



THE MAGAZINE OF THE
LAGONDA CLUB

Number 187

Winter 2000 / 2001





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FRONT COVER

Part of the splendid line-up of cars at the AGM.

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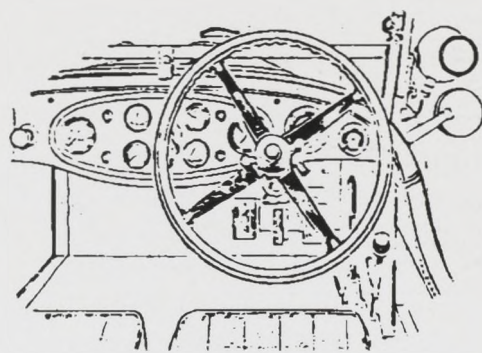
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From the Driving Seat

by Ken Painter



WHENEVER YOU TAKE an old car out for a spin, I am prepared to bet good money that, at some point, someone will come up to you and trot out one of those oh so familiar lines. You know what I mean, it will be "I used to have one of these", "They don't make 'em like that anymore", "My Dad/ Grandad/ Uncle (etc. etc.) used to have one of these", or variations along these lines. We all experience it, but how politely do you respond? I know for certain that when Joe Public tries it when I am in my Maserati that he is just plain wrong, but listening patiently and gently probing a little further has resulted in some surprising results over the years.

Many years ago, I had a Bullnose Morris Cowley (I got it as a straight swap for my Lagonda 16/80, which seemed like a good idea at the time). Once when I stopped for petrol, an elderly garage mechanic came out of the depths of a stygian workshop and looked at the car's dashboard, which was missing its clock. He ambled back into the workshop and came out carrying a clock, ticking merrily and showing the correct time. "I saved this when the scrap man would only give me a pound for my Bullnose in 1935, you might as well have it now!" Another garage provided a set of gaskets for the same car and a third actually offered the correct wheel nuts when a wheel fell off and rolled across their forecourt (don't ask....).

Even Lagonda parts turn up this way. A garage in Yorkshire had pistons, king pins and valves in stock from when the

proprietor serviced a customer's Rapier before the War. Being a true Yorkshireman, he sold them to me at the original purchase price. The same man told me where a 16/80 could be found in a breaker's yard, it was scruffy but complete, but I couldn't afford the £80 the scrap man wanted for it! Another much more recent surprise gift during a re-fuelling stop miles from anywhere was a part-set of gaskets for a post-war DB 2.6 litre.

I have lost count of the gasket sets, driver's handbooks, instruments, lamps, etc. I have been offered over the years. Most were for other pre-war makes and it would be fair to say that not all were useable or cheap. How about a magneto, rusted into a solid immobile block, offered for half the price I had paid for the car it was reputed to fit? Or £50 for a Pitman Handbook of the Austin Seven when a complete car might fetch £40?

In case you should think that all of this happened before the introduction of decimal currency, let me assure you that the kennels where my dog takes his holidays during the racing season own a DB 2.6 litre saloon, reputed to be a Motor Show car and in serious need of a sympathetic restoration. Interested and heroic rescuers should contact me for further details! Once you are known as one of those fortunate people who own a proper motor car it is astonishing what can come to light, what a pity it doesn't always relate to the same make of car as yours.

It isn't all good news though. In the early 1970s, I went to see a house which was up for sale following the death of the elderly owner and found his housekeeper in the garden, covered in soot and busily burning household rubbish to clean the place up prior to

sale. She had been hard at work at this for almost three weeks and had almost finished, I was just in time to save about a dozen pre-war motoring magazines, but she had already burned a complete set of "Autocar", from 1918 to the previous month, when the old man died.



**LAST DATE FOR COPY FOR THE SPRING MAGAZINE IS
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Prelude to the 1928 T.T.Races at the Ards Circuit.

Martin Whitehead researches a little known piece of Lagonda history

WHILE THE STORY OF Lagonda's involvement in racing from the late Twenties onwards is well known, not all the background work that went in to back up their efforts is as widely acknowledged. The following came to light as a result of contemplating some photographs and news items of the period.

The first comment is from the Belfast Newsletter of Friday 20th July 1928. It reports the imminent arrival of Mr.H.Kensington Moir the Lagonda team racing manager, who is coming to inspect the course for the August races. The fact that the method of travel was by aeroplane apparently caused some excitement, as the local Lagonda agents, Messrs. Nelson and Moore Ltd., were called upon to inspect several large fields that might be used as landing grounds . Not only this, but they negotiated with Belfast City Council with a view to using the abandoned Malone Municipal Aerodrome on the outskirts of the city a bare two miles from the City Hall. Finally they received a special dispensation from the R.A.F. and were allowed to use the military airfield at Aldergrove. Malone Aerodrome is interesting in that it was the first airport in the U.K. to be owned and operated by a local authority. It opened in April 1924 with a regular service to Aintree Liverpool by De Havilland D.H.50 four passenger aircraft also carrying mail and newspapers. Airmail letters had to have an extra halfpenny stamp and a blue airmail sticker. Alan Cobham was one of the first pilots with the service, this of course was before he achieved fame with his long distance pioneering flying boat trips. The aerodrome eventually had to close due to difficulties with weather

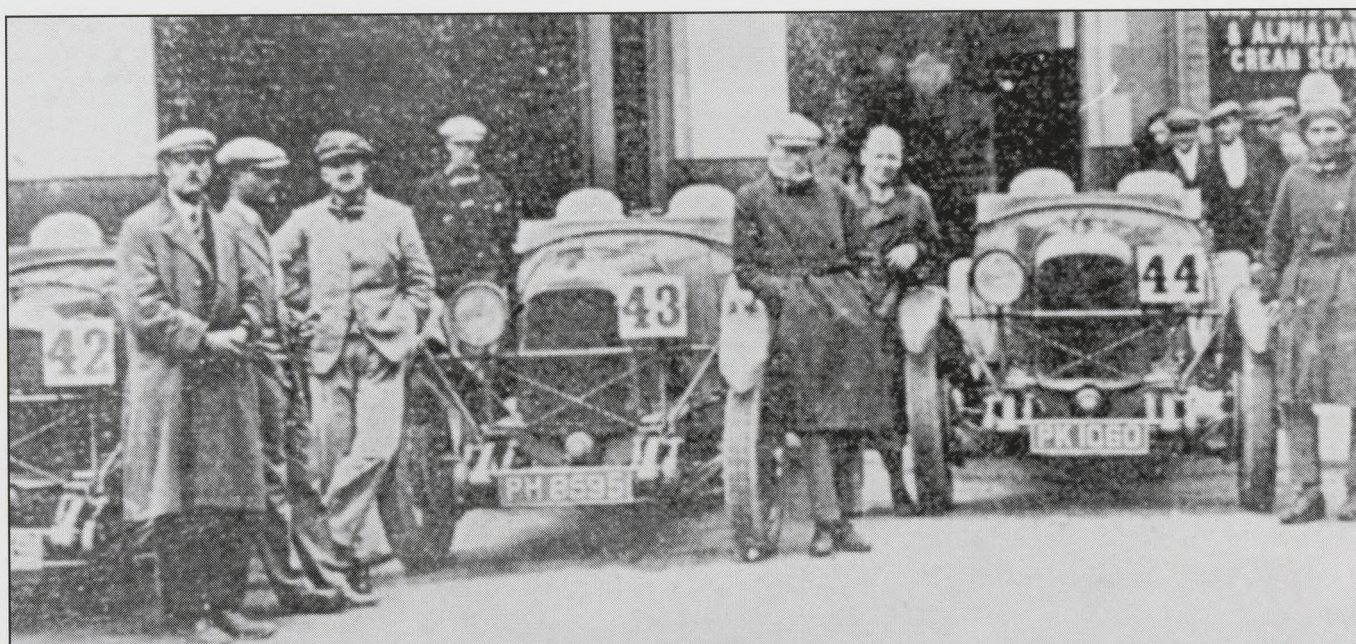
reporting and the necessary communications between the two terminals. Another interesting point is the time that the flight was expected to take - six and a half hours. This was taking off from Stag Lane, London at 8.30 a.m. and arriving at Aldergrove at approximately 3.p.m. Compare that to today's time of an hour and a half. Mention is also made in the article of Squadron-Leader Mulholland of the well known County Down family. This is of course the family name of the late Lord Dunleath of HLL534 renown. I wonder if the good Squadron-Leader had anything to do with the dispensation for the use of Aldergrove. As far as the team cars are concerned there is very little said except to note that the cars will do over 70 m.p.h. on the third gear and that the gearbox has been specially designed to ensure quick and silent changes at these speeds. Being a two Litre owner I find myself thinking my car has not done that for a day or two, although I occasionally get a silent gear change from third to top.

This article was followed up on Monday July 23rd by a photograph showing the arrival of Kensington Moir. He is accompanied by Major Hayes who was the driver of PH 8595, Number 43 of the team. It is plain to see from this photo that the aircraft is an Avro Avian but with no identifying marks visible. The two fliers do seem remarkably cheerful after six and a half hours in the air, though there was probably at least one refuelling stop on the way.

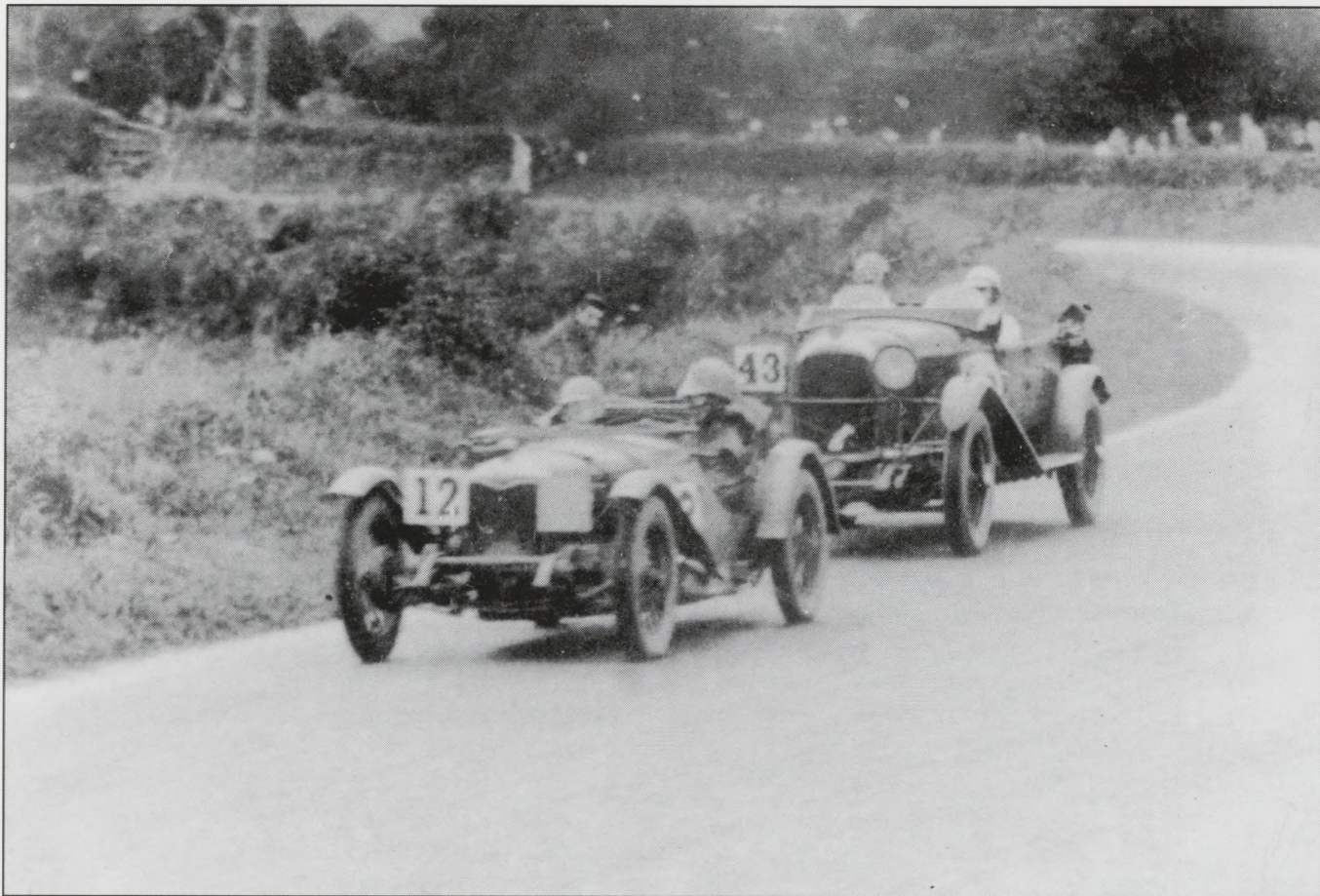
Of the other photographs, the first shows the three team cars drawn up in the road outside Nelson and Moore's premises in Chichester Street, Belfast. This is not more than 150 yards from the City Hall on one of the main arterial



*Kensington Moir and Major Hayes arrive at Aldergrove by Avro Avian.
Belfast Newsletter, July 23rd 1928*

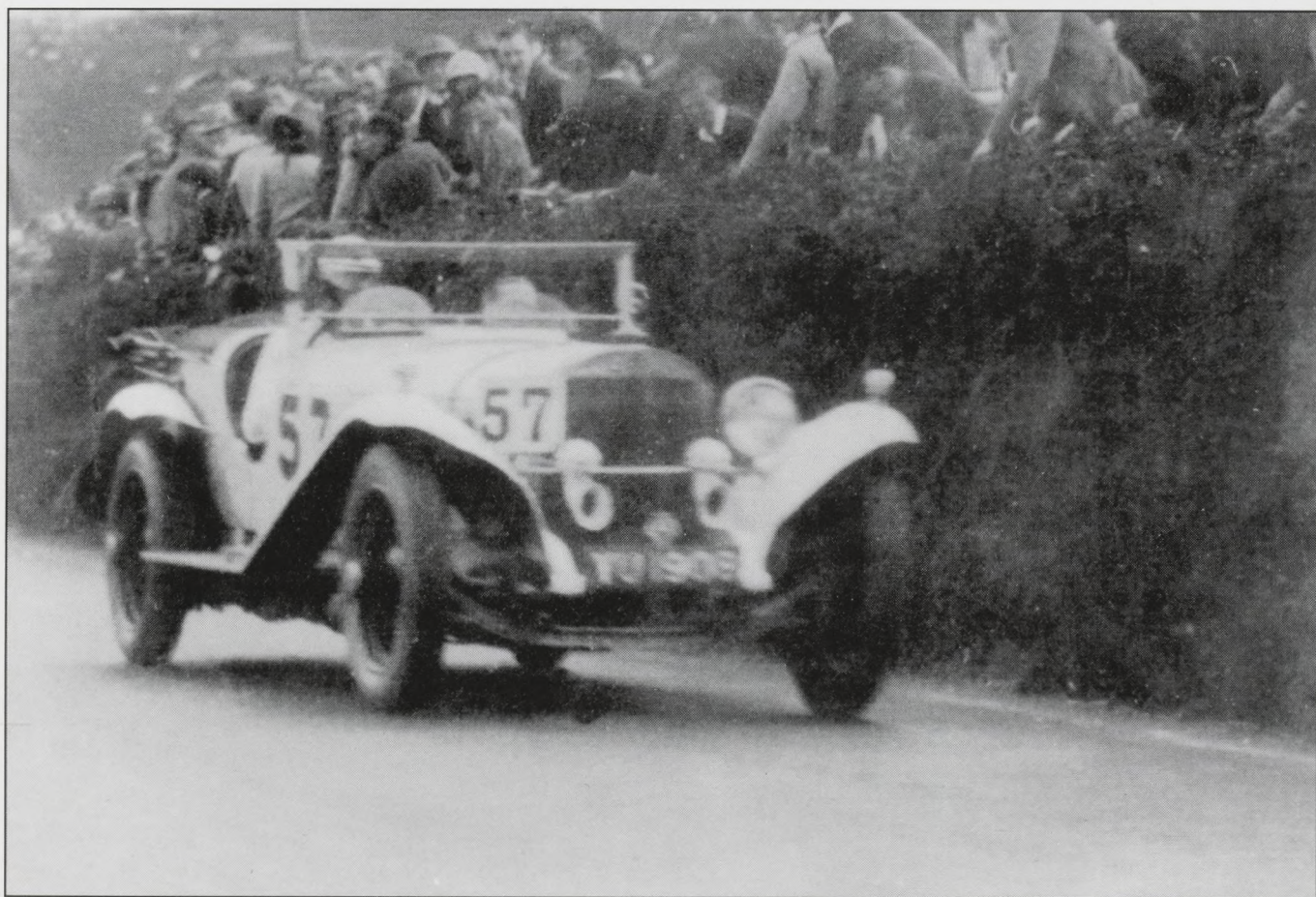


LAGONDA CARS AND DRIVERS AT THEIR DEPOT IN CHICHESTER STREET, BELFAST.



The 1928 Ulster TT, I Macdonald (Riley 9) ahead of Major Hayes in his 2 litre.

Photo: Ulster Folk and Transport Museum.



Thistlethwaite in the 6.7 litre supercharged Mercedes Benz.

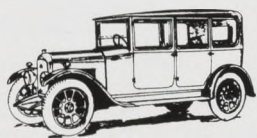
Photo: Ulster Folk and Transport Museum.

routes out of the city. The relaxed atmosphere gives an entirely different impression from today's frantic traffic. Car Number 42, PK 1059, was driven by Baron d'Erlanger, car Number 43, PH 8595 by Major Hayes, and car Number 44, PK 1060 by Eddie Hall.

The second shows Major Hayes about to overtake A.V. Wilkinson in a Riley Brooklands. Wilkinson was a local driver and he retired somewhere about lap 10. As the cars had to run the first two laps with the hoods erected, this incident is fairly early in the race and looks as if it is on the descent of Bradshaws Brae.

The third shows something of the opposition. This is Thistlethwayte's Mercedes, the only entry in Class B and the largest car in the race. Size is not everything though, as it ended up in a ditch at Quarry Corner with a blown head gasket.

Arnold Davey has of course told of this in the 'BOOK' and the team picture was also used by Geoff Seaton but perhaps this will give a little insight into the atmosphere and spirit of the times.



FLYING TO BELFAST.

THE GREAT ROAD RACE.

Manager of One of the Teams
Arriving To-morrow.

SEVERAL VISITORS BY AIR.

To-morrow, Mr. H. Kensington Moir, racing team manager for the Lagonda Company, will fly from London to Belfast for the purpose of inspecting the course for the great Ulster road race which will be held next month.

Following Mr. Moir's inquiry concerning a suitable landing place for his aeroplane, the Lagonda Agents in Belfast, Messrs. Nelson & Moore, Ltd. have been engaged in an endeavour to satisfy his needs. Large fields at Bangor and also in an area between Stormont and Holywood have been inspected, and the possibility of obtaining the use of the Malone aerodrome was also considered. It is understood, however, that for a nominal charge the machine will be permitted to land on the aerodrome attached to No. 502 (Ulster) Bombing Squadron at Aldergrove; and, in all probability, this will be the landing place. Mr. Moir will leave Stag Lane Aerodrome, London at 8.30 a.m. to-morrow, and expects to arrive at Belfast at 3 p.m. He will come by Scotland, in order to get the shortest sea journey.

It may be recalled that Messrs. Lagonda, Limited, have three cars entered for the race; and the purpose of the team manager's visit is to get a thorough idea of the circuit, and the gradients and to decide upon the most suitable gear ratios. Hotel accommodation for the drivers and mechanics was booked some months ago. All tuning and preparation of the cars will be done at the garage of Messrs. Nelson and Moore's, Ltd. in Chichester Street, Belfast. The cars entered are each rated at 12.9 h.p. and incorporate the latest design factors which make for speed and reliability. It is understood that these cars will attain a speed of over 70 miles per hour on third gear and that the gearbox is designed so as to enable quick, silent changes to be made at these speeds.

Mr Moir's visit by aeroplane is evidence of the tendency discussed by our motoring correspondent, "Verax" in a recent article on aircraft development, and it is expected that before the end of the summer season we shall have several visitors to Ulster by air, Squadron Leader Mulholland, who is a member of a well known County Down family, will arrive next month, and it is expected that several spectators at the race will come by aeroplane.

The 49th AGM of the Lagonda Club

Tony Loch reports on a splendid event

THE LAGONDA CLUB returned to Aldermaston Manor for their 49th AGM. Once again we were blessed with a fine warm day which brought out all the best in the attractive setting.

Because it was only a few days after the end of the petrol blockade the organisers were concerned about how many members would turn up and if there were going to be enough cars for a worthwhile Concours d'Elegance. They need not have worried; although the turn-out was down on recent years 48 members sat down for dinner on Saturday night, with only 4 cancellations, and they were not all locals, some members had come from Cumbria and Cheshire.

By the time the AGM started 30 Lagondas had arrived and the total for the day was at least 45, plus the 1905 land speed record breaking Napier and a yellow vintage Renault. All the models of Lagondas from the 14/60 to the V12 were well represented and the post-war class included an AML V8 as well as the usual DBs. The saying "no two Lagondas are alike" was well justified by the difference in the cars on display.

When the members assembled for the formal part of the AGM it appeared that the Board had really made a move to reduce their average age because sitting at the end of the table was Harry Lloyd-Bisley, however it transpired that in the absence of his mother Kevin had decided that that was the best way of keeping an eye on a 5 year old. His composure during the meeting was exemplary and demonstrated his fitness for a place on the Board in due course.

The President opened the meeting by welcoming all those who had made the effort to attend. He briefly reviewed

the events since the last AGM before handing over to the Chairman. The first item on the agenda was acceptance of the accounts. A request was made from the floor that some of the balance in the spares sub-fund should be spent on building up a stock of slow moving parts, such as sets of gears, which are at present only available when members themselves have a batch made. The Chairman said that it had been the policy not to tie up funds in slow moving expensive parts but the new spares organisation would consider it. A question was asked about what the Centenary year had cost the Club. This was difficult to answer because there was still a stock of Centennial regalia. It had been marked down in an effort to move it but the final figure would depend on how much was sold. However even in the worst instance the total cost would be well within the £12000 that the Board had set aside for the year. This was mainly because the rallies and runs that were held had covered their costs.

The next item was the election to the Board. Messrs Bugler, Davey, Lloyd-Bisley and Stoneman were re-elected and Alan Hancock was elected as the new spares organiser. The Chairman proposed a vote of thanks to John and Vivien Breen for all the hard work that they had put into the spares section.

The Chairman then explained how the spares would now be organised. Alan Hancock would hold the stock and would deal with the selling and delivery but the provision of new spares would be the responsibility of a sub-committee chaired by him. He would welcome suggestions for new items and offers to help in their provision. He mentioned that a member, David Ayre, had bought



It is good to see more of the post-war cars at our events. An A.M.V8 and three DB 3 litres at the AGM.



all the Forshaw stock of second hand items but this was not run by the club.

The Chairman closed the formal meeting by announcing that the 2001 AGM which would celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Club would be held at Woburn (Bedfordshire) on 23rd and 24th September with the gala dinner on the Saturday at Woburn Abbey.

The President then stood up again for what he said was a very pleasant task. This AGM marked the 40th anniversary of Arnold Davey's election to the Committee. He joined the Club in 1957 when he was running a Rapier. In the early days he helped organise sprint meetings at Brands Hatch in conjunction with the ACOC and in 1968 he became the Club Registrar and Historian after Bill Hartop gave up. In 1970 he took over production of the Register which, to start with, he drafted in longhand before it was typed. In the mid '70s he became the

Winners were:

2 Litre Class

Winner	Carl Heighington	1929 LC tr	PG2882
Second	Allan Elliott	1929 HC tr	PG402

16/80 Class

Winner	Vivien Breen	1933 tr	AME912
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Rapier Class

Winner	Colin Mallett	1934 4str special	BLC599
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3 and 3 1/2 Litre Class

Winner	Jolyon French	1929 tr	UU5820
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M45. LG45 Class

Winner	Barry Lowe	1934 M45 Park Ward DHC	AYR 360
Second	Stephen Lewis	1936 LG45 Rapide	DLK505

LG6. V12 Class

Winner	Maurice Leo	1939 V12 Rapide Coupe	FLO727
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DB Class

Winner	Peter Gilkes	1954 DB 31 FHC	UPE222
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Car Club Trophy for the most prestigious car

Winner Brian Watson 1937 LG45 DHC FPA521

Ladies Award for the most appealing car to take home voted by all the ladies present

Winner Mrs Clare Fisher 1955 DB 31 Tickford DHC CSL787

Special Award of Merit

Dennis Clarke – although on crutches he had driven his 1932 21 LC DH (PN8750) up from New Milton determined not to miss the 44th AGM that he has attended, probably in the same car

Can anyone beat that record? I doubt it.

editor of the Newsletter which, unlike those of many Clubs, is not just a summary of events but it often includes his own views and experiences which makes it such essential reading. However he is probably best known for his co-authorship of the definitive book on Lagondas - The History of the Marque Lagonda. He is, said the President, a lynch pin of the Club. He then presented Arnold with a suitable engraved silver dish. Arnold, who had no idea that the occasion was going to be celebrated, then thanked the meeting in his usual humorous manner. A suitable presentation was also made to Wendy, his long suffering wife and assistant registrar and historian.

Judging of the Concours was completed mainly in the interval before the excellent bar-b-que lunch was served, with the result that the presentation of the awards started early.



A rearview of the cars featured on the cover.



The beautiful silver salver presented to Arnold Davey.

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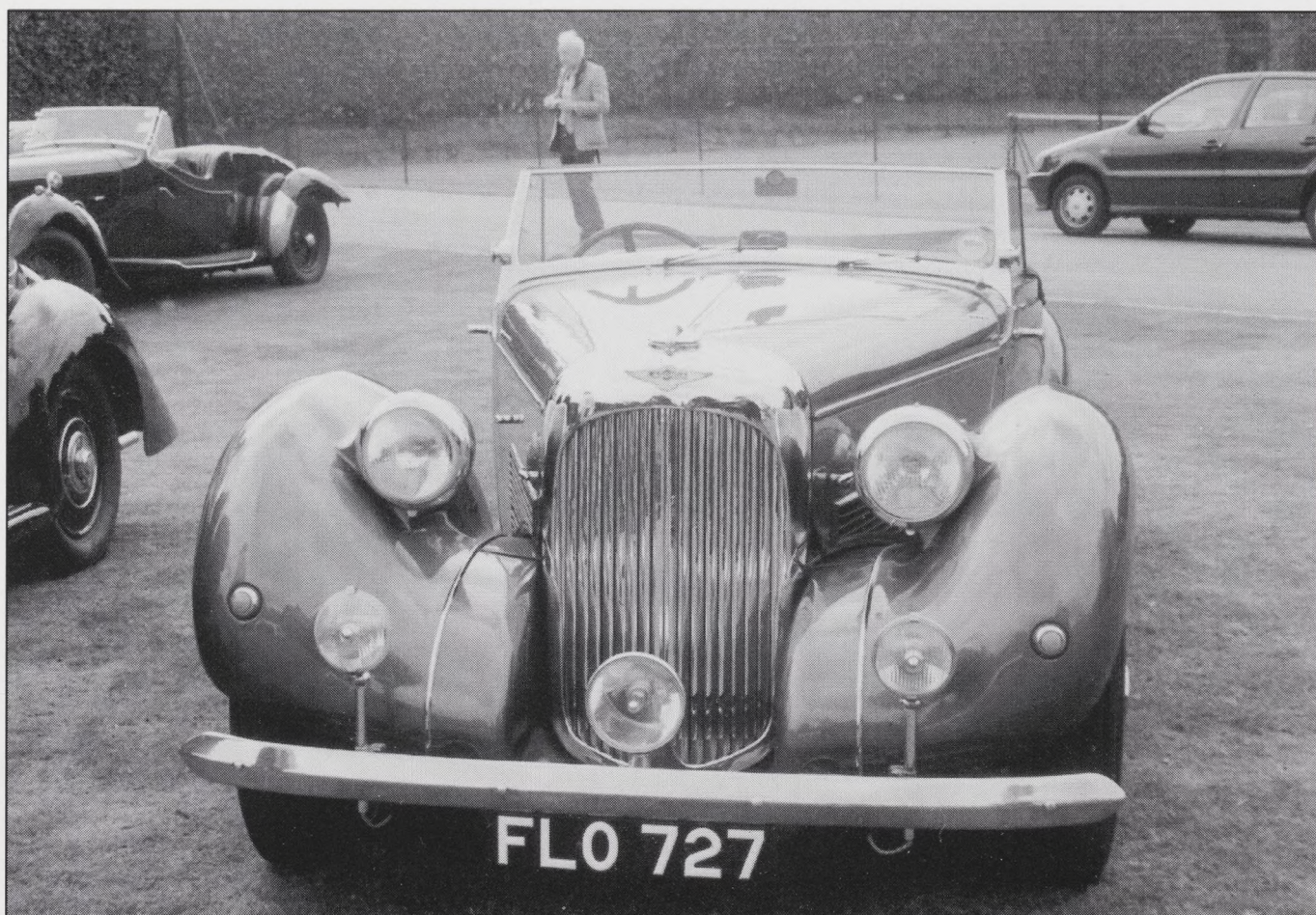
Annual General Meetings are about people as well as cars! David Hine presents Vivien Breen with the award for best 16/80 . . .



. . . and Dennis Clarke receives his Special award of Merit at his 44th AGM.



Maurice Leo accepts the award for the LG6/V12 class – and his car is shown below.



Meeting of the Dutch Section of the Lagonda Club

J.J. Dolleman reports:

ORGANISING AN EVENT is always done far ahead. Reservations have to be made, the lunch and the dinner have to be discussed, lots of work. The strange thing is that one envisages the day of the event as being bright and sunny and in the year 2000 there was, with hindsight, no reason to do this. As we all remember the summer and autumn of 2000 were very wet. But when starting the preparations for the rally we did not know what was to come. In the wet month of May we were sure the 10th of September 2000 would be dry and sunny. Let me tell you a secret: it was in the end. Very early in the morning mist of the 10th of September I drove to Gerard van Pelt and from there we took off to the rendezvous near Apeldoorn. Since my Lagonda had not yet recovered from a terrible disease called the CBI syndrome (crankshaft bearing illness) I was pleased to navigate Gerard in his nice 3 litre car. So at least my day would be good, in an open Lagonda.

We expected about 10 cars for this first event. Due to family circumstance the total was 9, of which 7 were pre-war vehicles. Not a bad score. All the way from Belgium we had 3 cars joining us. Shanna from LMB was the only lady driver. After lunch one of the other ladies joined her for a full ladies equipe. One participant had come with his 4wheel drive (no, no names) telling us he had all kind of ropes in the car just in case. So we asked him if he expected his car to break down.

When a section is as small as the Dutch Section, everybody knows everybody. So the early morning coffee

was a good time to see friends again. Even Tony Paalman (one of the directors of the nearby automobile museum in Deventer), who is a big Lagonda fan, came to see us there and to have a look at the cars. Isn't it a wonderful noise to hear these cars turning into the parking lot of the hotel ? I could not stay indoors for I was so curious what cars would show up. And I was not disappointed. When You see the pictures You will not believe most Lagonda's are green.

When everybody was there, we took off on a 100 miles route that was set out by our member Frans Louwaard who unfortunately was unable to be there that day. I had been checking the route 14 days earlier, in the pouring rain and prayed it would stay dry this one day. The system was easy with tulip and arrows and the distance was indicated in miles and in kilometres. The east of Holland is very rural and beautiful. The country side rolled out along the cars and as the day grew older the weather got better and better. How about sitting outside in the sun for the aperitif before lunch? A real present as one could read from all the faces.

The stretch after lunch was not so long so we could enjoy a nice drink outside looking at cars or sitting under a tree on the terrace of the restaurant. All cars completed the day without any trouble and even the 4wheel drive car managed to find the finish without problems. As there was no prize to win there was no winner, but they all wanted to have another section meeting next year. So the Dutch Section will certainly meet again in 2001.



Red Lagondas at the Dutch meeting.



One green Lagonda, hidden by the red ones.



The 1962 Rapide of Hans Ruhé, next to Gerard van Pelt's 3 litre.



Gerard's 3 litre, next to an M45 from LMB Racing.



Well, it is Holland . . . Gerad van Pelt's 3 litre improves the scenery.



More from the AGM, Allan Elliott came second in the 2 litre class. My apologies to the class winner, but I didn't get your picture!



The 'Ladies Prize', for the most appealing car to take home was won by Clare Fisher's DB 3 litre convertible, Alastair Barker accepts the award on her behalf.

Nutmeg 2000 Rally and Lime Rock in the Fall

Colin and Valerie Bugler enjoy some American hospitality

BACK IN THE SUMMER, Valerie and I were invited by Rudy Wood-Muller and Rob Bettigole to come over in October for the VSCCA Nutmeg Rally and to visit the Lime Rock race days a couple of weeks later. Having enjoyed the Springfield Centennial Rally we were very happy to take up the invitation. We arrived at Rob's house in Lakeville, Connecticut rather late from JFK after picking up a hire car and getting lost in the Bronx. Valerie got out and asked a very nice man the way (why do Americans sound surprised about this?). The next few days were spent at Rob's house enjoying the brilliant fall colours and fettling his 2 litre.

On the Friday, Rob and Barbara left Lakeville in their Lagonda and Valerie and I were in the Dodge Neon hire car. All arrived at The Inn at Chester, South East Connecticut late afternoon after a trouble free journey. We spent a very pleasurable evening as guests of Rudy and Jenny at their Country Club in Old Lyme. We had already met Jim and Carol Donick (he is the Editor of the VSCCA magazine) in Lakeville and they were in charge of organising the clues on the Nutmeg rally route (about 100 miles).

About 30 cars took part and Saturday morning saw us all set off in excellent weather with Rob and I co-driving his 2 litre and Barbara map reading. Valerie navigated for Rudy in his very elegant and comfortable LG 45 drophead. We found some difficulty with "local" questions which needed USA knowledge but the route was so scenic it was hard to concentrate on the answers. Rob and Barbara were very keen and jumped in and out of the car tracking down every last clue - at this point I decided I was more use when driving. Valerie vastly

enjoyed her time with Rudy as he gave her the historic background to what she was seeing and they decided to give everyone else a chance by leaving out some of the answers needed (at least that is what they said!).

Halfway through the route we stopped at a beauty spot called Devil's Hopyard where we found Jim all dressed up in huge waders. All navigators had to take part in the Duckie Derby and were given a small, numbered, yellow rubber duck. They threw these off a covered bridge five at a time and the drivers had to yell encouragement as the ducks sank, snagged or swam to where Jim scooped them up to decide the winner. This proved great entertainment and I am wondering whether to suggest it to rally organisers here?

At the end of the rally we all attended a wonderful dinner at The Chester Inn where the winners of various prizes were announced. Rob and Barbara won the rally much to our combined pleasure. I gave a talk about the history of Lagonda and the US connection with Wilbur Gunn seemed to spark some interest. The next morning, after a leisurely breakfast, Rob and Barbara left for home in the 2 litre and we set off to wander around the White Mountains in New Hampshire and, eventually, to see my brother who lives in Maine. Whilst in Maine we had dinner with Nick and Jeanne Sewall and I admired his beautiful 3 1/2 litre.

We arrived back in Lakeville for our last weekend to attend the Fall Lime Rock race meeting which was so different from our frantic and over regulated meetings here. The foliage colours all round what is effectively an amphitheatre were, at this time of the

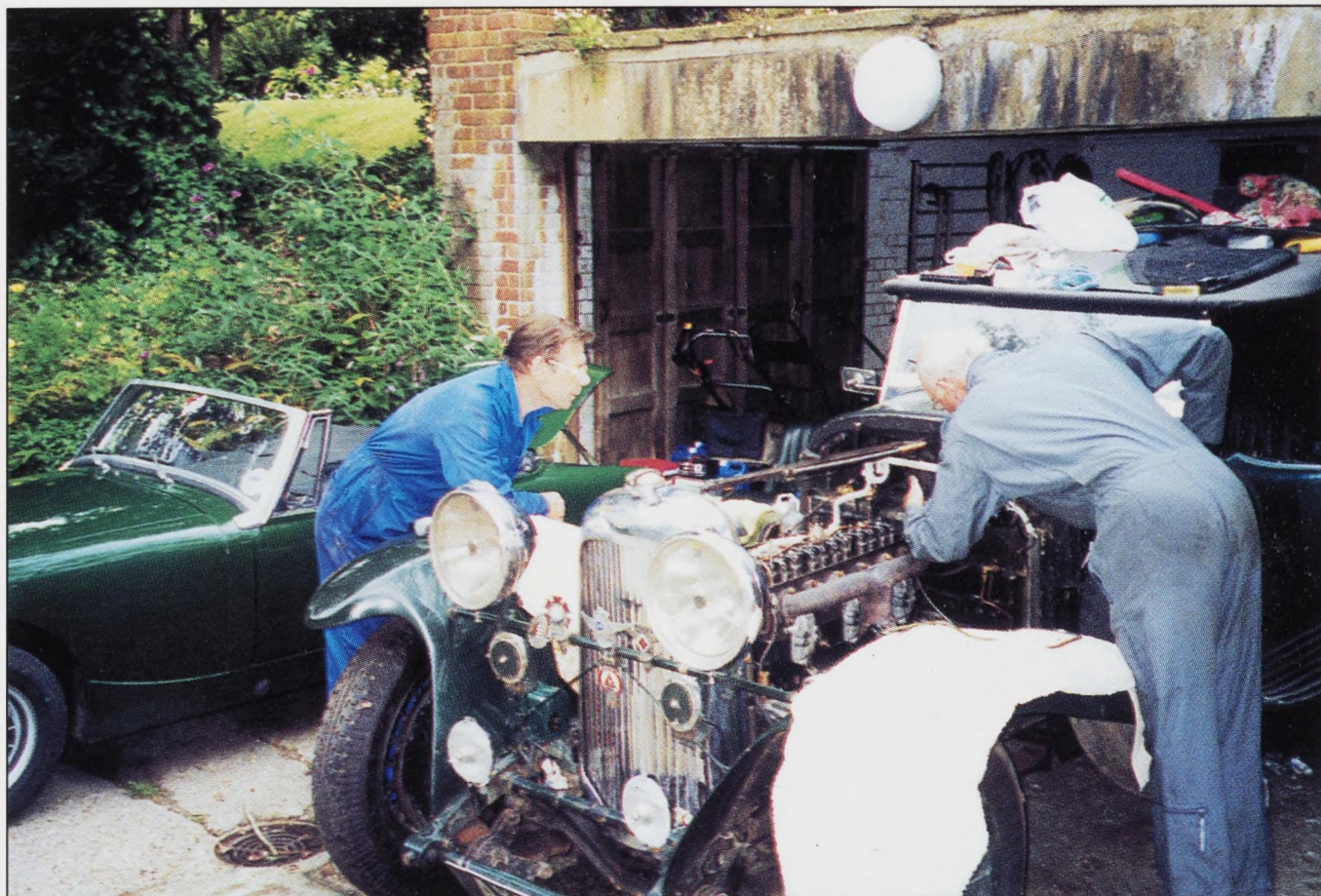
year, incredible and the whole atmosphere so pleasant and relaxed. Rob took us around the track for several laps in his 2 litre during the lunch break and I was left with a very strong ambition to race my Rapier there. There was a local dinner on Friday evening where I had the great pleasure of meeting John Fitch, who had raced Peter Biggs' V12 Le Mans Team car when it was fitted with an American V8 engine not long after the war. Students of motor racing in the 1950's will remember that John was a works driver for Cunninghams at Le Mans and was later with Mercedes

driving at Le Mans, Dundrod T.T. and the Targa Florio. He was a Mustang pilot during the war and stills flies gliders at the age of 83 – what a character! On the Saturday we met Club member Dan Ghose who had hoped to compete with his 1913 Fiat. Instead he was spectating in an eye-catching red and silver Corvette.

All too soon it was back to a very wet homeland – great memories – any members thinking of joining in USA events are sure of a big welcome – try it next year!



'The Shadows' (Valerie and Colin Bugler) photograph Rob Bettigole's winning 2 litre.



Richard and his brother-in-law Michael Pearson prepare AXD for the Marathon.



Richard and John about to set off.

The 12th Classic Marathon, 9th - 14th September

Richard Mann takes AXD 56 on another Continental challenge

WE HAD A TERRIBLE SETBACK on starting out for the Millennium Monte, when we seized 30 miles from Brooklands. I decided to replace the block, the pistons and the conrods, but this was no job for my home team and needed a more professional approach, so I eventually chose Henry Meadows Ltd. (Michael Bristow) to assemble the new engine. I had bought the new block and sump from him and pistons and conrods from Peter Whenman. With time running out, I eventually had the renewed engine delivered on 21st August. By 7th September, two days before the Rally was due to start, I had driven over a thousand miles, changed the oil over three times and knew that, even at this early stage, the car was poised to run as she would have done in the '30s.

So, on 9th September, John Blake and I set off for the Ashford International Hotel, where scrutineering was to take place. There, we met up with Roy Williams, who had been hoping to be driving his LG6. Unfortunately not this time, but there he was in his "Riley Bigley" special, with his co-driver, Steve Gough. Roy was to drive in his very competitive, but highly sporting way during the Rally.

Also from our previous Monte, we met Alex and Jane Postan, in their Austin Healey Sebring Sprite, who fondly referred to us as the "Old Lags". The vintagents were to form a strong social group, with Paul Carter driving a 4 1/2 litre Bentley, as well as others we had met on previous Rallies.

The Rally started with an evening drive around a maze of lanes around Ypres as our pipe opener. We were pleased to perform fairly well in the regularity sections, bearing in mind that we operate in miles and you cannot read the trip, as it is obscured by the speedo

needle. The car went superbly. After the official start in Ypres' main square we were to drive through the wonderful wooded country of the Ardennes, Luxembourg and into South Western Germany. Short sharp mountains tested us all in our driving and navigating, particularly as the official maps for this rally were copies in black and white and almost impossible to read at times.

Of the vintagents, the Broderick's Invicta was looking very good, with 3 Bentleys, all 4 1/2s well up, with Paul leading and Roy's Riley and Roger Gourd's Austin Ulster all going well. We continued through SW Germany and Switzerland, then climbed the awesome, amazing road up to and over the Grand St Bernard Pass. What a view and what a place! AXD got a little hot climbing up so far and we lost some water at the top, but the engine never missed a beat and was running very smoothly.

In to Italy and the Piemonte, great climbs and descents, with hairpins abounding, it really tests car, driver and navigator, but is truly rewarding. The vintagents were showing their qualities of endurance and, surprisingly, a fair amount of pace.

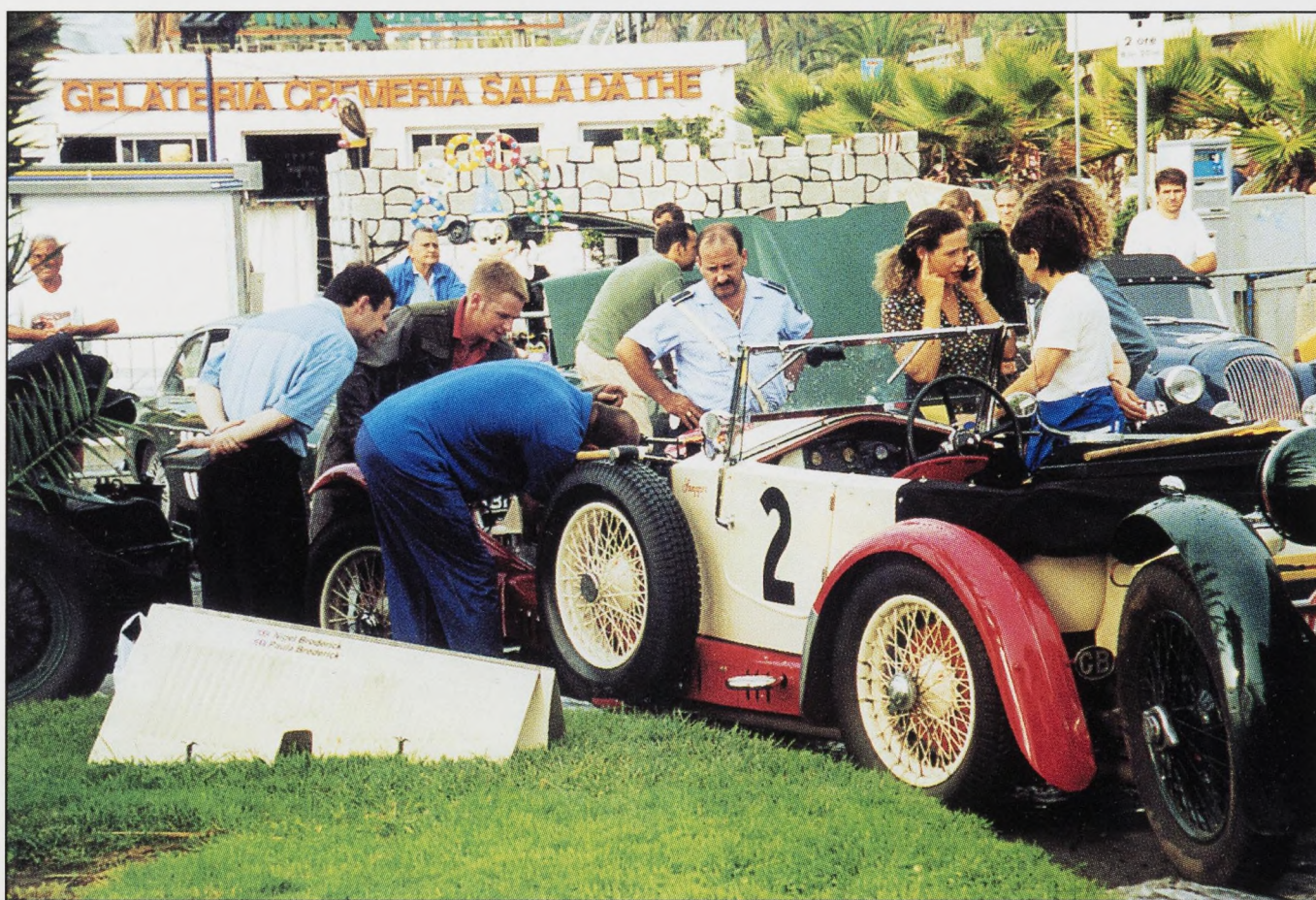
On we went to San Remo and how pleased one is to get to the end of 1600 miles of testing roads after five days, but how we enjoyed it! Once again, I urge sporting Lagonda owners to enter Rallies of this type, you will not regret it.

In our class, the Brodericks came first in their very original Invicta; Paul Carter came second in his superb Bentley and Roy Williams third. We came a respectable seventh, but considering that we made some tactical cuts, we were not too far behind!

The vintagents had some good evenings together and we are now looking forward to the next Monte Challenge in January 2001.



At the finish in San Remo.



The Broderick's Invicta attracts a great deal of attention in San Remo.

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The White Lion Hotel, tel. 01728 452720, offers two nights B&B plus one dinner for £113 per person, but not one-night bookings. Contact Mike on 01394 382773 for details of accommodation at other hotels and guest houses, or with local members. Book early – Sizewell Power Station refit may fill local beds in March

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John Anderson relates an extraordinary tale

THERE'S AN OLD SAYING "If you can't beat them, join them", and there's no truer example than that at the time the British were involved with the Gurkhas whilst building our former Indian Empire. What they didn't know at the time was that the first car to enter the Kingdom of Nepal some 120 years later was to be an M.45.R!

When the British made friends with the Gurkhas the agreement was that no one other than a "Military Advisor" was allowed into the country and his job was solely military recruitment and, during the immediate pre-war years, the M.A. was the colonel who came to be my C.O. in 1942.

Last year I was given a book on the history of the Gurkha regiments and in it was a picture of a car being portered on a raft of bamboo poles, and the caption read "The first car to enter Nepal in the mid 1930's". I recognised it as a Lagonda but Arnold Davey (as expected) with little to go on declared it to be an M.45.R! Sadly my ex C.O. is no longer with us to refer to but I mention this in a suggestion that the car - which would have been brand new - was for delivery to a member of the Nepalese royal family.

At the time there were, however, virtually no roads in Nepal apart from the neighbourhood of the capital Katmandu - all travel would have been by hill tracks and to quote an instance my Orderly going on leave had two weeks walking from railhead to his village.

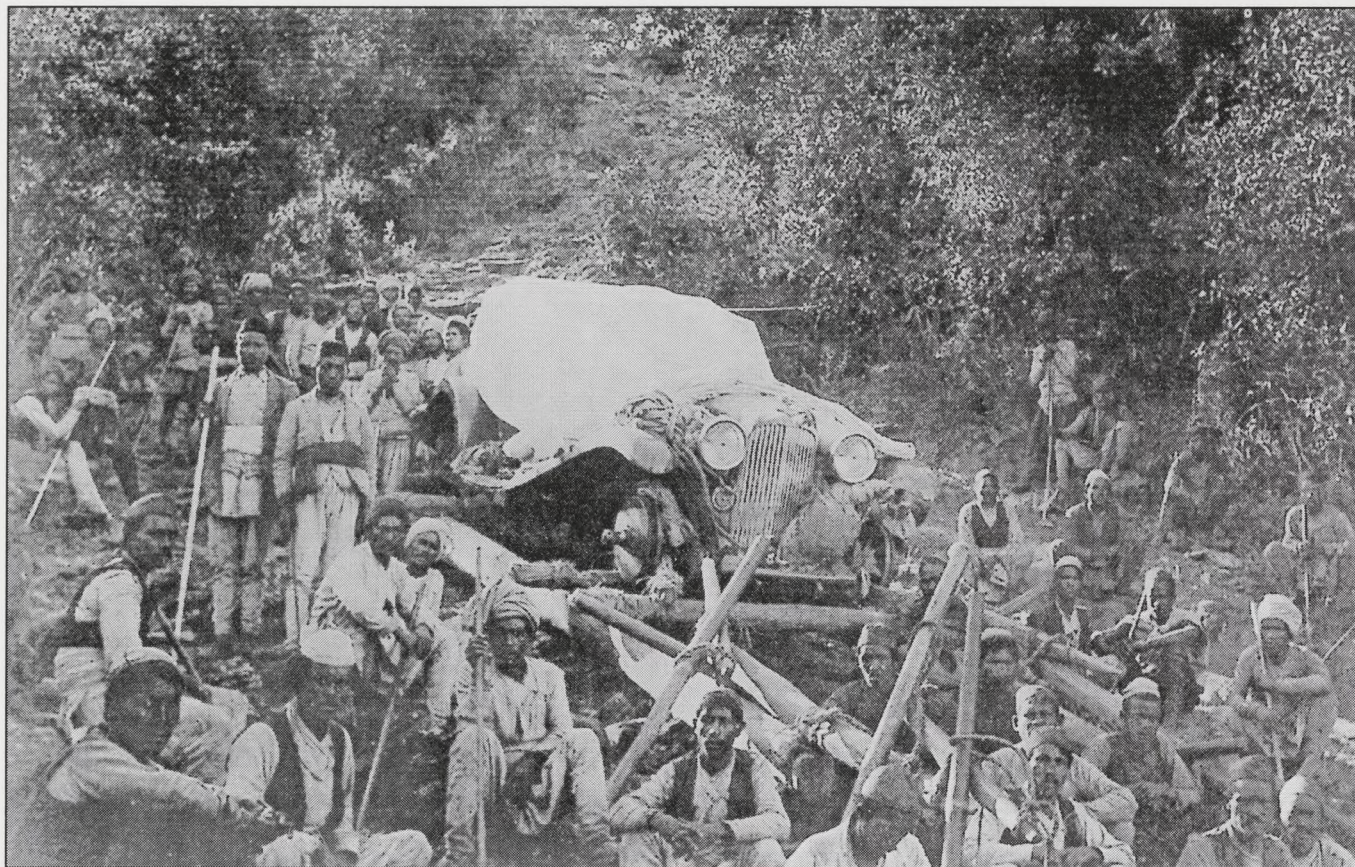
From the Publishers I have learnt that the author of the book (now deceased) obtained a photograph - from which the accompanying picture was produced - from the Gurkha Museum in Winchester. A fellow officer, with whom

I served, happens now to be closely concerned with the museum and he is trying to trace it - hopefully with some inscription on the back.

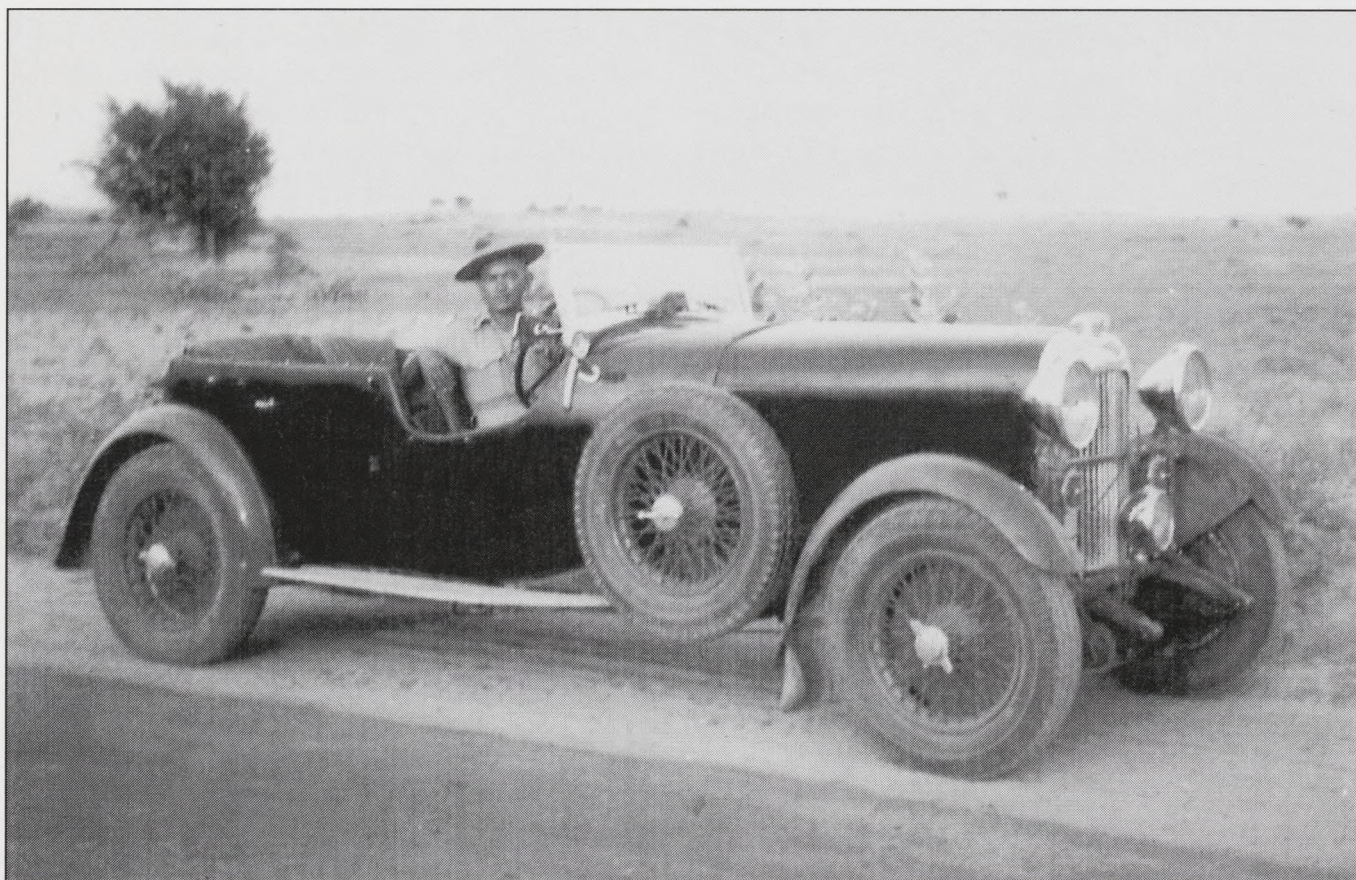
The probability is that the porters, once having got the load off the ground would replace one-another on the move. It will be noticed that the wheels have been removed - probably to reduce the overall weight - and one of these would have been a load for a man carrying it upon his back supported by a canvas band looped around his forehead! I saw this being demonstrated in the carrying of a wounded soldier.

Ken Painter wanted this report before Christmas and having got thus far I suddenly remembered that some years ago at a re-union lunch (in Winchester) I met a chap who had served in the same battalion as me but had left before I joined. Just how we got onto Lagondas I can't recall but he told me that he had taken over such a requisitioned car, which had come from under wraps in a shed in Peshawar in northern-most India almost in sight of the Kyber Pass! I got him on the phone and asked, did he know the model - yes, an M.45 (No R). I told him why I was asking and - knowing the terrain - he thought it would have been almost impossible to get the car into Katmandu at that time. One must remember that we are talking of hill country overlooked by Mount Everest!

I had previously been in touch with the current M.A. in Katmandu and the Nepalese Embassy in London and, although contact had been made with two scrap dealers in the city (what a dreadful thought in such a rural country!), there was absolutely no memory of the car. I was hoping that some descendant might have said, "Yes,



The M45R being manhandled into Nepal.



The plot thickens! The 'other' Lagonda wasn't an M45, but a 16/80. The Ghurka at the wheel was called Deokharji and was to become John Anderson's Transport Jemedar in June 1942. Jemedar is an Indian Army rank with no British equivalent. Essentially, he was in charge of the transport section.

my Grandad had one of those cars". I feel that these were not two cars, but one and the same and the importing to Katmandu had been a failure. My predecessor still has photos of the car and is letting me have them to pass onto Arnold whom I will ask to comment in his Newsletter.

One amusing story, and I just can't believe such coincidences, is of a young subaltern driving a four and a half litre Lagonda around northern India in the presence of his very senior and envious Indian Army 2 I/C Major who was none

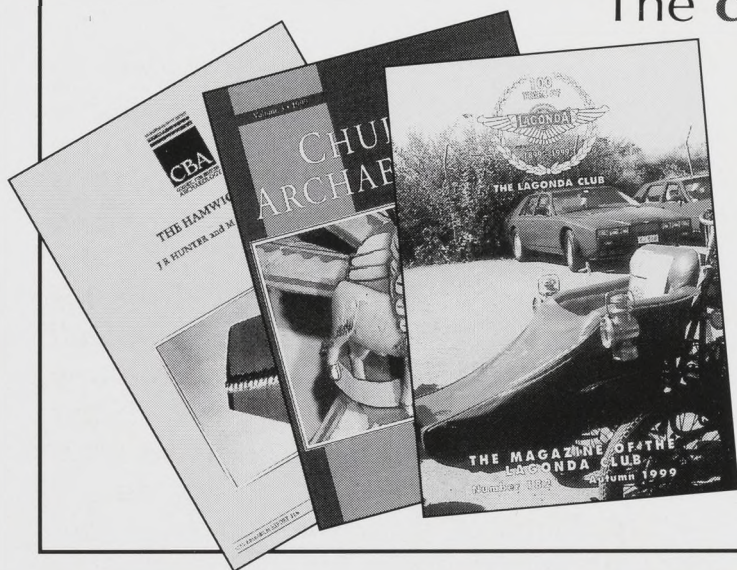
other than Darrell Berthon, erstwhile Secretary of the B.D.C whose own four and a half litre Bentley was on stocks in his garage back in the U.K!

Post Script

The photographs from my predecessor have now surfaced and the car is not the one featured in this article! Arnold is investigating, so watch out for further information in future Newsletters.

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Letters

Dear Ken,

Michael Valentine (Magazine 186) repeats the old, advice to owners of LG6 and V12s to chuck the central lubrication system on the chassis and fit grease nipples. One swallow doesn't make a summer, but....

I bought my LG6 in the days when we drank water from lead pipes and writers of cheques were trusted. The nearside chassis lubrication was original, whilst the offside had been converted years before to grease nipples. When, in a fit of (relatively) youthful exuberance, I started restoration, I found that the nearside (oiled) chassis was in reasonable nick, unlike the offside (greased) bearings etc., which were dreadful.

So I put the thing back to original. O.K., she dribbles, but then so does her owner and, anyway, British cars were renowned for this behaviour.

Kind regards and all the best for the new year.

Ruth and John Turner

Dear Ken,

As always, I was very interested to see the Autumn 2000 issue of the Lagonda magazine. As a West Countryman and a previous regular competitor in MCC long distance trials, I would like to comment on the location of the photograph on page 32.

I am certain that the picture of BPK 202 on the Lands End Trial was not taken on Beggars Roost which is a much more open and straight hill than depicted in the photograph. I suspect this was Darracot which, again, is a hill that was early on the trial.

As a matter of interest I enclose two photographs from the files of the

National Motor Museum which depict Lagondas being used in pre-war films made in America. One is captioned by the film company as being Bulldog Drummond at Bay, the other has no film title on it, though the film was made by Universal Pictures, we believe, in 1942. Perhaps the film buffs amongst your members would know which film this was? Maybe someone knows who owned the cars at that time?

Yours sincerely

Michael E Ware

Director,

National Motor Museum

It is good for the Club to have friends in the right places! Although the National Motor Museum, like every other picture archive, charges a small fee for their materials, these pictures have been loaned to us free of charge and I am particularly grateful to Michael for his kindness. The Museum Library is well worth a visit if you want to research any aspect of motoring, the staff are always extremely helpful and I have always come away laden with goodies on my visits. Material from their archive (but not about Lagondas on this occasion) once helped win a court case when I acted as an expert witness many years ago!

K.P.P.

Dear Editor

Apropos the comments in recent magazines about the lack of technical articles. I am very happy with the present mix and I would not welcome more pure technical articles.

I am interested in reading what other members have been doing with their cars and articles of general technical interest such as those by Michael Valentine



The caption on the back of this picture reads: 'A 1936 LG45 Tourer in the film 'Bulldog Drummond at Bay'.



... And on this one 'Lagonda 4½ litre tourer 1938'.

Both pictures are courtesy of The National Motor Museum.

However I do realise that the Club has a responsibility to disseminate technical information. I suggest that purely technical articles should be produced as "Technical Topics" and distributed with the Newsletter. They could then be abstracted and filed separately, which would make them much easier to find in a crisis. It would also mean that new members could get back copies without having to buy whole magazines.

Yours faithfully

It is always good to hear a variety of views, it certainly goes to show that we can't please all the people all the time! What do our other members think of the idea of "Technical Topics" distributed with the newsletter? There are pros and cons to this suggestion, but is it what members would wish us to do? K.P.P.

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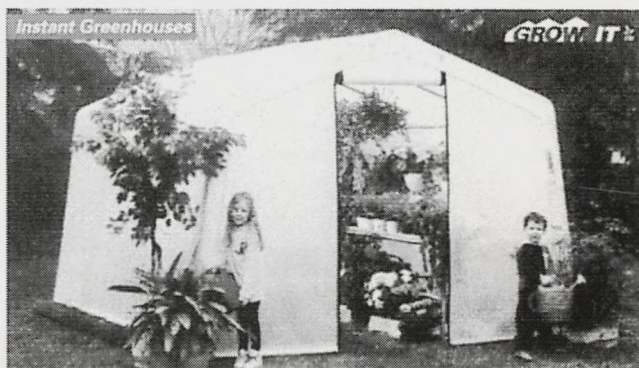
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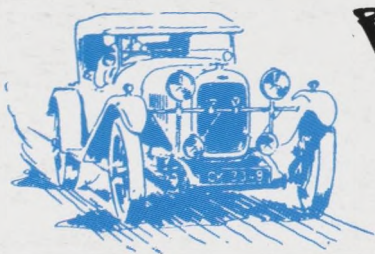


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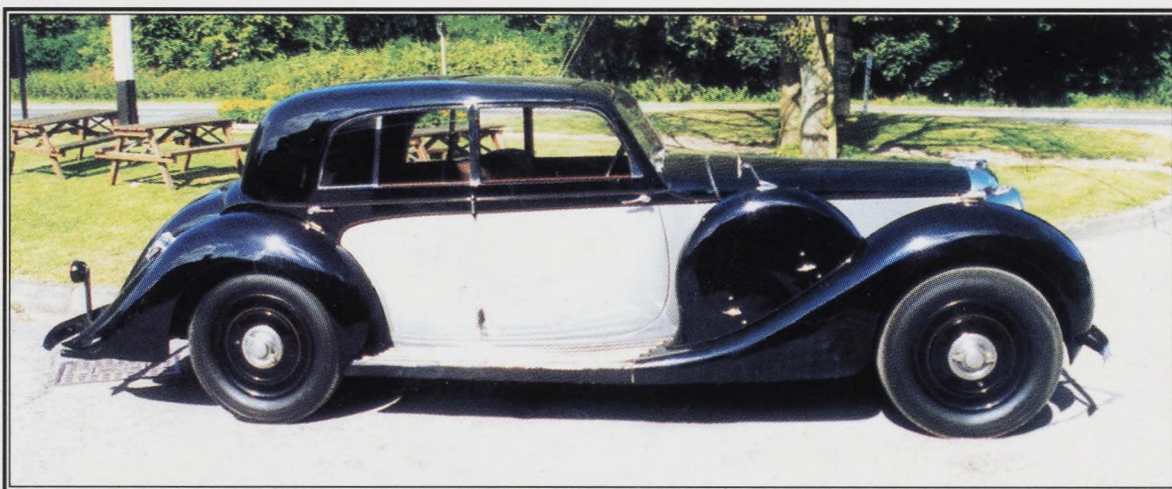
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