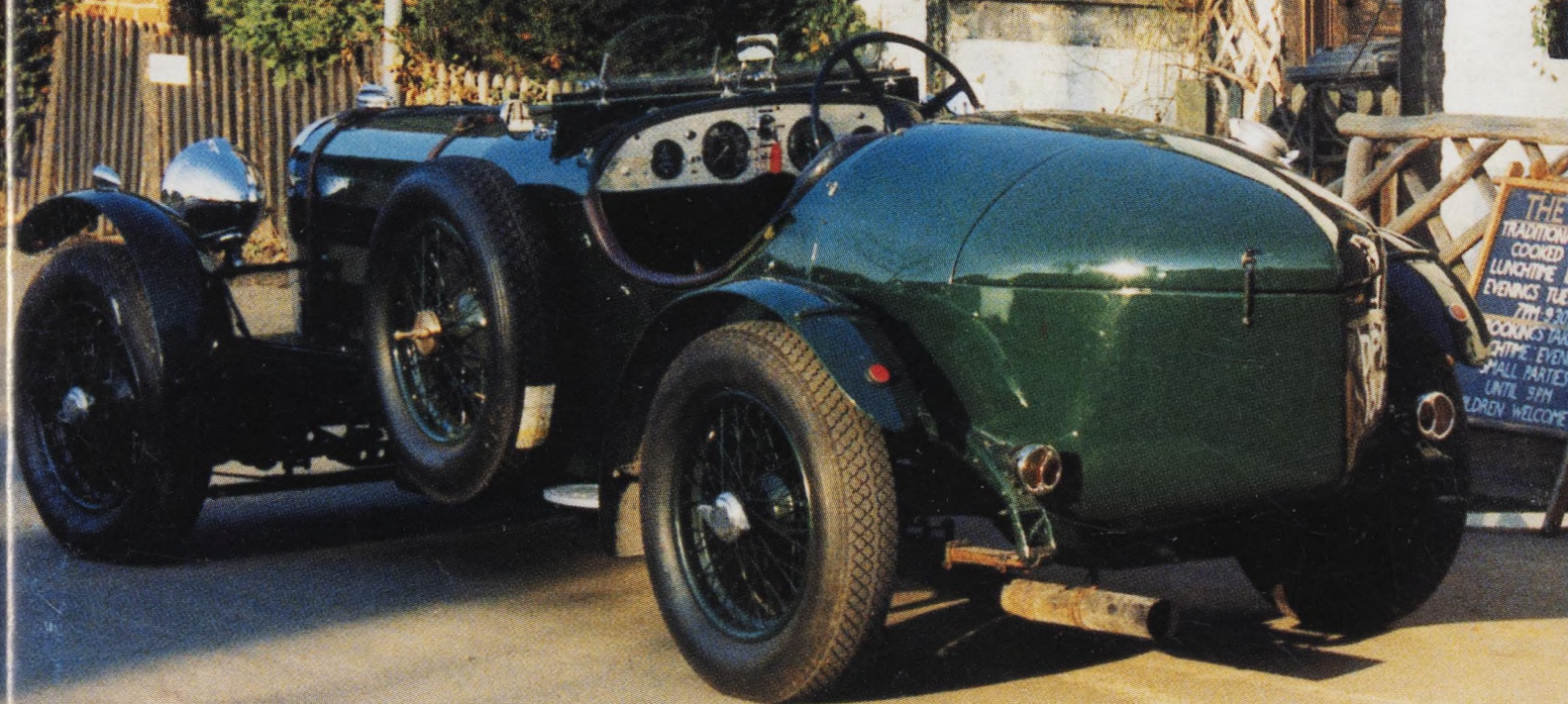




**THE LAGONDA CLUB**



**THE MAGAZINE OF THE  
LAGONDA CLUB**

**Number 179**

**Winter 1998/99**





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In this instance all went smoothly, but AXX 757 does have a 200 BHP engine thus ensuring that the bride and groom could make a rapid departure!

Simon Bull's Invicta has semi-retired from racing and is being used as a "Q car" for everyday use in London and long distance touring, surprising many a modern with its 230 BHP and 125 MPH top speed.

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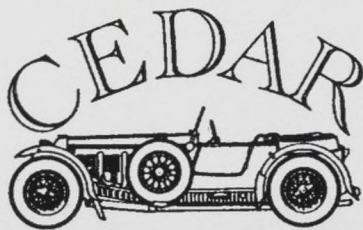
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## Lagonda Magazine

Issue No. 179 • Winter 1998/99

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J J Dolleman's LG45 Special.

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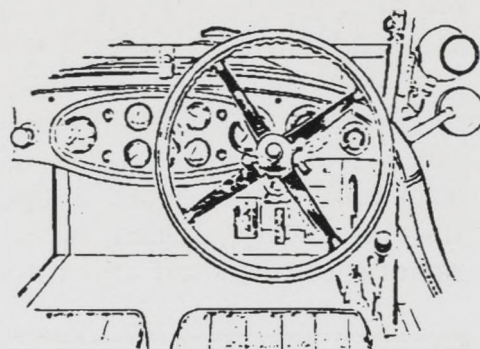
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# From the Driving Seat

by Ken Painter



WELCOME to the first of the Centennial editions of "The Lagonda". For the next year we will have full colour covers and the Centennial logo, instead of the traditional Club badge. Every edition will have full reports on the events as they happen and we already have a superb selection of other articles ready for publication. Many of these are on technical subjects, but be assured that, as ever, I will try to ensure a proper balance between the technical, the historical, the competition and social, the humorous and the simply anecdotal aspects of matters Lagonda.

The year promises to be something very special in our history and the sub-committee have worked very hard in trying to ensure that we have a wide enough variety of events to attract every member. Whatever your interest, there should be one or more events just for you and we hope to see even more of you participating than in the past. We also have a fascinating selection of Centennial regalia and for those of you who haven't seen the items on offer, they are well worth your attention and may even become collectors' items in the future! As they say in all the adverts, buy now while stocks last.

The Champagne Rally is attracting a lot of interest among those who enjoy the challenge of longer tours in new and interesting surroundings. The tour will be more of a gastronomic challenge than a motoring one, so you don't have to worry about the possibility of damaging your car by high speed driving, or poor

roads and you won't need highly developed navigation skills either. If you have never tried a continental tour before, this could be your ideal introduction, get your entry form in as soon as possible while there are some places available.

By the time you read this, there will only be a matter of weeks before the first of the many events is upon us, I am sure that many of you will have been busy over the winter preparing your pride and joy for the pleasures and challenges of our very special year, if you haven't, then there is still time to give the car an extra special check-over for the events of your choice.

Now, here's a challenge for you, How many of our members know of a Lagonda which is not owned by a club member and is not currently on the road? I certainly know of one, it is a DB 2.6 and is reputed to be a Motor Show car. It has been in storage for many years whilst the owner has been busy restoring a number of early aircraft. The challenge for me - and for you - is to seek out cars like this, encourage the owners to join us **and** encourage them to get the cars back on the road where they belong. If they seem reluctant to get involved it might be worth exploring the option of passing the car to an enthusiast who **will** do the work.

I had great fun over the new year, driving an LG45 saloon recently returned from America. It was used there as a wedding car and is painted white, a colour which doesn't really suit it, but I



am sure that it will be re-finished in a more appropriate colour scheme before long. Overall, it is a very pleasant car and feels nicely taut, with a healthy sounding engine, a properly quiet gearbox and solid bodywork. More than anything, it increased my desire to get my own restoration finished and I am grateful to

Colin Mallet for another chance to sample at first hand to joys of driving a Lagonda. For those members who, like me, have their one and only Lagonda off the road for major or minor work, I can thoroughly recommend rekindling the flame by borrowing a drive, however short, in another member's car!

## **IMPORTANT NOTICE!**

**THE EDITOR'S TELEPHONE AND FAX NUMBER IS NOW**

**01379 890653**

**THE OLD TELEPHONE NUMBER HAS BEEN TERMINATED.**

# **The Lagonda Club Dutch Section**

**by J. J. Dolleman**

WHEN we bought the Lagonda LG 45 special, it was clear to me that there would be very few other nuts in Holland with such a car. Well, I can tell you now, I was wrong.

As a member of the Dutch Pioneer Automobielen Club, I learned quickly there were some more Lagondas in Holland and I made a list of the names and addresses. Colin Bugler also could provide me with some names and addresses. All in all I had around 35 names of people owning a Lagonda in Holland.

Talking this over with Gerard van Pelt, we decided to investigate the possibility of starting a Dutch Section of the Lagonda Club. The idea was not to start a new club, but gather those who live in Holland and have a Lagonda, just the same way as the BDC has a Dutch Section, without this section being a new club in itself.

So we wrote a nice letter to all the names we had, asking them if they were interested in a Dutch Section and inviting them for a first meeting on

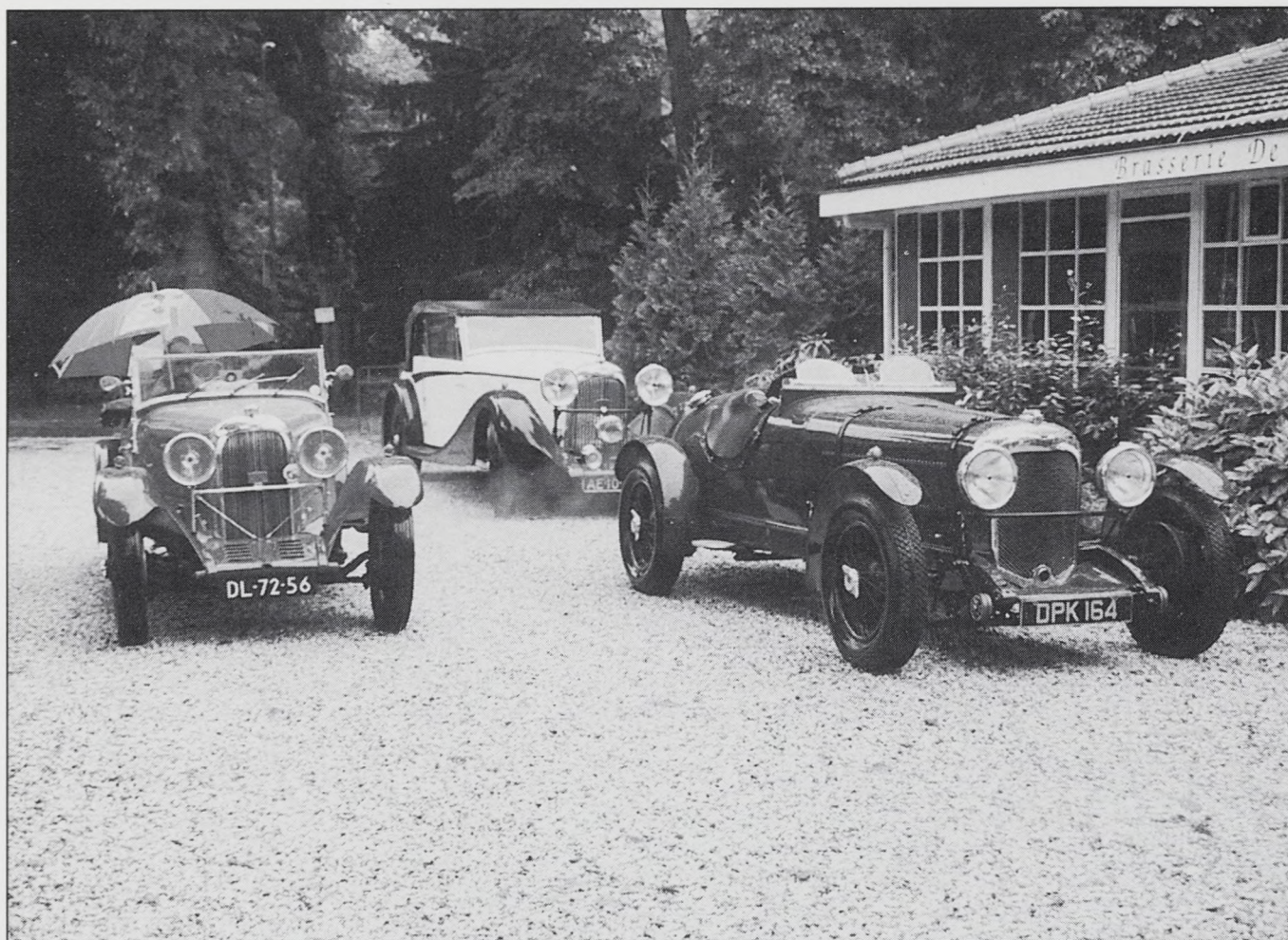
Sunday September 13th. To keep it a bit in an English style we proposed a real High Tea.

All reactions were very positive and the first meeting took place in the very centre of Holland, near Amersfoort. You all know what kind of summer we had and it will come as no surprise that it was raining all day. Maybe that is also a bit of an English tradition.

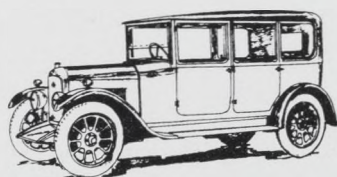
Since I had started all this I thought it would be impossible not to go there with the Lagonda, so I put my rainsuit and helmet on and fought my way through the rain to the restaurant. Two other brave owners had decided to come with their Lagondas, as you can see in the picture, making me feel less cold and stupid. We were: DPK 164, J J Dolleman's LG 45 special; DL 72-56 and F Louward's M 45 tourer.

The meeting was very successful, with 22 attending. They all thought it was a very good idea to start a Dutch Section and all wanted to have a meeting in 1999, so you will hear more from us via the newsletter or the Club magazine.





*The Lagondas at the first Dutch Section Meeting.*



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# Competition and Awards Round Up

by Peter Whenman

Allinson	Wessex Rally	Alan Elliott
Bentley W.O.	The first Lagonda in BDC/Lagonda race at Silverstone	Tim Metcalfe
Car Club	Concours winner at AGM	Bernd Holthusen
Committee	Awarded by the Committee at their discretion	Not awarded
Densham	Most active 2 litre or 16/80	Phil Ridout
Expensive Noises	For those unfortunate to have major problems	Not awarded
Fox Mobil	Best performance at Prescott Hillclimb	Peter Whenman
Fox and Nichol		
Le Mans Trophy	Top driver	Tim Metcalfe
The James Crocker		
Racing Trophy	Runner-up driver	Peter Whenman
Gaber	Best performance in a V12, any event	Joe Harding
Gosling	Best magazine article	Jeremy Oates
Invicta	Best performance by Club member	Jo Moss
Michael	Best performance driving any Lagonda in all types of events	Tony Metcalfe
Newcomers Racing	Awarded to best new driver in competition events	Not awarded
Rally Trial	Best performance in navigation rally	Roy Williams
Northern	Winner of Northern Driving Test	Nick Hine
Raine	Best DB car at AGM Concours	Helen Lloyd-Bisley
Seaton	Best maintained and used Lagonda	David Ayre

## Points for Racing Season 1998

		Points			
Tim Metcalfe	Rapier	78	David Hine	LG Special	11
Peter Whenman	Rapier	34	Roger Danielle	DB/Jaguar	8
Tony Metcalfe	Rapier	26	Colin Bugler	LG Special	5
Tim Wakeley	Rapier	25	Nigel Hall	LG Special	2
Martin Bugler	LG Special	19	Joe Harding	V-12 Special	2
Mark Butterworth	LG Special	14	Stephen Matthews	M45 Tourer	1
Neil Jones	LG Special	2	Allan Elliott	2 litre	1
Jo Moss	Invicta	12	David Holland	LG Special	1
Nick Hine	LG Special	12	Paul Tebbit	M45 Special	1
Terry Brewster	LG Special	12			



# In Register

by Arnold Davey

THIS instalment is a bit of a miscellany, with references to several unconnected aspects of Lagondism that have cropped up recently.

The first was an unexpected discovery by Ken Painter at Beaulieu of a wartime economy edition of the V12 Instruction Book. This matched the original book in appearance, with gold blocking on a maroon cloth cover, but has no loose-leaf system and no press-studded flap. Instead of saying "Instruction Book" it says "Running Instructions" and at the bottom of the cover "Abridged Wartime Edition". It certainly is abridged, running to only 12 pages instead of 54 and omitting all pictures and diagrams. It is dated inside at July 1941 and you note at the back that the car operations had been moved out of the factory, probably for security reasons as much as anything, since Lagonda/Wyndham Hewitt were making all sorts of military bits. The parts department was now at a site in Kingston Rd., opposite the Cottage Hospital and servicing was done in Clarence St., probably at the Bridge Garage, which Lagonda owned and used for other, more warlike activities as well. Lagonda customers, clearly rich and influential, can be presumed to be more likely than most to be continuing to run their cars during the war and hence there was a need to maintain a spares and servicing operation.

In many ways the abridged edition is easier to use than the full handbook, since you don't have to chase through pages of the stuff to find the key information, like plug gaps, for instance, as everything of that sort is tabulated at the beginning. Incidentally, the plug recommendation is different; Champion

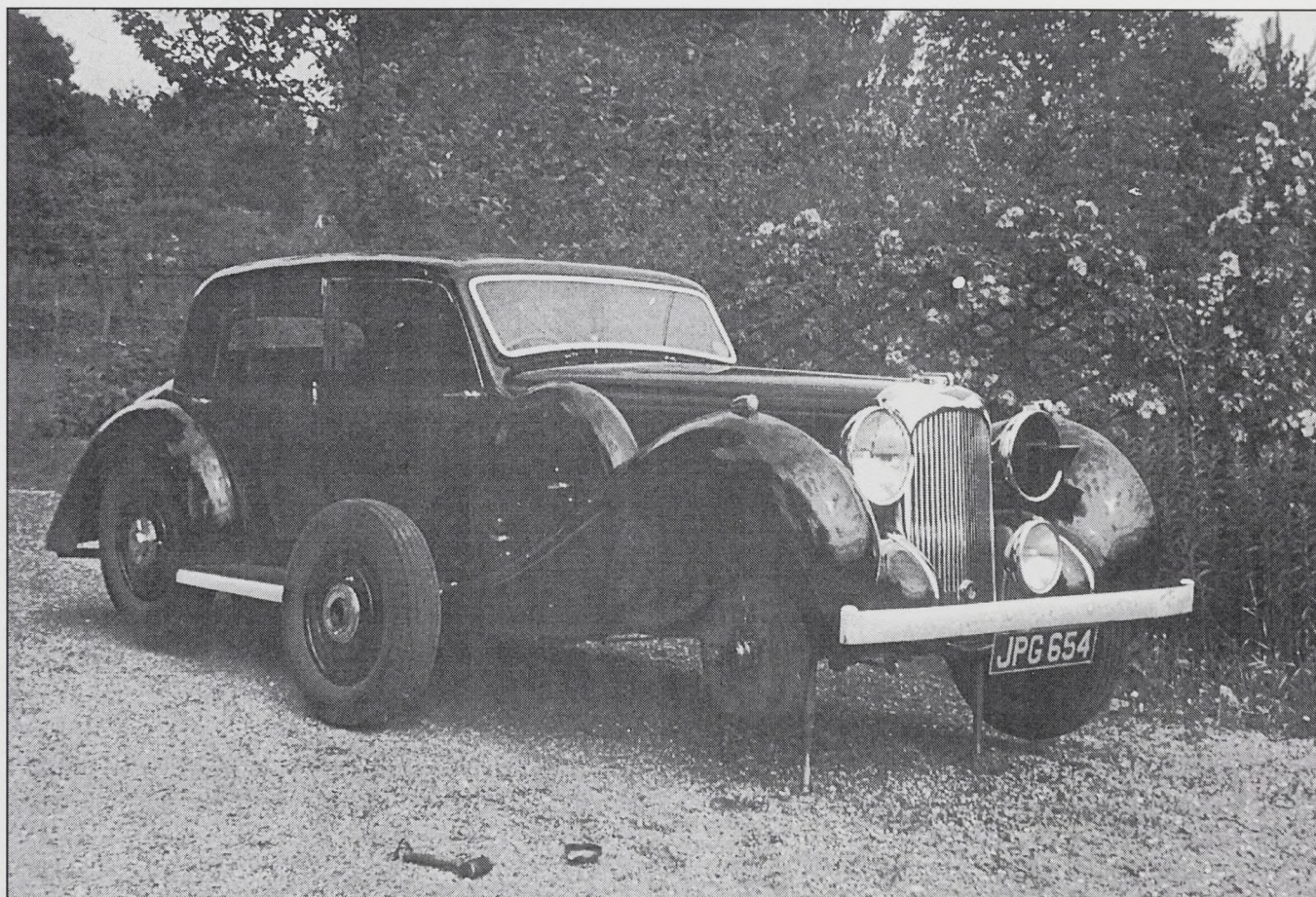
L10S instead of L10 in the handbook, although the only difference is one of reach, possibly to lower the compression ratio very slightly to suit Pool petrol. There are a number of other minor changes, 32 psi in the front tyres instead of 30, deletion of the decoke from the 10,000 mile service and so on. All running-in instructions are left out for the good reason that there were no new cars in 1941, so no need for running-in. It is significant that, in the "Don't"s in the original, "Don't run on bald tyres" has been omitted. In wartime you had no choice. On the other hand, the explanation of what the fuses do is much clearer, as it had to be, with no wiring diagram to refer to.

The printer is different, Tapp & Toothill Ltd of Leeds and London having replaced W.W.Curtis of Coventry, but the reason for this is known, as Curtis were bombed out in the Coventry blitz, although they were able to re-establish themselves and the firm lasted until about 1973.

My thanks to Ken for generously donating the book to me and hence the Club archives.

The next item of interest came from Brian Rickets in the form of pages from Glass's Guide for June 1939 and a 1954/5 summary of models. Brian observed that his 16/80 was only worth £55 as a trade-in, but retailed at £95 in 1939, offering the trader a 73% mark-up. All the prices were rather like this; the depreciation curve before the war looked like the profile of a ski-jump. For example, an M45 tourer costing £825 in 1933 when new as only worth £77 as a trade-in by 1939 and trade price was £52 to £60. It isn't surprising that few owners took up the renewable guarantee. After three







years of that sort of depreciation, the cost of bringing the car up to a guarantee-able state was probably more than the value of the car and since the models changed quite radically each year, the money was better spent towards a new one.

The 1954/5 pages do not contain prices, but are a guide to the trader on how to identify a Lagonda offered to him from the chassis number and the various distinguishing features. These latter are good and accurate, but the identifying chassis numbers are full of traps, the result of Lagonda's pernicious habit of not building cars in chassis number order, or indeed anything like it. For example, Glass's quote 3 litre Selectors as beginning with chassis Z 10109 in April 1932. But there are loads of Selectors with chassis numbers smaller than this, but when you check the date of first registration it always comes out at March or April 1932, despite the model technically being available from the 1931 Motor Show onwards.

There are some muddles which are Glass's fault. M45 and M45R engines are quoted as having the same dimensions, 88.5 x 120.6 mm, but one is supposed to be 4467cc and the other 4453 cc. This mistake was in the 1939 book, too, but it ought to have been spotted by 1954.

When it comes to the post-war cars, the Byzantine complexity of Lagonda's chassis numbering gets Mr Glass right out of his depth. He assumes, wrongly, that when LAG 48/ numbers gave way to LAG/49 numbers, they started over at 1 again, which they didn't. He must have mystified his readers by alleging that the last Mk 1 2.6 was LAG 50/446 and the first Mark 2 was LAG 50/521, implying that the numbers in between didn't exist. But in fact the changeover was extraordinarily muddled and the first four Mark 2s, in date order, were Lag 50/438, /521, /522, /515, with the intervening numbers following on in no discernible system. The change from 2.6 litre to 3 litre is even more odd; the first 3 litre is LAG 50/468 in chassis number order, but it was built two years after the

cars on either side of it and is the 20th 3 litre in date order. To reflect this, Glass's Guide then has a note in bold type saying **"Chassis numbers not necessarily issued in numerical sequence. In case of doubt, apply to the manufacturer"**. I'll say.

The next item is one where perhaps our "Old Lags" can help. Our member John Scanlon sent me a set of photographs which may or may not be connected with each other. They were sent with the intention of passing them on to the present owners of the cars, but this was foiled, since we don't know who they are. The first set were taken near the Hand Hotel, wherever that is, and I reproduce one. The car is a Sanction 3 LG45 saloon, registered EMB 146, that has never been in the Club and the chap holding the door is presumably the owner. The car carries three club badges, AA, what I think is an ERA Supporters' and another. It is therefore unlikely to be a press or works car. The photographer is James Brymer of Streatham and on the back of one print is pencilled "Dr Gwyer". The second set are of a medium chassis V12 saloon, JPG 654 (16063), which was the press car during the war and was road tested by "Motor Sport", among others. The pictures are clearly wartime ones, as the running board edges and bumpers are painted white and the nearside headlamp has the statutory mask. The car is jacked up, with the offside front wheel removed and one picture shows the driver, but cuts his head off. Is this the same man as in the LG45 pictures? There is no clue to where it was taken, except that it looks like somebody's garden. It is just possible that the name or the photo will ring a bell with one of our "Old Lags". Does the LG45 owner, presumed to be Dr Gwyer, mean anything to anyone? Is he the headless man? (Don't tell me about the Duchess of Argyll). Are these two cars connected in some way?

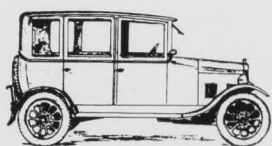
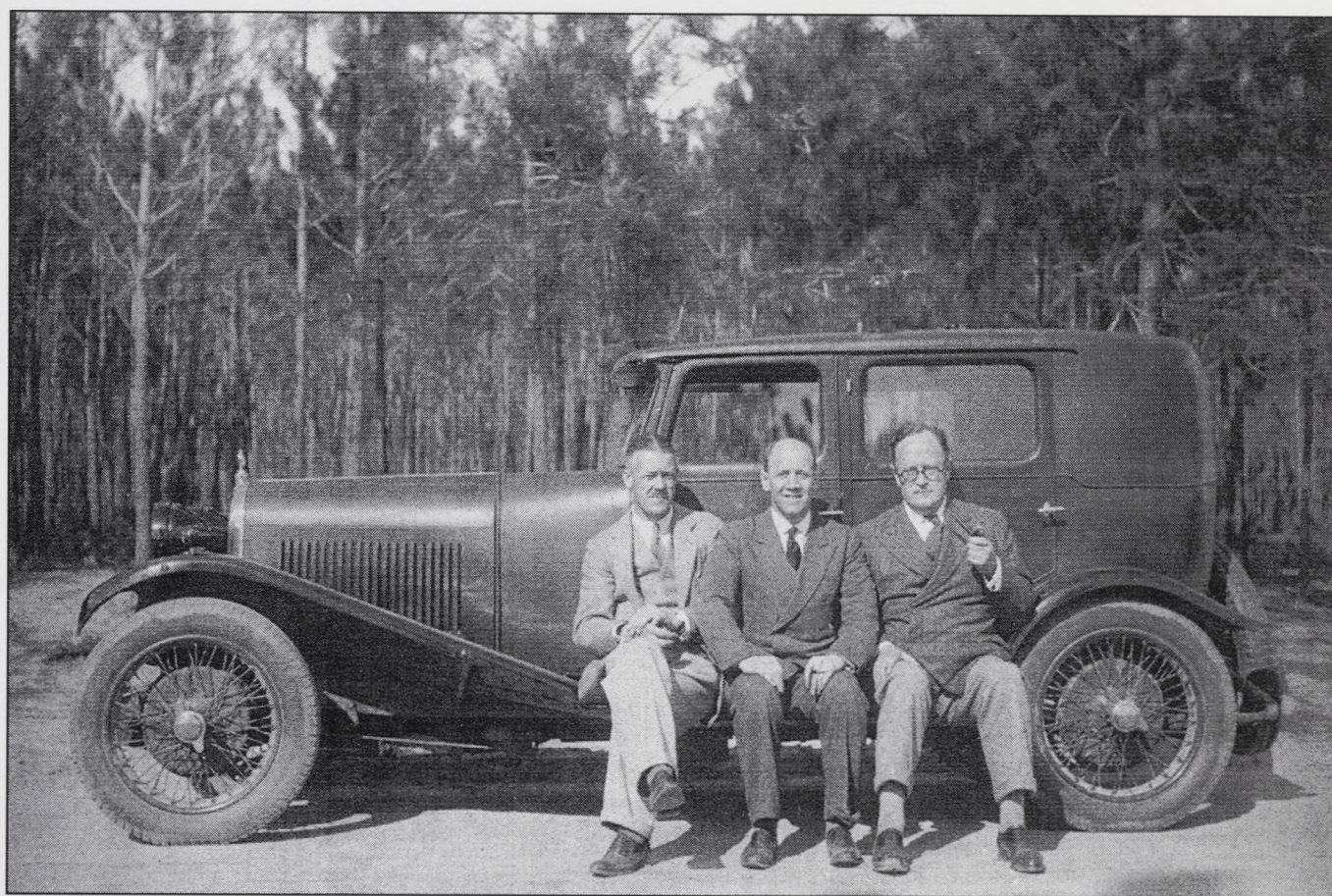
Lastly, another puzzle picture. I picked up the original of this splendid period photograph at an autojumble and, as the vendor didn't know what it was,



got it for a much more reasonable sum than if the magic word "Lagonda" had crossed anyone's lips, to jack the price up. The car is a 1927 or 1928 High Chassis Speed Model Weymann, with fabric covered body. I have no idea who the three gentlemen are, except that the middle one looks remarkably like our milkman. It is interesting that the bonnet is fabric covered too, using the

---

"Buckingham" method that I described on page 184 of the Lagonda History. Also that the lamps are all black - chrome was more expensive. The photographer's name is stamped on the back as Curzon Studios, 30 Hill St., Richmond, Surrey. I wonder if they still exist and I wonder if any of our readers recognise any of the people?





# The Three Valleys Rally 1998

## Or - How I Lost More Than my Shirt at the Casino

by Alan Elliott

IN 1997 the Lagonda Club's foreign excursion was to Fougères. In previous years we have been south to Bordeaux, north to the Hague and east to Nuremberg. However, 1998 saw us a little nearer to home - in Normandy for the Three Valleys Rally. This is an annual two-day event, organised by the Association Normande de Vehicules d'Epoque and supported for many years by Lagonda Club members.

The meeting point was some 45 kilometers east of Caen at the ancient Chateau de Fervaques where a famous King of France once resided. A variety of British entrants were lined up, ranging from Austin 7 to Rolls Royce, plus all the French competitors. Three Lagondas were there, all 2 litres; Chris Paling and Ivan Spurrier-Smith in supercharged cars, plus our standard low chassis tourer.

We examined the cars, talked, kicked the tyres for a while - and then it was time for lunch. This was the really serious part of the day, lasting three hours and living up to the French traditions.

Thus fortified, we started the rally proper, through the hills, wooded valleys and quiet villages of the Pays d'Auge. The Normandy roads are unbelievably deserted - just like our roads used to be when the cars were new! There were various control points en-route, where we stopped for "Jeu", but all were very light-hearted. Normandy is dairy country and the route took us through Pont l'Eveque, well-known for one of the legendary cheeses of France, and then a guided tour of the "Coeur de Lion" Calvados distillery - with of course a

tasting. Finally to our hotel at Trouville - a very modern affair, but ideal for a large rally party. Trouville is just along the coast from fashionable Deauville, where rich Parisiens traditionally spend the week-end, however Trouville offers slightly better value for money.

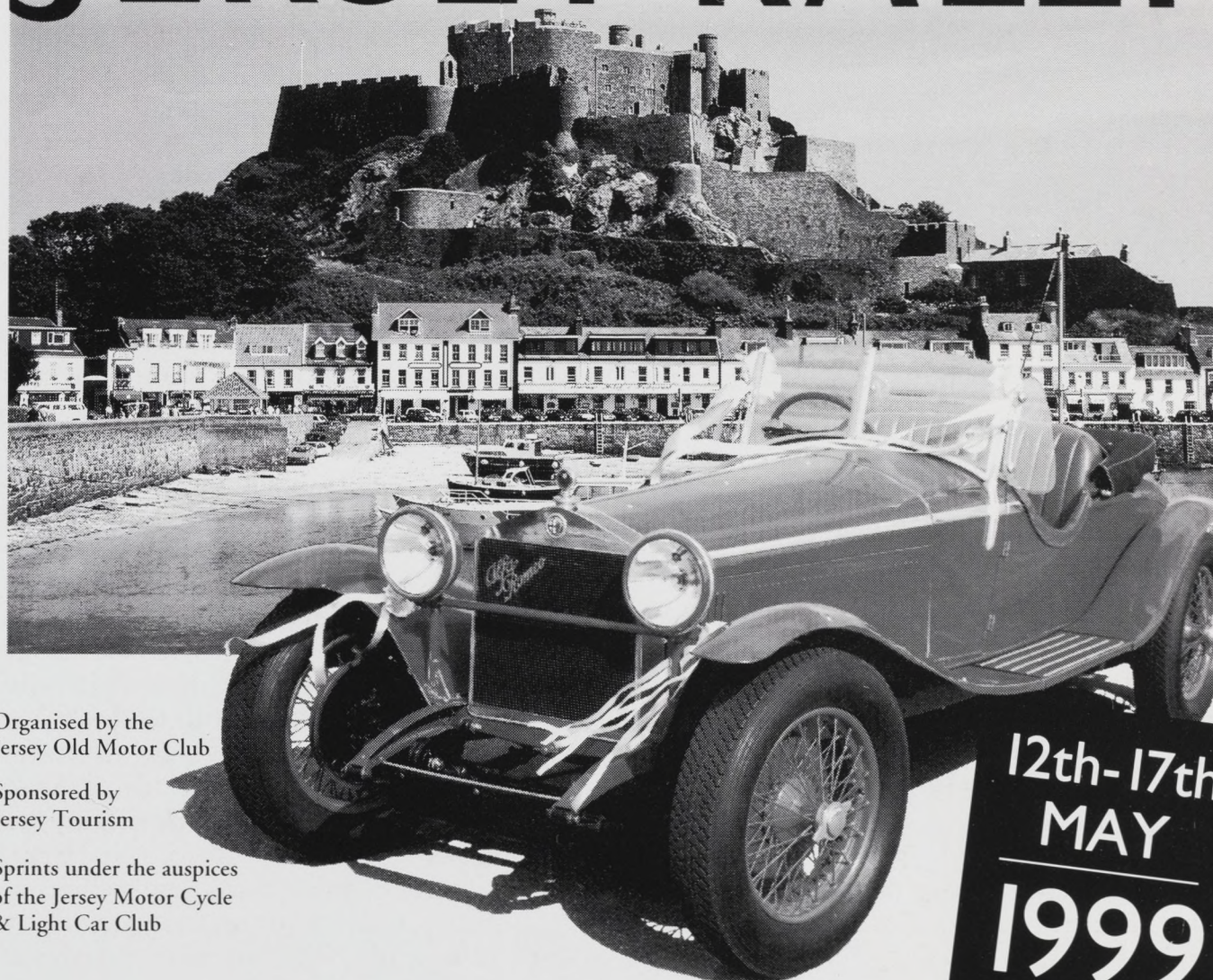
The evening festivities commenced with a drive to the Casino, where the cars were put on display. A full banquet followed - and dancing - and around the small hours some of the more intrepid tried their luck at the tables. There were understandably a few absentees the following morning, but the survivors began the next part of the rally with a stop at the Cote de Grace, where there is a magnificent vista of the Pont de Normandie across the mouth of the Seine and offering the shortest route to le Havre. It is then but a few minutes drive to the gem of this coast, Honfleur, an artist's paradise, with its old harbour, cobbled streets and quaint houses.

Finally, a drive along the Normandy Corniche and back to the finish at Trouville - and of course more food - a lengthy Sunday lunch. We then all gathered for a real Concours d'Elegance for cars and passengers, the theme being "At the Seaside". Despite the gathering storm clouds, the waiting crowds were not disappointed, the costumes ranged from mermaids to Victorian bathing suits.

Patrick Guilleux and all the members of the ANVE made us all so welcome and the rally can be highly recommended as a very enjoyable and light-hearted event. Pity I lost my trousers at the Casino - they were new!



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# Midlands Section AML Visit 23rd July 1998

by Harry Taylor

IT WAS that time again - another year and we were welcomed, once again by our friend Roger Stower at the Newport Pagnel factory. I define the venue because, as everyone knows, the DB7 models are made elsewhere nowadays.

An excellent representative turnout of models, covering many years. The oldest being Steve Lawrence's 11.1 of around 1913 vintage, through to George Williamson's 1955 DB 3 litre 4 door. In between was John Breen's 16/80, John Batt's 2 litre (nice to see you and your wife back John), Mr Thompson's 2 litre and my 1953 DB 3 litre DHC.

Having done this each year since 1972, apart from the odd occasions when there have been changes of management, etc, I have seen quite a few changes. This time was no exception in that the walk around the factory has become somewhat regimented. Indeed, we were only able to view the cars, during the final assembly, from a distance. All this

is due, no doubt, to the Ford influence and their insistence that the Factory Act must be adhered to. This takes the form of restricted areas and the wearing of ID badges, ear plugs and goggles - we were spared the hard hats.

Nevertheless, it is still inspiring to see how cars should be made and for my part, I always return home with a little increased incentive to spend more time on my restoration project - a 1954 DB 3 litre Coupe.

The day finished in the service area. This part, I think, is now the best of the tour. Many various models in all sorts of conditions, from a general service to a complete rebuild.

Regardless of the situation that now prevails at AML, I intend to organise something for '99. I suspect that the Management might have something lined up for the Centenary, so watch this space for details.





# *The Centenary Suffolk Dinner*

Saturday 20 March 1999, 6.45pm for 7.15pm

at

**The Melton Grange Hotel  
Pytches Road, Woodbridge**

---

*Salmon & Prawn Salad*

★

*Contre Filet of Beef à la Dreux  
with*

*Selection of Vegetables*

★

*Black Cherry & Kirsch Gateau*

★

*Fresh Ground Coffee with Sweetmeats*

★

David Hine has agreed to speak at this first event of Centenary Year. Gary Guiver Gong for the Rapier driven furthest. Dress optional. Ticket £18, cheques payable to Mike Pilgrim, from Little Orchard, Bredfield, WOODBRIDGE IP13 6AW. **no later than 12 March.**

Menu options available **if stated with your ticket order:-** Melon Opporto starter - Vegetarian main course of Cheese Tortellini in a Tomato & Onion Sauce - Fresh Fruit Salad dessert.

Local members offer accommodation, also B & B is available nearby (Oxfam scheme) - details from Mike on 01394 382773, but **before 25 February**, due to holiday absence.

For rooms at the Hotel, kindly ask for the agreed concessionary B&B rates of £50 double, £40 single, tel: 01394 384147.

---

**ALSO - on Sunday 21 March**



Meet for lunch, from noon onwards, at The Old Mill House, Saxstead Green near Framlingham

**Bring your Lagonda!**





# Liège - Rome - Liège, AXD Goes to Rome

by Richard Mann

I MANAGED to persuade Jo my wife to accompany me as my navigator on this exciting Rally, which only goes one way, i.e. Liège to Rome, it crosses the Vosges, Jura Savoie and Piedmont and is for cars made before 1960.

We had driven in good order from East Sussex for the gathering of cars and crews, which took place at Liège on 19th June 1998 at the Posthouse. 87 cars were to start, of which 10, including ours, were pre-war.

This was the first rally that Jo had navigated in and, luckily, the layout of the route book helped enormously, giving clear instructions for the route. The only major problem was if we made a mistake, finding where we were on the map was sometimes tricky. That was when we learned to mark up the map as well.

## Day 1, Saturday 20th June

Liège to Riquewihr went better than we expected, Jo acquitted herself with honours, scoring three "0"s and only losing points on one section. The route through the Vosges was beautiful, with wooded mountains, fast running streams and medieval towns. We got a tremendous welcome in Riquewihr, being met by crowds of people, mountain horns booming and bands playing, we were even given a glass of the local wine.

Having found our hotel, we decided that we had had enough driving for one day and got a lift in a Bentley Continental to go to drinks in another town. A Belgian navigated us to the dinner, on the way back Jo and I decided we would like to stretch our legs, so we were dropped off at the top of the town. We walked through, but couldn't find our hotel. On asking at a bar for

directions we then discovered that we were in a totally different place - Ribeauvillé, 6 km away. Luckily we got a lift from a charming girl who worked in the bar and she drove us to our hotel. You can imagine our comments to the Belgian navigator the following morning!

## Day 2, Sunday 21st June

We did not go far before we got lost and, on rejoining the route in the first hill climb of the day, the car phut-phutted and stopped. In the end the only way the car would go was down, so we turned round and drove into a small town. I assumed it was vaporisation, but I then discovered an air leak in the petrol feed system, after wetting down cloths over the pipes and adding new petrol, she went along OK. We lunched near Colmar and then drove 6½ hours, via major roads to La Clusaz - we lost a lot of points!

## Day 3, Monday 22nd June

Leaving La Clusaz we did some spectacular climbs in the Savoie, going via Bourg-St-Maurice and Vald'Isère, the last a great climb up and over into Italy, with fantastic views of mountains and valleys. Once in Italy we did a very frightening timed regularity run on narrow steep roads, very twisty with hairpins. We had to reverse five times and nearly went over the edge twice, Jo was very controlled and did not panic!. However, after lunch, we opted not to do any more of that type of road and drove, using some of the Rally route, to Santa Margherita, where we stayed in a superb hotel, the Miramar.

## Day 4, Tuesday 23rd June

The next morning we decided not to follow the Rally route to start with, as it was twisty and very narrow, but to rejoin





*In the Vosges.*



*On arrival at Santa Margherita.*



it after lunch. We think we made a wise decision, several of the other competitors damaged their cars, trying to go too fast over the difficult roads. After lunch we went by good roads, including a motorway to Florence and arrived at our hotel at 5 p.m. - heaven! All other arrivals had been between 8 and 9 p.m.

Day 5, Wednesday 24th June

We decided to do the first leg, but then cut out the regularity runs. As a result, we had a very nice drive to the lunch stop at Montalcino. On the way to the last stop before Rome, disaster struck. On re-starting the car after searching for petrol there was a bang and everything locked up. We rang the back-up crew and waited for two hours. Luckily, after removing the starter motor, we were able to remove the broken pinion from the flywheel. The car was pushed and, hey presto, she started. We then made up time and met the last three cars at the entry onto the Autostrada around Rome.

Then followed the most extraordinary drive I have ever experienced, we had a police escort into Rome, through red lights, over tramlines at 50 m.p.h., right into the centre, where the cars were gathered for a champagne reception. We had a fantastic welcome, as we were thought to have broken down. After another incredible police-led drive to find our car park, we arrived at our hotel, the Grand Plaza, a very ornate, but

rather faded place, but lovely to arrive at and relax.

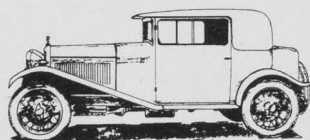
**Day 6, Thursday 25th June**

The prize giving ceremony was held today and, in spite of our monumental losses, we gained some mementos for finishing 50th and for the longest car. The distance we covered was 1365 miles from Liège. At the ceremony I was introduced to Nino Violante, who helped me find an engineer to make a pinion to fit the starter, a very long story that I will not go into.

**Days 7 to 18**

I drove to near Perugia, in Umbria, where we stayed with friends for a week. During this time I fetched the new starter pinion from Rome, re-fitted the starter and carried out several other jobs on the car. The drive to Bologna, to catch the train home was also incident packed, this time it was the petrol pump working erratically in the 33° plus heat, so we were pleased to load the car onto the train and sit back and enjoy the trip to Calais.

We drove quietly home from Calais, using the Channel Tunnel to cross over and arrived with a feeling of intense gratitude that, somehow, the car had made it again. We had covered 2008 miles from start to finish, had a truly amazing time and now, once again, had to set about getting the car into good condition for the Rallies ahead.





# Book Review – “Into the Red”

by Nick Mason & Mark Hales Virgin Books,  
London. ISBN 1-85227-717-3, Price £20

by Ken Painter

AS ALL right minded people know, Nick Mason is the drummer in the group “Pink Floyd”. He is the son of Bill Mason, who was responsible for the wonderful series of films “the History of Motor Racing” and, like his father before him, he is an enthusiastic member of the Vintage Sports Car Club. The success of the group has enabled Nick to create the sort of motoring stable - Nick hates the word “collection” - we all dream about, but for him it is no dream.

Mark Hales is a journalist and racing driver, perhaps best known for his work in “Classic and Sportscar”, “Top Gear Magazine” and “The Daily Telegraph”. His writing, like his driving, is of the highest quality and the two men have combined to create this superb analysis of 21 of Nick’s cars.

The cars range from the 1901 Panhard, through ERA R10B and the Type 35 Bugatti, to the Maserati 250F, the fabulous BRM V16, to the 1990 Porsche 962, bought new by Nick and raced at Le Mans in what I suppose we might call “Floyd Pink”. There are no Lagondas among this selection, but don’t let that put you off, this book is essential reading - and listening.

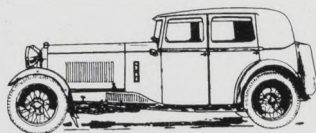
Mark Hales gives a short history and technical guide to each car, then describes just what it is like to drive. Alongside Mark’s analysis of the car, Nick’s own commentary is given, describing how and why he bought it and what he thinks of it. His wry humour

and his candour make a perfect foil to Mark’s more analytical, but still emotionally charged comments.

If you have ever wondered what it might be like to drive - or to own - one of these cars, then this is for you, but the really different part is inside the front cover. There you will find a CD which gives you the sound of every car in the book, first as they drive past on the track, then from the cockpit. Be warned! the BRM is LOUD, you can hear it for the entire lap of Donington Park and when it passes the microphones in the pits you are left in no doubt about its unique sound.

For those who like their special books to be really special, the book is also available as a limited edition, printed on superior quality paper and hand bound in leather which replicates the seats in Nick’s Alfa Romeo 8C 2300. A separate booklet contains the 40 minute CD and a set of six prints, suitable for framing is also included. The whole package is encased in an Aluminium slip case embossed with the rivet pattern from the tail of a 250F Maserati and each copy is personalised with a chassis plate displaying the buyer’s name and the limited edition number. This very special package costs £250, plus delivery. Whatever your financial choice, this is one book you really should buy.

The telephone orderline can be contacted on 0171 624 0869.







*48 hours before the start!*



*Parked with the Butterworth Lagonda.*



# Italian Adventure

by Florian Brandt

GRAN Premio Tazio Nuvolari - a name like music and a location like heaven. It gave us ideas of a sunny autumn, delicious Italian foods and classic motoring in good company.

As so often happens, after I registered for the event problems started to occur on my trusty old banger (a Lagonda LG 45 tourer of 1937), which is in very original condition.

Many things had to be fiddled with, as the car had never done a long distance trip in the past 15 years. I got used to spending the nights in the garage under my car and I can tell everyone that I know many better ways to spend a night!

The worst problem was the sudden overheating of the car, even after I changed the radiator, flushed the whole engine with high pressure, checked the compressions and torqued down the cylinder head. Just by chance I found the solution of the problem: the shaft of the water pump could move far too much in an axial way while the engine was revving high. This caused the shaft to become disconnected from the dynamo shaft. It could only slip back into the slot in the dynamo shaft after the engine was stopped.

All this I found out two days before leaving and you can imagine how I felt at that moment. I was very lucky to have a friend who helped me a lot with all his knowledge and his special equipment, for example machinery to machine the shaft and the new bearings.

At this point I have to express my thanks to Peter Whenman and his staff, as well as Alan Brown, who tried to help me by telephone to solve the problems, with a lot of good ideas and hints. It was so comforting to feel that the Lagonda Club members are somewhat like a big family,

48 hours before leaving for Italy, the car was in a very unfinished state, much of the bodywork was still removed, the engine not running yet, one magneto out of order and the water pump dismantled. I could list many more niggling faults which still needed to be solved.

After two more night shifts (where even Viagra wouldn't be any help), the car was pushed out of the garage and started on the button. One very short test drive at 8° and pouring rain in Germany showed that the car didn't overheat, at least during those conditions. So I decided that we would go to Italy, without any idea how the car would tolerate the distance or the temperature, or how we would manage the wine and food.

We arrived in Mantua without any problems. It is a wonderful medieval town, which is still very intact and lively. While the weather was perfect for a modern car, we were amazed to find out that the average temperature was above 24°. Anyhow, the welcome was very warm, the organisation full of Italian charm and, after we got all our stickers, bags and presents, we started from Mantua in the company of many other great cars, like Invicta, Alfa Romeo, Alvis, Bentley and one more Lagonda - the well known Butterworth Lagonda.

From Modena we drove through Maranello, which was totally in Ferrari Formula One fever. We could even hear Schumacher testing the car on the Ferrari owned race track.

Everyone enjoyed the Italian style of driving, which means open the third lane, don't bother about traffic lights, rush through villages and always be greeted by the locals and the police! This was fast driving on narrow roads in the







countryside, often the way led through town and village centres. In some way it was a very personal Mille Miglia-like event, with less press and commercial character, but with even more fun and contact with all the other competitors.

Next, we went to the famous town of Lucca and then we visited Pisa, where we had a time check in the shadow of the Leaning Tower. Everyone was gentle with the accelerator pedal, so that the bark of the exhaust wouldn't destroy one of the most prominent buildings of Italian culture.

When we arrived at Livorno everybody enjoyed the seaside and all the participants from Central and Northern European countries tried to forget the rainy and cold summer we had. Livorno was the most southerly point on the run, then we drove back north. At the central square of Carrara we had a wonderful stay-over for lunch and later on we headed through the mountains to Salsomaggiore. Later we went through Cremona to Mantua.

Wonderful driving in the mountains, with dices with several Alfa Romeos and a 4½ litre Bentley showing clearly that the power and roadholding of the Lagonda was beyond reproach - if there weren't the very old tyres, or piles of luggage always flying from one side of the car to the other. The experience of driving very fast for hours on very small Italian roads in a wonderful landscape is a feeling which let me forget the experiences in my garage quite easily.

Also, I had one of the most relaxing times of my life. In more than 850 kilometres I never had to open my

toolbox or do any mechanical work to the car. By the way, it might be interesting for some that during the whole trip we still had "temperature problems". But this time the temperature would hardly rise above 70°! A new "temperature problem".

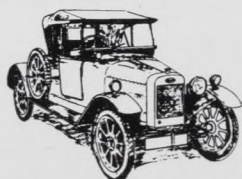
The arrival and welcome back in Mantua was tremendous, crowds everywhere, we were guided to the town, everyone was cheering "Bella macchina, bella macchina!"

The location for the prize giving was a remarkable theatre, we have never been in such a beautiful place for a prize giving. Marble, fake marble, columns and cosy boxes were the perfect setting for the ceremony. By the way, all the prizes went to Italian competitors, as I said before, it was wonderfully organised in true Italian style!

Our Lagonda, even though it is still in very original condition, was driven with verve and did the whole trip without even the smallest problem. As I mentioned earlier, we now have a real problem, what should we do to make the temperature rise?

So, if there is anybody out there who doesn't know how pretty and relaxed Italy can be, get a Lagonda and follow, for example, the Via Appia in the warmth of the afternoon sun, enjoy food, wine and the hospitality of the people. (Sorry, I can't mention the beautiful Italian girls as I'm married).

Finally, I would like to thank very much all those Lagonda people who helped so much and made the event possible for my wife and me. Thank you.







*The Appian Way in the afternoon sun.*



*A wonderful selection of cars took part.*



# From the Novice

by J. J. Dolleman

## PART 1: FIRST STEPS

Many years ago I wanted to have a monoposto for some serious driving around the racing circuits. As an Austin Healey owner and enthusiast I went to lots of historic races and saw these big "cigars" racing around the track making such a wonderful deep sound.

But then, when I got a bit older, I discovered that (at least in Europe) one cannot leave the track with such a vehicle unless it's on a car ambulance. In fact, with such a car one is confined to driving around and around on a circuit. Only short driving periods and very long waiting periods. Maybe I just don't have the patience for that. I want to hit the road and go on and on. In any case, this is where my racing aspirations ended and where I started in a new world of continental tours and rallies. Many thousands of miles by now I have cruised through Europe with my companion Hanna.

The car to do this, was an Austin Healey 110/6 from 1958. A very nice and very reliable car, with enough luggage space for all our luggage including formal dresses. If you see all the luggage next to the car you will want to bet it will not fit in.

After 12 years, more than 100,000 km and the car still in perfect running order, I thought it was time for a change. Time for something new, something dramatic. The big question was: what?

A big green Bentley maybe? But my bank was so kind as to point out my financial limits and this was out of reach. It had to be British, it had to be pre-war, it had to have good looks, it had to have a big engine with lots of power and it needed stamina for long rallies. Of course it needed to be an open car and

last but not least it needed luggage space!

The choice of a British car was decided by the fact that the Brits race the cars I am interested in, therefore the supply of parts is good. If you drive these cars to the limit, some parts will go to pieces and in order to keep the car on the track you need to have the spare parts. So spare parts are made and even improved, thus making the car more reliable.

Just try to find something for a pre-war French car.....

So I had some ideas, like Alvis, Aston Martin, Invicta, Riley, Sunbeam and suddenly in August 1997 there was this advertisement from LMB in Belgium who were selling a very interesting looking car from the make Lagonda....

I was very interested and made an appointment after a telephone enquiry. It had the looks, the size, a huge luggage compartment, it was green and....it was also sold the same morning I went to LMB to have a look at the car.

But somehow I was hooked on this type of car. Everybody with pre-war car knowledge told me a Lagonda was much better and easier to drive than a Bentley. It was in fact a better car. This puzzled me greatly. Why was a Bentley so expensive if it was not the best car around? Maybe I will find an answer to this question later in life.

After my visit to Belgium, I had a more precise image of the car I wanted. Lagonda 4½ litre, green, special body. The car world is a small world and so I told everybody I knew to have connections within the pre-war classic car scene to look around for me.

One month later, within the period of a week, I got four different offers and they all presented me the same car.

It was an LG45 with special body



and registration number DPK 164. I took this fourfold indication for a good sign and chose the only channel I trusted out of the four to have a closer look at the car.

We took the plane to London and went to Paradise Garage. They were selling the car on behalf of a third party. Mr Charles Prince received us very courteously and I was very impressed by the looks and the sound of the Lagonda. My good friend Martin Grant Peterkin had told me the most important thing about looking at the car would be: Does it ignite a spark when you look at it? (In other words, look with your heart, not your brain). If you don't like the car, don't buy it. Well, I liked what I saw. A green monster of fairly big proportions, looking very racy and producing a deep sound from an exhaust pipe in which a man's arm would fit. It was not as big as the 6-litre Bentley standing beside it (such a car dwarfs anything except a truck), but still much bigger than a Riley or an Aston Martin.

My first question was if I could see the boot or luggage space. For a moment they looked at me with disbelief. I had the idea they thought I came from Mars, just for a visit here on earth. Here is a man looking at a racing car, wanting to know how much luggage the car could carry. How could they know that the deal with Hanna was: No luggage, no go. If there was not ample luggage space, there was not much use in talking further or taking a nice test drive in the warm autumn sun.

In the boot was the big 18 inch spare wheel. If this could be taken out of the boot there was enough space. On the other hand, the small fuel tank for racing would have to be replaced by a touring version of double the capacity. After some measuring it was decided that this car had the minimum luggage space needed. So we went for a test drive. Great fun but, of course, far too short. I had no experience in driving such a powerful pre-war car, but the ride was very thrilling. I even forgot to take some pictures, for we were in a hurry to catch

the airplane back to Holland. I told Mr Prince I would have to think about it and went home.

About two weeks later we went back again for a longer test drive, a thorough technical investigation of the car and a long talk with Mr Prince in order to make a decision. The most surprising thing of the test run was the power of the engine and the light steering. The gearchange was precise and all synchromesh. Later I discovered that the Alvis Speed 20 or 25 gearbox in the car was a great improvement compared with the gearbox Lagonda engineers had planned for the car. But as soon as the engine got warm, water sprayed out of the filler cap. Very interesting in a car without a windscreen. So there was much more work to do than we were made to believe.

To cut a long story short, we made a deal and Mr Prince proved to be a gentleman in every way, even when the deal got tough (unexpectedly) for Paradise Garage. England is not so far away, but in such cases just not near enough for my nerves.

So now we owned a Lagonda from which only fragments of its history were known. She started life as a saloon on 16th August 1936 and stayed a saloon until at least 1969. Then the car disappeared, to be back on stage as a racer at the end of the '70s. The chassis was shortened, the original gearbox was replaced and the new body was made of aluminium over a tube frame. Two bucket seats and a polished aluminium dashboard were fitted. (I do hope to find some pictures of this early stage of the later period in the life of the car).

Obviously there was a lot to learn and to do. We had a Lagonda with good looks, many oil leaks, a very low oil pressure, an overheating engine and in need of lots of attention. (When I sit behind my desk and write all this, I wonder why anyone would buy such a car....)

Some basic alterations had to be made and so the car went first to Peter Whenman. I met Peter through an Austin Healey friend here in Holland, who had



commissioned a Lagonda from Vintage Coachworks. He had some time left, for the work needed included fitting a new oil sump. the spare wheel was to be mounted on the left side, I wanted steps to get in and out of the car easier (those beautiful castings with an "L"), I wanted a bigger fuel tank and a floor in the boot and, of course, a new radiator core.

Due to some transport problems, it took until March 1998 before the car arrived in Holland and the first miles on Dutch soil could be driven.

## **PART 2: ON THE ROAD**

The replacement of the sump had not helped a great deal and the Dutch soil was "polluted" wherever the car went. It was impossible to pass the licence test this way. Action was needed. We had entered the Lagonda in a great event: the re-run of the Rally from 1898, called "Amsterdam-Paris-Amsterdam". Cars from 1898 until 1972 were admitted, but the emphasis was on pre-war cars. The Rally would cover almost 1000 miles.

With more than six weeks to go before the Rally, I started with this "Piece of Cake", together with the garage where I have all my classics serviced. The shortlist was something like: stop the excessive oil leaks, adjust the brakes, check the wiring, stop the leak from the radiator, mount the seats properly, fit a tripmaster and more things like that.

Do I need to say that anything that could go wrong did go wrong? God knows how these cars are maintained in England, but I have a vague impression now the cars are "fixed".

The oil pressure was very low. Now we discovered why. The oil filter housing was cracked internally, so the pressure could not build up properly.

The clutch made a rattling sound. Now we found out why. The bronze bushes in the flywheel were broken, as was the bush in the clutchplate assembly. The reason for this was that the gearbox was not properly aligned in the drive train. I could give you a list of all the problems we found, which would be at

least two pages long. So, the gearbox needed to be taken out. It was clear that we needed much more time than six weeks and this time was not available unless we continued at night. And so we did.

Peter Whenman very helpfully supplied us with a used filter housing, but for the rest was hand crafted in the garage.

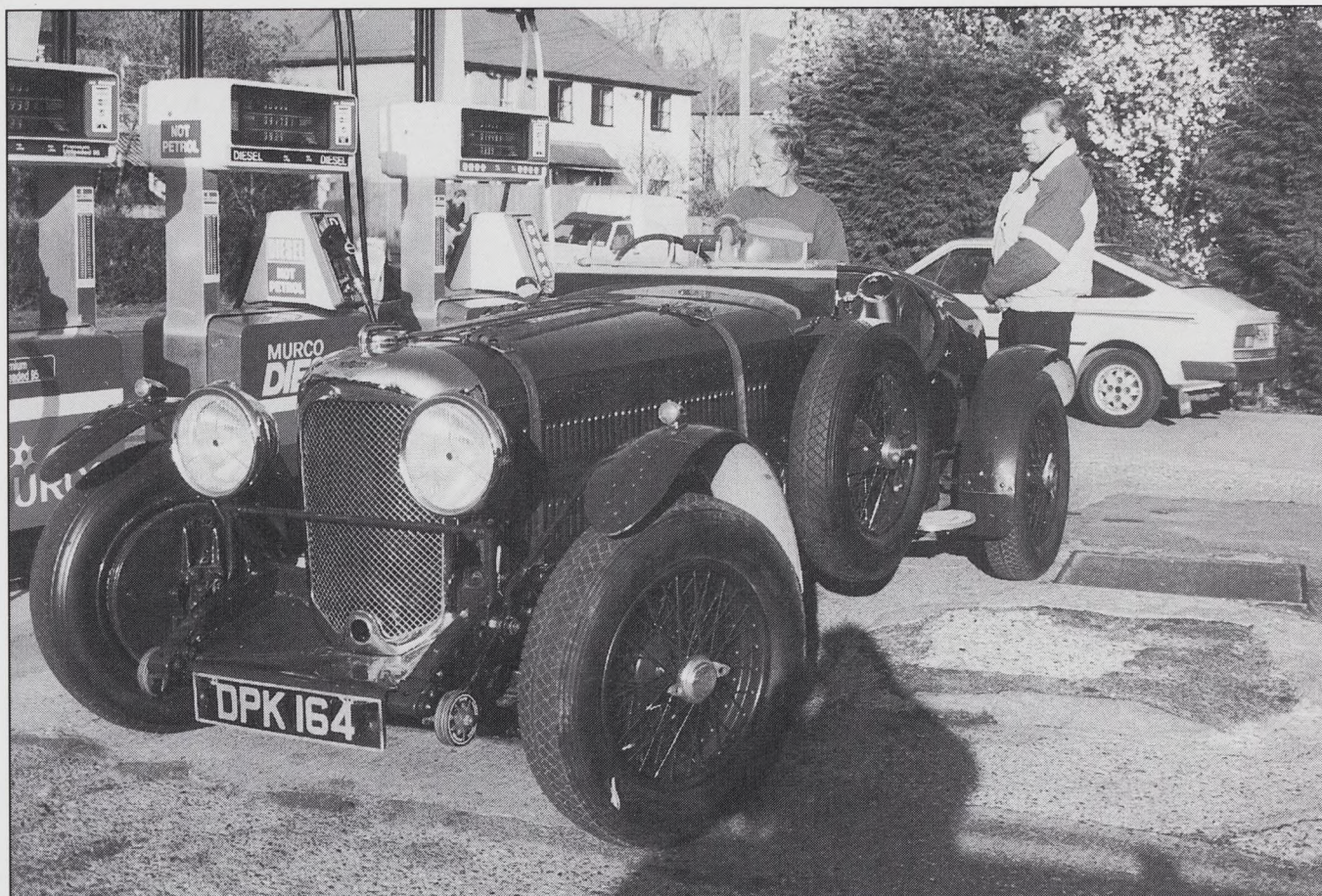
Only two days before the Rally before we could do our first test run. The oil pressure went up and stayed up, even when the engine was hot. The engine was not so dead and gone as we had expected. The gearchange was smooth, with no extra noises. All we had to do was adjust the friction shock absorbers and the brakes.

This went quick and two days later, on June 6th, we were at the start of the Rally in our car. Out of eight days of rallying we had eight days of rain. Not all the time, but rain every day. I must say that driving this car around in the rain without a windscreen or a hood is marginal fun. But we made it and I admire Hanna greatly as she did not complain at all. Driving without a windscreen is no problem, provided I wear my waterproof motorcycle overalls and my helmet with full visor. Leather gloves are soaked in 10 minutes, so they have to be waterproof too. As long as you keep on driving it's OK, but don't stop when the rain is pouring down on you. When getting out of the car I often found a puddle of water in my seat.

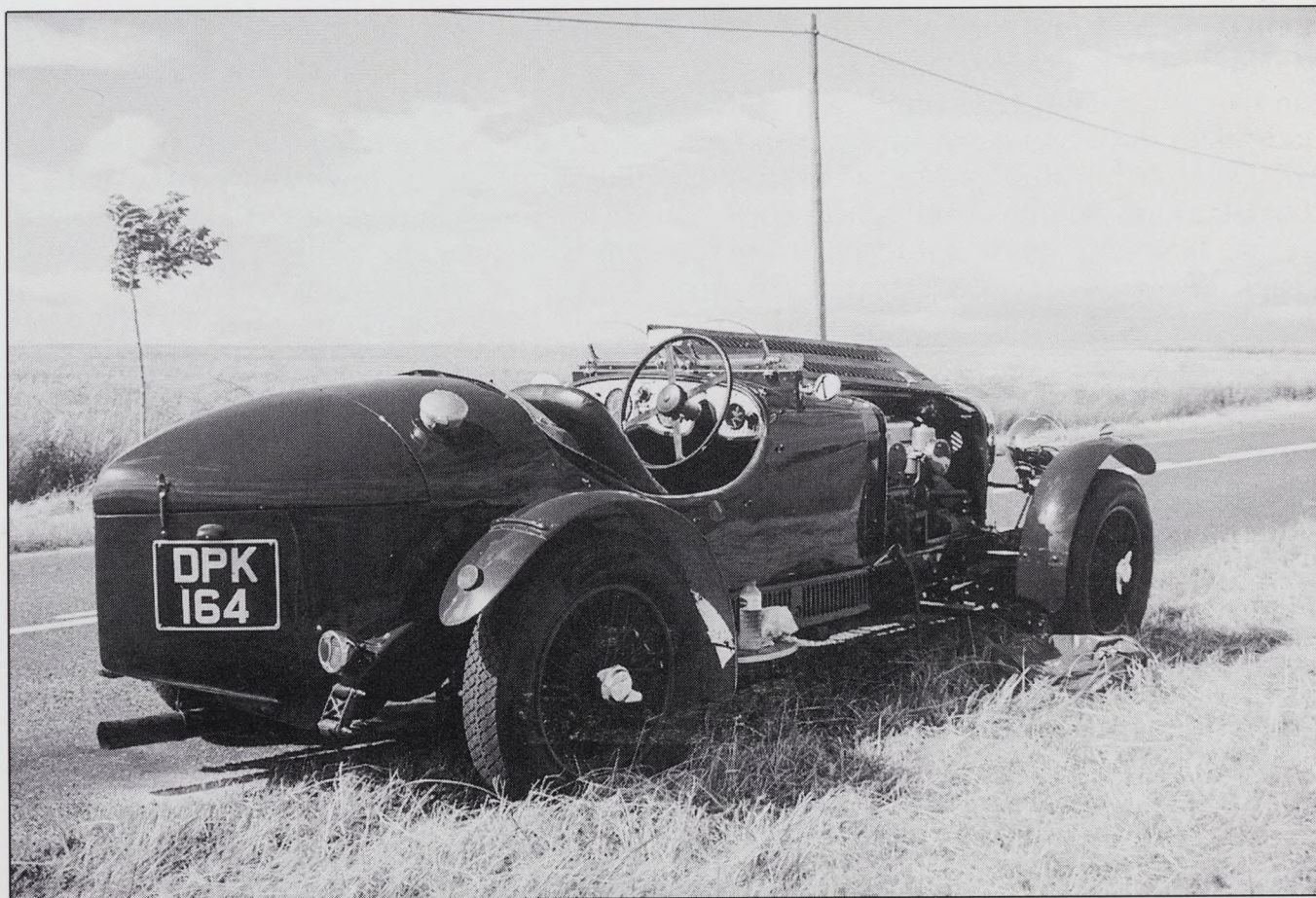
There were only two major problems. Somewhere during the Rally (in the middle of nowhere of course) the car stopped functioning. Thank God it was not raining, so I could investigate under the car and found that the fuel pump did not work anymore. A new pump!

Because I knew from personal experience that SU pumps have a tendency to stop working when they are needed most (how about getting stuck in the Dartford Tunnel with a Healey?), I had decided to have the best pump available. I had asked Peter Whenman's





*The "new" car being refuelled*



*..... but the fuel pump fails.*



advice and he told me the best pumps around are the Facet Red Dot fuel pumps. So of course I had asked him to mount one, to be sure we had no fuel problems - and to our surprise the only new part on the whole car stopped functioning. These are sealed pumps and can not be repaired at all. Of course I did not have a spare pump with me. We had a brand new one after all. (You can be sure I will have a spare one from now on.)

Sadly we had to be towed the first 20 miles and then the car was put on the ambulance to be brought to the hotel where we would stay for the night. all the old cars of the other participants had mechanical fuel pumps, so nobody could help me out. The next morning i went looking for a replacement pump. It took three hours of driving through and around the city of Reims before I found one. I discovered a specialist in British cars who had an identical pump for me and so, very shortly after that we could continue the rally.

The other problem was the huge oil leak at the front end of the gearbox mainshaft. We lost almost a litre a day! Maybe this was no problem in the period the car was raced, but now it was, for I had taken only one extra litre of gearbox oil. One of the other participants had a five litre can. So after finding the correct oil all I had to do was to take care to check the level twice a day and fill up

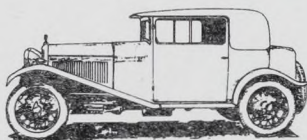
regularly. It spilled oil but at least we could go on driving.

The car was very much admired and was very quick on the road, even more so on the hills we had to take. Designed for hillclimbs and sprints, this did not come as a complete surprise, but it was a very pleasant experience.

The only unpleasant experience involved the brakes. The linings were of a racing compound, which meant that there is only sufficient braking effect when the brakes were warm or hot. Just imagine, you are driving at 60 miles per hour on a beautiful open road and after about 10 miles there is an obstacle, like a roundabout. First you slow down a bit, but in the end one has to brake too. At such moments the brakes are cool and hardly function, or "nobody at home" as we say here. Very unpleasant indeed!

I have the impression that the car has not been out and on the road for such a long period or for so many miles in the last 30 years. Racing around a track or uphill doesn't involve 100 miles in a day. All in all the car proved to be reliable, handling very well, easy to steer and relatively comfortable - for a motorcycle with four wheels.

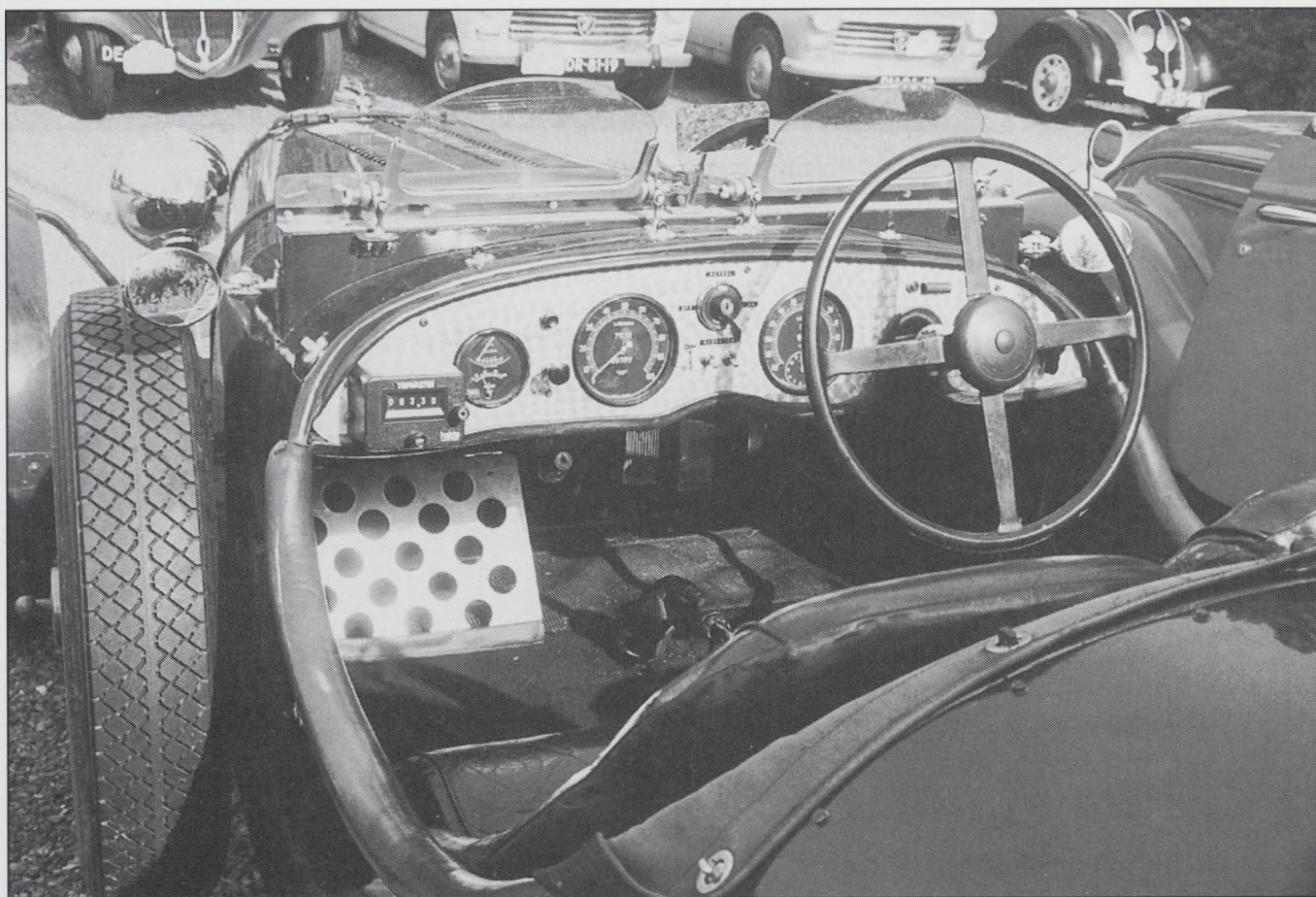
A lot of work on the car is awaiting me this winter, but the first trip was a great success and we like this green monster, which we call the "Green Mauritius", very much.







*On the way to the Hotel.*



*At the finish.*



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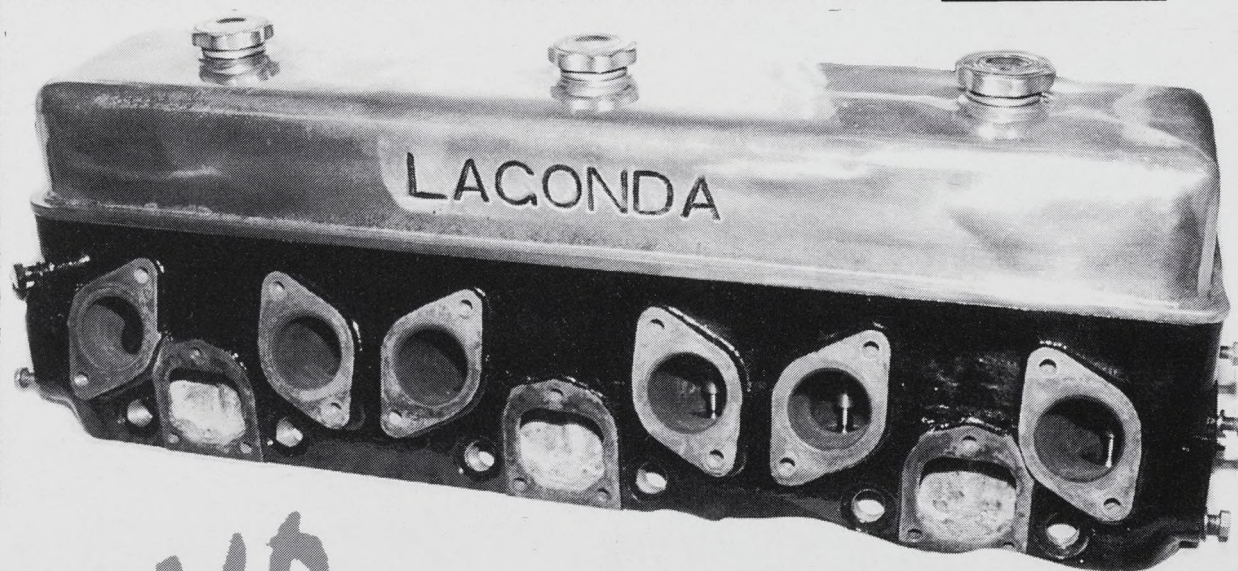
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*Iain and Sue May after their Wedding in St Nicholas' Church, Stanningfield, Suffolk, July 1998. The car is John Stoneman's 2 litre.*

*Below: The bride's attendants, Hilary May (left) and Sue's sister Anne. Sue's nephew Christopher sits next to the driver, Clive Dalton. Iain is the son of Valerie and Tony May, previously our Secretary and Editor respectively.*





# AC Owners Club Goodwood Sprint, 7th November 1998

by Colin Bugler

THIS enjoyable event is usually well supported by Lagondas and particularly by Rapiers, so I was disappointed when the Entry List came through, showing only three entries in the Lagonda Class this year.

My son-in-law, Neil Jones, had entered my LG45 and my Rapier was being driven by myself and son, David. This was to be David's first Speed Event, although he had competed in the Gymkhana before the Club AGM, back in September, where he achieved second place in his first competitive event.

Fortunately, two more entries appeared during the last few days, being Freddie Williams in his well known Rapier Special ACA 145 and Jo Moss in her very smart 4½ litre Invicta. In the past the Goodwood paddock at this time of year has welcomed us with puddles and mud, so we were all delighted that the recent revival of the circuit has resulted in a tarmac paddock with individual garage bays. For a change it did not rain!

Practice went smoothly but, soon after the start of the main event after

lunch, an XK 120 coupe overdid it in the chicane and ended up with modified bodywork! The driver had to be taken to hospital and, while the ambulance was away from the circuit, regulations forbade us continuing sprinting. A good hour was lost, but, in the end, everybody managed to get their second runs. This is always a very well organised event and the AC officials are helpful and friendly. The Lagonda Class results were as follows:

- |     |                                |
|-----|--------------------------------|
| 1st | Neil Jones LG45 122.44 seconds |
| 2nd | Jo Moss Invicta 126.19         |
| 3rd | Freddie Williams Rapier 127.43 |
| 4th | Colin Bugler Rapier 140.68     |
| 5th | David Bugler Rapier 153.77     |

Also competing was Lagonda Club member Brian Gilbert-Smith in his AC Bristol, who achieved 118.90 seconds, narrowly missing third in Class.

My son, David, found his baptism of fire in a Speed Event very exciting and is now very keen to get as involved as Neil and my son, Martin.





# The Tramps That Never Tramp

by Andrew Elphinstone

THE cause of the axle tramp referred to in the Autumn Magazine (The Lady has a Tramp) is easy to understand once you realise that axle tramp is simply the front axle assembly oscillating at its natural frequency. When a system oscillates at its natural frequency it is said to be resonating and can store huge amounts of energy. In the case of axle tramp this energy is visible as high amplitude oscillations of the front axle. resonant systems (especially resonant bridges) are often 'self limiting'. This means they are expensive to fix when they come to a stop.

To resonate, a system must have two means of storing energy which are tightly coupled (i.e. bolted together) and which operate so that they effectively take turns to store the energy. The front axle of your car is capable of resonance because it can store energy alternately in the leaf springs and in the axle. When a wheel goes over a bump and compresses a leaf spring, energy is put into the system. The spring releases the energy and moves the axle down on one side and up on the other. The movement of the axle is converting all the springs' Potential Energy into Kinetic Energy, or energy due to motion ( $\frac{1}{2}mv^2$ ). The Kinetic Energy keeps the axle moving until all the energy has been transferred back into the springs (unless it 'self limits' of course).

This process repeats because each time a wheel is pushed down onto the road more energy is absorbed into the system and more energy means more amplitude. At this stage, if you want to stop the tramping, take your foot off the brake. This may not appear to be a major contribution to road safety, but it will stop more energy being absorbed and allow the tramping to subside.

So, if bumps can start front axle tramping, why doesn't tramping occur on every car after hitting every bump?

The answer is that for a system to resonate, energy absorption into the system has to exceed energy loss from the system. If the system loses more energy than it absorbs, then any tramping will subside. The amount of energy absorbed into the axle and springs after you hit a bump depends on the bump size and shape, tyre compressibility, wheel and spoke compliance, weight distribution in the car, speed, braking force, axle geometry, road conditions and so on. Get all the conditions right (or wrong) and the braking force on the front wheels will force movement into the axle each time a wheel hits the road and so increase the amount of energy in the system.

This energy will cause tramping unless it is lost by transferring it into the chassis (or other masses loosely coupled to the axle) or by dissipating it as friction. This is not very likely to happen if you've just rebuilt your car. All those loosely coupled masses will be tightly coupled, or not coupled at all if they weren't supposed to be in the first place. Everything will be the right size and shape, with the correct clearances and be well lubricated to reduce friction. Consequently, a minimal amount of energy will be lost. Alternatively, it may take a few months, or even years, for everything to settle in and for the friction to reduce. Either way, if the means for energy loss reduce, axle tramping is more likely.

The good news is that if your front end is worn out, seems to have a mind of its own on left hand corners (especially going downhill) and rattles a lot, then



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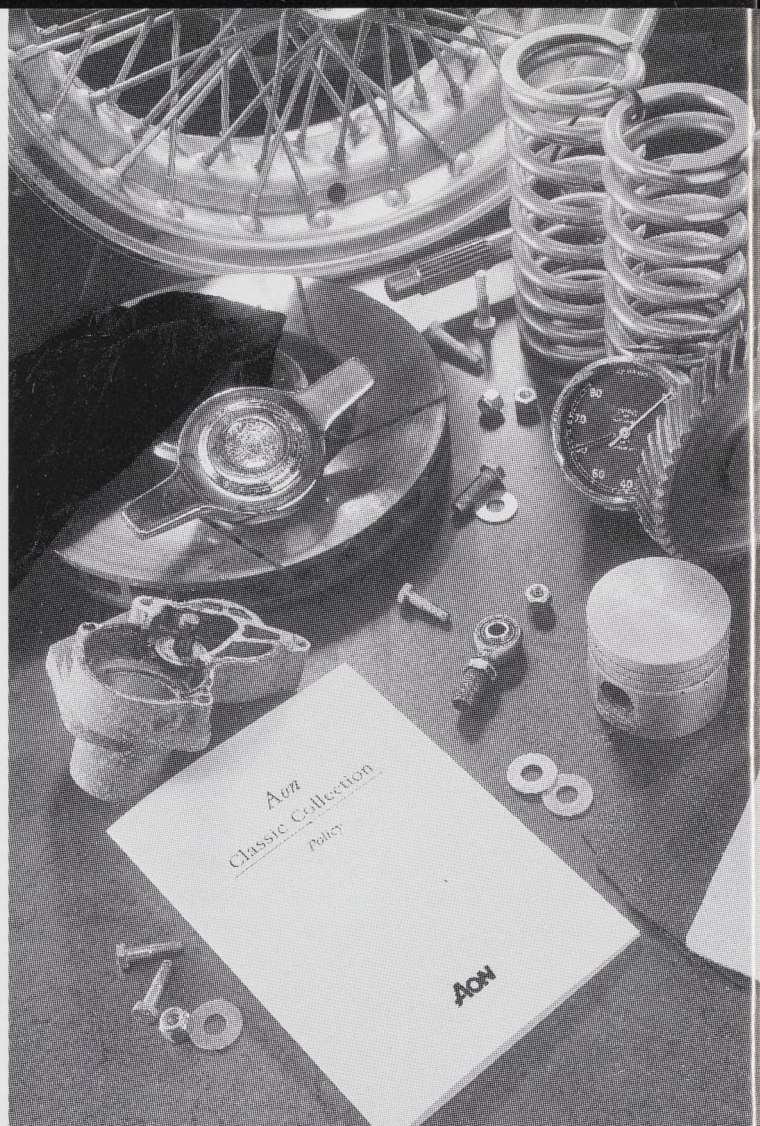
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there are probably enough loose couplings and friction to prevent tramping. In other words, to avoid tramping, get yourself a Tramp. Pick one that's got a few bolts done up too tightly, or a few parts that aren't quite the right shape or size. This will all help to transfer and dissipate the energy, especially if you forget to replace the grease!

Most Lagondas probably left the factory in (or close to) this state and

consequently never suffered from axle tramp. The tightness in all the joints and, later, all the clattering caused by wide tolerance parts, loosely coupled together saved them. The cars that did fit together perfectly probably shook themselves to bits and were either lost for good, or rebuilt with a few ungreased oversized parts done up too tightly. These are the ones that have survived - survival of the misfits.

---

# The Tramp is Alive and Well

by Peter Towers

I HAD not met the Old tramp until a few years ago, when he appeared in similar circumstances to those described by the Constables. Slow speed, rough road and there he was, shaking the steering wheel as violently as he could and he wouldn't let go until I jammed the brakes on hard.

It must be admitted that I had a rather out of sorts front for some time, after an involuntary inversion in the Black Mountains during a Measham, but had not carried out any radical repairs due to the lack of money and time.

Eventually, in the winter of 90/91 I took the plunge and stripped the axle down. It was twisted in two planes and bent in one. A bend in the transverse horizontal, a twist, i.e. angular differential between the reverse bores and an error in the camber plane. These were all corrected using a heavy press, a variety of packings and winding sticks and a great many settings up and trial and error. With the axle now true in the three planes and using the winding sticks and gauge it was discovered that there was a two degree differential in the king pin inclination. Setting up and measuring the heights of the upper faces of the reverse elliot bores above the spring mountings indicated that the

offside was higher than the near side. Any attempt to reduce the king pin disparity would increase the height disparity, so it was left alone. The axle now being in as true a state as perhaps when manufactured.

The stub axle were attended to with great care, also the king pin bushes and seals, new parts being made where there was any trace of damage or wear and the axle re-assembled. Refitting it to the car was done with the greatest of care, the steel wedges being replaced between the spring face and the axle spring platform in the original position. These steel wedges were of such quality that I presume they were of Lagonda origin and might have been a retro fit by Lagonda in answer to the Old Tramp problem when the car was in normal daily use in earlier days.

The car was put back into service and all was well until the Autumn of '96, when, without warning and in very similar circumstances to the Constables, the Old Tramp appeared again; rough bumpy road and very slow speed because of the rough bumpy road. This time I approached the problem from a slightly different direction. I looked at all the track rod ends, all the shackle and



pivot bolts and all the bushes in the Andre Hartfords. There was wear in all these areas, so the lot were replaced. The track rod ends were supplied by John Ryder, the shackle pins by the Club and the Hartford bushes by Sports and Vintage Motors in Shrewsbury.

Ryder will take your old worn ends and, for a very reasonable price, refit with new ones and also new recoil springs in the rod housings. The shock absorber bushes were pushed out in the usual method, with a press and socket ends that match the correct diameter of the bush. The pivot and shackle pins were re-fitted oversize, the bronze bushes being reamed by hand with expanding reamers.

The axle was re-fitted and trial runs commenced. Initial indications were that handling of the car had altered, I now had a degree of understeer that was not present prior to this latest work, but I became used to it over the summer months and drove accordingly. Matters seemed to have at least reached a conclusion and I congratulated myself that I had carried out a fine piece of work in banishing the Old Tramp for my lifetime at least.

In the latter part of September '97 I was delivering a Bride and her Father to her wedding, via a rather narrow and unmade road. I never exceed 30 mph with a Bride in the back, as the rear set passengers in my car have a eye line just above that of the windscreen, it's excellent for making the Royal Wave, but tends to loosen the head-dress. This time I slowed down even more so because of the state of the road, so slow in fact that the Old Tramp sprang out of the bushes, taking me completely off my guard and commenced shaking the car and oscillating the steering wheel with a fury that terrified the Bride and caused her Father's top hat to fall overboard. I stamped on the brakes, bringing the car to an abrupt halt and turned to soothe the passengers, assuring them that it was

nothing at all unusual and that these models did it from time to time. And so we set off again, just a tad quicker.

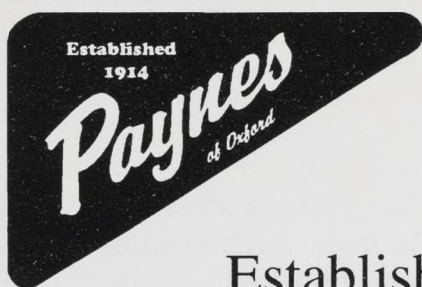
Quite clearly, all the work done in '91 and '97, correcting known and unknown faults had made little impression on the Old Tramp. He was still lurking there, ready to catch the unwary.

I have only one avenue left to explore and that is correct castor angle for these cars. What is it and how to ensure if it can be applied, how to keep it so? The angle is difficult to check without the correct equipment and the original data. I have spoken to many people regarding this and no one person seems to agree with the other as to the correct, or suitable angle. Distillation of all the information that I have acquired seems to result in only two facts: Too much and you will only be able to drive in a straight line. Too little and the Old Tramp will grab you.

Castor angle is allied to the king pin inclination, could my problem be the result of the two degree differential described earlier? If so, why is it not constant? I certainly drove slowly over bumpy roads during the year, in fact where I live all the roads are bumpy, except where they have been repaired with yellow spray paint. Is the steering design of these chassis so sensitive? Were the manufacturing tolerances of the axles too low? Spring flattening due to age also alters the castor angle, could this be part of the equation or the whole answer to it? Especially when it appears that the Old Tramp only seems to appear in ripe old age, or was he there right from the very beginning?

An old garage friend of mine once told me that when a customer came in complaining of axle tramp he would take an old *lignum vitae* bowl and cut a slice off it, shape it to a ¼" thick wedge and put it between the spring pad and the axle. They never complained again. I expect they couldn't turn round and come back.



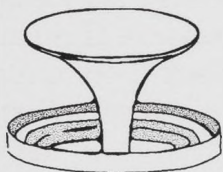


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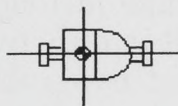


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# Letters

Dear Ken,

Interesting to read the article "The Lady has a Tramp" in the Autumn issue. The problem raises its head from time to time and has done so during the 30-odd years that I have owned many makes of cars. There have been many suggested remedies, but as far as I know none of these has worked. It is not just Lagondas which are prone to this problem, which clearly occurs at low speeds. God help us if it manifested itself at high speeds.

Most people are of the opinion that it is due to castor angle but, again, this never appears to solve the problem completely. Some Bentley Folk fit a shock absorber between the track rod and axle, which, they say, works, but it does not get to the root of the problem.

My M45 tourer occasionally "Dances the Tango" at around 10 m.p.h. and Beryl thinks I do this on purpose, well, perhaps a little knowledge is good from time to time. I have done many things to try to stop this. I had come to the conclusion that it was the Perrot shaft brakes which caused this, as most of the cars I had come across were fitted with this type of brake. But, lo and behold, a number of months ago I was out in one of my Edwardian cars, which is not fitted with front wheel brakes and once again, we joined a session of "Come Dancing".

I have therefore now come to the conclusion that the "Jitter-Bug" is caused by King Pin inclination, my Edwardian at one time had a bent front axle and it appeared that after strengthening it was still bent a little. I have now had this put right and the car has not given me the "Squirts" since. My M45 is fitted with 6.50x19 tyres, which effectively alter the King Pin inclination a little, these I intend to remove before the Alpine Rally and hopefully we will not need to take as much Persil with us this time.

Stephen and Carol Constable, in

fitting larger wheels to their car, have effectively altered the King Pin inclination of their 16/80 and if they were to revert to the original, then, whilst I cannot guarantee this, they may have "Shaking" free journeys in future.

Best wishes

**Roger Firth**

*Old cars are like old people, some smoke a little, some drink a little, some are not very strong, some have stiffness at the joints and others have lost their youthful complexions, some need to be cared for and given a good home. All, however, have developed character and much can be learned from them. They are good company.*

Dear Editor,

"The Sports Car" by Colin Campbell discusses the three different but related phenomena of shimmy, patter and tramp, including "brake tramp". When braking, if both front tyres grip the road equally, both front springs "wind up" equally and axle alignment is unchanged. But if one wheel strikes a slippery patch or bump it loses grip, the spring on this side "unwinds" and the axle is tilted. Due to the inertia of the rotating wheels, a gyroscopic reaction results. This lifts the opposite wheel off the ground and presses the first wheel down firmly. The second wheel now loses its grip, whilst the first recovers it. The unbalanced spring wind-up is now reversed and the gyroscopic torque reverses. The cycle repeats again and again and continues until the driver releases the brakes, which may not be convenient ..... This is what causes brake tramp.

Compared with the high chassis model, the low chassis 2 litre front axle has more "drop" between the stub axle and the transverse beam. Therefore an



equal horizontal braking force, transmitted via the stub axle, has a greater turning moment about the transverse axle beam and spring wind up is greater. That is why brake tramp is more pronounced on low chassis cars.

Modern road surfacing materials and, perhaps, the compounds from which vintage size tyres are now made, give more grip between tyre and road than in years gone by. The driver subconsciously adapts to the feel of the car's handling and makes use of the extra road grip when braking. So there is more disparity in grip between the two front tyres when one encounters a slippery patch or bump. That is why tramp can be initiated more often nowadays.

The axle assembly moves relative to the chassis, constrained by the road springs. Also, the forces applied via the spring anchorages cause the chassis frame to twist about its fore-and aft centreline, carrying with it the whole front axle assembly, complete with road springs. It is springy because the channel section side members lack torsional rigidity. Damaging high amplitude tramp probably occurs when conditions allow these two mass-plus-spring systems to resonate in synchronism. Paradoxically, an overhaul may worsen the problem, because it eliminates any slack clearances, which could contribute friction to damp the oscillations.

Yours sincerely

**Mike Pilgrim**

*a would-be Guru*

Dear Ken,

The Revised Handbook for Lagonda M45R and LG45 models and LG6 (engine only) by David Hine et al is without doubt a masterpiece and all contributors deserve to be highly commended. Not only is it a jolly good read but it is amazingly informative, historically and practically, oozing great common sense and much good humour. Having owned various models since 1951 and, in particular, my M45R for over forty years, I prided myself on knowing a bit about

the car, but my pride took an undignified tumble when I read the Green Book.

Advice on the changing of a wheel, such a simple routine I have done umpteen times, caused acute embarrassment, never again shall I subject the hub cap to a lusty whack, just for good measure, after the jack has been removed and the wheel is back on terra firma. How comforting to be reassured about the oil pressure, reiterating one of Henry Coates' maxims that all is well if, when hot and running, the pressure is at least 20 psi and, when idling, the needle is just off its stop.

The reproduced photographs and diagrams are very clear. I like the odd hand written comments, but what about a shot of the nearside of the Rapide engine, showing the position of the coil and the rocker cover with the word "RAPIDE" emblazoned in black, I searched in vain for a wiring diagram, but discovered some modern terminology, litres, surely 2½ gallons sound better than 12 litres! No owner of any of these models should be without this handbook, it has given me hours of enjoyment and I thank all who have helped in its production.

Yours sincerely

**Gordon Rider**

*I know that Yorkshire prides itself in its traditions, but few oils are now sold in gallon cans, so translating quantities into the current terminology seems a good idea to me - and remember that American gallons are smaller than our old imperial units, so this could avoid some confusion.*  
**Ed.**

Dear Ken,

Back in August, which seems like last week, I visited my brother Tony in deepest Devon. Transport was a 240 Jag, I'm afraid my 16/80 is still in bits! (*I understand it was supposed to be rebuilt in time for Tony and Sue's wedding, they were already married when I met them in Singapore in the mid 1960's! Ed.*)

I met a friend of Tony's son Paul. I



can't remember the friend's name (old age!), but his grandfather worked for Lagonda's design department and the family have a collection of his papers from that time. You may know about this, but, just in case it is a new source, I have sent your address to Paul, who will pass it on to his friend, who lives in or near Kingsbridge.

Hope this is useful.

Kind regards

**Bob Baller**

*Thank you Bob, I didn't know about this potential source of historic information. At the time of writing this, Paul or his friend have not yet contacted me, but I will certainly follow this up. If any other members know of sources of information about our cars that they haven't shared because they think it might be old news, do remember that we would rather be told the same information more than once, than never hear of it at all!. Ed.*

Dear Mr Loch,

I did enjoy your review of the AGM - the first (of many I hope) that I have attended.

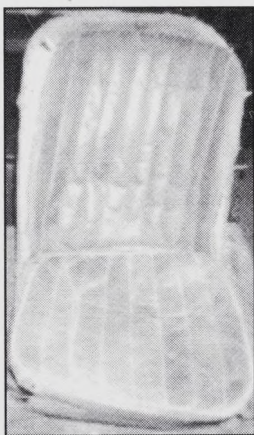
I was delighted to see my own car photographed and commented upon - it was the DB7 - but I should correct a minor error in the text. I am, in fact, a member and was prevented from attending in my 2 litre LC as a minor indiscretion in the workshop put her out of action for the critical few days!

I must say that I have hugely enjoyed my Lagonda in the last few months and on a sunny day the decision as to which car to drive can be a very tough one!

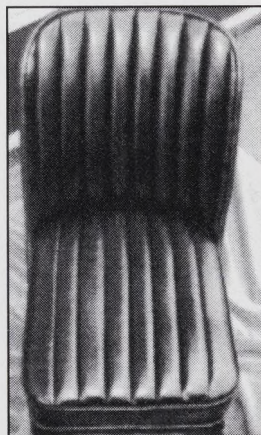
My father had three Lagondas. A 2 litre (still in the club) in the early '30s, a Rapier in the mid '30s and an LG45 just after the war. As I now have my own, I understand perfectly his attraction to the marque.

Yours sincerely,

**James P Williams**



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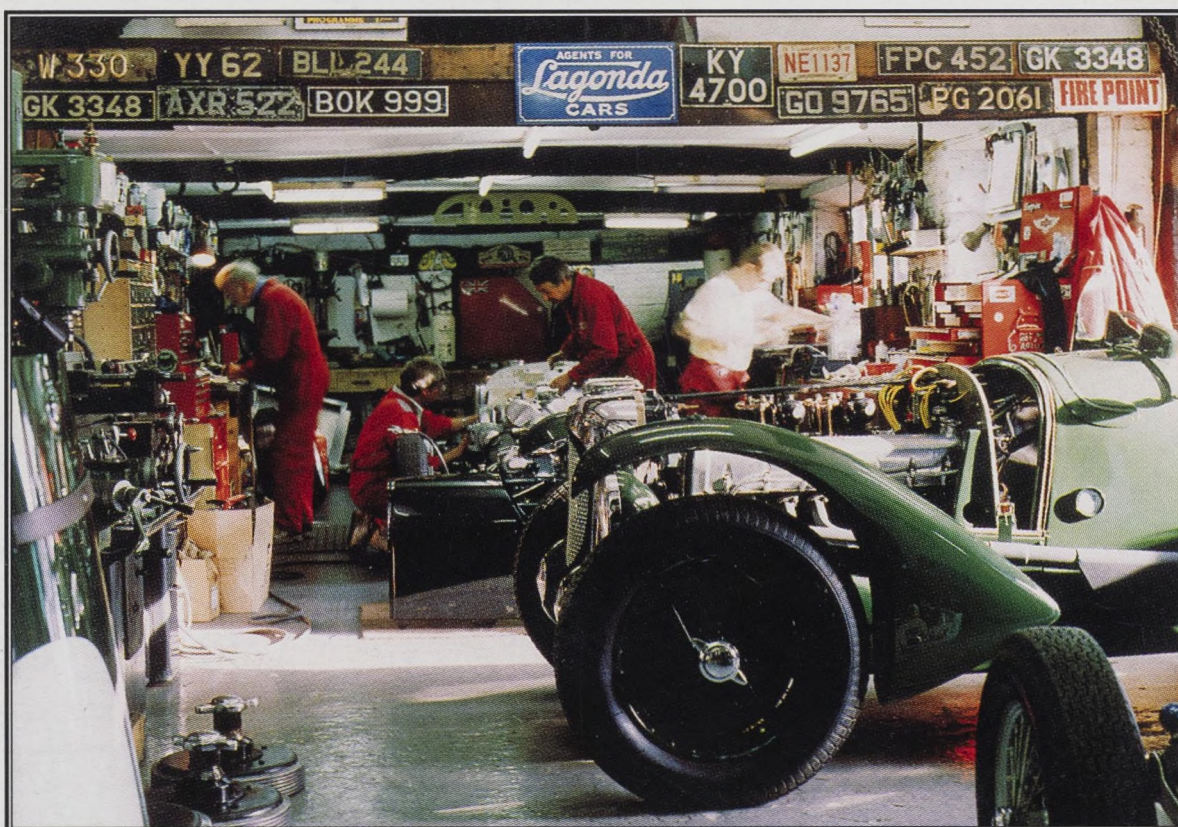


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