



**THE MAGAZINE OF THE
LAGONDA CLUB**
Number 270 Autumn 2021

Northern Dinner – Wednesday 4th May 2022

Rossington Hall Hotel

South of Doncaster DN11 0HW



A new venue for 2022, and a midweek date, by which we hope to minimise the dreaded Friday traffic and avoid the date clashes with hotel wedding bookings.

The hotel is characterful and has excellent rooms - these are now bookable by telephoning the hotel directly and mentioning the Club dinner date.

The various rooms can be viewed on the website (**Rossington Hall; press 'book a room' to see the pictures**). Phone **01302 866822**.

The hotel adjoins the Northern Racing School, off the old Great North Road - A638.

Alternative accommodation can be booked just over half a mile away at the Best Western **Premier Doncaster Mount Pleasant Hotel, DN11 0HW 01302 868696**; again, say you're with the Lagonda Club.

Forms for the dinner booking, with menu choices, will appear in the New Year, together with a tour, yet to be organised.

Further information from Nigel Hall, nigelhallgb@gmail.com or 01457 762766 (home) or 07831 638383 (mobile).



The Lagonda Magazine

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COVER: M45s at the Annual Gathering line up in the sunshine Picture from Peter Lloyd

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Editorial Mutterings

Roger Seabrook

HELLO AGAIN LAGONDA enthusiasts! I am back in the 'hot seat' for this issue. Many thanks to Toby for keeping the Magazine going during the Pandemic – there couldn't have been a worse time to take over than in 2020, when all activities had to be put on hold.

More recently, things have improved socially, most notably the Annual Gathering which was held in perfect weather.

I have been trying to fathom out the workings of the Zenith 36VH carburettors fitted to my 2-litre saloon, coming to the conclusion that the compensator jets were too small. The car went fine on the flat but, when climbing one of those long steady gradients that 2 litres struggle with, the car would not just require a lower gear - it over-heated and spat back at the carbs. It then became embarrassingly slow, down to under 30 mph. I checked the jets against those in the earlier 36 UH carbs that the tourer used to have, and found that there was quite a big difference (36VH = 80, 36UH = 130). The main jets were similar, so no problem there. I managed to find a couple of 135s and fitted them. A great improvement!

So, we set off on a Bean Car Club run, and the car went well – until we climbed the Fairmile, out of Henley on Thames. It was keeping to 45mph in top (still running in some new pistons) when it started to slow, and cough. At the narrowest point in the road, and 100 yards before a pull-in, it conked out. Not the jets this time – it had run out of petrol (fuel gauge still reading 4 gallons). So, I had to get out, open the bonnet, and switch to 'Reserve'. All well and good, but the Autovac needs to fill, and that means suction from the inlet manifold. The car only splutters away from the kerb for a short while, before running normally. No-one got impatient, so that was a relief, but embarrassing nevertheless. At least I know now where the 'red line' is on the fuel gauge. On the Tourer it's at Zero and there are still about 2 gallons in the tank.

Over the last few months I have been helping with a house renovation and slowly restoring a 1925 Austin 7 Chummy, for my son. In some ways, more challenging than the Lagonda – I'm having some difficulty with fitting the timing case. When on, the engine stiffens, so some investigation needed. ■

***Last date for copy for the WINTER Magazine is
Friday 24th December 2021
Please keep new articles & pictures coming in.***

The VSCC Light Car Race at Oulton Park

Richard Matthews entered his 1922 K Type

THE LAGONDA 11.9 is a fine light car with an extensive pedigree, having its roots in the 11.1 which was first produced in 1913. It was one of the first cars to be produced with a monocoque body and had other innovations like a fly-off handbrake. However, even its most ardent admirers would not class it as a race car, performance being limited by its not inconsiderable weight and lack of horses under the bonnet.

I am lucky enough to be the current custodian of BC 6389, a Lagonda 11.9 model K of 1922 vintage, a car of charming simplicity. Dashboard embellishment is limited to an optimistic speedometer, an ignition switch and a lighting panel incorporating an ammeter. There are no unnecessary fripperies like an oil pressure gauge- oil level being estimated by a handy float on the left hand side of the crankcase. Rear wheel brake drums of tiny proportions and a transmission brake provide some retardation, but it is minimal. The 1420cc 4 cylinder engine has exposed rocker gear, unusually mounted transversely in the head, and all that power is delivered through a 3 speed gearbox of splendidly low ratios.

BC 6898 has an interesting family history. My father discovered her at the back of a garage near Newark whilst he was learning to fly at nearby RAF Syerston as part of his National Service. Being in need of a vehicle, he

struck a deal and £25 changed hands. The impression my father got was that if he hadn't bought her, BC 6389 would have soon ended up in the brambles at the back of the garage, and gone the way of so many vintage cars.

A few years and many miles and adventures later, BC 6389 was in dire need of some mechanical TLC and, lacking the necessary funds, my father parted with her. Fast forward sixty years and he noticed her for sale again in the back of the VSCC gazette, having spent the intervening decades mostly in the care of one family. Again, a deal was struck, though this time for rather more than £25, and BC 6389 and a quantity of useful spares returned home.

I jumped at the chance to stretch her legs on a racetrack this summer when the VSCC advertised a light car race at Oulton Park for the first time for many years- after all when else are you likely to be able to compete against such unsuitable race vehicles as Bedelias and Trojans? My entry was accepted, and some thought had to be given to turning BC 6389 into a race car. Catch tanks for oil and water were fashioned from plastic milk containers, and an extra throttle return spring attached to keep the scrutineers happy.

The day of the race dawned and an early start saw us at Oulton Park and ready for action. The light car race was the last of the day and scheduled

to last for forty minutes, rather optimistic given the fragility of some of the vehicles taking part. Practice went off without a hitch, and the start of the race saw me well down the grid sandwiched between Austin Seven Chummies, and next to a Trojan. This was my first visit to Oulton Park, and the track certainly gives the driver plenty of excitement with lots of twisty bits. There is even the odd hill which would be unnoticed by the high-powered machinery that normally graces its tarmac. However, in an underpowered light car they cause speed to be scrubbed off at a depressing rate, and by the crest it felt as if we were travelling at walking pace.

The red light turned green and we were off, the 11.9's low gearing meant that once we were in top gear I could largely stay there apart from when tackling the afore-mentioned hilly bits. It was all hugely exciting especially when overtaking other competitors- yes this did really happen – though

the faster competitors started lapping the back of the field after a few laps.

The narrow beaded-edge tyres made cornering interesting, but the little Lagonda didn't miss a beat. A yet-to-be solved vibration caused a few white-knuckle moments but disappeared when at full chat, so I kept my foot firmly planted on the centre throttle and hung on. As the race progressed, several of the competing vehicles gracefully gave up the unequal struggle and came to rest by the side of the track. One competitor suffered the indignity of having a beaded-edge tyre explode as he crossed the finish line. All too soon it was time to retire to the paddock and drink Champagne like real racing drivers – most generously provided by Dougal Cawley of Longstone Tyres who also sponsored the race. When the dust had settled, I discovered I'd come 23rd out of 31 entrants; not a bad result and more importantly I'd had lots of fun. ■



A car to grace any circuit!

Then and Now

Colin Bugler reviews Lagonda Club activities over the years

A FEW MONTHS ago, Jeff Ody sent me some historical papers he had received from the late Phil Ridout's collection. Some of these were new to me – some I had seen previously when I took over a mass of documents from my predecessor Valerie May back in May 1991. These included such gems as the Minute Books of the 2 litre Register and the first Minutes of the Lagonda Club.

The story of how Peter Densham founded the 2 Litre Register in 1946 has been recounted many times and I won't repeat this. Also, the bad feeling between him and Mr Davies of Davies Motors was mentioned by Ivan Forshaw in his magazine articles about the early days, resulting in Mr Davies destroying all the factory records of the 2 and 3 litre Lagondas. Ivan was still apoplectic until the day he died!

Re-reading these documents brought home to me how very different those days were from the life we lead today in the Lagonda world, and I thought I might entertain you with a number of examples.

When Peter Densham founded the 2 litre Register, petrol was still rationed in the UK. In fact, it stayed rationed until the 27th May. 1950. The first meeting of this new Register (which welcomed 2 litres, 16/80's, 3 litres and Rapiers) took place at the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough, on the 20th April 1947. Southern

members were asked to assist those from the North by donating a few petrol coupons – whether this suggestion bore fruit is not recorded. However, 60 2 litres took part and there may have been even more, as cars were coming and going all day. If we fast forward to 1999, the big meeting at Brooklands, celebrating the Centenary of Lagonda, attracted approximately 100 cars, but again it was difficult to be sure of the numbers with late arrivals and early departures...

The upset between Messrs Densham and Davies occurred at this Farnborough Meeting and, apart from destroying valuable records, Mr Davies reformed the pre-war Lagonda Car Club which tended to attract the bigger engined Lagondas. The two Organisations flourished for several years with a certain amount of co-operation. Early discussions of amalgamation were not well received by either club, but, as time passed, members started to ask about the possibility of joining together. The RAC, issuing permits for events, would recognise only one club for Lagonda cars and the Lagonda Car Club had organised a few rallies. The Minutes of the 2 litre Register show that Peter Densham's reaction to the suggested amalgamation was quite curt – he said that the Car Club should close and that all members should join the 2 litre Register!

The marriage of the two organisations was not without its birth pangs and I have a copy of the discussion paper produced at the time. It is a wordy document which I won't quote in full but a flavour can be deduced from the following: - *"It is not true that the Car Club is a setup of plutocrats interested only in expensive social functions. Equally it is not true that the Register is a collection of oily enthusiasts who prefer to take their cars to pieces rather than to use them"*. I venture to suggest that even today there are many owners of the bigger Lagondas who entrust their cars to the professionals, whereas the 2 Litre owners know one end of a spanner from the other. That should bring a few letters of protest!

This paper was circulated to the members of both Clubs and a vote was taken – 257 in favour of amalgamation with 25 against. To keep both sides happy it was originally decided that the new organisation would be entitled "Lagonda Register and Car Club" but thank goodness this was soon shortened to "The Lagonda Club". The new badge was designed by a character named "Tortoise" Taylor who became the second editor of the Magazine, and his photograph captions and spoof letters were a legend.

It is interesting that the March Newsletter last year was written by Ken Jeddere-Fisher, as his father was a leading light in the Car Club, and I hold his letter to Peter Densham, dated 7th October 1951, inviting Peter to be a Patron of the new Club and giving the membership as 450 (270 from the Register, 200 from the Car Club, with

20 belonging to both clubs). By July 1952 membership had risen to 550 and, as a contrast to today, I counted 17 Overseas members in the 1952 list of members – a tiny proportion – and some of these were UK citizens working abroad. Today we have circa 800 members and approximately one third of these live outside the UK. Another trend in modern times is for members not to live in houses with numbers but more in the type of house called "The Old Rectory" or similar.

Earlier I wrote that I would highlight differences between the old days and modern times. Back in the early 90's I visited several founder members of The Lagonda Club – Ivan Forshaw (the spares supremo), Mike Bosworth (the joint Hon Secretary of the 2 litre Register and an early Committee Member of the Lagonda Club), Alan Audsley (Hon Treasurer of the 2 litre Register and first Secretary of The Lagonda Club) and Maurice Leo (whose brother Lewis was the last Secretary of the Lagonda Car Club). Their recollections were fascinating. Mike Bosworth told me that the Committee were all so young that they referred to Ivan as "Old Forshaw" because he was 40! How many of our members today are that young? Their memories, however, were not always 100%. For instance, Ivan assured me that Hamish Moffatt had driven a 14/60 from the North to the South of the African continent whereas we know it was a 12/24.

Ivan started as the Registrar of Spares for the 2 litre Register, helping members to assist each other. As time passed, he moved more to being a spares provider except for Rapiers,

which had a good source of Spares from Daniel Richmond near Salisbury. For many years an advertisement appeared in Motor Sport magazine "Lagonda wanted for spares – any model, condition or location if cheap". Cars which had come to the end of their life for whatever reason ended up with Ivan, who cannibalised them and was a reliable source of second hand spares. In the 1960s prices of cars started to increase, and it gradually became economic to rebuild rather than scrap them. At about that time, AML wanted to dispose of their pre 1960 spares and Ivan decided to bid for these because, by now, he had started to find that the DB 2.6 and 3 litre Lagondas were coming his way. He became more deeply involved with the post 1945 Lagonda and Aston spares with pre-war Lagonda spares gradually fading.

Eventually the Lagonda Club realised that it had to start being more pro-active and two Club Spares Sections were formed, with Alan Brown sourcing and providing 4½ litre spares and Peter Whenman dealing with 2 and 3 litre parts. In 1987 these were joined together and various Spares Officers have followed (sometimes of mixed quality) and now Robin Cooke provides a helpful and friendly service, not only providing new spares but also second hand ones.

Tyres – Today we are bombarded with advertisements for tyres to fit all our models. Back in the late 1940s it was a very different matter. Photographs of cars from that time frequently show completely bald tyres, which seem almost sacrilegious today. There were advertisements in the 2 Litre Register

Newsletters offering second hand and even re-mould tyres and in 1947 Ivan wrote "*Tyres suitable for re-treading can often be bought for 30/- (£1.50 today) while those with tread fetch up to £4 each*". In 1951 he reported that a set of new tyres cost £30... To put this in perspective I was earning £3 a week at that time. In 1955 I bought two 4.50 x 19 Avon Tyres for a total of £9-3-8d. Two months later I had a tyre remoulded for £2-17.6d. By then I was earning just over £20 per month before tax.

Motor Sport – I started racing in 1956, with my Rapier - the RAC issued a licence without any formalities. They sent me a small pamphlet entitled "Do's and Don'ts for Dicers". This was issued by the British Racing Drivers Club and a flavour of its contents can be gleaned from the first paragraph "*Your name (in all probability), is not Nuvolari. Please do not enter your first race with the idea of proving yourself a genius overnight. It took even the great Tazio years of practice before he became acknowledged as "Il Maestro"*".

A medical examination was required but there were no technical requirements for the car and the only equipment requirement was a crash helmet. Any helmet was OK and I simply borrowed an Army motor cyclist's steel helmet and wore goggles from my motor cycling days. You simply drove to the track, were scrutineered, went out and drove round Silverstone in your ordinary clothing. As the years went by the regulations changed out of all proportion and now you have to go on a one-day Training Course at an approved circuit and take a written

test. Then a medical and your quite expensive licence. A helmet to the latest technical specification. Flame resistant overalls and at some levels of racing, fire resistant underwear, socks, gloves, balaclava and special boots. It is almost as though the authorities are putting in so many hurdles to see whether you can surmount them. On the car side, racing tyres are required, catch tanks for oil and water, all drain plugs to be wire-locked, and extra springs on the throttle linkage.

Next you have to have a fire extinguisher, which lasts only about two years, and a Transponder on the front of your car for timing purposes.

There are now briefings by the Clerk of the Course which certainly didn't happen in the 1950s. To my mind a lot of the fun has been taken away. At some levels of racing an exercise ECG is required every two years, and the total costs keep mounting up. Back in the

old days there was a member named Bunny Henry whose name frequently appeared in "Motor Sport" racing a 4½ litre Lagonda. He sometimes worked on friends' Lagondas and, on one occasion, gave Maurice Leo a lift to Castle Combe Circuit in one of his customer's cars, which Bunny had entered in a race. Maurice asked if the owner of the car knew about this, and Bunny replied "No". "Don't you think he should?" asked Maurice. "Oh no" replied Bunny, "as far as I am concerned this is all part of my testing the car".

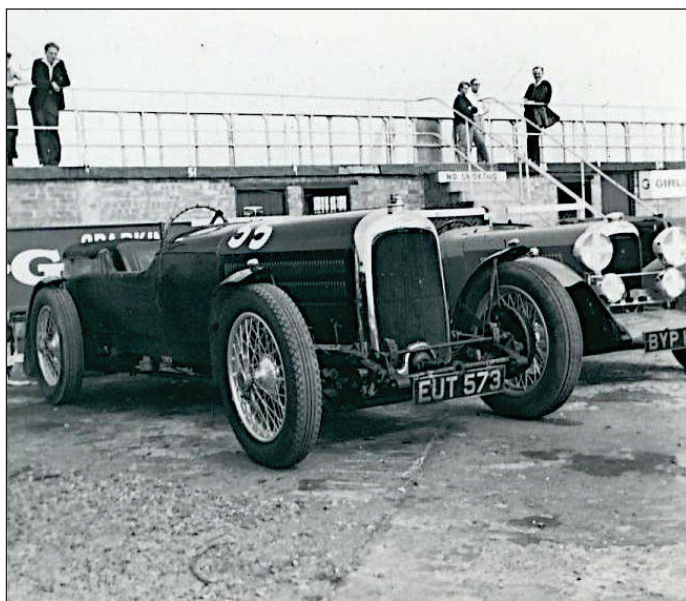
The race tracks have changed out of all recognition over the years. In the 1950's the Paddock at Silverstone had a rough grassy surface and there were concrete steps leading to the top of the pits, where you could stand to watch the racing. There was no separate pit lane until much later. An old double decker bus was used by the time keepers.



***THEN** - 2nd June 1956 - Colin in his Rapier wearing full racing gear in army helmet, goggles, sports jacket & flannels at Silverstone*



NOW - June 2012 - Son in law Neil Jones in Colin's LG45 wearing full racing gear at Le Mans Classic



Silverstone in the early 1960s the viewing area above the pits in the background. Jack Read's Rapier next to my 2 litre (the EUT registration number was a temporary aberration).

Age of Members – We all know that our ages are steadily increasing. It is recorded that Hamish Moffatt was once the youngest member at the age of 19. I was 20 when I joined in 1954 but now our new members (how can I put it politely?) are of mature years. In the early days, Lagondas were everyday transport and I drove my Rapier for about 50,000 miles in five years. Now Lagondas are advertised as “Appreciating assets” etc.

Unfortunately, as they have become more valuable, fictitious histories have started to appear such as: “*This Lagonda was first owned by a famous American film star*”. No, it jolly well wasn’t, and thanks to Arnold’s meticulous records we have been able to burst some of these bubbles. My early motoring was against the background of very limited finances which meant I had to learn to service my car myself. After doing National

Service on the transport side, I had a basic understanding of car mechanics which certainly helped.

A bit later on, when I bought my 2 litre in 1959, within a few months the crown-wheel and pinion broke. I borrowed my father in law’s car and rushed off to Ivan Forshaw who sold me a complete differential assembly for £20. Sounds cheap? That left us with savings of only £10. The following weekend my father in law and I jacked up the car in the public roadway outside our flat with screw jacks, withdrew the half shafts and fitted the replacement differential which is still in the car today. The old oil went down the roadside drain and the 2 litre was back in action as our only family transport for the next five years (eventually with three small children). I rode a bicycle to work which was about 2 miles away. Somehow, I don’t think that repairs of



The 2 litre outside our flat in Southampton – this is where the differential was changed.

this type carried out on a public road would be very popular today.

Driving our cars – These days usage varies between a trip to a local Pub Meet or perhaps an occasional social rally to pleasant parts of the world. Very few members compete in motor sport whereas 60 years ago the Lagonda Club organised road rallies, Driving Test Meetings and we were frequently invited to other clubs' events. Now only a handful of keen members use their Lagondas in sport. Mileages covered are minimal. Earlier I mentioned the first meeting of the 2 Litre Register at Farnborough. This town is in Hampshire, one of the most Southern Counties in England and 2 litres came from all over the South but also from such Northern places as Nottingham, Hull, Gateshead on Tyne, Blackpool and Cheshire. Bearing in

mind that petrol was still rationed, there were no motorways and very few dual carriageways, I find it staggering that members drove such incredible distances.

Some time in 1950, Ivan recorded that he had received an old extract from a paper called "The Courier and Advertiser". This article was headed "Dundee Motorist's Feat". It tells of a journey from Lands End to John O'Groats in a total time of 22 hours – 940 miles at nearly 43 miles per hour. The driver was a Mr Cecil Taylor and the car was a 2 Litre Lagonda. No date is given for this extraordinary achievement but, bearing in mind petrol rationing, I suspect that the drive occurred in the 1930s. No doubt there will now be a rush of 2 litre owners keen to see if they can break this record! ■

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Alastair Barker - Lagonda Racer & Character

David Hine remembers this cheerful enthusiast

ABOUT 53 YEARS ago this very charming, good-looking chap just seemed to appear in our midst. We were the Northern Lagonda Club group of pals.

He had joined the Club and was interested in buying a Lagonda, so we made him welcome but soon found he was a bit of a mystery man! Our leader and dubious role model was Herb Schofield, and it was his custom to give everyone a nick name. Because of his military bearing Alastair was named the Captain and even on our fictitious company notepaper he appeared as Capt. A Barker. I found out some years later that Alastair was, in fact, deeply involved with the Territorials and held a much higher rank but his modesty prevented him correcting Herb at the time. He asked if he could join us on a trip to Silverstone and Herb suggested we should make sure he was well looked after. Only to find when walking through the Paddock that he knew far more people than we ever did or would!

One of our elderly pals was Hugh Gasper (nicknamed Gasping Hugh) and he sold Alastair his splendid LG45 Tourer which was then driven to many events with much enthusiasm. In 1968 Herb, Jack Buckley and I had built a V12 special based on the design of the Le Mans team cars. Herb didn't like it but I raced it with boyish enthusiasm until the engine blew up in 1971. It then took me two years



to rebuild it, and I was subsequently very nervous when racing it. Alastair had no such misgiving and purchased the car from me. He also did some engine work and the car was then totally reliable. He drove it to many race meetings including driving to Italy and completing the Mille Miglia, which was no mean feat. Alastair always called this favourite car "The Old Girl". His unlucky brother Freddie was driving it at Cadwell when he skidded and bumped into a hidden rock. Alastair then brought the car up to our Slaughter House in Oldham and painstakingly took it all apart himself to get the chassis straightened.

Our group trips to Club race meetings were legendary for all the wrong reasons. Our diets were based on copious quantities of beer, fags, hamburgers and ice cream. However, one year the word got out that our bachelor pal Alastair had actually got a girlfriend which caused quite a stir. We were even more surprised when Clare arrived at Oulton Park and opened up the back of her Volvo to reveal hams, cheeses, fruits, fine wines and champagne.

Now we were really impressed. Clare joined our gang with enthusiasm and accompanied Alastair on several rallies in the V12 including one in Ireland run by Peter Walby in '97 which turned out to be incredibly wet. We will never forget the sight when following them under a flooded railway bridge when they were completely covered in water of an agricultural nature! Alastair joined in the Northern Lagonda Factory enthusiasm and created a LG45 special

but he didn't like it much and soon sold it on. The chap who bought it also didn't want the body so Alan Brown and I brought the body back to Knarr Mill and created the car Alan drives to this very day. It has one of Alastair's spare Mille Miglia stickers on it giving us undeserved street cred!

Alastair and I were manning our Club stand at a classic car show when a chap came on and asked if anyone wanted a pile of Invicta parts. Alastair jumped at the chance and went on to build the Low Chassis Invicta which was a great success. This car has appeared, going extremely well, at some of our one-day rallies organised by Tim Gresty.

Alastair's last big project was yet another V12 team car replica on which he did some of the work, but a lot was done by Peter Whenman and then David Ayre. He only used this car sparingly.

RIP, Alastair. ■



Racing "The Old Girl" at Silverstone 1989

The Lagonda Convoy to Vintage Prescott 8th August 2021

Mark Yeomans reports

THE HISTORY OF the Lagonda Convoy to Vintage Prescott takes us back quite a few years, to when John Batt would call those he knew were coming to the event and seek to muster a convoy of Lagondas that in arriving together all parked together. It always made a magnificent display of 'our' cars in The Orchard alongside the track.

So, it was with some relief that on 8th August 2021 we assembled on the car park of The Royal Oak in Gretton, before making our way to the VSCC's Prescott Speed Hill Climb event. It had been two years since we last came to Prescott and we all said how pleasant it was to once more be amongst Lagonda friends.

It all sounds simple to arrange but John Batt had to accurately time departure from the B&B at The Hollow Bottom pub in Guiting Power and ensure he was passing though Gretton at the specified time. Those who knew John well will recall that to be the cause of his late departure would incur his wrath!

In earlier years the convoy would consist of the Batts, Daltons and Heins plus others who stayed at the same pub. The route down from Guiting Power came through Winchcombe and on through Gretton before turning left on the edge of the village up to Prescott.

The instructions were always

conveyed by a short telephone call a week before. "See you next Sunday 9:00am outside The Royal Oak, - be there or we go without you!" As the years passed and the event became more popular, we found the convoy being parked lower and lower down The Orchard, so John brought forward the meeting time to 8:45 sharp! He also instructed me to "stick the nose of your car out of the entrance so we can see you are waiting." This worked well and on approaching, almost always at the stated time, the convoy slowed down and those Lagondas assembled in The Royal Oak car park were ushered into the line for the short drive up to the hill climb.

The previous day John had chatted to the parking contractors and asked them to help us achieve our aims and to direct any other Lagondas to our line-up. This didn't always work as some people choose not to park with the group, but the ranks were often swelled by later arrivals. Back in 2019, following John's untimely death, I thought it was fitting to continue the Prescott tradition in his memory, so The John Batt Memorial Convoy was born. However, 2021 was somewhat uncertain with the VSCC and the owners of Prescott, the Bugatti Owners Club – unsure, until a few weeks before, of exactly how many tickets could be sold. Therefore, my emails to the usual suspects went



A lovely M45, showing Lagonda's in-house mastery of elegant coachwork.

out late and luckily coincided with a call from Tim Wadsworth, so an insert in the Newsletter could be included.

On the day we assembled nine Lagondas at The Royal Oak for departure at exactly 8:45am. Along the road we collected another two Lagondas. Our final convoy was some eleven cars. Those present included, your truly (M45 T8) plus David Westall (M45 saloon), Roger Seabrook (2L LC), Mike Hallowes (16/80 saloon) David Humphries (2L HC), Michael Nassim (M45 Saloon), Chris Hancock (14/60) another M45 T7 and a wonderful 1929

2/4.5 saloon, with apologies to those I was unable to speak with or have missed off the list.

Unfortunately, we were two Lagondas down as the Sobey's had been 'pinged' a few days prior to Prescott. So, having to self-isolate, could not attend. This also impacted the Pilgrims who were due to stay with them but instead travelled direct from Suffolk in a more modern machine. It was nice to be back at Prescott and in the Clubhouse later in the day we raised a glass to John Batt, he would have been pleased with the display! ■



The Convoy lined up at Prescott



M45s – This Year's featured model – Picture from Peter Lloyd





Bill Spence's superb 3 litre Carlton Drophead



Nick Bell's recently acquired M45 saloon – your Editor likes cars like this!

Pictures from Peter Lloyd

The Annual Gathering 2021

Walton Hall, Warwickshire

25th-26th September

James Baxendale was there

MOTORING THROUGH the Cotswolds to the Annual Gathering, for what proved to be a glorious weekend of sunshine, I thought that there is nothing better than driving a Lagonda in fine weather. Even if England was in the midst of a fuel crisis.

Our first stop was a visit to Fisher Restoration, who generously hosted the Club for a lunch at their impressive premises at Chateau Impney, near Droitwich. Together with Bishopgray, their sister company and pre-War Lagonda specialists, they have been associated with the Club for a number of years. There was a beautifully restored 1931 2 litre Low Chassis on display (W 330). A special thanks to Steve Wilson for the organisation.

From Chateau Impney, Peter Gilkes had devised a gentle tour through the Warwickshire countryside to Walton Hall, our venue for the weekend. Four of us drove in a small convoy (KY 5551, BU 8558, HE 4573 and GF 8843) – my slipping from third to last as I took a wrong turn off a roundabout, before making a hasty U-turn.

Walton Hall was a wonderful location for our first formal Annual Gathering since 2019 (although the 2020 AGM in Great Tew had attracted a fair number of stalwarts). Purposely located further north than the previous venue at Wokefield Park, in order to

attract more northern members (the first time since 1964 that the gathering had not been held in the south of England), its extensive grounds allowed for an excellent display of cars on the Sunday.

Numbers for the weekend were only slightly down from 2019, not bad considering the prevailing situation. Fears that the location might be a disincentive to those living further south (who constitute the bulk of the UK members) proved unfounded. The gala dinner was attended by 70 members and their partners, compared to 78 in 2019, with 39 Lagondas for the gathering as a whole, down from 44 two years previously.

At the dinner, John Sword gave the grace, Rodney Saunders the loyal toast, and David Hine as President made his traditional after-dinner speech.

The AGM the following day was attended by 84 members and supporters in person, with a number attending virtually, a healthy addition in these Covid-19 times, allowing all Club members to participate. With luck, this hybrid style of AGM will continue in future years. The President welcomed everyone to the AGM. He recounted his recent trip with Alan Brown to the Lagonda Continental Rally in Graz, Austria – an impressive journey given current restrictions – and noted future

Lagonda events in 2022, in particular the Northern Dinner at Rossington Hall near Doncaster from 3rd-5th May, and the Tour of the Pyrenees from 2nd-12th June.

The Treasurer (Brian Green) said that despite the effects of Covid-19, the Club was able to report improved annual accounts. Cash balances had not been depleted. The Club had taken advantage of the Government Loan which it hoped to repay in the current Financial Year. Spares prices had been increased to above inflation.

Arnold Davey, Tim Parker and Nigel Smeal were re-elected as directors, with myself (James Baxendale) being formally elected to the Board (my thanks to Tim Wadsworth, who gave me my first driving lesson in my Lagonda, for having proposed me).

There were reports from the Spares Officer (Robin Cook), the Competition Secretary (Tim Parker) and the Membership Secretary (Colin Bugler).

Tim was able to report an improvement in the availability of competitive events in 2021, compared to 2020. He encouraged more members to enter VSCC events, in order to compete for the Crocker Cup. A race for standard touring cars was being considered, following the successful light car race at Oulton Park, where an 11.9 Lagonda had taken part. This would suit a number of Lagondas, including 2 litres.

Colin reported that membership currently stood at 803, an increase of 3 from the 2020 AGM (though down 20 from 2019), with 23 new members (12 from overseas). He encouraged everyone to use the facility on the new website to renew their membership

going forward. 33% of the Club membership consisted of overseas members. The membership list was now on the Club website, with a printed version shortly to be available for £10.

In Any Other Business, the question of a second-hand spares list was raised. Sorting of these spares was a question of resources and there was a request for members living in the Suffolk area to assist. The 16/80s were sorted, with 2 litre second-hand spares being next on the list.

The Chairman (John Sword) noted that the Club currently had about 200-250 active members, who participated in events. In order to justify the membership fee for the remaining members, an interesting quarterly magazine and monthly newsletter was necessary. He encouraged all members to contribute articles for the magazine, notably as there had been little social activity to report on in the last 18 months.

The AGM closed with the presentation of the Committee Plate by the Chairman, awarded to a Club member who has put exceptional work into Club events and activities. It was presented (for the second time) to Michael Drakeford.

Following the AGM, those attending moved to the display of cars and the buffet lunch. A wide range of Lagondas were present for the gathering, from a 1924 12/24 to a 1950 DB 2.6. The M45 was the chosen marque and they happily dominated the gathering, with 16 M45s on show. Given border restrictions, none of the Club's overseas members had ventured across the Channel, but members had

come from Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England, Bill Spence and his wife easily scooping the prize for having driven the furthest (from the Orkney Islands).

The prizegiving closed the gathering, awards being made to a number of cars which had been meticulously restored.

Huge thanks must go to Rodney Saunders for his supremely efficient organisation of the weekend (something that most of us would think twice before taking on), to Len Cozzolino

for his organisation of the display, and to Peter Gilkes for the scenic run on Saturday afternoon. Driving back through the Cotswold countryside, the car's tank prudently filled up in the nearby village, I was already looking forward to next year's Annual Gathering in similarly beautiful weather. With any luck, the Covid-19 restrictions behind us, we will be able to welcome more members, notably from overseas. ■



Georgina & Michael Drakeford with their M45, Michael holding the Committee Plate which he had been awarded for the second time - a great achievement.

Picture from Peter Lloyd

The 2021 Annual Gathering Weekend

- Award Winners

CLASS	CAR MODEL	REG.	WINNER	PIC. No
Early Cars	1924 12/24 Coupe	NN 8080.	Ken Jeddere-Fisher.	1
2 Litre:	1929HC CC Saloon	UU 7571.	Michael Tuck.	2
16/80	1933 Special Six Saloon	AGO 29	Mike Hallowes	3
3Ltr,16/65, M35	1932 3ltr Carlton DHC	BLO 47	Bill Spence	4
M45 & LG45	1937 LG45 DHC	FPA 521	Brian Watson	5
LG6 & V12	Not awarded			
Rapier	1935 DHC	OW 6954	David Bugler (Martin Bugler).	6
Post 1945	1950 DB 2.6 DHC	HJW 900	David Stone-Lee.	7
Car Club Cup	1935 M45 Tourer	BYV 490	Norman Marrett.	8
Vokes Cup	1932 3ltr Carlton DHC	BLO 479	Bill Spence	4
Seaton Trophy	1934 M45 Saloon	AMV 751	David Hine	All
Ladies Choice	1934 M35 Tr	BLD 968	Jan Browne	9
Concours Cup	1935 M45 Tourer	BYV 490	Norman Marrett	8
Merit Trophy	1933 M45 Saloon	KY 5551	Jonathan Oppenheimer	10



Pic 1

Picture from Barry Halton



Pic 2



Pic 3



Pic 4



Pic 5



Pic 6



Pic 7



Pic 8



Pic 9



Pic 10



David Stone-Lee's 2.6 drophead - a fine car, and a most attractive colour.



This LG 45 of Nick Birch has it all – style, elegance and a superb colour.

Pictures from Peter Lloyd

The Meadows Engine in Context

*David Hine continues his story of this
important power unit*

Editor's Note:

In Part 2: The Hectic 20s, the gentleman portrayed is actually Henry Meadows himself and not R S Crump as it may have seemed.

The photo on the right is that of Mr Crump in later years, taken in 1959 when he met with Harry Wareham.

Part 6 Upmarket road car toils

In 1967 an LG45 Rapide came on the market. Several of the chaps up North had Rapides, in fact there were four with another being made! I had to sell my delightful M45 tourer to help raise the £1,500 required. The Rapide was in splendid cosmetic condition and the engine ran and idled sweetly. However, the performance was such that it wouldn't pull the skin off a rice pudding! It turned out that the camshaft drive chain had slipped by three teeth probably whilst someone was removing the dynamo for repair. Once the performance was restored, I began to enjoy my "Promenade Percy" car.

One day, while showing off on a rally, the engine suddenly seized up. Luckily my navigator was a policeman, so he got his chums to tow us home behind a Range Rover with blue lights flashing. It turned out a gudgeon pin had seized in a piston. None of the other pistons rocked easily on their gudgeon pins, so another lesson was learned. Ivan Forshaw supplied six



pistons with cylinder liners. These were "top hat" liners because each liner had a vestigial flange at the top. In those days I could simply lift the block off, on my own, in my little garage, to take it and get them installed.

In 1975 inflation in the UK was roaring out of control, due to excessive national debt after the war. This affected car prices as well. So, I sold the Rapide for twenty times what I had paid for it. This paid off the mortgage on our Victorian house and there was enough change to buy the M45 Tourer I still own today. This car was complete, original but very tired, so a full, body-off rebuild was required. The Meadows engine block was already bored out so cylinder liners were required. These liners were fitted by the machine shop which white metallised all the bearings. I rebuilt the engine myself, and confidently pressed the starter one evening. The engine started first time

but suddenly there was a huge crash and it blew up. The folk who did the liners did not use the Forshaw top hat liners but had used the cheaper option of pressing plain liner tubes into the block. The block had split between five and six cylinders and the liner had been pulled down. I went to see my good pal Alan Brown, and he gave me an old cylinder block he had under his bench. Some Morris Commercial pistons he had were a loose fit and he suggested this would get me going, if only for the season. Thanks to modern oil the engine still runs sweetly after forty-five years and eighty thousand miles on the clock. Part 7 Competition in the 70s.

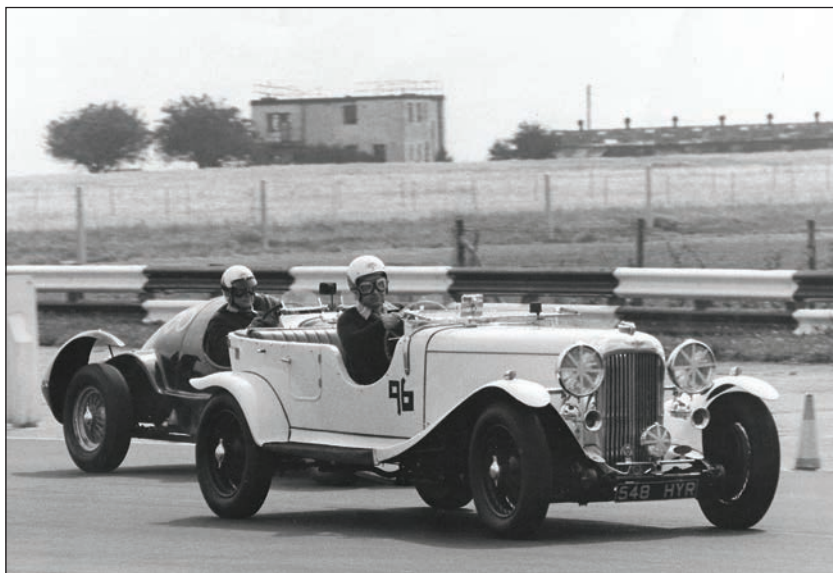
In 1976 I decided to build another, more sophisticated, special known as the "White Car".

I had acquired a complete LG45 that had been taken apart, right down

to the last nut and bolt, and arrived in about 30 cardboard boxes after the previous owner had run out of money and enthusiasm. I didn't even touch the engine, because there was another S3 engine, complete, from an old saloon we had broken up for spares.

To "tune" the White Car engine for racing a tenth of an inch was skimmed off the cylinder head to raise the compression. Care was taken to make sure the Lanchester damper was free to work because we had read that Colonel Michael had blown up not one but two engines. when trying to race without a damper. I had a lot of fun in this car and the engine got smokier as time went by. Its original, matching numbers, engine was then rebuilt and used for competition for a year or two.

Nick, my son, had raced the White Car a couple of times. He wanted a much more purposeful racer so, in



The White Car racing at BDC Silverstone in 1978 – alongside Alastair Barker in the V12

1993/4, he and Alan Brown conceived "Wotsit" the famous blue coloured special which featured in our last Club magazine with a splendid article, by its current owner, Mark Hayward.

The chassis was again a LG45 full length 10' 9" which is much easier to drive, at speed, than the 10' 3" M45 Rapide chassis. I had found an Alvis gearbox which I only had to strip and clean. These, all-synchromesh, Alvis gearboxes were an amazing piece of engineering, far better than the cumbersome G10 gearbox that Lagonda struggled with in the late 30's. To get going and sort out any chassis problems we simply used the old smoky engine for the first season. Synthetic oils had arrived by then so the problem of oiled up plugs had suddenly vanished. A synthetic oil

base is made by polymerising ethylene gas and therefore does not contain any dissolved bitumen.

Decokes and re-bores are now a distant memory.

That winter I set about preparing the engine for competition. The crankshaft was dynamically balanced with huge chunks of metal ground off, to our amazement. The flywheel was lightened. All the bearings were re-metalled and the Borg and Beck clutch relined. We found that short skirt, flat top, Volvo pistons were a perfect fit at 60 thou" oversize. A pair of 2 inch Jaguar carburettors were fitted with the ports into the block opened up and polished as best we could. Peter Whenman had been working with Kent Cams on a new profile, so we sent our Camshaft off to him and he had them



The engine of 'Wotsit', fitted with Jaguar SU Carburettors



Nick Hine in 'Wotsit', leading the pack at the Le Mans 24 hour start

grind it and re surface it. They still offer this service today - to the 'LG6 profile', they call it. The combination of all these things gave the motor a real boost, without major stress to the engine or my wallet. We were also keeping all the major components original. Nick then had a few years of enjoyable Club racing before the big decision to enter Classic Le Mans in 2002. I had driven round the circuit during Club Rallies and knew the legendary Mulsanne Straight where cars could reach their terminal velocity. The only thing I could do was fit a high ratio 3.3:1 rear axle and new Dunlop racing tyres and hope for the best.

It all turned out to be as good as we hoped and much better than I expected. In those days the Le Mans folk wanted us as much as we wanted them, and the hospitality was superb

-we were treated as honoured guests. Scrutineering was in the Main Square of the City LeMans with a band playing under the cathedral and glasses of local bier being handed out, while our cars were admired rather than criticised. We didn't actually race for 24 hours but in two-hour sessions - afternoon, night and morning. There were four grids based on the ages of the Classic cars. At 4.00 pm the pre-war grid opened the proceedings with the traditional Le Mans start, when the drivers ran across the track and leapt in the cockpit. Nick was first away in Wotsit and the picture above shows him leading the charge. He is followed by two Invictas with Meadows engines, and then Mark Butterworth in the Lagonda V12 close behind. This iconic photograph became the publicity shot for future Classic Le Mans events.

All went well except when I tried to dip the oil after he came in. The dip stick was so hot I badly burnt my finger and thumb!

An interesting thing happened on the night run, when Nick was neck and neck with a Low Chassis Invicta for several laps down the straight. Both had standard Meadows engines with the rev counters hovering around 4000, close to 100 mph. Suddenly Nick pulled ahead, to the astonishment of the excitable German driver who came dashing over in the pits afterwards, asking how he had done this.

“Do you have a hidden overdrive?” he said. “No”, said Nick, “it just

became a bit lighter and I turned off my headlights”. The race finished with Nick in 6th place overall, just ahead of Mark Butterworth in his V12 Lagonda. Mark had had to contend with a blown head gasket, which his brilliant mechanic had changed between sessions, no mean feat and with a very hot engine. There was a magical moment when an elderly Frenchman tottered over with tears in his eyes and kissed us all on both cheeks. As an excited young man, he had witnessed Fontes and Hindmarsh winning in 1935 and couldn't believe it when he saw an almost repeat performance with our Lagonda! ■

To be concluded



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Letters & Emails ... Letters & Emails

Hello Roger,

I think that it was you asking for photos at the AGM so I attach one of my participation at Loton taken by a relative, Philip Screen, who is a professional photographer but who has given permission for publication if you wish. I have had great pleasure in taking my Lagonda Rapier Special AAK 205 up the hills at Loton and Prescott (August and September) and picking up a handicap award at Prescott.

The VSCC meetings engender a good spirit and I think all the drivers have fun – even those of us who have little hope of knocking the more experienced drivers from their exalted positions on the leader board.

Paul Ginnings



Letters & Emails ... Letters & Emails



The Rapier Special has a most attractive body, complemented by the swept wings. It looks superb in these pictures.

Letters & Emails ... Letters & Emails

Dear Roger,

Captain John & his Lagonda - Reunited

When you published "Captain John's Lagonda" (Magazine 263) I had no idea there would need to be a Part 2. Part 1, if I may call it that, describes how Len Cozzolino received an enquiry from Captain John Aston RN (Rtd). "Does the 2 Litre Lagonda I owned in the early 1960s still exist?" Well, it certainly does, and thus Captain John and I swapped photos and stories, and I made sure he received a copy of the article.

Then, in May 2021, a message arrived; Captain John and his wife Lizzie would be driving from their home in Winchester to Norfolk (where I live) in September and, "Any chance of a reunion with the Lagonda?" There could be only one answer.

On being reunited with the car for the first time in almost sixty years, Captain John's excitement was palpable.

He was genuinely thrilled. Following a thorough inspection, he gave GX 188 an approving thumbs-up (one feels that as a senior Royal Navy officer and engineer, he would be well versed in bestowing "passed muster" on both men and machinery) and we set off for a gentle meander around some quiet country lanes. As if slipping back into habits formed sixty years ago, he enthusiastically took over my wife's usual role of waving and thanking cyclists and other road users

who had moved aside to let us pass. It was wonderful, a privilege actually, to share in the pure pleasure of the occasion.

The black and white photo shows a then Lieutenant Aston providing wedding car service for his Royal Naval College term-mate in 1963, while the colour photo shows him reunited with his beloved 2 Litre fifty-eight years later.

Images of the old buff log book show that a then Mr J. A. Aston taxed GX 188 at the Bournemouth Licence Office on 26 July 1962 for a whole year at a cost of £5 10s 0d. I wonder if he was excited about owning an amazing Lagonda; or was it a stopgap until he could afford "something better"?

Barry Stiff

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Letters & Emails ... Letters & Emails



Lieutenant John Aston at the wheel in 1963



Captain John reunited with his 2 litre in September 2021

Letters & Emails ... Letters & Emails

Dear Roger,

We enjoyed a convivial lunch at the Cricketers Arms on May 23rd, with excellent pub grub. I was able to meet and greet members old and new and had the opportunity to chat with everyone, I hope.

We managed to park GK4650 before the heavens opened but we got soaked putting the hood up. Others were less fortunate and were caught out in the heavy downpours on the way over, but the rain doesn't actually fall on you if you go fast enough! Some decided a dry ride was preferable and came in their moderns.

In total, we had a good turnout of eight Lagondas from a 2L through

to a V12 with just about everything in between including a lovely DB 2.6. Also to add a bit of variety, a pretty XK150 and a very rare Bristol Beaufighter.

Some of you may be aware that our car has been off the road since about August last year with a constant stream of miscellaneous issues so our trip to Wisborough was only her second time off the premises. Happily, we made it there and back with only a few backfires and the odd stall, we have now bought a new ML Magneto and fingers crossed, all of our issues are fixed, and she now runs better than ever.

Catherine





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