



**THE MAGAZINE OF THE
LAGONDA CLUB**
Number 178 Autumn 1998



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In this instance all went smoothly, but AXX 757 does have a 200 BHP engine thus ensuring that the bride and groom could make a rapid departure!

Simon Bull's Invicta has semi-retired from racing and is being used as a "Q car" for everyday use in London and long distance touring, surprising many a modern with its 230 BHP and 125 MPH top speed.

A 1904 Martini is currently being fully rebuilt. This is a fascinating project, because we are having to re-manufacture a vast number of new parts. We are tempted to wave the magic wand over the engine and see if we can double its original power, as we have with the Meadows engine, but the owner feels it might not be in keeping for the London to Brighton.

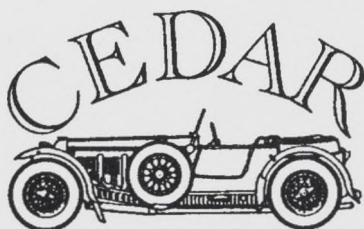
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THE LAGONDA CLUB LIST OF OFFICERS 1998/99

e-mail: lagonda.club@bt.internet.com

Web Site:

<http://www.btinternet.com/~colin.mallet/lagonda.html>

President: Vacant

Vice Presidents:

A. Davey, A. W. May, H. L. Schofield

Chairman: Clive Dalton

Hon Secretary:

Colin Bugler, Wintney House, London Road, Hartley
Wintney, Hants, RG27 8RN
Tel/Fax: 01252 845451

Hon Communications Officer:

John Stoneman, 21 Main Street, Little Thetford, Ely,
Cambs. CB6 3HA. Tel: 01353 649494

Hon Competition Secretary:

Peter Whenman, White Cottage, Phoenix Green, Hartley
Wintney, Hants RG27 8RT.
Tel: 01252 842589 (between 7.30 - 8.30 pm)
Fax: 01252 844980

Hon Registrar & Newsletter Editor:

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

The Spares Service:

John Breen, 12 Blackmore, Letchworth, Herts, SG6 2SY.
Tel: 01462 486476.

Hon Editor:

Ken Painter, Church Farm Cottage, The Street,
Rickingham, Diss IP22 1EQ.
Tel: 01379 898228. Fax: 01379 890653

Hon Social Secretary:

Jeff Leeks, "Ashleigh", 183 Main Road, Naphill, High
Wycombe HP14 4SD Tel: 0149 456 3188

Other Committee Members:

Colonel Stephen. Matthews, Heathercote House,
Silchester Common, Reading, Berks RG7 2PG.
Tel/Fax: 01189 700709.

David Willoughby, Mutley's Oast, Swift's Green,
Smarden, Ashford, Kent TN27 8PQ. Tel: 01233 756651.

Kevin Lloyd-Bisley, St. Margarets Cottage, Woodlands
Lane, Windlesham, Surrey, GU20 6AS.
Tel: (Home) 01276 452723

John Batt, Reynard House, 49 Amptill Road,
Maulden, Beds MX45 2DH
Tel: 01525 402935



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FRONT COVER

Our new Chairman, Clive Dalton (*left*) and our new American Representative, Rudy Wood-Muller (*right*) chat at the AGM.

Technical Advice:

Peter Whenman, address as previous.

Alan Brown, Knarr Mill, Oldham Rd., Delph,
Nr Oldham, Lancs, OL3 5RQ. Tel: 01457 820267.

Kevin Lloyd-Bisley, (DB Models), address as previous.

Colin Mallett, (11.9 and 12/24 models).
Tel: 01728 688696.

Paul Nickalls (Rapiers), Maryland, Bredfield Road,
Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 1JE.
Tel: 01394 384463.

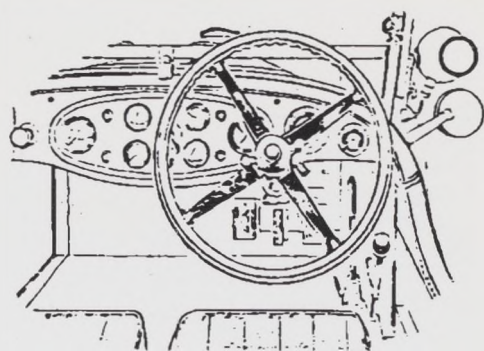
USA Representative:

Rudy Wood-Muller, P.O. Box 403, 51 Bill Hill Road, Old
Lyme, Connecticut, CT 06371, USA
Tel: 212 348 3772

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From the Driving Seat

by Ken Painter



THE period just before this magazine went to press was a busy time for the Painter family. Two days at the Beaulieu Autojumble; a day back in Suffolk; then back to Poole to catch the ferry to France for our fortieth wedding anniversary holiday to the Loire Valley; a day after the holiday with our younger daughter in Reading; then the grand finale, the Annual General Meeting at Aldermaston - where we experienced the best weather we had seen for about three weeks! I have to admit that none of the mileage was done in a Lagonda, but since the company never built a camper van I have a kind of an excuse.

We had a very pleasant surprise on the ferry on the way back from Cherbourg. We sat at a table with a man sitting by himself, he noticed my Lagonda Club badge on my jacket and started talking. We discovered we had mutual friends in the Club and the next four hours passed very quickly as we talked about cars and aeroplanes! The moral is, always wear your Club badge, it can bring you into contact with all sorts of interesting people. I was on a train once, wearing my Club tie, the young lady opposite me recognised it and, again, I had a fascinating talk with the daughter/sister of two VSCC members. It pays to advertise!

By the time you read this I hope I will have caught up on the huge backlog of correspondence, faxes and messages on the answerphone, but if you are still awaiting a reply, please be patient for a little longer, I really will respond to

everything I have received. I was gratified by the number of articles sent in for publication, some will be held over for a time so that the balance between the various types of articles can be maintained, so don't be surprised if your magnum opus isn't in this, or the next edition.

Just after the AGM I was saddened to hear of the death of John Oliver, our former Spares Service guru. John had been unwell for some time and had taken early retirement before he took over our spares service. In spite of his poor health he took an active role in several motor clubs, organising a variety of events and we send our condolences to his wife, Barbara.

Our Centennial celebrations are approaching very rapidly now and next year promises to be a very busy one for the Club. Each event will be well advertised in the newsletter, so I won't list them here. I believe we can offer something for every member in the programme that has been planned, so make sure you spend the winter preparing your car for the fun and games!

The magazine will look very different for the Centennial Year, with a full colour cover and with the Centennial logo in place of the traditional Club badge, so this will be the last edition you receive in this format for a year. If you would like to support the magazine by advertising your business in its pages we might even be able to offer some very attractive rates for full page colour ads! Contact me for further details.

Finally, I want to pay a very personal tribute to David Hine, who has just retired from the Committee after seven years service. David has taken a major role in steering the Club forward into the new millennium and has also personally organised or planned a number of our major events during his Chairmanship. At the same time he has found time to compete actively in his Lagonda and to take on the creation of what promises to be one of the most exciting and attractive V12s ever made. It is no secret that his period of office was a challenging one,

we faced many problems in the past seven years and he has worked extremely hard to guide us through them. We can honestly say that he has left the Club better equipped and organised to meet any future challenges, with a revised "Mem 'n Arts" which should offer the Club the flexibility to meet future changes in legislation and allow our activities to evolve to meet the changing needs of our members. In welcoming Clive Dalton as his successor it is only fair to warn him that David will be a hard act to follow!

Reflections

by David Hine

THESE "Reflections" are the last I shall write as the burden of high office is lifted from my shoulders at our next A.G.M. in September and I cease to be Chairman of our Club.

I have learnt a lot more than I expected from the last seven years and I now realise why chaps who transfer from industry into politics don't usually last five minutes!

I guess I thought, as most people do, that the Chairman is in charge of the Club and not much happens without his say-so! Well, I soon found out that I couldn't do much at all, whereas most of my fellow officers are autonomous in their own spheres of influence.

Fortunately this works most of the time and, when I was obliged to do difficult things, I always had the support of the majority of the Committee, thank goodness.

I wish every success to my successor, Clive Dalton.

Now I shall have a bit more time for

spannering and one of the winter jobs is to fit wipers on my M45 tourer.

Up to now I have relied on hand signals, which are fine on a normal road in daylight, but a fat lot of good on a rainy night on a motorway. I have been jogged into this, even though it is not a legal requirement, by a circular from the FBHVC, our federation. These people work long and hard in the corridors of power to try and prevent legislation which would prevent us enjoying our cars on the road.

However, all their good work would be undone if there were some high profile incidents which caused the media to turn their formidable venom on to us. Just imagine the headline "Rich at play slaughter innocents". The key phrase in the FBHVC's "driver's code" is that all drivers of old vehicles need to take steps to maximise safety and minimise inconvenience to other road users. So we have been warned!

I am coming to the point in the

rebuild of the V12 chassis where I need some copper pipe for the hydraulic brakes.

This reminds me of an incident in the early 60's when my budding career as a petroleum technologist nearly came to an abrupt conclusion. At that time also we were rebuilding a V12 and the copper pipe was a requirement in the same way as it is now. But could I find any? No chance.

The petrochemical plant I was seconded to as a shift technologist distilled liquid gas and had several of those enormous distillation columns, some over 200 feet high. I was climbing one of these one dark winter's night, to read the pressure gauge at the top to double check that it read the same as the remote one in the control room way below. The regular workers loved to give these duties to raw graduates like me! I suddenly noticed that the two gauges were connected by copper pipe of the type that would be perfect for our V12.

In fact the whole plant was controlled via copper pipe in those pre-electronic days. I tried hard to persuade the man in charge of instruments to sell me ten bob's worth for the Lagonda brakes, but to no avail. He couldn't sell anything to anybody, could he now?

Both the Lord and the Devil work in mysterious ways and, only a few days later, an instrument fitter chucked a left-over coil of the self-same pipe into the skip near our control room and guess who was seen to scramble in after it, but yours truly.

"And just how do you think you're going to get that past security at the gate young fella?" said the shift foreman. But he was a kindly soul and soon thought of the ideal solution.

Just before clocking-off time I was spinning round and round in the control room, as the copper pipe was wound round my middle. Then on with the donkey jacket and out into the crisp dawn air for the long walk to the main gate.

I approached with beating heart and blushing face, but I needn't have worried, for I was greeted with a smile and a salute.... I felt awful.

A few yards further on was parked my little grey Austin Mini, so as nonchalantly as possible I opened the door. To my horror I couldn't bend down to get in.

The security man was also clocking off at shift change and I could see him putting on his coat and heading in my direction.

I hurled myself headlong across the two front seats and gunned the starter, which was a button on the floor below me. Bless her, she fired and I managed to curl a foot round to depress the clutch and jam her into gear. An apparently driverless car was soon jerkily chugging down the road to safety.

Being young, I soon forgot the whole thing and guilt only came flooding back when I was looking at the same car (now Alastair Barker's) for guidance for the current rebuild. I think I will pay for the next lot!

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Federation Conference, 21st March 1998

by Arnold Davey

THE conference of the Federation of British Historic vehicle Clubs is rapidly becoming one of the highlights of the year for those concerned with running the clubs as well as the cars and concerned with the problems of continuing to do so in the face of the "green" onslaught. So March 21st saw 262 delegates heading for Gaydon in Warwickshire, to the splendid Heritage Motor Centre, gulping their coffee and racing for a decent seat.

As before, Chris Searle was an admirable Chairman and got the meeting off on time by introducing Lord Montagu, the President of the Federation. Lord Montagu delivered a quick overview of the movement, referring to our disappointment that the Treasury had beaten the DVLA in not agreeing to fix the 25-year exempt tax rate at 1973, with no further rolls forward. This was the opposite to what had been promised earlier. He was sad to be leaving FIVA, but agreed it was necessary, as that organisation showed not the slightest sign of putting its house in order and he felt the new IHVO would go from strength to strength. The Federation's "census" of the true size of the old vehicle movement was the first ever undertaken and the results fully justified all the hard work that had gone onto it. Other countries had caught on and were to follow our lead, so that ignorant and/or hostile governments can be shown the hard facts about employment and trade in old vehicles and not just rely on guesses.

Turning to the future, he said that the Federation was looking into having its own insurance scheme for our vehicles, but it was far too early to announce anything yet. Lord Montagu

then gave way to the first speaker of the conference proper. This was Walter Hayes, who in his time has been boss of Ford Europe and later of Aston Martin Lagonda, where he succeeded Sir David Brown as Life President, after retiring as Chairman. Walter revealed that he had started out as a journalist in Fleet Street, and while there had engaged a young writer called Colin Chapman. (I wonder whatever became of him?) Walter was caustic about the declining standards in writing, which probably followed from the changes in the teaching profession in the 'sixties and the trend not to teach anything remotely difficult, like grammar or mathematics. He also pointed out that with all the environmental gizmos that engines now had to be fitted with, his Jaguar, in going from London to Coventry, put out less pollutants than your lawn mower doing one lawn, but still the motor industry was the target of unrelenting attacks over pollution. His one happy topic was the re-opening of Goodwood circuit and by a happy chance the first meeting will fall on the 50th anniversary of Stirling Moss's first ever race, a fact which had not been lost on the organisers.

The next speaker was Dr Matt Vincent, a fuels technologist with Associated Octel and a member of the Federation's Fuels Committee. He gave a quick rundown on the legal position, which most members will already be aware of: leaded fuel will be withdrawn on 31st December 1999, but in practice will become steadily harder to get from about the middle of 1999, as retailers rejig their forecourts. Greece, Spain and Portugal have sought a derogation until 2005, since they have so many old vehicles still in use and, although the

Federation has asked our government to follow suit for the same reason, it doesn't seem willing even to ask. There is one small glimmer, however, The EU rules permit 0.5% of the total volume sold to be leaded and available for older vehicles. (As an aside, "older" can mean cars made as recently as 1990, which require leaded fuel!) There is a snag, though. This tiny amount won't interest the major retailers and certainly not the supermarkets, whose proportion of the trade is growing alarmingly rapidly, forcing many independent filling stations to close. When they have all gone, the cut-price petrol mysteriously vanishes as they hike the profits up again. So we will have the situation that enough leaded petrol will be permitted to satisfy the dwindling numbers of vehicles that must have it, but it is doubtful if anyone will stock it.

Meanwhile, the official position is that there will be made available a "lead replacement petrol", which contains sodium, potassium and phosphorous additives. A start has been made on drawing up a British Standard on this, only to have it stalled by a legal action only faintly connected with it. Even if this can be overcome, there is no guarantee that LRP will get any distribution, since it will require wide necked pumps to stop idiots wrecking their catalysts with it, and not every retailer will want to sterilise a pump on his forecourt for a small clientele. Dr Vincent didn't mention it, but new regulations covering vapour loss on forecourts come into force in 1999, which will close a huge number of small retailers anyway, since their turnover is too small to bear the cost of the new equipment. Later, in the discussion at the end of the day, someone asked Dr Vincent whether the 0.5% had to cover light aircraft too. He was reassuring. It didn't; the rules for Avgas are quite separate. For the record, standard unleaded petrol is 95 RON octane and complies with EU standard EN228, premium unleaded is 98 octane and complies with BS 7070 and LRP, if we ever see it, will comply with a BS not yet issued.

Dr Vincent then showed some interesting slides, illustrating the rate of valve seat recession compared with RPM, taken from a set of experiments with two engines with unhardened cast iron cylinder heads, one a European of 1700 cc and the other an American and 4 litres. I quickly sketched these curves but would hesitate to reproduce them as there wasn't enough time to get them right before he moved on. Let's hope they appear in the transcript eventually. What is clear is that the rev. rate is the black person in the fuel store. Up to about 3000 rpm, valve seat recession is virtually negligible and provided you check and adjust your tappets regularly, the crucial point where you use up all the tappet adjustment can be delayed for a very considerable time, probably to the next major overhaul. But beyond 3000 rpm, the curve begins to get steeper very rapidly and by 4500 it is very nearly vertical, i.e. the engine will need a new cylinder head in a very short time, or at least hardened valve seats. Converting this to Lagonda models, 2, 3, 3½ and 4½ models look OK, with 16/80 marginal, but V12 and Rapier owners have to take care or convert, as do DB owners. V8s already have hardened seats and, even if they didn't, for some reason probably connected with thermal conductivity, alloy heads give far less worrying results, even unhardened. Enlarging on the subject of hardened valve seats, the speaker endorsed the use of sintered powder seats, which are widely used in the industry for new engines.

The Fuels Committee were about to let a contract to an independent laboratory to conduct a series of experiments using a Rover A-Series engine. The idea is to test all the fuel additives offered to see if they are actually any good, the tests to be carried out at the supplier's expense. He didn't seem very hopeful. I happen to know that the MG Owners Club is also doing something similar, using back to back tests with two identical cars, one using leaded petrol, while we can still get it, the other unleaded plus additives.

Dr Vincent was followed by Dr Chris Hart from the University of Central England in Birmingham. He and his department had done the work on the Federation's "census" of last year, turning the returned questionnaires into the statistics which are so valuable. 36,000 questionnaires were returned, which revealed that the old vehicle industry turns over £1.66 billion a year and serves 650,000 pre-1977 vehicles still in use, of which 64% were road licensed. 60% of the vehicles covered less than 3,000 miles in a year and 24% of the owners had two or more vehicles. He illustrated his talk with some quotes from some of the students who actually did the work, graphically illustrating the way the youngsters have been misled by the "green" movement into believing all old vehicles should be banned as a health risk, were dangerous since they had no seat belts and similar nonsense. Each of these points could be countered if they would only listen and in particular he pointed out that keeping an old vehicle going implies that you haven't bought a new one, and there is more energy consumed making a car than it will ever use throughout its life thereafter.

As the Federation tends to regard the EU as its natural enemy, there is nearly always at the conference a speaker to explain (again) how it all works. This year it was David Ward, Director-General of the European Bureau of the AIT/FIA. He is also One Of Us, belonging to the MG Car Club. The most interesting part of the talk, I felt, was an explanation of the internal rivalries at Brussels and his advice was to make friends with your MEP. MEPs are constantly seeking more power in the decision-making, which tends to be spread between the Commission, who are really civil servants writ large, and the Council of Ministers, who unfailingly represent their own government's view. MEPs distrust both and welcome any ammunition they can use to discredit or embarrass them, especially if it seems to arise from excessive secretiveness, which afflicts

both sides. In the discussion which followed it emerged that despite the forthcoming ban on leaded fuel, there were still 3.3 million vehicles in the EU that require it.

Our sympathy went to the next speaker, Andrew Legge, who had only been told the night before that he was to deputise for Adrian Hope, who was sick, and address us on insurance for vehicle clubs. As a result he was, perhaps, not as assured as a better prepared speaker might have been. What he said made sense; we are all aware of the increasing litigiousness of the public and the general concept that there is no such thing as luck - someone's got to be summonsed. Insuring against the unforeseen was his remedy, although the cynics among us reckon that if it was unforeseen the insurance company will probably refuse to pay, as it was outside their calculations.

We then broke for lunch which, as always, was served with amazing efficiency. It is no easy thing to serve nearly 300 people at once and get them all finished in an hour, but the Gaydon staff manage it each year.

First speaker of the afternoon was Inspector Norman Sheffield of the West Mercia Constabulary, who first had to explain where West Mercia was, since it was an administrative concept rather than a place. (Since you ask, west of Birmingham, up to the Welsh Border). His main thrust was to dispel common illusions about the powers of the police. They don't control rallies, for example, that's the RAC. Nor do they close roads, that's the local authority and only after prolonged legal formalities. He admitted that the police don't, generally, have much trouble with the competitors in road events, but much more with followers and spectators. The RAC Rally was never mentioned.

Next to stand up was Brian Miller of the South East Vintage and Classic Vehicle Club, who was putting the case for the local, area-based club, vis-a-vis the national one-make clubs. His club is

based in east London and Essex and runs some very well attended events, which he illustrated and which have attracted a great deal of local support from local businesses and local authorities, notably Southend-on-Sea. My own view is that there is plenty of room for both and I couldn't quite see why he was attacking the one-make clubs so strongly. I admit I'm biased, but the tenor of the later discussion was similar to my view.

Brian was followed by Alan Robinson MBE, secretary of the T.T.Riders Association. His address had little to do with cars and I won't expand, but I did take his point that the whole motorcycle movement is very badly let down by its magazines, which seem to be written by disturbed twelve-year-olds and are way out of touch with the riders.

Before we got to Peter Glover's summary of the conference, the Chairman instituted a general discussion, notable for a diatribe on habeas corpus by one delegate, who may be in need of psychiatric help, who would be talking yet if the Chairman hadn't stopped him. We also had the biggest laugh of the day when a Bentley club member asked if there was going to be, as before, a publication of the "Proceedings"? On being assured that there was, he asked if the recipe for the outstanding bread-and-butter pudding we had for lunch could be included. Unfortunately, it turned out to be the chef's secret, but we were assured that Gaydon is open 364 days a year and bread-and-butter pudding features frequently on the menu.

Peter Glover then summed up the day and gave us the latest position in the dispute with the FIVA, which led to the setting up of the IHVO. Members of the latter are Norway, Sweden and Finland,

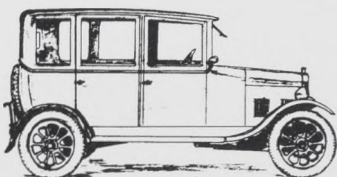
while Ireland and the Czech Republic are busy filling in the papers. Eleven other countries had expressed interest and were expected to join shortly. The IHVO had no intention of competing with FIVA and had, in fact, totally different aims. There was no intention to promote events and IHVO would confine itself to the political side and concentrate on trying to resist attacks on our freedom by legislators and do-gooders. He introduced the Chairman of the IHVO, Horst Gruning from Sweden (I hope I have spelled it right), and the Secretary, Carol Nash from the UK. The IHVO already had good links with the FIA and Max Mosely, Reg Dawson was transferring to us and would stay on in Brussels to head off hostile legislation, paid by the IHVO. As a result of a question from the floor, Peter confirmed that for the time being at any rate, the FBHVC will still be issuing FIVA "passports", since there was a contract in being. He doubted if this would continue for long, however.

It remained only to give the Chairman and all speakers a prolonged acclamation, set the date for next year, drink a welcome cup of tea and disperse for home in the last of the daylight. This conference goes from strength to strength and is becoming a "must" if one wants to keep one's ear to the ground in vintage circles.

Editorial Note:

Since Arnold wrote this, there have been many strange twists to the story of the future of FBHVC and the IHVO, many of which have been reported in the Newsletter. When the situation is finally resolved, we will give you details of the position, either in the Newsletter, or in this magazine.

K.P.P.



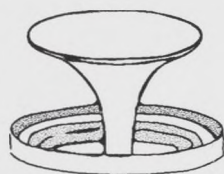


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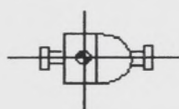
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*The AGM – Members catch up with the latest gossip . . .
and the regalia tent is kept very busy.*



The 1998 Annual General Meeting

by Tony Loch

THIS year the Annual General Meeting returned to the imposing mansion and lovely grounds of Aldermaston Manor, where we were in 1994. The weather was kind to us on both days with a welcome return to sunshine once the morning mist had cleared.

The weekend started with Gymkhana driving tests on Saturday afternoon with 20 competitors, which was an enjoyable way to get the party going. The winner was Geoff Gates in his LG45 tourer. In the evening there was a dinner in the Manor, attended by 65 members, partners and guests.

Sunday was the day for more serious business. Cars started arriving at 10 a.m. and were marshalled into a rough circle on the mown grass in front of the house. At one end there was the marquee with the usual Club regalia and spares stands and also the Centennial regalia stand, which was well patronised all day.

The Annual General Meeting commenced shortly after 11 o'clock in one of the large rooms of the house.

The Chairman began by welcoming the Club's new American Representative, Rudy Wood-Muller, and also Mr and Mrs Earl Kulgoske from Ohio.

Then there was a change in the normal procedure. Instead of the accounts being passed without comment the Chairman was bold enough to give some details. The annual turnover had gone up slightly, probably due to an increase in membership, which was now approaching 800. This in turn was possibly due to the recent Committee decision that spares would be sold only to members. It had been decided that the mark-up on the spares would be reduced, so that now our spares may be

cheaper than those of any other Club. Even so the income had increased by over 50%. Overall there was a surplus in the administrative side of nearly £7,000, much of which would be needed for the Centennial celebrations. The spares profit was slightly over £4,000. In reply to questions from the floor the Chairman said that the increase in accountancy charges was because it had been decided that the Club's finances required the employment of professional accountants instead of having the Club Treasurer from the membership, and that the high expenditure under "sundries" resulted from replacing some of the banners, flags and signs etc that are used at A.G.Ms. and other events and which would be needed next year. The accounts were then approved and passed.

Four Committee members resigned in rotation; Messrs Hine and Lindsey were not standing for re-election, but Leeks and Painter were re-elected. Clive Dalton was elected to the Committee as Chairman and John Batt was elected back onto the Committee on his return from a spell in the U.S.A.

That concluded the formal part of the A.G.M. and the Chairman handed over to his successor. Arnold Davey, in his capacity as Vice President, thanked David for all his hard work as Chairman for the last six years. His term of office had not been easy, but he had steered the Club through the difficult moments with wisdom and patience. He will be remembered for the 1995 Le Mans trip, which he organised so successfully. David was then presented with a magnificent thermometer and barometer on behalf of all the Club. (Was it a coincidence that it was in the shape of a

hand brake, or was there some hidden meaning?)

The new Chairman spoke briefly about the Centenary year, stressing that it was a unique occasion for the Club and he hoped that all the members would give it their full support. He introduced Jeff Leeks, the Chairman of the sub-committee organising the Centennial events, who gave a summary of what was being arranged. Tony Loch followed, giving details of the Lagonda displays that there will be at the Brooklands Fete. He said that he had written to nearly 250 Lagonda owners and he thanked the 190 or so who had answered, offering their cars. Such a response was unprecedented for the Club and boded well for the support that the events will receive. Out of the 64 different models and styles of body that there are in the Club he had been offered cars for 56 of them and he hoped he could still find some of those on the missing list. He also hoped that eight out of the 12 Lagondas that ran at Le Mans would be on show, as well as 40 or more other Lagondas with interesting histories.

Other Committee members then gave brief reports before the meeting was closed, with plenty of time before lunch to have a drink, meet friends, walk round the cars and visit the Centennial regalia stand.

After an excellent barbecue lunch the judging of the concours began, with the sunshine bringing out the best in all the cars. This year the judges were previous winners, which served two purposes; excellence was judged by excellence and it stopped them winning again. It was obvious that they were going to have a difficult task, but they managed to finish, not only on time, but early for a change. There were 67 Lagondas on parade and two half-brothers (or -sisters), a Crossley and an Invicta. A vintage Vauxhall had also somehow got into the line. In the morning there had been an Aston DB7, whose owner had asked if he could join the Club.

The Car Club Trophy for the best car was won by Bernd Holthusen's 1939 V12 DHC. He also won the car for the car most admired by the ladies, with his 1939 V12 Le Mans car. (It is food for thought why a car with such a brutal aspect has that much appeal to the ladies of the Club, or was it not the car?)

The results are:

CAR CLUB TROPHY (best car)

Bernd Holthusen's 1939 V12 DHC

2 LITRE CLASS

Winner

Dick Jones' 1928 2L HC tourer

2nd

John Brown's 1926 14/60 ss tourer

3rd

Ian Ronald's 1928 2L HC SM tourer

Merit

Peter Jones' 1928 14/60 saloon

3,3½ L CLASS

Winner

David Blunden's 1933 3L tourer

RAPIER CLASS

Peter Cripps' 1934 2/4 seater tourer

M45, LG45

Winner

Clive Peerless' 1937 LG45R tourer

Merit

Rebecca Matthews' 1934 M45 tourer

DB CLASS

Merit

Helen Lloyd Bisley's 1955 DB 3L DHC

PREVIOUS WINNER'S CLASS

John Walker's 1931 2L LC s/c tourer

LADIES' TROPHY

Bernd Holthusen's 1939 V12 Le Mans

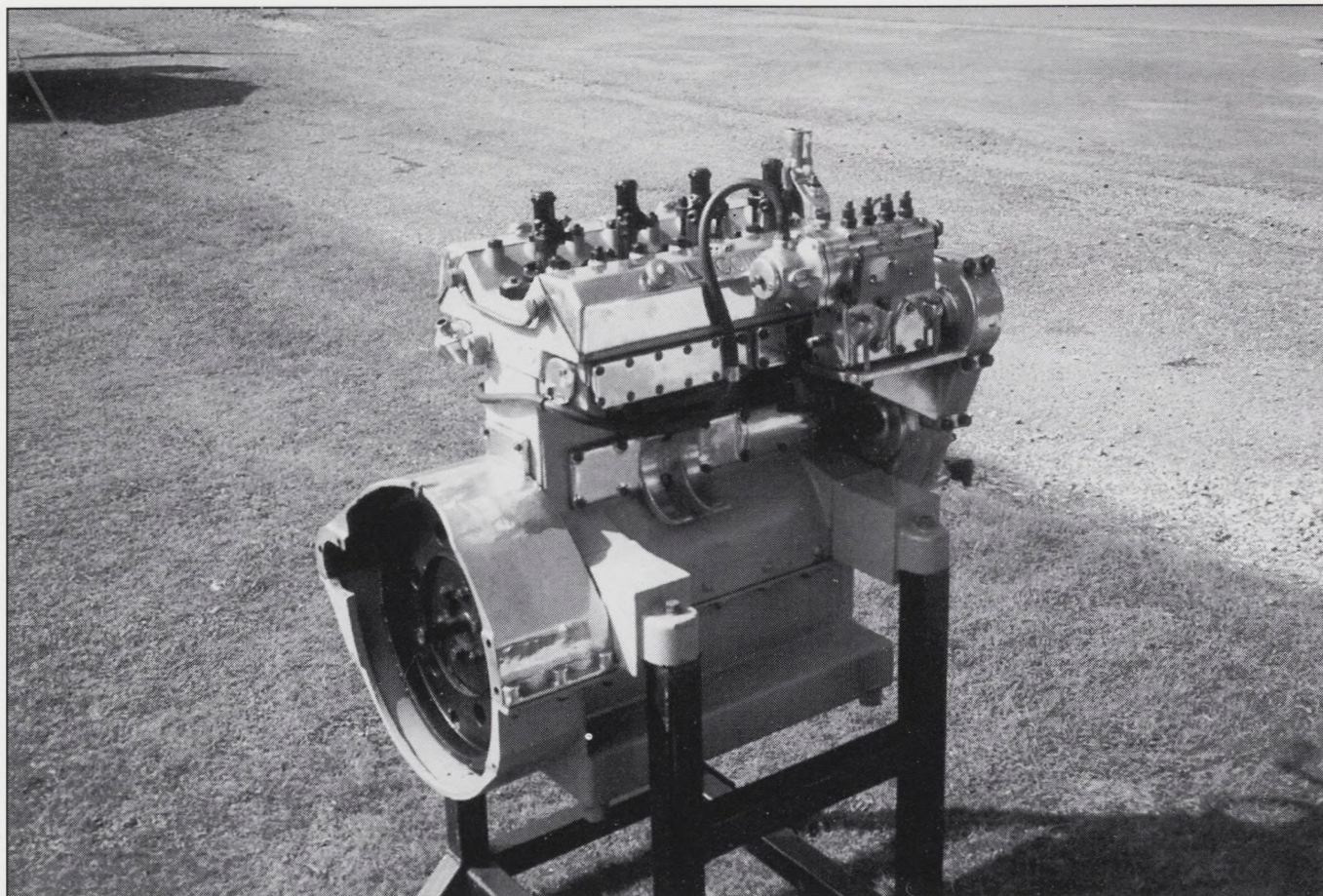
The organisers must be congratulated on running such an enjoyable event. The weather and the setting helped, but without their quiet efficiency it would not have been the same. Thank you, and let us hope that the Club goes back to Aldermaston again soon.



I think the DB7 is with the early cars because it arrived first.



The Oates' 12/24 and the Lawrence 11.1. Steve's dog guards the picnic, mine would have eaten it!



The Lagonda Diesel engine.



Some of the cars lined up at Aldermaston.

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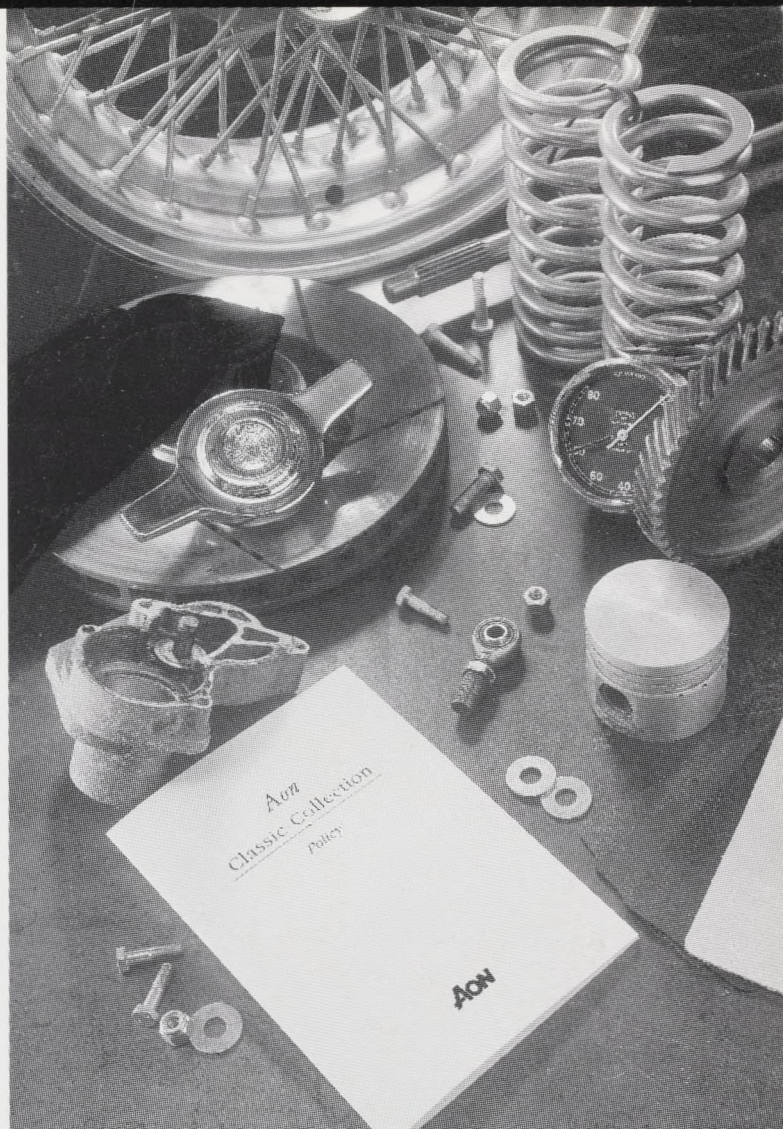
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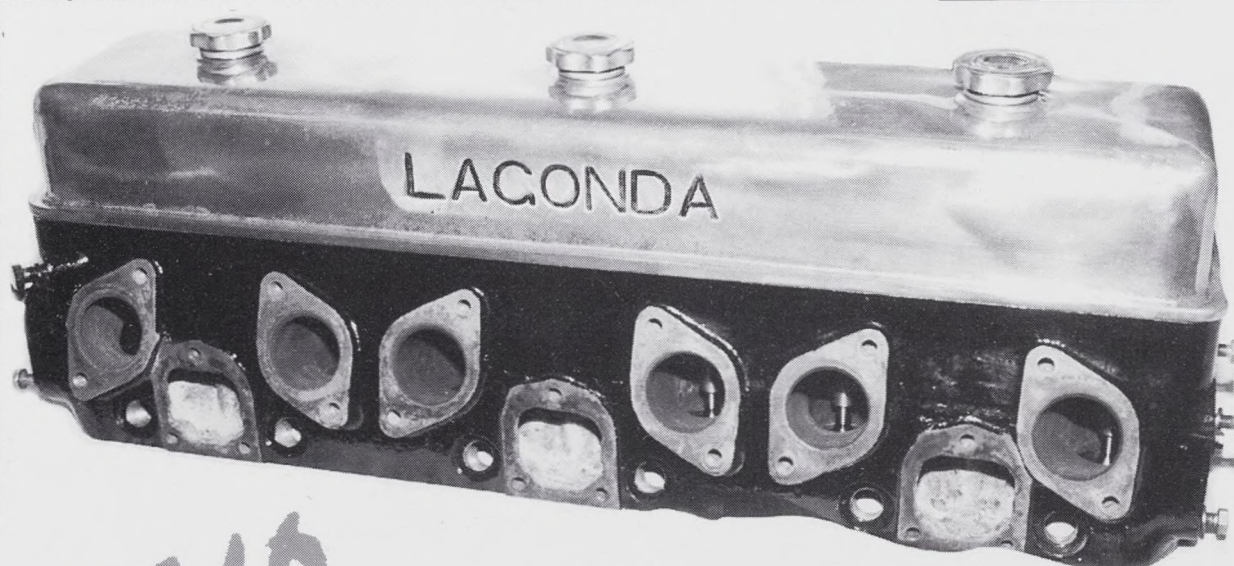
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The Cooling System of Old Cars

by Michael Valentine

I HAVE for some time been developing a theory about cooling systems in pre-war cars (and one post-war car, but we'll come to that later).

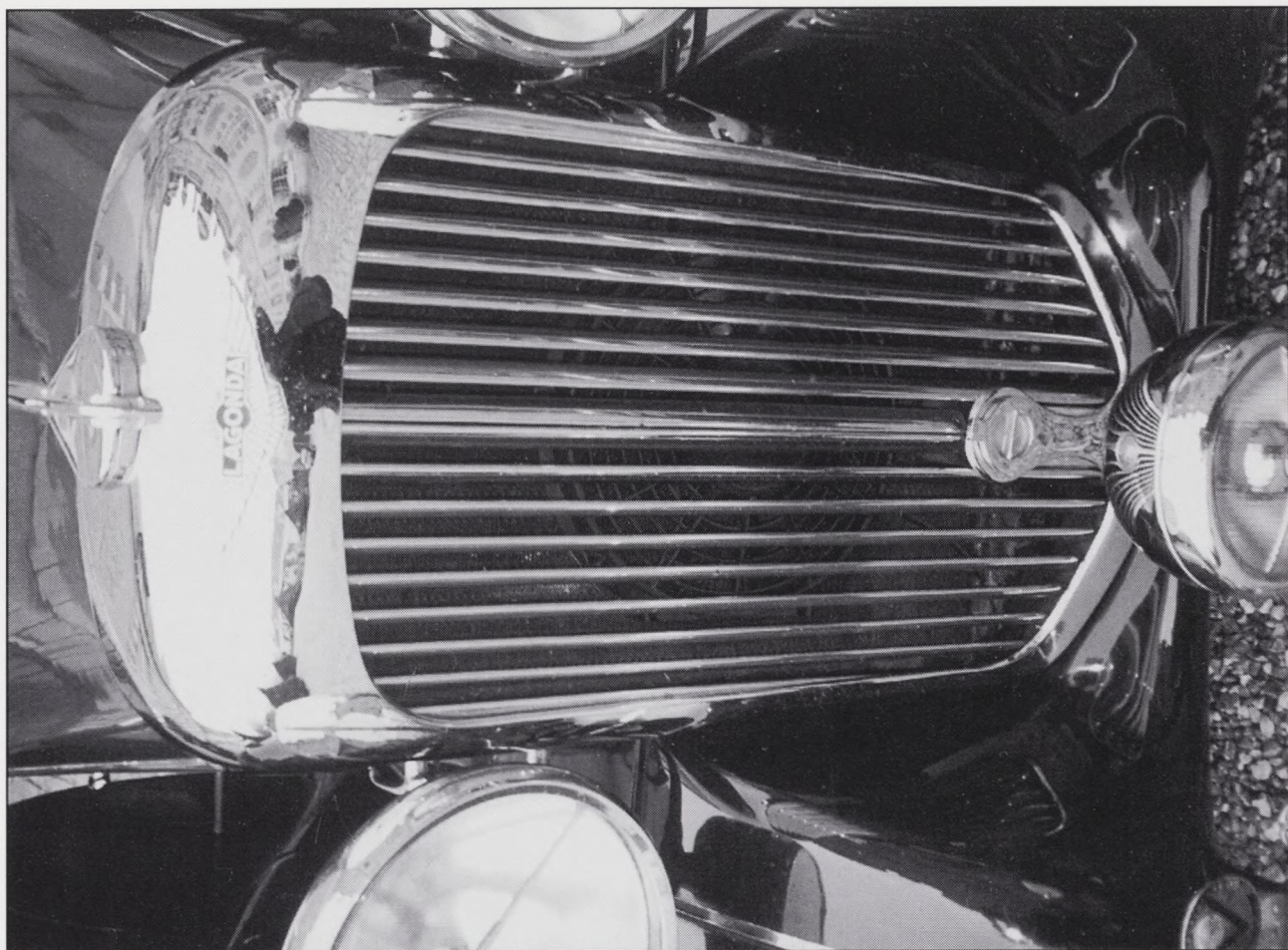
This theory has been developed after ordeal by boiling water and it is as follows: before the thermostat became common in cooling systems as a means of controlling the flow of water and therefore the heat of the engine, designers of cooling systems had to perform a kind of balancing act, namely putting enough water pump generated circulation and enough radiator area into the car to keep it running at normal working temperature when driven fast or slow on a hot English summer's day. Since the time when they applied their mighty brains to this balancing act, significant changes have taken place. First, no matter how well cleaned out the blocks of engines or the cores of radiators are when they are overhauled, time will have brought an increasing level of deposit which decreases the cooling effect of the water (with, or without anti freeze). Secondly, there is rather more traffic around now than there was in the 30s (though I can remember being stuck for over an hour with my mother in the family 1928 Morris Oxford in London in about 1934) and, thirdly, people now more often take their older cars abroad, where temperatures are hotter. Not much of that was done in the 20s and 30s, because these countries were occupied by foreigners.

My V12 Lagonda, unlike those which first came out of the works in 1938, does not overheat on runs and does not really require its boiling temperatures set at 80_ on the dial, which was Staines' answer to the overheating problem I believe. It does however get very fussed if it is held up in

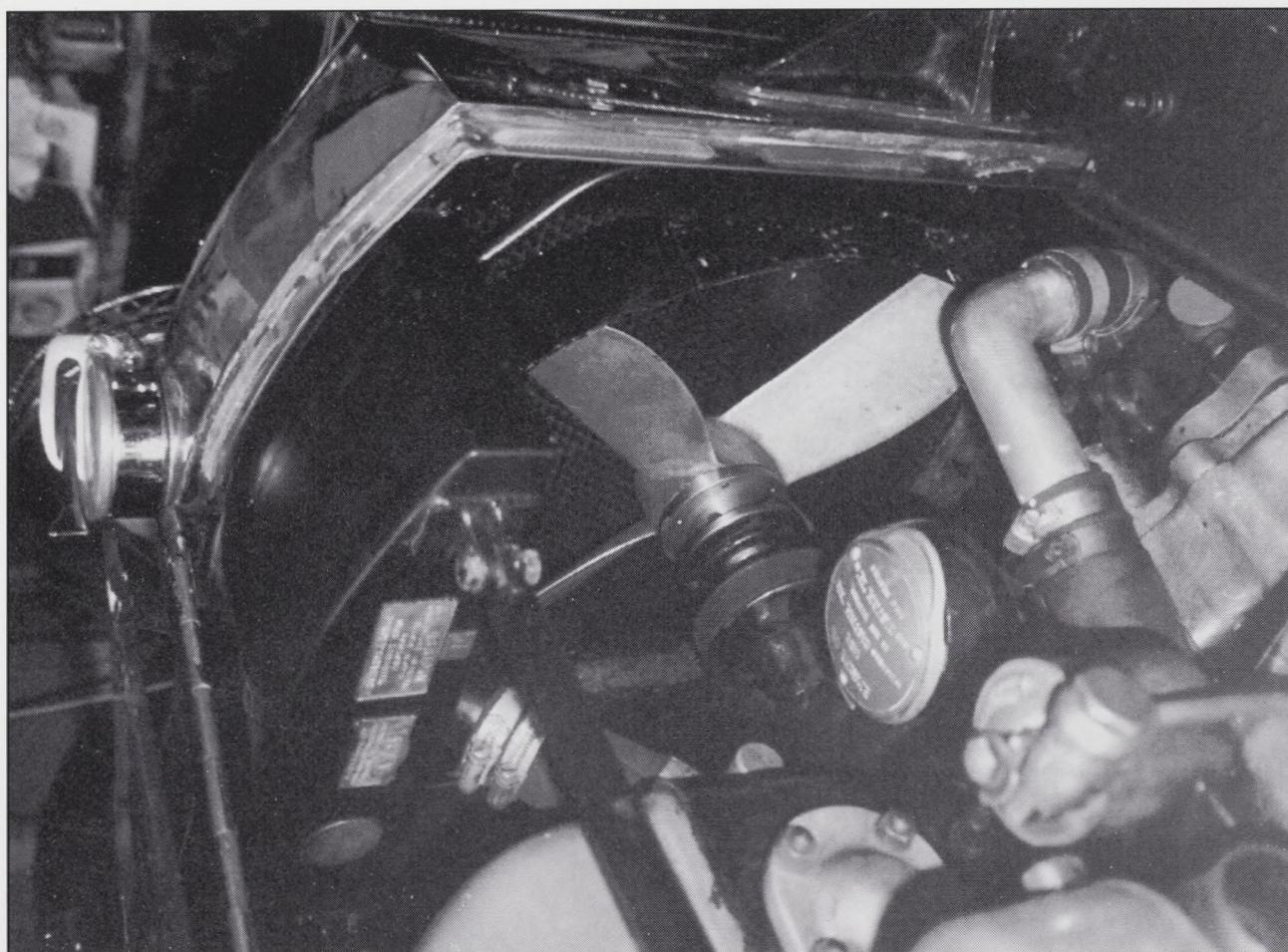
traffic for more than 20 minutes or so, despite having a pressurised system. Last June, after spending an hour and a half getting from Hammersmith to Putney Bridge one hot Saturday evening after a quick drive down from Silverstone, it decided it had had enough and exploded its water and anti freeze out of the radiator cap by bursting the cork washer sideways. This meant an embarrassing and inconvenient stop at the end of Putney Bridge and a long process of cooling it down and refilling it with water.

So I have now carried out a modification which I strongly recommend to anyone with a 30's 4½ litre, be it 6 or 12 cylindered. I have fitted between the thermostatically controlled radiator grille and the radiator a slimline electric fan made by Pacet (and available from Demon Tweaks) which switches itself on only when the temperature of the engine reaches 190°F. To fit the fan it was necessary to remove the radiator from the car complete and then separate it from its chromium housing. Fixing the fan in position proved particularly difficult as I believe the radiator on my car must be original, inasmuch as it has staggered down pipes. These make it impossible to get any kind of fixing mechanism through the radiator and in the event I had to use plastic covered garden wire; but the fan works very efficiently, it comes on only when the mechanical fan is idling and it is virtually invisible.

The 1930's Lagondas at least had some form of thermostatic control to their cooling systems through the opening and closing of the radiator grilles, but my 4½ litre Invicta has no thermostat or pressurised release valve on the overflow and, unlike the Lagonda,



There's an electric fan in there if you look closely.



The cooling aid on the Invicta.

it tends to run too hot if kept at speeds of 65-70 over several miles. I have not yet discovered an electric fan thin enough to fit between the front of the radiator and the stone guard, so I had to think of other ways of improving the cooling. I found the front three cylinders were running very weak - putting that right made a big difference to the propensity to overheat, but did not cure it. The mechanical fan on the Invicta, standard Meadows, is well designed and is efficient, but it is about 1½" behind the radiator, so I had a collar made to bring the fan to within about ¼" of the radiator. This helped but, again, did not completely cure the problem, nor did my next modification, which was to cut from the bottom half of a black plastic dustbin a ring of about 3" depth, which I have used to make a cowl around the fan, held in position by plastic garden wire through the radiator (yes, I know, but it can easily be removed by a purist). This improves the suction through the radiator, but even this did not cure the problem completely, nor did moving the headlights each about 1½" sideways to reduce their obstruction to the airflow. There was therefore the question of what else to do, as I knew that the radiator was clean, it having been off to an expert to be cleaned, and the block had fairly recently been cleaned during a Whenman overhaul when a "new" water pump was also fitted. Then a neighbour, who owned Allards, said that friends of his had discovered a product called "Water Wetter", which was efficacious in reducing this problem. About £15 worth of Water Wetter went into the radiator and it seems to have produced the final part of the cure. How or why it works I do not know, but I suspect it contains some form of surfactant, which keeps the water more in contact with the various parts. so we are now running at between 80_ and 90_ and the cooling system seems to keep the temperature down, even in traffic jams on a hot day.

My other car is a 1953 Healey Abbott, which has a 2½ litre Riley engine in it - designed pre-war - and this has, interestingly, a very small aperture in the

bodywork to let air into the radiator, a small radiator and a tiny mechanical fan. nevertheless, this arrangement, perhaps because of good air flow, or a ferocious water pump, keeps the car at a sensible running temperature, providing it does not get stuck in traffic. Same problem, except that when the temperature rises to normal boiling point, as it has a fully pressurised system, it is still not actually boiling. I decided that the cure for this was to fit a Kenlowe electric fan in front of the radiator, between the radiator and the grille. So again this is not easily visible.

I then decided to see if the cooling was adequate with just the 10" electric fan and no mechanical fan. I have discovered that, except in traffic on hot days and then only after being stationary for several minutes, the electric fan never switches itself on and the car runs happily at a normal working temperature with no cooling fan. Also, the power required to operate the mechanical fan is now being applied to the back wheels! The next question is whether to disconnect the mechanical fan on the V12. I have just driven it to Angouleme (for a rally) and back, with no heating problems, so I think I'll leave well alone.

We have the old problem, originality, or the ability to drive the car in modern traffic conditions. I plump very firmly for peace of mind, particularly if it can be achieved with no obvious appearance of modification to the car by the fitting of an electric fan - and no problem of reinstatement to originality if desired. What I would really like to find is a 10" to 12" diameter electric fan which is only about 1½" deep, which I could then fit between the stone guard and radiator of my Invicta. If any member knows of such a shallow fan fitted to a modern car he will be very popular - and not just with me I suspect.

As a foot note, if your radiator is blocked, formic acid, as used in kettle descalers, is very effective at removing the scale; in some circumstances overheating can be cured by formication!



Wessex Rally, a fine sight, in front of Wells Cathedral.

The Wessex Rally 1998

by Alan Elliott

THE morning of Sunday 19th July saw a fine gathering of Lagondas on the Cathedral green at Wells, by kind permission of the Dean and Chapter, the occasion being the Lagonda Club Wessex Rally. This event originated in the 1950's as Ivan Forshaw's New Forest Picnic, was resurrected as the New Forest Rally, changed its name to the Hants/Dorset Rally and finally became the Wessex Rally, so we can now legally run it anywhere between Winchester and Land's End!

The organiser was last year's winner, Andrew Gregg. The first task he had set was a "width of car" tie-breaker – most Lagonda owners wisely allowed a substantial margin each side of the car! The road section then commenced, as a tour through virtually all the major attractions of North Somerset, with a variety of clues to be answered en-route. There was quite a historic sign on the road near Wookey Hole Caves, advising "not Suitable for Charabancs", this led to a long steep climb to the top of the Mendips, with magnificent views across the Bristol Channel to South Wales.

We had a slight contretemps with our 2 litre here, when we were baulked and had to stop on the steepest gradient. The handbrake then refused to release, the rod from the top button had broken, allowing the pawl to drop into the ratchet, effectively holding the brake fully on; very embarrassing with several cars behind. Still, it was eventually freed, allowing us to proceed.

Various clues had to be answered on such diverse subjects as the Duke of

Wellington, Jacob's Ladder, "Rock of Ages" and the Registered Office of the Lagonda Club. do **you** know where it is? The cars attracted a great deal of attention on the drive down the Cheddar Gorge, for by now the tourists were out in force. We then proceeded up Barrington Coombe, similar to the Gorge, but not so steep or well-known. Most competitors had time for a noggin in the sunshine outside the Swan at Rowberrow and then eventually to the finish on Priddy Green, where the New Inn was well-known as the headquarters of the VSCC Wessex Trial in years gone by.

Andrew and Carol Gregg had arranged a magnificent picnic buffet, complete with Pimms – very welcome. The results were very close, with victory just going to Alan and Pat Elliott's 2 litre, followed by Sarah and Trevor Parker's Rapier and John and Vivian Muschamp's LG6. The other entrants were Peter Jones and family in the 2 litre saloon, Witt and Norma Wittridge's M45, James and Celia Sheppard's 2 litre and Martin and Jane Holloway in the 3 litre.

Altogether it was a most enjoyable event, ably organised by Andrew and Carol, through some of the best scenery Somerset can provide – and the weather man also co-operated. But why only seven entries, with some fifty other members within easy radius? The Centennial Year Wessex Rally will be organised by Stephen Weld and is scheduled for Sunday 2nd May, reverting to the traditional New Forest Area. Make a note of the date in your diaries now!





Wessex Rally, Andrew Gregg supervises the width test.



Wessex Rally, Witt and Norma had an additional navigator!

Dear Uncle Guru

by Don Courtney

THIS time it's axle tramp. Frightened me witless (I **think** that's what he wrote, Ed). Broke one of the cycle wing supports and bent the wing. I think it might have frightened the guy who was coming the other way.

I can see what causes it because on braking I can see the front wings dive forward as the back plate and hence the axle tilts to the front.

But what is the cure? Are low chassis 2 litres the only model that is prone? Do they all do it? If not, why not? Is it to do with balancing the braking effort fore

and aft? Why don't I see more 2 litres with anti-tramp devices? Surely it can't have been a problem from new, so why do I and other owners experience it from time to time now?

As ever, practical hints and advice will be much appreciated.

The ex-Editorial 16/80, featured on page 29 of the Spring "Lagonda" has been experiencing exactly the same problem. See the article below for one man's cure of the problem. **K.P.P.**

The Lady has a Tramp

by Stephen and Carol Constable

THE other day, while out in PJ9930, our 16/80, on a test run following routine adjustments, I had a very disconcerting experience! Time served 2 litre owners will know what I am about to relate. Approaching a junction at about 20 m.p.h. the car went over a slight bump as I touched the brakes. Suddenly all hell broke loose at the front end with much shaking and thumping. I thought a wheel or brake drum had collapsed but soon realised the car was still on all fours. Having exited the car in a hurry I found no real damage except our newly acquired P100s were surveying each other, and the radiator shutters looked like a typical England test wicket. I drove home slowly and immediately 'phoned 2 litre s/c man John Stoneman at Ely. He said "Don't tell me - axle tramp", which I had suspected having heard rumours of this problem before.

Over the last few years, amongst a mountain of other work we have fitted 21 inch wheels and tyres, and L/C 2 litre style cycle wings in steel. The front suspension had been rebuilt. We had toured Somerset in this guise and attended AGMs and Prescott with no similar problems. John kindly spent an evening showing me the beautifully machined anti-tramp bars he had fitted to his car following a much more damaging incident. Although I restore classic cars for a living I am not a machinist and only had a short time before the annual trip to Prescott, and certainly had no intention of using the car 'sans bars' again.

After contemplating the problem, I obtained 2 MGB track rod ends, 2 x $\frac{1}{16}$ UNF 3" bolts and nuts, 2 x 18 $\frac{5}{8}$ " lengths of thick wall $\frac{3}{8}$ OD steel tubing, 2 x MGB V8 wishbone bushes (silent bloc) with

long bolts and large washers to suit the centres, and 2 x 1¼" lengths of steel tube to fit the bushes. I then assembled and welded the parts as per the sketch diagram. Having fitted and painted them they don't look too out of place. The curved 'L' shaped brackets fitted under the spring 'U' bolt mouldings are in ¼" plate, heated and bent in the vice with optional stiffener strips.

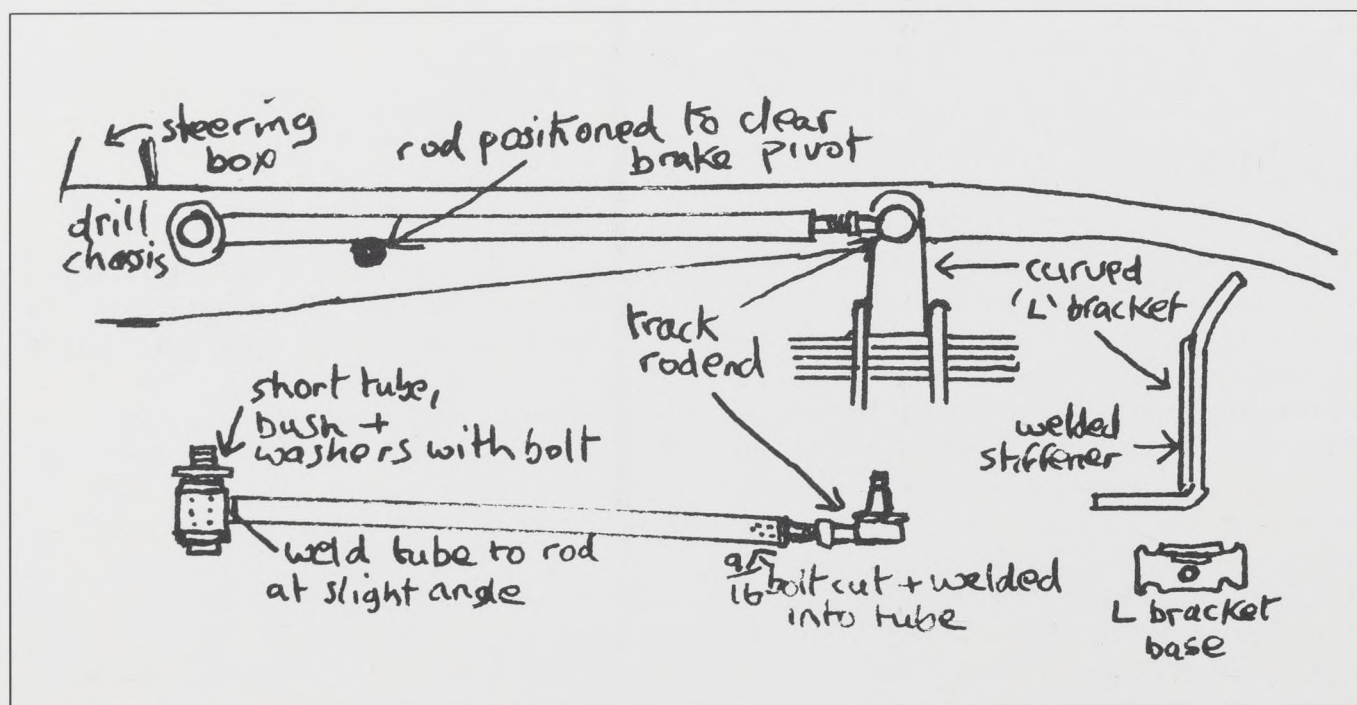
I can only suggest that owners with low chassis cars that have not been 'barred' do something pronto, as a severe dose of axle tramp could result in dire consequences. It puts enormous strain on all the steering arms and joints etc.. If it has happened already, check all arms, ball pins and woodruff keys for damage. I replaced all the ball pins as a matter of course.

Perhaps that relic of the British Raj,

Mahatma Kane Jeeves, or Uncle Guru for short, can comment, and why did Lagonda never do anything about this problem?

P.S. Our 16/80, now with 21" wheels, 4.1 heavy axle and ENV110 box still pulls well four up plus picnic basket - so much for rice pudding skins! The old ZE box makes a good door stop though my wife actually preferred it. Many thanks to all the club stalwarts who made us so welcome as new members a few years ago, and gave so much unstinting help and advice - what a magnificent and friendly club this is.

Yes, but **why** does the low chassis 2 litre or 16/80 sometimes suffer from this problem - and why can it take years to occur on a car? Steve had rebuilt his front suspension comparatively recently, so can anyone offer a scientific explanation for us?
K.P.P.



David Brown Colour Schemes

by Arnold Davey

ONE of my spare time activities of late has been transferring on to the Club's system the records of the David Brown Lagondas, which I have had on loan through the kindness of Roger Stowers. It was no surprise to find that Feltham carried on some of the best Staines traditions in that they were never able to build cars in anything like chassis number order and occasionally duplicated chassis numbers, solved by adding an X to the second one when it was spotted. Also, there are a number of mistakes in both sets of records, the production set and the sales set, but fortunately, between the two you can resolve nearly all of them.

One thing that did emerge, however, was the unexpectedly large number of grey cars and also how many different shades of grey were on offer. This is not helped in some cases where the production records differ from the sales ones and I deduce that "polychromatic grey" was the same as "moonbeam grey". For people like me who are interested in such things, I add the complete list of 2.6 litre colour schemes, year by year. These are actual calendar years, of course, not production years. The greyest year was 1950, when no less than eleven different shades of grey were supplied, if you count "moleskin" as grey, which it must have been, surely. As a few cars were supplied as bare chassis for outside coach-builders, these totals will not add up to the published total production.

1948

Maroon:	2
Metallic Grey:	1
Total for year:	3

1949

Black:	16
Maroon:	15
Birch Grey:	11

Continental Blue:	2
Polychromatic Alpine Blue:	2
Grey:	1
Sun Beige:	1
Total for year:	48

1950

Black:	55
Poly Grey/Moonbeam Grey:	25
Birch Grey:	20
Maroon:	17
Continental Blue:	7
Poly Silver Green:	4
Silver Grey:	3
Horizon Grey:	3
2 each of:	
Ivory, Burgundy, Satin Bronze, Suede Green, Alpine Mist, Almond Green, Poly Green, Poly Steel Dust, Poly Silver, Poly Alpine Blue, Botticelli Blue	
1 each of:	
Cadillac Green, Carnation Red, Clipper Blue, Poly Light Pearl, Heather Grey, Blue Haze, Orient Blue, Silver Grey, Moleskin, Spithead Grey, Battleship Grey	
Total for year:	169

1951

Black:	43
Moonbeam Grey:	22
Maroon:	15
Birch Grey:	14
Satin Bronze:	8
Silver Green:	5
Alpine Mist:	5
3 each of:	
Cadillac Green, Almond Green, Botticelli Blue, Dark Green	
2 each of:	
Silver Grey, Crushed Strawberry, Clipper Blue, Steel Grey, Steel Dust, Heather Grey, Blue Haze, Brown Bronze	
1 each of:	
Vauxhall Poly Beige, Airways Blue, Sports Green, Metallichrome Light Maroon, Imperial Crimson, Alpine Blue,	

Dark Blue, Willow Green, Grey, Electric Blue, Persian Grey, Burgundy, Cream, Connaught Green, Continental Blue, Dark Battleship Grey
Total for year: 156

1952

Moonbeam Grey: 30
Black: 24
Maroon: 14
Birch Grey: 8
Almond Green: 5
Satin Bronze: 4
Steel Grey: 4
Orient Blue: 3
2 each of:
Steel Dust, Cadillac Green, Botticelli Blue, Dockers Steel Grey
1 each of:
Moleskin, Enamel Green, Crimson, Burgundy, Brown Bronze, Crushed Strawberry, Mid-Brunswick Green, Continental Blue, Alpine Mist, Heather Grey, Cream, Smoke Grey
Total for year: 112

1953

Black: 2
Moonbeam Grey: 1
Total for year: 3

SUMMARY

1948:	3 cars,	2 colours
1949:	48 cars,	7 colours
1950:	169 cars,	31 colours
1951:	156 cars,	35 colours
1952:	112 cars,	24 colours
1953:	3 cars,	2 colours

Thus of the 491 cars covered, there were 56 colours all told, of which 22 were only ordered once. Black was top choice, with 140; followed by Moonbeam Grey, at 79; Maroon, at 63 and Birch Grey, at 53. Then there is a very sharp drop to Satin Bronze, at 14 and Continental Blue, at 11.

These sort of figures would drive a modern bodyshop man barmy. Not only the aggro. of ordering small quantities of dozens of different colours of paint, but also the costly delays in cleaning out the equipment at each change of colour. There are some laughs to be had at some

of the names of the colours. "Brown Bronze" is no doubt called that to distinguish it from green bronze or pink bronze.

The 2.6 Lagonda was a very expensive car and you can safely assume that the majority of the purchasers were of, shall we say, mature years. Hence the preponderance of dull or sober colours. In the early fifties the pre-war preference for black cars was on its way out but hadn't gone. It was probably stronger at this end of the market than at the other, but you will notice that by 1952 black Lagondas were not the most common. In the 3 litre cars they dwindled away noticeably.

3 LITRE CARS

While all the 2.6s were painted in a single colour, the different design of the 3 litre body lent itself to two-tone paintwork and this became very popular, to the extent that in the 1955 year only five cars were sold with a single colour out of a total of 91 cars all told. for the purposes of this article the bewildering varieties of colour combinations possible and exercised by the buyers make it impossible to analyse in a sensible length. There is also the problem that the sales records were entered by all sorts of people and you cannot rely on the coachbuilders' convention of quoting the upper colour first being observed. Easily the most popular combination in 1955, for example, was Shell Grey/Tudor Grey. But is this the same as Tudor Grey/Shell Grey or does it refer to a car whose colour scheme is the other way up? For simplicity I have assumed that both are the same.

To begin with, most of the dropheads on the 3 litre chassis were in one colour, owners relying on the hood material for colour contrast, but quite soon two-tone paintwork began to appear on dropheads too and, for the bulk of the production, just as many dropheads are two-colour as saloons. There are some surprising differences between two-door (which includes dropheads) and four door cars. For example, in 1954 there were 18 2-

doors using the Tudor Grey/Shell grey combination, compared to only one 4-door. But the following year it reverses, with 15 4-doors and 5 2-doors.

The decline of black, commented on above, is noticeable. In the successive years 1953-8 we have, respectively, none, 2, 11, 3, 6 and none painted in plain black, although there are a few two-tone cars where black is one of the pair, usually coupled with a grey. There aren't quite so many different greys in the 3 litre production, but it remained far and away the most popular colour. After the Duke of Edinburgh had his drophead 3 litre in dark green, this colour, or variants of it, began to creep up the list, although the weird prejudice against green cars in some quarters hampered this a bit.

I shall have to summarise the 3 litre production and just single out the colours ordered by more than three customers in any year:

1953

8 cars, all 2-door. 5 different colour schemes

1954

62 cars, 20 different colour schemes
Top choices: Tudor Grey/Shell Grey: 19,
Circasian Blue: 8, Lugano Blue: 6, Shell
Grey/Circasian Blue: 5.

1955

91 cars, 29 different colour schemes
Top choices: Tudor Grey/Shell Grey: 20,
Black: 11, Circasian Blue/Blue: 9,
Circasian Blue/Shell Grey: 8, Amaranth
Red/Beige: 8, Mid Olive Green/Beige: 4.

1956

37 cars, 15 different colour schemes
Top choices: Circasian Blue/Blue: 5,
Tudor Grey/Shell Grey: 4, Dark
Grey/Light Grey: 4.

1957

60 cars, 32 different colour schemes
Top choices: Tudor Grey/Shell Grey: 6,
Black: 6, Light Blue/Blue: 5.

1958

5 cars, 5 different colours

In total, there were 263 cars listed, using 68 different colour schemes, although there may be some duplication here. If one man recorded "Dark Grey/Light Grey" for a car, did he mean Tudor Grey/Shell Grey but just couldn't bother to look it up? This last was by far the most popular combination at 51 examples, followed by Black at 22 and Circasian Blue/Blue at 17, tying with Circasian Blue on its own, also 17. At the other end of the scale, there were 41 cars with a colour scheme only used once, although here again, when the salesperson recorded "Green", which of the dozens was meant, or was this a specific colour?

I should add that the above numbers, both for 3 litres and 2.6s earlier, only apply to factory bodied cars. I have excluded, since I don't have the information, cars bodied elsewhere.

DAVID BROWN RAPIDES

The three years that elapsed between the end of 3 litre production and the beginning of Rapides saw some sort of revulsion against grey and, of the 18 colours used for the 55 Rapides, only "Highland Granite" (one car only) sounds remotely grey, although it is anyone's guess what colour "Oro Longchamps" was. Top favourite was Aegean Blue at 8 cars, followed by Dubonnet and Goodwood Green at 7 each. Black was down to 2 cars, but the metallic version, Black Pearl, accounted for a further 6. The names given to Lagonda colours had become more exotic over the years and shades like "Peony" and "Caribbean Pearl" give quite a range of possibilities, while what on earth was "Ivory Red" or "Metallic String"?

This trend grew even more pronounced in the V8 era, but most of those records are still buried in the Newport Pagnel computer and will give my successor a separate headache next century. Especially if their machine is one of those that assumes the world will end on 31st December 1999.

Letters

Dear Ken,

What an excellent day we had for the A.G.M., with probably the best turn out of Lagondas we have ever had. I brought my "new" high chassis 2 litre, this being the first time the car has been on the road since 1957! It was probably the scruffiest Lagonda there - my son and I have rebuilt the chassis, but the body and interior remain to be done. There are a few teething problems we must resolve before the Centennial events next year.

I enclose an article on the Lagonda Club Wessex Rally, which Andrew Gregg

ran very successfully in July (see Page zz, Ed).

Yours sincerely

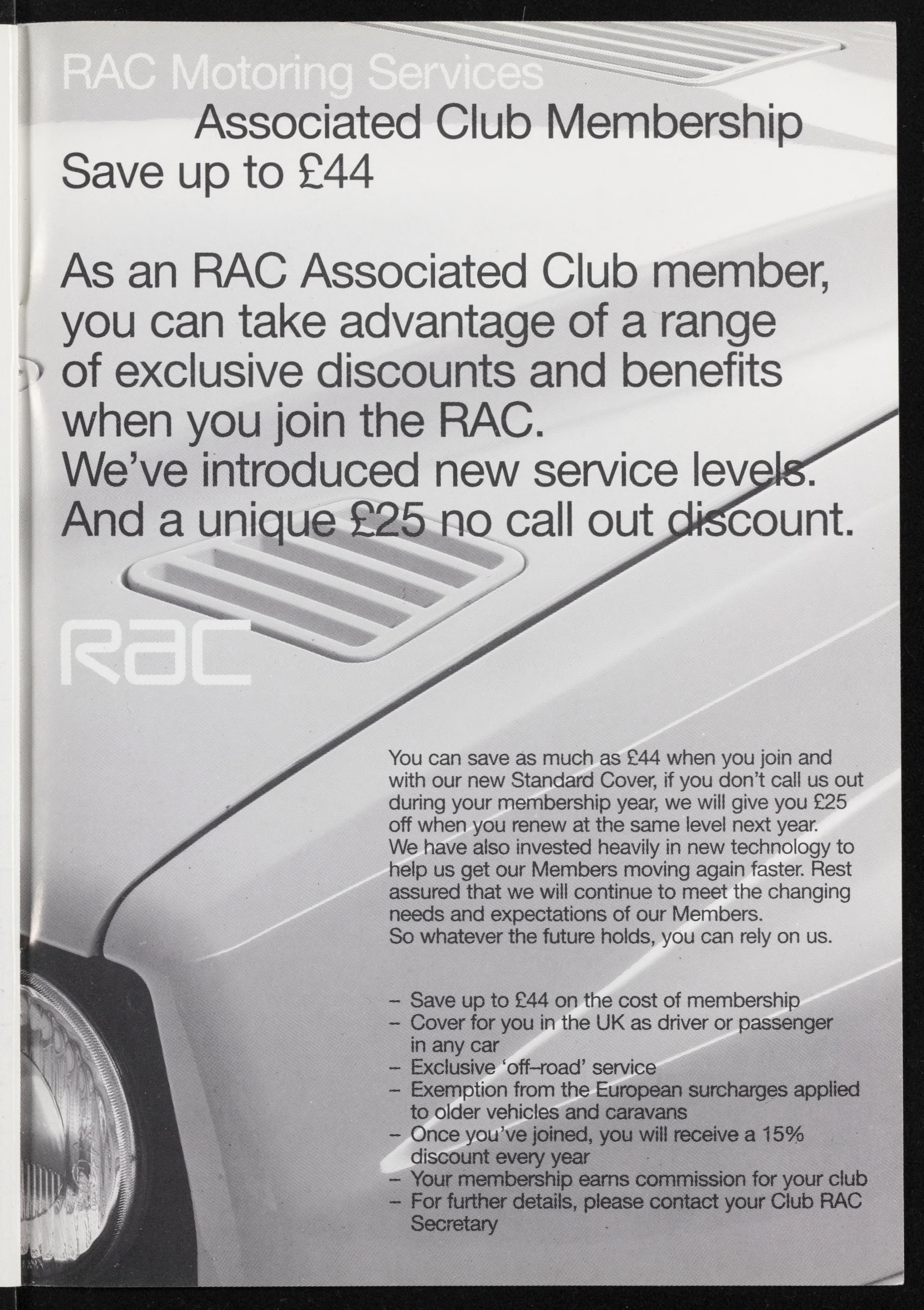
Alan Elliott

It's funny, but I envied Alan for being able to bring his car to the A.G.M., mine is still a long way from being able to move, let alone drive. It would encourage every member who is slowly rebuilding his or her car to see more cars like Alan's at our meetings - perhaps we ought to have a special prize for those cars which we could describe as "work in progress".

K.P.P.



The local Council helps Roger Firth find his way home after the Northern Dinner.



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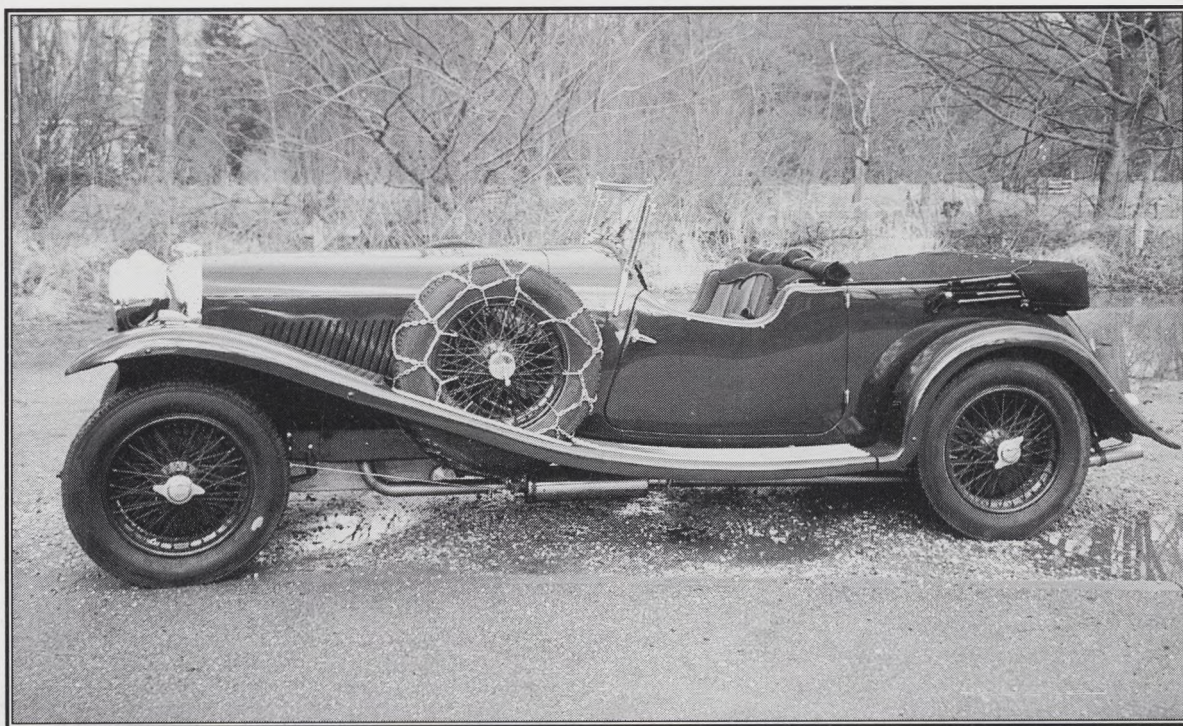


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