

Essex Thameside News

Nº 224, December 2025



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Chairman's message

Steve Rider

chairman@jecessesthameside.co.uk

Hello Essex Thameside Members,

It seems hard to believe but another twelve months has flown by. Hopefully, you will agree that it's been a tremendously full year. We have attended a huge number of events and shows and arranged some very successful foreign and domestic trips, enjoyed by many members.

Following the recent success of our themed club nights for Halloween and our French trip, with members' favourable comments, we are looking to do more in future. It would be remiss of me not to give recognition to our club 'Wags', with special thanks to Gemma Peck for the regular provision of sustenance and nibbles.

The committee hasn't been resting on its laurels. Determined to outdo the brilliant Cotswolds tour that he organised earlier this year, Vaughn High has put together a two-centre tour of East Anglia for the spring. A flyer is currently being prepared, which will describe the proposed tour and costings, and this will be circulated in due course. With regards to a trip abroad, we are looking at arranging a possible Christmas shopping trip to Bruges next December. Consequently, we are planning to give a presentation to members early in the New Year, showing some of the options available and to gauge interest.

Much closer to home, I am pleased to confirm that we have negotiated and secured the Police Sports and Social Club in Chelmsford for another year of club nights, once again on the last Tuesday of every month.

I am aware that some members were disappointed by being unable to secure tickets for our annual Christmas

bash at **Pontlands Park on the 6th December**. However, I can confirm that we have arranged for a fun Christmas **club night on the 16th December**, at our home base in the Sports Club. It will include entertainment, a Christmas quiz with nibbles, and a bumper festive raffle.

We are currently preparing another full calendar of events and shows for 2026, the first of which is a **breakfast meet** in conjunction with the local Porsche club for the **11th January at the Summerhill Garden Centre**, Arterial Road Essex ,Pipps Hill Road North, Billericay CM11 2UJ, from approximately 9 till 11.00 AM.

Some of you will already be aware that we have arranged a repeat of our previously very successful Emergency First Aid course, on 12th February. We will soon be confirming numbers and availability to those members interested and not already signed up.

The first big car show for 2026 has now been confirmed for 5th April at the Museum of Power Transport Fest. Lester Magness will be taking the relevant bookings and will also soon be providing details for our traditional seasonal opener, the Sunday lunch at the Six Bells Pub in Boreham.

Finally, I hope that you will join me in thanking, and perhaps raising a glass, to my fellow committee members who to a man and woman have again put in a tremendous effort this year. Together, we are all very grateful for the support and participation of the membership; clearly, you make the club the success that it is and I believe that, once again, we can look back with pride at this year's achievements and look forward eagerly to the next.

Cheers and merry Christmas.

Steve

[Front cover image: photo from the Cotswolds trip altered by AI to embody a wintery Christmas theme]

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Coffee & Rolls at P&A Wood

A friend of mine recently bought a “previously owned” Bentley Continental which he proceeded to have serviced at P&A Wood, the local Rolls Royce and Bentley dealership in Great Eastern, Dunmow, in Essex. An invitation to their end-of-September coffee morning subsequently arrived and he and I, plus my son-in-law and a few friends, went along to enjoy the coffee and bacon rolls and to look around this well-known dealership. We weren’t the only ones; various car clubs were also present amongst a fine turnout of Rolls Royce and Bentley owners.

History

P&A Wood are an authorised Rolls Royce car dealer and the only authorised accident repair agent for the UK. They are also Bentley-approved service dealers. They specialise in sales, servicing, restorations and spares for the entire range of both makes, from 1904 to the present day.

Starting in 1967, in a workshop in Moreton, Essex, Paul and Andrew Wood’s business flourished and, following a first move to Great Barfield in 1970, eventually in 1988 they moved to their current site in Great Eastern. In 1995,

a new, traditionally-designed showroom, with two levels to display heritage models, was constructed. In 2014, a further similarly-styled showroom was opened to accommodate new Rolls Royce models. The company employs highly skilled crafts people and has an apprenticeship scheme.





Monty's Rolls Royce



Rolls Royce 20/25

Showroom

On the day, all departments were open to us and we were able to walk into the two-storey, carpeted showroom to inspect its contents. Amongst many enticing cars for sale was a 1932 Phantom II Continental with a mere 95,000 miles on the odometer – yours for £245,000, but it did come with its original factory tool kit. Adjacent to it stood a 1933 20/25, selling for a mere £77,500. It seemed like a large difference to me for such a similar car, but I'm sure the RR buffs amongst you could explain the reason. The rest of the cars consisted of models from most decades to even the latest electric Rolls. I did like the convertible Corniches, still my favourite.

Storage

This area was equally fascinating. Amongst many other cars, it housed a 1937 Mulliner Airline limousine once used by Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery. Originally ordered new by Sir Alan Butler, then chairman of De Havilland Aircraft Company, at his request the car had a rearwards sloping front windscreen because this design was "more aerodynamically effective" on aircraft tested in a wind tunnel – hmmm! Later given to the war effort, it was used by Montgomery who ferried some famous people in it including Churchill and Eisenhower. Montgomery kept the car for his own personal use after hostilities ceased. They say that there is a cigar burn on the dashboard walnut veneer from one of Churchill's cigars, but I could not find this.



Rolls Royce Phantom II



Inside the workshop at P&A Wood

Accessory Shop

I couldn't resist a look in the well-stocked accessory shop, mainly on the basis that there might be something on sale there that I could afford. I was amazed at what was available for Rolls Royce cars of every age. Coach lamps, fire extinguishers, radiator grilles, owners' manuals, picnic hampers; the list goes on. One modern example of the hampers really was impressive, a "must have" for the car that has everything. Billed as "A Feast for the Eyes", the hamper on display took over 500 hours to produce from a combination of saddle leather, oiled teak (I trust this was responsibly sourced) and polished aluminium. After folding out the piano black tables, you would see artisan crockery,

cutlery and glassware. The enticing detail continues – the crystal wine glasses and decanters were crafted in Hungary by a process that can trace its origins back 200 years. The 12-piece cutlery set was made in England and the porcelain plates were Wedgwood. Needless to say, everything was hand-made by artisan crafts people. They claim it is "everything you need for the perfect picnic for four people". I wonder what chef will have prepared for the food and wine... Oh, and the price for this heavenly concoction: £28,000! But hurry, the price for the new versions is going up to over £30,000!



Service & Repair Centre and Visitors' Cars

We were also allowed into the service and repair workshops with plenty of vehicles to see in several stages of completion. Unlike a modern garage, this had Roll Royces from across the last century up to the present day, all undergoing surgery. The phrase "You could eat your dinner off the floor" comes to mind.

So, apart from Rolls Royces and Bentleys, what else did the invited petrolheads bring to the party? Well, a couple of Jaguars (I liked the white one), a Mercedes SL, Astons by the bucketload, MG's, Morgans, a Lagonda, Minis, Golfs, Fords, Vauxhalls and much more.

Standouts for me included an odd racing car from the early 20th century. It had a V8 aircraft engine with exposed valve gear and a name that started with LUX – sadly, I did not get any other detail.



The 'Lux...' racing car

Of all things, a white Austin Allegro made an appearance. This 1976 1100 deluxe was completely original and had been sparingly used with only 5,534 recorded miles covered from new. It was stored from 1977 until 1999. If perfect Allegros are your thing, then look no further.

Probably the most expensive car present had to be the 2024 red Ferrari Daytona SP3. At around £1.7 million each, before extras, only 599 have been made. The "23" decals on this one cost £20,000 to add. All the cars were LHD and the owner admitted that he did not take it to Tescos. In fact he said that he doesn't visit Tesco's at all – Waitrose it is then! The horizontal stripes at the rear with the sensuous curves everywhere else do add up to a striking looking car. The 829 bhp V12 engine just finishes it off. Incidentally, a tailor-made special sold at RM Sotheby's in Monterey for £19.85M. How the other half lives...

Neil Shanley



1976 Austin Allegro 1100 deluxe



Front and rear views of the 2024 Ferrari Daytona SP3 (but not in a Tesco car park...)





Inside the servicing area



Some of the other classic cars outside ...

... including a Jaguar XK120 coupe and, best of all of course, a familiar white Jaguar 420!





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CHRISTMAS FILM QUIZ 2025

Name the film and one actor in the shot



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

Answers: 1) Danny DeVito, Matthew Broderick, Kristin Davis, Kristin Chenoweth - DECK THE HALLS; 2) Majorie Reynolds, Bing Crosby, Fred Astaire - HOLIDAY INN; 3) Macaulay Culkin - HOME ALONE; 4) James Stewart, Donna Reed, Kathryn Grimes - IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE; 5) Arnold Schwarzenegger, Paul Wright - JINGLE ALL THE WAY; 6) Bill Nighy - LOVE ACTUALLY; 7) Edmund Gwenn, Natalie Wood, Maureen O'Hara - MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET; 8) Michael Caine - THE MUPPETS CHRISTMAS CAROL



Figure 9

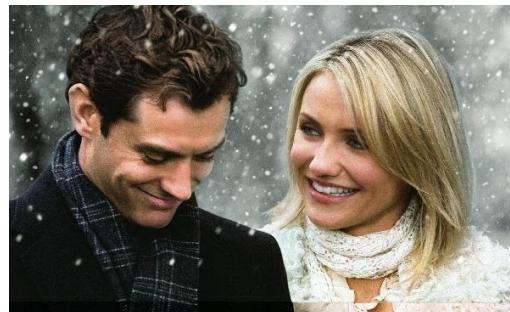


Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16

Answers: 9) Dudley Moore, David Huddleston - SANTA CLAUS THE MOVIE; 10) Jude Law, Cameron Diaz - THE HOLIDAY; 11) Chevy Chase, Beverly D'Angelo - NATIONAL LAMPOON'S CHRISTMAS VACATION; 12) Bing Crosby, Rosemary Clooney, Vera-Ellen, Danny Kaye - WHITE CHRISTMAS; 13) Cary Grant, Loretta Young - THE BISHOP'S WIFE; 14) Dan Aykroyd, Eddie Murphy - TRADING PLACES; 15) Bill Murray, Carol Kane - SCROOGE; 16) Will Ferrell - ELF



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