From the Garage Floor
Advice from ‘Dino’ -
Buying a Vintage Car

Musical Missive
by Jeff “Two-Tone Boogie”

Plus Diary Events
And much more...
Election Blues

At last the election is over and we can have a break from the constant proclamations of politician’s trying to persuade us we can trust them. Resignations have come left, right and centre (literally) and the people who should probably be fired are the pollsters who got it completely wrong. But then again, you never quite know what’s going to happen in an election.

Take the General election of 1945 for example. The previous election had been ten years earlier as they were suspended during the war. Churchill, the favourite by a long stretch with an 83% approval rating, had led the country victoriously through five years of hardship. He was hugely popular and nobody expected a change of government.

But what caused this landslide victory for Labour. Many still blamed the Conservatives for the policy of appeasement which allowed Hitler to become so powerful but the Beverage report, published in 1942 and eagerly adopted by the labour party, was a major factor. Proposing nationalised health care, state-funded education and a new housing policy, it was extremely popular. The war weary people of Britain had been promised a better life after the war and they were determined for change. They just didn’t think Churchill was the man to make that change.

It’s a shame that much of the VE Day Celebrations this year have been overshadowed by the election but there were still many events to choose from and a lot of effort was put into their organisation. It’s still such a privilege to meet veterans and those that lived through this pivotal period of our history.

Ian

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From the Garage Floor
Thinking of buying a Vintage Car?
Here are a few tips and tricks from Dino that might help when viewing your potential purchase for the first time.

Hello again everybody
Since my last article it’s been the start of a busy season. We have had ‘drive it day’ and saint George’s day as well as the 70th year VE celebrations and a few early shows, so I hope some of you have been able to get out and enjoy some of these events.

As I said at the end of my last article there may be some of you who are considering purchasing a classic vehicle for the first time, so I am going to look at some buying guidelines which may help. Many of these suggestions will also apply to modern vehicles as well.

When looking to purchase a vehicle there are a few considerations to take into account.

You will need to have somewhere safe, secure and protected to keep the vehicle. Old cars can be fragile and valuable. Many vehicles are obviously now getting very old and as such parts are becoming quite difficult to find, so think about whether the make/model you are looking at has good availability of parts. Are there any parts needed and if so what will be the potential cost. Has the vehicle been fully restored recently or in the past? It is so easy to overlook this and then find that in a couple of years time when something is needed for servicing or repairs that they are impossible to find or incredibly expensive. This can then lead on to the vehicle being parked up and neglected and left unused sitting in a garage, which defeats the whole point of owning the car in the first place...

There are lots of owners clubs out there and I would strongly advise that you at least look at, if not join the relevant one, ideally before you buy the car. You may well be able to get some useful advice in advance and they often have cars for sale.

Once you have considered the above and have found a car to view, the fun starts. When you first see a car, speak to the owner and find out exactly what’s
been done to it, how recently and how much the car has been used since. This should give you a good idea of what you may be purchasing. Arrange to go and see the car and if possible take somebody along with you, ideally a mechanic, classic car enthusiast or somebody who knows that particular marque well.

When you first go to see the car take with you a small magnet, a good torch, a blanket and a cloth. When you arrive at the car put your hand on to the bonnet to see if the car is warm. There could be a genuine reason for this, such as it has been moved out of the garage or the owner has used it earlier if it’s late in the day. However, it could be that the owner is trying to disguise a potential starting problem or cold running issue. So if the engine does show signs of being warm, quiz the owner as to why and maybe even consider arranging another time to view the car when the car is cold.

Before you do anything else, have a good look around the car and check the paint work and body work looking for signs of rust, poor quality repairs, damaged paint and any obviously missing parts or trim. Now is the time to use the magnet you brought with you. As you walk around the car just put the magnet onto the car body, particularly around the wheel arches and bottoms of the doors, wings and anywhere where it is likely to rust. This is usually in areas which can trap mud and water. If the magnet sticks then obviously there is good metal, if it doesn’t the panel has been repaired with filler and could be hiding a multitude of sins. This then needs to be investigated further. Small amounts of filler are ok on a repair but with a classic vehicle it is far better that any repairs are done using traditional repairs such as lead loading - which ensures that you only have metal in the car. This is becoming a lost art but is still practiced by restorers and people like myself.

If the magnet sticks then obviously there is good metal, if it doesn’t the panel has been repaired with filler...

Once you are satisfied with the body and chassis, next look at the engine bay. At this stage you don’t want to start it you are just looking for the general condition and cleanliness. Look for any signs of leaks or areas which are very clean, which could indicate that there has been a problem which has been cleaned or a new part fitted. It is nice to see a clean tidy engine but one which shows honest signs of use. Look at the radiator for signs of rusting or deposits. This could indicate a leak or overheating problem. Also check the general condition of the radiator as these are quite expensive items to replace - especially on some of the vintage cars with the very large rads. Now you are probably wondering why I suggested bringing the cloth. This has three uses. Firstly, if the car is wet you can use it to dry an area to check the condition of the paint, secondly, if the paint is flat or oxidised, wet the cloth and polish a small area to get an indication of what the paint will look like when polished and buffed and lastly use it for wiping the dipstick when checking the oil. It is important not to overlook this check as it gives a good indication of how well the car has been looked after and the general condition of the engine. Ideally the oil should be golden brown and at the correct level within reason.

Once you are satisfied with the body and chassis, next look at the engine bay.

It generally costs more but is worth it. Finally put the blanket on the floor, lay on it and using the torch have a really good look underneath. You are looking for rust on the chassis and floor areas and also along the sills which are the parts where the body connects to the underside. Also while you are looking underneath, check the exhaust system and have a look at the steering and suspension. You may not be able to test it fully but you can pull it to see if there is any excessive movement in any bushes and again look for general condition and rust.

Once you are satisfied with the body and chassis, next look at the engine bay.
Once the engine has warmed up it should settle down to a steady idle speed and should be quiet and free of any knocking or rattling noises. Some older engines can sound a little tappets which is a kind of rhythmic metallic ticking noise. This is not normally anything to worry about but may be worth mentioning. Whilst the owner is still in the car get him to switch on the lights, indicators and brake light and sound the horn to ensure these are all working.

Now it's time for the test drive. Whilst you are sitting in the car check all the gauges and switches to make sure everything is working. Also try the windows and interior light. The owner may let you drive providing you are insured but some owners prefer to drive it to a car park or somewhere safe for you to try it. This is not a problem as it gives you a good opportunity to check on a few things. During the test drive you want to be listening for clonks, bangs and rattles and try to establish where they are coming from and to listen to the gearbox for any rotating metal noises or crunching when changing gear. This could indicate worn bearings or worn synchromesh. If there is a clonk as you pull away this can be caused by the Propshaft UJ or worn differential. Obviously unless you know what you are talking about you may not be able to diagnose exact faults but at least you can highlight it and use it in negotiations.

When you do drive the car there are some things to consider. When moving off ensure the clutch is smooth and that the biting point is not right at the top or bottom of the pedal travel. This could indicate a worn or badly adjusted clutch. Also look for smooth gear changing and positive steering without too much play. The other important area is the breaking. The breaks should be progressive and not too hard or soft and should stop the car squarely and efficiently. The handbrake should work smoothly and hold the car on a hill without rolling. Many older cars have cable brakes but they will still work well if correctly adjusted.

Whilst driving or being driven keep a look out for any smoke especially when pulling away, accelerating or under load, up hills for instance. There should not really be any at all but due to the age and tolerances of older vehicles a small amount may be acceptable but do investigate fully as otherwise you may be looking at an expensive engine re-build.

Obviously old cars are not going to be perfect and when they were made they often had far greater tolerances so steering and gear changing will not be the same as modern standards. It is important to remember this when purchasing a vintage or classic car but after saying that it should still be a relatively easy experience and not a nightmare.

Following on from this article my next one is going to cover a brief history of the wartime Jeep and highlight the differences between the models. I am also going to highlight a few weaknesses and things to look out for if purchasing one.

Until then remember a car is for life not just for high days and holidays.

Happy motoring!

Dino

Dean - known as “Dino” has a garage in Biggin Hill which specialises in classic and vintage vehicles and is a collector of vintage, classic and military cars. Dino’s Vintage Motor Works 07866 699969 deanwhybra@aol.com

Finally ensure that all the instruments, switches and fixtures and fittings are all present...
To prevent epidemics in Britain’s crowded air raid shelters, London boroughs are regularly making tests of the air and disinfecting the shelters.

Here a member of the Finsbury health staff sprays bedding of a shelter user.
The Jean Bentley Dance (Orchestra) Band

With some band members having played in bands during the 1940s there is a wealth of experience in this group of musicians.

The Jean Bentley band has been playing locally in the Sevenoaks area for a number of years with its more steady recent membership been drawn through local musicians many of which are in the Sevenoaks symphony orchestra.

Jean the dance leader developed a love of the music through her grandfather who was a wonderful pub pianist and had the enormous skill of hearing a tune once and then being able to sit down and play it. Her Great Aunt was also very musical and ran an operatic society in Plymouth. Her father too filled the house with his beautiful bass voice and the house was always full of sheet music from the thirties. Her brother formed a career in music but Jean followed in her mother’s footsteps training to be a physiotherapist. It was during her Physiotherapy training at the Middlesex Hospital in London that Jean was first introduced to dance band music. She was still a keen viola player, having played with the local Sevenoaks orchestras and soon joined the hospital’s music society. From there she was invited to an inter hospital musical event which played all the beautiful music from the thirties and forties with music drawn from the BBC libraries. Jean persuaded the Middlesex music society to play something similar and using her contacts with the Kent Youth orchestra to complement key missing players of the orchestrations Jean went on to perform at her hospital Balls and other musical and social events. This took jean through to see some of the beautiful ballrooms in London, both in hotels and dance halls.

Jean fell in love with the beautiful Rivoli ballroom in Crofton Park south East London where she played but more regularly danced and which still remains intact in its refurbishment in the 50s with its magnificent dance floor. She had grown to love the dancing side and though a ballet dancer when young was introduced to Lindy hop where she learnt with Ryan Francois and then started attending Peggy spencer’s ballroom classes in Penge.

The Jean Bentley dance orchestra predominately plays music from the era of the dance bands and big bands of latter years and the players are versatile to allow different combinations and numbers of players. Over the years the group has tended to morph away from the brass section in favour of the horn section and lighter orchestral sound using a front line of oboe, flute and violin along with alto, tenor and soprano sax. Although they call themselves a band and love their Dixieland numbers they are perhaps better described as a dance orchestra, perhaps more in keeping with the palm court orchestras.

The Jean Bentley Dance Orchestra is currently running Tea dances on a Sunday afternoons at the Plaza suite in the Stag Theatre Sevenoaks with DJ Ian Bayley from the 1940s Society. Local dance teachers Dave and Sandra Coppen –‘Shall we dance’ provide tuition at the event but also run classes locally in the Sevenoaks and South London area. (see advert on page 17).
Fredrico “Fred” Elizalde

by Jeff ‘Two-Tone Boogie” A.W.G.H.

Critical of British Dance Band music.... Student of the Madrid Royal Conservatory.... Music prize winner at the age of 14... Classical and Jazz pianist.... Composer.... Conductor and band leader Fredico “Fred” Elizalde is our subject for this issue of ‘Musical Missive’.

Fredrico’s early years of study were spent studying piano at the Madrid Royal Conservatory where he won first prize for piano at the age of 14. His parents, both natives of Madrid were very proud of their first son Joaquin (a diplomat), and were equally proud of Fredico, better known as Fred when he left home to study at St Joseph’s College in London and in the 1920s started to study Law at Stanford University USA. Although Fred was well studied in law he had a massive interest in music, as this interest grew so did the urge for Fred to leave law and turn to music for a career. He left school in 1926 embarking on a career as a Jazz band leader, leading the Stanford University Band playing at the Baltimore Hotel in Los Angeles while continuing to study composition under Ernst Bloc.

It was in 1926 that he made his first recording with the Cinderella Roof Orchestra. Just after these recordings were made Fred returned to England and Cambridge University to study law. It did not take him long to start a new band, the Quinguaginta Band which was very successful and had great influence on the development of British Jazz music in 1927 and onwards. Fred was very critical with his comments about British Dance Band music and worked hard to bring in some of the American idea’s of rhythm. This lead to his making various recordings for both Brunswick and Decca with his band. Although they recorded under several ensemble names these recordings became very popular and the more up-tempo and bouncy of these recordings are very hard to find nowadays. Players in the band varied from the very best of the days British and American players such as Harry Hayes and Jack Jackson to Adrian Rollini and Bobby Davis, with the readers of the days Melody Maker magazine the band was voted best Dance Orchestra. This vote lead to more interest by the listener’s and more comments of dislike from the older members at the Savoy Hotel where he made several broadcasts for the BBC, who did not help his case, in July of 1929 his contract expired and was never renewed.

However at the same time Fred composed a set of musical works that bought together the best attributes of Jazz and European concert music, these works included ‘The Heart of a Nigger’ in 1927 - 1928 and ‘Bataclan’ produced by Sergei Diaghilev. Fred’s association with Siegfried Wagner started in 1928 when he visited Germany, where as well as in Belgium and the Netherland he conducted various orchestras. Also in 1928 he wrote the complete musical works for Pola Negri’s final silent film ‘The Way of Lost Souls’ also known as ‘The Woman He Scorned’.

On his return to England Fred started a tour in Scotland but with the onset of the Great Depression the tour was not well received and in 1929 Fred broke up his band, which in-turn meant a return to America for many of his American players. In 1930 Fred was leading a new band at the Duchess Theatre in London, although this was successful he accepted the job as conductor of the Manila Symphony Orchestra, which marked his return to Manila. It was only at this point at the age of 23 that he received his parent’s consent to continue with his love of working the music world, which was a big release for Fred as his parents always wanted him to work in law. Paris, Madrid and
Fred had a close association with Maurice Ravel and Darius Milhaud in Paris in 1931 to 1933, he also conducted the first performances of some of Milhaud’s musical works. During this time in Paris he also composed a number of songs, which were used in the play ‘Pajara Pinta’ by Rafeal Alberti. After a short stay in Spain Fred returned to France and enrolled in the Requeti troops of Navarre, a Basque regiment and fought during the Spanish Civil War until 1939, although he was wounded and decorated for his efforts. During the WWII years Fred lived in confinement in a house in Bayonne, France under German occupation, during which time he composed many works of music including opera’s, violin concertos and many more.

His return to Manila in 1948 to conduct the Manila Symphony Orchestra, also lead to Fred becoming president of the National Radio Broadcasting Company. Fred also conducted a number of orchestras in Japan and led the London Symphony Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall during the Festival of Britain in 1951. Outside of music Fred was an excellent sharpshooter, winning gold medals as captain of the Philippines shooting team in 1954.

From operas to hot Jazz, from violin concertos to the dance music of the 1930s and 1940s, from light music compositions to symphonic poems Fredrico “Fred” Elizalde has left behind him a grand history and contribution the world of music. He passed away on 16th January 1979.
**Events Diary**

**22nd May 2015**
*The 1940’s Society - Sevenoaks*
*A Schoolboy in London - 1940 to 1945*

Ray Broomfield will be giving a presentation about his life in London during the war. This illustrated talk will include details of his school days and coping with life between 1940 and 1945. Ray will also be bringing along original wartime items from his collection.

Come along and find out what life was like for the children of the Blitz.

8pm at Otford Memorial Hall near Sevenoaks, Kent.

Further details from Ian on 01732 452505 Admission £3

**24th May 2015**
*Jean Bentley Tea Dance*
*At the Stag Theatre Plaza Suite, Sevenoaks 2.00pm - 4.30 pm*

With dance lessons included and the Jean Bentley Dance Orchestra supplying the music what better way to spend the afternoon.

Tickets £7.50

Order Now from the Box Office on 01732 450175 or online at www.stagsevenoaks.co.uk

**6th June 2015**
*The Spitfire Bounce 3pm to Midnight. Otford Village Memorial Hall, Otford, Kent TN14 5PQ*

The best music from the forties and early fifties

Dress to Impress, 1940/1950s civilian or allied uniform

8 DJs - 9 hours, stalls, Music, Dance & Fun

Tickets £10 All Day
Details: 07931 674 158 or www.preserversofsound.com

**30 May 2015**
*Batley Vintage Day 2015*

Batley is off the M1 exit at junction 40
From 10:00 to 17:00 in the town centre this FREE event looks like it will be a great day out.
There is a lot going on through the day with entertainment, vehicles, vintage stalls, and loads more. There is also a dance being held the night before which might be of interest if you are planning of making a weekend of it. There are far more details on the website at: www.batlevintageday.co.uk so do take a look.

**14 June 2015**
*Festival of Flight*
*Biggin Hill Airport - Postcode: TN16 3BH (Greater London)*

This is the 2nd in the series of air shows at Biggin Hill after they ceased in 2010. This years show will have an attendance of 18,000 which is capped following a sell out in 2014. If you are interested please email info@bhfof.com for full details. This show will feature a unique Red Arrows, BBMF, Typhoon Display as well as a simulated bombing of the airfield and fighter scramble.

**14 June 2015**
*RAF COSFORD AIR SHOW*
*RAF Cosford - Postcode: WV7 3EX (West Midlands)*

WWII Re-enactors & Vehicles required for a WWII Living History Area at the RAF Cosford Air Show 2015. Large area with multiple exhibits planned. Contact via email for interested parties please. camping on Saturday night available.

Visit: www.CosfordAirShow.co.uk

**22nd - 26th July 2015**
*The War & Peace Revival*
*RAF Westhanger, Folkestone Racecourse*

A huge military vehicle event with masses of stalls, vehicles and entertainment. A real experience if you’ve never been. Check the website for full details. Visit www.thewarandpeacerevival.co.uk for more details.

**25 & 26 July 2015**
*Leyburn Home-Front Vintage Fair as part of the town wide Leyburn 1940s Weekend*

Indoor and outdoor stands at Thornborough Hall, Moor Road Leyburn. DL8 5AB

Music dancing and refreshments spiffing atmosphere. True vintage fashions, jewellery, home-wares, menswear, militaria, vintage toys and games, hats and accessories and more. Admission is FREE.

Details: 07779342782

**31 July 2015**
*The 1940’s Society - Sevenoaks*
*The Royal Engineers - Bomb Disposal*

A display and presentation by Capt. Mike Authers

In September 1940, after just two weeks of the Blitz, there were more than 3,700 unexploded bombs waiting to be dealt with in London alone. Capt. Mike Authers will be displaying ordnance and explaining the role of the Royal Engineers and how they dealt with the dangers of defusing UXBs, Butterfly bombs and firebombs.

8pm at Otford Memorial Hall near Sevenoaks, Kent.

Further details from Ian on 01732 452505 Admission £3

**19th September 2015**
*The Coco Club*
*Enjoy the style and glamour of the 1930s At the Stag Theatre Plaza Suite, Sevenoaks - 7.30 pm*

This vintage nightclub features period music from Empire Radio and live performances by renowned musicians ‘The New Arcadians’. This is an opportunity to wear your best classic clothing and enjoy an evening of fabulous music, social dancing and a unique atmosphere.

Tickets £15.00 Order Now from the Box Office on 01732 450175 or online at www.stagsevenoaks.co.uk
I hope you have found this issue both interesting and informative and would like to receive it on a regular basis.

Please use this form (or a copy) or join online at www.1940.co.uk if you would like to receive the magazine throughout 2015.

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