



THE MAGAZINE OF THE
LAGONDA CLUB
Number 237 Summer 2013



— DAVID AYRE —



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David Ayre • Mobile +44 7785 365890 • Telephone/Fax +44 1635 268058

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

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: 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:

*Clive and Shirley Dalton in their 2 litre Continental tourer on the Dorset Tour.
Photo by Richard Reay-Smith.*

Contents

From the Chair	5
Spring Tour	6
Our Lagonda, GF 1954	12
Three Brushes	15
Musings of a Mancunian	17
Electric Clutch for a 2 litre	18
Well, Fancy That	21
More Early Pictures	25
A Little Learning is a Dangerous Thing	29
Letters	34

From the Driving Seat

Roger Seabrook tries the Editorial chair for size

KEN PAINTER, EDITOR for over 100 copies of the Lagonda Magazine, is retiring this year. He is kindly “showing me the ropes” and guiding me into the mysteries of the desktop publishing software. This edition has been edited by Ken, and today we are sitting together to paste up the master to be sent to the printers. The high standard Ken has brought to the Magazine is, I am sure, one of the reasons the Club is in such good health (as confirmed by Jonathan Oppenheimer in the last edition). This, along with Arnold’s monthly newsletter, is the “glue” that holds the Club together and keeps people in touch. And what a great Club it is, with people from all walks of life and a friendly lively atmosphere. I particularly enjoy touring on the Continent and hope to take part in some of the events organised by our members elsewhere in Europe in future.

My interest in vintage cars started (like many of my generation) with a copy of ‘The Vintage Motor Car Pocketbook’. Our School Head of Art used to turn up in a smart 14/60 Semi Sports tourer and I remember him being surprised and pleased at the interest I showed when many considered it to be an old banger. My own 2 litre was tatty and worn back in 1958, when advertised by Chiltern Cars for £155. I was still at primary school then, and by the time I passed my driving test I could barely afford £40 for a car, so Lagondas were still a distant dream. Instead a Riley 12/4 for £15 provided 4 years of transport.

The lack of a proper Spring has meant the hood on my 2 litre has stayed up for much longer than expected. I really prefer driving with the hood down in all weathers as the standard T1 body doesn’t allow elegant ingress and egress, especially for ladies in dresses! It amazes me the interest shown in using the car for weddings – it’s really unsuitable with those tiny doors (and only on the near side). But the view down the bonnet can’t be beaten!

A recent trip to Hay on Wye with a group of friends from the Bean Car Club set the scene for what I hope will be a pleasant summer. The area is perfect for vintage motoring, with some testing hills and magnificent scenery. Quite by chance we came down a narrow road in the middle of nowhere, and there we saw a 3 litre Lagonda peeping out of a garage. We all stopped and were treated to tea and biscuits (thank you Trevor), and the car turned out to be the one driven to Delhi by David Crowe back in the 1960s (See Geoff Seaton’s illustrated history for details).

We will be driving to Switzerland in the 2 litre later this year and, as usual, there is a lot of preparation required on the car. I try to do most of the work on it myself, and I know many of you do the same with your cars. That’s part of the fun, I would not want to drive far from home if I didn’t know how to fix things such as changing a magneto, or a petrol pump!

***Last date for copy for the Autumn magazine is
... SATURDAY 12th October 2013 ...***

Spring Tour in Dorset 2013

Richard Reay-Smith tells the tale

WE ARE TOLD that last winter was the severest since records began and this is proof of the existence of Global Warming. However that may be, John and Joan Fitton timed the start of their Spring Tour to coincide with what was almost the first day of a belated spring. Less hardy types came in saloons but those with hoods were able to lower them and enjoy the first rays of the sun even though the crops in the fields were stunted and looking unlikely to recover. In places floods had swept them away altogether leaving swathes of chalk where there should have been winter wheat or oil seed rape.

This year they had chosen Dorset, one of the most attractive counties in England, made rich by the wool trade, home to great estates that have been in the same ownership since the early middle ages and, as a result, dotted with some of the most evocative place names in England; Purse Caundle, Sutton Poyntz, Whitchurch Canonicorum and my own favourite, Ryme Intrinseca, (population 103). Two miles from Ryme is the much larger conurbation of Evershot, (population 230), infused with the spirit of Thomas Hardy. In his novels it appears as Evershead.

At the heart of the village is the magnificent Summer Lodge Hotel and its pub, the Acorn Inn which were to be the base for this year's tour. The hotel is a fine Georgian house built by the second Earl of Ilchester and enlarged by the sixth earl when he commissioned his friend Thomas Hardy, who I was surprised to learn was also an architect, to draw up the plans.

When King George V was told of Hardy's death in 1928, he was so affected by news that he insisted on personally sending the telegram of condolence to the family.

The family of William Hardy of Alnwick, purveyor of fishing tackle to the nobility and gentry and holder of many Royal Warrants, were taken aback to receive it, until a quick telephone call to the Pall Mall shop confirmed that Uncle William was alive and well. He was the only Hardy of whom his sovereign had heard.

Twenty couples met for the traditional Champagne Reception before dinner on Sunday 21st April. Under the influence of the champagne, log fires, outstanding but not overwhelming service and good food, the assembled company realised that once again the Fittons had discovered an outstanding hotel, perhaps the best yet. The extensive wine list was almost worth the trip by itself. A 1980 Petrus at £3,950 the bottle was particularly tempting. As usual, John's ferocious negotiating skills ensured that the cost of the trip was kept within reasonable bounds.

Five M45 Tourers were entered, but only one, Michael and Georgina Drakeford's very early example, arrived. Of the others, Peter and Anne Walby, from Northern Ireland, preferred the comfort of their LG45 Saloon. John and Alison Boyes, chose their smart and surprisingly rapid Rapier Randalagh Tourer. John explained that a Rapier can leave a 2 litre behind when climbing hills, if the petrol tank is less than a quarter full.

Robin and Janice Saddler substituted their Special bodied M45 Rapide for their 3.5 litre Carlton DHC, John and Kay Brown brought their M35 Rapide tourer and Tony Saunders and Sue Blackwell their immaculate blue and silver LG45 Tourer. Mike and Liz Blackwell drove one of the two post-war cars participating, an Aston Martin DB7,



John Boyes' Rapier Tourer.



Tom Wilcox shows the flag on his Close Coupled Saloon.

painted in a striking Rolls Royce version of bronze.

Your correspondent drove a recently acquired XK150 which made up for not being a Lagonda by leaving traces of oil when it parked overnight.

Other comfort seekers included John and Rosalind Sword, in their elegant and immaculate M45 Rapide Freestone and Webb two-door saloon, Roger and Beryl Firth in their equally elegant M45 Pillarless Saloon and Tom and Shirley Wilcox in their 2 litre High Chassis Close Coupled Saloon, which on the Tuesday very properly flew the flag of St. George on the saint's name day. The only other version of this car is owned by John and Susie Batt and there are those who make the mistake of thinking that the two cars are identical. Not so. The Wilcox's car does not have a flower vase on the dashboard.

2 litres were the most numerous model, led by high chassis tourers of the Fittons and Frank and Margaret Walton, the low chassis examples of Walter and Rosie Thomson and Phil and Beryl Pyne, the Continental tourer of Clive and Shirley Dalton and, for the first time on this tour, following a complete rebuild lasting several years, the supercharged tourer of Charles and Emma Hobbins who had come from Anglesey. As always, tone was added by the immaculate 3 litre tourer of David and Francesca Rowe, perhaps the ultimate gentleman's sporting carriage of its day.

The ultimate sporting carriage of a later day was the V12 DHC of James and Shirley Valentine which had just completed a full mechanical and electrical restoration. Sadly it was let down later in the day by the failure of the modern electronic ignition. This has now been replaced by the original distributors which of course are working perfectly.

The only other mechanical mishap of the tour was when the No. 4 valve cap came off Clive Dalton's car on Tuesday. He found that three cylinders are not really enough for a 2 litre. The problem recurred on the M27 on the way home.

Monday's route toured Cranbourne Chase and stopped for lunch at Tollard Royal. Normally one would expect the hedgerows and banks to be alive with wild garlic, bluebells and other wild flowers. This year, despite the sunshine, there was nothing other than an occasional primrose while the leafless trees suggested the depths of winter. The morning coffee stop at the village of Moreton was a particular highlight. The Fittons are acknowledged experts on coffee stops and this one was a corker.

The Moreton Estate has been in the Frampton family since the early 1300s. Lawrence of Arabia was a cousin and rented and later bought a cottage, Cloud's Hill, from them when he was a private soldier at nearby Bovington Camp.

It can't have been good for discipline at Bovington to have a squaddy who was a grade A national hero, a colonel, a fellow of All Souls and a friend of most of the cabinet, who lived away from the camp when he wanted to and spent much of his time careering round the countryside on a Brough Superior. It is difficult to know how his superior officers coped with him. They probably did what the army usually does with insoluble problems and left it to the NCOs to sort out.

He later transferred back to the RAF, where he had served earlier, until he had been forced to leave, following exposure by the press. Two months after his short period of service, he was killed when he came off the motorbike whilst avoiding two young cyclists. He is buried in Moreton churchyard.

The church is remarkable and well worth a visit if you are in the area. It was bombed during the war and in the 50s all the windows were replaced with clear glass, delicately engraved by Laurence Whistler. The effect is stunning during the day and must be equally effective at night when the light in the church is reflected from the engravings against a black background.



A misty start to a good day's motoring.



Not an easy picture to take. The wonderful church windows by Lawrence Whistler.

The award winning Moreton Tearooms is in the village's old schoolroom. Among the photographs of pupils on the wall are the Pitman twins who filled up Lawrence's bike just before he died and the excellent cakes are displayed on the bier which carried him to his grave, followed by Winston Churchill and a good selection of the aristocracy and intelligentsia of the day.

Lunch in the King John pub at Tollard Royal was memorable for the fact that our cars completely filled the car park with John Sword's saloon as the cork in the bottle. When some poor chap in a modern wanted to leave, it took about twenty minutes of traffic management to let him out.

Despite overnight fog, we had excellent weather the next day for a tour of the Jurassic Coast and a visit to Mapperton House and gardens. The hedgerows were already showing a hint of green and there were more wildflowers than the day before. Many cars stopped for coffee at the Beach Cafe at Burton Bradstock with dramatic views of miles of coastline from the nearby cliffs and some were tempted to stay for lunch by the offer of lobsters landed that morning. All this was missed by Tom Wilcox who was frightened by the sight of a nearby caravan park. Others chose to press on for lunch at Lyme Regis and a walk on the Cobb.

After lunch the route took us to Mapperton, for a tour of the house and gardens. Mapperton is an Elizabethan manor house with its church, stable block, coach house, dovecot and courtyard overlooking a valley garden, all set in an area of outstanding natural beauty. Pevsner says of it: "There can hardly be a more enchanting manorial group than Mapperton". As usual, Pevsner is right.

Joan Fitton, who writes the roadbook, is always careful to provide some challenge and interest for navigators. The last entry on this day read "T junction, straight on", which kept everyone on their toes.

Not necessarily as a result of that instruction, Tony Saunders' LG45 tourer sported some scratches along the nearside wing and running board in the car park that evening. A helpful notice read, "These are not misjudgement damage. They are the latest Lagonda go-faster stripes".

Dinner that night was at the Acorn pub, which is also owned by the hotel. Like the hotel, the pub stocked more than a hundred different brandies including at least one surprising example from Japan. A small group of enthusiasts, under the perhaps mistaken belief that they would be cheaper in the pub than the hotel, tried to sample as many as possible. I can't now remember how many they achieved.

The final day started with a gentle route to Sherborne Castle, which was built by Sir Walter Raleigh in 1594, but he quickly lost it, and his head, by getting on the wrong side of James 1st. In 1617, James gave it to the Digby family for services rendered and it has been their home for nearly five centuries. It is filled with paintings, furniture and fittings of the highest quality from each of the centuries and was well worth the visit. After lunch there was a tour of Sherborne Abbey followed by a very enjoyable organ recital by Roger Firth with a varied repertoire starting impressively with the Grand March from Aida.

At the final dinner that night the Chairman Elect, John Sword, thanked John and Joan for yet another successful and enjoyable tour and presented them with the Committee Plate, which had been awarded to them for organising these tours over many years.

In reply, John thanked the Committee and announced that next year Charles and Emma Hobbins will be organising a tour in North Wales and Anglesey. For those who don't know the area, the scenery and history are well worth the trip and you can now buy alcohol on a Sunday.



The funeral bier, now used for happier purposes in the tea rooms.



*After the "Lord Mayor's Show"? Cleaning away the evidence of the Lagonda invasion.
All photos by Richard Reay-Smith.*

Our Lagonda, GF 1954

Peter Sowle makes an exciting discovery

WHEN I PURCHASED our 2 litre in October 1983 I had no idea what history was to be revealed to me over the next thirty or so years. For a start, the previous owner, John Cope, had purchased it 19 years before, following a complete rebuild under the supervision of the then Spares Secretary, Capt. Ivan Forshaw. With the car came a file containing very detailed hand written invoices and details of work done over the past two years, and some earlier bills and documents back to when the car was in the ownership of the late Rowland Morgan in the early sixties. It was blown then but when it came to me there was no blower, although the Zoller bevel box was still there, but fitted with a blanking plate, and there was a single HV3 carburettor.

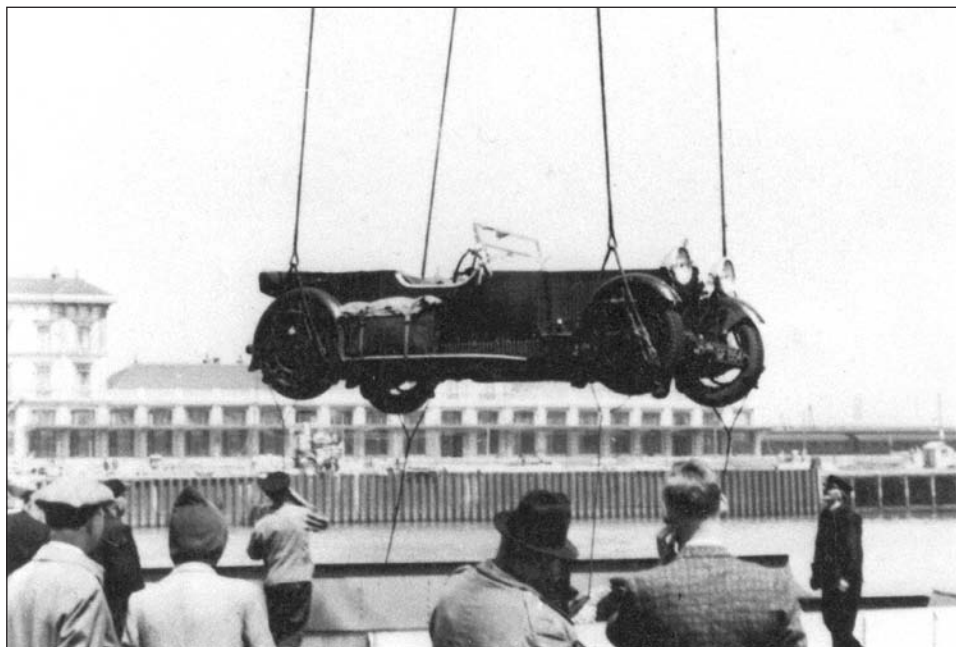
Rowland Morgan's good friend John Anderson had known the car well and told me it was once owned by Henry Coates- It transpired that Henry, a Yorkshire farmer, had bought the car on a trip to London for £50 mainly because of the registration number! He had previously owned two 2 litre cars. In 1947 he bought also from the same dealer, (V W Derrington Ltd. of Kingston-upon-Thames) a 1932 blown chassis and installed the blower engine in GF1954. Over the next several years Henry used the car extensively, mainly in VSCC rallies and trials, gaining many successes. He was one of the founder members of the Two-litre Register. The car is number 25.

The next lucky discovery came at the 1999 AGM at Henley-on-Thames. There I was drawn to a marquee where Brian Stevens had set up a display of

photographs entitled "Lagondas at Brooklands", where I found two pictures of "my" car, taken at the final Brooklands Lagonda Fete of 19th July 1930, The enlargement was so good and clear the registration could be seen easily. I asked Brian where they had come from and he told me from the Berndt Holthusen book pages 112 and 113. The car is the sixth from the left in both pictures bearing the racing number 19. These photographs were taken barely four months after its original registration in March 1930. In 1991 I bought and installed a replica blower, a Cozette this time, together with a cush drive to make it compatible with the Zoller bevel box. It runs well.

Now comes the best piece of history yet discovered. In November 2011, I had a telephone call from Mike Pilgrim to say he had just bought a book on Morgan cars entitled "Morgan 150 Years" by Charles Morgan and Gregory Houston Bowden, in which on page 166 are three photographs of "my" car taken in 1938 en route to the Le Mans 24-hour race as part of a Morgan racing team. It seems a young lady amateur racing driver named Prudence Fawcett visited Le Mans in 1937 and had been "bitten by the bug" to the extent that she wanted to "have a go" and decided that a Morgan Plus-Four would be her choice. Negotiations were entered into with HFS Morgan for a car for the 1938 race.

Morgan cars had never raced Le Mans before and agreement was reached to supply a car to Winter Garden Garages of Holborn London who knew Miss Fawcett well and who



Heart-stopping moments before the development of the modern ferry.



A picnic on the way to Le Mans.

required the involvement of Winter Garden's Chief Mechanic (Dick) Anthony and their sales manager Geoff White as co-driver. The racing Morgan was duly supplied early in June and was driven to Le Mans by Dick Fawcett, accompanied by a female companion and the other members of the team, plus luggage and spares carried by the Lagonda. In the race the Morgan ran well until noon on the Sunday when slowed by a misfire affecting their lap times. Even so, they finished 13th overall covering 1373 miles at an average speed of 57.20 mph. As this was the first time Morgan cars had competed at Le Mans, it brought forth much beneficial publicity.

Once the cause of the misfire had been found and cured, Prudence Fawcett drove from Le Mans back to her parents' house in Sheffield at an

average speed of over 60 mph for the return journey. As for the Lagonda, I am yet to discover who owned it at the time. It may have been Dick Anthony as he was a regular competitor in trials in an experimental Aston Martin BGF 557 (GF again), perhaps Geoff White, or even Winter Garden Garages owners Lancelot and Charlotte Prideaux Brune, who had been agents for Aston Martin in the early 1930s.

Sadly Prudence died in 1986, but left two sons Charles Trevelyan, and his brother, both of whom have been most helpful in my search for more history of GF 1954. I am also indebted to Chris Chapman and Jake Anderson authors of "Morgan Sports Cars -The Early Years". Jake has been especially helpful. Charles Trevelyan is a member of the Bugatti Owners Club and was recently appointed its Chairman.



A close-up shot of the crew on the way to Le Mans.

Three Brushes

Clive Dalton attends to his charging rate

THERE ARE TIMES when modernity intrudes without, as it were, the option. Here is an example.

Many of the earlier cars, say before about 1933, have three brush dynamos. These have a pair of output brushes connected one to chassis and one to 12 volts via a cut-out plus a third, narrower brush which taps off a proportion of the output voltage and uses it to feed the dynamo field. In this way it produces the magnetic flux which enables the rotating dynamo armature to produce electricity.

These dynamos are, in theory, partly self-regulating but there are two difficulties. The first is that they have only two charging rates, usually about 2 amps and about 12 amps called, respectively, “summer” and “winter”. The second is that when the system voltage rises the charge rate increases which is not what is wanted at all.

Crunch time has now arrived. Whilst the defects of third brush could just about be tolerated when using the kind of battery that gets inspected and topped up at intervals the arrival of “maintenance free” batteries has altered things. These batteries do not tolerate overcharging. They require a maximum system voltage of 14.4 volts and overcharging overstresses them, causes them to leak and in some cases explodes them. The old more tolerant style of battery is no longer easily found.

After about 1933 and before the advent of alternators in the early 1960s an electro-mechanical development of the Tyrrill regulator was used. Basically it is a relay across the

generator output which operates when the generator voltage rises and so opens a pair of contacts feeding the field current. The field collapses and the generator voltage sinks whereupon the relay opens and the field current is applied again. This takes place about 20 or 30 times a second and, with certain refinements works well except that it is mechanical, wears, goes out of adjustment and has contacts which erode. Cars which have this system have only the wear and adjustment problem, not the overcharging problem.

It is possible to apply transistors to switch the field current and there are designs on the internet to do just this for existing mechanical regulators. However, a better approach is to design a solid state controller which not only does the switching but also incorporates various protective circuits. These limit the generator output to its safe maximum and also take the place of the cut-out by preventing the flow of current from the battery into the generator when the generator is stopped or only rotating slowly.

Having used a maintenance-free battery for some years I found myself, earlier this year, with a non-functioning generator. We bought a spare battery and went on John & Joan Fitton's Dorset event topping up the charge from a 13 amp socket very kindly provided by the pub we were staying in at Evershot. At the end of the event we pulled the old battery out and put the new one in for the return journey home only to find that the old

battery had leaked because it had been overcharged. Action was needed and we got Peter Jury at Classic Dynamo and Regulator Conversions to re-wind our generator field for two-brush operation and to fit one of his solid-state regulators. Ours is not the first Lagonda he has done.

The conversion is done in such a way that the electronic works are concealed inside the cut-out housing so that unless you take the cover off the cutout you could not know it was done. The old field fuse becomes the main circuit fuse and there is one small wiring change to do.

We finished this off on the Thursday before the Northern Dinner at Monk Fryston last week and the relief of not having to think about the dynamo again is very considerable.

There are some slightly surprising effects. Putting the brakes on no longer results in a discharge as the regulator instantly compensates. You have actually to be watching the ammeter flick to check that the brake light switch is working. The same thing applies to flashing the headlights. You can no longer check you are on full beam by seeing 12 amps discharge. In fact, after the initial charge taken out of the battery by starting the engine from cold is put back the ammeter spends most of its time reading very close to zero. I had not realised the time I had spent checking the ammeter. Seeing my voltmeter sitting steadily at 14.4 volts is a considerable novelty.

There is one more virtue. It is that

the need for an alternator is removed. Even with 60 watt bulbs in my headlights the generator is well capable of maintaining the system voltage even with the wipers, panel lights and sidelights on too.

There is a caution. If you choose to do it yourself you have to be very careful indeed to follow the instructions to the letter. Even in wiring totally renewed 25 years ago when I rebuilt my car and most carefully recorded it was very easy to make a mistake. I made two. I did not pay enough attention to a single line in the four pages of instructions and I didn't make a clear enough drawing of the exact configuration of the cut-out before I sent it to be modified. Both got fixed on the Thursday before the Northern Dinner when we stayed the night at Peter & Claire's B & B.

Your editor reminds me now of a standard hazard that has befallen others. It is that some regulators return to their supplier only for them to be found to be working perfectly. It is a standard hazard of the business and is equally infuriating for the purchaser and for the supplier. There is not an easy answer and the advice is for the purchaser not to get cross, the supplier is doing his best.

My solid state regulator was supplied by Peter Jury of Classic Dynamo and Regulator Conversions and, as said above, mine is not the first he has done for the Club. His website is www.dynamoandregulatorconversions.com and is a good read.



Musings of a Mancunian at MonkFryston

*Stephen Weld's Crossley saloon reports -
with a little help from his driver*

I HAVE HAD a busy winter, more particularly because my sports tourer accomplice has been away for hip replacements and the like (spring shackles and hubs refurbishment). This has meant that I've collected all the salt, which seemed to be lavished on our rough, potholed roads, by date despite the prevailing conditions. Let's face it- what better way is there to make a perfectly dry road wet and therefore frost prone than by covering it with deliquescent rock salt? The only solution to the winter salt scourge is not to go out at all, but what's the point of a car if it can't be used? I found a radiator muff a great comfort- a sort of cardboard cummerbund round the bottom of the radiator. I have always used anti freeze - the blue stuff, of course.

Anyway, it was early May and still cold and grey and it was Monk Fryston time - a splendid annual affair which seems to come round very frequently. My owner's previous gripes about bumpy roads are old hat now that most roads are no longer maintained. I have become quite adept at avoiding pot holes but tend to forget that on-coming traffic has similar intentions - could be tricky !

At the Monk Fryston Hotel my owner parked me in "my usual place" opposite the hotel entrance so that I could be admired from a distance, the under body salt damage being less obvious. All those beautiful, shiny Lagondas present were very forgiving and indeed commiserated with me for having such a callous owner. But it was a very splendid evening, and I hope Saturday's jolly proceeded apace, followed by a delectation of Delages...

Your Editor, together with John and Ruth Stoneman also attended this splendid dinner and were able to take part in the first part of the gentle tour of the area. For us, the trip finished at the Goole Harbour Museum, so we also missed the opportunity to go on to the Delage event.

Being of a modest disposition, none of the locals has provided a fuller account of the weekend, but it would be remiss of us not to give a special mention to Don Redmon and his wife, who flew over from California to receive the Gostling trophy for his superb articles on the restoration of the Invicta. It was a great pleasure to meet them both and we look forward to further accounts of the restoration work.

Alan Brown is clearly feeling his age, he actually kept his trousers on right through the dinner, but his and David Hine's double comedy act after the final proceedings was very well received.

The new management were both startled and delighted to learn that this really was the 52nd consecutive year that the Club has held its annual Northern Dinner in the hotel. I wonder, what sort of reception we will get there for our 100th Dinner?

Our grateful thanks go to Tim Gresty, the Northern Secretary, for organising the weekend. As he lives in Cheshire, this isn't exactly a local venue for him, but the route he chose for the Saturday run showed that he had done his homework very thoroughly. Don't even THINK of missing next year's event!

K.P.P.

Electric Clutch For The 2 Litre

Alan Elliott combats his advancing years

WHENEVER I TELL other club members that I have added an electric clutch mechanism to my 1929 HC 2 Litre Lagonda, often the response is incredulity! The problem is that at age 83 I have begun to develop arthritis in my left knee and hip. We all know that the Lagonda clutch is very heavy in operation and it can become tiring on a long run. The purpose of my electric mechanism is to alleviate this problem.

The operation is very simple. The mechanism is controlled by a switch on the steering column – actually a direction indicator switch. This gives a figure tip control with no need to remove one's grip on the steering wheel. Instead of using the foot to depress the clutch pedal, one moves the switch down and the clutch is disengaged. The clutch remains in this state until the switch is moved up, when the clutch re-engages. This is fine for normal gear changes on the move. However there is another switch which has to be operated when starting from rest, to slow down the action. One thing I have still not mastered is the correct judgment and timing for the action of changing down using double de-clutching. This will need a great deal more practice

The mechanism is installed under the off-side bonnet and is bolted to the side of the cylinder block using the existing tapped holes, used for the camshaft tunnel covers.. Hence it does not require any modification to the car and can easily be removed. The mechanism consists of a powerful 12 volt electric motor and a train of gears giving a total gear reduction of 600:1 The final stage of gearing is a worm and wheel. The final output shaft only needs

to turn through 90 degrees, for it incorporates a crank to which is connected a pull-rod connected to the back of the clutch pedal. When the mechanism is operated, the clutch is pulled forward to disengage. There is a sliding link in the system, which ensures that the clutch pedal can still be used in the normal way. In fact, when the electric clutch is not used, the clutch pedal can be used quite normally.

Cams on the worm-wheel operate micro-switches which control the limits of movement. This controls the clutch travel to the correct amounts in both the clutch engaged and clutch non-engaged positions. The clutch pedal movement does not have to be very much – 1.5 inches is quite sufficient, but in practice the system is adjusted to give some 2 inches of movement. The downwards operation of the clutch takes about a quarter of a second, which is quite satisfactory. It is a little faster coming up. There are several relays in the system, to switch the motor on and off, to reverse the motor and to slow down the motor for the starting from rest situation. This gives a more gradual clutch engagement, corresponding to the slight slipping of the clutch which is necessary for a smooth getaway from rest.

The fact that the complete unit can be easily removed by undoing three bolts means that there is no modification to the car at all. Once removed, you would never know it had ever been there! I am sure someone will tell me that it has all been done before – and perhaps I could have bought a system off-the-shelf, but it has been an interesting project, designing and building it.



The electric controls for Alan's clutch.



Two of the Oppenheimer family's Lagondas.

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Well, Fancy That

Roger Firth tells of an age long past

I WELL REMEMBER in the late 1950's attending Belle Vue Stock Car meetings on several occasions, it was quite easy in those days getting there and back by British Rail on Saturday nights using the steam train from Stalybridge to Gorton (Ashbury's) Station. At the time I worked for British Rail and had a season ticket anyway, so it was free. A short walk up Gorton Lane and you arrived at Hyde Road and opposite was the entrance to Belle Vue. I must say that I never saw a Lagonda there, even though it was rumoured that one did occasionally attend, certainly there were at least 2 x 4½ litre Lagonda's in a scrap yard on Elizabeth Street, Cheetham Hill, Manchester, and owned by Mr Evans, I could not afford either of these at £40 each.

Cal Wills was a young 30 year old when the craze of Stock Car Racing came to these shores back in the early 1950s.

As soon as he heard about the new sport he thought "I want to do this" and as a mechanic, and successful garage owner of The Doncaster Motor Company, he was well placed to give it a go.

He purchased an M45 Lagonda which had the body removed, it was the "Ex Airfield Fire Engine Special" at British Ropes, Bawtry. It needed very little to be adapted for Stock Car Racing, its power to weight ratio was ideal, it was a very intimidating car, and was in use up to the 1954/5 season.

His first meeting was the opening meeting at Wombwell, the 13th

meeting to be staged in the country and, as expected, he loved it, despite coming away with large bruises across his chest and legs. He said "My wife nearly killed me." "That's it, you're going no more" she said, but thankfully he carried on.

For the next four seasons, Cal travelled all over the country with fellow Doncaster driver, Les Munchcaster. Les was a Potato Merchant, he had a wagon to transport the cars and Cal had a garage where he could work on them.

Although the two friends travelled together, there was never any question of a racing team, as far as they were concerned it was every man for himself, but Cal remembers the unique nature of the sport in the pits after a race, if you got smashed up, everyone joined in to help out, it was great.

Both Cal and Les were popular with the crowds and they soon began to receive invitations to race at West Ham and other Southern Stadiums. They both got on well with everyone, there were only one or two odd characters, but everyone knew who they were.

Cal once had a problem with Harold Bosworth, he was doing well in one of the races, when he was overtaken by Bozzy, he blamed Cal for fencing him in, Cal knew it wasn't him, and everyone else did. Anyway in the next race, on this occasion, everyone ganged up on him, "If you're playing dirty, we're playing dirty." After which Cal never had any more trouble with the formidable Bozzy.



The best picture available of the "ex Airfield Fire Engine Special".



The M45 T34 saloon has a hard time.



Cal was a proven race winner, with the final victories coming in Doncaster, Sheffield and Norwich, he knew how to win and being an experienced mechanic, he had the knowledge to set the car up. He had worked on Wellington Bomber Aircraft during World War 2. He also had tactics that he would deploy.

The Lagonda had dual ignition, so he would pull onto the track, missing and coughing, then as soon as the racing started, he would flick on the dual ignition switch and he would be flying.

Cal loved the big shale tracks, "Norwich, that was a lovely big track, and most suitable for the big Lagonda." He also liked West Ham. He well remembered his first visit to Norwich trying to find the stadium and an amazing scene. He hadn't a clue, he saw a police car and pulled up, the policeman said "I know where you are going, follow me." the sirens going, he took them all the way to the stadium, a police escort.

However the police were not always helpful. One night on the way home from Sheffield the police stopped him as shale was flying from the wings of the Lagonda. The policeman had been on duty inside the Stadium, he had enjoyed the night's racing, but still did him with a fine of £1.

In 1956, a rule change meant that Cal's Lagonda was banned due to its power to weight ratio, so he went out and got another Lagonda with more bodywork and a powerful 4.5 litre

engine, this was the M34 ST34 Saloon model, he swapped an old Singer 10 and £25 for it.

By 1957, so many tracks had closed or were closing their doors to Stock Car Racing, including all Cal's local tracks, Doncaster, Sheffield, Wombwell and Bradford, which meant travelling, and with a young family and a successful business, he reluctantly called it a day

So, what about his two Lagondas? It was thought they were never seen again. Had he got them parked up? His wife was not very happy with Cal's hobby, and with 2 young daughters to consider as well, he decided to retire, He said there was a bloke who lived in Hatfield, a doctor fellow, he ran a Lagonda so he rang him up and said "Are you interested in my two Lagondas for spares?" He was down in a flash. "If I hadn't got rid of them I would have raced another season." No wonder the good doctor didn't waste any time. "I gave them cars away." Cal admitted.

Now, who was the good Doctor? It appears that it was the much missed and respected Gordon Rider who was the local GP in Hatfield prior to moving to Hutton Rudby. Both cars did finish up in a scrap yard, after all the good bits had been removed.

Cal is now a 90 year old grandfather and has never been to a meeting since parting with his cars.

I am grateful to The Editor of The Stock Car Club Magazine for their permission to use these photographs and information.





A selection of the cars on the recent Continental Rally.



Five V 12s in a row. An inspiring sight!

More Early Pictures

Ken Painter, Arnold Davey and Valerie Bugler work together

JOHN LENNON ONCE said: "Life is what happens whilst you are making other plans" and that pretty well sums up the way these photos of early Lagondas came to light. Let me explain. My good friend and near-neighbour, Nick Portway, Vauxhall 30/98 expert and the former owner of a V12 Lagonda saloon, collected virtually a complete run of early loose copies of "The Autocar", to help with writing his superb book on the 30/98 and recently invited me to search through them to see what I could find on the Lagonda Light Cars. (Only 610 copies to go now!) Nick didn't just collect magazines though, he bought several album collections of early photos and in them he found these three photos of early Lagondas.

The first is an 11-1, probably dating from 1913 or early 1914, as it pre-dates the longer flat running boards introduced some time in 1914 and it has acetylene lights. There is no way of identifying the actual car, the registration number is invisible and the picture wasn't captioned, but it is fairly obvious that the car had been well used by the time the picture was taken, so the picture itself might actually date from the early twenties, which would be consistent with the 30/98 photos in the same album.

The second two pictures are captioned "Oates' Lagondas, Chatcombe Hillclimb, Cheltenham", but no date is given for the event. As they are from a private collection, they may never have been published and we are probably showing them to the world for the very first time.

These pictures were, of course, promptly passed on to our archivist,

Arnold Davey, who has made careful records of every event where Lagondas are listed as taking part and this is what he is able to tell us about them:

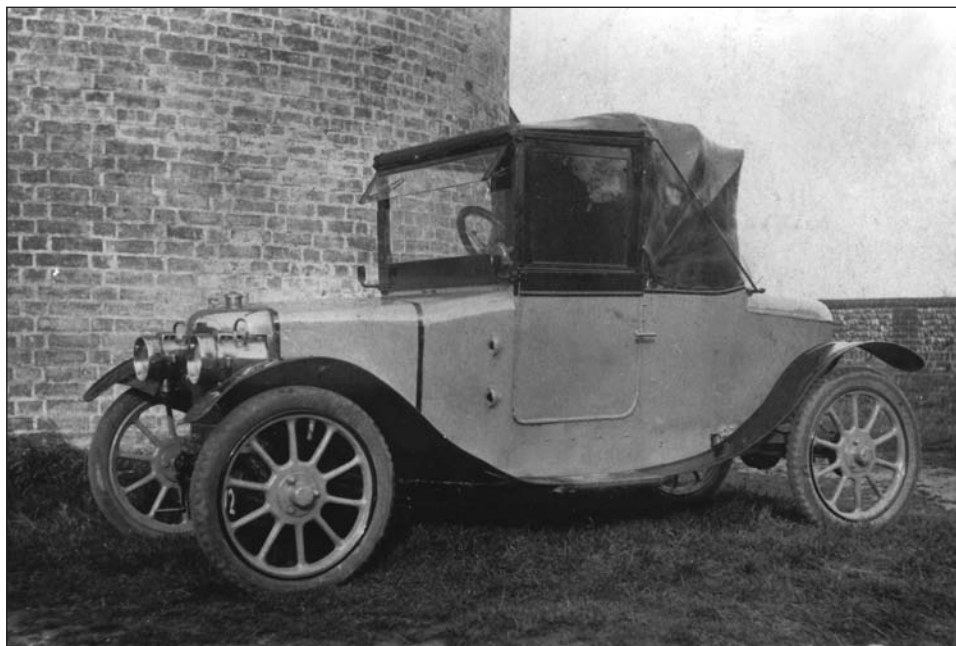
"The event recorded in the two photos is the Chatcombe Pitch Hillclimb, held on 21st May 1921 and organised by the ACU Western Centre.

"Oates drove his single seater, XE 6440, Chassis 2715, engine no 6789. He gained a Silver Medal in Class 25, with a time of 46-8 seconds, the class winner was Archie Frazer-Nash in 34-4 seconds.

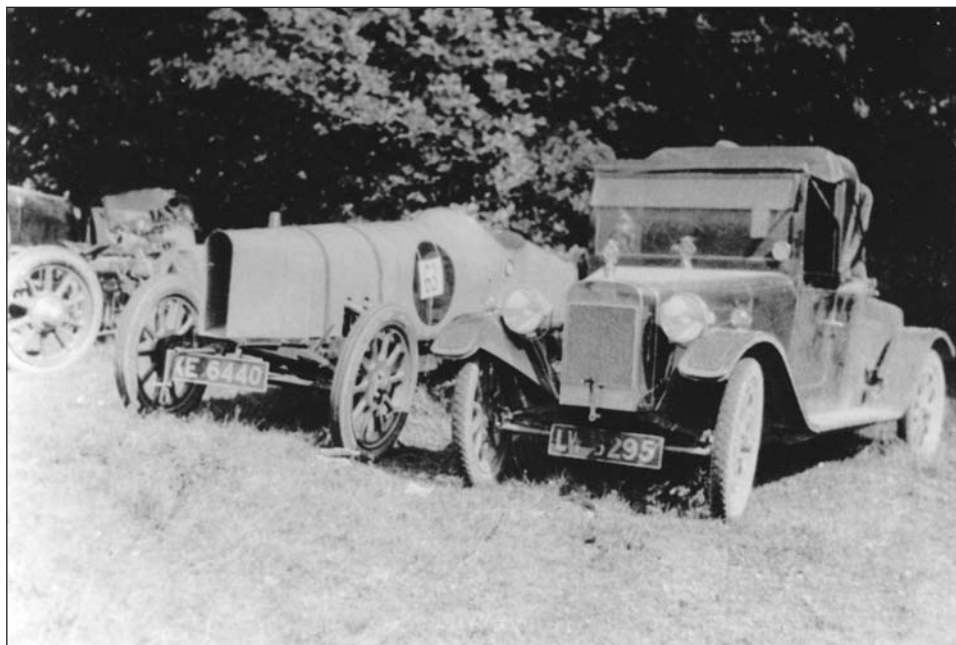
"In Class 26, Oates took 3rd place in 46-0 seconds. The class winner was Archie Frazer-Nash again, in 35-2 seconds. It appears that Oates was trying harder and Frazer-Nash took things a little easier!

"An interesting point arises from these pictures; I have a photo of the 1922 single seater at a different hillclimb and it is registered ?? 4321. (You can't see the letters.) I suspect this was a rebuild of one of the 1921 200 mile race cars, I can't see why he would re-register the 1921 car".

The last picture was bought at this year's "Spring Start" VSCC Race Meeting at Silverstone. The registration number fooled me, but help was at hand from an unexpected source. Colin and Valerie Bugler were there, with their team car replica, I showed the picture to Valerie, who immediately said. "Oh! Its a picture of my husband!" To cut a long story very short, it is Colin's 2 litre, low chassis



The unknown early 11.1 from the Nick Portway collection.



The two Oates cars at Chatcombe Pitch .



The Oates Racer on one of its two runs at Chatcombe Pitch.



Colin Bugler in his 2 litre at Prescott, 14th August 1966. Photo by Guy Griffiths.

tourer, with its distinctive 3 litre radiator, photographed by Guy Griffiths at the 14th August 1966 Prescott hillclimb. The car was re-registered shortly after the war, as this attracted a very much lower road tax rating. Some time after he bought the car, Colin managed to recover the original registration number, PL 7593, and that explains why I didn't recognise the post-war number.

On the subject of registration numbers, it is interesting that Oates was campaigning a late Lagonda 11.1 with the smaller 11.1 engine, the rounded tail and the 11.9 style radiator in an article in "The Autocar" dated May 8th 1920, carrying the number LW 6295. Did it become the prototype for the 11.9, or did the factory transfer the number to an 11.9 later? The same number appears on an 11.9, road tested by "The Motor" in their November 3rd 1920 issue, but by

this stage the car has the typical tail of the 11.9 and is reported as having the longer chassis. The car appears again in a report on the 11.9 in "The Light Car and Cyclecar" on February 19th 1921. The picture at Chatcombe Pitch is the latest I have seen where the number can be read.

In the May 1920 article, great emphasis was placed on the fact that the car then being used was "highly tuned, provided with extra instruments and as carefully groomed as any prize animal before a show." This might explain why the early cars seemed to have such a good performance in comparison with the later models...

The 11.9 road tested by "The Motor" on February 1st 1922 carried a different number.

See below, for a 1920s view on the art of performance enhancement of supposedly 'standard' cars...



THIS LITTLE POEM, by "C.A. P." was published on page 701 of "The Light Car and Cyclecar" on November 19th 1921. It is clear that Lagonda was not alone in a little performance enhancement of what were usually described as standard models.

I went to a hill climb, a certain car
Made fastest time of the day by far,
I went to Brooklands to see a race,
And the same car won at a spanking pace.
So I ordered one, but except for the name
I found it wasn't a bit the same.

"What's your trouble?" the makers said,
"It's true we've valves that are overhead,
Different pistons, chassis and wheels,
Moving parts of expensive steels,
A carburettor of larger choke,
Higher compression and longer stroke,
Gears of a closer ratio,
And a few little things like that, you know,
But otherwise, you can take it from us,
Ours is a perfectly standard bus!"

A Little Learning is a Dangerous Thing

Len Cozzolino does some research that will be of interest to all pre-war Lagonda owners

AS PROMISED I have been researching oils for our 16/80s. To some, perhaps most of you, I may be teaching grandmother to suck eggs, but in my reading I found that some commonly accepted principles are not based on fact and some simply wrong. Also other interesting facts emerged that I thought worth disseminating.

Before I do, let me plead a disclaimer. This note has been written after discussions with oil supply specialists, Withams of Lincoln and by reference to Richard Michell's excellent book "Which Oil?", which I highly recommend. The points made are to the best of my knowledge accurate and I will be following this advice but you do so entirely at your own risk.

A Bit of History

In the early 1920's it was not uncommon for car manufacturers still to recommend vegetable or animal based oils. During this period mineral oil (oil derived from crude oil) had started to displace vegetable/animal oils though there were not the standardised SAE numbers we have today. (SAE = Society of Automotive Engineers.) The only safe way to buy reliable oil was by buying from a recognised manufacture, e.g. Mobiloil, Shell, Prices etc. By the end of the 1920s the SAE viscosity system was introduced. However, neither multi-grade nor synthetic oils had been developed so only single grade engine oils were used, the most common being

SAE30 and SAE40. Additives to improve the oil's performance were starting to be included from the mid 1920s such as anti-foaming (engines of that time relied more on splash and dipping for lubrication so foaming was a problem), pour point depressants (to stop natural waxes forming at low temperatures), and anti-oxidants (to reduce the oil oxidising at high temperatures and thus extending the oil's useful life).

So this was the state of the lubrication industry at the time our 16/80s were built and the Crossley engine was developed.

Which Engine Oil?

The oils Lagonda originally recommended are Prices Motorine C De Luxe, Wakefield Castrol XXL, Mobil D and Aero Shell. From discussion with Witham's Technical Director these are all SAE40 straight oils. They would have contained anti-foaming, anti-oxidants and pour point suppressants but not detergents/ dispersants. So a single grade SAE40 non-detergent/ dispersant oil is what you should use if you are to stick with Lagonda's original recommendation.

However, lubrication technology has advanced since those days and the use of multi-grade oils will give a better overall performance and should be considered. The trouble with single grade oils is that as the engine temperature raises so the viscosity of

the oil reduces. The viscosity is probably the most important factor in ensuring that a thin film of oil remains on the bearing/moving surfaces. If the viscosity is too low the ability for the oil to sustain a continuous film reduces and so engine wear increases. Lagonda needed to specify an oil that gave the right lubrication characteristics at operating temperatures but this leads to a compromise at start-up temperature as the oil will be cold and more viscous than is wanted.

Multi-grade oils use special polymers to ensure that as the temperature rises the viscosity does not reduce so markedly. So a multi-grade will give the same performance at high temperatures but can provide lower viscosity oil when cold at start-up to speed lubrication of the moving parts. Remember the current day ad on the TV, "80% of an engine's wear happens in the first 10 minutes". So, getting the right viscosity at start-up is also critical and a multi-grade achieves this far better than a single-grade oil.

Using the various tables in Richard Michell's book the appropriate multi-grade to replace SAE 40 oil is 15W/40. The Witham's Technical Director agreed with this but said that he would tend to use the more common 20W/50. If, as is the case in my engine the oil pump is a little worn then going for the 20W/50 will help the pump to pump more efficiently as the less viscous 15W/40 may result in oil flow-back across the pump as the engine warms.

Should I use a Detergent/ Dispersant Oil?

The common advice is "Yes" if the engine has recently been rebuilt and fully cleaned, and under no circumstances if not. However, one of the interesting points to come out of

Richard Michell's book is that the answer is probably "Yes" even if the engine has not been rebuilt/cleaned and particularly if your engine still only has the original simple oil filtration systems. There are two reasons to alter this common misconception:

1. Dispersants hold the combustion solids in suspension and prevent them from amalgamating together to form large particles which, when large enough, settle as sludge at the bottom of the sump in an unfiltered engine. When these combustion particles are formed they are microscopic and do little damage to the engine. Once they combine to form larger particles they can start to cause damage and start to build up and block oil-passage ways. Their size when they start to cause damage is still too small for them to settle out under gravity as sludge so they are circulating around the engine causing wear. The job of the dispersant is to stop this amalgamation of the combustion particles and hence reduce damage. Together with the detergent it also discourages the tendency for the particles to adhere to the metal surfaces and accumulate there.

2. From the 1960's it was hard to find non-detergent/dispersant oil. So unless the owner was aware and took the trouble to find non-detergent/dispersant oils it is very likely that your engine has used oil with detergent/dispersant in it for a number of years.

So unless you can guarantee the engine has never used non-detergent oil you are probably safe to use it. My 16/80 engine has been recently rebuilt so it is not an issue, but would I risk using it in my un-rebuilt 16/65 engine? Yes, particularly as it has no filter and the ability to keep the combustion particles

in suspension, combined with the frequent oil changes I judge to be preferable. However, on this point you must decide for yourself. I also take other precautions. After every run I pass the oil through a separate oil filtration system and deliver it back into the engine. So I am further reducing the build-up of damaging particles.

How often should I change my oil?

I have included this as again Richard Michell's book is again very instructive, horrifying and frankly made me stop and think. Most, I think, would change their oil once a year or every 3,000 miles per the Lagonda recommendation. This was fine when the car was used daily or at least regularly but not so given its probably current usage. Richard Michell's expert recommendations are :

Usage and frequency of oil change:

A few short trips a year:

Every 3 trips or every 12 months whichever comes first

Semi-regular use, short to modest trips:

Every 6 trips or every 12 months whichever comes first

Regular use, with varying trip lengths:

Every 3,000 miles or 6 months whichever comes first

Told you, it is horrifying!

If I decide to use a multi-grade should I go for synthetic engine oil?

In short the answer is probably yes provided it is from a recognised manufacturer but given the probable infrequent use the added costs will outweigh the benefits. The benefit of synthetic engine oil is its ability to better withstand high temperatures

typically found in high performance highly stressed engines. So unless you intend to race your 16/80 normal multi-grade oil from a recognised producer is more than adequate.

How often should I start the engine and warm it to keep the parts oiled?

This was another interesting conclusion made in Richard Michell's book. You should not start the engine and run on a semi-regular basis until warm and switch it off. Richard Michell states that "this operation is just about the worst that can be imposed on an engine from the point of view of lubrication". His reasoning is that this type of start-up is invariably when the engine is cold and having sat for a month or so. All the oil will have drained from all surfaces. As the engine is cold so is the oil and in this state is viscous and slow moving. To start the engine you need to apply the choke or pump in neat petrol via the Ki-gass so putting excess petrol in the engine. This fuel will strip what little oil is left on the cylinder walls and drain into the sump, thus diluting the oil with each start unless it is boiled off by operating the engine at high enough temperature for long enough. Equally the water formed naturally from the combustion of petrol will find its way into the engine and sump and if not boiled away by prolonged high temperatures will start to attack any ferrous parts after the oil has drained away. How many times have you seen rusted steel push-rods and wondered how this could happen in an enclosed oil laden area of the engine!

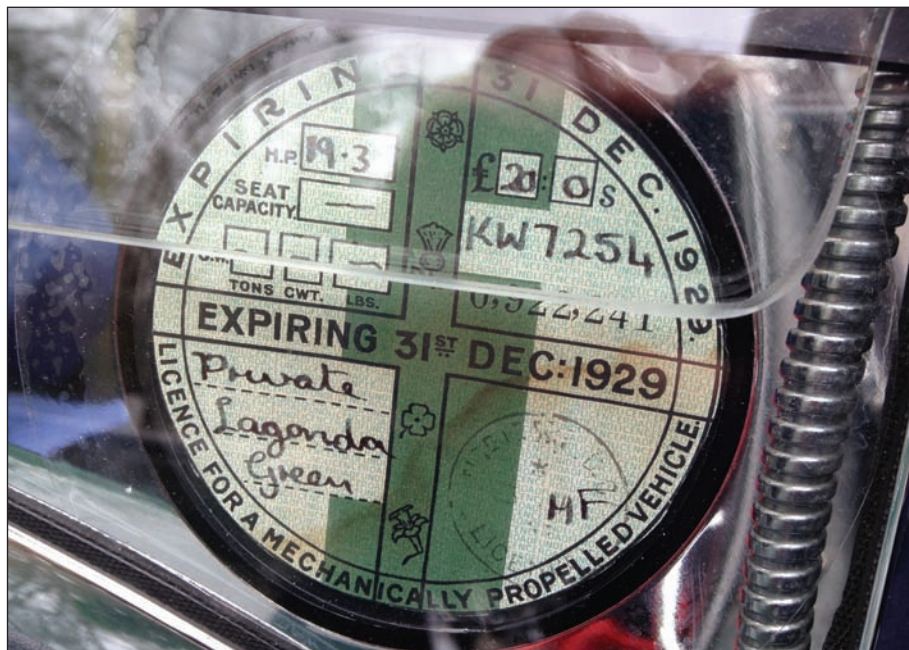
So the advice is to start the engine less frequently, and when you do, take the car for a long run to heat the oil thoroughly, not just to bring the water in the radiator up to temperature.



*Taken at the VSCC Bisley Rally in 1950. The driver is possibly Mr Bloor.
Photo by Guy Griffiths.*



*How not to take a picture? It shows no respect for the two men working on the LG45-R!
Bought at an autojumble and un-captioned.*



Period detail is so important. The original-style tax disc on David Rowe's 3 litre tourer.

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Letters

Dear Ken,

The following is a summary of an experience that may serve as a warning to members, not to ignore any accident, however trivial.

Travelling 3 miles to the next village in my DB 3Litre coupe, I came upon road works and temporary lights showing red. A van was in front and was positioned across the exit from a minor road showing a give-way sign. I stopped a short distance away to allow

traffic, coming through the works, to turn into the minor road if required. The lights changed and as I moved forward, a Passat arrived on the minor road, failed to stop, and we collided. Fortunately, he swung away and his door mirror put a small crease in the front wing near the headlight. No other damage occurred to either car – the door mirror was undamaged.

Harry Taylor



Your Editor Elect is not expecting this. Roger Seabrook competing at Prescott.

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