

Number 275 Winter 2022/2023

**THE MAGAZINE OF THE
LAGONDA CLUB**

The Club's
2023 ANNUAL GATHERING & A.G.M.

on
Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th September,
will again be held at
The Mercure Warwickshire Walton Hall Hotel & Spa
Walton, CV35 9HG, Warwickshire

Following the substantial improvement in the standard of service which it provided in 2022, the show of hands in favour at the last AGM, and the lack of



alternative venues which can provide the facilities that the Club requires, the board has decided to return to the Walton Hall Hotel for a third year.

The weekend will include the usual events and activities, i.e.

Saturday afternoon	Scenic drive, details to be announced
Saturday evening	Gala Dinner
Sunday morning	Display of Lagondas (featured models are 16/65, 3L and 16/80) AGM of the Lagonda Club Buffet lunch, served in our marquee
Sunday afternoon	Presentations

Please book accommodation for one, two or three nights at the agreed rates per room per night of £130.00 (double occupancy) £120.00 (single occupancy), including full English breakfasts, by phoning 01789 842424, option 1, during office hours (Mon. – Fri., 9.00 am – 5.00 pm) **on or before 11th August 2023** and quoting "Lagonda Club Event".

Tickets for Saturday's Gala Dinner and/or Sunday's cold buffet served in our marquee will be available from early February from the Shop on the Club's website: www.lagondaclub.com

If you have any queries please contact Peter Gilkes, preferably by email to: pgilkes2@gmail.com, or alternatively by phone, tel. 07903 822668

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The Lagonda Magazine

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**COVER: See the article on page 6 to find out more about these people
and this car, at a rally in the 1960s**

Contents

From the Workbench	5
The Family's 11.9 HP Lagonda	6
Clive Dalton - Memories	11
Lagonda LG45 Power-assisted Steering Conversion	17
Useful Tips on Driving a Motor Car	20
The Lagonda Light Car & Hill Climbing	26
A(nother) Cautionary Tale	29
2 Litre Register Rallies 1947-1951	30
A Tale of Twelve Cylinders (continued) Part 1.....	36
Letters & Emails	39-42

From the Workbench

Roger Seabrook

AS IS USUAL this time of the year, old car activity is minimal. However, I did manage to marshal at the VSCC Winter driving tests at Bicester Heritage in December. It was great to see so many young people taking part, many in Austin Sevens of varying types, some surprisingly quick. And it was noticeable that most of the youngsters had better co-ordination in the tests than their seniors!

We did attend a New Year gathering in our 2 litre saloon - fortunately there had been the mild spell of weather with plenty of rain, so there wasn't any salt to worry about. Only one other vintage car turned up, and that was a bullnose Morris, everyone else deciding that a warm modern car was the best transport on a cold day.

I was pleased to be contacted by Jim Punter, who owns the delightful 11.9 featured on the front cover of this Magazine. When I saw the pictures of the car, they jogged a memory. Back in about 1970, when I acquired my 12-24, I attended a vintage car meeting at Booker Airfield, near High Wycombe. I had done a gliding course there four years before, whilst an apprentice at BEA.

They paid for us to do this, but we had to camp next to the hangars where the gliders, and other very interesting aircraft were kept. The film '*Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines*' was produced at Booker, and the aircraft from the film were still there (some actually flew, others were cleverly positioned to appear as if they were flying).

Anyway, as a young and rather naïve Lagonda owner, I was drawn to this cream and brown 2-seater which I realised was an earlier version of my 12-24. I chatted to the proud owner, who was rather disdainful of the replica bulb horn I had treated myself to. However, he was very enthusiastic and showed me round his car, giving me useful advice on how to go about fixing mine (YM 221). This car appears on page 33 of this issue, behind the man in the flower pot hat. At that time, it was owned by a chap called Bunce and he won an award in it. It now resides in Belgium.

Fifty-two years later the same car (YX 9558), now owned by this gentleman's son, turns up again. What a small world! ■

***Last date for copy for the Spring Magazine is
Friday 31st March 2023
Please keep new articles & pictures coming in.***

The Family's 11.9HP Lagonda

Jim Punter regales us with stories of his 1919 11.9HP Lagonda

A Pile of Junk!

I was there in 1957 when our family's 11.9 Lagonda YX9558 arrived. Dad had bounced enthusiastically into the house saying, "...come and see what I've got". A few years before my dad had turned the big garden of our house into a car breaker's yard after the family's timber business had failed. He had been to collect an old car and was unusually enthusiastic about it telling us it was a surprise. Would this be something special - a barn-find Jaguar SS 100 perhaps? No! What we saw was a pile of junk on the back of his lorry. The car had been dismantled to rebuild it as a restoration project by one of dad's friends, who had sadly died. Dad was very pleased with his new acquisition having paid the poor widow £25.00 for the car - a lot of money at the time.

Mum was horrified, "...that's not a car Dick, it's a pile of junk, and it's so old". "No, you don't get it Doris", said dad enthusiastically, adding, "that's the point, it was made in 1919, the year you were born - it'll be loads of fun, you'll see, it just needs doing up a bit". As a 15-year-old, my sentiments were with mum, it was a pile of junk. Although I was keen on Vintage cars, especially the old powerful sports cars like Bentleys, Invictas and the big Lagondas of the 1930s, I was unimpressed with the light cars of the era, especially the pile of junk on the back of dad's lorry.

Concours Cups & Charity Events

Eventually, in the summer of 1961 dad said the Lagonda was finished. OK, I

didn't like the car, but was astonished at the quality of dad's work, he'd done an impressive job, as if it had just driven out of the Staines factory. He said that it performed as expected and for years he took it to numerous rallies, and even drove it around local dance halls - (yes, indoors!) collecting money for charity. He frequently featured, pictured behind the wheel of the car in the local papers, with him and mum often dressed in period early 1920s attire. He became well known as a keen collector for charity, using the Lagonda and his black Labrador dog with a collecting box on its back as props to support his act.

Very proud of his car, dad entered numerous concours events one of which, out of curiosity, I drove to myself. I can clearly remember the arguments dad had with the judges as to whether this, or that feature on the Lagonda was in 'original' condition. He won many concours cups in those days.

Driving the Lagonda

Whilst impressed with dad's restoration, I was not with the car itself, and despite dad's urging me to do so, refused to drive it. What sort of 'street cred' would driving an 'old crock' give a young guy like me in my late teens?

Then in the summer of 1962 dad announced that he was going away for six weeks that summer, touring Europe in his camper van and said that as I would be running the business during my summer vacation from university, which I had done for a week or so in the previous few



With its hood up the 11.9 has a dignified appearance.

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years, he also expected me to take the old Lagonda to two concours rallies. He said that it was important to him and mum that I take the Lagonda to those events while he was away. He had entered a concours competition which involved attending several meetings through the summer, where points were awarded at each meeting - the car earning the most points over the year would become that year's concours champion.

Reluctantly I took YX 9558 for a drive expecting some difficulty with the gearbox, and pedals (the throttle's in the middle) but didn't expect any problems as I was used to double de-clutching. But the Lagonda was harder than I expected! Eventually I managed to master it with relatively smooth gear changes most of the time, but not necessarily guaranteed! For the first few months of driving the Lagonda I just coasted up to junctions to avoid crunching down-changes from top (third gear) to second! Nowadays its easier as I'm more fully in tune with its gearbox's tantrums.

Braking, on the other hand, is an unnerving strategic planning exercise. There are no front brakes, which was not unusual for the period, but the footbrake is a transmission brake clamping the prop-shaft. So, a slippery road means your only braking is on one wheel as the differential kicks in, allowing the wheel in the grease or grit to spin as the other wheel bites! Observant planning to slow down or stop is vital, and there's severe brake fade with just twenty seconds or so of braking before there's little or no footbrake at all... There is a handbrake on the rear wheels, it was the first production car with a fly-off handbrake - but that has steel brake shoes bearing

onto steel brake drums, meant only to hold the car on hills or use in dire emergencies, but useless for braking in normal driving - the shoes/drums would get very hot, melting the outer half shaft oil seals!

Antiquated, futuristic and reliable

But for all its antiquated foibles and idiosyncrasies it's surprisingly modern in other respects and has some very positive features. Despite counter claims by other more well-known vehicles, the 11.9 Lagonda was one of the very first cars with fully integrated body/chassis construction, yet without shock absorbers, although you wouldn't think so from the relatively smooth ride. It's also fully electric (6 volts) with a self-starter, dynamo, and lights - not necessarily a 'given' for light cars of the period although the lights are of the 'glow worm in a jam-jar' ilk. And it is astonishingly reliable. I inherited the car when dad passed away in 1981, and use it regularly for local journeys, and sometimes when other cars in my small collection of classics let me down, the old Lagonda fires up straight away. Turn on the fuel, tickle the carb, select ignition fully retarded, press down on the foot operated starter button - advance the ignition lever, and she bursts into life. On the road the old 11.9 is no speed merchant. The most I've seen on a level road is about 43 mph (By GPS - there's no speedometer!), but she will do 40mph all day long - unless you meet a hill, where even gradual inclines, if too long requires a down-change to second gear. Take a deep breath, gearstick into neutral, rev up to synchronise engine revs with road speed, then feel for the

gear - and see my grin when it's a silent process - or a grimace from the grating sound when the revs aren't just right, and I've got to double de-clutch all over again!

Once I was driving up a hill in second with my young son when the engine stopped. No petrol! However, I remembered that the bottom of the tank (behind the dash panel) was curved, and the petrol feed was not right at the bottom of the tank - the angle of the hill had dropped the level below the fuel feed point. Easy solution, do a three-point turn using the hill itself for power, then reverse up the hill as the fuel feed was now at the lowest point, find a suitable place to stop, and top-up from the reserve fuel can strapped to the running board! One day I drove the car to the family business; no longer a breakers yard but, by then, an MOT Testing Station and car repair business, to get an MOT. As I pulled into the garage there was a 'clunk' from inside the engine and it stopped dead and wouldn't start. I was leaving to go on holiday the next day, so I said to Steve, who managed the business for me, "...dad used to have a spare engine sitting on the ground at the back of this building - if you get a spade and have a dig, it might still be there but buried in the mud, and it might have some spares to fix whatever's happened". When I got back to the business after my holiday, I asked about the Lagonda, "What was the problem?" Steve said that a loose gudgeon-pin became had damaged the cylinder. "Did you find that old engine?" I asked, as I went into the workshop, where to my astonishment one of the guys had started the Lagonda and it

was running beautifully. "So, what's happened?" I asked. "We couldn't repair it", said Steve, "so we fitted the old engine we found buried where you said... and its running fine". Industrial archaeology!

A Long Journey

In 1965 dad decided to take the Lagonda to a rally at the Beaulieu Motor Museum - a 140-mile round trip and asked if I minded following him in my car in case anything went wrong. It was wintertime and freezing cold, but mum and dad braved the cold, and the car didn't miss a beat. I felt very smug and snug in my Mk 1 Jaguar following behind. Despite my urgings to join me in the Jaguar, mum was determined to keep dad company in his beloved Lagonda.

More recently when using the car for a trip to the local shops, I decided to try and invent a new urban myth - voice activated self-starting in 1919...! When I returned to the car on a sunny day it was surrounded by several people interested to know what it was, what it's like to drive and so on. As I went to get into the car to leave, one of the guys offered to crank the starting handle to start the engine. Standing with one foot inside the car (over the starter button beneath the carpet), and the other foot on the running board, I said, "No, thanks, its voice activated self-starting". Then, shouting, "Start!" I surreptitiously pushed my foot onto the button and advanced the ignition. Immediately the engine burst into life. Astonishment all round! I explained I had to tune a small strip of thin brass so that it slightly vibrated with my voice - which then closed a circuit to a relay to engage the

starter motor. They all believed it and were very impressed!

After dad died, I used the car for forty years with the only work required being to replace the original fuel tap and installing that once buried engine. In 2021 the magneto failed and was reconditioned. At the same time, I renewed the tyres (from 1961!) and battery - and that's it! What reliability...

This year an old guy was doing some building work for me, and when I told him my name he asked, "...are you Dick Punter's son?" Affirming that I was, he said that in 1961 he was apprenticed to a car body shop business, and one of his first jobs was to paint the wings and bodywork of an old car for my dad - the Lagonda!

He was astonished to find that I still had the car, and with his original paint job, still almost pristine! Wow!

These days, now in my eighty first year I enjoy the challenge of driving the Lagonda. My wife and I frequently drive to the local pubs on balmy summer evenings with the hood down, sometimes braving even longer journeys. And even if, from time to time, I slightly crunch the gears it still leaves me with a wonderful feeling of achievement, pleasure, calm serenity, and smug satisfaction. Not many people get to regularly drive a 103-year-old car; and sometimes, driving alone in the car I visualise dad's ghost sitting next to me, grinning, and teasing me about my less than perfect gear changes!

...and the story continues - the family's 11.9 hp Lagonda. A lifetime of experiences and fond memories, and all from a pile of scrap on the back of dad's lorry. ■



Engine, nearside - exposed rockers, and convenient oil can!

Memories of our Dear Friend Clive Dalton

1936–2022



WE WERE FIRST introduced to Clive many years ago by our late friend Jim Bradshaw, Jim having acquired the remains of his 2 litre high chassis earlier from Andre Kenny. Most parts were examined on Clive's kitchen table at Little Eversden. Everyone learned from Clive over the years, in particular with his knowledge of 2 litre Lagondas.

Clive was a true engineer at heart. With that came a desire for precision and care, and that extended into all his other interests. Including, of course, his family, his friends, and his beloved Lagonda.

Clive grew up in Hove on the South Coast. He was sent to boarding school, aged just 9, ultimately ending up at Tonbridge School. Before going to university in 1956, Clive did his

National Service. He served from 1954-1956 in the Royal Signals at Catterick Camp in North Yorkshire. Even at that stage, Clive had an interest in cars. He bought a vehicle, but did not tell his parents. He needed somewhere to fettle it and found a friendly garage in Catterick Bridge on the old A1. He made good friends with the owner of the garage, Sydney Garforth and his wife Marjorie.

His car once got hit from behind as he worked under the bonnet. His parents were not best pleased to receive this news. The accident fractured Clive's skull and left him deaf in his left ear. This is why he always liked to keep people on his right-hand side so he could clearly hear what they were saying.

One day after his recovery, Sydney

asked Clive if he could pick up his daughter from Scotch Corner. This is how Clive met his future wife, Shirley. Clive was very quick off the mark, asking her out to the cinema on that first meeting!

Clive got a place at Cambridge University to read Mechanical Sciences (now "Engineering") at Queens' College where he made several life-long friends. He joined the Cambridge University Automobile Club, meeting Dick Marston and Andre Kenny. Clive's interest in vintage motor cars had begun.

Andre Kenny had been a classics scholar and was a key part of the wartime Photographic Interpretation Unit at Medmenham. But he also owned Lagondas. He and his wife, Leslie, had a workshop near Long Melford in Suffolk. They allowed students to fettle their own Lagondas there. Clive and Shirley were regular visitors, often staying over. Clive bought his 1932 2-litre low chassis 'Continental' Lagonda in 1959 from a former school headmistress in Cambridge. He liked how well designed and engineered Lagondas were. He went down from Cambridge that same year and he and Shirley stayed with the Kennys into that autumn. During this period, Clive helped work on several cars, including Bill Summers' V12 and Willie Court's twin cam Sunbeam.

Clive and Shirley married in December 1959, ending up in Little Eversden, south west of Cambridge, in 1962. They had two sons, John and David who have contributed to this tribute.

It eventually became clear that Clive's own Lagonda really needed a proper overhaul so it came off the road in 1963. Their elder son, John, had been driven in it as a toddler. Clive started working for himself and consequently the restoration project floundered until some friends asked if it could be ready for their wedding. This spurred Clive on and the Lagonda was eventually back on the road in 1988. Throughout this time, Clive was a keen member of the Lagonda Club and the VSCC and served twice as Chairman.

He and Shirley regularly attended rallies all over the UK and into Europe. His Lagonda was frequently seen around their village and the local countryside.

Clive would have a stream of callers asking for his help and advice which he always gave freely. He felt that such vehicles should be driven, and not allowed to become just museum pieces, and would have been delighted to see how many Lagondas were driven to his memorial service in October.

Clive was committed to a wide variety of things affecting life in Little Eversden. He served on the Parish Council for many years, often as Chairman. He was an enthusiast to restore the bells in Little Eversden church and remained as a bell-ringer for as long as his health would allow.

Clive was very committed to education. In addition to the academic connections he retained with the likes of Cambridge University and Imperial College, he was a governor for many years at three local schools and founder governor in two of them.

In 1971, Clive started a company in his own front room that eventually became Cambridge Insitu Ltd. Their first venture was to manufacture an electronic thermometer for measuring core body temperature for hospital intensive care use. Although the idea was sound, the device did not work in the way the inventor had imagined. Clive worked out how to correct this.

A friend then persuaded Clive to take up a contract for manufacturing strain gauged load cells using designs from Cambridge University. To calibrate these devices, he was permitted to use the facilities of the Engineering Department. This brought Clive into contact with work in the soil mechanics field. A novel tool for the in-situ measurement of soil strength, stiffness and lateral geostatic stress had been developed. Clive acquired the rights to manufacture these devices, known as, "Cambridge self-boring pressure-meters". The instruments are now widely employed so engineers can design foundations for large buildings, that are cheaper to build yet safer. For example, they were used for the new British Library, the new Forth Crossing, the second Severn Bridge, Crossrail, Changi Airport, HS2, on all the nuclear power projects in the UK, and all our off-shore windfarms.

Clive was an enthusiastic and generous teacher and many people have had the benefit of his considerable engineering knowledge. Hundreds of engineering students attended one of the equipment demonstrations he arranged in his garden. He undertook one-off tasks for various Ph.D. students and research projects. Cambridge

Insitu financially supported several doctorates.

Fifty years ago, Clive knew that what he was making was important. That foresight is its own kind of genius. But Clive's real talent was allowing others to find theirs. He made the space for people to discover of what they were capable, and encouraged them to achieve their potential. He was a very generous man. We will miss him greatly. **J&RS**

Clive lived within a few miles of my house, so was often my first port of call when I needed advice. I found him always helpful and sensible, and willing to use his contacts, either in his business or in the wider world, to assist with repairs and maintenance issues. In one instance, this included getting my clutch relined and the cover plate surface corrosion removed which involved transport of the parts to and from the relevant suppliers and giving them appropriate instructions, using his extensive engineering knowledge and, of course, his long-standing experience with Lagondas. His service to the club was rightly recognised at the 2022 AGM. He and Shirley will be sorely missed at our local VSCC monthly pub meeting and at the meet-up of Lagondas each year at Prescott.

MCP

Clive joined the Club on 20 September 1959 with his much-loved Continental 2 litre. He was a keen supporter of Club activities and had an enviable record of attending Club dinners. Clive became Chairman of the Club in 1998 and he oversaw the ambitious and exciting Commemorative events

in 1999 when we celebrated 100 years of Lagonda. His gentle touch on the tiller was needed to keep the Club ship on course during those Events.

My enduring memory of Clive is his kindness and willingness to help other people. When Herb Schofield and his friend, Ann Shoosmith, developed terminal illnesses, Clive was a great support. Any member who had a car problem at an event could be certain that Clive would be quick to offer his assistance and advice. It is so sad that this intelligent man ended his life with dementia.

JCB

Clive was one of the most generous and kind-hearted of men. I first met him on the Centenary Champagne Rally in 1999, when he was Chairman and I was a very new member. Four of us had set out in my recently acquired V12 saloon and all was going encouragingly well until, some 50 miles from Calais on our way to Épernay, a young man drove a small Renault into the front nearside of the V12, bounced off and ended up in a roadside hedge. Luckily no-one was hurt but neither car was driveable. Mine was recovered to a nearby garage and my insurance provided us with a Fiat Bravo. We arrived at the Épernay restaurant where we were all due to meet, just as Clive was finishing an after-lunch speech. He welcomed us warmly and commiserated with our misfortune. On several occasions over the years after that, Clive was unstinting in his help when I encountered minor mechanical mishaps that were beyond my ability to resolve. He was supportive and encouraging during my own term as

Chairman, and he and Shirley were always welcoming when I occasionally dropped in at their home.

One recollection sums up Clive's kindness and willingness to put himself out where others, including me, wouldn't. As folk gathered one year at Monk Fryston before the Northern Dinner, a wedding lunch was drawing to its inebriated close. The bride tottered outside on unsteady feet accompanied by two bridesmaids in similar condition and followed by her father, equally the worse for wear. A few of us were standing around with glasses of beer chatting about cars, when the bride's father approached and asked if one of us would take his daughter and the bridesmaids for a spin. I guess the same thoughts went through our heads, such as the prospect of one of them throwing up on an immaculate interior. We all spotted our saviour - a few yards away Clive was attending to something on his lovely Continental. In unison we referred the gentleman to Clive, who didn't hesitate to take the delighted ladies for the requested spin. We were all left shamefaced, if more than a little relieved.

JO

Clive was an absolutely delightful, incredibly talented and good-humoured man who would always do his utmost to help. I always remember his ready laugh, twinkling over his half-moons; and the seriousness with which he would immediately set to, trying to tackle the latest Lagonda contretemps presented to him. His engineering training at Queens' College, Cambridge and the sheer length of ownership of his 2 litre

ideally placed him for the latter... When he wrote technical articles, you could hear his characteristic turn of phrase, and that always made me smile! He is pictured magnificently in profile at the wheel of his Car (upper case deliberate) in Richard Bird's book, *Lagonda Heritage*.

He was a delightful Chairman of our esteemed Club, and the partnership with wonderfully sociable and supportive Shirley was admirable as they threw themselves into all the events, campaigning the Continental including, appropriately enough, on continental rallies such as the highly regarded Alpine Rally years ago. Their intercom set-up to forestall Lagonda-induced hoarseness was enviable!

They were always so hospitable and welcoming, and paying a visit to their lovely old farmhouse in Little Eversden was always a joy. They planted a copper beech in the upper reaches of their land when they moved in, which is now a huge and magnificent specimen, and a rather fine monument. He was a wonderful chap who I amongst many will miss, and send their sympathy to Shirley.

LD

I have so many fond memories of Clive, from carefully following him for the entire Snowdonia Rally, to gently ribbing him (forgive the pun) about his 'knitted by a committee' bright jumpers when I gave him a big hug at our pub meetings.

However, there is one special reason I will always be indebted to him. One day, we had all enjoyed the Tiger Moth event at Woburn Abbey and were about to depart when I said to him: 'Clive, please can you put in

a good word for me to persuade dad to let me drive the Lagonda?' I had been trying for at least twenty years to learn, but dad, understandably, was of the opinion Midget Driver + Lagonda = Likely Calamity.

'No,' said Clive. My heart sank. Dang! There was a crestfallen pause. 'I'll teach you to drive mine.' Wow. And so, over a couple of Saturday mornings, Clive let me loose in his car. Showing touching confidence, he first of all made me reverse out of his garage onto the road. I drove a circuit through the Cambridgeshire countryside getting used to changing gear and hauling the car round the corners, with Clive sitting admirably calmly next to me. All went well, until during our second session I had to change from first to second. I just couldn't get it in gear, even after several attempts. 'Oh no, Clive, I've lost the knack!' I lamented as we ground to a halt yet again. Clive looked at me, a tad discombobulated and said wearily: 'I'll have a go.' I felt really deflated. We swapped over and set off. Several crunched gears later we'd moved all of ten feet. 'I don't understand it,' said Clive, frowning as he started wiggling the gear stick. Seconds later there was a groan and, blushing somewhat, he produced a rather splendid wooden hairbrush. 'It was wedged against the gearstick,' he admitted, ruefully. I was more relieved than Mafeking. Maybe there was still hope for me to become a bona fide Lagonda driver! Clive put a good word in for me with dad, who then heroically took over my tutelage. What a true gent Clive was. We'll all miss him.

RB



Clive in typical jovial mood, with Shirley at a rally.

I first met Clive in about 1959, when he was living in Northampton and worked for, I believe, British Timken Roller Bearings. He was newly married and I was still single, just. In those days 2 Litres were few and far between and being fairly active in vintage and Lagonda events at the time, my impulse was to search out any 2 Litres seen in the area.

This was the start of a lifelong friendship which included a family holiday in a longboat on the Birmingham Canal. There were nine of us on board including Clive and Shirley's two boys and our two boys

and a friend. Clive was the only one of us to fall overboard! As the years went by and my then lack of a 2 Litre, we saw less of each other but always kept in touch. We went to his 40th wedding anniversary and Clive and Shirley came to my 75th birthday in Thurston.

When I began my restoration of HE4591 around the time of the Millennium he gave me valuable advice, gained when he restored his own Continental. Always friendly and ever smiling he has been, together with Shirley and the boys, a damn good friend.

JCW ■



Clive's green Continental at a Suffolk Dinner meeting

Lagonda LG45 Power-Assisted Steering Conversion

James Patterson explains how he tackled this job

IN CONVERSATION WITH John Neil about his collection of Lagondas, which included my father's M45 pillarless Saloon at one time, he told me that he no longer had the strength to manoeuvre the cars.

Which got me thinking, although a generation behind John, what could be done to extend my future use of my LG45 DHC - and I do like a good project!

After talking to David Wall, it was decided that an electric conversion would not be acceptable as it would do too much damage to the controls in the steering column, and not easily be reversed.

After Googling hydraulic conversion kits for various tractors and Land Rovers that are available, I asked a local PAS firm if they had any ideas. They suggested I look at an early Corvette system and use an electric hydraulic pump, which was a help as there was no obvious point to take off a mechanical drive on the Meadows engine. E-Bay provided a complete second-hand kit of Corvette parts and a couple of Citroen Saxo pumps.

In trying to preserve the original Lagonda parts, I saw that a heavy-duty Land Rover Defender track-rod was a similar dimension to the Lagonda link arm, which could then be put to one side. In the past, I had considered fitting a 2-litre car drop arm in an attempt to reduce the gearing but returned it as the track rod end tapers of the two drop arms were different.

But I then realised that the 2-litre drop arm would be an ideal fit for the taper on the Corvette shuttle valve – followed by a quick visit to Suffolk to retrieve the part!

By trial and error, I found the combination of track rod ends with the correct taper to join the drag link to the front axle steering arm. One end of the hydraulic ram was bolted to the Lagonda chassis, and then the other end was clamped to the new L-R drag link, again using a Land Rover after-market part.

Luckily the bulkhead on an LG45 has ample space to accommodate both the electric hydraulic pump and a second battery for good measure. With the assistance of a local hydraulic hose firm, we made up hoses of the required length and suitable end fittings to accommodate the Citroen pump and Corvette shuttle valve, and then onto the ram. With the correct fuse for the pump, and a dash mounted switch to a relay, the system can be switched off and on at will. We undertook road trials without the system powered up, to check free movement.

Later, we were in Ireland on a pre-war rally with an MGPA when, in discussion with a fellow competitor, we found that the VSCC had cancelled the planned classic Birkett, in which we had a team of MGBs entered. We were invited to a day's stubble racing with the Bentley Boys – well the LG has some WO in the DNA!

The off-road event certainly gave the steering system, still not live, a full test and the LG survived without issue – unlike some others. As a late entry we started last and the multiple stubble tests were well ploughed by the time our turn came! So, the next move was to liven up the hydraulics with new parts. Corvette Kingdom

had all the parts in stock and is only 15 minutes away!

It has made the car easy to manoeuvre and, along with the Alvis gearbox fitted by the previous owner, it is less daunting for those not used to driving pre-war cars.



*Citroen Saxo
hydraulic pump fits
behind the bulkhead*



*Shuttle valve from a
Corvette, under the
front wing*



The hydraulic pipe run from the pump to the shuttle valve



From the front of the car - the hydraulic ram attached to the draglink

Useful Tips on Driving a Motor Car

Nigel Hall explains

MANY YEARS AGO, following a youthful fit of over-exuberant pilot error which resulted in some damage to my boy-racer Lagonda, that doyen of eccentric architects Brain Dearden-Briggs bought me a 1929 edition of a small volume entitled '*How to drive a car - the niceties of control*'.

Re-reading it sheds interesting light on changing times. Following the adverts - '*ROP benzole mixture*' (that's Russian Oil Products Ltd., of course); '*239 manufacturers recommend Wakefield Castrol*' - 239! is the preface - '*thoroughly up-to-date, including a description of free-wheel device*'.

And Chapter 1, which waxes lyrical, thus: '*The wide open road, stretching away into the blue distance, the soft breath of wind on your face, the faint hum of the car, the scents of the countryside. And your hands on the wheel. Is that your dream? Is that the wish that will come true when you take delivery of your new car and venture for the first time on the King's highway? If it is, then this little book will be of value through all the stages of your novitiate, from the moment when you feel the lean, firm rim of the steering wheel between your gloved hands, are thrilled - gloriously thrilled - as you find how great is the power you so easily master, right up to the time when, with serene confidence, you can take the wheel of any car and drive it as if you had handled it all your life*'.

The M25 on a Friday has rarely sounded so appealing. It continues; '*The first drive is far too wonderful to be*

spoiled by fear or nervousness; besides, there is an altogether special interest in learning the different manoeuvres - how to steer, to stop and re-start, to reverse - which drives timidity away'.

After helpfully clearing up a few points about the controls - '*Lest the fact that there are three pedals, while you only have two feet, should alarm you, it is as well to understand from the beginning that a case never, in any emergency, occurs when you have to press down more than two pedals at a time*'. The First Drive is made equally simple: '*While many teachers believe that the novice should start by getting away from a standstill and changing up through the gears, this is giving the learner rather a lot to think about at once. It will be found very much easier if, after a good run round with an experienced driver whose every movement has been closely watched, the car be slowed down to a walk and seats changed without stopping the vehicle. For this operation, however, and for the ensuing initiation into driving a car, it is essential to choose a quiet, straight and level road, so that the novice is not flustered by traffic, corners or gradients*'.

For the avoidance of doubt: '*If you want to steer to the right, turn the wheel to the right, i.e., clockwise. Steering to the left, you do exactly the reverse. This may seem very elementary, but a great many learners have an extraordinary propensity towards turning the wheel the wrong way*'.

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A1

NORTHERN DINNER Friday 28th April 2023

The Izaak Walton Hotel, Dovedale, Ashbourne DE6 2AY



Our dinner will return to the traditional Friday evening at this new venue in beautiful Dovedale; the date is a week before the Coronation. We will arrange a tour of the surrounding countryside, starting on the Friday morning, so some of us will stay the Thursday night for a convivial evening dining in the hotel. Others may wish to join up at the lunch stop, which we will advise well beforehand.

Bookings for the Dinner are open now. The menu options, at £37 per head, appear in the January Newsletter. Choices can be sent to the Northern Secretary, details below, with a cheque payable to The Lagonda Club Ltd, or booked online at 'Events-Northern Dinner' on our Club Website with card payment, if preferred. Let us know who's coming and their dinner choices!

Rooms are to be booked directly with the hotel, at £140 per night, mentioning The Lagonda Club; best rooms to early bookers, though all rooms are good.

Phone: 01335 350981

Nigel Hall, mobile 07831 638383, home 01457 762766

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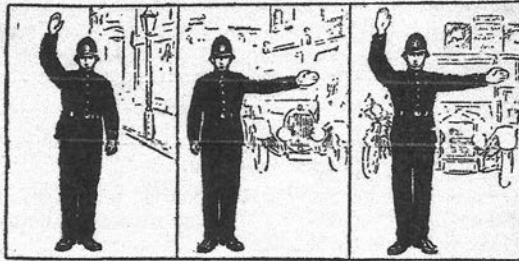
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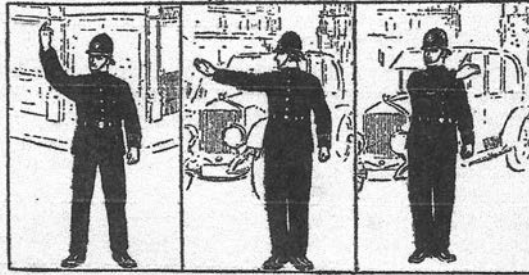
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Signal No. 1.—To halt a vehicle approaching from the front.

Signal No. 2.—To halt a vehicle approaching from behind.

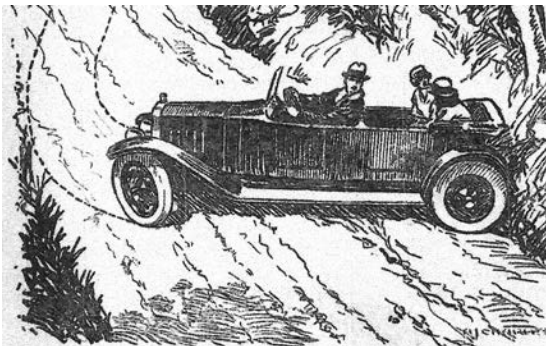
Signal No. 3.—To halt vehicles approaching simultaneously from front and behind.



Signal No. 4.—To bring on a vehicle halted by Signal No. 1.

Signal No. 5.—To bring on a vehicle in other circumstances (first position).

Signal No. 5.—The finish of this signal to be used except when No. 4 applies.



Should the car fail on a hill and the brakes prove incapable of holding it from running backwards, swing the car round so as to hit the bank fair and square. There will then be no danger of overturning.

Two full chapters are devoted to gear changing, illustrated by complex technical drawings of the gearbox innards. However, a simpler method of changing down is suggested; *'There is another method of changing down which many people use with success, but the double declutching system is probably the best by a long way for the beginner. The alternative method consists of slipping the clutch gently, meanwhile accelerating slightly, pushing the gear lever straight into that of the next lower gear at the same time. When you first try this, the gears will probably make horrible noises; but, with a little luck, the double-clutching change can be effected perfectly silently after the second or third attempt.'* That seems quite reassuring!

Once fully mobile, the new motorist is offered much useful advice, such as *'Stopping the car if the brakes fail on a hill'*. After warning of the dangers of *'coasting'*: *'Should the car really get out of control, then if there is a side turning which can be taken at the speed you are travelling, the best thing that you can do is to take it. It is also a good thing to know that if you hit an ordinary gate fair and square you can almost invariably knock it off its hinges without doing too much damage to the car'*. Also: *'On a winding road with high banks it is desirable, immediately it is found that the speed of the car is becoming dangerous, to turn the steering wheel sharply and charge the bank head on. If this is done at moderate speed no serious damage should result and the car is not likely to turn over'*. All confidence-building stuff.

Driving on country roads has a chapter: *'When meeting a herd of cattle*

or sheep it is generally best to stop the car altogether until they have passed. This will often be found quite as quick as trying to pick you way through moving animals'... *'Cattle drovers are by no means invariably competent. With cows it is generally better to keep moving slowly, hooting, or better still, shouting at them to get out of the way'.....* *'Cats are very prone to lie in the middle of the road at night and where they do not bound out of the way it is perfectly safe, as a rule, to drive so that the animal passes unharmed under the car between the wheels...a cat is, in this respect, often much more sensible than human beings, in as much as in the case of danger it stops where it is and makes no attempt to leap about the road'....* *'As regards chickens, these are in England fairly sensible and do not, in most parts of the country, go into the wild panics that characterise fowls on the Continent; also in this country the motorist who kills a fowl is liable for the cost of the bird. In France this is not so; it is the poultry-keepers fault if the fowl is so foolish as to stray under the wheels of a car. In the old days fowls were a much greater nuisance than they are now, so presumably hens now instruct their young as to the best way of dodging a motor car'*. Perhaps the more advanced tuition, on topics such as *'skidding round corners'*, *'use of the horn (don't squeeze the bulb suddenly)'*, *'Competition driving - how to make Racing Gear Changes'* are best left for another time....although pictures of traffic police signals will come as news to most modern motorists who rarely see our esteemed Coppers directing traffic. ■

The Lagonda Light Car & Hill Climbing

Mark Yeomans has been investigating

UPON BUYING MY 11.9 some eight years ago, I was fascinated by the period road test reports for these cars that appeared between 1919 and 1924. These reports had been diligently researched by the late Ken Painter and preserved in hard and digital copy. It was the first time a pretty much complete record of all road tests, press articles and advertisements for these cars had been compiled and very interesting reading it makes.

In period it was not the 'done thing' for the motoring press to directly criticise a manufacturer's product, so you had to read between the lines when an observation was made. However, period criticisms of Lagonda products were few and one aspect always attracting praise was the hill climbing abilities of the 11.9. An example report is in The Motor of 3rd October 1922, which is typical of several I have read. It covered the test of a Lagonda 11.9 K Model open two-seater. The test involved a drive from the Lagonda Sales Depot at Hammersmith heading out of London via Ealing then through Uxbridge, a route with '*terrible tram-setts and potholes*'. They then arrived at Kop Hill, Princes Risborough to be warned against making the ascent. Remember, in those days most roads were unmade and usually just loose gravel. In this case it is recorded '*many vehicles had failed the climb due to the*

treacherous nature of the surface'.

Setting aside the warnings and noting that the 'wet, chalky state of the road resulted in '*skidding and wheels spin*' they '*put the Lagonda at the hill on second gear and succeeded in getting within a few yards of the top before changing to bottom - a procedure that was adopted to make sure of getting over the crest, but which was really unnecessary*'. These types of experience of the 11.9 in use were common and Arnold Davey recorded in his *Lagonda History* that a light car first gear falls between the Land Rover low ratio second and third!

Another, more modern example of the hill climbing ability of these cars came just forty years ago when Colin Mallett decided Porlock Hill in Somerset would be a suitable test for his 12/24. The hill is the steepest A road in the United Kingdom with gradients of 1 in 4 in places. Yet Colin - to quote him - '*so enjoyed growling up the hill that I went down and came up again*'. But Colin was not the first Lagonda Light Car to crest Porlock - sixty years earlier in the Spring of 1923 the London to Lands End Trial took place. On that reliability event all four Lagonda 11.9 models cleared Porlock non-stop, two qualifying for Gold Medals by maintaining a speed above 15mph for the whole climb.



Those faster cars will just have to wait!



A quicker descent, but what about those brakes?!

So, we must bring this all up to date. For several years now I have been a member of the Midland Automobile Club who are the custodians of the famous Shelsley Walsh Hill Climb in Worcestershire, the oldest motor racing venue in the world still using its same course. The annual MAC Classic and Nostalgia Show always displays very interesting vehicles. In July this year it was a collection of BRM racing cars, most of which ascended the hill at great speed with an amazing soundtrack. Not for the first time we flew the Lagonda flag in the event's concours competition. Having previously won or been placed in both our M45 and 2 Litre, we didn't think there was any risk of such honours this year. But to our surprise TA6980 our 1923 11.9 KK open two-seater came second in the Pre-War class. This put a smile on our faces until we remembered that those cars placed in the concours were asked to do a demonstration run up the famous hill! My wife Sadie and I debated being sensible by declaring the car was not capable of climbing the hill, but the challenge was too tempting. Driving ahead of a group of more modern machinery (a very frustrated 1979 Lotus Esprit followed us) we set off and sat in second gear (16-18mph) until about one third of the ascent when the steepening gradient forced a drop into first gear.

We maintained a speed of 10-12mph through the 'esses' which have the steepest part of the course at 1 in 6 on a left-hand turn and then dropped back into second and 20mph on our way to the finish line. Colin Mallett's description of 'growling up the hill'

is very accurate because the car does have to maintain high revs all the way and it does 'growl'. But Lagonda honour was upheld! The 11.9 has a 1420cc inlet over exhaust valve engine with exposed valve gear that dates from its design in the 11.1 of late 1913. It produces less than 20bhp and only has a three-speed gearbox. But it is a robust little car and achieved its ascent just one year away from its centenary.

TA6980, I am sure, now has the honour of achieving the slowest run ever made by a Lagonda up Shelsley Walsh! As for the descent, well that was even more exciting than the ascent, and the less said the better!

With thanks to David and Penny Humphreys for the photographs. They were not troubled by the velocity of the image they were trying to capture.

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A(nother) Cautionary Tale

Martin Pollard explains

WE ALL KNOW that it is sensible to carry a spare magneto in case the one in use fails. I do, and I was carrying my spare when, halfway through Milton Keynes on my way to Prescott in my 3 ½ litre last August, I suddenly lost all power. Happily, I wasn't caught up in the traffic and there was a convenient lay-by to dive into. Inspecting under the bonnet, I couldn't see anything in particular, so decided that it must be the magneto (a Scintilla) and retrieved the spare from the back of the car.

Removing the supposedly non-functional instrument, I found that the driving shaft wouldn't turn through a full 360 degrees, in effect the magneto had stopped dead. I then sought to install the spare but couldn't get the coupling to engage properly. Inspecting the vernier coupling (a nearly new one) I found that almost all the teeth had stripped and there was no way it was ever going to drive the replacement magneto.

Clearly, there was nothing left to do but to call for recovery, which happily was included in my insurance. The recovery vehicle arrived within 30 minutes or so and took me back to Cambridge.

On examination, it turned out that one of the HT lead fixing screws had undone itself, the rotating magnet had captured the screwed portion but the head had somehow become trapped in the teeth

of the distributor drive gear.

This clearly explains why the magneto would not turn and why it had come to a sudden and abrupt halt, stripping the teeth from the vernier coupling in the process. Scintilla users should occasionally check the security of the screws holding the ignition cables to hopefully head off the situation I encountered.

So, the moral of this story is, always carry a spare vernier coupling as well as the spare magneto. Whilst my experience is probably a very rare event, you never know.....

I use a Scintilla on the 2 litre and will certainly check - thanks Martin!
Ed ■



2 Litre Register Rallies 1947–1951

By James Baxendale

DURING THE 2 LITRE Register's brief life from 1946–1951, there were seven rallies (and one combined with the Lagonda Club). The 2 Litre Register Notes provide a more or less detailed record of these events. Photographs exist for a number of the rallies, giving an interesting record of 2 and 3 Litre cars belonging to Club members 70–75 years ago, as well as allowing us to identify which cars attended. The Club's Heritage Archive holds Peter Densham's photograph album, which includes the Register's rallies from 1947–50. Densham was the founder of the 2 Litre Register and editor of the Notes.

First Spring Rally, Farnborough Aerodrome, 20 April 1947

In Notes 4, Densham asked members for any suggestions for the programme (“so far I have only heard from one who suggests a sustained drinking bout”). He had a target of 100 cars attending.

The rally took place on Sunday 20th April 1947 at Farnborough Aerodrome. Whilst only 60 cars – rather than the 100 hoped for – attended, it was deemed a great success (“as fine a sight as one could wish to see”). Brief accounts appeared in *Autocar*, *Motor*, *Motor Sport* (June 1947, p169) and the *VSCC Bulletin*. A full report was promised in Notes 7, but in the end did not appear “due to lack of space and funds to meet extra printing”. From the very beginning the rallies were used to buy and sell spares, which was, after all, one of the purposes of the Register.

The photographer, Guy Griffiths, was present and photographs were sent to the various owners (Harry Gostling, the owner of GF 8843, kept his). The Guy Griffiths Collection still retains the photographs, which can be purchased. We can identify 44 Lagondas from the negatives, including 26 photographs of cars of current members of the Club.



*Farnborough Aerodrome
20th April 1947
(ALP695 & GF8843)
Guy Griffiths*

Second Rally and AGM, Brimpton Grange Hotel, near Oxford ('Oxford Meeting'), 21 September 1947

The second rally took place at the Brimpton Grange Hotel in bright sunshine on 21st September 1947. 43 Lagondas were present (again, 100 cars had been hoped for). Brimpton Grange (now replaced by the Oxford Belfry Hotel) was used for a number of Lagonda Club AGMs in the 1950s. Being 1947, catering was difficult *"and likely to become more so"*. At least a week's warning was required if any hotel meal, apart from tea, was needed.

programme continued with the AGM, ending exactly on time. Few people can have realised how narrowly we missed the disaster of no tea."

The winners of the Concours d'Elégance were:

High Chassis:

1st HN6771

Spiller (30) (now M16)

2nd UL8564

Sawers (118)(now P55)

3rd XV6238

Ponsford-Jones (110)

Low Chassis:

1st APH59 Rees (63)

2nd APA524



The Oxford Meeting 21st September 1947 (from Harry Gosling's photo album)

As is the custom today, members were asked to pin their name to their lapel. Even tea, however, proved difficult on the day, and so a procession of cars drove to nearby Brill village hall *"where a magnificent tea was waiting in the village hall; two local inhabitants had been pressed into service as car park attendants and the*

Hibbert (14) (now S85)

3rd GK984

Gabb (105) (now M59)

Guy Griffiths was again present. From the negatives, 20 Lagondas can be identified, including 10 Lagondas belonging to current members of the Club.



Third Annual Rally, Newbury 11th July 1948 (taken by E Bruce Watson)

Third Annual Rally, Newbury, 11 July 1948

The third rally and AGM followed the usual format: picnic lunch, Concours d'Elégance, AGM and tea. Only 35 cars were present, due to lack of petrol – and perhaps deterred by bad weather – although 88 members and their friends stayed to tea.

The winners of the Concours d'Elégance were:

High Chassis:

- 1st HN6771
- Spiller (30) (now M16)
- 2nd PG402 Gregg (33a)
- 3rd VM888
- Roberts (93) (now R51)

Low Chassis:

- 1st APH59 Rees (63)
- 2nd APA524
- Hibbert (14) (now S85)
- 3rd GK984 Gabb (105) (now M59)

APH59 and APA 524 look to be magnificent cars and it is not surprising that they won the concours for two years in a row.

The prize for the oldest car present was won by Watson (10) with his 1926 coupé (YR5299 – now W10). The prize for the member who had come furthest was won by Tweedle Walker (21), who had come from Birmingham in YX2306 (now F29).

The local photographer “got hold of the wrong end of his camera and took a number of photos of the backsides of members; parts of cars appear on some of the prints”. However, thanks to Gordon Watson’s father, Bruce, who took 19 photographs we have an excellent photographic record of the day (see The Lagonda no 265), being able to identify 30 of the Lagondas present, of which 22 are current or recent members of the Club.

Register Rally & Gymkhana, Leamington Spa 15 May 1949

This rally was cancelled at the last minute, due to the refusal of the RAC to issue a competition permit.

Fourth Annual Rally and AGM, Red Lion Hotel, Lambourne and Chequers Hotel, Newbury, 25 September 1949

The rally took place in brilliant weather and “in many ways it was the most successful”. 40 Lagondas were present with 96 members and friends for tea. There is no record of who won the Concours d'Elégance.

No Ration Rally, Army Base, near Hindhead, 2 July 1950

Cars noted as being present were :

YV4127 Bosworth (now G12)

GP466 Spiller (now L49)

NN8080 Mrs A J Fisher (11.9)
(now J14)

PU5800 H F Moffatt (11.9;

he arrived at the venue at 3am, sleeping at the wheel until dawn when polishing commenced)

APA 524 Hibbert (now S85)

There was no official photographer for the rally. Notes 22 mentioned that only two members had to date sent in their photographs.

The No Ration Rally was held on a fine day at an army base near Hindhead – likely Bramshott Military Camp. In all there were about 70 cars present, but that included a number from the Alvis Register which had been invited to take part in the competition. The driving competition itself attracted 23 entries.

Bruce Watson was once more at the rally and took a number of photographs. The results were given in Notes 25 and reproduced in The Lagonda no 267 (although the two photographs reproduced are in fact of the 1948 Newbury rally).



No Ration Rally 2nd July 1950 (taken by E Bruce Watson)

Notes 24 recorded that M Belfield, an amateur photographer, “has been bribed with NOM-ship [non-owner membership] to take photographs on any future occasion when several cars are gathered together”.

1. Fifth Annual Rally and AGM, Red Lion Hotel Lambourne and Chequers Hotel, Newbury, 8 October 1950

50 Lagondas were present and approximately 90 members and friends. Notes 26 helpfully listed all the names of the Register members who attended. 37 of the cars which attended are current (or recent) members of the Club, confirming that if the car was part of the Club in 1950, its owner is still likely a Club member 70 years later.

The winners of the
Concours d’Elégance were:

High Chassis:

1st UL8564
E Sawers (118) (now P55)
2nd KM888 D J Roberts (93)
3rd KW4070
C G Martin (161) (now J19)

Low Chassis:

1st GP466
J F Spiller (138) (now L49)
2nd GO5480
A C Burnett (238) (now B20)
3rd KY2712
Lt Col G E Walker (182)

2. Sixth Annual Rally and AGM, The Stonor Arms, Stonor, 23 September 1951

The rally began at the Stonor Arms Hotel in Stonor. After a picnic lunch, they moved to the Lambert Arms in Aston Rowant (my old home!), where the AGM was held, followed by tea at 2 shillings per head.

To my knowledge, no details of how many attended were recorded.

3. Thame Rally, 21 October 1951

This was a combined rally with the Lagonda Club. There was a Comic Concours designed to find the member whose attention to detail blinded him to the more essential matters. Members were marked both for such things as clean hub caps and clean hands, but also lack of water or oil and dirty windscreens.

There appear to have been 33 Lagondas present. Bruce Watson took a couple of photographs of this rally, including an excellent one of Mrs Fisher in her 11.9 (NN8080).

Winner : Connall
Oldest metal bodied car:
Mrs Fisher (NN8080 – now J14)

Newest leather seated car. Elphinstone





Thame Rally 21st October 1951 (taken by E Bruce Watson)

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A Tale of Twelve Cyclinders (continued) Part One

David Hine recounts his involvement with building & racing a V12 LeMans replica

I SAY (CONTINUED) because the first part of this article is included in the Number 63 issue of “*The Lagonda*” dated Summer 1968. The front cover of the magazine has a magnificent photograph of our newly created V12 Le Mans replica. I note from the, gratefully received, recent Club Register that there are now nine V12 LeMans Reps in the Club and, no doubt, several more in existence plus, of course, the two original Le Mans V12’s which have had to be totally restored.

The one Herb Schofield designed and commissioned Jack Buckley to create was the first in this line of these exciting replicas. Herb’s article describes the work he and the team at Jack Buckley’s garage did to achieve this monumental result in a relatively short time. This was Jack’s first of many such creations. Up to this point he had been beating out bent Mini’s without realising what artistic potential he had. I was transfixed watching him seamlessly join two sheets of aluminium together. He was only using his fine blow torch and a cigarette drooping from his lips. Herb also lists all the folk that had helped us, with many Club members simply donating spare parts, headlights etc.

Herb and I had already built a special for racing in 1964. It was based on a LG45 chassis and had only taken

3 months from start to finish - in good time for April Silverstone 1965. He and I worked on the different aspects of the build. He did the cosmetic things like home-made coachwork, chrome and trim and I did the mechanical bits and electrical components. Herb was terrified of all things electrical after a shock from a spark plug which some pill told him could have been lethal! This LG special proved beautiful to handle and almost totally reliable. After an engine change in late ’65 it was winning races in the 1966 season.

Herb had been avidly reading old copies of “The Motor” about the exciting V12 cars at 1939 Le Mans, with heroic deeds of daring do! One evening in Spring ’67 he introduced me to the young Jack Buckley who, he was sure, could build us a V12 Le Mans replica to go even faster. All I had to do was fettle the chassis and wire it!

Our Club member and friend Ted Townsley had an old V12 saloon which had been stripped and abandoned in the rear yard of his workshop. He said we could have it but did warn me that these cars were a nightmare to work on. Advice which I noted but did not fully comprehend at the time. Another Yorkshire pal, Ian North, brought it over and the photo shows us starting to lower it off his truck suspended by a teagle hoist from above, operated by my then fiancé, Jill.

The next week I was up to Jack's workshop and the chassis was bare, with the original aluminium saloon body sold to the scrap man for £20 (equivalent to £500 today or even more!). Herb had wire brushed it and was busy cutting several big holes in the chassis to save weight. There was precious little else left so we agreed we needed a donor car and a Saloon de Ville was located locally. This abandoned car was totally complete except for no engine. When we were towing it back with me in the driving seat and Herb in the works Bedford van in front, the drive shaft that goes into the gear box started flailing about causing me much alarm. The purchase of the De Ville was covered by the scrap price we got for its body so we got the rest for nothing. An advert produced a response and a V12 engine was located in Carlisle, so off we went with Alan Brown in the trusty Bedford van. How we managed to lift this engine into the van at the back of a filthy garage I will never know, but £50 changed hands and it was soon dropped off at my father's house for me to check over.

As I mentioned, Jill was now my fiancé and we were getting married later in 1967, so we were re decorating a small bungalow to move in once it was legal to live together! This meant I was somewhat preoccupied but I did find time to occasionally visit Jack's garage and watch the progress. Jack Parks, known as Timber Jack was building a beautiful wooden frame for the rear of the body. The De Ville was stripped bare of everything and the chassis dumped outside. I decided to replace the rear springs with those

from the De Ville but made a bad start, because I didn't realise the shackle pins were threaded and tried to drive them out. At this point I began to realise that I was dealing with a car so completely different to any previous Lagonda model.

Up to 1937 each Lagonda model tended to be an evolution of the previous one. However, with the creation of the V12, apart from the radiator badge, virtually every single chassis feature had changed. The knowledge I had gained with my M45 and the LG45 was of little help. I bought a V12 handbook from the Club. This had beautiful photographs illustrating the various mechanical intricacies of this design and it served to make me a somewhat nervous young man. The hydraulic brakes were a new mystery to be solved and I needed to start by fitting new pipework, as the old pipes had rusted away. I worked as a night shift technologist at Shell Petrochemicals on the Gas Distillation Plant. The instrument panels in the control room were clockwork. The signals they received came down $\frac{1}{4}$ " copper pipe filled with mercury. This copper pipe was ideal for the V12 brakes. They refused to sell me any pipe but a kind instrument engineer told me that he had dumped a large coil in a scrap bin only that night. Six a.m. in the frosty morning found me rotating, and one of the operators winding, several yards of precious pipe around my body. I then replaced my boiler suit and donned a large donkey jacket to hide my bulk. I nervously strode out of the works site entrance past the watchful eyes of the security staff. All went well until I

reached my car, a Morris Mini Minor, and found I couldn't bend to get in! I finally hurled myself in with feet on the pedals and head jammed up against the roof and somehow drove, in agony, to a hollow, out on a snowy Carrington Moss where I unwound myself, relieved that my budding career with Shell was not in ruins. The complexity of the handbrake cross shaft and the innards of the rear brake drums told a tale of bitter argument between the forward thinking hydraulic engineers and the suspicious W.O.Bentley team. The latter insisting on a mechanical safety mechanism to stop the car by the handbrake should the hydraulics fail. I retrieved the Lockheed slave cylinders and master cylinder from our donor car and acquired all the rubber seals to rebuild them. The parts from Ted's chassis were seized solid but even those from the low mileage donor car required a lot of cleaning and polishing to make them serviceable. The main problem was that the slave cylinders

were of cast steel with aluminium plungers. The plungers appeared to have corroded, possibly due to the moisture content of the brake fluid over time.

This was a far cry from the beautiful simplicity of the LG45 Girling brake system which still worked well even when somewhat tired. Herb had drilled holes in the brake drums to imitate the pictures he had seen of the team cars. However, unbeknown to me, when he then took the drums to be skimmed they clamped them to a back plate, using these holes, and then skimmed them corrugated as a result! I then found there was nowhere to fit the rear shock absorbers due to all the holes Herb had cut in the chassis. The De Ville had been converted to telescopic shock absorbers at the front so we used these at the rear of our car, and Jack welded a couple of lugs on the rear axle to fasten them to. ■

To be continued



From L to R: Unknown, Ian North, David Hine, Alan Brown & John Beardow

Letters & Emails ... Letters & Emails

Dear Roger,

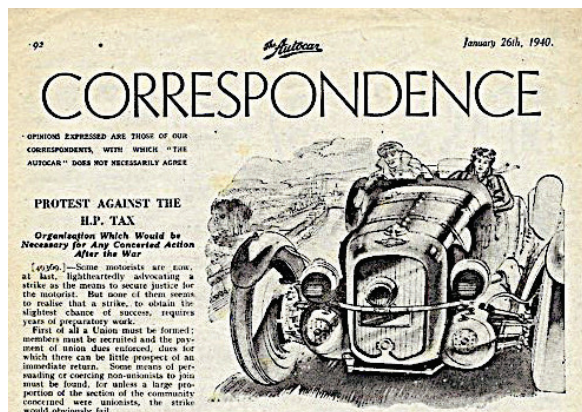
What an odd choice of illustration!

A pretty accurate one of a V12 Le Mans, not in race mode but with a pilot and his bit of fluff out for a spin. Note also the headlamp masks

... I wonder if either of these cars had these fitted at any time? They would have been a recently introduced requirement in January 1940.

Best wishes

Laurence Hannam ■



Letters & Emails ... Letters & Emails

Hello Roger,

The enclosed well-known picture of the three 12HP Lagonda variants has always been put about as having been taken at the Folly Inn in Adstock, site of the inaugural Light Car Section meeting.

However, I pass by the now derelict Folly occasionally and the architecture does not match. So, I dug out the original in an old album of my father's where the caption states that it was taken at the Chiltern Summer Rally in 1951.

I have not been able to identify the pub. Nor am I sure whether this was a Lagonda Club or Light Car event. But I wonder if any of your readers recognise the location. All three cars are currently not far away from the Chilterns (one is in my garage!) and it would be wonderful to have a day out to reproduce the picture if we can discover the right place.

Best wishes

Ken Jeddere-Fisher ■



Letters & Emails ... Letters & Emails

Dear Roger,

A true short Lagonda story about Robbie Hewitt, a character of years gone by

1987 May 31st - I drove to Brooklands in my 1937 Rover Ten. After parking up, I wandered about for a while before I walked over to see the Lagondas when, somehow, I got talking to Robbie Hewitt, who was a prominent member of the Lagonda Club for many years.

She was one of the many characters within the club at that time - she had come in BPK 203 a Lagonda team car, shown here with her driving (who was the other person in the car?).



She also owned BPK 201, her other team car, but on this occasion that was absent.

It was sometime during our conversation when she suggested: "How about taking the Lagonda up

the hill?", an offer I quickly accepted. I took this to be a normal Lagonda, without knowing, at the time, its vast Racing history.

As we got into the car, she kicked off her shoes, (she always drove bare footed) and then said "bugger-where is the bloody accelerator?" - where it normally was, of course, in the middle! After sorting that out she carried on to say, "let's have a little drink first". She started the engine of the Lagonda, and we drove towards the large hangar (where the Wellington bomber would be housed later), entering on the left-hand side. We then just managed to do a "U"

turn, to where the Lagonda Club had a trestle table full of glasses of wine!

The Lagonda came to a stop by the table; Robbie jumped out, had a glass of wine, then jumped back in and said "now let's have that run up the hill".

As we drove out of the hangar, with the exhaust noise resonating as we left, we drove the 200 yards to the far fencing and Robbie did another "U" turn. We were now facing the famous Brooklands Test

Hill.

The engine raced as Robbie blipped the throttle as we approached the start line.

We only stopped for a second - the Lagonda seemed to shake for a

Letters & Emails ... Letters & Emails

moment as the clutch was let out and, before I knew it it, were half way up the hill, in second gear and flying.

I was holding on for dear life – 30 seconds later we nearly took off at the top.

Robbie braked hard as we turned right and proceeded down to the banking and back to the hangar.

If that's a run up the Brooklands hill, I said - "I am the one who needs a drink now"

Alan Heard ■

Dear Roger,

References to Lagonda in literature are rare, but I attach an extract from Frank Muir's autobiography which may interest you.

From "A Kentish Lad", the autobiography of Frank Muir (1997)

I don't know how well you know St. Anne's Hill in Surrey, whose sharp corners and gentle slopes (before the motorway was built) carried the motorist up from Thorpe and down into Chertsey, but I was taking that rural route one morning in my old, fifteenth-hand Lagonda.

I was 'think' driving, driving idly well on my side of the road, hoping

that a bright idea might alight like a mustard seed on the damp flannel of my brain, when round the corner ahead came a woman driver at speed, in a clapped-out dented Morris Minor. She missed the wing of my beautiful Lagonda by a centimetre, wound down her window furiously and yelled at me: 'PIG'!

'Women drivers'! I snorted, drove on round the corner and hit a pig.

With acknowledgement to the publishers:

Corgi Books, Transworld Publishers Ltd.

Best regards,

Peter Minett ■

Dear Roger

This shows how Meadows engines block radiators and cause overheating.

Regards,

David Hine ■





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