(Lagonda)



THE MAGAZINE OF THE LAGONDA CLUB

Number 162

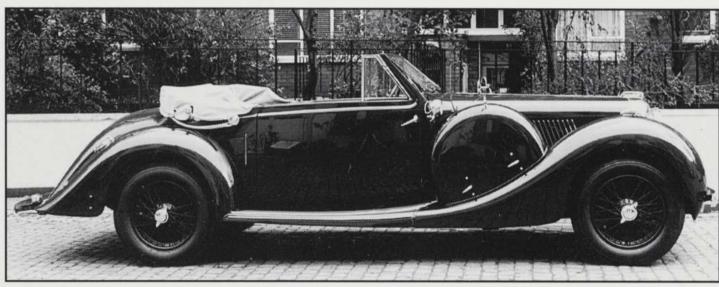
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MAGAZINE Issue No. 162 Autumn 1994

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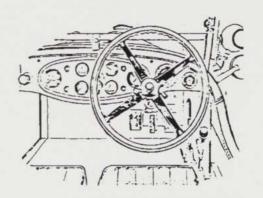
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#### FRONT COVER

The Forshaw family's 1929 Le Mans Team Car, on display at the Coys Silverstone Meeting.

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# From the Driving Seat



AH me, another competition season over, time for the oily fingernails bit again, but this winter I hope it will be different. If a reluctant builder can be persuaded to get on with relieving my bank balance of enough money to buy most of another Lagonda, I shall have my new garage at last. Then, for the first time since I swapped the bare bones of the Rapier (which Peter Whenman now uses to beat me in races and sprints) for the even barer bones of my beloved 2 litre, I shall have enough space to start the long hard re-creation of my Weymann saloon.

Yes, folks it's really going to happen, Painter is going to work on his Lagonda! Years of searching for parts at Autojumbles and at our AGMs mean that I now have sufficient pieces to start in earnest. It isn't a full set of bits yet, there are lots more vital components to be found, but as Calvin Coolidge once said, "We can't do everything at once, but we can do something at once." Watch this space, but don't hold your breath.

The Annual General Meeting was held just before this was written, speaking personally I liked the new venue, especially as a favourite aunt of my wife's lives within a mile or so of the hotel. Seriously though, it did seem to have everything we need, lots of parking space, a decent room for the boring bit and reasonable access - but I'm glad I didn't go in my other favourite car, the speed bumps were higher than the available ground clearance. The day's events will be properly written up in the next Magazine, after the official minutes are prepared and everyone has their piccies developed. The gap between the AGM and this mag hitting your front doormat may seem huge, but the timescale for the production of each edition means that the report simply has to wait.

Incidentally, I have spent some time at the last few AGMs photographing 2 litre dashboards. So far I have about two dozen pictures and no two are identical. I don't simply mean that different owners have the instruments arranged differently - although they do - the instruments themselves and the switches are often different. Now, does that mean that I can fit whatever I can find and bluff fellow owners into believing that my dashboard is as likely to be original as theirs is, or is there really original and accurate dashboard out there somewhere, with the instruments and switches originally fitted by the factory and each one still in its allotted place?

That leads me to another mystery concerning the 2 litre dash. My last 2 litre saloon was a high chassis model, but the dashboard layout and the instrumentation was the same as the low chassis cars. As far as I can establish, my very scruffy Weymann body came off a high chassis car originally, but it too has a low chassis style layout to the instruments. Does this 'prove' that the saloons had the later style dash first, or do any HC tourers have the later style dashboards? Letters and pictures to the Editor, please!

K.P.P.

# Reflections

WELL another season is drawing to a close and I think that we may look back on 1994 as a vintage year. Certainly the weather in the UK was kinder than I can remember for a long time with many days of shirt sleeve open air motoring. More members organised more events and more turned out to enjoy them, so what more can we ask?

I have just presided over my second AGM during the pleasant weekend annual function and was able to report that we are in good shape financially and that this was largely due to a small band of members who give freely of their time. Many thanks to them.

Later in the afternoon I had a short drive in a 16/80. The previous evening I had the pleasure of sitting next to Jennifer Taylor who now owns "Amy" the late Dick Sage's old car. Jo Harding

had fitted three carburettors and she insisted I test it. Well, I was surprised and delighted with the remarkable performance right through the range. The conversion has made it a very usable car indeed. I am now looking at the 16/80 saloon I am rebuilding in a new light. There is no doubt about it the secret of improved performance is to let each piston get a huge gulp of the correct explosive mixture every other stroke.

With best wishes to our members in the southern hemisphere who are just starting their summer. In the northern areas we are hibernating into our smelly garages in our equally smelly overalls to breathe a bit more life into our ancient Lagondas.

D.R.H.

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## Coys Silverstone

EVENTUALLY the Lagonda marquee shivered into focus, like an old silent movie seen from our painfully vibratory wooden seat. We had mistakenly employed the Silverstone free tractor to deliver us up from the camping field, via the old perimeter track, (be warned!). The journey seemed like an eternity and established just how vast Silverstone is. However, all discomfort vanished as we reached the marquee, to be greeted by the most impressive exhibition I think the Club has staged.

With hindsight I think the first mistake I made was to become immediately engrossed in studying Arnold's historical notes with my glasses, normally only essential for darts, perched rather ostentatiously on my

forehead.

"Aahh!" said Colin purposefully, mistaking this image as scholarly, "Brian, you're interested in the history side of things, how about a write-up for

the magazine?"

"After all," he continued quickly, pressing home the advantage of surprise, "just look at the Le Mans history here; those two V12's haven't been seen together since a bomb hit them in 1944 and would have been a sensational success at Le Mans in 1940, but for Hitler. Those two V12's," pointing wildly over his shoulder, "are rarely seen together and represent an equally sensational flop at Le Mans fourteen years later - and this lovely team 1929 Le Mans Team Car hasn't been seen outside of Dorset for over thirty years!"

Encouraged by the drift of Colin's quick historical synopsis and a certain amount of family cajoling, I began to warm toward the idea of being the Club scribe for the day, recognising it as a unique opportunity to find out more for myself about Lagonda's racing history.

I quickly made a bee-line across the marquee to join Arnold Davey, hoping to

enlist his expertise in this task.

Arnold was busy degreasing his wrist, having searched in vain (I think) for hidden serial numbers on one of the two 1939 V12 Le Mans Team Cars, HPL 448. This car, together with HPL 449, was badly damaged by a flying bomb during 1944, whilst garaged in a shed a short distance from the factory. Both cars were subsequently re-built after the war and successfully raced, 448 in Europe and 449 in the USA. 448 returned to this country relatively recently and is believed to be the ex-Dobson/ Brackenbury car, once the property of Ivan Carr of Carr's Biscuits. Any relation to our PR secretary I wonder? He is rather partial to the odd box of biscuits! 449 was almost broken up and lost in the States in the 1950's, the original engine, having thrown a rod, being replaced by a Chrysler Firepower unit. The original body had also gone at this time, in favour of a home made special utilising Buick wings. Bob Crane, for a long time the Club's American representative, tracked down the original V12 engine, just in time to prevent it going into a speedboat.

Flanking this pair were two other rare beasts, PG 8804, the 1930 2 litre privately entered in the Double 12 by Gafkin Wilkinson and PK 2901, one of the four 1929 Le Mans Team Cars entered and prepared by Fox and Nichol and now

owned by the Forshaw family.

Arnold pointed out some unique details on these two cars; PG 8804, now in the ownership of Macko Laqueur wore a heavy woven fabric welting in place of the normal aluminium scuttle panels under the Rexine body covering, to save weight, presumably and, continuing on this theme, the gear box casing has turned out to be cast in Electron. It is



The success of the Coys weekend owed a lot to the team who staffed the Marquee. A group pose in front of the display and, below, the Regalia stall prepares to meet the customers.





Maurice Leo's two beautiful DB V12 cars.



thought that this particular mod is evidence of factory involvement, as no individual was likely to have access to the patterns and the foundry for such a project. Further compounding this theory of factory backing were the many unique engine modifications in evidence, several these pre-date features developments with the supercharged car.

PK 9201 has been re-covered in its original racing finish of cream and black fabric. The Forshaws have collected together all four of these racing cars and Richard is convinced that they are rebuilt versions of the 1928 team. Several documents in his possession support this theory. As we inspected this car, Arnold revealed the lovely Fox detailing, such as the unique, hand-pressurised fuel tanks, the special radiator-cap and the quick action hood mechanism, fitted because one lap had to be raced with the hood up.

The next two exhibits led us just outside the marquee, onto the apron where, earlier in the afternoon, I had a chat to Maurice Lee about his two DB Le Mans V12 Lagondas (c 1954), 3 DPC and 4 DPC. These were fascinating machines and were born out of a development project at Feltham by David Brown, in order to attempt the famous 24 hour race once again under the banner "Lagonda". 3 DPC, the green one, was probably the car that started the 1954 Le Mans, driven by Eric Thompson, it retired after four hours with a damaged rear end, following a spectacular burial at the Esses - it took two hours to dig it out!

"What did this development work lead to?" I asked Maurice. "Absolutely nothing!" he replied, "the project was dropped as a complete flop, despite a maximum speed of over 148 mph, the car wasn't really competitive against the Ferraris and the Cunningham.'

"Did W.O. have anything to do with

this engine?" I enquired.

"No, in fact I met him once in the late sixties with the car over at Finmere, not far from here and I asked him the same question. He confirmed that it wasn't his project and that a chap called Willie Watson had designed it. He added that it was 'all wrong, the engine being too long for a start.' I always remember him saying 'I told them it would never work!'".

Arnold added later, as we toured the apron, that its "Achilles' heel" had in fact been the extensive use of aluminium in the engine. The bodywork on both cars is reminiscent of the Aston Martin DB3S, probably the work of Frank Feeley.

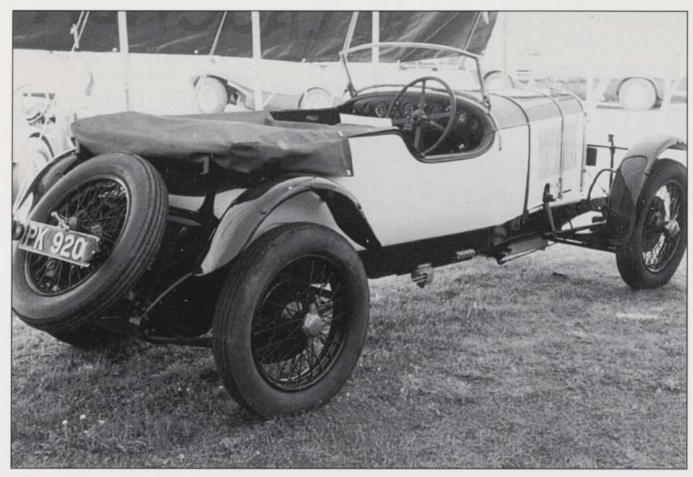
"One thing is for sure,' remarked Maurice "you have to take the body off to change the brake master cylinder!" Apparently this was standard race car practice, the body being held on by just six bolts.

4 DPC was privately owned by Noel Cunningham-Reid in the late 1950's and underwent several modifications at this time, in an attempt to convert it into a road car for his wife's shopping trips. During this period it acquired its long nose, together with winkers, two batteries and carpets. Ken Rudd, of Rudds of Worthing, did the conversion and painted the car blue, Mrs Cunningham-Reid's favourite colour. "Can you imagine a more unsuitable shopping car?" added

Maurice "265 b.h.p!"

My subsequent research into the Aston Martin Lagonda factory's activities in the 1950's turned up an article by Ted Cutting, which made reference to the 1954 V12 car. Evidently the original DB V12 Lagonda (3 DPC, raced in '54) was basically a stretched DB3S chassis; but for the 1955 entry a space frame was conceived by Willie Watson and executed by Ted Cutting, two frames apparently being constructed, one of which was raced in 1955 as a V12 Lagonda and the other, never completed at the time, being used as the basis for the DBR2 development work under John Wyer's direction for the 1956 season. Maurice Leo confirms that both his cars share identical chassis frames, the stretched DB3S type, designed originally by Eberhorst.

At this point, on the Sunday, the heavens opened up, as the threatened storm broke and the world and his wife



The nearly completed Forshaw team car.



Arnold spoilt for choice.

suddenly developed an intense interest in Lagondas. As they all flooded in, Valerie took more money from umbrella sales in five minutes then for the whole of the rest of the weekend.

As the rain ceased, Arnold and I heard the unmistakable sound of a Merlin engine. We dashed out of the marquee in time to see a Mustang take off, fly a few circuits and then treat us to a display of aerobatics. The sight and sound of this aircraft triggered a whole series of memories for Arnold, who recalled driving near Duxford during the War. On one occasion he remembered actually over (under?) taking a Feissler Storch in a Lagonda, as the RAF tested its incredibly low stalling speed.

Staring at the sky so intently brought on a severe attack of the "floating squiggles" in front of my and Arnold's eyes. Offering by way of reassurance, my doctor's diagnosis that this phenomenon is caused by cracks in the retina's emulsion, Royston Carrs chipped in, undermining the theory with tales about reflector gun-sights and his mate "Buntington-Smythe"... who he had not seen since the Gadiator Squadron days, but who might just be there that afternoon

Returning to reality and a somewhat darker vista, Arnold swooped beneath 92 MY, exhibiting great interest in the back axle of this, the fifth production Rapide, built in 1961.

"This was the development car." explained Arnold, kneeling in a puddle near the back wheel "With, yes, I thought so, a solid beam rear axle!"

Admiring his enthusiasm for historical detail, I wholeheartedly confirmed his findings, from the drier vantage-point of a yard away.

At this juncture I remembered to note the registration numbers of all the members' cars present and with the help of Colin's memory for the Saturday attendance, I hope I have included all those attendees in the footnote list for future record.

David Ayre is to be congratulated for

assembling seven rarely seen historic Lagonda racing cars together, along with Arnold Davey for his invaluable documentation. This combined effort provided a very professional exhibition, both inside the marquee and within its apron. These exotics were supported by a further display of members' cars in the tent paddock. Colin Bugler's idea here was to attempt to fill the sequential gaps in Lagonda's development history, concentrating on the types that were not represented in the racing stable.

BPK 201 alone represented the most famous Lagonda racing team; the Fox and Nicholl 1935 trio that won at Le Mans that year. Although not the actual winner, it is thought that 201 was actually the fastest of the three, in the hands of Lewis, who had virtually worn it out in the TT (placed 9th).

One late-comer to the paddock was BYL 234, one of the very few original Eagle bodied Rapiers to survive. Also to be found a short distance away, was the lovely 1930 3 litre Lady de Clifford car, PG 6711, now belonging to Paul Lovett. this 3 litre is unusual in having the long, speed model, wings and twin, side mounted, spares, both fitted as original equipment for the 1932 RAC Rally, in which lady de Clifford won the Ladies Cup.

Alongside Valerie's reception and regalia stand, John Stoneman manned the drinks table valiantly throughout the weekend, which owed its success to the combined efforts of all involved. A memorable occasion, marred only by the behaviour of our Public Relations Officer "Turncoat Carrs" who was seen wearing a Maserati tee shirt all afternoon. Under interrogation he explained weakly that the rival regalia was only a fiver and came with both a good view of the racing from their tent and fifty quid's-worth of free sandwiches!

**Brian Stephens** 

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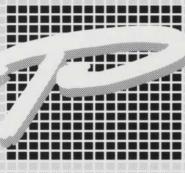
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## Competition Driving, Driving Tests

THIS is the third article in the series on competition driving. They seem to have been well received and I have had quite a lot of complimentary remarks. Budding competitors appear to find them helpful and it has even been suggested they should be expanded into a textbook!

The first article dealt with the preliminaries - competition licences, the regulations and scrutineering etc. The actual technique of driving in sprints, hill climbs and racing was covered in the last article, in magazine number 161. However, I must apologise for a "typo" on page 10 of that issue which rather altered the meaning. In line 9 of the second column, "slipping point" should

read as "clipping point".

Driving tests, or autotests as the RAC would now have us call them, have been around for a great many years. They certainly demand great skill from the driver. Competition Licences are not normally required, a Club membership card being sufficient unless other clubs are also invited. A driving test meet usually consists of a programme of about six tests, maybe more. Such tests were very popular at the end of the pre-war RAC rallies, which always concluded with a series of tests, usually on the seafront at Hastings or similar venues. However, driving tests can take place in quite confined spaces - I have even taken part in indoor tests, carried out in garage premises specially cleared for the occasion. This was back in 1956 though, at the time of the Suez crisis, when petrol was again on the ration.

The RAC rules specify that competing cars are never permitted to travel more than 100 metres between manoeuvres. Marks will be lost for touching bollards, crossing or failing to cross marker lines or failing to follow the correct route. Passengers are not permitted in any

timed tests, but are often necessary in the more informal type of gymkhana event, especially those where the driver is blindfolded and drives under instruction from the navigator!

from the navigator:

The perfect driving test car would have superb acceleration, outstanding braking, an extremely small turning circle and generally be very manoeuverable. This definition probably eliminates most Lagondas! However, in their class, and against similar cars, Lagondas have done very well. Skill can often make up for many shortcomings.

Some organisers seem to delight in devising tests which are fiendishly complicated, involving numerous different manoeuvres. They are as much a test of memory as of driving ability. I can offer no advice on this subject, for I know I have a very poor short term memory. The regulations should make it clear whether competitors may correct their mistakes by retracing their route to the point of deviation from the prescribed path.

Another favourite type of test involves a 180 degree turn within a box. The length of most Lagondas makes this very difficult and a hand-brake turn may result in scattering bollards in all

directions!

A certain amount of practice will certainly help in gaining expertise in driving tests. Every traffic light provides the opportunity to stop astride a line - although this is best attempted when other traffic is light. Before the advent of Supermarkets opening on Sundays, their deserted car parks provided excellent areas in which to practice backing into garages, driving round pylons and the like.

As with all competitions, the regulations must be carefully studied and fully understood. It must be firmly



Jonathen Elliott in the family 2 Litre, Exeter Driving Tests, 1992

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Equally important, make sure you know what happens at the finish. Is it a flying finish as you cross the line or do you stop astride the line? In this case, is the time taken as the front of the car actually crosses the line, in which case you should aim to stop astride as far forward as possible, ie. with the rear wheels almost touching the line. Alternatively, if the time is taken when the car actually comes to rest, you should then aim to stop astride, with the front wheels barely over the line, by the minimum possible amount.

If you have to enter a garage, does the entire car have to be within, or is it sufficient for the rear axle to be just within? All these questions should be made clear in the regulations - although

they may not be!

Driving Lagondas round pylons is an activity requiring lots of space. If you are driving a reasonably powerful car, a jab on the accelerator at the appropriate moment can make the rear of the car break into a slide, thereby reducing the

turning circle a little.

The handbrake turn is a technique which can reduce your time in the test significantly, but can be rather severe on the car and tyres. The procedure is much easier to achieve on a wet surface or on grass. The technique is to accelerate hard towards the pylon and commence to steer the wheels in the required direction. As the car begins to turn, pull the handbrake on hard to lock the rear wheels. De-clutch at the same time. The back of the car will then slide round in a most satisfying manner, don't be half-hearted or pussyfooted about this, or you will fail. You must be going really fast and you must brake hard enough to ensure that both rear wheels are locked.

This technique also prevents the rear

wheels following their normal path, which is inside the path taken by the front wheels. In a handbrake turn, as long as you miss the pylon with the front wheels, the rear of the car will also miss. The vital principle about the whole manoeuvre is that locked wheels have no preferred direction of travel and will always slide straight, whereas steering control is still maintained using the front wheels.

The handbrake can also be used to assist engaging reverse gear whilst still travelling forward - and vice versa. If, for example you are required to enter a garage and immediately reverse out, carry out your final braking with the handbrake and lock the rear wheels. Thus you can be engaging reverse whilst you are still sliding forward, thereby saving valuable fractions of seconds. Again, you can still maintain steering control with the front wheels.

These methods may sound drastic. You are correct. They are, especially on tarmac. It was whilst taking part in the old Lagonda Club - Bentley Drivers club driving tests at Finmere in the nineteen sixties that I broke a half shaft during such manoeuvres. It is this sort of happening which demonstrates the camaraderie of the Club. There were immediate offers of help. Roy Paterson let me complete the series of tests using his provided M45. David Johnson accommodation for my Lagonda locally and then lent me his Range Rover and trailer to convey the car back home to Forshaw supplied Dorset! Ivan replacement half-shaft and also complete differential, the old one being very worn although still operable.

The series of articles will continue in the next issue, the next one being intended to cover rallies and navigation,

both in this country and abroad.

Alan Elliott

## Elvington 1994 Report by David Hine

THE annual Northern 'gymkhana' at Elvington was this year blessed with perfect weather which is significant if you are going to cavort with your Lagonda in the middle of the second biggest airfield runway in the country.

The midday arrival at the wartime airfield with all its old buildings and display of planes is very exciting. This year they had one of the Victors just arrived to augment the collection.

We all made a bee-line for the NAAFI and downed a couple of pints of best Yorkshire bitter, then on to the roast beef and yorkshire pudding with that super gravy that is made to a secret recipe known only to the local natives.

About 3.00 we all tumbled out blinking into the sunshine to see a record line up of 20 Lagonda's and all troop out to the tests that Alan Brown had organised and laid out.

These were accompanied with much hilarity as metal rings and iron golf clubs were wielded to good effect.

The test required questions to be answered and it is clear that most northern members didn't know who the Club Chairman was or what places the V12's finished in the 1939 Le Mans race!!!

This year Roger Firth made fewer mistakes than anyone else and is the winner of the Northern Trophy.

There were quite a few spectators in Lags who just came for a chat and some 'competed' in moderns or classics. It was all harmless fun and nice to see more and more new faces every year.

A big thankyou to Alan Brown and also to Ted and Eleanor Townsley who organised the Airfield for the day.

Many thanks are due to Les Simpson who did a great job setting off and timing the tests for us.

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1 R. Firth	40	0	42	17	99	1
2 D. Price	55	6	85	16	162	
3 A. Hill	40	20	80	35	175	
4 D. Berry	40	40	90	45	215	
5 R. Squires	63	0	80	35	178	
6 D. Blackbur	rn 58	6	75	30	169	
7 J. Piper	90	10	120	30	250	
8 P.Golding	60	30	36	15	141	
9 K. Ayre	60	25	54	15	153	
10 R. Clayton	50	20	45	55	170	
11 D. Hoggard	53	0	40	30	123	3
12 G. Rider	61	3	48	20	132	
13 B. Darwin	59	15	78	15	167	
14 D. Hill	43	20	51	40	154	
15 J. Turner	61	1	45	43	150	
16 D. Hine	52	0	61	7	120	2
17 A. Barrer	55	0	80	23	158	



For those small machined items, i.e. bushes, clevis pins, shackle-pins, special screws, etc., reconditioning of machined items. One offs a speciality. Parts made to pattern or drawings.

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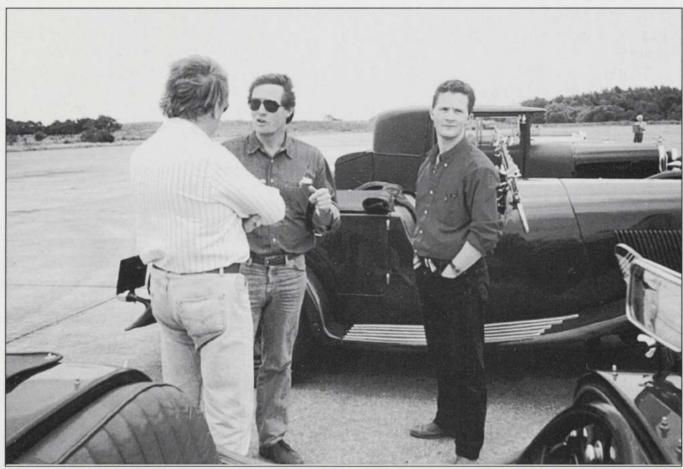
David Price (16/80) plays a round with Judy Mindle.



Peter Golding and Gordon Rider discuss tactics.



Alistair Barker releases the brakes on the V12, with help from Alan Brown and technical advice from "Charlie".



 $Nigel\ Hall\ complains\ to\ Alistair\ Barker,\ Don\ Hall\ is\ not\ impressed.$ 

## A tale of two wettings

1963, the year of the Great Train Robbery during the August Bank Holiday. It was also the time of the annual Lagonda Race at BDC Silverstone. Early on Saturday morning I set off from home in S.E. London with Pat (Patricia actually, my very curvaceous girlfriend at the time) and the Crutty Sark, my somewhat scruffy 16/80. Too scruffy for VSCC events but going well at the time in Lagonda Club events.

It drizzled most of the way across London and up the A5. However once at Silverstone the weather changed - it poured. Pat and I watched some of the current - raising races. There were three types of drivers. There were those who drove slowly at the back of the field. There were those at the front for a couple of laps, then relegated to the back, often plastered with grass. And there were the mid-way drivers who splashed round to

victory.

When the turn came for the Lagonda Race I took my place on the grid, starting 10 seconds ahead of me in the Handicap were Alan Brown and George Purnell in their 2 litres. When the flag dropped I set off in pursuit cornering confidently despite the water-logged track. I caught them up in half a lap and endeavoured to overtake them on Maggotts. I was at least alongside when my balloon of pride was pricked. The 16/80 started to spin. It did so once on the Tarmac and twice on the grass verge, every time the left hand ditch and bank at the bottom loomed larger. Fortunately instead of the 16/80 and perhaps me being written off, we entered the ditch facing forwards and by the grace of God and not me, it came to rest almost at the bottom of the ditch, just before it would have scraped along the Bank. My first thought was to get out of the car and over the 10 foot bank, in case there were any other press-on-regardless

Lagonda drivers performing the same manoeuvre. There were not. Probably yellow flags and the sight of my car had a daunting effect. I squelched through the wet grass to a nearby Marshall's hut to receive their congratulations in always turning away from the bank as the car rotated.

Meanwhile in the Pits, Pat was wondering what was happening. Finally I was towed in, undaunted and raring to go in the next race. However, inspection showed that the steering base mounting bracket was broken and that the car was dangerous to drive. I had to leave it at Silverstone, Bill Michael very kindly gave us a lift back to London in his Rolls-Royce saying, "you must both be soaked". We were. When racing the Crutty Sark, I used to drive it to the circuits minus windscreen.

At least Alan Brown saw the funny side of it all and gave me a chuckle later in the Paddock. George Purnell was

rather snotty about it all.

The car could not stay there indefinitely. I was not able to get another mounting until Tuesday after the holiday. On Wednesday I was due to work at Eskmeals in Cumberland. So on a hot Tuesday evening I arrived by train at Northampton carrying the part and a heavy box of tools, took a bus to Silverstone village and walked to the circuit. Changing the bracket was easy so I topped up with water (the water pump always leaked, especially when the engine was stationary) and set off overnight for Cumberland, still with the racing numbers on (naughty).

It was a long drive, the radiator needed numerous 'top-ups' so did the reserve water cans. All-night garages were scarce and once in Lancashire I had to top up from a convenient river. As I drove through Stockport at about 2.30

am and at 30 mph, two unfriendly policemen overtook, stopped me and were not impressed with the racing numbers, the lack of windscreen and tax disc. Still I made it to Eskmeals at about 6.00 am. Someone found me a wooden bench to lay on and I instantly fell asleep to awaken a few hours later by my colleagues for a days work. Whilst there one of the firms's photographers took a few snaps with the Cumberland Fells in the background and an empty radiator so no pool of water under the car.

The next year I again entered the BDC Silverstone Race. This time not only did the 16/80 water pump still leak, but the starter was also giving trouble and the car sometimes needed a push to start. It was no job for a lady friend and anyway at the time Pat and I had parted and I no longer had a girl friend. Well, young Mr Puniverse guys with greasy finger nails and smelling of SAE 140 EP oil are not every lady's dream man. Certainly in

those days there were no groupies at Lagonda Club events loitering in the pits, hoping to be noticed. so I asked one of my colleagues at work to be Pit Crew. The photograph shows him standing by the 16/80 (No. 77) filling it up. A second photograph shows it a few minutes later in a puddle of water which had leaked from the water pump.

This year the handicappers had been generous to me. The programme reads

35 RDA Wills (Lagonda Rapide) Scratch 29 Mahony D LG45 0.25 + 1 lap 79 Wilby M LG45R 0.50 83 Edwards B M45 0.55

80 Kerridge R.W. Rapier 1.05 + 1 lap 81 Young Dr. A 3 litre 1.05 + 1 lap 75 Purnell G. D. 2 litre 1.0 + 1 lap

75 Purnell G. D. 2 litre 1.0 + 1 lap 77 Gee R 16/80 1.10 + 1 lap

78 Abson J. D. Rapier 1.20 76 Macdonald I LG45 1.25

27 Crow D.P. 3 litre 1.30 + 1 lap 82 Kirkly J.N. 2 litre 1.30 + 1 lap

85 Besley P.F. 2 litre 1.50 + 1 lap

#### **PUB MEETS**

Northern: Third Thursday, The Great Western, Standedge. Between Oldham and Huddersfield, past Floating Light towards Huddersfield. Details, Roger Firth, Tel 061 303 9127.

Home Counties: First Sunday, The Stonor Arms, Stonor, Nr Henley, from noon. B480, 3 miles off the A423 from Henley. Details Jeff Leeks, Tel 0494 563188.

East Kent: First Sunday, Griffin's Head, Chillenden, Nr Canterbury, from noon. Details, John Anderson, Tel 0304 61309.

**Dorset:** First Thursday, The Wise Man, West Stafford. 3 miles E of Dorchester, MR 726895. Details Dudley Palmer, Tel 0205 788458, or Peter Dobson, Tel 0202 731265.

Somerset: First Tuesday, The Strode Arms, West Cranmore, 3 miles E of Shepton Mallett. MR 668432 (VSCC Meeting)

Third Thursday, The Rose and Crown, East Lambrook, 5 miles E of Ilminster. MR 423190.

East Anglia: First Friday, Royal Oak, Barrington, Cambs. Details John Stoneman, Tel 0353 649494.

Second Wednesday, The Scole Inn, Scole, near Diss (VSCC Meeging).

Third Wednesday, The Bridge Hotel, Clayhythe, Waterbeach Cambs. Details, John Stoneman 0353 649494.

First Thursday, The White Horse, Edwardstone, MR95 2428. Details James Holland 0787 228241 or Charles Ping 0787 310559. Pub Tel 0787 211211 (Grid ref: 952428).

**North East:** First Wednesday, The Triton, Brantingham, near the A63T.



Ron Gee (Car No. 77) waits at the start for the "Off"/

Looking at the pictures, suggests that at least 4 cars were non-starters. I thought that if I could keep ahead of Ron Kerridge and Doc Young then I might have a place at the end.

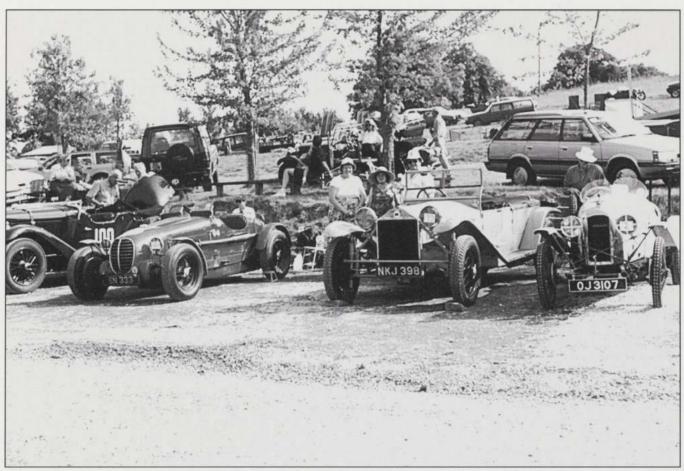
So the flag dropped and off I went, this time on a sunny August day. After a couple of laps I settled down and was able to look around a little. As I exited from the Club Corner hairpin I was able to look to my right and see Messrs. Kerridge and Young who started 5 seconds later, braking for the hairpin. So I resolved to look back again at the same place and see how they were gaining on me. When I did I found to my surprise that I was gaining on them. All I had to do was to lap consistently without spinning.

Now comes the tale of the second wetting. Halfway through the race the water expanded, Dave (Pit Crew) had filled the radiator up to the top and not just to badge level, so every time that I braked for Club Corner, warm water surged out of the filler cap and back over me. Several photographers were observed filming this phenomenon. Alas none of them sent any prints afterwards.

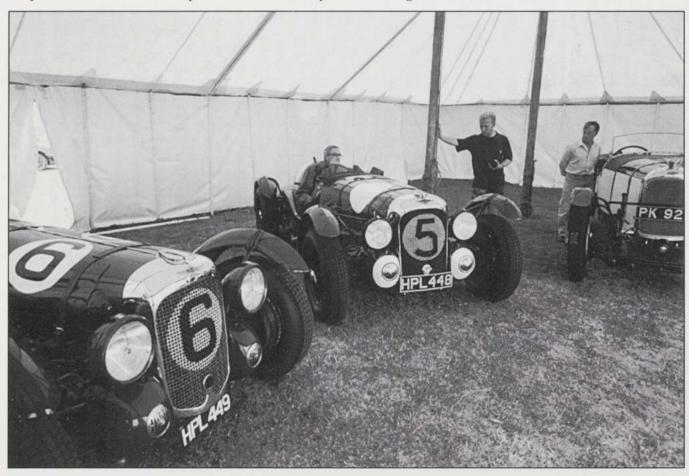
The final result was a win at an average speed of 56.46 mph. No lap times were given out for this race, but probably the 16/80 was circulating at about 1.40. Not such a Crutty Sark after all.

Ron Gee





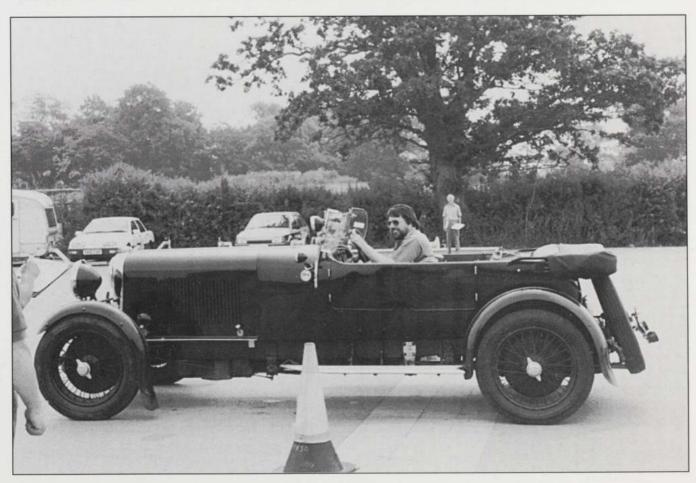
The Lagonda Club contingent at Prescott! Ken Painter's Maserati, James Woolard's Lancia and Jeff Ody's Amilcar. At least Bryan and Barbara Hyett had the good sense to arrive in their 3½ Litre.



The V12 team cars, Coys Silverstone weekend.



The cars on show at the NEC Exhibition, see Harry Taylor's letter (page 31).



Brian Stevens shows how it is done, 1934 3 Litre, Devon Driving Tests.





## Every picture tells a story

ON page 32 in Issue 161 of 'The Lagonda' there are two photographs. In the upper photograph my car (EPE 97) is in the rear, and in the lower photograph it is in the front. The other car was driven and owned by Lord Dunleath. I am at the moment looking at the Tankard I won, which gives the details of the race at Silverstone. It was a '10 Lap All Comers Handicap' in 1956 which I won at an average speed of 65.72 mph (!).

EPE 97, my car, was an Ex Team Car 1936 about which Arthur Fox of Fox & Nichols gave me a great deal of information. It was a very successful car in my hands and in 1959 I won the VSCC Pomeroy Trophy with it (page 194 of the History of the VSCC), and numerous

other races, sprints, and hill climbs, including 'The Lagonda Car Club Trophy' in both 1954 and 1955.

I purchased EPE 97 from Joe Goodhew who had rather 'butchered' it by doing a 'cut and shut' job. It was, when I drove, competitive with the then 'modern' sports cars such as Jaguars etc. After I sold it it was restored to its original appearance.

Regarding HLL 534, the other car in the pictures, I am not sure if it was an actual 'Team Car' but certainly looked like one in all respects.

I enclose a couple of photographs of my EPE 97 at the Eight Club's race meeting at Silverstone in 1955.

L. S. Michael

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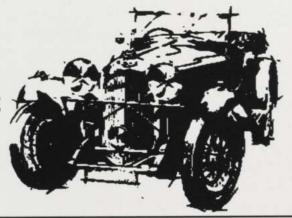
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## The Hants-Dorset Rally

THIS long-established event was held on Sunday, 10th July and again was blessed with the traditional magnificent weather. Stephen Weld had taken on the organisation, following his success in last year's event. The start and finish were both at Hordle House School at Milford-on-Sea, near Lymington. The school is in a magnificent position and while enjoying coffee before the start, we basked in the sun, admiring the fine sea view with the Isle of Wight and The Needles on the horizon.

However, duty called! - and route cards clutched to clip-boards, we set off with the throaty roar of our blown silencer. Phil Erhardt was somewhat delayed by having to pull over for urgent attention to a hydraulic brake fluid leak. The first part of the route had us all fooled - even those of us with a map - but we eventually untangled the "Weld riddle" and were on our way.

The lovely countryside of the New Forest unfolded around us, the sea sparkled and we motored regally through Beaulieu village and its river where some sort of regatta was under way. Small sailing dingies, canoes, rafts - all splashing merrily about, cheered on by seemingly hundreds of people on the river bank. A very different scene was presented as we passed close to the Fawley oil refinery, but then we were on to Stone Point, directly on the foreshore looking across the Solent to Cowes.

The really serious part of the rally started now - and those who were becoming somewhat weary of passing yet another welcoming hostelry, decided to call it a day - leaving the intrepid serious contestants to carry on. We persevered, despite the warning reminders from a hungry navigator that "time" was running out. The driver was determined to see it through.

We finally roared through Beaulieu, for the **second** time, with much backfiring (we must fix that exhaust!), then through picturesque Lymington and eventually into the grounds of Hordle House School. Picnic lunches were already in full swing as we clambered out, dusty, thirsty - **late** - but apparently victorious.

Another happy event - and we are now the proud possessors of one of Stephen Weld's delightful watercolours; this one of Hurst Castle and the Solent, very close to Hordle House School. We also, alack, have the dubious honour of organising next year's rally. We really must make sure we lose next time - any challengers out there?

#### Results

1st Alan & Pat Elliott
1930 Lagonda 2 litre tourer
2nd Mike, Pat & Richard Collings
1929 Sunbeam 20 tourer
3rd Peter Jones & 3 generations
of Jones' 1928 Lagonda 2 litre saloon

The other intrepid competitors were: Phil Erhardt M45, Witt Wittridge M45, Peter Dobson DB 2.6, Peter Taylor-Clark 16/80 and Roy Taylor 3 Litre.

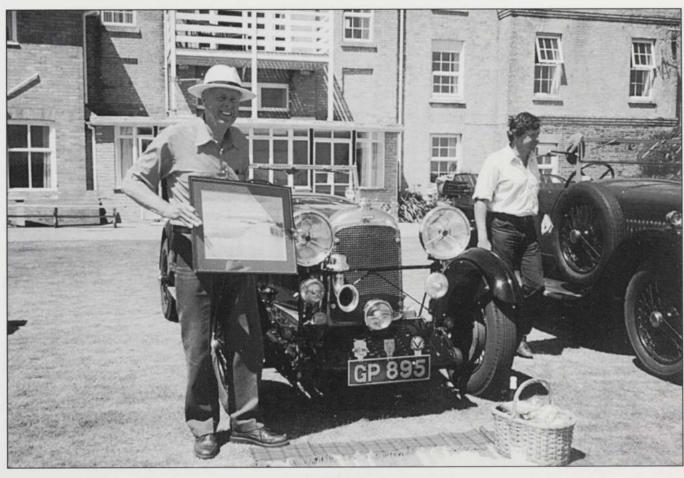
Many thanks are due to Setphen Weld for running this event and for making the school facilities available.

**Pat Elliott** 





Peter and Maureen Dobson in their DB 2.6 Lagonda in the Hants - Dorset Rally



Proud winner with his award – Alan Elliott after the Rally.

### La Belle France

FAMILY history recounts that my paternal ancestors were French Huguenots (named de Besse) fleeing by boat from La Rochelle to Liverpool after Louis XIV had revoked the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Maybe that's why we've sought the relative safety of living on a Derbyshire hill for the last 26 years and have held on to the old car. France, however, acts as a powerful magnet and we have spent many family holidays there.

In the summer of 1988, en route in the M45 to staying in a gite in the Perigord, we camped at a delightful lakeside site in the Correze and saw a house "A Vendre" in the charming village of Treignac-sur-Vezere. Two years later returning to Treignac, we found the house still for sale. By one of those extraordinary coincidences it had 1598 (the date of Henri IV's Edict of Nantes) engraved on the doorstone and by December it was ours. It is remarkably uncomplicated to buy a French house and the only blot on the landscape since we moved in to our "residence secondaire" has been "Black Wednesday" when the pound fell by 20% against the French franc. We travel there four or five times a year and what more natural than that for the summer of 1994 we should go in the M45 for her 60th birthday.

Generally speaking French people are more passionate and respectful about old cars than the English. On the road they flash their lights and sound their horns to convey their enthusiasm; and customers well into their third or fourth aperitif at road-side cafes cheer and clap as you sweep by. Having parked the car in the little square opposite our house we see families stand their children on the running boards or in front of the radiator to take photographs. We have several times been requested to let children and

grown men (!) sit at the steering wheel for a photo and there have, as our French neighbours say, been SO "admirateurs" that I felt forced to employ my schoolboy French to write five paragraphs explaining a little of the marque's and the car's history. (You can be sure that he Le Mans victory of 1935 figured prominently in the account, which I taped onto the windscreen and which has been read by thousands more than are likely to read this article!) It's a quaint thought that all over the continent there are photos being developed and people looking at them exclaiming in different tongues "Oh, there; the old car we saw in that French village . . .!"

I would urge you to take your cherished car(s) to France. Of course it's a risk, but it builds and leaves memories that you don't forget. Uniquely it makes all that loving work and attention to in your garage at home worthwhile. It's true that petrol costs were four times what we would have paid for the same mileage in our diesel; but if we had flown they would have been steeper still - and nothing to remember it by. It seems to me that the saving up for the additional expenditure of, say, £200 to take 'The Old Lady', as she is affectionately known in the family, is a small price to pay for the psychological satisfaction memories . . .

The M45 is my only old car and it is by no means 'concours'. If you have a long memory you may remember an article I wrote for this magazine, describing how, when I was just out of University and enroute for Turkey, I had to rebuild the crankcase by the roadside after running a big-end on an Italian autostrada. Thirty three years of acquaintance with the M45 have not



The view from the house window.
The sheet with the French description is taped to the windscreen.

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dimmed my pleasure in her, though I now own to anxieties that I would have and did - shrug off on that epic journey to Turkey in 1964. Those Volvo pistons I fitted (on the best advice in 1986) without boring out to a few thou more than Volvo recommended, have meant such a clean sweep of the top of the bore that the only oil she loses is via leakage. Moreover, when the engine is very hot, the starter is unable to turn the engine, which can mean waiting 30 minutes for her to cool down sufficiently. This makes planning petrol stops essential, and any garage with a slight incline downwards from the pumps gets my custom whatever the price of its petrol!

The loss of lower octane fuel means greater engine heat and with those pistons I have worried about over-heating and about seizing up. Fortunately neither has happened despite the amazingly high temperatures encountered on this high summer's 2,400 mile journey. And there was only one occurrence of the dreaded vapour lock mentioned in the magazine recently. Driving on French roads is a pleasure compared with England. Not only are most road surfaces incomparably superior but the villages are as far apart as towns are in England, and most towns are by-passed. 'The Old Lady' can really get into her stride on French roads and we covered the 360 miles to Treignac as quickly as in our modern diesel but with far more elan and style!

I worry about the British view that tends to value originality and appearance in vintage cars above everything else. My priority is to keep the old car moving on the road for people to enjoy seeing her being used. In France we have attended what they now call "Expositions de Retromobiles" and their cars rarely match UK standards for concours. But they are there - and give huge pleasure to the crowds who flock to see them. My M45 is only partly original in that Jack Buckley built the replica touring body for me in

1983 and I have fitted cyclewings and running boards more in keeping with the 3 litre from which she was derived and which could have been ordered from the works in 1933/34. I have also fitted an oil filter and (for the French trip) an alternator above the dynamo to drive the headlamps. And she **still** looks lovely and is delightful to drive, with steering so light that 360 miles in one day is easy on French roads. On hills that long stroke keeps her up with almost anything, but you need braking room on the downslope

By the way, on our return journey we stayed the night at "Le Relais de la Diligence", the 18th century coaching inn at Carolles in Normandy which was advertised in a recent newsletter - tel. 33 61 86 42. Let me encourage you to go there - the food is special, the reception warm, and it's half the normal price. The proprietor has a DS19 Citroën (La Deesse) of which he's very proud.

No doubt the trip has hastened work which will need to be carried out in the next few years - eg. rebuilding the gearbox and attending to the water pump as well as a new radiator core; but, as I said on my windscreen notice for those "beaucoup d'admirateurs", just because she is hand-built she will probably survive me. With luck she'll be back in France for her 100th anniversary in 2034 and starting when hot!

Alan Debes (Member D2)



## Letters

Dear Colin,

NEC Exhibition 30/4 TO 2/5 1994

Please find below a report and photographs. I thought it prudent to send them to you for the Committee to peruse prior to submission for including in the

Magazine.

We arrived on the Friday to build the stand and much to my surprise it went very smoothly. I was surprised because prior communications, with the organisers, had been fraught with inconsistencies, incorrect or no information.

I had been allocated enough room for three cars so my plan of 2 pre-war and 2 post-war had to be amended to displaying:

Chris Paling 1930 2 litre Blown LC Stan Williams 1939 LG6

Geo. Williams 1955 DB 3 Litre Saloon.

The stand was quite busy throughout the show, Saturday in particular. There were several enquiries for membership and our Ladies sold quite a bit of regalia.

There were several visitors who remained for long periods engrossed in conversations. One gent, from Frankfurt, had been offered a car, discovered in the proverbial barn, if he would simply take it out of the way. He understood that it was deposited there in 1939 (I'm not sure what is significant about 1939!). There was no badge to immediately identify it so, armed with a little info he had flown to London, ascertained from Coys it was a Lagonda, learned there of the show at the NEC and subsequently arrived on our stand. A long interesting discussion ensued.

Looking at the other **Club** stands, ours certainly exhibited the most interesting vehicles. Indeed, many compliments were received to that effect. As I recall, we were the only club to display both pre

and post war cars.

I wish to thank everyone who manned the stand, namely: Francis and George Williamson, Lolita and Chris Paling, Stan Williams and last but not least, David Hine.

I have drawn no conclusions regarding the benefits, if any, of the exercise other than that much experience was gained thus equipping us better for staging future events.

If we gained several new members then at least financially it was worth while plus I believe we all enjoyed the

weekend.

I have applied for space next year and hope that it will be a little larger.

Harry Taylor

Dear Mr Painter,

As promised I enclose the photograph of the Lagonda Drawing Office in the early thirties.

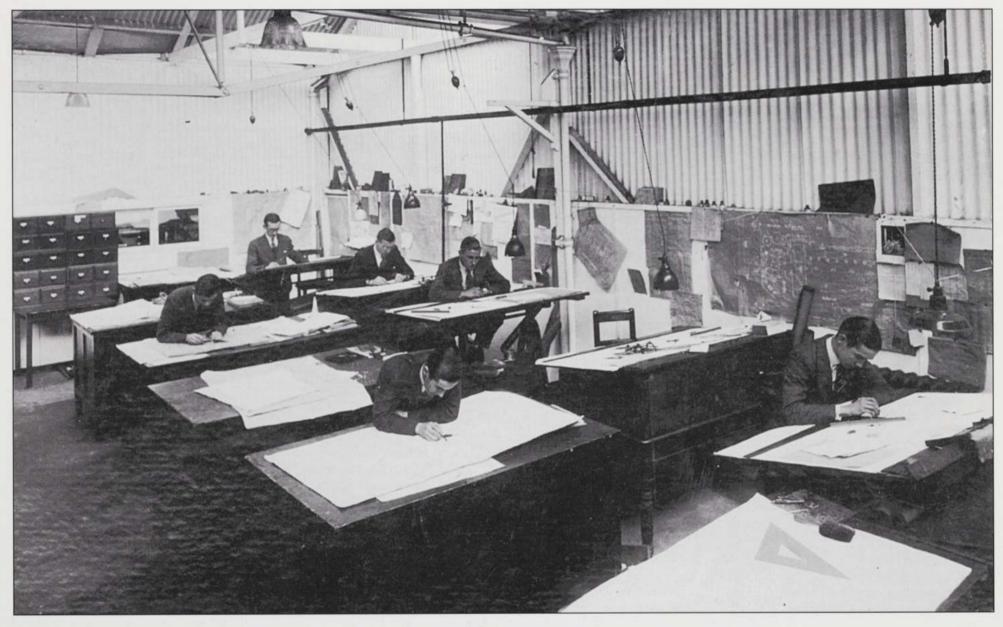
The Office was located in a corrugated iron building, the ventilation consisted of two small opening windows at the apex of the roof and heating was by

two small gas radiators.

On frosty mornings the first thing we did was to light the radiators and then de-frost the Indian Ink in their bottles. On cold days we were allowed to spend a couple of minutes every hour or so to warm our hands on the radiator. The office was also very hot in the summer, no fans.

In those days all component parts were drawn in ink on detail paper. If alterations had to be made the ink lines had to be rubbed out and you were not very popular if you rubbed a hole through the paper.

Blue prints were made for the works use, there was a large printing frame 54" x 32" mounted on trunnions, the whole lot was on a two wheeled trolley. The



The Lagonda Drawing Office, Staines, November 1932.

Reading from back to front and from left to right:— Mr. F. E. Potten – Leading Draftsman. Mr. C. T. Coleman, Mr. A. Doran, Mr. C. W. King, Mr. A. T. Kettle, Mr. C. Yokota, Mr. Masters, Chief Draftsman looking through window at rear.

drawing together with the unexposed paper was placed in the frame and the lot was wheeled out into the open to expose the paper. After the paper was exposed the trolley was wheeled inside and the print was rolled up and you had to sprint about 60 yards to the back of the Engine Test Shop and develop it in a tank of cold water.

The drying method was brilliant. In the back of the Test Shop were three large circular tanks about 4' 6" dia. x 8 ft high of hot water from the engines on test. We wrapped the wet print around the tank to dry (they fell to the floor when dry). No prints could be made on wet or foggy days.

When I started there in 1930, because I had won a scholarship to a Technical School I was paid 12/4p per week instead of the usual starting wage of 10/-. Two hours overtime for 9d (old money) - the good old days.

There was a recession on then so I was

lucky to get work anyway.

I must say that they were always a firm where time was allowed to do a first class job. It was the same in the shops where highly skilled men worked. It was always a good interesting place to work.

Many thanks for the Club magazine sent to me. They bring back memories of the old cars and the Rapier - I had almost forgotten them.

Best wishes to you all.

C. Coleman

PS. The large blueprint on the wall in the plan view of the Blown 2 lt.

Dear Mr Davey,

Congratulations to everyone involved in the meticulous work of preparing the latest Register of Members and their Cars. Now that it is out it seems a fitting time to remind present (and even past) owners of post-war Lagondas that I am now Registrar of the DB cars, taking some of the onus off Jeff Leeks, who has been wearing the post-war Registrar's hat up to now along with his duties of Social Secretary. Jeff will continue to provide technical advice on these cars, while I

will be responsible for registering their movements past and present.

The new Register once again proves that owners of DB cars are a minority in the Lagonda Club. This is partly due to the fairly small production runs of the later cars, as well, of course, as the shorter time-span covered. Apart from this though, there is the sad fact that up to now, at least, the DB cars have tended to their overshadowed by glamorous Aston Martin stablemates, and thus have tended to be undervalued both within and outside the club. As a result of this there seems to be a real danger that owners of the post-war Lagondas will feel that the club does not cater for their interests and that they might as well stay away from organized events, or even from the club itself.

This is not so! The Club is in a good position to offer both technical advice and historical information. As Registrar I will be glad to help any member who is trying to trace the history of their particular car, whether they own it now or owned it in the past. Like my predecessors, I am trying to build up as complete a record as possible of all Lagondas produced since 1947. And likewise anyone who has information about cars not on the Register - even if they were long since scrapped - any information to complete the overall picture will be gratefully received at the above address.

Yours sincerely

**Chris Moseley** 

Manor House Hampton Malpas Cheshire SY14 8AB

Dear Mr Editor,

A member of your Club, a Mr C \* \*
\*\*\*\*, wrote to Singapore pleading for
information on his 3 litre Lagonda, which
he believed had once been in Malaysia.
He gave his address as (Deleted, Ed).

The Malaysia and Singapore Vintage

Car Register printed his letter and a photo of his car, asking members if they could help, especially me, as I had been the car registrar in the past. I researched the Lagonda and managed to trace its history in Malaysia sending three letters to Mr \*\*\*\*, with a list of owners in Malaysia, history of the various bodies with which it had been fitted and the coachbuilder's name, the events in which the car had competed, photostats of the club magazine in which the car was mentioned and a photo of the car in 1953 with its then owner. I have received no reply to any of them.

I therefore wrote to the Editor of the MSVCR, asking if the address was incorrect, since I had received no reply to my letters. He has just replied, that he too wrote to Mr \*\*\*\*\* saying he would do what he could to help and enclosing a copy of the MSVCR magazine in which Mr \*\*\*\* letter and photo of his Lagonda appeared: but that he too had had no reply.

I can only assume that the address given was incorrect, or that Mr \*\*\*\*\* is deceased. Can any member help me?

Yours sincerely,

H. A. Stonor

Editorial comment: The name and address has been deleted to protect the guilty! I know who you are, Sir. You know who you are, the address given appears in our latest membership list. I have printed Henry Stonor's name and address in full so that you can do the decent thing and apologise in person. I don't want to appear pompous, but this has to be said . . . Laziness like this is inexcusible when vou ask fellow club members to help you learn about your car. Worse, it makes the researcher very wary of helping others in the future, especially when he has spent time and money searching out and making copies of the information you are seeking. Go out, buy a pen and write to

K. P.P.



the man!

Tailpiece . . . some of the cars at the AGM.

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- 7 Do you have a dedicated 0345 telephone number for membership enquiries? YES OF NO?
- 8 Does your membership cover your car for any authorised driver, and you, whatever car you and your spouse are travelling in, as driver or passenger?

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For immediate cover or further information telephone 0345 41 41 51 (weekdays 9 a.m.-5 p.m.)

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Contact the Lagonda Club Secretary for details

Offer valid until March 31st 1993.

Please note: to qualify for this offer you must be

1. A member of an RACMSA Recognised Club or

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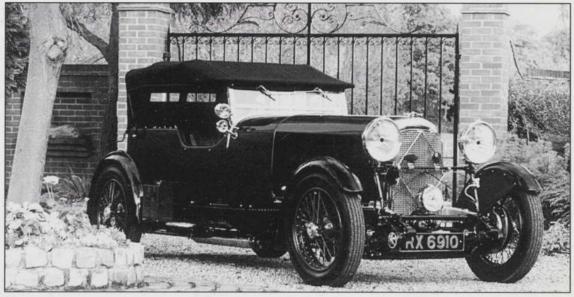
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