



THE MAGAZINE OF THE  
LAGONDA CLUB  
Number 249 Summer 2016



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## The Lagonda Magazine

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**FRONT COVER:** 2 litres in Wales. Tom & Shirley Wilcox lead in their CC Saloon, followed by Peter Bradley's supercharged LC with Mike Heins & daughter Judi in the rear.

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# From the Driving Seat

*Roger Seabrook*

WE HAVE RECENTLY returned from a tour of the Spanish Pyrenees, in the 2 litre, covering over 1000 miles and climbing to around 7000 feet in some places. The generally superb roads and beautiful scenery made driving a real pleasure in a vintage car. On returning to England the contrast hits you straight away. The appalling condition of the highways is a national disgrace and, even when you get a stretch of newly re-surfaced road, it is not laid properly. How often do you have to contend with sunken drain covers, tracks made by lorries that mean constant steering corrections on a beam-axled car, and really dangerous potholes!

I decided to overhaul the rear springs on the Rapier. These were probably made when the car was reassembled in around 1990 - and, it would seem, had been fitted without proper preparation after forging. They cleaned up well, and I renewed some of the shackle bushes, which had been turning in the spring eyes due to the pins being too tight. I also wanted to stop oil leaking onto the rear brakes, a common problem on Rapiers. This meant boring out the axle ends to take oil seals to back up those already in the hubs, and putting breathers in each of the axle tubes. I removed the axle and turned the pinion. It was as smooth as silk, with just the right amount of backlash. So I thought I would wait until later before installing my higher-geared CWP. However, when turning the axle over, I heard what sounded like

ball bearings rattling in the casing. On removal of the CWP, out fell four gear teeth, which had departed from the pinion!

So now the rebuilt axle has it's new CWP (4.55:1) and some significant refurbishment of the pinion housing, to rectify the attentions of previous bodgers.

Did anyone recognize the two autojumbler in the 1967 Beaulieu picture in the Spring Editorial? The lady is, I believe, the late Robby Hewitt who owned two of the three M45 Le Mans team cars, but who is the chap in the bow tie, looking challengingly at the punters? Does anyone remember attending that year? My first Beaulieu was in 1970, looking for parts for the 12-24 I had just purchased. I needed headlights and their mountings to the front wings, the top half of the windscreen, and numerous other bits and pieces. Even that long ago, nothing suitable was found. I eventually tried asking Maurice Leo, who was still in business in Beaconsfield, but he said 'You won't find anything for that!' I confess to having drilled out all the rivets that held the body skin to the angle-iron frame, to attempt to de-rust and refurbish. I lost interest and sold the remains, but miraculously it reappeared, fully restored, many years later.

A big 'Thank You', to those who have sent in articles over the last few weeks. Some are held over and will appear in a future magazine.

***Last date for copy for the Spring magazine is  
... FRIDAY 24th March 2017 ...***

# Lagonda Spring in Wales Tour 2016

## *Jim Valentine is accompanied by Shirley in the V12*

WHAT BETTER WAY to begin a tour? Sunday had been baking hot but the dust of the journey to the Gliffaes Hotel in Crickhowell, Powys was washed away by the ideal start to any rally: copious quantities of chocolate tiffin, scones, clotted cream and jam, as a gentle lead into the Champagne we shared later on the terrace with old friends.

The weather forecast was pretty grim for the week ahead: Monday broke grey but not raining, yet. The crews set out with roofs up and stopped for morning coffee at the Lake Country House Hotel. One member of our party was spotted stalking a small white fancy chicken at the morning tea stop. His motive was unclear, but as he had stomped on a peacock last year, it was useful to catch his eye before the execution. (You know who you are. It will be interesting to see what avian bullying you come up with next year.)

With the weather improving, roofs were dropped and the participants headed up over moors and hills to pick up the Elan Valley Trail. Spectacular scenery followed, with some stunning civil engineering in the form of reservoirs and dams built to provide Birmingham with fresh water, delivered from Wales using gravity. They were also used by Barnes Wallis during the war in preparation for the dambusters raid. The Elan Valley Visitor Centre is sited, somewhat confidently I felt, underneath the last of seven dams in the valley. So we ate lunch with nearly a billion tonnes of water on the other side of the wall. It wasn't entirely relaxing.



*Jim shows touching gentleness and respect for mother Shirley.*

Mike Heins and his daughter Judi Millward had clearly put a lot of hours into researching and writing up route notes for Tuesday's outing. These included photos of the approach to junctions, with alternatives for those not fancying the tight back lanes in the wet. Our own progress down these lanes was quite dramatic, with a local driver hurling her 4x4 into a ditch in preference to reversing. She showed impressive skills but she didn't manage to get out again on the first go. I lingered to see if she was going to need a tow out (the irony being that we would have to do that from the front so we'd

still have the passing problem) but there was no need. Although the lanes did prove to be a challenge, our only other major incident was meeting John and Joan Fitton coming back down the route: neither of us managed a fully controlled stop but we narrowly avoided hitting the organiser's car amid a certain amount of shock, skidding and squealing – not all of it produced by the occupants.

The Tuesday route took us to Abbey Dore Court Gardens. Their creator, Mrs Charis Ward, sadly died in January; but the family stood by the Lagonda booking and opened the tea-rooms and gardens especially. The beds along the river Dore were wonderful, even though the weather was turning wetter. Many locals had turned out to see the Lagondas, which looked good racked up alongside the tea-rooms. One local arrived with a picture of herself in the 1930s at the wheel of her grandfather's three-litre Lagonda with him in the back: a lovely connection with the past, the place and the cars.

Mike's day took us on to Berrington Hall, where he had arranged a tour below stairs. This was quite a privilege, as the rooms were not yet officially open. Our hugely enthusiastic and knowledgeable guide's love of the house was infectious and gave us a good feel for the lives of the 43 staff that worked there. It turns out the white gloves butlers wore were to conceal the damage done to their hands by the aggressive cleaning methods of the time. And apparently, the fashion among Georgian ladies for blanching the face with arsenic caused the death of more than one husband bestowing a marital kiss!

The food at Gliffaes Hotel and the speed of service occasioned some small murmurs of complaint over the tour. But the barbecue dinner on Tuesday, brought indoors by bad weather, was a delicious break with the traditional three courses. John Batt correctly took me to task for wearing a tie to a barbecue: who knew grilled meat could breed such informality?



*Judi Milward receives a bouquet of flowers for her help with organizing the Tuesday outing. Richard Reay-Smith makes the presentation.*

Wednesday's morning coffee stop was in the award-winning National Showcase Caves. We were welcomed at the entrance by real emus and llamas, and enormous, vividly coloured plastic dinosaurs.

David Edwards assured me that the groaning and straining noises I could hear were coming from a speaker and not him or Gill. A riveting video in the tea-room confirmed that you would have to be completely insane to go caving, but there are certainly some astonishing sights to be seen underground. I'll settle for watching them from the tea-room.





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*Boy, did it rain! A typical view from the hotel entrance.*



The Black Mountain Pass was next on the list, but the rain had settled in again and visibility was reduced.



*Peter Bradley wonders if it is worth venturing out.*

A long old run with a comedy route instruction at a roundabout bunched the group up for arrival at Aberglasny Gardens, which lived up to its billing as “a real treat”. We went from a sunken pond garden within a walled courtyard, past formal beds of black tulips, and into a woodland wild garden with groups of exotic planting. A very worked-over walled garden followed, where apple trees had been formed over years into organic arches and had been trained to give a diamond effect on the walls, which was echoed in the planting.

We took in Bishop Rudd’s Walk, another part of the estate, and then

the new ninfarium: a clever use of the ruined part of the mansion where a glass roof has been built on to the walls to make a tropical garden. Orchids jostled with palms; and I think it was a banana flower of some sort that really caught my attention (not enough to report accurately on of course).

The last supper was upon us before we knew it. Richard Reay-Smith gave thanks to the organisers for all their hard work and presented the gifts and flowers that marked the end of another great tour.

## h

The other participants (not mentioned above):

Peter Bradley in a two-litre won the informal concours event. His car was returned to immaculate condition every night. I have seen some clean and tidy engine bays in my time...

Tom and Shirley Wilcox were there with the close-coupled saloon and were happy to construct a tent over their car every night after coming second to Peter Bradley in the car park concours. Tom has given his car cover an interesting Australian twist with cork danglers, presumably to keep the flies off. On Monday he very proudly organised a convoy of followers by travelling just fast enough to be difficult to overtake but slow enough to keep his acolytes behind him on the narrow roads (your Editor did overtake him, and was branded a road-hog as a result).

Michael and Georgina Drakeford broke down irrevocably en route; and with a wedding to cover the following weekend, repairing the car took precedence over attending the rally.

Alan and Sue Harrison were sadly kept away by a last-minute family crisis, which was a great shame as they do keep the average age of the equipe down; and Sue would have loved to see the kites and chaffinches.

Roger and Beryl Firth obviously expected sunshine as they forsook the usual M45 Saloon for a beautifully turned-out M45 tourer, with that sublime wing line.

David and Francesca Rowe somehow managed to keep their three-litre Special clean without ever being spotted cleaning it, no small achievement given the weather conditions. Francesca seemed to have the perfect hat for every occasion and was spotted in a tremendous 30's bonnet: so chic.

Robin and Janice Saddler brought shame on the club by arriving with their Rapier on the back of a trailer. This turned out to be a prescient move as the Rapier lost its timing in a major way and the recovery, even with a trailer handy, was a four-hour drama. At one point the pair were spotted at the bottom of a fell, but in a trice Janice had scaled up about 300m and was at the top of the valley admiring the view. Robin called out something constructive while she was still within ear-shot on the lower slopes, but left her to climb while he adjusted some important straps on the Rapier.

The "modern British" contingent was made up of Richard and Sue Reay-Smith in a Jaguar XK 150 and Phil and Beryl Pyne in a Healey Abbott Tourer. The Healey Abbott was of particular interest to me as my father, Michael Valentine, owned one. We sold it in 2008 and I hadn't seen one since.

Walter and Rosie Thomson

added their usual great cheer to the proceedings. Walter got very excited by the transit of Mercury across the sun which happened on Monday afternoon. The local astronomy rangers were every bit as enthusiastic and had set up various telescopes to witness the rare celestial coming. I was rather underwhelmed, as you can model the event for yourself using an outspan orange and a series of ballpoint pen dots to much the same effect. Walter had a spot of bother with a jammed starter motor. It was encouraging to hear that Mike Heins fixed it, deftly wielding a Birmingham screwdriver. Walter writes: "Mike and David Rowe were the very kind assistant mechanics in sorting my jammed starter motor while Clive was the 'eminence gris' giving instructions. Very grateful to all concerned particularly as the rescue was carried out in the rain and having never experienced it before I had no idea what the problem was."

Richard and Pippa Campbell's M45 two-seater caught my imagination as I still lust after a car with a Meadows engine, having parted company with an Invicta two years ago.

Roger and Ann Seabrook came in their two-litre in preference to the Rapier, which last year was spotted on the A303 looking like a dinghy in the torrential rain we endured on the drive home.

Steve and Claire Webber certainly won the furthest travelled award, having come down from Aberdeen in their three-litre Special Tourer.

Jonathan and Merav Oppenheimer joined us on Tuesday in his elegant-if-not-watertight M45 Saloon. Jonathan had always wanted to join the April Tour. This year, having finally got his

name on the list, he found wedding duty clashed with the dates. So he and his wife Merav caught up with the party on Monday night. Tom and Shirley Wilcox sent this report of their day in the rain:

‘Just before arriving at the caves we noticed a sign off the new road to a pub that had been bypassed. Being both elderly and weedy we took the decision to try the pub for lunch instead of heading further west into the rain. The front door of the pub had a sign saying “Do not remove your boots or shoes before entering”. I stuck my head round the door to see the fierce, bearded landlord glowering at me from behind the bar. In what was intended to be a cheery greeting, I said, “I have my shoes on, may I enter?” The landlord did not reply and his face did not alter in any way. In some trepidation I approached the bar and asked if we might have something to eat. In a strong Welsh accent he replied “I saw you leave that old car in my car park,” still glowering at me. I did not notice, but he had winked at Shirley when I turned to her as she entered. Very seriously I started to explain what the car was, when finally he burst into laughter.

He had me going for a couple of minutes before he revealed that he was a vintage car admirer and had a Scott motorcycle from the 20s in his garage. He turned out to be a splendid man, who was not only interested in vintage cars, but was building a 7” scale King Class GWR steam locomotive and had driven several full size steam engines on preserved lines. He told us all about the wonderful views in the area which could be enjoyed when the clouds were not down to ground level and brought us photos to prove it.

A little while later we saw Robin and Mairwen drive up. Mairwen entered the pub, but Robin turned the car and drove off in the direction in which he had arrived. He returned shortly, leading David and Gill in their two-litre back to the pub. We had almost finished eating when the other four joined us. Rather than sit there with nothing to drink I went to the bar to ask the now smiling landlord if he had any Welsh whisky. “Yes, indeed I keep the wonderful Penderyn single malt,” was the immediate response. Shirley and I had a glass each and found it very smooth and enjoyable. “The distillery is only half an hour from here, much better than a garden in the rain,” he advised.

We took his advice and easily found the distillery. We bought a couple of bottles and returned to the hotel well satisfied with our day out in the rain.’

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# Clutch Braking - It's effect on gear changing

## *Clive Dalton offers some useful advice*

HAVING RECENTLY EXAMINED a 2 litre for which all gear changing resulted in prolonged side-grubbing of the teeth, I went back and had a look at clutch stop guidance in earlier magazines. Here is the result.

The clutch brake has a profound influence on how nice the car is to drive. Although Jeff Ody's comments in Magazine 149 and Tim Wadsworth's elegant pincer design in Magazine 200 go some way, neither of them deals with how to set the brake properly. The possibilities are as follows:

1. Early and fierce
2. Late but fierce
3. Early and gentle
4. Late and gentle.

Of these options most restorers, even those who do their own car choose No 2. They reason that if one only puts the clutch a little way down the clutch stop will not operate and interfere with the ordinary process of double-declutching. The defect with this is that only putting the clutch down a little way is not easy and may not fully disengage the clutch anyway. Accidentally putting it down too far stops the clutch/gearbox shaft dead.

If you are a racing driver then choose No 1. You can find your own salvation.

The correct choice is No 3 for it gives the option to use the clutch stop effectively if you are going uphill, yet

doesn't get in the way if you are simply motoring along on the level. It also allows you to engage first gear at the traffic lights silently and immediately.

The clutch spring in my 2 litre Continental is made out of 15 SWG wire, has 19 active turns and a free length of 71.5 mm. Its rate is about 25 lbs force per inch and, as installed and set, is compressed to a length of 68 mm. Many years use has confirmed that it is set about right. What is more its exact qualities are not that critical, and there are a range of similar springs which will work.

Turning now to the car in the first paragraph above I reckon that at some stage the clutch stop spring has been discovered to be missing. The restorer has found a spring in the miscellaneous springs box with the right length and right inside diameter and fitted it. He has not noticed that the spring is wildly stiffer than it should be and has sent the car for auction. The new purchaser finds that changing gears silently is simply impossible. Even a light depression of the clutch stops the clutch to gearbox shaft dead. A change of spring for a much lighter one is necessary

Cars otherwise perfectly satisfactory have been sold simply because their owner cannot come to terms with the gearbox.

There is a very good picture of how to adjust the clutch stop in the 2 Litre Working Instructions book.

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# Northern Awards Dinner & Tour 2016

## *Higher standards, better attendance, no trousers lost*

### *by Styger Tim*

IT'S EXTRAORDINARY WHAT Mr Gunn started, when he ceased singing for a few hours in 1904, and codged up that first Lagonda forecar. He changed our world, in so many ways.

For example, fifty-seven years later in 1961, Mr Gunn's dreams impacted the venerable Monk Fryston Hall Hotel. A bunch of northern enthusiasts led by Northern Secretary Ron Paine put aside their regional rivalries, and booked the first Lagonda Club Northern Dinner. From that long-distant day, oil stains have grown glacially outside the hotel's fine entrance as a fitting memorial to continuity. The walnut tree graciously gifted by the hotel to mark our fifty-two years of continuing loyalty at the 2013 Dinner sadly proved less permanent – but our persistence was well-rewarded by the excellence of our latest Northern & Awards Dinner.

The traditional display of Lagondae great and good was the best in many years. It featured the usual exhibitionists from the Northern Lagonda Factory, but they were trumped this year by Colin Mallett's superb, and recently-recommissioned, M45 Saloon. Trust the marque Lagonda to make the most of a splendid venue. Lenny the 2-Litre was out of sorts, so your Northern Secretary politely hid his inappropriate MGA round the back.

Records fail to show the number attending in 1961. They probably fell short of the 70 who sat down for a memorable dinner on Friday 13th May 2016. The Northern contingent was predictably strong in numbers and

character. What made the difference was the growing attendance from the South, many eager to respond to the Competition Secretary clarion of Richard Reay-Smith to collect their previous year's Competition Trophies in person.

We filled all the hotel's bedrooms well in advance. The best efforts of a non-Polish plumber to flood Monk Fryston meant we then lost some rooms, so our nearby back-up Milton Hotel was also well filled. See our cautionary 'Note for 2017', below.

Once the hotel team, led by General Manager Neil Doogan, breached the roar of erudite Lagonda conversation in the bars, and ushered the diners in their bow ties and tiaras to dinner, proceedings commenced with a sonorous Scottish Grace delivered with due decorum by a kilt-less Peter Weir. Confit Duck & Smoked Chicken Terrine heralded the arrival of a much-complimented Braised Shoulder of Lamb, followed by a traditional Apple & Rhubarb Crumble smothered in an adventurous Pistachio Custard.

The Scottish flavour of the evening continued with an appropriate Loyal Toast for our beloved Sovereign's 90th Birthday, from Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for Orkney Bill Spence, freshly returned with Sue from their Lagonda's epic tour of New Zealand. His return to Orkney next day was swift, so he could collect his uniform, and host the Royal and German Presidential Visit to Kirkwall and Scapa Flow for the Battle of Jutland Centenary Commemorations.

It would be good to report that the Northern Secretary addressed a few brief words as a sort of post-dinner digestif, but he simply is not capable of such brevity. So, it was some minutes later that he handed over proceedings to Club President David Hine and Lagonda guru Alan Brown for the entertainment, a mix of politically-incorrect jokes from Alan and a similarly-irreverent ode from the pair. Be-hatted as Nelson and Hardy, they explored the implications of workplace Health & Safety on their conduct of the Battle of Trafalgar. Conclusion : Frogs 1, Lions 0. Matelot Brown retained his trousers throughout. President Hine brought their proceedings to a close by urging the congregation to join him in "A Streak in the Park". We understand West Yorkshire Police are on the case.

Then, on to the evening's prime purpose. Hilary Green helped Admiral Hine remove his hat, and from the full list of the Club's Competition Awards present members of the assembled multitude with their Trophies. Clive and Shirley Dalton won the Densham for the Most Active 2-Litre. Nigel Hall carried the Fox and Nicholl for the Club's best overall Racing Performance at VSCC Oulton Park 2015, John Abel richly deserved the Michael Trophy for the best performance in any type of event, with his 1st in Class and 10th Overall in the HERO RAC 1000 Mile Trial for the second year. And then Alan Brown returned to the stage with Nick Hine for the Overseas Trophy, earned by sterling efforts in the MRL Algarve Classic race, where their 7th place was judged the Best Performance in an overseas event.

Neale Edwards, who joined us specially from Somerset with Geraldine Wills, received the Club's

Gostling Trophy, awarded for best Magazine article as selected by the Editor. The unfortunate absence of this non-competition trophy did nothing to dampen Neal's exuberance at his award, or inhibit the specially-written Ode to Lagonda with which he regaled us all, to great applause.

The final act of an effervescent evening was the inauguration of the Northern Lagonda Factory Awards. Ian Waugh was first up as Apprentice of the Year, Nigel Smeal's achievements in advanced coachwork earned him Bodybuilder of the Year, and Tim Gresty's prowess in bulls\*\*t brought him the Gold Star Award. Their delight was obvious . . .

Many clubs would finish this report with 'and so to bed'. Not the Lagonda Club, whose past Northern Dinner denizens led by Herb Schofield and Terry Tratalos coined the motto 'and so to the bar'. There, we toasted a splendid evening in glorious company, with our lovely ladies, an entertainment where hats were gained and no trousers lost, and the greatest of craftsman-built sports-cars.

Grateful thanks go to Monk Fryston's owners Geoff Davies and Sharon Mason, and for their valiant efforts to keep up the standards of that welcoming hotel. Many voted 2016 our best Northern & Awards Dinner yet. Here's to an even better weekend in 2017.

### **The Saturday Tour**

A record turn-out of Lagondas supported Saturday's informal Yorkshire Tour. The Route Book took us from Monk Fryston to Lotherton Hall, a visit to the unspoilt Sam Smiths owned Greyhound Inn at Saxton, and

## **A smiling Hilary Green presents the awards to:**

Top left: Len Cozzolino  
Middle left: Clive & Shirley Dalton  
Bottom left: Nigel Hall

Top right: Neale Edwards  
Middle right: John Abel  
Bottom right: Nick Hine & Alan Brown







*Alan Whitehead's imperious 1934 M45 Saloon at Brighton Aerodrome*



*Brighton Aerodrome Messerschmitt Bf-108 Taifun in full flying state.*

onwards to Brighton Aerodrome, where aviation history awaited. Despite clear directions, fuzzy heads from the previous evening's Northern & Awards Dinner caused confusion over the turning by the church in Sherburn in Elmet. That spread Lagondas far and wide, and helped minimise the queue to enter the extraordinary world of Lotherton Hall, the dour grey stately home owned by Leeds City Council. With imagination and style, it has been turned into a light and splendid museum to the historic Gascoigne family as well as one of the largest and most imaginative aviaries in Europe. There was even a Condor Moment. The Lagonda line-up was impressive, with over ten in a line in our reserved paddock.

Driving over Cawood's intriguing and historic swing bridge, our Lagondas passed close to the Black Bull in Escrick, selected luncheon stop for those who didn't tarry at the Greyhound Inn. Then, on to Brighton Aerodrome, home of the extraordinary Real Aeroplane Collection. Lined up by the runway, our Lagondas mixed well with a vigorously-aerobatic Boeing Stearman biplane subjecting various victims to the delights of wing walking. It was noted that none of our Lagonda participants volunteered. Excuses ranged from dinner, girth and lunch to acrophobia and even anchraophobia.

The friendly and well-catered Clubhouse was the rendezvous for our privileged Guided Tour of the Collection of over fifty unusual, classic and military light aircraft, including areas rarely open to the public. Club member David Sharp was a walking library of information and stories

about the whole collection, as he took us on an in-depth 90-minute tour of the five hangers, each packed wingtip-to-wingtip with fascinating aircraft and long-lost names. An Aeronca 100 called Jeeves, and an Arrow Active. A Yakovlav Yak-18A alongside Max Holste Broussard. A flying Fokker Triplane Replica, and an emerging replica of a Sopwith Pup. The impressive Bukker Jungmann and a Tiger Moth, plus a racy Pitts Special by a more leisurely Comper Swift Replica – all in flying trim. Chipmunk, Magister, Dart Kitten, Luton Minor and many more too numerous to mention.

So many ways to reach for the sky, and such ingenuity. An impressive and privileged insight into the evolution of light aircraft flying, by the most erudite of guides. Our donations for this exclusive insight reached £250. The Real Aeroplane Collection has asked for their grateful thanks to be recorded.

As we left, our minds a-buzz, we were serenaded with the unique sound of a Gypsy Major air cooled four cylinder engine, as a historic 1935 de Havilland Hornet Moth took off for its home base. For those with an inkling of an interest in aviation, a day of rare delights – and a fitting end to our 2016 Northern & Awards Dinner Weekend at Monk Fryston. Why not join us for similar delights in May 2017?

## **NOTE FOR 2017**

For 2017, we have decided to modify the format, and encourage members to stay for two nights : Thursday 11th and Friday 12th May 2017 :

### **Draft Programme :**

**Yorkshire Tour :** visiting stately home  
+ other local attraction : daytime  
Friday 12th May.

**Northern & Awards Dinner :** Friday  
evening to usual format : 12th May.

**'Coffee Tour' :** Saturday morning :  
13th May

Those who wish to avoid journeying  
on a busy Friday can arrive on  
Thursday, enjoy a day on Yorkshire's  
uncluttered byways on our Friday  
tour, and then depart after an informal  
Coffee Tour on the Saturday. Of  
course, those who attend the Dinner  
on Friday evening and stay a single  
night are still encouraged, as are  
those who live close by, and choose to  
recover at home.

Full details on the Dinner and Tour

will be circulated with the Club  
Newsletter, probably in November.  
Knowledgeable members already  
book their accommodation at Monk  
Fryston well ahead, to ensure a room  
at our host hotel. If you plan to join  
us for that 2017 Northern & Awards  
Dinner on Friday 12th June, and  
perhaps extend your stay by arriving  
on Thursday 11th June, we suggest  
booking your room with Monk  
Fryston Hall Hotel as soon as possible,  
mentioning the Lagonda Club Dinner.

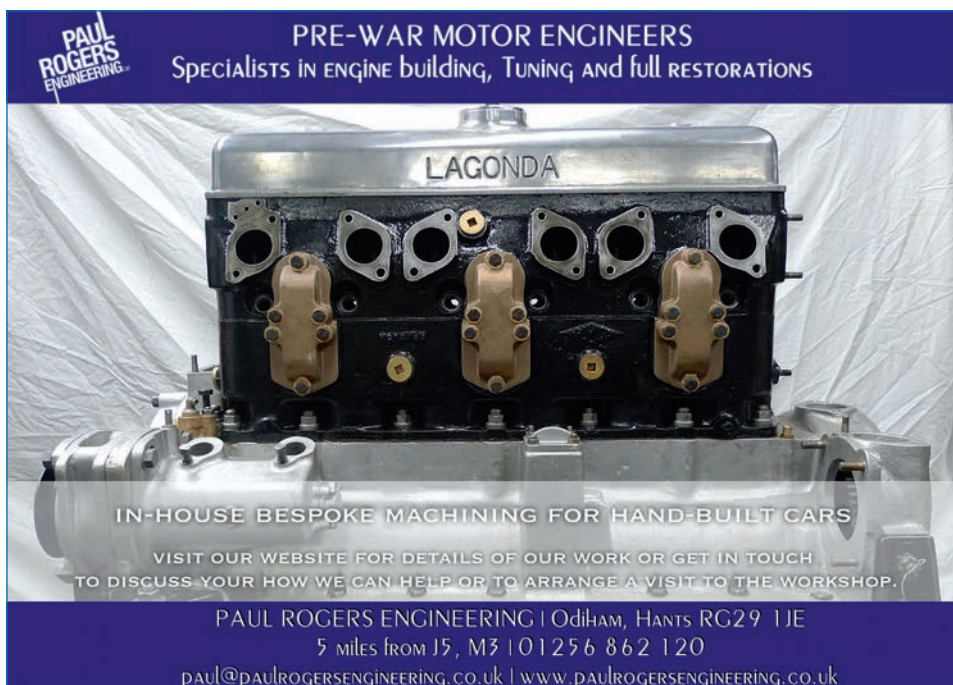
Contact details are :

Monk Fryston Hall Hotel, Monk  
Fryston, near Selby, Yorkshire LS25  
5DU

T : 01977 682369

W : [www.monkfrystonhallhotel.co.uk](http://www.monkfrystonhallhotel.co.uk)

E : [reception@monkfrystonhallhotel.co.uk](mailto:reception@monkfrystonhallhotel.co.uk)



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## Best of Breed

*Roger Learmonth celebrates two outstanding but utterly different sporting cars of the thirties*



*Auburn Speedster and Lagonda LG6*

ON FIRST IMPRESSION the very British Lagonda LG6 drop head and the American Auburn Speedster bear no comparison. In truth I really ought to compare the Speedster with the Rapide but I don't have one so the LG6 drop head will have to do. The Lagonda is a big luxurious four seater close coupled DHC, with voluptuous contours and sumptuous coachwork. The Auburn is a flamboyant Hollywood cruiser with just two seats, ludicrously unusable weather gear and a massive boat tail. They are however both products of their time that left their respective factories in what many consider the golden years of automotive design.

Unusually, the Lagonda featured here was exported directly to New York from the works and sold to a Mr

C G Chaplin. We know very little about this first transatlantic owner except that he returned the car to the factory in 1947 for a complete refit, before once again taking possession. The car, restored for a second time, arrived in the UK in 1998.

The Speedster was originally ordered from the US by Philippines plantation owner Eduardo Montinola. In 1934 Eduardo was courting Philippines socialite Susan Magalona. In an effort to win her hand he asked what she most craved and she told him, 'a fast sports car'. He ordered an Auburn Speedster that was delivered in 1936 and the courtship went into overdrive. For some reason, Eduardo's father thought to cool his son's ardour and sent the lad on a world cruise.



*The elegant lines of the Lagonda LG6*



*The immaculate engine of the LG6*



*A fuzzy 1939 image of Eduardo and his Auburn at the family's Philippines hacienda*

Home again in 1938, Eduardo was heartbroken to discover that his love had found another and he lost interest in the Auburn. His brother Renato took over and used the car as part of a playboy lifestyle until 1941 when the Japanese arrived to stop play and the Montinolas hid the car from enemy eyes at their island sugar plantation. In spite of their efforts the enemy found the car but were foiled by Renato's efforts at sabotage.

The Lagonda aficionados among you will know all this but the Lagonda story started in 1906 when American born Wilbur Gunn began production in Staines, Middlesex. If you think the name Lagonda sounds a bit un-English, you'd be right. Gunn named his company after the Native American Ough Ohonda creek near his home in Springfield, Ohio; so a very tenuous American connection between the two cars.

Having succeeded in winning Le Mans in 1935, the cash-strapped

company was saved by Alan Good who stole the firm from under the noses of Rolls-Royce. He also managed to persuade W O Bentley to join him as technical director.

We all know that when the great W O Bentley, who had built the vintage Le Mans winners, joined Lagonda, he set out to build the best car in the world. His pièce de résistance was, of course, the V12 that had the same in-house Frank Feeley designed body. I don't know if it was because they had a few Meadows six cylinder engines (used on earlier models) still in stock but the factory decided also to offer a 'poor man's' version of the twelve. Sporting the Meadows engine, the LG6 came in a few hundred pounds cheaper than the flagship V12. There was quite a difference between the performance of the two cars with, zero to sixty coming up in about 13 secs from the 156 bhp 4½ litre twelve and 16.4 for the 125bhp six. Both cars feature torsion bar front suspension, dual circuit hydraulic brakes, and dash mounted suspension control.

Shoehorning the longer six in place of the twelve was not an easy option however, and required the chassis to be lengthened by 3½ inches. As a nice quirk of chance the cheaper car received a slightly longer and, in my view, more elegant snout. The relatively practical LG6 seems in stark contrast to the totally impractical Speedster with its huge pontoon wings and massive boat tail, packaged up with a blown straight eight. With only two fairly cramped seats and virtually no luggage space it's a daft but appealing concept.

By 1968 the Speedster featured here was still in the Philippines where it sat derelict and forlorn for many years while Señor Montinola fought off all





*The derelict Speedster sharing its home with a four-legged friend. Note right hand drive; the Philippines drove on the left until 1945. One of eleven right handed cars built.*

attempts by eager buyers. In 1986, however, the Auburn was discovered by a UK garage proprietor and shipped back to the UK for restoration.

I suppose by any standards the Auburn supercharged, twin ratio axle, boat-tailed speedster was a failure. They sold very few of these monsters for although the model gave the firm a much needed publicity boost, it failed to stem the tide of financial disaster. Built only in the years 1935 and '36, they were a last gasp attempt to save the terminally ill Auburn Motor Company by putting a bit of eye candy into the showrooms. Engineering by the legendary Augie Duesenberg and hastily designed by Gordon Beuhrig of Duesenberg and Cord fame (he designed the 1937 coffin nose) the car was an amalgam of ostentatious styling and parts bin engineering.

The cash-strapped company contracted Union Car Bodies to construct an outrageous two-seater using a combination of blowtorch and fabrication. The initial order was for four cars to be made up from unsold

1933 body shells. The idea was to use them for promotional display. When they were done the management liked what they saw and authorised a further batch to use up the rest of the unsold bodies. Auburn planned to stick them in showrooms to encourage buyers for the company's less radical offerings. When they ran out of '33 shells, a few more cars were constructed from scratch.

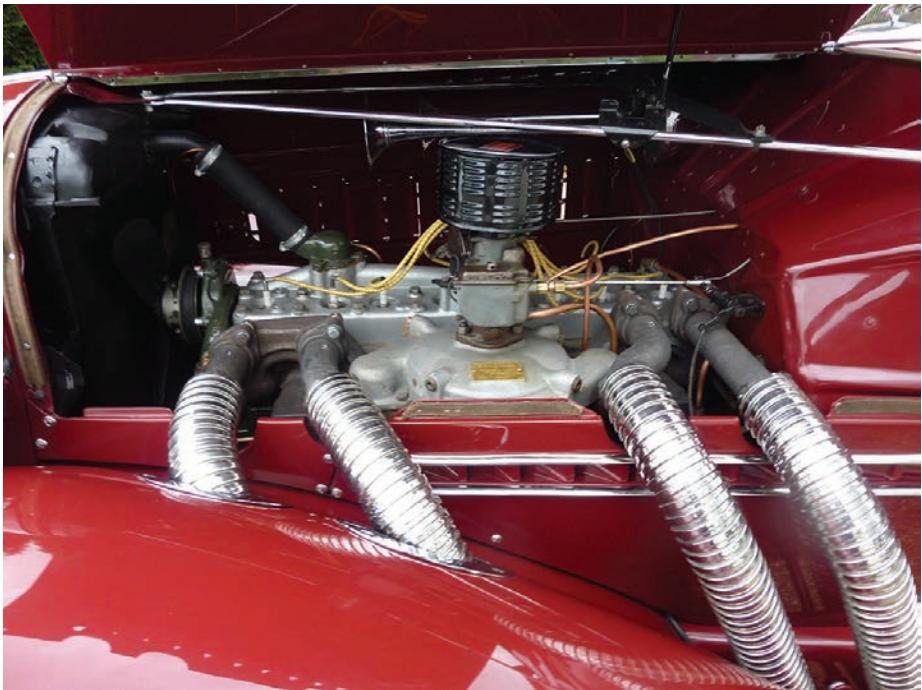
The engine is a rather pedestrian 279 cubic inch Lycoming flat head straight eight and, in order to improve performance, a Schwitzer-Cummins centrifugal blower was added which hiked output to a reputed 150 bhp.

The blower is a tidy and unobtrusive installation sitting neatly below what seems a rather tiny downdraft Solex carburettor. Compact size notwithstanding, the installation still necessitated the inclusion of four massive, chrome bound, three-inch exhaust pipes popping through the bonnet in time-honoured fashion. If anyone should fail to notice them, both sides of the bonnet carry the





*At just over seventeen feet long and six plus wide, the Auburn takes up its share of the carriageway and gets other road users attention.*



*Lycoming 279 ci supercharged, flat head straight eight*

legend “Super-Charged” in prominent script. Auburn used a three-speed gearbox but achieved a combination of acceptable acceleration and high speed cruising by adding a vacuum operated two-speed axle. By twiddling a knob on the steering wheel and depressing the clutch the driver can engage, through an epicyclic drive, either a stump pulling 5.1 or a more comfortable 3.5:1 ratio for cruising. The design of the car makes no concession to practicality except for the inclusion of a golf door on the right. Strictly a two seater, and a none too generous one at that, there is no provision for easy access to a luggage compartment. I suppose it was expected that well-heeled customers would only be using the car to cruise Hollywood boulevards in fine weather. Bearing in mind its bulk, the Auburn drives well enough with excellent hydraulic brakes and low geared but light steering.

Like the Auburn, the LG6 has enormous road presence but how well does it go and stop? The first thing you need to remember as you slip behind the wheel is that, aluminium body notwithstanding, the laden car weighs in at near 3500 lbs. The G11 gearbox is a revelation with both the synchromesh and the gear change working beautifully. At parking speeds the steering quickly brings out beads of sweat on the forehead, but when she's underway it's positive and reasonably weighted. It's not a car to throw around, although on the right roads she's happy to flow, cruising at seventy plus if required. W O's aim was to create a modern car and move away from the vintage Lagonda image of the time and in that he succeeded admirably. For so much weight to pull up, the brakes work surprisingly well.

With 4½ litres, the Lagonda goes very well indeed. Once on the move, top gear is all you really need. On English country roads, you soon gain the confidence to handle the sheer size and you can hustle her along quite nicely. The whole experience, however, lends itself more to wafting along in elegant, relaxed style than to sprinting. Like a lot of quality thirties cars, the interior is beautifully constructed; all wood and leather but without the plush luxury of a more mundane limousine.

The cars are so different each, in their way, a delight to own and drive. Both quintessentially thirties style, born in an era when, within a few years, their like would never be seen again. Both were low volume, special products. There were just 143 Speedsters built over 1935/6. There were about thirty LG6 drop heads and about fifty V12 convertibles. Auburn gave up the ghost in 1937 while Lagonda never broke the traditional dominance of Rolls-Royce/Bentley and Daimler. British royalty acquired Daimlers, gentlemen bought Rolls-Royces and Bentleys, while successful actors and maharajas bought Lagondas. If the second world war had not intervened, Lagonda would probably have suffered financial problems but was bought by David Brown in 1947 and rolled into Aston Martin. W O Bentley's other Lagonda engine, a twin-cam six, powered a whole generation of post war Astons. Sadly, the Lagonda V12 engine, like the Meadows six, was not frugal enough or fashionable for post war Britain and was relegated to a footnote in history. The completely impractical Auburn Speedster is now considered a great American classic.



*The rather bright and shiny American restored LG  
looking as good with the top up as down*



*An imposing presence on the road*



# JOHN BROWN (1938 – 2016)

## *An appreciation by John Sword*



*John and Kay in their 31 1/2 litre tourer*

CLUB MEMBERS WILL already know of John's tragic death whilst working on his Lagonda, and the esteem in which he was held within the club was demonstrated by the attendance at his funeral on the 23rd June. This included over thirty members from far and wide, and nine Lagondas. John had been keen on cars, motorcycles and steam trains from an early age. His father did not allow him to have a motorbike, so he had to wait to pursue this enthusiasm until he had obtained a car licence; then, with £100 borrowed from his father, he bought his first car - an SS1 tourer - and cars were thereafter always an important part of his life.

John initially qualified as a draughtsman and he later became a Chartered Engineer, most of his career

being in the petro-chemical industry. This led him to spend many years living and working overseas - mainly in Holland and the Middle East, with a long spell in Egypt.

John had several enthusiasms that were secondary only to his cars - for rugby, as a strong player in his youth and then as a keen follower of the sport; for steam trains, both full-sized (driving on the Bluebell Railway) and 00 gauge; for travel, and for gathering encyclopaedic knowledge across a wide range of interests.

Living abroad meant that John could not properly indulge his love of cars until he returned to live in England, when he and Kay moved to their farmhouse in Rotherfield in 1985. Then, after dallying with other makes, in 1989 he became the proud owner of



his first Lagonda, a 14/60. Lagondas then became a consuming passion for the rest of John's life - second only to his family (he and Kay celebrated their golden wedding in 2013) and his home.

The 14/60 was a 1926 ex-wedding-hire car; it was painted white, completely worn out and in need of a top to bottom restoration. As John was still travelling widely he had only limited time for working on his Lagonda, so the restoration took a number of years, with John carrying out most of the work himself (featured in Richard Bird's 1994 book).

Lack of time did not stop John from acquiring his second Lagonda, a blown 2 litre, soon afterwards. But it was not until John finally retired in 1998 that he was able to enjoy his cars to the full, and also to become engaged in the affairs of the Lagonda Club. In 2004 John and Kay downsized to the oasthouse next door, which was beautifully converted under John's design and direction. With that task completed, John then became a key member of the Club's Spares Committee, and subsequently joined the Board as a director in 2007. He quickly established himself as an invaluable member of our senior team. He was one of those all too rare individuals - a practical engineer who could not only design and draw things, but who also understood how to manufacture them, and, importantly, how to manage projects.

In these days of computer-aided design, with everything being done on screens, John was one of those people who was still able to work at a proper drawing board with a pencil and paper. I could always imagine him

working away in a traditional drawing office with an old-fashioned print-room, slightly reeking of ammonia!

John quickly took on responsibility for technical and engineering matters on the Board, and, most importantly, on the Spares Committee, looking after all the drawings of our spare parts, many dozens of which he prepared himself. He also undertook numerous vital projects to source and introduce new spares - all aimed at keeping our 80 year-old cars running on the road and fit for future generations to enjoy.

John was a wonderful colleague to work with - quietly modest and unassuming, yet hugely knowledgeable, and always available to members seeking technical advice. He was one of those people who gets things done, rather than just being happy to make suggestions but leaving the hard work to others.

Although he lived tucked away in the south-east corner of England, John was always willing to travel anywhere to visit our suppliers and to do such things as sifting through oily heaps of secondhand spares that we had been offered, and trying to value them. I enjoyed many such trips with him to different parts of England. John was a keen tourer in his Lagondas - he took part in many rallies in the UK and on the Continent over the years, usually with Kay in loyal support. He would often be called upon to help other rally participants who had car trouble but who lacked John's skills. Most of John's touring was in his s/c 2 litre, until this was replaced more recently by his M35R, a well known car which, after much work and development, was still not quite 'sorted'.

One of John's key characteristics was his selflessness and his concern for others. Whilst he had some serious health problems in the last few years, he always played these down and showed more concern for the problems of others - and at our time of life there are always plenty of those!

A consequence of his health issues was that John was unable to take his car on the Club rally to the Czech Republic last summer. As a result of this, I was fortunate enough to have him as my navigator for this journey across Europe, and a wonderful companion he was - a good man with the spanners, of course, and when

problems arose he was always willing to get stuck in and help, often taking the lead in things.

Despite not being exactly noted for his athletic figure, he was still able to lift things and to contort himself into awkward corners to fix what needed fixing.

In recent years, many of us had become used to frequent and enjoyable phone chats with John, mainly discussing spare problems and technical issues, and it is difficult to believe that these will be no more, such a part of our lives they had become. He will be greatly missed by us all.



*John in typical pose, helping to fix a Lagonda*

## BYT 321 - A 1935 M45 Tourer is refurbished

### *Adrian Rogers digs deep into his pockets!*

BYT 321 WAS probably born beautiful; like all M45 Lagondas, but by the time she arrived in Devon in 1976, according to Wing Commander Doug Brown her new owner, she had “a crude cut down saloon body” which had been put on in 1959. She probably was not then as appealing as she was to become! Originally registered in 1935, she was probably a saloon but the original build sheets are privately owned and not readily available. By 1959 the log book describes her as a “black and red drop head coupe”.

Doug Brown must have been well known to the Lagonda Club as he had at least two Lagondas, and it was he who commissioned the reproduction T8 body which has now been restored. Whenman and Pitney made this body in 1989 - she was painted bright French blue with tan hide and her next two owners, Hugh Guest and Mike Blackwell from the Taunton area, honoured the car with plenty of excursions and regular maintenance. She moved to me in 2015 and although undoubtedly patinated, she was “tired”. Although my original intention was simply to paint her green and tidy her up, one thing led to another. And another! And another!

The rear Hartford shock absorbers were missing and the original Telecontrol Hartfords were not connected and so not working at all! Part of a gear tooth was in the sump nut of the gear box, the steering was catching in the steering box, everything was loose and the main bonnet hinge was not fixed to the scuttle, so moved up and down as you drove!

Doug Brown's windscreen was flimsy, the leather trim was sound but tired and, worst of all, the spare wheel was cantilevered over the back of the car by what could only be described as an agricultural arrangement!

The Club was, of course, a Godsend. Other M45 owners were extremely helpful as was “the Master” - Arnold Davey - and the Club Spares team.

Most important were two good friends, Peter Mitchell who had been an aircraft engineer, and Rem Lockton a vet who was by natural inclination an engineer. Without them, and without David Ayre, the car would never have had a “proper job” as we say in Devon.

So we started - axle stands, long faces, much muscle power and a few big King Dick spanners! The gearbox came out and was off to David Ayre for reconditioning. The main problem was freeing those fibre drive couplings and loosening the mounting bolts - they had all but seized. It is also tricky for the unskilled to take the gearbox out while the body is still on. We managed but it was much easier to put it back in later!

The “rolling chassis” and engine were essentially good. The engine had been rebuilt following a seized piston in 2000, but the original clutch was still “in situ”. That is when we should have taken the opportunity of replacing it. Little needed doing to the engine other than to learn to use a strobe timing device and set the magneto and coil timings to be “just right”. The SU carburettors were worn but with new needles and seals it was



*The radiator with the shell removed, showing the operating mechanism for the thermostatically controlled shutters.*



*The impressive front of the M45. What a fine car!*



only the sticking pistons that needed fettling, and they soon behaved.

The drums and brake mechanism were all excellent but, in the process of refurbishment, the hand brake release rod had broken, so the brake locked on until we made a new one. Fortunately the rear axle had been set up some years before and was good. The only annoying feature was that the old trim prevented easy access to the delightfully designed filling system. The filler nut had been butchered to be a hideous relic of its former self and only a spare from the saviour of Lagonda parts, David Ayre, enabled us to restore mechanical beauty to this arrangement.

Having owned Alvis cars and a Bentley before, the wonderful design of the M45, enabling removal of the floor and the ability to lift the hinged floor over the back axle, makes the Lagonda a top car design for access. Not so accessible however is the clutch, which can only be removed by lifting the back of the engine off its mountings, and that remains a sore point and a different story!

So with floor up and gearbox out you then look at what Dougy Brown did all those years ago and think hmmm - we need to restore the missing pipework to the Telecontrol Hartfords, send the steering wheel for refurbishment, replace the speedo drive, take off the spare wheel mounting system and throw it away, and while we are at it, why not upgrade the trim and make a better windscreen? That particular thought process was fatal. The trim was secured with literally thousands of small tacks and nails. Two days later the entire interior was out and in the bin!

We could now see the proper

anatomy of the body. The wood was perfect, sound in every respect and actually very well made. We had dropped the instrument board to check all the electrics and gauges when my friend Rem said - "If we undo this bolt here the body will come loose". So he did! Three days later the body was freed, wings off, doors off, windscreen off and in the bin, bonnet off and finally the body off and no turning back.

Doing this enabled us to take off the headlamp bar and stays for rechroming, and the horns for refurbishing. She looked very sad but none the less very sound. That was when I had the sick feeling known to all restorers where the potential for cost hits home! But a fine car like a fine lady has a way of making you say yes to anything she wants! It was clear the electrics needed rejuvenating so out came the old reproduction loom, the radiator grille came off, to get to the beeswax filled grille control mechanism, and BYT 321 was bare!

The steering wheel was very worn and there was no oil anywhere near the upper bearing, so off it came. The steering had been catching when turning to the right so out came the steering column and we stripped down the box. Rem made a shim using brown paper and with this the problem was solved. Vintage Shock Absorbers came up with the missing Telecontrol for the front and the missing Hartfords from the rear. I know it has been popular in the Club to throw away the Andre Hartford Telecontrol system but they are hydraulically exquisite and also look great. We refurbished the reservoirs and hand control units and replumbed the lot. The gauges worked fine. Exe Engineering made the missing rear shock absorber brackets

and copied the one remaining front bracket. All went back in a treat and for the first time in decades she had two sets of front and rear shockers, as she should. She would no longer ride on just the rear springs. Months later, when back on the road, I can confidently state that the Telecontrol adjustment made by changing the damper pressure, by turning the wheels attached to the steering wheel, is brilliant allowing a soft ride over road humps or a firm ride on the motorway. Don't throw them away - put them back in while the parts can still be found!!

The spring-driven radiator flap control unit had to be rebuilt due to massive corrosion. When we finally got it out from its pocket in the header tank the front had corroded away from the sides. A new front had to be made and then brazed back. It worked delightfully when fixed, using the same beeswax with which it was originally filled.

Next all the body parts went along with the body, in a small trailer to West Hill Body shop. The shade of green was chosen by chance. A friend had left me a tin of Hammerite Smooth Dark Green and this just seemed right so we matched the colour closely to form British Imperial Green- suitable for a 1935 Lagonda in its year of triumph at Le Mans.

David Ayre refurbished the gearbox so that it looked and worked like new. However getting a gearbox back in precisely the right position is not so easy.

We used an electronic level and were able to set the box very precisely to 0.1 degree both horizontally in line with the engine and also laterally using the cylinder head. What we could not

so easily judge was the amount of lift or drop. A compromise was reached which would have worked had there not been some clutch drag. This was later partly remedied by further adjustment but some drag persists and the answer is probably to have a new clutch.

As a surgeon says when closing an abdomen - "we are on the way out". So it was when things started going back on the car. The new woven wiring loom went in, dashboard and instruments went back followed by body, door panels, and wings (front and rear). A lot of pushing, tapping, shoving and screwing, especially to fit the running boards. It was a real fiddle getting the headlamp bars and stays back in line with the front wings but the design is excellent, so the headlamps are almost 'set in concrete' and don't wiggle around. The boot lid was strengthened to take the spare wheel, which was then directly mounted and showed the lovely little tail on the body work.

Meanwhile Richard Prout of Classic Windscreens, Tintagel, had made a new windscreen complete with beautiful castellated nuts to hold the wind deflector/aero screens and, with a little extra strengthening needed to the body frame, this fitted well.

We now had a British Imperial Green up and running car with no trim - so in went the seats. A short drive up the Exe to Bickleigh Castle lies Vince Webber Upholstery who fitted the hood and trimmed her up to a standard that only a master upholsterer can do. Nice touches like the rear arm rest cubbies, the trim line running from front to rear and a tonneau that fits over the car so that water does not run back up.

The cognoscenti may say the

hood is riding high but to be honest dropping the steering wheel more would hide her tail, and the slightly high surround makes the rear seats feel much more cosy. The door arm rests are not standard but Hamish our terrier has to have somewhere to put his feet while travelling and an unpadded door is slippery. Hamish has his own foot pad pads!

Now things are not perfect and the clutch drag is scheduled for sorting by David Ayre but at the Killerton Classic Car show on Sunday BYT 321 won a prize. The truth is that many people had not heard of Lagonda, one thought it was a pre-runner of the Laguna and others were convinced it was an early Italian supercar!

So there she is - a stunningly beautiful M45 Lagonda. She can't claim to be original in every respect but virtually everything that attaches

to the chassis is original, and the benefit of the Whenman/ Pitney body is that we have been able to put in a trim that is both elegant and functional. Once the clutch is sorted she will be out and about in Devon and, who knows, maybe further.

Now for one serious alteration to the original set-up. I intend to switch the accelerator pedal to the right. Even though I have always had a car with this arrangement few others have, which means no one else can drive her safely and easily. One day she will move to another owner - she is more likely to find the right person if he or she can drive her readily and safely. A friend of mine had a fatal accident in a car with the pedals in the original position. I want to drive this beauty for quite a bit longer and without having to worry.

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# Targa Tasmania Revisited

## *Gordon Lindsay brings his M45 Rapide out of retirement from competitions*

THE TARGA TASMANIA is a closed-road grown-up rally with classes ranging from Vintage and Classic to Modern saloon and GT cars, for up to 300 selected vehicles. It claims to be the world's largest, longest and hardest tarmac rally. Cars at the pointy end this year included a pair of Dodge Vipers that were attaining speeds of 280 kph. You get the picture. Cars are launched at 30 second intervals onto roads that can only be described as sublime, varying from a series of tight bends to sweeping, undulating stretches to flat out sections through beautiful country, and all on tarmac roads in excellent condition. The six-day event covers some 2,000 kms with over 40 competitive stages, the longest of which is 53 kms.

I was fortunate enough to do the first Targa Tasmania in 1992 in my 1935 Lagonda Rapide, and again in 1994. I then did three more in an MG A, the last of which was in 2001. As one of the 1992 entrants who still had their original car, I was invited to do it again at no charge in the 'Tour' as part of the 25 year celebrations. I was a little apprehensive about the 'Tour', fearing that, with a speed limit which I was told was 130 kph (not a problem), no overtaking or hanging back and in some sort of procession with a lead and sweep car, I would be frustrated at not being able to stretch the Lagonda's legs. I was assured that there were no restrictions on the car other than that it was roadworthy – scrutineering consisted of checking that the lights and horn worked – and that there

would be plenty of opportunity to 'have a go' if I wanted to.

I retired the Lagonda from any sort of competition in 2006 when my daughter asked if she could use it for a wedding car. Of course I agreed and then walked round it observing the split in the mudguard, the biff in the back, chips, damage caused by running over a rather large boulder while negotiating a hairpin on the Targa, and its general untidiness. So I bit the bullet and had it fixed, including a respray. It cost more than the wedding. Hence its retirement from competition.

Apparel, including crash helmets, was not mandated so Gerald Swinnerton, who had agreed to navigate, and I decided to wear our original 1992 flying helmets. In 1992 we were known as the cone heads (aliens in a television series at the time). The following year crash helmets were, quite rightly, imposed.

The first stage of the Tour was used by the organisers to sort out the order – with the faster cars first. If you felt you were out of position you could request to be moved up so that you were not restricted by slower cars. As a result we had clear runs.

The Lagonda was going extremely well. The tour organisers, who were not used to fast vintage machinery, were suitably impressed. One was so effusive about it that he is my new best friend. And a journalist from the Launceston Examiner wrote 'the 1930's Lagonda looks like a tank (harsh!) but it goes as fast as the artillery shells that



Lagonda used to make.'

Not that we were without problems. The starter motor packed up; it would start immediately on the crank handle when warm but needed a hill in the mornings. And a valve cap came off three times. They lay on the cylinder head and were soon popped on again twice, but the third time one fell down a push rod hole. I have since purchased an extendable magnet but without one, innovation was called for. Gerald whittled a stick to the diameter of the cup and withdrew it without drama. We also ran over a plastic 'witch's hat' at a service station which managed to turn off the overnight switch on the chassis. This caused some panic when we came out of the Longford pub to find none of the electrics working. We must have been travelling on the magneto only and got to the pub just before the fuel ran out.

We had to return on the Friday night ferry to Melbourne, which meant not completing the last two stages or going into Hobart. We completed all other stages and miracle of miracles, it didn't rain! A first for the Targa.

Tasmanian hospitality is rightly famous and there was no shortage of

it. At Ulverstone we asked the service station owner opposite our digs if we could leave the car in an area which had a nice slope for starting in the morning.

Of course he agreed and moved his own car to let us into the spot. At dinner in the local pub we were approached by someone enquiring if we were car 96. 'You can't leave it there' he said as he gave us his security firm card. 'You can leave it in my garage opposite.' 'But we're leaving at 05:15 and we will need a push' we protested. 'That's OK' he said 'and the missus'll make you a cup of coffee before you go.' And so it was with a promise to look us up when they came to Melbourne for the Avalon Air Show. And then, perched on top of a hill waiting to get onto the ferry, we were invited in for a coffee and biscuits as 'it must be a bit chilly out there'.

Our experience on the 'Tour' was beyond expectations. We completed the challenging stages in the same spirit that we did 25 years ago. The only difference was not racing against the clock. Nevertheless, we concluded, as we did then, that you can't possibly have more fun in a sitting position.



*The fantastic road in Moorina – N.E. Tasmania*

## *Letters & emails ... Letters & emails*

Dear Roger,

Some years ago, when I apologized to a member for being pedantic in correcting something in his letter to me, he replied that it wasn't me being pedantic, it was my job as Registrar to get things right for posterity. Buoyed up by this I am bold enough to offer two corrections to articles in the Spring 2016 issue of the magazine.

First, in the Manns' excellent account of re-running their grandfather's 1936 Monte Carlo Rally adventure it is remarked that Conrad would not have been bothered by speed limits. Not so, the 30mph speed limit came in in March 1935, causing Lagonda to go into Receivership. It was rigidly enforced in the early days with no tolerance for 31 mph. On the other hand, there weren't many patrol cars.

Second, Roger Firth says that all of the LG45 Rapides are accounted for. I thought so too until gaining access to the Henry Meadows records, where I discovered reference to engine LG45/380/S3 which was going into chassis 12206/G10R. Now we have never had chassis 12206 in the Club but it would have come as an addition to the short run of Rapides, chassis 12201 to 12205, so it is very likely. That engine, 380/S3, survives and is now in an M45, so it seems likely that 12206 has been broken up, probably before the war, as we have absolutely no record of it.

Talking of Rapides, the very first

one, chassis 12140, has an adventurous life. It was the original Press Car EPF 242 and while on a road test by *The Autocar* in the Spring of 1937 they were overwhelmed by a blizzard in the West Country, slid off the road, and had to abandon the car. They came back by train and got Lagonda to fish it out. They had to borrow another one to photograph.

The factory mended EPF and used it as a demonstrator until the V12 superseded all LG45s. It was sold to Essex Constabulary who used it first as a high performance chase car until the war. It then moved to the Essex force's driving school at Writtle, near Chelmsford, partly so that policemen could get experience of a really difficult gear change, and then later for driver training on the skid pan. There is a documentary film existing of this last period showing the car on (deliberately) bald tyres and with evidence of several contacts with hard objects. Eventually the police grew tired of repairing the car and broke it up, but the engine survives in a Club member's car. It has the intriguing feature of a non-standard housing for an oil temperature gauge which brings on the speculation that it could have originally been in one of the defunct 1936 Team Car four-seaters. That would entirely fit with Lagonda's creed of never throwing anything away.

Regards,

Arnold Davey

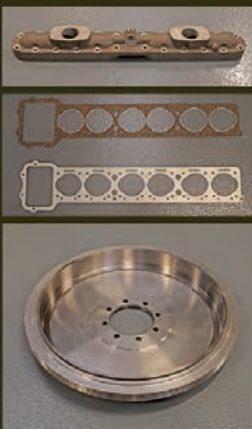
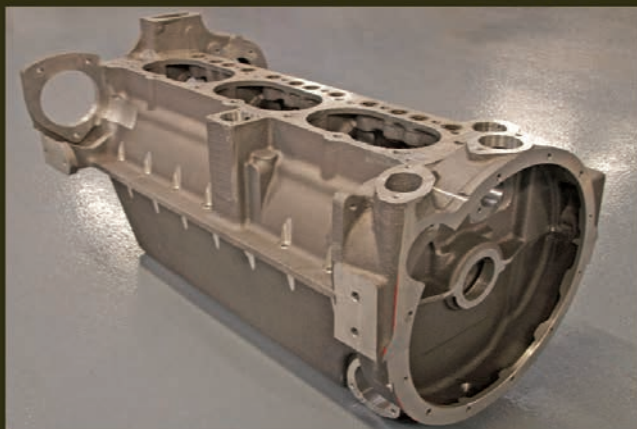
## *Letters & emails ... Letters & emails*



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