



# THE MAGAZINE OF THE LAGONDA CLUB

Number 103

Summer/Autumn 1979





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## MAGAZINE

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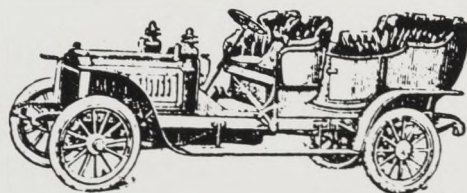
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Contributions do not necessarily represent the views of the Committee nor of the Editor, and expressed opinions are personal to contributors. No responsibility is accepted for the efficacy of the technical advice offered.



**FRONT COVER:** Robbie Hewitt enjoying a break in the Normandy countryside.



# Out and About

THE PUBLICATION of Arnold Davey's up-dated Register of members in August took the place of the Summer magazine, so this current issue can be regarded as a combined Summer/Autumn edition with the bonus of some extra pages. It was interesting to receive three separate accounts from members reporting on their adventures on Continental rallies during the summer. This is a very healthy state of affairs and one to be encouraged. In addition there are two accounts of long holiday trips in Lagondas including our Chairman's tour of the North with companions.

★ ★ ★ ★

The very successful LONDON FILM SHOW will be held again at the Rugby Club premises just behind Langham Place, but please note the revised date which differs from the Club Calendar. It will take place on:

FRIDAY 30th NOVEMBER

Full details will appear in a convenient Newsletter but please note the new date on your Club Calendar. Duncan Westall promises you another entertaining evening with films from the archives, hot food and a convivial atmosphere.

★ ★ ★ ★

We were very sorry to learn of the death earlier this year of artist ROY NOCKOLDS. He was, of course, the painter of the Densham Trophy which is highly coveted by 2-litre owners. We were particularly glad to be able to assist him last year when he had been commissioned to paint one of the V.12s that competed in the Le Mans race of 1939. Roy's paintings will remain as a permanent tribute to his superlative skill.

★ ★ ★ ★

News from the National Motor Museum Trust: New Acquisitions: The following press release was issued by the Museum on 14th April 1979...

**BRITAIN'S MOST ADVANCED SUPER-LUXURY CAR NOW LIVES IN THE NATIONAL MOTOR MUSEUM AT BEAULIEU.**

The National Motor Museum's objective to present the story of motoring from the 1890s to modern times, has come right up-to-date today with the arrival of the number one Aston Martin Lagonda super car.

The car was only designed in 1976 and is the current model to be seen at the International Motor Shows and in the dealers showrooms, as

well as in the Motor Museum.

The car was the star of the 1976 Motor Show at Earls Court and incorporates many advanced and futuristic features.

At £37,500 and 84 pence, it's not surprising that only four of these super-luxury cars have been bought so far, which makes it a rare collector's car.

Its ancestors, with which it now shares a home at the National Motor Museum, include the 1922 Aston Martin 1½-litre "Strasbourg" produced for Count Zborowski, Earl Snowdon's 1964 Aston Martin DB.5 and the 1939 V.12 Lagonda 4½-litre.

Other new acquisitions include: 1903 De Dion Bouton—Donated by L. Willis, 1923 Royal Enfield—Loaned by N. Collins, 1975 Suzuki RE5—Loaned by D. Boorer, 1928 BMW R.63—Loaned by BMW (Germany), 1956 Douglas Dragonfly—Loaned by B. M. Steel, 1956 Francis Barnett Cruiser—Loaned by R. V. Denning, 1966 Scamp Electric Car—Loaned by Professor Orville-Thomas (Salford University), 1931 Morris Minor—Loaned by P. J. Vacher, 1975 Lucas Electric Taxi—Loaned by Lucas Industries Limited.

★ ★ ★ ★

## Valentine

I was your first love and hoped your last,  
Although, many others I have had in the past.  
My need for you is constant and true,  
I hope you never thought of spraying me blue.  
For miles we travelled so very gently,  
Then your affections were transferred to a Bentley.

Here I lie so alone and cold,  
Is it because I am so very old.  
Once I was so new and shining green,  
More than fit to carry a queen.  
Into your feelings it's hard to delve,  
I can but guess your heart's gone to a V.12.

**CHANGE OF DATE!**  
**THE LONDON FILM SHOW**  
**WILL TAKE PLACE ON**  
**FRIDAY 30th NOVEMBER**





Peter Coward, Manager of the Swan at Grasmere, inspects the cars.

## *Northern Lagonda Factory Works Outing* *21st-24th May 1979*

*by Herb Schofield*

HAVING ENJOYED a splendid weekend with some of our staff back in November helping the V.S.C.C. out at the Lakeland Trial, we decided that we should organise a motoring holiday covering the more attractive parts of the North of England. Eventually we settled on visiting the North Yorkshire Moors, Northumberland, the Lake District, down through the Yorkshire Dales, and back to Oldham. Our original party of myself (LG.45R), Roger Firth (LG.45R), Nigel Hall (4½-litre Racer), Alistair Barker (LG.45 Tourer), Alan Brown (M.45 Tourer) and panel beater Buckley (Fire engine) was swelled by the late addition of John Beardow (M.45 Tourer), Ted Townsley (LG.45 Tourer) and David Hine who, due to the pressures of work or something, could only manage the last day, which was rather sad.

### *21st May*

The day dawned overcast but dry as we assembled at Roger and Beryl's house at 10 a.m. for coffee, before setting off on the first lap of our journey which took us over Woodhead to Barnsley. Now on my list of lovely places, Barnsley would be somewhere near the bottom (together with Oldham). Fortunately we were

soon through, although in so doing we mostly got split up thanks in part to Nigel who only seems to have a driving mirror for combing hair or popping his facial pimples. Eventually the A1 was reached and we sped north. The A1 is not a particularly pleasant road, very busy and full of Burton suited reps. and upstanding members of the Transport and General Workers Union in their ghastly juggernauts. Fortunately we soon left this road and after passing through the rather attractive town of Thirsk, arrived at the "Faulkenberg Arms", Coxwold at 1.00 p.m. to find our mates already there and into their second pints of Theakstons Bitter. We can recommend the "Faulkenberg Arms" (and of course Theakstons!), nicely situated with friendly management and some accommodation, you can find them in Egon Ronay.

After lunch was completed, followed by the inevitable drowsiness caused by heavy drinking, we set sail for Helmsley via Byland Abbey, which nobody bothered to look at—assuming of course they actually even saw it! We eventually reached the "Black Swan" at about 4.00 p.m. and parked outside this rather nice old Hotel which is situated in the village



square. Some of us took afternoon tea whilst the rest took advantage of the late afternoon to have a kip and freshen-up for the evening. Later we had an excellent meal and were joined in the evening by Doc. Rider and his two sons, Roy Paterson and Ken Pape. A splendid day.

#### *22nd May*

Dawned dry but overcast, and as we were not leaving Helmsley until 10.30 a.m. some took advantage of the time to have a look round the village and the castle which was rather interesting, but not as interesting presumably as the photograph Beryl Firth was taking of a peacock making love outside the castle grounds. 11.00 a.m. found the Lagondas at Rievaulx Abbey which must be very educational if you have a lot of time at your disposal, unfortunately we hadn't as we had a pressing lunch engagement further north. We were soon on our way again passing by the Hambleton Hills through the Cleveland Hills, through Darlington (which replaced Barnsley on my list and also, I observed, must have the highest concentration of heavily corseted women in the north), and on to Piercebridge and the "George". There to welcome us was Iain and John Macdonald in their LG.45 Tourer, and David Royale who arrived in Alan's M.45 Tourer which he had repaired (some members may recall that Alan had a serious accident with this car in 1978). We can recommend the services of David and his V.M.C.R., Stainford for they did an excellent job. We didn't particularly like the "George" which was on a busy main road and will pick somewhere else next year, but the company was good.

Our plans for taking the pretty route north through Teesdale were thwarted by Messrs. Royale and the Macdonalds who both insisted we visit their various establishments which we willingly did, some even tried the Macdonald rolling road. On this machine Ted recorded 115 b.h.p. in his LG.45 Tourer and Roger 118 b.h.p. in his LG.45R, Whilst Nigel's 4½ special produced 140 b.h.p., all at the back wheels and all at 3,000 r.p.m. As a bit of an aside therefore it would seem obvious that the original manufacturers claim of 150 b.h.p. gross for the LG.45R was not very far from the truth, this is borne out by my LG.45R which on another occasion produced over 120 b.h.p. at the rear wheels.

We now pressed on to Chollerford, Northumberland and the "George Hotel" which is attractively situated by the River Tyne (before

it has passed through Newcastle of course!). The Hotel is close by Hadrian's Wall which as you know was originally built to keep the Scottish Football supporters out of England. Also nearby is Chesters Fort and Bath House. The hotel service was not too good, the rooms smaller than average and some complained of the small food helpings, but mine was O.K. We were joined in the evening by the Macdonalds (LG.45), Harold Golding (2-litre) and Bill Symons (1958 Ford, I think).

#### *23rd May*

We arranged for early morning calls at 8.00 a.m. so that we could take a look at Chesters, unfortunately not everybody in our party received the call, but other who weren't did! When we arrived at the entrance to the Fort we found it locked. We couldn't see a white coated, inflation proof pensioned attendant anywhere, so we got Nigel to climb over the spiked gate as he has a high pitched voice already, and he let us in. We spent a happy hour wandering round the place and marvelled at the Roman fetish for personal hygiene and cleanliness.

We left the hotel at 10.30 a.m. and headed west towards Cumbria which is short for Cumberland. We came down through Haydon Bridge and Alston, up the Pennines to a call of nature stop at the very top and a splendid view of Cross Fell, the highest part of the Pennines, rising to nearly 3,000 feet. By now it was both blowing and raining hard which was a bit of a nuisance where I was standing! We continued on our way and as we came down to Penrith we could see in the distance the snow-capped peaks of the Lakeland Hills. Soon Saddleback was on our right and as we passed by Bassenthwaite Lake we caught occasional glimpses of the high ground on Skiddaw. Soon we were in the "Pheasant Inn" at Bassenthwaite Lake which is one of my favourite places (having spent a naughty weekend there some years ago). By 1.30 the Draught Bass and Theakstons was flowing down with some speed and we were joined by David Hine to make our party complete. David motored up in his "Dr. Who" 4½-litre Special. We took an excellent lunch of sandwiches and soup and at 3.00 p.m. emerged legless, having promised the landlord we would be back next year which didn't seem to make him very happy. The rain was still heaving down as we proceeded to our night stop which was to be the "Swan Hotel", Grasmere, another of my favourite places (having spent a *number* of





Nigel Hall and David Royale enjoying the "Tour".

Photos: Herb Schofield

naughty weekends there some years ago!) We passed Derwent Water, down by the side of Thirlmere opposite which towers Helvellyn, the second highest peak in England and finally through Dunmail Raise to the "Swan" where the manager had reserved a special car park, and at 4.00 p.m. opened the bar for us (as if we hadn't had enough!) The hotel is a Trust House and was voted the best place we had been. The service was good, the meals excellent, the staff helpful with dramatic views of the Lakeland Fells as an added bonus. Cliff Walmsley joined us for the evening with his recently rebuilt M.45 Tourer which is a credit to him.

#### 24th May

A bit sad really because this was the last morning. We had sort of got used to travelling together and felt we could go on this way for a long, long time (except it was costing about £60 per couple per day!) We left the "Swan" at 10.30 a.m. with the nine 4½-litre Lagondas heading towards Kendal, through to Sedbergh and Hawes beyond and what was going to be the most dramatic bit scenically. The Lake District always seems full of traffic and trippers but parts of the Yorkshire Dales seem largely neglected by comparison. From Hawes we took the 1976 F.I.V.A. Rally route on a minor road up

and down (very much up and down) to Buckden, Starbottan and Kettlewell. In parts the infant River Wharfe runs by the side of the road and during the course of this 20-mile section I don't think we saw another car. What scenery and what fine motoring country for powerful old cars. Soon we were passing through Kettlewell and the "Racehorses Inn" (another of my favourite places!) and on to the "Devonshire Arms", Bolton Abbey, which is one of Roger's favourite spots (for the same reason!). The Devonshire Arms is a splendid old fashioned hotel. We took our final lunch together joined by Mike Hoare (M.45 Tourer) and units of the Hill family from Ilkley. Then it was all over. It was voted the best of four days motoring fun we had ever had, every car had been 100% reliable in the hundreds of miles covered, everybody had got on well together and we promised ourselves that we would do the same sort of thing again next year. Care to join us?

#### Some Facts

	LG.45R GPD 939
Fuel consumed (car)	30 gallons
Fuel consumed (driver)	5 gallons
	bitter
Fuel consumed (passenger)	40 Campari Sodas
Oil consumed (car)	Nil
Water consumed (car)	Nil



# *B.D.C./Lagonda Club 8-lap Handicap*

*Saturday 25th August 1979*

THE USUAL well-organised B.D.C. Meeting took place with a good entry and this year marked the 60th Anniversary of the original Bentley Company, so the Club were doing much to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Bentley Motors Limited.

Eight Lagondas were to be entered at the time I prepared the Handicaps in July, but unfortunately James Crocker—Rapier, Alan Elliott—2-litre and Herb Schofield—4½-litre subsequently decided they were unable to participate for various reasons and so the programme for Race 2 included only five of our cars.

It was especially nice to welcome back "Witt" Witteridge with his well-known M.45 car he has used in practically every type of event, but who has not been out for a couple of years, although Witt has been around spectating.

It was the first time on the track for Colin Bugler with his new Team Car Replica which I think is a faithful copy of the Factory 1937 Le Mans car. Colin competed at Prescott a fortnight previously and, pleased with the car's performance there, had been working on some ideas to obtain extra speed. This resulted in him using 21" rear wheels, I suspect taken from his 2-litre to raise the axle ratio and obtain more speed. The mod was apparently not entirely successful as this compromised his cornering speed. Nevertheless, I had given him a handicap of 1.32 when trying to evaluate his car's performance against other similar vehicles and his best lap according to the official results was 1.31.2 which is 63 m.p.h. lap speed. A competitive 4½ should get round Silverstone in 1.25 or better which is around 68 m.p.h. and I think we can expect Colin's new car to begin to show its paces in the 1980 season.

Our remaining entries were from the Northern Factory in the form of Alistair Barker's V.12, Nigel Hall's LG.45, and David Hine with his new and very successful LG.45.

The Handicaps have been getting better over recent years in that they are more consistent. Last year David Hine won the race overall and Nigel Hall was second, whilst James Crocker in the Rapier was 3rd Lagonda and the 6th on the road. It was a very fast race, David's time for 8

laps being 10 min. 30.9 secs. at a speed of 79.03 m.p.h., equivalent to a lap time of 1 min. 12.6 secs. which is truly incredible. This year the race was somewhat slower, but nonetheless just as interesting.

The grid was formed up in relation to practice time and handicap. There were no adjustments so Alistair Barker was on the front row, Nigel Hall just behind, then in the middle of the pack Witt Witteridge then Colin Bugler and David Hine on the back row.

All our cars made a good start, but Witt was just a little too enthusiastic and jumped the flag, which as we later found out incurred a 10 sec. penalty. Having done a brief commentary on the cars as they lined up, I watched the race from the Dunlop Tower assisting John Willis as he talked the race through. Noticeably the V.12 was trying at the start, as the car left the line clouds of blue smoke came from the O/S rear, the wheel lifting slightly. Nigel Hall took his usual tight line round this corner and was making ground rapidly.

Most spectacular of all was the sheer speed of David Hine. Remember that although he has the advantage of an Alvis gearbox which offers a good set of ratios and a much quicker change than the G.9, his car is in full touring trim, the only things which make the car look fast are the Dunlop racing tyres, which clearly give him excellent roadholding and the car was coming up through the Bentleys at great pace.

The assortment of Bentleys included the eventual winner, Victor Gauntlett in his supercharged Derby 4¼ car. Tim Llewellyn in the very special 3/8-litre owned by his father which won at Finmere last year, Harvey Hine in the supercharged 4½-litre Brooklands car previously owned by Harry Rose, Russ Turner with his well-known ex-Birkin supercharged Bentley with long pointed tail and splendid fishtail exhaust pipe arrangement, Barry Parkinson in his well-known 4½-litre and particularly interesting, David Llewellyn in a recently acquired vintage 4½-litre Bentley "Bluebell" which was modified in the forties and raced by an assortment of famous Bentley owners up to the late sixties when the car then disappeared.



By lap six we had Witt in the lead and I thought he was going to hold the position and so give us another Lagonda first; this did not happen as Gauntlett was coming through extremely fast and beat Witt to the flag by about 20 yards. However, we had not counted the penalty incurred at the start so on the road although Witt was second, he was relegated to tenth place and a best lap of 1.27.7. Our Mr. Barker therefore finished a splendid second and David Hine had worked his way up to fourth, his best lap being 1.22.9 which rather suggests an error in the results for 1978 race. Nigel Hall was sixth and Colin Bugler fifteenth. The full statistics for our cars extracted from the race results are set out below.

The meeting continued with a race for Morgan cars including for the first time the 3-wheeler brigade, the usual B.D.C. Pace Petroleum Handicap which for a change was won by an extremely original 3-litre car of about 1927 vintage which must have rather upset the racing brigade! The Allcomers 10 lap race also a handicap saw Bill Symons our Member who races a very nice 4½-litre Invicta out there running extremely well. There followed towards the end of the afternoon the Times Trophy Race for Bentley cars, this being a scratch event, then the Historic Sports Car Club members had their chance fielding a mixture of

cars varying from Lotus 23, A.C. Cobra, HMW Jaguar and a very fast Reliant Sabre 6, Porsche 356, E-type Jaguar and so on.

In the vintage and P.V.T. Sports Car Handicap, Colin Bugler was out again driving just a little slower at 1.33.3 finishing in last place. The usual mixture of all-comers in Race 9 concluded the last race of the day. A visit to the well-known local pub, the Green Man followed where Dick Sage (16/80) and family were encountered relaxing during the early evening, and a spirited drive back down the A5 brought a splendid day to a close.

Several Lagonda club members were seen around the Paddock area including Peter Wenman and his wife, Arnold and Wendy Davey, Arnold armed with his usual camera and ever-present note book. Iain Macdonald's son John was having a good day with his supercharged Morgan +8 handsomely winning Race 9 even though pursued with great style by Colvill in the superb A.C. Cobra. It would have been nice to see more Lagonda owners around and it is worth remarking for next year that the B.D.C. Meeting is a fascinating event with the right crowd and an excellent mixture of machinery both old and new. As they say in the Press—highly recommended.

JOHN BATT

	Place	Car		Completed Time		Speed	Best
		No.	Name	Laps	Min. Sec.	m.p.h.	Laps
	1.	50	Gauntlett M.V.	8	10.37.1	75.05	1.15.5
1st Lag.	2.	62	Barker A. W.	8	10.56.2		1.19.9
	3.	104	Middleton J. F.	8	11.00.1		1.32.3
2nd Lag.	4.	69	Hine D. R.	8	11.01.8		1.22.9
	5.	111	Walker J. M.	8	11.02.3		1.39.2
3rd Lag.	6.	58	Hall N. D.	8	11.04.4		1.19.9
	7.	103	Hall M. L.	8	11.07.03		1.31.3
	8.	121	Llewellyn T. C.	8	11.08.9		1.13.0
	9.	108	Baddiley R.	8	11.11.2		1.36.5
4th Lag.	10.	99	Witteridge A. H.	8	11.14.3		1.27.7*
	11.	80	Harry Rose Autos, Hine H. P.	8	11.15.9		1.24.0
	12.	86	Grafton B./Higgitt J.	8	11.18.1		1.29.3
	13.	64	Russ-Turner B. M.	8	11.22.1		1.23.7
	14.	110	Black R.	8	11.51.4		1.41.8
5th Lag.	15.	74	Bugler J. C.	8	12.09.4		1.31.2
	16.						
	17.	90	Parkinson B. H.	7	10.39.4		1.32.3
	18.						
	19.	109	Worrall T. D.	4	Retired		1.59.8
	20.	79	Llewellyn D. W.	0	Retired		

Revised results to include car No. 86 omitted from 1st result.

#### FASTEST LAP

121 Llewellyn T. C. 1.13.0 79.30



# *“Circuito del Garda” in M.45, AXO 773*

GETTING A bit on an itch to go foreign again and combine an event with a holiday, I was lucky to be on the Brescia Veteran Car Club's mailing list; presumably because of participating in two historic re-runs of the Mille Miglia earlier, and got an invitation to enter in this revival of the old mountain circuit race.

Visits to local Italian cafés produced some understanding of the instructions, which were in Italian. Was it a race? “Yes”, they said “It's against the clock.” Anyway we sent off the £40 entrance money which covered a couple of days food and an hotel night stop for two.

Next the Lag., which looked scruffy and uncared for sagging on those awful retread zig-zag tyres forced the realisation that much work and money was needed. Four new Dunlops set me back a bit and I did eventually recover from cleaning the thing, leaving only one problem, recently the Lag's cooling had become marginal and didn't respond to Harpic nor hydrochloric acid. Also the fan pulley wheel was u/s, the hole had become enlarged by being reamed out by the splines on the drive shaft. In despair I rang up Alan Brown who went to no end of trouble to find a pulley and ended up loaning me one which he dismantled from a rewirable car. I used to hate Alan Brown because he used to keep spinning off in front of me on Woodcote corner in the old days, but now I love him! No I don't, he refused to take money but made me promise to write this trip.

Being a mean creature, when filling in the ferry booking, I called the M.45 a Rapier which, as we all know is less than 12 feet! After a sleep on the boat we left Le Havre and pointed at Paris and then promptly got lost, of course, trying to find the A6 heading towards Lyons. We finally settled down and cruised along the motorway becoming aware how warm and lovely the weather was, it stayed that way until Brussels on the way home again. The French dig up their motorways too, and on one busy narrow bit the two S.U. petrol pumps stopped, so did we and the squeaking of the taxi horns wasn't music to our ears! The kick and thump method worked for a bit but finally points filing saw us out of trouble.

Turning off the A6 at Tournus, aiming at Geneva, we chanced upon a nice little French

village, St. Trivier, and that night stopped in a pub type hotel. Madame's food was exotic, a vin du pays (plonk to you) added the finishing touches. A leisurely start and a relaxed drive through the St. Bernard tunnel saw us at the frontier where we picked up our Italian tourist petrol coupons at the Italian Auto Club; they let us have 60 gallons at £1 a time, but this represented a saving over pump prices of about £1.40. They wanted sight of the registration document and its super grade only.

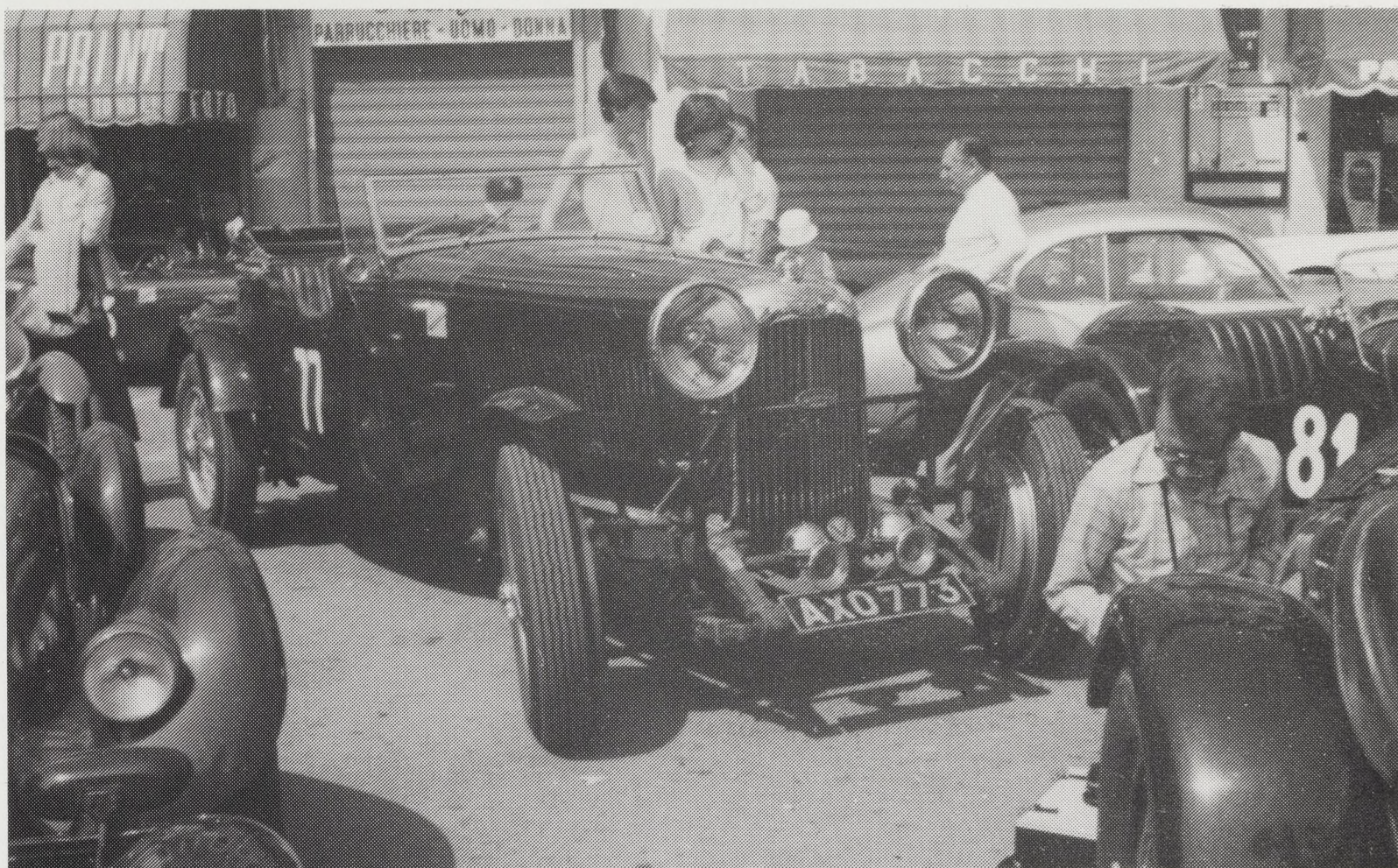
After a pleasant night stop, we went into the city of Salo, the Lake Garda, to report in but found none around to help, although this holiday seaside type place was very busy with trippers we then got in trouble with the politzei for obstruction! This turned out to be a blessing in disguise however, as the chief of police came over to investigate the commotion. He spoke good English and was most helpful and shouted at the fuzz who had arrested us, to phone up and find out where we were to stay and where to report in the morning.

We were the first to arrive at the control point which was in a square by the lake side, but soon, swarms of red Alfas and Fiats descended into the square later to be mixed up with newer Ferraris, Cisitalias, Porsches, Mercedes and the like up to 1960 cars. There was an Italian driven Moggie and an MG making up about 180 entrants. Apart from a chap called Tolhurst driving a Cooper Lancia, which he brought on a trailer, we were the only British entry; Lagonda does it again!

The scrutineer said “Machina OK?”, I said “si”. He said “Stoppa”, I said “Si, si.” Where upon he putta da stampa on!

The course was about 11 kilometres, along the narrow built-up waterfront, up a succession of hairpins to the top of the hill, along a bit and steeply down to the waterfront again. We had worked it out that one lap should take 16 minutes, ridiculously slow this seemed but we were suspicious lest it be difficult if the bends and slopes were tighter than we thought. We were even more suspicious when the Italians started waving furiously before the start; we should have realised that they always do so, even if it's just to park! On the first lap of thirteen we got round in 7 minutes, after having





Citta di Salo.

a bit of a go with a German lad in a BMW 328, but on the second and later "giris" we arranged to cross the line in multiples of 16 minutes; the German lad kept tearing round determined to enjoy himself. Apparently the idea was to make a noise and create a spectacle near the crowds and then waste time on the mountain road to cross the line on schedule; we even stopped on the steep hairpin bit to take pictures! Later on the BMW was on the side of the road with a "kaput" gearbox. After a chat, we finished the "race" and then went round again and towed the BMW back to the start. Meanwhile the officials were going berserk at this performance as the second session, with the later cars, was about to proceed! For me this was poetic justice as I ran a big-end in the Lag. whilst sorting out a BMW during the 1973 Le Mans Vintage race.

Well that was that, apart from the prizegiving when only God and the Italians know what was going on; they gave us a couple of nice plaques in cases and also a briefcase. What must go on record was the dinner before the event. It was fantastic. The venue was some kind of palace affair, floodlit, with huge sweeping staircases lit with Roman oil lamps—I was sure they were filled with Christians' fat.

We sat with our friend the Chief of Police and his wife who was American and enjoyed chat,

gastronomy (grosso type) and lots and lots of vino. They don't seem to worry too much about drinking and driving; who was I to question this with an inebriated Chief of Police as my shining example?

We went to Venice and around, spending a couple of days more in Italy before heading for home via Austria, Germany, Luxembourg and Belgium. The things that stood out were the sheer beauty of Austria and the relative cheapness, those steep mountain roads, most of which the Lag. took in top gear except for the hairpin bits.

We diverted to go up the Mosel valley which seemed busier and more commercial than I remembered it. Having a meal there, we were asked what we would like to "trink". With my expertise I said, Mosel, the waitress produced a large wine list with hundreds of sorts of Mosel on it.

An enchanting night in the Black Forest was the antithesis of a rainy night and a huge bill in Belgium. All too soon, the white cliffs of Dover turned up after a grand couple of weeks. I really must remember to take a shooting stick next time to prod the peasants away; inquisitive devils these foreigners you know!

A. H. WITTRIDGE



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## ***Finmere 1979***

LAST YEAR it will be remembered the Vintage Weekend incorporating V.S.C.C. Silverstone and our annual driving tests at Finmere Aerodrome were badly affected by diabolical weather. The 29th July 1979 was no exception and although the previous day at Silverstone had been most pleasant, Sunday dawned dark, wet and cold.

The inevitable result was a very poor entry and notable lack of support. Brian Hyett and his wife Barbara, met myself, Susie and family at the appointed hour at the gate to the airfield and let ourselves in accompanied by the publican, to get the tests set out, hopeful for a start with the first car away at 11.30 a.m.

This year the tests were devised by Alan Brown and first used at the Northern Gymkhana. They were a great success and with only little modification were to be used for the Southern meeting. Devised for an emphasis on skill rather than brute force, there was no question of damaging the cars. Given attractive names Test No. 1 was called the "Le Mans Reverse" where the driver standing on point X runs to his car, reverses it around a bollard and into a garage where the distance between the offside and two markers is measured and the time recorded. The tighter one gets the better.

No. 2 was entitled "Circles". Start with front wheels on the line and with string in hand make two complete circuits in a clockwise direction stopping astride the Start/Finish line. In circling, drivers were to attempt to knock down four markers during the course of the test. This was done by holding a rope from which was suspended a large spanner and penalties were incurred if the spanner hit the ground and any of the markers remained upright. Sounds simple, but this was a devious test which caused no end of amusement.

Next a variation on a theme called "Wiggle Woggle Balls". Forward round two markers and reverse round two markers all four being in a straight line, the plan was to pick up four balls and return to Start/Finish line AA. This led to "On Your Marks" and on this one the driver negotiates a number of pylons and has to stop on two markers which have previously been set from the Start line which is some distance away, such that X and Y finish up underneath the nearside front and rear wheel. Simple? You should have come to try it!



The "Regularity Knot" was Test No. 5 and I particularly liked this one. Starting in a reverse direction one drove around two cones in a figure of eight, stopping astride line BB, when the timing stops. Repositioned by the marshal the timing is restarted and the idea is to retrace the same route in a forward direction stopping astride the Start line AA but in such a manner that the time of the run in reverse gear should be exactly twice that of the run in the forward gear! I hasten to add watches and dashboard clocks were *not* to be used.

The final test "Rolling Home" again looked very simple in the booklet. Taken in a straight line there are three points marked out down the runway. They start at AA and then a little further on and in time to allow reasonable acceleration line BB, a few paces beyond is CC and then at an undisclosed distance, the finish line DD. The car starts and accelerates to the first line when, with the marshal riding in the vehicle, the driver knocks into neutral and having given a target has to roll from CC to DD in a given target time (different for each run) stopping astride the finish. These then were the tests attempted by 12 entrants, 7 Bentleys and 5 Lagondas.

The rain continued to fall and it was found necessary to turn the bar round so that the prevailing wind was prevented from blowing away the canopy and everyone standing underneath! Duncan Westall was finding things very difficult with the papers required for marking the tests and working out the results but persevered finding the tailgate of his Rover quite the best feature of the car! The wind and rain abated slightly and we got the first run away about midday with Brian Hyett as Clerk of the Course, keeping his fingers crossed the marshals would stay the pace.

The first runs went through extremely well and we were then able to have a short break for lunch to give the bar a chance, then on once again for the second attempts.

The best Lagonda was Tony Metcalfe in his Rapier, followed by Alan Elliott's 2-litre and Joe Harding in M.45. But all the Lagondas were beaten by the B.D.C. with Tim Llewellyn once again winner in the famous 3/8-litre Special owned by his father who, in fact, came second.

In conclusion, and on balance, it was an enjoyable day and my particular thanks to the marshals and especially Brian and Barbara Hyett for helping me with the organisation under such difficult circumstances. However,

to have seen so many members at Silverstone on the previous day and some who stayed over the night to my certain knowledge, but who were clearly put off by the weather knowing the event was to be run yet did not turn up was a big disappointment to the writer. This year there were also very few spectators and so one wonders if there is a future for this kind of event which so often in the past has been supported by the same handful of people. JOHN BATT

## RESULTS

Combined Bentley drivers and Lagonda Club  
Driving Tests

Position			Total Points
1.	T. Llewellyn	4½-litre Bentley	286.2
2.	D. Llewellyn	3-litre Bentley	244.0
3.	J. Hine	3-litre Bentley	249.4
4.	H. Hine	3-litre Bentley	285.0
5.	R. Hine	3-litre Bentley	297.4
6.	H. Harben	4½-litre Bentley	334.4
7.	T. Metcalf	Rapier Lagonda	338.0
8.	A. Elliott	2-litre Lagonda	395.8
9.	J. Harding	M.45 Lagonda	437.4
10.	P. Erhardt	M.45 Lagonda	445.2
11.	J. Nutter	6½/8 Bentley	504.4
12.	G. Gates	LG.45 Lagonda	755.4

## ENGINE STANDS AXLE STANDS ENGINE CHANGE AND MAINTENANCE CRANES

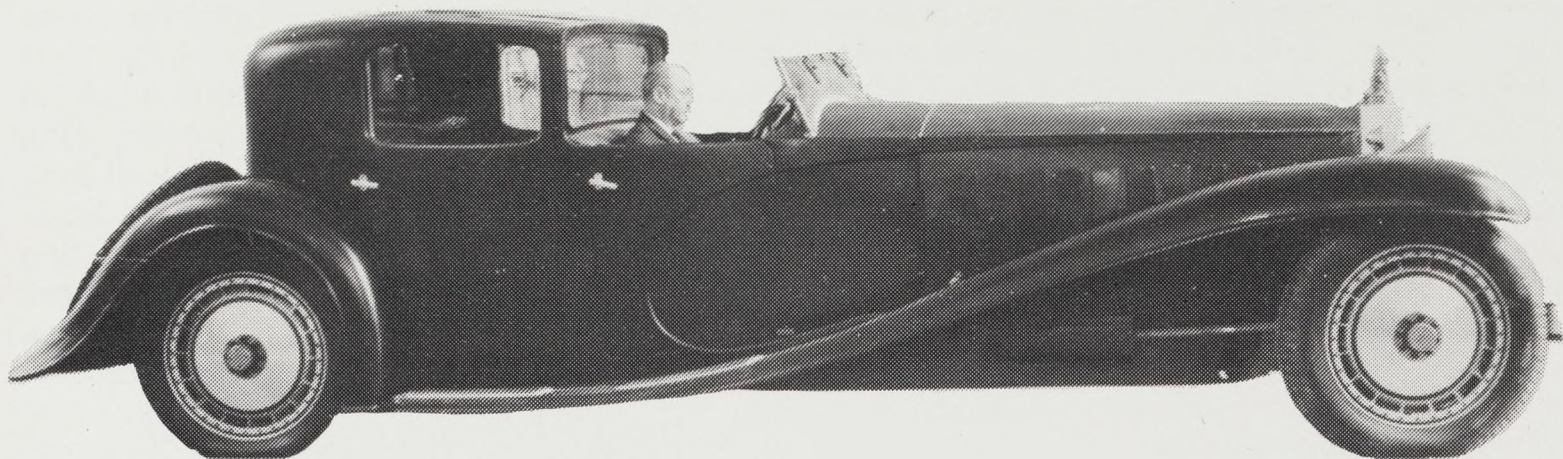
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## *The Type '41' Bugatti*

*by Alastair Innes Dick*

The Coupé Napoleon.

THIS WAS also known as the 'Royale' and royal indeed it was in size and magnificence both of bodywork and engine.

Ettore Bugatti had been turning over in his mind since 1913 the idea of producing a car which would outdo all others in every aspect of automotive engineering. He visualized something which would be bigger than a Rolls and would hold 100 m.p.h. in silence, which was advanced thinking for those days but typical of the man.

By the middle Twenties the company's finances permitted of resources being devoted to the construction of an experimental prototype Royale. Its wheelbase was fifteen feet and the engine capacity was no less than 14,726 c.c., with bore and stroke of 125×150, and, for testing, fitted with a 7-seater Packard touring body. Ettore himself spent two years testing the car in the mountains of France and then put a batch of six chassis into production.

These production chassis were slightly smaller than the experimental one, the wheelbase being reduced to 14 feet 2 in. and the stroke to 130 m.m., making it a nearly 'square' engine of 12,763 c.c. The engine was a straight eight with the usual three valves per cylinder and a single overhead camshaft. It was a massive creation, nearly five feet long and every part, like the rest of the car, being hand finished to 'Concours' condition.

The most unusual part of the engine was the main casting which, in one piece, comprised the cylinders, the fixed cylinder-head and the upper half of the crankcase which included the

main bearing housings. The crankcase and cylinder sections were enclosed by aluminium plates, none of which provided structural strength; they, like the sump, were only for oil and water retention. Water circulated all round the cylinders and even the main bearings.

The crankshaft, which weighed 220 lbs, ran in nine plain bearings and was in two halves joined at the centre, with circular webs to which balance weights were bolted. Dry sump lubrication was fed from a five gallon tank.

Ignition was by magneto and coil with, on the offside, two carburettors. The exhaust manifolds were heavily heat insulated for the sake of the passenger; the heat output must have been terrific.

Bugatti had intended that a Royale would not need any kind of overhaul for at least ten years and it is therefore not surprising, in view of the engine design, that any work on the engine was a major operation. If, for example, a valve needed changing, it was necessary to remove the engine, invert it and then remove the crankshaft and pistons!

The complete engine weighed 770 lbs, without the clutch, compared with the 640 lbs (including clutch) of the 4½-litre Meadows. This was remarkably light for a 12¾-litre unit (or, perish the thought, could it be that the Meadows was remarkably heavy?) It developed 300 b.h.p. at 2,000 r.p.m. which gave 125 m.p.h., whilst 100 m.p.h. required only 1,700 r.p.m.

The clutch was mounted separately and connected to the engine by an intermediate



shaft; it also functioned as a flywheel. The gearbox was in the back axle and had three speeds, the lowest (7.5 to 1) of which was only used to get things moving. The highest, an overdrive of 2.66 to 1, was normally brought in at about 75 m.p.h. Most driving was done on the direct drive second (3.6 to 1) which gave speeds of walking pace up to 95 m.p.h. at 2,000 r.p.m.

The chassis was of the same noble proportions with side members ten inches deep. The suspension followed Bugatti practice with front half-elliptics passing through slots in the axle. At the rear were forward-facing quarter elliptics with a second pair facing backwards to cater for exceptional loading.

The appearance of the wheels was in accordance with the size of the car. They were light alloy castings incorporating huge brake drums and with short vane-type spokes so shaped as to direct the airflow across the drums. The diameter of the wheel with tyre was about 38 inches.

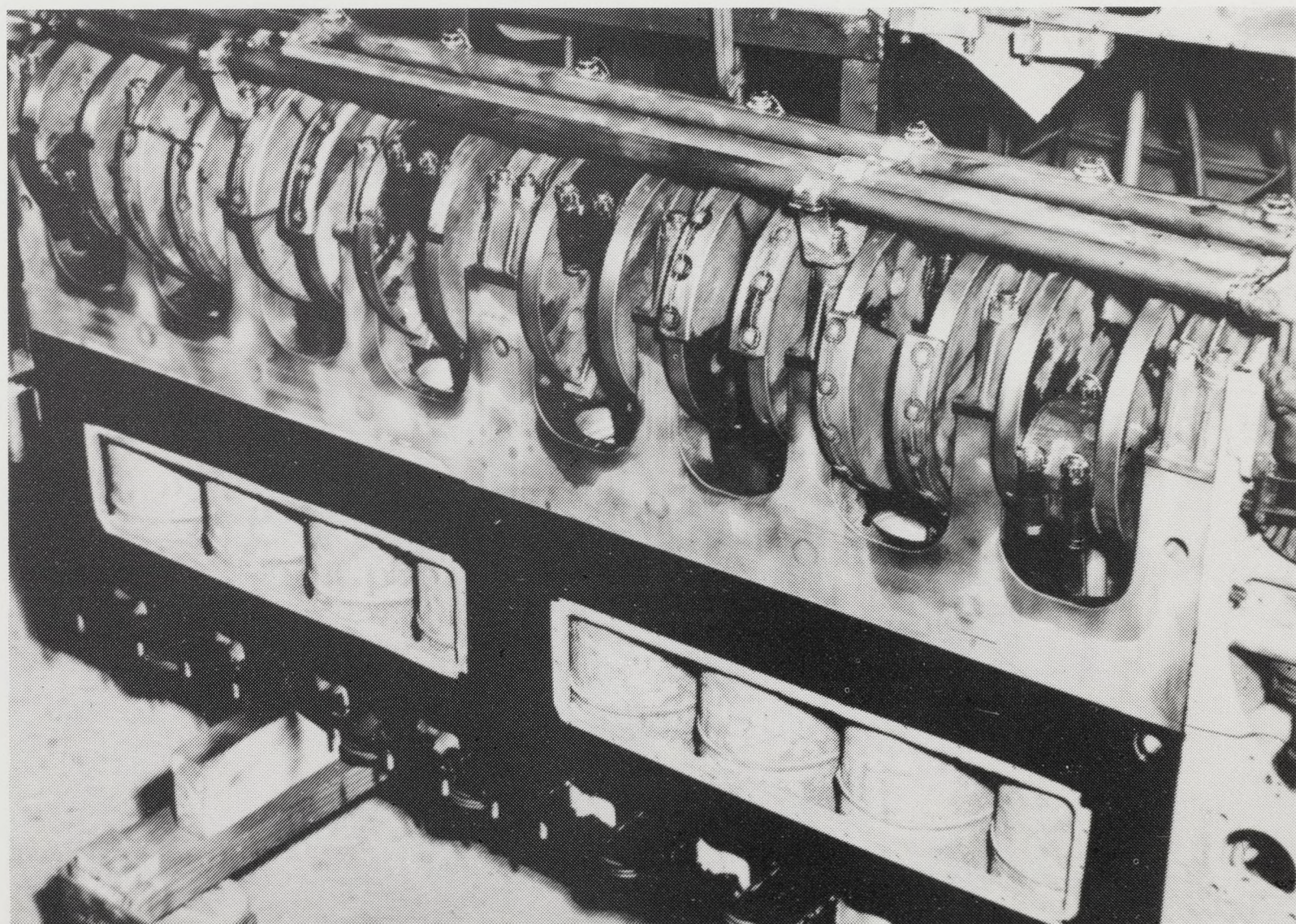
The wide range of types of the eleven bodies made for the seven chassis makes an interesting study. Bugatti had intended the car

to be one of such magnificence that no-one less than Royalty could aspire to it—or even afford it—and he may even have had thoughts of orders being accepted on an invitation basis.

It was therefore vital that bodywork design should come up to his hopes for the car and this accounted for the experimental car being rebodied three times in less than four years. The immense size of the car could have made an orthodox body look like a disaster and even 'Le Patron's' own designs for the first two Royale bodies were more garish than tasteful.

The first change to the experimental car from its tourer was a red and black coupé with 'razor-edged' panels and of most box-like shape, a design which owed something to the Brougham carriage. A large luggage trunk was mounted over the back axle at some distance from the vertical rear panel of the coupé.

This body did not last long, and was replaced by a four-door saloon, still with 'razor-edged' panels and with oval quarter lights which added to the impression of sheer size. But it still did not have that look of "Grace, Space and Pace" which advertised another make many years



The Weinberger engine under restoration by Charles Chayne.



later and it, too, was soon scrapped.

The next body was put out to Weymann's and this, at last, was worthy of the chassis. A luggage trunk was fitted close up to the coupé body which had more attractive low-slung lines than the previous bodies' fashionable Parisian 'razor-edged' look. An ideal car in which to start for Scotland early on a summer morning!

The Weymann car was Bugatti's personal car until it was written off in a crash in 1929 when it was replaced by a production chassis which was to carry a Coupé de Ville body, of which more anon.

At the same time, a second chassis was earmarked for another Bugatti-designed body to be known as a 'Double Berline'. It seems quite extraordinary how designing coachwork for the Type 41 brought out ideas which, to modern thought, seem to have been better suited to the coaches of the nineteenth-century aristocracy. The Double Berline's windows were rectangular and high, and the leather roof sloped downwards towards the front. It must, even then, have looked terrible. It remained in the Bugatti family until 1950 and is now in the Harrah collection in Reno.

We are now left with four chassis out of the original batch of six and it was not until 1932 that a customer placed an order for one. He was Armand Esders, a French textile tycoon, and the design work was given to Jean Bugatti who produced a most eye-catching two-seater which had the look of a large, much stretched Type 55. The normally concealed dicky seat had its own retractable windscreen. Esders specified that no lights should be fitted, it is said because he would not be driving at night when no-one would be able to see him!

This body was also scrapped and replaced by a Coupé de Ville by Binder which was not so perfect as the coupé already referred to, on the first chassis. This one spent the War hidden in the Paris sewers, and is now also in Reno.

The next order was from Dr. Fuchs of Munich who commissioned a Cabriolet from Weinbergers. This would now be known as a 'drophead' and a very good looking car it was with a long, low and solid look, terminating in just the right shape of luggage trunk. This car was finally rescued from a scrap-yard in America and, beautifully restored, is now in the Dearborn museum.

In 1932 Bugatti placed an order with Kellners for a Coach (Bugatti's mind seemed to run on horse-drawn vehicles!) but which we would

call a two-door close coupled coupé, as fourteen feet of wheelbase does not lend itself to the modern definition of '2+2'! This did not attract a buyer and it also remained a Bugatti family car until going to Briggs Cunningham's collection.

The third and last outside order for a chassis came from a Britisher, C. W. Foster, who put a Park Ward saloon on it in 1933. This was a typical Park Ward product of overwhelming stateliness. One is tempted to say that any connoisseur of coachwork who was being driven in it would be inclined to lie on the floor in case anyone he knew saw him! This car, like the first coupé, is now in the Schlumpf collection.

On the principle of leaving the best until last, let us now return to the first Coupé de Ville, also known as the Coupé Napoleon. This type of body is one which, if produced nowadays, would cause a riot by the hired help. Only the rear seats were enclosed, leaving the front seats entirely open, so providing stage coach conditions for the chauffeur and footman who, if one wanted to cut a dash, was carried for the smart opening of the rear doors.

'Le Patron' had given Jean the job of designing a body of this type for the first of the production chassis. Perhaps Ettore had got discouraged with his efforts on the experimental chassis but he must have been delighted with the genius shown by Jean when the Coupé Napoleon took shape. He liked the result so much that the car was thereafter always his personal transport.

Only a photograph can do justice to it; words are not enough. It could have been ostentatious but for its matchless elegance and over-opulent but for its impeccably good taste. In short, it must surely have been the most beautiful car ever built.

(With grateful acknowledgements to the Bugatti books of H. G. Conway and Paul Kestler.)

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**THANK YOU**



# *V.S.C.C. Prescott,*

## *Sunday 12th August 1979*

AN EXCELLENT meeting saw a very full complement of entries to this most popular V.S.C.C. event, with 131 cars listed. This number included eight Lagondas of various types of which six competed. Paul Nickalls should have been there with his Rapier Special but instead found himself stuck on a G.P.O. ship in mid-Atlantic so was unable to be there to show the same skill and enthusiasm which enabled him to take the up-to-1500 c.c. sports car record at the recent Shelsley meeting. Mike Hallows entered his High Chassis Lagonda as usual but apparently was unable to make it on the day. Also missing in his class but seen spectating were Messrs. Ody and Woollard, who for a change were having a more touring weekend.

Still battling with their house renovation, the Batt family arrived with LG.45 on Saturday afternoon having decided to camp the weekend and found other club members with the same idea. Colin Bugler and his wife were there for the weekend with his new LG.45 Special which has taken eight years to construct and is a credit to Colin's enthusiasm and endeavour. A really nice vehicle which enjoyed enthusiastic comment throughout the meeting.

Also camping were Dick Sage and family plus 16/80, Tony Metcalfe and it was nice to see



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John Weatheritt there with a beautiful, although not quite completed, 2.6 Special looking rather like a Healey Silverstone but having slightly better style. John was telling us that he had been working on the car for some years and decided that he wanted to try it out and hadn't the patience to go through the various detailed work required to finish it off. He has converted the rear suspension to negative camber and had new coil springs made for the front end to slightly adjust the side height, beyond which the chassis is standard and around which he has fitted a tubular frame clothed with aluminium. The road-holding is apparently impressive and the performance is quite good, although I suspect later on it will be extremely so because of the advantageous lightweight construction. Hopefully, we may see this car in competition next year.

Practice on Saturday ran without incident and the weather was fine, if extremely close. The evening was spent visiting local hostelrys followed by a traditional camp fire. Sunday morning dawned warm but overcast, however as the first cars came down to the start line the sun was shining and everybody was enjoying the more traditional August Prescott spectacle.

The V.S.C.C. had laid on the usual classes with the first two with sports cars up to 1100 c.c. and 1500 c.c., the latter with Nickall's Rapier entered.

The main Lagonda action occurred in Class 3 for sports cars between 1501 and 3000 c.c. with two people entered that I'm afraid I have not met previously, and for some peculiar reason, missed on the day. These being R. M. Seabrook in a 1929 L.C. 2-litre with long wings, and D. F. White in a 16/80 destined to have a battle with Dick Sage in his well-known car.

Drama surrounded this action since after practice on Saturday evening Dick was replacing his tonneau when a burning smell was noticed. Unfortunately he lost 90% of his wiring loom as a result of a dead short on the wiper motor circuit, following the removal of his windscreen. It turned out this circuit did not have the usual fuse so the whole lot went through. Regrettably Dick's car was not fitted with a battery master-switch and as the regulations state, batteries have to be held down firmly, the cover to the box was just that—screwed down. Speedy action removing this cover saved the car but not the wiring, so on the Sunday morning it was all hands to assist with a suitable repair to get the fuel pump connected

so the car would run. It did so with a push start, but later on, I am pleased to report, Dick was able to salvage a suitable repair for his journey home on Monday.

Colin Bugler made his debut in Class 4 for the big sports cars and looking at the results, did extremely well with such a big car on the full chassis length.

When the racing cars appeared we saw Alex McCall in the Eccles Rapier running extremely well. He was followed by Peter Evans who now owns the Richmond Rapier with 2-stage supercharging. Not the prettiest of cars to look at, since to my mind the rear end is rather ugly, the car was recently mechanically overhauled and appeared at Silverstone in July with Peter holding the revs down to 5,000 r.p.m. to give it some running time. It was most impressive. A Prescott Hill and could well be a potential class record breaker for the Vintage 880 yard course. Always a temperamental vehicle but very exciting when it goes, we look forward to seeing it out again.

The Edwardian cars were again most exciting with Roger Collings' Mercedes 60 rushing up the hill in fine style. The Arnold-Forster 5-litre 1912 Bugatti looked an entertaining machine with its extremely long pointed tail—fine on the track but useless in London traffic! Harrison's de Dion Bouton at only 950 c.c. and a single cylinder was extremely slow but almost achieved handicap in Class 5 and was given a special award. Sam Clutton had the rebodied 1908 Itala and thundered up the hill but was beaten by the Bugatti, the margin being 0.2 of a second. Close indeed. Neve was also there in 1914 Humber looking as immaculate as ever for such a well-used and popular vehicle.

The big racing car class saw the usual mixture of Bugatti, E.R.A. and the inevitable Caesar Special of W.A. (Doc) Taylor, but Tony Brooke in the Vauxhall-Villiers failed to start, as did Gordon Chapman in the E-Type E.R.A. This did not surprise us as the car was seen in the paddock at Silverstone in July as chassis and body with wheels but bereft of any mechanical component! It looks like a Mercedes W.125 and although unsuccessful in its day, could well be as exciting as the front engined B.R.M. campaigned by Corner in vintage events.

Gordon's son, Martin Chapman, was entered in the Monza Lister-Jaguar for Class 10—historic racing cars, all capacities—which was poorly supported with only two entrants. Nevertheless, the Jaguar shot up the hill in



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43.4 seconds, just about a full second behind the practised Alan Cottam who holds the record with his Connaught, but who had decided not to enter this meeting.

All the first runs were carried out in dry conditions. Lunchbreak was at 2 p.m. and cars should have gone up at 3 p.m. to start their second runs. However, there was some delay which allowed rain clouds to come over from the Cheltenham direction! Spectators took cover as quite large droplets came crashing down and which nicely greased the track. The second runs commenced about 3.30 and everybody was being most cautious although there were a couple of spins. The most dramatic being Fred Giles with his G.N. Salome Special and which is now a very potent machine,

previously owned and run by the writer in 1962. Fortunately, no damage occurred.

And so the meeting came to an end, the sky cleared as people adjourned to the bar to discover only draught lager was left which fortunately was no real problem, as the pubs opened withing 20 minutes at 7 p.m.

The best times recorded by Lagonda drivers on the dry run were as follows:

R. M. Seabrook	L.C. 2-litre	71.9 secs.
D. F. White	16/80	63.6 secs.
R. J. Sage	16/80	63.1 secs.
J. C. Bugler	LG.45	58.4 secs.
A. McCall	Eccles Rapier	53.8 secs.
P. J. A. Evans	Richmond Rapier	53.3 secs.

JOHN BATT

## 6è Raddonnée des Trois Vallées

THIS YEAR, for a nice little change, I decided that it would be a good idea not to take "Auntie" 3-litre Lagonda to the Côte d'Azur and through "Le Fanatique de l'Automobile" came across a rally in Normandy.

I am glad to say that we were the only English competitors, after all, one can see one's English motoring friends on numerous occasions at such meetings as Silverstone and Prescott, to name but a few.

Comme l'Habitude, Auntie was subjected to her annual service and being a very reliable lady there was nothing drastic to do before departing for Dieppe. On arrival in France we promptly turned right to spend the night at Quiberville in a little hotel which specialises in fish food. On arrival the proprietor promptly vacated his garage on our behalf, the heavens having opened up. We consumed a fantastic Fruits de Mer and had many jokes with the owner, the biggest being my command of the French language.

Having invaded our French Cyclecariste friends we then duly arrived at the Vimoutiers for the start of the rally on Saturday, which very sensibly commenced at 1.30 p.m. (French time!), the organisers having had consideration for those unfortunate persons who were obliged to work on Saturday or travel a considerable distance.

Lagondas are very rare in France but on this rally there were three, a 1932 3-litre drophead

Carlton Coupé, a very neat and tidy DB drophead coupé and my own 1932 3-litre tourer.

The other 3-litre owner complained bitterly about his very audible gearbox, so at his request I drove the car; my comment was that there was nothing wrong with it. "It's a perfectly normal beastly 3-litre gearbox", I said!

### Test 1

We all sat in the town square of Vimoutiers and awaited our turn to have a pipe put up our exhaust system (cars only) to test the pollution rate. I obtained six points and a "modern" car recorded nine. I am not sure if one was supposed to have more or less points to be sociable and I never did find out.

### Test 2

We all had a happy tour around the very picturesque region of "le Pays d'Auge". We ended up at Gace where all the chaps who normally play "boules" in the early evening had to vacate the premises of the town square for our driving tests. We took turns in going between and around plastic bollards—which were empty bottles. The French cars were more adapt than the English... maybe they had been practising before.

### Test 3

Drinks with the Mayor.

### Test 4

To find the nice little hotel in which we were booked, and to find garaging for the night for



Auntie.

*Test 5*

Dinner and dancing until 3.00 a.m.

*Test 6*

Get up. Sunday. Assembly 9.30 a.m.—that means 10.30 a.m., French or English time.

After the flag went down we all set off for a trip over the beautiful Normandy countryside passing through the Forêt de Peche which en route included many skilled and amusing tests—not all driving!

On this section my French was not up to the required level for the supplied itinerary of very “in” French jokes and expressions, so we decided to follow the French owned 1932 3-litre. He proved to be a very good navigator and, if when by chance, he took a wrong turning the five cars behind played the trumpet voluntary en mass.

*Test 7*

Lunch.

*Tests 8, 9, 10*

All good jokes and great fun.

*Test 11*

Prizegiving.

One final test was for the best improvised hat for a lady or a gentleman, so I secretly borrowed a sun-umbrella from the other 3-litre Lagonda and adorned it with flowers and appeared to have won that class!

What a pleasant amiable rally it was. It is rather boring to note that the car's overall performance was perhaps better than the occupants. I also seemed to acquire some other prizes, one must have been the Coupé des Dames—being the only lady driver, but one never knows because the organiser announcing the awards gets confused and so do you.

Vive la France!

ROBBY HEWITT

## *The Third Route de Champagne Rally*

AN ACCOUNT of someone else guzzling and boozing their way round a small part of France may make good election broadcast material, but for a Serious Motoring Magazine may be a bit suspect. So I thought this article should be interlaced with detailed technical comment of the most boring kind, like how to release the outer cotter flange pins from the dog shaft of the Wilson pre-selector gearbox fitted to only two of the supercharged 2-litres (in reality you use a hammer and chisel), but realised I would fall asleep before I had written it, even if I knew how. So back to the important matters.

Eleven British entrants turned up at the Place de la Concorde for the start of the 3rd Route de Champagne rally organised by the Club de l'Auto of Paris. Ten continued, John Grafton's 1934 open Talbot having pre-selected and post-selected bottom gear as being appropriate for the 4 cylinders out of 6 still firing. At least he and his wife were able to stay a bit drier than most of the rest of us thereafter and the Club kindly arranged to lift his car back to the coast on a trailer.

All of the British cars were open and many

had little weather protection. As it poured with rain throughout except for one afternoon and one evening you had to be keen. Envious comments were noticed about the excellent weather insulation of my V.12, including sarcastic questions about whether the hood actually did go down.

The British cars were more interesting than most of the French and suffered fewer mishaps. A French owned peerless puce Packard lived up to its name and packed up, and a French owned Rolls-Royce 20/25 appeared to be unsteerable even before lunch. Of the British entries, John Creed-Miles brought his elegant 1923 H.E.; Reginald Harper-Smith an immaculate 1933 Wolseley Hornet; Peter Moores a beautiful supercharged 1930 two-seater Austin 7; and Bruce Dowell a towering 1928 Sunbeam (did the designer mishear when asked for tourer?). On the last afternoon many people swapped cars and I had the greatest pleasure in driving round the Juvincourt race track (no R.A.C., no scrutineers, no crash helmets, minimum bureaucracy, maximum Beaujolais) all the other British cars, whilst their owners drove



mine. There were John Pettit's 1924 duck's back 12/50 Alvis; Tom Threlfall's completely original 1929 4½-litre Bentley; Roger Collings' 1912 Züst (fascinatingly like a vintage car) and the other real car present, Richard Campbell's very speedy 1934 M.45 Special (the special bit being the replacement of the saloon body by a lightweight tourer body). I also tried to drive Roger Collings' other car brought by Tony Jones. This was a Bentley 4½ in a 3-litre chassis with the maximum in "pottage dessus". Clutchless changes de rigueur, which flummoxed yours truly who reckons himself quite a dab hand—or at any rate foot—at the double de-clutch routine. Properly driven this ferocious car is very fast and totally different from the extraordinary delicacy of the Threlfall Tourer.

One of the tests at the Juvincourt race track, and the only one in the rally dependent on the performance of the cars and drivers, was a ¼-mile sprint. Richard Campbell won this in his M.45 over the souped-up Bentley and even a Type 57 Bugatti which turned up for the day. He won a handsome cup.

The so called rally started with the cars proceeding to Reims. "Après moi le Déluge", we cried as we passed one. The long journey, all

of 60 miles, was broken by a large lunch. Then on the following days we weaved our way from one champagne tasting or feasting to another, the cars being subject to regularity tests in between, likewise the drivers because of the champagne. Luckily an escort of motorcycle gendarmes kept their breathalysing brothers at bay. The proceedings ended with a gala dinner from 8.30 p.m. to 1 a.m. in the house of the Counts of Champagne, a true banquet. All the wives and girl friends suddenly blossomed forth in their true beauty and raiment of many colours, a delightful contrast to their motoring togs! John Creed-Miles obviously thought it was a fancy dress party and came as a sanitary engineer.

Camaraderie and conversation were on a "high" plane throughout. As we listened to a Frenchman coughing and spluttering loud and long at breakfast we were all just agreeing that people got to sound like their cars, in the same way they looked like their dogs, when one of our party objected strongly. His car, he said, was much given to backfiring. No one liked the cherry ice cream one day so it was deemed "grotty" (ugh!) and here comes the technical bit at last. Silting up of engines and radiators was agreed to be a problem with old cars and the benefits of kettle descaling chemicals were

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extolled for this. These are based on formic acid and we reached the general principle that serious overheating could best be cured by extensive formication.

No one overtook me when I was going 105 on the road back from the race track to Reims in the evening, and after I re-connected the twelfth plug lead in Kent on the way out, my V.12 stayed on song throughout and was a delight to conduct.

More people should try this way of exercising their old cars. The excellent sponsorship of Esso and three champagne houses, Mercier, Piper Heidsieck and Taittinger, apart from providing exceptional refreshment, kept the cost down. £60 each all found must be good for three nights in the best hotel in Reims and three days of very high quality guzzling and boozing, which is where we came in.

MICHAEL VALENTINE

## *50th Birthday for a 2-litre*

THE CONCLUSION that it is the uncertainty that makes the project interesting still holds good and was one of the motivating reasons for the trip. The car's 50th birthday, and the profit created from the sale of a younger brother of the same species (car) and the anti-packaged holiday syndrome found my long-suffering wife and myself on the North Sea ferry at Hull bound for Rotterdam.

The cost of the first night's accommodation in an unpretentious hostelry in the Ardennes forest cast doubts on the economic viability of the tour but was thought possible, if we resisted

the Maison specialities and made do with the less gourmet fare.

No hard and fast route was planned, making a change from check points, average speeds and trick questions, which was fortunate as the engineers who put together the 2-litre engine without a fan obviously did not have the Arlberg Pass in mind—with a following wind!

The ski runs in St. Anton looked even more scary without snow than on a winter holiday a decade ago—a sure sign of anno domini. The Alps looked as vivid and breathtaking as ever but our destination of Vienna required that we



At the summit of the Fluela Pass at 7,618 feet.



travelled on through less spectacular country.

Fine as the city of Vienna is, a population of over three million people, plus tourists, demands a sophisticated public transport system, traffic controls, one-way systems—all right-handed—which is confusing to a mature lady (car).

With a less than basic grasp of German, and after three days of sightseeing, it was a pleasure to point the bonnet in the direction of the Italian border, and some interesting rally-style routes.

Vienna boasts a very new Metro system, with stations and rolling stock to match, but no obvious places to buy tickets, and the only conclusion we could come to, after three days, was the the system must be free.

It was about this time that the engine produced a high-pitched squeak which, to my mind, was indistinguishable from the piston trouble experienced the previous year. It took a little while to stop and lift the bonnet to find it was the early stages of a blown gasket on the exhaust manifold. The only gasket material available was about  $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick and reinforced, and without one's favourite tools appeared quite impossible to cut at the first attempts. It is rather interesting to note that a tight joint is

possible with one stud snapped and two brass nuts with only interference fit, even after some 1,000 miles running. However, disaster struck outside the hostelry for the night. The important basket of luggage containing camera, binoculars, radio and whisky was placed on the ground behind the nearside rear wheel and it was surprising how quickly one realised what one had reversed over. Good to report, the bottle was not broken.

France, to our minds, did not match Austria or Italy in scenery or weather. Interest was aroused by an encounter with a Swiss gent driving an Amilcar, followed by another Amilcar on a transporter. We passed the time of day alongside traffic lights at the next town and would I take his regards to Robbie Hewitt.

The car, by this time, had fully regained her confidence to storm through Le Mans on a foggy, wet Sunday morning to finish the day on the Dieppe-Newhaven ferry in a force nine gale. The Victorian style hotel in Brighton was a welcome haven—I never was a good sailor.

As the well-turned-out continental gent exclaimed when we were stopped on the top of the Flüelapafs at some 8,000 ft.—“What a beautiful car!”

W. H. GOLDING

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# *The Parable of the Good Traveller*

AND IT came to pass that Lolita, one of the tribe known as Lagonda, a 2-litre Begat by Gunn out of Staines, was called by the decree of Kain to go and register at the place which is Silverstone near Towcester in the land of Northants, during the winter solstice.

And she travelled on that road which is Watling Street and she was heavy laden with many persons in the tonneau. But by use of even the 3,500th revolution and the fullest retard of the ignition she was exhorted and made to surmount even the severest incline with undiminished speed.

And on this same road there was another traveller, a seven, one of the daughters of Austin, Tourer by name. Yet this seven also was sorely pressed by weight of numbers, and her driver was crouched over her wheel, with cap reversed, and she was full of the Holy Goeth.

But even so, this Lolita did pass Tourer at great speed, yea even making mincemeat of her, until she was the merest speck in the desert.

Know ye then that there is a mountain called Corm Hill in the region of Bugbrooke and wherein did this same mighty Lagonda grind to the severest halt when only the foothills had been attained, on account of the unaccountability of the Holy Spirit within her loins.

And her driver did leap from her and with much weeping and gnashing of teeth did struggle mightily with her bonnet catch, and turn her lever to the reserve position, and only then did she suck and drank deeply in, and breathed again.

But even so, in the time taketh it for only the fewest grains of sand to run out, was the daughter of Austin upon her and came to pass her and her followers did mock and laugh and travel on with great whining of straight-cut gears. And having come to the summit of the mountain then did Tourer plunge onwards down its farthest slopes and go out of sight.


For it was known at this time that certain of the tribe from which Lolita sprang were not versed in the art of the ascent of such mountains without use of many asses, and she did now but slowly progress, but nevertheless was soon come to the summit.

But it was found necessary to halt and obtain sustenance at a wayside inn and only then could she continue her journey refreshed.

And afterwards, even by use of the most ultimate full chat, and by the passing of many caravans, she could not again find the company of Tourer (which is one of the Sevens), except until she was come to the place of the Silverstone. And she did enter its gates in great shame, and cast about her many droplets of Castrol R from within her differential, and her driver could not lift his eyes from her dumb irons.

And the moral is this, that pride goeth before a fall, and that the more the haste, yet even so, the less shall be the speed.

PETTIFER I. v. I-XI



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# Letters to the Editor

## Lagonda Lore

Dear Sir—K. H. Murray's joke; letters: Spring 1979, on the origin of our "Sonorous" (After Forshaw?) name, comes at the time when the accurate origin had been printed in "Automobile Quarterly" Volume 1, No. 1: "Lagonda" is a French Fur Traders' distortion of Wyandot Indian words meaning "buck's horn". A creek north-east of Springfield, Ohio, was so named because of its shape. It is now less attractively called "Buck" creek. It is regrettable that the article, while outstanding in content, gives no credit for the origin of the information, missing an opportunity for enhanced credibility as a result. The source is the Clark County Historical Society, the Curator is Mr. George Berkhofer. There is no more authoritative source.

On returning home to Detroit from Cincinnati recently, I made a side trip to Springfield to see what I could see. Sure enough, there is a Lagonda Avenue, Lagonda Church, Lagonda School, Lagonda Park, and so on. This is the industrial end of town and, frankly, is now somewhat run-down. Some of the houses on Lagonda Avenue, however, suggested it was formerly a rather grand street. Now the good news: Lake Lagonda, alternatively "Clarence J. Brown Reservoir", which was formed by a low-dam project is very beautiful, it forms the focus of Buck Creek State Park. Is this the venue for some future club meet? (I'm going to watch to see if Mr. Murray puns "up the creek" somehow.)

The Automobile Quarterly article falls down in only one regard: The Post War 2.6-litre gets reasonable mention, but no picture! Without one, what are we to use as a yardstick with which to gauge the beauty of the other models which are shown? Come to that, in about two years membership, I have seen only one picture and one mention of this model in "Lagonda". What's up? Is it that we 2.6'Ophiles are failing to sell the undoubtable technical merit of our favourite? Surely some member has the literary talent to do it justice. Granted, we would need a Browning or Wordsworth to describe the styling. When our man surfaces, will the LG.6 and 45 set be glad or sad to have it pointed out that the styling cues were carried through?

2.6 owners: let's start making ourselves heard.

HARRY CLAY (CII),  
Franklin Village, Michigan.

## A new Club Badge?

Dear Sir—After reading Peter Densham's article in the magazine of how the Club badge came into being, may I make a suggestion?

While appreciating the strong feelings that ran at the time of the amalgamation of the 2-Litre and Lagonda Car Club, surely those feelings have now been forgotten and we could consider a new design based on a decision as to which is the most tasteful to choose?

The present one is not, to my mind, attractive and is too reminiscent of Ford. I agree with Peter that the 1935 badge is the most attractive of all, so why not use that design with the word 'Club' (instead of 'Car Club') underneath? Also, remove the radiator behind it as the L.C.C. badge had. It would look really terrific! What do other members think?

ALASTAIR INNES DICK  
Stratford-upon-Avon,  
Warwicks.

## Olga Kevelos

Dear Sir—Although I missed the programme myself, I believe The Girl Who Worked at the Lagonda Factory post-war appeared on television the other night—Olga Kevelos, who was a well-known trials rider on motor-bikes some 30 years or so ago. The programme was *Master Mind*, and her subject? Genghis Khan!

PETER HULL  
V.S.C.C.  
Newbury, Berks.

## V.12 Hints

Dear Sir—With reference to Ted Overy's letter in the Spring Magazine. The reference number for the Kingpin thrust bearing on the V.12 is:

SKEFKO 3G 909622  
SKEFKO 3G 909522

You have to grind some metal off the bearing but I suspect Lagondas also did this when the cars were originally made!

These bearings are still obtainable from A. A.



Snell, 126 Boundary Road, Walthamstow, E.17, Tel: 01-520 5222. If you have a V.12 and some sense (this is not a usual combination!) you should order a set now.

HERB SCHOFIELD

#### **LG.45 Chat**

Dear Sir—I was interested to read Roy Paterson's letter in the Winter 1978 magazine regarding the whereabouts of *LG.45 OHC BKU 999*.

I owned this car from 1971 to 1975 and used it quite extensively during this period covering a fair mileage for an old car.

It was a very pleasant car with a good performance and excellent Girling brakes and was only sold to enable me to purchase the

prototype *1935 LG.45 Tourer DPE 120* which ran as a works entry in the 1936 Monte Carlo Rally.

Almost immediately after my selling it, it appeared at one of the London Auctions (food for thought here!) and subsequently found its way to California where to the best of my knowledge it still remains.

It was indeed previously owned by Peter Cavanagh back in the nineteen fifties I believe, although several years elapsed between his ownership and mine.

A. G. STEPHENS,

Neath, West Glamorgan.

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#### **Replacement Cables**

Dear Sir—Just in case it is not common knowledge, it may be worth while mentioning in the magazine that the following firm still offers an old-fashioned service in the supply of new replacement cables, individually made for pre-War cars like Lagondas:

Speedy Cables (London) Ltd.,  
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As an example, I recently obtained a 36" LG.45 Speedocable for £5.50, and a pair of 2-litre rear brake cable for £9. Both were supplied complete with the correct end fittings, and the staff appeared familiar with these fittings without being instructed.

The firm also carries out repairs to dashboard instruments and I believe it is associated with Richfields in the West End, but cannot be certain. Manufacture is usually carried out within 24 hours.

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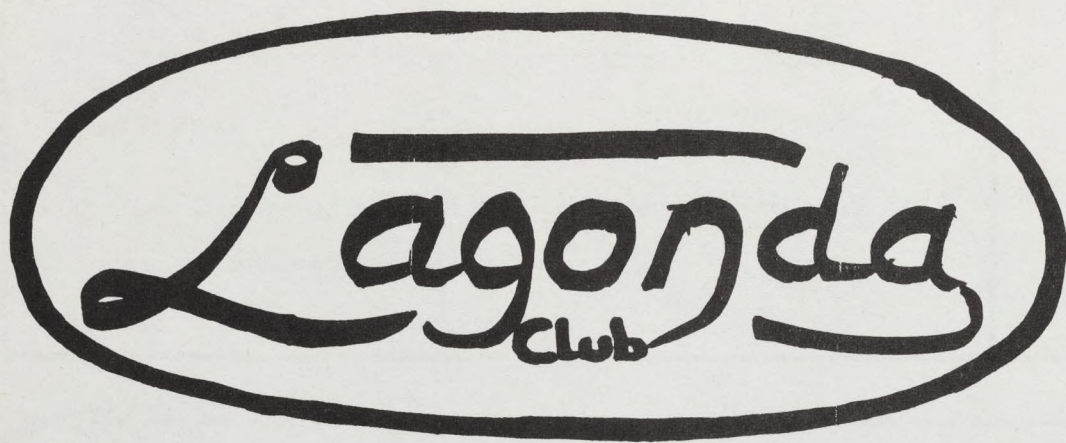
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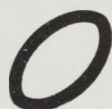
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