



**THE MAGAZINE OF THE  
LAGONDA CLUB**

**Number 199**

**Winter 2003/2004**





# DAVID AYRE



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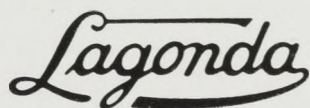
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FRONT COVER

Tim Holt's 3 litre on the Pyrenean Challenge. The drop off the road is as steep as the rise on the other side. Not for the faint Hearted!

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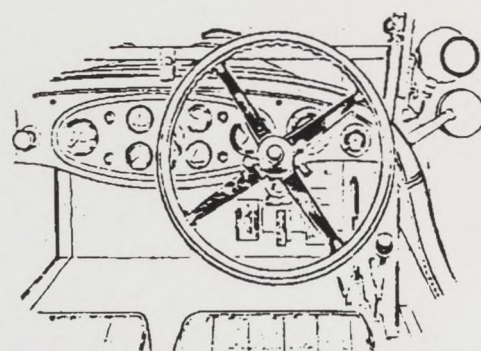
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# From the Driving Seat

*by Ken Painter*



THE PILE OF PARTS for the Painter 2 litre has grown even larger recently, after a trip to Aladdin's Cave, a.k.a. David Ayre, in the company of Chairman Elect Brian Savill and former spares guru John Breen. I wanted to take a peek at the 3 litre Weymann saloon David has rebodied and this has certainly boosted my confidence and enthusiasm. I daringly took my three-page 'wish list' of missing parts with me, David took the list from me as we walked round his stores and I watched in fascinated horror as the pile of parts grew larger by the minute and my bank balance shrank at exactly the same rate! My list of missing parts (those that I know about, anyway) is now about half a page long and I am running out of places to put newly painted lumps of Lagonda. At this rate the car will be completed before I am too decrepit to drive it.

One of the many problems of restoring a car you haven't dismantled yourself is not knowing what you haven't got in that huge pile of bits. Another is not being able to recognise what you do have, especially when it is well past its 'best before' date, but several of these mysteries were resolved by the simple process of picking items from David's stock and asking "What is this for?" The only problem was the all too frequent answer "Ah you will need that too, it's a..."

All efforts are now directed at converting the collection of refurbished and repainted parts into reasonably complete 'sub assemblies', like front and rear axles, gearbox (anyone got a good spare set of second gears for an OH box?) and engine. This will ensure that nothing is mislaid and that I put the pieces together before I forget where they are meant to go. It will save space too, it is remarkable how much more room one needs to store the constituent parts of even the simplest component.

This issue of "The Lagonda" carries several articles about events in Europe and even further afield. It is quite amazing how such adventures are now almost commonplace, even though the cars (and often the drivers too) are much older than when I first joined the club in 1959. The very first magazine I received had an article on a French rally and this seemed exciting and exotic in those far-off days. It says much about the engineering quality of the marque that a continental trip is no longer regarded as something out of the ordinary. Long may this attitude continue.

The technical issues are not neglected either, but the comforting backlog of material is now growing smaller, so more technical articles would be very welcome. Would I be regarded as selfish if I hinted that information on 2 litres would be particularly appreciated?

**LAST DATE FOR COPY FOR THE SPRING MAGAZINE IS  
... SATURDAY 27TH MARCH, 2004 ...**



# The Staines Messenger

October 2003

*From our motoring correspondent*

## LAGONDA SWEEP THE BOARD

### V12 AND 2 LITRE TEAMS TAKE 1ST AND 2ND PLACES IN SERIES

IT IS always a pleasure for your motoring correspondent to visit a race meeting but that pleasure turned into a real privilege when he was asked to accompany the well known and highly respected engineer Mr. W.O. Bentley to the historic Donnington circuit. After founding one of the world's finest marques and going on to be Technical Director for Lagonda, W.O., as he is known to one and all, retired many years ago but he still takes a keen interest in the cars he created.

It was highly appropriate that he should attend this particular event for we were to see the final round of the Pre-War Sports Car Team Challenge between Bentley, Lagonda and Aston Martin. This is a three race series the first two rounds of which had taken place at Oulton Park and Silverstone. Each Club was invited to enter three teams of three cars and as they were of mixed engine capacity results would be calculated on a handicap basis.

At the end of May the AMOC hosted the Oulton Park meeting with a full field of nine teams. The V12s were represented by the experienced trio of David Brock-Jest, Mark Butterworth and Alistair Barker. Competition Secretary Nick Hine was the sole LG45 entry and the 2 litre team was comprised of Tim Wadsworth, Roger Seabrook and Jeremy Oates none of whom had ever raced their cars before. A fine race

saw the ferocious 4.5 litre Bentley of Clive Morley (running without wings) come first with Nick Hine's fully equipped LG45 in 4th place followed by the V12s of Mark Butterworth, David Brook-Jest and Alastair Barker in 5th 6th and 7th places respectively. As might be expected the 2 litres brought up the rear although Tim Wadsworth did briefly get ahead of David Lang's 2 litre Aston Martin but could not hold on to his advantage. Roger Seabrook followed in his very standard car with Jeremy Oates putting in a determined performance despite his lack of horse power. When the handicap results were announced it was with some jubilation that the teams learnt that the V12s had been placed first and the 2 litres second. The Bentley team were third and Aston Martins fourth and fifth.

The next round was held in August, courtesy of the BDC, on the flatter and faster Silverstone circuit and again the weather was fine and dry. On this occasion Florian Brandt flew over from Germany to drive his LG 45, Piers Leigh brought his Rapier and Roy Williams was driving the Le Mans style LG6

Together with Nick Hine they joined the unchanged V12 and 2 Litre teams. For sheer speed even David Brock-Jest in the fastest of the V12s was no match for the formidable Bentley 3/8s of Andrew Day,



Stanley Mann and Richard Ford. However the handicap results told a different story and this time the results were reversed with the 2 litre team coming first and the V12s second. Individually on handicap David Brock-Jest was 1st, Jeremy Oates 3rd, Roger Seabrook 4th, Florian Brandt 6th, Tim Wadsworth 8th, Alistair Barker 10th and Mark Butterworth 11th.

So the scene was set at Donnington for a championship decider between the V12 and 2 litre teams. This time the third Lagonda team was made up of Edmund Fletcher and Piers Leigh in their Rapiers and Roy Williams in his LG45 substituting for Nick Hine. I accompanied W.O. as he examined the cars in the paddock and joked with some of the drivers. "A gay bunch of fellows" he remarked as we made our way to the grandstand. I made no comment. As the three V12 cars came out on to the track for the warm up lap I heard the old boy mutter "That's funny I thought we only made two of them". He watched the race intently puffing steadily on his pipe. The lead was hotly contested between Simon Baldwin in the Aston Martin Le Mans, Clive Morley in the 4.5 Bentley and Charles Gillett in his Frazer Nash Supersports who finished in that order separated by less than 4 seconds. The V12s followed in 4th, 6th and 10th places. In the

middle of the field there was another fierce battle with Edmund Fletcher in his Rapier splitting a bunch of seven Aston Martins, all eight cars finishing within 7 seconds of each other. Still further down the field Tim Wadsworth was having a great scrap with Robin Hine's 3 litre Bentley and the Aston Martin International of Richard Ashmead. The Bentley eventually winning by just 0.1 sec. from the Lagonda. To his intense disappointment Jeremy Oates 2 litre ran out of sparks just after Starkeys Bridge and he sat out the rest of the race on the grass effectively ending the 2 litre team's challenge. W.O. was clearly impressed with the keenness of the competition and the competitiveness of the older 4½ litre cars. As we got up to leave I turned to say goodbye to our hosts and when I turned back the old man had vanished. There remained just the faint sweet smell of tobacco smoke drifting in the autumn air.

When the handicap results were computed the Bentley B team were the winners with the Lagonda V12s second. However this was sufficient to give the V12s the AMOC Holland Trophy awarded to the Series Champions and, thanks to a favourable marking system, the 2 litre team were judged to have come second by a single point from the Aston Martin A team and will receive the Bentley Trophy.





# The Vintage Sports Car Club

## 2003 Pyrenean Challenge

*Non-member John Chadwick tells the story of a fascinating trip*

WHAT FOLLOWS IS a personal account of a 1000 mile journey crossing and re-crossing the Pyrenean mountain chain between Spain and France in an open topped vintage sports car. The journey emulated similar tours completed in the early days of motoring using similar roads (often in much the same condition), in similar cars (often I suspect in somewhat better condition) with modern drivers and passengers (some of whom could have been in worse condition due to the debilitating effects of too much falling over water!)

A cold winter's day in January this year found me laid on my back, screwdriver and soldering iron in hand groping about in the dark under the dashboard of Tim Holt's 1928 Lagonda 3 litre. Electrical problems had brought about this state of affairs and I had offered help in sorting these out. The cold, considerable discomfort and the mesmerising effect of minimal light intensity in this confined place led to a soporific state of mind. As a result when the job was successfully completed and I was asked if I would care to be navigator / riding companion / mechanic / general dogsbody on a European car rally I enthusiastically said YES! (The whisky had nothing to do with it – honest!)

The opportunity to make good on the proposal came later in the year, when a voice on the telephone said do you want to go to the Pyrenees? After about 5 seconds deliberation, (to gain the permission of my superior officer) I said "What a good idea" and left it to Tim to describe the basis of the Vintage Sports

Car Club Pyrenean Challenge and follow up with sorting out the paperwork etc. Meanwhile I got out the maps and identified the towns and villages where the hotels were situated and eventually settled down to try to digest the regulations and other instructions sent by return after our entry had been accepted.

I have travelled with my wife in the Pyrenees before on my favourite form of transport, which only has 2 wheels. This places certain constraints on a holiday such as limiting the amount of luggage one can carry and having to wear appropriate clothing which is often very hot and sweaty in the sort of weather encountered in this region during the summer months. Driving around in an open topped car would be a very different experience, allowing one to gaze at the wonderful scenery without looking through a visor, and wear more appropriate clothing (or so I thought).

### **Day 1: Home to Portsmouth**

The first day began with a very early start. Tim had risen at 5am to pick me up en-route at 6am – still dark! The Lagonda was trailered to a friend's farm near Bicester to save wear and tear, then unloaded, packed with our luggage and driven south to a rendezvous with other entrants at Port Solent near Portsmouth. As the day progressed, the weather became hotter and we donned sun hats and sun glasses. By the time we arrived at Port Solent we were ready for the sea breezes and a welcome cup of coffee in the shade.



All the 15 entrants and support crew finally arrived and we made our way to the Portsmouth to Bilbao ferry terminal, to be loaded on the *Pride of Bilbao*, find our cabin and inspect the contents of the tax free shop before making a small purchase each to cover the need for a nightcap. After watching the passing spectacle as the ship left harbour and having a meal it was time for bed.

### **Day 2: Ferry across the Bay of Biscay**

Spent aboard ship, jog round the deck first thing, then breakfast and some serious whale watching in the sun. The sea was flat calm, the sun shone and the evil reputation of the Bay of Biscay was forgotten. We had been summoned to a meeting in the Posh Bar that afternoon to introduce all the 'competitors' and receive the road book, map and final instructions. Before attending the meeting Tim and I decided to sit down and have a beer. We got talking to a couple in adjacent seats and found they were returning from their house in the north of England to their 'Casita' in Spain for the winter. It turned out that they were naturists who would spend most of their winter without clothing! I suppose one small bag for luggage would suffice in these circumstances. After warning them of the dangers of frying sausages we attended the meeting, collected our rally plate giving us number 3 and took the roadbook and maps to the cabin to sort out the routes and recap how to follow tulip charts. More jogging round the deck (slowly to prevent the beer spilling) and a last 'English' type meal completed the day and we retired with a liquid 'nightcap' and great expectations for the morrow!

### **Day 3: Bilbao to San Sebastian**

Early rise again, then breakfast before joining the car and driving on to Spanish soil. Bilbao in the morning rush

hour is chaotic, the smog is awful and the smell unpleasant! We joined the A8 motorway in the direction of our first stop at San Sebastian.

Having all day to reach the hotel, we had already decided to leave the motorway as soon as we left the environs of Bilbao and travel via the coastal road. This proved to be a memorable part of the journey as we drove through little Spanish fishing villages and some wonderful cliff top scenery, we also passed through open country with pumpkins, kiwi fruit, apples, peppers and sweet corn growing in the fields. Lunch was purchased en-route and eaten in a grove of Eucalyptus trees to provide some shade from the sun. Locals passing by stopped to gaze at the car, one man even drove off, collected his wife and children then drove back to admire the vehicle again! We found this sort of reaction throughout the event, the Spanish people were very enthusiastic about the old cars and we were clapped and cheered on several occasions.

Directions to the hotel in San Sebastian were very limited and after arriving in a major city in the rush hour we inevitably got lost. We were assisted by a very efficient and buxom traffic warden who gave us instructions in Spanish and French, which neither of us could fully understand, so we resorted to arm waving and sign language to complete our journey, with an escort of young boys and girls on scooters clamouring for a closer look at the car. The hotel was situated on top of a hill overlooking the bay and harbour with fabulous views in all directions, the restaurant supplied a generous meal with a bottle of wine, the bar stocked good beer and our en-suite room was large and comfortable. San Sebastian when lit up at night looks fantastic and was far enough away to ensure we had a good nights sleep undisturbed by traffic noise.



#### **Day 4: San Sebastian to Sos Del Ray Catolico**

Awoke to another bright sunny day and after packing our luggage into the car and having our continental breakfast we took to the road. The first job was to find petrol, then rejoin the motorway over the French border before turning south into the foothills of the Pyrenees. Once clear of the motorway we found ourselves driving into wonderful rural roads with little traffic, through sleepy villages, past meadows and farms then through deciduous woodland which at this time of the year was at its most colourful with all shades of green, brown and red foliage. Squirrels darted through the undergrowth collecting nuts for the winter and we decided to stop and collect some edible chestnuts which were falling from the trees as we passed!

As the day developed the temperature climbed and we donned sun hats and glasses. Lunch was taken under the shade of some trees on the edge of a wood in which a couple of locals were searching for edible mushrooms. We were surrounded by a group of enthusiastic Austrian motorcyclists who had also stopped for a roadside picnic. They were most interested in the car and easily slipped into speaking English with us to find out more about what was happening. They were treated to a moving vintage car display as some of the other cars in the rally were driving past at the time.

The afternoon saw us move back into Spain driving in very different scenery through gorges with eagles flying high over amazing rock formations and dry river beds. The sun was getting even hotter and we treated ourselves to a welcome ice cream under the shade of a garage forecourt in one of the small villages before continuing our journey to our overnight stop at the Parador hotel in

Sos del Rey Catolico.

After parking the car and settling in our room we decided to have a cool beer and discuss the days drive with other rally participants before having an excellent evening meal in the Parador dining room. All that fresh air, good food and drink had made us sleepy, so an early night was needed before contemplating the pleasures of another day.

#### **Day 5: Sos del Ray Catolico to Aucun (France)**

After another Spanish breakfast we left the Parador and joined the route for the day. The first part of the route followed deserted and twisty country roads for what felt like a long way, since we were getting low on petrol. Sure enough the engine died in the middle of nowhere. Dipping the tank proved that it was dry so the spare gallon can was poured in and a passing vintage Rolls Royce donated another two gallons so we were soon on our way again.

After finding a garage and filling up, we rejoined the rally route. The morning's route took us over more high mountain passes on narrow roads that clung to the sides of ravines with only a single Armco barrier between the car and a raging river hundreds of feet below. Adding to this were unlit tunnels cut through huge rock buttresses and large rock overhangs covering half of the road.

The afternoon found us having lunch under umbrellas to shade us from the sun before again taking to mountain roads, this time with different hazards. Clues as to what is around the next bend lie all over the road in great brown piles! Yes, a herd of cattle with audible warning devices around their necks! These beasts are very stubborn and are not to be moved from their ponderous route under any circumstances so we





*The 'main road' runs through the archway!*





*Real touring roads.*



enjoyed the scenery and took our time. Further up the valley we met our first of many large flocks of sheep complete with shepherd and dogs. Tim, being a sheep farmer himself, took great delight in observing and photographing this spectacle and I, as a non farming type, can now speak with more authority about animal husbandry and sheep dog breeds!

All this climbing and descending in hot conditions had taken its toll with the car engine and we found that we were down to 5 cylinders instead of 6. A quick check found a contaminated plug, a spare was substituted and away we went again. Later one of the mechanics who accompanied the rally decided that the carburettors were set too rich and reset them. This seemed to effect a cure, but constant changes to altitude did affect the running of the engine but never caused any real problems.

After traversing more mountain roads and passing another large flock of sheep, we arrived at the top of the Col D' Aubisque, which has been used as part of the Tour de France route. It never ceases to amaze me that anyone can ride up these mountain roads on a bicycle and still have enough energy to do the same thing the following day and the following day etc.

We celebrated this ascent by purchasing a Basque beret from a delighted souvenir stall holder who showed us how they should be worn and insisted on taking our photograph as we set off down the mountain!

Our hotel for the night was on the outskirts of Aucun, a tourist type Pyrenean village which normally caters for walkers, rock climbers, horse riders and mountain bikers in summer with snow sports in winter. Again a meal followed by a few drinks ensured a good nights sleep ready for more action the following day.

## **Day 6: Aucun (France) to Vielha (Spain)**

Day 6 started with a diversion from the set route, so we navigators had to find the alternative route to the bottom of the Col du Tourmalet. After purchasing some lunch in Argelès we donned our berets and sallied forth into the mountains again. This being a Sunday, everyone and their dog was out trying to conquer the Col! Motor cycles raced past at high speed, modern cars tried to emulate them and the rest of the population got on their bicycles to join the fray!

Eventually we arrived at the top having gained over 6000 feet in altitude. Tim had been fighting the steering wheel round hairpin bends all morning and deserved a rest before continuing the effort on the way down. No wonder we were out of breath walking from the car to the souvenir shop! And still the cyclists kept coming! After the obligatory photograph and purchasing a sticker to show we had made it, we began the descent. Keeping a look out for overtaking bicycle riders who were silently descending at 3 times our speed. We made our way down the mountain driving over a road surface covered in the painted names of Tour-de- France competitors.

More sheep and hairpin bends later we crossed the Col d' Aspin and the Col d' Peyresourde before arriving in the valley floor to enter the town of Bagnères-de-Luchon which is twinned with the Yorkshire town of Harrogate not far from where we live. Another obligatory photograph before continuing our journey over the Col du Portillon into Spain and to our Parador hotel in Vielha. Arrived just in time to avoid the first rain and thunderstorm of the rally. After an excellent evening meal and a stroll round the Parador's grounds we decided we had had enough fresh air and retired to our excellent room for the night.



### **Day 7: Viella (Spain) to Pau (France)**

The day dawned dry and bright, so after an excellent continental breakfast we set off down the Garona valley through more deciduous woodland towards the French border. Not long after crossing the border we encountered a wonderful view of a large cathedral set on top of a fortified hill not far off the route. We decided to make a diversion to see this medieval French 'Bastide'. The diversion was worth the effort and after parking the car we spent an hour walking round the 800 year old Cathedral of Saint-Bernard-de-Comminges and the surrounding village.

Our usual picnic lunch was taken by the side of a river but by this time the weather was beginning to change, not long afterwards we had to don waterproofs as the rain started. As we approached a set of traffic lights in Bagneres-de-Bigorre the heavens opened and of course the traffic lights changed to red! Water collected on the rear tonneau cover and eventually overflowed down our backs soaking us and the seat squabs, the roads were like rivers and the car engine stopped and would not restart on the button! You don't get this wet on a motorcycle!

We eventually managed to bump start the engine but something had happened to the electrical system and we were unable to start the engine on the button and had to operate the starter motor solenoid by hand for the rest of the rally.

Our route today was described as a challenge for the navigators, with 12 pages of tulip charts! This proved a correct description as reading maps and following tulip charts using bi-focals in an open car in the rain with a wet bum was proving difficult, so we decided to 'cut and run' taking the next major road to Lourdes and on to our destination for the night in Pau.

After navigating through Pau in the rush hour we found the hotel and did what we could to dry out the car's wet bits first, then our own wet bits! Since we had our own kettle, we were able to dry out with a hot coffee and a Mars bar before showering and changing, then finding the bar to discuss the day's events with other rally entrants and eating our evening meal.

### **Day 8: Pau (France) to St Jean-Pied-de-Port (France)**

Another continental breakfast. Bring on the egg and bacon! A morning check on the car revealed that considerable wear was evident on the rear tyres. No wonder, considering the sort of terrain we had been travelling over.

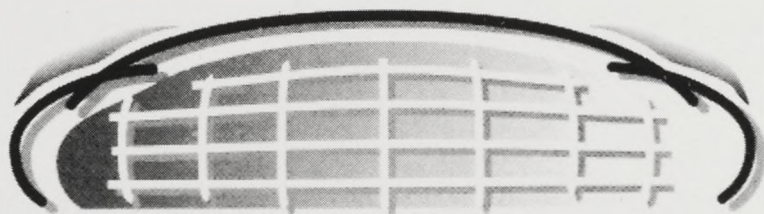
Today we are travelling to St Jean-Pied-de-Port another medieval bastide with more recent fortifications by Vauban and famous as a gathering point for pilgrims travelling to Santiago de Compostella in Spain. But first we had to get out of Pau in the rush hour with dark skies and misty horizons.

Following the tulip chart led us to Centre Ville then past the Hotel de Ville (poor accommodation) and eventually to Autres Directions and Toutes Directions (places we never found) to the wrong side of town. Eventually we got back on track and started to climb through mist and past extensive vineyards which would have offered more wonderful scenery if we could have seen it.

An excellent coffee stop was found at Belair and from our outdoor seats we could watch some of the other rally cars splash past. We eventually moved on to a tree lined section of road famed as a stage in the Tour de France car rally and worked our way upwards beyond the tree line into thick mist and eventual rain. This time we were better prepared and erected two small umbrellas! At the speed we were climbing the umbrellas



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RESTORING THE PAST WITH ENGINEERING OF THE FUTURE



kept us dry and needed little control to avoid them being blown away.

When we got to the top we were clapped and cheered from the covered patio of a hotel. Imagine sitting outside a hotel, sheltered from the rain, enjoying a nice coffee and cake when two intrepid Englishmen in an open topped vintage car with umbrellas as top cover drive slowly past. What an impression of eccentricity we must have presented as we raised our umbrellas in salute and carried on in true English fashion! They must have thought we were nuts!

After diversions due to road closures we eventually came into sunnier climes and into our hotel for the night in St Jean-Pied-de-Port. The hotel bathroom could be described as Gothic and we conducted tours for other rally members since the decoration, toilet, bidet, sink, shower and porthole window were so unusual. It all worked, but I wouldn't want to see it again.

That night we had a walk round the town and ate out in a small restaurant which seemed full of English tourists. Two cyclists from Lancaster sat behind us, two other rally entrants ate with us and other English speaking groups were evident on other tables.

### **Day 9: St Jean-Pied-de-Port (France) to San Sebastian (Spain)**

A comfortable night's rest followed by breakfast served by 'Madame Edith' was the precursor for a short drive back over the Col-D'Ispaguy back into Spain. The morning's excitement was seeing a large flock of vultures sitting on and flying round a high rocky outcrop. We stopped to gaze skyward at this spectacle and counted 17 of the birds floating round the sky, presumably waiting for some unsuspecting goat to fall off a ledge and provide them with lunch.

We got lost again along with lots of others. At one junction, cars were

coming in three directions at once! We decided the tulip charts were wrong and carried on downhill into Spain and a delightful picnic spot by a river with other vintage cars and crews for company.

We finally arrived at the Monte Igueldo hotel in San Sebastian for our last night on Spanish soil and went down the funicular railway for a walk round the bay before going back to the hotel to repack our bags ready for the ferry home.

A shower and change into posh frocks (for the ladies in the party) and creased trousers, shirts and ties for the men, to attend the last night party. A nice meal with wine flowing freely, followed by speeches thanking the organisers and helpers, then presentations of a 'commemorative icon' officially ended the event with us having an early night in anticipation of an early start the next morning.

### **Day 10: San Sebastian to Bilbao and ferry**

The plan to get an early start to pack the car and get an early breakfast was thwarted by the dining room not opening till 7.30am. So we watched the dawn sunrise illuminate the night fishing boats and eventually had our last continental breakfast before setting off towards Bilbao and the port of Santirzi for the ferry home. The weather had suddenly turned colder and we needed our jackets and hats to keep warm, but it was dry and sunny as we travelled by motorway back into the smog and smells that engulf Bilbao.

After filling up with Spanish petrol, which costs much less than at home, we arrived at the ferry departure point and were able to verify that all entrants' cars were present including, two casualties that had been delivered to the dockside by trailer after suffering breakdowns.



After a wait on the dockside, we were loaded on to the *Pride of Bilbao* for the journey to Portsmouth. First job was to get our cabin and have a beer, before the usual jog round the deck when we discovered that the ship had a 'Wildlife Officer' whose mandate was not the ship's cockroaches and rats but conducting research into whales dolphins and porpoises! We were privileged to see Finn whales surfacing and porpoise swimming in the ship's wake, before doing some recreational shopping for presents for the family and my new granddaughter.

Time was spent gazing at passing ships before having a traditional English evening meal of – fish and chips! A few more beers then bed for the night.

### **Day 11: Portsmouth – Home**

The ferry does not normally arrive in Portsmouth until late afternoon, so after a day spent waiting to get back into Britain we disembarked at 4.00pm just in time to be ahead of the rush hour. A motorway journey at modest speeds, with a shelter from a rain storm under a bridge near Oxford returned us to the trailer for reloading and towing back home.

We both agreed that the event had been well organised and provided an excellent tour in first class company using vintage cars for the purpose for which they were intended.

### **Notes**

For those who might be contemplating a similar tour in the same area, even in modern transport, it might be worth taking some tips from our experiences.

Driving in the Pyrenees is obviously going to be different from driving in England. You will be on the opposite side of the road, going round roundabouts the 'wrong' way, using pay

booths on the French motorways etc so:-

Take it easy until you get used to driving on the right, it is easy once you have reset your mind to the new method.

Be aware that animals in large numbers can be round the next bend, the shepherds don't always lead their flocks so the first thing you will see is wall-to-wall sheep or cows!

When going on the peage, collect your card at the first set of booths then pay as you exit. Don't lose your card and keep some small change handy for pay booths, avoid those booths which require pre-paid cards and get your passenger to handle the money. It saves drivers time having to find their wallet in their back pocket, and they've got enough to do!

Temperatures and weather conditions can change rapidly, keep suitable clothing handy in case you need to add layers or waterproofs.

We used a travel kettle with a continental adapter and 2 cups. You don't get a kettle in your hotel room and it's nice to have a brew when you arrive at your destination and when you get up in the morning.

Carry water to drink and some for the radiator.

Petrol is easily available but sometimes garages are far apart. Top up regularly, and carry a spare can.

It helps to have a rear view mirror on the left hand side of your car and a passenger with a strong left arm for hand signals.

In towns, pedestrian crossings don't seem to have the same rules attached to them as we do at home. It's up to the pedestrian to walk when there is a gap in the traffic.

Traffic lights on the entry to villages are often used to make you stop if you are travelling above the speed limit. Stopping at a red light wastes time, it's quicker to adjust your speed first, then keep going.



French signs are often right on the junction so it's easy to go flashing past them and then have to return. Go slow to avoid this problem.

Sans Plomb in France and Sin Plomo in Spain indicate unleaded petrol.

Chausée Déformée means the road is deformed! Bendy and bumpy!

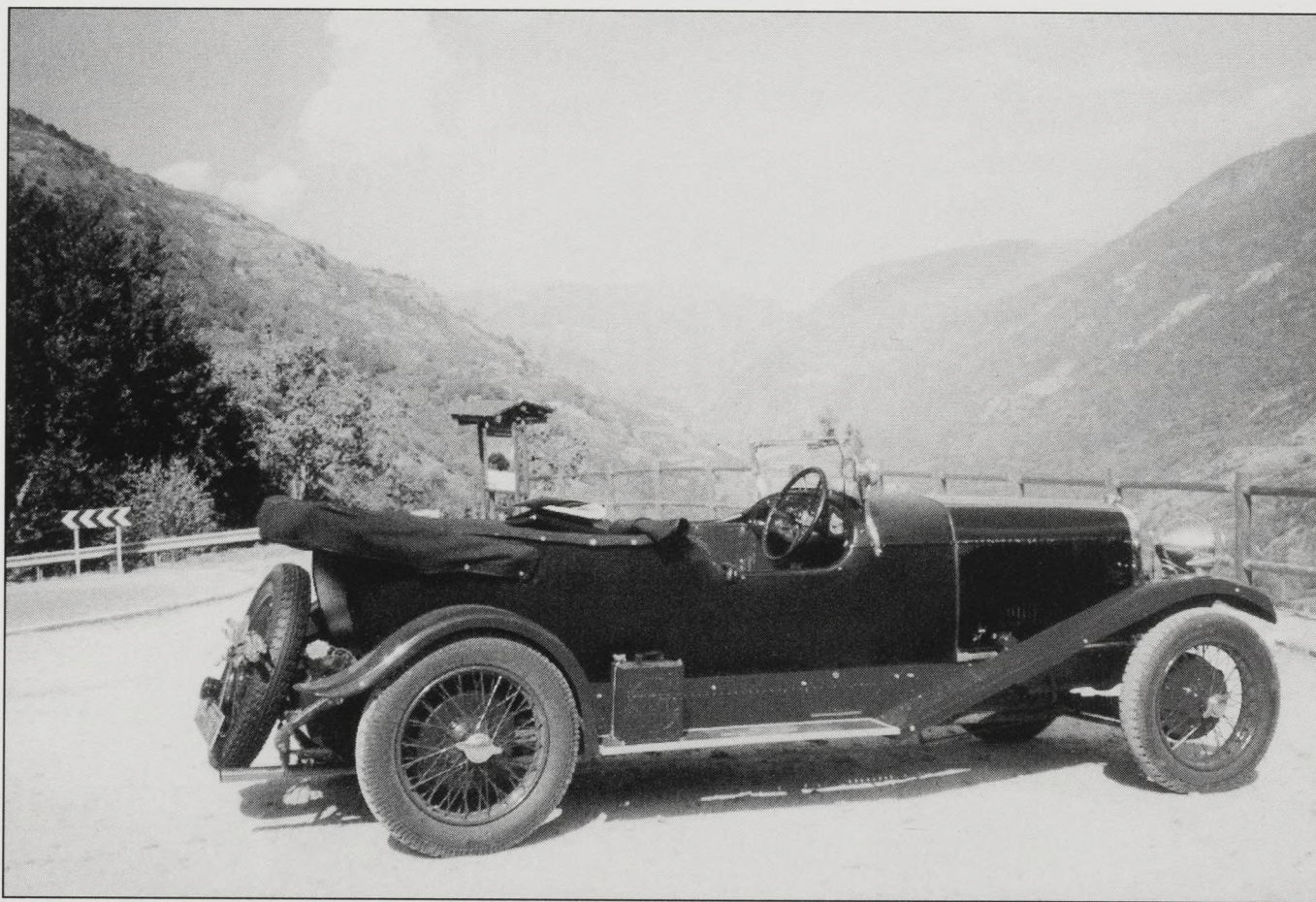
Camions are trucks and often big ones!

Don't try to book a room at the 'Hotel de Ville'!

Don't expect French hotels to maintain the same standards as Spanish ones! (Spanish hotels are generally much better).

French hoteliers are notoriously frugal. Don't expect the automatic corridor lights to stay on long enough for you to reach your room, or the top of the stairs!

The pre E.U. border control buildings in this area are interesting to look at, not just because they are now a piece of history, but because the window panes all seem to have bullet holes in them! We noticed this on several occasions and put it down to the fact that most of the time we were travelling through Basque territory and perhaps the locals were making their feelings about the French and Spanish central government known! We never experienced any unrest at any part of our travels, but we did see graffiti signs for ETA and other Basque political parties drawn on buildings in the countryside. I would not like this to put anyone off travelling in this part of Europe. The people we met were without exception friendly and helpful.



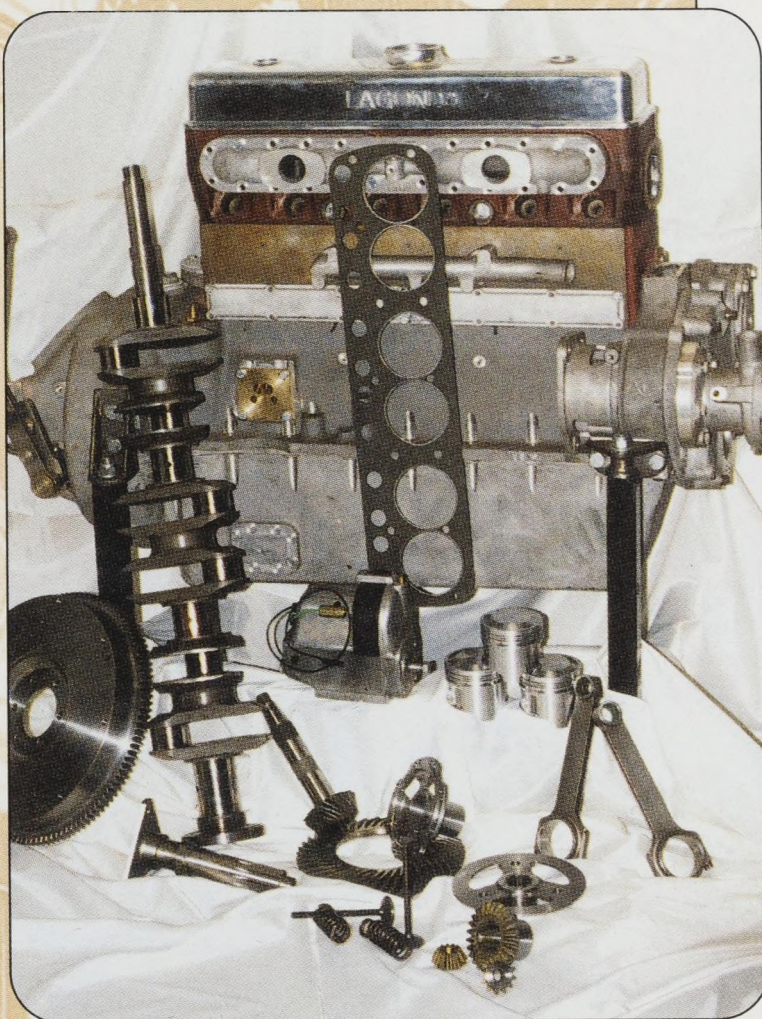
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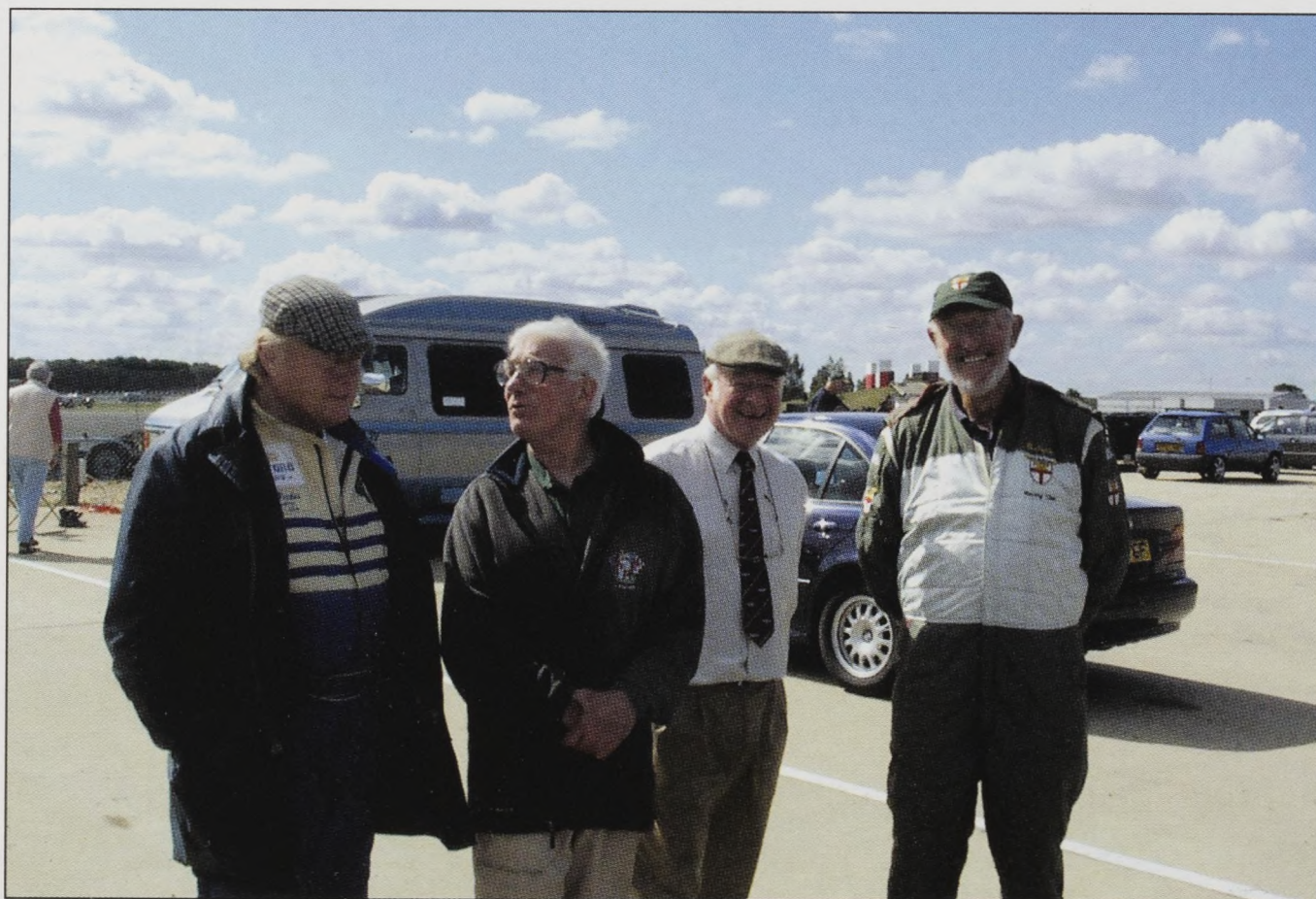
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*A group of the Irish contingent pictured during the Ards TT Anniversary, reported in the last magazine.*



*Alastair Barker, Alan Brown, David Hine and Roy Williams enjoy the sun at Silverstone.*



# *The Suffolk Dinner*

Saturday 27 March 2004, 6.45pm for 7.15pm

at

**The White Lion Hotel**

Market Cross Place, Aldeburgh

---

*Stilton & Celery Soup*



*Salmon, Smoked Haddock & Crab Cake*

or

*Mixed Melons Cocktail with Champagne Strawberries*



*Guinea Fowl Supreme, Pot Roasted with Garlic*



*Sweet Spiced Lemon & Lime Tart*

or

*Roast Pineapple Wedges & Cinnamon Ice Cream*



*Coffee and Mints*



This year we welcome Colin Bugler as our after-dinner speaker.  
Gary Guiver Gong award for the Rapier coming furthest. Dress optional.  
A vegetarian Fettucini Pasta with Roasted Red Peppers & Mozzarella is available in  
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# A 16/18 Motors At Over 100 mph for 24 Hours

*John Soffe and Sandra Meade let the train take the strain*

I BECAME THE current keeper of NV 2992 (Esmeralda) in November 2001. During 2002 I visited France with Esmeralda twice, first for the Fougères Rally and secondly for the 1st retro Le Mans. As these were just weekend runs, it was decided to take her to Italy for a two-week holiday this year and see how we got on together over a longer period.

To reduce the actual driving time and therefore spend more time in Italy we travelled on the Motorail from Brussels to Bologna. This saved many nights in hotels and over 1000 miles each way. The Motorail only travels to Italy on a Friday /Saturday returning to Belgium on the Saturday/Sunday. The next problem being-where to stay in Italy?

Triumph TR owning friends in Italy recommended accommodation in the Marche area on the Adriatic coast, at a village called Coppo, near to the towns of Numana and Sirolo, twenty miles south of Ancona.

Driving down to collect Sandra saw the only panic arise during the whole trip - a duster under the bonnet had dropped onto the exhaust and caught fire -no visible damage so we drove on! We decided to stay on the Thursday night near Dunquerque, so that a leisurely drive to Denderleeuw (Motorail Station) on the Friday morning would see us at the train suitably refreshed. With the cars loading at 2pm and the passengers at 5pm. We had been recommended to cover the windscreen by the London branch; as a precaution I also made covers for the headlights. On our return to Brussels the local BNRC manager told

of over 85 broken windscreens on just one train - children were thought to be the blame, throwing stones from a bridge. He also stated that the BNRC immediately paid out for the new screens - just like British Rail then!

One item of great interest was that a Dutch couple arrived with a brass radiator 1915 Model "T", on a trailer, that their family was then taking back to Holland. They were putting the T on the train to Bologna and then travelling back to Holland in it, camping on the way. A whole month was allowed for the return trip. He had fitted the two speed back axle so that he could cruise at 40mph!

This was Sandra's first journey on the Continent in an old car and as we left Calais the first car to overtake beeped his horn which was followed with "Has something fallen off?" She soon became used to waving her hand at almost each and every vehicle!

We arrived at Bologna at 0800hrs and two hours later the cars were unloaded-welcome to Italy!

Our friends met us in their TR2 and we drove off towards their home in Rovigo. At the first petrol stop we discovered that Esmeralda travels at 60/65mph when we thought she was doing 50! The Speedo has been added to the "winter" list. We stayed with our friends in Rovigo for three nights during which time we visited Venice and Verona. Tuesday saw us travelling down the coast road to Numana. Near Rimini we ran into a shower, but not enough to raise the hood and that was all the rain we had for 18 days. We arrived at our





*Esmeralda safely loaded onto the Motorail.*



*... and disembarking after the holiday.*





*The coastline near Ancona.*



*Sightseeing in Ancona.*





*Lunchtime!*



*Hazards in the middle of a Regularity Section on the Pyrenean Challenge, see pages 8 to 18.*





*Rob Betigole's H.C. 2 litre ready for action.*

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accommodation late in the afternoon and were pleasantly surprised by how nice it was. The accommodation was part of an old manor and had only been converted last year. We had superb panoramic views and the sunsets were just fantastic.

We spent most mornings driving round, visiting the local historic sites - Recanati, Loreto, Ancona, Osimo etc., all had very beautiful buildings, usually made from millions of hand made bricks. The afternoons were spent swimming and resting. The local restaurants were well used in the evenings!

Our friends joined us for the middle weekend and after an extra special meal on the Saturday night we drove back through the town centre to discover that the road was blocked with the locals "parading". Blowing the Klaxon seemed to make everyone smile and also open the crowd for us to drive through. They cheered and clapped as they parted for us to drive through, waving me on to drive faster!

The second week saw a heat wave with the shade temperature rising to 37° C and the sea temp at 27° C, Esmeralda nearly reached boiling point climbing into Osimo -1100ft above sea level - but enjoyed the return trip. She actually romped up most of the hills, if a run was available.

The Marche area of Italy will undoubtedly become as popular as Tuscany in the next few years - so go now! The area is absolutely full of beautiful historical towns and buildings and the local people are really welcoming.

Esmeralda was without doubt seen as a star by all the local people who

generally asked just two questions, how old was the car and had she been handed down to us.

On the Saturday, for the return to Bologna, the temperature rose to 41° C and we found that putting the hood up made the journey much more comfortable.

The train now had the air conditioning working for the return journey. When we went through Milan the temp displayed on a local bank was 37° C (98.6° F) at 9.30pm!

We arrived back in Belgium at 9am and within twenty minutes we were driving towards Calais. A stop for lunch in Verne still saw us on the 4pm ferry at Calais and home for 6.30pm.

Unfortunately France has increased the cost per kilometre travelled by the foreign trains by a factor of 4 or 5 from October 2003, consequently the German and Belgian Motor trains will cease running altogether through France from 23rd September 2003. The Dutch have stopped theirs already. This is a great shame as we found it a very relaxing and convenient way to travel to Italy.

Our conclusions were that travelling in Esmeralda is the best way to have a holiday and we got on just fine!

For those that like to know the details we managed 1600 miles in 19 days - Esmeralda was driven every day, 3 pints of oil were consumed - mainly leaked - in total, many pints of water were added - those hills! I don't know the mpg, but I do know that we managed about 100 miles per mile!

Where to next year? Watch this space!





# Targa Tunisia

## *Tony Mather takes his Invicta around the Sahara*

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED in competing in long rallies and normally use my Citroën DS 23, which is a nice, comfortable, although complicated, car. However, seeking a challenge, my wife Pauline and I decided to enter my 1930 4 ½ litre high chassis Invicta in the Targa Tunisia Rally, a 1500 mile competitive event around Tunisia. The rally was to start in Tunis in the North, then wind its way south to the Sahara Desert, before returning to Tunis. Some of the route would be on closed roads and timed to the second, so it obviously wasn't going to be a sedate tour!

Preparation of the car consisted simply of a thorough check and service and the fitting of air filters to the carbs, to cope with the expected dust in the desert.

Living in Northumberland meant a long trip to the channel, stopping overnight in Canterbury, crossing on the P & O Ferry to Calais and driving to Paris, to put the car on the train to Marseille. The car train is a double-deck carriage, but due to wind buffeting problems when entering tunnels, they will not allow convertibles on the upper deck. Unfortunately the Invicta was one inch too high to go on the lower deck with the hood up, so we quickly had to fashion a tonneau cover to protect the interior with the hood down. The train people were extremely helpful and allowed me to load the car on and off the train. Normally they like to do it. The snag is that you have to be at Marseille Station at 7.00 a.m. to unload the car. As Passengers are not allowed with the cars,

we travelled down in comfort on the T.G.V.

Driving in Marseille, I noticed an oil leak from the pressure gauge pipe. Tightening the connection snapped the pipe and I discovered that 1/4 inch copper pipe is not available in France, so I simply hammered the pipe shut and trusted that the oil pressure would stay at a healthy level. I then found that the brake light switch had burnt out; but at least I managed to get a suitable replacement from a local motorcycle dealer for £5.00.

In Marseille we met up with the other competitors on the rally, including a Bentley Continental and a Morgan Plus Four in our class, then boarded the overnight ferry to Tunis. In theory, the rally was to start in Tunis City centre with a start ramp, a film crew and to be waved off by the Mayor of Tunis. Well, the city centre and the film crew were there, but not the start ramp or the Mayor. This meant that we started about three hours late, so a large section of the route was, unexpectedly, in the dark. Thank goodness I had fitted my Marchall headlights, found in a Uruguayan scrapyard on a previous rally.

We very rapidly discovered that the roads in Tunisia are generally quite rough, particularly in the South and the rally route often went onto gravel and sand tracks. The driving standard in Tunisia is interesting, particularly on the very occasional stretches of dual carriageway, where traffic, especially motorbikes, drive in either direction. A good horn is essential. Fortunately the





*Not the usual scenery for our sort of rallying!*

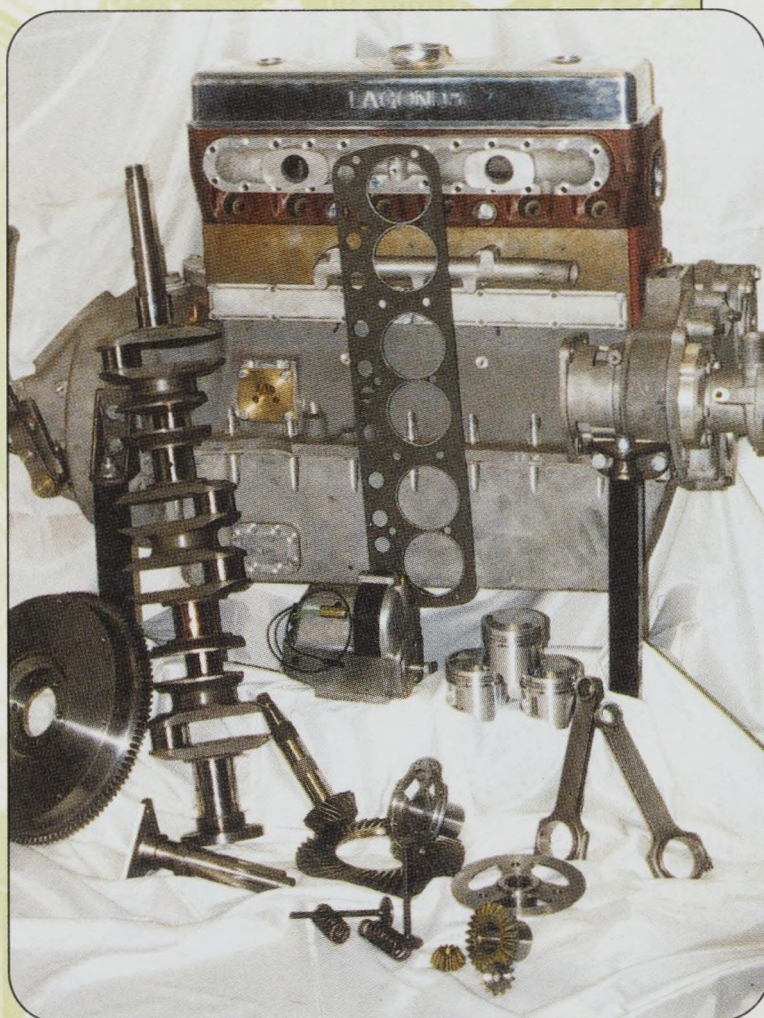




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police entered into the spirit of the rally and would pull in front of us at the city boundary, switch their lights and sirens on and blast through red lights and main road junctions at full speed, with us desperately trying to keep up. Great fun!

The Invicta was the oldest car in the rally by about 25 years so on most, but not all, stages we were the slowest; the high ground clearance helped on the rougher stages.

The route of the rally was from Tunis to Tabarka, then on to Kairouan, to stay at La Kasbah Hotel for a couple of nights. Excellent food was provided but, when asking for alcohol, patience was required, so the waiters obviously had to go through some complicated procedure. Tunisia is a dry country, so one could hardly complain.

By now we had discovered that not only were some of the stages a bit rough for the Invicta (although o.k. for the Citroën), but also the dust was a bit of a problem in places. Surprisingly, we were less affected by the dust than some of the more modern saloons. From Kairouan we travelled south to Tozeur, then on to Tatouine. At Tatouine, Pauline fancied buying a yashmak, so we haggled with the old man in the restaurant, feeling pleased with ourselves at getting the price down considerably. We later discovered on close inspection a label "Made in China". Typical tourists.

From Tatouine we had a rally stage out in the desert near the Star Wars film set. The road out to the stage was horrendous, with a washboard surface. It didn't seem to matter what speed we tried, it felt as though the Invicta was going to vibrate to pieces. In an attempt to find a smoother track I decided to go off piste; this was partially successful – the new route was much smoother – but on trying to regain the rally route we grounded on a sandbank. Fortunately we had packed a folding shovel and, in

temperatures of over 30° C, I eventually managed to dig the Invicta out.

Tunisia is a very dry country in both senses of the word, particularly in the South, where it reaches into the Sahara Desert. The scenery ranges from flat desert to mountains and in the South the people seem to subsist looking after half a dozen sheep at the roadside. The towns are lively, with colourful markets, where you are expected to haggle over the already reasonable prices. The Tunisian people are wonderfully friendly, particularly the children, who were allowed out of school to cheer the rally on.

In Tatouine, we called at a garage, where the chassis was cleaned and greased and the car washed while we waited, all for £7.00. Petrol was also cheap.

We then travelled from Tatouine back to Tunis via Kairouan. Once again, the Mayor didn't turn up for the rally finish, but at least the British Ambassador invited us all to his Embassy for a drinks reception.

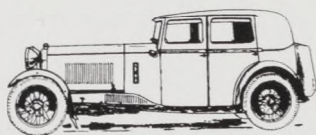
The Invicta proved to be extremely reliable on the rally, with no problems other than a broken rear light and a leaking shock absorber, which I simply kept topping up with oil. In spite of the high ambient temperatures and steep gradients, the Invicta never overheated. The brakes were excellent, never fading, even on the downhill regularities, but the paint on the drums did blister quite badly. On the Invicta I have retained the original Autovac system, without any pump and it worked perfectly throughout.

On the last competitive day of the rally, we gave tow of our fellow competitors, Roger and Mike Stevens (Lagonda owners), a lift back, as their Seat had blown its engine. Driving with four up didn't seem to affect the performance unduly and everyone seemed to enjoy it.



After ten days of competitive motoring, we set off for home once again, via the Marseille to Paris train, although we were greeted by frost in Paris. Pauline had on six layers of clothing and two blankets and was still cold, even with the roof up. We got back home after about

3,000 miles of fast motoring. We had used about two gallons of oil and had to top up the radiator with about a pint a day, due to a slightly tired and porous core. We had no punctures, but the rear tyres were looking sorry for themselves by the time we got to Northumberland.



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## Ambi-Sinistrous

*Ron Gee ponders on his pedals*

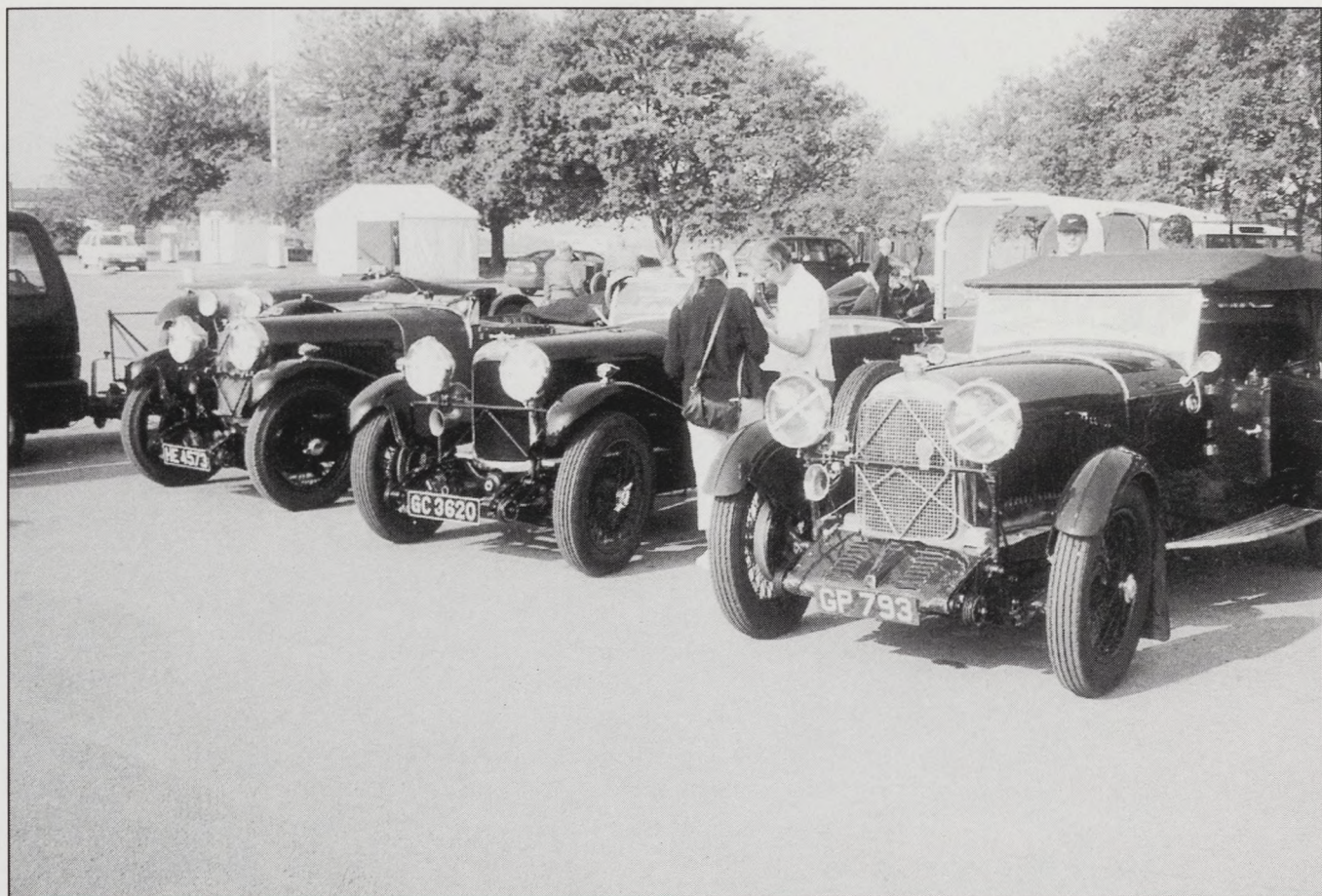
IF AMBIDEXTROUS MEANS the ability to use both hands with equal ability, then perhaps ambisinistrous could mean the ability to work a Lagonda's central throttle pedal with either feet. When I first acquired the 16/80, I used only the right foot for both the throttle and the brake pedals, and relied on youthful quick reactions, daring and luck to cope with London's traffic. As my reactions slowed with age and London's trams became more dense and cut-throat, so I have altered my driving technique. These days, once I am in top gear, I work the throttle with my left foot and keep the right foot on the brake pedal for instant response. This means that one no longer has to lift one's foot about three inches before pressing forward to actuate the brake. Thus response times must be about 0.2 seconds quicker.

In racing days, it was not impossible on Silverstone where the bends were

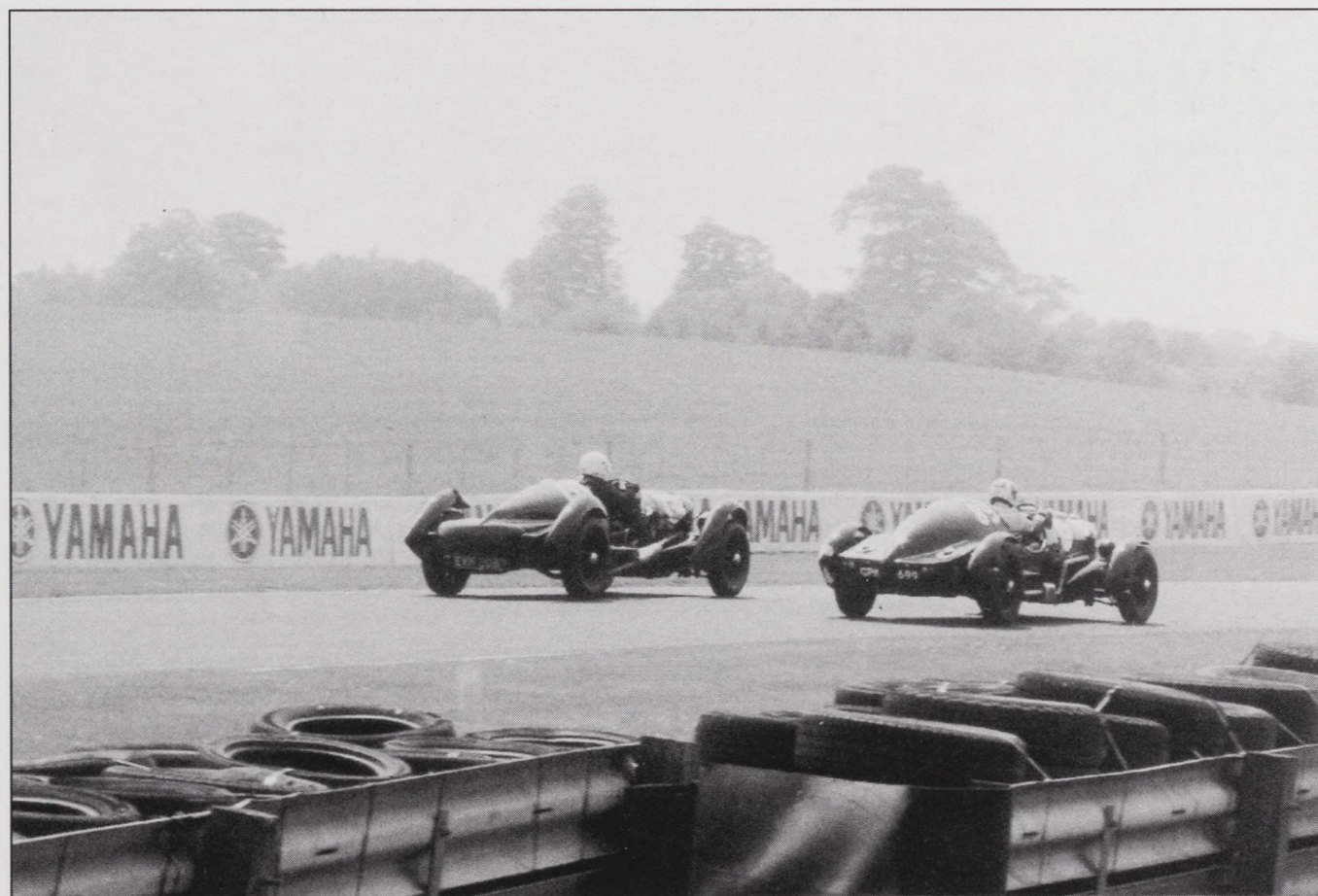
slower than Brands Hatch, to press the brake pedal hard and to simultaneously heel the throttle pedal, as the two were almost parallel under hard braking. The use of an Alvis box assisted in changing down as one entered a bend. I cannot emulate the racing abilities of Jean Behra and Sir Stirling Moss, but I once read in Motorsport that Jean Behra used to insist on a central throttle in his Maserati because, although he could drive cars with either layout, Stirling could only drive cars with a right throttle pedal. Thus Stirling could not take over Behra's car during a race.

Whether what I have suggested is good practice for everyone, is not certain. Trolleybuses only had two pedals, but London Transport always trained its drivers to drive with the right foot only. As far as petrol-engined buses went, the central throttle was certainly the case for a 1929 Leyland Titan.



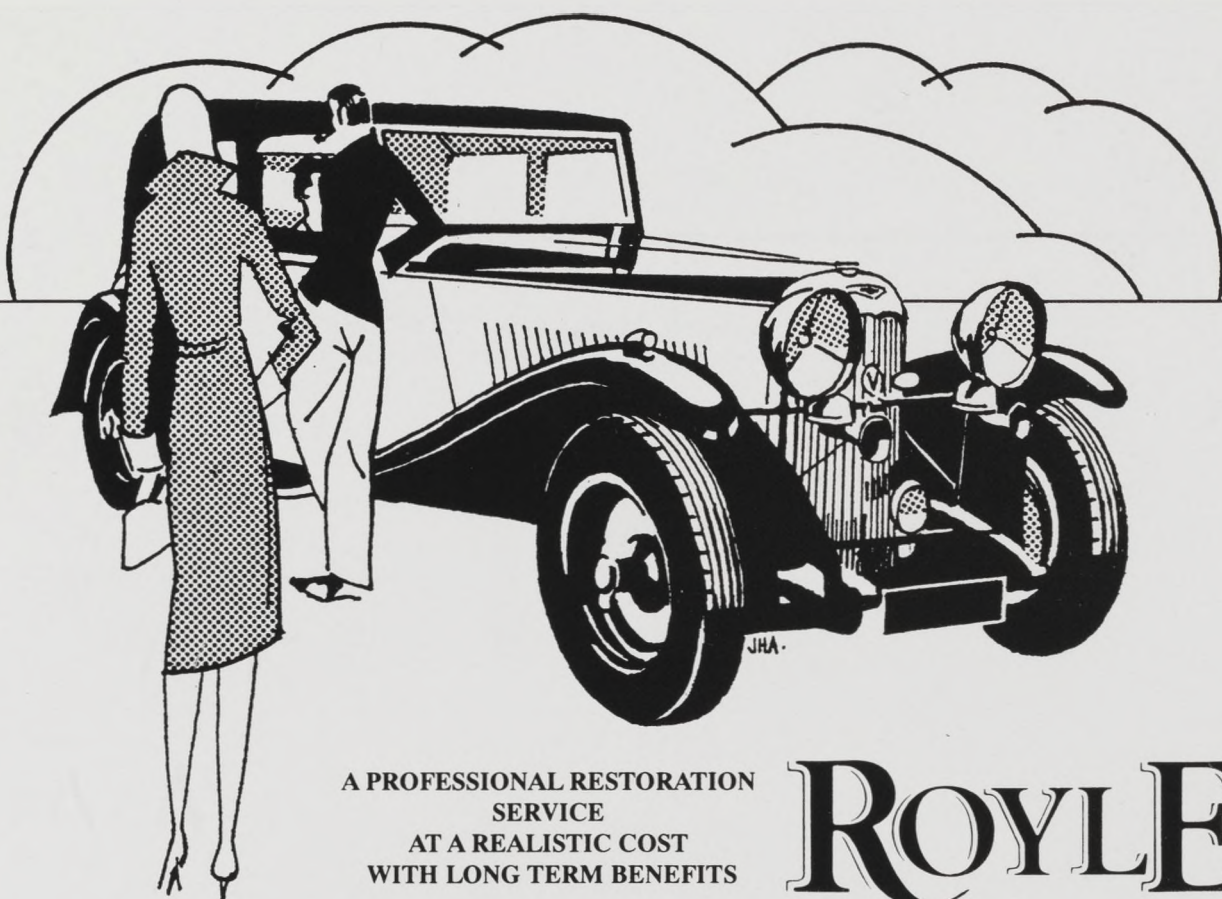


*Team 2 litre prepare for action at Oulton Park.*



*Alastair Barker and David Brock-Jest in their V12s at Oulton Park.*





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# Cars and Computers

AT A RECENT computer expo. Bill Gates reportedly compared the computer industry with the automobile industry, and stated: "If G.M. had kept up with technology like the computer industry has, we would all be driving 25 dollar cars that gave 1,000 miles to the gallon." In response to these comments G.M. issued the following press release;

"If G.M. had developed technology like Microsoft, we would all be driving cars with the following characteristics:

1. For no reason whatever your car would crash twice a day.
2. Every time they painted new lines on the road you would have to buy a new car
3. Occasionally your car would die on the freeway for no reason. You would have to close all the windows, shut off the car, restart it, and reopen all the windows. For some reason you would simply accept this.
4. Occasionally, executing a manoeuvre, such as a left turn would cause your car to shut down and refuse to start, In which case you would have to reinstall the engine.
5. The oil, water temperature and alternator warning lights would all be replaced by a single "this car has performed an illegal operation" warning light.
6. The airbag system would ask "Are you sure" before deploying
7. Occasionally your car would lock you out and refuse to let you in, until you had simultaneously lifted the door handle, turned the key, and grabbed hold of the radio antenna.
8. Every time a new car was introduced, buyers would have to learn how to drive all over again, because none of the controls would operate in the same manner as the old car.
9. Only one person at a time could travel in the car, unless you bought "car95" or "carNT". But then you would have to buy more seats
10. You would have to press "start" to turn the engine off.

This was submitted by Peter Towers, who found it in "Bridge". The publishers have given their permission for us to reprint it.







*"Not to factory specification", Paul Tebbett's "library shelf" bodied special, which caused much amusement at the VSCC Prescott Hill Climb and Mark Butterworth's "2-Twelve" about to start its climb.*







*Alan Brown welds Nick Hine's broken drive shaft in a pig farmer's workshop, en-route to Silverstone.*



*Nick Hine gets his hands dirty re-fitting it.*



# Lagonda M45 Adjustable Suspension

*The indefatigable Michael Drakeford sorts out his shockers*

MANY OF US TRY to get our cars back to the condition they would have been in when they were made. So I wonder why so many M45s do not have the adjustable suspension in working order.

When I bought AUL 720 some five years ago it was not working, and had not worked for over 30 years. I found the suspension working perfectly well relying on the existing static Hartford units. Whilst on the Champagne Rally I met members who said that the adjustable suspension made a lot of difference to the ride. To be honest, for normal everyday driving the difference is hardly noticeable if the static shock absorbers are set up correctly.

With an eye for originality I decided to set about getting the system to work. Also I cannot stand having dials on the dashboard that are dead. I was quoted around £1,000 for someone to do the job. As the system appears quite simple and with the impression that things could not get any worse than they were already I set about the restoration myself.

The Andre Hartford system is fairly simple. Liquid is pumped by the driver up to a pressure sufficient for rubber bags in the dampers at each wheel to create a resistance which tightens the damper. The only difficulty is ensuring that all ten operating units work. For front and back these comprise the pump, the adjuster, the two dampers and the gauge.

The location of these varies according to the age of the model. Being an early car AUL 720 has the adjusters to the right of the driver. In later cars they are mounted under the dashboard, either

side of the steering column. My theory is that the throw of the Meadows gear lever was greater than the earlier Lagonda box allowing the driver's hand to knock the adjuster when changing into reverse. At any rate that is what I found with mine, which had the gearbox altered in January 1934. If anyone has a car with the Lagonda gearbox I would like to try out my theory.

To help smooth progress through the gears (I must be joking), I moved the adjusters back two inches when I carried out the restoration.

My first job was to take off the ten units. The second was to make friends with Graham Brown of Vintage and Classic Shock Absorbers, South Croydon (Tel.0208 651 5347). He has probably the biggest stock of the parts needed for this restoration and offers much friendly guidance. How much you want to do yourself is up to you. I prefer to leave the tricky things to the experts and do the hard graft myself.

The dampers should present few problems. Their operation is simple but it is likely that the rubber has distorted. For £20 each Graham will dismantle the unit, sand blast and paint it and fit the rubber diaphragms which cost £32 each plus any other parts required at the cost of those parts. The rubbers are either square or round and should be ordered accordingly if you want to fit them yourself. The end of the arms may also need re-bushing. Not a difficult job with the right sized drift. The front dampers are easy to get at but those at the rear are pigs. Take the chassis bolts off rather



than try to work in the small dark space available. The best time to attack this job is when you have the axle out. Simply dropping it under the weight of the springs gives hardly enough space.

On rebuilding the dampers the friction discs should be carefully checked for wear. If they are too far gone, they should be replaced. If they are not renewed they should be soaked in oil and allowed to dry. Age usually demands replacement. On assembly a light smear of grease should be applied to the friction faces. The condition of the main pivot bats and bushes should be checked.

The pumps, or, more correctly, Telecontrol reservoir tanks, are located beneath the floorboards on the early cars. They are unlikely to get damaged, but they are a drag to reach should they require topping up or the pressure falls and they need pumping. On such occasions it is best to remove the floorboards. On later cars the tanks are sometimes located under the dashboard. A lot easier.

These instruments were originally made of tin or brass. Mine were tin. I found that on one the bracket that fits it to the bulkhead had come adrift. It might have been possible to solder it back but the metal had deteriorated and it may not have lasted long. The other pump had jammed and the non-return valve was not going to move as the ball bearing spring was broken. As it is essential that these units operate well I decided to buy new ones, made of brass, from Graham. Not cheap at about £100 each but well worthwhile. On painting they are virtually indistinguishable from the original.

The Adjusters required rebuilding. Over the years frustrated owners have vented their anger on them and the pressure domes had become broken and mis-shapen. The Regulator Diaphragms

were badly worn. Apart from that they were in fine shape. When refitting it is important to exclude the air in them. The best way to do this is to invert them and unscrew them half way. Using a syringe from your friendly doctor or dentist, inject the liquid through the hole at the bottom and then fit them the right way up. Immediately after this screw the adjuster down to ensure that the air in the piping does not find its way back into the adjuster's cavity.

The gauges on my car, to the experienced eye, are slightly different. Clearly at some time one was changed. One is certainly original being heavier with a greater proportion of brass. I cleared out the grime and washed the mechanism as best as I could with paraffin. However, they vibrate when the car is in progress. I assume that this is to match the speedometer and rev. counter, which tend to do much the same.

One has to consider the copper piping which runs the length of the car. Some may wish to force clean the pipes, which will probably be filled with a congealed grease-like substance. I chose to replace these entirely. I then knew that all is clean and sound. It also gave me the chance to replace the myriad of fittings with ones that match. Not modern plastic ones of course. Interestingly I noted that the piping that fitted into the rubber at the dampers end was silvered. The circular twist of the piping into the dampers allows for continuous movement and it is important that a pattern is obtained, remembering that each corner will be slightly different. Equally important is the need to get the right angle of 90 degrees from the coiled pipe into the rubber. If this is not exact it will leak. On two dampers I had to try repeatedly to get it right. This is self-sealing and there is nothing but the rubber to hold the liquid in.



For the concours minded members it is worth noting that the piping at the front still had the original BRG paint.

Finally, once the system is reassembled, the liquid must be prepared. This is a one third glycerine to two thirds water mixture. This provides for an antifreeze solution and appears to work. A modern antifreeze could be used but the liquid would not have the same viscosity of that described. This mixture, when left on the shelf, tends to grow a fungus and should not be re-used. I have no evidence that the same growth occurs within the piping.

I concentrated on one pump at a time. I filled the front one, again using the syringe. I pumped this to get pressure in the pipe, which showed on the gauge. At this time the adjuster was fully screwed down. I refilled the pump and pressurised it again. Then I unscrewed

the adjuster so that this would fill. I pumped and refilled again. Gradually the system filled and the pressure was maintained at around 100 lbs per square inch. It was then a matter of checking for leaks, tightening up and adjusting. After this the pressure was taken to 150 and left overnight to check for further leaks.

Once both front and back were apparently working I adjusted the static dampers to a lower setting. Without this the restored adjustable dampers would not be fully effective.

For normal running I find 120 about right. When the car is not in use I tend to drop the pressure. So there it was. Something else that works. Adjustable dampers are now being used in the new BMWs. I bet our system is easier to restore and at a total restoration cost of around £650 it is a darn sight cheaper on the Lagonda.



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# Jersey - Again!

## *Jo Moss has fun in the Channel Isles once more*

AFTER COMPETING IN the Jersey Old Motor Club's Festival of Motoring in June, Paul and I were encouraged to go back for the other major motoring event on the island - the Classic and Vintage Motor Racing Club of Jersey's Motoring Festival.

We had arranged to go to Jersey a few days before the start of the event and make a bit of a holiday of it, so we travelled on the Fast Craft from Poole on Monday 25th August. This gave us plenty of time to go and look at the sprint and hill climb venues in advance. The hill was pretty daunting - over three quarters of a mile long with a couple of sharp corners and lots of sweeping bends. A lot to learn if you did not want to end up getting over friendly with any of the stone walls or trees that flank each side of the road!

As we had arrived early we were invited to take part in a parade of competition vehicles to promote the event. We drove through the streets of St Helier and parked in the square so that people could get a preview of the coming weekend's sport.

The Motoring Festival started with a reception on Thursday evening, then on Friday the cars were scrutineered prior to the quarter mile sprint at St Ouens Bay. The sprint course was quite twisty, which made it interesting and the cars entered ranged from a 1930 Alfa Romeo to a 1976 Ford Escort, with a selection of motor bikes thrown in for good measure. RRM won its class and was fastest pre war car at the sprint. Paul was making

his competition debut at the sprint in his 1968 MGC GT, and he came 5th in class, running against Sunbeam Tigers, Austin Healey 3000's etc, so he did well. There was a BBQ on Friday evening with a lovely selection of food!

The hill climb took place on Saturday at Greve De Lecq, and you certainly needed your practise runs to try to familiarise yourself with the course - even after our sneak preview earlier in the week! RRM again won its class and was fastest pre-war car, also beating some of the older motor cycles, much to their surprise! The dinner in the evening was at the Royal Jersey Agricultural and Horticultural Halls at Trinity, and made a fine end to the competitive side of the event.

On Sunday the grounds of the RJA&HS head quarters were taken over by a wide and varied selection of cars and motor cycles, for the Classic and Vintage Motor Racing Club of Jersey's annual show. It always amazes us just how many beautiful vehicles are on the relatively small island, and what superb condition they are in. The display of motor cycles filled virtually the whole of the main hall in the HQ building, with more outside being demonstrated on a trials course.

We have thoroughly enjoyed both the motoring events that we have attended on Jersey this year and will definitely be going again. The nice atmosphere and friendly and enthusiastic people really make it a pleasure to go and compete there.



# Letters

Dear Mr Painter,

A very short letter! On Page 35 of the latest magazine, is the dressed up car really a Lagonda? It has the wrong number of wheel nuts. It has five and I am sure that all Lagondas of that time had only three. Incidentally, I have a few of the original brass domed wheel nuts if any owner is short. I also have a sound 11.1 / 11.9 exhaust manifold, sadly with nothing to attach it too!

Yours sincerely

**Alan Audsley**

*Is it possible that this could be the last known sighting of a "Russian" Lagonda?*  
K.P.P.

Dear Ken,

As one who has driven the equivalent of 77,000 times round Brooklands behind his 2 litre Crossley engine, I was fascinated to read of Brian Savill's modifications to his 16/80 engine.

Low oil pressure has caused me alarm over the years, but the tourer ran for many years at about 18 p.s.i. when hot at 2750 r.p.m.. Now the tourer runs at 40 -50 p.s.i. and the saloon at 20 -22 p.s.i., both using 15/50 oil. I have two theories for low oil pressure, assuming, naturally, that all is in order with the bearings. First, as Brian says, the oil pump must be in good condition. I have found that one of the gears tends to grind its way into the lid of the pump housing; a circular scour can easily be seen. Secondly, the big end assembly becomes

sloppy on very high mileage cars. The white metallised phosphor bronze "shells" become slack in the aluminium big end housing. A steel peg in the big end cap locates the shells, but the peg wears an elongated hole in the shell, allowing it to work, causing excessive wear through which much oil may freely flow. Both my Crossleys now have directly white metallised steel rods.

Turning now to the top of the engine. Brian is right that copious amounts of oil flood the rocker box. However the lubrication of the camshaft, cam followers, etc. depend on this somewhat haphazard cascade of hot oil, so I'm quite happy to have it as originally intended. Slight snags are that I suspect so much oil flowing over a hot cylinder head raises the oil temperature and lowers the pressure - and it's almost impossible to keep the polished aluminium cambox cover oil tight!

Both my Crossleys' lubrication systems are standard. Because the oil filter is so basic I change the oil as soon as it starts looking nasty, which is about every 1000 miles, using the cheaper oils, but not the cheapest. I admire all that Brian has done to his 16/80 engine, but I have great faith in Mr Crossley's designs. After all, he has been producing engines since about 1876 and, indeed, still does - thumping great V16s of 24,000 h.p..

Much of the design of the 2 litre Crossley engine is basic, but is not simple engineering good engineering?

With Best wishes

**Stephen Weld**



Dear Ken

It's the time of year to organise another Suffolk Dinner for the Lagonda Club and the Rapier Register! The White Lion's prices shot up last year, but this year they have stayed stable, so it has been straightforward to sort out something sensible for 2004 and the dinner will remain at Aldeburgh

As in every December, we ponder on whether to visit the VSCC's Cambridge Area's meeting on New Year's Day for a change. As always they seem to be in turmoil, changing from one unsatisfactory pub to another one, which in turn they won't decide they won't like until they've tried it. So, we'll probably follow tradition and come to the Scole Inn again.

Recently we put our old Rapier Abbott Fixed Head Coupé back on the road, after almost a decade's sojourn unused in a corner of the shed. It was languishing with a choked radiator core, which had made it necessary to tip the contents of the one-gallon overflow can back into the filler cap every ten miles. New cores are costly, but the much cheaper solution of Fernox DS-3 has succeeded 100% in restoring things to A1 condition, improving the flow unbelievably. Next job is to re-fit the heater, which I removed in about 1972 because it refused to function. In my youth I did not understand, but now I know that if I plumb its return pipe down to the water pump inlet, rather than to the radiator header tank, all should be well. Maybe New Year's Day will be a test run for it!

Happy motoring!

Yours sincerely

**Mike Pilgrim**

*This trick with Fernox sounded interesting, so I asked Mike for more details. It is available in several grades from builders' merchants. DS-3 should*

*not be used where there are aluminium parts and Mike put it in the radiator only. There is another grade that can remove iron scale as well, ideal for 4 1/2 litre engines. Mike promises a fuller account for the next magazine, so watch this space. K.P.P.*

Dear Ken,

This picture came my way recently. CLO 549 (chassis number not known) was the Lagonda Press Car in 1936. This picture, taken at the top of Brooklands Test Hill, was meant to accompany the article "Lagonda 4½ litre at 16,000 Miles", which appeared in "The Motor" of 20th December 1936, but was not used.

Yours,

**Arnold Davey**

Dear Ken,

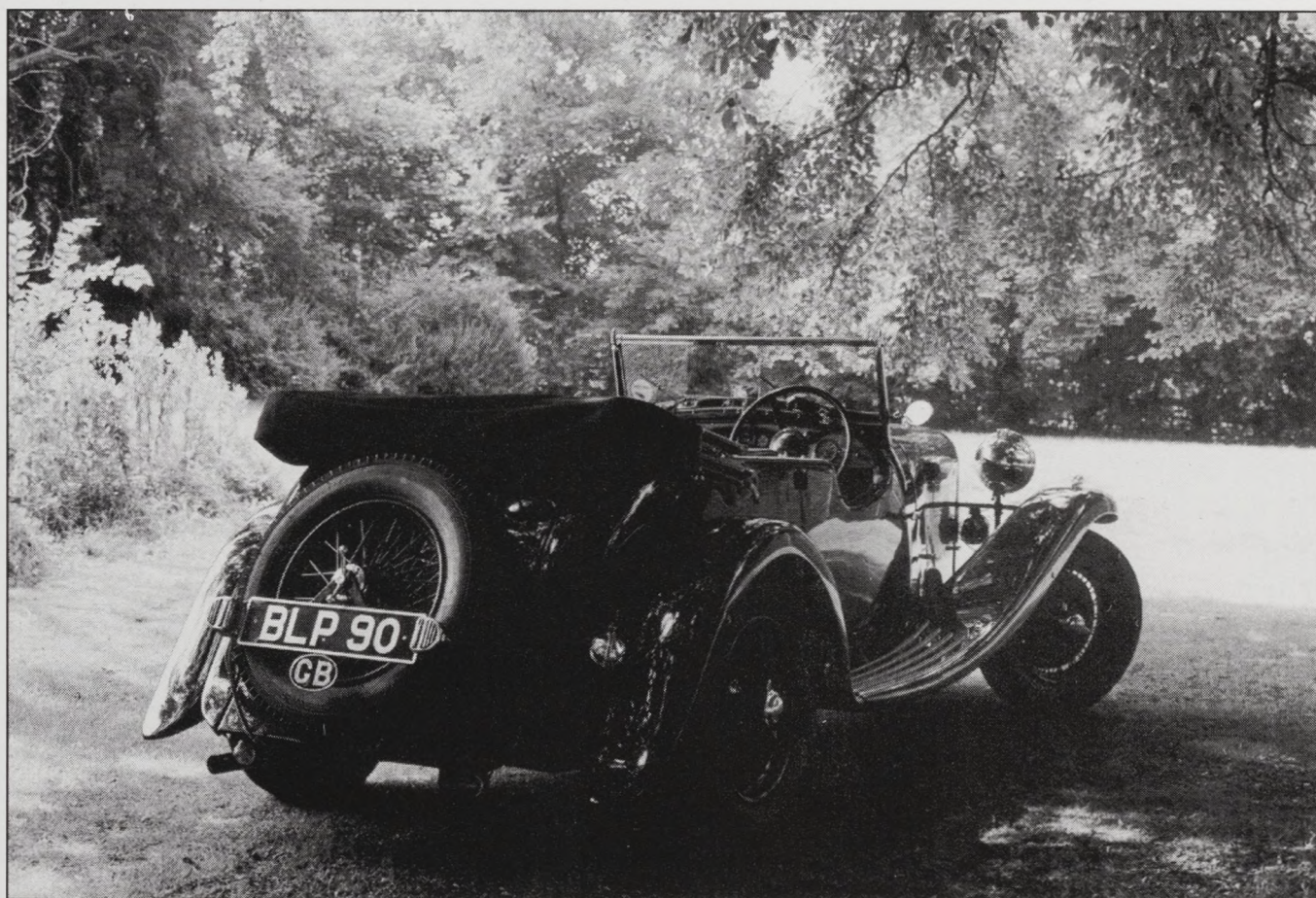
I was highly amused to be awarded the 2003 Expensive Noises Trophy, and would like to thank the Committee for their tongue-in-cheek sympathy and the splendid tankard. I have worked tirelessly towards my T8-bodied 16/80 gaining this much-coveted accolade, and indeed could very nearly have been awarded it twice over this year in rather spectacular fashion!

The reason that the trophy was originally awarded is a timely reminder to anyone rebuilding an engine to have a real expert check the rebuild during progress. It wasn't noticed in mine that during the re-whitemetalling of the crankshaft main bearings, the circumferential groove that ensures a constant oil flow into the crankshaft drillings that supply the big ends had been obliterated. The result was an intermittent oil flow which lasted 3000 miles, the last of which were responsible for tangibly reviving Anglo-French





*See Arnold Davey's letter opposite.*



*Laurence Drake's 16/80, parked under 'that tree', all is revealed over the page!*



relations during a tour of Normandy (i.e. the French adored her in their usually generous and demonstrative way!), before returning to Old Blighty and promptly - and noisily expiring on the A3. In the dark.

Fortunately, the engine (a sanction II) has now been rebuilt by my good friend and 16/80 guru, Brian "Savvy" Savill, including modifications as detailed in his splendid recent article, and she now boasts magnificent oil pressure, full-flow oil filter, Phoenix conrods, etc.

Thus rebuilt, BLP 90 then narrowly avoided a further catastrophe of cartoonish proportions. In July she

conveyed a beautiful bride to the church, and throughout the service was parked under a magnificent beech tree just outside. After the wedding she rather disgraced herself by deliberately trying to upstage the bride and drawing everyone's attention to her own beautiful curves.

That very night, despite not a breath of wind, a huge bough from the beech, weakened by honey fungus, came crashing down onto the exact spot where the Lagonda had been parked outside the church. Divine retribution, perhaps?

Kind regards,

Laurence Drake

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*Murray Smith's Invicta "Speedy" and Richard Lisman's Lagonda EPE 97  
after the Ards TT*

These historic works cars were previous entries in the Ards TT in the 1930's and we have the pleasure of looking after both of them. On behalf of the owners, Clive Doyle and I were invited to enter and drive them in this year's retrospective event. Both cars were driven there, performed impeccably and we were able to fully explore the capabilities of their 200 BHP engines in friendly competition!

It may appear that we only restore Invictas, but we have six Lagondas in the workshop at present, one V12 Rapide, two M45's, an LG45 and a brace of 2 litres as well as an SS100, a Vulcan, a 1927 Rover, a High Chassis NLC Invicta and two different S type Invictas from last time!

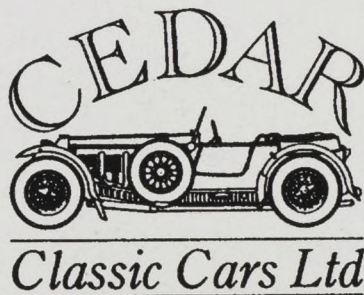
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