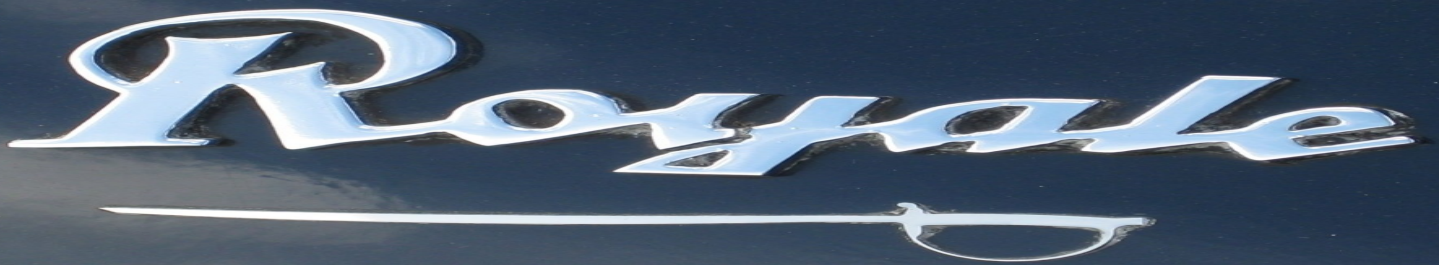


# Royale Owners Club



News

Spring 2012



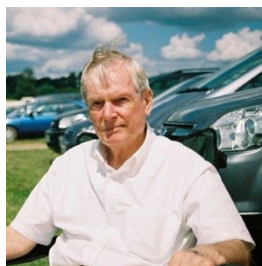
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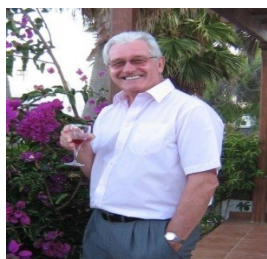
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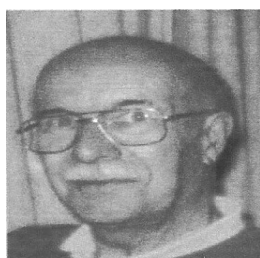
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e-mail user group Members only  
<http://autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/royaleownersclub>

## Chairman's Chat

Firstly I have to thank Alec Patterson for his hard work whilst editor of the magazine, it is not an easy task at the best of times but when your computer skills are not necessarily as good as the most able secretary and you have to learn from scratch how to put a magazine together I think you will all agree he did an excellent job. Sadly Alec feels he can no longer continue in this role due to other commitments and has asked if we can find another volunteer to take up the reins and perhaps discover skills he or she hadn't realised they had. So if you would be willing to have a bash at a bit of journalism and a bit of coercing your fellow members to come up with the content for you then please step forward and have a go.

In the short term I will do my best to give you something to peruse until we are able to replace Alec but in the longer term I feel I would not be able to give even the small amount of time required to take it on full time as I have my own commitments that as I get older, seem to be taking up more and more of my time and for some reason Wendy is expecting some of it to be shared with her!

The Valentines weekend was a great success and we had 16 couples enjoy a very relaxing day at the Best western hotel – Buckingham where they managed to improve on last years event by throwing in a complimentary bottle of wine in each room. The meal was excellent, the company charming and I'm afraid to say the time passed far too quickly to be able to spend enough time with everyone that took the opportunity to attend.

We have booked space at both Stoneleigh and Newark this year as usual so I hope to see as many of you at these gatherings as possible. Personally I used to attend these events to buy more bits of bling for my car and would go home disappointed if I had not been able to spend some money, but now I prefer to use the meeting for socialising with the members and catching up on news from other parts of the country. So if you were thinking of attending make sure you bring lots to talk about and a bit of gossip.

You will see later in this edition at one time we had Miss Newark drape herself over our cars or at least one of them. Being a long time servant of the Murdoch empire I think they should bring this back as it's a long time since I had anything young and with few clothes on drape over anything of mine. I did think that maybe we could have a page three model in the content of the edition but I was struggling to find any young models willing to freeze in our weather and actually to find a young model at all.

On the inside back page of this edition and for the next three editions you will find an advertisement for car insurance, this is a 'paid for' advertisement and goes a small way to supporting the cost of your magazine, it is not the policy of the club to recommend any insurance company over another but I would urge you to at least obtain a quote at your insurance renewal cost and compare them to your renewal. You never know you may get a pleasant surprise.

Wendy and I have usually already planned our holiday by this time of the year and know which part of the continent our car is going to visit. Usually we share this experience through these pages with the members which I hope you enjoy reading, However, due to other commitments we may find escaping the UK difficult this year as we have a lot going on. So if you decide to take your car on holiday with you, help the editor who may well still be me and jot a few notes each day that will refresh your memory when you get home and share your trip with us.

All I have left to do now is wish you all a great summer with the hood down and to enjoy your Royale to the best the weather allows.

If you are reading this will have seen a change in the design of the magazine and I hope the quality, this of course has to be paid for and at the AGM at Stoneleigh you will have to vote as to whether this is the route you wish the magazine to take. The magazine is the back-bone of the club and the method in which most of you keep in touch with what's going on. So come to the meeting at 12:00 and voice your opinion, and of course your vote.

**Peter Gibbons—Chairman**



## Help and advice sought

**Name:** Tony Hayllar

**Email:** mail@ahayllar.plus.com

**Telephone:** 01438 860370

Hi, would it be possible to put a short note in the Magazine asking if any owner is driving a kit with a Ford 2.0L EFi Pinto Engine and is having problems with Idle speed. Sometimes it is perfect and sometimes it approaches stalling speed and is kept running by the Engine Management System. This can go on for a minute or so if I don't open the throttle. The mechanic who does my MOT says this engine always suffered with this problem, but I have driven two Granada's for over 100,000 miles and not had any significant occurrence. Local garages seem unable to help and no one knows where there is a workshop that still has a diagnostic system that handles the 5 pin plug that is wired into my loom.

I have been driving my Sabre for 10 years and the problem still occurs from time to time. Any advice would be helpful.

Tony



**I have not been able to get our member to write an article on his bargain of a lifetime, but this car he tells me was purchased for just £25.00. If you know of a better deal than this then I would like to hear from you, or even if you have a similar story.**



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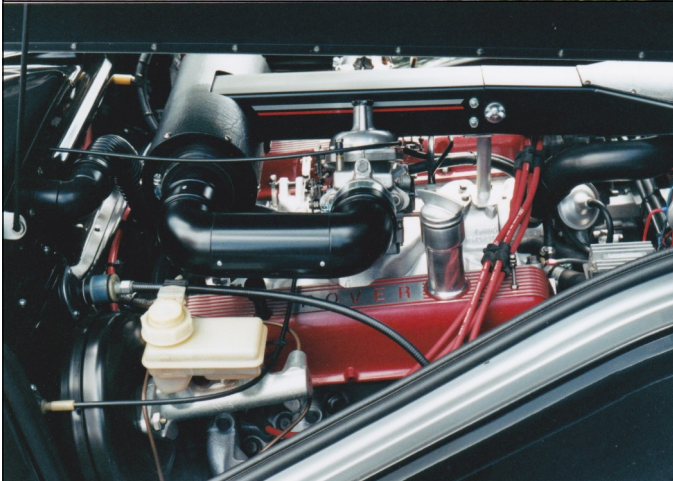
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**Simon and Leslie Carrington in Blue Streak**

**Milton Keynes Classic Car Tour 2011**

**Simon Carrington**

Given a start time of 9.15 on a Sunday morning, 12 miles from home, was scary enough. Worse, my neighbour said it was the better part of half an hour's drive and I'd asked my brother Jerry (see photo committee page) to meet us at my house 15 minutes before the sign on time of 8.15, luckily he turned up a little early and we got to the start venue, at Frosts garden centre in Woburn Sands in 12 minutes.

Jim & Jean Waites arrived shortly after, with the same start time as us. Sadly Peter & Wendy Gibbons were given a much later start time and so was Colin Maslen who, I think, was co-driven by his son. (Apologies if that is incorrect)

The Plan was for everyone to be signed on 45 minutes early so that they could enjoy the delights of a cooked breakfast at the cafeteria, I can't comment on the food, only to say that it smelled delicious, but we'd only had breakfast at home a short time before, and I wanted the car to be as light as possible. (I nearly left my socks at home)

Anyway Jean & Jim had coffee etc. aboard their Sabre and we chatted in the car park until the off.

The organisers did a good job getting nearly 200 cars in, signed on and out of the car park, at approximately 1 minute intervals.

There were some serious cars on this run, quite a few Ferrari's and Porsche's (all modern) Morgans aplenty and obscurely enough, a handful of those timeless classics, Chrysler Crossfires.

The first part of the tour took us 15.6 miles, through pretty lanes and countryside, skirting around the Woburn estate to the Millbrook proving ground, where we were let loose to do 2 laps of the Alpine circuit, see photo.

Millbrook is used by motor manufacturers to test new models. Mostly used at one time by Vauxhall at Luton, where according to Jim Waites, there used to be a British car factory.

It was a beautiful sunny day and I really enjoyed this, I can't say the same for Lesley who was terrified and it's taken me until this week, to get the impression of the fingers of her left hand out of the upholstery on the passenger door cap, see photo.

Actually it's more about handling than speed because of its twists and turns, negative cambers, banked corners, hairpin bends and blind crests. In fact I don't think I was in fourth gear, hardly at all.



Next it was a 40.1 mile leisurely drive along the backroads, around the southern extremities of Milton Keynes, to Quanton Railway Museum, where if you handed in your coupon from the entry form you got a free tea or coffee from the café. I must admit that as we had parted from Jean & Jim when we left Millbrook and the route ran through our home town of Winslow, we cut part of the route out and called in at home, I needed a "comfort break" and Lesley needed tranquilisers. At Quanton it was getting on for lunchtime so we had a sausage roll with our free drink and we had plenty of time to enjoy the museum or wander around chatting to other classic car owners. Before we left there we met up with Jean & Jim again and Jerry caught up with us in his Marlin Berlinetta. Jerry & his wife Judith (all these J's) bought themselves a sizeable lunch from the café, which with hindsight we should have done.

Anyway from Quanton it was a 33 mile drive along rural roads to the finish at Silverstone circuit. I have to say that as I marshalled at Silverstone for 25 years and had to find 100 different ways of avoiding Grand Prix day traffic, I know all these roads like the "back of my hand" so, you guessed it, as we got near to the Oxford entrance to Stowe public school. I deviated from the route book once more and missed out the delights of such villages as Biddlesden.

Now full marks to those who ventured there, I worked there once, fitting a kitchen in an old council house where an old brother & sister lived. They used to go the nearest shop, her on the trailer and him in the driving seat, of the rotivator. (Deliverance & duelling banjo's) suffice to say that I think the people of the Appelation mountains in the USA may well have originated in Biddlesden. I had no intention of "squealing like a piggy", so I took a short cut to the circuit.

At Silverstone we drove around the perimeter road outside of Woodcote, Copse, Maggots, Becketts & Chapel curve, to arrive at the "Porsche experience" circuit, alongside the Hangar straight. We only did 3 or 4 corners of this, although there was an optional loop of about 4 more corners that entrants could do, but that involved either getting soaked or putting up the roof, because it was a "skid pad" with lots of hoses pointing skyward, like fountains.

We parked up and waited for the others to arrive, most drivers of open cars opted out of the soaking, but still visit Millbrook and the Porsche experience at Silverstone, where the catering is promised to be "in house" laid on by Porsche after the high number of complaints received last year re: the hog roast



If you need a reason to come to Newark this year try this



## H o w       d i d       I       g e t       m y       S a b r e ?

Well it's a bit of a long story but since you're reading this anyway you've probably not got a lot else to do so I may as well tell you.

Back in the late '90's I was Sales Manager for an employment agency and among other clients we had a few Technicians working at the Nissan Technology Centre at Cranfield on the development of new models and improvements to existing ones. As an aside my company was a specialist manpower agency providing technical manpower – it was all blue collar hands-on chaps and we had lads working in quite a few of the car plants in Europe as well as places like MIRA and Millbrook, all jolly fascinating stuff.

On one occasion I visited them at Nissan just to monitor any issues and make sure they were happy and chatting over a cuppa in the canteen, one of them mentioned they were all going to the kit car show at Stoneleigh that coming weekend. And did I want to come along? Well of course I knew what they really meant was did I want to drive them in the company minibus and pay for the beer, so not being one to shirk a challenge agreed to the plan.

We duly attend the show which was my first proper foray into the world of kit cars and I must say I was somewhat taken with the whole scene. The thought of actually building my own car was something that had flitted in and out of my mind over the years but never got any further than that, but that Saturday was a bit of turning point. I duly paid the lads huge (for the time) bar bill and came back home somewhat pensive. On the Sunday morning I phoned one of the lads I was particularly matey with and said I was going to go back to Stoneleigh that afternoon for another look and did he want to come.

Chatting as we wandered round I was particularly taken with two cars, both totally different in style. The Royale Sabre was one and a Paul Banham creation, the XJSS I think it was called, was the other.

You all know what a Sabre looks like; this is Paul Banham's XJSS. Bear in mind he did this before the XK8 was launched



If you're interested, there's some more photos and specs of an XJSS for sale on the web here;  
<http://www.carandclassic.co.uk/car/C253213>



And here's what Paul developed it into a few years later;



I duly took brochures home and got tentative "management approval" to build a kit car. But which one? The Sabre or the XJSS? My mate was all gung ho for the Jag conversion and offered to spend all his free time helping me build it, he only lived about ten miles from me so that'd be a great help and he reckoned we could have it on the road that summer, no problem. I was a bit less sanguine and not 100% convinced that the Jag was the way I wanted to go, I was still mightily taken with the Sabre.

So SWMBO (She Who Must Be Obeyed) and I decided to visit both manufacturers before making a decision. Good plan eh?

So first off we visited Paul's set up in Rochester I think and spent a Saturday morning chatting to him and couple of chaps working there. Even though not insured I had a short drive of his demonstrator round his industrial estate and I plead guilty to falling in love. In case you don't know, Paul's XJSS was basically "just" a re-body of an XJS and looked fairly straightforward to do, certainly the way he explained it. In the immortal words of Jeremy Clarkson, "so how hard can it be"? Cut off the old XJS bodywork and bolt on the new panels. Easy peasy eh? As an extra plus point the car was an auto and at that time, and still today, I just love autos even though my then company car was a manual. Personally I can't see the point of manual or keep-fit gearboxes. What's with all this clutch malarkey and building your muscles up moving the stick up and down all the time? No automatic has to be the only sensible way to go. But I digress.

So having driven the XJSS demonstrator, the next job was to visit Royale before making a decision yes?

Err no.

I weakened there and then and put down a £500 deposit for the XJSS kit. So first job was to buy an XJS. Paul strongly recommended NOT buying the V12, so of course I bought a V12 HE for £1200 through an ad in Exchange and Mart from a chappie in Hendon. On the drive home up the M1 one of the head gaskets went. Well to cut an even longer story a bit short, it took me five months and an awful lot of work to sort the engine out and to be honest by the time it was fixed I'd totally lost interest in the whole project so cancelled the body kit. Because I couldn't get the head off, I'd had to remove the engine and gearbox from the car to do the head gasket and if you've ever tried that it's a sub-assembly that's over ten feet long and must weigh over a tonne. A right pig of a job. If I remember correctly it cost me about £800 in parts alone by the time I replaced all the bits needed and in the end I got so fed up with it I put it all back together, got it



running properly and sold the car for £200. And I've still got bits lying around the garage. Which reminds me I never did get my deposit back from Paul? Oh and if you're intrigued as to how much help my mate from Nissan was in this process, between me ordering the kit and buying the XJS he fell in love with a girl from the Isle of Wight so guess what happened next? Yes, he moved to the IoW and now runs his own garage in Ryde.

At this point I was a bit fed up with kit cars to say the least and SWMBO decided I didn't want to build a "toy car" anyway. Well to be honest what with work, family and money pressures I put the whole thing down to experience and decided that was the end of my kit car building plans.

Well, for a few years.

Come the late noughties and the kids were grown up. I was working on a long term well paying project at Airbus in the south of France and had a few quid spare and more to the point sufficient spare time to think about building a kit car again. I carefully floated the idea past SWMBO who, after a bit of tutting and huffing and puffing and a couple of very nice Mediterranean cruises, agreed that maybe I could build one. But in her words, "not that awful Jaguar thing".

And to be honest I'd gone off it anyway, the XK8 was out by then so the XJSS looked well, dated or wrong is all I can call it.

No, it was going to be a 30's style sports tourer.

So in early 2009 I resurrected thoughts of the Sabre again and got out the old brochures I had safely tucked away and started buying the "toy car" magazines again. Only to find that Royale had gone out of business and no-one was selling the Sabre kits. I spoke to loads of people but it seemed I'd missed the boat and was out of luck. The Sabre was gone. Boo hoo, cue loads of tears.

Come April 2009 and it was time to see what else Stoneleigh had to offer and to decide what I fancied buying and building. And no mates were going to stick their oar in this time; it was going to be my decision alone. Well as long as SWMBO agreed.

So we did the day trip to Stoneleigh with the Grandkids and wandering around the halls I was quite taken with the Autotune Aristocat. Been around for years and not overly expensive to buy the kit but it does seem, from the three or four people I spoke to, to be a five year build process and like the Suffolk SS which I really did like, I'd probably end up having to buy yet another Jag XJS as a donor. The clincher against the Suffolk SS was the price. Phew. They reckon to do a proper one, it'll come out the thick side of £25K, too much for my wallet. I also seriously looked at the Gentry quite a few times, but for heaven's sake, it's based on a Triumph Herald. Technology has surely moved on a bit!! Also on the shortlist was the NG and that's not too shabby either though it doesn't look quite finished, to me the front looks only half done. The Marlin Sportster? Well, that's OK ish though a bit sevenesque and there's something about it that to my mind isn't quite right. I know several RoCkers have had JBA Falcons and I plead guilty to having ignored them in my search. Don't know why I missed them but they just never figured. Would I be right in saying they don't have a boot, if so that'd be why I discounted it. I take a LOT of junk with me everywhere. So back to the search at Stoneleigh and I was very much leaning towards the Aristocat if I couldn't find a Sabre.

Surprisingly to me, though I suppose you all know it anyway, the rear views especially look very similar.

This is the Aristocat





And here's the Sabre;



Actually I think the Sabre looks better but anyway

Chatting to some of the exhibitors I asked if anyone knew anything about the Sabre or what had happened to it and several had fond memories of it but couldn't help. No-one seemed to know who owned it or where the moulds and jigs were but quite a lot of the kit car fraternity, especially the older oops, I mean "more mature" people, mourned its passing.

And then wandering around outside among the club displays I came across the Royale Owners Club display area. Whee hee, what's this? Heaven does exist? The Sabre is STILL alive. So I stopped for a chat and what nice chaps they were too (I didn't put that last bit in, I reckon the Editor added it).

I must have spent a good half hour or so chatting and James and Peter both let me try their cars out for size. I'm a bit of a "fuller figured" chap and had previously got stuck in a seven lookalike, but I fitted the Sabre perfectly. All I had to do now was find one. Jim Kelly knew of a part built one in Norn Iron for sale and he gave me the phone number but all of the chaps on the Royale stand were a bit discouraging, sucking their teeth and tutting and shaking their heads and telling me they never come up for sale, especially not un-built or part built. So somewhat disappointed I wandered back in the halls and bought a couple of mags and burgers for the family and we all sat down on the grass for lunch whilst I tried to come up with a plan. My son suggested I could



nick one off the Royale display area while they were all at their AGM. Or maybe I could dress up as Bin Laden and do an armed holdup? Or just make an offer to buy one even though not openly for sale.

Hmm, this needed some thinking about.

Sitting there with my burger I flicked to the back pages of CKC and the first advert I read was "For Sale, Royale Sabre. Finished and completed but no SVA" along with a very reasonable price and a phone number. Honest, no joke it was really like that.

So sitting there at Stoneleigh I called the number and spoke with the chap selling it and we had a nice long chat about it and he said it was still for sale and he'd e-mail me some pictures. By the time I got home that evening the e-mail was there waiting, so I called him straight back and we agreed a deal there and then on the phone subject to the entire car being as good as the photos he'd sent me. He also told me what he thought was a bit of bad news. In the interim he'd had a bit of a rethink and a slight change of heart about the SVA and said he'd decided he would put the car through SVA after all and would register it himself and accordingly would be increasing the price to reflect that. To be honest he didn't want that much extra and since I was working in France and only back in the UK every other weekend and didn't really have the time to do the legal stuff anyway, this fitted me perfectly. And it was still well within my budget. But of course I didn't tell him that. So in principle I agreed a deal with him and the following weekend flew back specially from Toulouse to go and see the car in Rochdale.

And it was everything I was after. Royal blue with a nice mohair hood and a reasonable interior all in blue, though three different shades, but overall it was exactly what I wanted. Mechanically it seemed OK, nothing wrong that a halfway decent mechanic couldn't fix and even if I say so myself, I'm almost a halfway decent mechanic.

Getting it through SVA took him a bit of time. It failed on a couple of silly things, fog light not e-marked and in the wrong position, washers not working, wooden steering wheel not acceptable and the weirdest of all, the boot latch didn't have the correct radius on the handle, as if you're going to reverse into someone and cut them on the boot catch, but still there was nothing major wrong and after two re-tests it passed. I think it was actually the last car to go in for the old SVA before IVA came in

Early on the day of the second re-test he phoned me from the test centre telling me it had passed but sounded a bit cold and distant so I asked him what was wrong. He finally admitted that he'd had another local chap, a friend of a friend, after the car who was offering a bit more than I was but he said somewhat magnanimously he'd stick with our deal as long as I definitely wanted to have it. Or did I want to back out?

Well by now I was starting to panic a bit that I'd lose it. So I told him I'd be straight up with the cash that afternoon.

Checking in one of the magazines I found a car recovery service in Huddersfield and the chap agreed to collect the car that afternoon and deliver it to me in St Neots for £250 cash. "Aye lad, no problem" he told me, "Rochdale's only just t'other side of t'hill, I can do that for 'ee." 'T hill, by the way turned out to be the Pennines. Lovely attitude eh?

So all that was left was to get the cash from the bank and drive up there and collect it. By the time I faffed around at the bank and drove up to Rochdale the car was all tied down on the breakdown truck waiting for me to hand over the money. Before long our little convoy wended its way south.

Oh and so far I'd not driven it. How's that for faith? Or stupidity?

Registering it was a bit of a performance in that I had to hire a trailer to take it to the DVLA in Peterborough for inspection and to do that had to get a tow bar fitted to SWMBO's car, but in the end it was registered, insured, taxed and legal and on the road in July 2009.

As an aside, the chap I bought it from wasn't the original builder. He'd actually only owned it about 3 months and had bought it from an ad in this very same RoC magazine that you're reading now. Apparently the original builder who lived somewhere out in the Fens had spent 9 years

building it and had failed the SVA twice and he'd got so fed up with it that he'd replied to the wanted ad in the RoC mag and virtually gave it away, he was that fed up with it. I know the feeling. See my first few paras about the XJSS.

So the story goes, when he came to look at it the builder told him that if he didn't want it he was going to pour a gallon of petrol over it and set it alight. Phew, glad he didn't.

After I'd got the car I managed to track down the original builder and phoned him half a dozen times leaving messages before I finally spoke with him. I told him that I was phoning with some questions about his old Sabre but he told me in no uncertain terms what a disaster the process had been for him and he wanted to know nothing about the car and would tell me nothing about its build. He said he had kept the original build manual and donor paperwork but as soon as the car had gone he'd burned the lot. To say he hated the Sabre would be an understatement. Shame, but each to his own.

Anyway back to the plot. Once Tiddles, as my Sabre is affectionately called, was on the road I decided to take it to my home in Toulouse. But how to get it there?

Well there's three ways, or there was then. Drive it, take it by train from Calais to Toulouse, or have it taken by truck. Now the logical one is to drive it but as my local garage mechanic said when he checked it over for me, this is in reality a 1988 Ford Sierra that hasn't been driven for God knows how many years. And the first trip you want it to do is 800 miles of motorway driving from St Neots to Toulouse?

Second choice was the Motorail from Calais but that turned out to be quite a strange setup. The old fashioned Motorail which I remember doing with my parents back in nineteen hundred and frozen to death where you drive the car on the train then sleep your way through France waking up next morning in the sunshine finished a few years ago, to be replaced with this new improved service. And it's a bit odd to say the least in that you deliver the car to the train company in Calais but you don't accompany the car on the train. Instead you get another train to Paris and then change to a high speed train to Toulouse, not a TGV though, whilst your car travels on a separate dedicated car train and gets there the next day. How odd. Not surprisingly they cancelled the service in late 2010 due to lack of demand. Can't think why that is?

And the third option was to have it transported by truck. I got half a dozen quotes and was quite surprised how relatively cheap it was. Single journey came out at £650 for a door to door service, so less than a pound a mile. Comparing it with driving down, in high summer where a last minute booking on the tunnel or ferry is around £150, then two tankfuls of petrol, so another £150, a night in a hotel, road tolls and two days of my time I'd have to take unpaid from work, and £650 is a bargain.

So I ended up with Tiddles in Toulouse and over the autumn and winter I drove all over the Midi Pyrenees and down to the Med and the South of France. We even ventured almost as far as Barcelona. Sounds a long way, but Barcelona's only 4 hours and 240 miles from Toulouse so not exactly a grand tour. We didn't actually get to Barcelona, just dropped a friend off at Girona airport to get a Ryanair flight to East Midlands but nevertheless it was a smashing drive. Four hours by motorway to get there and seven hours and an overnight stop in Andorra on the way back. Cracking weekend.





This is Tiddles outside my house near Toulouse, sorry it's a bit of a boring picture but I lost a lot of my files in a computer move.



And the French absolutely adored Tiddles. I was actually stopped on several occasions by French drivers wanting to know what it is; they'd never seen anything like it. And being Royal Blue, or as they call it, French Blue, wherever I stopped I'd draw a crowd. "Allez les Bleus" took on a new meaning even if we were beating them at Le Rugby at the time. On one occasion I was waiting at a set of lights and a barmaid from the cafe next to the lights came running over to me waving her arms. "Would monsieur please give her a ride around the market square in his beautiful car?" Well, what can you do? You have to foster good relations with les mademoiselles don't you?

And on another occasion I was pulled over by the Gendarmes. They prodded and poked all round the car and called up their buddies on the radio to come and see Tiddles too. I ended up with half a dozen flics spending best part of an hour just chatting cars. Very appreciative people the French. Much maligned and misunderstood; they recognise and applaud individuality and beauty and they all think Tiddles is beautiful.

Kit cars are almost unheard of in France; they're just not legally allowed to build cars themselves so my Sabre was out of the ordinary to say the least. I joined a "first Sunday morning in the month" car club in Toulouse where a few Ferraris, Maserati's, Lambo's, Aston's and other exotic creations regularly appeared and Tiddles was always admired and commented on. I got nodding friendly with a couple of the few French kit car owners who do exist. They have to build their cars in France, transport them to the UK on a trailer for a UK SVA; find an English "friend" with a UK address to register it to and then drive it in France on UK plates. But they're only supposed to do that for six months then they have to have a French version of a MoT and register it at their local Mairie (town hall) to get French plates. But each mayor has the discretion to accept it or not. Since it's not passed a French Type Approval a lot of Mairies just take the easy way out.

Non. Which means the only way to drive their cars at all is to keep them on UK plates, which after six months is highly illegal. So there's quite a lot of "sales" of cars among mates, i.e. I own one for this six months and you own it for the next half year etc etc. A lot of messing about but as long as you don't have an accident or an insurance claim it's OK, but God help you if you do. Anyway, back to the plot.

In spring 2010 unintentionally Tiddles and I embarked on Le Grand Voyage - back to the UK for the Stoneleigh kit car show. After all having finally bought a Sabre I wanted to show it off a bit to the cognoscenti.

In mid March, so plenty of time for Stoneleigh, I'd booked the same transport company that took Tiddles from UK to Toulouse to bring her back. Unfortunately this was during the Icelandic volcano problem which you'll recall meant loads of flights were cancelled. That in turn meant quite a few people in Spain and France who'd originally planned to have their cars transported back while they flew home had a big change of plan and drove back instead, which of course meant cancellations for the hauliers. Well that meant that come the week I'd booked Tiddles on the truck the truck just didn't turn up. After many phone calls and broken promises and excuses they finally admitted I was the only customer who wanted to come back to UK and they weren't going to send an artic from Preston to Toulouse just to bring Tiddles home. So with little option open to me and a bit of trepidation, I decided to drive her home.

Turned out to be a dead easy drive from Toulouse. This was the last week in April and the weather was glorious. Too glorious really. Twenty five degrees in the morning creeping up to thirty in the late afternoon so with the top down and loads of factor fifty sun cream and more hats than Mrs Shilling at Ascot, I left Toulouse just before lunchtime so I'd have the sun behind me most of the day. I drove seven hours on the first day to just this side of Paris and booked into a hotel overnight and then caught a 9:00am tunnel the next morning. I was home just after lunch having averaged virtually 70mph and 38 mpg for the journey. And she didn't miss a beat. The temperature gauge stayed firmly in centre of the scale the whole way to such an extent that I was convinced it was broken and was stuck. And of course with so much motorway driving in top gear it was just like having a proper gearbox.

If anyone's travelling through France via Paris there's a very good collection of hotels at Junction 7 on the A1 just before Charles De Gaulle airport. They've built seven or eight of the big chain hotels there and they all do deals, just try them one after the other for the best deal that suits you. Some do cheap rooms; others throw in dinner or breakfast, just sort out what's best for you. I'd like to be able to tell you they do special rates for Sabre drivers but that'd be stretching things a bit. Oh all right then they do.

To be balanced and fair, it's probably not somewhere you'd want to stay for a fortnight, but it is a really good stopping off point for the odd night or two if you're going either direction or if you just want to see Paris which is only half hour away. This hotel complex is about a hundred and sixty miles from Calais, so two and a bit motorway hours and there's a Balladins, Mercure, Campanile, Formula One, Novotel, B&B and a couple of others I can't remember. Google maps shows it, just type in Charles De Gaulle airport and go north up the A1 one junction and there it all is, Survilliers St Witz it's called. And you can find all the hotels on their relevant websites. Sorry I got carried away there a bit.

So having got Tiddles back to the UK and survived my first kit car show, a somewhat cold and wet Stoneleigh, I also went to a couple of other shows in 2010. Unfortunately on the way back from the Newark show the head gasket blew on Tiddles Sierra 1.8 CVH engine. Stripping it down showed the head was cracked and finding a new head proved difficult to source so I took the opportunity to improve things a bit and bought a crashed Focus and had a nice 2.0 litre Zetec fitted instead. By my erstwhile mate on the Isle of Wight. I had it set up by Northampton Motorsports



on their dyno and rolling road and it gives 140BHP and 140 ft/lbs torque so a nice balanced engine that does everything I want it to do.

Apart from that, Tiddles has been virtually trouble free and I've clocked up about 8,000 miles "since new". Due for our first MoT in June so fingers crossed.

Overall I'm really happy with the Sabre and I think Tiddles is a reasonably good example though I take little credit for it; it's mostly how I bought it really. Though it's not up to concours standard yet I'll get round to improving it over the coming years. And changing from a manual to an auto box is high on the agenda.

Now if anyone knows of an un-started or unfinished Sabre sitting in someone's garage looking for a new home, I'd really like to build one myself

Oh and why the nickname Tiddles?

A friend coined the name. It's 'cos it's a kit(ty) car. Geddit? Kitty -Tiddles? Oh Ok, I'll get my



coat.

And finally if you're confused about the three different number plates this is all the same car. 204 JWC was the original number of the Sierra but unfortunately it hadn't been put on retention so the DVLA wouldn't let me have it when I came to register it. So they issued me with a generic 1988 number, F537 OJE. Then last year I bought a personalised plate, E5 ABR and with a bit of jiggery pokery with the numbers, got it to read E 5ABR. A bit Eric Morecambe ish in that it's got all the right letters for SABRE, but not necessarily in the right order.



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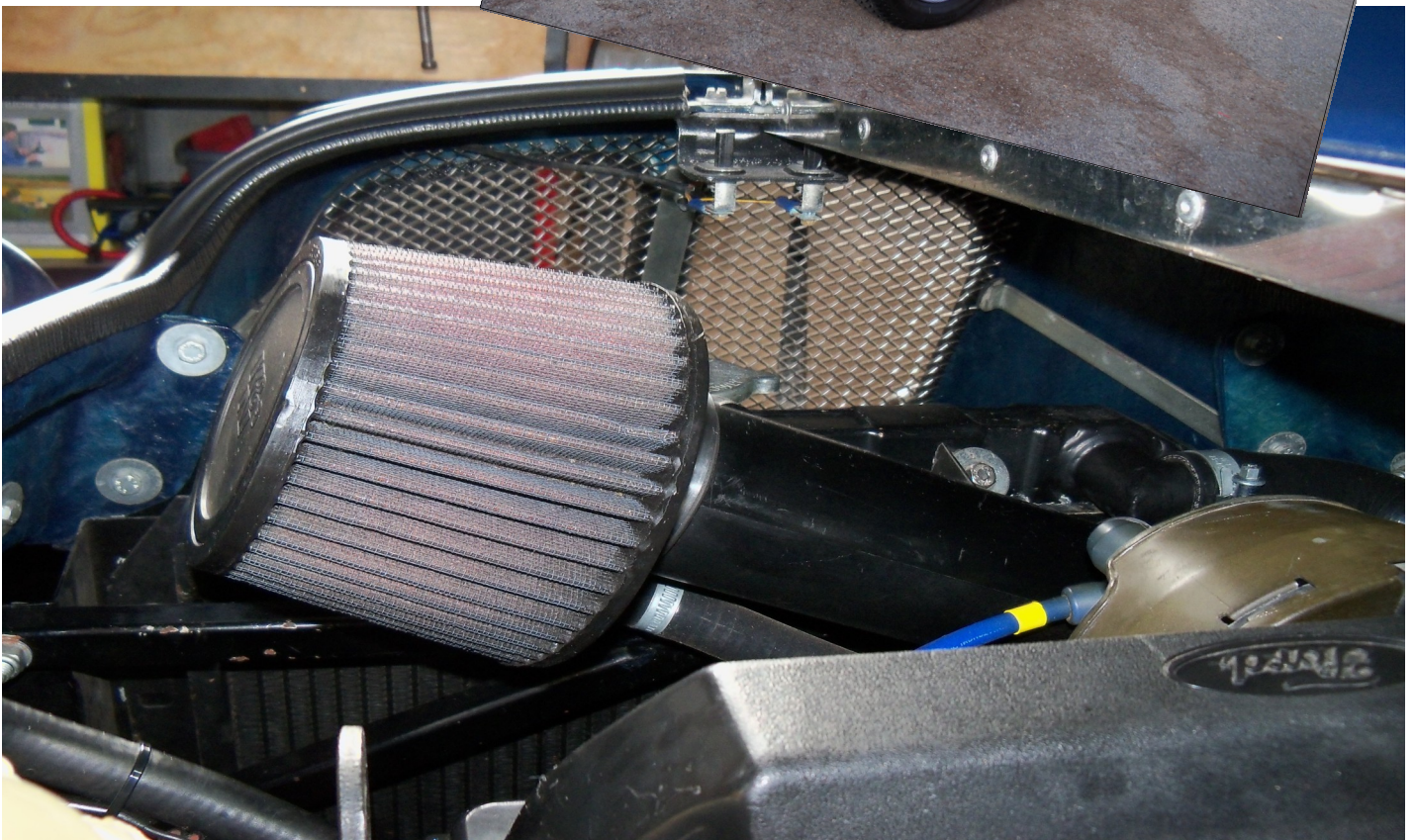
The existing air inlet terminated in a K&N filter was buried directly behind the radiator and pointing downwards towards the road. This was in turn connected to a right angled rubber bend, which was connected to the solid, plastic air intake tube, housing the idle speed control valve. I loosened the large Jubilee clips and removed both the filter and rubber bend.. Discard the bend and fix the air filter directly onto the air intake housing. It is the same size.

On my Sabre half the filter (now in a horizontal position) still "hid" behind the radiator so I loosened the intake housing fixing bracket and found that there is enough play to angle it upwards towards the underside of the bonnet. The filter now sits almost above the radiator.

The engine now breathes direct, cool air from the radiator grill . What a difference this has made to the response of the engine and acceleration, with the added benefit of more miles to the gallon. The filter is so much easier

to access and maintain now too. Even if you haven't got the same set up as mine I'm sure with a little thought a similar modification could help your engine breath more easily and bring your Royale similar benefits.

**Barrie Evans**





## **Events 2012**

**April 7th & 8th**

Detling Kit-Car Show  
The Kent county showground Detling  
[www.car-shows.co.uk](http://www.car-shows.co.uk)

**May 6th & 7th**

National Kit-Car motor show  
Stoneleigh  
[www.nationalkitcarshow.co.uk](http://www.nationalkitcarshow.co.uk)

**Club Stand Booked**

**May 20th**

Classic Rally and Auto jumble  
Old Warden, Nr Biggleswade, Beds, SG18 9DX  
[www.themansionhouse.org](http://www.themansionhouse.org)

**June 16th & 17th**

The National Kit-Car Festival—Newark  
Newark and Notts County Showground  
**Club Stand Booked**

**July 4th**

Classics in the walled garden  
Evening picnic, Luton Hoo  
[www.petermadden.co.uk](http://www.petermadden.co.uk)

**August 12th**

The Classic, Kit and Performance show  
Old Warden, beds, SG18 9DX  
[www.themansionhouse.org](http://www.themansionhouse.org)

**August 26th & 27th**

Knebworth Classic Motor Show  
Nr Stevenage, Herts, SG1 2AX  
[www.classicmotorshow.com](http://www.classicmotorshow.com)

**October 20 & 21st**

**Exeter Kit and Sports Car show** Exeter show ground



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