



Number 277 Summer 2023

**THE MAGAZINE OF THE
LAGONDA CLUB**

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	Heritage Motor Museum at Gaydon
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 the Courtyard Suite
Sunday afternoon	Concours presentations.

Please book accommodation direct with the Hotel for one, two or three nights at the agreed rates per room per night of £130.00 (double occupancy) £120.00 (single occupancy), incl. full English breakfasts, by phoning 01789 842424, option 1, during office hours (Mon. - Fri. 9.00am – 5.00pm) **on or before 11th August 2023 (no rooms will be held after this date)** and quoting "Lagonda Club Event".

Tickets for Saturday's Gala Dinner (£47 incl. wine) and/or Sunday's cold buffet lunch (£16) are available to book in 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. 01295 269897.

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The Lagonda Magazine

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COVER:

Never mind the rain - using our Lagondas is what it's all about!
Ian & Meghan Waugh in the Peak District

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From the Workbench

Roger Seabrook

WE HAVE BEEN able to take the 2 litres on some enjoyable events so far this year. We started with the Daffodil Run to Christchurch, on which we took the saloon. Then came the Northern Dinner event in the Peak District - a great venue, and some wonderful countryside - we were glad of the snug interior of the saloon when it rained! The ZE gearbox is not the slickest of gear changes compared to the tourer's OH but the car performed nobly on those steep and narrow roads. I was very glad to have paid particular attention to the brakes when I recommissioned the car, as we missed a turning early on when doing the tour. We ended up at the highest point above the Manifold Valley, and the downward journey was very steep and twisty!

Then came a week in Northern France with some friends from the Bean Car Club - we took the tourer on that one. The wind that blew across the Dieppe-Etretat road was very strong and I had to hold onto my hat with one hand and steer the car with the other. There were two Riley Lynxes on that run - in my opinion the most practical of that make if you want a tourer. Handsome, comfortable, and nippy


- I always wanted one when I first had a car, and was running around in my £15 Riley Continental saloon. But they were way beyond my pocket, although not as much as a 2 litre Lagonda would have cost at the time.

The other cars were an Austin 20 and an Austin Heavy 12 - both tourers. Nice, but rather ponderous.

The most recent event was the Suffolk Dinner, and we had three days at Ufford Park. A most enjoyable event took place at Friston, with some interesting cars - the place was packed! I was delighted to meet Werner and Carla De Laet from Belgium, who had brought their lovely 12-24. They are not afraid to drive it and it was good to see it motoring so well.

My apologies to Dick Slaughter who wrote the article on electric power steering in issue 276. I used the name 'Passmore' which is, of course, the name of Dick's company, rather than his name.

Thank you to those who have contributed to the Magazine recently - there is some copy still in hand, so if yours isn't in this issue, it will be in the future.

And finally, hope to see many of you at the Annual Gathering in September - don't miss it! 

***Last date for copy for the Autumn Magazine is
Friday 29th September 2023
Please keep new articles & pictures coming in.***

A Tale of Twelve Cylinders (concluded) Part 3

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

THE BENTLEY DRIVERS Club August Silverstone found me as the sole owner, again on a cold 4am run down the M6 and A5. This time it was drizzling but the car was running fine. I had constructed a mechanical set of levers to operate the throttles with the pedal hanging down, hinged from the bulkhead. This was working well. I was lonely at the track because the rest of the Northern crowd had suffered breakdowns and returned to Oldham. In those days we had the Bentley Lagonda Handicap race which was invariably won by a Bentley, but still great fun. I was set off as one of the last cars with a stiff handicap to beat. The race is well written up in "The Lagonda" by our then President Mike Wilby. It was run in pouring rain and I didn't think I stood a chance.

However, the huge RS5 road tyres Herb had fitted clung to the wet track brilliantly and the powerful V12 engine allowed me to nip in, out and around all the other slithering cars. The photograph below shows me about to take the chequered flag after five gruelling laps in appalling weather.

None of us raced much the next year 1969. Herb and Alan Brown were building yet another special. This was a lowered, short chassis LG45 fitted with a Wilson box and known forever as the "Selector Special". My wonderful wife Jill had produced a splendid little baby boy we christened Nicholas. Nick has just turned 54 as I write and is also a dedicated Lagonda enthusiast!



Overall winner - Bentley/Lagonda handicap August 1968

I decided that the V12 needed serious chassis work to actually make it safe to drive never mind race! I had drained the water when I laid the car up in my father's spare garage, but we had cold winters in those days and the bottom tank of the radiator had burst open due to residual water freezing. I decided to take the whole body off by lifting it all in the air and suspending it in the rafters. I could now get at everything and do what I should have done to start with. The original rear, lever arm, shock absorbers were reinstated with lugs welded on where Herb had drilled all the holes. I also fitted radius arms to the rear axle to stop it winding up when setting off from the start line. The design of the chassis is immensely rigid and if the front suspension dips too much at one side then all the weight is lifted off the opposite rear wheel and rear traction is lost. I decided to fit telescopic shock absorbers within the front wishbone assembly with built in bump stops to limit the deflection.

I guess an anti-roll bar would have



The hydraulic shock absorber mounting

been the ideal solution but this was beyond my comprehension at that time.

I spent a lot of time lining up the engine and gearbox with new rubber mountings and this, together with a balanced prop shaft, removed the vibration problems. Thankfully the engine and drive train required little work apart from refreshing all the oils. I had the brake drums lightly skimmed again and fitted slightly thicker linings to match. I re-cleaned all the brake slave cylinders and fitted an extra hydraulic oil reservoir to supply the master cylinder when I was bleeding every last vestige of air out of the system. Jack Buckley made me a very nice plinth so that I now boasted two larger aero screens for relative comfort.

1970 was an excellent and trouble-free season as I became more and more confident and experienced in handling this amazing machine. We had thought about fitting four carburettors but the power was more than adequate provided I used the high revs that W.O. had said was the answer. Most of the races were handicap in those days and provided one improved, the silver kept coming!

1971 also started well with the Old Girl running smoothly. Jill even came with me to the race meetings now that I had fashioned a huge Perspex screen that could be fixed temporarily for the road journey. Suddenly during a race at July Silverstone, I noticed a drop in oil pressure but no loss of power or unusual noises. We went on to the BDC Finmere Driving tests where we were an invited Marque. The highlight was a scene when Rusty Russ Turner threw out one of their members for, not only, coming in a Derby Bentley but one with

a V12 Rolls Royce P3 engine. "This trend has to be stopped" he bawled.

I drove gently home with the oil pressure steady at only 30psi rather than the previous steady 70psi. I didn't think much was wrong - probably a bit of dirt under the relief valve. Once home I lifted the little lid off the two oil filters. To my horror both chambers were completely full of shiny aluminium powder. For the first time in my young life I couldn't sleep. I began to realise what was in store.

The car limped up to the Old Slaughter House at Rear London road Oldham which was now our headquarters. The engine was hoisted out and onto an engine stand which sat slightly sloping on the cobbled floor. One had to avoid the stone channels where the blood used to flow and try not to disturb the dust on the rafters which was, no doubt, mostly bone powder used for making glue in the old days.

I quickly lifted the cylinder heads which I had done before and then I started on the sump assembly. Even in my youthful enthusiasm this took ages. I began to understand why so many V12 cars no longer have their original, matching numbers, engine. It was regular company practice to simply swop engines for a new or reconditioned unit when a car came in for service or repair. The water pump alone was a nightmare. It was almost inaccessible and held on with several long bolts of different lengths. Inserting the wrong stud in the wrong hole or fitting the wrong number of spacer shims could cause irreparable damage. I was grateful that my pump had given no trouble but I could see that it would need a new

carbon seal later when reassembling. I was amused by the fact that when removing the bottom half of the sump with a myriad of fasteners you could still see nothing apart from a clogged-up suction filter in my case. Clearly this engine was coming apart for the first time ever. Its number was V12/196 one of the last engines to be made before the war and probably very little used as a result. What luck we had had to be able to race an unknown engine for 3-4 years. I finally got to the crank shaft and found the cause of the problem. The later engines were called Sanction 2 as certain modifications had been sanctioned. The Sanction 1 engines had the pairs of connecting rods on a common crank pin but separated with a thin web. On the later S2 engines the web had been removed to enable wider big end bearings. The con rods actually touched and ran against each other but, in my case, they had become over heated and actually melted against each other. What a mess had ensued.

I rang my pal Ted Townsley who had worked on V12 engines before and just after the war. He told me the weary tales about drama with the use of aluminium con rods on this engine. W.O. Bentley had made his name due to his successful use of aluminium for pistons before the first war, and his insistence that aero engines should use them during the subsequent hostilities. He clearly hoped that he would revive his flagging reputation by the use of this wonder material in his current "masterpiece". However, the choice of aluminium con rods in the V12 engine was close to a disaster. Fortunately, they worked OK on the cars they exported to California where it was

warm all the year round. However, on a cold winter's day in Bradford the new owner found that his engine was seized solid as the aluminium rods contracted onto the steel crankshaft. The quick fix was to get the likes of Ted to take a lick off the inside of the big end bearings. Only several hundred hours of labour. However, once the engine warmed up the aluminium con rods expanded dramatically and the oil pressure dropped like a stone. The next truly awful "works" fix was to combine the majority of the output of both oil pumps to feed the crankshaft and thereby maintain a reasonable oil pressure to the big end bearings. This was risking a minimum flow to the camshafts and other accessories through a crude pin-hole. They got away with it but the design office and publicity chaps must have been appalled if, in fact, anyone ever told them. Certainly, the handbooks and press articles never mentioned it and nothing was changed in the handbooks provided with new cars. All those involved were still boasting about the dual high- and low-pressure oil systems.

However, I must not criticise the by-pass valves on the oil filters. My filters had become completely blocked with aluminium dust but the by-pass valves had ensured a supply of oil continued and there was no damage to the sixteen camshaft bearings.

The next general problem with the aluminium con rods became apparent after the war. Over the years the aluminium alloy tended to crystallise and lose its tensile strength. Many engines were ruined by these con rods snapping at very high revolutions and smashing through the side of

the sophisticated crankcase casting causing irreparable damage. To avoid this happening to me I took my con rods to a heat treatment specialist and he carried out "solution precipitation" by very nearly, but not quite, melting the alloy and dissolving the crystalline formation. I also found that Pontiac shell bearings could be obtained in all sizes at a very low price and these were fitted to match the reground crankshaft.

The main Block of the engine is of really solid construction, a typical Bentley design. The balanced crankshaft runs satisfactorily in only four main bearings which makes the engine nice and compact. Initially these were white metallised bronze shells but mine were the later steel shells. Ivan Forshaw sold me 12 shiny new pistons which I later found out were from a Hillman Imp catalogue. They fitted nicely but did lower the compression ratio quite a bit. Maurice Leo sold me some new timing chains but I never managed to get the camshaft timing perfect as I didn't understand the Vernier effect of the two sprockets that the chains ran on. The cylinder head and valve construction were very complicated by comparison to the simple block. Clearly the work of a different design office, probably Rolls Royce. The valve gear drawings are notated Le C which is short for Le Canadel, where Royce spent his declining years. When W.O. left Rolls Royce he persuaded Stuart Tresillian to come with him to Lagonda. The latter, I suspect, had the drawings rolled up under his arm as he left!

Looking back, I have no idea how I managed to get this engine reassembled in the dubious conditions of our Oldham slaughter house, but I guess

youth conquers all. To add to the stress, when I came to start it up there was no oil pressure showing on the gauge. After another sleepless night it occurred to me to lift the lid off the oil filters and fill them with oil to back-prime the oil pumps. Thank goodness that worked. I cannot understand the design requiring an oil pump having to suck oil up a long tube from the sump instead of the pump being immersed in the oil.

1974 saw me out at BDC Silverstone again.

I was running the engine in gently on the way down and it sounded sweet enough with good oil pressure again. Nagging me was the thought that I had never really found out why the two rods had welded themselves together to cause the previous problem. After practice I opened her up fully and managed a lap time of 1m 24secs. Not bad but not brilliant either. The problem was nerves. I couldn't face another rebuild should anything go wrong.



My last race in the V12 1974 BDC

In the bar I poured out my feelings to Alastair Barker who promptly offered to buy the car off me there and then. I was stony broke after the rebuild costs and Alastair readily agreed to my suggestion of £4000 and the "Old Girl" was his!

My ownership ended there but not my interest, because Alastair kept the car up at the Slaughter House and later at Knarr Mill. I closely followed things as his ownership continued. It

was a relief when he had completed several high-speed laps at the next Silverstone Meeting and my moral warranty therefore expired.

The next winter Alastair decided to change the con rods from aluminium to steel. It was found that XK 120 rods would fit although he had to grind quite a bit off the big end journals but this was done without problems. The longer rods gave a much better compression ratio but he did have

a disaster when bolting down the camshaft casting. This was because he had not rotated the camshaft to the correct timed position before assembly. This meant that a valve was fully open and came up against a piston. The aluminium carrier casting cracked and a replacement had to be sourced.

Alastair then fabricated a new pair of inlet manifolds to fit four carburettors. These manifolds were a simple construction and did away with the complicated hot-spot arrangement which was no longer needed with modern fuel. He also removed the starting carburettor, which was prone to flooding, and used the ticklers to provide a rich mixture to start the engine. Access to the spark plugs was much improved.

The engine and car generally continued to be totally reliable but, with the increase in power output, tended to run a little hot when abroad. For his adventure to drive in the Mille Miglia he fitted a taller water radiator and this solved the problem.

The performance generally was good but not amazing and our thoughts turned to the brief conversation I had had with the great W.O. Bentley some years previously. W.O. had stated "It's the camshafts, we never got them right". During the next winter Alastair and I visited Peter Ling who was a specialist camshaft designer in Coventry. We were able to take a complete camshaft assembly with us and look at it on his desk. Peter was clearly intrigued by the design complexity and was interested to know how easy it was to remove the cams without losing the timing, so that the engine could be decarbonised. This latter decarbonising process used

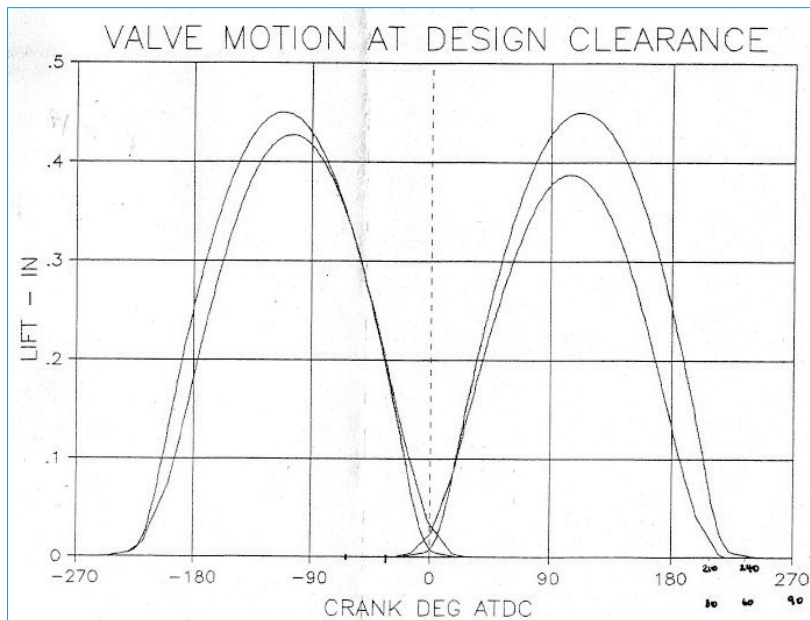
to be an annual event. However, the practice has been rendered unnecessary by modern, clean burning, oils. He then observed that the cam-followers had a pronounced curve rather than being flat, which is normal practice. However, the camshaft profile was flat-sided so that as the cam starts to operate on the follower the initial valve opening rate is rather gentle and slow. He then demonstrated that as the peak of the camshaft comes into operation the follower would open the valve very quickly and then begin to close it equally quickly followed by a gentle final closure. This is fine for quiet operation but does not give much chance for fuel to enter the cylinder and give good power output from the engine. He proposed a radical redesign of the camshafts with a profile which better matched the curved cam followers. This involve a pear shaped hollow sided camshaft.

The profile was altered so that the valves open quicker, stay open longer and close later. The crucial aim was to get as much fuel mixture into the cylinders during each stroke. This intake is caused by the vacuum created by the falling piston. The vacuum is actually greatest as the piston reaches towards the bottom of its stroke. This means that the inlet valve must remain open after bottom dead centre (BDC) for the engine to get a full gulp of fuel. As the piston rises this is actually the compression stroke so the valve timing depends on what you want from your engine. 50-55 degrees after BDC is normal for low revving vintage engines. High performance camshafts close the inlet valve as late as 65 degrees after BDC but this means that this type of engine only produces power at high

revs as it “comes on the cam” as they say. Such engines tend not to idle very smoothly. To also help with timing the camshafts Peter suggested slots should be made in the drive flanges

so that final fine adjustments could be made.

The graph shows the valve motion profile for the original cams overlaid with our new profiles.



After a few months we were able to fit a new pair of camshafts to the engine and this time we were able to time the camshafts to Peter’s instructions using the slots he suggested. The performance of the Old Girl was hugely improved with all aspects positive. Better low-down torque, cooler running, better petrol consumption and superb acceleration right up to 100 mph!

Over time several other V12 owners fitted these new profile camshafts and all were delighted with the extra power. I noted that some years later LMB in Belgium took things a stage further with an even higher lift, and longer dwell profile

I wrote an article for the magazine

some years ago, where I postulated that the camshafts fitted to V12 engines were not in accordance with the original Le C drawings. There is very little detail available but the one drawing we do have asks the question “We wish to try a tappet with this shaded part deleted”. This deleted part gave rise to the curved tappet, presumably to make the engine sound smoother with less clatter from the valve assembly as a whole. The drawing also shows a pear shaped, hollow sided camshaft profile. This would mate well with the curved follower, however all standard V12 camshaft profiles are flat sided. If a cam shaft profile designed to mate with a flat cam follower was specified by accident

this would go a long way to explain why the performance of these new engines was such a disappointment to all involved.

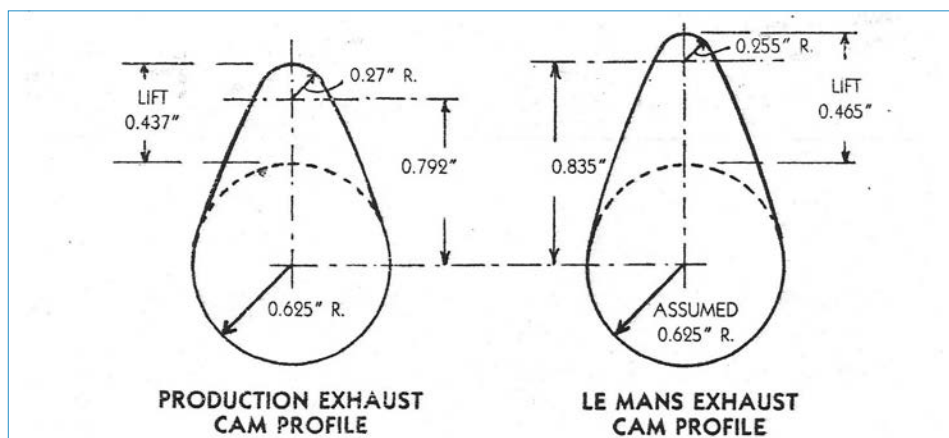
The slow valve opening characteristic followed by rapid acceleration gave rise to valve bounce at high revolutions leading to valve spring breakages. The big difference between S1 and S2 engines was the longer valve stems allowing for an extra 1.5 coils in the valve springs to cope with in service problems of spring breakages.

There is no doubt that exhilarating 100 mph speed could be achieved with relative ease and sustained for long periods if sufficient road was available. However what drivers of large luxury cars expect is a surge of power from relatively low speeds without constantly having to change gear.

In early 1939 WO's stress level's must have risen alarmingly when Alan Good demanded a couple of cars be prepared for Le Mans 1939. W.O. was very familiar with Le Mans and the fearsome Mulsanne Straight. This was actually the road from Le Mans to Tours which, in those days had no chicanes

and was dead straight for nearly four miles. This road was incorporated into the circuit for the race and allowed cars to reach their terminal velocity. Total reliability was what was needed for success at Le Mans but several modifications were made to the engines to add extra performance. A good modification was the reduction in the curved tappet radius from 1.25" to 2.5" making them much flatter and allowing more valve open dwell time. However, someone decided to fit higher lift camshafts. This increased the lift from 4.37" to 4.65" but still with the same base radius. (see drawing) This would be very punishing for the valve springs at high revs. At the last minute WO ordered some specialist springs from Eaton in America. He then instructed the drivers not to exceed 5000 rpm at any time. As we know the cars performed creditably but when the engines were inspected several of the valve springs were found to be broken but, thankfully, without causing engine failure.

The last drawing we have on file was signed off by draughtsman Eric Easter.



This was for a lower lift cam profile to go with flatter followers but the Sanction 3 engine never went into production as the war came in September that year.

Presumably W.O. was left with a tiny team during the hostilities and immediately abandoned any further significant development of his ill-fated V12 “masterpiece”. However, he did not give up and proceeded to develop the twin cam six-cylinder engine to power the post war 2.6 litre Lagonda. Others improved and perfected his design but this engine powered many Aston

Martin and Lagonda cars and reached amazing performance in the DBR sports racing cars. As for the “Old Girl” she continued to give Alastair faultless service for the next twenty years but then spent ten years only being driven to the odd event when a pal could drive Alastair in her. After another few years of hibernation she was brought out for the sad occasion of Alastair’s funeral. The engine fired first press of the button but I did notice a drip from the body of the water pump. Thankfully a phone call to our excellent Club Spares Section will provide a new unit! ■



GAVIN MCGUIRE’S FINE AUTOMOBILES

**Website www.gavinmcguire.co.uk
Email gavinmcguirecars@gmail.com
Phone 0044 (0) 7770 316481**

1933 Lagonda 2 Litre with downdraft cylinder head - £69,950

Perhaps a good way to introduce this interesting 2 litre on chassis OH10483 is to quote from a letter written by the Lagonda Club Registrar in December 1976:

“Your car is an interesting one in that it is a 2 litre low chassis tourer but made a couple of years after the 2 litre had been dropped in favour of the 16/80 which used the same chassis but with a Crossley pushrod engine instead of the twin camshaft one. Your car has a 16/80 radiator which is mounted in the 16/80 position some inches forward of the normal 2 litre place. I imagine that the original customer preferred the four cylinder engine to the six and had a special car built which was mostly 16/80 but with the earlier engine”.

Please look at my website to see more information, pictures and a video of the car!

Robert Michael ('Mike') Heins

A good friend remembered

MIKE WAS BROUGHT UP in Shropshire and Staffordshire, his mother being a farmer and his father an electrical engineer. Mike's interest in all things mechanical began at a very early age, starting with his extensive collection of Matchbox cars, and his love of building things with his Meccano. He qualified as an engineer after an apprenticeship with Chubb Safes & Locks, progressing to computers and ending up as IT

Director with the Blue Circle Group.

His first car was an MG, but he really wanted to build his own special, so he acquired the remains of a Lagonda Rapier. He produced an attractive sports car which he retained for the rest of his life. He also acquired a high chassis 2 litre Lagonda, and an MG 18/80 and became very active in several car clubs.



Hazel with Mike - Pyrenees Trip 2022

Sue and I knew Mike for the best part of 20 years. The first time we met him and Barbara was our initial Northern Dinner, where we came across a Black Tie clad, bouncy, enthusiastic character with boundless energy and no shoes! A theme that was oft repeated throughout the intervening years, although the Black Tie formal attire latterly remained in the wardrobe, the shoes were usually absent.

We participated in many tours together and Mike always showed an interest in Rapiers as well as the larger Lagonda models. In fact, he was interested in anything mechanical, particularly if it had an engine attached!

A natural engineer, he could turn his hand to any task and invariably did. Always there to lend advice and skill to whoever required the help.

On the Pyrenees Tour last year, I had a fuel leak on the ferry. By the time we had disembarked and parked the car in the Bilbao ferry terminal, and I had retrieved my overalls from the boot, Mike was already under the car, removing the offending pipe and pump, much to my embarrassment and gratitude. On the return journey,

as we were trying to leave for the ferry from the hotel's underground car-park, I have fond memories of Mike's feet sticking out from under the Chairman's dashboard as he isolated and bypassed a fault in the starter switch.

On both occasions he was wearing shoes, which was probably the most unusual part of the rescue missions.



Mike and Hazel with the MG 18/80 on a Bean CC trip to Spain 2017

Mike was always at the head of volunteers to contribute to identifying and fixing your latest disaster. He was truly one of the nicest guys you could meet, with a personality that could melt the frostiest character. He was very stoic over the loss of Barbara, with whom he had had a very close relationship for an enormous chunk of his life. His original encounter with Hazel as he looked for a companion for the NZ trip is the stuff of fairytales, while the development of their relationship and subsequent marriage proved a joy for both. Their brief time together was sadly cut short by Mike's death, but I suspect they compressed

more into those few short years than many couples do in a lifetime. He will be sadly missed on the roadside for his analytical, diagnosis and engineering skills, but the true loss is that of a dear friend and one of the nicest guys you could hope to meet. **AH**

I first met Mike about 20 years ago at a VSCC meeting at Oulton Park. It was not long after our return to the UK from the Far East and I noticed his 2 Litre parked overlooking Knicker Brook watching the racing. I introduced myself and it turned out he was living just a few miles from our (then new) home in Cheshire.

We got to know each other and he introduced me to the local monthly VSCC pub meeting. Mike really used and enjoyed his cars, covering many thousands of miles a year, in the UK and overseas and I looked forward to hearing about his latest motoring exploits, including an extended tour of New Zealand with Hazel, who he only recently met and subsequently married!

He was an expert engineer and his cars were always immaculately maintained but he will be remembered for his willingness to help anyone in need of advice, or get his hands dirty if someone needed practical assistance. He was always cheerful, even when it took months and many hospital visits to recover from a major heart operation a few years ago, from which we all thought he had made a full recovery.

His untimely death was a terrible shock and we all will miss him. **BJG**

I have known Mike for over 30 years and in that time he and his second wife Barbara and current wife Hazel become very good friends. We met up at vintage car events both in Europe and the UK. He was a very honest and extremely helpful person and very rarely had a bad word to say about anyone. He was always willing to assist with technical matters relating to vintage cars, mainly Lagonda and vintage MG's which were his main interest having owned both his High Chassis 2 Litre Lagonda and 18/80 MG for many years, which he restored and maintained to a very good standard. I have been very grateful for his assistance on several occasions. We were on an Early MG Society rally in the Loire Valley in France and on this

particular event I was driving my 16/80 Lagonda as we had only just purchased it and wanted to give it a good run. The car developed a misfire and we spent a day trying to diagnose the issue. It was a very hot day and we tried all we could think about, changing the coil conversion, trying a magneto, fiddling with the carburettors changing plugs etc and we were being constantly given cold drinks which Hazel and Sue were getting from the hotel. All our efforts were to no avail, and in the end Mike decided to try the old spark plugs he had in his 18/80. This miraculously solved the problem. This was talked about on numerous times in the bar.

Another episode I had with my 16/80 happened in Northern Spain last year when, on our return journey I broke a rear spring which caused the brakes to lock on. Mike and Roger Seabrook were following me and before I could get out of the car Mike had his overalls on and had diagnosed the problem. He actually had a spare main leaf for a spring in his car (stored by Hazel's seat!!) and offered to help change the main leaf at the side of the road. We did not do this and got a RAC recovery to the docks. This was the kind of helpful friend he was.

On all vintage car rallies I will miss him as a good friend as on most nights we would stay up and have a beer/cider (more than one on most nights) followed usually by a gin and tonic to discuss the day's events and put the world to rights.

On a final note someone once quoted to me "if you break down on the road hope Mike Heins is the next car to appear behind you".

Mike RIP.

CH

I first met Mike in the late 1980s but got to know him well after we acquired our 2 Litre nearly 25 years ago. Mike had a great sense of humour that contrasted with his diligent approach to all things technical. On the Fitton Tours we discovered we had a mutual liking for 'Jammy Dodger' biscuits. At the morning and afternoon tea/coffee stops we would compete to be first to take ownership of the said biscuits!

Mike offered to post some 2 Litre information to me and asked me to email my address. I responded by saying

I am Y2 in the Register and from then on I was always greeted as Y2! Mike was always willing to offer advice on issues with the 2 Litre. A call or email would produce a sound analysis and possible solution. Often he would call me a few days later and say 'I have been thinking about your problem, why don't you try xyz'. Mike was one of a circle of friends with vast experience of the 2 Litre (and Rapiers), the others included John Batt and Clive Dalton. I can imagine them sitting on their clouds debating the best way to adjust the valve timing! **MAY**



Mike and his 2 litre in Czech Republic 2015

Many of us will remember Mike for two things. For being a super-active club member - forever 'on tour', and for his immense kindness to members less mechanically talented than him, particularly when 'stuck' and far from help. Whilst, over time, Mike owned several Rapiers and an early MG, it was for UW 2193, his HC 2 litre, that most of us will probably remember him. The Lagonda T body, with its

running boards, is certainly capacious, but nobody exploited this better than Mike. When setting out on tour, UW was jam-packed with every conceivable spare part and with comprehensive tools for every possible contingency, plus, most importantly, pots of potions, adhesives, fillers and other materials, which could provide magical solutions to problems. How Mike managed also to fit in luggage for two people for two

weeks was always a mystery to me.

More than once I was a beneficiary of Mike's talents and ingenuity. The most notable occasion was on the way to Prague in 2015, in the middle of Germany, when my 3-litre suffered a massive oil-leak from the magneto/water-pump shaft. This was resolved by Mike's creativity, using a combination of a slice from a Red Bull drink can and one of his filler/adhesives! It endured for over a thousand miles until properly fixed back in England.

Mike was particularly fortunate in having supportive ladies by his side, and it was wonderful that he and Hazel found each other in the latter years, enjoying much happiness and Lagonda tours together, as an admired part of the Lagonda fraternity. **JDS**

It was a considerable shock to learn of the death of Mike Heins, which was wholly unexpected and sudden. Mike was a valued member of the club and regularly attended our lunch meetings in the West Midlands. He had a considerable journey of around 140 miles to do so, sometimes undertaken in his little Rapier. Mike was very sociable with a ready smile and always willing to share his considerable knowledge and practical abilities with regard to all matters Lagonda. He had great enthusiasm for tours and rallies in his cars and several events were in the pipeline when he died. Whilst he is a great loss to the club, we must remember his widow Hazel and our thoughts and sympathy go to her and her family. **RB**

It came as a shock to hear of Mike's passing. He should really have been taking it easy but that was not Mike's

outlook on life, and he continued to live it to the full. His was a generous and cheerful outlook. He joined the Rapier Register in 1971. He had restored his special two-seater KY 8765, and in 1973 he joined in on the Register's trip to Germany despite the car having only two fairly restricted seats, and no room for luggage. Luckily, we had a tender van with us.

His generous nature was apparent when on one occasion in November 1974, he came to the rescue when I had a puncture on my way from Shrewsbury to Birmingham. The jacking point began to collapse and, despite it being late on a Sunday evening, I managed to telephone him and he came to the rescue in the Rapier, with a trolley jack. Another time, he came over specially to test the rewiring I had completed on my Rapier. I was a bit of a dunce on electrics so I feared the worst. When he put his circuit tester on, he found only one minor fault so I was quite pleased.

On one occasion when he took his Rapier for its MOT Test, he suggested that the tester let him, Mike, drive as the brakes had just been relined and were a bit sudden. The tester, however, insisted on driving and came back with a bloody mouth, where he had contacted the aero screen on the braking test. The car passed! More recently Mike used his 2 litre Lagonda to transport a late friend to their funeral. Mike built a special platform to carry the coffin and this aroused the suspicions of the constabulary who stopped the cortège to make enquiries. Mike's silver tongue got the problem solved and they were waved on their way.

He will always be remembered as a true and trusted friend. **AW**

I first met Mike in the 1980s. I had gone to Oulton Park in my recently acquired MG PA, and parked in the area allocated to the Octagon CC. Everybody seemed to know each other, which was most disconcerting for a newcomer like me. However, I remember being immediately approached by Mike who made a point of walking over and introducing himself, and putting me at my ease. Later, on I joined the Octagon CC committee of which Mike was treasurer, and was always impressed by his knowledge, and by his ability to get things done. Thank you, Mike, it has been an honour to have known you.

JB

Mike was one of the nicest fellows you could wish to meet. I knew him for twenty years and he was unfailingly friendly, cheerful and the best of company. He was also truly courageous in fighting serious health problems and other blights on the equilibrium of his life.

His unshakeable enthusiasm for proper motor cars was matched only by his enduring regard for the people who shared the vintage spirit with a passion the equal of his own. It was a delight to witness the joy and devotion which Hazel brought to his last years but a tragedy that they were to be so few. He was known widely as a superb engineer and was unstinting of his time in helping others with their Lagondas and MG's. It is doubtful if there were any mechanical malfunctions which could defeat his skills. Most importantly, however, Mike was a thoroughly decent bloke with all that that entails. Rest in peace Mike. Your memory will remain always in the hearts of those whose privilege it was to know you as a friend.

KM

Mike had been a supporter of the VSCC North Wales Natter from the very start. As the Natter organiser I received a lot of help, encouragement and support from Mike. He tried to attend every meeting even though he lived quite a distance away from us, in fact Mike was an enthusiastic supporter of such meetings, and attended many others in Cheshire and Shropshire, all with equal enthusiasm.

GB



Mike in typical pose

Lagondas of the Maharajas - Part 1

By James Baxendale

A CHANCE ENCOUNTER with our Indian member and well-known vintage car restorer, Marespand Dadachanji (D3), at the Lagonda Club stand at the Beaulieu Autojumble last September, set me on a quest for the Lagondas that are, or were originally, in India and Pakistan (the 'British Raj', as it was known prior to independence), or linked to the British Raj. Anyone who has read either Manvendra Singh Barwani and Sharada Dwivedi's *The Automobiles of the Maharajas*, or Gautam Sen's *The Maharajas and Their Magnificent Motor Cars* (which has a section on the V12s in India), or has been to India and seen some of the cars in person, will know just how stunning those ordered by the maharajas were, in the period between the two World Wars.

It is difficult to know precisely how many Lagondas were shipped to the British Raj. However, it is probably a good bet that many of the Lagondas bought by the maharajas have survived. Of those shipped to British officials, Indians and others, we can be less sure.

V12 Chassis 16010



I have listed the Lagondas with links to India and Pakistan of which the Club is aware, which are still in existence (there were two M45s in Burma – the subject of a separate article). Ten are still in India (and a further one which has since been imported). Since June 1972, it has been illegal to export pre-1940 cars from India. I am very grateful to the cars' owners, who have clarified some of the history of their cars and permitted me to use their names. In particular, to Karl Bhote, an acknowledged expert on vintage cars in India; Manvendra Singh Barwani; and Jyotsna Sanghi (S17), who has a collection of over 100 vintage cars and whom I had the pleasure of meeting in London.



Maharaja Yeshwant Rao Holkar



Robert M Lee Automobile Collection, Nevada

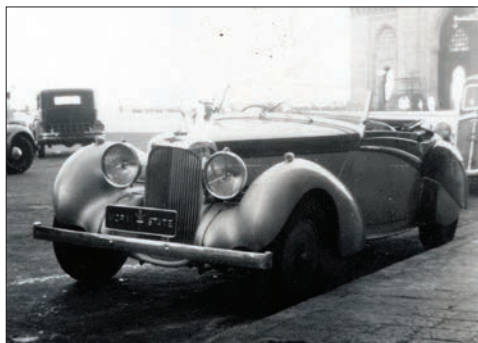
This 1938 V12, with a body by coachbuilder J Gurney Nutting Ltd (designed by John Blatchley), was ordered by the Maharaja of Indore, Yeshwant Rao Holkar II, on 2 September 1937, the chassis being delivered to Gurney Nutting on 2 February 1938. Known as the 'Holkar car', it was shipped to India and registered as HSC-1 (Holkar State Car-1).

The Holkar family had one of the most extraordinary collections of cars in India. Maharaja Yeshwant Rao Holkar II was a true connoisseur of cars – he owned 40-60 cars – and ordered them during the 1930s on a “cost no issue” basis. He paid great attention to the cars’ design, all in the art deco style, down to the last detail. At least three other of his cars had coachwork by

Gurney Nutting, including the famous Maharaja Duesenberg (now part of the Lyon Family Automobile collection in California).

His collection included six Bentleys, a Bugatti, a Delahaye, a J12 Hispano Suiza, three Alfa Romeos and, of course, the Lagonda V12. Most, like the Lagonda, were painted in the Holkar colours, black, with “sun-glow” saffron. Following the Maharaja’s death in 1961, the car was shipped to England, where it was given number plate EYT 5. In 1963, it was exported to the United States, where it has been ever since. It is currently part of a collection in Nevada belonging to Anne Brockinton and Robert M Lee, who are Club members (L41). Its history was covered by Len Cozzolino in Club Mag 243.

Chassis 14096



With Morvi State plates, in front of the Gateway to India, Bombay



Jodhpur royals in Chassis 14096



Under Krit Chandra Nath's ownership



Chassis 14096 today

This 1939 V12 Rapide Coupe originally belonged to Alan Good, the owner of the Lagonda Car Company. But in 1940 the car was shipped to India: "Prepare car for India", Lagonda's factory records note on 7 September 1940. The car was second-hand, as the war made civilian car production impossible.

The car first appears to have been used by the **Maharaja of Morvi** (or, more likely, his son, Mahendrasinhji Lakhdirji Shaib Bahadur, aged 22 at the time, and who succeeded to the title in 1948).

He owned a number of cars, including a 1938 Rolls Royce Phantom III and a 1950 Daimler (the latter with a similar colour combination to the Lagonda). There is a photograph of the V12, with Morvi State number plates, in front of the Gateway to India in Bombay. The car was then owned by the Maharaja of Jodhpur, Umaid Singh, who bought it for his son, (later Maharaja) Hanwant Singh, the car having registration number JODHPUR 7.

Hanwant Singh was a noted car enthusiast, owning a Delahaye and a number of big American cars, Cadillacs, Buicks and Packards.

Following Hanwant Singh's early death along with his third wife, the actress Zubeida, in a plane crash in 1952, the car was acquired by Krit Chandra Nath, the brother of Subodh Nath of Ahmedabad (when its registration number changed to RJQ 594). His son sold it in 2000 to Awini Ambuj Shanker (S21), aged twenty-seven at the time, with just over 18,000 miles on the clock.

Chassis 14097

He wrote to the Club, "*The car is in a terrible state, but complete*". (Club Mag 188). In a subsequent letter, he said, "*The latest I know from the then Maharaja's brother is that he and the Maharaja used to race this Lagonda and a Delahaye 135MS that he still owns in Jodhpur. Till about 100 mph the Lagonda led, the aerodynamics took over and the Figoni et Falaschi bodied Delahaye would gain and overtake. As kings they owned the roads so they had endless roads to race on*". (Club Mag 192). The car has been wonderfully preserved in its unrestored state.



Bhogilal Collection, Ahmedabad

This 1940 V12 Drophead Coupe was owned by the **Maharaja of Baroda**, Sir Pratap Singh Rao Gaekwad. For a time, the Maharaja, a hedonistic spendthrift, was the second wealthiest maharaja and eighth richest man in the world. His family is reported to have had a stable of over 30 Rolls-Royces and Bentleys. The original car for the Maharaja was en route to India, but the ship was torpedoed and

sunk; so, at the Maharaja's insistence a replacement V12 was hurriedly put together and delivered in the middle of the war. It may have been shipped at the same time as Chassis 14096, given the sequential chassis numbers; they were likely to have been some of the last sports cars exported from England until after the war.

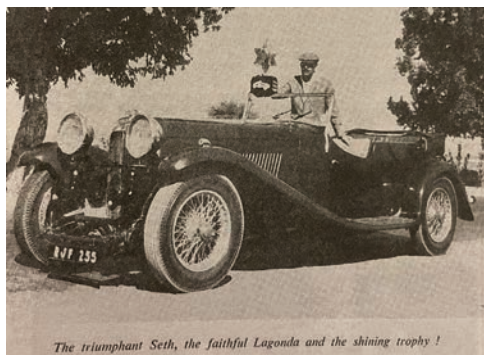
The car was painted in the Baroda state colour, saffron (orange).

Its original registration number is not known, but by the early 1960s it had Gujarat registration number GJA 7111, when it was in the ownership of Ariel David (the Maharaja having gone into exile in 1951, deposed by the Indian government for “*irresponsible behaviour*” and de-recognised as maharaja).

The car was subsequently acquired by the well-known Pesi Shroff, who sourced many cars for the renowned collector, Pranlal Bhogilal (formerly member B1).

The car remains in the Bhogilal Collection in the Auto World Museum in Ahmedabad, with registration number MRW 4123.

M45 Chassis Z10958



Chassis Z100958 with Raj Seth



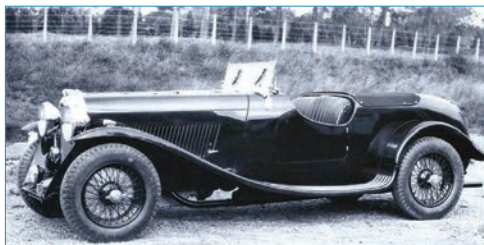
Chassis Z100958 today

This 1934 M45 was originally owned by the Maharaja of Bikaner, General Sir Ganga Singh (or more likely his son, Sadul Singh, who succeeded as Maharaja in 1943). The car passed in the late 1950s to Dr Himmat Singh (possibly via the Maharaja's private secretary, Bharat Singh, who died in 1955 and who left his car to Himmat Singh). Raj N Seth acquired the car in 1965, co-owning it with Nandi Nagpal (on whose death, the latter's share was passed to Babi Nobis). The car was registered as RJF 255.

Raj Seth, a leading light in the vintage car movement in India, lovingly described his ownership of the car in his 2017 book, *Driving Across the Borders*. “*When we bought the car it had done approximately 25000 miles. It has, to date, participated in fifty-five rallies and each time, won a trophy or two. She is still capable of doing 75 mph in top gear. If there was a better stretch of road available she could probably do more*”.

On Mr Seth's death, his share in the car passed to Babi Nobis.

Chassis Z11159



From Geoffrey Seaton's book on Lagondas



*Jyotsna Sanghi with Chassis Z11159
at the 2018 Pebble Beach Concours
d'Elegance*

The M45 Rapide Tourer has a Tourist Trophy Replica body by coachmaker **E D Abbott Ltd.** It was built as a race replica of the factory Rapide racing cars that were prepared by Lagonda's main agents, Fox & Nicholls, and performed well at the 1934 RAC Tourist Trophy at Ards in Northern Ireland and went on to win the 24 Hours of Le Mans the following year. The car first appeared at the 1934 London motor show, where it was described as "*Special body by exhibitors, employing features as used in the Ulster TT race*". It was advertised for sale at £1,075. It features in Geoffrey Seaton's, *Lagonda, An Illustrated History 1900-1950*.

The car was originally owned by the **Maharaja of Bhavnagar**, Krishna Kumarsinhji Bhavsinhji, who bought it at the motor show, and who was a keen car collector.

The car had passed before 1965 to Subodh Nath (formerly member N2 and president of the Gujarat Vintage & Classic Car Club). Mr Nath drove the car from Ahmedabad to Bombay to participate in the first Bombay Concours in 1966. After nearly 25 years in Mr Nath's possession, it was acquired in 1989 by Sharad Sanghi of Indore. The Sanghi family, authorised dealers for Tata Motors since 1950 (including Jaguar and Land Rover), have a passion for collecting vintage cars. Under their ownership, the car has been beautifully restored. It appeared at the 2018 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance and the 2019 Cartier Concours d'Elegance in Jaipur.

The M45 is currently part of the Sanghi car collection in Indore.

Chassis Z10662



This 1934 M45 Drophead Coupé was variously in the Indian states of Assam (where it had registration number ASA 2338), Nagaland (where it had registration number NLA 2944) and West Bengal. From 1958, it belonged to Maurice Normington (formerly member N4), who was working on a tea estate in Assam at the time. He may be the person who brought the car to India. It was originally a saloon, the DHC body

being built in Delhi. The car was owned from 1988-1994 by David Balfour and stored in Kolkata with Manab Pal. It was purchased from Mr Balfour in 1994 by Delhi and London-based businessman and car collector, Sudhir Choudhrie, in whose collection it remains.

Chassis 12514



Bhogilal Collection, Ahmedabad

This 1938 LG6 De Ville (registration number GRD 7878, previously MYM 101 and MYM 2664) was originally owned by **the Governor of Madras, Sir Arthur Hope**. It is uncertain whether he brought the car to India from England. In 1938 he was the Conservative Member of Parliament for Birmingham Aston, becoming Governor of Madras in 1940.

The car was subsequently owned in the mid 1960s by Bobby Jayaram (formerly member J24). He sold it to the Sanghi family. It was acquired by Pranalal Bhogilal in around 1978. It is now part of the Bhogilal Collection in the Auto World Museum in Ahmedabad.

3½ Litre Chassis Z11164



The unpredictable Lagonda driven by Imam of Hazaribagh. He finished third in the 10 lap race at an average speed of 46.82 m.p.h.

Calcutta Grand Prix, 1952



Calcutta Grand Prix, 1954



Road registered 1954



When bought by Marespand Dadachanji

One of the Lagondas in India with the more interesting history is this 1934 or 1935 3½ Litre. It was owned in the 1940s and 1950s by Syed Askari Hadi Ali Augastien Imam (or Tootoo Imam, as he was more commonly known). Tootoo Imam was a well-known

motor racer (and later big game hunter), coming third in the Calcutta Grand Prix at the Alipore circuit in the Lagonda in 1952 and winning it, again in the Lagonda, two years later in 1954.

Tootoo Imam described the car as follows in Club Mag 12:

“My car is a 1935 3½-litre and was originally fitted with a four door pillarless saloon body. I acquired the car in 1945 and after a few months use, during which I had absolutely no trouble and found the car mechanically perfect. I removed the saloon body and fitted a home-made drophead coupe one. Later, around 1950, this body too was scrapped, and a very light timber framed and aluminium skinned Le Mans type 4-seater body was fitted. This, also, was a home-built job.

The car has now done well over 250,000 miles without a rebore ...”

Following Tootoo Imam's ownership (when it had registration number BRM 2112), it was sold in 1962 to C Powrie (formerly member P7), who was living at Digboi in Upper

Assam with his wife Sally, where he worked for the Assam Oil Company.

It then passed through a number of owners and radical rebuilds (with very different bodies). It had an Assam registration number, ASW 516, and now holds a Mumbai registration number MMF 4208. In the early 1980s, it was bought by the controversial Indian businessman, Vijay Mallya (formerly member M24), who was chairman of United Spirits, the largest spirits company in India, and founder of Kingfisher Airlines. Mallya was the former co-owner of the Force India Formula One team. Most of Mallya's huge car collection was sold off in 2016.

The car is currently owned by Marespand Dadachanji (D3), who is in the process of restoring it. When he bought the car, it was little more than a chassis.

3 Litre Chassis Z10161



This 1932 3 Litre Selector Special Saloon was allegedly delivered to the last Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, Sir Hari Singh, who had the car specially equipped for night-



time hunting expeditions with full-length sunroof and pillar-mounted spotlights. The Maharaja had a large collection of cars, notably two dozen Rolls Royces, but was forced to flee

his summer capital, Srinagar, after independence in 1947, living the rest of his life in Bombay. Some of his cars, however, remained in Pakistan, such as his 1924 Vauxhall 30/98, which spent a number of years in Peshawar and Lahore, before being shipped to the United States.

The Lagonda was subsequently owned by Khan Bahadur Taj Muhammad Khan OBE MLC of Badrashi Village, Nowshera, a well-known contractor in the Punjab during the British Raj. The car's last owner in Pakistan was a Mr A Ahmed of Lahore. The car had Lahore registration number LEG 2770 (and previously Punjab registration number PJJL 833). When it left Pakistan, it was painted in a lurid maroon and bright blue. The inscription on the bonnet ("Leslie 1910"), visible in

the photograph, remains a mystery. The car was shipped to England in 1969 with only 15,000 miles on the clock. "An English garage owner was contacted by an Indian, apparently a man of some prominence, and invited to buy the car, which was by now approaching Liverpool docks, on the ship. A deal agreed, the ship then failed to dock at Liverpool, due to a strike, and the garage owner found himself collecting the car from Rotterdam, "with much documentary hassle" (Club Mag 142).

When Nigel Hall (H39) acquired the car, it was fairly complete, minus the magneto and pillar-mounted spotlights (offered back to Nigel later, but at an unaffordable price).

The car has been carefully restored by Nigel. It now carries UK registration number USU 920. ■

To be continued

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Northern Dinner & Peak District Tour 2023

David Hine joined the happy throng

DUE TO THE sad demise of Monk Fryston, our home for the Northern Dinner since the late 1950s, Nigel Hall chose Rossington Hall, near Doncaster last year.

The 2022 event was a success considering the health scares etc. but suggestions of a repeat visit were met with lack of enthusiasm by Rossington coupled with requests for a huge financial commitment.

Undeterred, Nigel made the bold decision to move our venue yet again—this time to the Peak District somewhat further South. Our traditional date in early May was gazumped by our new Monarch who decided to get himself crowned so, for this year only, the date was brought forward a little.

The hotel chosen was the Izaak Walton Hotel in Dovedale which is set in a spectacular location surrounded by the sharp crags of limestone, which this area is noted for.

To say Nigel was nervous is an understatement but he was assured by your scribe that even if there were just the four of us for dinner, we would still have a good time. With his usual zeal he set about advertising the event in our Club Magazine and our little-read newsletter (now the latter is mostly on line to save a few bob). He also phoned and e-mailed all the usual suspects to encourage them to come, book rooms and, most importantly, choose from the extensive menu.



Ian Hissey's lovely DB 2.6 saloon

Photo from Richard Connolly

The result was spectacular. The car park was filled with no less than 16 Lagondas and a superb Invicta. For the gala dinner 48 members sat down for dinner at six tables of eight together, with a seating plan and list of what you had forgotten you chose to eat.

Several of us were able to come the evening before to make it a two-night event. We found the Izaak Walton under new management with everything spotlessly clean together with superb hospitality and cuisine. The weather was a little unkind on the Thursday afternoon, and it rewarded those of us who came in saloon Lagondas.

This included our esteemed magazine editor who had driven from High Wycombe in his six-light two litre, a splendid effort indeed.

Friday morning was misty to begin with but the rain had passed. Tim Gresty had designed a series of short tours around the Peak District. With his encyclopaedic mind he had selected villages, valleys and unique locations which even those of us who know the area were amazed to discover. As mentioned before the whole area is limestone which has been formed into high peaks and gorges with picturesque villages nestling in valleys by tranquil rivers.



Peter Brown's historic team car, followed by the Editor's 2 litre saloon.

Photo from Richard Connolly

The roads he selected were narrow and winding. There were water splash fords instead of bridges. However, there is very little traffic as this is not a major tourist area. One had to marvel at the white cliffs and walls and try to imagine that it was all once a coral atoll under a tropical sea millennia ago.

Pub lunch was organised for us and then another afternoon run if desired or a return to the hotel for cream tea. One section Tim had highlighted was the Ashbourne to Buxton road which was equivalent to the Le Mans Mulsanne straight if the still-born 30's road race had ever been allowed.



Ian Waugh's 4½ special joins the tour. Photo from Richard Connolly

This was where, many years ago, your scribe once saw a downhill 100 mph on his M45 speedo with Herb Schofield riding shotgun, listening to Cassius Clay fight Rocky Marciano on a transistor radio.

Soon it was time for us to meet up in the bar, make new friends and renew acquaintance with others. The gala dinner was a splendid occasion with food served correctly and promptly with everyone getting what they ordered.

Nigel gave an amusing speech and, at his prompting, we toasted The

King which was just as it should be.

The entertainment was provided by the Knarr Mill amateur dramatic duo with a politically incorrect selection of jokes and songs. The bar was then buzzing and late into the night which was just like it always has been.

Breakfast the Saturday morning was also a pleasant affair with a wide choice of Derbyshire food. Folk were then admiring each other's cars and reluctant to leave the car park in the bright sunshine. Some even went for a stroll in Dovedale to round off this excellent event. ■



Roy Hatfield's superb and original LG45R. Photo from Richard Connolly

A 1951 DB Drophead Coupé

Mike Baggot acquires a fine car

HAVING PREVIOUSLY OWNED a '58 Messerschmitt and a '34 British Salmson both were improved and sold for a profit, which paid for my 1951 2.6 DB drop-head coupé. The eBay purchase arrived end of 2019 on a trailer and I actually drove it into my garage. There it died and would not start again. Compression tests showed low on four cylinders and two cylinders with no pressure - head gasket? This started a 2-year restoration.

The engine was removed and stripped by Brewster Mudie Ltd and revealed that just about everything required renewal. The fault probably developed when several of the cast iron valve guides had corroded through. This started a catastrophic chain of events - water in the oil, oil in the water, burnt out valves, scored pistons and liners and more. £5,000 worth of parts, and a few months later the car had a virtually new engine.

While this work was being done the car returned, minus engine, and I concentrated on refurbishing the suspension, then cleaning and painting the engine compartment. I removed all the wood trim, replaced some of the veneer and spent a fortnight painting, rubbing down and polishing with Rustins two-part lacquer. All the wood frame I could get access to was treated for woodworm and I replaced all the parts of the frame that had crumbled like honeycomb.

All the chrome parts were sent off to Castle Chrome for re-plating. Both doors were twisted - not closing at the front by ½" at the bottom. After removing the door cards and sealing with a sheet of ply, I steamed the interior of the door with a wallpaper stripper for an hour. Using clamps blocks and ratchet straps I twisted it back into shape before re-fixing the diagonal brace. Now the door gaps are perfect 'ish'. The woodworm had also attacked the door cards and left hundreds of exit holes through the leather. I replaced the worst of the wood and filled the exit holes with the waste leather made by a hole punch and glued into the holes.

On to the electrics. Someone had previously "repaired" "wires behind the dash using plastic 'choc block' connectors. Not surprisingly there were several that had melted! These were all repaired with new cloth-bound wire soldered in place and sealed with heat-shrink. Now the only electrical component not working is the clock. (I have had a £200 quote for repair, if you know a more reasonable quote please let me know).



The valve radio was sent away for repair (the 'vibrator' that produces the A.C. had fallen apart in the inverter). Next on the list was the upholstery, fixing cracks and splits, feeding and re-colouring. I had to painstakingly re-paint the grey piping to contrast the red upholstery. New carpets were cut to the pattern and edged with leather trim.

My first shake-down run revealed fuel supply problems - a sharp tap

with a spanner on the SU pump got me going again. The problem was solved with a solid-state conversion kit from Burlen.

I have also spent £10 on eBay for a spare pump hidden away in series, which I can quickly connect just in case.

You may have seen MGC 203 at the 2021 AGM - it was the off-white drop head DB coupé before its re-spray.



An elegant car enhanced by the choice of paint colour

As I live locally, I only visited for the afternoon, then on the drive home encountered a traffic queue. To my surprise I had been stopped at the end of the runway at Wellesbourne just as the V Bomber taxied up and down the runway. As it approached the whole car shook. It was spectacular. The rest of you must have heard it.



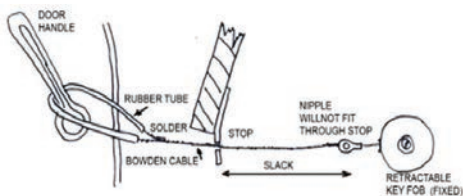
I didn't quite make last year's AGM as the DB was a week away from finishing a bare metal re-spray. I had an arrangement with a local firm who agreed to a lower fee if they could do the work in between their bread and butter jobs. I didn't envisage the job lasting 11 months but am more than happy with the result as there was quite a bit of unforeseen aluminium welding that needed doing.

Getting it back on the road was one thing, persuading Sue to enjoy the wind in the hair experience with me involved a whole new set of jobs. (No seat belts! No head rests! What happens if the suicide door bursts open!)?

I have now fitted "Kangol" type 60s 3-position belts with red straps to match the leather interior. I have also sourced a lambswool-covered head rest that fits over the back of the passenger seat.

As far as the door security is concerned, I have seen cars fitted with clips, hooks and overbalancing clamps fitted to the lower part of the door. The problem with this solution is, in the event of a crash, access to the passenger is compromised. I settled on an anchored wire loop hooked over the door handle, loose enough to allow the door to open 6" but spring loaded to pull the loop tight.

As you can imagine there were a thousand other little jobs completed during the restoration (some not so little). That's another story! I hope to be out and about this year as the weather improves. ■



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Tony May - 1932 to 2023

An Obituary from Arnold Davey

THERE ARE ALL manner of reasons for a young man to join the Lagonda Club, but Tony's must be unique in that his wife was Secretary of it and Lagonda matters were already prominent in the household.

Towards the end of the 1950s the Club grew unhappy with the secretarial services provided by its hired agency and the Treasurer, Charles Elphinstone, asked his secretary, Valerie Wilhelme, to take it on. Valerie proved to be good at it and in 1957 took up the post permanently. In the same year she married Tony May and moved from Southgate to Winchmore Hill.

The Editorship of the club magazine tended to change very frequently at this time, some people only lasting for one or two issues and this came to a head in 1963 when the Spring and Summer issues had to be merged. When the magazine re-appeared, the new Editor was Tony and he was to fill that post until 1982, setting and maintaining the high standards of literacy and illustrations that the club has always sought to achieve.

In 1971 the Committee agreed to raise funds to get a Lagonda history book written, partly because there was a need to do this before all the people involved died and partly as a tribute to the newly deceased and much missed Mike Wilby. Tony had contacts in Fleet Street and it became obvious quite quickly that our tribute fund was wildly inadequate to lure a professional writer and we would have to do it ourselves. So, Tony

had to repeat his drudge round the publishing world, but this time seeking a publisher, not an author. To demonstrate our capabilities I rushed out the chapter on DB V12 racers of 1954, arguing that even a book-publisher should have heard of David Brown and Aston Martin. Meanwhile, I had acquired a Readers Ticket for the British Library, in those days located at Colindale, and set about reading "The Autocar" from 1900 to 1939.

In time, Tony's approaches produced a publisher willing to take a chance on a marque history they probably had never heard of. David & Charles had made a name for themselves with non-fiction writing about railways and canals but motoring was new to them. The American arm of the company was strongly represented over here in trying to use American spellings in UK books, which wasted time in proof reading later.

It all took much longer than expected and it was 1978 before Davey & May appeared. Some unfair individuals have contrasted the space devoted to post 1945 Lagondas and the pre-war models, but this does not give credit to Tony for getting it published at all. Without Tony there would still be a yellowing unread typescript gathering dust in the attic.

The AGM of 1978 made Tony and me Vice-Presidents of the club as a kind of "thankyou" present for our joint efforts, an honour we both always felt, and I still feel, proud of.



Out & About

In April, the East Midlands chapter Spring Pub Meet in Woodhouse Eaves attracted some new faces and cars, including Michael and Indi Fountain's 2L HC, Harry Taylor's DB3 saloon and Vin and Liz Jones in their totally gorgeous V12 DHC.

We continue to attract top brass from Head Office; at the previous Pub Meet we were graced with our President David Hine and for the April meet, Chairman John Sword. John Boyes thanks everyone for their support. ■



Letters & Emails ...

Dear Roger
Regarding your article in the Spring edition 2023 magazine asking for input from anyone that has fitted an overdrive in the cars. I fitted one in my Lagonda LG45 Rapide GPA 41 (a car we have owned for over 40 years). The work was done by a long-established company - Riste Motors in Nottingham who have carried out work on various vehicles for me over the years. Please note that I have no personal connection with this company. I can certainly recommend this modification to any of the 4½ litre Lagondas. We have done many rallies and tours - Rallies des Atlantique, European Rallies plus numerous visits to Angoulême - also substantial usage in the UK without any problems whatsoever. I only

use overdrive in top and it certainly makes a difference particularly on motorways, making it more comfortable. Cruising around the legal limit I am pulling 2000-2200 revs. - this gives more substantial use in mpg. I believe it is a Borg Warner type 35, and it would prove no problem to revert back to the original should an owner wish to do so. It is approximately 40 years since I fitted it and it has worked perfectly - the increase in economy from the normal "10 gas lamps to the gallon" is most appreciated. I have an illuminated switch on the dashboard when it is engaged. Should any Club member contemplate doing the work, I would be please to hear from them.

Kind regards,
Roy Hatfield ■

Letters & Emails ... Letters & Emails

Dear Roger,

I am reading my spring newsletter about James Crocker's LG45 Rapide-DXU163.

Who has that awesome picture?

That is my 1938 LG6 Saloon deVille parked right next to it.

I would love to know the time period of the photo and the owner if possible. I thought in all my reading, I saw a Crocker as a previous owner of my car. I could be wrong, but that car off in the shadows is indeed my 1938 Lagonda #12512 plate # MG5883. If you have any info on the previous owner or photos you can send it would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you.

David J D'Agostino

If anyone can help David, please forward the details to him - Ed ■

Dear Roger,

With reference to Alan Heard's letter in the latest magazine, I think that the passenger with Robbie Hewitt is possibly the late Russel Wilson-Kitchen.

He was a member of the VSCC, Brooklands Society, Riley Register and other car clubs, and was a friend of Robbie's.

I knew Robbie through a mutual acquaintance, and at one of the Brooklands "does" she invited me to drive her black 3 litre up the test hill.

Much to my shame and embarrassment, I failed to get from first to second gear and she completed the climb.

Both of these two enthusiasts were great characters, greatly missed.

Best regards

Dudley Rolph ■

Dear Editor,

Age affects both cars and owners and I foolishly referred to my Lagonda LG 45 Rapide rep as being BYT 321 in the letter you kindly published - Spring 2023.

In fact BYT 321 belongs to my previous Lagonda a lovely M45 Tourer and owned now, by the intrepid fearless driver Peter Hewitt who uses it far more than I used to – so it will be seen and driven as it should.

My LG45 Rapide Rep is actually PSY 918 – a handsome beast too, which has recently acquired black wheels and as its previous owner, Chris Abrey, completed the Swiss Alpine rally once and the Flying Scotsman, no less than five times in it, she is currently resting and enjoying a pampered gentler life in Devon.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Rogers - Exeter ■

Letters & Emails ... Letters & Emails

Dear Roger,

As noted in my email to Colin and Len I have read the article in the last club magazine with respect to electric power steering and believe the EZ electric power steering system provides a much better solution for Lagonda owners who feel the need for power steering assistance.

The EZ system is simple and elegant and eliminates the need for pumps, valves rams etc. I am not sure why David Wall was negative with respect to the electric system. Perhaps it was in the early stages of development when it was not designed for the earlier cars.

David Hine has the EZ system on his M45 Saloon and he states that it has transformed the car for him. Please feel free to quote from my email in the newsletter or the next issue of the magazine.

Best Regards,

Craig Davis

Thank you, Craig - your email is published next. Ed

I have had the EZ Electric Power Steering unit(s) installed on four vehicles without any problems. I do believe in the earliest electric unit there were some concerns for the older cars. My first installation was on a 6½ litre Bentley. Since then I have had the system installed on our 1928 4½ litre Bentley and on our 1927 Speed Six. The installation is quite simple, and the electric motor is affixed to the steering column. It is

necessary to have a shorter column to account for the motor. Rather than shorten the original we had a new column made and retained the original. All of the functions that are routed through the Bentley's steering column, such as advance/retard and throttle, continue to function as original.

The EZ models I allow for an adjustment of 60-100% of assist. I tend to use 60%, which seems about right to me. I also have an off/on switch which allows me to turn off the system on the open road. I understand the newer systems have additional features such as a navigation system, which I would not use. The only other concern I have heard about the EZ System is that it drains the battery. I have never had a problem with this.

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Letters & Emails ... Letters & Emails

In short, I have had the electric power system in three of my cars for some time (the third being a Ferrari Daytona) and have never had a problem. I find it to be a very useful and flexible system.

Another advantage of the EZ System is that nothing is visible in the engine compartment and, other than a shorter steering column, no permanent changes have to be made to the vehicle.

I assume the same would hold true for pre-war Lagondas. I do not find the steering too heavy on our

Lagondas and therefore I have not considered adding the EZ System to any of them.

If anyone has any questions or would like to pursue the matter further, let me know. I have two very experienced experts, one in Switzerland and one in Monterey CA who could explain the process. The cost of the unit for our Speed Six in 2019 was about 8,000 Swiss Francs. I do not recall that the installation cost was all that much.

Best Regards,
Craig Davis ■

Hi Roger,
I thought this may be of interest. The BBC on Friday 16th June between 10 and 11pm had a program about famous Montreux Jazz Festival, and about the inspirational founder Claude Nobs.

So, I thought you may like to know he had a 1952 3lt.

Best regards
Alan Heard ■



Letters & Emails ... Letters & Emails

Dear Roger,

I was fascinated by Jonathan Oppenheimer's excellent article on the restoration of his M45 (The Lagonda 276). When I was in Canada in May, I was warmly welcomed by Peter Ramm (R29) near Niagara-on-the Lake. In addition to vintage aeroplanes, Peter owns the M45 that is the "sister" car to Jonathan's Lagonda, both having been brought over to Canada on the Canadian aircraft carrier, HCMS Bonaventure, by Lt Cdr G H F 'Peter' Poole-Warren. The story goes that a previous owner (not Poole-Warren) used parts from one car to restore the other. Poole-Warren was clearly a bon vivant. He had a striking resemblance to the suave Commander Edward Whitehead, who starred in the Schweppes advertisements in the 1950s and 1960s.

Twice married, with 12 children, he used a Rolls-Royce to drive them around in. Another story goes that one drunken Friday night in the mess, his car (apparently a small Messerschmidt) was used to race around the bar anteroom, the room being turned into a track by putting all the wardroom furniture in the middle. All went well until someone missed the turn by the bar and crashed into the wall, wrecking the car. "Next day, the usual hell to pay, everyone there had to chip in for car and mess repairs, but as far as I can recall everyone thought it was more than worth it". It was a shame that Poole-Warren was never a member of the Lagonda Club.

Best

James Baxendale ■





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