Lagondaforum: Advice when buying an LG45 S1

Advice when buying an LG45 S1

Written by Keith at Sep 15, 2019 11:59 am

This will be my second Lagonda, my first pre-war car and therefore my first pre-war Lagonda.

It has been a long, patient search to find what I hope will be the car for me. I will see it (and I feel confident that I will buy it), this week.

It is an original, matching numbers, Tickford bodied Tourer from 1936. It is an S1 with decent provenence.

Any advice or tips that you could let me have will be most gratefully received.

It is a non runner, was laid up several years ago. I am assured she was running well when parked up. The only reason she was laid up and not used was because other projects got in the way (I am told).

The seller is knowledgable and seems completely genuine.

I look forward to any advice that is forthcoming.

Thank you in advance
Keith

Re: Advice when buying an LG45 S1

Written by Mark at Sep 15, 2019 7:22 pm

Hi Keith,

I have been unsuccessfully searching for the list of 'LG45 buyers checks' I prepared on the advice of the sadly missed John Batt back in 2004 when I viewed my LG45 de Ville. So the list below has to be from memory!

Firstly buying a non runner presents significant risks of unforeseen expenditure into the future so you should factor such risks into the purchase price. If the car has been previously restored that may be a bonus..or not dependant on the quality of the work.

Do check with the club for known history.

My list relates to a runner but here goes:

The obvious risks are mechanical condition of engine, gearbox and axle. You will have to rely on the honesty of the buyer but do budget for remedial work. Of course visual inspection under the bonnet will identify if everything is there (check both mags are there and of correct type) and give an impression of whether the car was well looked after prior to hibernation.

The most important aspect of an LG45 is condition of the ash body frame which is best checked whilst driving as the creaks and bangs show up quickly. However, you can get under and check the obvious timber sill structures and the vulnerable area of the ash frame around either side of the rear number plate which is often poor. Use a screw driver to prod the timbers. If it sinks in then there is rot. That said, it can sometimes be highly localised and easy to remedy, but check any rot carefully for extent. Lifting the doors from the base can show wear in hinges and more importantly the ash hinge post in the frame. If the door moves at the hinge post it can be a walk away moment as the framework is complex and needs the aluminium panels removed before repairs can be started. Condition of the screen pillars at their base is also one to check. Movement shows up as cracks in the aluminium panels and indicates rot in the A post timbers. Woodworm is also an issue and normally shows up under the car just look for dust. Worm normally attacks the 1936 plywood made using animal glue. So the rear inner arches have a plywood backing that often suffers so does the rear seat back.

Whilst under the car check for original Luvax shock absorbers are they missing and replaced by Andre Harford friction types? Is the Smith jacking system present and complete. (Highly unlikely it will work) What is the condition of the exhaust and tyres? Is the fuel tank clean or showing signs of

leaking and/or rust?

Check the wheels and tyres for condition eg rust and loose spokes. The pencil test of the spokes is an easy check.

Condition of the interior is easy to check. Look at the polished woodwork, leather and door panel condition, hood condition if it is a DHC. Also check all the door furniture is present inside and out and finally the dash has all is original instruments.

Externally look at panel alignment but Lagondas are good at hiding body problems so the above checks on structure are essential. However visual inspection of the aluminium panels is important and put your hand under the front and rear wings to establish if there are any large filled dents that show up underneath. Interestingly, if the original under wing protectors are still in place that gives an indication that the wings are unlikely to have been removed.

Does the car sit well on the level, stand back and look for sagging corners. This need not be a major issue as springs can be reset but make sure it is just the springs!

Glass on LG45s if original can show yellowing and delamination. I have seen door glass in very poor condition on quite a nice car. It is a bit of a job to strip the doors down to replace glass.

Brightwork condition is important as it is costly to rechrome. Make sure everything is still there and check condition of the rad shell, slats and headlamps and horns and centre lamp plus front bumper condition.

Finally condition of the wiring will tell you if the car was looked after in years gone by. Has it been rewired in the past? It should have been!

Hope the above helps and I apologise if I have missed anything obvious. Good luck with the purchase.

Best Regards
Mark (Y2 in the register)

Re: Advice when buying an LG45 S1

Written by davidbracey at Sep 15, 2019 8:29 pm

Kieth, all of Mark's helpful comments are spot on. I also have an S1 LG45 so there are a few of us in the club that will be happy to answer calls and offer advice. The club has a good supply of spares for the 4.5 and those of us that have been through the restoration process have a few pieces left over so you should be onto a safe bet.

The engine is the biggest unknown by the sounds of it though. Good luck and please post some photos.

David Bracey

Re: Advice when buying an LG45 S1

Written by h14 at Sep 16, 2019 10:19 am

One of the reasons I bought my LG6 was that it had had a complete professional mechanical rebuild, with the bills to prove it. Those bills show that the work was entrusted to a variety of "specialists". Unfortunately the work almost universally proved to have been done by untrained chimps who had been peculiarly instructed to do the job as badly as possible. Twenty years later, I am still resolving issues. Last year, I took the car to Haynes Motor Museum to have the steering checked; they found one front wheel cambered in, and the other out! Fixing that and other steering settings cost nearly £500 alone, but at last, the car now feels safe on corners! I've re-rebuilt the gearbox, rear axle and steering gearbox. That leaves the engine ... yes, that too will be re-rebuilt shortly.

Sometimes it pays to buy a car in "unknown" condition.

Sounds an interesting car. I'm wary of the impression that a perfectly good car has simply been laid up to await work. Doesn't necessarily mean anything dramatic/serious, but I'd ensure the agreed price factors in for the unknown.

Good luck!
Laurence

Re: Advice when buying an LG45 S1
Written by Colin M34 at Sep 24, 2019 3:44 pm

I totally resonate with David, Mark's and Laurence's comments.

When buying a car such as this I like to see it "with its knickers down" so we can see the clues to any bodgery that might have taken place. A private purchase is always preferable as you are assessing the previous owner as well as the car.

There are bargains to be had from nice, kind people - or sadly their widows or family members.

Good luck!

Colin

Re: Advice when buying an LG45 S1
Written by DavidLG45 at Oct 06, 2019 7:15 am

Hi Keith,

Probably too late for any more buying advice. Did you buy the car? Would love to see some photos if you did.

David

Re: Advice when buying an LG45 S1
Written by Keith at Oct 26, 2019 10:26 am

Gentlemen,

Thank you all for your generous advice and comments. This is much appreciated and most helpful.

I will be on the Lagonda stand at the NEC on Friday 8th November, if you would like to introduce yourself?

Well, it seems I found a diamond! After only 70 hours of good, old fashioned, recommissioning, she started at first turn of the key.

The clutch plate was stuck solid to the flywheel and the the horizontal, Scintilla GN6 Magneto requires overhaul. In all other areas, she seems to be way better than I expected. The clutch issue is now resolved with a little struggling and the occasional adjective.

I have now driven her around 50 miles for shakedown tests, each time I improve something small I have spotted during my outing.

I'm very close to making the decision to take her on a long tour to Berlin, next year. She really is that good.

It seems I got lucky!

I will be taking her to the George Public House in Maulden on Saturday 9th November for the regional Lagonda meet up at 12:00.

If you would like one, I'm happy to give a fellow enthusiast a ride out in her.

Thank you all again

Keith

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Re: Advice when buying an LG45 S1

Written by davidbracey at Oct 26, 2019 1:31 pm

Keith,

I am delighted for you. Good that you are taking it easy for the first few hundred miles - a sensible plan. Keep an eye on the engine temperatures. Remember that the mechanically driven water pump is pretty inefficient unless upgraded, and that it's output varies with engine speed. So, when running gently at low revs the pump isn't circulating a great deal of water. You might expect a fair amount of crud to be dislodged and this can block the cores. My advice would be to fit an inline filter into the top hose to the radiator.

Best of luck and please keep the group informed.

David Bracey

Re: Advice when buying an LG45 S1

Written by Colin M34 at Oct 28, 2019 8:32 pm

Here here

Colin Mallett
