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THE MAGAZINE OF
THE LAGONDA CLUB



Adrian & Joanna van der Kroft's
LG45R photobombs at the
old Reims race circuit! A teaser
from the Champagne Tour
full report next issue...



The Lagonda Magazine

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**Last date for content for the Winter magazine is 31st December 2024.
Please keep new articles,
emails & photos coming in.**

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Editorial

Roland Bugler

Wow. As the main event season in the UK of this 125th anniversary year draws to a close, I can honestly say that it has been a packed year. Maybe even epic.

I've been to more than I've ever done before, albeit without my Lagonda for much of it, and for the events I didn't get to, the reports all suggest that there has been a lot of fun. A huge debt of gratitude is owed to the organisers of them all. I know that a lot of work and anguish, goes into the concept, the organisation and the execution of every event. I'm in awe of every organiser.

For my Rapier, it has been quite a rocky season. It started in late winter with such grand plans, most of which ended with no-shows due to an extremely irritating problem that means she splutters to a halt after about 30 minutes. Is it ignition, fuel, etc. I keep thinking that I, my friends and a local garage have tried everything, and then another idea pops up. As a result, I have 'fixed' a lot of things, but none of them resolved the fundamental problem. As I write, the solution is still out of my grasp, but I'll get there, and with all the love and attention, she ought to be going very nicely once the eureka moment arrives.

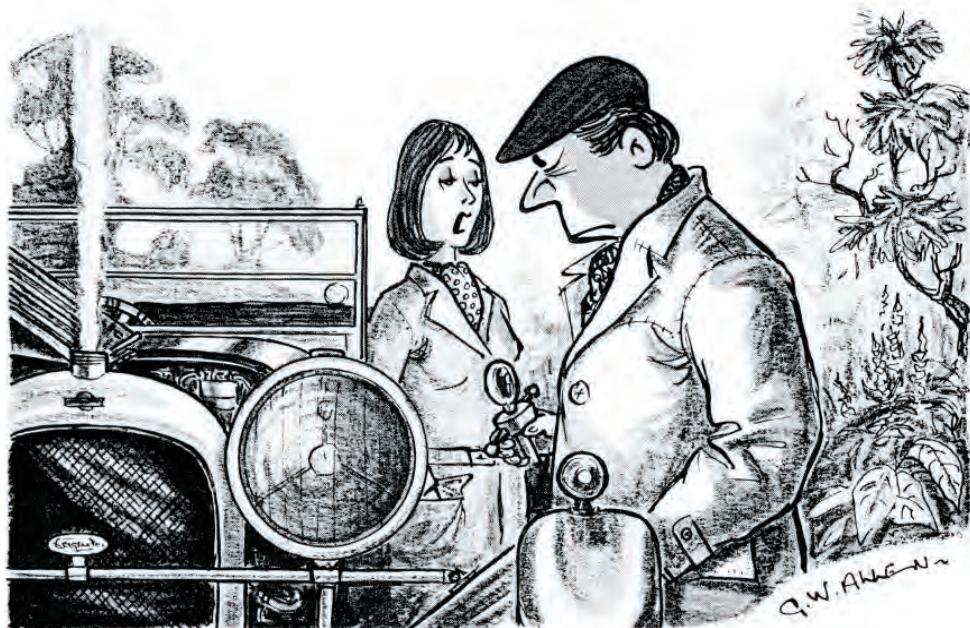
My personal highlight was the Champagne Tour. As tour 'virgins', Sally and I didn't know what to expect, but we were blown away, even as passengers to my older brother Martin, in the 2 litre of my younger brother, David! Life after the tour seems so dull and trivial by comparison. I also want to say how great the Brooklands Fête was. What a turn-out of cars across the decades, so many people to catch-up with, a scooter up 'the hill', a fabulous museum and a proper café (very important in my world!). A great, easy day out.

For this magazine, we have the final part of Richard Cunningham's Americas adventure (what a shame it had to come to an end), reports from recent events, and lots more. There has been so much going on, I've saved some for the next issue, which will be a good thing as it will brighten up what will be, by then, mid-winter. I've also started to make inroads into what's going on outside the UK, as you'll see, and am actively encouraging more from non-UK members.

I've unearthed another of the great Allen cartoons this issue, and have also started rummaging through more back-issues for additional cartoons, which are not only brilliant in their own right, but are great for those awkward blank spaces.

And, finally, a date for your diary. The Northern Dinner is set for 9th May. It must be time to buy the 2025 wall calendar and start planning next year's trips.

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"I suppose that four-letter water-pump drive you just mentioned is part of the superb vintage craftsmanship you are always drooling over."



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Ultimate Overland: The Americas (pt 3)

Richard Cunningham's adventure concludes

Part 3 – The home run



Our cars are our passports! Colombia

Ecuador is the most beautiful country, and we motored through it constantly surrounded by stunning active and inactive volcanos. We crossed the equator in Ecuador and celebrated on the Midad del Monde, the following day crossing into Colombia.

Colombia is equally stunning, and we gently rose and fell through equatorial rainforests. We never went higher than 2,000m, so the cars found the going relatively easy. 70km from our destination we came to another grinding halt, being told that the earliest that the road would open was 19:00. The road had been swept away and engineers were constructing a replacement. With our rule being 'Never drive at night' this was a challenge we needed to overcome. We decided to risk all and charged about 10 miles to the front of the queue. Our technique in this situation was to smile, engage and to persevere. By the time we arrived at the front of the queue the interest shown by other drivers was causing significant delays and traffic jams and after about an hour the police decided to push us through the roadworks as a matter of urgency. A single-

track replacement road had been constructed. It was extremely steep and twisty, and I had serious reservations about the Rolls not making it, but once again it simply ground its way up in first gear. We had just ducked an enormous bullet and were back on the road once again. The challenges of the Colombian roads did not stop and throughout our trip through this beautiful country there were endless problems caused by the fallout from cyclone Yaku. Another day we ground to a halt alongside the beautiful Cauca River where miles of rock and mud slides were being repaired. We finally took a long diversion east towards Venezuela to avoid road works but everywhere we went we saw the most stunning countryside and were met by friendly faces and kind people doing all they could to help us on our way.

Despite the problems that all the cars had experienced with overheating, the first broken radiator was as we left Mompox when my radiator suddenly boiled as the water had leaked away overnight. We had no option but to try K-Weld as the car was on a busy street and we still had a long way to go. It solved the immediate problem but undoubtedly lay the foundations for problems to come.

Cartagena was our final destination in South America and the port from which we needed to ship the cars to Panama. There is still, and there probably always will be, a gap of about 65 miles in the Pan-American highway between Panama and Colombia. The gap is known as the Darien Gap and one must ship the cars around it. Fortunately, Nigel had found a ship which could carry the cars and we had a few days grace so we parked up on the Baru peninsula south of Cartagena where we successfully serviced the cars and prepared them for central and north America. Unfortunately, when we left Baru for Cartagena my Lagonda boiled once again and, when we settled into our AirBnB in the old town, we extracted the radiator to seal the leaks and washed the radiator through. It was an extraordinary sight, two foreigners carrying a 1930s car radiator through the streets of the old town to their house. The cars were shipped over the Easter weekend and our shipping agent even managed to get them extracted from the port on the Easter Saturday, proving once again it's not what you know but who you know, particularly in this part of the world.



Armed escort, Nicaragua!

Because of the unusual nature of the cars, we had been allowed to drive them onto the ship in Cartagena but in Colon, the port of Panama City, the stevedores decided to try and start Nigel's Lagonda and in the process destroyed the starter motor and Bendix drive. Good fortune prevailed and we managed to get replacements to Colon for the Monday, and we were back on the road. My son had come to join me for a few days through Panama which was a complete joy, and we motored through the arid parts of northern Panama together. Our drive through Central America was a journey of fantastic roads, wonderful people and organisational and mechanical challenges. My Lagonda was still overheating and for the second time we removed the radiator. It wasn't leaking but there was a problem and this time we tested the pump. "It's never the pump" is a common mantra when suffering overheating, until of course the time comes when it is the pump, and once we had replaced it the problem was largely solved.

Costa Rica and Nicaragua do not allow right hand drive cars, and we found no way around Costa Rica's rules, resulting in us trucking our cars across this beautiful country. The Nicaraguan Embassy in London had been wonderful in sorting out an exemption for our three venerable old cars. The exemption resulted in us having a police escort through the entire country, arriving in Managua like a presidential motorcade, blues and twos clearing the way to our hotel.



Head gasket change 'in the field'? No problem. And fine pair of spectacles the old gasket will make...

Following his starter motor problems Nigel's Lagonda increasingly struggled, losing power and consistently overheating. In Nicaragua we did a compression test and it was clear that the head gasket had blown between cylinders 5 and 6. The modern composite head gaskets rarely blow so this was unfortunate but the three of us set about replacing it in the dusty hotel car park. 7 hours later the Lagonda was back together and running like new! It wasn't the end of Nigel's mechanical challenges, but it was a huge repair for us to complete.

Honduras was spectacular with wonderful roads through stunning forests. The cars were running well, although Nigel's Lagonda was still getting too hot. Our first challenge was meeting a local teachers' strike where they were blockading the road, so we found ourselves again in a long traffic jam. We managed to get to the front but this time, despite all my very best negotiating skills with the head teacher, they weren't letting us through until they had



Nuns on the run. Guatemala/Honduras border

made their point. A couple of hours later and we were back on the road. The road rapidly deteriorated and disaster struck when I broke a rear spring. The rear axle was displaced and there was little hope of us being able to repair it on the roadside. We needed a lift, and I couldn't drive the car any distance. Disaster is often followed by good fortune and in the very next village Chris found Tito's garage, owned by the exceptional Tito and staffed by his sons. To say that Tito was surprised to find two 1933 Lagondas and a 1927 Rolls Royce in his garage would be an understatement. Two hours later we had replaced the main leaf (I was carrying a spare) and were once again on the road, arriving at our hotel minutes before the sun went down. Tito was a genius, demonstrating a bush mechanic's extraordinary ability to overcome any problems, and getting the car back on the road.

With the mileage we needed to cover, one of the things that we often missed was sightseeing. We had seen the most wonderful countryside, met fantastic people but due to the unremitting work required on the cars we had more often than not lacked the time to see some of the wonderful places we passed. In Honduras we found time to visit Copan Ruinas, the Mayan ruin, and in Guatemala the beautiful town of Antigua and then we were pushing on into Mexico.

For travellers, and in particular motorists, Mexico has a bad reputation and the stories of robbery, kidnap and murder are numerous. Just before our arrival five Americans had been kidnapped in the border town of Matamoros, three had been killed and the US Government had advised all citizens to avoid travelling to Mexico. We crossed Mexico in 7 days and were only met by delightful people, fantastic food and good roads. Our arrival at the US border at Matamoros was met with incredulity by the US border control staff. The truth is once again that our cars are our passports, and particularly in South America everyone we met simply loved seeing the cars driving through their countries.



The now-legendary Tito's garage

We planned our border crossing into the US carefully. Reynosa is now known as the murder capital of the world, whilst Matamoros had experienced the recent tourist kidnapping. We stayed the night before at a small town about 60 miles south of the border and then planned an early start so as to cross the border with the minimum of fuss. We missed the clocks changing by an hour as we approached the border so were already an hour later than we expected. We also missed the fact that there was a 'tourist' crossing and a 'commercial' crossing. Chris and I went through the former, Nigel the latter and we all eventually ended up at customs at the commercial crossing struggling to understand how we could get our cars into the US. It was clearly not a problem to get them in, since as we weren't importing, simply transiting through, no paperwork was required to get into the US. The problem might arise when we try and ship them on to the UK. We decided that we would face that problem when we got to New York.

Our drive through Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and New York saw us experience jazz, soul, rhythm

and blues and country and western, fantastic roads, polarised politics, rampant conspiracy theories and once again some of the most kind and generous people one could hope to meet. The US, like no other country on earth, has the ability when it focuses on an issue to solve any problem it faces. The problem lies in the fact that it is so divided and so lacking in confidence that it apparently would rather tear itself apart than continue to build this wonderful bastion of enterprise and democracy. The cars had travelled an enormous distance and the signs of being tired were clear to see. In Vicksburg we had Nigel's radiator out to flush it through which solved his overheating issue. My Lagonda was running hot and sounded like a bag of nails but continued to roll down the road. The Rolls, with daily tlc, just kept on rolling. Mr Royce would be so proud of what he designed in 1907.

On Sunday 7th May we rolled into New York having driven some extraordinary roads and met so many wonderful people who have helped us on our way. We drove nearly 20000km, through 13 countries. We removed three radiators, replaced one spring, built a working magneto from two broken ones, replaced two water pumps and a blown head gasket. We drove through mud and rockslides, a cyclone, flooding, an earthquake, protesting miners and teachers and we had driven from Buenos Aires to New York. It was a truly extraordinary, life affirming adventure for three men, their classic cars and a wonderful collection of co-drivers, helped on our way by the unstinting kindness of strangers.



Where next?

Continental Rally 2024

Welcome to Flanders

David Hine reports back on a tour around Belgium

This year the Conti was held in Belgium. Every year, a different country hosts this private rally. Jean van der Elst and Isa van Damme did a wonderful job, and everyone was well looked after.

Julian Messent from Historic came along as back up and had to help a few but nothing really serious! His presence and advice were always reassuring.

Jean had picked the Auberge du Pecheur south west of the city. The superb food and wine flowed wonderfully on our first night with old friends reuniting and new members being brought into our family. Alan and I are always made very welcome, and this was our 20th Continental rally.

The first day was a circuitous route through the country and into the City of Brugge. The picture shows us all lined up in a special place in the market square. Not many car clubs still boast a selection of 60 – 100-year-old cars with no new cars dominating the scene! We then had a mile walk to the canal and this picture shows all of us setting off in our own barge. This is a wonderful way to have a guided tour of the sights of this otherwise busy city.

That evening a coach had been laid on to take us into Ghent. We had a walking guided walk and were all amazed by the vast number of beautiful historic buildings dating back to mediaeval times. The city was mercifully spared the bombing that we all inflicted on each other 90 years ago.



*Lagondaists afloat.
So... who brought the spare magneto!*



Stunning architecture, thankfully spared war damage.

(see picture overleaf). A courtyard restaurant provided a splendid dinner in a historic area.



Our hosts - Jean van der Elst and Isa van Damme

The second day was a circuitous ramble through the rolling countryside of Flanders with a lunch stop in a tranquil garden setting blessed by sunny weather. That evening we had the Gala dinner at the Auberge of which the highlight was Jean's slide show on a huge screen. These were a collage of photographs dating right back 25 years. This was

when the late lamented Roland Danner launched these events. It was poignant to see so many pals we have inevitably lost and hilarious to see the games some of us got up to over the years!

There was an optional third day this year. We all motored to Ypres. Some of us following the special scenic route whilst others who got lost took a more direct route relying on our trusty Tom Tom! We parked next to the Cloth Hall, which is famous for being rebuilt stone by stone and almost bankrupting the 1920s German economy. We had pre-selected our menu for the dinner that evening at a nearby restaurant. Once again Isa had selected splendid wine to accompany the repast. Some of us were amazed at all the young folk enjoying this luxury and it was just an ordinary Wednesday evening.



Me (DH) walking away, having arrived last, of course!

My trusty M45 Saloon whisked us back to the ferry. I was pleased to hear that Eckhard had fitted the same EZ power steering to his V12 and was delighted with it. Lags with lighter coachwork especially 2 litres and Rapiers don't really need this modern supplement, but it is a huge help with the heavier cars.

And a heads-up for 2025 – the Conti will be Baden near Wein (Vienna).

The 34th Gran Premio Nuvolari

*Robert Ecklemann and Cito Aufenacker
compete alongside five other Lagondas*

The 34th edition of the Gran premio Nuvolari 2024 began in Mantova with stable, good weather and thunderous applause from many enthusiastic spectators. The first 300 kilometres went north to Lake Garda, and the big challenge on this first stage was the narrow serpentines up to 1,500 m high - a special challenge for the heavy, long Lagondas

Six Lagondas were registered in this year's tour:

1932 W24 Tourer, Germany. Robert Ecklemann and Cito Aufenacker (E 9)

1933 3 Litre Tourer, Austria. Adolf & Michalea Schacherleitner (S 6)

1934 M45, Netherlands. Hans Bloemendaal & Sytske Kiestra (B 46)

1934 M45 T8, Switzerland. Michael & Anke Baur

1936 LG45, Germany. Nunzio & Raffaele Clemente

1939 LG45 Le Man, Italy. Manfred Feyrer & Angelina Igl



*That flag is enough to get the
adrenaline going!*

The first stage ended in the beautiful city of Modena, from where we continued towards Tuscany the next morning. In this stage too, everything was demanded of the Lagonda. Narrow gorges, more serpentines. Maximum concentration! However, this was more than compensated for by the beautiful Tuscan backdrop.

The highlight of this second stage however was the old town of Siena. Here, too, hundreds of spectators roar. This second tour ended on the beach in Rimini, where the evening program began directly at the Grand Hotel Rimini.

However, in the afternoon of the second day of racing we had the misfortune of a significant leak in the oil pipe. We quickly realized that due to the high loss of oil, continuing the race would automatically lead to drastic engine damage. The

mechanics also had difficulty restoring the necessary oil level. 10 litres of oil were added after the repair!

The Lagonda could not continue like this and was chauffeured to Rimini by van. Arriving there at 11:30 p.m., some mechanics did their wonderful work so that the Lagonda was at the starting line at 7:20 a.m. sharp on the third day of the race. The Lagonda drove like a young timer - everything went perfectly, despite the little adventure.

On the third day, the weather was good and we continued from Rimini via Ferrara to Mantova. Weather is necessary to mention in this case because a state of emergency was declared in the two regions of Rimini and Bologna due to the massive rainfall last week. Accordingly, the route could not be carried out as originally planned.



Robert & Cito with their W24 tourer

Particularly worth mentioning are the enthusiastic Italians along the entire route! Many parents with children, some even wave Italian flags. Of course, it is also something very special to drive through traditional old towns under police protection.

In summary, it should be noted that over 300 beautiful cars can be admired on such a vintage car tour. However, it is noticeable that most viewers pay particular attention to the beautiful old Lagonda models.

Lagonda is an elegant racing machine that can compete with other sports models such as Bentley, Bugatti, Alfa Romeo, Lancia and Fiat. It was 1,000 kilometres of pure pleasure.

The 2nd Spitfire 'Run & Break'

Paul Anderson's event returns



Simultaneous take-off. A rare sight, and very evocative.

This year's Spitfire Run & Break was held on the 22nd July. The same day 84 years ago in 1940, The Battle of Britain was well under way and German bombing commenced at 09.27 at Banff on a German Prisoner of War Camp which resulted in 6 Germans being killed and 1 British guard, 18 Germans and 18 British troops were being injured. The Luftwaffe raids finished at 04.27 on 23 July with the bombing of Swansea. The Germans lost 4 aircraft and 3 damaged during the day.



Yep – we really are this close to the action. Spitfires in flight all day.

84 years ago, many of our Lagonda's were over a decade old if not more for some and just like the Spitfire we had gathered to see, they were still up and running and capable of the tasks they were designed for. The weather was kinder to us this year with plenty of sunshine around and isolated showers. In all, we had 18 Lagondas and a few moderns.

Seeing a Spitfire, it is easy to jump back in time to the Battle of Britain, especially when you are at a Kent aerodrome but just like last year, we managed to get close up and personal with Spitfire MK IXT NH341 'Elizabeth', a D-Day Spitfire.

To recap from last year, she was built at Castle Bromwich as a Spitfire Low Level Fighter (LFIxE) and delivered to 8 MU on the 28th April 1944 and then delivered to 411 (Grizzly Bear) squadron RCAF on 12th June 1944. She made 27 operational combat flights over the post D-Day battlefields in the hands of 9 pilots. F/L Trainor scored two air victories in NH341 against ME109s on the 29th and 30th June.



At 13:00, Club members gathered around 'Elizabeth' to hear Flt LT Antony 'Parky' Parkinson talk us through the history of NH341. Parky is ex Red Arrows with 1600 hours on Spitfires. We held a draw to win a flight in a Stampe Biplane and a chance to have your Lagonda photographed with Elizabeth.

Parky was presented with one of our event posters and it now proudly hangs in the dispersal hut at Headcorn Aerodrome.

It is a rare treat to be able to park your Lagonda along the flight line and watch Spitfires taxiing, taking off and landing with the odd victory roll thrown in for good measure.



*David Stone-Lee and his DB2.6 DHC.
A raffle win for photos airside in front of a Spitfire.*

Lagondas at VSCC Prescott: John Batt Memorial Convoy

Mark Yeomans reports

As has become tradition we had ten Lagondas assembled on the Sunday of VSCC Prescott.

It was a lovely sight and attracted a lot of attention. The origins of the convoy go back many years when John Batt would seek to arrange a display of Lagondas in The Orchard at Prescott. That was not as straightforward as it sounds with the cars arriving from different directions at different times and with other vintage cars joining the queue into Prescott, Lagondas easily got split up.

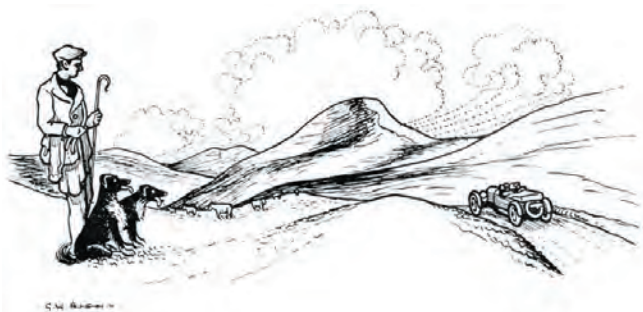


The solution was on the Saturday to chat up the supervisor in charge of parking the cars in The Orchard and ask if he would reserve a line, well up the field for a display of Lagondas. Not a problem for John Batt in years gone by as the parking stewards were of a certain age and most knew what a Lagonda was.

Coming up to date, the Saturday chat has become impossible with a change to the stewarding contract which now buses in a team of youngsters who seem quite bored and leaderless, but have the ability to scan a QR code from your online ticket! In recent years the assembly of Lagondas at The Royal Oak in Gretton is the key to getting our lineup. This takes place from 08:15 with a strict departure at 08:45. To repeat the words of the late John Batt, “be ready to depart at 08:45 or we go without you”. So, on Sunday 4th August we assembled 10 Lagondas in the Royal Oak car park and were even filmed for a YouTube video of the Prescott event which is a most professional production.

See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZolzHEUSoI>. Or search 'Jack's Lagonda' in YouTube.

Those in attendance were: yours truly in our 2 litre LC, David Humphreys in his HC 2 litre and Roger Seabrook in his 2 litre Saloon, plus Henry and Wendy Kaye in their 2 litre HC all the way from N Yorkshire. Completing the excellent 2 litre turnout was Brooklands Team Car PK9201. We had three M45s in attendance Messrs Carver, Hallowes and Westall. Tim and Ross Miller turned up in the family 2 litre and a 3 litre. But the Nassims, with work ongoing on their M45 saloon, decided to raise standards by hitching a lift with friends in their imposing 1937 Packard Straight 8 Limousine, it was quite a car. With thanks to all who supported this year's memorial convoy. Old friends were looking down on us with a smile!



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The Lagonda Brooklands Fête

Jonathan Cresswell shares the joy

I want to share with you, our experience of The Lagonda Fête, organised by the Lagonda Club in celebration of the 125th anniversary. Although we had a cylinder block for a Meadows engine in the boot, we decided to park our car in the visitor's car park rather than entering through the Campbell gate, not to spoil the view of the Lagondas with our modern car. A friendly Brooklands volunteer greeted us at the entrance and told us all excitedly about the special Lagonda event that was to be held today at Brooklands. As if we weren't excited yet! We swiftly made our way through the motor racing display area to see how many Lagondas had already gathered on the Finishing Straight [Ed: 40 Lagondas!]. And yes, there they were... what a sight. Their iconic radiators gleaming proudly in the sun. Almost a biblical sight to see so many Lagondas, neatly parked in what I refer to as "the holy concrete", Brooklands. A little hesitant, my wife and I went closer to see the Lagondas. After all, we are just mechanics, enthusiasts and admirers and, not yet Lagonda owners. We were pleasantly surprised by two major facts. Firstly, the diversity of the Lagondas as we are only used to the ones on the continent (living in Belgium) and secondly, the welcoming owners and Lagonda club members. It didn't take us long to get into conversations about their precious motorcars. Conversations quickly went from history, restoration and, men being men, superchargers.



Mark Yeomans' M45 taking 'the hill' in its stride





Previous page. Forty cars assembled on the concrete. A beautiful sight. Thanks go to Peter Lloyd for the photos, including the centre pages, which stylises the scene brilliantly.

Catherine kindly brought some copies with her from the Lagonda Fête on Brooklands in period, painted by Alan Fearnley. A must have for every Lagonda owner's or enthusiast's living room or workshop, hence we needed two of them.

The dapper looking marshals gathered the drivers for a briefing, before attacking the famous test hill. I was overjoyed, and forever grateful to the Brooklands volunteer who allowed me to be his passenger in the M45 team car rep. Whilst patiently waiting our turn, the Lagondas one by one roared up the test hill. When the Marshal, on top of the test hill, waved the green flag, my experienced driver let in the clutch and off we went. A rush of adrenaline went through my body whilst the trusty Meadows engine made the test hill look like a mole-hill. Without any effort we got to the top.



Kenneth Jeddere-Fisher readies himself for the hill in his 12/24

Sadly, after saying our goodbyes, we had to set off to catch our ferry back to the European mainland. Back in the car, on our way to Dover, I couldn't help but think if Wilbur Gunn ever realised, or imagined, that what he started with tinkering in a greenhouse in the garden of his house in Staines, would still be celebrated 125 years later at the magical place of Brooklands, and would connect all kinds of people, all over the world.

Last but not least, my wife and I would like to thank Catherine and her team for organising this wonderful event, and all attended drivers and club members for making these events what they are, amazing!



Tim Metcalfe's Eccles Rapier looking, and sounding, very impressive

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Lagondas at le 24 Heures du Mans (pt 4)

Compiled by Roland Bugler, reviewed by Arnold Davey

As the 2024 'season' draws to a close, 2025 beckons and, with it, thoughts of the Le Mans Classic creep to the fore. In the penultimate part of this odyssey through Lagonda's participation at Le Mans, we jump from 1939, past WW2 to the 1954 and 1955 races, the next, and last, races in which Lagonda has a works entry.

Development of a new 4.5 litre V12

1954 saw a completely new 4.5 litre engine emerge, fearsomely complicated with four overhead camshafts, 24 plugs and 3 carburettors.

The chassis and body were very similar to the DB3S and four of these cars were built in preparation for Le Mans, although one is believed to have been destroyed in a fire during testing. One of the cars first appeared in a race at Silverstone in May where it came fifth, which was no mean feat against the competition which included the 4.9 Ferrari.

The 1954 Race

Two of the Lagondas and three of the DB3S cars were set to start at Le Mans, but only one of the Lagondas ran on the day (DP115/2), with another DB3S taking the second Lagonda's place.

The drivers were Dennis Poore and Eric Thompson, and they started reasonably well, keeping clear of the crazy first hour madness to be in tenth place, though passed soon after by one of the DB3S cars.

Around 4 hours in, on lap 25, Thompson spun the Lagonda in a big way whilst overtaking a slower car in the Esses before Tertre Rouge, crumpling the tail so badly that it took him nearly



Number 7 – the 1954 Le Mans Lagonda

2 hours to get going again. Sadly, they had to withdraw when he reached the pits as there was no hope of getting the rear lights to work, with darkness soon approaching. The car was fine mechanically, so it was a frustrating way to be forced to retire.



1954 Le Mans. It'll take more than a hammer to sort out that dent!

Arnold Davey adds “I had lunch with Eric at an AMOC ‘do’ in the ‘90s. He told me that he had accepted in 1954 that he had overdriven the car in passing a slower one, but much later it came out that a key in a steering arm had fractured so that he lost control. He knew that they would be disqualified when it got dark, so only pootled back to the pits and didn’t spot anything odd. The fractured key story was confirmed by John Wyer in the 1980s”.

As a post-script to this race, although designed for racing, one of the cars was driven at the 1954 Lagonda Club AGM by David Brown, haring up and down the A40 at very high speed!

Further development for 1955

For the 1955 Le Mans race, the chassis was extensively redesigned with a spaceframe of smaller tubes replacing the ladder-type design of the previous year’s car, though the engine was virtually unchanged.

Reg Parnell and Dennis Poore drove DP166, once again avoiding the madness in the early laps to lie in 16th place at the end of the first hour, and up to 9th place by 6:30, only one lap down on the leaders.



1955 Le Mans. Pits action.

This was, of course, the race made infamous by the terrible disaster when so many spectators were killed and injured after one of the Mercedes cars crashed and went over the fence. However, the race continued and by 8pm the Lagonda was in 8th place. Just after 11pm, the Lagonda pit crew held out a 'REG 2 LAPS FUEL' signal for Parnell to pit, but the car didn't appear. It emerged that the car ran out of fuel, and since you could only refuel at specified distances and at the pits, the race was over for the Lagonda. It appears that the fuel-filler cap had not been correctly secured, and fuel had spilled out when cornering. Another frustrating end.

1954 and 1955 races were not lost due to faulty engines, etc, though it is fair to say that a 24-hour race is not only about the endurance of car components. It takes an entire team of people, as well as the cars and drivers to achieve a successful campaign.

Where are they now?

DP115/2's body was modified for the Mille Miglia but was entered eventually. It was subsequently re-bodied for David Brown's personal use. DP166 Became the DBR2 with a 4 litre 6 cyl engine. Both are alive and well.

Next issue, we conclude this series with the famous Lagonda win in 1935 – the whole point of this series, and the call to action for us all to get our cars ready for the trip to Le Mans this coming July!

An Edwardian Lagonda

Mike Dyson's 11.1 'minor' rebuild

The name *Lagonda* conjures up an image of flowing lines, sleekness, power and luxury. Unfortunately, none of those words apply to the 11.1 hp cars that were produced immediately before the First World War. A more suitable description might be basic but with some advanced features. It is thought that only four of these models have survived: three are two-seater coupés and ours, which is a four-seater tourer.



*Before restoration.
That shouldn't take long...*

I went to view the car with my son following an advertisement which showed an interesting vehicle that perhaps needed a little work to bring it up to a more agreeable standard. The car had not been in regular use for some time and was running reasonably well although it clearly needed a major overhaul. Once we had the car home, it was planned to run the car for a few months and spend the winter carrying out necessary maintenance and restoration work.

Do things go to plan? In the first few days a list of work that was required started to grow at an alarming rate, so I decided to make a start at stripping the car down. The car does not have a chassis and is the first car with monocoque construction. It is not a true monocoque as angle iron is used in several places to stiffen the shell and there is also a pressed steel cross-member. Some Lancia owners believe the Lambda was the first monocoque, but Lagonda were ten years ahead of them. The shell with its stiffening pieces of angle iron were covered in mud and dirt. Priority was given to cleaning this off to discover the ravages of the rust moth. A rather unpleasant job, but once the muck had been removed, I was amazed to find the tinned sheet metal was in almost perfect condition and the angle iron stiffening pieces were only coated with light rust. I treated the angle iron with a rust converter and an epoxy rust proofing paint and finished with two coats of Craftmaster engine enamel.

The cooling system is totally thermo-syphon with no water pump or cooling fan. The radiator had been leaking. Once it had been cleaned it was obvious there were a series of pin-holes in the vertical brass tubes. A recommendation in

the Veteran Car Club's list of suppliers led me to contact CPA Radiator Services at Grantham. They examined the radiator and pointed out the problems in just replacing a few of the brass tubes. A total rebuild of the radiator would be much easier but of course very expensive. Two days later I was informed only five tubes needed replacing and they were all accessible. Three days later the work was completed.

The removal of the engine was no easy matter. It took a little time to discover how to disconnect the clutch and eventually it was possible to lift the engine without the sump clear of the body shell. The aluminium sump, clutch housing and gear box are a single casting and form an important strengthening part of the monocoque structure. As is usual with veteran car engines, the engine casting is in one piece with no separate cylinder head. One very unusual feature of the engine is the arrangement of the valves with overhead inlet and side exhaust.



The sump, clutch housing & gearbox are a single aluminium casting.

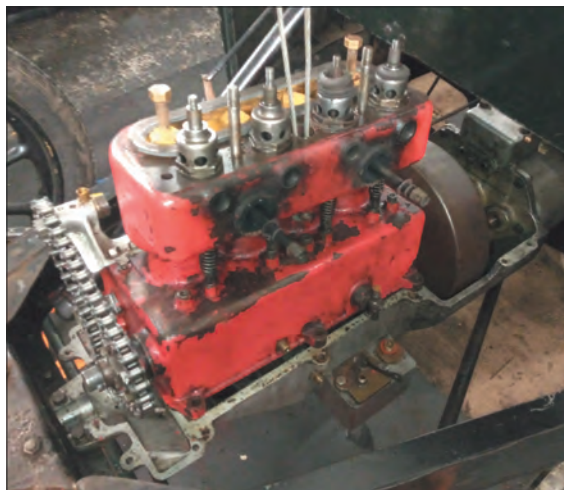
There are two rocker shafts for the exhaust valves which are both at right angles to the cam shaft with the valves operated by push rods.

The push rods for cylinders one and four are outside the engine casting but two and three run inside a steel tube screwed into the engine casting. It was no surprise the steel tube was leaking water as it was severely rusted and obviously had to be replaced. After many hours of gentle heating and the application of quantities of penetrating oil it was eventually removed. The tube has a curious thread – 1-1/8 inch by 18 TPI, something very unusual! Hugh made a fantastic job of machining the replacement tube which not only has this unusual thread but is also tapered.



Newly machined vs original!

Work continued on the engine with everything dismantled for inspection. All the bearings seemed to be in good condition but new piston rings were needed. I had been in contact with Mark Yeomans who



Removal of the engine.

owns a 1923 11.9 hp Lagonda which is very similar to the earlier 11.1 hp. He was a valuable source of information on many aspects of these early cars and advised me that piston rings could be obtained from Vintage and Classic Spares. The valve seats were somewhat pitted, and these were re-ground. Engine re-assembly went ahead fairly quickly with all the major problems now behind us apart from re-fitting the engine. I lowered the engine into position whilst Hugh was underneath ready

to guide the flywheel into the clutch housing. The sump was re-attached. The whole operation had taken a matter of minutes! It was hard to believe that it had taken so much hard work and time to remove the engine and only a few minutes to replace it. However, trying to get the timing chain back into position and set correctly was no easy matter.

As expected, once the exhaust was removed and cleaned holes appeared in the silencer. The two end flanges were in good condition, and these were bolted to the silencer. Once removed it was an easy task to replace the silencer although it was necessary to mount the new tube in the lathe so the ends could be machined accurately.

The rebuilt magneto and new spark plugs were fitted. The carburettor and magneto linkage proved to be yet another sticking point. Although many photographs and notes were made during dismantling, there always seems to be something that should have been more carefully recorded and observed. Eventually the engine was ready for testing. With the help of some Eazy Start the engine fired but initially it did not run very well. It improved enormously with adjustments to the timing and the carburettor. With no choke control, it takes a while for petrol to reach the engine, so the engine has to be turned over many times before it fires. I may have neglected to mention the car has no electrics so starting is by the armstrong method – hand cranking!

The upholstery was in a very poor condition and initially I thought we would have to have the seats re-trimmed. When I started this article, I described the 11.1 as basic. Wilbur Gunn in his attempt at producing a cheap light-weight car decided the seats could be unholstered in a faux leather material similar to rexine. A friend suggested I try a leather renovator and wax polish which

worked very well. I used an enormous quantity of wax polish and it seemed to soak in faster than I could apply it. However, the final result is very pleasing.

Wilbur Gunn had visited Henry Ford's factory in Detroit and came back with many of his ideas. Henry Ford said you could have a Model-T in any colour as long as it was black. Well, Wilbur Gunn had a similar idea – you could have an 11.1 in any colour as long as it was green. We spent some time trying out various colours but, on the advice of Craftmaster Paints, we chose Napier Green, a colour that was popular in the early days of motoring. Hugh decided he would do the painting as the results he had achieved on his wife's Austin Seven Special were very good. Dust is always the enemy when painting but so much worse when brush painting, so a bubble of polythene was created around the car, and over a few days the car was transformed from a rather down at heel car into something much more attractive.

Over the next few days, the mudguards and wheels were painted and, together with the running boards, were attached to the car. The brakes were re-fitted and adjusted. These only operate on the rear wheels and have no brake lining, just steel pads operating on a cast iron rim. The foot brake operates a transmission brake although this is always used sparingly.

The car was cautiously rolled outside for a trial run. The engine started and was driven around the field. We were delighted everything worked well but there are still a few teething problems which needed sorting out. It was subsequently taken out on the road and went well.

We have been able to cover a couple of local events with one presenting us



with a cup for the best vintage car in the show! We seem to receive comments about the car's instrumentation – there is none not even a speedometer! Over the 14 months there were many times when I thought this was a project I should not have started, but the final result has made it all worthwhile.

The completed car at its first outing in public

The Lagonda Club AGM 2024

Alan Harrison reports on a soggy AGM...



The courtyard made a great location for a fine display of cars

Well, the AGM has been and gone! It was a memorable 38th AGM with the 40th Gala dinner, a broad blend of participants, and very mixed weather.

Saturday dawned fine and warm, and coffee on the terrace outside the restaurant was a pleasure. There were various options for trips out in the cars, from the British Motor Museum to a stately home and landscaped gardens. Some of us, however, were trapped in their hotel room trying to remember how to record and stream the AGM the following day. After much struggling, fiddling and questionable language a satisfactory result was achieved, and the panic and nerves of early morning dissipated!

In the evening the Gala dinner took place with 48 members and guests attending, slightly fewer than last year. Martin Bugler welcomed everyone to his first Gala Dinner as Chairman and spoke enthusiastically of the wide-ranging events many of us have enjoyed throughout the year.

The meal and service were much improved on the previous year and the

wine and conversation flowed very companionably! As usual David Hine, the President, entertained with tales of Lagonda events and a magnificent rendition of Jake Thackeray's epic ballad Sister Josephine.

Sunday dawned on a grey and very wet Walton Hall, with even more dire Met office predictions for the rest of the day.

This year was the 90th anniversary of the launch of the Rapier, so it was fitting that this was the celebrated model for 2024. It was particularly pleasing to welcome many long serving stalwarts of the Rapier Register to the event to join in the celebration. There were 7 rapiers present, the Eccles Rapier being the outstanding car of the contingent.

Unfortunately, the weather was so bad that the usual display on the lawns was abandoned. Rachel Bagenal has taken over the organisation of the car display from Len Cozzolino and her efforts to layout the model sitings was to come to nought. I'm confident that she will ensure better weather for next year.

After coffee in the room the AGM started promptly at 11am with a good representation of members present and 12 further members attending via the live zoom stream.

David Hine, the President, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the AGM. Martin Bugler then repeated the welcome and dealt with all the total AGM business within the hour - a fine achievement for which he was complimented by John Sword, the previous Chairman.



I don't propose to go through the detail of the AGM here. The proceedings have been minuted by Roger Seabrook and the YouTube video of the event is available via the Lagonda Club website.

Hoods up. Suddenly, everyone wants a saloon!

Following the AGM, the weather continued to dominate the event. A few hardy souls inspected the cars and went to the tent to view the Eccles Rapier and spares available. Then came back to the conference room to dry out!

Lunch was taken, by those who had purchased tickets, in the conference room and discussion of all things Lagonda continued.

The prize presentation took place at the earlier time of 2pm due to the weather, with most people heading home soon after. The list of trophy winners is below:

Class	Car Model	Reg. No.	Winner	Photo No.
2 Litre	2L LC Tr	TG 1547	Walter Thompson	1
16/80	16/80 Spl Six Tr	JJ 9440	Rachel Bagenal	2
3Ltr & 16/65 & M35	3 L Spl DHC	FW 3154	Robin Sadler	3
M45, & LG45	M45 Tr	BYU 490	Norman Marrett	4
LG6 & V12	V12 DHC	EYY 2	Tim Hughes	5
Rapier	Rapier S/C SStr	Eccles	Tim Metcalfe	6
Post 1945	DB3L 2-dr sln	UPE 222	Peter Gilkes	7
Car Club Cup	Rapier S/C SStr	Eccles	Tim Metcalfe	8
Vokes Trophy	Rapier Tr	KY 8330	Alan Harrison	
Ladies Choice	Rapier Tr	BPJ 160	Jonathan Oppenheimer	
Gostling Trophy	–	–	Paul Anderson	

The AGM, although compromised by the weather, was very enjoyable and gave everyone the opportunity to renew acquaintances and make new ones. With some people travelling notable distances to attend:

- Bill and Sue Spence attending from Orkney
- Peter and Katie Weir coming from Oban
- Adam Oppenheimer travelling from Geneva.

With Rachel's assurance of better weather next year and the 90th anniversary of the Lagonda win at Le Mans, I am sure we can all anticipate an even more successful event in 2025.



The rain didn't stop a good deal of catching up, and admiration of the cars.



Suffolk Dinner

Colin Mallett enjoys the sunshine with friends

The 45th joint Rapier Register and Lagonda Club Suffolk Dinner was held at Ufford Park Hotel in July 2024. We also had a coffee morning at the Club spares operation at Johnson's Farm and Classics On The Green in my home village of Friston.

The mid-week date proved to be a great success, especially as touring the delightful Suffolk countryside in a Lagonda in summer is great fun.



Several of our visitors combined the event with a mini-break and, being an easy drive from Harwich, we were particularly pleased to welcome repeat visits from our European friends. This included Werner de Laet, who brought his 12/24 YM 221. The first picture (left) shows Werner with Roger Seabrook, who owned this car 50 years ago. The second picture (overleaf) shows Werner approving the properties of Lagonda Ale.

Being a joint event, Rapiers were well represented, especially as we were celebrating the 90th anniversary of the Rapier launch.

At the dinner, we also enjoyed the company of Richard Schneider and his guests from the USA, as well as Bernie and Helen Jacobson from Australia. Bernie was in very good form. He announced that this was his last visit and sadly passed away some months later. After dinner we went round the tables inviting people to talk about their cars.



Bernie made us laugh when he reminded us that his much-lightened 1934 Rapier KG 5363 was previously raced by Beatrice “Tilly” Shilling who designed a device that prevented Spitfire engines losing power during combat. This became commonly known as Miss Shilling’s orifice!

Some maintenance was required during the visit, including Rachel Bagenal and her assistant (below) performing urgent adjustments to her 16/80 tourer. It was that kind of event.



All together we had lots of fun, and thoughts are now underway to extend jollifications for the same time next year. We have plenty of space for everyone, and hope that even more of our overseas friends will join us.



*Two of the Rapiers at the expanded Suffolk Dinner event.
Iain & Rosemary Whyte's Abbott Tourer (left),
and Mike & Ann Pilgrim's Ranalah DHC (right)*



Out and About

DP115/2 spotted on tour, by Roland Bugler

Thanks to Colin Gurnsey, who alerted us to the presence of DP115/2 (one of the 1954 race V12s) at Pebble Beach, California in mid-August, winning their 'Elegance in Motion' award.

Then to a friend of mine, who started sending me photos of the same car at Hampton Court Palace, along with DP115/3 only two weeks later.

What a globetrotter!



Lagondas at Lime Rock Park, by Rob Bettigole

And remaining in the USA, but 3,000 miles to the east in Connecticut, there was more Lagonda action. Rob Bettigole reports...

“As the newly minted area representative for the eastern US and Canada, I was keen to see if a gathering of Lagondas could be arranged to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the founding of the company by Wilbur Gunn.



Conveniently (at least for me), Lime Rock Park, a 1.53-mile sports car racetrack dating to 1957, is under 6 miles from my house and the 42nd Historics were on for the end of August/beginning of September. A friend was involved in planning the concours on the Sunday of the weekend, and I set out to recruit Lagonda owners to attend.



Though a number of members were interested, at the last, only two cars entered, which was a bit too few for a separate Lagonda class. My Two Litre was entered, of course, and Rowena Gill brought her son's V12 (ownership passing through the male line in the family) driven more than ably the 30 minutes from her home by her good friend Charles Gray.

Our Lagondas were entered in the pre-war sports car class, with judging weighted towards the car with the most interesting story. I couldn't compete with Rowena's account of picking the family V12 up at the Port of New York and driving it home through a hurricane, complete with a sideways slide across the road during particularly heavy rain.

The V12 won Best in Class, as well she should have done. I was pleased that our Two Litre, Lucy, was given a yellow ribboned medal inscribed 'Star of the Rock'."



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Letters & Emails ... Letters & Emails

David Bracey takes on a challenge

Dear fellow Lagonda people,

I am writing to share details of an expedition I have organised to raise money for two very deserving charities: The Quest School and Just A Drop



Together with my partner in this adventure, Ioana Predescu, I will be participating in The Toubkal Challenge which will see us driving to Morocco in my Morgan Plus 4, from where we will transfer from car to foot and climb the highest mountain in North Africa, Mt. Toubkal 4,167m tall (or 13,667ft for those measuring things in Lagonda units.) Details can be found at www.toubkalchallenge.com but rest assured that this is not your usual Sunday stroll before lunch. We expect the temperature at the summit to be -20°C and oxygen levels to be just 12% and we are mountaineering alone with just a single local guide and not part of a larger group.

Ioana and I are funding the expedition ourselves, and all money raised (less any fees from banks and justgiving.com) will go directly to the two charities. As you will imagine, the costs are significant so I would like to call on the generosity of any members that feel able to sponsor us so that this is all worth the effort and personal sacrifice. Our training in Iceland in July was a fabulous experience but quite brutal so if you are interested in hearing what we are putting ourselves through then please read our account of that trip on the website.

Donations via <https://www.justgiving.com/page/david-bracey-1716286645879>

All and any questions are most welcome.

David Bracey, B69. (LG45 Pillarless Saloon)
07710 423667 david@toubkalchallenge.com

A Californian Drama

Colin Gurnsey (our western USA rep) and I were in an email conversation about the V!2 at Pebble Beach (see Out & About) and about what members in his 'patch' are getting up to, when it emerged that Rosie, his 16/80 had been a victim of California forest fires.

"I've been writing a number of articles on my resurrection of "Rosie" my 16/80 that was burned in the California forest fires. I've written about six articles

so far which have been printed in “The Bumper Guardian”, the magazine of the PNW Region of the Classic Car Club of America. I don’t consider myself an expert in anything so haven’t submitted anything for publishing in the Lagonda magazine. These articles are mostly about how I go about getting this car back together. It is a daunting task, not for the faint at heart, and not really the right thing to do. But I consider it a worthy challenge.”

See below for how Rosie looked shortly after the fire. Surviving the fires at all was dramatic enough, but I can’t imagine how I would even begin to tackle a project of this nature. I can feel an article coming up for a future magazine...



The benefits of setting a doubtful example to your children!

I don’t know if this will be of interest to readers, but I came across the following from the JM Scott’s biography of Gino Watkins, the youthful Arctic explorer. Colonel Watkins, his father, is quoted in the book describing a trip with Gino to London in 1926 to buy a car.

“But the finances of the family were becoming inadequate for their requirements. To do things in London was very expensive and not to do them was dull. Also they required transport. So Gino and I set out one morning in search of money. We first visited Lloyds Bank, whose letters lately had been almost bitter in tone. We called on Mr Morris, head of the Guard’s Department, who was delighted to see us and as kind as ever. But, in spite of looking immensely rich, his suggestions were, in fact, not as helpful as we had hoped.

We then went on to St. Swithin's Church in Cannon Street and enquired the age of the vicar and how his health was from an astonished verger. From our point of view the answers were unsatisfactory; he was in excellent health and not very old. To avoid appearing disappointed we looked at the tomb of Gino's great-great-grandfather who, in 1792, had bought the living which we were now hoping to sell.

All this seemed to lead nowhere, so as we still had half an hour before lunch we went and bought the car we had our eyes on, a Lagonda, all weather, which gave good service for many years. When parents set a good example to their children it is seldom followed, but a doubtful example really does seem to be of use to them. They see what to avoid. Gino's father lost his temper on most occasions and was hopeless about money. Therefore, Gino never wasted money and never lost his temper."

Kind Regards, Tom Foster, F 24.

VSCC Madresfield Driving Tests

Dear Roland,

On Sunday the 15th September there was a rare gathering of two Lagonda light cars at the VSCC Madresfield Driving Tests in Worcestershire. Ken Jeddere-Fisher arrived in his Lagonda 12/24 and I arrived in my Lagonda 11.9. Both models are from 1923 and created quite a lot of interest. It was possibly the first time two Lagonda light cars had attended Madresfield in over 50 years. I attach a photo of the cars taken on the day.

Best Regards, Mark Yeomans



Mark Yeoman's 11.9 and Ken Jeddere-Fisher's 12/24



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