

THE MAGAZINE OF THE LAGONDA CLUB

Number 144 Spring 1990



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MAGAZINE Issue No. 144 Spring 1990

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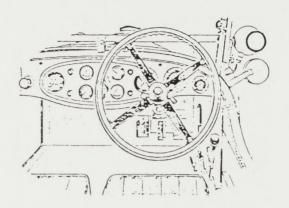
FRONT COVER

Peter Whenman and Richard Bush up in the mountains during the Mille Miglia retrospective, 1989.



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From the Driving Seat



One of the unexpected pleasures of editing "The Lagonda" is the frequent contacts it generates with former staff of the old Lagonda factory. In this issue John Berridge reminisces about another of his colleagues from those far off days and, in the pipeline for a future edition, I have very generously been loaned one of the wartime newssheets produced by the factory to keep the staff morale high. This has been provided by Frank Ayto, nearly 87 years old and still going strong!

The son of Stuart Tresillian lives just two miles from me and he has promised to sort out some of his father's memorabilia from the days when he was one of the development team for the V12. So far he has not managed to lay his hands on it, but you may depend on it that I will keep nudging him! Apparently, most of his papers were passed to his former secretary after his death as she intended to write his biography, but this is yet to appear. Now if I can just find out where *she* lives . . .

Many years ago, I met Bert Hammond at one of the London pub-meets and I am *sure* that it was he who told me that the 2 litre Continental was originally built to the special design of a customer who, when the factory then began to produce replicas of his personal design, took them to court and sued for infringing his design. This, I was told, was the reason that so few were made. Can any of our historians or former staff members confirm or refute this tale? I have never seen it in any of the accounts of Lagonda's history and have never heard it repeated, so is it true, or did I imagine it?

I have been delighted with the offers from fellow members to visit them and

examine their Weymann saloons and have even been contacted by a previous owner of my old car, but real vintage Weymann 2 litre saloons seem to have disappeared completely. I have to confess that, when we owned our saloon, we actually looked very seriously at the possibility of replacing the body with one from a tourer, but had to abandon the idea as we simply couldn't find a good second hand body and couldn't afford a new one. I had always kidded myself that, at least this meant that at least one very fine saloon was preserved, but now I'm not so sure, perhaps simply delayed metamorphosis into a replica tourer. Can those fragile and broken remains in my garage really be the very last of the Weymann 2 litres?

The more eagle-eyed among you might notice that this magazine has been printed by a different company. After many happy years with Kenion Litho, who recently changed their name to CBC Print, we have moved to a company in the barren and frozen north who have made us an offer which we simply could not afford to ignore. The magazine represents the single largest expense to Club funds and we would not be serving your interests properly if we did not keep a very tight control on its costs. Kenion/CBC will be a very hard act to follow, they gave us a first class service and only the editor will ever know how much he depended on their kindness and patience when he was picking up the reins after a gap of many years since his last attempts at editing a magazine. This is therefore a very public, yet a very personal "Thank you" for the work of Roger Cooke and his staff.

K.P.P.

"O.K. For Lagonda" The Mille Miglia retrospective, 1989

This wasn't meant to be a story about a Lagonda at all. Richard Bush had entered his Alfa Romeo 1750 in this year's re-run of the Mille Miglia, with me as co-driver, but, three days before the car was due to leave, the clutch collapsed and replacing an Alfa multiplate clutch takes time. We had paid a deposit for the event, which, a few years ago, would have served as a deposit on a house, so something *had* to be done quickly.

We looked round the workshop and decided to have a go in the 4½ Litre Lagonda special. Would the organisers accept it? A picture was faxed to them, with the information that it was Italian Racing Red and noisy! With just a day to go before the cars were due to leave, the faxed reply arrived: TO RICHARD BUSH AND PETER WHENMAN 24 APRILE 1989. OK FOR LAGONDA. WE WAIT AT SCRUTINEERING. SIGNED, THE ORGANISING COMMITTEE.

It was now far too late to think of driving the car to Italy for the event, but we were able to scrounge space on a transporter organised by Coys, for which much thanks. We threw in a selection of spares, two sets of motorcycle waterproofs and our spare clothes for the event and we flew out to Milan a few days later.

We stayed our first night with a very good friend, who is a real architectural buff and who took us for a conducted tour of the sights of the city in his baby Fiat, but I have to confess that our thoughts were entirely on the start from Brescia the following day! We spent much of the night talking and sampling the local wine and neither of us slept at all well.

At Brescia we met the crew from Coys, Peter Agg in his Bugatti and discovered that another Lagonda, the M45 of Athos Eliades, had also travelled out on the transporter. We were total novices at this type of event and had no idea what to expect or what to do, so we decided to follow one of the 'old hands' in this event. Jeffrey Pattinson, with his superb Talbot Lago, very generously offered to 'show us the ropes'.

Signing on and scrutineering began at 9.30 in the morning and was absolute chaos, as only the Italinas can orchestrate. It was totally mind-blowing to be part of such an incredible event, with so much motoring exotica around us and the crowds were everywhere, how anything got done I shall never know. As we signed on we were given a pack of 'goodies' for the run, with food and accommodation commemorative ties. cheater jackets and, most important, our route book. The trouble was, we hadn't a clue what to do with it! It was printed in Italian, all distances were given in kilometres and simply didn't understand a word of it.

David Bayliss and Robert Brookes kindly took pity on us and David gave us a quick briefing on what we could expect and what we should do. Armed with this new knowledge, we adjourned to a local cafe and tried to make some sense of it all.

Before the official start that evening, we were all invited to a superb official dinner in a monastery courtyard, but we were too excited to think of food, the adrenalin was building up and all we could think of was the start in a few hours time. As 8.30 approached the old hands began to drift away from the dinner, so we tagged on after them and went to our car.

As we drove up to the start, it began to drizzle with rain, so we put on our motor cycle suits. We were to bless these suits before the event was over. The start itself was incredible, each car drove onto the

starting ramp, which was bathed in arc lights, bedecked with bunting and surrounded by pretty girls. The ramp was shown on one of those huge TV screens, so everybody could see the start itself, as we sat there, waiting for our turn, I began to wonder what we were doing, hundreds of miles from home in an old Lagonda, which hadn't even been checked over since its last thrash around Silverstone!

Then it was our turn, we drove up onto the ramp, the flag dropped and we were off – into what seemed like total darkness. We shone our torch onto the routebook, but this turned out to be unnecessary, every road junction and bend was clearly marked with "Mille Miglia 1000" signs and the entire route seemed to be lined with clapping cheering spectators. In practice all we had to do was to watch our timing, but the timing is the same for every contestant, so the old timers have to go like the clappers and the drivers of 250 GTO Feraris and the like can stop for a meal if they want!

The first time check was at Vicenza, 56 kilometres from the start and we started to experience our first bit of rain – a lot more was to come. We decided to ignore the timings and just to press on. As we reached the check at Peschera, the crowd just closed up until there was only just enough space to drive through. As we drove gently between the lines of waving and cheering enthusiasts, we were showered with gifts of local produce to eat and drink on the following stage.

At Padova, we decided to check the fuel - we had filled the car before we left England, but hadn't even looked in the tank since. To our horror, there was hardly any left and we were really worried, as there were very few filling stations open this late at night. Luckily, we found one open, outside a small village and seemingly empty of other customers. We came upon it rather quickly and overshot the entrance, so had to reverse. In that brief instant of time it seemed that the entire population of the village rushed out to watch us. We quickly poured in the equivalent of 30 gallons and paid, with what seemed like millions of lire. Our

instant rough calculations suggested that we were doing just 8 m.p.g., if that were the case then we would almost certainly run out of money before we had finished the course!

The Italian petrol is bright red, smells absolutely foul and is a fairly low octane rating. I had taken the precaution of bringing lots of tins of octane booster, but after the shock of paying for this first tankful I wasn't sure whether to pour it into the tank or drink it myself. When we had the opportunity to recheck our consumption, we were more than a little relieved to find that we were actually doing a far more reasonable 14 m.p.g.

Stopping for fuel actually caused us a problem, as when Richard climbed back into the car he accidentally kicked the battery master switch 'off', so each time we slowed down after that, the lights dimmed almost to extinction and we thought we had a real electrical disaster on our hands. It was only when we switched off at the end of the first day's driving that we found what had happened.

The journey from the filling station to the official halt at Ferrara was about 40 kilometres and we were totally on our own on this stretch, without a single competitor in sight. When we pulled into the control in a cobbled square, the whole area was ablaze with lights and there was the usual crowd, even though it was now 1 a.m. We parked in the official car park and tried to find our hotel - at least, that's what we intended to do, but the security at the official car park was so stringent we couldn't get out for some time. Eventually we escaped by climbing the security barrier. Once we finally made it to our room, we sat up for about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours, trying to make sense of the route book, with its very complex cumulative timings each checkpoint between recalculating our fuel consumption. We got to bed at three, but it felt like only minutes later when I was roughly woken by Richard, it was 5.30 and time to get up!

Back home, we had been told by friends who had attempted this event before how wonderful the food was throughout the run, so we were looking forward to a

The Mille Miglia Route BRESCIA Vicenza Verona Padova Montichiari **OMantova** Piadena Rovigo FERRAR Parma Modena Reggio Emilia Bologna Ravenna Passo Della Raticosa Rimini Passo Della Futal Gabicce Monte Resaro Firenze S.MARINO Ancona Siena San Quirico S.Benedetto D,Orcia Del Tronto Radicofani Pescara Terni Rifti Chieti Viterbo L'Aquila Rignano Popoli Flaminio ROME

gastronomic delight for breakfast, only to find that it consisted of dry biscuits and coffee so thick I swear you could stand the spoon up in it!

Richard was to drive the first leg, from Ferrara to Rimini, today. Back at the car we found that everybody was already leaving, so we hastily joined the queue in the right place for our running order and were off on Day Two, this was going to involve some serious motoring as the section was no less than 750 kilometres and was scheduled to take 14 hours.

The first stage, from Ferrara to Rimini was 300 kilometres and at an early time check we were given a bag of bread rolls and a punnet of strawberries, this was just what we needed, so we pulled off the road and finished the lot as our belated breakfast! We had actually come prepared for the long haul between controls, with a big bag of sweets, Mars bars and packets of soft drinks, but the frequent gift packs thrust at us en-route were always very welcome.

On the sea front at Rimini we had to undertake a regularity test of some ½ kilometre. This was no casual event, the timings were taken to .1 of a second and it was differences as close as this which decided the final positions. To make matters worse, it started to rain quite hard at this point, making things very uncomfortable for us.

By now, we had begun to settle into some sort of routine and had begun to make sense of the route book. We were sharing the driving on a two hours on two off basis and, to start with, the weather was good, but this was not to last. Today was actually Richard's first opportunity to drive the Lagonda and he passed the test with flying colours!

After Rimini we began the drive up to the Republic of San Marino. The surface was good and the road was potentially fast, but by now the rain was really coming down hard and painfully. It was my turn to drive on this stretch and I really got the bit between my teeth and enjoyed myself



Not like Silverstone! The scene at scrutineering.

hugely. Richard's feet were through the floorboards most of the time, I could see the whites of his knuckles were he was hanging on for grim death.

San Marino is a lovely ancient city, but has many narrow roads, with lots of sharp turns and narrow arches to negotiate. In an old car, with limited lock and on a cobbled and slippery surface, this was far from easy and many of the tighter turns took two or more bites before we could get round.

Once we reached the top of the climb, we were joined by Victor Gauntlet and his co-driver, HRH Prince Michael of Kent, who were entered in Victor's lovely LG45 Rapide. The view from the top should have been superb, but all we could see was low cloud. Richard took his turn to drive down the hill, but neither he nor I enjoyed this bit much. The rain was cascading down upon us now and was incredibly painful as it hit our faces. Many cars stopped, with their ignition systems totally swamped, or simply to shelter from the driving rain. We had no windscreen, just aeroscreens and goggles, so simply had to keep going, even though our goggles constantly steamed up.

The next test was yet another hillclimb. Poor Richard was barely able to see and it would have been only too easy for both of us to give up at this point, but I gave him what encouragement I could and tried to help by offering a running commentary on the road ahead "Right, left, change down..." it was all a bit hairy.

We had to attempt about four timed sections up mountain roads before the lunch break - and we were really ready for that when it arrived! During the morning it stopped raining and we were able to take our waterproofs off for a change. In spite of the awful weather, we had made quite good time and were able to stop for a short rest just before many of the official checkpoints. It would have been all too easy to stop too long at these checks, they provided great piles of delicious Parma ham rolls, wine and fresh fruit and we took the opportunity to restock our supplies for the journey once again.

At the lunch break we got a chance to chat with other competitors as we had, by this time begun to overtake some of the slower cars. It was very noticeable that the smarter competitors simply grabbed handfuls of food and left without any unnecessary delay.

After lunch we were off to Pescara. We were now mixing it with other competitors and overtaking a gaggle of Bugattis and 1750 Alfa Romeos. Several other cars had fallen by the wayside at this stage. We had a long dice with a superb GP Delahaye and to our surprise found that there was hardly any difference between the performance of the two cars, we stayed close together for mile after mile, wonderful!

Of course, we were not the fastest car in the event by any means, we were overtaken by Paul Grist in his Monza Alfa (who was later pulled up by the police for speeding!) and by a GP Delage, both went past as if we were standing still and the noise was fantastic.

We joined up with young Tim Gauntlett driving the K3 MG – we understand that this was a seventeenth birthday present. He managed to keep up with us for some distance, but we eventually pulled away on one of the steeper parts of the route. I drove on yet another hill climb, with Richard, the ace time-keeper trying in vain to curb my enthusiasm – he didn't entirely agree with my plan to thrash up the early bits and relax for a smoke just before the finish control, as we were getting heavily penalised for arriving minutes early at every checkpoint and we were meant to be driving to an accuracy of a tenth of a second.

As we drove through the crowds, we soon found what they wanted to hear, a change down to third, followed by flat out acceleration got them clapping and cheering like mad! It was turning to dusk now, we still had 160 kilometres to go before Rome and it seemed to take forever, even becoming slightly boring. Then we met up again with Paul Grist in the Alfa Monza, a supercharged OM, a K3 MG and a few other quick cars. We tried really hard to stay with the Monza and the last couple



Spectators lining the route.



Richard looks absolutely exhausted at the end of the day's run.

of hours turned into a real charge and were thoroughly enjoyable.

On the outskirts of Rome the normally superb Mille Miglia signs began to let us down, but every competitor was in the same boat and somehow we all muddled through to the official finish. We swept into the square and onto a floodlit podium, where a mike was thrust into our faces and we were asked our views of the event so far. We were amused to see a famous Italian porno movie star present at the finish control. Apparently she is trying to stand for Parliament at the moment and we were assured that she was rather better dressed than she normally is in her film roles!

We reached our hotel at about 11 p.m. and had managed to get over our tiredness – or so we thought – after a quick shower we were looking forward to a good meal and a few drinks with the other competitors, but in reality we virtually fell asleep at the dinner table.

The final day was to take us from Rome to Brescia, another 660 kilometres and this was to prove to be the most picturesque part of the entire run as we drove through the Tuscany hills. The first section took us to Sienna, a truly beautiful city and, as it was Sunday, filled with lovely young girls — all chaperoned by their mothers!

By this late stage the field had closed right up and we were intermingled with cars such as 250 GTO Feraris, C Type Jaguars, Lancias and Maseratis – the older cars start the event first and the younger, often faster, cars start last. The weather was now good, the sun was shining, we were all well fed and watered and I was really enjoying my drive. I had a wonderful dice with a 300S Maserati and to my surprise I actually left him on the bends. Richard had to remind me to slow down at about this point, he gently pointed out that this wasn't a five lap handicap at Silverstone and he thought that things were getting a bit too hairy. Just to keep my sense of perspective, I was trounced in turn by a 1927 GP Delage, which passed at full chat, making an indescribable noise.

All this dicing resulted in us arriving at

the lunchtime stop an hour early, so we had to stop at a cafe to enjoy a few coffees and watch the other competitors drive past. We enjoyed this a little too much, miscalculated the time we had to spare and, in the rush to check in, actually checked in after our set time, so we had to do some really serious driving after lunch to make up for lost time.

The first big challenge was the climb up the Futa pass, but the roads were dry, our racing tyres gave us plenty of grip, we knew that we were well outside the top twenty places, so not 'in the money', and we just enjoyed the climb, playing to the crowd again, hanging the tail out on every bend – but the trip down the other side was a different story altogether.

The road down was no less steep than the road up – and just as long of course. There were countless sharp bends and we seemed to be braking hard constantly. This took its toll and before long we had to stop to adjust the brakes to try to get retardation, this was getting We realised just dangerous! dangerous things had got when I found that I needed to take up each adjuster no less than five clicks - and that's a lot!

After the advantures of the Futa and the Raticosa, we were on the last leg into Bologna. We had a bit of a problem on this stretch, when the stop watch was dropped into the rubbish inside the car, which was looking like a dustbin on racing tyres by this point. Something fell onto the road and we thought it was the stop-watch, luckily it wasn't, we eventually found it among the dead rolls, bits of fruit, paper bags and drink cartons and never did find out what had fallen out of the car.

Whilst all this was going on we became mixed up with a gaggle of Ferraris and suddenly found ourselves driving into the Ferrari factory at Modena. After some shouting and arm waving, we got away from the factory and back onto the route, we were still 200 kilometres from the finish, it was 5 p.m., the roads were now very crowded and we had fallen behind time. It seemed that everyone and their aunt were on the road. The police were no longer able to stop the traffic to let

competitors across junctions and things were getting very difficult.

By sheer luck, we managed to tuck ourselves in behind a police car on one of the long straight roads. There was heavy traffic in both directions and the police saw us through waving aside any Fiats of Alfasuds who dared get in the way, but the police weren't fast enough, so we drove closer and closer to their tail until they began to speed up. Eventually they were going flat out down the centre of the road – wonderful stuff!

Suddenly, I realised that Jeffrey Pattinson in his incredibly quick Talbot Lago was right on *my* tail, so I waved him past. He wasn't satisfied with simply overtaking me, he shot past the police car as well. I followed him and we had an exhilarating 75 – 80 m.p.h. dice through the traffic! Once clear of the town I could only just manage to keep the Talbot in sight.

Some 20 kilometres out of Brescia, the cars were directed into a big arena at Montichiari, prior to the final run into Brescia. We were feted by bands and a

troupe of drum majorettes, Richard greatly amused us and them by constantly teasing them, winking and generally causing consternation!

Finally, we were off. At the outskirts of Brescia, the ever present crowds pressed in closer than ever, it was now only possible to drive through the gap at a walking pace. The big problem was that everyone wanted to slap us on the hand or shoulder for luck, not just a pat, but a really hearty bang. One over enthusiastic spectator caught me on the head and left it ringing, not nice at all.

The final ramp came into view, we drove up into a barrage of TV cameras, press, flash lights and general razzmatazz. Our route book was stamped for the very last time and the event was over. We drove off the ramp and into total darkness and utterly deserted roads. We were so lost we had to enlist the aid of a friendly taxi driver to guide us to the hotel, where we had a few drinks before collapsing into bed, but I seemed to spend the rest of the night reliving the epic drive of the past three days.

Veteran, Vintage, Classic & Contemporary



Crossply: Dunlop, Lee, Bedford, Fulda, Firestone, Universal/ Lester, Ceat, Avon, Denman, Olympic, Fort, Pirelli, Mabor. **Beaded Edge:** Dunlop, Bedford, Firestone, Universal,

Durandal. Wheel rims also available.

Bibendum: Michelin, Durandal, Firestone. **Straight sided:** Dunlop, Universal/Lester. **Racing:** Dunlop CR65, CR70, R1, R5, R6, 5-stud.

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The finish at last. Brescia, 10.50 p.m.

Monday morning saw the formal ending of the run and we had to haul our now very creased and crumpled jackets, ties and slacks out of the car for the official reception, which was held in the enclosed courtyard of a palatial mansion. The reception was followed by a terrific lunch. The star turn at the lunch was a vast iced cake in the shape of the whole Mille Miglia route, built all the way round the fountain in the middle of the square. The roads and even the cars were all beautifully depicted in icing sugar, fantastic. There were lots of speeches and the usual showbiz style presentations, then it was really all over.

How did we do? Well, we finished way down the list, but we *did* finish and that is more than many of our fellow competitors managed. The car came through with flying colours, one Scintilla magneto gave up at some point and that

is all the trouble we had. Everywhere we went the car was feted, with cries of "Bella, bella" "Fantastico!" and the infectious enthusiasm of the Italian crowds overwhelmed us. No wonder there is a certain magic about the Mille Miglia. For both of us it was a truly fantastic drive.

It is always grossly oversubscribed and we were lucky to be granted our entry in the circumstances. Although it is probably true to say that the first hundred entrants are VIPs, pop stars and ex racing drivers, and therefore automatically get an entry, it is no longer a race as it was originally, but it is still a test of both machine and competitor. How Moss and Jenks managed to cover the course in just under 10 hours 8 minutes in 1955 defies the imagination.

Would I do it again? You bet! Ciao!

Peter Whenman, with Richard Bush



The winter seems to be over before it ever began. All very fine, but I can't help feeling that we shall have to pay for it in some other way.

Committee meetings have been as well attended and as busy as ever in the early months of the year. John Oliver is back in action on the spares management, after his recent heart disruption, thankfully, and we have also been joined by Jeff Leeks. who will be taking over from Alec Downie as Southern Secretary. His first task will be to comb through the list of southern members to see what kind of constituency he has and to locate a suitable pub meet venue, where he can hold court each month in future. I know that it is irresponsible to say so in today's climate, but pub meets seem to have become very "milk and water" affairs, since the drink/ driving issue became so serious. I really do miss the good old bad days.

We have been spared the worst of the vintage racing eligibility controversy, which has apparently ignited the VSCC Committee with some ferocity, but it has now reached us by way of Alastair Barker's shock absorbers. Alastair is putting up a spirited defence of his use of telescopics on his V12 team replica, but despite the apparent popularity of telescopics among V12 owners, even before 1940, the Vintage Club will not accept them if not originally fitted, and that's that. I have no doubt that they have in mind the thin end of the wedge syndrome, but it does seem rather hard when Edwardian style Bentleys are accepted with hydraulic brake modifications.

I heard that another of our Committee, treasurer Clive Peerless, is not only an accomplished jazz musician, but can be enjoyed playing in public: every Sunday lunchtime at the Half Moon in Putney (no concessions for Lagonda owners, but he promises to buy a round for every Lagonda which turns up). Perhaps Clive can be

Jottings from the Chair

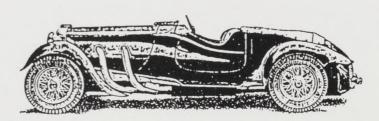
persuaded to play at a southern knees-up, in pale imitation of the Northern D and D, with its all night technicolour disco.

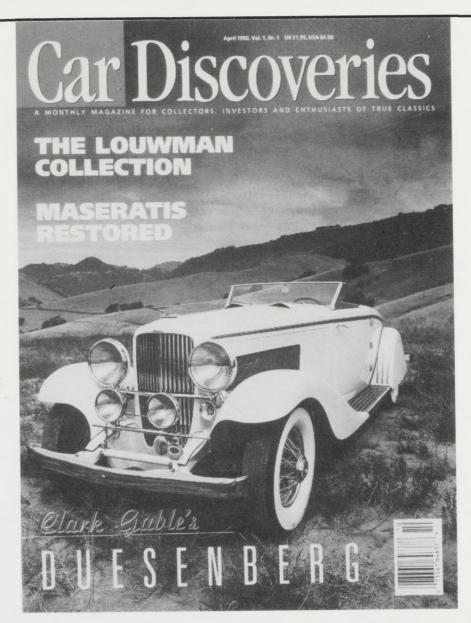
Is it my imagination, or is vintage car price escalation slowing down to a more sensible pace? I hope so, as otherwise only the seriously rich museum operators would have been able to afford to own Lagondas. Whilst the market attention has switched to Ferraris and Astons, pre-war Lagondas seem to cost little more this spring than a year ago, which must be a good thing if they are to stay in active road use.

Roger Firth was attempting to climb a muddy gradient in his Riley when I was marshalling at the Wessex Trial, and said that he would like to help with a Lagonda equivalent of "The Technical Facts of the Vintage Bentley". The Bentley Club have a major advantage in this area, as the WO cars share a common design philosophy (built like even heavier lorries than Lagondas); nevertheless, such a reference work is an enormous asset to the club and to owners. I am certain the idea should be encouraged for Lagondas.

Technical Hint: Geoff Seaton points out that the Scintilla magneto for the 3 litre possesses a helpful timing mark on the casing next to the fibre gear wheel. When the two scribed marks, on the casing and on the wheel (both quite faint) line up, the mag is correct for number one cylinder, fully advanced (on one stroke anyway). Not a lot of people know that, as the man says.

TTFN Jeff Ody





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The Story of Harry Freeling

At Staines there was a group of great men, whose skills were not really appreciated – and among them was old Harry Freeling.

Harry Freeling was known as the "marker-off", or to put it more accurately, Harry would take every casting and check it entirely, inside and out, to the finished drawings and to the casting drawing.

Harry worked in the "final view room", at a space just outside and in front of Len-Phillips' office. Len was the Chief Inspector for Lagonda Ltd. and Harry was attached to Len's department. The final view room was a long, deep, open room, with work benches across it at ten foot intervals, sliding doors at each end and a pair in the middle. To the left of the view room was a small heat treatment shop, where the starter ring gears were finished, with each tooth of the gear hardened and quenched individually. I think Lagonda were the only people to do this and it prevented severe distortion of the gear ring.

Before any cylinder block crankcase casting was sent for machining, the casting was put into the final view room for the check and marking off by Harry Freeling.

Harry had a steel slab, about eight feet by four feet, set at chest height; on the steel slab were several marking-off tools. which were long steel scribers, set into block stands, which allowed the points to be moved in any direction by less than 1/100th of an inch. the actual measured heights were made with a four foot rule, scribed in 1/100th of an inch all the way up to the four foot mark. The rule was about 2" wide and fixed into a vertical machined slide, which had a vernier screw, the screw was behind the rule and with the knob above the slide Harry could move the rule up and down by less than 1/100th of an inch. He had a six inch magnifying glass and would hone the points of the scribers to needle points and set the scribers to the height dimensions needed to mark off the casting. Above the steel slab was a small tackle to lift the

weights to the table and the casting would be set up on small jacks, which were moved up and down to get the best first machining operation.

Now the first machining operation would normally be to machine the sump face, or the cylinder head face for a datum for the later operations. Along one side of the casting was a long cast up boss for the main oilway for the main bearings and this was some 20" long. This was drilled from one end, so that if the drill started off not fairly centred, it could end up with a wall too thin at the other end, so that was critical. I think, from memory, that the drilled hole was three-eighths or sevensixteenths. But other places had to be so considered that the "meat" for other bosses, for example, the bosses for the tapped holes of the timing cover faces were also in the best places. To digress a little, in large iron castings like this, the final positions of the contours of the iron casting would be the result of the annealing – and large castings could move a bit in annealing. So, it did happen that small bosses for tapped holes might be a quarter of an inch out and not leave much for the tapped hole. That was what Harry had to set out. His most important job was to see that we didn't scrap a casting when it arrived at the tapping and screwing, that the metal around valve seats was true and the "meat" around the cylinders was true.

Harry first set the casting up on the jacks on the slab; marked the casting with marking white on all the critical lines. Starting with the main oil holes and the small tapped holes, he would work out to the cylinders and the valve seats, when he did a cylinder head. Often, after spending some hours on a casting, he would find that, at the end, there wasn't enough metal at a boss for a large hole and he had to start all over again, by moving the jacks a little and averaging out the dimensional differences. Generally, each cylinder block or cylinder head, or gear box had to be treated as a single piece and

different. I cannot recall a cylinder block ever ending up as unusable. When Harry had decided that he had set up the casting to the best place, he would then carefully scribe heavily marked lines for the first machining ops and any "specials", then he would centre punch the lines to identify them, "just in case". The first milling operations were done by Bill Winckley, who showed me how to cut good gears on a milling machine. (That's very difficult.)

Harry could split 1/100th of an inch with his pointers and mark out accurate long lines to less than five thou. In his young days, Harry had been the superintendent of the gun shop for the Japanese Navy in Tokyo and he showed me an album of photographs of his working days in the gun shops of the Vickers company in Tokyo.

As a matter of interest, we too at Staines became gun makers. We were the first to make an anti-tank gun, the six pounder. Not very big. The calibre bore was somewhere around 60mm, or two three-eighths and, from that, we learned the art of boring very long accurate holes in gun barrels six feet long. It was rather heart-breaking at first, when the swarf chips persistently broke off at the tool points and caused deep tool marks, which couldn't be honed out.

But back to Harry, he must have been

around 65 to 70 years of age as I knew him and he was extremely agile, tall, shock-head of white bushy hair, with strong hands. Harry could easily split five thou and then some with a rule and his scribers and he made all his tools himself.

The steel slab was actually a precision surface, supported at six points on adjustable legs; it must have weighed a good two to three tonnes.

Harry was also ready to check off the first of any casting, forging or stamping from the foundry, of any part not made before, so that the "firstoff" was kept in an approval museum in Len's final view room.

Later, when I find more relics, I'll tell you how the gear wheels were made, before the modern machines for gear rolling were invented. We were allocated three Lees Bradner gear rolling machines and two Pfauter machines, which made life a lot easier. By gear rolling and rolling tooth grinding,modern gear tooth forms are far more accurate than the old ways and mesh with the silky silence we now all expect.

Harry must be long gone and his skills haven't been handed on to any modern machine shop, but his skills are still needed at all the workshops where machine tools are made . . .

John D. Berridge

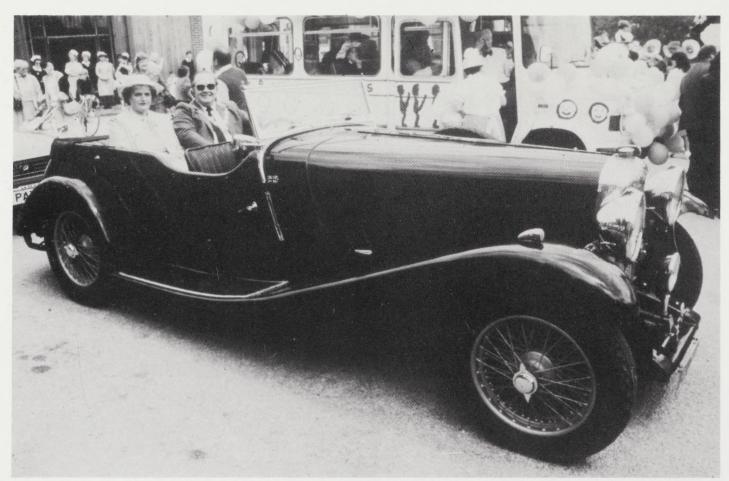
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When not attending to Club affairs, Bryan Hyett finds time to serve on his local council. He was recently Chairman of Wombourne Village Council and here he attends an event in Richard McCann's $3^{1/2}$ litre.



Roger Firth enjoying himself in his Close Coupled 2 litre saloon at this years VSCC Pomeroy Trophy Meeting.

UF 9616 – A First Lagonda

My interest in Lagondas, like all the best things in life, happened by pure chance. The year was 1959 and I was working for a Company in an old mansion house in rural Essex, very isolated at the end of a mile and a half drive. In the drawing office was a unique character called John who had an obession with cars and motorcycles, changing his vehicle about every two weeks. The vehicles were most varied and I can recollect him thundering up the drive in a vintage Bentley, XK 120 Jaguar, Packard Saloon, Riley Nine, Austin Seven, Excelsior motor bike and many others. He was a most exuberant driver and was always becoming involved in hair raising incidents. He had one leg shorter than the other and a permanent limp which was the result of several different motor cycle accidents.

John was aware of my interest in cars because at that time I was running a Triumph TR2 and competing in various rallies, driving tests and hill-climbs. John arrived one Monday morning and told me that he had been looking at a derelict Lagonda over the week-end. It was in a scrapyard near Colchester and he thought it might be picked up for around twentyfive pounds. Although he was interested himself, he had decided that it needed too much work doing and suggested that I might be interested. At first I declined but the idea turned over in my mind, gradually gathering strength. Eventually, Dick (another colleague) and I set off to Marks investigate this interesting Tey to machine.

The scrapyard owner viewed us quizzically and suspiciously but escorted us to the rear of the yard where the machine reposed. It was indeed a Lagonda, one could see the name through the verdigris on the radiator which lay on the rotting back seat. The body was a primitive open four-seater, clearly not original. The construction appeared to be a gas barrel frame covered with sheet steel. The machine looked sad and forlorn, standing

open to the elements amongst the nettles with its flat tyres, the grass growing out of the seats and the battered and rusty body almost devoid of paintwork.

However, after due consideration, Dick and I thought that we might be able to make something of it and decided upon a joint venture. We started haggling with the scrapyard owner and offered fifteen pounds. He said it MUST be worth twenty as scrap and produced a magnet to prove that the radiator was brass, not steel! Eventually, the deal was struck at eighteen pounds and Dick and I became the proud owners of a thoroughbred motor car!

I remember that there was also a Bentley in the yard – a vintage three litre hearse. It had magnificient silver plated rails and etched glass windows but was highly priced at fifty pounds. I wonder what happened to it?

We returned the following evening in Dick's 2.5 Litre Riley and a rope to tow the Lagonda home. Surprisingly, half-anhours strenuous work with a foot-pump resulted in all the tyres inflated. They even stayed up. The Lagonda was attached to the rope and off we went. I shall never forget that journey home through the gathering gloom with no lights on the Lagonda. The steering was almost seized and moved in jerks. The brakes were virtually non-existent, but somehow I avoided running into the back of Dick's Riley and the journey was actually completed with no serious incident. However, one outcome was that a half shaft broke on the Riley when Dick set off to work the following day.

At this stage we knew nothing about Lagondas and still did not actually know which model we had purchased. John had said it was a two-litre. However, having read a potted history of Lagonda in a magazine, I realised this could not be true because our car had six cylinders. After considering the meagre information to hand, we concluded that it must be a 16/80. This was confirmed some time later

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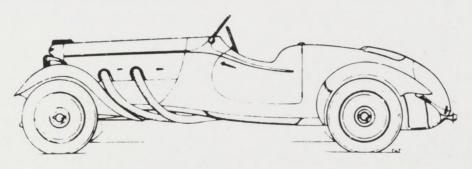
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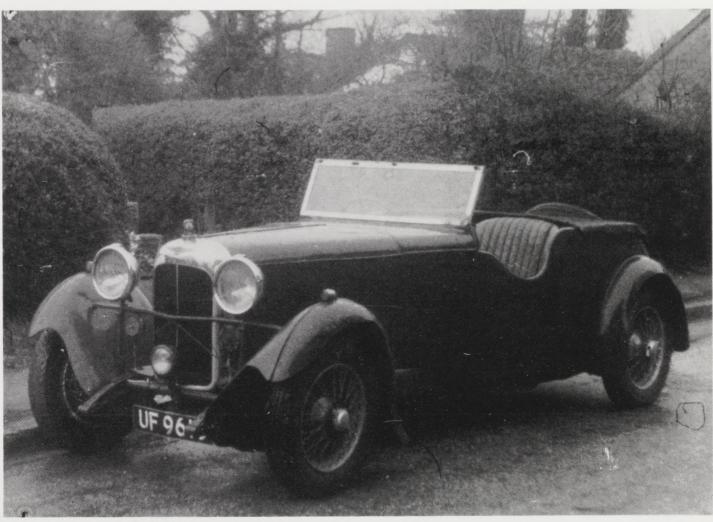
by a knowledgeable enthusiast in the car park of the Kings Head, Chigwell.

The first decision was "Let's start the engine!". After much struggling, the rusty plugs were removed, cleaned, adjusted and replaced. The dipstick showed the sump to be at least half-full of black sludge. We plugged the lower radiator hose and filled the block with hot water through the top hose. My TR2 battery was borrowed, connected up, the button pressed and the starter turned over. However, there was no spark at all from the magneto, which at that time was a piece of equipment which was a total mystery to me. However, advice from various quarters was to put it in a warm oven overnight, so this was the approach. The contacts were cleaned and after this attention, sure enough we had a spark.

After filling the carburettor float chambers with petrol we tried the starter again. The engine coughed, backfired several times and lo! and behold burst into life with a thunderous noise through the holes in the corroded exhaust, and with an ejection of dust, lumps of carbon, cobwebs and black smoke. We succeeded in driving up and down outside the garage a few times, and proved that all the gears functioned.

Further examination of our puchase revealed the frightening amount of work needed to be done, but we decided to do the minimum possible to make the vehicle roadworthy. The radiator was the first problem – it had clearly been removed because it leaked like a sieve. An old Vauxhall radiator was obtained from a scrapyard and grafted into the original Lagonda radiator shell. The crankcase had several ominous sheet steel patches screwed on, obviously to cover up cracks and holes. Clearly a broken rod or some other disaster had affected the engine at sometime in its life.

The work to get it on the road followed the usual routine of much degreasing,



UF9616 pictured in 1960.

wire brushing, painting, cleaning etc., although done very hurriedly because we were not "restoring" only "getting-itgoing". A coat of green Valspar was brushed on. Dick did one side and my girl friend, Pat, did the other. Dick later complained bitterly that whenever I showed the car to anyone, Pat's side of the car was praised but his side never even mentioned. We totally rewired the car and then came the great day to submit it for the newly introduced MOT ten-year test. After some doubts about brakes, we were given the vital certificate and could now really try the car on the road.

It went surprisingly well and many happy miles were covered, not all trouble free by any means, but by hook or by crook we always managed to get home under our own steam. As impecunious enthusiasts, economy was vital. Secondhand tyres were purchased for an average of fifty shillings each. Dick's brother-inlaw ran a garage and provided free oil, drained from new cars when it was the practice to change the oil after the first 500 miles. This oil appeared brand-new

and clear, and certainly never created any problems of which I was aware.

In spite of Pat's apprenticeship on ancient and rusty motor cars, she later consented to be my wife and thirty years later is still a Lagonda enthusiast. We ran the Lagonda for about three years but by this time I was married and had acquired an old cottage which needed a great deal of time spending on it. The Lagonda was pushed more and more into the background and finally, it had to go. An advert in Motor Sport produced a buyer at the magnificent sum of seventy-five pounds — which seemed a good appreciation on the purchase price.

With hindsight, it could be said that we abused and ill-treated this car, but at the time it had very little value and was just another "old banger". However, perhaps we did save it for posterity and somehow, I believe we actually obtained more enjoyment from it than from todays overpriced and highly polished examples. I wonder where UF9616 is now?

Alan Elliott



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Cadwell Park – Not my favourite circuit.

We decided to have a fairly full racing season in 1989 after two years out of action with the LG45. Cadwell Park was one of the race meetings we attended and while I was there somebody commented that Cadwell Park was their favourite circuit. Looking back on the weekend's activities I subsequently decided that I did not share their opinion of that circuit.

We set out after lunch on August Bank Holiday Saturday afternoon to make the 200 mile journey to Cadwell, which at times is a fairly tedious, cross-country exercise. It was a hot, humid afternoon and I set off in a short-sleeved cotton shirt. Soon after we reached the A1 the heavens opened and I was soon saturated. The LG has no hood and the journey was one of the worst I can remember.

We eventually reached Cadwell and prepared the car for the following day's racing. Sunday morning was cold and blustery with frequent showers, but by the time my practice session commenced the track was fairly dry. I had not been to Cadwell for about five years, and getting to know the circuit again was not assisted by frequent yellow flags where other practising cars had come to a halt for various unknown reasons.

My first race was disastrous as on the second lap I spun off – entirely my own fault – and ended up on the grass facing the way I had come. The battery was tired and I could not re-start the engine.

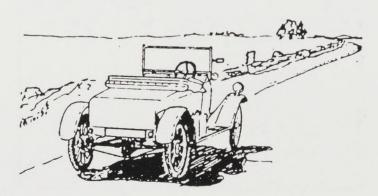
In my second race, my driving was affected by the earlier incident and I "pussy-footed" around the circuit, ending up somewhere in the middle of the field. Towards the end of that race I noticed that the water temperature was high, but did not worry unduly as I had been using third gear fairly extensively.

Next morning, we were preparing to come home and having started the engine I checked the water level only to find that the water was not circulating. The water pump had sheared and I then had a 200 mile journey at low speeds, with the temperature hovering around boiling point. I stopped to top up the radiator about every 30 miles and altogether it was a miserable trip. Half-way home one of the rear tyres developed a puncture, and I began to wonder what else the weekend had in store for me. We eventually reached home considerably later than planned, and I put the car away, wondering whether I would be back on the road in time for Donnington Park about four weeks later.

Peter Whenman kindly loaned me a spare water pump and the weekend after Cadwell I switched the two pumps. With the radiator off I decided to take the opportunity to back-flush the core and in the course of this simple operation I managed to drop the radiator on the ground with the result that I now have some rather nasty scratches on the otherwise perfect chrome.

After all this hassle, I came to the conclusion that Cadwell Park is definitely not my favourite circuit, and I don't think we shall be tempted to go there again for some time.

Colin Bugler





Roger Wheldon sent this fine picture of a DB 3 litre tourer.



A. J. Wade's 3½ litre saloon, see page 38.

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 pm 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).

Northern: Lancs/Yorks V.S.C.C. Pub Meeting: the Lagonda Club are invited to this meeting, which is held at the "Floating Light", Standedge. (A62) on the third Thursday of each month. Further details can be obtained from Roger Firth, 061 303 9127.

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 the "Triton", Brantingham, near the A63(T), 10 miles west of Hull.

Dorset: First Thursday each month at the "Frampton Arms", adjacent to Moreton Railway Station on B3390, Bere Regis. Map reference 780 891.

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Leaded Fuel

Many people complained bitterly that their vehicles overheated this last summer, and placed the blame firmly on the demise of two-star petrol. In fact, as will be seen from the following article, the blame lay with a mismatch between the volatility of fuel made for the UK market and the exceptionally hot weather. This led to vapour lock problems, and in turn to weak mixtures which were the cause of the overheating. The Federation is indebted to Dr. Vincent (a Vintage Alvis owner, and a specialist in fuel technology with a major British fuel company) for providing the following synopsis of his talk at the AGM, which explains the mechanism of this problem in detail.

The presentation covered two main areas, namely

1) unleaded petrol

2) user of "4 star" leaded petrol following the withdrawal of "2 star" petrol from the market.

UNLEADED PETROL

Quite a lot of information has been published to indicate that the use of

unleaded petrol in unsuitable engines (principally those of all cast iron construction) may cause exhaust valve seat wear. A slide was shown indicating the rapid increase in valve seat recession as lead content in the petrol decreased below a critical value (about 0.07 gPb/L). The current level of lead was about 0.15 gPb/L, so a considerable safety margin above the wear threshold existed with leaded petrol. Thus, leaded and unleaded petrol could be blended, or used alternatively if desired, thereby both reducing lead pollution and avoiding the risk of valve seat recession.

The mechanism of valve seat wear with unleaded petrol involved the oxidation of the cast iron valve seat by the stream of hot exhaust gas. Iron oxide particles were transferred to the valve, and accumulated, forming hard nodules or lumps which were compacted into the valve surface, reducing its contact area with the seat. Rotation of the valve at higher engine speeds caused it to grind away the seat, which wore rapidly. Abrasive wear debris,

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which were fine particles of iron oxide, (jeweller's rouge) could also accelerate valve guide wear.

Increasing engine speed was shown to accelerate exhaust valve seat recession with unleaded petrol. In one engine on test, wear rates had doubled as engine speed increased from 3800 rpm to 4400 rpm. Conversely, at engine speeds below 2000 rpm, wear rates were much reduced. Increased exhaust valve and seat temperatures, and the greater impact of the closing valve upon its seat as engine speed rose, were factors in the increased rate of wear at high engine speed.

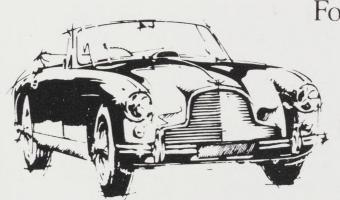
Fitting valve seat inserts of harder and more corrosion resistant material into cast iron heads or blocks was shown to allow continuous operation with unleaded petrol, with a very much reduced risk of valve seat wear. An alternative process, that of induction hardening the exhaust valve seats, was also effective in reducing wear, but this was more likely to be employed as a production line process. The results of some recent research work carried out in the UK showed that some engines were very prone to valve seat recession with unleaded petrol, up to

3mm of wear occurring in about 8000 miles, while others proved more tolerant, although still showing fairly serious seat recession (1mm in 14,000 miles).

One engine type not actually recommended for unleaded petrol, which was fitted with a light alloy cylinder head having cast iron valve seat inserts, nevertheless showed almost no valve seat recession. The most likely explanation for this unexpectedly good performance, lay in the better heat transfer of the aluminium head, which helped to reduce the temperature of the valve seats. Although light alloy cylinder heads were likely to be more wear resistant than cast iron heads, it should not be assumed that all light alloy heads would be satisfactory with unleaded petrol.

It was recognised that some engines might be unable to accommodate valve seat inserts, and for the owners of these vehicles, the performance of valve seat protection additives could be of interest. Two slides were shown indicating the differences in exhaust valve seat wear rates which had been measured with and without anti-wear additives. In both cases, some improvement in seat wear was

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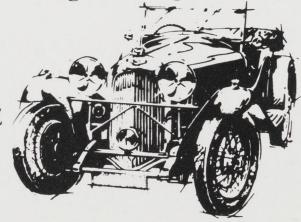
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evident, but on the engine exhibiting the most severe wear, the best additive still permitted valve seat recession of 0.6mm (25 thou') in 14,000 miles. In another engine slightly less susceptible to valve seat recession with unleaded petrol, additives performed better, the best result being about half the above figure. It was possible that in some engines, additives could produce acceptable results, but it was stressed that no additive tested had solved the problem of wear completely.

In summary it was concluded that cast iron engines were at risk when used with unleaded petrol, but that engines with light alloy cylinder heads might fare better. It was not possible to predict wear rates because these would vary widely with engine type and cylinder position (cylinder number 3 in a 4 cylinder engine frequently exhibited the highest rate of valve seat recession). Valve seat inserts of the right material would solve the problem; where engines could accommodate seat inserts, anti-wear additives would provide some protection, but did not represent a complete solution. The best policy currently was to continue to buy leaded petrol. Supplies of leaded petrol would be sustained longer while a healthy demand existed.

USE OF 4 STAR PETROL

Many owners had been concerned, since the disappearance of 2 star petrol, about the use of higher octane quality (ie 97-98 octane compared with about 92 octane) in low compression engines. It was stressed that there was nothing inherently damaging about using high octane petrol in low compression engines.

Octane quality was explained, being defined as resistance to detonation, also known as "pinking" or knock. Detonation was described as an unwanted, abnormal combustion process which could occur in the "end gas" of the combustion chamber. The "end gas" was so called because it lay furthest from the sparking plug, and thus was at the end of the combustion process. Certain types of hydrocarbon molecules characterised by a long, straight-chain, structure (low octane components) permitted the build undesirable combustion intermediary products called "peroxide radicals" in the end gas. These radicals encouraged the unwanted spontaneous and violent combustion phenomenon called detonation. High components, whose structure did not encourage the formation of peroxide radicals, permitted normal combustion to proceed without detonation occurring. It was stressed that the octane quality of petrol did not affect the speed of normal (spark ignited) combustion but only altered the tendency to encourage or discourage detonation. Flame speeds were shown to be independent of octane quality.

A slide depicting the distillation of

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crude oil to yield different fuels, was shown. Crude petrol, usually called "straight run gasoline" was shown as the first liquid product from the distillation tower. Before the war, this low octane (65-70 octane typically), comprised mainly of long straight chain hydrocarbons, was the only form of petrol produced at the refinery. Since the war, although straight run gasoline was still produced, the introduction of catalytic cracking and reforming processes which used other distillation products as a starting point, had permitted production of high octane products. Examples of the change in structure and shape of the molecules achieved by reforming were shown. It was shown that relatively simple molecular changes could produce big increases in octane quality, vet in normal, knock free combustion, burn rates were not altered. The results of test work carried out recently, in which the speed of combustion had been measured in a test engine, showed that 2 star and 4 star fuels burned at the same rate.

It was explained that the problems encountered by some motorists during the hot summer weather had not been caused by the use of a high octane fuel, but were due to vapour lock resulting from the unusually hot weather. Petrol had a boiling range from about 30°C up to about 200°C, because of the number of different components which made up the fuel (150-200 approximately). Each of these components boiled at a different temperature, thus making up the boiling range. In practice, this meant that bubbles of vapour would form in the fuel pump or lines, or in the carburettor bowl if temperatures about about 30°C occurred. Vapour formation in the pump could cause erratic operation, resulting in a restricted or intermittent supply of fuel. Vapour formation in the carburettor bowl could alter the liquid level, leading to a weak fuel-air mixture. A weak fuel-air mixture burnt more slowly than one of strength leading the correct overheating, which in turn resulted in higher underbonnet temperatures. This

situation naturally increased vapour formation in the carburettor, or fuel pump, and a vicious spiral began. Power output fell with weaker fuel-air mixture, and an erratic fuel supply produced poor driving characteristics, perhaps leading to complete failure. Starting often became difficult, in addition.

Thus, most of the symptoms of which motorists had complained during the summer could be explained by vapour lock. Changes in octane quality would not explain the symptoms because the heat released from low and high octane fuels was the same, as was the speed of combustion. The tax changes in the March 1989 budget had resulted in the rapid disappearance of 2 star petrol, with tanks and pumps being used for the sale of unleaded petrol. It took about two months for the remaining supply of 2 star to be used up, with the result that many drivers of older cars, who had not previously used 4 star petrol, first purchased the higher octane fuel in early-mid May, when some very high temperatures had occurred. Vapour lock, which some drivers may have experienced, perhaps with the first tankful of 4 star petrol, had led many to conclude that the higher octane quality was incompatible with their engines. This, however, had been shown to be quite incorrect. In fact, drivers of older cars could use 4 star petrol without concern. Where vapour lock problems occurred, local solutions, for example the use of a heat shield between the exhaust manifold and the carburettor, or thermal barriers between cylinder head, or block, and the inlet manifold, would be beneficial. Care should be taken to route fuel feed lines away from the exhaust manifold, and to ensure that bulkhead mounted fuel pumps, for example, were not getting too hot. By adopting such simple measures where necessary, all owners of older vehicles should be able to continue to derive pleasure from using their cars, without concern.

Reprinted from The Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs, News sheet Issue 4, Winter 1989/90.



"Charles Elphinstone – An appreciation by Valerie May"

Charles Elphinstone, who died last year, will be sadly missed by the longer-serving members of the Club who will remember him for his efficient stewardship of the Club's financial affairs from 1951 until 1958. Indeed Charles was one of the small group of Lagonda stalwarts who helped the Club to reform after the last war. Peter Densham, Mike Wilby, Billy Michael, Henry Coates, Alan Audsley, Freeman-Wright, Charles Rexford-Welch and others were his contemporaries whose enthusiasm for the marque assured the Club's future success when other smaller one-make clubs found it difficult to survive on their own.

I first met Charles in 1950 when I joined a London firm of Chartered Accountants as a young secretary and where Charles was a junior partner. Not surprisingly, I was soon involved in Club affairs when we were not busy! Lagonda was a familiar name to me as I had an uncle who had worked for the company at Staines

between 1912 and 1947. Eventually in 1957 Charles asked if I would like to be the Club's secretary, which carried on when I finished working in the City and became a full-time housewife in 1962. In recent years Charles said to me that he had little idea that I would still be Club secretary in 1987!

Charles was not only my boss for twelve very happoy years but he and his wife, Pamela, became good family friends and we have always kept in touch. More recently, when health allowed, Charles, Pam and their son James were to be seen at A.G.M's. Tony and I were especially pleased to see Pam and James at last year's very wet A.G.M.

A couple of year's ago, Charles enrolled both his sons, Andrew and James, as Club members so not only does the name "Elphinstone" continue in the Club but "Giralda" the 11.1h.p. and the M.45 Tourer are assured of remaining in the family.

Letters

Dear Mr Painter.

As I am soon to start the "underrestoration" of Z11388, a 1935 M35R T9 tourer (currently still running on its original wiring) I was receptive to the suggestion that a workshop manual should be produced by the Club. There are enough common components amongst the 3, $3^{1/2}$, $4^{1/2}$ litre cars (other than the Meadows engine in the $4^{1/2}$) that a manual based on these cars should be of interest to many members.

For my part, I should be pleased to assist in the project through the preparation of technical drawings on a computer-based draughting system from supplied sketches

or photographs.

One part of my car I have already attended to is the Ki-Gass pump seal. The sealing material is "1/8 PTFE Impregnated Yarn" and is available by post from M. Barnwell Services Ltd, Reginald Road, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands B67 5AS. Tel. 021 429 8011. It works perfectly and could also presumably be used in water pump stuffing boxes too. The snag is that although you only need about 8 inches of the stuff, you have to buy 8 metres at a cost of £25. Perhaps the Club should stock it?

Yours sincerely

Paul Ellis

Dear Ken.

I support your idea for a mini "workshop manual" for our cars. Having just spent four years building an Austin 7 tourer from a box of bits, I must say that I found the 750 M.C. publication "The Austin Seven Companion" invaluable, being for those who don't know, a compilation of articles, technical and entertaining, written by and to the Club over the years. If it would be of any help or encouragement, I would be happy to illustrate any articles written, assuming reference from photos or sketches was made available to me.

Good luck with your Weymann body, Lagondas are a different kettle of fish to Austin 7s, so I'm happy to leave the rebuild of my 3 Litre to someone who really knows what they are doing!

Yours sincerely

Roy Taylor

The following was received recently without a stamp:

Dear Painter,

Must apologise for the delay in sending this, but have just found a copy of your Spring 1989 magazine on a bench on Waterloo Station.

Your man Davey is a bit hard on poor Wilbur Gunn in his article "Now it Can Be Told". I well remember the stir in Odessa in 1919 when the armoured cars arrived. I was a young subaltern in the Intelligence Corps, stationed there at the time and although the whole project was supposed to be top hush-hush, everyone knew about

From your article, you would suppose that it was coincidence or imcompetence that led to the cars fitting exactly into the railway tracks. Far from it. Gunn knew his Russia and the cars were specially designed to fit the tracks, which were often the only viable route through the wilder parts of the country.

In fact, the cars carried a set of flanged steel wheels which whould bolt on, just like the spiked ones, to enable them to run on the railway. They also had ingenious little ramps to allow them to mount and dismount from the tracks anywhere.

What let them down was the sheer muddle of the Russkis, who never laid down proper supplies of petrol, so that the commanders were forced to pay cash for two-gallon tins at every chemists shop they came to. What a way to run an army!

Yours sincerely

Walter Pratt, Major (Retired) Box 3, Charing Cross Railway Arches, London WC2

Dear Mr Oliver.

I am writing somewhat belatedly re the Lagonda spares advert in the Automobile (August 1989 issue).

I am restoring a 1925 12/24 4 door tourer, chassis No L3061. I have another chassis, No L2673 for another possible restoration. I enclose a photo for your information.

I am not sure if you have any spares available for this model, but thought it worth a try. Before Christmas I received a copy of "Lagonda" by Seaton, which I had ordered from Chater and Scott Ltd., Middlesex and have found that it contains additional details not included in other publications.

I know of three other Lagondas in New Zealand:

a 1925 4 door tourer,

a 1924 4 door tourer and

a 1923(?) 2 door tourer.

Would it be of value to belong to the

Lagonda Club? some correspondence with the owner of a similar vehicle would be appreciated.

Regards

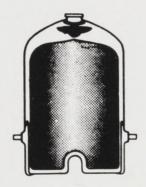
Ian G. Hedgman 24A Station Road Heathcote Valley Christchurch 2 New Zealand

Dear Ken.

Geoffrey Dorey has no need to feel degraded or complemented by his Bentley friend. Perhaps he can allow himself to feel a little superior, for the word "gonadal" does not exist – the adjective of gonad is gonadial and the adverb gonadiac!

What else can you expect, as "A Bentley Driver is an anagram of very bleared nit! Yours sincerely

Gordon Rider





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Sir,

Harry Robinson's analysis of incomplete entries in the last Register merits an explanation. The Registrar would not wish to defend his work but, from a distance, I am prepared to do so, having compiled the very first published Register of Members and their Cars thirty years ago.

That first Register contained details of 776 Members in a form which has been followed every few years since 1960. Later editions have included additional interesting sections and corrected many inaccuracies.

Very little properly addressed mail goes astray; the census cards are pre-printed clearly with the Registrar's address. In 1959 and 1962 thirty per cent of the Members returned their cards; the other seventy per cent were too indolent or apathetic. Publishing a Register with 500 + blanks would have been absurd so I spent many hours writing and telephoning to Club Officials or Owners and finished with more than fifty who, despite reminders, would not reply and about whom we could not make an intelligent guess. Needless to say, with guesswork cross-checks missed, some cars appeared with two homes.

All this work takes time, the previous listings are becoming out of date (Members change at about 100 a year. Others change their cars.) It is not safe to assume that an Owner still runs the Lagonda(s) he/she had a few years ago even if he/she had retained them for several years before that. If you don't supply the facts your Register will be inaccurate and incomplete. Reminders were sent to all Members in April, in May with a final one in June before publication.

We are fortunate to have a Registrar keenly interested for more than twenty years in the cars and people who made them. He knows more about these things than anyone else in the world and is consulted not infrequently by the Vehicle Licensing Authority about Lagondas. You may take it that much of the last Register was compiled from the file he revises continuously with reliable information from a variety of sources. His long-

suffering wife Wendy then types it all up – more than once.

Less information filters through from far away lands with widely scattered Members so there are proportionately more incomplete entries marked 'No Register Card'. Why not let the Magazine Editor, the Secretary or Registrar know about your Lagonda exploits. There is all too little in the Club Magazine from overseas.

Yours sincerely

Lepus

Dear Ken,

Yes, some do read your bit of the magazine, and the mention of BR 8412 rang a bell. Out came my album of black and white photos of my early involvement with vintage cars. There was a photo of BR 8412 outside my home in South Norwood, South London in 1960, and also a young John leaning against her at the Ascot AGM that year.

Clifford and Mrs Robinson bought the saloon around 1954, then bought a 3 Litre just before I bought my 2 Litre tourer in 1956. They then restored the Saloon, chrome, paint, fabric, etc. but little mechanically. Later they separated, he took the 3 Litre, she kept the 2 Litre saloon (by the way, Iris passed her driving test in it). Soon after that, I bought it from her. During the summer of 1960, my tourer ran a big end whilst in Newquay, Cornwall and we attempted to tow it with the saloon. We got as far as Bodmin, the saloon's engine was down to 400 revs in 1st and I looked back to see the tourer empty, with my brother walking beside it! The tourer came back by train from Bodmin.

Early in 1961, I sold BR 8412 to Ted Townsley.

The tourer? It's in the garage being recovered again.

Best wishes, thank you for an excellent magazine.

Yours sincerely

John King



BR8412 when Ken Painter owned it, see letter opposite.



Non-member, Gordon Rider's 12/24 in New Zealand. See letter on page 33.

Dear Jeff,

I am now the proud owner of one 1937 LG45 Tourer, chassis no 12190. This Sanction III car is currently a "heap" but will eventually be restored to its former glory. I am taking lots of pictures and keeping meticulous records in the hopes that someday I may write an article on the project, (Yes please! Ed.)

Can any Club members provide any historical details of this car? At this point I know that the family I purchased the car from had owned it since 1963, and that it must have come from the U.K. very shortly before that. Any particulars would be greatly appreciated.

Best regards.

Christopher M Salyer



Sir,

Mr. Michelmore asks about LMG 319 (page 15, No. 143). It is an M45 Z10951 and the proud owner leaning on its scuttle is Peter Cavanagh. Listeners to the wireless knew him as "The Voice of Them All".

During the Fifties I watched the car undergoing fairly extensive overhaul in the "Lagonda Department", a bay of the Dunstonian Garage, Petts Wood, Kent. Jack Kemsley a regular Monte Carlo competitor, member of the R.A.C. Committee and Competitions Committee, had a substantial interest in the garage. Cavanagh lived nearby and other sporting motorists were frequest visitors.

Various B.A.R.C. badges in the photograph however, show Cavanagh's interest concentrated on more modern machinery. Before long he was seen about in a Healey. The Lagonda later went to a Lagonda fancier in America who also had Bernie Calkins 1934 Team Car — now back in this country with Mrs. Robbie Hewitt.

Yours sincerely

Dear Ken,

The car shown on page 15 of the last magazine was owned by Peter Cavanagh, the famous impressionist, better known as "The Voice of Them All". He was an enthusiastic Lagonda owner and I believe that he wrote the odd article for the magazine too.

I claim the first prize of a fortnight's holiday in Bali.

Yours sincerely

Herb Schofield

Dear Ken,

Lag Mag 143 page 15: The 1971 Register entry:—

K28: Kerr, B.M. 2813 First National Building, Oklahoma City, 73102, U.S.A.: M45 Tr (LMG 319) Z10951 also: M45R Team Car (BPK 210), etc.

Do I ever throw anything away?

Martin Whitworth



Lepus

Dear Mr. Painter,

I have just received the Winter 89/90 magazine and just read the Editorial that no one reads.

I would like a silk tie, I would like to see more "technical" articles, like the ones that used to appear many years ago. I have been a member since '59, but have never written an article or done anything to contribute!

I have a 16/80 Weymann saloon and had a 16/80 tourer, which I had to get rid of through lack of space. I used the saloon as everyday transport from '59 to '66, then took it off the road to do a few jobs, discovered the body was a little worse than I had estimated, so took it off the chassis.

I bought ash from a place in London, kept it to dry for 18 months, then set about making a new body, using the "old" body as a pattern. I completed the body remake in about 1972, also decided to refurbish the chassis etc. By 1977 it was well on the way, but unfortunately I had to discontinue, through family problems that took all my time, so the progress went backwards.

It still is a way from completion, the inside leather work has now spoiled, so has to be a special operation. I replaced the metal on the doors—I was very pleased with the result. I did this fairly recently, the metal needs to be painted, then the leathercloth tops can be fitted and then the windows—to be bought new—to be fitted etc.

So, you can see that it is possible for a complete amateur to build a body. You are welcome to view it, if it is any use in your project, for ideas.

Yours sincerely

Bill Boden

Thanks for that last offer Bill, I will certainly take you up on it — and welcome to that exclusive list of contributors to the magazine! Ed.



Dear Sir,

Since Summer 1986, detailed recording of the industrial archaeology of the entire Brooklands site (particularly the former British Aerospace factory) has been carried out by staff and enthusiasts on behalf of Brooklands Museum Trust.

Before everything outside the Museum site completely disappears under a major development programme, Museum welcomes any comments from interested individuals, organisations and societies to ensure that nothing significant has been missed during recording so far. In particular, we seek information on specific motoring and aviation buildings (especially the Itala Works and the pre-1919 Vickers premises) which anyone considers worthy of detailed recording for future generations. Any other statements about the importance of specific features of the site including photographs and any interesting anecdotes relating to past events are also sought.

Brooklands Museum already has extensive Brooklands archives for the pre-World War Two period, but we now feel this is perhaps the last major opportunity to appeal for further contributions to our archives specifically about the site itself.

The fact that Surrey County Council's Planning Committee have recently instructed their officers to consult local residents and companies based on or adjacent to Brooklands about a proposed Brooklands conservation Area reinforces the importance of this unique site – the birthplace of British Motorsport and aviation.

I shall be most grateful if anyone with further information could contact me at the address below with the ultimate objective of producing a definitive site plan of Brooklands' historic past.

Julian C Temple

Curator of Aviation and Industrial History Brooklands Road Weybridge Surrey KT13 0QN Tel. 0932 857381 Dear Mrs May,

I have just read the article in May '89 "Money Observer" Magazine and was thrilled to learn that the Club is still flourishing.

I belonged from 1951 or '52 until 1958, when we left Scotland. In 1951 I took our 1935 3½ Litre pillarless saloon BPL 19 to Shetland for two years, where I was engaged in Rural electrification. I was delighted that it would travel anywhere, over rough tracks, with its high ground clearance.

The only trouble was it lost a tooth from the double helical gear, so that I had to change up from second to top, until through the good offices of your magazine, a member who had access to the necessary equipment cut me another. I'm sure his name was Sanders – he sent me a photograph of his open top $3^{1}/2$.

I'm afraid we were not very active members, being located in Shetland and then Caithness until 1957, but our visits South coincided on two occasions with '8 Clubs' meetings at Silverstone, which was marvellous variety, since we had to be content normally in our spare time with bird watching!

Sadly, the cost of shipping the $3^{1/2}$ Litre on the boat from Lerwick to Aberdeen twice a year and the thousand or so miles at 19 m.p.g., visiting our families in the South of England, proved too much and I sold the car after about two years. I think it was in 1953. I sold it to a London dealer as I had ordered a Ford (!) in Lerwick, for my return from holiday. I received £30, plus an old Austin 7 van, which I took, as

it was the best deal I could get at the time! I left the Austin 7 with a garage foreman at our works in Erith and that was the year of the Thames floods. It was an insurance job – drowned! And I received another £40! How I wish I could have kept the $3^{1/2}$ – I would have been in my element, now that I am retired. Impossible, I'm afraid, with our peripatetic existence – my poor wife has had to endure fifteen moves!

We were thrilled to bits to see the Club badge on the Duke of Edinburgh's 3 Litre at Badminton, when we visited in 1958. different car to mine! I see from your Spring '54 issue the report that the Duke had ordered the car at the Motor Show.

I have just seen in No 27, Spring 1958 issue – the Gen. Secretary is given as Mrs V E May, Winchmore Hill, London N21. You are to be congratulated indeed for your dedication to the Club.,

By the way, the Ford only lasted a year – it was disgusting! I was lucky enough to pick up a 2½ Litre Riley which had been kept on ice for three Monte Carlo Rallies and been back to the works each time, so it was virtually new. I grieved to part with that after donkey's years and 140,000 miles, but it was clapped out.

Would never have happened to the $3^{1/2}$ – they were indestructible. I would love to know if BPL 19 is still around.

Well, I hope you don't mind my wittering on, but the article brought back such happy memories.

With best wishes to the Club,

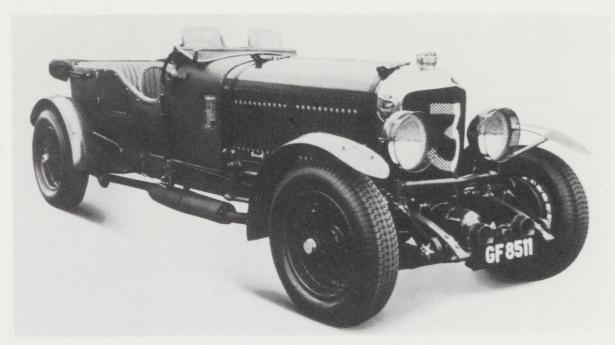
Yours sincerely

A. J. Wade

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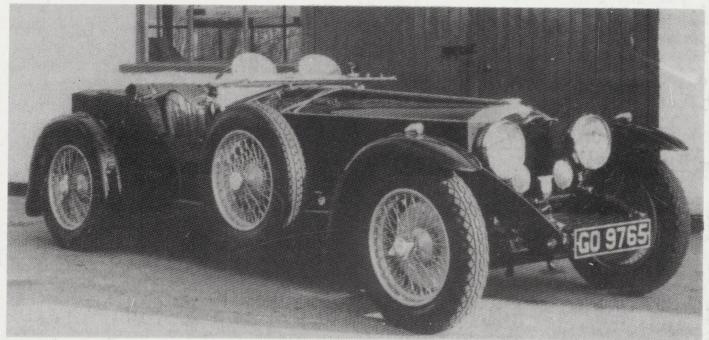
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