



Number 281 Summer 2024

THE MAGAZINE OF
THE LAGONDA CLUB

The Lagonda Club AGM 2024

Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd September

The Mercure Warwickshire Walton Hall Hotel & Spa

Walton, CV35 9HG, Warwickshire



The weekend offers the following:

Saturday afternoon

Saturday evening

Sunday

- ❖ To be announced
- ❖ Gala Dinner
- ❖ Display of Lagondas
- ❖ Featured model: The Lagonda Rapier and Rapier, celebrating the model's 90th anniversary
- ❖ Lagonda Club AGM
- ❖ Buffet lunch
- ❖ Award presentations (each model, condition, distance, etc)

Accommodation can be booked for one, two or three nights at our agreed rates per room per night of £135.00 (double occupancy) £125.00 (single occupancy), incl. full English breakfast. To book, phone the hotel directly on 01789 842424, option 1, during office hours (Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm), quoting “Lagonda Club Event”.

Tickets for Saturday's Gala Dinner and/or Sunday's buffet lunch are available from the Club's website shop.

If you have any queries please contact Catherine Monnington, preferably by email: events@lagondaclub.com, or alternatively by phone: 07950 169684.

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The Lagonda Magazine

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Front cover: An early start on the Pan-American Highway for Richard Cunningham and team. From his epic 'Ultimate Overland – The Americas' adventure.

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@LAGONDA_CLUB_EVENTS

Instagram: Use your phone's camera to view.

Last date for content for the
Autumn magazine is
Friday 27th September 2024.
Please keep new articles,
emails & photos coming in.

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Editorial

Roland Bugler

Spring truly sprung (well, sort of), and the last three months have been busy with events, as you'll see with reports in this issue. And there are more to come as they build to a crescendo for the second half of 'the season'. Some of the biggies are:

17th Aug – Lagonda Fete at Brooklands

25th Aug – Continental Rally

9th Sept – Champagne Tour (fully booked)

21st & 22nd Sept - AGM

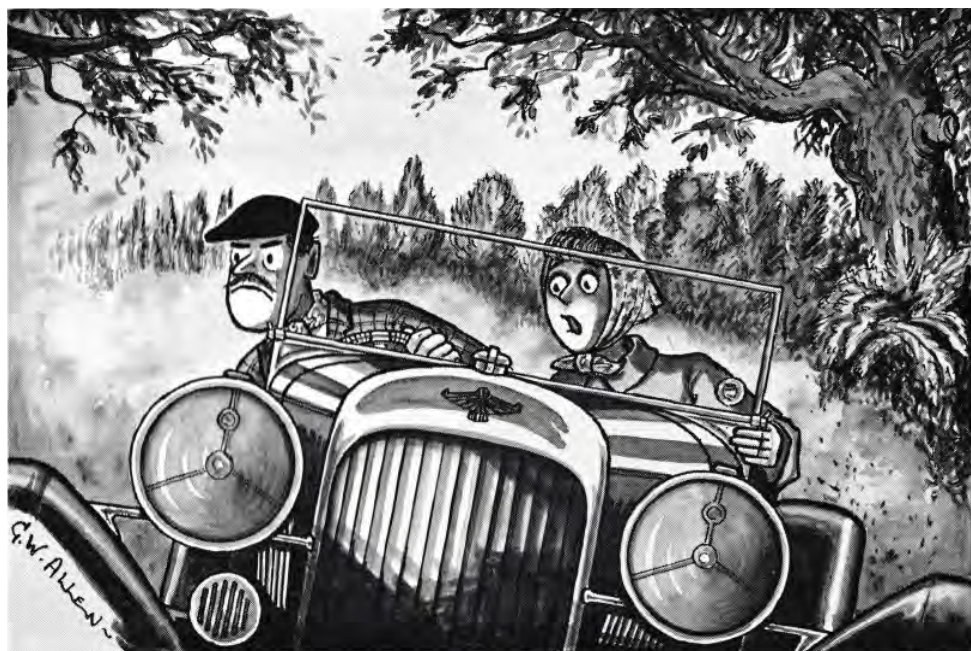
For all of you Rapier owners out there, don't forget to get the AGM in your diary to gather as many as we can in the centre of the 'show ring'.

Judging by the comments I've received regarding the last two issues, the Allen cartoons and the mix of articles, photos, etc are going down well. For each issue I have wondered what on Earth I'm going to be able to use on the cover, and then a fabulous photo lands in my lap. From the moment I saw this month's cover photo back in February, it was destined for that spot.

We've been blessed again with great reports from events which are clearly showing that there is a healthy appetite to participate. The Spitfire event's report will appear next time as there was so much to include, and a maximum magazine size for postage. Something had to give, but there is a silver lining in that the report will not be a hurried affair as it took place only a week before the copy deadline. We might even manage a video of the highlights...

The Lagonda Club takes more steps forward with respect to online technology with QR codes, and an Instagram account - whatever next! The Instagram account is an important step as the Club has never had a social media presence before. It is a great place to see photos and videos provided by members, and to advertise events. The QR codes allow you to waft your smartphone's camera at the magazine and click on the link displayed to be swept off to Instagram, YouTube, etc to view online photos, videos, or other web content. Try the one on the previous page for the Club's Instagram events account and enjoy photos and videos from some recent events.

On a personal note, I seem to have ambitions greater than my time and abilities allow. I had hoped to get my Rapier to the Spitfire event, but a troublesome misfire at the VSCC Dorset Tour highlighted that when hot and under load, she was badly misfiring, so my magneto is now off for repair. Along with local events, the Brooklands Fete, Champagne Tour and the AGM, I'm asking a fair bit of my car, so here's hoping. Still, more frequent use and more miles should shake out issues, and then hopefully keep them at bay.



"I'm beginning to regret buying you that motor-racing book club subscription!"



CLUB SHOP

Welcome To The Lagonda Club Shop.

The club are proud to offer a range of high quality 'Lagonda' branded goods, including:

Scarves, Travel Bags, Hats, Gilets and now stocking a new high quality leather keyring!

Visit the website to get your Personalised goodies!
Many New items available:



Hosted by Logo That Polo who will Embroider your order on demand with your choice of club badge!



logothatpolo.co.uk/store/Lagonda



Jeffrey George Ody (1940-2024)

by Arnold Davey



Jeff and I grew up in adjoining roads in Southgate, North London. Our mothers were acquaintances, as both were members of the local Ladies Whist Circle. I first met Jeff in about 1959, or thereabouts, when he bought a Rapier and joined the Rapier Register. On getting the list of members he was startled to discover the nearest one to be only about 100 yards away, even though he had never seen it. Naturally, he came to call, said who he was and could he look at mine. He had never seen it as it had not moved since I had brought it home about five years previously.

Jeff at this time was a Cambridge undergraduate, reading Economics at Downing College. His first job after Cambridge was with Vauxhall Motors at Luton as a sort of boy Chief Executive. This was the time of the “Press Gangs” where big companies sent squads of recruiters to universities to lure new graduates on to their staff. I imagine Jeff was so lured. The Rapier Register in those days was very northern and rarely met. I suggested to Jeff that he should join the Lagonda Club and attend the monthly meetings at the “Coach & Horses” in Avery Row, off Bond Street, where there was ample parking in the evenings and the landlord was a member. There was a lot to learn about Lagondas and the social meet was the place to begin.

In 1962 I left the local authority I had been working for, as I could see little future there when London local authorities were amalgamated. By taking a small pay cut I got into the infant motorway building programme with Hertfordshire County Council, based in St Albans. With Jeff in Luton, we had the opportunity to meet from time to time for lunch, midway, at “The Fox” in Harpenden. It was at one of these lunches that the first signs emerged that he was not happy at Vauxhalls. His main beef was that the management did not know what to do with him and he had become a kind of travelling recruitment officer. The car he could use was the one offered to women’s magazines. The interior was a symphony of pink and fawn and, travelling through some dubious parts of Luton, it seemed a good idea to lock the doors.

So it was no surprise to learn that he had left the motor industry and taken a job with the Intelligence Unit of “The Economist”. This involved a lot of travelling, much of it overseas. 1962 and 1963 were a period of rapid changes. Mike Wilby had a long-term plan to lower the average age of a Lagonda Club committee member from the 50s to the 20s. He persuaded Jeff on to the committee from the 1962 AGM. The List of members for that year shows two Rapiers, BPJ 303 (his original Abbott tourer) and BLC 599 (once my Maltby drophead). We had devised a plan to swap engines around, so that the respectable Abbott got the good engine and vice versa. This sort of happened, but the buyer abandoned the drophead, choosing instead a skimpy two-seater, easier to build and lighter.

Neither of Jeff’s daughters knows how and where Jeff met his future wife, although Nancy feels it was most likely to be at a party, but he met Gill Howick and fell for her. Luckily, his feeling was reciprocated. Gill was working in the fashion industry, and I remember her telling us how Twiggy was causing them nightmares as her shape was like no other. Jeff and Gill got married on 9th November 1963 in Gill’s native West Country and took on the role of “gentrifiers”, then a brand-new phenomenon, in buying a run-down property and improving it to the latest tastes. In their case, in Islington. The house in Rydon Street was a Victorian terrace which had been split into three flats with a single cold water tap halfway up the staircase. It was going to be a single dwelling again. The period from 1963 to 1967 is the only time when Jeff was without a Lagonda, mobility being entrusted to an ex-army Jeep, which could be left outside overnight without feral Islington kids scratching the paintwork. Gill used to tease oncoming motorists by sitting knitting in the right-hand front seat while on the move.

Islington in the early ‘sixties was little changed from the dodgy place it was ten years earlier, when I was at the Northampton Engineering College, full of strange shops that never seemed to open or sell anything and mysterious front doors with six bell pushes, all labelled with a lady’s name. Camden Passage could have been used as the set for a Dickens film without any changes needed.

The gentrification set in with a vengeance in the Beatles era with property prices following suit. Gill remembers that Nick Mason of Pink Floyd bought a house on the New North Road, around the corner from our house in Rydon Street.

In 1967 Jeff rejoined the owners list by buying PG 2882 (Chassis OH 9449) a low chassis 2 Litre tourer which he was to keep until 1980, surviving a house move to a bigger property in Highbury which was just as run down as Rydon St. had been at the start but offered the chance to rebuild the basement as a garage, if you didn't mind a drive gradient of about one in four. (Full noise in reverse, ready to slam on the brakes before hitting the car parked opposite). At Rydon St. Gill had got used to cooking on the landing, at Beresford Terrace in Highbury the loo had a glass door, so at night it was best not to switch on the light.

Rydon Street was also the birthplace of the Ody's two daughters, Katy and Nancy, the latter being only nine months old at the time of the move to Highbury Both ladies have been extremely helpful in looking up dates and reviving memories for this tribute.

APM 66 is the next Lagonda on the Ody ownership list. It was a hulking great LG45 De Ville limousine on the long wheelbase. Chassis 12245. Jeff had a plan to make a tourer out of it, but rather than rely on a cut- and- shut shortening operation, he had found an orphan M45 chassis and was transferring the works from one to the other, using a large, rented garage in Crouch End. Jeff drove it around without a body for a time.



That project completed, Jeff's next two Lagondas were extremely original, barely touched from new. OG 9999 (Chassis Z9855) came from Andre Kenny's fleet and was a 1931 3 Litre Weymann saloon, kept from 1976 to 1994 and BLX 477,(Chassis Z11221) an M45 T7 tourer, obtained from Ray Wickham, also very original, kept from 1969 to 1976.

In the summer of 1982, the Odys were on the move again, this time to a house in Tudor Road, Kingston-on-Thames. This time, no conversion needed, just move into a respectable suburban residence. What only emerged after settling in was that Tudor Road formed a back way into Richmond Park and was plagued with

cars parked while their owners exercised themselves in the park. I didn't know until Katy mentioned it was that they had a 3/4½ litre Bentley at this time. Some facts are better ignored.

Jeff was elected as Chairman of the club at the 1982 AGM and the committee was again looking for a home. Herb Schofield, the outgoing chairman, had relied on a friend to host meetings but she was not prepared to extend that to all and sundry. The big event looming on the horizon was how was the club going to mark the 50th anniversary of the 1935 Le Mans victory? It soon became clear that two parties were mooted, a "Short" one just for the weekend and a "long" one which added a fortnight's tour in France. Richard Hare was to lead the short one; Peter Whenman the other. Two sub-committees dealt with trip details so that the main committee had time for other things. After all the excitement had died down Jeff set about reducing the size of the committee back to just the essential people.

In January 1985 readers of the New Civil Engineer magazine were treated to Jeff's photo, accompanying the announcement that he and three others had left the engineering consultants Rendel, Palmer & Tritton to set up a new consultancy, to be called Tecnecon, with offices in W1 and Glasgow. It did not say, but Jeff was the MD. Also, in 1985 Jeff bought a tiny little Amilcar CGS, the lightest and simplest known sports car. Just as a contrast to the weighty Lagondas.

As an example of friendship beyond the Lagonda Club, I should mention that in the late 1980s, having been made redundant by Hertfordshire, I was struggling to establish a one-man engineering consultancy and Jeff put work my way for Tecnecon.

At the 1992 AGM Jeff stepped down from the Chairmanship, handing over to David Hine and in the same month moved house to Palace Road, Molesey, shedding cars as he went but adding a 2 Litre GT 910 (chassis OH 9959). He became a director of High Point Rendel in May 2000, followed by a move westward, a year later, to Devizes and entering local politics. The final move was within Devizes, to Greenfield Road. The last communication I had from Jeff, apart from routine Christmas cards, was a poster of him put out by his party when he became a County Councillor. Across it in red biro he had scribbled "Pompous old git"

Sorry, mate, can't agree with you there.

Parkinsons UK is close to the family's hearts, so if anyone wishes to make a donation, please go to parkinsons.org.uk/donate or 0207 931 8080.

Ultimate Overland: The Americas (pt 2)

Richard Cunningham's adventure continues

Part 2 – Cyclones, rockslides, political unrest and earthquakes. The joys of South America

We climbed out of Uyuni back into the remote high Andres of Bolivia. The mountains of Bolivia are full of small, deeply impoverished mining towns but the countryside is spectacular. In many stretches there are no petrol stations for long distances, and one needs to be very careful about running out of fuel. The Rolls had the smallest 50ltr tank with a 20ltr can, my Lagonda has a standard 80ltr tank plus a 10ltr can and Nigel's a rally-prepared 140ltr tank. The irony was that Chris was constantly running out of fuel but so did Nigel who twice managed to run out completely. I discovered that many of the hawkers on the side of the road had large plastic jerry cans behind their roadside huts just waiting for customers like us to arrive desperate for fuel. There is always a solution if one just scratches the surface! My small 10ltr emergency can got us out of trouble on numerous occasions. The other challenge when rising and falling such enormous heights was getting the brakes too hot which is what happened to Nigel in the middle of nowhere. In the process of trying to unlock his brakes he broke the front brake shoes, not something we carried a spare pair of. Driving with just the rear brakes, although not ideal, is not a disaster. Running out of fuel and breaking the brake shoes, it had been a testing day but on journeys like this one must always remain focused on what's in front of you, not what's behind.



Taking the high Andres, Bolivia

Nigel and David were still tinkering with his Lagonda unable to find out the underlying problem, it was still fouling plugs, still ticked over badly, everything had been adjusted and fettled and still the problem couldn't be identified. By the time we arrived in our digs in La Paz we had decided to make and install heat shields to try and minimise what was thought to be vaporization along with cleaning fuel filters and everything else anyone could think of. It was as this work was being undertaken that Chris spotted that the

air intake into Nigel's fuel tank was blocked, as fuel was being consumed a vacuum was being created in the fuel tank and the result was self-evident. Nige, at long last, had got to the bottom of his problem, a problem that he had struggled with since Buenos Aires.

Our original plan was to cross from La Paz into Peru, passing around Lake Titicaca to Puno and then onto Cusco and Machu Pichu. Unfortunately, due to the political hiatus that existed in Peru since the beginning of the year, the border to Puno had been closed for two months and reports weren't



*The three amigos, and
a message for us all*

encouraging about travelling through that part of the high Andes. There had been riots amongst the indigenous population and the airports of Puno and Cusco had been closed to tourists. The border crossing opened whilst we were in La Paz but we concluded there was far more important traffic that needed to cross into Peru than three pre-war cars and we changed our route. We decided to drop down to the Pan-American highway in Chile and then along the coast road to Peru's capital Lima. The road through the Atacama down to the coast was stunning and we could have free wheeled for about 90km if we had run out of fuel.

We reached Lima on the 7th March where we had three rest days booked. We knew that we would need to replace our tyres and had the good fortune to contact the Aston Martin dealership there

(Aston Martin purchased the Lagonda marque in 1946) who offered to help. Ariosto, the manager, not only arranged to accept two pallets of tyres but also organised three bays in his workshop and three mechanics to help service the cars. This service stop was critical to the success of the rally. A serious oil leak on the Rolls was finally identified and fixed, the Lagondas had complete services and new tyres and after two days were ready to go again. The mechanics even managed to perfectly weld Nigel's broken aluminium brake shoes. Ariosto was determined to show us Jorge Nicolini's Car Museum, a private car collection built up over some 70 years of finding restoration projects sourced throughout South America. This was followed

by a visit with the cars to the Aston Martin show room at which point it started to rain! Lima is the most arid capital city in the world and as such rain is unexpected to say the least. It was the bottom end of cyclone Yaku which had hit the coast of Peru and Ecuador leading to widespread flooding, mud and rockslides throughout the route we were about to travel. We had little idea of what faced us down the road.



The difference between leaving Lima at 04:30am and 05:30am can be 2-3 hours on your journey so we left at 04:30am! The Rolls led the way and the Lagondas followed all cruising out of Lima without any problems. We dreamt of Lobster and Chablis on the beach further up the Pan-American highway and we got so close, just not close enough. 10 miles from our planned destination at a critical bridge on the Pan-American highway at a town called Casma we came to halt. Trucks, buses and cars all were stationary on the road, a critical bridge had been swept away and there was no way through. We were told it could be three to six weeks before the road reopened. We were lucky, retreating some 50km we found a hotel with a single room with four beds by the sea. We re-grouped and got our maps out.

Cyclone Yaku had caused serious problems right the way along the coastline and up in the mountains. Dozens of huaicos (Andean term for mud slides and flash floods caused by torrential rain) were reported throughout Peru, both along the coastline and up in the high Andes. It had killed at least 8 people and destroyed thousands of homes. The options we had were to

hunker down and wait for the bridge to be repaired, to return to Lima, park up and come back when the road was open or to look for a diversion. The only alternative route was to drive high into the Andes to Huarez and then travel north before dropping back down on the Pan-American highway. Local truckers and police told us that the road up to Huarez was difficult but passable, they were less clear about the roads back down, but we decided to risk it and set off up the mountains. The rain got heavier and heavier and the road conditions worse and worse and by mid-afternoon we recognized that it was too dangerous to continue. Luck was to hand, and we found a trucker's hotel in which we could escape the torrential rain so we hunkered down for the night.



Road damage following cyclone Yaku

The following morning, we climbed once again, battling with massive trucks crawling up the mountain, mud and rockslides and huge amounts of water in every river and culvert. Once up on the main road to Huarez we faced a minefield of massive potholes real life axle-breakers. Nothing was easy. Huarez, high in the Andes had an uncomfortable feel to it, a centre for the political unrest that had caused significant riots and protests since the previous Peruvian election. We met a large group of police officers and discussed our dilemma (as best we could, given the significant language barrier), obtaining the advice that the road down to Casma was open and that we would be clear of the collapsed bridge. Off we went, convinced that we would arrive in Casma and then be back on the road north to Trujillo.

We drove into town to find a bridge on our left standing, but the traffic was very much stationary, a second bridge, to our right, was the one that had collapsed. We had driven some 350km, from sea level to above 3000m and back down again and arrived about 2 miles further up the road from where we had been three days previously, still facing the prospect of the bridge not opening for 3-6 weeks. The team had a very frank discussion about the options available and none of them seemed particularly appetising. Sometimes the only answer is to sleep on it and that is what we did. We had the most uncomfortable night of the rally in a leaky cottage with the rain falling for 14 hours. "Time spent on reconnaissance is never wasted" and so it proved. The next morning a visit to the collapsed bridge showed that a partially built new bridge could be brought into service quickly and by 16:00 the traffic was indeed moving again, and we all agree to get in the queue however long it took. The rally was back on! We crossed the bridge at 21:00 and broke rule no 1, 'never drive at night', as we drove through the flooded towns and villages to get to Trujillo.



We had planned for a rest day in Trujillo, but our two replacement co-drivers had been sitting there for 5 days and we all agreed to push on. So, following a couple of vicious haircuts we set off for our last night in Peru.

Some of the most serious floods occurred in the coastal town of Tumbre up towards the border with Ecuador. We had also been warned that it is

one of the more dangerous areas, so the plan was to push on through to the border. Unfortunately, that didn't allow for me hitting a hidden pothole in one of the floods and losing my exhaust. Having collected the lost exhaust and strapping it onto the back of the car we pushed onto the border, intent on repairing it when we arrived at our hotel in Ecuador. Once again, the cars proved our saviour, all we received in the 'dangerous' town of Tumbre was help and friendship. People love to see these venerable old cars battling through such conditions on an extraordinary adventure and have always gone out of their way to help.

Our next stop was the UNESCO World Heritage site at Cuenca. The problem was that both of the first two routes we tried were blocked by rock falls. Whilst sitting in stationary traffic the car started to shake and after initially worrying that it was something catastrophically wrong with the car, I soon



Aston Martin, Lima

realised that everything around us was also shaking, cladding was falling off nearby buildings and that we were in the middle of an earthquake. The Guayas earthquake was 6.8 magnitude, its epicentre just off the coast and caused 446 injuries and 16 fatalities. On we pressed. Only on the third attempt, by which time we were directly north of our target, was successful. Once again, we climbed for about three hours to over 4000m, my Lagonda struggling with the altitude and its temperature before rolling down into Cuenca. The good news was that we had arrived, the bad news was that we were going to have to climb the same long, steep hill to get back out.

Having replaced a filter in my water system my car was working perfectly on the climb out. That was until we arrived at Alansi where the main road was closed. An old dirt road was being graded and opened as an alternative diversion and then, despite being told our cars wouldn't make it we set off for an hour's climb on a rough track, crawling behind trucks and busses. The cars took a terrible beating but eventually crawled into that night's AirBnB. Cold beer and food provided sustenance; the morrow would show how much damage the cars had sustained.

A Splendid Day at Brooklands

Catherine Monnington reports on a great day out



30 Lagondas attended Brooklands on 16th June for their Double 12-Relived event where they did a wonderful job of creating a most convivial atmosphere with a vintage live band, period dress and entertaining commentary on the roaring race starts, auto tests and hill climbs.

Lagondas far outnumbered any other marque at the event and made quite a spectacle parked up two deep in front of the picket fence around the Clubhouse. What a sight they made! Some cars had not been seen for many a year, there was even a non-club member who came in his 1927 2L. Bets were made on how long it would take me to enlist him, but sadly I failed on this account.

I'm unsure who drove the furthest to attend but I noted that several of the members I spoke to had travelled for at least two hours in the morning to arrive by 9 o'clock, which I thought was very committed and I am grateful that they made the effort. Tim Green brought several cars with him from Newbury including Richard Jones and Jack Morley in David Ayres' car.

Both Alan Faggetter in his 2L LC super charged GT 910 and Richard Branch in his 16/80 Special six BPA 334 participated in the auto tests waving the flag

for Lagondas and, rather excitingly, Richard was best in his class and was awarded a splendid trophy.



Richard Branch and his trophy

Chris Bound, who was driving Mrs Sonia Brock's M45 which resides at the museum, decided to attempt the hill in 3rd gear. Despite a promising start, the car literally died about a third of the way up, so he had to start again in a more optimistic gear.

Others tried a change up into second but most wafted up quite comfortably in either their M45s or 2L super charged cars. I have been forbidden to attempt the hill as I have been assured that it would burn my clutch out and no one wants that to happen.

Speaking of trophies, the Robbie Hewitt Trophy has traditionally been awarded to a Lagonda at a Brooklands Double Twelve event for 'The Best Car' as Robbie would

A very impromptu opportunity was offered to the Club to parade the Lagondas in front of the public in the area previously designated for the auto tests. Seventeen Lagondas launched themselves from the display area and proceeded to accelerate fast up the finish straight towards the banking before slowly descending and repeating the exercise. Some Lags, Chris London's 2L S/C PL5877 exuded so much smoky exhaust fumes that the next car could barely make out the course!

At three pm half a dozen Lagondas attempted the Test Hill Climb, some more gracefully than others.



Rachel Bagenal and her father John Breen, dressed for the occasion

have nominated, so not necessarily the one in Concours condition but the one which is honest and drives well. This can be interpreted many different ways, but we decided that on this occasion Robbie would have picked Alan's car GT 910. When I presented the award to Alan and Kathy, they were both overcome with emotion as Alan has a significant Robbie Hewitt connection.



Please see below from Alan (Slim) Faggetter:-

“Thank you all for the Robbie Hewitt Brookland memorial trophy awarded at the Lagonda Relived day at Brooklands, what a lovely surprise!

Here's a short story of our brief encounters with Mrs Anne Robbie Hewitt.

It brought back many happy memories from the 80s and 90s when Kathy, my wife, and I attended many of the Brooklands Society events throughout that era.

On two occasions in the late 80s our paths crossed with Mrs Hewitt. On the



TT LAGONDA IN A MODERN SETTING.—Robbie Hewitt in her famous 4½-litre team car, BPK 203 was one of several girls who drove at Silverstone.

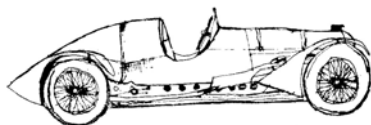
first occasion I found myself having rather stern words with Mrs Hewitt outside the Brooklands Reunion Society Luncheon Hall because she was being very dismissive of a good friend of mine's M45 and she had accumulated rather a large crowd around the car! Words were exchanged! I will leave it at that as it's a story to be told over a pint with good friends and not put in print.

The second occasion was the following year at the same event! I was queuing up in my little two-seater Austin 7 Special to tackle the test hill when beside me a voice said, "do you have a spare seat, may I jump in and go up the hill with you?", I looked round and it was Robbie Hewitt!! Somewhat surprised I said yes, jump in. Robbie was very gracious and genuinely very interested in my modest little car and was amazed how well it sped up the hill. In those days we went up the hill down the return road and round a fair section of the banking turning off onto a small gravel return road just before we ended up in the River Wey.

In this small time bubble, Robbie Hewitt talked non-stop about my car, her TT Lagonda and others in her collection and it was a joy to listen to her enthusiasm in the world of racing and vintage cars.

I felt very privileged to get an insight into the character of Mrs Anne Robbie Hewitt so to be awarded this trophy is very special to me indeed!"

[Ed. Don't forget the second visit to Brooklands this year – the reborn Lagonda Fete on 17th August - see the fab poster on facing page]



BROOKLANDS

Lagonda Fête

17th August 2024



Relive the Lagonda Fêtes of old, by joining the largest gathering of Lagonda motor cars as all models take to the Finishing Straight for race-starts driving tests and attempt the Test Hill Ascent Challenge.

**Tickets online £25 per person includes full museum & exhibit access.
Gates open 9am. Campbell Entrance off Brooklands Rd. KT13 0QN**

Northern Dinner 2024

Jonathan Oppenheimer

The Northern Dinner returned to the Izaak Walton Hotel in Dovedale, near Ashbourne in the southern part of the Derbyshire Peaks, surely one of the most visually magnificent parts of England. On this occasion the beauty could be enjoyed in sunshine, unlike a previous visit some years ago when a tour planned meticulously, as always, by Tim Gresty was beset by unremitting rain and murk. I remember it well because my wife Merav and I were in our M45 saloon, whose impeccably original external Klaxon wiper motor had decided to give up the fight, and even copious applications of Rainex were inadequate to the task of maintaining at least some visibility. The windscreen also leaked and Merav went through several kitchen rolls mopping up as I drove.

No such worries this time; we enjoyed ideal motoring weather, and as I arrived from Aldermaston in the V12 prototype that Thursday afternoon, I found a line of other Lagondas already in the car park, including a very sporty-looking 4.5litre shortened-chassis special built years ago by Alan Brown and now in the eminently capable hands of Nick Hine. Nick appeared just as I arrived, having run up and down Thorpe Cloud, a seriously steep hill rising from the other side of the Dove.

The hotel is in an idyllic setting but my euphoria at arriving without mishap evaporated when I went to register and was told there was no sign of any booking in my name! After an ominous pause, the gentleman at reception said that luckily there were two rooms left. I learned later from Northern Sec. and organiser-in-chief Nigel Hall that mine was not the only unrecorded booking and that the cause lay in the recent departure of the General Manager, who had kept some of the bookings on his own computer, which he had taken with him. Everything was soon sorted out and no harm done.



*The Northern Lights, over
the Northern Dinner!*

Those of us who gathered on the Thursday enjoyed a convivial evening, some eating in the restaurant and others in the bar where a few of us led each other astray after dinner sampling the hotel's selection of malts. There was no sign of sore heads in the morning, and after a leisurely breakfast we set off on a tour of the peaks on routes plotted with customary skill by Tim Gresty and checked for accuracy and driveability by Ian Waugh. I had experienced a momentary loss of oomph in the V12 as I approached Oxford on the drive up and had visions of a repeat of the fuel-pump failure that had hampered our return from last year's Fougères Rally. I also lacked a navigator because, defying the Gaza war, Merav was visiting her family and our son Joe in Israel, so, not wanting to get stuck or lost in the Peaks, I cadged a ride in the back seat of our President's M45 saloon. Alan Brown, who celebrated his 93rd birthday that day, was in the front passenger seat.



I enjoyed the drive enormously, never having had the opportunity to experience the back seat of my own M45 saloon. The back seat of David's proved to be a very comfortable vantage point and it was a pleasure simply to enjoy the ever-changing view without having to concentrate on the winding road, cyclists, or the next gear-change. I was very impressed with the car's performance and the power steering David has installed, enabling him to throw the hefty saloon round tight bends with admirable panache, belying its sedately patinated appearance – a modification I'm quite tempted to follow. The drive took us through wonderful landscapes, such as the hidden valley near Glutton Bridge, on splendid roads that even David and others who live relatively nearby had never driven before. Tim's route instructions were clear and accurate, embellished with his customarily detailed notes about points of interest along the way.

At lunchtime we stopped at the Old Smithy Café in Monyash, a pretty village whose pleasures we shared with our fellow-Lagondists and numerous bikers; motorised and pedal. With the prospect of a substantial dinner, David and Alan had ice cream, but I went for the filled Derbyshire oatcake, which was huge and came with salad, crisps and a concoction of sunflower seeds. David and Alan decided to forego the afternoon leg of the tour in favour of a nap back at the hotel to be at their best for the evening's entertainment. I decided to make use of the hiking boots I'd brought with me to walk off my lunch, and set off from the hotel, following the river Dove upstream to the famous Stepping Stones, where I crossed and followed a footpath clockwise round Thorpe Cloud Hill and slowly up to the summit, certainly not running it as Nick had! The descent was more difficult, with a choice at each step between hard but slippery rock and unstable scree, so I was glad to reach the path at the bottom, which I followed round the south side of the hill to a footbridge back over the Dove and so to the hotel.



Happy Birthday Alan!

The evening started, as always, in the bar, where those who had enjoyed the day's tour greeted those who had just arrived, bringing the total present to over fifty, including a healthy sprinkling of new and newish members and several well below retirement age, which is always reassuring. Everyone seemed to be in excellent spirits as we filed into dinner, and the good humour and companionship which are the hallmarks of our club were pervasive throughout the evening. Alan Brown was presented with a 93rd birthday card, signed by all those present, and a cake with a seemingly countless number of candles, which he blew out effortlessly.

Once hunger and thirst were satisfied and we'd raised our glasses for the Loyal Toast, President Hine handed out the club's awards, assisted by our new Chairman, Martin Bugler, who himself received perhaps the least-coveted, the Expensive Noises Trophy, which I too won some 25 years ago. Organiser of the



The Club President in full flow.

event, Northern Secretary and intrepid racer Nigel Hall won both the Michael Trophy and the Knarr Mill Plate; Nick Parker won the Bentley Trophy, and the Committee Plate went to Roger Seabrook, who edited the Magazine for ten years. But perhaps the most exciting win was the Overseas Trophy, which went to Richard Cunningham, who planned to drive his M45 from Cape Horn to New York, along with Nigel Gambier in another M45 and Chris Evans, who lives in the same street as me, in a Rolls Royce. As Richard explains in the first part of his account, published in this magazine's last issue, although he arrived in Tierra del Fuego as planned, his car didn't, so the drive actually started in Buenos Aires, a truly heroic adventure, nonetheless. As I write, yesterday I visited David Ayre's workshop to collect a couple of bits for the restoration of my own M45 tourer, and there were Richard's and Nigel's cars, being prepared for something potentially even harder, London to Singapore, which David, himself an experienced long-distance

rallyist, told me is now the longest driveable trip on the planet, fraught, very obviously, with political as well as physical challenges. It's wonderful we have members who drive their cars so adventurously.

After the prize-giving the evening was further enhanced by a performance by the Knarr Mill Players, namely Messrs Brown and President Hine, the latter sporting a solar topee, followed by a solo rendition by the President of that popular favourite from his repertoire, The Bantam Cock, after which we dispersed, some to bed and others to the bar. Finding myself in the latter group, our choice was rewarded when someone came in and said that the Northern Lights were clearly visible outside. We all trooped out and there was the Aurora Borealis, the first time I'd ever seen it. It was soon apparent that a

smartphone “sees” a lot more colour in this phenomenon than the human eye. We said our farewells after breakfast next day and went our separate ways. Apart from missing a turning and getting a bit lost somewhere around Derby, I had an uneventful run back to Aldermaston, with no repeat of the momentary loss of throttle on the way up, which must, I think, have been merely fuel vaporisation.

Next year’s Northern Dinner will take place at the same venue on 9th May, with the usual tour the day before, so I strongly recommend booking for two nights.



Did you identify that masked man?

It was Maurice Leo at the 1955 AMOC Silverstone David Brown Relay Race. The Lagonda, issue 18 reported “...coming very fast into Woodcote he braked very heavily and the offside rear wheel, which had shown a tendency to lock in earlier races, locked on solid.” Scary stuff!



Tour of Ultima Thule 2024

Martin Mountfort's tales from the far north

Shetland & Orkney, until this year these were in my mind distant lands towards the northern extremity of the civilised world frequently mentioned in weather forecasts. In this quasiquicentennial(125th) anniversary year of the establishment of the Lagonda Engineering Company by Wilbur Gunn, I heard of a Lagonda Club tour, starting May 30th in Aberdeen, travelling through Shetland and then Orkney before returning to the Scottish mainland and culminating in a Gala dinner at Inverness on June 6th. This was an opportunity I should not miss and sent my entry to Bill Spence of Kirkwall Orkney.

Before 1468 Shetland and Orkney were Norwegian, however in that year Princess Margaret of Denmark & Norway married James III of Scotland and the two islands were passed to Scotland in lieu of the wedding dowery. This is the first of several Norse connections that you will read of through this report.

Bill Spence, the tour Co Ordinator, had travelled down from Kirkwall Orkney to meet us all at the Aberdeen Northlink ferry terminal. He organised the boarding passes and meals. Northlink Ferries were sponsors of The Shetland Classic Motor Show which enabled us to qualify for a discount as we were guest exhibitors at the show. We were given “goody bags” inscribed with our individual registration marks. These contained all the maps we needed, some fudge, a blue cap for Shetland and a red cap for Orkney, the Shetland flag (blue with a white cross), the Orkney flag (red with a yellow & blue cross), both of which have a similar layout to the Norwegian flag. Also included was a rather attractive Puffin wearing a Lagonda Club tea shirt.



The Tour Puffin

The ferry HJALTLAND from Aberdeen to Lerwick took 14 hours for the 130-mile journey. Bill Spence directed us to a more comfortable lounge and dining area where we have dinner and breakfast. We then drove south to the southern end of Shetland, Sumburgh Head. On route we went over a traffic light-controlled crossing between our road and an air strip. Having reached Sumburgh Head, we walked up a steep incline alongside steep rocky cliffs. I noticed that binoculars and cameras with huge zoom lenses were appearing.

Sue Harrison is a keen bird watcher, she told us about Fulmars, Guillemots and Puffins. I did not spot any of them at first, then suddenly a puffin appeared only about 10 feet away, they live in burrows or holes in the cliffs. By the time I had my phone focused on the bird it disappeared back into its burrow. Still, at least I have the Puffin which came in our goody bag which now adorns my mantlepiece.

During a visit to the Scalloway Museum we learn of another Norse connection, "The Shetland Bus". During World War II Norway was occupied by the Germans. An Anglo Norwegian clandestine operation was set up whereby (escaped) Norwegian fishing vessels were used to smuggle arms and people between Norway and the Shetlands. At first it was kept so secret that the local civilian population were unaware of this activity. However later in the war the operation grew, and three submarine chasers were being operated out of the Shetlands against Germany.



Bill and Sue Spence

The following day, Saturday we drove north through Yell and finally Unst at the northerly end of the Shetlands and indeed the most northerly point in the British Isles. The journey included two short prebooked ferry crossings. The landscape of Shetland is hilly treeless and rocky but still beautiful.

At the pre-arranged a lunch stop at the UK's most northerly restaurant at Haroldswick, Alan & Sue Harrison suddenly mobilised themselves in their LG45. Birdwatchers have an app on their phones which report sightings of unusual birds – today a Golden Oriole. Unfortunately, they did not sight it.

Robin and Janice Saddler drove and walked to Muckle Flugga which really is the most northerly point in the UK. They knew that they would miss their booked return ferry taking a chance on

catching a later one. Fortunately, there were spaces on later ferries. Robin has recently purchased their handsome 1932 Carlton bodied DHC 3 litre in Glasgow, then left it in Argyll ready for the Ultima Thule rally. After the rally they drove all the way back to Kent with leaking exhaust fumes because of head gasket trouble. A 600-mile trip.

On Sunday we were the feature display at the 20th Shetland Classic Motor Show in Lerwick. Bill had given us numbers to arrange us in date order. Robin Sadler led with the oldest car, his 1932 3 litre, Peter Gilkes took the rear with his 1954 DB 3 litre. Poor Paul Keane from Baltimore, Ireland, should have been the newest in the order with his DB 3litre but had battery problems and had to leave his car at the hotel.

We drove in convoy to take our show positions in line. Unfortunately, it was raining at times but there was a very good show of old Motorcycles under cover in the same building as the refreshments. We then left our cars and walked to a prearranged restaurant for lunch, after which we left the show in a date order convoy again to return to our hotel.

During this tour I met for the first time Alastair Gunn who is the Scottish Area Representative of the Lagonda Club. He has an immaculate 2 Litre Continental which has been in his family since 1938, when it was bought for £165 by Alastair's grandfather. Alastair's great uncle, also Alastair, was a Spitfire pilot during World War II, who, because of his talent at navigation, was selected to fly an unarmed but heavily fuelled Spitfire long distances for aerial photography. Unfortunately, he did not survive the war.

Monday afternoon we caught the Lerwick (Shetland) to Kirkwall (Orkney) ferry. We had the first bit of headlight driving from the ferry terminal to our Kirkwall hotel, there are much longer hours of daylight in Orkney than in southern England. The Lynnfield Hotel has lots of character, old books, maps and antiques including Orkney chairs, but the bedrooms have every modern convenience.

Tuesday

We travel South and cross the Churchill Barriers. At Burray there is a large, upturned steel hull in the water presumably a block ship put there before the barrier to block the passage of enemy vessels. We continued south to Burwick at the southern tip of Orkney. Across the Pentland Firth to the south is John O' Groats. On our way back to Kirkwall we visited Lamb Holm. This was an Italian prisoner of war camp, prisoners from here helped to build the Churchill Barrier. The Italian prisoners converted one of the prison's Nissen huts into a chapel They painted masonry and religious symbols onto the concrete. The result is surprisingly beautiful and has stood the test of time.

Late afternoon we were invited to the house of Bill Spence and had Champagne in his lovely garage. Sue Spence has a charming little Austin Nippy that caught my eye.

Bill Spence has organised this Orkney & Shetland rally four times previously and will have his 80th birthday next year. He indicated that this will be the last

time he runs the rally, I count myself as very lucky that I took the opportunity to participate.



Lamb Holm. A converted Nissen hut, built by Italian POWs

Wednesday

Bill had a series of interesting visits organised for us. The first to Skara Brae near Sandwick where there are the remains of a Neolithic village. In 1850 a severe storm washed away the turf uncovering the stone dwellings. Archaeologists established their age at around 5000 years, pre-Viking pre-Roman and pre-Egyptian Pyramids but it is unknown who lived there. From the remains it appears that stone was used for shelves and furniture.

From the same carpark we were able to visit Skaill House full of artifacts from the Scarth family, something of an enigma to find a 17th century mansion in the remote Orkney landscape.

After lunch our next stop was the Broch of Gurness. Bill checks that we have the right map. I have felt very safe with Bill who has given clear instructions and his arrangements have always worked, he has I think been disappointed with the weather which even he cannot control. Bill was a Master Mariner which is clearly evident in his leadership and diplomacy.

Later on Wednesday we took the Lagondas down to St.Magnus Cathedral . Bill pre -arranged that we may drive them onto the grass in front of the Cathedral.



St Magnus Cathedral

Early in the 12th century Orkney was ruled by two cousins Hakon Paulsson & Magnus Erlendsson, Magnus refuses to fight in a war of Norway against the Hebrides and the two cousins argue. A peace conference is arranged on the island of Egilsay. Each party is only supposed to bring 2 ships and an equal number of men. However, Hakon brings eight warships, Hakon requests his cook to execute Magnus. Even as Magnus waits for the axe blow to his skull, he prays that his executioner will be pardoned by God. In 1129 the King of Norway granted to Magnus nephew Rognvald half of Orkney, however Rognvald had first to defeat Paul son of Hakon. Rognvald did defeat Paul and started to build the magnificent Cathedral at Kirkwall dedicated to his uncle Magnus. However, the cathedral took 300 years to build. During restoration work when masonry was removed, a damaged skull and bones were found, these are believed to be the remains of Magnus. They were put back into the wall. The cathedral belongs to the people of Kirkwall not to the church and is built from lovely red sandstone.

During our last evening meal here I was introduced to Dr. Wright who has been a doctor in Kirkwall for many years. His father Robert Freeman Wright (deceased) was chairman of The Lagonda Club in the early fifties. Dr Wright had brought photographs, correspondence & tankards that his father had stored away. These included photos of a car which John Sword recognized as

an LG45 adapted for racing known as “The Scarlet Woman”. Also, a very old photo of the corner Eau Rouge at Spa Francorchamps. Dr. Wright recounted that his father competed in the Firlie Hill Climb and there were photographs of that.

Thursday



We catch the ferry across from Stromness to Scrabster on the north coast of mainland Scotland, then drove towards John O Groats, there was an opportunity to visit the Clan Gunn Museum. We booked into the Drumossie Hotel at Inverness and that evening had our Farewell Gala Dinner.

Friday

Poor Paul & Georgiana Keane from Baltimore Ireland had to wait for a dynamo to be delivered for their Lagonda.

We say our Goodbyes after breakfast and had a lovely drive South past Loch Ness. All in all, a very successful holiday.

Lagondas at le 24 Heures du Mans (pt 3)

Compiled by Roland Bugler, reviewed by Arnold Davey

Continuing our look back at the exploits of Lagondas at Le Mans in the lead-up to next year's 90th anniversary of a Lagonda win. This time we highlight the 1939 race, and the arrival of the mighty V12s.

WO Bentley & the development of the V12

Rising from the ashes of a refinanced company in 1935, WO Bentley had joined the management team and assembled a hand-picked team to develop a V12, a prototype of which appeared at the 1936 Olympia Motor Show.

It was initially conceived as a sophisticated road model and WO Bentley was incensed when it was proposed that a race car would be built to take advantage of the V12 powerplant. He agreed only on the basis that there would be no attempt at winning in 1939, and that it would be a proving ground for a serious attempt in 1940. However, from deciding to prepare a car to the date of the race was less than six months.

The Race Car Development

Although there was some additional development of the engine, it was largely restricted to handling the fuel supplied at Le Mans but also with a new cylinder head, modified valves and special valve springs from America. There were other modifications too, such as different carburettors but the main changes were in the chassis and body.

The chassis was seriously reduced in weight by drilling copious holes into the sides of the box sections. Weight was saved everywhere it could be including brake drums, wishbones, road springs, and even 17lb was removed from the steering box alone. The bodywork was also ultra-light with just five parts in aluminium sheet, mounted directly to the chassis with no framework, held together with



Pre-race checks of fuel by a race official!

quick-release fasteners. There was even some talk about the complete first car being lighter than the rolling chassis of the production Rapide!

Lagonda was preparing a single car, but a second was privately funded by Lords Waleran and Selsdon, though prepared by the factory.

Full testing was impossible in the time available. However, Charles Brackenbury, who would partner Arthur Dobson was able to fit in an hour at Brooklands just before leaving for France. The Waleran/Selsdon car was run-in and tested on the drive to Le Mans and in practice.

The 1939 Le Mans Race



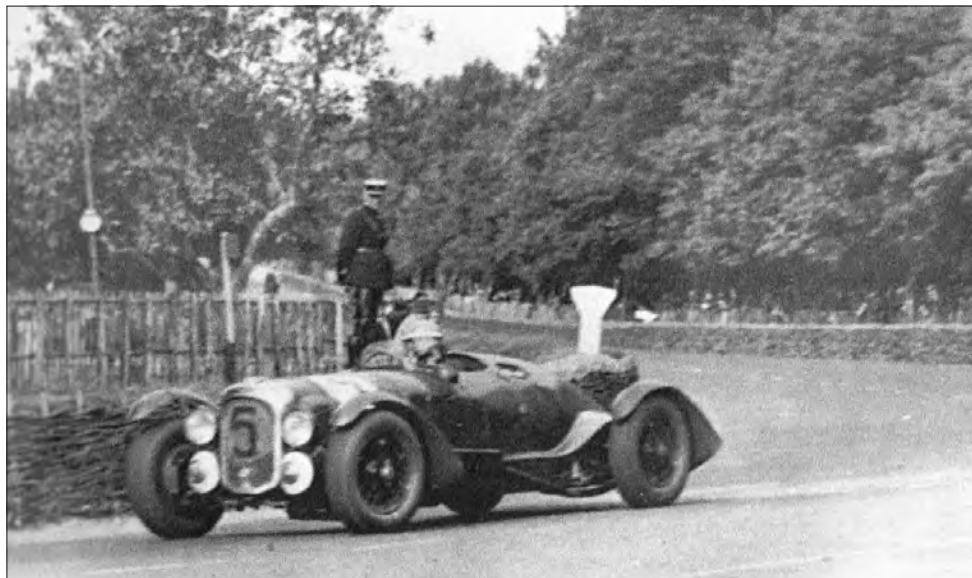
Dobson (number 5) got away before Selsdon (number 6)

The cars were given a strict pace to reduce stress on the cars, based on an average speed just above the previous year's winning Delahaye. 40 cars lined up (of the 49 entries) and at the start, Dobson got away first, though Selsdon made a bad start. Both cars were lapping well, and Waleran proved to be faster than Selsdon, closer to the times of the experienced Brackenbury/Dobson pairing.

The cars continued to run well overnight but, in the morning, the Brackenbury/Dobson car had to come in twice to try and resolve a sticking clutch and, later, a broken exhaust bracket. To make up time, they were signalled to speed up and pushed up the average to 88mph.

Come the end of the race, the Dobson/Brackenbury car came third and the Waleran/Selsdon car came fourth overall, which was first and second in their class, proving the cars to be well capable of winning when fully developed.

A year earlier, these times would have won the race, so Lagonda had every reason to be extremely pleased with the outcome.



Dobson at the wheel

By the end of the race, the cars' bodywork looked a little tattered but otherwise they looked sound, and the privately entered car had run without issue. However, when the engines were stripped, of the 96 special valves in the two engines, only three were left intact. There were also cracks in the heads and evidence of oil starvation.



Dobson at the wheel with Brackenbury behind. Number 6 follows

Post-Le Mans, and WW2

Both cars went to Brooklands on August Bank Holiday and came first and second in a race that turned out to be the last at Brooklands. WW2 arrived and the cars were garaged at Staines until a V1 flying bomb hit the garage and damaged both cars. It didn't end there though as both cars, through tortuous routes, were rebuilt.



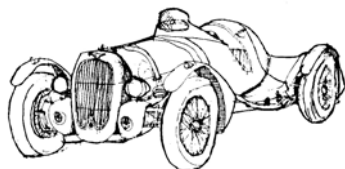
The remains after the V1 bomb

Where are they now?

The Dobson/Brackenbury car is in the Louwman Museum in Amsterdam.

The Waleran/Selsdon had a turbulent time with various owners, but the last known whereabouts was in September 2012 when Peter Gibbs sold it to an unknown buyer.

Next issue, we leap forward to the 1954 and 1955 races, the next, and last, that saw Lagondas race at Le Mans.



Lagonda Spring Rally, North Norfolk

By Stephen Matthews

"I am still reeling with delight at the soaring majesty of Norfolk." John Betjeman

For something entirely new, the Lagonda Spring Rally headed to north Norfolk. Martin & Janice Sumner answered the call to organise the event. They live some three-hour drive away, such was their commitment. As we now know, Norfolk is a long way from anywhere. Dual carriageways are scarce and motorways non-existent, but what we did have were lots of narrow roads and stunning scenery, plus panoramic views of the grey sea.



Martin's instructions for the 20 participants called us 'tourists', which was apt as we toured through the many attractions that north Norfolk has to offer the visitor. An excellent hotel had been booked, The Pheasant Inn, near Kelling. Selecting the hotel is key to a successful tour; good parking of course, comfortable rooms, easy access, large bar, helpful staff, good food, all at a reasonable rate. So, the Pheasant Inn had five stars from the Lagonda folk; many thought it was one of the best hotels we have used in recent times - high praise indeed. As we assembled on the Sunday afternoon there were some inevitable changes to the attendance list (always best to keep the admin staff on their toes....!):

John Breen & Rachel Bagenal	16/80 Tourer	Dennis Schills & Els Kumpen	3L Tourer
Nigel & Jennifer Hall	LG45R	David & Polly Stone-Lee	DB2.6 DHC
Alan & Sue Harrison	LG45 DHC	Martin & Janice Sumner	3L Carlton DHC
David Hine	M45 Saloon	John & Rosalind Sword	M45R F&W Saloon
Peter & Natalie Blenk	LG45 Tourer	Walter & Rosie Tomson	2L LC Tourer
Stephen & Rebecca Matthews	M45 Tourer	Peter & Ann Walby	2L LC Tourer
David & Francesca Rowe	3L LC Tourer	Paul & Paula Yallop	3L Special sports
Robin & Janice Sadler	LG45/M45R		
John & Alison Boyes	John & Joan Fitton	Norman & Tricia Marrett	Nigel & Sybil Smeal

Day1. The Tour party assembled for pre-dinner drinks; the sense of adventure was palpable, with new friends to be made and old friendships renewed. The hubbub was considerable, and this is very much the ‘glue’ of the Lagonda Club. Dennis and Els had arguably travelled the furthest although the Walbys had come a long way too; much to the group’s amusement Martin described them as ‘overseas’, which may be news to those living in Northern Island. Paul Yallop claimed he lived the nearest and was disappointed when there were no prizes. Naturally the weather was a topic of conversation and although mainly dry it was certainly overcast and cold, with the strong easterly wind making itself felt. Those who had arrived in saloons were rightly smug and warm, the merits of ‘wind-up windows’ discussed, while those in tourers experimented with side screens or just keeping the hood erected. Lagonda folk are a hardy lot and so we proved, through sharp downpours and even some sleet that awaited us over the next few days.

Day 2. The day started in proper form with a good deal of spares being exchanged in the car park, some sort of ‘Lagonda Amazon delivery service’, cardboard boxes were scrutinized and eagerly examined. First destination, some 20 miles away, was Langham Glass which had the essential warm drink and a fascinating glassmaking demonstration. The craft skills shown were very impressive and as the molten glass was moulded and blown, one could appreciate those skills. The next stop was Sandringham, a very slick visitor experience. Most of us arrived with plenty of time and although the cafeteria was closed for refurbishment at least there was a ‘take away’ service. Martin successfully marshalled the ‘Lagonda flock’ and we were escorted through the gardens to the House, giving us the opportunity to see the newly planted topiary garden on the old west lawn and the new maze

garden under construction. Charles III has wasted no time in getting these projects underway. Personally, while pleased to have visited Sandringham I am glad I don't live there, rather cold, and impersonal, museum like. Having ticked the Sandringham box, we returned to the warm Pheasant Inn for drinks and supper - a great day.



Day 3. A Free Day where people could simply choose what they wished to do. An excellent plan as there was so much to do and see in Norfolk. Some went bird watching and saw a Marsh Harrier having its lunch. The coast was an attraction with Cromer, Wells next the Sea and Sheringham. A ride on a steam/diesel train from Holt proved popular. Some tour members decided to adorn their cars with the Sheringham Seagull, which certainly brightened up the car park. This evening's dinner was marked by Lagonda Club members who lived nearby being invited to join us, Norman and Frankie Opie, James Paterson plus David and Suzanne Wall, which proved to be an excellent idea. As some tour members had to depart the following day, short speeches of thanks were made and there were many accolades for Martin & Janice, who made five pre-visits to ensure the tour went smoothly. Well done them.

Day 4 Our destination was the RAF Air Defence Radar Museum returning via Blickling or Heydon, a time warp village. Just 30 miles took us to the

Radar Museum which turned out to be a real gem. The enthusiasm of the volunteers was impressive and reassuring to know we Brits had discovered radar just in time for 1940 and the Battle of Britain. The 'Cold War' operations room, in a time warp set in November 1984, was rather chilling; we just hope similar alert systems are operating now although David Hine did remark "you wonder why they turned them off". Some of us visited Blickling Estate, a National Trust property, and what a fine Jacobean mansion it is, with an impressive Long Gallery and about 55 acres of garden, plus of course the essential hot drinks and food replenishment. We made our way back to The Pheasant Inn, looking forward to drinks and the Gala Dinner. The realisation that the time had simply flown by and people now looking forward to the next trip. David Hine, as is his custom, regaled us with a new rendition of Sister Josephine by Jake Thackray. An evening of much laughter and fun – the very essence of a good Lagonda party.

Day 5. Departure Day, started with farewells at the breakfast table and reflections on an excellent tour and appreciation and thanks to Martin and Janice for their excellent organisation. Reflection also of our wonderful Lagonda friends and acquaintances; we are a very eclectic group but the bonds that bind us are also very special. Tours like this cement those bonds, make the Club stronger but also, support one another through our cars. Just as our cars are so special, so are the people, it is a privilege to drive a Lagonda in company - simply splendid!



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Catastrophic Hammering Sound

Graham Swindley tackles the heat with his 14-60

I have been gradually extending the range of drives in my 1927 14/60 semi sports after a lay-up of 55 years. It has been run a little since getting on the road for my son and daughter in law's wedding in August 2021 but only a handful of miles. The performance had been quite anaemic until I recently removed the cylinder head and had new valves and guides and rocker refacing done by Gosnays. A very fine job they did too.



Enjoying its newly found power on a toasty hot Sunday visit to my son, I was motoring quite swiftly along the Ash bypass (a nice straight bump-free A road) when there was a huge catastrophic hammering from the engine and rapid deceleration. I thought the big ends had gone. After perhaps 6-8 violent compressions I released the throttle and coasted to a stop. Thankful that I had fitted Hazard lights I switched them on and phoned my son for recovery.



I noticed that the engine was very hot (100 degrees C) and sat down in the sunshine to contemplate removing the engine whilst I waited.

The wait was a little longer than expected so after about 10 minutes I inspected the car again and decide to push the starter button. To my huge surprise it

burst sweetly into a tick over. When my son arrived, we decided to try driving it. It happily completed the 10 miles home (if a little gingerly).

Reading and musing on the incident I have decided that I must have experienced severe pre detonation. Concerned about possible piston damage this morning I popped my endoscope down the plug holes. All appears to be well.

Clearly the improved compression is generating much more heat than before and the very hot head lead to pre-detonation. The cooling system was obviously not doing its job well.

My first fix was to make a brass shroud to fit in the thermostat cavity so that hot water is directed through the radiator matrix. Then I took the radiator to CPA services of Grantham who did a splendid repair fixing 5 major leaks!



Now I've drilled out the spark plug shrouds as suggested by Julian Messant of LMB, as a means of keeping the plugs cooler whilst also keeping them cleaner. I suspect we will see many more 26 degree C days over future years.

Finally, I am taking various other steps to ensure it stays cooler so that hopefully my granddaughter can continue with her driving lessons. She really hasn't got the hang of the gears yet ...



Tricar Wheel Repair

Peter Walby finds a solution

IN THE AUTUMN 2022 magazine I related our wheel collapse on the tricar, resulting from spoke failures. As the wheel rim had twisted under the hub and stub axle a section of the wheel centre mounting the outer row of spokes had broken away, when the front axle landed on it. This has necessitated a tricky repair and I thought it might be of interest to see the method of repair I used.

The front wheels transpired to have been manufactured by the Chater Lea Manufacturing Company as a die stamping on the wheel centre revealed once paint was removed.



Chater Lea Mfg. Co. London



Bronze brake shoe

Lagonda were supposed to have made most components in-house but at least the wheels must have been outsourced. The front axle is braked with the backplates having single expanding bronze C-shaped shoes to bear on the integral steel drums forming part of the wheel centres.

Again, paint removal revealed a legend adjacent to two small holes on the drum rim advising oil lubrication of the shoe/drum interface. I had previously used grease on the shoes but will use oil in future.

Chater Lea wheel centres are understandably not available off the shelf, so a repair was planned machining off the outer broken spoke ring of the cast steel wheel centre.



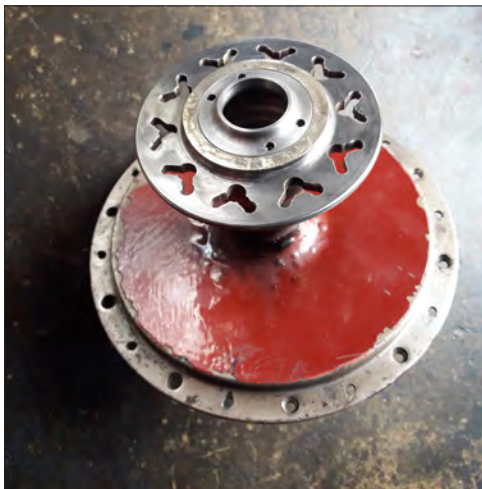
Removing the broken outer spoke ring

After a lot of measuring and photography ensuring that correct orientation of the inner and outer spoke rings could be replicated, the broken ring was milled off the wheel centre maintaining its integrity for comparison.

The wheel centre was machined to create a cylindrical surface on which to mount a new spoke ring sleeve. This in turn was machined from the solid and then mounted in the miller to index the spoke mounting holes and slots. This new spoke ring sleeve was then fitted to the wheel centre and silver-soldered in place.



Newly machined outer spoke ring



*Spoke ring sleeve pressed on
and silver-soldered*

Both front wheels were sent off to be re-spoked as I was uneasy about the other front wheel despite it being visually fine and running true. Richards Bros. were happy to re-use the rim from the undamaged wheel but they replaced the other rim as many of the spoke nipple sockets had been pulled out of line.

After powder-coating, the beaded edges tyres have been refitted and the tricar is fit again for an outing.



The completed wheel repair

Out and About

VSCC Dorset Tour, by Roland Bugler

In case you weren't aware, the VSCC have started to organise local 'tours', so I decided to try the one local to me. It was a great day out in my Rapier (Josephine), taking a friend who was experiencing vintage cars for the first time.

It was a civilised start at 10:30 from a sports club with breakfast rolls and a hot drink beforehand, setting off at one-minute intervals to avoid the dreaded convoy. Yes, we eventually 'clumped' into small groups, but that was nice. We stopped at a house and gardens for a cuppa and then lunch at a lakeside café before the drive back to 'base'. I dipped out after the lake as it was already 3:30 and it was close to my home. It was a great day out with almost no rain!

There were two Lagondas (both Rapiers), plus a Sunbeam, Bentley, Vauxhall, Austins, etc. A very mixed bag with lots of chatting and the plenty of camaraderie at the stops.

This sounds like an advert, but the VSCC is doing these all over, so if you fancy someone else working out a great, stress-free drive through the countryside with about 20 cars, stopping at lovely spots, this is probably for you. I will definitely go on another.



*Tim Kerridge & Ian Massey-Crosse's
1500cc, supercharged Rapier*



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Letters & Emails ... Letters & Emails

Peter Henson writes...

Hello Roland,

Great effort with the latest Lagonda Club Mag. I like the new style and presentation. Also, the cartoon rang my bells, and I can see a few owners that I know crying over what might have been, if only. Very nice to see a DB on the cover, very well presented too. I am enjoying the event posters, though not much chance of attending from this distance I would like to download a printable copy if that option comes up.

After digesting the contents of No 280, my Rapier education has commenced. Prior to this issue I had not really known the 'Rapier Story' well enough to comment on these Lagondas, nor did I know just how the Rapier evolved. Still lots to learn, but my interest has been aroused to know more about these cars.

Well done and I look forward to more Australians contributing soon.

Cheers, Peter Henson. H62

[Ed: Watch out for news on downloading posters or ordering left-over prints.]

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