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**THE MAGAZINE OF THE
LAGONDA CLUB**

Number 251 Winter 2016/17



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The Lagonda Magazine

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FRONT COVER: *Clem Dyer with his new Lagonda S/C 2 litre in Perth, Western Australia.
Picture from James Dyer*

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From the Driving Seat

Roger Seabrook

WISHING EVERYONE A very happy and successful 2017. It's been rather cold in the garage these past few days – who says winter is the best time to work on your vintage car?!

We are hoping to bring the Rapier back to the racetrack this year, after quite a long break. The regular competitors seem to have enjoyed themselves in 2016 as our Competition Secretary reports elsewhere in this issue. Looking back to reports of Lagondas racing back in the 1960s and 70s they were dominated by the activities of the Northern Lagonda crowd, who were very well organized and successful. It was rather easier then to take a relatively standard car and race it, and there were 2 litres and 16/80s regularly taking part as well as the more powerful 4½s. Nowadays you are up against cars that are prepared by specialist firms with access to all sorts of tuning equipment, not to mention expensive modifications to engines and ancillaries.

With both the 2 litre and the Rapier I found that my foot was flat to the floor round most of the circuits, with no power in reserve. So I got used to being close to the back of the pack, and enjoyed the scenery for a lap or two before I was lapped! I have uprated the engine in the Rapier, and put a higher geared CWP in the back axle – it doesn't run out of revs, so should be able to keep up with the more touring versions of the other cars. It does quite well in Hill Climbs. The tuned Bentleys and big Lagondas will still leave it for cold, however!

There has been a good response to the draught head question from the last Editorial. There is another interesting 'one-off' that Arnold Davey mentions in his book, titled 'Lagonda 2, 3 & 3½ Litre In Detail'. Early in 1930 a 3 litre engine was sent to Ricardo for them to produce an experimental inlet- over-exhaust cylinder head. This head was actually manufactured and apparently increased the output of the engine from 79bhp to 100 bhp at 3800 rpm. Arnold mentions that this engine had survived (at least until the 1970s). I can certainly confirm this. In 1978 I was looking for a proper Lagonda, or Meadows, engine to replace the 2½ litre Riley engine in the 2 litre special I had at the time (shown in issue no. 243 -Winter 2014/15). I was put in touch with a chap called Tom Pinguey, who lived in Beckenham and had been involved with Lagondas for a long time. I expect several Club members remember him. Anyway, I went to see him, and remember he had a very cluttered garden, full of cars and car components. Underneath a tarpaulin was this unusual 3 litre engine with the cylinder head removed. I was surprised to see the IOE arrangement, but it had a Lagonda valve cover and the rest of the engine was clearly a 3 litre. I made an offer to buy, which Mr. Pinguey accepted, and arranged to collect it later that week. When I turned up with my box trailer he had sold it to someone else! Both the 2 litre special and this engine have disappeared. Where are they now? ■

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

My Crash Course weekend in Driving a Vintage Car

Jennifer Harding enjoys the M45 (who wouldn't!)

LET ME BEGIN by introducing myself, I'm Jennifer, I'm 26 and have grown up in and around vintage cars my whole life. The vehicle in question is my father's, Joe Harding (aka Lagonda Joe). He has owned this particular car for 46 years, she is a 1934 Lagonda M45 T7 tourer, and her name is Lagondella. The weekend in question was The Silverstone Classic, which was at the end of July. And finally I didn't actually crash her!

I have been driving Lagondella for almost three years but only on day trips, so this was the first weekend event - I was looking forward to it, because I love driving her, especially in the heatwaves we experienced in England last summer. I took her out on the Thursday to visit my godfather in Surrey. On the way down I noticed that the engine was making a bit more noise and she sounded like she was missing, the oil pressure had also climbed a bit higher than normal. However, we were only 2 miles away, so I continued. We arrived at the Farmhouse, and proceeded to give her and the other car we were taking, a 1953 Bentley Special, a wash.

When I started her up to leave, the noise was still there and my godfather, Philip, told me to cut the engine and he would have a look to see what was going on under the bonnet. After a substantial amount of prodding, and getting covered in grease the problem presented itself. One of the push rods was bent, and she was not safe to drive. It looked like the weekend had taken a sudden turn for the worst. A few transatlantic phone calls to

my parents in California and I was told where I would be able to find a replacement. So my fiancé, Rob, and I jumped into the Bentley and raced off on a two and a half hour round trip to retrieve a push rod from David Ayre. We returned later that evening and he saved the weekend by fitting it. We returned to London in the two cars, and prepared to leave at 6am the next morning for The Silverstone Classic.

We left London without a hitch, I had remembered to pack the tickets, and in my mind everything was going well. We decide to pull off the motorway, into the services for a spot of breakfast, as we were running ahead of schedule. On returning to the car, David, Rob's godfather who had joined us for the weekend along with Rob's father, mentioned that my back right tyre was looking a bit flat. We gathered round and had a look; yes, the tyre was slowly losing air at the valve. We pumped it up and agreed to stop at the next services to see how quickly it was deflating. The answer was obvious when we pulled in; there was now a hissing noise from the valve. We grabbed the jack and popped her up, for a quick wheel change. That went well (although none of us will be making the grade for a Formula 1 pit crew anytime soon!). We arrived at Silverstone and were separated, as the Lagonda and the Bentley were being displayed in different areas. The Lagonda was parked with the Aston Martin Club. They were a great club and we were warmly greeted. I got out of the car and headed over to the Bentley area to wait for Rob in the



How about this in your rear-view mirror?



“It came off in me ‘and Guv!” The gearstick is waved in the air!



The M45 and the Bentley at Silverstone

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Mark VI Special. He eventually arrived saying that his queue was horrendous and the car had almost boiled. We thought we had better get the inner tube replaced so that it was ready for the trip back down to London the next day. We were directed to Dunlop, just outside the pits. We asked about the possibility of getting it changed if we supplied the tube. They were happy to do it for us, so we arranged to return on Saturday. Our journey to our accommodation at the end of the day was uneventful but congested. We stayed at Elm Tree Farm, in a lovely two bed, self-contained house, with a great pub, next to the canal, across the road.

On Saturday morning Rob attached a Go-Pro camera to the Bentley and it was decided that the M45 would lead the way to Silverstone. We jumped into the cars ready for the day ahead. It turned out we were going to get a bit more than we were expecting.

I was driving Lagondella, and when I went to change from second to third gear the gearstick came off in my hand! I was surprised to say the least. My first thought was 'Oh god, I've broken the car!' Luckily I kept my foot down on the clutch and pulled off to the side of the road. Rob, driving behind in the Bentley, was confused as to why I was stopping, however it all became clear when I brandished the gearstick in the air above my head. (This is all caught on film, might I add!) My co-driver was able to pop the gearstick back into position and tighten the screws to keep it in place. I made a note to get some more screws, as it appeared there were only two doing the job of four, and to confront my father about his failed assassination attempt! We

gave the screws one last tighten and continued on our journey. Needless to say, the flat-headed screwdriver was never out of arms reach for the rest of the weekend.

The journey in was much quicker as we found a back road into the town of Silverstone, so were able to avoid the queues. Our second day was spent in much the same way as the first, enjoying the racing and the shopping stalls, and a particularly tasty duck wrap for lunch. The only difference was taking the tyre to the pits on the bus, which received a few looks, and an entertaining journey pushing the wheel up the hill to the Dunlop truck. After dropping it, and arranging to return for it in the afternoon, we wandered through the pits to look at the cars and watch a bit of racing. We were able to find some really good seats which gave a view of the corner coming on to the last straight, but also one of the TV screens, so we were able to follow the race all the way round the track. In the afternoon we drove Lagondella to the pits to collect the wheel.

On Sunday morning we packed up the cars, which due to the purchase of a Scalextric set was a bit trickier than anticipated, and headed back to Silverstone. We made it to the infield with no mechanical problems and parked up. Our last day at Silverstone was uneventful and relaxed. I did buy a pair of leather driving gauntlets, (which I had been looking at all weekend), and I wore them on the drive back down to London. We parked the cars, and I for one was very happy to have made it though the weekend, and looking forward to the next adventure after I have ordered more screws! ■

Rudy Wood-Miller

Memories of a popular Club representative



Rudy, with David Hine [in hat] at Pebble Beach

RUDY WOOD-MULLER, our much loved America and Canada Representative, passed away at the beginning of December. This followed a mercifully swift illness. He was eighty eight, and had been in office for twenty years. We were all delighted to see him at the Annual Gathering and he appeared in excellent form. Little did we realise that he was with us to say goodbye.

Born in Prague he had to immigrate to the New World as a very young man, in the nineteen thirties. He lived in the New York / Connecticut area for the rest of his life but always felt himself to be a guest in that turbulent country.

Rudy trained as an electrical engineer and, while still a student, obtained a job cataloguing the large collections of the industrialist Armand Hammer, which included many great art pieces such as Gainsborough's "The Blue Boy". Realizing the catalogues needed pictures he researched and studied photography.

He became an eminent photographer in New York and, once a year, gave a prestige lecture at an event hosted by Kodak. He specialised in a novel form of photographic art. His first exhibited internationally at the New York World's Fair and a selection of his work is in the permanent collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

He had a passion for unusual cars. In his early days he raced a Healy 100/6 later turning to Lagondas, ending up with an LG45 drop-head, which lived with him in Old Lyme CT, and his M45 Saloon kept at his pal David Crow's house in the UK. He and his wife Jenny attended several Northern Rallies and he drove the M45 with great gusto for such a quiet and polite man. He also owned a Citroen SM, reflecting his interest in the avant-garde.

On the splendid rally to Le Mans in 1995 a highlight of the event



Rudy's LG 45 Drophead



The M45 Saloon kept in England

was Rudy riding shotgun on Bernd Holthusen's V12 team car, in order to get special pictures of our parade laps. The problem was there was no seat for him so he had to straddle the body! Chris Salyer was on the rally and indicated to me that he wished to pass the baton, and several friends urged the appointment of Rudy as our next American Representative.

Rudy has kept the Spirit of Lagonda alive and well and organised many events including the centennial rally ,with Colin Bugler ,to Springfield Ohio in 1999. In Rudy's words " two dozen Lagonda stalwarts converged on Springfield from all parts of the globe".

He produced 70 newsletters embellished with his creative art.

A highlight of Rudy's life and tenure was the year that Pebble Beach celebrated Lagonda as the appointed Marque, hosted by Craig Davis. Rudy got on the phone to me and stated that he would hang on until I agreed to come over and be a Judge at this amazing event. Jill and I had a wonderful and unforgettable time.

We became firm friends and visited each other on many occasions over subsequent years.

I recall a rally he held at his house in Old Lyme where seven Lagondas turned up and as many other classic cars. Dan Gosh made a stylish entrance in the team car EPE having covered a hundred miles in the hour, so as not to miss lunch at Rudy's Club.

On his visit this year Rudy was accompanied by Colin and Laurel Gurnsey from Vancouver. He indicated that our well-known member Colin would be an excellent successor to him one day.

We are delighted that Colin has agreed to take up this appointment

albeit tinged with sadness that Rudy and Jenny are now only with us in spirit.

David Hine

Colin Mallett adds: During the 1980s I was working on international telecoms networks, which became part of the Worldwide Web. This involved many trips across the Atlantic, which allowed me to become firm friends with Rudy and Jenny. I would stay with them in their splendid apartment in 5th Avenue and be scooped up along with dogs, children, friends, and anyone else around to spend the weekend with them in Old Lyme. I spent much fun time with the family. This included driving their daughter Sophie in the M45, to her wedding. Afterwards I chauffeured Jenny and two of her friends back to NYC.

The three ladies (all countesses) held a very animated conversation in Italian in the back of the R-type Bentley and eventually, wiping tears from their eyes, Jenny explained that they were telling each other dirty jokes! Pity I do not understand Italian.

I also shared difficult times with them. In 1988, attending the local church, we heard that some members of the congregation, coming home for Christmas, had been killed in the PA 103 Lockerbie bombing. I had taken the same flight a few months before and we had quite a subdued Christmas. Rudy and Jenny were both committed anglophiles and as well as enjoying the Northern crowd, they also made firm friends with the East Anglian mafia including regular visits to David Wall, and Johnson's Farm where the spares operation is now situated. ■

Review of Speed Events in 2016

By Richard Reay-Smith

FOR THE LAST few years VSCC race meetings have been attracting larger grids of Standard and Modified Sports Cars, which they call Set 3. These are the cars driven by most of our members. The Owner Driver Mechanic Series for Set 3 cars, organised by John and Lesley Guyatt, provides a dedicated marquee and refreshments, a relaxed social atmosphere and large grids which guarantee interesting and competitive racing.

The Set 3 Race at the VSCC Silverstone Spring Start Meeting in April was so oversubscribed that it had to be split in two, with the faster cars racing against Specials. In this race Nick Ball, driving his father's S-Type Invicta, finished 10th and my seriously underpowered LG45 Team Car, 20th. In the second race Tim Wadsworth's very fast 2 litre came in 23rd. In the Short Handicap Race Trevor Swete's Invicta was 2nd and my LG45 16th. One feature of the meeting was the success of non-member Darren McWhirter in the race for post-war sports-racing cars which he won driving his 1954 DB Le Mans Lagonda V12, beating an Aston Martin DB3S. Modern technology has solved the problems that the car had in period.

Motor Racing Legends organised a race in their Mad Jack series for pre-war sport cars at the Donington Historic Festival at the beginning of May. In a large and competitive field Chris and Nick Ball, in the Invicta, finished 13th closely followed by Trevor Swete in his similar car. My car was so slow that I was thinking of retiring when I was put out of my misery by being rammed

amidships by a Talbot, ensuring that I would have very little racing until towards the end of the season.

The Mike Hawthorn Memorial Meeting at Oulton Park on 21st May was wet and windy. It attracted five members including a rare and welcome appearance of Mark Butterworth in his V12 Le Mans Replica who finished 4th in the Set 3 race followed by Trevor Swete's Invicta in 8th, Nigel Hall in 15th and Tim Wadsworth in 27th place. Tim also came 9th in the first All-comers' Handicap. In the second handicap, Nigel Hall was 6th, Trevor Swete 11th and Nicholas Morley in his LG45 17th. Nicholas last raced this car with his father, John, twenty-four years ago and found that quite a lot had changed since then. However he comes with a good racing pedigree, - Clive Morley the very fast Bentley driver is his cousin - so he didn't let it discourage him.

The Brooklands Double 12 in mid June offers an interesting combination of events, a driving test, a sprint and a concours and attracts a huge entry, many of which rarely compete in speed events. Tony Saunders' elegant LG45 Tourer was deservedly judged Best in Class in the concours and as a result came 11th overall in this large field with Michael Drakeford's M45 2nd in class in the concours and 17th overall. Andrew Cheyne and Nigel Walder only competed in the sprint so were not classified overall but Nigel was 3rd in class and 1st on handicap and Andrew 4th in his class.

Classic Le Mans is held every other year in early July. It was well covered in



Richard Reay-Smith in the wet at Castle Combe



Tim Wadsworth leads the pack at Silverstone. The camera cannot lie.....

Colin Bugler's report in the autumn issue but it is worth repeating that Martin Bugler in Colin's LG45 Le Mans Replica finished 4th overall, the best result for a Lagonda at Le Mans since 1939. Chris and Nick Ball's Invicta followed in 5th place and Trevor Swete's Invicta was 6th. After two and a half hour's racing over twenty-four hours, these three were separated by less than three minutes. While this was happening in Northern France, at Shelsley Walsh Tim Wadsworth achieved 2nd in class and Nigel Hall 4th in his class.

Cadwell Park Circuit in the Lincolnshire Wolds describes itself as "the mini Nurburgring" with the emphasis on mini. At this attractive track in late July Nicholas Morley's LG45 TT Replica and Tim Parker's 2 litre finished 18th and 19th within two seconds of each other in the scratch race and Tim also finished 4th in the handicap race.

Prescott Hill Climb in early August usually attracts entries from Lagonda owners. This year Andrew Cheyne was the only representative of the Club. He came 11th in his class in the Long Course hill Climb on the Friday.

The Bentley Drivers Club Silverstone Meeting in August is always enjoyable. In the combined race for specials and Set 3 sports cars Trevor Swete was 7th overall but 1st in Set 3. My car had now found some more power and finished 9th overall and 2nd in Set 3, while Tim Wadsworth was 15th overall and 6th in Set 3.

Pembrey in South Wales is not particularly easy to get to from South-East England but is worth the effort. Tim Parker made the trip on 21st August and was rewarded by 3rd place in the Allcomers' Handicap Race. He was also one of the few qualifiers

in the high speed trial. Incidentally, the locals tell me that the name of the circuit is not pronounced "Pembry" as the English tend to but "Pembray" with the emphasis on the second syllable. So now you know!

Mallory Park is another small but attractive circuit and on 24th August Tim Wadsworth and Nicholas Morley made the trip for the Bob Gerrard Memorial Trophy Meeting. The start of Tim's race was delayed by an accident in the previous one and when the time came to leave the assembly area, his engine refused to start. He eventually discovered that his top timing chain had broken. Though there was some engine damage, luckily it was not too bad. Nicholas made it safely to the start of his race and finished 13th.

The next weekend Motor Racing Legends organised a race for pre-war cars at the Historic Grand Prix Meeting at Zandvoort on the Dutch Coast. It is said that during the last war the locals realised that a racing circuit would help them attract tourists after the conflict, and managed to persuade the occupying German forces to construct the long pit straight by convincing them that they would need a suitable place for a triumphal march past to celebrate their inevitable victory. In 1946 the community employed Sammy Davis, the 1927 Le Mans winner, to design a grand prix circuit and it became the home of the Dutch Grand Prix until 1985. The annual Historic Grand Prix Meeting is a celebration of the track's illustrious past and attracted two Lagondas: Robert Lewis's V12 Le Mans Replica and my LG45 Team Car Replica. Practice was on Saturday and those like me who were new to this long and undulating track built on the sand dunes needed all the time available to learn it. There was

time to relax in the evening when the town of Zandvoort turned out en masse to welcome the parade of competing cars, which wended its way through the town and then parked at random in the centre, so that the drivers could choose from one of the excellent restaurants for dinner. After a wet and blustery night, the race on Sunday started on a damp track which allowed me to compete against faster cars for a while. As the track dried, speed and power reasserted their dominance and Robert Lewis finished in 10th place after a race long tussle with an astonishing streamlined Hotchkiss and I came home 13th out of 15 finishers.

Le Circuit des Remparts at Angoulême in early September is a unique event. Tim Parker entered, driving his 2 litre there and back. On the way down an oil pipe fractured but a local garage was able to weld it and simultaneously add to Tim's knowledge of French technical words and phrases. Scrutineering here is always random and challenging for those not driving French cars. This year the scrutineers concentrated on windscreens. The lower part of the 2 litre's windscreen was ruled unacceptable but the day was saved by a French competitor who provided some plastic laminate to cover it. The very tight second hairpin is a challenge for Lagondas at racing speed and it was made more so by Tim's hand throttle sticking open. Once it was disconnected he found the experience more relaxing. In a grid of Bugattis the 2 litre was never going to gain a podium position, but the race was enjoyable and the return journey uneventful.

The season draws to a close in October, which is perhaps why few Lagondas enter the pre-war race at the Castle Coombe Autumn Classic event.

They are missing an interesting meeting on a fast and exciting track. I was the only Lagonda present and once again benefited from a downpour during practice, which gave me the opportunity to harry some faster cars. The race was held in dry conditions and I was well satisfied with 9th place.

The VSCC Goodwood Autumn Sprint on 22nd closed the season with success for the two Lagondas taking part. Nigel Walder's M45 achieved 1st on handicap in Set 3 as did Andrew Cheyne in the class for Specials.

So ended a busy and enjoyable season. A good number of members competed in a wide range of events at home and abroad but there is always room for more and it seems that we may see one or two newcomers next season. There are even rumours that the Editor may be returning to the track in the Rapier. Something to look forward to in 2017. ■

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Robert Lewis at Zandvoort



Tim Parker's 2 litre wheel to wheel with a Bugatti at Angoulême

Psychoanalysis of the LeMans Classic Racers

By Dr Florian Brandt

THE DISTINCTIVE STYLE of Colin Bugler's report of the mighty LeMans Classic 2016 outing showed a noble correctness, but the effort of all the people who made the successful run possible needs some addendum.

Colin's red Lagonda is definitely a car with lots of racing pedigree, due to the unbelievable stamina of Colin. He is one of the now rare to find individuals who treats a car with real enthusiasm. He knows all the secrets and all the necessary sweat to turn a battle-scarred racer into an efficient bullet of speed. Maybe the secret is hidden deep in his humble down-to-earth workshop, or the tea Valerie offers is full of unknown anabolica!

Colin's LG45 is a regular competitor at the LeMans Classic, an event created only to destroy or tear apart engines, magnetos, or gearboxes as quickly as possible. I know what I am talking about, my LG45 received a lot – an awful lot – of expensive attention after six LeMans. A broken crankshaft was just the curse quelle. And Colin will know what this does to a man (and his

wallet).

This time we were separated as I was offered a drive in a fancy, albeit a rather vulgar green, Talbot – a car with lots of history. On the circuit I grabbed its huge steering wheel for the first time and had to come through the mechanical nightmare of its preselector gearbox. This was connected to the shortest differential ratio possible and the skinny tyres didn't help to create top speed either. The borrowed green banger turned out to be a good companion with only modest speed on the long straights, and the sensational road-holding allowed me to finish 8th without any drama – good for the owner, and good for me!

However, Colin's Lagonda was full of testosterone and the Bugler Family Affaire allowed Martin to compete with the happy few in the front positions. He piloted the car in a distinctive and spectacular style. After the race Colin's Lagonda was full of hypertension and it cooled down like an exhausted lady after a blistering night out with an unknown nobleman!



The LG45 at the Start Line

I inspected the car with hidden envy. Yes, Martin was that quick that even the stickers lost adhesion to the cellulose paint:



The nasty yellow hook was ordinary ballast this time :



and the driver's cabin was full of FIA approved comfort items:



As blood is thicker than water the Lagonda efforts made me proud too, but I have to report that a Talbot drives much easier, and with a very predictable road-holding that even Ralph Nader (Chevrolet Corvair – “Unsafe at any Speed”) would have appreciated.

Conclusion: A Lagonda is a machine for real men – full of testosterone.



Martin is definitely a man, now knighted by a Lagonda. Well done! ■

Lagonda Club Southern Area 2016 events

Michael Drakeford reports on a busy year

24th April, Pub Meet at Wisborough Green

The year started well with the annual gathering at the Cricketers Arms. There was an excellent turnout, so good in fact that the pub staff had trouble keeping up with the food orders. That did not spoil the day and it was a good run out for the cars.

22nd May, Spring Picnic at Ditcham

Once again Jeremy and Margaret Oates invited us to the glorious Tithe Barn on the edge of the South Downs near South Harting. Offering plenty of space and as usual, good weather, the event was well supported by both the Lagonda Club and the Riley Club. On this occasion we had the pleasure of being able to attend short lectures on 'car electrics' and 'lace making', which were well attended and very much appreciated. Mike Thomas was there to show attendees his excellent work at the upholstery workshop. Well done Jeremy and Margaret, and thank you.

18th – 19th June, Brooklands Double Twelve Motorsport Festival

The event was well supported with around 260 cars taking part in the sprint, the concours or the driving tests; however, 42 of these took part in two of the three events and were eligible for an overall Festival score. The Lagonda success of the day was an excellent showing by Tony Saunders ably assisted by Duncan. In Tony's LG45 tourer they came 1st in Class in the concours and 2nd in class in

the driving tests, making them 11th overall for the Festival. Michael Drakeford, in his M45, was hot on Tony's heels with 2nd and 3rd in class in the same events and 17th overall.

Andrew Cheyne in his 3½/4½ special finished just ahead of Nigel Walder's M45, both running in the sprint. Rapier specials driven by Christopher Rees-Jones and Ralph Wienrich also took part in the sprint.

Christopher and Kay Hobbs had hoped to bring the 2 Litre, but the run was aborted when the gearbox failed before setting off. Instead the MG K1 was allowed out for the day and gained a creditable 2nd in class for the concours. David Bracey, always bringing a different car, turned up in his 1963 Mini, attaining a notable 12th overall.

It was a grand day out at this spectacular Brooklands event.

10th July, Summer Picnic at Uppark House

We had hoped for a return to the halcyon days of the summer picnic events when we enjoyed well over 20 Lagonda cars on the East Lawn, with endless sunshine and wonderful views over the rolling South Downs as we sheltered ourselves under the trees. Hey Ho! Heavy early morning rain prevented us from us using the lawn, and a show of just six cars was the result. The only blessing was that we could all park in front of the house without crowding, and fit snugly into the 'Gothic Seat' for the picnic.



The Manns enjoying themselves at Ditcham



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The owner of the Red Lady, receiving the Robby Hewitt trophy at Brooklands



Richard Branch's 16/80 at Churt



The line-up at Uppark House

We were pleased to welcome Charles Goode in his newly acquired V12R DHC, and Arthur and Anna Manners in the ex-Tony Loch M45, KY 5207. Now, this car is again a rally car, brilliantly kept as a very 'used' car to be driven as she was intended - long distances at speed. Next year it is a trip around the Baltic, and the Flying Scotsman rally. What could be better? James King came full of passengers in his ubiquitous Invicta and Nigel Walder was in his M45 with Rodney Saunders.

13th August, Churt, Help for Heroes through Tanya and Robert Lewis

The sight of hundreds of the most elite and expensive modern motor cars must have set many a heart throbbing - Ferrari, Bentley, Rolls Royce, Maserati, Lamborghini, Aston Martin, McLaren, all splendid and sparkling. With nearly 1,000 cars and 2,000 people it was a triumph for Robert and Tanya and their team of helpers. Apart from the cars the gardens with their many ponds were at their best, and provided some cool shade in what turned out to be a hot day.

Some Lagonda supporters came in alternative cars such as Philip Erhardt in his Bentley, and Tony and Duncan Saunders in Duncan's enormous Le Mans style Bentley. There were six Lagondas, four belonging to Robert Lewis, being admired in his splendid museum and two in the field. One was Michael Drakeford's M45 tourer and the other was Richard and Denise Branch's newly acquired 1933 16/80 special six, BPA334. The event was a great success for the charities involved.

14th August - The Brooklands Reunion

This event is always a delight. It enables supporters and the public to see the museum and the environs with a show of exemplary pre-war cars.

This occasion was to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the first ever British Grand Prix. The Museum arranged for a line-up of Grand Prix cars covering more than a century and included such names as Delage-1927, Lorraine-Dietrich-1911, Halford Special-1926 and Duesenburg Indianapolis-1927. The supporting cars included the more modern Arrows, McLaren-Mercedes, Force India and Williams.

Overall the number of cars attending from the 'right era', were lower than usual. However, the large crowd of onlookers showed much enthusiasm. There was a cavalcade of five laps on the Mercedes World circuit but the maximum speed allowed for these cars was rather slow this year.

The ascent of the Test Hill was enjoyed by most with the final one ending in a celebratory photo-shoot for attendees at the Member's bridge, together with the Grand Prix cars.

Lagonda members were able to vie for the Robby Hewitt trophy. The number of cars eligible was low. Roger Cooke with his M45 tourer, Richard and Sally Walker with John's 2 litre S/C tourer, which won last year, and John Chapman in his excellent Rapier tourer. Hugh and Priscilla Burnard had entered their 16/80 but having left at 6.30am the car failed just a couple of miles from home near Salisbury.

Richard Walker was volunteered to choose the winning car and, for the first time, it was Michael Drakeford's M45.

The only comment the fortunate

owner could make, as he collected the prize from the Museum Director, Allan Winn, was that his was the last Lagonda available because the others had already left!

16th October Wisborough Green

Importantly we had four new members attending. Richard George came without his 2 litre. His repairers had fitted a powerful pusher pump, by-passing the SU, with the result that petrol had sprayed around the 2 litre's engine bay. Scott and Melisa Samuel came in their Carlton-bodied M35. James Campbell was on his first run in his lovely 'oily rag' 3 litre, accompanied by Ian Dimmer who has sold his 16/80 saloon. Mike and Barbara Spicer braved the weather in their newly acquired 2 litre, driving from Windsor through a storm.

Old Lags there included Robin

Saddler in his ex-Coates 4½ LG45 special, Sally and Phil Erhardt in the M45 T7, Peter Minett and Pat Heather in the H/C 2 litre, Nigel Walder in his M45, Nick Channing in his V12 Van den Plas, Jane and Ian Anderson in one of their Rapiers, and John Chapman in his Rapier.

Those with cars 'in dock', included Malcolm and Marion Burgess, Bob and Marlene Osborne, David and Polly Stone-Lee, Jonathan Oppenheimer in a very smart electric car, and Peter Blenk, who has a Lagonda stuck in the garage by a sewage works.

Sadly we learnt of the death of Duncan McGregor, who often attended our pub events in one of the two 'White Invicta' cars once owned by Raymond Mays. We will miss both him and John Brown, who died in the Spring. ■



Tony Saunders tackles the Brooklands banking - Photo from Steve Welsh

Lagonda History in Western Australia

By James Dyer

SOME WEEKS AGO I suggested to your editor that it might be worth reflecting on some of the exploits of my father, a very perceptive gentleman who purchased not one but TWO Lagondas on his stints at university in England in the late 1920s and early 30s, as well as a very fast 'pure racing car' - the Bartlett Special, all of which were bought in England and shipped back to the port of Fremantle in Western Australia.

Clem Dyer was born in Perth in 1910, went to a good private school (Hale School) then on to the University of Western Australia studying electrical engineering. To further his education he travelled to England to study at Loughborough College (Faraday House), which, it would seem, is where he developed a taste for quality fast motor cars.

His first Lagonda was a 2 litre supercharged model that I believe was purchased new from the Lagonda showroom in London. On his return to Perth he drove that Lagonda as his daily commuter. He also joined the WA Sporting Car Club and was, I believe, talked into 'racing it occasionally'.

The car had a Wilson pre-selector gear box and my father said it was one of the nicest cars that he ever drove. It is still in Australia and is now owned by Mark Whitehead. I believe that his father bought it for

him for one of his birthdays back in the 1950s. It was then transported from Western Australia to Mark's property at Armidale in New South Wales where it still abides. My father also raced a Triumph Special. However I don't know a lot about that car apart from the fact that he 'spun in' on one of the hill climb events and did a moderate amount of damage to both the car and himself.

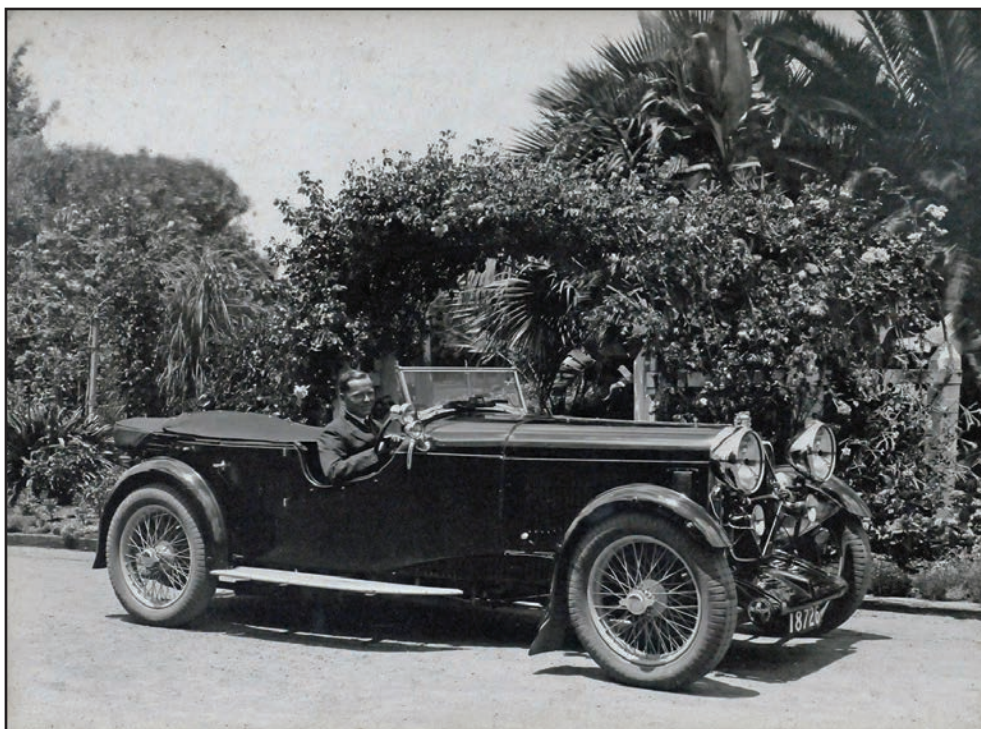
He returned to England in 1933 for another stint at some post graduate studies at Faraday House and spent much of his spare time at Brooklands, admiring the feats of the local racing car drivers hurtling their cars around the banked circuit at tremendous speeds. He was particularly attracted to a little racing car called the Bartlett Special that was manufactured in France by one Emile Salmson, who built a limited number of racing cars at an engineering works in Billancourt. This was originally one of 17 Salmson Grand Prix chassis models. They had an 1100cc engine with dual ignition, twin cams roller big ends and a No. 9 Cozette supercharger. That particular car eventually found its way to the Societe des Moteurs Salmson in London and would probably have sold for around £475 at the time. Little was known of that car until Jack Bartlett purchased it from George Newman Motors'



The Bartlett Special as it appears today



The impressive engine of the Bartlett Special



Clem Dyer's new S/C 2 litre with proud owner

Brighton premises for £130. In an interview with a Motor Sport magazine journalist, Bartlett said he bought the car on the basis that it looked very smart. He was advised "it had never been raced and was as good as new." Hmmm!!!!

At the time he was a part of the Brooklands racing crowd and his company, Jack Bartlett Ltd. at Pembroke Villas in Notting Hill, specialised in selling used European sports and racing cars (such as Alfa Romeo & Bugatti) to his well-heeled clientele, who seemed quite happy to part with their hard earned cash to drive such exotic motor cars. One might suggest that we suffer a similar malaise today with such a wonderful assortment of expensive (and fast) quality autos available on the market.

Jack Bartlett raced the car with great gusto and achieved some success at Brooklands, as well as on other racing circuits in England. It was alleged that the car achieved a speed of 139mph (at 5,900rpm) along the Byfleet banking at Brooklands in the 1934 British Empire Trophy Race - quite a feat for a car of 1100ccs in that day, and a speed that my father never managed to equal. Perhaps the air is lighter in England? He never did tell me how much he paid for it, and, I never asked him either. On reflection I regret that I didn't.

The Bartlett Special was raced extensively with notable results from 1935 until 1937, winning numerous events around the country. In doing so my father established himself as

one of Western Australia's leading racing car drivers. The car has had a number of makeovers since he sold it, via a series of different engines and owners until Allan MacKintosh acquired it in around 1940. After a few races it was mothballed until after the end of the war. It then transferred to Allan's son Barry, who still races the car in Historic events, which are quite popular in Australia today. The car now has its original engine and supercharger installed and it looks tremendous.

After his second stint at Faraday House in 1933/34 my father decided he would like to bring back to Perth the best (fastest?) British sports car that he could afford. He was particularly impressed with the performance of the Bentleys with their wins at Le Mans in the late 20s / early 30s. He was close to signing up for one of their new models. However he had kept in touch with various Lagonda people, in particular the sales director Warwick Wright who informed him that W.O. Bentley had recently departed and was now working at Lagonda and, that he had developed some new models for them, including the wonderful M45R which he just happened to have as a demonstrator in their London showroom. Wright suggested that he 'really should have a drive of one of those cars before he made any rash decisions to buy a Bentley'. So arrangements were made to take the demonstrator Rapide for a 'trial run.' The route was to include some city driving

and an opportunity to 'open her out' on the Staines bypass.

No doubt my father would have pursued the 'opening her out bit' with some enthusiasm and everything would all have gone beautifully had the weather not turned out a little foggy and very rainy. Not the type of weather one might expect in sunny Australia at that time of the year - which might have contributed to a slight misjudgment causing the offside front wing of the Lagonda and the rear end of a truck to make contact. Not too serious, but probably not the best outcome on their test drive? My father ended up with dented pride and the Sales Director with a dented new M45R motorcar. After surveying the minor damage at the rear of the truck and the driver continuing on his way, my father enquired 'Well what do we do with the Lagonda now, Warwick?' His reply was something like 'Perhaps an order for this lovely motor car might be a good way to start, Mr. Dyer!'

'Done!' said my father (or words to that effect) and he was well on his way to taking possession of his second Lagonda. The necessary paperwork was finalised, the car went back to the factory to have the wing repaired. It was then shipped to Fremantle to start its new life 'in the colonies'.

I believe that it was unbeknown to my father that the car that he had just bought (BLA 903 chassis number Z11212) had, only a month or two before, been used by the Lagonda company in a failed promotional

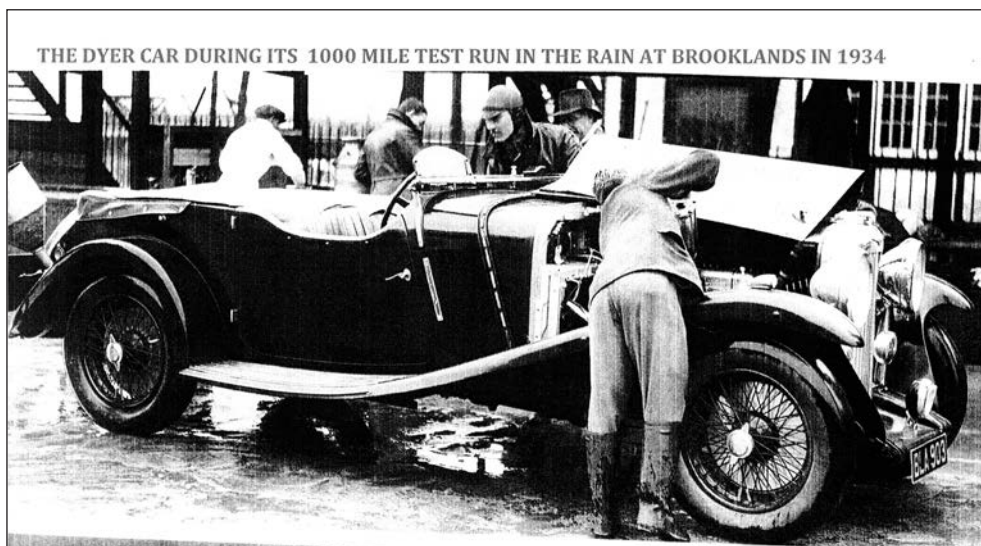
speed /endurance attempt at Brooklands.

It was an endeavour to cover 1,000 miles in 12 hours and demonstrate that this Lagonda was indeed the fastest un-supercharged standard British sports car on the market.

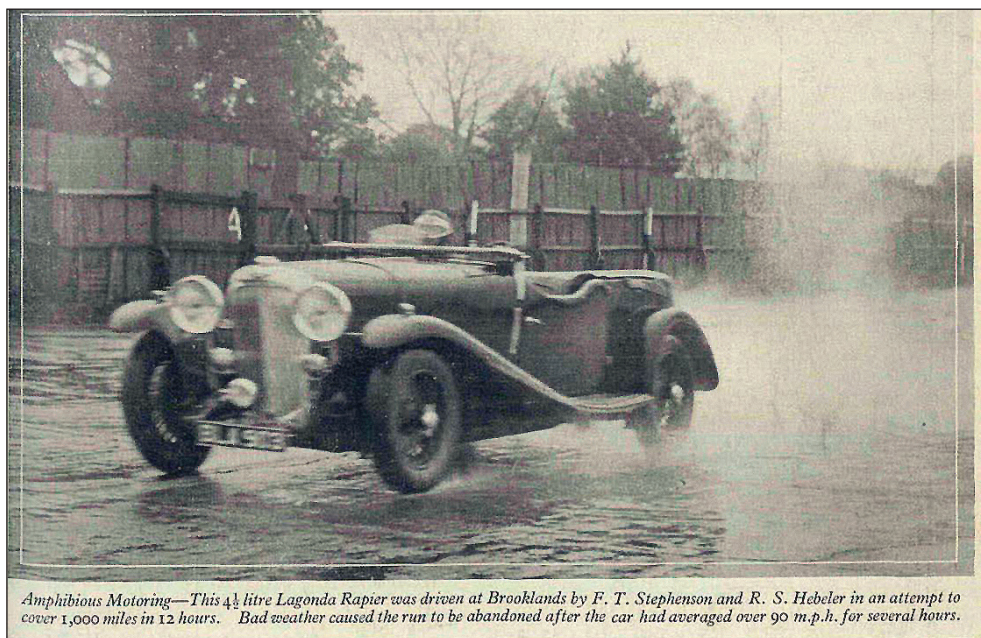
The idea was to take a 'stock standard' car from the showroom, which happened to be the Sales Director's demonstrator, and take it to Brooklands for the attempt. The car did, however, happen to go via Fox & Nicholl's works for a 'service' (or tune up?) on the way to Brooklands but, apart from that, the car was indeed 'stock standard'. The Rapide was driven by Roland Hebler, a Fox & Nicholl's race driver, and F. J. Stephenson from Lagonda.

The attempt commenced at 8am on a typical English morning with some drizzly rain, but not enough to deter the group to call the venture off. The initial hour was run well within the required time guidelines and they averaged 91.69 mph. The rain intensified which brought the speed back to an average of 89.62 mph, still enough to achieve their goal, but eventually became torrential which made it unsafe to continue at such high speeds. After eight hours or so, when the track became waterlogged, the exercise was abandoned. A photograph of BLA903 at Brooklands featured on the cover of Motor Sport magazine in December 1934.

It was suggested that another attempt be made again later as the Company felt that with 12 hours



The M45R in the pits, on the record attempt at Brooklands.
Picture reproduced with acknowledgement to Motor Sport and LAT Photographic.



Picture reproduced with acknowledgement to Motor Sport and LAT Photographic.

of good weather the desired result could easily have been achieved.

This never materialized – that car was the one sold to my father.

Needless to say the car created a lot of attention on its arrival in Perth early in 1935.

In one of his first ‘official’ outings with the car he won the prestigious Western Australian Concours D’Elegance.

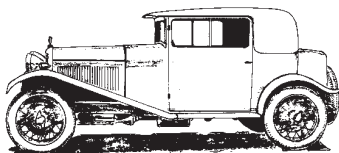
There were not a great number of motor cars in Western Australia at the time.

The ones that were there were mostly of American origin with a

smattering of English and European motor vehicles.

Of course at that time Australia didn’t have a ‘car industry’ - that didn’t come to pass until about twenty years later when General Motors set up a manufacturing operation in Victoria.

So, a striking car like the Lagonda Rapide being parked anywhere in the city soon attracted a crowd around it eager to get a good look at such a lovely piece of machinery. If they were lucky my dad might have lifted the bonnet so they could view the engine! ■



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Racing Reminiscences from the Swinging Sixties

Chapter 1. The first few years with the 16/80. *By Ron Gee*

IN 1956, AT the age of 19, with more money than sense and not much of either, I decided to purchase a 1930s sports car. Out of the hundreds then advertised in *Motor Sport*, I took a fancy to an advert for a 1933 Lagonda 16/80 which purported to be in 100% mechanical condition (it was not), to have bodywork which was not concours but good (it was not) and was on sale for £120. Such prices were par for the course then, because not many people could afford to run such cars, let alone pay the sort of sums that they fetch today. I went to see it and foolishly agreed to pay £95.

The next evening, I collected the car and drove it home through the much poorer street lighting that was the case in the 1950s. The headlamps were of little use, because they only had 12 Watt bulbs. During the journey back to Sidcup a chronic misfire started, but I made it to home. The next day a garage diagnosed that a rocker arm had jumped out of the push rod. However that was only one of the many faults.

Instead of the original twin SUs, the 16/80 was fitted with a worn updraught Stromberg carburettor. At my request, the garage changed this for a new carburettor. A Solex was supplied, which made starting and running even more difficult. So the car stood in the front garden for almost three years, apart from infrequent occasions to tax, insure and run it. However, I had joined the Lagonda Club and learnt

about Ivan Forshaw with his unique spares service and advice (Ivan wrote countless letters to Club members). He supplied new and second-hand spares to many owners thus enabling many Lagondas to stay on the road. So Ivan supplied an inlet manifold and two carburettors, whereupon the car's engine ran sweetly. However calamity soon struck in the gearbox, which the vendor had alleged to have been overhauled but had left nuts and bolts loose which caused the transmission to lock. A trip to Maurice Leo, whose garage was at Beaconsfield, did offer replacement gears but also, for less cost, an alternative solution of an Alvis Speed 25 gearbox, with synchromesh on all 4 gears. This could be fitted into a Lagonda, but entailed shortening the prop-shaft and other modifications. Nevertheless the Alvis box was an asset in London's traffic, and a worthwhile modification. All this took time and money but after two to three years the car was roadworthy.

A friend helped me to decoke the engine. Once the pistons had been scraped, they revealed that they were still standard. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. Although they were standard, this was because they were not Lagonda pistons, but pistons for a 4 cylinder Rover car. However I did not realise this. It seemed prudent to overhaul the engine and this I entrusted to H&B motors of Redhill, who advertised in the Magazine



Ron Gee in his 16/80 back in the 1960s



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purporting to provide "Specialist Work at prices you can afford". So in 1959 I took the car there.

About 3 months later and a bill for £200, the car emerged and I ran it in carefully for 1000 miles. I entered it in a Club sprint at Brands Hatch. Just beforehand I was returning home from a Club evening at the Three Horseshoes, and was running carefully along the A20 just east of the Dutch House. Suddenly a clatter arose from under the bonnet and I stopped - a hole had appeared in the nearside of the engine. Yet it was still possible to drive the car home. What had happened was that a con-rod had broken. I suppose that either the piston had seized or that a ring below the gudgeon pin in the non-standard Rover pistons had jumped out of its groove and caused the engine to seize and/or the con-rod to fracture. H&B motors were not sympathetic, but agreed to repair the engine, which I then had to get towed to Redhill. One unfortunate aspect was the matter of a replacement piston. Unfortunately the supplier of pistons to H&B Motors would only sell a set of 6. That the Rover car was a four cylinder was glossed over and, too, was the fact that two spare pistons were in stock following the supply of six for the 16/80 rebore. As a mere customer and not a Lagonda specialist, how was I to know how many pistons were in a set for a Rover? Such information was in the Hepolite catalogue, however this was only available to motor traders, not retail customers. So I went and purchased a single piston, which fitted the bore but perhaps gave rise to

the vibration, which I was never able to eliminate. Anyway the car came back, this time with a loose big end. The running of the car had not been tested, and it was left to me to cure. This gave me some experience in car mechanics, but was quite unwelcome.

I list some modifications to the car, which may be of interest:

1. The fitting of Rover pistons increased the compression ratio and bore. This was not a deliberate ploy but an expedient introduced by the previous owner. The cubic capacity increased to 2130 c.c.

2. Electricity Generation. For no logical reason, I had the car's third-brush regulator fitted with a Scintilla voltage control plus cut-out. This enabled me to start the car with an additional battery in series (i.e 18v instead of 12v) without upsetting the electrics. Whether such a start would have been possible with the original third brush system I do not know.

3. Tyres. During the era when I raced the car, I used British Bergougnan tyres. BB was a subsidiary of Michelin and the trade price was 10% cheaper than it was for a Michelin or a Dunlop brand. Later India 550x18 6 ply tyres were offered at the same price as Dunlop 4 ply, so I purchased and fitted the India tyres.

4. Headlamps. The original P80s badly needed refurbishment. In the 1960s there were few firms offering such services. Even if they were available, I doubt if I could have afforded them. So I availed myself of some Simms headlights, originally sold for use on Bristol and other omnibuses, and available new at a

surplus price of £2 each. ‘Sacrilege’ some members will exclaim. However that was how the cars were kept running at that time.

5. The Alvis gearbox was much longer than the original Lagonda unit. At first it was fitted by scrapping the Jackshaft and using just one fabric coupling. Years later, and after lots of thought, I bought a Jackshaft from Ivan, thus enabling the fitting of two fabric couplings; and moved the gearbox backwards in the chassis. I managed to do this without scrapping a cross member (as others had done) and fitting the gearbox into the car so that the rear end just poked through a hole in the cross member. New holes had to be drilled into the vehicle’s chassis for the gearbox mounts. When doing this I observed that the original mounting holes for the engine meant that it lay at an angle of 1.25 degrees to the centre line of the car, and that the rear of the gear box was somewhat to the right of the car’s centre line. This meant extra work for the propshaft’s

rear universal joint. As part of the original 1960s exercise in changing to an Alvis gearbox, the prop-shaft was replaced with a standard Hardy-Spicer unit with modern U-Js, so I suppose that the modern design will last better. Brakes were not a problem in those days as asbestos linings were still legal, lasted for decades, and never faded on or off the racetrack. The first event, in which I participated, was entering the 16/80 into a Lagonda Club sprint at Brands Hatch in 1959 or perhaps 1960. I did not figure in the list of winners because the Sprint was organised as a handicap event. Although the car initially received a sympathetic minimal handicap as might be expected for a Mr Puniverse guy in a tatty 16/80, my practice times were quick enough for the car to be re-handicapped and I did not appear in the awards list. It was a mistake that I never made again. Thereafter during practice I always eased the car through one of the bends, so as not to give an indication of hidden abilities. ■



Going well at Brands Hatch in 1964

Letters & emails ... Letters & emails

Dear Roger,

We have recently bought a 2 litre tourer, EM2565, as we were looking for a pre-war sports tourer and felt the Lagonda was the nicest and best bet.

I must admit I was influenced by the fact that my uncle owned one from perhaps 1946-56. John, who was a great favourite of mine, used his essentially as a mini-bus for the prep school he owned in Maidenhead. All we know about the car is that it was a Lagonda tourer. My wife and I are trying to trace any history on the car which has proved almost impossible as we have no photographs and no registration number, just a few fond

Dear Roger,

I may be able to throw some light on your mention in the latest magazine of a 2 litre downdraft conversion by Peter Whitman in 1956. I am fortunate in having every issue of The Lagonda magazine – invaluable when I was publishing my book *Lagonda Journey*. I also have most previous Registers of Members, and almost all the Two Litre Register Notes.

The Register for 1960 lists a PGA Whitman as owning a 1928 2L HC Tourer, YV5833, so very likely, this

Dear Roger,

I remember Peter Whitman, in fact I bought all of his motoring bits and bobs cleared out his garage/cellar [two days work involving one removal van plus a trailer and four able-bodied men!]

I talked to him about the cylinder head that he had converted to take two downdraught carburettors. In simple terms he had bored through the head

memories from old Winbury School boys from 60-70 years ago. The DVLA, it seems, is unable to help.

In conclusion I was wondering if any club owners of a tourer (it could be any engine size) have buff log books with the name of 'John' or 'Dennis Spicer', Winbury School, West Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire?

Regards

Mike and Barbara Spicer

PS: if anyone has pictures of EM2565 as a 2 seater, when owned by Paul Watt in the 1970s, I would be grateful to see them. ■

was the car. It is interesting that in 1948 this same car was owned by GW Allen and had a 35mm Solex. He was a very active member of the 2L Register and also produced the very humorous cartoons which appeared in the early magazines. The car is listed in the latest Register as belonging to member H59. It would be interesting to learn the details of its current carburettors! ■

Regards,

Alan Elliott

and sleeved the water jacket with a pair of metal tubes. I don't know what happened to the head but I still have one of his complete engines which I thought I would play with sometime – probably won't happen now. I have too many model steam projects to finish first. ■

Regards,

Peter Jones

Letters & emails ... Letters & emails

Dear Roger,

Here is some follow-up to your query about Peter Whitman's downdraught 2-Litre cylinder head in your Autumn 2016 editorial. He fitted this to YV5833; 2-Litre High Chassis Tourer OH9046/OH789 first registered 8th May 1928. That car was No.156 on the Lagonda 2-Litre Register, listed in their May 1948 Newsletter as having a 35mm Solex Thermostarter Carburettor, Lucas magneto, and owned by G. W. Allen of Romford, who appears again in their 30th June 1950 Members List. Peter G. A Whitman appeared as a 'new non-owner' in their 1st November 1950 Newsletter, so had been a long-standing Lagonda aficionado. G. W. Allen appears as still the owner in the Lagonda Club list dated 31st August 1952.

By the time of the next Lagonda Club Register, in 1960, member W18 Peter Whitman owned the car, which he continued to do until he last appeared in the 1997 Register. Along the way he owned other Lagondas too, appearing with an LG6 in the 1960 Register, but not in the 1962 and 1968 Registers. By the 1971 Register he had acquired SMG161, one of the two prototype Rapiers, and by the 1979 Register also BGT261, listed as a single-seater Rapier. By the 1984 Register he also owned two 4½-Litre Tourers, AUU295 and BLX47. He had parted with SMG161 by the 1989 Register, and the other Rapier too by the 1994 Register, which listed BLX477 as an M45/LG45. But by the 1994 Register his fleet was reduced to

solely YV5833.

Clearly you found the photo of YV5833 fitted with twin down-draught SU carburettors in 'The Lagonda' Christmas 1956 Issue No. 22. I wonder whether you spotted on page 3 thereof the following text: ***'SENSATION – The matter of fact arrival of Peter Whitman at the A.G.M. in his 2-litre with two carburettors perched ON the cylinder head and feeding THROUGH it. There's a quiet one for you –!'***

There were follow-ups in subsequent Issues, viz: a letter from Geoffrey Allen (former owner of Peter's car) on page 23 in the Spring 1957 issue No.23, and two letters responding to that one on page 22 of the Summer 1957 Issue No.24.

The original idea of the downdraught head came from Lagonda Ltd. In 1930 that they produced publicity material for two new 2-Litre models, the 'Supercharged' one which went into production and the 'Special' which did not. I surmise that the publicity picture of the 'Special' was probably faked by taking a photo of an ordinary 2-Litre with a couple of down-draught Zenith carburettors stood on top of the head, with the original carb or carbs covered over or deleted from the photo afterwards. Maybe Arnold Davey knows more on this subject.

People quickly forget what they read in club magazines and newsletters, and for many subsequent

Letters & emails ... Letters & emails

years there were members who believed Peter Whitman's car to be the original 'works prototype' of the 'Special' which had been taken no further. When I mentioned this to Peter he said to me "If they want to believe that, it's OK with me, who am I to disillusion them!", or words to that effect. I had contacted him because I had bought a latter-day brand new downdraught head for UF6089 and wished to fit 'authentic' carburettors. Having searched autojumbles without success for carbs exactly like those in the publicity shot, I wanted to visit Peter to inspect them and find out precisely what model of Zenith they were. It was then that I discovered the truth; he had produced his downdraught head himself!

The new downdraught heads from Wessex Workshops stem from work by those two great friends Phil Ridout and Peter Jones. I think they tried out the idea, to see if it worked, by welding bits into a cracked head to try it out on Phil's UL8564 (now our car). When

it did, Peter Jones' skills produced patterns from which the new heads are cast. As an aside, here's another guess; in about 1977 the long awaited Wickham Market bypass was opened, and the town was in great fest that evening, the whole Market Square set out like French pavement cafés. Phil drove our Rapier Randalah DHC round the bypass, and then I drove UL8564. We had an MGB at that time, and I said to Phil "Oh no, I don't want to buy your 2-Litre (he was toying with selling either UL8564 or his blown car) as its performance is too sluggish for modern traffic". It may have been that remark which set him off down the road to the new heads, but we shall never know. Anyway, it's no sluggard with the downdraught head. In June we drove back from Newhaven to Bredfield at an average speed of 53mph. Not too bad for a 1929 car.

You can read a bit about the 'Special' in the last paragraph on page 217 of Arnold Davey and Anthony May's book "Lagonda, a History of the Marque". ■



YV 5833 pictured in the 1950s - Picture from Chris Hubble

The 2 Litre Downdraught Cylinder Head from 1956

Still going strong – *Chris Hubble* brings us up to date

WITH REFERENCE TO the “*From the Driving Seat*” section of the recent Lagonda Club Magazine, I think I can help some answers about the 2 litre downdraught head conversion pictured in 1956.

I first met Peter Whitman in 1964, when he kindly repaired our AC Greyhound, which had thrown a con rod, punching a hole in the engine crankcase. I was 14 at the time and very much enjoyed helping with the work that he carried out.

Thus began a long friendship with Peter. Initially this was with a succession of different kinds of motorcycles that I had whilst at school. A 32cc Cyclemaster, various scooters, a 350cc Matchless, a 350cc BSA B31, a 650 BSA A10, and finally a 1936 500 cc Ariel, which I still have. I took my test on the 650 BSA with a sidecar frame attached. This was the first of the bunch to be used legally on the road! On the motorcycle front Peter then was riding a Rudge Multi; quite a regular performer on the Pioneer Run.

With age, motorcycles gave way to cars and my first was in 1967 with a 1933 Austin 7, 2-seater tourer (formerly Peter's). Peter offered the car to me if I could get it running and remove it from the undergrowth in the back garden of a friend's house. I still have this car, reg. no JJ 6948.

Peter was then living in a barn on a cucumber farm, near Much Hadham, run by former Italian prisoners of war; he lived in and had his workshop in

the barn in return for maintaining the farm's vehicles. A lot of work took place in this barn on all sorts of unusual and in many cases exotic vehicles.

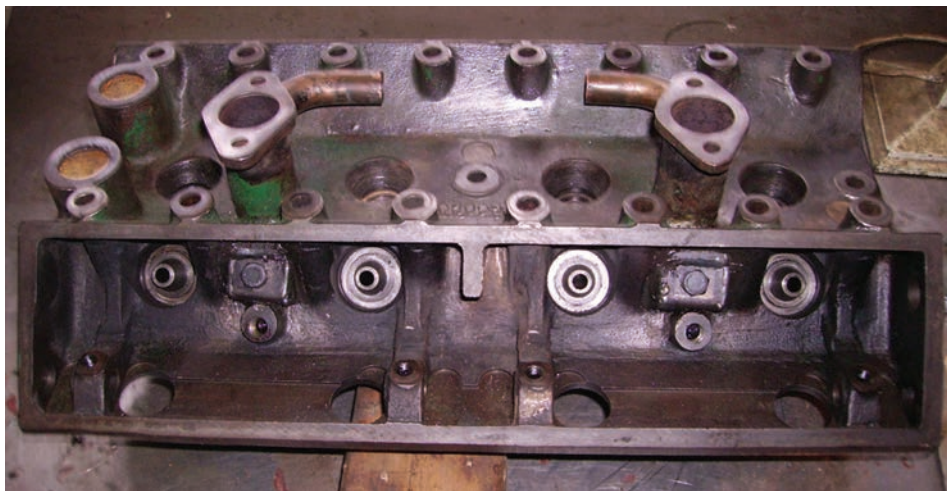
It was always a great pleasure and experience to visit and help out.

From a Lagonda point of view, work was then underway on the single seat Rapier that Peter and Len Thompson initiated (BGT 261). Meanwhile YV 5833 languished in a nearby pigsty, together with a '60s Bentley saloon.

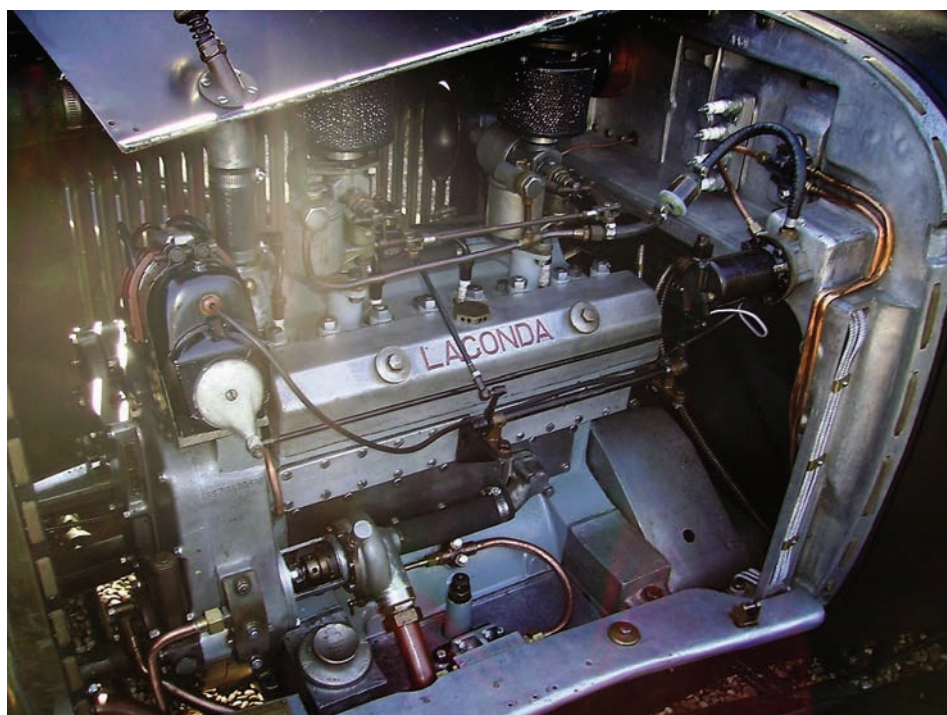
I recall one outing to a Lagonda AGM when Peter drove YV 5833 and I was privileged to drive what I think was a prototype Rapier, SMG 161. For me, as a 20- odd year old, this was a great experience and my first driving encounter with Lagondas and preselector gearboxes.

Peter owned a succession of different Lagondas. However as time progressed they all went on to new homes. Except that is for YV5833, which came to me when Peter died in 1998. It is in very good running order, still using the cylinder head in question.

As to how the modification was carried out, unfortunately I don't have detailed knowledge of the internal waterways of a standard 2 litre head. However I surmise that the head would have been bored out from underneath using the existing inlet ports as a guide; the holes going through the upper wall of the inlet



The Whitman downdraught head stripped for overhaul



The rebuilt engine and downdraught head as it appears now

tract, into the water jacket and out through the top surface of the head. The holes would be at or just less than the diameter of the existing inlet port holes in the head; they may have then been enlarged in diameter from the opposite direction.

A suitable width steel tube (probably with a carburettor flange and balance tube already attached) would then have been inserted through the hole in the top of the head, into the water jacket, and through the hole into the inlet tract, far enough to be a flush fit. This tube would then have been suitably “attached” to the wall of the inlet tract (accessed via the existing inlet port holes) and also to the top surface of the head, to provide watertight joints. The inlet rocker box evidences further welding work that may relate to additional “tunnelling” required to gain access to effect good joints.

Once this work was completed the original inlet port holes would have been blanked off with suitable tapped plugs and sealed with solder. I attach

some pictures for illustration.

In conversation with Richard Jones (J12) some years ago he told me that he has a set of parts that he thinks relate to this modification, so I expect Peter Whitman had a spare set made just in case.

As ever these vintage car jobs start out as one simple task and then expand exponentially:

- a bit of a clatter from the front of the engine; broom handle to the ear diagnosed a small end going.
- clean the chassis whilst the engine is out; able to access all those awkward areas.
- may as well lift the body off to do a more thorough job; only a few extra bolts to undo.
- to reveal that the top chassis rail could double as a fairground ride!

So the whole car had to come apart; that bit was easy! Then, with a straightened and reinforced chassis, it was all put back together again with much refurbishment, expense and time. Nevertheless it was well worth the effort. ■



YV 5833 today - going as well as ever

Farewell Nancye Whitehead

Sad news from Australia

ON THE 16th of December 2016 Mum died very peacefully, aged 97. (Barely 48 hours passed between reporting she had a chest pain and taking her last breath. An enviable way to go - in good taste to the last).

This thwarted my Christmas surprise for her, a short trip in her own car!

The image is of the 1951 Sydney Motor Show car. Jim, my Dad, bought it for Nancye soon after and I have vivid memories of being driven around the northern beaches of Sydney. In 1955 Jim had an accident in the car so it was retired to our garage. In the early 1970's my best friend Peter Woodward prevailed on Jim to part with the car so it could be put to its designed purpose; being driven and seen and admired. It earned some notoriety

when it featured in the late 70's cult film "*Madame George*".

In 1983 Peter sold it to Clarrie Robinson who, upon driving it home, embarked on a total body-off restoration. Thirty three years later with most of the hard work done, time and health caught up with Clarrie, and earlier in 2016 he offered it to me, to return to its original family.

For over half a century Nancye berated Jim, on an almost weekly basis, for giving away her beautiful car. I had not told her it was back "home", intending to surprise her when I would have picked her up to drive her to Christmas lunch. All was not lost, the DB 2.6 would still be out on Christmas day, its first journey since 1983, and at the memorial service we had for Mum in Walcha a few days later. ■

Mark Whitehead



A beautiful car

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*

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or

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Coffee and Chocolate Truffles

After dinner Colin Bugler Esq will speak on "Lagonda (and other) motoring in the 1950s".

Dress code : dinner jackets or lounge suits or smart casual. Tickets £38 each + S.A.E.,

cheques payable to Mike Pilgrim, from Little Orchard, Bredfield, WOODBRIDGE IP13 6AW,

by 25th March DEADLINE, please use Booking Form 'flyer' sent with January Newsletter.

The White Lion, tel: 01728 452720, offers rooms (quote 'Lagonda Dinner rates'). For alternatives see the Internet, or enquire of mike@pilgrim74.plus.com or tel: 01394 382773. **Book early !**

Additional weekend attractions :-

Friday 4pm: watch Woodbridge Tide Mill working at Low Tide (IP12 1BY), **then at 7pm:** an English bell-ringing talk & demonstration at Bredfield (IP13 6AX), ascend the tower to view the bells.

Saturday 2pm sharp: Leiston Long Shop Industrial Museum visit, with refreshments & introductory talk.

Sunday 10am: Lagonda Club Spares open for viewing & sales, also visit Chris Banham's restoration workshop, morning coffee available, co-located at Carlton near Saxmundham (IP17 2QW).

Lastly, on Sunday 9th April, 12.30pm



**Lunch at The Old Mill House,
Saxtead Green, IP13 9QE Map Ref: TM256643**

Come in your Lagonda !

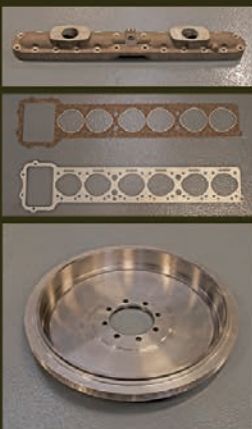
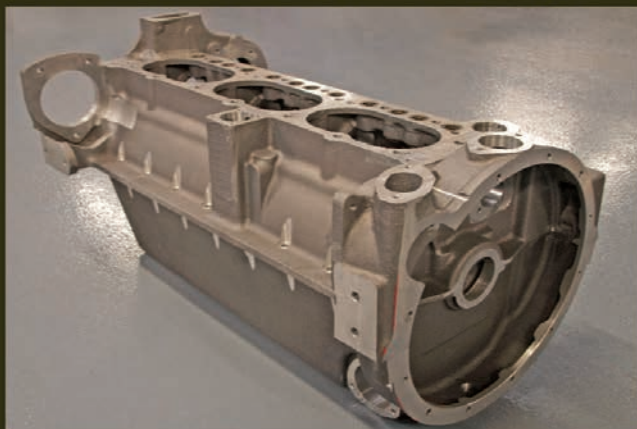




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