

Essex Thameside News

Nº 176, December 2021



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Graham Cook
Chairman and co-editor

cook_gm@hotmail.co.uk

Chairman's message

Welcome to our December newsletter.

Our winter Sunday Lunch took place on 7 November at the Six Bells in Boreham. We had not visited here before but the pub lived up to all our hopes and expectations, with good food and good company. Members had a nice lunch with their club friends and I would like to thank Lester Magness for organising a splendid afternoon.

2021's Lancaster Insurance Classic Motor Show took place at the NEC the following week, on 11, 12 and 13 November. It was attended by some of our members including Neil Shanley and I'm sure that he will have written an article and taken some splendid photos for you to report in next month's newsletter.

It's only a couple of weeks ago that I was saying to someone "It looks as if Covid is under control now, unless of course a new variant comes along to disrupt everything." If only I had not tempted fate; as we are all aware now, the new Omicron variant has indeed arrived, is in Essex and we are back to compulsory wearing of face masks in shops and on public transport. As has been reported, scientists do not yet know how serious a problem the Omicron variant is; at worst, it could be both more infectious than the Delta variant and more deadly; let us just hope that this will prove not to be the case.

Fortunately, the outlook for Christmas is much better than it was last year and, in the meantime,

restaurants, clubs and bars are still open and it looks as if we should be able to hold our Christmas club night as planned, at 8pm on Tuesday 7th December. We will have our December quiz and raffle with a good selection of prizes. I will email our membership if there are any changes between now and Tuesday.

The JEC have announced a new event for next year, being held at Brooklands Weybridge, Surrey on 14th-15th May. The event is expected to be a large gartering which will be limited to 1,000 cars. See my email I sent to you for the full details. We have no further events scheduled now until next year. We have our fingers crossed we can a full diary of events in 2022.

Whilst it still seems a while off, the committee and I would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas.

Graham

Answers to last month's quizzes

Before They Were Famous: 1) Albert Einstein, 2) Robert DeNiro, 3) Daniel Craig, 4) Sally Field, 5) Bruce Springsteen, 6) Diane Keaton, 7) Robert Downey Jr, 8) Catherine Zeta-Jones, 9) Bob Dylan, 10) Michelle Pfeiffer, 11) Harrison Ford, 12) George H Bush

Car Makes and Models: 1) 1961 BMW 501, 2) Chevrolet Corvette, 3) Rover P5B, 4) Ford Anglia 105E, 5) Jaguar Mk X, 6) Facel Vega HK500, 7) Cadillac Coupe De Ville, 8) Duesenberg Model J, 9) Lancia Flaminia, 10) Landrover Defender, 11) Mercedes-Benz W113 280 SL 'pagoda' convertible, 12) Austin Mini, 13) Rover SD1 3500 (V8), 14) 1950 Studebaker Champion Coupe, 15) 1955 Ford Thunderbird, 16) 1963 Vauxhall VX4/90 FB

Other committee members



Neil Shanley
Committee member
and co-editor
neilshanley@btinternet.com



Gill Cain
Membership
secretary
jeccain451@outlook.com



Richard Gibby
Treasurer and Editor
rwgibby@gmail.com



Lester Magness
Events Coordinator
lestermagness1@gmail.com



Bob Cain
Committee member
jeccain451@outlook.com



Ian Croxson
Secretary
ian@thecroxsons.com

Beautiful Beaulieu



It was during June, when the country was acclimatising to some new-found freedoms after lockdown, that Doug Warren suggested we accompany him to a “Simply Jaguar” show at Beaulieu. A great venue and a very good reason to stretch the Jaguar’s legs—what’s not to like? Sadly, Doug and Jackie had to cancel but I and Sue,

together with Steve and Wendy Potter, drove down the day before the show.



We stayed in the Premier Inn located in the market town of Ringwood about half an hour’s drive from

Beaulieu. The hotel was like new inside, showing they have clearly upped their game. Unfortunately, there was no chef available for Sunday morning’s breakfast but the following morning they did make up for it with waiter service and a beautifully cooked breakfast. The staff were obviously not used to table service and the result was hilarious—forgetting first the cutlery, then the milk, then plates and so on with the head waiter admonishing one poor individual for his lack of knowledge. That’s Covid for you.



Following check-in, we walked, in glorious sunshine, to the nearest pub, the Railway Tavern. With an excellent outdoor garden area and table service, good local beers and food including locally sourced burgers, it was an excellent place to relax after the journey. In the evening, we ate at The Star Inn, a 16th-century pub and hotel now offering Asian cuisine. If you are in the area, it’s a must.

The weather remained kind as we drove to our New Forest destination the following day. We were early and parked on the hard standing adjacent to the Car Museum. The surrounding grassed areas soon filled with a variety of big cats, the majority of which were the newer models although there was plenty to interest fans of the older machines. A boy came with a small E-Type pedal car—you may have also seen him at the Bicester show the following month.



It is not all cars, though. Beaulieu has some lovely gardens which were originally the grounds of the ancient Beaulieu Abbey with the entrance to the Abbey Clock House, dating from the 14th century, still existing with an Art Gallery alongside. A small but fascinating place, the Gallery contained the Art Russe exhibition, with bronzes and oil paintings from the late 19th and 20th centuries under the theme “Socialist



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Realism to Naturalistic Landscapes". All by Russian artists, and not shown in public for many years.

Within the grounds are the Victorian Garden, the mirror-like Millpond, the Kitchen Garden, the Chapel, the Abbey Ruins and Palace House, one of the first houses to open its doors to the paying public. Oh, and don't miss the sculptures in the gardens, they're a work of art!



During the early afternoon, the skies darkened and light rain followed. We chose this moment to take lunch in the Brabazon Café, added in the 1970s and designed by leading post-war architect, Leonard Manasseh. It is named after motor and aviation

pioneer, Lord Brabazon who became the Montagu Motor Museum's first patron.



Since our modest show entry fee included access to all sites, we took advantage of this while the weather cleared



to visit the display of vehicles used in film and TV shows and, of course, the famous museum. If you have not visited before I recommend that you do, for here you will see a mix of mainly British cars both vintage and relatively new, some set in period surroundings.



There is also a large collection of model vehicles all laid out like a train set. You can recognise toys that

you may well have played with in your very early youth.

Do see the Lalique mascot collection. I wish I



possessed one of those.

Amongst the displays of Automobilia, the museum showed a vast collection of motorcycles from the



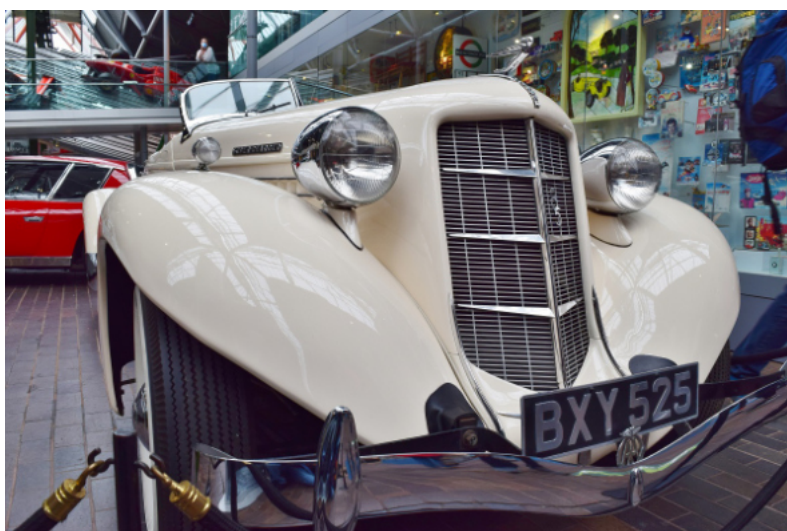
earliest days of motoring to the present day. If you remember my article on the Spirit of Ecstasy you can see its predecessor The Whisper, one of only four to exist, atop the radiator of a Rolls Royce purchased from the 1925 Motor Show by John Scott Montagu.



My take-home car was from the other side of the pond, however—an Auburn 851 Supercharged Straight Eight Boat-tailed Speedster in white, which I last saw in the early eighties. The star of the show for me.

A great day out; we must do it again.

Neil Shanley





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Andalusia or bust

As you may know, I have taken part seven times, now, in 14-day tours for Suffolk SS100 owners organised by Classics On The Road. Whilst they organise tours throughout Europe including the UK, and I've been to France, the Swiss Alps and the Black Forest, Classics On The Road is based in Madrid and perhaps it is no surprise that our best experiences have been in different parts of Spain.

At the end of our tour to Cuenca and Catalonia a couple of years ago, our guide Diego asked me where I thought we might want to go in future. He assumed that, after five tours already we might be getting tired of Spain and want a change, but I'd never been to Andalusia and said I'd welcome the chance to see the one major part of Spain that we'd not yet visited. Diego promised to consider it and, 18 months later, offered a bespoke tour for us.

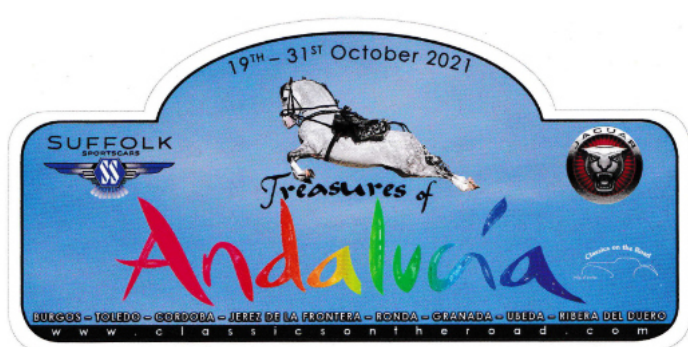
but one having a soft top.



Naturally, we needed to cover a lot of miles to get to Andalusia so, arriving at 5pm in Bilbao, we faced a 2-hour drive (110 miles) in darkness to reach our first hotel in Burgos. Burgos is a beautiful city and I remember, from a previous tour, the spectacular cathedral.

However, no time to explore on this occasion as, first thing in the morning, we set off again southwards, driving 225 miles across the northern plain via Segovia and over the Navacerrada mountains to El Escorial and our next overnight stop in Toledo.

Capital of Spain in the Visigothic era from 542 to 725 AD, between the fall of the Roman empire and the arrival of the Moors, Toledo is known as the City of Three Cultures, reflecting the cultural influences of its population—Jewish, Christian and Muslim alike. Almost every other building is a church, mosque, synagogue, convent or monastery. Rather like Durham and the Wear, Toledo is built on a steep hill surrounded on three sides by the river Tagus, which flows west to Lisbon and the Atlantic Ocean. We had time to explore in the evening and lost ourselves in the maze of alleys and streets (mostly pedestrianised); it is not for the weak of heart and we were soon out of breath despite taking seven



Originally scheduled for May 2020, the tour was postponed three times because of the Covid pandemic. Finally, however, we set off on the ferry from Portsmouth in mid-October for a late autumn tour. The tour was advertised for Suffolks plus classic Jaguars and the fourteen cars on the tour came from almost every decade: we had three Suffolk SS100s, an XK120, an XK140, two XK150s, three E-types, two XK8s, an XKR and an F-type. No saloons, however, with every car being a two-seater and all



escalators up the hillside.



The following day we had another 200 miles through olive groves across the southern plain to reach Andalusia. A tour this late in the year perhaps risks poor autumn weather but, in the event, it proved ideal with mild, dry weather in the north and centre of Spain, rising to warm sunshine in the south. We certainly felt the heat—full sun and 28 degrees—as we arrived in Cordoba, the former capital city of Al Andalus (Spain when it was under Muslim rule by the Umayyad Caliphate).



Cordoba is famed for its Great Mosque; begun in the 8th Century, the mosque grew larger and larger as different rulers added to it in the 9th and 10th centuries. Cordoba was reconquered by the Christians in 1236 but, instead of demolishing the mosque, they kept it for use as a church. It is an enormous building, covering an area 590 feet by 425 feet plus a cloistered garden, and includes a Christian cathedral in the middle of the mosque—quite a sight.



The next day included a visit to an olive grove, where they were harvesting the olives by shaking them off the trees with a special



machine, one tree at a time. The olives were then taken to the farm's processing plant where they were cleaned, sorted

and pressed to make extra virgin olive oil. Spain is the world's largest producer of olive oil and the owner was justifiably proud of his product, which we all tasted.



Moving on, our next stays were in Jerez (Sherry) and Ronda where we visited a sherry bodega and the Andalusian horse-breeding stables, home of the famed Jerezano thoroughbreds, some of which go to the Spanish Riding School in Vienna. Their exhibition of horsemanship was spectacular and the horses themselves were beautiful creatures, although one or two female members of our group were perhaps more struck by some young Spanish riders in their knee-high leather boots and tight riding breeches.





Then on to Granada and a tour of the Alhambra, the ancient Muslim citadel at its centre. Granada was the last Muslim stronghold and finally surrendered to the Christians in 1492, following which the Christian monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella authorised a certain Christopher Columbus to cross the Atlantic in search of a new western route to China and India, effectively kick-starting the Spanish empire.



Named for its pomegranate trees, Granada is located at the foot of the Sierra Nevada mountains (rising to 11,414 feet) and we spent a day driving the spectacular mountain roads, sun shining on the late autumn colours of the trees and the whitewashed villages.

Almost as colourful were the flamenco dancers we saw in a show in the caves opposite Alhambra. These were real gipsies and, while the male dancer looked like Johnny Depp, I wouldn't want to upset some of the fiercer women—I was quite glad to have been sitting towards the back.



And now the return north to the ferry at Santander; some 750 miles over two and a half days. My car had performed flawlessly but I must say that I was feeling stiff and tired myself by the end. Unfortunately, two cars—a V12 E-type and the XK120—did not make it and are now returning to the UK by trailer, while the XK120's owner, having burned his arm on the engine manifold while trying to diagnose the fault, ended up in hospital for a strong dose of antibiotics to prevent sepsis setting in. Otherwise, however, another great trip in excellent company. Roll on the next one!



Richard Gibby

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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



December Car Quiz - Name The Make And Model



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.

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