

# Essex Thameside News

Nº 162, October 2020



8.00 p.m., first Tuesday of every month. Langdon Hills Golf Club, Lower Dunton Road, Bulphan, Essex RM14 3TY



## Chairman's message

Hello..

Yet again I am writing my Chairman's message with little to report due to the ongoing pandemic. However, in the last month we have been able to attend a limited number of events. We were able to hold our second post Covid-19 Lockdown Club Night in September. It was a welcome opportunity for members to have a drink and a meal, with

a low-key meet and catch up. As we all know the government's rules have recently changed and for the time being we will most likely have to put our club night meetings on hold. The situation is fluid and I and the Committee will try our best to keep you informed. Rest assured, we will arrange a gathering as soon as it is safe and legal to do so.

It is with great sadness that I must report that member Pete Wilson has passed away. He was a good supporter of the club with his partner Carole Chapman. Our sincere condolences go to her and the family.

The NEC Classic Motor Show in Birmingham due to take place in November has been cancelled. The organisers

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had taken action to try and make the event safer, such as limiting the numbers attending with timed slots for attendance. However, with the present ever-changing situation and the prospect of local lock downs, took the decision to cancel the event.

We have a packed Newsletter for you this month with some interesting articles from members and reports from the two recent events that some of us attended. We also have two great quizzes and the return of the Caption Competition. Since this drew the largest response last month, we have decided to give away another enviable prize for the best caption. Email your entry to me, Graham Cook, together with your address and you might win a **rechargeable electric cork screw**. Surely a must-have for all serious (!) wine drinkers. Once used, you'll wonder how you managed without one for all these years. In addition, there are two new sections; Items For Sale and My First Car. We look forward to receiving your contributions to these. This month's editor is Neil Shanley.

We have, more or less, come to the end of the car show season, and I am sure we all hope next year will see an end to this virus, lending us the opportunity to take our Jaguars to shows and events again. In the mean-time be careful and obey the rules and advice – they are not that difficult really.

Please keep your articles and stories coming for the Newsletter.

Stay safe

Graham



## Committee



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## Client Feedback

Richard Noble - 4th Jan 2018  
Excellent job on my XK An 11  
year old car looks better than  
when it was new!

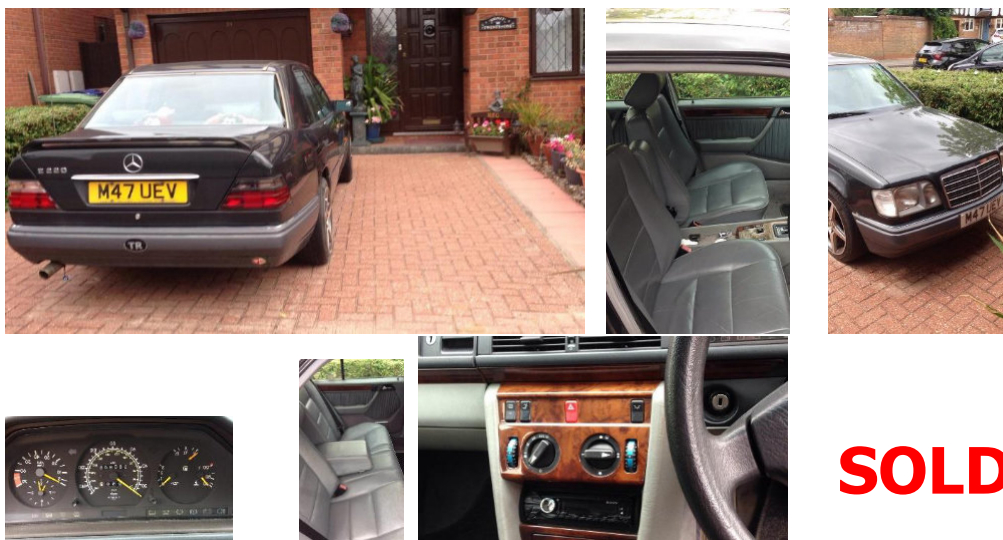
Lee Browning 6th Jan 2018  
Highly recommended, amazing  
work, You need to see it to  
believe it. Blown away with  
the final result.

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## Members Items For Sale

Members are invited to advertise any item they wish to sell or give away in this section. This is a free service. The Club takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the description or the condition of the articles advertised.

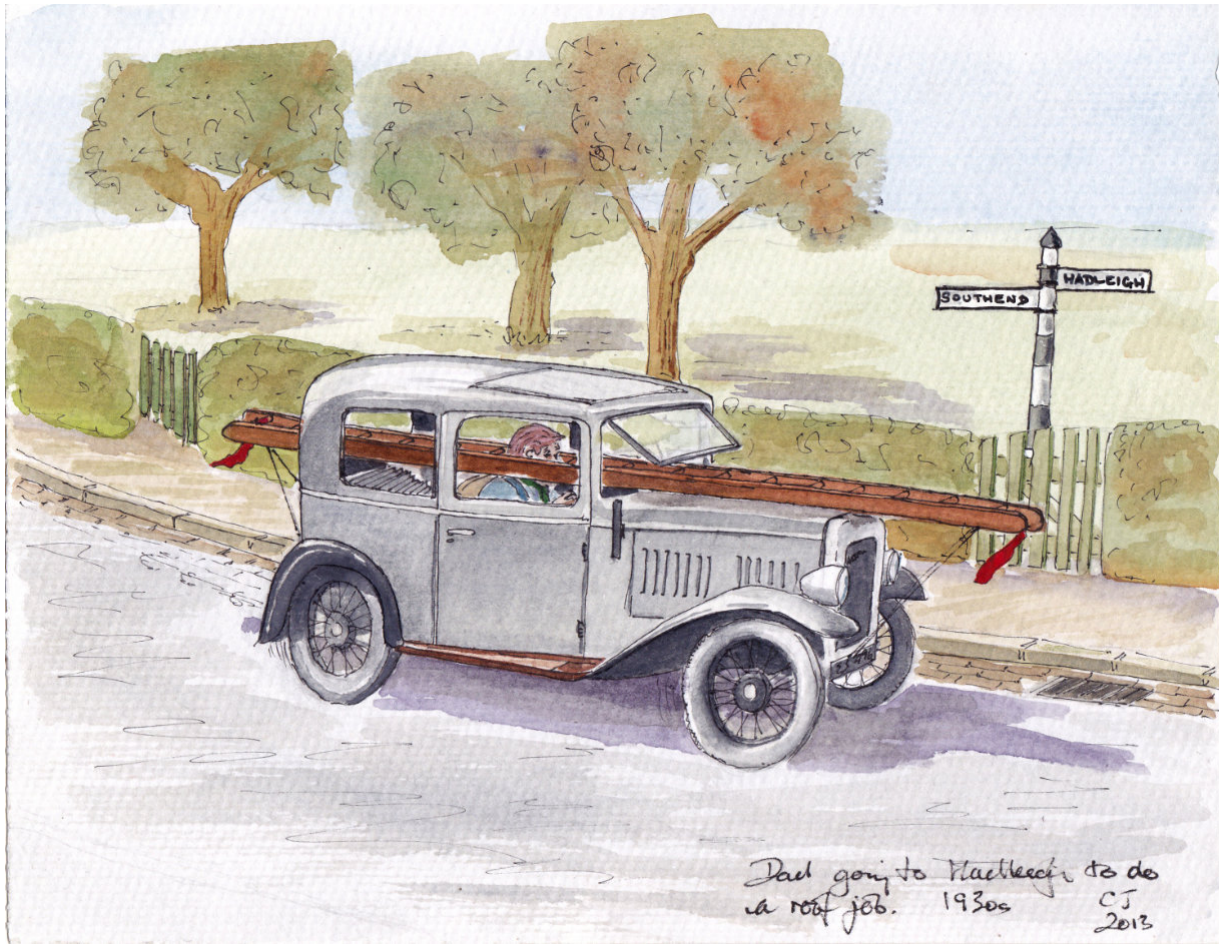
**Mercedes E220;** "M" registration, one owner, 60,000 miles, Price £3,500. Contact Bob Duff at [bobduff68@gmail.com](mailto:bobduff68@gmail.com)



**Jaguar Wheels and Tyres;** 4 number Star Burst 16" wheels and tyres (two tyres are new), will fit X300 and X308. Two wheels may need some refurbishment, Price £250. Contact Steve Perryman on 07930 340655.



**Track Rod Ends;** Suitable for Mk 10/Daimler Limo, part numbers C23077 (RH) and C23078 (LH). Still in sealed plastic bags, price £30 for the pair. Contact Neil Shanley on 07973 874022 or at [neilshanley@btinternet.com](mailto:neilshanley@btinternet.com).



## The Grandfather Days

My father, Frederick John Cooper, had just purchased his driving licence and then bought a second hand, black, Austin Seven saloon car. He must have been about 21 at the time. Luckily the Austin just passed through the gate at the rear of 107 Milton Street. Grandfather came out of the back door to look at the new acquisition. Father Fred offered to give him a ride in the car but Grandfather William declined the offer, saying, "It was flying in the face of the Lord" and he wasn't having any of it.

Over the coming months, Grandfather gradually changed his mind as he could see the potential benefits of this new vehicle over the usual transportation of plant and materials by builders hand cart.

A roofing job needed doing in Hadleigh and Frederick was given the task of delivering a long wooden pole ladder. To be able to transport this ladder to the outskirts of the borough boundary, my father, Fred, opened

up the front wind out windscreen, to its fullest extent and completely removed the rear view window. This enabled him to pass the ladder through both windows and tie the ladder down to the front and rear bumpers. The passenger seat and rear seats were used to store the slates, cement, sand, lead, battens and roofing tools.

The poor old car was, not for the first time, well laden. The next thing to do was to drive the car to Hadleigh. This was only just achieved by Fred poking his head through the rungs of the ladder so that he could see out of the open front window! He later said, "When I think back Son, what a stupid thing to do!"

But I think Grandfather was being won over by this new form of transport.

Written by Colin Cooper in recording my memories and the stories told to him by his family especially his father Fred, and his uncles, Geoff, Fred and Bill in running and working for the local family building and decorating firm W.J.Cooper & Son.

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## Answers to September Car Quiz

1. Ferrari 308 GTB
2. Sunbeam Tiger
3. Triumph Stag
4. Alfa Romeo SZ
5. Chevrolet Corvette Stingray
6. Lamborghini Gallardo
7. Cadillac Series 62
8. BMW Z1
9. Talbot 105
10. Alfa Romeo Montreal
11. Ferrari Enzo
12. Studebaker Starlight Coupe
13. Auburn 852 Straight Eight Supercharged Boat Tail Speedster
14. Allard L
15. Jaguar XJS
16. Swallow Doretti



## Battery Life by Doug Warren

I always check out Jaguar forums and one of the questions I asked recently was how to identify the age of one's car battery. I have just replaced my XK8's battery and it appeared that the one to be replaced was the original fitment. One forum subscriber has indicated that the manufacture date of the battery is stamped on the top of negative terminal. I checked mine and it showed "38.04" meaning that it was made in the 38<sup>th</sup> week of 2004. So my battery has lasted 16 years. That's pretty good, don't you think?

*Editor's note; Batteries can also be stamped with a date code on their casing or on an attached label usually with a letter and a digit(s). The letter indicates the month, starting with A for January and so on with the digit showing the year eg 4 for 2004.*

*Does anyone have a battery in use that is older than Doug's?*

**October Movie Car Quiz** — Name the film that the car appeared in, the make and model and a lead actor/actress. Three points for each picture. If it appeared in more than one film, then all must be named together with the lead actor/actress in each film to obtain the respective point. Maximum points – 30.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4 (OK, so there's not much car to see, but it is really easy if you are old enough)



Figure 5



Figure 6 (the car on the left)



Figure 7 (Not the Police car)



Figure 8



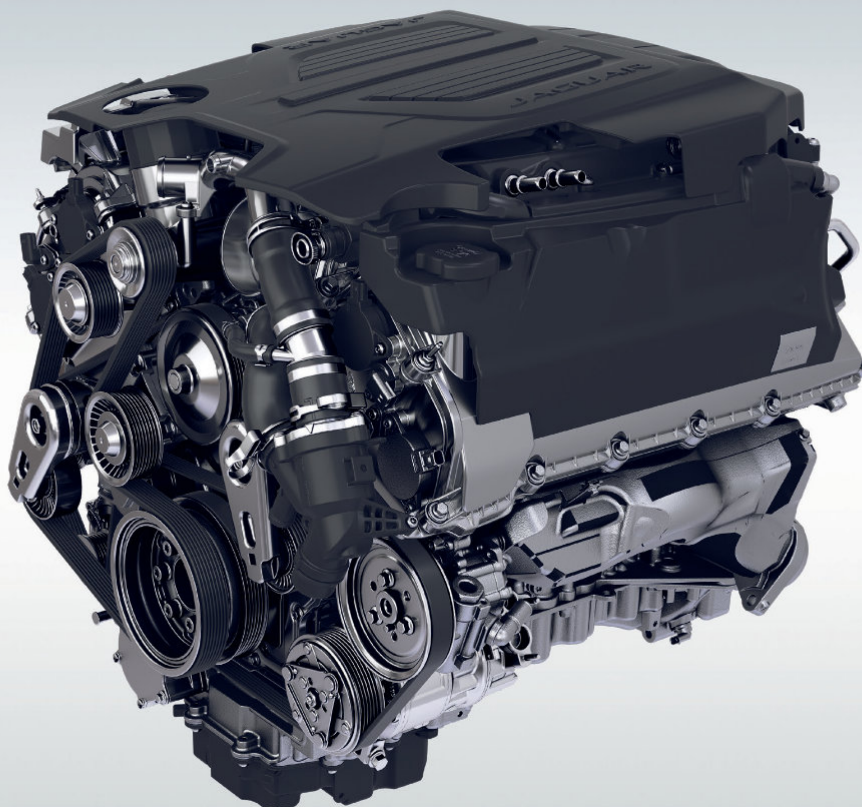
Figure 9 (the centre car)



Figure 10

Good luck. Answers in next month's Newsletter

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## Cool Runnings

When my 1994 XJS 4.0 Convertible facelift first set tyre to the driveway, our young neighbour said, as she slid comfortably into the driver's seat, that it really was a cool car. Well it was and it wasn't. It literally did not live up to this description since the aircon refused to refrigerate the cabin. This was rectified by a replacement condenser and a thorough overhaul. Now some five years later it has failed again. No doubt a leak test and some re-gassing will effect a cure. In the mean-time I was determined to address the coolant temperature reading that has plagued me since I purchased the car.

On regular runs, the temperature gauge needle has always been close to the cold sector but on really hot days and in traffic it would rapidly climb above Normal, but, thankfully, never right into the danger zone. The car is fitted with an Auxiliary Cooling Fan which I have not seen running since the car was purchased, so that was my first port of call.

The book says it is connected electrically by a blue relay and a red 10 amp fuse located in the left front component panel within the engine compartment. I checked the fuse and replaced the relay, but on a test drive in the recent hot weather, the fan obstinately refused to spin. Next on the agenda is the Thermostatic Switch which is screwed into the radiator behind the Air Cleaner assembly. This latter item will require removing for access. This, in turn, will necessitate the removal of the Ram Tube. Both tasks are a pain. Once the Thermostatic Switch was exposed, I unplugged the connector and shorted across the two terminals. The fan spun like a top. (Note this is a permanent direct live connection and does not require the ignition on.) Well, it must be the switch itself. This is in the form of a brass hexagonal "bolt" about 25mm diameter – and is obsolete. (part number DAC 6794). Luckily, the version for the V12 engine is still available. (part number EAC 2510). You will, however, need to adapt your wiring since this item has spade connectors whereas the original has the wiring directly incorporated within the switch. With the task completed, another test drive in hot conditions was called for. Yes, you've guessed it, still no fan response.

At this point, I decided to ask someone who, unlike me, would know what to do – Ken Jenkins of the main club. He stated that it was unlikely that the fan would ever cut in under UK climate conditions since it was there for use in countries with much hotter weather. I wish I had called him earlier!

My next thought was that the thermostat may be faulty. A quick check on line revealed that whilst most of these are around £12 each, the one for my later chassis number is only available from Jaguar at about £40 - Ouch! (part number EBC 3621). Do check your chassis number before ordering and don't forget to order the correct gasket and "O" ring with it. Oh, and check the number of bolts to the thermostat housing. My car has two, but some have more. I again removed the Air Cleaner assembly – the butterfly screws are bound to be stuck, particularly the bottom one. Just douse them in WD40 and keep on trying. Release the clips to the Air Mass Meter taking care not to lose the rubber "O" ring, unless you have purchased a replacement. You should then remove the Ram Tube having first detached it from the Air Cleaner. (only a jubilee clip). The plastic tube is attached to a "funnel" as it passes through some metalwork above the radiator. Prise the funnel off by pushing a screw driver onto the small plastic "knobs" and then between the "funnel" and the Ram Tube. Upon removal of the Air Cleaner the radiator bottom hose is exposed. The jubilee clip must then be slackened off to allow the hose to be removed from said radiator. This will release the coolant. (The book says that there is a bolt on the side of the engine block that can be used to fully drain the coolant. I was advised to leave well alone since the metal can be cracked when removing a bolt that may be extremely stuck). With the Ram Tube out, the thermostat housing can then be removed. If the bolts are too tight to turn, warm up the engine and try again. This will do the trick. Do not force since this is an aluminium casting.

Following a complete flush of the system new coolant was added. This is a 50/50 mixture of water and antifreeze. The recommended antifreeze should conform to BS 6580 and be phosphate free. It can either be blue or pink and it was not recommended to mix these. In my case, the original coolant was so brown that it was impossible to tell which colour was present so I used blue. As an added complication, I was told that some cars had yellow antifreeze. I simply didn't go there! As regards to capacities, the car's dry capacity is 11.6 litres and this reduces to 9.9 litres for a fill after draining. Oh, and whilst I was at it, I changed the air filter. Mine, like the coolant, looked like it was due for an appearance in the Antiques Roadshow. So much for main dealer service.

And finally, when taken out for yet another test run, the temperature gauge read bang on "Normal", so success at last. Now onto that aircon!

Neil Shanley

## Cooling Repairs In Pictures



1. Air Cleaner to be removed



2. Thermo Switch removed



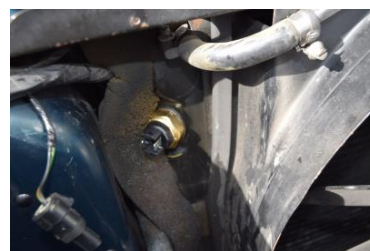
3. Original Thermostatic Switch



4. New V12 Switch with spades



5. Connector adaption



6. New Switch in radiator



7. Now connected to loom



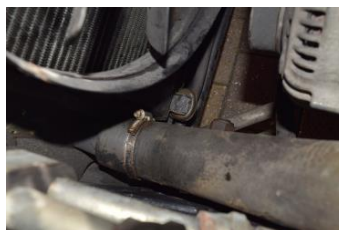
8. Disconnect Tube/Cleaner



9. Remove Funnel & Ram Tube



10. Thermostat housing exposed



11. Drain from bottom hose



12. Fitting new Thermostat



13. Air Cleaner assembly



14. Old Filter



15. New filter



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# BEFORE THEY WERE FAMOUS

Who did these youngsters grow up to be?

1



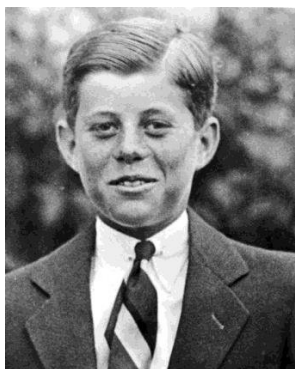
2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



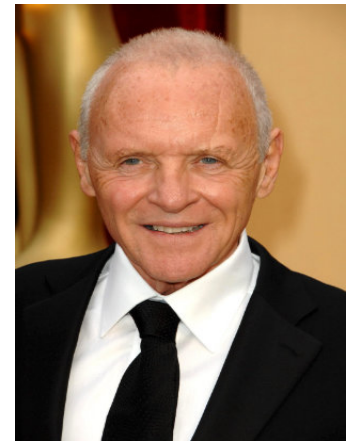
## September "Famous" Answers

If you are still puzzling over last month's quiz – as was I, (Richard did admit it was a particularly hard one), well, here are the answers; 1 Robert Downey Jnr, 2 Winona



Ryder, 3 Keanu Reeves, Marilyn Monroe, 5 Richard Nixon, 6 Kathy Bates, 7 Anthony Hopkins, 8 Mick Jagger, 9 Audrey Hepburn, 10 RICHARD GIBBY (with baby sister), 11 Judy Dench, 12 Jose Mourinho

This months are easier!






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## Restoring The Restored

A few years ago, I had the front driver and passenger seats of my XK8 cannolised by a specialist in Battlesbridge. Although not recommended to them, I had passed their base of operation, following one of our yearly trips to RHS Hyde Hall Car Show for our joint get together with the JDC. I wish had hadn't bothered since the workmanship was pretty rubbish. I had to take the car back within a week following the leather cracking. The response was, *"it is because I sit on the area that cracks!!!"* So this year I



thought, there is only one place that I felt confident in taking it to and that was AutoArt Detailing at Brentwood. Club member, Mario

Varnava, runs the business and has undertaken a number of 'car detailing's' for club members over the years. Having seen some of his leather work recently, I decided to take my XK8 to him for a full leather restoration. As you will see from the pictures, this is the cracking after only a few years that "specialist" had previously undertaken to repair. The further issue was that the colour match was non-existent. The front seats being a different shade to those at the rear.

Mario commenced the work on 7<sup>th</sup> September and kept me informed with daily "WhatsApp" videos. I have to say that this was a brilliant way of showing me the progress of the work that was that he was undertaking on the car. I was also able to see other issues which came to light and was therefore able to instruct him to carry out the work straight away, thus reducing down time on the project, both for him and his staff.



So, if the interior leather on your Jaguar 'Pride and Joy' is looking a bit tired and you feel that it is in need of restoration, then give Mario a call on 07912 877771 and obtain a quotation.

You won't regret it, I haven't!

**Doug Warren**

## Caption Competition

We received five entries for our August Caption Competition – by far the largest response we have received to our recent competitions to date. So, heartened by this, the editorial team have decided to run it again. See the picture below by kind permission of Chris and Marise White. Please send in your suggestions to our Chairman, Graham Cook.

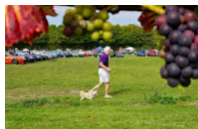


The entries for the August completion came from; Ian Croxson, Liz Croxson, Ray Oliver, Russell Smedley and Doug Warren. There were two winners, Ray Oliver and Ian Croxson whose entries were; "The new airbag did not come with any instructions" – and – "If you think I'm driving this, you must be quackers", respectively.

Thanks to those members for their support. We look forward to your suggestions for this month's competition the results of which will be published in the November issue



## Forum Finale



I write this having just learnt that my favourite classic automotive event and the years' last major car show has been cancelled. I am talking about the NEC Classic Motor Show in November. It was fortunate, however, that some of our members attended the Jaguar Forums UK event at Denbies Wine Estate in Dorking. A rather unexpected last hurrah for shows this year.

The meeting was organised by Jaguar Forums UK, an internet based organisation which connects like-minded enthusiasts both in the UK and from abroad. Originally scheduled for May, it was postponed to 20<sup>th</sup> September and was well attended. Covid restrictions were in place and, from what I observed, were adhered to by all. Apart from admiring members' cars, the day was taken up with awards for best car, best engine bay, raffle prizes and so on. An unusual feature was the Forum's patron arriving in a helicopter – not seen that before. In the main building, housing a cafeteria and wine gift shop, an art exhibition was being held. From abstracts in oil to iridescent acrylics the quality of the art on display, the styles and subject matter were truly professional. We were lucky to be shown around by two of the artists exhibiting which always provides a better understanding of the subject matter.

Back in May the Forum was holding a competition to have your car form part of their next year's calendar. I won the December slot. There were some excellent shots of Jaguars which the calendar printers did not seem to appreciate. Instead they decided to modify these by cutting the fronts and rears from the cars on many of the photos, mine included. It was the Forum's first attempt at a calendar and, in my opinion, was a

disaster. Thankfully, the weather and the show was not thus allowing Ian and Liz Croxson, Steve and Wendy Potter, Doug and Jackie Warren with myself and Sue to soak up the rays on a lazy Sunday afternoon.

There were many excellent cars attending. A few that caught my eye included a well-travelled 1959 Mk IX owned by Alan Mobbs. It had been driven in three continents including along the famous Route 66 in the USA. Alan had a wealth of stories to tell of his travels with the car. He should publish them. There was another 420 at the event apart from mine (a rare occurrence). A fawn coloured '68 example purchased by Rob Farrow in 2018, initially looking in good condition, but requiring a professional rebuild upon closer examination. A nice car with several upgrades including electronic ignition and a reversing camera with the screen mounted where the original ashtray and radio were sited. An interesting and possibly unique modification. Rob claims a staggering 25 mpg whereas I average no more than 20 mpg on a run. Maybe I should change to an electronic set up.

The Bentley Owners Club was also in attendance with a lovely 1938 4.5 litre Drop Head Overdrive model as my favourite. The owner bought it 30 years ago in boxes and restored it as a hobby. It can easily top the ton, he says, and whilst doing so, a motorway patrol car pulled alongside and the officer waved his finger from side to side, upon which, the Bentley driver slowed down to a legal speed whilst the squad car sped off. No fines or flashing lights, how civilised!

Finally, some members may remember a club visit in 2009 to this venue where, I am told, James May was building a house using giant Lego bricks.

**Neil Shanley** (with photographic help from Liz Croxson and Doug Warren.)



When Hyde Hall cancelled their car show this year, the Jaguar Drivers Club who organise the event emailed all the car clubs that had been due to attend asking if they would be interested in staging a meeting at North Weald aerodrome. Most of the other clubs said they wouldn't attend due to the risks associated with the Covid-19 virus. However, I responded to the JDC advising that I thought we would have members interested in attending, subject to the restrictions current on that day.

The morning was dry, but a little windy. I guess ideal weather to meet under the restrictions, and to take off in a light aircraft if you had one handy. We provided a splendid turnout of around 25 cars from our club.

A red converted bus sold drinks and food. I had bacon rolls and coffee, which was just the job after a late previous night. Pity about the wasps, where did they come from?

As usual at these events, some interesting machines were brought along. Does anyone know the make and model of the red car in amongst the Triumph Club? A beautiful Mark X was driven by the owner's wife, pictured alongside it. Vaughan was interested in a Mark IX and Martin came in his recently restored 340 together with his grandson. We even spotted a Ford Anglia. Clare experienced trouble with her E Type, but a new fuse soon had it bursting back to life. I will let the pictures do the rest of the talking – enjoy.

**Graham Cook**



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## My First Car

This section is for you to send in any photographs of your first or early car and maybe with a little description or story to accompany it. A scanned photograph will be fine if you do not have one digitally.

Our first volunteer is Richard, who writes;

My first car was a silver green Renault 18 bought from my parents. This was followed by my second car which was a

brand new Fiat Uno Turbo, a fantastic car and I loved it. The third and fourth vehicles were a Rover 214 and a Nissan Primera



respectively and were company owned. My sixth car was a



Mercedes E Class, a little more prestigious than the previous two.



My sixth was the Suffolk SS100 which I run along with my Mazda-based Fiat 124 Abarth Spider.



We are looking for some real old gems for this section, so please raid your archives and send some early shots in. If you are in some of them, all the better.

Whilst I am still looking in my files for my first car, I know I have the photos somewhere (it was a 1955 Austin A50 Cambridge), I did come across this gem. Taken some years ago in sunnier climes. Anyone know what the car is that I am driving?



## A Trip Down Memory Lane, Part 2, by Ian Croxson



Day 5 - After days 1-4 spent in transit between Germany and Austria, getting a good night's rest in Augsburg was essential. After several large Beers and local firewater, the night

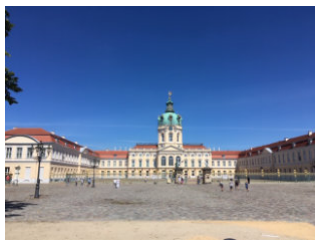
before, an early start was required to get to my next point Berlin. I set off in the direction of Donauworth and then via Audi Ville (Ingolstadt) and onto the A9 via Bayreuth (Scene of the Opera), Leipzig (the Allies really gave it a good hit during WW2) and then onto Berlin. I can't help but think back to the 60's as part of the baby Boomer era to recall how different it was, and how unusual it was, and how privileged we were in being able to travel by car into Eastern Germany. At that time there were several restrictions, including the English Channel taking some three hours and infrequent and cancelled sailings. We also faced paying Transit Fees of DM5 in Germany after endless queues waiting to get the documentation sorted. Now, it is totally different. In the baby Beemer era, who would have thought an M3 chasing a British registered

XK in a completely derestricted zone. A far cry away from having to lean forward to reach the 1955 Morris Oxford's top speed of 74mph and a 0-62mph time of just over 31 seconds!! During that time we would pray that the Morris would not breakdown or run out of fuel. Petrol Stations were few and far between.

As a family, we were fairly comfortable travelling via the GDR (German Democratic Republic) as the AA had introduced its 3 or 5 Star Recovery Service through an alliance with the ADAC until we realised that in East Germany you were on your own. Dad was always relaxed on holiday. Once he had closed the door of the family home and out of earshot of the telephone in the hall (we were lucky to have in Ilford-#Valentine 3535) he was beyond reach. Work couldn't call him up on a whim to ask if he had seen the office stapler or send him a pile of documents to read by the morning. He could spend some quality time with the kids in the car. Only problem was he had to know where he was going. There was no Sat Nav, only Sat Nag and a whole load of maps that my Mum had absolutely no idea how to read. I can always remember her shouting straight on, usually when the road would bear right and my Dad getting more and more agitated. It wasn't long before I was installed in the front bench seat and given an Atlas. The night before any journey the 'old man' had me sitting next to him, pen and paper in hand and working out the route by road numbers and the towns that were next en

route. I had been promoted to chief map reader and Navigator at a very early age.

Back to the modern age – now - in August 2020, the journey into Berlin via Augsburg, some 391 miles later, took me just over six hours, which forty years ago would have taken two days. I was staying at Berlins' Schönefeld Airport as the first night of a three day stay in Berlin. The main purpose was to attend a funeral the next morning of an old family friend. On the Southern outskirts of the city I came across Grunheide, the new site for the new Tesla Giga Factory. The factory is planning to produce batteries, battery packs and powertrains for Tesla EVs. It will also assemble the new Tesla Model Y which will start European production in 2021. They hope to manufacture 500,000 cars annually. The location was originally earmarked in 2000 as a production facility for BMW but for some reason they chose a site in Saxony instead. The Tesla site is on a state owned man-made pine forest that once fully excavated, the authorities expect Tesla to mitigate the felling by planting new trees, much to the consternation of the Green Party. Elon Musk has apparently given it the green light.



Day 6 – I jumped in the XK for an 11.00 am kick off at a German Covid-19 funeral allowing for just 40 guests. We gave Hans a good send off at the service just a few minutes' drive from the famous Charlottenburg Schloss

(Palace) on the Spandauer Damm. His father had been the Head Gardener there and was a friend of my folks. Built in the 1700s, it was badly damaged during World War 2. It then became the seat of the President of Germany for a short period whilst the Bellevue Palace was completed in the Tiergarten. Just 10 miles driven today. The Jag deserves a well-earned rest.

Day 7- am now staying at my German Cousin's residence in the north of Berlin very close to Tegel Airport one of the three existing airports in the city. A fourth one is now under construction near



Brandenburg. I spent a fun six months in Berlin when I was a Student in the mid-seventies and was keen to see it again. It has changed so much since those days. It had a Russian, French,

American and British sector subdivided, with a wall in between, sharing it with the GDR. Isolated during the Cold War, some 2.5million people



fled from the East to West Germany. In response East Germany built a barrier overnight in August 1961 to close off East Germans access to the West. That barrier became a wall which in turn turned into electrified fences, watchtowers and fortifications that extended 45 kms dividing the two parts of the city and stretching a further 120kms around West Berlin, separating it from the rest of East Germany. The Wall was finally removed in 1989 after days of protests following Gorbachev's reform policies and not

before 80 people had died trying to escape from the Soviet Communist regime.

Countless others were injured whilst trying to flee. My cousin was one of those that had escaped to the West in the boot of her Father's car in 1961. She has a story to tell, but that's for another day.



During my time in Berlin, in the mid 70's travelling around West Berlin it was always on public transport.

The U Bahn (Underground) would go through the Russian controlled sector at Friedrichstrasse. Armed Guards would be stationed at the end of the Platform and the trains would not stop there. You would see the watchtowers surrounding and the pale complexioned heavily armed Guards keeping a close eye on activities. Very spooky. My earliest recollection was of grey and drab streets outside and no advertisements anywhere. Fast forward that nearly fifty years later, I found myself journeying to my cousin's old family home near to the Wannsee Lake at Klosterfelde. It took nearly 40 years but they now have legally secured the land that they previously owned in the East as a family. On the land is still the original one storey chalet style cottage like a Dacha that they had lived in. This is adjacent to a modern two story house built in the last couple of years as a weekend retreat.

Just up the road is the Wannsee residence that the former GDR leader resided in and held Party functions in. Erich Honeker was the Party supremo who lived the life of Riley using the George Orwell philosophy



'All Animals are equal, but some are more Equal than others! After German reunification he claimed political asylum in the Chilean Embassy in Moscow but was extradited back to Germany to face Human Right abuse charges committed by the East German Government.

Proceedings were abandoned on grounds of illness and he was subsequently allowed to join his family in Chile where he died of liver cancer in 1994.



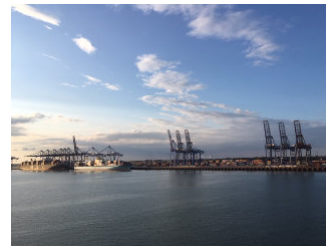
Fascinating stuff the history of the GDR. No part of it is complete without mention of the Trabi. The Trabant was another Peoples Car, but built in Zwickau in the East. Made from recycled wool or cotton this piece of machinery first produced in 1959 had no fuel gauge, no indicators and had a Two Stroke engine. Not even a heated rear screen that you could keep your hands warm when pushing it. Over the 30 year production run the price of one rose to the equivalent of one year's salary (USD1864 –now around USD15000) for a typical worker. This had to be paid in full in advance. The average waiting period for such an icon was 10 years. Despite its problems nearly 3 million were produced before production ceased in 1989. There are still around 30,000 in existence. That's quite enough about a pile of crap.

Back into the Grand Tourer and my current pride and joy, the Jag now begins the final stage of the journey. Day 8- the last part of my trip found myself heading out of the city around the Avus Ring, part of the Berliner Ring Road system. Built in 1921 it is the oldest controlled access highway in Europe. Until 1998 it was also used as a Motor Racing circuit. It now forms the northern part of Autobahn A115 linking Berlin via the A2 with Magdeburg and then Hannover. I came off the



Autobahn at Helmstadt the old transit point stop into and out of the former East Germany. I did this so I could take a quick detour into Wolfsburg the spiritual home of

VW near to where I would stay as a boy. No transit fees this time, nor long delays at the crossing point, simply a chance to revisit the past. No time to stop as a ferry to catch and running out of time. Another 480 miles down the road and eight hours later, despite heavy rains, I reached the final destination on my continental journey, the Hook of Holland and the Stena Brittanica. Quite



performed effortlessly and beyond expectations. Having carried me some 1,983 miles across Europe in eight very sunny and warm days, I couldn't think of a better companion to spend the time with (apart from my

wife of course!!) Only complaint is that the Sat Nav system is hard to read in bright sunlight and its position is far from ideal causing one to look down instead of viewing the road ahead. Still a lot easier than reading maps and notes across the front seat. Thinking of next year, the Spluegen Pass linking Switzerland and Italy via Lake Como springs to mind, virus and Travel Corridors permitting. Can't wait to check this out and cross off the list of epic journeys to do!



(PS. The man in the photo, also on the previous page, was the last person to be killed whilst attempting to escape to the West. Winfried Freudenburg chose to use an improvised gas balloon - a novel idea, but unfortunately he fell from this at high altitude over West Berlin on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March, 1989. He was 32 years old. If he had waited another 8 months until 9<sup>th</sup> of November, he would have been able to walk across.)

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