

Summer 2023
Middlesex Section Magazine

MIDDLESEX SECTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

2023



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Editors Ruminations- July 2023

The last six months have seen one of the busiest periods of activity the Middlesex Section has seen in its history. I have included some brief reports on some of what we have got up to.

It was good to meet up with a number of Section members at this year's Annual. We were blessed with good weather and a fair turnout, but I feel there is much for the club management to do to restore this event to its former glory.

As many of you will know, this year marks the 90th anniversary of the Derby Bentley and I am involved in organising a celebration at Chatsworth House in late September when we shall see over ninety Derbys from all over the world. The full weekend tour is now fully subscribed, but the Sunday afternoon rally at Chatsworth is open to all RREC members with club cars. Please contact me if you would like to come and see the biggest assembly of Derby Bentleys ever put together.

In this issue of our magazine, Tony tells about bringing some sunshine to a February day in Potters Bar. A little later I had great fun participating in a photo shoot for a forthcoming article on Derby Bentley cars. Will tells about a trip to Spain. Nigel reports on his weekend at the National, he was the much deserved recipient of the Le Touquet award for the member who had contributed the most to our club. We also have a couple of useful technical articles.

Coming up to date, we had two splendid section gatherings in late July, organised by Tony and by Michael who have contributed some words and pictures from Bentley Priory and Brooklands. Will tells us about a wet days filming. Other cars are represented by Vicky's story of her drive to Brighton and Mr. Skinner's E-Type Jaguar.

We include a list of the Section events we have planned for the Autumn. These include a first ever Section visit to the Hampton Court concours at the beginning of September. Please contact the relevant committee member for details.

On behalf of the committee may I wish you much further happy motoring in 2023.

Richard Edgell

Cuffley Manor

Early in the year, Tony O'Brart was able to bring some sunshine into Potters Bar when he joined a group of enthusiasts on a visit to local retirement home. Well done, Tony. (ed)

In February I picked up an Email asking for a selection of interesting cars to make a showing for the residents of a retirement home in Potters Bar. I contacted the manager offering our 1979 Silver Shadow for the Sunday of the show, which on arrival seemed a bit like our usual 2nd Tuesday of the month at the Ace Cafe in Wembley! So many exotic motor bikes in various colours, shapes and sizes, police cars, fire engine and a great crowd of enthusiasts much to the delight of the visitors and residents.

One gentleman who was 100 years old (pictured below) commented that it made a fantastic afternoon.



Tony O'Brart

A fun day's shooting

As a part of the Derby Bentley 90th anniversary celebrations, I thought it would be a good idea to get some exposure in a National car magazine. I wrote to several editors with a mixed response. Nigel Boothman who edits ROLLS-ROYCE & BENTLEY *driver* magazine was very enthusiastic and after much email correspondence we set a date for a photo-shoot to support the article which will appear later in the year.

The first requirement was to get the right location. Fortunately, within a mile of my home near Hertford there is a two-mile stretch of road, an old coach road, now bypassed, which would allow some action shots. At one end of this road lies Cole Green where the gate lodge of Panshanger House is to be found. Mr. Boothman looked this up on Google Maps and agreed it would be suitable.

Next, we needed two cars. I selected Tim O'Rourke's wonderful Oxborrow & Fuller tourer to represent the early lighter style of Derby and Kingsley Sleep's more sober Thrupp & Maberly saloon. Tim lives in West London and Kingsley just over the border in Essex so neither would need to travel far. Nigel Boothman would drive down from Edinburgh with his photographer Greg. The date was set in late April and all we needed was good weather and two co-operative cars for the morning's photos. In the afternoon, there were to be more photos of my James Young parallel-action door drophead.

Sadly, at the last moment Tim's car developed ignition problems, another car had to be found. Nigel said, no problem, use your other one. I had to explain it had only done one mile since I had acquired it (see my article on rose tinted spectacles in last year's summer magazine). It was also very much patinated to be polite.

Needs must, so I gingerly drove her to the rendezvous at the local pub. We met with Kingsley and then drove to the old gates of Panshanger for the stills, the lodge owner very kindly supplied the coffee. Hundreds of pictures were taken of both cars before we started on the 'action' shots. Greg lay in the back of Nigel's Volvo estate car as first Kingsley and then I drove our cars along the road, Greg beckoning us to go faster or slower up and down the road and round the village green. The more demanding action shots involved 3 cars abreast as the Thrupp & Maberly overtook the Barker.



My heart was in my mouth, fearing the Barker, which had done barely 100 miles in the last 22 years might let me down. But no, she went like a bird and as the photo shows, looked every bit 'The Silent Sportscar'.

After a pint and a sandwich at the pub, it was time to subject the James Young drophead to a few hundred clicks of the camera. The action shot resulted in possibly my all-time favourite picture of one of my cars. It looks like the African Savannah at 60mph. Actually, it is East Herts at 25mph!



If offered the chance of having your car photographed by the boys from ROLLS-ROYCE & BENTLEY driver, go for it!

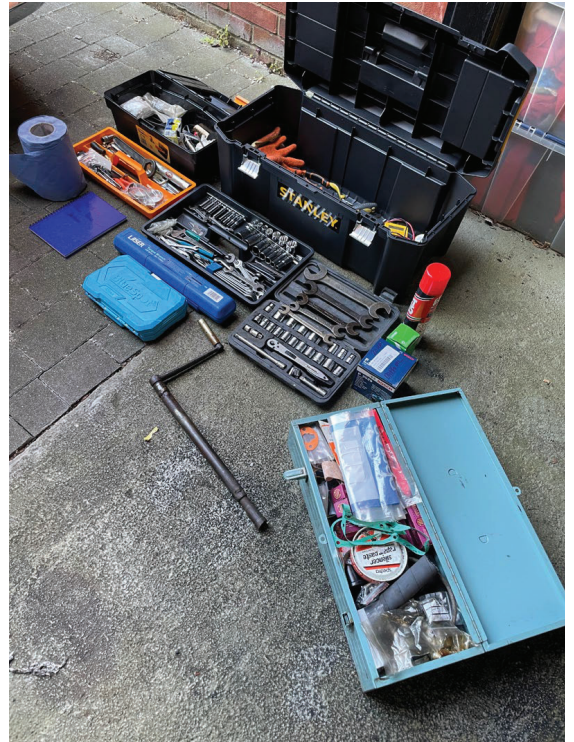
Richard Edgell

Photos copyright '©Gregory Owain / RR&BD'

The Trip

Last winter, the 20hp Register sent an email about a rally to Spain during the summer of 2023. It sounded like an adventure, and 'Daffodil', my 1926 20hp, had been back on the road just weeks after an engine rebuild. I am thankful to Richard Edgell, Nigel Sandell and Brian Packman for all their help and support over the many months of engine work.

On Sunday, 4th June, a day before departure to Portsmouth for the Ferry to Santander, the last job on my list was to do a quick oil and filter change. To my horror, and as I drained the oil, the first thing that appeared was not oil but a waterfall of blue coolant. It was clear that the head needed torquing down after replacing the head gasket six months earlier. I set the tappets correctly a little while later, and the car ran sweetly. What more could go wrong? My co-driver, Richard Edgell, had planned to bring his 20hp to the rally but had problems with a cracked head, so he decided to travel with me. He might have been nervous following the engine work but didn't show it.



A few tools were packed for the trip to Spain, including a torque wrench.



As we arrived in Spain and started the journey south to Segovia, it struck us how smooth the roads were, even better, in fact, than those in Austria or Germany. A 20hp on a smooth road with few cars really is a joy to drive. It was clear that northern Spain has some of the best driving in Europe and stunning scenery to match.

The Twenty in front of the 2000 year old Roman viaduct in Segovia, Spain. The 97 year old suspension got a workout on the cobbles shown in this photo.



Unusually for modern times, we decided to navigate through Spain using the road book provided by Tom Jones, who organised the whole tour, and a fairly up-to-date map provided by Richard Edgell, dated 1998! I got thoroughly confused when it was my turn to navigate, but we found our way and stumbled across some superb roads, which we wouldn't have had we blindly followed the sat nav. On the open road, we cruised at 45mph and, on flat stretches, engaged the overdrive. Unbelievably we averaged 20mpg.

One of the scenic driving routes suggested was thousands of feet up in the mountains above Segovia.

When we returned to the UK, 'Daffodil' hadn't missed a beat and had covered 1400 miles. Our only minor technical difficulties during the trip were a lazy Klaxon horn and a rattle from the exhaust, which we fixed in 2 minutes. A week after arriving home, I tentatively drained the oil, and thankfully there wasn't a single drop of blue coolant to be found.

The trip to Spain was my first continental rally with the RREC and surpassed all expectations. The people I met were incredible, and all had something in common, their love of motoring. I can't wait for the next club rally, and if you haven't been on one before, I can strongly recommend it.

Will Bate



GMJ41 resting after another mountain climb and enjoying the view.

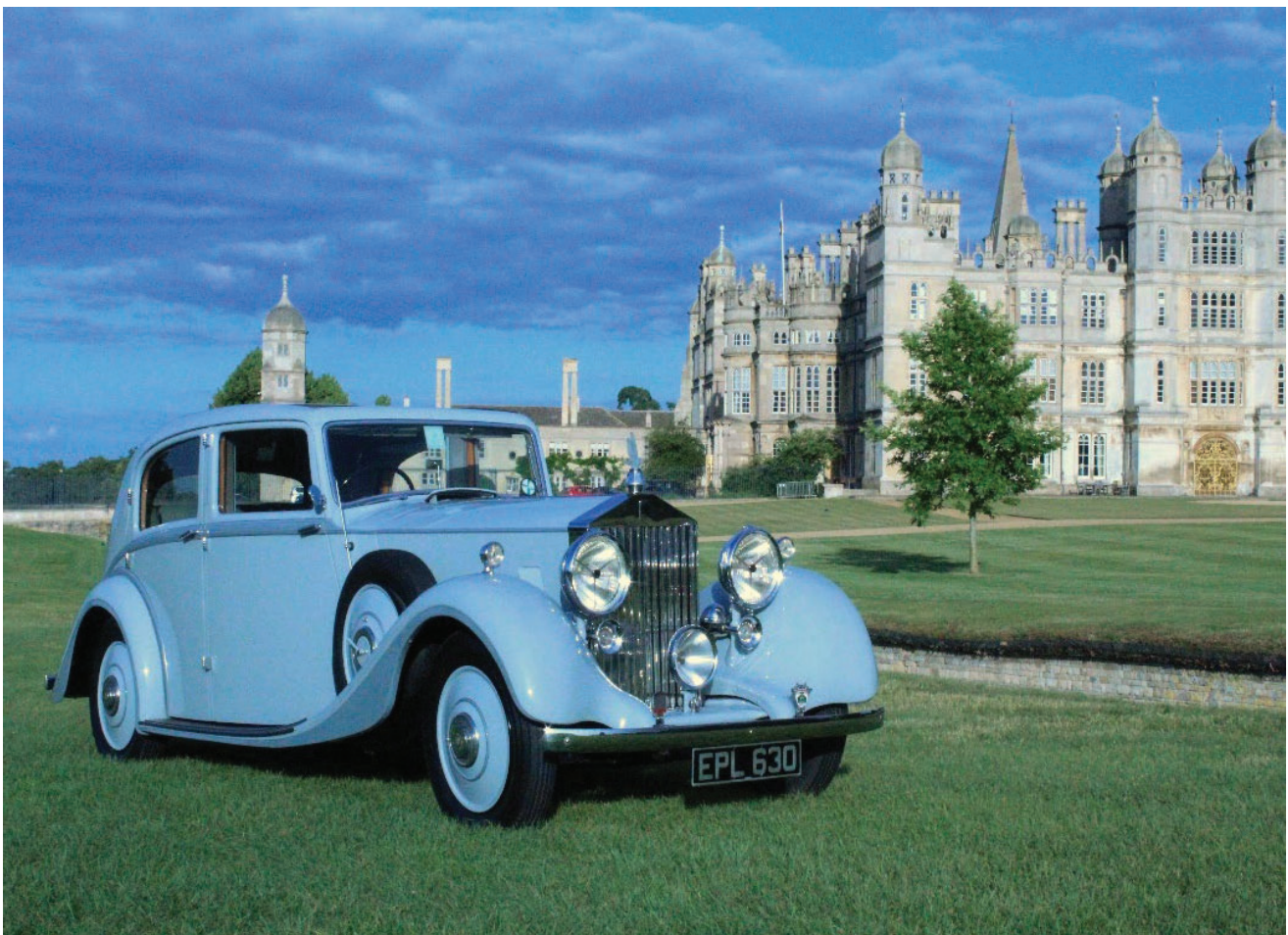
Annual Rally

Our quiet unassuming chairman Nigel relates his experiences at this, the 10th RREC Annual to be held in the grounds of Burghley House. Full details of the burst tyre incident and its aftermath would have filled the magazine and no doubt for this reason, Nigel has omitted them. It was indeed very hot on Sunday and I was pleased to shelter in my Derby Bentley Register marquee (ed)

Award winning Sunday

On Friday 23rd of June we set out on our annual pilgrimage to the Rolls Royce Annual Rally at Burghley House. When traveling with a pre-war car, I think it is always wise to allow more time than usual, in case of any problems that arise. One such was on the way up on Friday when the left rear tyre delaminated. The issue was quickly resolved as Richard and Michelle Skinner helped get me back on the road.

On arrival at Burghley we had a glorious weekend of weather. However, 8 hours of cleaning the 25/30 in 30-degree blistering heat certainly took its toll.



Onto Sunday. Unfortunately, the number of judges in attendance was drastically decreased this year. Moreover, I ended up judging two categories: Class 17 and The Douglas Wood trophy. The day continued to get better when my team and I were able to witness the fruits of our labour as I became the winner of Class 7. In addition to this I was honored to be awarded the Le Touquet trophy for my contribution to the club over the past year. We were also thrilled to be judged runner up for best car in show.

Congratulations to Michael Marshal-Clarke for winning the observer trophy for his contributions to spirit and speed. Congratulations also to Richard Skinner for beating MM-C by winning the touring trophy in the Shadow class.

And a final congratulations to everyone in the Middlesex section for our great presence at the annual rally this year.



Nigel Sandell receiving one of his awards from Julian Foster

Bentley Priory

Late in July we enjoyed two splendid visits in one weekend which were both very well attended. The first was ably organised for us by Tony O'Brart, recently back in action following a major operation. I am grateful to him for his report. (ed)



On Saturday 22nd of July the Middlesex section visited Bentley Priory looking proudly over North London. The day dawned a typical British summer's day - windy and pouring with rain. However, this did not deter the 15 club cars and 35 people who attended. The cars were displayed in a semi-circle in front of the magnificent facade of the house. Members then visited the cafe where coffee and tea were served along with the chance to greet fellow guests.

Bentley Priory was built in the late 18th century under the supervision of Sir John Soane. In its time it has been the private home of Queen Adelaide, a hotel and a girl's school, but most importantly it was the headquarters of RAF Fighter Command from soon after its formation 3 years before the outbreak of war. Wartime defence was planned and controlled here, and vital strategic decisions made.

It was from Bentley Priory that the Battle of Britain was won! Our tour started at 12.00 hosted by our enthusiastic guide Sharon. We first visited the office of Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding who was a truly inspiring man to those he commanded. He cared deeply for their welfare and was responsible for introducing many safety measures to protect them during battle. The Filter Room was amazing, with life sized figures leaning over the operations table upon which battles were controlled and aircraft tracked. Radar was in its infancy and huge reliance was placed on the decisions of the people in this room. We then visited the operations room from which instructions were issued.



The one and a half hours flew by (no pun intended) thanks to Sharon and her vast knowledge of Bentley Priory and its history. The group returned to the museum cafe to enjoy lunch.

Sadly, we were not able to walk in the magnificent grounds due to the weather but still had a very enjoyable and awe - inspiring visit.

Tony O'Brart

Supersonic Sunday – Brooklands 23rd July

The day after our visit to Bentley Priory, many of us made a return visit to the Brooklands Museum. Organised and described by Michael Marshall-Clarke. We were pleased to have pole position and our cars received much admiring attention (ed)



Our section visited Brooklands to join the popular ‘Summer Classic Gathering’ event on 23rd July and (with some prior negotiation) managed to bag the premier parking location at this historic motor and aero museum, with our cars surrounding Concorde ‘Delta Golf’.

There was a fantastic turnout of 21 gleaming club cars – 11 Rolls-Royces and 10 Bentleys – spanning the years from the 1920s to the 2000s and we were joined by members from both the Surrey and East Anglian sections too.

Many thanks to all those who attended, we made quite a magnificent display around Brooklands’ supersonic icon.

Concorde G-BBDG, to give this 'Speedbird' her full title, was the first to carry 100 passengers at Mach 2 and was in service from 1974 until 1981. Her four Rolls-Royce Olympus engines were capable of propelling her to a top speed in excess of 1,300 mph, with a fuel consumption of 6,771 gallons per hour! Figures that make our own Shell V-Power bills seem very insignificant in comparison.



The event, and museum with all its attractions, proved so popular with members that we've been asked to repeat it for the Brooklands New Year's Day Gathering.

I'm currently negotiating to secure the coveted Concorde location again, so let's see if we can't beat our 21-car total next time.

If you'd like to pre-register your attendance on 1st January 2024, please email me at mmc.rrec@gmail.com

Michael Marshall-Clarke

Replacing a windscreen rubber on pre-war car

Screen rubbers are often a problem on pre-war and coachbuilt postwar cars. They can be replaced cheaply on a DIY basis. I managed it many moons ago on a 20/25 and Richard Skinner's article emboldens me to do the same on my 1936 Derby coupe.(ed)

A few months ago I was faced with having to replace the rubber windscreen rubber seal from my 1936 Rolls Royce 25/30. The problem was that it was perished and cracked badly particularly around the corners. I tried to work out how it was attached to the chrome frame. Was it just glued in the aperture or was it somehow connected in a different way? It was stuck fast, and I wasn't brave enough to tug it away in case it caused a big problem in as much as it was obsolete and had to be made. I called various dealers and spoke with members to no avail. Fortunately, Nigel Sandell was having his windows replaced in his 25/30 and his glass man was on hand to ask.

This very knowledgeable chap told me the on the other end of the flat piece of rubber was a T shape end which pushes into the chrome frame aperture.

Brilliant news! I pulled it out and went to C Baines in Kent who are the 'go-to' people for all car rubber seals (*Seals Direct are good as well*). Through their catalogue they matched the rubber and cut me 4 meters. The cost was a princely £20!



Next, I removed the fold out screen which is easy to do and slid it out into a blanket very carefully. I separated the two halves of the screen. Then used a strong clear silicon to re-clamp it together trapping the glass in between nicely. I then used some fairy liquid solution to help slip the T shaped end of the rubber onto the chrome frame- using a plastic trim tool to press it in. That was a long

process which took 3 hours! Well worth the effort though.

A further half an hour to fit the whole thing back in to the car. Now you know!

Richard Skinner

Auction purchase update: Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud III

In our summer 2022 magazine, I wrote about my most recent auction purchase and how enjoyable fixing little jobs on the car had been. Part of the reason for the purchase was the lure of a complete engine rebuild just 500 miles before the auction. What could go wrong?



The worn camshaft lobe and worn down hydraulic tappet.



The worn down tappet on the left hand side, and on the right. a good hydraulic tappet.

However, when I arrived at last year's annual rally and a mere 2,500 miles covered since purchase, an alarming knocking sound could be heard in the engine bay. Nigel Sandell found that a lobe had been worn off the camshaft and a tappet worn down. Nigel and his team set to work, sourced another camshaft and used a particular machine to test and provide 16 good hydraulic tappets. I am pleased to report that the Cloud III is roadworthy after additional gearbox and brake work.



SGT 527 with gearbox removed awaiting surgery.

The moral of the story is that anything can happen and to prepare for the unexpected. From what I understand, it is the luck of the draw with such problems. Thanks to Nigel and his team for their work.

Will Bate

A Change of Career?

A phone call from the Hunt House looking for a suitable car and driver might have led our secretary onto another career path, but the events put a dampener on that idea. (ed)



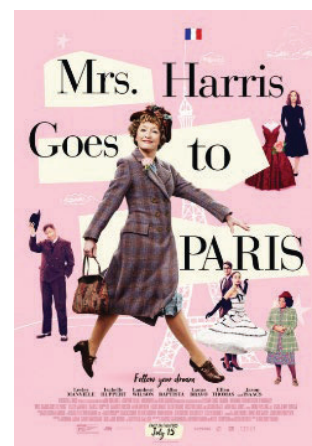
As I sat comfortably in the back of the car, smartly dressed as a chauffeur and flicking through Spirit & Speed to kill time, I thought, 'Right, I'll give up my day job in IT and go into doing films full-time'. I was getting carried away by the glamour of being on the set of a film called Mrs Harris Goes to Paris. My role in the film was to drive my 1953 Bentley R-Type up to a house, collect a few passengers and then drive off again. I hadn't done it before, so my hopes were high for my new career.



After a full day of shooting and much of that spent under a rain machine, I and the car were tired and cold. It was a terrific experience, but as I made my way home late that night, with soaking cold feet and a pulled shoulder, I thought that I would stay in IT after all and put my day of filming down to a one-off experience. The cold, of course, didn't last long because of the fantastic heater you get in an R-Type.

Mrs Harris Goes to Paris is a light-hearted film worth watching, and if you look closely, you might even spot a Bentley. Now available on Amazon prime.

Will Bate



OTHER CARS ARE AVAILABLE

London to Brighton Mini Run- no magazine is complete without an account of the adventures of a certain Mini.(ed)

On the 21st of May my dad Nigel and I embarked on an adventure in our 1968 Mini Cooper. We met with the group of Mini owners and enthusiasts on Cheam common and soon we were off, me dressed up in 1960s getup, perfect for the occasion in a mini dress, platform boots and Mary Quant earrings, my dad in his Mini T Shirt. I even painted my nails snowberry white to match the car perfectly. After a beautiful scenic drive down to Brighton, all the Minis parked along the sea front in colourful rows. Chatting to other Mini owners we saw such classics as the Mary Quant edition, the Blues Brothers' car as well as plenty of modified modern Minis. The day continued with beautiful sunshine as we walked along the sea front and down the pier, we could see the lineup of hundreds of minis, all their owners gathered for the love of the car.

Despite a great day, the journey home threw a spanner in the works. Down a small road in Brighton centre we went over a large bump, knocking the exhaust off in the process. With no tools and no other option, my mad dad crawled under the car and attempted to re-attach it with cable ties. After some struggle, we made it home with our pride dented and the exhaust bent.



Vicky Sandell

A semi-lightweight E-Type

Last year several of us went as a group to the Spa Classic. A particularly interesting car, albeit a noisy one was Richard Skinner's semi lightweight E-Type Jaguar. Richard is a Silver Shadow and 25/30 owner and has sent me the following which may be of interest to those with quieter, slower and possibly less thirsty automobiles(ed)

This is one of my "other cars" A Jaguar semi lightweight 4.2 litre race car. I intended to race this car before I retired from car racing at the start 2016. I have owned the car for a decade and use it on high days and holidays.

Because of its state of tune, it's a bit gruff under 3k rpm! It runs a Rob Beere full race engine with uprated crank, cams, pistons etc. It has triple 48 Weber carbs and one of the original 12 factory lightweight sand cast Exhaust manifolds (- don't ask how I came by this please!) The car was built by the legendary John Arnold of CMC and of course ran various Jaguar race grids. It was originally built for Michael Wisher and had at least 3 power upgrades requested by him. Michael Wisher was the sheriff of Nottingham University; my picture shows him delivering the Hoff" to lecture the students about various subjects.



Prior to Michael's ownership, the car was owned by Everyman track events company and the car was driven regularly by F1 driver Mike Wilds and even by Jack Brabham at Brands Hatch. The car purports to be about 1962, but is actually much later, typical of a Goodwood hot Rod built to race.



The front of the car is all aluminium as are the doors. The one-piece rear hatch is carbon Kelvar. The instrument gauges are D type in face - but are actually electronic. The seats are Aluminium bucket lightweight race seats with Willans harness type belts. There is no heater, but the screen has a quick clear electrical element. For

relaxed long distance cruising we have a 5 speed Getrag gearbox and a 3.9 final drive .



The car weighs in at approx 920kg and has in excess of 340bhp available. At 100mph the car is only revving at 2600rpm approx in 5th gear We have accurately seen 163 mph on gps driving on a German autobahn. However, this is not recommended because the steering becomes very light due to poor aerodynamics!

The costs to put it together were astronomical, but well worth it. Noisy and flame spitting, just the way I like it!



Richard Skinner

MIDDLESEX SECTION EVENTS 2023



September, Saturday 2nd
Hampton Court Concours,
SW London.

Contact Will Bate
wbate@northpole-it.co.uk



October, Sunday 8th
Penshurst Place, Kent.

Contact Richard Skinner
richardskinner10@btinternet.com



October, Sunday 22nd
Visit to N.Sandell, Isleworth,
SW London.

Contact Nigel Sandell
sndllj@gmail.com



November, Saturday 25th
The National Motor Museum,
Gaydon.

Contact David Siegal
david@ealingtrading.co.uk

MIDDLESEX SECTION EVENTS 2024

January, Monday 1st

Brooklands, New Year's Day Classic Gathering

January, Sunday 14th

54th Middlesex Section AGM at the Grovelfield House Hotel

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