

THE MAGAZINE OF THE LAGONDA CLUB

Number 205 Summer 2005

# DAVID AYRE-



David Ayre in his 1927 H/C Lagonda during the London to Cape Town Rally

"The only original pre war car to finish without major mechanical difficulties" *John Brown Hero* 

## LAGONDA BENTLEY INVICTA

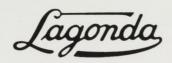
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#### FRONT COVER

Return to La Sarthe, BPK 203 and others enjoy the Le Mans trip.

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# From the Driving Seat

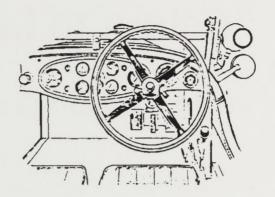
by Ken Painter

THERE IS SOMETHING rather special about driving a Lagonda and, dammit, I miss it. So do my family. My elder daughter recently admitted that she was fourteen before she realised that we were not, after all, a minor branch of royalty. Why did she think we were? It was because every time we drove anywhere the public waved and cheered. Our every-day cars were a series of Lagondas and it never occurred to her that the cars and not their occupants were the reason for the public enthusiasm.

After all, it happened in Singapore when she was very young and we were in our 16/80. When we returned to England, the 3½ litre tourer came out of storage after just a few days and the adulation continued.

We would frequently drive to old car events and be waved straight in, past the long queues of the general public waiting to pay their entry fees. It simply never occurred to her that we might have paid in advance!

This fit of nostalgia has been brought about, in part, by the letter from our dear family friend Marianne Robinson, which appears elsewhere in the Magazine. Our two families were in Singapore at the



same time, we jointly edited the local vintage car magazine and we spent many happy hours together at local club events. We were there when she bought her beautiful M45, we mourned with them when Harry's team car replica was destroyed recently in a fire and now their Lagonda motoring days seem to be over. At least both of them are remaining in the Club, but I think this means that Alaska is now without any Lagondas at all, how sad.

Another reminder of those 'good old days' came from Peter Docker and his letter to Uncle Guru, where he reminded me of my time in Singapore. I never actually saw the 2 litre that Peter now owns, but its picture appeared in the same magazine as the article to which he referred.

Just to show what a small world the Lagonda Club can be, Peter's nearest Lagonda owning neighbour is Mike Truter, who still owns the 16/80 he bought from me in Singapore all those years ago. Editing this magazine can be a source of unexpected pleasure and a constant reminder of the benefits of Lagonda ownership!

LAST DATE FOR COPY FOR THE AUTUMN MAGAZINE IS

... SATURDAY 1ST OCTOBER 2005 ...

# "Return to La Sarthe"

### David Hine reports on a very special event

THIS IS THE title Rudy, our American Representative, gave to the third decade of Lagonda visits to Le Mans. This year it the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Victory of the Marque in the gruelling 24 hour race in 1935.

It was a perfect summer dawn with the sun rising, a huge blood red orb above the trees and early morning mist still lying in the hollows. The still air was shattered as 50 Lagonda engines burst into life at Mulsanne Corner and we filed swiftly out onto the circuit.

Your scribe was in his trusty M 45 tourer and fortunate to be immediately behind Alison and Harry driving Dr Benjafields team car BPK 203. We swooped past Maison Blanche, through the Porsche Curves and suddenly we were on the awe inspiring Pit Straight, roaring through the stands to the cheers of the early morning crowds and the

waving of the marshals.

The track here is a full blown race track and rises up and then swings from side to side up to Tertre Rouge where it curves onto the main road to Tours, the famous Mulsanne Straight. Full throttle was now called for and the Meadows engines pulsed in response with their legendary torque. Within moments the speedo was showing 85 mph and I finally lifted off in respect for her old bones and also for our windswept passengers, Colin and Laurel from Canada. BPK 203 literally disappeared into the early morning mist, back at full speed as if the passing of 70 years had been but a blink of the eye! Both Jill and I had tears of emotion in our eyes at this dramatic moment, fully realising that this was a once in a lifetime experience.

The week had started with a gentle drive via Leek and Ashbourne in quiet but freezing weather. Tim Gresty and Margaret in their Low Chassis 2 litre were only half an hour ahead of us but we couldn't catch them, mainly because we had to stop at a pub to thaw out and that led to a carvery etc. etc. We finally met up at the Seacrest Hotel in Portsmouth where a pleasant evening ensued.

Not wishing to waste the next day Tim had organised a tour of the Mary Rose, HMS Victory and HMS Warrior, a real beast of a vessel, bristling with guns, fully rigged with sails but also with the most enormous steam engine you could imagine. No wonder it never fired a shot in anger, I guess most other captains beat a hasty retreat when it loomed over the

The rendezvous for the rally was the Whale Island Naval Base, where Andrew Rothwell had laid on the most splendid BBQ. It was very exciting to see different Lagondas appear from all over the country and indeed all over the world. There were a few old friends from previous rallies but the vast majority were new acquaintances, who earnestly asked me to look after them, thinking they were the only new boys, so to speak. I had to assure them that I was new to nearly everyone so they soon relaxed as we were all in the same boat.

Lindsey Warren, our organiser, came with our rally shirts, tickets and words of advice. She had already done a fantastic job in meeting everyone's different requirements. I handed dashboard medallions I had had made. which ensured I met everyone at least once. This night my speech was confined to homilies about not drinking all night on the cross channel ferry and convoy tactics the next day, ie look out for the

chap behind, don't just chase the one in front. Replete with Andrew's food and wine, we made the short hop to the ferry and loaded up. The crossing was mercifully smooth and the wake-up call was not too early, thank goodness.

Leaving the port of Le Havre was slightly unpleasant due to the traffic but we were soon over the bridge and onto the deserted French roads that Lindsey had plotted for us. There was a slight delay when Trevor's 16/80 decided to select top gear permanently. However he whipped the lid off the gearbox, Alan Brown flicked something and, as if by magic, all was well.

The first stop for coffee and croissants was Lieury and their high street was suddenly strewn with vintage machinery, not that the locals seemed in any way fazed by this. Off again to the forest of Harras du Pin where a splendid lunch was promised. We filled up with petrol at a dubious garage and soon after had to retard the ignition slightly to avoid slow speed clatter from my engine.

I had elected to be "tail end Charlie" to give moral support to those in distress, assuming they were on the same route as I was. I had not actually expected what then happened, when coming round a sharp bend, the road was blocked with our cars and folk gazing over an abyss. I stopped and Jill and I ran back to see Graham and Suzanne's concours M 45 Rapide down the side of a very steep slope wedged against a sapling which had mercifully arrested their precipitous descent. They had by now climbed up and were relatively unscathed if very shaken by their ordeal. Once it was clear that no one was injured, the rest went on for lunch leaving Graham and Suzanne to wait for rescue. The local peasant farmer came by with cold drinks and words of Gallic consolation, they really are super people individually.

I hung around for a bit in increasing heat and finally departed for lunch promising to return with more supplies.

After four hours the Gendarmerie arrived and closed the road allowing the

recovery crane to drag the Lagonda sideways up the cliff and dump it unceremoniously back on the road. Only about 10 cars had passed in this time which shows how unlucky Graham had been to meet one on this blind bend. I saw them onto the recovery vehicle and then proceeded to collect Jill who had been waiting with our son Nick, and on to our Hotel, The Touring Hotel in St Leonard des Bois.

It was a perfect evening when we arrived with all our crowd drinking cold beer in front with the Lagondas parked in line across the road. An hour or so later a huge cheer went up when Graham arrived in his slightly dishevelled Rapide, minus windscreen but otherwise little damaged. Our excellent courier Sebastian had driven up to help in his modern car and brought Suzanne and the luggage.

Alan Brown was already at work trying to coach a trickle of charge from various dynamos, in some cases with

great success.

Our Hotel Host, Pascal, was a champion fellow. No request fazed him and he got on with arranging to have Graham's car repaired and sorting other minor mechanical ailments while at the same time masterminding the most superb five course dinner with unlimited wine!

Wednesday dawned grey overcast. What a difference from the cloudless day before. However the activities planned were in and around the village, so no big problem here. Several of us went to a nearby off-road driving school for the most amazing course in four by four driving. The rain and mud made for some tricky moments as we learnt how to extricate ourselves from impossible gradients, in reverse! The more intelligent of the gang had a spectacular cookery demonstration from one of France's leading chefs.

The afternoon was enlightened by a scenic tour in a charabanc and visit to the historic village of St Ceneri with its beautiful mediaeval church and houses.

Our evening meal was billed as the "Hog Roast" and sure enough, when we assembled for drinks there was a huge beast rotating on a spit with wonderful cooking aromas. The rain had relented but we had to eat inside, however all agreed that the ambiance was splendid. A nice flourish was the appearance of an enormous cake richly decorated with the Lagonda Club logo. It's amazing how there is always a bit of room for cake after a feast, if washed down with more grape juice. Thursday's weather looked much more promising and the forecast was for a heat wave to coincide with the Le Mans weekend.

Back in the Lagondas we had a leisurely drive to the Spa town of Bagnoles de Lorne. There was a chance for shopping and sight-seeing before a light snack of Moules et Frites. Most of us had an afternoon zizz but Alan was hard at work coaxing Peter Merrick's Saloon back onto 12 cylinders.

This evening was billed as our first Gala Dinner and Pascal did us proud as we had now come to expect. Bill and Sue Spence, from the Orkneys with their well known 3 litre, had to leave the rally for a meeting of honorary Consuls. As a parting gesture he thoughtfully provided us all with a nightcap of the finest Malts from his island home.

Friday we said goodbye to St Leonard des Bois and journeyed south to Sable sur Sarthe. This was much closer to the Le Mans circuit and was our base for the next three days. Our numbers now swelled and we were roomed in three hotels. Those who had joined for the weekend only were either at the Grand at Solesmes or Campanile nearby. Most of the long trip were in the Relaise Marmotte where we stayed ten years ago. The latter was adequate as a billet.

Some of us explored the town and others rushed off to the track to experience the excitement of the "Pit Walk" where the ticket holders are allowed into the hallowed areas to witness the last minute preparations.

Ten lucky "winners" had been

picked to join the Parade du Pilots. Our group of cars was lead by Alison Moores in the team car BPK 201 and Julian Messent with the 2 Litre team car PG 8804. All gathered in the square beneath the towering presence of the spectacular Le Mans cathedral in the old part of the city. Drivers (Pilots) due to race the next day are paraded in the back of our cars past the adoring fans in a slow but very exciting procession. Great fun if a little exhausting for both cars and drivers.

It was a little surreal to tumble out of our bunks at 4.30am, in the dark, dress and stagger to the room where black coffee and croissants were gulped down. Out to the Lagondas streaming with early morning condensation but ready to fire up to a man. One by one we filed out onto the deserted roads and bumped and bounced at speed as the sky gradually began to glow. There seemed endless fields filled with waving corn rushing past us and even the odd spray from an irrigation pump ("Don't breathe the mist" was the cry).

Suddenly the sun rose with tropical rapidity and was right in our faces as we passed through wonderful villages apparently frozen in time. Through a Police cordon we went as all the roads are now closed and into Mulsanne town

for our rendezvous.

The line up of fifty Lagondas was spectacular and folk were greeting each and making last minute adjustments, occasionally oily, to their cars. Here we greeted for the first time our Canadian and American contingent who had come without cars. We already had August Grassis and his big family in his LG 45 and Bill Roberts with the "Scarlet Woman", but now we had another 12 members who had made the great effort to be with us on this special occasion. Many had kindly offered passenger seats so I was able to introduce our visitors to their Pilots for the day.

20 cars were fresh to the rally joining the 30 that had completed the early part of the tour. Again it was fascinating how many new members we were welcoming



The line up outside the hotel at St Leonard des Bois.



Alison Moores takes Graham and Suzanna for a trip in BPK 203.



 $Colin\ and\ Laurel\ Gurnsey\ from\ Canada\ in\ the\ back\ of\ the\ President's\ M45\ on\ the\ Sarthe\ circuit.$ 



David Hine presents Bill Holt from Canada with a "Spirit of Lagonda" award.

to this historic parade even if some of their cars were veterans of previous tours. The "youthful" section was lead by Andrew Rothwell who had broken out his enormous Union Jack this time in his brand new rebuild, M45R Team Car Replica, both flying very well indeed. His co-pilot was Alex Hazel who was standing by to repel attack from Nick Hine and Alan Brown in their blue racer, Wotsit.

Sebastian, our Guardian, had given us dire warnings about good track behaviour which was perhaps just as well because we were allowed complete freedom for 3½ or 30 miles of pure race circuit! Once on the track it was all systems go and there were wonderful sights to see. Most were travelling far faster than they expected and, as always, the chicane on the Mulsanne Straight lies in wait for the unwary. All got round OK with a lot of squealing of tyres and the obvious amusement of the Marshalls. I shall never forget the sight of Clive and Peerless, still sporting crumpled cotton suits, high up and windswept in the back of Bart and Justine's LG 45 Rapide, both grinning from ear to ear. I had lost sight of Alison in BPK 203 but was comfortably keeping ahead of the rest when suddenly there was a huge roar and Julian Messent flew past in the 2 litre team car, very impressive performance indeed.

Soon it was all over and we filed off at Tertre Rouge and to our dedicated car park. Our Spirits were lifted higher still by the excellent champagne breakfast in the vast Motoring Adventures hospitality marquee. This was to be our base and refuge from the madding throng as the day became hotter and more manic.

Next on the agenda was the Legends Race, this was for cars 1935 - 1955 and Duncan Wiltshire had organised an impressive line up. Our Marque was represented by two 1939 V 12 team car reps and a 1955 V12, not many of the latter in captivity. It all went very well and it was a thrill to be in the paddock

when the two'39 cars roared in still running perfectly. The beam on Mel Cranmer's face said it all, he had just rebuilt the engines!

Tension was now building for the Vingt Quatre Heures du Mans due to start at 4.00pm. Our Stand Seats were superb overlooking the Start Line and mercifully in the shade from the, now blistering, noonday sun. There was the traditional parade of historic Le Mans cars and, of course, our cheers were loudest for Alison and Harry in BPK 203. The main Le Mans race cars then warmed up and must have been very hot inside even at the start. The Aston Martins looked good with their oval mouths edged in green. However once they had all screamed away and lapped a few time your Scribe felt his enthusiasm ebbing away, maybe it was the early start we had had! Back in the Marquee another buffet dinner was served and we tottered back to our cars leaving the young ones to party into the night!

Sunday was another beautiful day and Jill and I went for a romantic lunch in La Fleche. The Restaurant overlooked a waterfall in the river and I marvelled as a local rowed out in a little cockle boat and casually netted a salmon for his lunch, not a bad life is it?

Our rally was topped off with a rather warm Gala dinner at the Grand Hotel. Everyone was a winner but prizes had to be given to our Sponsors, LMB racing and Andrew Rothwell. Long distance awards were given to August Grassis, Graham Lawrence ( (Australia) and Alison Moores (New Zealand). Spirit of Lagonda awards were given to Colin Gurnsey, Bill Holt and Craig Davies and to your Scribe for keeping the Marque alive in North America. Rudy Wood Muller could not be with us but he will also get this award and we all sent our best wishes to him and Jenny. Finally Alan Brown got an award for helping so many keep their cars and spirits on top form.

Participants	Car	Registration
Jeremy, Jonathan, Richard & Patrick Bayliss	M45 Tourer	KY 5722
Michael & Elizabeth Blackwell	M45	BYT 321
Peter Bloemendaal & Marie-Anne van Harten	16/80 Tourer	DE-5749
Clinton & Jacqueline Bourke	LG45 Rapide	SSL 646
Sir Charles and Nicholas Chadwyck-Healey	V12 Rapide	YSU 310
Jamie Dutton-Forshaw & Miranda Knowles	LG45 TT Replica	CXT 820
Alan & Pat Elliott	2 litre	PG 402
Eckhard Fabncius & Wolfgang Kunkei	V12 DHC	LGF 3
David Fletcher & Alex Boyiakis	LG45	DGF 577
Peter & Lois Gilkes	DB 3 litre	UPE 222
August & Ruta Grasis; Augie lil & Pami Grasis: Augie IV	LG45 DHC	CUF 1
Peter Gray & John Furlong	LG45 Tourer	LBT 74
Andrew & Carol Gregg	M45 Tourer	BPJ 168
Tim Gresty & Margaret Browning	2 litre LC	GT 4530
Colin & Laurel Gurnsey		
Benjamin Hargreaves & Julia Chapman	LG6 dhc	FXM 25
Gifford & Alison Hatfield	200 4110	
Alan & Carol Heard	2.6 dhc	MWD 757
Robin Henoga & Guest	M45 T7 Tourer	AUF 45
PeterHill & Russell Page	16/80	PJ 9930
David & Jill Hine	M45 Tourer	OD 9571
Nick Hine & Alan Brown	LG45	FPK 696
Anmin Hinze & Angela Richter	M45 Tourer	BOR-07021
Bill Holt & Liz Haan	14110 104101	DOI: 07021
John & Clare Hugh	14/60 Semi-Sports	OAW 125
Gary. Kristy. Gordon & Emerson Jenkins	14/00 beini oports	O11W 120
Maurice Jobson; Reginald Donner & Remo Marcangelo	16/80 Tourer	JH 3138
Richard & Marion Lamb	2 litre LC	GP 748
Graham Lawrence & Suzanne Skillen	M45	00 419
Richard Mann & John Blake	M45 Tourer	AXD 56
Peter & Christopher Merrick	V12 Saloon	YJ 5577
Julian & Shanna Messent	2 litre LC Team Car	PG 8804
Alison Moores & Harry Watson	M45R Team Car	BPK 203
Lee & Julianna Nobie	Wilow Tourn Gui	D1 11 200
Jonathan & Joseph Oppenheimer	Lagonda Rapier	ARD 246
Trevor & Sarah Parker	16/80	AGC 254
Clive & Anthony Peerless	LG45 Rapide	MFF 332
Bart & Justine Peerless	LG45 Rapide	FYW 998
Roger & Ann Preece	16/80 2 Seat Special	APH 850
Philip & Beryl Pyne	2 litre LC	722 GF
Bill Roberts & Conrad Wouters	LG45 Rapide	AGE 730
Charles & James Rosenmeyer	LG45	FPC 315
Andrew Rothwell & Alex Hazell	M45	CMD 897
Robin & Janice Saddler	3 litre	AUL 728
Brian Savill & John Breen	16/80	AGO 295
Tim Sobey & Cilla Clive	2l HC Speed Model	KO 6871
Bill & Sue Spence	3 litre Carlton dhc	KY1610
Nowell & Birgit Stebbing	M45 Tourer	AMT 77
John & Rosalind Sword	M45 Tourer M45	AYK 925
John & Liz Thring	M35R	BTO 536
Nigel Walder & Rodney Saunders	M45	AXK 786
Stephen & Claire Webber	3 litre 1929	SV 8029
Ian & Diana Willis	16/80	US 6751
Idii & Didiid Willis	10/60	03 0/31



 ${\it Graham\ Lawrence's\ M45R\ is\ rescued\ from\ the\ cliff}.$ 



Lagondas fire up in the dawn light at Mulsanne and prepare to join the circuit.



 $The \ wonderful \ host, \ Pascal \ (left) \ and \ the \ excellent \ courier \ Sebastian \ (right).$ 



The Lagonda cake in all its glory.

## **Such Sweet Thunder**

# After disastrously blowing the engine in his LG45 at the Le Mans Classic in 2004, Nick Hine recounts his return to the track with a rebuilt engine and renewed vigor.

I HAVEN'T RACED at all since blowing my engine on the first lap of the Le Mans Classic last year. I was quite depressed by the whole affair, as was my chief mechanic, my Dad, David Hine.

Indeed many people less fortunate than myself would have had to call it quits for several years as they slowly and painfully rebuilt a LG 45 engine. However, I am truly blessed with a great support team, the Northern Lagonda Factory.

Dad and Alan Brown took out my engine and it was whisked away to Dad's garage, where the doors solemnly closed in July 2004 for a total rebuild. The cause of the blown engine was a burnt out piston which was put down to a combination of high compression, weak mixture, over heating and damaged cam followers.

Unfortunately, I don't live near my Dad, but over the next 7 months I know that he spent nearly every day working on the engine. I am a very lucky man to have such a talented Father. By March the engine was back up at Knarr Mill in Oldham, where we squeezed it back into its chassis, before some brief testing and then decided that it was ready for its first competitive run at the VSCC April Silverstone.

I had tentatively entered the VSCC April Silverstone with one 5 lap handicap race and the "Fox and Nichol" 8 lap Scratch Race. As usual, we drove to the circuit and the engine ran flawlessly. The practice was in fine weather and my car ran without fault. The chief mechanic gave it a once over and stated that all was well.

Alan Brown successfully completed the 30 minute high speed trial in Duncan Arthurs' lovely high chassis Invicta. Our own Competition Secretary, Tim Wadsworth was out in his quick 2 litre in Race 4 which was a 5 lap handicap. Duncan Arthurs was in Race 8, another 5 lap Handicap. And both Tim and I were making up the field in the Fox and Nichol Trophy Race. My apologies to those that I have missed out.

The biggest surprise for me was in the Handicap Race 6. At the start I found myself towards the back of a busy grid with 25 cars ahead of me. Just as we started the rain kept its promise and began to fall making a dry oily track turn into an "ice rink". After 4 laps of passing cars who were struggling even more than me with the slippery conditions, I found that with only four corners left I was in the lead. However a very quick and light Riley Special Sports was reeling me in and I crossed the finish line to take the chequered flag in first place with only seconds to spare. Well what a turn up for the books, after a total engine rebuild and only a brief testing, I had won the race.

Of course, I never doubted my Father's expert mechanical skills. But if I told you that in 15 years of racing, that was my first VSCC win at Silverstone you can perhaps relate to my surprise and elation as I returned to the Paddock. The car ran faultlessly and not for the first time this year did I state that without Dad I would have not been here at all! A fantastic result for the beginning of the year and Le Mans 2004 was all but forgotten. In the Fox and Nichol race I did not care that there were many cars faster than me and I was still giddy from my win and just happy to finish in one piece, 14th overall.

Next was Donington Park in early

May in the Legends Pre War Race Series. This meeting showed a good turn out for the Lagonda Lads, just not the Cars.

Only two Lagondas made it to the Mark Butterworth and David Brock-Jest had V12 problems. consequently raced Duncan Aurthers' Invicta and David ran his very quick 4 1/2 Bentley. Alan Brown and Duncan raced in Duncan's new acquisition, a 3 litre Bentley formerly owned by the late Ray Wiltshire. To balance this out we had a new member of our gang, who had defected from the Bentley Boys, Robert Harley, who turned out his newly acquired very smart LG45. However he still needed a bit of convincing about the "Old Lags" as he suffered overheating problems several times in the day.

"Motor Racing Legends" run by Duncan Wiltshire were organising the Donington Park meeting as the British leg of their very successful European race series for pre-war cars. The race series has been to Spa, Nurburgring, and Assen, and has also planned in for this vear Dijon, Porto and Le Mans. The Prewar Sports Cars Series, have endurance race element in that each race is often over 45 minutes and there are usually two races in the day or it is spread over two days. The general idea would be for two drivers to share each race, and indeed there is an obligatory pit stop in each race which adds to the endurance feel.

The tractor-like engineering of the big Lagondas are more than up to the test of a 45 minute race (approximately 23-25 laps), but when you consider that the drivers are more used to a 15 minute or 5 lap races in the VSCC, it is the driver and not the car that is likely to be weakest link.

The grid for the race was eclectic with marques such as Stutz, Alfa Romeo, and Talbot rubbing shoulders with Aston Martin, Bentley, Invicta and Lagonda with a pinch of Frazer Nash, MG and Morgan thrown in to complete the medley.

My LG45 was running well, fresh

success Silverstone's from Donington is a "local" track to where I live in the Midlands. I was in an early practice which meant being track-side by 7.30 am and any benefit of waking in my own bed was somewhat lost as a result. I roped in my good neighbour, Darren Shotter, who provided a very useful lap board and we got to the circuit a bit bleary eyed. Practice went well and despite the early start and lack of sleep, I gridded 10th on about row five. I then awaited the race in the afternoon in a "relaxed" family encampment! All my family and friends had come to watch.

And so to the race, I did not have a co-driver so I was set to do the whole of the two 45 minute races on my own with the obligatory pit stop in each race. Robert Harley made it to the start of the race and Alan in Duncan Arthurs' 3 litre Bentley was doing the first stint further back the grid.

The scratch start went well for me and I immediately picked up a few places from people not quite used to vintage gear changes. (easy for me to say with a synchromesh Alvis gearbox!). By the end of lap one my pit crew, made up of Dad and Darren, indicated from the pit wall that I was already in 8th Place.

After 20 minutes, cars started to stream into the pits for driver changes. Many of the cars were being shared, often by a semi pro and an owner driver (as in the case of Brown and Arthurs). However this meant that those of us with no friends with International Licenses had to do a pit stop to emulate a driver change where I would have to run around the car. This done, I was back out on the track in a very quick time.

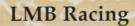
The following 25 minutes were fantastic, the car ran like a dream and I really enjoyed driving the curves of the Donington Park Circuit. It was nigh on impossible to say who was where in the second half of that first race, although my pit crew kept me informed of how long I had left which I found invaluable. The flag dropped after 45 minutes and to my great surprise and delight I was



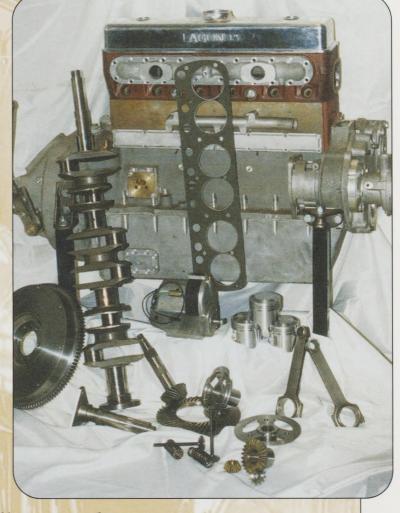
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Nick Hine, with his assistant Darren Trotter at Donington.



Nick runs around the car to simulate a driver change - not as easy as it looks!

ushered over to the winners section as I had come a fantastic second. In fact the only car that had beaten me was a very fast 1935 Alfa Romeo P3 Tipo B, which was really from a different world of motor racing. So, another great victory for our team. The engine ran "sweet as a nut" for the whole 45 minutes and when interviewed on the podium I again stated that "I would not have been here at all if it had not been for my Father". Which of course is true on so many levels!

Our euphoria was shattered during the intermission between the two races as, we had a major mishap which caused the engine to be stuck at full throttle for 6 seconds at over 6000 rpm. We were all heart-broken when the engine was gingerly restarted only to sound like a bag of bolts. Luckily Dad was once again on hand and stepped up to the bonnet, took off his tie and tweed jacket, rolled up his shirt sleeves and began to dismantle a very hot engine in the paddock. He removed the rockers. extracted the push rods and found that five of the 12 were badly bent. I had brought four spares from Knarr Mill and we agreed to replace the worst and keep the one that was least bent. He replaced the rockers, set the gaps and we restarted the engine. It sounded better, but we had no way of knowing what other damage had been done. I meekly test drove down the lanes around the back of Donington, keeping the revs well down. The engine felt OK and the discussion then ensued as to whether we should race in the second half of the two race event.

After much debate, it was agreed that I could complete the race but I must keep the revs below 3500 rpm. The second race was set to be a different affair. Alan and Duncan were still in the race in the 3 litre Bentley, Robert had not finished the first race due to overheating problems, but was persevering and was also the last race.

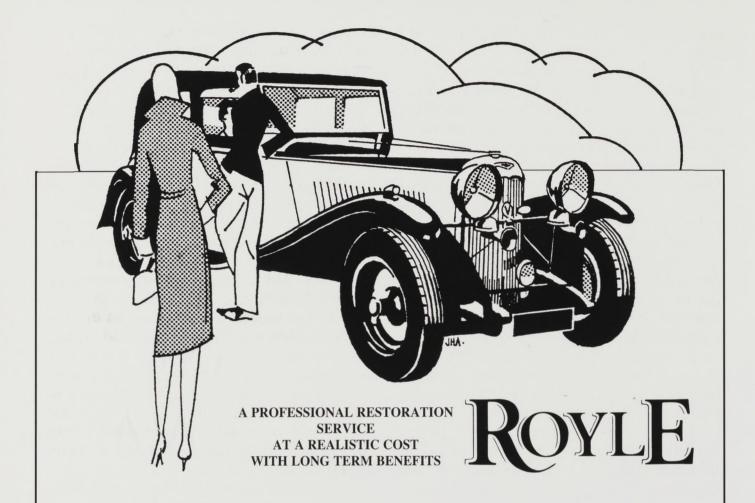
So I took my place on the grid based on my fastest time and nervously pulled away for another 45 minutes of nail biting racing. I found that I could hold my position at about 10th if I kept my revs to 3500rpm, but then a heart stopping moment! Coming down the home straight I heard a tremendous rattle from the car. I lifted off but the rattle remained. My heart was in my mouth as I had pictures in my head of pistons hanging out of the side of the engine and worse of all the pictures of my Father's face as he looks at the destroyed engine. I coasted into the pits and quickly turned off the engine. Dad and Darren came running and I leaped out. expecting a pool of oil!

But no oil was present. Up with the bonnet and in fact the engine still looked as though it had just come out of the workshop. So where had the rattle come from? We started shaking the wings and wheels and then found it, a bracket that held up the exhaust had sheared a bolt and was hanging down. Off with tail and we tried to remove the exhaust, it was a bit hot but it would not budge. A kindly scrutineer offered cable ties to fix it, and then insisted that we use them. They were about as effective as an ash tray on a motorbike, but we fitted them anyway. I had now been in the pits for about 8 minutes and I carefully rejoined the race and finished 14th overall 5 laps down on the leader. But I did finish in one piece!

Alan and Duncan also finished, but Robert again suffered with overheating. Even with all of this I got an aggregate of 10th overall and I came third in class.

As I drove home from Donington, listening carefully to the engine, I again thought how different it would all be with out the support of my long-suffering Father.

The "Old Lag" was driven to Knarr Mill shortly after the events at Donington for a good looking at and all the push rods were changed as well as a full service. We couldn't find anything further to do so it was given a clean bill of health and I readied myself for VSCC Oulton Park at the end of the month. In the mean time we had also been cajoled into entering another of the Legends



There is something about Lagondas that appeals to people, whether it is the styling, the fine engineering or the quality of the coachwork. Whichever it is it certainly attracted me, I have owned and enjoyed Lagondas for forty years. This company was founded because of them and our long established team of craftsmen and engineers have now restored over 700 motor cars in our Staindrop workshops (not all of them Lagondas!)

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Race Series, this time at Porto in

Portugal.

Oulton Park was a major outing for Lagondas, Tim Gresty encouraged his colleagues at the Northern Lagonda Factory and northern area to bring their cars to the track and many of the cars and owners were there as track cars for the day. The weather was dry but with a crisp wind. I had only entered two Race one saw David handicap races. Fletcher Jones in his Rapier and David Brock Jest in his very quick V12 Le Mans Replica. I was in race Four which turned out to be a slow Handicap. By this I mean that my Lag sits on the cusp between the faster special VSCC cars such as the single seater Rileys, Napier Bentleys and ERAs and the slower more standard VSCC racers such as the Austin Sevens, 3 Litre Bentlevs and Lea Francis.

This means that there are two types of Handicap races, fast ones, where I am set off at the front of the field as the "Limit Man" with a head start which can be over one minute plus others. The second type of handicap would be one where I am set off at the back as the "Scratch Man", and I call these the slow handicaps. It is like the "hare and hounds" scenario, sometimes you are the hare and you run breathlessly, scared, always looking in your rear view mirror, and sometimes you are the hound, eyes popping, tongue lolling, and barking

loudly as you give chase.

One of the most exciting parts of a VSCC handicap race is, if the handicappers get it right, all the cars should finish at the same time or at least very close together. I have been in many races where I have been the Limit man, the "hare" if you like, and have led the race for four of the five laps only to have been caught by a chasing pack on the last couple of corners to finish out of the

points.

I had a one minute 40 second wait on the start line to set off last, very definitely the biggest hound. As I was preparing myself for the race Dad found a minute from organising the track cars (he can be a very busy man) to whisper in my "shell-like" that the car had not had much testing since Donington and as parting shot he said "Remember Porto" meaning that I should not go daft now as we had other races already booked later in the year.

in the year.

I trundled out on to the track and found my place at the back of the grid. I was set off on the 12th drop of the flag 20 seconds behind the next car with 27 cars ahead of me. I was quite surprised how quickly I caught the main pack and really enjoyed threading myself between people having their own private battles. It is important to be courteous in events such as this and I always try to thank those who move aside to let me through and apologise to those whom I inadvertently cut up, with a brief hand wave. I genuinely know how it feels to have a car nearly twice your speed bearing down on you as you enter into a tight corner.

I was ploughing my way through the field and by lap three I found myself coming upon the lead cars. I popped out in the lead on the last lap and had virtually a whole lap to myself, which was a little embarrassing. But it did not diminish my elation to bag my second win of the year. It has been many years since the VSCC raced at Oulton Park, but I had grown up watching Dad, Roger Firth, Nigel Hall, Herb Schofield, Alistair Barker and Alan Brown race there as it was our local track and I was overjoyed to have won there for my first time. was interviewed after the race and yet again, this time with a spec of sentiment, I thanked my Dad for making it all happen. I was wonderful to win in front

of a home crowd.

In a rather "topsy turvy" way I complained to the handicappers (much to their surprise) that they had in fact been too lenient with my handicap. I had one more handicap race and the handicappers added an extra 30 second handicap to my final race. This again was a slow handicap and I was last off with nearly 2 minutes of sitting on the

grid. I finished 14th, 35 seconds behind the leader! But the car performed flawlessly and was still oil tight at the end of the day.

Other Lagonda Club racers were Alan Brown and Duncan Arthurs in his Invicta, Ben Fiddler in his Rapier and Alistair Barker in his V 12 Le Mans Rep. My apologies for any of those that I have missed.

I drove the old girl home to Lichfield without any problems and since then I have competed in the VSCC Competitive Eastern Rally and driven over 1400 miles on a return trip to Le Mans to celebrate 70th anniversary of our win.

Articles written by others will deal

with this fantastic trip, but I will mention that Alan Brown was my long suffering co-pilot on the celebration rally to Le Mans. He had been, let me say, "encouraged" to limit my enthusiasm on the rally especially on the three parade laps around the track. He was great company throughout the whole trip, but did have the annoying habit of saying to me "Remember Porto" when ever I pressed the loud pedal too hard. Now I wonder who told him to do that?

Foot note: All the Legend Race Series results can be found online at the following address:

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# **Labour of Love or Mid-Life Crisis?**

#### David Stone-Lee embarks on a heroic restoration

OWNING A 6000 mile 1981 MGB LE Tourer in just off production line condition seemed a perfect way to recapture my youth but in the end just was not the cure for a midlife motor crisis. With a 50th birthday looming, my immacculate MGB just did not provide either the inspiration or the leisure distraction I needed. Having been a Rover Company engineering apprentice at Solihull in the 1960's, I decided that I wanted to get back to basics with a suitable restoration project.

I was running a Jaguar dealership at the time and my first instinct was to find a Jaguar Mk V drophead. It offered elegance but would be be a practical tourer, which would not only reach various destinations but have a good chance of getting home again afterwards.

Luckily, I had not discovered a suitable Jaguar before I noticed an advert in "The Automobile" for a rather dilapidated Lagonda 2.6 DHC and was struck immediately by its elegant proportions and flowing lines. It was obvious the car had not been on the road for many years but a deal was struck and the Lagonda eventually trailered home.

My first task, the first of many contacts with the Forshaw family at Aston Service Dorset, was to buy reprints of the owner's handbook, workshop manual and parts manual. I also obtained a photocopy of the works records for the Lagonda, first registered on 9th June 1950 as a demonstrator with Cyril Williams Motors in Wolverhampton. The second task was, of course, to join the Lagonda club in July 1992.

It was obvious a total restoration was needed. It was to be a long task. The family joke was that the car would need to be ready for my son's wedding. It is lucky he was in no hurry to march up the aisle (in fact, 12 years later he tells me I'm well ahead of schedule!).

When I had removed the car's seats, boot lid, doors, bonnet and front wing assembly it was time to enlist some muscle from my son's college rugby team, bribed with beer, to help lift off the body so I could concentrate on the rolling chassis renovation.

The engine was the first major unit to be removed and stripped down with many photographs to remind me how to put it all back together again. I have taken about 900 photos in all of my car and other owners' 2.6s over 12 years — my family now quake with dread at the sight of photo albums.

A long crack had been patched up with brass plates and lots of BA nuts and bolts on the induction side of the cylinder block. Once stripped, the block was taken to Technistitch Ltd in Coalville, Leicestershire to be reinforced on the inside, and the split fusion welded. The exterior webs were refabricated where they had been ground off for the previous plated repair.

Meanwhile the cylinder head was skimmed, new valve guides fitted, valve seats and all but one new valve refaced. The crankshaft was crack tested, journals built up and finish ground by R.J.D. Hillthorne Ltd. in Hayes, Middlesex - an amazing place stacked to the roof with hundreds of crankshafts, everything from an Austin Seven to a Sherman tank.

One of the most interesting aspects I have found with long-term restoration is trying to find out who can do things or supply parts and, once found. discovering all the other projects these firms are handling. Often drawing back an innocuous back-street garage door

revealed a hive of engineering activity.

When I had collected the cylinder block back from Technistitch it went to Eric Neve at Barcombe, East Sussex for the machining needed after the intense heat required, for cast iron fusion welding substantially distorted all horizontal and vertical friction and mating surfaces.

The main bearing carrier bores had to be line bored, together with machining for the cylinder liner seatings square to top face of the block and rebored to true them up. In turn, patterns for oversize main bearing "cheeses" had to be made and cast and machined, together with

new oversize liner castings.

The front face and rear face were refaced square to cylinder block top face and lower face machined square and parallel to top of block. What a pity a replacement block was not available in 1994!

With the crankshaft, con rods, pistons, flywheel, clutch and front pulley balanced, Eric Neve completed the basic assembly. He had to conduct any final machining of the liners to provide just enough compression of the copper liner seals at the base of the block once the cylinder head and gasket were attached and to finish any grinding of the ends of the valve stems necessary to provide the correct tappet clearances.

Next I assembled the remainder of the engine once every part was stripped and cleaned. I spent a long time poring over the valve timing with protractors and dial gauge probes down the bores. Eventually the "penny dropped" with extra help from a template which straddled both camshafts to ensure they were in harmony with each other.

The twin carburettor assembly and the electrically operated starting carburettor were despatched to The Carburettor Centre in London for complete refurbishment. Meanwhile, I set about stripping, cleaning, refurbishing, sometimes replacing and polishing where necessary all of the remaining ancillary engine parts ready for fitting once the renovations to the chassis and suspension were completed.

Having read about oil pressure or lack of it for the W.O.Bentley 2.6 and 3 litre engines, I had asked Eric Neve to have a close look at the oil pump. It was decided new gears would not be required, but all the component parts were refaced to include the smallest realistic tolerances on re-assembly.

The chassis had now been completely stripped and taken to a local metalwork and metal finishing company who grit blasted it and re-fabricated weakened parts and those bits that disappeared altogether in the process.

It left me with the nitty gritty work in my garage, where visiting house guests never failed to be unimpressed by what looked to them nothing like a car. I set about stripping, cleaning, sand blasting, painting and reassembling all the suspension, brakes and final drive assemblies with new bearings, seals and shims when needed. It included a new king pin upper ball, all new wheel cylinders and brake linings. And although the master cylinder looked very rough from the outside, the inner bore was pretty clean and I got away with polishing the piston and bore and renewing the seals.

The steering rack seemed sound so I cleaned it all thoroughly and kept on pumping grease through it until it came out clean. All of the bellows and rubbers required renewal some being available from Aston Service and some renewed from other unrelated devices which happened to fit or could be adapted to fit.

The gear box and final drive units looked alright and were just cleaned and fitted with new oil seals and gaskets and flushed through with several oil changes. The original steering column gear change was exchanged for a central gear change conversion from the late Richard Forshaw at Aston Service. It is now a delight to use.

I was very fortunate to receive a lot of advice from Richard during the running chassis element of my



The body tub now ready for repainting.



Tim Hastings' beautiful new ash framing.



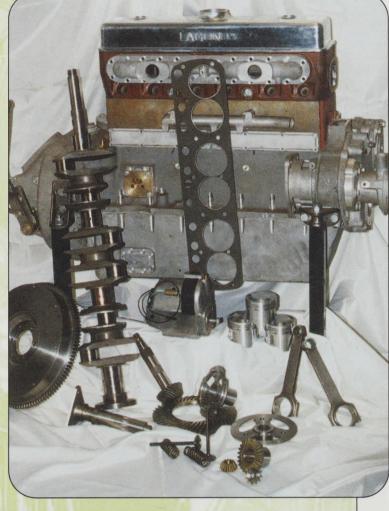
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restoration and luckily he also found me a very clean secondhand petrol tank, which just needed a little bit of fettling by a local radiator company. It replaced my original, which was very badly rusted inside and beyond repair. More recently Simon at Aston Service has hunted through their stock for odd bits and pieces and often come up trumps.

I will skip over lots of detail/years between here and when I eventually finished the rolling chassis and had it wired up so that I could start the engine with a key complete with oil pressure, temperature and ammeter gauges whilst I

set about the bodywork.

Time flies when you are enjoying yourself. By now it was 1998 and I had been busy trying to discover someone able to take on the basic Lagonda body reconstruction. The body is based on a steel bulkhead, floor and rear end /wheel arch pod to which the woodwork and panels are added. It then fits to the chassis via four silent bloc bushes.

Eventually Tim Hastings, of H & H Coach-building based at South Stoke, near Goring-on-Thames, said he would take on restoring the ash frame and Dick Hamlet, from the same complex at the Old Vicarage, would renovate the steel body pod and all the aluminium panels including refitting them to new ash framing where it had been renewed and blending in new metalwork where the original was beyond repair.

Building a new replica Le Mans body for a 1930's car was, I was told and could see from jobs in progress, much easier than figuring out how my original ash framing, some of which had disappeared years ago, should be reformulated. The ash framing could not be started until the mild steel body pod, which turned out to be a triple rust sandwich in many places, had new metal dovetailed in, including a whole new integral rear body mounting beam.

Tim and Dick's experience, together with a fair share of head scratching, inspiration and quite a few months transformed my wreck of a body into a very sound carriage ready for the next stage.

Without the fear of scratching any paint, I now put the little grey cells to work in deciding how to produce a hood frame assembly from the few bits of rotten wood and metal that had originally been shoved in the boot of the car when it was first collected.

Christopher Zimmerlie, another club member who was listed in our club register as a 2.6 DHC owner not far away in London, told me his car was unrestored and kept miles away. But he had lent a piece of his frame to another owner from Cambridgeshire for copying, who had just completed restoring his frame and had not yet covered it.

A phone call later and I was winging my way through the Dartford Tunnel with camera, tape measure and sketch pad. It soon became obvious that I was missing some vital bits, but Christopher offered an almost complete frame. He also lent me some of the missing bits from his original frame so that I could copy the substantial metal mid section hinge arms and the finisher to the front windscreen beam.

I decided to start my frame fabrication by making rough finished centre uprights and working forward to the windscreen with some original woodwork stripped of the thin aluminium cladding plus some newly fabricated wooden side members and front beam. Next, I worked backwards to the boot incorporating the pram irons.

It might be that my carpentry skills are somewhat lacking but it took me at least four months taking the frame on and off to shave off slithers to change angles slightly, endlessly re-measuring before it would fit, fold up and down and lock out the pram irons when up.

I then re-clad the wooden members which surround the side windows with all but one of the original bits of aluminium, made up the remaining piece and prepared them for painting and made up new hardwood trims for this timber surrounding the side windows.

I borrowed an old body mounting platform from one of my old firm's coach shops and adapted it so I could mount the Lagonda body via its four mounting points. So I set about dismantling again everything that could be removed; wings, boot, doors, front assembly etc. and mounting the remains to the platform.

Then it was a question of rubber gloves up to the arm pits, two gallons of paint stripper, wire wool and a couple of weeks hard labour until every scrap of the paint had been removed from all the panels inside and out. Who said vintage

cars are glamorous?

It was time for a dummy run to fit all of the interior trim woodwork including the dashboard, door trims and cappings. It meant much shortening and lengthening for them to fit the reworked body and doors before I stripped off what remained of the old veneer on the dashboard and door trims.

Chapman & Cliff in Cheshire had the job for re-veneering all the woodwork in burr walnut and polishing. I was delighted with the finished product and used the same two-pack plastic coating treatment myself on all of the interior cappings and wooden hood frame trims. The last stage in the coating process seemed almost miraculous, when the surface, which had been rubbed down several times with wet & dry, was finally polished with burnishing cream to provide a mirror like finish.

My steering wheel was in pretty dire condition. The chrome had peeled off the flat spokes, the plastic coating was split and peeling away from the spokes and there were other cracks around the rim. Professional restoration enquiries produced expensive results and it was off to internet searches to try and find a cheaper self help solution without

compromising quality.

The Complete Automobilist firm was flagged up and a black steering wheel kit

purchased for 10% of the cost of professional refurbishment. With the help of some two pack epoxy, G-clamps, the kit and a few hours a very satisfying result was achieved.

The search was now on to try and find a fairly local paintshop for the final treatment to the body off the chassis so that the bulkhead and underneath could be finished in the final gloss colour, Aston Martin Buckingham Green, with all the panels being prepared and

painted separately.

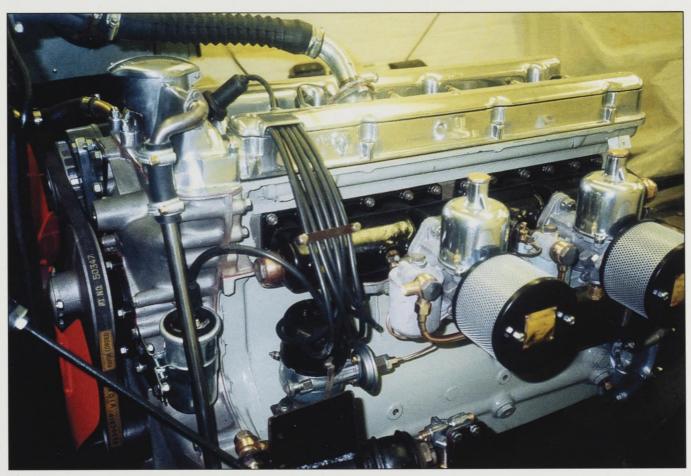
Yet another lucky discovery produced STC Coachworks at Seaford, East Sussex. Run by John Pudsey and his sons Gary and Darren, they were really interested in my project and produced a marvellous job. John fitted the doors to the pod and mounted the body onto the chassis and it was time for me to put it all back together again once I had worked out how best to fit new piping without scratching the paint.

I fitted all the instruments and switches to the dash, purchased a new loom with additions so that I could operate the original semaphore indicators alongside with modern flashers and enlisted the help of an electrician to complete the

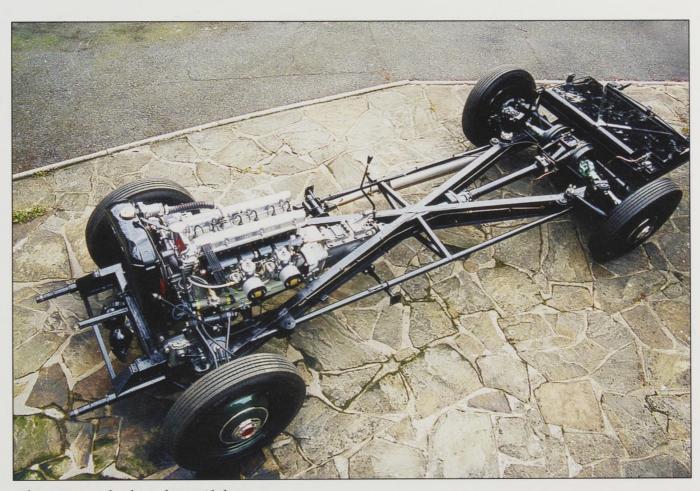
installation.

By now my Lagonda was actually beginning to look like a car. I set about mending bits of upholstery frame in the rear arm rest assemblies, making sure the new plywood door panels made earlier still fitted, mending and remaking bits of seat frame mechanisms, sticking, stitching and re-colouring the seats and re-fitting them.

It was now May 2003 and was time at last to drive the car to the garage for its first MOT: a nervous moment. Gerald Dale, of Gerald Dale Motorsport in Ninfield, was recommended to tune the engine using his rolling road. Once he had sorted out the best plug specification to suit the Lagonda it was transformed into a delight to drive - albeit rather gingerly until confidence in my work had been established.



Fully restored engine.



Chassis now looking beautiful.



The refurbished interior, now looking stunning.



This really is the car shown on page 23, what a superb restoration!

I even ventured to a Southern Area social meeting at Goodwood House in West Sussex with a full compliment of passengers, luckily it didn't rain as the Lagonda still had no side windows or hood covering.

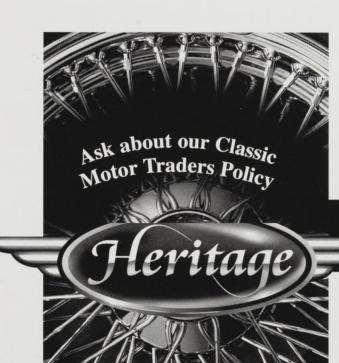
My 60th birthday loomed in April 2004 and my wife Polly and I planned a celebration lunch for our friends, combined with an official launch of the Lagonda. The race was on to find someone to cover the hood, re-carpet the car and now that we had decided that we liked the colour selected for the upholstery to go the whole hog and have the seats completely recovered.

Membership of the Lagonda Club came to the rescue again when I was almost in despair of finding a trimmer in whom I would have confidence: I am a bit fussy. Another owner, Malcolm Burgess, suggested I visit Paul Bird of The Surrey Trimming Co. in West Byfleet, who had worked on his brother's Wolselev 14/60 Maltby drophead.

Paul and Steve had really professional looking facilities obviously had the skill and enthusiasm I wanted. They gave me advice and samples of leather, hooding materials and carpet whilst persuading me out of having contrasting seat piping which in the end I recognise would not have suited my car although they did let me have contrasting door pulls!

A work schedule was agreed so the car was finished for my birthday bash and they met the deadline, living up to and exceeding my expectations with a couple of days to spare.

Many trials and tribulations now solved have been omitted here - but time is now spent wrestling with maps to discover suitable tours in the Lagonda. I think even Polly is recognising a midlife crisis has its advantages.



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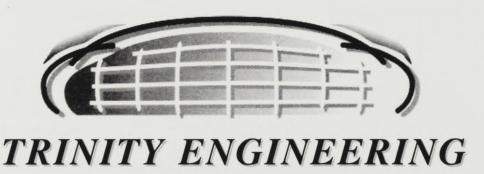
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Post War Aston Martin and Lagonda Specialists

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If you need to know more and find out if we really know what we are talking about, telephone Tim and let him convince you.

In addition, let us send you our Services Fact Sheet on how we can make your Post War Lagonda a more usable and enjoyable experience.

Contact Tim Butcher: 01932 862040

RESTORING THE PAST WITH ENGINEERING OF THE FUTURE

## **Letters**

Dear Uncle Guru,

Did you know that our esteemed Editor has a very distinguished and interesting international reputation as an editor of Vintage and Classic Car Club Magazines with over 40 years experience, as well as being an excellent host of parties for motoring enthusiasts? We are indeed fortunate in having such an accomplished and experienced Editor who always produces a well balanced and interesting quality magazine.

This recently came to my notice when reading the Malaysian and Singapore Vintage Car Register Monthly Magazine of October 1968 edited by one K. P. Painter. There was a photograph and a paragraph about a 2 Litre Lagonda then in Brunei that I subsequently acquired in 1979, some time after its owner John Elton had brought it to Sydney Australia.

Also in the same magazine there was article titled "A Blast in Changi" confirming our editor's renowned party prowess. (Dare you to print it in The Lagonda Ken). Sorry, no space, perhaps next issue. K.P.P. The high standard of the M&SVCR monthly magazine back in the 1960s, a 32 page glossy was as good to read as The Lagonda is now.

Quite a number of the goings on in the Vintage Car fraternity of Malaya and Singapore reported in their magazine were much wilder than trousers at half mast, but they were fun times among motoring enthusiasts.

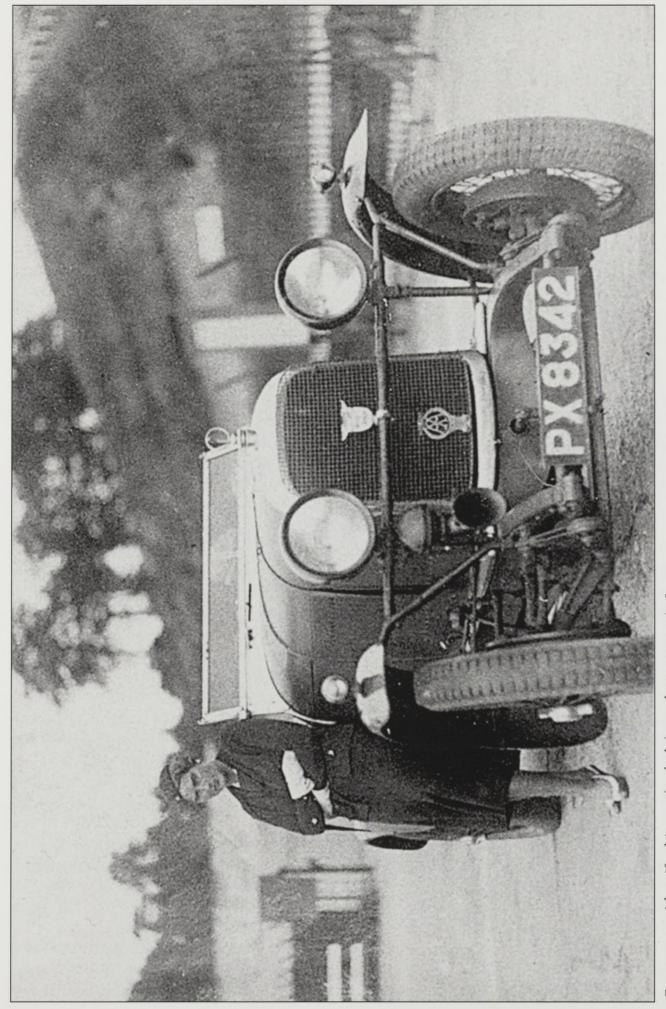
Our Editor pleasantly surprised me in the Spring 2005 issue of The Lagonda in which he published two colour pictures of my 2 Litre Lagonda undergoing an engine rebuild a couple of years ago out on our grazing property some 230 kilometres west of Sydney. I imagine that our editor had some sudden nostalgia for his Singapore days when this Lagonda and its many owners out there were well known to him and prompted him to include something about its recent engine rebuild far away in the Australian bush.

It is interesting to note that Singapore is still attracting some great classic cars, my Speed 25 Alvis DHC a very attractive Charlesworth original has recently taken up residence there.

Lagondas are thin on the ground in this country and even more so 1928 Speed Model 2 Litre Lagondas. Indeed we are a long way from the Lagonda Spares and our poor exchange rate plus freight and duty make them rather costly so we do make many parts locally. However for those complex parts and Lagonda advice we are only a phone call or email away from the Club and all the expertise going right back to the days of Ivan Forshaw and the late Phil Ridout, Alan Hancock and others. Keeping a Lagonda going here would be much more difficult without them.

During the 1950s and 1960s. Ivan Forshaw wrote many detailed technical papers on the repair and maintenance of the 2 Litres. Have these been collected and published? If not it would be well worth doing.

At the end of May we are taking the 2 Litre on a 3500 km. tour up to Gladestone and inland in Queensland



Can anyone identify this car (or lady), see letter opposite?

with the VSCCofA to join the Vintage Car Club of Queensland in their 50th Anniversary Tour. We will visit Jim Whitehead and his many Lagondas at Walcha in the high country of the New England on our way to Queensland. Perhaps a report on this major event in Australia may be of interest later on. (Yes please! K.P.P.)

Yes please! K.P.P.) Kind regards

Peter Docker

Dear Mr Bugler

It is with very much sadness that I have to tell you that my husband, Eric Macey, who is on your mailing list died on April 3rd. He was not a car owner, but looked forward very much to receiving every copy of the "Lagonda" magazine. They are full of interest and nostalgia and contain many letters from old employees of Staines reminiscing about old friends and past memories.

Eric joined the Lagonda as a junior draughtsman in 1938 at the age of 19. At this time, Frank Ayto (Spud!) was the senior draughtsman. As a member of the Territorial Army he was mobilized in 1939 into the Royal Engineers and spent most of the war years in the Middle East. After being demobbed in 1946, he rejoined Lagonda; again working in the drawing office and Spud Ayto was still in charge. Eric's biggest job at that time was working on the Cotal gearbox. I believe he did the final general assembly for this.

There were four other Maceys working at the Lagonda at his time – Eric's father Ernie who went on to receive a Long Service Certificate for 32 loyal years – also his father's three brothers – Ralph as a blacksmith, Ken went into the Assembly shop and Ronald, like his dad, as a toolmaker.

In September 1947 Eric and his father went to Canada for a year, but

returned to find that David Brown had bought up the manufacturing rights of the Lagonda cars and had moved to Feltham. Once again he rejoined the firm in December 1948 and remained there for a further seven years, continuing to work on design and detailing of both Lagonda and Aston Martin cars. His salary in 1948 commenced at £7.10s.0d. per week plus a living bonus of £1.14s.6d.

I was with Eric on that exciting day in June 1995 when so many old Lagonda cars amassed in Sainsbury's car park to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of the victory of a Lagonda car in the 1935 Le Mans 24 hour race. What a truly wonderful sight - gleaming cars and proud owners. Eric met again many old colleagues and spent many hours looking and chatting. We were there at the end to see each car off with a wave on its journey to France. I remember Eric saying he felt a little humble and even a little proud that in some small way he had been given a chance to be part of such a famous name.

Thank you again for the many years that you have kept in touch and for the many pleasurable hours Eric had reading your magazine.

My best wishes to you and everybody at the Lagonda Club.

Sincerely,

**Mrs Phyllis Macey** 

Dear Mr Bugler

I found this picture of a Lagonda years ago in a photo album, along with many other period motoring pics.

The pictures were all taken in 1933, and the Lagonda was taken at Brooklands, next to the test hill.

Judging from the other pictures in the album, the 'Lagonda' family (whose album it was) was on first name terms with Malcom Campbell and

Raymond Mays.

I wondered if the car still exists - if so the picture would be of interest to the current owner.

Regards,

Chris Keevill. (The Early M.G. Society)

Dear Friends,

My 1934 M45 is heading for England shortly. Christopher Claridge-Ware is the new proud owner.

I am very pleased that it will be heading "home" and am particularly happy that it will be "run" and not stored in an American museum. Christopher is just the fellow who will make sure that "Bessy" is on the road again and the car will be among like members of the mark

at club events in the UK.

It was not an easy decision to say the least. I bought the M45 back in 1969 from Roger Gillbanks, a rubber plantation manager from Australia. After one of the Singapore Grand Prix vintage class races, I got "first refusal" rights on the vehicle. It had been shipped from England to Malaya in the early 1950's by a doctor

and was an active participant in many Malaysian & Singapore Register club events.

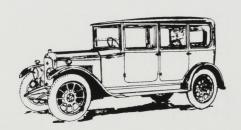
When the Robinson family was transferred by Mobil Oil from Singapore to Durban, South Africa in 1970 both Lagondas (now being part of the family) went with us. It was run in many club events and family weekend outings in the Natal Province. It arrived in Alaska in 1974 and survived many cold winters and beautiful summers (no overheating problems up there!)

It spent two years at Hartley Wintney getting an extensive overhaul in the late 1980's. More recently, under the faithful, expert care of Jim Walters in Victoria, BC, the engine, transmission, etc., were brought up to a very high standard of restoration. I am grateful to Jim for that effort and feel that Chris will be receiving the vehicle in the best shape it has been in for decades.

The Robinsons will continue to be Lagonda Club members, by the way, because one just doesn't disassociate with such marvelous, supportive friends after 39 years!

All the best,

**Marianne Robinson** 



## NEW PREMISES NEW ADDRESS



BishopGray have now moved to larger premises and, as usual, will be happy to discuss any work required on all pre-war Lagondas from total restorations to routine servicing and competition preparation.

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### A Clutch of Cars for Servicing



Who said we only know Invictas? Here we have a Derby Bentley, Lagonda 16/80, S Type Invicta and 2 litre Lagonda.

This month I let the whole team out for a breather in the sunshine, except for Sue, who is camera shy!

We all hope you are enjoying your summer motoring and that the trusty steeds are behaving. If not bring them in for a free appraisal of the problem over a cup of tea or coffee.

GOING RALLYING, RACING OR JUST POTTERING? TALK TO US.

PS. One of our 4.5 litre Nags has just produced 210 British Horse Power after a visit to the Dyno and she feels a lot better!

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