

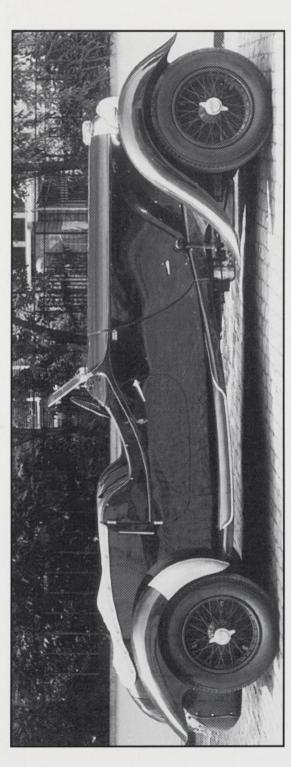
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MAGAZINE Issue No. 164 Spring 1995

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Editor: Ken Painter, Church Farm Cottage, The Street, Rickinghall, Suffolk IP22 1EQ. Tel: 01379 898228.

Registrar & Newsletter Editor: Arnold Davey, 86 The Walk, Potters Bar, Herts. EN6 1QF. Tel: 01707 654179.

Technical Advice:

Peter Whenman, address as previous. Alan Brown, Knarr Mill, Oldham Rd., Delph, Nr Oldham, Lancs, OL3 5RQ. Tel. 01457 820267.

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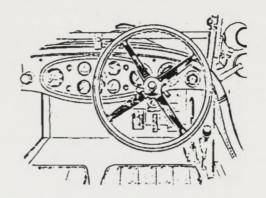
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FRONT COVER

A fine 3 litre, pictured at a recent Louis Venton Concours d'Elegance event.

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From the Driving Seat



AS I write this, the new Painter Motorhouse is finished - well, almost - it needs only power and lights and miles of shelving. Chris has been decorating it, bless her, so it is white as far up as she can reach (about five feet!) and the red floor paint has a decidedly spotty look about it. (Memo to self, paint walls and ceiling first next time!). I have one of Colin Mallett's "Agents for Lagonda Cars" signs for the outside, so as soon as we bring the bones of our 2 litre out of their long hibernation (thanks John), we are in business!

I have been challenged that it will take at least two long hard years to recreate the fabric saloon body. This may well be true, only time will tell and I still haven't worked out how to replicate all those special steel stampings which hold every part of the wood frame from its neighbour and stop the whole assembly from squeaking whilst allowing it to flex, but I am desperate to see some substantial progress on it this year, before it all collapses into wood dust. Fellow 2 litre restorers may be interested learn that a Volkswagen Caravanette stripped of its furniture is the perfect size for a 2 litre body! Only an idiot would take the trouble to make a new Weymann saloon when tourer bodies are cheaper, probably easier to sell in the future and certainly available "off the peg", so to speak, but this idiot loved his last Weymann saloon and I have never been sure where the dividing line falls between "being different" and being bloody minded.

One thing I do know. The restoration, whether it is fast or slow, will be fully

documented and will be photographed so much that I probably should take shares in Kodak. I have developed the excellent practice of keeping a "diary" of all I do to and with my pre-war cars. It all started when I was asked how the flywheel is removed from the crank of that funny Italian thing I play with. The rebuild was running late, with the first race of the season only a matter of weeks away and although I had removed the flywheel in the past, I couldn't remember how! Luckily I knew a man who could, but this set me thinking, if I could forget such a vital detail in just a few years, what would I remember in ten or more? Not relishing the prospect of re-learning everything the hard way every rebuild, I started the diary. Now it is becoming a priceless asset, everything we do to the car, every idea we have, every theory we try - or reject -is detailed and all the technical details, from torque settings, to valve timing and valve clearances, or carburettor needles tried and found wanting, all are listed for posterity. Not only that, but it is the continuing history of the car, all in one volume and when my son takes the car over he will have the collected experiences of many years

As for the photographic record, that is worth doing in its own right and the old saying that a picture is worth a thousand words helps explain why I can always be found poking my camera at the generally less photogenic parts of other people's cars. But there is another useful reason for lots of pictures. Some

(continued on page 7)

Reflections

WELL, how have you spent the winter? Jill and I have used up most of it organising the Le Mans trip - along with many other members, who have joined in with enthusiasm.

I now realise that neither of us is blessed with much imagination - not where rallies to mega motoring events are

concerned anyway.

It had not occurred to us that there is no choice of places to stay near Le Mansnot that week anyway - any other 51 weeks of the year, no problem, but that week, "rien". We also did not imagine that, with a lot of notice, 170 Club members would come along. All very gratifying of course, but a bit surprising, for our Club is not noted for large turnouts.

I haven't learnt from those skilled in the art how to get sponsors hitched to your waggon. To begin with, it is a very tricky fishing exercise, but once they are hooked and realise the benefit for their organisation, they become ardent

supporters.

My little word processor has a "spell check" on it and it turns "sponsor" into "sponser". It also turns sponsor into sponger and I've learnt that that can happen in real life if you are not careful. NOT, I hasten to add, with our main sponsors, who have been a terrific support, i.e. Sainsburys (Staines), Esso (as in 1935), Evening Standard and Aston Martin Lagonda Ltd.

Going back 2 - 3 years, when Peter Whenman, who organised the '85 jolly, was talking to me and suggested a '95 mega jolly, we did not start any too soon, bearing in mind the hurdles we have had to jump.

I am still happy that we agreed on a D.I.Y. effort, rather than employing one of the many professional rally organisers. The main reason was that we wanted to tailor the events to our own peculiar requirements and not any standard package - we also hoped to keep the cost down, but only time will tell if we have achieved a "break even", or overstretched ourselves.

The Bentley Drivers Club go regularly to Le Mans - and their President Ray Wiltshire kindly offered to advise us on where to stay in France. He also got us an excellent deal on Stenna Sealink Ferries and fixed for us to meet the Directors of the Auto Club L'Ouest, the company that runs the 24 hour circuit at Le Mans.

They, in turn, granted us permission to parade around prior to the big race and organised a special car park, which we will share with the Aston Martin Owner's Club, who are over there at the same time.

Peter was also going on about a chap he knew, (a customer and member) called Tom Farrington who lived in Tom used to have holidays in a farmhouse near Le Mans, owned by Bernadette Dubois. I was very skeptical to begin with, as I was also being bombarded with advice from people who had "friends in high places", who could Tom and fix things However, Bernadette both turned out to be a great help to us. Tom in locating hotels for "trip B" and guiding us through the French customs of "deposits" and Bernadette is very well known in the Le Mans area and secured for us the much needed accommodation

as our numbers rose far above our initial

expectations.

She also laid on the pre-race dinner and race day barbeque, all of which would have been difficult from long range. Our research visits to France were punctuated by hilarious conversations in my pidgeon French (30% at "O" level 1956), which was marginally better than the English spoken by the locals. As I was paying, so to speak, they were anxious to know what I was saying and more than happy to wait while I searched the little grey cells for the scarce vocabulary.

Tony Mays is another member of our little committee who has responsible for securing sponsorship and organising the P.R. and press releases to get the media chaps on board. contacts are legion and very important to our cause. For example, he asked me early on if we had the actual Le Mans winning car on the rally - to which I replied weakly that I thought it was in a museum somewhere. This, like many other things to Tony, was a challenge and it was not long before he had found the right strings to pull to secure the car's presence.

He also thought the start ("see you on the ferry) was a bit weak and he set about Sainsburys at Staines to lay on a gala send-off, to such an extent that this should be a major event in itself. It is hoped that many "Old Lags" and members who are not going on the rally will join in. There will be a big line-up of historic Lagondas there, not to mention cream teas, balloons, special Lagonda hats and all the fun of the fair.

As in 1935, 1985 and now in 1995, Esso Petroleum have agreed to sponsor us again, with some free petrol and advertising. Their theme is their new synthetic lube oil ULTRON. Conventional monograde and multigrade oils are based on distilled crude oil and a greater or lesser quantity of additives to act as viscosity stabilisers, antioxidants and detergents. Fully synthetic oil is based on a synthesised polymer oil,

usually, (but not always) made from polimerising ethylene, plus additives of They presented me with 25 litres of Ultron to try out after I had told them the construction of Meadows engines. My brave M45 saloon has been running all winter on this (5w/40w!!) and the oil pressure has been as good as ever, no problems apparent. The main advantage is that the early morning rattles seem to disappear much more quickly. It is certainly the oil of the future, e.g. in sealed engines. Whether our leaky old bangers warrant such an excellent and therefore expensive product is a matter of personal choice. I think I would certainly use it in a rebuilt V12 engine for instance.

I was delighted to hear that 60 M45 revised handbooks had been sold in the first month, this is very gratifying to the writer and also to Alan Debes, my editor and publisher and fellow M45 owner, (see "Stories from France", last magazine) thanks again to all those who read the proofs and gave me advice.

Please read again the bit on leaving plenty of clearance around pistons when I can't believe my own re-boring. dimness in accepting the advice of a reboring firm - after I had told everyone else to bore them nice and loose. They bored it with modern clearances and then what do you think happened? Yes, my engine seized up on the way to Monk Fryston this April and I feel a prize pillock. The problem lies in the fact that piston speeds in long-stroke pre-war engines are much higher than in modern engines at the same r.p.m. . Also, with such a long stroke the oil does not get up the bores at all if they are too tight, so a seizure takes place. Far better to err on the loose side and put up with the odd puff of smoke if necessary. modern oils this hardly ever results in oiled up plugs, as the oils burn with practically no residue.

So, I'm stomping around my garage, muttering "physician heal thyself" and other such encouragements. However, undeterred and encouraged by the response, the LG45/M45R hand book revision is now well under way.

Many thanks to those who wished me well on the recovery from my minor knee operation. Mind you, minor operations are only those that happen to other people! I wish I could claim that my problems stemmed from some manly

pursuit, such as being prop forward as a rugby playing youth. However, those who habitually miss the hub nut while trying to avoid damaging the spokes of the offside wheels may know how I managed it!

All good wishes for the 1995 season.

D.R.H.

Continued from page 3

years ago I attended a seminar at Beaulieu called "So You Want To Be a Motoring Writer" and a prominent magazine editor pointed out that he has to turn down dozens of excellent restoration articles every year, simply because the owner failed to photograph the work. Some even failed to provide a before and after comparison. You may not be planning to write up your efforts in the immediate future, but be sure that

you will be wasting your time if you have no pictures! Not interested? Think on this, I was paid £50 for an article I wrote in 20 minutes one lunch time and which contained just three pictures, a "before", a "during" and an "after". The money was several thousands short of the cost of the restoration, but every little helps.

It is also worth pointing out that many of the articles we publish in "The Lagonda" would benefit from a few accompanying photographs.......

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Lagonda Tricar - LN 3252

THE sale in Denmark in October 1994 of one of the three known Lagonda tricars gave me an opportunity to own a piece of early motoring history. The Lagonda Club Magazines 51, 52 and 53, in 1965 refer to the previous auction of this car at the second dispersal sale of the John Sword collection in Ayreshire and of the Lagonda Club's attempt to buy the car being eclipsed by "a gent from Denmark". This gent turned out to be the Baron Raben-Levetzau of Aalholm Castle near Nysted on the southern coast of Lolland, Denmark, who was collecting cars for his Automobile Museum which he had founded the previous year. He purchased quite a number of the cars at the Scottish sale. The Raben-Levetzau collection, which now forms the premier Danish motor museum, was built up over the years with cars being accumulated in various states of repair. Those on exhibit are housed in a purpose built museum on the estate, comprising several interconnecting buildings accompanied by a shop, a cafeteria and a narrow gauge railway running round the castle estate. It is well worth a visit. An unusual feature of the museum collection is that period dressed mannequins are dotted around the collection in vehicles or beside them and are quite realistic, giving the impression that there are far more visitors to the museum than there really are. It was quite unnerving at times to find oneself apologising to a dummy for getting in its line of view. Cars awaiting restoration were housed in various sheds and buildings around the estate and some apparently still remain there. Following the Baron's recent death his son John Raben-Levetzau decided to rationalise the collection which it seems had grown out of control. The craftsmen who had restored the cars had all retired and any further work was being farmed

out. The castle which is open to the public is in need of maintenance and restoration and to finance this Sotheby's were retained to thin out the vehicle collection. The museum still has at least 100 cars on display after the sale of approximately 90 vehicles from the collection. A number of the Sword cars were again on the move.

There was only one Lagonda in the whole collection, namely the tricar. It is known to have been dismantled while in Scotland and a Lagonda Club member had reported that the car was incomplete on a visit to the Aalholm Museum some years ago. Arnold Davey assured me that the Lagonda Club had not planned again to bid for the car and I decided rather than take a telephone description of the completeness of the car I should go and have a look myself.

The tricar had clearly only been used as a static exhibit and had probably not run for over 30 years. Wilbur Gunn's development of the tricar moved quickly during the early years of the century as traced by Arnold Davey in his history of the marque. This version had all the final developments of the model except conversion to magneto ignition. It had the 45 degree twin cylinder 1221 cc water cooled 12 hp engine with radiator and a three forward speed gearbox with reverse. The steering was rack and pinion with a stayed front axle and a steering wheel rather than handlebars. The starting pedals had been superceded by the starting handle. A hand brake

operated the front wheel brakes which

were internal expanding rather than the

earlier type of external contracting band as on the rear wheel. The car was fitted

with a Brown and Barlow carburettor

descriptions refer Longuemare being fitted as standard. The car was largely complete and the

although



only important missing parts were the contact breaker and trembler coil ignition system and the clutch actuating pivot. The frame was well painted in maroon and neatly lined in black and orange. The script name Lagonda was painted rather oversize on the front of the forecarriage footwell and on the rear mudguard rather than on the sides of the petrol tank and forecarriage as original. The coachwork of the forecarriage was in good condition with replaced upholstery in brown leather but lacking the buttoning to the back of the forecarriage seat. It appeared that the engine which had siezed was either about to be removed or had just been replaced at the stage when someone lost interest, because all connections to the engine were missing. No exhaust manifold pipes, water pipe connections, oil feed pipe, petrol feed pipe or tap, drive chain or floorboard remained. All these appeared straightforward to replace. There were no lamps or horn and the missing radiator filler cap (described in

the auction catalogue as the petrol cap) was alas now probably a former museum visitor's souvenir.

Restoration of the tricar did not appear to be too daunting a task and during the auction viewing there was very little interest shown in the car by many of the hundreds of people who attended. I was hopeful I might return this rare tricar to the UK. Malcolm Barber, Sotheby's auctioneer conducted the sale with his usual aplomb. The bidding was conducted in English but in Danish Kroner. This involved a certain amount of mental arithmetic and spice was added when Mr Barber occasionally accidentally lapsed into pounds during the middle of running up a bid. This drew gasps from the floor as the bidding appeared to have jumped by a magnitude of about ten and a pause was needed while an ashen bidder was resuscitated. I am well used to auctions but this was a new feature for me. When the tricar came up there was no other serious interest in the bidding from within the saleroom



and a telephone bidder from England pushed the price up, but fortunately not far. The majority of cars in the sale had been selling for well under estimate and so it was with the tricar as I became the proud owner of this historically important vehicle. Bernard Evan-Cook had the car carefully shipped to Belfast for me and I now have embarked on the task to make it roadworthy again.

The car had no registration plates attached but clearly was the one pictured on page 75 of Geoffrey Seaton's book which makes it LN 3252. This vehicle when pictured in 1928 at Brooklands has Major Oates; daughter, Mrs. Esme Humphries, at the wheel. That this is the same and therefore the third known tricar would seem to be confirmed by the fact that all other tricar pictures that I have seen show the forecarriage to be mounted on C-springs which can be seen looping behind and beside the seat. This car has the forecarriage mounted by brackets unsprung directly to the frame. Whether this was considered

development or was a repair because of a difficult to manufacture broken spring I do not know, but it would seem to confirm this car's identity. this Registration series was issued from November 1906 to March 1908 which would place LN 3252 in about March 1907. That is the correct period for this tricar which has all the late developments of the model although it is known that earlier cars were often returned to the works to be updated with the latest modifications.

The other two known tricars are well documented. The 1904 prototype tricar which was registered OI 266 in 1905 is still in the Southall family ownership since being rebuilt by Philip and Stephen Southall in 1934. It has the aircooled twin cylinder 10 hp engine with handlebars and footbrake operating external contracting band brakes at the front. I hope to visit Stephen Southall in Hereford soon to compare the different models.

The only other tricar recently known

of is T 1115 which had been owned by Aston Martin Lagonda Ltd. and was sold by Christie's in 1976. Its whereabouts is not currently known. Its engine has the later water-cooled cylinder heads and radiator. It has been converted to magneto ignition and has rack and pinion steering with steering wheel. The front axle does not have the stay fitted and so may be earlier than LN 3252. Alternatively it may just be missing from T 1115 when photographed or LN 3252 could have had it fitted later than manufacture. The upper photograph on page 18 of Geoffrey Seaton's book is almost certainly T 1115 although it has been printed reversed in the book. The 1930s photograph of a tricar on page 85 of Bernd Holthusen's Lagonda book is also likely to be T 1115 with the chain driven magneto clearly visible.

Stephen Southall has kindly sent me a copy of a letter written to him in 1936 by George Burtenshaw of Reigate who owned LN 3252 in which he refers to his personally having reached a speed of 55 mph on it and lapping the Mountain Course at Brooklands in 1931 at 32 mph. His original handicap was lowered on the day of the race when the handicapper saw what the car did on her trials. Although he started favourite he reports that unfortunately an inlet valve cover blew clean out after making a wonderful getaway, so putting him out of the race. Note that you drive on a tricar rather than in it, and with advice that the brakes are very limited and that it is best to have a light passenger in the forecarriage (who will be closest to the accident) Anne and I have interesting times ahead.

I want to thank Arnold Davey for his help in tracing history of the tricar and am now getting on with the replacement of the missing bits. I must ring John Oliver and see if he stocks tricar contact breakers. As a professional Otologist I will hold the phone well away from my ear when he replies lest he causes serious damage.

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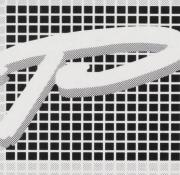
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Sixty Years On

IT was Sunday 24th April 1994 the day of the Bean Car Club's Annual Daffodil Run (Maidenhead to Bournemouth for pre 1939 cars).

I arose at 6.00am and awakened my now reluctant teenage daughter who had volunteered to navigate. It was a cold morning, sunshine but with some dark

clouds threatening rain.

God job I had checked, fuelled and decorated the car with the "obligatory" daffodils, the day before. Three squirts on the Ki-gass (BPC 44 being the prototype Rapier is not fitted with a choke) and I had time to start and warm up the engine whilst Charlotte was putting the finishing touches to her hair.

It was a pleasant but chilly drive over to "The Seven Stars" at Knowl Hill for the start. We met up with Jeff and Hillary Leeks with 2 litre and friends, grabbed a cup of coffee and queued up to sign on and collect our route cards. A glance at the entry list showed 139 entrants including 7 Lagondas. Start times were spread between 8.00 and 9.00 am to avoid conveys. Jeff advised an early start (to avoid being held up by the Austin Sevens) and was soon seen disappearing into the distance at high speed. After donning scarf, motorcycle gloves and flying helmet (I said it was chilly!) we climbed aboard and headed off in the general direction of Reading.

The route avoided most of the main roads and we were soon winding our way through some delightful country lanes. Despite the comprehensive route instructions we soon got lost. Charlotte insisting that the roads must have been altered since the route was planned. Luckily I knew the area and we managed to pick up the route a little further on.

At Silchester we rounded a bend to be confronted with a 2 Litre Lagonda coming in the opposite direction! Jeff and Co were looking for a mysterious Roman Wall which we were supposed to pass on the right. We were soon joined by a little Austin Seven chummy and after much to-ing and froing, all three cars headed off in different directions! We eventually found the Roman Wall but did not see the 2 Litre again until the tea stop at Stockbridge.

More cars were due to start the run at Stockbridge and they made a splendid sight lined up along the High Street as we arrived. We parked and found our way to the Church Hall where tea and biscuits were being served. Meanwhile a considerable crowd had gathered admiring the machinery in the High Street. We particularly noted a very nice 4½ Litre Invicta and Charlotte fell in love with a very smart and immaculate 1935 Hillman Aerominx 2 seater sports.

Well – I had to admit it was pretty. We had time to chat to some of the other entrants and heard various tales of woe. I was very surprised to see Don Lee amongst the first to arrive in his 1912 Wolseley. However, he told me he had seen 50 mph on the downhill bits! We left Stockbridge with waves from the crowd and headed towards Salisbury on the A30.

We were soon back to the lanes, through Tytherley, Lockerley and Wellows. We now had a choice — through the ford or an alternative route to avoid it. Now, fords can be fun but seeing that the route instructions had a cautionary note stating this particular one was 2 feet deep at the beginning of the month, the magneto is mounted fairly low down on a Rapier and discretion being the better part of valour etc..., we gave the ford a miss.

The route now wound its way through the New Forest where for most of the way we were in company with an



MG VA Drop Head Coupe. Lunch stop was at the "Alice Lisle" where marshalls directed us onto a central grassed area in front of the pub. Suddenly there seemed to be hundreds of cars. Where had they all come from? One seems to see very few cars when on the move in these sort of events. there was a barbecue outside for those that fancied it or a larger choice of meals inside. After being fed and watered it was time to fill in the concours voting slip. Always difficult when spoilt for choice. There were two classes, one for Vintage and one for Post Vintage.

Then it was off on the final section for the run into Bournemouth. We turned into Westover Road and the Pavillion car park where all lined up for inspection by the Mayor and other admirers. Presentation of the prizes for the Concours then took place on the steps of the Pavillion. To my amazement we won 1st prize in the Post Vintage Class, the

announcement of which was greeted by a loud cheer from the Lagonda contingent! This was followed by a civic reception and tea with the Mayor.

It was then time to find our own way home. We left in convoy with two other Lagondas (Peter Jones and Gillian in the Rapier and Jeff and Co in the 2 Litre) attracting a lot of attention as we roared out of town.

As I was not sure of the way, Jeff's friend sat in the back of the 2 Litre giving me hand signals well before each turning. This worked well until he signalled right and Jeff promptly turned left! As I was already committed I turned off right and we carried on alone a little non-plussed. After several miles, Charlotte spotted a Vintage car in the distance. I put on more speed and eventually came up behind the 2 Litre again! As the TV program says "How Did They Do That".

We soon waved goodbye and turned

off towards Basingstoke whilst Jeff and Co carried on heading North. The Rapier was motoring along the dual carriageway in grand style when suddenly the engine coughed, spluttered and died. I cursed myself for not refuelling before leaving Bournemouth. Still, I thought, there are 2 gallons on reserve so I coasted off onto a slip road, stopped and turned the tap to reserve. However when switching back on, the petrol pump would not stop Still not worrying remembered I had a gallon can in the boot, I jumped out again and poured the contents into the tank. Pump still kept ticking so I tried tightening everything in case there was an air leak. by now my daughter, who had absolute faith in my ability to fix the Rapier at the side of the whatever went wrong, beginning to have doubts. It was getting dark and there wasn't a house or telephone in sight.

Luckily, after allowing things to cool down a bit, I eventually got it restarted and drove back onto the dual carriageway. We carried on for a few miles with the engine still running in fits and starts. Then suddenly there were the bright lights of a modern petrol station. What a welcoming sight! After filling the tank and turning the petrol tap back to main, we continued on our way without further mishaps. We arrived home tired but happy. It had been a very enjoyable day.

It was also a nostalgic day as almost exactly 60 years previously BPC 44, driven by Lord De Clifford, had finished the RAC Rally in Bournemouth. The old car must have driven over the very same roads and been parked in almost the same place as the Lagonda factory had laid on a special display at Westover Garage for the Rally finish period.

One touch of irony was that in 1934 BPC 44 did not win a prize in the concours that followed the Rally. Sixty Years later, she did!

Peter Cripps

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Fitting an Oil Cooler to M45 Engine

I FOUND the M45 engine to be prone to overheating after 10 miles or so running in hot weather. I took the usual precautions of having the radiator cleaned etc. but to little effect. The oil cooler however seems to do the trick.

The cooler I used was from Serck Marston of Wolverhampton. Dimensions: 11" long, 4" deep, and 2" wide. It can be installed longitudinally alongside sump with the top level with the top sump flange. (Hardly shows!).

Fixing is a simple 3/16" dural plate attached with two sump bolts at front – rear is suspended on rubber-type connecting pressure pipe made up to suit your own dimensions by Magpie Engineering.

My engine has the external full flow filter which makes this a simple job to connect to top of filter body.

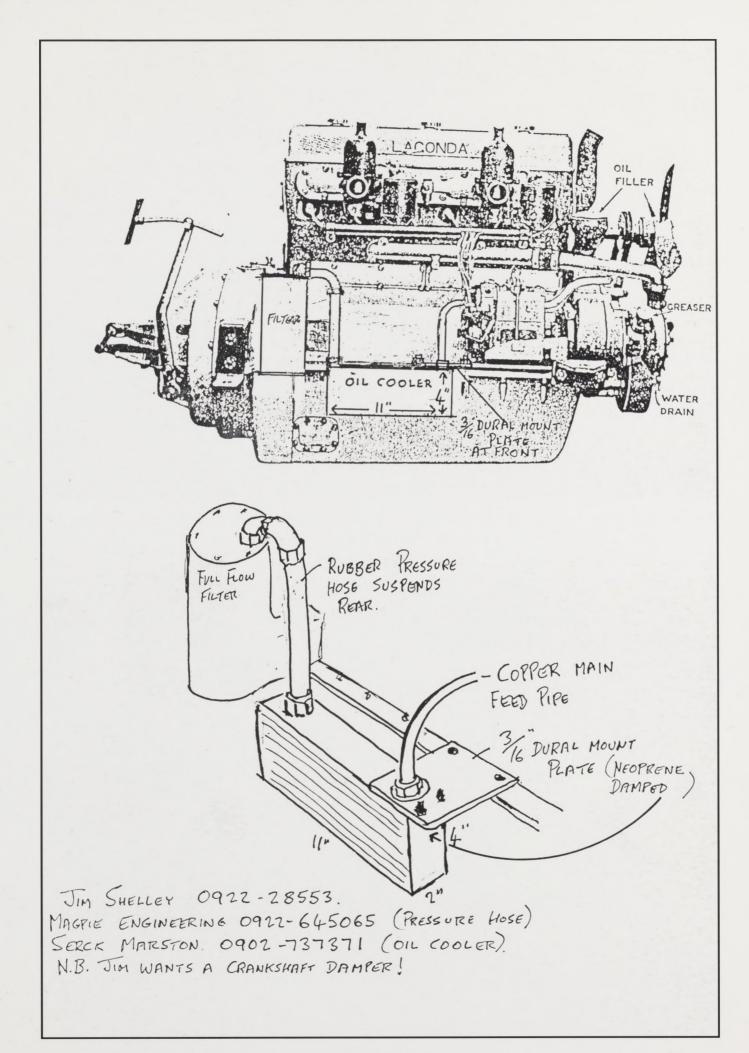
The most difference is noted when starting from cold. Oil pressure shoots up instantly (used to lag for 10 seconds) on oil gauge, the cooler acting as a receptacle for oil.

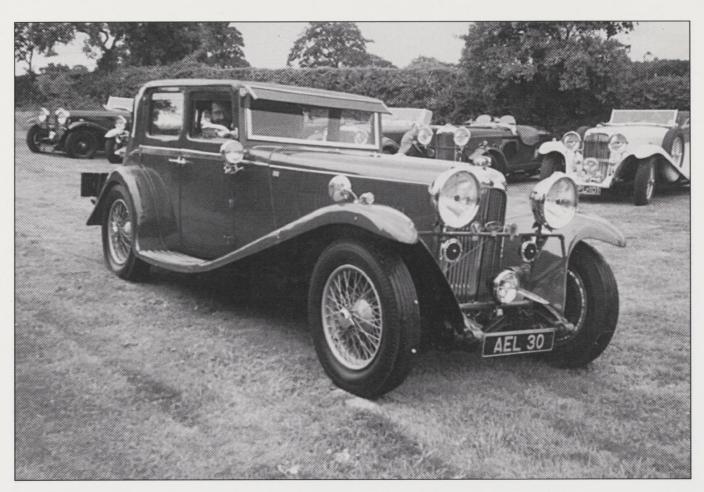
Do not tighten the pressure release valve to give more than 80 psi when cold, and hot running oil pressure should improve!

I found the engine to run sweeter and cooler with this addition.

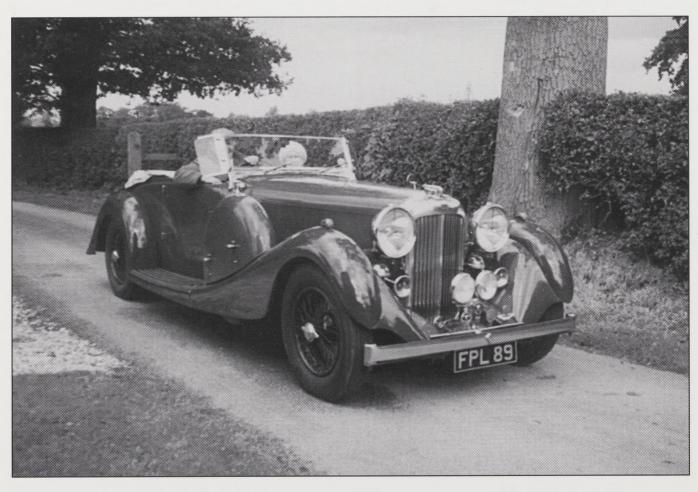
Jim Shelley





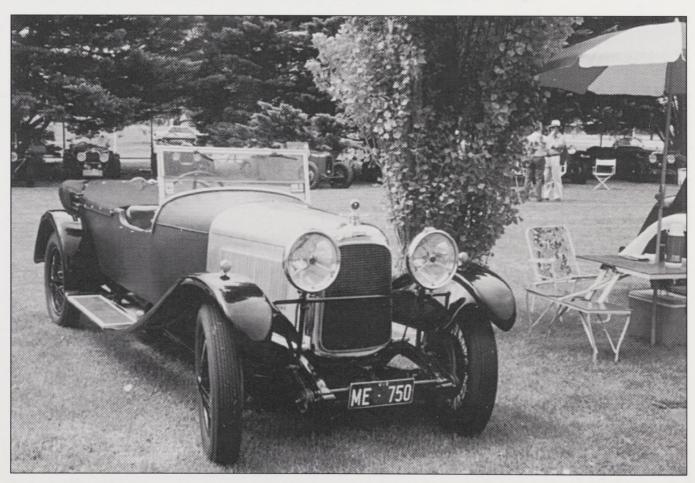


Above: Alan Whitehead and Steve arrive at the picnic at Yarwoods, September 5th 1994 - and below: Ted and Eleanor Townsley in their LG45 Tourer at the same event.





 ${\it Graeme\ Mille's\ V12\ and\ Bernie\ Jacobson's\ Rapier\ at\ a\ VSCC\ of\ A\ Meeting.}$



John Whiting's 2 litre at the same event - See Arnold Davey's letter on page 24.

PUB MEETS

Northern: Third Thursday, The Great Western, Standedge. Between Oldham and Huddersfield, past Floating Light towards Huddersfield. Details, Roger Firth, Tel 0161 303 9127.

Home Counties: First Sunday, The Stonor Arms, Stonor, Nr Henley, from noon. B480, 3 miles off the A423 from Henley. Details Jeff Leeks, Tel 01494 563188.

East Kent: First Sunday, Griffin's Head, Chillenden, Nr Canterbury, from noon. Details, John Anderson, Tel 01304 613091.

Dorset: First Thursday, The Ship Inn, Wool. 15 miles E. of Dorchester, MR842868. Details Dudley Palmer Tel 01305 788458, or Peter Dobson, Tel 01202 731265.

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.

East Anglia: First Friday, Royal Oak, Barrington, Cambs. Details John Stoneman, Tel 01353 649494.

Second Wednesday, The Scole Inn, Scole, near Diss (VSCC Meeging).

Third Wednesday, The Bridge Hotel, Clayhythe, Waterbeach Cambs. Details, John Stoneman 01353 649494.

First Thursday, The White Horse, Edwardstone, MR95 2428. Details James Holland 01787 228241 or Charles Ping 01787 310559. Pub Tel 01787 211211 (Grid ref: 952428).

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

West Midlands: Third Saturday of alternate months starting April 95, Talbot Inn, Chaddesley Corbett. Details, T. P. Brewster.

South Wales: First Thursday, Court Colman Hotel, Pen-y-Fai, Near Bridgend (VSCC meeting)

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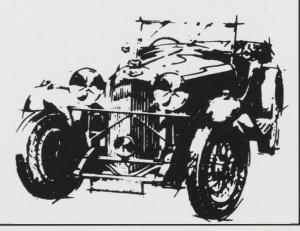
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Lagonda. An incomplete history

LG6 Drop-head Coupé. Chassis/ Engine No. 12343 RAC rating 29.13 HP. Road Tax £37.10s.0d. [Equivalent to about 1200 of today's

brass pounds].

The car was registered MG 6279 on 29th November 1938 and sold by University Motors of London. One month's road tax was paid of £4.2s.6d. equating to around £124 today. Rumour has it that there were then eight owners until December 1951.

The next positive information is that it was part of the stock of Davies Motors, Staines, in 1951. That summer Mr and Mrs Davies went to Italy in it. I have an atmospheric photo of Mrs Davies standing besides a very hot looking vehicle as an ox-cart goes by! [Thanks to Alex Downiel.

Mr Rowland Henry Hill of West London bought it in December 1951 and Road Tax for one month initially paid on 2nd February 1952 when a new Log book was issued, which put paid to any earlier information about owners.

The car was off the road through that April. He then taxed it continuously until 31st December 1954. The first of the extant repair bills now hoves into sight. Mr Hill seems to have had an accident around July 1954. "Reshaping all wings and running boards where damaged. Flat, stop and respray with 8 coats of finishing colour in two tone". This is the first indication that the original colour "blue" (actually a metallic blue grey) had been changed. The radiator shell and head lamps needed repair as well – some prang! Actually the account with Darkins Brothers, Kensington Park Road, ran from the end of March to the end of August 1954 and came to the then horrendous total of £356.17s.2d. [Multiply by at least 20 for today's prices]. Amongst other things seen to

that summer were: choked radiator; non functioning dip-switch; non functioning oil gauge; valve regrind; new Bendix drive; magnetos repaired; water pump repaired and the first indication of rot in the ash frame as the door pillars were reinforced with steel plates, and all the

bright work was rechromed.

Mr Hill must have felt rather poorly after that for he kept the car off the road from January to May 1955, finally selling it at the end of August to Metcalfe and Mundy Ltd., Old Brompton Road, London. They got rid of it quite quickly to Mr T. A. Morris, Dental Surgeon of Wells, Somerset, who returned the car to Davies Motors for sorting out. The radiator was yet again choked but they seemed happy with it otherwise. Mr Morris wasn't.

In October 1955 it was in the hands of D. A. Taylors, Wells, who looked after it until the end of December. Items now needing attention were: New petrol pump; leaking hydraulic brake pipes; leading exhaust; "Towing to start, Tow into Garage" on 21st December. A nice

Xmas pressy!

New plug leads and battery were needed to deal with that problem. Mr Morris taxed the car for the year 1956, but just how much fun he had I don't know, for in February it went to D.H.C. Hull of Finmere with the first recorded mileage of 47,849. The clutch assembly was in bad condition. The brakes were relined and the drums machined. Brake master cylinder cleaned out and new rubbers fitted. Once again magneto trouble and more silencers, and yet another Bendix assembly. It was now that the offside automatic chassis lubrication was replaced by grease nipples - costing me a small fortune in replacing worn bushes and bearings 25 years later. [The untouched nearside

system had kept the bushes and bearings immaculate]. The spare wheel was rebuilt and confirms that the car was now blue and "Ivory" - I would call it kitchen cream, the family called it the flying banana and I have now got it back to a near shade of its original colour.

That year saw the Suez Crisis and petrol rationing. The Ministry of Fuel and Power authorised 22 gallons of petrol by virtue of the signature of the Deputy Secretary of the United Bristol Hospitals [so Bureaucrats occasionally have their uses after all]. Although the car was initially taxed for the year 1957, Mr Morris claimed a refund at some time and sold the car to "Mack" Stratton, Ear, Nose and Throat Surgeon of Surrey in December 1957. The speedo reading was 55,000.

Having bought it, Mack presumably found that the ash frame had rotted too far to repair and that the hydraulic jacks were inoperable. He handed the vehicle to Mayford Motors Ltd. Away went the spare wheel fastenings and casing and its opposite number on the near side, off with the running boards, the hydraulic jacking system and a large chunk of the tail. They were yet another band of mechanics who tried to make something of the windscreen wipers.

To be fair to Mack, who became a Lagonda Club Committee member, the motoring climate in 1958 was still very much affected by the aftermath of World War II, with regards to disposable income, spares or anyone prepared to make one-offs. In addition a 20 year old gas guzzling sports car, however illustrious, was considered in the same light as a tired mini would be today – a fun car.

There were other faults, for he wrote to D.H.C. Hull who were unable to provide the "parts" he needed. They may have been magneto gears, for Mayford Motors later replaced the drive wiper mechanism yet again: Magnetos and headlamp dipping were all problems in June 1958. H and B Motors of Redhill now had a hand in the game, removing

the cylinder head, further grinding-in the valves and – yes – the magnetos!

Mack Stratton taxed it regularly through 1958 to the end of 1961. He did 6,000 miles in 1958, 7,150 in 1959 and just under 7,000 in 1960. However all this travelling cost him! Sunninghill Motor Services Ltd were the recipients of his bounty in February 1960. Brakes were giving trouble and a new brake master cylinder was fitted [It didn't last all that long either, I had to replace it a few years later. The water pump gland was repacked. A month later they were dealing with brake fluid leaks, repairing cill strips and having fun with the oil pressure gauge. May 1960 they towed the car in: replaced the water pump with a new [modified] one - a much better bet for it lasted 30 years before needing repair; replaced the plugs and tightened up the wings - not surprising since most of the support had been removed in 1958. In June the wipers were still causing trouble - was it a wet summer?

In November 1960 Mr Stratton went on the Lagonda Handicap Rally in Wales and a rather damp looking and slightly despondent Mack is seen in action on the back page of "Lagonda Magazine" Winter 1960 [No. 37].

"Motor Sport" September 1961: "Lagonda D. H. Coupe. 1938 Six cylinder. New Hood, Tyres, taxed £195. Stratton, Langtons, Ottershaw, Surrey."

In the same issue Coys of Kensington were advertising themselves as Auto-Union and D.K.W. Agents "BE AHEAD. DRIVE A DKW 40s". Mr Duckworth wanted £400 for his V12 D.H.C. in very good condition, not yet fully run-in after Staines engine overhaul and Mr Taylor wished to be rid of his LG45 D.H.C. second gear chipped, brakes and clutch need attention, dented wings in return for £120. Mr Mills would accept £45 for his M45 Saloon, and it had a valid M.O.T. Certificate! Mind you, someone was offering a truly magnificent LG6 Rapide for £950. It is now owned by Berndt Holthusen [photo. page 344 of his bookl.

Anyway, this mug could raise £200 but no more. So off to Surrey and hooked he was, for the second time [first time was 1952 with a 16/80 tourer]. Some folk never learn!

Question 1 Why, in spite of all the maintenance and repairs from 1954 and 25,000 miles, was the car I bought in 1961 showing such phenomenal wear? The carpets were done, clutch and brake pedal rubbers hanging in strips and the metal throttle pedal worn down to half its size. The engine was hard put to show any oil pressure at all. Had it been belted round all the RAF stations in the South of England by a succession of gung-ho pilots between 1939 and 1945, or was it a case of, "They don't make them like that anymore – thank goodness!"?

Question 2 Who else had an almighty prang leading to a cracked front chassis tube and some steering link replacements – painted green whilst the rest of the

chassis is grev?

Now I had a cut-down LG6, no hydraulic jacks and all the offside Tecalamèt oiling system replaced by dozens of grease nipples. The speedo read 71,000. Driving back to Surrey from Yorkshire with a 6 year old daughter the top hose split just by the Ram Jam Inn. A few weeks later I discovered that the

crank-case threads holding the bolts for the oil breather/fan assembly were stripped when the whole thing shot forwards into the radiator! Things went on in this vein for years as I acquired an ever more voluminous correspondence from Ivan Forshaw among others, until I finally snapped in 1965.

En route to the Border Rally a big-end ran near Darlington. This was for the second time. One of the big-ends had gone in an earlier attempt to reach an AGM. The car disappeared into the garage for a rebuild. And there it remained for nearly 20 years. That four letter word WXXK always getting in the way. And then the daughters were old enough to bring quite responsible boyfriends home and the car was finally put on the road. Now, apart from the windscreen wipers still going on strike every time it rains, the magnetos needing three rebuilds by three different experts and the carburettors dripping petrol whatever I do to them, it gets us around with reservations from Ruthl. The

And I'd love to know what happened to the old thing between 30th November

speedo reads 05663 at the time of writing.

1938 and 31st December 1951.

John Turner



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Letters

Dear Ken,

David Hine has no need to perpetuate the North/South divide (Issue 163). It is immortal, separated by blocks of Granite. That John Butler pours gravy over his fish is one example, but the real proof is that the poor southerner puts garlic in, so as to give some sort of life to his flabby, tasteless Cod; whereas the Yorkshiremen need no zest to add to our marvellous flavourful Haddock. Incidentally, David, though quite a nice chap, is a Lancastrian.

Kind regards

John Turner

Dear Ken,

I have been corresponding with John Whiting in Victoria and you may like to print the enclosed pics in the Mag. They were taken in January 1995 at a VSCC of A meeting and show John's 2 litre, which he is restoring, Graeme Miller's V12 Rapide and Bernie Jacobson's Rapier

Regards

Arnold

(see page 19 - ED)

Dear Ken.

I was most intrigued by Arnold Davey's article on the legendary 4 litre 4wd Lagonda and I don't imagine that he realised at the time how near he was to the truth. He has jogged my memory and I think I can add to what he related, although what I have to recall took place nearly 50 years ago, in 1946, at which time another 5 years were to pass before I became a Lagonda owner.

You may remember that a year or so back, you raised the subject of length of time members might have owned one particular vehicle and asked for stories to be included in your admirable Magazine. I duly replied with an account of the

construction of my single seater Special, which commenced in 1938 and which I still own and drive. It was in January 1946 that I returned from the jungles of S.E. Asia, doing my bit for King and Country.

Often, during those years I dreamed of completing the rolling chassis I had left behind, stripped down and packed away safely in the inspection pit I had constructed in my father's garage - it survived two blitz raids!

At the outset, the power unit had been an Ariel square Four, it was, however, a very early 500cc model, which had had failings and I was experiencing them. Finally a motor bike enthusiast warned me off it, having paid £3 pre-war for it I subsequently got £9 post-war! Faced with having to find a replacement, I was told to visit a yard on the outskirts of Kingston on Thames. This was during the summer of 1946, by which time I had reassembled the rolling chassis, with the aid of notes and diagrams I had buried with the bits in the inspection pit. It was strange, having made some particular component, finding myself at a loss as to what it was and where it went!

The yard was not really a "scrap" or "breakers", but something like a forerunner of what we know as an Industrial Estate. There was a shop selling Ministry of Aircraft surplus - literally tons of it - where one could get a gross of 2 B.A. self locking nuts for 2/6d, or a Spitfire nosecone. It was here that found what I had been told would probably be there - a V twin aircooled J.A.P. engine - exactly £9!

It was just as I was leaving the yard with the J.A.P. engine in the back of my Austin 7 that I saw something which immediately took my eye and this turned out to be one of Sir Henry Seagrave's

world speed record cars. There was somebody nearby and we got into conversation. He hadn't been at the yard for long and didn't know what was to happen to the car, but it had been there some time, just left out in the open. It could of course, have been the one now in the Beaulieu Museum. One thing led to another and he had an interesting story to tell.

From the subject of Seagrave, we got on to Sir Malcolm Campbell (and Bluebird), who lived nearby in the local millionaires' Row - Coombe Hill - and from this it transpired that he knew Leo Villa, Campbell's mechanic. About a year previously, just before the end of the war, he told me, a battered chassis with two engines in it was brought into the yard and to his amazement he recognised it! He had, pre-war, been employed by the Earl of Ushant in Shropshire and he had helped the younger son of the Earl to build the wreck which had been brought in.

His version of the accident differed slightly from that described by Arnold, in that the axle fitted to the front of the car seized solid just short of the crest of the hump of the bridge and was stationary at the time of impact with his Lordship's Daimler. There was, he thought, a design fault in the oil system for the front (former rear) axle. Close inspection of the sketch drawn by Rupert Cloudesley-Spade (obviously a descendant of the Admiral Cloudesley-Shovel who went to the bottom with his treasure ship just off the Scillies), which Arnold unearthed, gives a clue in this respect. The second rear axle being fitted to the front would, as Arnold points out, have to be inverted to ensure that both pairs of wheels drove in the same direction. This would have brought the oil filler spout to the off side, facing downwards. This, presumably, would have become the draining orifice, the original one fulfilling the purpose of oil input. This latter does not appear on the sketch. What is shown, however, is that the original filler spout has been fitted to the nearside. The reason for this

is not evident, except possibly to clear the offside engine. The suggestion was that in any event the surge of forward impulsion and the gradient of the bridge hump would have taken the oil into the cavity of the rear-facing differential casing.

My informant told me that he had once re-visited Ushant Park, but all was deserted, the bridge was still there, as were the remains of a wartime Bailey Bridge alongside it. He did remember one other thing, prior to the start, a stop watch at each gate recorded the report of the starting gun, to ascertain the climatic differential by which to adjust the timed run. I never asked the name of the friend I had made, but I can't help feeling that it was Mansell, the chauffeur.

John Anderson

Dear Mr Painter,

I enclose some photographs of my Lagonda. It is a 1932 Carlton bodied 16/80 DHC (aluminium over ash), painted BRG, which is still the original paint, but now in need of renovation.

The upholstery will need to be replaced, and the dashboard is not original, although all the original instruments remain. The hood is still serviceable.

As you can see from the photo, the spare wheel has been mounted on the boot. This was due to the usual fault of the side mounting bracket having broken off. However, I have replaced the original bracket by plating it back onto the bulkhead.

If you look at the picture of the engine, you will see that the manifold to downpipe nuts are non-existent. I had these re-made, together with copper downpipes.

The remainder is original, the disc oil filter still operating of the clutch, etc.

I blanked off the vacuum gauge (just a screw in the manifold) because, for some reason which I never discovered, the engine ran better that way.

I have a spare set of headlamps, which



Bob Kitchen's Carlton Bodied 16/80.



have been rechromed, but never fitted.

To put it back on the road should be quite painless, to bring it up to concours standard would require all the above seeing to.

Yours Aye

Bob Kitchen

Editor's note: In my conversations with Bob, I learned that he is now considering selling this car and although we don't make a habit of advertising cars in this way I particularly wanted to illustrate what is a fairly rare example of the 16/80. The price asked is reasonable, so if any of our readers would like to take on what looks like a very simple restoration, please contact me and I will provide further details. K.P.P.

Dear Ken

The latest magazine has arrived safely with some very interesting articles

and photographs.

May I ask if, in the next magazine, you would kindly publish a correction to the Competition Notes on page 23. The report states that Tim Metcalfe is not a member of this Club. In fact Tim has been a member since July last year and, of course, his father Tony has been a member for many years.

Whilst writing, thank you for your comments about the service you received from the RAC, I have yet to call on them but the peace of mind is a considerable

asset.

I was very interested to read Alan Brown's letter regarding "missing" LG45's and the number of N/R's in the last Register. We did actually target these N/R members with a special Archive Form in November. Alan may be pleased to hear that we have had a good response, many from the USA and with, in some cases, new information which has brought a smile to Arnold's face. However, there are still 64 forms not yet returned to us and we are wondering what else we can do to persuade these members to reply. A faxed reply would

be very welcome - in fact any reply!

Yours sincerely,

Colin Bugler Hon. Secretary

Dear Ken

I was rather saddened to read the Arnold Davey's comments about FIVA in

the February newsletter.

When you have never worked with FIVA, never been to any of their meetings and know little of what they are trying to achieve, it is easy to criticise the organisation. I accept that there are commission chairmen who are satisfied with a lower level of achievement than Michael Banfield and the European Affairs Commission, but he and I have one great advantage, 99% of the meetings are conducted in the English language!

I have been working for the Events Commission for five years; I have never 'swanned' about and any hotels I have stayed in have been paid for out of my own pocket. The VSCC very kindly pay my air fares to the two meetings I am required to attend; I am most grateful to

them.

I sincerely hope that members of the Lagonda Club do not feel that their contribution to FIVA's finances, through the FBHVC, is money wasted.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Grant Peterkin

Dear Ken.

Thanks for the sight of Martin Grant Peterkin's letter. I suspect that in compressing what I mean to say into near-telegram Newsletter-ese, I have given a totally wrong impression. The last thing I wanted to do was to scorn the efforts of the Federation or its delegates, who do a thankless task extremely well. Surely the last sentence of that paragraph made that clear? What I was reporting was the impression given by several speakers at the AGM that the Federation does all the work and that some of the equivalent national bodies from other European countries are really hollow

shams, representing hardly anyone and whose delegates just go along for the fleshpots. When I said "some of the delegates" I was not referring to British ones at all.

Michael Banfield gave names, but I am not going to, on the sleeping dogs principle and because we have members in those countries. Taking a broader view, I suppose it is only fair that the British should make all the running in these matters, since it is here that the bulk of the old vehicles live, which is partly a result of history and partly the national tendency to go everywhere looking backwards to some mythical golden age. We have the most to lose from badly-conceived legislation, so it is right we should do all the work, but I can see, and reported, how this might grate on a hard-working delegate when his opposite number from another country failed to do what he was asked.

Yours sincerely,

Arnold Davey

Dear Sir

We must all be grateful to Arnold Davey for his scholarly investigation into the story of the Cloudesley-Spade Special. I am sure that his detailed account of the actual construction and testing is correct, but he goes too far in giving Cloudesley-Spade the credit for the original concept of the conversion. The evidence indicates that the factory always intended to provide for the conversion at some point in the life of the car. It is a well known fact that the high-chassis 2 litre can crack the main longitudinal member at the S-bend after a time. Arnold even mentions the matter on page 191 of his master work 'Lagonda - A History of the Marque' written with Tony May. The reason for this design feature has never been explained previously and some may even have thought that it was a design fault. Now we can see that it was in fact built-in expressly to facilitate the conversion later demonstrated by Cloudesley-Spade. However he did not act until the late thirties and by then Lagonda had long despaired of seeing the idea realised. They had therefore provided chassis bracing for the 2 litre low chassis because owners did not appreciate the

value of the cracking.

Your editing is normally impeccable but there was an unfortunate confusion over Arnold's two articles in No. 163. He wrote, in explanation of how he investigated a story, '... but by far the simplest method, and probably the one carrying most conviction is simply to make the whole thing up, as I have done here.' Of course he intended these words to be at the end of the spoof article about the imaginary 'Lagonda Vignale' but you printed them at the end of his historical piece. I think they were unnecessary because surely no reader would ever believe that such a monstrosity could carry the Lagonda name? Do be more careful in future.

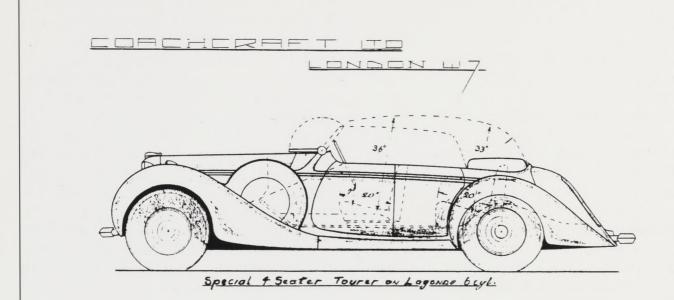
On a different matter, I knew the 2litre mentioned in Peter Docker's letter from Australia. Bill Jupe bought the car in Ipoh in Malaya and later sold it there. I do not know how it came to Brunei. Bill, the late Peter Mills, Jack Elton and I were all with Shell in Seria, the oil field town of the State of Brunei, from 1956 to 1960 in my case. My recollection is that the car was in Seria and certainly in the ownership of Peter Mills for most of that time. It looked then much as it does in the magazine picture. I thought that it was bought by Jack Elton, a very good practical engineer who was a supervisor in the workshops, before I left. I heard that he took it back to Australia when he left Brunei. There were two other Vintage cars in Seria at that time, a Speed Six Bentley belonging to Bill Jupe and an 8 litre Bentley belonging to an English contractor.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Cook

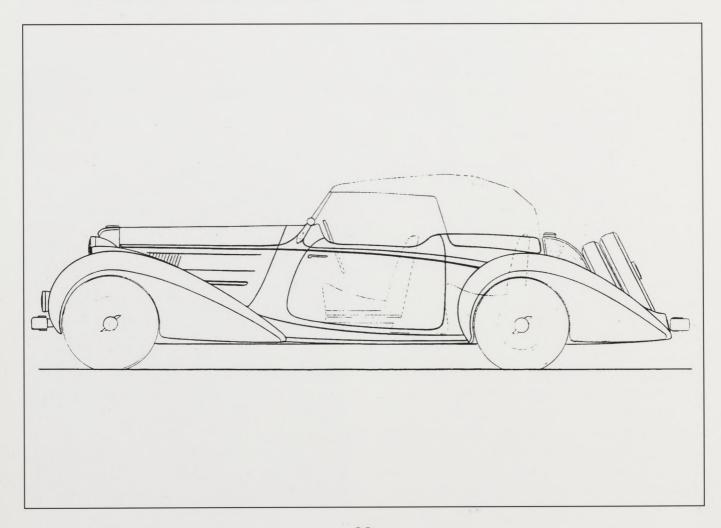
Dear Ken.

You may find a use in the magazine for the enclosed drawings. They came to me via John Dyson of the Railton Owners



Drg No 1141 Dale 13-3 39

Scale 4'-1'



Club. They were originally produced by Coachcraft in 1939 and submitted to Lagondas as possible body designs that Coachcraft might build (assuming a customer wanting one). None were built.

They came to the Railton OC from the late G. C. Durtnal, who was the Chief Body Designer at Coachcraft at the time and eventually became a Director of the University Motors Group, the parent company. University Motors were Lagonda's London & Home Counties Distributor in the 1935/39 era and the V12s and LG6s with MG registration numbers all came from there.

The two-door body looks very attractive, but of course has absolutely no luggage space if four people were in it. The four-door would present the same problem as all four door tourers; how do you stiffen the B-post enough to hang the rear doors on it? Actually, Coachcraft were better at this than most and incorporated stiff pressed steel brackets across the car by the front seat squabs.

The original drawings are retained by Dyson and I have reduced the scale of the two-door to get it on to A4 and I have also strengthened the lines in a few places to make them reproduce better. The four door is definitely on the LG6; I am not sure about the other, but I think it is as well.

Regards,

Arnold Davey

Dear Mr Painter,

Editorial Comment

I feel compelled to write in reply to your editorial comment following Henry Stoners' letter published in The Lagonda No. 162.

I accept without reservation that I failed to reply direct to Henry Stonor immediately on receiving correspondence from him, and many others, of a generous and informative nature.

In mitigation I had sent a letter to my original contact in the MSVCR informing him that it would be some time before I could write to everyone, regrettably, this message did not get passed on for which I accept responsibility.

As you are now aware, I had indeed, apologised to Henry Stonor long before your comments were published and without any reminders being necessary. Moreover, I accept that the constraints of the publishers meant that your remarks could not be edited with the benefit of hindsight.

However, I take great exception to your presumption that I am lazy and as for courtesy I would suggest that you are throwing bricks in a glass house. Perhaps you should give more consideration before comment, what was at worst an oversight compounded with misunderstanding has become inflammatory and insulting!

Yours sincerely,

Mr C *****





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- Do you receive discounts on European cover, publications and signs services?

 YES OF NO?

- 5 Would you receive a free traditionally crafted grille badge when you join? YES or NO?
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- 7 Do you have a dedicated 0345 telephone number for membership enquiries? YES or NO?
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Please note: to qualify for this offer you must be

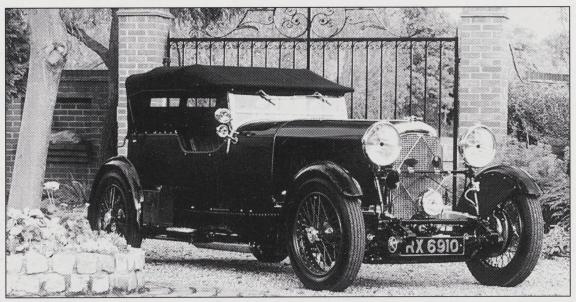
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