



THE MAGAZINE OF THE
LAGONDA CLUB

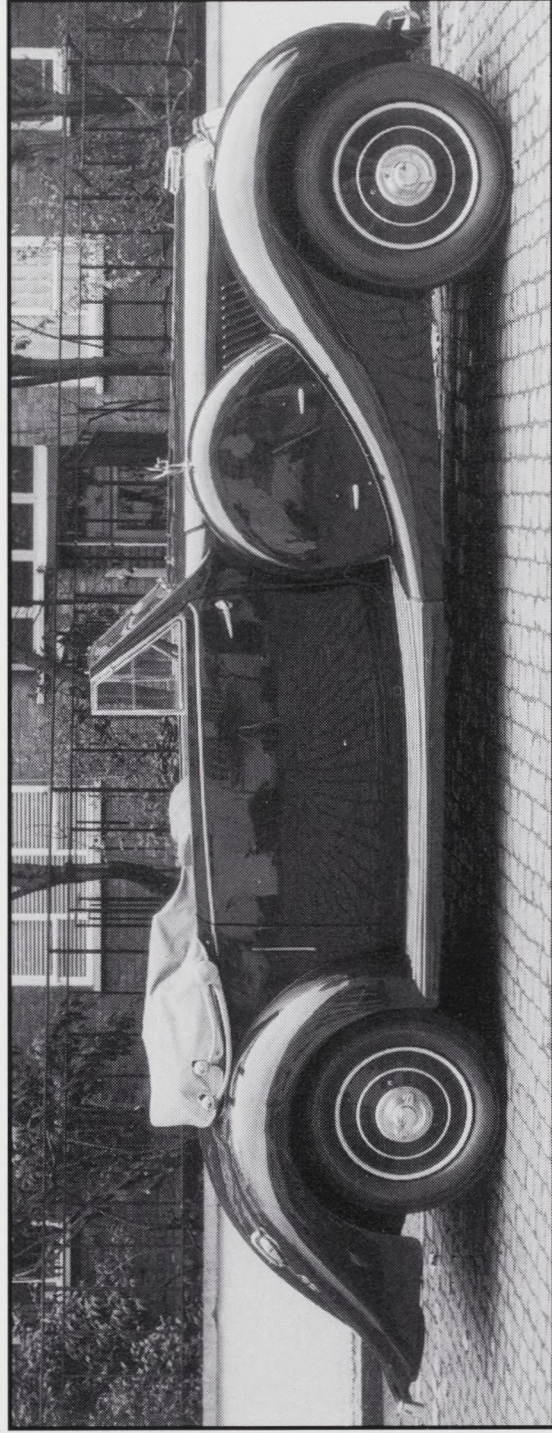
Number 168

Spring 1996

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CARS IN STOCK

1952	Allard J2	1955	Bentley S1 Continental DHC by Park Ward,	1938	Lagonda V12 DHC
1932	Auburn Speedster	(power steering)		1938	Lagonda V12 Rapide one of 12 cars built
1922	Bentley 3 Litre Speed Model Tourer by Cadogan	1956	Bentley S1 Continental Fastback by H J Mulliner	1936	Maserati 6CM
1929	Bentley 6 1/2 4 Light touring Saloon by Barker	1926	Bugatti Type 37A Grand Prix	1959	Maserati Tipo 61 Birdcage
1930	Bentley Speed Six Tourer by J Gurney Nutting	1935	Bugatti Type 57C Stelvio drophead coupe	1955	Mercedes-Benz 300 SL Gullwing
1930	Bentley 4 1/2 Litre Supercharged Tourer, one of the original 50 cars	1967	Ferrari 275 GTB/4	1958	Mercedes-Benz 300 SL Roadster
		1954	Fraser-Nash Targa Florio Mk II	1971	Mercedes-Benz 280 SE 3.5 Drophead Coupe
1934	Bentley 3 1/2 Litre DHC by Park Ward	1963	Jaguar E-Type Competition Lightweight	1920	Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost Fully Collapsible
1936	Bentley 3 1/2 Litre Vanden Plas Tourer	<i>Le Mans winner 1963</i>			Salamanca
1937	Bentley 4 1/4 MR "Malcolm Campbell" design cut-away door tourer by Vanden Plas	1968	Lamborghini Muira S	1930	Rolls-Royce Phantom II Sedan de Ville by Hooper
		1936	Lagonda LG45 DHC		
1954	Bentley R-Type Continental Fastback by Mulliner	1937	Lagonda LG45 Tourer	1963	Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud III Standard Steel Saloon
				1936	Talbot-Lago T150C Ex Works 4 times Le Mans

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Issue No. 168
Spring 1996

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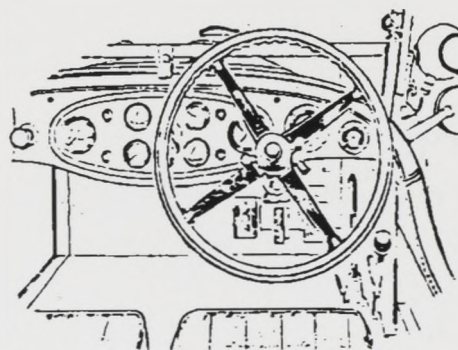
FRONT COVER

BPK 202 on the Le Mans' Parade.

Photo courtesy of Aston Martin Lagonda

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From the Driving Seat



IT'S A LOVELY day today, the garage doors are open and the swallows are serenading me from their customary perch on the TV aerial. Spring has sprung at last and the time has come for some really serious vintage motoring. Of course, now that we have continuous free vehicle licences, I know that many members are encouraged to use their cars throughout the year, but I suspect that most Lagondas appear with the swallows and spend the colder months tucked up in the garage.

The combined Rapier Register/Lagonda Club Dinner, which is reported fully on page —, attracted some sixteen pre-war cars, which implies that almost 50% of those attending did so in a “proper” motor car, not bad for a March event! Does this mean that we are about to see some sort of return to the “good old days” when we used our Lagondas as every-day transport? I have to admit that it is well over twenty years since my sole means of transport was a pre-war car of some description, usually, but not always bearing a Lagonda badge. There is no way I would - or could - use any pre-war car for business now. I travel roughly 20,000 miles every year and my employers insist on providing a boring modern car, but that now gives me the perfect opportunity to use a more interesting car for purely pleasure motoring. All right, just at the moment, the car I am using carries the “wrong” badge, but the pile of bits in the garage is slowly but surely becoming a collection of restored and assembled components that, one day in the dim and distant future will all come together to take you all by surprise!

This edition of “The Lagonda” is unusual because the main feature is a long and fascinating account of a rally and holiday in New Zealand. I make no excuse for this, holidays such as this may seem to be the stuff of dreams, but when I joined the Club back in 1959 the very first copy of the magazine I ever read carried an account of a trip to France in a 2 litre. In those far off days that seemed just as fantastic as a trip half way round the world seems now, yet one of the Club's most successful events ever was the Le Mans trip of last summer and your Committee is seriously considering the possibilities of a Club trip to Springfield Ohio to celebrate one hundred years of Lagonda cars. The world truly is shrinking!

At a recent VSCC pub meet, Mark Hollis, who runs a vintage 3 litre Bentley which until last winter really was his sole means of transport, brought along some very old scrap books which he had just been given. In one was the poem “Brooklands”, which is printed on page 9. As is so often the case with scrap books like these, the sources of the cuttings were not listed. I would very much like to acknowledge the original publication, can any of our readers identify it? If so please write to the Editor so that proper credit can be given in a future edition. From the illustrations, it almost certainly appeared during the vintage period, but the style is typical of many of the magazines of that period, could it be from “Speed”, the fore-runner of “Motor Sport” - and who was A.C.H.?

This edition of the magazine is rather later than intended, so the next magazine

will follow very shortly to get us back on schedule. Articles should therefore be forwarded as soon as possible please, as should pictures, particularly of Lagondas in competition. The drivers who race, sprint and hillclimb their cars get very few opportunities to take pictures of

fellow competitors, so those who watch us and support us can do both the competitors and their fellow Club members a great favour by offering their pictures for publication..

K.P.P.



Reflections

AT THE AGE of ten I was despatched by a slow, cold, steam train from Manchester Victoria Station to attend boarding school over the hills in Yorkshire.

This spartan establishment had been built in 1779, originally as a hospital, but later as a school, by the Quakers. The intention was, and still is, to bring up young children to observe the excellent religious beliefs of that Society.

We noticed the school motto over the door, NON SIBI SED OMNIBUS, and were told in reverent tones that it meant "not for oneself but for all" and filed off for silent meeting for worship.

However, once the teachers had retired for their Horlicks (alcohol forbidden) the older boys proceeded to plunge our heads down the loos, lock us in small cupboards, pour ink on us and spend the next few weeks making us feel terrified as well as awfully homesick.

When I heard them bellowing out the school song "Forty years on, growing older and older, shorter in breath but memory long" it seemed to this bewildered ten year old that the whole world about me was totally mad.

I had to stick the place for eight long years and even came to respect most of the teachings. However, it left me a somewhat cynical observer of human frailty.



Another forty years on (plus a bit), I find myself actually growing older and older as, inevitably, are all the other members of the Lagonda Club. However, our cars are now unlikely to deteriorate at the same rate as we do. To be sure, some Lagondas did succumb in the awful fifties and sixties, when nothing old was considered worth saving. Those cars which survived have, in the main, been patched up and are as fit and well as when they first were young.

We who rescued Lagondas, or who paid out a vast amount of hard earned dosh for one, naturally feel as if the car belongs to us. Being seen zooming around in them also helps boost our egos... for who isn't conscious of other people's opinion then!

Another treasure we possess is our photograph album, full of pictures of proud owner in various spectacular cars, in various spectacular locations, thus chronicalling our eminently successful lives.

The sands of time continue to run for us, but one tries to ignore them. There are few young people in our club, due to the value of the cars and their high running costs. So, inevitably, some cars are heading for the dark ages. They will rest quietly on sagging tyres as the garage door hinges rust solid and patiently wait.



One day in 2020, a grandson or nephew gleefully prises back the doors with a crowbar to see what the silly old beggar left him in his will. New air in the tyres and the latest synthetic brew in the tank and, once again, the exhaust roars, to the delight of all around.

But what's this on the seat? A really exciting find. The old boy had produced a full dossier on the Lagonda, with all its history. It's full of pictures, which he must have taken out of his album, old M.O.T's. from the nineties and so it goes on. Tucked inside is a note, urging that the dossier is to be kept going for posterity. "After all, young man" it said, "you are only the present custodian of this splendid piece of British engineering".

NON SIBI SED OMNIBUS, as they say!

D.R.H.

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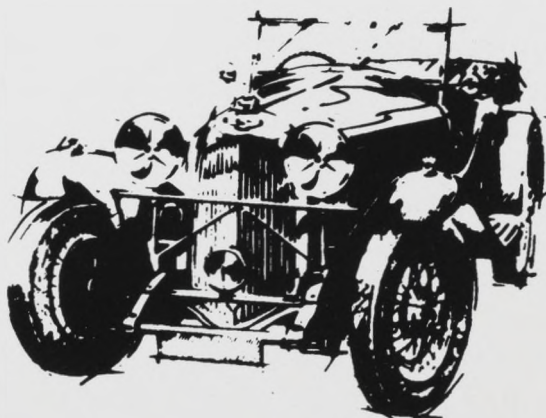
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Lagonda Club Awards 1995

The Allinson Trophy:

Awarded annually to the winner of the Hants and Dorset Rally; winner for 1995 was Phil Erhardt.

The W.O.Bentley Trophy:

Awarded to the first Lagonda in the BDC/Lagonda race at Silverstone; awarded to Mark Butterworth.

The Car Club Trophy:

Awarded to the overall Concours winner at the A.G.M.: winner for 1995 was John Walker.

The Committee Plate:

Awarded by the Committee to Tom Harrington for his invaluable help with the Le Mans trip.

The Densham Trophy:

Awarded to the owner of the most active 2 litre; this year it goes to Roger Seabrook.

Expensive Noises Trophy:

For those unfortunate to have major problems. Goes this year to Noel Stebbing for coaxing his 4½ litre Lagonda back from Vichy with ever decreasing gears.

Fox and Nichols Le Mans Trophy:

Awarded for the best overall racing performance throughout the year. This year the trophy goes to Tim Metcalfe.

The Gaber Trophy:

Awarded to Peter Biggs for his excellent rebuild of the V12 car No 6.

The Gostling Trophy:

For the best magazine article; goes to Jeremy Oates - a good read.

The Invicta Trophy:

Goes to Macko Laquer for his exploits in some extremely hard rallies.

The Michael Trophy:

Goes to Peter Whenman - runner-up in the 1995 racing season.

The Bellini Trophy:

Newcomers racing award, goes to Tim Metcalfe, our best young driver.

The Northern Trophy:

Goes to Andrew Hill, winner of the Northern Driving Test.

The Seaton Trophy:

For the best maintained and used Lagonda, goes to John Ryder.

Well done to every award winner and let's look forward to another good season in 1996.

Peter Whenman, Competition Secretary

Points for the Racing Season 1995:

T Metcalfe	40.	Rapier
P Whenman	38	Rapier
J Crocker	35	Rapier
T Metcalfe Snr	32	Rapier
T Brewster	30	LG45
T Wakeley	29	Rapier
A Barker	14	V12
C Bugler	12	LG45
N Hall	11	LG45
D Hine	7	LG45
N Hine	4	LG45

Points are awarded as follows:

Position in Event	Points Scored
1	10
2	9
3	8
4	7
5	6
6	5
7 to 10	4
11 to 15	3
16 to 20	2
20 to last	1



Macko Laquer receives his Invicta trophy from Peter Whenman.

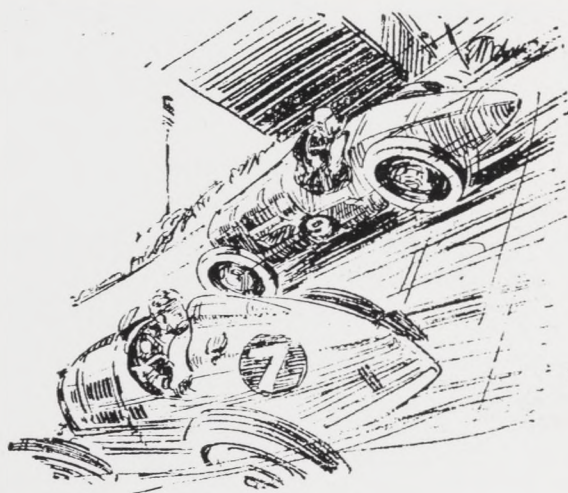
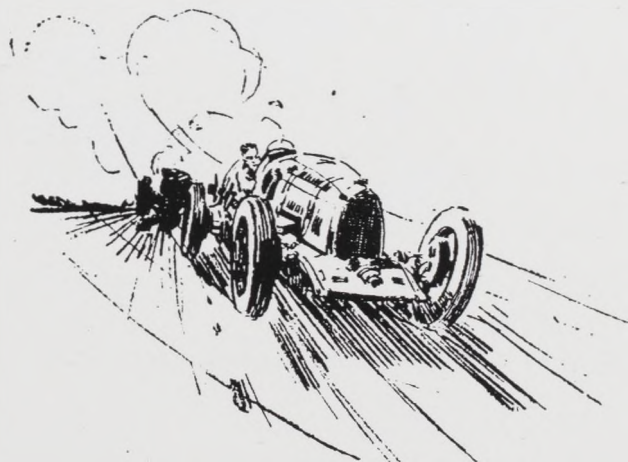


Cold! Harry and Marianne Robinsons brave the snows in Alaska.

Brooklands

Oh! it's wait, wait, wait-watch the flag
and feel the gate-
Now it's dropped, the clutch is in and
you're away-
And it's gears, gears, gears-you've been
changing 'em for years
Not so bad-now into Top and no delay!
Oh! it's fly, fly, fly, or they'll all come
sweeping by,
And these precious seconds cannot be
regained-
There's the throb, throb, throb, for the
engine's "on the job",
And you've ev'ry nerve and ev'ry muscle
strained.

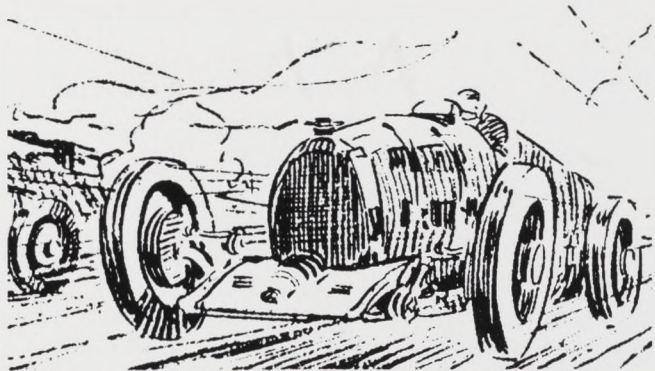
There's a beat, beat, beat-mighty
drumming at your feet,
And a stifling wall of air against your
face;
There's the roar, roar, roar of the engine
to the fore-
While your heart and pulse are joining in
the race.
There's the din, din, din, and you're
driving for a win
As you sweep the banking, thrilling with
the chase-
May your car be slow or fast, you'll be
hoping to the last
That, at worst, you'll bring her home into
a place.



It's the first time round, and you haven't
gained much ground-
You can see the others hurtling down the
Straight
But the car's flat out, and you know what
you're about-
You're determined not to leave the spurt
too late.
At a staunch "three thou" she is revving
steady now,
And you never give a thought to
stripping treads-
With a deep, deep smile you tear madly
past The Mile
To mount the gentle banking by The
Sheds.

Oh! it's two laps more and you've passed
'em all but four,
And two of these you know you've got
"on toast"-
But it's two whole laps, and they're
pretty cunning chaps
Are the two you've got to Beat upon the
Post.
So it's chase, chase, chase, with the wind
upon your face,
And the Devil take the Hindmost for his
trust-
Your brain and nerves are steeled, and
you're worming through the field,
And you'll beat the blighters or you'll
damn well bust!

Now it's lurch, sway, bump- first a slide
 and then a jump,
 And you're hanging on the wheel like
 grimmest death;
 You're as high up as you dare, and the
 wind plays with your hair,
 And it's mighty hard for you to get your
 breath.
 Your heart thumps fast (there's another
 one you've passed)
 And you tingle with excitement at the
 scrap
 Oh! it's fight, fight, fight, for your
 handicap is right,
 As you'll show the Judges on the final
 lap.



Oh! it's speed, speed, speed- and for
 more of it you plead
 With whatever gods there be, as you
 flash round;
 For it's on, on, on, till the race is lost or
 won
 And you're back on earth-and deaf to
 ev'ry sound. . .
 Now it's up, up, up on the banking , near
 the top,
 With a list that seems to lift you off the
 ground.
 A skid! A straighten-fine! then you shoot
 across the line
 And come slowly home to Paddock,
 Glory=crowned!

A.C.H.

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IT WAS BACK IN JUNE 1995 that my good friend Tim O'Rourke phoned me with a hair-brained scheme to take our cars (and possibly wives!) to South Island, New Zealand, to participate in the 50th Anniversary celebrations of the Vintage Car Club of New Zealand. My instant reaction was "Let's do it." quickly followed by "How much?" Tim told me not to be so mercenary and our wives, Catherine and Polly, instantly started planning where we would visit and which hotels we would stay at. It would be the proverbial "trip of a lifetime".

And so the detailed planning began. I would be in charge of the itinerary, booking hotels, etc. and Tim would look after the transport of the cars, marine insurance, bank guarantees in NZ for the importation of cars and so on and so on. The wives would plan their wardrobes! In fact Tim definitely got the short straw. The bureaucracy involved was daunting and I doubt if we would ever have made the trip, but for the splendid efforts of Andrew Anderson, a founder member of the Vintage Car Club and Director of Heritage Motoring Services. Nothing was too much trouble and everything was managed with the maximum of good humour. C.A.R.S. UK were also most helpful from the UK end and can also be highly recommended.

Originally we were told that some 1200 classic, vintage and veteran cars were expected to participate. The final numbers were in excess of 1640 - a quite extraordinary turnout, given that the whole event lasted close to two weeks, from Monday February 26th until the final dinner (three sittings!) and attendant festivities on Friday March 8th.

A breakdown of rally participants makes interesting reading: 155 makes of

car were represented, including such well known marques as: Allday and Onions, American La France, Ansaldo, Arrol Johnston, Bard, Bean, Beardmore, Bradbury, Briscoe, Briton, Clement Bayard, Durant, EMF, FN type 1600, Fargo, Graham, Gray, HCS, Jewett (not Jowett), La Salle, Lorraine Deitrich, Marquette, Metallurgique, Metz, Minerva, Mitchell, New Pick, Newton Bennett, Nimbus, Oakland, Orient, Overland, Regnis, Reo, Rugby, Saxon, Scott, Sizaire Naudin, Squire, Stevens Duryea, Stoddard Dayton, Terraplane, Unic, Whippet.

The oldest cars participating were a 1904 Northern Runabout and a 1904 Orient Buckboard, the youngest a 1960 Alvis TD 21. Over 160 cars were veterans. Over 170 cars were overseas entrants. Of these, 70 were from the UK, including one from Guernsey. 63 came from Australia and 9 from the USA, 3 each came from Germany and Belgium; Canada, Norway, South Africa and Fiji kept their respective flags flying, with one entry each.

Given the number of vehicles involved, it seemed a little disappointing that there were only six Lagondas - three from New Zealand, including Ian Hedgman's immaculate 1925 12/24 and three open tourers from the UK, an M35 and two M45's, including my own. However, the interest in the Lagonda marque was certainly raised considerably by a quite splendid article in the March "New Zealand Classic Car" on the ex-Robby Hewitt M45R BPK 203, now owned by Alison Moores and residing in New Zealand.

Enough of facts and figures. Prior to the departure of our cars (Tim took his 1935 3½ litre Derby Bentley) on the Berlin Express from Tilbury on December 19th for the six week voyage to

Lyttleton, near Christchurch, we had to decide how we wanted to use our three week holiday time.

Our agreed priority was to see as much of South Island as possible and yet participate in as much of the rally activities as was consistent with that prime objective.. The rally itself was structured in two parts. The first being five days of touring and the second a series of one day events, using Christchurch as the hub. For the touring part, the island had been divided into 28 stand-alone routes, with approximately 60 cars in each party, covering between 350 and 2000 kilometers.

We chose Route 26 (overseas visitors received priority of choice), which allowed us to cover most of the principal sights and towns in the north of South Island. More about that later. This would allow us to be back in Christchurch on the Friday evening, the first opportunity for all the entrants to meet. This was followed by a Hill Climb on the Saturday and Race Day (Pomeroy Trophy format) on the Sunday. Subsequent days offered Homestead runs, One Make runs, a concours event and much more, leading up to the final prize-giving dinner. Reluctantly, we decided to opt out of the weekday events and go on our own private tour of the south of the island.

And so the great, much anticipated day of departure (Wednesday February 21st) arrived. I should add that, towards the end of January we had been much relieved to hear that our cars had arrived safe and sound. Imagine the horror of arriving to find that they were still on the high seas or, worse still, had been offloaded in Dar es Salaam!

We flew Singapore Airlines (stewardesses are every bit as good as the ads would have you believe!) from snowy Heathrow, direct to Christchurch, with a 2 hour stopover in Singapore. 26 hours in total and a 13 hour time change! Tim and Catherine, who had arrived two days earlier, were there to meet us at the airport on a drizzly, but relatively warm Friday morning. To our surprise we were

not completely shattered. Perhaps in part due to our taking the recently much publicised Melatonin, which purports to have two key benefits, prevention of jet lag and anti ageing. It may have helped with the former, at least on the way out, but it certainly has done nothing for my loss of hair and other signs of general dementia!

Wasting no time, we went straight off to find our Lagonda. There she was, resplendent in a bonded wine warehouse (good taste!) alongside Guy Ravenscroft's outstanding 1909 Sizaire Naudin (Guy was underneath!) and a quite sensational 1910 Bradbury motorcycle with wicker side-car. We were already in good company.

The rest of the day and Saturday and Sunday saw us sightseeing in and around Christchurch. What an attractive city. It seems to be built round the enormous and lush Hagley Park which, in turn, accommodates a flat but interesting 18 hole golf course, as well as many magnificent trees and botanical gardens. Running through the city is the aptly named River Avon. Very pretty, with manicured grass banks running down to the water, umpteen weeping willows and the odd punt gliding past. All very gentle and Oxford in the 1950's, a far cry from the bomb afflicted London we had only just left. By Sunday evening we had already found some very fine restaurants - not just lamb-burgers! - had visited a thriving Arts Centre and done the obligatory tourist trip round the city in a tram. A rather pretty Victorian clad girl not only sold us our tickets on the tram, but some fudge too. Wonderful. So was the fudge.

Finally, before going to bed, tired but very happy, we washed and polished the cars, ready for the big "off" on Monday morning. The only mistake was to turn the television on and watch South Africa wipe the floor with England in the One Day World Cricket Series. No surprises!

It's Monday 26th. We're up at 7.00 and at the Belfast (pub) by 9.00 to meet the others on Route 26. There are 53 cars



----- Route No. 26 (1st Week)

x x x x "Independent" Route (2nd Week)

No's indicate approx. time between points at 50 mph.

in our party and we have a "tour leader", who we never actually met and a backup man with a rather decrepit 1970's Toyota truck. Fingers crossed!

Also in our group is an entrant from Northern Ireland with a 1935 Riley Lynx; also a 1929 Model A Ford from Belgium, a 1951 Norton Dominator and a 1926 Trojan from the UK and two magnificent Mercedes Benz from the Stuttgart Motor Museum. one a 1912 3½ litre, the other a 1936 500K - plus private backup team - much needed by the 1912 entrant.

The rest were New Zealanders and included the delightful 1925 Lagonda 12/24 already mentioned. Other cars of particular note included a very original looking 1925 OM and 1925 Star Orion and a 1930 Delage D8. The remainder included several Austins, Dodges, Chevrolets and Model A Fords, also a rather special 1923 Harley Davidson.

The idea is to make our own way up the northeast coast to Blenheim. This we do, enjoying superb weather, relatively car-free roads and stunning scenery in equal measure. We're also pleasantly surprised by the price of petrol, about half what we pay in England. On the way we visit Kaikoura, renowned for whale watching. We hadn't pre-booked a boat for this and despite being on two short lists, we failed to make the cut. Others who made the trip saw several Sperm Whales "which can grow up to 20 metres in length and have the largest brain of any animal alive" according to the bumph. Words fail me! Perhaps more sobering was that we read in the papers two days later that a boat had overturned the day after our visit and a tourist had died....

We spend the evening in a nondescript Motor Lodge in Blenheim with the two Mercedes and the Riley Lynx, sounding a little rough, as companions. We've had a terrific day, and the cars have performed like the good'uns they are.

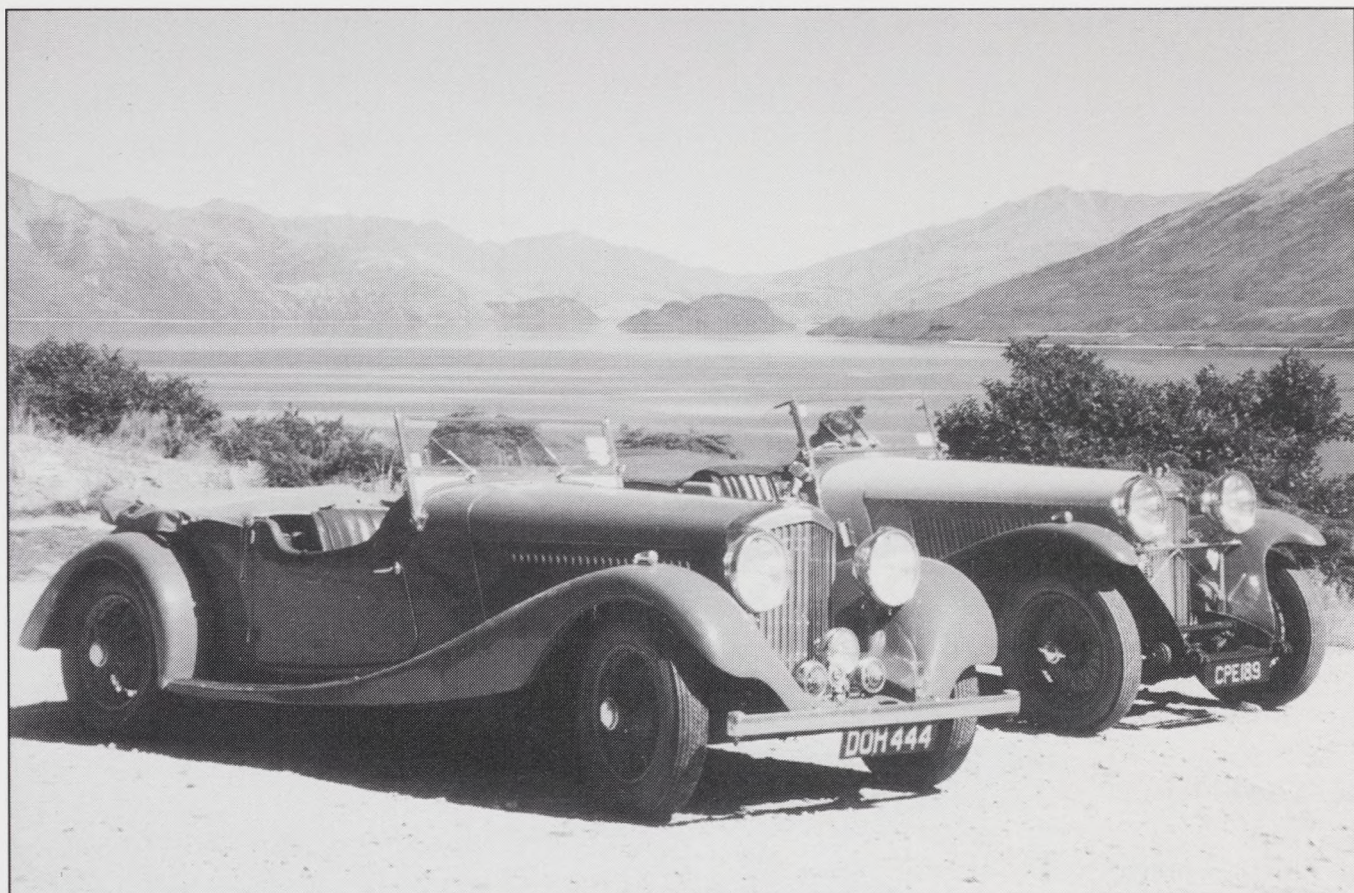
Tuesday is another wonderful day from every standpoint. The "Christchurch Press" is full of the event, describing it as the "World's Largest Travelling Rally" and we've no reason to

argue. It certainly seems to have caught the eye of the public and we are welcomed wherever we go. Tonight we are due in Nelson, just off Trafalgar Street, but meanwhile we decide to drive some 30 kilometers north of the town of Picton. On the way we visit two delightfully situated wineries, Alan Scott's and Hunter's. Needless to say, despite the fact that it's still only 10 am, we sample the local produce and declare them both equal winners. We also try the very freshly baked Blueberry Muffins at Hunter's, not to be missed! A case or two of wine are bought to help us round the rest of the rally. Incidentally, both wineries sell in the UK and their Sauvignons are certainly worth trying.

On to Picton, a very pretty little town, with harbour and views of hills, islands and coves that stretch for ever. It's lunchtime, so we rent a "Buzzy" boat and take ourselves off to a secluded beach, armed with picnic and our wine. I get sunburned, but it's worth it, just!

Then the drive of the day. It's a superb, albeit twisty, mountainous road that hugs the coastline from Picton to Nelson. It's called Mount Charlotte Drive and every corner has a wonderful new vista just around it. Plenty of opportunities for photographs. Arrive at our hotel quite shattered, but manage to find the energy to eat well at a small restaurant in the town. Seem to be very few rally cars staying at our place, though we do have the Mercedes for company again. Apart from the very pretty OM which we saw at Picton - and which seemed far from the worse for wear for colliding with and killing a sheep - we have seen few other cars today. In fact the only others we saw were going in the opposite direction, either on a different route or simply lost!

Before going to bed we watch a half hour programme about the rally on TV. Wonderful shots of several very dusty Vauxhall 30/98's, Bugattis, Bentleys and a Riley Special "racing" on a 100 kilometer unsealed road through 8 fords called The Molesworth. How come we didn't get on that route?



Two girls looking good by Lake Wanaka



Mount Charlotte Drive

Wednesday is a "rest" day and we stay in Nelson again this evening. Not a cloud in the sky. We decide to do some local sightseeing and troop off with Bentley and Lagonda to the Abel Tasman National Park - and our first mishap. Just outside a little town called Motueka (except for the principal towns, most place names are Maori) a stone flies up from a passing car and we have a shattered windscreen. The first I've ever had in 35 years of driving any kind of car. No problem. "Nu-Look Windscreens of Motueka" are just the guys for the job. We take the windscreen out, leave it with a rather good looking blonde chap who Polly had certainly also noticed, put our aero screens in place and continue on our way.

Arrive at Kaiteriteri, the entrance to the park. No cars allowed. A good thing as there are no roads either! We meet a splendid New Zealand couple in an Austin 10. He was 82 years old and his wife 86. They bought the car new and it's the only one they have ever had. This was an incredible testimonial ad. for car and owners alike!

We rent a water taxi, which takes us on a half hour trip round a number of small secluded coves, each more beautiful than the last, before dropping us off on a tiny island called Young, for our now statutory picnic. I get more sunburned, despite Factor 25! Then back to the blonde adonis who has done a remarkably good job on the windscreen (Polly would recommend him anytime) and off we go back to Nelson, via a wonderful Arts and Crafts shop with straw filled cavity walls. No insurance problems we were assured. We stay there for at least two hours and the girls make good use of the time! An outstanding seafood dinner at the Boatshed, overlooking Nelson Harbour, rounds off yet another great day.

It's Leap Year's day and we're on the road again. This time through the Buller Gorge to Westport on the North West coast of the island. Another stunning drive and the weather continues to be

perfect. The gorge itself, whilst fairly dry due to a particularly good summer, is very impressive and we pass numerous creeks and dramatic landscapes before arriving quite tired after a long, twisty 240 kilometers. Along the way we had our first and far from last encounter with the dreaded sandflies. Little black b.....s that seem to thrive on anti-sandfly spray. Once bitten, always scratching.....

Lots of fellow rallyists are staying at the Motor Inn at Westport, including some from Route 21, perhaps 15 in all. Early evening, we get a visit from Ian Hedgman and his 12/24 Lagonda, take lots of photographs and go for quick spins round the town in each other's cars. Whilst he's obviously impressed by the relative size and power of the M45, I'm amazed at the meticulous detail that Ian has gone to in renovating his car from what was clearly an old lady in fairly advanced stages of senility. I was rather less surprised when I learned that Ian is a cabinetmaker and joiner. His car is absolutely immaculate and though really rather slow, labouring mightily on any kind of incline, you have no doubt that it will get there in the end! Certainly it managed Route 26, hills, mountains, hairpin bends and all, with a great deal of stoicism.

Friday dawns and it's another great day! The last day of the "touring" part of the official rally and it takes us via part of the Buller Gorge, through the aptly named Lewis Pass, to Hammer Springs and back into Christchurch.

The Buller Gorge part of the day's run was as much fun as any of the splendid drives we'd already enjoyed, with virtually no cars on the long sweeping roads both Bentley and Lagonda were able to be driven at their absolute best through breathtaking countryside. We were able to drive at a steady 70 m.p.h., at times perhaps more, there's plenty of life in the old girl! But of course it couldn't last, the steering suddenly went soft, we had a flat - rear wheel, driver's side. No harm done and within twenty minutes and much idle banter from all



M45 and 12/24 in West Port.



We "Blast on through".

the Austins, Fords and Dodges that we'd passed along the way, we were back on the road.

We stop at Hammer Springs for lunch, this proves to be a meeting point for a number of rally routes and we note two magnificent "Rollers", a 1926 Phantom 1 from England and a 1922 Silver Ghost from New Zealand. A number of participants took to the thermal waters; we took to four "Hokey Pokeys". For the uninitiated, these are ice creams liberally filled with toffee crunch. Not to be missed - and we didn't!

And so back to Christchurch. The five days have flown by and we cannot find enough superlatives for the trip so far. That evening we go to the Addington Raceway (horses!) as do all the cars from all the routes. What a sight! The real problem was that there was too much to see to take in properly. Row upon row of cars of every conceivable make, from a 1926 Bugatti 35B to a wonderfully original 1911 Arrol Johnston, from a 1907 Cadillac to a pre-war Humber ambulance, from a 1927 Leyland fire engine to a 1911 Zenith Gradua, from the 1930 Delage to a lovely 1929 Alfa Romeo, from a 1914 Hispano Suiza racing car to a handful of immaculate, well used Austin Chummys. And so on and so on. Almost as far as the eye could see. Absolute heaven!

On Saturday we decided not to go to the hillclimb (though Tim and Catherine went and participated) but did the inevitable shopping and obligatory postcards. In the evening the VCC of New Zealand gave a splendid party for all the overseas participants. Great fun. Met David Adair from England, who had brought his M45 on the trip. Interestingly, his car's previous owner was...Tim O'Rourke! Lord Montagu of Beaulieu said a few words on behalf of the guests. A very pleasant and somewhat quieter day had come to a close.

Three o'clock Sunday Morning was when the rains came down. This wasn't rain as we know it in Europe. This was sheets of water all landing on you personally for ever! The cars were not

garaged and had only their tonneau covers for protection. At 3.05 a.m., Tim's Bentley had had enough. Right outside our window the horn decided to express itself and would still be doing so now, had Catherine not finally been able to wake him and persuade him that it was his car and not the Lagonda that had woken the entire hotel, the inmates of which were all convinced that the French had got something wrong in the South Pacific! "Dressed" in his winceyette pyjamas and blue blazer (always a gentleman), he finally braved the elements and, some time later, reappeared, completely drenched, but holding a fuse triumphantly aloft. Next day the Bentley wouldn't start. Same fuse! After a while you get used to pushing in the rain!

On a much sadder note, the rains continued all day and the pivotal event of the whole rally - the Pomeroy Trophy Race Day and Open Day for the public to view all the cars - was cancelled by 8 a.m. An enormous disappointment for an enormous number of people. For my part, this was the day when I was going to take more photographs of old cars than there would have been albums in the world to put them in. So much for that!

By 10 o'clock we had resolved that there was no point in hanging around. We put our roofs up for the first time and proceeded very slowly through torrential rain and attendant spray, out of Christchurch en-route for the famous Mount Cook and its National Park. The four of us and our two cars were now on our own, doing our own thing. By early evening we arrived at the Hermitage Hotel at the foot of Mount Cook and by the side of the gargantuan Lake Pukaki - and it finally stopped raining. It had been a long day and the drive rather less amusing than we had previously experienced, not least because my windscreen wipers had decided to call it a day about a mile out of Christchurch! In just a little frustration, I gave the motor casing a "gentle" tap to encourage the wipers into motion. They refused to

budge and the windscreen cracked..... Now I've been driving cars for 35 years and this is only the second time I've had a broken windscreen.....

At the hotel the staff advised us to be very wary of the Keas. For the unaware, Keas are substantial, ferocious looking, dull grey parrots that feed on the rubber mouldings that surround windscreens and windows of old cars. They're also quite partial to the odd windscreen wiper blade or two. The problem is that none of this is a joke. They really are nasty fellows, and though ostensibly quite tame can do an awful lot of damage. Of course, there are no garages at the Hermitage Hotel, so we had another fairly sleepless night, wondering if either of us would have any tyres left in the morning! In the event, all was well, though we woke to find the weather overcast and the views of Mount Cook somewhat obscured.

Enough was enough and we resolved to move on to Queenstown, where we were to spend three nights. The first couple of hours were scenically relatively uninteresting - at least by comparison to much of what we had already experienced on this fabulous trip. However, Lindis Pass and Lindis Valley that followed seemed to be the turning point and thereafter the weather improved dramatically - sunny and in the low 70's again - as did the landscape. Indeed we picnicked by the side of a rushing stream, surrounded by wild lupins. Delightful.

Maybe ten miles outside Queenstown, we came upon a wonderful old suspension bridge spanning a deep and cavernous river, way down below. We were far from the only people there. Reason: bungee jumping! We watched in gaping fascination as the youth of today, mostly backpackers paying £70 for the privilege, jumped off the bridge, ever hopeful that the elastic band on which their lives depended would last just one more time. Extraordinary! Not for mere Bentley and Lagonda owners we quickly decided. Rivetting nevertheless.

Then into Queenstown proper. Situated on the tranquil and beautiful Lake Wakatipu and overseen by a mountain range aptly called The Remarkables, Queenstown is in an idyllic setting. That said, it was probably the most tourist-driven centre we visited. It was, perhaps, not wholly surprising to learn that only one hotel in the area is New Zealand owned - by coincidence we stayed there - and that the vast majority of accommodation is in Japanese hands. We had found the same situation on a visit to British Columbia in Canada a few years ago and it gives a not altogether comfortable feeling for the future.

Our hotel, Nugget Point, is some four miles out of town. This place is a dream, albeit a pricey one. Our beautifully decorated rooms, which have separate sitting/kitchen facilities, have stupendous views, overlooking a wide sweeping stretch of the Shotover River. With its pervading feeling of airiness, controlled sophistication, sports facilities, excellent cuisine and friendly staff, this must be one of the nicest hotels we have ever been to. Run by Philip Jenkins, an ex-army officer from Kenya, who knows the local form to a "T", this place is a must for anyone going south.

That evening, Philip described the scenic options for the following day. Top of the pops is to rent a helicopter for two hours in the morning, weather permitting, to visit Fiordland and the famous Milford Sound, one of the wettest areas in the world, where 10 inches of rain in 24 hours is not unknown, via a series of glacier "hops" and visits to hidden lakes close to Mount Earnshaw and Mount Aspiring. Sounds fabulous and very exciting. Problem is, I hate flying, am petrified of small planes and shake uncontrollably at the mention of helicopters! Nevertheless, the others are keen and I declare myself "game on".

Don't sleep a wink! Come Tuesday morning - which took an awful long time coming - the weather was fantastic. Not a cloud in the sky. Just my luck! And come pick-up time, from a mere few yards from

our room, I simply couldn't make the trip. Feeling extremely wimpish, I sloped off to get our second new windscreen and off the others went. From all accounts and photographs, this was the most magic experience any of them had ever had. I kick myself frequently for bottling out, but know full well that, given the chance again, I'd make the same decision. There you have it. It's Lagondas and terra firma for me!

Lunchtime, we met up at a tiny hamlet called Glenorchy, several miles down a dirt track, bordering Lake Wakatipu. The O'Rourkes and Polly arrive by helicopter and I come by a clapped out bus of no particular pedigree. This is the mouth of the River Dart, from where we "journey into the very heart of untamed New Zealand" as the Dart River Jet Boat Safari Brochure explains. This is a sensational three hour trip up a very shallow river, surrounded on both sides by mountains, some of them still snow clad. The boats, with powerful Chrysler engines, can operate in as little as four inches of water and reach speeds approaching 50 knots. It's an exhilarating and very windy experience. We travelled some 70 kilometers and "climbed" 500 feet, before turning around and returning to base. Great fun, we'd all been both shaken and stirred!

Wednesday morning is given over to "doing" Queenstown and recovering the now repaired wiper motor. Tim visits the motor Museum and reports it dull. Arnold Davey later tells me it used to house an early LG45 saloon that had been a guinea pig for the G10 gear box. Apparently not there now, I'm afraid.

We lunch at the picturesque Gibbstons Winery, where the cars are as admired by the owner as we admire his award winning Riesling! The afternoon sees us visiting an old, touristy but attractive, mining town called Arrowtown, followed by a superb drive on unsealed roads (very dusty) on an Arts trail. We drop in on a number of artists, wood turners, etc. and have a wonderful time.

Now you may have noticed that I've not mentioned the word "sheep" in this travelogue so far. Whilst we had seen thousands of sheep from a distance in our travels, we had not seen them really close to. The moment had arrived. Still on the unsealed road, we round a corner and there they are, all 750 of them! The farmer advised us to "blast on through". Easier said than done. We have wonderful photographs to record the occasion, but no photographs can ever convey the smell of 750 sheep,... Very special!

A marvellous day not yet over. Tim and I take another jet boat, this time down the Shotover River. This is a half hour "spills and thrills" ride at high speed through narrow gorges, sometimes very narrow, not dissimilar to white water rafting, but without the white water. A gentle game of tennis before a swim and dinner ensures we sleep very well that night.

It's now Thursday March 7th and we are very sad to leave Nugget Point and Queenstown. Once again the cars start on the button and off we go on our way up to Wilderness Lodge at Lake Moeraki on the West Coast, some six hours drive away. We take the unsealed Wanaka Pass....to Wanaka.

What a road! It's a gruelling ascent over the Crown Range, very steep in parts and liberally scattered with the tightest of hairpin bends. That said, by far the greatest danger are the lorries coming around the corner from the opposite direction on your side of the road, unable to stop quickly on the unsealed surface. In places the road is heavily corrugated, which makes you feel you've been drilling the road for hours on end. Not for the faint hearted or those with loose teeth!. Nevertheless, a great experience and wonderful views over the Wakatipu Basin - if ever you dared take a second to glance.

At Wanaka we visit Puzzletown, consisting of a maze (we cheated after half an hour), some incredible holograms and, the piece de resistance, an Illusion Gallery that makes you feel that gravity

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operates at right angles. Absolutely nothing to do with alcohol!

On through the twisty, verdant Haast Pass and some spectacular waterfalls, not least Fantail and Thundercreek Falls, to the coast at Haas. Nothing to keep us there except for a beach so full of flotsam and jetsam that it was hard to appreciate that, if you swam straight out to sea, the next stop would be Argentina. Now we're on the West Coast proper, which is famed for its rainfall, attendant rainforests, spectacular coastal scenery - and dreaded sandflies.

The Wilderness Lodge is very basic by comparison to Nugget Point. Owned by Dr. Gerry Sweeney, an eminent ecologist and botanist, it's a place for communing with nature. To give you an idea, the first night we were there, Tim and I went on a guided Glow Worm Walk after dinner! Catherine and Polly were far too sensible to participate and didn't get bitten either!

Next morning was overcast and we all go canoeing on the lake, very gentle compared to the unsealed roads of yesterday. In the afternoon we go on a three hour guided walk in the rainforest, enthralled by the extraordinary variety of ferns and trees. We also spotted a wood pigeon which bore no resemblance to anything you've seen in Trafalgar Square. Much more highly coloured and at least three times the size. Sad that these are rapidly becoming a rarity, due to the increasing numbers of voracious possums, despite the very large number of possum road casualties we saw every day of our trip.

It's Saturday, cold, with rain forecast and we're off to Brunner Lodge at Lake Brunner, some 300 kilometers up the West Coast. In fact the weather holds up well and it's roof down the whole way. We stop at the Franz Joseph Glacier, awe-inspiring and surprisingly untouristy.

Lake Brunner Lodge is reached by a twelve mile dirt track. If I gave the impression earlier that the Wanaka Pass was rough, it was like a billiard table in comparison. Nevertheless, we made it, no doubt minus the odd leaf spring or

two. A most attractive clapperboard one storey house overlooking the lake awaited us, where Ray Grubb and his partner Marian served us tea and cakes. Ray is considered a leading international fisherman and knows more about brown trout than most of us have had fish and chips. The Lodge is a fisherman's paradise and stories of several 6lb brown trout caught that day travelled the dinner table. I noted that we were eating venison!

Our magical tour of South Island is nearly over. On this, our last day at Brunner, we troop off in the rain to visit the Pancake rocks and Blowholes north of Greymouth. Touristy and a little disappointing, but on a nice day this would be another fabulous drive along a very rugged, dramatic coastline.

Monday March 11th, time for Polly and me to return to Christchurch and for Catherine and Tim to drive six hours up to Picton, before taking the Bentley on a three hour crossing to Wellington in North Island. Lucky things have another week to drive up to Auckland before flying home.

Polly and I have one more wonderful drive to do. It was very cold but, undaunted, we set off, roof down but well wrapped up, to cross Arthur Pass and its National Park. The pass itself is long, very steep and as twisty as anything we had encountered and, as before, the Lagonda did it in style. Yet again, the scenery was dramatic and we saw a number of harrier hawks wheeling high in the sky against the backdrop of mountains that had received their first dusting of snow the night before. An impressive way to end our trip.

We were in Christchurch by lunchtime and putting the car in a container for shipment back home by mid-afternoon. The old girl had done us proud. We drove over 2100 miles, some of them well off the beaten track, in less than three weeks. Probably as much as she's done in the past three years. I've promised her a set of new tyres the moment she gets back in six weeks time



View from helicopter towards Milford Sound.



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- as well as a hard earned visit to the David Ayre Health Farm!

So, it's nearly the end of our story. If you haven't already discovered, we had the best holiday of our lives and are already planning the next "trip of a lifetime". There are strong rumours that the VCC of New Zealand will be organising another rally - in North Island - to celebrate the Millenium. We'll be there - and so will the Bentley and the Lagonda!

P.S. For those who might be tempted to go on a similar adventure, a crude breakdown of the freight and attendant costs to which we found ourselves committed may be of interest. These are on a per-car basis:

Arranging collection, receipt, loading and securing car into a 20 ft container and ocean freight to port of Lyttleton, including all documentation charges and return trip	£3000
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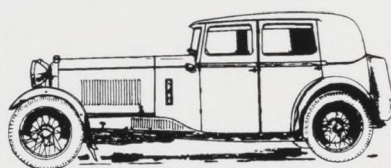
Marine insurance - both ways	£ 500
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Bank guarantee/Customs Bond	£ 370
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Road insurance whilst in New Zealand	£ 130
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Total	c£4000
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Stephen Lewis



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How Cool Can You Get?

Jim Shelley's Further Mods to an M45 Engine

FOLLOWING my previous article on fitting an oil cooler to the M45, something very interesting has occurred.

One cylinder had lost compression, so I removed the cylinder head and found a burnt exhaust valve on No.2 cylinder. I put this down to the very hot running of the engine over the years. The manifold would glow a dull red at night after a fast run.

I decided to fit a more efficient manifold - 1,2 and 3 going into one downpipe and 4,5 and 6 into the other.

Bananas 1¼" diameter

Downpipes 2" diameter

Main pipe 2½" diameter

Similar to the LG 45, but with a bit of crafty bending to give good clearance to the distributor on my engine.

A new set of valves and thimbles were purchased and a further 95 thou machined off the cylinder head, giving a total of 155 thou, which increased the compression ration to 9.2 :1 - head torqued down to 67 ft. lbs.

Mine is the "Cormorant" engine, with heavier rods and larger crank, so I

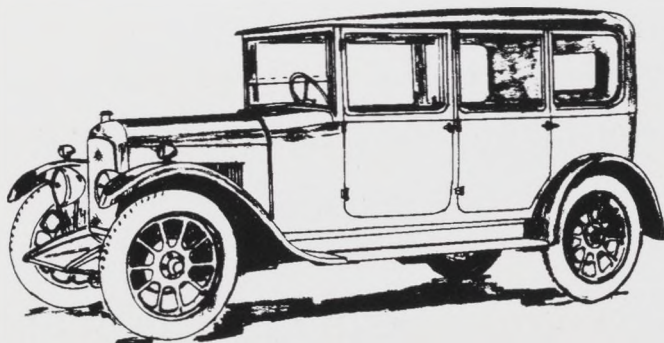
reckoned on all being well using 95 octane petrol, instead of the original 70 - 75 octane. I fitted a standard vibration damper to the crankshaft, but had to bore it out to suit my crank.

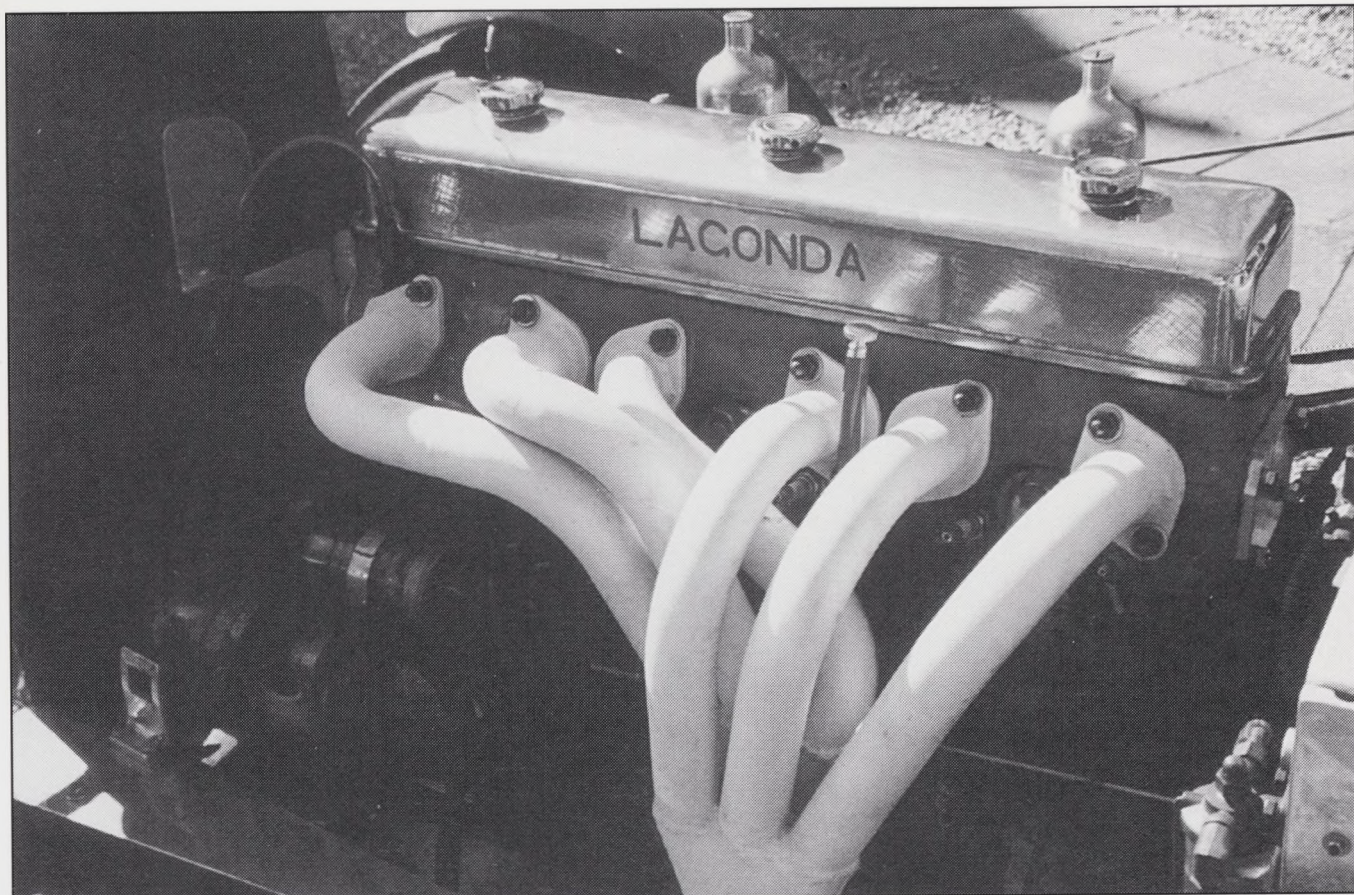
One more item was modified, I noticed that the rockers were binding on the back rocker block, so I machined 20 thou off them to ensure free movement.

The result is quite spectacular. Not only does the engine run very sweetly, but I went to Prescott and the temperature never rose above 65° C - and on a very hot day too. Five minutes after a 50 mile run, you could comfortably hold the manifold without the smell of burning flesh.

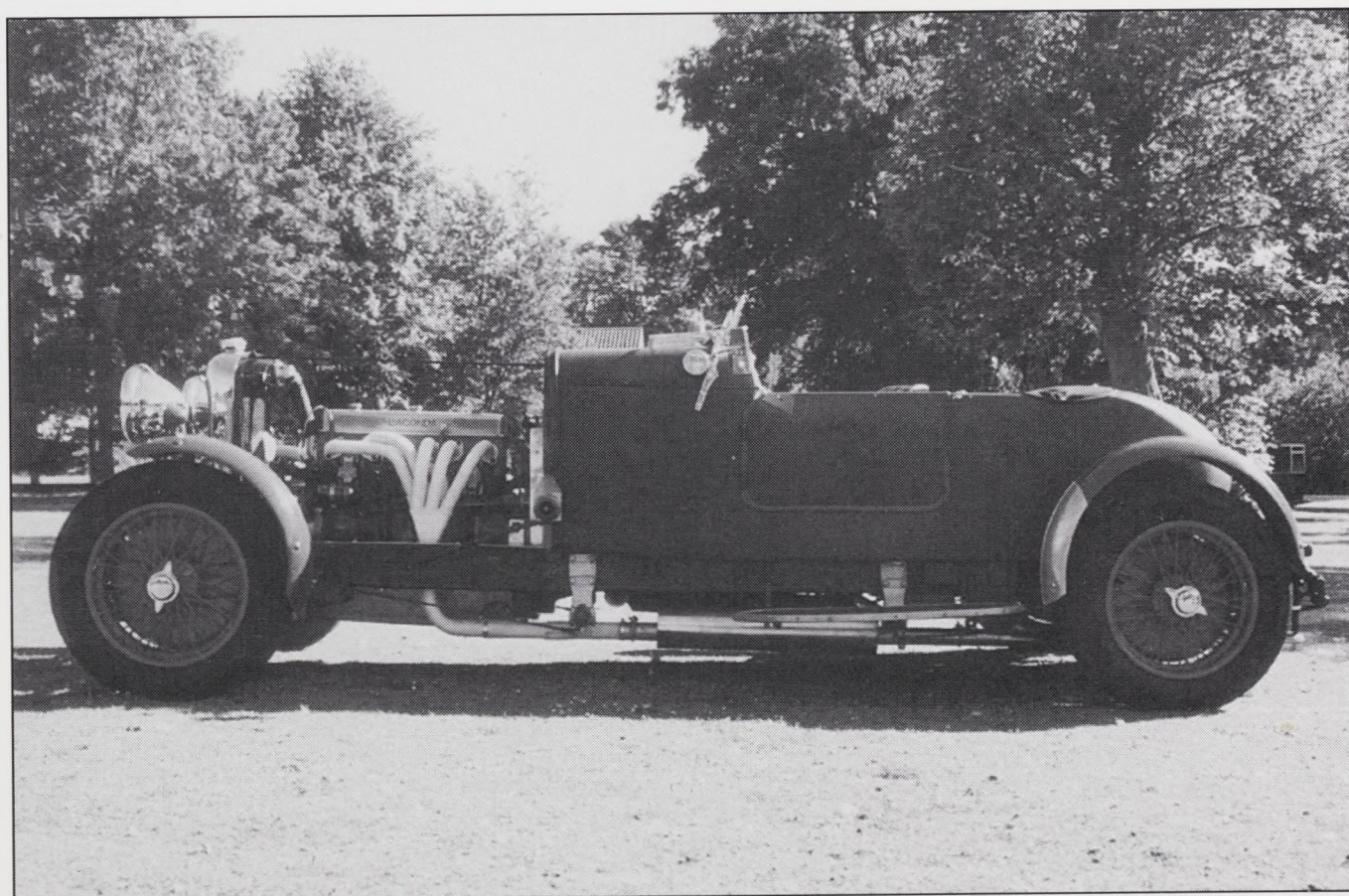
I spoke to a diesel engineer at Prescott, saying I had increased to compression to 9.2:1 and he immediately asked "Does it run cooler?" The answer, "Yes, it most certainly does, due to the much improved dissipation of heat from the manifold, but power is much improved and it doesn't snort!"

Jim Shelley





Jim's bunch of Bananas



– and a general view of the car.

The 19th Suffolk Dinner

FOR A GREAT NUMBER of people of the Lagonda, or Rapier persuasion, the year begins in March. To be precise on the Saturday of the joint Lagonda Club/Rapier Register Dinner at the Melton Grange Hotel, in Woodbridge, Suffolk. From the time of the Rapier Northern Dinner at Bridgnorth in December they have been existing in a state of torpor and, on the day of the dinner, come out snorting like old war horses at the long unaccustomed sound of military music. This year proved to be exceptional in that so many brought their cars, real cars that is, with them and first the Nickalls' and then the Pilgrims' abodes and then the hotel were to be graced with an ever increasing collection of the finest of motor cars.

Although this year was to be the 19th consecutive annual dinner at the Melton Grange Hotel, this event is nothing if not the natural successor to the series of Annual Rapier Dinners that started on 1st February 1964, after the Racing Car Show. John Organ had acquired half price tickets for the show, Tony Wood wrote up the event and in attendance were Len and Maureen Buck, along with Mike Bailey, Courtney Peddle, Ron McCaffrey, Dick Woolett and Bob Speer. Assorted girl friends and fiancées made up the number to fifteen. The following extract from Tony's article gives a flavour of the event and, I suspect, a hint at all our lost youth:

"After leaving the show the party adjourned to the Knightsbridge 8444 Restaurant where a table had been booked in advance. A splendid meal was consumed together with wines and liquors to the accompaniment of a Spanish guitar. The management then trotted out Mexican hats, maracas and castanets for everyone to join in the fun. Len looked even more like Froilan

Gonzales in his floppy Mexican hat than he did at the wheel of his Rapier at Brands Hatch in June! (Tony of course was wearing his usual headgear for a large part of the evening. A silver champagne bucket! Ed.) We were in the Restaurant from 8.15 p.m. until 10.45 p.m. and when the bill came the cost per head was less than £2, which was remarkably reasonable."

I think there may be some ideas there for next year's dinner. In the same edition as the above was a report on Tony Wood buying a Ranalrah Two Seater from Ivan Forshaw, the announcement of the engagement of Jonathan Abson to Michele Bent and an advertisement for a Drop Head Coupe for £75. But my favourite is an article by Courtney Peddle entitled "Experiences With a French Country Girl." We don't seem to get items like that in the Rapier "News", or "The Lagonda", these days.

Thirty two years later, Mike Podmore and I arrived chez Nickalls and were delighted by the sight of Douglass Murray's Abbott Tourer (BLC 209) nestling cheek by jowl with Colin and Valerie Bugler's LG45 TT Replica (AYS 620). The former having been driven up from Surrey by Malcolm and Marion Burgess, while the smart new hood on the latter helped to explain why Colin and Valerie were not looking quite their usual fresh faced and healthy selves after their long drive. Chris Banks soon arrived in his Eagle Replica (JY 6305) looking extremely smart in its new coat of black paint and new hood. Presently Roy Dunlop's recently restored Ranalrah Tourer (DLP 18), conducted by Tim and Beverley Daniels, and Peter Merrick's Abbott Tourer (RG 5045), joined them. Although Tim and Beverley are non-members, Tim has done a great deal of restoration work on Roy's car and helped

to ensure that one of the longest restorations in Rapier history has at last reached completion. I must just add that the restoration is to a very high standard and also wonder just how Roy is going to spend those empty hours.

The short journey to the hotel was broken by some impromptu roadside repairs to JY 6305's petrol pump and then by the necessity of pushing it the last few yards to its parking space in front of the hotel. Those who have not seen the facade of the hotel - and this includes many who have attended the dinners over the years - have missed an architectural treat. It is what I would describe as Gothic Revival and would, given decent lighting, provide a magnificent backdrop to the assembled cars. The cars already mentioned were joined by Colin and Amanda Mallett's 1927 2 litre Speed Model (NF 7076), the Nickalls' Eagle Two Seater (US 8351) John and Vivienne Breen's 1933 16/80 Tourer (JJ 9440), Warren King's 1937 LG45 Saloon (BGB 493) and Paul and Sally Hartley's 1933 16/80 Sports Saloon (PG 7799). The Pilgrims' 1933 M45 Pillarless Saloon (AXC 402) and Gavin Rowe's 1934 Abbott Tourer (BKV 839) making up the round dozen of six Rapiers and six Lagondas, although some of the former are also, of course, some of the latter. Two Bentleys, one Rolls Royce and an Alvis, all of post-war vintage, added to the general upper-crust ambience of the car park.

The capacity of the dining room, fifty, had again been reached this year, as it had in 1994, and in consequence the pre-prandial crush in the bar was more intimate than usual. After repairing to the dining room a delicious meal was soon consumed. the Loyal Toast drunk, as it had been at the Lagonda Car Club's first annual dinner in 1934, and any somnolent diners rudely awakened by Mike Pilgrim's vigorous wielding of his gavel. Mike began by welcoming guests, Tim and Beverley Daniels, and Lagonda Club members, John and Vivienne Breen, Robert and Christine Miles, Bill and

Audrey Ambro, Geoff. and Diane Gates, and Warren King, who were attending a Woodbridge dinner for the first time

It was at this point that this year's dinner took an unusual turn and a series of commercial breaks began. First was Colin Mallett, who had his magnificent enamel Lagonda signs to sell; next was Martin Whitworth, who, on his and Betty's behalf, invited us all to his windmill the next day. Mike now continued by reminding us that sixty years ago had seen one of Lagonda's most successful years in competition and that CXR 556 had been road tested several times and then never seen again. The latter a little gentle chaff at the expense of your scribe, who sees it most days. Forty years ago, we were informed, saw Roy Dunlop join the Rapier Register and Martin Whitworth purchase his 1932 16/80 Tourer (GG 8999).

Colin Bugler now rose to his feet to present the Lagonda Club's award for the most promising newcomer to racing, or, as in this case, the most successful young driver, to Tim Metcalfe. Tim received a tankard to keep and the trophy, a model of the M45R that won Le Mans in 1935, for a year, with the Fox and Nichol Trophy to follow. Ryszard Kobylecki, last year's winner of the Gary Guiver Gong for the Rapier coming the longest distance, now presented it to Gavin Rowe, who had driven 122 miles from Lewes, Sussex. However, Christopher and Monika Magawly would surely have won if they had travelled the 440 miles from their home at Unkel Rhein, Germany, in their Rapier, rather than by Rolls Royce.

The remains of the evening were now spent viewing the Register Albums, propping up the bar and in social chit-chat with a distinctly Lagonda flavour. In addition to those attending who have already been mentioned were Jonathan and Michele Abson, Clive and Shirley Dalton, Peter and Alison Allen, Tony and Pam Metcalfe, Sidney Allerton, John Stoneman, Jim Bradshaw, Len and Brenda Thompson and Brian and Joyce

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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 Show Boat, Harleyford Estate, Henley Road, Marlow, Bucks. 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 Prince of Wales, Puddleton. MR 757943. 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 Meeting).

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 Cave Castle Golf Hotel, South Cave, E. Yorks.

Midlands: October - April, last Sunday lunchtime, The Green Dragon, Willington.

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

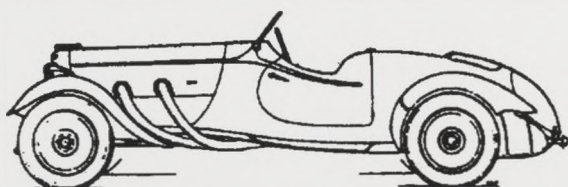
South Wales: First Thursday, Court Colman Hotel, Pen-y-Fai, Near Bridgend (VSCC meeting)

Savill, who, I think, may have been, along with Colin and Amanda Mallett, at Monk Fryston the previous evening. If someone cares to count, that should come to fifty in all.

The next day saw many of the revellers from the previous night's celebrations visiting the Whitworth's windmill and sampling their hospitality, as had occurred the year before. By mid-day the venue had changed to the "Maybush" at

Waldringfield, where a good proportion of both people and cars from the previous night assembled to sample the local ale and, in particular, a brew called "Devil's Kiss", to fortify themselves for the, in many cases, long drive ahead. Slowly a happy weekend began to unwind as people began to depart in ones and twos, to make their various ways home.

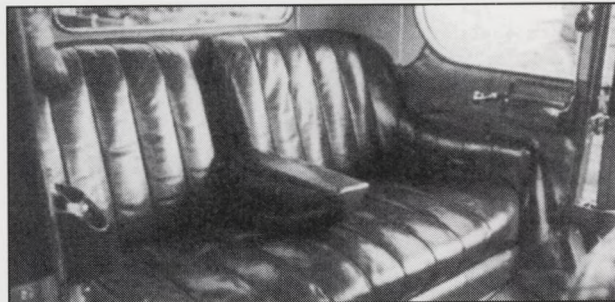
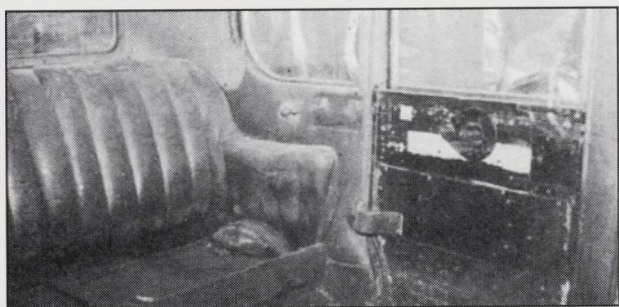
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Federation Conference, March 1996

I REPRESENTED the Club at the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Club's conference at Gaydon, near Warwick, on 23rd March. The all-day event had as its theme "The Vehicle Preservation Movement 1996 to 2020", with ten speakers addressing different aspects of our hobby/business/obsession. The venue was the magnificent new Heritage Motor Centre, which has brought together under one roof all the hitherto dispersed collections of historic cars and documents formerly belonging to the companies that now fall within the Rover group.

In the luxurious lecture theatre about 250 delegates were finally called to order by Lord Montagu, introducing the Chairman for the day, Chris Serle, who, apart from being a television personality, is also One Of Us, owning a Brighton car, an Aston DB2 and a Vintage something that I didn't note. After explaining the programme and running order, Chris then introduced the first speaker, Nick Scheele, Chairman and Chief Executive of Jaguar.

This was only a few days after the announcement of the XK8 and naturally this exciting new model figured largely in Nick's talk. He explained that Jaguar are always conscious of their heritage and their designers are always made to respect the family look. With the new model they are aiming to make it a "classic" right from the outset and have given a lot of thought to ensuring longevity, maintenance and easy replaceability of components in the years to come. (Cries of "about time too" from the floor). For example, instead of a purpose-built Electronic Control Unit to run the ignition and fuel injection, which costs about a thousand pounds and cannot be repaired, the new model's ECU uses standard industry electronic

components which can be replaced separately. So when in 2020 you need to repair your 1996 Jaguar's ECU, all you need is to cannibalise an old washing machine for the bits. (That is not one of my little jokes, he means it). Nick also remarked that in the USA it was now a legal requirement to have available all parts for a car for ten years after manufacture ceases.

Nick Scheele was speaking on behalf of the vehicle construction industry and we now turned our attention to the restoration industry, for such it has now become, with an address by Ron Gammons, Managing Director of Brown and Gammons of Baldock, specialists in restoring MGs and who race and rally their products to considerable success. Ron started by outlining the size of the industry; about 4000 companies producing an annual turnover of some £150 million. There are over 300 clubs in the Federation and even allowing for a lot of overlapping, there must be over 300,000 members in all.

Ron said, ruefully, that the besetting sin of the enthusiast was that he talked at length about quality but bought on price and in his opinion it was rarely possible to do a good, cheap job; it was one or the other. To give an illustration, he estimated that it took three to four hundred hours to restore an MGB to what he regarded as the proper condition. At £25/hour, plus parts, this meant a final bill of around £15,000 for a car like new, but only worth perhaps £8,000 to £10,000. (The Chairman said later that we all had our own negative equity problems). Ron then turned to Product Liability and its effects, particularly in the USA. His firm had the misfortune to sell a defective batch of camshafts and although there were only 35 of them, it took 3½ months to track

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As a Member of any other Motoring Organisation:

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| <p>1 Would you receive 15% off your membership plus a reduced joining fee? <small>YES or NO?</small></p> | <p>5 Would you receive a free traditionally crafted grille badge when you join? <small>YES or NO?</small></p> |
| <p>2 Are you offered off-road service when you breakdown away from the main highway? <small>YES or NO?</small></p> | <p>6 Will your motoring organisation represent your views to Parliament? <small>YES or NO?</small></p> |
| <p>3 Are you exempt from surcharges on older vehicles and caravans when you travel to Europe? <small>YES or NO?</small></p> | <p>7 Do you have a dedicated 0345 telephone number for membership enquiries? <small>YES or NO?</small></p> |
| <p>4 Do you receive discounts on European cover, publications and signs services? <small>YES or NO?</small></p> | <p>8 Does your membership cover your car for any authorised driver, and you, whatever car you and your spouse are travelling in, as driver or passenger? <small>YES or NO?</small></p> |

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

Please note: to qualify for this offer you must be

- 1. A member of an RACMSA Recognised Club or*
- 2. An RACMSA licence holder or*
- 3. An RACMSA Official.*



THE NEW KNIGHTS OF THE ROAD

them all down and involved sending someone to Geneva to sort out one awkward customer. To all clubs making parts he stressed, you MUST be able to identify each batch and be able to trace each component back to its supplier.

The next speaker was Peter Henley on Fuels. Peter is an ex-test pilot and represents the Federation on the British Standards Institution Fuels Committee and although he is not a chemist by training, has picked up a great deal of knowledge of the subject over the years. The foremost question was, of course the future of leaded fuel. At present it represents 37% of the UK market but dwindles each year as more cat-equipped new cars replace the older ones. His advice was, as you might expect, to carry on using 4 star as long as it is available and in every vehicle that will take it. But if you are rebuilding your engine, have hardened valve seats fitted because one day you are going to need them. He confirmed that the Shell "Low Lead" petrol, which has 0.075 grammes/litre was OK in our engines because it was above the minimum value of 0.05 g/l allowed by BS4040. But beware of LRG (Lead Replacement Gasoline) which had no lead but was sold by less scrupulous firms as "4 star" when it isn't. The only giveaway was the lack of the BS 4040 logo on the pumps. If using an unfamiliar garage, look out for this, it could damage the valve seats.

Peter then moved on to the additives which purport to replace lead and told an amusing story about one which was sent to him as a sample. He got a lab. to analyse it and they said it was virtually indistinguishable from Napalm, so he used the remainder of the sample to attack the weeds in the back garden, with remarkable success. There seemed to be some evidence that phosphorous-based additives work better than those based on sodium or potassium (Wait till the Greens hear about that). We should soon have some useful guidance from New Zealand where the Government has fairly abruptly banned leaded fuel. An

additive called "Valvemaster" has gone on sale there and first reports were hopeful, but the problem is that an engine that has run on leaded fuel for ages builds up a layer of lead on the valve seats which takes some thousands of miles to wear away, during which period no ill effects will be observed. Once it has gone, however, the wear rate accelerates at an alarming rate, reducing the engine, or at least the head, to scrap in about 15,000 miles.

The problems we have been having with hot weather volatility may be receding now that agreement has been reached and 4 star and unleaded have the same volatility level and "summer" specifications will apply from 16th April to 31st August. Having said that, Peter reported that his Vintage car was a great deal happier on Spanish 4 star on holiday than it has been recently in the UK and all the hot weather misfiring disappeared there. My own view of this is that the Spaniards KNOW that they are going to get prolonged periods of hot weather and adjust their formulation accordingly; we only hope we will and also have to allow for snowfalls in June. Summing up, Peter was only slightly cheerful, but warned that any future government might suddenly get a green fit and ban leaded overnight, as has happened elsewhere, and we mustn't be complacent.

It was now lunchtime and we moved up to the restaurant, which is a huge circular glass-domed chamber, rather like a sci-fi air traffic controllers' tower, with a 360 degree panoramic view over the surrounding countryside. The meal arrangements, like the rest of the day, were outstandingly well organised - getting 250 people fed simultaneously takes a bit of organising - and there was some time left over for a quick look at the museum exhibits and the shop, which sell books, models, videos and souvenirs of the Centre. At the beginning of the afternoon session the Chairman announced that we had so impressed the shop staff with our learning and keen

questions that they had volunteered to keep the shop open for half an hour after the conference finished, instead of closing at 4.00, as it said on the door. As they were probably on commission, this statement raised an ironic cheer.

We then started the first afternoon session, on Legislation and Environment, with two speakers, Reg Dawson, who is the Federation's resident Brussels transport consultant, as the first and Arthur Jeddere-Fisher, formerly the Federation's legal adviser and now performing the same function for FIVA, as the second.

Reg Dawson has lived in Brussels for some years and knows the way round the EC HQ very well by now. He explained that we no longer kept a "tame" MEP. By the time a proposal got as far as the chamber all sorts of political issues get grafted onto it and the voting is more to do with scoring points off the other side than the rights and wrongs of the issue. It is far better to get at a proposal while it is still fluid and you have some hope of influencing the wording. He was of the opinion that no-one, apart from the "Greens" was out to get us but the big danger was that we just get forgotten when new rules are being drafted and it is his job to see that we were not forgotten and do not suffer as a result. He quoted some examples of oversights which he has been able to put right, sometimes coming from the most unexpected quarter, like the telecommunications regulations which, as originally drafted, would have banned all magnetos, since they generate electromagnetic fields. He finished with a request for help. There was a definite shortage of reliable statistics on the number of old vehicles (not just cars) in use and the mileage covered. He would very much like to get hold of reliable figures. (Actually, Bob Oliver of the DVLA gave out just such figures at the 1994 Federation AGM, but they looked very dubious to me, and clearly to Reg too, since he was at that AGM). His final plea was for a definition of "historic". How, if at all, did it differ from just "old"?

Arthur Jeddere-Fisher followed, concurring with Reg Dawson that MPs weren't a lot of use to us in getting the law changed; by the time it got to the House it was set in stone. You had to get to the draftsmen before it became a Bill and reputations were resting on it. As a cautious lawyer, he was yet to be convinced of the government's motives in exempting old cars from VED and suspected still that some concealed snag would emerge later. This view was echoed from the floor during the discussion, when a delegate quoted the situation in Belgium, where old cars are exempted from their MOT and paid no tax, but could only be used on the road to and from recognised rallies. This was just what we seek to avoid.

I have not mentioned it before, but there was a discussion session, open to all, after each speaker. Little of what was said was important and some totally irrelevant. As ever, a small number of egotists insisted on having their ha'porth on every subject that came up. We even had one dummy say that it was a disgrace that the Federation wouldn't support the foreign old cars. After the stunned silence, it turned out that he thought the "British" in the title meant we only looked after British-built cars. It fell to the Chairman to explain, with marvellous tact, that it was the clubs that were British, not the cars. Later on, when we were examining ways of getting our message across to the motoring movement generally, a delegate from a university nobody had ever heard of, said rather condescendingly, that of course we weren't well known, we didn't have a site on the internet and were therefore not worth bothering about. He didn't explain how he had come to be there. (Subsequent investigation reveals that such a site would set the Federation back about £50,000 and I can think of far better things for it to spend its money on).

The last session had five speakers, representing a cross-section of clubs and service providers, each giving the view of the movement from their perspective,

snags encountered, policies adopted and so on. The first speaker was Ann Davy, National Secretary of the Vintage Motor Cycle Club, believed to be the biggest motorcycle club in the world. She outlined how the club had grown and how it was organised. Naturally, such a large club had an area set-up and a very extensive programme of events. They had adopted a policy of rolling dates, so that a vintage motor cycle, by VMCC definition was one 25 years old, unlike the VSCC definition for cars, where the dates are constant. On their (the VMCC's) basis, more machines became eligible each year and they were now beginning to get into the Japanese bike era.

After the strengths and problems of a very large club, the next speaker spoke from the perspective of a small club. He was Keith Poynter, Chairman of the Lea-Francis OC, which is about one third of the size of the Lagonda Club, and has the usual problem that only about five members are prepared to devote time to running it, while ten times that number are prepared to criticise.

The next speaker was our member Tim Holt, as I referred to in the Newsletter, wearing our tie, but speaking as an event organiser. Tim's other club is the Cumbria Steam and Vintage Vehicle Society and they promote a very large annual rally at Grange-over-Sands (on 26-28th July this year, advt). Tim's speech was hugely entertaining but very serious in intent as he explained the problems faced by the organiser of any large event, the special problems that steam vehicles specifically bring and also the various dodges and devices he has evolved over the years to overcome problems, like getting Scouts to do the litter-picking since they are nearer the ground than adults. He went way over his time, but nobody minded in the slightest. Jim Whyman commented in the discussion later that Tim's event regularly contributes £1,000 to Federation funds after each show, which shames some of the clubs who try to weasel out of paying anything at all.

Peter James of Insurance Brokers Footman James was the next speaker. Clearly delighted to have a captive audience of club officials, he set out what he considered to be the essential insurance cover each club should have. As the list grew longer, I noticed some narrowing of the eyes of delegates around me, but of course Peter was doing what he had been asked to do, namely put the view of the insurer. For interest, the list was as follows:

Employers' Liability, if you have employees
Public Liability
Product Liability
Professional Indemnity (to cover valuations, etc.)
Libel/Slander cover
Breach of Copyright cover
Fire/flood/theft cover for office equipment and regalia stocks,

If you paid out for all those, I doubt if there would be much left to run the club with. He also claimed that car insurance was strongly competitive at present and had never offered better value for money.

The last speaker was Peter Glover, Chairman of the Federation. He explained where we fit in to FIVA (the Federation is the largest body within FIVA) and that although FIVA claims to represent the whole world movement, neither the USA nor Australia were in FIVA. If we want to influence anything at all in Brussels we have to do so through FIVA as EC officials rarely listen to anything purely British, since the British view seems nearly always to be at odds with everyone else's. Unfortunately, the Federation's contribution to FIVA now exceeds our subscription income and we need to increase the latter by 20% just to retain the status quo. He asked the meeting for a show of hands, not to be regarded as binding, on whether we would recommend our clubs to accept a on-off levy of, say, 50p a head to help the Federation. This was carried overwhelmingly. Delegates, at least, are well aware of the valuable work the Federation does and what a mess we would be in without them.

The discussion session that followed the club speakers was the best of the day and was expanded to cover the whole day's proceedings. Points worth mentioning include a question put to the insurance man. "What happens if a car is involved in an accident and is found to have an expired MOT?" His reply was that his firm anyway would pay the claim to avoid the insured being charged with driving while uninsured, but would then reclaim the sum from the insured, since he had breached the conditions of the policy by letting the MOT lapse.

Another question arose from the uncertainty surrounding the E-Mark system. Arthur Jeddere-Fisher explained that the purpose of the E-Mark on a product was to demonstrate that it conformed to the appropriate euronorm and as such could not be refused by any EC government agency. The rules do not say that a product without an E-Mark is illegal. Well, not yet they don't. Despite the bureaucrat's love of regulations,

preferably incomprehensible, we have extracted an undertaking that vehicles will never be asked to meet standards that they couldn't have met when new. This ought to kill any idea about enforcing modern lamps, for example. (The leaded petrol issue is an exception to this, of course).

The Chairman eventually had to curtail the discussion which looked as if it was going to go on for a week and bring the meeting to a close as five o'clock was getting near and we still had a cup of tea to drink, the shop to visit and lots of socialising to do before departing into the twilight. It was a valuable and constructive conference and I am pleased to have been able to attend. It is inevitable that a club devoted to old cars spends a lot of time looking backwards and as the historian I am more guilty than most, so it was salutary to spend a day looking forwards in a "where do we go from here" atmosphere.

Arnold Davey

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Letters

Dear Ken,

I was looking through a listing of collective nouns the other day and found that there are two for painters! The first is "A curse of painters" the second is "An illusion of painters". Since Barbara and I see less of you since you moved from the Midlands, we prefer the second version, but what do the rest of the Club think?

Yours ever

Bryan Hyett

I manage staff in two offices 30 miles apart. Both teams think that when I am with them, the first definition applies and when I am in the other office the second applies! Ed.

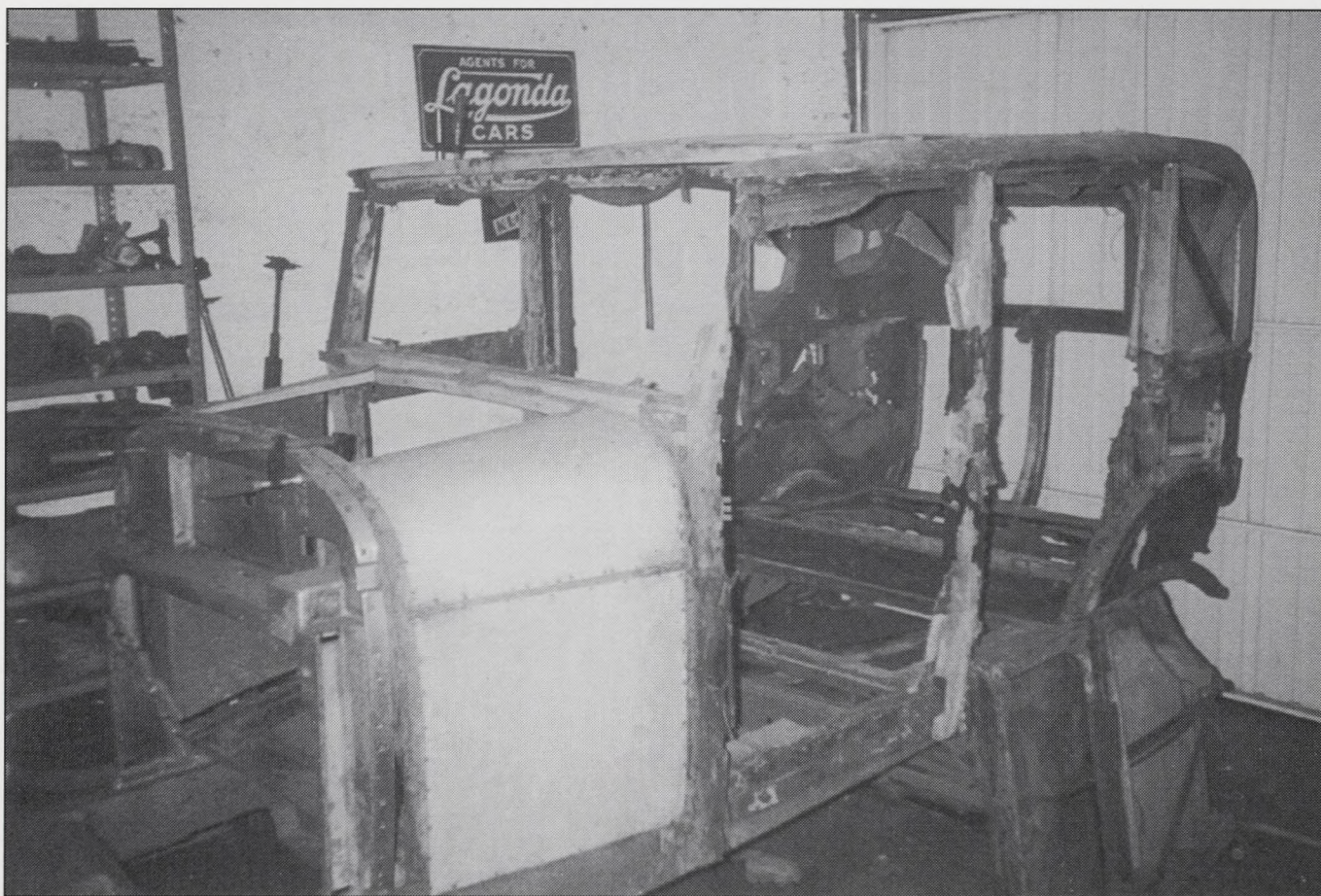
Dear Ken,

Just who do you think you're kidding? You keep going on about this 2 litre you are going to restore one day, but nobody has ever seen it! As far as I can judge, you have been going on about it for almost seven years now. If it was real you would have something to show for the hours and the cash you claim to have spent on it. Why don't you just admit that you can't afford a proper car and have to make do with an inferior Italian toy as a far from satisfactory substitute?

Yours suspiciously

Sceptical from Scunthorpe

I don't know if you - or the Club are ready for this, but a picture of the car in all its glory is shown below — Ed





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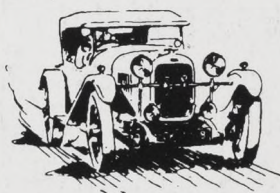
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