



**THE MAGAZINE OF THE  
LAGONDA CLUB**

**Number 256 Spring 2018**



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## The Lagonda Magazine

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**Vice Presidents:**

A. Davey, A. W. May, K. P. Painter

**Chairman:**

John Sword,  
Chivel, Chipping Norton,  
Oxfordshire, OX7 5TR  
Tel: 01608 683227 · Mob: 07795 480031  
e-mail: [j-sword@hotmail.com](mailto:j-sword@hotmail.com)

**Membership Secretary:**

Colin Bugler,  
Wintney House, London Road, Hartley Wintney,  
Hants, RG27 8RN  
Tel: 01252 845451  
e-mail: [admin@lagondaclub.com](mailto:admin@lagondaclub.com)

**Vice-President & Registrar:**

Arnold Davey,  
86 The Walk, Potters Bar,  
Herts, EN6 1QF  
Tel/Fax: 01707 651302 · Mob: 07773 681556

**Editor:**

Roger Seabrook,  
Haslemore, Old Dashwood Hill,  
Studley Green, High Wycombe,  
Buckinghamshire, HP14 3XD  
Tel: 01494 482379  
Mob: 07887 635290  
e-mail: [warrington74@live.co.uk](mailto:warrington74@live.co.uk)

**Hon Treasurer:**

Brian Green,  
The Coach House, Long Lane,  
Haughton, Tarporley,  
Chehsire, CW6 9RN  
Tel: 01829 261522 · Mob: 07969 450078  
e-mail: [brianjohnngreen@btinternet.com](mailto:brianjohnngreen@btinternet.com)

**E-Communications:**

Christopher Hobbs,  
Church Cottage, Church Hill,  
White Waltham,  
Berks SL6 3JH  
Tel/Fax: 01628 825246 • Mob: 07775 847811  
e-mail: [christopher.hobbs@chco.co.uk](mailto:christopher.hobbs@chco.co.uk)

**Competition Secretary:**

Tim Parker  
25, Chilworth Mews,  
London W2 3RG  
Mob: 07966 466605  
e-mail: [timothyparker@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:timothyparker@hotmail.co.uk)

**Board Member:**

Richard Reay-Smith,  
Hollyhurst, Godolphin Road, Weybridge,  
Surrey, KT13 0PU  
Tel: 01932 830366  
e-mail: [rpmrs@hotmail.com](mailto:rpmrs@hotmail.com)

**Post-War Cars Secretary:**

Peter Gilkes,  
61 Horton View, Banbury,  
Oxon OX16 9HW  
Tel: 01295 269897  
e-mail: [pgilkes2@gmail.com](mailto:pgilkes2@gmail.com)

**Technical & Drawings:**

David Bracey,  
Orchard Rise, 205 Willington Street,  
Maidstone, Kent, ME15 8EE.  
Tel: 01622 751493 Mob: 07710 423667  
e-mail: [dbracey@gmail.com](mailto:dbracey@gmail.com)

**Trophies Officer:**

Martin Sumner,  
Silver Birches, Stoke by Clare, Sudbury,  
Suffolk CO10 8HP  
Tel: 01787 277729 Mob: 07748 988338  
e-mail: [mjsumner@silverbirches.co](mailto:mjsumner@silverbirches.co)

**The Spares Service:**

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

**The Lagonda Shop:**

Denise and Martin Bugler  
Garden Cottage, Walhurst Manor, Picts Lane,  
Cowfold, West Sussex, RH13 8AW  
Tel: 01420 865442 Mob: 07770 270601  
e-mail: [shop@lagonda-club.com](mailto:shop@lagonda-club.com)

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## Overseas Representatives:

### USA and Canada

Colin Gurnsey  
658 East 5th Street,  
North Vancouver V7L 1M7,  
British Columbia, Canada  
Tel: [+1] 604 980 7429  
Mob: [+1] 604 788 7429  
e-mail: gurnsey@telus.net

### Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg:

Herman Arentsen,  
Logtsestraat 3, 6675 NB Valburg,  
The Netherlands  
Tel: (+31) 488 431291  
Mob: (+31) (0) 651 427163

### Switzerland:

Franz Hatebur-Mani,  
Villa Montana, Höhweg 1h, CH 3700 Spiez  
Switzerland  
Tel: 0041 33 243 3879  
Mob: 0041 798163786  
Fax: 0041 33 243 0607  
e-mail: fhatebur@bluewin.ch

### Australia:

Nick Proferes  
Tel: +66 8 8278 9242  
e-mail: nproferes@internode.on.net

### Germany:

Eckhard Fabricius,  
Franklinstr. 53, D-40479, Düsseldorf, Germany  
Tel: +49 211 626767  
e-mail: fabricius@fabricius.de

## UK Area Representatives:

### Anglia:

John Stoneman,  
Tel: 01353 649494 · Mob: 07850 218518  
e-mail: john.stoneman@btinternet.com

### Midlands (East):

Harry Taylor,  
Tel: 01559 830363 · Mob: 07901 846672  
e-mail: hta108@aol.com

### Midlands (East):

Robin Balmain,  
Tel: 01531 640166 · Mob: 07816 668065  
Fax 01531 640167  
e-mail: jenniferbalmain@btinternet.com

### South East:

David Bracey  
Tel: 01622 751493 · Mob: 07710 423667  
e-mail: dcbracey@gmail.com

### North:

Tim Gresty  
Tel: 01260 291830 · Mob: 07989 583124  
e-mail: timgresty@cognitio.co.uk

### Northern Ireland:

Peter Walby,  
Tel: 028 9066 5610 · Mob: 07767 271851  
e-mail: pursang@doctors.org.uk

### Scotland:

Alastair Gunn,  
Tel: 0131 4412279 · Mob: 07913 677339  
e-mail: alastair.gunn@hotmail.co.uk

### South West:

Nigel Paterson,  
Tel: 01460 258844  
e-mail: nigelandathypaterson@btinternet.com

### South:

Michael Drakeford,  
Tel: 01903 872197 · Mob: 07932 565830  
e-mail: michaelwdrakeford@hotmail.com

### Yorkshire:

Ian North,  
Tel: 01482 897105  
e-mail: iannorth44@gmail.com

**FRONT COVER:** LG45 Rapide 'The Scarlet Woman' pictured in its racing guise over 50 years ago, probably at Silverstone. It would be a brave person to so modify one of these rare cars today!

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# From the Driving Seat

*Roger Seabrook*

WELL, A SUDDEN CHANGE in the weather leaves me typing this in a temperature of 28° – the hottest April day since 1949, we are told! So a good reason to lower the hood on the 2 litre and take it for a drive. The last time we used it was to attend the Suffolk dinner weekend, earlier in April, and the hood was a necessary item for the return home, when it rained and rained and... This was at a new venue, and it proved to be a very good choice. A report will appear in the Summer Magazine.

This edition includes an extract from the 1928 (for 1929 season) Lagonda catalogue, featuring the six cylinder models available at that time. They were not cheap! I hope you enjoy reading about them – there will be some more on the 2 litre cars at a later date.

Work continues on the 2 litre saloon, with a full overhaul of the brakes, road springs and new rear hubs. The suspect A post, which should support the driver's door, turned out to have rotted badly at the joint with the scuttle. The windscreen had come apart at the bottom joint on this side, and had allowed moisture to get in. So the A post was in two parts, allowing the door to drop on opening.

The aluminium skin had cracked as a result. Charles Gray has come up with a brilliant solution which adds a metal strip to the back of the A post, joined to the brackets that tie it into the scuttle and to the roof. The part that looked worse, just below the roof peak, was actually quite sound (thank goodness) – it was the thin strip that secures the leather-cloth covering that was rotten, and this has been removed. There is also extra metal bracing for both A posts, supporting the door hinges, and screwed to the lower timber rail next to the chassis.

I have made a new wooden section to replace some missing timber in the nearside rear wheel arch, and we have treated and hardened the remaining timbers, that were in better condition than I expected. The goal is to preserve the saloon bodywork and retain the car's 'patina' as a faithful family transporter.

We are looking forward to taking the tourer to Spain in June, and to Germany in August. That means some time in the garage preparing the car, but that's always rewarding. I am sure you are all anticipating similar enjoyments, and the pleasure that come from meeting up with old friends in this happy Club of ours! ■

*Last date for copy for the Summer Magazine  
is FRIDAY 29th June 2018.*

**Lagonda M45R Le Mans winner at the Louwman Museum,  
The Hague, Netherlands  
*Peter Lloyd visited recently***



*The famous M45R Team Car – photo by Peter Lloyd*

MY WIFE RIA, being Dutch, and I go to the Netherlands very frequently, to see family, friends, tour and sightsee. However, it was not until 2016 that we decided that we must visit the Louwman Museum (the Dutch National Motor museum) in the Hague – opened to the public in July 2010 – and, my word, how glad we were that we did. I have never seen such a beautiful collection of historic cars so well displayed, in such a magnificent setting.

The collection consists of over 230 veteran, vintage and classic cars and other vehicles from more than 100 manufacturers dating from 1910 or earlier and is the largest of its kind in the world, as is its display of automotive art, including a large

collection of paintings and drawings by Frederick Gordon Crosby, the brilliant English illustrator and artist. The bulk of the museum's collection was made by two generations of the Louwman family.

The entrance leads into an enormous central hall with a spectacular wooden vaulted ceiling. It is worth a visit just to see this! A hall beyond contains an early 20<sup>th</sup> century set piece with authentically re-created showrooms, garages and car workshops along a "street". Ria and I enjoyed a pot of tea with cake in what felt like an en plein air high-class cafeteria, with waiter/waitress service, flowers and tablecloths, whilst savouring the calm period atmosphere of the early days of motoring. A great

way indeed to prepare for the delights ahead.

The collection is spread over three floors which allows many of the cars – especially the “star” ones - to be displayed in their own well-illuminated space without the distraction of other vehicles, so you are able to give each car your admiring and undivided attention, to your heart’s content.

We were particularly fortunate on the weekday that we visited, as there were very few visitors and, photography being permitted, I was able to take my time photographing these wonderful cars, my camera mounted on a tripod. (Ria went on ahead being well used to this and we met up much later for a coffee in the cafeteria). Imagine my delight upon beholding, in all its glory, the famous 1935 Le Mans winner - Lagonda M45R BPK 202 (Number 4)! (My photograph of it is included with this article with the kind permission of the Louwman Museum). I am sure that many of you will know the story of this very special Lagonda and its history but would agree with me that it is well worth recounting, particularly for the benefit of those who are not familiar with it, so here are the salient facts (with my acknowledgements to the sources from which they are gathered):

BPK 202 was one of two M45R Lagondas that took part in the 1935 24 hours Le Mans 13th Grand Prix of Endurance on 15 and 16 June that year. The other was BPK 203 then (it is believed) owned and driven by Dr. J.D. Benjafield (a “Bentley Boy” who won Le Mans in 1927) with Sir Ronald

Gunter as his co-driver.

Arthur Fox, of the well-known firm Fox and Nicholl based on the Kingston By-Pass had entered BPK 202. Having raced teams of Talbots for a number of years Fox, in co-operation with the Lagonda factory, built, in 1934, three special Lagonda cars (BPK 201, BPK 202 and BPK 203) powered by 4 ½-litre Meadows engines, specifically to take part in the RAC International Tourist Trophy on the Ards circuit near Belfast in September 1934. BPK 202 was given racing number 4. They were built on the short chassis as used for Lagonda’s 3½-litre sports cars, with a 10ft.3in. wheel base, regulation four-seater bodies and rounded tails surmounted by a central fin. A large petrol tank was concealed within the tail, with a hinged lid on the top to get at the two filler caps and under the rear of the tail was the spare wheel, the end of the tail with its fin being held in place by four spring clips. In the 1934 race these three Lagondas (wearing special dual-cockpit bodies finished in a vivid red) finished 4th, 5th and 8th, driven respectively by the Hon Brian Lewis, John Hindmarsh the Hawker test-pilot, and John Cobb.

In the 1935 Le Mans race BPK 202 (“Number 4”) was driven by Hindmarsh and the 21-year-old Luis Fontes – the Lewis Hamilton of his day. In predominantly wet conditions – and having sustained damage to the front suspension from a collision with an Aston Martin - they beat, by just over 8 kilometres, the Alfa Romeo of Dreyfus and Stoffel (the Alfas having won the previous four Le Mans races), averaging 77.84mph (125.283km/h) for



1868 miles (3006.97 km). Fontes had the honour of driving this last stretch, having been advised to “take it quietly” because of very low oil pressure. BPK 203 (number 14) finished 13<sup>th</sup> after some gearbox trouble.

This win was very important for Lagonda, which had fallen into receivership on 18th April 1935. Partly as a result of this victory the company was bought by Alan P. Good, who just managed to out-bid Rolls Royce. He also persuaded W O Bentley to leave Rolls Royce and join Lagonda, along with many of his racing department and staff.

On the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, in 1985, The Lagonda Club organised a major “jolly” to Le Mans to commemorate the marque’s only victory there. Members Peter Whenman and Alec Downie put together a 10-day trip around Northern France for some 25 Lagonda cars, ranging from early 2-litres to late V12’s,

including, naturally enough, a lot of 4½-litre Meadows-engined cars that owed much to the Fox & Nicholl racing 4½-litres. This “jolly” ended up at Le Mans for that year’s 24 Hour race and “Number 4”, then owned by member David Johnson, was there to take part in a parade around the circuit before the race began. This being such a special occasion BPK 201 and BPK 203 were there as “maids of honour”, though BPK 203 was, of course, also present in its own right as a participant and finisher in the 1935 race.

#### **An interesting footnote:**

A record that remains unbeaten to date is that 10 women started the 1935 Le Mans race and 7 of them finished. Among them, Anne-Cecile Rose-Itier was the highest ranked, finishing 18th in a Fiat. ■

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A website created to display some (at present over 450) of the photos taken by Lagonda Club member Peter Lloyd of many of the beautiful Lagonda cars that have gathered at the club's AGMs and Southern Area meetings since at least 2005, some of which have appeared on the front cover and inside the club's magazine 'The Lagonda'. Photos are regularly added to the website.

Archive-quality photographic prints of various sizes can be ordered as well as on canvas or a hand-crafted personalised card of your Lagonda by Peter's wife, Ria, for all occasions (see samples on the website: [www.lagondaphotos.co.uk](http://www.lagondaphotos.co.uk) ).



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## The Road to buying a V12 Lagonda - Early Days

### *Laurence Hannam reminisces*

HOW DO WE get involved in this eccentric pastime? For me, it must have started with an interest in mechanical objects from a very early age; my parents told me they watched me take a clock apart and try to reassemble it, when not much more than a toddler. Mechanical knowledge and experience grew with (inevitably) Meccano, model railways and bicycles. An early lesson was wiping oil from my hands with old rags, leading to dermatitis. Even now, this means that, whilst I really enjoy spannering, I can't stand having oily hands for long. I've always been interested in old things; indeed I wanted to be an archaeologist ... until I discovered going to university was necessary. Whilst I didn't mind exams, revision was utterly abhorrent; therefore that career choice was barred. So, cars inexorably took over from bicycles, and my interest in old things and mechanics meant ownership of an old car inevitable. Perhaps it's a "male thing", but there is also a love of beauty. So that old car had to be pleasing to look at, as well.

First motoring memory:- I would have been no more than 4 years old, and the family car was a 1938 Triumph Vitesse, DWM202. My father was an engineer at KLG, and the memory was playing "trains", sliding spark plug tins down the wings and onto the running boards. Remarkably I still have the tins, but the Triumph was sold at auction in the early 1960s for I think £40; less than the cost of the new set of tyres Dad had had fitted, to enhance the price achieved!

My uncle owned a V12 Rapide, JPH126, and the photos probably date to the late 1950s. I think it was green and cream.

My only recollection was my mother referring to it as "your uncle's Rolls-Royce"! Quite a coincidence that my own V12 should transpire to be one of the few registered in the JPH series. The chassis number is 14119R: my V12 is 14111.

It must have been around 1964, when my parents took us to a traction engine rally. Also on display were a couple of vintage Bentleys. I can still recall marvelling at the architectural beauty of their engines; the simplicity and neatness ... the polished aluminium and brass, copper piping etc. This was in stark contrast to the black ugliness and mess of cables and pipes in our family car's engine bay. At around this time, Blue Peter, essential viewing, carried a feature on people rescuing such Bentleys from scrapyards, restoring them, and selling them for a lot of money....about £500.

1968:- now at Tiffins Grammar school in Kingston. Across the road, a regular in the bombsite car park was a pale matt green 20hp Rolls-Royce pick-up truck! Then a potential new teacher arrived in an immaculate RR 20 doctor's coupe. I recall waiting for him to start it and drive away, and the surprise at hearing nothing; he simply got in and glided away in absolute silence. That must have sparked my interest, and I got guides from Adams and Oliver describing pre-war Rolls-Royces, body styles, and what to look for when buying. I decided that a

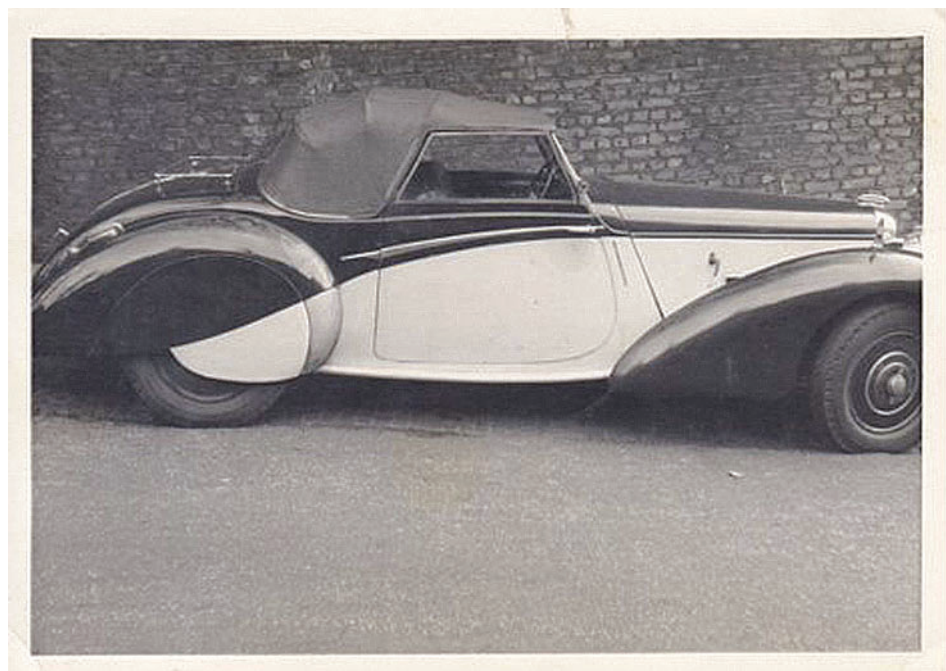




*Father's Triumph Vitesse, somewhere in the Lake District*



*My Riley RMB, after its restoration*



*Uncle's V12, pictured in the 1950s*

20/25 tourer would be very nice. £200 - £300 could buy me quite a reasonable one, perhaps. All I needed was for parents to lend me the money; 2 shillings (10p!) a week pocket money meant no nest egg. Unfortunately the dream ended abruptly. Mum refused to lend me the money, on the annoyingly sensible basis that, at 13, it would be several years before I could drive a car. A friend at school was also keen on old cars; I still jealously recall the impressive Bentley 8 Litre catalogue he brought in. I used to cycle to school. Even in the 1960s, a bicycle could get you into Kingston quicker than a car, and certainly quicker than the bus; lovely old RTs, but too frequently full of pensioners by the time they reached my stop. Often, I overtook a handsome light grey old car with a black roof. I thought this could be a Riley...and discovered it was. I told my friend that, if I couldn't buy a Rolls Royce, I'd like one of these Rileys.

I left Tiffins in 1973, started learning to drive in October, and before passing my test, bought just such a Riley in February 1974. I had told my car enthusiast uncle that I wanted a Riley RMA, to which he responded that an RMB might be better; it would do nearly 100mph! I wasn't aware of the 2½ litre version until then, so that is what I bought. At 18, I was sensible enough to become a member of the Riley RM Club and ask what to look for. Sage advice, worth repeating: "Don't buy the first one you see, and buy the best one you can afford". Thus armed, I naturally went out and bought the first Riley I saw (it was maroon!), and although I could, just, have afforded the £300-£350 needed for a really good example, plumped for this, as it was only £165 and came with around £100

worth of spare parts.

MISTAKE! I passed my test and drove my Riley for 8 months and 1,200 miles, in 1975. Then I decided to replace the roof covering, which had in fact been renewed not long before, but in some ghastly imitation sharkskin material. I bought a new correct-pattern roof covering and started removing the not so old one. I found that some of the wood that this was nailed to was split; nail sick, it must have had several replacement roofs already. So, I would need to replace some of this wood, which proved remarkably difficult to remove. Slowly, the penny dropped. As late as 1951, a relatively mass produced car had had its body built by assembling an ash frame, then screwing, nailing and welding a metal skin over it. Stage-coach technology in 1951 – unbelievable! Worse still, whilst I really enjoyed working on the mechanics, it didn't take long to realise that I didn't like, or have the aptitude for, bodywork. A job that I thought would take perhaps three weeks ended up with the Riley being off the road for many years. I tried to get on with it many times, but eventually realised I would never get to drive it again unless I paid someone to do it. So, I had the body professionally restored, and got to drive my Riley once more, in 2015....yes ... 40 years later. After just 7 weeks and 2400 miles, it ran a big end. Don't buy the first one.....!

Around that time (1975), my brother Richard started collecting old Dinky toys. He bought three to start off with; an Alvis, a Sunbeam Talbot, and a Lagonda, the latter in light grey. I rather liked the style of these, and decided that I would like a pre-war tourer, and one of at least 3 litres. The Alvis and Sunbeam Talbot didn't




suit, and I preferred the look of the Lagonda. But what was a Lagonda? It might seem hard to believe, but even though I owned the Riley, and had nurtured an interest in old cars over many years, I had never come across the marque. The name sounded, perhaps, American but it was far too attractive to have been American. Italian, maybe? Occasionally, I bought Exchange & Mart, and noticed that sometimes, Lagondas appeared for sale, predominantly post-war, and interestedly, drop-head coupes for a few hundred pounds. This was very encouraging; I knew that many manufacturers continued with their pre-war models into the late 1940s, so perhaps one of these beautiful cars could be mine.

I turned to my uncle for advice. Needless to say, he not only knew about Lagondas, but had owned one - a V12 Rapide (JPH126). I was amazed to discover that these cars had been built locally, in Staines. Also they would do over 100mph! 4½ litres - just the job! I liked everything I heard. Except that the post-war Lagonda was entirely different to pre-war. I started buying Motor Sport magazine, and soon found that a few hundred pounds would not be sufficient. I had about £1,000 saved, and at that time, thought that with some luck, I might buy one, needing some work probably, for £3,000. Mum agreed to lend me up to £2,000, so I was ready to start looking. I realised that the appropriate club would have members with cars to sell, so joined the Lagonda Club at the start of 1976. Dan Margulies, a well-known dealer in similar cars was advertising an LG45 DHC, so I went up to London to look at that. It was actually very nice, except for the roof, which had been

recovered, bizarrely, in multi-coloured striped canvas. Think deckchair and consider how appealing this was not. Anyway, the style was attractive, but I decided that I should try to see one of the later models. For the money I now realised I would need to pay, the car I bought would need to be as close as possible to my ideal, as far as style was concerned. I saw that another Club member lived not far away, in New Malden. This was Michael Valentine, who owned a V12 drop-head. I rang him and he very kindly was happy for me to come over and look at his car. He was actually fairly insistent that I come over very quickly, as he had the engine apart for rebuild. That made it all the more interesting for me, so I cycled over that evening. Only it turned out his actual address was in Putney, not New Malden! Fortunately I had brought my A-Z with me and, mistake realised, pedalled on to Putney. What Michael thought of the keen but sweaty individual who eventually arrived I don't know, but his car was absolutely gorgeous. I now knew that this was the style I wanted. ■

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# When Did That Come In?

*By Arnold Davey*

BROWSING ON a bookstand at an autojumble, I found and bought a comprehensive catalogue of exhibits for the Science Museum. The interesting thing from the Registrar's point of view is that each exhibit is dated, giving a good guide as to when

the product first came on the market. Some I knew, such as Spring 1929 for the Lucas P100 headlamps. As the question 'Would this car have had these from new?' comes up time after time, I thought it worthwhile to make a list, and here it is:-

## DATES OF INTRODUCTION OF CAR COMPONENTS

### Engine

Honeycombe Radiator -Serck 1919  
 Gilled Tube Radiator – Spiral Tube & Component Co 1920  
 Radiator Shutters – S Smith & Co 1919  
 Film Radiator – J Richards & Sons 1930  
 Calormeter in radiator top – Wilmot Breeden 1925  
 Oil Filter – Vokes 1928  
 Remote Radiator Thermometer – S Smith & Co 1930  
 Floatex Engine Mounts – André Silentbloc Ltd 1933  
 Silentbloc Bushes – André Silentbloc Ltd 1928  
 SU Carburettors (Slopers) - GH & TC Skinner (SU Co Ltd) 1904  
 Zenith Carburettors - Zenith Carburettor Co Ltd 1907  
 ZenithTriple Diffuser Carb.- 1919  
 Zenith U Type Carb. - 1930  
 Zenith V Type Carb.- 1933  
 Claudel Hobson Carburettors - H M Hobson Ltd 1906  
 Autovac - 1920  
 SU Petrolift - SU Co Ltd 1929  
 SU Electric Petrol Pump – SU Co Ltd 1932  
 AC Petrol Pump – AC Sphinx Sparking Plug Co 1928

Kigass - Kigass Ltd 1927  
 Autoclean Oil Filter - 1919  
 Cozette Supercharger - Gallay Radiator Co 1926  
 Bowden Wire - 1907  
 Petroflex Tubing – S Smith & Co 1933  
 High Tension Magneto – Bosch 1903  
 Ignition Coil – Lodge 1903  
 Vertex Magneto – Scintilla Ltd 1934  
 Mica Spark Plugs - 1900  
 Porcelain Spark Plugs - 1918  
 14mm 1934

Transmission  
 Wilson preselector gearbox - Self Changing Gears 1927  
 Silent Third – Moss Gear Co Ltd 1932  
 Synchromesh – Vauxhall Motors 1931  
 Clutch – Borg & Beck Ltd 1927  
 Clutch (centrifugal)- Newton-Bennett Ltd 1934  
 Flexible disc coupling – Hardy 1919  
 Needle-roller coupling – Hardy-Spicer 1935  
 Spiral bevel rear axle – David Brown Gear Co Ltd 1924  
 Hypoid rear axle – ENV Ltd 1932  
 Starter Bendix drive – 1912

## Lighting

Barker dipping system –  
    Barker (coachbuilders) 1924  
 Tilting reflector (dip & switch) –  
    Lucas 1931  
 'Rubbolite' tail lamp –  
    Flexible Lamps Ltd 1922

## Wheels & Tyres

Schrader Valves - 1914  
 Wired-on covers - 1890  
 Well base rims - 1929  
 Detachable Wheels (splined) -  
    Rudge-Whitworth Ltd 1929  
 Artillery Wheels – Sankey Ltd 1908  
 Detachable Wheels (bolt-on) -  
    Rudge-Whitworth Ltd 1929

## Brakes & Steering

Vacuum servo – Dewandre 1926  
 Hydraulic – Lockheed 1929  
 Asbestos friction linings – Ferodo 1918  
 Rods-in-tension – Girling 1928  
 Marles steering system – Marles Ltd 1914  
 Bishop Cam steering system –  
    Cam Gears Ltd 1923

Burman Douglas system - 1934  
 Taper roller bearings – Timken 1898  
 Sprung steering wheel – Dover 1928  
 Hydraulic dampers – Houdaille 1918  
    Armstrong 1930  
    Newton 1932

Automatic chassis lubrication –

Luvax-Bijur 1930

Telecontrol dampers - André 1933

Telescopic steering – Bluemel 1935

Pressure greasing – Tecalemit 1925

## Bodywork

Laminated safety glass – Triplex

Patented 1910

First made 1923

Toughened safety glass – Triplex 1930

Sunshine roof – Weathershields 1929

Electric horn – Klaxon 1920

'New Alto' horn – Lucas 1932

Trafficators – Lucas 1933

Remote wiper motor – Berkshire 1934

Suction wiper motor – Trico 1926

'Jackall' 4-wheel jacks – S. Smith 1933





## *Stephen Matthews brings news of the New concept from AML*

AT THE GENEVA Motor Show, Aston Martin Lagonda (AML) re-launched the Lagonda brand as a stand-alone-maker of luxury cars to directly rival Bentley and Rolls Royce. The Lagonda Vision Concept is the next stage in the Second Century Plan that AML announced in 2015. The Lagonda is to be a high-technology luxury car with all-electric drive, high levels of autonomy and an arresting design. Ignoring preconceived concepts, this is very radical and meant to be. I quote from Autocar "The Aston from Outer Space"! The plan calls for two Lagonda models, and the Vision Concept car, to be built in South Wales, will be on sale in 2021. For those interested there is more detail at [www.lagonda.com](http://www.lagonda.com) and the AML website.

Some may recall that we have been here before, the 2009 V12 SUV Geneva concept and the Taraf, that joined us at the AGM in 2016. Yet those of us who watch AML will tell you it is very different now at this company. A clear seven-year plan and the vision to create a sustainable, profitable, world-leading company have replaced the hand-to-mouth, loss-making regime. AML is now profitable and cash positive, a long-term investment plan is in place and the management team has been

strengthened and broadened. In simple terms, AML is back, and the Lagonda brand is a key component to its future success.

While you could wonder what this has to do with our cars I would suggest everything - as we celebrate the unique nature of our cars - the design, engineering and the sheer experience of pleasure, and so we should also rejoice in the concept that automotive travel can deliver similar experiences in the future. Our heritage lies with Wilbur Gunn, Alan Good and Frank Feeley and so many talented people who toiled at the Causeway to deliver the "best car in the world" - so now AML, inspired by that past, have declared they intend to take the "Lagonda" into the future - what an exciting journey ahead, the spirit continues.

AML introduces the concept with the following message:-

### **DEFINING A NEW ERA**

Lagonda aims to be the world's first zero emission luxury brand – a reinvention of the world-renowned luxury marque, unapologetically taking full advantage of the latest advances in emission-free powertrain and autonomous driving technologies.





*Pictures courtesy of Aston Martin Lagonda Ltd*

Our intention is a bold yet simple one – to redefine luxury travel by challenging the status quo to create next-generation, hand-built, automotive luxury for the world’s most discerning customers. Using cutting edge design to create technologically radical, visually spectacular, thoroughly modern and ultra-luxurious vehicles, Lagonda will prove that the old conflicts – those between high performance and zero emissions, technological sophistication and the purest luxury – are conflicts no more.

The Lagonda ‘Vision Concept’ is a near future study that provides the first clues to the Lagonda models of the future. It dispenses with the horse and carriage design, and our new concept shows the scope of design opportunities offered by electric powertrains. The Vision Concept showcases Lagonda design ingenuity, being both far shorter and lower than traditional limousines. The exceptional space efficiency achieved by its radical design means there is room inside for four adults, each of two metres height or more, to stretch out in luxurious comfort.

The cabin, designed in collaboration

with David Linley, uses British wools, silks and cashmere in total harmony with some of the most modern materials known to man, such as carbon fibre and ceramic tiles.

The Lagonda Vision Concept also anticipates a world with a high level of autonomy. Its design is commensurate with level four autonomous driving, meaning the car is capable of driving itself in all routine circumstances and on all recognisable roads. As a result, the steering wheel can not only move from left- to right-hand drive according to need, but also in autonomous mode it can retract entirely, allowing front seat passengers to rotate 180 degrees to engage in face to face conversation with those in the back.

To experience Lagonda is to be reintroduced to the wonder of travel and to discover a brand-new way to move. Lagonda will remain faithful to the forward thinking, ever adventurous spirit of Wilbur Gunn who founded Lagonda in 1904, challenging conventions to not only create a new kind of car, but to realise a new era of luxury travel. ■



*Picture courtesy of Aston Martin Lagonda Ltd*

# Fathoming out the “unfathomable” Part 3

## (The concluding story of the experimental I.O.E. Ricardo Engine) *By Brian Stevens*

### **Summary of the new facts to emerge from my research visit to Ricardo's.**

THE DATES ARE all much later than we thought, with the development work (fraught with difficulties) taking two years. The Ricardo design, although potentially very efficient, was very new. Only the Chenard Walcker engine had been successfully fitted with the high power head previous to its application to the 4 Litre Bentley and subsequently the 3 Litre Lagonda.

In the Aug. '32 report Harry Ricardo sums up by saying:~ “ In conclusion, the results of the tests were quite encouraging in that they show a satisfactory output up to 3,200 r.p.m. The rough running and the carburetor ‘blow-back’ and piston ‘blowing’ were all completely cured and the outlook, with regard to a new engine embodying the various features found to be beneficial from these tests, was very hopeful.”

Interestingly, on page 60 of the report there is a reference to “The cessation of further testing on the mechanically defective motor until the engine has been re-conditioned and modified in accordance with the present series of tests”. This statement can be dated to around the 20<sup>th</sup> January 1932 when the last tests were undertaken at Shoreham on the damaged engine, and may have been at the suggestion of Alf Cranmer after his ‘disappointing demonstration’ visit on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December. It calls into question Harry's

interpretation of what was meant by ‘a new engine’ in his report summary; conceivably my motor could have been the reconditioned original. What is certain from the report is that the prototype was partially dismantled at Ricardo's for inspection before being sent back to Lagonda. This partial strip down confirmed that:~

- All the top piston rings in the ‘Bohnalite’ pistons were free and intact (two rings in each top groove at 1/16” wide).

- Three inlet springs were broken.

- The cylinder bores and big ends were in good condition.

- The main bearings nos. 2,3,5,6&7 were perfectly all right, but No1 bearing appeared to be not quite so good, showing evidence of ‘hard’ bearing, while in No.4 bearing the white metal had broken away from the shell in both top and bottom halves.

So either possibly two engines were made (making sense of the number two stamped, on mine, along the joint face of block to sump) or perhaps just a new ‘second’ block was fitted to the original prototype. No doubt I will be able to unravel this one further when the engine is being reconditioned. Exactly when the ‘second’ engine was built (or re-built) and tested still remains a mystery. It could be as late as January 1933 if they were waiting on Harry's new cam profile design (dated Dec 1932), and it was most likely undertaken in the factory, as the engine is recorded in

the Ricardo papers as being dispatched back to Staines. However, I can confirm that it is basically an earlier 72mm unit with the smaller oil pump. The major differences are, of course, centred around the head, the block, the carburation, the exhaust and the cooling. Both of the above 're-build' case scenarios would have required a new block casting plus a new head (the original head developed a small water leak as a result of over-zealous grinding early on in the test programme at Staines) and seems to have been subsequently altered to allow running without pent-roofed pistons.

Cooling the valve seats for this design turned out to be critically important. Once this was established, the Ricardo Engineers dropped the cooling temperature down from 75° to 40° using mains water (I shall need a very efficient radiator when this engine is installed in a car!). The Aero Shell engine oil was also cooled using a mains water tank to 70°-75° for testing.

Currently, the engine features a Borg and Beck clutch and a host of smaller modifications including the use of conical valve springs (maybe a later cure for the spring breakage problem). The pent-roofed pistons are no longer evident and in the light of this, as I have said, one suspects that the head was modified, bearing in mind that current pistons are +20 and show signs of wear.

I think General Metcalfe's letter (illustrated in Part 1) is a real gem ~ he is clearly manoeuvring and trying to cut his losses, possibly in the light of the 'new' plan for 1932 to just bore out the standard engine to 75mm for the new selector model. I find his

reference to the 'long stroke' in his letter curious; nowhere in the files did I see any indication that the long stroke of the engine was a handicap to Harry's work. However, he never could get it to sustain its power curve above about 3200 rpm (could that be related to the stroke?). I wonder what Harry's response to this point was (Metcalf asks for a response in the letter). Perhaps this was a pet theory of Alf Cranmer; or General Metcalfe needed to say something 'technical' as a pretext to drawing a line under the whole project!

Arnold Davey's theory, that the Lagonda project was on the back of the development work undertaken for the I.O.E 4 Litre Bentley engine, is borne out in the files with several comparative references. Together with some key dates gleaned from the Shoreham archives, we can establish that Bentley had sent their engine to Shoreham on 08/06/31. A month later Harry was up at Staines with Alf Cranmer for the first tests on the modified Lagonda engine. Tests on the Bentley engine were concluded on 20/08/31, just five days before the first Lagonda running tests were embarked upon 'in house' at Shoreham. The Bentley motor produced 120 bhp (under target by 12 bhp, incidentally) and was nearly one litre bigger at 3,915 ccs making 'ours' very impressive at 115 bhp (potentially). As Arnold says in his later book, its introduction would have made all the difference to 3 litre sales in 1932.

Getting side-tracked into Ricardo's notes on the Bentley engine development is fascinating, as that too was fraught with difficulties. I quote:



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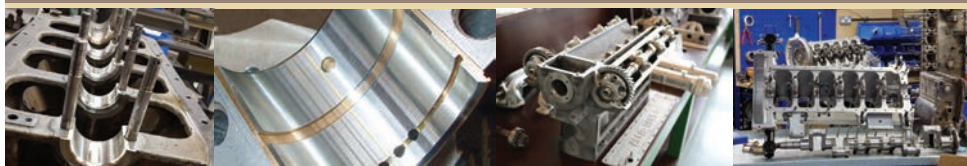
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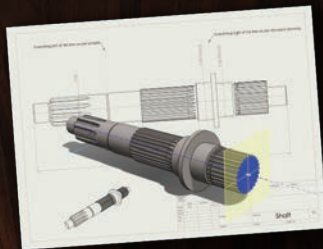
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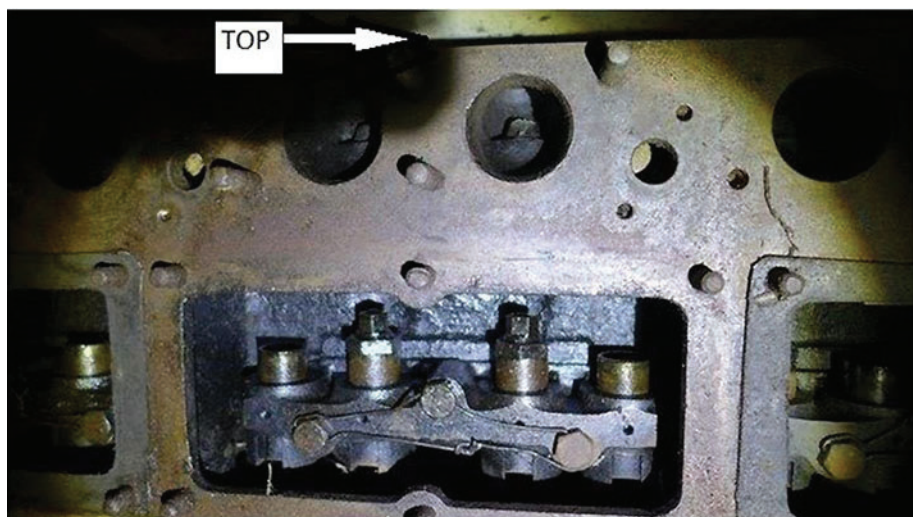
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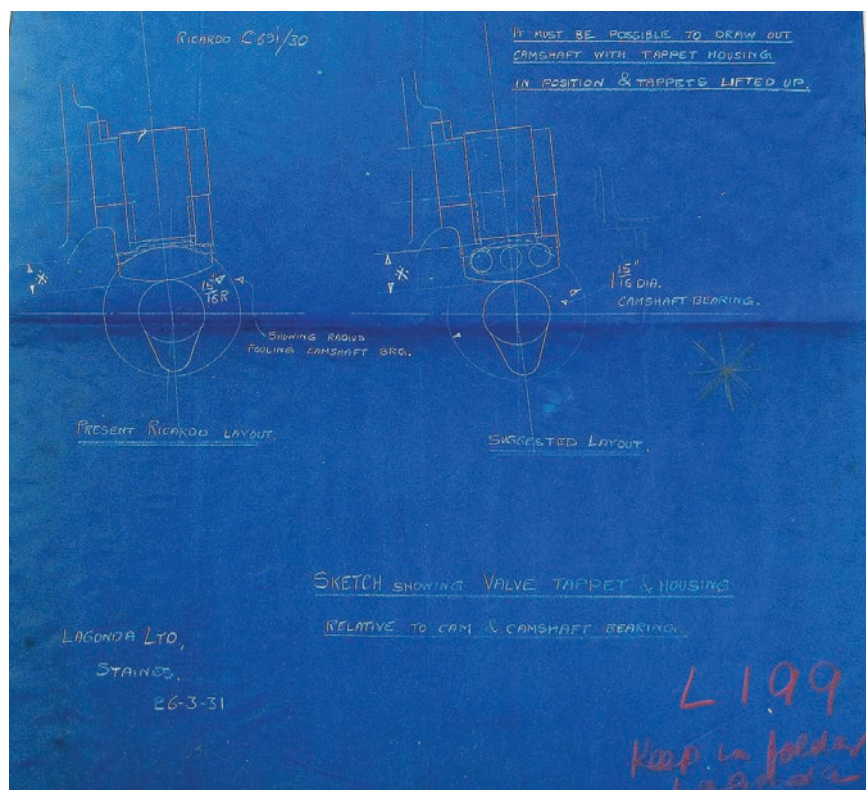
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The side valve chest showing the tappets



Original Lagonda blueprint describing tappet modification to the Ricardo layout

***“The Bentley 4 litre” provides a striking example of an engine which refused to give anything like its expected performance, and which would not yield to any treatment imposed on it”.***

It seems that Harry struggled with both these high power I.O.E. cylinder head commissions. But at least in the case of the Bentley engine, the design went on to be successfully resolved, and developed, post war, by Rolls Royce into the Mark VI Bentley motor of 1946. This engine was the final version of their B60 military motor, using Ricardo's head design, this time cast in aluminium. In 4¼litre form it produced 130 bhp increasing to 150 bhp for the 4.6 engine. This OISE engine had a compression ratio of 6.4:1 and was reported to be very smooth and flexible. Over 14,500 units were made for the military.

### **Tracing the engine's subsequent history:**

My first breakthrough on this front was an incredible example of serendipity soon after the purchase; ~ now back in Yorkshire, Don rang to tell me that whilst following Norma's instructions to “get rid of those old ‘Motorsports’ under the bed!” he just could not resist one last scan of the 1950's ‘for sale’ classified ads. (where Bentleys commonly changed hands for £350!) and there in the October 1950 issue was a tantalising advert:~

*“LAGONDA 3-litre Ricardo special series engine inlet over exhaust. Standard for 4½ litre chassis. Complete with Borg & Beck clutch, twin S.U.'s AC pump, magneto, dynamo and starter, no gearbox. Offers around*

*£40. Wing Commander Fazan, R.A.F. Andover, Hants.”*

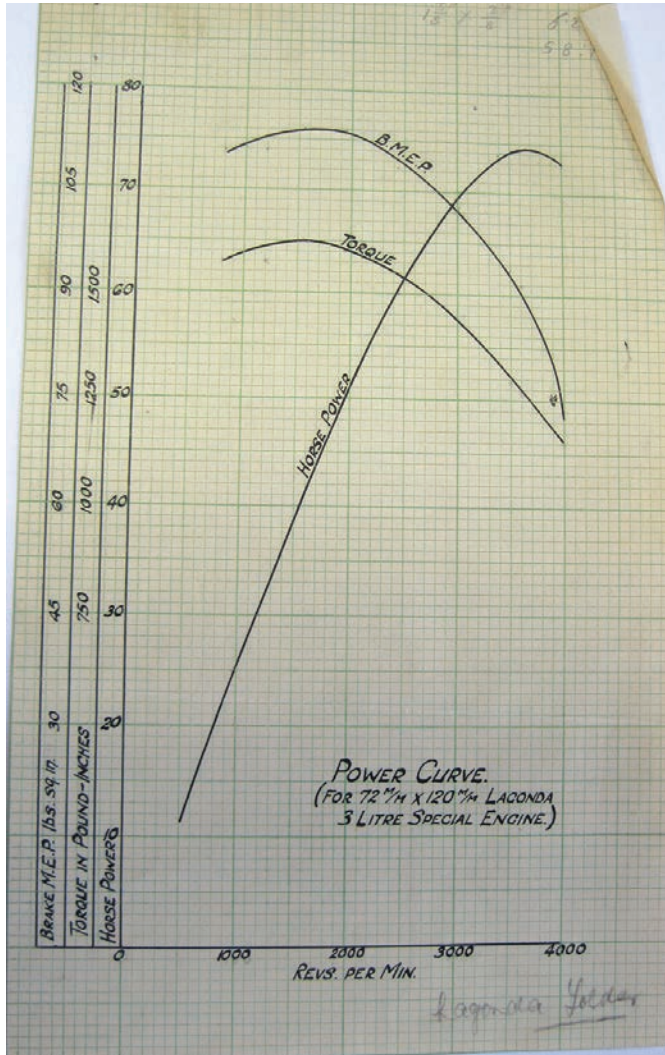
Unfortunately, Arnold cannot trace any reference to the Wing Commander in the early Club records, but the line in the advert “standard for a 4½” is interesting to speculate upon, as the engine has certainly been on the road, +20 pistons being testimony, together with a worn out crankshaft) and, considering that the ZM chassis later metamorphosed into the M45, this IOE. Engine, with its standard 3 litre engine bearers, would have dropped into the frame perfectly. Was this engine fitted to one of the ‘Bankrupt’ cars I wonder, hurriedly assembled from all the factory spares on the instructions of the receivers in March 1935? Apparently all manner of strange hybrids emerged from Staines at this time as all serviceable parts were inserted into vehicles that could then be sold. Arnold speculates that the motor, probably languishing at the back of the stores or the test shed, could well have been sold for scrap at this time, and subsequently found its way into a Lagonda M45 chassis in the 1950's. Also possible was a transfer to Davies Motors (run by Mr.J.E.Davis the long-established Lagonda Service Manager) when all the pre-war stock, minus the 4½ parts initially, were hived off and sold to him immediately after the war.

A further small clue to the Ricardo post-war history puzzle has surfaced just recently, also by pure chance. A pal in the Morgan Three- Wheeler club passed on some old Motor Sports, this time dating from 1955 ~ “Here” he said, “buy yourself a Lagonda for 200



quid!" As I opened the very top copy, (Sept 1955) I actually allowed myself to think: ~ "I wonder if the I.O.E. engine was still doing the rounds at this time". When, almost immediately, I came across a second 'For Sale' advert in the classified ads. column! This time it read: ~ "3-LITRE LAGONDA engine; oh inlet, side exhaust. Dismantled

but complete with twin carburettors, dynamo and magneto. £25 the lot". I had to read it three times to believe it, but it doesn't actually tell us very much more ~ except, of course, that five years after the 'Fazan' advert, the engine has now been dismantled and is £15 cheaper! It does, however, give an address to explore:



The Power Curve Graph

29, Beaufort Ave., KENTON, Harrow.

### **Remaining Grey Areas:**

The 'Fazan' advert of 1950 implies that the engine was in an M45 (but it's clearly out of a car by this time). It has certainly covered enough miles to incur a re-bore to +20 oversize.

The remaining gaps in the story centre on knowing what the engine was doing between 1933 and 1950, plus its movements after 1955. If any members can throw light on this I would dearly like to hear from them (Club Number S41).

### **Why did it not go into production?**

Close scrutiny of Harry's final report back to Lagonda reveals it to be a masterful fudge. Clearly, he would have been keen to get paid for his company's 68 hours spent in testing. It extends to 99 pages, endeavouring to establish a positive outcome using every test graph from Shoreham, culminating in a potential power projection of 115 bhp. The fact was that, whilst pursuing this power objective, the engine had become seriously handicapped (due to cracked exhaust valve seats in No's. 3 & 4). This meant that a concluding (successful) full power test on all six cylinders to 'prove' the engine was compromised.

When the valves were ground for this final test, in the presence of Alf Cranmer, the power was still well down, at around 69 bhp, despite the valve seats being found to be in better condition than previously (an output only fractionally better than the standard Davidson engine). It is very telling that Harry's adjectives,

exercised in his report summary, largely damn the engine's performance with faint praise. Digging deeper into the notes reveals that he found the power output always fell away quickly above 3400 rpm. and "neither explanation or remedy was found for it".

However upbeat Harry sounds about achieving full potential with the second engine, clearly the broken prototype was a major production set back for Lagonda, with several issues remaining to be resolved pending the second engine build. One such nagging unresolved problem was the engine's propensity to break its valve springs; another might have been the limited achievable rev ceiling - typically around the 3,600 mark. The figure 4,500 is crossed through in red crayon on the original camshaft drawing, with 4,000 supplanted across it - 4,200, remember, was the speed at the first blow-up (Harry noted that the crankshaft suffered torsional vibration at this speed).

Additionally, Arnold's views on this question (as expressed in his 'In Detail' publication) are persuasive in the absence of any documentation being found in response to Harry's final report to Gen. Metcalfe in August 1932. Arnold argues that the main factors at work here were basically financial. Too many component parts were different (complicating the stores situation) and Lagonda simply could not afford it by 1932. Patent fees may also have been payable to Ricardo if his 'Power Head' went into production.

Fivemonths earlier, Bentley had gone into receivership; (with the 4 Litre IOSE Bentley/Ricardo project largely blamed

for consuming most of the remaining money). By now, the recession in America was starting to affect the UK and, given the development delays with Harry's 'Power Head', things needed to move on quickly at Staines, it seems.

The Ricardo papers hint that General Metcalfe was keen to cancel the project in December 1931, and also indicate that Harry was still fine tuning camshaft details for Alf Cranmer a year later. So we can assume that the General was persuaded to stick with it. Six months later, however, the General fell ill, whilst Alf Cranmer was busy shoehorning the Meadows engine into the ZM chassis.

In conclusion, we can now see that the I.O.E. engine was fraught with development problems and that the 'Power Head' was not going to be a 'quick fix' for the 3 Litre's power deficiency. The experiment revealed weaknesses both in the Davidson design and problems with adapting 'after market' type modifications to existing engines. These can be summarised as:

Limitations of the original design (all unresolved whilst at Shoreham); ~

- Restricted R.P.M. Ceiling (suspected crankshaft torsional vibration above 4,200).

- Weak timing chain (also evident in racing).

- Persistent valve spring breakages at speed.

- Plus: The need for Alf Cranmer to improve the clutch and possibly the water pump, before production at Staines.

Issues arising at Shoreham, requiring on-going modifications: ~

- Insufficient exhaust valve cooling
- Rough running
- Carburettor 'blow back'.
- Piston blow.

All solved at Shoreham, but too late, the projected 115 bhp eclipsed by the less expensive Meadows 4½ option now on the horizon.

Despite the Meadows evolution it is interesting to reflect that Alf Cranmer did not give up developing the Davidson OHV engine. Having received one 'stop-gap' re-bore to 75mm, its final incarnation became the 3½ litre in 1935 with its bore further increased to 80mm. (88 B.H.P.) This became the last, and many consider the best, engine built by the original company before receivership.

## THE PLAN

To learn details of Ricardo's achieved boost in power with the 3 litre is encouraging as, in the absence of any certainty, I admit to thinking that the engine may well have been a complete flop, neatly explaining why its been dismantled for the past sixty years!

The engine test log-book is a fascinating insight into how Ricardo's engineers tackled the job and is crammed with chronological detail right up until Alf Cranmer's visit at Christmas 1931. In sharp contrast, the subsequent development evidence is dispersed throughout a series of loose-leaf disjointed rough notes, largely in pencil, spanning 1932. Revisiting these, largely as a result of writing this account, I now realise that my cylinder head must have been a design revision late in the day. These note books will be instrumental in the planned rebuild of this motor, stating, as they do, the tappet

clearances, valve timings, piston design, cooling arrangements, ignition timing, spark-plug specifications, carburettor details, valve spring specifications (although unresolved!) and the final compression ratio, to name just the basics. The big report additionally contains every test graph executed at Shoreham.

The difference in power that Alf Cranmer achieved by boring the ohv block to 75mm amounts to 12 bhp. Added to Harry's projected figure of 113 bhp on the 72mm bore with the 'Power Head', suggests that 125 bhp could be achieved with a re-bore to 75mm. I intend to have the block X-rayed to see if there is enough material to do this 'factory' modification with this unique one-off block, that is clearly a completely different casting. I am fairly confident that this may be possible as the folders contain two drawings proposing that wet liners be fitted to this motor.

I feel we have now filled a yawning gap in the technical mysteries surrounding this engine, and to learn

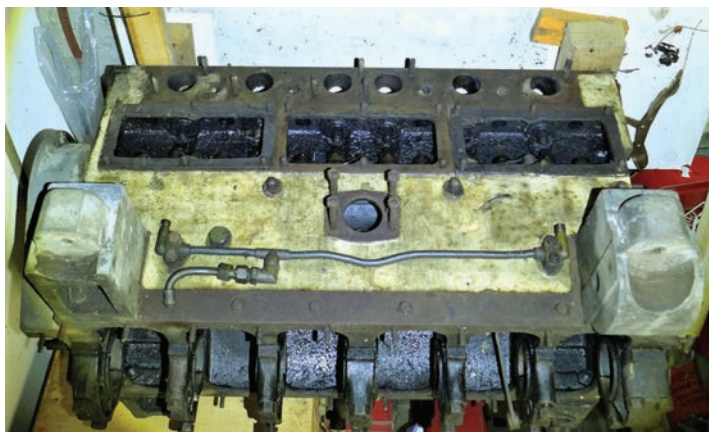
something of the history of this project is an added bonus.

To top it all I now have a handbook for a non-production engine!

I have a suitable Lagonda chassis and a selection of running gear collected over the years from Ivan Forshaw's yard, and various exchange deals with all the usual suspects (many sadly, no longer with us). I intend to construct the 'Ricardo Special' as an authentic-looking special of the early 1930's period, with something of the works cars about it. Given what little we know about this engine's chassis parentage, a mongrel could be considered quite in keeping!

#### Footnote

I've found that preparing such an article as this is extremely complex and time consuming. There is a nagging responsibility to the reader (and posterity) to get it right, not least to try and make it interesting. I take my hat off to Arnold, whose entertaining and informative hefty tomes must have taken extreme dedication to write. We are very lucky to have him. ■



*Side view of the unique cylinder block*



# Lady Lagonda - The colour transformation of an LG45 DHC

*Tom Griffith writes from Verona, Wisconsin, USA*

PURCHASED LAST JULY was a car I've always dreamed of, a Lagonda. Not just any Lagonda, but an LG45 DHC. Disliking the color combination I proceeded to buy the build sheet and happily discover that the car was originally just one color: Dominion Blue. So it was time to do a full repaint from two-tone cream and brown to a dazzling Dominion Blue, and dying the saddle interior to an elegant burgundy. Knowing now for sure that this was a matching numbers car which sported its factory body, just gave me all the more incentive to get right to it. Plus, they only made 26 of these cars, and I knew I had better do it right.

The restoration process started in December by dismantling and sanding the body panels, and taping in preparation for the body shop. Those three intense weeks of labor probably saved me \$15,000! After four weeks at the shop, the chrome work was finished and the car was ready for four coats of single-stage paint.

The 2000/3000/5000 grit post-paint buffing took ten days and gave the car a mirror finish. Since all the upholstery had been removed, it was time to re-dye the leather to a rich burgundy to complement the new Dominion Blue and the like-new convertible top. As I was prepping the car for its debut at Amelia Island, March 11, there was no time to spare once the car returned home for assembly. I finished the Lagonda literally the day before the truck arrived on route to Florida.

At Amelia, my freshly trimmed Lagonda took a class trophy, tying with a Bugatti in what is arguably the most difficult class to win: Pre-war European Luxury Class. It was a proud moment and definitely worth my long days and nights getting 'Lady Lagonda' ready for her unveiling!

*What a superb car, and a great credit to Tom for getting it finished in record time. I certainly agree that the original colour specification is much more attractive than the cream and brown (Ed).* ■



*The spotless engine bay - note the twin Vertex Magnetos*



*Such an elegant car, and the original colour scheme sets it off perfectly*



# 1928 [for 1929] Lagonda catalogue extract

## 6 cylinder models



### 4 and 6 Cylinder Models

**F**EW firms in the history of motoring can look back—as Lagonda Ltd. can—upon a continuous manufacturing experience of more than a quarter of a century.

In the first year of the present century the name Lagonda was in the forefront of motordom associated with motor tricar which, crude as they may have been in the light of present day practice, yet carried all before them in the acid test of open competition. Followed a period of many years' supremacy in the light car world established by a 10 h.p. car of wonderful performance.

Success followed success, until the Great War called a halt in car production. Lagonda cars enjoyed a reputation second to none—hard earned in ever-growing competition.

Post-war days enhanced still further the reputation of this famous British car. The 12/24 h.p. model played a prominent part in the world of reliability trials, hill climbing and competitions of every description, and achieved a name for sturdy reliability and performance.

It became apparent, however, that the public demanded a car of superlative performance, luxurious equipment and high speed capabilities. Lagonda Ltd., sensing this demand, introduced in 1925 the now famous 14/60 h.p. two litre model, a car which secured at the outset an almost unprecedented welcome from those best qualified to judge.

This model embraces the most modern and efficient principles of automobile design. The engine, with two overhead camshafts and semi-spherical combustion heads, attains the theoretical ideal as nearly as practice makes possible, without sacrifice of the general reliability and accessibility essential in the automobile of to-day.

The same high standard of design is employed in connection with the chassis details. Such refinements as centralized lubrication system, six powerful compensated brakes, and the employment of the highest standard of material and workmanship throughout, result in a car capable of high speeds, wonderful flexibility and road-worthy qualities generally.

Unquestionably this model has taken a place in motoring history which will not be usurped until engineering skill has advanced far beyond present day limits. The high praise which has been lavished upon it is evidence of its amazing performance.

The increasing interest which the public have evinced in 6-cylinder cars caused Lagonda Ltd. to turn their attention to a vehicle of this type, the 16/65 h.p. 6-cylinder Lagonda being produced and exhibited at the Olympia Show, 1926, after two years of experimental work.

This model, whilst embracing the principles and standards attained on the 14/60 h.p. 4-cylinder model, is produced particularly with a view to providing that ease and luxury of transit associated with a high-class carriage. The highest art of the designer has been employed in the provision of coachwork for this model, whilst the engine provides ample power and speed to ensure exceptional road performance for all types of bodies, at the same time maintaining the smoothness, silence and flexibility which a 6-cylinder engine makes possible.

The satisfaction which has been given by the 16/65 h.p. 6-cylinder car has resulted in a demand for a more powerful type giving greater accommodation for enclosed drive coachwork. To fill this demand we have evolved the 3-litre 6-cylinder, which is provided with either long or short wheelbase chassis. This car retains all the fine qualities of the 16/65 h.p. type and yet gives considerably greater power and luxuriously spacious coachwork.

Mr. John Prieau, the well-known motoring critic, wrote: "It is altogether a most delightful car," and his verdict is fully endorsed by all its users.

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CATALOGUE No. 30 CANCELS ALL PREVIOUS LISTS.

## The Three-Litre LAGONDA Six Cylinder Model

### SPECIFICATION

**ENGINE.**—Six-cylinder monobloc cast in one unit with the top half of the crank-case. Bore 72 m/m. Stroke 120 m/m G.C.2931. R.A.C. rating 19.28 h.p. Tax £20.

Overhead valves, operated by rockers and push rods, are fitted into a detachable head. The bearings of the rockers are lubricated by oil under pressure.

The inlet and exhaust valves are interchangeable, and valve clearances are adjusted by means of a screw and lock nut most accessibly placed at the end of each valve rocker.

**CRANKSHAFT.** which is of large diameter, is carried in seven bearings of large dimensions.

**PISTONS** are of light weight, thus ensuring freedom from vibration. They are fitted on extra large hollow gudgeon pins.

**CAMSHAFT.**—The camshaft is located on the near side of the engine and is carried in four large white metal bearings. Both the camshaft and tappets which operate the push rods run entirely submerged in oil.

**DYNAMO.** 12-volt type, is positively driven from the front end of the crankshaft.

**IGNITION** is by high-tension Magneto which is set at right angles to the engine in a very accessible position and is driven by spiral gearing off the camshaft.

**COOLING** is by circulating pump in conjunction with large honeycomb radiator and assisted by a fan.

**CARBURETTER.**—Fed through "Autovac" system from 14-gallon tank at the rear of chassis. A petrol level gauge is fitted and also a filter on the suction pipe. A two-level tap is arranged to obviate the carrying of a spare petrol can.

**STARTER.**—12-volt type electric starter is fitted, the bendix gear and pinion of which are mounted on the engine the starter, which is mounted on the frame, being coupled by means of a flexible joint.

**LUBRICATION** is of forced feed drilled crankshaft type by a special pump which draws its supply from a sump of 2 gallons capacity. A pressure gauge is fitted on the dashboard, and a specially designed strainer is placed on the suction side, which can be taken out and cleaned without disturbing any connections. A filter of large capacity is provided, in which is incorporated a large filter and dipper gauge, showing the amount of oil in the sump. For emptying the sump, in place of the usual drain plug in the base, a valve is fitted which is operated from an accessible point above. Chassis lubrication is by Tealemit grease system, and all points not easy of access are carried to a central position on each side of the frame.

**CLUTCH** is mounted in the steel flywheel and is of the single disc fabric-lined type, running dry.

**GEARBOX,** which is of ample dimensions, is a separate unit provided with four forward speeds and reverse, and is mounted on flexible pads to ensure silence. Right hand change. The gears are mounted on short shafts of large diameter, the permanent mesh or spigot gear being supported by ball bearings on both sides. The speedometer drive is incorporated in the gearbox.

**TRANSMISSION** is by open propeller shaft, with a Universal joint at either end.

**BACK AXLE.**—Banjo type pressed steel, with aluminium inspection cover and gear housing. Final drive is by spiral bevel.

**FRONT AXLE** of H section special alloy steel; the steering pivots are of large dimensions, the weight being taken on ball thrust washers. The hubs, fitted with large brake drums, are mounted on roller bearings.

**SPRINGING** is by flat semi-elliptical springs, assisted by shock absorbers at front and rear. The rear springs are underslung.

**BRAKES.**—Six very efficient internal expanding type fabric-lined brakes are fitted. One pair of the rear brakes, together with the front wheel brakes, are operated by the pedal, and the second pair of rear brakes by the hand lever. The brake system, which is fully compensated and is mounted on self-aligning ball bearings throughout, consists of a special arrangement of cables and chain links, which ensure maximum efficiency. Easy adjustment is provided.

**STEERING** is of the Marles type, and the steering column is adjustable for rake.

**WHEELS.**—Detachable wire wheels are fitted with 33 in. x 6 in. Dunlop tyres. Detachable steel artillery wheels are optional.

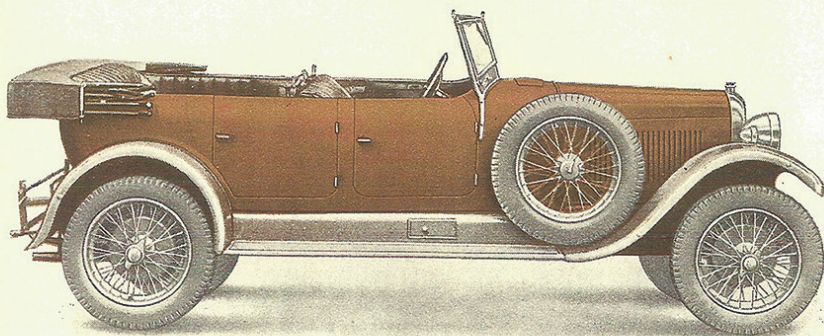
**FRAME,** of pressed steel, is inswep at the front and upswept at the rear.

**PRINCIPAL DIMENSIONS.**—Wheelbase, long, 11 ft. 6 in.; short, 10 ft. 9 in. Track, 4 ft. 8 in. Ground clearance, 10 in. Weight of chassis, 24 cwt.

**CHASSIS EQUIPMENT.**—12-volt dynamo lighting and electric starting set, 5 lamps, electric horn, clock, speedometer, thermometer, oil pressure gauge, grease gun lubrication hydraulic jack, spare wheel and tyre, shock absorbers, spring gaiters and complete tool kit.

Chassis Price (Short wheelbase)	-	-	£650.
" " (Long wheelbase)	-	-	£660.





## The 16/65 h.p. Six-Cylinder Touring Model - - £740

**D**IFFERING from the usual run of "touring models," this attractive car caters abundantly for the accommodation and comfort of its occupants.

A single adjustable front seat is provided and a 3-panel rear screen fitted as standard.

A feature of this model is the raked "V" type windscreen with its double panels. Weather protection has been most skilfully achieved by the provision of celluloid panels which are each housed in a special compartment behind the rear squab, a numbered rack holding each screen in a manner which effectively protects it from damage. With these screens in position and the hood raised, the car is converted into virtually a closed model, the whole operation being only the work of a few seconds.

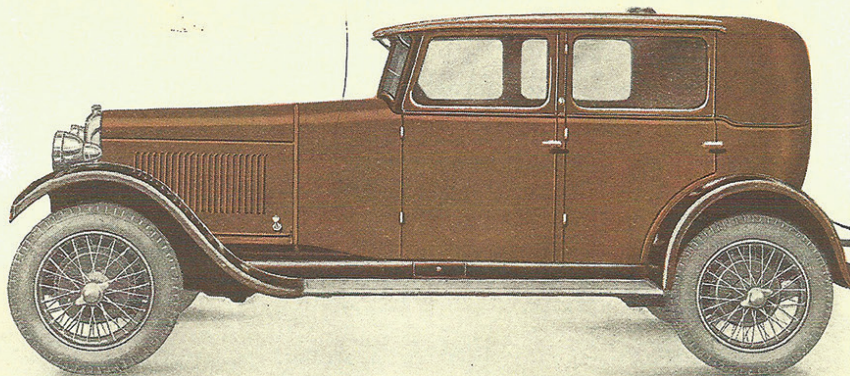
The body throughout is a fine example of the coachbuilder's art, and a wide range of colours to match the hand buffed leather upholstery is offered.

On each side of the fascia board a small compartment is provided to accommodate parcels.

The equipment includes :—12-volt dynamo lighting and electric starting set, 5 lamps, electric horn, clock, speedometer, thermometer, oil pressure gauge, dashboard light, windscreen wiper, driving mirror, luggage grid, spare wheel and tyre, spring gaiters, licence holder, and complete set of tools.

Extra for supplying and fitting Triplex Safety Glass Windscreen . . . £6 7 6

# The 16/65 h.p. Six-Cylinder "Weymann Saloon" - £845



**A** FOUR-DOOR Saloon embodying the latest continental practice throughout and providing exceptional comfort for driver and passengers. Built under "Weymann" patents, the extreme lightness of this body and the total absence of drumming are important features which render it a delightful closed carriage both for town use and long distance touring. The windscreen, which is of the single piece type, gives ample driving vision.

Wide doors, four in number, give easy access to the interior and close with patent safety catches; one door is provided with a lock, enabling the whole interior to be secured from unauthorised entry.

Leather upholstery is supplied matching the body colour scheme.

The head is lined and heavy pile carpets are included. All interior fittings are heavily plated, whilst the cabinet work is executed in walnut.

An electric roof light is placed over the rear seat, and a blind which can be operated from the front seat—a great convenience for night driving—covers the rear light.

The equipment includes :—12-volt dynamo lighting and electric starting set, 5 lamps, parking lights, electric horn, clock, speedometer, thermometer, oil pressure gauge, dashboard light, ladies' and gentlemen's companions, cigar lighter, rear blind, driving mirror, windscreen wiper, luggage grid, spare wheel and tyre, spring gaiters, licence holder, and complete set of tools.

Extra for supplying and fitting Triplex Safety Glass throughout	..	£27 10 0
" " " " " " " " to Windscreen only		£5 0 0



# The 16/65 h.p. Six-Cylinder Saloon - - - £860

THIS elegant motor carriage, eminently suitable for both town and touring usage, is in every detail of equipment and finish a car de-luxe, designed for the owner who seeks refinement and luxury.

Five persons can be accommodated in perfect comfort, and four wide doors give easy access to the luxuriously upholstered seats. The front seat is provided as a single adjustable seat or as separate adjustable seats. In all there are six windows, the rear two being fitted with silk blinds, as also is the rear light. Door windows are frameless and operate in felt-lined channels by means of patent window lifts, and the window in the driver's door is fitted with a quick lift device which facilitates the raising and lowering of the window for signalling purposes.

The coachwork is treated with Cerric lacquer finish, a wide range of colours to match the upholstery being available. Finest leather upholstery is employed.

Ventilators in the scuttle and the roof effectively ensure ample fresh air in the interior of the body without draughts.

The fascia board is so arranged to accommodate two useful compartments for holding small parcels.

The standard equipment includes :—12-volt lighting and starting set, 5 lamps, parking lights, electric horn, clock, speedometer, thermometer, oil pressure gauge, dashboard light, interior roof light, 3 silk blinds, windscreen wiper, cigar lighters, parcel net, ladies' and gentlemen's companion, step mats, two loose cushions, foot rests, driving mirror, luggage grid, spring gaiters, licence holder, spare wheel and tyre, and complete set of tools.

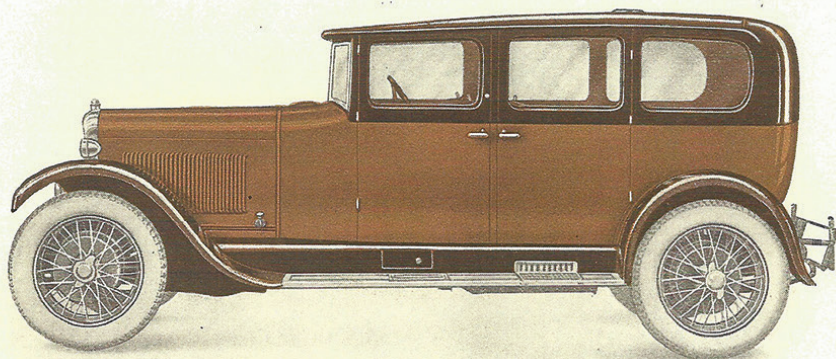
Extra for supplying and fitting Triplex Safety Glass throughout	£29	10	0
Windscreens only	£5	8	0

## PARTITION BETWEEN DRIVER'S SEAT AND REAR COMPARTMENTS.

When desired, a partition can be fitted at an extra charge of £13 10 0.

In this case the front seat is made in one and fixed, and the partition is fitted with a sliding window.

TWO OCCASIONAL SEATS which, when not in use, hinge and fold neatly into a compartment at the rear of the partition, can also be fitted, if required, at an extra charge of £11 for the two seats.





## The Three-Litre Six Cylinder enclosed Drive Weymann Saloon - - - £965

**T**HIS model, eminently suitable for both town and touring usage, is in every detail of equipment and finish a car de-luxe and provides ample reserve power and maximum accommodation for both passengers and driver.

Seven persons can be accommodated in perfect comfort, and four wide doors give easy access to the luxuriously upholstered seats. The front seat is divided and is separately adjustable. In all, there are six windows, the rear two being fitted with silk blinds, as also is rear light. Door windows are frameless and operate in felt-lined channels by means of patent window lifts, and the window in the driver's door is fitted with a quick-lift device which facilitates the raising and lowering of the window for signalling purposes.

A division having a winding window and silk blind is provided between passengers and driver, and two extremely comfortable occasional seats give extra accommodation and when not in use can be folded away without effort.

The exterior of the body is covered in high grade leather cloth, a wide range of colours being available. Upholstery is carried out in finest hide to match.

The fascia board is so arranged to accommodate two useful compartments for holding small parcels, whilst the many fittings are in heavily plated nickel finish.

The standard equipment includes :—12-volt lighting and starting set, 5 lamps, parking lights, fog light, electric horn, clock speedometer, thermometer, oil pressure gauge, dashboard light, interior roof light, four silk blinds, windscreen wiper, cigar lighter, parcel net, ladies' and gentlemen's companions, step mats, two loose cushions, foot rests, driving mirror, luggage grid, spring gaiters, licence holder, spare wheel and tyre and complete set of tools.

Extra for supplying and fitting Triplex Safety Glass throughout .. £41 0 0

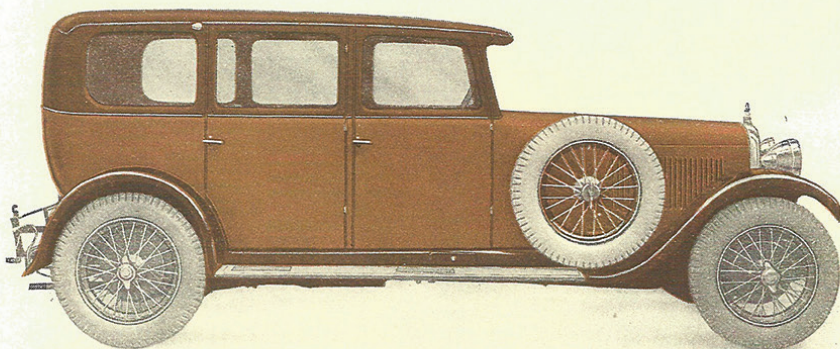
Extra for supplying and fitting Triplex Safety Glass Windscreen .. £6 0 0

Short Wheelbase Coachbuilt Saloon - - - £940

Short Wheelbase Four-Light Weymann Saloon £925

Short Wheelbase Six-Light Weymann Saloon - £925

Short Wheelbase Five-Seater Touring Car - - £820





# Why a Lagonda?

## *Neale Edwards argues the case*

GIVEN YEARS OF Lagonda ownership, and a good deal of experience with other makes, I have come to realise just how good these Lagondas really are. Amongst their many features are all manner of shortcomings, but the whole is greater than its parts. You also may wish to ask yourself how our much-enjoyed Lagondas, and other makes, fare when it comes to criticism as seen through twenty-first century eyes. At the time when our cars were new eyes were not the same, standards were very different. But today's standards are, when applied to an old car, far too demanding to offer fair judgment. In spite of that, these venerable beasts do well in this company: they can usually keep up with traffic, most of the time, hills excepted. They get from A to B in style, provided they are in decent nick. They are enjoyed by the majority of those who see them. Not, by any means, by all though. There are some who will cut us up and show no consideration. These citizens are generally testosterone-filled teenage boys, probably showing off to unimpressed girls, in uninsured, and untaxed bangers! But we should remember, in my youth, vintage cars were just old bangers too! Vintage Bentleys were one hundred pounds a litre, Lagondas about half to two thirds of that. There's a thought.

An interesting comparison is that between the Lagonda 2 litre and the 3 litre Bentley. I have had both and am impressed with the relative standing of the smaller Lagonda. It was often criticized as the poor man's Bentley,

but I now think that is not quite right. It certainly is less fast and less tolerant of hills, especially the models after the 14/60, which benefits from a far more helpful constant mesh gear ratio than the Speed Models. The 2 litre may be slower than the 3 litre Bentley, but the Bentley is also thoroughly sluggish when it comes to the hills of South Somerset. The Lagonda is just a bit more sluggish, but both are really equally hopeless at climbing! Both, to varying degrees, fail the rice pudding test. Otherwise they are pretty similar, the Lagonda being rather more refined, but it is a close thing. Put the downdraft head on the 2 litre and the score will, I suspect, be evened up a bit.

It is fruitless trying to compare the Lagonda V12 with the Rolls Royce Phantoms, they are so different. The V12 is much handier and it is surprisingly nimble, but then 8 litres of Phantom II Continental is pretty impressive: ours, by Barker, was on the Motor Show stand at the Paris Salon in 1933. I have never had a Phantom III. I have no experience of the larger W.O.s, but there is a modification to the 2 litre which is itching to be done. Recast the engine with dimensions of 120x120, which would give about 5.43 litres, Why not? The 4½ Bentley was basically an inflated 3 litre! Such a Lagonda should go a bit. There is enough room under the bonnet for this and there is no reason why such an engine should be significantly heavier than the original. Anyhow, with buckets of torque and many horses it could cope with that. Decent tyres, I am sure, could preserve the turn-in on

corners, and there is not much wrong with the brakes.

Levers to inhibit axle-tramp on the front are a good idea anyway on the 2 litre Speed Model chassis.

I have recently re-indulged in a foray into modern exotica, and it is very hard to fault any current offerings in that sector of the market. The Bentley Continental GT is without fault (apart from the beautifully upholstered rear seats with not a millimeter of leg room) and drives sublimely. It is also an engineering wonder worthy of Bugatti, Birkigt, Coatalen, Pomeroy, Royce, Bentley, all rolled into one. A computer helps of course. A W-12 engine with both 15° pairs of banks of three cylinders offset on the same crankshaft journals is puzzle enough, before you tackle the four valve per hemispherical cylinder-head arrangements. Then give each pair of two banks of three offset cylinders a common overhead camshaft head (geographically a bit like pre-war Lancias). On the road this device is perfectly mannered and blisteringly fast.

But we, who love vintage cars and Lagondas, don't really buy them to be fast. Not by modern standards. Fast is only a minor ingredient in a clutch of characteristics, which we love. If you want to go fast, buy a new generation contraption, but be careful! They are indecently quick! We have a Porsche 911 Carrera too. At last they have made this once-terrifying contrivance a bit tamer. Spells cast by a clever electronic box prevent the classic Porsche tail-first experience. This has in the past caught me out; I rolled a 911 in about 1974 getting onto the M4 at junction 10. The two hundred and seventy degree slip road, over a bridge tightened, was of course downhill, and caught me out

because I had entered the system too fast, the car rolling over three times. I swore I would never have another 911, but a Porsche demonstration driver took me on a track forty years later, and we tried to replicate the earlier experience. Neither of us could make the back come around. The present 911 is a staggeringly well-presented and beautifully controlled piece of work. A triumph of development over obstinacy. Apart from allowing, in the beginning, the sourcing of cheap Volkswagen parts, why on earth would the good Doktor Porsche have hung the engine out of the back? And then spent fifty years compensating for an absolutely obvious error? The only possible conclusion is overpowering stubbornness! Having appeared to shoot it down, I can't speak too highly of the current Porsche 911. It of course incorporates another example of useless back seats. Rather surprisingly, it is very easy for a large tall old man to get in and out of. So much so, that I have replicated its dimensions in the Bentley two seater fixed head fast back coupe which I have designed and am now in the process of having built. There is a move in the family to try a DB9 too. This is another miracle worker. After having a rich gravy of Ford development money poured all over it, together with putting its production into a shining new factory, this car too is pretty comprehensively good. Gone are the days of Aston's under-the-skin-where-you-never-see-it dreadful welding and workmanship and a machine shop defined by Newport Pagnall dollops of back-lash. None of this talk of up-to-date finery, however, invalidates or reduces the sheer overall enjoyment afforded by a Lagonda, vintage or later, or many of

its competitors. Part of the enjoyment of an old car, it seems to me, is the raw proximity of the natural world around us. We are always very close to our surroundings in an old car; sometimes almost too close. It is *de rigueur* too to be able to drive the thing and manipulate its controls without looking and being foolish. In a new style machine, we are insulated, isolated even, from our surroundings, and the experience is almost cinematic at times. Is this good? It's certainly comfortable, but is it good?

At this moment I am trying to sell the old cars that we have, having grown exasperated by certain features. For example, it is a little tiresome that Royce makes everything so unnecessarily complicated. Why, when S.U., Solex, Zenith, and others made perfectly good and reliable carburettors, did Royce have to design his own, an utterly awful useless monster? One of the specialist companies told me that, in their estimation, nine out of ten pre-war Rolls-Royces are greatly out of adjustment both in the carburettor and in the ignition areas. This is partly because most of the owners know a lot less than they think they do, but more likely because a fundamental fault has remained uncured, and the wrong adjustment arises through a desire to compensate for that, rather than put the underlying fault right. Which fault, the owner may well not have detected or diagnosed correctly!

Here is another example of the pig-headedness of Rolls Royce. The Merlin engine has two magnetos, as do all reciprocating aero engines to this day. You would expect, in order to give true redundancy, these two magnetos would be separately and independently driven. They are not;

they are at opposite ends of a cross-shaft, like the 3 litre Bentley. If one fails through a drive breakage, so does the other. How did that get past the inspectorate? It was, I have been told, quite commonly a source of engine failures. There are many quirks in their post-war motorcar engines, before the V8, too. Like the Lagondas, Rolls Royces are greater than the sum of their parts, but I think I may have got them out of my system! Some quirks are more easily tolerated than others and Lagonda quirks strike me as broadly liveable-with.

When the decks are clear and the garages empty, it may well be time to go on a fresh Lagonda hunt. I have never had one with the Meadows 4½ engine; maybe that is the way to go? There are also some extraordinarily good lesser fry worth looking at. A 1948 Riley RMB is very attractive, as is the 1950s Jaguar XK range. It is good to dream, and lots of fun! A certain degree of grunt is appealing too; enough to keep up with traffic and not to find hills too much bother. Real speed is entirely unnecessary; there are other machines for that.

My experiences with many other makes, as well as having had at least seven pre-war Lagondas in my time, indicates to me that they are extremely difficult to better. The obvious contenders may be very good indeed, but they don't appear to me necessarily to trump the good old Lagonda. I have learnt, through straying into pastures where the grass appears greener, that the Lagonda generally is pretty hard to beat. It has honesty about it, combined with a carefree attitude, which is very British. What a shame that it did not survive. Vivat, atque floreat, Lagonda! ■

## Letters & emails ... Letters & emails

Roger,

I have been in communication with Angela Pugh whose father D.L. Orton owned our 2-litre GP 4585 in the 1950s. His name appears in the 1952 Lagonda Club List of members. Angela's grandfather was Fred Elson who featured in the Team Car Bodies article by Arnold in Magazine No. 250. She sent me some photos of our car when owned by her father but also included two photos, which appear to show a Lagonda Club meeting presumably from the 1950s. He lived at the time in Kings Somborne, Hants., but I do not know where the photos were taken. The only clue I see is the pub name "The George" which sold Arkells Ales. Apart from a 1950s van and an early Rolls Royce all the cars are Lagondas.

They cannot be identified as no Registration Numbers are visible. Angela may have sent the photos to Arnold when she supplied the team car photos but as they were not relevant to that subject she probably didn't.

I wondered would these be of interest or quality to be reproduced in the Magazine maybe to test the membership as to when and where the meeting was?

Regards  
Peter Walby

*I think the location is opposite 'The George' in Lambourne, West Berkshire. Anyone any ideas as to when? Ed*

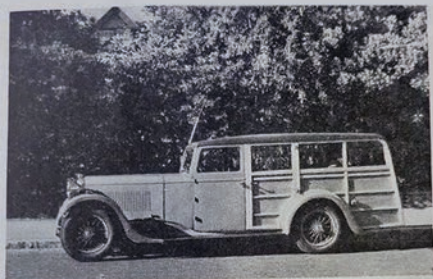




## Letters & emails ... Letters & emails



*See letter from Peter Walby on previous page*



### **CARBERY GARAGE**

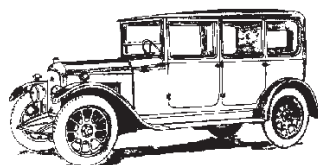
offer a very fine and extremely well-built shooting brake on a 3-litre Lagonda chassis. This fast car will give 20 m.p.g. under normal touring conditions. The engine and back axle were completely overhauled about 8,000 miles ago. There is a complete spare engine and many other spares. This car, the property of one of our directors, is for sale at £450 or near offer as he has purchased an open car.

**Carbery Row, Southbourne, Bournemouth.**  
Tel : Southbourne 2076.

Dear Roger

From Motor Sport 1950.  
Would be nice to find this still around! No doubt if it is, it will be a tourer by now.

Mike Jones

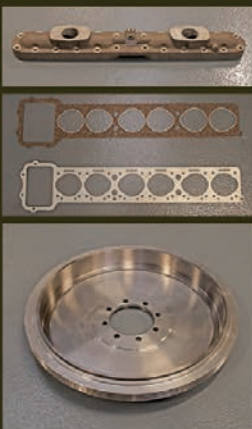
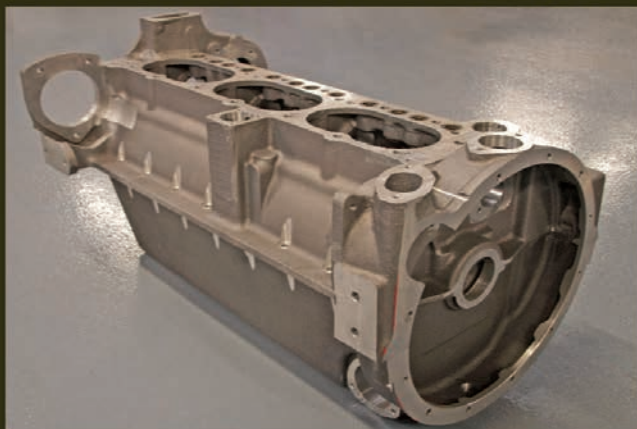




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| - Crankcase 4.5 Ltr.                          | - Camshaft 4.5 Ltr. and V12                       | - Brake back plates 4.5 Ltr.<br>and V12             |
| - Sump 4.5 Ltr.                               | - Halfshaft 4.5 Ltr.                              | - Clutch conversion 4.5 Ltr, 2 Ltr.<br>and 3.5 Ltr. |
| - Oil pump 4.5 Ltr.                           | - Inlet and exhaust manifolds<br>4.5 Ltr. and V12 | - Steering conversion V12                           |
| - Water pump/pump housing<br>4.5 Ltr. and V12 | - Timing cover 4.5 Ltr.                           | - AND MANY OTHERS                                   |
|   | - Magneto drive box 4.5 Ltr.                      |   |

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