



**THE MAGAZINE OF THE  
LAGONDA CLUB**

**Number 223  
Winter 2009/2010**



# DAVID AYRE



David Ayre in his 1927 H/C Lagonda during the London to Cape Town Rally

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**FRONT COVER:**

*Mark Yeoman's lovely LG45 de Ville at the AGM.*

*Photo: Peter Lloyd*

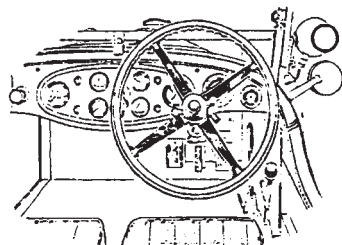
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# From the Driving Seat

**Ken Painter**



THIS IS BEING typed as the garden is covered with a thick layer of snow and all thoughts of working on the Editorial Lagonda put firmly on hold. Just in case you are thinking that I am getting soft in my old age, it might also be relevant to point out that one leg is in plaster from toe to knee and attempting to work whilst balancing on a pair of crutches is proving rather difficult. Very soon, the plaster should be gone and the weather might possibly be more suited to fettling the still-growing pile of parts that will, one day, be transformed into a complete and running 2 litre saloon.

Family health problems seriously limited the amount of time available for mere hobbies last year and, apart from Board Meetings, I was able to attend only five motor club related events, including my annual pilgrimage to the Beaulieu Autojumble. At this stage it is not clear if it will be possible to improve on, or even match this number in 2010, so, if my absence is noted, please don't take it as a sign of waning interest.

When I first moved to Suffolk, there was a thriving monthly VSCC pub meet held locally, plus a second pub meet held under the auspices of a local car club devoted to veteran and vintage cars. Both suffered a dwindling attendance and now neither is held. Even our once

highly successful New Year's Day meet has been abandoned. Since alcohol consumption always took a very poor second place to simply talking about the cars, or dining with like-minded friends it is difficult to understand why the meetings faded away. It was never really an age-related matter, since many of those who attended were considerably younger than my generation.

Another local club seems to have found a solution, the organisers are enthusiastic and, more importantly, well connected in the motoring world and can attract popular and well known personalities from the motoring or motorcycling world to come along and give talks that can be funny, fascinating, revealing, technical or historical, but always interesting and never boring. The membership interests run from veteran cars to modern formula one and just about everything in between. All this is arranged by a group of about half a dozen enthusiasts, there is no membership fee, no monthly or quarterly magazine, the only regular communication is a flier for forthcoming events and money to pay the speakers is collected at the events themselves, when we are invited to place a donation towards the cost of the evening in a converted racing helmet. So far, no event has ever run at a loss.

***Last date for copy for the Spring magazine is  
... Friday 27th March 2010 ...***

# The Restoration of Josephine

## *Colin Bugler returns to an old love*

IN FEBRUARY 2007 I repurchased OW 6954 – the 1935 drophead coupe Rapier I had originally owned between 1953 and 1958. Maurice Kelliher had owned her since 1964 but, in recent years, his health had precluded him from making much use of his Rapier although in 2004 John MacDonald had carried out much work to prepare the car for Maurice's granddaughter's wedding.

Once she was home from Scotland my first task was to change all the oils, which included dropping the sump to clean out all the inevitable gunge and strip and clean the oil pump. The filter canister contained one of the original Tecalemit felt type elements considerably blocked with sludge and I replaced this with the more modern paper type supplied by the Rapier Register. Before long, I was in a position to start the engine, having drained out stale petrol from the tank. I pressed the starter button and absolutely nothing happened. I soon discovered that it was the starter button itself which had failed and, on replacing this, the engine fired immediately. I drove her up and down outside the house a few times but, with autumn approaching, I decided not to go for an MoT.

About this time Geoff Henderson from County Durham called to see the car. I had contacted him as soon as I bought her with a view to Geoff restoring the bodywork but his response was that he wanted to retire and really was reluctant to take on a big job. However, constant cajoling eventually won the day and, having examined the car, he agreed to take on the task. Josephine's final trip that autumn was on the trailer to the Lagonda Club AGM in September where I enjoyed driving her around the side roads.

Immediately after that, my son David and I started the job of stripping the car. He removed all the wings, which involved quite a bit of grinding away rusted and seized fittings, while I stripped out all the trim. One interesting discovery inside the passenger's door was a programme from the July 1974 VSCC Silverstone Meeting.

I remember spectating at this meeting and being excited to see that Maurice Kelliher was due to take part in the Rapier Register track parade. I had gone over to the Assembly area with a view to joining him for this parade only to find that he had not turned up – instead I thumbed a lift in YS 1491. Presumably Maurice turned up later and was given a programme.

As I removed the trim I realised that the wooden framework of the body was in generally poor condition and the heavy drophead doors had inevitably sagged and warped – it was possible to see daylight between the bodywork and the fronts of the doors. With the engine out it was not long before I was able to remove all the coach bolts holding the body to the chassis (most of these had to be ground or cut out). I had a set of 16" wheels left over from my previous Rapier and I cadged scrap tyres from North Hants Tyres to provide "slave" wheels so that I could get the original wheels rebuilt. By the beginning of December 2007 the car was ready to go up on a trailer to Geoff Henderson's works in Country Durham and, within a week, he had removed the body and put it on a jig.

Geoff decided that the wooden framework was far too fragile and the alloy panelling was also badly corroded. It was therefore reluctantly decided to replace the main body tub but Geoff was able to save the wings (despite them



*David Bugler making a start on the big clean-up.*



*The clutch area, not a pretty sight at this stage.*





*Is this what they mean by a "six foot wheelbase"?*



*The underside after restoration.*



being very thin in places), the doors, bonnet and boot lid. Originally this Rapier had had a rear bumper, which I think was an original fitting judging from the massive bracketry. After much heart searching we decided to scrap this bumper for aesthetic reasons but Geoff kept most of the bracketry to help support the rear of the body and to take a new more modest cross piece for the rear number plate and lights.

By February 2008 I was able to return to County Durham to collect the rolling chassis while Geoff continued remaking the main tub. On removal of the body from the chassis, original paint was discovered which proved that the colour of the car in 1953 was the same as it had always been and, obviously, I have kept to this. Geoff's local coach painter had matched the paint on the body to a Fiat colour.

Back home I quickly stripped the chassis and had it grit blasted. I then suspended it from my garage roof about four feet above ground level and proceeded to hand paint it.. I used Craftmaster Paint which is a favourite with traction engine and canal boat enthusiasts. At the recommendation of a professional painter and also Craftmaster, I added Owatrol oil which makes the paint flow more easily and seems to give it a little more flexibility. The steering arms and stub axles were removed and these, together with the steering box components, were crack tested by a firm at Maidenhead who were extremely helpful and quick. I fitted new king pins and bushes. The 19" wheels went away to Richards Brothers in Cardiff together with the brake drums. The wheels were rebuilt and everything was painted in the chosen Fiat colour.

The springs were overhauled by Jones Springs at Darlaston, West Midlands.

The hub caps were rusted and on two of them the engraving had been buffed off at some time. The engraving

on the other two was very faint and I sent them all to Precision Engraving at Stanford-le-Hope. It was necessary for the domes to be built up and they were then engraved, copper plated and heavily chrome plated. They came back looking absolutely wonderful.

I was soon in a position to start putting the axles and springs back on the car. The shackle pins were badly worn and the bushes were oval so all were replaced. By now we had got to late April 2008 and a serious hiatus occurred as a result of my 4½ litre Lagonda being involved in a bad accident at Silverstone which made it necessary to strip the car down completely to get the chassis straightened. This slowed down the Rapier rebuild but as I had a target of taking the chassis back to Geoff Henderson in early May (to coincide with a Lagonda Club dinner in Yorkshire) I hurriedly finished off the front axle, painted the back axle and assembled it all while family members were carrying on with the 4½ work.

However, the accident put me considerably behind with work on the engine but I soon was able to take the cylinder head to Surelock for stitching of some frost damage which had happened back in the 1980's. I got the head back before the end of 2008 and refitted the camshafts, after having worn valves and guides replaced. Having checked that the bearings were OK, I painted the block and reassembled the head, fitting Elliott Elder bars and renewing all chains and tensioners.

In the meantime Geoff Henderson had put the new body tub on the chassis, fitted the wings etc. and Josephine went off to local painters, Corbridge Coachworks, who did a wonderful job. Next a local trimmer, Mr J R Richardson, replaced all the trim. We went back to original upholstery colour of tan, with brown carpets which match the hood. After a great deal of thought we had

decided to have a dark brown hood which would match the brown line along the side of the bonnet and which then becomes a wider strip along the top of the doors and carries on below the hood. Advertisements by Abbotts for their original drophead coupe bodywork show this line very clearly and the chocolate brown coachline against the cream paintwork of the rest of the bodywork tones in very well.

Back in 1957 my fiancée, Valerie, had made the Rapier a new hood and we had removed the original miniscule rear window to replace it with a large plastic window for better visibility. For no particular reason I had retained this original rear window when I sold the car and I now had this put back. Drophead coupes are very rare and I strongly suspect that mine is the only one with the original rear window.

There are a large number of wood cappings in the drophead body and my son, David, took on the refurbishment of these together with the dashboard as his own project. The original finish was French polish but this can react badly to rain and, in the end, he used Bri-wax after rubbing down the woodwork with very fine wire wool. He lost track of how many coats of Bri-wax he applied but, in the end, the results were well worth all his efforts.

My target all the way along had been to get Josephine ready to attend the Rapier Register AGM at Brooklands in July 2009 but progress was always slower than I had anticipated. I decided to replace all the brake linkages, as all the original rods were quite pitted and I thought it wise to renew these and all the yokes and clevis pins. All this took much longer than I expected mainly because I had allowed a tiny bit extra on the brake rods but soon found that I had to trim these extra bits off to obtain adequate braking.

The original battery tray was in a parlous state and it would have been very easy to replace this completely.

However, I fabricated a reinforcing cage and an additional base whilst filling in all the rust holes with plastic padding. It is now a stronger unit than it was originally and, from the outside, looks perfectly standard.

The gearbox had been overhauled by Graham Whitehouse in Birmingham and I had the clutch relined locally. It was not long before we were able to shoehorn the engine and gearbox into the chassis and fit the radiator, which had been overhauled by Anglia Radiators at Cambridge. John MacDonald had replaced the wiring loom in 2004 and, having taken copious photographs of the wiring before dismantling, I expected no problems but soon found that this was optimistic. The main problem was the indicator light connections, not made any easier because I did not want to retain the switch Maurice had put above the dashboard but intended to use a different switch half hidden out of sight. In the end I called on Richard Jones to come over and sort out these anomalies and, by the beginning of July, I was ready to start the engine. Having connected the petrol pump it was irritating to find that it clicked away merrily without moving any petrol. The first problem was that the seal between the base unit and the electrical section had perished during the rebuild and petrol poured out of the joint. This was soon remedied but the pump would still not draw petrol from the tank. Using my compressor I found that the two way petrol tap on the bulkhead was dragging in air so I bypassed this and soon had petrol in the float chambers. To my great pleasure she started immediately and ran very sweetly. As the refitting of the camshafts was the first time I had ever worked on this part of a Rapier engine, I was absolutely delighted that it all worked so well that I did not even need to use a strobe to check the timing.

Then a big problem ensued. I fitted the clutch pedal and, on trying to operate



*The newly restored engine.*



*Martin, Rachel and Toby examine the finished article.*





*Proud owner Colin tries the car on the private road outside "Bugler Towers".*



*Josephine waiting for her MOT.*

this to check gear linkage etc., I found that the pedal rotated on the splined shaft. I guessed that the splines on the pedal were at fault and purchased a replacement pedal and a few other spares from Brian Fidler, only to find that exactly the same thing happened again. I then realised that it was the splines on the shaft that were at fault. Fortunately I had a spare shaft on the shelf with excellent splines but, of course, I then had to withdraw the clutch and gearbox half an inch to make room for the clutch operating shaft housing plate to be removed. All of this was wasting a great deal of time but, once the new shaft was in place, the clutch pedal and gear linkage worked OK. The end result was that this work was not complete by the time of the Rapier AGM so I had to take Josephine on a trailer – which did not seem too popular.

Our holiday in August brought about a further delay but I was able to take Josephine for her MoT in late September which she sailed through with not one observation.

A few other jobs had to be tackled at various times – a great deal of re-chroming, some done by Geoff Henderson's local platers, and the rest by a firm at Camberley in Surrey. The awful red telescopic shock absorbers which I had fitted in 1957 were thrown

away and replaced with new Andre Hartfords. Geoff Henderson supplied a four branch exhaust manifold and I bought a stainless steel silencer and tailpipe from John Batt. The exhaust system assembly work was done entirely by my son, David, and he enjoyed the lateral thinking involved in achieving the best method of suspending this firmly.

Instruments were overhauled by Chris Clark and Tony Metcalfe has loaned me a steering bracket which I will be having copied shortly. Peter Merrick has coped admirably with large and frequent orders for spares despite health problems. As Burlen Fuel Services were quoting ten weeks to overhaul the carburettors I had these done by BishopGray.

None of the above could have been achieved without a great deal of patience and understanding by long suffering Valerie and a huge amount of help from our son David. The original journey to Glasgow to collect Josephine from Maurice's home was made much easier because David came with me and did the lion's share of the driving. Again he accompanied me on the final trip to County Durham to collect the Rapier after Geoff Henderson had finished his wonderful bodywork restoration.

## **An Important Message to All of You!**

**Our Secretary, Colin Bugler, holds a large collection of back numbers of "The Lagonda". The time has now come to dispose of some of the surplus, so, if you are missing any copies, or would like to have extra copies of particular editions, please contact him soon, or it will be too late! The surplus supplies do not extend to the very early issues and copies are not free, but this may be your last chance to fill those gaps in your collection. Don't delay, do it now!**

# *The Suffolk Dinner*

Saturday 20 March 2010, 6.45pm for 7.15pm

at

**The White Lion Hotel**

Market Cross Place, Aldeburgh

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*Leek & Potato Soup*



*Pinney's Smoked Fish Parfait with Cucumber Salsa*

or

*Spiced Pear, Cashel Blue & Toasted Hazelnut Salad*



*Braised Shoulder of Alburgh Lamb Bourguignon with Potato Purée  
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*Banana & Chocolate Tart with Crème Fraiche*

or

*Fresh Fruit Salad and Cream*

or

*Selection of Local Cheeses with Biscuits, Celery & Grapes*



*Coffee and Petits Fours*



After dinner Tony Wood Esq., President of the Rapier Register, will speak on  
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Gary Guiver Gong award for the Rapier coming furthest. Dress optional.

Vegetarian main course available if requested when you order tickets –  
see flyer for details.

Tickets £29 50 each + s.a.e., cheques payable to Mike Pilgrim, from  
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The White Lion, tel. 01728 452720, offers rooms, or for details of other  
accommodation contact Mike on 01394 382773. Book in good time!

ALSO – on Sunday 21 March



Meet for lunch, from noon onwards at the Old  
Mill House, Saxstead Green near Framlingham

Bring your Lagonda!





# Memories of a Racing Man

## *Jeremy Oates joins the racing fraternity*

16TH MARCH 2003 dawned very much as usual and it was only at 9.00 p.m. that evening, when the telephone rang, that my quiet and orderly life began to unravel into an unholy nightmare. "My name's Tim Wadsworth. I'm leading a Team of 2 litres racing this season. Fancy joining in?" A man of few words Mr Wadsworth.

I explained that I was pathologically unsuited as a potential racing driver – was over 60 – "Good should bring our average age down a bit", and genuinely did not wish to leave a grieving widow and 3 children – barely into their 30's –fatherless. Tim heard me out with sympathy. "Good – I'll have the forms in the post tonight" and the phone went dead.

It had not seemed necessary to mention to Tim that I had never driven a 2 litre – though in truth I did own one. It had been bought at Auction in Ireland many years ago and looked a lot better than it was. In front of me, as I write, I have a report from John Batt dated 21/03/01:

"Block scored/worn. Studs pulled or broken

Pistons size .030" worn out

Big ends measured 1.950/954" Standard 2"

Camshafts. Shot!

Personally, I think these engineering Johnny's get a bit carried away – after all I didn't want to eat lunch off the thing – and most of the bits mentioned you can't even see when its all together.

However, next day our Team leader had myself and fellow conscript Roger Seabrook apply to Castle Combe for our ARDS test prior to getting a Racing licence. This proved quite gruelling, driving at high speed around a strange

circuit and being told to do the opposite of everything prudent one had been taught, as a youth, to stay alive on normal roads. As we battled round the circuit in our little saloons, various single seater racing cars delighted in overtaking on both sides, adding to the sense of fear.

Out of the 30 odd participants, only myself and an Advanced Driving Instructor for the Met. actually failed. All I had passed was "Is able to retain full control of vehicle and stay on the track surface for the whole session" and I got an 'A' for 'Not riding clutch'.

Two hours later with the Chief Instructor (I had now gone through three), he pulled us over and said "Do you think that I should pass you?" I had seen the gap and took it "Certainly not" but I don't think he was listening. I passed, but his last words echo still "Stick to the 1929 Lagonda if I was you".

The next hurdle proved to be the Medical whereby my Doctor either did not read the rules or else she didn't want me racing. The Motor Sports Association telephoned over lunch on receipt of the form and they were concerned. Firstly, the eye sight had to be remarkably good and I had failed on that. Secondly, the alcohol intake was excessive, and finally my Gout pills would show up on a drugs test and the Olympic Committee would be able to disqualify me and remove me from the winners podium.

Dare I tell Mr Wadsworth? Frankly he is quite scary and with the aid of a pair of glasses, a promise not to drink alcohol before the race and the risk of a random drugs test, matters proceeded and Competitor 177364 duly got his licence.

The next problem was the car, which was having a new Ash frame tailor made for it and mechanically it had never been drivable or driven by its owner. Threats were made, even more cash changed hands and we had a trimless vehicle home with a very stiff engine straight from John Batt's workshops.

Intensive running in and adjustment followed before our first outing at Oulton Park on 31st May, six weeks after passing the ARD's test.

A nasty surprise was the demand for £400.00 to enter all three races in the series, in my youth I recall Stirling Moss receiving £50.00 just for turning up at Goodwood. How times have changed – and not for the better.

We drove to the circuit from Hampshire, and with the engine so stiff, managed to boil four or five times on the long straight hills, but we made the B&B in time for a pub supper.

Next day proved hot and we drove the few miles to the circuit only to have the engine cut out twice for no apparent reason, the result of a piece of plastic sheeting floating in the petrol tank.

Oulton Park is a pretty circuit – but with hills – and these were really our undoing as at this point in the learning curve we had never really mastered hills, and were often reduced to 2nd gear, which in a 2 litre means very very slow.

Being last does have its moments. At the start of the race one pretty much has the circuit to oneself. There is plenty of time to admire the wildlife, listen to the engine and choose a perfect racing line. At these speeds the best line is the shortest, clinging to the inside of any

right hand corner. Suddenly, the atmosphere changes, the Marshalls spring to life and begin waving blue flags. Etiquette says 'wave back' but then the peace is shattered as Napiers and Bentleys roar past on both sides followed by the entire field, leaving one once again with the circuit to oneself.

Over the next three or four years the car got a little quicker and the driver slightly more knowledgeable, but the competitors learnt faster and had better mechanics!

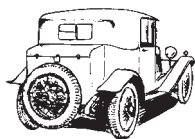
The highlight came one day in practice when the commentator announced 'Jeremy Oates has joined Holly Mason in the long grass'. Alas we were several corners apart and on opposite sides of the track.

But that's motor racing for you, and it was time to hang up the flat cap and goggles!

*Tim Wadsworth provided the picture of Jeremy for the article and adds the following:*

*"With typical modesty, Tim understates his contribution to Team 2 Litre. Jeremy, if not the fastest, was always enthusiastic, reliable, willing to help anyone and great company. With his help we even managed to win some silverware.*

*Not content with these achievements, his enthusiasm encouraged his daughter, Binky, to take up racing and she is now engaged to an accomplished racing driver. Hopefully this will ensure a supply of Lagonda competitors for generations to come."*





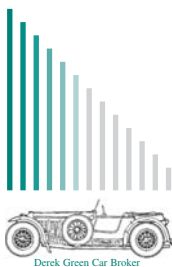
*Jeremy Oates in a pensive mood.*



*The New Forest Picnic attracted some local residents last summer.*

*Photo:Pat Elliott.*





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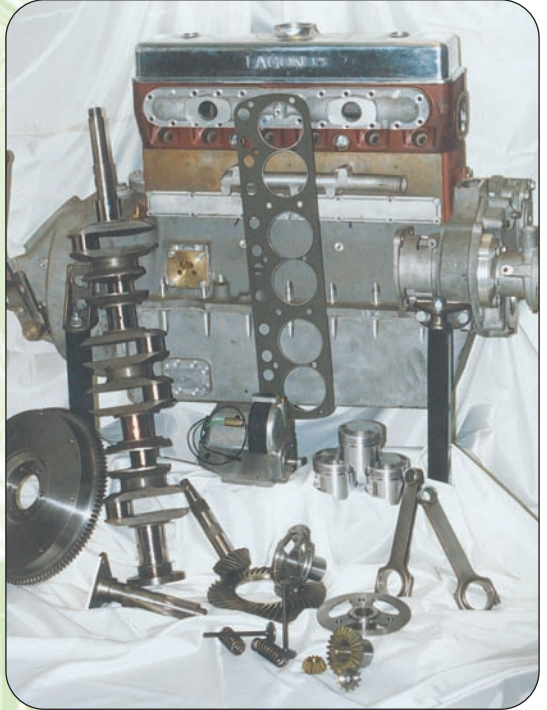
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*Bernie and Helen Jacobsen, Alan and Pat Elliott at Monastery Le Bec.*



*The nuns clearly enjoyed their ride in David Hawkins' T Type Aston Martin.*



# Four Days In A Monastery

## *Alan and Pat Elliot take a rather different holiday*

AFTER THE RIGOURS of last year's Lands End Trial, we were wondering what event would take our fancy in 2009. Perhaps something continental? We always like vintage motoring in France - the roads are so well maintained, there is very little other traffic, and parking is never a problem. So, the invitation from Malcolm Elder in the VSCC Newsletter, to spend four days in a monastery in Normandy with fellow vintage car owners, sounded an unusual and fascinating idea.

Enquiries to Malcolm clarified that he had visited the monastery of Notre Dame du Bec on several previous years in vintage cars - but last year in a "modern". Whereupon he was taken to task by Brother Hotellier, who told him, "You have come in a modern car, and the Abbott will not get his ride this year!"

"Don't worry," Malcolm replied, "I will return next year and bring lots of old cars!" This was well received - and the seeds were sown for the subsequent visit. Malcolm had thought that his invitation in the VSCC newsletter might attract interest from one or two members, but was astounded by the response - he eventually found himself organising a full-blown tour with some twenty vintage cars!

There were 2 Lagondas, our 1929 HC 2 Litre and Bernie Jacobsen's Rapier. Three Rapier owners had put their cars in a container and had them shipped from Australia in order to take part in various European events, including Prescott hill climb and the VSCC 75th anniversary celebrations at Malvern. What enthusiasm! Pat cannot understand

how Helen Jacobsen could exist for four months with her limited wardrobe stuffed into various corners of the Rapier in plastic bags!

We all assembled one Thursday evening in May at the Mermaid, Port Solent marina, where we were able to admire the huge number of impressive multi-million pound yachts. The first surprise - no Malcolm! He eventually arrived, very late, but in a modern Jaguar, his always-reliable vintage Alvis having broken down shortly after leaving home! However, we all enjoyed an excellent dinner, after which the overnight sailing with cabin in the LD Lines "Norman Spirit" was smooth and comfortable. LD Lines are not as well-known as they deserve to be, but they offer budget, and very adequate channel-crossings to Le Havre.

The Abbey du Bec has had an interesting history. It was founded in 1034, and later had associations with Thomas a Becket at Canterbury. However, at the time of the French revolution, the Abbey was disbanded and it became a cavalry barracks, being occupied by the army until the second world war. In 1948 the Abbey recovered its original vocation, monastic life being restored by a community of Benedictine monks, continuing to this day. But part of the Abbey also became a car museum, housing the impressive Marc de Briancon car collection. It became a calling point on French car rallies, which is how Pat and I first visited the Abbey some years ago. However, the museum has now closed and the car collection broken up and sold.



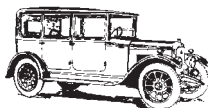
The journey to le Bec through the Normandy countryside from le Havre is about 100 kilometres. Malcolm had arranged for us to visit the famous Basilique de Sainte Theresa at Lisieux, before we all partook of a superb French lunch at Brionne. Arriving at le Bec, we were welcomed by Brother Hotellier. There are two types of accommodation. We were in the guest house, where our twin-bedded room was basic but quite clean and adequate, with the facilities at the end of the corridor. Evening dinner and lunch came complete with wine - and we were expected to clear the tables and do the washing-up. But we were criticised for too much noise during the meal - one is expected to keep silence whilst eating although this is not perhaps observed too strictly. Staying in the monastery proper is restricted to men only, and here the rooms are quite grand, large, airy, and with splendid views, not the simple cells normally associated with monastic life. Here, there is no talking at all during meals, when the monks listen to readings or music. Accommodation charges in the monastery are modest, although extra donations are much appreciated.

We were able to treat the accommodation as a holiday home, although our hosts hoped we would attend at least one office during the day. It was the weekend of Pentecost and the

service, with Gregorian chants, sung by the choir of monks, and nuns from the nearby convent was very impressive. The procession led by a monk swinging his censer, filling the abbey with smoke, was quite a spectacle. There is also a pottery on the site, operated by the monks on quite a commercial scale. The abbey is in a beautiful area with lovely walks in the surrounding forests. We were also able to visit the fourteenth century castle of Harcourt, and the huge chateau of Beaumesnil surrounded by beautifully maintained formal French gardens with terraces, fountains and partaerres.

Another interesting visit is to the D-Day museum at Arromanches, the centrepiece being a huge model of the Mulberry harbour, made by the famous Bassett-Lowke company, more well known for one of my other interests - model steam locomotives.

Of course, the monks expected their rides in the vintage cars, the nuns likewise and we all obliged. The spectacle of nuns in the back of David Hawkins' T type Aston Martin, with their white whimples flowing in the breeze, was unforgettable! However, these four unusual days came to an end and it was back to le Havre for the voyage home. I understand that Malcolm Elder intends to repeat the visit in 2010, so get your applications in as quickly as possible!



# Filling in the Gaps

## *Owen Eather provides more information on his car, featured in the Autumn magazine*

FIRST, MAY I thank you for the excellent coverage you gave to my V 12 and the All British Day. I am sure the Aston Martin people will be most pleased to know my comments were published.

Below is a response from Mark Whitehead on the RAN Commodore and his V12 which I thought Arnold may find of interest. What odds one of his sailors being there on the day?

I am in bureaucratic arm wrestle with the State road authority on the registration. It is dormant, had not been used for 14 years but the plates were never returned. They won't, through privacy laws, either let me know who owns them or get in touch confidentially at my request. All this contravenes about ten pages of regulations, according to my jousting companion. However, I keep writing letters and, eventually, hope to wear the fellow down.

### **GFK V12**

Herewith details on the V12 SS/2 car No 14066.

The late Commander George Knox Royal Australian Navy served some time with the RN during and after WWII. Whilst in England he was captivated by the V12 Lagonda and purchased this short chassis saloon in the 50's and brought it back to Sydney with him. My father Jim and George were good friends (ex Naval colleagues) and we saw the car frequently.

George decided to overhaul the engine but during the dismantling he was stricken with mesophilioma as a result of wearing asbestos aprons during gunfire. During his last months Jim visited him every Saturday and worked on the car whilst he watched from his wheelchair.

In the late 1970's we bought the car from his estate and completed the engine rebuild.

George carried out these modifications during his ownership:

Addition of a vacuum brake booster.

Conversion of the chassis lubrication from oil to light grease, most nipples being mounted on a brass bracket fitted to the chassis under the front mudguard.

Converted inlet manifolds and fitted dual barrel downdraft Solex carburettors. These did not suit the engine. Later we installed engine No. 81, fully restored, so the car was returned to original.

### **BODY**

Structural timber replaced where necessary in the 80's.

Painted RR metallic Sherwood (?) Green, some chips whilst working on engine and interior to be rectified.

Doors re-hung.

Complete electrical rewiring so all circuits are now fused.

New gauges.

Petrol caps re-chromed, new filler pipes.

Non-original bumper bars re-chromed.

Radiator shell restored and re-chromed, similarly P100 headlights.

Timber finish for doors and dashboard professionally restored.

## CHASSIS

Brake drums reskimmed, new linings radiused to drums.

Wheel cylinders restored and brake servo replaced with new item.

Master cylinder non original but re-sleeved and new seals.

Radiator rodged through.

New alloy firewall.

Gearbox untouched but known to be sound.

Chassis running gear and all steering linkages overhauled.

New exhaust lines.

## ENGINE

Sanction 1 No. V12/81, very low mileage. This engine was overhauled by the works soon after WWII and became the subject of litigation between the works and the proprietor (we understand overheating and scuffed bores due to aggressive manor in which it was run in). It was fitted to the Coupe Jim acquired in England in the early 60's. (Mike Wilby and Richard Hare, prominent club members at that time, investigated the car and its history for him).

Work on engine 81 done by us includes:

Re-sleeving, pistons cam ground (STD size), new rings.

Big ends fitted with slipper bearings, main bearings renewed and line bored.

Oil pumps overhauled.

Crankshaft reground and rebuilt to STD by adding 10 thou. hard chrome to main and con rod journals.

Camshaft re-profiled.

New valves, cam followers re-profiled.

Twin SU carburettors and petrol pump completely restored by Bill Bessington of Midel Pty. Ltd.

Distributors restored and new points.

Overhead drive gear found to be in as new condition.

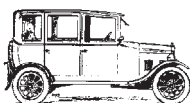
All moving engine parts electronically balanced to 8000 rpm.

New stainless steel exhaust heat shields (not fitted when photos taken).

The car has not been on the road since all this work was done.

Please understand that neither Jim nor I are trained or qualified motor mechanics: I am a grazier and Jim is a retired architect - with a bent for engineering. We rebuilt this car believing it would remain in our collection but in the meantime we have acquired another short chassis saloon.

*I must apologise for mis-spelling Owen's name in the last magazine. This was a simple typing mistake, made worse by failing to pick it up in the proof reading stage! K.P.P.*





*Owen Eather's elegant V12.*







*AGM Weekend, the cars lined up outside the Matthews' house.*



*Just a few of the cars at the AGM. Photo: Peter Lloyd.*

# The AGM Weekend

## *Peter Blenk was there...*

For anyone who loves Lagondas and good company, the October AGM weekend was not to be missed. Activities began Saturday afternoon with a gentle drive to the Sandham Memorial Chapel, a landmark commemorating the dead of the Great War and the masterpiece of Stanley Spencer, a well-known painter of the 1920s and 1930s. Some 15 Lagondas participated, in the company of David and Karen Ayre's monumental and terrifyingly quick 1907 Itala, veteran of the 2007 Peking to Paris rally. The return route took us to the Matthews' charming house (with an enviable number of Lagonda and workshop-housing dependencies), where Stephen, Rebecca and son Harry plied us with tea and cakes – most generous of them and a great success.

Sixty-five members sat down to dinner Saturday evening to enjoy the Manor's fine fare and good conversation, thanks to Valerie Bugler's seating plan, capped by David Hine's inspired rendition of Noah and His Ark. We were very pleased to have with us Fred Berndt, from Milwaukee, Nick Schede, from Belgium, and Graham Lawrence, from Australia, no less, as well as new Members Norman and Tricia Marrett, Chris Mann, and Michael and Delia Nassim. Some dozen of the hardier members closed the bar at 1:00. On Sunday morning, some 80 members attended the AGM, admirably run by our new Chairman, Jonathan Oppenheimer, assisted by his modest cabinet of 12. We were sorry to lose the services of Alan Heard, who contributed immeasurably to the revival of the post-war section during

his tenure on the Board, but at the same time pleased to welcome to the Board Peter Gilkes, who, with his mother Lois, has been one of the most consistent participants in Lagonda events in his three Litre two-door. John Breen, who has served two stints on the Board and has contributed immensely to the spares scheme over the years, also stood down, and into his shoes stepped Christopher Hobbs, who has already applied his marketing and organisational skills to the Club's website and IT. In another important change, John Sword has reinstated the position of Club Treasurer.

Sunday also saw the arrival of some 55 Lagondas to participate in the Concours d'Etat, this year seamlessly managed by John Brown. The standard of cars continues to improve, making the choice of winners increasingly difficult; in the event the winners were:

### **Two Litre Class:**

Norman and Tricia Marrett – supercharged two litre

### **16/80 Class:**

Brian and Joyce Savill – 16/80 tourer restored to Brian's impeccable standards

### **Rapier Class:**

David Bugler – recently restored Abbott DHC (and Colin's first car)

### **3/3.5 Litre Class:**

Philip Mayhew – Three Litre

### **M45 and LG45 Class:**

Macko Laqueur – M45 Rapide (period Monte Carlo and RAC entrant)

### **V12 and LG6 Class:**

Paul and Carol Collins – LG6 Rapide – has deservedly won many awards

**Post-War Class:**

Antony Bowie – DB 2.6 saloon

**Car Club Trophy:**

Brian Savill - 16/80 tourer

**Award of Merit:**

Jack Wright – notable restorer of Lagondas

**Ladies' Choice:**

Stephen, Rebecca and Harry Matthews – LG45 TT replica

**Seaton Trophy:**

Jeff and Gill Ody – supercharged two litre tourer

**Raines Award:**

Mike Abbott – V8 MkII saloon

Following the concours awards, a tea station served refreshments outside the Club marquee, and participants began to leave at 3:30. Weather is always important for an outdoor activity, and we were lucky over the weekend, as we had no rain. Sunday was sunny the morning, chilly and grey toward the end of the day. Overall, a great weekend – be sure to join us next year!



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AGM, Mike Abbott's Lagonda V8, these are rare visitors to our meetings and this one has only covered around 9,000 miles in 25 years. Photo: Alan Heard.



More of the post-war Lagondas at the AGM, a tribute to the hard work of Alan Heard in encouraging their participation. Photo: Alan Heard.





*Just a few of the 2 litres at the AGM. Photo: Peter Lloyd.*



*The Jeremy Oates Fan Club assemble at the AGM!.*

*Photo: Peter Lloyd.*



*Two photos from Roger Firth's collection, showing Hugh Dixon Carr's 3 litre attempting Kirkstone Pass in the Lake District in the 1930s. Sadly, the climb burnt out the clutch and the car was towed up by a Vauxhall 14!*





*A puzzle picture for you. Who, what, when and where?*

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# Setting the Clearances on 16/80 Valves

**Brian Savill does it the easy way**

HAVING BEEN CONTACTED on numerous occasions querying as to what in my opinion is the best way to perform the task of valve clearance setting on a 16180. I thought it prudent to put my method into print.

## **With reference to the chart:**

First check that Petrol pump and Magneto switch is in the off position, remove the spark plugs and rocker cover.

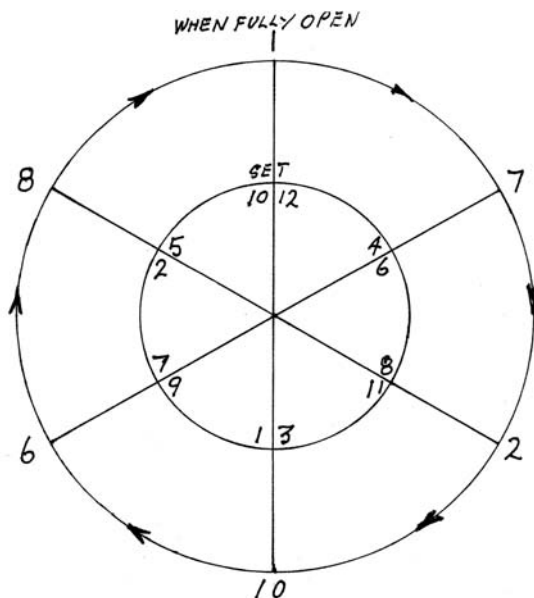
Start with the car backed up as far you can in the garage then engage top gear, or if you have a pre-selector box neutral and with the starting handle at the ready.

Push car forward/turn the starting handle until one (any one) of the valves notated on the outer circle is fully depressed i.e. open.

Look down the line & on that number towards the centre to see the valve numbers that are to be adjusted.

Push/turn handle until the next clockwise number on the outer circle is fully depressed and adjust the relevant inner circled numbered rockers. If you for instance started at 2 (on the outer circle) the next valve that will become fully depressed will be 10 and the valves to be adjusted will be 1 and 3. Continue clockwise round the circle.

If you are pushing the car and run out of space take it out of gear, push it back, re-engage top gear and continue. If you think that is superfluous information it is the reply previously given to the relevant question.





# Letters

Dear Arnold,

Regarding your article in the Lagonda Magazine 219, Winter Edition 2008/2009 referring to engines. I thought it might interest our members that, along with my LG45 Rapide, GPA 41, which I have now owned for almost 25 years, we are also the proud owners of another vehicle with a Meadows engine, a 1949 Guy Otter short wheelbase Tipper. I acquired the vehicle some time ago after seeing it for sale on 'e-bay'. Margaret had serious doubts as to my sanity at the time, but having placated her with the promise of a stylish set of overalls, a flat cap and muffler, she went along with it.

I collected the vehicle from Gloucester. The Tipper was in reasonable condition, though it required some 'T.L.C.', plus some new tyres. The original petrol engine rated 3686cc had been previously reconditioned and, having thoroughly examined it and replaced all the hoses and fast movers, plugs, etc., I connected a new battery. She fired up first time, as do all Meadows engines.

I have had the vehicle painted in our company livery and we participate in some local County Fairs with the lorry and on Historic Commercial Runs. On these trips I carry a pallet of approximately 1/2 ton as ballast as, without this, the lorry tends to bounce about a great deal.

She drives quite well and is comfortable up to 45 m.p.h. Everything functions extremely well, including the pilot tipper and it should be noted that it still carries the original "Indian Head" mascot on the radiator.

My interest in the vehicle dates back to 1953, when I passed my test at the wheel of a similar vehicle, a Guy Vixen. When driving the Guy one is left in no doubt at the massive advances made in transport with today's vehicles. Nevertheless, I feel it is a most charming example of the way things used to be.

Kind regards,

**Roy Hatfield**

Dear Ken,

As discussed, here is the 2010 Suffolk Dinner publicity. (See page 14 K.P.P.)

Phil Ridout's 2 litre made it to le Mans this year, despite having to fit the spare magneto en route. It ran well with the new Arias pistons. We had a good time taking part in the "Grande Parade des Pilotes" on the eve of the race, carrying the Aston Martin team of Lord Paul Drayson, a Life Peer who holds two Ministerial appointments. Back home the 2 litre's magneto problems were found to be wet and/or oil on the low tension earthing slip-ring and a loose centre-bolt retaining the contact breaker - there were signs of arcing and poor contact. A hammering noise in the engine during the le Mans trip and persistent oil leaks are cured, now that I have fitted a Wessex Workshops thrust pad at the rear of the exhaust camshaft and fitted new gaskets on the camshaft tunnel cover plates, using locktite to seal the screw threads. We also took the Morgan Super-Aero down to le Mans, to be displayed in the exhibition at the "British Welcome" which, this year honoured the centenary of the Morgan

Yours sincerely

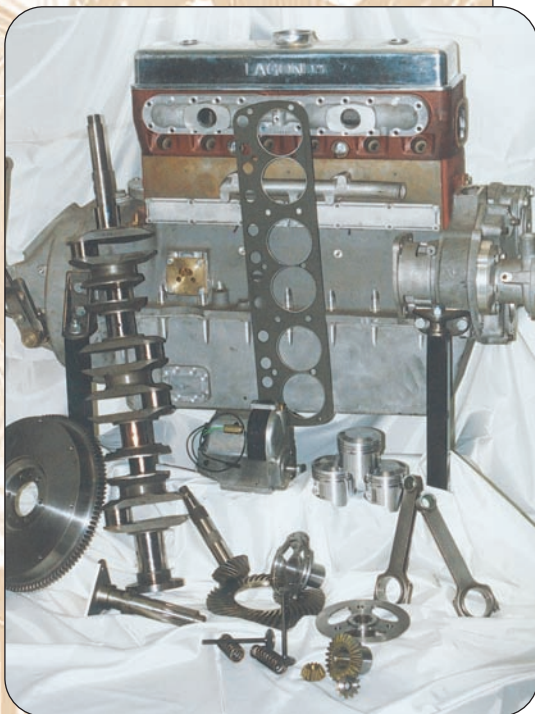
**Mike Pilgrim**

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