

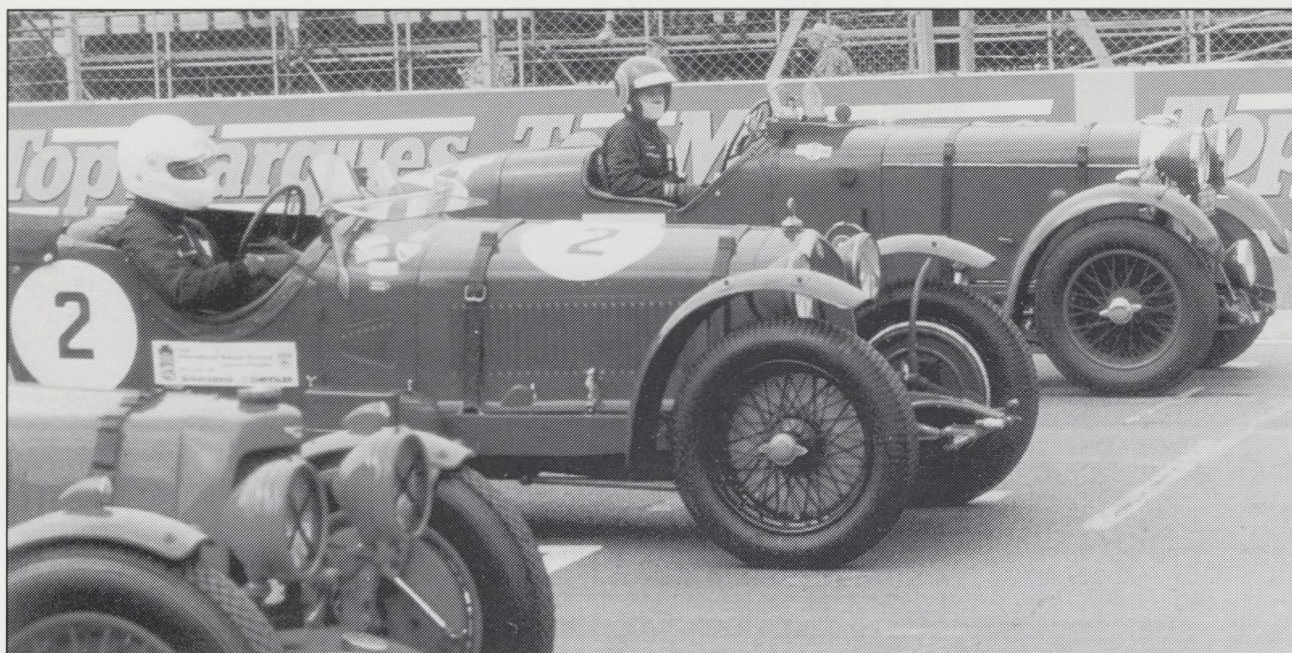
THE MAGAZINE OF THE LAGONDA CLUB

Number 173

Summer 1997



THE
Lagonda



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.

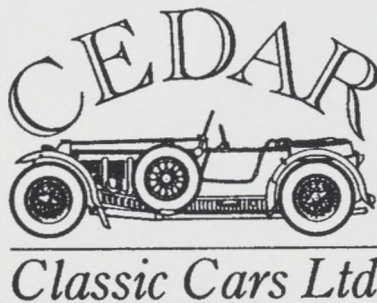
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MAGAZINE
Issue No. 173
Summer 1997

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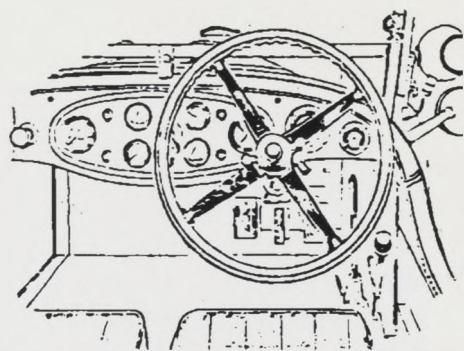
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FRONT COVER

*The proud navigator poses beside
GPA 41 at the end of the Rally Atlantic.
See article on page 10.*

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From the Driving Seat



IT LOOKS AS IF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY has finally caught up with your Editor, who is to take early retirement from the NHS (not from his Editorial role!) this autumn. I had wonderful visions of a new and more relaxed lifestyle, spending virtually all my time in the garage and playing with my big boy's toys, but I have been offered a part time post with a local publishing company, so it looks as if I can afford to keep playing in the garage and even carry on racing for a bit longer. As I write this, my actual retirement date is still under negotiation, but I may already have actually stopped work by the time the magazine reaches you.

In the last magazine, I asked if any other car used the ignition switch fitted to high chassis 2 litre cars. I still don't know the answer, but, thanks to James Woollard, this elusive spare has been found. James, like me, has a car for total restoration and as his is a high chassis tourer he was able to let me have the metal panel for the centre of the dash of a low chassis car. He was able to help me with some other spares as well, so his stock of parts is much reduced now! At this rate of progress I am going to run out of excuses very soon. Actually I will have one new one, the engineering company I use locally to do all my machining and to overhaul pre-war engines is about to close down. Perhaps that will be another excuse for moving house again!

After the Spring issue was printed, the reserve stock of articles for future editions was beginning to look very thin indeed. Happily the picture looks a little

better for the next edition at least, but please keep material flowing in and don't lose heart if it doesn't appear in the very next edition. We like to make every copy a mix of competition reports, social events, technical information and history - of the cars, the people, or the factory, with a bit of humour thrown in for good measure. Obviously, this isn't achieved every time, but it isn't for want of trying.

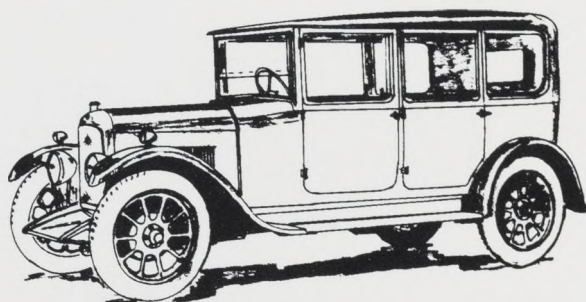
Unlike the commercial magazines available on the news-stands, "The Lagonda" isn't dependent on advertising revenue to ensure its regular publication, your subscriptions contribute the major source of funding. That said, we do need advertising to keep your subscriptions at an affordable level and to improve the quality of the magazine. Most of the advertisements we carry are placed by Club members and relate to their own businesses. We are truly grateful for their continued support and hope that you, in turn will consider using their services, but if you are part of a larger organisation, have you ever considered persuading your advertising manager to place his advertisements with us? It's a sad fact of life that Lagondas are no longer the cheap and cheerful motoring that my first 16/80 offered me, but it does mean that we can represent a very profitable market for the right products. Think about it!

Our Chairman's "Reflections" will give you an insight into the tremendous amount of hard work and forward planning that goes into arranging big events for the club. Sadly, on this occasion he is discussing an event which won't now take place because the costs

have escalated beyond our control and the logistics of planning an event in the States were looking more and more complex. We owe David a huge debt of gratitude for trying so hard to get the American trip off the ground and I am sure he is immensely disappointed that it has had to be abandoned, but, knowing David, he will never be able to stop thinking up challenging things for us to do. I had even been offered a car for the trip by a fellow member, so I am saddened too, but more and more of our members use their cars in events further

and further afield. You can't get further away than New Zealand and we have had two reports from intrepid members of their Rally experiences in the past few years. These overseas events are tremendous fun and need not be a car breaking exercise, although a few do offer a very real challenge to your mechanical expertise. If you have never attempted an overseas event there are plenty on offer, but do please make sure that they are properly recognised events if you hold a British competition licence!

K.P.P.



Special Message about the forthcoming AGM

YOUR AGM COMMITTEE HAVE BEEN PLANNING something very special for this year's get-together. The beautiful location of Phyllis Court, on the banks of the Thames at Henley, has been chosen for the 19th-21st September weekend. For those who only want to come for the A.G.M. day this is the Saturday, not the Sunday. However, things are planned from Friday through to Saturday night for those who want to make a weekend of it. Fuller details have been given in the Newsletter.

This time Aston Martin Lagonda have come up Trumps and donated a

huge marquee, for which we must thank them very much. They will bring some new cars to excite you and what I am asking is for as many of you as possible to bring your Lagondas to make it a spectacular display.

As this is my ultimate year as your Chairman, I asked Tony Mayes and his keen young A.G.M. committee to push the boat out a bit further this time. I hope you will all support us with your presence and, almost as important, with your Lagonda.

David Hine

Reflections

I SUPPOSE EUPHORIA IS THAT PERIOD OF TIME between thinking of something exciting and new, and realising it won't work out.

You see, we had this crazy suggestion that we should all drive our Lagondas to Lagonda in Springfield Ohio. Well, it was worth a go if we could get someone to help with the dosh!

I could hardly believe our luck when the directors of Aston Martin Lagonda Ltd. offered to ship all the cars over, absolutely free.

When over 90 members sent back the form to say they wanted to go, we got ourselves into serious planning mode.

A recce was called for, so the air flights were booked and three stalwart stateside members were warned of our imminent arrival, complete with half a ton of Yankee brochures.

I ignored the warning voices on the committee saying I was biting off more than I could chew..... after all, whatever you organise, someone tells you it isn't going to work!

Then came a body blow. Just before we left I got a phone call to say that the A.M.L. sponsorship offer had been withdrawn. No reason was given, but it coincided with what they call a boardroom reshuffle, so that was that.

By now I had so much mental momentum that even this did not stop me in my tracks, so off we went.

We enjoyed wonderful hospitality from Rudy and Jenny Wood-Muller, John and Susie Batt in Ohio and Nick and Jeanne Sewell in Maine. Without them, I fear our exhaustion would have turned

to total collapse! We were courteously received by Andrew Watt, the Vice President of A.M.L. in America. However, it was clear that they consider their heritage as the D.B. Astons and they see scant mileage in old Lagondas, fascinating as they may be.

The exhaustion came from the huge mileages involved, together with trying to select suitable hotels for large numbers of people. The guide books were very misleading and this involved a lot of doubling back and disappointments. Anything suitable seemed to cost an arm and a leg! Holidomes, which are revamped Holiday Inns are all weather play areas and full of ghastly kids! Sure, the smaller hotels are fine and quite reasonably priced, but no use for a big event.

In our desperation one night, after another 300 mile slog, we ended up at a Ceasar's Palace. We were shown to our log cabin and were startled to find inside a purple, heart shaped, jacuzzi, with wall and ceiling mirrors. Her indoors was not best pleased when the phone rang to ask when we wanted the photographer to join us....presumably when we were covered in soap suds!

The jewel in the crown was Springfield itself. John Batt and I set off on our journey of exploration and were delighted with what we found. We met fellow Club member Bob O'Connell, who showed us his fantastic collection of racing cars. Then we travelled south to Buck Creek State Park. They have dammed the river to form a huge reservoir and yachting marina, which looks great fun.



This is the site of Wilbur Gunn's house.



... and this would have been the view from his bedroom!



The Lagonda Elementary School.



The Lagonda Club Building.

We followed the river down into Springfield and the main road actually becomes Lagonda Avenue as it passes through what must have been the village of Lagonda. Here we found the Lagonda Elementary School and the Lagonda Methodist Church. It would be nice to think that our Wilbur learnt and worshipped at these establishments. Further into town we found Old Lagonda Road and even the Lagonda Travel Agency, although the staff inside had never heard of Lagonda cars!"

In the centre of Springfield, amid a mixture of old factories, historic Town Hall and modern office blocks, we found the Lagonda Club. Now, alas, empty, but a beautiful building ripe for restoration. Apparently in Springfield's heyday the influential in the town met in the Lagonda Gentlemen's Club and generally fixed things oh happy days! The Springfield Inn would be a perfect place to stay in the centre of town, one of the few we found. Here we were entertained to lunch by the members of the Historical Society, who were very excited by the thought of a visit in 1999. It would combine with the start of their bi-

centennial celebrations. If only we could beam everyone over there as they do from Starship Enterprise, instead of hurdling import-export agents, not to mention extortionate insurance rates and various others wanting their palms crossing with dollars. Still, we ran around taking pictures, to the evident alarm of some of the "resting" community, who guessed we were a drug bust or worse!

It's an interesting thought that if our Wilbur had been more like the other chaps who started car companies and named them after themselves, we might all be driving around in Gunns - or more likely not at all.

So, once we got back and over the jet lag, then began to work out what was involved, it just seemed that it was impossible without the benefit of a professional organisation and, either way, the cost would go through the roof. With huge reluctance and the guidance of my colleagues on the Committee, we have decided to cancel the whole idea. So sorry to disappoint so many. Euphoria evaporated, for a while at any rate!

DHR



The Rally Atlantic

IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME! A few days in France and Spain, with the emphasis on enjoyment and not too much competition, plus varied cars and like-minded people. Margaret and I thought it a pleasant way of going crackers for a week!

Unfortunately, as the departure got closer, we realised that it did not quite fit in with the boys' holiday arrangements.

We did consider taking the Speed 6, however, whilst it is splendid up front, for the poor sods at the back it is really quite tiresome, so this was "kicked into touch".

Mark, my eldest, offered his services, which I readily accepted, completely discounting the fact that he had never navigated before, that being settled, we then prepared our LG45 Rapide GPA 41. Departure took place on 4th April, from our home town, Sheffield, to Portsmouth. Approximately five trouble-free hours later, we arrived at the dockside. We were met by Peter Davis, Karen, Ian and Caroline and were then issued with our Rally plates. After preliminary inspection of the vehicle in company with another 20 vehicles (Jaguars, Ferraris, Morgans and Healeys, etc.), including a splendid 2 litre belonging to David and Pam Inns, we boarded. We then made our way to our cabins and to a segregated part of the dining area to allow us the opportunity to get to know each other over dinner.

After a pleasant crossing we arrived at St Malo and had a most enjoyable relatively leisurely drive with some regularity. We arrived at La Baul, where we were met by one of the sponsors of the event, Comte Audoin de Dampierre, a most charming gentleman, as well as the owner of the champagne vineyards, which were well sampled!

He has a Lagonda, an M45 tourer. He was very complimentary about the

Rapide and we were given an invitation to visit him, which we will certainly endeavour to do some time in the future. A superb dinner followed and the next day saw us motoring down to La Rochelle, where yet again we were greeted with champagne and oysters in copious quantities. It was hell, I can tell you!

Rochelle is a most charming town, where the reception from the locals was tremendous. Anyone who has not travelled abroad in a "proper car" should immediately avail themselves of the opportunity.

To date Mark and I had only made one small hiccup and we were running strongly. Most importantly the car was behaving perfectly and gave us great peace of mind. We then motored through France and took the ferry across the Gironde. Unfortunately, David had experienced a few problems with the 2 litre, namely a fractured oil pipe. However, with the help of the hotelier and a local mechanic, who did a better than new repair, he was soon running again. David mentioned later that he could have caught the ferry, had it not been for the fact that the mechanic and the hotelier insisted on toasting the successful repair and the opportunity of working on a "proper car", with bottles of wine. David did, however, catch up with us later.

That evening, we donned our finery to stroll the boat, where a gourmet dinner had been arranged, plus a splendid six piece band. The evening started with more champagne and oysters and the dinner was perfect. Dancing went on until quite late, as did the wine and it was a most memorable evening. Next day, many of the participants were showing signs of the previous night's entertainment, though everyone and, indeed, all the cars, set off for the



In the Square of Santaliana Del Mar.



The final T.C. and finish near Santander.

parador at Hondarribia in Spain, an utterly charming route, through vineyards and forests.

A lunch was partaken at a small restaurant recommended by Peter Davis, with river views, which served the most exquisite fish food. The parador at Hondarribia was very impressive and overlooked the old town. On arrival, the various parties split up and chose one of the civilised restaurants for an evening meal.

The next day we had quite a photograph session in front of the parador, before setting off for what proved to be one of the longest days, arriving at a most exquisite parador at Santillana del Mar, approximately 30 miles outside Santander. Margaret and I have stayed there in the past and, for anyone motoring in the area, this village is a must. It is virtually untouched and is truly charming.

After dinner, the people were given their awards. I think everyone got something, it was that type of event. However, Lagondas were well represented and we were fortunate to win our class and the Rapide was voted the most desirable car, for which we received some splendid crystal goblets. David, in his 2 litre, won the spirit of the Rally Award, in view of his hiccups.

The next day was easy, we left the parador late morning to motor to Santander, where we sailed at 2.00 pm. An impressive lunch was had on board, followed by dinner and, after a very relaxing crossing, we arrived in Plymouth the following morning at 12.00 am. The drive home to Sheffield, approximately 300 miles, in total took us 5 1/2 hours and was absolutely trouble free. We used a pint of oil and topped up the radiator to the tune of approximately one pint of water for the whole event. We covered approximately 1500 miles on the event, plus the journeys to and from the docks.

Very few of the cars on the event experienced any great problems, the most cause for concern was for a Morris 1800 Landcrab with three occupants. They were using the rally as a

shakedown trial in preparation for doing the Peking to Paris later this year.

Having done more competitive events over the years, I would like to emphasise that a properly prepared Lagonda would do this event easily and I would urge anyone to consider contacting the organisers. Peter and his team have set about to create an event primarily based on enjoyment and with like-minded people, above average accommodation and with just a small amount of competition to add spice. They have succeeded admirably.

The organisers are limiting these gatherings to approximately 20 vehicles, so they can be selective in choosing good accommodation with safe parking, interesting routes and good restaurants. This they have certainly achieved.

If the foregoing is of interest, please contact the organiser, Mr Peter Davis, Classic Eurosport Ltd, 42 Burley Road, Bockhampton, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 7AJ.

I hasten to add that I have no vested interest in the event, other than to make the Club aware of what might be a most enjoyable few days away. Perhaps next year we can have a Lagonda team!

The only down side of the event is that my trousers have shrunk and I think I shall have to relinquish the title "snakehips" for some time to come!

Finally, Mark, who is just 15, not only did extremely well, only "wrong slotting" twice in the whole event, but he thoroughly enjoyed himself.

On reflection, as previously mentioned at the start, it was indeed a good idea!

It perhaps is worthy of noting that last year, 1996, Margaret and I did the European Rally. The event started in Holland with approximately 40 cars. We were on this occasion the only English participants. All the cars were put on the overnight train to Narbonne. We then had a few days in the south of France and in the Catalonian region of Spain, then back up to Biarritz, finishing up in Holland. In total approximately 2½ thousand miles. Once again with no trouble.

Roy Hatfield

James Crocker's Competitive Motoring

THE OBITUARY OF JAMES CROCKER in the Autumn "Lagonda" gave very few details of his competitive record. Those members who knew him only in recent years may not have realised that he was competing in Lagondas for at least 43 years. Some details of his achievements and the cars he ran can be gleaned from back numbers of the magazine and from the Registers.

His name appears in the 2 Litre register of January 1949, as the owner of a 16/80 tourer of November 1933 vintage, which he had bought in June 1947. His membership number was 123 out of 212, so he probably joined soon after he bought the car. This would have been while he was still at Cambridge and before he was married.

The first competitive mention in the magazine seems to be in issue 5, where he was mentioned taking part in the "Lagonda 24 Rally" (it lasted 24 hours) on March 1/2 1952 in the 16/80. In the spring of 1953, he entered the Bentley Drivers' Club Eastbourne Rally, again in the 16/80, when he "did well on the road". This event became one of his favourites. He ran in that year's November Handicap, a Club event. His interest in photography was alive in those days, as there is a photograph taken by him in the Summer 1954 edition.

He raced the 16/80 at the 1955 8 Clubs Silverstone meeting, where he ran a big end, having done a 1:47 lap. As a result, he competed in the following Summer Rally in a hired Standard 10, winning his class. The report said it was fortunate that no representative of the hire company was present to hear the revs the engine was taken to. The 16/80 was fit again for the BDC Silverstone race meeting and he won the Club's Night

Trial Trophy. There is a photo in issue 20 of him being presented with the cup by film star Susan Beaumont.

He appeared for the first time in his "new" 4 1/2, the very handsome 1937 LG45R tourer DXU 163, that he bought from Archbell, at the 1956 Southern Rally and he took it to the BDC Firle hill climb that autumn. The 16/80 was sold to Symonds, who was on leave from Malaya. In 1957 he won the Club's April Social and did Firle again, but it seems he did not race. That was the year he and the Rapide spent three weeks in Spain for the filming of "Chase a Crooked Shadow". In the summer of 1958 he was a member of a 4 1/2 litre team that came 3rd in the Singer Owners' Club driving tests. The Rapier team won and the 2 litre team was 2nd; what happened to the Singers? At the combined Lagonda/AC Owners' Club sprint meeting at Brands Hatch he was, in his standard Rapide, within 6 seconds of the class winner, Billy Michael in the modified Team LG45R. He also raced at Silverstone at least twice, putting in a 1:29.2 lap. He was 5th overall in that year's BDC Eastbourne, when Richard Hare was 2nd. The following year he was 2nd, with Richard 3rd. At the 1959 Southern Rally he was second in a class that mixed Rapiers with 4 1/2s, the theory being that the acceleration of the big cars would overcome the manoeuvrability of the small ones, but it did not quite work out. At some time during the summer, the LG45R seemed to have suffered mechanical problems, because he appeared in his vast 3 1/2 litre saloon, the Duchess, BLL 79, at the BDC Silverstone and again at the September Social. He had bought the Duchess as acceptable family winter transport and for occasions when tidy clothes were

required, but he still lapped Silverstone in under 1:52. There is a wonderful photo of this in issue 33.

In 1960 he was 4th (?) in the BDC Eastbourne Rally, when the Lagonda team of Crocker - Hare - Smith won the team prize, beating not only the best Bentley team, but also the Metropolitan Police. He ran in the VSCC High Speed Trial at Silverstone in the LG45R, when he lapped in under 1:29. He was so far ahead of his qualifying speed that he did the last two laps in top gear. The Duchess was sold to Staermose and was replaced for family transport by a very elegant LG6 saloon, MG 5883. In July the Lagonda team of Crocker - Overy - Barnett (Rapier) were 4th in the VSCC Relay Race and he won that year's Southern Rally. He also ran at a driving test meeting in the LG45R against 28 modern cars and, in spite of the tests being unsuitable for big cars, he still managed to win an award. He won the November rally again. He ran at both the VSCC and the BDC Silverstone. At the end of the year the first three places in both the Fox and Nichol and Michael Trophies were the same - Barnett, Crocker, Bugler. The Fox Trophy was awarded to Barnett and James was awarded the Michael. That was a good year for him. He won the Michael trophy again in 1967, 1969 and 1977. 1960 was the first time there was a car other than a Lagonda in the family, his wife's Mini.

In 1961 he did the VSCC Measham Rally in the LG6 saloon, which must have been a handful for him, but luxury for his navigator. In the BDC Eastbourne Rally he was in the Rapide. This event consisted of a night navigation run of about 300 miles, starting after dark on Friday night, often from somewhere near Oxford and ending on the front at Eastbourne. Sometimes there was a breakfast stop before the final section into Eastbourne, other years breakfast was at the end. The driving test started at 10.30 am on a closed section of the front with, in later years, the Rally finishing by lunchtime. In earlier years there was a

"do" in Eastbourne on Saturday night and the Firle Hill Climb took place on Sunday. In 1961 at the end of the road section there were only two with a clean sheet, James and a Metropolitan Police driving instructor. Could James in the big Rapide beat the hot Wolsley 6/99 squad car? His first runs were not his usual standard, but he settled down for the second runs and got a good aggregate score. Could the policeman better it? He could not and so James finally won the BDC Eastbourne after many attempts and on what seems to have been the last time it was run. That year at the April VSCC Silverstone, he won one race and was 3rd in another. In the VSCC Driving Tests he won a 1st class award and in the Club's November Handicap, also based on Measham, he won the class award. That was in the Rapide, to the disappointment of his navigator, who was hoping for the comfort of the VSCC Measham LG6 saloon.

In 1962 and 1963 he continued to compete at race meetings and in rallies and driving tests in the LG45R. The 1962 Register shows that, as well as the Rapide and the LG6 saloon he had bought a 1935 Rapier, AHN 730 and he had a 1924 12/24 tourer YA 6646. Was this so that he could compete in the VSCC Light Car section events? In the 1963 Club's November Rally he won the big car class in the Rapide and was second overall. That was the year when the weather was foul and only eight cars finished. Although some members were in moderns, at least five of the finishers were in pre-war Lags. In 1963 he lapped Silverstone in the Rapide in 1:26.

In 1964 James raced the Rapide two or three times before selling it to Charles Green, who had been a regular competitor in a 2 litre. In the apparent absence of anything more suitable, James drove an Austin Chummy in the Southern Rally.

In 1965, James was competing in the Rapier, which had been converted into a fairly basic, but road legal, two seat racer. However, at the BDC Silverstone, he was

driving a DB V12, one of the 1954 Le Mans cars, with 305 bhp and a top speed of 150 mph. His lap speed was not given, but Maurice Leo in a similar car did 1:15.4. He also drove it in the 1966 VSCC Pomeroy Trophy, where he recorded 16.19 for the standing quarter mile. In 1965 he won the Fox Trophy.

Unfortunately the Rapier was damaged at Oulton in 1966 - not by James - and as a result he had nothing to drive for a year. The next time he was out seems to have been at the 1967 July VSCC Silverstone and the BDC Silverstone, followed next day by the Lagonda/BDC driving tests at Finmere, all in the Rapier. At Silverstone his fastest lap was 1:34.2 and he was the best Lagonda at Finmere. In the November Handicap, run for the first time for 5 years, he drove his Bentley R - the replacement for the LG6 - into eighth place.

The only mention in 1968 was at BDC Silverstone, where his racing tyres were quite unsuitable for the wet track. That year's Register lists only the Rapier, so the 12/24 must have been sold by then. In 1970 he was due to drive Maurice Leo's DB V12 again at the BDC Silverstone, but had to withdraw because of incontinence, the car that is. He must have raced his Rapier quite often, because he achieved second place in the 1970 Motor Sport's Brooklands Memorial trophy. The 1971 Register still lists only the Rapier. The 12/24 was then listed as an 11.9 owned by Symonds. At the 1970 April Silverstone he won one race with a lap of 1:24 and was equal first in another race, an unusual result. In 1972 he was out in the Rapier again, appearing at, amongst other places, Thruxton, where the VSCC had a meeting. In January 1973 he was a member of the official party for "The Drive into Europe" from London to Brussels to celebrate (?) Britain's entry into the EEC. On the return journey he drove Robbie Hewitt's team car, BPK 203, with such gusto that it worried

Robbie. Later in 1973 he ran at Nurburgring, winning two out of three races and, at BDC Silverstone, where he broke a piston. There is in issue 83 a photo of James and Peter Hunt in the Rapier taking part in the 1973 Mille Miglia. As the Rapier is pretty spartan, one can only hope that the weather was kind to them.

He did not seem to run in 1974, appearing on his motor cycle at Finmere, but he was racing again in 1975 and 1976. In 1977 he won the BDC/Lagonda Silverstone race. He continued to race in AHN 730, but the 1979 Register shows he had bought a second Rapier, BHP 492 (1934), for converting into a single seater racer with an AC engine. In 1980 he ran in the VSCC Loire Rally, with his stepson as co-driver in the Rapier. At the BDC Silverstone he had an epic 8 lap neck-and-neck dice with David Hine, nipping past the "white car" on the corners, but losing out to 4 1/2 litres on the straights. At the finish there was only one tenth of a second separating them. There is a good photo of this dice on the cover of issue 108 and another in issue 169.

He ran AHN 730 at Nurburgring in 1981 again and he was second at Donington and Oulton. In 1983 he ran in the VSCC Isle of Man Rally and won a cup in the navigation event. The first mention of the new Rapier racer was in issue 123, when he got a 3rd place at Oulton in 1984. He also got a place in the VSCC Jubilee Driving Tests. In issue 124 there are two photos of the AC Rapier. Unfortunately there are no lap times for this Rapier on the old Silverstone Club circuit, but in 1990 he did a sub 1:45 lap on the revised circuit. That year he did a 2:10.3 lap at Cadwell, which is just slower than his 2:7.9 lap there 10 years earlier in AHN 730.

James continued to compete, mainly at race meetings, in one or other of the Rapiers up until 1996. When not competing he often came on his motor cycle to watch, or marshalled, especially at the VSCC Lakeland trial, where he ran a section.

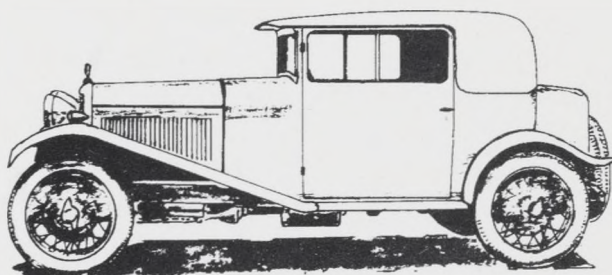
James was first elected to the Club Committee in 1956 and, in 1958, he became Chairman, holding the post until 1966. He was elected President in 1971.

James was not a "spanner man", nor was he an expert on any particular model of Lagonda, or any period of history of the marque. He just enjoyed driving Lagondas competitively.

This brief resume of just some of his

motoring achievements shows that, in addition to the time he devoted to the Club as a Committee member, Chairman and President, he supported the Club in all kinds of sporting events, consistently and with great verve, for many more years than any other member has done. As his obituary said, he was unique; there will never be another James.

A.J.Loch



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A Tool to Change 16/80 Valve Springs

RETURNING FROM THE LAGONDA MEET at Chaddesley Corbet in April, I had the misfortune to suffer a valve spring breakage. Whilst, in itself, not the end of the world, I was a bit miffed as the 16/80 was undergoing its first run after the usual winter overhaul and I was reluctant to lift the cylinder head so soon.

After my phone call to the Spares Secretary, ensuring rapid delivery of a new pair of springs, I was left pondering on how to replace the springs without either a second pair of hands, or lifting the head. Lagonda issued a gadget for precisely this situation and I remembered seeing a photograph of one somewhere, but despite a trawl through all my Lagonda literature, I couldn't find it. Arnold Davey tells me that there is an illustration in the 2 litre handbook, but of course as a 16/80 owner there was nothing in my handbook. So it was to the junk and scrap boxes in the workshop that I had to turn. The result was a Rigid Valve Support Tool, or A Second Pair of Hands.

Parts found in the junk box:

A scrap NGK 18mm spark plug.

A 6" 5/16 dia steel stud with one end stripped and the other mangled.

A 3"x1/2 Whit Hex Head set screw with squashed threads.

A 5/16" BSF Nyloc nut with nylon locking patch missing.

2 similar, but complete and only mild corrosion.

A flat mild steel pressed spanner, with hexagon one end and a point the other. Probably from a kitchen flat pack.

Plant required:

A grindstone, blowlamp, hacksaw, vice, heavy hammer, power drill and drills, taps, dies and punches for 5/16"

BSF and an old leather glove to hold the 5/16 rod when you heat it.

Method:

Start with the spark plug. Clamp it firmly in the vice and then smash out the ceramic insulation and the central electrode. Clean out the body, not forgetting the series of sealing rings that are in the middle. Grind off the earth electrode and then grind down the top to a smooth finish, leaving about a 1/16 shoulder.

Grind down the faulty nyloc nut until the hexagon is 1/8" thick and the coned diameter is just a slide fit into the bottom of the plug body. Do not reduce the depth of the nut as the more there is the more steady will be the tool in operation.

Cut off the head of the 1/2" set screw, leaving about 3/8" of the shank. Mark off, punch and drill down the centre, then tap 5/16" BSF right through. This is the top centre and clamp for the tool.

Now we come to the skilful part. In order to determine the centre of the valve face in relation to the centre of the plug hole and the outer face of the plug hole and the angle of the plug hole in relation to the valve face, I used a length of thick plumber's solder and touches of engineers blue. Use a fairly thick stick of solder, because you will have to bend and straighten it several times before you have the best shape and angle setting. When you are satisfied that you have the best possible shape, transfer it to the 5/16" dia rod. This is where the blowlamp, old glove and heavy hammer come in. After you have bent and shaped one end of the steel rod to an exact copy of the solder rod, polish the face smoothly, as you do not want to damage any internal surfaces. Finally, run the

5/16 BSF die down the length of the rod to about 1/2" from the angle of the bend.

Assemble the tool by first screwing down the cone shaped 5/16 nut to the end of the thread, cone shape pointing away from the hook. Then wind back three threads. Slide the spark plug body down the threaded rod until the bottom of the body fits over the coned nut. Next, screw down the 1/2" hexagon for an inch or so.

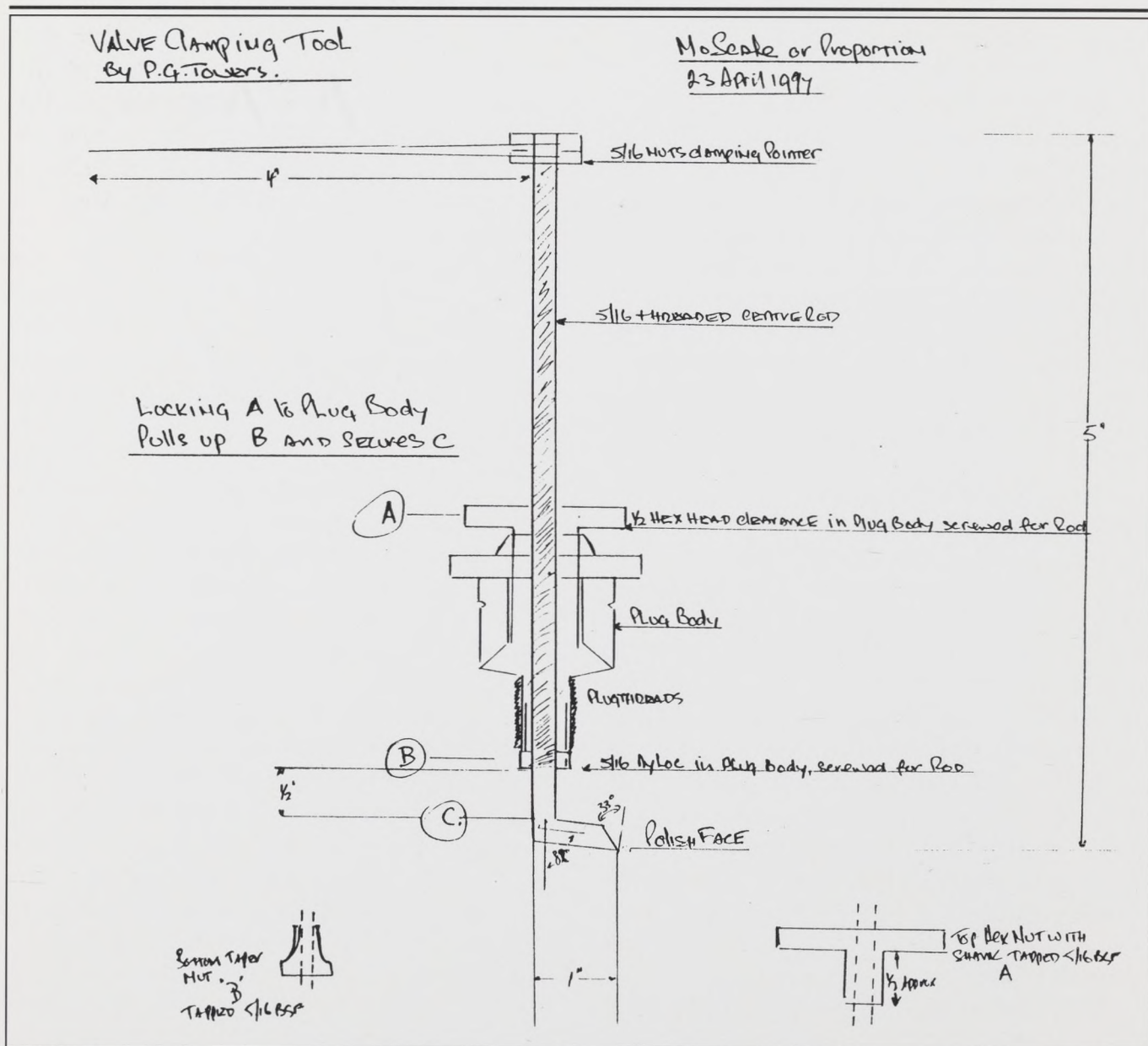
Screw on one 5/16 nut, then your pointer made from the flat pressed spanner, then lock in place at 180 degrees to the hook with the last nut.

Mode d'emploi: Insert the hook end through the plug hole and screw home

the sparking plug body, pull up the rod until the taper nut enters the plug body, then screw down the top nut with the pointer at about 25 minutes past. Gently press down on the valve stem to check the support is in position, then clamp down the top nut. You are then free to change the valve springs using both hands, secure in the knowledge that the valve will not drop into the cylinder.

The drawing accompanying these notes should help clarify the construction and operation. Note that there is adjustment for reach by screwing cone nut "B" up or down shank "C", but height is fixed.

P G Towers



16/18 Valve Spring Tool.



David Hine presents the Michael Trophy to Terry Brewster.

Stanley Sedgwick

THE LAGONDA CLUB WERE REPRESENTED at the Thanksgiving Service, held at Guildford Cathedral, for the life of Stanley Sedgwick, Patron of the Bentley Drivers' Club. The weather on 17th January was damp and dreary, but this did not deter a number of drivers from bringing their cars, notably those who now own the cars which, at one time, belonged to Stanley. Arranged before the west door of the Cathedral were Bentleys ranging from 3 litre, through 4 1/2, Speed Six and 8 litre, to the sleek modern Turbo R. A fitting tribute to the man described as "The Architect of the Bentley Drivers' Club", of which he became Secretary in 1945, President in 1948 and Patron in 1980.

The congregation of more than 200 were welcomed by the Dean and there followed a very moving service, during which words of remembrance were spoken by his grandson, Nick Slater and by the Club's President, Ray Wiltshire.

We were told of a life packed full of interest, which he pursued with almost fanatical zest, be it cracking codes at GCHQ during the war, or his fair but somewhat autocratic leadership of the Club. This from a man who some described as being shy and detached, but who cared deeply about things and always sought to make a balanced judgement.

His contribution to the Bentley Drivers' Club over 51 years is immeasurable and must have taken every spare moment of his time. Even so, his interests embraced other marques as well and he found time to attend Lagonda Club dinners. He will be greatly missed by the motoring fraternity but, happily, we can read about his exploits in the many articles and books he wrote, of which, perhaps, "Motoring my Way" is best remembered.

John Foulsham

Mille Miglia 1997

THE MILLE MIGLIA IS THE EVENT FOR HISTORIC CARS and is oversubscribed every year by some hundreds of applicants. I was therefore delighted to hear that, after several attempts, the Lagonda was accepted this year as one of the 360 participants. The car is a 1932 3 litre, with a competition history that commenced in the 1950's, when owned by a London newspaper seller. I have owned the car since 1979 and have raced and rallied it extensively at home and abroad.

My navigator was Phil Pirie, a long standing friend, whom I hoped would still be so at the end of the trip! We arranged to meet at Brescia, the starting point, near Milan on the morning of May 1st - the start being 9 pm of that same day. My wife Carmen planned to get the car there via the overnight Calais-Nice train and a drive via Genoa.

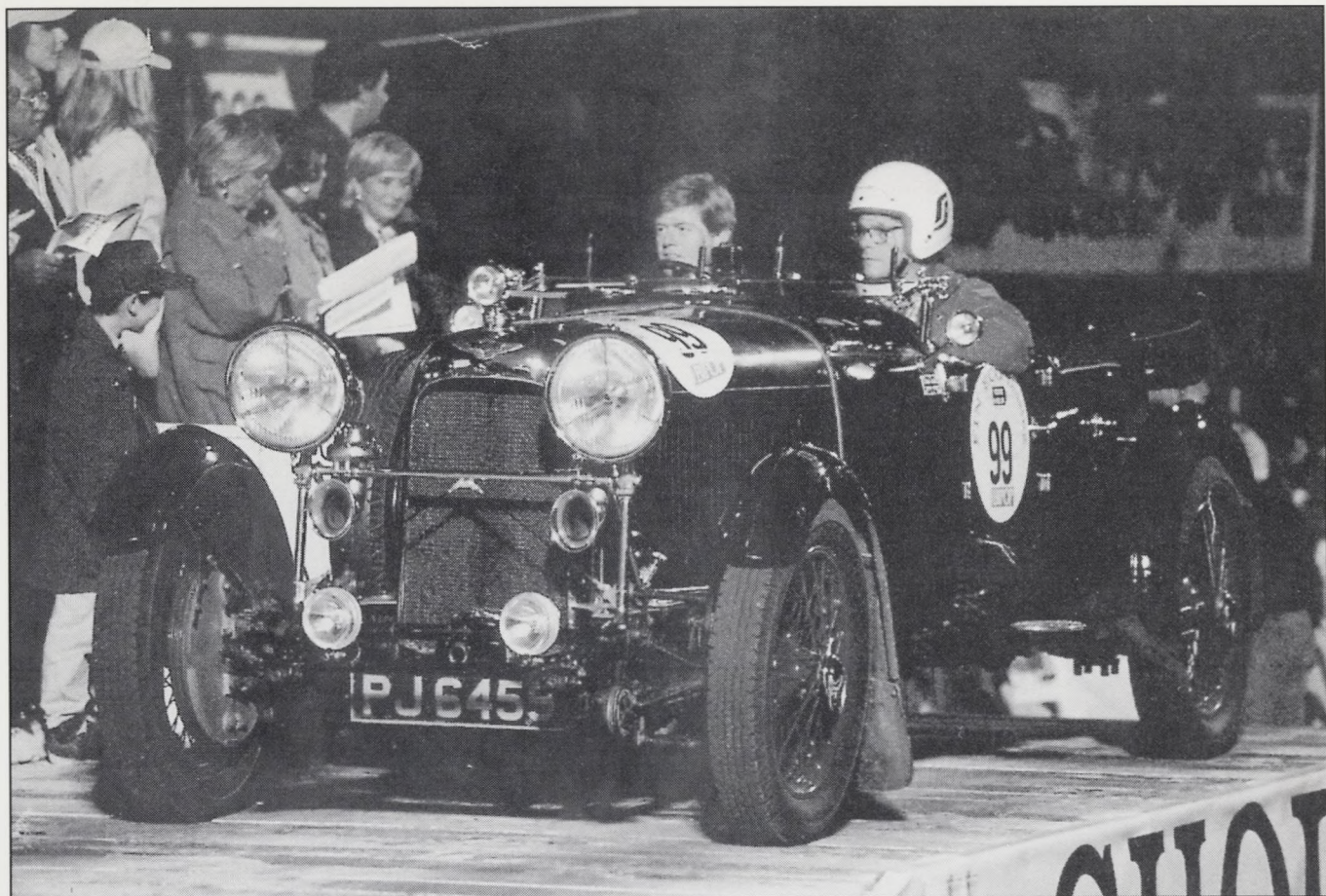
By the time my wife and I reached Genoa on Tuesday afternoon, all was going swimmingly. The car lapped up the miles with no problem at all, the weather was beautiful, likewise the scenery. Then trouble struck. Coming out of a fuel stop I noticed that the battery wasn't charging. With an old car, driving during the day with no battery isn't a problem because the magneto makes its own current, but there was night driving to do and lights would be required, for which the battery most certainly would be needed.

About two hours from Brescia we left the motorway and pulled in to the first garage. It was shut, but there we met Etzio, who offered to lead us to an electrical repairer, which he did, but with no resolution to the problem. Etzio then led us to a hotel nearby and we ended up with a group of locals round the bar, discussing what to do. By then it was 6 pm. One gentleman, who had very

obviously been taking an extended lunch, offered to get a mate to look at the car and off he went. Etzio told us that the mate was a rally driver and a bit like the professor in "Back to the Future"! The professor, Giovanni, duly arrived, with a retinue of followers and, after more discussions, we drove to his workshop, the dynamo was taken off and Giovanni worked on it until 1 am.

Next morning, it was reassembled and we took it to the electrical shop for testing, where all was pronounced OK. The dynamo was refitted to the car, the instruments indicated that it was charging and off we went, to the cheers of the locals, only to return 10 minutes later, when the charging stopped once more. Off came the dynamo again, more work on it, off to the electrical shop again and, by 6 pm the problem had not been resolved - and we had to get to Brescia! We purchased a spare battery, but it had to be charged. Giovanni offered to do this overnight and then to drive to Brescia the next day in time for us to fit the battery before the start.

Thursday morning, we arrived at the check-in, to be presented with our numbers, maps, route timings, etc and also a number of goodies reminiscent of The Generation Game, namely: a swiss watch, a kit bag, a holdall, two books, two caps, two jerkins, a shower head (!), a model of a Mercedes, a torch, two sweatshirts, a key ring, a pair of driving gloves, with only the cuddly toy missing. The route papers informed us that there were to be about 36 time trials over the drive, where fixed average speeds had to be maintained, penalties to be incurred for default at the rate of 100 per second. We also had to be sure to arrive at certain places not before or after a certain time. Phil went off to spend a couple of hours on his own, working this all out (he is an



No, it's not Robert Redford . . . Kip and Phil at the start, Brescia.



Outside St. Peter's, Rome.

accountant and proved expert at the figures).

I am now in seventh heaven. The car is going well in spite of the battery, we are in a beautiful medieval city, surrounded by beautiful cars - Ferraris, Maseratis, Bugattis, Bentleys, Alfa Romeos, Fiats, Mercedes, Jaguars, Lagondas, etc. All cars built between 1927 and 1957 and which did compete in the original races, or would have been eligible to do so, may enter. This year about one third of the cars were pre-war.

At 7 pm, there was a reception for the teams in a medieval monastery. The cars were parked in the ancient courtyard and we were treated to an excellent buffet. At 8 pm we met with our Italian helpers, Giovanni, Etzio, Massimo and others, all of whom had come to see us off, and changed the battery.

By 8.30 there was a huge line of cars ready for the "off", to be started at 20 second intervals. Thousands of Italians cheering us, bright lights, a fantastic atmosphere. 9:33, it was our turn, as No 99, to be up on the starting ramp and we were away, using one side light, one headlight and one rear light.

Our target was Ferrara, via Verona, a drive of only about 120 miles, but with time checks and stops we did not expect to arrive much before 1 am.

It was not long before I noticed a blue flashing light behind and a Police motorcyclist pulled alongside. Oh dear, not enough lights! "Many cars 'ave zee electrical problems" he said and whizzed off. In fact the police were terrific and joined in the fun all the way!

We arrived in Ferrara, to be greeted by thousands more Italians and paraded round a beautiful square, overlooked by medieval palaces. Drinks were offered and gratefully accepted and a roar of approval was given when I lifted the radiator cap of the Lagonda and poured in a glass of wine. A meal, and to bed at 3 pm, only to get up at 6 am for a 7.30 start on the next leg, to Rome, 430 miles away.

Friday was another glorious day. The countryside was absolutely stunning and we seemed to drive from one hill top medieval town to another, passing through delightful villages en-route, with Italians en masse to wave and cheer us on. The schoolchildren obviously had the day off, because they were in each village and town, rising as one to welcome us with waving of arms and flags. We passed through the gems of San Marino, Urbino, and Gubbio, often with a civic reception in the medieval town square, with drinks and gifts being given to us. By now, we realised that the car was a great hit with the locals, perhaps even more so than the Ferraris and more modern machinery. "Bella, bella, bella machina!" was the cry! Having arrived at each town square somewhat hot and thirsty, with the car overheating as a result of normal uphill crawl, sharp right angled turn into the medieval gateway, sometimes with a three point turn or more to complete the exercise and slowly driving through medieval streets no more than eight feet wide, trying to avoid thousands of Italian toes with 1 1/2 tons of motor car, these receptions invigorated us and the car for the next step onwards towards Rome.

We passed through Assisi. What a beautiful town! more overheating, which even local drinks could not cure, necessitating pouring three bottles of local mineral water over the carburettors, before attempting the climb of the mountain behind the town. The climb was quite something, with the road degenerating into a dirt track and passing over the snow clad peak. Picked up the first dirt of the drive, which has even now not been washed off and part of which I shall scrape off to keep as a souvenir. Unfortunately one very expensive Ferrari proved to have less grip on the way down than the Lagonda and ended up, somewhat diminished in size and on its roof. Driver OK, happily, though somewhat shamefaced.

It was getting dark as we entered Rome and what an experience it was,

driving through the cheering crowds up to St Peter's. I swear I saw the Pope giving us a quick peek through one of the windows. Getting out of the car, I found my legs would not stop trembling and I admit I was totally shattered! Thence to the hotel, bed by 1 am and up next morning at 5.30 for a 7 o'clock start.

Saturday, a mere 450 miles to drive. More beautiful scenery. Passed through Viterbo, yet another perfect medieval town, but this one has a passion for flowers. Every street was lined with them and all the buildings decorated with hanging baskets. Then Sienna and the main square where, once a year, the famous Pallio horse race takes place. Again, what a sight! Perfect medieval architecture - but only time for a quick drink, not even getting out of the car - and off to Florence.

Coming down the mountains into that fair city I thought I heard a weird noise and got somewhat worried. However, I now realise that when your ears "pop" you hear noises at a different pitch, which normally you do not hear, so no worry. Then on past Ponte Vecchio and the cathedral, more crowds, more flags, cheers medieval splendour and on to the first of two mountain passes, the Futa and the Raticosa. The first was the worst, not helped by (a) trying to keep the car going as quickly as possible to avoid overheating, (b) trying to get round very tight corners without being forced into a three point turn and (c) trying to avoid the local bikers out for the day and roaring up and down the route, cutting each corner by crossing to the "wrong" side of the road. Several near misses on blind corners! As we approached the top, we could see hundreds of locals waiting to cheer us over, so we deliberately slowed to a first gear crawl, made it all look very difficult and then changed gear for a dash over the last 100 yards! The second pass was nothing by comparison, as we were already fairly high up, but what views!

Then to Bologna. Imagine a crowded city, traffic lights, and a bunch of 30 or

40 of us trying to keep up an average speed to avoid penalty points. With police encouragement, we could drive up pavements, squeezing past normal traffic (which always waved us on) and even driving on the "wrong" side of the road and across red lights - with many shouts of encouragement from the locals and the police, with their white gloves, little lollipop sticks and whistles, waving us on. A bit like a grand prix, with normal traffic (in both directions) and road furniture mixed in as well. On through Parma, more gifts, of course, the local cheese and ham rolls.

The final stop before Brescia, by which time it was dark, was at an airfield some 12 miles from the finish, where we were required to drive along the 3 mile runway at an average speed of about 30. To explain, all the speed tests were on an average speed basis. These tests were over sections of road as short as 100 metres and as long as 10 miles. Start and finish were electronically timed by wires across the road. You could stop at any time on the test, save for the last 100 metres, the start of which was marked by a yellow board, the finish by a red board. So many drivers went hell for leather up to the yellow board, then stopped and waited till close to the expiry of their time, and then a mad dash to the finish. So we had to do likewise, or otherwise get stuck in a traffic jam when wanting to cross the finish line. Anyway, the runway test was like all the others. 360 cars doing their best to take off!

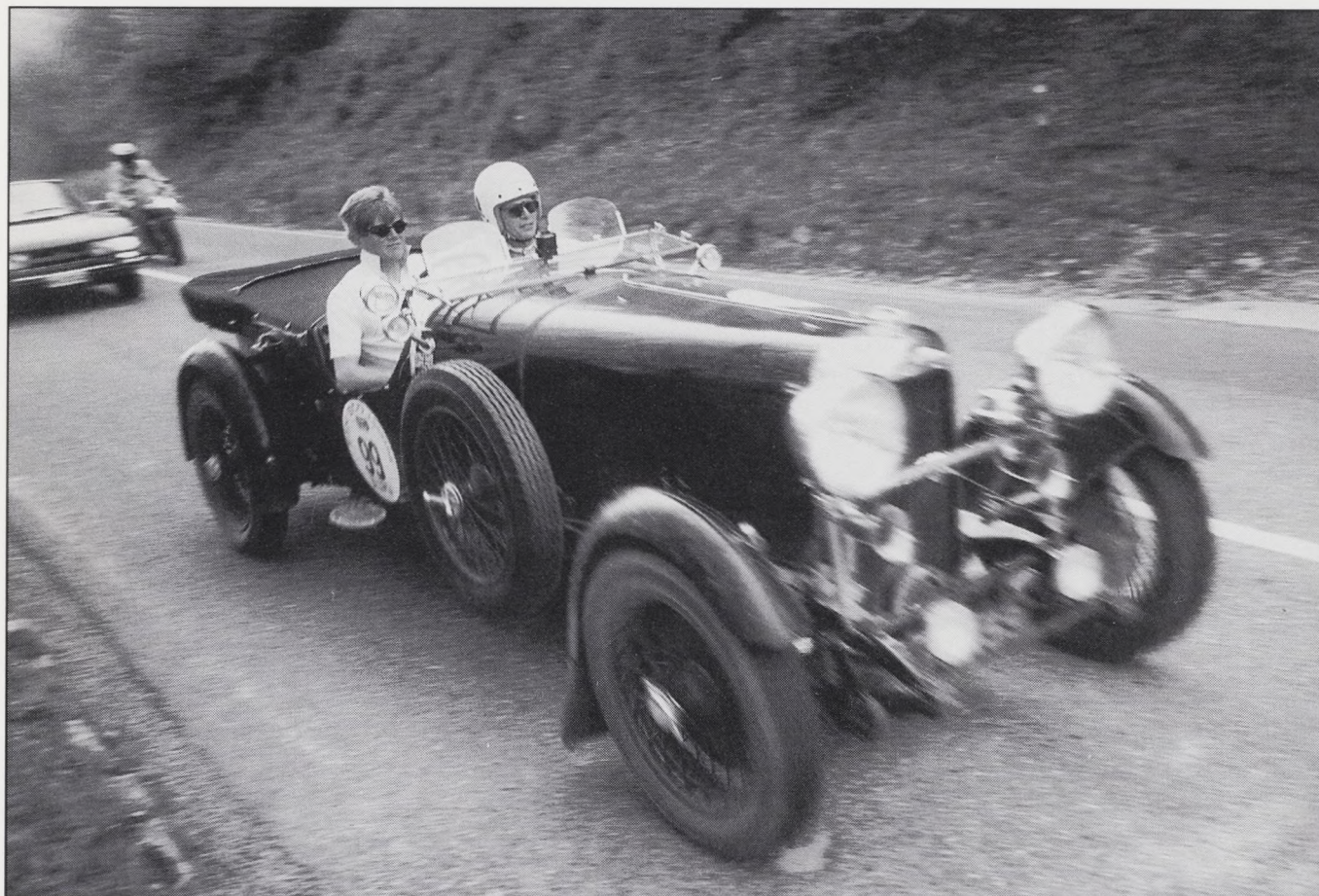
We arrived in Brescia at about 9:30 pm, to be greeted by Giovanni and Massimo, both with tears in their eyes! The crowds lined the route for about half a mile, this a wide two way road, reduced to six feet in width. What a welcome! Ticker tape thrown, autographs given, cheers, handshakes, "Bella Machina"! And so to the finish, a real achievement for Phil and me, but more particularly for the car. "The car" I say! Before the drive, we knew we had to christen the car. I had owned it for 18 years and did not even know its sex. The

Italians had the answer, so final congratulations have to go to BELLA, who made it all possible.

End result, 208 out of 360, but we now know the ropes and cannot wait for

the next opportunity to show the motoring world what a 65 year old active lady can do.

Kip Waistell



Kip and Phil storm the Futa Pass.

Photo: Adam Painter

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F.B.H.V.C. Conference, 22nd March 1997

LAST YEAR'S CONFERENCE AT GAYDON, near Warwick, was meant to be a one-off, but it was so well attended and informative that it soon became obvious that it ought to become an annual event, and this is now the case. I attended again as the club's representative and what follows is my notes of the proceedings. Chris Searle was once again an admirable chairman.

The conference was opened by Lord Montagu, who started by referring to Jim Whyman, who retired as secretary at the end of 1996. Jim was one of the key people in getting the Federation running and steering it to its present level of importance and we all owe him a large debt. Conference agreed wholeheartedly. Lord Montagu then introduced Mike Holt-Chasteauneuf, the new secretary, who was picked from a large number of eminent competitors. He has a hard act to follow, but Lord Montagu was confident he would be a worthy successor. He went on to refer to the scare late last year over the "green" eco-fascists in the EU trying to enforce catalytic converters on all cars. This had been vetoed by the UK minister and with the passing of Directive 96/96 was now dead, despite what you may read elsewhere.

The Federation's circular (which our members got with the February Newsletter) had gone to 70% of the member clubs and the results were still coming in. The purpose of the circular was to get up to date and accurate information about the size and strength of the old car movement. No-one else has this information, or is in the position to gain it, so it was of the utmost importance to get as many members as possible to return the form, but only one form per person, no matter how many clubs you may belong to.

Lord Montagu was rather worried about some aspects of FIVA, but was confident that Michael Banfield, who is Vice-President elect, would put some backbone into the wobbly parts of the organisation. He went on to refer to the Peking-Paris rally, which most people knew about and the projected London-Capetown rally of 1998, which was new to me.

The Chairman then introduced John Quenby, the Chief Executive of the RACMSA (Sir John Rogers is Chairman, but was not present following a gardening accident). Despite his lofty position, John is one of us, competing in the Classic Trials, like the Lands End, in a TC MG. Most of his address concerned the Classic Trials, which are rather different, promoted by the RAC plus their sponsors. These have proved embarrassingly popular, to the extent that the Norwich Union event now has 14 different starting points and last year over 1400 entrants. The point which he wanted to stress to conference was that a substantial proportion of these entrants did so directly and not through clubs. So as a movement we are missing out by not signing up these people, who are visibly keen but not clubbable. As they weren't in a club, they hadn't heard of the Federation. He floated the idea, which no-one pursued later, that the Federation should make it possible for individuals to join directly.

The next speaker was Tony Peart of the Historic Commercial Vehicle Society, whose topic was the problems of the preserved commercial vehicle - in his case buses - with judges at concours events. The judges vary widely in their approach. Some stroll past the vehicles once and do their judging in the bar. Others practically dismantle the vehicle. He told the story about one of the latter

class who marked down his vehicle because he found a dead moth inside the destination blind box. However, despite these strictures, he was even more opposed to "self judging" where the competitors do it themselves, quoting cases where club members had ganged up to distort the results in their members' favour. Basically, what he sought was some consistent set of rules to be applied universally and not to be left at the mercy of the whims of individuals.

He was followed by Ray Newell, secretary of the Morris Minor Owners' Club, whose theme was the practicality of using your "classic" as everyday transport. Not many Lagonda owners do this now, although I know one who does, and more power to his elbow, but Ray's examples in a way rather undermined his argument, for in many cases the outwardly standard Morris Minor actually had a Marina engine and a five-speed gearbox and, in extreme cases, a turbo-charger. To my mind, this isn't using your classic every day, it's special building.

Racing historic saloons was the topic explored by David Ramsbotham, Finance Director of Aston Martin Lagonda and a keen saloon racer. He started with a hotted-up Cortina GT, then another, progressing to a Lotus Cortina Mark 1 and more recently to a Mini-Cooper S. He has raced both here and in Germany and he contrasted our happy-go-lucky amateurish approach to the conditions he had met in Germany, where every car seemed to be backed by a string of articulated workshop trucks, motor homes and regiments of helpers. "Where is your manager?" they would ask and he would point to his wife, who was also head caterer, assistant mechanic, chief time-keeper and about half a dozen other functions.

The last speaker of the morning session was John Surtees, now with distinguished silver hair but just as forceful as ever. His plea was for us to resist as much as we can the growing

trend to insist on silencers in the most isolated places, just for political correctness, not as a result of protest. An important part of old racing machinery, he said, on both 2 and 4 wheels, was the noise it made and they cannot be appreciated properly if muffled. He had some interesting tales of his racing career, revealing that one of his functions at Ferrari was to take the customers out and terrify them, particularly those who had come back to the works to complain that their car wasn't as fast as the factory had said it would be.

The first item after lunch was the presentation by Lord Montagu of the Prince Henry Trophy, which is awarded by the National Motor Museum to individuals or organisations deemed to have been outstanding in the Veteran and Vintage movement. The recipient today was Mike Worthington-Williams and this was clearly a popular decision, greeted with acclamation. The Chairman then projected a picture of MWW, taken when he was 18, riding a motorcycle combination and totally unrecognisable, being clean shaven. In his thank you speech, Mike recalled his first article, sent to Lord Montagu when he was running "Veteran and Vintage" magazine. As funds were extremely short, he was offered a year's subscription in lieu of payment, which he accepted as it came to 42 shillings, about a week's money then. It proved to be the bargain of a lifetime as V & V forgot to cancel it at the end of the year and Mike got 23 years of the magazine without further payment.

The Chairman, in introducing the next speaker, read out a letter from "The Automobile" in which the backwoodsman writer tore into everything non-British and urged rebellion against the "power-crazed bureaucrats of Brussels". He then introduced, in the person of John Berry, one of the PCBs. John is a former Department of Transport civil servant who now works at Brussels, responsible, among other things, for crash testing and

the various national equivalents to the MoT test, yet to be introduced in France and Italy, but due in the next few years. He started with some slides from the archives which, taken out of context, were hilarious and then sobered up and explained that the EC staff is not as huge as the bureaucratic army imagined by the "Daily Mail", but in fact the staff of all 15 countries put together comes to less than those employed by the Welsh Office in the UK.

His principal preoccupation recently has been the attempt to harmonise the roadworthiness test procedures of the different countries, which range from France and Italy with none, to Germany, where they practically tear the car apart. All member states must have some form of testing in place by 1998 and our existing UK standards are already higher than any EC standard likely to be laid down. He reinforced Lord Montagu's earlier remarks about Directive 96/96, passed just before Christmas, that lays down that a vehicle will never be asked to pass standards of emission or anything else that it couldn't have met when new. Coupled with the earlier Directive that said that provided a vehicle complies with the Construction and Use Regulations of the country where it is registered, then other EU countries have to allow it on their roads, two at least of our abiding fears are overcome.

Turning to fuels, he said that the discussion on leaded fuels was still going on and the talked-of phase-out of leaded fuel by 2000 is likely, but not definite. Other requirements were that sulphur content must be reduced (goodbye to the bad eggs smell?) and the benzene content must be reduced from 5% to 2%.

John Berry was followed by Dr Geraldine Neat, Retail Technical adviser for Esso. Her talk was very strong on chemistry but was not, perhaps, what conference wanted to know, as came out in the discussion later. Asked by a delegate why modern 4-star deteriorates

over the winter so much that the car won't start in the spring, she denied that this was so. The entire audience then growled "Oh yes it does", like a kids' pantomime. Pressed about which, if any, additives would replace the lead, she confirmed the view that none was much use, but keeping below 60 would prevent most damage. Cold comfort for Vintage racers with a Bugatti, or a Bentley where conversion to hardened seats is impossible.

Apparently leaded petrol now represents about 30% of the market and while Esso would continue to make it while it was commercially viable, they obviously were at the mercy of legislation. One questioner asked about Avgas, which is 100 octane and heavily leaded. Two standards apply again; there is no word of changing that, so if you can get hold of a supply, it will mix with the dreaded unleaded and solve everyone's problems.

Bob Oliver was the last of the guest speakers. He is Head of Policy at the DVLA and well known to the Federation. Not only a Vintage car man, he also does aerobatic displays in his YAK 52. The unexpectedly early prorogation of Parliament caused some consternation because, in theory, senior civil servants aren't supposed to make speeches about anything during the election period, but he had cleared it with his Permanent secretary, who said, in view of the importance of the conference, he could go ahead provided he confined his remarks to "matters of fact and record". And so he did, but the overhead projector slides, silently produced and removed, told quite a different story. Bob was clearly in end-of-term jovial mood and the audience, by now rather numb in the nether regions, responded joyously. The jokes won't reproduce - you had to be there - but the serious core of the talk will.

The V765 procedure for rescuing lost registration numbers has now restored 18,000 old numbers and a further 13,000 cars have age-related

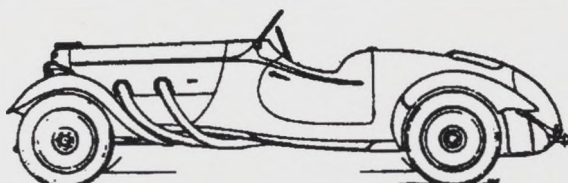
numbers issued. these are cars where the original number is unknown. As a result of the recent survey of clubs, there are to be some minor changes to the system. Clubs will have to register each year and confirm who is doing the V765 work (we have already done so). This is because some of the more obscure clubs have been known to fold without warning. There is to be an appeals procedure and the DVLA will be providing advice to clubs on what evidence they should accept and what they should not. Bob said the advent of the 25 year exemption from VED had produced a wave of extra cars taking out licences, but he didn't amplify what he meant by this. Personally, I now licence for 12 months instead of 6. Does this count as a doubling? One last observation was that,

by 2001, Drivers' Licences in all EU countries will have to be in the same format, which includes a photograph of the holder.

Conference was by now running half an hour late, so Peter Glover was forced to curtail his proposed address very severely, but he did have time to say that in recognition of his excellent work, Jim Whyman had been made Vice-President of the Federation and that the federation was going to set up a Fuels committee so that member clubs could get some unbiased advice. (By inference, you can't rely on oil companies to tell the truth).

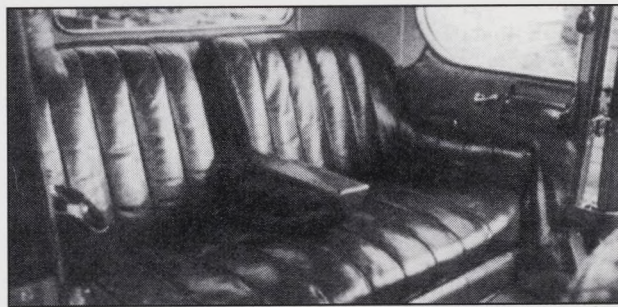
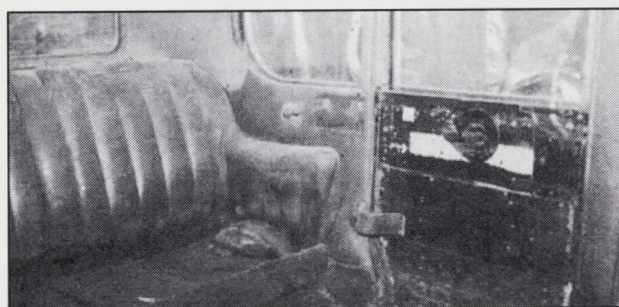
It was then time for a last cup of tea before departing to the ends of the land, tired, but conscious of a day well spent.

Arnold Davey



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Geoffrey Seaton: Some Recollections

WE HAD BOTH OWNED OUR 3 LITRE TOURERS for well over 40 years but from the beginning we had a different approach. When he first saw his car he took pity on it as Colin Bugler said, but in my case I liked the look of my 3 litre and bought it virtually on looks alone. I do remember entering it for the Club's November Handicap and worrying about oil pressure and the time it took the needle to pick up after going round a left hand bend.

It just so happened that Geoff and I both decided to do the engine at the same time. In those days, he and Joan lived in Harrow and the car was kept in a nearby row of lock-up garages. How to get the engine out? Simple - we put a beam across the inside walls and used a block and tackle. Never did explain how that crack appeared.

I then went off to Davis Motors at 273 London Road and bought a supply of engine parts for both our engines, mainly valve guides, push rods and springs, etc. The pistons we got elsewhere. We both had a 72 mm engine, with his a month or two later than mine of February 1930. He was able to get 40 thous. pistons, whereas I bored out to 80 thou (with some trepidation) and fitted Rover 20 pistons. Unfortunately the Chamfer on the Rover pistons was not enough, as I soon found out when I started it up. No harm done - I just ground a bit off the combustion chamber.

We were both fussy, but in quite different ways. In stripping my engine, I found the original colour grey for the block and got some heat resistant paint made up by a firm called Artoray in London to match exactly. We agreed on that, but when it came to the carburettors he wanted these to be stove enamelled black. I thought this dull and had mine stove enamelled aluminium. We never agreed which was best.

In those days, Geoff benefitted from the shift system at London Airport and, although it did involve a certain amount of night work, he knew for months ahead which group of days he could have off. It was during these free periods that he would take the car off the road and strip down the offending part - probably because there was a slight noise which upset him. I would seldom hear it - but then he was always a perfectionist.

And all the time he used the 3 litre daily from Harrow to London Airport and back, no matter what the weather. But he did have something special. It was a long, brown leather motoring coat. It got rather tatty in the end, it's true, but it was very much part of him in those early days.

We differed about the hood. I have had my hood up only about three or four times, despite my using the car almost every day at one stage. I just feel that the 3 litre looks a lot better as an open tourer without the hood. Geoff felt it had the right lines. beauty is in the eye of the beholder, I suppose.

With the hood down he could often take Joan and his daughter Carol with him. Carol, sitting in the back, soon found it better to disappear under the tonneau. There are those of us who believe she would be a lot taller than her 5 feet if she hadn't. But then a 5 foot bank manager is something special.

We were both concerned about brakes. We had the drums skimmed and then put duralumin strips between the brake shoes and the linings to make up for the lost metal. This certainly made them a lot better, but it is still asking a lot to stop nearly two tons with only one leading shoe in each drum.

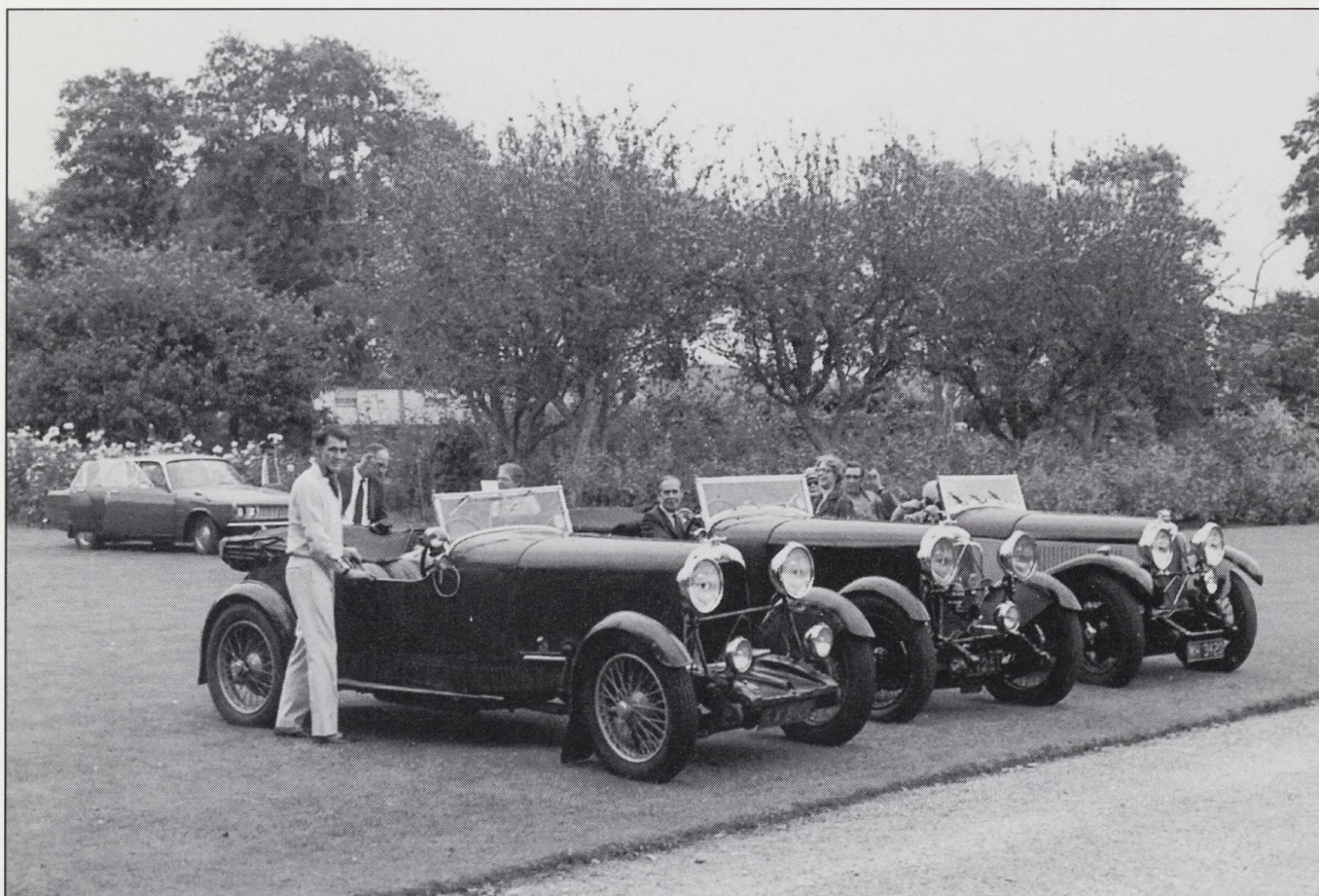
When the Seatons moved from Harrow to Sandhurst, they bought a bungalow with a garage large enough for four cars, where Geoff was able to make

a real workshop with all his tools. He would remember the very good grounding he got in working on aero engines and how, at London Airport, they would dismiss anyone found using a ring spanner. It had to be an open ender to avoid over-tightening when working on aluminium. How many of us working on a 3 litre aluminium timing case have

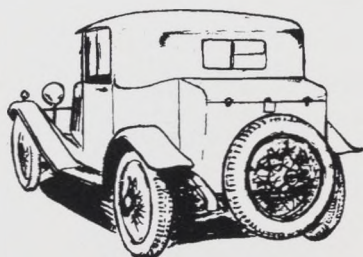
been guilty of this?

He had his priorities too. Joan complained about some nearby trees, which had grown rather tall and she felt they were threatening. He looked and said it was alright -they weren't going to fall on the garage!

Alan Hitch



Alan Hitch and his 3 litre, Geoff Seaton in his 3 litre and the Eastwards in their Blown 2 litre, pictured at a Mitchelman Priory meeting.



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| <p>4 Do you receive discounts on European cover, publications and signs services? <input type="checkbox"/> YES or NO?</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? <input type="checkbox"/> YES or NO?</p> |

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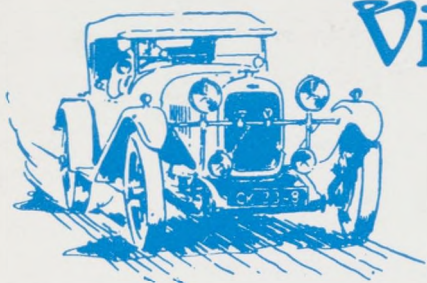
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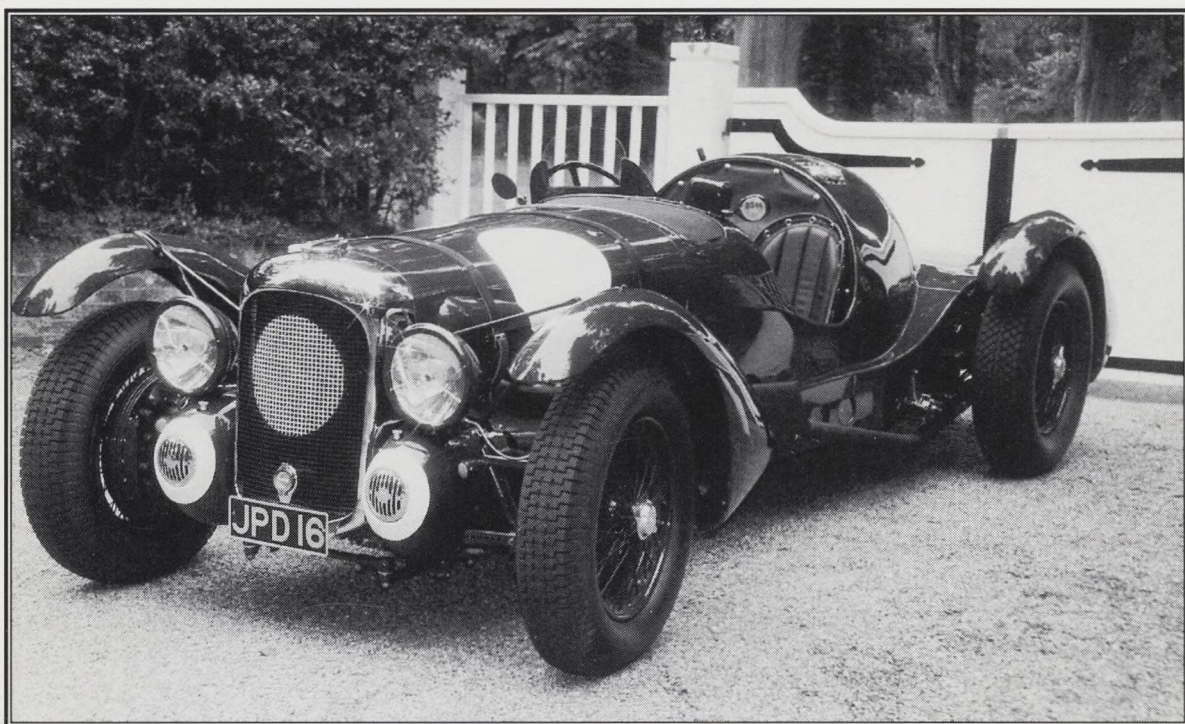


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