

Our Sponsor's Story

For some fifty years the Lenton-based Horsley family have been providing chauffeur-driven cars for weddings and executive travel. This is their story.

As a young man in his early twenties living in Riddings, Derbyshire, Ralph Horsley worked as a lorry driver but more significantly had acquired a car of his own. This was something that many of his friends and acquaintances in the 1950s had yet to achieve. Ralph also found himself called upon to act as best man at several local weddings when his car would be used to transport participants to and from the wedding. It gave Ralph the idea that maybe one day he might take up this role of chauffeur on a professional basis.

In 1957 Ralph Horsley married Barbara Gravelle in Derbyshire. The following year their first child, Stephen [Steve], was born. Before Simon, their second son, was born in 1960, the Horsleys had moved to Nottingham. Their daughters, Angela and Diane, were born here in 1961 and 1964 respectively. James Ralph, their final child, would be born in 1970. In the mid-to-late 1960s they came to live in Lenton in a new housing development off Gregory Street, known as Forsythia Gardens. By now Ralph Horsley had established his own business 'Ralph Horsley Haulage' and during the latter half of the 1960s Barbara ran the little transport cafe on Abbey Street. At the end of the 1960s Ralph acquired a large Bentley motor car and began to offer his services as a chauffeur (see advert above). Soon after this the Horsleys moved to a detached property on Hillside, Lenton which remained Ralph and Barbara's home for the rest of their lives. In 1974 Rushcliffe Borough Council began to use Ralph and his Bentley motor car to drive the mayor and mayoress to and from their various official functions. Ralph continued in this role until June 1999 when he chose to step down whereupon Steve, his son, took over.

Steve and his younger siblings were all inducted into the wedding car business. Even as children they would be called upon to clean the cars both inside and out; and on the wedding days fit the various ribbons and bows to the vehicles. Simon recalled that, almost the day after he passed his driving test aged seventeen, he was pressed into service as a chauffeur. Driving the wedding vehicles would be a task that most of the Horsley

children would be called upon to perform at one time or another. When their services as chauffeurs were not required the two older boys were occupied on the haulage side of the business.

Chauffeur driven
BENTLEY
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Weddings and executive
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Contact Mr. Ralph Horsley,
40 Forsythia Gardens, Gregory
Street, Lenton, Nottingham.
Tel. 77638

Nottm. Evening Post April 1970

Once Ralph Horsley decided to take more of a back seat in the business in the early 2000s Simon Horsley took over the wedding car business and changed its name to Lenton Limousines. By now, as the advert (below) makes clear, the Horsleys had a fleet of five or more wedding cars to call on. These cars have almost certainly 'attended' weddings at each and every church and register office in the Nottingham area and must have featured in many thousands wedding photographs and in more recent time video recordings. Among the more famous personalities to have used

the Horsleys' services are the radio presenter Simon Mayo, Valerie Halliday (one of The Three Degrees) and Nigel Clough (of Nottingham Forest F.C. fame). For the first decade of the 2000s Simon had an American stretch Lincoln limousine which ferried both wedding guests and school prom parties all over the East Midlands. Simon sold it about 2010 and the vehicle was last known to be plying for trade in the Brighton area.

Barbara Horsley died in August 2006. Ralph continued to live at No.6 Hillside. His final years were blighted by dementia but his family rallied round to look after him. Ralph Horsley died in April 2019, aged eighty eight. Back in 1990 Simon had moved to Arnesby Road on Lenton Gardens Estate, which now serves as Lenton Limousines' headquarters. In Lenton Limousines' fleet there are currently two beautiful 1950s Silver Bentleys and two Rolls Royce Silver Shadows - one in classic White and one in Gold. All are available for hire. Check out Simon's website or give him a call and he will be pleased to advise and help with all enquires [see page 2 for more details].



RALPH HORSLEY

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Nottm. Recorder October 1996



Three of the Lenton Limousines posing for their photograph at Wollaton Park