



**THE MAGAZINE OF THE
LAGONDA CLUB**

Number 204

Spring 2005

—DAVID AYRE—



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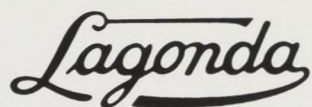
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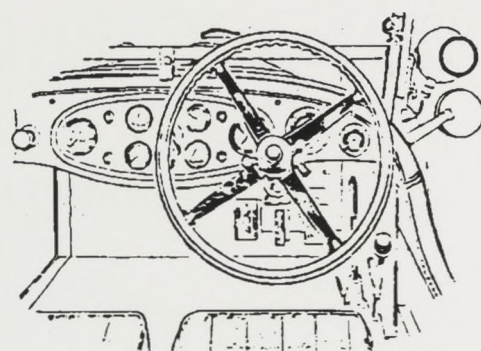
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From the Driving Seat

by Ken Painter



NOW THAT ALAN BROWN'S knees have been fully aired in the 'letters' section, can we please move on to other subjects? The original letter was intended as a gentle critique of Editorial practice and not an attack on the fun and games enjoyed by so many at the Northern Dinner. It is not Editorial practice to censor letters written by members, too few of you ever write anyway and I don't want to inhibit the few who do! Comments and criticism are always welcomed, but please aim these at the Editor and not at the magazine contributors. It would be arrogant to suggest that I always get the balance or tone right and I assure you that I am not going to resign in a huff if someone objects to an item in a magazine. This is, after all, your magazine and should reflect your views and tastes. I strive for an overall balance between models and try to aim for a mix of technical, historic, competition, anecdotal and even humorous material, but I collate and present the articles, I don't write them. If your favourite issue is not discussed in these pages it is up to you to do something about it – and do it soon, as the stock of unpublished articles is rapidly dwindling!

An ever increasing amount of articles and pictures is now sent to me by email and this is very welcome. Those of you who have a "word recognition" program in your computer will know that they are nothing like as good as they

claim to be. I have one of the better programs but the subsequent editing of the scanned text can be nearly as time consuming as retyping it in its entirety! If you are sending pictures electronically, please send them measuring 125 mm wide and at 300 dpi. If you are still unsure of what is needed, then a phone call – or even an emailed enquiry - will usually resolve any problems. Potential front cover pictures need to be 148 mm wide and 211 mm tall as a minimum. They also need to have an area of the picture that can be overprinted with the magazine logo and title without ruining the picture itself. The good news is that it is rarely necessary to back up emailed text with a copy sent by snail mail. If I have problems with your text I will contact you very quickly. For those who still rely on the typewriter or even a pen, your contribution will be equally welcome, just so long as I can read your handwriting.

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M45 top-end clatter or rattles?

That man Drakeford gets all oily again

THE MEADOWS ENGINE is not the quietest of beasts. Indeed I have often sought comfort from the sound of the motors belonging to other members that mine is no different from the norm.

Having had a top end overhaul on AUL 720 just 700 miles previously, I was surprised about the amount of rattle, indeed clatter from the tappets when on the Discovering Dartmoor 2002 rally in Devon. On arrival at home in Guildford I removed the rocker cover to discover that two of the rockers where they hit the thimble on top of the valve, were quite dry. Indeed there were metal shavings on the thimbles to show for their trouble. How could this be when I had checked and adjusted the valve clearances before I left for Devon on the rally? They now measured 12 thou' but the nuts were still tight.

Rather than entrust the problem to others on this occasion, I decided to go on a journey of exploration myself. Lubrication to the overhead valve gear is obtained by forcing the oil from the relief valve through a horizontal pipe at the top of the rockers through three banjo fittings to the hollow rocker shafts. Each rocker receives the oil through a hole in one of the three shafts into a canal scraped in the bronze bush. The oil is then directed through a small passage onto the top of the pushrod. Thus the rocker bushes and shafts are oiled as too are the pushrods. The remainder of the gear is oiled by the general spray within the rocker cover.

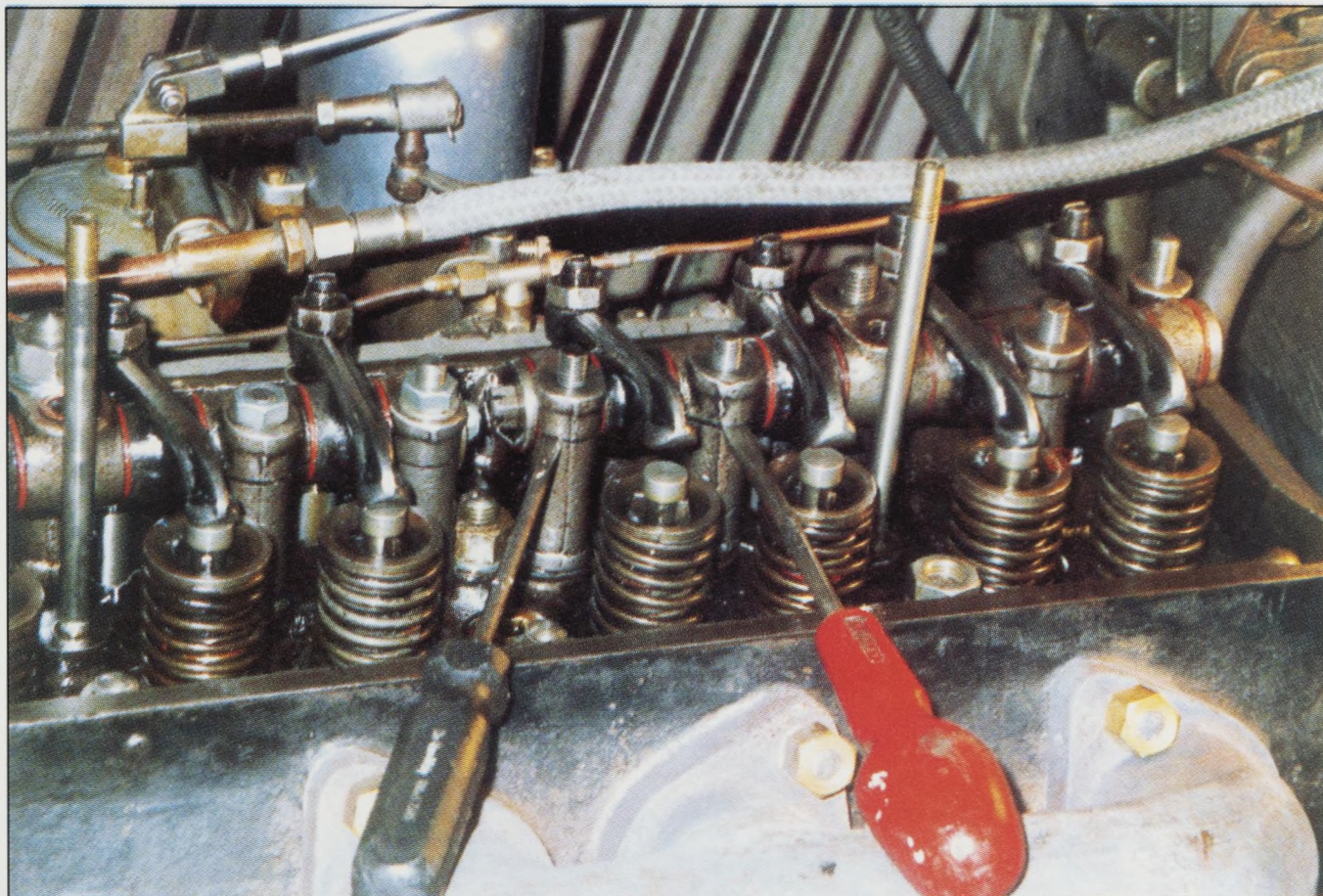
First off came the oil flow tubing. Not a problem surely. Blowing down the pipe was easier in the first section than the last two. Sludge was doing its best to stop a fair flow. Also I noticed that the smaller banjo hole, as described in the manual was not at the first port where it

should restrict the flow to the first section, but it was in the middle. This could have been because the central shaft was nearly new and the intention had been to force more oil to the worn outer shafts.

Next was the turn of the rocker shafts. Getting these off the head was no mean feat. The manual says a small tommy bar should be used to prize them up. I found a crow bar more appropriate. To be fair to AUL 720 those shafts numbered 1 and 2 came off comparatively easily, but number three was a real effort.

I recalled that the chap who did the top end overhaul last year after the head gasket blew, mentioned that one of the main studs was crooked in the block. The consequence was that this impacted the sitting of the final rocker shaft. When it eventually came off I could see the numerous hammer marks where some rough mechanic long ago had vented his spleen on the old girl. On the other hand it might have been a frustrated owner. There is, in fact, an easier way of getting off a sticking shaft. I discovered this after a worried sleep thinking about the damage I might do when getting the thing back together. At the side of the pedestals through which the shaft passes there is a split, which allows the tightening of the bolt to grip the said shaft at a particular angle, which is required to allow the oil to flow through the various holes to the rocker bushes. If you prise these open slightly using small screwdrivers, the tension found along the shaft is removed and most of the removing and fitting problems reduce to zero.

It is a pity that I only discovered this after I had struggled with the refitting of



Screwdrivers used to remove or replace the rocker shafts.



Thimbles of all shapes and sizes, many worn.



Up to six thou wear on the rocker shafts!



Bent pushrods.

the first two shafts. For these I had to align the holes exactly to fit the shaft and the studs. Quite a chore.

Back to the rocker shafts. These were indeed worn quite badly with up to six thou. carved out. Also the holes were smaller than on the new shafts, which I obtained from the Club Spares. By the marks on the shaft one can see if the oil was reaching the bushes in the rocker. Surprisingly the wear appeared to be mainly on the shaft rather than the bushes. However it is worth ensuring that the small passages, which enable oil to spray from the bush to the top of the push rod are clear. Mine were clear, however I noticed that one of the bushes did not have the canal through which the oil travels to the said hole. Thus little oil could have been getting through. The answer to this was to obtain a new bush, or use a Dremel grinding wheel tool to make a groove. I had to grind down the wheel on a sand stone to make the wheel small enough to do the job.

The rockers, where they hit the thimble, are hardened and should remain true. Mine were reasonable but a few needed a small amount of flattening on a flat stone. It was appreciated that these would need re-hardening if they needed too much attention.

What more could be wrong? Looking at the thimbles that sit on the top of the valves these appeared to be a variety of sizes. More worrying than that, there were significant indentations on over half of them. Thus tappet adjustment would vary depending on which way these blighters were facing. Another call to Alan Hancock at Club Spares.

Well that is about it. Better check the push rods for size. If they are different there could be an impact on the rocker movement leading to uneven running. They were the same size, BUT four of the ten were as straight as the proverbial dog's hind leg. Again depending on the way these were facing depended the result of adjusting the tappets.

Surely there can be nothing further. Only when you try to put the jigsaw back

together does one appreciate just why you spend so much money on the professional mechanics. I attempted to put things back in the order that I found them. Using common sense and a few of my engineering measuring tools, it became clear that for each of the three shafts there were four different shaped rockers. This is because of the off-set cylinders. By trial and error can they be made to sit on the thimbles correctly. Previously mine had clearly not. I am dying to lift the rocker cover of a few M45s and see if mine was uniquely wrong.

On putting back the rockers on the new shafts it will be necessary to grind down the new shaft to fit. If you have a 5/8" chuck this will provide a platform. I have not and with only a half inch one it meant I had to manually smooth the shaft with emery cloth. Probably not very accurate but the rockers must have enough clearance to run freely when they heat up. I made sure that mine could spin without difficulty.

The manual mentions the existence in some instances of washers between the two cylinder head nuts, which also hold the two extreme pedestals, and the pedestals themselves. Mine did not have these washers. Nevertheless before fitting the pedestals I wrapped a little PTFE tape around each of the pedestal studs to help stop oil being sucked through the manifolds and into the cylinders. This may prevent the three far plugs oiling where I have the bent stud.

I also needed new fibre washers, which fit either side of each rocker. Care needed to be taken when refitting the pedestals and the rockers with the washers. These should be a fairly tight fit in order to retain some oil on the shaft and indeed to some extent the pressure in the oil canals. However when the shaft goes back on there will be slight shifting along the shaft as the stands seek their position in line with the studs and free movement may be taken up and at other positions gaps may arise. Hence there will be a need to make adjustments using

both new and old washers particularly if the rockers have lateral wear. My troublesome third shaft with the crooked main stud is a case in point.

With much trial and error, all three shafts were refitted. The way of making this easier by opening the splits is described above. I made sure that the hole for the banjo fitting was still central and that the rocker shaft had not slipped. This is unlikely due to the grooves present for the pedestal studs, but you

never know!

After running the engine I rechecked the tappet clearances and also that I could see a good quantity of oil at the top of the pushrods. All was well.

I now feel more confident that the setting of the valve clearances will be more successful and less bother. As for the tappet noise it is less of a clatter, more of a subdued rattle, just as it should be on a Meadows engine....

Members' Tips

Having difficulty filling the reservoir for your telecontrols with the water/glycerine mix? Easy, buy a syringe from your chemist for a few pence. You will be asked what it is for, I say it is to fill woodworm holes in my old car (it works for that too!). You will need a needle, but not the sharp type. The syringe can also be used to fill difficult deep holes with filler, but you will have to work fast. M.D.

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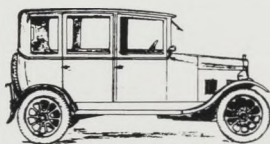
THE IDEA OF setting up the trust followed an alarming lecture at the 2003 AGM of the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs. The speaker was Dr Jacqueline Bickerstaff, who runs the spares operation of the Vincent HRD Owners Club. She was pointing out the risks clubs run, especially if they make and sell replacement parts. In today's compensation culture, an unincorporated club risks its members being sued for every penny the members possess, if lawyers invoke the pernicious 'jointly and severally' wording. Sensible clubs turn themselves, as we have done, into companies limited by guarantee, which protects the officers and members against these predators.

But what the company status doesn't do, Dr Bickerstaff pointed out, is protect the club's assets. A successful litigant could win control of the archives held in the club's name or, in the case of some of the more affluent clubs, their headquarters building. For this reason, the Bentley Drivers Club and the Aston Martin Owners Club have both set up charitable trusts to hold the archives and to act as freeholder of their buildings. We have no such building, but the value of our archives is nowadays very considerable. Not that long ago, a single typed letter signed by W.O. Bentley, of no great significance, sold at auction for a four figure sum. We hold a trunkful of Bentley souvenirs, given to us by Margaret Bentley when W.O. died.

With this in mind, the board agreed we should follow suit and set up the Lagonda Club Heritage Trust to protect our archives. This has been done and the Trust Deed was signed early in 2004. I was able to borrow a copy of the AMOC trust deed and adapt it to our needs. There are five Trustees, all members of the Board, so that the club will not lose control. This also has the advantage that Trustee meetings can coincide with Board meetings. The Trustees are Brian Savill, Michael Drakeford, John Stoneman, Ken Painter and Arnold Davey.

The next step will be to gain Registered Charity status. At this point Catch 22 appears. The Charity Commission requires details of the Trust's bank account. But the bank won't start an account until the charity is registered. We are working on this, but the trust is in being anyway from the date of signing the trust deed and the Board agreeing to transfer the archives to it. As we have no landed property, the running costs of the trust should be minimal, confined to filing requisites, with a possibility of buying memorabilia that comes on the market.

You never know, it is possible some millionaire bachelor member may leave us a property to make into a headquarters, so we have left in the trust deed all the property clauses, even though they are unnecessary at present.



The Competition Year 2004

Tim Wadsworth reviews last year's activities

AFTER A STUNNING 1-2 victory in the Pre War Sports Car Team Challenge in 2003 we rather faded this year and allowed the Bentley Teams to take top spot. There were however some excellent individual performances and we will be back in 2005. Our most active and highly successful competitor Mark Butterworth, who has won the Fox and Nicholl Trophy for the past two years, sporting declined any awards this year and did not submit his results, which left the way open for David Brock-Jest to take the Fox and Nicholl by a mile as well as the Bentley Trophy for his 2nd place at the BDC meeting and the Gaber Trophy for the best performance with a V12. The committee awarded the Michael Trophy to Tim Wadsworth who was the leading driver in the Team Challenge (on handicap) and won the last race at Donington. Also doing well at Donington was Peter Golding completing his first full season who gets the Bellini Trophy as the best newcomer.

Lagondas have been prominent in events abroad. Particularly noteworthy were our four entries in the Le Mans Classic, Colin Bugler achieving an excellent 10th place, Mark Butterworth 16th after some engine problems, but sadly Florian Brant and Nick Hine failed to finish, the latter getting the Expensive Noises Trophy as a result of his disastrous blow up. In addition Alan Brown, Duncan Arthurs, David Brock-Jest, Roy Williams, Richard Reay-Smith, Richard Campbell and others have all waved the flag for Lagonda in overseas competition. Duncan wins the Invicta

Trophy and Richard Campbell is to be congratulated on a first place in the novice section of the Tulip Club Rally. Lagondas were very much in evidence at the Jersey Festival of Motoring Nick Hine comprehensively winning the 4.5 litre class with Richard Campbell and Jo Moss in her Invicta, also competing.

Rapier drivers were out in force, Tim Metcalfe narrowly winning the Crocker Trophy from Peter Blenk, and his wife Jane adding to the family silverware with the Ladies Trophy. Jonathan Elliott, Ben Fidler and David Fletcher-Jones also all did well, the last named winning the VSCC Spero Trophy at Cadwell Park.

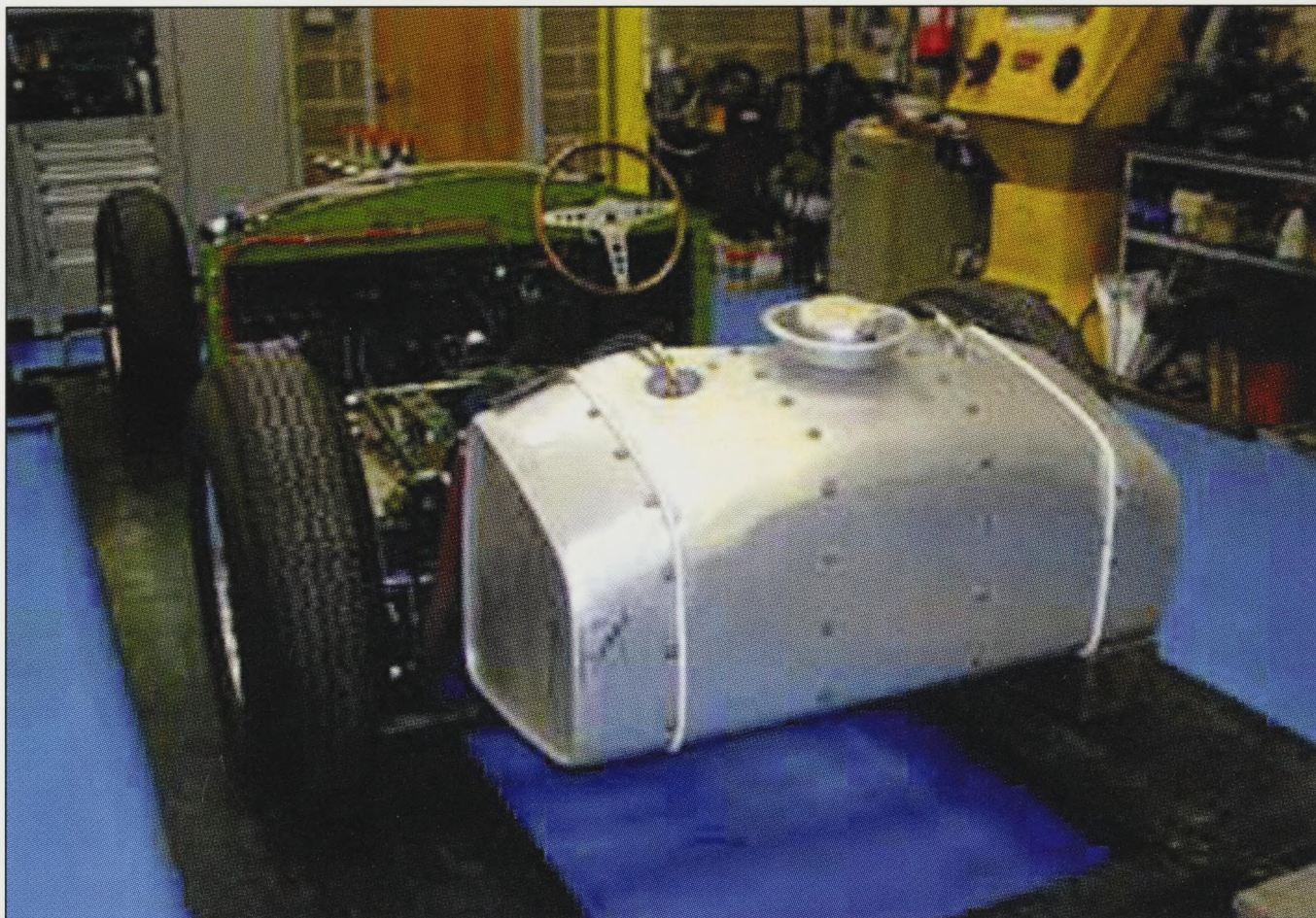
Our ever enthusiastic photographer Tim Gresty has been seen out and about frequently in his 2 litre and deservedly gets the Densham Trophy. Tim Jones in the family 2 litre took first place in the Wessex Rally collecting the Allison Trophy and smart work with his pen earned Jonathon Oppenheimer the Gostling Trophy for his article on the V12 rebuild. In recognition of his sterling work in past years the ex Competition Secretary Nick Hine receives the discretionary award of the Committee Trophy.

The Car Club Cup was presented at the AGM to Eckhard Fabricius who had brought his wonderful V12 drophead over from Germany, Robin Wodehouse collected the Seaton Trophy for the best maintained and used Lagonda and, with a nifty bit of driving, Andrew Rothwell took away the Vokes Trophy by winning the driving tests.



Two pictures of the V12 AM Lagonda being restored in Suffolk.





That is some fuel tank! The dashboard will be simple but very efficient.



The French Sports Car Revolution

Brian Cook suggests some interesting reading

OBVIOUSLY SOME MISTAKE? Why is there an item about French sports cars in this magazine? Lagonda Club members are surely thinking this year about the Lagonda victory at Le Mans in 1935 and I should like to recommend a book which gives an outstanding account of the sports car racing scene in the Thirties, including a lot of Lagonda information. It is called 'The French Sports Car Revolution: Bugatti, Delage, Delahaye and Talbot in Competition 1934-39'. The author was the late Anthony Blight who died in 1990 when he had completed about three quarters of the text and all of his research notes. The book was completed by his widow Mrs. Mary Blight and his son in law Stephen Curtis with his chosen editor Robin Read and the result was published by Haynes in 1996.

Some members will know Anthony Blight's earlier book 'George Roesch and the Invincible Talbots' published in 1970, a fine book far above the standard of most motoring literature. His book on the French sports cars of the Thirties is even finer. It is not simply a description of the cars; he sets the scene by describing the political and industrial setting in France and surrounding countries. He sets out how the various sets of racing regulations were made for French racing to encourage French manufacturers to develop new cars in very adverse commercial conditions. He describes the development of each of the makes, relatively poorly known in Britain except for Bugatti. The amount of detail about the history of each marque is amazing, not simply on technical matters but information about the personalities involved in the design and finance. All of the firms were in dire financial straits

throughout so they had that in common with Lagonda. It was new to me to learn that there was significant British influence in the financing of Delage and Talbot and of course Hotchkiss had an English Managing Director, H.M. Ainsworth. The remarkable American lady Lucy O'Reilly Schell financed the Delahaye competition programme which could not have happened without her money. Blight even explains the financial basis of the Sunbeam-Talbot-Darracq combine but this seems much more complex than the Schleswig-Holstein question so I pass on quickly.

Accounts of the principal races of the period are in great detail; it is hard to believe that the writer was not present because the accounts are so vivid with descriptions of the personalities of the drivers. In fact Anthony Blight was only thirteen in 1939 and so the material has all come from meticulous research. He explains why the 1936 Le Mans race had to be cancelled because of the industrial and political turmoil in France.

There are many references to Lagonda throughout the book. On the technical side, he contrasts the progressive design of firms such as Delahaye with their type 135 cars, light and with independent front suspension, with the ponderous Lagonda M45. He is much more complimentary about the Lagonda V12 at Le Mans. The racing accounts give as much detail of the racing exploits of the Lagonda team as of the French teams and the accounts seem fair, including the oft-told story of the Lagonda victory at Le Mans because of the mis-counting of laps that led to the premature slowing of the Alfa Romeo which should have won. There is also a very full account of the RAC Ulster

Tourist Trophy.

The book is packed with information new to me on many things. For example, I knew that the first car made by BMW in 1928 was an Austin Seven built under licence. Blight explains how the Austin cylinder block was turned to the opposite hand to make room for the steering column on the left, then the engine was enlarged from 747cc to 782 cc, the maximum allowed within the German 3 HP tax band, then converted rather awkwardly to overhead valves, then made into a six cylinder by essentially adding on two more cylinders of the same size and finally in 1936 converted to the familiar pre-war BMW engine with cross pushrods to operate the exhaust valves. Of course no element of Austin Seven remained but it is remarkable that the post-war Bristol engine had an evolutionary ancestor in

the Austin Seven. I have greatly simplified this story told over several pages but it is just one of very many in the book.

I will end with just one quotation, the opening paragraph of Anthony Blight's Introduction.

'This book is about the remarkable revival of the sports racing car in the second half of the 1930's, and the dazzling finale which it staged to 20 of the finest years in motor sport: like the condemned man's hearty breakfast, a farewell consolation – perhaps a benediction – before a bewildered Europe was plunged into a global war for the second time in a generation.'

The book was published by Haynes Publishing under the G.T.Foulis & Co. imprint at £95. The ISBN number is 0 85429 944 0. I believe that it is now out of print but find it if you can.



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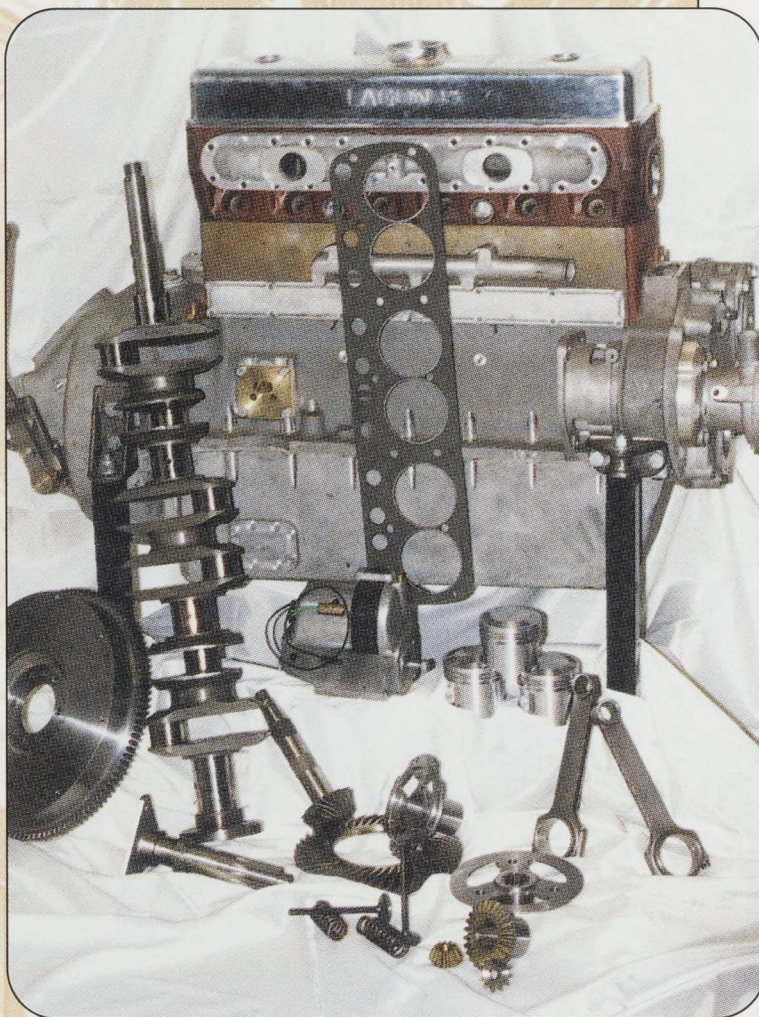
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Christopher Magawly's Eagle 2 seater Rapier. He drives it from Unkel, near Bonn to the Suffolk Dinner most years.

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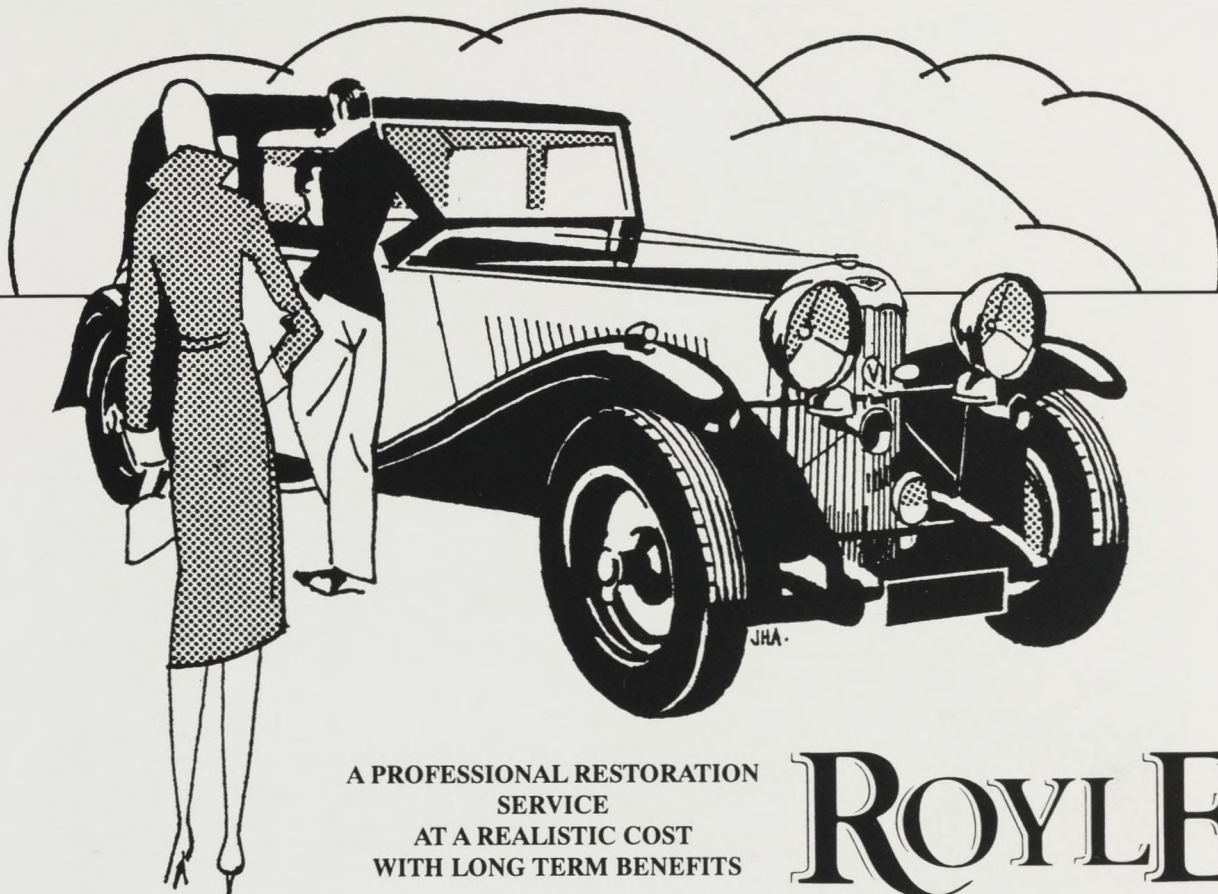
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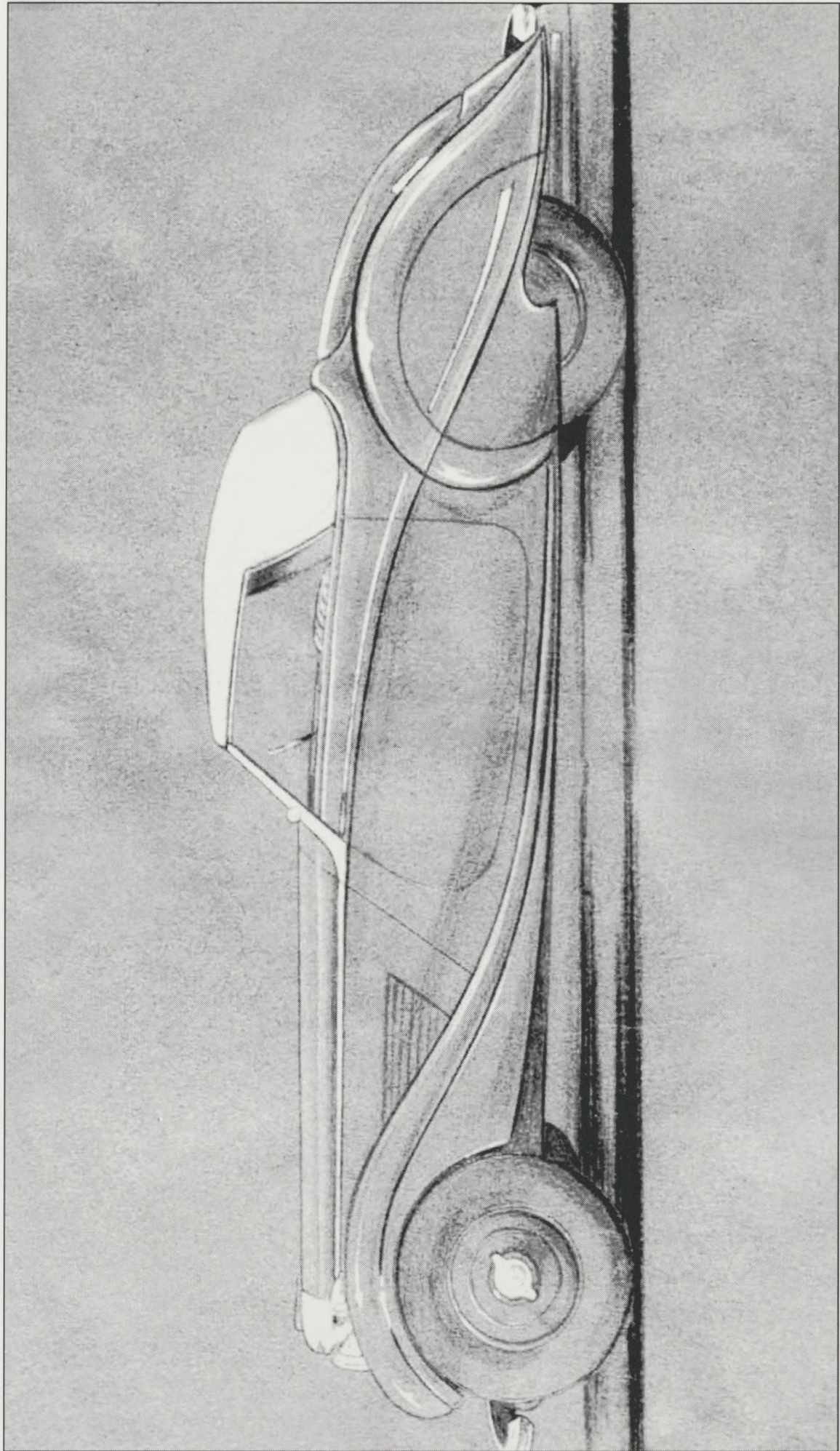
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Frank and Bob

Arnold Davey reveals a secret

YOU PROBABLY SAW the obituary in the VSCC Bulletin of Bob Newell, one of our "Old Lags", who worked in the drawing office at Staines in the W.O.Bentley era. Bob's passing reminds me that the story of how I came to possess probably the only original Frank Feeley body drawing that is outside the family archives, has never been told.

It dates back to the period when Dick Watney was trying to inject a note of sportiness into what he regarded as a too sober V12/LG6 range, rather as he had in the LG45 era by introducing the LG45 Rapide. He sold the board on the idea of a V12 Rapide and Frank Feeley was charged with the design of the body, naturally. Eventually the day came when Charles Sewell would offer the chassis ideas and Frank Feeley his bodywork proposal. For some reason, the board rejected the bodywork and the only departure allowed on the chassis side was that the car must make more noise.

Bob was working in the drawing office when Frank returned after the meeting in a foul temper, screwed up his

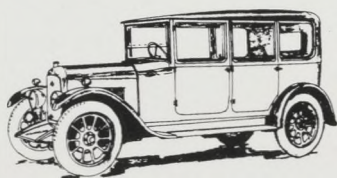
drawing and threw it into the waste paper basket. Then, after denouncing the board in unprintable terms, he stormed off home. Bob retrieved the drawing from the bin, smoothed it out and took it home, where he framed it.

Later, in 1989, Bob went through a hard-up phase and offered me the drawing. We agreed a suitable sum and he sent it to me through the post, who managed to smash the glass, fortunately without damaging the drawing, which is reproduced here. It is quite small, only 12 inches by 7, on grey paper and in pen-and-ink, lightened with white pastel.

As you see, the design is not that far removed from the eventual V12/LG6 Rapide, the major difference being the wing line, which finished up with a convex upper curve rather than the concave one. But all the proportions were unchanged. You can also just about see in the photograph where Frank screwed it up, a feature which adds to the provenance and which I have no intention of eradicating.

Members' Tips

Plugs one and six on the nearside of the M45 engine can create a jumping spark from the plug to the exhaust manifold, this may be caused by the plug gaps being too wide. If you want to keep to the original screw tops fixing, take a piece of the tube used to cover the plug leads, cut and shape it so that the 'cap' stays in place and the problem is solved. The cap can be taken off for concours judging if you wish! M.D.



Dobson's Records

Arnold Davey discovers a fascinating insight into pre-war second-hand values

PROBLEM: You are a maker of low volume, high quality motor cars. There is a considerable brand loyalty, to be encouraged, which results in existing owners wanting to trade-in their old car against a new one. But if you accept these vehicles, how can you dispose of them? If you attempt to sell them from the factory, not only do they take up a lot of space and occupy the sales staff's time but the potential buyer of a new car may just possibly opt for one of the second hand ones, with the consequent loss of a sale and the profit on a new car.

What Lagonda did and I am pretty sure most small makers did, was to do a deal with a local retailer whereby he takes all the trade-ins and sells them for you at normal retail prices. The mark-up between the trade-in value and the sale price is then split between the parties. I know such an arrangement persisted until at least 1962, when I bought an Alfa Romeo Guilietta which had been traded-in at the Lotus factory against a new Elite. But the whole deal was done through a garage in Enfield, partly owned by Lotus.

In the late 1920's and 30's, Lagonda had their deal with Dobson's Garage in Staines and, quite incredibly, Dobson's sales records have survived. They are bound into five purpose-printed ledgers, leather bound, as was the style then, but now rather fragile and in places difficult to read. They have come into the hands of Mike Dalby, a fellow member of the SAHB (Society of Automotive Historians in Britain) and in return for my giving a talk on Alan Good at the SAHB AGM, he has lent them to me to go through and extract the Lagonda entries. So far, I have finished the first three books, which cover:-

Book A

August 1927 to 28th September 1934
1710 entries

Book B

1st August 1933 to 5th February 1937 1112 entries

Book C

18th July 1931 to 30th March 1933
606 entries

3428 total

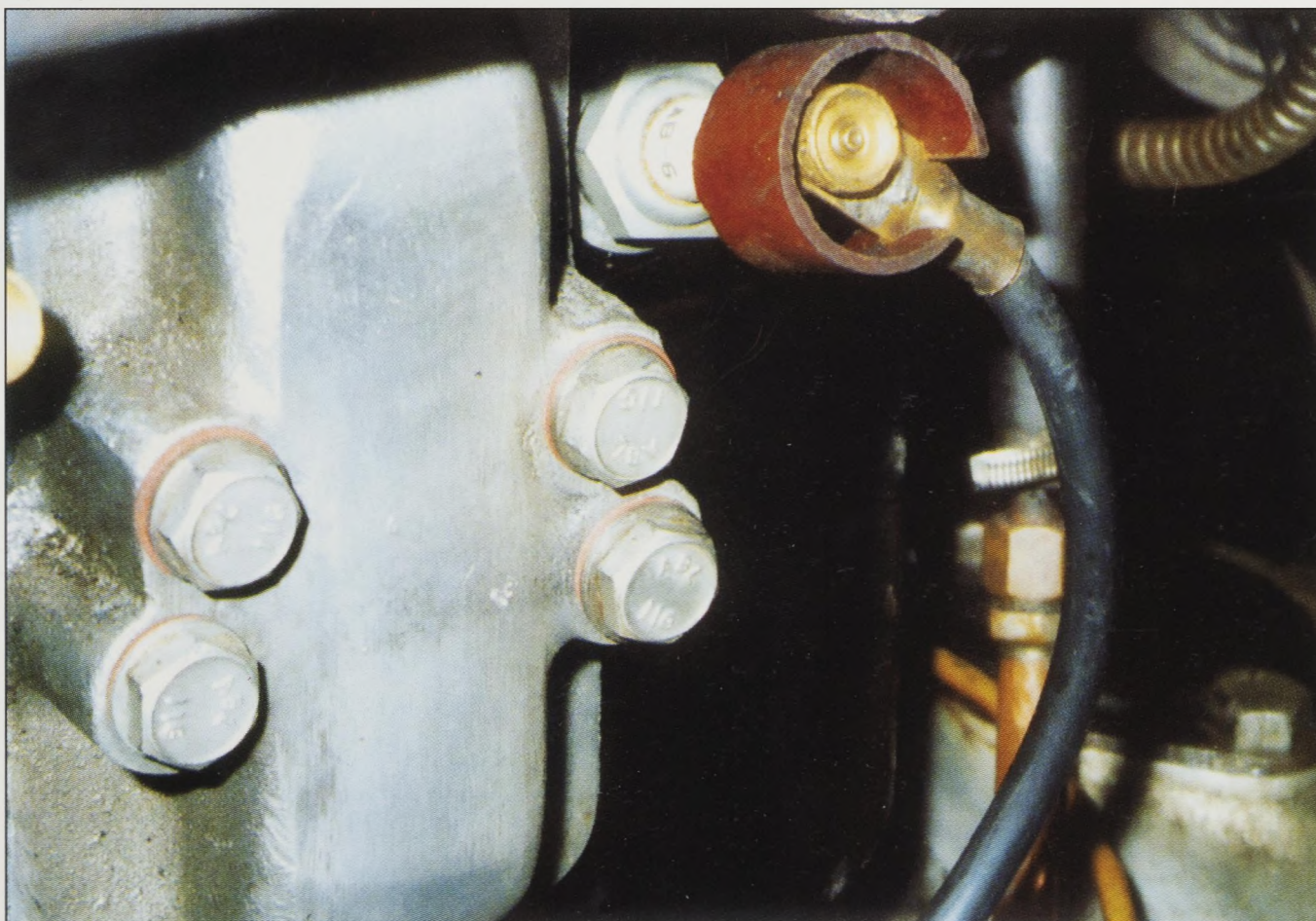
The overlaps are because Dobson had more than one site and separated out new cars from second-hand ones. The titles are Dalby's, for easy reference). I will get the other two books later this year.

Cyril Ivan Dobson was born in Windsor in 1880 and set up in the motor trade in Staines in 1907. By the 1920's he was trading from 124 Laleham Road and in 1929 he sold this building to T.A. Craig and moved to Clarence Street, the road that links the High Street to the Thames bridge. In 1933 he added the Bridge Garage to his empire, this being right adjacent to the north abutment and only the width of the river from the factory. He became the Morris agent for the area and later added MGs, so naturally these makes dominate the ledgers. His son, Cyril Fulford Dobson, (1900-74), was a 'works' trials driver for the MG factory until 1931. For a short period in 1934/5 Dobson went into partnership with Lord de Clifford to sell the de Clifford Special Rapiers. After 17 cars had been sold the partnership was dissolved when 'Ted' de Clifford lost his licence.

What can we learn from the Dobson records? In the earlier part the registration numbers appear of scores of Lagondas that we have never heard of before, with usually rather vague



See "Members' Tips on pages 10 and 21 for an explanation to these pictures!





This lovely Invicta S Type was a visitor to a recent Southern Area meeting.



descriptions of model and bodywork. The date of first registration is usually given, normally a good clue. The headings on the pair of pages are:- Date of purchase; Make; Registration number; Year; Purchased from; Cost price; Date of sale; Sold to; Invoice No.; County Council; HP?; Sale price. (HP refers to hire purchase, not horsepower).

In 1927 and 1928 nearly all the trade-ins are 11.9s or 12/24s, with a typical purchase value given as around £30 and a sale price in the sixties. 100% mark-up can't be bad. This percentage dropped sharply when 2 Litres started to come in and the first one I am sure about was PH 1509, taken in from Lagondas on February 16th 1928 for £350 and sold to Miss E. Fletcher of Willow Bank, Staines for £400 the following day. This was a 1927 'Sports' model (I believe a semi-sports 14/60) and would have cost £570 new 10 months earlier, an example of the terrible depreciation in those days. Miss Fletcher traded-in an undated 12 HP Lagonda tourer YK 2360, for which she got £20. Dobson sold it for £70.

I have no intention of boring readers with loads of this sort of detail, but there a number of famous cars passing through the Dobson books and a number of famous owners. We learn that Major Parbury, a Lagonda Board member, traded in PF 2204, a coupé on the 1926 14/60 chassis in July 1928 and bought a Speed Model for an undisclosed sum. The book says, laconically, "Pay Lagonda".

By 1932 we are beginning to see a few cars that have survived. PL 1240, the prototype supercharged 2 Litre, was sold by Dobson on 7th April to a man called Fowler in County Donegal for £400, having spent nearly two years as the factory Press car. A month later PJ 1867, a 3 Litre T3 tourer and Lord de Clifford's car in the 1932 Monte Carlo Rally, arrived and was sold to a doctor in London SW3 for £320. This was one of Dobson's less successful deals, as the factory had charged him £425 for it.

A feature begins to appear of cars

appearing at Dobson's for the second time. Similarly, some owners appear several times. One such was Oliver Horlick, he of the malted milk drink, who had a new Lagonda most years. Frank Feeley told me that Horlick was much disliked by the motor trade locally, following his cornering the market on ex-WD lorries just after World War 1 and then selling them at extortionate prices. But Dobson clearly kept in with him, for in January 1931 we find him taking in 25 identical second-hand Morris Cowleys from Horlicks Ltd. at £95 each.

It may be of interest to follow one such story of a car passing through Dobson's hands more than once. YO 6489 was a 1927 2 Litre saloon. Dobson took it in second-hand on 5th October 1929, from the Lagonda factory, for £100 and sold it to a man in Westminster for £212 two months later. Right at the end of 1932 it was back in Dobson's having cost £37.10s and was sold in January 1933 to a man in Staines for £60. It was back again in November 1933 and this time Dobson parted with £40 to get it and had to spend £2 9s 8d on repairs. But it stuck, wouldn't sell until the following July, when it went to a banker in Edinburgh for £25. So in its seven years of life it had fallen from £750 to £25, with £650 of that depreciation occurring in the first two years.

In the later period covered by these books, Dobson began to record, against the cost price, how much he had had to spend on repairs to make the car saleable. For example, in November 1933 he took in a 1929 'sports coupé' UV 3786 from Lord de Clifford for an undisclosed sum, spent £4 15s 1d on it for repairs and sold it to a garage in Shepperton for £60. I bet that penny was crucial.

At the start of Book B, Dobson has begun to sell some new Lagondas and for the first time begins to record chassis and engine numbers. All the new cars were bought through Warwick Wright, then the Home Counties distributor, even the bare chassis which were going to become

de Clifford Rapiers. The first one of these went to Newns for its body on 24th March 1934. An interesting feature of the period is that when the catalogue price for a car was, say, £800, that was what the customer paid. There were none of the sneaky add-ons you get today, like a delivery charge or outrageous charges for number plates. In fact influential buyers could negotiate discounts, even when the model was new, and not just when the factory was trying to unload last year's model. C.G. Seddon, for example, only paid £485 for a 16/80 tourer, since he was going to enter widely publicised rallies with it. The catalogue price was £595.

When we get to the Rapier era, with the factory only supplying bare chassis, it is interesting to see how much body

building cost in 1934. Most of the Dobson Rapiers had bodies by John Charles, presumably to the customer's requirements. The average charge for a John Charles body seems to be £92 10s for a two-seater tourer but that on D11085 (BNE 940), apparently similar, cost £125.

At the end of these first three books we have records of 156 Lagondas, all but a few "new" ones, i.e. cars we have no previous record of. Unfortunately Dobson didn't begin to note chassis numbers until quite late, so these cars have to be filed under the registration numbers outside our main system, which relies on chassis numbers, since they are constant and don't vary as a car moves from country to country. I await the loan of the other two books with impatience.



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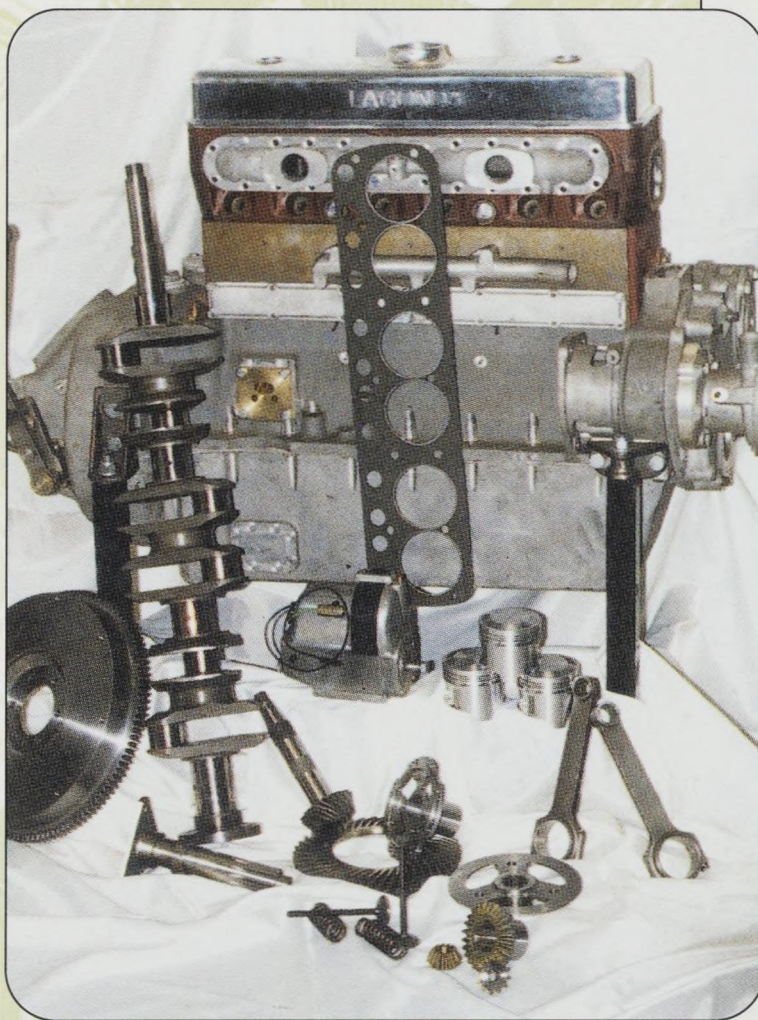


Martin Whitehead's 2 litre poses beside Yates Tower.

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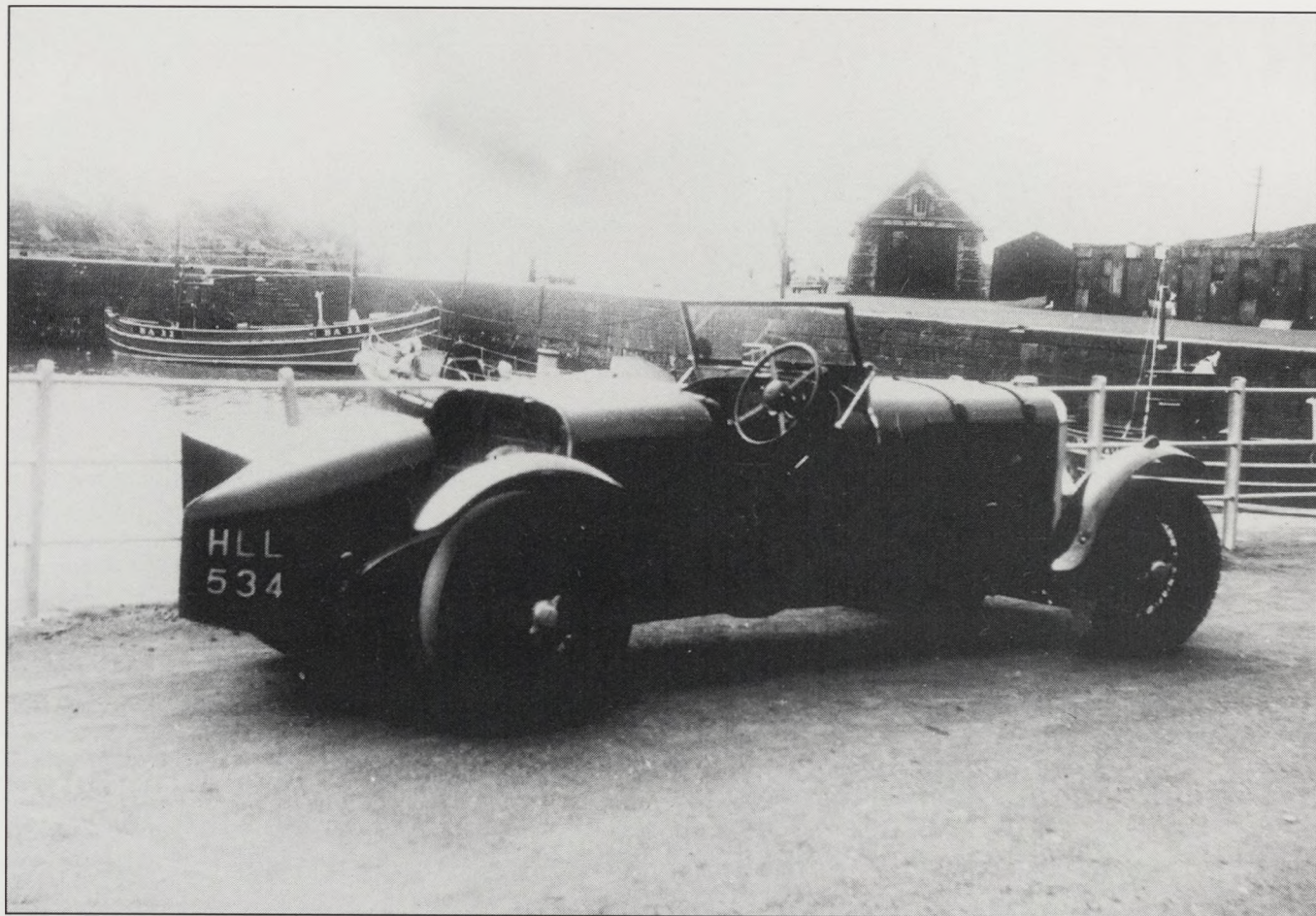
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Two very old pictures of HLL 534 when it was owned by Lord Dunleath.



N/O Register

Joe Branson Hon. Sec ASS N/O describes a very unusual club

IN THE WINTER edition of this magazine our editor, quite rightly, bemoans the fact that it is hard for a young man to be able to purchase one of our cars and to "join clubs such as ours."

At this point I must disagree in my unofficial capacity as the N/O Registrar. The N/O only requires the standard subscription of £35 without the burden of a £75,000, much modified, V12 to justify the £35!

As an N/O you are able to enjoy "all the benefits" of being a Lagonda Club member, i.e. with the regalia, the social functions and the news-sheet. Sadly you are not allowed to compete in any of the normal sporting events or overseas tours, but you are still in the club.

You can buy spares, either to decorate the mantelpiece or in the long run, build your own 2-litre, but you then forego being an N/O and become an Owner.

New N/O's join every month, but what becomes of them? Do they fade after one year or is there a good conversion rate? Only Colin knows, perhaps there are more N/O's than Owners?

I have been an N/O now for very many years, but like our editor acquired my first Lagonda at 21 in February 1955 (201/4 actually).

The car was a Rapier "Special" AUA 170 and cost £110. It is interesting that in Motor Sport at that time I could have had

3-litre Bentleys for £100 and a V12, for the same price as the Rapier.

I was an Owner then for some 16 years, then a "Jaguar Driver", and a Scimitar GTC Owner before becoming a Lagonda N/O (ex-Owner) for the last 20-odd years.

The real advantage of being an N/O is that we can own any car we like and have many Ferraris and similar amongst our members, but we are always discreet!

We do not publish a magazine or have meetings or social events, but we are not forgotten and we pay our subscriptions to subsidise the club.

I must design a badge though, perhaps just NO at the top of the normal badge, and a 'sticker' for the Christmas cards.

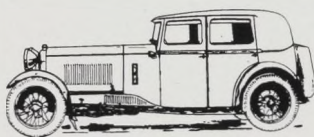
Apart from being a Lagonda N/O I am also the secretary and only member worldwide of the A. S. S. Motor Car Club as depicted on their advertisement.

This club is referred to as the ASS Owners Club incorporating the ASS N/O Register which anyone can join for £35 - pay me!

For some reason this motor car did not sell in English-speaking countries (or French for that matter).

We have an old club joke which is "My girlfriend has to kick her ASS to get it to start."

Long live N/O's - whatever you drive.





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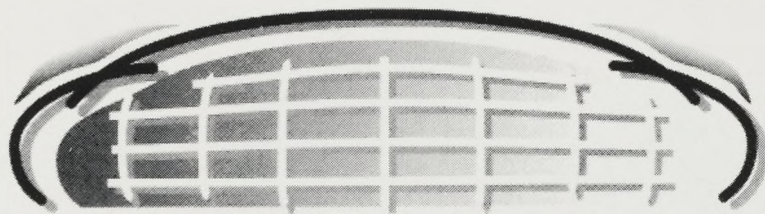
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This lovely picture was sent to me by John Lazor some time ago.

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Vintage car radios may have been large, but the sound quality was excellent.



A reminder of summer, cars at the Cricketers Arms last year.



Peter Docker in Australia is a very long way from the Spares Service, but it doesn't inhibit him in any way. These were taken some time ago.



Letters

Dear Ken,

Thank you for the Winter magazine.

As a proud and longstanding campaigner for the Crossley cause, imagine my distress on seeing the top photo on page 23 of Gerry Lawson's lovely looking VDP 16/80. It will be a very funny 16/80 with that engine!

By the way, rest assured that as I write these words my trousers are on properly.

With best wishes for 2005

Stephen Weld

For the benefit of those unfortunates who do not own a 16/80, or 2 litre, they are advised that Gerry's 16/80 currently has a 2 litre engine. If Gerry has plans to fit the correct Crossley unit, the Editor might just be interested in the surplus 2 litre engine...

K.P.P.

Dear Ken,

Thank you for printing Roger Firth's letter; but does this really show him in his true colours?

I am not normally rude to fellow Club members, but he was rude to Pat Elliott, dear and lovely wife of Alan (stalwart Club member if ever there was one) and friend of myself among so many others.

Mr Firth should learn to read. Pat's protest was not against the performance itself, but publication of a picture of it - particularly on the cover.

I am conscious that as organiser of the Dinner Mr Firth deserves respect and thanks. But in treating those of other

opinions and values in such an intemperate and insulting manner he belittles himself and our Club.

Yours sincerely,

Arthur Brend

Dear Ken,

The front page view in the Lagonda of Alan Brown with his trousers at half mast made the undersigned roar with laughter. For many years we Southern and no doubt Scottish and elsewhere Lagonda members have read about the decadent happenings at the Northern Dinner and realise that it is the Northern Social event of the year - even worth crossing the Pennines to get there.

Perhaps the atmosphere of the event can be best summed up by recalling a conversation that I once had with the late Herb Schofield. Herb was notorious for his biting wit and libellous articles in the Lagonda. Somehow we got round to Alan and his "get 'em orf" act at the end of the Dinner. Herb remarked that the type of member had changed - at the previous Dinner, instead of the usual shouting and cheering at Alan's Act, there was a frosty silence instead of applause. Times change.

Yours sincerely

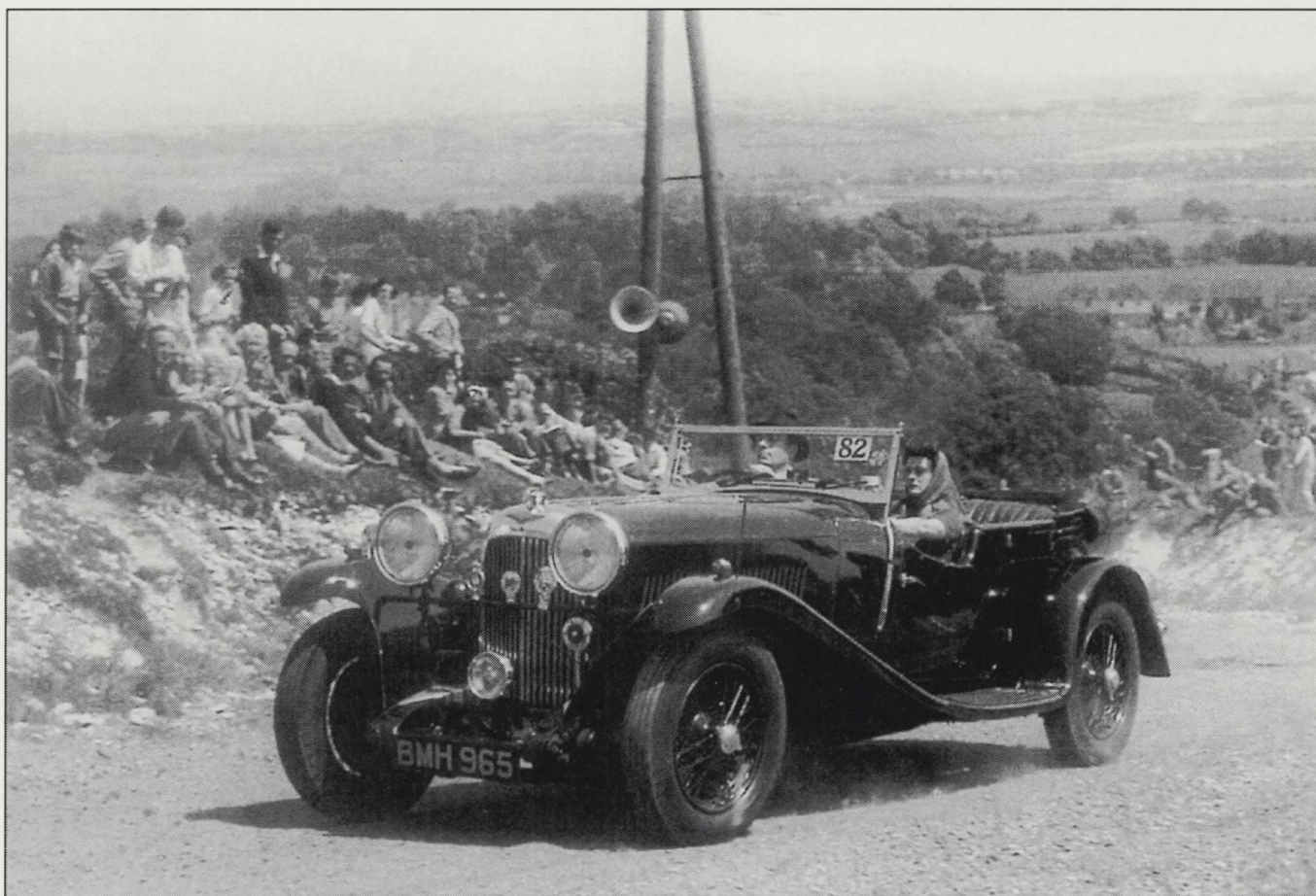
Ronald Gee

1st April

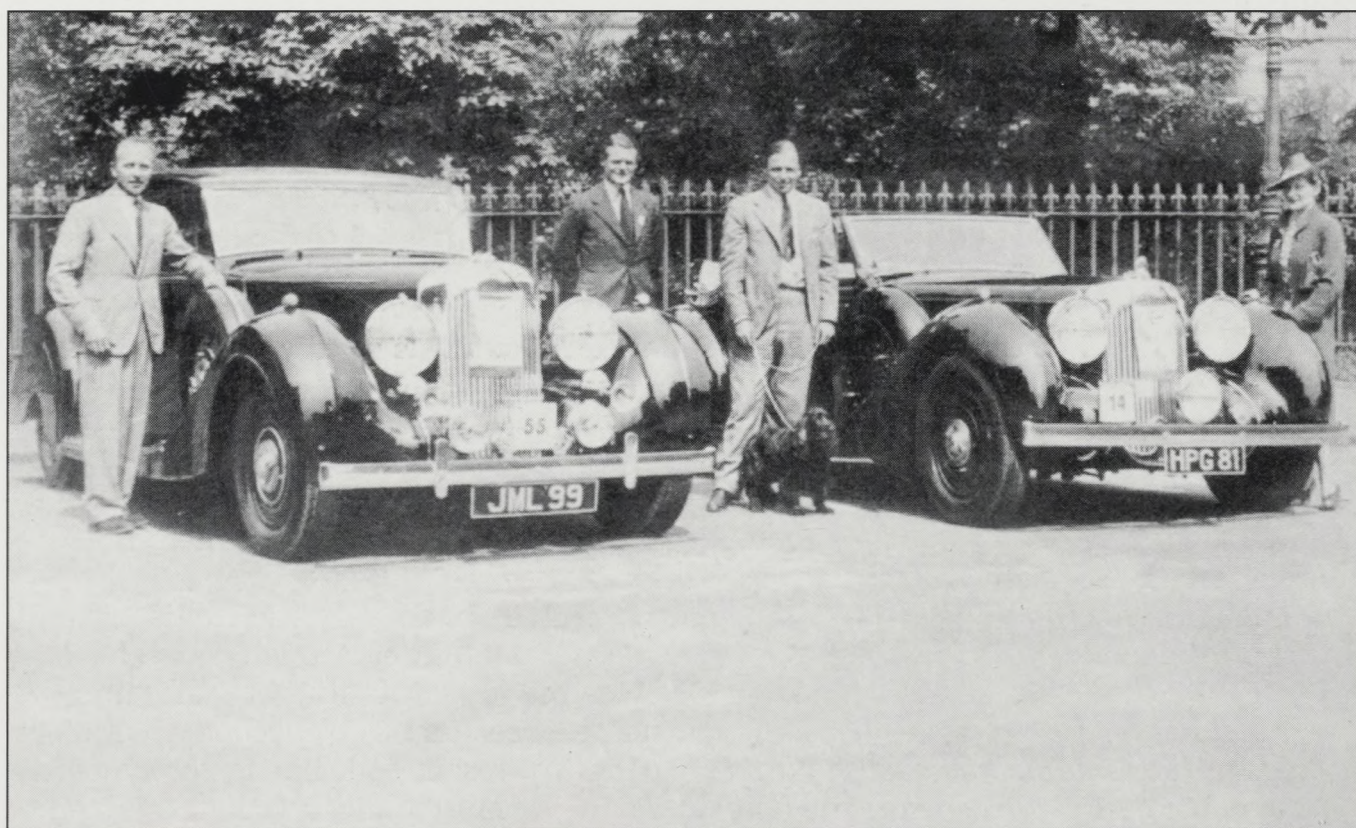
Dear Ken

I wish to protest vehemently over the recent Front Cover of The Lagonda.

I am saddened that this excellent magazine has been sullied by such extraordinary vulgarity. That such low standards of propriety have emerged must be an embarrassment to all those



See the letter from Dick Hannis, opposite.



See Arnold Davey's letter opposite. The original caption read: 'TWO SUCCESSFUL LAGONDAS IN THE COACHWORK COMPETITION OF THE RECENT SCOTTISH RALLY. No 55 is Mr W. F. Watson's car which won the premier award for four door closed cars, and No 14 is Lord Waleran's which won the premier award for drophead coupés'.

who cherish the rich heritage of quality and personal respect that has signalled out our Lagonda Club as something special in this modern, over-commercial, and over-wrought world.

Quite simply, the Front Cover photograph used on Issue Number 203 Winter 2004/2005 is not acceptable.

Look closely, and you can just about discern a blurred image of Lagonda, largely obscured by a concrete wall. Sadly, however, the whole cover is dominated by 19 brand logos for Total – which I understand is a petrol brand, apparently of continental European provenance.

To give over the front cover of our respected magazine to a plethora of images of a foreign fuel is an abrogation of our standards as a club. In future, we must insist that such front covers bear images which are more relevant to the rich and proud heritage of The Lagonda Club.

For example, I suggest that in future most members of The Lagonda Club would prefer to see such images as the strapping legs of a valued Club member in a traditional pose at a major social event than that travesty of commercialism.

In repeating this and similar images, the magazine would continue to reflect the standards and characters of previous generations, who surely carried out such ritual unveilings after returning safely in their splendid Spitfires from defending our freedoms against the Hun, and before taking themselves off in their much-loved Lagondas for some more well-earned libations and gentle social intercourse. In so many ways, the past was a better place.

Yours sincerely,

Anon

The author's name has been omitted to protect the guilty! Please note the date at the start of the letter. This really does bring an end to the correspondence on this topic. K.P.P.

Dear Ken,

I enclose a copy of a photo, kindly sent to me by one of our Australian members, Graham Lawrence; showing my 1934 M45 – BMH 965, taking part in a Hill Climb or Rally in 1948.

I wonder if anyone can identify the location or occupants of the car.

Kind regards

Dick Hannis

Dear Ken,

I enclose a cutting from 'Country Life' of 1939 which was sent to me by Mark Walker, who has been in contact with the present Lord Selsdon about the history of Mark's car, once owned by the first (or at any rate an earlier) Lord S.

It shows the two V12s after the Scottish Rally of 1939, which ran from 29th May to 2nd June. W. F. Watson is shown standing by JML 99 (car number 16036) a razor-edged saloon by H.J.Mulliner. The other people are (left to right), Lord Selsdon, Lord Waleran and dog, Lady Waleran. HPG 81 was the factory Press Car at the time and has since disappeared. As the caption says, Watson's car won the coachwork award for four door closed cars over £1000 and the drophead was first in the equivalent open car class. For the first time, dropheads were separated out from tourers and lost the right to opt whether to run open or closed. Each winning car won a 'silk Bannerette'. I wonder what became of them?

In the rally proper, Watson was 19th in Class 6 and Waleran 7th in Class 5. There was no overall winner, but six class winners.

JML 99 had a very varied history and was for many years owned by the late Eric Howlett. Eric always maintained it had a Freestone & Webb body, which it certainly resembled, but factory records say H.J.Mulliner and it was undoubtedly the same body all the time. Eric died intestate and the new owner of the flat where he had lived pushed the by now rather sad V12 out into the communal

parking area, where it was taken by a tramp to be his residence. Eventually it was sold at auction and has vanished from our ken. Not many people take their dog with them on a rally nowadays, do they?

Regards,

Arnold Davey

Dear Ken,

Following the sad passing of Phil Ridout, I have been helping sort out his vintage wireless equipment. As well as vintage cars, Phil was also a radio ham, with the call sign G2DKI, and he was a member of the Radio Amateur Old Timer's Association.

Reading one of their journals, I came upon an interesting item, where in 1934 tests were carried out between Nottingham City Police's mobile radio equipment against that of Scotland Yard's. The Nottingham equipment was installed in a Morris 12 van, but Scotland Yard sent two vehicles up to Nottingham, each with four men. One of the vehicles was, to quote, "a high powered Lagonda". Do we know anything of this Lagonda, and does it still exist?

One gathers that the results of the tests proved that the Nottingham radio equipment was much superior to Scotland Yard's!

With best wishes,

Alan Elliott

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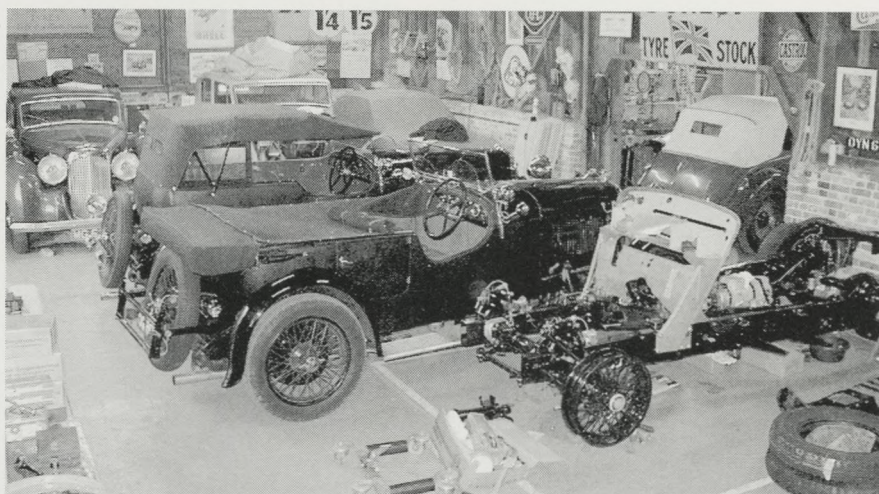
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From the Sublime to the Ridiculous



Who said we only know Invictas? Here we have a 1940 Lagonda V12 Rapide nearly finished and a 1926 Vulcan coming along nicely.

I let Mike, Rene and Bob out for some fresh air and they are smiling because the other 5 members of our team are still hard at work!

*May we wish all members of the Lagonda Club
A Very Happy and Prosperous New Year.*

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