

Lagondaforum: Lagonda 11.9 crankshaft oil sealing or lack of

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Written by Mark at Oct 27, 2015 11:32 pm

I purchased my 2 seater 1923 KK model last summer with the help of Ken Painter. I had been looking for a couple of years. I do not want to say too much about it as I will probably write it up for the club mag at some point. Suffice to say that it has had very few owners. The first had it as a 21st birthday present and kept it nearly 50 years. The second refurbished it over 10 years and sold it via dealer Performance Cars of Chiswick in 1982. The third owned it for 32 years and only did 150 miles, it then stood on blocks under a cover for over 26 years ...then I came along. It is likely to have done less than 50000 miles...but who knows.

Upon purchase it was found that the exhaust valves were seized, so badly that it required an engine strip down and they had to be drifted out! It was evident that an earlier engine strip probably in the early 1960s had included fitting Cord oil control rings to the original pistons and this had done the bores no good at all. So it was decided that a rebore with new pistons (modified Austin Light 12) was needed alongside everything else!

What I am interested in is the effectiveness of oil sealing for the crankshaft. The front seal is via the starting handle guide block which has a felt seal that sits against the timing chain cover. Thing is when you engage the starting handle on its spring loaded shaft, it wears the felt and leaves a gap around the felt. On stripping the engine I found attempts at sealing with silicon so I am guessing there was a problem.

The rear of the crank has a flange that runs in a groove in the rear main bearing housing. The bottom half of the main bearing housing seems to offer an oil tight seal, but the upper half looks somewhat vulnerable to oil flowing out, particularly going up a steep hill. (I have this the wrong way around , it is the top half of the rear main bearing housing that offers an oil tight seal as it forms part of the crankcase...the risk of oil flowing out is from the underside of the main bearing housing where it sits within the sump. Hope that makes sense)

Is this just a feature of the model that has to be accepted with a splash lubrication system? I have a solution for the front of the crank as the starting handle block has to be remade as it is very worn so I can easily provide a better sealing arrangement with a small redesign.

I know the engine is inclined to wear the number 1 and number 4 big end bearings due to oil starvation if you are on long steep hills...but is there a problem with oil sealing at the rear of the crank in particular operating conditions...driving up a steep hill?

With the engine in pieces, now is the time for me to resolve issues if indeed there are any issues. (I am not sure if there were any improvements in crankshaft oil sealing between 11.9 and 12/24 models, but guess the bottom end is likely to be the same)

Grateful for advice, no doubt from Colin...plus others please!

Thanks
Mark

Re: Lagonda 11.9 crankshaft oil sealing or lack of

Written by Colin M34 at Oct 28, 2015 9:56 am

Hi Mark

Yes I know the car! I went to Performance Cars to look at it when it was in their showroom. I think this was around 1979 and it had been advertised in Motor Sport. I cannot remember how much for, though as a reference, around the same time I helped a friend pick up an un-restored type 44 Bugatti from Dan Margulies which cost him £10K.

Performance Cars were very helpful and I will look for the photo I took when the car was in the showroom.

I will give a more detailed post about the engine questions. Suffice to say that that I kept on knocking out big ends on PE 7073 to the extent that John Kirkby gave me an extra-fast turnaround service when a rod needed attention.

Colin

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Re: Lagonda 11.9 crankshaft oil sealing or lack of

Written by Mark at Oct 28, 2015 10:58 am

Hi Colin,

It would be great if you could find the photo as I would love to use it in a club mag article...with appropriate acknowledgment of course!

I will also seek to find the advert in Motor Sport as that would be documented history. I believe the car has only been advertised for sale twice in 92 years. The first being around 1972, possibly in Exchange and Mart or similar and secondly in Motor Sport. In 1982 it sold for half the price of that Type 44...if only it had maintained the differential

Very much look forward to your views on oil sealing of the crank case to sump and how to overcome the potential big end issue.

Thanks

Mark

Re: Lagonda 11.9 crankshaft oil sealing or lack of

Written by Colin M34 at Oct 28, 2015 2:23 pm

Hi Mark

Of course the other fascinating thing about this car is that Brentford is very close to Staines and I believe it sold to a chap in Twickenham so it never went very far from the factory!

Colin

Re: Lagonda 11.9 crankshaft oil sealing or lack of

Written by Mark at Nov 05, 2015 12:45 am

Just to stimulate a little debate around the effectiveness of the early cars splash oil system...

The late Arthur Jederre-Fisher recommended raising the level of oil in the two sump troughs by 1/8 inch. This was achieved by drilling and tapping the drain hole in the centre of each trough and fitting a 1/8 or 1/4 BSP reducing bush and cutting it down to achieve the raised level. The hole in each bush may need to be drilled out to a larger diameter. (Thanks to Ken Painter for this extract from Arthurs J-Ds note books)

I guess this was one improvement to overcome potential oil starvation for No 1 and No 4 big end on hills?

Are there any views on how effective this would be and whether there is any down side?

Thanks

Mark
