

THE  
*Lagonda*



**THE MAGAZINE OF THE  
LAGONDA CLUB**

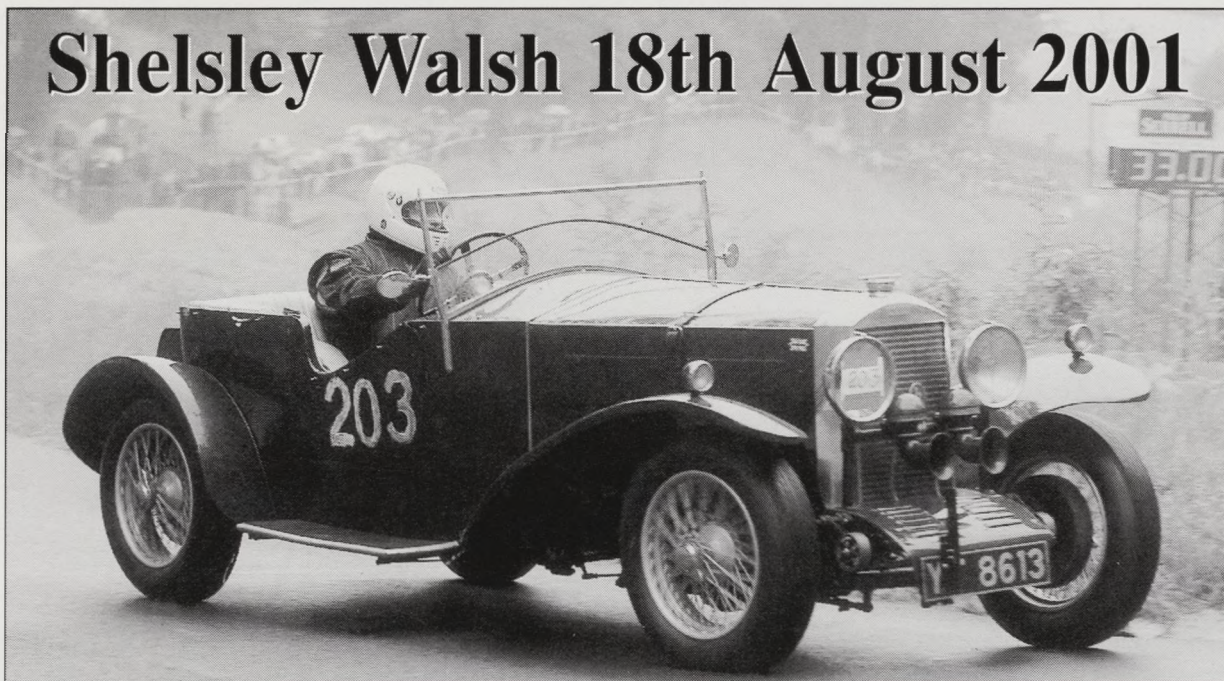
**Number 192**

**Spring 2002**



# *Congratulations to Trevor Swete and his Invicta*

## **Shelsley Walsh 18th August 2001**



Winner Bill Phillips Trophy  
Winner Thoroughbred Trophy  
Ford Trophy 3rd

Prescott Hill Climb 1st Overall Class 6 Time 49.40  
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VSCC quote *"Trevor Swete's Invicta was almost indecently quick!"*

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*The car is always referred to as "extremely well prepared" never "very well driven!"*  
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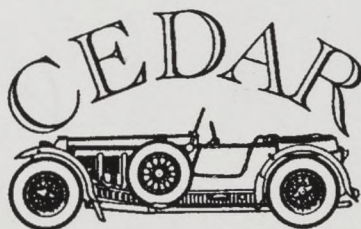
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### FRONT COVER

The AGM Dinner Report didn't mention the splendid contribution made by Clive Peerless and his jazz band, so to make amends we show them in full flow!

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# Lagonda Fetes at Brooklands 1927 to 1930

## *Arnold Davey finds a cup and tells the story*

THIS ANTIQUE DEALER rang me up one night.

"I hear you are the bloke who buys Lagonda bits of interest" he said.

"Possibly" I replied, guardedly, having been caught before. It turned out he had a silver cup awarded at one of the Lagonda Fetes at Brooklands and was keen to sell it. I asked for a photograph, which confirmed what he said and after a bit of haggling I paid him far too much for it and I now own the cup awarded to Mr Foster at the 1929 Fete for coming second in the 12/24 race. Examining the hallmark shows that Lagonda kept to their tradition of never throwing anything away, for it was made in London in 1906. So either they bought it secondhand or, quite possibly, it was one of the scores won by Wilbur Gunn that had been renovated.

One of the quirks of the antiques trade is that engraving on a silver object reduces its value, whereas for someone like me the Lagonda inscription means the difference between valuable and not interested. Our dealer friend was well aware of this. His story is interesting in itself. He had bought a Victorian commode at a country house auction, paying a reasonable trade price for it. In cleaning it up for sale he had removed the china po and found jammed in a corner of the outer box a battered black object, which turned out to be this cup. He rescued it, hammered out the worst dents and cleaned it up prior to contacting me. Since he was going to make his profit on the commode alone, the silver cup was a windfall for him.

The four Lagonda Fetes of 1927 to 1930 make an interesting study in themselves, as an example of good customer relations. In essence, the

company hired Brooklands for the day in summer and invited all their known or likely customers to come along and pretend to be racers. No old nonsense about competition licences or crash hats or any of that. You brought your Lagonda and entered on the start line any event that you qualified for by virtue of your car. None of the events lasted for more than two laps and most were only one. Between the races were gymkhana-type events featuring balloon bursting and concours events involving wives and girl friends. The Lagonda dealers were heavily involved, both in rounding up customers and in presenting the prizes, no doubt having already having had their arms twisted into paying for the awards.

We know very little indeed about the 1927 Fete, which seems not to have been reported in the motoring press or if it was, I haven't found it. But "The Autocar" did send a photographer, whose results are in their archives, dated August although other accounts have a July date. During July the company had been hinting in their adverts that something special would be revealed "shortly" and accompanied this with a hideously distorted drawing of what was to be the Speed Model. But the Fete itself wasn't mentioned.

In fact the introduction of the Speed Model was the momentous event that the adverts had been going on about and the first examples were paraded round the track during the day and were available in the paddock for inspection. It was a momentous event in the firm's history~in that this was the first production model that was meant from the outset to be a sports car or at least a sporting tourer. Hitherto the sporadic competition programme had always





*Paddock scene at the 1928 Fete. 14/60s still predominate but there is a sprinkling of Speed Models.*  
*Photo courtesy of "Autocar".*



*Miss Iris Monckton at the 1928 Fete. But this is not her beloved PH2440. She appears to be trying a Speed Model for size.*  
*Photo courtesy of "Autocar".*



involved specials of one kind or another, whether privately owned or factory backed. But the production product had always been relatively staid. Now the customer could buy a sporting car off the shelf. It was up to him whether he tuned it further but even if he didn't the Speed Model with its (almost) 80 mph maximum had the legs of almost anything it was going to meet on the roads of 1927.

We have in the club's archives copies of "The Autocar"s ten pictures of the 1927 Fete. As you might expect at this date virtually all the cars visible are 14/60 Semi-sports tourers, plus a thin sprinkling of full tourers and saloons, with the occasional 12/24. You can read the number plates of 21 cars and of these only four are known to survive, these four being MK 4844 (OH8382), TR 3270 (OH 8630), PH 2440 (OH 8659) and KA 7214 (OH 8704). PH 2440 is particularly interesting as this was Miss Iris Monckton's car, which was to be the star of the 1928 event.

The 1928 Fete was held on Thursday July 5th and the programme consisted of nine events, which were:

1. The "Cellon" Cup (Cellon supplied Lagonda's paint). For the best appearance of 14/60s, 16/65s and Speed Models. It was won by E.F.Cole with a two-year old car "Looking like new". Model not recorded.
2. A one lap scratch race for 14/60s, starting with a dead engine. Won by Iris Monckton in PH 2440
3. A 'Novelty Race' for 16/65s. Drivers had to run 25 yards to their cars, drive to a line in the paddock, put the spare wheel on the nearside front and replace the spare on its carrier, and then drive to the finishing line. If you overshot the intermediate line, you had to push the car back, not drive it. No winner was ever declared and it is anybody's guess why not. Perhaps they were all disqualified or had heart attacks trying to push a 16/65.

4. A one lap scratch race for road equipped Speed Models, run off in two heats and a final. It was won by "Car No. 1" and was awarded the cup presented by Lagonda Distributors (London) Ltd.
5. A one lap scratch race for 12/24s with a Le Mans start. The cup was presented by Colin Parbury (a Director of Lagonda Ltd) to his wife in car number 9.
6. A one lap scratch race for stripped Speed Models, competing for a cup donated by Major W.H.Oates. This was also won by car No. 1. There were only 7 starters for this, perhaps the others were put off by the complicated business of removing Speed Model wings.
7. A 'Flexibility' race for a cup presented by Alfie Cranmer (The Technical Director of Lagondas). Confined to 16/65s and to top gear only. Passengers were carried to prevent cheating and last past the post wins. Won by Mr Whitehead.
8. Hillclimb on the Test Hill for 14/60s only. For a cup presented by Central Garage, Bradford (where all those KY registrations came from). Won by Iris Monckton.
9. Grand Aggregate Challenge Cup. Worth £25 and presented by all the Lagonda agents.

It was won by Iris Monckton, who was said to have won 3 out of 8 events, although I can only find 2. The cup was handed over by Lady Holberton, as were all the other prizes. (Her husband was a Director of Lagonda Ltd.). In each event there were second and third prizes given by Lagonda Ltd.

We have all this detail since I bought, ages ago, a copy of the programme. As everyone entered on the day, there is no list of starters, so that the programme consists of a list of events and officials occupying four pages and 20 pages of adverts for dealers and suppliers. Unfortunately, the content of the advertising pages had been sub-contracted to an agency and to present-





*" On with the Show,  
Let Joy be unconfined,  
Up Guards and at 'em."*

—THE POET LAUREATE, in his spare time.

### **Note to Readers, Gentle and Ungentle.**

On Pages 11 to 14 of this our Programme you will find a Sober and Solemn List of the Spectacular and Breathlessly Exciting Events which will occupy the, no doubt, Better Part of the Day. When you would recover your Breath, turn then to these our Pages of Advertisement, and you will note that Sundry of our Advertisers have kindly allowed us Certain Liberties.

We do beg our Readers, therefore, to make Due Allowance for the Efforts of our Wit.

*Introduction page from the 1928 programme. One wonders if they had begun to get cold feet about some of the so-called witty examples.*





## COACHING DAYS at WIMBLEDON

The Rev. O. Hercules Hardnut, who very kindly acts as half-time tennis coach to the Junior School at St. Polyanthus (for the sons of gentlemen). His twist-hand drive is a revelation.



Mme. Sophie Mignonne, the dashing centre-forward, whose agility on the Courts is a Constant Wonder. She acts as tennis coach (in her spare time) at "The Laurels" Superior Ladies' Seminary.

The Last Coach on the last train down to Wimbledon any day during the Tournament.



Three examples illustrating the result of not going to the Best Firm. Although the chassis in each case may be adequate, it is safe to say that not one of these coaches came from JARVIS. Jarvis built bodies are pre-eminent in style and workmanship.

## JARVIS & SONS, LTD.

Lagonda Specialists and Coachbuilders

VICTORIA CRESCENT  
WIMBLEDON, S.W. 19

Jarvis's advertisement from the 1928 programme. All the adverts were in this style and were all illustrated by this artist.



day eyes it is all extremely schoolboyish stuff, with the notable exception of the factory's own page, which is in the Dunkirk spirit type story of the 1928 Le Mans race (the battered and unroadworthy D'Erlanger and Hawkes car was persuaded to progress round the track during the day and one of the intact Team Cars was there acting as a demonstrator). The other exceptions are the pages provided by Dunlop and the Ace of Spades Garage, which are much more restrained. I reproduce the advert from Jarvis and Sons Ltd. so that you can see what I mean.

The 1929 Fete was held much earlier in the year, possibly so that they could get a Saturday date, April 27th to be exact. There were nine events, much as in 1928, but with the addition of a balloon race for 6-cylinder cars, still mostly 16/65s at this date. It is interesting to see more Lagonda notables getting involved. Bob Nicholl of Fox & Nicholl won both the Speed Model races in PH 8364 (OH 9002) with Roland Hebler of the same firm third in one race and second in the other. Eddie Masters, the chassis designer, won the 12/24 race and 'my' Mr Foster was second. Colin Parbury, a Lagonda Director, was second in the 6-cylinder acceleration test and third in the 14/60 race, so must have had two cars there. Iris Monckton turned up again, was third in the Ladies Handicap but won the hillclimb once more.

By now the motoring papers had cottoned on to the fact that this Lagonda day was worth attending and full results were published:

**1. Appearance contest for the Cellon Cup.**

1st Mr Cook  
2nd Mr Stearns  
3rd Mr J.A.Lloyd

**2. One lap scratch race for 14/60s .**

Cup presented by Sir Edgar Holberton.  
1st J. Eyre at 555 mph  
2nd J.A.Lloyd 3rd Colin Parbury

**3. Balloon race for 6-cylinder cars.**

Cup presented by Brigadier-General Metcalfe.

1st H. Coleman-Smith

2nd Colin Parbury

**4. One lap handicap for road equipped Speed Models.**

Cup by Lagonda Distributors (London) Ltd.

1st R.I.Nicholl at 671/2 mph

2nd Clarkson

3rd R.Hebler

**5. One lap handicap for 12/24s.**

Cup by C.Parbury.

1st A.E.Masters at 47 mph

2nd Mr Foster

3rd Mr Clarke

**6. One lap scratch race for stripped Speed Models.** Cup by Major W.H.Oates.

1st R.I.Nicholl at 69 mph

2nd R. Hebler

3rd Mr Clarkson

**7. Acceleration test for 6-cylinder cars.** Cup by Alfie Cranmer

1st H. Coleman-Smith

2nd C.Parbury

3rd Mr Evershed

**8. One lap Ladies sealed handicap.**

Prize by Sir Frank Nelson (newly appointed Director of the company).

1st Mrs Clarkson

2nd Mrs Graham

3rd Miss Monckton

**9. Hillclimb on the Test Hill.** Cup by Central Garage, Bradford. For 14/60s only.

1st Iris Monckton

2nd Mr Jephson

3rd J. Eyre

The second and third prizes in each event were donated by Lagonda Ltd. There was also a repeat of the Grand Aggregate Challenge Cup but no record of who won it, although it looks as if it



ought to have been Bob Nicholl, who won two events to everyone else's one. Incidentally, Bob's middle name was Isidore but he nearly always gets in the papers as R.J., probably as a result of poor handwriting by the reporters.

The one lap events used a 2½ mile lap starting at the end of the Finishing Straight and finishing at the the timing box by the Paddock. Cars fitted with two carburettors had to concede 25 yards to the other competitors in addition to any other handicap.

It is a measure of the increasing status of the Lagonda Fete to compare the adverts in the programme. The 1928 one is devoted entirely to Lagonda dealers, plus Dunlop. But by 1929 the programme, which is 12 pages longer, also carried adverts from BP, 'The Motor', Triplex, Pratts, Cellon, 'The Autocar', Setalite (who made the automatic sidelamp switch for the 3 Litre), Martin Walter, Power Petrol and Shell. There were also three excellent photos of current Lagonda models, larger and better reproduced than those in the contemporary catalogues.

The 'Automotor Journal' added some period charm by recording that the driver of the winning 12/24 in race 5, a much-abused 1923 two-seater which had done 100,000 miles already as a driving school car, "threw his arms high above his head in enthusiasm as he flashed across the finishing line". A winning speed of 47 mph takes a bit of reconciling with the "flashed" bit. The balloon race, run in two heats and a final, led to a contest between H.Coleman-Smith in a 16/65 saloon and Colin Parbury's chauffeur in a similar car. Coleman-Smith won by one "flattened but not burst" balloon. It is clear that the chauffeur's job description included entering motoring competitions on his master's behalf. It also explains how Parbury could have two cars there. Each year there was a competition for the oldest running Lagonda present and in 1929 it was won by a Tricar, the one now owned by Peter Walby. Old cars were

usually seen as hilarious at the time and the Automotor Journal assured its readers that this Tricar had been built in 1897.

For 1930 Lagonda Ltd was able to return to the summer and keep a Saturday date, July 19th to be precise, and there were now 11 events plus two demonstrations of the new supercharged 2 Litre, this being its first public appearance. Where better to show it? Timings and results were as follows:

**1. 11.30 2 lap handicap for Trade and Lagonda Sales staff**

1st D.R.Sharman (Fox & Nicholl)

2nd C.G.Edwards

3rd C.L.G.Wilkinson (Gaffikin Wilkinson)

E. Grimaldi, later a dealer in St Albans, was in the lead but took a wrong turning at the Fork on lap one.

**2. Noon 2 lap Mountain race for Trade & Lagonda Sales staff**

1st Ernest Grimaldi

2nd C.L.G.Wilkinson

3rd J.K.Graham

12.30 Demonstration of supercharged 2 Litre

**3. 1.15 Appearance contest. Winners:**

**Class A**, open Lagonda sports cars H. McCalman 3L (later Lagonda's Sales Manager)

**Class B**, closed Lagonda sports cars Either R.A.Lee or A.R.Innes (accounts differ) 2 Litre 1927

**Class C**, open Lagonda standard model J.A.Lloyd, 1927 14/60 semi-sports

**Class D**, closed Lagonda standard model J.H.Stead 1927 14/60

**Class E**, Lagonda with special body E.M.Cohn, 1930 3L FHC by James Young

**Class F**, open car, any make Capt. Randall-Stephens 1925 Voisin

**Class G**, closed car, any make R.B.Thomas Rolls-Royce Phantom II



4. **2.15 The 'Manchester' handicap** for any model Lagonda in touring trim. One lap.  
1st W.T.Barnes HC Speed Model (NF 8424)  
2nd J.A.Lloyd  
3rd L. McCardle
5. **2.45 The 'London' Mountain handicap.** Two laps and run in three heats and a final  
1st W.T.Barnes HC Speed Model (NF 8424)  
2nd O.K.Marwick  
3rd J.A.F.Dalgety
6. **3.15 The 'Hanover Square' one lap handicap for lady drivers.** Cars to be in touring trim.  
1st Mrs Graham (NF 8424)  
2nd Mrs G.W.Gemmell (YV 6652)  
3rd Mrs Cranmer
7. **3.45 The 'Bradford' handicap** over one lap for Lagondas in any trim. Also required three heats and a final.  
1st W.T.Barnes (NF 8424)  
2nd A. Dwyer  
3rd C.G.Flewitt  
(Heat winners: Lord de Clifford (3L), Flewitt & Barnes)
8. **4.15 The 'Hammersmith' Mountain handicap.** One lap.. Run in two heats and a final. 'The Autocar'said the final was the most exciting race of the day.  
1st L.McCardle 2Litre saloon  
2nd C.G.Flewitt  
3rd J.A.F.Dalgety  
  
**4.45** Second supercharged 2 Litre demonstration.
9. **5:15 'Garaging' race from scratch**  
1st M. Kennerley  
2nd E.H.Peak  
3rd J.A.F.Dalgety

10. **5.45 Obstacle race.** Tied between D.H.Searle and L. McCardle. In the playoff, both were disqualified and Lord de Clifford (3L) declared the winner.

11. **6.00 Prize presentation.** Grand Aggregate Challenge Cup awarded to W.T.Barnes for three wins. Mrs Metcalfe deputised for Lady Holberton.

'The Autocar' sent a photographer again and his seven pictures are in our archives. So did 'The Motor', lots of the cars shown still survive and the 1930 surreptitious Team Car PG 8804 is prominent in most of the photos. In the picture by 'The Motor's man there is a quaint Lagonda Service van, built on a 16/65 chassis with artillery wheels. There are no side windows to the cab, just D-shaped openings above the tiny doors. Also prominent is the outrageous Wylder 3 Litre coupe' PG 1290 illustrated on page 91 of Geoff Seaton's book. The public address commentary was enlivened by Gillie Potter, a well-known comedian of his time.

I have no doubt that Lagonda Ltd had every expectation of continuing these extremely popular events, which were attracting upwards of a thousand people. Lagonda was not the only firm to hold them, several of the more sporting makes did likewise, but suddenly at the end of 1930 the Brooklands authorities stopped them all. No reason was ever given. It seems, at this distance, quite pointless and rather dog in the manger. Cecil Vokes, for one, was extremely annoyed and his annoyance was sublimated to good effect, for it was his initiative which led eventually to the founding of the original Lagonda Car Club, with factory backing, in 1933.



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# The V12 Project 1994-2002

*David Hine brings us up to date with his exciting new car*

IT SEEMS ONLY YESTERDAY when I drove out of Berry's Garage in Rhos on Sea with my new project in tow.

I had just bought a derelict, but more or less complete V 12 Lagonda from my friend Dave Berry and was towing it on a trailer to Arley Hall. Arley Hall is a place in Cheshire where Peter Chapman worked and he was going to build me a body as the first stage of the restoration. This order of events is unusual but, I had found over the years, that to submit a fully restored chassis to the rigours of coachbuilding can be quite frustrating as time and damage has no limit in these circumstances!

I was determined not to alter the chassis in any way so that I could claim the car as "Standard" under the originality categories that seem so important to us these days. So the body had to be designed to fit the chassis and not the other way round.

The choice of coachwork was not easy. Many Le Mans replica cars had been made, so another of those seemed a bit tame. To replicate any of the factory coachwork was not an option for me, I had done an LG 45 Rapide replica and I knew how hard it was to get them looking right, and the later '38-'39 cars are even more difficult!

I had seen an Alfa Romeo Spyder Corsa and noticed how similar the wings were to the '39 V 12 team cars so I asked Peter to do a scaled up drawing onto the V12 chassis layout which Arnold Davey had kindly sent me. The result was excellent and we set about modifying it to incorporate Frank Feely style profiles to the wings and the classic "bombs" to shroud the independent front suspension.

Work then started on a complete wooden mock-up of the whole body .

This was a huge task, involving literally hundreds of hardboard cut outs glued together and then covered in paper to give the full impression. Quite big changes had to be made before we were happy with the overall shape and could ensure, for example, that the wheels would not foul the wings or the bombs on full lock.

Another big decision was to go for a new slightly raked radiator to enhance the caddish image!

Peter's number one, Adrian, was responsible for all the mechanical work such as wing brackets and these were designed as far as possible, to allow easy removal. I was also anxious that it should not be too difficult to remove sections of the body, so it was decided to make it in two, all aluminium, sections, with riveted bulkheads a bit like an aeroplane.

Two and a half years passed and things were looking very good when suddenly Peter announced that he was retiring from Arley Hall and the car passed to Trevor Farrington's place in Nantwich for the last three wings and "bombs" to be made. I shall always be grateful to Trevor for picking the job up in midstream and finishing it so well.

Peter had done a fantastic job on the bodywork and the only major problem had been the fitting of a valance to cover the chassis and exhaust system. This had been left to the last and is stitched on with rather too many screws.

The new radiator and windscreen were magnificent achievements as can be seen. As I said, the chassis is standard, however the steering column had to be lengthened a foot and the gear box was modified by the splendid Mel Cramner so that the gear lever was further back and now sprouts directly out of the





*Collecting the car from Dave Berry's, Summer 1994*



*The wooden pattern takes shape.*



gearbox housing like the Le Mans cars. This is because the driver sits further back than in a standard car. The pedals now hang from the bulkhead for the same reason.

In January 1997 the whole job, looking deceptively finished, arrived at Knarr Mill on a trailer and then my job started in earnest. No longer was I operating as a cheque paying supervisor but as a hard working mechanic!

I slowly stripped everything down to the last nut and bolt, doing my best to put things in little boxes and make copious notes....the first bits to come off would be the last to go back on!

There is virtually nothing on a V12/LG6 chassis that bears any resemblance to the cars that came before. It's almost as if the memory of pre-1936 had to be purged by some cultural revolution! Apart from the G10 gearbox, which was pure W. O. Bentley design, everything else was designed and built from scratch for this new model. In many cases there was fantastic attention to detail, for example every single part is numbered and stamped, even every cylinder head nut. In other areas like the rear brakes, crude cables were used to get the designer out of a "hole" and this was never sorted out properly. The result of designing a totally brand new car in such a short time is that the first models are really prototypes but what has always puzzled me is that there were virtually no changes in the 200 or so cars that were built in the two years before the war stopped production.

The design team headed by W.O. and Stuart Tressillian was disbanded either due to the War Preparations set in motion by Neville Chamberlaine after Munich or simply due to shortage of funds at Lagonda Motors. However W.O. himself was still there and could have initiated gradual improvements but as far as I can tell virtually nothing was changed of any significance. Perhaps he was just exhausted after such a mammoth effort.

Back to my dismantling. The front suspension is independent type with

enormous torsion bars. The trickle-down oil supply had long since become blocked with sump sludge and one side was locked up solid! This must have made for a strange ride in the final days of the Saloon and taking it apart required huge thumps with sledge hammers and the application of a massive blow torch. This sort of thing I find quite awful and was much surprised to find very little damage when it finally yielded to this onslaught. All that was required after this was cleaning and painting and refitting with new rubber seals from the Club spares and all was as good as new.

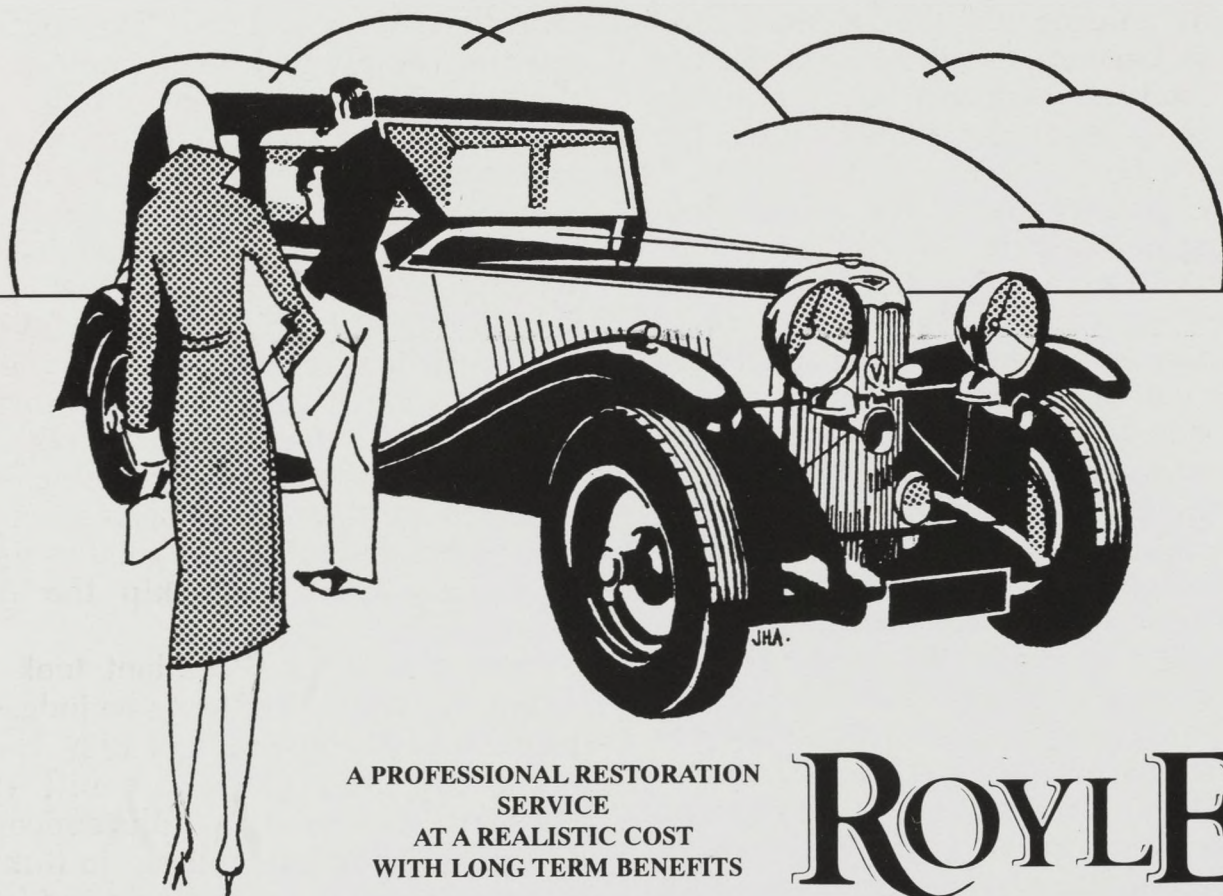
Purists must now skip the next paragraph.

My "duties" as President took me with Rudy Wood -Muller to be judges at the glorious Pebble Beach in 1999. Here I met fellow V12 enthusiast Bill Holt whose car won its class in the concours. He had fitted an anti roll bar to link up the two sides of the suspension and I was most impressed as it seems a most acceptable modification to me. I rushed back and did a bit of research. I found that the Mk VI Bentley was a similar size and the Bob Peterson Engineering Co of Beaworthy, Devon supplied a heavy duty version which fitted quite easily. Experience in 1967 taught me that the original Armstrong shock absorbers were not man enough for the weight of the front of this car although they are perfect for the rear suspension. So I subtly fitted telescopics but well hidden under the "bombs". I justify this modification because all cars were so modified when returned to Davis Motors for a service.

The brakes are hydraulic and were rebuilt as standard except I used stainless steel pistons instead of aluminium in the slave cylinders to avoid corrosion. I also fitted a pressure reducing valve in the pipe to the rear brakes to stop them locking up so easily.

Apart from this, I think everything else is standard and basically required stripping cleaning and rebuilding which took 5 years of Tuesdays at Knarr Mill under the eagle eye of friend, guide,





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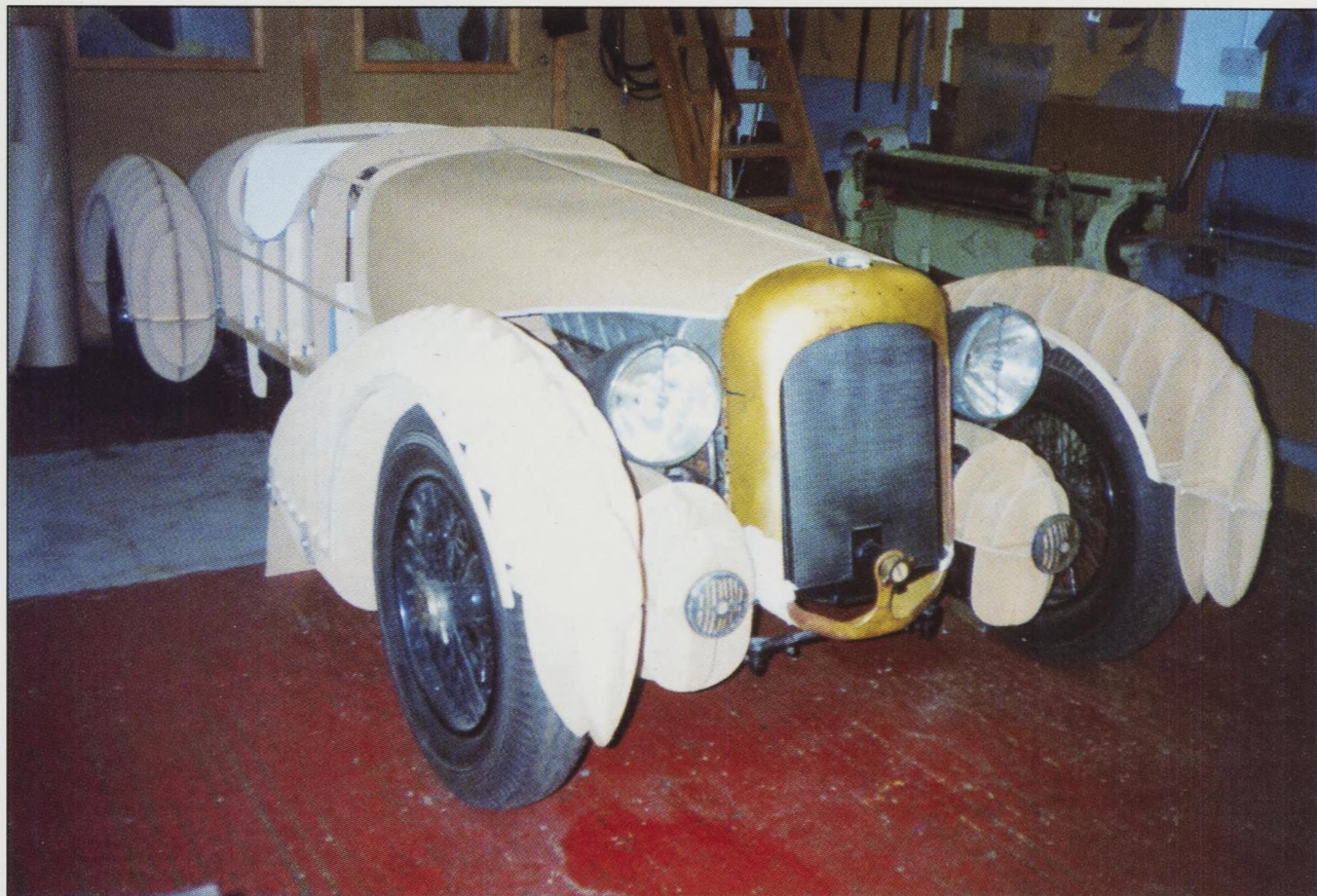
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*The front-end mock-up. At this point I decided that the radiator needed sloping.*



*The part completed car is delivered to Knarr Mill, January 1997.*



mentor and firm task-master Alan Brown who let me get away with nothing !

The engine was dismantled and brought home in bits to be rebuilt. Peter Whenman was a great help in providing me with spares and suggesting where I could get a new crankshaft as the old one was ground down very small indeed for some reason. Jo Harding and Phil Erhardt sorted me out with con rods, pistons and moral support! Jo even found me some two thou undersized bearing shells when it was discovered that the crankpins were a bit too small. It is incredible what he can source in the USA.

Local engine builders Beauxfield in Warrington did all the boring, grinding and pressure testing for me and then I set to work on the long task of building the engine. I should really say engines because there are really two engines in one in a V 12..... there seems to be 48 of everything.

I took the risky step of modifying the main bearings to shell type instead of white metal, the ones fitted to London taxi diesel engines were discovered to be big enough. The aluminium con rods are now well past their sell-by date and would be too brittle to be safe. They were replaced by Arrow lightweight steel ones with the popular Pontiac shells. Pistons were made by Arias who do a good job of replicating any piston for round about £100 a piece.

The only other big change was the replacement of the camshafts with the Peter Ling designed high lift type which have been such a success in Alastair Barkers V12 racer. Alastair has raced that car for 30 years with very few major problems which proves what a splendid design it was. He has a lot of knowledge on where to get clutch bits etc which proved invaluable.

Very, very slowly the engine came together. A lot of time was taken up making studs on the lathe because someone had previously stripped the engine down and somehow the box of

tiny studs got lost which is a disaster as there are literally hundreds of them, all different, I guess it's character building!

The finished article is a splendid sight with four new carburetors from Bill Bressington in Australia, he makes almost perfect replicas of the original D5's .

It was a great day when Alan Brown and I mounted the finished engine on his test bed and fired it up. It kicked first push of the button and roared into life with the second, complete with good oil pressure and lots of smoke and hot water from the jury rig radiator.

The assembly of the body at Knarr Mill was a joy. We have a painter, John Hargreaves and, of course the famous Jack Buckley on site so they were able to prepare the body sections, wings etc as I needed them which was a great help.

Soon the day dawned for the first run to the MOT man and Herb Schofield rode shotgun for moral support with Alan behind in the pick up for actual support. It actually went quite well with the only problem being a burnt out fan switch which meant boiling in traffic jams and a defunct starter motor (one of the few bits I failed to rebuild, and they are the very devil to get off the engine!)

Herb then did a superb job on the hood, and tonneau, together with carpets and trim, while I fixed the dynamo on his 3 Litre in return !

Now in the Spring of 2002 some eight happy years later, I am running her in. She is showing a few teething troubles and I had to fit snail adjusters to the rear brakes and rebuild the steering box again but otherwise the potential is fantastic. Its very hard to keep the revs down she is like a young stallion just raring to go like the wind.

The real joy for me, apart from the performance, is that she really does look like a Lagonda and I think Frank Feely and W.O. would smile if they could see her today.





*The finished car certainly looks beautiful.*



*.... And this is the view most drivers will get!*



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# In Register, The Motor Show, 1936

## *Arnold Davey reveals yet more Lagonda history*

YOU CAN SOMETIMES find some very interesting things at autojumbles, hidden behind heaps of rusting bits for unloved "classic" cars. At a show last summer I came across a huge pile of pre-war issues of 'The Automobile Engineer'. There was little or no Lagonda interest until I found the issue of 5th November 1936 which covered the recently closed Motor Show of 1936, which saw the very premature announcement of the V12. In an article called "A Critical Survey of the Exhibits", further sub-divided into Engines, Carburation, Clutches, Electrical etc., etc. which ran to 38 pages, the new Lagonda came in for considerable attention.

You must remember that W.O.Bentley had been bullied into presenting the car so soon by Alan Good and the show car was something of a fake, having various substantial bits made of wood, treated by the paint shop to look like metal. The writer from AE may have spotted this, for he says "It is still largely experimental, it having been put on exhibition more as an indication of future policy than as a finished car." To follow this up, he remarked that although the block/crankcase casting was in chrome-alloy cast iron "it is the intention to experiment with an alloy cylinder block and liners." This is Tresilian speaking, since he had come to Lagonda after falling out with Hives at Rolls-Royce after the latter had ignored his work on the Phantom III engine and chosen another design. W.O. was soon to veto the alloy engine concept. In 1936, though, the V12 mock-up was said to have the sump, camshaft covers and various other low-stress parts made of magnesium alloy.

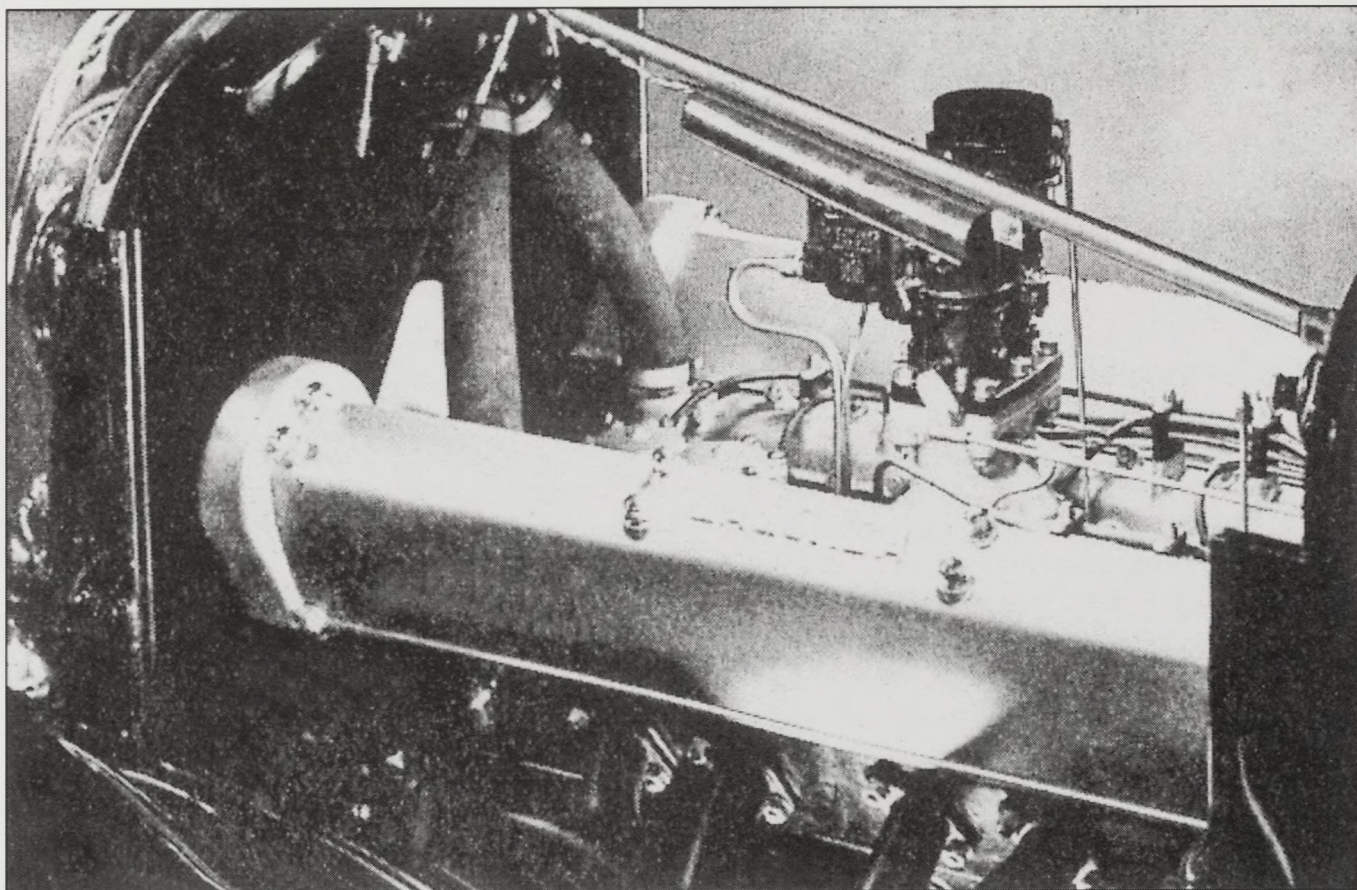
The reviewer remarked on the V12

as being a design built to an ideal rather than to a price and commented on the fact that all parts were stressed to stand 6000 rpm although 5000 rpm represented 100 mph in top gear and would normally be regarded as the maximum.

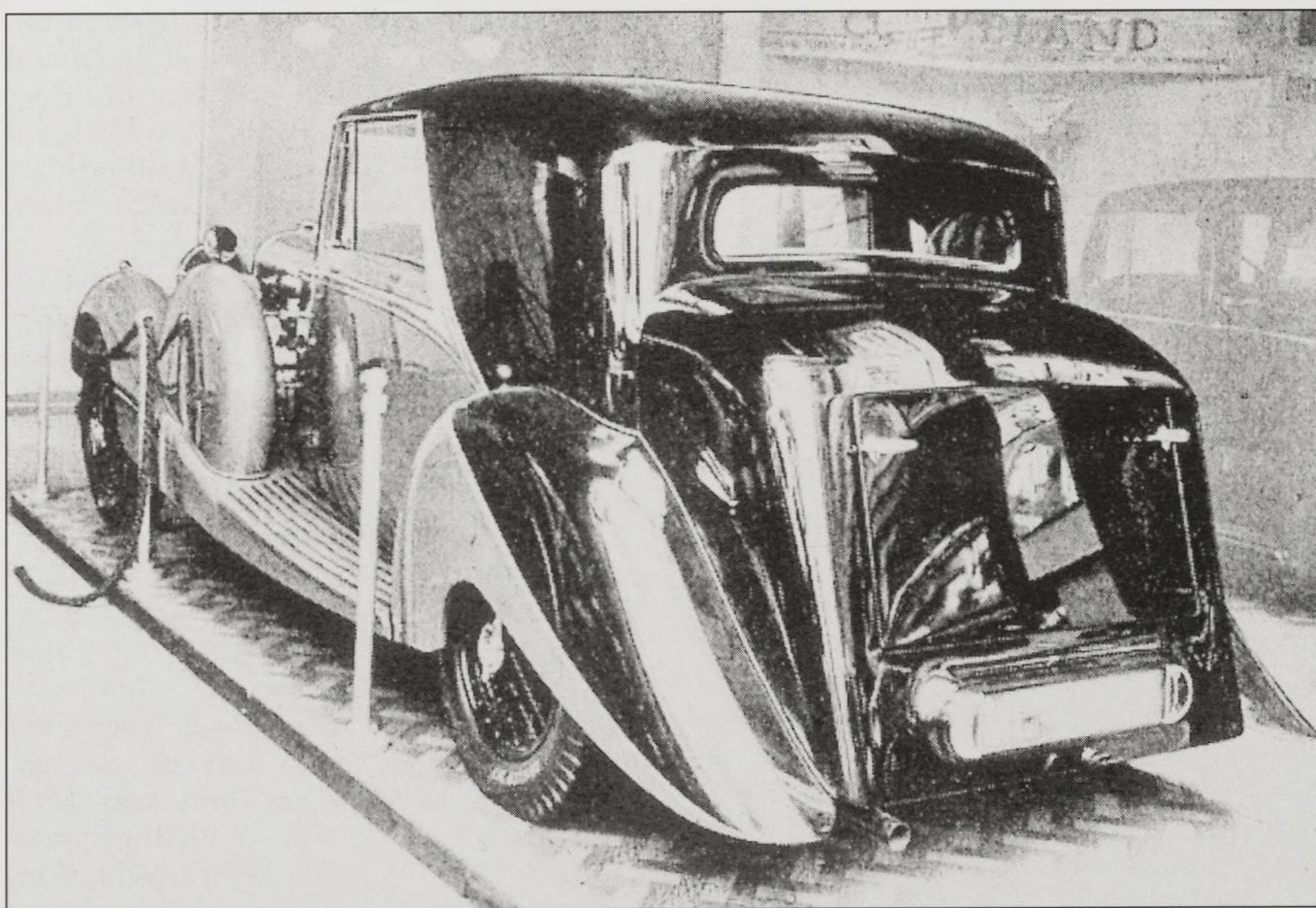
Carburation was one of the trickiest parts of the V12's design and the 1936 Show car had a single dual-choke downdraught Stromberg. This had been intended for the Phantom III and was perhaps a little ill-suited to the much peakier Lagonda but in the following year Rolls-Royce opted for a different instrument and Stromberg then withdrew the model, forcing Lagonda to look elsewhere. The advent of downdraught SUs enabled the bonnet line to be lowered quite substantially and the newly introduced thermostatic starting device also relieved W.O.'s men of the complexity they would otherwise have met designing jet-lowering linkages.

The writer was a bit suspicious of the shallow combustion space being wider than the bore and hinted that he thought there might be interference when the valves were fully open, but agreed that a lot of experimental work remained to be done. I reproduce AE's photo of the 1936 engine, which doesn't tell us a great deal, although some of the details, like the raking strut supporting the top of the radiator vanished in the following year, with this strut replaced by two diagonals. The raised 'Lagonda' lettering on the cam covers caused troubles at the foundry and was also replaced by a flat tablet with the name incised, but not until after production got under way and early engines have the raised lettering.





*The prototype V12 engine, as shown at Olympia in 1936 with a single Stromberg carburettor. Several key components are wooden fakes.*



*Eye-catching coachwork by Mayfair on LG45 chassis 12145. It was painted black over orange and was bought by the actress Frances Day.*



W.O. had already settled on a hypoid rear axle and this was sufficiently unusual to be remarked on, with a drawing as well. This drawing, which I reproduce, is intriguing since it isn't an LG45 axle, nor is it the Salisbury axle that was used in the end, after W.O. found he could buy it in the USA for less than it cost him to make at Staines. And it was lighter, too, despite being all steel compared with Lagonda's mixed steel and alloy unit. The reason given was the official one and was true, but W.O.'s hand was forced by Wyndham Hewitt, by then doing all Lagonda's machining work, being unable to cut hypoid gears on his machinery and unwilling (or unable) to buy new kit just for about 100 axles a year. One thing I have never understood is that there was great trumpeting about the ability of a hypoid axle to permit lowering the prop-shaft line by 2 inches or so, with consequent benefits to either increased headroom or the lowering of the whole car, yet the LG6 has the older spiral bevel axle and the same body. Possibly the propshaft tunnel is more pronounced in the LG6, but it doesn't show if it is.

The V12 chassis frame, although complete at the Show, in fact was to undergo a number of changes in the year before production began, including the introduction of a third, shorter, wheelbase that proved to be the most popular by far. The 1936 one had a square box section front cross-member and not the tubes we know now. This box was welded to the side members and not detachable as in the production car. Members who have Bernd Holthusen's book can compare the 1936 design on page 205 with the production effort on page 244. Also, the damper/anti-roll bar layout shown in the drawing of the rear axle here was substantially changed for 1937, including a different type of damper.

The V12 wasn't the only Lagonda on show, of course, they were still selling the LG45 and had in fact just introduced the G10 gearbox which featured in the

saloon on the stand, but was not present in either the Rapide (also a new introduction) or the drophead coupe. We have never identified the G10 saloon but the Rapide was 12141, now with Bernd Holthusen and the drophead was almost certainly 12126, now in the Sparkford Museum. There were Lagondas on the coachbuilders' stands too, of which the most eye-catching was chassis 12145 on the Mayfair stand. This body was a fixed-head Coupe de Ville for Frances Day, the actress, painted in black over orange (see picture). This car later belonged to our member Wing-Commander Misselbrook (who repainted it in less extrovert colours) but we haven't heard of it since 1970. Freestone & Webb had a razor-edged LG45, chassis 12146, which they called a Brougham Saloon. Alec Downie has this now. Razor-edged styling was the very latest thing in 1936. Finally, chassis 12150/G10 carried a two-door sports saloon by Gurney Nutting that went straight to the USA after the show. I haven't even been able to find a picture of this body, which has now vanished and been replaced by yet another Rapide Replica. The AE article devotes a whole paragraph to a description of the innovative wing/running board style, but it means little without a picture.

It was news to me that from 1936 on Lucas offered two different glasses for the P80 and P100 headlamps, labelled 'Speed' and 'Touring'. I'll bet all Lagondas had the 'Speed' pattern, which gave long range and little spread in contrast to the 'Touring' which gave the opposite. Lucas had also followed Berkshire in introducing a cable-rack windscreen wiper that enabled the motor to be placed remotely and not co-axial with the wiper spindle. They had improved on the FT37 fog lamp by bringing in the FT57 with a more closely controlled flat-top beam, and demonstrated this on a stand which simulated a pea-souper with layers of gauze.

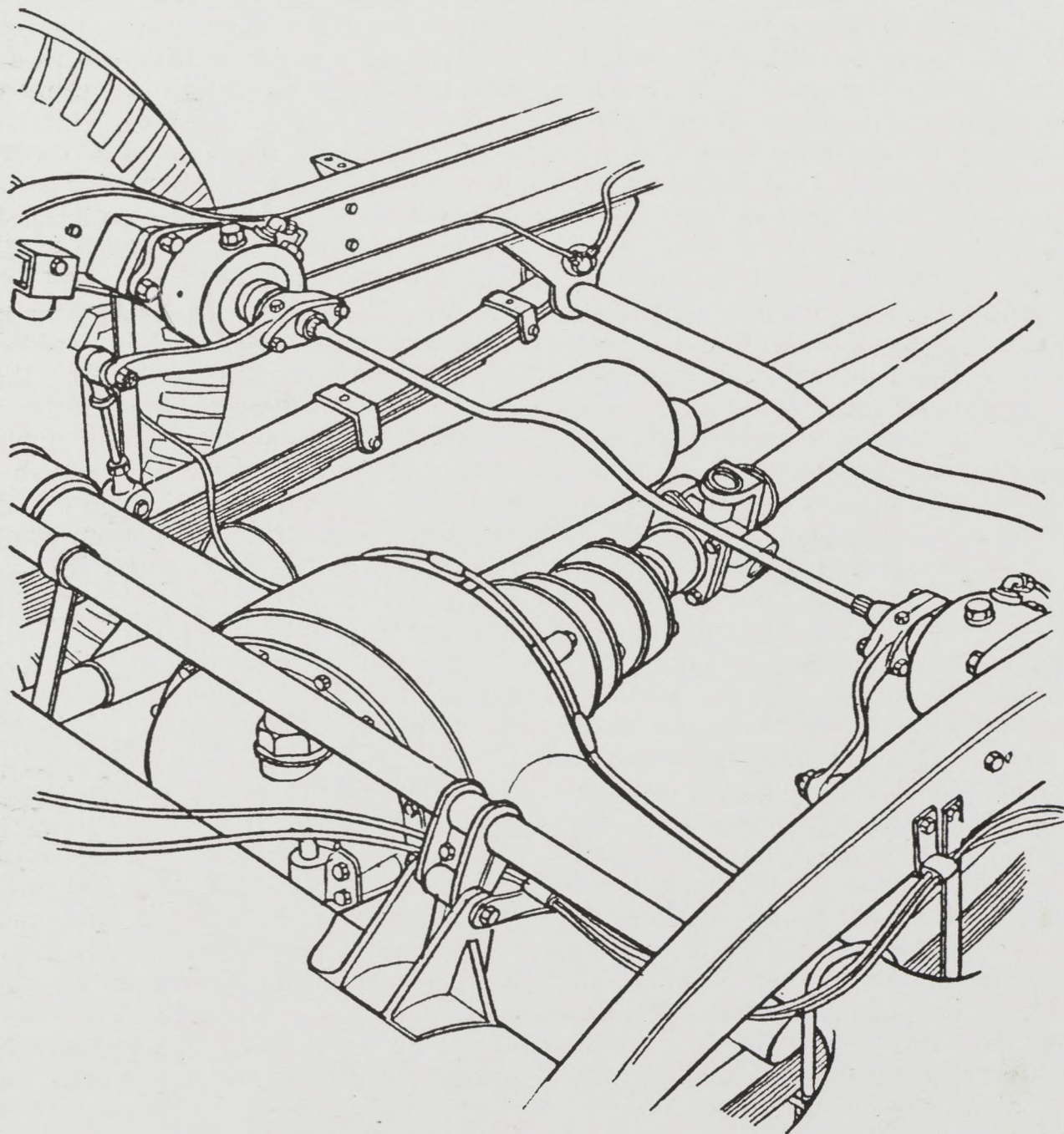
By the time the V12 really got going at the end of 1937 there had been lots of



other changes in addition to those mentioned above. Frank Feeley had lost his battle to have a full-width front, but kept the design in a drawer, modified it after the war and put it on what we now call the DB1. Lockheed hydraulic brakes with the new tandem master cylinder replaced the rod operated Girlings of the 1936 car. But the delay did mean that the final bodies were much nicer than the hastily cobbled up show car which

appeared to have been put together by two committees, one doing the front and the other the rear.

1936 was the last time the Motor Show was held at Olympia with its multitudes of linked halls which tended to confuse. For the 1937 Show, Earls Court was ready and although not all that much bigger it was simpler to understand and easier to reach.



### **Torsion rod stabilizer on Lagonda chassis.**

*Drawing from "The Automobile Engineer" of the rear axle of the V12 exhibited at the 1936 Motor Show. It looks very much like a modified LG45 unit and did not go into production.*



# A Lad at Lagonda

*John Biggs reminisces about his life with the company*

TOWARDS THE END OF MY SCHOOL DAYS I would often cycle to the Service depot at Wendover Road, just to see the superb cars whenever the doors were open. Lagonda was one of the larger employers in the area, with Ron Breakwell, panel shop foreman, living next door I suppose it was inevitable that I would work there, given the chance. In August 1940, at 14 years old, I started work at 3d per hour, 12/9 per week in the panel and welding shop, the beginning of my working life. On my first day I saw the manufacture of Westland Lysander wheel spats, the outer aluminium panels all shaped by a very skilled workforce, large brass fuel tanks that were riveted and soldered and complicated panels for Spitfires and Hurricanes, just to mention a small amount of war work. On my first trip to the machine shop I saw dozens of lathes, mills and drills that were all powered by one large motor driving overhead pulleys and flapping belts. New machines were different, having their own power supply.

By the time I was 16½ I was qualified to weld aluminium, steel and brass to aircraft spec. The A.I.D. tests were taken every six months. About this time I was on night work every two weeks, with the bombing of London we often spent most of the night in air raid shelters. Some would play darts, others, cards etc., I often saw people lose all their wages on the turn of a card. In a short while, aircraft spotters would press the alarm if danger threatened, thus greatly reducing the time wasted in shelters.

One evening when going into work there was a German V1 Doodle Bug that crashed but did not explode, the damaged parts were repaired by the work force. Due to the shortage of skilled

labour the government started training schemes, recruiting people from all walks of life. One chap in particular was a Billingsgate fish porter, who would often bring in a box of fish when on night shift. These were cooked on soldering stoves, filling the workshop with blue smoke.

In August 1944 I was 18 and on 31<sup>st</sup> August I was called for National service, returning in 1948, to find the Lagonda factory sold and the car interest bought by David Brown, to join Aston Martin at Hanworth Air Park Feltham, using buildings that were used to make gliders for the invasion. It was on this same ground that I helped to pull down the German Graf Zeppelin when it made a short stay on 1934 or 35.

Frank Feeley wanted to start a small team to build prototypes, racing bodies and even a speedboat for D.B.. I was part of that team and spent several very interesting years that included D.B. 2/4, D.B.3, D.B.R.1 and D.B.R.2, which was pictured in the Winter magazine 2002.

I was included in the 1959 le Mans team, although in other years they had always hired a panel beater, however, I was very busy when, on the second night of practice, it was thought that the fuel tank on the prototype D.B.4 was not big enough. So, back to the hotel, tank out, make up extension and weld in. Not all the recommended safety precautions were possible in the time available, but I survived, although I was apprehensive about applying a flame to a tank that had simply been drained of petrol and washed clean.

Fortunately the race was won by Carol Shelby and Roy Salvadori in D.B.R.1. I was very pleased for David Brown that he had achieved a lifetime ambition.



By 1960 it was certain that all work would go to Newport Pagnell, so I resigned. I then spent 6½ years at the National Physical Laboratory by day, with two evenings' teaching at a local Technical College. Then I moved into full-time teaching metalwork, welding and panel beating at Brooklands Technical College, Weybridge. I did organise an evening class for motor body

restoration, which was very successful. This included making a new body for a Bullnose Morris and a complete new body for a Rolls Royce. The finished body was painted by apprentice day students.

I thought I would write this as a small appreciation of your magazine each quarter, which often contains names that I knew.

## Competition Results for 2001

	Points awarded
Jo Moss	154
Colin Bugler	107
Alastair Barker	44
Peter Whenman	40
Terry Brewster	33
Nick Hine	25
Mark Butterworth	20
Trevor Swete	20
David Brock-Jest	20
Tim Wakeley	20
Florian Julius Brandt	20
Paul Tebbett	16
Roy Williams	15
Neil Jones	10
Alan Elliott	10
Martin Bugler	10
Tim Wadsworth	10
Rob Bettigole	10
Johnathon Elliott (non member)	10
Michael Bolger	5
Edmund Fletcher (non member)	5
Bob Goodchild	5
Margaret Brewster	5
Peter Blenk	5
Ronald Willson (non member)	5
P. Fenichel	5
Richard Campbell	5



# The 25th Suffolk Dinner – 16th March 2002

*Jonathan Oppenheimer reports*

WHEN MIKE PILGRIM ASKED if I would write this report, I felt honoured, and agreed without much hesitation. Now that I put pen to paper, I feel quite inadequate to the task, being a relative new boy to matters Rapier, and likely to leave out things (or worse, people) that should on no account be omitted!

We were I think, the largest family contingent, Merav, sons Adam and Daniel and I, and for us the weekend brought mixed emotions as it marked our last drive in the V12 Saloon, FGX978. Already sold to its new owner, Neil Edwards, he kindly lent us the car back for the occasion, as our Rapier, US8351, is awaiting new pistons after I holed one a short while ago. The V12 now drives better than ever in my ownership, thanks to the efforts of “new” Lagonda specialists Bishopgray. Their work included an engine rebuild, and the journey formed part of its running-in programme, so we made the 320 mile round trip at an uncharacteristically sedate pace!

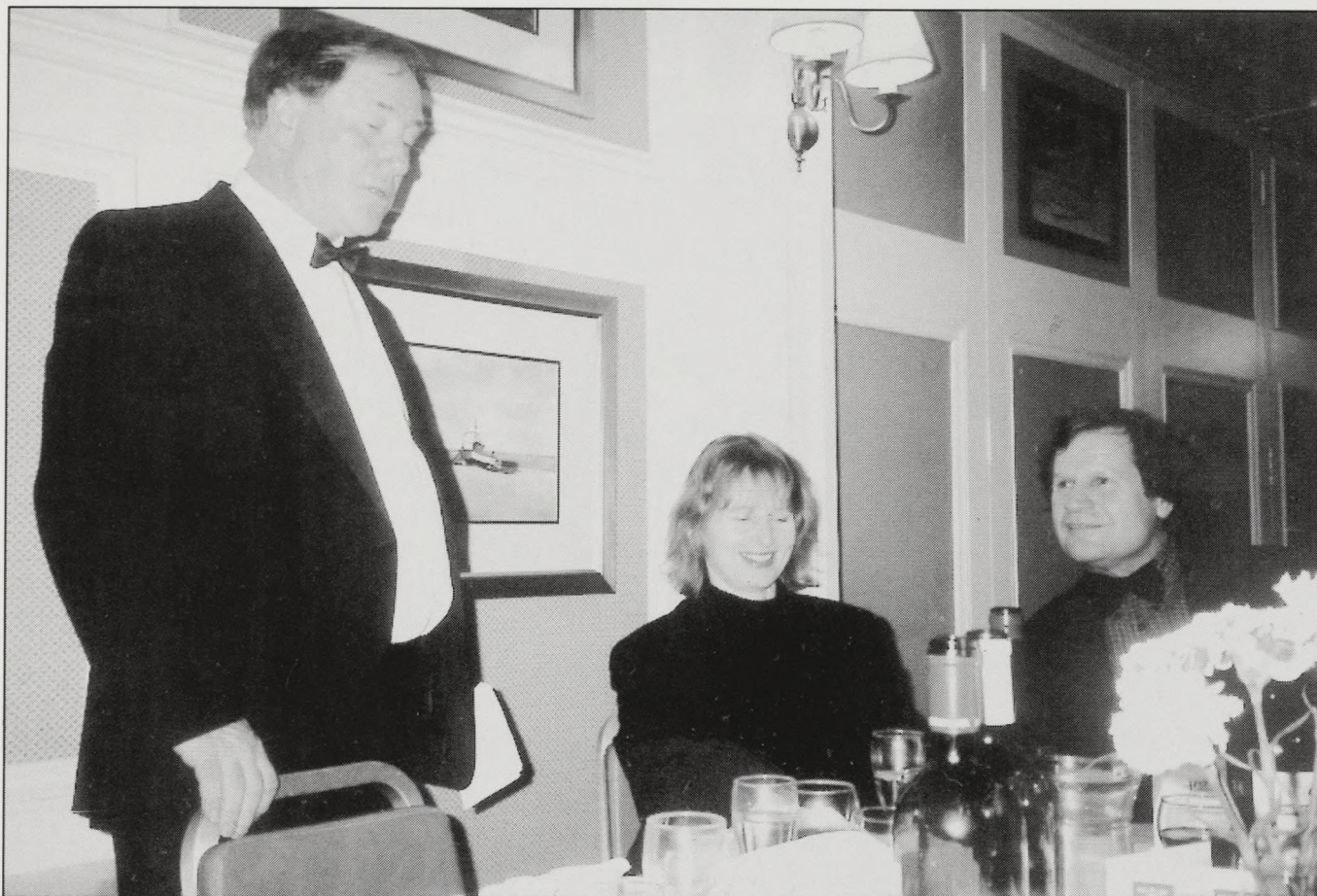
Sixty diners were expected and all were present except Brian Fidler who was unwell. Others absent for health reasons were Gavin Rowe and Gerard and Maria Lansink. They sent best wishes which were warmly reciprocated, with wishes for speedy recoveries all round.

When we arrived at the White Lion in drizzle after a fine day, there was already a good selection of Staines' and Hammersmith Road's finest parked outside, and a friendly hubub of Rapier and Lagonda folk in the bar. Warm and friendly greetings from those we have got to know in our few years of Lagonda activity reminded us what very special organisations both the Lagonda Club and Rapier Register are.

Peter Merrick said grace, though not in Latin this time, as his command of that language had been called into question by some unusually attentive diner last year. The dinner itself was most enjoyable, though I fear that our two boys soon found more to amuse them outside the dining room! After the meal and the Loyal Toast, Mike Pilgrim welcomed us all and introduced some new faces. John and Marcia Castle had travelled 358 miles from Bodmin and Leo and Marianne van Yjseldijk had come from the Netherlands in their Abbott tourer TH5555, whose splendid restoration has featured so prominently in recent editions of Rapier News and was only completed just in time for the trip! Peter Blenk had come from London, and Derek and Wendy Cooper from Colchester. There was also James Ross, a friend of Sidney Allerton, and Martin and Janice Croucher from Saxmundham, just down the road. The latter are not yet Lag owners, but Martin learned to drive in his father's Lagonda in the 1950's.... I sympathise - I had my first “drive” in my father's V12 saloon in 1957 and was never able to shake off the infection, though it took me forty years to obtain effective medication - a V12 of my own.

After these introductions, Mike announced that while there were some who had attended ten, fifteen and even twenty Suffolk Dinners, there was one man present who had been to all twenty-five, Tony Metcalfe. Tony proceeded to regale us with a lively account of the motoring milestones in a life filled with old cars, and especially Rapiers, culminating in the recent acquisition, with son Tim, of the Eccles Rapier. He emphasised that a fundamental element of his enjoyment had always been the wonderful people so often associated





*Tony Metcalfe reminisces, Marianne and Leo van Ysseldijk are sitting next to him.*

*Photo: Ann Pilgrim.*



*Peter Merrick berating those who cannot read.*

*Photo: Ann Pilgrim.*



with our wonderful cars. Another lasting image will be his vivid description of being escorted at night by a horde of Hell's Angels when the failure of his Rapier's dynamo left him without lights!

Next it was Dave Williams' turn. He reported that his sponsored hair-sacrifice had raised £1000, of which £500 had gone to the Shropshire and Mid-Wales Air Ambulance appeal and £500 to the RNLI. He then announced to the shocked assembly that next year, Jean's magnificent tresses will be sacrificed in similar fashion! Dave then passed on the Gary Guiver Gong for greatest distance to the dinner by Rapier to this year's winner, John Laughton (227 miles by Mike's reckoning, but 244 by John's route). In accepting, John took the opportunity to extol the virtues of the windscreen wiper motor as a hand-warming device on long cold journeys.

Peter Merrick is clearly not one to allow discomfort to get in his way. Resplendent in a rather tropical suit (on the windswept Suffolk Coast in March this must reflect an optimistic and positive outlook), with a new knee and an arm in plaster following a skiing fall, he reminded us all of the fool-proof procedures that must be followed when ordering spares from the Register. He proceeded to name and shame some of the serial offenders among us who don't read the instructions and therefore fail to write their orders correctly on the forms so helpfully provided at the back of the Spares List. Outstanding in this dubious company was that pillar of both Club and Register, Colin Bugler, who had left Peter a message beginning "Grovel, grovel", which then listed 1174 bits and ended "If possible, please bring these to the Suffolk Dinner". As one who has frequently imposed on Peter's patience by failing to follow the clear instructions, I was grateful that he had found more prominent targets. I suspect that others may have felt the same, and, like me, vowed to do it properly in future!

On Sunday morning, after an excellent breakfast at our B&B (Field End in Leiston prop. Mrs Pat Wright), we motored gently over to Friston to call on

the Malletts. We found a hive of activity as the two Colins, Mallett and Bugler, attempted to fix a water leak in the aluminium casting at the rear of Warren King's LG45's engine. It had been described as a pin-hole, but the hole I saw would have accommodated a substantial bolt! We left them at it and took Colin and Amanda Mallett's daughter Ruth with us to the Windmill on Saxtead Green, where there was to be the usual post dinner lunchtime meet. Although several years younger, and a girl, Ruth has become a firm friend of our sons. In fact, she had both of them wound around her little finger. The repair crew must have been successful, because before long the Malletts' 2L HC tourer, the Buglers' LG45 TT Replica and Warren King's LG45 Saloon all arrived. There is a moral in this: make sure that your car reserves its breakdowns for occasions like the Suffolk Dinner, where kindness, resourcefulness and expertise are sure to be present in equal measure.

Once again, the car park contained a splendid assortment of Rapiers and other Lagonda models as well as an early Alvis Speed Twenty. No tables had been specifically reserved as last year, but everyone seemed to find somewhere to sit and to get fed and watered. Other customers were fascinated by the cars and Colin Bugler and others found themselves answering numerous questions about them.

As always, there was not enough time to talk to all those one wanted to talk to. Ann Pilgrim and I had wanted to discuss my recent chance discovery of documentary evidence of the original 1933 registration and engine and chassis numbers of the Rapier prototype, now registered SMG161, but we had little opportunity for more than a brief chat. She is writing this up separately; I would only note that it demonstrates that frequent repetition, even in something as authoritative as Rapier News, does not make a statement true, e.g. "the prototypes did not have chassis or engine numbers". It now appears that they did, as one might expect, but that trace of them had simply been lost.





*Leo van Ysseldijk, Mike Pilgrim and Tony Metcalfe, sporting new Rapier caps, admiring Leo's car at Saxtead green.*  
*Photo: Ann Pilgrim.*



*Ian Shipman's Abbott DHC and John Laughtons Abbott tourer, with Frank Tuff's 14/60 saloon.*  
*Photo: Ann Pilgrim.*



Soon another splendid weekend was over, and we were trundling back towards the M25 at 40 mph, with me exerting tremendous willpower to keep that right foot hovering lightly over the

accelerator! Next year who knows? Will it be the Rapier at last, or the V12 drophead prototype, ARD 246, off the road since 1959 and for whose restoration FGX had to be sold?



Rapiers, V12 and Alvis Speed 20 at Saxtead Green. Photo: Jonathan Oppenheimer.

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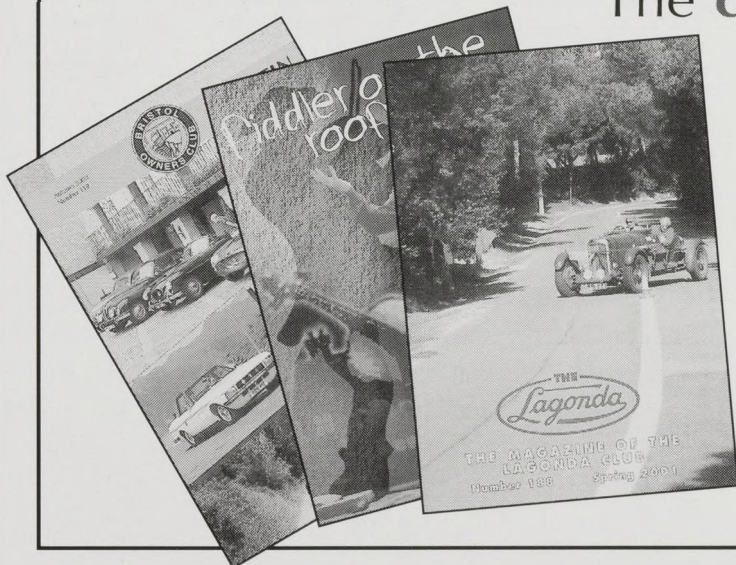
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# The Duchess De-Frocked – and Then Made Decent Again

*Robin Hasler reveals all*

IN THE FIFTIES, James Crocker, our former Chairman, drove an enormous 3½ litre Lagonda with immaculate 'family 6' bodywork as his family transport. It was the only 10' 9" wheelbase 3½ ever made and had one of only two 'Family 6' bodies built. With the radiator six inches further forward in the chassis than other Lagondas, the body went on forever. Nevertheless, it was impressive rather than ugly and had a surprising turn of speed.

A Christmas 1959 magazine photo shows James (Hunt) Crocker racing it at Silverstone, where he showed a clean pair of heels to Rapiers and 2 litres alike. Harry Gostling is shown looking worried, as James passes him on the inside at Woodcote. A worried Gostling seems to be thinking "What's a barn doing coming past when I'm on the limit?"

James sold BLL79, 'the Duchess' as he called her, after this and the car 'disappeared'.

In late 1968 my family and I had moved house and, by a bit of creative mortgaging, had some spare cash for the first time in our lives.

"3½ litre Lagonda racer" said the Exchange and Mart advert. It was Christmas Eve, dark and wet, when I turned up at a large house in Stanmore. John Guyatt, Lagonda, Talbot, SS Jaguar and Peugeot driver showed me into his garage. He pointed out the 3½. It was very long, very nose-heavy, very crudely made and very, very red. The body looked like an attempt to make a 1935 le Mans car from cardboard cases. It looked rather like a long red fire engine.

Nothing daunted, John pointed (actually, blasted) it out into the traffic. By Stanmore tube station we were doing 60 and passing a queue of stationary

traffic lined up at a Zebra crossing. He continued terrorising a large chunk of North London as he demonstrated cornering, acceleration, overtaking and, occasionally, braking.

I was sold and BLL79 became mine for £325. A measure of how ugly it was is that 2 litres were then fetching about £750 and 3 litres about £1,000.

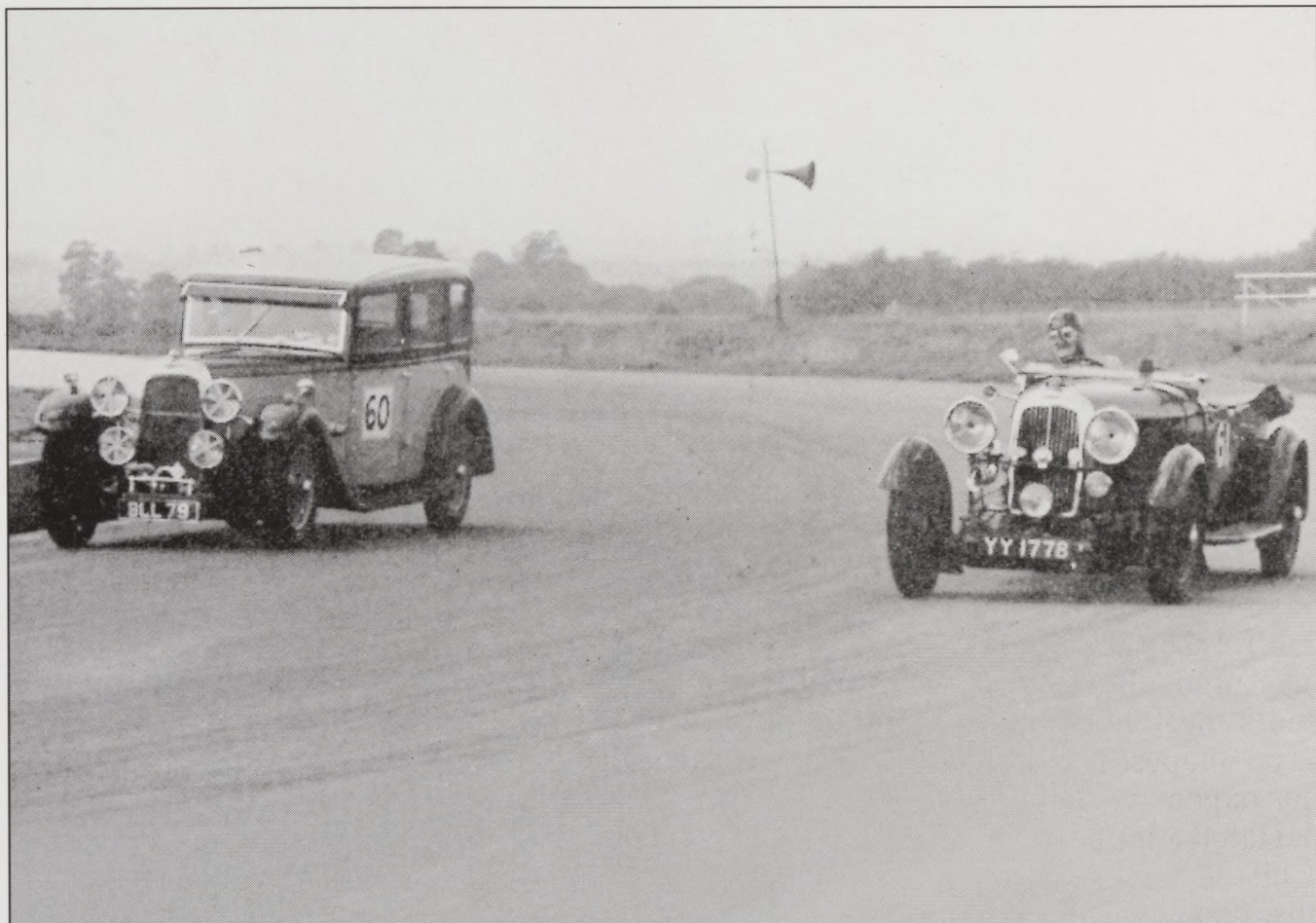
It took me some time to get over the shock. I knew I could improve its appearance, hopefully enough to allow me to put in appearances at VSCC events. Maybe I would also dare to go to the Lagonda Club AGMs, though I might have to park in the corner of the field.

Gradually my plans took shape. A talk to Arnold Davey helped with dimensions and even the car's history. It was then that the story of the Duchess came out. It hardly seemed possible that this once aristocratic lady had been turned into a ruffian in just a few years. Who would have detached such a beautiful and unique body?

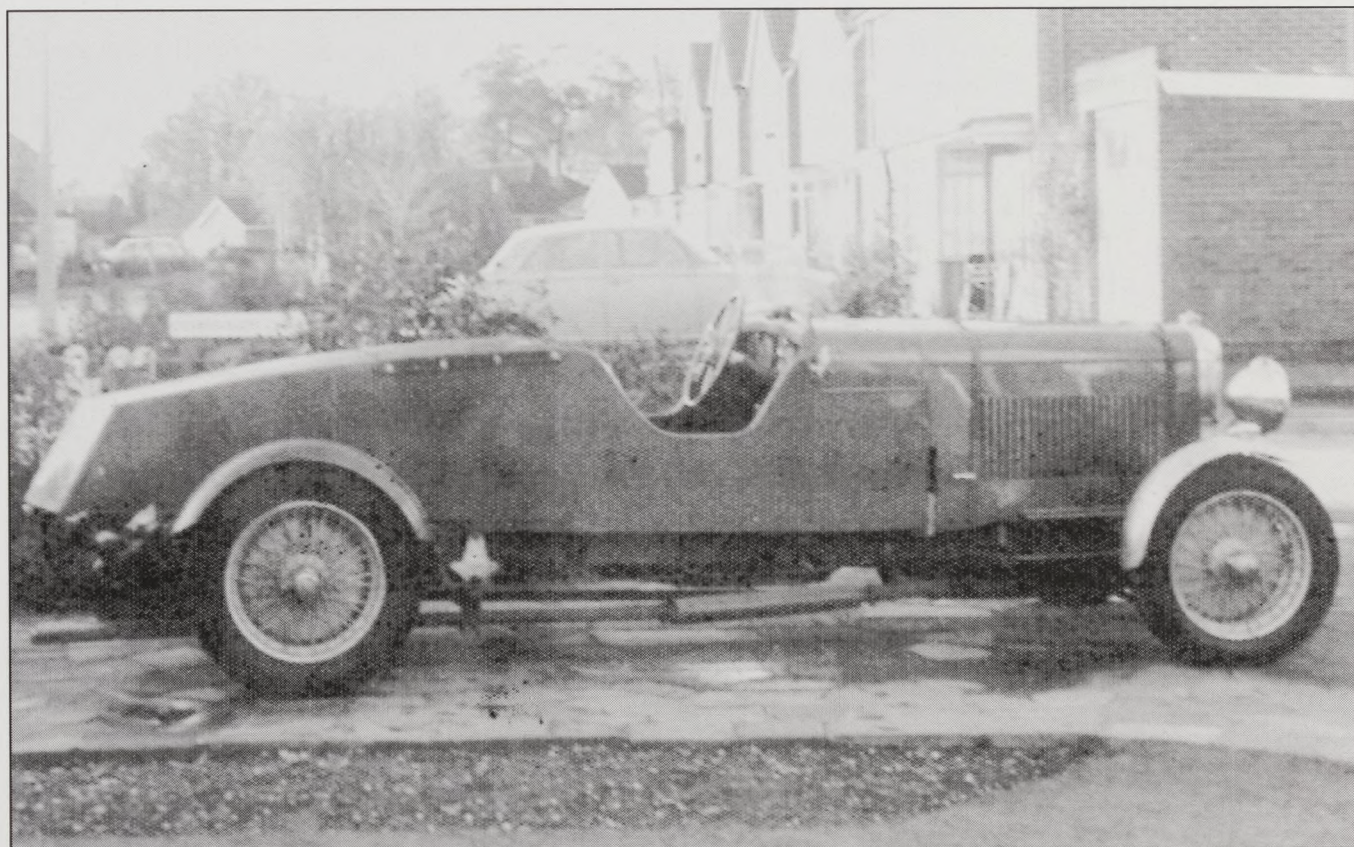
Re-creating the Duchess would, I thought, not be possible, but I did feel I had to do something to restore her dignity. My ambition, skill and money only really ran to creating a 'special' that I had planned in the first place. After all, this was 1969 and the end product would not warrant spending very much. Besides, I was anxious to go vintage motoring as soon as possible and I wanted to do as much of the rebuild as I could myself.

Gradually I 'fleshed out' the plans. I loved the looks of the 3 litre tourer though, so I set out to encapsulate its essence, if not the exact dimensions or the fine detail. So I shortened the prop-shaft and moved the radiator, steering, engine and gearbox back six inches.





*James Crocker in the Duchess being given a respectfully wide berth by Harry Gostling.  
Photo: Charles Dunn and taken from the Christmas 1959 edition of "The Lagonda".*



*The long red fire engine, December 1968.*



engine and gearbox back six inches. Then, except for the radiator being an inch too tall and the bonnet a bit square-shouldered, I had a 3 litre tourer in outline. I always thought the 3 litre body was a bit long, so I made mine a 'racy' six inches shorter. This allowed me to turn the saloon petrol tank upright (just like a Bentley!). And so it progressed, designing and building the body like a simplified T2. The knock-on effects of all this were numerous, like having to use endless trial and error to get the hood frame right. At least the result was the finest hood frame (in my view) that I have ever seen on a Lagonda. The hood itself I couldn't make, but I carefully measured all the best looking hoods I could locate. I became very discerning of hood shapes. It is amazing how many of the expensive items looked wrong and deviated a lot from the original. I became a bit of a hood bore and gave detailed and extensive drawings to the old, ex-Hooper, ex-AC, ex-everyone trimmer, who said he would make it. It looked fantastic when finished and it checked, spot-on, with my measurements.

"I'll let you into a secret now," said gnarled old Archie. "I never looked at your drawings once!" He gave a chuckle. "Well, at least it proved I got everything right in my design." I said. Old Archie and I chuckled together.

So the rebuild went on. Thirty bob to shorten the prop-shaft. Thirty bob to chrome plate the small parts. Thirty bob to wheel the quarter panels to shape. Everything seemed to cost thirty bob in those days – as long as you went in the back door and chatted up the foreman!

The wings cost a bit more, £8 for the four made to my own design by the legendary and much missed Don Ferguson, who traded as WG Ferguson of Bath Road Garage, Nailsworth Glos. A name and address engraved on the hearts of a generation of 50s and 60s special

builders, just as "Horace Batchelor, Keynsham "Spelt K – E – Y – N – S – H – A – M" is engraved on those of Radio Luxembourg listeners!

The seats cost a bit more still, £50 for a pristine XJ6 set with luxurious pleated leather that I modified to fit the body.

So there it is. I hope the picture does the car justice. It's not original, it's not a replica, just a unique Lagonda special. If it offends the purist then tough. It's pretty much what I wanted and I had a lot of fun building it within the limitations of my skill and my purse – and I got it on the road in less than a year. If I hadn't reclaimed it, a unique car might have been totally lost, as no-one else seemed to want to pay money for it.

Finally, I hope I have restored the old Duchess's dignity, although, having given her a smart new suit, she does insist on going 'shamelessly topless' on every outing!

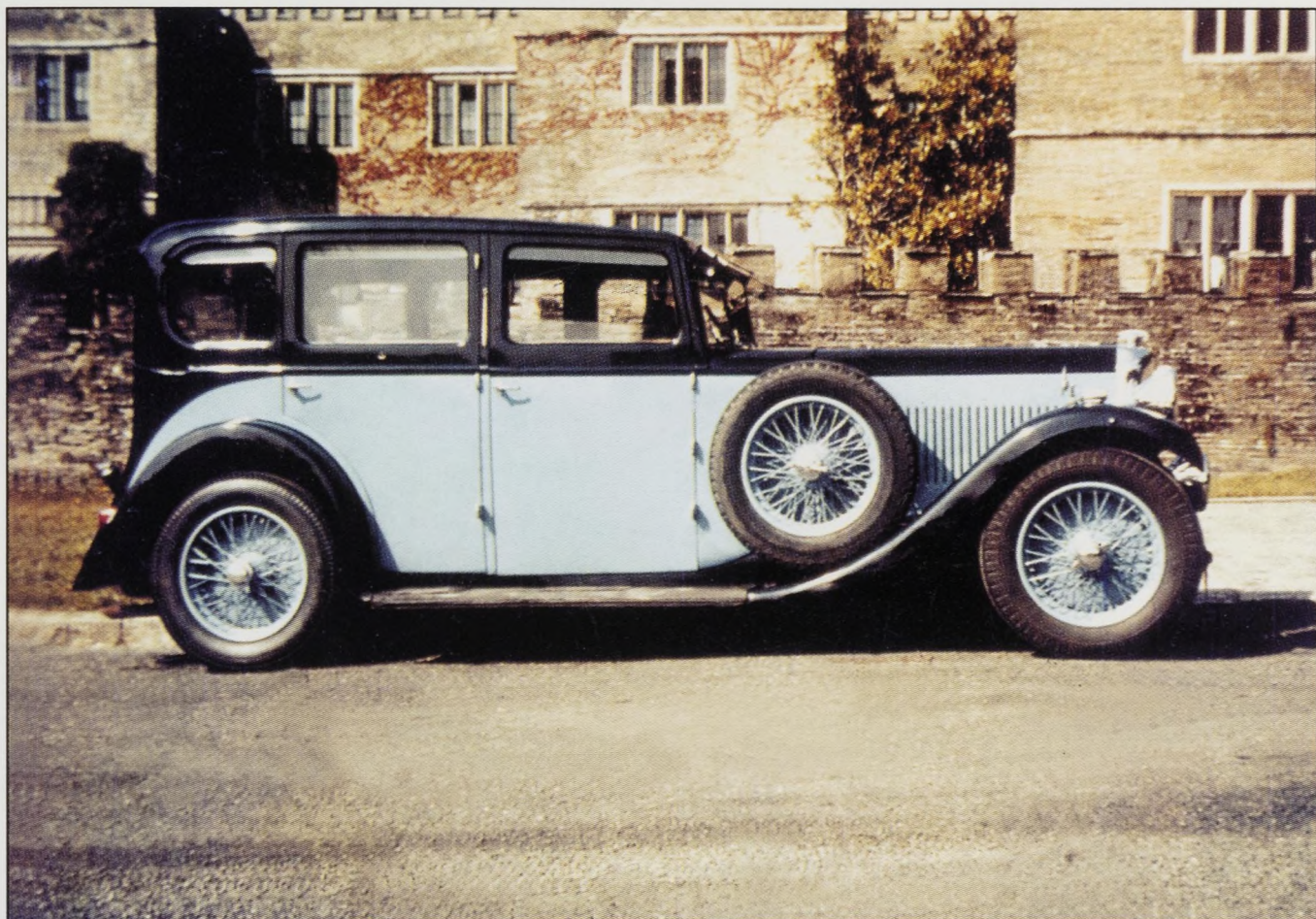
Alas, we have come to the parting of the ways. The Duchess had to go for me to fund future projects. Ernst Chalupa from Austria has taken her over. I believe he intends to join the Lagonda Club. I know he will be given a warm welcome.

Apart from Arnold Davey, I must mention John Oliver, John Breen and Peter Whenman, who were all generous with their support over the years.

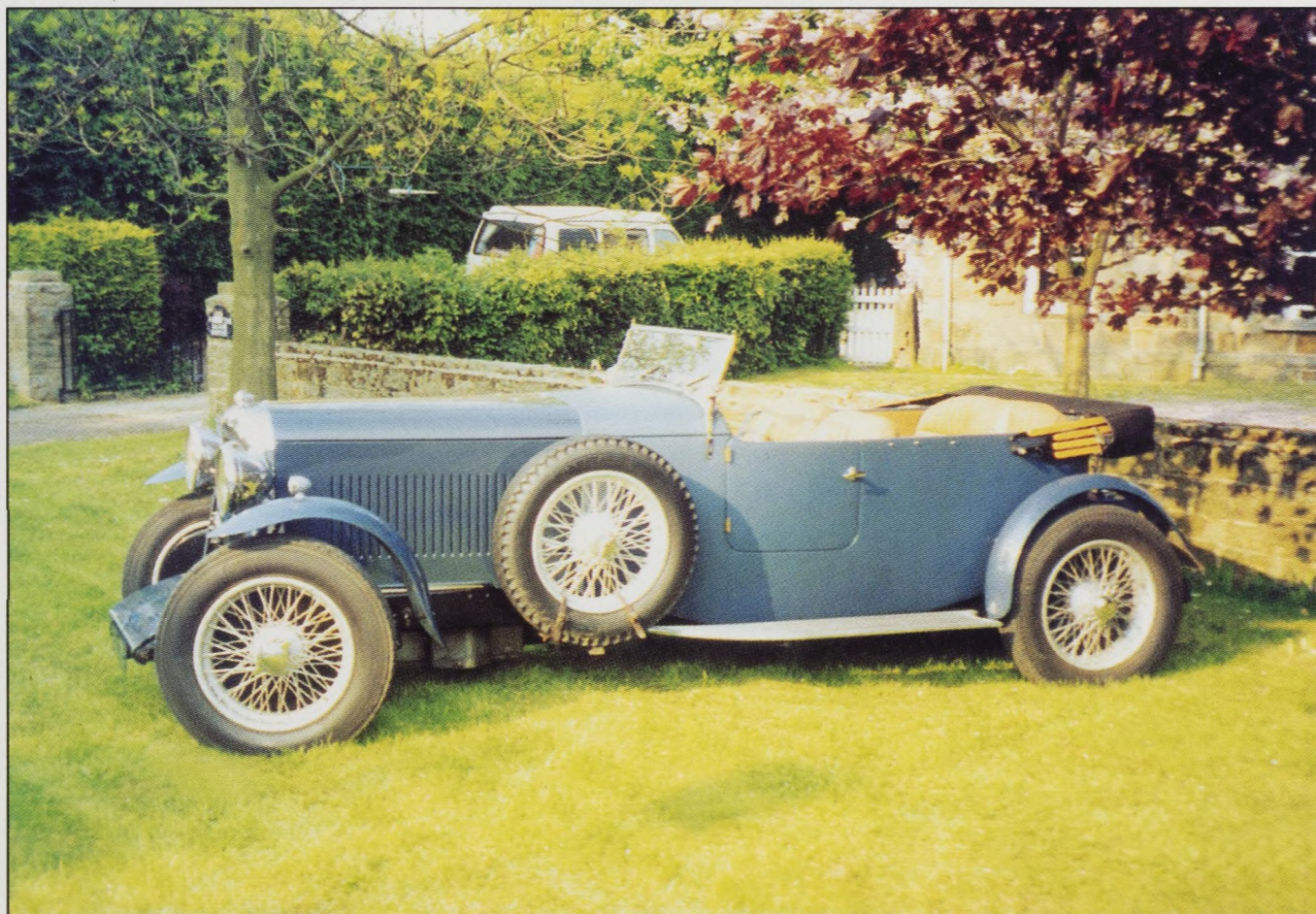
*I don't want to steal Robin's thunder, but Don Ferguson did much more than make cycle wings, he made lots of beautiful vintage car bodies as well, including the Editor's Maserati, a friend's Mille Miglia Alfa Romeo and many Bugattis. At one time he had what looked like a very original Type 35 Bugatti in the window, but when you examined it closely, the tubular front axle was actually made up of dozens of laminations of 16g aluminium sheet, off-cuts from the metal for the bodies and wings he had produced!*

**K.P.P.**





*The Duchess in her original form and as she is now.*





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# SU Pressure Pump Type L

*Michael Drakeford brings our manuals up to date*

THIS IS A WELL KNOWN and widely used pump and is described in the relevant Lagonda Manuals issued by the club. Members who have referred to this section may be aware that the diagram referred to therein is missing.

Through the good offices of Burlen Fuel Systems Ltd I have obtained a diagram and altered it to reflect the text in the manual. This will be added to subsequent versions.

In the meantime a number of points are worth noting:

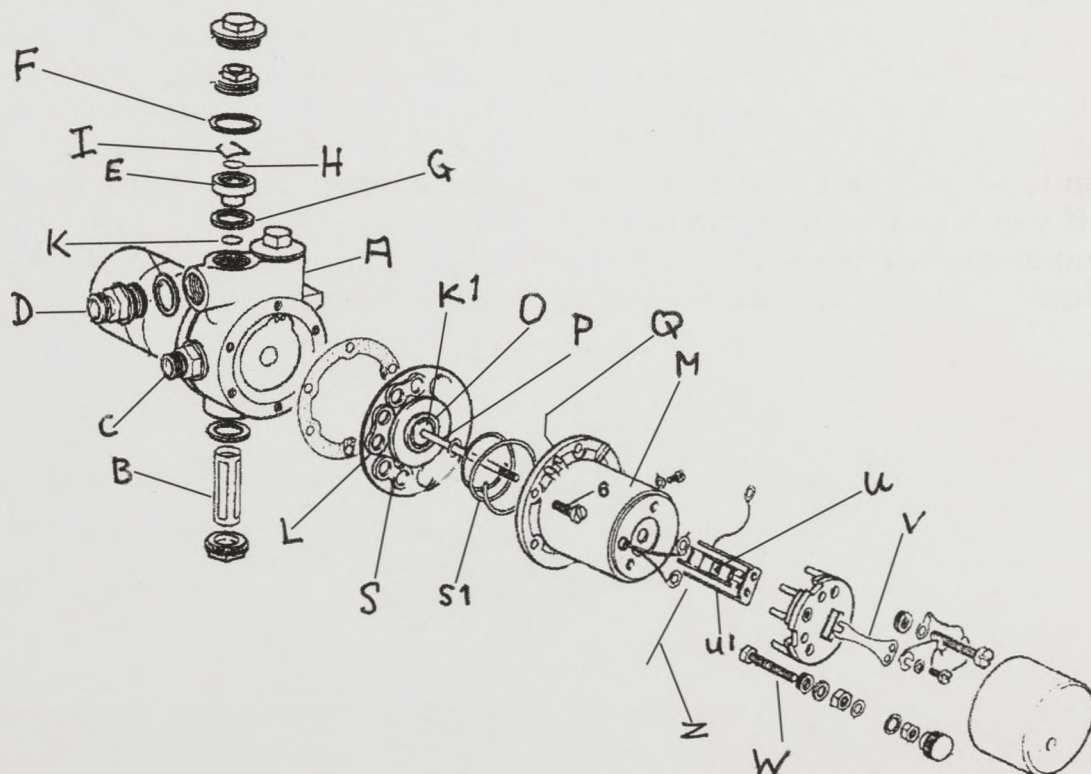
- 1) The original pumps included a small return spring referred to as J the manual text, Burlens consider this no longer needed with the valve relying on gravity for the return. I surmise that the springs were originally intended to prevent valve clatter and wear, as well as prevent the possible build-up of air by the increased vibration that would occur without the spring. I have left mine in place.
- 2) The text refers to brass rollers to

keep the armature rod central. These were initially replaced by a single plastic armature guide plate and now Burlens provide 5 separate centering plates. I found the latter prevented free movement and decided to re-use the single plastic plate.

- 3) The replacement points have two contacts rather than the original one.
- 4) The part: number reference for the diaphragm has altered from AUA 6011 to AUB 6098.
- 5) It is worth noting that the pump description in the manual. refers to the early single pump rather than the dual pump featured in the diagram. The former was often replaced by the dual pump on M45s for additional fuel throughput.

Should you wish to renovate your pump the second diagram containing the part numbers should be of help to you.

**Advice and parts are available from Burlen Fuel Systems Ltd on 01722 412500.**





# Competing in a Lagonda

*Nick Hine, our new Competition Secretary, shares his thoughts*

THEY SAY THAT ONE'S view of the world is coloured by one's own experiences and my experience of "competition" stems from watching my father for over 20 years, careering around UK race tracks in various "Old Lags" from the "Northern Lagonda Factory". More recently I have also campaigned my LG45 in mainly track racing, but also sprints, driving tests and the occasional navigational rally. However, after taking on the position of Competition Secretary it has dawned on me that there are many other "competitive" events around the world in which club members are active. Some that spring to mind are: Hillclimbs, Competitive Rallies, Trials and non UK Track races such as Nurburgring and Laguna Seca. I am sure there are many more that I do not even know about.

In fact I would be very keen to hear from any members who compete themselves or from any spectators that see a Lagonda competing anywhere around the world. For those of you who don't know, there are various club trophies for competitive events which are open to all members of the club. So please if you take part in a competitive event, no matter where or when then let me know. There are even points

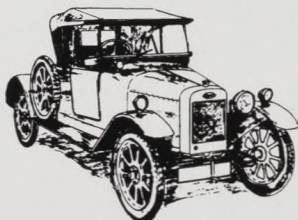
awarded for just making it to the start line

In the UK apart from the obvious VSCC events the club is sometimes invited to compete at other Clubs' events and certainly the Aston Martin Owners' Club and the Bentley Drivers' Club have invited us to their events this year. (see Arnold's newsletter for details) I will publish the details as I get them.

Indeed, if you have any contacts or invites please don't keep them to yourself let either Arnold or myself know so that we can let others join in. There has already been a great result from David Ayre and Andrew Rothwell who finished 2nd overall (Vintageant Route) and 1st in class in The Winter Challenge and the Against all Odds Trophy was awarded to Richard and James Mann. Andrew has narrated an account of the rally to me and I will hopefully have it written up for the next magazine, with some pictures as well.

Which brings me neatly on to my last request for help, any members who have taken part in a competitive event or even watched Lagonda take part, why not jot some notes about the event and send them in to Ken.

I look forward to seeing you out there this year.





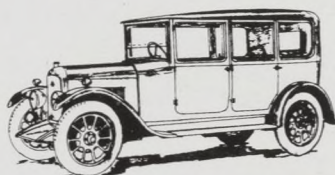
# Tyre Pressures

Martin Whitworth has recently loaned your Editor a small collection of 2 Litre Lagonda Register Newsletters and, at the request of our Chairman, we have reprinted the recommended tyre pressures, as detailed by Ivan Forshaw in the "Spares and Technical Topics" section. This is undated, but is filed between the papers for September 1950 and March 1951:

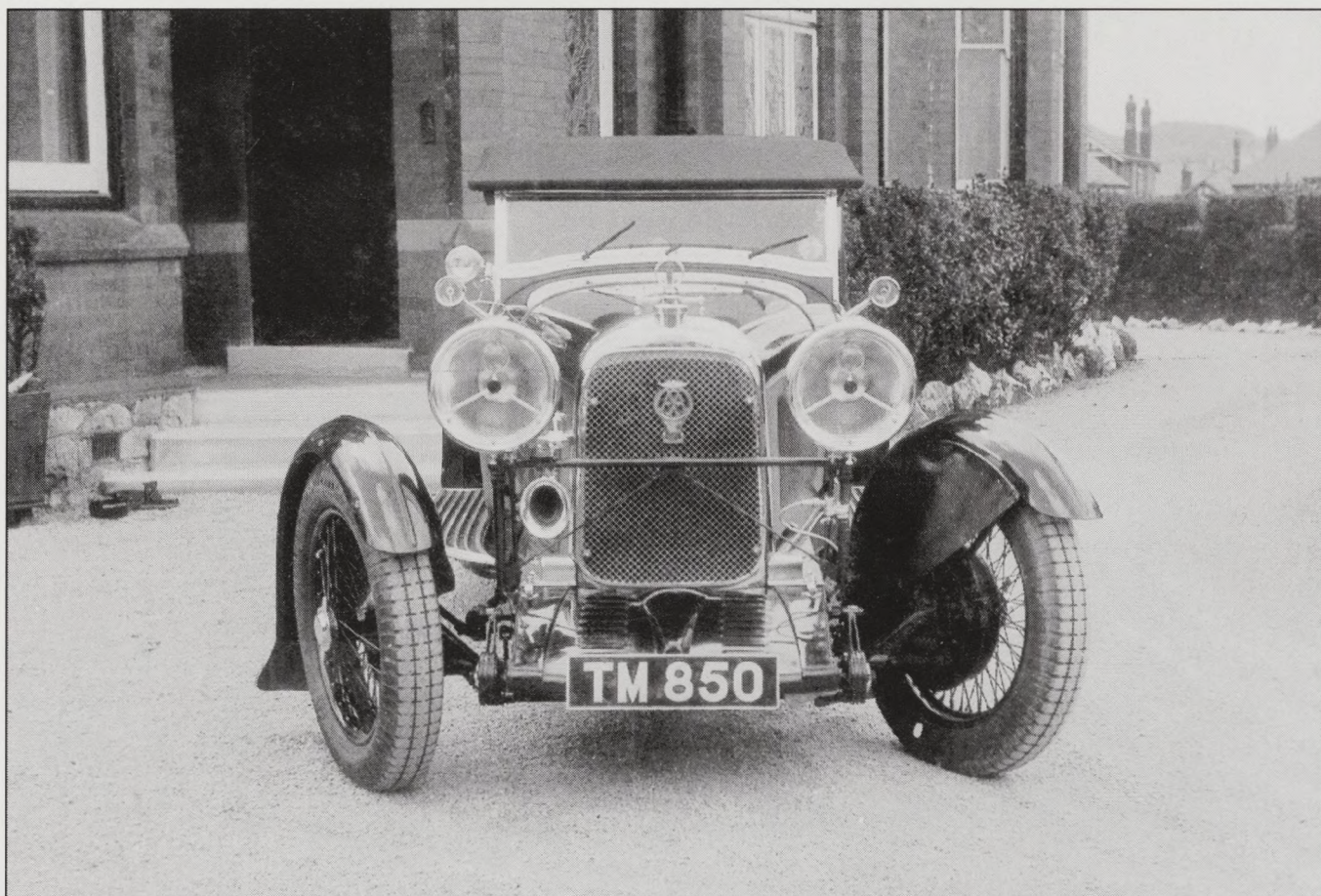
TYRES. A new suit of tyres now costing in the region of £30 all but the most wealthy will be concerned to obtain maximum service from them. Speed, acceleration and braking are vital factors in tyre life; it is a pointer that Dunlop tests before the war showed the rate of tread wear at 45 m.p.h. to be double that at 35 m.p.h. Correct inflation pressures are of great importance and the following table of maker's recommendations may be of interest.

Recommended Pressures [lbs.per sq. in.]			
MODEL	Tyre size	Front	Rear
2 litre 4 cylinder Open Tourer	5.25x21	55	55
	5.50x18	52	32
Weymann Saloon	5 50x18	37	37
16/80 Special Six All models	5.50x18	32	52
3 litre 6 cylinder Open Tourer	5.25x21	37	37
	6.00x19	35	35
Weymann Saloon	5.25x21	37	40
	6 00xl9	35	35

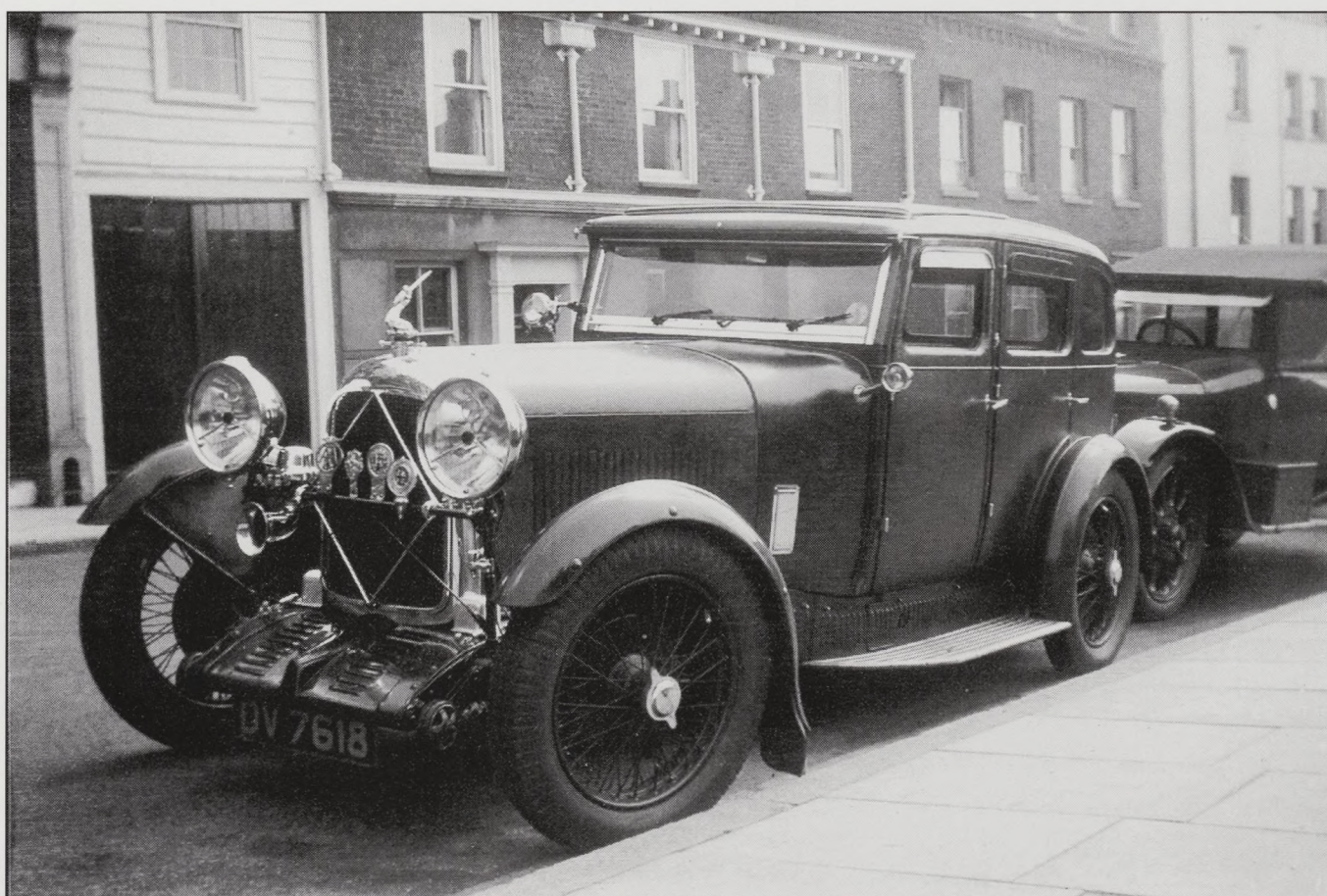
Optional wheel and tyre sizes were offered in the later years of production. A reduction of 4 lbs per sq.in. is permissible in the front tyres at any time, and in the rear tyres when the rear seats are unoccupied.







*See Lawrence Drake's letter opposite. Only one of his two pictures has been reproduced here.*



*2 litre Lagonda saloon DV7618, photographed in the High Street, Harrow on the Hill in 1931 with a No 2 Brownie camera by CA Hartridge, then aged 14*



# Letters

Dear Ken,

As there's not much going on at this over-salted time of year I thought that the enclosed photos might cheer people up a bit. One of my patients, a spritely lady of 80, had spotted me in my 1934 16/80 T8, which has recently finished a four year total restoration. (I hasten to add I don't do my rounds in that car! In fact, I normally cycle, which some people seem to think a little infradig.) She then brought me these pictures of 2L tourer TM 850, which was bought new in 1932 by Tommy Gilbert at the age of 24. His son, Brian, thinks he collected it from the factory at Staines. We can't date the photographs, but they were sepia tinted, by design or age, and apparently he used to develop his own. Another connection was that he went to the same Cambridge college as I did, St John's, where he read Engineering. He moved to North Wales, and here my patient used to enjoy many rides in the car, including driving miles to find cheaper eggs!

Mr Gilbert moved to Blunham in Bedfordshire, and here the car sadly met its end in about 1967 when the wooden garage caught fire from a faulty stove; understandably, this profoundly upset him. He died a few years later.

Do you know the function of the cable curiously clamped to the nearside headlamp support? (*It is an alternative bracket for the spot lamp by the driver's right hand, so that it can be used as a fog lamp. K.P.P.*)

Changing the subject, and, like a fool rushing in where angels fear to tread, re-opening the steering wobble debate... I have cured my 16/80's terrifying tendency to lose steering by developing a dreadful frontal oscillation on hitting a unilateral pothole or bump at low speed, by fitting a long-wheelbase Land Rover

steering damper between the track rod and the front axle, as suggested by Wheatley and Morgan. (Yes, I had checked the toe-in and castor first.) I removed the inverted-J shaped N/S jacking support from the axle to provide a hole for bolting on one bracket, and the other bracket clamped on to the track rod. This damper allows 3/4", more travel than is required, and is suitably beefy. There is no significant adverse effect; indeed my blood pressure is a fraction of that when previously driving the car! Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

**Lawrence Drake**

Dear Ken,

I was very sorry to read in the Newsletter of the passing of Arnold Young. Arnold served in the RAMC during the last War. He was demobilised in Malaya and set up his own Health Service with benefits similar to the NHS in Britain.

I believe it was a great success.

He returned to Britain and was in practice in Devon for a number of years. He was well known in the Club because of his yellow LG 45 Rapide.

I tried to contact him some months ago but the telephone given in the Club Magazine was not recognised.

A very friendly and likeable man and a great enthusiast.

Yours sincerely

**Ivan Forshaw**

Dear Ken

I read with great interest Arnold Davey's 'Recycling can be Bad for Your Health'. I was instantly reminded of childhood days, looking up the encyclopaedia to learn what significant occurrences took place on the date of



one's birth in days gone by. The only matter of any import that had taken place on 23rd March in the 20th century was the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, Archduke of Austria and Hungary, in Sarajevo in 1914. Since the assassination triggered the First World War, I guess its import was reasonably significant! Thanks Arnold for a lovely (and thought-provoking) tale.

**Nelson McMinn**

Dear Ken,

I am writing in appreciation of all the kind things Valerie wrote in the Autumn issue of the magazine.

It is good to know that my efforts are not forgotten.

In reply may I say that I do not think that the Club would exist in its present form had it not been for the work that Valerie did in the early years.

Incidentally, I no longer have the lovely cameo that she gave me a long time ago. I gave it to one of my grandchildren and I hope it will give her as much pleasure as it gave to my wife and myself.

Yours sincerely

**Ivan Forshaw**

Dear Sir

I have just received from the AMOC their super new register of cars. I noted that this includes a section on the post-war 2.6 and 3-Litre Lagondas. I immediately scoured this for my grandparents' Lagonda 2.6 DHC, first registered as LGK 54, but it is absent.

I would be very interested to know if the car still exists and wonder if you can help. I attach two photos as follows:

The splendid photo showing the rear of the car was taken in early 1952, while climbing up towards Arlberg Pass, just after a very large snowfall, the snow on the left being about 3 times higher than the car. The pass was shut and the car was taken through the tunnel by train, then driven on to go skiing in St Anton.

The photo of the front of the car was

taken at the Spanish border during a second trip to Europe in the Summer of 1952, with my grandmother at the wheel, my grandfather smoking, my uncle (now aged 61) being the little boy, with two very impressed Spanish border guards looking on. I suppose my mother is missing because she must have taken the photo. On the same trip, the car entered a Concours competition at Juan Les Pins and my mother has a splendid photo of that too. This 2.6 was silver.

My grandparents, the Benkerts, owned 3 Lagondas in all and were intrepid European tourers. My grandmother learnt to drive on their 2-Litre Lagonda. In 1936, they took this from Surrey on their honeymoon to go skiing in the Riesengebirge, which was in Germany at the time, but is now about 100 miles East of Dresden on the Polish/Czech border. In 1937, they took the car up the Oetztal to ski in Obergurgl and at some point also managed the Stelvio Pass.

Their 2.6 DHC is the one in the photos. After the 2.6, they then had a new metallic blackberry-coloured 3-Litre DHC, but although she remembers taking it up to 100 mph on the Portsmouth Road in the days before speed limits, my mother does not know its original number-plate or have any photos, so we have no more identification information for the 3-Litre.

I would welcome any information from any of your readers.

Yours faithfully

**JLW Miller**

Dear Ken,

We read the Letters in The Magazine of the Lagonda Club, No. 189 and 190 (summer 2001, autumn 2001) from Brian Ricketts and Ron Gee.

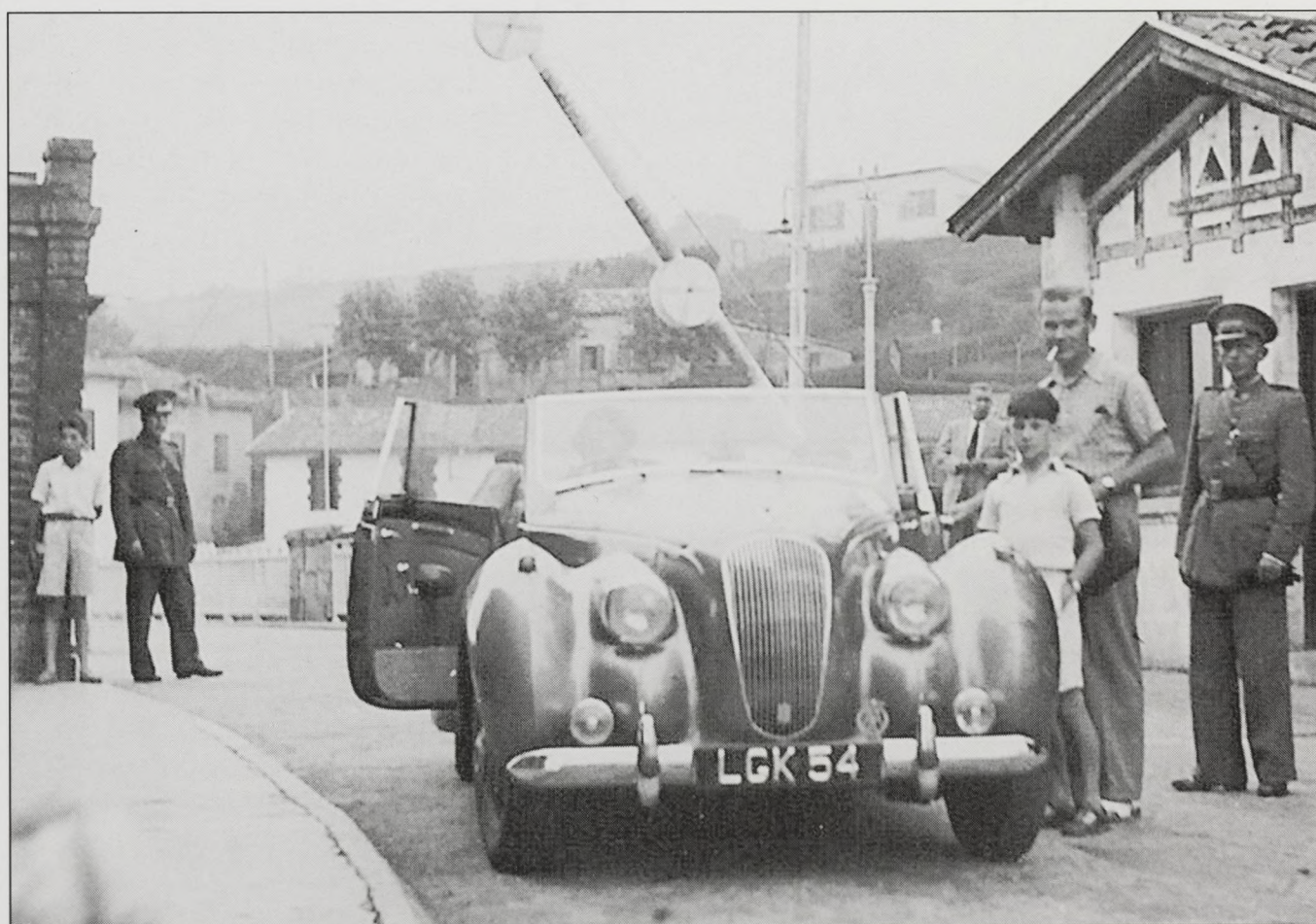
We would like to fit an oil filter kit in our Lagonda 16/80 and we need some help how to fit it or have somebody fit an oil filter kit in his Lagonda.

Maybe Brian Ricketts or Ron Gee can





*See the letter opposite from JLW Miller.*





help us? Is it possible to get the address from them or do you know another person?

Thanks for your help

Yours sincerely

**Peter Martin**

*Our address:*

Peter Martin

Fabrikweg 3

D-96450 Coburg

Fax: +49 9561 10807

Dear Mr Davey,

We were delighted this morning to open our post and find your letter and the Lagonda magazine article.

We were very surprised at the reproduction of the photographs of Uncle's car considering the quality of the original, you must have some 'Wizards' in your magazine's graphics department.

It was kind of you to remember us, another few pages added to our Family Tree Album!

We really do appreciate your taking the time.

THANK YOU

Best wishes

**Rita Scales**

Dear Ken

How good it was to see the large number of period photos in the last magazine. I counted nine which actually exceeded the number of current day inclusions.

I appreciate that you are somewhat at the mercy of the members and their submissions when it comes to deciding what pictures to include in the magazine. However, if period photos are not forthcoming, would it not be possible to utilise those held in the club archive, including the Club Photograph Album?

I am sure that a good balance of old and new photos would provide interest for all.

Yours Sincerely

**Philip Paiolo**

*This is an excellent idea and we will see what we can do! I can't guarantee that*

*there will be archive pictures in every magazine, that will rather depend on the number of pictures supporting the articles printed, but a regular 'archive' spot would be very interesting. Have any members got ancient pictures they would like to see printed in this way? K.P.P.*

Dear Ken,

Valerie and I were very sorry to hear that Roy Paterson, one of the stalwarts of our club, has passed away. During my time as editor of the magazine I had every reason to be appreciative of his quiet work behind the scenes. Writing under the acronym 'Hermes', Roy's regular quarterly reports to the magazine kept us in touch the latest motoring activities of the Hull and East Riding members. I well remember his friendly voice on the telephone telling me that he was just putting his 'copy' in the post. As always, it arrived right on schedule.

It was poignant too, to read that Vivienne Coates has also died, which naturally brought back pleasant memories of herself, Henry and their M45. This much modified two-seater was the subject of a number of erudite letters that reached us from Hill Farm, Swine and which I was glad to print in the magazine for the wider benefit of club members.

Two sad losses for the Hull and East Riding section.

Yours sincerely,

**Tony May.**

*Both Roy and Vivienne were good friends of the Painter family, we first met Roy at our very first Lagonda Club pub-meet at the Half Moon at Skidby in 1959 and we became firm friends, right up to his sad death. After we left the Yorkshire area I stayed with Roy and his sister Enid on several occasions and was always made most welcome. His support of the magazine was always most valuable and he wrote many articles and letters under a variety of pen-names. This support continued right up to the time of his*



*resignation from the club and he regularly sent superb photographs of the local events. In fact my very first cover picture was one of his.*

*We met Vivienne before she and Henry married and well remember her immaculate MG attending many of the club's events in those far-off days. We stayed with the Coates family as well on one of our visits and will always remember the many events Henry and Vivienne organised around the farm. We miss them both and the club is the poorer for their passing. K.P.P.*

Dear Ken,

For all those who think know how the four stroke engine functions, my OH 2 litre motor succeeded in proving that perhaps we don't know it all.

I started the engine after a particularly cold night in the open (cold for Cape at +2 degrees C) and after running for a couple of minutes and without any perceptive knock or bang it began to run roughly rather as if a plug lead had fallen off. I stopped the engine and opened up the bonnet and finding nothing obvious removed spark plug No.1 to find that the plug's earth electrode had been bent back and was touching the central electrode. There was no evidence on the plug to suggest what might have caused this.

I have a very powerful narrow beamed torch rather like a boroscope and could not see anything in the cylinder either. I then removed the other plugs to find that No.3 had a similar problem. I turned the engine over by hand and this did not present any difficulties and there was no evidence of any technical problem. By this time my British car was holding up the American cars which were waiting to start out on the rally which we had gathered for and I was being given a great deal of advice. On this basis we decided to turn the engine over on the starter motor with the plugs out and blow any foreign objects out of the system. This was duly done

satisfactorily and after sorting out the bent plugs we started the engine once again. It was running on all four cylinders but I picked up a slight roughness which I was told was my imagination. I was persuaded to listen to a couple of Yankee machines and as usual they sounded rougher than the Lagonda so I was persuaded to get on with the rally.

As I drove the 200 metres to the start the rough running started again in earnest and once again an inspection of the plugs revealed that Nos.1 & 2 had bent over as previously. So whatever the foreign object was, it had found its way into three cylinders. This time I decided that I would not take the car any further and left it in a garage where I could investigate the problem when I had the time. We finished the rally in a Bentley which ran a big end on the way home, so it was not a good rally for the British marques.

The only way to start sorting out the Lagonda was to remove the head for an inspection and the first observation was that all four cylinder crowns had been beautifully shot peened although there was no evidence of pitting on either cylinder walls or the head or valves. It was not until I had placed the head upside down on a bench that I realised what had happened - No 2 exhaust valve seat was no longer there. So this was what had caused the problem but how had the bits found their way into all four cylinders?

My approach was that I needed to find out why the seat had dislodged and had the head high pressure tested with water and found that the head had a small crack where the seat had been - and another six seats revealed a similar problem waiting to happen. Happily the head was easily stitched and all the valve seats were replaced with hardened steel (EN19).

The grinding of the valves was a mission on its own but the work has now paid off with an improvement in



compression ratio and the engine now runs very smoothly with the option of using non-leaded petrol.

Other members may have had a similar experience but can anyone explain how the airflow in the OH engine managed to distribute pieces of valve seat to all four cylinders.

Regards.

**Peter Vowles**

Dear Ken

I was quite amused to see the pictures of the Lagonda bodied Rolls Royce on page 22. I think the Rolls grille doesn't suit the body at all as it makes the car look tall and narrow, perhaps a Bentley radiator would look better and the car definitely needs a front bumper. Also the location of the car featured on the front cover is Florence and not Sienna as stated in the caption. I know because I holidayed there after attending the clubs 50th anniversary celebrations at Woburn Abbey last year.

My V12 Rapide is now finally on road though lot still needs to be done. Can any member remember the car when it was in England? All I have from Arnold Davey is that the late 1939 car was used initially by Alan Good, till it

was shipped to India for the Maharajah of Jodhpur in September 1940, it was originally burgundy with a tan top and the registration number in England is not known, the chassis No. is 14096 and engine No. V12/160. Hopefully someone would remember the Company President's car.

I really would like to know the history of the car during its short stay in England as I know the full history of the car in India. the latest I know from the then Maharajah's brother is that he and the Maharaja used to race this Lagonda and a Delahaye 135MS that he still owns, in Jodhpur. Till about 100 mph the Lagonda led, then aerodynamics took over and the Figoni et Falaschi bodied Delahaye would gain and overtake. As kings they owned the roads so they had endless roads to race on. As they also owned the population, hitting someone on the road would not have been a problem!!

Regards

**Awini Ambuj Shanker**

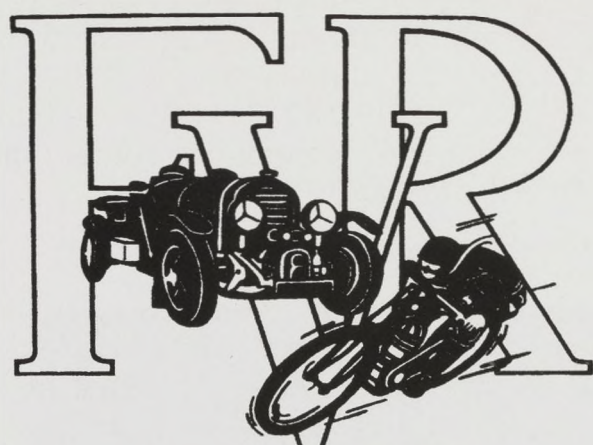
*Sorry about the wrong caption, but that's what it said on the back of the picture!*

**K.P.P.**



*Northern Dinner, Monk Fryston 2001, Herb Schofield, our Northern Secretary, waxes eloquent.*





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