

Lagonda



THE MAGAZINE OF THE LAGONDA CLUB

Number 159

Winter 1994

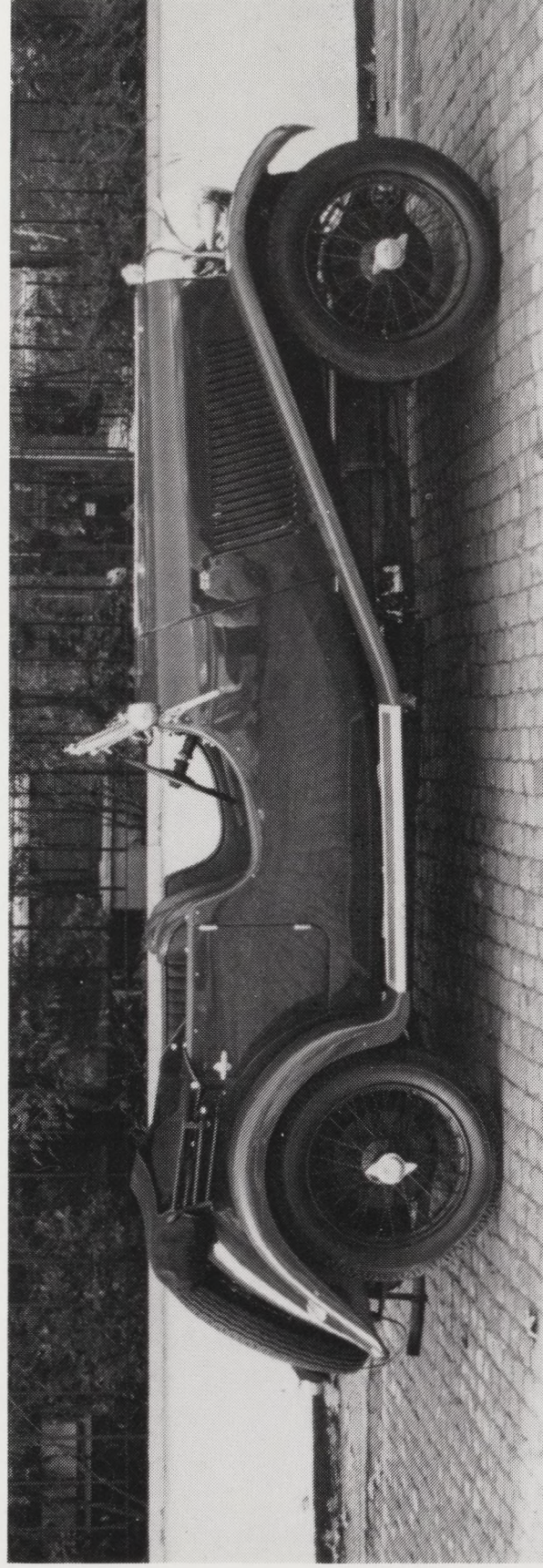


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Issue No. 159
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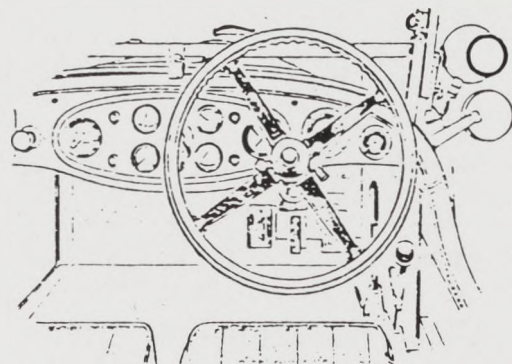
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FRONT COVER

A 1950 picture of a new DB 2.6 with
Raymond Wickham's 1939 LG6.

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Committee.

From the Driving Seat



This magazine is being put together immediately before Christmas, it would normally be done in the week between Christmas and the New Year, but the Painter family is finally on the move and we will leave Wiltshire on 29th December. For a few weeks we shall be in temporary accommodation, but, if all goes according to plan, we will be established at our new permanent address by the time you read this. Our 'new' house is even older than the Lagonda and dates back mainly to the early 17th century, but it lacks enough garages for the family collection, so a new motor house has already been commissioned. Just for a change, I don't intend to do any of the work myself, so it shouldn't interfere with the production of future magazines!

Where is this new house? To find out you must turn back to the top of page three and all will be revealed. At this early stage I can't give you the telephone number, but this will be published in the Newsletter as soon as possible. If you can't wait, you could always try my mobile phone, that's 0850 446966.

In my short time in Suffolk I have been made very welcome by fellow Lagonda owners and by the local VSCC members, but I find that quite a few of the local Lagonda Club members rarely attend the many social events. This isn't unique to Suffolk of course, many of our members join the Club for spares or advice and take no part in the social scene. That, of course, is their choice, but I wonder if they realise just how much more enjoyable the old car

scene can be if you share the fun with fellow enthusiasts. Don't be shy! Come along to one of the local events, if you come in your Lagonda that will do the introducing for you, if you have to come in a modern (as I do at present), then talk to any of the other owners and you will be surprised at the welcome you will receive. If you really **are** shy, then carry a copy of this magazine so that other enthusiasts will recognise you as a person of taste and discernment! Try it, you'll like it. Make attending at least one new event a New Year resolution and get more for your membership subscription!

As for me, my resolution is to make a real start on the saloon body of my 2 litre. It came across to Suffolk in the back of a large van, so that the bits which fell off en route wouldn't be lost for all time. I still need lots of bits, but I have enough to make some real progress now, so watch this space . . .

K.P.P.

Lagonda

Reflections

It would appear to be appropriate as the year comes to a close to glance back at 1993 and see if we left it any better than we found it. I hasten to add from a Lagonda Club point of view, far be it from me to comment on the activities of our rulers. We don't make the rules, we just play the game!

Several excellent events were staged by enthusiastic members in various locations. A lot of them were well supported but some lacked numbers as is often the case. Clashes with big national events can sometimes lure members away but lack of good advance publicity has been observed as a culprit. For next year we are going to include a rolling fixture list with each newsletter and include worldwide publicity if it's sent in. To those who gave of their time a big thankyou and do try to get a report in the mag to encourage others to join in.

At the Annual General Meeting all the members of the committee were given fulsome praise and votes of thanks and I can confirm that a lot of hard work has been done. Some of the work will only bear fruit in years to come e.g. becoming computerised often causes more frustration until all the gremlins are exorcised. Instant savings have been achieved by doing all the mailing from Hartley Wintney but we must be careful not to over pressure the secretarial boiler however sturdy it is!

Also reported at the AGM was the installation of electronic order processing and stock control of the spares scheme. Unfortunately we also had to report a

dramatic fall off in sales of spares as recession hit members lick their financial wounds (real or imaginary).

As Ivan used to urge me to good effect back in the sixties I urge members now, if you think you may need some parts in the future order them now. Only this way can the spares scheme generate its own profit and invest in new items. For a club with such a diverse range of models we have a remarkable and well run scheme but like all business it needs regular lumps of turnover.

Super to see a couple of very nice enthusiast rebuilds appear this year as well as the spectacular professional ones that are now fewer than before. One benefit of the 'back to basics' era is that younger members i.e. those under 40, can once again afford the proverbial box of bits that may one day metamorphose into a Lagonda.

May I take this opportunity to wish you a 1994 in which your magneto continues to spark, your oil remains viscous and your brakes and spirit never fade.

D.R.H.



Sir David Brown 1904 - 1993

One of the most important figures in the Lagonda history was lost to us on 3rd September 1993 when Sir David Brown died. His grandfather founded the family firm in 1860 in Huddersfield, making gears and employing a staff of nine. David was born on May 10th 1904, the son of Frank Brown, and at the age of seventeen he started work for the company, by then David Brown & Sons (Huddersfield) Ltd. It was no cushy path to the bosses office and he had to serve a normal apprenticeship, involving a 7 am start and work on the shop floor by day, followed by night school to gain the necessary academic qualifications.

The motor sport bug hit him early and during his apprenticeship he built himself a "special", using a home-made chassis and a Meadows engine and gearbox. At the same time he was entering hillclimbs with an 1100 cc Reading motorcycle that he had tuned himself and scored several FTD's. In the mid-twenties, Amherst Villiers got the David Brown company to make a Roots-type blower (really a pair of 2-tooth gears) for the famous Vauxhall-Villiers and David was put in charge of this project. Villiers must have been satisfied, for the company later got the job of making all the superchargers for the blown Bentleys that W.O. hated so much. David Brown built himself another supercharged Vauxhall and won a lot of races with it on Southport sands, although the salty sand virtually ruined the engine.

David Brown became the foreman of the worm gear department in 1926 and manager of the Keighley Gear Co. (presumably a subsidiary) in 1928, setting out quickly on a tour of America, South Africa and Europe to study other people's methods. He became a director of the main company in 1929 and MD in 1932.

In 1933 the gear company was approached by Harry Ferguson to make the steering and transmission for a tractor he had designed and was proposing to

manufacture. For a time it looked as if the partnership would build the whole tractor but the two protagonists disagreed on policy and eventually Ferguson took his project to Ford, but DB had learned enough about tractors in the process to launch his own in 1939.

The war years were occupied with military work, of course, and at the end of it DB found his company, and himself, very wealthy. In February 1947 he was intrigued by a small ad in "The Times" offering a sports car company for sale, responded to it and found himself the owner of Aston Martin at a cost of only £20,000 of his own money (not the firm's). For his outlay, he had acquired a long lease on a shed in Feltham, a design and a prototype car, the Atom, which had admirable roadholding but a gutless push rod engine of 2 litres. Meanwhile, at Staines, Alan Good had resigned from Lagondas in March 1947 and had been replaced by J.R. Greenwood, who carried on trying to get the Cotal-gearbox 2.6 litre LB6 into production. By August, he had given up, announced massive redundancies in the factory, sold the buildings back to Good for his Petter enterprise and put the rest up for sale.

The Lagonda Distributors all got together and appointed Tony Scratchard, of Central Garage, Bradford, as their spokesman and he then approached DB and asked him to buy the company. DB wasn't keen, initially; one run down sports car company should be enough for anyone. But W.O. arranged to pick him up from Heathrow in one of the LB6 prototypes and let him drive it. This car was the antitheses of the Atom, with a smooth and powerful engine but a chassis that needed more work, to say the least. It dawned on DB that he had the makings of a very good car indeed if he put the two together.

By now Lagonda was in liquidation and the Liquidator told him that he already had large bids from Jaguar, Rootes and one

other firm. DB's idea of the price was only a fraction of theirs, but he put in a bid anyway and went off on holiday to Italy. While he was away, Sir Stafford Cripps, the Chancellor at the time, came out with another of his gloomy economic forecasts and the other companies withdrew their offers. Greenwood then asked DB to come down to Staines, discussed with him the two new offers received since the big three had pulled out, and then left the offers on his desk while he left the room on some pretext. DB saw that £50,000 was the top offer, so he bid £52,000 and got the Lagonda company, taking over in September 1947.

Donald Bastow recalled hearing the news on the radio in the car at a petrol station on the A1 on his way back from holiday in Scotland.

For his money, DB got either 5 or 6 cars (stories differ), all the designs, jigs and the like for the 2.6, but no building and precious few staff. There were also the heaps of spares for the pre-war cars that Good wanted out of the way, so DB rented hangars from the Hanworth Flying Club and moved the Lagonda bits and pieces into them. He also set about recruiting staff and quite a number of old hands went to Hanworth and Feltham. But not W.O., who disagreed with DB very soon about practically everything and left to set up his own consultancy after a few weeks, taking Donald Bastow with him. When DB refused to let Claude Hill develop a 6 cylinder version of his pushrod engine, he went too, leaving Jack Sterling to become Technical Director and Frank Feely in charge of bodywork. Frank was a great fan of DB's and the two got on famously well. Frank told me the story of the aftermath of the disastrous 1954 Le Mans, when the Lagonda was shunted and both DB3S coupes written off. Three lorry loads of extremely expensive scrap were delivered back to the works racing department at Feltham and laid out on the floor. DB and Frank looked at it for a bit, with Frank nearly in tears and then DB said, "Right, chaps, let's get on with next year". He never referred to it again.

DB ran the Aston Martin Lagonda

company from 1947 to 1971, being knighted in 1968. This is no place to go through in detail the complicated ups and downs of this period, but he was undoubtedly the saviour of the Lagonda name and always had a soft spot for it. It is entirely appropriate that the current management, under Walter Hayes, made him an honorary President of the company earlier this year and have put the revered initials on the latest exciting product, the DB7, which promises to be more like the DB 2 to 6, he produced in his era, than the current V range of behemoths.

Sir David was married three times. The first marriage, to Daisy, produced two children. David Junior, usually called Bill, and Angela, who married George Abecassis. David Junior followed his father into the family firm. The first marriage ended in divorce in 1955 and DB married his then secretary, Marjorie Deans. The third marriage was to Paula Stone in 1980, by which time he was a tax exile in Monaco, having been ripped off by the Government over the nationalisation of Vosper, his other pet concern. Needless to say, he was still a frequent visitor to motoring events on the Continent and here. His memorial service in October was like a "Who's who in motoring". And rightly so, for he was a key figure for more than twenty years.

One last story, which may even be true. A well-known society figure, as stingy as most of the very rich, made it his business to get to know DB and after a suitable interval set about getting hold of an Aston Martin on the cheap. DB professed to not understand what the man was driving at until eventually he came out with it. "Can you let me have an Aston Martin at cost?" "At cost?" said DB, "You mean you are prepared to pay five grand above the asking price?"

A.D.



Lagonda V8 Production

Some time back the marketing people at Newport Pagnell enquired about where all the V8 Lagondas had got to, in the sense of who bought them when new, presumably to try to target the new cars on the same people. I was kindly given a copy of the eventual breakdown and although few of their owners have yet joined us, this is the sort of thing that the Registrar of 2023 will be glad to have, so I set it out below with apologies to members not interested in postwar Lagondas.

First of all, the numbers are a little different in total to what was expected, since the total production was supposed to have been 645. Well 645 chassis numbers were allocated, but what with experimental cars, those tested to destruction and so on, in fact there were only 633 sold. The main breakdown by year and market is:-

Year	UK	USA	Europe	Gulf	Other	Total
1978	2	0	0	0	0	2
1979	11	0	0	0	1	12
1980	36	1	0	0	1	38
1981	25	1	9	30	9	74
1982	14	4	3	55	5	81
1983	9	32	9	30	4	84
1984	20	27	8	19	7	81
1985	8	29	18	16	2	73
1986	6	14	10	17	2	49
1987	5	8	8	7	3	31
1988	5	17	6	3	7	38
1989	13	15	8	1	8	45
1990	10	2	9	1	3	25
	164	150	88	179	52	633

This is all fascinating stuff. Look how the Gulf took off as a market and then died. And how the Americans caught on later and the little surge when the facelifted shape was brought out.

We can break the zones down further. Thus the 88 European cars were sold as follows:-

France	29	Switzerland	22
Germany	11	Monaco	11
Holland	6	Italy	3
Channel Isles(!)	2	Denmark	2
Sweden	1	Spain	1

I bet you didn't know the Channel Isles weren't part of the UK, but wait for the next list. Gulf States cars were sold:-

Saudi Arabia	80	Kuwait	43
Oman	24	Qatar	10
Abu Dhabi	8	Dubai	11
Misc	3	Brunei(!)	1

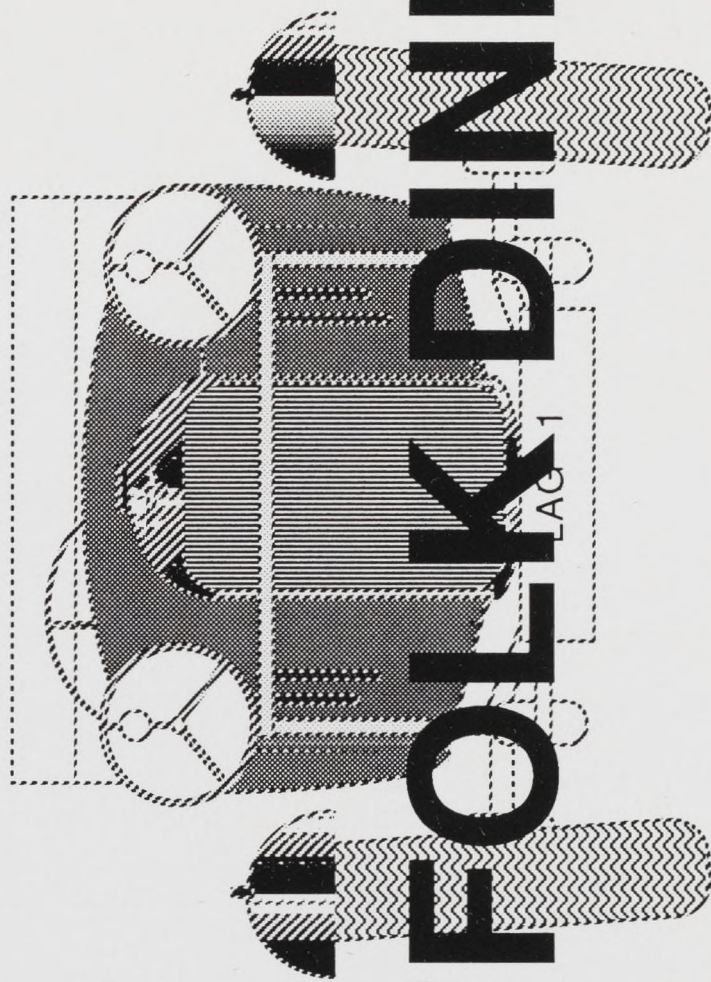
Not content with moving the Channel Isles into Europe, Brunei got moved to the Gulf! Last of all, the "Other" markets were:-

Japan	16	Hong Kong	10
Malaysia	3	Taiwan	1
South Africa	8	Australia	5
Congo, Zimbabwe, Gabon, Morocco, Venezuela, Haiti, Iraq and Jordan all one each.			

Thus the present day Lagondas follow Wilbur Gunn's ancient tradition of being sold in foreign parts. Perhaps future Lagondas will reopen the Russian market and bring the wheel full circle.

Arnold Davey





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If your answer is YES to all these questions you must already be enjoying the privileges of RAC Associated Club membership.

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

Members transferring from other motoring organisations are exempt from the £10 joining fee.

Contact the Lagonda Club Secretary for details

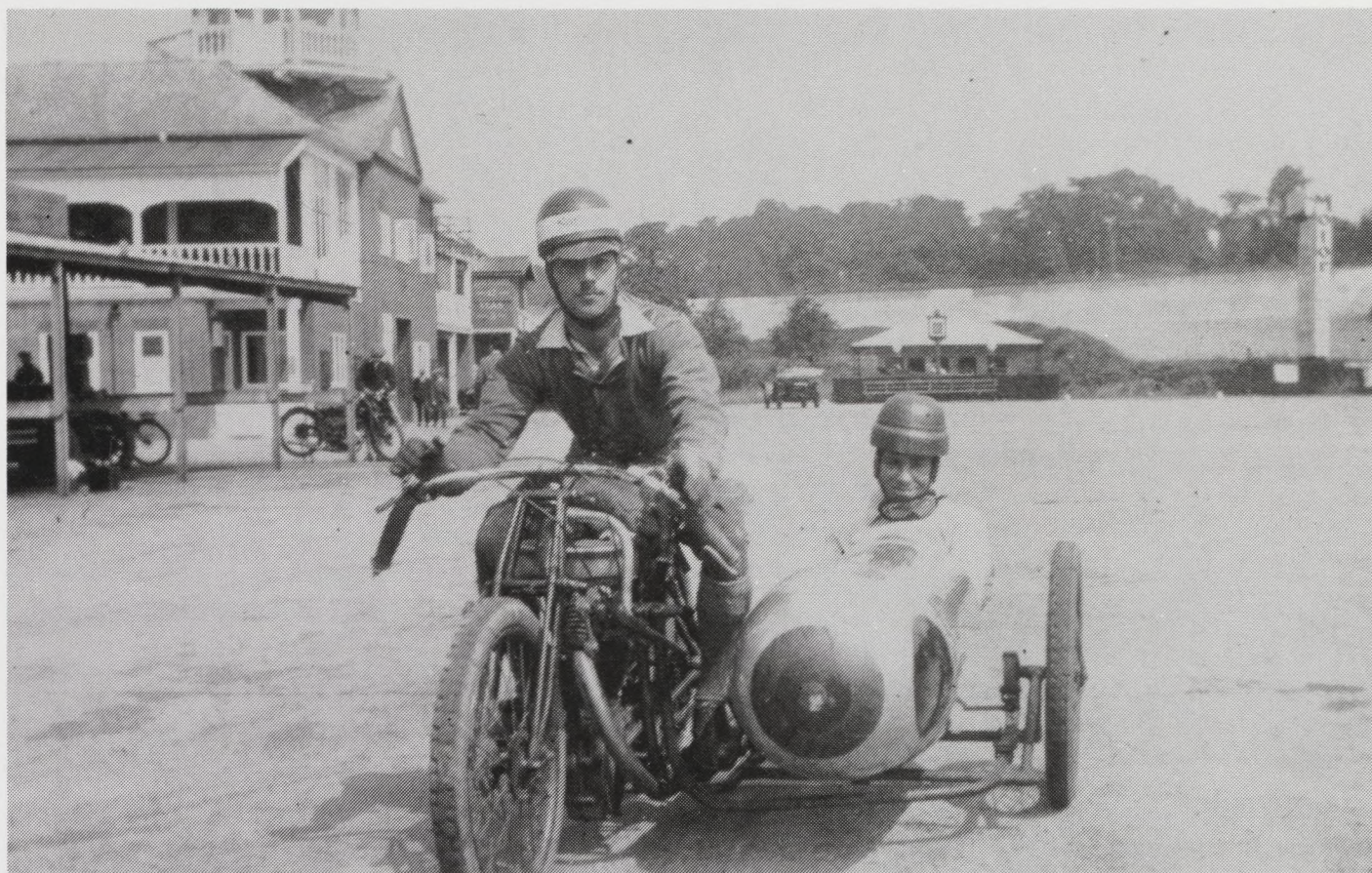
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THE NEW KNIGHTS OF THE ROAD



Brooklands 1925, Raymond Wickham with George Smart in the sidecar.

Raymond Wickham Remembers

I purchased my first Lagonda in 1929, but my interest in petrol driven motors started when I was still at my Public School, during Christmas 1918 holidays.

My cousin (RFC/RAF) had a 500 cc flat twin Brough, a la 350 Douglas, designed by W.E. Brough (father of George Brough, with his Brough Superior, which he raced with some success in the 20's and 30's). Before handing over the bike, my cousin told me he would like a last blind. He certainly did - over-revved her and blew up the engine! That was that.

I then found a nearly new 500 cc. TT Rover single gear belt drive no clutch which I took to Worcester where I became a pupil on a large farm prior to entering fruit and hop growing. A man from Rover

approached me and suggested he put some knots into her. He claimed he had just tuned 2 Rovers to compete in the first post war TT. He put some 15 mph into her. Eric Williams, who had won the 1914 Junior TT, ran a garage in Worcester and I helped him form the Worcester Motor Cycle Club. We organised speed trials (now 18 years old). Surprisingly I made 2nd Fastest Time of the day. I sold the Rover to two chaps from Sandhurst.

I then invested in a 500 cc BRS Norton, single gear, no clutch, belt drive. What fun - run and jump on - girl already sitting sidesaddle on carrier!

I made my initial entry on Brooklands (5/- in 1921), joined Kent and Surrey M/C Club, and entered first race in Essex M/C

at Brooklands. Result N.B.G.

On entering my 21st year, the Guv'nor (Father) bought me the famous and successful 500 cc long Stroke Sunbeam - a beautifully finished steed. In 1922 I hit a cow in fog and took some weeks to recover from a fracture at the base of my skull. After competing in local speed trials, with some success, I raced it at Brooklands.

We are now to 1923, when I sold the Sunbeam before purchasing a 1923 500 cc O.H.V. Norton, one of the first deliveries. Old O'Donovan, the Norton tuner, again tuned her up. She gave me some fun, including Brooklands. I also used a sidecar. I happened to take the first Norton to Sweden, where I had a great reception.

Unfortunately in the International 50 mile sidecar race in 1924 I was running 2nd on handicap - Victor Horsman lapped me at 40 miles - my con rod decided to blow up engine.

After 1925 I thought it better to invest in 4 wheels. A 1926 bull nosed Morris Oxford was procured. Not satisfied with her 50/55 mph I purchased an MG engine, which the Long Wall, Oxford manager claimed was the sole Oxford they had altered. It gave me 65/70 mph, and proved a surprise to people on the road! The chap I sold it to went broke, so no cash!

I had a 14/40 proper M.G., which was fun, and this led to the 1929 Lagonda H.C., which I drove for six years without costing me any repairs of note. What a motor! As you may agree, she was overloaded, weight about 27 cwt. 75 in top and 73 in third.

I swapped her for a 16/80 Crossley engined model - a splendid looker but rather slow! At my wife's home in Sweden the chauffeur prized her. I sold her to an R.A.F. pilot, after which was the beginning of a successful run. A splendid 1934 3 litre open, lately owned by Air Chief Marshall Sir Alec Coryton, superbly serviced. Drove her hard for 3 years, sold her to a Public School Chaplain for cash and a 2 litre 1930 LC in part exchange, which I sold quickly.

During this time I invested in a 1939 Rapide LG.6 Coupe. I saw a Chauffeur asleep in her in Berkely Square, woke him and asked if his Guv'nor was thinking of selling her. The owner rang me, asking £1,200, as he was taking delivery of a Rolls. She was a bit of a wreck, so I let Bey Davies of Davies Motors, London Road, Staines, have her to carry out her salvation. Spent £1,000 on her - like new! Won West Kent Motor Club Concours. Lord Camden, Chairman of the judges, warned me "if you ever enter for an important Concours, see that your crank case is not weeping oil." I joined the Chiltern Car Club, and won their Concours at Amersham. There was an indecision on the winner by the judges. Lord Howe, the Chairman got under my car and shouted to the rest "here's the winner. You can do your bloody hair in the crank case." Thank you, Lord Camden.

I took the LG.6 to Sweden, where she was treated like a Rolls by the family chauffeurs. I had four children by then, and I eventually sold her because when the hood was up they could not see outside. It was a great wrench. I sold her to that strange bloke at Sutton Coldfield who collected Lagondas.

I then went along to Davies Motors to see what was in stock, where I found a super black 1934 4½ open tourer - that was 1950. I drove her all over England, Scotland and Wales without trouble. Except in 1953, when I started to drive through the night to Blackpool, where the Royal Show was held that year, and I was Chief Steward of the Farmers Union exhibits. Leaving Oxford on the Woodstock road, I noticed she was doing 75mph. On approaching the roundabout just before Blenheim Palace I applied brakes - no result - hydraulics severed. The hand brake was a joke, so I decided to climb over the roundabout. Landed all right the other side, got steering wheel in my guts, plus two front wheels a bit out of line. The Lag looked like a flower festival - rhododendrons, flowering currents and an assortment of shrubs. The

Police Sergeant summed it up, "don't expect, sir, we shall need do much pruning this winter!"

She never gave me any serious trouble. At the age of 86 I thought perhaps I should retire. I knew Jeff Ody was looking for something, so I passed her on to him in 1987, and he made thorough use of her. AUU 332 - 159,000 miles on clock. It was a sad day when Jeff collected her - I felt an old man without her. Anyway, Jeff and Gill were great sports, calling for me to attend rallies.

AUU was auctioned recently, and made £75,000. A German bought her, and said he would not take her out of England, because he wanted a decent car in England when he came on business.

While I had AUU 332 I also purchased a 1963 4 litre Rapide, which proved to be in bad condition, so I sold her quickly. A good looker but not a commercial success, as the new big Jaguar was being offered at £2,000, and the Lagonda at £4,000. It killed her.

That is the end of my 70 years of petrol propulsion. I now travel in a 309 Peugeot *sedately!*



1949 Chilton Car, Club Concours, Raymond's LG6, winner of the Prix d'Honneur.

Competition Round-up No.13

I am writing this column at the end of December with the speed event season completed and the trials – rally season well under way. There have been good Lagonda entries during the year and the report covers Vintage Sports Car Club events from the end of August until early December 1993.

30th August – Cadwell Park Race Meeting

The Lincolnshire venue was host to the final VSCC race meeting of the year. Lagonda representation was exclusively Rapiers. The first heat for the Spero & Voiturette Trophies saw a fine win for David Fletcher-Jones, making fastest lap, two and a half seconds better than his closest rival – Richard Wills in the 1930 Riley. Another Rapier was out in the second heat, in the hands of Mike Hollinshead finishing seventh. The Final was marred by the red flag being shown, shortening the race from eight to only four laps. However, David clinched his triumph, again being followed home by Richard Wills, with Mike Hollinshead coming in sixth.

Event Five for pre-war racing cars was a triumph for Sir John Venables-Llewellyn in ERA R4A, with the Rapiers of James Crocker and Brian Fidler further down the field. The final event of the meeting was a four lap scratch race, with victory going to Phil Walker in the MG, closely followed by Len Thompson's Rapier in second place.

5th September – Madresfield Driving Tests

There was fine weather for the annual driving tests and concours held in the driveway of the stately Worcestershire mansion of Madresfield Court. The dearth of concours entries last year was easily solved by all competitors being automatically entered this year. The concours winners were self-selected by the competitors themselves. The organisers cleverly imposed a penalty for failing to return the form! Our member Robin Colquhoun usually supports this event, but his Two-Litre is currently "hors de combat" following a thrown rod. Lagonda representation was David Crabtree in the Rapier. Jo Moss gained a 2nd class award with the Invicta.

26th September – Kentish Rally

This is now a well-established event in the VSCC calendar. The ninety mile route had a midday start from the Hadlow College of Agriculture near Tonbridge. J. Ruggles navigated by C. Bowyer again entered the Rapier but were unable to repeat their success of last year when they carried off a second class award.

3rd October – Avon Park Speed Trials

The Weston-super-Mare weekend has become a very popular event in the VSCC calendar. It has always been a relaxing and informal end of season sprint along the promenade. The VSCC event on the Sunday is traditionally preceded by the Burnham-on-Sea Motor Club event for modern cars on the Saturday. Unfortunately for them to run their day, they needed at the very least 65 cars. Their entries only came to 47 on the closing day so they were forced to cancel. This would have left the VSCC holding the baby for the entire cost of the event, which they were unable to do, hence it had to be cancelled at short notice. Quite a few spectators turned up on the day, only to be disappointed. However for competitors, the VSCC managed to arrange at very short notice an alternative venue at the Avon Park Raceway, Long Marston near Stratford on Avon. This was all arranged in seven days, which included getting the RAC MSA to issue a track licence for the venue. This must indeed be a record!

Fortunately the Weston tradition of fine weather was maintained at Avon Park. The course was a straight quarter-mile sprint from a standing start but competitors found the road surface very unusual. On their first runs, the faster cars were just not

getting off the line well. The track was very "sticky" from the compound the dragsters spray onto their tyres. This took some getting used to.

Tim Wakeley, Rapier, achieved second place in Class Three with 16.46s and Bernard Miller took the Class Four handicap award, fractionally faster at 16.44s in the 4.5 litre special. J. Miller was 0.04s slower in the same car. Jeff Ody was in the same class, his two-litre being of course supercharged, recording 21.84s. Richard Bush enjoyed himself in the Peter Whenman M45 special (16.79s). Class Five saw two Rapiers, with Peter Whenman taking third place to Peter Evans' second place – 16.56 and 15.85 respectively. R. Parker also drove the Evans car. Peter Whenman had mysterious misfiring earlier in the day and followed the standard routine of changing plugs, which never makes any difference – except in this case, it did! Derek Green and Jo Moss had their Invicta battle, recording 16.74 and 18.48 seconds respectively. All these results should be compared with Bruce Spollon's fastest time of day – 12.61 seconds in the 1936 ERA.

All competitors enjoyed the new venue and in fact said they look forward to another event there in the future. However, the VSCC still hope to return to Weston super Mare again next year. The Victorian seaside atmosphere is quite unique!

24th October – Eastern Rally

There was an excellent entry for the Eastern Rally, ably organised by Piers Hart and his team. The start and finish were at Haughley Park near Stowmarket and the carefully drawn-up route followed some 95 miles through the Suffolk and Essex countryside. Best novice award was well earned by B. Wildsmith navigated by Miss L. Northwood, 1933 Lagonda Rapier. The well known LG45R team of John Harris/Charles Ping had exchanged seats for this event, with John doing the navigating this time. Again a successful result, with a second class award. The other Lagonda contenders were Colin Banks/R. Banks, J. Holland/S. Holland, P. Merrick/C. Merrick and C. Ruggles/C. Bowyer. All drivers and navigators were presented with "Eastern Rally Souvenir Mugs" – a nice memento of the event.

4th December – VSCC Enstone Driving Tests

Horizontal driving rain greeted competitors for the winter driving tests at Enstone near Chipping Norton in Oxfordshire. The Lagonda Club was well represented amongst the marshals – Colin Bugler. Peter Whenman and Tim Wakeley earning their Brownie points for future events. It was nice to see Roger Seabrook taking part in the two-litre, not the most suitable driving test car. J. R. Holland was competing in John Organ's Rapier. The Miller family were well represented, three of them taking turns with the big LG45R special. On one of the tests the car nearly ended up at the bottom of a large bomb crater – a relic from wartime events at the former RAF airfield.

The VSCC had also made arrangements for members to have RAC medicals at Enstone, thanks to the doctors who gave their time in aid of "Save the Children". This gave rise to an interesting procession of members, proceeding through the driving rain with mysterious little carrier bags containing glass bottles!

Footnote

This will be my final Competition Round-up as I am passing over the reins to someone else to carry on the write-up for the magazine. I have enjoyed doing it very much but cannot attend as many events as I would like. The reports can better be carried out by someone located more centrally in the country than in the wilds of Dorset! However, as mentioned last time, I am putting the finishing touches to an article on Competition Driving which should appear shortly. Au Revoir.

Alan Elliott

Round the clock

Experiences with a Speed Model Lagonda in the London - Land's End Trial: Climbing Bluehills Mine in the Dark.

It is difficult to define one's exact thoughts after a "Land's End". First, try how one may to overcome the feeling, the winter is a depressing time, with very little happening, an affair of hoods and side curtains, of going out in perpetual mud and drizzle, of frequently washing the car. Perhaps it is not surprising that one feels stale, even a little pessimistic, after this dull period.

Then comes the great day when the season really opens again with the 326 mile run at Easter, with the countryside fast turning to that beautiful untarnished green which tells of summer to come. Yes, and there are lambs and primroses, all with the same promise.

On this occasion our mount was a speed model Lagonda of the type that is really to be 'blooded', in the 24 hour race at Le Mans; not, of course, with road racing gear ratios, nor yet with the full power that comes of really careful, skilled preparation, but none the less the type of car which can drag motoring from the rut of just ordinary things.

Naturally, the first part of the run was free from incident, for it is nothing but a smooth amble at a definite speed schedule, which can be pleasant or the reverse in direct ratio to the personality of one's passenger-navigator, whose business lies with time and space, route, cards and watches. Number five-two-eight's navigator is not to be beaten anywhere, anyhow, as a remedy for dullness, which simply cannot exist in his presence.

Porlock, however, always effectively breaks the monotony. And there there was a mess. A wrecked motorcycle was being repaired by a misguided enthusiast whose character was being blackened by

indignant spectators. On the bend the stern of a private car stuck out with perspiring officials clinging to it, the driver being very mixed with his gears. At least a thousand grinning but highly interested spectators offered advice and criticism.

When the hill was tidy, up we went. That was a most satisfactory affair; the engine bit from the first, the car climbed fast with a real snarl of exhaust, behaved beautifully on the corners and finished up in style on third as through glad to be partially unleashed after the many sober miles from London.

Lynmouth was a maddening business. Another car, very broad in the beam and afflicted with an unfortunate gear-box trouble, got in the way and stopped us just after the Lagonda had accelerated fast from the turn. That involved a restart, which was easy, but it was a long time before we could get clear. Beggar's Roost, unhampered, was much better; a good, clean, fast climb with throttle in hand, the sort of climb that makes one the confirmed and incorrigible lover of the sports as compared with the ordinary car.

That finished the interest for the moment, and in the pause friends exchanged jokes and rumours. How, for instance, the driver of one fierce sports car had begged Symons with a 10 - 15 hp Fiat, and Montagu with a Riley Nine, to keep well to one side on Porlock, as he was just behind and was to make a real fast climb, as his car had been specially prepared in racing fashion.

Very strictly did these two hug the left-hand side, goggling out occasionally to make sure there was plenty of room, ears aprick for the fierce drone of a racing engine. All the way up they went like that and never a sound but their own cars' exhaust, for the sports car, alas, had a very high first-speed ratio, and things went badly amiss at the start.

Then we heard of the massed attack of the "tiddlers" on Beggar's Roost, from which afay more than half of them got through with colours flying, a notable insult to a famous and resentful gradient, and further we heard how two great enthusiasts were keeping their car together only with string and chewing-gum borrowed from a spectator!

Best of all, however, was Bluehills Mine Hill, a spectacle more magnificent, more eerie, than any other I have had in a trial. It was dark: the shrouded hill was puzzling. As one rounded the top corner and dipped towards the valley below for the moment it seemed as though we had come upon some goblins' meeting. The hillside and test gradient, with its famous corner, could be seen across the valley, jewelled in outline with a myriad little lights. In one place the corner, its rocky sides more weird in consequence, was brightly illuminated by the head lamps of a stationary car.

All the hillside was a mass of silent people, just black, blurry outlines which silhouetted against the sky as we reached the valley, and seemed absolutely motionless. Even the famous chimney stack assumed grotesque proportions, and one felt, rather than saw, the natural amphitheatre covered with spectators.

The marshal gave us the order to go, it seemed, in a hushed voice, the car went up to the turn in the right hand gutter; it was almost impossible to judge the turn accurately, but when the wheel spun over to full left lock and the engine note went up to a scream the radiator seemed suddenly to tower above the windscreen, there was a second while the spinning rear wheels flung rocks and stones backwards, a lurch, and we were round and climbing fast beyond.

Just as the car turned one caught a glimpse of its headlights reflected, it seemed, in innumerable pairs of impassionate eyes, all staring down at the car, and a glance back from near the summit showed the crowds all waiting solemnly for the next man.

Thence to Hayle, the car had to be handled; corner succeeded corner in

narrow lanes, the gear lever had to move like a pump handle as real gradient succeeded real gradient; never for a second was the road straight or flat, and this rather glorious experience proved that the Lagonda had, as we thought, that mysterious quality in steering, gear change, brakes and acceleration that answers every wish, so that when, after Penzance, we encountered the same type of road again, and the car was just as handy, we decided that as a sports machine the two-litre speed model Lagonda was second to none of any type, size or price, for this kind of work, and it is not too easy to make a car just like that.

Nor did the run back to town alter the verdict thus decided, for the engine responded immediately to the starting motor after a night in a shed alongside the famous hotel, and the return journey was a model of what such things should be.

Arriving at Launceston too early for the lunch that has become almost traditional,

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we carried on to Okehampton, stopping on the outskirts to wonder why any man should want to build a castle in a valley overshadowed in such fashion that, even today one could throw stones into the ruins, and lunched very comfortably at Horne's restaurant for a charge of 2s. 6d. each, the principal hotels of the town being thronged with motor cyclists returning also from the trial.

Without hurry, and in great comfort, we then went on to Exeter and through that ancient city to Honiton and Shaftesbury. It has always been the custom to have a huge and welcome tea at historic Palladour, or Shaftesbury, or Shaston, as the milestones have it, but as we pulled up in front of one hotel the hostler, if such be hostlers nowadays, told us, without ceremony, that there would be no room in the place for twenty minutes.

There were, indeed, many cars outside, but the lack of warmth, or indeed politeness, in the welcome roused an always rather fiery Celtic temper, and leaving the hostler something to think over we went on to Ludwell, where, by good luck, we tumbled upon a very excellent, clean and comfortable little village inn tea-room – the Grove Arms –

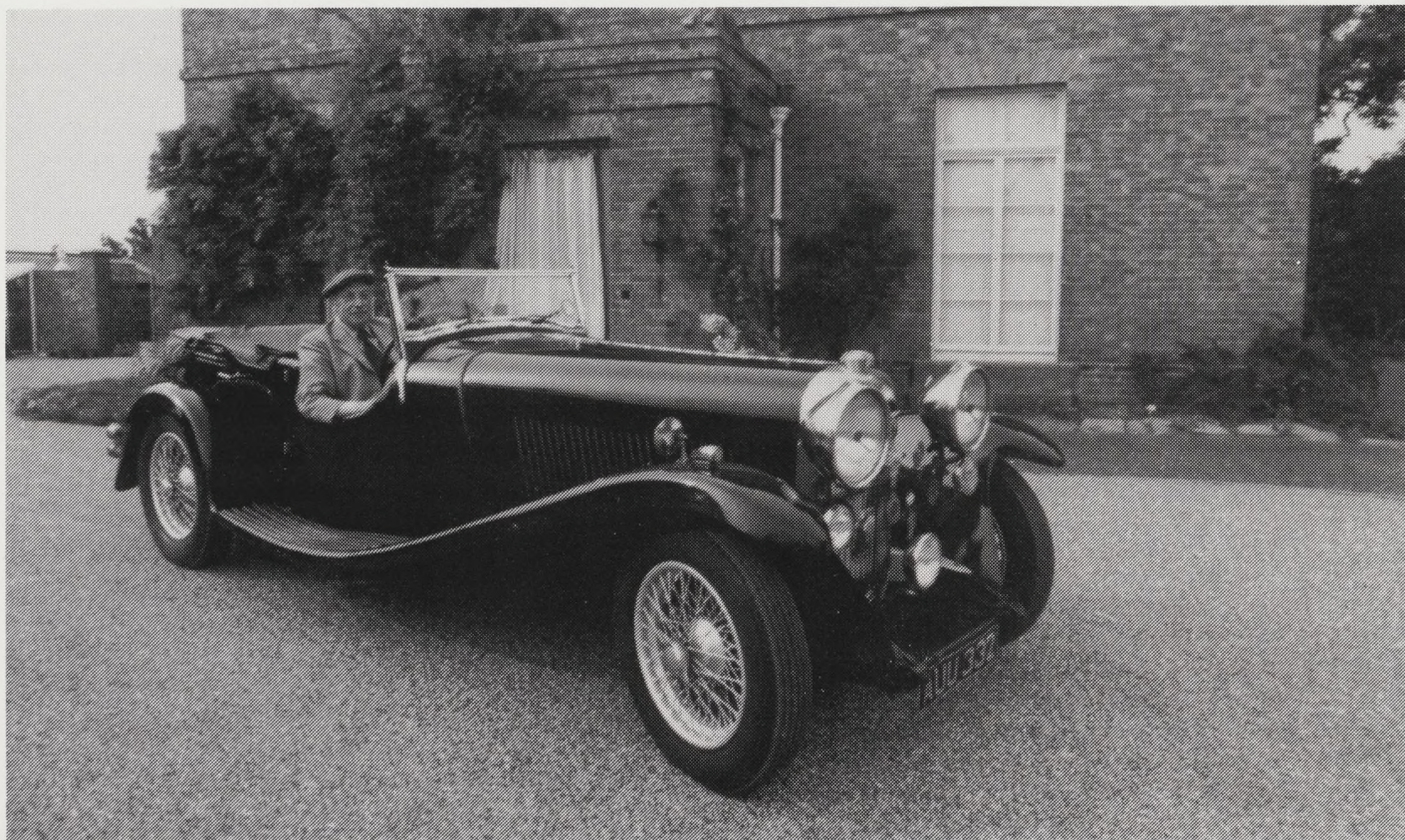
wherein we two were speedily and politely served – for 4s. – with a tea worthy of the occasion.

We reached London at 9 o'clock that night, and it seemed impossible to believe that we had covered 310 miles and only a few hours ago had been watching the Atlantic rollers break on the rocks of Land's end. That shows what a car can do, and there was no difficulty about it at all; both of us were as fresh when we finished as when we began, which is a testimonial to the car.

The principal features of the Lagonda are the smoothness of its engine, in spite of the power, its extreme comfort – due partly to pneumatic upholstery, and the fact that there is nothing a sober touring car can do that this car will not also do if handled with knowledge and skill. Therein lies the difference, for the speed model is one of those cars that give the enthusiast a chance to show how much the driver counts, almost as though it were an instrument which responds ten-fold better to the expert than to the casual player.

S. C. H. Davies

(The Autocar – April 27th 1928)



Raymond Wickham again, this time in his 1934 M45.

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Lex sodii ubique est et omnia vicit (A true fable for our time)

Many years ago, in the time of our fathers, it was decreed that a great race be run, the length and breadth of the land of the Italians. And its length was many hundreds of leagues and it was called the Mille Miglia, after the Roman style.

Such were the difficulties of the great race that all of the best drivers of the time were made to perform great feats of valour and endurance and much was the publicity attached thereto. Then came a great war and there was no race for near a decade, but when the war clouds rolled away the race was run again every year on St Spiridion's Eve and even greater were the feats of valour.

And the stirring tales grew and were recounted by the scribes, and so that the tales be more vivid, the scribes were invited to take part themselves. The greatest of the scribes was Denis the Bearded, son of Jenkin, whose tale of the race of 1955 became a legend on the day of his telling it and has so remained.

Then came an almighty prang and Alfonso, Count de Portago, flew into the

multitudes and many were slain, for most of the Italians had gathered at the roadside to witness the deeds of derring-do. And there was much wailing and gnashing of teeth and the Kings of Italy said "This must cease". And it ceased.

Full three decades went past and the elders of the sport of motoring among the Italians gathered together and it was mooted that the Mille Miglia be run again. But the Kings would not allow this, so they met again and one of the elders said, "Let us run it with a stop for sleep and then we can say it is a Rally". And this was carried with acclamation and so it was that a rally was decreed called again the Mille Miglia and it was really a race but the roads were open to all and so it was legal and all was well.

All the wise men agreed that the rally was to be for cars of great age, as this would be most fitting, and so it was. Again the scribes waxed eloquent about the rally and it became very important and rich men fought to get an entry and the wise men made the rules tighter, saying that

the cars must be presented as they were once made unless the laws of the land had deemed otherwise. Still there was great strife among the well-heeled to get a start and much kudos was gained by the successful.

Now there was a member of the Lagonda Club possessed of a Lagonda of great beauty and noble lineage and he being of passing wealth and desirous of having a crack at the Mille Miglia, took his car to a man learned in the ways of Lagondas saying, "Make sure she will last for the thousand miles with no trouble". And the learned one gave the car a thorough examination and reported saying, "She is passing fair and strong and sound in wind and limb, but I am sore afraid of the fuel pumps, for they are truly ancient, of the kind made by Skinners Union long ages ago and I fear they may go phut at any time". The member responded, asking what could be done and the learned one said that he could not

replace the pumps with modern ones for this was forbidden by the rules, but he could add a modern one. "Woe is me", said the owner, "For this too is forbidden by the rules". So they conspired together to fit a modern pump in a place so secret that it shall not be found by him who is to scrutineer and since such an instrument pumpeth with the force of a dozen simooms, a pressure reducing valve was also secretly fitted, lest the new pump overwhelm the carburettors and sink their floats.

This was done and it came to pass that the car satisfieth him who scrutineered and the Lagonda was allowed to start. And Lo! halfway round the course the modern pump gave up and so much time was lost restoring the old ones that they were eliminated.

Truly, it is written. The Law of Sod is omnipresent and omnipowerful and will not be gainsaid.

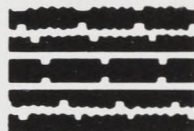
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TRIPLE STUD (S5) PATTERN



F4 PATTERN



B5 PATTERN



D2 103 PATTERN



R55 PATTERN

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Beaded Edge: Dunlop, Bedford, Firestone, Universal, Durandal. Wheel rims also available.

Bibendum: Michelin, Durandal, Firestone.

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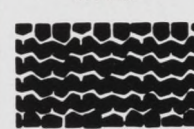
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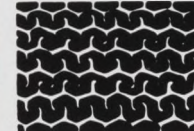
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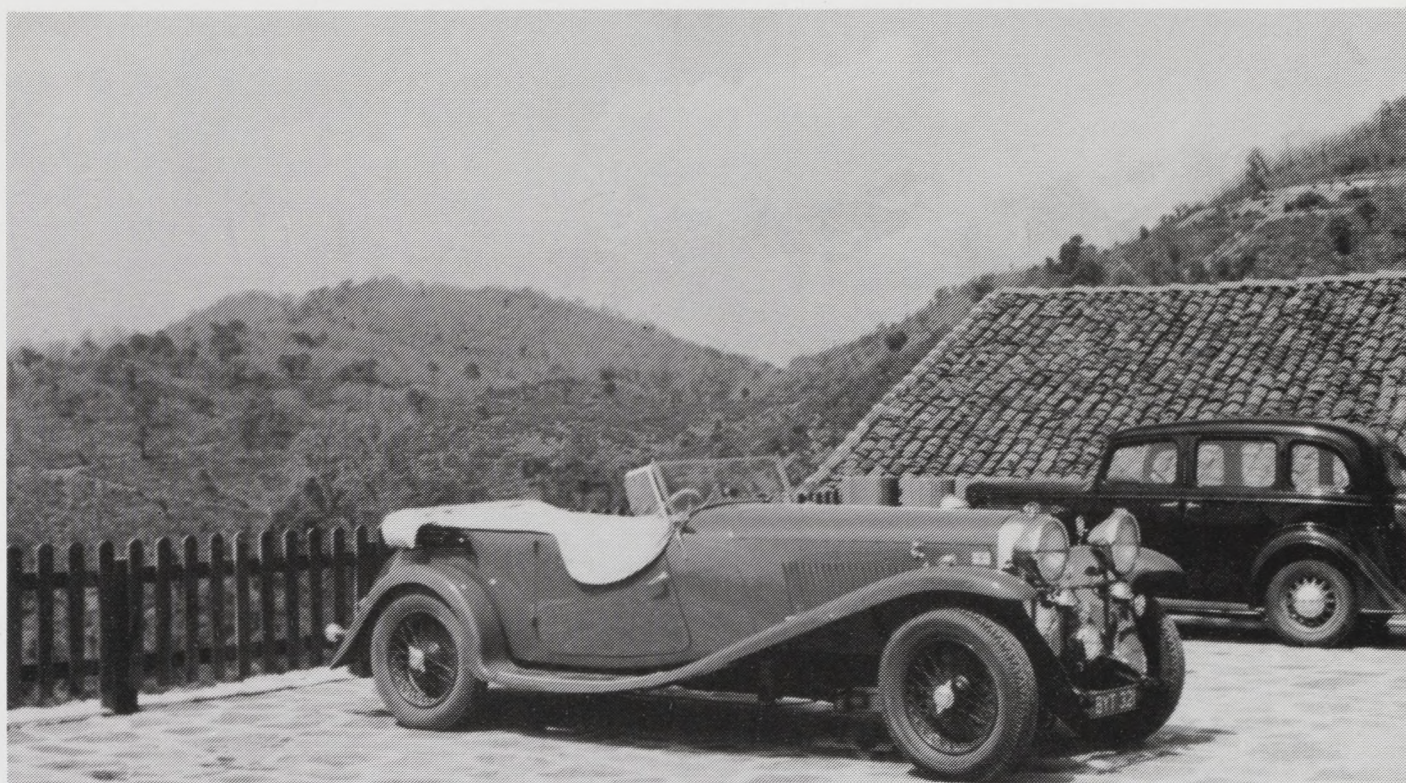
R5 PATTERN



R6 PATTERN



CR65 PATTERN



The Rain in Spain . . .but a Lagonda takes to the hills

The Devon Vintage Car Club is a multi-marque car club of very enthusiastic individuals, driving vehicles ranging from a 1914 Model 'T' Ford to cars of the '60's. In 1991 this club started a 'Spring Holiday' continental tour, and a party travelled from Plymouth to Santander - motored through a little of northern Spain and then wound their way back along the French Atlantic sea-board, returning to Plymouth via Roscoff. The event was pronounced a success - there were no serious breakdowns, no accidents and, I am told, everyone enjoyed themselves. The experiment was repeated in 1992 with a crossing from Poole to Caen then a tour along the Normandy/Brittany coast to Brest, where the party was joined and hosted by the Brest Vintage Car Club with which the D.V.C.C. is Twinned. From Brest the party returned to Plymouth via Roscoff.

Elisabeth and I took part in the 1992 event with the M45 and enjoyed the experience very much indeed. There were some eight cars ranging from the model 'T' Ford to a '60's Sunbeam

Alpine.

With spring 1993 the event had grown in popularity and on the morning of Sunday May 2nd fourteen well turned out cars and twenty-eight perhaps not so well turned out members boarded the Brittany ferries ship 'Normandy' at Plymouth for Santander. The ferry, one of the largest continental ferries, was quite palatial, the cabins comfortable and - at that time of year - the boat was free from the hoards of 'free range' kids that make some crossings an absolute nightmare. After a smooth uneventful crossing we arrived, twenty-four hours later, at Santander, duly disembarked and assembled in the dock area in 'line astern' ready to make our way to the 'Picos De Europa' in the province of Cantabria.

Initially the roads were very good. We used the A67 for Torrelavega, which we skirted to join the N634 which heads West along the North Spanish coast. About 80 kilometres from Santander we turned South onto the N621 to follow the course of the Rio Deva in the direction of Potes. We were now heading into the 'Reserva



The view of Fuente De.

Nacional' mountainous country - breathtaking scenery. The road was reasonable for some 24 kilometres, that is up to a small town called 'La Hermida' but after that we entered a winding precipitous gorge with sheer rock faces several hundred metres high. The road surface deteriorated to potholes, uneven contour and loose gravel with, on one side, a sheer drop to the roaring Deva below. Very hairy!! Everyone however kept going, even the little 1932 Austin 7 and when we reached Potes we pulled up for a welcome break.

Potes is a small country town with a large central square, rather like those found in provincial France. In fact the green countryside, the style of the houses and the friendliness of the people puts one in mind of France rather than the south of this huge country. After a brief walk-about we moved off on the last stage, of but a few kilometres, to the hotel at Camaleno.

I should explain that this holiday, unlike the previous two, was less of a tour

arranged via a chain of night stops, but was more of a static holiday based on two hotels, the first at Camalino in the valley of the Deva and the second at Cahecho high in the hills. We were to stay for three nights at the former and four at the latter. From each location we made a number of trips to local places of interest. From Camaleno we made a trip to Fuente De which is a very small holiday location at 1070 metres and then took a cable car to a view point which is at 1926 metres. We were then above the snow line (though the thaw had just set in) and enjoyed spectacular panoramic views.

The time came to move to the next hotel and this we reached by taking the N621 south from Potes for a few kilometres and then turning left up an un-numbered, un-marked road which wound unremittingly upwards for the next fifteen kilometres to Cahecho, which was the end of the line 'all change'!! The hamlet consisted of about ten buildings, of which one was a church and two were hotels. We filled both hotels!



A notable trip from this base was to Riano about fifty kilometers to the southwest of Potes. This turned out to be a completely new village - except for the church. A new reservoir had been built which completely inundated the old town but the people wished to preserve their church so they dismantled it stone by stone and transported it to higher ground and rebuilt it!! The journey to Riano took us over the puerto De San Glorio, a pass at 1609 meters, that is about 5280 feet (c.f. Ben Nevis at about 4400 feet!!).

Time as always ran out all too quickly and we had to head back the way we came via the fourteen and a half kilometres of winding precipitous gorge, this time in pouring rain, to Santander. we did however deviate to take in Santillana Del Mar on the way. Santillana is a perfectly preserved medieval village near the coast about twenty five kilometres west of Santander. It seems that back in the those stirring times the 'grandeas' in the great cities kept summer establishments there and numerous coats-of-arms are to be

found carved in stone above the doorways. Now alas many of these homes have become souvenir shops, though, fortunately, of reasonable quality.

And finally, the boat and back to Plymouth, home and reality.

We did not cover great distances, we recorded about five hundred and thirty miles door to door. Potes had a garage which accepted British 'plastic' money so we did not have to carry large sums of money. The entire trip, ie. the car fare plus two passengers with a cabin each way and including B & B in the hotels (which were booked by Brittany Ferries) cost £437. In the event we decided to take the evening meal in the hotels and that was only Ps. 1000 per head at both hotels, and this included wine at the table. So add about £77. The lunches were nearly always picnics, so some bread rolls etc., about £550 for ten days for two - can't be bad. And the M45? I think she enjoyed it - anyway nothing fell off!!

P.S. There is a plot to 'do' the Loire Valley in the spring of '94, must start checking over the 'White Swan' it's her turn next!

PUB MEETS

Midlands: Third Wednesday, The Green Dragon, Willington, off the A38 between Derby and Birmingham.

Northern: Third Thursday in month The Great Western Standedge midway between Oldham and Huddersfield. Quarter of a mile towards Huddersfield, past Floating Light. Further details from Roger Firth, Tel: 061 303 9127.

London: Third Tuesday, The Bishop's Finger, Smithfield (Jointly with BDC).

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

Home Counties: First Sunday (lunchtime), Stonor Arms, Stonor, Nr. Henley.

East Anglia: First Friday, The Royal Oak, Barrington, Nr Cambridge.

South Wales: First Thursday, Court Colman Hotel, Pen-y-far, Nr Bridgend.

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

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

Dorset: First Thursday, The Wise Man, West Stafford, 3 miles E of Dorchester. MR 726895.



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The Sound of Music

The number of members and cars attending our monthly pubmeet has gone up since we moved to the "Swan and Filofax", but one or two of our former regulars don't now come. We thought it must be the pub or the beer, but last month, when our Founder Member, who had been one of the deserters, turned up he admitted that the problem had been that the car park at the new place was below the level of the road outside and there was thus no chance of a push start if his fifteen-year-old battery should go on strike. Now a small windfall had enabled him to buy a new battery and he was reunited with us.

Not that he always comes and, latterly, when he does it usually means that he has got some yarn to tell. Now we have never clearly understood F.M.'s background. In appearance he suggests a military career and is given to wearing blazers with arcane badges or the kind of tweeds for which you feel planning permission should have been refused. On the other hand, he clearly knows a very great deal about show business and if encouraged, can usually tell you some discreditable story about virtually anybody in films or TV. But I have found some of his anecdotes were, shall we say, unreliable. For instance, he once told me that Michel Legrand, the songwriter, was actually Irish, from Strabane, and was known locally as Big Mick. I believed him, too, until I saw Legrand on TV one night. Some of the younger members have taken to calling F.M. "Meissen", although never to his face. I discovered that this was because he was believed to be hundreds of years old and slightly cracked.

At the meeting last June FM turned up and in due course got an audience round himself, lit his appalling pipe and started. "I see that Leslie Charteris has gone", he said.

We agreed.

"I knew him at school, you know".

There was a silence, in which you could hear all the cogs whirring round in

everyone's brain as they tried to work out from this how old F.M. actually was, interrupted by him adding,

"I was a lot younger, of course".

"Of course", we said.

"Rum sort of chap", F.M. continued, "I mean, by the time you get to the sixth form most chaps have some sort of idea of what they are going to be when they leave, but he had absolutely none. Not a clue. Mind you, there weren't any courses in thriller writing at our school. But he did all right at it. He had a 16/80 by the time he was 26 and then an M45 Rapide two years later, which he called the Hirondelet in the early Saint books".

F.M. then went on to comment on the extraordinary number of celebrities in the 'thirties who had Lagondas.

"Ralph Richardson had two, an LG45 Rapide and then a V12, Frances Day had an extravagant LG45, Tyrone Power, Clark Gable, Phyllis Dixey, Olivia de Havilland, there were dozens". Our bar-room psychologist launched into his theory that Lagondas being extrovert and eye-catching cars, they would naturally attract buyers from a business that demanded those features, but F.M. ignored him and ploughed on.

"Teddy Nervo, Malcolm Campbell, Ray Noble", he reeled them off.

"Malcolm Campbell! What films was he in?" queried some wag, but F.M. was warming to his theme.

"It wasn't just film stars and actors, either. I mean, Leslie Charteris was a writer, there were several Maharajahs. Then there was Alan Frescoe. He had a passion for Lagondas and had at least four".

There was a chorus. "Who was Alan Frescoe? Never heard of him".

F.M. looked astonished. "Never heard of him! One of Britain's finest songwriters and you've never heard of him!"

Everyone admitted that they hadn't. If he was so famous, what had he written?

"It's a sad story, really. Alan was the unluckiest writer ever. Time and again he would get a splendid idea, write a song

but get it just a little tiny bit wrong. Then someone else would pick it up, change it very slightly and make a fortune”.

Someone asked for examples.

“Oh, there were dozens. He wrote ‘Ten coins in the fountain’, for instance, and ‘Meet me in St. Albans’. Then there was ‘I left my heart in Sandiacre’ and ‘Twenty four hours from Tulse Hill’. Followed by ‘The girl from Inverarie’ and ‘Trouble over Bridgwater’. He was so annoyed when that flopped that he went to live in Hollywood and took to calling himself Al”.

F.M.’s list tailed off as he struggled to remember some more of Frescoe’s disasters.

“One thing puzzles me”, said one of our more inquisitive members.

“If he had all these near-misses, where did the money come from to buy all those Lagondas?”

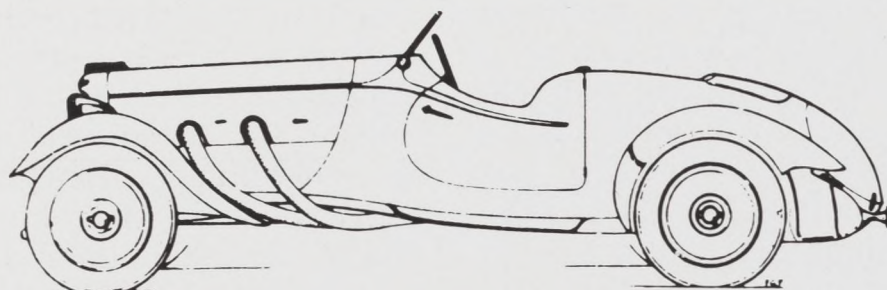
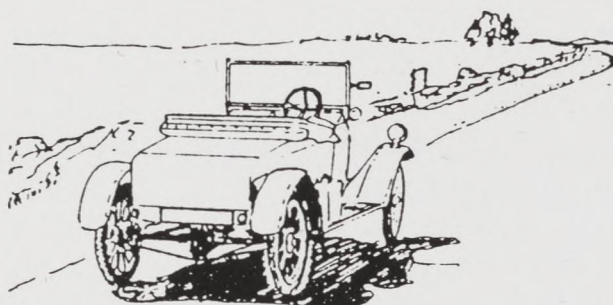
“Ah, he did have one very early smash hit that made him a fortune and I am surprised you didn’t know it”.

We asked him why he thought so and F.M. said, “You must know it. It is very appropriate to the Club and that Fanny LaRue sings it all the time.”

“WHAT IS IT?” chorused the group.

“Why, ‘Lily of Lagonda’, of course.”

Arnold Davey



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Letters

Dear Mr Editor,

I am writing to bring you up to date with my researches in Russia about the 1910 cars, but first let me congratulate you on the fine cover design with Michael Valentine on the Klausen. Extremely elegant it looks.

The news about the 1910 cars is that there isn't any yet, to speak of, but you can have a lot of fun looking. I travel to St Petersburg (which as every schoolboy used to know, was the capital and major western port of Russia in 1910) fairly regularly now that we have opened an office there, and I have made contact with the old car underground there. With no paper available for publications and not many private people on the telephone, you have to run a club by word of mouth, but I eventually found the key folk, working in the Peter and Carl fortress, and they have access to the pre-revolutionary records, including import records and annual gazettes. Rather like us finding early registration documents here.

So far I have been provided with photocopies from the official gazette of 1912, with an item on the St Petersburg/Riga Trial of that year. This appears to have been won by an OSTINH (in the Russian alphabet ?Austin) and featured a large Metalurgique too. I enclose a poor photocopy from that report, obtained with some difficulty.

I now have my contacts booked for a proper search of the records for the earlier years, but rather like Arnold, they won't take things out of order and they are currently committed to a more lucrative private job for Siemens, researching the company's history in Russia before the Revolution. They promise they will do Lagondas early next year, but I can't really outbid Siemens! The only hard facts they have produced from a quick scan are that they traced a silver medal for Lagondas in the 1907 St Petersburg International Salon and that imports of *all* makes in the

early years were: 1901, 40 cars. 1902, 35 cars. 1903, 60 cars. 1904, 180 cars. 1905, 111 cars. 1906, 241 cars.

Their own vehicles, as you would expect, are very ordinary by our classic car standards, with very little pre-1945, but I have found a local copy of a Ford Model T, and early Benz and a P1 Rolls with a truck engine (said to have belonged to the Tsar, of course). The Benz and the Rolls are squirrelled away, and their ownership is unclear, but there are hopes that they will form the beginnings of a motor museum in the city sometime.

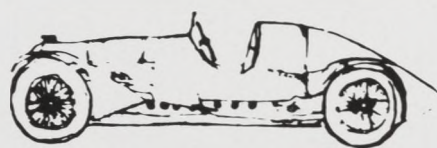
So, watch this space: something may turn up!

With my best wishes to the Committee and all the Club.

Jeff Ody

See picture on next page

Ed



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Dear Ken,

With regard to the problem encountered by My Wittridge, of SU fuel pump overheating (Autumn issue), I feel sure he is right about the positioning on his car. Although I have had no such problem on my LG45, I do recall this sort of thing happening all too frequently on other cars which I've had in the past. The early MGB's from about 1964/65 were notorious and the Abingdon factory fitted a heat shield in the engine bay. The SU pump on MGB's was fitted below the rear wheel arch, where it kept nice and cool from the airflow, but got literally soused with rain, mud, hedgehogs etc. I can recall finding one of these wheel arch mounted SU's very hot, which seemed a bit of a mystery because of its location (as far from the engine as it was possible to be).

I was told by a dealer in SU products that pitted or poorly adjusted contacts can

cause the unit to heat up quite considerably, even to the extent of **boiling** the petrol! This is apparently due to electrical resistance, caused by points neglect. For what it is worth I pass this on.

Call me a vandal if you will, but if I experienced this problem on my LG45 I would have no hesitation in moving the pump towards the back of the car. Colin Bugler tells me that he had problems until he did just this.

A bit late in the day to comment about Silverstone, but as it was our first I must say how much I appreciate the efforts of everyone involved, particularly David and Kim Ayre. I can't wait for the next one. My wife and I camped in the Club marquee at night. The running board of the Downie's Rapide proved to be the ideal height for our bedside (sleeping bag) table.

Royston Carss



1912 St. Petersburg / Riga Trial. (See Jeff Ody's letter page 27).

Dear Ken,

How pleased I was to see a technical article by David Hine. Most people will not know that David has been my brightest apprentice for the last 25 years and should, if he continues at his present rate of progress, be fully time-served in another five years.

However, as is so often the case with the young, he has a tendency to dismiss too lightly some of the finer, but nevertheless important, technical facts in his article.

I refer of course to the matter of **surge**. I appreciate that quite a lot of members themselves no longer suffer from this problem, but their cars may do so from time to time. It is important to understand why surge occurs. It all stems from a very efficient water pump being driven at $1\frac{1}{2}$ times engine speed. As a friend of mine said, the Fire Brigade would be proud to own a pump like that.

Surge usually occurs at the end of a longish fast run, when the foot is lifted sharply off the accelerator and it manifests itself as a shower of dirty brown water coming out of the radiator cap. This can be confused with boiling.

Fear not. Help is at hand, in the form of three patents which have just been taken out and which will be made freely available to all Club members. The original patent was by our American member Rudy Wood-Muller and I have since had two improvement patents granted in this country.

Although not covered in the patent, the first thing that has to be done is to reduce the efficiency of the water pump. This can be done by removing three of the six blades on the impeller, alternately so that it remains in balance.

The original American patent consists of placing a restriction in the top hose. this is easily done by taking a 2 inch (50 mm) length of tube the same i.d. as your top hose and welding a blank disc across the end. Into this disc you drill a number of small holes, the size and number found by trial and error. The holes must not be too big, otherwise they do not restrict the flow, nor too small so as to block up. I

suggest $\frac{5}{32}$ " diameter (4mm) holes and 15 holes. Drill the holes round the outside, working into the centre last of all as extra holes are added as required. The criteria for the size and number of holes is that they should not restrict the flow so much that it causes overheating.

It is easily put into the top hose by cutting the hose approximately in the middle, inserting the tube and clamping it with two jubilee clips. I am still awaiting news from America on the final configuration arrived at by the patentee.

The first improvement is the semi automatic version, which involves converting the disc into a butterfly valve and connecting this via a Bowden cable back into the cockpit, where it can be altered to obtain the optimum result.

The second improvement is the fully automatic version. This is a bit like a kick-down used on an automatic gearbox, but works the opposite way around, being a lift-off. When the foot is lifted sharply off the accelerator, the butterfly valve snaps closed, reopening when the accelerator is pressed.

I hope the above may be of some help to those that are sure that they have cured their overheating problems, but are still troubled by a stream of hot, dirty brown water from their filler cap from time to time.

Regards.

Alan



Editor's note: Readers are reminded of the caveat printed on page three . . . I had the same problem many years ago with my $4\frac{1}{2}$ litre engined 3 litre saloon. I was on an old airfield at the time and picked up a large washer with about a half inch hole. The washer wedged nicely in the hose on the pressure side of the water pump and the surge problem never recurred. Now all you need is an old airfield and a large washer . . .

Dear Ken,

I am reluctant to write again to the Magazine, since my last missive was never published! (This was some 9 months ago and enclosed some paperwork on my car from the original owner's family).

However, in answer to Wittridge's plea for suggestions on how to banish fuel vaporisation – my advice is to abandon the original system. Recipe as follows:

- 1 Install a main/reserve tap under the boot floor
- 2 Add a modern fuel pump
- 3 Run a fresh fuel line down the opposite chassis rail
- 4 Connect discreetly to carburettors
- 5 Disconnect the original setup, but leave in situ for something to polish.

Regards,

Paul Tebbett

November 1993

Dear Colin,

Thanks for the note and update.

I'll look forward to trying to help keep up the awareness of upcoming events in the colonies!

The big events in the US are, of course, Pebble Beach, the third weekend of August every year in and around Monterey, Calif. The other big concours weekend is Meadowbrook, usually in July. I've never been to Meadowbrook but I'll let you know about dates etc. when they become available. We also have our version of Beaulieu which we call Hershey because it is in Hershey, Pennsylvania! It is held every October with the smell of the chocolate factory creating the overall ambiance.

We obviously have our share of auctions just like everybody else. The big ones are the Barrett Jackson extravaganza in Phoenix the third weekend of January every year. Then, the 'Granddaddy' of all US auctions is Auburn every August with about 5,000 cars present.

The collector car hobby is alive and well in this country principally because

of the Classic Car Club of America (CCCA). The CCCA is divided into about 6 regions. Each region holds an annual concours. Lagondas are quite highly regarded on the concours circuit and usually place quite well. There is a ladder system through which one's car can rise and compete. This helps avoid the stark contrast between the 100 pt car that always comes out on top every year and the enthusiasts car that is so beautifully cared for and driven and used. The CCCA also sponsors CARavans which are leisurely drives through some of the country's most wonderful sights. There are approximately two CARavans per year.

The other area of interest is racing and rallying. The Monterey Historic races surrounding Pebble Beach are the most popular but several other vintage racing organizations are quite active as well. Most notable would be the SVRA and the VSCCA., In addition, there have come onto the scene within the last five years some more spirited runs. These are like CARavans but are limited to sports and sports racing vehicles. Again, Lagondas are quite sought after by the organizers for these events. Meg and I participated in the Colorado Grand in 1991 and would rank it the highest. Others are held in Calif, Arizona, New Mexico, New England, North Carolina, Texas etc. These events occur over a one week span and cover about 1,000 miles. Of course the scenery is beyond description but the other participants, their cars and the food and drink make it all a most memorable experience.

Well, this is sort of a thumbnail sketch of the North American car tapestry. I'll put together a calendar around the first of the year and send it along. If there is any elaboration that you would like to hear about, let me know.

We're headed off this weekend for one week to see Meg's parents on Long Island for Thanksgiving. Not a big holiday for you I know but started here by New England colonists!

Best Regards,

Chris Salyer



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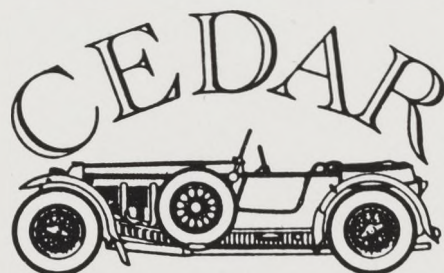
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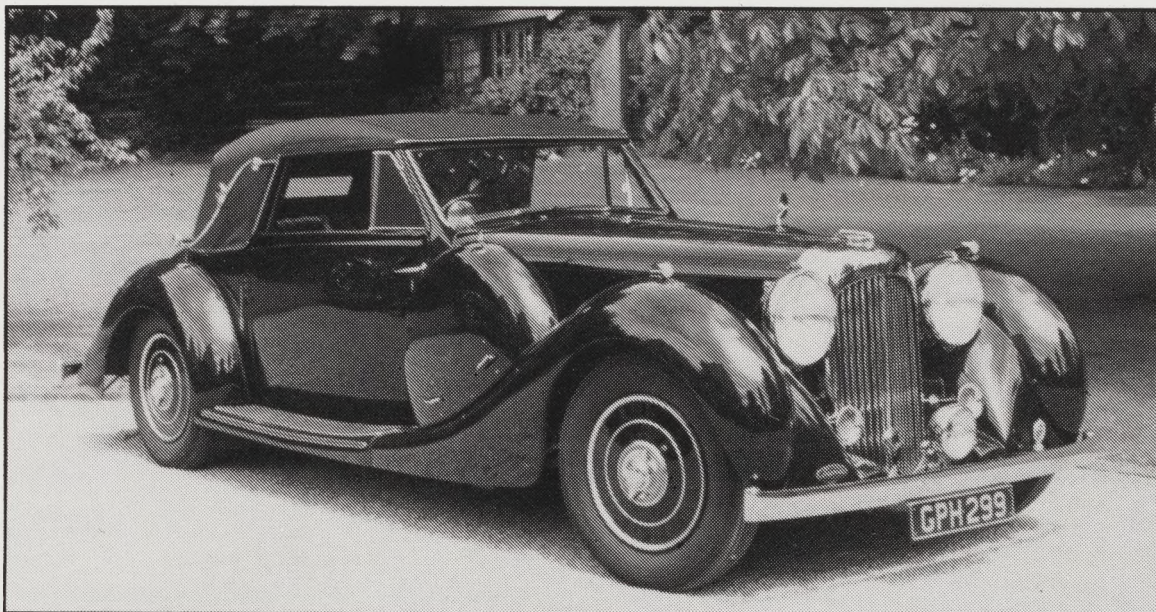
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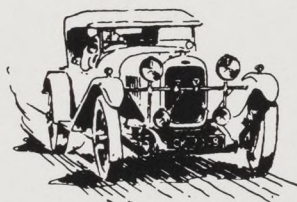
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