



**THE MAGAZINE OF THE  
LAGONDA CLUB  
Number 236    Spring 2013**

# DAVID AYRE



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

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## The Lagonda Magazine

e-mail: lagclub@tiscali.co.uk · Web Site: <http://www.lagonda-club.com/>

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### LAGONDA CLUB LIST OF OFFICERS 2013

**President:** D. R. Hine

**Vice Presidents:**

A. Davey, A. W. May

**Chairman:**

Dr Jonathan Oppenheimer,  
21 Criffel Avenue,  
Streatham Hill, London, SW2 4AY  
Tel: 020 8671 0852 Fax: 020 8855 5366  
e-mail: jono@smpgroup.co.uk

**Company Secretary:**

Andrew Gregg,  
6/7 Queen Square, Bristol BS1 4JE  
Tel: 0117 9069400 Fax: 0117 9069401  
andrew.gregg@gregglatchams.com

**Membership Secretary:**

Colin Bugler,  
Wintney House, London Road,  
Hartley Wintney, Hants, RG27 8RN  
Tel/Fax: 01252 845451  
e-mail lagclub@tiscali.co.uk

**Registrar & Newsletter Editor:**

Arnold Davey,  
86 The Walk, Potters Bar, Herts, EN6 1QF  
Tel/Fax: 01707 651302

**Editor:**

Ken Painter,  
Church Farm Cottage,  
The Street, Rickingham, Diss, IP22 1EQ  
Tel: 01379 890653  
e-mail: kenpainter@talktalk.net

**Treasurer:**

John Sword,  
Chivel, Chipping Norton,  
Oxfordshire, OX7 5TR  
Tel: 01608 683227  
e-mail: j.sword@hotmail.com

**E-Communications:**

Christopher Hobbs,  
Church Cottage, Church Hill,  
White Waltham, Berks SL6 3JH  
Tel/Fax: 01628 825246  
e-mail: christopher.hobbs@chco.co.uk

**Competition Secretary:**

Richard Reay-Smith,  
Hollyhurst, Godolphin Road,  
Weybridge, Surrey, KT13 0PU  
Tel: 01932 830366  
e-mail: rpmsr@hotmail.com

**Post-War Cars Secretary:**

Peter Gilkes,  
61 Horton View, Banbury,  
Oxon OX16 9HW  
Tel/Fax 01295 269897  
pete@gilkes-surveying.fsnet.co.uk

**Other Board Members:**

Peter Blenk,  
56 Rivermead Court, Ranelagh Gardens,  
London SW6 3RY  
Tel: 020 7731 7484 · Fax: 020 7731 2836  
peterblenk@gmail.com

John Brown,  
Biddenden Farm Oast,  
Station Road, Rotherfield,  
East Sussex, TN6 3HP.  
Tel/Fax: 01892 852586  
e-mail: kay.john.brown@care4free.net

John Boyes,  
Ash Tree House, Bosworth Rd., Walton,  
Leicestershire. LE17 5RW,  
Tel. 01455 556015  
john.s.boyes@btinternet.com

**The Spares Service:**

Robin Cooke, Lagonda Spares,  
Johnson's Farm, Carlton, Saxmundham,  
Suffolk IP17 2QW  
Tel: 01728 604040 · Fax: 01728 604570  
e-mail: spares@lagonda-club.com

**The Lagonda Shop:**

Denise and Martin Bugler  
Garden Cottage, Walhurst Manor, Picts Lane,  
Cowfold, West Sussex, RH13 8AW  
Tel/Fax: 01403 865442  
e-mail: shop@lagonda-club.com

**Yahoo newsgroup:** <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Lagonda>

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## Overseas Representatives:

### USA:

Rudy Wood-Muller,  
P.O.Box 403, 51 Bill Hill Road,  
Old Lyme, CT 06371, USA  
Tel: 001 860 434 1996  
Fax: 001 212 226 4909  
e-mail: lagondausa@aol.com

### Netherlands and Belgium:

Herman Arentsen,  
Logtsestraat 3, 6675 NB Valburg,  
The Netherlands  
Tel: (+31) 488 431291  
Fax: (+31) 481 373593  
e-mail: eh-arentsen@hetnet.nl

### Germany:

Roland Danner,  
Kleingschaidt 79,  
D-90562 Heroldsberg, Germany.  
Tel: (+49) (0) 9126 288 472  
Fax: (+49) (0) 9126 288 374  
e-mail: roland\_danner@t-online.de  
Rudolf Ernst,  
Schoenaich-Carolath-str. 22,  
D-22607 Hamburg, Germany  
e-mail rudernst@yahoo.de

### Switzerland:

Franz Hatebur-Mani,  
Huenibachstr. 58, CH-3626 Huenibach,  
Switzerland  
e-mail: fhatebur@bluewin.ch

### Australia:

Peter Henson,  
165 Mountain Top Road  
Georgica, 2480 NSW,  
Tel: 61 2 66888 144  
email: octane1@bigpond.com

## UK Area Representatives:

### Anglia:

John Stoneman. Tel: 01353 649494  
e-mail: john.stoneman@btinternet.com

### Midlands (East):

Harry Taylor. Tel: 01159 830363  
e-mail: hta108@aol.com

### Midlands (West):

Terry Brewster. Tel: 01386 792770  
margaretbrewster2@btinternet.com

### Kent:

Adrian Lead. Tel: 01304 614690  
e-mail: a.lead @btinternet.com

### North:

Tim Gresty. Tel: 01260 291830  
e-mail: timgresty@cognitio.co.uk

### Northern Ireland:

Peter Walby. Tel: 028 9066 5610  
e-mail: pursang@doctors.org.uk

### Scotland:

Alastair Gunn. Tel: 0131 4412279  
e-mail: alastair.gunn@hotmail.co.uk

### South West:

Alan Elliott. Tel: 01963 250353  
e-mail: alanpatelliott@btinternet.com

### Surrey, Sussex & Hants:

Michael Drakeford. Tel: 01903 872197  
e-mail: michaelwdrakeford@hotmail.com

### Yorkshire:

Ian North. Tel: 01482 879105  
e-mail: iannorth.kazoo.co.uk

## FRONT COVER:

*A gentle reminder that this year's featured model will be the light cars, from the tricar to the 12/24 and including the Rapier, 80 years old this year. Picture by Peter Lloyd.*

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# From the Chair

## *(as opposed to the driving seat!) –*

# a demob-happy end of term report

IT IS REFRESHING that Ken Painter opens each edition of this magazine with his thoughtful column from the driving seat but eschews messages from presidents, chairmen etc. that are a frequent feature of other club journals. Doubtless worthy in intention, in practice they are often repetitive and at worst pompous; I suspect that they may be the least read pages.

Fear not, I make no suggestion that Ken, his successor, or my own should break this tradition on a regular basis, but as the end of my Chairmanship approaches I have many people to thank and thought it worth noting a few of the Club's achievements and areas where we need to do better.

I wrote a similar report at the end of my first three years that somehow never reached Ken. I suggested that although the Board had asked me to serve a second term, if members didn't like that idea they could vote me off at the AGM and the Saturday night dinner would be a good opportunity to rally support for such a coup, which might get my wife's grateful approval! I also promised not to follow the examples of Gaddafi or Assad in response, but this was never published and my chairmanship survived.

Mention of AGMs reminds me that these have changed somewhat in recent years, thanks to an excellent idea of Christopher Hobbs when he joined the Board. This was the suggestion that we should feature a different model for special attention at each year's display, with a special trophy for the best example. First, in 2010, the 75th anniversary of the Le Mans victory, it had to be the M45, then in 2011 it was the turn of the 2 Litre and in 2012 the 16/80, certainly the biggest gathering of these cars in one place since they left the factory! This year it is the turn of two models, since their numbers might be slightly smaller, as are the cars themselves: the early cars and the Rapier. If you possess either of these make sure you bring them. The venue also changed last year; after upheaval and uncertainty surrounding the ownership and management of Aldermaston Manor the Board decided to bring forward the decision to try Heythrop Park in Oxfordshire and although their were some shortcomings in terms of service and disappointments over mistakes with room allocation we are returning their this year with a promise of improvement from the management. In any case Aldermaston is no longer an

***Last date for copy for the Summer magazine is  
... SATURDAY 28th June 2013 ...***

option as the house has been bought by a Russian oligarch as his private residence. The organisation of the AGM weekend is a major task and we must thank Christopher Hobbs and John Sword who are the most recent bearers of this responsibility, as well as those who man the stalls of regalia, books and spares in the marquee and the small phalanx of concours judges who sacrifice a leisurely lunch to appraise the assembled cars.

I have been lucky that the last five years in the life of the Club have not been marked by major traumas and it has been a real pleasure to work with other members of the Board - those with real jobs, as my family is wont to remind me! There have been some important changes. It was clear at the outset that far too much of the burden of running the Club rested on the shoulders of Colin and Valerie Bugler, unfair to them and unsustainable in the long term. Moreover, it seemed that the longer this continued, the harder it would be to find anyone able and willing to step into even one of their four shoes.

Good fortune and the gentlest arm-twisting led two people to relieve the Buglers of some of their duties. John Sword became Treasurer and Andrew Gregg Company Secretary - both are doing a splendid job and now these tasks have been separated from the Membership Secretariat, it seems incredible that Colin and Valerie coped with the whole shebang for so many years.

Valerie does not always enjoy the best of health and although both seem indomitable, their work-load at renewal time is still excessive. Online membership application and renewal should reduce this burden, but teething troubles with the new system have temporarily exacerbated the

difficulties. Colin is the official post-holder, but he and Valerie have always worked together as an amazing team and although he recently retired from the Board, Colin is as actively engaged as ever in the leadership of the Club.

My other big initial concern was that the Spares Committee would be critically weakened by the retirement of Brian Savill. Brian did a tremendous amount of work strengthening the spares operation, including the venture into used spares that started with the purchase of a large quantity of items from the late Maurice Leo. This was controversial at the time but resultant sales soon made it profitable; and it has been followed by other smaller purchases of second-hand parts that continue to sell well.

Soon John Breen also decided to step down and it was clear that his and Brian's experience, knowledge and engineering skill would be sorely missed. Their loss has been mitigated by the arrival on the Spares Committee of John Sword and John Boyes (with John Brown we have so many Johns that communication becomes confused at times, especially as those who are not Johns are mostly Peters!). John S has valuable experience in the spare parts business and through his ever-growing and eclectic collection, has gained direct experience of most Lagonda models, while John B brings engineering knowledge and familiarity with 4.5 litre cars as well as a welcome sense of humour. That is not to say that others lack it but humour is a commodity of which a committee can never have too much!

John S has focussed our attention on the need to extend greatly the range of parts we should offer, pointing out that the Rapier Register lists as many items for one model as the Club does for all the rest put together. He also

suggested a way to broaden input and spread the work by establishing model groups, led by committee members, to prioritise and manage new projects. These groups are now functioning, although not yet as energetically or as consistently as we would like. For instance, I am supposed to lead the V12 group, but other commitments have kept getting in the way, and I have no wish to hang around and get under the feet of my successor, so I would be delighted if another V12/LG6 enthusiast would take on the leadership and co-ordination of this group.

Alan Heard resigned as representative of the post-war section, having done a great job of raising the profile of post-war cars in the Club and persuading their owners to attend club events, especially the AGM weekend. His place was taken by Peter Gilkes, one of the most regular of all participants in club tours. With Peter's input the Spares Committee is finally beginning to address the need to supply parts for the post-war cars, whose attraction is increasingly recognised, as demonstrated by rising sale prices.

No reference to the Spares Committee can omit the contribution of another John – John Brown continues to contribute untold hours to managing the Club's drawings and producing new ones where they are lacking or where modifications have made them inadequate. This vital work is unseen by the bulk of the membership and John does it quietly and without fuss. His modesty is exemplary but no excuse for any of us to forget to thank him. John suffered a period of serious illness and although now fully recovered, his temporary absence brought home just how dependent our Club is on him and a

small number of other individuals and how important it is to identify potential candidates for all its key roles.

The spares operation has settled down in Carlton which, unlike Market Drayton in the well-known ads of Jeremy Wade, is quite far from everywhere! Robin Cooke, ably assisted by Leah Knee, sends out more parcels than ever and members are getting better at ordering by part number and on-line, reducing confusion and disappointment when the wrong part arrives. Robin has made more storage space available to the Club and the spares are housed in orderly fashion – the operation is worth a visit if you find yourself in Suffolk, and I was very pleased that Robin opened it for inspection and a cup of coffee on the Sunday morning after this year's Suffolk Dinner. In spite of heavy snow and arctic temperature there were several takers and I hope he will repeat this initiative in future years.

Tim Wadsworth stepped down as Competition Secretary, his place taken by Richard Reay Smith. Tim was, by common consent, one of the most active and successful Competition Secretaries in the Club's history, encouraging drivers and cars onto the track who may never have dreamed they would find themselves there. Among his many achievements were the Lagonda-only grid at Angoulême and the 2010 Great Lagonda Race at Oulton Park to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Le Mans victory, as well as many successes in inter-marque race series. Richard has proved a worthy successor who has reacted to his own racing mishaps with stoical equanimity – at least in public!

Change has also been felt among our friends in the North where, after a

splendid tour of Northumberland, Roger Firth handed the ceremonial lavatory seat of Northern Secretary to Tim Gresty. Roger's forthright manner, good humour and organisational panache had been the hallmark of Northern Tours for many years and of dinners at Monk Fryston since Herb Schofield's untimely death. It is reassuring that his place has been taken by a worthy successor, born out by the successful weekend extensions of the Northern Dinner and tours of the County Palatine and North Yorkshire.

There have, of course, been other tours, dinners and events too numerous to mention, organised by a variety of individuals, Terry Brewster in the Midlands, the Fittons in the West Country, Alan Elliott in the New Forest, Brian Savill in the Cambridge area, Mike Pilgrim, jointly with the Rapier Register in Suffolk and Michael Drakeford in the South East. In 2010 Peter and Natalie Blenk led a number of us to Le Mans Classic to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Lagonda victory and to cheer the competing Lagondas, some of which, sadly, succumbed to mechanical misfortune. In spite of that and the almost unbearable heat, the trip was a great success and an intrepid few were rash enough to brave a second leg down to the Dordogne. Meanwhile our continental members have also continued to organise successful rallies, attracting several Brits as well, to the Dutch/Belgian borderlands in 2010, followed in 2011 by an invasion of south-eastern England based appropriately at Battle and enhanced by our President's rendition of The Battle of Hastings – "on 'is 'orse with 'is 'awk in 'is 'and"! Both these were organised by the Laqueurs and the Arentsens and in 2012 the tenth Continental Tour, organised by Roland

and Sabine Danner, returned to the Franconian region of Germany, giving me a wonderful opportunity to visit the villages and graves of my paternal ancestors.

Others who continue on the Board also deserve grateful acknowledgement. Their doyen is, of course, Arnold Davey who continues his custodianship of the Lagonda Heritage Trust, which includes housing its treasures, and his production of the monthly newsletter. However, thanks to Christopher Hobbs, the newsletter is also now readable online, removing the inevitable delay of postage for our many overseas members and, thanks to Nathalie Menigoz, our francophone members can read it in French!

There is change afoot even in Arnold's domain as a little bird tells me he may have acquired a lap-top! You read it here first. Peter Blenk has taken on the new post of Assistant Registrar. The idea is that Peter will work with Arnold with a view to cataloguing the archival material and preparing it to be copied, over time, into digital form, both to ensure that there is a proper back-up of the original material and also to make it more readily available for study and research by members. Much of the information Arnold holds is already digitally duplicated on the database that Valerie Bugler maintains, but in a welcome new initiative Len Cozzolino, who helped to organise the magnificent display of 16/80s at the 2012 AGM and to compile the accompanying booklet, has volunteered to take the lead in establishing a free-standing and secure master database of cars and members. This is an ambitious project that will be completed over the next two or three years.



Ken Painter soldiers valiantly beyond his 100th edition of the magazine, after which he had always made clear that he intends to put away his blue pencil. It is one of the Board's principles that no-one is allowed to jump ship until he has found an equally good replacement, and Ken has recruited Roger Seabrook as his successor. Other commitments prevent Roger from taking full control until this year's autumn issue so Ken will exceed his planned tenure and has assured Roger and the Board that he will be available for any necessary hand-holding thereafter.

I am very grateful for the support and encouragement I have received during these five years from my colleagues on the Board but especially from our President, David Hine. Not only is David a generous source of vast knowledge about our cars and how they work - or should work, and a reliable after dinner entertainer whose repertoire never fails to raise laughter and a warm feeling of well-being. He has also lent a patient ear whenever I have wished to halve a problem by sharing it and responded by giving unfailingly wise counsel with a light touch.

One area where it was clear we had much more work to do was the website. The previous version, for which Tim Wadsworth and I bore major responsibility, functioned within the limits of its capability and provided information and points of contact. It brought in new members and re-united several people, some very ancient, with cars they once owned and current owners - I had this experience with both my V12 and my Rapier, filling in large gaps in the cars' histories and bringing pleasure to both parties. Nonetheless, the website was inadequate. We were somewhat naïve

in our original brief and web design has moved on rapidly in the meantime. Although Colin Mallett and Brian Savill put a great deal of effort into the spares shop and others have helped, it remained unsatisfactory in a number of ways. Richard Reay Smith's arrival on the Board was a catalyst and his suggestions were welcomed, resulting in a decision to commission a new site. A subcommittee was formed of Richard, Christopher Hobbs and me to select and interview candidate developers and make a recommendation to the Board. It was clear that far more interactivity was available than on the previous site, particularly in the areas of administration (online membership application, updating of personal details, information about cars, subscription-renewal etc.) and for the online spares and regalia shops. In the end Hallway Studios were appointed to develop the new site, which has now been up and running for several months. Although there have been snags and teething problems and there is still much work to do in improving accuracy and increasing content, the response from members has been overwhelmingly positive. I am extremely grateful to the Buglers who have fielded correspondence from those who have had problems joining the Club online and to Christopher Hobbs who has shown unfailing patience and good humour helping members experiencing difficulties with the site. I am optimistic that shortcomings in the site's handling of administrative issues will soon be ironed out. This has been a major project, whose difficulty is easily underestimated. There is a huge difference between building a simple, informative website and developing a fully-fledged interactive retailing site,

which is what the Club requires. Taking the lead in such an undertaking is almost inevitably a thankless task and Richard Reay-Smith and Christopher Hobbs deserve our gratitude for the huge amount of time and determination they have invested in this.

Another area where we need to do better is in attracting the young, or even the early-middle-aged! This is difficult with the cost of our cars currently so high, and the days of gaining one's first driving experience in a Lagonda are probably gone forever for most, although I have managed to hook three sons by giving them this early experience and the Buglers have been very successful in this with sons and grandsons – I am sure there are many other such examples; there are, after all, cars like the Manns' splendid M45 that have passed through successive generations of the same family. The club offers free membership to under-25s although as far as I know take-up has been minimal. I would urge everyone to do whatever they can to give younger members of their families and friends the opportunity to enjoy their cars, certainly as passengers, but wherever possible also as drivers and mechanics.

One obstacle is the difficulty in obtaining insurance cover for young drivers – in my view the VSCC and other organisations forming ties with insurance companies should make cover for young drivers of 'proper cars' a much higher priority. I recently considered switching to the VSCC's current insurance partner only to be told that they would not cover my two younger sons to drive my cars and their own nearly completed Rapier special, although both have driven my Rapier with full cover and no mishaps

for the last few years. My present insurer also tried to remove their cover at the last renewal, but in the end accepted the arguments that they have already been insured without claims for a few years and a young driver who is prepared to learn the idiosyncrasies of a pre-war car is not the kind they have to worry about.

Another issue that requires more attention is the increasing proportion of our membership outside the UK. This now stands at 30% and rising. We must thank the various overseas representatives who carry the Lagonda banner and keep the Club alive elsewhere in Europe, in the USA and in Australia, writing newsletters, organising events, giving technical advice and welcoming new members. Our cars are bought and sold across the globe and the Lagonda Club is a truly international organisation that must improve its adaptation to that fact. I have mentioned the kindness of Nathalie Menigoz in translating the newsletter into French. I hope we can extend this to German, as we have many German-speaking members and potential members – Lagonda owners who have not joined the Club. Another way in which we might make membership more attractive is to translate our technical manuals, and I hope to achieve something along these lines before I hand over to John Sword.

John has been an excellent Treasurer, keeping a keen eye on the Club's financial health; he has also played a key role on the Spares Committee, initiating the "model groups" led and co-ordinated by committee members, and also taking responsibility for relationships with suppliers. John has been a source of consistently wise counsel and was the obvious choice to be the next Chairman. The only question was who

should take his place as Treasurer? I felt it was vital that the good work he has done and the disciplines he has established should not be lost, and he himself was reluctant to relinquish this responsibility. Fortunately, a worthy successor was at hand – Brian Green did a first-class job as Paddock Marshal for the Great Lagonda Race at Oulton Park and became custodian of the Club's trophies, bringing to both tasks an admirable blend of efficiency and unflappability. The clincher was that he is also a chartered accountant – what more could one ask for?

One of the factors in my decision to step down after five years, rather than six as several of my predecessors, was that it seems foolish to carry on longer when there is an excellent successor already lined up, especially since John is a few years older than me so I didn't want to keep him waiting! I

wish him and the rest of the Board every success in the coming years. They will have plenty to do in perfecting the website, further improving the spares service, supporting and strengthening regional activity and adapting the Club to an increasing proportion of overseas members. Above all, perhaps, they must work to attract younger members to secure the future custody of our cars and their own succession.

The Club is in good shape and financially sound, thanks to a handful of committed volunteers with a very limited amount of paid help. Some say that the spirit of volunteering is dead or dying. I have seen little sign of this in our Club and I hope I am right because in due course we shall all have to be replaced, so will all those interested please start forming an orderly queue!



*What happened to the hardy breed of Lagonda owners? No-one wanted to eat outside after the Rapier/Lagonda Dinner.*

# The 36th Rapier Register & Lagonda Club Suffolk Dinner

## *Martin Mountfort reports*

THIS ANNUAL EVENT organised by Mike Pilgrim has been held 36 times, it is for members of Lagonda Club, Rapier Register and guests. Normally there are many Lagonda cars around during this week-end.

The week-end was beset with biting cold east winds and snow showers, the worst weather I can remember in late March. On the Saturday morning I was delayed by hassles during some agricultural work, because of this and the poor weather, I set off for Mike Pilgrim's house in my modern car. I felt guilty about this because there is usually such a good selection of old cars to look at, that not bringing one's own car seemed a bit selfish. Perhaps this is a penalty of the high present value of our cars in that we are not so likely to risk using them when there is salt on the roads.

When I arrived at Little Orchard Bredfield I was almost relieved to find only modern cars parked on the snow, it lessened my guilt. Mike said it was unique not to have any Lagondas or Rapiers at the event. Over 20 people called at Mike and Anne Pilgrim's house for afternoon tea. Ann had prepared a nice variety of cakes, I particularly enjoyed the very tasty marmalade cake.

In the evening David and Beryl Greenwood braved the inclement weather and came to the Aldeburgh Dinner in their Suffolk Jaguar SS100 replica. There were 47 people for the Dinner at the White Lion Aldeburgh compared with 39 at the 2012 event.

Mike welcomed a number of people who were attending their first

Aldeburgh Dinner, these included the following:

Ross King. From Sydney Australia, on a visit to England, guest of his brother, Warren King.

Martin Pollard. Owns Rapier and Lagonda 3.5 litre.

John Furlong Rapier Owner.

Nigel Smeal. Carrying out a major Rapier restoration project and LG45 owner.

Bob Muggeridge. Owns 1927 Bentley 3 litre.

John Havard. New Lagonda Club member and new owner of Martin Whitworth's 16/80.

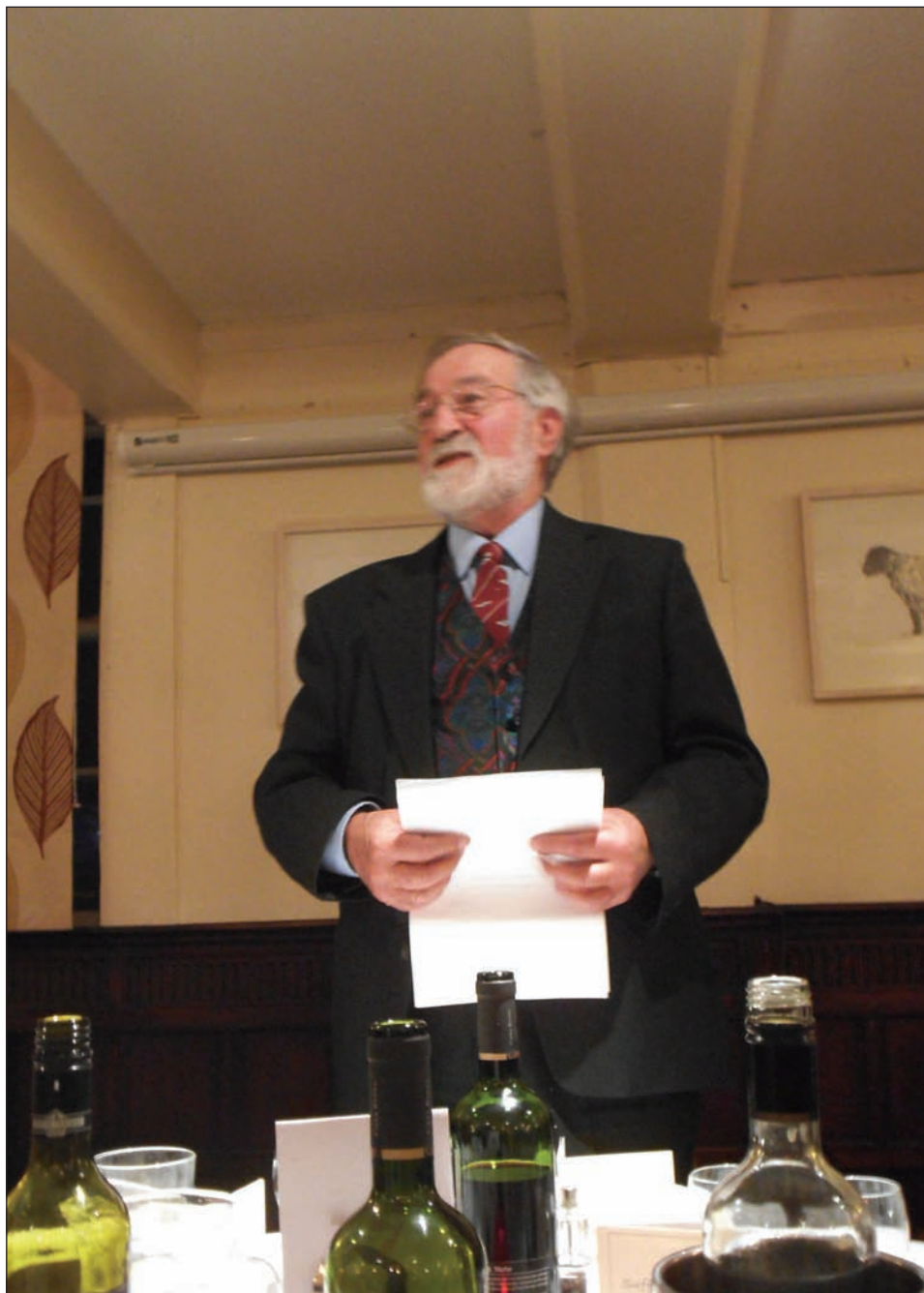
Clive Tickner. New Lagonda Club member. Owns a Lagonda 16/80 and a Locomobile.

Martin Whitworth, now sadly confined to a wheelchair was brought to the dinner by Clive Tickner. Clive Tickner owns a two seater Vanden Plas 16/80 which was actually owned by Martin Whitworth during the fifties. The car is now fitted with a Lagonda 2 litre engine with crash box as opposed to the Crossley with preselector gearbox which it would originally have had.

Grace was read by Peter Merrick before we sat down to an excellent meal with all the trimmings.

The after dinner speech this year was given by Ken Painter who has been the editor of the Lagonda Magazine since 1988.

In 1967 whilst serving in the RAF Ken was posted to Singapore. Whilst there he purchased a Lagonda 16/80 from a man who was being posted to Borneo. In Singapore Ken was talked



*We don't usually feature the Editor in the pictures, but he was the guest speaker this year.*



into becoming the editor of a motoring club magazine even though there was a deputy editor who should have taken over. He was editor for three different car clubs for 6 years in the pre word processor or Email era. In Singapore, the magazine was set out by Chinese compositor who couldn't actually speak English. This usually worked out OK but there were occasional disasters such as the whole document without any of the vowel letter "E" character and on another with every "E" replaced with a "T".

When Ken returned from Singapore the RAF arranged to have his Maserati flown back to England. This service only cost Ken four pounds, this was the local garage charge to transport the car from an RAF Airfield to Ken's new home.

Ken originally agreed to be the editor of "The Lagonda" magazine for 100 issues, however he is editing a few more until the new editor Roger Seabrook is able to take over. He estimates that he spends 100 hours on each edition.

Ken is currently working on an early Lagonda, a 12/24.

At the Lagonda AGM week-end this year early Lagondas and Rapiers will be the featured models. So if you have a Rapier please do try to attend this event, it is hoped that as many Rapiers as possible can put on a good display at Heythrop Park in the Cotswolds on the week-end of September 27th and 28th or just the Sunday 28th. Hopefully it will also be a chance to see Ken's early Lagonda.

When I woke on Sunday morning the ground was still snow covered,

pretty, but cold, During the Sunday morning we visited The Lagonda Club spares department at Johnson's Farm for people to look around including the second hand parts store, this is administered by Robin Cooke who was on hand to show visitors around. Robin Cooke is a restorer of Rolls Royce cars.

Right next door is Chris Banham's Vintage Motor Works, where Chris Banham was particularly hospitable, serving coffee and biscuits and his premises were warm. I was surprised and grateful that such a large garage/workshop was so warm inside. In the building were a couple of vintage Alvis, a vintage Renault Taxi and many eclectic garage items and tools, it was really like a little museum. I loved the place.

Twenty people attended the lunch at The Old Mill House, Saxtead Green, but there were no Lagondas in the car park. A sign in the car park invited guests to take lunch in the garden but nobody did.

Next year the Aldeburgh Dinner will be on Saturday April 5th, this date coincides with the Ufford car festival, this event is in a field opposite the Ufford Lion pub at Ufford Woodbridge. It attracts a good variety of cars from veteran through to classic and there are catering outlets for lunch. There is therefore the opportunity to visit the Ufford event in the morning then go to the Aldeburgh dinner in the evening.

There couldn't possibly be snow again in Suffolk in April. Put the date in your diary.





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Vintage Restoration Specialists.



*Four Pages featuring the people and cars at the Australia Group's first meeting.*

# The First Australia group Meeting

*Peter Docker reports*

OVER THE WEEKEND of 26th to 28th October 2012, several Lagonda owners in Australia met at the Hawkesbury Race Club Motel at Clarendon near Sydney. This was the first time that Lagonda owners have had a meeting in Australia and most of the forty known Lagonda owners in Australia were contacted and invited to attend. There were fifteen Lagonda owners and family members that attended as well as some members of The Alvis Car Club. The limited attendance was due to the wide dispersal of Lagonda owners over Australia and the long distances they would need to travel to join us. However there were Lagonda owners that attended from South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and Canberra. Lagondas had driven several hundred miles from northern and western New South Wales and the A.C.T. for this weekend meeting. Whilst there were only five cars that arrived, they represented a range of Lagondas from 1928 to the Aston Martin Lagonda of the 1970s.

Apologies were received from a further twenty Lagonda owners /enthusiasts.

The purpose of the meeting of Lagonda owners in Australia was to consider the formation of a Lagonda Group or Club in Australia to keep owners informed of Lagonda issues and to provide on line communication on future events and technical support where possible.

We were especially delighted to have Alan and Carol Heard from The Lagonda Club in the UK join us for the

weekend. Alan told us a lot about The Lagonda Club in the UK, its operations and recent events etc. His advice on the Club's operations and involvement with its overseas membership was particularly valuable to us. Many of the Lagonda owners in Australia have been members of The Lagonda Club for a number of years and appreciate its benefits.

There was considerable discussion on the several ways that a Lagonda Group could be set up here. However the predominant view was that we should consider forming a Lagonda Australia Group of The Lagonda Club in the UK, this would require those owners who are not presently members of The Lagonda Club in the UK to join that club. Of course we would need to know the terms and conditions for such a proposal to be approved by The Lagonda Club.

A steering committee was elected to further investigate the feasibility of the proposal to form a Lagonda Australia Group (LAG) as an entity of The Lagonda Club in the UK. A meeting to further consider this proposal will be held in Canberra (A.C.T) in March 2013.

The whole weekend was most enjoyable at Clarendon with so much Lagonda talk; there really is a great interest here in these classic cars. We owe a great debt of thanks for the initiative and the considerable work done by Bev and Peter Henson in the planning and organising the weekend for us. I think Bev and Peter said it was much like trying to muster a mob of cats.





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Now that there is so much interest in having a Lagonda Australia Group formed, we look forward to our next meeting in Canberra to hear our steering committee's progress report.

Persons interested in supporting the Lagonda Australia Group's endeavors could contact the coordinator Peter Henson by email.

octane1@bigpond.com or the secretary Alec McKernan by email. alecannemck@grapevine.com.au

*The Board of the Lagonda Club welcomes the formation of groups such as this and will support their activities in every way it can.*

*We wish them every success with this new initiative.*









# Spanner Soliloquy

*by Ian Stirling*

*Reprinted, with thanks, from The Bulletin of the Vintage Sports Car Club, No 246, Winter 2004*

MOST OF OUR older members have grown up with the dual-size markings on spanners and a few, like me, may possibly have wondered how it came about. The story goes back a long time to the days when every blacksmith made his own screw threads as he saw fit. As industrialisation developed, this became bl\*dy inconvenient, to say the least, but, "commeth the hour, commeth the man", and Joseph Whitworth was the man.

Whitworth realised the problem this free-for-all created, designed his eponymous thread form and drew up the list of standard thread pitches and sizes that we all now know. With hindsight, he made one fundamental mistake, and one that still haunts us, whilst causing amusement in the USA and the Continent. He linked the spanner sizes to the diameter of the thread. Everywhere else, the spanner is characterised by the dimension across the jaws, and is unrelated to the thread size. Still, the man who never made a mistake never made anything, as they say, and my generation of engineers and their predecessors have coped very well with Whitworth threads and hexagonal sizes.

Whitworth was a very thorough engineer (read his biography by Atkinson if you want to know more about him), and having thought through the matter of thread design, he gave his nut sizes fairly generous dimensions to keep the hoop stress low and give a decent back-up of metal to the thread. Still a touch of the blacksmith thinking there, perhaps, and his thread pitches

were relatively coarse, too. For convenience, the bolt head sizes were made the same. Later in the 19th Century, it became evident that a somewhat finer thread pitch would be useful, and, with the guidance of the British Standards Institution, which had come into being, the British Standard Fine thread was drawn up, now known universally as BSF. I believe there was a move to rename the Whitworth series as BSC - "British Standard Coarse", but the traditionalists rejected this denigration of Sir Joseph, as he had become before his death, and settled for BSW - British Standard Whitworth. Not that it mattered, since everyone calls it, simply, "Whitworth".

The BSI committee did incorporate one advance in that they realised that the finer threads did not need such big nut hexagons, and so they made them one size smaller. Stress analysis had improved a little in the interval since Whitworth's time. This resulted in the anomaly we see on the spanners, whereby a 5/16th Whitworth and a 3/8th BSF are the same size hexagon, and are labelled accordingly. There are mind-boggling complications with the intermediate sizes of 9/32nd, 7/32nd etc. diameters, but not many people use them and they are non-preferred sizes anyway.

AHA, you ask! Why then does the spanner now fit both types? Enter the BSI again, wearing their WW II hat this time. The wartime government had a bee in its bonnet about metal shortages - aluminium saucepans into aeroplanes, iron railings to make more steel, and so on. As an aside, I still remember, as a child of three, watching two men with a handcart and an oxy-acetylene torch cut up the nice wrought iron railings outside

the parental home. Sheer vandalism, but believed at the time to be morale-boosting as part of the "War Effort". However, back to the BSI.

As part of this salvage campaign, as it was called, a BSI genius (?) realised that it was now feasible, mainly because of improvements in metal quality over the years, to make the Whitworth nuts and bolts from the same size hexagonal bars as the BSF ones and save a smidgeon of metal from each hexagon for the "War Effort". Since there were no complaints, this decision was duly implemented, and the BSI man probably received his OBE. His judgement was correct, and the situation continues to this day. BSF and Whitworth hexagons are the same for all diameters of Imperial nuts and bolts. To hell with the damn Yankees and the Frogs - they weren't in the Empire (questionable in the case of the Yankees, I suppose) -they can carry on using AF (across flats) dimensions sensibly - like they have always done.

Spanners are almost always all die-forgings, and no sane die-master would bother to reflect the change, and so spanners kept being made with the dual size marking for years after the alteration had been implemented. The other amusing fact is that most tools nowadays are made in far-away countries, such as Taiwan, for cheapness, and, since they do not appreciate the finer points detailed above, in many instances they still have the dual marking.

The other historical quirk about open-ended spanners concerns the change from the simple open-end in line with the centre-line of the tool, to the 30° offset which is now standard practice. The logic is obvious, since it enables two

different angles of attack to be used by turning the spanner over, but who was the clever so-and-so who thought of it - possibly the same genius who thought of cranking ring spanners to improve their access?

An idle thought to finish with, I expect we all have "King Dick" adjustables in our toolboxes - who was King Dick, and why did he decide to make an adjustable spanner?

*(Since Lagonda cars are not a part of the common herd, it is well to remember that Wilbur Gunn was an American and had a particular liking for the American 20 TPI thread. Since his company made all their own nuts and bolts, he was able to incorporate it into his products. However, he very sensibly kept to the British Standard hexagon sizes, so we didn't need a second set of spanners!)*

*The "King Dick Conundrum" was resolved in the VSCC Bulletin No 248, Summer 2005. To summarise the response published there, the company Abingdon King Dick still exists on Kings Road, Tyseley, Birmingham. It was founded in 1856 and was known as the Abingdon Works, probably because the first owner, Thomas Mabbatt lived in Abingdon on Thames. The company came by its present name, "Abingdon King Dick", after a bulldog so named that won Crufts in the 1920s. As the bulldog had the various qualities associated with Britishness at that time, namely strength, toughness, and so forth, the company adopted that bulldog first as a trademark and later, in the 1940s, as part of the name of the company itself.*

*So now you know! K.P.P.*





# 2 Litre water Pump Drive

## *Clive Dalton resolves an old problem*

THE ORIGINAL DRIVE for the water pump on the 2 litre was a fork and blade. The fork projected from the timing case, the blade was machined on the end of the water pump spindle.

This design requires the water pump to be exactly lined up with the spindle of the timing case idler wheel. Easy when the car was new, it is increasingly more difficult to ensure as the water pump is removed and replaced. Unless the two spindles are exactly lined up and remain so one will fret against the other and an inspection of the cars at any AGM will show that this problem is widespread.

There is a well-known modification to the water pump spindle in which the spindle is tapped and a much wider blade screwed to it but this still leaves the misalignment and fretting problem.

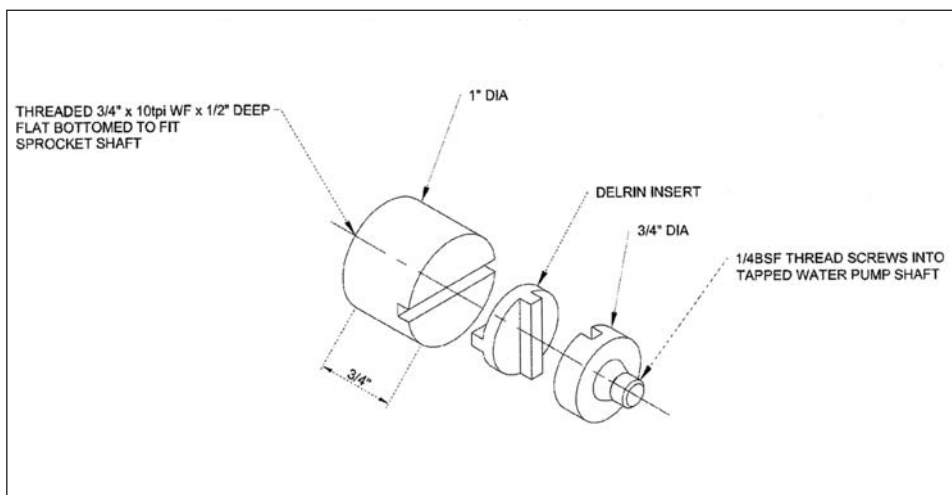
A simple and permanent cure is shown in the sketch. It is an Oldhams

coupling and its property is that transverse misalignment does not worry it.

The sketch explains itself. The part carried on the timing wheel has a slot across it and is tapped  $\frac{3}{4}"$  x 20 threads per inch Whitworth form. The part on the water pump spindle simply screws into the tapped hole and the part between is, on my car, made of an acetal resin engineering plastic named delrin.

When I first made it I thought I would have to replace the plastic part with brass but this hasn't happened. Delrin works perfectly well, doesn't require lubricating and seems to have lasted for more than 70,000 miles so far.

The isometric sketch indicates the principle. Detailed, dimensioned drawings have been lodged with the Club.



# Connie, The Never-ending Story

## *Ken Painter is still hard at work*

IT'S A LONG time since I wrote of the highs and lows of Connie's apparently never-ending rehabilitation, so let me summarise the story since Summer 2011.

Connie's starter motor failed at the 2011 AGM, after just five engine starts, so it was sent back to the company who had 'repaired' it. After a few days, they returned it, claiming there was nothing wrong with it. It still didn't work. I have no specialist electrical equipment to check it thoroughly, so took it to a company in Essex, who totally rebuilt it for roughly half the cost of its first unsuccessful repair. I shall use them again!

Brian Savill produced an early Lagonda steering wheel, slightly smaller than the original, but perfect for my needs. The celluloid covering on one spoke was cracked. Brian advised me to dissolve ground-up pieces of celluloid in acetone and mix it to a thick paste, then gently clamp the broken covering in place and paint the paste into the crack. It sinks in very quickly, but after several coats it builds up until it is just proud of the original surface. I polished it smooth, using Autosol on a piece of card and the repair is virtually invisible. Thank you, Brian.

The old wheel was from a Morris Cowley, with what looks like the top end of a Cowley steering column grafted onto the Lagonda column. This was removed, revealing the original 20 TPI thread and square shaft for the Lagonda steering wheel. The horn button base screws onto this thread to lock the wheel in place, but its thread had been re-cut to match the larger, coarse threaded, end of the Cowley column, so Andrew Kirby made a new base for me.

First, he needed to check the pitch and diameter of the thread on the

column. With the starter motor under repair and the starting handle unable to turn the crank, the only option was to remove the column and take it to him. This was quite a character-building exercise, as it took two days to remove it from the chassis. Connie's Hillman body differs subtly from the Lagonda original and the differences really complicated the removal process. The 20 TPI thread was slightly damaged, so Andrew cleaned it up in his long-bed lathe.

Whilst the new base was being machined and nickel-plated, I removed the starting handle. The two dogs that engage with the pin through the nose of the crank were built up and re-shaped and a new rotating grip made to replace the damaged original. At some point in the future, the pin will have to be replaced as well, but, with luck, it will last until the next engine overhaul.

At this point, I made a silly mistake. To remove the steering column, first the starter, then the dynamo, which is driven by the 'front' timing chain, had to come off to give me working space. When I gave the engine a trial turn with the repaired starting handle, I forgot that the pivoting dynamo mounting bracket was not locked up tight and, very much later, discovered that it had moved. The timing chain then jumped its sprockets and altered the timing. I shall return to this later.

With the thread cleaned up, the steering column was returned, still dismantled, as several ball bearings were missing from the ball races at the top and bottom of the shaft. An engineering company in my village stocks loose ball bearings, so it was re-assembled very quickly. Re-fitting it was as challenging as its removal and took just as long.

New rubber mats, to replace the very



*Left: Off with the old clutch plate and shaft*



*And on with the new!*

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worn carpets, were cut to shape and fitted. The damaged leather seats were repaired and re-coloured during odd moments between May and August. With leather that hasn't dried and become very hard, the whole process could probably be done in a week, but much of the time was spent applying leather reviver and softener to make it easier to work - and there were long gaps between some of my ministrations to allow the leather softener to do its work.

Lots of missing, incorrect, or damaged screws, nuts, bolts and studs were replaced with new items. I suspect the blacksmiths, who bought the car in 1929, converted it into a pick-up truck during the early 1940s and ran it until 1952, used whatever nuts and bolts they could get, since just about every variety of thread known to the motoring world was in the mix.

New BSF nuts and bolts are now very hard to find! Few companies make them and one of my local suppliers stopped stocking them years ago. Now I buy stocks of BSF nuts and bolts, and a few Whitworth sizes, whenever I can. Before you all rush to write rude letters reminding me that stainless steel versions are still available, I know this, but they look out of place on a car from the nickel-plate era.

Parts hunting continued during 2012 whilst I waited for 'farmed out' jobs to come back from specialists. The new rubber matting was found at Race Retro. I found a 1926 spares list and a smaller rear luggage trunk at the VSCC "Spring Start" meeting at Silverstone in April. The two large and rare box spanners to remove the valve cages, and a better oil pump, were found at the Spring Beaulieu Autojumble. Other large BSF spanners I needed and a suitable fuel filter were found at bargain prices at the June Newark Autojumble.

The 12/24 has a very simple wiring system, with just the one fuse in the 'field' circuit. I don't like this, so bought a suitably period-looking six-fuse block

at 'Classic Silverstone'. I then decided that an eight-fuse system would be better and exchanged the six for the eight-fuse version at Beaulieu. A better magneto and new rubber blades for the manual wiper came from the autojumble at Prescott in August. Autumn Beaulieu produced a pair of newly restored sidelights, a second manual wiper assembly, the unions for the new fuel filter and a rear passenger screen - which, I later discovered, wouldn't fit. A 'new-old-stock' vintage choke cable was found at the NEC Classic Car Show in October. I thought I had found five suitable wheels when I visited Christchurch, New Zealand, but they were from a Morris Cowley and wouldn't fit Connie. You can certainly see the world when hunting for parts for old cars.

When it seemed that all the work was done, the brakes were checked again and adjusted. Now it was time to check and re-set the engine timing.

This was not easy. The flywheel is mounted 90° out of line, so the timing marks were meaningless and it seemed that the valves were not opening and closing, or the magneto sparking when they should. It is a fixed head engine and the sparking plugs screw into the side of the combustion chamber, so accurate timing marks to find TDC are essential.

I couldn't adjust the camshaft timing with the engine in the chassis; so I removed it. "Motor Commerce", dated 23rd January 1926, says to allow one hour for two men to take the engine out. Working alone, it took around eight hours, not helped by Connie's Hillman body and finding many more 'foreign' nuts and bolts.

There are two timing cases, the front one drives the magneto, fan and dynamo and has to be removed to access the chain that drives the camshaft and the front chain. The rear chain is then lifted from the camshaft gear wheel, so that the camshaft and the crankshaft can be moved independently to set each in their

correct position to re-set the timing. All very straightforward in principle, but it involves a lot of dismantling.

Confession time again. Changing the ignition timing settings should have no effect at all on the cam timing, but I didn't know this, until the VSCC Library and Arthur Smythe (the current owner of the ex Jeremy Oates' 12/24) sent me copies of an article from "The Autocar", 18th April 1924, that clearly shows how the inner chain drives the outer chain, so changes to the magneto timing have no effect on the cam chain. These two articles arrived several hours apart on the same day, but about a month after I semi-dismantled my engine! However, the cam timing was three teeth out when I checked it...

I tried to remove the gearbox so that I could re-align the flywheel, but the gearbox input shaft and clutch centre plate stuck together inside the flywheel assembly. Teasing it all apart was difficult. The splines on the shaft and in the clutch centre plate were badly worn. There was 22° of movement between the two components, where some of each spline had worn away on both parts. There should be no play at all. I discovered that you can't remove the flywheel on a late 12/24 without lifting the block from the crankcase, so I have made my own set of timing marks.

In a recent Editorial, I recounted how Robin Aikman very generously gave me a centre plate for a late 12/24 plate clutch, which saved me both money and time, as 'all' I then needed to do was to have two new spring steel plates cut to replace the rusted originals and have a new shaft machined. One of the constant mesh gears is an integral part of the shaft; so its 'pair' had to be made as well. As the gears were very noisy, new 1st and 2nd gears were made too. All this was not cheap or done quickly, but there was no sensible alternative.

My meagre spares collection includes a good crank, with a rusty flywheel and plate clutch, but the

gearbox input shaft would have been totally different, as the clutch centre plate has a square hole, not splines. In just three years of production, the 12/24 apparently had three different clutch designs. Early models using the cone clutch, carried over from the 11-9; early plate clutches using the square ended shaft and the later models using the splined shaft.

The June 1925 12/24 Parts Catalogue pre-dates the plate clutch, which was introduced later that year. The April 1926 issue lists parts for the cone and the plate clutches, but only one centre plate, which then cost £1 2s 6d (£1 12.5p in today's money), happy days! The input shaft doesn't seem to be listed at all. Did the factory believe it would last forever?

Once the gearbox was rebuilt, the fiddly job of lining-up the splined shaft with the floating clutch plate began. Although my new clutch alignment tool and the old and battered shaft fitted without difficulty, manipulating the gearbox to slide it into place was a long, uncomfortable job. Once in place, it and the engine were bolted back in the chassis, another slow task.

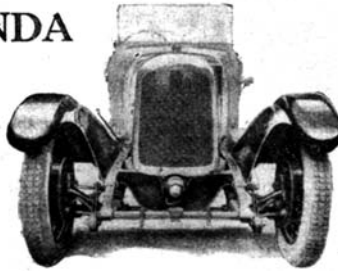
There is still some, mainly cosmetic, work to be done. The wings need some serious repairs to splits and dents. My fuse panel has yet to be fitted. The Hillman bonnet doesn't fit the Lagonda radiator properly. One CAV headlamp shell is covered in cracks and a local specialist is attempting to repair it, but he is taking forever. If he fails, I shall have to find a better one somewhere. Do you have a spare CAV shell, stamped "Small NR" on its underside?

Connie really needs new rear shafts and the propshaft splines are worn. I have a half shaft, which, I hope, will replace one, broken and welded decades ago and now a little too short! The 1926 spares catalogue lists three different half shafts, but gives no indication as to which fits which specific model. The factory would match the parts you ordered to the 'car number' you quoted.



## A NEW LAGONDA SIX.

*Overhead-valve 2½-litre Engine  
installed in the Largest Model  
produced by its makers for  
1927.*

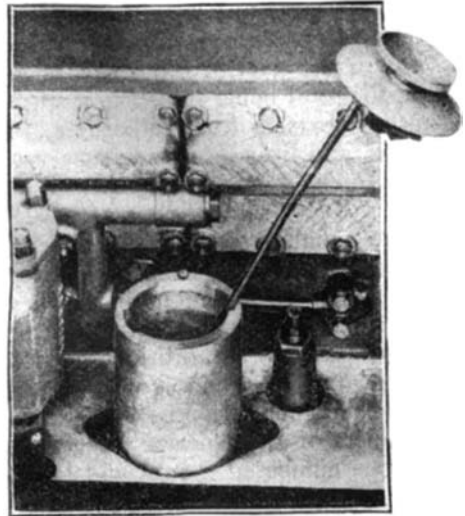


### SPECIFICATION.

ENGINE: 16-65 h.p., six cylinders, 65 x 120 mm. (2,389 c.c.), Tax, £16. Overhead valves, detachable head.  
TRANSMISSION: Single dry-plate clutch, four-speed gear box, spiral bevel final drive.  
SUSPENSION: Half-elliptic springs.  
BRAKES: On four wheels.  
WHEELS: Detachable wire with 31 x 5½ in. tyres.  
WHEELBASE: 10ft. 9in. Track, 4ft. 8in.  
PRICE: Chassis, £570; Saloon, £795.

LAST YEAR LAGONDA produced a four-cylinder car which, for smoothness and performance would be extremely hard to beat, and its chassis was specially designed for the owner-driver, the grease gun nipples being located on the chassis side where they were immediately accessible, the oil filter of such type that the contents of an oil can could be poured in at once without waiting, and there were other items which made a distinct appeal to the practical motorist.

This year the firm have gone a step further and have produced a rather larger engine, of 65 x 120 mm (2,389 c.c.), with six cylinders, for the same chassis. The new engine is a neat, rectangular block, the cylinders being cast in one with the upper portion of the crank case, while the head is a single separate casting. In the side of the crank case is a camshaft which runs submerged in oil, each cam operating a rocking lever in the cup end of which is the ball end of a push rod extended upwards to another lever on an axis shaft above the head. The upper rocking lever is provided with the usual adjustable cup on the push rod end and a hardened roller which forms the wearing surface at the valve end. All the push rods are within the engine casting and so out of sight.



*Oil filler of the Lagonda: the top will accommodate the contents of a quart tin, the filler lid being combined with the dip stick.*

### Strength and Rigidity where Required

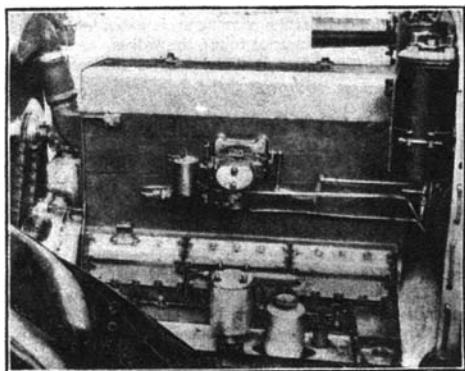
From the crankshaft an inverted toothed chain drives the camshaft, the chain being kept at the correct tension by a strong, single leaf spring which makes contact with the back of the links as the chain runs, and is both automatic and simple. From the timing gear also is driven a substantial skew gear actuating a transverse shaft, on one end of which is the magneto, with the contact maker facing to one side, high enough to be plainly visible and conveniently placed for adjustment.

To the crankshaft forward end is attached the dynamo, which projects from below the radiator and is made so that its shaft can be used for the starting handle at need. The coupling between the armature shaft and the crankshaft is a substantial hardened dog, adequately held by ball races of considerable size: the dynamo cover can be removed in a few seconds, exposing the brush gear and the commutator, should these need attention.

The crankshaft is one of the largest, at all events as regards the diameter of its crank pins and journals that has ever been fitted to an engine of this type, and is held in seven substantial bearings, its size being, it is claimed, sufficient to guarantee rigidity and therefore eliminate vibration without the aid of a special damper, though the armature of the dynamo serves, to a certain extent, in place of a damper.

### **Effective Lubrication Arrangements**

On the camshaft side, driven by skew gearing, is a rot-plunge pump with its oil supply adjustment. This pump sucks from a filter placed high on the side of the crank case in a position where it can be withdrawn with the utmost ease, and the lubricant, after passing through the filter and pump, is fed to a gallery pipe supplying all the main bearings and then through drilled channels in the crankshaft to the big ends, a certain quantity of oil is by-passed all the time through a pressure filter in a cylinder bolted to the engine side of the dashboard alongside the vacuum tank, which it greatly resembles. By this means the oil is regularly cleansed by



*The six cylinder engine, showing the clean appearance of the cylinder block. The chambers between the engine arms are the oil filter and the suction filter .*

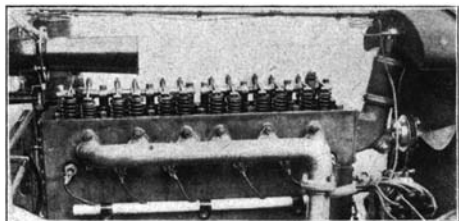
a design of filter which, it is claimed, removes all impurities.

A further supply of lubricant is forced to the skew gears for the magneto drive and to the hollow axis shaft for the overhead rocking levers. A twin choke tube Cox carburettor of the latest pattern feeds the inlet passages which are cast in the head, one branch feeding the three forward cylinders, another those to the rear, the carburettor being bolted to the mouth of the passages with an interposed flange which is used to take a lead pipe for the vacuum tank, and a second pipe for the vacuum operated windscreen wiper.

As in the previous engine, the oil filler cap is a cylindrical affair sufficiently large to take the contents of the usual small oil tin, which can thus be emptied into the filler instantly and will then slowly find their way down into the base chamber, thereby saving the driver much time. The filler is placed close to the suction filter, and its lid, which is held in place by a bayonet attachment, carries a dip stick showing the level of oil in the sump.

## Clean, Neat and Accessible

Close to the filler also is a special control which, when necessary, opens an oil drain valve in the bottom of the sump, the driver neither bending down not getting dirty when engaged in the process of opening it, nor can the valve clog in the irritating manner often experienced with a tap.



*Off side of the engine with the valve cover removed. A neat exhaust manifold is employed, leading the gases down the front.*

Water is circulated by thermosyphon, passing round the valve ports and passages and completely round each cylinder, which accounts for the impressive size of the jackets. The overhead valve gear is concealed beneath the usual aluminium cover. On the right-hand side is a plain exhaust branch coupled to the exhaust pipe proper near the radiator, well away from the floorboards.

Aluminium B.H.B. pistons are standard, the connecting rods being steel stampings with the usual white metal big ends, and the combustion chambers are extended fore and aft to give ample clearance around the valves. At one side of the combustion space is the orifice for the reception of the spark plug. The lower portion of the engine, it should be noted, is an aluminium casting. As regards

detail, provision has been made for carrying the oil can, jack and jack handle in special clips close to the engine under the bonnet. The remainder of the chassis is the same as the two-litre car. That car, by the way, is being continued unaltered for next year and a short test proved that it has improved considerably, particularly as regards slow running in top gear and silence. One of the features of the chassis, as before, is the very large pulleys employed to compensate the cable brakes, whilst the steering is very light and the suspension excellent.

The new six cylinder car will be sold at £795, with a five-seater saloon body. The only modification of importance in the older 14.60 h.p. model is the provision of a new type clutch operation by means of which the clutch shaft collar being thereby freed from anything but the direct thrust.

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# August Grasis II - November 27 2012

*Submitted by Don Armacost, Jr*

August Grasis II of South Padre Island, Texas, and Weatherby Lake, Missouri, passed away on November 27, 2012 at the age of 87. August lived the American dream, building his life and his legacy in the USA after escaping Soviet occupied Latvia in 1944.

He married Ruta in 1950 and founded Grasis Corporation in 1964 to become America's leading microwave tower company.

Along the way he and Ruta raised three children, won many sailboat races at Weatherby Lake, competed in national skiing competitions and

collected the finest Bordeaux wines.

After he retired, he restored and drove Studebakers, Jaguars, Porsches and Lagondas in events all over the world. He gave back to his Latvian homeland by establishing a foundation to help retired people in Latvia and contributed generously to the Latvian summer camp at Garezers.

His smile, laugh and zest for life will be missed by Ruta, his wife of 61 years, his three children, Mara Grasis Garton, August III, and Nora Kristina Jenkins, 10 grandchildren, 6 great grandchildren and many friends.



*John Cobb in the Lagonda in the 1934 Ards TT.*



# Letters

Dear Ken,

The 1920s and 30s were not only a golden age for Lagonda but also for popular music. The music had melody and the lyrics were literate. The Piccadilly Dance Orchestra under Michael Law are the leading exponents of the popular music of the period and they have an annual ball at the Cafe de Paris in Leicester Square each February. In 2011 and 2012 we met the guest of honour, Mrs. Joyce Stone, the widow of the famous pre-war band leader Lew Stone. He was one of the very top band leaders of the period, born in 1898, and he died in 1969.

Also present in 2011 was Tony Staveacre who had just written a biography of Lew Stone and I was able to buy a copy. The book has various illustrations and one of them is a picture of his Lagonda CTN 27 with his wife standing beside it. The caption reads 'the two loves of Lew's life'. Joyce Stone came from a very different background because her father C. P. Newman was Chairman of Smiths Industries who made (among many other things) the instruments for Lagonda and most British cars. She did have music in common with Lew because she was studying music at the Royal College of Music when they met.

Mrs. Stone did not come to the event this year because at the age of 100 she has moved into sheltered accommodation. When we spoke in 2011 and 2012 she had clear and happy memories of the Lagonda. She said that she had often driven the car in England and on the Continent. She

thought that Lew Stone did not buy the car new but he had it when they were married in 1937 and kept it for the rest of his life.

I see that the car is still in the Club and that it is an M35 Rapide, now belonging to Graham Brice, member 896. The photograph in the book indicates that the car is a saloon although it is not really possible to see anything of the coachwork behind the windscreen. I see that it is now listed as a tourer. The photograph in the book must have been taken in the 1960s because in the background I can see a Triumph saloon of that period.

Yours sincerely

**Brian Cook**

Dear Ken

I was recently touring southern Spain when I stumbled across this bar in Calpe.

The manager knew nothing about Lagondas but apparently the first owner had a Lagonda and clearly was a true enthusiast!

Kind regards

**Jamie Dutton-Forshaw**

Hi Ken

Thought you'd like to see an edible gift I received recently at my leaving do from my last job.

Driving it is a piece of cake but it does suffer from icing...

Regards

**Stephen Carter**

*See next page for the two pictures mentioned above.*

**K.P.P.**



# EXCELLENCE



*Some of the cars that have recently passed through our workshop*

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e-mail: [bishopgray@msn.com](mailto:bishopgray@msn.com)



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