



No. 11

Christmas 1953



## THE LAGONDA CLUB

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LT.-COL. L. S. MICHAEL.

R. FREEMAN-WRIGHT (*Chairman*).



**THE LAGONDA  
CLUB**



Hon. Sec. : A. K. AUDSLEY,  
Greenways,  
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Gerrards Cross.

Editor : G. P. W. Taylor, 35, Highbury Place, London, N.5.

## EDITORIAL

Members will be interested to learn that H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh has taken delivery of a new 3-litre Lagonda ; owners of old 3-litres are gently reminded, that, beyond certain superficial and numerical resemblances, the new model is quite a different proposition!

A warm welcome is extended to Michael Wilby who is taking over the post of Secretary to the Club early in the New Year, and thereby relieving Alan Audsley. It should be recalled that Alan originally took on the job on the understanding that it was to be a temporary measure to tide over the affairs of the Club until such time as a suitable candidate could be found with that very necessary qualification . . . spare time. Michael Wilby will now find that he has lost that particular qualification!

The thanks of all members are expressed to Alan for the good and considerable work he has done in very difficult circumstances, and to Nancy Audsley for her invaluable assistance to the Club on many occasions, particularly for allowing Alan to stay up late to deal with Club business.

It has at last proved possible to obtain and publish the story of Hamish Moffatt's wonderful London—Cape Town drive in his 11.9 Lagonda. This feat, as Ivan Forshaw rightly comments, has received little enough mention, and would indeed have justified applause in 1923 when the car was new . . . let alone thirty years later! To commemorate their achievement, the Club is to present a dashboard plaque to Hamish and the 11.9.

Before proceeding to the customary seasonal greetings, it is unfortunately necessary to

mention that at the published closing date for accepting contributions for this issue, only two or three articles had been received. If the present Editor can get sufficient material by the published closing date, he can generally organise his time so as to be able to devote a few clear days to editing, correcting proofs, and deciding the layout, but if contributions straggle in bit by bit after the closing date, the amount of work is considerably increased, and he cannot then always give it immediate or full attention. It is therefore, with regret that the Editor has notified the Committee that if there is insufficient material for the next issue by the closing date, 1st February, 1954, his resignation will be placed immediately in the hands of the Chairman of the Committee. As the Editor has several quite large mantelpieces, this step may be avoided if members would send contributions instead of seasonal greetings . . . and in order to give members the chance of returning the compliment, the Editor wishes you all a very happy and hearty Christmas, with the best of motoring in the New Year.

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At the moment of writing the Editorial, it does not appear likely that there will be sufficient time in which to correct the proofs if the Magazine is to reach members in time to give notice of the Northern meeting and the Christmas Party. Apologies are offered to the printers, Messrs. Macaire, Mould & Co., Ltd., for this omission and for the way in which this issue has been rushed to print, and our thanks are expressed for their very prompt and cheerful help.

The Report on The Lagonda November Handicap has had to be held over until the Spring issue. This event, magnificently organised by Charles Long and Michael Kennard was a great success. Results have already been sent to competitors.



## COMING EVENTS

Dear Editor,

As an owner of this make for 14 years, the recent article on the cost of running a 2-litre fill me with a great urge to set down for posterity, my experiences on overall m.p.g. of 2, 3 and 4½-litre cars.

The 2-litre Wegman saloon I bought in 1938 was fitted with a single Zenith triple-diffusion carburettor and a log of petrol bought against miles run gave 24.1 m.p.g. It would break into 25 on long runs, but not much more. With tools and equipment, this car weighed 30 cwt. as driven.

In May, 1946, the timing chain broke, and I was offered a tow by a dealer at the humble end of the motor industry (chiefly scrap-yard), who claimed to have an engine "just like that" in his back yard. He towed me thither, and we removed the timing chain from his engine and fitted it to mine. Neither of us was adept at timing a 2-litre and we took a long time and got it wrong. I arranged to drive my wife and infant home, but not before I had made an offer for his engine which had obviously been in a crash but was in good condition where complete. I don't expect you to believe me, but it had a row of centre-punch marks round the block between cylinders 2 and 3. I enquired the reason: the idea, he told me, was to saw the engine in half to make a 1-litre motor boat engine.!!

I won't bore you with the difficulties of fitting an engine with a crankshaft driven dynamo into a chassis made for the older dynamo-under-the-exhaust-manifold arrangement. It took three weeks, but eventually, there it was, and fitted with the original carburettor, magneto and dynamo. The performance was much brisker, as I had hoped, but it never again bettered 22.5 m.p.g., though there were no leaks that I could find.

The 3-litre pillarless saloon that followed, gave 48,000 miles of faithful service, and all my best motoring up to last April, when it roared away driven by a customer with a bristling mustache. It turned the weigh-bridge at 37 cwt. as driven and after some attention to the carburettor, gave 20.1 m.p.g. over a great many thousands of miles, not all gentle.

The last of this line of Lagondas is a 4½-litre drop-head, ex-Archbell and ex-Remfry. This car gives a fairly steady 20 m.p.g. which is remarkable for its size and weight, and credit for this goes to Archbell who put in some good work with the carburettors. The car weighs 38 cwt.

An engineer acquaintance says the m.p.g. for any car is given by the formula  $MPG = \frac{33}{\sqrt{c}}$  where  $c$  = capacity in litres. This has no theoretical or other justification, except that it fits in with the figures claimed by most owners of modern tin-ware. I suggest that the following is nearer the mark  $MPG = \frac{120}{\sqrt{W}}$  where  $W$  = weight in cwt.

$\sqrt{W}$

Yours etc.

R. A. LAKE.

The Old Cottage,  
West Langton,  
Market Harborough,  
Leics.

Dear Editor,

We are now approaching number twelve of THE LAGONDA, and my much prized pile of magazines is getting quite thick. Quite often I wish to refer to something in a past copy and have to hunt through the pile for it. Could we not with the twelfth copy have an index for the complete set to date?

The articles of 16/65, and in fact, all the articles should be listed by name and author, and the sub-headings of Ivan Forshaw's notes also indexed. These latter notes are always useful, but it takes so long to find the particular tip that one wants.

HON. SEC.

Greenways,  
Hedgerley Lane,  
Gerrard's Cross,  
Bucks.

27th August, 1953.

Dear Hon. Sec.,

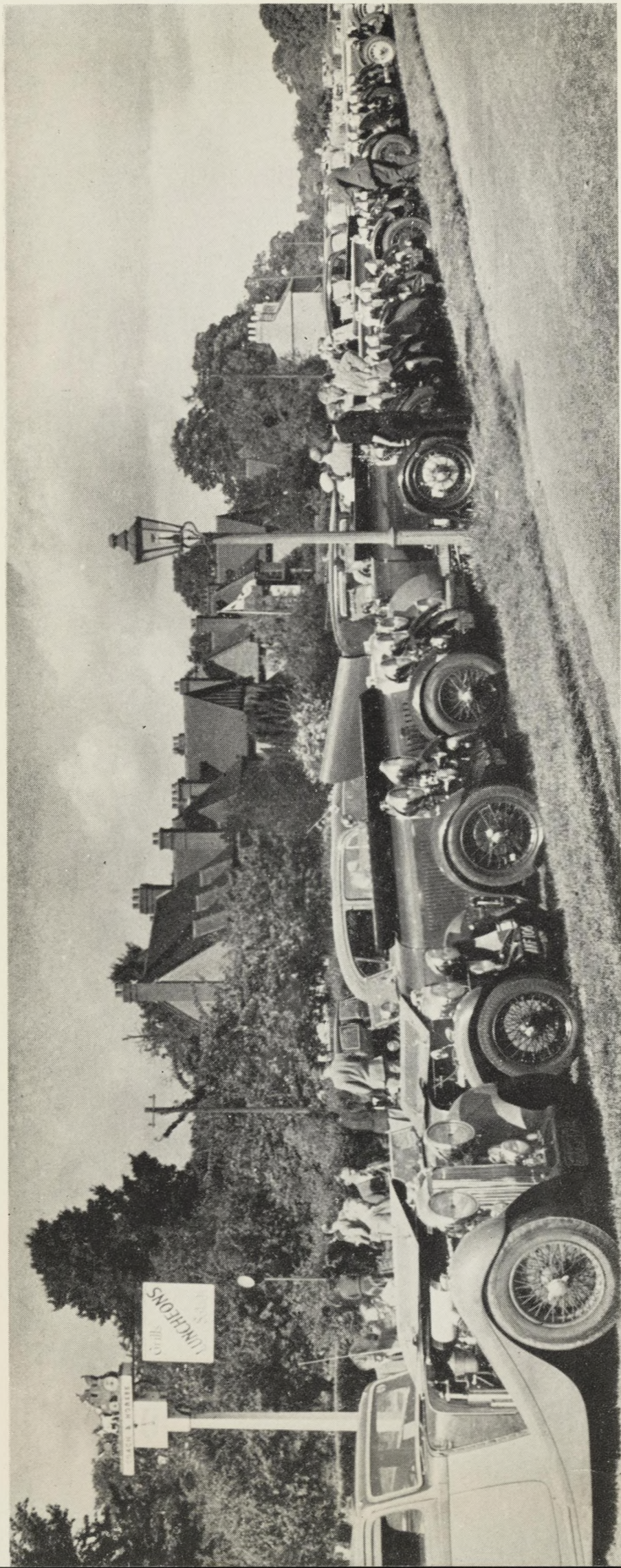
Certainly.

Like to do it?

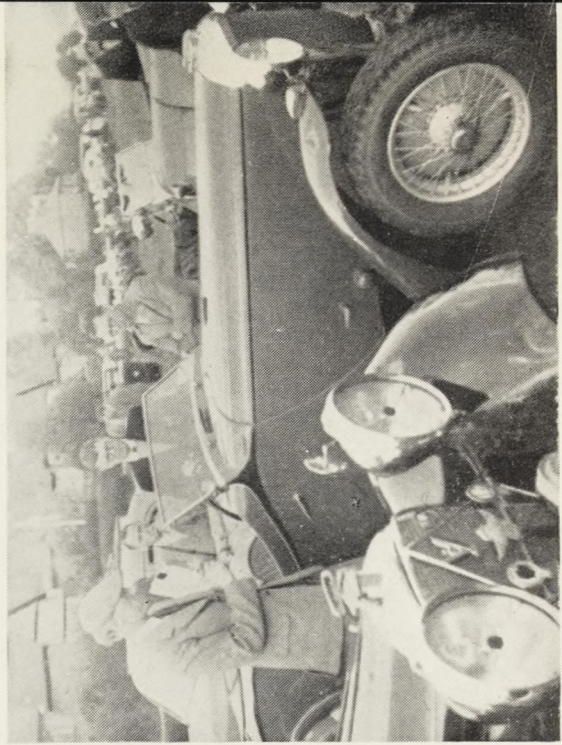
HON. ED.

35, Highbury Place,  
London, N.5.



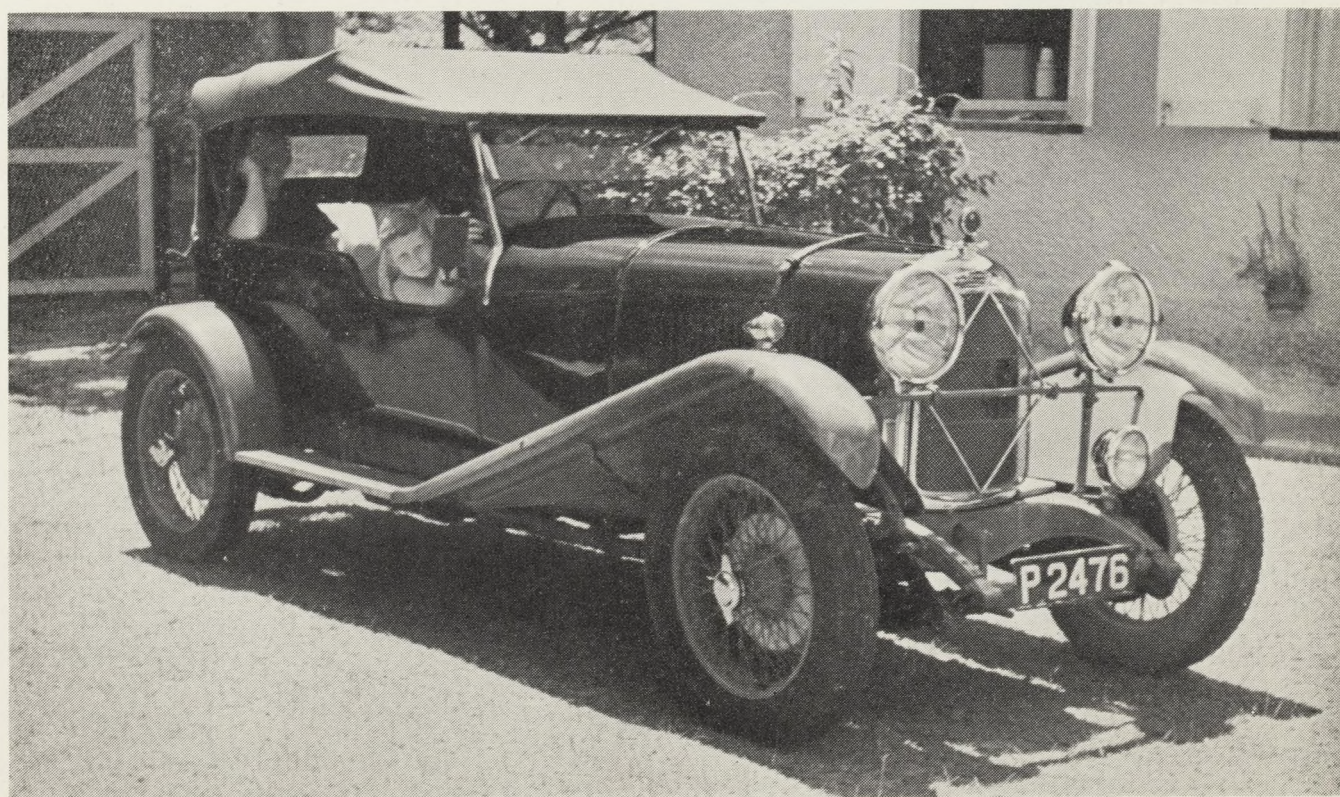
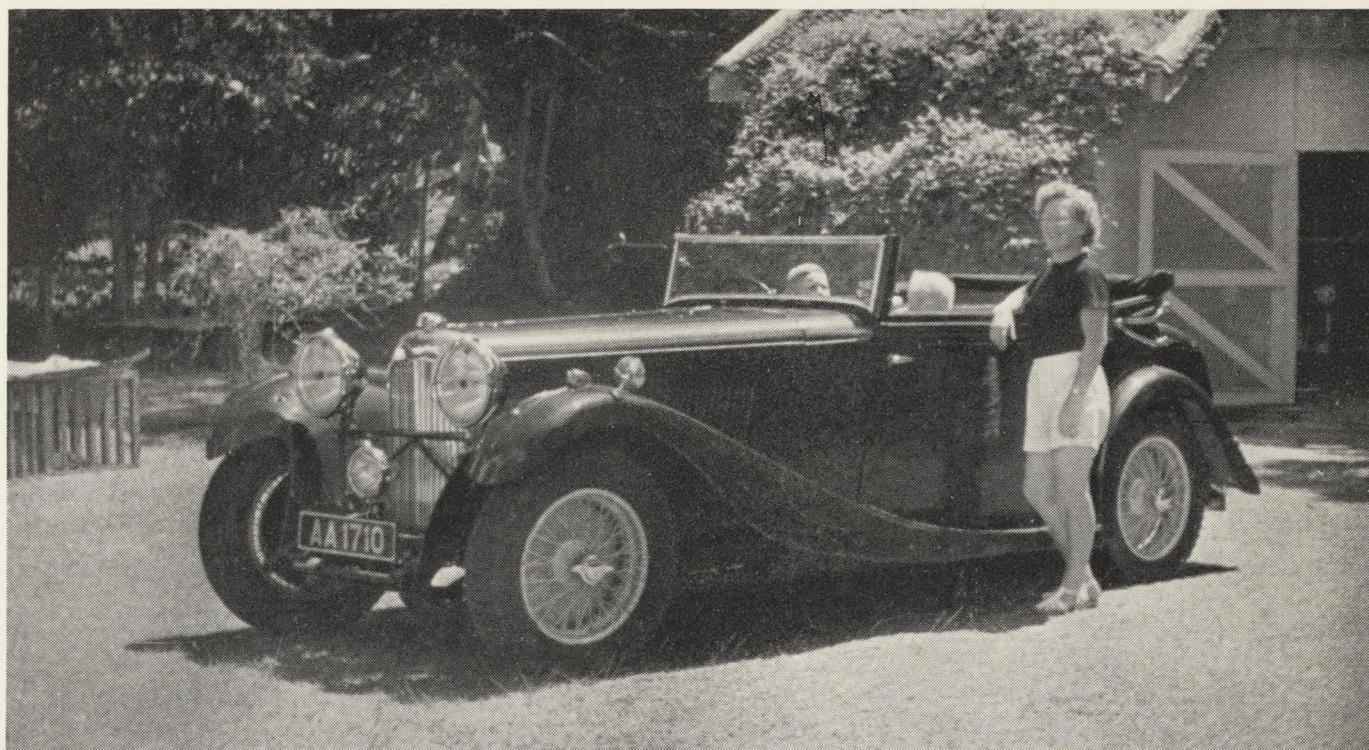


*Part of the line out at the A.G.M.*



*THE THREE WISE MEN at Croxley Green. Left, Col. Berthon, Secretary of the B.D.C. Centre, Ivan Forshaw chatting to George Sanders (in cap). Right, Stanley Sedgwick, President of the B.D.C., most ably judging the Concours.*





*“Quack’s” M45 and 2-Litre pose in the Witch Doctor’s compound at Ipoh in Malaya.*



## PER ARDUA

And, by Icarus, it's ardua than you expect!

Coming up for more beer, I am faced with cunning wretch Taylor's summer issued goad about my ominous silence. To tell the truth, ominous silence is one of the lesser manifestations of the havoc wreaked in a hitherto care-free existence by decision to make an homest motor car out of an M45 (though, on second thoughts, this may be an unduly optimistic description of Life With a Two Litre).

Perhaps I should, like everyone else except Hartop, begin at the beginning. It must have been about March that I discovered, carolling forth to beat the lark by a short head, that the level in the radiator had markedly diminished, though the dipstick level had, as if to compensate, equally gained during the night. This curious circumstance was rendered no funnier by the knowledge that there are no water passages in the head gasket, not by Charles' instantaneous reaction that here, at last, was the way to easy money—"run the 4½ and flog all the oil it makes!"

I will say that Mr. Meadows' crowning misdemeanour ran all day on water-oil emulsion without much complaint; a dose of familiar overtime got the 2-litre back on the road again, and we walked round the ruins and considered the situation.

Big black marks, besides the aqueous oil lark, were three; (1) though accurate enough, steering was remarkably heavy under high lateral G. She steered, according to my Australian friends—"a fair cow"—the only chap I've seen working harder than me was an intrepid character with a V16 special—(two Ford V8 engines tied together, one behind the other, more or less) which wasn't, perhaps, unexpected.

(2) What is politely called heat exchange in any other country but this, was by no means adequate; in spite of worrying about it quite a lot, the water thermometer, if I may quote Standley, tended to reach 100 a long time before the speedometer.

(3) Rear suspension, on my specimen at least, was too wallowy for words, shattered bump stops, twisted Hartfords, bottoming Newtons, broken brackets and bent frame

sections being some of the less spectacular results.

It was decided, besides putting the machinery in good standard condition, to carry out a meticulous check of chassis dimensions, steering geometry, and valve timing. Fortunately, I know a meticulous type to do all the hard work of this kind. You can see he's met this kind of motor car before by the way he measures wheelbase on both sides of the car. Then again, there was the question of cooling. Since I had already invested in a new water pump and a new radiator, I felt the next thing to do was to use an oil radiator, dropping the lubricant a grade or two and using the stuff as a coolant, having seen this dodge successfully applied to a hard pressed Javelin. We then still had up our sleeves a water pump mod., increasing output at the cost of some drive fragility.

The biggest tree in my compound was shored up, its population of maneating ants beaten back with a blowlamp, block and tackle rigged, and all hands hauled out the engine, at the cost of one cracked tree, one bashed headlamp, and a few minor rope burns.

The agony commenced, the first interesting discovery being the fact that the port side member was indubitably  $\frac{5}{8}$ " longer than the starboard. New springs were obtained, zinc interleaves removed to aid stiffness, and two extra leaves added, to save the bump stops. Davies was badgered until he produced type 17,000 Newtons, which, it is hoped, will last longer than the type 1,400's used last time. The clonk in the back axle was dealt with by bushing the starwheels, and a good deal of work done at fabulous cost on the engine, upstairs and down.

The non-standard water distribution was found to be due to corroded water transfer/castings in conjunction with not-tight, enough head nuts. A curious tendency to repeated sticking of carburettor pistons was finally attributed—locally—to "growing" of the alloy jet blocks prior to final disintegration, and dealt with by use of new dashpots, pistons, and jet blocks. An occasional diffi-



culty in swapping cogs was found to be due to a bodged repair of an old fracture of the gear gate ; I had once again occasion to tip the topee to Davies when he took another one off his shelf and sent it out. The standard oil filter was scrapped, and the holes in its housing tapped to take pipes conducting the stuff through an enormous Tecalemit full flow filter, and an oil radiator by courtesy of Fowler tractors.

Stowing these items under the bonnet left no room for the standard exhaust manifold ; the tempo was, inevitably, increasing by now, and the obvious answer to this, Rapide type manifolds, were flown out from London. Malayan Airways dropped the plumbing in Ipoh four days after it left, and it went on the car the same night. Yes, night work had started.

My locally obtained stock for the external pipes wouldn't bend without splitting ; a spasm on the bush telegraph located an 18' 0" length of copper pipe, 2½" internal diameter, in Singapore. Malayan Airways said this was too long for their Dakota, so it had to come by Malayan Railways' train ; the one that always gets to our local level crossing just when I do. This was filled with sand, plugged, annealed with welding torches, and put in the hydraulic press.

When the power was turned on, the press promptly uprooted itself from the floor, and a full twenty-four hours were lost in sticking it down again.

Apart from these major disasters, all sorts of little things happen to keep up one's interest ; one little thing is the mason bee, an industrious insect with a *penchant* for building houses of pre-austerity durability in any convenient small hole. The pin holes in electric supply plugs are commonly thus occupied, and so, I found, were my petrol pipes. I had left some newly plated sections on the shelf, and entered the workshop one day in time to see one of these little devils nipping inside. I threw a spanner at him, but too late, and all the air pressure at my command failed to dislodge him. This means much poking with wire, followed by use of a high pressure airline.

The time sheet was getting to be pretty

demoralising by this time, but we bashed on ; assembly completed 48 hours before I was due to leave for the Johore Grand Prix. The engine was terribly stiff, so we put two gallons of Redex in the sump, hitched up behind the wrecker, and towed ten miles, past the houses where all my richest patients live. Then back, change oil in the dark, and tow start. She started within twenty yards, the oil pressure relief valve stuck fast, and the needle shot round the dial to take the zero stop smartly in the rear. This caused clot Quack to sing out "No oil pressure", but his ideas in this connection were quickly sorted out when the oil radiator, demonstrating that Fowler tractors do not run at such indecent oil pressures, split from end to end, and the flexible pipe to the oil, gauge burst giving him a sockful of oil enough to stop his shoes squeaking for years.

Nearly two gallons were lost before he switched off ; the apprentices are still mopping up the mess, and Wakefield's are doing rather well this year.

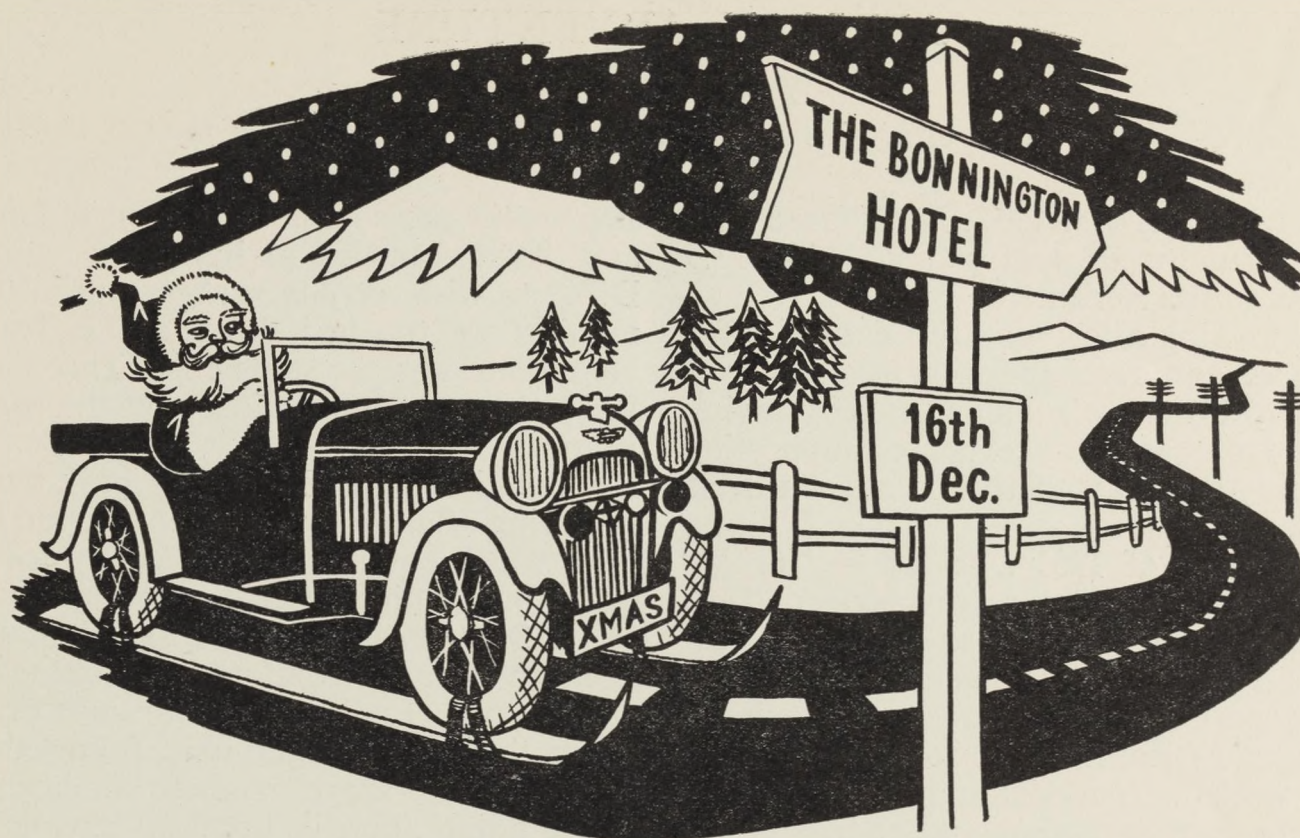
It only needed the discovery that the fibre reduction gear in the magneto was stripped to finish me off ; I lent the 2-litre to Charles and borrowed his Riley 1½ to go to the races in. Being a bit short of time by now, we had to drive down to Singapore during Friday night, and back again during Sunday night. Nice quiet weekend. The Riley did the 400 miles each way in about eleven hours in the dark, compared with the 2-litre's daylight time of nine hours and a quarter. I was almost converted.

The M45 is now running in, sans oil radiator ; Charles says she looks, in her temporary cycle type wings, like a duchess in running shorts, but he admits she handles better than she used to, like an empty three tonner now.

Replacing the oval balls in the steering ball joints and putting a 30 thou. shim under the steering box cover have made the steering much lighter ; performance figures await arrival of replacement mag. and the correct needles, so whether the car is otherwise much closer to the heart's desire remains to be seen.

I rather fear not, but the last word is yet to come. So, no doubt, is the M45's. "QUACK."





## THE LAGONDA CLUB

# ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY, FILM SHOW & PRIZEGIVING

*Date :* WEDNESDAY, 16th DECEMBER 1953  
*Time :* 7.15 p.m. for 7.30 p.m.  
*Place :* BONNINGTON HOTEL, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, LONDON, W.C.1  
*Tickets :* 8/6 Single, 15/- Double, including substantial BUFFET

Obtainable from: L. S. Michael, Esq.,  
 26, Bryanston Square,  
 London, W.2

Dr. C. Rexford Welch,  
 124, Clarence Gate Gardens,  
 Baker Street, London, N.W.1

R. Freeman Wright, Esq.,  
 Lanehurst,  
 Worth, Crawley, Sussex.

*Film Show :* Short, humorous, including Charlie Chaplin  
*Bar :* Open until 11 o'clock  
*Parking :* Russell, Bloomsbury & Queens Squares



## AFRICAN ADVENTURE

By HAMISH MOFFAT

(Reproduced by kind permission of the Editor of "The Bulletin" of the V.S.C.C.)

Towards the end of 1952, I was faced with the opportunity of taking my 1923, 11.9 Lagonda across Africa.

After making a few tentative enquiries for passengers and receiving negative results I decided to do the trip alone, thereby saving time and consequently expense, supporting the idiom that he who travels alone travels quickest.

In February of 1951 a friend had driven his 1921, 11.8 Calcott across Kenya, Tanganyika and the Rhodesias, and the experiences he encountered made me resolved, finances permitting, to cover as much as possible of Africa, north to south.

Four weeks were needed to prepare the car, obtain the necessary visas and endless documents, and to fit the extra petrol tanks, etc., for the Sahara: the final preparations being completed the evening before departure.

For the technically minded the car is of 1,420 c.c. with overhead inlet and side exhaust valves and develops 24 b.h.p.—magneto ignition and thermo-syphon cooling. A transverse leaf spring in front and quarter elliptics at the rear support a four-seater touring body. The car has original bores, bearings and big ends, the only replacements to the motor being a set of new exhaust valves and new rings. There are no front wheel brakes and no shock absorbers.

The original beaded-edge wheels had to be converted to well-base and the motor was stripped, cleaned, and carefully reassembled.

At 6.45 a.m. on Sunday 21st December, after much burning of the midnight oil, we slipped out of Hampstead with a friend who was coming as far as the airport, through the damp and deserted streets of London and out on the A.2.

At Lympne, courteous and extremely speedy service on the part of Silver City Airways authorities cleared the documents and I drove the car into the gaping jaws of a Bristol freighter. A representative of David

Brown, the present manufacturers of Lagonda and Aston-Martin, arrived in a glittering D.B.2 to wish me *bon voyage*, and in twenty minutes we touched down at Le Touquet. Here there was the same expedience and the Lagonda was soon let loose on the roads of France.

We had to be in Marseilles by 3 p.m. the following afternoon to load the car on to the ship, which entailed driving gently for most of the intervening time. I gave the new rings about 300 miles to bed in, and then settled down to the car's comfortable cruising speed of 38 m.p.h. Endless stops for cups of black coffee during the night were followed by a change to the spare magneto at dawn, due to the points (new in London) having burnt out. I had some nougat at Montelimar which regrettably attached itself to the steering wheel, and was alongside at Marseilles shortly after two.

We sailed at noon the following day, by which time I had purchased another set of platinum points.

On the way over to Algiers I made the acquaintance of four members of the Italian Moretti team for the Algiers/Cape Rally, and also four Australians who were motoring overland to Kenya. We docked at 6 a.m. on Christmas Eve.

Followed Christmas Day, an extremely festive occasion with the entire Italian Moretti and Egyptian teams for the rally aboard the Lagonda racing through Algiers from wining place to dining place. Then a desperate week obtaining more visas and trans-Sahara permits, etc.

The first day's run to Mascara, over the Atlas Mountains, was eventless except for an Arab funeral procession. At Mascara, due to a bureaucratic slip-up, I had to make a detour of some 200 miles to cash traveller's cheques. This entailed making for the Foreign Legion town of Sidi bel Abbes and then striking south to pick up my original route.



Unfortunately, there was no track in one part where I had hoped to find one, which meant making my way in the general direction by stars and compass, motoring across the desert. After five or six hours I saw in the distance a light which proved to be in the village of El Aricha. From here I was able to take a track to Berguent in Morocco, and from there pick up the route from Oudjda to Colomb Bechar, passing *en route* the desert memorial to General le Clerc.

On the run to Colomb Bechar a knock developed in the engine which on stripping proved to be big-end trouble. The bearings are located by a small white metal dowel which in this case had sheared, causing the bearing to turn in its housing and starve itself of oil. The bearings are fed by splash lubrication. I had a spare but decided to keep this in case of future necessity. In Colomb Bechar I was lucky enough to find an old lathe and a blowlamp, and with some pieces of white metal from a scrapped truck managed to turn up an apparently satisfactory new bearing.

In Colomb Bechar a young European asked me for a lift to Gao on the other side of the desert, to which I readily agreed. At midnight, as the New Year came in, we set off for the next oasis of Beni Abbas. Running steadily on a well-indicated track we arrived between four and five the following morning. Then through to Reganne, where there is a pretty little oasis and a military post, the commandant of which refused to allow us to continue until another vehicle arrived with which we could travel in convoy. After four days nothing appeared, and to our relief he told us that we could depart early the following morning with the object of arriving at the military post at Bidon V, with whom he was in radio communication the same night. This was achieved quite comfortably, in spite of the fact that we had to dig ourselves out of the sand some seven or eight times. The terrain all day was entirely flat, and there was always a fairly clear indication of the way made by previous vehicles and marker drums dotted along the desert. Mirages, of an uninteresting nature, were quite frequent.

At Reganne we had both been unfortunate

enough to get dysentery due to the lack of all but salty water. At Reganne also we had taken on thirty-five gallons of petrol from the dump there to last us through as much as possible to Gao. In Africa one can never predict very accurately the petrol consumption, due to gradient, altitude and nature of the surface; even humidity appears to have a marked effect.

We decided to continue without delay and I allowed my passenger to drive. Unfortunately, due most likely to the fact that sandy surfaces are not easily discernible at night, he put the car into a big hole, out of which it bounced and landed on a soft mound of sand with all four wheels in the air. Excavation proved not difficult, but the front spring was broken, which meant changing to the spare.

Then through Tesalit to Gao, where the military entertained us in a truly French manner. Timbuktu is close at hand. My friend, Gerrit by name, now asked if he might continue with me as far as Kano.

We were now regrettably passing out of the Sahara proper. It is such an interesting place, with everything constantly and rapidly changing, from the hour by hour topography as each set of dunes or mountains unfold to the tremendous change in temperature at sunrise and sunset, the latter being of indescribable beauty.

After Niamey, Gerrit again driving, he had the misfortune to put the car into a river over quite a considerable drop. Luckily it was almost dry, and after vigorously wiping the magneto I was able to drive it out.

However, the drop had broken the front spring and one of the back ones, fractured the mudguard and windscreen supports and cracked the chassis.

The mudguards and screen supports were removed and stowed carefully in the back; blocks of wood between the axels and chassis, firmly secured, dealt with the broken suspension as I had no more spare springs, while a wooden splint roped into place gave strength to the chassis fracture.

As such we continued the journey, the ride over corrugations being somewhat akin to that of a pneumatic drill, but we soon found



that driving slightly faster than our normal pace relieved the strain slightly as the corrugation speed was somewhat higher.

The next day a big end suddenly collapsed, number three, the one replaced in Colomb Bechar, and for no other reason that I can think of than bad metal. The other three original bearings were perfectly sound. In a few hours we were off again, having replaced number three with the original spare. The car now had four 1923 big ends, and we felt happier.

These difficulties, although troublesome, were nothing compared to the constant irritation of tyre trouble. Before leaving London I ordered a set of  $5.00 \times 19$  tyres. The people concerned unfortunately, due to a slip, fitted a set of  $4.50 \times 19$ , and by the time I received them there was no time to have them changed. I think these tyres must have been just insufficient to support the weight of the car, as the internal fibres were constantly working loose, causing abrasive punctures. On reaching Kano the score was twenty-seven punctures and one burst. Another harassing difficulty at this stage was the way that a seam in the radiator kept on opening due to there being absolutely no suspension at the front.

On the evening of Saturday, 10th January, we arrived in Kano, completely covered in dust and sand, made our way to the European hotel and had an extremely welcome bath and cooked meal.

I stayed in Kano a week, watching the Rally come through, looking around the district and repairing the springs, etc., of the car. I met the Australians again, who had taken the Haggard route without mishap except petrol pump trouble. The Lagonda had taken three days less to arrive in Kano than both the Australians or the Rally, the latter of course having to keep to a schedule.

While in Kano I made the acquaintance of Captain Hill, a B.O.A.C. pilot, who very kindly arranged to collect and subsequently deliver to me in Nairobi another spare conrod and big end from friends in England, to replace that already used.

Gerrit, my companion, had various irregularities in his papers, and asked if I would

take him over the border into Equatoria, where he would find his nearest consulate.

A good run through to Maiduguri and Fort Lamy, passing *en route* countless flamingoes and crossing one ferry. After Fort Lamy we came across a considerable amount of wild life, including two herds of elephant and innumerable smaller beasts, panthers and leopards, etc, etc. We also had the misfortune to hit a skunk, which "stayed" for a day or two.

Just before Fort Archambault the surface of the track became appalling, causing the three wheel studs on the nearside rear brake drum to snap. The wheel raced ahead of the car, which took on a very down-at-heel appearance. The cure for this was to remove the brake drum, knock out the old studs, bolt the wheel to the brake drum with some  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. bolts I had with me, and, without the hub cap, replace the whole unit and do up the half-shaft lock nut.

After Fort Archambault, Gerrit made his departure, and I went on through Fort Crampel to Bambari, where I again met the Australians. Shortly before Bambari, some extremely kind American missionaries put me up for a night, providing great interest and entertainment with their local stories.

After Bambari, I had a spot of bother with some natives, and again while in the Oubangui-Chari stopped at a mission village. Here a native requested a lift to another village some eighty miles away. We had not been driving for twenty minutes when he led me off to a mud hut where he said we would find beer. With slight misgivings and visions of the warm fermented mealie beer that the natives brew, I entered to find some bottles of a very good brand of Dutch Pilsener.

We continued a now somewhat erratic course, and shortly this magnificent negro dressed in his loin cloth and my duffie coat, as the night was chilly, halted me at a small native village. Here we went into one of the circular mud huts again and sat down to a sumptuous meal of stewed antelope, sweet potatoes, rice and sweetened milk.

With some sadness I dropped this splendid man in his home village and gave him a pull-



over as a parting present, bringing tears of delight to his large round eyes.

Crossing the River Bombu at Bangassou brought us into the Belgian Congo. The ferry there is made up of a raft capable of holding a large lorry, which is secured transversely to eight long canoes hollowed out of tree trunks. The natives sit in the stern of these canoes paddling with long pointed paddles, chanting the while to a big drum made from a hollowed-out log. In the bows stand natives steering with long poles that reach the bottom. The crossing takes twenty-five minutes.

In the Congo I again broke a front spring and had to resort to a block of wood, which again caused radiator trouble. This time I came across a native village at dusk, removed the radiator, heated up a tyre lever in their fire, and by using battery acid, as a cleaning agent, and a small piece of solder that I had on board, managed to effect a good repair : soldering pieces of an old oil can on to the split.

The Congo, like the Sahara, is quite the most fascinating territory to pass through,

with its exotic vegetation and flowers, brilliantly coloured birds and its many and very different native tribes. In the Congo also, I had the pleasure of accepting the kindness of numerous missionaries.

We passed through Bondo, Buta and Paulis, with the car going extremely well, to Mambasa, in pygmy country. Between Mambasa and Beni there is an extremely narrow and twisty ninety-mile track, so much so that it has only one-way traffic : that leaving Mambasa having to wait until after 6 p.m. I passed along this track in a really thundery, black and menacing tropical night, with the jungle meeting in a high arch overhead through which a full moon occasionally filtered. I think I enjoyed that night's run more than any other.

After Beni, through the Albert National Park to the Uganda border post on the foothills of Ruwenzori mountains. According to local legend there are only sixty days in the year when it is clear enough to see the top of this glaciated snow-capped mountain situated so close to the Equator.

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## **A POINT TO PINT**

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**TO ALL LAGONDA CLUB MEMBERS**

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**"NOT A KNOCK IN A PINT"**



Just before Mbarara something really rather extraordinary happened. The same wheel came off again for the same reason, raced ahead of the car down the length of the headlight beam and almost hit a lion standing in the middle of the road. This was the one and only lion I saw on the whole trip, and he regarded my wheel in the same way that a very small kitten might look at a very large ball of wool. Fortunately it bounded off into the scrub, leaving me petrified in the car. I was not carrying any arms as it involves so much extra red tape at the customs and various frontiers and being in an open car I felt a little vulnerable. After an age I plucked up courage to go and collect the wheel, but could not find the hub cap, which being vintage and rather beautiful I did not wish to be without, so I curled up in the bottom of the car, firmly clasping a tyre lever, to wait for the light of dawn, when I effected the same repair and continued on towards Kampala.

A Jowett Javelin saloon went through the Uganda-Kenya border post at Busia just ahead of me. I met this car twenty minutes later, completely overturned on its back off the road; the driver, having crawled through one of the broken windows, was standing, bleeding and somewhat dejected, gazing at the loose rear wheel that caused the trouble. We attached a rope to a chassis member of the Jowett and the front axle of the Lagonda and rolled it back on to its four wheels. Very little work soon made it serviceable, and we continued in convoy to the next town.

Shortly after Kakamega, now a ghost town where gold mining once boomed, I again stayed with a missionary, made the more enjoyable by the fact that his wife held a culinary degree.

On Tuesday, 3rd February, we had a very good run into Nairobi along what was for the most part an excellent road, and having crossed the Equator for the third time since being in British East Africa, on this occasion near Molo at nearly 9,000 feet.

The puncture score at Nairobi was fifty-seven, the purchase of two new Goodyears being an excellent investment, as they gave no trouble all the way to Cape Town. I spent

a week in Nairobi looking round the district, working on the car, buying tyres and visiting friends, and again met Captain Hill, who, true to his word, turned up with my con-rod. I also made the acquaintance of two Dutchmen and one Italian who had come from Europe, overland the former in an army lorry, the latter on a motor scooter, which he had however loaded on a lorry for the Sahara crossing. While in Nairobi it was very pleasant to come across some vintage machinery again, including a fine 3-litre Bentley and a blown 1750 Alfa-Romeo, also an extremely elegant and pristine Phantom I tourer.

The first day's run after Nairobi to Babati in Tanganyika produced various forms of wild life: giraffe, bucks and wildebeest grazing fairly close to the road, comparatively unruffled by the car.

I filled up at Babati, and having climbed the Pinnear heights, came to a barrier where I had to drive the car into a large wooden shed to be sprayed for tsetse fly. Then through the delightful village of Kondoa Irangi to Dodoma, where I stayed for two days at the kindness of Dr. John Robson and his wife, a fellow-member of the V.S.C.C. An amusing time was had in a P.W.D. yard there sorting out a spot of spring trouble when a touring film unit took some photos of the car and a native who was driving a tractor. The native, 4 ft. 6 in. in bare feet and the most enormous straw hat, immediately demanded higher pay as a film star.

And so to the very lovely Southern Highlands province of Tanganyika, through Iringa, over the M'mporotos at 9,700 feet down to the customs at Mbeya. I arrived at Mbeya at dusk and decided to continue to the border post of Northern Rhodesia at Tunduma, 71 miles distant, where there was a small rest-house, before turning in.

As I drew up in darkness outside this rest-house, a man framed in the light of the doorway said, "Hey, there is a car out here nearly as old as yours". A small avalanche produced Paul Fawcett, the owner of the aforementioned 1921 Calcott and my previous daily companion in England. We had previously met some five months earlier while



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both on holiday in Marseilles. He had no idea I was in Africa, and I was fully thinking he was in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia. The Calcott was some miles down the road in Nyasaland, the magneto having burnt out, and Paul was on his way with two friends from Abercorn, where he was temporarily living, to collect it in a lorry. As our routes crossed at Tunduma it was quite extraordinary that we both appeared on precisely the same day, and it is with but few regrets that I say that four of us dried up the beer stocks of that rest-house that evening.

The next morning we drove down to where the Calcott was stranded and fitted my spare magneto to it. What a meeting! How marvellous to have together again after exactly two years and one day two cars and two people previously inseparable, and in the middle of Africa. We motored back to Abercorn, 150 miles away, together just as of old on the roads of England, quite an unforgettable run. We got bogged at a river crossing, but some nearby natives hauled us out.

I spent a very delightful ten days at Abercorn, at the foot of Lake Tanganyika, while Paul finished his work there, and we then crossed Northern Rhodesia together. The rains were now in full spate in the Rhodesias, causing much havoc to the earth roads. I went over the most appalling bump which yet again broke the front spring. The chassis landed heavily on the track rod, which being fairly solid, and unable to articulate vertically, broke the offside track arm. Fortunately I had a spare, which was replaced, and I reset the toe-in adjustment, in the most appalling thunderstorm.

Shortly after Kapiri Mposhi the Calcott landed in a deep rut which broke the main oil pipe from the pump, losing all its oil before Paul realised it. We did not have sufficient spare oil, so the Lagonda took the Calcott in tow to Broken Hill, where a repair was effected. In Broken Hill the next day we met Michael Stafford with a very beautiful 1928 Morris Cowley.

At Kifiri Bridge, the old Waterloo Bridge across the Thames, we parted: Paul to return to Salisbury, myself to continue through Livingstone and to the Victoria Falls. As I watched the pretty little two-seater Calcott disappear down the road I could not but help wondering under what conditions and where the two cars would meet next. The Falls are certainly not to be missed by anyone within striking distance. I was lucky to see them really raging due to the current heavy rains.

Some miles outside Bulawayo I came across a modern American car with petrol pump trouble which the Lagonda towed into a garage there.

Over the border at Beit Bridge to the good roads of South Africa and an uneventful run to Johannesburg, where the Automobile Association of South Africa entertained me for a day.

After Johannesburg the road to Cape Town is all tarmac, providing good fast motoring. People coming past who had read about the Lagonda in the Johannesburg newspapers, were handing me out bunches of fruit and newspapers while on the move. All through South Africa I met extreme kindness and hospitality. On the last morning of the trip I had to forsake the car for the first time and hitch-hike fifty miles through the Karroo to get a new tube.

At the top of the Du Toits Kloof, with fifty miles to go, I met some people with a welcome crate of beer, and at the bottom some representatives of the Mobiloil firm of South Africa.

Over the last few miles down a magnificent dual carriageway I let the car out just to see if it was still capable of its normal performance. The engine rose steadily in the revs. with that healthy edge to the exhaust note telling of a motor basically in good heart.

Drifted around the Van Riebeeck statue, still with wooden suspension, and, with 12,500 miles in six weeks' actual driving, pulled up outside the Automobile Association offices, seemingly all too soon.



## SPARES AND TECHNICAL TOPICS

*Spares Registrar and Technical Advisor :*

I. FORSHAW, "Lyngarth," Sandecotes Road, Parkstone, Dorset.

Apology is offered for the absence of technical notes in the last issue, for the sketchy nature of these for the present magazine, and for the difficulty of keeping abreast of correspondence and at the same time meeting my domestic commitments and avoiding the divorce courts.

**Simms Vernier Couplings** are used for the magneto drive on the majority of these cars. These couplings give a control of adjustment of less than  $1^\circ$ , but their exact function and use do not appear to be clearly understood, and an illustration may be useful. Several different types were made, but the most common has nineteen serrations on the engine side of the coupling, and twenty serrations on the magneto side. To advance the timing, ease the magneto and coupling away from the drive ; turn the magneto, keeping the Simms coupling attached, through  $\frac{1}{19}$  of a circle, or one serration in the direction of rotation. This will have advanced the timing  $\frac{3.60}{19}$  or  $18\frac{8}{9}$  degrees. Push the magneto forward and engage the drive. The Simms coupling should now be held on the drive and the magneto again eased away. The magneto should now be turned against rotation  $\frac{1}{20}$  of a circle, or one serration, and re-meshed with its drive. This will have retarded the timing  $\frac{3.60}{20}$  or 18 degrees. It will be seen that the net result of these two movements will be to advance the timing on the initial setting  $\frac{8}{9}$  degrees, or approximately 1 degree. If the timing had initially been too far advanced, the first movement would have been against rotation of the magneto and the second movement with rotation.

**Parking.** Bournemouth is a town of hills. Few weeks pass without prosecutions for parked cars running amok, sometimes with fatal results to innocent and unsuspecting people. Recently an empty car rushed at terrifying speed down the steepest acclivity

of all, miraculously crossed a busy main road at the bottom, and seriously damaged several other cars standing on the fore-court of a hotel. The defence is always the same—"I cannot understand it. I set the handbrake"—and the penalty a few shillings instead of the term in prison which is richly deserved. Careless dependence on a ratchet is criminal ; wherever the car is left, bottom gear should be engaged and the handbrake applied. If parked on a hill, then the lower road wheels should in addition, be turned in to the kerb.

**Frost Precautions.** The annual warning is issued—replacement blocks and heads are difficult, sometimes impossible, to obtain. Those not using anti-freeze should clear all taps with wire and drain religiously, not forgetting the cock under the body of the water pump, when this is fitted. Freezing of the well of water retained here will grip the rotor and shear the pump shaft or drive on starting.

**Leather Upholstery.** Good saddle soap, thoroughly applied at regular intervals, will restore suppleness and is the best treatment for ageing leather. Fabric bodywork should be lightly scrubbed with warm soapy water to remove ingrained dirt, and thereafter, polished with a stain boot polish of the appropriate colour—this will waterproof the fabric and is not sticky. In the opinion of the writer, spraying of fabric and leather with cellulose or other reconditioning agents should be avoided as long as possible.

**Recommendation.** George Dean recommends Bonds of Waterlooville, this firm having promptly overhauled his steering gear at reasonable charge. On the other hand, Chester has stripped and rebuilt his own steering box, and now reports finger light steering at all speeds.

**Magazines.** The offer of loan of my personal set of Club Magazines, has been taken up strongly, and there is now a waiting list.



The offer is repeated and the books will be sent out in rotation.

**Chat.** Clarke has retired from the R.A.F. and taken a farm on the Cotswolds ; having according to Tweedie Walker, hounded out the previous occupants by sending successive waves of jet aircraft screaming between the chimney pots by day and night. Tweedie's description of life on the farm is graphic and entertaining—"... the approach roads are well guarded by flocks of sheep in order to prevent a rapid surprise assault. Once safely there, the weary visitor is immediately press-ganged into scouring the surrounding hill-sides for escaped geese, which are eventually discovered in the middle of a vast patch of nettles about four feet high. The horrid Clarke drives the visitor into the nettlebed with oaths and blows, whilst he remains on the clear grass to catch the geese as they are driven out by the guests. These pestilential birds being finally thrown back into a stone-walled rocky bedded compound, the tottering guest commences to have visions of tankards of ale and highly polished table laid with appetising dishes, but this mirage soon fades as it slowly dawns upon him that the hens will be fed first. When this foul labour has been accomplished, the fiendish Clarke forces his tottering guest up into the very attics to view a nightmarish Walt Disney growth on the floor and is threateningly ordered to admire the mushrooms!"

Many members write warmly of the great enthusiasm and excellent turn-out at both the A.G.M. and the November Handicap, and of the good spirit within the Club. It is difficult to resist a malicious thrust at a sister club which some years ago was held up to us as a model ; two of our members recently attended by invitation a gathering of this Club held in the London area—total present, two Lagondas and the nameless car of the person who invited them. Hilary Morse of Carlisle was an unexpected and welcome competitor at Bosworth's frolic, having, as someone said, done a vicarage crawl throughout the length of the country. Robert Pinkerton broke an axle shaft in Salisbury a matter of hours before the meeting but by a remarkable

piece of staff work (*advert.*) was present as planned.

Geoffrey Farrel has infected his father with his own enthusiasm, finding him a smart 16/80 saloon. Toss will deserts the Rapier for a 3-litre. Fletcher takes over the car earlier owned by Hearn and Harry Browell, whilst Scates has the close-coupled 2-litre saloon on which Gilbey did so much work. Gilbey himself, now has one of the 3½-litre cars, and it is pleasant to observe how many change their cars but cling to the make. Gostling returns to the fold with a Continental 2-litre, after several years absence.

Wells, who appears to be something of a firebrand in Sheffield, is assailed by a huge and belligerent person demanding to know if he is the man who "drives around shouting 'CLOT' at other motorists"—Daddy Hughes with the V.12 was a popular winner in the Concours at the A.G.M., having laboured mightily in the preparation of the car. Mrs. Collins used the 2-litre to transport members of the local Womens' Institute to their annual picnic—the President subsequently made reference to her Land Rover! The R.A.F. contingent of members is strengthened by Groves, assistant Chaplain in Chief to the service.

Kennedy, who disports himself with naval dragonfly helicopters, is for exile in Northern Ireland and should make contact with Tony Frazer, who has recently bought a 4½-litre as stable companion for his high chassis 2-litre car. In Eire, Ponsford-Jones is known as the mad spalpeen with a field full of cars ; he complains bitterly of grievous taxation there, especially on motor-cars. Elsewhere overseas, Gompels' 3-litre is attracting enormous attention in South Africa, Salisbury frets for his M.45 in Rome, whilst George Reid is due home on leave from Pakistan and longing to get his 16/80 out of pawn. Austin Vowell is posted to SHAPE in Oslo and with no enthusiasm at all seeks a home for his car.

One, Edwin Hancocks—not, I hasten to say, a Club member—is described in the daily press as a very successful suitor, but one who inexplicably persecuted his young lady and her family without mercy, and finally



set fire to her car. Mr. Justice Stable, summing-up, is reported to have said "You were courting this young lady in one breath, and setting fire to her car with the next". Half wolf, half dragon, in fact.

Bartleet and George Nall learn all about the tightness of rear axles, bending the writer's tools in the process. Chesher and Young buy a 16/80 in Birmingham—described as "not just rough but positively jagged." Veteran Spiller, a motorist in the last century and driving giant Mercedes in 1904, exchanges his supercharged 2-litre for a Lancia Aprilia. Another bitten by the Lancia bug is Ron Barker, who in a rather bewildered way, finds three amongst an extraordinary collection of vehicles; he has recently returned from a trip to Spain in the tiny 1922, 6 h.p. Peugeot Quadrillette including the crossing of an 8,000 ft. pass.

Rexford-Welch, Tortoise and Kennard, body building on the huge Edwardian 8-litre Italia, are in the market for old sofas and seasoned furniture. Forshaw unearths a veteran Napier, Emmett like and cobwebby, the culmination of years of search, and hopes to restore the car in her Jubilee year—pathetic letters asking for assistance will shortly flow to those members having machine shops and the like.

Arthur Woodhouse buys a 6½-litre Bentley as companion to his L.G.6. Richard Paines joins the do-it-yourself school with an engine overhaul on his 16/80; with a friend he is also rebuilding a Rapier from chassis form. On the same stretch of vile road in Bodmin, Pritchard breaks two rear road springs, whilst in nearby Newquay one of John King's cars is stolen and ruthlessly tumbled over the sheer cliffs at Bedruthan Steps. Jack Hullock is livid at a garage charge of 3s. 6d. for sufficient grease to silence a protesting front wheel bearing. Dudley, Pinkerton, McConnel and others contemplate the purchase of smaller cars to cut expenses and maintain their Lagondas on top form for high days and holidays.

As a child, the writer was taught that every creature, however obnoxious, has its place in nature's scheme of things, but it is hard to

## GOURMETS' SOHO HIDE-OUT

Well worth visiting

**T**UCKED away up a shabby staircase at 31, Wardour Street, W.1, is a veritable gourmets' hide-out in the best pre-War Soho tradition. Here celebrities of Stage, Films, TV and Press meet to enjoy food in good taste in the intimate atmosphere of La Lanterne Restaurant.

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Lunches cost about 3s. - - - the 3-course Dinner by candlelight at 5s. 0d. (from 5.30 p.m. until 10.30 p.m. or later by arrangement) is quite outstanding.

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see what niche is filled by the newspaper gossip columnist. In a page headed, "Stalkers in Jive Jeans crawl to a Crooner Kill" (what does this nonsense mean?) one John Aubrey of the *Daily Sketch*, writes, "Veteran car enthusiasts are getting out of hand. Not content with clattering round the British countryside week after week in their ridiculous old rattleboxes they are invading the Continent". And much more in similar strain aroused the ire of Mrs. Letcher, one of our most enthusiastic members, who tore him to shreds and extracted a sort of feeble minded apology. My feeling is that a tourniquet should be applied to restrict the circulation of an organ which emits such poisonous matter.

These happy sentiments of goodwill recall to mind the sobering thought that Christmas is once again approaching at an incredible rate of knots—may I close by wishing that every true motoring enthusiast, wherever he may be, may enjoy the happiest of Christmases and a clear road in 1954.



## COMING OF AGE

The registration book of the 2-litre indicated that it had first ventured on the highway of life in March, 1930, so March, 1951, seemed timely for a celebration. The principal in a "21st" is likely to be called on for some exertion, but may be excused some display of discontent if the exertion is not tempered with indulgence in some form or another. The Lagonda had full share of the exertions, but in a somewhat unfair division of the labours, the crew monopolised the indulgences.

A fitting occasion seemed to be the Cumberland Sports Car Club's Rally, which was open to "Vintage" members, so on the appropriate Saturday morning the machinery was directed towards Northumberland. The indulgences started with a succulent repast at Borough-bridge, followed by tea at Chollerford on the Tyne. The driver, in memory of a charming and long drawn out party the night before, at which he had been practicing of going to bed, then tried to snooze, and confined himself to a half pint of light at dinner ; but the navigator, without full appreciation of the problems of cartography before him, became mellow with copious draughts of wine, and at twenty past midnight, the official starting time, was only folding maps and collecting coats. Fortunately there were many miles to the first control, so the late start did not cause immediate anxiety ; but disagreement as to the intentions of the route card entailed some extra mileage, and heavy footwork was required to get to the Kirkstone Pass on time. A final blind, with the "Lakes" echoing with the scream of gears and blower as the 1 in 4 was stormed at peak revs in 2nd, just made it. Followed the hectic plunge the steep way to Ambleside, and awakening Wordsworth's ghost, round Rydal Water to Red Bank re-start, where for once bottom gear was not too high. By less steep but twisty lanes to Langdales, where the marshal sent cars up what seemed a 1 in 1 gradient with hairpin bends on which neither head or dipped lamps would focus. After this, a rest. Wrynose was out (an M.G. on recce the night before having

stuck in the snow and blocked the pass), and Broughton was reached by easy roads. A glimpse of Morecambe Bay ; a souse in which might have paid, for a state of non-inflation in a rear tyre did not become evident to a torpid crew till the cover was quite beyond covering any more. The lower tip of Windermere and inland, and a jolly hustle along A6 to Kendal. Thence the hills again, and an unkind check on the steepest part, and hide and seek with an elusive lane to Shap. Even passed a Healey here but must admit he was very low and being wary of perforation. The Lag's sump was low too, but 21 today, and the dawn breaking, and torpidity put by, the next control was reached on time with the crew singing(?) in discord and *ff* "She'll be coming down the mountain" and incidentally not disinclined to meet the dear woman.

The navigator now forgot on which hand his girl friend wears her engagement ring and firmly pointed Right when the Route card said Left. When Penrith did not look like Keswick the mistake was detected, but what had promised to be a calm and dignified progress into the final control, resolved itself into a lurid dice in the best traditions of the dicing with the old gent of the exposed cross-members school. No penalties on arrival, but the hasty manner of it resulted in taking the arrival test with the pulse rate at considerably over tick-over, and a penalty for faulty execution was recorded. No penalties were collected over the performance at breakfast, at least not for expedition, though here may have been small failings in technique. Further gyrations were performed after breakfast, but dimness was returning, or the oil drums were unstable, and noon saw the equipage setting off on the 175 miles to base. A pleasant adventure, and a nice little pipe opener for the Lagonda all night Treasure Hunt the following week.

Perhaps this was more hair-raising, at least in the Lakes one is not likely to MEET much traffic in the night watches. In Oxfordshire owing to a bright idea of the organisers, one would be driving with a high degree of velocity along a lane that was hardly wide



enough for One Lagonda, when Another Lagonda would appear round the next bend going the other way at even greater speed. Also it rained, which was not the fault of the organisers, but it did involve the crew in an hour long search for a person who was elsewhere because he was getting wet. It took

another fifteen minutes for the navigator to find the driver.

1,100 hectic but trouble-free miles in two successive week-ends, at 21 years old. Perhaps that is why the writer drives a Lagonda.

HENRY COATES.

## LAGONDA BY ACCIDENT

There are many ways of acquiring a Lagonda. You can spend delightful weeks looking for and at Lagondas ; you can pour over the motoring journals until you find one at a price you can't afford ; you can even spot one at a roadside garage, as you pass, thinking about something entirely different. But I didn't get mine in any of these ways. I got her by accident.

Perhaps I should explain. It all happened because I had to pass through Nottingham—a pleasant enough city, as all who know it will agree, but peopled for me by the most unpleasant mechanical Gremlins. Every time I pass through or near the place, something blows up, and when I say blows up, I mean just that! This time, I was driving an old London Talbot and, as I approached Nottingham, a most depressing and expensive noise began to issue from under the bonnet. Swearing quietly—but none the less heartily for that—I pulled up to find out which of the big ends I didn't have any more. A passing AA Scout suggested we should tackle the job there and then, by the roadside, from which I concluded that he didn't know very much about London Talbots. After I had explained to him that, to get the bottom off the sump, you had to take the engine out of the frame and that, on this particular model, before you could do that, you had to remove a cross-member of the chassis, he was persuaded that my idea of removing a plug and leaving the car at the next garage was better.

It transpired later that some clot of a previous owner had dropped a washer into the sump and it had chosen this particular moment to get itself mixed up with the oil

pump gears. As some other half-wit had placed the oil guage under the bonnet, I had continued to press on, in blissful ignorance of the fact that I had no pressure at all. No doubt you, dear reader, would long ago have put the gauge in its proper place—and so would I, in theory, but, somehow, I just never got round to it.

I fear I digress. *Retournons a nos moutons.* I carried out my plan, and, from the garage, rang up my good mechanic friend, to arrange for a tow-in next day, since no-one in Nottingham was fool enough to undertake the necessary repairs. I completed my trip to Birmingham, by train. I do this with monotonous regularity, every year, when the B.I.F. is on!

Next morning, my garage pal rang up and said he'd practically bought me a Lagonda. When I regained my senses, I asked for details and he told me he'd found a lunatic who had offered to swop a 3½ Lag, in good fettle, for the Talbot, as and where lying, plus what seemed to me to be a very moderate quantity of dubloons. Well, of course, I've always wanted one, who hasn't? I accepted the offer and now I'm a—what do you call it?—Lagonda-lier.

She's a wonderful motor car. She weighs 34½ cwt. dry and this, coupled with the fact that she will do an indicated 90 m.p.h. has led me to christen her "Dumbo" because she's the only baby elephant I've ever met that could fly! But, my goodness, she does get hot. Has anyone got a complete fan assembly, please? Fan, bearing, mounting and what have you? (1s. 3d., please. Ed.)

JOHN ATKINSON.



## NORTHERN NOTES

A time of thoughts rather than deeds, ideas rather than actions, of Lagondas (or parts thereof) on the workbench rather than on the road. Not that Lagondas spend quite so much of their time in introspection and reorganisation as some other cars we could mention ; but even the best require occasional refurbishings.

Page is motoring in his newly acquired second string, meantime, the blower model receives some technical attention to it's inside. Hibbert, with courageous zeal, attended the A.G.M. as passenger, his famous model awaiting the return of vital parts from Laystalls. Coates, alarmed by lurid tales of what befalls the rods if mains are slack, hurries to assemble and instal the spare power unit. Allison is on the road at last, and running in with masterly restraint, while Pape continues to hold out against profound and forceful advice not to use certain colours on certain places. The dashing coupe of Pegg, in vivid red, with sweeping body off a well known Continental, is now in Airforce hands. Blacker is, on occasion to be seen, at pace which speaks of firm right foot, a hearty but pleasant burble (exhaust of course) heralding his passage. At Cave, Foster finds time all too scarce, but is rebuilding his 3½ with wondrous care and precision—still with THREE gear levers—even his ingenuity is unequal to the task of devising means whereby the intricacies of suck and pre-selection may be replaced by one straightforward lever on the Maybach Box.

Certain members undertook some experiments in pyrotechnics on an appropriate date in early November. These could make a tale, but let it suffice for now that the experiments were premeditated, and that such conflagration as resulted did not extend beyond the prearranged site.

A Lagonda figured in results at the Rochdale Cavalcade. Page is to be congratulated on securing awards for turn-out and for manipulation.

No representation among competitors in the Welsh Rally, but two members were to

be seen vigorously waving flags.

A gathering of the nature of a belated general meeting is being arranged for December 13th.\* Tea will be served—the Northern Section is rather fussy about that sort of thing—and discussion will cover such subjects as what we are to DO next year, how extraordinary well our Lagonda has been motoring lately—until something FELL OFF, the DATE of the PARTY, and the retrograde ideas incorporated in modern cars. The more people turn up the more quickly will this programme be completed, as squads can be detailed to deal with each subject concurrently, so allowing people with babies to go home and put them to bed, and people without babies to drink something other than tea, and arrange to have a meal if they are hungry, or just like eating. If sufficient cars turn up, and it is not raining too hard, or if we can borrow a couple of umbrellas, two unbiassed persons will be asked to decide which Lagonda they would rather have. The owner of the car they select will receive a small prize. He will not necessarily be expected to accept this in full exchange if the judges are inclined to carry their preference to the extent of desiring to actually take possession of the car. All this, by the way, will take place at Cottons Hotel, Knutsford, Cheshire, and the unfortunate individuals who will be required to inspect the machinery will be in a position to make their survey from 2.30 p.m. Tea will be served at 4 p.m. and the profound discussions envisaged will continue from there in the comfortable lounge. Some will be stealing a march on others by having lunch also, and those who are already thinking of having lunch will be very pleased to be joined by such as change their mind and decide to have lunch too. It will be a good idea to ring up the management beforehand to be sure they have mashed sufficient potatoes.

It's rather pathetic this harping on food, but some of those to the East of the North propose to eat at the Nth. Sec's. in December. If any member from afar should happen to be buying a fish or something in Hull at the



time, he will be welcome. A moderate monetary contribution to the expenses may be exacted, but no washing up, and a bed on the spot.

Alvis commence a series of Film Shows with an evening near Preston. We are very grateful for their hospitality, and it is hoped to reciprocate in some form later.

HENRY COATES.

\* The pious hope is expressed that this announcement will reach members *before* December 13th.—ED.

## ABOVE THE BORDER

Lagondas in varying numbers continue to frequent the Allan Water Hotel, and meet Aston-Martins, though the old enemy, geographical divergence, makes regular attendance difficult. Not that a Lagonda worries about a few miles, but the contribution demanded by the Exchequer out of each gallon of the necessary fuel, gives pause to schemes entailing considerable locational re-adjustment.

England still calls apparently for, further losses to the South are Scott-Barrett and Rider, the latter in search of less healthy patients. Scott-Hyde, about to join, finds himself across the seas. One Scates, a non-member, has bought a 2-litre and gone to London—we hope to be caught up by the

Southern Section. Grant of Dornoch (the most Northerly member bar one) is selling his 16/80, Cmdr. Hoare his Rapier and Jack his 3-litre but hopes to remain a member. Major Marshall owns *the*, or one of the few, V-12's with four carburettors and original pre-war streamlined body ; he looks in vain for a kindred soul. Other non-member V-12's are to be seen, and will be roped in—if their owners are not wary. A very good 16/80 and a 2-litre saloon, prove very elusive. Cochrane is welcomed into the area and it is hoped to meet him when his Military duties permit.

Gow of Dumbarton has bought another 16/80, similar to his original car, but in an outstanding shade of maroon. Thom, also the proud owner of a 16/80 finds time between his flying duties to turn out. Gunn is alleged to own a 1933 Continental tourer but no one ever sees it ; he says he is rebuilding it, but he has suffered the indignity of losing his garage while the car is dismembered.

Apropos the Hon. Sec's. recent article, there are (or were) more 16/80's in Scotland than 2-litres. Besides those already mentioned, Scott-Barrett and Rider both had this model and it seems that it forms a high proportion of the Lagondas above the Tweed.

May we hope that N.O.M.J.C. will extend its influence a little further North?

HENRY COATES.

## MIDLAND NOTES

At last your Midland Hon. Sec. has NEWS!

In glorious weather on Sunday, September 6th, we held out first competitive event, at the Fleur de Lys Hotel, Lowsonford, Warwickshire ; eight members and their Lagondas took part. Three other members arrived to help with the marshalling, and in order to swell the entry list, arrangements had been made to run the event in conjunction with the A.C. Owners' Club. The A.C. boys fielded ten cars, so all together there was quite a party.

The event actually started at 2.30, but most members had arrived by one o'clock. Two types however were there at noon, it

being a coincidence, no doubt, that they arrived exactly at opening time.

Competitors were given a map reference, and with this point as centre, a circle of stated radius had to be drawn on a 1" Ordnance Survey Sheet. They were then required to visit every point at which the circle crossed a road, and at these points clues were to be found. The maximum time allowed was two and a half hours, and although the distance was only about forty miles, several competitors were late. Apparently the exercise proved more difficult than I had imagined for no one obtained all the correct answers. Best on this section was



Lake in a 4½-litre with Davies's 3-litre and Morrow's 16/80 not far behind.

On arrival back at the Fleur de Lys Hotel, a kerb parking test was held, one mark being lost for every inch the wheels were distant from the kerb. The best performance here was made by Payton in a 4½-litre saloon, who managed to place his wheels five inches away. Pearson (2-litre) was not far behind with 5½". Dalzell with the Rapier was handicapped by the poor lock and was unable to do as well as he might otherwise have done. One gentleman, who shall remain nameless, was 3' 6" away.

After the test, tea was provided and the results announced. The outright winner being Lake (4½ litre) with Moorhouse and Wilkinson of the A.C. Owners' Club tying for second place. The A.C. boys also won the Team Prize.

After the tumult and the shouting had ended, we settled down to watch an excellent colour film of the M.G. Car Club Midland Centre's Welsh Rally, and I know that the Club would like me to express our appreciation to the M.G. Club (Midland Centre) for their kindness in lending the film and to Don (Tug) Wilson for bringing along his projector

and doing all the work *gratis et honoris causa*. The film show filled in the time until seven o'clock, when "Brookie", our host, opened the bars and the consumption of light refreshments commenced.

#### Jottings

I missed the familiar faces of Clarke, Tweedie-Walker, and Crumbie. May I take this opportunity of welcoming our two new Midland Area members, Burrow of Solihull and Hall of Daventry. I hope to meet them at our next meeting. Dalzell has had continued trouble with his Rapier and has now used up all the spare chain tensioners and fibre wheels in the Midlands!

My own Rapier has done 30,000 miles without this trouble, until last week, when after I had spent considerable time polishing it so that it would look so nice standing in line with all the Big Lagondas, the fibre timing gear sheared only twelve hours before the meeting. This accounts for the battered Austin "7" saloon circa 1930 which stood between a V12 and a 4½.

There will be another meeting before Christmas and Midland members will be informed in due course.

T. HARRY WAREHAM.

26 August, '53

## THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

### Held on Sunday, 22nd September, 1953

The programme this year was to line up the cars on the Green at Croxley Green, ready for the Concours judging to commence at 12.30. The programme as went out in the notes got a bit behind and the meeting itself which was to have taken place after lunch, was delayed until after tea.

The weather was kind to us and it remained sunny the whole day. It is not known whether anybody actually counted all the Lagondas at the moment when they were at their maximum but the figure must have been near 70 or 80.

We were fortunate in having Stanley Sedgwick and Lt.-Col. Berthon, President and Secretary of the Bentley Drivers Club respectively, to judge the cars with the able

technical assistance of Ivan Forshaw. This judging was a little more severe than of previous years and it is heard that several members had lost tools and equipment found for them during the extensive examination of their cars. The standard this year was higher than ever and the judging was split into classes for Vintage and Thoroughbred cars, both open and closed classes. There were no entrants in the closed Vintage Class.

The results of the Concours d'Elegance were as follows :—

#### Thoroughbred Open

- |                  |       |                            |  |
|------------------|-------|----------------------------|--|
| 1. A. C. Burnett | 2.L.  | 244 marks                  |  |
|                  |       | (outright Concours winner) |  |
| 2. J. F. Russell | 2.L.  | 240 marks                  |  |
| 3. P. C. Jackson | 16/80 | } 236 1/2                  |  |
| Gibbins          | 2.L.  |                            |  |



### Closed

1. W. Hughes 4½ 239
2. E. M. Lane Rapier 233½
3. W. C. Whetham 4½ 229½

### Vintage

1. Fox 2.L. 237
2. Audsley 11.9 227½
3. Seaton 3.L. 217

Our three very hard-worked judges were still at it when the members had tea supplied by the Coach and Horses. After tea the members returned to the tea room for the Annual General meeting itself.

The meeting opened by the Secretary reading the Minutes of the previous A.G.M. held at Thame on Sunday, 21st September, 1952. These Minutes were passed as being a true record of that Meeting.

R. Freeman-Wright apologised to all present for the lateness of the Meeting and thanked Col. Berthon and Stanley Sedgwick for their kindness in coming to judge our cars.

The Treasurer gave details of the Year's Accounts ; the Accounts Sheet will be circu-

lated to all members. It was decided on the result of these figures that the Club Entrance Fee and Subscription rates would remain unchanged for the coming Club Year.

The Secretary explained that he was going to keep facts and figures out of his report as this had been circulated to all members in an article in the September Club Magazine. However, the figures of the growing Club Membership were quoted as follows :—

485 in September, 1951

522 in September, 1952

541 in September, 1953

Bearing this figure in mind, and the fact that there are approximately 170 members within 25 miles of London, the Secretary showed some concern at the relatively small turn out to any Events, Competitive or Social, in this area.

The Secretary mentioned, as had already been notified in the Magazine, that he was resigning, finding himself unable to continue to handle the Club's affairs with any satisfaction to its 500 odd members.

Ivor Forshaw, our Technical Advisor, has beaten his own last year's record, and has in

*contd. on page 23*

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## THE "OLD LAG"

(AUU 295)

The "Old Lag" is a 1934, 4½-litre open tourer which I purchased in March, 1944. It was in dreadful condition, the engine would just about run, the body was broken and bashed in, and the hood was in tatters. The war was on, so replacements were a problem, and in addition the work could only be done in spare times, but the work was eventually completed by early 1945.

The programme of work was as follows :

The engine was removed and completely reconditioned. The steering, clutch, gear box, rear axle and chassis were tested checked and any necessary repair, rectification or replacement made. All road wheels were remade. A new instrument panel was laid out to my choice, this being made and fitted in ebony finish. Lucas P100 head lamps were secured in second-hand condition, and these were rebuilt and fitted. The body, trimming and interior carpeting were reconditioned and made good. The car was then cellulosed in a medium green.

During the winter of 1950/51, I decided that certain body alterations were desirable. With this in mind, all wings and both running boards were scrapped. These were replaced with four wings of cycle pattern to my design, and small individual entry step boards were fitted. The rear boot lift was done away with, and we carried out alterations to the rear in order to give maximum accommodation for luggage with entry behind rear seats. The rear seat squabs and backs were remade to cut down room, but still allow reasonable comfort for passengers. A detachable and collapsible hood and frame were designed and these can be carried conveniently in the rear locker. A horizontally folding wind-screen was made and fitted complete with two screen wipers and a screen washer.

The old shock absorbers were scrapped and replaced by Newtons, and a badge bar was made and fitted. Two Marchal head lamps replaced the Lucas P100's and were fitted in a lower position.

The whole body was cellulosed in a specially mixed dark green with silver wheels. Following this, a supercharger was fitted to the engine, but this did not prove at all successful and was removed at the end of the 1951 season when I reverted back to the standard engine.

During the winter of 1952/53, I decided to get down to "tuning" and "spit and polish". The engine was removed and completely reconditioned, being bored back to standard, and a new clutch was fitted. Engine pipes and accessories were chrome plated and the engine generally painted. Dunlop standard tyres were fitted to the front. Goodyear Eagle tyres fitted to the rear. The body was made good and cellulosed as necessary. A new two piece tonneau cover giving cover to any one or all seats was fitted.

Since early Spring, the car has done 6,000-miles and fine motoring has resulted. Consumption is 15/17 m.p.g. Acceleration from rest through gears to 50 m.p.h.—12 secs. Top speed 80-85 m.p.h. ; given favourable weather and road conditions, 90-95 m.p.h.

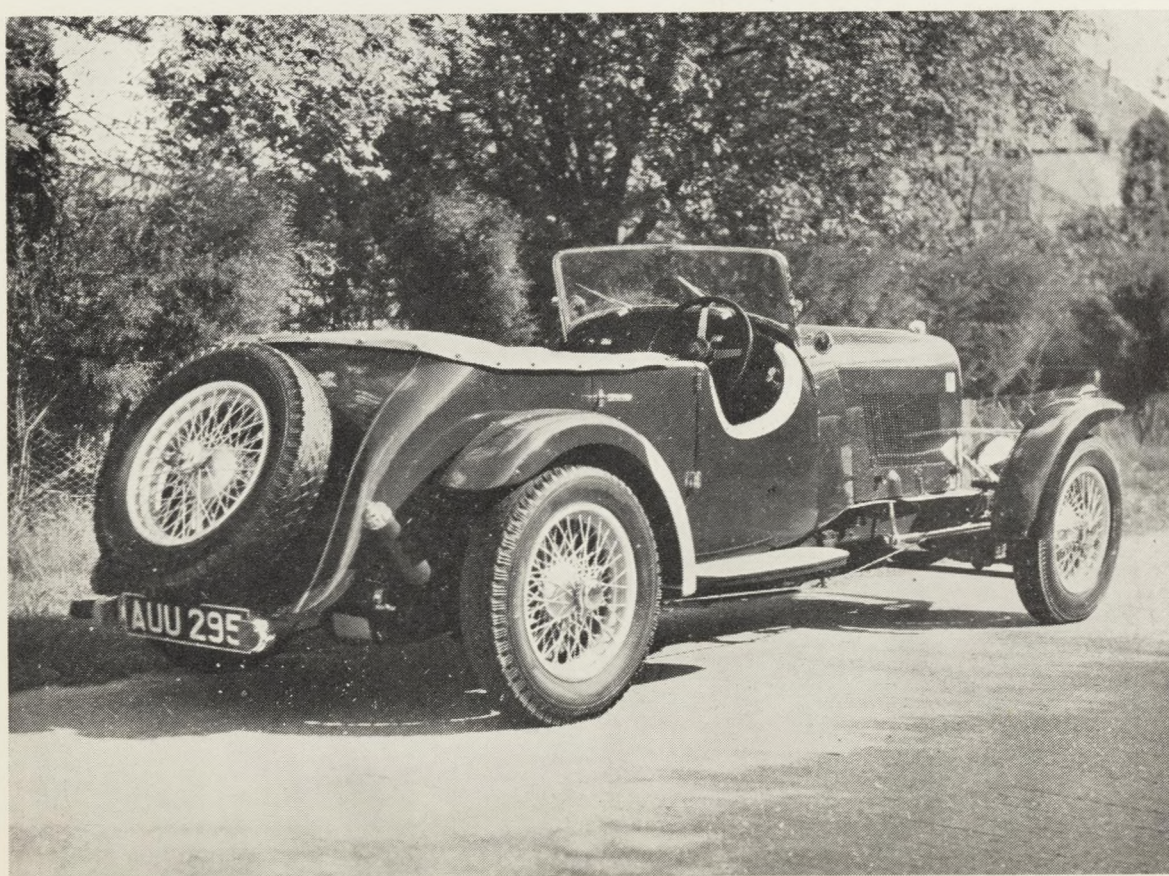
The "Old Lag" is an interesting car, and it has given me many many hours of pleasure, but I cannot close without a word of appreciation to Davis Motors for supplying new parts and to the work and co-operation of Arthur Hops and his staff at Garstin Automobiles Ltd., of 31 Portman Square, Portman Place, W. 1.

STANLEY NEWBOLD.

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It is learnt that Anthony Hyde-East has resigned his directorship of Hyde-East, Balston & Partners (better known as Hyde-East & Partners Ltd.), in order to be able to devote himself to the personal contact type of business . . . mainly with the affairs of the really enthusiastic motorist. The latter should now contact Mr. Hyde-East at 9, Waldegrave Road, Teddington, Middlesex.





*Stanley Newbold's "Old Lag"*

*Photographs by C. W. Withall*





*BENTLEY FIRLE. On the line: left, Long and Le Mans 2-Litre; right, Hughes and V12.  
Photographs by Peter Bartleet.*



*8 CLUB'S 2nd EASTBOURNE RALLY. Published entirely without comment—for once!*



*contd. from page 21*

the past 12 months handled over 1,700 letters. He claimed an average of three telephone calls per day and one visitor. He had kept no record of the cups of tea, etc., served. He asked all members to co-operate in the speedy return of loaned books, etc.

After relating a few incidents of the past year on the lighter side of being the Club Technical Advisor, Ivan told all those present, whether as intending visitors or telephone callers, that his bedtime is 10 p.m.

The Competition Secretary stressed the same problem as has been brought up so often before of poor support to Competitive Events. Apart from the same hard core of a few regular attenders, it would appear in general, that there is very little interest in the Club in competition. It was appreciated that in many cases it was a matter of cost, but as far as Club events are concerned, this is always kept to a very low figure.

Westall proposed an idea with the object of saving individual cost to members: he proposed a group of say, three members sharing the costs and time involved in getting one car on the track. The Competition Secretary pointed out that if such a system could be worked, it was up to members to team themselves up, and not for the Club to organise such a team.

Lane showed uneasiness about the insurance of cars whilst racing. The Competition Secretary replied to this by saying the R.A.C. Competition Licence covered this matter fully. Lane expressed a view that this was probably not well known enough amongst members, and the Competition Secretary agreed to give full details in a future issue of the magazine.

The Editor has forgotten precisely what he said at the meeting, but it was probably something about not getting enough contributions and not getting them ON TIME, and he may have hazarded the thought that more members might find an opportunity for advertising in THE LAGONDA.

The Chairman concluded the Meeting by reading the names of the past year's Committee and reminded members that the entire Committee resigns annually.

The members offering to stand for re-election, Lt.-Col. L. S. Michael, proposed the same committee be returned to office. This was seconded by Westall.

The Chairman thanked the Committee for the work done in the past year and thanked all members present for coming to the Meeting.

A. K. AUDSLEY

## COMPETITION NOTES

Since our last *magnum opus*, the few members of the Club who dare to hazard their machines in combat in such dangerous pursuits as rallies and other junketing have been comparatively busy and accounts of these orgies will be found in the tail end of this section.

The new rules for competition for the year 1954 have been released by the R.A.C., and though the complete list is a large one, the most interesting fact emerging is that Clubs will in future, pay a yearly fee—out of Club funds we hope—which will allow their members to compete in the normal club events without the formality of the 5s. competition licence; the RAC giving insurance cover as for the old comp. licence. This new ruling

will of course be of aid to the clubs who run a large number of events but will not be such a good financial break for the smaller ones!

## THE EIGHT CLUB'S SECOND EASTBOURNE RALLY

*Venue*: Three starts North of London, finish Eastbourne, with lots of miles in between and certain hazards.

*Eligible*: Members of the Eight Clubs'—Hants and Berks, Harrow, Cemian, Chiltern, Seven-Fifty, Lagonda, Lancia and A.C. Clubs.



Date : 16/17th October, 1953.

As it is seen above, we are members of this organisation—news to anyone?—and to prove it we entered eight cars, that is an entry of 1.6% of the Club which hardly sets the world on fire! The brave souls were :—

L. S. Michael, 4½	M. H. Wilby	Rapier
P. Jackson, 16/80	P. G. Bartleet,	2-L
J. H. Lynes 2 L	J. H. Pinkerton,	3 L
D. J. Westall, 4½	J. W. Crocker	16/80.

The Rally was conducted in sections, at the completion of which, the entrants were given a new puzzle card. Early on, a terrible thing was discovered—the organisers had planned one section but omitted to tell competitors to bring the map for it! This may make several, who have *not* organised an event, smile. In this instance, a new section was plotted and marshalled, and of the 80 odd entrants, only three were in any way held up by this error. This can truly be looked on as a considerable feat, which implies organisers who were very quick off the mark and who had marshalls on whom implicit reliance could be placed.

Many hazards were introduced to fool the competitors such as notices which, on getting out of the car, for they were just out of reading vision—"suggested that the competitors should have known better than to stop", and the notice conforming in no way with the method of marking laid down in regs. ; silly perhaps, but they caught a few of the experts. Another point manned by M. Bosworth, caused some heartburn, as the competitor was handed a "running" stopwatch and sent off to the next point only a matter of 200 yds. away where the time on the watch was recorded—any hesitation cost lost of marks, again the experts took this in their stride.

Your scribe, who was posted on the highest and windiest down in Sussex, crouching over a coke brazier, heard many a strange and awful thing relating Lagondas—Wilby had hit a Ford—this on decoding read his mag. had packed in a 100 yds. before a ford (water) ; Bartleet had been flying—this was in fact true, as he neglected to turn the steering wheel at a sharp right hand bend, this resulted in him breaking a halfshaft a few

miles further on. Russell navigating Westall had had an aberation between left and right and their chance of being high up in the Rally evaporated, a pity as they were well placed. Pinkerton in the 3-litre came through and appeared to be enjoying things and was very determined to finish. At dawn Mrs. Scribe began cooking on the dubious brazier and a pleasant meal was taken while the rain began to fall on the competitors' route cards, which were fortunately rescued by Jeddere-Fisher who worked out same and telephoned results to Eastbourne—a good idea which aided much in the rapid compilation of the results.

The scene now changes to Eastbourne, where the competitors were sent off on a regularity test, which included the Beachy Head cliff road, with lots of nice corners. After this, the runners were allowed a break before tests on the front—these were of the standard type—which was a good thing as Lag owners knew what excuses to give for poor performances before they started.

Most members of the Club put up at the Albion Hotel, Eastbourne, and it must be recorded what a long suffering and excellent hotel this is—they didn't appear to mind any of the eccentricities that most rally types produce. In fact, they even cooked sausages that Freeman-Wright provided for the delection of a very rough lot of fellows in the bar, with whom your Competition Sec. thought it was best not to associate.

In the evening, a party was laid on in some assembly rooms, and copious quantities of beer vanished. From all reports the 8 Clubs' can reckon that they have again laid on an experts' rally in which the experts were at least made to think more than usual.

### Results

Overall winner: A. Greig, Hants and Berks.

Class A. : Dr. J. H. Pinkerton,  
Lagonda.

B. : P. Stark, Hants and Berks.

C. : S. Moore, Hants and  
Berks.

The Club will, I am sure, like to offer its congratulations (and at the Xmas party a prize) to Pinkerton and his navigator, Trethewey. Not to mention the organising



brains, Jeddere-Fisher and Uncle Barclay Fisher. Again we were indebted to the Mayor, E. C. Martin, J.P., and the Corporation of Eastbourne, a town that not only welcomes motorists, but goes out of its way to help them—a very rare thing in this country!

## BENTLEY FIRLE HILL CLIMB

*Venue :* Firle Hill near Eastbourne, Sussex.

*Eligible :* Members of the Lagonda Club driving Lagondas, at the invitation of the Bentley Drivers Club.

*Date :* 27th September, 1953.

This event is one that has appeal on two counts ; firstly, the climb and the excellence of the organisation, and secondly, the pleasant surroundings in the beautiful Sussex downs.

The Club entry on the programme was very gratifying and no less than 10 cars were listed :—

		<i>Practice 1st run</i>	
		<i>secs.</i>	<i>secs.</i>
H. C. Long,	2-litre	51	53
R. Freeman-Wright,	4½ Rapide	33	34
D. J. Westall	4½-litre	38	41
T. D. A. Kennady,	4½-litre	41	41
L. S. Michael,	4½-litre	36	37
P. Cavanagh,	4½-litre	—	—
G. Woodward,	4½ Rapide	—	39
M. Russell,	4½-litre	34	35
P. Hunt,	4½-litre	35	35

(It should be mentioned that Russell and Hunt were driving Westall's and Freeman-Wright's cars which had been entered twice—a very nice gesture by the two owners.)

The Bentley Club can always be relied upon to turn on an event which is impeccably run, however, they are not so clever in choosing their day and when the competitors returned from the lunch break—liquid is taken by tradition at Alfriston—the rain started in earnest and carried on for the day. In fact, it became necessary to abandon the meeting in the interests of safety, long before all second runs had been completed, for it becomes a bit slippery at the top corner.

On leaving the hill, the Club wended its way home with a protracted stop at Crawley—strangely enough opposite the “George”.

## THE WINKWORTH WALK ABOUT

*Venue :* The Three Shoes Inn, Laleham nr. Staines on Sunday 11th, October, 1953. Start, 2 p.m.

*Eligible :* Any member of the Lagonda Club.

*Entry Fee :* 2s. 6d.

The above event which was as well organised as the turn out of Lagondas was bad (or should it be pathetic?) was run on a really beautiful October Sunday in the pleasant country south of Staines ; a total of about 50 miles being covered between the simple map references, ten in all and one of which entitled the competitor to a free cup of tea—a welcome innovation.

At 13.15 hours, the Comp. Sec. and Winkworth were the sole representatives of the Club at the “Three Shoes”, and it is not surprising that the organiser was becoming a little on the dispirited side. However, by closing time the numbers had been swelled by the arrival of Maurice Leo, Digby, Bourne, Wilby, Cooper, and Price—enough at least to justify starting. Tortoise Taylor and Mackilvener arrived after the OFF—the former to spend the afternoon touring the countryside in a vain search for the pack.

The points chosen by Winkworth, without exception, demanded an average knowledge of an ordinance map and a little ingenuity in unravelling the clue. One of the best being “A narrow Bride” which turned out to be a road sign in connection with a maintenance bridge but with the G missing, whether this was due to Winkworth's screwdriver or the standard of British road signs, will never be known.

The event was nicely timed to get us back to the THREE SHOES by dusk—who turned on a very excellent tea at a most moderate price and served with the best of humour. Results gave the winner to be Digby, then Leo, Rexford-Welch, Wilby. All competitors then started in on one of the small and intimate parties that appear to follow on such events and departed home well satisfied with the day, but pondering why so few people turn up to an event in an area lousy with Lagondas. Thank you, Wink.



