

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## Banking on her grandfather's Brooklands bravery with Georgia Peck

**Lead**

On 7 October 1935, John Cobb lapped the famous Brooklands banking at a record-breaking average speed of 143.44mph. Flagged out of the way in his MG was Georgia Peck’s grandfather, Henry Aubrey Peck, the inspiration for her new company, Aubrey Peck



I first met Georgia a few years ago at a Duke of London Classics and Cake event, run by her boyfriend Merlin McCormack. At the time, she was in charge of events for Duke of London and the luxury lifestyle magazine Tempus, while also heading up the magazine’s motoring section. But it wasn’t until recently that I discovered her grandfather’s racing past. We caught up to chat about her family and her new business....



**Georgia, your family seems to have a fascinating past, please tell me about your grandfather, Henry Aubrey Peck?**

“Everyone called him Harry. Sadly, I never knew him personally; he passed away just after I was born, but my father has always said he would have adored me, and by the sounds of things I would have adored him, too. Growing up, all of my bedtime stories were about his travels and him racing cars around the world.

“Every Christmas, as a treat, my father would bring out our 1920s projector and we’d sit down as a family to watch the old Pathé footage of him at Brooklands, trialling and so on, which always brought me great joy – one day I hoped to do something as cool as that! He was a member of the BRDC, the British Racing Drivers Club, and loved cars so much that he had his own petrol pump installed athome. And he was just as capable in the sky as on the track, joining the RAF during the Second World War and piloting a Bristol Type 156 Beaufighter.”



**Fantastic! What notable cars did he own?**

“He had a R-type MG, which was the one he raced most frequently, and a 4.5-litre Bentley, in which he was recorded doing a 100mph lap at Brooklands. He remarked to my father how 100mph on the banked track felt ‘suicidal’, as the gaps between the concrete sections would cause the suspension to bottom out and his goggles would fall down his face!



“He also had Mk II, Mk 10 and E-Type Jaguars, his MGTC ‘Black Bess’ and a 105 Talbot he bought new in Kensington in 1934. I tracked down the Talbot; it now lives in Arizona with a rather fantastic gentleman called Gregory who uses it most days. I’m so pleased the Talbot went to a good home, I think my grandfather would have been friends with him!”



**How did you manage to track it down?**

“I have to say a huge thanks to I S Polson, the Talbot specialists in Suffolk, who kindly put us in touch with Gregory. The car underwent a full restoration before Gregory had hoped to pick it up and drive it 600 miles to the Isle of Skye with only a canvas hood – brave! Unfortunately, the timings didn’t work out for the trip. Later this year, the car is entered in The Quail and the Sonoma Speed Festival, so huge respect to both him and Ian Polson for restoring it to such a high standard. Hopefully I’ll be back out in Carmel for car week again this year to see it in all its glory.”



**Tell me more about Harry. He sounds like a real character...**

“He used to commute into London in ‘Black Bess’, using an ex-police bell to clear rush-hour traffic – while smoking a pipe. He also fitted some sort of naughty contraption that puffed out a cloud of black smoke at the press of a button to anyone who got on his bad side on the road. He was quite a character alright! But my favourite quirk I heard about his cars would have to be the china toilet pull by the driver’s seat in his Bentley – when it was pulled, a pair of ladies’ underwear would dangle in the back window. That was pretty scandalous in the 1930s, I imagine!”





**That is brilliant! So, Harry’s adventurous side has inspired you to establish your own business, Aubrey Peck. Tell us about that...**

“Yeah, absolutely, it’s 100% inspired by my grandfather, mixed with my own love of cars, travel and exploring. As I said, I never got to know him, so this is my way of doing that – it’s more than a business to me, it’s personal. I’ve been tracking down some of his old cars, or similar examples, and I’ve got plans to recreate what I’ve seen from the fantastic Pathé footage of his trips, like him taking the Orient Express across Europe as his car was shipped to meet him, or taking his MG across the Egyptian desert, discovering new and exciting places in the world of that era. I’m hoping to combine old-school luxury, adventure travel, history and a passion for all of the above, bringing what he did into the modern day, as if he were still here with us.”



**Did the new business grow out of what you previously did for Tempus?**

“Before I set up Aubrey Peck, I worked for a few companies around Europe, most recently Tempus, heading up global events and experiences. I frequently worked with incredible brands like Bentley, Rolls-Royce, Aston Martin and Breitling, and sometimes received luxury cars to travel around in! It was an incredible privilege, but obviously I had to write about it all, which I openly admit I didn’t enjoy.”

“After a while with the magazine, I realised I didn’t really want to be writing about what other people were doing or producing – I wanted to be the one organising things of my own that other people wanted to write about. I’ve been so lucky to build up an amazing network of people in the luxury, automotive and events industries, either through friends, previous employment or Tempus, that starting my own company and combining what I loved with a career seemed a natural progression. And, of course, when I met my other half Merlin, who owns Duke of London, my whole world really did come to revolve almost solely around cars!”



**There clearly was no hope for you, then, it was always going to involve automobiles! So, will you be curating events and trips for people and brands?**

“Yes. At the moment I’m working on a really wonderful project with a large manufacturer, but I can’t tell you any more about that just yet! I’m also working with Aston Martin organising something related to the new James Bond film, No Time to Die, when it’s finally released.”

“Later this year, the second government regulations permit, I’ve planned a number of exclusive rallies, driving tours, hillclimbs and other exciting motorsport events across the UK and Europe, for a range of corporate and private clients. With every experience I create at Aubrey Peck, whether for a company or individual, I try my very best to make it totally personalised to the client, linking back to an element of their automotive history wherever possible – be it the racing history of a manufacturer or the personal history of a client’s own car. At the risk of sounding clichéd, I try to make them truly one-of-a-kind!”



**What other plans do you have for Aubrey Peck?**

“Unique road trips, certainly. Money-can’t-buy experiences are what we’ll really be focusing on – marrying classic cars, adventure travel and luxury with a splash of history and visiting places behind closed doors – yes, it’s possible! We’re also running a number of different events that are quite exciting. One is an immersive drive-in cinema, with vintage aircraft and stunt planes performing a live airshow, and with a few surprises along the way.”



**Wow, that sounds like an amazing spectacle, sign me up! Clearly you’ve inherited a passion for the automobile and adventure from your family. Did your father also race?**

“My father used to go to Spridget racing around the southeast of England. He had lots of cars when I was younger, including his prized Daimler V8 Tornado Talisman prototype – previously owned by Jaguar ‘Knobbly’ Lister racing driver John Bakeart – that was built from a race car rolled in Morocco and he restored himself. There was also the 1920s Austin 7 Special that he used to compete in hillclimbs with. My father also loved being a member of the VSCC, which I’m hoping to get into myself this year, specifically trials.”



**Trials looks like one of the most fun types of motorsport in the world, I’m also very tempted by it!**

“It’s just the epitome of British eccentricity isn’t it? I’m looking to buy an Austin 7 Ulster, which I think is a good entry-level car. Trials looks like my idea of absolute heaven. I grew up on the border of Kent and East Sussex, with the nearby seaside as my playground. My mother and our old family bath will confirm I spent more time covered in mud than not, usually running riot in a field somewhere on a mini motorbike or equally muddy pony. And I suppose I haven’t grown out of the guilty pleasure of being covered in mud in the great outdoors just yet, so why not take part in a sport that fully encourages it, in the seat of a pre-war car?”

**Georgia, thank you so much for your time. I look forward to seeing some of the exciting Aubrey Peck plans take shape!**

*Photography by Amy Shore for Classic Driver © 2021*













































































































































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