



THE MAGAZINE OF THE
LAGONDA CLUB

Number 126 Autumn 1985



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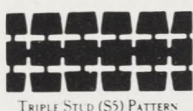
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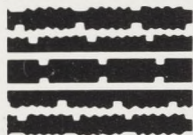
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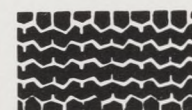
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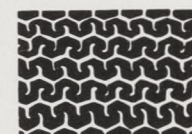
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MAGAZINE

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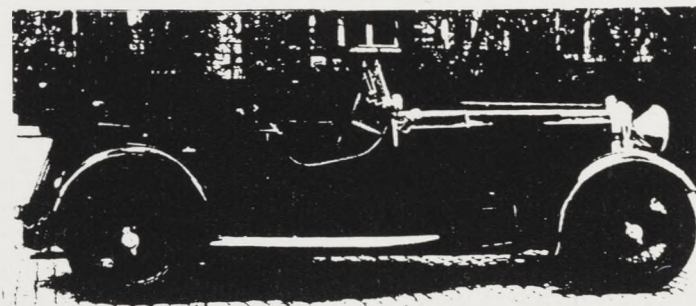
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FRONT COVER: 'Miranda' on honeymoon in Eire in 1946.

Photo: Courtesy R. Watson.



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**COPY FOR WINTER
"LAGONDA" URGENTLY
REQUIRED. Submit to Editor
by 31st December please.**

Out and About.

SO WE ENTER AUTUMN with the recollections of a Happy Summer for those who went to Le Mans as part of the two Club organised trips to be recounted to the less fortunate amongst us in both this and the all encompassing Winter magazine.

By all accounts so far received both trips were a success for all concerned. The Club thanks go to those responsible for the problems of organising such prestige events which must have made the continent think.

The editor was sad to have had to stay at home for the period but was heartened, on his holidays, to meet a DB Lagonda in 'captivity' in a barn awaiting work.

Reputedly an ex-New York Motor Show car.

When work is completed it will be another interesting car back on the road creating interest and another person to be persuaded into the ranks of the Club.

PUB MEETS

Midlands: Third Thursday in each month at the "Green Dragon", Willington (just off the A38 between Derby and Birmingham).

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: Joint Lagonda/VSCC meet. Third Thursday in each month at the "Floating Light" nr Marsden, on the Lancashire/Yorkshire border.

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

North East: First Wednesday in each month at "Pipe & Glass" South Dalton, between Beverley and Malton. Map reference: 965 454, Sheet 106.

Dorset: First Thursday each month at Hambros Arms, Milton Abbas for a "Noggin and Natter".

With the 'summer?' that we have just had to endure work on the 2-litre has not happened. However if we have a reasonable winter, who knows.

I may be tempted to write a blow by blow account of the dismantling of the car. As everybody knows, the rebuilding process is a direct reversal of this simple procedure, so there will be no need to bore the knowledgeable, or disinterested, with those details.

After all, you just turn the spanners and things the other way to tighten the nuts, or so I'm told by those who have done such things before.

BOB CRANE

I am sorry to have to tell you that Bob passed away on 10th August at the age of 82. He had not been well for the past few years but I had received a very cheerful letter from him a short time before he died.

VALERIE MAY

It is hoped to have a fuller tribute to Bob Crane in the next magazine. In the meantime the Clubs sympathy goes to his family. He will be sadly missed by all, both sides of the Atlantic. Ed.

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Boobs.

THOSE OF MY FAN CLUB who saw me perform at the BDC will have noticed that "the white car" was going like a train again—sorry about the poor performance all season—yet another "boob". This time it was finally traced to No 1 inlet valve gap only about one thou. The symptoms were that the car ran perfectly on the road but only when very hot on the race track did it cough and spit and appear to be suffering from petrol starvation. So simple to cure once thought about! I am prompted to write a few notes on other "boobs" I have committed or discovered in the last 23 years driving Lagonda's. Sorry if I cause any red faces.

4½-litres are prone to overheating. The standard cure after cleaning the radiator is to insert a stocking filter in the top hose. The classic boob is to let it fill up and burst and so the radiator blocks up again.

I've seen front springs on the wrong way round, moving the axle back 2-3" with peculiar effects, but a more common boob is to remove the wedges between the axle and spring causing heavy steering. I once bought a car where all the shims had been taken out of the bishop cam steering—very stiff to steer and another where the king pin had siezed in its bearings and was turning in the axle! More common I have seen many drag links fouling spring grease nipples—does yours!

Power greasing has a lot to answer for with over filled hubs, perrot shafts and grease causing brake failure.

I have had wheel bearings sieze up because the conical washer behind the big castellated nut was on the wrong way round.

The number of Lags I have seen with oversize front tyres amazes me—the complaints of heavy steering can be avoided.

Moving on to the engine, one or two boobs are worthy of mention. Like the needle dropping out of one of the carburettor pistons or one set of plugs with the leads crossed over—the cars still "go"—after a fashion.

More serious, big rebuilds are done but

the cam shaft bearings are not metaled—very poor oil pressure results even if the mains and big ends are perfect.

Meadows engines did not used to leak oils—most of it comes from the worn out seal on the front of the crankshaft—or that little metal collar the seal bears on and then blows back over the engine and chassis!

Always replace that ball bearing behind the crank shaft damper—the noise they make when worn is awful.

A classic boob is camshaft timing. 3 cars I have bought were wrong—if the inlet valves open a fraction too early the performance drops dramatically—if in doubt err on the side of retarded camshaft adjustment. In the log of a car I once owned it was recorded that after a period of storage the starter button was pressed, a valve was siezed, the push rod did not bend but broke a cam follower, which fell between the cam shaft and con rod and bent the con rod—always try turning by hand, it only takes a moment.

I once got a replacement set of rockers, must have been off an M45—they fouled the discs on top of the larger sanction III valves—what a clatter. More troublesome were oversize inner valve springs which got coil bound and broke rockers regularly until discovered.

I've had water in the sump due to loose core plugs under the rocker shafts—but worse—much worse, I've seen sand in a sump resulting from the original rad casting sealer being removed allowing sand out of the porous aluminium castings!

I once had no oil pressure after a mammoth V-12 engine rebuild—the oil pumps on V-12's need priming when they are dry because they are above the oil level!

V-12 water pump shafts break because most folk don't realise that the nut on the front is a left hand thread. A lot of Lag engines are not earthed to the chassis with consequent sluggish or zero starter performance. I have seen Kigas pipes glowing red during starting because they are the only earth connection to the chassis—check the paint on yours!

New clutch linings bed in and M45 clutches have to be adjusted 2 or 3 times during the first 500 miles—otherwise they slip and burn out!

Some sports men remove crankshaft dampers to improve acceleration—the crankshafts then break!

A classic boob I made was to get V-12 distributors crossed over—they both retarded as the revs picked up—performance was a little sluggish. Then one threw its weights at Silverstone and we had to come back as a 2 ¼ litre six!

In France it's easy to mix up fuel pumps at a garage—Lagonda's don't run at all on 20 gallons of diesel—it's even more embarrassing when the gendarme wants to know why you are pouring it down a drain!

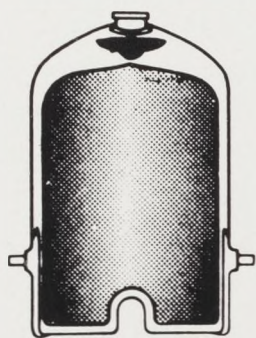
Many folk find their cars start well cold but not when hot—this is often the first sign of magneto failure—as insulation breaks down when hot and is restored again after cooling off—are you struggling with this.

A noisy back axle is often due to those lock nuts that hold the pinion shaft steady, coming loose. Every one in five cars I have checked has had these nuts loose.

Never put normal mineral oil into a gearbox or axle that has had vegetable oil in it, unless you have stripped cleaned and replaced the bearings—it sets to some sort of varnish which is non-lubricating.

To end with I think Lagonda's boobed when they designed the stylish flush louvres on their 4 ½ and 3-litre bonnets—smoke tests I have done indicate that they actually cause under the bonnet to be "pressurised". This ensures that all the heat and fumes possible enter the interior of the car. Explaining why most Lagonda drivers are semi-drugged at journeys end—it may also explain why the very modest amount of liquor they consume has such a dramatic effect giving rise to our ill deserved reputation in the rest of the vintage car world.

DAVID HINE



GWR

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ORIGINAL CONDITION.

'Miranda'—The Story of a 1926 14/60 Lagonda.

I STARTED writing this story several years ago in conjunction with my father. It has been recorded in the newsletter that my father, Bruce Watson, died on the 29th January this year. This prompted me to complete this story about the 14/60 that he owned from 1936, as it also describes a part of his life.

"I was very interested and pleased to have your letter of the 19th letting me know that the old Lagonda was still on the road, as a matter of fact I was speaking about it only the previous week and I thought it would have been on the scrap heap long ago. I must say you have had extraordinary service out of it and it is certainly a good advertisement for the breed."

This extract is from a letter written to my father, dated 25th March 1947. The 'extraordinary service' I shall go on to unfold, but firstly let me give a brief

description of the car.

'Miranda' is a James Young bodied three-seater and dickey 14/60; registered YR 5299 on 6th December 1926, but not acquiring her cherished name until some years later. The body is truly from the hands of a coachbuilder with such refinements as wind-up windows. It is a steel body which originally had a leather hood. As far as I know chassis valences were never fitted. In addition to the dickey seat opening, there is a forward-folding lid to allow easy access. There is ample room for three adults on the front bench seat and this roominess has traditionally allowed dickey passengers, in imminent danger of perishing, to be invited into the front. Wire wheels are fitted. The original wheel caps were the type turned with a C-spanner.

The first owner of the car was the Hon. Eric Brand Butler Henderson of Winwick Manor, Rugby. Less than one year later the



1937, with the supporters of Dr Matchek in Croatia.

Photo: Courtesy the author.

car was in Scotland in the ownership of James Robertson whose address was Morebattle Tofts, Kelso. Mr. Robertson, who I believe farmed a border estate, kept the car until April 1935. It was he who wrote the letter above from which I have taken an extract. The next owner was Oswald Muir Miryless, c/o 47 McDonald Road, Edinburgh.

This story really began in December 1936, when my father bought the car in a back street of Edinburgh—not for his own use, but for a Norwegian friend staying in Edinburgh. My father was in fact already the owner of a 14/60, which was a 1927 yellow and red tourer with a V-windscreen, registered YF 3095. This car had also been bought in an Edinburgh back street in September 1936. On the Norwegian friend's departure in April 1937, the coupé passed into my father's hands. He preferred this body to that of the tourer and later that year the tourer was broken up to provide parts.

It was also in 1937 that 'Miranda' undertook her most epic tour and consequently acquired her name. This was a journey to Albania via Germany,

Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, taking a ferry to Italy, and returning through Austria, Germany and Belgium. It was a journey of some 5,000 miles which took one month. The tour cost my father and his companion £35 each. My father wrote a full account of the tour in 1940. The account pays tribute to 'Miranda's' achievements. Rolls Royces, Bentleys and French Hispano Suizas were in most countries in small numbers, but he does not record the sighting of another Lagonda.

This is how 'Miranda' is introduced into the narrative—

"By 1937 times had changed; we now had some money, just a little, and a car which had cost nearly, but not quite £15, and which though old, we could claim to be venerable rather than ludicrous. Thus with 'Miranda' overhauled, polished and hardly looking her years, we drove quietly down from Edinburgh to London on August 17th, travelling by the Border Country, Newcastle and the Great North Road."

Even before they left England there were problems with overheating and this was to



1937, on an Austrian pass en-route for Albania.

Photo: Courtesy the author.

have a significant effect on the trip. A new radiator core from the Works would have been £8 which was more than they could afford.

They enjoyed the good roads in Germany and the Union Jack on the car was given a good reception. Little difficulty was encountered as far as Yugoslavia but my father particularly emphasised the atrocious state of some of the roads around Dubrovnick and in Albania.

"The first four hundred miles from Ljubljana to the coast at Split was comparatively easy going. We travelled continuously over a narrow and winding track and though setting up such a cloud of dust that no car could ever overtake us, thirty—even forty—miles an hour was still an easy speed, and 'Miranda' did not jib at all. From Split onwards the whole country seemed to change and for the next four hundred miles our love for politics, history and even photographing strange people, had to give way to the one all-conquering necessity—would we reach Durazzo, our port of embarkation, or would the mountains and the gullies with their boulders, make this summer 'Miranda's' last?"

When they did eventually arrive in Durazzo 'Miranda' had suffered nothing worse than a hole knocked in her petrol tank. An Albanian soldered up the tank in situ!

During their night in Rome 'Miranda' was taken for a 'Mysterious Trip' at the dead of night, which did her 'no good at all'.

"During the afternoon (of the following day) we gave 'Miranda' to one of Rome's best garages hoping that a mysterious banging sound which had developed as the result of the previous night's run would be cured. It was not to be. 'Mechani he speak Eenglizie' was off for the afternoon, and a worthy who could offer no other diagnosis but that the engine was 'Fuzée' and whose only interest in the engine anyhow was to see how it worked, was finally extracted from beneath the sump. After that the engine was allowed to go on banging and we pretended we could not hear it."

The tyres were now suffering and they limped into Florence with two flat. After having the tyres repaired they carried on via Merano into Austria. At Nassareth, the last Austrian village before the frontier, which had the appearance of a garrison town, 'Miranda' was put away in a garage side by side with a fine Austro Daimler car and army lorries of vast size.

"Next morning at 9 o'clock we went to the garage for the start. 'Miranda' this time was stubborn, and after a ferocious backfire, ominous clanking noises issued from the engine, not just the dull thud which had begun that morning in Rome, but something really alarming."

Action was indeed indicated this time, and clad in decayed pyjamas operations commenced in the army's only repair pit. These operations proved to us the worst. A connecting rod had snapped in two; a piston was broken and large chunks of broken metal were distributed throughout the engine. The outlook was very grave."

At this point the Austrian detachment commander asked them to surrender the pit, but later his icy countenance thawed. Although not mentioned in his account, my father thought that the army moved the car during the night and over-revved the engine.

"If we gave his staff sergeant the connecting rod he would file it down. We took it out; we carried out thorough cleaning operations and tried the one faint chance of making the engine work. It did work and without a murmur, so with one piston in the dickey and its connecting rod thrown away, 'Miranda' covered the last 900 miles to London with a top speed of 50 mph and without so much as a puncture."

In the winter of 1937/38 my father went skiing with friends in the Allgauer Alps. They stayed in a pension at Hirschegg in Kleinwalsertal Bavaria, at that time a very remote spot. The idea of seeing Hirschegg in the summertime intrigued them and so another tour for 'Miranda' was arranged. A circa 1931 12hp Armstrong Siddeley, loaned by my father's cousin, was taken also. It was largely an uneventful tour, although I believe the third bearing was knocking again on the return journey. A

trailer was towed for luggage which caused them to be stopped for speeding on the autobahn on the outward journey. This trip took place in August 1938 at the time of events leading up to the Munich Crisis. My father believed he made himself unpopular with the party insisting that they travel back by the quickest route because he thought war was on the point of breaking out. A medalion from the pension lives on 'Miranda's' dashboard.

My father visited the Lagonda works in 1937 and 1938. On the first occasion a tester took the car out and said it was running like a sewing machine. On one visit he saw Commer vans being built in part of the factory. He made the first detail change to 'Miranda's' appearance in 1939 when he fitted a tommy-bar radiator cap, having seen this type on later 2-litre models at the works.

In the summer of 1939 an even larger party was assembled to stage a tour of Norway. For this 'Miranda' was accompanied by what might have seemed like a Morris Register outing with a bull-nosed Morris Cowley tourer, a flat-nosed two-seater and two Morris Eights, a tourer and a saloon; plus a circa 1930 Fiat saloon. They landed at Stavanger and motored along the southern coast before heading up to Oslo. The most northly point reached was Levanger, north of Trondheim. The tour incorporated an ascent of the Galdhopiggen Pass, driving above the snowline, which caused boiling well below normal boiling point. They also visited some of the Fjords on the west coast. Little could they have realised that the tranquility there would soon be broken, for these would be the scenes of bombing raids. I have no knowledge of 'Miranda' giving any trouble on this tour, but I suspect that the flat-nosed Morris did, as she is recorded as the "unfaithful Annabella".

It was soon after returning from Norway that war broke out, but in the meantime my father had purchased a 16/80 drophead, APK 96. This was a car of considerably more modern appearance and a great deal smoother running than 'Miranda'. He also owned at this time a Barcelona two-seater Hispano Suiza.

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1954, in Reading on the return journey from Cornwall. Photo: Courtesy the author.

'Miranda' was licensed to 31st December 1939. He really had no intention of carrying on with the car, but a friend persuaded him that the 14/60 was the one to keep and after only a few months' ownership the 16/80 was sold in 1940 to a fellow army officer.

'Miranda' was used in connection with army duties, in particular when my father had a troop at Rosyth, and consequently was licensed from October to December 1940. A young boy inquired of my father recently if the car took part in the war. It was with obvious pride that he was able to reply that it had.

After his departure for the Middle East early in 1941, 'Miranda' was to spend the remainder of the war in my grandmother's garage in Edinburgh together with her 14hp Armstrong Siddeley tourer. It is sad to record that the Hispano which was in the garden, did not survive the war.

On my father's return from Italy in 1945, little was required to bring 'Miranda' back to life and was re-licensed in mid-June. This is the last stamp in the original log book. The first post-war excursion was from Edinburgh to the

Border Country. The second log book was issued at the end of November after my father's return from a short spell on war crimes investigation in Norway.

In January 1946 he started teaching at St. Lawrence College, Ramsgate and 'Miranda' was to commence a long period of residence in Thanet. My parents were married in September and they went in 'Miranda' on their honeymoon to Eire. Prior to their wedding in Preston, the car had been in the Motor Industry Jubilee Cavalcade in Regents Park. They attended another Cavalcade in Belfast. Their tour in Eire took them down to the coast of Galway.

My father was one of the ten people to whom P. A. Densham sent a letter proposing a register be established of 2-litre Lagonda owners. Valeria May very kindly recently sent me a copy of the letter, dated 19.9.46, with my father's application form. He states on the form that the car's believed mileage then was 195,000 and I believe that he had sufficient knowledge to be able to give an accurate figure at that time. Over the next ten years the mileage must have increased

considerably as, in addition to daily use, there were several trips to Scotland and my father took boys from St. Lawrence College on geography field trips to North Wales and Yorkshire. Generally I believe the car ran reliably and my father was quite confident to embark on long journeys in a car which was over twenty years old.

As if *'Miranda'* had not been asked to work hard enough, in 1954 my parents purchased a four-berth lantern-roof caravan for her to tow. We had two family holidays when *'Miranda'* towed this caravan; in 1954 to Cornwall and in 1955 to Oban, Scotland. My elder brother and I travelled in the dicky. For the trip to Scotland my parents took pity on us and my father had a canopy made which could be erected to enclose the dicky. It gave the car a strange appearance and people laughed at it. My brother and I appreciated its protection. When in later years long journeys were undertaken less frequently it became infra dig to require the dicky hood and so it fell into disuse. The only problems I remember on the two holidays were difficulty in starting when the magneto was damp.

In April 1956 my father took boys for a second time in *'Miranda'* on a field trip to West Yorkshire. On the return journey the propellor shaft started to break up. The dicky passengers started to get quite scared when it threatened to come through the floorboards. The car had to be left at a garage in North London and a later propellor shaft was fitted. In the late summer *'Miranda'* towed the lantern-roof caravan on the first stage of our family holiday as far as Staines. Here we transferred to the LG 45 drophead, FPA 521, which my father had recently purchased from the Reverend Martin-Harvey, a colleague at St. Lawrence College. *'Miranda'* was at last relieved of her most strenuous duties.

By the summer of 1959 the engine was getting extremely tired. Ivan Forshaw offered my father a 1927 short engine which had been little used. This was

installed and the car was back on the road in the autumn. My father wanted me to mention what an invaluable assistance Ivan Forshaw gave him over the years supplying his every need.

My father drove *'Miranda'* very regularly throughout the sixties. He used the car for going to school, running around locally and for going to rallies. He kept several hundred chickens and there was much running around collecting swill, the tubs sometimes travelling in the dicky, and delivering eggs. He was quite prepared to make the return journey to Silverstone in a day, perhaps using the Gravesend ferry, arriving back home in the late evening. I remember on one return journey it became impossible to select first and second gears near St. Albans. He managed to drive the remainder of the way back to Broadstairs, including crossing London, using third and top only.

There was an occasion in the early seventies when the car packed up locally, which turned out to be the fibrite gear coming adrift from its boss. This had previously happened on a rushed return journey from Edinburgh in 1952 when my father was travelling at *'a dickens of a speed'* near Stamford. An expensive failure occurred when a set of rockers were fitted which were too hard and consequently wore away the cam lobes.

An excursion to the Silver Jubilee celebration at Ascot in May 1977 ended in disaster with a run bearing. On investigation I found the crankshaft journals to be oval, a badly scored cylinder due to a broken piston circlip and badly worn bores. An engine overhaul was clearly called for. This took longer than I had hoped, however *'Miranda'* was back on the road in August 1982.

Very sadly for me my father was unable to drive for his last few years, but was always keen to go out in the car. It is my ambition now gradually to renovate *'Miranda'* to bring her back to that elegance which first attracted my father when she had aged little in 1936.

R. WATSON

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are: £25.00 per whole page.
Smaller spaces pro rata.

64 Lags to Le Mans.

ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1935 LAGONDA VICTORY, two groups totalling 64 cars converged on the 24 hour race at Le Mans.

In this article Alec Downie and Duncan Westall comment on the highlights of the trips in anticipation of the next special issue of the Lagonda magazine in which both 'Motor 100' and the Le Mans tours will feature with articles and colour pictures.

Twice within a week Newhaven saw a cavalcade of vintage Lagondas organised by Peter Whenman and Richard Hare respectively progressing in automotive splendour to board the ferry en route to a celebratory reunion at the vingt-quatre heures du Mans. On Saturday 26 Lagondas set sail, while on the following Thursday a further 28 Lagondas, one Bentley, one Invicta and a Crossley were led aboard the vessel headed by the captain occupying the front seat of the leading LG 45.

an honour

"C'est un grand honneur de transporter ces voitures venerables sur le bateau de Sealink" he said.

The poplars of the long straight roads of France resounded to the exhaust notes of five decades ago, while 19" and 21" wheels made long-legged progress amongst the modern 5 cv buzz-boxes and

their astonished drivers.

A sea of Lagondas were parked together inside the circuit, whilst the original team cars paraded on the track in front of the tribunes. On the Saturday evening half way through the race, some 50 cars and their passengers congregated at the little village of Thorigné sur Dué for a joint supper party in the garden of the local auberge.

All this and more will be described in a series of articles in the next Lagonda magazine: the start, the race, the feminine viewpoint, the race-night supper, and the comments will all be covered. And the sketches, cartoons and colour pictures: these you must wait to see.

a grand reunion

In the quiet of the Sunday evening after the race Lagondas flooded into the main square at Alençon for a mayoral reception for the visiting English Club, and the camaraderie of their own newly-formed vintage car society.

Return on the Monday and following days re-enacted the throaty sounds, the flying-helmetted equipes and their immaculate driving in the homeward direction. And all the weekend the sun shone!

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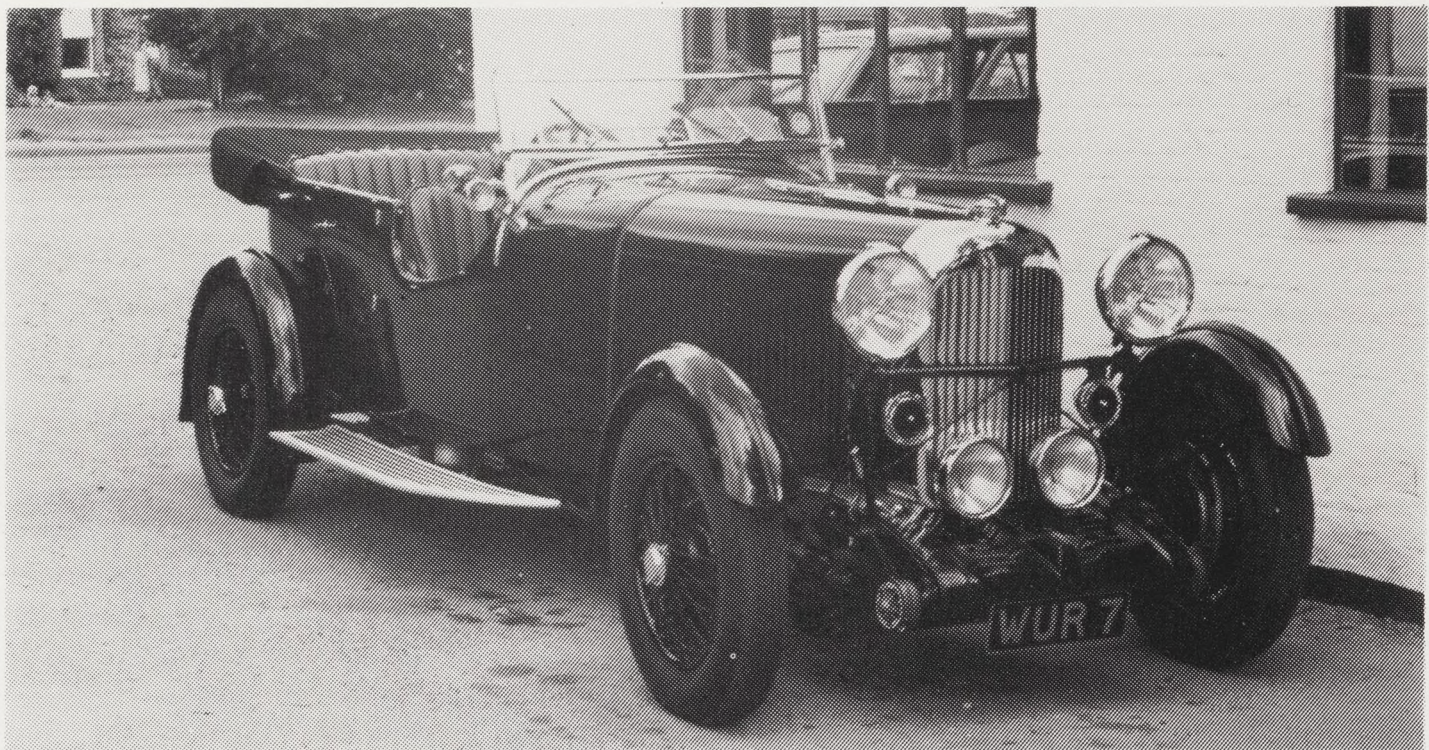
58 PORTMAN ROAD, READING



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Tails of Three Team Cars.



The tails of three famous Lagonda's. L to R BPK 203, BPK 202 and BPK 201.

Photo: Mrs. Robby Hewitt.

THE COMPLETE TEAM of three Fox & Nicholls 4½-litre Lagondas all registered B.P.K. set off from England to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the famous win in 1935 at Le Mans.

Taken in number order:

201. Started six days early, covering Normandy, various receptions with the local mayors, gymkhanas, gala dinners etc., during which the driver broke the clutch pedal and enjoyed himself thoroughly, I gather. He, after all, had to press on being troupe leader of his particular Lagonda trip, and he must have taken the outer circuit, if not the scenic route, as to get to Le Mans and back he covered 1,200 miles!

Meanwhile 202 and 203 started their "jolly" from the R.A.C. country club near Epsom with breakfast and champers cocktails—202 was late and missed it. Both Lagondas and a very much faster D Type Jaguar managed to miss the planned ferry

from Dover-Calais due to a wretched lorry breaking down on some road on the way to Dover. The two Lagondas were somewhat despondant to see the Sealink boat slipping out of Dover without us, passengers waving and raising their glasses. The Sealink chap told me later about his well prepared speech which he gave on board concerning the two famous Lagonda Team Cars on his boat—the trouble was we were not!

Morale was not high, by the time we had waited for the next crossing, plus loosing one hour by French time we were running three hours late. We therefore formed a little convoy, 203 frequently supplying liquid refreshment to 202 who was proving very thirsty and was chucking out boiling water in its owner's face. A well known ploy . . .!

203 (Lady driver) had a very enjoyable thrash from Calais to Abbville being right handed, right footed and driving on the

right once again. I have no idea what 201 was doing at this time.

The following day 202 and 203 eventually found their way to a small pre-booked "bordel" in the centre of Le Mans—which proved very difficult to find on race weekend. 202 wanted to borrow half the screws from 203's radiators shell which was not attached, but in its modern tender car—to which 203 said "No don't touch it—its a runner!"

Race day. Both cars had to be at the circuit early. Never follow the French little green arrow sign posts "Garage vert" pointing left which actually mean straight on . . . after 20 miles and heading for the Autoroute to Paris, and going in completely the wrong direction 203 eventually arrived at the circuit.

201 had arrived some what indecently early in our collection bay having heard that it just might be allowed to do a few

laps of the circuit along with the other two cars.

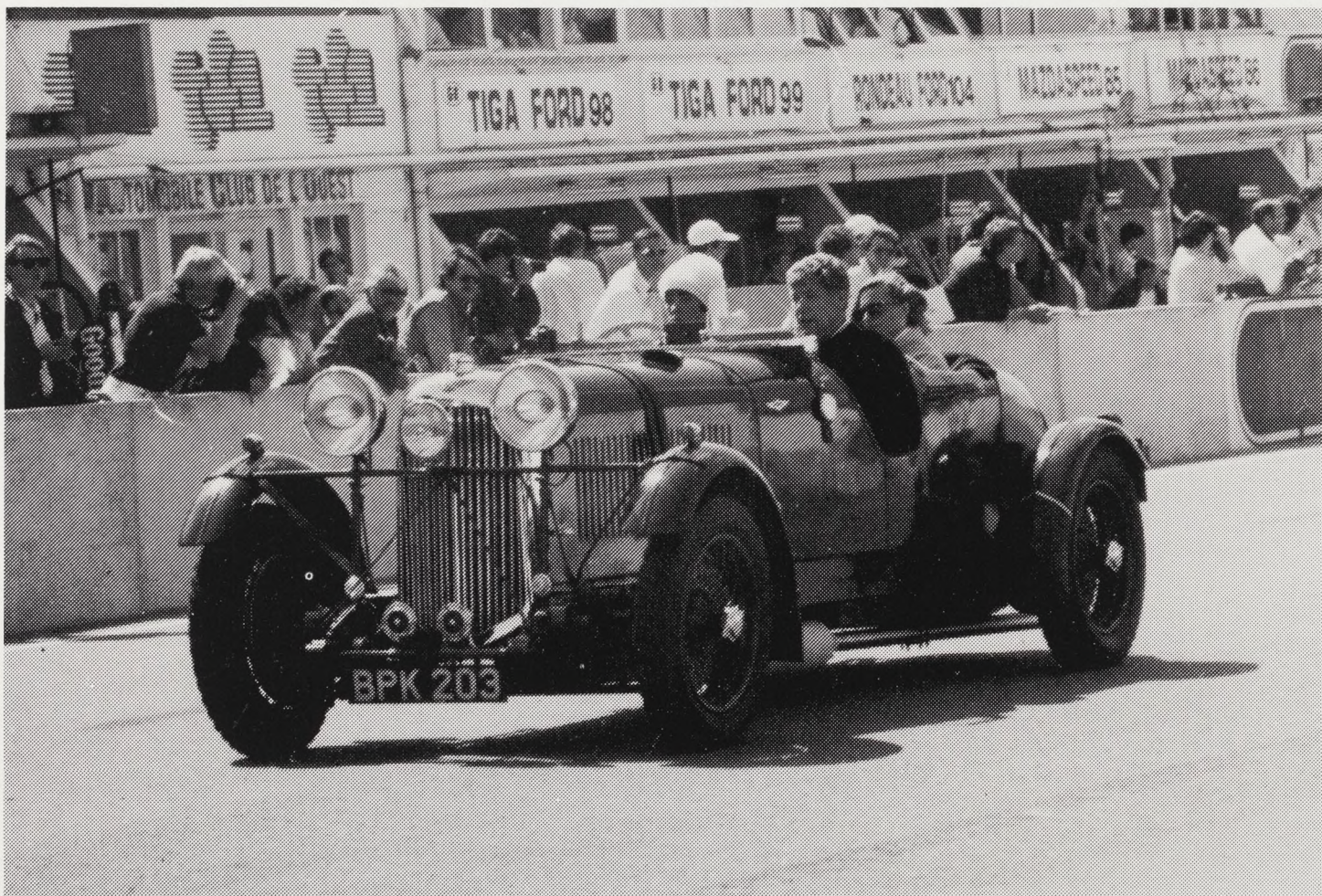
It was a very fine sight to see the three Team cars lined up in front of the pits at Le Mans.

202 was soon full up with photographers, wives and children.

Likewise 201 and 203 acquired passengers various and changed drivers after a couple of laps. Despite slipping clutches, and push rods leaping all over the place, we both accomplished about four laps of the full circuit, being now 13.622 kms in length. It's a long way round—I wouldn't like to do it for 24 hours!

Le Mans for me has a persistant unique magic which is undescribable. I have been many times and this magic does not diminish. Forget about Silverstone and Brands Hatch—Magic is Le Mans and Lagondas.

MRS. ROBBY HEWITT



Some Lagonda Saloons, and the M45 in Particular.

AS OPEN LAGONDA'S are usually worth twice their saloon counterparts it has been inevitable in recent years that many have been destroyed to make into open specials and tourers, and whilst it is true that many had gone past the point of no return it seems sad that some quite easily restorable saloons have been converted into open cars. Of course restoring a saloon is a labour of love, and certainly the costs of restoration are generally far higher than for a tourer, and if you are going to do the job properly the finished result, and the total cost, will probably have exceeded the value of the car.

The writer restored a quite well preserved example of an M45 saloon (AEL 30) a couple of years ago, and has had excellent service from the car during the past eighteen months. The car has an excellent performance almost comparable with the open tourers. I particularly like the interior design of the coachwork with 'Sunburst' pattern finish to the door panels—very typical art deco thirties styling.

The M45 saloon is of course of pillarless construction, I am not quite sure what the advantages are of this type of design, maybe the fact that you could put somebody in the car horizontally had something to do with it! The seats originally contained "float-on-air" air cushions which you pumped up with either a bicycle pump or your mouth in which case they were called float-on-bad-breath cushions, be that as it may the cushions on my car had seen better days and leaked, so the doubtful novelty of making passing wind noises when the driver and passengers sat down soon wore off. The seats have now been filled with foam which is not entirely satisfactory—so far. I thought a good wheeze would be to fit front seats from an LG45 saloon which are much more comfortable, but I haven't managed to get hold of any yet.

Driving the car is a delight once all the rattles had been sorted, and the shock absorbers adjusted correctly. In truth the rattles, creaks and groans took some time to locate; to this end Alan Brown was pressed into service, and by removing the rear seats and flooring Brown was persuaded into the rear, and we drove about having previously checked with my Insurers that I was covered for passengers dropping out to the road below!

The T8 gearbox is noisy on 1st and 2nd gears (despite some new cogs) 3rd and top quite silent.

We thought it would be rather smart to fit a heater which I discovered subsequently was not really necessary as a lot of heat comes back from the engine together with just enough crankcase breather aroma to be interesting but not quite enough to be dangerous. In fact the heater is useful in winter as it helps clear the windscreen and windows of condensation, in summer the interior is so hot you have all the windows open anyway!

The engine was not overhauled as it seemed to be in good order and indeed has given no trouble. The oil pressure is quite remarkable. The M45 engine is certainly powerful and smooth but not particularly refined and a fair amount of engine noise can be heard in the car, but, as I shout to my wife, this is all part of the fun of old car motoring!

The M45 saloon is a rugged sporting car long and lean with a wing line which to my mind has never been bettered. The spare wheel is mounted on the tail in a case which is a rather large amount of weight for the boot lid structure to carry.

I must say I get immense enjoyment out of the old saloon, the rather snug dark interior with that rather delightful smell of old leather and wood is hard to describe, and the view through the windscreen from a drivers point of view is quite superb, an object lesson to some other car designers

of the period, who in an attempt to get their cars as close to the ground as possible cut down the height of the windscreen to a mere slit which must have made them somewhat unpleasant to drive.

The 4½ litre 6 cylinder cars which came afterwards, the LG45 and LG6, were distinct in character, much more refined and comfortable and a great deal heavier, so despite the greater power output of the later engines the cars were no faster. I have owned both LG45 saloons and a couple of LG6 saloons. I liked the LG45 but didn't think they were particularly outstanding from a design point of view, on the other hand the LG6 is quite lovely and must be considered as being one of the most attractive pre war designs. Its manner of going matched the looks. The independent front suspension by means of torsion bars was possibly the most effective of the time

and certainly superior to the British competition.

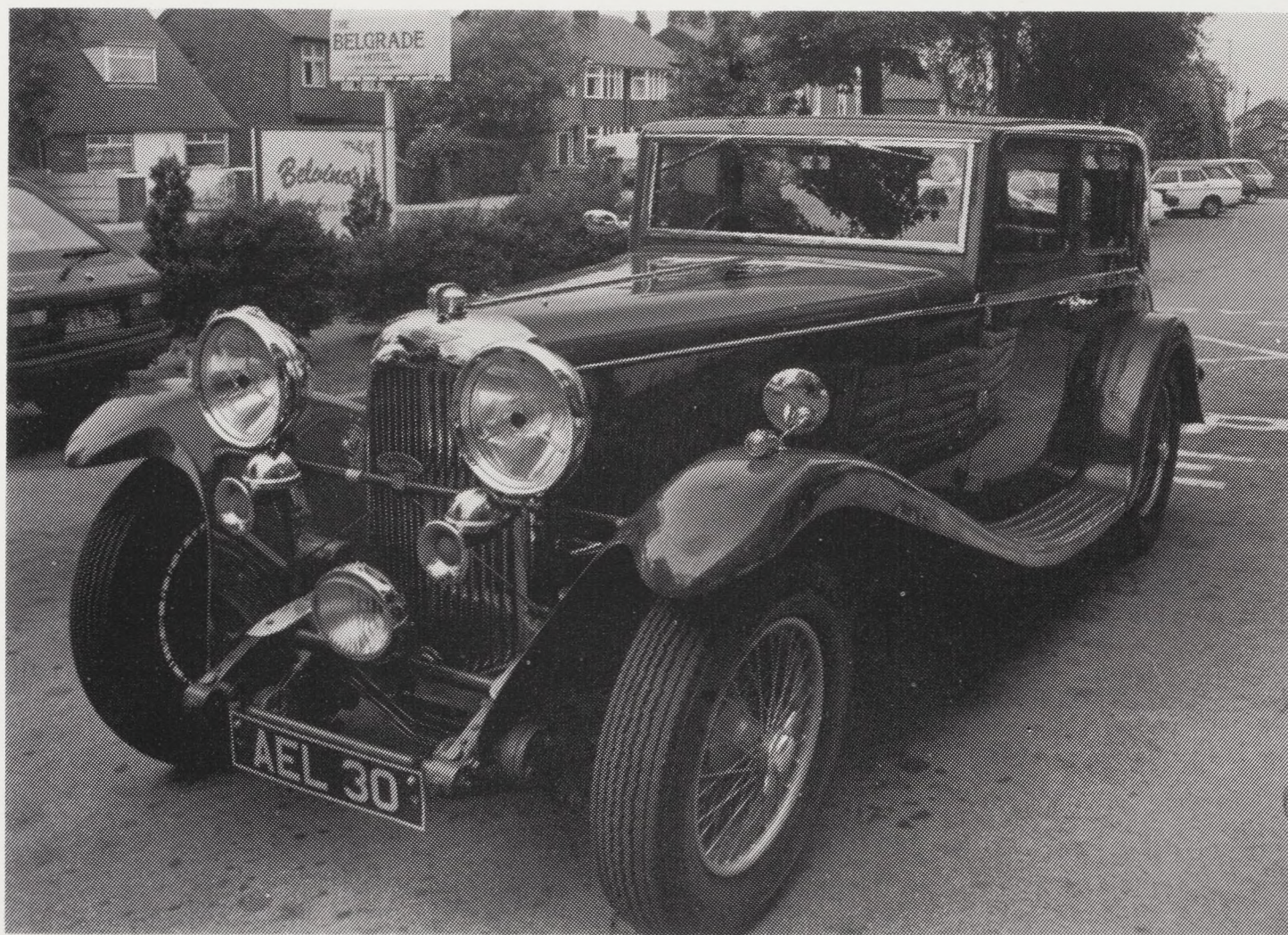
Sadly all pre war Lagonda saloons are now very rare, so if you come across a basically sound model, please think twice before you make it into a boy racer.

HERB SCHOFIELD

LG45 Rapides—The Record Now Complete

The remaining car yet to be discovered has now come to light. Still apparently in the hands of its original owner. The car is not in this country and the owners name and address will not be published without permission. The record we think is now complete.

HERB SCHOFIELD



The author's standard M45 saloon, 1934, coachwork by the manufacturers.

Photo: Herb Schofield.

Hermes Notes.

A YOUNGER CHAP who left Hull, years ago, rang a local member whom he'd known to say that he now hankered after a Lagonda himself, and was ready and willing to pay. Were any available locally? The caller was unlucky.

At the end of August he rang to say he was in Hull visiting relatives, and could he visit our aforementioned that afternoon. No, he did not drive up in a Lagonda. However, he was delighted to tell us he now had one, (somewhat fortuitously).'

Had he still lived hereabouts he would

obviously had been invited to join Hermes. As it is, we welcome Stanley and Shirley Bingham to the Club and hope they'll see us again. In the meantime our loss is South Wales's gain, we hope.

Re hospitality—Last year Roy and Barbara Hatfield invited us to their barbecue. This year it was to their sheep roast. Thanks for the invitation, regret only Don and Norma able to enjoy it. The rest of us missed a good do.

HERMES I

My Favourite Racing.

FIRSTLY obtain a lift to the circuit in a modern car, to a vintage race meeting at some ungodly hour in the morning having decided to leave your 4½ litre Lagonda Team Car at home for a change.

On arrival fall across the official course car which to all intents and purposes is exactly the same as the one you purposely, definitely left at home. Funny you think, it looks the same, same unmistakable tail, it's red except you recall that the one in your garage is BPK 203 and this one is 202.

The proud owner is nowhere to be seen as he has lent it for the day to be used as the course car. All officials insist that it is your car. One protests profusely until one

finally gives in as they insist that you drive it. So one gives it a little care and attention, removing Le Mans flys and generously feeding radiator and officials with water and Pims regularly in either order, between one lap races.

The best way to go racing—passenger holding out white flag means no one in front or behind—stop to have a chat with the marshalls en route when waved at and collect any interesting notes which they might have, then the circuit is yours completely. A one lap race with yourself, thats the way I like my racing "All clear"!

MRS ROBBY HEWITT.

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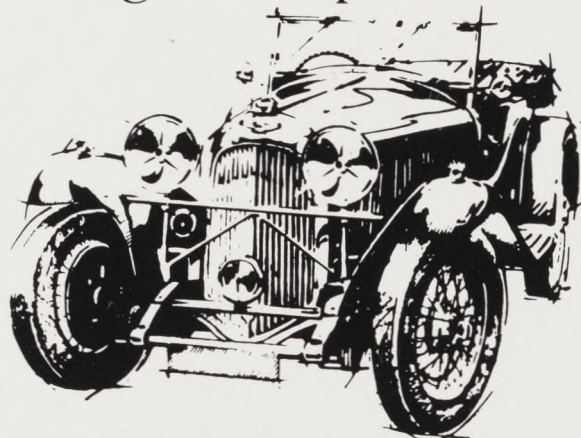


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Evenings — Weekends

Lagondas at Cadwell.

HARRIS WINS AGAIN

John Harris and LBT 74 (4½-litre) notched another First, otherwise this year's VSCC Meeting at Cadwell Park was disappointing in being poorly supported by Lagonda Club drivers and spectators. Of the latter, I usually bump into twenty or so; this time I saw Don Hoggard, John Ryder, Paul Tebbett, and Tony Wood. I also spotted Rowly Hill's M45R parked on a windy hillside. And thanks to VSCC's Peter Hull for signing the Patersons on again. We liked the stylish course-car too.

The printed programme had no Numerical List of Competitors and Events, which I should have found useful, and its intro began by noting that this was the VSCC's ninth year here. I made it the tenth, presumably the listed winners of the nine previous Williams Monaco Trophy Races would agree with me, but no matter. It was a breezy day with plenty of clouds about, though the sun shone as usual and remained unmasked until mid-afternoon. Six Lagondas were entered, they did not all make the startline.

EVENT 1—Five-lap Handicap Race

No Lagonda entered but race won by Graham Withington (1500cc Riley Raven). He repeatedly supports our local pubmeet, first Wednesdays, and issued an invitation to our local friends and all VSCC members to join in his personally organised Practice and Testing Day at Cadwell Park in July (Hoggard and 3½-litre went from here). It obviously paid off because not only did Graham win, but his young son Grant (A7) came sixth.

EVENT 4—Five-lap Handicap Race

Len Thompson and his single-seater Lagonda Rapier entered, but not in evidence. Race won by limit man in Wolseley Hornet Special.

EVENT 6—Five-lap Handicap Race

Harris (LBT 74) off the 30 seconds mark, ten seconds behind Vauxhall 30/98 enthusiasts Quartermaine and Scott who

have a tremendous private dice whenever they're in the same race. This time Quartermaine finished 3rd, fastest lap 2 min 29.2 sec, beating Scott, 4th, fastest lap 2 min 28.7 sec. Their official racetimes were 13 min 01.6 sec and 13 min 01.7 sec. Brian Fidler (Lagonda Rapier Racing) started five seconds behind Harris, but with considerable disappointment and discretion returned to Paddock on Lap 3 with an aeroscreen problem; a hard-luck ending to a praiseworthy season. Harris himself worked tremendously hard throughout, passing some dozen cars, to win by a full five seconds. Moreover, I consider his car to be the quietest of them all, very refined, and his times were, lap 2 min 26.2 sec, race 12 min 56.1 sec. 2nd man (A.C. Ace) was 13 min 01.1 sec. Quite a race!

EVENT 7—Ten-lap Scratch Race for Pre-war Racing Cars

James Crocker (Lagonda Rapier/A.C.) was present in the Paddock but absent from the race. He had mentioned a practice problem. Martin Morris (R11B) won, having driven with his goggles round his neck as visibility was better that way due to drizzle having become persistent heavier rain.

EVENT 8—8-lap Scratch Race for the Spero Trophy, cars under 1100cc

This had promised to be a humdinger with three previous winners battling it out from the front of the grid, David Fletcher-Jones (Lagonda Rapier), F. Giles (Morgan GN Salome), and N. Farquhar (genuine Riley Brooklands); unfortunately both Giles and Salome had come to grief in an earlier race. Undaunted, F-J and Farquhar had their usual race-long momentous duel until the very last lap, when the spectatorworthy spectacle ended with F-J dropping out of contention. So this year it was Farquhar's. He last won it in 1976, F-J in '77.

EVENT 9—Five-lap Handicap Race

Harris started his second event off 40

seconds. He overtook one or two cars on every lap, but on the penultimate he was unable to overcome the challenge of Burrows from the 55 second mark and so finished 2nd to the Speed 25 Alvis Special. D. P. Crow (V12) was entered, but another non-starter.

Some Cadwell Quotes

(At about 1500 hrs)—“I feel sure we'll be seeing a wet track here for the first time ever.” Wilf Powell, respected northern member of the AOC when they used to invite the Lagonda Club to AOC Northern Events.

“LAGONDA—A HISTORY OF THE MARQUE”

by Davey & May

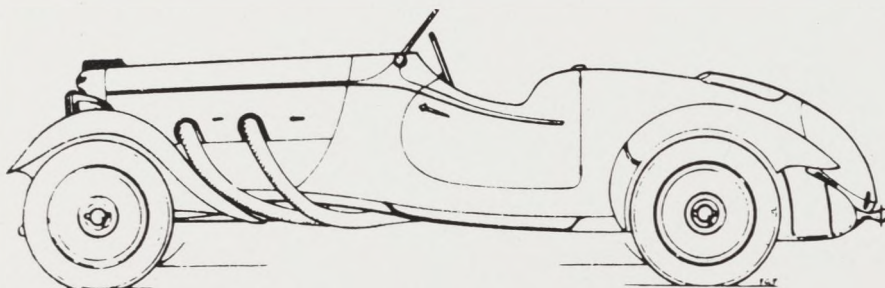
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“Harris's Lag going well as usual . . .”
“It's a whacking great Lagonda, that, he handles it well, he always does.” Public Address System.

The Lagonda Club surely owe Harris their gratitude and congratulations for his strenuous efforts to bring Lagondas to the fore during the past few seasons. Paradoxically, he now wishes to sell the car, having developed a strong predilection for 30/98 Vauxhalls. (What can they do that LBT 74 cannot?) Sad ending. Wish him luck.

ROY PATERSON

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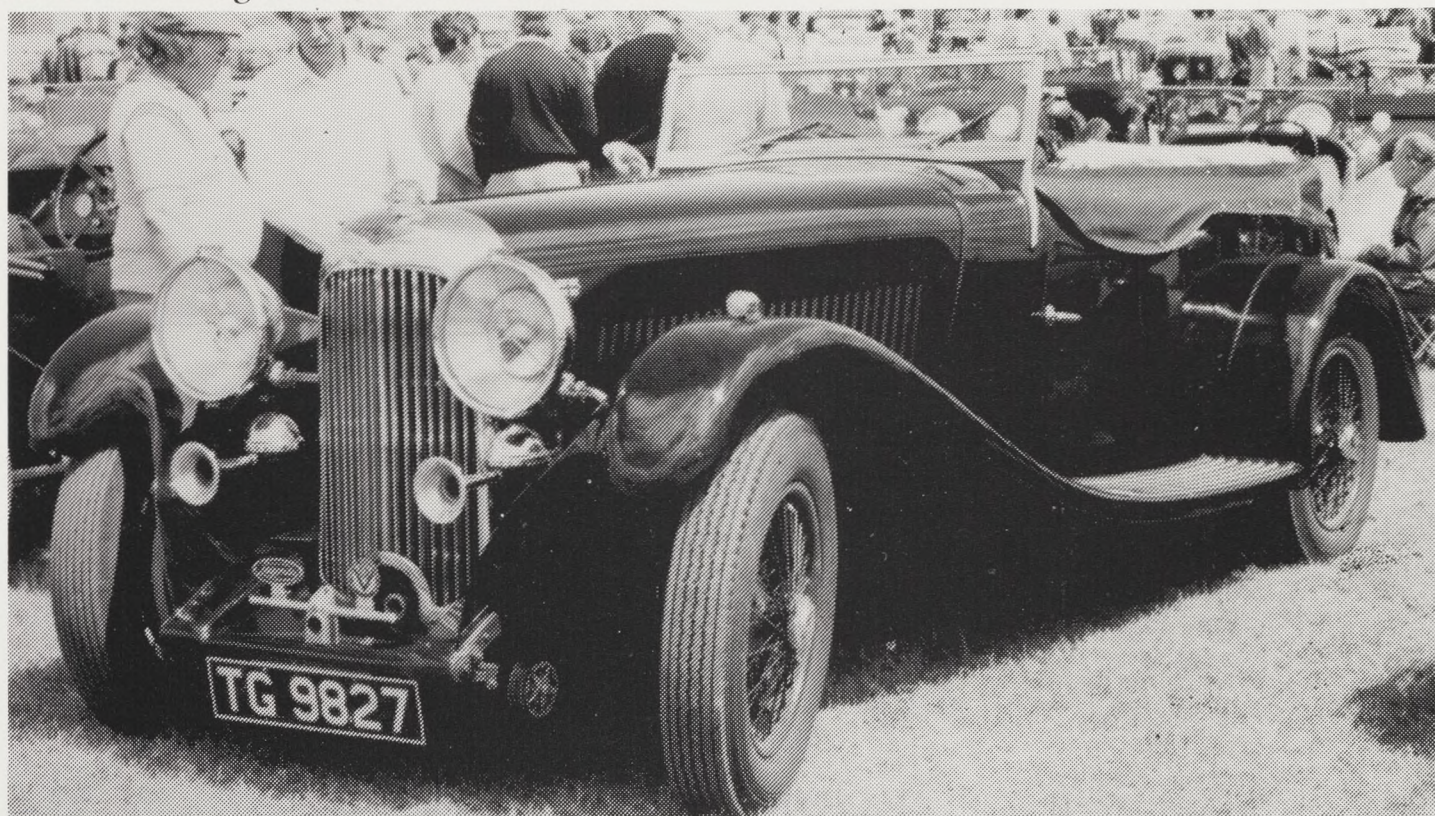
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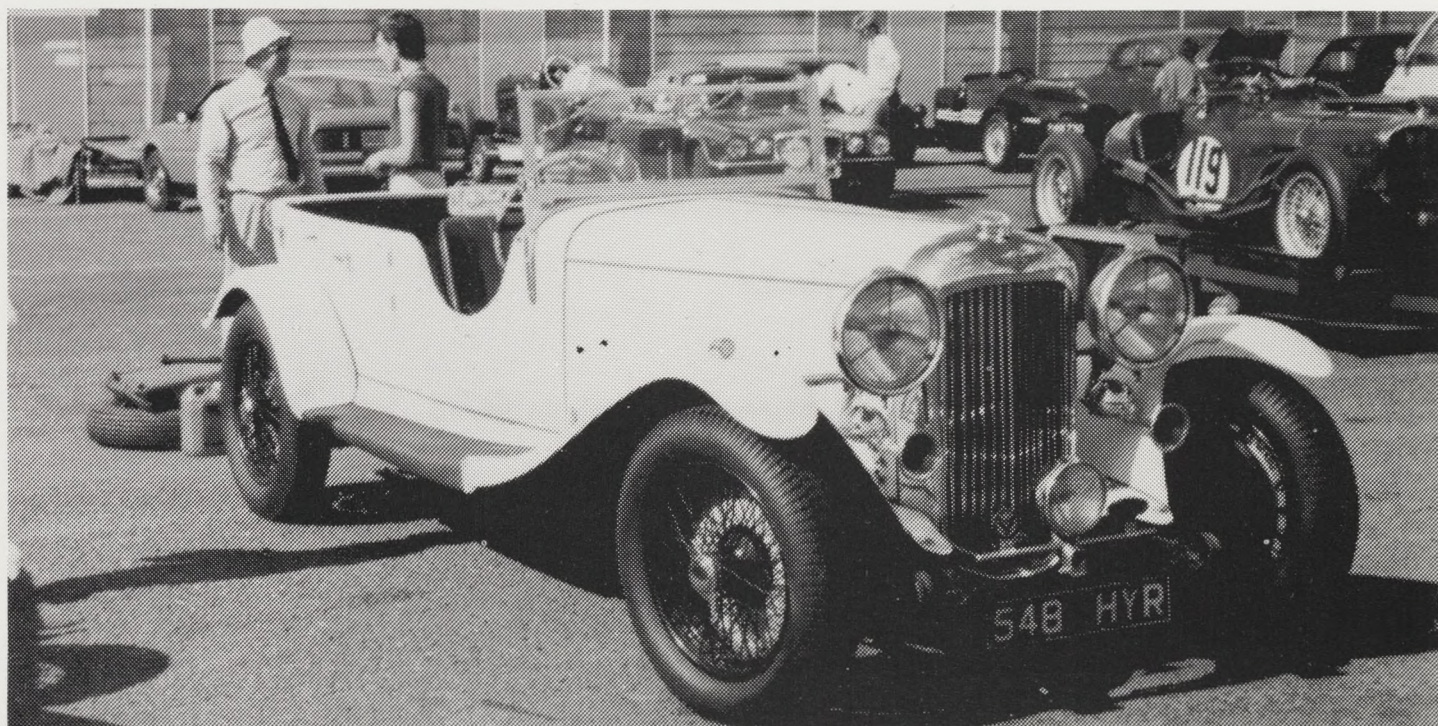
A Photographic July Silverstone.

The following photographs, taken by Richard McCann, show some of the fine turn-out of Lagonda cars that were to be

seen both spectating and competing at the VSCC July Silverstone Race Meeting.



D. C. Wall's finely rebuilt 1935 3½-litre tourer.



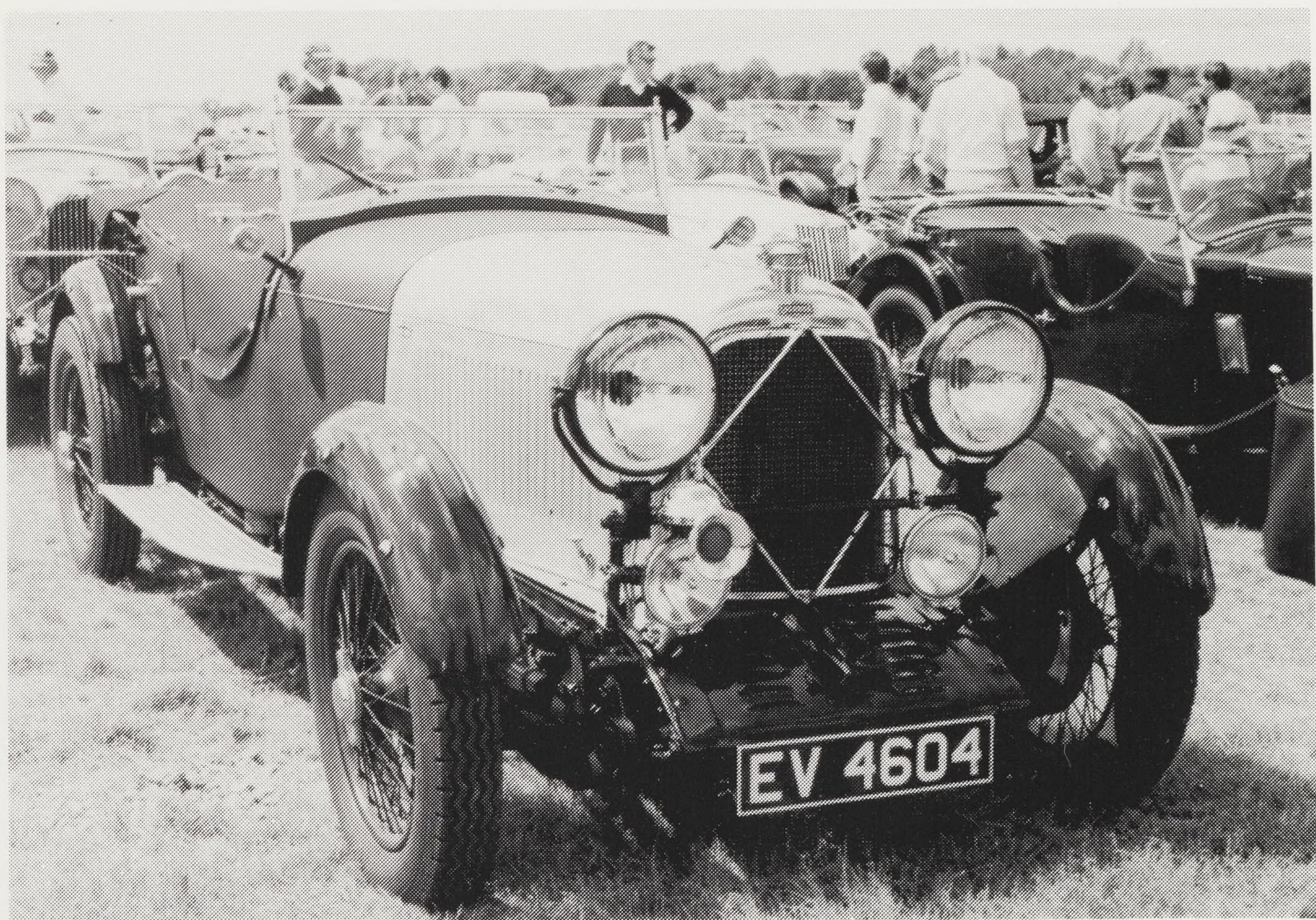
David Hine explains . . .



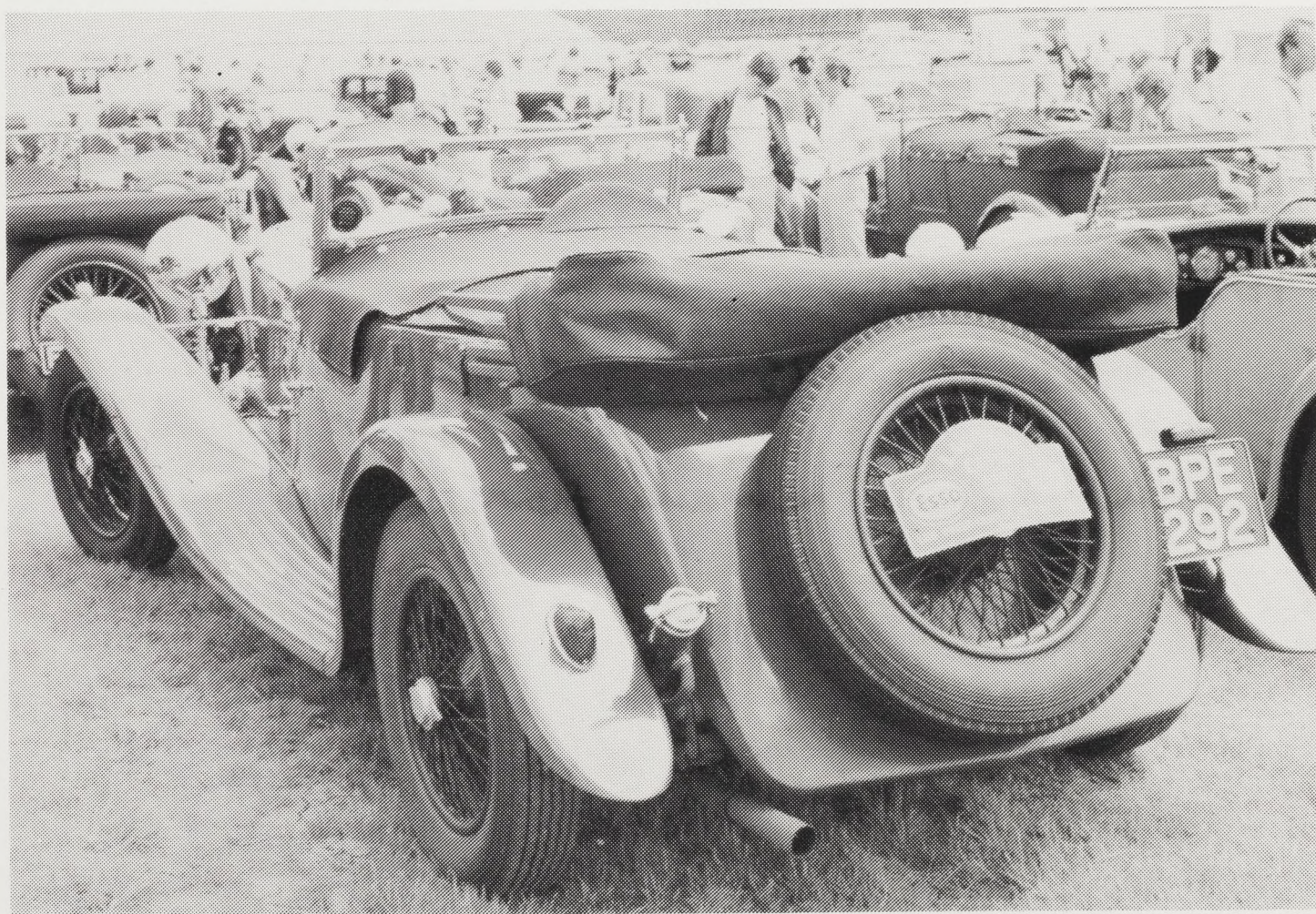
... how to put all the bits back afterwards, whilst keeping your hands clean ...



... having seen how John Harris had put the bits back on LBT 74 ...



... whilst the Competition Secretary's 2-litre spectates.



Roger Cooke's M45 sporting its Le Mans trip plates.



Two versions of the 3-litre models: the Hopper's 1934 saloon and the Hayes' 1930 tourer.





Geoff Gates 1936 LG45 making the modern cars look insignificant.

A Winters Tale or Trial by Error.

IT IS SAID that without our weather, Englishmen would have little to speak of; those Englishmen without Lagonda cars that is. I used to speak of things Lagonda, until one time I was called a Lagonda bore, since when I speak only of the weather. This is a tale of the weather and what our weather can do to our precious Lagondas.

This year I have not used the 16/80 because of the weather—not the weather of 1985, but the weather of 1982. To be precise the weather of the night of 5/6 January 1982. That night the temperature here in the far north of Worcestershire fell to minus 25°C and remained so for six days. LJ 8429 sustained massive frost damage to the block, all the core plugs blew and the water jacket behind the tappet blocks peeled outwards like so many overripe bananas. The anti freeze and the heated garage had not been sufficient protection against such arctic conditions;

indeed I had never envisaged needing protection to this degree of frost and so had not provided it.

By March of '82 the engine had been taken out, stripped down and sent to ***** at Halesowen who carried out repairs using their patent cold stitching process. Most of the water jacket was replaced with new steel, though a good deal of cutting out had to be done to get at the damage; eventually all was repaired and I collected the block. It was in a filthy condition and took a great deal of cleaning before rebuilding, but by mid May the first test run was undertaken.

Unfortunately over heating was severe, the water would boil off after only a mile or so and we would be forced to stop. After one such try the engine siezed completely, though started again some hours later. The maximum amount of water I could get in the system was three

gallons, whilst the owner's handbook stated five.'

Opening up the water system revealed a horrific mess; the two rear water ports were blocked with a stiff gunge of Barrs Leak, swarf, shale, rust and other unidentifiable debris; clearly I had not been thorough enough with the cleaning operation before building up. A lot of loose scale must have been left in nooks and corners that had escaped my attention, this combined with the Barrs Leak that had been used as a prophylactic for many years, due to a leaking water pump, had combined to produce a gunge of almost a solid consistency.

Using the utmost care, and with a scraper on a long flexible probe, I poked and prodded in every crack and crannie, shifting a mountain of debris that in some cases appeared to have lain undisturbed for many years. This was followed by a high pressure water wash through and then by drying with hot air; finally a high power industrial vacuum cleaner, that will lift a house brick, was adapted with a long plastic nozzle, and used to ensure not the smallest crumb had been left behind. Inspection with a flexible light and magnet completed the cleaning.

Turning to the radiator, a flow test carried out by Marsden proved that it was incapable of passing through the volume of water needed and the only solution was to recore it. While this was being carried out I turned my attention to the water pump, which had been the reason for the fairly heavy doses of Barrs Leak that the 16/80 had been subjected to for so many years; the automatic self closing seal had long ago given up being either automatic or self closing.

Several manufacturers were approached but without success, eventually a new shaft was turned and a pair of Pioneer Weston seals were used araldited back to back with the carbon faces outwards. A high pressure water test confirmed this to be satisfactory.

On return of the recored radiator a trial run of some 50 miles was completed with a normal temperature of 75 degrees, so it would appear that the overheating problem had been cured, though the water capacity was still only three gallons;

perhaps the scrapped radiator core was not the original either?

Now lets move on in time to November 1984; by now, a thousand or so miles later in the life of LJ 8429 we had developed quite a rattle somewhere towards the front of the block. This rattle was combined with poor oil pressure, around 10 lbs dropping away to nothing. We would start with good oil pressure and loud rattle, and as the engine heated up so the rattle died away together with the oil pressure. Most of the friends who I invited to listen to the rattle could not be of help because by the time I arrived at their home the engine was hot and the rattle had stopped.

Strip down revealed that number two piston had at some time siezed; the rings were welded into the piston skirt and it was badly scored. The big ends of the conrod bearings were worn through the white metal and all in all it looked like a remetalling job and new pistons. When had this seizure occurred?, cast your mind back to the spring of 1982 Dear reader, did I not say that on the second test run after the ***** repair the engine had seized but had appeared to be all right after cooling off. The cylinder wall did not show any obvious signs of damage from the ringless piston flopping up and down so the crank and its attendant bits and pieces were removed and sent off together with the block for remetalling and reboring.

In the meantime a search for a piston or pistons commenced with the usual lack of success from all those people who advertise in the glossy magazines as being specialists in the supply of pistons. Eventually a club memeber turned up trumps with six pistons that, though they were quite old, with a little cleaning and new rings would do the job. Also while the crank was away I made new valve guides, bought some new valves from the club spares, reground the camshaft and rehardened and polished the cam followers; a new bronze bearing in the timing case cover was also made to control an old oil leak around the pulley shaft. On the return of the crank and parts, the whole lot was balanced from the front damper to the flywheel. The engine was

reassembled.

It was not possible to start the engine either by the handle or the starter as the crank was so very tight. A tow did the trick however, and several runs along the lane were achieved by this process and after a while the starter took over from the tow lorry.

The first run revealed a sticking valve, really sticking, jammed down, so the rocker was slackened off to prevent the awful clatter and we limped home. Several times this happened so it was obvious that the tolerances in the particular valve guide were a little too close for comfort. I removed the head, relieved the valve guide and refitted the head using a new club head gasket as by this time my old one was somewhat the worse for wear. Water seeped out around the joint, and bubbled up around the nuts on the head studs, no amount of torquing down stopped it; a new gasket was obtained from the Gentleman in North Wales this time, but this proved to be just as useless. Putting a straight edge on the block face indicated a considerable lump in the centre; it was obvious that the face would have to be machined if anything like a seal was to be obtained.

A local engineering company milled off the damaged surface of the block and skimmed the face of the head to match guaranteeing a tolerance of .0002" on the faces. The assembly was completed and the engine refitted to the chassis, filled up with oil and water, and I sat back to watch the water seeping out along the head joint

and bubbling up around the head nuts.

By this time I had gone into some sort of shock, for two days I think I just sat in the workshop, divorced from the world, muttering about scrap yards, car crushers and whether the dustmen would need a special collection phone call to take the wretched thing away. I recovered however and once again took the head off. (I can do this in about 25 minutes now), and took a long hard look at the water holes in the block, the gasket and the plugged holes in the head. These do not line up anywhere near close enough for the gasket to make a seal around them. In all the cases the gaskets supplied by the club overlap the water holes instead of encircling them. The ring that closes the two sides of the gasket is forced down into the water hole for about two thirds of its circumference, allied to this is the corrosion around the hole itself that is the result of the original blanking off of the head water ports. These two factors I feel sure are the causes of the inability to achieve a water tight joint, even though a fraction of the corrosion has been cleaned off in the milling operation that was necessary to remove the lump in the middle of the block, caused by? you've guessed it; the ***** repair to the damaged water jacket in 1982.

At this moment in time, as the trade union spokesman said, I have written off 1985, and am considering the production of a cylinder head gasket that does not have holes in it to pass water that has no where to go.

PETE TOWERS

Letters to the Editor.

Dear John

I feel very remiss for not having written to you long ago, to send you the promised photographs of your wheel discs gracing my V-12.

However, relevant photographs are now enclosed, and I trust you feel that the discs have gone to a good home. In my opinion they certainly add to the appearance and elegance of the motor car and contribute

the right sort of finishing touch.

Having now sorted out all its various peculiarities, and finished a long tidying up process it is now looking and performing as I feel it should.

The only thing I still would like to get is a pair of the correct wing-mounted petrol filler caps, so if you or Alan Brown can assist in this respect I would indeed be

most grateful.

Again, many thanks for your help.
GAVIN SANDFORD-MORGAN,
37 Fuller Street,
South Australia.

This letter and the photos were passed to the editor by John Batt for general interest. Ed.



Dear Sir,

I am writing to inform you of the recent death of my father Frank Feeley at the age of 73 following a short illness.

Frank Feeley joined the Lagonda Motor Company at Staines directly from school in 1927 and subsequently rose through the ranks to become Chief Body Designer. He worked for Lagonda for over 21 years before transferring to the Aston Martin company at Feltham.

I would be grateful if you would make mention of my fathers death in your Lagonda Magazine as this will serve to inform many of his former colleagues with whom we have lost direct contact.

Continued success to your magazine and to the Lagonda Club.

SHAUN FEELEY,
Egham,
Surrey.

Dear Sir

The VdP 2 seater 16/80's

YY 5595 briefly re-surfaced at Cottingley Bar Motors, Bingley, earlier this year with a price tag of £19,000 round her neck.

I did not interview her, but she appeared to have been untouched by human hands since her restoration. The body work incidentally was cream, not white. She was not wearing a club badge.

JOHN TURNER,
Rockville,
Shipley,
West Yorkshire.

PS—There were 6 Lagondas at Monk Fryston (until 0230 hours), not 5.

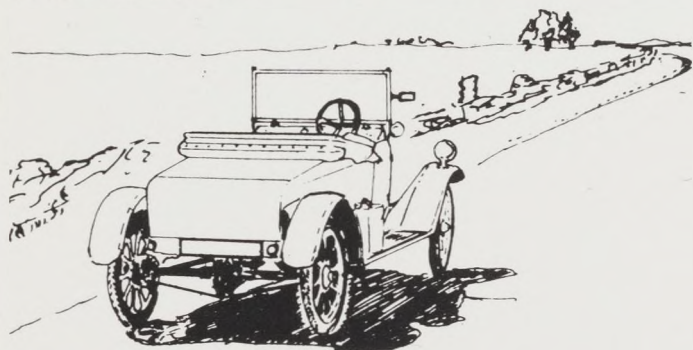
Dear Sir

The Crossley and I thank the Lagonda Club for the Award of the Densham Trophy for the year 1984. The Crossley is flattered to be considered as one of the family in such a demonstrable way, and feels that the award is a just tribute to over 20 years of membership of the Clubs and some 200,000 miles of motoring since that first visit to Ivan at Lagonda Farm, Longham.

The Crossley and I were also flattered to be amongst the Right Crowd at Le Mans this year. It was a most memorable long weekend (we were short trippers) and we would like to thank Richard Hare for the extremely effective way he managed the trip. I would also like to thank everyone, and in particular Jeff Ody and Mike Emmesson ("The people in the blue car") for being so good to young James and enabling him to cope so well in an adult world of fast cars, Muscadet, and Coca Cola at £22 a gallon.

Thank you, Lagonda Club.

STEPHEN WELD,
Plumpton Green,
Nr Lewes, E Sussex.



Plenty of Revs

Dear Sir,

A lot of Lagonda owners seem to be and have been colourful characters, which I suppose is a fairly obvious statement.

Recently reading back numbers of a weekly magazine I came across the attached cutting about the Rev. Needham Davies, rector of Euston, Suffolk in the early '30s. This seems to have coloured the correspondents memory a bit. I wonder if any of the senior members knew of him or if anything is known of his motoring.

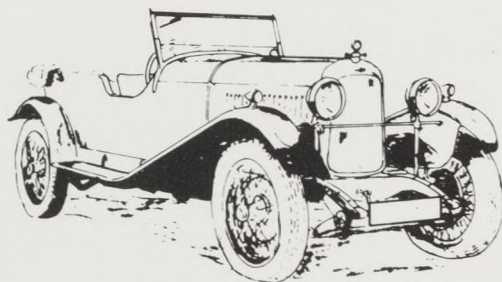
... He love fast cars and took great pride in his immaculate AC Six Coupé.

The Reverend Needham Davies was, in addition to St Genevieve's rector of St Gregory's at Barnham, the adjoining village. He took the Sunday evening services at both churches, the times being staggered sufficiently for him to finish the service at Barnham and get across to Euston, two miles distant, to begin the service there.

The story goes that he allowed himself just ninety seconds to cover that distance. On completion of the Barnham service he would stride through the Vestry, leap into the Lagonda, fire it up, and with surplice and grey hair streaming in the wind, thunder down the long and almost straight, tree-lined gravel road, on full bore with exhaust 'cut-out' wide open.

The congregation at St Genevieve's meanwhile, awaiting his arrival, sat tense in their pews, with bated breath and ears strained to catch the now familiar drone of the approaching car, as the driver 'lifted off', at around 100 m.p.h., checked the car's speed with the brakes—then, a lightning change into third, and finally into second, to slow the car before turning into the Park and pulling up behind the church in a cloud of steam and dust; seconds later their rector, calm and unruffled, entered serenely from the Vestry... everyone relaxed.

A. J. LOCH
Bentworth,
Hants.





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