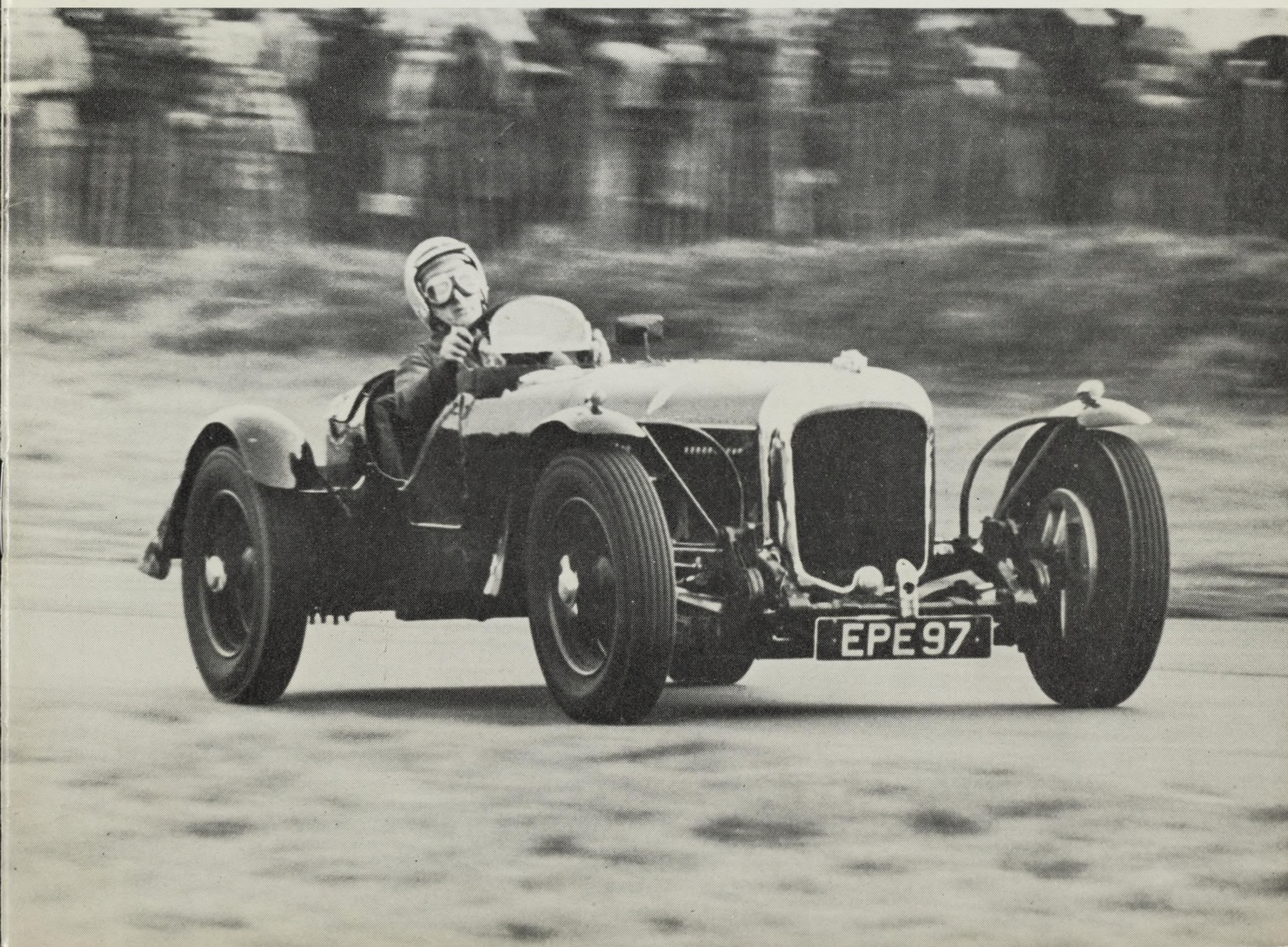




THE MAGAZINE OF THE LAGONDA CLUB

Number 95 Summer 1977



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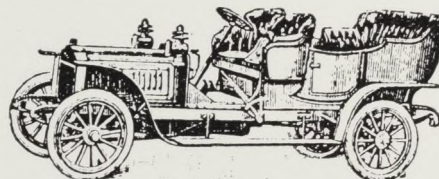
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Contributions do not necessarily represent the views of the Committee nor of the Editor, and expressed opinions are personal to contributors.

FRONT COVER: The Team Car returns to racing. The modified LG.45 Team Car previously owned by Billy Michael is now raced by new owner David Dunn.

Out and About

FRONT COVER. Those of you who actually read the captions to our photos will have spotted the unfortunate error on the Spring issue's cover. The cars were of course M.45 Rapides and not LG.45R's. Sorry about that! Thanks to Herb "Catseyes" Schofield for taking the trouble to point it out.

* * * *

JIM MCMURDY's rather critical letter in the Spring magazine concerning MR. WOOD's conversion work on his David Brown 3-litre raises the important point that the Club cannot take responsibility for the efficacy of any technical advice offered in its pages. It is up to members to check carefully and satisfy themselves before carrying conversions and other work on their cars. Mr. Wood incidentally has questioned some of Jim's comments (see "Letters to Editor") to which Jim will hopefully reply.

* * * *

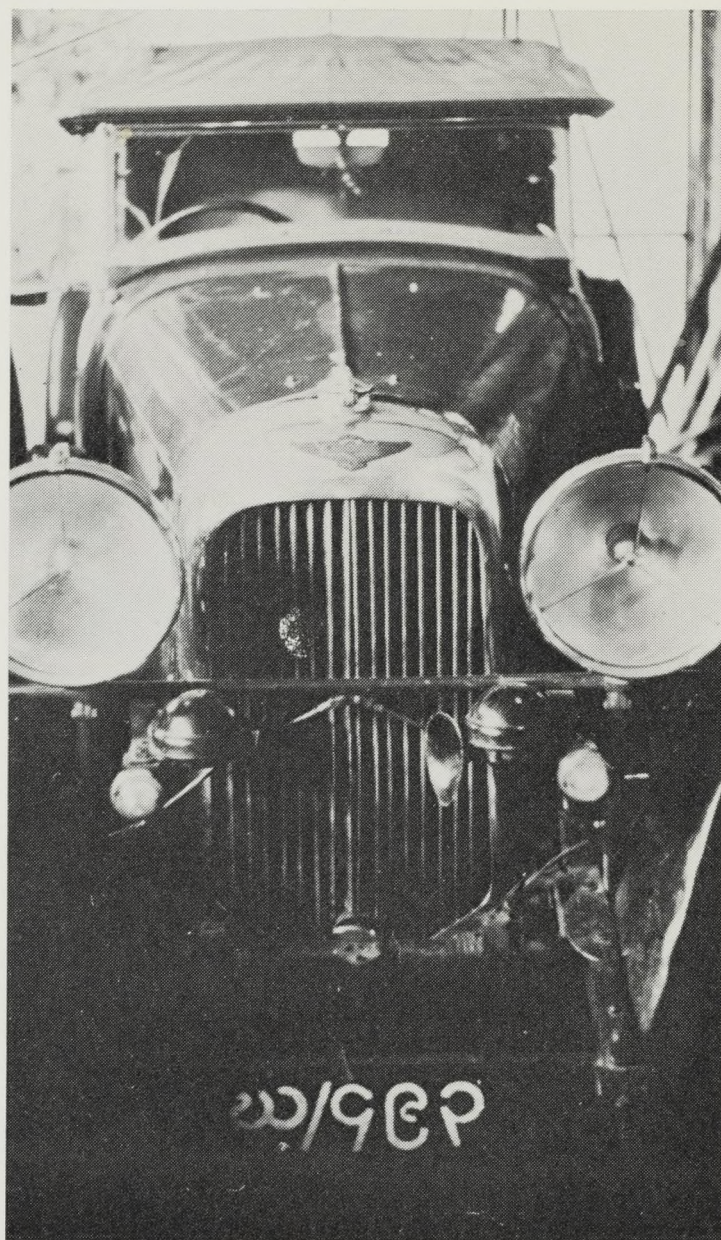
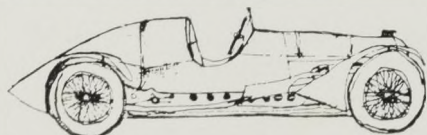
The planning for the Club's AGM/Dinner Dance proceeds apace. It has been decided to ask members to book their overnight accommodation *direct* with the hotel mentioning they are Club members. Full details appear elsewhere in this issue as well as in the Newsletter.

* * * *

The Club is actively searching for a new Treasurer as Alastair Innes Dick has announced he wishes to relinquish the post. Are there any volunteers for this important role on the Club's Committee? Preferably some experience of accounting would be an asset. Or perhaps two people working as a team? One to look after the receipt of subs. and the general financial accounting while the other could chase up reluctant members to actually pay! It is important that we find someone quickly.

* * * *

Similarly there is a vacancy on the Committee for someone who can look after the interests of the David Brown Lagondas and organise and channel the considerable interest that exists in these models to the benefit of their owners. If anyone is interested please drop a line to Herb Schofield or your nearest Committee member.



Mystery M.45

This motor car is presently located in a remote part of the world, to which it was shipped around 1950. It requires a little ingenuity, plus an export licence, to bring it back to its country of origin.

Question 1: In which country is it?

Question 2: Is anything known of its previous history?

The answer can be found in Jeff Ody's article "A Vintage Peripateticity" elsewhere in this issue.

Copy wanted for
Autumn magazine.
Please send to Editor
by 15th August please

Northern Dinner/Dance 25th March, 1977

"EXCELLENCE RESTORED". AFTER LAST YEAR'S below par effort it is pleasant to record that the party this year was perhaps the best yet—and this despite the fact that the band forgot to turn up!

The venue as usual was Monk Fryston Hall and about sixty brave souls turned up. Firth (LG.45), Schofield (Stutz Bearcat) and Hine (1934 BSA Scout) actually came in old cars. The evening followed the usual pattern of prep school humour and vulgarity, with Brown (looking comparatively smart in an evening suit which had obviously belonged to someone much taller 20 years ago) doing his usual variations on his well tried (worked to death?) theme of trouser removal. This year's effort involved yards of string, pieces of wood, three union jacks and two birds to actuate the operation. Most unfortunately the Northern Secretary fell over the Heath Robinson like construction shortly before it was due to be sprung and so nothing actually dramatic happened! Strange to say everybody found it highly amusing especially—Brown. The Northern Secretary followed and having had the good sense to confine his drinking at that point to three pints of Grotneys 'Red', which as you know is non-alcoholic was able to read his speech (unlike last year) and (unlike last year) it went down better with the audience—in fact it went down well if you don't mind me saying so!

After prizegiving it was discovered that the band had gone missing. John Beardow and Henry Coates offered to sing for us but as we wished the party to continue the kind offer was declined, instead some chaps from the kitchens operated a sort of 'disco' which went down very well, as indeed did David Hine's annual rendition of the "Battle of Hastings" which sixty people recited with him. This would perhaps indicate a change next year!

So the best meeting in the vintage calendar came to an end at 1.30 a.m., when those members who had come with their wives took coffee in the large reception area leaving the rest of us to retire to bed for the best part of the evening!

* * * *

Silverstone 16th April, 1977

NIGEL HALL ASKED ME WHETHER I HAD BEEN talking to the V.S.C.C. as he had been allocated the low number "48" and this could be partly the reason why Lagondas did not feature in the race results. Not strictly correct of course, but Club Members did do particularly well in the 1976 season which undoubtedly had some effect on the handicapping.

Nice to see John Abson out again in Elliott Elder's Rapier and also Paul Morgan with his supercharged Eccles Replica. In fact, thirteen Lagondas were entered but poor Wittridge never got onto the track having brought this year's Competition Licence with last year's medical card—pity. Richard Fletcher-Jones lost oil pressure in practice and decided he did not want to blow up another engine after the Cadwell Park catastrophe and so put the car back on the trailer and spent the rest of the day spectating. Mike Hallows and Peter Whenman both in 2-litres went extremely well in the 40 minute High Speed Trial and we hope to see them competing again later in the Season.

April Silverstone is usually wet, cold and windy. This year there was a cool wind but no rain and it seemed to be bright most of the day—even in the bar! This time incidentally, the Circuit Club had remembered to order draught beer.

Elliott Elder spent some time telling me how his Cooking 1500 c.c. engine was in fact split between the bores, but a little careful welding and a well placed bolt driven from the inlet to the exhaust side, endowed with two large washers and a couple of nuts, was doing a grand job holding the thing together. "Just like they use to hold together old houses!". The car certainly went well despite this mechanical innovation and John Abson was seen to be having a great time in the 15-lap All-comers' Scratch Race. James Crocker appeared to be enjoying himself yet again, although rather unkindly the commentators kept

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referring to him as "John", no doubt this can be overlooked since driving from a midfield position, I think I counted him 4th in Event 9 which was a 5-lap Scratch Race.

The two Rogers, Firth and Threlfall both went well in their Handicap races and it was nice to see the only husband and wife team in the Club, Paul and Margaid Nickalls having a good start to their 1977 season. In the last magazine Cadwell report they were mistakenly referred to as Enid and Peter, but this was put down to reporters licence and quickly forgotten when it was found that Margaid had won the coveted V.S.C.C. Ladies Award last year. Well done indeed, especially during her first season of competition.

The Meeting took its usual form starting with the High Speed Trial at approximately 1.30 p.m. Jim Shelly was in with the heavy metal with his 4½ then we saw the 2-litres and also David Seath's Rapier last seen at Cadwell in September. The rest of the entry comprised of the usual mix of cars, Alvis, Vauxhall, Bentley, M.G., Austin, etc., and that rather dreadful 1937 FWD Citroen, just the kind of car that ought not to be in the Club, but that is a personal opinion. A couple of 5-lap Handicaps followed, both providing an interesting cross section of the right kind of machinery, and then followed quite the best race of the day.

The long, in this case 15 laps, Allcomers Scratch Race incorporating the more modern machinery is always good value. This year, Willie Green who normally drives in a professional capacity for J.C.B. but is nevertheless a V.S.C.C. member entered the J.C.B. 250F Maserati and was up against Simon Phillips in the extremely rapid Cooper Bristol along with David Llewellyn and Chris Mann also on 250F, seven ERA's, the 3-litre prototype Rover of Frank Lockhart and various other interesting vehicles including John Abson with the Rapier. Green allocated No. 1 in the programme led almost from start to finish but scared himself once or twice at Copse and Becketts, allowing Chris Mann, No. 5 in the blue 250F to gain the lead for a short time. Simon Phillips followed in hot pursuit, but with half a litre less capacity had little chance of getting by. Towards the end of the race he had the misfortune to tangle with a back marker at Woodcote and spun in towards the pit lane. He recovered but pulled off later, presumably with damage to running gear. The 1.5 Maserati of Margulies was most exciting around Woodcote, the inside rear wheel lifting and clouds of blue smoke coming

off the tyre almost blinding the driver behind, not a very efficient way of putting power on the road but it was exciting!

The noisiest car of the Meeting was undoubtedly Tony Bianchi's 3.5 Alvis Special with Siamese Megaphone Exhaust—beautiful!

The 10-lap Scratch Race for the Itala and Napier Trophies was also exciting, but again rather disappointing as the J.C.B. 1½-litre Straight Eight 1927 Delage non-started. It appeared to be going quite well up and down the paddock earlier in the day, but was in such immaculate condition, presumably having just been rebuilt that perhaps one or two final adjustments needed to be made before this extremely valuable vehicle could be chanced on the track. For those who like big machinery, Peter Morley again had the Bentley Napier with its 24-litre Napier engine thumping and banging round and the rest of the entry comprised principally of Bentley, Bugatti and an assortment of Riley models.

A new 8-litre Bentley arrived on the scene in the hands of G. J. Russell. This appeared to be based on a 3-litre chassis rather like the Llewellyn 6½ Bentley Special, but was in fact a single seater beautifully finished and quite the part. However, it suffered diabolical axle tramp with the front wheels lifting almost 12 in. off the ground under hard breaking for Copse, so clearly something will have to be done to make it safe at speed before the owner can get down to some serious fun.

Quite one of the nicest cars I have seen for some time appeared in this event. This was a 5-litre Bugatti in the hands of Nigel Arnold-Forster. It is the twin of the Peter Hampton's Black Bess of 1912, but has a racing body with an extremely long, pointed tail and looks very much like an overgrown Brescia, if you can picture the one owned by Hamish Moffatt. Talking in the paddock prior to this race, I was told that the parts had been found in Switzerland some years ago and it had taken considerable time to rebuild and assemble. Believe it or not, a front wheel fell off during the race as someone had forgotten to split-pin the hub nut. Fortunately, the damage was not too serious, but this sort of incident seems to have become a habit with a certain gentleman who suffered the same problem a while ago with his Delage. There must be a lesson there!

And so, with two more 5-lap handicaps and Event 9 being the last Scratch Race of the day an extremely enjoyable Silverstone came to an end.

It would be nice to keep up this size of entry at subsequent Meetings, just add Herb Schofield, Alan Brown and hopefully myself and we can almost ask for an all Lagonda Race—that would be really something.

J. A. BATT

Pomeroy Trophy Meeting or “A Clash of Pistons”

AFTER ALMOST THREE YEARS OF MOST ENJOYABLE work my 4½-litre, LBT 74 was finally ready for action. To complete the running-in programme prior to April Silverstone, I decided to enter for the Pomeroy Trophy. This is one of the few events in the Vintage Calendar that I have so far not competed in, mainly because until I bought LBT from Henry Coates I did not have a Lagonda with a suitable engine capacity.

Final checking on the car completed, Saturday arrived warm and dry so the swift run up the A5 was a real delight as dawn broke. The A-roads are so much more fun these days, especially early in the morning, and believe me, unless one travels the night before, Race days really do mean a pre-dawn start.

The V.S.C.C. accepted 64 entries in all with my car in Class A—Standard Tourers, whilst Class B took Sports cars and Specials. Scrutineering was quickly over with only one problem and here is a tip for others—should your seats lift or fold forward, they must be secured firmly to the floor—it is no good relying on your tonneau. Fortunately, a friend produced one of those rubber “octopus” things normally used for holding articles on a car roof rack and this did the trick so with my first scrutineer’s ticket of the season, back to the paddock.

A quick drink of coffee and a chance to look at the rest of the field. For those who do not know, the “Pom” is the only event when the V.S.C.C. allow a mixture of Vintage and modern cars. For instance, Class A covered a 1923 Alvis 12/50, a 3-litre Bentley Tourer, several Bugattis from a 1926 Type 35T through to a ’29 43A fitted with rather beautiful semi drop head French coachwork and supercharged, BMW 328, Aston Martin 1958, 4½ Bentley of 1938, Frazer Nash Le Mans

Replica, Jaguar XK 120 and C type, Lancia, Maserati, and A.C., Aston Martin DB.4.GT, through Reliant, Morgan, Alfa Romeo Tipo 33/2, sports racing 2-litre GT of 1968, an MGB GT V8 and finally a number of Ferraris culminating with a 308 GT B of 1975.

By comparison, Class B with only 11 cars ranged from Bentley 3/4½, Frazer Nash Super Sports, Alvis 4.3 and Lea Francis SS Specials, another BMW 328, an Austin Healey 3000 and a modern Datsun 240Z.

There is a very complicated marking system involving a formula relating capacity in litres with year of manufacture and then the number of inches from the centre line of the rear axle to the brake pedal. This is related to actual time recorded and a figure of merit. The winner is the driver whose car at the end of the day collects the appropriate number of marks, all very complicated and frankly, I am glad that someone else has to work it out—I only go for the beer, and of course the racing!

Test A is officially described as a steering test but it is in fact a zigzag between a number of pylons attempted by most cars flat out in second gear. The regulations say that approximately 40 m.p.h. maximum will be reached and clearly the person who wrote that had not tried it! Times ranged from 34.03 seconds recorded by a Reliant Sabre 6 (something wrong here) to 20.87 which was not a Ferrari but a Vauxhall Firenza. Yours Truly managed the respectable time of 24.72—do not forget the car is running-in but more of this later.

Test B—the one where you have to stop across a line—I would prefer to forget about—but for the sake of the record, the regulations state that “from a standing start at line A, drivers will cross line B at a speed of their choice and are required to stop astride line C at first attempt. Timed from B to C”. Sounds simple doesn’t it, but it is very misleading. Several drivers, including myself, made the classic mistake of accelerating like hell from line A across B and of course attempting far too late to stop astride the finish. You see, one does not get a chance to look at the speedometer, it all happens so quickly, at least that is my excuse and that of the other 28 people who either failed or for other reasons non-started. The Morgan Plus 8 won this one with a time of 6.7 seconds and the slowest was 9.5 by an Alvis 12/50 TE. At least I now know that my 4½-litre stops in a reasonably straight line although I did bend the

front brake rod in the process of finding out. Better here than in the middle of London.

Standing start quarter-mile sprint and flying quarter-mile comprised Tests C and D prior to lunch. These are the first two Tests where the complicated formula really plays an important part, otherwise what chance does the fellow in the small Alvis have against the 1975 308 GT.B Ferrari? Looking at the results, the overall times recorded were remarkably close, and I was pleased to see that my car in the standing quarter was only 1.2 seconds behind the supercharged type 43A Bugatti and only 0.78 seconds slower on the flying sprint! Trying to prove that a 4½-litre Lagonda is faster and better than the Bugatti is one thing, but trying to prove the fact has cost me at least £150 so I thought I may as well see the point in print—satisfaction achieved.

Several other cars were good value on this Test, notably the Frazer Nash Le Mans Replica which was very smooth whilst the DB.4.GT Astons went well but were extremely noisy. The Morgan V8 purred away but the fastest time went to the AC Cobra with its 4727 c.c. V8 engine really pushing out the torque.

By now, the sun was through and it felt almost like a spring morning but this fooled nobody as the small electric sun shone dimly in the crowded paddock bar where the sound of crown tops could be heard tinkling to the floor amid the click of plastic glasses. Yes a problem—the first official meeting of the year at the track and the Management failed to get in a delivery of draught ale! This was made up for by the pleasure of seeing people last seen at Cadwell Park and there is always plenty to talk about whoever you meet where the common interest is the “right” kind of motoring. A few sandwiches and a couple of scotch eggs later, it was time to go out for the high speed reliability trial. Did I say reliability? Each car is allocated a certain number of laps to be completed in 30 minutes, and for LBT the figure was 17. Two warming up laps were allowed and all the drivers were called forward to the Grid, told to switch off and leave their cars for a pep-talk from Tony Bird who then asked everybody if they understood the official flag signals. A strange time to ask such a question I thought as anybody who did not know them was hardly likely to admit it when fully kitted up, car on the Grid and five minutes to the Flag! Sure enough Tony Bird was not disappointed and two minutes later we were in our cars ready for the off.

For some reason I was on the front row of the grid on the outside of the track and was rather pleased with my start, although for the first time realising that all those people who said the GT.10 box was so slow were actually right. The laps soon ticked away in the 1.30's and the faster cars began to come through. Morgan Plus Eight, Aston Martin DB.4, Jaguar D Type and similar vehicles one really does not want to play with! All went well until lap 13 at Woodcote corner when, accelerating hard in third gear, there was this dreadful screeching noise and I thought “that poor fellow on the left has blown his engine up”. The obvious lack of power and smell of burning oil wafting up through the floorboards into the cockpit told me a different story, easing back, I quickly pulled off the track and back in the paddock and found my lovely new engine had siezed solid. I must admit that at this point I took very little interest in the remaining two half-hour race sessions except that I was by no means the only person to have problems and would guess that the retirement rate in the afternoon was about 15% of the entry, judging from the results sheet.

To cut a long story short, there was only one thing to do, and that was to go back to the bar. Several brown ales later, two of my Rapier friends had organised a strong wire rope and a captive Ford Cortina (and driver) to tow me back home. It usually rains on such occasions but the sun still shone as we sped south down the A5 and back to the spanners.

By Sunday afternoon the engine was stripped and I found cylinders three and four badly scored, and the pistons melted due to lack of lubrication and a too efficient bottom oil ring. Members of the Northern Syndicate told me they never install the bottom ring which is obviously one way round the problem, but the other has to be a longer running-in period.

The engine will shortly be ready for reassembly complete with super lightweight Volvo pistons unfortunately I shall miss my entry for V.S.C.C. April Silverstone.

Apart from this misfortune, a most enjoyable day, but it would have been much more fun had there been other Lagondas entered. In fact I only saw a couple of Club Members but there were quite a few spectators. The combination of high speed tests throughout the day and the mixture of car types makes the Pomeroy Memorial Trophy Competition a unique event.

J. A. BATT



Seen on way to Silverstone . . .
... a tender car?

A Vintage Peripateticity

IT WOULD BE AN EXAGGERATION TO SAY THAT THIS journey was undertaken for the purpose of enjoying a Vintage social experience, but it made the other reasons a little easier to bear. The basic equipment needed was the membership registers of three Clubs (Lagonda, Rapier, and Vintage) plus a few snaps of Lagondas At Home.

The itinerary started in Washington DC (where they keep the Presidents) which, as a glance at the Bell Telephone Directory will tell you, is close to places known as Virginia and Maryland. And if you look in the Club register (latest edition—1971 (remember 1971?) you will see that many quite respectable Lagondas live nearby.

Too respectable as it transpired: the general reaction to these initial telephone calls being the immortal “We’ll call you if we need you”. Apparently they didn’t.

I suppose a more sensitive flower would have taken the lesson then and there, but fortunately I didn’t.

The next stop was Fiji, where the dateline is

(one side it’s Thursday, the other it’s Friday. Very disturbing). Arthur Jeddere-Fisher was a big wheel in Fiji once, and at that time had the misfortune to experiment on me with his famous Rubber-Chicken-Dull-Knife Act. It wasn’t a success, and he’s no longer in Fiji, but I doubt there was any connection. There were no motor-ing candidates there on this occasion, not that I could locate anyway (I exaggerate slightly: there is at least one black R-type Rolls, but that is scraping the barrel rather).

And so to the Solomon Islands, Guadalcanal and all that. Lots of post-vintage beachside Japanese attempts to keep the awful Montezuma’s at bay, but no signs of current interest. (I exaggerate again: subsequent re-inspection of the *Vintage* Register suggested the presence of a Mr. Hansen, but the identity of his car was not established. Regrettably, my Other Responsibilities had distracted my full attention at the time.

And so to Papua New Guinea. I don’t think we’ll go into Papua New Guinea. Suffice it to say there is no recorded account of a Vintage pub meet every third Wednesday in the Coach and Horses in that Territory, nor any other sign of Vintage life.

But then . . . Australia! And not *just* Australia, but *Queensland*, whose land area and wealth are two and a half times as great as the whole of the Commonwealth of Australia itself, as anyone from beyond the Banana Curtain will tell you. They also manufacture (“brew” is too cosmetic a word) a substance known as Fourex, which I don’t think we’ll go into here. Well, Queensland is the home of a long-suffering Rapier owner by name of Doctor (not the sort you go to for Confidential prescriptions) Geoff West and family. With the benefit of my occasional advice at roughly quarterly intervals over the last two-and-a-half years, Dr. West has made significant progress with the mobilisation and cladding of a Lagonda Rapier chassis, which had previously been immobilised by a combination of lethargy and mud-hutters (a species of wasp well known in tropical parts for their enthusiasm for transporting quantities of saliva-stabilised soil into obscure parts of one’s chassis and engine, and for all I know, of one’s person).

Be that as it may, much fine (the initiated will know that is a serious description) Australian wine was consumed, some modest progress was achieved with the Lagonda, and the itinerary continued.

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This time to Sydney, the capital of New South Wales, which is where they keep Australia's money. Situation there was normal. Australian LC representative E. J. Whitehead having completed the rebuild of four V.12 suspensions, four transmissions and eight axles, is now progressing at a time-honoured pace towards the rehabilitation of four V.12 engines, taking time off only to repair the DB 3-litre DHC which son Mark unfortunately persists in treating like a means of transport. Meanwhile the 2-litre low-chassis tourer, the DB 3-litre saloon, the DB Rapide, and the VDP 4.3 Alvis tourer appear to get little or no attention at all.

At the same time, Peter Woodward, the well-known Lunatic Fringe of the NSW Lagonda fraternity, manages to keep his DB 2.6 drophead in impeccable condition, whilst driving a curious selection of vehicles, having Sphinxes on some of their bonnets, and AM badges on others. He introduced me to the only pub in NSW which gets so crowded (admittedly only on a Tuesday night when the Jazz Band is there) that they *drink on the pavement*. Where I live, that applies to seven pubs out of ten, ignoring the jazz band. But then over here we have Things to Forget, which I suppose is some justification.

A side trip was made to Canberra, the Australian Capital Territory, but only during daylight,

and once again Responsibilities took first priority. But it is said that an erstwhile Figure of Standing in the movement, Dr. Stuart Saunders, has moved there from Hackney (ACT from Hackney? It takes all sorts), with or without his Type 35 we have yet to ascertain. (The pleasure awaits him, though he knows it not, yet.)

And so to Melbourne, the capital of Victoria, where the Nobs live in Australia. Due to a depressing concentration of Responsibilities there on past visits, I had neglected to investigate the Vintage Nobs of Australia. A great oversight. This time I took care to correct the omission and only just missed the Victoria Section of the Australian Vintage Sports Car Club Monthly Meeting that Friday evening. As it was I got drunk on a private enterprise basis instead, and only contacted the local Lagonda Star Bernie Jacobsen in a spirit of retaliation the Saturday morning after.

Thereby hang a number of tales, but the main points were that:

- (i) BJ did the decent thing, and picked me up in an LG.45 drophead an hour later the same morning.
- (ii) The local vintage President, Graham Steinfort, has
 - (a) a nice habit of having his vintage friends round for an alcoholic lunch in



Ah! The good old days . . . a typical street scene in 1977 Rangoon.

the sun between one and five on Saturday

- (b) a very attractive new wife Sue to provide said pleasant lunches
 - (c) a fine, slightly special M.45 tourer from his Days of Youth (he is now 24½, successful, and considering retirement), and
 - (d) a curious solicitor's practice run like a Speakeasy, with files in the front office and concealed workshops with some acres of automobilia at the rear.
- (iii) Paradoxically, vintage services (like white-metalling and wheel-building) are holding up more healthily on the successful side of the earth than they are in the erstwhile Workshop of the World (no prizes).

Bernie Jacobson's LG.45 held memories too: on an earlier visit to the Far East, in Kuala Lumpur in 1971, I had been collected from the hotel in similar fashion by its then-owner Ron Armstrong, of which more anon. Ron had since repatriated the car to U.K., passed it on to finance the purchase of a castle (there you go!), seen it on later leave and attempted to repurchase it, unsuccessfully, before it was advertised in *Motorsport* last year. Bernie being a man of decision, he telephoned the surprised vendor, from Melbourne, put his confirmation in the post, and after some minor (by Bertie's standards) difficulties, collected the car from the Melbourne Harbour Trust docks. Unlike other such tales I have heard, there were no nasty surprises waiting for him on collection, and it even boils just like an LG should.

With Bernie and Graham's unexpected (for them) kindness, Melbourne quite made up for WDC, Fiji, the Solomons and PNG. And also, as it turned out, for Jakarta, my next stop, which is reputed by the locals to possess an MG TC and an Old American Car. I didn't investigate further.

Now, Singapore has been the home of an honourable succession of fine cars, including quite recently a 16/80'ish model, but I had only 36 hours this time. Responsibilities once again intervened, and the nearest I got was to observe a photo of a very smart SS 100 attributed to a Singapore owner, in the 1977 calendar of the Go Hup Hiaw Tyre Distributors Sendirian Berhad.

East Malaysia was next: my Doctor Livingstone here was Alan Giles in Kota Kinabalu, in Sabah. The normal enquiries in the normal quarters (the local Four Ale Bar) revealed his presence, fighting a brave rearguard action

against the liquidation of the Empire armed only with a nice, straightforward 3-litre Bentley with Park Ward body (virtually identical to the more normal VDP). (If Wilbur had never given up opera, this would have to have been my Best Car.) For purely environmental reasons as they would now say, Alan had also restored a Morris Cowleyish early 20's Fiat. For better or worse, both will probably retreat to the home base soon.

Otherwise, Kuching, Bintulu and Labuan which are all in East Malaysia too, passed without events worthy of note. The best I could manage was that once a man in Brunei (between the Sarawak and Sabah parts of East Malaysia) had a high chassis 2-litre, whilst the present Chief Minister of Sabah had a rather smart new Ferrari GT outside his office when I called. (Such name-dropping is, I hope, giving quite the most misleading impression. Actually, I was trying to pick up their carbon paper order.)

Fascinating polyglot of stuff, heavily laced with wartime QL's, Dodge weapons-carriers and MB-jeps, but all the way through "VW" Morris 8's, Standard Vanguards, Buick Eights, Humber Snipes, Wolseley 6/90's, the lot. The first diversion was provided by Daimler-with-jack-at-the-Masthead to lunch with HE the British Ambassador (name-dropping again: there's class in carbon paper, as they say); but this was just vapourised by the next item, the Real Thing.

Denying all knowledge of what I tactfully described as "pre-war quality cars" my normal sources confirmed the membership registers and my own expectations, until the little man from the Embassy sent to help with my Responsibilities said "only two Lagondas". I have a confession to make, which will explain the state of the U.K. economy. Responsibilities were put aside, the Carbon Paper Target forgotten, and the Search commenced.

Time was short: 30 hours of a 48 hour call had already passed, and the morning flight out had to be got. The report was accurate though: two M.45's had been imported in the '46-'50 period by optimistically-returning expatriates in the Law business, only to be abandoned in the subsequent disappointed withdrawal. Both had escaped the downhill slope to marginal motoring, taxi-dom and shame, but both had been retired, defeated by lack of spares: the general motoring atmosphere in Burma is rather reminiscent of the immediate post-war period in U.K.

Anyway . . . the local Vintage Movement was



Graham Steinfort's pretty locally bodied Chummy, Edwardian Chevrolet while outside his LG.45 melts in the sun.

identified and located, consisting of the Swedish/Norwegian Honorary Consul (both) (a Burmese) and the Chairman of the Burma Ports Authority (in self-imposed isolation following an enterprising venture with some surplus port equipment). The former owned a number of cars, from a Triumph Roadster to a rather comprehensively modified modern Hillman Husky; the latter one of the M.45's. This was unfortunately in the immobile stage of a total rebuild in the port workshops, and in danger of being regarded by the Higher Levels as substitute port equipment. The second M.45 was in Mandalay, complete, and in process of acquisition by my newfound Consul friend. He had been cut off from all sympathetic motoring contact with the outside world (they don't have passports in Burma—solves the foreign travel problem) was just beginning to believe that *he* was out of step, not the rest of the population, and our reunion was something of an alcoholic one.

And so to Peninsular Malaysia, as Malaya is now known. Once the scene of probably the most active vintage club outside U.K. or Australasia, with Lagondas playing a very prominent role, the remorseless march of Progress and Toyota have

changed all that. But wait. Are there crumpets still for Tea? Sure enough, Ron and Dorothy Armstrong are defying forces stronger than gravity itself, and are still Planting, not just Rubber now, but oil palm and cocoa too. As another observer commented, "you can always recognize an Armstrong estate".

Ron and Dorothy had moved twice since my last contact with them at Bukit Rajah, and are now on the company's showpiece estate at Sungei Buloh, just 38 miles out of KL, and quite immaculate, all 12,000 acres of it. I am unreservedly impressed.

Despite the disposal of both the LG.45 mentioned earlier, and the M.45 with the KL Chinese-craftsman body (recently noted again at £8,000 in a Continental auction), Ron runs his superb Sanction III engine on its proper static test-bed once weekly (on Saturday mornings) and is anxiously awaiting delivery of a chassis from Ivan, so that he can recover his self-respect again. *His* best story I think, was of going into the local Kuala Selangor Resthouse soon after moving to this estate, only to find on the coffee table—yes you've guessed it—copies No. 4-13 of the *Lagonda* Magazine. There is still some justice in the world.

After a very enjoyable Sunday at Sungei Buloh, Responsibilities took over again for the rest of the KL call, but the next one was Rangoon.

Now Rangoon is in Burma, which took a sort of Vow of Total Abstinence in about 1960, and has scarcely been seen since, by man nor beast. As all the trade papers will tell you, though, Burma is now beginning to Open Up again. Now that Oneself has called, they will probably appreciate how right they were in 1960. Anyhow, for reasons I won't explore further here, Burma has been almost untouched by the march of Toyota since 1942 (I don't suppose even the New Management had Toyotas then did they?) and the local Vehicle Park (trade term—has nothing to do with floral clocks or bowls clubs) is made up of a fascinating collection of elderly cars.

After Rangoon it all seemed a bit flat. Tehran was still on the itinerary before London, but despite the listing of a couple of names in the Vintage book, I couldn't escape a feeling of anticlimax, and decided to stick to the Responsibilities and leave the Chase there till another time.

JEFF ODY

By Tricar to the Far North West

A Summer Tour Part II

Off to the Great Unknown

Bonar Bridge was the next place of importance, and after a brief stop here for refreshment we were off to the great unknown. All the rest of the trip was new to me, so I was able to appreciate it on equal terms with the others of our party. First we bowled along a pretty wooded road, averaging an easy twenty, and then came a long and stiff climb, which my Lagonda took in style, only needing the second for one short stretch. Up, up, we mounted from sea level to 400 and some few feet above it, and then dropped down into Lairg. This was the last civilised town, and the last railway station in this part of Scotland. Heaven alone knew when we should next get petrol, so we both filled up to the brim, while S. strapped a can to the step of his tricar. We then skirted Loch Shin (the largest freshwater loch in Great Britain), and made for the first convenient spot for luncheon. The roads in this part of the country are few in number, and a few miles out of Lairg we passed the last signpost—to Tongue.

A short run brought us through some woods, and just beyond them was an inviting green lane, up which we ran the tricars, and encamped. What a delightful meal that was, far from the busy haunts of men! At our backs the woods, to the left the hills we had just descended, in front Loch Shin, long and narrow, extending as a silver stream beneath our feet, and beyond great rugged mountains speckled with distant snow patches, pointing onwards to what was for us the great unknown. Luncheon over, we elected to exchange passengers, the Lagonda starting first and the Armadale behind. The roads, which had been good from the time we started in the morning, now became very bad. First we encountered bad patches of loose granite; then the looseness became almost continuous. All around was desolation, yet, withal the scenery had a charm of its own. We swayed, rocked, and bumped along our course, drinking in each new view as the road unfolded itself before us. Then my passenger ventured a most ill-omened remark. "It is beautiful," she said; "but suppose one of us broke down?" I remarked, "Oh! don't say that," and we continued our journey in silence. The end

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of Loch Shin was marked by the Overscaig Hotel—the last on the route. Then came Loch Merkland, around the shores of which we skirted. Presently I heard a yell. Thinking something was wrong, I drew into the near side, and applied the brakes, pulling up almost instantly. The next thing I saw was the Armadale toppling over on its side, passengers and all, down a 10 ft. bank. Both passengers and driver were shot clear, and, fortunately, escaped with *slight* bruises. Though we were only a few yards away, both were up and on their feet before we could reach them. Then came explanations. It appears that S., who was anxious to stop and admire the scenery, shouted at me and blew his horn. Finding I did not hear, he approached within a few inches of my back wheel, and then, since his attempts to make me hear failed, my wife shouted S. was too near to stop in time, so he drew on to the grass, and in doing so his near side wheel fell into a deep hidden rut, which caused the vehicle to overturn.

A Dilemma

Here we were, twenty-two miles from the nearest railway station and from Scourie—the nearest town in the direction in which we were travelling. The Armadale lay on its side, with the near side

wheel completely buckled, half of it lying beneath the frame. It was too heavy to lift, so alone we could do nothing. A mile down the road we remembered passing a stonebreaker. So I started up the Lagonda, and in a few minutes brought him back, sitting proudly in the front seat, holding his pickaxe like a sceptre. He was a splendid specimen of the Highlander, his face all covered with tawny hair, and a really good fellow. However, his giant strength added to our feeble efforts failed to dislodge the stricken tricar, and after the first attempt the handle of the pick gave way. While we were puzzling our brains to settle on what to do next, an Argyll car hove in sight, bringing with it, as we hoped, salvation. It came up, stopped, and S. interviewed the owner, who turned out to be Mr. Carnegie. He enquired if anyone was hurt, and, remarking that it was dangerous to drive so fast on roads like these, continued his journey. Our case now seemed hopeless. The mail motor car had gone by, and further assistance seemed out of the question. There were no houses, no villages, no inhabitants, for miles; only mountains and lakes and stones. It seemed like leaving the Armadale to its fate, and sending out a rescue party the next day at great expense. Just as we were getting desperate, I

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sighted a car. As it came near, we made it out to be an old Arrol-Johnston, bearing a fishing party from one of the remoter lochs. It was our last chance, and if that car had not pulled up of its own accord there might have been a tragedy on that lone mountain road. As it turned out, it was carrying the proprietor of the Overscaig Inn, a friend, and a couple of gillies, all fine strong Highlanders, beaming with good nature and sympathy, and eager to lend assistance. Briefly we told them of our accident, and in a moment we were all tugging, hauling, lifting, and pushing the Armadale out of the hole into which it had fallen.

With the welcome aid of these kind Samaritans we set up the damaged tricar close against the road and removed the buckled wheel, jacking up the frame on stones. Our good friends advised us to apply for a horse and cart from the Duke of Westminster's manager at Achfarry, so that the occupants of the Armadale could drive to Scourie (twenty-two miles distant) from where we were. This we decided to do. First I gave S. my tarpaulin to cover the remains, and then, telling the ladies to pack themselves somehow in the front seat, we began a new phase of our journey. For a mile the road was undulating, but, despite the heavy load, the Lagonda never faltered, and only once required the second speed. Next we descended a steep hill in a perfectly appalling condition,

and then the going was good till near the shooting lodge, where the springs were sorely tried by the double load on the uneven surface. At length we reached the house, only to find that the inhabitants were willing though unable to help us. Despite our dilemma, we could not help admiring the beauties of the surrounding scenery. After going along for four miles the beautiful cone-shaped peak of Ben Stack came in view, the road skirting the while a pretty loch. I then left the ladies in the care of the good mistress of the house, and set out as fast as I dare to where I had left S. On reaching him I found he had made all snug, and had satisfied himself of the damage done. All that had happened was a buckled wheel, and not a single portion of the Armadale had suffered in the least degree, which certainly speaks well for its construction. We did not waste much time, so we piled up the rest of the luggage (I had left my bag at Achfarry) and wraps, made all secure, and in twenty-five minutes rejoined our party. Nothing could be done but repeat the process, so, strapping on my bag, I took on board the two ladies, and plunged deeper into the unknown. First came a hill needing second speed, then first speed, then a steep descent and an acute angled turn, banked the wrong way, shelving here down to the waters of Loch Stack. Then the road became easy and fairly level, flanked on one side by the base of Ben Stack and on the other by

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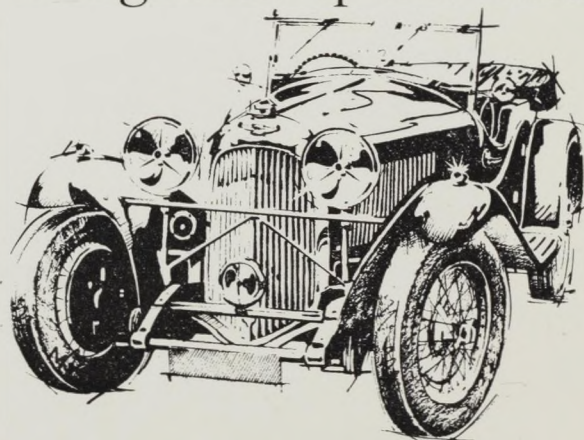


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Loch Stack. The going continued fair for a mile or two, though loose in places, when ahead I espied a miniature mountain pass to be negotiated. I was soon on to it. It seemed to rise almost perpendicularly. The second speed was barely in before the first was needed, but the tricar took the hill without a falter, kicking up the beachlike surface of the track in all directions. Then came an equally stiff descent, then a brief respite, and next another severe climb with an equally bad surface, varied by a spring which bubbled up merrily in the centre of the road. Laxford Bridge was next reached—nothing but a bridge and a blacksmith's shop. All around were mountains and rocks, patched here and there with green, superbly grand in the evening light. Here it was we should have turned off to the right to Durness, but all hopes of reaching Cape Wrath were gone. We then swung round to the left and mounted one of the many short stiff hills, and rested a moment. The view was magnificent; behind lay Ben Stack, his grandly shaped peak towering over the superb desolation, beneath was Loch Laxford, blue as the sky above, dotted here and there with rocky islets extending to the sea. We had just time to take it in, and then on to Scourie, round hairpin corners, up hill and down dale, and over the most difficult road on which I have yet driven. Here and there lakes dotted the landscape. At length an old and weather beaten C.T.C. notice board came in sight. The letters on it were illegible, but we knew we were on the summit of Scourie Hill, not far from our destination. Now, our worthy companion the Contour Road Book gives the gradient as 1 in 9-10, and utters not a warning of the extreme danger of the descent. All the motor mail car drivers and another local motorist assured me that the steepest portion is 1 in 5. Added to this, the surface is appallingly loose, and the hill ends with a right angled turn, flanked by a rock on one side and a stone wall on the other. On reaching the beginning of the hill the ladies begged to be allowed to dismount, but I besought them to keep their seats. They were right, I was wrong. I applied the brakes gently at first, and then with all my force, with the result that I locked the back wheel. The tricar then slid for about twenty yards. It was an anxious moment, but it eventually pulled up, and we safely reached Scourie—our destination for the day. That comfortable hotel the Stafford Arms was full, but the kind proprietor Mr. Ross found lodgings in the village for my now weary passen-

gers. I gave myself just time to snatch a handful of biscuits and drink a glass of the wine of the country, and then set out to fetch S. and the rest of the luggage. The only incident was a stop of five minutes to replace a lost drain tap out of the crank case with a plug cut from a sparking plug box covered with the finger of an old glove. It was a splendid evening, and though 11.15 before I reached Scourie again, it was light enough to drive without lamps even on that terrible road. It was an eventful day, and I shall never forget the gratitude with which I looked upon the Lagonda as I stabled it for the night for having served us so well and saved the situation. Never in all my experience have I traversed such a road, to which the Grampians are as mere child's play.

A Delightful but Desolate Spot

Scourie was a delightful spot. It would be difficult to find a more out of the way place in the British Isles. The only two links with civilisation were the telegraph and the motor mail service. Here we spent four enjoyable days boating, fishing, and shooting the great black back gull, whose ravages among the ewes and lambs in the spring time render the crofter's lot by no means a happy one. We bagged five in one morning, and great was the joy among the inhabitants when we landed with them aboard. Perhaps Scourie's greatest attraction is Handa Island, the westerly rocks of which rise sheer for some 300 ft. from the sea. Millions of sea birds of all kinds come here in the summer, and nest in the crannies of the rocks. The sight is perfectly marvellous, while the rock scenery is grand. At length a telegram arrived to say that S.'s wheel had arrived, and again the Lagonda had to do salvage work, taking S. out to the scene of the disaster. The wheel was soon fixed on, and, starting almost with the first turn of the handle, the Armadale was soon on the road again. Both tricars reached Scourie without a hitch in the afternoon. The next day we started for the south, and made an excellent run to Inverness. The Armadale pulling grandly, and kept the Lagonda busy when the roads improved. This time we cut across country from Bonar Bridge to Evanton. The road is in fair condition, but necessitates a long and stiff climb from Wester Fearn to Altnamain; it saves a good many miles, however. My only trouble that day was the loss of the improvised plug in the crank case, so I inserted a cork, and thought no more of the matter. The following morning my troubles began early.

Immediately on leaving Inverness my back tyre burst, owing, of course, to the severe strain to which it had been subjected on Scourie Hill. The tube was repaired, but it held only for a few yards, so there was nothing to do but put on a fresh cover. We then found the old one was done for. It had served me well, since it was the original Dunlop tyre supplied with the tricar eighteen months ago. It had lasted for over 10,000 miles, and had been four times re-covered by Grose. Near Carrbridge I found my petrol pipe was broken, but managed to reach Dalwhinnie (our destination) that night. S. travelled well all day. Here misfortune assailed me in another form. My passenger was taken ill, so we were forced to remain for six days in the Loch Ericht Hotel, where we received the greatest kindness from the proprietor and his wife. The following Monday we started along for Edinburgh. S. had had to leave us five days previously.

Petrol Supply Exhausted

The tricar took the Drummochter Pass even better than on the outward journey, and ran well all day till we reached Burntisland; two miles from the town it faltered up the steep hill, gave a couple of coughs, and stopped. It was just touch and go as to whether we should catch the ferry, so we set to work to push to the summit. It was no light job, but we did it, and ran faultlessly down into the town. At the quay we were told we had lost the boat by three minutes. After the motor had behaved in this manner I suspected a choked carburettor, took it down, and found almost every passage and the bottom of the float chamber covered with a red paste—heaven knows where it had come from—so, having located the trouble, I set to work to wash out the carburettor with petrol, only to find on turning the tap that the tank was perfectly dry. We had plenty of time, as I thought, so I sent for some petrol, and filled up. By the time the carburettor was fit to reassemble the steamer was alongside, and it was time to embark. My wife took the tickets (price 1s. 9d. for two passengers and a motor tricycle), while I, with the aid of two sailors, got the machine aboard. I started work level with the boat, and finished as soon as the paddle wheel ceased to revolve in Granton Harbour. I was rather pleased at the performance, as while at work I had to lecture on carburation to an interested fellow passenger. The ferry is good and cheap, while the men in charge give one every assistance. Hence

I can strongly recommend its use to other motorists. From Edinburgh home I will not describe my journey in detail. Up to reaching that city I had barely a moment's trouble.

The Result of Insufficient Oiling

Then luck turned against me—first a slipping clutch, which took over a day to remedy, then I discovered too late that a badly fitting cork is no use as a plug when one loses a drain tap. Apparently every drop of oil ran out of the crank case as fast as I pumped it in, with the result that when the clutch was put right the engine started knocking almost immediately, as almost every bush was worn. It knocked from Berwick to Newark, and from Newark to our destination on the east coast, till every moment I expected a permanent breakdown. If any of your readers, Mr. Editor, want an insight into purgatory let them drive an engine 188 miles in one day in this condition as I did. Yet, bad as my trouble was, I cannot blame the machine; the loss of oil was due to no fault in design, and for the straining of the springs on that awful Lairg to Scourie road I cannot blame the maker, since they were never intended to carry the weight of more than one person. On arriving at Hunstanton I found S. and his wife had been there for some days. They had had a splendid run after leaving Dalwhinnie, from whence they went south *via* Aberfeldy, Stirling, Linlithgow, and Edinburgh (where they came in for the great thunderstorm). Staying the night at Edinburgh, they pushed on the next day to Newcastle, having to drive the Armadale in three places through water right across the road being six inches deep, as the result of the storm. From Newcastle they made Newark the next day and then right into Hunstanton before lunch the following day. After this for three successive weeks the Armadale ran from London to Hunstanton on the Friday and back on the Monday.

As regards the tour itself, despite the misery of the last four days, I look back on it with pleasure. We found the country delightful except for the roads and the people charming, the more so the farther north we went. They were always obliging, always genial, and almost without exception ready to lend a hand on every possible occasion, and yet expecting nothing in return. The Scotsman in his own country is a true sportsman and a brick. The hotels were good on the whole and moderate in price, and our experiences with them even in the wildest parts were decidedly good, and

I shall never forget the many kindnesses shown to us at the Stafford Arms, Scourie, and the Loch Ericht Hotel, Dalwhinnie. As for reaching Cape Wrath—well, we wish ourselves better luck next time.

E.M.P.B.

Reprinted from the 'Motor Cycle', November issues 1906 by kind permission of the proprietors.

'Wottle' go where

There used to be a WOTTLE CLUB—"whottle she do mister?". Since becoming involved with Lagondas, there has developed a small and select club—the WOTTLE GO WHERE CLUB. Some character has maybe become the owner of a partial Lagonda and when offered a further partial one, wonders whether it will serve to make up a complete Lagonda. Purists and sticklers for originality should read no further, though Staines was not entirely consistent all the time. There was a 1933 registered car which looked like a 16/80, but had a "high" front axle, 2-litre engine, and pre-selector box. All evidence suggested this to have been as delivered from Staines.

To start at the beginning—front axle: Subject to room under mudguards, and under sump all 14/60, 2-litre, 16/80 and early 3-litre and 16/65 are interchangeable. The low axle has more kick up, and the brake operating cross shaft threaded a hole in the axle. Most of the brake mechanism, except for that cross shaft, fit high and low axles. Later cars usually had ribbed brake drums which are interchangeable with the pressed ones. King pins and thrust bearings are interchangeable. Some stub axles have brackets forged on to take cycle mudguards. These are not in the way if you have fixed mudguards. Steering arms have more bend on low axles to clear springs.

Later 3-litres, 3½, all 4½ before LG.6 have the same axle beam. This fits above the springs. 3-litre and early 4½'s have rod operated Bendix type brakes, 3½, 4½ Rapides and LG.45 use Girling brakes. A change of brake mechanism entails changing whole stub axle and brake back plate. Of the Bendix type shoes were of aluminium or cast iron—with a servo the cast iron are probably safer. Width between spring pads is the same in all axles. I believe *all* front hubs are interchangeable.

Front springs are all of the same length. Earlier ones were quite normal, with one rebound leaf above which were rivetted the clips. Later springs had zinc interleaves and bronze end pads

to each leaf, and two upper leaves both with clips. Ask Ivan Forshaw the purpose of these. Some I have seen have been set up as if to act as helpers with weight taken by the clips—others bearing down to act as rebound. Earlier springs had ½ in. pins at each end, but some later ones a bigger front pin. 3-litres and M.45 had springs mounted on Silentbloc bushes. Changing is not straightforward. The front forging on the dumb iron and the mounting on the chassis at the rear have to be changed, and the rivet holes do not always mate up nicely. To change the shackle mounting also entails enlarging the hole in the frame for a Silentbloc to replace normal bushes. The reverse change leaves a gap round the bush, which the Scrutineers query. According to the type of axle the centre bolt of the spring must have its head up or down, so that it engages with the appropriate hole in the axle.

At the other end, springs are also all of the same length, but vary in type as do the front, and in number of leaves according to weight of car. Again changing to or from Silentbloc is not simple, entailing changing the whole anchorage at the front, and dumb iron ends at rear. Front anchorages are also not interchangeable between early parallel frames and later taper frames mainly because of the cross member that couples left and right—the fixing has to be at right angles to the centre of the car, regardless of whether the frame is parallel with it or not. Some anchor pins are thicker than others, oddly thicker in the earlier cars.

There are broadly two main axles—up to and including LG.45. The Light fitted to 2-litres, 16/80 and open hip-baths, and Heavy fitted to all the rest—I might be in error in saying only open hip-baths for light, but I have found a heavy axle under a hip-bath chassis which had carried a saloon. All axles are the same width between spring pads. Brakes of all earlier cars, with separate hand and foot shoes, are interchangeable as are individual parts. Later axles, with cam or Girling brakes have back plates factory fitted and are not interchangeable with each other or with early types. Differentials from all heavy axles are interchangeable, though one should watch of fitting a later diff. They often have a sort of extension to the diff. cage bearing housings that register with the inside of the banjo behind, to help with side thrust. Later axles so fitted have a rear cover appropriately relieved to make room for these extensions. The later cars usually have

a heavier half shaft than the earlier. One has to make sure that the splines in the diff. cage are of the correct size. Also there is a felt oil check a little way along each axle tube, and this must suit the axle shaft. It is held in by a sort of tab and small bolt. The axle shafts have a bit of spiral cut to mate up with these pads, and of course must be assembled so that oil is encouraged to stay in. Back to the light axle for a moment—the axle shafts are not both the same length. A short one will get you home if fitted in the long side, but not much spline engages. A long shaft will not go into the short side. There are no oil threads, but very early axles had flanges as oil slingers. A long light shaft will get you home in a heavy axle if it has the small diff. splines. Ratios were available in the heavy axle from 5.3 to 1 to 3.3, and a straight cut higher for racing. Apart from very early light axles, the taper at the axle end is the same, so any knock on hub will fit any axle—the rare bolt on will also for that matter.

D. H. COATES

Lagonda Lives!

MOTORING: Ian Morton beats the sheikhs to the most exclusive road car in the world

ASTON MARTIN LAST WEEK FINISHED SCREWING together, as a fully-running prototype, the Lagonda whose fine lines and glossy shell stopped the Earls Court Motor Show. And I have been privileged to be only the third driver to take the wheel.

I confess to some difficulty in recording impressions. This prototype is now a test bed for the tuning of the chassis and mechanical elements (the gas-plasma analogue and digital instrument displays are being perfected on a separate jig), and chief engineer Mike Loasby was understandably jumpy about allowing a journalist—even an avowed Aston enthusiast—to take charge of his unique beastie.

No other motor manufacturer to my knowledge has allowed an outsider in at such an early development stage, but one of the reasons was that some commentators have been doubting the seriousness of the project, pointing out that bar the Motor Show the Lagonda had “never turned a wheel.”

Well, now I have driven it. It turns its wheels all right. And given that sundry adjustments will now result from the coming together of practice

and theory, the Lagonda is already a considerable driving experience.

Objectively it is not the futuristic machine most people dramatically dubbed it, but a brilliant packaging job based on largely conventional elements.

William Towns, who styled this car and the existing Aston V.8, sees the Lagonda as a straightforward three-box car with fairly conventional bonnet, roof and boot lines, incorporating all that he and Aston know about aerodynamics.

Loasby makes the point that these aerodynamics have been subordinated to aesthetics, but the absence of turbulence and drag is still close to what he and Towns aimed for.

As for the instruments, he readily agrees that you can find touch-switches in hotel lifts and digital displays in cheap pocket calculators, and that it simply needed someone in cars to pull it into a package.

“This technology is some years old,” he says. “We have taken a giant step into the present.” But in admitting that Aston’s limited production and great flexibility enable them to produce a car for the present rather than having to guess ahead and aim for a lengthy production run, Loasby still has cause to believe that in some respects the Lagonda is seven years ahead.

So how does this prototype drive? From the first moment there is a contradiction about the car. To sit in it is to feel relaxed and even cosy on fine squashy seats, with an impression of interior spaciousness greater than in any other car I know.

Yet, to drive the car is to set aside any feeling that here is six feet of width and more than 17 feet of length, for it handles like a nimble and much smaller car in traffic. The high-ratio steering with variable power assistance has a marvellously glutinous weight, yet a directness of action in all conditions and an unchanging feel whether it is taking a curve or striding the motorway.

This superb steering speaks of the car’s thoroughbred sporting lineage, but the ride tells of something else. It is virtually level, and almost silent. The tyres on the prototype confused the issue, being the wrong sort and unevenly worn, but over the awful bit of country road near Newport Pagnell which Aston use to prove their suspensions, the Lagonda at worst rippled lightly, absorbing the miniature crags and crevices and producing little except slight tyre crackle.

There was no low-frequency drumming from the exhaust, and all in all, when fully set up, the

production Lagonda promises to be a stunning example of that sporting limousine type of car which must be the peak of automotive creation.

This was no performance test—although I was not unaware of the woofy surge of the Aston 5.3 litres under the long bonnet (it has quite a curve on it, you know). Since the kerb weight will be about the same as the V.8, but with lower drag, and a final-drive ratio set for a 145 m.p.h. maximum speed rather than the V.8's 155, the Lagonda will be among the fastest sprinters in the world.

But not at this stage, said Loasby, so I luxuriated in the relaxed driving position, positive steering and murmurous rumblings of a memorable car in the making.

But this prototype is fated. The model has to be crash-tested before it can be sold in the U.S. and Japan—Aston's two major export markets (they have orders for 100 without them, several bound for oil-rich sheikhs). It is this very specimen which will end its days by driving at 30 m.p.h. into a 100-ton concrete block!

*Reprinted by courtesy of the
'Evening Standard'*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From the Competition Secretary

Dear Sir—I read with interest the article from Alastair Innes Dick in the Spring Magazine No. 94, talking about the oil return system on the dynamo drive assembly of his M.45R.

Having had occasion to look inside my 4½-litre engine twice in the last six weeks, I was able to go out into the garage last night to compare notes. The unit on my car does not have a shrouded bearing but the conventional type which I in fact renewed last time round. It looks as if Alastair's engine may have missed the Inspection Department since there is a return hole on mine and otherwise the oil would clearly run out on the rear side of the casing.

I have been convinced for some time that no two Lagonda components are exactly the same, what intrigues me is how the cars run so well and why these many anomalies have not shown up before!

Thank you for a splendid Magazine and can we have a few more factory photographs; perhaps four per page for even better value.

J. A. BATT
Maulden, Beds.

DESTROY RIDES AGAIN!

Dear Sir—I am puzzled and would welcome enlightenment!

In the Summer Magazine last year I explained, as clearly as I knew how, why it was so much to the benefit of your Club that subscriptions should be paid to the Treasurer promptly and how it could be done as painlessly as possible for you. All you had to do was write a cheque or complete the Banker's Order form given to you when you received the reminder that the subscription became due on 1st October.

But this did not improve matters. In fact, the unpaid subscriptions at Christmas were slightly higher in 1976 than in 1975! The experiment was tried of sending a personal note to a section of the 'unpaid', numbering 28, on 29th December; a fair number of cheques were received as a result but it was clear that the experiment was really a failure. Replies were still drifting in at the beginning of April and nine of the recipients of my note have ignored it completely!

The system of issuing overdue reminders was altered in 1976 by printing them in large letters in the Newsletters instead of sending them by post. It was also announced that membership cards would be sent with the February Newsletter to

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members who had paid up by the end of January. Even after this, several members have written asking why their cards were not sent upon the receipt of their cheques!

Everything, it is feared, points to the fact that a large proportion of the membership does not read the Newsletters!

This seems incredible but it will be proved if a flood of protests from non-payers arrives, complaining that they haven't had any Newsletters or Magazines since February. The answer will be that the complainants have neither paid their subs nor read their last Newsletter!

The new system of collecting subscriptions and issuing membership cards is considered to be the most efficient possible for a club of our size. So what on earth *can* one do to persuade the slow payers to pay promptly?

The answer to my puzzlement seems to be so easy; it is just to write a cheque when the Newsletter asking for it is received. What *could* be simpler than that?

A. INNES DICK

Lagonda "Q"

Dear Sir—Many thanks for letting me have my

copy of the Spring edition of the Magazine by airmail, no doubt in order that I would get an early look at the highly critical letter from your reader Mr. James McMurdy.

For the information of this gentleman the facts are as follows:

Fact 1) According to the "Aston Martin" people my Engine was designated "VBJ6 (DBS) special. It is painted red, it does have two exhaust type camshafts. Its compression ratio is 8.6/1.

Fact 2) The three carburettors layout including the balance pipe, was fully discussed with the "SU" special products department and advice was given by these people on various aspects of the entire layout. They also supplied needles for trial purposes.

Fact 3) The air horns shown in the photograph were not used, but horns of approx. 1½ in. were fitted.

Fact 4) A very minor point, the "Micro Adjuster" merely overrides the micrometer adjuster on the distributor, and makes the final setting easier to obtain.

I would appreciate any constructive advice and/or criticism from Mr. McMurdy on the following points that he raised.

- a) Why does he consider that "Pirelli Cintura" tyres are unsuitable and what effect will they have on the car in question.
- b) I am at a loss as to what is wrong with replacing Drum type brakes with "Discs" especially in relation to the "Hypod" differential unit. The reason for changing to Discs was because the existing brakes were not particularly good and were subject to fading. The new layout allows for good braking, with reasonable pedal pressure.
- c) Regarding the "Panhard Tubes", both from the drawings and the actual construction, they are built like the "Forth Bridge" they are a typically "Bentley" job, why they should come up through the back seat I would not know, the modified braking system only brings it up to a good performance not excessive stopping power.
- d) Land Rover wheels are designed for rough going and were considered ideal for my purpose, the welding was done by first-class welders used to all types of welding and were supervised by a fully qualified Engineer.

I look forward to hearing from my fellow Club Member with interest.

C. F. WOOD, Hong Kong

LAGONDA CLUB WEEKEND

SATURDAY/SUNDAY 17/18 SEPTEMBER 1977

LOCATION	Burnham Beeches Hotel is in a country setting to the N.E. of Burnham, between Slough and Beaconsfield, 25 miles to the West of London.
ASSEMBLE 12 noon	Lagondas park on R.H.S. of drive facing Lawns; other cars on L.H.S. of the drive. Bar open. It is on the right hand side entering the hotel.
LUNCH 12.30 to 2.00	Full lunch in the restaurant at a la carte prices. Bar snacks in the Georgian Room. Chicken in the basket at £1.00 Scampi in the basket at £1.50 (Picnics are not permissible in the grounds)
CONCOURS 2.00 to 3.00	Cars will be displayed overlooking the lawns. Judging will take place between 2 p.m. and 3 p.m.
AGM 3.30 to 5.30	Assemble in the Burnham Room at 3.15 for a prompt start at 3.30.
TEA	Afternoon tea cakes and sandwiches will be available during the afternoon on a cash basis.
BAR	The hotel bar will be open from 6 p.m.
RECEPTION 7.00 to 8.00	A club bar in the ballroom will serve drinks, including draught beer, from 7 p.m. during the reception and attitude-adjustment hour before dinner. Wines for dinner, priced from £3 per bottle, may be ordered at this time.
DINNER 8.00	Dress: Evening or club dress. A bedroom will be available in which members who are not staying overnight may change. Table places will not be allocated. Members will form their own groups at table. An attractive menu has been selected. ● Book from Duncan Westall on tear off slip provided in the June Newsletter. Price £6.50 per person.
DANCE to 1.00 a.m.	A band has been engaged; a committee member has volunteered to ensure that the style of music is to your taste.
ACCOMMODATION Saturday Night	The Lagonda Club has booked 30 rooms at the hotel for distribution on a 'first come first served' basis. Book your room immediately to save disappointment and to support your committee's commitment. The charge will be single room rate for all double rooms and reduced rates for single rooms. These range from £8 to £12 plus VAT plus 12½% service. There will be no charge for children sharing their parents room. The foregoing rates also apply to other nights, if required. ● Book directly with the Burnham Beeches Hotel, Buckinghamshire. Burnham (062-86) 3333. Mention on telephone that you are a Lagonda Club member, and confirm in writing.
BREAKFAST Sunday a.m.	Continental breakfast in the restaurant at £1.00. English breakfast in the restaurant at £2.00. Plus VAT plus 12½% service.
CONCLUSION	After breakfast members may admire the cars, play squash or tennis or walk in the woods and conclude with a drink at mid-day before lunching or departing for home.



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