

Media news

April 22nd 2021

**National Motor Museum Trust Reference Library celebrates 60th anniversary**

The [National Motor Museum Trust](https://www.nationalmotormuseum.org.uk/) will be celebrating 60 years of its Reference Library with an online commemoration from 28th April, giving motoring enthusiasts a fascinating insight into one of Europe’s largest publicly accessible motor heritage libraries.

Marking six decades since the library was opened in 1961, a selection of films will be available to watch on the National Motor Museum Trust [YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/user/MotorMuseum), taking viewers behind the scenes of the library, which contains over 300,000 items, and revealing its remarkable history. This vast collection spans from the beginning of the automobile era in the 1880s right up to the present day.

The Reference Library curators, Carina Taylor and Lindsay Whitaker-Guest, are looking forward to commemorating this invaluable resource. Lindsay said: “The 60th anniversary is definitely a proud moment for us as it shows how far the collection has come over the years”. Carina said: “Thanks to the expert knowledge of all its librarians, staff and volunteers, past and present, the service has become the place for information and advice whether you are a vehicle restorer, academic researcher or finding more about your family history”.

The Reference Library, or National Road Transport Library as it was originally called, was officially opened on 28th April 1961 by the late Edward, 3rd Baron Montagu of Beaulieu, who recognised the importance of providing a motoring library and archive service for historians, researchers and members of the public.

From its unlikely location in the kitchens of Palace House, the Montagu family home, the library expanded quickly, relocating to larger premises at Beaulieu’s John Montagu Building in 1972, then to its current location in the National Motor Museum Trust’s Collection Centre in 1989. Today, it occupies five rooms over two floors.

The Reference Library tells the story of motoring in Britain and abroad. The service provides access to a wealth of research material including rare and out of print publications on everything from cars and motorcycles to commercial vehicles. The collection of 300,000 items includes 14,000 books, 7,000 bound volumes of periodicals, 100,000 loose periodicals, 70,000 sales literature items, around 25,000 handbooks, 7,000 workshop manuals and over 9,000 event programmes and show guides. The collection continues to grow with over 2,000 historical and contemporary items added each year.

Highlights include early motor journals *The Car Illustrated* and *Coach Builders Art Journal*, early French motor journals, a rich collection of vehicles sales literature and brochures dating back to the 1880s, technical material and almost complete runs of *The Autocar* and *The Motor*.

Normally the library’s collections can be accessed by making an appointment in advance through the Motoring Research Service. Each appointment and visit is led by Patrick Collins, the Research and Enquiries Officer, who brings extensive knowledge and expertise of the collection and motoring history. Like many places the library has had to close its doors due to the national lockdown restrictions.

Despite this, the service still receives many enquiries from researchers keen to continue their work. Once Government guidelines allow and it is safe to do so, the library hopes to reopen with new Covid-secure procedures and welcome back visitors again. This will become another great moment in the library’s long and wonderful history.

The National Motor Museum Trust YouTube channel can be found at [www.youtube.com/user/MotorMuseum](https://www.youtube.com/user/MotorMuseum).

For more information about the Reference Library, the Motoring Research Service and the National Motor Museum Trust collections, please visit [www.nationalmotormuseum.org.uk](http://www.nationalmotormuseum.org.uk).

**Note to editors:**

**Opening Times**

The Reference Library is current closed to the public, in accordance with current Government lockdown procedures. For the latest information opening information please visit:

Website: [www.nationalmotormuseum.org.uk](http://www.nationalmotormuseum.org.uk)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/nationalmotormuseum>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Beaulieu_Hants>

**Ends**

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Visitor Information: <https://nationalmotormuseum.org.uk/enquiries/motoring-research-service/>