



THE MAGAZINE OF THE LAGONDA CLUB

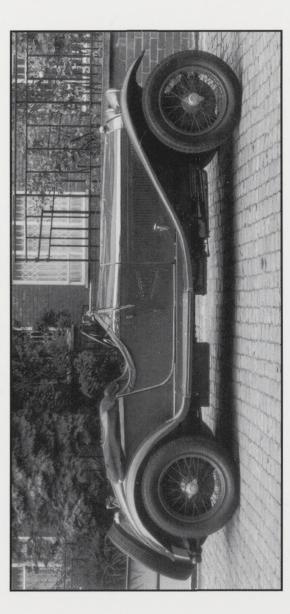
Number 170 Autumn 1996

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# CARS IN STOCK

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193	193		1932	1938	196,	195	195	1931	192	196	193
VandenPlas	1935 Bentley 3 1/2 Litre Sedanca Coupe by	Freestone & Webb	1937 Bentley 4 1/4 Litre Gurney Nutting Sedanca	1937 Bentley 4 1/4 Litre H.R. Owen Sedanca Coupe	by J Gurney Nutting	1954 Bentley R-Type Continental Fastback by	Mulliner	1955 Bentley S1 Continental DHC by Park Ward,	(power steering)	1955 Bentley R-Type Continental Coupe by Park	Ward
	1935		1937	1937		1954		1955		1955	
1930 Alfa Romeo 6C 1750 SS Supercharged Spyder	Alfa Romeo 6C 1750 Supercharged Drophead	Coupe	Allard J2				Russ Turner, UU44	1930 Bentley Speed Six Open Tourer by Hooper	1930 Bentley Speed Six Le Mans Tourer	1934 Bentley 3 1/2 Litre DHC by Park Ward	1935 Bentley 3 1/2 Litre Cutaway door Tourer by
1930	1932		1952	1955	1964	1929		1930	1930	1934	1935

Please contact: COYS SALES DEPARTMENT for further information on cars available.

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### MAGAZINE Issue No. 170 Autumn 1996

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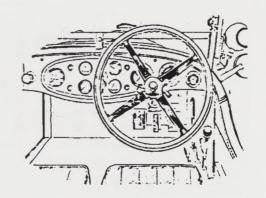
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#### FRONT COVER

PK 9201, the 1929 Double 12 Team Car, pictured at Prescott recently.

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# From the Driving Seat



ANOTHER RACING SEASON over, this time with no serious problems to worry during the winter, competition cars get more than their fair share of the time and the available cash before the next season starts in April. For me, this will mean more time to devote to the slow restoration of the 2 litre. My local supplier of seasoned ash is ready to cut the wood to my specification and I have been studying the complexities of the patented joints which are used to hold each part of the structure far enough its neighbour to eliminate from squeaking.

I suppose it isn't really surprising, but Lagonda didn't make theirs exactly as described in the Weymann patent, theirs is a little more complex, but it is a great improvement. Instead of simply cutting a thread in the 1/8 plate, they countersink the hole and fit a tiny conical nut. There is always something new to learn about

the cars we love.

I am still agonising over the best way to go about re-creating a Weymann saloon body from the very frail skeleton sitting on my chassis. Conventional wisdom is that it should be done the same way as the original, start at chassis level and work up from there. Fine in theory, but the structure is so weak from wet rot, broken and missing timbers and rusting metal brackets I fear it may collapse entirely if I try to lift it, remove the base timbers and suspend the rest by above woodwork the door appertures.

If I begin by renewing the woodwork from the top - start with the roof and work down - I can re-inforce the remainder of the body so that every part is held in its proper relationship with the chassis. Then, as the vertical timbers are replaced, they will be positively located from the top and can be carefully aligned with the remainder of the original frame at the bottom. This sounds great in theory, but will it work? Unless someone can convince me that it can't, or shouldn't be done my way, I am inclined to give it a try anyway. There are virtually no wood joints in the entire body, as parts are connected by the patent metal plates, so there is no obvious structural reason why my idea won't work. Suggestions and comments please! If I get it wrong I will have to fit a boring old tourer body and that will never do.

Whatever happened to all the old saloon bodies anyway? Yes, I know they were all converted to tourers long ago, but didn't anyone else save the bones of the original body for posterity? Was Peter Jones the only man in the whole of Britain to have the good taste to dry store a frame for something like twenty years, so that an idiot like me would actually choose to restore it? Arnold tells us that Weymann saloons actually represented a fair proportion of 2 litre production, but before I took over as Editor, I think only one picture was ever printed in the magazine of this body style. I have more than an academic interest in this, I need all sorts of body bits, especially the proper Weymann door catches, so have a look through that pile of Lagonda junk you always meant to sort out "one day". You wouldn't want me to have to borrow bits to copy from my friend's Ansaldo would you?

K.P.P.

ONCE AGAIN THE NIGHTS are drawing in and its time to pause and reflect on another year in the life of our Club. It was never going to be easy following the vintage year of '95 with the Diamond Jubilee rally and that fantastic Staines gathering which preceded it. However '96 proved to be most testing as we struggled to re-organise our spares activities and the few events organised were sparsely supported - in the case of our Dutch rally not at all!

However, our AGM was a great success (because of the free lunch?) and the confidence expressed in the

Committee was heartwarming.

We have new blood joining the Committee and overall the membership of the Club has risen to all time record levels, so generally we are set fair for the

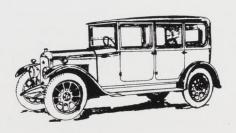
When you get your new diary for 1997, make sure you mark in the French and Irish rallies, together Goodwood, where we are having a big show. Also put a big ring round the AGM weekend which, next year, will be held at Phyllis Court, Oxford. The main day will be Saturday and not Sunday for a change (20th September) and once again lunch will be free to members.

Looking further ahead, we are planning the holiday of a lifetime for you. Due to the success of our '95 Le Mans event, the sponsors are falling over themselves to help with our next big "do".

As all will recall, it was in 1899 that Wilbur Gunn founded the Lagonda Engineering Co. in Staines and, as Lagonda cars are still manufactured, ours is the first british Marque to achieve its Centenary. Also, as our Wilbur was an American, from Springfield Ohio, what better way to celebrate than with a CENTENARY CAVALCADE around New England in the Fall of 1999?

As I said, it is expected that the rally will be well supported financially, to keep the costs right down, but start saving those sixpences and get that rebuild finished so that in three years' time you can join in with the most spectacular event the Club has ever staged.

D.R.H.



# Hants/Dorset Treasure Hunt 14th July 1996

THE TREASURE HUNT was well supported, with seven entrants and the event started at 'Moonrakers', the home of our hosts, Norma and Witt Wittridge. We were very lucky to have a fine sunny day and Witt tested our skills at the start, with a point-to-point test to be covered in 13.2 seconds. This test was won by Andrew Gregg in 13.4 seconds, with Ashley Jackson from New Zealand in second place.

The route selected by Norma and Witt covered part of West Dorset and most of the clues could be seen from the car, in order not to cause congestion on the

narrow roads.

The participants had a pleasant and scenic trip, visiting Hardy's Monument, then on through the countryside turning at Toller Porcorum, down towards the coast, via Shipron Gorge, along the coast road to Abbotsbury and Langton Herring,

with a splendid view of Chesil Beach, before returning to 'Moonrakers' for a D.I.Y. barbeque organised by Norma and Witt. Most of the D.I.Y. cooking was ably done by Pat and Alan Elliott, Alan looking very smart in his Chef's hat.

The results were as follows:

1st	Andrew Gregg M45	Tourer
2nd	Alan Elliott	2 litre
3rd	Peter Dobson	2.6 D.B.
4th	Tim Jones	2 litre sln.
5th	Dudley Palmer	2 litre
6th	Ashley Jackson	M45
7th	Peter Jones	2 litre

We were very pleased to have with us our friends from New Zealand Billie and Ashley Jackson, whose brother, Selwyn Jackson is a Club Member.

**Peter Dobson** 





1934 Lagonda M45R Team Car to be sold at Olympia on 2 December

# London

### The National Hall, Olympia, December 2

A SALE of HIGHLY IMPORTANT COLLECTORS MOTOR CARS, AUTOMOBILIA and MOTORING ART

Brooks end-of-season sale is the highlight of the year with last year's sale seeing some £3 million worth of important motor cars sold. Brooks' traditional pre-Christmas sale has become recognised as the most important sale marking the end of the year and this year promises to be no exception. The '96 sale will take place in the splendid surroundings of the National Hall, Olympia, formerly the home of London's prestigious Motor Show, and significant entries already include:

1903	Darracq 8 hp Rear Entrance Tonneau	1929	Pierce Arrow Four-Light Sedan
1913	Fiat Tipo 56 Open Drive Limousine	1929	Pierce Arrow Club Coupe
1921	Angus Sanderson 14.3 hp De Luxe Tourer	1934	Lagonda M45R Team Car
1923	AC Acedes Tourer	1938	Lagonda VI2 Drophead Coupe
1923	Austro-Daimler 60 hp	1953	Lancia Aurelia B20 GTS Competition
	Skiff Bodied Two-Seat Tourer	1955	Mercedes-Benz 300 SL Gullwing
1926	Delaunay Belleville P4B	1956	Mercedes-Benz 300 SL Gullwing
	Open-Drive Limousine	1959	Lotus Elite SI
1929	Isotta Fraschini Tipo 8A Sedanca de Ville	1963/84	Wingfield Jaguar D-Type Replica

Further entries are invited.

For further information concerning these or any other Brooks sale, or any aspect of entering a car for auction please call Malcolm Barber, James Knight, Stewart Skilbeck or Michael Worthington-Williams on 0171 228 8000. Catalogues will be available price £20 UK/£25 overseas. Please call 0171 228 8000. Credit cards accepted.

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SPECIALIST AUCTIONEERS AND VALUERS

## James Crocker

JAMES CROCKER has died after a mercifully short illness, he was 70. President of the Lagonda Club and past President of the Vintage Sports Car Club, he was one of the most admired and

respected members of both clubs

James was born in Sevenoaks in Kent and had five older sisters. His father was Sir William Charles Crocker a highly respected solicitor and one-time president of the Law Society. James claimed that his lifelong passion for our sort of cars began when the family chauffeur taught him to

drive the family Minerva.

Educated at the Beacon and Marlborough, James went up to Clare College, Cambridge just before the Second World War. At Clare he formed a band with the happy name of "Slim Jim and his Celestial Beings", his love of jazz remained with him for the rest of his life and he enlivened many of our meetings with impromptu performances over the

vears.

As with so many of his generation, the war interrupted his studies and he left Cambridge to join the Royal Navy. Life below decks must have been something of a culture shock to a young man of his fairly privileged background, but he rose to the challenge and fitted in perfectly. Always grateful for this important lesson in life, getting on with others, regardless of background or position, was forever one of his finest qualities. By the end of the war he was in command of a tank landing craft and was on his way from Europe to the Far East when peace was declared.

Once he was out of the Navy, he returned to Cambridge to complete his degree. During this time he bought a Bentley 3 litre and met his future wife Barbara at her son Julian's birthday party. At 23 he married and found himself with two stepsons. After graduation he joined his father's law firm, he stayed in the legal profession for the whole of his working life, enjoying every minute of it. He became the Vintage Sports Car Club's advisor on libel, advising the Bulletin Editors for many years. A famous quote of his from this time was "It may not be the advice you want but it's the advice you're going to get". He also acted as legal advisor to the Lagonda Club and steered

us through the complications of forming ourselves into a limited company.

The Bentley was replaced by a 16/80 Lagonda, which, many years later became the editor's car in Singapore. For James, this car started a lifelong love affair with the marque, it was followed by an LG45 Rapide, which starred in the film "Chase a Crooked Shadow". Later, he built a Rapier special, AHN 730, which started life as an Abbott bodied tourer. He bought this from your editor, when it was long past its prime. It was typical of the man that the purchase of this car began a friendship which lasted between us for the rest of his life. More recently, he created a single seater with a Rapier chassis and AC engine and, for many of us he was a spirited competitor, always giving of his best efforts and never an easy man to beat. In victory or defeat, he loved every minute of competition and was always excellent company at VSCC race meetings. He gave back as much as he took from the sport and, when not competing, he was often found marshalling or otherwise officiating at events.

James' service to the Lagonda Club extends over much of its history, he was a committee member for many years, and also assisted with the production of the magazine, serving as advertising manager and also as editorial consultant. He took over as Chairman in 1957 and continued until 1966. His appointment to the post of President was probably one of the Club's most clever decisions and in that role he continued to serve behind the scenes, offering advice when it was asked for, never interfering in the Club's day-to-day affairs, but always ready to act in our best interest. We in the Lagonda Club, and our colleagues in the VSCC who are not fortunate enough to own a Lagonda, have lost a very special friend. It is all too easy to say that an individual was "one of a kind", but James really was unique, with that uncanny ability to get on with all he met, his wonderful sense of humour and a strong sense of duty.

Our sympathy and sincere condolences go to Barbara, his son Simon and his stepsons Julian and Christopher.

K.P.P.

# The Annual General Meeting

THE AGM WAS HELD on Sunday 22nd September at the Taplow House Hotel near Maidenhead. The weather was dry, which undoubtedly encouraged members to come in their proper cars, but there was a chilly start to the day, which accounted for the variety of motoring dress, everything from full length fur coats and flying helmets to modern fleece jackets.

Shortly after 11 a.m. at least 70 members, in addition to the Committee, crowded into the meeting room for the formal business. The procedings started with a tribute from the Chairman to our late President, James Crocker, who was such a keen supporter of all things Lagonda in one capacity or another since he joined the 2 litre Register in 1950. The meeting stood in silence for a minute at

his memory.

The first item on the agenda was the Club's finances. To the surprise of some of the Committee, there were no questions and the accounts were approved forthwith. This may have been due to the fact that the accounts, which had been circulated to all the members, ran to 13 pages and the Treasurer was not asked to explain them. In fairness, it must be noted that the Club's balance had gone up by approximately £8½ thousand, because of a refund of VAT and a very generous donation to the Spares account.

The next item was the election of Committee Members. Peter Whenman, the Competition Secretary, was reelected and John Breen's appointment as Spares Secretary was confirmed. In addition, Colonel S.C.Mathews was elected, the Committee believe that his considerable knowledge of modern mechanical engineering would be of

great benefit.

Three proposals had been submitted by members. The first two concerned the position of Committee Members vis-a-vis Directors of the Club and the official Registered Address of the Club. The Chairman said that a sub-committee had been formed to revise the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Club and they would be looking at both these points. The sub-committee's proposals would be circulated to all members before the next A.G.M. with the aim of the revised M&A being approved then. In view of this the proposers withdrew both the motions. The Secretary remarked that the last thing he wanted was a brass plate on his front door and he confirmed that the current registered address was the office of a member who was also a solicitor.

The third proposal was that members who were connected with the motor trade should not serve on the Committee to avoid a conflict of interest. After some discussion, all of which was against the proposal, it was put to the vote and

defeated by a large majority.

Informal reports from Committee Members then followed. The Secretary reported that the paid-up membership now stood at 723, 27 up on last year, of which 21% were overseas members. 59 members were now paying their RAC subscription through the Club, which not only saved members money, but paid the Club over £400 in commission. He could not understand why more members did not join this scheme, which would benefit the Club. Nearly £750 was taken by the Club stall at the Beaulieu Autojumble.

The Editor said that for the first time in his experience he was running out of copy for the Magazine and he asked for more articles, technical, interesting, or just plain amusing. He even appealed to poets for verse. Until recently he preferred photos in landscape format, but as the Magazine cover now has a full page photo he wanted some in the portrait format, or photos that could be

enlarged and cropped to fit.

The Competition Secretary reported

that there had been 15 events during the vear that Lagondas could have entered. Next year the Club planned to run a rally in Ireland and he was considering running a hill climb training day at Prescott, which sounded like a chance to drive your Lagonda or your modern up this famous hill non-competitively. The Club would have a stand at the 1997 Goodwood Festival of Speed (June 21-22) and volunteers would be required to staff it.

The Spares Secretary thanked the members for their patience while he was taking over. He asked for orders to include the Club part number where possible. He appealed for information on new sources of supply and requested members with skills to put them at the disposal of the Club. There was an urgent need for manufacturing drawings so that the quality of manufactured spares could be maintained and he hoped that members who had casting patterns would loan them to the Club. Also he would like to know who had borrowed some of the Club's patterns which are missing. Lastly, would members please say, when ordering, what the urgency was; he did not want to postpone his holiday to find a spare if the re-build was not going to start until next year.

The Registrar reported that it was hoped that the English version of Bernd Holthusen's book would be available for Christmas. The price? Wait and see.

The Chairman gave some dates for next year. One of our French members is running a rally starting May 31st and the 97 A.G.M. would be on corresponding weekend, in Henley, but with the dinner on Friday and the meeting on Saturday (Sept 19-21). Discussions were still going on for the Centenary events and there was the possibility of a rally in America, with support from Aston Martin Lagonda Ltd.

Contrary to previous policy the Chairman said he would like more people on the Committee. If any members were interested they should let

him know.

Because of the good state of the finances, the Committee had agreed that the Club would give everybody lunch

(courtesy of Customs and Excise). This may be the reason why the meeting then ended with no further matters being raised, other than a vote of thanks from the floor to the Chairman and the Committee for all their hard work.

About 55 Lagondas turned up, but because some arrived late and some left early it was not possible to keep an accurate check. The largest proportion were 2 litres (25), followed by 4½s (17). the remainder were more or less equally divided between Rapiers, 16/80s, 3 and 3½ litres and David Brown cars. There was even a mongrel 3½/4½, which mystified most members.

This year the Regalia and Spares stands were in a marquee on the lawn, which was a great improvement.

The results of the concours were:

ap	ier		
o.t	Doton	Crinna	

1st Peter Cripps 1934 tourer

### 2l,16/80,3+3½l

1931 2l blown 1st John Walker

### tourer 1932 2l LC

2nd Keith Bowley speed tourer A of M Geoff Seaton 1930 3l tourer

### M45, LG45

1st Phil Erhardt 1934 M45 DHC 2nd Peter & Anne Walby 1934 M45

#### tourer

A of M Clive Peerless 1937 LG 45 Rapide tourer

#### LG6,V12

1st Michael Valentine 1938 V12 DHC 2nd Kit Erhardt V12 Le Mans replica

### **David Brown**

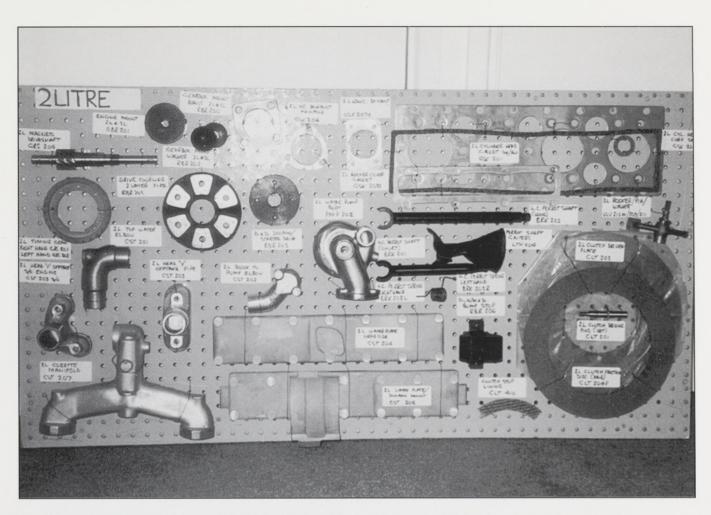
Peter Gilkes 1954 3l saloon

### Club Trophy for best overall:

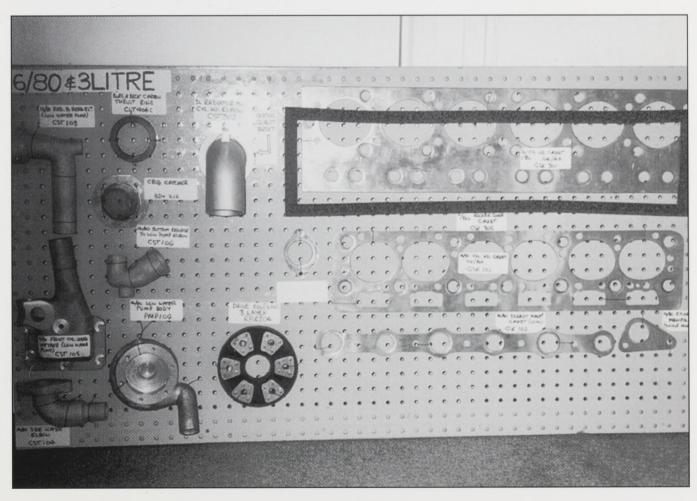
John Walker

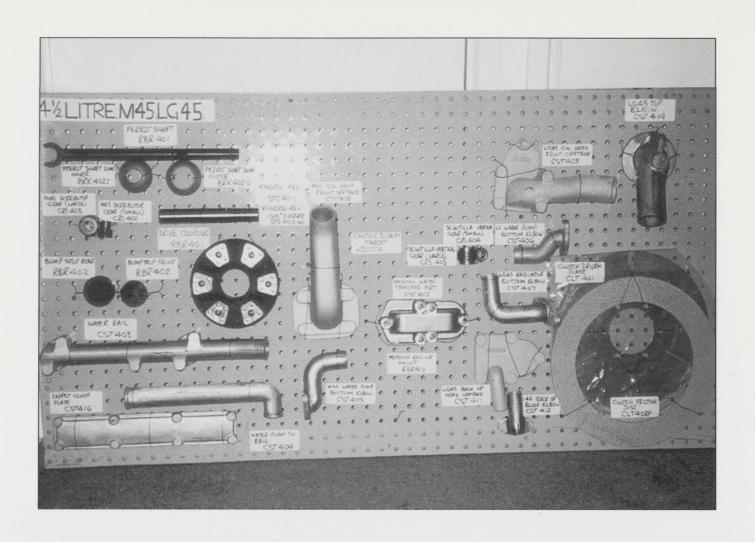
The prizes were presented by Mrs daughter of John Harrison, the Hindmarsh, who was co-driver of the 1935 Le Mans winning Lagonda. Other guests of the Club were Mr and Mrs Harry Calton, from Aston Martin Lagonda Ltd.

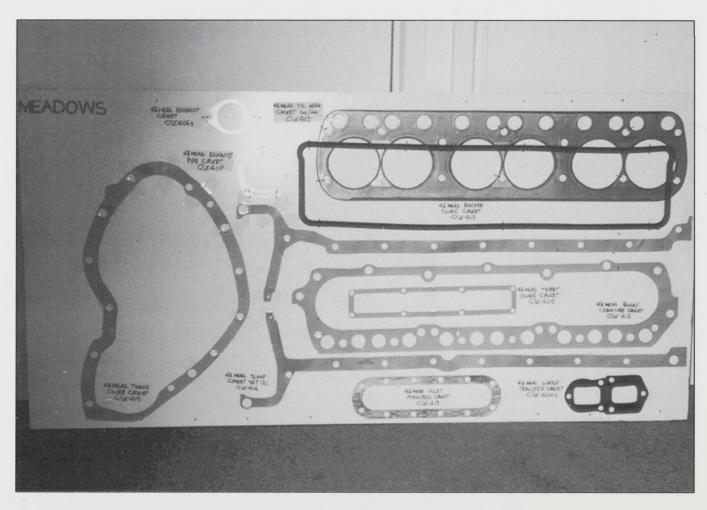
**Tony Loch** 

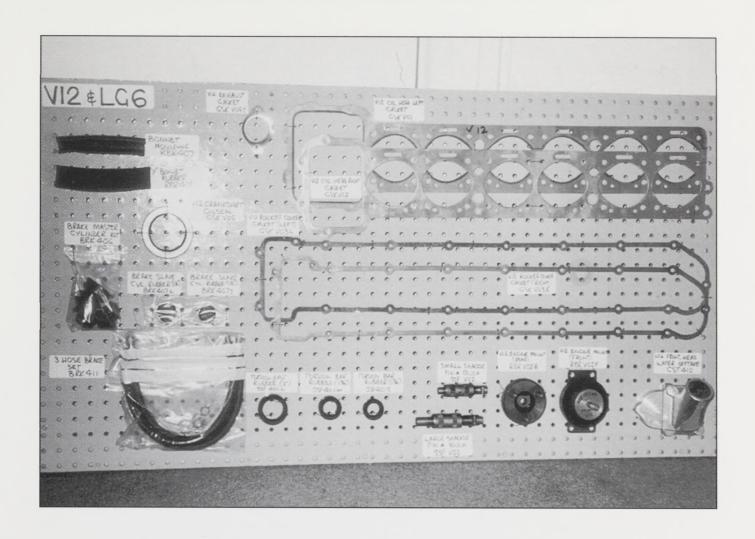


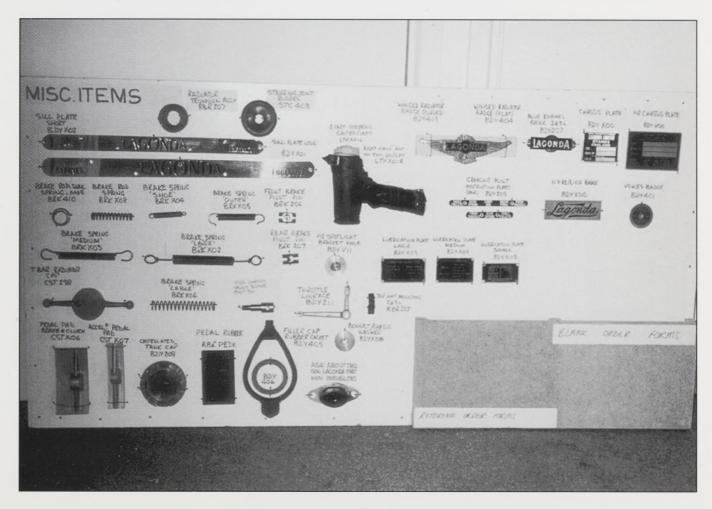
Just for a change, no pictures of the cars at the AGM, but pictures of the Club's range of new spares.











# An Alternative Ignition System for a 16/80 Lagonda

THE SCINTILLA MAGNETO fitted as standard to the 16/80 Lagonda is a logically designed and nicely manufactured unit. We know this as a result of an experience extending over some fifty years of reliable performance and this on the original set of contact breaker points. Any failure is excusable after such reliability.

An intermittent failure, due to a break in the secondary winding of the fixed armature produced periodic misfiring when the current failed to jump the gap. Deterioration became more pronounced as the jumping increased the physical size of the gap and it became obvious that a complete failure was inevitable.

The whereabouts of professional artisans was sought and after some enquiries, an expert was approached.

Experience suggests that the employees of the Scintilla Company knew something about coil winding that has evaded the magneto cobblers of today.

Rewinds have not lasted more than two years and the guarantee is no help when you are stuck in the back of beyond with a lifeless car. A solution to the problem could be the possession of several magnetos, one in use on the car, one in the tool kit and one at the launderers.

I have adopted the alternative solution of a coil ignition system which can be introduced in an emergency without major change, by making use of the existing magneto, which can be retained minus stationary armature.

A 12 volt ignition coil can be mounted on the rear offside bonnet plate. This becomes a permanent fixture on the car and a cable connects the low tension side of the coil to the ignition switch on the dashboard. A condenser is attached to the CB terminal on the coil and earthed to the mounting bracket, the rest of the circuit to the magneto being left open.

Should I experience another armature failure, all I have to do is to complete the circuit from the coil by means of a connector block, which replaces the dud armature. The connector block connects the LT and HT terminals on the coil to the contact breaker and distributor respectively, the cables being threaded through the earthing connection on the magneto rear cover.

The switch to the coil ignition can be made without disturbing the timing, but care is required when fitting the connector block so that the carbon brush in the end of the distributor is not trapped or broken.

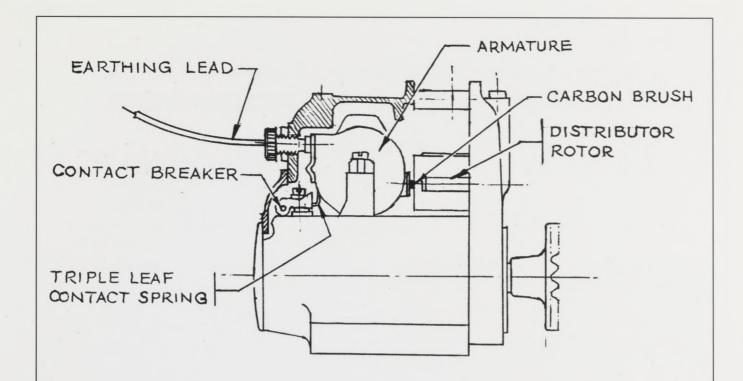
The sketch shows the main features of the connector block. The steel bar on which it is mounted replaces the armature core and acts as a "keeper" for the rotating magnet. This connector block can be made by anyone with access to a small workshop. Mine was made by my old pal Bill Brownhill from Chaddesdon, Derby.

It should be possible to hide the coil from view, in which case there would be no way of telling that the engine is running on coil ingnition, apart from the size of the cable entering the rear cover of the magneto.

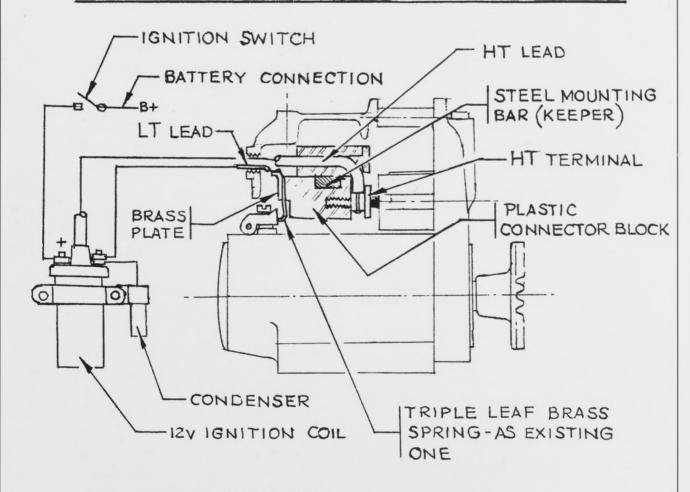
In fact, I am rather tempted to leave the car set up in this way.

The conversion kit is effective and cheap, certainly a lot cheaper than a spare magneto, which may have the same latent fault anyway and it occupies less space when carried as a spare part.

**Bill Wright** 



### PARTIAL SECTION THROUGH SCINTILLA MAGNETO



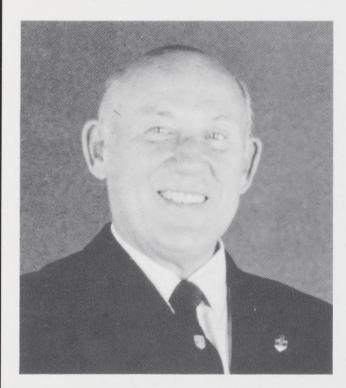
SCINTILLA MAGNETO CONVERTED TO COIL IGNITION

the Bain Hogg

### classic collection

OF INSURANCE SCHEMES

# The Right Insurance for Your Classic Car



"In an increasingly competitive environment, Bain Hogg can offer top quality cover at the right premium. I insure all my cars through the Classic Collection and I recommend strongly that you do too."

Priviling Man

Bain Hogg, a member of Inchcape plc, is the UK's largest retail insurance broker.

Our competitively priced, agreed value insurance schemes are designed specifically for enthusiasts who love their classics. Above all, they provide peace of mind and top quality cover at affordable premiums.

The Classic Collection offers the widest possible choice of limited and unrestricted mileage policies tailored to your particular needs.

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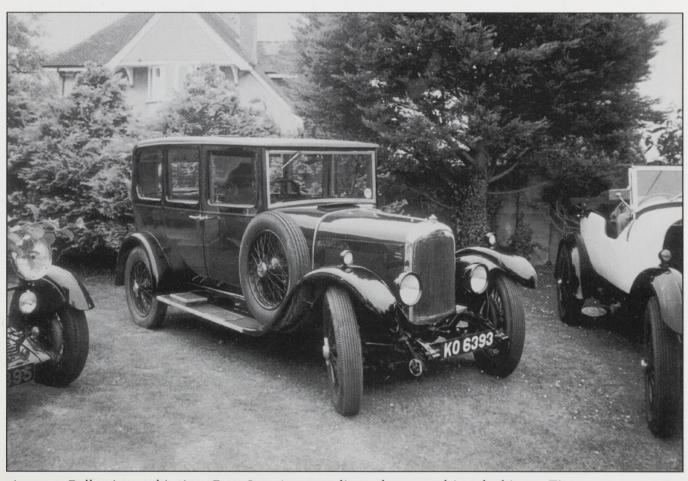




Bain Hogg Limited, Falcon House, The Minories, Dudley, West Midlands DY2 8PF.



Andrew Gregg won the Hants/Dorset Rally, he is pictured here with his Fan Club!



A proper Rally picture this time. Peter Jones' pretty 2 litre saloon was driven by his son Tim.



The stars and the cars at the Northern Driving Tests.



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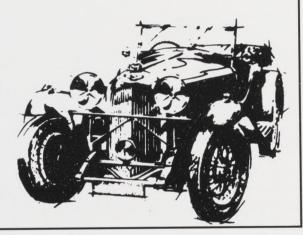
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## The Dream Turned Sour?

Dedicated to Paul and Clare

I THINK MY LATE father was to blame. His contact in the Bentley Drivers' Club kept him in the know. It was no coincidence just how many of our family picnics ended up next to a vintage car meeting, where this club was out in force. Life in the '60s was simple, happy and fun. The weather was always hot. I don't remember rain. We would sit on a rug spread out on the grass next to our 1951 Ford Anglia and would enjoy our sandwiches while the kettle heated up on the meths primus stove.

I recall a visit to the Pageant of Motoring at Penshurst Place, where a Bentley driver, in his striped college blazer and boater, retrieved his champagne bottle from an ice filled silver bucket. His family sat on proper garden furniture, enjoying their picnic from what looked like a Fortnum and Mason's hamper. Dad and I were more interested in his blown 4½ litre and he was happy to open the bonnet for us.

We were enthusiasts, liking vintage cars of many marques, including Alvis, Aston Martin, Rolls Royce and those Lagondas with the windscreens. For over 30 years I longed to own a vintage open tourer. Naturally, it had to be British Racing green. As my tastes and bank balance did not match, I settled for lesser cars, owning three MGs, a 1932 J2, 1949 TC and 1960 MGA, together with a selection of British motorcycles. Motorcycling is my first love and parting with my Norton Atlas would be almost akin to a family bereavement.

My vintage tourer dreams never died, but I realised that, short of a Lottery win, a Bentley was out of my reach. I was becoming increasingly aware of the handsome Lagonda, with its uncompromising engineering. I also thought they looked lighter and more

sporty than the Bentley.

In 1992 I bought a copy of Geoffrey Seaton's Lagonda history in a sale, my heart became set on the 3 litre and I always seemed to return to the photograph of Geoffrey's own car parked on the Brooklands banking. That page has become decidedly dog-eared. I decided to join the Lagonda Club, learn more about the cars and find out what was on the market. Membership quickly taught me three things. First, any Lagonda represented for me a King's ransome. Secondly, the 3 litre I coveted was perhaps the most sought after and. therefore, expensive model. Finally, all the Lagonda people whom I approached telephone were, without the exception, friendly, helpful generous with their advice.

In August 1995 I went to my first Lagonda Club meeting at Groombridge Place. I took Mum along and we stopped at a pub for lunch. A 3 litre tourer pulled up at the same pub and soon I was drooling over it. The owner generously offered us a ride to the meeting, this was a great experience and the whine of the straight cut gears, the power and exhaust note provoked strong emotions.

Somehow I had to own one.

Some while later I went to see a 1930 3 litre special advertised by a club member in "Classic and Sportscar". I would have given my right arm for it, despite the appalling state of the trim. I made an offer, which represented every resource I could muster, plus a loan, but the owner was seeking the best offer. An enquiry through the Club put the value at around £50,000, about double my maximum realistic figure. I considered another 3 litre, but rejected it as too nonoriginal.

I now turned to the 2 litre. I loved the appearance of these cars and that high camshaft engine. Several literature sources suggested that this model was underpowered and I did not relish the slow pace of some of the old cars in which I have been driven. I saw a lovely example at a dealers, it was virtually concours, far better than I was looking for, but when I consulted the archivist, I learned that it was apparently a 1930 chassis, 1927 engine and 1933 16/80 body. I also thought about the 16/80, my local garage man had owned one and, though he said it looked the part, he described the Crosslev engine in unflattering terms. He reckoned it was all out and push on Battery Hill, leading out of my village. Perhaps I listened too much to hearsay, but this is only natural when contemplating such an expensive

outlay.

In early November 1995, I made an epic rail journey from Hastings to Durham and back, in one day, to see a 1929 Low Chassis 2 litre, owned by a Club member since 1955. Before the "up and over" garage door had hit its stop I knew that VR 3607 had to be mine. It was a genuine well-presented driver's car in usable condition (and the right colour), not a pampered museum piece. Quite what the owner and his wife thought of me I do not know, after they showed me the car I spent several hours on my own, looking at every detail asking myself if I could really afford it. Finally, I took the plunge and made an offer, which was accepted with only a little haggling. I paid a deposit, they fed me well and drove me back to Durham for my train home. I wished that I had known another Club member well enough to accompany me on that day. I had mixed emotions for the next week or so, from joy and excitemment to sheer fright at parting with virtually all of my life's savings.

Delivery day was set for about a month later, after I had sorted my finances and the cheque was cleared. I considered driving the car the 350 miles home, but the former owner's local garage man had a breakdown truck and offered to deliver for £250. Train fares and overnight accommodation for two of us would have cost almost as much, with this and the weather in mind, I accepted the offer.

A noisy diesel engine in our cul-desac at around 5.30 p.m. heralded the arrival of VR 3607 and sparked off the usual round of flickering net curtains. My next door neighbour was out and booked the car for her daughter's wedding before it was off the trailer! The car had been left uncovered and had picked up a bit of motorway salt, but apart from that seemed fine. We pushed her into the garage, where she looked a snug fit.

The next day Paul and his wife Clare paid a visit. He is a work colleague and one only has to study the detail on his beautifully restored Austin 12 to appreciate his engineering abilities. They were suitably impressed with and shared my undisguised enthusiasm for the

Lagonda.

I decided to drive her in the spring, so I removed the battery, cleaned the car and spent evenings in the garage, polishing the engine and copper pipes, sprucing up the interior, etc. I never went to bed at night without at least going for a last look. I even tried my wicker picnic hamper and travel rug on the back seat to see how they looked. One evening was passed sitting in the driver's seat, puffing on a cigar (I rarely smoke), while practicing gear changes on pedal/gearlever unfamiliar configuration. "Happiness is a cigar called....." could have been written for me. On another occasion I considered how, if I opened the passenger door for a young lady, I would then climb over the side and into the driver's seat. Despite considerable practice, I still lack the necessary dexterity. Had a spy camera observed my strange goings on, I would probably have been consigned to the local asylum in a straight jacket.

I sent some photographs to Colin for an agreed value letter and felt much better when he told me that I had, by all accounts, bought a good car. I shopped around the usual insurance companies and Richard Hosken quoted £133.50 for 3,000 miles, with an agreed value of £25,000 (including my Diabetes declaration).

Saturday, 20th January 1996, my birthday weekend, it was dry, sunny, bitterly cold, but with no salt on the roads. The car was insured, MOT'd and with its free tax disc in place. Why wait for spring to arrive? Paul agreed to accompany me, he is more used to crash boxes and I valued the chance to share the driving with him. I connected the newly charged battery, flooded the carburettor, pulled out the choke and pressed the starter button. She fired up relatively easily and I moved her out of the garage to warm up. I was not unduly perturbed when, after several minutes, it cut out, I did some last minute fettling and had my lunch. When Paul arrived in his RAF greatcoat, balaclava, scarf and gauntlets, he clearly realised that I subscribe to the view that only softies ever put the hoods up.

It appeared that the bendix had jammed on the starter ring. I got down on my knees, trying to turn the flexible coupling, but this failed to wind it out. Rocking the car in gear, use of the starting handle and all the usual thing failed to move the engine, which appeared to be seized solid. I didn't expect to buy a 1929 car and not have to work on it, but I wasn't expecting major problems so soon, especially with Open University studies

starting on February 10th.

We had a cup of tea and agreed that I should have a chat with the previous owner. As he left, Paul said that if I had to take the engine down he would be glad to lend a hand. I think we both knew that this was inevitable. The previous owner confirmed that the bendix had jammed before, but within an hour of trying again, I knew the worst. Floor out of the car, starter motor assembly removed and an attempt to move the flywheel with a tyre lever wedged into the ring gear failed. More drastic, I pulled on a six foot

scaffold pole on the starter handle without budging the engine. I had a conflab with Paul at work... cylinder head off first.

Paul arrived the following Saturday, even though we had had a heavy snow fall the previous night. You can't keep a good man down. By this time the head was loose and supported on wooden blocks and I had noticed that one of the 7/16" BSF studs which hold the water top hose casting in place was very loose in its threaded hole. With Paul's help the bonnet was removed and the head lifted from the block.

There was nothing visibly wrong, everything loked normal, with plenty of oil around. We decided to remove the sump. The first of many mistakes I was to make during this unexpected overhaul was in draining off the oil. After removing two gallons, I took Paul into the house for some lunch, leaving the remaining oil to drain into a washing up bowl. When we returned, the bowl had overflowed, leaving a pool of oil just where we had to lie to remove the sump. We cleaned the mess up with old newspapers and jacked the car up onto axle stands. I have never known a sump held in place with so many fasteners and several ended up getting butchered, including the two, long, 5/16" BSF studs into the clutch housing. At last, the thing dropped onto two wooden blocks with a reassuring thud. Examination revealed some white metal slithers and a large Woodruff key. I never did find where that came from, perhaps it was put there as a red herring to confuse me.

We removed the cap from No 2 con rod and the whole bearing fell out in a heap of jig saw puzzle-like pieces. The engine was still locked solid. I removed the cap from con rod No 1 and the bearing showed the early stages of disintegration. No 3 would not split and No 4 appeared satisfactory. Using fox wedges and a copper mallet, No 3 was taken apart and the crankshaft rotated. This was enough for one day, the temperature was well below zero and we reeked like oil wells.

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### LAGONDA VINTAGE SERVICES

RICHARD FORSHAW

MANY USED PARTS FOR PRE-WAR LAGONDA MODELS REMAIN AND WE SHALL BE PLEASED TO ASSIST OWNERS WHERE SECOND HAND ITEMS IN GOOD CONDITION WILL SUFFICE My theory is that No 3 bearing broke up and a nugget of white metal about the size of a grain of corn blocked the oil hole through the crank pin. The resulting oil starvation led to overheating and melting. None of the white metal ran out, which saved the crank pins. Piston 3 was scuffed in two places and one of the piston ring slots had closed up and trapped the piston ring.

Next task was to remove the con rods and get them remetalled. I thought it would not be possible to pull the con rods and pistons out through the bottom of the engine. I should have read the manual more carefully, because it is. I popped each piston out of the top, far enough to remove the circlips and gently tap out the gudgeon pins with a brass drift. I slightly damaged two pistons, the circlip groove is very close to the piston side and a small fragment of aluminium fell away, exposing this groove in one place on each. Had I done the job the correct way I could have warmed the pistons before

pushing out the gudgeon pins.

Twelve days after my intended inaugural drive, I took the offending parts to Hamilton Engineering in Bexhill-on-Sea. I was introduced to an aged man who reminded me of a Druid. He wore a grey warehouse coat and was liberally doused in essence of honing oil aftershave. I asked him if they could ultrasonically test the newly metalled bearings to confirm the bonding (like they do in my Power Station with turbine bearings). He looked at me over the top of his half moon spectacles and said "Son, if it looks right, it is right". He promised to start the work right away. Journals 1.2 and 4 measured 1.963" Dia and I arranged to phone through the size of No 3 once I had cleaned it up, should it be different.

I carefully cleaned up No 3 journal and found that it was the same diameter as the others. I removed the big end caps either side of No 3 and took out the blanking plugs from the crankshaft, I was then able to push the white metal pellet out of the oilway and remove it. I inspected the main bearings, as they had been

remetalled at the same time as the big ends. All appeared to be well.

Hamilton's took just over a fortnight, but did a good job, they made up phosphor bronze pads, to convert the gudgeon pins to a fully floating arrangement. The total bill was £352.50 and how I begrudged the Chancellor his unearned 17.5% share.

A week later I had assembled all the reciprocating parts and Paul inspected my efforts as I did not want to face this work again. He also cleaned the sump and the faces of the head and block, by the end of the day the head was back on (unbolted) and the sump and engine front cover in place. Fortunately Paul noticed that I had fitted the head gasket the wrong way round, with the two inlet holes over

the three exhaust ports.

Re-assembly revealed other problems, the dynamo would not locate in its housing and Paul had to machine the housing and reverse the drive dog on its shaft before it would fit. That sloppy water hose top housing bolt pulled right out, so Paul made a bridge piece with a shorter stud. He also made two very handsome brass dome nuts to prevent water leaks here. The copper oil feed pipe to the rocker gear fractured and a kindly welder at work made up a new pipe, fully silver soldered, with a new BSP Wade fitting to replace a cracked original and annealed ready for bending into shape if required.

I took two days leave and Paul joined me on the second day for our first engine start. The engine was very tight, despite lashings of oil down the bores and the starter motor couldn't cope. The handle was also a struggle, requiring considerable muscle power to rotate the engine, then the solenoid packed up. We tried in vain to strip it, but whatever we did induced it to work and it has been

fine ever since.

We considered and rejected the idea of a tow start, then tried running her down the steep hill from my house. She fired readily in second gear, with a glorious sound from the copper exhaust pipe. We

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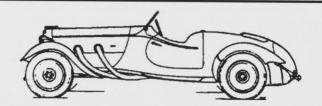
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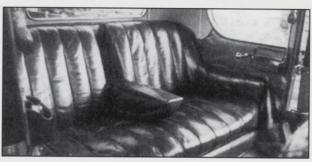
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16 MARPLE ROAD · CHARLESWORTH · VIA HYDE · CHESHIRE · SK14 6DA Tel. 01457 863617 (Office) · 01457 856313 (Fax) · 0585 296544 (Mobile) · 01457 864876 (Home) cut the engine almost immediately, the gauge failed to show any oil pressure, but oil was spewing from virtually all the banjo joints on the cylinder head. I had fitted oval section hollow copper washers in place of the original fibre washers and they were obviously unsuitable. The oil pressure gauge is a modern 0-100 PSI unit that barely moves at the engine's designed 20 PSI, I need to find a 0-40 PSI instrument.

Paul performed miracles that night, he checked the gauge for me and found that it took 20 PSI to register any movement. He also re-made a join on the oil pipe to the main bearing feed and soldered turned rings beneath the heads of the banjo bolts so that they located properly within the female banjos, then the oil pipes were refitted with new fibre washers.

The next day was the shot in the arm we both needed. She seemed oil tight and sounded healthy and we had a 10 mile round trip to Winchelsea Beach. We both mastered upward changes, but I made some desperate graunches in the downwards direction, She handled and rode well, with plenty of torque and performed better than we had expected. Paul gently urged me to keep the revs down on a couple of occasions, we stopped for petrol and checked the engine, all was well, except for the water pump, which leaked like a garden sprinkler.

Paul suggested that we should overhaul the water pump and starter motor, but these would not be the end of

my problems, far from it.

With the water pump off, I noticed that the slotted driving shaft was worn to almost paper thinness. I removed the shaft and housing as carefully as possible, but broke the aluminium housing across one of the four stud holes. I hung the driving chain up on a tyre lever, but unknown to me it was off the bottom 19 tooth sprocket.

Bob, the welder at work, came to my rescue again, building up the worn slot with TIG weld and, after many problems, repairing the aluminium housing with an invisible weld, re-shaping it and

redrilling the hole.

With Paul's help, we overhauled the starter motor, fitting new bearings, and rebuilt the water pump, with a new spindle and bush. The casing was badly corroded, so I resolved to buy a new water pump body, despite the £140 price tag. While at Paul's, Clare insisted that I joined them for proper meals. As a bachelor I spend far too much time at the fish and chip shops. As we re-assembled the overhauled parts, we noticed that the chain was off the bottom sprocket, so were able to put everything back in the proper position.

I had three more test runs over several days and found after each that the cylinder head nuts could be pulled down by as much as half a turn. Oil leaked badly from the water pump drive, I had assembled it without making sure that the drain hole was at the bottom. In taking it apart again, the bottom chain jumped off again and this time I turned

the engine and lost the timing.

With Paul's help, and with the instructions from Mr P Ridout, we eventually retimed the engine. The trick is to get pistons 1 and 4 to TDC using the starting handle and leaving the chain off the bottom sprocket. Then remove the split pin from the exhaust camshaft end nut and you can rotate the camshafts with a socket spanner, driving via the top chain, until the inlet and exhaust valve rockers are in the correct position with no load on the valves. Check the rotor arm position and the points that No 4 is about to fire, then put the bottom chain back on its sprocket. It took us several attempts to get this right before the settings corresponded with the flywheel timing mark.

The new water pump body casting was of good quality and well machined, but, in cleaning it up, someone had left a series of overlapping flats around its perimeter, I blended the worst of these with a file and finished it off with a glass bead blast. The new pump fouled a bolt

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Please note: to qualify for this offer you must be

- 1. A member of an RACMSA Recognised Club or
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THE NEW KNIGHTS OF THE ROAD

head on the cylinder block side cover, so I ground metal off the bolt head, rather than thinning the pump body further. I also fitted a new casting to the block to accept the suction hose as the original was wafer-thin. The whole water pump suction hose and pipe design seems poorly designed compared to the engineering excellence of the remainder

of the engine.

Regretably, I was destined to drop another clanger. The two 4" BSF tapped holes in the oil pump body to secure the suction pipe were in poor condition and one stripped. I removed the pump and helicoiled both holes, this meant removing the suction pipe from the sump.I disconnected it and pushed a twisted Sainsbury's plastic bag into the hole. You should only lose a droplet of oil if you're quick. I dismantled and cleaned the oil pump at the same time. When we first re-started the car, the pump primed almost immediately, this time it did not and I knocked out a big end and damaged the others in a mere 2/3 mile. The sump strip second time around was very slick indeed, but I felt gutted at making such a fundamental error.

Hamiltons did the work, including making a new con-rod bolt, in less than a fortnight, but I had Open University work to complete, which delayed me even longer. Feeding the pistons up through the bottom of the engine was difficult and, at Mr Ridout's suggestion, I had Paul make me a simple brass clamping ring which located in the bottom of the bore and allowed the piston to slip in, with the con rod hanging vertically down, all it took was a simple tap with a hide mallet.

The hand fitting of the big ends was a The bluing/ matter. scraping/hand fitting took several days and evenings and I had to return two to Hamiltons to re-machine as there was too much metal to remove by hand. Another fact I learned was that the con rod small end is off-set by 1/8" on one side. This off-set should point towards the centre of the engine, ensure that the stamped numbers on the half joint faces all point to the near side of the engine. It took a month to finish the work to my satisfaction.

Paul assisted with the sump fitting and by nine that evening we were ready to light the blue touch paper again. Priming the oil system by hand cranking with the plugs removed reduced us to perspiring wrecks before that reassuring spurt of oil was seen at the disconnected rocker gear pipe union. There was a sense of elation as I drove at dusk along our familiar switch back test route. We carried out a visual check of the engine, apart from a couple of oil drips, all appeared well. Paul then drove her home, the combination of a dear old car and the red sky kissing the tops of the hills made the trip extra special. This was what I had been waiting for all these months. She performed faultlessly and the small oil drip from a banjo fitting was soon fixed. A tiny oil leak from the exhaust camshaft casting is proving more persistent and lands a drip onto the exhaust manifold with the resulting unpleasant smell.

A repeat trip the following evening showed she was mechanically healthy at last, but the pair of us still need with practice considerable downward changes! A few days later I drove the fifty mile return trip to work. I left home 20 minutes earlier than usual, only to arrive in the car park 15 minutes early! At lunch time all the lads from the workshop came out for a viewing session and study of the engine. All were

enthusiastic and made my day.

My prose inadequately describes the backs and work. set disappointment associated with getting VR 3607 back on the road for the summer of 1996. In fact is is difficult to find words to convey how I feel after the first ownership. months of honeymoon period was over much quicker than I would originally have predicted, although I still get tremendous thrill as I open the garage doors and focus on my Lagonda. I liken

those super P100 headlights to looking into the eyes of a beautiful woman- you find yourself going weak at the knees and forgiving such a lot. As an act of faith, I committed myself to attending the visit to the Aston Martin factory in July and the AGM in September. I need a period of driving and enjoyment, where the car proves to be reliable and fun, before tackling any further major work. The MOT certificates show that the previous owner covered a consistent 2,000 miles a year since 1987. That kind of reliability would suit me. My neices and nephew are itching for me to take them for a spin through the lanes when next they stay for a week, they no longer simply want to play in an old car perched on axle stands.

My rear tyres can be described as "just legal". One wheel has five spokes which touch the brake drum, two have become loose in the few miles I have covered so far. The dynamo bearings rumble and need to be changed next winter. The black rubber rear lights are perished and almost shedding their lenses. I need to find a solution to the porous casting round the exhaust camshaft. The leak has existed for some while as there is a small patch of epoxy paint applied here, which has not solved the problem. The manual advance and retard does not work. None of these problems actually grounds the car, or can not be resolved with a little effort.

There are a few lessons that Club members can learn from my story:

- 1. Open university courses, demanding 15 hours study per week and Lagondas don't mix. I reckon I am 70 hours behind on my reading, I long for July'97 when I hope to succeed in my studies.
- 2. If you are a mechanical engineer used to estimating how long a job should take, assess the time needed on your Lagonda, then add a 500% contingency allowance.
- 3. Never try to hurry any job, or cut corners, because your time is precious. It will always find you out.
- 4. If you are feeling liverish and simply not in the mood for laying on your back on the garage floor with your arms in the

air, then stay indoors. You are likely to do more harm to your Lagonda than good.

On a more positive note, my baptism of fire has taken me from a complete 2 litre novice to one who understands his engine intimately in just a few short months.

I would like to thank all those Club members who have helped me both technically and with moral support when I have been foundering. I hope to have met you all by now and put faces to the voices on the telephone.

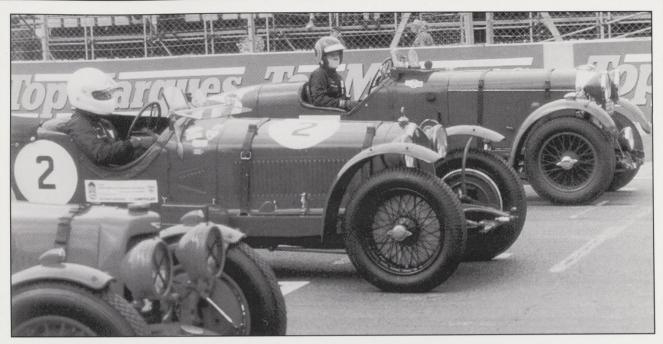
To Paul and Clare, words are not enough, but I can only thank you from the bottom of my heart for helping me and reaffirming the value and meaning of true friendship. Paul stuck with me to the end and did not suffer from compassion fatigue when the job dragged on.

To several skilled tradesmen at Dungeness "B" I offer my sincere thanks for the odd dinner hour job that got me out of a hole. There is an admirable array of trades to be found at this remote location.

I finish the story by returning to my immediate family. My Mum and sister can only look on in a state of bemused bewilderment at one whose priorities seem eccentric and curious. How can I live in a clean but austere batchelor pad, content with others' cast off furniture, yet have an expensive car in the garage? Why do I hang pictures of trains on the walls to cover the marks left by the previous owner's taste in art, rather than buy pots of paint? Mum thinks that people selling dodgy old cars see me coming. They have to admit, however, that life here is never dull. The family are convinced that only a very special kind of woman is likely to take me on.

Dad would have understood. He planted the seed (literally!), he and I were tarred with the same brush. My two real regrets are that I have been unable to share VR 3607 and my experience with him and that he never had the resources to own a car of the calibre of the Lagonda.

**Chris Deall** 



### Why not be on Pole next year?

We rebuilt the Engine and Chassis of Terry Cohn's Lagonda EPE 97 in very short time for this year's Coys' Cup race meeting. The car was driven to Silverstone, it achieved fastest lap on all three days and was only closely beaten into 2nd place overall.

The following week it was driven out to the Nurburgring where it competed in the Old Timer Grand Prix and came 3rd overall, only beaten by an Alfa Monza and an 8C Alfa, it was then driven home.

The next week the old lady was taken to her previous stamping ground Phoenix Park in Ireland where once again she behaved perfectly.

Simon Bull's Invicta is now producing 230 BHP. The torque exceeds 270 FT/LB from 2000 RPM through to 4200 RPM with a maximum of 312 FT/LB at 3500 RPM. These improvements to a standard Meadows 4.5 Litre produce a very exciting performance indeed! Simon's car is comfortable cruising at 100 MPH; has been timed at 125 MPH and yet is totally tractable in London traffic.

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Our hourly rate is extremely competitive and we always supply fully detailed worksheets.

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