



THE MAGAZINE OF THE LAGONDA CLUB

Number 257 Summer 2018



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The Lagonda Magazine

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FRONT COVER: Peter Seabrook in his Rapier at a Prescott training day!

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From the Driving Seat

Roger Seabrook

WHAT WONDERFUL WEATHER for enjoying your Lagonda in. There is really no excuse for leaving the car in the garage when there is so much sunshine. We enjoyed some 1,300 miles of motoring in Northern Spain and Portugal mostly in temperatures of 30°+. Despite this the 2 litre only reached a maximum of 90, and on that day the local town square recorded 41°!

The Club often worries about attracting young people – the youngest on our recent trip was 24!

When I first joined the Lagonda Club it seemed to consist mainly of elderly people in tweed jackets, mainly because they were the primary users of the cars. But the irreverent stories from the Northern section were an antidote, and brightened up the Magazine at that time. Let's not be too concerned – in this edition one of our more senior members has decided he simply can't do without a vintage car to enjoy. So he has acquired a very nice Lagonda and will be making the most of it. What really matters is that the cars get used and, where possible, passed down to the next generation as several members have done.

Son Peter has acquired an early Austin 7 to restore. My father had a few of these in the 1930s & 40s and I still have a set of new pistons he bought and never used.

Horace, our milkman, had a saloon dating from about 1931 – it filled with

smoke from the worn engine so he always drove it with the windows down. Eventually it went to the scrapyard at Croxley Green, which was full of them. Another was acquired for about £10 – this didn't smoke, but Horace took snuff, so it reeked of this instead. I tried a Seven out many years ago, but was never tempted to own one.

The 2 litre supercharged cars were reported as suffering from overheating back when they were new. So it's no surprise that this still happens in modern traffic. I believe the V12s are also prone to this - perhaps some of you with such cars could write in and let us know of your experiences. Fitting an electric fan can help if there is room – not all models have enough space.

How about the Lagonda electric car, featured in the Spring magazine? Sounds good, but how will it work in practice? And where is the infrastructure to support the charging of such cars? Not only that, but the idea that electric cars are the 'green' solution is nonsense, since it requires energy to generate electricity and this mainly comes from burning, be it wood, coal, or oil. Nuclear power also has its drawbacks – how do we dispose of the waste? And do you want to wait for a half hour recharge each time your car runs out of 'fuel'?

***Last date for copy for the Autumn Magazine
is FRIDAY 26th October 2018.***

Lagonda Club 2018 Spring Tour

Tom Wilcox describes the event

HONITON HAS A special place in my life. Most importantly because John and Joan Fitton chose the fine Deer Park Hotel in Honiton for this year's "gathering of the faithful" Lagonda Spring Tour. This 18th Century Georgian Mansion, set in 80 acres of glorious grounds with its immaculately maintained gardens and double rosette restaurant, was our resting place for four days. The walled vegetable garden was something to behold.

Our Lagondas were parked in front of a glass-fronted garage full of classic and vintage cars used by the Hotel for weddings and hire. However, it also figures in my memory as just 65 years ago I received my call up papers for National Service. I was ordered to attend the No. 2 Training Battalion REME in Honiton. A motley crew of eighteen-year olds were met at the station by several drill sergeants who organised us into groups, 3 abreast, to proceed on foot to the Camp. At the front and rear of the group a man was required to carry a sign on a long pole, bearing the message "Caution Troops Marching". Nothing could be less apt than this message, when applied to the shambling mob that walked to the Camp.

I understood that the letters REME stood for Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. Our Sergeant quickly advised us that in fact REME stood for either Rough Engineering Made Easy, or Ruin Every Maiden Eventually. Sadly, I failed to achieve either.

In total contrast the comfort, spaciousness and welcome at the Deer Park was a very satisfactory contrast to the austere wooden huts and Parade Ground of No.2 Training Battalion.

We all gathered on the Sunday evening for a champagne reception, when old acquaintances from previous Tours were rekindled and new friends made.

On the Monday morning we followed the carefully prepared "green route cards" with which we were issued. The first stop was at Knightshayes Court, a fine National Trust property. These elegant cars drove through the stone pillared entrance gates and up the drive of the picturesque park and were allowed to park in front of the house for other visitors to enjoy. The house was built by John Heathcote Amery and designed by William Burgess. The grounds were spectacular with flowering azaleas and rhododendrons. After coffee, our route took us along the Exe valley, in sunshine, to Bampton then on to Somerset. As the road dropped into the small town of Wiveliscombe, the views over Taunton Vale were panoramic.

On our way to Sheppy's Cider we found that the final section of the route through the small village of Bradford on Tone had been closed (seemingly due to a woman, driving under the influence, colliding with a small bridge). Fortunately we spotted Michael Drakeford ahead in his red M45, who guided us along the



Cars lined up outside the Hotel Garage



The intriguing 'A la Ronde' 18th century 16-sided house



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The Wilcox 2 litre CCS outside the Bottle Inn

diversion. Our 2 litre close-coupled saloon kept up!! We were given an excellent tour of the orchards at Sheppy's, followed by a visit to the gleaming stainless-steel production units as well. We were then taken to the sampling rooms where we were treated to four different ciders. Our guide asked us to choose our favourite. Most voted for the Kingston Black as being the best, although not the most expensive variety on offer. This was followed by a welcome sandwich lunch.

We were driving a 2 litre car still fitted with only one carburettor and bearing a saloon body. We noted that part of the return route involved covering a steep hill and, knowing from previous experience of Fitton Tours, we decided to take the "devout cowards" route home along main roads. Not as spectacular as the official "green card route", but one which allowed us to return to the hotel without that "heart in the mouth" feeling that we have previously experienced on these outings!!

Tuesday's "green card" arranged to take us to A la Ronde, a spectacular National Trust property overlooking the estuary of the river Exe. Before leaving the hotel many "Lagondaists" took the opportunity to admire the contents of the Hotel's Motor House. It contained about eight early cars in spotless condition, including a couple of Rolls Royces; two American cars; a very rare Jaguar and an Austin Healey. The departure from the hotel was further raised in spirit, by the appearance of Brian Savill in his shorts and Clive Dalton in the jolliest, many-coloured jersey that was guaranteed to brighten even the dullest of days.

We failed to look at the route ahead on our Ordinance Survey map before leaving. The route lay through the pretty village of Gittisham, followed by a very minor road to the top of Gittisham Hill to join the A375 to Sidmouth. Our failure in advance planning left us in ignorance of what lay ahead. If only we had looked at the map we would have noticed that the road ahead included a section with two chevrons on the map, indicating an ascent steeper than 1 in 5. The road became narrower with no road markings, through the woods with more and more bends and certainly steeper than 1 in 5. By the greatest good fortune, we were not baulked on the hill and met nothing coming the other way. All conversation ceased in the car and we just made the crest, by the skin of our teeth, and with a little dampening of the brow!!

We drove on and, as we had some good friends living in East Budleigh just off the "green card route", we decided to call in for a brief visit. As it happened we had three other Lagondas behind us at this point. It was then our sincere hope that they would follow us into the drive of our friend's house, so that they would find four Lagondas on their doorstep. Very sadly the Walbys were too efficient for us and quickly realised that we were going "the wrong way". All three cars turned around to take the correct route to A la Ronde, leaving us in solitary state at our friends.

A la Ronde is a house to which the word unique really applies. It is a "round" house, but actually with sixteen sides, built for two cousins. Started in 1796 it provided its two lady owners with somewhere to show

their collection, made up of interesting pieces from around the world - the collection of sea shells being most impressive. There being no electric light in 1796 the round design enabled the owners to move round the house during the day, taking maximum advantage of natural daylight as the sun moved round the building.

We then set off for a run of about 40 miles to Forde Abbey. We were getting hungry by about 2 o'clock, so stopped at the Bottle Inn at Marshwood, which was indicated on the route card as a possible stop for lunch. The Inn was built in 1569. It had a thatched roof and was recently repainted in an attractive cream colour. To step inside the Bottle Inn was to take a step back in time. There were plain wooden tables and chairs, a bar with only hand pumps serving real ale and a very welcoming landlord called Michael, who had previously owned an MG TA and who hosted a monthly vintage car meeting. We intended to stay for a short time, but Michael's welcome was exceptional. He even lit the open fire for us. Sadly, none of the other Lagondas had stopped at the "Bottle" and so missed a very special watering hole.

All this meant that we did not arrive at Forde Abbey until after 3 o'clock. In spite of this we were in time to visit this fascinating house. Cistercian monks founded it as an Abbey over 800 years ago. It grew to be one of the richest and most learned Monasteries in the country. Inevitably it was destroyed by Henry VIII and became a ruin for a hundred years. In 1649 it was rebuilt into the

magnificent home that we visited. Unfortunately, we did not have time to see the 30 acres of gardens that are tended today, so we will have to try to return in the future to see more of this magnificent estate. The Wednesday of the tour was a free day to go where you wished. People went in all directions and returned in the evening with tales of their journeying. As we returned to the hotel the engine temperature rose rapidly. The general consensus of opinion was that unfortunately the water pump had failed. I suppose that if you have an old car you must expect some problems...

The final dinner that night was again an excellent meal that was much enjoyed. Ann Walby made an eloquent presentation, on behalf of the Tour, to John and Joan Fitton by way of thanks for all the hard work that they had put into the latest "Spring Tour". Anyone who has had a hand in organising such an event will be well aware of the problems involved and all present expressed their thanks in a warm round of applause.

John was off to hospital the next morning and all wished him a successful outcome from the surgery he was to undergo. We phoned on the 8th May and were very glad to hear that all had gone well. It will of course take time before he is again fully fit, but knowing John's determination, we are sure that he will be back on form in due time.

Another excellent "Fitton Tour" had come to a close. For us, with 578 happy miles on the clock, we arrived home safely, managing to keep just below boiling point on the return journey. Now for a new water pump!

Besotted

by Harry Fuchs

I STARTED MY interest in classic cars with Jaguars, owning a 3.4 litre XK140 roadster, a 3.8 litre XK150 DHC and a 4.2 litre E Type.

But in the 1980s I discovered Bentleys and had a string of them, starting with a Mk 6 Special by Mallalieu and progressing to vintage cars; a 1923 3 litre, a 1928 4½ litre, a 1927 6½ litre and finally a 3/4½ litre.



My first Bentley, a Mk 6 Special by Mallalieu



The Bentley 4½ cornering on a South African trip in 1992

Nevertheless, I was always aware of and attracted to the Lagonda and have owned two LG45s and an M45 T7 tourer. The first Lagonda was an LG 45 tourer which I bought for Caryl my wife, to introduce her to large pre-war cars.

Later I bought a completely original LG45 which had spent most of its life in the ownership of a film star in Hollywood. This car was restored by Peter Whenman and shown at the Hurlingham Club Concourse, but only came second.

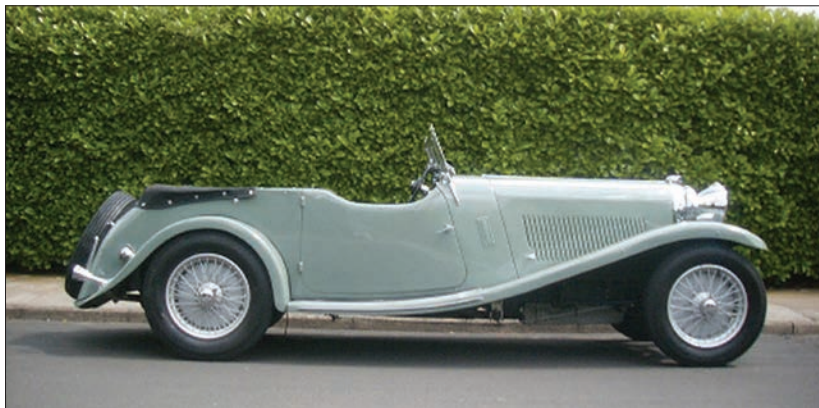


Caryl Fuchs driving her LG45 tourer with my uncle in the back



The 1937 LG45 Tourer restored by Peter Whenman

Latterly I owned a really quick M45 T7 tourer with which I campaigned in France for a number of years.



1935 Lagonda M45 T7 in France

I also had the pleasure to meet with the Lagonda Club's charismatic president on a BDC trip to Italy, where at one point we had to put our cars on a train. David Hine's beautiful 3 litre Bentley was just a bit too tall to get on and I remember four of the heaviest BDC drivers sitting on his running-boards, which, with slightly deflated tyres, just got the car into the space available.



1925 Bentley 3/4½

In my eighties I realised that I didn't have the stamina for long distance motoring and so settled for a 1949/84 Bentley MK 6 Special. This car, rather reminiscent of the 1930s SS 100 Jaguar, was also sold in November 2017, as I came to terms with old age. But in January 2018 I had severe withdrawal symptoms, as I contemplated a garage reduced to a trolley jack, a luggage rack and two spare LG45 wheels (by the way does anyone need them?). So after consulting my very understanding wife, in March, with Charles Gray, of Bishop Gray's help, I found a 1934 M35R. However fastidious an owner, when one buys an 80 year-old car there are always many things that need putting right. WS5888 M35R is a 1934 built, 1935 registered car, which started life as a Silent Travel Pillarless saloon, probably used as a demonstrator by the Edinburgh dealer Burton & Tweedy.

Converted to a replica T9 tourer sometime in the 1960s it is in remarkable condition with burgundy paintwork and good chrome. Charles Gray has improved the car with new half shafts, shock absorbers, kingpins, splines, wheels and exhaust manifolds, bringing it to long-distance touring condition. It finally arrived at my house in May and I drove it for the first time on the 17th of that month.



1934/35 M35R T9

The M35R is a very delightful vehicle. Only some 59 were built, clearly an interim model, waiting for the availability of the Meadows 4.5 litre engine. With that fitted, it won the 1935 Le Mans 24 hour endurance race outright, completing 222 laps, 3006 km, at an average speed of 125 km per hour, against its nearest rival, the Alfa Romeo supercharged 2.3 litre, which also completed 222 laps.

I will now drive it through the summer. In autumn I have the ambition to change the engine for a 4.5 litre Meadows and create a replica M45R, one of Lagonda's most alluring models. Hey-ho. ■

Lagonda Club Tour of Western Ireland

29th May - 3rd June 2018

Nigel Hall reports on a successful trip

TWENTY-ODD LAGONDAS, an Aston Martin and a couple of sporty moderns, with mainly familiar crews, assembled in good order on a pleasant evening in May at the Cymran hotel (pronounced 'Cameron') near Holyhead ferry port. Good hotels are thin on the ground in this part of Wales, and the choice was an early success for the organisers – Rodney Saunders, Nigel Walder and Jonathan Oppenheimer – whose hard work was evident throughout this enjoyable event.

It became apparent that preoccupation with the weather was going to play a big part in our trip to the Emerald Isle. It always rains there, doesn't it? Everyone seemed to have seen a daily forecast, except those fortunate (slightly smug) souls possessed of saloons or drop heads.

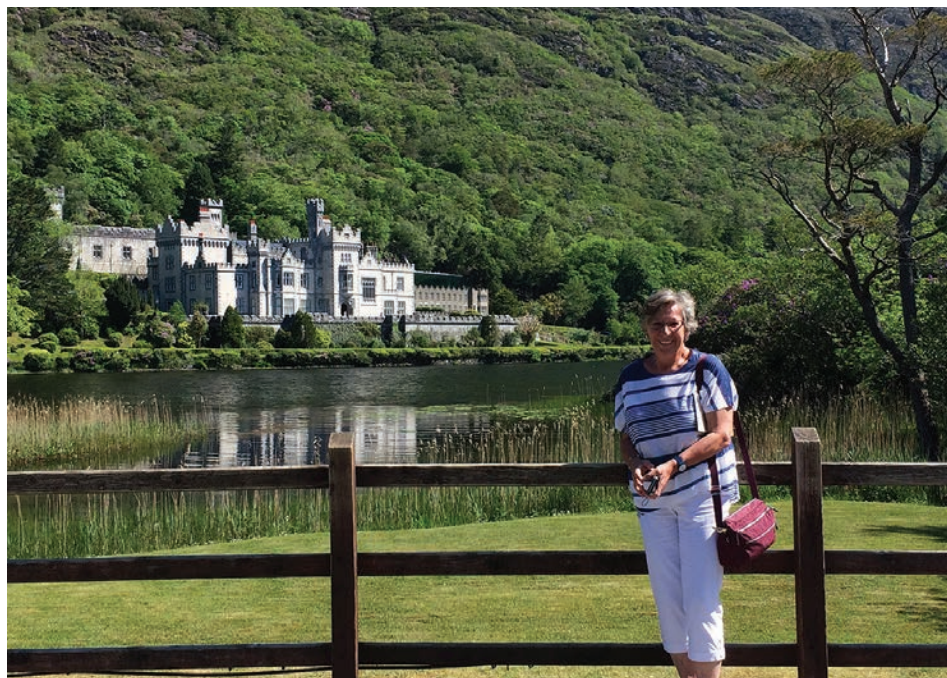
Early Tuesday morning (forecast: partly cloudy) saw us convoy under clear skies to Holyhead Port and board the ferry; an uneventful crossing found us in Dublin. Our progress through this fine city was a bit challenging, as the traffic is dense, the traffic lights are set up to frustrate, and it was a warm day. A small diversion (quite a big one for me actually, due to navigational error) took us through Phoenix Park, where motor racing with Lagonda interest took place pre-war. We then set out for Galway, some 200 kilometres away. Negotiation of Galway rush-hour traffic, on what had become a very hot day, gave further cause for alarm to the temperature gauge watchers, and some boiling and

gnashing of teeth (cars and drivers) ensued. Some participants will read that as an understatement! We were glad to reach the Hotel Ardilaun, which was excellent for all our needs – another good choice. It was good to meet Peter and Anne Walby, who had driven from Belfast in their recently completed, and utterly splendid, 2 litre. We had the great luxury of a covered garage for all the cars – this would surely be a boon for the rain predicted later in the week?

Wednesday dawned sunny and bright (forecast: partly cloudy) and we toured north, up the coast to Connemara, through spectacular scenery and mountains to visit Kylemore Abbey. There we had lunch and tours of this interesting country house, which adjoins a working monastery and is situated among beautiful hills with a lake. There was a choice of return routes, both through splendid countryside, and one passing the site of both Marconi's transatlantic wireless station and the bog where Alcock and Brown landed, rather heavily, after their transatlantic flight in 1919.

A coach took over transport duties to the evening's restaurant – O'Grady's on the Pier. This proved to be an inspired choice, with brilliant food and service. A good time was had, as they say, by all. A balmy evening, and a red sky at night, set us up for Thursday's tour south, into County Clare.

The morning run was scenic again,



Kylemore Abbey. Hazel's smile brightens the picture!



Lagondas at Ailwee

and took us to Ailwee and its visitor centre, where an extensive cave network was explored, alarmingly partly in pitch darkness; the less adventurous risked being pecked at the adjoining birds of prey centre, where a highlight was that one of the bigger-performing raptors decided to fly away for some independent ravaging of the local rabbit population; it may well still be at large.

After lunch we called at Catherconnell, with a well preserved iron-age fort to explore, and a sheepdog handling demonstration, which proved popular with our, presumably, dog owning members.

County Clare has a rugged landscape, a huge area known as the Burren being of fissured rock presenting a rather intimidating view; and the cliffs of Moher are a famous and spectacular sight on the tourist must-see list. Our route back to Galway, taking in this unique natural landscape, was along the Wild Atlantic Way, and it is presumably wild indeed when the weather is typically bleak; it presented to us its most benign face on another sunny day.

A swim at the hotel's rather Roman Bacchanalia styled pool (lurid colours, and complete with assorted semi-clad nymph statues), a spell at the bar and a good meal in the hotel restaurant rounded off an excellent day. The weather portents for Friday were universally bleak, the local lore being that in Galway it's never fine for more than three days running; but for the Lagonda Club it was another glorious day. An inland tour was arranged, visiting Tullamore DEW whiskey visitor centre (tasting on offer) and the ancient monastic site of Clonmacnoise. This was a longish round trip, and

many of the less dedicated kilometre coverers (this writer included) settled for a trip north for a leisurely lunch, and an early return to the hotel. Here we were collected by coach again for a foray into Galway City – a cosmopolitan place with a lot going on. We had dinner at McSwiggans, an amazing complex of bars and dining rooms, all full and buzzing. Back at the hotel, hardy souls still had the energy to head for the bar, as Saturday was to be a day where the cars stayed in the garage.

Forecast: intermittent rain; well you'll have got the general idea – sunshine again for our boat trip to the Aran Islands. A coach to the ferry took us to Inis Mor, the largest of this island group, a western outpost into the Atlantic Ocean. We were given a guided tour in minibuses with breaks at the many places of interest and a longer stop at Dun Alonghasa, a prehistoric hill fort sited vertiginously above a 100metre cliff. The walk to the fort was pretty hard going, and must have deterred all but the most determined bronze-age gatecrashers. The fort proved most interesting, and we had the benefit of an erudite and entertaining guide to interpret the well-preserved remains.

Having been ferried back and re-boarded the coach for the return to the hotel, we made a 'surprise' stop, as tourists do, at a pub for Guinness to be sampled or quaffed, according to thirst. It has to be said that this fairly garrulous group of the Lagonda Club did not seem to blend in seamlessly with the locals who, whilst amiable, observed us with some bemusement.

Saturday evening was our gala dinner, a tradition of these tours, and an elegant occasion it was too; we tourists

grandly dressed, pre-dinner drinks in our own dining suite, a harpist, a good menu and a bonus – Rodney's careful husbanding of finances allowed for wine to be on the (Lagonda) house, much appreciated.

Sunday was to be our return to Dublin. During the night it rained – hard!

Within our splendid garage much anguished indecision of the hood-up-or-down kind until, after breakfast and just before leaving time, it stopped raining. After a while the sun came out and stayed out for our millpond-flat Irish Sea crossing. The weather forecast was probably for hurricanes and storm force ten, but we'd stopped taking any notice of predictions by then.

The drive to Dublin was easy, and all went well until after the fuel stop (the only one – quite close to Dublin). Walter and Rosie Thompson's 2 litre packed up, or, in Rolls-Royce-speak 'failed to proceed' due to the timing gear stripping. This was a cruel irony as Walter had only recently received a trophy at the Northern Dinner for

his gallant long-distance tours in this normally reliable car.

Norman and Tricia Marrett came to the rescue, however, in their mightily powerful Mercedes roadster, and towed the 2 litre through the Dublin bypass tunnel, and onto the boat, in good time. Quite how terrifying the experience was for the 2 litre crew is not recorded.

Back at Holyhead, most of us headed for the Cymran hotel (including Walter – still on tow) and enjoyed a convivial evening before going our separate ways on the Monday morning. Some journeys home were quite long, Holyhead being out on a western limb, and no doubt felt longer still by the time the cars and crews reached home, but there were no reports of problems and all made it safely back.

This brief review of our adventures can hardly begin to reflect the immense amount of effort put in by Rodney, Nigel and Jonathan in organising the tour, and our thanks are due to them for a very pleasant and interesting holiday among friends. ■

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*Goodness knows what's going on here! The Heins 2 litre at Clonmacnoise.
With Nigel Walder, Rodney Saunders and Hazel Rowlands*



The Cliffs of Moher

Suffolk Lagonda Weekend 2018

Colin Mallett organized this one

THE 41ST SUFFOLK DINNER took place on Saturday 7th April 2018 at the Ufford Park Hotel Woodbridge Suffolk. The first dinner was an informal gathering of Rapier and other Lagonda owners organised in 1977 by Mike and Ann Pilgrim. After the original hotel closed down we enjoyed the seaside delights of the White Lion Hotel in Aldeburgh but then their function room became an exotic Indian restaurant so we moved to the Thorpeness Country Club for a few years. A lovely location, but with no accommodation was not ideal.

Mike asked me to take over the dinner last year. My first job was to find a suitable location and Leah (who helps Robin to run the spares) assisted with admin. We chose the particular date because there was a vintage car rally in Lower Ufford on the Saturday lunchtime organised by Talbot specialist restorer Foppe d'Hane.

The Ufford Park Hotel is a modern purpose-built business and leisure complex with private, secure parking. There are many different sized function rooms. We were not sure how many would come to the new event and once the bookings came in we were able to move to a bigger room with a private bar. We ended up with nearly 60 people and the room can accommodate many more than this.

Everyone seemed pretty happy with the hotel, especially as it caters for the "less mobile" and indeed we had a ground-floor room. The only criticism is that it is a little "golfy". Some of us think there are more rewarding ways of spending time, although the parking

was appropriate as seen in the picture.

Clive Dalton parked in the Captain's slot with the Lady Captain's place taken by John Breen's daughter Rachel. She is still getting to grips with the 16/80 so had put the L-plates on.


The Rapier belonging to Rodney Saunders nicely completed the line-up.

Rather than a pre-set seating plan we prepared name-tags and put them on a table for people to scoop up and arrange their own seating. This worked well, especially with the good-sized room as there was plenty of space for everyone to sit where they wanted.

The weekend was completed with the Spares Office open for coffee on Sunday morning followed by the lunchtime meeting in the Mill House Pub in Saxtead Green.

Next year's dinner will take place at the same place on Saturday April 6th 2019. All are welcome. ■

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Appropriate parking slots



Colin and Amanda Mallett, happy with the turnout

Lagonda Club Data Protection Policy

1) This Policy sets out how Lagonda Club Limited (the Club) collects, uses and protects any information that the Club members (Members) give to the Club about themselves and their cars.

2) The Club is committed to ensuring that Members' privacy is protected and that any personal information will only be used in accordance with this Policy.

3) This Policy will be effective from 25 May 2018, and may be changed from time to time thereafter. Any changes will be notified to Members before they are implemented.

4) The Club will collect, store and update information (the Information) about each Member, covering their name (and partner's name where given), membership number, postal address, telephone number(s), email address and the fact that they own their specific Lagonda(s). No other personal information will be held by the Club. If Members give credit/debit card details to the Club, these details will be used only for the transaction concerned, and will not be retained by the Club.

5) The Club will also collect, store and update information on Lagondas owned by Members, including the model, body type, registration number, date of first registration, car number and engine number of each car. One of the Club's purposes is to build a complete history of each car, and it does therefore expect Members to provide this information on joining the Club, and to update this on request

at reasonable intervals.

6) In addition to the information in 5) above, the Club will collect as much information as possible (including photographic) about each Lagonda and its condition, from Members and from other sources, in order to build upon the Club's historical archive.

7) The Club will publish, to Members only, a Register, which will include, for each Member, the Information in 4), above, and car details as in 5), above. This Register may be in hard copy or in electronic form (password-protected where necessary). Details of new Members will be published in the Club's Newsletter. If a Member wishes to restrict the publication of the Information relating to them, then they should inform the Membership Secretary, who will agree this with them.

8) From time to time, the Club may contact Members to confirm the information that it holds on them and on their Lagondas. Any Member may obtain details of the Information by contacting the Membership Secretary.

9) No information that is not included in the Register will be used in the Club's publications to Members (including the Magazine and the Newsletter), without their written permission.

10) No information about a Member, or any that links them to a specific Lagonda that they own, will ever be published to a non-member or to any third party without the Member's written permission, unless the Club is

legally required to do so.

11) The Club will share with bona fide (in the Directors' reasonable opinion) enquirers information about individual cars, including the names and the counties/states/countries of the last known addresses of their past owners, but it will not disclose any information about the current owner of any car without the owner's written permission.

12) The Club is committed to ensuring that Members' Information is kept secure, and it has taken steps to prevent unauthorised access or disclosure, particularly where electronic data is concerned. Security measures will be reviewed, as available technology evolves, and improvements will be made where reasonable.

13) The Club's website uses 'cookies', stored on Members' browsers, which identify Members and store information about any purchases that

they may make. This helps the Club to improve its service to Members. Members can change the settings on their browsers to prevent this, but this may limit the service that the Club can provide to them.

14) Members are expected to maintain strict confidentiality regarding information about other Members and their cars, and to adhere to the Club's policy in this matter. Members' Information must never be used for commercial purposes. Any breach of this policy will be taken very seriously by the Club and may lead to the termination of a Member's membership.

15) All queries should be addressed to the Membership Secretary, who, as at 25th May 2018, is Colin Bugler, at Wintney House, London Rd., Hartley Wintney, Hants, RG27 8RN, email: admin@lagondaclub.com ■



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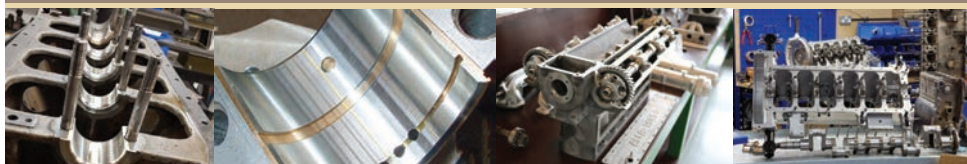
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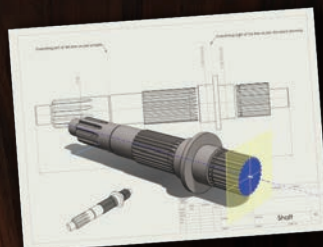
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A 1930s reincarnation of an early Lagonda Part 2

Mark Dufton is making excellent progress on this monumental rebuild

THE WINTER EDITION of 'The Lagonda' highlighted several engine issues discovered during the on-going restoration; this follow-up gives some insight as to how these were resolved. I lay no claim to them being the ultimate solution - after all there are many ways of doing things - but offer a possible method. Factors, such as wanting to do as much 'in house' utilising ones own skills and facilities, and a tight rein on the budget, all influence the decision. In some instances there is no alternative but to engage specialist services, the cracks to the cylinder block being the first example.

Initial visual inspection of the cracks revealed only the tip of the iceberg - utilising proper flaw detection methodology revealed a network of cracks on both sides of the block, assessed as being the result of frost damage before the car was laid up about 60 years ago. I had considerable concerns about welding processes and subsequent heat distortion on a 90-year-old cast iron block. However, subsequent to the previous article, two club members kindly emailed me to suggest the user of laser welding with nil distortion, something I had not considered but certainly would in the future. This may well have been a good solution, but in the event, a mechanical method was adopted.

Into the void stepped Mike Powell, a man with over 40 years of experience with the 'Surelock' process, specialising in vintage casting repairs. A very distinct advantage was

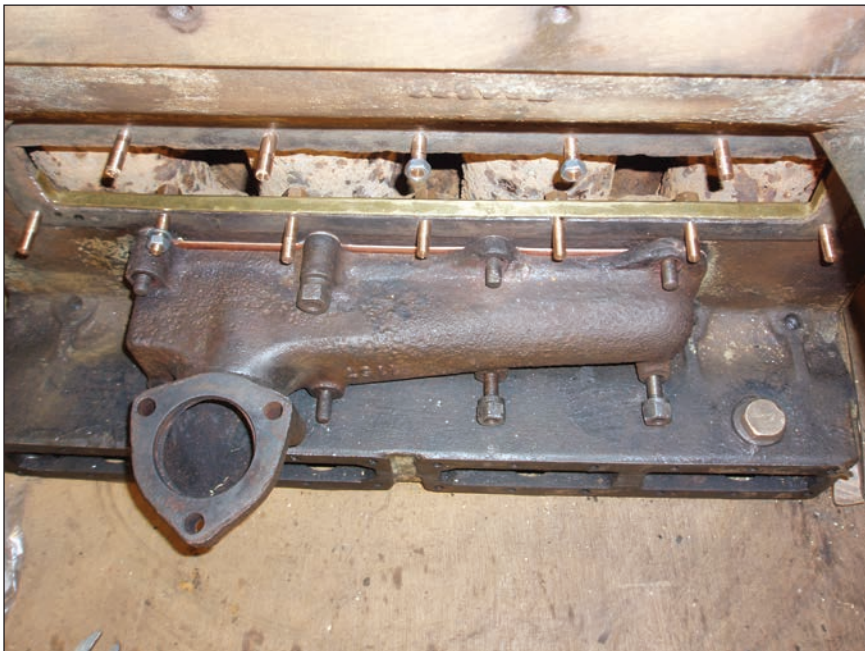
that the repairs could be carried out on site, and after eight hours of work he had dealt with all the cracks using either stitching (keys placed across the crack), lacing (along the crack) or a combination of both. Although we were unable to undertake subsequent pressure testing, the job looked superb, and whilst very confident there would be no leakage, he recommended a sealing additive, such as Wynns ceramic or Techrock, when the system is first filled and run to temperature.

Hindsight is a wonderful thing, as Mike also indicated he could have effected a repair on the corroded and torn water plate threads, as well as dealing with the 3/32" bow on the upper seating face. This was likely to entail cutting out cast material and stitching in new, and then re-tapping the threads. However, I had already faced this challenge by producing an L shaped flange from 16swg brass sheet, clamping it to the block and transfer drilling to enable an extension of the 1/4" BSF holes into the plate. Studs replaced the original screws, accompanied by thin backing nuts machined from either phosphor bronze or stainless steel. The missing corroded bolting face was in-filled with Q-Bond, and the surfaced trued by very careful filing.

Consideration was given to not impeding water flow around the cylinders, differential expansion of dissimilar materials, and the operating temperature /resistance of the metallic filler, but it was felt that none of these



The engine before commencing the rebuild



Cracked water jacket repairs adjacent to inlet ports



Crack repair behind exhaust manifold



Nearside water plate mounting repairs

issues would lead to failure. The 'bowing' of the one bolting face was countered by machining the new water plate mating surface appropriately (as was the original corroded component), and fitting a new and generously thick gasket. This appears to have tightened down well and should be leak free.

As mentioned previously, the centre main bearing cap was missing its locating lug, relying on the studs to hold it squarely in alignment. Although this appears to have worked, one felt a little uneasy leaving it like this. By a stroke of good fortune, Robin Cooke, the Club's Spares Officer, managed to find me a cap which configured very closely to the broken one, albeit off an earlier engine with piped oil feed. The original shell was checked in the cap using marking blue, and fitted very well, but when offered to the block, the machined alignment lugs were set a few thou narrower than the block register. After considerable measurement and checking, the cap was delicately and accurately set in the milling machine and corrected. A small amount was also removed from the bolting face which would subsequently allow a very thin shim to be used to adjust the bearing clearance. This was done, resulting in 1.5-2.0 thousands of an inch clearance, measured using 'Plastigauge'. Each journal was checked individually, resulting in a crankshaft which turns with only small resistance. The problem with the connecting rods and their alignment is another story!

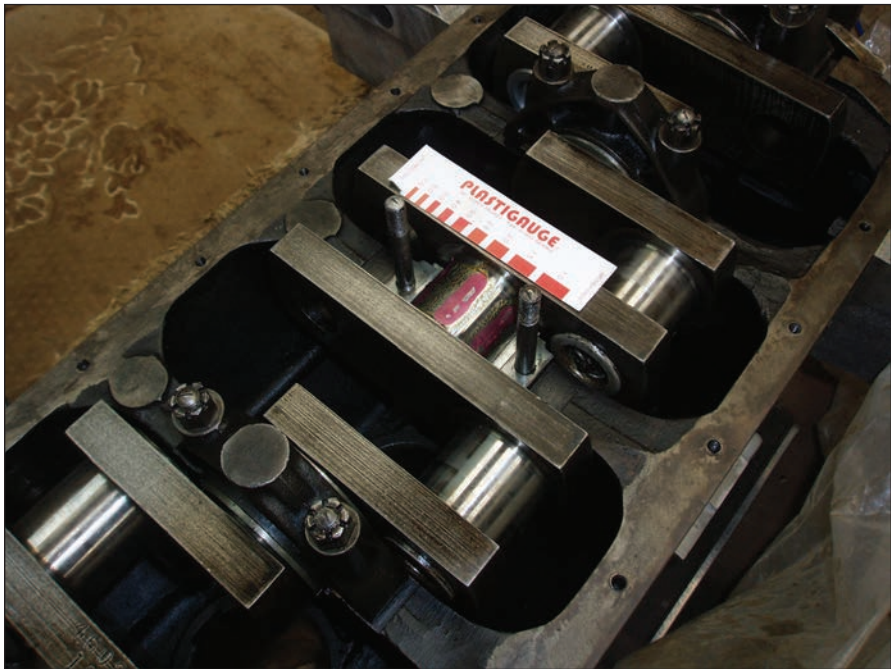
After some research, and discussion with various parties, the camshafts supplied by the Club equate to those for the 'Speed Model' engine as fitted to ETV199. One area that was still a bit murky was the precise timing

of the camshafts, there being two or three possible options put forward. After discussion with Newman Cams (the manufacturer of the Club's camshafts), it was decided to stick to the specification sheet supplied with the shafts, setting the inlet opening at 12 degrees BTDC, the exhaust closing at 12 degrees ATDC, with an 8 thou valve clearance. A very useful timing disc can be downloaded from www.blocklayer.com, which you can print off bespoke to your engine timing. When stuck to a cardboard disc and fixed on to the crank nose, using a wire pointer, this proved very useful. It can be zeroed using the flywheel TDC mark (assuming it's bolted on correctly!), the engine being turned using a pry bar on the starter ring gear (starter removed).

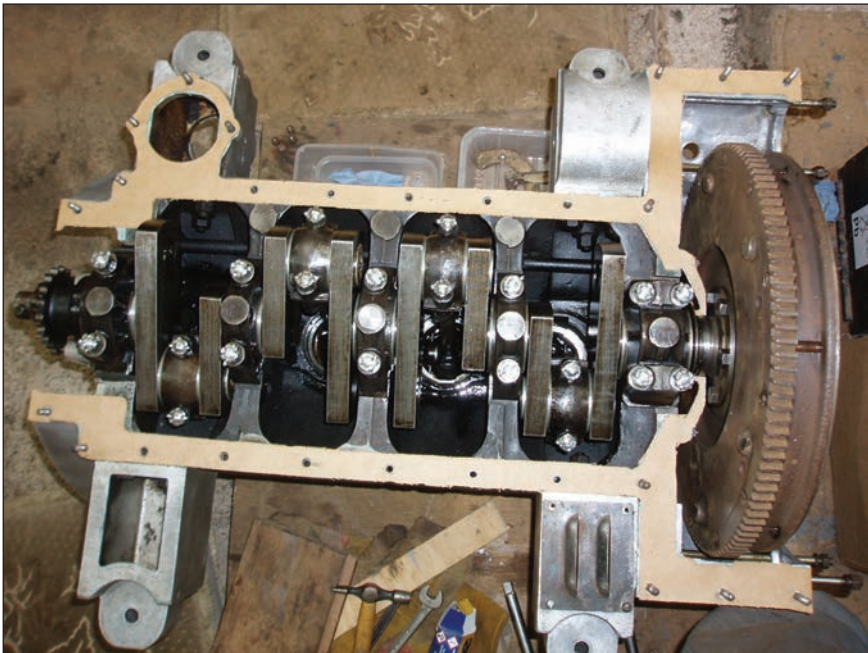
At this moment in time the engine is now installed in the chassis but has yet to be run, a considerable number of ancillaries are being worked on before this can happen. Fingers are firmly crossed!.

The following resources were found invaluable during the engine rebuild, or were recommended (laser welding):

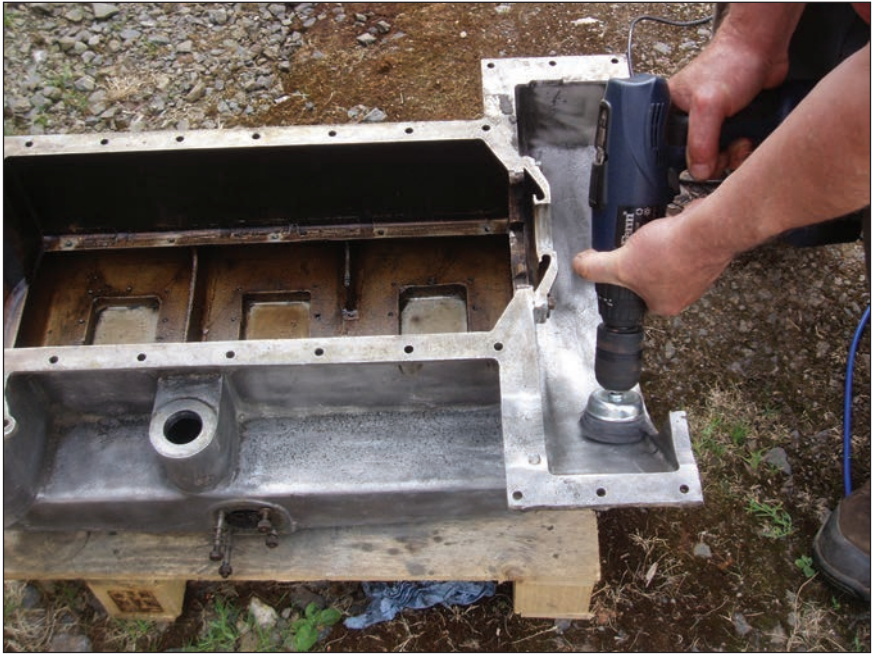
- New and Used spares: Lagonda Club (Robin Cooke), Pre-war Car Parts (David Ayre).
- Crack Repairs: Sure-lock Casting Repairs, Halesowen, Mike Powell 07860 645414.
- Non Ferrous Materials: Maidstone Engineering (Staplehurst, Kent), see website.
- Gasket Paper Rolls, Plastigauge: Stationary Engine Parts (Elvington, Yorkshire), see website.
- Shim stock: MSC Industrial Supplies Ltd (Wednesbury, West Midlands), see website.



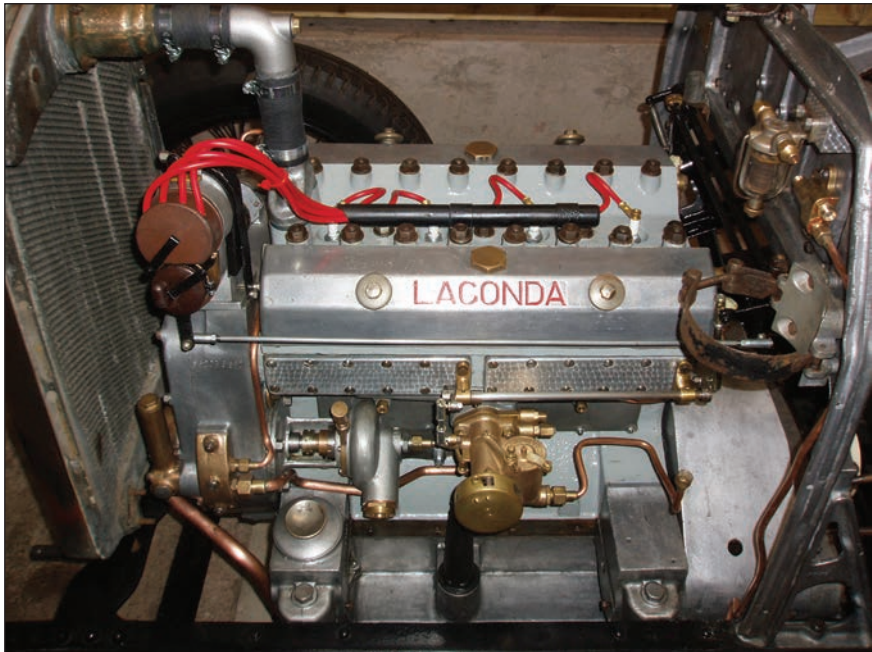
Main bearing fit - checked using Plastigauge



Crankshaft, rods and pistons fitted



Cleaning the sump



The rebuilt engine looking as new

- Piston Rings: F.W.Thornton & Son Ltd., (Wellington, Telford, Shropshire), see website.

- Magneto Repairs: Ribblesdale Auto Electrics Units Ltd (Preston, Lancashire), see website.

- Control ball Joints: Vintage Supplies Ltd, (North Walsham, Norfolk, relocation to Worcester early 2018), see website.

- Laser Welding: EMP Tooling, (Havant) 02392 492626.

I must not forget the invaluable resource of both members and professional restoration companies, who have all greatly assisted with filling the voids in my knowledge during the process of rebuilding.

As to the cleaning of the castings, dependant on size they were fully scraped and degreased to remove caked-on road debris, soil, oil and grease, then 'sand blasted' in a cabinet, using a glass bead based media. Once removed the items are slightly matt; they were washed, then wire wool used to give a shiny finish.

On the larger castings like the cast iron block and aluminium sump/bell

housing, various sizes of rotary wire brush were used in an electric drill, enabling every nook and cranny to be reached, then a bit of hand wire brushing to get the 'scratch marks' pointing the same way, then finally polishing with wire wool.

Copper pipes/brass fittings with awkward shapes were usually hand wire brushed, initially, to get rid of thick verdigris (wearing dust mask/safety glasses), then light emery cloth, followed by wire wool.

The chassis and axles were professionally blasted and sprayed by a local company.

As the restoration building is unheated a bloom of new corrosion will quickly commence in the damp winter weather. All non painted items have therefore received a very thin coat of clear lacquer (Ardenbrite), which takes the shine off slightly, but provides a hard coating to resist atmospheric corrosion. We have yet to discover if this product will remain stable at normal running temperatures, but it appears to on paper! ■



The restored chassis engine - February 2018

The Road to Buying a V12 Lagonda - Part 2

Laurence Hannam continues his reminiscences

HAVING JOINED THE Club, I placed a "Wanted" advert, which duly appeared in Newsletter No.24, May 1976. "LG.6 or V.12 DHC. Any condition considered. Prepared to travel. Will pay cash". LG.6, you ask; why? Well, I had begun to hear of the fearsome complexity of the V12. And spares? There were hardly any. To the Club, and indeed many in the old car movement at the time, the V12 was a "modern". Hence spares were reasonably plentiful for the LG6, courtesy doubtless of the M45 and LG45 preceding models. I realised even then, that an LG6 would be a far more practical purchase; plus, coachwork being almost identical, the same handsome car.

My Newsletter advert prompted two responses. The first was by letter, from Roland Morgan, a name familiar to anyone a member of our Club at that time. Dated 3rd June, "I have a 1938 LG6 Drophead Coupe which I am prepared to sell for £6,000 if you are interested". He had owned it 12 years and the car had covered 110,000 miles. Good condition, engine rebuilt 20,000 miles prior, good paintwork, leather-work fair. At the time, perhaps it sounded too expensive, but strangely, I didn't follow up.

Odd, as he was available either in Kensington or Broadstairs, so I would not have had to travel very far. I guess my £3,000 budget made enthusiasm for a £6,000 car rather pointless. By this time, I realised that my £3,000 was unlikely to buy an up and running car; whatever, it would doubtless need much work.

Some three weeks later, the phone rang. This time, a V12 drophead.

Here are the notes I took from that conversation: last car (ie last V12 built) ... completed 12/12/1940 ... very original ... mechanically sound ... bodywork perfect.

I recall that the latter was qualified by the statement "but not Oulton Park concours". I had to have this car. I can't explain it, but I knew this was THE car. With trepidation, I asked how much he was looking for. "£7,000". So that was that, I said it sounded a really nice car, but beyond my means, and there the conversation ended.

Mum having agreed to lend me £2,000, was keen to hear what had transpired. She listened carefully, and to my great surprise, volunteered to lend me £6,000! She knew how much research I had done and simply said that, if I was sure that the car was worth £7,000, she would lend me the additional amount necessary. To put this into some inflationary perspective, the new price of a Jaguar XJ6 4.2 in 1976 was £6,660, and a Mini could be yours for £1,496.

Notice anything missing from my notes? I didn't get the caller's name! Of course, once I knew the price, all hope evaporated, and knowing his name was pointless. The 1976 "Car of the Year" was the Chrysler/Talbot Alpine, new price £2,164. Imagine going to someone who had never bought a new car, and had agreed to lend her son (only 2 years out of school) enough to buy a new car, and saying, "Can you lend me enough to buy THREE new cars".... for some old car? Hence my

huge surprise at Mum readily offering the difference.

But who was it that rang? I called Arnold Davey. Unfortunately the "last car" comment, which eventually proved incorrect, confused things. Arnold was aware of chassis 14120, but that was not the car in question.

Newsletter No26: August 1976 Wanted adverts. "I would be most grateful if the gentleman who telephoned me regarding possible sale of a very original V12 DHC in reply to my advert in the May Newsletter would please contact me again". I have only now appreciated this, but I never repeated my "Wanted LG6 or V12" advert; that must demonstrate how certain I was that this car was "the one". Unfortunately there was no response, and my plea was repeated in the next Newsletter - October.

Meanwhile, I was keeping an eye on and maintaining a record of Lagondas being advertised, and sold at auction. Prices were increasing. That 'expensive' LG6 of Roland Morgan's, sold at auction for £6,400, had not been overpriced after all! I discovered Coys had bought it, so rang them. They said they would vacuum it, tidy the interior, perhaps spend some £1500 on it ... then seek £9,500 for it. This really was alarming; there is no way, obviously, that I could ask for or expect to borrow even more. Needless to say, I also regularly checked adverts in Motor Sport, Classic Car, and Exchange & Mart. I couldn't read everything, and a colleague at Commercial Union mentioned that the Sunday Times carried adverts for old cars; so I asked him to let me know if anything of interest appeared. A few weeks later, in August 1976, one Thursday he said

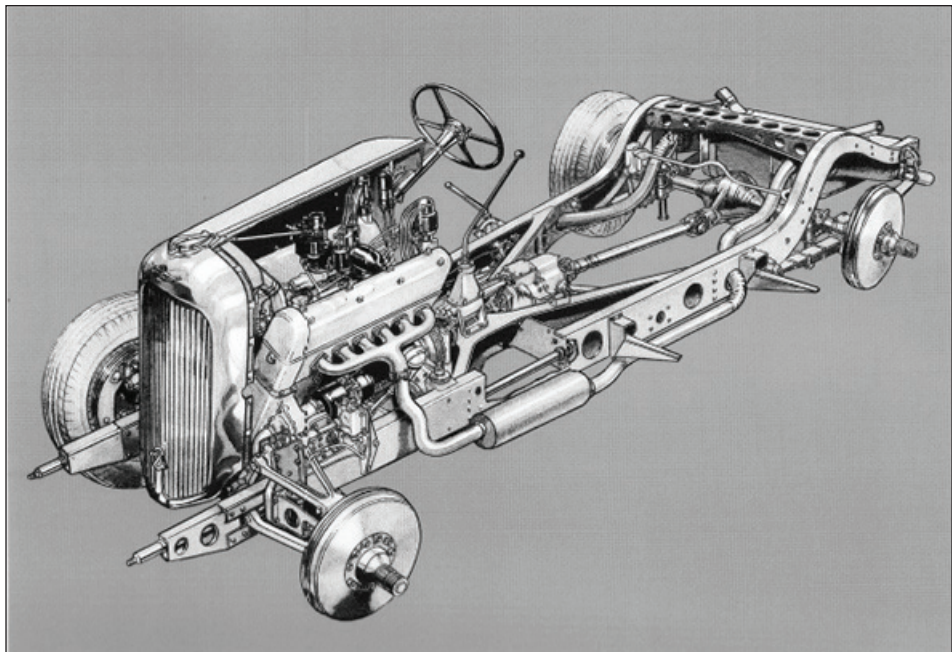
he thought one of those cars might have been in the last Sunday Times. A V12 drop-head, in Edinburgh; I recall, in pretty good order and with a spare engine: £5,500! Of course.... it was sold; at that price, it probably sold that Sunday morning. By this time I had realised that not many of these cars were built, and were rarely coming up for sale, so that missed opportunity was pretty depressing.

Searching for missing Riley log books serendipitously brought to light those notes made in 1976. That LG45 DHC I viewed at Dan Margulies' premises in Kensington in May 1976 was priced at £3,750. Stated to have very good mechanics, needing a new hood, doors requiring attention and some wood needing renewing, in hindsight that seems a pretty fair price from a Kensington dealer. In April 1972 another LG45 DHC, stated as needing some trim, but otherwise concours, had been advertised at £1,250. Gives you an idea of how prices were increasing at the time, but that needs to be viewed in the context of general inflation then, which was rampant.

Despite the lack of spares, V12s were clearly already achieving higher prices, and I had to accept that LG45 DHC prices were no direct comparison to those for V12s. My notes must have made pretty depressing reading. A V12 DHC had achieved £8,240 at an auction in Geneva. In October 1976, Brian Classic had one "in good condition" for £8,000. In December 1976, Culcheth had one, "not concours, can leave out in the rain, very original excellent condition, 97,000 miles: £10,750. In February 1977, Dan Margulies was selling a 1939 V12 dhc "in mint condition"



The Dinky model that fired the enthusiasm for the V12



V12 chassis sketch

for £12,000 ... and he sold that car quickly. I had, indeed still do have, an admiration for Bentley R Type Continentals. I considered buying one, even if rear seat passengers would need to have no legs below the knee. At least it would keep pace with Lagonda prices, and the plan would be to sell it to fund a Lagonda purchase at a future date. But what if I fell in love with it - couldn't bear to sell it? Performance-wise, there was not much between the two cars. My uncle told me that he had been driving along the Great West Road in his V12 Rapide, and encountered a Bentley Continental out on test; 'overalled' driver with owner at his side. Clearly the owner told the driver to give it the gun, but my uncle stayed ahead. Surprised to see that, today, an R Type Continental sells for considerably more than a V12 drop-head. Perhaps this is because 1950s cars appear to hold an allure for many today that pre-war cars don't.

Fashion, style; what drives them? We all prefer certain eras of car design above others. Lagonda were exceptional not simply for their engineering quality, but also the beauty of their coachwork. To me, a 2 Litre Lagonda is a far more attractive car than a lumbering VdP Bentley 4½. Of course, my preference is for cars of the late 1930s. My 1951 Riley is, in all truth, a 1938 style. The war dealt a cruel blow to the development of the V12. Lagonda's 2 Litre had a seven year run, likewise the Meadows-engined cars. Had the war not intervened, we could have seen V12s still being manufactured into the mid or even late 1940s. What further improvements would have been achieved during that period? Even the last V12s have detail improvements,

so doubtless much more could have been expected. When the war ended, some manufacturers continued with pre-war models, usually fairly briefly, but generally new styles were not a development of pre-war but entirely new and different. It wasn't all bleak in the UK, the Jaguar XK120 was outstandingly beautiful. The 2.6 Lagonda? To me, not an unattractive car, but it epitomises the slightly lost/bewildered approach that followed the war. There are pre-war elements modernised, but it doesn't match in beauty the style that the technical tour de force of its chassis demanded. The 3 Litre: yes, that's got it - a realisation that, actually, less fussiness could result in something really attractive. The epitome to me, however, of beauty through simplicity is its contemporary - the Graber-styled Alvis TD21.

The phone rang; it was him! Mel Riding. He hadn't realised that my advert was directed at him. I explained that Mum had agreed to lend me some money, and that therefore his V12 was of interest. It was not to be plain sailing. He had decided to buy a garage, and would only sell the V12 if he could not raise the funds otherwise. So, contact made, but no progress.

Another month went by, the phone rang; Mel felt that it was likely that he would sell the V12! Arrangements made, I drove up to Cheshire with my brother Richard to see the car. It was two-tone grey, one shade of which was identical to that on the Dinky Lagonda that set me off on this journey. The drive to Bramhall and back was over 400 miles. Despite that, Mel refused to let me drive the car, only volunteering to take us for what turned out to be a mere 15 minute drive. The car took a while to start, much whirring for some



The V12 when acquired



The V12 snapped by your Editor at the 1979 AGM

time, a few pops and bangs, and then eventually running on all cylinders. I had never seen a V12 start so assumed that was normal; it certainly seemed to run well otherwise. If you recall my previous article, you will remember my error when buying the Riley. This time round, I took great care to check the wood frame and panel fit carefully. Some rot around the base of the number plate panel, otherwise all seemed very sound. The roof covering was fairly recent, as was the paintwork and some of the chrome. Mel bought the V12 in 1971 and I think this work was completed in 1972. I asked if he knew details of the original owner; he responded that he thought it was a doctor or vet in Blackpool. I doubted that, as I could see "JPH" meant first registration in Surrey. Mel showed me spares that would be included; not much of use mechanically, but there was a set of wings, running boards, radiator shell, and correct headlamps (the latter very poor but having the little fins on the plinths, matching the Lagonda radiator cap bar).

I liked what I had seen, and my enthusiasm was even more enhanced. Eventually Mel rang to say he would sell the V12. But disaster! The price had risen to £8,000! Spoke with mother; OK (relief!), but see what you can negotiate. More discussion, and I stated that if it helped, I'd be happy to give him first refusal if ever I decided to sell the car. Eventually we agreed on £7,800. Not much of a reduction, it has to be said. Eventually, however, I was to have the satisfaction of "the last laugh" on the topic of the car's worth. There now followed a hiatus, only explained when the car arrived in Worcester Park, where we lived then. I had expected to drive up to

Bramhall to collect it and it was with some surprise then, to discover that Mel was insistent he deliver the car to me. Especially given the cost of petrol for that journey. The wonderful day arrived, 29th December, but was not without its worries. We expected Mel around 2.00pm, but no sign. The hours passed, then at last, around 5.00pm, he arrived, V12 very much travel stained. "Got lost around Marble Arch". After the usual pleasantries, down to business - at last, the dream was mine. I had just spent a fortune and put myself into debt for goodness knows how many years, buying a car I had never driven!

You will have to endure yet another article to discover what followed, but I did soon discover the real reason for the delayed arrival. The V12 was parked in our garage. It had snowed, and I really didn't wish to have my very first drive in poor weather. After 3 days I could stand it no longer, so with great excitement, I started the car; as before it took a long time to fire, let alone start. I set off, in the snow. By the time we got to the A3 roundabout, the car was boiling. I returned home. So, this was why he had been late! Very disappointing, but more importantly I liked driving the car. "What if proves horrible to drive?" had been haunting me.

By early February, I had covered 100 miles in the car. Reversing out of the drive, the engine stopped, and nothing would make it restart. Having paid so much for a car, I naively expected total reliability. Furthermore, despite always wanting to take things apart "to see how it works", I had resolved not to do this with the V12; now I had no choice. ■

Monk Fryston 2018

David Hine describes the event

THE LAGONDA CLUB Northern Section is enjoying an interregnum, following the long and admirable tenure of Tim Gresty as our Northern Secretary. As a result, our annual Dinner, Rally and Prize-giving was arranged by a small team of stalwarts.

The event has evolved into a two-day affair with many folk staying Thursday and Friday nights.

This allows the inevitable wedding to follow us at the weekend.

Nigel Hall organised the hotel and dinner arrangements and Ian Waugh plotted the mini rally, which took place on the Friday. There were multiple dramas at Knarr Mill in the preceding weeks as Nigel was convinced that practically no one was going to show up. The lack of the printed newsletter has clearly contributed to many folk not responding in a timely fashion. This involved Nigel in many phone calls and e-mails to ensure that we were fully subscribed.

Another drama involved Nigel Smeal's Big Red Lagonda which decided to snap its timing chain when revved up in neutral. Alan Brown helped Nigel S to change the chain, which is a huge job, only to find that the abrupt cessation had sheared the dynamo drive shaft as well. Alan, patient as ever, did all the work again so that Nigel could reassemble the shiny bits in time to arrive on time.

The third drama, as yet unresolved, was that both our organisers' 3 litre Lags failed to proceed and they had

to make do with lesser chariots, a Bentley and an E Type Jaguar! Many of us arrived at Monk Fryston on Thursday afternoon and enjoyed either a (boisterous) dinner at the Hotel or in local hosteleries.

Monk Fryston is a charming venue but suffering from faded splendour. However this was well balanced by the excellent staff who made our stay most enjoyable.

The weather was kind and Friday saw us out touring the charming roads and villages of Yorkshire following Ian's excellent directions. The Coffee stop was a golf club where we were as perplexed as to the excitement of knocking little balls around, as they were perplexed as to why anyone would drive such an old car.

A splendid lunch was held at the Falconberg Arms, Coxwold, and other local pubs. The former had always been the start of the Northern Rally in years gone by.

Many more members had arrived during the afternoon and there was a wonderful display of twelve Lagondas, two Crossleys and five other splendid classic cars.

Then followed the usual reception where we enjoyed acquaintances old and new. It was great to see John Turner, in his 95th year as sprightly as ever! Clearly Lagonda cars lead to a pure and long life.

Sixty members sat down and dinner was very well served indeed. This year Nigel had introduced a varied menu so



*Margaret Hatfield, Jill Hine, Jenny Hall and Margaret Browning
enjoy pre-dinner drinks*



*Nigel Hall, Nigel Smeal and Rodney Saunders
discuss Big Red's timing chain dilemma*

that everyone could choose what they wanted. Hand written legends were on each table to help most of us who had forgotten what we had ordered in the first place. Tim Gresty said the Grace and Rodney Saunders proposed the loyal toast as the evening progressed to the traditional series of dubious jokes by Alan Brown, which cause much hilarity.

Martin Sumner had very kindly brought the appropriate prizes to be presented.

My Jill did the honours and it was great that Tim Gresty was awarded the Committee Plate and the Knarr Mill plate for exceptional and outstanding service to the Club.

Mark Butterworth was awarded the V12 trophy picture, and Walter Thompson the 2 litre trophy picture. It was a bit sad that no more trophy winners had been able to come for their awards.

I then followed with a few comments about the new electric Lagonda and its miraculous ability. I also looked forward to the Rally to Ireland this June and the Snowdonia Northern Rally in 2019.

I rounded off with yet another recycled monologue, which folk seem to find amusing depending on how much wine had been taken.

Judging by subsequent thank-yous and other comments the whole event was considered a splendid success. ■



Northern Member Jack Read wins the Cheshire Life Trophy in his Rapier

Letters & emails ... Letters & emails

Hi Roger,

I was told about this reference within a book by Roald Dahl called “*My Uncle Oswald*”. It purports to be an extract from Oswald’s diaries:

London, July 1938

“Have just returned from a satisfactory visit to the Lagonda Works at Staines. W.O. Bentley gave me lunch (salmon from the Usk and a bottle of Montrachet) and we discussed the extras for my new V12. He has promised me a set of horns that will play Mozart’s *Son gia mille e Tre* in perfect pitch. Some of you may think this to be a rather childish conceit, but it will serve as a nice incentive to be reminded, every time I press the button, that good old Don Giovanni had by then deflowered 1003 buxom Spanish damsels. I told Bentley that the seats are to be upholstered in fine-grain alligator, and the panelling to be veneered in yew. Why yew? Simply because I prefer the colour and grain of English yew to that of any other wood.

But what a remarkable fellow this W.O. Bentley is. And what a triumph for Lagonda when he went over to them. It is somehow sad that this man, having designed and given his name to one of the finest cars in the world, should be forced out of his own company and into the arms of a rival. It means, however, that the new Lagondas are now peerless, and I for one would have no other machine. But this one isn’t going to be cheap. It is costing me more thousands than I ever thought it possible to pay for an automobile.”

I hope this is of some interest – maybe in particular to Arnold.

Cheers

Nick Hine

The book cover describes Uncle Oswald as follows:

“Aside from being thoroughly debauched, strikingly attractive and astonishingly wealthy, Uncle Oswald was the greatest bounder, bon vivant and fornicator of all time”.

With acknowledgement to the publisher – Penguin Books. ■

Hi Roger,

From Le Mans - please note the words on the can to the right. ■

Martin Bugler

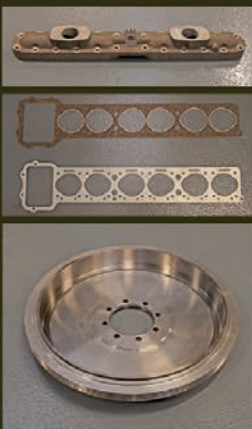
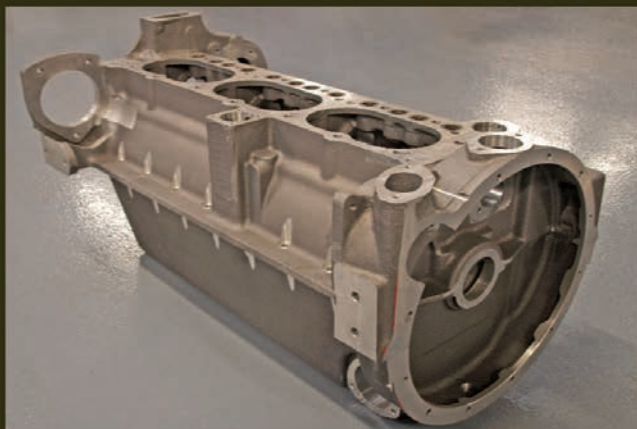




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