



# ESSEX THAMESIDE NEWS

N° 230, June 2026





## Chairman’s Message

**Steve Rider**  
srider@live.co.uk

Hello Essex Thameside members,

Hopefully, you have all been enjoying the remarkably warm weather of late and haven't been shy or reluctant to apply plenty of sun cream! As I write this, the temperature has at last cooled a little and the weather forecast is indicating more changeable—or should that be normal for this time of year—with some showers. The gardeners amongst us will certainly be welcoming some rain.

As I am sure you are aware, our summer barbecue is rapidly approaching and due to take place at 3.00pm this coming Saturday afternoon, 6th of June. Whilst the weather is unlikely to be as pleasant as it has been over the last week or so, fingers crossed that the weather gods are kind enough to the club for everyone to enjoy a great afternoon.

Apart from our own members we will be very pleased to welcome fellow enthusiasts from Area 33 of the Jaguar Drivers Club and also several enthusiasts from the local Porsche car club. Once again our regular caterers, Beck and Call, will be providing the fare. Almost everyone has now paid in advance for their food but, if you are one of the small minority still to pay, then our Treasurer Richard Gibby will be happy to receive your fee and provide your wristband on the door when you arrive.

As previously reported a substantial number of our members recently enjoyed a very successful spring

tour of East Anglia. If you weren't one of those fortunate enough to take part in the trip you can at least enjoy the excellent narrative (part 1) provided later in this Newsletter. Part 2 will follow next month. Thanks are due to our regular scribe Neil Shanley, and also to all those members who helped make the trip a great success.

We have an increasingly full diary with numerous shows and events coming up during the summer. In July we are planning to attend the Orsett Car Show and, if you have not enjoyed that event before, you can get a taste of what's in store by reading the enclosed page about it with a couple of photos from last year's show. The event certainly provides a range of activities and entertainment.

Finally, as you are no doubt aware, we have been making efforts to reach out to other Jaguar enthusiasts and to expand our region’s membership. I would ask you to join me and provide a warm welcome to all new members.

Best wishes and happy motoring.

Steve

## Committee Members

	<p><b>Richard Gibby</b> Treasurer, Editor &amp; Webmaster rwgibby@gmail.com</p>		<p><b>Ian Croxson</b> Secretary ian@thecroxsons.com</p>		<p><b>Lester Magness</b> Vice Chairman and Social Secretary lestermagness1@gmail.com</p>
	<p><b>Beverly Warren</b> Membership Secretary beverlyrlwarren@gmail.com</p>		<p><b>Neil Shanley</b> Committee member and Chief Correspondent neilshanley360@gmail.com</p>		<p><b>Vaughn High</b> Committee Member vaughn.high@sky.com</p>

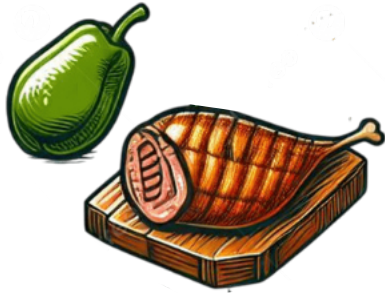
# For Your 2026 Diary

<b>Club Nights</b> <i>(Tuesdays at 7.00pm, Essex Police Sports &amp; Social Club, St Margarets Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DT)</i>					
30 June	28 July	25 August	29 September	27 October	24 November
22 December					

<b>Shows, Events and Trips</b>		<i>Contact:</i>
Sat 6 June	Summer Barbecue at the Essex Police Sports & Social Club	Lester
Sun 28 June	Hatfield Heath Festival, Hatfield Heath CM22 7EB	Neil
Sun 12 July	Orsett Classic & Vintage Show, Orsett Showground, Rectory Road RM16 3JU	Lester
	[also: Coffee & Cars with the JEC, Bridge Classic Cars, Pettistree IP13 0HH]	[Vaughn]
Sat 25 July	Essex Police Family Day, Sports & Social Club, Chelmsford CM2 6DT	Lester
Sun 9 August	Cambridgeshire Signature & Performance Motor Show, Duxford CB22 4QR	Ian
Sun 16 August	Lodges Coaches Car Show & Autojumble, High Easter CM1 4QR	Lester
	[also: J.E.C. 'Simply Jaguar' at the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu]	[Ilan]
Sun 30 August	Clacton Classic Car Show, Parish Fields, Little Clacton CO16 9ND	Ian
11–14 Sept	Isle of Wight trip	Vaughn
Sun 27 Sept	[Jaguars at Gaydon]	[Ilan]
Sat 4 October	[Coffee & Cars with the JEC, at Brooklands Museum]	[Ilan]
Date t.b.a.	Christmas Dinner Dance	Neil

## Contact Details:

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Steve Rider	07969 572010	srider@live.co.uk
Vaughn High	07910 787411	vaughn.high@sky.com



# SUMMER BARBECUE

3.00pm, Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June

Essex Police Sports & Social Club  
St Margarets Road, Chelmsford

Members' price:

**£15 p.p.**



with invitations to our  
neighbouring Porsche and  
Jaguar clubs



# Orsett Classic & Vintage Show 12th July 2026



Don't forget that one of our most popular shows is again on for this year. For a great family day out, and a must for all classic car lovers, this show is hard to beat. There are hundreds of classic, custom and vintage vehicles, bikes, scooters and trucks mixed with stalls, food outlets, trade stands, auto jumble, live music, kids' fairground, a licensed bar and much more to make this a memorable day for everyone.

Set in the borough of Thurrock, it lies 3 miles northeast of Grays. For those interested in spending a little time in the village of Orsett, it has a variety of interesting and listed buildings including Victorian workmen's cottages and Grade II-listed, timber-framed and thatched houses and grand houses dating from Charles II's reign. Oh, and two pubs have survived in the village centre: the Whitmore Arms and the Foxhound.

We have reserved spaces for our club, so contact **Lester Magness** for further details.



# The Rickinghall Classic Car Show, 17th May 2026

By Neil Shanley



On Sunday 17th May, we joined our neighbouring region, Essex & Suffolk Borders, for their annual show in the attractive village of Rickinghall. To quote Essex & Suffolk Borders flyer: "Set against the backdrop of the Village Hall and Green, this is a show that is as much about atmosphere as it is about cars. Expect a varied and interesting mix of vehicles, plenty of time to chat with fellow enthusiasts and an enjoyable day out for visitors of all ages".

And what of Rickinghall? The village used to support 13 pubs; most have now sadly gone, but you need not go thirsty as the Bell Inn and the Greyhound still survive. Famous people who lived in the village include; Mackenzie Bowell, Prime Minister of Canada in the 1890s, Basil Brown the archaeologist who discovered the Anglo Saxon burial ship in Sutton Hoo and Deborah Kerr, Hollywood actress.



Unfortunately, I did not get to see the village or have lunch in The Bell Inn—much to my wife's despair—as I was helping to judge the Best Car competition due to the sudden unavailability of the booked judge. I didn't know how hard it could be; our choice was based on condition, owner involvement, background history and anything rare about the car, but it seemed like every candidate suited those categories!

The eventual winners were a 1933 Ford Model Y 4-Door (3rd Place), a 1959 Borgward Isabella (2nd Place) and a 1983 Mercedes-Benz W123 (1st Place) with an honourable mention to a 1966 Jaguar E-Type.



The winning car had not been restored and looked as if it had just emerged from the Showroom. A simple 4-cylinder, 2.0-litre, low mileage car but “built like a tank” and, to my eyes, very desirable.

The Ford featured a straight front bumper since it was an early 1932-1933 car. Its shorter radiator/grille design left sufficient clearance at the bottom so that the starting crank could be inserted below it without hitting the bumper. Later in 1933, Ford extended the length of the radiator grille, which therefore required a dip in the bumper’s centre to allow access for the starting handle.



The Isabella was the coupe version and it was known for its glamorous design, as could be seen in this blue and white example. It was not just looks; the design featured a monocoque body and full independent suspension and was also available as a saloon, an estate and a convertible.

The E-Type was faultless and brought along by the former editor of Jaguar Magazine and well worth mentioning.

The rest of the field contained many cars that could easily have won including: a 1967 rare early Dodge Charger R/T – they started in 1968 – and immaculately restored, a Buckler Sports a sort of kit car, the last imported (to the UK) VW Beetle, a 1983 Ford Sierra XR4i one owner with original dealer applied side stripes, a Lagonda sports, a mini pick up, a 1929 Ford Model A (and matching owner), A very rusty original Austin and many, many more.



A great day out – we fielded about 15 cars – and we met a Traction Engine on the way home. Very British!!





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# 2026 Grand East Anglia Tour (the Bomber Command bit)

by Neil Shanley, with photos by Liz Croxson and Sean Landy



Fresh from his chart-topping tour of the Cotswolds in 2025, our Trip Supreme Commander Vaughn High (and Julie, of course) was faced with the unenviable task of reprising its success for 2026. Judging from the participants' responses to the 2026 Grand East Anglian Tour, he has!

Starting in Essex, we headed out to Lincolnshire via a stop in Cambridgeshire and eventually ending in Norfolk for the final leg travelling home to Essex via Suffolk. Still with me? Thirty members and fifteen cars (fourteen Jaguars and one VW) made the journey.

The City of Ely is around 44 miles from our point of departure at the delightful Birchanger Services on the M11. Amongst many others, Ely has two famous attractions: its Cathedral and Oliver Cromwell's house.

The former is a must see. You can either buy a day ticket or purchase a year's season ticket for the same price! A quick synopsis. It is a medieval cathedral often referred to as the "Ship of the Fens" due to its commanding view over the relatively flat landscape (Ely was once an island surrounded by marshes). It



was built between 1083 and 1376, i.e. almost 300 years or about as long as HS2 will take, and is in the Romanesque style with a Galilee Porch, Lady Chapel and Choir rebuilt in Decorated Gothic. Its most notable feature is the central octagonal tower, with lantern above, providing a large internal space. Along with the West Tower, the Cathedral presents an impressive structure which attracts a quarter of a million visitors per year.



A stone's throw away is Oliver Cromwell's house which is well worth a visit if only to understand the history of the man who became England's ruler as Lord Protector from 1649 to 1653. Cromwell has received a lot of bad press over time, but was he that bad? He was a small farmer who inherited control of various properties in Ely from his uncle who was the Tithe Collector for Ely Cathedral in the mid 17th century. His income and status rocketed, placing him in the ranks of the gentry. The trouble was that he also became a Puritan along the way. When he entered Parliament he found that the King, Charles I, ignored Parliament, its laws and Acts and simply treated England and its inhabitants as his own personal banker and obedient servants. This



eventually led to the English Civil War with Parliament, mainly led by Cromwell, fighting against Charles I. Despite have little prior experience, Cromwell found himself pretty good at military endeavours and played a key role in winning the war.

Following the Parliamentarians' success, Cromwell made sure that Charles would not interfere again by being one of the signatories on his death warrant. After refusing to be made King himself, he was made Lord Protector until his death in 1658.



Unfortunately for some, the Royal House of Stuart was restored two years later and those involved with the former king's execution were brutally punished.

Cromwell was already dead but that didn't stop the new King from exhuming Cromwell's body from Westminster Abbey and hanging it in 1661 as a "posthumous execution". His head was cut off and displayed on Westminster Hall's roof until around 1684. What was left was probably lost.

So, was he that bad? Well the brutality of his conquest of Ireland and his use of military force to retain power made him a sort of military dictator to some, but to others he was a hero for taking the country away from the King's autocratic rule. And he still had time to sire nine children!

Following this visit, some members went for a stroll in the city's historic area, some took a river walk and some just went to the pub. The latter was popular, but the beer was not cheap – probably a leftover from Cromwell's puritanical beliefs. Later in the day, we converged at the Kings Lynn Premier Inn, where dinner was served if you possessed the patience.



At 09.15 hrs prompt the following morning, after a briefing by Wing Commander Vaughn High, the squadron took off in formation to the Bomber Command Memorial Centre in Lincoln. This is a relatively new venue, having opened during 2018 as a memorial to RAF Bomber Command. Its centre point is a 31 metres tall spire made from Corten Steel, together with walls featuring the names of those who died serving or supporting Bomber Command in WWII. We were given a guided tour during which the extremely high casualty rates were made clear, both for the RAF personnel and other Allied Forces.





Following this poignant reminder of what over sixty combined nations achieved, we departed for the Petwood Hotel in Woodhall Spa, once frequented by 617 Squadron better known as “The Dambusters”. A well laid-out room had been reserved for us for lunch, which was excellent. I was surprised by the size of the hotel and grounds, which made the actual bar used by the aircrews look comparatively small. Nevertheless, it was packed with genuine mementoes of those long-gone-but-not-forgotten heroes like Guy Gibson and friends. A truly fascinating place to visit and possibly stay; the cheapest rooms were only £129 per night.

Some facts: Bomber Command started in September 1939 and ended in May 1945. It was made up of forces from the Commonwealth countries, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and also the USA, Poland, France Czechoslovakia and Norway. 126 squadrons served within the Command with the age of the aircrew ranging from between 19 to 25 years old. They flew 364,514 sorties, losing 8,325 aircraft and 57,207 crew – a 46% death rate. 8,403 were wounded and 9,838 were taken prisoner. The total killed, wounded or taken prisoner came to 75,446 or 60% (!) of the air crew total of 125,000



Inside the centre you could use interactive displays which told stories from eye witnesses to the events, interviews with survivors, members of the Resistance, service personnel, air and ground crew – all people from around the world. The Centre is named in honour of Ray Chadwick, the designer of the Avro Lancaster Bomber.



Departing slightly later than planned, we travelled to the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre situated in East Kirby. Its location is a WWII airfield with original control tower, outbuildings, chapel and a hanger museum. Afternoon tea and cakes were available in the on-site NAAFI. A guided tour of the Lancaster bomber housed there had been arranged. By the time we arrived, the venue was readying for closing although there were officially still around 3 hours to go, hence there was little time to enjoy the delights of the NAAFI or see much of the site or museum. But we still enjoyed the conducted tour of the Lancaster, despite being admonished for being late by the guide who referred to it 3 to 4 times during his briefing. Not really the best way to treat paying visitors.

So what about the star attraction? Well, it was built by Austin Motors in Birmingham as a MK VII Lancaster and was one of 22 Lancasters sold to the French Navy in 1952. It was later sent to New Caledonia in 1962 and given to the French Historical Preservation Society in 1964. After being overhauled in Sydney, it arrived at Biggin Hill, then moved to Lavenham and was sold to Lord Lilford in 1972, before ending up as a Gate Guardian for RAF Scampton. It was finally

purchased by Fred and Harold Panton in 1983. It is one of four surviving Lancasters in the UK and one of only two in taxiable condition. Of the other three, two are static displays in museums and only the one based in RAF Coningsby is airworthy and still flying.

The owners of this Lancaster were successful poultry farmers who lost their elder brother in a raid over Nuremburg and bought the Lancaster as a tribute to him. In 1981 they had bought part of RAF East Kirby to house the Lancaster which finally came to them in 1987. Since then, the museum has purchased other planes and artefacts. The airfield was built in 1943 and was used by 57 Squadron and 630 Squadron until the end of the war with the US Air Force taking it over until 1958. Much of it survives today with the Prime Meridian passing through it. This Lancaster here saw no active duty in the war but it saw service in the First Indo-China War in bombing raids. When it arrived in East Kirby, it was given the name "Just Jane" after a popular comic strip during the '40's by Norman Pett. It has appeared in a Dr Who Christmas special and is currently undergoing restoration to airworthy condition.

We departed about 17.00 hrs for a de-brief at the hotel HQ prior to our sortie to Norfolk the following morning. But that's for another time.





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