

**THE MAGAZINE OF THE
LAGONDA CLUB**

Number 213

Summer 2007

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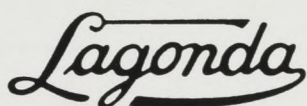
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FRONT COVER

The fabulous Treasury facade at Petra. See "Letters" page 37.



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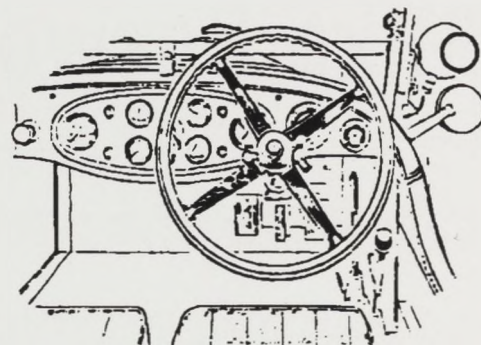
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From the Driving Seat

Ken Painter



ONE OF THE perils of getting older is that those incidents that kinder friends dismiss as "senior moments" occur ever more frequently. There were at least two in the last magazine, there may have been more, but these are the only ones brought to my notice... I have known Gordon Rider since 1959, when I first joined the Lagonda Club and had the good fortune to be stationed in Yorkshire by a benevolent Royal Air Force. The Lagonda Club friends I made then remain friends still, so why did I confuse his name with that of John Ryder, with whom I can only claim a friendship dating from 1970, when I returned from Singapore and moved to Staffordshire? Sorry Gordon, I will try very hard not to do it again!

My second "senior moment" was just as silly. A few years ago I was privileged to drive Steve Lawrence's 1913 11.1 cabriolet around the display area at the Annual General Meeting. It is a remarkable car, with probably the quickest steering I have ever experienced and it demands great care if it is to be driven safely on modern roads. It is also the oldest car I have ever driven and I treasure the all too

short joy of that brief drive. So why did I describe the car as the Elphinstone 11.9?

The moral is simple. When you save a photograph, make a note on the back of the car's details, the name of the owner or driver, the date the picture was taken and the place. At the very least, it will save you the acute embarrassment of making a total fool of yourself as I did and, at best, future motoring historians will bless you for your foresight when, in years to come, they find your photographic masterpiece on an autojumble stall. I collect old and interesting motoring photos and trying to work out the "who, what, when and where" can be a real challenge for any serious researcher if no details are listed at the time the picture was taken.

To show you what I mean, or to give you the opportunity to prove me wrong, the picture on page 8 was sent to Colin Bugler recently and we can't identify the date, the people, or the place. Can any of our readers help? No prizes are offered, but you will get your name in the next Magazine!

***Last date for copy for the
Spring Magazine is
... Saturday 29th September 2007 ...***

Mike Bosworth

Colin Bugler pays tribute to one of our pioneer members

OUR HONORARY FOUNDER Member, Mike Bosworth, died on the 8th May 2007 after a short fight with cancer. He was a few weeks short of his 86th birthday.

Mike was very instrumental in the joining together of the 2 Litre Register (where he was Treasurer and later joint Secretary) and the Lagonda Car Club. This was not a seamless union as some individuals felt very strongly that it should not happen and it is very clear from reading the Minutes of 2 Litre Committee Meetings that it was Mike's quiet and thoughtful representations that were a significant factor in the eventual birth of the Lagonda Club. He became Vice Chairman of the combined Clubs.

In the late 1930's Mike joined the Territorial Army and, during the Second World War, he was commissioned and commanded a troop of light anti-aircraft guns. He served through the North West Europe campaign ending up in Hamburg. On demobilisation he returned to the UK with a Mark II Aston Martin which he had "liberated" and he rejoined the TA partly to make use of the unit workshops! Mike joined the 2 Litre Register in 1947 and the Lagonda Car Club in 1948 when he owned a 1928 High Chassis 2 litre (LPL 678).

After war service he became articled to the well known Accountants, Peat Marwick and later he was "borrowed" by the then Minister of Transport, Barbara Castle, and appointed to the Board of British Rail. This appointment lasted for the rest of his working life and he survived three different Chairmen which was no mean feat. There is a Lagonda

Club legend that, during the first Lagonda Club Le Mans Rally in 1985, the Club was using British Rail Cross Channel ferry "Sealink" and, when a member's 2 litre failed on the dockside before boarding the ferry, Mike arranged for the crew to get the Lagonda on board and repair it during the crossing.

I first met him in the early 1990's when I was behind the Club stall at the Beaulieu Auto jumble and he arrived seeking parts for an LG45 he was rebuilding. Mike eventually completed the LG with a special body to his own design but then found that the traditional LG45 heavy steering was a bit of a problem so he sold this car to Mark Butterworth who campaigned it very successfully in races and rallies for some years. I was pleased to have met him as I had been intending to make contact regarding the history of the Club's formation. It was arranged for me to visit his home in Dorset and a very pleasant evening was spent with him and his charming wife, Pat, while he reminisced over the early days of the Club.

It is clear that Mike was very much a family man and the Lagonda Club's condolences go to Pat, their son Tim, daughter Mandy and the grandchildren. Mike's funeral was extremely well attended with very many relatives and friends paying their respects. The Club was represented by several members and Peter Gray brought his LG45 (the ex Henry Coates/John Harris car) as a fitting tribute. The funeral service had been arranged in detail beforehand by Mike himself and ended with a tape recording of an M45 accelerating into the distance.

Early Experiences With 2 Litres

An article written by Mike Bosworth in the days of the 2 Litre Register, but never submitted for publication

THE ONLY OBJECT of this article is to stop the Editor from pestering me in the future, so the wise reader will now turn over and read Ivan Forshaw's Technical Topics.

It has been suggested that I could write on my "2,000 Mile Trouble-Free Tour of Europe", but that will be difficult because it was not trouble-free, or on "Why I Own a 2 Litre", but that would be too simple since it is only because I can't afford a D.B. II. Other people have been more unkind, with such suggestions as "Duck Shooting From a Submarine", or "Motor Body Building From Sardine Tins". So instead I will simply refer to my Lagonda troubles since 1936.

At the age of 15, I very nearly acquired a brand new 4½ litre tourer, this near catastrophe arose through the over-enthusiasm of a salesman at a now non-existent Hanover Square establishment dealing in fine carriages for gentlemen. My enquiries and desire for literature regarding the famous marque had resulted in a phone call to my house-master, suggesting a demonstration run, my house-master, knowing that I had just purchased white mice with my weekly pocket money, assumed that I was now insolvent and put an end to what would have been an interesting test run. Since then I have never got near to owning a 4½.

A bull-nose Morris in 1939, cost price £7-10-0, sale price £5-0-0 to the same dealer and a Riley 1928 tourer in the early years of the war did not put an end to my schoolboy desires for a Lagonda and so, with the aid of a gratuity

and a Mk II Aston Martin, picked up in Hamburg (Did someone say loot?), the search started. Prices of 2 litres at this time ranged from £595 in the Staines area to some so-called "Real Snips" at 400 guineas in the Paddington area. However, the purchase of a 3 litre Bentley because it had an outside handbrake, another of my schoolboy desires, only tended to confirm my longing for a Lagonda (The Technical Advisor may not agree with this) and finally an exchange was made - with a small(?) cash adjustment for a most glamorous black and white machine, shod with 16 x 7.50 tyres, the resultant heaviness of the steering was not noticed after my previous vehicle. This car had a badly finished weld on the cylinder head, through which water leaked and filled up the No 1 plug hole, it caused me great anxiety, but on seeing the car again quite recently I was able to put the owner's mind at rest, since it was still the same after five years.

Financial worries, something most Lagonda owners know quite a lot about, forced me to dispose of the car after 18 months for £425 - yes, a small profit!, and then followed a period of motoring in a 1923 12/50 Duck's back Alvis, acquired for £90. The car was one of the first of its type, with a cone clutch of the 12/40 period; it used no oil or water, had no silencer and would go up Pebble Hill near Dorking in 3rd gear, a feat NO unblown 2 litre Lagonda will ever do. (Challenges for a gallon of beer accepted.)

I then decided that it was time I

really got to know the inside of a 2 litre, my efforts so far having been kept to the de-coke level of engineering. I bought during the following six months David Green's badly smashed high chassis speed model, a chassis, a spare block already rebored and a 1926 Standard Saloon with a badly cracked block, the total cost of the lot amounted to £90 and filled one end of the Regimental Workshop of the TA unit in which I served. (Some say only to get a supplementary petrol allowance.)

I spent a lot, worked a lot, learnt a lot and used up most of Forshaw's spares and after a long period I found myself driving a high chassis tourer and towing another rebuilt chassis in running order,

which I had sold to Arthur Fisher - this should have been the worst buy Arthur ever made. (It was intended to be, since he was in the Car Club!) Luckily it was pouring with rain when I got to the Fisher residence and so no trial run was made on the chassis. The rebuilt tourer was then sold to a Cambridge enthusiast (he certainly needed to be) and the whole episode looked upon as gaining experience.

Below the original text to this article, Mike had added "Never sent to the Editor! Perhaps I will write part II when I am 90!" Sadly he died four years short of this target and we will never be able to enjoy that second instalment. K.P.P.



Who, what, when and where? Can any of our members recognise this picture?

The Dorset Rally

29th April to 2nd May 2007

Robin Reay-Smith tells all

IT WAS ALFRED, Lord Tennyson who so perceptively remarked, "In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love". He might also have pointed out that at the same season certain more mature men's fancy turns to awakening their Lagondas from winter hibernation. It is to cater for these entirely natural urges that each year John and Joan Fitton organise a West Country rally in April. This year the chosen venue was somewhat further east than normal, the Isle of Purbeck in Dorset. For the sake of accuracy, I should point out that Purbeck is not really an island; but it is surrounded on three sides by water and it has all the necessary attributes for a Fitton rally. It is beautiful with attractive, little used roads, has a comfortable hotel with good food set in idyllic surroundings and is little known, at least to your correspondent.

On 29th April, 17½ couples, 17 cars and a camper van assembled at the Moretons House Hotel in Corfe Castle for tea, followed by a champagne reception and dinner; starting as they meant to go on. The unequal numbers are explained by the fact that, sadly, Geogina Drakeford was unable to accompany Michael in his M45, as she was recovering from a bad attack of flu. A number of people had travelled some distance to be there. I had flown in from Geneva that morning and had hoped, by cheating, to upstage those like Neil Dyson and Kenneth Greaves who had come from North Yorkshire in Neil's attractive and original M45 Rapide. However I was beaten out of

sight by Jeff and Margaret Walker who had left their 2.6 litre saloon in New Zealand and were in the early stages of an 11 month trip round the world in a camper van they had bought on E-bay.

They were offered lifts in various participating cars, thus allowing Michael Drakeford to reveal a hitherto unsuspected tendency to promiscuity. He appropriated the wives rendered surplus to requirements as navigators, to satisfy his own needs. That evening Geoff and Margaret Clamp earned a cheer as they arrived in their 3 litre Carlton DHC just as dinner was being served. Last year it had not been persuaded to start until the third day of the rally.

Next morning the planned route took us through attractive scenery and quiet roads to Lulworth Cove and on to Abbotsbury Subtropical Gardens for lunch. A frisson of danger was added by a note that pointed out that the route crossed a military firing range which might be active. The roadbook helpfully offered a detour. The range was active but a quick headcount at dinner that evening confirmed that there had been no casualties. Lulworth Cove was worth the risk, offering dramatic scenery and rock formations with an opportunity for a pleasant walk and a coffee at the water's edge.

Regulars on the Fitton's rallies are hardy types who are used to facing the testing weather conditions to be expected in the West Country in April. On this occasion the weather was excellent throughout the rally. Sporting

sunhats and sunglasses, the participants drove down lanes flanked by drifts of bluebells and cow parsley. The sunlight, filtered by the new foliage on the overhanging trees, warmed the earth and the air was heavy with the scent of wild garlic. The idyllic villages through which we drove had names such as Gussage St. Mary, Milton Abbas (mainly wattle and daub houses with thatched roofs) and Winterbourne Strickland. One half expected to meet Miss Marple round the next corner. We visited Poundbury, the Prince of Wales' model village, which is still being built. It is much derided by architects but it looked as if it will be a pleasant place to live when it has matured. At least the Prince has had the courage to build what people like not what professionals tell them they ought to like.

After lunch, the route back to the hotel took us to a viewpoint to contemplate the Cerne Abbas Giant, a well-endowed figure cut into the turf of the hillside. The roadbook instructions read, "Ladies look up. Men look down". I did as instructed but saw nothing remarkable.

Next day was a free day allowing a visit to whichever of the local attractions caught one's fancy. A group including Frank and Margaret Walton, David and Gill Edwards and Walter and Rosie Thompson all in their 2 litres visited the Bovington Tank Museum, close to T.E. Lawrence's cottage at Cloud's Hill. I am told that the ladies stayed outside drinking coffee while the men inside behaved like school boys. Among the exhibits were two examples of the Vickers Light Tank of the early thirties, powered by Meadows 4½ litre engines. Others travelled from Corfe Castle to Swanage by steam train or walked to Old Harry Rocks from which one can see the whole sweep of the coastline from Swanage in the South to Poole Harbour

in the North and the Isle of Wight more than twenty miles to the East. A surprising number, including the contingent from the tank museum as well as Clive and Shirley Dalton in their 2 litre Continental tourer and your correspondent in his M45, discovered the Bankes Arms in Studland for lunch. It purveyed the excellent products of the Isle of Purbeck Brewery. I chose a pint of Studland Wrecked.

Charles Good and Michael Valentine, who were both driving V12 DHCs took the opportunity to try out and compare each other's cars. Charles is the nephew of Alan Good. He remembers his uncle saying how relieved he was after he had sold LG Motors to David Brown and that if he ever wanted a fast car in future, he would buy one. Lord Northcliffe had a similar attitude to peerages.

Others were able to visit Corfe Castle, whose ruins tower over the village. In the immortal words of Marie Lloyd this was "One of the ruins that Cromwell knocked about a bit". In this, as in so much else, Cromwell proved to be remarkably thorough. The castle had withstood two sieges in the Civil War commanded by Mary Bankes, the wife of Charles 1st's Chief Justice, Sir John Bankes, who must have been busy elsewhere with the judging. It finally fell in 1646 due to treachery. Most of the village is built with its stones.

The hotel car park that evening was the scene of a little light fettling and the examination of unfamiliar cars. John Fitton was seen trying out the dicky seat of the Clamp's Carlton DHC and proving it could accommodate an adult. I had not realised until I examined Robin and Janice Sadler's attractive 3 litre tourer just how large the 3 litre engine is. No wonder they were able to fit the Meadows engine into the chassis without much trouble. Among the cars new to

me was the recently acquired honeymoon coupé of John and Susie Batt. It proudly bears a plaque on its dashboard proclaiming it the winner of the 2/3 litre class Concourse d'Elegance at the 1986 AGM and it is just as elegant today. John told me that, after buying the car, the only work necessary was to change the flowers in the vases either side of the windscreen. Truly, romance is not dead. Another elegant and recently acquired car was the LG45 tourer, in light and dark blue, of Anthony Saunders and Sue Brockwell. It was also good to see Mike and Barbara Heins' 2 litre which had come from Nantwich and Mike and Liz Blackwell's M45 tourer from Taunton while Jeremy and Margaret Oates had chosen the 2 litre LC tourer from their large and eclectic collection of Lagondas.

The next day's route took us under still cloudless skies via the Sandbanks Chain Ferry across the mouth of Poole Harbour to Kingston Lacy for lunch. As seventeen Lagondas boarded the ferry, the Captain welcomed us aboard over the public address system, saying that he had never had so many Lagondas on his ferry and that it reminded him of halcyon days. Both the Goods and the Fittons seemed to be more interested in a prominent advertisement on the ferry for Studland United Nudists who seem likely to be getting some new members soon.

Kingston Lacy is a most attractive house and garden. Sir John Bankes' son, Sir Ralph, built it originally in the 1660s to replace Corfe Castle but it was transformed in the 1830s into a sort of 17th century Italianate palazzo by William John Bankes and his architect Charles Barry, who later designed the Houses of Parliament. William John was a remarkable man. Most of the Bankes went in for the solid but boring virtues. William John preferred

interesting vices. A friend of Byron, he travelled widely throughout Europe, Asia and Africa sending back pictures and artefacts to Kingston Lacy. Some of the pictures he sent back are excellent while others, unfortunately the largest, are very bad. In 1842 he had to flee abroad after indulging too publicly in Byronic activities which in those days were illegal. I was therefore rather taken aback to see on the great marble staircase, a bust of a forebear of mine, a contemporary of William John, who had never married. Historians have tended to judge that my relation devoted his life to gambling, drinking and directing the war against Napoleon and did not go in for anything more intimate than an address to the House of Commons; but the presence of his bust on William John's great staircase makes one wonder.

It would be wrong to leave the subject of Kingston Lacy without referring to the cottage pie served in the café. It is made from the meat of the property's own herd of North Devon cattle and it is well worth visiting the house for that alone.

The route back to the hotel took the cars through Okeford Fitzpaine and up Bulbarrow Hill. At the top of the hill there were the most remarkable and extensive views of the Dorset countryside spread out below, a fitting climax to a most enjoyable rally.

At dinner that evening, the participants looked back on a thoroughly successful three days, distinguished by a visit to a particularly attractive part of the world in brilliant weather and with no mechanical problems. Once again John and Joan Fitton had assembled the ingredients for a memorable rally. I understand they are already beginning to plan next year's event. Jeff and Margaret Walters were so inspired that they are thinking of organising a rally in the South Island of New Zealand in 2010, an intriguing prospect.

Northern Dinner – Monk Fryston, 11th May 2007

Jonathan Oppenheimer braves the weather to report on a great Club tradition

THE REASON MERAV and I make this annual pilgrimage so far North of Watford, is that for us the Lagonda Club is at its most attractive when not taking itself too seriously. The club celebrates wonderful cars, and the Northern Dinner is no exception, but it does its celebrating in a light-hearted and irreverent matter. In attempting a truthful account, the following contains passages that may offend those of a sensitive disposition, who may therefore prefer to and read no further and turn instead to a more sober item.

At some point during the dinner, when he gauged that enough had been drunk to ensure a positive response, Roger Firth rose to his feet, waited for the chatter and tinkling of cutlery to stop, and asked for a volunteer to report the event for the Lagmag. Deathly hush ensued – you could have heard a split-pin or carburettor needle drop, in spite of the carpet. The silence became embarrassing, so I put my hand up. Afterwards, various members came forward with helpful advice, like "we don't need a blow by blow recital of the menu" while two others, more constructively, gave me actual material to include. I shall do so.

I can pass swiftly over our journey: we left home early enough to drive through central London almost without stopping, and the smooth ride of the V12 allowed Merav to sleep most of the way. The only disturbances were a massive pot-hole on the North Circular into which I dropped the offside rear wheel

with a spine-jarring clunk, and the sudden realisation, half way up the A1, that the genial old gent in a silver Merc estate, who flashed his lights to let us overtake a lorry and then sped past us, was in reality none other than Chairman Brian! Others had a more challenging journey, including Stephen Weld, who sent me the following account of the conditions he and his Crossley had had to contend with:

"I am fortunate to have a dentist whose regular attention ensures that all my teeth are securely attached and rattle free. Similarly over the past 46 years I have endeavoured to keep the Crossley properly screwed together, but on arrival at Monk Fryston Hall for the Club's Northern Summer Dinner I began to have my doubts, and the horrid little speed humps on the hotel's drive did nothing to dispel them.

What is happening to our roads? Is it just me getting grumpy or are the Crossley and I gradually disintegrating and I haven't noticed? On a couple of stretches of the admittedly rural route I took from Ripon to Monk Fryston I was reduced to 25-30mph due to unbelievably bad surfaces, and I always drive on the crown of the road now to avoid shoddily repaired or potholed verges. Now I know I've done such a huge mileage in the Crossley that some looseness could be expected, but within the last 15 years all the running gear and rattley bits have been refurbished including new front springs, reset rear springs and the complete (mechanical)

braking system which I finished a year ago. I've done the Hartfords, too.

To anyone who hasn't yet taken their Lagonda – or Crossley – to Normandy and beyond – do so! Even the smallest country lanes are superb, and traffic free, whereas in the early 60's when I first took the Crossley abroad (to Spain) French roads were nearly as bad as ours are now – which is why they had to invent the 2CV I suppose.

Despite all, what a thoroughly enjoyable evening! the Northern Dinner has become a firm fixture in my diary – like Prescott, or Christmas – lovely cars, but in particular such excellent company. Thank you Roger for laying it on.

I hope I disturbed no-one with the mighty roar of the Crossley when I left the hotel before breakfast. I had a cold, damp drive back to school and the roads were still rough. In my workshop I am making a replica "Avion" with the children – see the back page of the May "Automobile" – and I have some more wishbone suspension units to make out of aluminium sheet for the children making model cars – no beam axles for today's children!"

We arrived at Monk Fryston in time for a sandwich lunch, and were surprised that ours was the first old car in front of the hotel. Altogether there were fewer Lagondas than usual – perhaps people were deterred by the forecast of rain, or the prospect of the dreadful road conditions suffered by Stephen. The afternoon remained mostly dry, and was spent as usual, nattering around the cars or over tea. There was a wedding taking place and the guests began to emerge, some in an advanced state of merriment, for photographs in front of the hotel. Admiring the cars, the bride's father, who had clearly enjoyed his lunch, approached a group of us and asked if someone could take his daughter for a ride in one of the cars. We didn't take

his request too seriously and it looked, for a while, as if it had been forgotten, but soon it was repeated with greater urgency. Unanimously, we proposed Clive Dalton, who had been busy fettling something on his car and was quite unaware of what was going on. Clive accepted this unasked-for task graciously and without hesitation, and soon the happy bride was being wafted along in a 2 litre Continental.

Tea was soon replaced by stronger stuff and a bigger crowd in the bar, and then we were called to dinner. The high table with long tables set at right-angles seems to be a thing of the past, replaced by round ones, which most probably prefer. I must confess to affection for the old layout, because I think it gave more of a sense of being part of a single group, participating in a common event. For the statisticians, there were sixty-one diners.

After the meal Alan Brown filled the warm-up slot as usual before the presidential prize-giving by David Hine. For the benefit of those to whom these things matter, I can report that Alan managed to be as funny as any man can be with his trousers on – yes, pants-dropping seems itself to have been dropped since the contretemps over his bare-legged cover shot!

David delivered a splendid new monologue, which brought the house down, and will, I hope, have future airings for the benefit of those who were not there. He went on to present the various trophies that had been laid out in all their glory in the massive fireplace. It may seem as though the trophies and prizes arrive at Monk Fryston every year by magic, but this is only because of the tireless efforts of John Stoneman, getting their previous holders to part with them and send them safely back from the ends of the earth in time for him to have them engraved and brought to the dinner, this time in the back of the Chairman's Merc.

This year David's was not the last turn of the evening, for when John Boyes

rose from our table to receive not only the magnificent Fox & Nicholl Trophy but also the Crocker Trophy for his very energetic campaigning of his Rapier, he regaled us with the following:

Colonel Ponsonby-Smyth and Commander Hamilton-Smith met at their Services' Club in London. "Hello Ponsonby-Smyth" said Hamilton-Smith, "I want a word with you about your young lad Rodney. Brought my daughter Bunty home at 5 o'clock in the morning after the Christmas Hunt Ball and had a jimmy riddle in the snow outside my front door!"

"Not to worry old chap, probably didn't want to come in. Might have woken Nanny, what? No harm done, surely?"

"That's all very well, but the bounder wrote his name in the snow – get my drift? What?"

"Well, you remember what it was

like at the Regimental Ball, old boy. High jinks and spirit, what?"

"Yes, but it was written in Bunty's bally handwriting!!!!"

After dinner, members repaired to the bar for more refreshment and further in-depth discussion.

Next morning those with hangovers disguised them well and after a hearty breakfast, we said our farewells. Merav and I headed for a very wet drive back to London. At times even the Rainex I had applied so liberally was inadequate, and with our British Berkshire wiper motor out of action, Merav had to resort to manual override, twiddling the bakelite knobs. This is possibly the only circumstance in which a V12 passenger requires dexterity and co-ordination, as to reach the driver's knob she had to pass her hand through the steering wheel – awkward on sharp bends...you get the picture. Thanks again, Roger and Beryl.



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We have enjoyed considerable success with Lagondas in recent times, and the lovely dark green 1936 LG45 Tourer continued the trend when it sold for £88,000 in our June Buxton auction.

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The Dorset Rally. Richard Reay-Smith's M45 at rest. The next nine pictures are all of this event and were taken by Richard or his wife.



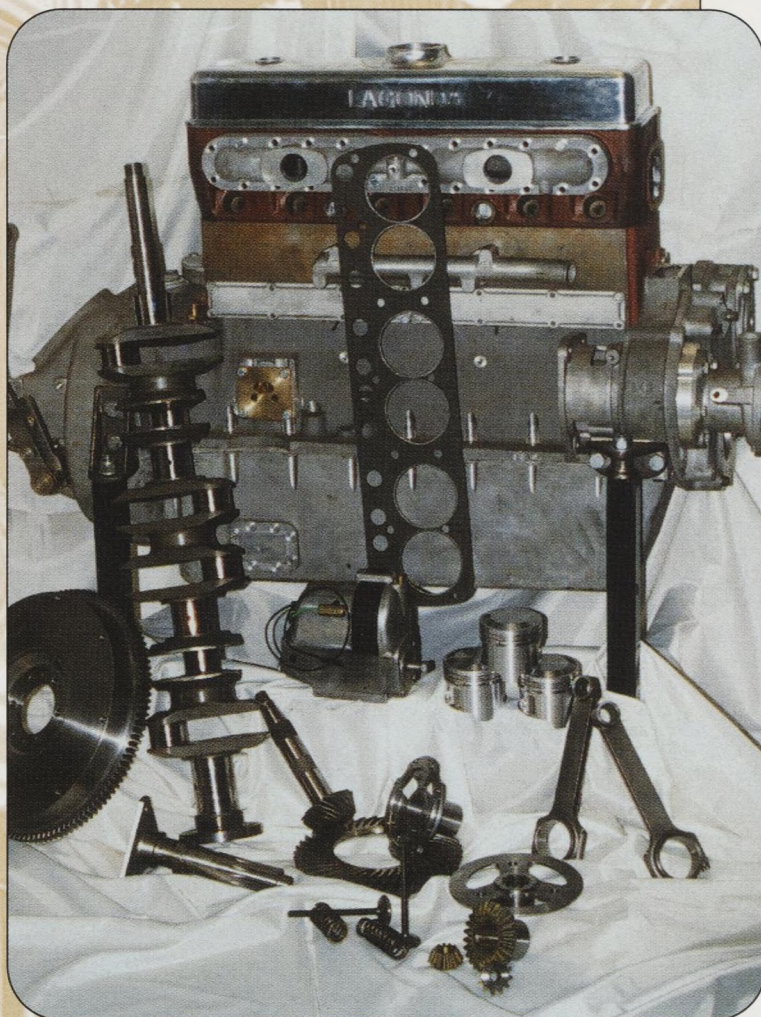
Anthony Saunders' LG 45 tourer.

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The inevitable under bonnet inspection of a very pretty car.



John Fitton tries the dickey seat of the Clamp's Carlton 3 litre tourer for size.



David Edwards indulges in a little light fettling.



Left to right: Robin Sadler's 3 litre, Michael Blackwell's M45 and Neil Dyson's M45R.



The Cerne Abbas Giant.



Michael Valentine chauffeurs Jeff and Margaret Walker, club members from New Zealand.



Geoff Clamp's 3 litre DHC and Frank Walton's HC 2 litre.



Now its the turn of Mike and Barbara Heins to give the Walkers a ride.



Northern Dinner, Monk Fyston, the Oppenheimer V12 heads the line of Lagondas.

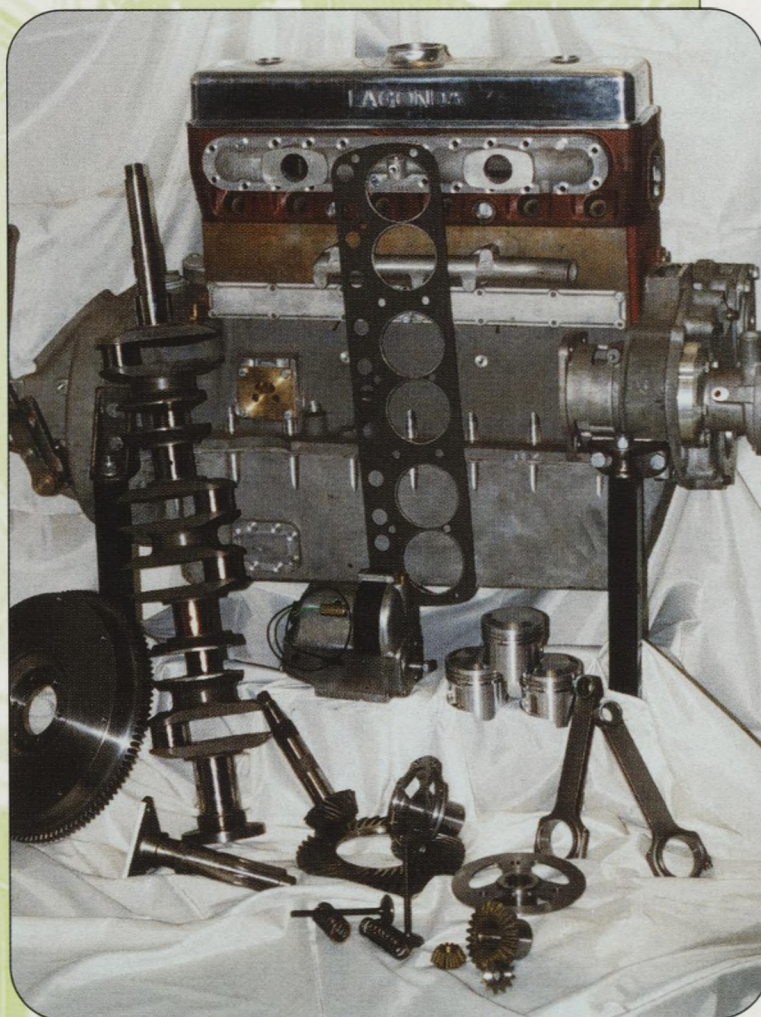


Alan Harrison's pretty Rapier.

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David Hine, who provided the other pictures of the Northern Dinner, presents a heap of trophies to John Boyes. Photo by Nick Hine.



The morning after the night before... My, they do look tired and emotional.



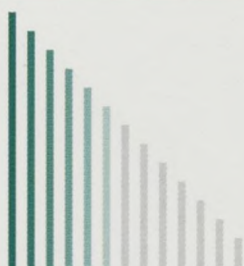
One last picture from the Devon Rally. Jeremy and Margaret Oates in their LC 2 litre.



Nowell Stebbing's M45 in the ancient Roman town of Jerash, see his letter on page 37.



This is the picture for the 2007 Christmas card, painted by Arnold Davey. Get your orders in early, we sold out in record time last year.



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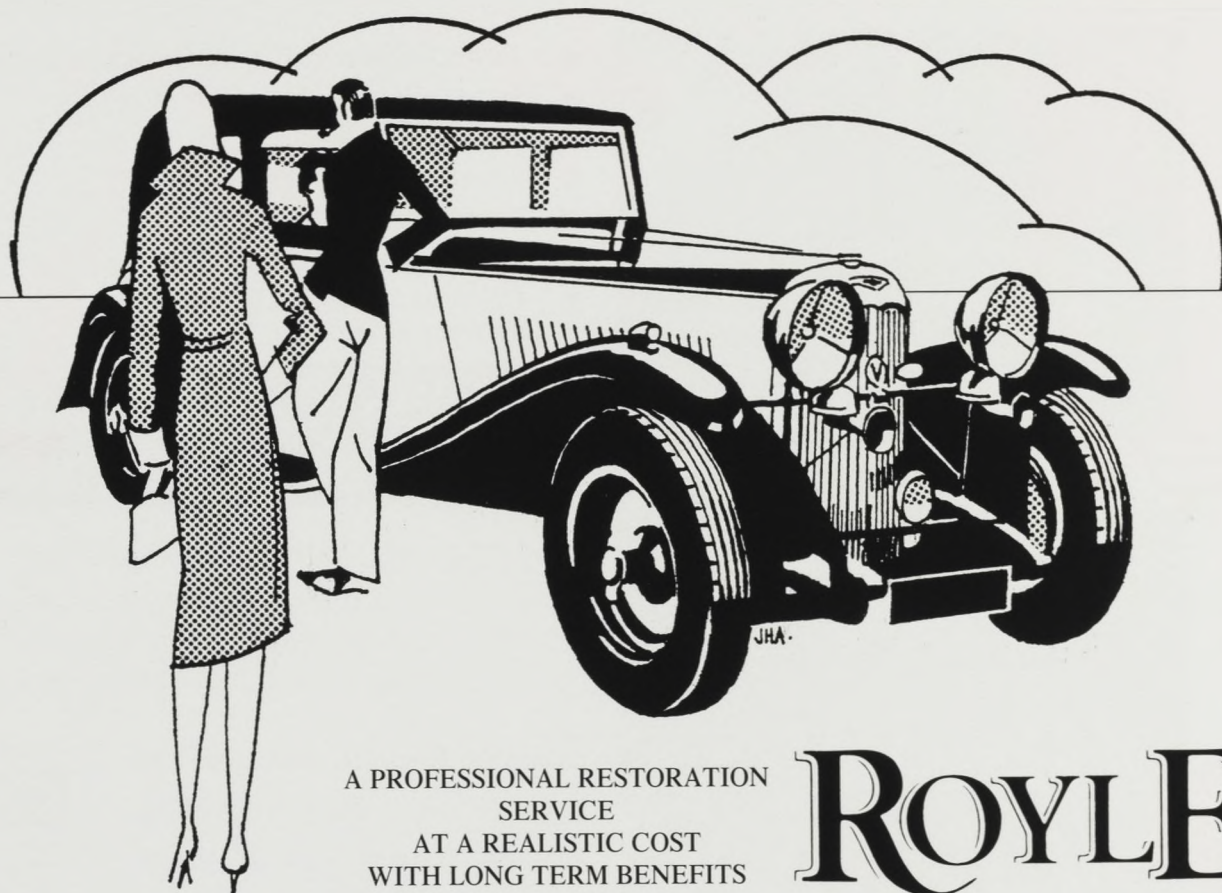
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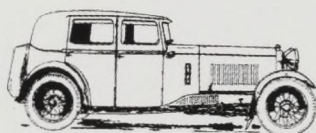
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Memories of my 1956 Visit to Australia

By Tony Tostock, Service Engineer Aston Martin Lagonda Ltd from 1950 to 1963

1956 WAS A SIGNIFICANT year for me, in my capacity as Service Engineer, part of my duties was to visit all our Overseas Distributors in Europe, U.S.A. and Canada. It was not only a Public Relations exercise, but also a hands-on affair. Having notified all owners of the visit, they would be booked in for a chat with a Factory Representative and were free to air the delights, or any disapproval of their cars. My job was to make sure that the mechanics at the Distributors were kept informed of all the latest servicing techniques.

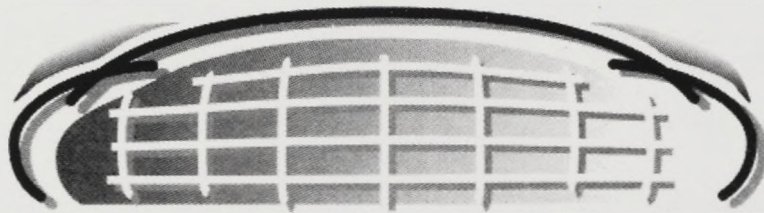
Having carried out my duties in France, Belgium and Switzerland in the early part of the year, it was now time to map-out a service visit to Canada and America. Now the other significant happening in 1956 was that the Olympic games were being held in Melbourne, Australia and the person picked to open the Games was the Duke of Edinburgh. As most Lagonda owners at the time knew, he owned and drove a 3 Litre Tickford Convertible. As service engineer, the collecting, delivery and servicing of this car was my responsibility. The company decided that I should go to Australia, to make sure that I was on hand in the event of any trouble. Also, on this visit, David Brown Australasia Ltd was to organise a convention at their factory in Sydney and notify all local Aston-Martin and Lagonda owners that a Factory representative would be present.

On all my overseas servicing visits, Pat Fox, who worked in the Office Admin Section used to book all my flight tickets etc., so we now had to plan this extensive trip. It was agreed that we would make three service visits in Canada, starting in Toronto, on to Quebec, from there to Vancouver, then back to New York, Chicago, San-Francisco and Los Angeles. It was then logical to fly to Australia from Los Angeles. In those days before jet engines, the piston engined aircraft had only a 3,000 mile range, which meant three stops to reach Sydney, Australia. First stop was Hawaii, then on to an atoll which was just a refuelling landing strip in the middle of the Pacific, created during W.W. II. The next stop was Fiji, then on to Sydney.

Once I arrived in Australia, the first job was to assist in the final arrangements for the Aston-Martin Lagonda Convention. At this particular time there were very few Astons or post-war Lagondas in Australia, mainly due to the import restrictions imposed by the Australian Government. The David Brown Factory was the venue for the Convention, which took place on 24th October. It was very well attended and certainly flew the flag as far as the David Brown Companies were concerned.

After the Convention was over, I had to concentrate on locating the Duke of Edinburgh's Lagonda, which had been shipped out to Australia in the most

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elaborate packing crate. Apart from a stronger than normal frame, it was clad in planed tongue and grooved timber. I located the car in the docks and gave it a careful inspection, carried out a short road test and satisfied myself that all was in good order. It had been so well secured in the crate that no damage had occurred. The car was then garaged in the Government Transport Section until Wally Bennett, the Duke's chauffeur and I drove it to Melbourne.

Several weeks earlier they had some atrocious weather in the Sydney/Melbourne area and this had washed away large sections of the highway, which only had temporary repairs carried out on it. After a very bumpy journey I was very concerned that with all the chassis flexing some damage might have occurred, but the only problem was a small split in the top of the petrol tank, which I was able to repair by soft soldering.

Wally Bennett and I were quite familiar with each other, as he was the person I dealt with at Buckingham Palace Mews when collecting and delivering the car. On arrival in Melbourne we were introduced to the powers-that-be in the Government Transport Section expressly set up for the Royal Tour. We were also introduced to the senior police officer at Melbourne Police Station, as they were going to be very involved with every move made by the Lagonda.

His Royal Highness arrived in Melbourne from Canberra on 22nd November, which was the opening day of the 1956 Olympic Games. The Lagonda was used from Melbourne Airport to Government House. On all occasions when His Royal Highness used the Lagonda I was in one of the cars following, so as to be on hand in the event of any problems. Although he opened the games, he saw very little of

them, because he had many other duties to carry out. The following day, the Lagonda was used from Government House to Melbourne Airport, when His Royal Highness flew to Deniliquin to spend a day in the country. Wally and I then had to drive the Lagonda to Canberra. Canberra is known as a garden city, which it truly is. On one of our trips around the town we saw a large hare cross the road. We were stationed in Government House, which was a fair way out of town and very rural. His Royal Highness used the Lagonda a number of times whilst in Canberra.

I must mention one particular incident. I was walking into the courtyard at Government House, where there were a number of garages which housed several Rolls Royces, when suddenly a four foot brown snake crossed my path and slithered into one of the garages. There was no one else in the yard until I shouted in a very loud voice "Snake in the garage!" In no time some four or five people came rushing out from all quarters. By this time the snake had disappeared up into the chassis of one of the Rolls Royces and at first they didn't believe me, but they armed themselves with brooms and started to rattle them under the Rolls. Suddenly a very angry snake appeared, with all hands trying to strike it with their brooms. Fortunately, one landed a direct hit on its head and they all waded in and finally killed it.

There was a fair amount of hanging about during the Canberra visit, with nothing much for us to do, so one day it was suggested that Wally and I go fishing in a river at the back of Government House. To get to the river involved a long walk across a field with very long grass, we were all for this until someone pointed out that you had to keep a sharp look-out for snakes, needless to say, the offer was declined.



Tony Tostock takes a question from the floor at the Aston-Martin Lagonda convention in Sydney.



Some of the cars assembled for the Convention, Your Editor would like to have the DB 2.6's registration - it is KP 001.

On 29th November His Royal Highness left Canberra for Melbourne to join the Royal Yacht Britannia, which had arrived from Sydney. Wally Bennett and I also arrived in Melbourne with the Lagonda. Wally was staying aboard Britannia and I stayed in a very pleasant hotel nearby. I was issued with a pass to board the Royal Yacht and visited it a number of times. Having already made myself known to the police and officials of the tour, I was now on stand-by whenever HRH used the Lagonda. He made quite a number of trips, often driving himself. Because of our duties, Wally and I saw very little of the Games, as HRH had many other engagements to carry out other than the Olympic Games.

Being attached to the local Government Transport Pool, we got to know many of the Ministers' chauffeurs, most of whom were Honorary Members of the Officers' Mess in Melbourne Barracks and at their suggestion Wally and I were made Honorary Members too. It was a good place to socialise on odd evening occasions. The custom of the Australians drinking the Pommies under the table never worked, but that is another story...

Although the Lagonda was used quite extensively, it ran perfectly, giving no trouble whatsoever. When not on duty with the Royal Tour, my time was spent contacting a few local Aston or Lagonda owners. On 8th December His Royal Highness formally closed the Olympic Games. His official departure was on 11th December, before he left, apart from all the dignitaries, all the Senior Chauffeurs were introduced to him and all received a pair of gold cufflinks. I was never introduced, so never received any.

It was now my job to see that the Lagonda was put away and secured in its elaborate packing crate for its return to England. Having been away from home for over three months it was time to

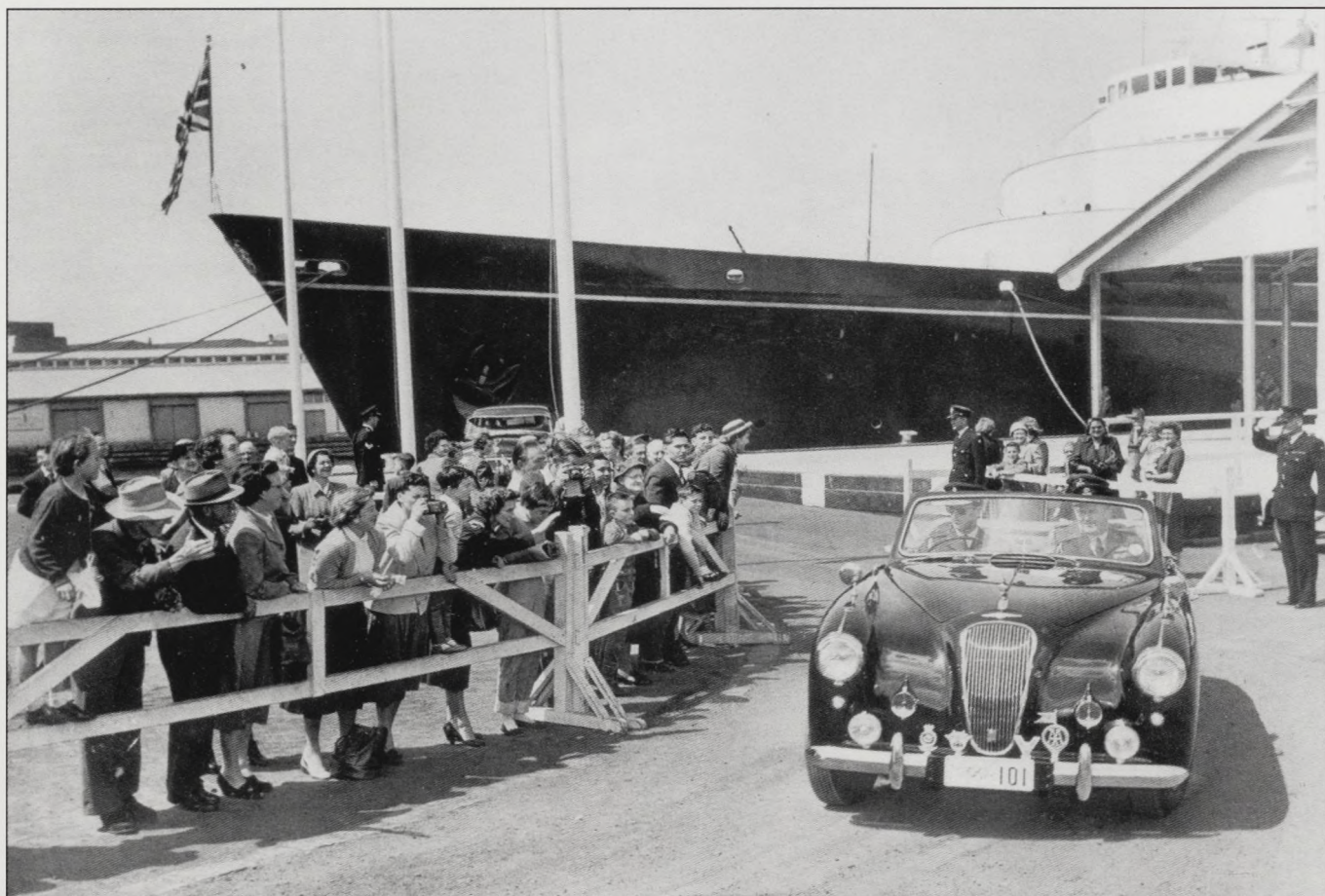
return. On going to the BOAC booking office to book my flight home, I was told that all seats were fully booked until long after Christmas. I was in utter shock, as I knew that my wife and baby daughter would be more than disappointed. On this particular day I had made arrangements to visit a Lagonda owner and on relating my tale of woe he said he would see what he could do. I didn't think that anything would come of it, but the next day his secretary phoned to say that if I went back to the BOAC office there would be a booking for me. As can be imagined, I was over the moon, but on going to the office I certainly had a booking, but it was first class and I was on a tourist ticket. I told them to hold the reservation until I had contacted the company. Giving it a lot of thought I sent a cable to the Factory - "Unable to return before Xmas on tourist ticket please sanction first class". Back came the reply - "Exploit all possibilities of tourist if not first class sanctioned". Fortunately I had sufficient funds to pay the difference in the ticket price, so, on 14th December, I was on my way.

As I was half way round the world, Pat Fox, my good friend in the office, said "You might as well come home via the Far East and Middle East, then you will have circumnavigated the world." I must be one of the very few mechanics to have achieved such a thing and be paid for it. The flight route was Sydney to Darwin, Singapore, Hong Kong, Karachi, Bombay.

Cairo was the normal next refuelling stop, but owing to Britain invading Egypt over the Suez Canal problems in 1956, Cairo Airport was shut down. During the flight after leaving Bombay we were given permission to land and refuel in Bahrain which, at the time, was a British protectorate. The final stop was Rome and then onto London. The journey took just over two days and travelling first class made the trip very memorable.



More of the cars assembled for the Convention.



HRH The Duke of Edinburgh drives away from HMS Britannia in Melbourne.

The first Concours d'Elegance at the Grand Prix de Pau

Charles Chadwyck-Healey reports

I AM PLEASED to report that my 1939 Lagonda V12 Rapide won the overall Concours d'Elegance at the Grand Prix de Pau Historique on Sunday 27 May, and also the prize for the car in the best condition.

This was the 7th Grand Prix, for historic cars racing through the streets of Pau. The first use of the term 'Grand Prix' in car racing was in Pau early in the last century and, after the revival of these races seven years ago, they are now a well established fixture in the historic racing calendar. The Concours d'Elegance is entirely new and most enjoyable because it takes place in Pau's attractive main square; the judges were knowledgeable, attentive and pleasant and there was an interesting range of cars – the runner-up was a magnificent 1905 Renault with the most imposing fitted luggage I have ever seen. The Concours included a parade through the streets of Pau, and the driver and his passenger were expected to be dressed in keeping with their car, and with the elegance and fun that characterised the whole occasion.

To get to Pau we drove from home near Cambridge to Portsmouth, took the ferry to Bilbao – two nights and one very pleasant and relaxing day at sea, and then drove about 180 miles to stay with friends north of Pau. The day after the Concours we started our three day journey North to catch the ferry from Caen, a distance of just over 600 miles. Unfortunately the weather was appalling for much of the time, rain and wind blowing in from the Atlantic on the first and last day. In spite of this the car performed magnificently – until we reached Caen on the third evening, when

it quietly gave up the ghost as if to say it had enough of being constantly drenched. Water must have got into the dynamo as there was no charge and the battery was flat. Fortunately the car expired at a filling station and I was able to buy a second-hand portable 'engine starting system' from the adjoining garage – at 7pm in the evening. So we still got to our Michelin one-star restaurant Le Pressoir in Caen, which I can recommend to anyone looking for a good meal before the ferry, which sails at 11.30pm.

Brittany Ferries were not happy about the fact that the bonnet had to be opened and the large yellow plastic box placed on the bulkhead with leads to the battery each time the car was started. But they then relaxed and let us on as normal. This apart, the car never missed a beat, or used any oil in a journey which totalled over 1,000 miles. The downside of the trip was the petrol consumption which varied between 9 and 11 miles per gallon. The only consolation is that petrol in France is currently £0.65 per litre! The rain also revealed more leaks than a luxury car of this caliber should really have – all on the passenger side, occupied by my long-suffering wife Angela, whose expert map reading meant that we did not get lost once even though we used many minor roads on a truly cross-country route, only occasionally going on to autoroutes. Our overall average speed including short stops for petrol etc. was 38mph. I look forward to doing such a journey again but hope to choose better weather. The Concours is strongly recommended and can be combined with watching the racing.

Letters

Dear Ken

I was very interested to read John Ryder's letter in the latest Magazine. I can fully understand his frustration with increasing Rules and Regulations, health and safety dictators etc. However, I am sure Club members will appreciate that the Board needs to keep an ever watchful eye on any developments which may adversely affect not only our members but also the Lagonda Club itself. This is nothing new and it is worth remembering that it is now 20 years since the Lagonda Club, which had existed as an informal organisation since 1951, was transformed into a Limited Company. The Committee at that time had realised that the increasing willingness of individuals to resort to legal processes was beginning to pose a threat to any unincorporated body. Thus the Club became a Limited Company in 1987 and most of us thought that was sufficient.

Only a few years later, the Club faced another problem when certain spares were deemed "not fit for purpose". We sought legal advice and asked whether a disclaimer covering all spares sold by the Club would be sufficient. The answer was that it was always worth using a disclaimer but, in a Court of Law, it might easily be overturned. The real answer was to arrange Product Liability Insurance which we promptly did. A few more years went by and the question of technical advice given by the Club's "Technical Advisors" became a subject for discussion. One member claimed that advice given by one of these individuals had been incorrect, causing him problems on a long distance rally. After consulting other motoring clubs and our Insurance Brokers it was decided to dispense with the official Club Technical Advisors to protect the

Club and its members against any claims. Very much more recently we have seen situations where technical articles have been criticised and consequently we are now doing all we can to get such articles comprehensively checked before publication.

John quotes the waivers used by the VSCC but it is worth remembering that they do not operate a spares service and I can't recall having seen any technical advice articles in the VSCC Bulletin. Just a few years ago Arnold Davey and I attended the AGM and Conference of the F.B.H.V.C. and listened to a very interesting and sensible talk by our member Tim Holt relating to the big Steam Rally he organises in Cumbria. The rules and regulations have increased steadily over the years but Tim and his fellow organisers have still been able to run this event, albeit they have to take more and more precautions to protect themselves from litigation. During the question and answer session, the Federation Chairman (a Solicitor) was asked how effective a disclaimer would be. His reply was succinct and amusing "Not a lot and that's the long answer!"

I do hope that John and all our other members will realise that the Board are constantly concerned with the welfare of the members and the Club.

Regards,

Colin Bugler

Dear Editor

I see my letter was in the latest club magazine I did not realise my ramblings would take up an entire page, you ask for more info regarding the alternator I fitted. It was supplied by a company called Racemettle Ltd telephone 01427 679784. www.racemettleltd.co.uk they do various types including tacho drive

models. Also a company called Jack Knight Development make a steering assist unit that fits in the column, suitable for post war models I believe. I have no connection with these companies.
Regards

Robin Allum

Dear Ken

Re your question at the end of Robin Allum's piece about his 3L DB in the Lagonda magazine.

I was at Enfield at the end of May & saw an alternator/dynamo at a stall run by Classic & Vintage Dynamos Ltd. The casing is specially made to look like a dynamo but it contains alternator innards. I didn't ask about price but I did pick up a card. They are in Shirebrook, Notts Tel 01623 747666. They offer a one year guarantee. They also supply LMB.

Enfield autojumble used to be quite good. This year was awful & I won't be going again.

Regards

Philip Paiolo

Dear Ken

Robin Allum has written to provide an account of battery capacity starting to fade on his D.B.3 litre, as the dynamo was not up to the task of supplying enough current on a wet, winter's night. Back in 1962, I had similar problems when I entered and navigated my 2.6 litre saloon in the November Handicap – a foray from Thame to the outskirts of Birmingham and back. About one hour after dusk, there was not enough current to operate the headlamps and so we had to abandon the Rally, even though up until nightfall we were probably eligible for an award or perhaps a win. Following revitalisation of the dynamo, the next year my driver and I were able to see the unlit lanes of Oxfordshire and we won the 1963 event

This was of course after I had found the fault. Ferodo fan-belts made to strict SMMT standards were just too long. For a while, slightly shorter Telamite fan-belts cured the problem. Next I changed the CVC unit for current and voltage control box (three coils instead of two on the CVC unit). No solution. Finally I went to Feltham and purchased a new pulley for the Dynamo. That cured the problem. Perhaps this hint may help DB owners with an errant charging system, although these days it may difficult to source a new pulley.

Robin Allum also wished there was a simple power steering conversion available. One simple solution to ease the heaviness of the steering would be to fit cross-ply 600x16 tyres on the front wheels. When fitted with Avon Turbospeeds on the front and Pirelli Cinturatos on the rear, the 2.6 litre did lap Silverstone Club circuit in 1 minute 41.8 secs. One statistic was that the fitting of cross-plies did drop the speed occasionally achieved on the way to work by 2mph per axle, so I settled on the mixture of tyres which gave 92mph on a fast stretch of road on the way to Sevenoaks. In the 1960s Cross-plies were par for the course, but will only give about half of the mileage between changes. However one obviously saves on wear and tear to the steering, which is some compensation.

Yours sincerely

Ron Gee

Dear Ken

My wife and I participated in the Jewel that is Jordan Tour in May in our M45, reg AMT 77. It was wonderful driving through desert terrain, with the highlight being a visit to Petra. There, incredibly, we were asked to drive to the famous Treasury facade for an official photograph, flanked by two vintage Bentleys. I thought you might want to use the attached photograph which my wife took in the magazine.

It is unlikely that any private car will again be allowed to drive through ancient Petra as we did; we were requested so to do by the Ministry of Tourism which wanted such a picture for publicity purposes. It might have helped that our Lagonda had previously belonged to Prince (now King) Abdullah II. This seemed much more important in Jordan than the 1934 Monte Carlo history of the car.

We were also privileged to be one of only 6 cars to be allowed to park in the middle of the ancient Roman town of Jerash, and, again, I have attached a photo, which you may wish to use.

Yours,

Nowell Stebbing

See the cover and page 25 for these pictures. K.F.P.

Dear Ken,

It was good to learn of Charles Chadwyk-Healey's success at Pau! ARD 246 also won a prize – the "Prix du Publique" or spectator's choice at the parade on the seafront at Dinard that was part of the Fougères Rally. Michael Valentine's Invicta came second in the Mayor's choice. Our car also performed faultlessly, even in the same pouring rain that Charles experienced, which we had on the first part of our journey. ARD is surprisingly water-tight for a pre-war drophead, much better in this respect than our previous V12 saloon. The rally was great fun, our first experience of Patrick Rollet's organizational skill, and we met a number of old friends and made several new ones.

Regards,

Jonathan Oppenheimer



One final picture of Tony Tostock's memorable trip to Australia. Here he poses in front of the Royal car with Wally Bennett.

EXCELLENCE



V12 Prototype, 2005 Winner of the AGM Car Club Trophy

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HOLD THE BACK PAGE

*We have just heard Christopher & Anita Claridge-Ware have made it from Peking to Paris
one of only forty cars to drive every mile*

*We would like to congratulate Christopher & Anita on receiving a Bronze Medal & being
awarded the True Grit Trophy for helping other competitors*

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It's not only our Lagondas that are reliable!

*We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Jack Dalessandro for completing his
first Mille Miglia in his elegant Alfa 1900SS Zagato
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We must not forget congratulations to Dr Lisman & EPE for their sixth successful Mille Miglia

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