



**THE MAGAZINE OF THE  
LAGONDA CLUB  
Number 241 Summer 2014**

# DAVID AYRE



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

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## FRONT COVER:

*Peter Henson's DB 2.6 Lagonda shows the flag Down-Under! Photo by Ken Painter.*

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# From the Driving Seat

*Roger Seabrook*

LAGONDA SALOONS, ESPECIALLY those of the vintage era to 1931, are quite rare these days. The body structure - particularly the fabric covered Weymann type- was not destined to last long if the car was kept outside. Even those that were garaged were likely to rot somewhere, as water could bypass the seals in the doors and windscreen causing the wadding to become permanently damp. Transport on cold wet days is less appealing in an open car especially when one gets older, even if the hood and side-screens are up. Therefore, unlike our preference when young, our desire now might be for the acquisition of a saloon for use in inclement weather.

It was therefore a real pleasure to receive a visit from Tom Wilcox (and his grandson Charlie), and their 2-litre high chassis 'Honeymoon Coupe'. Charlie is a real enthusiast, helping with all sorts of tasks his Grandad sets him, and clearly enjoys himself. It was interesting to study the high quality period fittings inside the car, particularly the folding rear seats - beautifully made. That one of these cars survives would be something of a miracle but, of course, there are two (the other owned by John & Susie Batt). Both cars attended the Spring Tour, and they are in fine condition, as you will see later.

During our discussions on the saloon, and my low chassis car, Tom mentioned the rebuild of his radiator, and how it came back from the restorer with crimp marks where the shell is joined to the side panels, with abrasive swirls instead of a deep polish, and a loss

of fit to the bonnet. This was exactly what happened to my radiator, and it turned out we had used the same firm. On my unit the mounting castings had been attached with long screws instead of rivets, the bottom outlet bolts were cross-threaded, and black silicone sealant (in copious quantities) had been used to seal the outlet joints. The badge had been attached with damaged screws, one of which was steel, and the shell looked as if it had been attacked with a Brillo pad! I had to spend more money getting another specialist to rectify the problems and restore the fit as best he could. The radiator is so prominent that it must be in the best possible condition, and the shell treated with great care as it is easily scratched and dented. It is also prone to metal fatigue after nearly ninety years! The Club has been made aware of this company, so it is worthwhile checking before you lay out a fortune on a rebuild!

We have been experiencing the occasional sticking of the exhaust valves in the 2-litre, which at first I thought to be ethanol induced, but now I'm not so sure. The valves and guides are reasonably new, and the deposit is like varnish. I have found that acetone can be used to remove it, and it can be done without removal of the head. A morning's work every 2000 miles seems to do the trick. I am trying a lead based additive, and this seems to be working. Has anyone else experienced this problem? I have been told to replace the guides (steel) with a better material, so this is probably the long term solution.

***Last date for copy for the Autumn magazine is  
... FRIDAY 17th October 2014 ...***

# Rapier Register & Lagonda Club 37th Suffolk Dinner. Celebrating the Rapier's 80th anniversary

*John & Susie Batt report from the White Lion,  
Aldeburgh*

LAST YEAR THE annual dinner weekend arrived with heavy snow, blizzards, and blocked roads, such that not a single Lagonda attended! What a difference this April, as warm conditions encouraged 14 cars to the three activities planned by local organisers Mike and Ann Pilgrim. We planned to test our Rapier FHC, finally running well after cylinder head problems. Our weekend started on the Friday morning for the 115 mile cross-country run to Aldeburgh, a seaside location famous for fresh fish, prawns and essential crab sandwiches!

Saturday dawned a superb day, hot and sunny, which was most welcome as there was an open invitation to a vintage 'cruise in' at the White Lion pub in Lower Ufford. After a short pleasant drive down delightful narrow Suffolk lanes, we were amazed to find hundreds of pre-war cars of 'our type' parked up in the field by the pub.

There, for ones enjoyment, a hog roast cum pork barbecue, beer tent, and live music had been laid on. It seemed everyone in the old car world in the near vicinity had turned up! Club member James Woollard - today in his yellow Lancia Lambda along with Gerry - was a prime mover organising the event which was apparently celebrating it's 10th year.

Several members from the Register and Lagonda Club over for the evening dinner were seen chatting and admiring the many diverse vehicles on show. We encountered the Merricks, Martin Mountford, Colin Mallett, Warren King and John Furlong, Ian and Mary

Shipman, Roland Grindell (this time driving his 3-Litre Sunbeam Tourer), the Daltons, and several others, too many to mention! It was nice to see the prototype Blown 2-Litre once again, and looking very smart. Traditionally, there is an invitation for tea and buns at the Pilgrim's on the Saturday afternoon, 'millionaires shortcake' being Ann's speciality - not to be missed!

The annual dinner has been held at the White Lion Hotel in Aldeburgh for some years, since moving from Woodbridge when the venue there closed. The Lion has recently been nicely refurbished, and is now much improved, but retains it's former charm. Dinner menus (and tickets) were provided by Ian White, and 40 guests sat down to beef bourguignon, prior to which Mike introduced first-time attendees Barry and Rachel Halton, and Alastair and Heather Boyes. He also gave a special welcome to our Club spares officer Robin Cooke, joined by assistant Leah Knee.

It is amazing how noisy a room becomes as urgent chatter begins, then quieters with the enjoyment of good food. After the meal and salutations to the Queen (and, at our table, also Prince George!) the highlight of the evening arrived with the introduction of John Sword our guest speaker, who was to talk on 'Lagonda in my life'.

John started by amusing us as, when it was announced over a year ago he would be taking over from Jonathan Oppenheimer as Lagonda Club

Chairman, Mike Pilgrim was in immediate contact to book him as the speaker for 2014! His first Lagonda was a blown 2-Litre while still at Cambridge, however he could not get on with the supercharger so it was removed. The car was used regularly, and took him with wife-to-be Rosalind on a return trip to southern Spain. He said the car survives and is believed to be in Germany. This prompted a comment on the number of 'our' cars residing on the Continent and elsewhere overseas (Strength of the Euro?). Following a lull in Lagonda ownership of some years, and after selling various classics he began a collection of pre-war Lagondas currently numbering nine vehicles, all with the emphasis on originality. In his new capacity as Club Chairman John then commented on present times and the future direction on the Club, requesting members to contact him with suggestions and ideas. He concluded after about twenty minutes to a warm round of applause.

The award of the 'Gary Guiver Gong' was next on the agenda, an essential part of the proceedings. Originating as a prize won by Gary driving his Rapier on a rally from Hobart to Woodbridge, Tasmania, and presented to the Register at the time of the Woodbridge dinners, it has been awarded to the driver of the Rapier covering the greatest distance to the function. This year it was none other than John Sword who came in his Eagle Rapier 2 seater, Ros riding shotgun in her modern, all the way from Chipping Norton, some 160 miles. The 'Gong' was presented this year by previous winner Martin Mountford (see picture in the Spring magazine).

After the presentation, Mike announced a change to the Award. Since this popular dinner is now attended by members of both Clubs almost on a 50/50 basis, from 2015 any Lagonda will be eligible to win the 'Gong'.

As usual, the evening wound down with coffee and drinks in the lounge then to bed about 1am.

After overnight rain Sunday was cold but dry. Robin Cooke had kindly offered to open the spares store at Johnson's Farm in Carlton, and this was taken up by everyone. Tea and biscuits provided, there were Lagondas of all sizes parked everywhere as one searched for that specific part! Len Cozzolino, with his son, came in the rare 16/65, Mike Pilgrim in his M45 saloon, Ann Pilgrim with their Rapier DHC, John Furlong driving his Rapier Abbott Tourer (ex. Jim Ruggles, and which we used to own), Colin Mallett in his high chassis 2Litre now fitted with an overhead inlet cylinder head, our Rapier, a number of others plus some moderns. Barry Halton left smiling, having found a steering component for his 14/60. Robin did some good trade that Sunday morning, our thanks to him and Leah Knee.

The next stop was for lunch at the Saxted Mill Pub. The run from Carlton via Saxmundum is about 10 miles, so we had a Lagonda convoy! Susie and I followed Colin Mallett, with Len Cozzolino bowling along in the 16/65. Tony Wood was seen to be enjoying himself chauffeuring Ann Pilgrim in the family Rapier DHC and comparing the drive with his own, much lighter, 2 seater Ranalagh. On arrival at Saxted, 8 Rapiers and 5 big Lagondas were parked up. Warren King was missing, but turned up shortly with a grinning John Boyes as passenger, so making an excellent total of 9 Rapiers and 14 cars in total. David Wall had promised to fly over in his Tiger Moth, but if he did we missed him unless there was a weather problem at his end. Pity.

And so to lunch. An excellent carvery is offered at the Saxted Mill and good Adnams beer. This year was no different with large plates of food observed at the various tables, being enjoyed by Messrs Metcalfe, and Smeal, the Whites, Daltons and Savills et al, proving that even after Saturday's dinner, then morning breakfast, Lagonda owners can certainly eat for England!

Soon it was time to leave. We followed the Halton's 14/60 towards Stowmarket, the A14 west and so back home to Maulden. We were pleased our car ran well! Another excellent Suffolk

weekend in good company with thanks to the Pilgrims for their organisation. Roll on 2015 when the date will be Saturday 28th March again at the White Lion Hotel. Book your room NOW!



*The event included a visit to the Spares Emporium, courtesy of Robin Cooke*



*The Batts' Rapier FHC next to the Pilgrims' M45 saloon*



# The Lagonda Spring Tour

## *Or 'It's Not What You Know, It's Who You Know'*

LAST YEAR, IN a moment of tremendous bravery, Charles and Emma Hobbins volunteered to pick up, for one year, the “Fitton Mantle” of Spring Tour organisation. Lagondaristes need not have been concerned that this would be a hard act to follow. Our new leaders discharged their duties with notable, and most enjoyable success.

The 2014 Tour involved a trip to “foreign parts” and as soon as the border was crossed this became very clear. No longer were we only invited to “SLOW” at the approach to a sharp corner. Swiftly we learned that the advice was now “ARAF”. Those who, before arriving in Wales, were worried about words containing 27 letters, seemingly few vowels, and a great many double ff’s, ll’s and dd’s need not have worried. Firstly, the natives were not only very friendly but also most welcoming. Secondly, some of the concerns over language started to evaporate, when it was found that a number of basic and frequently required words in the Welsh language were readily understandable. For instance “traffic” was “traffig”, “tea” was “te”, “coffee” was “coffi” and “phone” was “ffon”. Those of more mature years may have found that, with the passage of time, it may be necessary to travel shorter distances before seeking “comfort”. Should this stage be reached it is, however, imperative to learn the difference between “Merched” and “Dynion”.

Our leaders had chosen the Portmerion Hotel as the base for the tour. It was a very special and truly delightful centre to choose for the event. Portmerion was the creation of the brilliant, if enigmatic, architect Clough

Williams-Ellis. The original residence on the Estate was now the main Hotel building, providing splendid accommodation. Those who were not in the main building enjoyed a variety of different suites close by, all of which had great character. The situation of Portmerion, in its 70 acres of sub-tropical woodlands, on the tidal River Dwyry, is stunning. Mountains rise up across the river and the sands of the estuary are exposed and re-covered with the ebb and flow of the tide.

Some 45 people were expected, but inevitably one or two at the last moment were prevented from attending. David and Francesca Rowe were detained by sad family circumstances, from joining the tour. Jeremy and Margaret Oates had set off in good time in their 2 litre, but had suffered a mechanical derangement on the journey and had had to complete the trip by returning for a “modern”. John and Joan Fitton had also arrived modern, due not to a problem with their 2 litre, but the necessity to take things steady after issues with one of John’s hips, into which the Good Lord had failed to build a suitable “universal joint”.

Although the German motor industry and its subsidiaries had provided modern conveyances for those not able to attend in the products of Staines, the Lagonda banner was held high throughout with an excellent turnout of proper motor cars. Championing the Lagonda marque, it was a particular pleasure to see Robin and Mairwyn Colquhoun back again on a Spring Tour. Their 2 litre Tourer had brought them safely from Welshpool to Portmerion. The hotel is well known to

them as they are regular visitors, and anyone returning to the hotel could well profit from their knowledge as to which rooms have the best view and facilities.

In time-honoured tradition, Lagondaristes assembled in the main bar for a champagne reception on Sunday evening. The usual steadily rising conversation level in the bar was cut short by Charles, who called for attention and welcomed all. He was delivering a brief outline of the plans for the tour, when a member of staff stepped forward with an urgent hand-delivered envelope which was addressed to him.

The communication was opened, and Charles revealed that it had been written by a Mrs. Trellis of North Wales, who had intended personally to welcome the Lagonda tourists. However, it had come to her notice that there were members attending who did not pay Road Fund Tax to use their Lagondas on the highway, and that some of those elderly cars had continued to be used on the road after the expiration of their MOT's! To cap it all she had obtained photographic evidence that one member attending had employed his 8 year old grandson to replace the repaired petrol tank on his 2 litre only four days before the event. In the light of these irregularities, and the blatant exploitation of child labour, she could not bring herself to greet members as she had originally intended.

A duly chastened group then attended, what quickly became, a most enjoyable and lively opening dinner.

On Monday morning we began to realise the importance of knowing the right people to enjoy a Lagonda Tour. Charles and Emma had arranged a visit to the village of Portmerion, not led by a mere tour guide, but by Meurig Jones the Portmerion Attractions Manager. It quickly became very clear that Meurig was a great enthusiast for Portmerion.

He explained how Clough Williams-Ellis had saved and collected a vast array of architectural items gleaned, not only from ancient buildings which were suffering from the indignity of modernisation, but from sources such as war damaged buildings as well. These items were cleverly incorporated into buildings already on site, or in completely new structures which he designed. Over many years the Italianate village was built round a central square and became widely known as the scene for the TV series, "The Prisoner".

After coffee the cars moved off to head for Aberdaron on the Llyn Peninsular. Here many had lunch on the terrace of the Ty Newydd Hotel which offered wonderfully fresh seafood meals. In spite of the road book warnings of the possibility of poor weather on the Peninsular, it would seem that the Hobbins connections with the Weather Gods were sufficiently good for the visitors to be provided with plenty of sunshine.

The afternoon took the tour to Plas Yn Rhiw, a small 16th century manor house, now in the care of the National Trust, but bought many years ago by two spinster sisters from Nottingham who had fallen in love with the area. They slowly repurchased the surrounding land and gave the entire property to the Trust to keep as a whole for the quiet enjoyment of all in the future.

Tuesday again dawned bright and clear and remained so as the Tour departed for Anglesey. After a number had left the hotel, John Batt and 'Yours Truly', who had arrived in the only two remaining 2 litre High Chassis Close Coupled saloons, noted the space vacated immediately in front of the hotel. Both cars were moved into place with the hotel as a fitting background for a very pleasing photograph to be taken. Martin and Janice Sumner acted as Good



*8 year old Charlie assisting with petrol tank repairs*



*The two Honeymoon Coupés at the Portmerion Hotel*

Samaritans and gave John Brown and Kay a lift in their 3 litre, as John's car suffered mechanical problems that, after much work, could not be rectified in the car park. Eventually it was loaded and despatched to the Northern Lagonda Works, by a well known motor rescue organisation. However, not before they had completely disregarded John's instructions as to the nature of the problem. This resulted in a "man in a van" fruitlessly being sent. The driver quickly confirmed to base that his van, while full of metric spanners did not contain the 80 year old spares needed.

We crossed Robert Stevenson's 1850 Britannia Bridge to arrive at the Hidden Gardens of Plas Cadnant. The cars circled round the area in front of the reception buildings and parked in line to provide a fine vista of Lagondas. Here, once again, we recognised the importance of knowing the right people. Shortly after our arrival, David Lea-Wilson, The High Sherriff of Gwynedd and Anglesey arrived to welcome us. He did not bring his 1926 Sunbeam, perhaps because his sword might have got in the way of making silent gear changes. None the less he arrived in full ceremonial dress with bejewelled buttons on a very smart black velvet suit, buckled patent leather shoes and the shiniest sword imaginable. He produced his notes from a fine red leather case and made us all feel very welcome. He then joined us for a fascinating tour of the gardens by yet another 'top man' - this time, Anthony Tavener, the owner of the estate in which the house and gardens were situated. The site had become totally overgrown when acquired by Anthony and the work done in the intervening years was overwhelming in scope, cost and scale. The determination required to restore the gardens, both the formal ones and the informal valley gardens, had to be seen to be appreciated. The Georgian house was splendidly positioned, with

extensive views. The normal Georgian facade incorporating an odd number of window openings across the front had not been employed by the Irish Architect who designed the house. The even number of openings used resulted in the front door having to be built out of centre, a fact that did not seem to have worried previous owners, or indeed Anthony Tavener. Attractive restoration of the home farm buildings had been made resulting in some prize winning holiday accommodation. The return was made to Portmerion over Thomas Telford's Menai suspension bridge, still carrying modern day traffic after almost 200 years of service.

That evening all were transferred by mini-bus up the hill, through the estate to Castle Deudraeth. Here, after drinks in the open air on a lovely evening, we took dinner in the castle itself.

Wednesday saw departure for Plas Brondanw, the family home of the Williams -Ellis', which was inherited by Clough 106 years ago. It suffered a disastrous fire during his residence, but had been completely restored. The house together with the "whimsical" gardens, were wonderfully placed to take full advantage of the position overlooking the river valley, with mountains as a backdrop. After leaving Plas Brondanw, the road book prepared by Emma, and so beautifully illustrated with her drawings, took us first on 'A' roads, followed by a series of 'B' roads. The instructions, with no revelation as to what lay ahead, innocently advised 'slight left' on to a smaller road with a 'No Lorries' sign. This smaller road, measuring about seven feet across and full of patched potholes, led across a relatively flat but elevated landscape above cloud level. Suddenly the topography changed dramatically and we were at the top of a precipitous descent into the valley below. There was no possibility of turning the car and





*Now this will really impress the lady!*



*Lovely Portmerion. There are worse places to be a prisoner!*

retracing our steps. The only way was forward. In a navigational rally, the VSCC would have described it as a 'white' road. In fact it was a 'white knuckle' road. As the car pointed steeply into the depths, hundreds of feet below, all conversation ceased. It was a matter of gratitude that the 2 litre rear brake drums contain a total of eight rather than four brake shoes. The braking effect using 1st gear was augmented by judiciously alternating the hand and foot brake controls. The passenger constantly pressed with her right foot hard down on an imaginary brake pedal. By great good fortune, nothing was encountered in either direction and, with more than a little relief, the valley floor was eventually reached without incident. Conversation was once again re-established.

Our destination was Gwydir Castle, and again our leaders arranged for no less than the proprietor herself to greet and guide us. Gwydir has very ancient foundations, but the current buildings, with alterations and additions over the centuries, date from around 1500. Judy Corbett gave us a fascinating tour of the castle. The story of the endeavours of Judy and her husband was inspirational. Earlier we had seen restorations on the tour which had been substantially funded, but Gwydir had been brought back from the dead on an absolute shoe string by Judy and Peter, driven by invincible determination and will, to overcome the problems they faced. Judy outlined the story, but to understand the enormity of the restoration achieved it was necessary to buy and read a copy of Judy's delightful book on the subject entitled "Castles in the Air". Tea and biscuits were served in the garden with yet more lovely sunshine, together with one of the many peacocks that live at Gwydir. When all were contentedly sipping their tea an incident occurred which caused some commotion. A

member of the Club, whose name must, of course, remain a closely guarded secret, approached the peacock from behind and stood on its very long tail feathers. With a piercing scream the bird leapt into the air and spun round to establish who had dared to step on its proud plumage. Cups of tea and biscuit crumbs flew in all directions, while the instigator of the incident moved swiftly back to his chair, with a grin of mischievous delight spreading from ear to ear.

With congratulations to the Corbetts on their monumental dedication at Gwydir, the Lagondaristes returned to Portmerion by way of a fine run to Betws y Coed, and up over Capel Curig.

All too soon it was the final dinner at the hotel. Richard Reay-Smith eloquently expressed the thanks of all to Charles and Emma for the considerable work that they had put into arranging such an enjoyable Lagonda tour.

It is always a pleasure to look back into the history of our cars and, as all prepared for departure, Clive and Shirley Dalton drove south to Solva. The object of the journey was to find the cottage which had belonged to a previous owner of their car. They photographed the Lagonda next to the cottage and the current residents were delighted to receive a copy of the picture.

We stayed on for an extra day and took the 50 mile round trip to Caernarvon on the Welsh Highland Railway. The steam hauled journey on the narrow gauge line, through some stunning scenery, was most enjoyable, but one ingredient seemed missing. Suddenly we realised what was absent - The Hobbins weren't there. We no longer had an immediate introduction to the most important people involved - we didn't even know the name of the engine driver!

**Tom Wilcox**



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*A smart line up of cars on the Spring Tour*

# A Spring 'Jaunt'

## *Kenwick Park Hotel, Louth.*

LAGONDA CLUB MEMBER and M45R Tourer owner John Thring sent out an email, inviting a few like minded vintage car owners to a run around Lincolnshire. What a nice idea! Paul and Margaret Elliott from Wingerworth ,who own an extremely smart 14/60 Semi-Sports Tourer, arranged the hotel in Louth and proposed routes for two days touring. There were thirty eight participants driving a range of proper cars, mostly two-up and, apart from the odd shower, we enjoyed good weather and some fine motoring. David and Mary Hill, also from Wingerworth, left their 1925 Lagonda 12/24 Saloon at home, preferring to use the 3Litre Tourer for the weekend.

Margaret had planned some WW2 interests for us, firstly with a visit to the famous Petwood Hotel in Woodall Spa which was the 617 'Dam Busters' Squadron officers Mess. Next, a call at the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre in nearby East Kirkby, which is the home of the only privately owned 'working' Lancaster Bomber. This plane, named 'Just Jane', is fully operational but does not have an air-worthiness certificate. On special days it will taxi up and down the grass runway. It is quite a piece of kit when you get right up close. The Lancaster crews were certainly very brave men.

A call at a very smart Garden Centre on our way back to the hotel near Louth was a necessary essential to pleasure the ladies!

After enjoying excellent food at dinner at the Kenwick Park Hotel, and a lively social evening, we set off next morning for the sea-side joys of Mablethorpe. A place for summer holiday visits many years ago from our family home in Sheffield, and it really has not changed in all that time! Anyone for a caravan break? Driving south along the coast road our second visit of the day was to see the unique five blade Windmill still operational in Alford. Most of us left with white flour dust on our clothes, but the view of the countryside from the high level balcony was quite stunning as the 'five blades' swooped round.

Coningsby, and the RAF Memorial Flight Collection was our final stop. What a fantastic place, housing second world war planes everyone must have seen flying on special days and national anniversary occasions. The most impressive plane on show is, again, the Avro Lancaster Bomber 'City of Lincoln' being one of only two flying examples in the world. The other is in Hamilton Ontario, Canada, and I can boast having seen both in the air!

A very enjoyable long weekend of driving and socialising which all too soon came to an end. Some of our group departed on Sunday evening in MG, Alvis 12/50, Riley, Singer Junior and McLaughlin - Buick, whilst the rest of us drove home on the Monday. Special thanks to the Elliotts for excellent organisation.

**John Batt**







*The Elliotts' handsome 14-60 Semi-Sports tourer*



*The Hills' 3-litre tourer*

# Le Tour de Bourgogne

## *Rodney Saunders samples some fine wine*

EVERY LAGONDA OWNER appreciates the importance of getting ones timing right, and none more so than Jonathan Oppenheimer. At the final dinner of the 2013 Northern Gathering in North Yorkshire, after Nigel Walder and I had each had several glasses of wine, he leant over and enquired, "As there is to be no Northern Gathering in 2014, it might be fun to take a few Lagondas down to Burgundy. Would you be prepared to help?" And so was born Le Tour de Bourgogne 2014.

Last November, Nigel and I drove down to Nuits St George where we met Jonathan, who had driven across from the Dordogne, and the three of us spent a couple of days planning the event. It soon became apparent that Beaune would be an ideal centre for Le Tour.

To cut a long story short, at the appointed time on 28th June, twelve Lagondas (a fine selection of M45s, Rapides, 3 Litres plus Mike Heins' 2 Litre) and one modern (Tim Sobey's Rapier having failed to get itself ready for the trip) arrived at the Hotel de la Poste in Beaune. Some had come direct from the UK while others had participated in the Fourgeres Rally which had finished a couple of days earlier;

It was the large indoor garage, with plenty of space for those wishing to clean their cars or needing to carry out running repairs, that had persuaded us that the Hotel de la Poste would be an ideal base for Lagonda-ists. And it proved to be an excellent choice with first-class accommodation, good food and staff that couldn't have been more helpful.

There was little time to relax after longish drives, as mini-buses arrived to transport the twenty-five participants in

Le Tour to the premises of Louis Jadot, which produces quality wine on an almost industrial scale. A tour was followed by dinner in the winery.

Despite adverse forecasts, the gods appeared to smile upon Le Tour. Thursday morning's bright and sunny conditions continued for the duration of our stay in Beaune. A guided tour of the town on foot was followed by a short drive to Verdun sur Le Doubs, where Le Caveau Restaurant provided an excellent lunch. This included Pôchouse Verdunoise, a local fresh water fish speciality comprising pieces of pike, perch, tench and eel cooked in a special white wine sauce which, we were told, had taken the patron's wife some five hours to prepare. After lunch there was just time for a quick visit to Château Pommard before returning to the hotel for the first Lagonda dinner.

On Friday morning we gathered at the premises of Olivier Leflaive. Here, after we had successfully parked the Chairman (see picture 1), we walked out into the vineyard where we were given a fascinating and informed account of the production of grapes for wine. I now know that vines planted in the fertile valleys are lazy and somnolent, and produce lots of leaves and cheap and cheerful wine. It is the vines that cling on for dear life to the tops of the hills, putting down roots up to fifty metres through strata of different materials in search of water, that produce the grapes for the prized Grand Cru wines. A born showman, whose ancestors had run the business for sixteen generations since 1692, Monsieur Leflaive himself conducted our tour of his winery, which was followed by a splendid wine tasting lunch.

The afternoon drive incorporated an optional visit to Château Rochepot. Dinner on Friday evening was the one meal for which participants were invited to make their own arrangements and to enjoy the delights of Beaune.

On Saturday morning we visited the family run winery of Guy Bocard. Monsieur Bocard has eight hectares of vines and is at the lower end of the range of sizes of Burgundy wine producers. The Lagondas were parked in his courtyard (see picture 2) while tasting was conducted in his dining room with his aged parents in attendance. The subsequent drive along the beautiful valley of the river Ouche ended in Barbirey sur Ouche where a delightful Irish lady runs the village café. By special request le plat du jour was the “duck shepherds pie” (I believe the French call it *Parmontier de Canard*) that the three of us had so much enjoyed

during our recce visit in November. On Saturday evening we enjoyed our second and final Lagonda dinner of Le Tour, for which the hotel kindly provided us with private dining facilities.

On Sunday morning, after saying our farewells to Beaune and to one another, it was time to head north. Most people had decided to take two days over the return journey, although at least one intrepid soul decided to do it in one. As far as I am aware all the Lagondas eventually returned to their respective homes, although Jonathan's ignition switch had to be reassembled several times, and I believe that others had dynamo problems on the way.

The most worrying aspect of Le Tour was the number of participants who enquired about the destination for the next Tour and when it would be held.



*Guy Bocard's winery at Mersault, Burgundy. The car occupants are busy indulging in extensive wine tasting!*



# Antipodean Adventures

## *Ken Painter goes "down under" - Part 1*

I RECENTLY ENJOYED a two-month holiday in New Zealand, followed by a two-week visit to members of the Australian Lagonda Group in New South Wales. The NZ visit was primarily a family holiday, to visit my daughter Ruth and her family, so it gets very little mention here!

The New Zealand part of the story is really about two remarkable coincidences. My daughter Ruth was shopping in Christchurch, when she met Michael Hedgman, the only Lagonda owner in the area. He recognised her after three very brief meetings in 2011, when he took both of us for a trip in his Lagonda 12/24, and when Ruth drove me to and from a vintage car rally, where I navigated for him. He asked after me, was told that I was due to arrive a few days later, and asked me to contact him. Ten days after I arrived, I navigated his 12/24 on a Club event for the second time.

It was termed a Homestead Run and took us to two very early farms, set up in the 19th century, and a long way from the usual tourist routes. There were 108 vintage and classic cars on the run, so the farms had been selected with great care, not many could cater for such a large number of visitors.

The first of the farms is one of the oldest in that area, and is many miles from a main road. We were made very welcome, and admired their beautiful house and gardens as we were given a fascinating talk on the history of the farm.

The second farm was equally remote and offered the additional attraction of a vineyard. One of their white wines had been awarded a gold medal in a national competition in 2007 and they still had a

few bottles left. I bought one and regretted this later. It was absolutely superb and I should have bought a case of it! We couldn't find a supplier in Christchurch, and now I can't remember the name of the vineyard...!

The farmers had been offered payment for entertaining such large numbers of old car owners, but both refused, asking the club to share the money between the hospital and the health centre in their local town, where we were to stop for lunch.

After our picnic lunches, we were joined by the Mayor and representatives from the hospital and health centre, when a formal presentation of two cheques was made and gratefully received. After short speeches by the club, the Mayor, and the two representatives, we began our long drive back to Christchurch.

There is a curious and totally natural grouping of rock formations along the road at one point, one is in the shape of a frog, the next a seal, and the last is remarkably like the rear view of three elephants! The road was narrow and winding at this point, with nowhere to park safely, so I was unable to stop and photograph them.

The Vintage Car Club owns a large plot of land outside the city, where they have their Clubhouse and a "Spares Shack". Club members donate unwanted spares to the club and they are sold to any buyers, with the money raised boosting club funds. I visited the Shack on my previous visit and again this time. I looked for a better headlamp shell for Connie, my 12/24, but had no luck. The volunteer, who helped me in my search, told me that he had worked for Lagondas in the mid 1960s. A group of the staff





*Michael Hedgman's 12-24 - in superb condition'*

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*Ken enjoys a drive in his old 16-80, which he owned when based in Singapore*



*Penn Bradley, Chris Aplin, Ken Painter and Alec McKernon, with Alec's DB 2.6*

made regular visits to a David Brown factory in Yorkshire to stamp out the chassis parts for Aston Martins and, in the factory where the Lagonda gears were hardened, he discovered a room filled with pre-war Lagonda body panels!

Now, 1965 is a long time ago and the panels had probably been there since David Brown's take-over in 1947, but I emailed David Brown Gears and asked if, by any chance the panels were still there. I received a very friendly reply and a promise that they would search their factories to see if they had survived. I haven't had a second email yet. It will be a miracle if they have, but it is certainly worth checking.

On 4th January, I flew on to Sydney, to begin a manic game of "pass the parcel", with me as the parcel! I had contacted Peter Henson, the organiser of the recently formed Australian Lagonda Group, telling him of my visit and saying that it would be good to meet as many Lagonda owners as possible. I had no idea of what I was about to experience!

Mike and Gail Truter met me at the airport. Mike is a long-time member of the Lagonda Club; we first met in Singapore in 1967, and in 1969 he bought my 16/80, which he still owns. I have no idea how far from Sydney his farm is, but it took many hours to reach it. On the following day, he invited me to drive my old car again. What a joy that was!

Mike has a small collection of vintage and classic cars, one is a 1925 or '26 Hillman saloon, first registered in 1926, but many of the panels and parts are stamped 1925. The body is by Chalmer and Hoyal, and Mike was convinced that the 1923 Hillman body on Connie is from the same coachbuilder. I have written another article, which goes into this in greater detail and, now that I have examined his car, I think he is right.

There are no other Lagonda owners for about 250 miles from Mike, so we spent our time looking at his cars, reminiscing about our past times together, and catching up on life since our Singapore days. All too soon, our time together came to an end and Mike and Gail drove me to Canberra to deliver me to Alec and Anne McKernon.

Alec owns a DB 2-6 Lagonda saloon, which he bought as a pile of pieces, after the previous owner died before he could restore it. He has a couple of classic Volvos as well. He and Anne hosted a dinner in a local restaurant for Mike, Gail and me. This was a great way for us to get to know each other and it proved to be the start of a very busy few days for Alec and me!

On our first full day, we visited the National Museum and then the War Museum. Both were fascinating, I learned a lot about the country in the first and, in the second, about Australia's support of Britain in many conflicts, from the Boer War to Afghanistan, not forgetting their contributions in two World Wars and Vietnam. The displays in the War Museum are particularly moving and many of them are brought to life with cine films made at the time, which are shown alongside the displays themselves.

That evening, a friend of Alec brought his vintage Bean tourer around. He had bought this from Alec and I had seen and admired a photo of it on his wall.

The next morning, Alec took me to meet another vintage car owner, who has a beautifully restored San Sebastian Salmson, inherited from his father. He is restoring a Cottin et Desgouttes tourer, that promises to be an imposing car when it is complete.

In the afternoon, we visited the Australian Houses of Parliament and were given a conducted tour, which was of particular interest to me, as Rachel,





*Chris Aplin's LG45 de-Ville*



*Penn Bradley's imposing 'Towns' Lagonda V8*



my older daughter, is a Parliamentary Aide to a Cornish MP. Last summer, she took me and two of her Cornish friends for a private tour of our own Houses of Parliament. Australia has a copy of the Magna Carta on display and I couldn't resist "swapping club hats" and informing them that, until very recently, the Maserati Club held its Committee Meetings in the house on Magna Carta Island, built on the spot where the Royal Seal was placed on it in 1215. Very confusingly, the tourist guide states that the Australian version dates from 1297.

Chris Aplin, a Lagonda Club member who owns an LG45 de Ville (just like Mark Yeoman's) and an early post-war Armstrong Siddeley tourer, lives a few streets from Alec, so we paid him a call in the evening and enjoyed a long chat about the cars. Chris has been restoring the LG45 for some time, but

there is still much to be done to restore it to its former glory. After we returned to Alec's home, we walked through the bush (don't call it a forest!) a few yards from the house and I was able to photograph a group of kangaroos. On my last full day with Alec and Anne, we visited another vintage enthusiast who owns fine examples of a vintage Armstrong Siddeley, a Model T Ford, a lovely veteran Overland, and an Indian motorcycle. When we returned to Alec's, Penn Bradley was waiting there, with his beautiful "Town's" Aston Martin Lagonda. He offered me a ride in it, but things suddenly became very busy, as Chris Aplin and his wife arrived and lunch was served. Somehow we were unable to find time for my promised ride before Penn had to leave.

*To be continued.*



*Ever seen a Bean before? You have now - this is a 14hp with Australian coachwork*

# Southern Area Activities-Spring 2014

## *Michael Drakeford reports*

### **WISBOROUGH GREEN-13TH APRIL**

Despite the prospect of bad weather, members were able to mainly dodge the showers and attend a convivial lunch at The Cricketer.

### **THE VICTORY, STAPLEFIELD 11TH MAY,**

and afterwards tea at Kathleen and Roger Learmonth's with a viewing of their car collection.

"Wow", "incredible", "what cars!". Just a few of the superlatives that were uttered by members, as they were shown the exemplary display of cars that Roger has collected over many years.

The meeting started at The Victory, where an agreeable lunch was enjoyed by a happy throng of Lagonda followers. New members, Scott and Melissa Samuel were with baby Claude, and are looking for either a M45/LG45/LG6 or a V12. Robin Saddler surprised us all by bringing his 1914 Rochet Schneider, which started life as a light commercial with twin rear wheels for WW1. After the war it was, allegedly, converted to the saloon, as seen today, for the Mayor of Lyon with the still-present braid, silk blinds, and bone door fittings. Perhaps we can persuade him to bring her again for more to see?

On leaving Staplefield, our convoy travelled the short distance to see the car collection at Old Deaks near Cuckfield. Members were taken to a large barn where part of the collection of 18 cars is kept. With a discreet and selective number attending, Roger was able to lead the party around, explaining the features of the cars, a history about how he had come across them, and the work needed to get them to the state in which they are now maintained. All the cars are in super condition, and some also have

sensible improvements for modern driving. To name but a few, they included a 1950 Bradford light truck with rod brakes and no ignition key, a Jaguar Mk 5 DHC, and a very rare 1934 Rover Speed Fourteen Tourer.

We moved along to the cars kept in individual garage blocks; these included an even more interesting part of this eclectic collection. Present were an SS100 Jaguar, a Mk II 289 Cobra, the unique 1951 Barris XK120 Jaguar, an American Auburn Supercharged Speedster and, of course, the grand LG6 Lagonda. Added to this is a full set of Jaguar XKs, which is the heart of the collection and reflects Roger's main passion.

After the effort of wallowing in a spirit of exotics, what else could we do but to succumb to the charms of Kathleen and accept a glass of champagne, followed by strawberries and cream, and tea and cakes. We were joined by Jaguar-owning friends of our hosts who, too, were able to enjoy the setting at Old Deaks, bathed in glorious afternoon sunshine. We can but hope that Lagonda members will be invited back again one day.

Our thanks go to Roger and Kathleen.

### **BROOKLANDS DOUBLE TWELVE - 14TH & 15TH JUNE**

The Double Twelve has become an event integral to the VSCC calendar, with over 150 cars taking part and a public crowd of around 5,000 over the two days.

The Lagonda Club was, this year, represented by Christopher and Kate Hobbs in their splendid 2 litre low chassis speed model, Martin Tinsley in his 2-litre S/C, Howard-Davies in the ex-

Vokes 3 litre tourer, Richard Reay-Smith in his LG45 Team car replica, and Michael Drakeford in his M45. Other members taking part were Jo Moss in her Morgan Plus Eight, Julian Grimwade in his Frazer Nash Single Seater, and Nigel Walder in the Alvis 12/50 Sports. Participants could enter any two of the three events - Concours, Speed Trials and Driving Tests.

Members with a Lagonda were well spread, with Richard and Andrew in the Speed trials, Christopher and Kate in the Concours, Martin in the Driving Tests, and Michael in both the Concours and Driving Tests. Michael's was the only car eligible for the Double Twelve trophies, but came well down the field. The 'Red Lady' failed to impress the judges, and large Lagondas are not designed to whizz around cones and fit into parking spaces made of straw bales. However, Christopher and Kate did well coming

3rd in class for the Concours. Second place was awarded to a dramatic 1939 Rolls Royce Phantom II 'special' using a Phantom chassis and a Merlin tank engine, with a body designed and built by the owner to resemble the Napier-Railton held at Brooklands. The crowd loved the way it went up the Hill, leaving tyre marks on the concrete and a large cloud of burning rubber. In my book Christopher was 2nd!

Jo did well, winning the Double Twelve Ladies prize, and coming 1st in class. Julian, too, was up there with the winners and came 3rd overall. In the sprint Nigel managed a credible 1st in class for vintage cars.

As an aside, Martin's car, sans number plates- was used for the front cover of the programme. This was computer generated, and Martin assured me that the plastic looking driver was just that and not a photograph of himself!



*Roger Learmonth's LG6 DHC*

# T8 Gearbox Repairs - Part 2

## *Concluding Michael Drakeford's rebuild*

THE GEARBOX REPAIR was a matter thinking through each stage, and understanding how it worked. Considering the cause of failure of the gears, it was clear that the bearings and spacers need to be as one unit. This means that the centre of the bearings along with spacers and the various washers, are all tight together. If they were not tight, as I think happened to my gearbox, the bearings would probably rotate in the fitting and wear it, causing much trouble.

Another factor is the expansion of the metal. My gearbox always works better if I warm up the car. The oil gets hotter, the size of the shaft and bearing holder changes, preventing the bearings revolving in the housings. To explain this, let me refer to the time when I wanted to remove the spacer and bearing from the bull-horn casting. There was no way that I could remove these without resorting to brute force. I was also having trouble removing the Silentbloc bushes. The simple answer, and do not tell Georgina, was to put the fan oven on at 240, and leave the casting in for ten minutes. A dreadful smell of burning rubber ensued, but when the bearing/bush housings expanded I was able to drift out the remaining parts. When the new bearings were found to be too tight on their shafts, I put the drive and input shafts and bushes in the freezer for an hour. I then warmed the bearings on a radiator. Everything then fitted together without trouble.

The roller bearings on the input shaft and the layshaft allow for a little lateral movement when the shafts get warm. The bronze spigot bush also

allows movement between the input and drive shafts.

It was evident that when I went to fit the input shaft, there was wear at the front end of the drive shaft. The new bush still wobbled and, if I had accepted it, before long there would have been pressure on the 3rd gear again. Some recommended that I should apply chrome, and build up the shaft that way, and thus fit the new bush. However, to do this the drive-shaft end would need to be skimmed, otherwise it would only fit where it touched!

A layer of chrome would be hit and miss in getting the right depth of metal, although it did work when I used this method to stop wobble in my BTH magneto.

By chance I was directed to an Eric Neve, of Neve Engineering in Barcombe, Sussex, and not far from where I lived in my teens. Two facts emerged. Firstly he makes the complicated gears for the Club, specialising in manufacturing parts for Meadows, Lagonda, and Bentley gearboxes. Secondly he went to school with my brother! If you need specialist help with a gearbox, try him. He will supply parts, give advice, or carry out the rebuild for you. Eric's advice regarding the spigot bearing problem was to trim the drive shaft, and make a new bush to fit my box. As he had made the one from the Club along with the gears, how could I go wrong? The cost was very reasonable indeed.

Another issue not (yet) mentioned in the manual, is the problem with the selector arms. When changing gear, springs apply pressure to ball bearings



that fit into pistons. These 'lock' onto detents on the shafts, so that the gears do not slip out of mesh. On third gear, the screw had to be tightened down to drop the ball bearing. It transpired that the piston was a replacement, and, whilst the ball bearing ran freely in the piston (as it should), the piston was too tight in the shaft. Thus the ball bearing was not doing its job. The other two were also not functioning because, although the pistons worked, the balls did not turn as flat spots had formed on them. A friendly engineer supplied two new 5/16" ball bearings and re-cut the piston. A little depth is lost, but not enough to prevent operation.

This is something well worth checking, if gears are jumping out of mesh. You can attend to it when the gearbox is in the car. To replace the bearing and gears described, it was necessary to take out the two selectors for first/second and third/fourth gears in the manner explained in the manual.

As I went through the refitting process, I took the opportunity to check that the gears were all working, and the oil channel holes were clear and corresponded with those in the shafts.

Tightness was an issue, when fitting the new gears onto the shafts. It is best to get new shafts to match the new gears. You can guarantee they will fit. However, patience and a diamond file can tweak the odd edge. If in doubt, ask an engineer to fettle this for you.

An additional task was to clean all the bolt threads, the holes for the numerous split pins, and to mark the outside of the shaft/bolt where the hole starts and ends. This makes it easier when it comes to fitting. Finally, when dressing the nuts to fit the split pins at the end of the shafts, I use a flat surface and fettle the nuts by rubbing against 250 grade emery cloth. I find this produces a much flatter surface than using a file, but takes longer.

Whatever you do, thoroughly clean any parts you fettle and, indeed, the inside of the box itself. You will find years of scrapings naturally form within a crash box, and it looks like a layer of grey paint. It isn't, and it needs removing with paraffin.

It is worth fitting a magnet in the brass drain plug. I used Magnet Expert Ltd. Part No. F317N, 15mm X 4.2mm, countersunk. It fitted my plug, and I fixed it with Araldite.

The lay-shaft was refitted with new bearings, following the manual instructions. The input shaft was next. Remember, the large cup washers are fitted with the concave end facing inside. These are almost flush around the bearing housing. I started to assemble everything, including the bull horn, and found that leaving the upper lay shaft drive gear to last was wrong. It will not fit. I started again. The correct fitting procedure is to place the cup washer against the step on the shaft, followed by the roller bearing, snug against it. If it is too tight, freeze the shaft for a while. I fitted the two bearings and the spacer onto the shaft, and then the bull horn. The left handed nut should be screwed up to make sure the bearings remain tight, at this stage without the oil seal. If this is not done, when the shaft is put in the casting, the bearings will take the line of least resistance and it is likely they will then be difficult to tighten on the shaft. As the shaft is passed through the casting screwing up the bullhorn nuts aligns the lay shaft upper gear to receive the shaft, and tightens the bull horn casting.

The time came to re-assemble the 1st / 2nd gear and 3rd /4th gear selectors. I did not attempt to replace these when the drive shaft was in place. They will not fit. With the ball bearing mechanism removed and the selectors on the shaft ends located in the gear

'seats', they were fitted. The ball bearings, pistons and springs were replaced and the brass screws inserted loosely, for ease of movement. I had no shims to replace as per the manual.

A 'tip' while the box is still on the bench. If using new bushes, make sure the special bolts still fit. If not ream out to 7/16th".

The drive-shaft could now be passed through the rear, ensuring that the speedometer mechanism was well greased, and the concave washer and spacers were in order, and I attached the Woodruff key for the speedometer drive gear. The spigot bush should be in the input shaft, and the 3rd gear and 1st/2nd gears lined up. I needed at least 3 hands! The rear bracket was fitted last, with the oil seal in place, followed by the prop-shaft.

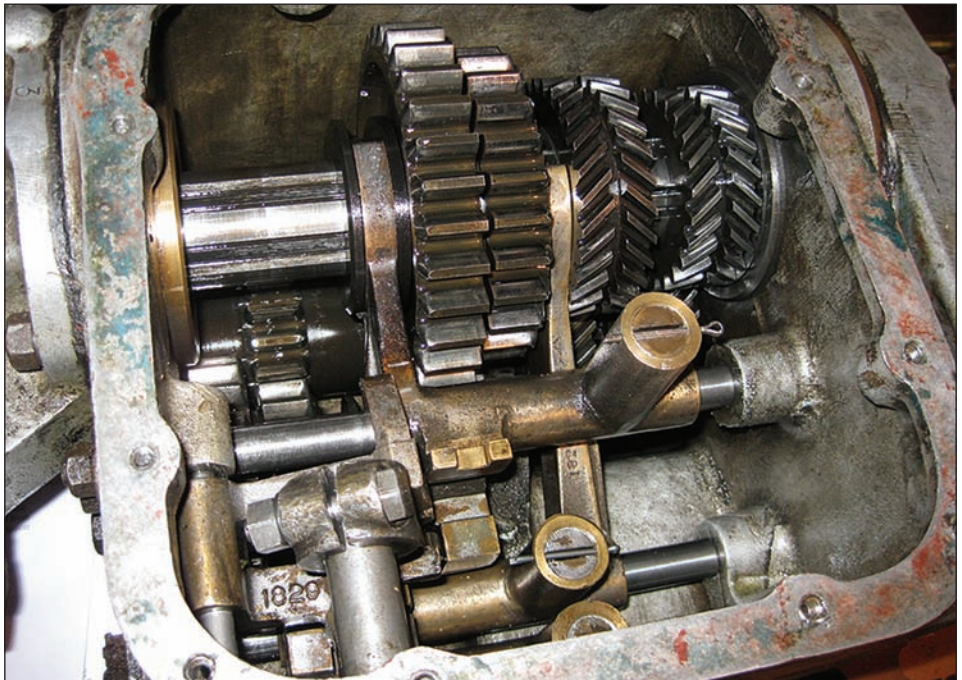
Turning the mechanism without oil should be free and easy. If not, check

carefully. If all is well, mark and remove the castellated nut, and fit the new front oil seal. Then re-tighten the nut to the mark, and pin. The seal should not make a difference to the position of the nut.

I fitted the gear lever assembly and checked the gears, including reverse, operated smoothly along from neutral, with the normal M45 box 'clonk' at each end of the movement. The selector screws should be flush at the top and re-pinned. Ensure the ball bearings and pistons are doing their job, and are 'fixing' the gears in place.

The gear-lever shaft was then removed, the gearbox replaced as per the manual, and checked to ensure it still lined up properly.

Finally, I noted that the 2 sets of gears I had to replace are date stamped 3/34. One wonders how many modern gears will last 80 years!



*The T8 gearbox*



*The mainshaft and gears*



*The layshaft and gears*

# Modelling Classic Cars - Road Wheels

## *Continuing Tony Hunter's building of a 2-Litre Lagonda*

HAVING OBTAINED DRAWINGS and photographs from a wide range of sources, including The Lagonda Club (many thanks), the next step was to draw up a build programme.

To capture a vintage car in miniature, it is essential to reproduce the wheels and tyres accurately, so they were the first listed items. For a typical Rudge-Whitworth wheel, we see 60 spokes in two rows; this means drilling 120x0.5mm dia. holes per wheel, x5 for a complete set.

I decided to make patterns turned from brass for the hub and rim, which would then be cast in resin for ease (relative) of drilling so many holes. Various jigs were required, for holding the parts in the correct position whilst drilling. It needed to be able to drill in three planes simultaneously, whilst rotating the parts at the same time on a dividing head to correctly space the holes. An added complication was that the rear row had only 12 holes, compared to the

other two rows of 24 each. Drilling completed, I then needed to produce (by hand) 300 spoke nipples, each with the correct detailing. Lacing the wheels with 0.45mm nickel silver wire, each spoke was fitted individually, together with its nipple. After taking care that each spoke overlapped as required, the lacing was finished.

It then remained to reproduce a set of tyres to suit. I decided to employ a rapid-prototype computer design expert, who used my initial drawings and data to produce a stunning master, suitable for casting in a resin that mimics rubber. This done, the wheels were cleaned, primed and top coated in acrylic gloss black, the finishing touches being the valve cores and the Rudge-Whitworth transfers. The final product fully achieved all that I set out to from my original maths and designs, which was very pleasing. Next time, I shall describe how I produced the main chassis, radiator and fully louvred bonnet.



*The wheel complete with hub spinner, before painting and plating*



# Letters...Letters...Letters...Letters

Dear Roger,

With reference to Peter MacDonald-Card's letter in the last issue, about the Lagonda 11.1 photographs, I can enlarge a little, although I have no idea who the young lady was. These pictures are part of a series of twelve, for which I have the negatives, all on 10"x 8" glass plates. I bought them from Bryan Goodman twelve years ago.

The one with the girl was taken on Runnymede, as are several of the others, although in different places. Runnymede, and the road to Old Windsor, was only a mile or so from the factory. Another 11.1 picture in the series, shows Bill Oates driving a man we think is Wilfred Denison, both wearing straw boaters.

The more numerous pictures, with the ecclesiastical background, were taken near the London sales & service depot in Hammersmith, and show the three models - drophead coupe, 4-seat tourer, and 2-seater - in all possible modes, hoods up with sidescreens erect, hoods up without sidescreens, hoods down, and so on. The sales depot was given the address of 195, Hammersmith Road but was formerly Montague Mews, until renamed by the Council. It did not have a frontage onto Hammersmith Road. The whole area was bombed in WW2 and rebuilt on a totally different road layout, but I believe the background building was St Paul's School.

As for dates, the 2-seater came out in June 1914, and the 4-seater in that November, so I imagine this series of photographs (the ones with the

School background) to have been taken that Autumn as part of the launch publicity for the new models.

The picture of the girl on Runnymede is clearly post WW1 as Peter has spotted. Lagonda went to electric lighting with the 1919 model, but there is an anomaly here, as they went to the flat radiator at the same time, at least for production cars. At the 1919 Motor Show the coupe went to the flat radiator, while the 4-seater retained the bullnosed one. So a coupe with both electric lights and a bullnose radiator should not exist, unless it was made between the start of production in 1919 and the October Motor Show. Which it may well have been.

Regards,

**Arnold Davey**

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# Letters...Letters...Letters...Letters

Dear Roger,

This may be of passing interest, otherwise that is what dustbins are for!

On our way to the splendid extended weekend in Portmerion expertly arranged by Emma & Charles Hobbins, our 2 litre was humming along nicely in pretty miserable weather, when with nearly 160 miles on the clock she gave a loud backfire and freewheeled to a halt.

It being "drive-it day" a WO Bentley kindly stopped, along with fellow participants John & Kay Brown. The spark proved fat, fuel plentiful, and compression fine. With much head-shaking, it was agreed that the timing must have somehow slipped inside the engine itself, and reluctantly the RAC was called.

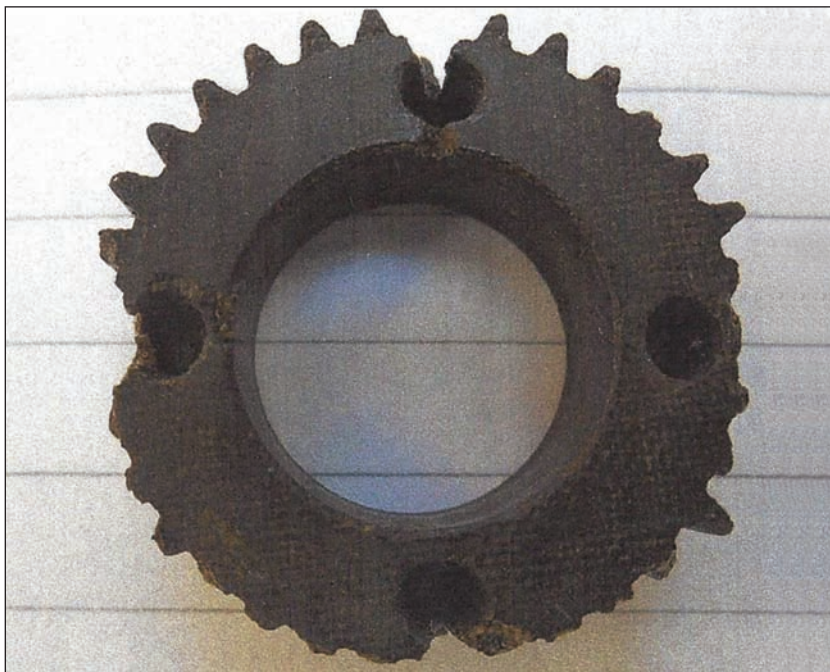
On investigation back home, all seemed in order engine-wise and the magneto was finally dismantled, only to find the half-speed fibre gear as illustrated. There were no missing teeth to be found, and presumably we had been running like this for several years until it finally decided to jump out of synch.

Of course we had a perfectly good spare magneto sitting on the back seat, it was just my diagnostic skills that were to blame.

Moral:- Next time your clutch slips, or the back axle disintegrates, first try swapping magnetos!

Best wishes

**Jeremy Oates**



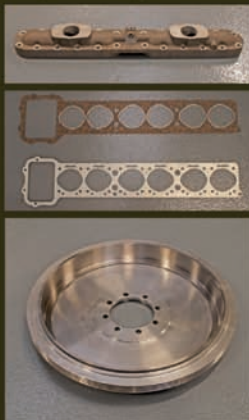
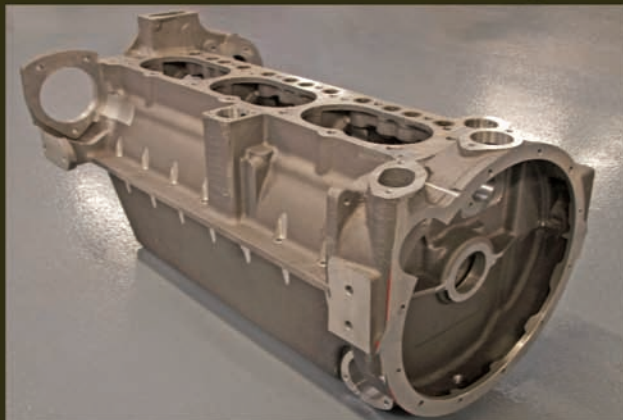
*Poor Jeremy - the 2-litre has never forgiven him for racing it!*



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