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NEWSLETTER



MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

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This month's Guest Contributor is:
James Williams

No. 526

October 2024

For full details please refer to the Club EVENT's page on the Website <https://www.lagondaclub.com/events/>

October

6 th	VSCC Somerset Tour
12 th	LC Anglia Area Pub meet. TBA. Contact Len Cozzolino
12/13 th	VSCC Welsh Trials
26 th	Coffee and Classics Chat in Scotland, Crieff. Contact alastair.gunn@hotmail.co.uk
26/27 th	VSCC Cotswold Trials

Our Chairman writes Lagonda AGM Weekend

Our AGM was held at Walton Hall the weekend of 21/22 September in atrocious weather conditions.

Thank you to all who braved the weather either for the full weekend or just for the AGM on the Sunday.

A full report will appear in the Magazine but the headlines from the AGM were that

- we are in a sound financial position
- members enjoyed a vast array of events this year thanks to Catherine Monnington, Philippe Nogen, Martin Sumner, Bill and Sue Spence, Jean Van der Elst, Paul Anderson, Nigel Hall, Colin Mallett and our area representatives worldwide
- Digitisation and therefore full search function accessibility to all club magazines is in progress with more news and dates to access this treasure trove through electronic means
- Celebration of the 90 years of Lagonda Rapier and Rapier Motors was celebrated with a number of Rapiers including the Eccles Special

Can I also add my thanks to all those members who volunteered to write a piece for future Newsletters. The Newsletter is a great way to record the history of your car(s) and your life of Lagonda ownership (and it's already digitised !) Please contact me for details if you would like to tell your story. *Ed*

This month we hear from James Williams

My father, Lawrence Paul Williams (always known as Bill) was born in 1905 in Slough. His father was a doctor and his mother an Amry Nursing Sister.

He was educated at Aldenham and the Architectural Association, qualifying as an Architect in 1927. He joined the fledgling film industry in 1928, starting on silent pictures before becoming Herbert Wilcox's chief Art Director (a role now known as Production Designer) in 1931 and head of the Art Department at Elstree Studios, supervising all the productions there. During the 1930s he was responsible for designing all Willcox's films and eventually went with him to Hollywood to design 'Nurse Edith Cavell' and stayed, having been offered a contract by RKO.

On becoming Supervising Art Director at British & Dominion Studios at Elstree in 1931, aged 25, he bought a 2 litre Lagonda. It was just over a year old, having been first registered in November 1929. His first car was an Austin Seven, bought in 1924 when a student and he followed that with a Lea Francis Hyper in 1927. He kept the 2 litre, named 'Black Beauty', till he bought a new Rapier in 1935.

He always reminisced very fondly of his first Lagonda and sadly it was not until just after he died in 1996 that we traced it through the club. I rashly said to Chris Deal, the then new owner 'You will let me know if you ever think of selling her...' Bless him, 26 years later in 2022 a letter dropped on our doormat and the rest, as they say, is history.

While he owned the car, he drove her to Spain in 1934 and having always complained about the horror of a gearbox, with several returns to the factory to try to fix it, it finally gave up in the middle of the barren plains of central Spain.

Thankfully it froze in second gear, so he was able to limp to a village. He described it as out of the wild west, with a single street with a café and tumbleweed blowing around and blisteringly hot.

The owner of the bar pointed my father to the blacksmith at the end of the street, perhaps because he had managed to convey that he had a problem with the car or perhaps simply that he had no Spanish and it transpired the blacksmith spoke English.

On arrival at the Blacksmith's shop the owner said 'Ah, I know this car very well. I did my engineering apprenticeship at the factory in Wolverhampton that manufactured the gearbox'!

He took the gearbox to pieces and rebuilt it overnight, while Dad was given a room over the bar. The car was driven round the next morning and the gearbox never gave him a moments trouble thereafter.

In 1934 he commissioned one of the modellers in his department, a George Demaine (who went on to become a noted sculptor), to make a model of the car. What happened to it we never knew...until I was buying VR3607 in 2022. Chris was approached by a John Demaine who had been put in touch by the Lagonda Club. He said that he had found a plaster model of the car in his attic that his grandfather had made; it was damaged and he wondered if Chris had any photos of the car that he could use for reference to have it repaired. We were able to do better than that as we had contemporary studio photos commissioned at the same time as the model, that showed how she had looked then, with flared wings rather than the current cycle wings. He has repaired the model and we have now had two splendid bronze casts made. They show my father at the wheel and the original mascot proudly on the bonnet.

That mascot; a fine chrome plated Art Deco model of the heads of a motorcyclist and pillion, with their hair blowing in the wind, was first on his Lea Francis from 1927 then transferred to the Lagonda when he purchased that in 1931. After five years on the 2 litre he did not use it on any of his later cars for some reason (perhaps it was just too big and dominated the lines of the Rapier). It had always been in his desk draw as I was growing up and it was quite a nostalgic moment to reunite it with the car after nearly 90 years.

The Rapier was his last Lagonda for a while, as his career took him to Hollywood, where he drove American cars including a Ford V8. When war broke out and he returned to England and was recruited into SOE as head of their newly established camouflage section in Cairo. From there, in 1943, he moved his unit with the progress of the war to Italy and was eventually repatriated late in 1944.

He returned to designing films and was the art director on 'Brief Encounter' at Denham Studios, at which time he bought an M45 that had belonged to the doctor of the Lagonda factory in Staines. That was the first motor car that I rode in, on the way to our home in the Hambleden Valley from my birth in Oxford.

Of the other two Lagondas my father owned – the Rapier (BLL663) from 1935 till 1938 and the M45, (CPE190) from 1945 till 1950 there appears to be no record of them ever having existed. Neither is there any record of the Lea Francis Hyper (XV3024)!

I include their registration numbers in case anyone knows different and would let me know. It also reminds me that my father would always mention the registration number VR3607 when talking of his cars but could never remember the numbers of any of the others!

Eventually he left the film industry after an illustrious career spanning over 20 years, interrupted by the war and retired to farming aged 45. This necessitated some radical changes to his way of life which included exchanging his M45 for a Land Rover in 1948. This early Series I he exchanged for a Series 2 in 1961 and that car shares a garage with VR3607 on his farm, where I now live and work.

James Williams

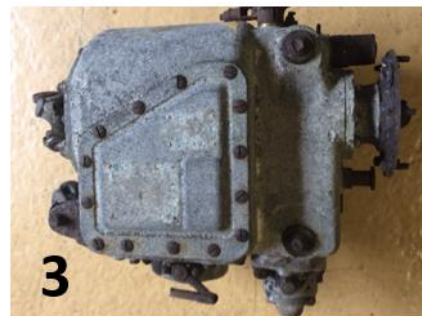
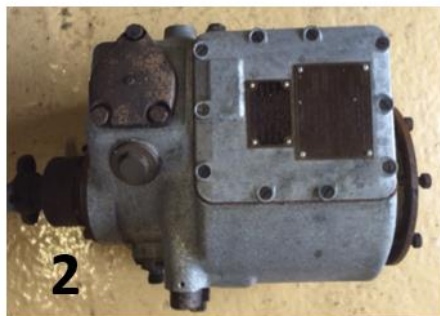
ADVERTISEMENTS: All advertisements should be sent to Len Cozzolino (len.cozzolino@lagondaclub.com). **They are free to members for up to 100 words and 1 picture in the newsletter. Repeat adverts are £25. Longer adverts and additional pictures are always available free in the Website under Classifieds and carried for 6 months or until car/parts are sold.**

FOR SALE:

Lagonda 3 Litre Tourer AYE 979 Registered 1933 Vanden Plas style body with full weather equipment for sale at H&H Duxford Auction 9 October. Photographs and details of mechanical and other work undertaken during the 17 years I have owned and used the car are on the H&H website.

For more information prior to sale telephone **Martin Sumner member S46** on 07748 988338





Gearbox 1 Daimler- List 22311 Self Changing Gearbox with cast no. 19608. c 17 " long incl shaft /10" high/ 17" wide

Gearbox 2 Riley (Coventry) Ltd Supplied by Armstrong Siddeley Motors c 16" long incl shaft / 9" high / 12" wide

Gearbox 3 Label lost -cast no. 359875S111 c 20" /long / 10" high / 17" wide

WANTED

'**WANTED urgently for 2.6 litre Lagonda, front suspension lower ball joints.** Complete 2.6 litre engine available Contact Mark Walker 01621 818608 or facelvegauk@aol.com'

NEW MEMBERS We welcome the following new members:- * Rejoin*

C 18	Gerard Cassagne	Avenue du Marensin, 40550 LÉON, France M45 LeMann Rep Z11123	Gw-184-aw
E 8	Simon Echlin	Stylebawn Cottage, Delgany, Wicklow N/O	
F 16	Paul Farrell	Birdsmill, Broxburn, West Lothian. Scotland N/O	
K 9	Hanno Kirner	Clopton House, Clopton, Stratford-upon-Avon M35R Z11270	WS 5888
K 26	Jakub Koníček	Popovice 375, 68604 Popovice, Czech Republic	
N 15	Jochen Niemeyer	Wilhelmstr., 44137 Dortmund, Germany 2L Tr 9653	GF 3575
J 8	Ian Johnstone	Coed Y Parc, Bethesda, Gwynedd. Wales LG45DHC 12015	CXU 898
S39	Wim van Soest	3342LA Hendrk Ido Ambacht Holland LG45 LMRep 12001	NJ 91 85
V 4	Howard Venning	Debden Road, Saffron Walden, Essex. 2ltr Tr OH9555	TF24
W 1	Matt Wisbey	Faversham Road, Ashford, Kent.	



THE DB GAZETTE

Greetings, once again!

Having received no comments regarding Gazette No.175, I must conclude that the topic was too sensitive or too banal to elicit comment, or have we all had enough advice regarding just how to dispose of in-completed projects?

So this month I want to describe what little I know of the production process that resulted in my 2.6 DHC being brought into the world in about 1948. Maybe other owners will be prompted to add to my effort. Please feel free to contact me at any time.

One could simply read up on Bastow, or one of the other authors that wrote about the era and published a few images/drawings of Staines or Feltham where these cars were conceived in the back of a local Pub, but I am interested in anecdotal history or what can be found of the early builders, the blokes on the tools.

For instance, I was told to look for the names or initials of the body builders/assemblers that worked at Feltham. They are reported to have left their initials inside the scuttle coverings; Bill Roberts on the left-hand side and Fred Smith on the right-hand side! I can relate to this because I'm sure that these two did not communicate very well during production when I consider the fit of the doors to the scuttle pillars. I'm guessing that Bill barracked for Huddersfield and that Fred barracked for the Batley Bulldogs and that they rarely spoke, even over a pint of John Smith!

In another life - I was seconded to a major workshop at Chullora in Sydney, Australia many years ago to learn all about Wilson pre-selector transmissions fitted to Rolls Royce aircraft tugs. The day that two of we RAAF Mechanical Fitters arrived, the engineer in charge, an Australian, invited us into his elevated office, 'for a chat'. There we were, looking down on a major repair line in an enormous workshop that carried out periodic overhauls on Government transport double decker Leyland buses. I'm guessing that the pre-selector transmissions were made by David Brown in the UK.

Amongst other information shared with us was the fact that almost all of the staff working in this facility had been recruited from the UK. Former employees of British Leyland or David Brown or whomever serviced the 'Grosser Rot Busse' of London and environs.

The Engineer I/C pointed out just where we would be working for a week in the transmission overhaul section and made the observation that two of the fitters we would be supervised by had not spoken to each other for 11 months! 'It's just in their nature,' he explained, but a supervisor would ensure that we were able to communicate with either of these two experienced mechanics!

So we got on with the job and fitted in quite well and observed the unwritten rules of workshop engagement! Years later I reflected on this experience and wondered how Britain had won the war with entrenched attitudes like this prevailing, as they must have.

This weird experience led me to ponder yet another 'detached training session.' This time I was detached to Clayton in Victoria to spend time learning about VW vehicle servicing.

VW had built an assembly plant in Australia and the RAAF had purchased about one hundred 'Kombi Vans' for tarmac transport and associated duties. I was lucky enough to be selected to undergo a training course at the Australian plant.

I met my first real Germans who turned out to be pretty much like us Australians, after one got over the weird accents. We learned much about VW, knowledge that I have used for many years and also developed a respect for German engineering the practical way, with my hands!

One thing that stands out still is the obvious attention to engineering detail.

Parts always fit - need I say more? I saw my first and only, cast iron VW sedan! Yes, a 1200cc sedan built in sections from cast iron! It was one of three outside of Germany and was used for testing body panel pressings. Sections of the mock up would be 'blued' and a bonnet or hood pressing dropped onto the mock up and the 'blueing' examined for witness. Absolutely stunning but no wonder that parts always fitted!

I guess that the boys at Feltham would have been envious of this technical availability, but hey, they only made about 500 DB Lagondas! Most of the doors opened and closed, most of the time, despite being mounted on wooden frames, and they were skinned in aluminium, a different metal to work, compared to pressed steel.

I'm grateful that Bill and Fred were able to preserve a working relationship for some years after my car was built. It's the first production DHC I am told, LAG/48/8.

I can't find their names under the scuttle any longer but this is a sort of tribute to the skills of the people who built the cars we admire today. Well some of us admire!

I have no sales reports for you this month, but a new Auction House has opened in Sydney, Australia and we may see sales of Lagondas soon!

Please send any comments to me, Peter Henson. H62. octane1@bigpond.com

SPARES NEWS – October 2024

E-mail: spares@lagondaclub.com, website: www.lagondaclub.com

BACK IN STOCK

- STG201 O/S – 2L King pin & bushes, oversized
- GRS418 - Meadows engine sprocket & chains
- VLV405 - Inlet valve LG45, S3 & S4
- GSK205 – Exhaust gallery gasket, 2L High Chassis
- VLV301 - Inlet & Exhaust 3L 72mm bore
- GSK304S - Exhaust gasket 3 & 3.5L 2.875" centres

FROM THE SPARES OFFICE

Please note, Robin will be away for the week commencing 30th September. The office and stores will continue to be manned, meaning orders will continue to dispatch as normal.

Robin will be back in the office from 7th October.

USED V12/LG6 SPARES SPOTLIGHT



Quarter light thumb knob -
£18



RFG2 regulator- £75



V12 door lock, pair - £50



V12 Steering Wheel - £50



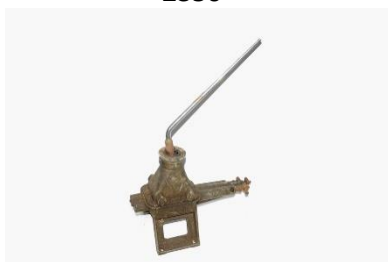
V12/LG6 steering cross shaft -
£350



V12 Chassis mounted torsion
bar brackets (pair) - £100



V12 Inlet Manifold - £150



G10 Gear Selector - £200



Jackal Pump Unit - £100

Please visit <https://www.lagondaclub.com/used-spares/> for more information.

NEW PARTS IN PROGRESS

- Winged radiator badges (curved and flat)
- Bishop Cam steering scroll

Please contact the spares team with any requests for new gaskets not already available.

Please e-mail Robin Cooke if you are interested in any of the following parts. Your support will influence the Committee's decision to proceed or not:

- ZM chassis - braking system (13 parts).
- Rockers, 4.5L.

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E-mail: spares@lagondaclub.com, website: www.lagondaclub.com

- Fuel tank senders (3-terminal type) 2L, 3L.
- Various DB parts, please see the Post-1945 Gazette for details.

“A BROOKLANDS LAGONDA FETE”

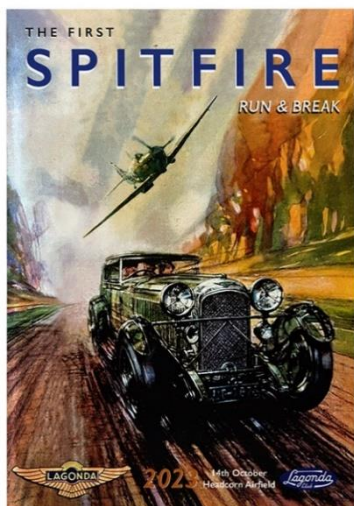
Signed and numbered Alan Fearnley prints now available



An exclusive print commissioned in 1999 to commemorate 100 years of the Lagonda Marque (1899 to 1999). Painted by the renowned and highly collectible automotive artist, Alan Fearnley.

Last remaining few prints available on high quality cardstock. All prints are numbered and signed by the artist. Approx. print size: 69.2 x 51.9 cm. Priced at £25 exc. VAT & postage.

“SPITFIRE RUN & BREAK” posters now available



These evocative posters were produced to mark the first and second “Spitfire Run & Break” events held at Headcorn Airfield, Kent in October 2023 and June 2024



These A3 posters measures 29.7 x 42 cm and are only available while our limited stock lasts. Priced at £20 each exc. VAT & postage.

Please visit our website via <https://www.lagondaclub.com/other-club-items/> to order.
to order.