



**THE MAGAZINE OF THE
LAGONDA CLUB**

Number 117

Spring 1983



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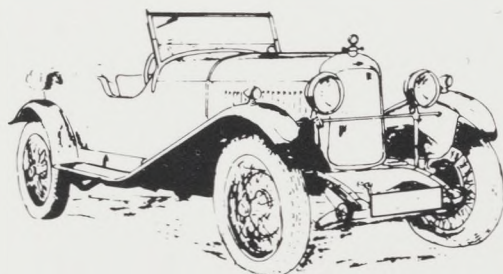
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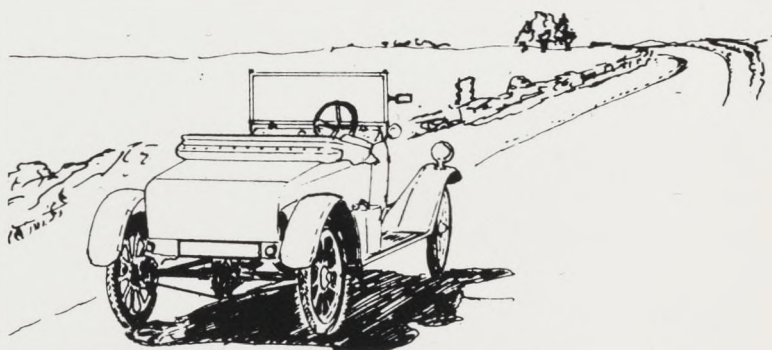
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FRONT COVER: A new hill climb.
Bernard Jacobson and his Rapier,
Templestone Hill Climb, Victoria, Australia.
Photo: Greg Stanfield.



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.

**COPY FOR SUMMER 'LAGONDA':
Please submit to Editor by
15th May.**

Out and About

THE FOLLOWING was, irreverently, scribbled on the reverse (blank) cover of Issue No 1 of the "Lagonda Register", the worthy predecessor of the present "Lagonda" Magazine.

The saving grace is the fact that this was a photostat of a photostat, kindly sent by Alan Elliott in response to the letter from John Anderson. This related to his lack of information on 2-litre carburation. One answer to the question has been culled from within. It is also full of information on various aspects of 2-litre history and data, as known in 1949. No doubt, large parts will appear in future editions of the "Lagonda".

Relating to sources of information, this Issue carries an "Index" of previously published 2-litre articles. If anyone would be prepared to do the same research for other models, this could be published in future editions for the benefit of owners.

On the personal side, the Editor's Lagonda is now "less engine". The work done in the past, by "Experts" WHO DID NOT SPECIALISE IN LAGONDAS, included the removal of the timing chains to replace the pistons (not easily remedied when you have to replace and re-time for the first time), the fitting of the head gasket left to right (easily remedied when you have diagnosed the fault), and the fitting of the con rods back to front on the crank (easily remedied once you have saved the money, not as easily recognised until you find that you need to save the money).

The engine has "come apart" very easily. The main problem now being: how does it all go back together again?

While I am "down under" solving this, would genuine "Down-Under" Members please note that the Committee is hoping that

both Jim Whitehead and Bernard Jacobson will be co-operating over their future needs. Bernard has written an article on the pleasures of using his Rapiers 12,000 miles away from Reliable Factory Assistance. And people think that the British do some silly things for fun.

Finally, as an apology from myself and our printers, for those of you who "saw Red" over the last Cover, congratulations.

For those of you who "saw Brown", sorry, you were right. Normal colours will be resumed from hereon.

Club Awards for 1982:

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PUB MEETS

Midlands: Third Thursday in each month at the "Gate Inn", Osgathorpe, Leicestershire.

Southern: Second Wednesday each month at 8.30 p.m. at the Windlemere Golf Course Club House, West End, near Lightwater, Surrey. (Near the junction of the A319 Chobham Road and A322. Exit at Junction 3 if approaching on the M3.) Alec Downie is the organiser.

Northern: First Sunday lunchtime each month at the "Floating Light", Standedge, near Marsden, W. Yorks.

London: Jointly with the B.D.C. on the third Tuesday each month at the "Bishop's Finger" in Smithfield. Easy parking.

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Oils: Are you moving with the times or sticking with what you know?

SINCE THE PRE-WAR Lagondas were designed, oil technology has advanced to the point where modern oil specifications bear little relation to the simple XL grades with which the cars were set up. In consequence it is much more of a decision of principle to use modern as opposed to traditional oils, as well as being increasingly difficult to find the traditional grades if you wish to persist with them.

I am unqualified to discuss the technical details of the subject, which are being covered by Duncan Westall in a future article, but have been asked to put forward the practical view on behalf of the average maltreater of fine old machinery. This I am well qualified to do. I shall deal principally with engine oils, as one seems to run out of the stuff rather more frequently than with gear oils, and chassis greases, but have added some passing thoughts on the latter as well.

Vintage Lagonda motors hold upwards of two gallons of oil, partly because the distances the oil had to cover within the engine were considerable, but mainly to employ the stuff as a heat sink, with the sump acting as crude radiator. This also permitted a sufficiently long circulation cycle for the oil to recover its viscosity to some extent, whilst in the sump. In contrast, a modern oil retains its viscosity better within a given range by virtue of its chemical formulation, and can therefore run much hotter without the lubrication film breaking down. This in turn means that a given lubrication performance can be obtained by an oil which is thinner to start with, which enables the engine designer to divert less power to pushing the oil around (which is what your battery groans about on a cold day) and more to pushing the car along, which is what the designer is paid for.

So thickness is one aspect; the other is additives for other purposes, primarily to prevent byproduct accumulations, like the inky paste around the inside corners of most of our engines. This is the detergent aspect, which is most extreme (I understand) in the case of oils for diesel engines. But the muck has to go somewhere and if you simply keep it on the move it has the long term property of a grinding solution, which brings us to filtration: this is the parallel technology which makes deter-

gent oils sensible, the idea being of course that if your filtration is efficient enough, the byproducts only ever get one part cycle around the system before being caught by the filter (so long as it is a full flow one of course).

Filtration technology has moved forward in parallel to oil technology, with Vokes being a pre-war pioneer who did much of his development work on Lagondas from the neighbouring factory (Robbie Hewitt now has the exceptionally nice Vokes 3-litre tourer). Vintage engine design, in Lagonda's case at least, gave little emphasis to filtration, and when one compares the practice then with modern standards, it is pretty horrifying to think of the amount of debris now eliminated, which in earlier days carried on around the engine till it was absorbed by the white metal bearings, or fell into the sump. (Again, bearing technology has changed and modern thin wall bearings don't have this absorbitive capacity.)

So where does this all leave us? If you are starting with a newly rebuilt engine whose bearing clearances are fine, and whose nooks and crannies are clean of sludge and debris, it probably makes good sense to use a modern oil and gain the benefits of easy availability and modern composition. It will run at a lower pressure when cold, which is a good thing as it relieves stress on the pumping circuit and face to face joints, as well as wasting less battery and engine power overcoming oil resistance. Equally, although having detergent properties, it should have no reserves of sludge to disturb in a clean engine, and being thinner its capacity to "throw out" sludge is unlikely to be much less than a traditional thick oil: I am uncertain about the process involved here anyway.

But starting with a clean engine it obviously makes sense to introduce a modern oil filter into the system, subject to one's feelings about the effectiveness of those originally fitted to many pre-war engines. An additional oil filter can do no harm, and the problem of originality of appearance can be overcome in a number of ingenious ways, one of which being to fit your car with "central heating", and have a copper piped oil filter/cooling circuit fitted from the engine back to the rear footwell region, where the filter can be tucked

away out of sight.

If you are running an engine which has done its fair share of work, and enjoys generous bearing clearances (here I can speak with the benefit of continuing experience), the use of a modern oil is probably less advantageous and may even be unfavourable. The multigrade feature is one about which I have some misgivings. The theory is that if you use a 20/50 oil instead of a straight 50, you should have a 20 grade equivalent when the engine is cold, but be back with your 50 grade viscosity when it has got hot. However, it seems to me that a lot depends on what you mean by "hot", and my suspicion (what with all that gallonage cooling in the sump) is that our "hot" is a lot less high in temperature than that of the oil in a modern engine running at speed. If this is in fact the case, then we should not expect to obtain 50 grade equivalent of oil pressure when our car has warmed up, but something further down the scale, say 40 or even 30, depending on the various factors involved.

So whatever the manufacturers' claims, in our old engines there is probably no substitute for a traditional 50 grade if you want to maximise oil pressure when "hot" by our standards.

One interesting observation in this area, is to cruise on a motorway at different speeds for extended periods. My experience is that you can "hold" your usual hot-engine oil pressure up to a critical rev figure (2,500 in the case of my 2-litre), but once you try to cruise at a higher speed you break through some kind of stable state in the engine, and oil pressure starts to sink, and carries on sinking. Presumably at the higher speed the engine can no longer dissipate the oil heat, and it starts to accumulate, or something. The amazing thing is how quickly oil recovers from these conditions: one red traffic light is usually sufficient.

A thought on the matter of oil pressure relief valves, of the adjustable variety. It is always tempting to seek solace in screwing the spring down, if low oil pressure is keeping you awake at night. But if the opening resistance is increased from 40 pounds to 50, this is going to make little difference to the worrisome end of the scale, when the engine is hot and running at 12½ lb. anyway (funny how even the ounces start to matter when you get below 15 lb.).

Another feature, encountered less frequently these days, is restrictors fitted to cut

down oil flow to some parts of the engine (usually the valvetrain) and leave more for the bearings. The correct (if fiddly) solution of course is to tackle the clearances in the valvetrain itself: on the 2-litre just watching the rockers with the valve covers off can show up the worst offenders so far as oil flow is concerned, and sorting amongst your spare rocker pins (if you are lucky enough to have any) can often find a better match with the rocker, which will appreciably improve oil pressure readings.

A tip for oil changes (apart from the ever useful reminder to close the sump drain tap before putting the fresh oil in) is to keep separate a gallon or two of new oil to run through the engine for a few minutes as a flushing medium, after draining the last lot. A fair amount of dirty oil stays in the various gulleys and receptacles (quite apart from the valvetrain which can be separately drained by special plug on both 2- and 3-litre) and even if used several times, your flushing batch will be cleaner than the dirty oil in the engine.

I will avoid rambling on too much about oils elsewhere on the car. Only the most fastidious rebuilders manage to stop the steering box leaking: you can buy 250 grade "steam oil" if you look for it, which runs out more slowly, whilst W. O. Bentley perversely put grease in his steering boxes but oil in the chassis joints, so perhaps the infidel among us could use light grease for Lagondas without too much distress.

David Hine said a few months back that you can't satisfactorily change from Castrol R (or other vegetable equivalent) to mineral oil in gearboxes and axles, without a complete strip down, wash and brush up. This may be true (it probably depends a lot on how gooey it has become) but it doesn't help much when you don't want to persist with vegetable oil, but don't feel like stripping the whole assembly either. I have heard that vegetable oils have a limited "standing" life in the unit, quite apart from their running life. Does this apply on the shelf as well, or only after some use?

Also, don't forget how easy it is to fit a button magnet to the oil plug in any of the major units, in comparison with the damage it can save by catching the odd steel fragment in the oil.

I have a theory that inadequate air breathing at the differential casing can cause oil surge along the back axle on to the brake linings, and

am experimenting with a breather modification one of my cars. Most Lagondas have nicely cross drilled filler plugs for this purpose, but they can get very blocked up.

Phil Ridout reckons that a 50/50 mix of engine oil with 90 grade in the gearbox, is worth three turns on the clutch stop adjustment, without doing any damage to lubrication properties. If your clutch stop suffers from oil mist or oil leaks coming back from the engine, and you don't mind the Bentley attitude to originality, you can vary effectiveness by drilling holes in the clutch

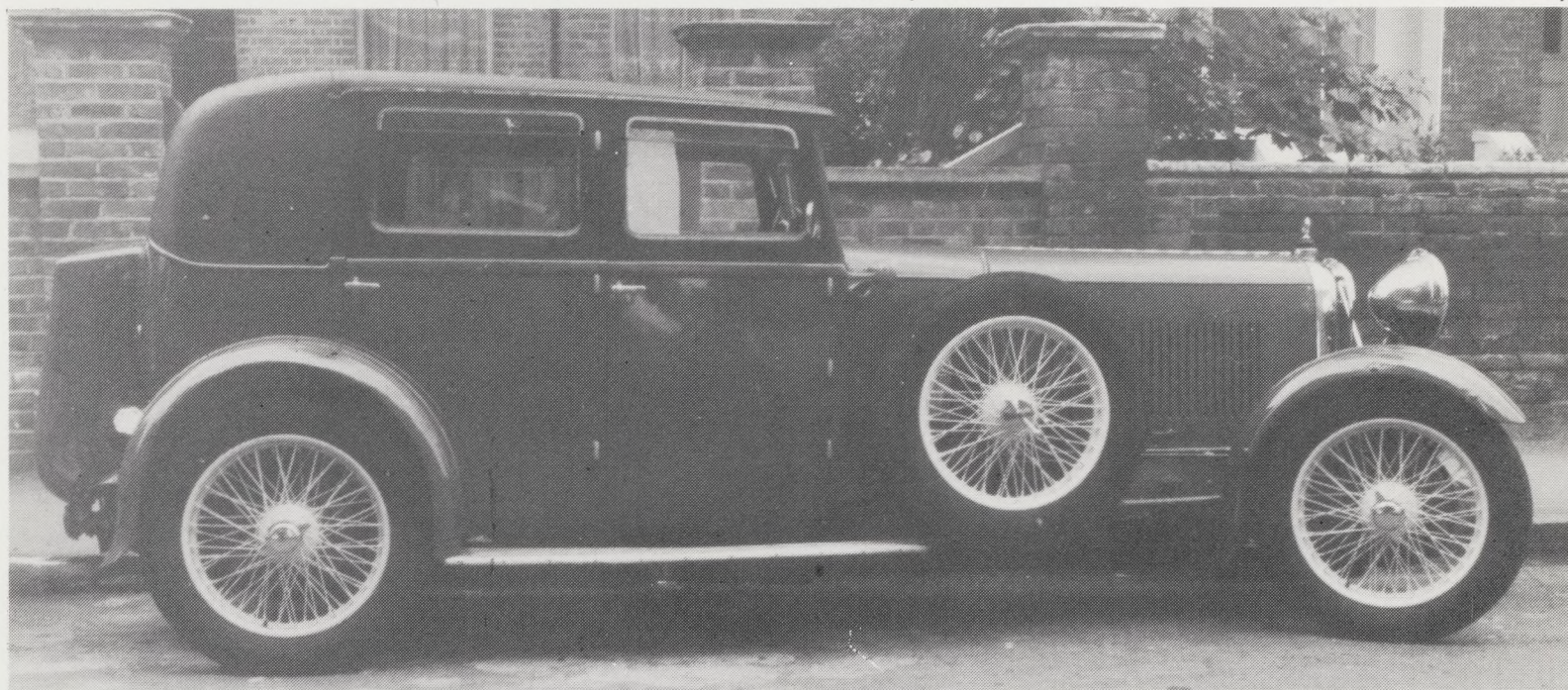
stop disk, like the modern motor cycle people have on their disc brakes.

Remember that most Hypoid oils (which our cars do not require, but can be sold to the unwary) have sulphur additives in them, which dissolve bronze very effectively. So don't absent-mindedly refill your gearbox with hypoid oil, if it has bronze bushes. I don't think your back axles do, in any of the pre-war cars, although I suppose the drain plugs may suffer slightly.

JEFF ODY

Jeff Ody's 3-Litre Saloon

Photo: J. Ody



This article will be of interest to more recent club members. It was written by the late Henry Coates in 1958 and describes his early involvement with Lagondas. It shows very clearly Henry's great enthusiasm for the marque and how his enquiring mind allied with technical ability enabled him to make his Lagondas go that little quicker — he is sadly missed.

MY INITIATION to motorised self-propulsion was at the wheel of the family Model "T". The succeeding Fiat 12 entailed painful re-adjustment of habits, due mainly to the need for using the feet for processes for which one had become accustomed to use the hands. Also vice versa. A small and unexpected windfall eventually enabled me to achieve independence in personal transport. I make no apology that the dream had always been Bentley. It was a decent and healthy dream in a young man in the early thirties. Bentleys were fine cars, and they were news — sad news just then because of the firm giving up, but Le Mans was still fresh in the memory.

Lagonda Log

The convenient knowledgeable friend, however, deemed that the available funds were not sufficient to purchase a reliable Bentley, and suggested a Lagonda or an Alvis. The latter had the wrong sort of wheels — one used a wheel brace to take them off — so the Lagonda had it. Early in 1934 therefore, I had the gratification — still tempered by regrets of Bentley — of going to London to look at the machine my friend considered appropriate for me.

First Two Litre

The first impression was magnificent. Beautifully clean, a taut look, twinkling hub caps — most impressive. The driver was from J. H. Bartlett, not so young but adequately keen-eyed, and the run, with 60 registering along a street full of L.G.O.C. buses (and in third too) completed the captivation. £135 the poorer, I set sail for home. Despite, or perhaps

because of, a couple of years on the Fiat, I could not change down — just could not. Of course I was used to something that almost had heart failure at over 30 in third and I was revving up too much, but the whole situation — grand new car and London — was too much for me to settle down and sort the thing out. Every time that traffic entailed too great a reduction of speed, I had to stop and start all over again — funny that later changing UP became less certain than down. To add to the complication there was another lever, and one could dip the lights by mistake instead of re-adjusting the gear ratios.

The journey had its disappointments. Despite the embarrassment of the gear box, and previous resolutions, 70 came up quite nicely — and quite often — but it made the thing boil. I did manage to change down, on the rise towards Welwyn, but only after several definite refusals of the cogs to engage. When forward motion had almost ceased the gear slipped in, so sweetly, into bottom! The gate was different from that of the Fiat. My mother solved the boiling problem — with washing soda — and the gears got less pigheaded, and I began to realise that it was all very well worth while. Looking back the car must have been in good shape, as well it might at barely six years old, though it was then considered incredibly ancient. I drove it flat out all the time and no doubt due to the thinner popu-

lation on the roads, managed to avoid calamity. It was a high chassis 2-litre, '28 model, green and black, registered YV 6639 and I kept it for 18 months. Those were the days when a decent 2-litre would hold its own pretty well amongst normal traffic, in fact be faster than most. Large Americans could accelerate quicker, and at times, on certain hills, there did not seem quite the right gear available — after being baulked one could pick up very nicely on second, but third was just too far away to take over decently.

Pennies being scarce on the farm, and my father suggesting that I should turn my bent for motor cars to profit, I tried selling the things. Selling any sort of car in a generally hard-up world was too difficult for me. The picture of myself flinging open bonnets of expensive and glamorous machinery and discoursing fluently on rockers, etc. proved a mirage. One starts by selling bread and butter stuff to folks whose only interest is what one would give for their horrible old one. Still it was an interesting experience. I lodged with a corsetry expert, had improper proposals made by a male customer of the garage, and developed a taste for beer.

Returning somewhat chastened, to agriculture, I regained mobility by spending £14 10s. at Pride and Clark on an Austin 7. This brought me North at great speed and 45 m.p.g. On the way I gallantly stopped to assist a lady,

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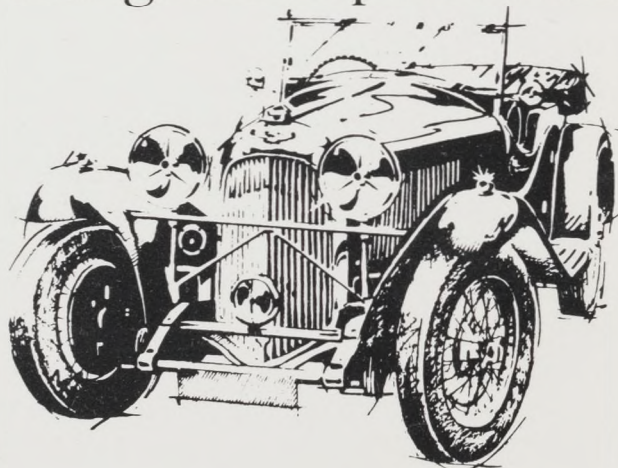


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apparently overcome with despair over a violently leaking radiator. It was not, however, the radiator! I gained, and still retain a great respect for the aluminium Chummy. It taught me, among other things, that it is better to connect the leads to the right plugs. It still reminds me that if a gentle engine has not much to pull, the performance can be quite lively. But, pennies or no, I wanted another Lagonda.

Second Two Litre

By November the convenient friend had found a Lagonda, so again to London, this time with Austin plugs firing in correct sequence. I was shown, and bought CXT 104. As before, but red mudguards and 1929. Also telecontrols and ribbed brake drums. It was not quite the same somehow. The steering was heavy and lifeless, and phenomenal revs were required to achieve 50 on third. However it was a Lag, and other things seemed sound. A good go with the grease gun sorted out the steering, and it always remained good. The gear box proved to have wide ratios. The registration letters (1936) and a "Douane" seal suggested that the car had spent its early life abroad, and the low indirects were to help it up the Alps. A breaker eventually provided another box for £1 (nudge Ivan!). Second gear was bust, but I was able to use the constant mesh gears and my 60 in third.

At this time, I had no thoughts of competition motoring, only wanting to get myself and appropriate friends about at great speed, and occasionally be suitably mounted in the car park at Donnington. I never therefore, sought greater performance than was built in at Staines. I was mustard with the grease gun and feeler gauge though! Increasing oil consumption, and chronic lack of currency, started my investigations into the insides. The first venture with Wellworthies, increased the consumption considerably. A wedding at Bromley, Kent, with taxi duty afterwards in the West End in a cloud of smoke, was probably instructive to the beholders, but to lose two plugs following a horse rally through the Rotherhithe tunnel was more than instructive to myself — always a bit claustrophobic anyway. There were not enough holes bored in the long-suffering pistons, but another fiddle made the rings work well for almost exactly 10,000 miles. This carried us into the war — against the Germans, etc. — nothing to do with the Lag. To the normal hack and trailer

work was added that of fire tender. We were not in quite the right area for fires, but we lost a lot of sleep until someone worked out a rota system. Many miles were covered with numerous temporary firemen inside and a magnificent pump behind.

Third Two Litre

The 10,000 miles coming up and all compression vanishing, almost overnight, something had to be done. I had for a long time hankered for a low chassis model, and an opportune advertisement of V. W. Derrington caught my eye. At Kingston I met GF 1954. With that number one would have to find a lot of faults before rejecting it. It had faults — there were no lamps, it was tatty — but there were some tyres, it sounded nice, and the price of £52 10s. included fitting a new hood, so I bought it. Some non-standard lamps were fitted — and some non-coupon petrol put in the tank, and I had a good run home. That car really did go well. There was a trace of smoke, and compression was not fierce, but it was beautifully smooth and very lively. When later the engine was dismantled, all the rings were stuck in the grooves, so probably the performance was due to lack of friction.

The transport officer of a unit in the area took a fancy to CXT. Whether for personal use or to help the war effort I was not clear, but he was in such a hurry to take over that I was unable to remove the telecontrols and a few other useful fittings.

The first misfortune with GF was when the fibre timing gear stripped some miles from home. A convenient pub provided homely and comfortable hospitality, meantime Lagonda Motors acted on my telegram and sent a new gear. It was only now that I found that GF was one of the few that were getting along with a sprocket less than usual — the gear was "wrong" hand. Telephoning elicited the fact that Lagondas had not a correct one, but would do something, so I went home by several trains and buses. GF and a heavy trailer load, including a hive of bees, was left in the care of the pub. Stupidly I had not taken home the old gear, or made a note of which hand it was, because I did all the bus and train business again with another cog to find that that would not fit either. Eventually the correct one was found, the car and somewhat restive bees retrieved, and GF settled into the routine, changed only in that it was now amateur

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soldiers instead of firemen.

The cycle front mudguards broke stays, and acetylene welding repairs did not last long. Some fixed mudguards from an Austin, of all things, were wished into place. The effect was not too bad, and they kept the mud down and the side lamps up quite adequately. Compression becoming increasingly diffident, I bought, unseen, another engine. It proved to be a standard High Chassis one, and was from the car at Rochdale that had been fitted with a Humber engine. It would turn over, I had been told, but the starting handle had bent in making it do so, and a rocker had broken rather than overpersuade a rusted valve. I took it to pieces — and put it together again. Hoping to be able to get the original engine decently done up, I was economical enough to do the bare minimum on the Rochdale engine, which consisted of freeing rings, valves etc. and replacing only the scrapers, and a couple of compression rings that I had bust. The very oval shaft had to do, and the bores were very rusty, though not pitted and not very worn. With only an extension to the starting handle, this dropped easily into the car. Lagonda Motors rather frightened me with their quotation for an overhaul, and I found no-one locally that I could trust prepared to do anything for me. Also, I was not yet brave enough to tackle anything very drastic on a "good" engine, so the old Rochdale engine was still functioning in 1945.

A further Derrington advertisement led me to a blower chassis, complete except for the blower. Ideas for a dashing two-seater seemed difficult to implement after a quotation for £300 to construct the body, so the engine was tried in GF. A supercharger had not seemed very appropriate for day to day motoring, but an inspection of the beginnings of my heap of bits gave me the idea of constructing another vehicle that would serve as a hack, and save the tidy car some indignities. (Of this vehicle more anon, but it allowed me to think of supercharging.) The original GF engine was sold, the blower engine came out of the car, and the Rochdale put in for another spell of duty. The blower engine was reconditioned throughout, and a Zoller 5 supercharger, that I had found (? Ed.), fitted. The blower engine was eventually fitted into GF, along with the correct cross bars, and also the Z gear box from the blower chassis. (The more obvious way would have been to fit the body

to that chassis, but I had discovered a nasty crack in the frame.) I could not at first sort out the lubrication of the Zoller, and until Hibbert came to the rescue with advice and the necessary bits, it was far too much or nothing. Having sorted out that one, and given the new pistons time to get used to their bores, I began to appreciate the performance. It was quite a revelation, as also was the smoothness.

At about this time Densham wrote about the 2-litre Register, while I had already joined V.S.C.C. and a local club, and a few mild adventures began to happen. A Vintage rally at Piercebridge (on Tees) and the Lag A.G.M. at Brimpton the following day (1947) entailed a grand Sunday morning dash from the former to the latter, as a final fling before petrol, and competition, became available once more.

The interim allowed me to do something about the fabric body-covering which was coming off. I committed myself by giving a good pull which brought off a lot more. (It was an early low chassis, by the way, with the body stopping at the chassis, the latter being camouflaged with louvred valances.) The doors were very shallow, and the cut-away horizontal, and both these features were more inconvenient than on the high chassis cars I had been using — somehow the body seemed to have been sat on, as well as the springs and axles. The screen was also too low for me, and I only avoided a permanent stoop by selling the car! The other bothers I got over by rebuilding the near side with one very wide deep door, and lowering the cut away. The latter was not for effect — previously the side was too near the wheel and with a glove and heavy coat it was difficult to reach the gear lever. The original aluminium was used, with additional pieces, to cover the body, fixed with innumerable screws, and stones of stopper to smooth it all off. I lost the rear door, and the passenger seat was made to fold to allow access to the rear seats. Folding at the wrong moment, it wrecked what I had hoped would develop into a beautiful friendship.

Unluckily, I think now, I became gear ratio

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by Davey & May

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conscious, or perhaps heavy axle conscious. I worried that all the new power would be too much for the light axle, although my blower chassis also had a light axle. Sheer curiosity had driven me to decipher the figures on the pinion housing, and I was horrified to read 10-44. I immediately swapped to the other axle which was 10-42, and worried Ivan Forshaw until he produced a heavy axle. This had the surprising ratio of 10-53 and bolt on hubs, but it *was* "heavy". Ron Barker, now of the Autocar, sold me the 10-41 C.W. & P. which I desired. This was all very nice — impossible to bust — but the performance lost its edge. Funnily enough, it did also bust! A half shaft gave up, fortunately almost at home. It was a little unhealthy looking when I put it in, and I had done some pretty severe motoring in trials. Road tests usually quoted a ratio of 4.1 to 1, but the "Motor" said 4.4 to 1.

The first Vintage trial was certainly thought provoking. I had read of the exploits of W. M. Couper, T. C. Mann, etc. and rather thought we might surprise someone. It was not us that delivered the surprise! A bottom gear of about 13 : 1 with 5.25 × 21 tyres full of wind, and a moderate c.c.-weight ratio, proved great pride reducers. Subsequently, when steep hills and re-starts seemed likely to be in the programme, the wide ratio gear box from the van was borrowed, and some 7.00 × 17 wheels fitted behind, with the blocks removed to keep some clearance. The tyres were very supple white wall affairs, that I had worn smooth on the van. They would stay on with less than 10 lb. of wind, and adhesion was capital. With these and a starting ratio that gave the engine a chance, quite some fun was had by all for a year or two. The blower was losing blow somewhat, and on one event power was very short and was contributed to by some misguided attempts to better the carburetter setting. The rotor went so far as to seize up on one occasion. Fortunately Hibbert was following and transported the personnel to the "Bull 'i Thorn", and while they dined, Bosworth, Rees and I think others, very kindly went out and collected the machinery. Next morning the offending parts were removed, the spindle holes sealed with corks from the bar, and we returned home in no ungraceful manner. Barimar re-instated the rotor, meantime GF motored very happily drawing mixture through an empty Zoller casing — happily until a slight back fire disturbed the bottom

cork and it fell into the drive. The cork should be assembled so that it will withstand both blow and suck! Later I attended an A.G.M. in this form and did the 200 miles at 40 m.p.h.

3/2 Litre

The supercharger not being all that effective, despite Barimar's attentions, I was arranging carburetters etc., to run unblown until I had sorted something out, when I found only 1½ compressions — the starting had been so certain that the handle had not been used for ages. Investigation brought to light an engine full of bronze filings and a gudgeon boss short.

This seemed an opportunity to try an idea I had been playing with for some time. I had come into possession of a 3-litre engine, and thought it would make a compact car if fitted into a 2-litre frame. It could and did. I used the spare frame, now repaired, and borrowed the body and some of the bits from GF. The thing was registered LBT 74. It was a rush job. I had done nothing to the 1928 72 mm bore engine beyond holding a perfunctory roll call of essential bits. It was run for the first time on a Thursday evening. On the Saturday I had planned a 200 mile jaunt with a friend — female and rather nice. Seven times in 20 miles I stopped to joggle the relief valve, as oil pressure was very shy — to the extent of complete retirement a mile or so after each joggle. Finally I deposited the friend — f. & r.n. — in a cafe and went to work in the adjacent garage. This time I tried the input side, and found the suction filter full of fluff — not the best place to carry fluff in a Lagonda. The 200 miles was performed with no further anxiety about oil.

This machine did rather surprise people at a Welsh Rally (V.S.C.C.). There was plenty of power low down, so gradients and re-starts were no problem, even with close ratio gears. The chassis was a bit lax, partly because I had cut into the front cross member and not adequately reinforced it, and the steering not what it should have been. I think the experiment worth while, and was planning to develop the hybrid, but a character wrote and suggested that some member might like to buy a Rapide.

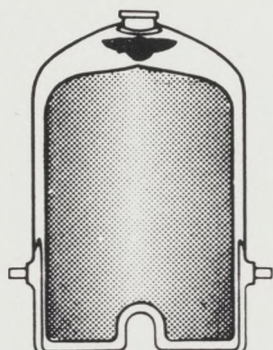
M.45R

It has not proved a particularly cheap car, and would have been expensive if I had not by

now overcome my diffidence at investigating the more intimate details. BPK 743 has quite a history. It was first owned by one A. E. Dobell, who drove in several of the more desperate rallies of the day. It was prepared at Staines for the Monte of 1935, in which there was some unspecified hitch and the car did not get through from Stavanger. The next year, and again from Stavanger, it finished the road section "clean". It also took the award for open large cars in the comfort competition. A Monte Carlo miniature plaque was on the dash reading 1938 — I am not quite sure whether this is authentic. Dobell also entered more than one R.A.C. rally, and reports mention his dashing driving in the tests. I believe in the same car. I am told by H. Overstall, who once owned the car, and who knows J. E. Davies well, that it was frequently at Staines making good after Dobell's adventures. The man from whom I bought it had a reputation as a buster of cars, and I must admit to getting worked up a bit in tests, so it probably does well still to be a motor car at all!

As I bought it, the car had deeply valanced wings — aluminium behind, a tank holding some 40 gallons, and a 3.6 to 1 axle. The body is panelled in aluminium. The boot — infinites-

simal, due to the encroachment of the petrol tank — was very shaky, and the mudguards insecure. A horrible noise sometimes greeted one on taking up the drive. At first I put this down to the free wheel, but in due course drive failed completely. With the greatest good fortune this happened within yards of a garage, but on holiday in Devonshire. Hoping that Forshaw was at home, and plentifully supplied with half shafts etc., I helped the garage to lay bare the axle. We had not far to look. The spider revolved free on the pinion shaft. The Woodruff key had gone and it had been driving protestingly on the jagged remains of the taper. A new key and an extra washer got us home. The radiator leaked, and was breaking up, but I managed to convert the core of an M.45 rad to fit, and it is only now beginning to be tiresome again. The M.45 also supplied front mudguards, which, with new rear ones, were fitted professionally. The spare wheel brackets were loose, one also broken, and as the two spare wheels up front seemed high and wide, and I thought looked too ponderous, I fitted one to a completely new and thoroughly reinforced boot lid. The arrow head extensions to the bonnet boards are still there as is the red badge on the radiator and



GWR

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the 40 gallon tank.

Virtually everything has had to be done to the engine, and now it is nice, but needs some craftiness to the carbs. The gearbox was always virtually silent on all but bottom gear. Oil was being lost very fast past the front bearings. A new seal was effective for a couple of thousand miles only. A bit of re-alignment of gearbox to engine effected a complete cure. Recently vibration behind the engine developed. I suspected the prop shaft, but replacement of the shaky end did no good, so I have dispensed with the free wheel, which was a horrid mess and could, I think, have been running askew. It seems to have done the trick. The gearbox was rebuilt into a non-free wheel case, with new bearings, which seem to have altered the mesh a trifle, as there is now a small whine — I think it should go off in time. The clutch seems a little prone to slipping — maybe due to my efforts in tests.

Performance was magnificent — still is, but I am used to it, and other cars have got faster in the six years I have had it. The steering is very quick — a very long drop arm seems different from that on other Rapides I have seen — and tiresomely heavy for parking, but first-rate when moving decently. Despite the weight the car is remarkably nimble. The original Luvax were ineffective, and someone had purloined the telecontrols. I now have Hartfords all round, backed up by large Armstrongs in front, and some elderly and not very large Houdaille behind. These were on the van for years, and I found they still had a lot of bite, so fitted them to the Rapide, and they are very helpful. I seem to have arrived at a combination that gives a decent ride, yet holds the thing down quite well.

First 16/80

Two 16-80's have spent a little time with me. The first was a late model, with a most luxurious body. I felt I was old enough to affect the dignity of a car with a permanent roof, also the thing looked lonely and unhappy getting wet in its field. It had also got rather wet behind the panels and a lot of the timber was rotten. The steel panels themselves were pretty hopeless, so I lost heart, and sold it at a small loss — always buy a car in daylight!

Second 16/80

The second was an early saloon GG 9134. It had been around for some time, and was in

fact the Allison brothers' first venture into Lagondas. They had done it up very thoroughly inside and out. The subsequent owner drove it rather too well and bisected a connecting rod. I bought it complete with hole. Having come by a Crossley engine I was able to replace the rod, and stuffed the bits of crankcase back with plenty of Loy. The second time on the road was to the marshals' dinner. It steered and handled beautifully. The engine did its stuff very well too, but was not very quiet, and of course the body amplified the gearbox noises nicely.

The Van

The van deserves a mention. The bits that comprised the first edition were:— the ex-blower chassis, an old type gearbox with wide ratios — (ex CXT), a high front axle from a 16-65 (T. D. A. Kennedy got the engine) and a home brewed covered wagon sort of body. Later it was rebuilt on to a 14-60 chassis, which gave more body space. The front of a Sunbeam saloon was incorporated as cab. The old Rochdale engine went in just as it was from GF. After about three years I decided it was time the crank was round in the appropriate places, and had it made so, professionally. The bores were not too bad, so the old pistons went back. In assembly they reversed the gasket and wondered why it would only fire on two cylinders — if they had continued to rev up the exhaust would probably have burst a way out, but I arrived to collect, and had to wait while the head was taken off. I was rather pleased with that bit of diagnosis.

Later I got wind of a 2-litre chassis in Cumberland. A friend wanted something of the sort, so we went to collect. He sat on a seat tied to the bare chassis for 150 miles behind the Rapide. He then did not want the chassis. However, I did because it was an early 14-60 and from the condition of shackle pins etc., could only have done a low mileage. I transferred the van body to this (not a word to the licence dept!). The engine proved not up to the rest, and having stupidly sold the other engine — which, by the way, went into a tourer — I had nothing to replace it. The mudguards were not pretty and were inclined to fall off, and I suddenly got tired of the whole thing, and dismantled it. Now of course I miss it greatly, but the bits are in good hands and may yet reappear as parts of the Pape Special.

This machine was at everyone's beck and call for almost 10 years. It also did some long

trips. Twice to Carlisle to collect most of a 3-litre, once in the snow to Knutsford, and several times to Bawtry. When the 3-litre engine was part of the cargo, two of us considered we had done well to get it in without mechanical assistance. It lay on its side just inside the tail board. At various times, axles ratios 5, 4.4, 4.2, 4.1 and 3.6 were used, the changes being to liberate the one in use because someone wanted it. The Rochdale engine was in my possession for 13 years. It propelled GF for several years, the van many more, and was lent to someone else for three months. No phenomenal mileage each year, but in almost constant use for short journeys. The same pistons were in all the time, and when I sold it, it was not a heavy smoker, and still boasted compressions.

LG.45 Saloon

As the years go by one becomes more sensitive to aural and physical disturbances. Performance at the cost of clonking chains and inflexible springs, no longer satisfies the Aldington Brothers. The first whisperings of this desire to cosset the person were there with the first 16-80. A vast Darracq with foot thick cushions was a tentative feeler towards luxury, though this again was sold before being motored. A temporary hack, to do some of what the van had done, was a 15 Daimler. Here was luxury all right, but at the cost of a very poor driving position. Just now I have really found something — in a drive at Bridlington, and likely to be scrapped because it was in the way — CKX 183 an LG.45 saloon. The price? What I got for the Daimler and a gearbox! Here *is* luxury. Not only deep soft seats, but leg room, and support — no craning to see out, no reaching for controls, no sliding about. Of course, there are things that matter. I have had a short drive, on one mag and five plugs only. It is quiet, smooth, steers beautifully, and even stops — when asked to.

It had never seemed possible to own two 4½'s concurrently, even if it was wise. It had become possible only because of the circumstances of their purchase. It is, indubitably not wise, because both are potentially respectable motor cars — too respectable for some of my transport needs — I'm afraid the pigs will just have to get used to the idea of walking.

Peroration

It would have been educational to have

owned more of other makes. Transport of some form has always been a necessity. Pre-war the 2-litre had the accommodation and strength I needed, and was economical as to tax and insurance. I looked at such things as Delage, Ballot and Sunbeam in the same sort of power and quality class. They were all beautifully made, sometimes verging on the exotic but almost always fell short in the matter of driver comfort. Since the war, and getting involved in the Club, Lagondas have become perhaps a habit, but it is difficult to think of anything else that would provide what I want in my price range. In the period of manufacture of the cars I have owned there must have been someone at Staines, who really knew what a driving position should be. I wonder if many other makes have been so consistently good in that respect. GF only suffered a little from perhaps too enthusiastic efforts at lowering in an early batch of low chassis models. Handling always seemed first rate, performance in relation to weight of the cars and size of engine was I think good. Workmanship was of course magnificent.

The 2-litre is probably the one that commands the greatest affection. The engine is so beautifully put together, withal so robust. It can, too, be really quiet and smooth, and given enough oil and not undue hammering, will stay so for a very long time. The trouble starts when a small modern overtakes and three rude children make faces at the old "racer" they have passed. Remember your 2-litre is probably 30 years old — 30 years before that it was only the powerful few that could do much more than the then legal limit, flat out. One of the charms of my 2-litre van, was that I had all the qualities of the 2-litre, handling, feel, smoothness — yes, even with oval journals — and no-one jeered at me if I did not want to cruise at more than 45 or so. It would do that very comfortably, only I had to watch the mirrors because I was of course subject to a 30 m.p.h. limit.

I did not give the 16-80 a fair chance. If I had taken the trouble to quieten the machinery it would have been a very pleasant motor car. Mine went really well, was comfortable and handled very nicely.

For fine easy performance the 4½ is the thing. I like the Girling brakes. They are simple and if the expanders are kept free, stop the car very nicely. It is probably not a good idea for the king pin to emerge inside the brake as the

linings don't like grease. The cap usually holds, but has to have a good washer and be tight to be safe — a silly little hexagon to tighten it with. My own gearbox is nice and quiet and lovely to use. Several third gear casualties I have heard of, make me think that the engagement puts odd stresses, particularly if hasty clutch-stop upward changes are practised regularly. A pity that fashion or financial expedience necessitated the fitting of a detachable radiator shell. I have not found out yet enough about the LG.45 to hold decided opinions. It certainly promises to be quieter than the Rapide, and smoother, but whether due to something inside the works, or because there is more padding between the works and me, I would not be sure. I am glad it

has an aluminium body much kinder to new and proud owners than rusted steel.

Do I still wish I had a Bentley! Of course I do. Apart from the glamour and magic of the name, they did go, the steering was very good, if heavy, and there was a nice gearbox, but at my price, they were noisy mechanically (the drive to the cam shaft, I understand), and the bodies were disappointing. Somehow one had to fish for the gear lever among one's legs. The components were all very robust but were they maybe a trifle heavy for the chassis they were attached to? The design was of course several years earlier than the Lagonda.

Staines has done me very well. Do I thank Wilbur Gunn, Brig. Gen. Metcalf, or Bert Hammond? All three, I expect, and several more!

D.H.C.

Fuel Saving on LG.45s

THE JETZERS' experiences driving to Switzerland with an LG.45, recently acquired, remind me that I too found a small pool of petrol on the ground last year after filling up at a wayside garage on a hill in France. Others perhaps may be interested in a cure.

The metal filler pipe in each rear wing is connected to the petrol tank by a hose. This hose is quite large — 2½" (63 mm.) bore and has a tight 120 degrees bend. It would be difficult to find a replacement and these reinforced rubber hoses are unsatisfactory anyway. They tend to kink and restrict filling and they disintegrate if the tank is left with more than 14 gallons (64 litres) for any length of time. 4½-litre engines are not so finicky as to resent dilute rubber solution for fuel but the large flaky bits may interrupt the supply.

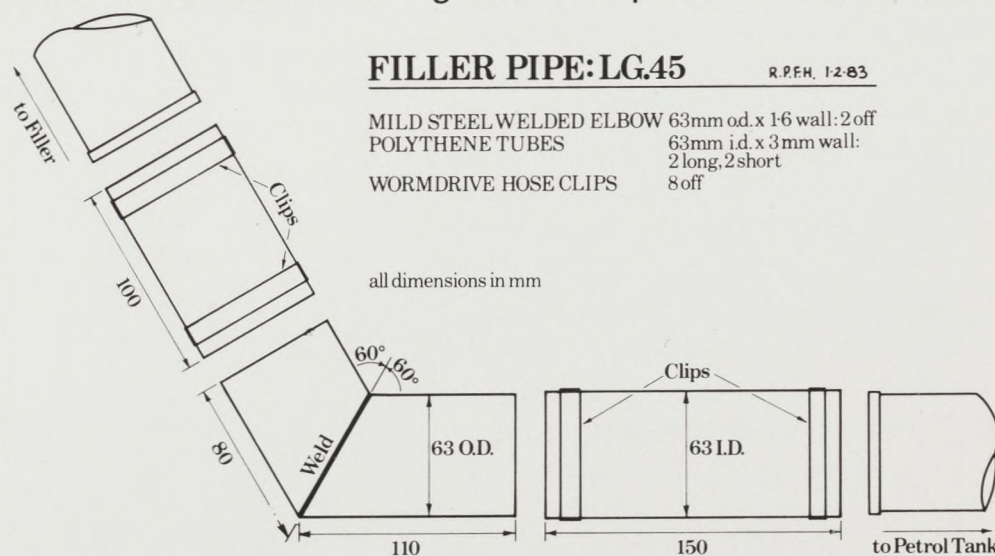
I obtained a piece of polythene hose of 2½" inside diameter and proceeded to bend it as recommended by the local, friendly plastic

tube concern. This proved a snare and a delusion. At temperatures little higher than the boiling point of water it shrinks, thins at a bend or goes tacky. The alternative had to be a manufactured metal elbow.

Searching revealed an old propellor shaft of just the right proportions — 2½" outside diameter, 16 gauge wall thickness. From this pieces were cut and welded as in the sketch. The cut, at 60 degrees precisely, must be clean and accurate to give a neat, petrol-tight weld. After thorough cleaning, the two elbows were sprayed twice with pvc (polyvinyl chloride — more resistant to petrol than normal paint finishes).

Assembly to the car with polythene hose connections required some pushing and pulling. Using liquid soap, as tyre fitters do, did not help; but with polythene a smear of grease was permissible and that did work.

"LEPUS"



Sources of Technical Reference

2-Litre

THE FOLLOWING SOURCES of reference have been researched by John Anderson. They relate to articles that have appeared in the "Lagonda".

A lot of this appeared within the first 50 issues, so newer Members will have to be pleasant to the "more established" figures within the Club to gain access.

The first part deals with items of general interest/information and is meant to be studied with a copy of the Handbook.

Part 2 deals more specifically with detailed aspects.

GENERAL: "Wottle": No. 95, p.19 (H. Coates), No. 99, p.13.

Care and Maintenance: No. 91, p.20, cont'd No. 92, p.15 (Reprint of Davies Motors booklet). **Care and Maintenance:** No. 3, p.8, cont'd No. 4, p.8, No. 5, p.9, then reprinted No. 57, p.20, No. 58, p.26 and No. 60, p.8 (reprint, 1929 Autocar). **16/80:** No. 7, p.18 (reprint, Autocar). **"Your Lagonda & The Law":** No. 94, p.18 (Davey). **Low Chassis Rebuild:** No. 110, p.5 (Anderson).

Blown Car: No. 25, p.13 (Autocar Road Test). No. 69, p.3 (Motor Sport Road Test). Also No. 96, p.22 (Timing/Carburation).

Radiator: No. 53, p.14 (Repairs, Peerless).

Kigas Pump: No. 114, p.23, No. 115, p.13 (Overhaul).

Clutch: No. 46, p.20 (Overhaul, Forshaw), No. 102, p.5 (Removal, Ody).

Shock Absorbers: No. 109, p.19.

Gear Box: No. 3, p.5 ("Z" Box Bearings), No. 52, p.22 (Lubrication) and No. 33, p.14.

Timing; Ignition/Valve: No. 11, p.13 (Vernier Couplings), No. 38, p.4 (Valve Timing, Dalton), No. 39, p.22 (Jones), No. 96, p.22 (Blown Cars).

N.B. P. Whenman suggests Inlet opening 3 deg. BEFORE T.D.C.

Carburation: No. 6, p.6 (S.U., Forshaw), No. 96, p.17 (S.U., Tomlinson), S/C No. 96, p.22 (Zenith, Tomlinson), No. 8, p.14 (Forshaw).

Water Pump: No. 23, p.20 and No. 48, p.30 (Forshaw).

Body Repairs: No. 33, p.18 (Thyer).

Threads: No. 6, p.6/7 (Forshaw), No. 12, p.20 (Hartop), No. 77, p.8 (Kenny).

Brakes: No. 5, p.12 (Drum Measurements),

No. 15, p.18 (Compensator Modification, Dean).

Steering: No. 7, p.9 (Toe-in Measurements), No. 21, p.44 (Axle Tramp, Forshaw), No. 27, p.12 (Page), No. 36, p.10 (Dismantling Steering Head) repeated No. 110, p.14.

Rear Axle: No. 33, p.14 (Lubrication), repeated No. 52, p.22, No. 34, p.18 (Overhaul, Rees), repeated No. 75, p.4, No. 98, p.16, No. 44, p.27 (Broken Half Shafts).

Lubrication: No. 20, p.30 (Oil Pressures), repeated No. 109, p.4, No. 33, p.14 (Gear Box/Rear Axle), repeated No. 52, p.22.

Lamps: No. 65, p.17 (Regulations, Davey) followed by No. 74, p.20, No. 94, p.18 (continuation including complete car).

JOHN ANDERSON

After that hard work, here is one answer to the question raised by John Anderson in the last issue:

SU JET AND NEEDLE SIZES

Model	Year	Carb Type	Throttle Needle Dia.	Jet	
14 H.P.	1929	Pair H.V.3.	1 1/4"	No. 4	·090
2-Litre	1932	Single H.V.3	1 1/4"	No. 6	·090
14.9 H.P. 4-Cyl. Supercharged	1930	Single H.V.5.	1 5/8"	K.	·100
16 H.P. 6-Cyl.	1933	Pair H.V.3	1 1/4"	No. 62	·090
20 H.P. 6-Cyl.	1933-35	Pair H.V.4.	1 3/8"	No. 7	·090
1104 c.c. Rapier	1933-34	Pair H.V.2.	1 1/8"	No. 2	·090

ZENITH

	Single Carburettor	Twin Carburettor
Choke tube	23 mm.	24 mm.
Main jet	85 c.c.	85 c.c.
Compensator jet	125 c.c.	130 c.c.

And a second answer for Zenith carburettors, supplied by R. D. Taylor, courtesy of Zenith in 1951.

2-Litre Type 1-36 V.H.

Choke	27	Needle Setting	30
Main Jets	110	Starting Jet	120
Comp. Jet	90	Venturi	50
Slow Running	65	Control Jet	120

Lagonda Service in the 1930s

AS THE YEARS go by, the memory fades. So as my three score years and ten approach, I thought that I should record one or two impressions left behind by a two year period with Major W. H. Oates at the Lagonda Service Station, Staines during 1933 to 1935.

My school record was a disaster and in desperation my parents sent me to an engineering college in Chelsea, where I found my niche and gained a Diploma and working knowledge of both women and cars. At this time jobs were not easy to find. After one or two unsuccessful interviews I joined the Lagonda "outfit", with another ex-student. He was Derek Van Hooydonck, whose uncle had been involved with the Phoenix car some years earlier.

The workshop was at 195 Hammersmith Road. It consisted of a scruffy building, set back from the main road by a cobbled passageway just wide enough for a car, a Reception Area and a Workshop which would take up to eight cars. This backed onto the F*ll*rs factory, the smell from which put me off their products for life.

The staff consisted of a Receptionist/Clerk, who usually dressed in a Hacking Jacket and Knickerbockers which created the impression of a horse-trader, 2 Mechanics, an Improver, who never improved anything, and a "Boy".

About that time the Meadow's engined 4½s were just coming along and we were working on these and various older models, chiefly 16/80s, 2-litres and some 11.9s. (2-litres, *OLD in 1933, Ed?*)

Looking back it is incredible the jobs which we undertook, in spite of the very basic equipment, no lifts or pit, just a small machine shop with workbenches. We undertook complete overhauls, including body removal on chassis damaged cars. The mechanics were the backbone of the workshop and would undertake any repairs that came along. I learnt a great deal whilst working with them.

Discipline was strict. No tea breaks, just a cup of tea at the bench whilst working. A 49 hour week, for which I was paid 10d (4p) per hour and expected to decoke a 4½-litre in eight hours. If it took any longer I would be in Major Oates' Office to explain why. We had

guaranteed work from Staines when they were "swamped out". This entailed, amongst other duties, the collection and delivery of cars to Staines which I was often called upon to do, which at that age was most exciting for me and instilled in me a love for the Marque which exists to this day.

The first Rapiers were in lots of trouble. We worked on several with timing chain and other snags. Tim Ashcroft was a frequent visitor and was very friendly with Oates. The prototype short chassis Rapier that he ran for over 60,000 miles was quite reliable and we were responsible for servicing it for him.

The problems came with the modifications made to production cars.

The highlight of the year was Showtime at Olympia, which was just along the road, when we had Demonstration Cars at the works. It is just as well that there was no breathalyser in those days, the Salesmen being a tough, hard drinking lot. I expect that they had to be to sell Lagondas as many of the purchasers in those days were "ex-army" types.

Major Oates always dressed as an ex-army Officer, with Bowler Hat, Dark Waistcoat and Kid Gloves. Even when working on the cars he never removed his Bowler and hardly ever his gloves. He was quite an impressive figure, which no doubt helped to inspire confidence in our Customers. He tried, however, not to let them see inside the Workshop.

I left just as the Rapiers were bought up by Oates, Ashcroft and Brocklebank and as the trucks started arriving with production parts from Staines. How the cars were ever produced in that small workshop and the Kew premises I shall never know, but they were. But that must be another story. JOHN WHITE

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Hermes Notes

THE NORTHS were busy with Ian's R.A.C. Rally preparations, Don was away on his oilrig, and Vic convalescing nicely; but Ken, the Beardows and the Patersons had a great weekend in November, in the Lake District. They thought they had better stick around there having heard of two members of an adjacent area planning a dirty weekend with Violet, whatever that may mean. Anyway, it coincided with the VSCC Lakeland Trial; a good excuse for all. Herb and his mob have had a jolly time marshalling one of the sections for the last two or three years, whilst some of us have been pretty regular spectators, and occasional marshalls, since 1959.

At the official H.Q. we politely asked the chief marshal where we should go to find the Lagonda team, he said, "Go to blazes..." but benevolently enough gave us a map reference which led to Blaze Beck, a new one to us. It's a good section. We could overlook it all by remaining in our cars parked on the verge. Competitors climbed up to the Finish which was at our roadside. Marshalls tramped up and down until it was dark.

An unpredictable weekend it was. In their wisdom the V.S.C.C. hierarchy had appointed a stranger to be in charge of our section. He is not even a member of our club. And there he stood on a slight eminence just like the Monarch of the Glen. Our crowd were all wrapped up in winter woollies and ex-service combat kit for these high altitude northern climes. The commanding giant stood there in his little Highland jacket, his unbuttoned shirt trying hard, but unsuccessfully, to cover up his great and hairy chest. A pity he'd left his kilt at home, but he never seemed to feel the cold at all. Perhaps his bushy black beard kept him warm. Or perhaps it was his own personal Boss Marshall – that's what it said on her armband anyway – who kept handing him a large flask from which he took copious draughts. Mind you, he'd have a worthy comrade if Alan Brown had been there. But let it be recorded that Boss Marshall also handed round her flask to most of the Lagonda marshalls. It was good Scottish spirit and quickly engendered a warm clanny feeling of camaraderie. Except for Violet.

Obviously the thought of two stout Lagonda

members bouncing up and down on her was just too dreadful to contemplate and so, no mud-slinging so far as she was concerned. Remaining pure and spotless and unsullied to the last, Violet's weekend was not as planned. The plans of Herb and Roger consequently went awry. Indeed, we were most surprised to even see them by Blaze's. Yet there they were, larger than life in their thick hairy woolly top-sweaters. Our immediate past chairman, considerably girthier since relinquishing the job of keeping the Lagonda Club in order, and still "ebullient", had wisely decided to do something about it for the sake of his health and considered his Saturday would most beneficially be employed in bouncing up and down in somebody's car. And that somebody was Roger.

The latter's entry on the official starting list was No. 24, R. F. Firth, and Violet was across in the next column, 1922 (a bit long in the tooth?) Sima Violet. No wonder the poor little blooming violet wilted at the prospect of suffering under that load. After all, she's only 5.2 h.p. and there must surely be a reasonable limit to the ratio of pounds per c.c.

We were not surprised to observe that whenever Boss Marshall offered her flask round to the marshalls, two thick hairy woolly top-sweaters appeared nearby. It is not known how many times the flask was replenished at the only car permitted to drive down to the start, a blue Citroen, while the Monarch extolled Dyane's virtues to the already converted, and from time to time let off the odd thunderflash to keep his men on their toes.

Unfortunately no Lagonda appeared on the entry list. The 4½-litre models are not supposed to be suitable, yet there were two Vauxhall 30/98s among the awards with two others not, also a 4½-litre Bentley. Two of our members present were not competing, but as their big Lags were in absolute concours condition they are readily forgiven. A few years ago Elliot Elder's 3-litre was entered, and two years ago our John Harris got an award in his Rapier.

Yes, it was a great day, fine dry weather again with some sunshine and the grass in surprisingly good condition. Whilst waiting for the first competitor we were approached

by the local hunt, and it was interesting to see them rounding up the lost and limping hounds afterwards. We were also entertained by the antics of a lone red squirrel.

Third competitor up our hill was S. Mann, but in a 2-seater Austin 7. It's amusing how these tiny ancient cars excel in scrambling up at these trials, but it's frustrating when one's own 4½ spins to a standstill and is manhandled to the side whilst a succession of these babies pass with no bother at all, as your scribe knows.

This V.S.C.C. Lakeland Trial is becoming a well-established occasion in our own club calendar drawing ever-increasing numbers, and especially for Herb's party afterwards at The Swan. It is worth mentioning that during the weekend the Yorks and Lancs and Ches regulars and their ladies were pleased to welcome R. J. Hewat(t) and navigator from Edinburgh in his Rapier tourer, and P. J. Evans, albeit without his Richmond Rapier. From further afield, Perthshire no less, came

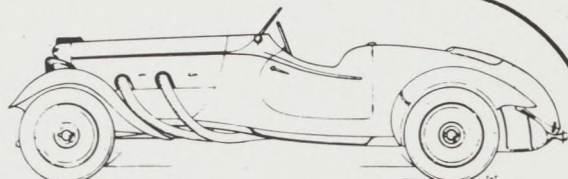
our keen and efficient marshall-in-charge, Branislav Sudjic, and his Boss. He's not in our club though; he's a Salmson. We thank him for his spirit and hope to see them again. It would have been interesting to meet the crew of AMF 805, a business-like looking Lag apparently up for the weekend but not competing, and not down in our club register. We did see John and Iain Macdonald. John's been a section chief for years and years but their hill was elsewhere. We hope they were not led astray in the dark after climbing Newlands Pass.

We now look forward to the follow-up social gathering at the Hull Area Christmas Dinner. Our thanks to John Beardow who must be well pleased with himself over the terms arranged for B. & B. (£18.50 double room), for those staying overnight. Didn't our Chairman mention hotel prices only last Maytime? We're not sure how John himself feels about the meal, or did the printer just forget to mention the cost?

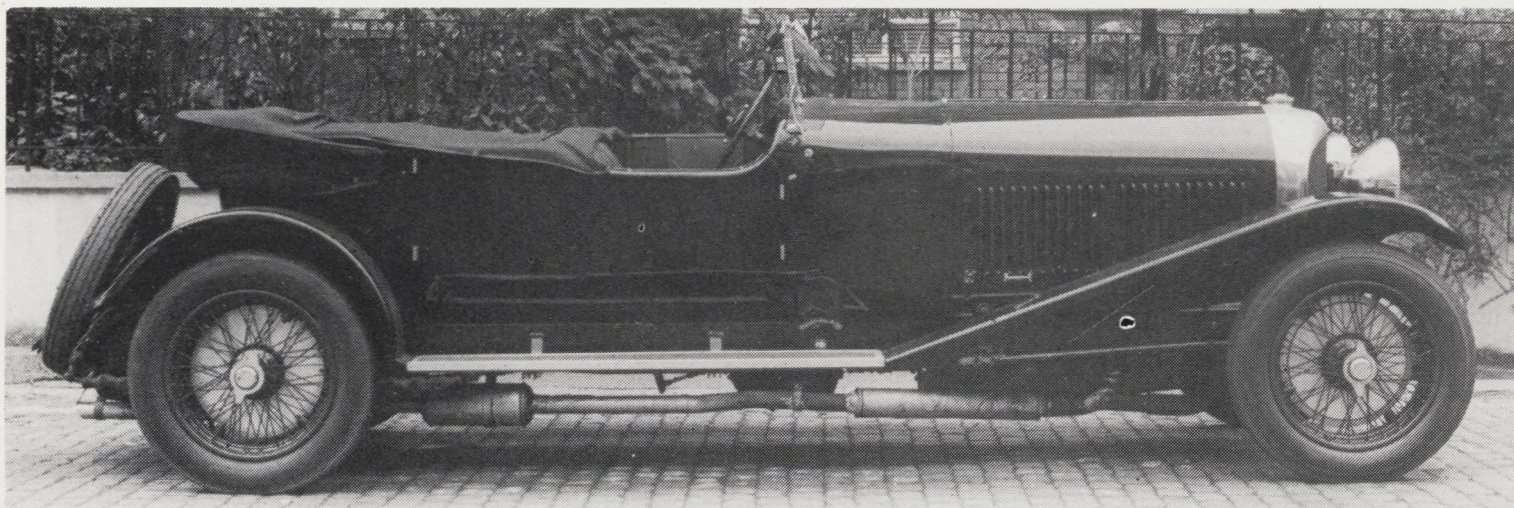
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Round the Horn

HAVE YOU ever wondered what has to be done when a fault in the horn circuit is traced to the steering wheel push button and what goes on down the steering column when you juggle with the hand operated throttle and ignition controls? I was recently forced into finding out and at the same time decided to do something about the fact that most of the movement on each control was utilised in taking up the slack!

Description:- The steering column control unit consists of three tubes, the inner one being the ignition control, the centre one, the throttle control and the outer one the locating tube containing a back plate at the steering wheel end. This outer tube is secured by an olive and gland nut to the end plate of the steering box. At the steering wheel end the individual control tubes are fitted with friction plates, the throw of the handles being limited by the retaining bolts passing through the back plate. Movement to the levers at the bottom of the steering column is transmitted through skew gears. Finally, the horn button cable passes through the inner tube.

Removal:- First put the steering column control handles fully downwards and then disconnect the horn cable – if you have to do this from the horn itself now's the time to fit a connector just below the end of the steering column. Remove the ends of the control rods from the two levers and subsequently the two screws securing the side-plate on the aluminium gear housing fitted to the end of the steering box. Note carefully the position of the levers and as the plate is withdrawn the skew-gears will come away with it on their respective shafts. In so doing they will twist the levers away from each other and these new positions will have to be noted for re-assembly in reverse. Next remove the aluminium housing by taking out the long bolts from the end. The ends of the control tubes will now be seen, each containing the skew half gear located by a lock-nut. Note very carefully their positions both rotationally on the shafts and axially by observing the position of the lock-nuts and take measurements from the end of the steering box. Also exposed will be the gland locking

nut – remove this and then lever the whole assembly out from the steering wheel end – DON'T bash the end of the tubes; the olive will then fall out and the whole assembly can be drawn out from the steering wheel. Under the base plate at the end of the main tube there are two locked bolts – remove these and the head will come away under spring pressure. The removal of the two countersunk screws exposed will reveal a bakelite socket containing two terminals to which the horn flex is attached. Between the two terminals is a circular nut which needs a forked screwdriver and removal of this releases the push button; under spring pressure. Contact is made in the following manner. The push-button contains a brass disc through which a bolt passes into the bakelite socket and this is secured by aforementioned circular nut – this in turn is in contact with one of the terminals. The other terminal is integral with a brass ring on the reverse side of the bakelite socket and presto; when the button is pushed the brass disc comes into contact with the brass ring.

My trouble had been that the circular nut had come undone allowing the push button to drop off. All was well as I had an auxiliary button wired in the dip switch but problems arose when the nut jammed between the two terminals and the horn was permanently live!

Returning to the other end and the hand control gearing – the spindles of the gears are housed in the aluminium casing as also is the inner (ign-control) tube – this is bad – the bearing surfaces should be bushed and this is what I have done. End play on the spindles will also create play and shim washers must be used. The levers are secured to the spindles on tapers (un-keyed). If you have to start from scratch with a pile of bits as I did proceed as follows.

Having secured the assembly with the olive and gland nut, set the handles at the steering wheel at the halfway mark – slide the skew half gears onto their respective tubes with the centres of the toothed surfaces upwards – slide the aluminium housing into place and observe from the side that the two gears are positioned axially with their tooth centres in line with the lever spindle bearings which of course run at right angles thereto. Lock up the nuts on the two skew half gears and bolt the

housing into position. Insert the spindles (they are not interchangeable) and replace the side plate. Push the handles at the steering wheel fully downwards. Place the levers on the spindles (the cranked one is the forward – ignition one) and set them at right angles to the housing or slightly leaning backwards. Adjust and fit the throttle and ignition rods not

forgetting that the throttle one has to slide freely.

On Reflection:- For a firm permanently in financial difficulties, what an expensive method. Think what those gears would have cost or worse still having them made now! Radial levers and Bowden cables at the bottom end would have served the purpose.

JOHN ANDERSON

Colerne Caper

AN EARLY breakfast in the Victorian splendour of Minley Manor with Mike and Wendy Hoare – out to the car park – spitting with rain. Hoares and Lagonda to Harrogate; Weld, crew and Crossley to Colerne. Wretched climate: beautiful day yesterday for the A.G.M., though.

Mike Stapleton and I set off in the Crossley, via A30, A303 and all manner of little roads in Wiltshire. Heavy rain near Andover – hood up and got soaked. Mike's first trip in vintage car – has that "I wish I'd worn my wet suit" look. I get wet right arm as usual.

Colerne Airfield found after much milling about. We are late. Find paddock splendidly lined with vintage machinery of all sorts. Lowering skies.

Find Dick Sage and 16/80 and piece of ground. Hood down, windscreen down, unload everything including (heavy) spare wheel, book in with Rosemary Burke, stick on

number. Join very long queue of all other late practisers.

First practice – matched with 3-litre Bentley. Start together but Bentley suddenly looks very small. Second practice paired with large Sunbeam Laudalette – Crossley suddenly looks very small from Sunbeam.

Then it rains. First timed event: sit in rain and get wet. Large volume of water collects on flat windscreen. Cascades into lap as speed increases. Paired with Dick Sage in 16/80 which stays the same size then drops back a little (missed gear he says!). Second timed run: 16/80 pulls ahead with a higher 3rd gear: so it's One All this time!

Great day despite the weather. Pleasant trip home. Passed by a Hyper Leaf which goes very small very quickly like the 3-litre Bentley.

Back to Minley Manor; Mike goes to the Red Sea to dive, I go to the Falklands. Falklands like cold wet windy Silverstone all the time.

STEPHEN WELD

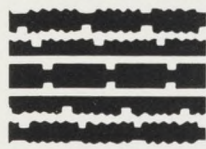


A wet Weld. Stephen and the Crossley at the Start

Photo: 2nd Lt. Mike Stapleton R.E.



TRIPLE STUD (S5) PATTERN



F4 PATTERN



B5 PATTERN



D2/103 PATTERN



R5 PATTERN

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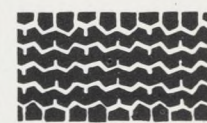
CHEVRON PATTERN



5 STUD PATTERN



R5 PATTERN



R6 PATTERN

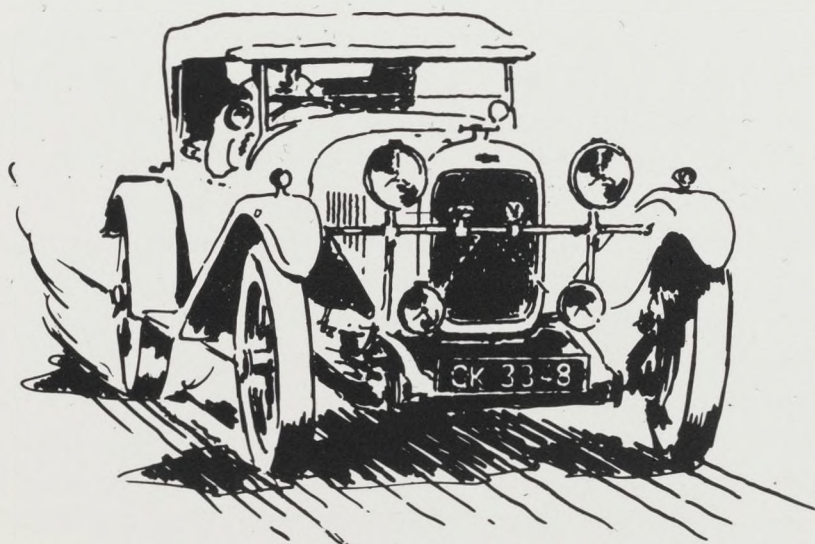


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Peter Whenman

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On Racing a Rapier in the Antipodes

DURING A visit to the U.K. in 1977 I decided to look about for a collection of unwanted spare parts that could be used as a basis to build a Rapier Special. This was intended to compliment the LG.45 Drop Head I then owned. After some fruitless searching Tony Wood very kindly introduced me to Witt Wittridge whilst attending the V.S.C.C. Silverstone July meeting. As it turned out, Witt had for sale, a complete set of mechanical parts including a front and rear axle, but unfortunately lacking a chassis frame. Undaunted it was decided to buy this "box of bits", in the hope that a chassis would eventually turn up.

On the return trip from Horsington, where Witt was ensconced at that time, we detoured in order to call on Ivan Forshaw in the hope of persuading him to part with a chassis. Yes he did have a Rapier frame but it was part of a complete "kit". It never rains but it pours, seemed to be the situation. However the good Captain did promise to see if he could find another chassis, with that thought in mind we returned to Australia. After several international phone calls it seemed that all hope of finding a bare chassis was dwindling and so the decision to purchase the Captain's "Kit" was made.

After some little delay, this arrived safely and over the next eighteen months was rebuilt into a lightweight two seater with cycle wings. Following a successful year or so, culminating in the two seater winning both the V.S.C.C. of A. P.V.T. Trophy and the Rapier Register's Ashcroft Trophy, it seemed time to do something about a proper racing car. Naturally it had to be a Lagonda and preferably a Rapier. This decision being made easier by virtue of Witt Wittridge's "box of bits", still sitting on the shelf. Once again we went in search of a chassis. Knowing that none of the Rapiers to be imported into Australia had ever been broken up, and not really being in a position to trip off to the U.K. again, the only alternative seemed to seek out a suitable substitute. Eventually a mutilated Amilcar frame was unearthed in M.45 owner and friend Graeme Steinfort's, store of vintage "goodies". This had been truncated at a point

just in front of the rear spring mountings. Not being easily put off, this was carried home, where it was completely taken apart, then re-arranged with the Rapier components in the appropriate places, laid out on the workshop floor. At this point local historic racing car restorer/builder David Low was brought in to give an opinion. Yes, given time and thought, it could be made to work, although the rear suspension would call for a drastic departure from the original. Three months later we had a rolling chassis, with the Rapier rear axle housing modified to be carried on trailing quarter elliptic springs, located fore and aft by radius rods. The Lagonda brakes converted to hydraulic actuation, two leading shoes on the front and one leading and one trailing at the rear, these being operated by twin master cylinders. While this work was being carried out the Rapier engine was away being bored out to 66 mm. to take A.J.S. pistons, at the same time the crankshaft was ground and the bearings remetalled, everything being crack tested, polished and balanced in the process. The camshafts were reground to give slightly more lift and overlap. Then the whole thing was re-assembled most carefully. Special inlet manifolds had to be fabricated so that the 1½" S.U. carburettors cleared the steering box, this being the original Lagonda unit. On the exhaust side four separate pipes discharge into a short tapering section of three inch diameter, terminating in a diminutive silencer, this in order to pay lip service to the regulations. In actual practice the car is remarkably quiet.

Finally the car was ready to be fitted with some clothes, accordingly one of Melbourne's specialist coachbuilders, Bill Sheehan, was engaged to wrap it up in aluminium. His brief being that as the car was essentially to be a competition vehicle that lightness, simplicity and practicality were the keynotes. Chassis dimensions dictated an off-set single seat body style, with a short pointed tail to complete the ensemble. The chassis and running gear had been painted Bristol Green and when the bodywork was completed it seemed rather a shame to cover up all that shiny aluminium with paint, so this was then

brought to a high polish instead.

Some few days short of six months after commencement the Lagonda Rapier special made its debut at Calder Raceway for the Historic Racing Registers November 1980 Meeting. Unfortunately this was to prove to be a total anticlimax, when after three or four laps of practice, the wick was turned up, to record third fastest pre-war practice time, only to come to a very quiet stop on the next lap with a broken camfollower, and that was that. As a result the Christmas holidays were spent crack testing and polishing camfollowers, having "borrowed" one from the two seater Rapier. All this to have the car going by the end of January for the V.S.C.C. of A. races at Amaroo Park some thirty miles north of Sydney and five hundred and eighty away from home in the suburbs of Melbourne. This time we arrived a day early in order to be sure that the car was "right". Number two camfollower broke within five minutes and without putting a wheel on the circuit Returning to our billet with Sydney Rapier owner, John Hamilton, it was decided that our reground cams were to blame. Fortunately John had his engine in pieces, so our testing day was spent changing over camshafts and replacing one camfollower.

This time we survived practice, to become scratch marker in the first race the car had ever actually started in, incidentally giving the limit man one lap less one cars length start. The result - Third outright (pre-1940) and First P.V.T., the race being won by an Alvis 12/50 engined Bugatti with a Brooklands Riley second. The second handicap saw the same starting positions. This time only a driver error could be blamed, the car spun on the second last lap and got well and truly stuck in the sand, having just passed the Riley to move into second and to within striking distance of the leader, the Riley went on to win. The third race for the weekend, a scratch race for cars up to 1955, disproved the theory about camshafts, when follower number three broke. So we returned home to Melbourne and a serious postmortem. This time four exhaust camfollowers were taken to one of the country's leading racing engine builders. (We had only experienced breakages on the exhaust side). He prescribed some strengthening in the vital area just behind the rubbing surface, this was carried out, along with some judicious lightening and more

polishing. The motor was then re-assembled with the high lift cams in place once more to be prepared for the Easter Historic Race weekend at Adelaide, about four hundred and fifty miles to the west. This weekend consists of circuit races on the Saturday then an early start on Sunday to give another sixty miles to Collingrove Hillclimb for the South Australian Championship. At last the engine stayed together for the whole weekend, and we were rewarded with two first P.V.T. in combined races for cars up to '55 and first P.V.T. at the hillclimb.

Back in Melbourne we attended the M.G. Car Club's hillclimb at Templestowe, this time only three miles from home, where we were rewarded with third fastest P.V.T. behind a S/C Austin and a T.B. M.G. Special. On this occasion we had one particular "moment", when the throttle jammed wide open approaching the first corner, a blind ninety degree left hander dropping sharply down hill. Three weeks later we were heading off once again, this time to the Combined Vintage Club's driving tests. Here we managed to gain second place in the Acceleration and Braking, being just beaten by John Oulds very quick M.45, after the Special suffered vast amounts of wheelspin on the grass surface. Remarkably the motor was still holding together, requiring only the normal amount of maintenance to prepare it for the Austin Seven Club's Races at the Winton circuit, about two hours drive north along the motorway towards Sydney, the faithful old 3.8-S Jag tow car averages about 60 m.p.h. towing the tandem trailer loaded with racing car, fuel, tools etc. After putting in some fairly fast practice laps, when we were called up for the start of the first scratch race for pre-1940 cars, we were placed number three on the second row of the grid. The flag dropped and away we went in a terrific burst. Burst being the operative word, as the Lagonda gave a short, sharp rattle, went silent and stopped, just short of the first corner, having poked number two con-rod into the water jacket. This put paid to any more racing for that weekend.

One problem we have here in Australia is the almost total absence of major spares, there being only two surplus engine blocks (for Rapiers) in the entire country and neither owner was anxious to part with their precious reserves. The only thing to do was to weld the block and sleeve the damaged cylinder bore,

at the same time it was thought prudent to fit a set of Jaguar 3.8 con-rods. While the engine was apart the opportunity was taken to install some larger (1½") inlet valves and to further lighten the flywheel by replacing the standard Rapier clutch with a stainless steel drive-plate. The work being done during our winter to be completed in time for the Light Car Club's September meeting at Sandown Racecourse. Here the car track shares facilities with one for horses. Sadly, as happens so often when things are done in a hurry, the repairs to the block proved to be unsatisfactory, with water seeping into the sump. Despite liberal doses of magic potions, eventually after three oil changes (2 gals. each) in as many hours, wisdom prevailed and the Rapier was loaded on to the trailer. With the V.S.C.C. of A. Geelong Sprint meeting only one week later, the sump was removed and an attempt made to inject more sealant. As Jeff Ody was to be visiting for this weekend it was hoped that at least a temporary repair could be effected. All seemed well when Jeff had a brief drive in the car on Saturday afternoon but after the second run on Sunday morning the sump was once again filled with "Malted Milk". Yet again we had to be content with second P.V.T. with a time of 16.98 to be beaten by a Bugatti type 51 S/C which covered the quarter mile in 16.84 sec.

The only thing to do now was to totally strip the motor once again, the cylinder block was then taken to "Loc-tite" where it was placed in a series of pressure vessels containing one of their very special fluids. While all this was happening the final race meeting for 1981, the Historic Racing Register's Calder event came and went without a single Lagonda entry.

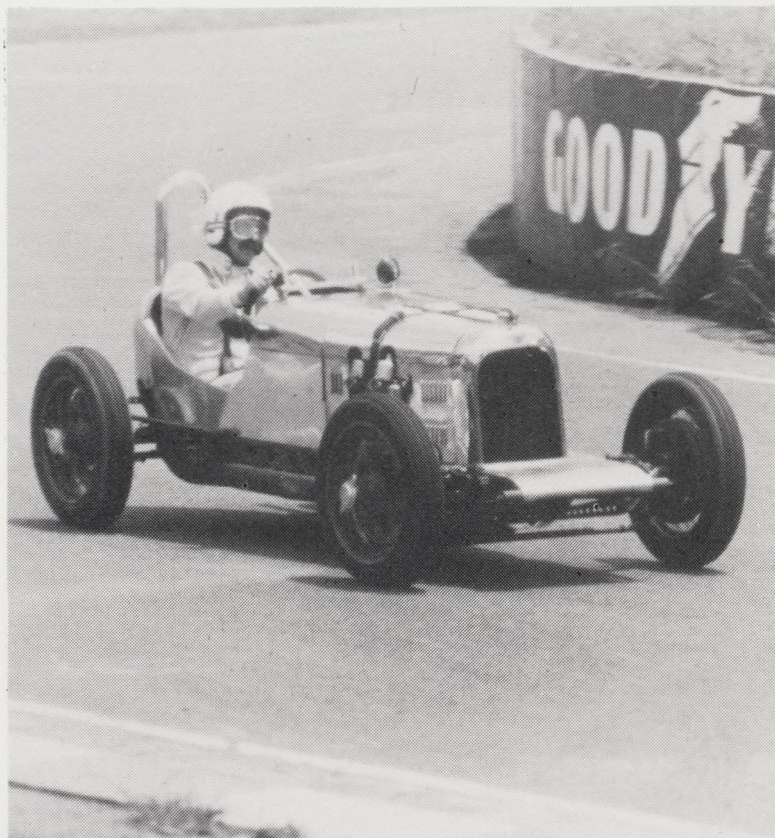
1982 opened with the annual V.S.C.C. of A.s Amaroo races in Sydney and for this year we decided to give the Rapier two-seater an outing as we were going en-masse with the three other Rapiers of duPont, Hussey and Seath, the M.45 of Hewitt acting as mother ship. The first outing for the Rapier special for the year being the M.G. Car Club's Templestowe Hillclimb. Yet once again the Blown Austin Sevens proved unbeatable, the racing Rapier finishing the day third P.V.T., my two-seater being driven by duPont on this occasion placed fifth with Hewitt's M.45 sixth. Next event on the calendar being the Combined Clubs' jolly I decided that the two-seater was really much more suited to events

conducted on grass. Then it was time once more for the journey to Adelaide for the Easter weekend, for this year the order of events being reversed with the Collingrove Hillclimb first and the circuit races on the second day. This hill suits both car and driver and for the second year we were rewarded with First P.V.T. South Australian Hillclimb Championship. Next day the car was still as sweet as ever finishing second P.V.T. in the scratch race and first in the handicap. David Seath, now resident in Australia, borrowed the car to drive in the Regularity Trial managed to take third place.

With some trepidation we returned to Winton for this years Austin Seven Club's races, however our worst fears proved unfounded and once more the Rapier followed the Supercharged Sevens home to be placed third in one scratch race and second in the other. On this occasion the handicappers were too clever for us.

Some of the U.K. members may have seen something of the very fast Austins when a team of five cars carried out a "Raid" on the English circuits during the summer of 1981. Weighing around 600 lb. and producing in excess of 80 b.h.p. (i.e. around 300 b.h.p. ton) they are virtually unbeatable on the extremely tight one to one and a half mile circuits used for Vintage and Historic racing in Australia.

BERNARD JACOBSON



*A corner of Australia. Bernard Jackson enjoying a day out
Photo: Stan Alexander*

Inter-Club Meet

THE YEOVIL CAR CLUB, Vintage and Classic section, and the Jersey Old Motor Club met at The People's Park, St. Helier, Jersey on 2nd September last year.

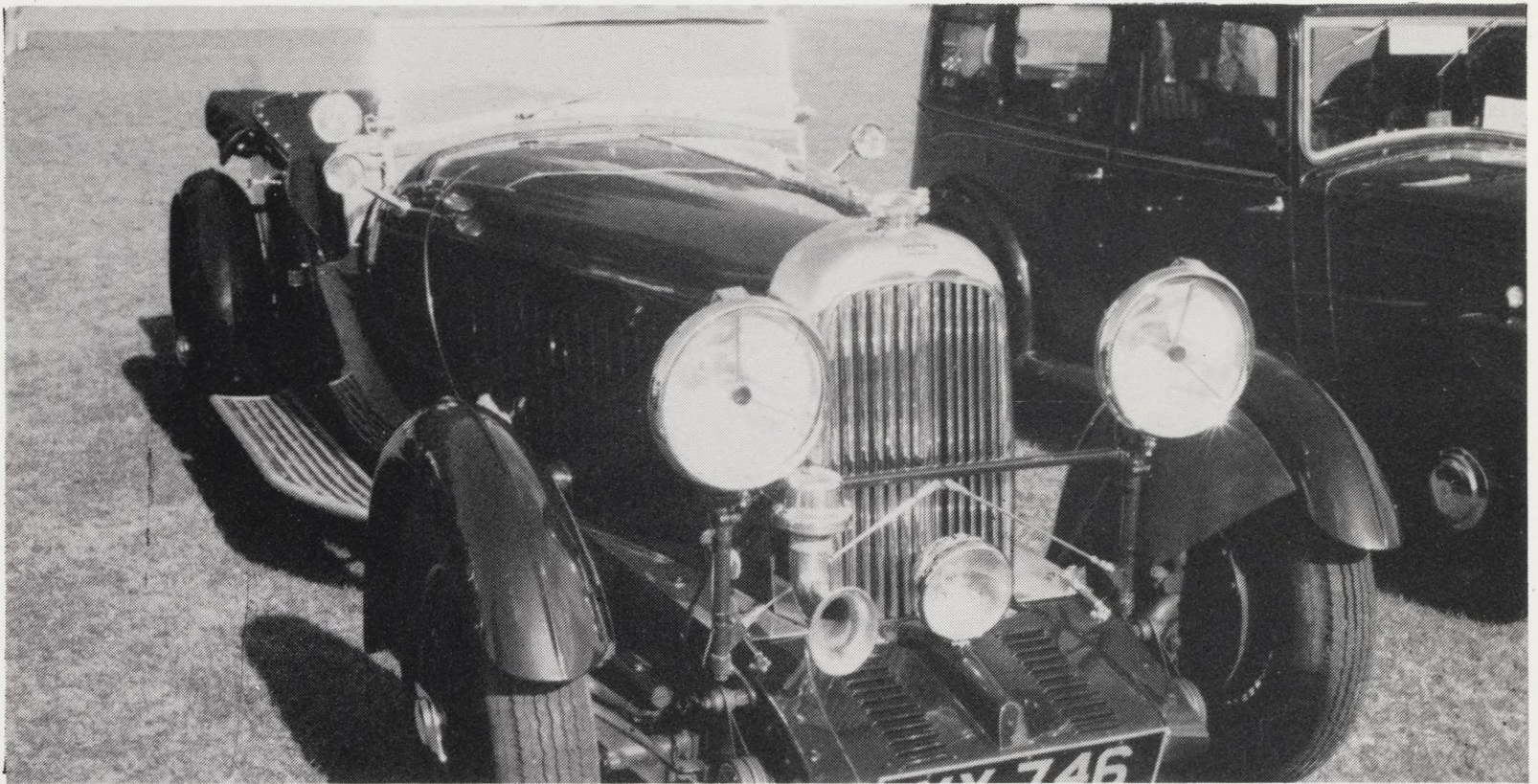
The attending cars attracted a deal of interest amongst the local population of the Island.

The entry included six Lagondas. To celebrate this a special prize was awarded for the best.

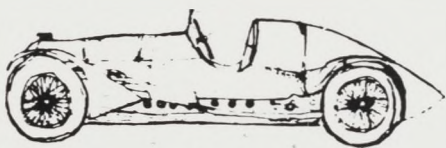
The Lagondas present were Michael Holliday's 1932 3-litre, a Jersey Rapier, Tony Breakspeare's 1932 Continental 2-litre, Chris Reynold's 1932 2-litre, a 1934 M.45 Saloon and my own 1931 2-litre.

The prize was won by Tony Breakspeare and his 2-litre, YY 74. As the photograph shows, the car is maintained to a very high standard.

DUDLEY PALMER



Tony Breakspeare's attractive 2-litre Continental basking in glory.



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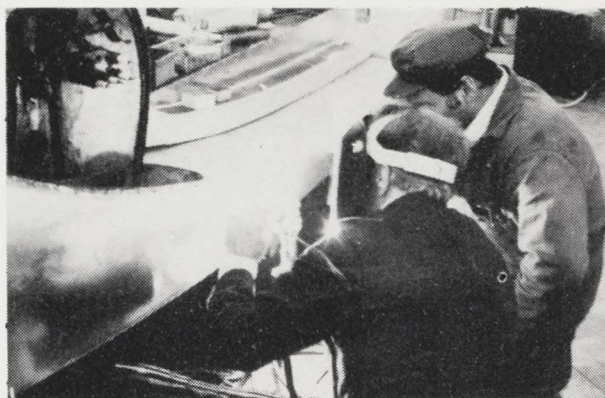
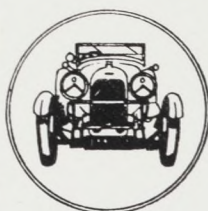
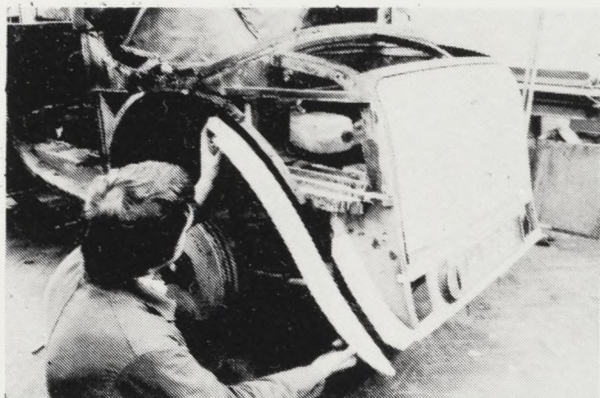
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Letters to the Editor

JPG 824, the Saga continues

Dear Sir — Further to David Hine's article on LG.6, JPG 824, I am the Club Member who purchased the car from David in the mid '60s. It was a case of one nice fellow purchasing a not-so-nice car from another nice fellow.

For a start it was a long chassis model with No. 2 cylinder having Arab affinities — it kept oiling up. At the time I didn't keep it for long, but bought it back some seven years later "in bags".

The chassis had been shortened by one Jack Buckley of Oldham, well known for such work, as well as superb restorations of rare types of Vintage cars.

JPG 824 now roams the countryside in the shape of a Le Mans Special, and without the dedicated services of *the* Alan Brown the world of Lagondas would have been one short.

He did an excellent job in fitting all the pieces together and was an object lesson in patience. The leather upholstery work was carried out by Herb Schofield, to a very high standard, for a similar standard of reward and I can also recommend him.

Up to now the period of time concerned is 14 years.

At the time of writing, the countryside here is like the North Pole and my intention of including a photo of JPG 824 has been frustrated as the car is garaged up a 1 in 7 lane. I still have the original "Buff" Log Book for this car, so what the V.12 "JPG 824" in the U.S.A. is, I do not know.

Over the last 15 years or so I have owned JPG 819, 821 and 424, all registered around June 1940. One of these I purchased from a London dealer, and upon first inspection, I found the wipers were "disfunctional", the radiator boiled and there were no lights.

I arranged to pick the car up in a couple of weeks, when the faults had been rectified.

I travelled down by train to pick the car up and drove back, up the M1, with no wipers, a boiling radiator (especially on the over-run) and one side-light. I've discovered that one certainly gets excitement when purchasing a car "South of Watford".

If anyone reading this does a bit of painting, please would they contact me, as it has long been a minor ambition of mine to have a painting of a "Flying Scotsman" type of LG.6 —

white plumes of steam at the front, charging along a frosty M1, with a red sunset in the background, and the fields on either side covered in snow.

ARNOLD COLLINS
Stalybridge.

An invitation

Dear Sir — I have just received the magazine which I always read with the same pleasure.

I take this opportunity to remind you that there are some very active Club Members in France, and it might be a good idea in the future to organise something together in this country. We could, for instance, organise a private Lagonda event or mix a few Club cars into one of the famous rallies organised at the Club of l'Auto.

If such a proposal would interest active members, please ask them to get in touch with me as I have entered my LG.45 on most of the interesting rallies (more a touring promenade than anything else) and can provide information for those interested.

Hoping to see a lot more Lagondas in France in the future, I remain,

AUDOIN DE DAMPIERRE
5 rue de Turbigo,
75001 PARIS.

The Possibilities

Dear Sir — In reply to Alan Brown's letter in the Winter 1982 magazine, regarding the Lockheed Master Cylinder on LG.6 and V.12 cars.

In my opinion there are possibly three options open:-

1. Have new rubbers made to suit the pistons.
2. Have two new pistons made to suit readily available rubbers.
3. It may be possible to sleeve the base of the piston arms, then you may have to open up the spring seat a little, then the 1¼" main rubber cup, secondary and valve cups should be available from Repair Kit SSB 772.

Finally, if the cylinder bore is badly pitted or corroded in any way then a complete new

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master cylinder is required and as Alan says there appears to be little suitable alternative.

A. HEARD
Cranbrook, Essex.

Starting problems

Dear Sir — May I again beg some Magazine space, relative to the Spares Scheme, due somewhat to the replies I received to my last letter re Repair Kits for V.12 master cylinders.

I have had several useful suggestions. Unfortunately all somewhat medium term, as no one has discovered themselves to be sitting on a trunk full of these units.

This time I am seeking sources of supply of original, alternatives or modifications of these units.

1. V.12 Starter Motors.
2. V.12 Tank (Petrol) Unit Sender.
3. LG.45 Tank (Petrol) Unit Sender.
4. Clutch Carbon Thrust Rings (LG.45/LG.6).

If anyone knows someone who is prepared to manufacture, I'll order a number for Stock.

Any help will be gratefully received, as I have several enquiries outstanding on each of the foregoing.

ALAN BROWN
Matley Moor Cottage,
Hyde, Cheshire SK14 4EG.
Tel: 061-338 2766.

Spot the Difference

Dear Sir — It was an intriguing surprise to note in the "Guardian", 11th February 1982, a theatre critic's note on a play set in Finland during the '20s. Reference is made to a chauffeur-driven Lagonda. This must have been one of the Russian imports, in the wake of the St. Petersburg-Moscow-St. Petersburg epic.

How very remarkable that Lagonda should have a literary association extending from Betjeman to Brecht.

KEITH MURRAY
London SW7 4JJ.

"His friends are the judge and the dean, his daughter is promised to a diplomat, and a government minister graces their engagement party. Matti, his quizzical chauffeur, drives the Lagonda — and the tractor."

The Guardian, 11th February 1983.

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