



Tiger TRACKS

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Happy New Year



UK Tiger owners gather to celebrate the completion of the new Rootes Archives Building. story on page 8

Trip to England to see The New Rootes Archives Building

by Charlie Ockels with assistance from Buck Trippel

I arrived at Heathrow Airport on schedule and was met by Buck and Claudia Trippel, and Graham Vickery. Once we found Graham's elusive car in the garage, he whisked us away to our hotel in Wroxton, about an hour away. Being as it had been a long flight, we decided to get some rest and meet the next morning and check out the new Archives building.



The new site is actually just a short walk from the hotel, or an even shorter ride in a car. Upon arrival at the site, we found the construction workers busy forming the driveway area, which was to be poured with concrete the next day. Others were installing the entrance doors and windows on different units in the complex.



Leaving the hustle and bustle of the new, Graham took us to see where the keepers of the Archives had been working. The volume of drawings in the space they were working in was amazing! One wall, which looked to be about 30 feet long and about 10 feet high, was solid cardboard tubes filled with drawings

floor to ceiling, and wall to wall. One gentleman, by the name of James Spencer was pulling one tube at a time, removing the drawing from inside, and after determining what the drawing was, noting that on the tube. Forty filing cabinets had already been moved to the new building, each weighing about 600 pounds. Those drawings will be scanned at a later date once the new building is finished and the scanners are set up. Another gentleman named Matt Ollman, was scanning microfiche cards from a cabinet that contained 1700 cards per drawer. Two other gentlemen were helping to identify what each drawing was and to what vehicle it belonged. Even with the brave souls from the US who have come over to help with the scanning, the job is HUGE, and mind boggling in scope.



So, you might be wondering what happens when all the drawings are identified, and scanned? Already, the Imp owners have used a factory drawing from the Archive to produce a water pump, an exact part, as would have been made by the factory. The new part is selling for about a third of what a rebuilt used to cost... and you don't need a useable core. These drawings are the means to keep our Tigers happy and on the road forever. As I said before, it's a massive undertaking, and these guys are committed to this cause. In addition, they are working for free because the marque is just that important to them.

The project has made unbelievable progress, but there's still so much more to do. One hundred percent of the donated contributions go directly to the project. Besides needing the funding to finish paying for the new building, the volunteers need basic office furniture and storage cabinets. Presently, they only have 4 swivel stools and a conference table from the origi-

(Trip to Rootes Archives continued.....)

nal Rootes Group offices. So, if you love Sunbeam Tigers or if you are in the process of trying to restore one, donating to this worthy cause is a no-brainer.



Charlie Ockels (center) and Claudia Trippel (right) discuss the new Rootes Archives Building with one of the construction workers

OK, back to the story! The next morning, Claudia decided that she wanted to go check out a nearby Blenheim Palace, and so Buck and I headed in the opposite direction to visit the BMC and Jaguar museums. Any question you could have possibly wanted answered, you could get answered at the Jaguar museum. Of course, neither museum had any Tigers in them, but they did have some cool cars, including a Le Mans car that John Morton, who normally drives Buck's race Tiger, had driven at one point in his career.



The BMC Museum has some very interesting stuff

The following morning came quickly, and we drove back out to the new building to see how things were progressing. The parking lot had been paved, and working doors had been installed. By my estimation they had poured about 60 yards of concrete in the past two days. The only thing left was the stairway to the second floor, which was supposed to be completed by the following week. We ended the day sharing Chinese food with the four musketeers from the Archives.



Graham Vickery picked Buck, Claudia, and me up the next morning and took us to Stratford upon Avon to take a cruise on a narrow canal boat. The canal lock system uses gates made of oak which are said to last about 20 years – that's job security for the gate builders, as there are a whole lot of locks in England. The city was packed with a festival and a bazillion people. The home of Shakespeare was rather charming. We stopped at a pub for lunch, and in the parking lot was a brand new McLaren. I waited to ask the owner for a ride, but he never came out, and by the time we finished lunch the car was gone.



The canal boat ride was picturesque

(continued on next page)

(Trip to Rootes Archives continued.....)



That evening, the UK Tiger club had their awards banquet. Rosemarie Smith was supposed to attend, but she had medical complications following a Formula 1 drive she had participated in a month or two earlier. She was very disappointed that the doctor wouldn't let her travel to the event. The next morning, the UK club members all jumped in their Tigers and drove to the new archives building for some photos, and to give some of the group a chance to see the project for the first time. I was very lucky to be given a ride by Angela Dandy, author, Tiger owner, and comedienne, in her beautiful Yellow Tiger.



After picking up my new brake booster, it was time to head back to the hotel and see how I could hide the booster in my suitcase. Buck, Claudia, and I, walked up the road for dinner at the White Horse Pub as it was our last meal before we headed back to The States in the morning.

One final thought - I'd like to thank Graham Vickery, the boys in the archives, and the UK Tiger Club, for their hospitality.

