



**THE MAGAZINE OF THE  
LAGONDA CLUB**

**Number 271 Winter 2021/2022**

# **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](mailto:nigelhallgb@gmail.com) or 01457 762766 (home) or 07831 638383 (mobile).



## The Lagonda Magazine

e-mail: [admin@lagondaclub.com](mailto:admin@lagondaclub.com) • Web Site: <http://www.lagonda-club.com>

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### LAGONDA CLUB LIST OF OFFICERS 2021-22

**President:** D. R. Hine

**Vice Presidents:**

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

**Chairman:**

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

**Membership Secretary:**

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

**Vice-President & Registrar:**

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

**Deputy Registrar & E-Communications**

Len Cozzolino  
Wytmead, Essendon Hill,  
Essendon, Hatfield,  
Hertfordshire, AL9 6AW  
Tel: 01707 275133 • Mob: 07789 001716  
e-mail: [len@cozzolino.co.uk](mailto:len@cozzolino.co.uk)

**Editor:**

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

**Treasurer:**

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

**Competition Secretary:**

Tim Parker  
Longdown Farmhouse, Longdown Hill,  
Cadsden, Buckinghamshire, HP27 0NB  
Mob: 07966 466605  
e-mail: [timothyparker@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:timothyparker@hotmail.co.uk)

**Other Board Members:**

Rodney Saunders,  
Wellwood, Stockcroft Road,  
Balcombe, West Sussex, RH17 6LL  
Tel: 01444 811598 • Mob: 07939 200071  
E-mail: [rodneysaunders@clara.net](mailto:rodneysaunders@clara.net)

Nigel Smeal,  
4, Nelson Terrace,  
Islington, London, N1 8DG.  
Tel: 020 7251 8972 • Mob: 07711 666504  
e-mail: [cowcomm98@aol.com](mailto:cowcomm98@aol.com)

James Baxendale OBE,  
35 Overstrand Mansions, Prince of Wales Drive,  
London SW11 4EZ  
Mob: 07988 819020  
e-mail: [james.l.baxendale@gmail.com](mailto:james.l.baxendale@gmail.com)

**Post-War Cars Secretary:**

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

**Trophies Officer:**

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

**The Spares Service:**

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

**The Lagonda Shop:**

Denise and Martin Bugler  
Garden Cottage, Walhurst Manor, Picts Lane,  
Cowfold, West Sussex, RH13 8AW  
Tel: 01403 865442 • Mob: 07770 270601  
e-mail: [shop@lagonda-club.com](mailto:shop@lagonda-club.com)

**Newsletter Editor:**

Tim Wadsworth  
The Thatched Cottage,  
Emmett Hill Lane,  
Upper Minety, Malmesbury,  
Wiltshire, SN16 9PP.  
Tel: 01666 860368 • Mob: 07989 911642  
e-mail: [tim@lagondahire.co.uk](mailto:tim@lagondahire.co.uk)

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## Overseas Representatives:

### USA and Canada

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

### Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg:

Herman Arentsen,  
Logtsestraat 3, 6675 NB Valburg,  
The Netherlands  
Tel: (+31) 488 431291  
Mob: (+31) (0) 651 427163  
e-mail: eh-arentsen@hetnet.nl

### Switzerland:

Franz Hatebur-Mani,  
Villa Montana, Höhweg 1h, CH 3700 Spiez  
Switzerland  
Tel: 0041 33 243 3879  
Mob: +41 (0)79 816 3786  
Fax: 0041 33 243 0607  
e-mail: fhatebur@bluewin.ch

### Australia:

Peter Henson  
e-mail: octane1@bigpond.com

### Germany:

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

## UK Area Representatives:

### South:

Catherine Monnington,  
Tel: 01428 653553 • Mob: 07950 169684  
e-mail: cmontuc@hotmail.com

### South East:

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

### South West:

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

### Anglia:

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

### East Midlands:

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

### West Midlands:

Robin Balmain,  
Tel: 01531 640166 • Mob: 07816 668055  
Fax: 01531 640167  
e-mail: jenniiferbalmain@btinternet.com

### North West:

Nigel Hall  
Tel: 01457 762766 • Mob: 07831 638383  
e-mail: nigelhallgb@gmail.com

### Yorkshire:

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

### Northern Ireland:

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

### Scotland:

Alastair Gunn,  
Tel: 01506 324138 • Mob: 07913 677339  
e-mail: alastair.gunn@hotmail.co.uk

**COVER: One of the two surviving Close Coupled 2 litre saloons at the 2021 Annual Gathering, driven by Michael Tuck. Picture from Alison Tuck**

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# From the Workbench

## Roger Seabrook

WISHING YOU ALL a very happy New Year, and hoping for some serious Lagonda motoring.

It's chaotic here at the moment, while the decorators make some much needed improvement to our kitchen and living rooms. It's amazing how much has to be moved. The next major job is to clear out the sheds and the garage, and dispose of years of accumulated bits and pieces.

We managed to take the 1929 2 litre to a new year's day event, a tradition ever since we acquired it. I was going to take the saloon, but a little squeak from the engine put me off. I hope it's not a contender for 'The Expensive Noises Trophy!' Compressions are still excellent on all four cylinders, so 'fingers crossed'.

This issue has a serious technical article about a commonly fitted steering box. You will need to concentrate carefully to understand how complex this seemingly simple device is. Since the handling of the car, and its safety depend so much on it, it's worth knowing how it should be maintained and adjusted – even if you give it to an expert to do.

It is always interesting to know the

history of your car – who owned it, and what happened to it during previous ownerships. It's even more interesting if there was a competition element, or special treatment by the Lagonda company. Some are considered in this issue.

The following amusing letter appeared in the June 1947 'Notes':

*"From the Manager of the National Provincial Bank:*

*Dear Mr Densham, I was surprised and not a little annoyed when the GW Rly. delivered a large piece of engineering addressed to yourself c/o the bank and I hasten to inform you that we have no facilities for the delivery of such machinery and neither I or my staff have the time for dealing with such things. I shall be glad therefore if you will kindly make arrangements with the Rly. Co. for its immediate removal. I cannot understand why this consignment has been forwarded to the bank and I will be much obliged if you will kindly see that this does not occur again. There is no indication as to where it has come from, or its owner."*

The comment to this was "Thank God it was only a gearbox and not a complete chassis!" ■

***Last date for copy for the SPRING Magazine is  
Friday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2022  
Please keep new articles & pictures coming in.***

# Editorial Bleat

## *See footnote on Page 37*

IT WOULD APPEAR that the Editor's secret policy of attempting to deposit THE LAGONDA on members' doormats on the first day of each quarter is due to come under review, having suffered a 75% casualty rate, to date.

Regular publication of the magazine is dependent upon two factors: -

(A) The receipt of sufficient perishable material at least a month before the first day of the quarter;

*and*

(B) The Editor

Factor (A) is in the ample laps of embers (sic) themselves, while factor (B) remains what engineers term "indeterminate", as the Editor has yet to receive sufficient copy for an issue a month in advance of publication. Analysis of the problem at this stage reveals the possibility of two lines of attack:

- (1) To publish as and when;  
Or. (2) To stir up the embers.

As line of attack No. 1 already obtains, recourse must necessarily, though regretfully, be made to the bellows.

It has possibly not occurred to you, gentle reader, that your responsibilities extend beyond the exploitation of a hard-won, near-facility, in the interpretation of the written word. The effort of attaining this utilitarian accomplishment may have seriously depleted your intellectual incapacity, but this in itself does not excuse you for NOT EVEN TRYING to write for the magazine.

Seriously – for once! – the magazine cannot maintain its present size and scope without more support from members.

The time and effort involved in getting together sufficient material for THE LAGONDA is quite out of proportion with the labour involved in editing copy, proof reading, and laying out the magazine, and unless the position with regard to the former improves considerably, intermittent publication, reduced standards, or another new Editor will follow.

It's up to you. Are you up to it?  
Yes - YOU! ■

The current Editor thanks those who have provided material – your efforts are very much appreciated

## ***GEORGE WINTER tells Jeremy Bayliss about his time working for Lagonda, starting in 1940, and how it shaped his life***

THIS IS THE remarkable story of how, armed service excepted, the apprenticeship of a fourteen-year-old at Lagonda shaped the rest of his life and, as he told me, enabled a comfortable life and a successful retirement.

For as long as I can remember, George Winter with a chest full of medals, including a row of them from Russia, has stood proudly in front of our village war memorial on Remembrance Sunday reading names of those it commemorated. Perhaps I would know him no better were it not for a coincidence. There was an event in our village hall and George was sitting opposite me at the same table. I cannot now remember my conversation, but I certainly mentioned the name Lagonda. George, from the other side of the table, immediately pricked up his ears "I worked there at the beginning of the war" he said "Really" I replied. "Yes" said George, "I was an apprentice at Lagonda from 1940" I suspect, that now, aged 95, George is the last living person who worked at the Staines factory at the time. I said to George that I, and I was sure many others, would like to hear his story.

To find it out I arranged to visit George in his immaculately kept bungalow on the other side of the village. I took a copy of the latest Lagonda Magazine with me. George looked through it and paused to dwell on the photographs. "Those lovely old cars; they make my heart go bumpety

bump" he said and added "You know I owe everything that I have done and achieved in civilian life and all this to my time at Lagonda." He waved his arm with upturned hands around to indicate that he meant his home and all that was within it which, despite his having been on his own for fourteen years, was kept immaculately.

I couldn't wait to hear George's story, so here it is:

He was born on the 3rd May 1926 in Pimlico, which at that time was a very poor area of London, not fashionable as it is now. He went to the local school - St. Barnabas in Pimlico - and at the age of eleven passed the necessary exam to obtain a free place at grammar school. Sadly, he never went there because his parents could not afford the uniform and all the other things that had to be paid for. He stayed on at St. Barnabas and most certainly made up later on for missing grammar school. He became Head Boy and when the war came was evacuated to Egham.

Aged 14 George went to the labour exchange accompanied by his father. At this stage he felt that luck played its part and perhaps it was because the person in charge knew his father that he was offered one of two apprenticeships that were available, just across the river at Lagonda. He and the other apprentice were paid fourteen shillings a week, that is just seventy pence in today's money. Lagonda had already started making armaments, principally parts

for the Lysander aircraft, but there were a number of cars around. These were cars upon which work had already started when armament production first began. Clearly the factory was very conscious of hierarchy on the shop floor as the foremen wore white coats, the charge-hands brown coats, while everyone else was issued with a clean pair of blue overalls each week.

During just over three years at Lagonda George worked in every part of the factory - the chassis shop, he specifically mentioned attaching the springs etc., the machine shop, the coachbuilding and panel beating shop, the paint shop and the trimming shop. He reminisced over the joy of spreading out "great sheets of beautiful Connolly leather" on a flat table top and marking them out. He remembered making wheel wells in the panel shop using "a roller". His memories of the paint shop were different. They were not about what he learnt as a skill, but what he learnt more directly from the foreman: how to swear. The foreman's name was Meakins, "Mr Meakins" to George. Meakins "swore all the time", but was clearly very skilful as he could paint the coach line along the whole length of a car with a tiny brush without using any support. Electricians were the only thing which George did not learn about formally as an apprentice, "although I did pick up quite a lot about it" George could not remember when war work took over from the making of cars, but clearly the skills that he learnt making wheel wells came into its own as he ended up making wheel spats for Lysander aircraft.

As an evacuee at Egham, George was not far from home at Pimlico

and he used to go back there most weekends. One weekend a bomb blew the "top of the house off" and he had to be dug out of the rubble, fortunately unharmed but very shaken. The house was uninhabitable and his parents moved to Millbank, where George had another close call. A "landmine was dropped behind the house" and George was "thrown out of bed". Again, he was unharmed, but decided that if the Germans could do that to him, he was going to "have a go at them" himself. At seventeen and a quarter he gave up his apprenticeship and signed on for the Royal Navy. He was sent to HM Ganges for training as a quartermaster. He explained that a quartermaster in the navy was quite different from that of a quartermaster in the army. In the navy the quartermaster was the person who "steered the ship" and who, when in port stood at the top of the gangway checking everyone off and on the vessel.

In late 1943 or early 1944 *HMS Harrier*, a minesweeper, sailed into Portsmouth with engine trouble, where it was discovered that five of the crew of 143 had TB. George was selected to join *Harrier* and help make the crew up to full strength. Soon after, *Harrier* sailed first to Harwich and then on to Iceland where she joined a convoy bound for Russia. As a minesweeper, *Harrier* had a low profile in the water and was used as a rescue ship. Out of 17 ships only 7 succeeded in finally getting home. Of all the people I have known who served in either the first or second world wars, I have never met anyone who talked about their experience of the actual fighting. Much has been written about the horrors of





*George Winter – as immaculate as the cars he is flanked by!*

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the Arctic convoys, but despite his being loquacious about so many other things George, like so many others, said not a word about his experiences of actual fighting. Maybe his Russian medals attest to it not having been a picnic. On D-Day George was just eighteen and a month. There was much work to be done after the end of the war clearing the seas of mines and George spent the next four years doing just that and visiting Russia, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, France, Gibraltar, Malta and Greece. He left the navy after four years having served on and “steered a battle class destroyer, *HMS Aisne*”

After he was de-mobbed George married and had to find a job in civilian life. It was the knowledge and experience gained at Lagonda which came to his rescue and which “made easy” the job that he went to at Botwoods, the largest garage doing accident repairs in Ipswich. He was in charge of the accident repair department and found himself teaching others some of the skills that he had learnt at Lagonda, especially “something that no one else knew - how to shape panels on the roller”. After 18 years George felt that it was time to move on. He made job applications and was offered jobs with General Accident and Zurich Insurance, but accepted the job offered by Norwich Union where he headed a small team of six people reporting to him as the senior staff engineer. During his time there assessing accident claims he dealt with every type of vehicle from cars to largest of lorries but remembers being daunted by the first claim he had to deal with for a combine harvester. In the end he just viewed it as a tractor with lots of add-ons and using the

engineering skills that he had learnt as an apprentice logically it all became quite simple. He retired in 1986 after 23 years with the Norwich Union.

George went to a table and pulled a Lagonda Club tie off it. He said that about 15 years ago\* he went to a Lagonda function at the Sainsbury's supermarket on the site of the old Staines factory. There were some lovely cars there and they made a “bit of a fuss of me and gave me the tie.” His next meeting with Lagondas was when I took him to BishopGray, just before the first Covid lockdown. Charles Gray very kindly spent some time showing George around. He was thrilled and really quite emotional by seeing the cars and the work that was being done there.

After our long chat in his house I said to George that it was time I left and thanked him for telling me his story. “No”, he said, “I must thank you for coming but, above all I must thank Lagonda for all that my apprenticeship with them, over seventy years ago, has done for me”. Most of the stories that I read in the magazine about members and their experience of Lagondas is usually about cars that they or their families have owned. George has never owned a Lagonda, but I am sure that the cars and his work experience at Staines have meant and still mean more to George than our cars do for almost all of us.

\*This was presumably when a plaque was put up at the Sainsbury's supermarket to commemorate the Lagonda factory having been on the site. Unfortunately, I could find no reference to this in the Magazine. JB. ■

# Fourth Lagonda Fête at Brooklands

## 19 July 1930

*By James Baxendale*



*W T Barnes in his 2 litre HC Speed Model Tourer (NF 8424)*

WHILST RESEARCHING the history of GF 8843, I discovered – thanks to the excellent archives compiled by Arnold Davey (to whom I am much indebted for this article) – that she had attended the Fourth Lagonda Annual Fête, held at Brooklands on Saturday 19 July 1930. Whilst my discovery came too late for an earlier article I had written about the car for the magazine (261-263), I thought other members – notably owners of pre-1931 2 Litre and 3 Litre Lagondas – might find

information about the Fête, and the cars involved, interesting as apart from the competitions (detailed in Arnold's recent booklet, *Lagondas in Competition*), this was the first event where 2 Litres were present in large numbers and where a number of them are still known to the Club.

The Fête itself – similar to today's Annual Gathering – is described by Arnold in his *Lagonda 2, 3 & 3½ Litre* in detail (pp 116-118) and in an article he wrote on the four Fêtes for the Club magazine (192).



There is a fair amount of information available about the 1930 Fête. The event was reported in both *The Autocar* and *Motor Sport*, and nine photographs from *The Autocar* – some of which are produced in Bernd Holthusen's book, *Lagonda*<sup>1</sup> – are held in the Club's archives, in addition to a couple from the BBC Hulton Picture Library. The Club does not hold a programme for the event, but one was sold at auction in 2009.

One of the cups awarded at the Fête (second prize for the Ladies Race) even came up for auction in 1989.

From the photographs, over 40 cars can be identified from their registration plates (just under half of all the cars that attended), with 11 cars being known to the Club. The photographs are fascinating. In my case, it allows me to see what GF 8843 looked like just three months from new.



*GF 8843 lined up for the Appearance Contest*

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<sup>1</sup>They can also be found at <https://austinharris.co.uk/car/lagonda?page=0>.

## History of the Lagonda Fêtes at Brooklands

Four Fêtes were held by Lagonda Ltd from 1927-30. The idea behind them was essentially an exercise in customer relations.

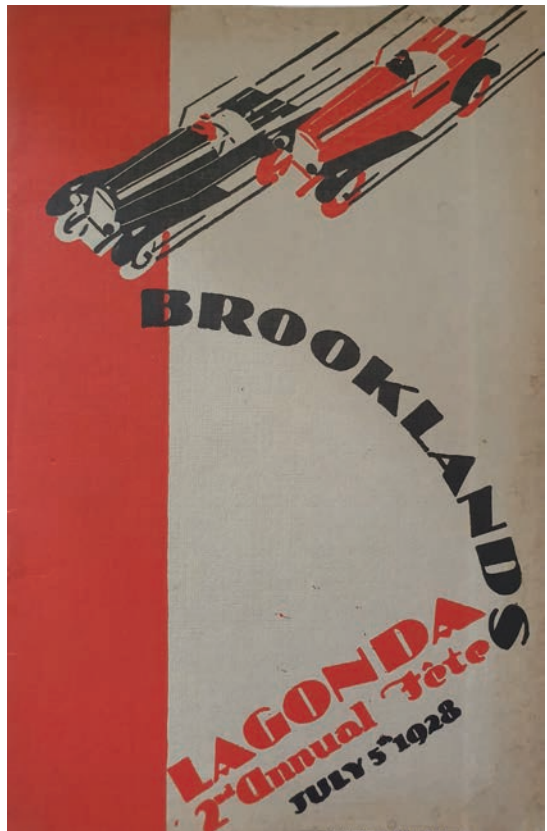
The company hired Brooklands for the day and invited their customers along. There were a number of competitions, with prizes being awarded. The 1930 Fete was the last to be held, the Brooklands authorities stopping all one-make shows at the end of 1930 without explanation.

Eight photographs exist of the 1927 Fête<sup>2</sup>, from which 22 cars can be identified (four still being in existence, all 14/60s).

There are four photographs of the 1928<sup>3</sup> Fête, eight cars being identifiable, but none known to the Club. There are unfortunately no photographs of the 1929 Fête, although PH 8364 (OH 9002) is known to have won the two Speed Model races.

### Fourth Lagonda Fête

Lagonda Ltd put a full page advertisement in the July 1930 edition of Motor Sport promoting the event:



*Second Lagonda Fête 1928*

*Readers of "Motor Sport" are cordially invited to attend the fourth annual Lagonda Fête at Brooklands on Saturday, July 19th. The keen racing that characterises these meetings will be supplemented by many novel events.*

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<sup>2</sup> <https://austinharris.co.uk/index.php/car/lagonda?page=8>.

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.motorsportimages.com/photos/?event\\_id=261701](https://www.motorsportimages.com/photos/?event_id=261701).



*Valuable awards will be devoted to the Appearance Contest or Concours d'Elegance, certain classes of which will be open to any make of car. Music and*

*a running commentary by a well known broadcaster will be relayed to various vantage points of the track, which will be specially decorated for the occasion.*

JULY, 1930
**MOTOR SPORT**
43

# COME TO THE LAGONDA

## BROOKLANDS FETE

### JULY 19th

Readers of "Motor Sport" are cordially invited to attend the fourth annual Lagonda Fete at Brooklands on Saturday, July 19th. The keen racing that characterises these Lagonda meetings will be supplemented by many novel events. Valuable awards will be devoted to the Appearance Contest or Concours d'Elegance, certain classes of which will be open to *any make of car*. Music and a running commentary by a well known broadcaster will be relayed to various vantage points of the track, which will be specially decorated for the occasion.

The new 2-litre Supercharged Lagonda "Special" will be on view for the first time, and track demonstrations will be available of this and the other Lagonda models during the day.

Tickets of admission (including stands and enclosures) and competitors' entry forms may be obtained on mentioning "Motor Sport" from Messrs. Lagonda, Ltd.

### PROGRAMME

**EVENT No. 1.** TWO-LAP HANDICAP FOR TRADE AND LAGONDA SALES STAFF ONLY.  
11.30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

**EVENT No. 2.** TWO-LAP "ROUND THE MOUNTAIN" HANDICAP FOR TRADE AND LAGONDA SALES STAFF DRIVERS.  
12 p.m. to 1 p.m.

**DEMONSTRATIONS.**

**EVENT No. 3.** APPEARANCE CONTEST (7 classes).  
1.15 p.m. to 2.15 p.m.

**EVENT No. 4.** THE "MANCHESTER" ONE LAP HANDICAP FOR OWNERS OF ANY MODEL LAGONDA CAR IN TOURING TRIM.  
2.15 p.m. to 2.45 p.m.

**EVENT No. 5.** THE "LONDON" "ROUND THE MOUNTAIN" TWO LAP HANDICAP FOR OWNERS OF ALL MODELS OF LAGONDA CARS IN TOURING TRIM.  
2.45 p.m. to 3.15 p.m.

**EVENT No. 6.** THE "HANOVER SQUARE" ONE-LAP HANDICAP FOR LADY DRIVERS ONLY ON ANY MODEL LAGONDA CAR IN TOURING TRIM.  
3.15 p.m. to 3.45 p.m.

**EVENT No. 7.** THE "BRADFORD" ONE-LAP HANDICAP FOR OWNERS OF LAGONDA CARS OF ANY TYPE.  
3.45 p.m. to 4.15 p.m.

**EVENT No. 8.** THE "HAMMERSMITH" TWO-LAP "ROUND THE MOUNTAIN" HANDICAP.  
4.15 p.m. to 4.45 p.m.

**DEMONSTRATIONS.**

**EVENT No. 9.** THE "GARAGING" SCRATCH RACE.  
4.45 p.m. to 5.15 p.m.

**EVENT No. 10.** OBSTACLE RACE FOR OWNERS OF ANY TYPE OF LAGONDA CAR.  
5.15 p.m. to 6 p.m.

PRESENTATION OF PRIZES INCLUDING GRAND AGGREGATE CHALLENGE CUP VALUE £25 by LADY HOLBERTON.

## ENTRY FORMS AND TICKETS OF ADMISSION FROM LAGONDA LTD

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### ENTRIES TO BE MADE BY JULY 15th

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The Fête was the opportunity for Lagonda Ltd to put its new 2 litre Supercharged "Special" (presumably PL 1240/OH 9711,

registered just two days beforehand on 17 July) on show to the public for the first time and to demonstrate it on the track.

As noted in the advertisement, there were, in addition, 10 events

for Lagonda owners throughout the day.



*Exhibition of latest models in the paddock Left to Right: 4 Low Chassis Saloons (2L or 3L); blown 2L Tourer; unblown 2L Tourer*

Despite the weather, which, according to the *Motor Sport* report, was *not too promising ... this did not deter Lagonda owners from turning up, and a big crowd assembled*. From numbers on the cars, it would seem that over 90 cars entered for the various events, although these may not all have been Lagondas as there were prizes for cars of all makes. Arnold reckons that upwards of a thousand people attended.

Randolph Trafford, the proud new owner of GF 8843, aged just 23, flew in especially for the event in his Morane-Saulnier MS-137, as the plane's log book shows. He had flown solo across the Channel from Geneva on 14 July. It was one of the last times he flew the plane, having taken possession the previous month of a Gipsy Moth to replace it. He was a busy man, and the fact that he was in the midst of breaking up with his 20 year old

girlfriend, Bunty Bickerton, sheds some light on the pace of his life at the time

*(You are lucky having a dozen things to do at once – life is then such a scramble, one has no time to think, or feel things, she wrote in her final letter to him less than two weeks later on 30 July).*

Randolph flew to Brooklands from Herefordshire, where his family lived,

on the Thursday afternoon, giving him enough time to go and fetch his car, and flew out again immediately after the prize-giving. Presumably someone else drove the car back to Heston airfield to meet him. GF 8843 – not for the last time – did not win any prizes in the Concours d'Elegance, *The Autocar* article clearly shows Randolph standing, somewhat hopefully, next to GF 8843 as the cars are being judged.



*Randolph Trafford at the Fête*



*Randolph in July 1934*

The cars and personalities at the Fete are interesting. Lord Freddie de Clifford was there, likely in his 3 Litre (PG 3024), in which he had participated in the Monte Carlo rally earlier in the year. He came first in one of the heats for the Bradford one lap handicap and won the obstacle race. D R Sharman of Gaffikin & Wilkinson won the initial event of the day, the two lap handicap for Trade and Lagonda Sales staff in his 2 Litre (PG 8804, which still exists). Sharman had driven PG 8804 in the Double Twelve at Brooklands in May.

The winner of the Grand Aggregate Challenge cup and who dominated the day's events, was W T Barnes, the owner of a 2 Litre High Chassis Speed Model Tourer (NF 8424). He won the Manchester one lap, London two lap and Bradford one lap handicaps. Given his prowess, it is odd that he does not appear in any other motor racing competitions. He may be identical to William Theodore Barnes OBE (1910-91), who was later a Wing Commander in the Balloon Branch in the Second World War.

The Hanover Square one lap handicap for lady drivers was won by Mrs Graham in W T Barnes' NF 8424. She was likely to have been

the wife of J K Graham, who had competed in the Trade and Lagonda Sales staff events.

Mrs G W Gemmell came second in her husband's 1929 2 Litre (YV 6652). The cup that she was awarded was sold at auction on 13 May 1989 by James & Sons Auctioneers in Norwich. George William Gemmell (1901-75) of Standish Park, Stonehouse, Gloucester was himself a serious competitor in YV 6652 between 1929-31, picking up medals in the MCC London-Land's End Trial (1930 and 1931); the MCC Sporting Trial (1929 and 1930); the MCC High Speed Trial at Brooklands (1930); and the NW London MC London-Gloucester Trial (1929 and 1930).

Third was Mrs J Cranmer, the wife or daughter-in-law of Alfie Cranmer, one of the directors of Lagonda, who had been with Wilbur Gunn since Lagonda's inception in 1899.

C G Flewitt came third in the Bradford one lap handicap, having won one of the heats, and second in the next race, the Hammersmith two lap "Round the Mountain" handicap. He is almost certainly Charles Edward Ansell Flewitt (1907-31), who owned a Lagonda, a 1929 4½ litre Bentley (chassis no RL3431) and flew planes. He was down to take part in his 3 Litre in



the Irish Grand Prix at Phoenix Park on the same day as the Fete, but it was recorded that he did not start. Within the year, sadly, he was dead, having crashed his Gipsy Moth near Castle Bromwich, aged just 23.

Captain J A F Dalgety (1893-1962) came third in the Hammersmith and London two laps and the garaging scratch race. He also owned a Gipsy Moth and was a Flight Lieutenant in the RAF Voluntary Reserve in the Second World War.

### Appearance Contest

Of all the photographs of the Fête, it is from the Concours d'Elegance (known as the Appearance Contest), that we can obtain the most detailed

information about the Lagondas present. There were five classes for Lagondas.

L McCardle won the Hammersmith two lap handicap in his 2 Litre Saloon and came third in both the Manchester one lap and the obstacle race. J A Lloyd won the prize in the Open Lagonda Standard Model class in the appearance contest and came second in the Manchester one lap handicap. At the 1929 Fete he had fared similarly, coming second in the one lap scratch race for 14/60s and third in the Appearance Contest. He had, a few months earlier in March 1930, gained a first-class award in a Standard in the Junior Car Club Half Day Trial.







No 62 NF 6572
No 17
No 5 NF 8424
No 9 YU 3576
No 3 PG 8804
No 19 GF 1954
No 18 GF 8843
No 10 KR 1642
No 91 KW 8900
No 16 PG 7847
No 37 PG 5976



*Participants on the 18th Continental Lagonda Rallye in Austria gather at the magnificent Schloss Schielleitern, near Graz. This event was organised by Franz Grossauer.*





### **1. Class A was for Open**

*Lagonda Sports Cars.* 11 cars participated, of which we can identify ten. The winner was H McCalman in his 3 litre Special (KW 8900). McCalman worked for Central Garage in Bradford and had registered KW 8900 just three days previously on 16 July. He later became Lagonda's Sales Director.

a) PG 5976 (no 37). 2L or 3L LC Tr

**b) PG 7847 (no 16).1930 3L (Z9648)**

**c) KW 8900 (no 91). 1930 3L LC (Z9727). Owned by H (Mac) McCalman**

d) KR 1642 (no 10). 2L LC Tr

**e) GF 8843 (no 18).1930 2L LC Tr (OH 9670). Owned by Randolph Trafford**

**f) GF 1954 (no 19). 1930 2L LC Tr (OH9644)**

**g) PG 8804 (no 3). 1930 2L LC Tr (OH9657)**

h) YU 3576 (no 9). 3L.

i) NF 8424 (no 5). 2L HC SM Tr 2 tone. Owned by W T Barnes

j) ? (no 17). 2L LC.

k) NF 6572 (no 62). 2L Tr (OH 8776)

### **2. Class B Class B, Closed Lagonda Sports Cars.**

Four cars participated.

The winner was A R Innes.

a) KO 9477 (no 60). 2L HC Weymann Saloon

b) YU 4691 (no ?). 2L HC Weymann Saloon

c) VM 5881 (no 26). 2L HC Weymann Saloon

d) GH 1444 (no 50). 3L LC Weymann Saloon

### **3. Class C, Open Lagonda Standard Model.**

Five cars participated, The winner was J A Lloyd.

**a) HW 8059 (?no 96). 3L HC (Z9619)**

b) YV 2671 (no 61). 14/60 Semi Sports

c) PH 2603 (no 27). 14/60 Semi Sports

d) UT 2998 (no 11). 14/60 Semi Sports

e) HW 3530 (no 89). 14/60 Semi Sports

#### **4. Class D. Closed Lagonda Standard Model.**

Two cars participated; one can be identified.

The winner was J H Stead.

a) PF 9529. 14/60 4 door Saloon

#### **5. Class E, Lagonda with special body.**

Five cars participated. Four can be identified, one partially. The winner was E M Cohn in a 1930 Special FHC by James Young (possibly GC 5764).

a) PG 1290 (no 51). 3L HC by Wylders of Kew. Owned by Francis M Cook

a.

**b) PG 4609 (no2). 1929 2L LC (OH 9517)**

c) U?E 7826 (HC SM 2 seater + dickey)

d) ?GH 1445 (3L Close Coupled 2 door DHC)

#### **Where are they now?**

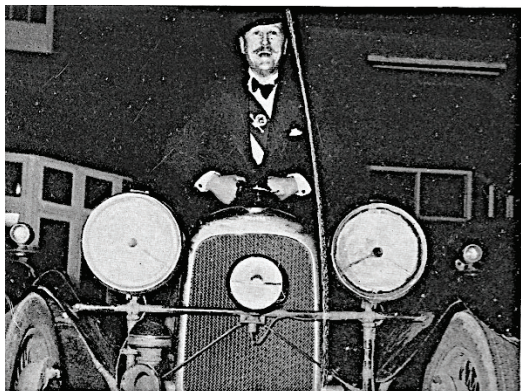
As noted, the Club holds records of 11 of the cars that participated at the Fete, of which six are owned by members of the Club (all but one being 2 Litre Low Chassis). A further two are clearly still in existence.

#### **PG 7847 (Class A, Open Lagonda Sports Cars, Appearance Contest)**

3 Litre. Chassis no Z9648. In 1951, it was owned by C L Barringer of Tarson Hall, Needham Market, Suffolk. Its subsequent history is unknown.

#### **KW 8900 (Class A, Open Lagonda Sports Cars, Appearance Contest)**

3 Litre. Chassis no Z9727. Registered by Central Garage, Bradford to themselves on 16 July 1930. It was exported to Kenya in 1948, where it was raced. The car returned to the UK in c1971. The car was broken up in 1994. The body is now on PL 7634 (2 Litre LC OH9894).



*Henry Coates competing in the 1952 night trial, one time owner of GF 1954*



**GF 8843 (Class A, Open Lagonda Sports Cars, Appearance Contest)**

2 Litre LC. Chassis no OH9670.

Registered 25 April 1930.

Owned by Randolph Trafford.

Subsequently owned by Harry Gostling, a member of the Club's

Committee from 1958-69. It

is currently owned by James

Baxendale.

**GF 1954 (Class A, Open Lagonda Sports Cars, Appearance Contest)**

2 Litre LC. Chassis no OH 9644.

Registered 24 March 1930. Owned between 1941-54 by Henry Coates, who was the Club's Northern Secretary in the 1950s. It is currently owned by John Keatley, Northern Ireland.

**GF 1954 was briefly reunited with GF 8843 80 years later at the VSCC Pembrey Circuit race meeting in 2012.**



**PG 8804 (Class A, Open Lagonda Sports Cars, Appearance Contest)**

2 Litre LC. Chassis no OH9657.

Registered 1 March 1930. The car ran in the 1930 Double Twelve, driven by Sharman and Stone and won the two lap handicap for trade and Lagonda sales staff. It underwent a total restoration in 1994-95. It is currently owned by Macko Laqueur, Belgium.

**NF 6572 (Class A, Open Lagonda Sports Cars, Appearance Contest)**

2 Litre Tourer. Chassis no

OH8776. Registered 31 August 1927. The car moved to the Isle of Man in 1970, when it was re-registered as 1927 MN. On returning to the UK in 1984, it was again re-registered as JSV 974. It has been reallocated NF 6572. Its current owner is not known.

**HW 8059 (Class C Open Lagonda Standard Model, Appearance Contest)**

3 Litre HC Tourer. Chassis no Z9619. Registered 15 February 1930. It is currently owned by Alec McCann.

**PG 4609 (Class E Special body, Appearance Contest)**

2 Litre LC. Chassis no OH9517. Registered 13 November 1929. Originally a 2 door FHC by Wylder of Kew. It was merged with two 1929 2Ls in 1954-55. It is currently owned by Graham and Gilly Wallis, California.

**GJ 7225 (Line-up for race)**

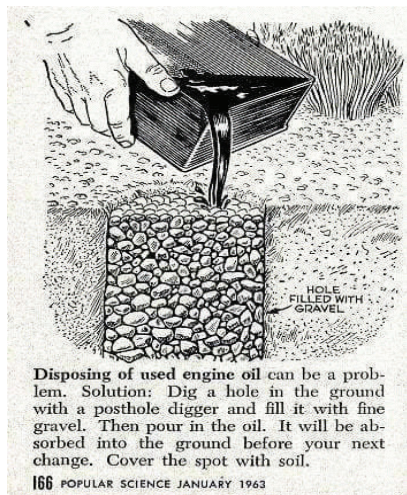
2 Litre LC Tourer. Chassis no OH9976. Registered 13 June 1930. It was owned until at least 2015 by Sam Anderson, County Antrim.

**VR 5110 (Line-up for race)**

2 Litre LC Tourer. Chassis no OH9544. Registered 8 February 1930. It was bought by Dr J D Bradshaw in 1966, who owned it for over 30 years. It is currently owned by Tim Parker, the Club's competition secretary.

**VB 6542 (Line-up for race)**

HC SM Tourer. Chassis no OH9297. Registered in July 1929. In 1950, it was owned by a D P King of Jacketts Hill, Thakeham, Sussex. Nothing of its subsequent history is known. It appears that by 2003 there remained only its ID plate. ■



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# Coping with Crooked Bishops

## *A saga in two parts by Michael Nassim*

BISHOP CAM STEERING boxes are a good example of “fings ain’t always what they seem”, besides which, as so often, Reginald Bishop’s 1923-4 base patents don’t reveal the important trade secrets and practical compromises. And now that specialist information and support are in short supply, members and the Spares Committee need a common basis of understanding when assessing and adjusting our steering boxes, or making new parts which will fit everything else old and new. So, let’s try and establish the critical facts, and in the process do away with some recurrent confusions.

### **Box basics**

The Z90 box as fitted to our 2 litre, 16/80 and 3litre cars, and its oil seal-equipped Z408 variant in the 4.5litres, have three fundamental reference touchstones - the cam scroll cylinder and steering column axis, the drop arm shaft axis perpendicular to it and offset from the scroll cylinder axis by 2.5 inches, and the box thrust plate gasket face, which datum level is 1.91875 inches above the cylinder axis, given that the scroll support bearing holes are 2.1875 (2 3/16th inches) dia. with edges set exactly 0.825 inches below the datum face. (Limited experience suggests that the nominal 2.125-inch cylinder diameters are insufficiently precise for use as surface datum levels). These support bearing holes are 5.325 inches

apart, but their retaining flanges have centering collars 0.1 inches deep, such that the nominal distance between them to locate the scroll cylinder and end bearings is 5.125 inches. In fact, the combined length of cylinder and bearings was made a little longer, such that the cylinder could be shuffled lengthwise along the box relative to the drop arm axis using end flange gaskets. (This is a useful original trick for fine positioning of the central steering “sweet spot”). But as Michael Drakeford cautions: *some safety-critical minimum collar depth being essential, no more than say 0.05-6 thou*” thickness of gaskets ‘ought’ to be fitted under any one flange. Even so, there’s an additional way of doing this if, for example, the combined length of cylinder and bearings is ever less than 5.125 inches, which is to fit internal ring gaskets on top of the flange collar registers.

Either way, when fitting new bearings, one should nip everything up lightly without any gaskets first, and then order or make the necessary. It’s not unusual these days to find that new bearing end caps may need equal grinding down to get a comfortably adjustable and symmetrical end-shuffling margin. Conversely, internal ring gaskets might help re-fitting after light and meticulous steering shaft axis-aligned re-grinding to salvage pitted scroll cylinder bearing faces, always remembering that surface

hardening is likely to be little more than 0.015 inches deep at either end, as has recently been done successfully by AMOC member Roger Martin, whom we specifically cautioned *not* to heat up and press the scroll off the shaft first. Too much harmful cooking, which must be repeated when putting things back together again. *In this context also observe that excessive pre-load on the inherently softer scroll bearing ends must be avoided when finally tightening up- the shaft should spin freely but with no end-float.* And finally, note that evenly spaced caged ball bearings are well-nigh essential in this design, although some other designs fit as many balls as possible to even up the load rather than spacing them out. But just try fitting them in a Bishop box! (All this does further suggest that scrolls would have been better and more cheaply made with square shoulders to accept complete and fully replaceable angular contact bearings. Hence, whether for salvage or re-manufacture, the search is now officially on for suitable bearings to fit or modify- all promising suggestions duly welcome!).

Steering boxes should, wherever possible, be checked for squareness, strain and distortion. Here a good surface plate, try square, micrometers and/or a height gauge are invaluable. Assuming that the box mounting sleeve is concentric and parallel with the drop arm shaft bush bore, it's worth mounting the sleeve in a really good large 3 or 4 jaw chuck, and tracing the gasket datum face with a dial gauge, having first checked

that the face is flat on a surface plate. While a few 'thou' of wobble is in practice allowable, anything more suggests that the box should be straightened. But remember: *under no circumstance should the critical datum face itself be machined.* Now's also the time to check the phosphor-bronze split bushes for wear and any clear ovality/eccentricity with a really good three-point bore micrometer/comparator and calibration standards. Experience suggests they were 1.125 nominal minus up to 0.005 inches internal diameter when fitted, and that even now it is relatively unusual to find bushes worn above nominal diameter. If so, consider comparing lathe box sleeve mounting squareness versus mandrel mounting through the bearings. *It's thus not really surprising to find that the bore into which they fit and by which the drop arm shaft is located is the most accurately defined and finely finished reference surface in the whole box!* By contrast, the unworn middle section diameters of steel drop arm shafts commonly measure 1.123 plus up to 0.005 inches in diameter, such that when new there was always around one thou of free play between bush and shaft. Most of the wear seems usually to be on the shaft, such that a reduction in diameter appreciably above, say, 1.5 thou merits rectification.

Next a few words on the fit of the split bush bearings themselves. They press into a finely finished hole 1.25 nominal minus around 0.0001 inches in diameter, which both accurately defines the drop arm shaft axis and the nominal internal bush diameter of

1.125 inches when press-fitted. This requires bush walls exactly 1/16th (0.0625) inches thick. The bushes can, with due care, be removed by inserting a very stout washer just under 1.25 inches in diameter in the free space between the two, and then winding them out from the inside using a suitable length of stout studding with two nuts spanning the washer and a central hole in a bridging strip across the gasket face. At the bottom end a suitable piece of support sleeve extension tubing is also needed to get the bush right out. Rather classier than a washer would be a stepped disc to both engage the bush and correctly centre the draw stud, *especially if the same method is ever used to wind or press in replacement bushes from the outside ends*. Much safer and better all round to get replacement bearings pre-chilled and pressed in at a good general engineering shop. The original pattern sleeves may be externally stamped O & S Pat. and are 1.25 inches long, of solid bronze and with a 45 degree lead-in bevel at one end only. On the inside, and directly opposite the split is a canted parabolic oil groove with its arch *at the bush end opposite the bevel*, and with both groove ends passing right through the bevel face. *This ensures that, when the bushes are fitted from the outside inwards, the inner groove ends allow the entry of lubricant from within the box but the arch end does not allow its free escape at the drop arm end of the box*. The bearing splits were carefully located to face directly outwards from the drop arm

shaft axis in line with the bisection of the radius arm arc.

The Glacier steel-backed style of shell bearing became available later, so split bearings of this type may also be encountered. Cutting complex oil grooves in these after forming is more difficult, such that other oil retention means may be used. Such sleeves may have lead-in bevels at both ends, and besides being harder such that they deform less when being fitted, they are much less liable to metal-to-metal drag and pick-up marks when being put in or taken out. Being stiffer than the bronze type they only spring out by approximately 5 thou, whereas the bronze types may spring out approximately double this amount. *Fitting bronze bearings thus demands extra care. So here again, consider leaving the originals well alone if your bore comparator readings and spinning the box through its bearings on a mandrel show only a relatively trivial amount of potentially eccentric wear.*

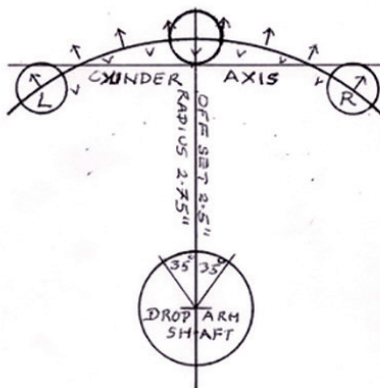
### **Relationships between the cam follower peg, its carrier radius arm, and the cam scroll groove**

Time now to look at the underside of the thrust plate end cover, and see what lies beneath it as shown diagrammatically in **Figure 1**. First up is the radius arm back, which in normal use backs up against the thrust plate. Neither back nor arm appear hardened to any marked extent, such that in practice both wear, and surface pick-up marks are commonly present. *Whatever else one does, the thrust*



plate should always be checked for distortion and hollowing out, which must first be corrected by light surface grinding or lapping. All other important wear is on the peg taper flanks and matching cam groove inclined faces. At first sight the cam groove profile resembles a Stub Acme thread with a total included angle of 30 degrees, i.e. close to a 1 in 4 inclination on each side, or 1 in 2 combined. As a result, every one thou of distributed wear on both peg flanks and grooves or on both arm back and plate increases the depth of apparent peg penetration by 2 thou. It's sobering, therefore, to note that as little as one thou loss on all four surfaces drops the peg in by a whopping 8 thou. *It is this perhaps more than anything which has given the Bishop system a relatively poor reputation, in that it may require more frequent and tedious adjustment than other types - something we are all too likely to keep putting off, of which more anon.* In the fixed peg design with no rotation peg, wear is not distributed such that local faceting occurs, and in theory wear adjustment is needed more often; but in practice the rotating peg variant with nominal rolling groove contact can stick or even seize up, as then revealed by the resulting intermittent pattern of flank wear witness marks. So here even more than elsewhere, scrupulous cleanliness and careful fitting during assembly are essential for long component life (changing the

BISHOP CAM Z90 SERIES BOXES:  
PLAN VIEW OF FOLLOWER ARM ARC RADIUS  
AND PEG PATH PLOT.



ARROWS: DROP ARM SHAFT SERRATION PEAK POINTS  
IN TEN DEGREE STEPS.  
VEES: INTERVENING SERRATION TROUGHS.

Figure 1

lubricant is not a ready option). One can also extend the service life of fixed pegs by pressing them out and re-fitting them to present unworn flank faces to the groove. (To reduce both wear and the need for adjustment, any new radius arms, perhaps with oversize shafts for individual fitting, should logically be the rotating peg version only.)

Of course, it ain't even that simple, as Figure 1 in part reveals. To start with, the peg centre radius of arc movement is 2.75 inches, i.e. greater than the drop arm axis offset of 2.5 inches, with the result that the peg centre *overhangs* the cylinder axis by 0.25 inches at mid-arc. What's more, the radius arm and groove together produce an arc of 2.75 inches radius spanning exactly 70 degrees of arm rotation or 35 degrees on each side

of steering dead centre, the limits to which are set by the peg butting against the groove ends and not by the arm reaching the inside edges of the box. At these limits the peg centre now *under-hangs* the cylinder axis by a similar amount. Whatever, the combined result is that the cam groove can only be a Stub Acme profile at the points where the arc crosses over the cylinder axis, which is at approximately 25 degrees out towards each lock. *To get the correct flank and groove fit, the groove profile and inclination relative to the cylinder axis must therefore vary continuously throughout the arc.* Not only that, but the groove effective depth has also to vary accordingly, because otherwise the arm back loses contact with the thrust plate or play increases dramatically as the peg ‘dives in’ progressively towards the three regions of overhang and underhang. Helpfully enough, there’s a lock centre circumferential scribe line at scroll cylinder mid length to assist initial location of the groove high point.

All done then? Not quite, because most perplexingly the apparent groove pitch also varies continuously, being coarsest at the furthest ‘left hand’ end of the groove, and finest at the top ‘right hand’ end towards the steering wheel. Why anyone should want to do this and what effects it might produce have bemused a lot of us over the years, but the double protractor rotational and effective groove depth profile plots shown in **Figure 2** give the answers. These show that *the asymmetric pitch linearises the rotational response*

*of the radius arm to turns of the steering wheel.* Though higher and lower scroll ratios exist, the 968:70 or 13.83:1 ratio seems typical, as can now be checked by counting just the degrees of steering wheel turn needed to traverse the box’s own internal 70-degree groove limits (968/70 degrees = 2.69, or a smidge over 2 2/3 turns). That apart, the compensated groove depth actually ramps up to a central peak before descending again! *This minimal thrust plate clearance “sweet spot” is what enables minimal side play and critical directional stability at dead ahead where castor return forces are also minimal.*

With a new peg fitted to mimic the original groove cutter profile and path, the ramp slope is essentially one thou rise per degree of arm rotation towards the centre to create a central high point or region. Worn pegs of both types both penetrate further and generate a smaller ramp slope, such that a new Club peg can raise the arm back and increase the potential gasket space by some 50 thou relative to the datum face. How the groove itself wears is complex, given that castor return forces act on opposite laterally facing sides of the groove when going from lock to lock, and that in the UK camber bias is predominantly to the left.

Superimposed on this are the driver’s turning efforts and the ambient statistical variation in the degrees of left and right turns. Suffice it to note that constant opposite lock castor groove wear might produce the small ‘chicane’ seen in the steering linearisation characteristic, and

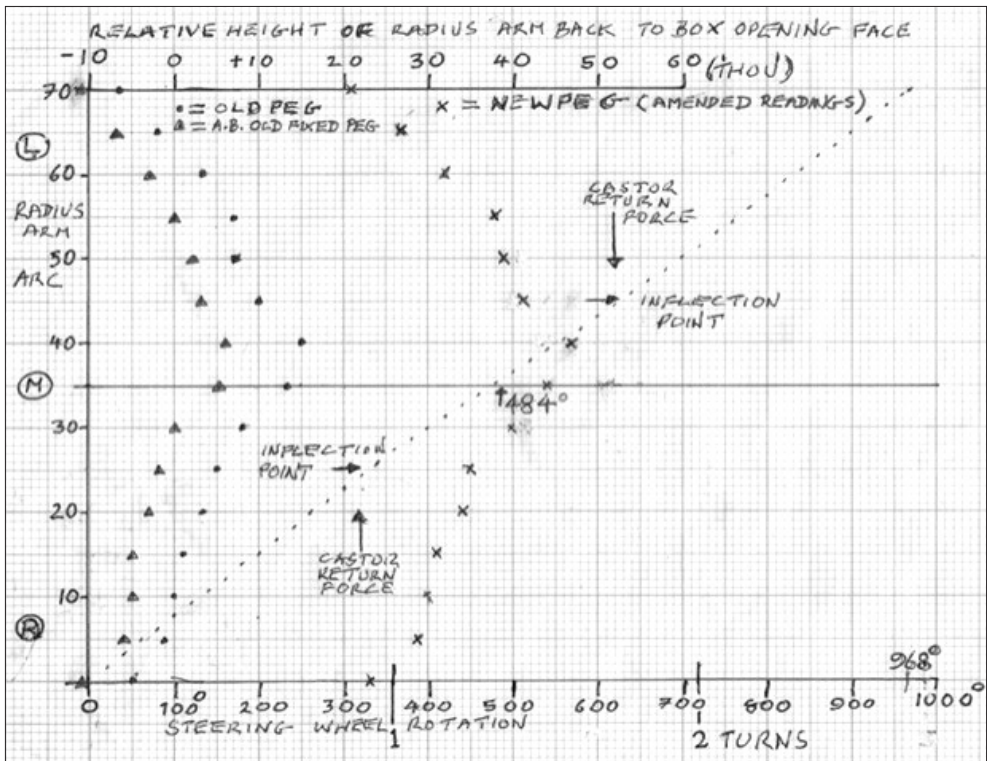


Figure 2

that in the UK camber bias might be expected to produce more wear on the 'engaging' left side groove ramp, and less on the 'disengaging' right side where lateral play progressively increases. All this makes the interpretation of groove and peg witness marks or blueing fit testing very difficult, as Terry Bown and Michael Drakeford have discovered. Even so, if box or radius arm distortions are suggested by tip contact wear on one side and root contact on the other, then peg axis alignment with the drop arm shaft should also be checked in two planes using a well-fitted reference test rod

in place of the peg.

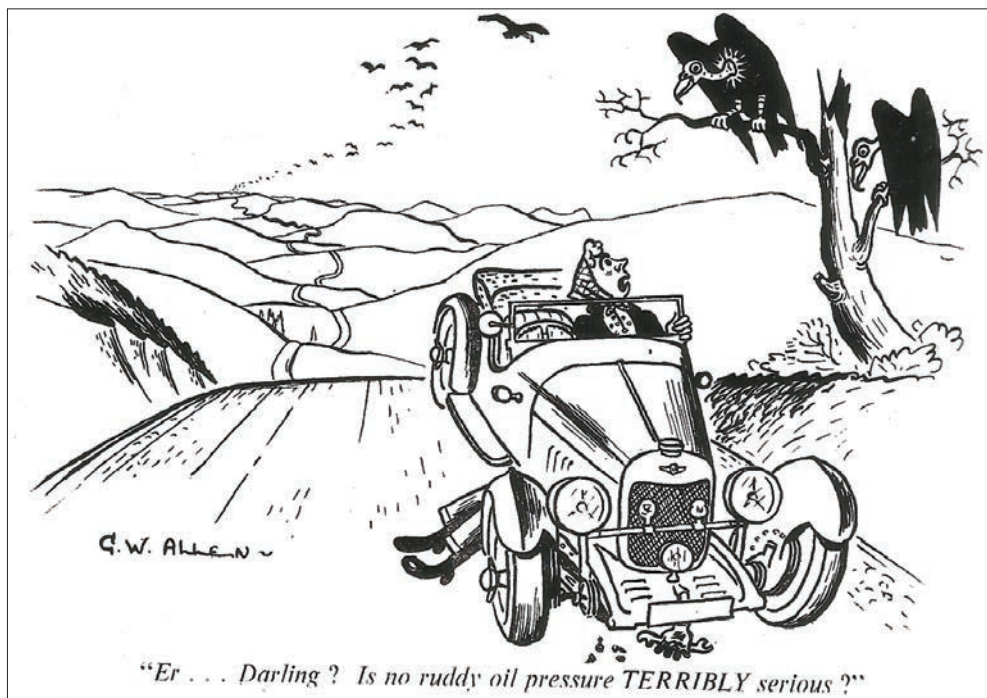
Despite such uncertainties, we can now create whatever ramp, groove profile and steering ratio we might want on an ordinary 4 axis machining centre by making a 30 degree included angle cutter/grinder (or 29 degrees to allow a final finish grind) follow a 2.75 inch radius arc and ramp while geared reductively to the rotating scroll cylinder blank. This in turn dictates the requisite thickness of thrust plate gaskets for taking up wear: here recall that the cylinder axis underlies the datum gasket by 1.91875 inches, in which case 82 thou of gaskets gives a nominal thrust plate main axis offset

of almost exactly 2 inches, which in practice is more than the 35 or so needed to fully compensate for combined wear sufficient to 'bury' the high point of sweet spot engagement below the thrust plate gasket face.

It is of historical interest that Reginald Bishop originally achieved his cutter arc relative to the cylinder blank by moving it relative to the cylinder blank on a "parallel ruler" style of travelling carriage, but revealed nothing about groove ramp

profiles or how he generated them. Those of us with different makes of car might also note that side-exiting Bishop boxes, a vertical drop arm and 'fore and aft' drag links require a right hand scroll thread when mounted for right hand drive, whereas bottom-exiting boxes require a left hand scroll thread when connected to a transverse drag link and rearwards inclined steering arm. ■

**To be continued**



*This cartoon from 1954 will resonate with 2 litre owners in particular!*



# Tales From The Bodyshop

*By Arnold Davey*

IT CAME AS a bit of a shock the other day to realise that of the historians who interviewed Frank Feeley in the 1970s, I am the only one left and as my next birthday will be my 90th, I had better be getting on with recounting some of the lighter hearted tales he told, and which have not been published before.

I first met Frank in 1966. The Club approached Petters, then occupying the old Lagonda factory, with the idea of a club social meeting on the site. Petters were quite keen but there was nowhere to accommodate us on the old factory area which was crammed with machinery, but we could have space on “Ironbarks”, where the old house had been pulled down and replaced with a shiny new office block and car park. There were still scores of ex-Lagonda staff working at Petters then, and they spread the word about us displaying our cars; the local paper got hold of the story and the occasion was very memorable. I don’t know why it was never repeated.

I had become the Registrar when Bill Hartop moved to Switzerland and in those days, it consisted of the drawer from someone’s kitchen table and holding two batches of index cards separated by a piece of plywood. The left half contained cars in model order and chassis number order. The right half, a cross reference of chassis number to registration number. We still use basically the same system but with five components, not two.

At the 1966 meeting mentioned above Mike Wilby found me and said you must meet this bloke who knows all about Lagonda bodywork. “This bloke” turned out to be Frank. I told him about the Register and my bafflement at the complexities of the codes used on the cars’ identity plates. For example; virtually identical saloons coded W24P and ST24. Frank sensed a keen listener and in the next hour explained the whole system, the various patents that they had used and the differing processes used for open cars and saloons. We exchanged phone numbers and he was happy to be quizzed at intervals afterwards.

Now fast forward to 1971. The Post Office workers went on strike for three months and we had to abandon the Club newsletter, since it could not be delivered. This made running the club and informing members of events, past or forthcoming, very difficult. During this silent period Mike Wilby had died, following an operation for colon cancer. Mike had held every office in the club, finishing as President, and probably knew more members than the rest of the committee put together. He was much missed and there was a general feeling that some permanent tribute to Mike should be organised. The upshot was that we would commission a respected motoring writer to research and write an official history of the marque. A fund was raised to pay said writer by seeking donations and what seemed

to be a more than expected amount collected. Tony May, then editing the Club magazine, set about finding an author. Nobody actually turned it down flat but the fees they sought made our whip-round look ludicrous, so we resolved to do it in-house, with me covering up to 1939 and Tony the post war period and, crucially, finding a publisher. Frank was going to be the foremost contributor as he had been in a senior position in the company from a young age and still had clear and accurate memories of it. He lived in Hythefield Avenue, Staines, only about half a mile from the factory, and I soon became a regular visitor. All the important facts found their way into the "Blue Book" but a number of stories he told have never been published before and serve to lighten the history: -

A fashion designer turned up one day, a rather camp young man from the East End garment industry who had invented a novel range of trousers which had become very popular and made a lot of money. He brought with him his "Chauffeur", a hulking great bruiser who Frank found very intimidating, particularly the very visible gun in a shoulder holster. The designer settled on a 3 Litre saloon, which in those days featured a peak over the windscreen. Looking at the car in profile, the shape reminded the young man of the then height of suburban chic, the classic flight of china ducks arranged up the wall, smallest first and increasing in size at each lower level. Once he had got this idea in his head, nothing could shift it and it became part of the instructions on the order. Difficulties emerged at

once. In your living room each duck had a hole on the back which engaged with a screw head projecting from the wall. This was not going to work on a car, so some form of permanent, weatherproof, adhesive had to be invented. Then they discovered that all commercial ranges of duck flew 'beaks to the left' but none were the other way around for the offside panels. Here they gave in and asked the designer to find these 'one-off' ducks himself. I asked how this all worked out in practice and he said he didn't know as they never saw the car again.

I knew from looking at factory build sheets how some customers were very fussy on detail. I saw one which under 'Colour' said "Blue to match eiderdown supplied by customer". You can only guess what state that eiderdown would be in after its stay in the paint shop. Customers were allowed all sorts of liberties. A.E.Dobell, having announced an entry in the Monte Carlo Rally, then very high profile, was lent an office next to Frank's in which he drew out his version of the dashboard of his M45R, since he disliked the standard one. He also had a red badge instead of blue on his radiator.

The Bodyshop had its problems with enthusiastic salesmen at times, especially those employed by dealers a long way from Staines. It got acute at the beginning of the V12 era. The prototype drophead coupé had elaborate swaging which ran diagonally from the radiator cap to the base of the windscreen where it met the body belt. There was matching swaging on the wings. But Frank said they never invented an easy way to do this. The bonnet man (Billy Ezzard) would have

to cut the panel with big margins, fit it and then mark out the swage lines and form them in situ, using a “jenny”, take it all off again to finish and final assemble. It cost a fortune in labour, so salesmen were instructed to play down these swages, while a hastily prepared new catalogue was rushed out where they did not feature. But there were adamant customers who demanded the swages until told they were “last year’s model sir”

Anyone who studies the Club Register will notice the scores of cars with KW and KY registrations. These were all the work of one man, “Mac” McCalman, who was Sales Manager at Central Garage in Bradford. “Mac” had put together a coterie of Yorkshire wool barons and impressed on them that the true symbol of success in their business was to have a new Lagonda every year. It worked, and was recognised at the factory. Any customer of Mac’s got privileged treatment. When Alan Good set up the 1935 Lagonda company, McCalman became the Sales Manager at Staines.

It is possible, even likely, that it was a ‘Mac’ customer who ordered an M45 saloon and specified chromium plated wings. Some customers sought eye-catching finishes but this caused a crisis in the Bodyshop. Lagonda did all their own plating, but the biggest object they dealt with was the radiator shell. To plate an M45 front wing required a new plating tank about 12 feet long which would only be used this once, plus extra labour polishing the metal to the standard required for chromium plate. All Lagonda wings and wheels were stove enamelled black first and then

the finished colour sprayed on top. The black layer would accommodate small blemishes, plating would not. Attempts were made to sub-contract out to professional platers but they all saw no use for such a huge tank and declined. So, the sales people, who had probably guessed a quoted extra price, nowhere near enough, were sent back to the customer to try to talk him out of it. He would not have it. He had been bragging about his shiny wings and must now have them but he did accept a non-standard shape. Hastily drawn up by the Bodyshop, the revised design was taller and shorter and if anything looked more modern, satisfying the customer. Against all the odds, this car survives, turning up in Poland about 20 years ago, only to vanish again. No sign of the chromium plate now of course.

Then there was the customer, presumably female but Frank didn’t say, who returned a new Lagonda because it looked “too dull” and had roses stippled all over every panel.

There were specialists within the body shop. I have already mentioned Billy Ezzard, who made every Lagonda bonnet. Another specialist was the man who painted the coachlines. Frank thought his name was Milhan. He used a very special brush and his own recipe for paint. The brush had very few hairs but they were about 12 inches long. Mr. Milhan was liable to return from “The Ship” after lunch a touch unsteady on his feet, but unhesitatingly slapped his strange brush next to the radiator and drew a perfectly straight line to the tail of the car.

Dick Watney, the Managing

Director after 1935, was determined to improve standards throughout the business, sometimes even if it upset people. He interfered with design too. Frank would produce drawings of the projected next model. Watney would suggest subtle changes and Frank would take it away, do nothing but produce it again a few weeks later. Watney would say how much better it now was and sign it off for production. The whole pantomime was ludicrous as the next stage would be to produce plywood cross-sections at full size for every "station" at 10-inch intervals. These would be set up in three dimensions so that the foreman panel beater could modify if needed to get the final shape. Frank was adamant that an experienced panel beater could always produce better shapes than any draughtsman, including himself. It had to be done full size.

By the time the Lagonda History was taking a final shape my thoughts were turning to illustrations and had already taken a special shot of a genuine LG45 Rapide. Greatly saucy, I asked Frank - did he have an original drawing of one? No, he hadn't, but was happy to make one for me. On the next visit he produced a side elevation line drawing and then said he was so pleased with it he was going to keep it, but handed over a photocopy which I reproduced at a smaller scale as page 374. I must have looked disappointed because later he gave me his DB period buttonhole badge.

While they were still with us the club tried to invite "Old Lags" to the AGM if it was to be held in reasonable distance from Staines. The 1970 AGM was one such, held near Maidenhead and the picture shows Frank with other veterans. ■



*"Old Lags" at the 1970 Lagonda Club AGM, Burchetts Green, Maidenhead.  
Left to Right: Ted Bibby (body painter), Frank Feeley (body design), Ron Kerridge (Club member), Dick Shattock (engine builder) and Percy Kemish (Experimental).*



## Letters & Emails ... Letters & Emails

Dear Roger,

### LIGHT CAR RACE

I was interested to read in the autumn magazine Richard Matthews' description of racing his 1922 K Type 11.9 Lagonda at Silverstone in 2021. However, this car has raced at Silverstone in the past. I am sure it is the same 11.9 that Freda Roberts drove to victory in the Lagonda Handicap Race at the BDC race meeting in August 1969.

The oldest Lagonda won the race!

Alan Brown, Witt Wittridge & Colin Bugler came second, third and fourth. I was also competing, in my 2 litre GP895, but came much further down the field! It is a shame that this annual race no longer takes place.

Incidentally, my brother was stationed at RAF Silverstone for a period during the war, when Wellington bombers were based there.

Sincerely  
Alan Elliott

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*Footnote: The ‘Editorial Bleat’ was written by the then Editor - ‘Tortoise Taylor’ in the Summer 1953 edition of The Lagonda. It seems nothing changes!*

# Letters & Emails ... Letters & Emails

Sent to Tim Wadsworth

Dear Tim

Sue's bemused expression greeted me as I put the telephone down and said "I've inherited a Bugatti".

In October 2020 my dear friend Bob Last called me from his deathbed to say farewell after a short but serious illness. Bob and I had been friends since 2002 when I bought his lovingly preserved Lagonda 3 litre DHC by Carlton - KY1610 - and so it was no surprise to get his call but news of the Bugatti was indeed a surprise!

About ten years ago he showed me the beautifully made child's pedal car he had created for his children, based on the Bugatti Bebe of 1924. Like everything Bob did this was perfection. He told me he had made it for his daughters, Jackie and Jo, who were now adults and the car had not been used for a number of years.

I gently dropped into the conversation a comment that my granddaughter was now three but he didn't pick it up and we went on to talk about other things.

But he had not forgotten that conversation and told me that he wanted me to have the Bugatti on condition that I leave it to a Museum when I was finished with it. Sue has grandchildren of 6, 7 and eight years old and so the car will probably be used in the family for a few years before being parked up in its final resting place. I also intend to exhibit it at The Orkney Vintage Club's annual Show in Kirkwall during the early days of August 2022.

Buy a Lagonda, get a good friend into the bargain who leaves you a Bugatti; surely the stuff of fairy-tales!

With kind regards,  
Bill Spence





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