

Essex Thameside News

Nº 164, December 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 all,

I hope you are all keeping well, in what remains a challenging and somewhat frustrating period we are living through.

Another month has gone by, with yet more changes by our government as to what we can and can't do. At the time of writing, it looks as if families will be able to meet on a limited basis for a few days over the Christmas period, but otherwise not until next year. We

have had almost a whole year that seems to have been 'virtual', 'socially distanced', 'postponed' or just plain cancelled. I look forward to a time when we can recommence our monthly club nights. Let's hope that the restrictions are eased sooner rather than later, to allow us all to meet again next year.

We have not been able to hold our usual popular, festive December club night with extra raffle prizes and nibbles to eat. I hope that we will be able to hold a similar kind of celebration next year, on the first club night when we are able to recommence our usual meetings.

Looking forward to 2021, I see that early bird tickets are

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now available for The London Classic Car Show. Pandemic willing and assuming that it takes place as planned, the show is to be held outdoors but under cover, on 16th, 17th and 18th April in Syon Park, Brentford, Middlesex. At £20 per early bird ticket, as opposed to £30 at the door, and because the number of visitors will be restricted in order to remain Covid-compliant, it might be a good time to book something now for 2021.

Our government has announced that it is bringing forward to 2030 the last year in which newly manufactured petrol- or diesel-powered cars can be sold, and 2035 for hybrid petrol-electric vehicles. Thereafter, all new vehicles must be electric or hydrogen-powered. Considering all the infrastructure that will become necessary, such as charging points in residential streets, car parks, service stations and shopping centres, it certainly sounds an ambitious plan to achieve in less than 10 years.

I expect that, in future, the government will increase taxation on the use of petrol and diesel cars through fuel or road pricing, in order to push owners into electric vehicles. And it may become more and more difficult to purchase petrol or diesel fuel. However, it may not be all doom and gloom for owners of petrol and diesel cars; I have read that accelerated development is taking place of synthetic fuel produced, using renewable energy, from carbon dioxide and hydrogen gases. This could be good news for us petrol heads and, if it is successful, we could continue to drive our well-loved petrol and diesel cars for

years to come. Long live the straight 6, V12, Double 6, V8 and other fine Jaguar engines!

This month's newsletter contains an article kindly written by Doug Warren, titled 'What Is a classic car?' Reading it made me realise how some of my previous cars are now considered classic cars. If I still owned them in the same condition as when I sold them, they could now be worth several times what I sold them for. My first car was a Hillman Imp, followed by two Mk1 Ford Fiestas. The second Fiesta was a 1.3 Ghia that was great fun and rather fast at the time. Rather like Richard's Fiat Uno Turbo mentioned in last month's newsletter, which he said was a fabulous car he loved driving until it was stolen from his driveway one night.

Why not send us an article about the cars you have owned over the years. Which ones do you wish you had kept, and which ones were you pleased to have sold at the time? We would also be interested to hear from any members that own an electric car, whether a Jaguar or any other marque. How have you found the car? Has it lived up to the range quoted by the manufacturer?

The committee and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you, and your families a very Happy Christmas; stay safe whilst enjoying the festive season.

Graham Cook

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A BREED APART

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Mrs Worthing's chimney

Between 1900 and the 1950s our family of Coopers lived at 107 Milton Street, in a small Victorian terraced house in the seaside town of Southend-on-Sea.

It was a dull day in the autumn of 1936 and my grandfather William John Cooper had just come into the back parlour. My father Frederick Cooper was sitting at the kitchen table in the middle of the room and my Great Uncle Fred, who was only a few years older than Frederick, was sitting in the corner by the side of the range. The range was always alight, winter or summer, and my Uncle Geoff was looking out of the bay window onto the back garden which doubled as a builders yard.

Grandfather had just met Mrs Worthing of number 23, further down the street, and she had said that her chimney was smoking and that it needed sweeping. My Grandfather ran a small building and decorating firm from our back garden and was often asked to sweep chimneys. Mrs Worthing ran a shoe shop in Milton Street nearer to the High Street and the fireplace that needed cleaning was in the room behind the shop. Grandfather told my Uncle Fred and Geoff to get the rods from the shed at the bottom of the garden and go down the street as quick as possible and sweep Mrs W's chimney. "And by the way, don't make a bl**dy mess."

Fred and Geoff took the rods from the shed and the special piece of tarpaulin with a hole in the middle,

made especially for sweeping flues, and went out of the back gate which opened on to Short Street. They walked briskly down to the shoe shop.

Mrs Worthing showed Fred and Geoff into the back room and said that she had to go down to the High Street to do some shopping. She said she would be back later in the morning and please could they not make a mess as she had just beaten the carpets on the back line the previous day. Geoff laid a builder's cotton dust sheet on the floor, removed the grate and fret from the fireplace and put the first rod with the sweeps brush through the hole in the tarpaulin. Fred wedged it with two cane rods against the cast iron and tiled mantle register fireplace and all was set for the sweeping.

Three rods were screwed on, each rod pushed up and down the mandatory four times and then when the fourth rod was pushed up it came up against an obstruction. "Whats up Geoff?" asked Fred. "The rod's up" said Geoff sarcastically. "Push it harder" said Fred ignoring Geoff's funny. Geoff gave the rods a hefty shove and with a rumble and a thump the rods pushed past the obstruction. "Probably just a loose brick, Fred" said Geoff.

Five more rods were connected, then pushed and pulled up the flue, always remembering to turn clockwise so that the rods didn't come apart. "Okay", said Fred, "go outside and see if the brush has come out of the chimney pot." "No,.....not yet" replied Geoff. "Keep going." Nine more rods had gone up the flue and still Geoff hadn't set eyes on the sweep's

brush. Geoff went back inside and quizzed Fred about the number of rods that the chimney had consumed. Fred and Geoff struggled with the mathematics of length of chimney versus the length of nineteen 3ft cane rods and came to the conclusion that something was not adding up!

Slowly, the puzzled Fred climbed the stairs with the intention of inspecting the roof space. Coming to the top of the stairs and on to the landing Fred noticed small puffs of dust coming from under the bedroom door. "That's strange" thought Fred. Then slowly, an unlikely possibility dawned. No it couldn't be. Surely not! Fred cautiously opened the door and peered round the edge of the door frame, for his worst imaginings to be realised. Through the now settling dust haze he could just plot the path of the sweeps sooty rods and brush. Fred called out to Geoff. "Come up 'ere and see what you've done." Geoff leapt up the stairs three at a time in response to the urgency in Fred's voice. "What?" said Geoff, annoyed.

The sight they saw could have doubled as a film set of the London blitz. The obstruction that the sweep's brushes had hit after the fourth rod was not, as they'd assumed, party wall flue bricks but the side of the flue into the bedroom. The first item the brush had disturbed was a framed oil painting of a highland stag. This had come off the picture rail and landed on a marble topped washstand, smashing the frame, glass, and the wash stand bowl and jug that had been on the marble top. The rods, still on a backwards, forwards and upwards course, had then continued past the painting and onwards until they reached the white distempered ceiling.

After distributing copious amounts of soot over the ceiling and frieze, the sweep's brush had then started its descent towards the first corner of the room next to the window. At the corner, it had turned and picked up the crimson velvet drapes, lace nets and green painted wood venetian blinds. The timber curtain poles must have had a good fixing to the window head because large pieces of wall plaster had come away from the brickwork and lay on top of the pile of sooty window dressings heaped upon the floor. Not all of the curtains had ended up on the floor; some still caught in the sweep's rods had been drawn backwards and forwards across the large double bed, spreading the black stuff across the bedsheets and feather-filled pillows. Fifteen rods and a brush had transformed the room from a place of peace and tranquillity into a nightmare of soot, broken glass, splintered wood, torn fabrics and soiled bed linen.

Fred gave Geoff a knowing look and ushered Geoff out of the room, closing the door behind them. In silence, and minds racing, the pair of sweep's rod operatives slowly descended the stairs. Without saying a word to each other, they started to bring the

sweep's rods back down out of the bedroom, back through the side of the bedroom chimney breast, and down the flue out into the downstairs fireplace. With gathering speed, they took down from the fireplace the special tarpaulin, gathered up all the rods, tied them into a bundle and made a hasty retreat back up Milton Street, into Short Street and through the back garden gate into the yard.

After storing the sweep's brushes in the shed, they both went in the back door and crept into the back parlour. Grandfather was doing his bookkeeping on the table in the bay window. "Don't bother sending a bill," said Fred, "we didn't manage to do it in the end." "S'right", said Geoff, adopting a backup role. Grandfather, for some unknown reason, did not question this statement. Luckily, perhaps, he was engrossed in his bookkeeping.

Some time later, Grandfather eventually got to know what happened that day. But, strangely, we never found out how Mrs Worthing reacted when she found the bedroom. All I know is that we never worked for, nor indeed ever heard from, Mrs Worthing again.

Colin Cooper





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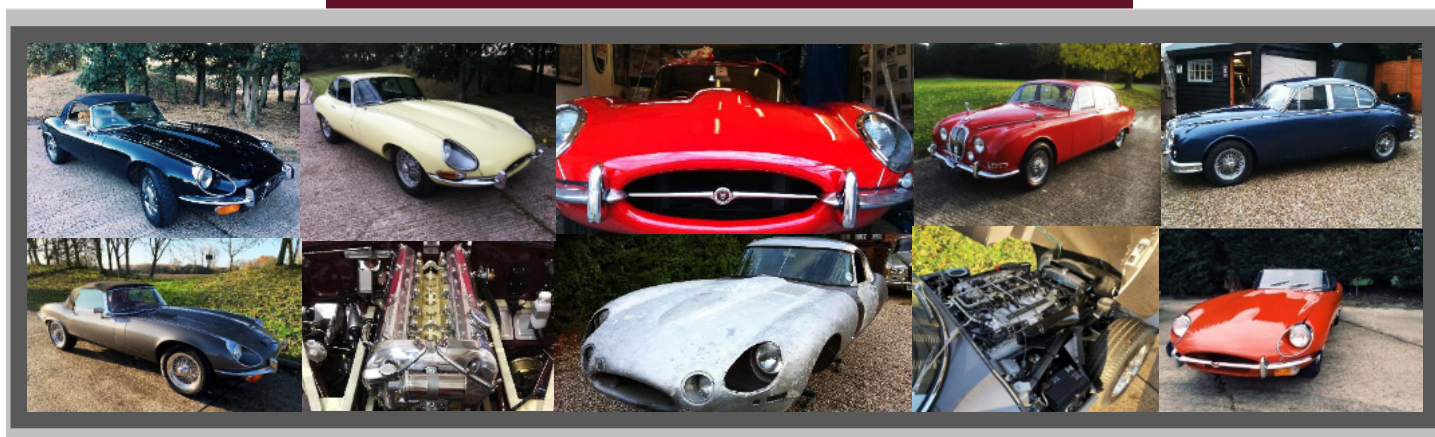
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Suffolk Sportscars

You may have read an article ("When is a Jaguar not a Jaguar?") in October's edition of the national Jaguar Enthusiast magazine about the demise of Suffolk Sportscars after twenty-five years.

The Suffolk SS100 is a visually and dimensionally accurate replica of the original SS100 Jaguar sports car that William Lyons launched in 1936. The SS100 was, and still is, reckoned one of the most graceful designs of the pre-war period. All told, SS Cars Ltd produced 315 of them, in 2.5 litre and 3.5 litre form, up till the outbreak of war in 1939. The factory went into war production from 1940 until 1946 when the newly renamed Jaguar Cars Ltd reverted to producing cars.

Fast forward to the late 1980s and early 1990s. TRAC Products Ltd was a company creating parts for replica AC Cobras and suchlike but its owner, Terry Rowing, was very enamoured of the SS100 and very knowledgeable about all things SS.

The Formula 1 designer Adrian Newey had an original SS100 in need of restoration and he approached Terry Rowing to do the work. They did a deal in which, in exchange for restoring Newey's original car, Rowing took copies and moulds of it, with which to create a replica with a new, stronger chassis and a Jaguar XK engine (as fitted to almost all Jaguar cars up till the 1980s). Thus the TRAC SS100 replica was born.

Unfortunately, while a brilliant engineer, Rowing was not necessarily the best businessman and did not realise the enormous potential of this replica. In stepped Roger Williams, who had trained as a Jaguar engineer and salesman. He purchased the rights, templates and moulds, creating Suffolk Sportscars Ltd in 1995 to manufacture more replicas, making various improvements along the way. He was successful and almost 400 were produced (mine is the 216th) before a certain large car manufacturer, which I shall not name but which is well known to us all, forced Suffolk Sportscars to cease production. The company went into liquidation in July this year but, fortunately, the workshop manager and staff have formed a new company in the same workshop, Suffolk Classic Services Ltd, to continue supporting the owners of existing cars, and servicing other classic cars.

I had always dreamed of owning a pre-war sports car myself but never thought I'd have one, firstly because I'd no mechanical or restoration skills and secondly because, living in a terraced house in London, I'd nowhere to keep one.

When I first came across an example at the Goodwood Revival I was captivated by the car. It took me a long look around and a close inspection underneath before I grasped that it was not in fact a restored original but a completely accurate replica with a fibreglass and alloy body. I also then realised that, because no welding was needed – it was essentially a big boy's Meccano set – I might be able to build one. But first I'd need a garage.

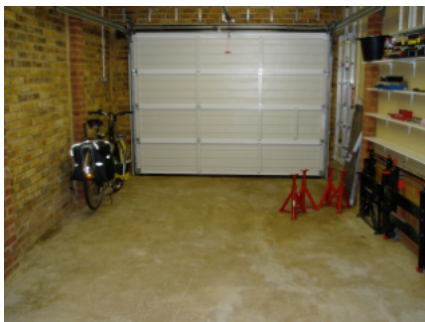


There is an alley to the back of my house so I and my neighbour, who also wanted a garage, clubbed together and applied for planning permission. This was granted after a few months but, because of a nearby willow tree, the buildings inspector insisted upon a massive, reinforced raft foundation. So, we hired a mini digger to excavate, then filled it with two tons of steel bar and caging. Then, one hot summer day, five large cement lorries queued up in the street while we pumped 95 tons of concrete 60 meters down the alleyway to fill the base.



For speed we hired a bricklayer, but my neighbour and I did everything else ourselves: carpentry, roof rafters, tiling, windows, doors, electrical wiring and plumbing. I'd never done anything like that before and learned a lot but, twelve years later, the garages are still standing with no cracks or leaks and looking good.

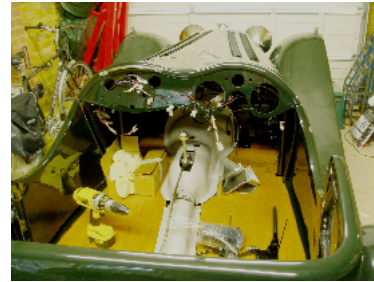
Finally, I could order – in four deliveries – the chassis,



engine, body and other parts from Suffolk Sportscars. Building the car was fun; I learned that traditional British engineering does require a bit of brute force sometimes.



The electrics were a great puzzle. Suffolk Sportscars had a wiring diagram, but it did not match my loom; for example, a red & white wire in the diagram turned out to be purple in the loom. However, I worked everything out eventually.



It took me about two years of Sundays but, finally, I trailered the car to Suffolk Sportscars for trimming and final testing; I was finally able to drive it in September 2010. It is great fun and, apart from some initial teething troubles while everything bedded in, I'm glad to say it has been very reliable; I've now driven 28,000 miles, including six European tours, without a single incident. I hope to do many more.

Now, whenever someone asks me how long it took to restore my 'Morgan', I tell them: "Actually, it's a replica SS100 Jaguar that I built from new in five years from applying to my council for permission."

Richard Gibby



The finished car in 2012 at Cambridge University Library with the Chief Executives of the British Library, the National Libraries of Scotland and Wales, the Bodleian Library Oxford and the Library of Trinity College Dublin

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Framed photographic print of Jaguar Mk II. 54cm x 44cm with a clear perspex cover.

Please contact Doug Warren on 07788 637057 or by email to dwarren169@btinternet.com

Answers to last month's quizzes

Before they were famous

1. Larry Hagman
2. Penelope Cruz
3. Jay Leno
4. Keith Richard
5. Quentin Tarantino
6. Jodie Foster
7. Lee Marvin
8. Marlon Brando
9. Ozzy Osbourne
10. Robert Plant
11. Sting
12. Yoko Ono

Name that Make and Model

1. Triumph Herald 12/50
2. Mercedes Benz Fintail 190 or 200
3. Chevrolet Pick-up 3100
4. Austin A35
5. Austin A70 Hereford (not A40 Somerset)
6. Ferrari 512 Testarossa
7. Wolseley 6 1800
8. Ford Zephyr 6 Mk III
9. Singer Gazelle
10. Vauxhall Cresta PA
11. Ford Consul GT
12. Ford Cortina Mk1 estate
13. Singer 9 Sports Le Mans
14. Mercedes 300 SL gull wing
15. Porsche 356 coupe
16. Ford Cortina Super Mk1

Well done and congratulations to Chris White...

Essex Quiz

1. Colchester was the first Roman capital in Britain
2. The world's oldest wooden church, dating from AD1081 is in Greensted
3. Great Dunmow is home to The Flitch Trials, Britain's oldest recorded competition still running (mentioned in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales and believed to have begun in the 13th century)
4. The Essex coastline is thought to be 350 miles, the second longest of any English county
5. Essex has 35 islands, more than any other English county
6. Southend Pier is 1.33 miles, the world's longest pleasure pier
7. Britain's smallest town is Manningtree
8. Britain's largest village is Tiptree
9. At 43 acres, England's largest village green is in Great Bentley
10. Colchester Castle has the largest Norman keep of any in Europe
11. In 1920, Dame Nellie Melba made the first ever radio broadcast from Chelmsford
12. Robert the Bruce was born at Montpelier Farm in Writtle, in AD1274
13. Five US presidents' families hailed from Essex: George Washington, John Adams, John Quincy Adams, George H W Bush and George W Bush
14. King Harold, who died in the Battle of Hastings, is buried in Waltham Abbey
15. The only one of the Cinque Ports outside Kent or Sussex is Brightlingsea in Essex
16. Edward the Confessor's palace was in Havering atte Bower; it remained a royal palace until 1686
17. Cary Grant never lived in Essex. All of the others (Richard Madeley, Jesy Nelson, Billy Ocean, Seal, Ian Dury, Idris Elba and Jilly Cooper) have at one point lived in Essex.
18. According to official statistics, St Osyth is the driest place (least likely to rain) in Britain.
19. John Constable painted The Haywain at his home in Dedham Vale
20. Essex is Britain's wealthiest county and has the 53rd largest economy in the world.

December Car Mascot Quiz - Name The Make



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7

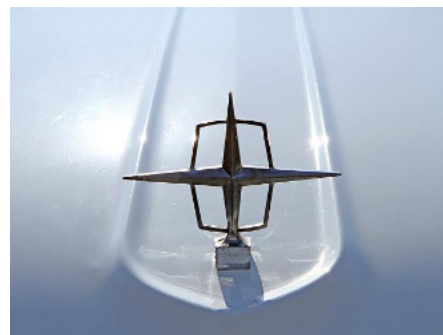


Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16

Good Luck. Answers in next month's Newsletter.

What is a classic car?

According to Wikipedia, "A classic car is an older car, typically 20 years or older, though definitions vary. The common theme is of an older car of sufficient historical interest to be collectible and worth preserving or restoring rather than scrapping".

This is a much debated subject, of course, which has been going on for many years and no doubt will be a topic of discussion for decades to come. There are so many factors involved that I doubt very much whether there will ever be a single definition that



encompasses every person's idea of what a classic car is.

For many, in this country at least, mention the term classic car and the vehicles that spring to mind will be some of the well-known favourites from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s such as the small Austin Healey Frogeye Sprite, through the MGA, MGB and various Triumph TRs to more expensive sports cars such as the E-Type Jaguar. Saloon cars from this period would include the Morris Minor, Triumph Herald, Ford Zodiac, and Jaguar Mk II, to name but a few.



Higher end models such as the Aston Martin DB4, DB5 or DC6 and the Jensen Interceptor, amongst countless others, are deservedly well known to many as all-time classics. No doubt in years to come cars from the 1980s and 1990s will also become considered as having achieved classic status; in fact, you could say that this is already the case when you think of the Ford Capri Mk3, Escort RS or Sierra

Cosworth, for example.

In Britain, very old vehicles do have some clear definitions. These being veteran (built before 1905), Edwardian (1905 to 1918), vintage (1919 to 1929) and post-vintage (1930 to 1945). However, at present, for the British market at least, there are no real hard and fast rules or firm criteria as to what constitutes a classic car.

The definition of a classic car can be very subjective. Generally in Britain, and perhaps some of Europe, you will find that the great majority of people would expect the car to be no longer be in production and at least 20 years old. However, some fairly recent

production cars are considered by some as "modern classics", especially some of the very expensive, low-volume production cars such as the Jaguar XK8/R, some Porsches, or some BMWs such as the E36. You can also be assured that some current exotica from Ferrari or Lamborghini will be guaranteed classic status in a very short space of time.



For many people, a classic car will be one that was on the road in the time of their youth. It could be what your dad, uncle or maybe even grandparent had when you were young, or maybe a car that you once aspired to owning when you were going through your formative years. Yes, nostalgia can be a big part of what makes a car a classic to you. Perhaps classic is not the best word to describe all the cars that we love; "cherished" would be a more embracing term.

HMRC indicates that, to qualify as a classic car for tax purposes in business, the car must be at least 15 years old at the end of the tax year and have a market value of over £15,000. This is not to be confused with road tax, which is a completely different subject. Most classic car insurers will also expect a vehicle to be

over 15 years old before they will take it on their books as a classic.

From 1 April 2020, the DVLA regards a historic (classic) vehicle as one built before 1 January 1980, i.e. 40 years old. It is then eligible for a vehicle tax exemption and a free vehicle licence under "historic vehicle" legislation, but only if you apply to put into the 'historic vehicle tax class' and to

stop paying tax.

Another widely held opinion on when a car can be regarded as a classic is that the model's value must have "bottomed out". This means that this model of car has reached its lowest point in value as a used car and is starting to appreciate in value again - a very good indication of its desirability.

Another marker, perhaps, is whether it is featured in many of the popular classic car magazines - although there is a fair amount of bias between different publications, with one or two magazines not giving any column inches to some of our more everyday and affordable classics, and just featuring the expensive and exotic classics which are sadly beyond the reach of many pockets.

So, we all have our own ideas, our own dreams and desires, and they differ from person to person. But there is also some common ground, not only in what is a classic and what is not but also the reasons for owning and cherishing the cars themselves, whatever marque or model they may be.

In Britain, and of course this is a British classic car club, the real glory days of car manufacture have now long passed with all but a handful of our own manufactures now consigned to the history books, such as the true MG's, Triumph, Austin & Austin Healey, Morris, Singer, Alvis, Humber, etc.

So have you got a classic? Just check out the values to see if the car that you drive is going up. Is it out of production? Has the market 'bottomed out' for your model? Always check with classic car insurers such as Adrian Flux, Peter Best, Footman James, Lancaster Insurance, Carole Nash, Lockton Performance or Peter James Insurance to name just a few, to see how they value your car. Always consider having a guaranteed value; should anything happen to your 'Pride and Joy', you may end up only getting market value which, for Jaguars ten or more years old, will be well below what you might expect.

Doug Warren



Caption competition

This month's picture is by kind permission of Vaughn and Julie High. **Please send your captions to cook_gm@hotmail.co.uk**

Last month's winner was Doug Warren for the following:



BREAKING NEWS:
Ferrari have signed Russell Smedley to their F1 team. He can't do any worse than Sebastian Vettel...



This is your page

THANK YOU

to Colin Cooper, Neil Shanley, Ian Croxson, Richard Gibby, Russell Smedley, Doug Warren, Lea Churchill, Graham Cook, Peter Shaw, Vaughn High, Gary Mitchell and Roger Petheram,

all of whom have submitted articles or stories in 2020 to help keep our newsletter going throughout this year.

What about you?

Do you have anything to share?

It could be on any subject, such as childhood memories, anecdotes and funny stories, your first car, your favourite and least-loved car, your experience of an electric car, any new purchases, maintenance and repairs, hobbies, what you have been doing in lockdown, local walks, how you are celebrating Christmas, funny photos, a drawing or painting. Frankly anything of interest...

We'd especially welcome anything from a female perspective.

Do please help us. If you have anything please send it with any images to cook_gm@hotmail.co.uk or neilshanley@btinternet.com or rwgibby@gmail.com

BEFORE THEY WERE FAMOUS

Who did these youngsters grow up to be?

1



2



3



4



5



6



7



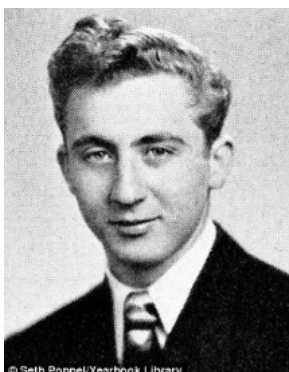
8



9



10



11



12



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