

Essex Thameside News

N° 215, March 2025



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Chairman's message

Steve Rider

chairman@jecessexthameside.co.uk

Hello Essex Thameside Members,

Firstly let me start by apologising for the delay in issuing this month's Newsletter. It's totally my fault as I've been swamped with a number of issues, both year end and personal.

Having said that, I would like to express my thanks to this month's contributors and in particular Neil Shanley. The depth and quantity of detail in this, the second part of his NEC report, really does justice to the overall size and quality of the show itself.

Thanks should also be extended to all those members who attended last club night and helped us consume a mountain of doughnuts, even more than the last time we put on such a high calorific event. The next time we lay on evening nibbles is likely to be at our April club night when we plan to provide hot cross buns, but please watch this space for confirmation.

The bulk of my Message for this month largely consists of a heads up or early warnings for forthcoming events.

Detailed planning for the club's spring trip to the Cotswolds is very well advanced, as those members who witnessed Vaughn High's presentation at our February club night can confirm. We currently have around 40 members signed up for the trip, consequently I would ask all of that group to watch out for emails, over the next week or so, requesting or confirming optional elements being arranged for their trip to the Cotswolds in May.

Invites or reminders are also being prepared for the forthcoming Transport Fest show at the Museum of Power on 20th April, Drive-It -Day on 27th April and our proposed visit to the Chatham Historic Dockyard on 7th June.

Looking further ahead, we have not forgotten our mandate to offer a foreign trip later this autumn. In the next couple of months, our Lester Magness will be putting forward the details of a suggested trip to Northern France, probably centred on the St. Malo area. Attention to detail is rapidly becoming the norm for our foreign and domestic trips, and I anticipate our autumn trip will be no exception.

Even further ahead, we have taken the decision to reserve 40 places at Pontlands Park for our 2025 Christmas meal on 6th December. Those members who attended last year can confirm just how good the evening was, including the quality of the meal itself, and we will be inviting members to book a place in the next few weeks. I understand that the venue has agreed to hold the prices to last year's costs and we will be requiring a deposit of £25 per person to secure your place.

On a less exciting note I would remind those members who haven't yet renewed their membership that the fees for the 2025/2026 year are now due. Correspondingly, the club's Annual General Meeting will take place during our next club night, and only fully paid up members will be entitled to vote.

March 25th is the date of our next club night, and as stated above we will be holding our AGM. All of the current committee have indicated their willingness to stand again for a further year, but it is of course up to you, the membership, to decide who you wish to lead the club for the next twelve months. Whatever your preference we hope to see you on the 25th.

Steve

Committee Members

	Richard Gibby Treasurer, Webmaster and Editor rwgibby@icloud.com		Ian Croxson Secretary ian@thecroxsons.com		Lester Magness Vice Chairman and Social Secretary lestermagness1@gmail.com
	Beverly Warren Membership Secretary membership@jecessexthameside.co.uk		Neil Shanley Committee member and Co-editor neilshanley@btinternet.com		Vaughn High Committee Member vaughn.high@sky.com

Events Diary

Club nights will start at 7.00pm on the last Tuesday of every month (except Tuesday 23rd December 2025)

Shows, Events and Visits

For information and/or to book, please contact Lester Magness (lestermagness1@gmail.com or 07739 263330) except where otherwise indicated.

20 th April	TransportFest Vehicle Show at the Museum of Power, Langford CM9 6QA
27 th April	Drive-it Day outing (details TBC)
16 th – 19 th May	Cotswolds Tour (Contact Vaughn High: vaughn.high@sky.com 07910 787411)
25 th May	Sandringham Pageant of Motoring, Norfolk (Contact Vaughn High: vaughn.high@sky.com 07910 787411) – see page 4
Saturday 7 th June	Visit to The Historic Dockyard, Chatham ME4 4TZ
22 nd June	Hatfield Heath Festival, Hatfield Heath CM22 7EB (Contact Neil Shanley: neilshanley@btinternet.com 07973 874022)
6 th July	Classic Car Show at RHS Hyde Hall, CM9 5JQ
13 th July	Orsett Classic & Vintage Show, Orsett Showground RM16 3JU
22 nd July	Joint JEC Essex / RREC East Anglia midweek visit to Barnards Farm, Brentwood (Contact Richard Gibby: rwgibby@gmail.com 07866 268522) – see page 10
26 th July	Display at Essex Police Sports & Social Family Weekend, Chelmsford CM2 6DT
TBC in August	Visit to Biggin Hill Spitfire Factory (restoring aircraft)
24 th August	Lavenham Classics, Suffolk CO10 9QT
7 th September	Classics at Glemham, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP13 0BT
14 th September	The Big Barleylands Classic Motor Show, Billericay CM11 2UD
6 th December	Annual Christmas Bash, at Pontlands Park Hotel (Contact Neil Shanley: neilshanley@btinternet.com 07973 874022)

Others - for information only

22 nd – 24 th March	Practical Classics Restoration Show at the NEC, Birmingham
18 th – 19 th May	Beaulieu Spring Autojumble
23 rd June	Simply Jaguar at Beaulieu
6 th –7 th September	Beaulieu International Autojumble
12 th –14 th September	Goodwood Revival, West Sussex
14 th September	Maldon Classic Car Show, Promenade Park, Maldon CM9 5JG
8 th –10 th November	Lancaster Classic Motor Show at the NEC, Birmingham



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Trying a new venue this year, we have reserved space for ten cars at this year's Pageant of Motoring in the Royal Sandringham Estate near Kings Lynn. Cost is £10 per car including driver plus 1 passenger, and £10 per additional passenger. There will be a reduced charge for visiting the House on the day if you wish to do so.

The Pageant is a major event with over 1,000 classic cars, a Battle of Britain flight display, live music, a vintage market and a Sunday market with over 50 local traders selling craftware, foods and other goodies.

Drive there on the day (c. 98 miles from Chelmsford) or stay overnight at the Premier Inn, Clenchwarton Road, West Lynn PE34 3LW.

For further information and to book your place at the Pageant, **contact Vaughn High on 07910 787411 or vaughn.high@sky.com**





The 2024 NEC Classic Car Show – Part 2

Saturdays are always the busiest days at the NEC Show, so we try to arrive before opening to be ahead of the queues. After a substantial breakfast at the hotel, we entered the NEC at around 09.00 hrs to undertake the second half of our yearly dose of the last and the best UK classic car show of the season. We didn't allow the car sales or the Iconic Auction sections delay us too much since you can always see many of their wares online, in showrooms or in magazines and, with over 3,000 vehicles to view, time was at a premium.

The entrance we chose was home to JVC 66, a 1950 Jaguar XK120 proudly on display to all who passed within. We had seen this car before, in fact I believe it was Meguiar's show winner in 2023. What makes this XK special is that it was a pre-production prototype and the first RHD steel-bodied XK120 built. Those in the know would tell you that it differed in many subtle ways from the production run cars, including head lamp nacelles, inner wings, door frames and engine block to name but a few. Subject to a well-researched, nut-and-bolt restoration with all original parts, it is said to be worth around £400,000!

So, which entries inside "floated our boat" today? We were taken by what, from a distance, initially resembled a '55 –'56 Ford Thunderbird, only to find

from closer inspection that it was a 1958 Simca Aronde Plein Ciel. Brought into the UK from Caen in 1990, it was bought by a lady enthusiast who restored it to its original black colour along with a rebuild using many new parts made especially for the restoration. The "Flash Special" engine was re-built and new crown wheel and pinions were made, together with a replacement windscreen. The four-pot engine is not as big as the Thunderbird's V8, but it did have a see-through ignition coil. A rare car whose interior also aped the American's design.



Ever heard of a Flying Standard 20 V8? Neither had we – which is not surprising since the one on the Standard Motor Club stand is thought to be the only one in the UK of a total production run of just 250 such cars. Originally registered in Doncaster and bought by an Austrian lady for her husband, it ended up in Austria just before WW2. After a hurried return to England it was eventually found in a shed in Thirsk, Yorkshire, in 1978. Its history and ownership before that is a fascinating story too long to tell here. A full engine rebuild and significant front body restoration (why stop there?), the car, including the interior and the fitted luggage supplied by the original owner, is totally original otherwise as is the 60,000 mileage.



Triumph are no strangers to Italian design houses so it was good to see a Triumph Italia 2000 on the TR stand. This was a Triumph TR3A with a Michelotti designed body and built by Vignale in Turin. To my eyes it is streets ahead of the TR3A in looks. Production started in 1959 and lasted until 1962 when Leyland Motors acquired Standard Triumph. (Why couldn't they have just stuck to lorries?) The new management were now concentrating on the soon to be released TR4, also a Michelotti design which looked a lot like the Italia 2000. So, the writing was on the wall. Production continued in Italy with about 329 cars produced of which 80 are thought to

survive. This example was sold new to a Spanish owner whose family kept it until 2013.

A must see for me is the Classic American Car of the Year stand. Here can be found a show-stopping array of some of the best chrome plated offerings this side of the Atlantic. Possibly the most original was a 1949 Cadillac Coupe de Ville owned by Graham Howard Wall. It was left to him by its former owner in thanks for his looking after it as his mechanic. The car features a 5.4 litre V8, auto transmission, power seats and windows. Much of its paint and interior are as it left the factory and was brought to Britain by the late MP and car buff, Alan Clark.



The 1966 Dodge Coronet was not a particularly expensive or impressive machine but the one here on display was a genuine Hemi 500 4-speed manual with power disc brakes and built as one of the homologation cars for Nascar. This car was number 26 of the 29 built. It was purchased to run "Moonshine" for a family which still makes "Moonshine" today. It has various modifications to help it outrun the police.





You couldn't miss the huge dimensions of the 1966 Buick Invictor convertible resplendent in Peppermint Green. After a five year restoration it is the winner of many shows. Powered by a 401 "Nailhead" V8, it has a 2-speed Dynaflow automatic transmission and weighs in at 4260 pounds with a length of 18 feet 1.5 inches. Not something you would take on the weekly shopping run. Others to look out for included a '55 Dodge Royal Lancer, a stunning '63 Corvette Stingray convertible and an Oldsmobile 442.



We always head for the various Vauxhall exhibits because they are such a rare sight these days. Their mid-Atlantic styling cues made them stand out from some of the '50's and 60's offerings from some of their competitors. Take the 1959 limited edition two tone Cresta that we spotted. Styled in the fashion of the contemporary Chevrolet range, the Cresta and its stablemate Velox proved popular in 50's Britain. This car boasted an up-range interior and all the extras, with a "speedbird" bonnet mascot paying tribute to the new "Jet Age". I was often lifted to school in one such car owned by the father of a school friend. Great memories!

Sadly, with so many others to highlight, we must end here – enjoy the photographs. See you next time.

Neil Shanley





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Visit to Barnards Farm on Tuesday 22nd July 2025

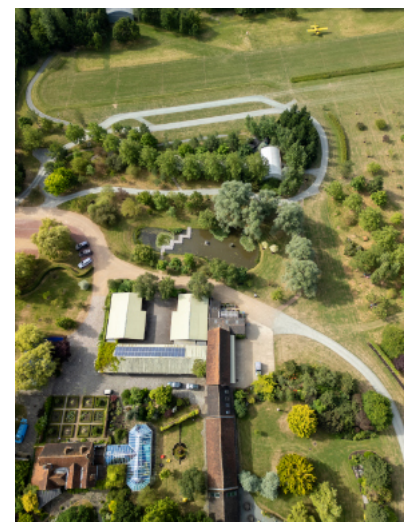
The private home of Bernard & Sylvia Holmes, Barnards Farm in West Horndon covers 22 hectares of gardens with a significant collection of sculptures by famous artists and, in the garages, a magnificent collection of veteran cars in full working order, several of which participate in the London to Brighton Run each November. Our very own Roger Petheram has worked on some of them.

We last visited six years ago on a busy open day. In contrast, this is a private, midweek visit arranged by Richard Gibby for members of the Jaguar Enthusiasts and Rolls Royce & Bentley Enthusiasts Clubs. Unfortunately, the miniature railway around the gardens will not be steamed up and working, but we will be able to tour both the gardens with their sculptures and all the cars in the garages.

Our last visit was a great success and why not come this time and meet some fellow car enthusiasts from East Anglia?

Entry cost is £10 per person, payable in advance. Please bring your own picnic and note that dogs are not permitted anywhere on site because of local hares and other wildlife.

To book your place on this exclusive visit, **contact Richard Gibby** on **07866 268522** or **regibby@gmail.com**



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Getting to Grips with Morris Marina Door Handles

Is the Morris Marina a classic car? Maybe, if you define “classic” in terms of age and numbers surviving, but a design classic it is definitely not. Conceived by British Leyland or whatever it was called at the time as a 4-door saloon, a 2-door coupe, a van and a pick-up in 1971, with an estate following in 1972, this dreary, underdeveloped car used many mechanical components from the outgoing Morris Minor, itself 23 years old. It was launched in a desperate attempt to compete with the all-conquering Ford Cortina. Using the hardly new but well-tried and tested BMC “A” (1300) and “B” (1800) series engines with a wide range of trim levels, it was a mildly reasonable success even if the range topping TC was too powerful for its chassis/suspension setup. The Mark II versions addressed some of the handling issues and added a revised interior. An “O” series engine replaced the “B” series in 1978 with the final facelift coming in 1980 together with a new name – the Morris Ital. The last ever “new” named Morris car.



All in all the Marina, with its early poor handling woes, shoddy build quality and “Ho-Hum” design and engineering, ranked with the Austin Allegro as possibly the low point of the mainstream home-grown British motor industry and helped pave the way for its eventual demise. However, one item of the Marina took on a life of its own and outlived the car it was made for by many years – the flush fitting, visually pleasing door handles. Said to have been designed by Harris Mann of Allegro, Princess and TR7 fame, they were possibly influenced by the 1968 American Motors AMX. The Allegro, Princess and TR7 were not the only cars to adopt these handles. The classic 4-door Range Rover of 1981 and the early Land Rover Discovery cars both featured these familiar door handles, ten years after the Marina’s demise.



It is expensive to produce certain parts for relatively low volume vehicles and, frequently, other manufacturers would choose some of the best bits from volume car makers for their own offerings. Doubtless the flush, modern rectangular and pedestrian-friendly Marina handles appealed to some more exotic car firms and appeared on their cars including: Lotus's Esprit, Elite II, Eclat and Excel, Reliant's Scimitar GTE and GTC, the Ginetta G21, British Leyland's Allegro van den Plas and Triumph TR8, plus approximately 75 other prototypes, kit cars and one offs.

Even the Marina's interior door handles found themselves inside Austin Maxis, rubber-bumpered



MGBs and even Bristol 411s. The handles were imitated by Fiat on the Fiat 132 of 1972, the 1976 Alfasud Sprint, the 1977 Giulietta and the Peugeot 305 and 505 of 1978 and 1979 respectively. Even in Japan, Toyota did a near identical version for their Celica A60, so much so that the Toyota door handle could be substituted on the 1985 Lotus Excel.

So, partly as a result of statutory pedestrian protection regulations and anti-burst requirements,



plus a nod to US design, the modern interpretation of a door handle with flush flap handles and a contrasting matt black inner surface was born and proved to be an endearing design classic. Ironically, in 1981 on the Marina's final iteration as the Morris Ital, the door handle design was dropped in favour of a more anonymous design, thus losing the one and only memorable item from a line of underachieving BL products.

As a footnote, did you know that the Marina indicator stalk switchgear was used on the Triumph Stag AND the Lamborghini Diablo?

Neil Shanley





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