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Classic Vehicle Club



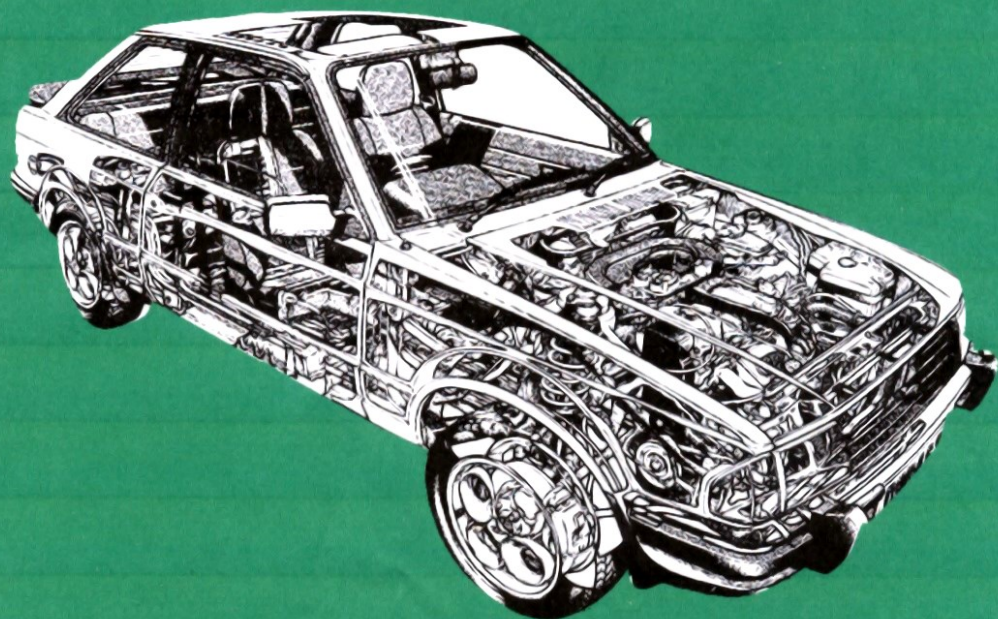
JULY 2024 | EDITION 390

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The Club meets at the Conservative Club, High Lane
on the **THIRD** Wednesday of each month @ **8.15pm**

Annual Club Subscription - £20

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HALL OF FAME AWARD RECIPIENTS

2012 - Chris Parr

2014 - Bob Plant

2015 - Ray Etchells

2016 - Fred Dean

2020 - David Bowden

2022 - Jane Harrop

2023- Steve Divall

& Mike Coffey

Disclaimer

Please note that the opinions of the Editor and any Contributors are not necessarily those of the Committee or Directors of the Club .

July 2024

Wednesday 17th July – Club Night. Annual Club BBQ & Impromptu Car Show.

Wednesday 24th July – Evening Run (postponed from soggy May) Open to all. Start & finish at The Aviator Pub, Lancasterian Way, Woodford SK7 1SA. Arrive at 06:45pm for a 07:00pm start. The (approx.) 20miles countryside route has been set by Jane Harrop and should mean arrival back at The Aviator about 08:00pm. Food served until 09:00pm but you are advised to book a table online or call 0161 388 2567 to be sure.

August 2024

Wednesday 21st August – Club Night. Details to follow.

Saturday 24th August – Poynton Show. To be held at Poynton Show Ground, South Park Drive, Poynton, SK12 1BS (**Club Stand Present**).

Wednesday 28th August – Evening Run . Details to follow.

September 2024

Sunday 1st September – Annual Club Show – Brookside Garden Centre – Open to H&HCVC members and non-members.
Wednesday 18th September – Club Night. A talk from Peter Walvin – “Driving (without the ‘R’)”.

October 2024

Wednesday 16th October – Club Night – A talk by Ken Coxey – “Communication”.

November 2024

Wednesday 20th November – Club Night. Details to follow.

December 2024

No Planned Activities At This Time.

OTHER EVENTS

July 2024

Sunday 21st July – Cheshire Classic Car Show (Morris Minor Day), Capesthorpe Hall, Macclesfield.

Sunday 28th July – Ashover Car & Bike Show, Chesterfield.

August 2024

Sunday 4th August – GVEC Glossop Car Show, Manor Park, Glossop - £5 charity entry fee per vehicle.

Saturday/Sunday 10th & 11th August – Astle Park Rally, Chelford.

Saturday/Sunday 17th & 18th August – Power & Passion Car Show. To be held at Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 6SG.

Sunday/Monday 25th & 26th August – Cheshire Classic Car Show (Jaguar & Mercedes Benz Day), Capesthorpe Hall, Macclesfield.

September 2024

Saturday/Sunday 14th & 15th September – North Rode Rally, Bosley, Macclesfield, CW12 2PW



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CHAIRMAN'S EDITORIAL

Keith Yates

As I write this piece, at the beginning of July, the weather is still damp and unseasonably cool/cold – my central heating is still endeavouring to raise the ambient temperature from a chilly 17/18C!!! At least British Gas will be happy with the situation. Anyway, I don't think that we'll be getting any sort of decent summer during 2024 so we'd best make the most of what's on offer. That leads me on to the Peaks & Dales Charity Run. Judith and I opened up the Marple Scout Hut on the morning of the 16th and the weather was starting to look very threatening; oh well, fingers crossed. By 08:30 it was persisting it down and the sky was very grey; oh joy, it looked like it was going to be another cold and wet day. Then, at about 09:00, the sky started to brighten, the rain stopped and a rarely seen sun started to burn off some cloud and brighten the day up. Yes, we were very lucky, the Weather Gods were kind to us and the run was well attended (circa 55 cars/crews). I would very much like to thank everybody that supported us, took part in the run, bought/ate some very good bacon rolls, helped set up and tidy up the Scout Hut, carried out the kitchen duties, registered cars and crews and marshalled at both the start and finish. Richard Burnham had put a lot of effort into setting another of his very interesting and well received runs that took cars/crews through some very nice scenery – the feedback from participants was extremely positive. Also, it was fantastic to see both Chris and Margaret at the start. They got a bit wet on

the way but helped to flag off the cars. The final amount raised for our 2024 charities hasn't yet been calculated but the expectation is that it'll be circa £1300 to be split between East Cheshire and St Anne's Hospices. Overall, I'd say that Sunday, 16th June was a good day for H&HCVC.

Before I leave the Peaks & Dales I'd just like to relay a little story that, I hope, will make you smile and perhaps think about life's coincidences. One of the P&Ds "traditions" is that a participating car is chosen as "Car Of The Day" and the owner is presented with a trophy. The criteria, so far as I have ever been made aware, is quite subjective in that the decision is made by a local "celebrity" and is based on whichever of the cars is their personal favourite and, given a free choice, they would most like to drive home. Well, we didn't have a "celebrity" to hand this year so the choice, as Chairman, was down to me; not something I'd done before so the responsibility was slightly daunting. Watching the cars roll up at the finishing point, I realised that there was a lot of very nice cars for me to choose from and that, in some respects, it would have been fairly easy for me to pick a car that was superbly presented, rare (ish) and just oozing the right amount of automotive gorgeousness. Top of the "obvious list" was a very cool and ultra tasty 1966 Mercedes Benz Convertible. Also and on my personal list was a fabulous and very rare Alpine (Renault) GTA V6 Turbo, a blue Triumph Stag with unusual chrome/spoked wheels,

Mike Coffey's Mercedes Benz Coupe or, out of far left field, a very nice tomato red Citroen 2CV. All great cars but, as I said on the day, I didn't pick any of them. I was swayed by a car that was, even in its day, out of the ordinary and a wee bit niche, a car that was still pretty much factory original and that was showing its age and patina with pride – my choice for "Car Of The Day" was, to me anyway, a fabulous 1972 SAAB 96 V4 in "Karolina Blue". So, it gave me great pleasure to present Janice Horner, the owner, with the trophy and to top off what, for her, had been a very good day out with her son and granddaughter in "Karolina", the family's pet name for the SAAB. So that was it really, job done and happiness all around; not quite though. Bear in mind that Janice isn't a member of H&HCVC, I hadn't met with her or her family before the day of the run and they had only gone on the run after her son had, by chance, found some publicity for it on the internet. Following the event, Janice very kindly contacted the Club, via Facebook, to say thank you. She explained that the Peaks & Dales had been the first ever run that she, her son and granddaughter had taken part in and that they had all enjoyed it immensely. Janice said that she was very pleased and proud to receive the "Car Of The Day" trophy and that "Karolina" had been so much appreciated. More poignant though, the SAAB had been bought for Janice by her late husband and her family and her husband had been cared for, towards the end of his life, by one of our charities, East Cheshire Hospice, a "wonderful place" according to Janice. Now then, was all of this coincidental and or serendipitous? I'll leave that for

you, dear reader, to decide but I think it makes a very nicely rounded story that perhaps underlines the positives of our annual Peaks & Dales Charity Run – long may it continue.

My March 2024 issue (Edition 386) editorial was mostly taken over by some facts and figures arising from the Club's accounts for the year ending 31/12/2023 and the costs associated with producing a monthly magazine in paper format. I feel that it's about time to provide members with an update as things have moved on. Firstly, my thanks go to those members who have taken the plunge and moved over from a paper magazine to an email based (electronic) one and also those members that have paid an additional contribution for continuance of their monthly, paper copies. There has been a reduction in paper copies issued from 58 per month to 31 and a percentage split from 54% paper issue : 46% email issue to 32% paper : 68% email. Printing and postage costs have also been variously and additionally reduced so that the projected cost of the paper magazine has been reduced from £1830 to £1174. So, each paper magazine was costing circa £2.60 each per month or £31.55pa whereas now, the cost is running at £1.96 per month or £23.52pa, a respectable saving. Overall and with an eye to savings whenever and wherever possible, the total costs projection was £3018 for the year but that has now reduced to £2142. So and as a result of all of this, the projected 2024 overspend has been reduced from £568 to circa "break even" or, possibly and with fingers crossed, a small surplus. Obviously, things can change and unexpected costs can arise but, generally speaking, if

things continue along the current and foreseeable path then the “bottom line” of our accounts to 31/12/2024 should look relatively healthy. My thanks to the Committee and to the wider membership for your patience, tolerance and cooperation in this matter.

A quick reminder. The Club’s annual vehicle show will be held on Sunday 1st September at Brookside Garden Centre. This, as ever, will be open to members and non-members alike and also to cars, commercials and motorcycles. Trophies will be awarded to the winners and runners-up in each of the categories. There will also be the usual raffle and tombola so, if you have any suitable “prizes” squirrelled away at the back of a cupboard, wardrobe or wherever you squirrel “stuff”, then please pass them over to a member of the Committee in good time – on the day is OK but it’s just that bit more to prep’ on what will be a busy day.

For some time now I’ve been pondering about holding an auction during one of our Club Nights. I haven’t finalized anything at this point as I’m not at all clear about how well such a thing may be supported. My initial thinking is to auction off what I would call “clean” automobilia/petroliana – things like car brochures, postcards, pictures, advertising, toys, badges, mascots etc, etc. What I really don’t want to get involved with is dirty, rusty and oily old car parts (eg a gearbox and rear axle from a 1951 Spudmobile) that have been sat in your shed for the last 40yrs. Prices, reserves and commission to the Club can be negotiated. If you think that this is something to take forward then please let me know. Come and have a chat or drop me an email.

Our June Club Night was something a bit different, a poetry reading night. Anthony Cross kindly and bravely (he’d never done a public reading before) took us through some of his own poems and some that other members had also written – one from Steve Bagnall was particularly touching. Thanks Anthony.

And so to bed as the great Zebedee used to say; well, the end of my editorial anyway. David and I hope that you enjoy this July edition and that we can all get those classics out there and turning rubber. I’ll be back here again next month and I’ll hopefully see you at the Club Barbecue.

This month’s front cover

proudly displays member John Minnikin’s superbly presented 1971 VW Beetle. This 1285cc (1300) car was registered in December 1971 and has been owned by John, as the fourth owner, for the last 15yrs or more. The car’s purchase, from the previous Milton Keynes based owner, was as a result of a search through Autotrader listings; John spotted the car, thought it looked a good one and the rest, as they say, is history. His instinct and intuition must have been working well though because the only real trouble the car has suffered from, now sorted, was some rough running that was traced to the devise that sits under the carburettor, works off the exhaust and warms the carb’ up. John enjoys the Beetle and uses it on club runs etc. The cover photograph was taken at the start of the April 2023 “Drive It” day run to Crewe Rail Heritage Centre (a Richard Burnham special).



New Member

For the second month running I'm very pleasing to announce that Ronnie Clayton has become the Club's latest member. Ronnie has managed to gather together a collection of cars, including:-

a 1970 Jaguar Series 2 E-Type

a Bentley Continental

a Lexus

an Audi A2 (a much overlooked/underrated car that is a modern auto design icon)

2005 MG ZT (this superb car is for sale – grab an MG “future classic” now)

A warm welcome to Ronnie and we hope that he enjoys his membership of H&HCVC.

Franny's

Mexico 70 Ford

Unless you've been living "off grid" as a hermit, you will have been unable to escape the mega-hype and media madness that's been swirling around the UEFA European Championship football tournament; the Euros as our media have snappily entitled them. Yes, it's been yet another occasion for the English media to dust off Sir Geoff Hurst and ask him "can England win it Geoff?" or to blather on about England's latest world beating (on paper at least) "golden generation" of footballers. The most recent "golden generations" could never quite "do it" out on the pitch but most of them have managed to find extremely lucrative positions as "pundits" on our TV screens. Jimmy Hill really has got a lot to answer for! It staggers belief that so many retired footballers (there are legions of them) can be paid so much money for talking a load of opinionated claptrap about football, in public and with their mates. Anyway and even though this piece has a footballing background, I've digressed from the main point. Time to get back on track.

Back in 1970, the FIFA World Cup finals were held in Mexico. England were defending champions and had a squad of players that, on paper (there's that expression again!), could potentially go "all the way". That was until England came up against West Germany in the quarter-finals. Looking fairly comfortable and with a 2-0 lead, England lost their grip. Marshalled by the majestic Franz Beckenbauer (Der Kaiser), the Germans turned the game

around and won it 2-3. England, the reigning World Champions, were out of the competition and to a winning goal that was scored by a short, stocky striker called Gerd Muller – one of the greatest and most prolific strikers ever. Basically, England had been "Mullered"! There was however, a little bit of compensation for the squad, they could get back to Blighty and laud it over their club teammates whilst driving around in their Ford provided Cortina 1600E "World Cup" cars.

Ford Motor Company, in what was then a great piece of publicity for them, loaned every member of the England squad (including backroom staff) one of their Cortina MkII range topping 1600E cars. The loan of these 30 cars was for 12 months (including the period of the actual tournament) with the cars being handed over at Wembley Stadium and under the shadows of the famous Twin Towers. Each of these cars were not only seen as being "aspirational" (the "E" stood for "Executive") but they also stood out too. On the front wings, Ford had placed the crossed flags of Mexico and the Union (not the English flag of St George) and the front doors had the logos "Chosen for England" on them. The England squad were seen in Ford adverts and publicity, along with "their" cars, beaming like Cheshire Cats and, seemingly, as happy as Larry. And why wouldn't they be? Footballers, even top players, weren't on great money in 1970 so to be handed the keys to a Ford Cortina MkII 1600E must have been a very big deal indeed. These days, a 1600E is, of course, a very highly sort after classic car; a "fast" Ford with a bit of a twist. It was (still is) seen as being very cool,

very stylish and with just enough Ford “flash” to make the difference. It had the lowered suspension package from the MkII Cortina Lotus, chrome featured Rostyle wheels, a sporty 1600cc cross-flow engine (with a twin-choke Weber and sports exhaust manifold), special “E” badges and an upmarket (Executive) interior that was enhanced by sports seats, walnut dashboard and additional gauges.

Interestingly, I was reading recently that one of the 30 “World Cup” Cortinas was coming up for auction sale after having been part of a car collec-

tion. The particular car had been loaned to one of my Manchester City heroes, the late and great Mr Francis “Franny” Lee (he of the famous MCFC Lee, Bell & Summerbee triumvirate). Lee had managed to buy the car, from Ford and for his wife to use, once the loan period was coming to an end. It is believed that Lee paid £600-£700 for the car in, presumably, 1971. The auction estimate? Well, the 1600E is expected to reach between £50,000 and £60,000 but, given its history and provenance, who knows? The (blue) sky’s the limit.

Peaks & Dales Charity Run 2024 Sponsor

Entry fees, sale of bacon barmcakes and other donations were very kindly enhanced by a generous contribution from our “Sponsor of the Day” – **R T Mycock & Sons Ltd.** This will all go towards helping our charities for 2024, East Cheshire Hospice and St Anne’s Hospice.



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A vintage black and white photograph of a tree-lined street. A metal fence runs along the left side of the road, with several people standing near it. The trees are tall and leafy, casting shadows on the road. The overall scene is peaceful and historical.

WOOLF BARNATO

**A Bentley Boy &
Bentley
Part II**

Thomas Wardle



1929

The Brooklands Double Twelve race, run early in May, was a sort of test bed for the upcoming Le Mans race that would run one month later. The Double Twelve was a 24 hour race, spread over two days and during daylight hours because night racing was banned at Brooklands. Barnato and Benjafield had a Speed Six car, its first official outing, that was going well until the dynamo drive sheared. "Benjy" removed the offending item and threw it into the back of the car but was later disqualified for breaking the rules.

W.O. Bentley described the 1929 Le Mans race as a walk over with Bentleys finishing:-

1st Barnato/Birkin – Speed Six
1763 miles @ 73.5 mph 174 laps

2nd Kidston/Dunfee – 4 ½ litre
1692 miles @ 70.5 mph 167 laps

3rd Benjafield/d' Erlanger – 4 ½ litre
1611 miles @ 67 mph 159 laps

4th Clement/Chassagne – 4 ½ litre
1590 miles @ 66 mph 157 laps

5th Bouriat/de Rothschild – Stutz
Blackhawk 1552 miles @ 64.5 mph 153
laps

At the beginning of the race the Chrysler and Stutz cars were pushing the Bentleys but most eventually fell by the wayside with only one Stutz and two Chryslers finishing the race. Barnato's driving style was such that you could practically set your stopwatch when he passed the pits, such was his consistency. Birkin was more of a racer. Towards the end of the race W.O. said his biggest problem was slowing the drivers down. On one lap, as he passed the pits at a crawl, Dunfee shouted "what do you want me to do – get out and push the bloody thing?". Although Barnato was the Chairman of the company, when racing he was a driver and he didn't pull rank on anybody. Each to their own job. Later in June, Barnato, partnered with Dunfee, won the 6 hour race at Brooklands in a Speed Six.

1930 – The Bentley and the Blue Train

In March 1930, Barnato was enjoying dinner whilst on board a yacht near Cannes. The conversation drifted onto the race that both Rover and Alvis had recently had with the train from St. Raphael to Calais, both cars having won. Barnato was not impressed with this achievement saying that he could beat the express "Blue Train" from Cannes to Calais. The following day, as the train left Cannes station, Barnato and Dale Bourne set off from the Carlton Hotel in Barnato's Speed Six. This

car had a two door fixed head coupe body with a shallow windscreen, the roof sloped down so much that the rear window was only two inches high. This meant that only a single rear seat, fitted sideways, was all that could be accommodated in the rear. They encountered heavy rain on the way to Lyon and fog and a puncture near Paris slowed them further. However, they managed an average of 43 mph over the 570 miles to Calais. Remember that in those days some roads were just dirt tracks. They crossed the Channel and continued their drive to the Conservative Club in St. James' Street. They arrived at 3.20 pm, four minutes before the train arrived in Calais. They had driven 700 hard miles.

Some reports say that the bet was struck in the bar of The Carlton Hotel. The amount of money reportedly bet varied between £100 and £200. The French Motor Manufacturers Association heard of this and fined Bentley £160 for racing on public roads. Barnato said he did this privately and not as Chairman of Bentley Motors but the French would not listen and also barred Bentley from that years Paris Salon. There is a rumour that the fine was never paid.

1930 – Racing

In the Brooklands Double Twelve race, early in May, Barnato and Clement triumphed in a Speed Six. For the Le Mans race, one month later, Bentley entered four cars. Barnato with Kidston and Clement with Watney were both in Speed Six's. Benjafield with Ramponi and Birkin with Chassagne were both in 4 ½ litre blower cars. Mercedes had Rudi Caracciola and Christian Werner

in a works 7 ½ litre, supercharged car.

At the start of the race the Mercedes was in the lead but Birkin pushed hard on the opening laps and overtook the Mercedes. A short while later however, he stripped the tread off one of his tyres and that meant a visit to the pits. Barnato and Kidston now took on the role of pushing the Mercedes. Through the night the lead changed more than several times as the two cars harried each other. The Bentley pushed the Mercedes to its limits, causing the supercharger to be operating almost continually instead of the emergency use only for which it had been designed. At 03.15 am “Babe” started to open up a gap which slowly increased to 90 seconds, then 2 minutes. He kept pushing and the headlights in his mirror became the tail lights in front of him on Mulsanne. At 04.20am the Mercedes pulled into the pits for the last time with water leaking from a blown head gasket. Caracciola told W.O. that he was surprised that the Bentley had pushed him as hard as it had; it wasn’t how the Mercedes team had expected the race to run. After the demise of the Mercedes, W.O. instructed the cars to slow by 10mph because there were no other cars close to the Bentleys. The final positions were:-

1st Barnato/Kidston – Speed Six, 1818 miles @ 75.5 mph, 179 laps

2nd Clement/Watney – Speed Six, 1756 miles @ 73.7 mph, 173 laps

3rd Lewis/Eaton – Talbot A090, 1644 miles @ 68.5 mph, 162 laps

Birkin/Chassagne 4 ½ Blower, 1400 miles, retired – engine

Davis/Dunfee 4 ½ litre Blower, 212 miles, retired – engine

Although the Birkin/Chassagne car retired they actually went further than the sixth placed car. This race was the third win in succession for Barnato and the fourth win in succession for Bentley.

The Final Days

The Wall Street crash and subsequent financial downturn hit businesses hard, especially the luxury car market. Bentley was no exception to this. Barnato wanted to speak with W.O. regarding the situation and suggested that they meet up at Barnato’s club for a discussion.

W.B. - “Thank you for coming. I feel that we have worked well together over the past six years. As you know, two mortgage payments are due shortly, one for £40,000 and one for £25,000 and I have spoken to my business advisors about the situation. We have concluded that up to the depression we have turned a small return but since then that small return is now a loss.”

W.O. - “Where are you going with this Woolf?”

W.B. - “I do have the future of the company at heart and since 1925 have pumped a lot of money into it. Sadly, I cannot continue. We have looked at reducing the workforce and other cost cutting measures but even that will not bring the company back to profitability for a number of years and the losses, for which I am guarantor, will continue. Sad to say that I am unable to meet the mortgage payments to London Life.”

W.O. - “And if you don’t make the pay-

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ments they will call in the loan?"
W.B. - "If we cannot find another guarantor or find somebody to take over the company, yes. I am sorry W.O. but I cannot prop up the company any longer."

W.O. - "If it wasn't for your intervention in 1925 the company would have only lasted a few months. You saved the company and gave us the finest car in the world but this is a huge blow as you can imagine. If the company does go bankrupt what will happen to the men?"

W.B.- "I will personally pay them a months wages and try to find them work elsewhere."

W.O. - "That is more than generous."

W.B. - "They are a great bunch of men whom I have got to know well over the years. I am sorry to have to do this, you are a great engineer and I am sure lots of companies will be willing to take you on."

They shook hands and W.O. left.

Woolf Barnato telephoned Napier's to see if any decision had been made which, unfortunately, it hadn't.

THE RECEIVER

On the 11th July 1931, two mortgage payments, one for £40,000 and one for £25,000, were due to be paid. Barnato said that he would be unable to meet these demands so the London Life Association called in the receivers. Although W.O. did not ask Barnato directly he was never sure how his decision had been influenced by his business advisers, the bad press in America regarding the state of businesses generally

and the fact that America was suffering more from the slump than Britain. The receiver, Patrick Frere, got on well with W.O. and worked with an air of optimism regarding Bentley Motors. After a few months the rumour was that a company of good repute was willing to take on Bentley. That company turned out to be Napier. Napier had built good quality cars up until 1925 when they had decided to concentrate on the production of aero engines. They now however, wanted to return to building cars again. At the end of July the receivers were happy to allow W.O. leave and to allow him to start work designing an engine at Napier's request. Terms were agreed with Napier and the papers were presented to the courts for their approval for Napier to take control of Bentley. It seemed, to all concerned, like a formality. On the day that the court was in session, Napier's representative stood up and presented to the court their price. At that moment, another gentleman in the court rose and announced that he represented the British Central Equitable Trust and offered an increased sum for the assets and goodwill of Bentley Motors. After a long pause the Napier representative rose to his feet and requested an adjournment to allow him to consult with his principals. This the Judge agreed to. After a short adjournment, everybody reassembled in the court and the Napier's barrister announced his higher bid. When he had finished the barrister for the British Central Equitable Trust rose to his feet to increase his bid. At this point, the Judge intervened to tell everybody that he was a Judge not an auctioneer and that the court would again be adjourned until 04.30pm when sealed bids would

been admitted to the British Central Equitable Trust for the benefit of the company's shareholders. But, and this was a big but, who were they? W.O. did not know who his future employers were and did not find out for quite a few days.

One evening, W.O.'s wife went to a cocktail party and when she returned told her husband "I know who owns the Trust. His name is Arthur Sidgreaves. Do you know him?"

"Yes" replied W.O., "he is the managing director of Rolls Royce."

NB. If you want to look into the winding up of Bentley and follow the "behind the

scenes" activities then read "The conspiracy to kill off Bentley Motors" by Alan C Smith online; be warned, it is quite complicated.

Question – I have read that Woolf Barnato spent £750 (some say £1000) per week "socialising". This would have been 1930(ish). How much is that in today's money? Answer at the end of the magazine.

£1000 in 1930 is today worth £15000 to £20000. If his spending is as reported, it puts today's footballers in the shade!

This & That, Bits & Bobs and a few Odds & Sods

The Professionals – A Quick Question

In last month's magazine (June, Issue 389) I asked the following question: -

Question: The TV series The Professionals first hit our screens in 1997. The three main characters, George Cowley, William Bodie and Ray Doyle, have seemingly always been associated with driving Ford products, namely a Ford Granada, a Ford Capri and a Ford Escort RS 2000. However, can you name the cars that each of the characters used during the first series?

Answer: Initially, in 1977 and during

Series One, the "main" cars were mostly provided by British Leyland. George Cowley was seen to drive a red BL Princess and then a yellow Rover 3500 SD1, William Bodie's machine of choice was a very tasty, white Triumph Dolomite Sprint and Ray Doyle got his right foot planted in a blue Triumph TR7 (occasionally, a brown Rover P6 too – presumably when the Speke built TR7 was in dock!).

Buy Your Own Car Museum

Here's a question for you; have you ever fancied owning your own car museum? I'm sure that this is the secret dream of many a car enthusiast, not least of them me. I just feel that it would be wonderful to display some classics with a load of automobilia and to share these with fellow car enthusiasts. Anyway and if this is your dream too, the Moretonhampstead

Motor Museum (Devon) is up for sale. Interested? Well, have a good look and a rummage at the back of your knicker/sock draw then. If you can find about £2mill that you'd forgotten about then the museum could be yours. This was a retirement project for the car collecting owner, 73 year old Mr Frank Loft. He's hoping to sell the museum as a going concern but, in the meantime and if a buyer can't be found, the building is up for sale at £445,000 and the whole classic car collection (150 cars) is due to go for auction sale, for an estimated total value of £1.5mill, in October. If, like me, your search has only yielded a Paddington Bear 50p and a ball of fluff, then you may wish to just pay a visit to the museum before it finally closes at the end of August. Have fun.

Consul Classic – “Classic” or Oddball?

During the mid-1950s to the early-1970s, Ford (Great Britain) marketed several of its cars under the “Consul” badge rather than (predominantly) “Ford”. So and for example, the so called “Three Graces” range (basically the MkII Zephyrs et al) was made up of the Consul, the Zephyr and the mighty Zodiac. Let us also not forget that when the “Ford” Cortina MkI was launched in 1962 it didn't have a Ford badge on the bonnet, it had a Con-

sul badge and was marketed as a “Consul Cortina”. When the late and very great Jim Clark was seen driving the wheels of his “Lotus Cortina” to yet another BTCC win, he was actually driving a “Consul Cortina Lotus”. Strangest of all of the Consuls must surely be the Consul Classic. This car was the creation of Ford (GB) design studios and, in its time, was seen as rather “avant-garde”. The problem was that its styling paid homage to and was very influenced by, American designs of the 1950s – the front grille, light clusters, interiors, colours, chrome, fins and the reverse angle of the sloping rear window all screamed Americana; a fashion that was, by then, perhaps starting to lose favour with the buying public. The other downside of the car was that despite its “modern” looks, it was, under the skin, quite “traditional”, relatively heavy and expensive to build. Ford of America took over Ford of Britain in 1961. They had a good look around and were said to be not only incredulous at the costs associated with building a Classic but also the low profit margin on each one. The order went out that the Consul Classic had to be replaced immediately (hence the short production run). So, the Consul Classic, is it a “classic” or just one of those quirky oddball cars that the motor industry seems to throw up every now and again? Oddball cars, now



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