



New Year 2021
Middlesex Section
Magazine

Middlesex Section Committee



Nigel Sandell - Chairman

information@nsandell.com

1979 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow II

1997 Rolls-Royce Silver Spirit



Richard Edgell – Secretary & Editor

redgell050@gmail.com

1929 Rolls-Royce 20hp Weyman Saloon

1925 Bentley 3 Litre Gurney Nutting Tourer

1935 Bentley 3.5 James Young Drop Head

1948 Bentley MK VI James Young Saloon

1951 Bentley Mk VI Standard Steel Saloon



David Siegal - Treasurer & Membership

david@ealingtrading.co.uk

1963 Bentley S3 Continental

2015 Bentley Continental GT



Tony O'Brart - Committee Member

tony.obrart@gmail.com

1979 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow II



Will Bate - Website Editor

wbate@northpole-it.co.uk

1953 Bentley R-Type

1979 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow II

2007 Bentley Arnage T

www.rrec-middlesex.co.uk

EDITOR'S RUMINATIONS JANUARY 2021

Welcome to our first new RREC Middlesex section magazine in a proper printed form. Whilst we have become accustomed to the digital age, most people still like to have a document they can pick up and read. I have tried to draw upon a variety of contributions from Section members in order to provide a good read in these dark days. If you continue to support us with contributions, the committee is keen that we publish further similar magazines in the future.

I think I may safely say that whenever it happens, our return to normal will not be the normal life we were used to in the early months of 2020. We may well find ourselves facing new challenges which are difficult to predict. Our hobby is coming under increasing threat from ill-informed quarters, especially in London, but I was encouraged by the recent report by the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs (FBHVC) on the results of this year's survey. I thought it sufficiently important to include a summary here.

The FBHVC tell us that the classic sector has never been stronger. Not only that, it is a growing contributor to the UK economy to the tune of over seven billion pounds per year.

According to the 2020 data, there were 1,538,927 historic vehicles registered in the UK in late 2020, which is a huge leap from the 1,039,950 recorded in 2015. The number of owners is also growing. The FBHVC reports it to currently be about 684,000 people in the UK, which is up from the 2016 figure of 493,000.

The classic car industry is worth some £7.2bn to the UK's economy. That is a lot, and not an amount the authorities should risk damaging. In the UK, there are 43,000,000 registered vehicles (including SORN). Historic vehicles make up just 3.4% of that number. Of that 3.4%, less than half are on the road. The rest are currently on SORN. Of those that are on the road, on average they only cover 1,200 miles per year. That is a mere 0.2% of the 356.5bn of the UK's total annual vehicle mileage. Classic vehicles such as ours have a tiny impact on congestion and pollution.

However, it seems the numbers are very much in the favour of the classic car and our club's future. Owners of old cars have made and continue to make a considerable positive impact on the UK economy, with a relatively low environmental impact that our significant chunk of industry brings. We love spending money on our cars more than we like driving them, it seems.

This surely means that there can be no justification for restrictions on our hobby. These figures are promising, and they show the world of classic and heritage vehicles is in a strong position.

Turning our section, we hope to be sending out confirmation of our programme of events which we have planned for the year. These should include a visit to The RAF Museum in Hendon, a return to North Weald for another go 'On the Buses', a meeting at Hatfield House, a Road Run, our Section weekend in Derbyshire and a visit to the Henry Moore foundation in the Autumn. David Siegal, our treasurer and membership secretary will circulate details by email as soon as they are available.

Our AGM is scheduled for Sunday 25th April at The Grovefield House Hotel and the Committee look forward to seeing you then, if necessary, we may have a Zoom meeting instead. I shall be standing down as Section Secretary in April, this is necessary because of the extra work that I now have since I took on the job of Derby Bentley Registrar three years ago.

Formal notice will be circulated as soon as we feel able to do so, but meanwhile David Siegal has prepared our accounts for the Section year to 31st October 2020 and these show a small increase in revenues and a profit which more than reverses the 2019 loss. A printed magazine costs a lot to print and post, but we have taken the view that it is an excellent use of Section funds, especially when we have all had such a lean time of things last year.

Will Bate who has done a fantastic job on our website has volunteered to take on the position of Section Secretary and I wish him well with this. I will continue as editor of our magazine. If you think that you can bring some input to the committee, we would be very pleased to see some new members.

In this Magazine, David Siegal has written about consolidating his collection of cars, Will Bate has been ringing the changes while Tony O'Brart is more than happy to keep driving his Silver Shadow. Nigel has told us about the workshop during lock-down and a big thank-you to Paul Brittlebank for his write-up on cycling in a deserted London. Rosemary Jeffreys tells us how to conserve old leather and Tim Neale tells us about three wonderful R-R ladies. Finally, we have a reminder that other cars are available. I hope you enjoy the articles in this magazine and I would like to thank our contributors for making it possible.

Richard Edgell, January 2021

SPOT THE DELIBERATE MISTAKE



In 2018, my wife Sandra pointed out that my 1971 Bentley Corniche, 1976 Rolls Royce Corniche and 2000 Bentley Continental R all looked alike and that a collection, no matter how small, should be varied in order to be interesting. Hard to argue against her reasoning.

I must point out that she had recently been for a ride in Richard Edgell's James Young Derby and had not been quite the same since. She said "I want one of those" but never explained whether it was the car or driver she was talking about.

In January 2018, Sandra and I went with Richard (is a pattern emerging here?) to North Wales to The Real Car Company to have a look at a shabby chic 1963 S3 Continental that caught my eye and a couple of cars Richard was interested to see in the metal. A test drive through picturesque Bethesda later I was hooked but needed time to think this one through.



Two peas in a pod – according to Sandra

My Rolls Royce was sold in the summer as although mechanically excellent it needed to be painted, probably re-trimmed and the roof mechanism was in need of serious attention. It was an adventure I didn't have the appetite for! Then a deal was struck with Ray at Real Car to part exchange the two Bentleys against the S3.

I must admit a tinge of seller's regret letting the 1971 Corniche go but my S3 Continental by H J Mulliner is a rare beast being one of just eleven built for Bentley customers whose taste was a tad too traditional for the newly released "Chinese Eye". I'd wanted a dark blue Continental R but bought a silver one instead which may be why I found it easier letting him go although a fabulous car. That and the inevitable head gasket problem I was warned about. The S3 was immediately christened "Bruce" by my daughters as he's big and green like the Incredible Hulk and the name has stuck. Raising smiles from other drivers and pedestrians as I drive by and prompting conversations in petrol stations, his natural habitat, there's no buyer's regret, that is for sure.



Seller's regret. Not that I am bitter.



Right car, wrong colour.

So, did you spot the deliberate mistake? A car enthusiast's double garage with just one car in it. Yes, that space large enough to fit a car in has been gnawing away at me for over two years. But there's more. I have a guilty secret. I like Camargues, in fact I like Camargues a lot. To me, they have aged well, like the Jaguar XJS only more so, and I want one! Time to do some research.

- classiccarsforsale.co.uk (the red website) only had a white LHD coming up in auction in America but carandclassic.co.uk (the green website) had three including a 1976 blue LHD and a 1977 brown LHD. So, just one RHD car

available! Finished in Sepia (that's brown to you and me) with green-gold interior, a colour combination I believe suits the car well. Sepia (40 cars) was actually the third most popular colour after Paprika (52) and Larkspur Blue (41). A 1976 early car with 62k miles just out of long term storage. "Long term storage" is usually code for "needs an expensive recommissioning service". Rather temptingly, the car is in Petersfield, Hampshire just 75 miles from home in North London.

- The internet is also a source of recent auction results. Historics sold a blue 1980 car with 90k miles for £23,772 in July 2019 and a blue 1982 with 1k miles for £73,920 in May 2018. H & H sold a grey 1984 model with 45k miles in March 2019 for £52,875 but the blue 1975 car with 34k miles didn't meet its reserve in July 2017.
- Classic Cars magazine's quarterly guide in the December 2020 issue suggested values ranging from £17,500 for "Rough" up to £47,500 for a Concours or Dealer car although they then reported a 2.1% drop in the January 2021 issue to £17,500 to £46,500. Strange given I couldn't find any sales to support any movement at all one way or the other.
- Next came the investment in the quintessential book on Camargues by Bernard King. Only 534 cars were built and of that already small number only 144 including prototypes were delivered to customers in the UK and not necessarily in right hand drive. Some cars were owned by "characters" and unfortunately in some cases became tainted by association.
- A (with hindsight badly worded) post on the club members forum under "Wanted" has failed so far to garner any response but hopefully an ad in the December Advertiser will be more successful.
- And last, but not least, Nigel Sandell who like Richard you all know. It was at Nigel's Isleworth garage a few years ago that I saw a dark blue Camargue he had restored for a customer that had piqued my interest. He advised, and when Nigel advises you listen, that the later cars offer a better driving experience, but in any event, you must buy a "good car".
-

It is a small pool of cars to choose from so compromises may be necessary.

I sense another January Road Trip this time to Hampshire coming up. Richard, please check your diary.....

David Siegal

[sorry David, Sandra and I are off looking for a Derby drophead Ed]

IT'S A SMALL WORLD

When researching the history of my S3, I discovered that originally he was registered 400FXB [*note it's a he! Ed*]. The first record of the current registration, 502HWR, was in 1973 but I did not know who had transferred the registration or why.

I searched the club database and found 400FXB was on a 1967 Regal Red Bentley T1 Two Door Fixed Head Saloon owned by club member Edward Gee so I made contact. Edward explained that he had inherited the car from his cousin Tom seven years ago and Tom had owned the car for at least twenty years.

A friend of Tom who helped him restore the car told Edward the car was bought from a man who owned a gravel pit. That peculiar snippet was the only information Edward had managed to find. But, from 1964 to 1967, my S3 was registered to Elliott Sand & Gravel Ltd. 1967? The same year Edward's T1 was new.

So joining the dots, I presume Mr Elliott bought the T1 new in 1967 to replace the S3 but retained the registration 400FXB. I think I know who, I just need to find out why.

But there's more! In June 2019 at the Annual Rally just a few months after Edward and I were first in contact, the two cars were parked just five spaces apart from each other entirely by coincidence.

And if that's not enough, in buying the S3, I part exchanged my 1971 Regal Red Bentley Corniche (pictured elsewhere in the newsletter), a car for all intents and purposes the same as Edwards T1.

Isn't it a shame GDPR means we won't be able to research our cars' histories in the future and rediscover long forgotten stories.

David Siegal



502HWR but formerly 400FXB



Currently 400FXB

A VIEW FROM THE WORKSHOP

Nigel Sandell tells us something about his year

Firstly, let me wish you all a very Happy New Year.

Well, what a year 2020 was! Normally at this point we would be writing about all the fabulous events we have attended, but unfortunately due to COVID restrictions, we have not been allowed to meet.

I thought I would enlighten you all a little as to what has been going on in my world.

RREC Section Committee meetings have now taken place on Zoom and there has been a get together with all the Chairmen of all the sections and Section Secretaries for the main club also! Zoom is something completely new to me but has worked well for our Committee as we are all very spread out.

In March, we furloughed 6 members of staff and with my good friend Russell Stephens-Nield, we managed to keep the garage open with a skeleton staff. With things starting to return to normal at the end of May, my staff returned to some quite big jobs.

In September I was invited by John Tupper from Introcar Ltd, to take part in a filming day which started at Introcar and then moved onto Kempton Park Racecourse. Both of us were interviewed and two small videos were created. One was about ownership of a Silver Shadow <https://youtu.be/2GD9l0asyfE> and the second video was about how practical Silver Spirit/Silver Spur is from an ownership point of view. <https://youtu.be/tCzcGzioR7Y>

Finally, in November, Paul Guinness from the Rolls Royce and Bentley Driver Magazine spent the day with us and wrote a very favourable review in his magazine.

So, what do you do in your spare time when you are not repairing Rolls Royces and Bentleys? Why do we hanker after cars that we have previously owned, sold and regretted selling! Both Jackie and I had classic Minis as first cars!

Nigel writes about his Mini Cooper restoration in OTHER CARS ARE AVAILABLE at the end of this magazine.

Paul Brittlebank has adopted the modern way of doing things, he and Stephanie have joined the Metropolitan cycling craze.

When the lock down hit us on 23rd March 2020, with the gym closed and aqua classes discontinued, Stephanie decided that it was an ideal opportunity to cycle around London.

I should explain that I started cycling when I was about 2 years old. As a teenager I raced and with the Cycling Touring Club, toured. About 20 years ago, when we lived in Bedfordshire, I met a chap in the gym who was a test driver at Millbrook, and quite mad to boot. He insisted that I went along to his cycle club which did night riding of the woods – all year and whatever the weather. Whilst I had a long way to go to achieve the necessary fitness I was hooked and every Tuesday evening was spent in this sometimes disastrous pursuit – though only once was being recovered by ambulance!

My experience of riding the highways was a distant memory and when we moved to London, I had good intentions but rarely ventured to cycle in the traffic, Stephanie on the other hand had, in Bedfordshire, enjoyed her Raleigh town bike which was good for shopping locally but not for long hauls.

To return to the beginning of lock down, Stephanie disappeared out on one of my mountain bikes.

She said that London was eerie. No traffic. No people. Shops and pubs closed.

And she had spotted Blue Plaques. Lots of them. Soon I was joining her on the rides.

Hooked on my bike she stood her town bike in the Mews outside the house with a For Sale sign on it. We cycled to St Katherines Dock that day and were sitting enjoying a bottle of water when the telephone rang – “can I buy the bike” said the young women from Holland Park? News of the offering had travelled fast! It transpired that cycle shops, who were permitted to keep open, were fast selling out of bikes. Indeed, even now few are available although if you look on eBay you will see “bought at lockdown, but never used” or should it read “stolen”?

What started with 2 laps of Hyde Park expanded – Constitution Hill, past Buckingham Palace, Birdcage walk, past HM Treasury and The Horse Guards Parade onto the Mall – who could wish for a better route? Sometimes we were

fortunate to be at the traffic lights when the police bikes stopped the traffic to escort Boris to and from No. 10.

Let's ride all the places we would not dare to ride when the roads are normal. Hyde Park Corner, Parliament Square Trafalgar Square etc.

Then it became all the parks: Kensington Palace Gardens, Hyde Park, St James Park, Battersea Park, Regents Park, Holland Park – even Wormwood Scrubs Park. Yes, it is not just a prison. With bikes on the back of the Land Rover it was off to Richmond Park.

A target was set for the next month – 200 miles. We learnt about Strava (Grandchildren have their uses!) and we recorded the mileage.

A chance meeting with a couple on a tandem was interesting. Been far we said? Canary Wharf was the reply. That was the next target and resulted in many visits with a light lunch at Browns.

Stephanie photographed the Blue Plaques. Always glad when they were spotted - whilst she photographed, I rested! About 100 were spotted including The Birthplace of the Bentley Motor Car (1919).

She has developed an album of plaques to commemorate the lockdown.

Some of the properly- planned cycle lanes are just fantastic. We can literally ride from the house to Canary Wharf without mixing with traffic.

But as the traffic increased back towards normal, we had adapted and now have the confidence and skill to ride on the normal roads where necessary.

Some of the pop- up cycle paths have been ill considered and have both wasted money and caused huge congestion and resentment. Was it wise to close a lane on Park Lane and make it a little used cycle path? One questions the lack of road sense by so many cyclists who seem to be on a suicide mission at times. Does the red light refer to the business in the area or mean stop?

Sometimes Stephanie will go out on her own and just do laps of the park – the police on guard duty count her laps and give a friendly wave – the police on Palace Green open the barrier and wave us through.

At times Central London feels like a village.

And now it is colder and the dark nights have drawn in – but the high intensity Exposure lights I used in the woods in Bedfordshire and the specialist clothing have taken on a new purpose in life and we have continued as before. Rain or shine, warm or cold we are on the bikes and loving it. The target has increased and in November we achieved 300 miles.

Speaking of myself, I have not lost a pound in weight! But that, according to a lady neighbour, is because the fat has turned into muscle!!

Ha Ho, we are now a couple of fit oldies!!



Stephanie Lea outside a deserted Buckingham Palace

AN INTERESTING ADDITION TO OUR SECTION'S CARS

David McBride joined our section late in 2019 having bought a 1926 Limousine by Rippon. At first it was not at all what he had hoped for and asked me for some help. His car GCK7 is from the same chassis series as Brian Packman's well-known Salmons All-weather 20hp. Brian and I spent much time trying to get the car running. This involved a further visit to a rainy Snowdonia just after the first lock-down (see the Autumn Newsletter), but as the front cover shows, it was worth it. David has contributed the following history of the car, together with the cover photo showing the car outside a deserted Hanbury Manor in Hertfordshire.

The original owner was Mr Herbert Walker, who purchased the car new from Rolls Royce in 1925/26. Herbert was a master cloth dyer & finisher and managing director of a textiles mill in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire. He had an estate worth c.£137,000 (c. £9million in today's money) and sadly died in 1933.

The next thought to be owners were the Hopkin family. We cannot be certain how long the family kept the car for, but the chassis cards show that in 1955 the GCK7 was kept by John A. Hopkins Esq of Galley Lane, Hertfordshire. John was thought to be a Solicitor and we believe his father, William Robert Hopkins, was a retired battery manufacturer who died in 1968.

We understand the next owner was Robert John James of Catshill, Bromsgrove, having bought it from the Hopkin family. He later sold it to Granville Angell, Lord of Cannock in 1985. Granville owned the car for 32 years after selling it to the real car company in 2017. We have recently spoken to the Lord of Cannock and learnt he was highly regarded in the free masons and spent 23 years in the Navy, surviving 2 world wars.

In 2017, Granville sold the GCK7 to the Real Car Company of Bangor, Wales, who spent time working on the mechanical parts of the engine. Soon after in September 2019, I bought the car, which was delivered to my home in Wadesmill, Hertfordshire. I have been lovingly polishing the car in order to return it to its former glory. There are still a few fuel problems to sort out, but we shall get there.

DRAGON OR TEMPEST

I recently posted a nose-to-nose photo of the Bentley Arnage T and Bentley Mulsanne on the official Bentley Network app. It quickly prompted the comment ‘great photo, but which one is better?’

You might automatically think that the newer car must surely win. But hold on a minute, what we are talking about here are two grand saloon cars, which both took around 500- man hours to build{*is that all? Ed*}. Can one possibly be better than the other?



The 2007 Bentley Arnage T in Silver Tempest and 2015 Bentley Mulsanne in Dragon Red.

Engines

Both of these cars are powered by the legendary V8. The Arnage is mated to a 6 speed ZF box and produces 500 bhp, the Mulsanne to the newer 8 speed ZF box. It produces 505bhp and the extra gears give it the legs it needs to be a true high- speed machine. That also helps it in part to return an extra 5-7mpg over the Arnage, in part thanks to cylinder de-activation. The driving experience of power delivery from both cars is very similar as you might expect. Masses of low-down power delivery thanks to all that torque. The Mulsanne wins this one as it is clearly the more technically advanced.

Steering

Prior to purchase of the Arnage in 2017, I had read reviews that criticised the car as having steering that was too light. In reality the steering is the perfect weight. The Mulsanne on the other hand, even on 'Comfort' mode, has stiffer steering and the car feels generally a little harder to manoeuvre. Not that a Bentley driver would ever drive with only one hand on the wheel, but if this were the case, it would be possible with the Arnage, but harder in the Mulsanne. The Arnage wins this one.

Comfort

Bentley have worked wonders with the Mulsanne and isolated the cabin well and making it quite a bit quieter than the old Arnage. The cabin is bigger and the rear passengers have more legroom. The boot does not seem quite as practical due to the smaller lid, but still decent enough.

The Mulsanne also boasts air springs and although I don't think the ride is as smooth as the Arnage, it still glides along with ease.

The seats in the Arnage are much softer than the relatively hard seats in the Mulsanne. I fit perfectly into the driving seat of the Arnage at just 5ft8", but taller drivers will struggle. The Mulsanne is much enlarged to fit all heights. Overall, the Mulsanne has to win this one.

Driving the Arnage T

It is a wild machine. From the moment you get in and sit in the very soft and comfy quilted leather seats, you know you are in something special. Once you have started the engine you hear all of the mechanicals working away. The slightest tap on the accelerator and you are off. You will not have been on the road for long before you hear the whooshing of the turbos and throaty exhaust noise.

Driving the Mulsanne

The Mulsanne is far more refined machine. The engine is there but far more distant. The gear changes smoother, the cabin quieter but you do need more leg to get it going and more strength in your arms to move it. It is easier in most regards to drive and less delicacy required. Just watch the length around corners.

If I were taking the family out for the day, I'd put them in the Mulsanne. If I were out on my own on a perfect bit of smooth road, it would be the Arnage every time as the true driver's machine.

Final thought

It is more than possible that Bentley received feedback about the Mulsanne from those who had purchased one having owned a late Arnage T. The reason is this, I recently drove a brand new facelifted Mulsanne Speed. The seats are re-designed and softer, throttle more responsive, steering sharper and exhaust note more audible. In short, they appear to have made its character more like the last Arnage T's.

In true Bentley tradition and like all of their cars, you always feel a little special driving one.

Will Bate.

Specs of the two cars below:

	2007 Bentley Arnage T	2015 Bentley Mulsanne
Length	5,400 mm	5,575 mm
Width	1,900 mm	1,926 mm
Height	1,516 mm	1,521 mm
Kerb weight	2,655 kg	2,650 kg
Power	500 hp, 738 lb ft	505 hp, 752 lb ft
0-60mph	5.2 seconds	5.1 seconds
Top speed	179 mph	184 mph
Miles Per Tank	295 miles	337 miles

FIND A GOOD CAR AND STICK WITH IT

While Will Bate likes to sample all there is in modern Bentleys, Tony and Sandy O'Brart have been loyal to their Silver Shadow II since it was just nine years old.



Tony's Silver Shadow II is a regular attendee at our Noggin and Natters

Our search for a Silver Shadow began in January 1988, 6 months later after many trips we actually discovered in the back yard of a car dealer near Heathrow a 1979 sorry looking dirty Shadow 11 . The car had a non- smoking owner 37, 000 miles, no bumps or dents, full service history, a possibility! The owner of the site suggested that if we returned on Monday they will have washed her so we could see her properly. Excited we duly arrived on the appointed day he greeted us, gave us the keys and to our utter amazement said drive it where you want and bring it back when you are satisfied. Can you imagine that in our day and age? He didn't know us from Adam.

After driving it for a couple of hours we just had to own her, agreed a deal and two weeks later, with our own OBR 200 plate fitted, fully serviced she was ready to be paid for in full and driven home. The garage owner Phil then offered us far more than we had just paid for her as in his words, she came up better than expected!

Now in 2020 having covered 105,000 since birth she looks and drives as good as when she left the Rolls Royce factory in Crewe.

Sandy & Tony.

LEATHER CONSERVATION ON A 25/30

Rosemary Jeffreys has kindly contributed this useful article on leather conservation, the photographs show what can be done with 84 year old leather.

Some of you may know that I trained in archaeological conservation and when we acquired a new 25/30, GRP 49 (named Grace), in 2013, my thoughts turned to whether it was possible to preserve the leather on the seats, the division, doors and other trimmings, which had been worn down to suede on the seats and was scuffed all over. It is all original from 1937, when the car was made, and we were keen to keep as much as possible. The seats are made of springs with horse-hair padding. The original owner, Mrs Devenish, and her various chauffeurs, must have been smokers judging by the seven ashtrays and cigarette burns!

I did some research and found an article about a 1906 car in the Science Museum which had some helpful information about conservation work done to it. I also found an article about conserving antique luggage made of leather. I have also done quite a bit of bookbinding over the years, which turned out to be helpful experience as many book covers are made of leather.

I have a collection of leather shoe polishes and glove cleaners which were called into action for Grace (as well as the books), and Henry had acquired some leather cleaners for cars over the years. We tested various products on the seats, which we removed from the car, and cleaned the leather thoroughly, but we left the application of the coating products until we could get at the seats and doors properly.

We drove Grace to Ben Smith in Devon for him to work on the body, and he also engaged an upholsterer named Sandra to renew the headlining. When the doors were off, it was an ideal opportunity to work on the leather. Henry took the same opportunity to work on the wood, which he French polished.

I applied the techniques I had learnt in archaeological conservation by doing a 'condition survey' of our new car, making this as objective as possible and taking lots of photos. It is important to deal with any structural problems before moving to the fun bits, because structural problems, such as a leaking window, will only resurface and cause the same problems again.

Structural problems

The stitching was coming apart in the front passenger seats and on the back seat (offside). This was repaired by Sandra when the seats were removed, but it would have been possible to repair them from the front if necessary.

There were two small areas of damage in the leather on the nearside back seat and the leather on the door, immediately below the ashtray and caused by a cigarette burn. They were repaired by inserting small pieces of matching leather, paring the edges to achieve a neat fit.

The leather under both the rear left and right windows had white patches, and was stiff and slightly brittle, suggesting water damage caused by the windows springing open. The leather had become detached from the body, probably because the adhesive dissolved when it got wet.

Immediately forward of the area of water damage there was a patch of leather which had been eaten through by woodworm. The woodworm appeared to be still active when we bought the car, as there was powdery wood on a ledge immediately beneath the holes and needed to be treated immediately with agglomerate of Cuprinol.

The leather needed to be replaced in the areas where there had been worm and water damage, and we also had to provide leather to the trimmer for the carpet edges. We bought a large calf skin which we thought would serve both purposes and dyed it to the colour we wanted, and luckily the tanners offered a skin with a similar pattern to that in the original leather. The skin we used was prepared for bookbinding but served well for our car.

Surface appearance

There were many scuff marks and the original leather looked dry and suede-like in some places. This was seemed to be due to normal wear and tear, rather than red rot, which is a serious problem caused by an acid environment and leaves a red powder when rubbed with the hand and has a distinctive smell.

All the leather in the car needed to be cleaned thoroughly using a vacuum cleaner and brush. We then cleaned it using a non-polar cleaner. Water, which is a polar solvent, is to be avoided as it makes leather become brittle (as in the water-damaged areas beneath the rear windows), and any product should be tested before use on a small area as it can take the colour out.

The appearance of the leather can be improved by use of a coating, which will make it shine. A variety of products is on the market. The products which I found had been recommended following a series of tests for scuffed leather were either Renaissance Microcrystalline wax (used in museums on wood and other surfaces), or a mixture of a neutral shoe polish with candelilla wax (obtained from the shrub *Euphorbia cerifera*) A further alternative was National Trust Furniture Polish, which had been used on an old suitcase with excellent results.

Results of tests

All of the cleaners and coatings I found out about were tested on leather from the car (before she went to Ben), at the back of the seat cushions, to see which gave the best results and were the easiest to apply. I tested them in small areas on the back of one of the front seats, where the leather had retained its original appearance in some areas although there was some scuffing. A larger area on the seat was then tested with the best performers.

Woly Perfect Gel, Woly Neutra shoe polish and Renaissance Wax all performed



Underside of cushion before treatment with the various products (note the suede -like appearance on to left

very well, reducing the scuffing to a considerable extent, darkening the leather very close to its original appearance and giving a shine.

Of the three, Woly Neutra shoe polish gave the best sheen and overall appearance, blending in well with the existing unscuffed leather and darkening the leather close to its original appearance. Woly Gel gave a slightly matter finish. Renaissance Wax did not blend so well with the original leather. But applied on top of the Woly Neutra shoe polish it gave an excellent result. The leather also felt good after the application of all these products. I was keen to

try the mixture of candelilla wax and shoe polish, but this turned out to be unsatisfactory as the wax was too hard. However, trying to find the wax had a beneficial result, since I contacted a firm called Premier Finishes who offered me some cream known as 4000 Victoria Cream which I tested, and which proved to be the most satisfactory product of all*.

We applied this more than once, after cleaning, and have re-applied it at six-month intervals. It has improved the appearance of the leather enormously which now shines with the patina of age.

*Premier Finishes, Catesby Street, Kettering, Northants, NN16 8XN. T. 01536 414401.



Underside of cushion after treatment with the various products. Note the improvement a few inches in from the left with Victoria Cream



Before



And after

POPPY, TILLY and ELEANOR

Tim Neale produced our Newsletters for us many years ago. He has contributed an eloquent historical piece on three famous R-R ladies.

Many myths and stories have been written about the last world war. One claims that we had never been so healthy and another that we all pulled together against a common enemy.

Most films seem to concentrate on men in sea or air battles or charging ashore against overwhelming odds.

I was reminded at a recent trip to the underground bunker in Uxbridge where "The Battle of Britain" was controlled from women with pushers positioning information across an enormous map wearing earphones and a microphone on their chests were equally important to the operation.

We hear about nurses, female spies or the invaluable efforts woman that ferried planes to the active airfields, flying everything from the Spitfire to the enormous Lancaster bomber. The factories would not have run without woman as exemplified by "Rosie the riveter" in the shipyards or their sisters on the land or trying to break the Enigma code at Bletchley Park.

I do not expect many people have heard of Fanny Lucy Radmall, a chorus dancer born in Lambeth, South London in 1857 who went by the stage name of Poppy.

At the age of 16 she ran off to Paris with a married man and continued with the habit and was married three times altogether. Her final husband was a multi-millionaire who lived on his yacht "Liberty" most of the time when not in his home on Hampstead Heath. He was Sir Robert Houston, so she became Lady Houston.

Towards the end of his life, he made out a will which he showed to his wife in which he had left her £1,000,000, after reading this she tore it in half, saying "I'm worth at least double that".

She was very patient and when he died, she inherited everything, so together with the DBE (Dame of the British Empire) award she had received in the first world war, she was set up on so many levels.

She hated the Labour government of Ramsey McDonald and them cutting back on the army and Royal Navy, so she offered £200,000 of her own money which was refused.

They also refused to back our entry into the Schneider Trophy air race of 1931 and forbade serving pilots of the RAF from taking part.

So patriotic as ever she donated £100,000 to Supermarine the aircraft builders to keep research going into the entry and predecessor of the Spitfire which won the race for the third time, so we kept the trophy. Her money had helped R G Mitchell and his team design the all- important wing and learn how to use the Rolls Royce Merlin engine to best effect.

If that had not happened, we would have still been using biplanes for the Battle of Britain which made her to be generally known as the "Mother of the Spitfire". To which she stated - "Every true Briton would rather sell his last shirt than admit England could not afford to defend itself".

You don't expect someone born in the reign of Queen Victoria in the East End of London to have such an effect not only in Britain but also the rest of the world.

A few years later during air battles one of the shortcomings of the Spitfire and Hurricane fighters was the engine cutting out when it went into a steep dive due to centrifugal force on the petrol in the float chamber of the carburettors. It didn't take the Germans long to realise this and take advantage of the glitch which they didn't suffer because of their fuel injection.

This had to be sorted out very quickly, so step forward Dr. Tilly Shilling from the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough. She was another interesting woman able to hold her own in a field dominated by men. Unusually she often rode a motor bike and sometimes attended meetings still in her leathers.

The solution had to be easy to fit because of the large number of Merlin engines in service so she came up with a small restrictor that fitted easily into the carburettors and then headed up a team going around all the front- line airfields in turn fitting them.

It was so successful that one trade publication introduced the modification with the headline "Miss Shilling's Orifice Satisfies all the RAF".

Both deserve more fame than they have though there is a pub in Farnborough called the Tilly Shilling and the pub sign shows her riding a motor bike. Tilly also raced cars at Goodwood after the war but before the war she had lapped Brooklands at over 100 miles per hour on a motor bike, one of only 3 women to achieve this.

You may not have heard of the previous two ladies, but I suggest you know more of Eleanor Thornton than you realise.

She was born in 1880 in Stockwell with the name of Nelly which she changed for her own reasons and got a job as a secretary with the Car Illustrated, a motoring magazine. This was partly owned by Lord Montague of Beaulieu who took a shine to her and she became his mistress until her death.

Lord Montague had recently bought a Rolls Royce Silver Ghost and commissioned his friend Charles Sykes to come up with an ornament to fit on the radiator.

Sykes produced a statue of a woman with diaphanous cloths streaming out behind her with her finger up to her lips which he called "The Whisperer". Charles Rolls was so impressed when he saw it he wanted something like it for all Rolls Royce cars so "The Spirit of Ecstasy" was born (Flying Lady) which was nearly the same, but with both arms behind her.

Eleanor Thornton is thought to have been the model, but she never lived to experience the fame of adorning "The best car in the world" or to reassure airline passengers looking out of the window to see her image on the engines.

She was on her way to India with Lord Montague in 1915 on the SS Persia a passenger ship which was torpedoed without warning and she went down with the ship *{the skinflint Montague only bought one lifebelt and was not very chivalrous it seems Ed}*

I hope you can see all three played their part in our country's history and survival. They are not as well- known as many of the celebrities we seem to collect now days who will equally be forgotten but have contributed nothing compared with this trio.

Tim Neale

OTHER CARS ARE AVAILABLE

Nigel's secret is out

MINI COOPER

What do you do in your spare time when you are not repairing Rolls- Royces and Bentleys? Why do we hanker after cars that we have previously owned, sold and regretted selling! Both Jackie and I had classic Minis as first cars!

I had the hair brained idea of purchasing a 1967 Mk II Mini Cooper. I bought this car in 2012 as an unfinished project that on paper looked pretty good, but when I got it home realised it wasn't as good as I thought.



Not much of the front half left!

After carrying out a fair amount of research, I found out that there were no new body shells available for MkIIs, so I had to work with what I had got!

At the end of 2017, the car was transported up to Pro-Strip in Nottingham where the body was chemically stripped by total immersion. It then went to Dan Budd at the Real Mini Company. Well, there was not much of the car left!! The body shell then went under a massive restoration and was then moved to my painter

in Chessington where it was painted in its original colour - snowberry white with a black roof.



As you can see the engine was in a terrible state!



The car is now back in the Isleworth works where I have been preparing all the mechanical components and hopefully when it is finished, it should be like a new car! The interior is away at present being refurbished by Newton Classic Car Interiors.

I was hoping to have it finished to take to Brooklands on New Year's Day, but it will be finished in early 2021 (I hope!!)

This is what it will look like soon, but bigger.



Stay safe everyone, take care
Nigel

WITH SOME LUCK.....

Noggin and Natters

Once the pubs are open again, we can resume our twice-monthly noggin and natters. On the evening of second Tuesday each month we meet at The Ace Café, On the last Thursday of the month we meet at The Winning Post in Whitton. Please do come along and mingle.

RAF Museum Hendon

This is an old favourite of ours where there is a great deal to see, David hopes to rearrange a visit for us in March or April

Road Run

Richard Skinner and I have a great run planned. We hope to start at The Kempton Steam Museum where we can witness their mighty machines steaming up before setting off for a 40 mile drive through the Surrey Hills.

On the Buses

By popular demand, Will Bate is hoping to re-run this event, please let Will know if you are interested.

Hatfield House

Tony O'Brart is organising this return visit to one of England's finest country houses in the summer.

Derbyshire weekend 23rd to 25th July

Please contact Nigel if you would like to join us



David Siegal keeps our section database and will send round a flyer for each of the above once we know they can go ahead. Will Bate posts all details on www.rrec-middlesex.co.uk

FINALLY, PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF YOU ENJOYED READING THIS LITTLE MAGAZINE, IF SO I WOULD BE PLEASED TO RECEIVE YOUR ARTICLES FOR THE SPRING EDITION- Richard Edgell

N Sandell advert -unchanged