

Essex Thameside News



N° 220, August 2025

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Chairman's message

Steve Rider

chairman@jecessexthameside.co.uk

Hello Essex Thameside Members,

Every month I seem to be referring to a busy period for the club and July was certainly no exception. The shows at Hyde Hall and Orsett were followed by a visit to Barnard's Farm and then the Police Fun Weekend here at our Chelmsford base.

With our attendance at such a plethora of shows and events, our regular scribes have had a job keeping up with their written reports. Consequently, we have only just been able to include details of our visit to Hatfield Heath and part two of our trip to the Cotswolds. The latter was incredibly successful and we are planning to return, to tour the southern leg of the area. However, because of the number of other events and shows in this year's diary, our second tour in the Cotswolds will not be until next spring, in 2026.

We have also just held a very successful barbecue at our July club night which, coupled with a field full of cars to admire, was a great, rain-free way to finish the month. Although we have provided food at the club before, this was the first time we have availed ourselves of the pavilion's barbecue. Our acting chef Steve Potter did brilliantly in keeping up with the demand. Thanks again Steve!

Amongst other things at club night, we managed to announce some reductions to the prices charged to

members by Grange Motors at Brentwood. Unfortunately, we haven't received the revised advertisement from Grange in time to meet the deadline for this issue of the newsletter, but please watch this space as our next (September) newsletter will bear the corrected details.

August is currently looking just as busy. We start off on 2nd August with around two dozen club members looking forward to a visit to the Heritage hangar at Biggin Hill airfield. The 'Spitfire Factory' based there is a restoration and engineering facility dedicated to returning Spitfires to the sky. A detailed report of the visit will be something to look forward to in a future issue of the newsletter.

I can also report that, commencing with the next newsletter, there will be slight revision to the way we distribute our monthly newsletters. In future, the newsletter will be put online via the club's website and we will just send a simple link to it, so that you will have a seamless and direct access to the relevant newsletter. This should assist those members who may have trouble with a restriction on the size of electronic mail files they can receive.

Finally, our ranks are continuing to swell and it is with great pleasure that I can welcome the following new members to the club: Andrew Franklin, Tony Cahill, Costa and Vicky Fafalios and Andrew Bennett. You are all very welcome.

Tuesday 26th August is the date of our next club night at our Chelmsford base and I hope to see as many of you as possible then.

Happy motoring,

Steve

Committee Members

	Richard Gibby Treasurer, Webmaster and Editor rwgibby@gmail.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 start at 7.00pm on the last Tuesday of every month (except Tuesday 23rd December 2025)

Shows, Events and Visits

2 nd August	Visit to Biggin Hill Spitfire Factory (<i>fully booked</i>) [<i>Contact Vaughn</i>]
13 th August	Visit to the Museum of the Past, Bentwaters [<i>Contact Ian</i>]
24 th August	Lavenham Classics, Suffolk CO10 9QT [<i>Contact Ian</i>]
7 th September	Classics at Glemham, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP13 0BT [<i>Contact Ian</i>]
14 th September	The Big Barleylands Classic Motor Show, Billericay CM11 2UD [<i>Contact Lester</i>]
5 th October	Visit to Chatham Dockyard [<i>Contact Lester</i>]
6 th December	Annual Christmas Bash, at Pontlands Park Hotel [<i>Contact Neil</i>]

Others - for information only

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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13th August 2025



Lavenham Classics

Sunday 24th August 2025, 11.00am–4.00pm



**Come and join us for a great family day out
Check out some of the coolest classic cars**

Once one of the wealthiest towns in Britain, due to its cloth and wool trade, Lavenham is most famous for being a well-preserved medieval town featuring a large number of listed buildings. The village features prominently in the film Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows as the location of Godric's Hollow

JEC Essex Thameside will have a group of cars on display in our own designated area within the Lavenham Recreation Ground. The event gets booked up well in advance, so book early before the 4th August deadline, or you will miss out. Any members wishing to attend who have not already done so, please let me know as soon as possible.

There is a charge of £11.55 per car

Book now via the club to avoid disappointment; contact Ian Croxson on 07477 785005 or ian@thecroxsons.com



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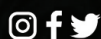
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Find us online:



Group visit to Chatham Historic Dockyard



Sunday 5th October 2025

£ cost and further details t.b.a.

To register interest, please contact Lester Magness on 07739 263330 or lestermagness1@gmail.com





Hatfield Heath Festival June 2025

The annual festival at nearby Hatfield Heath kicked off our club's summer show activities. It was a well-attended success as was last year's event when we first visited. Helped by the scorching weather, we fielded a sell-out club stand with 15 cars filling our quota. Martin and Jean could not make it, but an unknown Series III XJ6 took their place, the driver, Daniel Howard and his wife, had been mistakenly directed to the JEC area. Not to worry though, we soon made them welcome – and they joined the club!

For those who have yet to visit the Festival, it is held on the village green and hosts a full day of activities and displays including; Fun Run, Car Show, Falconry, Dance Troops, Stalls, Fun Fair, Live Music and much more. The current festival format has been run since 2007 with the exception of 2020/21 (because of Covid). Many thanks must go to Sarah White of sponsor JE White Motors. Local pubs and shops are handily situated just across the road.



The brochure for this year stated that last year a record of 300 vehicles attended. It probably wasn't much short of that for this year. If you look under the Classic Car section, you can see a photo of Chris and Marise's E-Type alongside my 420. Fame at last! There were six categories:

Post Vintage 1931-45

Post War 1946-59

Classic 1960-75

Modern Classic 1976-99

Military/Commercial any year

Plus club stands and motorbikes, scooters and push bikes (including jet-propelled!).

There is no charge to enter, the policy being that if people are good enough to spend time preparing their vehicles and bring them along, they should not have to pay to do so. Perhaps other shows should bare that in mind. Enjoy the photos.

Neil Shanley



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Cotswolds tour 16th–20th May, days 3 and 4

In this second part, we continue our journey through this beautiful part of England's "green and pleasant land" after a thorough briefing from Squadron Leader Vaughn High.



Our third day's itinerary commenced with a visit to the Classic Motor Hub in Abingdon. A not-to-be-missed meeting place for classic car and motorbike enthusiasts. Based on the site of former RAF Bibury, the Hub is a showroom for classic, vintage and collectable cars and bikes in the heart of the Cotswolds. Ample parking was provided alongside the old aircraft hangar which housed many classics for sale. The site provided a cafeteria where we discussed our favourites from the stock on display.



One car, although not one that I would take home, did stand out. The 1905 Isotta Franchini Fiat was a behemoth of a vehicle. Powered by a 16.6 litre six-cylinder WWI airship engine, it had four speeds with 250 bhp and 300 lbs ft of torque. It had done approximately 30,000 miles around the UK and Europe, and raced at many events including Goodwood members meetings. Yours for a mere £690,000.



Painswick Village, in the Stroud district of Gloucester was next on the agenda. Those who had time to do this would have delighted in the pretty little town which first appeared in historical records via the Domesday Book of 1086. Then it was known as Wicke, until around 1237 when it became Painswick. Like many places in the Cotswolds, it has history by the barrowload and its images could grace the lids of countless chocolate boxes.

By 13.30 hrs, it was time to catch the steam train which ran from Cheltenham racecourse to Broadway via Gotherington, Winchcombe, Hayles Abbey Halt and Toddington. Unfortunately, due to a "postcode malfunction", some of us caught the train from Winchcombe. However, we all met up at Cheltenham and proceeded to revel in the nostalgia of a bygone

era, but not before unfairly ribbing Vaughn about the postcode mix up. The railway ran across some beautiful countryside, through Greet tunnel (the second longest on a British heritage railway) and across the fifteen arches of Stanway viaduct, 42 feet above the valley floor. In fact, there were many places of interest within easy reach of the line, not least Cheltenham racecourse, Tewkesbury Abbey, Prescott Hill (speed trials), Hailes Abbey, Stanway House and Fountain (tallest gravity fountain on the planet) and Toddington Manor – home to artist Damien Hirst.



As is now customary, we finished the day with dinner at one of Vaughn's chosen restaurant-pubs. Today it was The Apple Tree, Stockwell Lane in Woodmancote. Yet another winner!

It was now Monday 19th May and Geoff Monk was finding it increasingly difficult to select gears in his red Mk II so, before our organised trip, Vaughn High and Martin Saward came to the rescue, diagnosing low gearbox oil as a probable cause. A quick fill up did the trick. Geoff thought he had last checked it about 20 plus years ago, so no surprise then.



And now, for all those wearing a train-spotter's anorak, the engine that hauled us was number 3850, a 2884 class heavy freight locomotive built at Swindon in 1942. Now owned by Dinmore Manor Locomotive Ltd., it was originally restored at Minehead and Tysely and re-entered service in 2006. A comprehensive overhaul was started in 2014 and the engine returned to steam in August 2024 bearing the wartime black GWR livery it carried when new. Altogether 167 of these engines were built. This example was withdrawn from its original use in 1965 and was found in the famous Barrie Scrapyard. And that is all you are getting!

The organised trip for this, our last full, day was the much-anticipated tour of the Morgan factory in Great Malvern. The factory is in Pickersleigh Road, Malvern and was founded in 1910 by Henry Frederick Stanley Morgan who, in 1909, designed and built a car for his own use. A year later he began production of three-wheelers and the company prospered. For most of its history, the company was owned by the Morgan family. More recently, however, an Italian investment group took a majority stake in the firm and, in February 2025, the former Ford of Europe boss Stephen Armstrong was appointed as non-executive Chairman, replacing the great grandson of HFS Morgan, Lawrence Price.



Our guide for the morning was “Cousin Nick” a character whose knowledge of things Morgan rated him a winning place on *Mastermind*. He started the tour with a look at one of the latest of the Morgan breed, a Supersport parked near the entrance. Finished in a metallic lilac colour scheme, it was a subtly updated version of Morgan’s traditional design theme, the main visual difference being the deletion of the boot-mounted spare wheel. Under the bonnet sat a BMW engine and gearbox giving credence to the factory’s boast that the car can be used as a daily driver (if you don’t carry too much luggage). The 6-cylinder BMW turbocharged unit provides 335 horses and a 0-60 mph time of 3.9 seconds. It is modern but retains that classic Morgan style. Yours for around £100K basic!

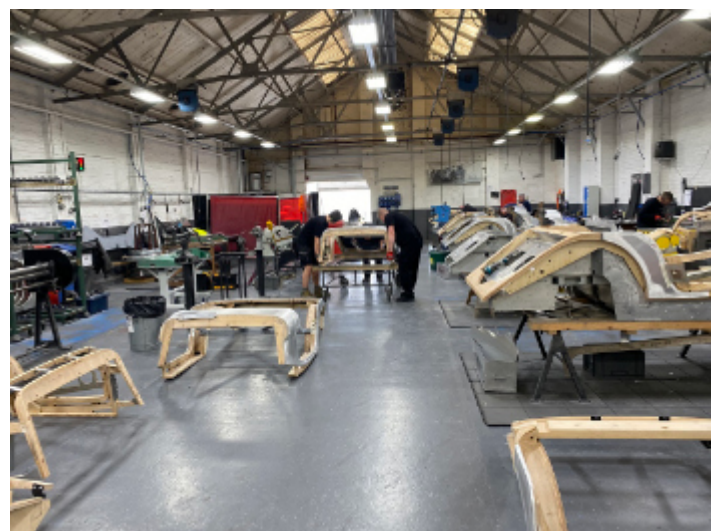


They still make a three-wheeler too. The Super 3, unlike the rest of the range, is powered by a Ford 1500 3-cylinder Dragon engine making 118 horsepower driving the single rear wheel via a Mazda 5-speed ‘box. Not bad for a car weighing just 1400 lbs. In an unusual design feature, it comes with side panniers to take luggage. These are strapped onto rectangular “barge boards” mounted each side of the

body which help airflow to cool the twin radiators. With a top speed of 130 mph, it certainly is not a Reliant Robin.



As you would expect, all Morgans are hand-built as we witnessed during the fascinating workshop tour with beautifully-crafted ash timber joinery fitted to bonded aluminium chassis tubs and hand-formed bodywork. Customers come from all over the world to buy the cars, often by helicopter landing in the field where we were allowed to park our cars. The lengthy build process can be of benefit as “Cousin Nick” related the story of one Californian customer who lost house and garage in the recent fires over there. Whilst his garage was burning down, his new Morgan was still being assembled safe and sound in Malvern.



If you require a good factory tour, look no further than this one and whilst you are here don't forget their museum where you can see most of the Morgan back catalogue including: Plus4Plus, "Flat Radiator", 4/4, Plus 8, Aero 8, AeroMax, Plus E, SP1, Plus 4 and 6, Super 3 and Midsummer to name just some – well, quite a lot really!



The afternoon was spent in nearby Tewkesbury, a pleasant market town famous for its abbey which we visited. It is a Norman abbey church consecrated in 1121, so quite old then. It was saved from dissolution by Henry VIII, who took all its valuables, after being bought by the townspeople for £483. Apparently, the tower is the largest Norman tower still standing, although the one in Norwich may give it a run for its money. We also took advantage of the fine weather to walk along the River Severn where we came across a derelict flour mill. The buildings were enormous and covered a large area. Opened in 1865, the mill closed in 2006. It is now an "at risk" structure due to subsidence which can be clearly seen in the sinking at one end of the main building. So, probably no loft-conversion apartments for this site.



For our last evening meal the venue was open, so we, together with Steve and Wendy Potter, returned to the Gloucester Old Spot where we met Ian and Liz Croxson plus a surprise meeting of a former work colleague and his wife on holiday. Small world! The end came too soon, but hopefully next year the Club can maybe undertake "Cotswolds Part Two – The Bits We Haven't Done Yet". That is if Vaughn and Julie have any energy left. To arrange such a tour is NOT an easy task. On behalf of the Club, a sincere Thank You for all that you have done.

Neil Shanley



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