

ISSUE 686/ SEPTEMBER 2025

Viva LANCIA

THE MAGAZINE OF THE LANCIA MOTOR CLUB

www.lanciamc.co.uk

INSIDE

**REAPPRAISING
THE DEDRA
LE MANS AND
BACK IN AN
INTEGRALE**



Omicron Engineering

Lancia Spares and restorations

LANCIAS FOR SALE

Our customers inform us that the following cars are available.

LANCIA FULVIA COUPE 1600HF LUSO

RHD UK specification car painted in Bianco Saratoga with black interior. Well known within the club, registration ROT950M. Last owner since 2010, all previous owners known. Thick folder of bills, and correspondence, significant investment by current owner. £45,000 ono

LANCIA FULVIA SPORT 1.3 ALUMINIUM PROJECT

LHD Fulvia Sport 1.3. One of the 700 or so 1300cc Sport Zagato's with aluminium bodywork. This car was recently imported to the UK by the current owner, but upon examination beyond his budget. Requires work to everything including sills and floors and we presume all mechanicals will need looking at as well.

Also available:-

- Fulvia Sport Zagato S1 1.4 Competizione replica, fast-road spec.
- Flaminia Touring GT 2.5 3C restoration project.



PARTS

New: Fulvia Series 1 Coupe front bumper bright finisher trim
New: Beta Coupe/Spider/HPE manual window regulators
New: Fulvia brake compensator rod bushes
New: batch of Fulvia etc., exhausts inc. some stainless steel ones
New: ignition lead sets for many models including Delta S4 & 037
New: Fulvia wheel bearing retaining nuts & hub nuts
New: Fulvia crank core plugs, 1300 and 1600. Correct weight
New: Beta brake discs, front
New: Fulvia S2/3 brake discs, front & rear
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New: Fulvia and Flavia / 2000 shock absorbers, front and rear
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Also: Fulvia S2/3 idler box bushes
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Also: Flaminia Sport / Super Sport windscreens
Also: Flaminia Super Sport rear screens
New: Fulvia S2 steering column bushes
Also: Fulvia sump guards
Also: Aurelia drag link lock tabs
New: supplies of Fulvia S2 5 in 1 instrument panel lenses
New: Fulvia S2/3 major & minor instrument lenses
New: Fulvia S2/3 alternator and lubrication stickers
New: front spring mounting blocks in three sizes

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Viva LANCIA



SEPTEMBER 2025 No. 686

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Sent by Tony Kovacevic, we've tried to locate this store front to no avail. It was clearly once a proud Lancia main dealership, then converted to shops and now stands half derelict, possibly in line for another repurposing. Does anyone recognise it?

Editorial

But you thought we'd done with the Beta bus, which has recently featured prominently in this magazine despite never being available in the UK. But it was an important vehicle for Lancia and much was expected of it. So here we are again this time with the true and final story of how two buses competed in the 1950 Trans Africa Rally. We've covered the technical aspects of the bus and its production history in previous issues; this is the story from a Rally point of view and it's an exciting one. Think of something – sabotage, lost wheels, crippling damage to vehicles, caught out by tides, becoming stranded in open desert, you name it and it happened to someone. Nicky Armstrong was fortunate enough to come across a copy of the book *Africa a Cronometro* by Egidio Corradi (one of the Lancia crew) which was in effect a daily journal giving a full behind the scenes commentary, no holds barred. The book is a reprint with additional material as an addendum and as such it answers a number of questions. Is it important? In the big scheme of things not really, the race received scant coverage but Gianni Lancia supervised proceedings inasmuch as he personally designed the interior of the buses and insisted that certain trusted employees were part of the crews. In true Italian fashion the buses were blessed and seen off by Pope Pius II (even today some Italians still have a new car blessed, or affix a photo of a saint to the dashboard) so evidently there were many who thought this a serious and to some extent hazardous undertaking. Read all about it on pp8-12.

We are always keen to hear from owners who run 'forgotten' Lancias and we are planning a mini series which will include the Ypsilon (later series) Kappa, Lybra, Thesis and others that were mainly

private imports. I've set the ball rolling by writing up my experiences with a Dedra – when did you last see one – I was vaguely casting about for someone else who might do this, but frankly I don't know anyone who's got one! So I did it myself. Good car, much maligned yet somehow now coming into its own. Hopefully the TDC will respond and we can get a fuller picture. I'd love to hear from anyone who went on the Dedra Challenge; I was once asked to give a talk on marketing to a symposium of students and briefly considered using the Challenge as a case study; then backed out and used Kia Ora (we all adore it/it's too orangey for crows) and Cresta (it's frothy, man) instead. Mind, one of my Dedras was also frothy when you removed the oil filler cap but more on this p15.

Lastly a sad note received recently from Alison Ure (Kent/Sussex meet) regarding regular attendee Simon Polley. We ask everyone to keep Simon in mind as this popular LMC member has recently been diagnosed with a terminal illness with little hope of a cure. Discharged from hospital, he is currently at home with his son Sam who will keep everyone updated. This is a sad time for Simon, his family and the many friends he has made through Lancia so please keep him in your thoughts.

Stuart

Jack Romano

Cover: Stuart Else's Fulvia HF pictured in Monsal Dale Derbyshire earlier this year. Photo: Stuart Else.

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Forthcoming events

LMC events diary

September

5 - 7 LMC Welsh Weekend

6 Goodwood Track Day

26 - 28 Beetameet

April, 2026

24 - 26 Great Northern Weekend

June, 2026

4 - 8 Sliding Pillar Rally

BETAMEET SEPTEMBER 26 - 28

The 2025 Betameet will be in Saltaire area of Yorkshire – Friday 26 through to Sunday September 28. Rough itinerary: Friday pm: arrive and have a few drinks then a proper Bradford Curry around 8pm. Saturday: meet in and around Amelia Street for tea/coffee/bacon butties then a drive up into the Yorkshire Dales – different from last time (2020) as I'll be adapting the GNW 24 route which proved very popular. PM there will be burgers back at mine, weather permitting in my newly re-built yard. Sunday am: drive over to 'The Motorist' for Coffee & Cars. There is already a spot booked for Yorkshire LMC members. Depart from there. Several attendees are already booked into the Mercure Bradford between Saltaire and Bingley.

Neil Prestman

LANCIA CLUB FRANCE GRAND RALLY, SEPTEMBER 26 - 28

The venue is the Narbonne region (Occitanie, Southern France), the first Roman colony outside Italy. A 250 km. route will bring the Lancias to various scenic places, including Canal du Midi, Fontfroide Abbey, vineyards, visit to the old Narbonne city with its fabulous history and tranquil canals, etc.

The hotel is the highly rated four-star Narbonne Novotel, participants will enjoy all meals from Friday to Sunday lunch, beverages included, visits, rally plaques and awards. Prices are: Lancia Club France member: €720 for two persons; €500 for one person. Non Lancia Club France member: €770 for two persons; €530 for one person.

The meeting point is l'Abbaye de Fontfroide on Friday at 2.30pm.

For more information and entry form please contact myself,

Daniel Pottier

sferic-pottier@wanadoo.fr

Tel. +33 6 89 78 39 78

GREAT NORTHERN WEEKEND APRIL 24 - 26, 2026

A brief note: the GNW 2026 will be held in Dumfries and Galloway. The hotel has been secured for the week-

end of Friday April 24 to Sunday 26, 2026. Further details of the package and booking to follow.

Simon and Debbie Butcher

LANCIA MOTOR CLUB IRISH RALLY APRIL 10 - 12, 2026

Lancia Motor Club Ireland are proud to announce their 2026 Rally to be based out of the Radisson Blu Hotel in North West Ireland, right beside the very scenic Rosses point area and the Darty Mountains, all in an Area of Ireland known as Yeats Country.

The venue is accessible from both Dublin and Belfast, being approximately two to three hours drive from either city.

Activities include the usual buffet and welcoming drinks on Friday evening, a scenic drive on Saturday, featuring plenty of the areas outstanding Natural Beauty, Mountains and another of Irelands famed 'Magic Roads', then a gala dinner to follow and a shorter run on the Sunday.

€506 per double room for Fri/Sat night including Friday night buffet and Saturday night dinner.

€451 per single room for Fri/Sat night including Friday night buffet and Saturday night dinner.

Hotel Bookings are available now, please book directly with the hotel.

Tel: +353 (0) 71 914 0005 – quote event reference Lancia Motor Club Ireland.

Please email edfahey@gmail.com and let us know you are coming – we need numbers so we can plan accordingly.

For overseas visitors contact www.nutttravel.com for the best ferry deals.

Looking forward to the event and plenty of Craic.

Ed Fahey

Lancia Motor Club Ireland

SLIDING PILLAR RALLY JUNE 4 - 8, 2026

The dates for the 2026 Sliding Pillar Rally are June 4 - 8. and the location will be Snowdonia National Park.

However, it is already fully booked and I have opened a waiting list for entries.

Ade Rudler

Tel. 07411 884125

aderudler@outlook.com

Electronic Club library

As your current Librarian I do not feel sufficiently IT fluent to complete the transition of the Library to a fully web-accessible system. I am therefore reaching out to all members to see if anyone is interested in helping the Club with this task. As I see it there are two possible ways to address this:

- 1 Someone to design the Library site but not want to stay permanently involved, or
- 2 Someone to become our Electronic Librarian, a new Officer of the Club, to work alongside me with the long-term option of taking over the Library completely.

To ensure the Library carries on supporting all members, I am continuing to bridge the gap by providing information to all members manually. Currently when someone asks for a manual, handbook, picture, sketch or whatever I send what is needed electronically.

Please feel free to email or call to chat about sharing this very important role with me.

Chris Hopkins

librarian@lanciamc.co.uk

Tel. 07818 444 333

Obituary: Ercole Spada

Ercole Spada (b. Busto Arsizio 1938) passed away on August 3, just as a new book on him and his work hit the shelves: *Spada. The long story of a short tail*, written by Bart Lenaerts and available now through Waft Publishing. Entirely self-taught, he will forever be remembered for his 'coda tronca' designs, the truncated tail that features on many of his cars including of course the Fulvia Zagato and the Flaminia Supersport. He was barely 23 when he designed the Aston Martin DB4 GTZ which debuted to an admiring public at the 1960 London Motor Show, but it was the first of three Spada designs destined to captivate audiences that year. The Turin Auto Show later displayed his OSCA 1600 GTZ concept car, while his Alfa Romeo Giulietta SZ debuted at the Geneva Motorshow that March. In fact most of what left Zagato during the 1960's had Spada input, and even after he left in 1969 he continued working for them as a freelancer. Spells with Ford,

BMW, Audi, IDEA and Ghia served to enhance his reputation. Latterly with his son, he set up the design consultancy Spadaconcept. "Most of my work was rejected at first" he said "but over time they came to accept it, and finally love it". Francesca Pasetti (Lady Fulvia) who met him recently at an exhibition called him "a true gentleman, very quiet, very humble".





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Snippets

GIUGIARO – BOTH SHAKEN AND STIRRED

Giorgetto Giugiaro, now 87 and described as 'the legendary pen-man' survived a serious accident in Sardinia on July 25 around 1pm when his Defender overturned on a back road. Looking at the photos of the scene (provided by the Fire and Rescue Service) it's amazing that he walked away with a just damaged vertebrae and some bruising. He described himself as 'shaken' and was kept in hospital for observation; recuperating at home, he may have to wear a supporting brace for a few weeks. Originally from Cuneo (Piedmont) Giugiaro was driving to his Sardinian Villa (part of a complex made popular in the 1960s when Prince Aly Khan built a holiday home there) when the vehicle overturned. Founder of Italdesign with DNA inherited from his family who were painters of frescoes in palaces and churches, Giugiaro has collaborated with the most prestigious marques in motoring and has received many awards and accolades, being inducted into the motoring hall of fame. His links to Lancia are tenuous but among his creations we have the Volkswagen Golf, Fiat Panda, Delorean DMC-12, Alfa Brera, Lotus Esprit, BMW M1 plus prototypes for Ferrari, Maserati and Bugatti.

SHOCK HORROR

It was frightening, never heard a noise like that before in 59 years of ownership. Absolutely Deafening.

I was only going a few miles, to Brooklands, to an assembly of Muttering Rotters (Motoring Writers) who would greet the B24 with cries of joy and I was looking forward to it.

I leapt into the car (that's 'leapt' spelt 'clambered'. Such is the toll that the years exact) turned the key, waited while pumps pumped and pressed the key.

Sheer horror engulfed me. Cacophony! Mechanical Mayhem. In local Esher Churchyard John Cobb stirred and muttered.

I pondered a minute, engaged reverse and lifted the clutch. We moved but even more appalling racket was added and I was contemplating aborting the mission but I did want to be there.

It was all very odd and I don't know why I persisted. It was self indulgence against the possible prospect of a horrendous invoice. I had taken leave of my senses.

It was about half a mile by which time I was in the middle of the Hersham Bypass (would you want your much loved one to collapse on something as low key as Hersham Bypass? I mean, after all!)

Then light, glorious blinding, relieving light dawned.

It was the first time I had driven wearing my hearing aids.
Ho hum.

Anthony Hussey

BETA IN SWANAGE

A couple of images (right) snapped whilst enjoying the delights of Swanage. The town's ice cream parlour, Fortes, of course. I noticed these period photos, proudly adorning the walls. Appropriate vehicle, I'd say.

David Bardwell

GOT AN YPSILON?

For a planned forthcoming article on the Ypsilon (second series) we would like owners to get in touch. Despite the fact that the Ypsilon has celebrated 30 years we are unsure just how many are in the Club, probably single figures and all private imports; but these are good, underrated cars. Several were produced in limited editions such as the 'Cosmopolitan', others like my own 1996 LS 1.4 12-valve example which I purchased from Peter Gerrish in 2019, were only made with this engine for 1 year. I'm not sure if its the same car that Pat Ure once owned. They deserve more exposure, so if you have one, in the first instance please contact me, Robert Richmond Jones on robwenrj@btinternet.com or 01929 555189

WRITE A BOOK ON YOUR MODEL

I am a commissioning editor at Amberley Publishing and I am looking for authors to write books for our contemporary and classic cars series.

The series consists of paperback books with 96 pages which are typically 20,000 words and 100 illustrations. The books are designed to be straightforward to write and produce but which nevertheless provide a well-researched, authoritative and readable background to the subject.

If you or any of your contacts would like to discuss a book about any of the Lancia models, I would be delighted to hear from you. I will be happy to send you further information on the series and the publishing arrangements.

Alexander Stilwell

Amberley Publishing, The Hill,
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THE RAY PANKS LAMBDA

I know I've mentioned this before, but still no definitive response so here's another reminder of the Ray Panks Terraplane based on a Lambda chassis. It belonged to Dr. C.T.C. de Crespigny of Adelaide and may have been a rare Casaro spider which was cut up to make the



a picture from *Capolavoro* of the body sides for a Lambda being made. I just cannot believe that the body was made by hand, beating out the panels on a Buck on the floor and then putting them on jigs to straighten them out, there are two or three panels lying on the floor in front of the jigs having been bashed about by large hammers. How could you expect to get two cars the same when using this antiquated method of production! What a slow laborious way to make a car body, I cannot understand why they did not press the panels in sections and then weld them together; I am sure that would have been more accurate than bashing them about and then having to straighten them out afterwards. No wonder the doors had turnbuckles in them to get them to fit.

Denis Basson
Australia



Regarding last month's editorial photo, we have had a number of Lancia funeral cars in this magazine but none more impressive than the one which carried Alfieri Maserati to his final resting place, as befits an Italian legend. Editor was so taken with this image he originally wanted to put it on the cover, we think its a Theta, registered 6366 BO and it's easily the most ornate and magnificent hearse I've ever seen. Once again, I don't expect it to have survived but if anyone knows any more please let us know.

Another driver who died of Kidney complications was Channel Islander Peter Richard Boley Pittard. Oftimes forgotten he at least has a fine write up on Motorsport Memorial.com. After a successful stint on motorcycles his motoring career began in 1958 driving a Lancia in local races. Despite allegedly being able to see only from one eye, he won a series of prestigious races against the likes of Jim Clark and others and came to the attention of Ken Tyrrell. By the mid-1960's he'd moved to Italy and was an established entrant in Italian races, but at Monza June 4 1967 his Lola caught fire. He bravely drove the car to safety and leapt out, badly burned across his whole body. Flown to the UK then rushed to a specialist UK hospital he died on June 10, 1967, and was eventually buried at Monza. It was bad year for drivers – several were killed or maimed and there was much debate regarding safety at European tracks. A bizarre footnote (no more than conjecture) came about when two Italian journalists claimed Pittard was killed because of supposed links to the 1963 Great Train Robbers; the truth was more prosaic – a loose filler cap, or perhaps a damaged pipe or union had allowed fuel to spill out over the hot exhaust. It's true that three of the gang have never been identified and legend has it that Pittard was one; more likely there has been some confusion with career criminal and erstwhile racing driver Roy James. The journalists claim to have undertaken painstaking investigations and summarised their conclusions in some detail in an unusual Italian-only article, which also implicates Roy James's friend Bernie Ecclestone. Their central theory is that Pittard was murdered, his 'flameproof' overalls doctored and a pipe deliberately ruptured, because (quote) 'he was about to sing'. Far fetched but you never know, read the full story on <http://www.motorsportmemorial.org/focus.php?db=ct&n=1330> and <https://www.f1sport.it/2015/02/f1-storia-e-leggende-sulla-grande-rapina-al-treno-postale-glasgow-londra/>

Clearly snapped before the times of drive-on/drive-off, a well-known image similar to this is in Jesse Alexander's book *Driven*. However the caption of this flying Flaminia image reads:



Capt. Fridd's table talk

The column that deals with the strange, the unusual and the often overlooked.



'1962-05-04 Targa Florio Lancia Flaminia Sport on its way to or from the 1962 Targa Florio. Licence no. is TO340516, same as entry #76 a red one supposedly driven by Elio Zagato himself. Did not finish. This may have been Sicily or perhaps around Genova? Seen a claim that this is chassis 1006 i.e. 823.1.1006'. What happened to this car, anyone know any more?

And here's an oddity – a Flavia Berlina on Prova. Part of a road-test of the Lancia Flavia Sedan, probably equipped with Kugelfischer mechanical fuel injection followed by a newly launched Fulvia Sport during November 1965. This apparently is the Turin Motor Show test road. There is a road sign on the inside of the hairpin (not visible in this photo) which indicates times at which testing will be in progress by carefree early 60's journalists eager to experience the latest in performance advancement. The write up of the test itself on the cover of *Gazzetta della Sport* is titled 'The Auto Funzionale has arrived' and is written by none other than Giovanni Canestrini, mentioned several times in *Viva Lancia!* recently. No matter what your view on him, he knew a good car when he saw one. Pending readability (my copy is smudged and has a huge crease right through the middle) I'm trying to persuade editor to translate it and run it in a future issue.



I don't know how I missed this but leggy actress Sandra Milo passed away January 2024 and here she is in her heyday lolling astride a Flavia Zagato. She is best remembered for her collaborations with director Federico Fellini. After nearly a decade of roles in comedies, Milo married in 1961 intending to end her acting career. She was encouraged to return by Fellini, and played the spoiled mistress, Carla, in his surreal opus *8½* (1963), which was hailed as a masterpiece. Milo was swept up in the film's success, earning a Silver Ribbon for Best Supporting Actress from the Italian National Syndicate of Film Journalists. In spite of her success in *8½*, she had trouble finding roles but fortunately re-teamed with Fellini in 1965 for *Juliet of the Spirits* Fellini's first exercise in colour filmmaking, where she played three separate roles. For this Milo received a second Best Supporting Actress award, but her talent still went unrecognised by many directors. She took another hiatus from acting in 1969, returning after 10 years when she was often cast as gruff middle-aged women in the ensuing decades. In 2003, she memorably appeared in a supporting role in the romance *Incantato* (2003) and most recently, featured in *An Enemy that Means You Well* (2018). She died on January 29, 2024 in Rome, Italy aged 88. This oft reproduced image is actually from the cover of an Italian motoring magazine; strangely Starline models decided to replicate it but using a



Flaminia Pf 3B coupe instead of the Flavia, looks odd to me but yours for 22 Euros plus post (currently out of stock). Check it out on <https://www.carmodel.com/starline-models/517157/1-43/lancia/flaminia-coupe-3b-1962-with-sandra-milo-promotional-toy-fair-nurburg-2008/26812>



Elsewhere this issue we have a little resume on the somewhat maligned Dedra and it caused me to wonder why the name was chosen and who Dedra might have been. A lesser-known minor biblical figure? A priestess perhaps, or a warrior princess? Afraid not, turns out that despite having a feeling of antiquity the name means nothing. There is apparently no record of anyone named Dedra in the classical texts, nearest thing is an old Irish spelling of Deirdre. A theory that it might stem from 'Theodora' is about as valid as the 'missing Q-Gospel'. With plenty of names available (some made up, some real) I ask myself why did Lancia move away from the Greek alphabet/Roman roads sequence, and just how did the Italian marketing team get to this?

It's difficult to get across what big business car accessories were in the early part of last century. You could order almost anything from cigar cutters, ashtrays, heaters, fitted luggage, picnic sets, picnic tables, trays, hairdryers, gloves, umbrellas, clothing, jackets; you name it, somebody sold it. The business was centred around Fitzrovia (Great Portland Street) with outposts in Old Bond Street and Jermyn Street. At one stage the area was nicknamed 'Motor Row' with no less than 33 purveyors of such goods, including Dunhill of course, and Lewis Leathers Ltd. The latter have enjoyed a long-term presence at classic motoring events and in off-shoots of the associated culture; it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the early passing of Derek Harris, the company's well-known President. Readers may remember that founded in 1892, this iconic 'wardrobe company' established itself on Great Portland Street and became the go-to outfitters for early motorists, aviators and other adventuring types. Lewis Leathers still maintains an attractive shop-front presence in this time of change, easily outliving Coppen Allan & Co. and even surviving the previously nearby and much-lamented high street chandlery of Arthur Beale, now mail order only.

I used to be a regular visitor to their near-equivalent, Alfred Dunhill established just one year later than Lewis' in 1893, and suppliers of the now (thankfully) discontinued Siberian Wolf Coat. But in the interests of impartiality if I had to choose an item from either, I would favour Lewis's rare special-order donkey jacket to replace my own somewhat fatigued utility wear. However, I never did recover from the indecision imparted upon a pair of Dunhill motorcycle boots featuring a rear zip and reinforced gear-shift patch. I'm hoping exclusive shoemakers John Lobb across the road can help at a fair price.

Lastly this scruffy and faded photo is for readers who might harbour an interest in the history of the uniformed services. This is Ireland in the early 1920's and I think they are 'hooded terrors' though I can't be entirely sure. Despite the poor quality the registration of the vehicle on the left is legible: 1099CN which might ring a bell with military Lancia enthusiasts. Read more on these and similar vehicles on <https://hmvf.co.uk/topic/17839-irish-armoured-railcars/> I also attach my



favourite period Irish Lancia photo – IZs converted to run on rails; again check the site mentioned earlier – many times the rails were torn up and the Lancia's sabotaged. Likewise, the Inchicore works where their armour plating was made. Idly musing what use these robust and now historic vehicles were repurposed as, once they were decommissioned I thought Zookeepers or Safari drivers might find a practical use for them. At this point I feel obliged to mention the passing of Lady Sarah Aspinall, who helped glamourise the 1960s 'like something out of F. Scott Fitzgerald' according to car-maker Charles Lucas. She died recently on June 17 at the age of 80. Although not directly associated with the Lancia brand, her interesting obituary in *The Telegraph* July 4 (it's also on line) contains the names of several historically important motoring personalities and their social circle. Although a Clermont Club curse is denied, some of those connected with this club and who subsequently suffered misfortune may have been left wondering, in particular the spectacularly infamous and by now near-penniless Lord Lucan. To amuse sundry high rollers and potentates he was reortedly reduced to clownishly pretending to prepare himself as lunch for Zorra the tiger, a story his old friend Phillipe Marcq claims to be true. A sad come-down for one who was once considered for the role of 'James Bond' and who's great grandfather commanded the British Cavalry unit which undertook the charge of the Light Brigade. Anyway back to the cage on the military Lancias, a use for something similar may have briefly crossed Lady Sarah's mind, when her conservationist, zookeeper and casino-owning husband John self-styled 'alpha-male' Aspinall lovingly and admiringly praised her as: 'a perfect example of the primate female, ready to serve the dominant male and make his life agreeable'. I reckon if he said that today, Zorra the Tiger would have had the lunch of her life.



Welcome new members

We extend a warm welcome to new members who joined the LMC last month.

James Hall-Smith , Wiltshire	Simon Tarlton , Herefordshire
Robert Feind , USA	Andrew O'Connell , North Yorkshire
Tim and Debbie Bailey , West Sussex	Richard Buxton , Dorset
John Sullivan , Dorset	Jake Brindley-Guy , West Yorkshire
Guy Bisson , London	

Wim Oude Weernink and Okke Mouissie, have produced a wonderful book with a surprising title, *Working Class Lancias*, which presents all the Lancia commercial vehicles, including the Beta, one of the several different vehicles for which Lancia used this name over a period of 100 years. This Beta was a small lorry or bus chassis that first appeared in 1950. At the end of this same year two Beta mini-buses, coachbuilt by Viberti left Italy to drive and sail to Algiers, the starting point of a nearly 16,000km rally across the African continent, all the way down to the finish at Cape Town, the most south-westerly town in Africa, a tremendous feat for two overloaded and underpowered vehicles by modern standards. Both buses arrived safely at Cape Town with honourable placings.

A journalist who was travelling in one of the Beta buses kept a daily journal of their adventures for his newspaper and when he got home he wrote a book that told the story of this 1951 Trans-African rally. The author’s name is Egisto Corradi and the Italian title of the book is: *Africa a Cronometro*. Wim and Okke referenced this book when they wrote a brief account of the event in *Working class Lancias*. I got in touch and asked Okke about the Italian book. He replied with the book title, the author, the publisher and the ISBN number; within a few days I had my own copy for only 25 euros. It had been reprinted in 2015 with an additional copious final chapter containing background notes that complement the original text. Corradi died in 1990 but the book-covers of the original and ‘new’ versions have some discreet differences in that the earlier one, a Viberti poster, backed up several times by the Corradi text, claims a distance of 16,000km covered on the Trans-Africa rally but the ‘new’ one says 15,000km. It may be that the new one has not included the longer East African optional route through Uganda, Kenya and Tanganyika. We are told that the road surfaces were much better on these British administered countries than those of the shorter, Belgian Congo route which was taken by the Lancia Betas. A final unexpected ‘deviation’ was forced on all of the rally vehicles by the South African Government; at Johannesburg they were prevented from taking the direct route to Cape Town and were required to travel on a longer albeit prettier coastal road via Port Elizabeth.



The Lancia Beta rally team (minus two) at Marseilles. Second from left Gianni Lancia, next to him Canestrini.

Crossing Africa with a stop watch

Interpreted by Nicky Armstrong

The photo botoom left shows the crews just before the Lancia team sailed to Algiers. Two of the men in the photo did not go to Algiers: Gianni Lancia and the Marquis, Arnaldo Trevisani drove home to Turin. Two other men of the Lancia team, Aldo Cappelli and Giuseppe Solaro, the co-drivers and qualified mechanics, are not seen in this photo. At the moment that the photo was taken they were occupied in watching the mini-buses being crane-loaded onto the *Ville d’Oran* the ship that carried the team to Algiers. Gianni had chosen the names for the two Beta mini-buses and every detail of their specification. The crews that travelled in the buses were made up of five Lancia employees and three specialist-newspaper journalists, eight men in all, four to each vehicle. One of the journalists who travelled to Cape Town in the *Southern Cross* was Giovanni Canestrini, who, with Arnaldo Trevisani were the Italian event-organisers of the Rally, but Giovanni had some personal reasons for wanting to take a direct part in this adventure. The second mini-bus was named *Climene*, after a famous Italian navy vessel. The second journalist in *Southern Cross* was Egisto Corradi.

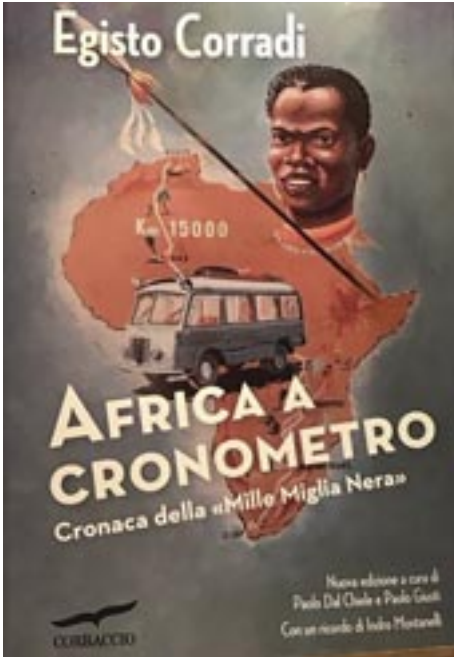
In 1950 Gianni Lancia, (second from the left in the team photo), was 26 years old and he shared the management of the company with his mother, Adele. He did not become a racing driver like his father, but he inherited his engineering ability. Very few qualified engineers in Italy were capable of welding to the standards of Gianni, their training did not require them to dirty their hands repairing motor cars. Arnaldo Trevisani, (first on the left in the Lancia team photo), and Giovanni Canestrini, (third from the left), are the two men that were asked by the French and Belgian Automobile Clubs to become the Italian officials and organisers of the

Trans-Africa rally. They accepted willingly and the first person to back them up was Gianni Lancia. At that time Trevisani was in charge of the Turin branch of the Italian Automobile Club, he was also Vice-President of the same club at its base in Rome. Arnaldo had first tried to interest Fiat in the project but was unsuccessful, mainly because unknown to him Canestrini had recently ruffled the feathers of the Agnelli family. Canestrini was the editor of the Italian Automobile Club newsletter but he was also a full time journalist and one of the four founders of the Mille Miglia.

The crews of the two Beta mini-buses that Gianni had named and built to his own specification for the Trans-Africa rally were chosen by him and as mentioned, consisted of five Lancia employees and three journalists. Two journalists were in the *Southern Cross*, Giovanni Canestrini, (third on the left in the team photo: Canestrini always found himself a good place in the photos, here he is seen in-between Gianni Lancia and Emilio Christellin). The second journalist in *Southern Cross* was Egisto Corradi, author of the book, and second on the right in the team photo. Emilio Christillin, (fourth from the left in the team photo), was the *Southern Cross* lead driver and his mechanic and co-driver was Aldo Cappelli, who is not seen in the Marseille team photo but is beside the Pope in the photo taken when the Lancia team was invited to meet him. Ferdinando Gatta, (fourth from the right in the team photo), was the lead driver in the *Climene* and his mechanic and co-driver was Leandro Solaro, who is not seen in the team photo but he is in the photo with the Pope. Luciano Palomba was the third journalist, (seen third from the right in the team photo, between Corradi and Gatta) with Gatta, Solaro and Pier Francesco Mele, (the first on the right in the team photo). Solaro never got



Cappelli-Solaro were not in the Marseilles picture, but photographed here with Pope Pius II.



to drive the bus because at Algiers Gatta calmly announced that he intended to drive it all the way to Cape Town, and that is exactly what he did. Both Christillin and Gatta were successful racing drivers but Christillin was an easier person to get on with and he did not hog the wheel. Emilio and Aldo took turns in driving and the passengers enjoyed watching the change-overs, which were carried out at full speed.

In the photo with the Pope you can just about make out Canestrini’s nose to the left of Adele Lancia with ‘Nando’ Gatta and Aldo Cappelli on her left. To the right of the Pope, Pio XII, we have Emilio Christillin, Leandro Solaro, Arnaldo Trevisani and Paolo Butti. The latter was there because he was also from Turin and he drove, with two friends, a Willys Universal Jeep with a tweaked engine that made it very fast, but liable to break down several times a day. In spite of this, he was initially told that he had won the race but after interventions from the French Army, concerning the rule book of that governed the event, he was given joint-first position and finally second place behind a French Army Delahaye station wagon that had just been pulled out of a ditch after the driver fell asleep. Despite the fact that most of the bodywork was missing and what was left seemed good for the scrap-heap, this wrecked vehicle was awarded first place. Third place went to a Land Rover that the organisers believed was an American make but by the time they discovered the truth it was too late for them to change their minds. Baron Roberto Barraco, who drove a Lancia Aprilia, should also have been in the photo with the Pope but he was still driving his car back to Algiers.

Although Butti had nothing to do with the Lancias he’s worth a mention because he was an ace mechanic, having changed the cylinder head gaskets on the Jeep almost every day of the race, and twice on the day that they arrived in Cape Town. In the course of the raid his team replaced 13 broken leaf

springs and an equal number of welding interventions were made on the vehicle’s chassis, not to mention a thousand other break-downs. An explanation of the head gaskets and their great speed, compared to the other, visibly identical Jeeps was that a special aluminium cylinder head had been fitted giving a higher compression and better breathing, at the cost of reliability. Of course, you are not allowed to do that now, but in those early days everything that could go went, and it did!

Amazingly, 30 vehicles managed to reach Cape Town within the time limits but points were added to or removed from each vehicle for reasons explained but hotly challenged after much reading of the book of rules that governed these rallies. The privately entered Lancia Aprilia driven by Baron Roberto Battaco was given 19th place overall. *Climene* came in 15th place and *Southern Cross* 20th.

One of the rules established for the rally was that the minimum average speed to avoid being disqualified was 35km per hour, and the maximum was 50kmph. One of the early daily runs was the 386km that separated Adrar from Beni Abbès. If they were to obtain a maximum of points, the two Beta buses needed to do this run in seven hours and 40 minutes, which meant arriving at Adrar no later than 10 minutes past two in the afternoon. Corradi was terrified that the tyres would be cut to pieces by the sharp stones in the roads that they were running on, but Canestrini simply smiled at Egisto. “Technical advances have made a lot of progress in tyre-making, since the Peking to Paris race, 50 years ago!” he said, and for once he was telling the truth. That day they arrived at Adrar with 10 minutes to spare.

A big problem for Canestrini, while organising the rally, was that he had failed completely to persuade any British manufacturer or race team to send their vehicles to the Trans-Africa rally. The authors of the final additional chapter insist that there were several British persons in the list of participants, (denied by Canestrini). No doubt Canestrini was well informed about Italian vehicles but he too was unaware that the Lapalu brothers’ Land-Rover was a British product.

Canestrini also claimed that the British Government failed to supply information about the road conditions in those countries living under British administration. But participants who had previously driven in these countries all said the roads in British controlled territories were superb compared to the roads in the Belgian Congo and in French Equatorial Africa. I would love to see the information that was sent by the Belgian government concerning the roads in the Congo. These roads were notoriously poor; seen on youtube, they seem to be even worse now, with much heavier lorries than they were then.



South Africa was just about to unleash a world chorus of criticism against their Apartheid racist policies, formally introduced in 1951, but the Belgian Congo had already activated similar policies many years earlier. It is quite possible that Canestrini’s claims against the British are quite true in this case. Canestrini had never hidden his own desire of fighting to reclaim the lost Italian colonies and this was known by the British authorities. In British East Africa only Kenya was a colony. Uganda and Tanganyika had been created ‘League of Nations’ Protectorates after WW1. In 1945 the United Nations took over from the league but at the end of the day all these titles became totally irrelevant because all three countries had been given independence, one at a time during the early 1960’s. After independence Tanganyika joined with Zanzibar to make the present day Tanzania.

Canestrini always described Italian residents in Africa as ‘our colonists,’ but he may have also meant this in the sense of self-employed farmers, there were many of these in several African countries administered by the French, the Belgians and the British, not just those in the Italian territories. When we discover that the Italians, having chosen the wrong side to fight, were stripped of all their territories in Africa, and in Europe, we realise that ‘colonists’ is an inappropriate term to use for these people. One of Canestrini’s better known quotes was produced during the course of the Trans-African rally. It ran as follows: “The Italian participation (in this rally) constitutes an un-repeatable and precious work of propaganda among the enthusiastic Italian colonists that we met along the roads.” I am sure that the enthusiasm he saw was really the effect of seeing fellow Italians taking part in an international event. Propaganda in English is a term with a nasty smell but some Italians seem to think that it is a brilliant marketing technique. The only meaning that I can perceive in Giovanni’s little tirade is that his crazy belief in the fact that Italian success in this difficult endurance

rally might make some Italians believe that they could recover their African territories. Frankly, a stupid and deluded idea!

My family spent a good deal of time in Tanzania and the many Italians that my family knew in this country had left their own country in search of a better life, which was exactly the same reason that my own parents came over. After the war unable to find properly paid jobs in England, they were offered good jobs in Africa by the British Government, in which they would be working at their own professions, (teaching and nursing) and helping a new country to gain its independence.

Canestrini referred to the local people as negroes but my parents always called them Africans. Canestrini complained that the British government, like the Germans, had made no formal entry request for their vehicles. Perhaps the Italians hadn't realised the full extent of allied bombing on Germany, with whole cities reduced to dust heaps. Italy too had been bombed, but never on the same scale. In the event a German-built Mk 1 Volkswagen Beetle, (with twin wind-screens, fore and aft), was entered for the 1951 Trans-African rally by a family who owned an agency to sell this make at Antwerp in Belgium. The driver was Gabrielle D'Ieteren, the daughter of this family, accompanied by her friend with an even more aristocratic name, Charlotte van Marke de Lummen. The Italian photo caption of the car and its driver gave her Christian name without the final 'l' and 'e'. Failing to realise that women too could drive cars, they must have thought that she was a man.

Canestrini disliked the British but he could not deny that they provided good race officials with their stop watches. Corradi described a halt at Potiskum, in Nigeria, administered by the British; he said: "Wherever there is an Englishman, even in a village of 100 inhabitants, (like Potiskum), the minimum requirements of comfortable living are never missing". We can see that Egisto was beginning to be fed up with the French or Arab idea of roadside hospitality across the Sahara desert.

Although Canestrini had a problem with the British, Egisto Corradi did not, but one Briton might have a little problem with Egisto because he made a slight faux-pas with his geography. When describing the alternative East African route for the Trans-Africa rally participants he mentioned Uganda and Kenya, (a longer route, which is why the Beta crews

Lancia Beta minibus, Trans Africa rally. Most of the details and fittings were specified by Gianni Lancia, who also hand-picked the crews.

chose to stay on the muddy roads of the Belgian Congo, i.e the shorter route), but often the fairly flat and usually dry and dusty roads of Tanganyika allowed for much higher average speeds. Corradi fails to say that, on the way to rejoin the other vehicles in Rhodesia, most of the miles to be covered would be on the roads of Tanganyika.

There is some confusion concerning the number of days on which the Trans-Africa rally took place. A putative figure of three and a half weeks would not be possible on the African roads; Wim Oude Weernink and Okke Mouissie announced a period of 53 days, (seven weeks, four days), which is what the Corradi book tells us. Suppose we gave ourselves seven rest days, that would leave 46 days of driving. Suppose we then drove for 10 hours a day and we managed to average 350km a day, at the (minimum permitted) average speed of 35kmph which, multiplied by 46, gives us the total of 16,106kms, which is what the earlier, Viberti red book-cover claimed. Of course, that is not exactly what happened, but it does make us realise how important the stop-watches were. The only single day described in the book with these stop-watch details is the one between Beni-Abbès and Adrar, in the Sahara desert. We are told that, to gain the maximum points, the 386km run needed to be covered in seven hours and 40 minutes, which gave an average speed just over the 50kmph maximum average speed allowed. We know that the Beta buses arrived 10 minutes in advance so presumably they waited for a quarter of an hour before they crossed the line. The Beta mini-bus drivers were never pressed by the Lancia management to take first place as the company knew very well the limitations and qualities of their products and employees. Gianni Lancia had made the right choice of vehicles and men and he was rightly certain that each man would do his best. Corradi says that he was almost crying when he thought that the tyres would be cut to bits by the sharp stones.



Once or twice there was a serious risk that the Lancia commercial vehicles would not arrive at Cape Town. Out of political correctness Egisto Corradi never related these mini-disasters, for fear that they might be interpreted as criticisms of his companions. Fortunately, the 2015 edition did not suffer from these problems, the author having died in 1990, and the background notes reveal all the secrets that we wished to know and one or two that we didn't. On one occasion *Climene's* mechanic Leandro Solaro, reacted swiftly when he heard a half shaft break, long before a normal driver would have been aware of it. Fortunately, the vehicles carried spare parts, which was one of the reasons that they were overloaded, but not to have carried spares would have condemned the vehicle to have lost its place among the survivors.

At Marseilles, under the eyes of the two 'second' drivers, the French crane operator carelessly allowed the rear of the *Climene* to bump into a solid part of the ship. There was a suggestion that the accident was not what it seemed to be, but the damage was not severe and it was quickly repaired in the week that remained before the vehicles needed to leave for Cape Town. Two later events were more serious affairs. On two consecutive days *Southern Cross* lost some road wheels, the first time only one, on the front left, at a very slow speed but on the second day the twinned wheels of the drive axle, (we don't know which side) flew off at speed. Incredibly, no one was hurt and there was no serious damage on either occasion, but the crew were upset to have lost points. Nobody ever offered an explanation of what might have happened but one naturally thinks of sabotage. Without proof, no accusations were made, so the team kept quiet and carried on with the job in hand.

The last mini-disaster was potentially the worst. In full sight of Table Mountain over Cape Town the two Beta minibuses drove off the main road and onto a huge beach. They

had done their calculations and decided that they had time for a quick swim. Unfortunately, our brave Italians had always taken their holidays on the Mediterranean with its short and feeble tides. If any of them had been to Mont St. Michel in France he would have seen and appreciated the force and speed of an Atlantic tide racing across the beaches. The tide was coming in and they barely had time to turn the buses round before they got stuck in the sand. At the very last minute, a tractor miraculously turned up and pulled them both out of the water. We are told that *Climene's* driver, Gatta, had another nick-name when young: 'Duccio' (little Mussolini), but I am sure that it was not often said in his hearing.

It seems that most of the Italian and World press were not particularly interested at the beginning in the progress of the Trans-Africa rally, in spite of having sent three journalists with the participants. Other reporters left in their own vehicles but these were mostly French, not Italian. One wouldn't expect the British press to be interested as there were no famous British drivers involved and there were other subjects to fill their pages, in particular the early days of Formula One and the re-establishment of the Tourist Trophy race on the Isle of Man. This situation changed when the East African Safari races began in the British Administered Territories. At the beginning these races were always won by Indians born in Africa, driving bog standard Peugeot 403 and 404s, placid family cars, but that too changed very rapidly over the years. Fortunately, the press in Italy realised that Italian drivers, some of them in Italian vehicles, were doing very well on the 'Trans-Africa' and an Italian, Butti, was initially classed as the winner, but later moved to second place. In the 1952 edition of the event an Italian team with an Italian car was the winner, in a Fiat Campagnola. It was a pity that the Lancia marketing people did not buy advertising space to take advantage of their good results. It looked as if they had little faith in their own products. Lancia was also criticised for not offering its commercial vehicles in the export markets. There was probably not enough cash in the bank to pay the costs of export marketing needs.

Corradi and his fellow members of the Lancia Beta team were not pleased with the South Africans when they decided to change the rally route at the last minute. The South African Government discovered that there was a flock of reporters and photographers waiting to greet the cars at Cape Town, so they immediately decided to close the direct route from Johannesburg to Cape Town. The rally participants were forced to go to Port Elizabeth in order to take the more picturesque tourist road to Cape Town, along the sea-side with its cliffs and beaches. This awkward albeit not unpleasant deviation added another 700km to the original agreed route plan.

Accidents did not only happen to the Italians. The French lost one of their

Hotchkiss Jeeps that rolled down a hillside, and a Delahaye station wagon also fell down a hole onto its roof when the driver fell asleep. At that moment the vehicle was well placed to win the rally so the soldiers made up a do it yourself lifting rig, with a pulley and chain and pulled the wreck back onto the road. One mechanic got the engine running while the others levered off the flattened roof sections. The soldiers then managed to drive the vehicle to Cape Town, where it was able to pick up more points, despite its scrapyard appearance.

The two writers of the closing chapter of *Africa a Cronometro* have done a great job in clearing up some of the questions posed by the Egisto Corradi text, such as his unwillingness to discuss some of the 'accidents' or negative aspects of the journey. One of the images found in this closing section of the narrative contains a map of North-West Africa, showing the alternative routes from the four departure towns. To the right is a box, in which the text explains the differences between the roads. This is closed by a sentence that could be described as criminally ignorant. It says, word for word, that: "Participation in this 'regularity raid' is made up of teams from all the countries of Europe, with the exception of Great Britain". The truth is that there were only three teams that participated in this event, two of them were French and one Italian. The first team was made up from a section of the French Army, comprising six vehicles, all of them with a 4 x 4 transmission. The second team was also French, it was Renault, a company that was practically owned by the French government. They fielded two 4 x 4 cars and three light commercial vehicles. The third team was of course the two 4 x 2 Lancia Beta minibuses, coachbuilt by Viberti but mechanically identical to those sold on the Italian market. All other vehicles taking part in the event were privately entered, including the Aprilia of Baron Roberto Barracco. The writers of this final chapter say that there were some British people among the entrants, but no details are available. The organisers of the event, (and most of the participants, including the vehicle owners), seemed to be unaware that the vehicle which finished in third place was a Land Rover, made in England.



Tidal miscalculation: After the teams took a refreshing dip, the two Betas had to be snatched from the incoming Atlantic.



The authors of this section also say that the British Government was the least helpful among the other European administrators in dealing with the organisers of the event. I suggest that this might have been on account of them being aware of strong efforts from some Italian quarters, (such as Giovanni Canestrini) in their futile dream of trying to regain their lost colonies. In Corradi's own text he shows open admiration for the work of the English administrator of Potiskum in Nigeria, who timed each arrival, and his wife who made every effort to ensure that the vehicle crews all enjoyed a good evening meal and found a comfortable bed to sleep in. However, it is likely that there may well have been some degree of truth in this last claim and the reasons for it have already been explained here earlier; they essentially lay in the difference between Canestrini's vision of regained Italian colonies and the British long term plan for independent African countries.

Lancia could not afford an export campaign and Britain could no longer afford its colonies.

My interest and enthusiasm for the Le Mans Classic started under rather unusual circumstances i.e. a skiing holiday in the Italian Dolomites back in January 2023, when one of our good friends (a great car enthusiast and fan of continental road trips) asked me if I might be interested in being his navigator for a trip to the Le Mans Classic later that year. I thought about this for possibly no more than a few milliseconds and the rest as the saying goes is just history. It was a wonderful trip, which was very well organised by a small family-run travel company named Fantastic Roads, who specialise in organising road tours, often with a motorsport connection, in various countries in Western Europe.

After the extremely enjoyable and hugely successful visit in 2023, I promised my son Michael, that I would take him to this event in 2025 and that he would love it. Indeed it would turn out to exceed his expectations by a very long way.

Now a Delta integrale is not exactly the type of Lancia which you would immediately associate with Le Mans; after all it is essentially a world famous rally car and to the best of my knowledge, one has never been driven in the famous Le Mans 24 hour race and therefore would never qualify to race at the Le Mans Classic. However, as the saying goes ‘necessity is the mother of invention’ and when it became clear that the car which we had originally planned to go to Le Mans in, would not be ready in time, we turned our attention to the integrale, which incidentally had just won the concours competition in its class at the LMC’s National Rally in June.

Despite being a long term enthusiast for Lancia cars, I have never actually owned an integrale, although I did have a Delta back in the mid 1980’s. However when the opportunity arose earlier in the year to buy one at a realistic price, it proved to be a little too tempting. A full service and a thorough inspection of the car had been carried out several weeks earlier to our trip, by Keith Turner of Auto Integrale, which included the

To Le Mans and back in a Delta integrale

by Alan Parkes



A photo of the main entrance to the Le Mans circuit, known locally as the “Circuit de la Sarthe”.

renewal of the all important cam belts and tensioner bearings. The car was therefore in very good shape for a lengthy continental road trip and being left hand drive was eminently suitable for driving in France.

So with my son, Michael, in the driving seat and myself as navigator, we set off from Buckinghamshire early in the morning of Thursday July 3, 2025 with the aim of getting to Le Mans by early evening.

The route to Le Mans from the Channel ports is a very well driven one. After a hold-up free run down to Folkstone, we checked in the integrale with Eurotunnel, for the short (35 minutes!) rail trip to Calais, then proceeded to have a French style breakfast at the ‘Flexiplus’ terminal and stocked up with drinks and sandwiches for the long drive to Le Mans, courtesy of Le Shuttle’s Flexiplus rail ticket.

Earlier, as we had approached the Eurotunnel entrance on the Folkestone side, we spotted a couple of classic cars, a Porsche 911, and an MGB Roadster which had clearly broken down. The MGB had passed us on the M20 only about 10 minutes earlier. Still we thought, better to break down on this side of the Channel than to do so later in France.

Leaving Le Shuttle on the outskirts of Calais, our route took us south on the A16 motorway, passing both Boulogne and Le Touquet on the way. Approaching Abbeville we hopped over onto the A28 motorway, which then headed south-west from that point and would ultimately take us all the way down to Le Mans via Rouen. Large sections of these motorways are toll roads (like the M6 Toll) and they can be quite expensive, however they do provide the best way to cover such a very long distance in the shortest possible time.

Now the Delta integrale is a car which is not exactly renowned for its fuel economy. Furthermore, it’s peculiar ‘U’ shaped petrol tank gives rise to some slightly misleading if

not mystifying petrol gauge readings, which tend to make you think that you’re burning fuel much faster than you actually are. We had filled the tank to its maximum capacity back in Buckinghamshire but we knew that we would probably have to fill up again before reaching Le Mans. The fuel gauge was reading about a quarter full, so we decided to make a re-fuelling stop at an Esso petrol station at the Aire De Translay on the A28. It was a ramshackle and run-down looking petrol station to be honest and not cheap either. Pulling in ahead of us was an old Chevy and an early series Mustang. Stepping out of their cars, the occupants looked like they had just left a film set for the next *Back to the Future* movie, or perhaps they had accidentally driven through a time warp portal from the mid 1950’s.

As we reached for a petrol hose it soon became clear that nothing was working and some irate looking motorists were forming a queue outside the Esso shop. Despite having failed to pass my French O-Level some 50 years earlier, I was able to establish that the petrol station’s internet connection was down and that they were unable to accept any card payments. Thankfully I had brought with me an emergency cash supply of Euros, so hey presto, we were able to fill up our tank and pay, though at more than 2 Euros for a litre of ‘sans plomb’, it seemed a bit excessive. Thus we set off on the final leg of our journey leaving behind some very disgruntled drivers who were equally desperate to fill up. Our erstwhile 1950’s time travellers had set off ahead of us, although we did catch them up some time later, as we approached Rouen, so they had clearly managed to get petrol somewhere else en route.

Back in 2023, our driving route to Le Mans took us far to the west of Paris and we intentionally avoided the perennial bottle neck around Rouen, where many vehicles struggle to get across the Seine at certain times and also to avoid the city’s ULEZ zone. We therefore decided at that time to avoid Rouen altogether! Instead our westerly route took us across the Seine on the truly spectacular Pont de Brotonne. However,



Onboard Le Shuttle, for a short 35 minute trip under The Channel.

returning to the current time, our tour operator had provided us with a Google map and detailed instructions on how we could best navigate our way through Rouen and avoid the ULEZ type zone altogether. This is what we did and it proved to be very successful, albeit a bit slow exiting Rouen due to the many sets of traffic lights.

It was about 6:30 pm when we reached Le Mans and just as we did so my brand new Garmin Satnav, which my wife had bought me recently as a birthday present, decided to throw a complete wobbly and take us off piste to our final destination. I was half tempted to throw the Satnav out of the window at this point, but I decided that this would not be good for my marriage. I therefore resorted to using a good old fashioned route map to get us to our hotel, which our very clever cat back home had also bought me as a present for my recent birthday, apparently.

The very picturesque little town of La Fleche, where we were staying, is about 15 miles to the south-west of Le Mans. Upon arrival at our hotel, we proudly parked the integrale alongside a couple of prestige British number-plated cars in the hotel’s car park. The integrale had performed magnificently for the whole journey.

For those of you who have never been to the Le Mans Classic, I should mention that the action on the track takes place over a four day period, starting with the familiarisation and qualifying rounds on the Thursday,

heats on the Friday/Saturday and culminating in the finals, chiefly on the Sunday. Each of the races is for just 45 minutes duration and the competing cars are time banded into six different grids i.e. classes, according to their year of manufacture. The entire, full length circuit is comprised partially of both closed public roads and also some dedicated racing sections. The most famous straight on the circuit is the 6km-long Mulsanne Straight, which is normally a public road (the RD 338) when it’s not required for major racing events.

The Le Mans Classic attracts huge crowds, so getting to and from the circuit can be quite an issue but there are a number of transport options. At the circuit itself there are numerous car parks around the periphery of the circuit, although car parking is naturally in high demand during major events and can be expensive. However our tour organiser laid on a minibus to take us to the circuit each morning and also to pick us up at pre-set times each evening.

There is a relatively cheap metro tram service which runs approximately every 10 minutes from Le Mans city centre and bus services available too of course. There is also an aerodrome close to the northern periphery of the circuit for helicopters and small to medium sized passenger aircraft, for those who are wealthy enough to want to get there in style!



An early morning start from Buckinghamshire to get to Le Mans in a single day.



Loading up the Integrale with lunch and other goodies from the Flexiplus terminal.



Aurelia B20s in one of the main paddock areas.



More than 80 cars and drivers lining up for a traditional Le Mans start.

The remote WW1 cemetery at Sailly-Sallisel.



One of the things we were curious about was to see if there were any Lancias actually competing at the event and indeed we found two Aurelia B20s in one of the paddocks, which we would subsequently see racing in the Grid 2 class (1949 - 1956). We also went in search of Lancias in the motor-clubbing area and had some success in making contact with a fellow integrale owner from one of the two Lancia Motor Clubs in France.

One of the most memorable things to see at Le Mans is the traditional Le Mans start, where all the race cars line up diagonally on one side of the track and the drivers have to run across the track to get into their cars, start the engines and then start the race. It is quite a spectacle and we would not be disappointed.

Apart from the motor racing and car club gatherings etc, there is also a vast amount of other things to see/do at the event e.g. museum, shopping mall, live music etc. Children are also well catered for with a fun-fair and for the lucky ones, half size replica Le Mans cars which even take to a small part of the track, under close supervision with a police motorcycle escort. The four days spent at the Le Mans Classic seemed to go very quickly and in truth we probably got to see just a fraction of everything there was to see at this extraordinary event.

After four days of truly incredible daytime and night-time entertainment, the natural tendency is to give in to the tiredness and go straight home. However, Michael was keen for us to take a slight detour on our way back to Calais, so that we could pay a visit to one of the preserved WW1 battlefields of The Somme and to see if we could

find the grave of my great uncle Henry Gambell who was one of the many thousands who were killed in one of the final battles of the war.

Before setting off on the Monday morning after the event, we made a brief visit to the Le Mans Museum with its fabulous collection of historic racing cars. Also inside the purpose-built museum is a large circular room featuring 1/43 scale models of all the cars which have competed at Le Mans since 1923. These are displayed on the wall year by year, in glass display cases. In amongst this hall of fame we found not only the Aurelia B20's but also a couple of more contemporary Lancias which had competed here in more recent times.

We then headed off to Albert, in the region of The Somme, and this proved to be a very time consuming cross-country drive in order to avoid congestion around Paris and/or accidentally straying into Paris's ULEZ type zones. Furthermore, we were also hindered by deteriorating weather conditions and we were forced to slow down by a series of torrential downpours. As a consequence, we had to cancel our plan to visit Compiègne, where the WW1 Armistice was signed and get to Albert, where we were staying that night, by the most direct route possible. But this was to involve further drama for Michael as he received his first driving experience of 'priorite a droite'. Shortly before crossing The Seine in the city of Vernon, an elderly French motorist pulled straight out onto the main road in front of us from a side turning on the right. Thankfully Michael's reactions and the integrale's brakes were equal to the task and we avoided any potential diplomatic incidents.

At the main entrance to the preserved WW1 battlefield site at Beaumont-Hamel.



The raison d'être for many hotels in the Somme region seems to be to accommodate the many coach loads of British tourists and historians who are keen to visit the WW1 battlefields and the numerous memorial sites. The Ibis hotel we stayed in was no exception to this and following our arrival, we were soon surrounded by dozens of fellow Brits in the bar and the hotel restaurant.

The following day, our first priority was to visit my great uncle's war grave, which we found at a small and fairly remote WW1 cemetery in Sailly-Sallisel, being one of the many WW1 cemeteries to be found in the Somme region and which is immaculately maintained to this day by the War Graves Commission. Michael pulled out a Royal British Legion poppy wreath which unbeknown to me he had been hiding in the back of the integrale, which we then placed on my great uncle's grave. It was a very moving moment.

After paying our respects, we drove on to visit the main British and French memorial site at Thiepval and from there to the preserved battlefields at Beaumont-Hamel. The latter battlefield, now maintained by the Canadian government, was manned by a Newfoundland regiment who suffered truly horrific casualties as they lost 80 per cent of their men in their first attack on the German positions. It was very sobering to think of all those young Canadians who lost their lives in such a futile battle, so far away from their home country. We were given a free guided tour of the battlefield by one of the Canadian students who spend their summers volunteering at this site. It was also good to see so many school parties from the UK and elsewhere in Europe visiting these battlefields to ensure that the sacrifice of so many will not be forgotten by the younger generations.

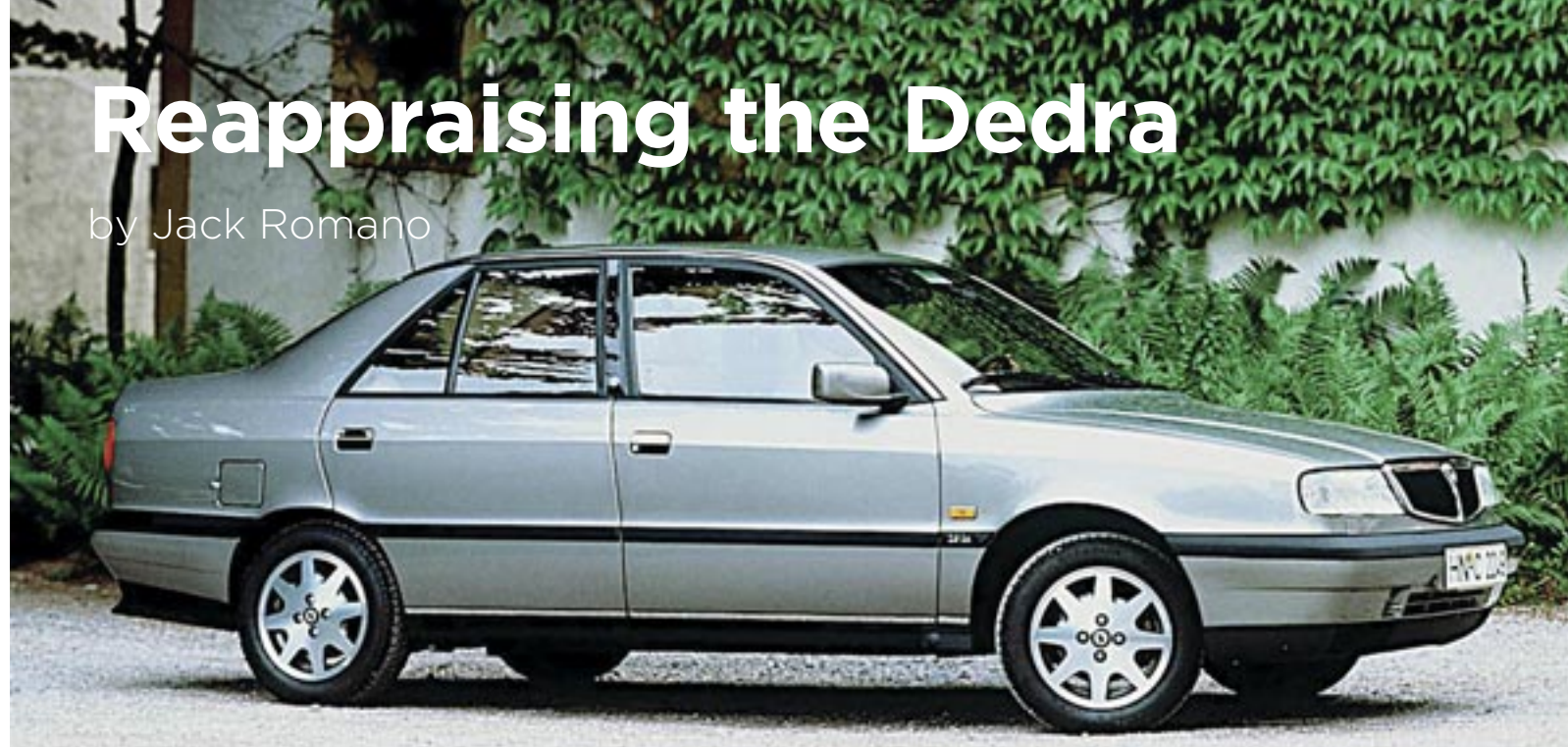
Leaving Beaumont-Hamel, we set off on the final leg of our journey, with Eurotunnel in Calais being our final destination in France. By this time, I had sorted out the gremlins which had been afflicting my new Satnav and we had a trouble free route to Calais with no off-piste sections to worry about.

After another short, trouble free crossing on Le Shuttle we were back on home soil. We had regained an hour upon our return and also thankfully remembered how to drive on the left! It was about 7:30pm when we arrived back in Buckinghamshire after a wonderful and memorable trip. Michael said that the whole trip had exceeded his expectations and he had enjoyed it so much that a return trip is already being talked about, or maybe next time to Spa, so watch this space!

Further information about the Le Mans Classic can be found on the Le Mans Classic Website at:
<https://www.lemansclassic.com/en/>

Reappraising the Dedra

by Jack Romano



I've owned two, a 1.8 and the 2-litre and I loved them. I found them quick, comfortable, roomy, thoroughly competent and very well equipped. From a driving perspective there wasn't much to choose between them, both were brisk performers and it was a nice relaxing environment. Did they make my hair stand on end? No, thankfully. I never bought them for that. The cabin heater was superb as was the electronic climate control (it looked like air con, but wasn't). I used to angle up the vents and dry my hair on the way to work. The handling was surprisingly agile, balanced and surefooted. I liked the wood inserts, they gave an air of class and I'm a fan of Alcantara, at least when it's new before it bobbles up. There was plenty of room in the boot plus decent binnacle stowage for things like maps and sunglasses; and the original radio cassette sound system in the 1.8 was top notch, I think it was a Pioneer. Sheffield main dealers SSA Motors fitted me an upgrade which was even better, a Grundig with a removable fascia, not common at the time. Turns out it was the one the Dedra should have had in the first place. I was so pleased with it that when I sold the car I had it taken out and installed in my Gamma which I understand is now owned by James May. I know the Lybra which followed but we never got, went one better with an upmarket BOSE system but I'm sure Dedras didn't have this; nevertheless the Grundig was nice, clear and crisp. Heaters, demisting, and sound systems may sound like trivia, but to me these are important – I regularly had to make long journeys, you need to be comfortable, things need to come easily to hand and motorway tedium was dispelled by listening to hissy cassettes and football radio commentaries. When you live with a car for a long time these are the details that make life pleasant. In short, both my Dedras made good everyday cars and were useful tourers. The word is 'agreeable' and various friends and family members who borrowed them for the occasional trip

had nothing but good to report. Perhaps this is the problem - they offended no-one; but nor did they, as Lancias of yore, provide seat-of-the-pants driving thrills. They simply did what they were designed for, and did it well.

I'm not going to pretend it was all plain sailing. A few things went wrong especially with the 1.8 which had covered a hefty mileage before I had it. It developed several oil leaks, a driveshaft wore out surprisingly early, balljoints too, and later the fusebox (behind and above the accelerator pedal) got wet and was never quite the same. From time to time and for no apparent reason it treated me to the full 'Christmas Tree' - every warning light brightly lit. But by now it had done a creditable 125,000 miles and when it failed an MOT on rust (rear arches and turret tops) I swapped it for the 2.0 litre which never gave me any trouble worthy of note. On the street they stood out in a quiet way, I thought they were rather stylish and understated. Designer Ercole Spada must have thought so too – asked to provide the jacket for Wim Oude Weernink's *La Lancia* second edition he put it on the cover as one of the yellow silhouettes.

Not everyone agrees with my assessment. The Dedra was panned even before it was launched, oftentimes by people who never drove one for any length of time. Shamefully some were diehard Lancisti who perhaps understandably harked back to the 'great days' refusing to accept that things had moved on. I recall some joker dubbing it 'Dead Rat' another wag pointed out it was an anagram of 'Dread'. I'm reliably informed that Dedra is a nasty female character in the *Star Wars* franchise. Others wondered why Lancia even bothered with it, a Fiat Tempra in a party frock. For no particular reason, in October 2013 *Top Gear Magazine* placed the Dedra on its list of 'The 13 worst cars of the last 20 years' simply because to them – somewhat belatedly – the car symbolised

the loss of spirit in Lancia cars after the Fiat takeover.

But wait. Many modern Lancias, criticised at the time have since become what you might call 'hindsight classics' – what were seen as quirks have become styling details; unusual body features have become precursors. And maybe the Dedra is one such. Truth was, in the UK there was already an air of resignation within Lancia, the car was poorly marketed and simply didn't fire the imagination. Fiat's creative team and their advertising agency could surely have done better. Far from being 'bland' or lacking spirit it had numerous clever touches, having been designed by none other than the late Ercole Spada (Zagato, Ford, BMW) then at IDEA, and latterly of Spadaconcept. He claimed – and I believe rightly – that the car enabled almost anyone to achieve their ideal driving position. Over its 10-year life the Dedra sold the best part of 420,000 units, these are not the numbers of failure and latterly its being touted by many as a future classic.

'Honest John' in *Classics Magazine* writing in 2018 probably sums it up more fairly than most:

'When the Lancia Dedra was launched in the UK, it was to prop up what was effectively a dying brand. Thanks to lingering bad publicity from the Beta rust scandal, buyer confidence was gone. Lancia made great play of the Dedra's galvanized body, but in truth, it was playing to an empty house. Shame really, as the Dedra was actually a very pleasant car, with much to recommend it. It was based on Fiat Tipo underpinnings, but thanks to a neat styling job by IDEA's Ercole Spada (who disguised those Fiat doors very well indeed), the Dedra looked every inch the junior executive saloon.

Engine options were the refined 1.6- and 1.8-litre twin-cams widely used across the Fiat



Above and below: Low mileage Dedra as described by Hegarty Group ‘there’s something quite appealing here’.

Honest John’s summary
Good

- Mostly galvanised Tipo/Tempra-based Lancia saloon, so won’t rust like a Beta.
- 165bhp 2.0-litre turbo is a bit of a tyre shredder, but will give BMW 318i drivers a nasty shock.
- 2.0ie has 120bhp, which sank to 115bhp with cat.
- SE has automatic suspension control.
- 1.8ie has 110bhp - down to 107bhp with cat; 1.6ie has 90bhp, down to 80bhp with cat.
- Good ride quality, decent handling.
- Alcantara trim is nice, but not every-one likes the colours.
- These cars are cheap and can be bar-gains, if you can find one.

Bad

- Ugly, especially from rear. Dated.
- Body parts hard to source.
- When did you last see one of these on the road?

Watch

- Check for uneven and excessive front tyre wear (especially turbo) - may be suspension damage.
- Heater may be u/s.
- Look for exhaust smoke from turbo oil seals.
- Satisfy yourself that performance of turbo is up to the mark.
- Check all electrics (of course).
- Expect the odd oil leak, especially from gasket between two-piece head and cam carrier.
- Need regular 35,000 - 40,000 mile tim-ing belt changes.

At a Glance: Score 3/5

Pro: Rides well, handles tidily, Turbo 2.0 is quite quick, all cheap to buy if you can still find one.

Con: Hard to find these days and getting uglier with every passing year. Body parts difficult to find, Turbo model can be heavy on tyres’.

range, while the top of the range 2000 Turbo was an integrale in all but name (the Europeans were treated to a 4x4 integrale badged version, too). This earned some kudos for being a very capable Q-car with a dash of panache. Sadly, we did not see the elegant SW estate version because in 1994, after sales had dried up to almost a dribble, Fiat pulled the plug, killing Lancia in the UK. As for the Dedra, it was refined, rode well, and had a beautiful interior – and in time, it will undoubtedly build up a following.

Opinions had changed somewhat for the worse in 2021 when Hegarty Insurance ran a feature on the Dedra, based around a car they’d found on the net:

‘Price: £4500 Year: 1990 Mileage: 24,500 Condition: Box(y) fresh Seller: eBay

Whatever is to become of Lancia? In the space of three decades it’s gone from the peak of World Rally Championship success to a one-car brand with little in the way of enthusiast equity.

That one model is the Ypsilon, itself no spring chicken these days being effectively a posh version of the 2003 Fiat Panda. UK readers may remember it badged as a Chrysler and sold alongside the similarly Chrysler-badged Delta and the actual Chrysler 300C... which in mainland Europe became the Lancia Thema. It was all a bit confusing and incestuous. Perhaps the worst offender was the Flavia, a rebadged version of the contemporary Chrysler 200, a car that struggled to be competitive even in its native North America.

In fairness, Lancia did the best it could – cast aside preconceptions and the Flavia wasn’t a terrible looking car, and its interior was bet-ter than the American car that spawned it. But for anyone who remembers Fulvias, the Stratos or Delta integrales – or indeed the original Flavia – the era of rebadged

Chryslers and long-in-the-tooth superminis has to go down as a low point.

Not that everything Lancia has ever touched has turned to gold. Take the Lancia Dedra, for instance. Arriving in 1989, it squeaked into the range between the Delta hatchback and larger Thema saloon and is almost entirely forgotten.

One of many Italian cars from the period indirectly related to the Fiat Tipo (elements of which wouldn’t disappear from our roads until the Alfa Romeo GT bowed out in 2010), the Dedra’s direct platform-mates were the similarly forgotten Fiat Tempra, and the more celebrated Alfa Romeo 155.

It was a saloon punching above its station. Contemporary road tests pitted it against cars as grand as the Mercedes-Benz 190E and BMW 3-series. It did not, as you might imagine, emerge victorious, though a range of fizzy four-cylinder engines and a space-efficient cabin in a class not known for it, gave it merit.

Car magazine writing in May 1991 neverthe-less delivered the damning verdict that it ‘makes neither a good ordinary car, nor a good sporting one’. Lancia left the UK soon after and we were denied the dubious joys of its replacement, the Lybra, but got to enjoy the aforementioned Alfa Romeos instead, so it wasn’t all bad.

However – and you probably know what’s coming – general disinterest in the Dedra makes it one of the few Lancias truly worthy of ‘unexceptional’ status. And as you can see here, we’ve found one for sale, a 1990 Dedra 1.8ie with low miles for the captive-audience price of £4500.

And maybe it’s just us, but there’s something quite appealing here. The 1.8 was the UK’s entry-level motor, but still good for 60mph in 9.8 seconds and mpg in the mid-thirties.



Ordinarily we’d steer clear of a car that’s been modified, particularly when it comes to the unexceptional end of the market, but in this case it’s an indication that despite the car’s rarity, the previous owner presumably cared enough to make an effort. Sure, those cross-spoked BBS alloys could do with a refurb, but it gives the Dedra a bit of a BTCC vibe, which we appreciate.

The nose-up stance may need some looking at (they didn’t do that from the factory) but the bodywork, complete with Abarth side skirts, looks straight. The interior looks great too, right down to that aftermarket but very period-correct four-spoke steering wheel. Dealer plates mean we can’t check its MOT history, so go in with your eyes open.

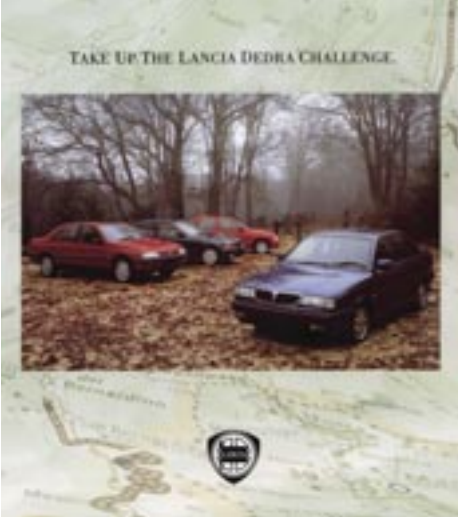
Lancia has had its ups and downs over the years, and more recently they’ve mostly been downs. We’d all love a Fulvia or inte-grale on the drive to remember the good days, but if you can’t stretch to one of those, then this Dedra is at least a slightly more fit-ting alternative than a 10-year-old Ypsilon’.

Elsewhere, Motor1.com calls the Dedra ‘a classic of the future’ while the Pistonheads website August 2013 had it as their shed of the week though the author, Tony Middlehurst bought the car in question for his wife, citing its pleasant lines and quality of finish. This comes as no surprise; the Dedra has always divided opinion, some-times critics hate it and love it in one sen-tence. It’s as though they want to dislike the car but somehow can’t help falling for its qualities. One correspondent on Pistonheads hankered after a turbo: ...‘would have quite liked a Turbo one. There was a twin test ages back in a mag against the E36 325i. Testers said it was ridiculously quicker than the BMW. Rare thing to see one at all now’. See also https://www.theaa.com/staticdocs/pdf/car-reports/AA_REPORTS/LANCIA_DEDRA_1.6IE_R9067.PDF for what I consider to be a sensi-ble, fair, comprehensive and unbiased review of an early 1.6.

However, the litmus test is how owners feel, so how did they react to the Hagerty article?

Robert Josef Hirschhorn, October 2021. I’ve had three including a Turbo, and my current unique automatic. Entry model is 1.6 but mine have all been 2-litres. Very underrated cars. Styled by Ercole Spada (Aston Martin DB4GT Zagato) and with a drag coefficient of only 0.29! Very pleasant to own, drive, and very well equipped, however boring Brits generally didn’t buy them.

Joshua Murphy, December 11, 2023 responds: I’m a boring Brit with one (in Portugal). Cost me a grand... all the CV joints, tie rods etc needed replacing, but after that it drives well. Probably needs injectors sort-ing, and definitely glow plugs judging by the amount of white smoke each morning. Once warm, it’s lovely to drive. It’s cozy, elusive, modest and also rather elegant. I like it’.



Jim Blades and the
Dedra Challenge

Even in Lancia terms, this must be one of the oddest yet endearingly stylish and confident marketing ploys ever devised. Possibly inspired by the ‘Pepsi blindfold challenge’ it merits ‘greatness’ for its sheer effrontery. Some 30 years on I still sometimes ponder how it came about and who sanctioned it.

In 1993 selected Lancia enthusiasts were invited to a ‘Dedra Challenge’ held at presti-gious sites around the UK like upmarket golf courses and stately homes which included Cliveden, Powderham Castle, Hagley Hall, Drum Castle and so on. Criteria for atten-dance was fairly random – either Lancia Slough invited you directly, or your local dealer put your name forward. ‘No challenge is too tough’ said the invitation card. The idea was simply to get people inside a Dedra and for them to appreciate its more subtle characteristics. There was usually food and drink on offer served by pretty girls dressed in Lancia race livery from a ‘Lancia’ truck; plus at certain venues, rides in the latest Delta integrale which kind of undermined the event, because the whole rationale behind it was to pit the recently facelifited Dedra against any two class rivals from a list that included BMW, Peugeot, and Nissan. Individuals could choose which cars they fancied to put through their paces. From memory, at least at one event British Rally Champion Colin McCrae drove the integrale no doubt providing an unforgettable ride, but for this purpose in the wrong car. The (unnecessary) point was made though: you were buying into rallying pedigree. Those invited had to reserve their slot, and were assumed to favour the Dedra, after all it wore the badge, was as quick as its rivals, handled well and was demonstrably better appointed. Just in case, they were asked to score the cars in various categories, a slightly risky venture as some had additional fea-tures, and all had something to commend them. In certain categories it must have been a close run thing, for example the Nissan Almera was roomy, comfortable and

had an advanced version of ABS. It was also heavily advertised via a campaign featuring spoof ‘Bodie and Doyle’ characters from the hit TV series *The Professionals*. I’ve been in marketing/advertising most of my working life and the Dedra Challenge broke all the rules. It has never been accepted practice to potentially put your brand’s reputation at risk. You might point to the aforementioned ‘Pepsi Challenge’ but that was controlled and the result more or less predetermined - this wasn’t, anything could happen. Nevertheless, the belief was that the Dedra - any version, as all three engine sizes were available to test – would impress and if, in the heat of the moment you fancied a Dedra as your next car there was a generous £400 discount voucher. Did the Dedra come out top? Probably, albeit only just. But then there were residual sales values to consider, and the BMW would come into its own.

Given a scenario where much could go awry, from all accounts the Challenges were well planned and perfectly run; when Lancia do this kind of thing no matter how unusual, they do it very well. But there was a sense of frustration: this was a good car not given a fair crack of the whip. Why not take it out there and prove it was as capable as any-thing else? It all had an air of being ‘last throw of the dice’ and we are unlikely ever to know if it was a success. From a marketing, insurance and organisational point of view it must have been crushingly expensive, per-haps not the best way to spend the budget but a brave and doubtless unique campaign that given the current climate, can never happen again. On the other hand it was an offbeat method of discovering how Lancia were perceived by the potential customer base. Whether Lancia UK fed this informa-tion back to Turin is unknown, a moot point is ‘would they have listened anyway?’ because the end was nigh.

Managing Director of Fiat UK at the time was Lancia Montecarlo owner and mountaineer Jim Blades, a popular figure who joined Fiat Auto UK December 1992, after a few months with the parent company in Turin. His back-ground included an engineering degree from Southampton University, five years with Ford and a long spell with Rover.

He oversaw marketing, sales, and overall strategy for Fiat, Lancia, and Alfa Romeo and thus would have been well aware of the Dedra challenge and its associated costs. Not long after the Challenge, Lancia – having sold just 569 cars the previous year – ceased operations in the UK but Jim remained with the Fiat group in various roles until 2002. Having met the late Brin Edwards (incumbent LMC President) at one Challenge the two became friends and Brin – ever per-suasive – tried hard to get help and sponsor-ship for the Club from Fiat. He spoke highly of Jim, reminding him that the Club and the firm had a long positive history, and for sev-eral years the firm had sponsored the Club. Jim was sympathetic but firmly non-commi-tal, he already knew it was too late.

Events roundup

EDINBURGH CALLING

For July 13 forecasters were predicting the hottest day of the year and so attending the Glamis Transport Extravaganza was a bit daunting. I didn't fancy the combination of a long drive in the morning then a full day in the sunshine followed by a long drive home, so devised a cunning plan. I had intended to go with my Montecarlo but felt that the Trevi would be more suitable. Additionally I booked Saturday night accommodation closer to Glamis in order to arrive more relaxed. On the day we were glad that Bob and Beverley Adamson had brought a gazebo and we spent more time under it than normal. Luckily there was enough room for myself, Willie and Margaret Ferguson, Bill and Helaine Ross, Colin and Gavin Blaikie plus our hosts David and Irene Hart. Car-wise we had Beta Trevi, S1 Delta, S1 Fulvia Coupe, 1600HF Fulvia, S2 Delta and S3 Delta. Unfortunately Tom Sephton-Brown could not join us and was missed by all. The usual wandering about was more leisurely than normal but thankfully we all survived the heat with everyone being sensible about staying hydrated and wearing hats. The Extravaganza is a massive show but we did meet up with members Brian Sharp, Allan Evans and David Ward whilst wandering. Sadly no other Lancias were on show.

Edinburgh Coffee and Classics group held a 'Slow Car and Bike' tour on July 23 and as the start point was the Newtongrange Mining Museum (pictured bottom left) which is quite near my house. I went along for the coffee aspect, as did a few others. However the number of actual participants was quite low so I felt obliged to join in with my totally inappropriate Trevi. However, the most inappropriate car was an MG Midget in full race trim including a roll cage! The more appropriate vehicles were three Isetta 'Bubble cars', Pembleton, S2 Land Rover, Motor-cycle, Morgan and an Austin



7. Other cars joined in as far as lunch but those mentioned made it to the end. I was quite pleased that there were hardly any issues with holding up other traffic although our friendly motor-cyclist occasionally struggled with the slow pace. A splendid time was had by all.

Leo Capaldi
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BROMLEY PAGEANT, ARDINGLY SHOWGROUND, JULY 27

This is an important event, always well attended and featuring some superb cars. The LMC have traditionally taken space here and have invariably received positive comments. This year seven Lancias represented the club at this large classic car show in West Sussex, moved from Bromley as this is now in the ULEZ zone. It was a bit of a Fulvia-fest with five of the seven being Fulvia coupes! But Andy Deykin's Delta HF and James Trigwell's Aurelia B24S brought a spot of class to the display.

We attracted the usual attention, even with a small selection of cars, and as I've heard on many occasions at other shows, people walking past would say "I used to have one of those, lovely car shame I had to sell it". We encouraged one lapsed member to rejoin again having just purchased a Y (see Robert Richmond-Jones' request p5) and one gentleman in the process of buying a Fulvia coupe to join up. The latter sat in various cars and asked numerous questions relating to the coupes and went away feeling he was definitely making the right purchase of his first classic car.

Luke Gough, one of our younger LMC members and owner of an Aprilia, was acting as one of the Marshalls, and persuaded me to enter the arena in Ross – my Fulvia – with a bunch of other very nice classics including a vintage Rolls and Bentley, to talk to the commentator and a journalist from *Classic Car* magazine. On the way to the arena, I



passed a gentleman who said "it's nice to see a proper car here" which made me smile.

Many thanks to James Trigwell, Andy Deykin, Gordon Patterson, Neil

Sims, Jim Moore and Paul Deamer? for turning out and helping maintain our Club's public image.

Photos by Neil and Dianne Sims.
Alison Ure

Film update

With the summer months and outdoor car shows drawing to a close, we are starting to get more screenings underway for the docufilm *Vincenzo Lancia and the Birth of Modern Motoring*. Following the postponement of the screening at Bicester Motion due to the fatal fire in May, we have a new date, see below:

September 6, As part of the Welsh weekend, Christo and Malcolm are planning to show the film around 4pm on the Saturday afternoon. Non-resident/Welsh weekend guests are welcome at no charge and are invited to stay to for dinner after. Anyone wanting more details should email enquiries@tyncornel.com.

September 11, Bourne Corn Exchange, 3 Abbey Road PE10 9EF, Lincolnshire, 8pm, £10. Please contact Peter Smith on petersmith49@gmail.com for more information.

October 2, Bicester Motion, Bicester, OX26 5HA hosted by Hagerty and Startermotor. Doors open at 18.00hrs, there will be a display of cars including two from the film and catering onsite, tickets £10. For more information and tickets please contact Alison Ure on alijoure@hotmail.com. Those who had already bought tickets will have their booking carried over unless they are unable to make this new date in which case they will receive a full refund.

Personal copies – Individuals can buy a password protected Vimeo streaming link for £10 or 12 euros so you can watch the film whenever you like. Please email me on alijoure@hotmail.com if you would like a copy and I will let you have the film bank details.

There are still areas of the country and members who have not seen the film. If you live in one of those areas, have a suitable small private cinema or village hall that you can inexpensively hire to show the film, and are prepared to help in the organization, please let me know.

Josh and I will be spending the weekend of August 24 – Vincenzo's birthday – in Fobello where the film is being shown for the first time to the locals. Report next month.

Alison Ure

Mailbox



ITS IN THE FAMILY

Dear Sir,
I am a lucky grandfather with three of my grandchildren now driving Lancias: Phoebe owns the ex-John Milham 1935 Augusta and is currently helping me rebuild the engine.

Olivia owns a Fulvia Berlina and drives it as her everyday car, she drove it to the National Rally and plans to drive it to Fobello in August.

Milo has bought an Aprilia and hopes to have it on the road in August. It's good to get the younger generations appreciating Lancias.

Mike Benwell



Above: Phoebe driving Dale Hick's Augusta at Brooklands.

Below middle: Olivia driving Fulvia to AGM. Milo navigating and grandad backseat driving.

Below left: AGM Northampton, Olivia received a driving award.

THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Dear Sir,
Getting old, idiosyncratic cars through their road worthiness checks (CTs, MOTs etc.) is often quite a challenge. You go to the test station and 'suggest' a number of ways to deal with your car. For the Ardea it's quite a lengthy list and goes like this:

"Before you start, you need to turn on the petrol - lever under the dash, RHS – the middle one.

Then a bit of choke, the left one. Then push the key in to get electricity to the coil.

Oh, and turn it one notch to the right so that primary electrics work – horn (see later), brake lights and indicators etc.

Now you're ready to start – look for the lever in the middle of the car, under the dash. The one with the wire attached to it, not the other one, that opens the fresh air vent.

She should start easily, so push in the choke and pull on the idling lever, the right one under the dash on the RHS.

Next lights and indicators. Indicators are easy that's the lever in the middle of the dashboard, next to the secondary horn button (see later).

Lights: this is where it gets complicated!

Turn the key another notch to the right. That turns on the side lights and if you want dipped lights, you rotate the outer ring of the horn button – the one in the centre of the steering wheel.

When you want main beams, then turn the key another notch, but



not until you've turned the outer ring of the horn button back, because then they're dipped again.

However, when you do that, the horn button on the steering wheel doesn't work any more, you have to use the secondary horn button on the dash – the one next to the indicators – they still work by the way.

Also, when you want to check under the bonnet, there's no lever as such, you'll need to rotate the 'badge' on the top of the bonnet..."

If you leave the car at the MOT station, expect a call asking for a fresh battery because they forgot to open the valve for the petrol and it won't start again because they've flattened the battery...

Endearing quirks when you're used to it but thank goodness it's only every few years!

Simon Ingman

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Classified advertising

This issue contains all adverts received up to August 12

BUYERS: The Cars, Spares and services listed here are descriptions from the vendors and although we are sure that items are described accurately, we cannot accept responsibility for variations, misrepresentation, or any other problems that might arise. Always try and view any car or item you intend to purchase, or at least check out its provenance before parting with money. Be clear about what you expect.

VENDORS: Please try to describe your services as accurately as possible, and avoid any hidden extras. Do not accept the first offer that comes along – Viva Lancia is distributed via 'Prestream', a GPO service which can vary from region to region, and full distribution can take up to 3 days. The first offer is not always the best.

Cars for sale

Artena

ARTENA SALOON. 1931. I believe this is the oldest known still running Artena. Older restoration. Price on request. **Dick Jansen, Kerkbeemd 22, 5511AN Knegsel, The Netherlands, madickmm@gmail.com** Tel. 0031-650485670.

Ardea

ARDEA. Rare 1944, new in Spain, recently imported into UK now with V5. Good condition, recent engine overhaul by Omicron. £12,500 ono. **Tel. Robert, 0771851487.**

Belna

OUR PRETTY two tone Blue Belna, is going up for auction with HH Car Auctions Duxford on April 9. We drove it to the Carcassonne may 2023, trouble free and is trophy winner at national rallies. Extensive sound damping makes it a lovely car to drive. **daniel.b@wwr.co.uk** for more info.

Aurelia

AURELIA B21, RHD, Green, very good condition overall, B12 engine extensively rebuilt. Located in Belgium. **koen.keutgens@telenet.be**



AURELIA B12 SALOON. Original low mileage completely standard fully recommissioned and ready to drive. New Michelin tyres, re-cored radiator etc etc. Bark blue with grey cloth. Uprated front suspension to B20 specification. Working Condor radio. All sensible offers considered. Essex. **Tel. 01206 543828.**



AURELIA B20 2500 V° series 1956 LHD, Chassis. N° B20S-1321, Original Eng. N° 4708. The car is in Turin, Italy. Used regularly, also for long trips; in original condition, with Italian plates and documents. Engine is excellent (no leaks or consumption of oil or water), gearbox silent and transmission without vibrations, precise drive from the steering box and efficient brakes. Everything of the electric equipment works. Colour Grigio (Grey) New-Market and interiors in perfect conditions. **Contact: Manfredi Lancia manfredi.lancia@hotmail.com, Italy.**

Appia

LANCIA APPIA S3 PROJECT. Reg 1963, owned 30 years but at 74, unlikely to get going on it. Did run OK and gearbox, have quite a lot of parts. Floors OK. No pics due to space. Think it could restore. In Scotland. **Contact Alan Borthwick, borthwickalan710@gmail.com.**



LANCIA APPIA LUSSO (VIGNALE), 138,000 km (gteed). 181 of 478 built. Imported new to Switzerland. Just restored for over 7,000chf. In top condition. Everything absolutely original. Four new Michelin tyres. Featured in the standard work LA LANCIA by Wim Oude Weemink (3rd edition). See p. 189. 2nd owner and in a Lancia collection since 1990. Always maintained by Lancia specialists. A delight to drive. Located near Basel, Switzerland. Offers requested. **h.a.bichsel@bluewin.ch**



APPIA 2ND SERIES 1956. I have owned this car since 1970. The car has been restored and repainted in a Lancia colour. A Nardi steering wheel is fitted. Most of the important wiring has been replaced. The car is fitted with hazard warning lights. The brakes have been recommissioned. The engine is 814 spec with 60bhp rather than 42.5 bhp. The front suspension has been rebuilt. I have many spare parts including a rebuilt 814 engine. The car is for sale with parts £20,000 or the car separately £17,000 for the car and £11,000 for the parts. **Will HowTel. 07831 716249 will_how@icloud.com**

Fulvia

FULVIA SPORT 1600 ZAGATO. 1972 road-registered UK car, lightened and converted into a race car with the support and inspiration of the Lancia legend Claudio Maglioli. It was campaigned in the late 80s and early 90s. It is a Gruppo 4 specification and features a 5-speed factory 'Solo Piste' close-ratio racing gearbox. The engine is rebuilt and the preliminary stage of 'running-in' has been completed. I have owned this car for over 30 years. It is a Group 4 Fulvia Sport ready for its next owner to enjoy on the track (currently not road legal)... a spares package is also available subject to separate negotiation. £35,000. **Tel. 0741 221 9199.**

1600 SPORT 1972. 818 751 001316. Nigel Trow, life long Lancia enthusiast and author of many books on Italian motoring history is selling his last Lancia. This 1960 Sport, bought from Mike Scott in 1975 with 1100 miles on the clock, has now covered 114,235 miles on its original engine transmission and running gear. Remarkably the inevitable body

repairs were not needed until the early 2000's when they included new factory original front and rear valances, new rear wing, new passenger door and tailgate and retrimming in black Connolly hide. For more information, **Tel. 01291420317, nitrow@talktalk.net**

FULVIA BERLINA. 1970. Low mileage 24,855 km believed genuine. Only 10, 000km in my ownership, since November 2012. 1. 3l 4 speed (a 'series 1 1/2'). LHD, imported from Venezia region. Garaged. Much expenditure (c. £6, 000) since 2012. Too much work done to list but includes new master cylinder and servo. Rust free - new sills (inner, outer, centre) and repainted in 2019 in the original white colour, plus Italian stripes, which is holding up well. Good condition black vinyl interior, cream headlining, original steering wheel and all gauges and switches work (apart from the clock). Starts first time and drives beautifully, very refined. Nippy in town and cruises happily at 70+. Used weekly including trips to France. Car in central London. £8,450 ono. **davidsimoesbrown@gmail.com.**

FULVIA 1600HF. 1972. Full history of ownership. Delivered new right hand drive in UK. Large file showing all work carried out. Recent engine re-build (still running in). Photographs of front sub-frame work etc. House move reason for sale. £29,995. **Tel. 01488 687080.**

FULVIA COUPE 1.3S S2. 1971 RHD. 5-speed manual. Bare-metal restoration 2015. Rosso Corsa Red. Original V4 Engine overhaul in 2020 by RSD Rallysport Development in Malton, North Yorkshire. 62K miles. Location: Cirencester. Lovely Car £25,000. **Tel. 07990 891011, peterbarefoot@icloud.com**

FULVIA 1.3 S2 COUPE. 1972. Beautiful example in Rosso Corsa and original black vinyl interior. Ready to use with new MOT. Fully rebuilt engine and only done c.1000 miles since. European/non-eyebrow headlights and RHD (originally Swiss) . Fabulous detailing and rust proofed from new (Zeilbart type). Floors, sills, rear valance all perfect. Delightful to drive, tight-feeling suspension and steering with nearly new tyres. Very original, full toolkit, spare wheel cover and jack. Photos on demand - UK registered, located in Hartlepool. £20,000 neg. **Simon Ingman simon.juliet@minervewines.fr**



1972 1600 HF S2, RHD. Alloy boot, bonnet and doors. 3 owners from new. Lots of history. £34k. For full details contact **Tim Jewell: 07444 034310.**

Flavia



LANCIA FLAVIA BERLINA 1967. LHD (UK registered, V5 in my name). Recently converted to carburettors (was Kugelfischer injection). Mechanically sound, 4 new tyres, new shockers and suspension bushes, all new brake discs and pads, new clutch, radiator flushed and much more. Bodywork has signs of time but in presentable condition. Interior follows the same with some worn out fabric on the front passenger seat. Starts, stops, steers as it should. Location: Rugby, Warwickshire. £14000. **Tel. Carlos Silva 07359445011 or alfa2300martini@gmail.com**

Kappa

1998 KAPPA COUPE PROJECT. 5cl 2ltr Turbo. Full details, **Tel. Geoff Wheeler 07925 556710.**

Cars wanted

FULVIA COUPE project wanted any condition on wheels, private buy. **Tel. Gino 07900 443532.**

LANCIA AUGUSTA LUSSO, Keith Canouse, Florida, **kcanouse@aol.com, Tel. (001) 407 273 8312.**

Spares for sale

BETA COUPE HPE Alloy wheels 5.5Jx14" 4 off. Good condition. £60 to clear. Essex **Tel: 01206 543828.**

FULVIA COUPE SAFARI. Five alloy wheels by F.P.S. Centre hole machined to fit S1 cars, so should fit all types of coupes that use 4.5J x 14 wheels. Decent condition, photos available. £350. Buyer collects from BN21 (Eastbourne). **john.morton66@btinternet.com**

MONTECARLO. After selling my Montecarlo I have a large number of spares available. Highlights include: New parts: nearside headlight (4345493), offside indicator/sidelight (4332413), rear buttress glass, rear quarterlight glass, 3 rear wishbone bushes. Used parts: brake calipers, headlights, rear lights, internal trim, S2 radiator grille, glass, cam cover etc. Too much to list it all here, enquire what I have. **Tel: 07881 648042, pannelm956@gmail.com**

LAMBDA cylinder head. New and unused aluminium late series head as machined by George Laycock. Complete with side plates, studs, valves and guides. £2950. Also available, late series camshaft and rocker assembly with followers and a set of used valves – all in good condition. Photos available. **Tel. Steve Lister 01629 650933 stevelister6421@btinternet.com.**

FULVIA. I have a range of fully rebuilt (by me) "to new" 1.3S1, 1.3S2, 1.4S2, 1.6HF Fulvia engines. Fitting service can be provided. **Tel. Tim Heath 01206 543828 for details.**

FULVIA 1.3. Complete engine, gearbox, carburettors. Believed 1970 version stored 30 years in dry garage. Offers. Reading area. **iansland356@gmail.com**

FULVIA SEAT BASES. Re-manufactured polyurethane moulded seat bases to original specification. £180 a pair excluding shipping. **Tel. Giuseppe 07967 242752, fulviaseatbases@icloud.com**

THEMA Alloy Wheels. Set of four white 17 inch alloy wheels, average condition £80. Available for collection in North Cardiff or by post. **Tel. Andy Davies 07548433722, martinisix@googlemail.com**

AURELIA. (Mainly). 60 odd years of infatuation and indulgence with Aurelias has left me with a large quantity of surplus spare parts, large and small. The time has come for me to make a serious effort to dispose of them. I have compiled lists of hundreds of parts, far too many to list here, but I can send lists to interested parties by post or email. The lists are by no means complete so please enquire if that elusive part you need is not there. Also many parts for Aprilia and Astura. **Tel Ron Francis 01497 820792, ronfrancis1942@gmail.com.**

Spares wanted

APRILIA. Due to clumsiness I need a replacement LHS lens (marked Lancia) for my 1st Series Aprilia rear number plate light. I have and am happy to exchange a RHS lens (marked Aprilia) for one of equal quality. **ian.harmond@btinternet.com**

APRILIA radiator shutter control lever, which sits on top of the radiator and moves the shutters. Urgently needed to complete rebuild please. **doug@dmartin.co.uk or 07802664020**

FULVIA COUPE S1 Four hubcaps **john.morton66@btinternet.com**

SET OF LANCIA DELTA mudflaps - in as good a condition as possible - for 1988 Delta hf turbo. These would also have fitted all Delta's, Prisma etc. Mine have split so looking to replace. **Tel. Andrew Plater 07736385877, the4platers@hotmail.co.uk .**

FULVIA COUPE S1. Underbonnet heater air intake metal channel box for s 1 only. **michaelkerr2808@gmail.com Tel. 07771 160446.**

Useful contacts

LMC Online Resources

WEBSITE www.lanciamc.co.uk

FORUM

www.lanciamc.co.uk - click "Forum" button

REGALIA

www.lanciamc.co.uk – click "Regalia" Button

FORUM HELP

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support@lanciamontecarlo.club

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ANDREW PLATER, 35 The Plantation, Hardwicke, Gloucester GL2 4SP. Tel 01452 729086

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ROBIN LACEY, Tel. 01342 822300. robinlacey@gmail.com

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MARTIN CLIFFE, Tel. 01508 570351

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THEMA & DEDRA CONSORTIUM

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Viva Lancia! is published during the first full week of every month.

COPY DATE: 12th OF PRECEDING MONTH

Monthly meetings

For more information, or in doubt, please telephone the area contact.

Three Counties Meet – Gloucs, Hereford & Worcs – flexible timing

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Contact: Justin Eacock 07985 164 842 jreacock@gmail.com

Omicron

Aurelia • Flaminia • Flavia • Fulvia • 2000 • Stratos

An Aurelia is here suffering from low oil pressure issues. After doing the normal routine checks, it was decided to remove the engine for a more in depth investigation. We found two things which would have contributed to the problem, one was easy to put right, the other took a little more time to solve – but the engine is back in the car and the oil pressure is now acceptable.

An Aurelia B12 has visited with a number of small problems including carburation, a brake issue causing a pull to one side and to fit replacement rear lamp units in order to fix a persistent rear lamp electrical problem.

A B20 is here for various recommissioning and improvement jobs and this car is approaching the finishing stage.

The Montecarlo has been returned back to its owner and a Flavia Vignale was collected on the same journey. This car is here mostly to improve the brakes but there are a number of other jobs to attend to whilst it is here.

A Flavia 819 Berlina has also arrived with engine problems. The car is difficult to start, and there may also be head gasket problems.

Two Fulvias visited as out-patients – one with a wiper motor problem and the other requiring replacement ball joints fitting.

We have continued to build up a 1600HF and with a temporary seat fitted, has been driven for the first time. Another 1600HF has had its syncromesh improved, and there are two other Fulvias receiving attention.

An Aprilia is here with a clutch issue – the engine has been uprated and the clutch is on the cusp of not being able to cope.

We have also been rebuilding gearbox and suspension of another Aprilia in advance of the body arriving at some point in the future.

Non-Lancia this month have included an Alfa Romeo GTV for propshaft balancing, a Giulia Veloce with a leaking differential and a Toyota Sera for some door and rear hatch gas rams. We also had a Daimler Double-Six with a window wiper motor problem.

Elizabeth has a selection of new chickens and ducks as the existing ones were getting quite elderly.

We do have workshop capacity to work on your cars in the coming weeks and months, and happy to discuss any potential project with you.

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