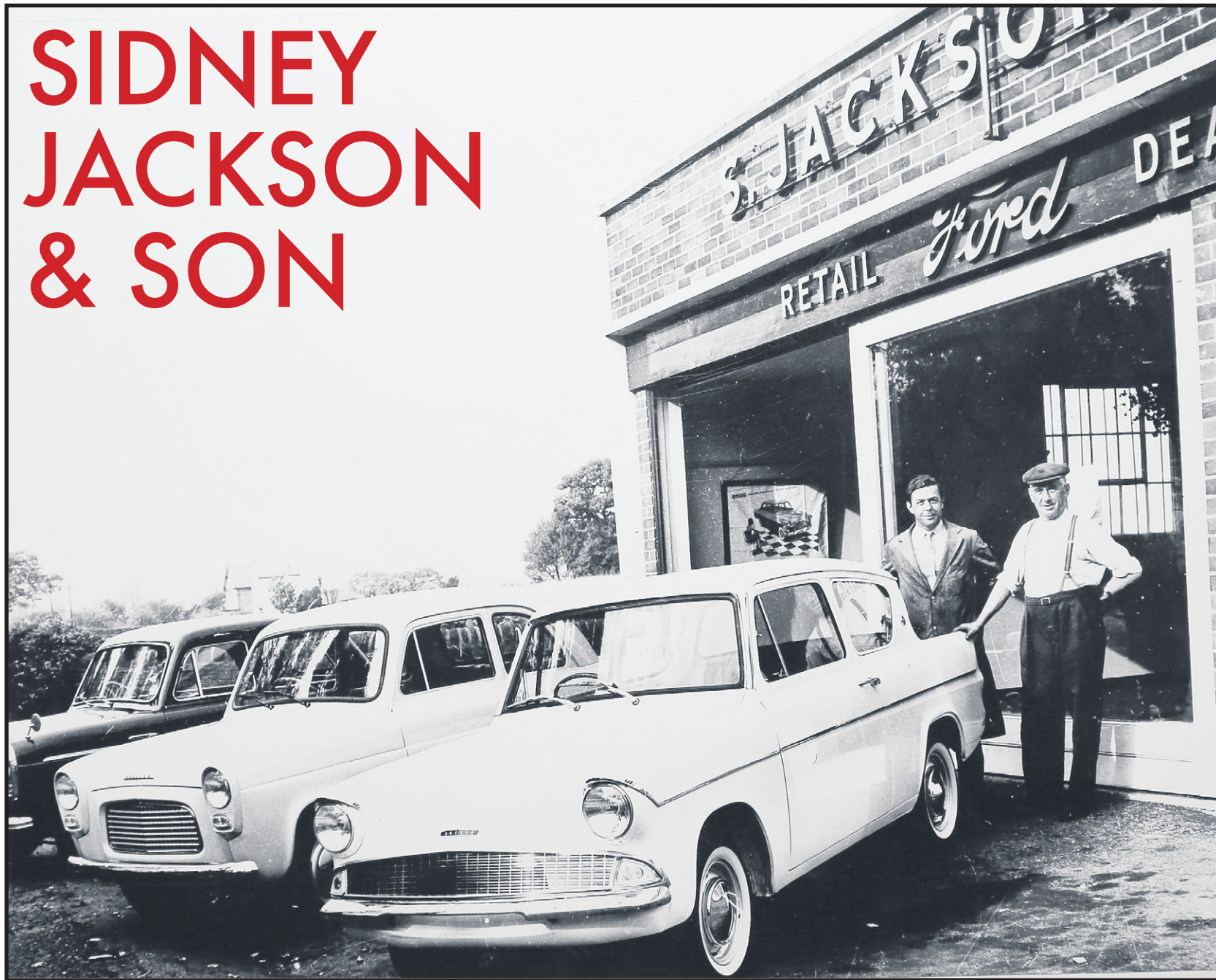


SIDNEY JACKSON & SON



The Sidney Jackson & Son Ford Retail Dealership is situated on Wilmslow Road in Butley, down the road from Adlington Hall. Or perhaps we should say It's still on Wilmslow Road, given that it has occupied this position since 1920. It was not a Ford dealership back then but it was the seed from which this remarkable family enterprise has grown.

Sidney himself was born into a farming family in 1892 but showed little enthusiasm for working on the land. During the First World War he served as a tank tester and on leaving the army set up a repair shop to service cars and the many tractors in the area. Before long a charabanc was added to the list of services. However, it was to be Sidney's son, Jimmy, who would push the business in the direction that sees it selling cars rather than simply fixing them and doing so to some repute all these years later.

Jimmy is now 85 and although he's no longer a regular presence at the showroom, he lives close enough that his presence is felt. He also has a son there - Timothy - who is the Service Director. But it was with General Manager Liam Riley that we visited Jimmy at his home, to find out more about this most steadfast of families.

When did you start working for your father?

When I left school I worked for my father as a mechanic and I ran the repair side of the business. In 1956 I said to my father "there must be easier ways to make money" and he asked me what I was thinking of and I said "we could sell motor cars". He was very easy going and never stood in my way but he said "well Jim, I don't know why you're bothering, we've always made a comfortable living" but he never said 'no, you can't do it.' He said "it's your life get on with it." So I wrote to the Ford Motor Company and told them I wanted to sell their cars. It was so easy, they said 'we'll

send a chap up to see you' and the chap came up and said 'yes, you're in a good position' and I asked him what we needed and he told us we had to have a showroom. We didn't have a lot of money so I asked him how big it had to be and he said 'big enough for two cars.'

Did you speak to any other manufacturers?

No, I was only interested in Ford. 75% to 80% of cars in the area were Ford and I'd been looking after them for years and years.

Was the showroom expensive?

It was for me. In fact I didn't have the money to do it. The only way I could get the money to do it was through the petrol companies.

How did that work?

During the war they had what was called Pooled Petrol. There was no Shell or BP. The when the war finished all these companies came back with all sorts of deals.



Left: Jimmy and Sidney Jackson outside their original two-car showroom
Top left, the charabanc, complete with 'SJ' livery on the side
Right: The original showroom is still there, but it is just an annex these days
Above: Sidney outside the original workshop, which opened in 1920



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I'd always been an Esso man so I went with them. They asked me if I wanted any money and I asked them what for and they said 'to improve your premises.' I told them that I quite fancied having a showroom and they asked what that would cost I told them it would be about £600. They didn't actually give me the money. They paid for the building and worked out how much petrol I would sell over ten years and the cost of the showroom was written off again profit I would have made on the petrol.

So the business took off right away?

Yes, I was quite amazed really although I wasn't completely new to selling cars. For seven or eight years I'd been selling cars for what they called an introductory commission. If one of my regular repair customers wanted a new car, a Ford or an Austin, Morris or Standard, all the other makes, I'd take them to the agent and I'd get one or two percent out of the profit on the car. I'd never had any con-

nection with the manufacturers before, but it didn't seem to be any kind of problem.

The first two cars Jimmy put in the showroom were a Ford Popular and a Zephyr. Thousands of cars have been a gone since then, and while the business has expanded its showroom considerably, the old, original, two-car space is still there, with 'retail Ford dealers' still proudly proclaimed above the windows and a flag still flying from the roof.

Independent, family-run businesses do not enjoy the financial clout of the major corporations but they have something very much in their favour. They offer a friendly face to the public, literally and figuratively. The Jacksons have carried family values into their business and that is precisely the reason it will be celebrating a very impressive centenary in six years time.

