



Number 276 Spring 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:

The superb M45 Abbot replica filmed at the Crich Tramway in 2017.

Contents

From the Workbench	5
The Story of a Lagonda 2 litre Continental	6
A Complicated Registration Number	11
A Tale of Twelve Cylinders (continued) Part 2	12
Whitewebbs Transport Museum Visit	18
V12 & LG6 Rear Road Springs Part 1	20
Any Other Business	23
Fitting Power Steering to a 1928 2 Litre	32
Choosing the Right Gear	37
Letters & Emails	39-42

From the Workbench

Roger Seabrook

I AM VERY sorry to report the passing of two long standing Lagonda Club members - this happening just before the preparation of this editorial.

Firstly, Mike Heins - a good friend and participant in countless Lagonda, Early MG, and VSCC events. Many of you will have been thankful to Mike for his knowledge and help, and for his enjoyable company.

Then, Mike Jones, one-time owner of the Editor's 2 litre tourer, and editor of the Bean Car Club magazine for nearly 35 years. Again, a good friend to many.

It reminds us that our vintage car interests lead to a wider and enjoyable social experience - it is, after all, the people that make the Club what it is. I have made a number of very good friends through a hobby that was an antidote to what I did as a living.

We have just had a most enjoyable day out on 'Drive It' day. Some lovely cars, great company, and a good lunch - what more can you want? On the way home in the 2-litre saloon, a very strange noise (repeated twice) came from somewhere around the gear lever/handbrake area. I've got used to most of the quirks of this car, but this was something quite different. It had me concerned all the way home.

It was only when I looked at my 'phone that I realised what it was - the strange warning sound from that new Government Alert which was scheduled for 3.00pm! And the phone was in my jacket pocket, close to the edge of the seat.

This issue has more on power steering for Lagondas, so you can choose which method you prefer, if you are considering this modification. It does make sense if the car has become unenjoyable to drive, due to heavy steering.

Another modification that some use is the addition of an overdrive. I would be interested to hear from anyone who has taken this step. If you have, perhaps you could forward an article for the Magazine.

On another note, The Club is seeking a new editor to take over from me towards the end of this year. If anyone is interested and would like more information on the requirements of the job, please call or email me. I took this over from Ken Painter in 2013 so, with the exception of two magazines, I will have edited 38 copies over 10 years. It has been, and still is, an enjoyable job but a change of style will be good for the Club. You get to speak to so many nice, and interesting, people too. ■

***Last date for copy for the Summer Magazine is
Friday 30th June 2023
Please keep new articles & pictures coming in.***

The Story of a Lagonda 2 Litre Continental Tourer

By Alastair Gunn

MY INTEREST in vintage cars began at a very young age as when I was born, my father was using a 1926/28 Bentley 3/4½ as his every day car. He bought the Bentley from a friend after he took his Lagonda 2 Litre Continental off the road. He christened the Bentley 'the rumbling heap' as he much preferred the Lagonda. He eventually sold the Bentley back to the same friend. In February 1961 father joined the modern tin brigade when he bought a Triumph Herald.

The 2 Litre Continental was announced at the end of April 1932 and was only in production for four months. The cost was £625 for the tourer and £725 for the saloon. This was the last model to have the 1,954 c.c. 4-cylinder in line engine which was first introduced in 1925. Unfortunately, all the 2 Litre factory records were destroyed on purpose, but that is another story. I believe that 24 Continentals were built in total.

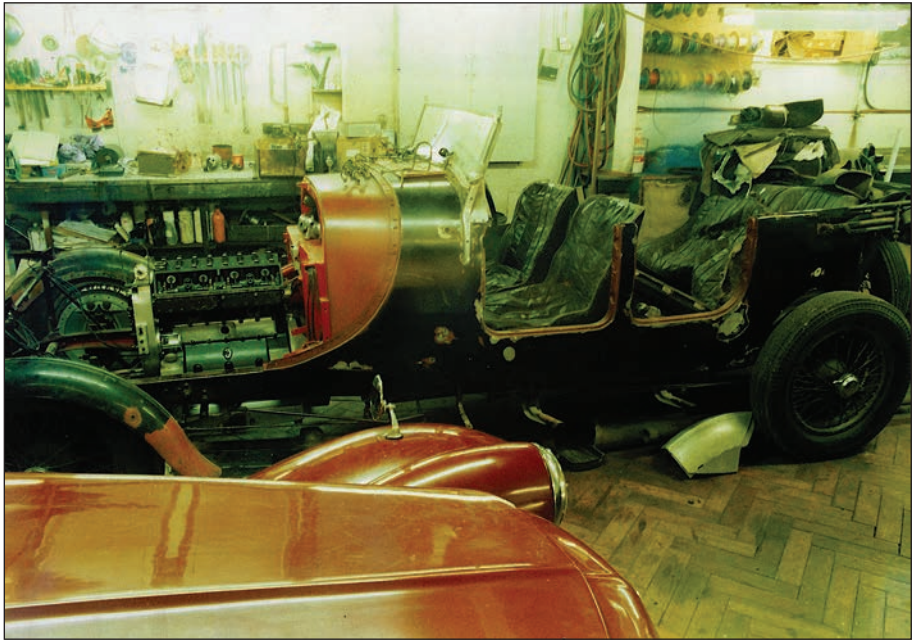
Our car was first registered on the 9th of May 1933 in Greater London. My grandfather, who was a doctor in Perthshire, bought the car for my father in February 1938 for the sum of £165, which would have been quite a lot of money then. It has been in our family ever since.

The Buff Log Book that came with the car was issued by Dundee Borough Council Licences on the 27th of May 1937, and at that time it states that the colour was Maroon and Black, and the declared R.A.C. Rating was 13H.P. (4 x 72mm). Sadly, all the 1930s Greater

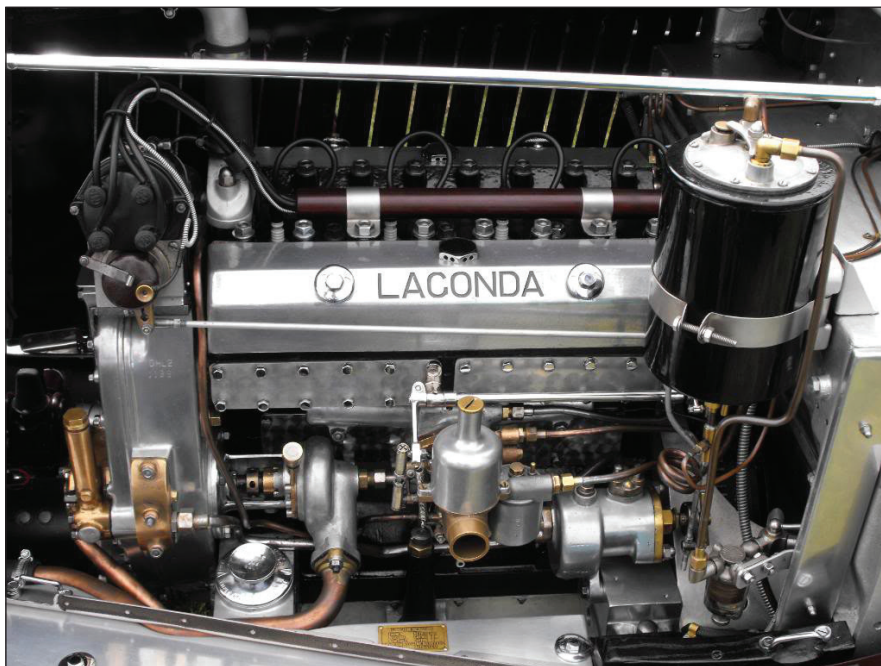
London registration records have been destroyed, so I will now never know who the original and subsequent owners of the car were before May 1937. From the list of Continental registration dates, I have compiled, our car was the last Continental to be sold.

Between May and December 1937, the car changed hands three times. When it was purchased the engine was in poor condition and the bodywork was fair. My grandfather taxed the car on the 21st of April 1938. In February 1939 the engine was rebored + 40 thou and some bearings were remetalled. The cylinder head was found to be cracked across an exhaust valve seat and a replacement was fitted along with new valves and guides. In September 1939 the gearbox was replaced, as 3rd gear was very worn. The replacement 'box had a low 3rd gear ratio and was believed to have come from a 16/65 car.

Father ran the car off and on until the end of 1942. In 1945 he partially dismantled the engine, carefully polished the manifolds and ports and fitted one big end bearing. He relicensed the car in October 1946 although he did not use it between January and May 1947. In June 1947 he swapped the gearbox for one that came out of his younger brother's 1928 2 Litre High Chassis tourer. His brother had bought his 2 Litre High Chassis in 1941 for £35 when he was in the R.A.F. and he ran this car until 1942, when it was put into store. It was first registered in February 1928.



The partially dismantled car as it arrived at David Royle's



The beautifully restored engine - how does he keep it so clean?

A side-profile photograph of a vintage Lagonda car, painted in a dark green color. The car is positioned in front of a large, stylized "Longstone CLASSICS" logo. Below the car, three different tire brands are showcased: Firestone, Excelsior, and Lucas. The background also features a large, stylized tire tread pattern.

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Father used the car between 1945 and 1946 and did 18,000 miles and got 20 - 22 m.p.g. on longer runs. The only trouble during that time was a burnt magneto and a partially seized differential. The car was sold in June 1947.

In September 1947 father was visiting friends in Edinburgh in the Continental and, when leaving, he managed to catch one of the engine sump feet on his friend's gate stop. The result was that 2½ gallons of Castrol XL was deposited on his friend's drive. Alexanders of Edinburgh, who were motor engineers, collected the car, removed the sump, welded the foot back on, and refitted the sump. The car was back on the road again after 48 hours. Father was charged a total of £6/11d including fresh oil. I still have the receipt for the repair.

The same month father had some work done on the car at a different garage in Edinburgh which included fitting safety glass to the windscreen, repairing the front apron, making a new tonneau and dismantling the car for painting, and recellulosing the entire vehicle in black. This cost a total of £48/11/3d. As father was a Writer to the Signet, he kept many receipts for work on the car as well as for purchasing spare parts. I have a file of receipts from April 1939 to September 1958 which makes very interesting reading. Included are some receipts from Davies Motors Limited, for various spare parts. Father took her off the road at the end of December 1952 as she needed quite a bit of work done to her. He did a lot of work to her in his spare time and at also at weekends.

In April 1961, we moved house and the Lagonda was, unfortunately, left in its rented lockup. The main stumbling block was that the garage at the new house was extremely small - you might have just squeezed in an Austin 7! Father applied to enlarge the garage but was refused planning permission for some reason. He got interested in other things and the poor Lagonda was almost forgotten about.

Eventually we managed to get the garage doubled and lengthened, and it was finished in 1980. At the time I was working in the motor trade in Edinburgh, so I borrowed the works van and their racing car trailer one weekend and transferred the Lagonda to the new garage. At this stage she was only a rolling chassis. I did quite a lot of work on her myself until demand on my time was taken up with my new business.

Finally, I managed to persuade father to do something about the car. We had seen several examples of David Royle's workmanship on vintage cars and at that time David owned a 1932 3 Litre Special tourer, which was the very first car that his company had restored. After much correspondence and many telephone calls father decided to send our Lag down to them for her restoration.

In July 2000 she was sent down to Royle's workshops in Staindrop. Beforehand father spent about a month gathering all the bits and pieces together and putting them in the car. Sadly, the

original rear cycle-type wings were missing and father couldn't remember what had happened to them. On one of David's visits to see father there was a great discussion about what colour to paint the car. David had originally

painted his 3 litre in green with red wheels and silver brake drums. He suggested silver brake drums to us, but father decided to paint ours the one colour as he thought it would look much better. Afterwards, David sent a swatch of maroon colour samples to father and after much thought he settled on Rolls-Royce Burgundy.

Royle's did a ground up restoration of her which involved a total of 1,915 man-hours. They also supplied us with a photographic record of the whole process, which came to 72 pictures.

We got her back at the end of March 2002 and Royle's have done a first-class job on her. She had been off the road for a total of 49 years! - I wonder if this might be some sort of a record. Father's choice to paint the whole car the same colour was indeed correct, as was his choice of Rolls-Royce Burgundy. The chassis, brake drums and wheels were painted with synthetic enamel, whereas the coachwork, wings, and front and rear aprons were painted with 2-pack

paint. It is a fantastic colour which is quite dark normally and becomes much lighter when the sun shines on it.

It felt rather strange when I drove her for the first time as I had never driven a car with a centre accelerator before - I had to keep saying to myself "brake on the right - brake on the right". It also took some time to get used to changes on the crash gearbox. She has an early OH gearbox (not the original) with the layshaft running in plain bushes. I believe that the Continentals usually had the Z gearbox fitted as standard, but knowing the Lagonda factory this probably didn't always happen as they fitted whatever items that they had in stock at the time.

The car has and still gives me a tremendous amount of pleasure and is an extremely pleasant vehicle to drive. Since 2004 she has been awarded many Concours d'Elegance awards at events in Scotland. It is quite a lot of work preparing her for a show and I normally spend a week beforehand

cleaning all the nooks and crannies and polishing her. I think that the general public at a show have no idea of all the preparation work that goes on before a show - they just see the end result. Long may it continue that we are able to keep using our sort of cars on the road. ■



A fine motor car in an ideal environment

A COMPLICATED REGISTRATION NUMBER

Herman Arentsen explains

ON THE CONTINENT many Lagonda owners drive their cars with the old original registration number. It's illegal, but it looks better and belongs to the history of the car.

Without any problems we drove many years with the English licence plates WH 4025 on our Lagonda 2 Ltr. L.C. Except for England (our car doesn't have an M.O.T.) and in our area, I have fitted mirror clamps on the Dutch plates and can put them on very quickly.

Someone said to me some years ago 'Do you know that your registration number (WH 4025) was the German army number (Wehrmacht) in the Second World War? All plates on Wehrmacht cars started with WH'. I didn't know, but so what? In the past, no one ever greeted us with an outstretched arm!!

A couple of years ago, on our way to the Continental Lagonda meeting in the south of Germany, we stopped for a break at a fuel station. After a cup of coffee, a German soldier was waiting for us at our Lagonda. "Sir, I have a question" he said "is this a real Wehrmacht car?" "Sorry for you", I answered, "this is a real British car". The man seemed disappointed and walked away.


When we arrived at our destination in Bavaria, I changed the number plates directly. Doing this, Johannes Woskowski, a German Lagonda friend, asked me "why are you changing the plates?" I told him the reason why.

He said, "I understand this, but now you have another problem - the Dutch number plates you are fitting now (AH-51-45) start with AH, the initials of Adolf Hitler!"

Some problems can't be solved and you have to live with them.....■



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A Tale of Twelve Cylinders (continued) Part 2

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

BACK AT MY father's house I began to look at the engine. We were incredibly lucky to have found a V12 engine, complete with all its accessories. It had simply been lifted out of a car to make way for a diesel engine which was rather more economical on fuel.

I thought I would start with a decoke and was bemused by the complexity of the camshaft system, with each camshaft being held in eight bearings. However, this assembly could be removed undisturbed, which I nervously did without dropping any nuts into the inner parts of the engine. I scraped out the modest amount of carbon and re-ground in the 24 valves. I treated the engine to twelve new spark plugs and put it all back together. I marvelled at the cylinder head stud nuts, each one a work of art, beautifully domed and waisted with a "P" part number stamped on each nut. The engine oil appeared remarkably clean so I just did an oil change and left everything else alone. I was delighted that no further work was needed. A previous engine rebuild I had done on a 3.5 Derby Bentley commenced with digging the thick sludge out of the sump and replacing totally burnt-out exhaust valves.

The V12 oil filter labyrinth remained a mystery. The handbook told of high- and low-pressure systems but there was this sneaky little slot milled in the cover plate, which meant both filters had to be operating at the

same pressure. The paranoia of the designer, fearful of sludge blocking the filters, meant that there was a complex system of relief by-pass valves. There is a simple spring valve at the front but some sort of pressure reducing valve at the rear. I just cleaned it all and put it back together hoping for the best. Again, this strange design spoke of compromise between different factions in the design teams. The Rolls Royce crowd wanted their own separate, low pressure, oil system for their camshafts. They would not have wanted filters because Sir Henry never fitted oil filters to any of his engines. If filters were forced upon them the compromise would have been the by-pass valves. However, with the need for more oil flow to the crankshaft, the sneaky modification meant that the oil to the camshafts now had to pass through a pin-hole at the bottom outlet of the rear oil filter (more about this later).

I managed to get the copper pipes plumbed in for the hydraulic brakes and was then chucked off the job because Herb and Jack wanted to construct the super new body, complete with a new Jaguar-cored radiator, with open fixed shutters for maximum cooling.

The rest of 1967, Jill and I spent preparing our little bungalow ready to move into once we were married in November. We got back off our honeymoon for our first night at home

to find a letter from Herb demanding that I spent more time on the V12, so that we could race it at April Silverstone in the Spring of 1968.

I arrived with the engine at Jack's garage to find the car looking superb but lacking all the unseen bits, such as wiring, that Herb really didn't want to get involved with. I beavered away and the wiring was completed satisfactorily, with a useful junction unit between body and chassis so that they were easy to separate electrically. The engine was lowered into place but sagged at the rear, due to collapsed rubber mountings. Piles of washers were a quick fix and the engine roared into life at the first press of the starter button. The unsilenced exhaust sound was magnificent, redolent of the legendary Rolls Royce

Merlin, of which this engine was a junior cousin without a doubt.

No one had thought how to connect the accelerator pedal to the carburettors, so I rigged up a Bowden cable from a bicycle hand brake.

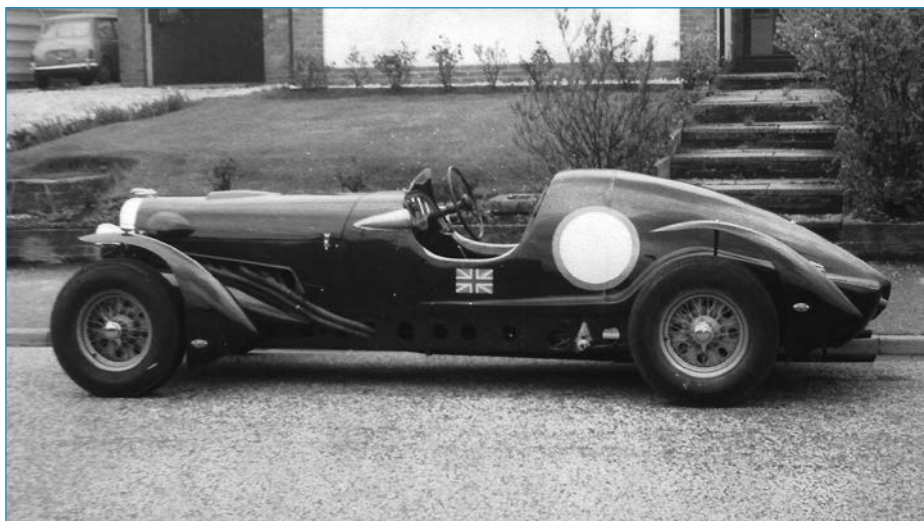
Herb suggested I take the car home for a couple of days, do some fine tuning, and then drive it to Silverstone where he would meet me ready to race. The photo shows the car about to leave Jack's, with the team that designed and built it. Note that Herb was dressed immaculately, complete with stiff detachable collar and spats, somewhat different to the rest of us! The body of this car had been constructed to perfection, with Timber Jack's frame now hanging up on the wall in case another similar body was ever required.



Left-Right - Herb Schofield, Unknown, David Hine, Derek Michin, Jack Buckley & Jack (Timber) Parks.

My drive home was a big shock. Bear in mind that I had virtually no problems with the LG45 special we had built 3 years previously. This car was quite the opposite. My accelerator cable system opened the throttle too quickly so that the car leapt forward alarmingly, and then the corrugated brake drums jerked me to an uncertain halt, with excessive pedal travel. The steering was awful

with the car wandering all over the road, which I assumed was excessive play in the steering box. The seating position was a beautiful fluted leather construction, but just a curved metal sheet and very uncomfortable. The next photo shows the car, looking perfect, outside our bungalow after I had had a puncture with no spare wheel, another nightmare getting a roadside garage mechanic to repair it!



I rushed back to Oldham to get the steering column complete from the DeVille, and then back to swap these columns that evening. The next morning, I rose at 4 am to drive to Silverstone for early practice. To my horror the steering wheel was very close to my chest, as I had not realised the column was much longer in long-chassis cars than the original unit. To add to my misery the steering was no better, because I later found out that the front wheels were towed out instead of slightly towed in. This was made worse by Herb fitting huge 7.00x16 ins tyres on offset spoked

wheels! Also, there was some sort of wooden bearing at the top of the steering column which was sticking, and made the steering jerky as I weaved about.

After one abrupt start there was a loud bang from the rear of the car. I stopped and looked underneath to find the telescopic shock absorbers hanging limply from their top bushes. The bottom bushes had snapped off because Jack had arranged the mounting pins fore and aft, and the wind up of the rear axle had snapped them off. I pressed on at a slightly increased speed to find that the

torsion arm front suspension was virtually undamped. The car was “motorboating” because the front shock absorbers were useless. I now realised why the De Ville had had the additional telescopic on the front. I later found out that the fitting of telescopic shock absorbers was a standard pre-war factory modification on most V12 and LG6 cars.

The cold April drive down the M6 then the A5 seemed endless, but at least it didn't rain. Hoods were for sissy folk I was told, and the vestigial aero screen would be all that I needed. I had to wear my helmet and visor for protection against the wind.

The good news was that other things I had assembled were actually working quite well. The petrol was flowing from the pump I had installed in the rear of the chassis by the petrol tank.

The engine sounded sweet, purring on twelve cylinders with good oil pressure.

The water temperature was a steady 65 degrees centigrade with

no apparent leaks. All my wiring circuits were functioning well. I had not understood the 6-volt instrument system with the strange senders so I had obtained a beautiful 12-volt instrument cluster off a DB Lagonda from Ivan Forshaw and this worked well, mounted in the polished aluminium dashboard. The speedo and rev counter from the De Ville were spinning accurately. The gear box from the De Ville was selecting all gears and the original rear axle was functioning silently. Even the dynamo showed a healthy charge on the ammeter.

I finally arrived at Silverstone Racing Circuit and was just in time for scrutineering before practice at 9.00am. There was huge interest in the car and I could hardly get close to it for the crowd of jealous and admiring spectators. I became slightly irritated by being told how lucky I was to be allowed by the owner to drive such a superb machine which really did appear to be close to perfection!



Silverstone, April 1968 - first run!

Herb donned my helmet and visor and went out for a quick practice session. He came back in after a couple of laps complaining that "it wouldn't pull the skin off a rice pudding." I followed him out and had to agree. Everything was flying past me and there was no acceleration at all. I tried to urge the old girl on but suddenly the power seemed to collapse completely and I limped back into the pits with the engine sounding very flat indeed. On inspection, to my horror, one of the distributor units had apparently destroyed itself internally, with the make and break mechanism all twisted. The engine still ran smoothly but only one six-cylinder bank was operating. Still surrounded by admiring hordes of spectators, I pretended nothing was wrong and went for a beer.

After racing was over, we all set off back in our usual convoy with me chugging along behind. I had topped up the petrol at Silverstone but the 18 gallons seemed to disappear in no time. So, when we stopped for the traditional fish and chips in Tamworth, I had to fill up again. Taking out the inaccessible spark plugs was beyond me with our skimpy set of spanners even if it had occurred to my muddled brain.

Back home the awful truth was revealed. I had mixed up the contra rotating distributors when servicing the engine and both were retarding the ignition as the engine revs increased. Immediately after I had changed them over much more power was restored and I vowed to tell no one and reveal my incompetence. Many years later I was secretly delighted to help another V12 owner on one of the Continental

Rallies whose mechanic had made the same mistake.

The next event on the calendar was Curborough Sprint meeting and Herb drove there with me as a wind-blown passenger. The V12 engine was running much better but our lap times were well down on the last year's times in the LG45. I was under the bonnet seeking more urge when Herb hissed "W.O.". I responded "W.O. what!" Only to look up and there was the great man standing there examining our car. I was struck by his appearance. He was wearing an old gabardine raincoat which had seen better days and there were drips of rain running down his bald head. He looked a lonely, sad sight, quite unlike how I would have imagined this living legend would have appeared. He quietly, almost diffidently, asked what seemed to be my problem. When I told him about our lap times, he replied that I was not using enough revs. He stated that the power doesn't come in under 2500 rpm. "It's the camshafts" he added "We never did get them right". With that he slowly walked off and got into a shabby Morris Minor and drove away. Nobody seemed to notice him. Like so many fine engineers he was no business man and lived on into retirement in genteel poverty. He survived on a small pension granted by Rolls Royce because many of their models bore his name.

Three years later I was sad to hear a postscript to the BBC news that he had passed away. He would have been astonished had he witnessed his own funeral which was a lavish and spectacular affair, attended by all the great and the good of the Bentley

Driver's Club and the vintage motoring world.

One month later it was the VSCC Oulton Park race meeting and there was no question of not entering. The race I was in was a scratch race and I roared away in the lead, not changing gear until 4000 revs had been attained. I lead the pack into Esso Bend and then began the short uphill followed by the long downhill straight. I had tried to fix the front shock absorbers but to no avail. The car began to "motorboat" big time, swooping violently up and down as I hurtled towards the next curve. Suddenly with no warning I did a neat half spin, rotating 180 degrees and coming to a screeching halt, in the middle of the track, with thirty cars bearing down on me. I thought my end had come and could only close my eyes and grip the steering wheel. The noise was incredible but no impact occurred as the wave parted and passed me by on

either side. The silence that followed was deafening and I slowly did a three-point-turn and limped back into the pits.

The Club driving tests at Sandtoft was the next meeting and I drove across the Woodhead pass in convoy with Alastair Barker in his Tourer. The car was still running fine and I had done more work bleeding the brakes so that it would stop better, if still jerky. Herb tried to do the tests but kept scaring himself by spinning the car on the cinder surfaces. In the hotel that night we were chatting and he asked me casually what I thought the car was worth. I thought for a moment and said £1500. Without hesitation Herb said "Right, give me £700 and she's yours!" This was a shock and I had to scrape the barrel, cash in my Shell Pension and plead with my long-suffering Father to raise the cash. This was equivalent to at least £30,000 today. ■

To be continued

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Whitewebbs Transport Museum - visit of Feltham era Aston Martins & DB Lagondas

Richard Branch attended

ON THURSDAY MARCH 2nd twenty-five of us gathered at Whitewebbs, arriving in 11 different cars covering the entire series of Feltham Astons: DB2, DB2/4 and 2/4 MkII, three DB MkIIIs together with two modern Astons. Arriving, sans roof, was an intrepid owner and his friend in what he described as "An old car made in Luton," this in fact was a glorious 1923 Vauxhall 30-98. Also present were a lovely pair of Lagonda 2.6-Litre Drophead Coupés. The green one - 'SMX', driven by well-known Lagonda enthusiast Alan Heard, was the first car built by the factory after David Brown's acquisition of the company; chassis constructed in Staines and body made in Feltham. Coincidentally the owner of the silver Lagonda, David Davidson, had acquired his car from Alan just a few years earlier. I am sure he will not mind me saying that he is 94 years old, so you'll understand why I just loved his touch of understatement when he told me that had previously owned a Lagonda 2-Litre, but that he started to find it a little difficult to get in and out so he bought a 'more modern car' to replace it - wonderful!

After tea and biscuits, we split into groups for our guided tours of the museum. Every floor had something of interest including automobilia, enamel signs, a motorcycle collection and, of course, the display of classic cars.

The museum also has a fine set of vintage commercial vehicles, some of which have been used in period television programs such as Mr. Selfridge. All the vehicles are maintained in drivable condition and are a credit to the volunteers that look after them.

Over a buffet lunch we were able to view original 1950s Aston Martin engineering drawings, log-books and build sheets including details of DB2s raced by the works team at Le Mans. Entries in the log books showing drivers names such as Wisdom, Salvadori and Abecassis and their finishing places were fascinating. These priceless items were kindly displayed by Antony Forshaw and are just a small part of the archive of drawings and books originally acquired by his grandfather Capt. Ivan Forshaw.

After lunch the talk in the car park was about how much people had enjoyed themselves and when could we do it again.

Finally, before leaving, I just had time to see the model railway running, not sure anyone else discovered that, maybe next time? We were well looked after by the volunteers at Whitewebbs and judging by the smiling faces enjoyed themselves, I know I did. Thanks to everyone who attended for making it such a great day. ■



The fine DB dropheads of Alan Heard and David Davidson



The Aston Martin line-up

V12 & LG6 Rear Road Springs - Part 1

By Laurence Hannam

SOME BACKGROUND; THE WHY? My V12 had the splendid habit of sitting down at the back, getting up like a sprinter when letting the clutch in and accelerating in first gear. Probably the only good aspect of its sagging rear springs. These springs were newly fitted in May 1945 when the car had travelled some 11,000 miles. Rather soon? What if I tell you that they in turn, replaced a set fitted in December 1940, at 9912 miles? Whatever, I had clearly had my money's worth out of the 1945 set, so I removed them, had them re-tempered and reset, and refitted them, with new threaded pins and bushes.

I don't know the early history of my LG6; however, a new set was necessitated when the previous owner shortened the chassis between the spring hangers. For some reason, those springs were new but untempered. They were also incredibly heavy, with leaves thick enough to suit more a locomotive than a car. As I was getting the V12's rear springs renovated, it was easier getting more suitable units made. These were fine; except that the firm could never get them set correctly. In the end they gave up, and never charged me for them. In 2000 I took them to another firm, who reset them; they seemed fine, except when I next drove the LG6, in 2016, they sagged almost immediately. So, last year, I took those springs to Owen Springs in Rotherham, who tested them and declared them unworkable. So, yet another pair of new springs for the LG6. The LG6 being a special

means that the springs and hangers are all exposed, making work and photographs easier; hence this article. There is no difference between the springs on the LG6 and V12, although of course, the axles differ.

This is a relatively straightforward job, however, you will need plenty of jacks and axle stands. Make sure you have generous working space at the sides and rear of the car. I had the V12 professionally steam cleaned before I took it off the road; this has made a huge improvement in working on the car. The automatic lubrication system is fine but does leave the underside covered with oily mud. Be prepared to spend time cleaning that away. In the past, I used to write notes on pieces of scrap paper. In some cases, written notes are essential, but mostly, I find using a digital camera provides an excellent "notepad" as to how things were and as an aid to reassembly.

Start at the beginning; appropriately here, at the front of the car. Chock the front wheels front and back; the handbrake must remain off; release the handbrake if it's applied. Start jacking the rear end, either a trolley jack under the rear axle, or a jack under a spring U bolt. Lift enough to take most of the weight off the tyre, then loosen the knock-off wheel nuts. Continue jacking until the wheels are at a fair height enabling easy under-car access, then place axle stands suitably adjusted, and lower the car onto them. Primarily, you need one each side, under the chassis to the rear of and within an inch or so to the front

spring hanger. If the flange of your axle stand overlaps the spring, move it just forward of the front spring hanger. You should then place axle stands just behind the rear spring hangers; if like my V12, there should be a nice clear space between the hanger and the rear exhaust mounting. The reason for this doubling-up of stands is that, substantial though the chassis is, the section aft of the front hanger WILL bend downwards if unsupported, placing an unwelcome strain on your coachwork's ash frame. Ideally, you should arrange for the chassis to touch the front and rear axle stands at the same time, as it is jacked down. If not, set the height so the front is touching, estimate the packing required, place on the rear axle stand, then jack down until the rear axle is hanging free.

Now, finish unscrewing the knock-off nuts, and remove the wheels. Screw the nuts back on, and wrap the hub splines with rag or plastic sheet. If you don't, you will soon find out, when you get the grease from that on your hand or clothes, how long it takes to clean it away! If your exhaust passes over the axle, fine; if under, best to remove that section now. A good idea is to disconnect the flexible brake hose where it attaches to the rear axle pipework; this will not take much strain to damage it. Use hose clamps or some other means of stopping the fluid dripping out. Disconnect the handbrake cables; you may need to loosen back the lever adjustment. If need be, remove the cable forward end clevis pin from its fork. Alternatively, remove the operating lever from its backplate spindle, by removing the pinch bolt and levering it away from the backplate. If tight, spray with

freeing oil, then hammer a suitable width screwdriver into the gap between the lugs: not too hard, just enough to open the orifice a little. Note that the spindles have woodruff keys for locating these. Remove if loose; the rebuilder of my rear axle lost mine! Disconnect the shock absorbers; it may be necessary to remove lever arm shock absorbers in their entirety.

Next, undo the automatic chassis lubrication pipework nuts where it attaches. The rear is obvious, to the spring hanger itself; the front less so, as it screws directly into the inner end of the shackle pin, hidden inside a drilling in the chassis. Opinion is divided as to the merits of the lubrication system. Many advocate doing away with it and replacing with grease nipples. This has the merit of ensuring lubrication gets directly to the component requiring it, and is less messy. But; you will find some of those nipples rather hard, or impossible, to get to! You have to remember to grease them all at appropriate intervals. Worse; many of the drillings were designed for oil, so are narrow. That means grease may not get through at all! The rear shackles are a case in point; the oil enters at the aluminium hanger casting, through to the threaded pin and bush, having to find its way along there. There is a drilling in the centre of the pin, leading to the centre of the outer boss, where another drilling lines up with one in the shackle. From there that drilling goes right down to the lower shackle pin, through a drilling in the pin, and from there, out of a drilling in the centre of the pin, to lubricate its threads. Is grease going to get that far?



To be continued

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Any Other Business

Jonathan Oppenheimer takes on a very early M45 Tourer

AOB 253 IS probably my last car restoration project, the end of the agenda as it were, so its registration couldn't be more appropriate.

I bought this M45 T7 in 2018 from Canada, where it had been taken in June 1957 by Lt Cdr George Poole-Warren, aboard Canada's third and last aircraft carrier, HCMS Bonaventure, on her maiden voyage to Halifax, Nova Scotia. According to the RCN List, Lt Cdr Poole-Warren was an engineer who joined RCN in 1947. He must have been one of Bonaventure's first complement of officers, and may have been involved in its fitting out, as his 1956 address on the buff continuation logbook was c/o Harland & Wolff Ltd, Belfast NI, where the Bonaventure was built. I have Poole-Warren's Canadian Customs declaration, listing a signet ring, dinnerware, a settle, bric-a-brac and "car parts", which may explain why the body had been sawn in half at the rear of the doors, and then re-joined with rather crude steel plates. The declaration is marked "Exempt".

Poole-Warren sold the car on 12th June 1969 and surprisingly, the Sales Tax receipt shows that after 12 years in Canada, AOB still retained its UK registration. It also gives Poole-Warren's address by this time as "Australia" (sic), and Lt Cdr GHF Poole-Warren does appear later in the Royal Australian Navy List.

AOB must have fallen on seriously hard times. Its last owner removed most of the chicken wire and filler from the gaping holes in the lower parts of the steel body panels, which

must have rusted completely away. He had also cleaned most mechanical parts and fixings, which certainly saved me a lot of time and mess. Some parts had been re-plated, and the wheels had been repainted dark red, their original colour as listed on the build sheet. However, the beautifully re-chromed radiator shell turned out to be unusable, as it was too distorted to fit the radiator frame without being stripped, repaired and re-chromed again. There was another, damaged shell with the car that I had repaired as a spare and then nearly sold to our President. Luckily, I decided to keep it; it fitted perfectly and has now been re-plated by Derby Plating.

An M45 T7 tourer had always been on my wish-list, and I was mindful of our President's dictum that an M45 saloon and tourer make the ideal Lagonda combination. He sent me an encouraging email when I acquired AOB, telling me I had won the Lagonda jackpot by adding this tourer to my pillarless saloon, though when I contemplated the wreck with a seized rear axle that emerged from the shipper's lorry, I'm not sure I believed him.

But why buy another forlorn wreck? Several reasons, some almost rational, and others wholly irrational. Although received wisdom advises buying a car that someone else has lavished their money on, I've never felt able to afford this luxury because of the daunting initial outlay. Instead, I've managed to convince (or fool) myself that a smaller purchase price, followed by

theoretically controllable outgoings, is more manageable, although the purchase price is never as small as it should have been, and the total cost is likely to end up greater than the price of a restored car. However, unless one knows exactly how a previous owner's money was spent, and where, it's hard to judge how good a "fully restored" car really is. I've seen several cosmetically shiny, expensive purchases by fellow-sufferers turn out to conceal a multitude of costly, unresolved faults and ill-conceived bodes. Third, there's no better way to learn about a car than to dismantle it, trying to photograph every detail (one never takes enough) and making copious notes, then discussing with experts what needs to be done and participating, as far as possible, in the reassembly.

The satisfaction of getting behind the wheel of a fine car one has helped to rescue from dereliction, hearing its engine come to life as it takes to the road for the first time in decades, is hard to beat. Finally, the rescue of such a car is a modest contribution to the preservation of automotive history.

There was another, semi-rational justification for buying this machine. Although there are usually mechanical improvements through the course of a model's production, the reverse is often true for body design and detailing, as the bean-counters chip away remorselessly at the designer's vision. I wasn't conscious of this years ago when I bought an early Riley Lynx, the 1933 model with its elegant disappearing hood, dispensed with the following year. Similarly, my Rapier, the first "Eagle" example, boasts unique curves that were straightened out for ease of

manufacture on subsequent examples. More prominently, the prototype V12 is endowed with sweeping two-tone swages conceived by Frank Feeley to distinguish it from the LG6, a distinction his bosses didn't consider worth the greater cost, quietly deleting the swaging from the production cars. Reflecting on these examples, I decided to seek an early example of any car I was after, thinking it would be possible, if needed, to replicate mechanical improvements that might favour later versions. AOB, built in October 1933, is one of the first batch of M45s, identifiable by small details such as the flat, all-walnut dashboard without a steel panel at the centre for the switches and ammeter (instead the wood is routed out at the back, making it thinner in this area to accommodate the switches; in my view a more elegant solution). It also benefits, like my saloon, from good-quality chromed brass door handles and the nice round Bakelite bonnet handles, rather than the later Mazak ones, although at the time of writing the door handles seem to have been mislaid – one of the frustrating hazards of restoration!

So, to the undeniably irrational factors – and I must admit it was probably these that clinched my decision. First was that registration. I have certainly tried Merav's patience and our financial resources more than enough in rescuing old cars from oblivion and this was to be my last major project of this nature, so what could be more appropriate than AOB? Furthermore, when the vendor emailed a copy of the car's build sheet, I discovered to my delight that its "car number", Z10492, is just two digits after my pillarless saloon, Z10490, so they must have been stablemates in



*AOB 253 soon after importing it from Canada in 2016
(note all the missing steel above the running board!).*



At Coachbuilt Cars, near Warminster, October 2018

the factory before embarking on their very different “lives”.

The saloon, KY5551, was despatched to Central Garage, Bradford and sold in November 1933 to Leeds businessman and Alderman, Mr E Arnold, manufacturer of globes and other educational paraphernalia, who endured a year of teething troubles. None of which seem to have stopped the car from running but required Central Garage to send it, with one of their drivers, back down the Great North Road to Staines every few weeks for warranty work. This must have accounted for much of the 15,000 miles clocked up during Mr Arnold’s year of ownership – almost HALF the car’s total mileage until I bought it in 2001! Thereafter poor old KY moved steadily downmarket to London’s East End before spending some decades off the road in a South Wales lock-up.

AOB, on the other hand, seems to have spent some months as a demonstrator at Patrick Motors of Birmingham, whither “many parts” were dispatched from Staines “after accident”. In May 1934 it was delivered to A E Dobell, then serving as an RAF officer in Malta. I hope he got a decent discount for damaged goods! The service record then speaks plaintively of the further damage incurred in “trial work” on the island. One gets an idea of the extent from the two lists of parts dispatched to Malta; the first, from June ’34, includes sump, rear wings and rear number-plate bracket and the second, only two months later, begins, “reinforced crankcase with main and camshaft bearings complete”. AOB still has this crankcase, which is interesting in being virtually identical to those later fitted to LG45s and having no Meadows number stamped

on it.

Dobell seems to have traded AOB in after about a year for the Rapide in which he competed in the Monte Carlo Rally, now owned by Macko Laqueur. The car went, in February 1935, to H Mann of Holly Lodge, Heathfield, Sussex, whose guarantee period is shown as extending to November 1936.

The service record itself stops in May 1936 (mileage 33,249) and doesn’t resume until June 1948, when the car was owned by KA Swift, of Allied Colloids Ltd in Bradford, by which time the speedometer has evidently gone round the clock and mileage is 14,935, so probably really 114,935. Unsurprisingly, quite a lot of work was needed, including a new speedometer. The record comes to a final stop on 24th March 1950 with a mileage of 6143 on the new speedometer. After two further owners (Leslie Lockwood of Shepshed, Loughborough and J M Bosworth of Cadogan Square, London), AOB came into the possession of Lt Cdr Poole-Warren who, as previously mentioned, may have been responsible for sawing the body in half. Although this indignity was part of its history, Gareth Burnard, who restored the ash frame, strongly advised replacement of the cut timbers to ensure adequate rigidity, and I have taken his advice.

I bought AOB early in 2018 and much has happened to slow the restoration. First came the pandemic with its attendant lockdowns and as that eased, I lost my Woolwich shed and had to find a new home for eight cars and twenty-five years of accumulated spares (and junk), tools etc. What my old business partner would call “a high-class problem” of course, but a challenge, nonetheless.

The new home is a much draughtier shed at Aldermaston.

While still in Woolwich I dismantled AOB with the help of Brian Bishop, discovering problems as we proceeded. The chassis required straightening, its distortion probably dating back to the Malta trials that did for the first crankcase. This is perhaps evidenced by the crudely fabricated offside radiator bracket, which has now been replaced with a standard item because it made it impossible to fit the repaired radiator shell, and may help to explain why the other shell had been plated while still distorted. The chassis was straightened by Chassis Alignment of Ipswich, whose bread and butter is straightening damaged articulated lorries.

The front springs were seriously asymmetrical, presumably to overcome the effects of the twisted chassis without repairing the latter. The radiator leaked badly and had to be re-cored and quite a few small body parts were missing and had to be sourced (mostly from David Ayre, via the Club) or remade, as well as carburettors, dynamo and Ki-Gas pump. The fuel filter assembly and starter motor were also missing and I'm extremely grateful to Alan Brown and David Hine for coming to my rescue with these. When my Tesla was stolen in the middle of the night, with it went the BTH magneto, foolishly left in the boot to be taken for overhaul by Tony Stairs. Fortunately, I was able to acquire a replacement from fellow member Robin Saddler.

Like much of the rest of the car, the engine and gearbox arrived from Canada dismantled and although the previous owner had had the crankshaft reground it required replacement, as

did the con-rods. He had purchased new pistons but being as short-skirted as any 1960s fashion model, these were deemed unsuited to the piston speeds of such a long stroke engine, even at a standard M45's modest revs.

The chassis and ancillaries were painted locally in Woolwich in pale grey as specified on the build sheet, and Brian and I reassembled the chassis while the body was placed on a trolley and taken to Coachbuilt Cars at Upton Scudamore, near Warminster, where the steel panels were carefully removed from the ash frame. This was then consigned to Gareth Burnard, also near Warminster. Gareth was already working on the tail section of another early T7 body and it was instructive to see the two of them side by side – almost identical, but not quite.

The frame turned out to be in parlous condition – I've already mentioned the sawn-in-half bottom rails, but with the panels off it was clear that many joints had failed or were on the point of failing and although Gareth preserved as much as possible of the original wood, he had to replace several elements.

The completed frame was returned to Coachbuilt Cars for the panel work. Again, the aim was to preserve as much of the original metal as possible, but in addition to the lower areas lost to rust, it was necessary to replace parts of the scuttle and the panel above the boot by welding in new steel, and the attendant problems of distortion had to be overcome. The service record showed that the boot lid had been re-skinned and strengthened in 1949 but this work was rather shoddy, so Gareth had made a new lid frame which had to be skinned. This proved to be one

of the most difficult operations and took at least two attempts, because the shape of the lid involves deceptively subtle and complex curves. After failed attempts to obtain the shape from a single piece of aluminium, like the shoddy 1949 skin, a much better result was achieved by making it in two parts, an upper and a lower, welded together along a seam. I was told later that the person who worked on the boot of the other car that had been at Gareth's encountered similar problems. After much discussion it was agreed that the large nearside and small offside doors could be retained as original with some work to repair cracked edges. On the other hand, both the front and rear wings were too damaged and distorted for viable repair, having been bodged several times in the past (I removed nearly an inch depth of filler from the running-board sections). It was decided to commission Vintage Wings and Radiators of Manchester to replace them all, using the originals as patterns with considerable reverse engineering to avoid copying the distortions. One of the old front wings had been made with a hole to take a side-mounted spare wheel, welded up for use on AOB, whose spare had always been mounted on the boot.

While the new wings were being made, the body tub was again removed from the chassis onto the trolley and transported to Garry Stone, 2 Litre owner and accomplished trimmer, based outside Cambridge. The original dark red trim had been painted pillar-box red and was beyond repair but useful for patterns and, combined with Garry's compendious knowledge of the finer detail of Lagonda trim, ensured a faithfully correct result.

Garry's preference was to make all the elements before the car was painted, to avoid any damage to new paintwork, and then to have the painted car back to fit the trim.

The body came back to Aldermaston in early December 2022, when work began to fit the new wings and get everything ready for painting. As always seems to happen, unforeseen problems arose at this late stage. Work on the bonnet had been left until the leaky radiator had been re-cored and could be fitted with its shell, and it was at this stage that the beautifully plated shell was found to be too distorted to fit the radiator, meaning that the spare shell, which does fit, had to be sent for plating. Disappointing experience elsewhere has led me only to use Derby Plating, much in demand and expensive, but reliably excellent. Meanwhile, it was found impossible to mount the radiator straight because the crudely fabricated bracket mentioned earlier, offset to compensate for the twisted chassis, was no use now that the chassis was straight, so a standard replacement had to be found.

I collected the freshly plated radiator shell and some other parts from Derby a few days ago, just before a positive Covid test has put me temporarily hors de combat. The next step will be for the car to go to Autobody Repair in Shaftesbury, for painting. This firm was recommended for the repair of my Bristol 400 after the passenger suicide door flew open on the Fitton's Final Tour, and they subsequently did an excellent job of repairing the toolkit pod on my V12 when its catch failed on a drive back from Scotland. After painting, the car will return to Garry Stone for



Frame repair at Gareth Burnard's workshop near Warminster



Jonathan, with his other M45 - a lovely saloon.



Awaiting despatch to the painter - BishopGray workshop February 2023

the trim to be fitted and I very much hope to have it back for some running in before this year's Fougères Rally, although I know I'm tempting fate in putting that hope in writing.

When my cars were in Woolwich, every outing meant driving through South London traffic, not the best environment for pre-war cars. This required innumerable gear-changes, and although my ham-fistedness with the T8 box in my M45 saloon gradually improved, I never felt sufficiently skilful to relax. I didn't want to install an all-synchromesh Alvis box, attractive though that is, because Lagonda would never have done that. However, I had seen a late 1933 advertisement in which the company announced, "All models now available with pre-select gear change." This was enough for me; Lagonda had offered the option, so although there seemed to be no evidence of an M45 sold with an ENV110 box, it could have happened.

At the time, I thought this was just my mad idea but I soon learned that at least three other M45 owners were thinking along the same lines, so there was some competition for boxes.

Alan Brown kindly provided a dismantled ENV110, which he sent straight to pre-selector specialist Graham Whitehouse on my behalf. It transpired that Graham was also sorting out a box for Norman Marrett, one of the others with this idea. Norman had spares of some bits that I lacked and vice versa, so we both ended up with complete gearboxes and mine was soon installed in the pillarless saloon. It was immediately apparent that the combined resistance of gear change and clutch springs

made for a very heavy pedal, even with the Borg & Beck clutch conversion. At first, I kidded myself I could get used to this, so I drove to that year's Northern Dinner at Monk Fryston and later to Devon for one of the Fitton Tours. Disaster struck at a traffic light in the afternoon rush hour in Honiton, when I felt I had no clutch pedal – I had pressed so hard that I snapped the brass pedal in two and loosened its shaft from the rest of the linkage.

Somehow, I limped to the hotel and called Graham Whitehouse, who said he could have predicted this would happen. He advised disconnecting the pedal from the clutch, which would remain permanently engaged, as a temporary measure because of the extra wear to the gearbox brake bands that would inevitably ensue. For a permanent solution Graham recommended replacing the clutch with a fluid flywheel, for which he would need the car for at least six months and the cost he mentioned would exceed what I had paid for the car (admittedly derelict at the time). As luck would have it, the owner of the hotel had a collection of cars and employed someone to look after it. This very helpful man managed a temporary repair of the pedal and several years later this has still not been replaced by the new one I bought from the club.

I decided to continue with the temporary solution for the time being after Alan Brown said he'd raced a car with that arrangement for six years before the brake bands began to give up.

When it came to AOB, I decided to try the fluid flywheel option, which

Alan and David Hine both concurred would be the right way to go if I was determined not to simply devote myself to improving my mastery of the T8. Charles Gray found me a Daimler fluid flywheel, complete with detailed and fascinating instruction booklet. He also found me a second ENV box, but as this needed a full rebuild, I decided to use the proven gearbox from the saloon, re-installing the latter's T8 box for the time being. That way, if the fluid flywheel experiment in AOB proves itself, I can get the other ENV rebuilt and go the same way with the saloon, and if not, I can reinstall clutch and T8 in AOB as well and look for buyers for two ENV boxes and a fluid flywheel.

The installation, in AOB, of the ENV110/fluid flywheel combination has one clear downside: it is impossible to fit the upper bellhousing cover, so, as in the V12, which has no bellhousing, the flywheel will whizz around just behind the foot boards. I also question how effective engine braking will be, given the steady increase in slip as engine revs drop, shown in a graph in the instruction booklet (which is silent on the topic). Alan's response was that there must still be engine braking because otherwise there would have been enough accidents to kill off the fluid flywheel concept completely. My concern remains because the 4.5 litre Meadows is an intrinsically low-revving engine, but I suppose that most of its long-stroke contemporaries would have shared this characteristic.

We shall soon see! Of the four people I know to have started down

this route with their M45s, I think I've taken it the furthest thus far. If it works well, it offers a possible solution for others who struggle with crash boxes but baulk at the Alvis option.

Being in Malta when other early M45s had their Z boxes replaced, AOB didn't receive a T8 box until 1949, when the service record states, "Gearbox removed and standard T8 gearbox fitted." When I examined the build sheet after reading this, I saw that details of the original gearbox had been crossed out and replaced with T8/289, which matches the box that came with the car. It looked as though what was written underneath was PS preceded by a number. I was quite excited and showed this to Arnold Davey, who agreed this might indeed indicate that here was the missing link to that 1933 advertisement, an M45 fitted from new with a pre-selector. Would it were so! Sadly, closer inspection with a magnifying glass showed that what was crossed out was 6091/5485, the same part number as used for the Z box originally fitted to my saloon, and it was the "85", written slightly larger than the other digits, that had looked like "PS" under the scratching out. Nonetheless, the intention to make the pre-selector option available on these cars is demonstrated conclusively by the fact that the chassis rails of both my M45s were pre-drilled for the pre-selector gear-lever arrangement, and Brian Bishop and Charles Gray have confirmed that the same is true of all the others that they have worked on in recent years. ■

Fitting Power Steering to a 1928 2 Ltr HC Lagonda

Dick Passmore has chosen the electrically assisted route

AS I GET older, much of the pleasure of driving a vintage car any distance is lost because of heavy controls.

In the case of my Lagonda, the Marles steering box has been overhauled, the beam axle checked for camber, caster and KPI, the kingpins and bearings renewed and track rod and drag link ball joints overhauled. Despite this work the steering still remains unacceptably heavy.

The 2 ltr High Chassis Lagonda is reputed to have light responsive steering but mine has anything but. It was designed with almost no caster hence little or no self-centring, low speed manoeuvring is very heavy but, worst of all, I run out of arm strength to apply lock when braking heavily having encountered an unexpected corner.

The installation of power steering is a better option for me than to sell the car and I have made sure that all the original components have been retained to enable the next owner to return it to original condition if he so wishes.

I have been reluctant to publish information on the basis that modifications to original specification are likely to be frowned upon by many Club members, however having read James Patterson's report in the latest Club magazine about hydraulic power assistance, I am happy to share my experiences with the alternative route which employs an electric power steering unit.

Stage 1 Fitting an alternator

I have never felt comfortable without a cooling fan and reckon that it is only a matter of time before I get well and truly stuck in traffic on a hot day. Having rebuilt the engine, I do not want to run the risk of cooking it, so an effective cooling fan was required.

Initially I rebuilt the dynamo to 2 brush and had the field coils rewound to suit electronic regulation but the output proved inadequate to allow prolonged use of the fan. The Kenlow draws 8-10 amps and the logical solution was to fit an alternator.

In the interests of appearance, I decided to mount the alternator out of sight under the floor driven off the gearbox input shaft.

Pic 1 shows the drive pulley which bolts over the top of the gearbox flexible coupling, pics 2 and 3 show the chassis and gearbox mounting brackets and pic 4 shows the general installation.

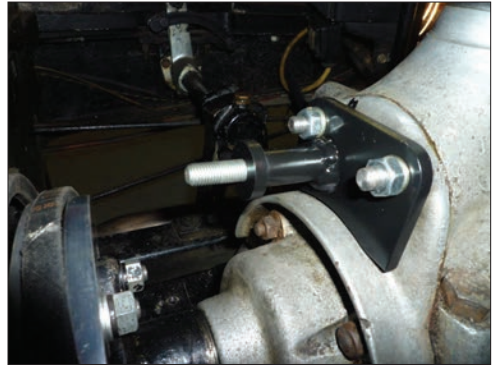
This particular vehicle has an Alvis gearbox. I have followed rally practice and used a nylon adjustment strut to reduce the transmission of engine vibrations. Note the spare fan belt. This is because the gearbox has to be removed to replace it; not something I am keen to do beside the road.

This tiny alternator is from a Kubota tractor and has a rated output of 36 amps.

A fringe benefit is that the charging system will now support a pair of



Top left: Alternator drive pulley



Top right: Alternator mount to gearbox



*Below left: Alternator chassis
mounting bracket*

*Below right: Alternator
general arrangement*

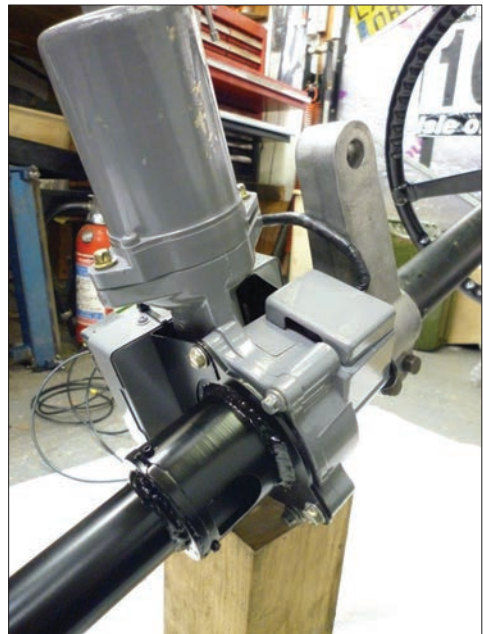




Top: Steering column for EPS under construction



Right: Steering column with EPS ready to install



Bottom left: EPS in situ

Bottom right: EPS detail



Cibie auxiliary driving lights which make night time driving a pleasure.

Stage 2 Fitting electric power steering

Hydraulic power steering requires, amongst other things, an engine driven pump and a visible steering ram connected to the track rod, so for me a hidden electric power steering unit free of hydraulic connections offers a less complex solution.

The installation of an alternator is a prerequisite to fitting electric power steering since the EPS unit can draw up to 40 amps when manoeuvring at low speed.

The principle of electric power steering involves a central torsion bar which twists when steering load is applied via the steering wheel. This is sensed electronically and assistance is delivered courtesy of a geared electric motor. This is, unfortunately, incompatible with the route of the hand throttle and the advance and retard mechanism which run through the middle of the column

I moved the steering wheel hand controls to vintage motor cycle hand throttle/decompressor levers mounted on the steering column below the dash board. In fact, my Scintilla MN 4 has 15 degrees of mechanical advance so for normal driving I rarely need to alter the A & R setting.

A popular EPS unit, often used by special builders, is sourced from a Vauxhall Corsa. I wondered whether it would be powerful enough for the Lagonda, but needn't have worried. These are widely sold on eBay and I purchased a nearly new Corsa B EPS

unit from a left-hand drive car for £275. It came complete with its ECU, wiring tails and control module.

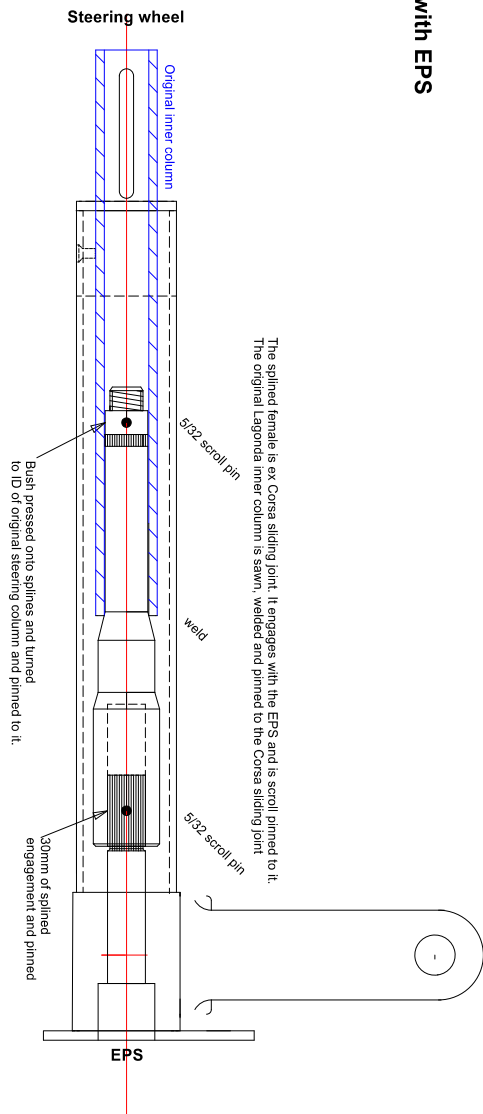
The engineering work involves making new inner and outer steering columns with bushes and flanges to mate with the power steering unit and the steering box. Particular care was taken to ensure that every inner column connection was scroll pinned or bolted as well as welded. There is plenty of room under the cowl top of the Lagonda so the EPS unit can be mounted vertically and therefore out of sight.

The EPS unit needs electronic inputs for engine rpm and road speed in order to function and these cannot be supplied by a vintage Lagonda. A small electronic control unit is available which fools the EPS into thinking it is receiving the necessary inputs and this also accepts a simple knob potentiometer which can be used to control the degree of assistance.

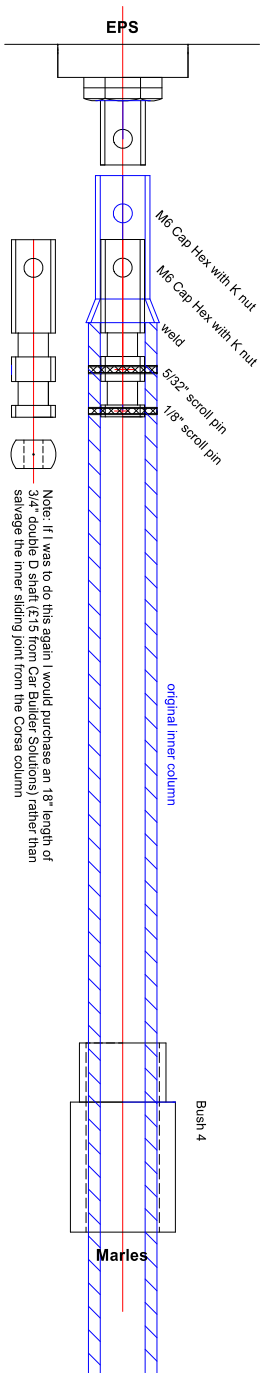
As to cost, in addition to the EPS unit, £25 was spent on new steering column metal, and £70 on vintage motorcycle levers. Everything was fabricated on a Myford lathe and an Emco vertical miller. I am fortunate to have a close friend who's welding is of the highest order.

Was it worthwhile? Absolutely; the car is a delight to drive now for any distance without undue fatigue and I have covered about 3000 miles since installation without any issues. I have working drawings for both alternator and EPS installations which I am happy to share with club members. ■

Steering Column with EPS Inner column.



The splined female is ex Corsa sliding joint. It engages with the EPS and is scroll pinned to it.
The original Lagonda inner column is sawn, welded and pinned to the Corsa sliding joint.



The coupling is ex Corsa with U/J sawn off and the coupling machined to fit the original Lagonda inner column.
The inner is ex Corsa sliding joint and machined to be a push fit into the Lagonda column welded, pinned and bolted.
The coupling to the EPS must be capable of being unbolted for assembly purposes with access via the ports in bush 3a.

Note: If I was to do this again I would purchase an 18" length of 3/4" double D shaft (£15 from Car Builder Solutions) rather than salvage the inner sliding joint from the Corsa column.

Choosing the Right Gear

By Arnold Davey

THE BUGLER FAMILY were planning their next assault on Classic Le Mans last year and the topic of choosing gear ratios came up in conversation. Colin mentioned the various combinations of tyre size, axle ratio and intermediates that have been tried and the vague feeling that there was still room for improvement.

The circuit at Le Mans is now very different from what it was in 1935. In those days you needed to tailor top gear to match peak power to the car's top achievable speed along the Mulsanne straight, and you needed a lowish first gear to give good torque out of the two sharp bends. Plus, two others for the rest of the circuit. Colin said he wished we knew what gearing was used pre-war and I was able to say that we do know, since I have here the complete set of gearing charts compiled by the Good/Bentley company from 1936 to 1946, all fixed together in a binder which looks to have been made in the drawing office. One chart is noted "Le Mans 1935" even though it was compiled in March 1936.

There are 53 charts in all, plus some summary sheets. All are initialled by the compiler, starting with "E.C.E." who was Eric Easter, a senior draughtsman. He gives way to "C.C." who was Cecil ("Dusty") Coleman, from whom I got them. They all plot Road Speed up the 'y' axis against Engine RPM on the 'x' axis. When the V12s appear the 'x' axis had to be extended from 4000

rpm to 6000, necessitating larger charts (17 in x 9 in) instead of (13in. x 9in). All are drawn in Indian ink on tracing paper with tape bound edges. As you might guess, all are now very fragile and have to be handled with great care. "Dusty" was very good at giving us historic documents over the years including the original doctored photos that were used in the Instruction Manuals. He died in 2004. As time passed, other initials appear on the charts, some indecipherable,

What were the 1935 Le Mans ratios, then? From chart number 114 we learn that the rear axle was 3.14 to 1 and 6.00 x 18 tyres gave 691 revs per mile. Overall gear ratios were 3.14, 4.05, 5.74 and 8.92 to 1. At 4000 rpm these ratios produced speeds of 110, 86, 60 and 38 mph in the gears. There is a panel labelled 'gearbox type', but this is left blank in this case.

"Gearbox type" changes as we work through the charts, G9 followed by G10, G11 and G12. What was a G12 for heaven's sake? This is interesting to the historian even though it never made production. It was the result of Bentley and George Constantinesco combining to patent a synchromesh 'box where the synchromesh action was provided by solenoids not cones. It worked along the lines of George's interrupter gear used on WW1 fighters to enable the pilot to fire through the propeller arc. The original patent was in W.O.'s papers that Margaret Bentley left us. It never made production, I suspect because W. O. discovered

the Cotal epicyclic 'box which was much lighter and could be made fully automatic.

I have always believed, based on a remark made by Charles Sewell, that the only difference between the G10 and G11 gearboxes was that one had ball bearings and the other had rollers. But I learn from these charts that the first, second and third gear ratios differ as well. Interesting comparisons are between all the internal intermediate ratios in all the 'boxes:

G9 1, 1.3, 1.68, 2.618

G10 1, 1.25, 1.67, 3.25

G11 1, 1.33, 2.0, 3.46

G12 1, 1.45, 2.75

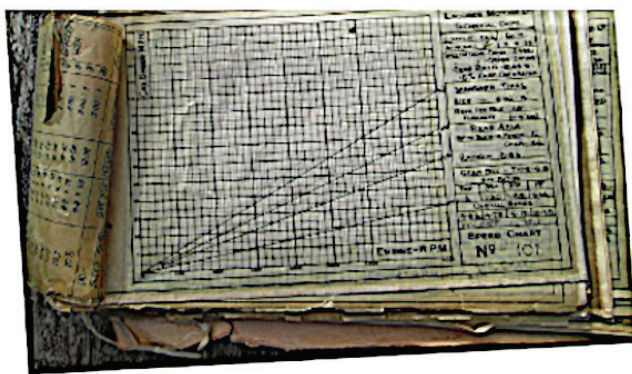
Chart number 122 is fascinating. It refers to the 1936 500-mile race at Brooklands where EPE 97 had its wings removed to fit tyres of 7.50 x 20 which gave 553 revs per mile, combined with a 3 to 1 axle ratio to produce a speed of 134 mph at 4000 rpm. Another 'special' chart was produced for the factory V12 entry for the 1939 Monte Carlo Rally where the car speed 'x-axis is calibrated in kph, not mph.

The final chart is dated 19th September 1946 and relates to the LB6 and with the Cotal gearbox and 16-inch wheels. The signature is just a squiggle.

"Revs per mile" is a key figure in all these calculations and it is surprising how this varied with tyre maker. There is a note differentiating racing and standard tyres for each size and diameter, as you would expect, but just as large a variance between makers. Take 6.50 x 18 for example where "revs/mile" ranges from 661.2 to 674. I am assuming the figures came from the tyre manufacturers as I doubt that Lagonda had anyone or anywhere to produce their own.

By 1938 Lagonda were producing a big range of models and rear axle ratios reflect this, going from 3 to 1 for competition LG45s to 4.73 to 1 for a long wheelbase V12 limousine. I have listed seven different ones in between. For any member who wants to dabble in the maths, the key equation is

Mph per 1000 revs in top gear = $60,000/GR$ where G is the rear axle ratio and R is the number of revs per mile of the tyre. For the other gears you need the gearbox internal ratios as well. ■



Sample chart from Eric Easter's book

Letters & Emails ... Letters & Emails

Dear Editor

A very astute friend of mine called Frank Lewis recalls watching a film called *Chase a Crooked Shadow* 1958 with Richard Todd and Anne Baxter, where an LG45 Rapide is put at speed along a coast road at a terrifying pace. The scene is found on YouTube - it's short but memorable!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zYS2dk1vhHI&t=3s>

I asked Arnold Davey which car this was - here is his reply (*Ed*):

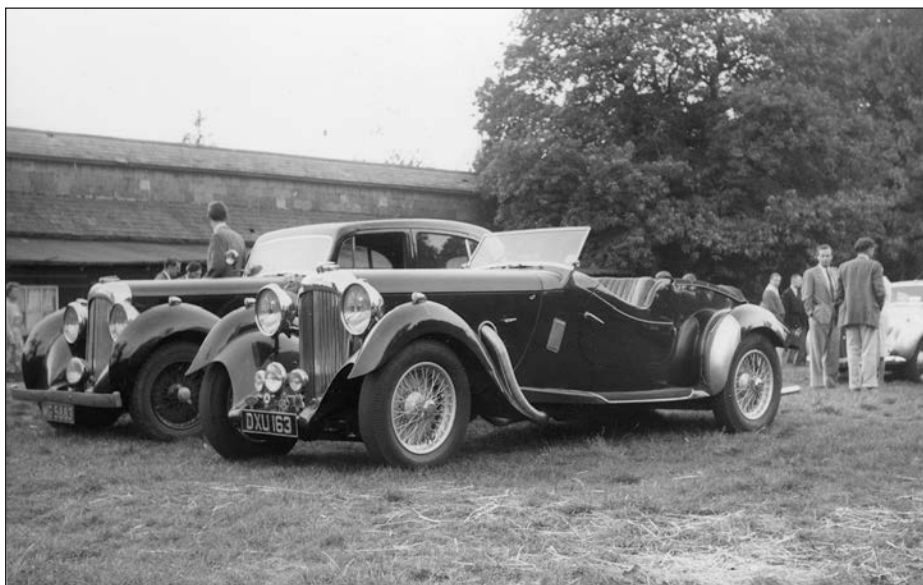
The Rapide in the film was chassis 12169 DXU 163, see the picture below. At the time it was owned by James Crocker and was painted BRG. To get the front wheel shots they

Well worth watching. The car registration is CA 44915 so I wonder which of the Rapides this is? - (*see below*)

As the owner of an LG 45 Rapide Rep BYT321 I shall be driving more slowly around coast roads here in Devon.

Adrian Rogers Exeter

removed the near side rear wing and built a scaffolding platform for the camera. They then tried to hand it back unrestored. James threatened a law suit and won when the Crocker family law history came up. The film was in black and white, the colour has been added later.



DXU 163 as acquired by James Crocker

Letters & Emails ... Letters & Emails

Dear Roger

I was pleased to read Alan Heard's letter about his encounter with Robby Hewitt.

The episode was typical of Robby; she enjoyed sharing her remarkable cars. She also enjoyed using them or having them used; in her kitchen hung a large picture of BPK 203 being raced - by, I think, Denis 'Jenks' Jenkinson. I enclose a couple of pictures which I took during the brief 18 months that I knew Robby. The one taken at her premises in Phoenix Green shows the purposeful simplicity of its design. The other is a view along the bonnet from the passenger seat; one has a partial view of Robby in the driving mirror, probably uttering one of her affectionate barbs.

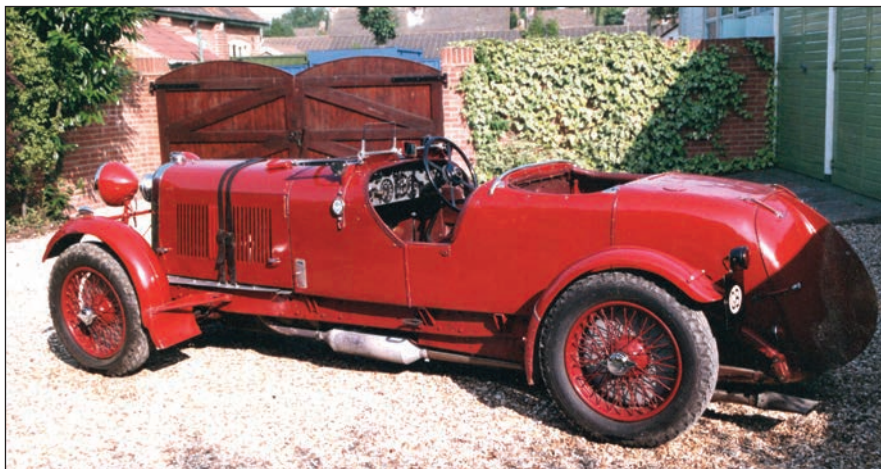
One does not generally think of Lagondas as being 'nimble', but this word occurred to me on the occasion when Mike Gaber (who was driving at the time) seemed to fling BPK 203 into the drive of my house in Camberley at very short notice. Davey and May's description, in their "History of the Marque", of Luis Fonte's handling of the car may lend some credence to this impression.

Good to know that memories of Robby survive.

Yours sincerely,
Arthur Brend



Letters & Emails ... Letters & Emails



Dear Roger

I enjoyed James Patterson's article in the last edition. Ten years ago, I fitted EZ power steering to my M45 saloon. Since then I have done three continental rallies in her including one to the Picos Mountains in Spain, where 20 effortless hairpin bends before coffee was common.

The picture shows how it fits snugly behind the dashboard and still uses the existing support clamp (*see Dick Passmore's article - Page 34*)

Kind regards
David Hine

Dear Roger

The attached photo was sent to me by a French friend, taken in Paris.

Kind regards,
Jonathan Oppenheimer



Letters & Emails ... Letters & Emails

Dear Roger

I thought this story might be of interest:

In the early part of 1968 I drove my V12 Lagonda (14088) down to Beaulieu, some 120 miles for an event, though I do not remember everything of that event except that it was put on by Lord Montagu. My V12 was parked near to a 1931 Daimler Double Six with a Corsica body, then, in 1968, it was a fairly unknown car.

The Daimler had a 7136cc Sleeve valve engine designed by L H Pomeroy, with a Wilson pre selector gear box. The owner and I had a good conversation about our V12 engines and their restoration.

Later Lord Montagu thanked us for coming and Raymond Baxter gave a commentary about our cars.

The Daimler went on to win the top prize at Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance in 2016 - here are two photos taken at the event, showing the contrast between the two cars. Later we had tea, which included salmon salad followed by Strawberries and Cream in the Pullman Railway Coach, they had then. Those were the days.

Regards

Alan Heard



Left: The V12 Daimler in 1968



Right: Alan's V12 Lagonda in 1968



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