

Lagondaforum: Baron D'Erlanger, 1928 Lagonda race team at Le Mans

Baron D'Erlanger, 1928 Lagonda race team at Le Mans

Written by ChrisWd at Apr 21, 2013 12:07 pm

Hi,

I'm currently researching racing drivers and cars of the 1920/30 era and, in particular, trying to obtain information about the Baron D'Erlanger who drove a Lagonda OH 2 Litre Speed with Wallace Douglas Hawkes at the 1928 Le Mans. They achieved 11th placing at that year's event, D'Erlanger was the lead driver. The Lagonda works team also ran two other cars at that year's Le Mans race.

Baron D'Erlanger had previously raced with the Bentley works team at the 1927 Le Mans achieving 17th placing with co-driver George Duller. He also again raced with the Bentley works team in 1929 achieving third place with Dudley Benjafield.

Given D'Erlanger's association with Douglas Hawkes and the Lagonda racing car I was hoping that one of the forum members may be able to shed some light on D'Erlanger's background. I have seen him referred to as Andre D'Erlanger but also, in Sir Henry Birkin's autobiography 'Full Throttle', as Leo D'Erlanger. I have seen photographs of D'Erlanger on www.austinharris.co.uk which suggest to me he may have been born around 1895 give or take a few years.

There was a Leo Frederick Alfred D'Erlanger born 1898 who was an international banker based in London and he had some association with motor racing. Leo D'Erlanger was at some point a suitor of Ettore Bugatti's daughter, Ebe, but Ettore strongly discouraged him and Leo eventually married another woman. Despite Ettore Bugatti's objection, Leo D'Erlanger still acquired four Bugatti racing cars: a type 13 registered in 1922, a type 23 registered in 1925, a 1926 ex-works type 35TC purchased in 1927, and a type 43 registered in 1927. I have no evidence that this Leo D'Erlanger raced Lagondas or Bentley but his profile looks right and the timing would match.

Any help or suggestions greatly appreciated.

Regards,
Chris
