

NEWS

Thoughts from the showroom...



1999-2019

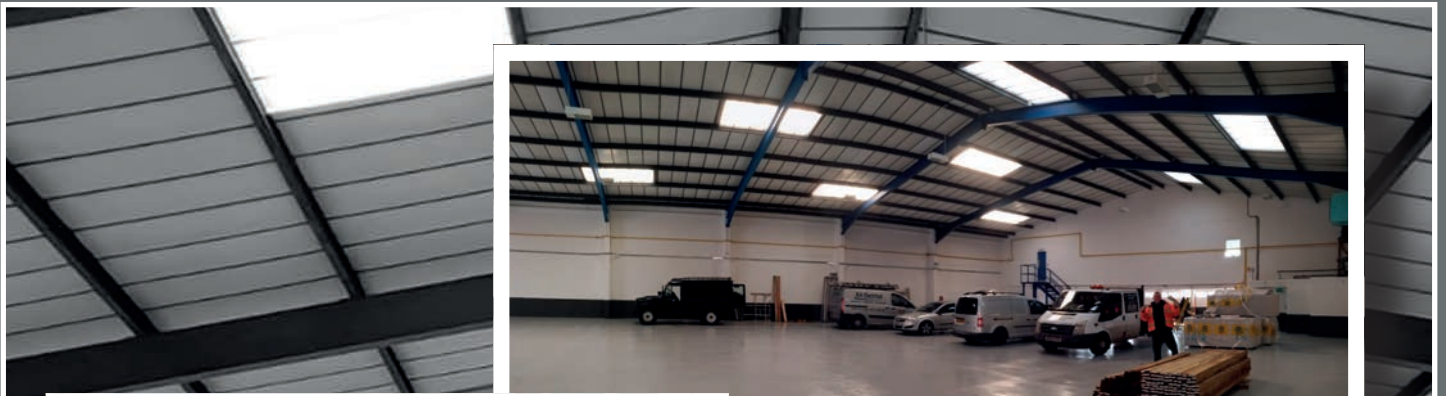
FRANK DALE
&
STEPSONS
Est. 1946
Rolls-Royce & Bentley Specialists

First and foremost, we know our newsletters reach far across the globe so from wherever you are reading, myself and our whole team at Frank Dale & Stepsons sincerely hope 2020 has offered a few enjoyable moments from between the dark clouds of the pandemic that has touched everyone in some way. We hope your health and that of your families has at the very least been unaffected.

We are grateful here at Frank Dale that we have been relatively unscathed in terms of health and the workshop has been particularly busy since we reopened our doors in July following the months of lockdown here in the UK during the spring and early summer.

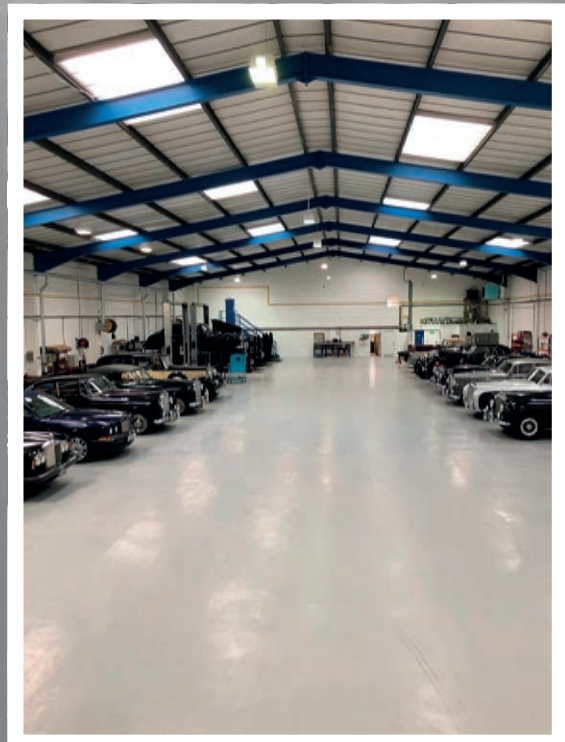
But before we look at this year let me revisit December 2019 when Frank Dale & Stepsons closed the doors to Harlequin Avenue and left its London roots behind.





Following 73 years of trading in the capital, the time felt right for us to make our move.

It was a big job, we had been situated in Brentford for 20 years and had accumulated huge amounts of automotive related 'stuff', some of which was kept and transported to our new home in Sandhurst, Surrey, whilst other items were discarded to the scrap heap. After all, who really needs 25 empty dynamo cases for an R Type? I lost count of the amount of skips we filled. Our team of staff were all involved in the move and all credit to their hard work. Cars were driven in convoys, trucks were packed and mid-way restorations, including a bare chassis, were transported safely to our new interim premises. The ramps were installed, the extraction system was plumbed in, parts stores were built and office furniture was put in place. It was a huge upheaval and Christmas was somewhat cancelled as we all focused on the move but come the first week of January we were open for business as usual, raring to go and totally unaware of what was to come later in 2020.



As many of you know we moved to Surrey to realise our dream of building our new premises, plans of which we shared publicly back in 2019.

Like many people around the world our plans for this huge project were put on hold in the spring of 2020 and have remained that way due to the ongoing situation with the pandemic. However, with the cautious optimism that the announcement and subsequent rollout of a vaccine has started to bring we will turn our attention back to the project in 2021. They say that great things never come that easy, and our resolve and enthusiasm for our forever home has merely been preserved on ice. We hope to start the thawing process in the months to come but until then we have been delighted with how our interim premises have served us since we moved in a year ago. It was a huge task to move the business but a very gratifying one to complete and since January 2020 we have continually improved the facility, with new tools, dedicated lighting for each work bench, additional ramps to keep up with the demand and various other improvements. Despite having to close during April and May and having a limited staff in June as we slowly emerged out of lockdown, our workshop output has exceeded 2019 when we were situated in Brentford. With a much-improved set of circumstances that we hope for in 2021, the sky is the limit for our workshop team. We have numerous large restorations which will begin in January and the diary is filling up with service work so the team will be extremely busy.



Concours d'Elegance at Hampton Court Palace

The list of motoring events that were cancelled in 2020 made for glum reading. Retromobile in February made the cut, just, but it was then a long spring and summer of cancellations that followed. Happily, we were able to exhibit at the Concours of Elegance at Hampton Court in early September, where we displayed three beautiful Bentleys on our show stand in the form of an A series R Type Continental, a 4¼ ltr bodied by Veth & Zoon and an S2 Continental Coupe by Mulliner. The event was very well attended by friends in the industry, customers and large numbers of people who had clearly been suffering from a combination of cabin fever and classic motor event withdrawal symptoms and huge credit should be given to the event team of the Concours who enabled it all safely,

given the limitations within which the event could be held. It was a wonderful three days, even the weather was consistently welcoming, that culminated on the Sunday afternoon when I was asked to assist with the judging of the Bentley Drivers Club members cars. I was delighted to accept, and myself and the other judges decided on a beautiful ex Woolf Barnato Derby Bentley, an S1 Continental Fastback and a modern Bentley Brooklands coupe as the prize winners in each section, with the Derby Bentley being awarded first prize overall. Here is hoping that 2021 allows us to attend and exhibit cars at all of our favourite Concours d'Elegance and classic car events across Europe and North America. Fingers crossed.



Our stand at Hampton Court this year



CONCOURS OF ELEGANCE
HAMPTON COURT PALACE





1936 Bentley 3½ litre Coupe by Gurney Nutting - sold in 2020

The Market

It has been a challenging year in the sales arena for many, including ourselves. Whilst the workshop has been buoyant and extremely busy, the sales department has been quieter than in years gone by. We have sold numerous cars, but most have been in the lower price bracket that we tend to deal in. I believe this has been down to numerous factors, but the lack of travel has certainly not helped. People generally like to see, drive and inspect the car they are considering purchasing. In normal circumstances, customers have travelled from the other side of the world to see a car we have for sale that they are interested in, but not this year, and that has definitely limited this side of our business. Notably however, prices have remained relatively stable, just fewer numbers of cars have been sold. Some have attempted to make comparisons with lost values in stocks and shares to that of classic cars. To my mind, even if you only view these cars as tangible assets worthy of investment, aside from the fact they

have significant historical value in their rarity, design, culture and provenance, plus they bring huge joy to their owners when they look at and most importantly drive them - unlike the uncharismatic stock market - then it is like comparing apples to elephants. We take our role of responsibility to the value and longevity of these beautiful motor cars very seriously and remain confident of our view that values may have plateaued on some models, but the utterly strange and unprecedented events of the past year preceded by the Brexit situation (yes, I said the B word) has not and will not change many of these motor cars important place in the wider investment market.

Have faith, and just a little more patience. Better times will come.

We look forward to seeing you in 2021, until then we wish you a peaceful Christmas and a healthy, happy and prosperous New Year.



1965 Rolls Royce Silver Cloud III Coupe by Mulliner Park Ward - sold in 2020