



**THE MAGAZINE OF THE
LAGONDA CLUB**

Number 231 Winter 2011/2012



— DAVID AYRE —



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

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Tim Wadsworth at Pembrey.

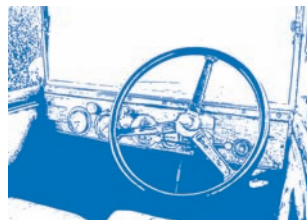
Photo by Peter Mcfadyen.

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From the Driving Seat

Ken Painter



AS THE NEW year begins, it appears that it could be even busier than 2011. There is a full programme of motoring related events in place and invitations to participate in jollies with other clubs arrive almost every day. Here in East Anglia we start with not one, but two dinners in March, one in Cambridgeshire, the other in Suffolk and, as the season progresses, there will be times when it will be difficult to decide where to go. Vintage and Classic gatherings of all kinds seem to be more popular than ever, in spite of the ever-growing pressures on our wallets, and this must be a very encouraging sign. In a perfect world, I would like to attend as many of our own functions as practical, but suspect that the distances involved simply to get to those on the other side of the country may make some of the attractions offered by rival clubs seem very tempting.

The range of events now is enormous. For example, I plan to attend several autojumbles; will visit a number of static events, such as Race Retro and the Classic Car Show; will watch some more active events, such as VSCC Race, Hillclimb and Sprint Meetings; attend at least two AGMs; try my luck in some VSCC Light Car runs; enjoy as many of the social dinners as possible; perhaps take part in some of the less challenging social runs; 'show the flag' in a couple of

local static displays (not my favourite way of spending a day, unless there are going to be lots of friends taking part as well); attend a series of 'off season' talks and film shows arranged by a local car club and attend the Board Meetings of two car clubs. All this should prevent me from becoming bored - and these are just some of the things I plan for the times I am not at home.

We should never forget just how lucky we are in this country to be able to enjoy our hobby in so many ways. Friends in other countries can only envy us when they compare the constraints placed on them with our freedom from overbearing regulations and restrictions. The government is considering abandoning the annual roadworthiness examination on older cars, partly because many of the tests involved don't apply to our older cars. I think this is a well-meaning mistake. The official view is that our cars are well maintained and cover only a limited mileage each year. This may be true in most cases, but Connie had been very lightly used before I bought her and the MOT revealed many warning signs that needed prompt attention. I believe the annual test is a vital independent and potentially life-saving check and I would want to have my car examined in this way if the test no longer applies. What do you think?

***Last date for copy for the Spring magazine is
... SATURDAY 24th March 2012 ...***

Tim's Tyre Talk

Tim Wadsworth 'tyres' of punctures

ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER puncture, or so it seemed at the time. Pioneer motorists were accustomed to frequent punctures but today there are no sharp flints or loose horse shoe nails scattered on our roads (pot holes are another matter!) so why so many punctures?

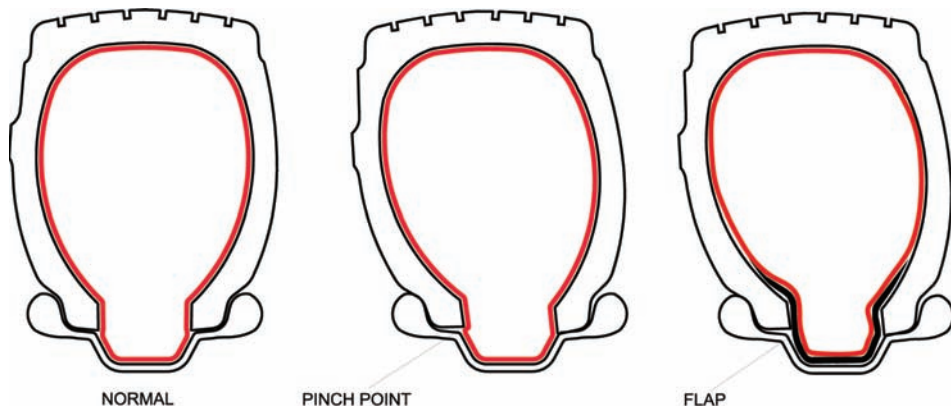
The first one you can dismiss as a stray nail, although come to think of it you never did find the offending nail. But not the next and the next and the next. There must be something else – and there is.

I have known tyre suppliers accuse everything from rusty rims to protruding spoke heads. One even suggested it might be the sharp edge of the rim tape! However careful examination of the inner tube showed an abraded line round the whole tube just above the valve stem with the puncture at some point along this line.

Now this line happens to be on the outer side of the tube at the point where the tyre meets the rim and eventually it became clear what was happening. As the car corners, the tyre flexes and the inner edge of the tyre moves slightly off

the rim opening up a small gap. Seizing its chance the inner tube pushes into this gap only to be pinched when the tyre moves upright as the car resumes a normal straight line. Do this enough times and eventually the inner tube will give way at some point and you have another puncture. The point was proved when I extracted one inner tube where the pinch remained and the two thicknesses of inner tube had almost welded together.

So, what to do about it? Well, first of all make sure your inner tubes are the correct size for the tyre and are “heavy duty”. “Universal” tubes often have so much rubber that they don’t fully fill out inside the tyre and there is plenty of spare rubber to find that gap. Next make sure the tyres you are buying have plenty of sidewall strength and are a good match to your rims. Finally, if all that fails there are things called flaps, thick half tubes which fit between the tyre and the inner tube and bridge the gap. They work, but your tyre fitter will not love you as they are b*****s to fit.



Spares Policy

Spares Policy:

ONE OF THE Club's main objectives is to keep Lagondas on the road, and having a good spares supply is key to achieving this.

During the last year and a half, the Board has been reviewing all aspects of the Club's spares operation and has introduced a number of policy changes. This paper explains the changes, and sets out for members the present policies that are being applied.

We need continually to seek improvement in this area, so these policies will be kept under review and constructive suggestions from members are always welcome.

Objective:

The long run objective is to provide a one-stop-shop for members' spares requirements, with most core needs being met by the Club directly. Where the Club does not supply parts (for instance, electrical parts, shock absorbers, fasteners) it should be able to point members to those suppliers who can best do so.

We are a long way from achieving this objective today. The Club supplies only some 500 parts (excluding second-hand items) across all pre-war Lagonda models, from the 14/60 to the V12. In contrast, the Rapier Register supplies a similar number of parts for just a single model and is generally judged to give an excellent service. We therefore have a long way to go.

Organisation:

The Club's spares operations are governed by the Spares Committee, which is chaired by Jonathan Oppenheimer. The other members, as of September 2011, are John Brown, Peter Blenk, John Boyes, Peter Gilkes, Robin

Cooke, Colin Mallett, Ken Painter and John Sword.

The introduction of new parts is very time-consuming, and with only the Committee members working on it in their (limited) spare time, progress has been slow. In order to accelerate things, the Club has decided that we need to involve more people.

Accordingly, five Model Groups have been set up, each covering specific models and led by a member of the Spares Committee.

These are:

- 1 Early cars: Ken Painter
2. 14/60, 2 litre, 3 litre, 16/80: John Brown
3. M45 and LG45: Peter Blenk
4. V12 and LG6: Jonathan Oppenheimer
5. Post-war cars: Peter Gilkes

Notes:

3½ litre cars are covered by Group 2 for engines and by Group 3 for everything else.

Group 3 covers the LG6 engine, of course.

The inclusion of Groups 1 and 5 signals the Club's intention to start to cover parts for these cars.

The Model Groups will undertake the work required to introduce new parts to the spares operation. Members of these Model Groups are generally enthusiastic and knowledgeable owners or those engaged in professional repair/maintenance of the relevant cars, who are willing to invest time and effort to help to bring new parts into the system. Further volunteers are needed.

Priorities for New Parts:

1. Top priority are safety-critical items, i.e. brakes, steering and suspension.

2. Next are commonly required service items e.g. gaskets, springs, clutch parts.
3. Next are wearing parts with high set-up costs (tooling, patterns, dies).
4. Next are other wearing parts.
5. Last are non-wearing parts.

In each category, high volume models take precedence, and proprietary parts that are available from stockists are low priority.

Stocking and Availability:

The Club's stocks of new spares are currently valued at over £160,000, and the planned expansion will probably take this up to at least £250,000. In order to use its funds wisely, the Club needs to balance the desire for good availability (i.e. good stocks of every part, always) and for low parts costs (i.e. buy parts in large batches), versus the amount of members' capital tied up and the need to cover as wide a range of parts as possible. To address this, the following policies are being adopted.

1. We will limit the number of parts which are 'always in stock', i.e. parts which are re-ordered before the stock runs out. The Model Groups are in the process of deciding what to recommend in this area, but service parts (No. 2 above) will certainly be included.
2. Other parts on longer lead-times (months) will be re-ordered as soon as stock reaches zero.
3. Other parts on shorter lead-times (weeks) will be re-ordered only when a member places an order for a zero-stock part.
4. Purchase orders will generally be for the smallest batch quantity that is acceptable to the supplier. Only a substantial price discount will permit a larger batch to be ordered.

The Club's stores at Robin Cooke's establishment near Saxmundham are being re-organised to give more space for

storage and to help achieve the quickest turn around of members' orders. Robin aims to turn around all orders within 48 hours of receipt, when stocks are available, and he will give an 'emergency' service for an extra charge.

Purchasing:

The Club's spares operation is entirely dependent upon the excellence of its suppliers if it is to give a good service to members, and purchasing policies are being evolved in order to achieve this. Some core principles have been agreed as objectives:

To have two suppliers for each commodity (commodities being, for instance, gears, gaskets, machined castings, springs).

Suppliers should be equipped to make small batches (i.e. not to have high tooling/set-up costs if these then require large minimum batch sizes, even though this might give lower unit costs).

All suppliers must meet quality standards that are agreed by the Club.

Safety-critical parts must be marked and certified so as to ensure traceability to supplier and to raw material.

Commercial Terms to Members:

Pricing:

A complete review has been undertaken of our spares prices, and a range of mark-ups over cost is now being applied, with larger mark-up percentages on low-cost items, and smaller mark-ups on high-cost items, with the objective of achieving an overall margin of 40%.

Prices will be raised annually (from 1st April), by the increase in RPI, except for parts purchased in the prior year.

A discount of 10% will be offered to members who commit to order from the initial batch of new parts, where the Committee decide that such support is needed.

These pricing policies are designed to generate sufficient funds to pay for the running costs of the spares operation and

for investment in its development, with the main items being:

Operating costs (mainly: staff, space, website).

Start-up costs on new parts (tooling etc.).

Investment in new stocks.

Payment:

We have moved to a system where payment is requested from members before the dispatch of spares (normally 'with order'). This has reduced the Club's debtors, thereby freeing-up cash to be invested in stocks. It has also eased the administrative burden of chasing up those (relatively few) members who have been slow payers.

Warranty and Returns:

Parts are warranted against defective materials and workmanship for 12 months. The warranty covers replacement/repair only, and the Club will not cover anything beyond this.

Refunds will be given on parts returned to the Club in good condition, but a carriage charge will be made, unless the return was occasioned by the Club's error.

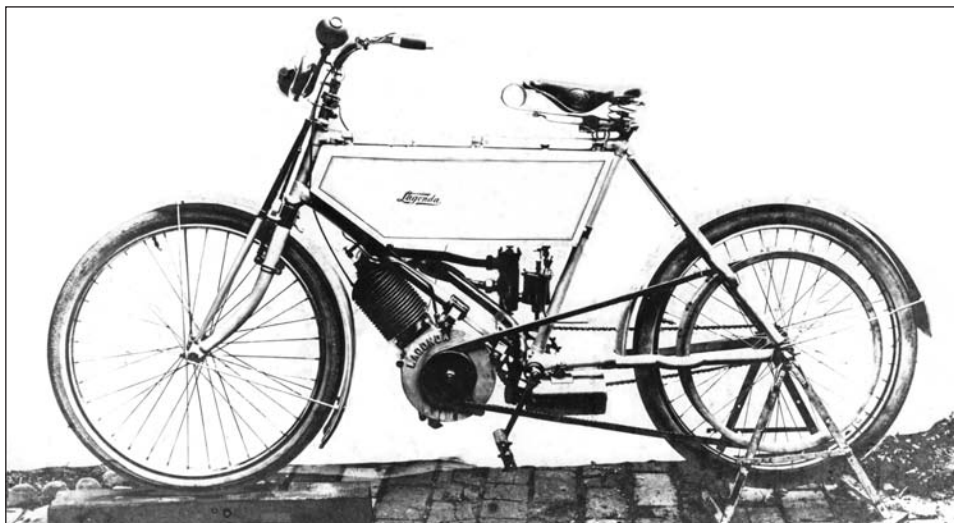
Second Hand Spares:

The Club invested £25,000 in acquiring a large stock of spares from Maurice Leo in 2008 and has subsequently bought other (smaller) lots of spares, as opportunities have arisen. This has added usefully to the Club's service to members, and in 2010/2011 the sales of second-hand spares amounted to nearly 20% of total spares turnover.

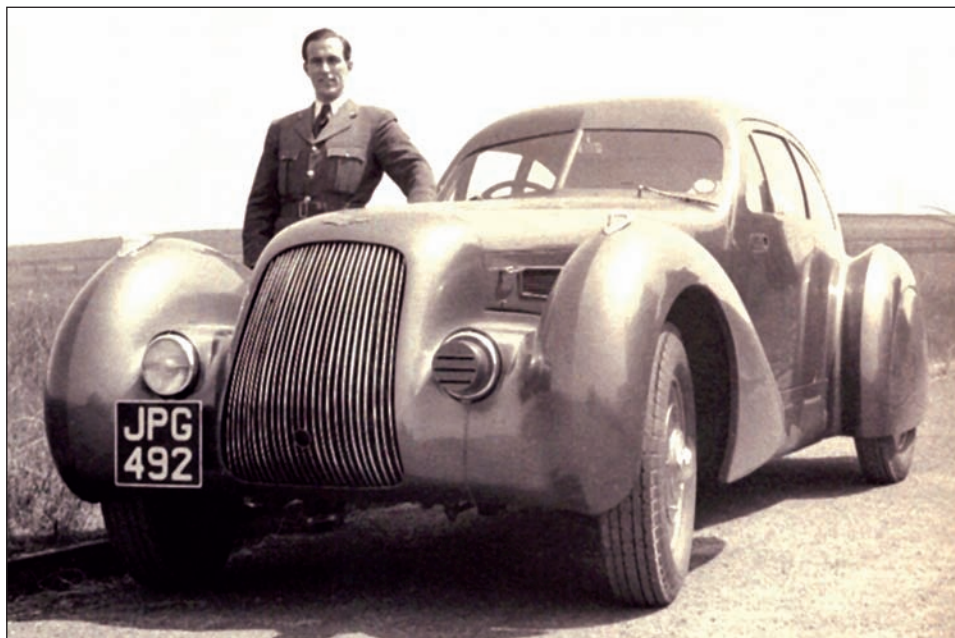
We plan to continue with this process, and would encourage members to offer un-needed spares to the Club, which is willing to buy 'complete lots' (i.e. not cherry-picking). Whilst we all tend to accumulate 'just in case' spares, (which usually remain unused), it would really be much better if these were on the Club's shelves and available to all members.

Summary:

The supply of spares is a key element of the service that the Club provides for its members and the Board believes that the policies set out above will help to secure substantial improvements in this service. However, we recognise that we have a long way to go and that it will take years not months to reach our destination.



A rare picture of the Lagonda Motorcyle.



Where the story opposite begins, Flying Officer Hornby with his V12.



Group Captain Mason, Station Commander, RAF Benson receives the Mosquito exhaust stubs from Colin Bugler.

The Story Of Three V12's

Colin Bugler mixes his hobby with his 'day job'

AMONG THE MORE interesting jobs that come my way is the identification of Lagondas. We frequently receive letters, emails or telephone calls from people and, very often, it goes something like "My father had a Lagonda in the 1950's and we wonder whether it still exists – it was black." Sometimes they send through photographs if we are lucky and we then tell them that either the car has long since disappeared or that it still exists (not always in the old shape) and we put them in touch with the current owners. The old photographs are recorded in the database with grateful thanks.

About 18 months ago I had a phone call from Mick Prendergast, the Curator of the Museum at RAF Benson, which is an airfield about half way between Oxford and Reading. Mick had a photograph of a car which was on the base during World War II and he thought it was a Lagonda. He quoted the registration number JPG 492 and I was able to tell him that this is a very well known car being a V12 streamlined saloon with coachwork by Lancefield. He emailed his photograph that showed the car with Flying Officer Hornby, the Station Intelligence Officer standing by it. Whether this Hornby was anything to do with the train model company is not known. Older members may remember a fascinating series of articles in our Club Magazine written by Brian Morgan, the talented engineer who did a 'last nut and bolt' restoration of this car. Brian was a co-author of books about the restoration and maintenance of vintage cars and I followed his advice back in the 1970's when I was restoring my LG45. JPG 492 is now in the Louwmann Collection in the Dutch Motor Museum where it is in company with BPK 202, the 1935 Le

Mans winner and HPL 448, the V12, which was third at Le Mans in 1939.

Whilst talking to Mick Prendergast I mentioned that I had two exhaust pipes mounted on a wooden base from a Mosquito aircraft, which crashed into a mountain in North Wales in 1944. This Mosquito had left RAF Benson on a training flight and the navigator and Polish pilot were both killed. Back in the 1980's I was given these exhaust stubs by customers who knew of my interest in old planes and cars. They said they had found them in a junk shop in Wales.

Mick knew all about this plane and was able to point me in the direction of a website (look at various websites re Mosquito LR412) which had details of the crash site and photographs of one of the V12 Merlin engines which had been recovered by a local farmer and mounted on a concrete plinth on his farm. The other engine had been removed from the crash site (illegally) in the mid 1980's and I suspect this is where my two stubs came from. Mick said that if ever I wanted to part with these stubs he would love to have them in the Museum and it was agreed that I would take them over to RAF Benson at some time. Months went by and, eventually, Mick invited me to visit the airbase at a time when there was to be a special commemoration of re-dedication of the Gate Guardian Spitfire. During World War II, Benson was the home of a Photographic Reconnaissance Unit flying Spitfires and Mosquitoes. The Gate Guardian had recently been renovated and repainted in the colours and markings of a PRU Spitfire which left Benson in September 1944 but was shot down over Bremen and the pilot died when his parachute failed to open. For many years his grave was unidentified due to confusion over

the spelling of his name but, eventually, it was correctly located and his daughter was the Guest of Honour at the Ceremony.

I took my son-in-law, Neil Jones, with me in the LG45 and, as he was a Sea King Helicopter pilot in the Fleet Air Arm before moving on to Sea Harriers, he was quickly involved in talking shop with the RAF pilots as Benson is now a helicopter base.

We had hardly arrived before one of the other guests came over to us and, to my surprise, this was our member, Alastair Gunn from Edinburgh. I had spoken to Alastair earlier in the year and knew he had a connection with RAF Benson as his uncle was a PRU pilot at this airfield. His uncle (also Alastair Gunn) had been shot down over Norway and ended up in Stalag Luft III where he was part of the Great Escape (immortalised in the film of that name) and was one of the 50 prisoners who were executed by the Gestapo. Alastair was one of the Guests of Honour and Neil and I spent a very enjoyable lunch with him talking mainly about Lagondas.

The re-dedication ceremony was a very impressive event with an RAF Band, Guards of Honour with Squadron Colours and the whole day was an extremely well organised and enjoyable occasion.

Postscript

Some time after my customers gave me the Mosquito exhausts they were arrested by the Police and spent time in prison. A zealous Detective Sergeant came to ask questions about their Bank account and, in the course of the discussion, asked me if these customers had given me any gifts - no doubt he was hoping to implicate a Bank Manager in their nefarious deeds. When I told him that all I had received were the two exhaust stubs from a crashed aircraft, he very quickly lost interest.

And a bit from your Editor:

In 1964 I served at RAF Stafford as Adjutant of No 5131 Bomb Disposal Squadron and Officer in Charge of the station's Mountain Rescue Team. The Bomb Disposal Squadron learned that a man walking over the Welsh mountains had found a bomb in the wreckage of an aircraft crash, giving us a very accurate map reference. I checked the Mountain Rescue Team's 'wreck maps', the 'bomb' was where an unarmed Mosquito had crashed in 1944, killing its Polish pilot and the navigator.

I took a few members of the Mountain Rescue Team to guide two Bomb Disposal specialists to the site. The walker had actually found an oxygen cylinder, and had marked the spot for us. As my bomb disposal colleagues were not experienced hill walkers, I carried the plastic explosive and they decided on a one-pound charge, "to save me carrying it all back again". About an ounce would have done the job...

It was packed around the cylinder, a large boulder to shelter behind was selected and a detonator with a two minute delay activated. As we reached the boulder, a huge flock of sheep trotted over the hill and began to crop the grass.

They ignored our shouts and the rocks we threw at them; then came the bang, with sheep running in every direction, being rapidly overtaken by flying parts from those too close to the charge. We never discovered how many were killed, but there were a lot of prime lamb joints lying around the area.

We reported the incident to the police, who contacted the farmer and advised him how to claim against the Air Ministry.

There were not many Mosquito wrecks in that part of Wales and this one had a Polish pilot. The date was right, as was the area of the crash, so I am fairly confident that it was the one in Colin's story.

K.P.P.



Hamish Gunn (left) father of our member Alastair Gunn, with Alastair Gunn senior. The 2 litre Continental is still owned by 'young' Alastair.



Neil Jones poses by the Spitfire at the gate of RAF Benson.

Lagonda In The Monte

Arnold Davey finds an interesting article from the fifties

IN JANUARY 1950, Lagonda Car Club member W. T. Franklin entered his Lagonda in the Monte Carlo Rally, then one of the really important events in the motor sporting year. I have not been able to establish which car this was beyond knowing that it was a 1939 LG6 saloon. Lagonda Car Club membership lists are irritatingly vague and never give registration or chassis numbers. He wrote the rally up for the 'Lagonda Record' of March 1950 and it deserves to be reprinted. I have, in places, repunctuated and corrected spelling, but the text is as published. There are explanatory footnotes, listed at the end.

It was in November 1949 that my co-driver Denys Burgess and I decided to enter for the 1950 - our first - Monte Carlo Rally. Unfortunately the whole project was beset by disappointments and setbacks from the start. As all discerning motorists know, the 1939 Lagonda is, without exception, the most beautiful car on the road today and I decided that in the Concours D'Elegance I would have the car 'done up'. Denys recommended a firm, Seary and Macready, who promised to make this the "car of the show" and the car was due out from the coachbuilders on 16th January. Then came disappointment number one. It was not to be a Concours D'Elegance but a Concours de Confort and according to our friend Mr Collins¹ they 'went for' gadgets. For myself, I like a car to be a car and to be superlatively comfortable for driving at all speeds and over long distances. This the Lagonda certainly is, I personally do not go for cars where you pull one flap and out pops a wash-basin and another and it turns into a set of jugs, etc.

However, now for disappointment number two. Came the 16th January and no sign of the car being ready. Mr Seary

was very apologetic and when was the latest we could have the car? I said Wednesday the 18th. Came the 18th and the car still not ready but we find that in fitting the Galloway car heater and demister they had connected through the ignition, so that you could not switch off and have the heater running - no fear of that - now you couldn't switch off at all. This meant a visit to Feltham and calling in the assistance of Mr Collins.

Eventually we finally got the car on Friday 20th at 11.30 am, the day we intended departing for lands up north. Finally at about 1:30 pm we were ready, although unfortunately we had no time for last-minute adjustments such as checking brakes - which was to have such disastrous consequences later - and practising the acceleration and braking test. We then, with our wives, who were to fly to Monte Carlo to meet us, repaired to that noted road-house, the Spider's Web² where we had a last meal of smoked salmon, steak and chips, etc. and so off northwards. The car at this moment was looking super and I had the sidelights fixed into the rear wings - spats fitted to the rear wings - new fog lamp and an imposing array of badges set up on the new valance to the front bumper. Inside, the car had been completely renewed.

We took it easy going north and the journey was quite uneventful and we arrived at the control at Glasgow at 1 pm on Saturday. Whilst being checked we discovered that a stone had smashed the glass of one of our headlamps. We found the Lucas Service Depot was open, especially for the Rally, and they were extremely helpful and supplied and fitted a new glass and focussed the lamp.

Eventually came Sunday, 4.48 pm and we were off; the great adventure had begun. We had prefaced a plan of

campaign – go like hell to the next control – and we reckoned that on each leg we would have from 1 to 2½ hours to spare when we could rest. We decided to stop about a quarter of a mile from the control point and go to sleep, having an alarm clock with us to wake up a quarter of an hour before our final time for clocking in.

The journey to Doncaster was uneventful, except for a little frost, which made the going uncomfortable in places, but the promised fog did not materialise.

Arriving at Doncaster, we found all restaurants closed but found a ‘dive’ where we obtained egg on chips and undrinkable tea. We then came to the racecourse and pulled up to the side for sleep, finding we had an hour to spare. Our alarm duly woke us on time and we arrived at the control with half an hour to spare. There we found that food was laid on, so we both had eggs and bacon and plenty of the latter, and then clocked out on the next leg. On the way it was nice to find at most towns that there was an RAC or AA scout on duty to show us the way. Being Londoners and knowing our way around we decided to go through London our own way and call in home for some light refreshment, much to the concern of the AA scout on duty at Jack Olding’s corner³ when we turned – to him – the wrong way.

After satisfying the inner man we returned through London and at Lewisham put two fellow competitors on the right road. When we turned on to the Sidcup Bypass we found a garage at a roundabout a blaze of lights and we were stopped by a man in a white coat who informed us that hot tea and coffee was available at the garage. Having recently imbibed we declined with thanks and he then pressed upon us a sandwich box with the compliments of the garage – containing sandwiches, cake and 20 Players – which gesture of goodwill was much appreciated. After Maidstone we ran into fog for about half an hour and we finished with quite a string of cars

behind us. We had a final check at a garage at Folkestone where we had another cup of tea and then to the Folkestone control. Customs were very good, not bothering us at all, and so aboard. Here I made straight for a steward and arranged to borrow two bunks for the trip and before we cast off Denys and I were sound asleep – not to awake until the steward called “Boulogne alongside”.

Disembarking was uneventful but on getting the car on terra firma we found that we had a puncture. Ah! I exclaimed, now to use Mr Collins’s hub spanner – you can imagine what I called him when I found it didn’t fit. In spite of this we changed the wheel in record time and after checking with control that it was in order, took the wheel, with the assistance of a friendly reporter, to a garage for repair. Just our luck – garages were closed from 12 to 2.30. However, we eventually found a mechanic in a local bar who promised to have it ready by 2.15, which suited us as our time for leaving was approximately 2 o’clock.

The journey then across France to Luxembourg was uneventful except I would like to record our thanks to all the gendarmes who at all turns were on duty to point out the way. At Luxembourg we parked our car in the square and went to the hotel to clock in and obtain refreshment. Here we had our first shave of the rally and found ourselves quite refreshed after. After “une bon consommation” – half a cup of lukewarm tea – we collected our food parcel and proceeded on our way to the next stop at Liège. We made Liège with about 1 hour to spare and stopped in the Quai Nativa for rest. We allowed ourselves a quarter of an hour to reach the control but found that this was not really sufficient and we had a few anxious moments when we found that the control was so far away. However, we arrived with about three minutes to spare. After more refreshments we set off for Venlo via Maastricht. About a quarter of a mile after leaving the Liège control a

white car overtook us and pulled up in front – the door opened and a man waved us on. This Good Samaritan led us all the way to Venlo, but drove off before we could offer our thanks.

And so through the night and into the dawn through Nijmegen and Arnhem and on to Amsterdam. Here we had plenty of time to spare so we pulled on to a car park, set our alarm and went to sleep. We were suddenly awakened by banging on our window and found an excited Dutchman who informed us that “Der control ist opp there”. After thanking him politely, but cursing under our breath for being awakened, we found that we had forty minutes to spare and as it did not seem worthwhile going to sleep again, we proceeded ‘opp there’ to the control. The weather had turned bitterly cold and we found that to make sure we got the full benefit of the wintry conditions the control was at the local ice stadium. We wandered in the wrong entrance and I remarked to Denys that although the canals, etc. were frozen they liked ice so much that they had to make more in large lumps.

We went on to The Hague and passed the passage control and then on towards Rotterdam. After leaving The Hague we were feeling rather cold and Denys suggested stopping for a drink of something warm, so we pulled to the side of the road and turned round to get our Thermos. The moment we stopped, from the side of the road came a breakdown van which came past us and then backed in front of us. The driver jumped down, lowered his crane and before we knew what was happening he had us hitched on. I opened my door and asked him what he was doing – he replied “Breakdown, breakdown, I take you to garage”. I explained that we were quite safe and sound but only cold and thirsty and full of smiles he unhooked us and wishing us bon voyage he drove away. This was evidently an omen of what was to come for we had not travelled for more than about ten minutes when we had our first major

misfortune and got mixed up with two other cars. This, however, had its humorous side, for we went into the back of the car in front of us and a car coming from the opposite direction also hit the car in front of us and then came on into the side of our car. Luckily, nobody was hurt, but we all jumped out of our cars, evidently with the intention of telling each other what we thought of them – how I was going to manage with two Dutchmen I did not know as neither Denys nor myself speak Dutch. The funny thing was that although the car in front of me had his back stove in by me and its side smashed by the other car, the driver saw the police arriving, turned round like a startled cat, ran to his car and drove off as fast as he could.

We were very lucky in that a fellow competitor who owned a garage two miles up the road was just passing and he sent men from his garage to help us. After pulling out our wings so that we could move we went on to the garage where they put six men on the job and in 1½ hours they beat our wings and running board roughly into shape, fitted new foglamps and gave the damaged parts a coat of cellulose. In the meantime, two Rotterdam policemen were waiting on a motorbike and sidecar and as soon as we were ready they set their siren going and escorted us through Rotterdam going all out. We now had not a moment to spare, having 110 miles to cover in 100 minutes. Luckily, we had the car for the job and in a few moments were clocking the hundred. We eventually arrived at the control at Brussels with five minutes to spare.

One would have thought that we had learned our lesson, but no, Denys decided that all the other cars were looking much cleaner than ours and that we should have ours washed and in any case we were feeling peckish and thought that we might as well have a good meal. We found a garage and left the car to be washed and then a good restaurant where we had a pork chop, pineapple and ice cream, but of course

took longer than we had anticipated and found ourselves with only 2½ hours to make the next control, Reims. Once more we put our foot down and made Reims with about half an hour to spare.

Here we were treated very well to sandwiches and champagne and then left on the lap to Paris. During this lap I had a sleep and woke up to find myself on the outskirts of Paris and following a gendarme on a motorbike.

At Paris we found that news of our accident had preceded us and we were collared by reporters for fuller details.

We were escorted out of Paris by a gendarme and were now quite happy as I am well acquainted with the road south to Nice. I was very pleased that the control at Nevers was at the Hotel de France as I had stayed here once or twice before and knowing the proprietors I knew that here I would have a long-awaited bath and get refreshed.

We eventually arrived at Nevers and I immediately arranged to have a room and bath for a short while. Unfortunately, however, we were not both ready to leave on time, so I went down to move the car. Unfortunately, for the first time on the rally, the official came to m.....⁴ to the car to see us off. I therefore had to speak to an imaginary Denys in the back of the car, but this satisfied the official, who called a bon voyage to my 'sleeping' co-driver and I moved the car round the square and then back to the hotel to pick up Denys.

After all we were about 15 minutes late leaving Nevers and then after about 15 minutes found it necessary to fit our chains. Here we met our trouble which was to rob us of any chance of a prize. It took us 45 minutes to get the first chain on, having got the thing twisted and not being able to see how to straighten it. Actually when we found the cause of the trouble it took only about two minutes to fit another two for the other chains.

The snow was now falling very fast and we had left what was to prove an impossible task to get to Lyons on time. Although we drove like hell and I am

sure if it had been daylight I would not have driven so fast on such treacherous roads, we arrived at Lyons very disappointed at being 30 minutes late.

We did not realise here that we were booked out at the same time that we were booked in and we were just getting down to having tea and coffee when Denys exclaimed "Crikey, Bill, we are already booked out". Knowing the state of the roads we left our drinks and ran out and got started on our way. As I was feeling tired Denys took over again and unfortunately at about Sisterton we approached a corner too quickly and went into a four wheel skid making a lot for nothing. Luckily there was a stone wall between us and space although I thought that we and the wall were going over. However, the wall stood firm and just folded in our wings again. We jumped out and just then passed a Hillman with three occupants grinning all over their faces, but their humour was short-lived – we pulled out our wings and started on our way but about a quarter-mile further on we stopped. The merry Hillman crew were no longer happy – they had gone over the side – luckily there was no big drop there and they had just gone over on their side in a field. We promised to send help from the next village but about a half mile further on we came across a tractor pulling a Javelin out of a ditch, so we asked these people to attend to the Hillman when they had finished with the Javelin.

And so on to the next control at Digne where we were again about a half hour late. Knowing that we were already out of the race after the slide on the corner, we decided to take no unnecessary chances on the slippery roads with visibility at about 100 yards owing to the snow. Undoubtedly the journey from Nevers to Grasse, 385 miles, snowing and slippery the whole time, was the worst I have ever undertaken. By the time we reached Grasse we were vowing that we would never again come on one of these
***** rallies !

After passing the control at Grasse snow was non-existent and it was amazing to see how it disappeared when we crossed the last of the mountains. On the last lap from Grasse to Monte Carlo , when we were about ten miles from Grasse we decided to practise the acceleration and braking tests which we had had no time to do before we set off.

I had to guess the distance of 150 metres but unfortunately I made a very bad guess and must have measured only about 100 metres for when we came to do the test at the end, all my calculations were wrong and after braking I had to accelerate again to cross the line, so we came nowhere in this test. We were very disappointed that we could not enter for the regularity speed test, but in spite of all our disappointments and setbacks we had a thoroughly enjoyable time and by the time Thursday arrived we had had a good night's sleep and we were talking about how much better we will be in next year's rally now that we know some of the snags⁵.

A.D.'s Footnotes

1. Collins was Service Manager at Aston Martin Lagonda, Feltham
2. The Spider's Web roadhouse was at Bushey on the Watford Bypass. It was still there, but derelict, in the 1960s.
3. Olding's Corner, north of Hatfield, was where the Barnet Bypass rejoined the Great North Road. Franklin lived at Enfield, so would have turned left instead of the rally route straight on. Jack Olding was a director of Lagonda Distributors (London) but by 1950 was importing Caterpillar tractors. The site now lies under the A1(M).
4. The photocopy I have used has about a centimetre missing from the right hand margin. Generally you can guess what is missing, but not in this instance.
5. They entered again in 1951, but didn't write up their experiences.



This is a V12, not an LG6, but the car described above would have looked just as attractive!

Photo by Peter Lloyd.

Tracing the Early Lagondas

Ken Painter is on the hunt

THE 2009 REGISTER of members listed just five Lagonda light cars, two 12/24s, two 11-9s, one 11-1 and two tricars. The new Register will show that the situation has improved, with five 12/24s, four 11-9s, still just the one 11-1 and two tricars. This leaves us with the nagging thought: do our members have others that we haven't heard of?

In my new rôle as Model Champion for the Tricars, the 11-1, 11-9 and 12/24 models I am attempting to discover just how many of these charming light cars still exist. So far, the figure is possibly twelve 12/24s, twelve 11-9s, four or five 11-1s and three tricars. Most are in Britain, one is in Belgium, one is thought to be in Norway, one in America, one in Hungary and there are three in New Zealand.

Because so few of the surviving cars are owned by Club members we have never attempted to discover what the demand for spares might be. In the early days of the Club, members regularly reported finding parts under hedges or in ancient breakers' yards. The hedges have been cleared long ago and the ancient breakers' yards are just a memory. The few tiny hoards of used parts are dwindling and many current owners confess that many of the parts they still hold are suitable only as worn-out examples of what they might really need.

If something is not done, we could reach a crisis very soon and, without a more organised approach to the manufacture of parts, owners may be forced to have new parts made as very expensive "one-offs", or the cars will simply become static museum pieces. I have sent out an informal survey to all known owners of the light cars, whether Lagonda Club members or not (but not

the two tricar owners at this early stage), asking them what they have; what they think they might need; what, if any, parts they would be happy to sell on to other owners in desperate need; whether they would be prepared to loan parts to the Club so that proper engineering drawings and technical specifications can be drawn up; if they have had parts made and are happy to recommend the relevant company and, not least, if they have technical knowledge and skills they are prepared to share with fellow owners.

It will be some time before all the responses are back and a clearer picture of the current availability of parts and the need for new ones established and this is where other members might be able to help. We know that many of you have owned Lagonda light cars in the past. It would be helpful if you could contact me if you still have a light car not recorded in our files; or have, or know of sources of spare parts. Could you assist in any way with technical or historical information, especially in the form of notes you made during your ownership? Do you still have early publications which we might be able to copy for the benefit of the present and future generations of owners? Even memories of the triumphs and disasters of owning one of the models could help recruits new to the joys of a Lagonda Light Car.

Since these early cars are inherently slower than the later Lagondas, they are generally not considered ideal for our events and, with the notable and heroic exception of the exploits of Jeremy Oates in "The Little Brown Car", we have rarely seen them in the last decade or so, even as static exhibits at events such as the

AGM. It doesn't have to be like this. Jeremy took his car to Le Mans, including taking the car around the track and he took part in a tour in Ireland. Several years ago, Colin Mallett took Connie on a French Rally and, on another occasion, wrote of the joys of driving up Porlock Hill. Porlock is a very long way from Suffolk, so the two of them have shown that it is possible to attend and to enjoy our touring-style events, at least in a 12/24. Never forget that Freda Roberts regularly entered her 11-9 in the VSCC Light Car Races, now discontinued. Does anyone know where her car, XN 4927 is now?

I am all too aware of the problems in getting an early car to an event, often a hundred or more miles from home. I still haven't managed to work out a sensible route from Suffolk to Aldermaston that doesn't involve using the motorways, ideally limits the use of major roads and avoids long steep hills, so I borrow a trailer from a friend and Connie can then enjoy the delights of the M25 and the M4 at a speed that doesn't bother the rest of the traffic. It has been suggested to me that, if I drive the car, an average speed of 20mph or less is likely to be the best

that can be achieved, so even a trip to Silverstone would involve around twelve hours of driving in total. The touring events pose less of a problem if one takes the car to and from the event on a trailer and, if all goes well, I should be able to take part in one or more in 2012.

Because the Club has not really been able to cater for the interests and needs of the light car-ists, few have ever joined us and fewer stayed with us. They find that the events organised by the Light Car and Edwardian Section of the VSCC far more appropriate. There, the speeds set for the cars are low and the routes are chosen to challenge the cars and drivers but avoid roads where large numbers of modern cars are likely to be met.

Would it be practical to try to include a slower and less challenging route for these light cars when our touring events are planned? What do event organisers and light car owners think of this idea? With the UK ownership spread from Scotland, to Sussex, Yorkshire to East Anglia, and Hertfordshire to Herefordshire this might not initially attract more than one or two brave entrants, but should we have a go?



Warren King in his Rapier Special. Warren now assists in proof-reading the magazine.

Lagonda Memories

Janette Knight tells of her time in the Drawing Office

I WAS WORKING as a draftsman in the Production Drawing Office at Lagonda Motors from the end of the war until McLaren's took over the factory and the Lagonda Car was incorporated with Aston Martin's and removed from the site.

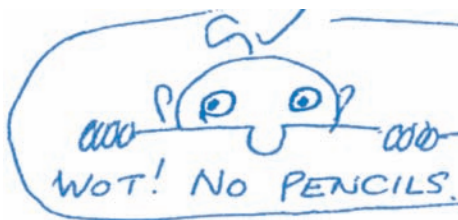
The drawing offices were in Ironbarks House, which was on the other side of Thorpe Road from the works and on Chertsey Lane. The design team for the new car were in the drawing office upstairs. Frank Feely, who was the bodywork draftsman, needed a whole wall to draw the panels for the car on his scale drawings. The production drawing office where I worked, was a prefabricated building on the end of the house, which with all the wire netting around the windows reminded us of a concentration camp, so we called it "Stalagonda".

The chief draftsman was 'Spud' Ayto, a very quiet kindly man, always smoking a pipe. The chief checker was Bob Martin. Then the other draftsmen - 'Dusty' Coleman (still living in Egham), Eric Macey (still living in Staines) Ralph Smith, Brian Clayton, Jack Hughes, Frank Bush, Maurice 'Seeboots' Seibert, Frank Hasty, 'Matt' Matthews Tassie, Len Dorman and Peter The draftswomen were Irene Broth and me. The tracers were Mrs Merryfield, Mrs Lennox, Olive, Shirley and Margaret Cadle,

Many of the men had just returned from the war, some invalided out. They would relate their wartime experiences, such as Frank Bush landing an aircraft ten feet above ground, Len Dorman (RAF

navigator), who targeted one of our own ships.

It was a very happy drawing office and there was much good-humoured teasing. It was the era of Chad and one could find one of these on the top of one's drawing Board, plus some object missing. The men testing the prototype cars and the racing drivers would come into the drawing office, so we would have first-hand information on what was happening in the experimental department and on the race track!



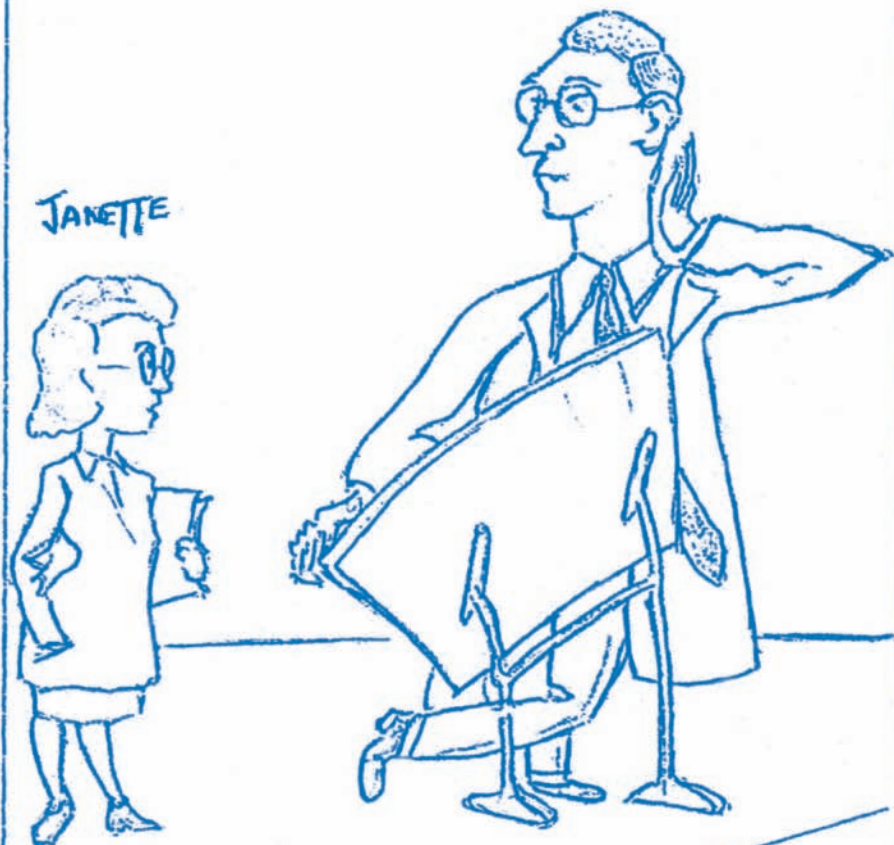
Most of us went to evening classes to improve our engineering knowledge, either at Twickenham or Kingston Tech. In those days Lagonda seemed to have a vast number of good-looking young apprentices, all working hard to take their exams.

There was also a Bryce Berger Drawing Office in Ironbanks. Jack Falgate was chief draftsman. There was also a young man called Fred Johns who, according to Nick Pollard of SAFG was still working in the factory D.O. when the works closed in the '80s and so he had been there for over 40 years.

I won a competition once for the design of a wheel hub for the new car. I can remember the design quite well, but what became of it I do not know.

RALPH SMITH.

JANETTE



WHAT / NOT ASLEEP YET?

September 1946

Behind Ironbarks House, near the railway, was the works canteen. In the war they had Workers' Playtime broadcast with Tommy Handley a few times (he lived at Thorpe). Every Saturday were Lagonda dances with a real band. 1/6d or 2/- a ticket. It was a great place for romance. Many a girl met her future husband there. That is the way everyone met in those days - at dances.

In the drawing office was a talented artist called Maurice Seibert ('Seeboots', as he had been in the Fleet Air Arm). He often caricatured members of the drawing office, such as this pictured of Ralph Smith, who had a problem, as he was always falling asleep. Unfortunately Seeboots was tragically killed outside the factory not many years later, when our office had split up.

1947 Floods

We were working in Ironbarks House in the 1947 Spring floods. I recollect having to walk from the bridge to the office over duckboards. Some people, such as Ralph Smith, who lived at Shepperton, didn't get into work at all until the floods had subsided

The Bailey Bridge

During the war a Bailey bridge was built next to the old bridge (upstream). When we left the factory at dinnertime or end of day, we all used to steam across the wooden bridge, where we didn't have to compete with traffic.

It was a very happy time working in the Lagonda Drawing Office and it was sad when it all came to an end and the factory changed hands, first to McLaren and then to Petters.



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or

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The Rebirth Of MJ 7070

James Greenwood rescues a derelict Lagonda

MJ 7070 WAS originally a 1935 Freestone & Webb bodied M45, but had since fallen on hard times. The car was last taxed in 1960 when the engine exploded with big end seizure wrecking the crankcase and terminating its active life. It then resided in an orchard near Passingford Bridge, Essex where it suffered from vandalism and fire. The car was initially rescued by someone in Hornchurch and in 1964 my father, David Greenwood, purchased its remains. The car was then transported to Richard Robart's farm, Bicknacre, Essex to assess the damage where it was parked alongside an LG45 chassis, which sported a complete engine in unknown condition. The only usable part of the M45 engine was a fully gas flowed cylinder head; this was duly swapped for the said engine. On cleaning this engine, the words Davis Motors were discovered painted on it.

The chassis then made its way to the bottom of the garden of my father's first house - the engine was fully rebuilt, together with the back axle, the chassis stripped, brakes reconditioned, new wheels purchased, with all painted parts becoming a deep royal blue – the spare bedroom becoming the improvised paint shop. A body was designed based on the 1934 TT / Le Mans cars but slightly stretched to suit the standard M45 chassis, and there the project stalled.

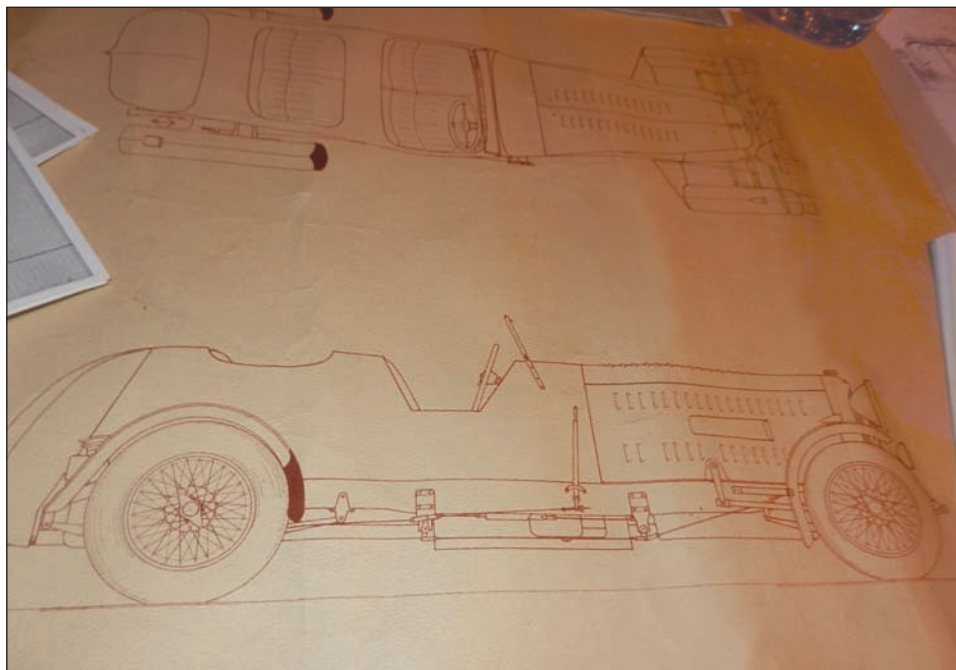
A family, lifestyle change, work commitments and several house moves ensued up until the 1980s, when the car acquired a Bentley Sedan De Ville body and the rolling chassis was repainted black. Unfortunately the rear wheels could never be made to sit centrally within the rear arches and the

body itself didn't sit nicely on the chassis – so that was sold on.

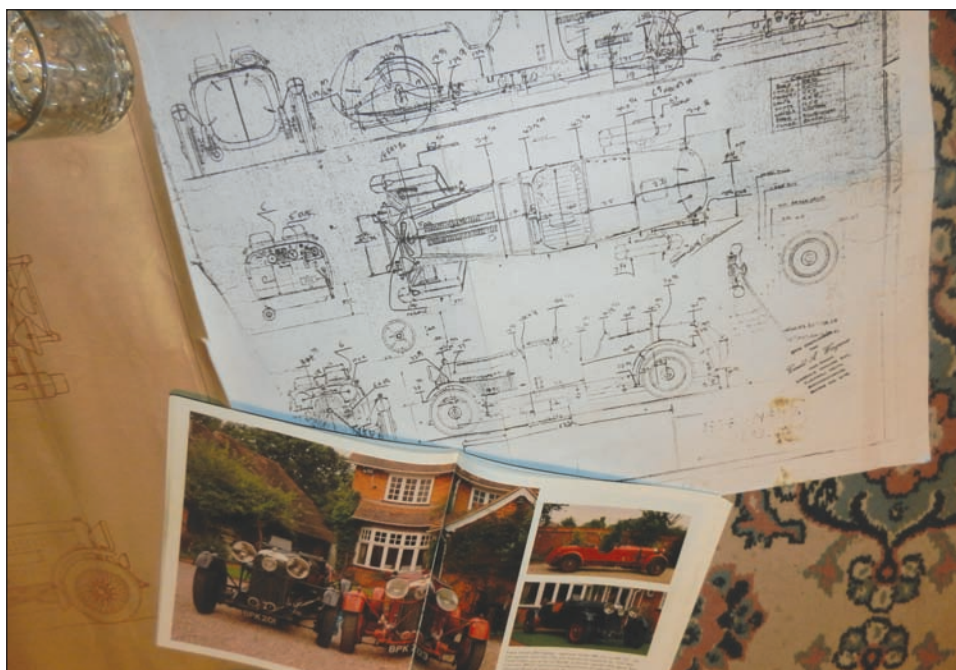
The 1990s saw a lot of Rapier use and trips abroad, so the M45 was put up for sale, but only attracted a few buyers, none serious though. 2000 to 2010, the chassis sat in the extension, and suddenly the decision was made to get the old girl going, with a nod to the Le Mans (LM) replica touring body penned 50 years ago. I cannot remember the catalyst for this decision, but I have a feeling that whilst clearing out one of the barns I found the drawing and thought it looked nice.

During the planning of the build, my father was immersed in all things Jaguar, and whilst having his SS 100 retrimmed, a network of contacts put us in touch with Roger Wing (ash frame support for LM replicas), and Ian Pintney (LM replica bodywork specialist). Phone calls and visits ensued, with the chassis finally breaking cover and trailer strapped in March 2010.

During this time I decided to do some research on the original LM / TT cars, BPK 201, 202, and 203. The first problem was one of reference as all the cars are outside the UK – I had found some of my own schoolboy photos of BPK 201 and 203, when owned by Robbie Hewitt, but nothing worthy of accurate replication. I had also tried, but to no avail, contacting the present owners (and replica owners) in the club, but that too was pretty fruitless – only viewing one example. We therefore embarked on the build using past and present photos, the 1/43rd model plans of a Gerald Wingrove custom model of BPK 202, and Ian Pintney's photos and sketches of BPK 201.



The scale drawings that inspired James and his father.





The chassis prepared to take the new body.



The long task begins.

The car would not be an out and out LM replica as our chassis was technically incorrect as it was 6" too long (M45 rather than M45R) and sported the wrong brakes (standard Lagonda brakes plus servo as opposed to Girling), and Hartford friction shocks (not Luvax). The car would also be coming from 2 different angles - I was all for it being as close to the LM cars as possible, my father wanted a continental tourer that resembled the LM cars. The proposed spec therefore needed to include:

- ❖ Fold flat windscreen, side screens, tonneaus and aero screens
- ❖ Fully disappearing hood
- ❖ Ability to seat 4 fully grown adults in relative comfort
- ❖ Large petrol tank and reserve allowing 300+ miles between fill ups
- ❖ Accessible full size boot taking twin cases
- ❖ Adjustable front seats
- ❖ Adequate front lights to allow night driving
- ❖ Passenger door (for the ladies)

The car was despatched to have its ash bulkhead and sole plates fitted. As we were not going to shorten the chassis by 6" the body would be longer. Fatal assumption number one, we would gain the 6" in the cockpit area giving the extra legroom required for adults to sit in the back – measuring showed 4½" in the bonnet and 1½" only in the body! The extra chassis length did however allow the curve from radiator to tail (when viewed from above) to be a lot smoother, thus removing the bonnet to scuttle kink – we also added several inches to the bulkhead width to allow elbows more movement when side screens were in place.

Six triangulated body supports were fabricated and topped with rubber pads to allow the frame to sit on the chassis. With new ash bulkhead and sole plates attached, the car travelled back to North Oxfordshire to get it prepared for the new aluminium body, with a scheduled start date of August. As the new body would be considerably lighter than its

original one, we placed bricks on the chassis to determine all up weight and found the springs were riding far too high at the rear. These were taken apart and various leaves added and taken away, profiles changed until an approximation of what we wanted was achieved. The radiator was put back into position, its central stay and bulkhead mount found, engine removed and carb positions noted.

As we wanted a usable boot, the fuel tanks would be made to reside underneath the rear seats and within the chassis itself with the filler pipes running down each side of the body internally. Also, the spare wheel would sit further within the boot lid requiring a custom made support, rather than replicating the LM cars' bracket. With many "little" jobs to complete, we were happy to let the body build start date slip through to January 2011.

To facilitate the above touring spec, the body would be subtly different from those Ian had done before. The first decision was that of overall shape. Stage one saw the radiator lowered on its mounts and angled backwards to allow ½ inch drop on the bonnet to give it that flat look (but not the broken back illusion). The scuttle was to curve slightly to be more pleasing on the eye. Both front and rear passenger cockpits were stretched for comfort and the side cut-outs were raised one inch and strengthened for side screen fitment later on. A box space was formed behind the rear passenger seats to take the fully disappearing hood. Incidentally, an old Morgan 4/4 frame was discovered in that same barn and the addition of 1 extra hoop gave it a perfect fit allowing an adult to sit comfortably in the back with the hood raised. Entry and exit would probably still require a degree of contortionism. As the length of chassis gave little extra centre section space, the fuel flap was radically shortened down to 8", with internal hinges and latches for security and a recessed catch tray to hold the twin fillers.



The windscreen is now lined up, the stay to the rear of the cockpit is temporary!



Still a long way to go, but the hood frame is in place.

The passenger door and bonnet bulge were modelled as closely as possible as those sported by BPK 201, as were the windscreen base and aero screens. At this stage foot well vents were cut into the bodywork. The car was still wearing its 18" wheels in grey enamel – correct 19" wires would replace these, shod with Dunlop racing tyres, one of which was despatched to Ian to allow the construction of the boot lid and fin, which would envelop the spare. At this stage, the overhang behind the rear axle was flattened to give greater ground clearance and under floor aerodynamics.

The bonnet louvre pattern and shape also needed to be decided. As all three surviving cars seem to wear different arrangements, a best fit guess was employed with both top and side louvres pressed into the bonnet, and 2 spaces left for the 2 securing straps. Black staples were to hold the straps in place. A large torpedo bulge was fixed in the driver's side to allow plenty of circulation around the carb trumpets. All that was left of the car's original body was one door skin and the 2 bonnet side panels (original colour grey), which allowed the original catch mechanisms to be retained

and cleaned and mated to new repro handles mounted upside down as per the team cars.

Colour would also need to be decided – something authentic but different. The original team cars were all red, but the exact shade is probably not known. Replicas on the Internet have appeared in dark blue, BRG, various shades of red and all black. My personal thoughts were French blue / black hide or Fox and Nicholl Talbot green / black hide. My father wanted red as per the team cars but the thought of repainting everything a third time didn't thrill either of us so we settled on black with red wheels and interior (with a nod to BPK 201).

The car was finally ready to leave Windsor in October – trailered up and several rainstorms later it was ensconced back in Oxfordshire. Windscreen and wings have been mocked up, as well as the adjustable buckets. The main winter jobs will be engine and gearbox rebuilds and remounting to allow final ride heights and spring rates to be determined, before starting on fuel tanks and everything else. The 2012 AGM may be pushing it for completion but 2013 is a definite target date.



Another picture from Jonathan Oppenheimer. EPE at a sprint meeting, was it Elstree?

Ethanol in Petrol

A summary of presentations made at the 2011 FBHVC Conference

ETHANOL IN PETROL was discussed in some detail. Much alarmist material has appeared on the subject in various media, and while there are potential difficulties to be dealt with and overcome, the discussions at the AGM on October 15 were useful in answering delegates' questions, and in providing factual information. A summary of the two presentations from Matt Vincent and Steve McArragher, covering Corrosion, Compatibility and Combustion is given here, in order to provide a concise reference which should be of assistance to owners of historic vehicles served by the Federation.

Corrosion

Ethanol in petrol can degrade in storage if not adequately treated with a suitable corrosion inhibitor. If this should happen, stored fuel becomes acidic, and can attack materials such as zinc and zinc-based materials, brass, copper, and lead and tin-coated steel. Traditional materials used in the fuel systems of historic vehicles are thus at risk of degradation if no action is taken. An effective corrosion inhibitor specifically formulated to overcome the tendency towards acidity in storage is very effective at protecting fuel system materials. These products are known in the fuel additives industry, and a selection is now subject to a test programme which should ultimately allow the Federation to issue endorsements for products providing a proven level of protection. Use of a suitable protective additive product at the time of refuelling will thus provide a low cost and effective solution to the problem of potential corrosion of historic vehicle fuel systems.

Compatibility

Ethanol in combination with petrol can attack a range of traditionally used non-

metallic materials. Various types of rubber used for fuel pipes, seals and gaskets may prove to be incompatible with petrol containing ethanol, leading to leakage problems. The same is true for many resins used in fibreglass fuel tanks on motor cycles and in some tank sealant materials. Fibreglass tanks are very vulnerable to damage if the medium holding the fibres in place, the resin, is attacked. Also, there have been cases of consequential damage resulting from the dissolving of tank sealant materials which are incompatible with ethanol, allowing unwanted viscous or gelatinous deposits in carburettors for example. Unfortunately the only real solution to the problem of incompatibility of elastomers, plastics and rubbers with petrol containing ethanol is to replace the offending items with compatible materials. A list of these has already been published by the Federation, but in summary, use of Neoprene and Buna-N for hoses and gaskets, and Viton for seals should produce a satisfactory result. A key message is to ensure that compatible replacement items are bought, by asking about this aspect before purchase. Tank sealant materials compatible with petrol containing ethanol are available, and it would be a wise precaution to use this type of product when treating a petrol tank.

Combustion

A number of concerns have been raised about potential combustion problems in using petrol containing ethanol. In fact ethanol is potentially a good fuel for use in spark-ignition engines, with a flame speed slightly greater than that of most hydrocarbons used in petrol. Ethanol was widely used in racing in the inter-war years, for example at Brooklands Track. However, ethanol does have effects which should be recognised; addition of ethanol increases the vapour

pressure and volatility of petrol, which may exacerbate hot fuel handling issues (sometimes called 'vapour-lock' problems), for example. Ethanol has a high latent heat which cools the air-fuel mixture in the inlet manifold, and while this improves charge density and can increase power output in a fully warm engine, the same property can degrade cold weather driveability (i.e. cold start and warm-up characteristics). Ethanol also contains oxygen and will make the air-fuel ratio leaner. This last aspect has been assessed and linked with increased exhaust valve temperatures, although the effect is fairly modest, typically in the region of 20°C. However, the combined effects of some mixture leaning, coupled with increased vapour pressure and fuel volatility could produce noticeably unsatisfactory operation, with more 'vapour lock' incidents for example, in warmer weather. As a result, petrol containing ethanol may have received a worse reputation than is perhaps deserved in respect of combustion. A number of relatively simple measures can be put in place to assist satisfactory operation with petrol containing ethanol in historic vehicles.

Compensation for leaner air-fuel ratio can be achieved with most carburettors by enrichment. Where hot fuel handling issues, also called 'vapour

lock' incidents, are experienced, it is a wise precaution to take steps to keep fuel cool. Fuel feed lines should be routed away from heat sources, electric pumps should be kept as cool as possible, and mechanical pumps should be mounted on a thermal break where possible. It may be necessary to mount carburettors on a thermal break as well. Where the inlet and exhaust manifolds are on the same side of the engine, heat shields for carburettors can be very effective at overcoming hot fuel handling issues, and need not be intrusive. For so-called 'cross-flow' engines where the inlet and exhaust are on opposite sides of the combustion chamber, vapour lock incidents are much less common, but cold weather effects may be more of a problem with petrol containing ethanol. It may in fact be necessary to take steps to get more heat into the inlet manifold to overcome cold operation symptoms.

Overall however, it is felt that the challenges of operating with petrol containing ethanol are not insurmountable, and with some sensible precautions, together with a number of material changes and some practical heat management under the bonnet, owners of historic vehicles can continue to use and enjoy their vehicles for many years to come.



The British bikes before the start of the International Trophy in France, September 1904. Rignold, right, is on a Lagonda

Letters

Sir,

I think there may be simpler reasons why Lagonda had a steam lorry. If, during the '14/18 war, they wanted another lorry, new ones would not have been available and if it was like the '39/45 war the second-hand market would have been virtually non-existent, so the steamer may have been all they could get. Alternatively they may have bought a steamer to avoid problems with the availability of fuel. It does not seem to have the ash box, shown in a photo of a similar lorry on a Foden web site, so was it an oil burner? If so could it have run on the used oil from the machine shop, suitably filtered?

It reminds me of a story that I heard sometime in the 1950s. The son of a Foden director had time to spare between leaving school and starting his National Service. His father suggested he might practice his mechanical skills on an old steamer that was in a shed at the back of the factory. Subsequently it was reported that a Foden steamer had been seen doing 80 mph. It transpired that the son and a friend had been disappointed by the lorry's speed so had swapped around some cogs, converting a step down ratio into a step up. I wonder if that was the unofficial land speed record for a commercial steamer?

Yours faithfully,

Tony Loch

Dear Ken,

I'm amazed to read (A Cautionary Tale - Andrew Gregg Gets His Hands Dirty) that members are still using water in their cars as coolant. I suffered a similar issue with my DB2-6 many years back when corrosion ate a small hole in my water pump allowing water into the oil. Luckily the damage to the pump was

easily repaired. Since then I've used premixed coolant in all my cars (MkII Jag, MGTD, TR6 and the Lag.) and suffered no corrosion issues, or overheating. I use Tectaloy 90 which is good for 40,000km or three years before a change is needed (see: <http://www.tectaloy.com/>).

If it is not available in the UK there must be similar products which are basically a mixture of ethylene glycol, distilled water, and corrosion inhibitors. These coolants have several advantages beyond the corrosion protection. They raise the boiling point which is especially important in unpressurized systems, they improve heat transfer into the coolant from the engine and from the coolant to the radiator, and offer antifreeze protection as well (though UK and other colder climates would need to check that antifreeze protection is sufficient in your more severe winters.) In emergencies, topping up of coolant filled systems can be done with distilled water though too much of this will dilute the system and reduce protection and lower the boiling point.

Cheers,

Nick Proferes

Adelaide South Australia

Current advice from the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs is that we should only use antifreeze that is based on IAT (inorganic additive technology) formulations in our historic cars. Antifreeze based on OAT (organic acid technology) formulations is not recommended in older engines. One reason is that these modern mixtures are highly corrosive to 'yellow metals', that is brass and copper to you and me. Unfortunately, few manufacturers actually specify on their antifreeze containers which formula they are

currently using. Some manufacturers, who used IAT formulations in the past have switched to OAT formulations as they last longer in the engines for which they are compatible. If the container doesn't specify that it is an IAT mix it is worth your time and effort to contact the manufacturer and ask them.

It is important to understand that you can no longer rely on the colour of the concentrate to guide you, the colour is simply an additive to prevent the antifreeze from being mistaken for water and there is now a bewildering variety of colours in use, both for the IAT and the OAT formulations.

Don't rely on labels that simply state "suitable for classic car engines" as they may still be made from the wrong style of antifreeze for vintage and pvt cars. A quick search of the internet suggests that CarPlan Blue Star uses the IAT

formulation, but the website carries no date, so there is a risk that they too might have switched to the OAT formula.

The Tectaloy website mentioned in the letter above does not specify which formulation is used, so I would advise our Antipodean members to check this out.

To learn about the problems caused by the wrong antifreeze, click on your Google link, type in "Antifreeze using IAT technology" and search for "ANTIFREEZE IN 2009 by Derek James." At the time of writing this, it comes up as the first hit and the wonders of a Mac computer prevent me from typing the very long address here. Every time I try, it switches me directly to the website! If you don't have a computer, ask a grandchild to do it for you!

K.P.P.



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