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FRONT COVER Edwardian Rolls-Royces at the cross-roads on the road to Carcassonne (the Brammalls' 1913 SG, 23NA, and Doug Magee and Diane Mandragouras' 1912 SG, 2092). Photograph by Diane Mandragouras.

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EDITORIAL

In this bumper issue I am concentrating on the various events that have taken place over the summer. The French Sunshine Tour was clearly a very special event, and the organiser, Tim Forrest, has kindly contributed a long article with photographs from many of the participants. I am only sorry that we were not able to go ourselves. Several members were able to join in part of the French Tour, taking themselves off to Normandy after leaving the others in the Loire, and Graham Tyson and Lesley Stuttard have written short articles about their adventures, including petrol rationing in France (which nearly turned their tour into a different version of a Long Tour). Mary Narvell, who with her husband John participated in the Sunshine Tour, has contributed a splendid Tribute to the Navigators, which I commend to all drivers, in particular. I am sure you have shown your appreciation of your heroic companions before now, but it is only when you read Mary's article that you will, I guarantee, fully understand the difficulties involved.

We have a write up of the tour in Cornwall with the Irish Georgian Society, and of a visit to Nottinghamshire. There is also a description of the tour in Tasmania, which I had to hold over from the last issue, 48. You will be able to read about the Driving Tests at Sandhurst in the next issue. The eagle-eyed amongst you will have noticed that at 44 pages this issue is already longer than our standard 32 pages.



Robin Dean's 20/25 and the Tiger Moth, meeting in June.

I am delighted to include various items of Members' News, including a truly historic encounter earlier this year between Robin Dean's 20/25 and a Tiger Moth, piloted by his step son-in-law. Do please keep sending me contributions!

Our events seem to be appealing to many of you, and as you will see on the back page, we have a long programme of future events. We try and offer variety, with a mix of longer and shorter tours, but we are keen to find out whether we are truly offering something for everyone. We are enclosing a questionnaire with this issue, and would encourage you to fill it in and return it by whatever means suits you best (e-mail or post, or even to telephone).

This may be the moment to mention the arrangements if you have to withdraw from a tour. The Club's Rules provide as follows: "There are occasions when, through illness or a delay in a car's restoration or a car not being roadworthy, members have to withdraw from an event having paid one or more deposits. If another member is able to take the place of a member who has withdrawn, then all amounts paid will be returned to the member who has to withdraw, on the basis that the Club is not out of pocket. Refunds will be made after the tour has finished but may be made earlier, at the discretion of the Club Treasurer (Philip Hall). If no substitute comes forward and the withdrawal is for medical reasons then the member is expected to claim for any loss against the member's insurance policy. If this is not possible, then a claim may be made through the Club's insurance policy and the Company Secretary (Ken Forbes) will assist with this. If the withdrawal is for other reasons then a refund will only be made if another member is available as a substitute". Our Chairman, John Stuttard, adds: the Committee has experienced no instance, thus far, of a member being out of pocket as a result of withdrawal from a tour through medical or other reasons, since tours often have a waiting list and/or claims for withdrawal have been made via an insurance policy. However, despite the popularity of current tours and events, members will understand that this cannot be guaranteed.

TOURING CORNWALL WITH THE IRISH GEORGIAN SOCIETY

Mary Narvell

May 2016



Arriving at Prideaux Place. Janet Valentine is directing Jimmy in their 1929 Phantom 1OR and Mary is just outside Yasmine, WEC27. Photograph by Colin Hughes.

Cornwall conjures many images - King Arthur and Merlin, Poldark and Rebecca, shipwrecks and smugglers, pasties and ice cream. A mystical region of ancient folklore and indigenous lingo, its west country isolation has contributed to its otherworldly feel. Long established families have occupied lands for generations grateful for the lack of interruption in their stewardship of properties. Impossibly quaint villages, where slate roofed white washed cottages tumble down to teeny fishing harbours, seem resolutely and delightedly stalled in an archaic age. Life moves at a slower pace washed by sea salt laden breezes. So it was with great anticipation that we joined the 2016 Irish Georgian 20-Ghost Club jaunt to amble through this region whose myths had long seduced us.

As ever, I prayed to the spirits of Mr. Rolls and Mr. Royce that our 1939 Wraith, Yasmine, would reliably transport our passengers. Please no punctures or engine failures. She had spent the last several months “at the spa” getting herself pampered by the fine mechanic a veteran driver had generously shared. She was sporting new radials - heresy, I know, for concours purists - so she was tracking well. We knew not to rely

on the temperamental petrol gauge so there should be no repeat of embarrassing fuel shortages. Rain-X, tools and spare parts were on board. If only we knew what to do with them, we should surely be roadworthy.

Saturday dawned gray with an unseasonable chill. But undaunted, intrepid Irish Georgian passengers embarked in our caravan of 10 glorious cars, one a Bentley. (John Redmill and Desmond Barry would join us at the next house after repairing their second puncture. What happened to that extra tube they were sure they had packed in Ireland?) Our destination was **Prideaux Place** where, at the end of its bluebell lined drive, we found an ivy clad house with battlements reminiscent of a toy fort.

At the Elizabethan oak door with its original lock and key, we learned the history of the family that had owned this property for over 14 generations, twenty six times descended from William the Conqueror. The “Strawberry Hill Gothic” central hall, with an impressive cantilevered staircase, foretold the same decoration in the home’s Regency extension. A tiny model Rolls on the owner’s desk suggested, had he been home, the view of so many real ones



The forecourt at Antony House with the Colliers' 1934 20/25, GNC70, and the Narvells' 1939 Wraith, WEC27.
Photograph by Colin Hughes.

in his drive would have thrilled. A sitting room pillow amused with wise advice: "God grant me the serenity to forget the people I never liked anyway, the good fortune to run into the ones I do, and the eyesight to tell the difference." Entering the dining room, through a double door that opened on one side to an unexpected old stone wall, we admired the recently restored 16th century wall panels with fine marquetry now revealed. Four female carvings on the cornice were rare in their possession of articulated limbs. Might they beckon us to dine on the china emblazoned with the family crest "toujours pret?" Certainly our group was "always ready" to discover more homes.

We motored onto *Pencarrow* past rapeseed fields the colour of Cornish gold. Down a drive of knarled beech trees christened "the Cathedral" by the owner Molesworth-St Aubyn family, we entered the park of mature rhododendron. The Stuttards' "FT Pink" 20/25 blended well with the garden's huge fuschia azaleas and wysteria vines. Paraphrasing nearby Devon native, Agatha Christie, "and then there were eleven little Indians" our missing car returned with its tyres repaired. But had the owners forgotten their car keys necessitating the mechanic to drop them by the hotel? Karma, at last, for that driver who scolded me in 2013 on leaving my coat at the home of a Marchioness who generously delivered it. Perhaps in future, we shall have to travel with minds.

In Pencarrow, there was more evidence

of a home enjoyed over successive generations. The draught under the vaulted ceiling of the inner staircase hall suggested ghosts of children who had played with the many dolls and carriages assembled. Busts topped with fanciful hats could not distract us from the cipher etched window where a peacock, pecking at his own reflection, had broken the glass. Aware that lunch of home-made Cornish pasties and cakes awaited, we only briefly appreciated the largest private collection of family portraits by Reynolds assembled.

Skies threatened as we crossed the desolate Bodmin Moor past Jamaica Inn, the notorious haunt of smugglers. Yet lambs grazing peacefully in slate edged fields foretold safer scenes to come. Entering the pastoral setting of *Werrington Park*, our cars briefly interrupted more sheep happily munching near an arched stone bridge. Colin Huges joked "This must be the River Camel as the bridge has a hump" but we soon learned we were on the River Ottery.

Owners Mr. and Mrs. Michael Williams greeted us in the red entry hall with its multi-hued mosaic floor. Beside the wellies and gun cases, he began the long history of the property that had included Henry VIII, Sir Francis Drake, and the Dukes of Northumberland in its storied past. A Jacobean strap work ceiling, Baroque over mantel, 18th century leather wall coverings, and a Victorian billiard room all gave witness to a house that had, as he remarked, "evolved in a way that doesn't happen nowadays and is remarkable to see."



Delwyn is about to dismount from the Greenes' 1923 Silver Ghost 41EM at Port Eliot. Photograph by Colin Hughes.



A bevy of beauties outside Pencarrow. In the foreground John Redmill's 1929 20/25, GXE097 and Jeremy Green's 1924 Silver Ghost 41EM. In the background, the pink rhododendrons set off the Stuttards' pink 20/25, GSF29. Photograph by Colin Hughes.

Our day concluded at **Kelly**, the demesne from which the family had taken its name 900 years earlier. Warren Kelly told a tale of crippling inheritance taxes, in relentlessly quick succession, coupled with maintenance woes. Here in the fabled land of Camelot, Merlin's magic would be a welcome antidote to the dry rot and roof damp - double threats to a building still proudly displaying a pattern book of Georgian architectural vocabulary. The family's battle, in the valiant spirit of King Arthur's knights, to preserve the structure was a sobering lesson in how demanding a mistress an historic home can be, not unlike a classic automobile! On return to our cars, it was a light hearted relief to find tiny stuffed koalas holding boomerangs or the Aussie flag. Yasmine loved her new mascot left surreptitiously by Jeremy Greene.

Sunday brought the news that the Stuttards' "pink lady" had a mechanical problem unfortunately not to rejoin the trip. So then there were 10 as we followed organiser Robert Jennings' "clues" to find **Antony House**, its grey Cornish stone dramatically offset against the gleaming blue sky. It was quite a sight to see the cars process deftly through the snug portecochere bringing the usual thrill to the resident family. Sir Carew Pole, alongside his son Tremayne, informed us we shared two things in common: his grandmother was Irish and they used to have a Rolls-Royce. In a double height entry hall, with paneling as dark as Cornish coffee, another long history of uninterrupted ownership was explained. "Antony is five parts of the whole - architecture, chattels, a family archive, integral formal gardens, and a wider landscape setting - that contribute to the overall entity that make a country house." Famed landscape designer Repton had thought the property blessed to have water in its view believing it a "desirable quality of which one should always take advantage." With this heritage, it was almost understandable that in the Civil War, an ancestor would have "lost his head to save his lands." Chillingly, the remnants of the suit he wore on the scaffold stood as evidence of his sacrifice.

Our next stop was **Port Eliot**, the only Grade One listed house and garden in Cornwall. Descending the curved drive, we encountered a drone hovering above, a peculiar juxtaposition to the medieval priory atmosphere. Had its buzzing (capturing our arrival for "a film that could be made available to us for a small fee") been what

prompted Lord St Germans to arrive on his quad bike? Or was it the assemblage of pre-War autos in his 1829 graveled carriage court? Once a monastery, this home now presented a hybrid of the modern with the antique - a 21st century mural attempting to coexist within the proportional purity of the round Soane dining room; a streamlined Apple iPad on a Boulle inlaid desk below 10 gilded framed Van Dycks. There in his study sitting as still as a "ghost", perhaps the Earl was contemplating rewriting his instructions in the estate guide: "A family tree will not be found in this guide book. Those in search of one may find them at any garden centre."

While others explored the gardens and estuary after lunch, I enjoyed a RR tutelage from one of the three female drivers on this year's trip. Mermie Karger, who had solo driven her Ghost across the USA, gave me tips on how to identify body styles. I remain impressed by the support among drivers on seeing her replace a part borrowed from Jeremy when her car had previously suffered mechanical problems. Delphine Gray-Fisk, enjoying her first IGS trip, shared how it had been love at first sight when she saw advertised her 1933 Ivory Phantom Two Tourer. Other owners could no doubt share similar tales of smiting. I intimately know one for whom his Rolls is a beloved mistress.

Miraculously our cavalcade of large cars navigated tiny Cornish lanes hemmed by high hedges. Each blind corner was an act of faith - would the next curve reveal an obstacle? As we neared **Cotehele**, we encountered one in the "rush minute" at this National Trust property where clearly the parking lot attendants were unprepared for the arrival of so many difficult to maneuver vehicles. A Keystone Cops traffic jam ensued testing the patience of many at the rear of the queue who gave up before visiting this treasure trove of tapestries and oak coffers.

A special treat of IGS/20GC rambles is the access given to private houses and the gracious hospitality of their owners. Such was the case with our elegant dinner Sunday night in the sumptuous **Boconnoc**. Our hostess told the story of first seeing the house from its drive with her late husband who told her "someday this house will have electricity." She had every reason to take pride in his sheer willpower and grit that fueled this restoration miracle. Indeed, Simon Jenkins in his book "*England's Thousand Best Houses*" praised Boconnoc as "another house of

saints. In this case, it is Anthony and Elizabeth Fortescue battling to rescue what was a near derelict family home.”

The only rain we encountered came on our final day but did not dampen our explorer spirits. To come were two houses that proved my favourites – **Trewithen** and **Caerhays Castle**. The former’s diverse collections - Asian china, Bristol Blue glass, chiming clocks – lovingly amassed since 1715 were testament to another long settled family home, this one with connections to the Raffles. Standing in the library, hearing of an owner’s dedicated cleansing of book bindings over eight days each, 20-GC drivers could appreciate this slavish attention as similar to that they lavished on their cars.

Skies opened at Caerhays but did not diminish its breathtaking vista from a headland above a stormy sea cove. The covered porch proved a perfect shelter from which we spied pheasants interrupting their courting to investigate the cars. In this Gothic castle fantasy created by John Nash, one could still hear the whispers of occupants from ages past. Well-thumbed folios of the Rhododendron Society recalled its founding here in 1916. The remains of a dart board, on a heavily punctuated wall in a

servant’s hall, revealed a tale of children evacuated in WWII – playwright Harold Pinter among them. And if Caerhays was the inspiration for Manderley in du Maurier’s “*Rebecca*”, then maybe I was hearing Mrs Danvers’ mantra “the sea, the sea” as I sat at lunch mesmerised by the water view through the dining room windows. But perhaps the most interesting link for our drivers was the discovery the family’s 1906 Light 20HP Tourer had been bought by Stanley Sears, one of the 20-GC founders.

Our trip had the usual escapades. There was the IGS member who, on trying to find the bathroom door *inside* his room, somehow found himself *outside* the hotel in a state of undress banging his window for reentry. (I have already requisitioned the CCTV footage of this mishap for the club archive). And even with the excellent “clues”, we somehow always manage to venture afield – this time when the Redmill/Barry car and Yasmine followed the Colliers on a wrong turn to Trewithen. “We were just testing the sheep instinct” David affirmed. Well, Cornwall is the land of “Camelot” so perhaps it is appropriate to paraphrase lyricist Alan J Lerner: “It’s May, it’s May, the lovely month when everyone makes divine mistakes and goes blissfully astray.”



Dinner at Boconnoc House. Photograph by Colin Hughes.

When it seems we only just greeted old friends, and made new ones, we are saying goodbye as our journey ends. It is a strange quirk that the clock in our Wraith can only be set forward perhaps proving the adage “you can’t turn back the clock.” I wish we could to relive this Cornish sojourn. Instead, memory will have to suffice.



Caerhays Castle. Photograph by Colin Hughes.

Name	Year	Model	Reg.No	Chassis No	Coach-builder
Mermie Karger and Colin Hughes	1920	Silver Ghost Tourer	R4871	89AE	Flewitt
Jeremy Greene and Delwyn Klevenow	1923	Silver Ghost Tourer	B1924	41 EM	Windovers
John Redmill and Desmond Barry	1929	20/25 Saloon	ZV4501	GX097	Park Ward
Jimmy and Janet Valentine	1929	Phantom I Saloon	UV1923	1OR	HJ Mulliner
Clive and Jane Carter	1933	20/25 Limousine	HS492	GB 862	Barker
Delphine Gray-Fisk	1933	Phantom II	825XUT	152MY	Tourer Wilkinson
David and Sue Collier	1934	20/25 Sedan de Ville	AYV921	GNC 70	Hooper
Sir John and Lady Lesley Stuttard	1934	Sports Saloon	BXB12	GSF29	Barker
John and Mary Narvell	1939	Wraith Four Light Saloon	985BGW	WEC 27	James Young
Sue Taylor	1939	Wraith Park Ward Limousine	HLL 34	WHC 77	Park Ward
William and Clare Corbett		Bentley			

FRENCH SUNSHINE TOUR AND CONCOURS

Tim Forrest

17th May to 29th May 2016

Early in 2015 on a rather dank morning in Cambridge, the committee of the 20 Ghost Club held a strategy meeting to decide what kind of tours we should run in future. We decided that the tours should have a clear purpose, pass through attractive countryside and have interesting places to visit. To my wife Susie's horror, I volunteered with two others to organise something I rashly called The French Sunshine Tour and Concours.

The aim of the tour was to replicate some of the Grand Tours and Rallies undertaken by owners of Rolls-Royces in the 1920s and 30s. Typically these had a variety of starting points across Europe and then converged on a common route through France. Then having overcome a number of challenges they ended up at a splendid venue where the cars were judged on elegance and on the condition in which they had survived the tour.

Little did I know how closely this was to be reflected in what happened in our Sunshine Tour to Biarritz! The first challenge was for me, as my prostate cancer re-appeared. This meant that the planned jolly to do a recce of the route, was replaced by interesting trips to the Chemotherapy department, much study of Michelin guides and days spent on Google Earth plotting the detailed route. John Stuttard helped enormously by finding some superb hotels in approximately the right places and Brian Fidler did a wonderful job of juggling the Euros and paying all the bills. Our younger daughter Katie, who was doing a post graduate course, volunteered to assist and kept up with the late entrants and changes to reservations. Since Susie was waiting for a knee operation, Katie also had two short practice drives in my 1912 Silver Ghost, in case I was not sufficiently recovered to drive all the way. Unfortunately, she rather enjoyed these!

Although the majority started from England we also had cars joining along the route. We had members from Ireland, Germany, Hong Kong, Monaco, Portugal, South Africa, Switzerland and the USA as well as the UK. Because several members could not come on the first five days of the tour, John Stuttard and Graham Tyson organised a short tour which peeled off for Brittany after the first three days.

So on a gorgeous sunny evening on Monday 16th May, travellers on the overnight ferry to St Malo were surprised to see more and more old Rolls-Royces queuing for their ferry. It was a long wait as they wanted to put us all on the lower deck. However once on board we were rewarded because of course this was a Normandy ferry and it had the most fabulous seafood buffet in the main restaurant so we all went to sleep happy.



Katie Forrest setting off in France. Photo by Tim Forrest.



The two groups at the Château de Marçay. Photo by Katie Forrest.

After a smooth crossing, St Malo was bathed in sunshine and so some decided to explore the historic parts of the old port. This was perhaps a little unwise since there was a rather long 180 miles of country roads to cover before supper and so there were a number of late comers! Having slightly struggled out of St Malo, where the driver, me, failed to respond to directions of either the Satnav or my wife, we were relieved to see a number of Ghosts parked around the square on the edge of the old town of Vitre. This was the first of many coffee stops on the tour where we would see another car at a stop and rapidly be joined by a different group of friends at each. Vitre is one of the best preserved old towns in Brittany with a massive fortress and some wonderful narrow streets with distinctive timber framed houses. However, with 120 miles to go we were soon all on our way again. One of the odd things we noticed on this and other days is that you never seemed to see any one at all in many of the towns and villages in rural France before about 11 am when they gradually come to life. After another 60 miles we crossed the suspension bridge over the Loire at Chalonnes. We then ran along the edge of the Loire until at

Saumur there was an escarpment of chalk into which for centuries there have been massive underground cellars dug for the storage of wine from the region. Shortly afterwards we turned south and entered the magnificent driveway to the Château de Marçay where we were to stay for the next three nights. Soon the wonderful circular driveway in the courtyard in front of the Château was full of Rolls-Royces ranging from two delightful little 20 HP doctor's coupés from the 1920s to the massively impressive Phantom IIs and IIIs from the 1930s. As ever, the largest number were Silver Ghosts of all shapes and sizes.

That evening we encountered the first of our duck challenges. Throughout the tour we had asked for the chefs to offer menus and wines from the region, rather than "international food." Being in the Loire this seemed to involve rather a lot of duck and the one in Marçay was still quacking according to our resident raconteur from Basle! Apart from an occasional duck disaster the food in many of the hotels was exceptional with some inspired presentation particularly of the puddings.

The next two days, the 18th & 19th, were relatively lazy days. Nearby Saumur was the traditional area for training cavalry and The Musée de Blindes made a wonderful refuge from the torrential rain that greeted us that morning. The Musée was in fact an extraordinarily large tank Museum containing an astonishing collection of huge French and German tanks from World War II to the present. Alternative refuges were to be found in the nearby wine caves, Fontevraud Abbey, where Richard the Lionheart is buried and the fortress of Chinon built largely by Henry II of England.

The Loire valley has a very mild climate and is famous for its wines and beautiful gardens growing the best roses in France. The next day we saw two magnificent examples of these, one incredibly elaborate and the other beautiful in its simplicity. The first, Château de Villandry, is one of the last Renaissance Château to be built on the Loire and has an absolutely extraordinary garden. The upper floors of the Château led on to a series of terraces below which the astonishingly manicured gardens stretch away before you.

In complete contrast but no less magnificent was the Château du Lude owned by friends of Strone and Alex Macpherson. We were

highly privileged to have access to the Château and were met by La Comtesse whose family had survived not only the French Revolution but many other ups and downs of fate over the last two centuries. She was delightful and her tact and diplomacy might well be the main reason for the family's survival as one of the few original families to be still in charge of their Château. She first of all took us on a tour of the gardens, explaining that they had decided to simplify everything and showed us the most delightfully simple garden leading down to a terrace alongside the nearby river. We then walked to a massive walled garden in which there was a splendid if somewhat dilapidated orangery. Later she entertained us with tea and a description of the history of the Château before we set off to Marcay.

These first few days reminded one of the enchantment of rural France. It is partly the roads which to someone used to the ups and downs of Surrey's roads are a joy. French roads go straight, are smooth and even in the mountains have only relatively gentle gradients and so are ideal for a vintage Rolls-Royce to stay in top gear for hour after hour. This coupled with the wide open spaces, intriguing villages and imperious châteaux



The Forrests' Silver Ghost, 2154, resting at Lude. Photo by Peter Golding.

and churches makes it a very enchanting world. As we moved further south, the other remarkable thing was the sheer variety in crops and vegetables that were growing interspersed with grapes of all sizes in the multitude of vineyards up and down the land.

The next day, the 20th, the full tour went on south, whereas the short tour turned north east and headed to Brittany (for what actually happened, see Graham's and Lesley's articles!). When planning the tour we intended to have hubs in each of the main areas so that we could explore the areas properly, but inevitably this meant that we had relatively long drives from one hub to the next. This day was typical, a relatively long but leisurely drive on some beautiful country roads through the Limousin region with a stop for lunch in Brantôme, known as the Venice of the Dordogne. Here we were lucky as the town was completely full, but a group of us arrived at the same time and managed to find parking alongside the river and strolled across the bridge to a restaurant. We could catch the attention of Rolls-Royces as they came across the bridge into the town and we soon had a large group that rather overwhelmed the small restaurant. However, the food and drink were excellent and we all felt well refreshed for the remaining 60 miles of our journey. I was delighted that my daughter Katie, who had only driven the car for perhaps 20 miles in England, was now happily driving our Silver Ghost for 100 miles a day and was mastering double de-clutching so well, that she was often making quieter changes than me.

Our stop for the next two nights was at the Château de Castel Novel, a rather Victorian-looking Château, but which proved to look after us all very efficiently. Here we were joined by the GTOs of the Rolls-Royce world, a group of no less than five members who all brought with them the most wonderful set of London to Edinburgh Silver Ghosts that you could find anywhere in the world. This included 1701, the first ever example of the London to Edinburgh model. This was the car that in 1911 drove from London to Edinburgh in top gear and subsequently later in the year was the first Rolls-Royce to exceed 100 mph at Brooklands. Not unnaturally these relatively light and sporting cars were often in the lead of our tour and were the first to arrive at the hotels and so feature in many of the photos of the fronts of the hotels from now on.

The next day, the 21st, we had a variety of choices. Some rested in the hotel and in due course greeted our new arrivals. Others went shopping in nearby Brive la Gaillarde, while the enthusiasts took a leisurely tour of the Limousin region, along the banks of the Dordogne. Here there were some fascinating villages and towns little changed over the centuries.

However, the next day we were onto a challenge again. This time it was a matter of the torrential downpours as much as the challenges of the rocky terrain and narrow gorges. It could have been a spectacular day but unfortunately the miserable weather obstructed the long views although the towns and river crossings were as wonderful as ever.



A shocking sight: split rim failure on 2154. Photo by Katie Forrest.

It was here that our 1912 Silver Ghost had a rather worrying attack of metal fatigue. We were reaching the top of a long, gradual ascent when a small Peugeot came by and waved us down pointing underneath the car. We had noticed that the car felt as if the road was rather uneven, but it turned out to be us and not the road causing this. Initially when I looked at the car I could not see what he was pointing at. However, I then realised that the inside rim of the left rear wheel had split for about 12 inches along the circumference of the rim. Amazingly the inner tube had not burst, being held in place by

the rubber tyre flap fitted to protect the tube from the rim. Fortunately, although deeply bowed the broken part of the rim had just cleared the bodywork. How long it had taken for the split to lengthen I do not know but there had been no dramatic crack or any other indication. This year there were a lot of rather vicious speed bumps in France, particularly when leaving their 30kph limit zones, and we had hit the bump stops on the rear springs once or twice. This may have contributed to the failure of the wheel rim.

All five wheels had been completely rebuilt in 1998 and so absolutely should not have failed 18 years later. New tyres had been professionally fitted just before the start of the tour, when there was no sign of any cracks or damage and the tyres were correctly inflated at 55psi. So all one can conclude, is that the cause was faulty material or manufacture. Unfortunately, 18 years later the company that made the original rims is no longer in business. We have never had a problem previously with the tyres or wheels and so we decided to continue on the tour rather cautiously especially slowing for all speed bumps.

Needless to say when this happened, it was in beautiful sunshine; no sooner had we

stopped to change the wheel in a wide open space a few hundred yards further on than a complete storm blew up and we, the car seats, and all our wheel changing tools were absolutely soaked in seconds! Fortunately, the jack worked and we were soon on our way again somewhat thoughtful and completely soaked. Thankfully the hotel was not more than an hour away.

This hotel Château Ayres at Meyrueis had been a complete shot in the dark. It was the only one anywhere near our target of the Gorge du Tarn and the bridge at Millau. It turned out to be the most welcoming of the whole tour and they could not have looked after us better. It was a family run hotel, with the father having handed it all over to his daughter to run. She attended to every detail personally and it really showed with first class service and excellent food including a duck that was perfectly cooked and tender and did not quack despite the rain! The hotel was hidden in a wonderful green wood with a lake in front and came complete with a sister who was a professional photographer and a young son of the daughter who rose especially early so that he could see all the cars in the morning, before walking jauntily off to school to tell all his mates about the cars. Altogether a most charming place



Two of the sporting London to Edinburgh Ghosts, outside the Château Ayres: 1701 and 212.
Photo by Franco Lupi.

and one to remember if you are ever nearby as it was a very reasonable price.

It was now 23rd May a week after we had started. The TV news was increasingly warning that the industrial workers' union, who had targeted a number of fuel depots in Northern France, were intending to restrict fuel throughout France. So first thing in the morning we descended on the village petrol station and kept our fuel tanks topped up at every opportunity. Fortunately, there was more fuel available in rural France than in the towns.

The route to Carcassonne gave us a wonderful day's drive firstly along a narrow tree lined lane off the plateau with a sheer drop on the right hand side into a gorge below. Fortunately for mile after mile nothing came the other way. The route then opened out and shortly we passed under the magnificent Bridge at Millau. This is the tallest bridge in the world with the road being 890 feet above the ground below, where we were passing underneath.



Willi Meier's view of the narrow road to Trèves on the way to Carcassonne in GRM1

On the way to Carcassonne, we passed some wonderful little hill top forts, river bridges and then as we went over the Montagne Noire had some glorious long views as we crossed over the various cols at over 1000 metres. Fortunately, the roads were dry and the temperature reasonable and then we had an easy run across the plain to Carcassonne.

Unfortunately, somewhere along this stretch, Ashley Carmichael and his Silver Ghost had the misfortune to break a leaf on one of his rear springs. I have already mentioned the vicious speed bumps and it seems that these and some of the sharp bends proved too much for the 96-year old springs of his Silver Ghost. This was possibly another example of metal fatigue, as his car has always carried a large and heavy limousine body by H J Mulliner with much of the weight carried right over the rear wheels. Although Rolls-Royce would have adjusted the springing for this weight, modern road conditions and speeds are very different from those of the 1920s, with much greater pressures being placed on wheels and springs.

Fortunately, he managed to continue carefully to the hotel at La Cité in Carcassonne. There he decided after consultation that it would be wise to call it a day and transport the car home. We were all very sad that Ashley, Adrienne and their friends Bob and Kate had to return early.

Along the route we had had no problem in filling up with petrol, but as we approached Carcassonne, I suddenly noticed a long queue of cars filling up with fuel at a supermarket. Sure enough the BBC and local news confirmed in the evening that the strikers had hit Marseille and that fuel was getting short all across France.



The Bramalls in 23NA in the Trèves woods

Fortunately none of this spoiled our enjoyment of La Cité at Carcassonne. The hotel was right inside the double walls of the city and so we were parked in the orchard of the Patron of the Hotel de La Cité just outside the walls. We and our luggage were transported literally through the walls in a golf buggy to the delightful hotel inside. Although greatly restored, the walls around La Cité are astonishing in their height and

width. The castle in the centre is equally impressive with great views north over the town of Carcassonne to the Montagne Noir. Not far away to the south you can see the outline of the Pyrenees which is why Carcassonne was such a key city.

Our hotel was right opposite the entrance to the cathedral and at night when the tourists had all disappeared, you could have a splendid



Some of the cars parked outside the walls of La Cité Carcassonne.

walk around the floodlit city and ramparts. In the morning the young amongst us decided to keep fit by walking round the Cité three times between the outer and inner walls, whilst the rest of us enjoyed an excellent breakfast. As it was a rest day, there was some tinkering with the cars but this was mainly lubrication duties. One of the 20 HP doctor's coupes had a persistent difficulty with a starter motor that would only work when it felt like doing so. Tom Heckman's overdrive had stopped engaging but otherwise all cars seemed to be running well. In the middle of the day many of us had a very pleasant barge trip on the Canal du Midi which slightly surprisingly runs through the town. Despite now carrying entirely pleasure traffic it is a very impressive engineering structure and provided a relaxing few hours on the water. Carcassonne is a World Heritage site and it did not disappoint.

The next day, because of the vagaries of the availability of our chosen hotels, we headed northwest back towards the Languedoc to the spectacular Château de Mercues on the top of a cliff overlooking the River Lot and the valley beyond. The days run took us through yet more beautiful French countryside and many ancient unspoilt villages. We again passed through the Montagne Noire and then the Massif Central before heading through the Forêt de Gresigne until we arrived at Mercues just north of Cahors.

Our car has a wide front seat. For most of the tour there were three of us in the car and so with me having slimmed down with cancer, Susie slimmed down through concern, and a slim-line daughter we all three squeezed into the front seat. This proved highly entertaining when it came to navigation, as both drivers watched and trusted the satnav, Susie trusted her map on which she had marked every bit of the route and whoever was sitting in the middle was reading the route book. Although the three were in harmony much of the time, the satnav was set to "Shortest route", which if Katie was driving meant us plunging into the centres of towns or villages rather than taking the longer route round the outside. In general this was for the best as one of the pleasures is seeing how unspoilt many of these town and village centres have remained. Just occasionally it led to new tests of driving skills as we were led up what looked uncommonly like single carriageway shared pedestrian walkways and one or two very sharp bends. Fortunately everyone seemed pleased to see us, even if a little bit surprised.

Throughout the day we had been filling up whenever we saw a decent looking filling station. Just outside Cahors we stopped at a large Total station. The lady in charge said we could only have 30 Euros worth and insisted on being paid in advance. To my disgust the tank would only take 20 Euros worth before it was brim full!



2121 on an excursion from Mercues. Photograph by Franco Lupi.

At least I knew with a total of 20 gallons we could just make Biarritz if we went carefully.

That evening many phone calls were made to friends and relatives to find out the situation between us and Biarritz. The news was not good and nor was it good from Biarritz where the hotel told us that most of the garages were sold out of all fuels. Just before dinner, a group of the L to E's were having a conference on the terrace in the evening sunshine. As I approached the group, Peter Livanos who knows a bit about oil tankers said to me with a broad grin, "Tim, I think it is time to hoist Flag Z, which they used in wartime convoys to indicate "Enemy in range, Convoy to Scatter". As it was a pleasant evening it took a few more drinks to consider his suggestion, but at dinner that night I told everyone that if the fuel crisis continued then each participant should consider their circumstances and decide what was the best way to protect themselves and their cars. Clearly no one wanted to be stranded with no petrol in an expensive car in the middle of nowhere.

The next day Thursday, the news seemed a bit better and as it was a gorgeous day the

sunshine encouraged many to set out on the excursion up the Lot valley on what might be their last day on the tour. Fortunately, the route for the day included some of the most outstanding places and scenes of the tour and those who went on it were all captivated by the amazing bridges, gorges and fascinating little towns and villages on route. Those that followed along the river Lot to St Cirq Lapopie had an excellent meal by the river. Others went to the Grottes de Pech Merle where the kilometre-long underground caverns had been decorated an alleged 20,000 years ago, with images of woolly mammoth, horses, reindeer and humans. Wherever they went, they all came back enthused by a really good day's exploration and encouraged by the fact that they had managed to find plenty of fuel during the day.

That evening we had an interesting wine tasting before dinner in the Château's wine cellar and showroom built within the last ten years. Afterwards, we had a very jolly dinner and wished those who had decided to terminate their tour at Mercues the very best of luck on their homeward trek. They in turn wished those of us continuing



Irvine Laidlaw's Springfield Roadster, S77LKI, on the excursion to the Grottes de Pech Merle.

to Biarritz good fortune and plenty of petrol. Most of the L to E's decided to return to Château de Castel Novel at Brive as their car transporters could just about get there and back on a tank of fuel and there was an airport so that they could then get away. Irvine Laidlaw showed true grit by jumping into his red Springfield Silver Ghost roadster and drove single handed the 390 miles to St Tropez averaging almost 60 mph for the whole journey, admittedly much of it on motorways. Leonie and Willi Meier were going home to Germany and managed to rendezvous with his Range Rover and trailer to take their car home a day or so later. We decided to go straight to Biarritz as Katie had to catch a plane to a friend's wedding on Majorca. Before then however much time was spent sending emails to the remaining hotels, changing the bookings for rooms and dinner as well as making some last minute bookings for those who decided it was better to take the ferry home from Santander rather than risking it through France. As Katie left, we were joined by our elder daughter Erica, who stayed with us for the last few days and the Concours in Biarritz before jetting home again.

Friday dawned with a beautiful sunny day as we set off in our various directions. Each had made their own decisions as to what they needed

to do and though we were sorry to have to disperse, we were all content that we had made the right decisions under the circumstances. We all parted with happy memories.

For those heading on for Biarritz there was still some interesting driving to be done. Friday took us to Cazaubon following the River Lot as it emerged from the Gorges to the east and meandered west to join the Garonne on its way to Bordeaux. The route then headed south into the Midi Pyrenees and the pretty hilltop town of Lecture. Those who had time visited the smallest fortified village in France at Laressingle which proved absolutely fascinating with its Château, church, narrow streets and houses crammed inside the walls. We were now in the real countryside and for the first time the tour had to stay in separate hotels. Those in the Bastide stayed in a recently modernised Château in Barbotan les Thermes, a pleasant spa town. The remainder stayed in a small Château run by a delightful French family in the back streets of Cazaubon.

For Tom and Mary Jo Heckman the proximity to the town was fortuitous. Some way before their destination, drive from the gearbox to the rear wheels completely failed. The overdrive, that had been giving some trouble



The Concours in front of the Gare du Midi. Photograph by Katie Forrest.

earlier, had now failed completely. Fortunately, our travelling mechanic Roy O'Sullivan was to hand and on the road leading to the Château they left the car at the local Renault garage. Tom had wisely taken the precaution of bringing the original length of torque tube with him and next morning Roy and he dropped the back axle out, took out the offending overdrive unit, replaced it with the original piece of torque tube and got the car back on the road in three hours. This was a tremendous effort by Roy and he was justifiably praised for his efforts. Tom and Mary Jo once more set on their way to Biarritz, if somewhat behind the others.

The route to Biarritz took us south on country roads rather than the rather bleak and deserted direct route through the National Park to the north. Miraculously everywhere seemed to have petrol again and we had no more problems with petrol on the tour. We later found out we had been in the best part of France for fuel availability, although the strikers were still at it in the North of France for several more days.

Our route took in some pretty villages and later ran along Napoleon's Route Imperiale of the Peaks with great views of the Pyrenees Atlantiques to the south. For some this part was bathed in sunshine, but the Heckmans were once again unlucky as they ran into one of the late

afternoon thunderstorms with hailstones so big that they punched a hole in one of their brass headlamps. However, they and everyone else arrived safely at the magnificent Du Palais Hotel on the seafront where everyone had rooms with superb sea views. That night we had a seafood buffet by the poolside before retiring to a well-earned rest.

Sunday was the day of the Concours and the morning rain cleared away after breakfast to enable the polishing to start in earnest. Various venues for the Concours had been suggested but eventually thanks to the continuous efforts of Jo Naismith, the Mayor suggested a wonderful small park that looked onto the astonishing Art Deco Gare du Midi that had recently been converted into a centre for the arts. This was very close to the hotel and was absolutely ideal.

At midday the local residents were rather surprised to see a group of gendarmes guide us into to the park where we displayed the cars in a circle around the bandstand. The cars looked magnificent with their variety of shapes and colours all gleaming in the sunshine. In all 15 cars made it to the Concours d'Elegance from the 25 that participated in the main tour. As in the original Concours in the 1920s and 1930's there were many awards to be made. There were no judges other than the competitors and so each car



The parade in Biarritz. Photo by Peter Golding.

was given a voting sheet and they voted for the cars they felt most deserved each award. The final winners were:

Pre-1915 Sporting Car: Roland Duce, 1913 Silver Ghost Tourer

Pre-1915 Touring Car: Tim Forrest, 1912 Silver Ghost, Torpedo Phaeton

Post-War Sporting Car: Strone Macpherson, 1930 Phantom II, Dual Cowl tourer

Post-War Touring Car: Nick Whitaker, 1937 Phantom III Sedan

Post-War Closed Car: Fokko Keuning, 1933 PII Continental Sports saloon

Small Horsepower Car: Ken Forbes, 1937 25/30 Sports Saloon

Most Elegant Car in show: Albert Eberhard, 1935 Phantom II Drophead

Also highly commended were the two 20 HP Doctor's coupes of Johann Marais and David Crossley Cooke, both of which were inseparable throughout the tour and both reached Biarritz without major fault. This was especially creditable as Johann had only acquired his car shortly before the start of the tour.

The deputy Mayor of Biarritz was so impressed by our cars that he soon called up the chief of police and ordered a police escort to take us around the town afterwards. This proved the usual kind of exciting experience, at times going extremely slowly and at others extremely fast to keep up and get across the traffic lights before they changed to red! Much delight and amusement was given to the bemused residents and early season tourists, as the colourful cavalcade passed by with the occasional Klaxon sounding. Eventually we all returned through the magnificent wrought iron gates to the peace of the Hotel du Palais. It did however confirm that Biarritz is a very varied and interesting place with magnificent sandy beaches, enticing the surf to come rolling in.

That night we had dinner in a superb room which reputedly had originally been the study of the Emperor. It was decorated in a suitably extravagant manner, and the food and wine were absolutely excellent. The sun shone and despite the odd hailstorm and down pour, let alone the fuel shortage, for the survivors it truly was a memorable French Sunshine Tour.

Next morning, we were up early for the 160 mile run to the ferry at Santander. Although mainly on motorways, the traffic was quite light and the scenery impressive, with the land rising

steeply to the left of us and the coast to the right. The weather was variable, a mixture of heavy rain and sunshine, but we all arrived at Santander in plenty of time for the fast overnight ferry to Portsmouth. This was Katie's longest drive in the Ghost a total of 160 miles having just got back the night before from her friend's wedding in Majorca.

After the usual long wait to board the ferry, we had a remarkably smooth, fast crossing to Portsmouth and were on our way home by late afternoon. One last trick of fate was to be played on Ken Forbes, who only a few miles from home had a half shaft fail in his back axle. Perhaps, once again, this was the dreaded metal fatigue striking again.

So ended the French Sunshine Tour, that had largely lived up to its billing. As the organiser, I would just like to say an enormous thank you to all the participants who handled the difficulties of the petrol shortage so calmly and considerately and who despite everything seemed to have enjoyed themselves greatly, judging by the many thank you notes and a mere 600 photos that I was sent of the best moments on people's tours! With grateful thanks to Katie for all her help and to my wife Susie for putting up with all the days on the phone and the internet.

A few Postscripts from the tour:

1. All the cars and participants are now safely back in their rightful locations and everyone seems to be very happy and contented with the tour
2. It was a real pleasure to have a variety of new members on this tour.
3. Anyone with split rim wheels made in the UK in the 1990s should look at them carefully and consider having the rims replaced if you are doubtful of them. I am going to replace all five on 2154, because a failure could have disastrous effects. Our kindly Frenchman saved us from a potentially nasty accident had we continued and the tyre had burst going down the steep decline shortly after we stopped.
4. Ashley Carmichael has had a new set of rear springs fitted to his Silver Ghost and is back on the road again.
5. Tom Heckman has his car back in the USA and will be investigating what caused his problems with the overdrive. Laycock type overdrives have been used successfully on many 20s, Silver Ghosts and Phantoms, but there have been two failures to proceed in ten years on

French tours and need a cautionary note on their use.

6. Ken Forbes' half shaft was indeed metal fatigue, the shaft having sheared at the splines as he was gently drawing away in first at a roundabout. He is now having two new shafts made.

7. Having a travelling mechanic on a continental tour is essential. You can never tell what kind of disaster will befall someone, but having a mechanic available at the end of each day means there is a good chance you will be on the road again in time to catch up. Roy did a great job keeping several cars running sweetly, as well as the major job on Tom's overdrive.

8. Our cars created nothing but interest and pleasure to the French as we meandered through rural France. There were no special security measures taken anywhere and none were needed, as there was no advance publicity of our plans or intentions.

9. The French hotels were extremely helpful and once the fuel strike took hold, could not have been more considerate.

10. France with its empty roads is an ideal

place to learn to drive an old Rolls-Royce, as shown by my younger daughter Katie, who drove over 1,000 miles on the tour having only driven 20 miles in the weeks before leaving England.

11. Despite the concern about immigrants in France, entering via St Malo and returning via Spain combined with staying largely in rural France, we were never exposed to any issues or problems.



Some of the beautiful puddings! Photo Katie Forrest

Entrant	Year	Chassis No	Registration	Model	Coachwork	Coachbuilder
Main Tour						
Nick & Jo Naismith	1911	1606	CH 722	Silver Ghost	Marlborough torpedo	Barker/Lamb NSW
Peter Livanos & Franco Lupi	1911	1701	R-1075	Silver Ghost	L to E Tourer	Holmes/Crailville
Doug Magee & Diane Mandragouras	1912	2092	R-1472	Silver Ghost	Tourer	Arthur Mulliner
Lucas Huni & Gina Bota	1912	2121	R-2121	Silver Ghost	L to E Tourer	Grosvenor/Penny
Tim Susie, Katie & Erica Forrest	1912	2154	R-1487	Silver Ghost	Torpedo Phaeton Tourer	Barker
Chip & Jacque Connor	1912	2208	8572	Silver Ghost	L to E Tourer	Mann Egerton
Sir Michael & Lady Betty Kadoorie Caroline Blunden & David McKirdy	1912	1958	R-8818	Silver Ghost	L to E Holmes Tourer	Holmes/Penny
Terry & Liz Bramall	1913	23NA	IA 4	Silver Ghost	Tourer	Ferguson of Belfast
Roland Duce & Kimberly Hughson	1913	37MA	ES1392	Silver Ghost	Tourer	Barker/Jarvis

Anthony & Anna Maclean	1913	25MA	BF 6165	Silver Ghost	L to E Tourer	Barker/Hemmings
Peter & Ann Golding	1914	41YB	LW-6471	Silver Ghost	Tourer	Marston, Birmingham
Tom & Mary Jo Heckman	1914	36PB	6009	Silver Ghost	Tourer	Brooks Ostruk
Ashley & Adrienne Carmichael and Bob & Kate Inglis	1920	47RE	PX-1780	Silver Ghost	Open Drive Limousine	Mulliner
Richard & Emily Buckingham	1922	42YG	R-1922	Silver Ghost	Tourer	Mulliner
Stan & Angela West	1923	314XH	BP-5157	Springfield Silver Ghost	Pall Mall Tourer	RRCCW
Johann Marais	1924	GMK76	XU-5999	20 HP	Doctor's Coupe	Barker
Irvine Laidlaw	1925	S77LK	LL 10	Springfield Silver Ghost Roadster	Piccadilly Tourer	RRCCW
David & Elspeth Crossley Cooke	1926	GOK47	NE_7966	20 HP	Doctor's Coupe	Cockshoot
Strone & Alex Macpherson	1930	62GY	GH-2966	PII	Dual cowl Tourer	Hooper
Fokko Keuning	1933	47MY	AM-20-40	PII Continental	Sports Saloon	Barker
Albert & Monique Eberhard	1935	167JA	778 UYF	Phantom II	Drophead	Gurney Nutting
Leonie & Willi Meier	1936	GRM1	DW-WM 34H	25/30	Sedanca	Windovers
Ken & Jane Forbes	1937	GRP68	BSG 527	25/30	Sports Saloon	Thrupp & Maberley
Nick & Maurice Whittaker	1937	3AZ168	DLY 380	Phantom III	Sedanca	Gurney Nutting
John & Mary Narvell	1939	WEC27	985 BGW	Wraith	Sports Saloon	James Young
Short Tour						
Graham & Sarah Tyson	1920	97AE	CE-454	Silver Ghost	Tourer	Cunard
Sir John & Lady Lesley Stuttard	1921	33LG	XF-7646	Silver Ghost	All Weather Tourer	Car Mart / Park Ward
Brian & Wendy Fidler	1923	36EM	XR-4398	Silver Ghost	Cabriolet	Hooper
Brian & Joan Palmer	1921	149AG	KE-6676	Silver Ghost	Tourer	Barker
John Redmill & Desmond Barry	1929	GXO97	ZV 4501	20/25	Saloon	Park Ward
Michael & Inga Lyndon-Stanford	-			-	-	-

PERSONAL MUSINGS OF A FRENCH ADVENTURE

Graham Tyson



The Chateau de Marçay

By Monday 16th May 2016 our 1920 Ghost had been oiled, tweaked, polished and loaded with what we needed together with what we did not need in readiness for our trip to France to join up with our friends going on the 20-Ghost Club short tour starting on the 17th and due to finish on Tuesday 24th May, arriving back home on the 25th. Our rendezvous point was the Château Marçay in the Loire where we would stay for three nights and join up with those in the larger group who were going on the long trip through France ending in Biarritz before heading home from Santander courtesy of Brittany Ferries.

Sarah and I left home in North Cornwall at 6.30pm in bright sunshine with the familiar feelings of excitement mixed with slight apprehension and headed for the Brittany Ferries port at Plymouth, about 38 miles from home and from where we took the night crossing to Roscoff, a delightful and surprisingly unspoilt Breton fishing village in Finistère, a little inconvenient for the Loire but the Plymouth crossing is really convenient for home.

We arrived in Roscoff in the early morning of Tuesday 17th and as the weather was not marvellous we thought we would head straight for the Loire, some 400 miles if you avoid motorways and dual carriage ways and travel via small byways.

An amusing little incident happened when we spied a Les Routiers at lunchtime with its car park full of vans and lorries. We parked the Ghost and went in to the bustling little place, full of character, the smell of garlic wafting out and our ears assailed by the general hubbub. The owner, who had evidently seen us arrive, asked us if we wanted lunch and we answered in the affirmative and went to sit in the atmospheric little café with its brightly checked tablecloths.

He would have none of this however and grabbing us by the arm led us outside, much to our puzzlement, and along the road a short distance to his other restaurant – the same menu but slightly more expensive, very quiet and ‘refined’ with white stiff tablecloths and not what we wanted at all! However, it was quite amusing as when I wanted the Hors d’oeuvres I was taken

through the kitchens, down a long passage and back into the transport café where it was all laid out in some style, and after choosing what I wanted was then led back the way I came – all very French.

When we finally arrived at our destination the Château Marçay was very grand and our bedroom was vast. It was good to meet up with old friends and introduce ourselves to those whom we did not know. My two favourite Ghosts were there, Doug MacGee's fabulous brass Arthur Mulliner 1912 Ghost tourer and Terry and Liz Bramall's Ferguson 1913 Ghost that had been sympathetically restored since I last saw it. What is it about the pre-WWI Ghosts that makes them not just cars but serious Works of Art?

On the first night we were there we were all taken on a tour of the wine cellars, in caves below the château and formed by the stone that was quarried in the 13th century for the building. Following this we had a wine tasting, all very convivial.

The following day, **Wednesday 18th May**, a number of us decided to have a lazy day at the Château whilst the more intrepid souls such as David and Elspeth Crossley Cooke drove off to Chinon and Saumur in their Doctor's Coupé 20HP, and still others looked around the charming town of Chinon with its brooding and magnificent castle overlooking the town from its vantage spot on the hill behind.

I was impressed to see the Forrests sally forth in their magnificent 1912 Ghost, three abreast with daughter Kate at the wheel and we wondered how many other sons/daughters would be so competent at the wheel of one of these marvellous cars.

On **Thursday 19th** we all set sail (surely not the right metaphor?) to visit two chateaux in the vicinity. The first one, Château de Villandry, is one of the last Renaissance Châteaux to be built in the Loire and is a beautiful building. It is notable for the gardens, all very intensively regimented with not a leaf or plant out of place. Woe betides anything that tries to express individuality! Not really Sarah's and my scene but everyone to whom we spoke enthused.

We all gathered for a light lunchtime snack at the Château following which we drove north to visit the Château du Lude, which the 20-Ghost Club had visited in June 1966 and which has a wonderful lower garden along the river

bank and which had been fashioned very much in the style of Capability Brown. The charming Countess took some of us for a walk around her magnificent Kitchen garden, nothing like National Trust uniformity, this was a real garden used to feed the family and others.

The Château has been owned by the same family for over two hundred years and I believe that the current owner's Grandfather had been good friends with Strone Macpherson's grandfather. We were treated to a magnificent tea following which we bade our adieux and drove the 110 miles back to the chateau.

The following morning, **20th May**, was tinged with disappointment as it meant a parting of the ways, with the majority turning south to carry on the big adventure that would eventually take them to Biarritz whilst half a dozen of us, Brian and Wendy Fidler, John and Lesley Stuttard, Brian and Joan Palmer, John Redmill and Desmond Barry, Michael and Inga Lyndon-Stanford (who were left hitching as their car had had to be left back in the UK) and Sarah and I turned north for a much shorter trip to a small château at Alençon that John Stuttard had chosen and from there the small medieval Manoir de la Hazaie in Brittany that we had chosen. It was at this point that we first started to hear stories of a fuel strike.....

We six couples retraced our steps of the previous day past Château du Lude and on to Château St Patern, a charming small privately owned hotel on the outskirts of Alençon. Some deviated en route to visit another château whilst Sarah and I pottered along quiet back roads to St Patern. Whilst we were not worried about lack of fuel as we had filled up both our main tank and auxiliary, giving us a total of 23 gallons, we noticed that virtually all filling stations were closed.

We arrived through the very narrow pillared entrance at Château St Patern, clearly designed for horse drawn carriages, just after the Fidlers and John and Desmond had arrived and the owners were there by the front door to greet us, a nice touch. Their ethos was clearly to make one feel they were not staying in a hotel but rather as guests in a country house, which worked magnificently. We particularly appreciated the complimentary drinks before dinner and the honesty bar, where one could take what drink one liked and merely put one's name down in a book.



Dinner at the Château St Paterne

Dinner was fabulous and unexpected with the owner doing all the cooking himself whilst his wife was front of house; we were treated to one table for the twelve of us in their lovely dining room, splendidly lit with candles and the table groaning with magnificence. I did feel rather sorry for a French couple who had clearly come for a quiet away stay sitting at their small table for two surrounded by the ebullient Brits! Was it a husband and wife, or a pair of intertwined illicit lovers I wondered?

Breakfast the following morning was another sumptuous feast and after an exceedingly slothful morning some of us roused ourselves to go into Alençon. John and Lesley Stuttard and Michael Lyndon-Stanford took a taxi whilst Inga L-S, Sarah and I decided to walk, which took about half an hour.

We all met up at a pavement café opposite the cathedral in the midst of the hustle and bustle of the market with vendors lustily calling out their wares, selling fresh vegetables, local honey and lots of Cider and after a drink (or two) the others all took a taxi back to the hotel

for lunch whilst Sarah and I ordered a typical light French lunch of baguettes, ham and cheese, whilst obviously having to sample some local cider – delicious - and drank in the typically Gallic atmosphere. Following this we looked around the Cathedral and then walked back to the Hotel for afternoon tea, where both the Fidlers and Palmers had stayed behind all day relaxing.

John Stuttard was seriously worried about the fuel disruptions if we went into Brittany to our next hotel where we were meant to stay the following two nights, given that most would then have to retrace their steps to Cherbourg when catching the ferry back to Blighty. Following some hasty discussions with the owners of St Paterne we were all able to stay on for a third night. Sarah, who speaks near fluent French, was then deputed to speak to the owners of Hazaie to tell them the bad news that we were having to cancel our stay; they were as disappointed as we were but were most understanding despite having bought all the food and fresh flowers for our stay; we clearly made the right decision as the fuel strikes seemed to be getting worse by the hour.

Sunday morning, **22nd May**, was wet and as the rain looked as though it would continue all day more ‘chilling’ seemed to be the order of the day. So we sat around reading, drinking and dozing etc – bliss! Sarah was in her element when she, Brian and Joan Palmer and Inga Lyndon-Stanford spent the afternoon playing Bridge.

John Redmill then introduced the group to an amusing card game called ‘Oh Hell’. Wendy had not played it before but ended up winning – beginners luck? No, sheer cerebral skill!

The Palmers decided to leave a day early on Monday and take the ferry from Caen (or more accurately Ouistreham) to Portsmouth and we thought that prudence should rule the day and that we should change our Roscoff to Plymouth booking and join them. The others were leaving from Cherbourg and booked a night in a Château a couple of hours from that ferry port.

So, on Monday morning we sadly bade everyone goodbye and whilst they set off to their next hotel via another château they wanted to visit, we took off, relying as ever on Tom Tom taking us on a very scenic route to Caen. We drove through some stunning southern Normandy countryside, past some exquisite privately owned small chateaux, one sitting in a fairy-tale location on a small lake, glimpses of an Arcadian idyll.

This drive was one of the best ever, the weather was good, the hood was down and we went for miles without seeing another soul, through a sun dappled landscape of Elysian Fields, past tall Oak and Beech woods heady with the pungent aroma of wild garlic and wild onion, and at lunchtime we stopped at a Les Routiers where the food was predictably excellent and cheap! The Ghost was surrounded by a crowd of appreciative locals as soon as we stopped, as indeed all of us found wherever we went.

We finally arrived at Ouistreham at around 6.30pm following a visit to the Pegasus Bridge museum – fascinating and well worth a visit, relaxed after a gentle day’s driving to find to our astonishment that Brian and Joan had arrived just a couple of minutes before us. We had adjoining cabins on board the ferry and so were able to start our cars together the following morning and bid our final adieux at 6.30am on Tuesday 24th.

Sarah and I decided that we did not want to touch either motorways or dual carriageways on the route back to Cornwall and therefore with

the roof folded down and in the bright early morning sunshine we were directed by our trusty Tom Tom onto a very stimulating route, through the New Forest and more quiet back roads than we thought existed in Southern England. The downside of course was the time the journey took, eventually getting home twelve hours later at 6.30pm.

And so our break came to an end. The Ghost performed as magnificently as ever and the tour had been intensely interesting partly because the enforced idleness met with so much approval from all six couples. Perhaps Anno Domini have caught up with us all and we are more comfortable staying at small decent hotels with a minimum of daily driving rather than facing long daily marathons and early starts? It certainly suited us!

Did we enjoy the tour? The answer is yes, as much as we could, but we had to have our Lurcher dog put down just two days before we left home and it affected us both badly, and certainly cast a giant shadow over things as we could not grieve properly. Those with animals of their own will understand, those with none will not.

Would we go on a similar tour again, staying at very few hotels and covering only small distances with lots of chill time? – yes definitely!!

THE SHORT TOUR: ADDENDUM

Lesley Stuttard

When plans were being made for the 2016 tour to Biarritz, it became clear that a number of entrants wanted to join the rally further south than the first stop in the Loire. There were also a number of us with time restraints/family commitments who were unable to participate in a long tour, and thus the “short tour” was born. Graham and Sarah Tyson, Brian and Joan Palmer, Brian and Wendy Fidler, John Redmill and Desmond Barry, Michael and Inga Lyndon-Stanford (minus car) and John and I would all join the tour at the start, but peel off and head back to Normandy after a short sojourn in the Loire. So, having waved off the rest of the group from the Château de Marcay, we headed back North. The plan was to have a few days touring the lush Normandy and Brittany countryside from two bases before returning home via a variety of different ports.

With only five cars, we started off in convoy, but the vagaries of navigating by map, and even satnav, soon split us up. John had chosen a route to our evening destination just outside Alençon, and had suggested a lunch stop at Fresnay sur Sarthe, one of a series of pretty little towns along the River Sarthe. We arrived first, located the restaurant, and went to find a garage. The patronne was sorry but they had run

out of petrol. She assured us they would have more that evening and that there would be petrol at the next little town, and we thought no more of it and joined the others for lunch.

We did indeed fill the car up in the next town and drove on to Alençon and the Château St Paterne. The patron rushed out when we arrived and said “The garage across the road has petrol. Fill up now!” When he saw our look of surprise at this greeting, he added “Don’t you know there is a petrol strike?” Who has time to listen to the news during a car rally? We had had no idea France was struggling with opposition to proposed labour laws and resultant strikes. Once everyone had refuelled and checked in, we took stock of the situation. We all now had enough fuel to reach a Channel port, apart from John Redmill, whose 20/25 holds a maximum of 11 gallons. Sadly we had to cancel the excursion to Brittany. Graham managed to rebook a ferry via Caen, and John Redmill from Cherbourg and to get the last room available at the final chateau, and with a bit of shuffling round rooms, the Château St Paterne agreed to accommodate us for an extra night.

Thus began the strangest rally – without cars. We read, we walked, we took taxis to the local market, we played cards (the photograph shows John Redmill’s unusual rules for the final round of “Oh Hell”) and Michael swam lengths of the pool, even in the rain. It was incredibly relaxing: no early mornings, no long drives, and best of all, no navigating. The Château de St Paterne is family owned and run and feels as though you are spending the weekend at an agreeable house party with lovely home cooking.

The Tysons and Palmers left for Caen and we carried on to Avranches. We stopped to visit the Chateau de Carrouges only to discover that, not only did it have a two-hour closure in the middle of the day, it could only be visited by guided tours at 11.00 and 2.15.



Playing Oh Hell with John Redmill’s rules. Photography by Brian Fidler

Perhaps the Chateau's labour laws also needed an overhaul. We passed a lot of closed petrol stations and others with long queues where only 20 euros worth of fuel, or 20 litres, were available, in an effort to stop panic buying.

Our final destination, the Château de Chantore, had recently been renovated in a very grand manner. There were only five rooms, an enormous dining room for elaborate breakfasts only and a very formal drawing room. However, we dined very well in Avranches, a short taxi ride away.

The highlight was a visit to Mont-St-Michel which could just be glimpsed floating ethereally in the bay from the Château grounds. I had visited twice before and found it enchanting from a distance, but increasingly commercialised. My first visit in 1968 was when it was still an island, and reached by a pontoon of boats at high tide. By the second in the 1980s a causeway had been built. Now, as a UNESCO World Heritage

site and huge tourist attraction the causeway, which was causing the bay to silt up, has been replaced by a bridge. Shuttle buses run from the car parks and disgorge crowds of tourists onto the narrow streets leading up to the abbey. But a monastic order has returned to the site, and we were greeted by wonderful singing from the chapel at the top, as one of the frequent daily services was held and many visitors joined in. The abbey has finally returned to its original function of spirituality and worship.

As we drove back towards the Channel, petrol suddenly became much more available and we all made it safely to Cherbourg and home, although John Redmill's car celebrated its arrival in Ireland with its third puncture in three weeks!

The ladies voted it the best rally for years – excellent hotels and no driving (or should I say, **no navigating**)!



Arriving at the Château de Chantore. Photograph by Wendy Fidler

SPIRIT OF ECSTASY

Mary Narvell

I have a theory why the famed Rolls Royce mascot, the Spirit of Ecstasy, is a lady. While there are some remarkable women who deserve credit for maneuvering those heavy Ghosts, I don't think the reference is to these talented drivers. I believe the Spirit of Ecstasy represents the female navigators who are partners on many a rally. In my view, these women are goddesses blessed with superhuman patience and fortitude. Oh, that I had those same virtues because ecstasy seems far out of my reach.

On that note, some disclosures:

1. I am an Italian American. Not for us the British stoic strength "Stay Calm Carry On". In our talent for passionate operatic drama, we follow the "Scream and Stop" *modus operandi*.
2. I have a pessimistic nature. My husband jokes my nickname should really be "Little Mary Sunshine". Had I been on the Titanic, I would have called May Day well before the vessel struck the iceberg. So weathering a rally mishap with sang froid is not my style.
3. Despite my Italian ancestry, Amerigo Vespucci was not in my family tree. I am lost at navigation.
4. Finally, I don't have good car karma. Indeed, there is a theory in my family that generations ago in Naples, an ancestor killed a mule. Since then, a curse on transportation has befallen one unlucky relative. In my generation, I have the hex. Our 1939 Wraith has broken down on every trip. Her reliability is she will fail.
5. To my temperamental shortcomings, I must add that I am effectively a rally virgin. I have only served twice as "navigator" (I use the term loosely unless routinely getting lost is a qualification). But experience is unlikely to make me the equal of the female veterans whose feisty spirit I worship in awe. On a Sunshine Rally in France, while drying my drenched clothing on the hotel radiator, I marvelled at the calm with which all the riders – in open cars no less – had weathered the monsoons. There was the goddess who calmly relayed her white trousers were now plaid after her tartan luggage lining had bled through in a downpour. Paramedics would have been required to resuscitate me had I discovered this calamity - again, Italian overstatement, but let this take nothing away from the gutsy reserve of

the woman co-pilot now unintentionally promoting Scotland. Another plucky lady sagely advised I wear a trash bag in future to avoid getting "a little wet." Either this characterisation was classic British understatement, or I was mistaken that I had grown flippers during the day's journey. Somehow I imagined the early advertisements for the luxury R-R experience would have suggested leather or fur as the attire of choice. It is likely heresy to confess but, while the drivers choose a mechanic to ride shotgun on these rallies, my idea of bliss would be a trailer containing a Miele washer, dryer and laundress. Add a hairdresser (I was looking like a drowned squirrel) and I might feel the Spirit of Ecstasy myself!

My admiration for the patience of the navigator is equally boundless. Only a long suffering female could persevere in deciphering the pages of directions or remain seated for hours gazing at a route. As we meander, I think have we not already seen that same tree kilometres ago? Perhaps I, unlike Margaret Thatcher, am a lady who *is* for turning as I am easily persuaded by the hypnotic advice of the Sat Nav "Where possible, make a U Turn" and "Switch to a New Route." I had read that Robert Louis Stevenson had crossed some of our itinerary on a donkey. Is it another example of my rally ineptitude that the *equus asinus* was looking very alluring to me about day 5? I'm weak, I know, but even dialling EZ Jet had occurred to me as an escape route. So how do these women rise to the challenge and persevere?

Of course, I could blame the looming spectre of that nasty transportation curse for making me a mortal among the female deities who were my travelling companions. Unlike them, I daily suffer trepidation of another mechanical failure. So could it really be possible that one of the drivers exclaimed he had never had a breakdown in 15k miles? Did he mean his car or his psyche, I pondered. I certainly had experienced a breakdown in both on each rally. In truth, we had walked the last mile and a half to our hotel that very night when our car had died in the deluge. I can definitely say ecstasy did not describe my mood on arriving as wet as a

mermaid only to be met with a colony of moths when my suitcase hit the Aubusson. Well, our itinerary was said to include a pilgrimage route so perhaps one is meant to arrive on foot.

But this was just one of many adventures that lure me to continue rallying, as long as Prozac is administered intravenously. I felt a bit heroic myself on being able to endure the water streaming through our windscreen on that rainy Sunday. Imagining as a refrain the lyrics to "Showboat" (the car felt nautical), I suggested to my husband that we "Make Believe" the water was a fountain and enjoy lunch while the car nearly sank. Italians are always at their best while eating so I had smuggled sandwiches out of breakfast for just such an emergency. If the Miracle of Cana were to be recreated and the water turn to wine, one could almost say our meal would have been romantic. Maybe I can become a goddess after all.

I had even survived a near death experience on this trip so was my designation as a deity far behind? On entering a parking lot, I had exited the car to retrieve the ticket from the

machine that did not anticipate a right hand drive Rolls. There surrounded by a group of admirers eager to learn about the "voiture", no one thought to remind me I remained under the traffic barrier as it descended onto my skull.



John has been persuaded to take a washing machine on the next rally.
No more worries about the pelting rain.

From the tarmac in my starry daze, I wondered why wasn't my husband among the many who were rushing to my aid including the local chemist with smelling salts to revive me? Then all was revealed when he returned lowering the window to say there were no parking spaces. More fool me to expect he had driven back to enquire after the well-being of his wife when his other lady needed urgent attention.

Indeed, I could assert the Spirit of Ecstasy glorifies the female navigators and their likely feeling they take a back seat to the ecstatic rapture the driver has for his Rolls - a mistress of sorts. What is the basis of my theory? Well at one point in our rally, my husband was asked "Where is your lady?" Without a moment's hesitation he replied, "Oh, she is in the glove box". No confusion there that the lady in question was the Spirit of Ecstasy not the wife. What woman can compete with the allure of such a powerful siren (or the "Fairy on the Front" as I learn she was christened by a club member's children)?

Best to believe the real power of the Spirit of Ecstasy lies not in her ability to captivate the driver but to capture the spirit of the navigator. The latter is the true divinity.



One of the other ladies, with Shaun Dowling's 20/25, GRW31, behind. Photograph by Mary Narvell (taken in 2015)

WEEKEND IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Rosemary Jeffreys

3rd-5th June 2016



Daniel Ghose and Maxine Miller arriving at Thurgarton Priory in Daniel's Ghost, 1557.

Roland Duce and Kimberly Hughson arranged a fabulous weekend in Nottinghamshire at the beginning of June, with a concert at Thurgarton Priory, their very own church, on the evening of 4th June. As soon as I heard that the Mozart Requiem was going to be on the programme, I was keen to go. So much so, that I arranged to come back from a study visit to Greece a day early... It just happens that 4th June is my birthday.

Roland and Kimberly suggested we should arrive in time for drinks at their home on 3rd June, so Henry and I had a gentle drive to Nottinghamshire during the day. Ten cars assembled over the course of the weekend, and several of us were most kindly invited to stay with Roland and Kimberly at their home. We enjoyed meeting the others for drinks in the splendours of Thurgarton Priory before walking to dinner in the pub down the road.

Next day, Roland had arranged a splendid drive from Thurgarton to Stapleford Park, which was about 50 miles. We assembled in the Orangery for breakfast and to pick up the instructions from Roland's assistant Simon Marriott. I had looked at the map on the way up the day before and been tempted by the white roads, but decided against on grounds of prudence. However, fortified by the splendid instructions from Simon, Henry and I had no hesitation about doing the full route. I had no idea how beautiful Nottinghamshire is, with idyllic small roads and countryside. We drove through the Vale of Belvoir, with fine views of the castle, and splashed through a small ford, before arriving at Stapleford Park for lunch. The lunch was (all too) splendid, and we took the recommended, shorter, route to be back at Thurgarton in time to change and get ready for the concert.



Most of the cars assembled at Thurgarton Priory, with Roland's Ghost, 30EB, facing the camera.
Photograph by Henry Fitzhugh.



Greg Leniston and Kristina Holland driving Greg's PII, 36UK, with Belvoir Castle in the background.



Conductor and Artistic Director of the Epiphoni Consort, Tim Reader, with the orchestra and choir.

What can I say about the concert, except that it was a delight from beginning to end? The Nottinghamshire Symphony Orchestra and Epiphoni Consort of London under their conductors Derek Williams and Tim Reader played two pieces by Vaughan Williams and Handel's *Zadok the Priest* before the interval. Many of the members of the Nottingham Symphony Orchestra are members of the medical profession, and they asked for the proceeds to go to Teenage Cancer Trust. I didn't know one of the Vaughan Williams pieces, the *Serenade to Music*, which was written as a tribute to Sir Henry Wood and first heard in the Royal Albert Hall, appropriately enough, in 1938. It is performed to words from *The Merchant of Venice*, where Lorenzo discusses the music of the spheres. It

truly was a magical and serene piece and sounded all the more wonderful in the lovely Priory Church. Before the Reformation, the Priory church of St Peter was from about 1120 a major priory in its own right, one of whose canons, Walter Hilton, wrote a book (in English) named "*The Ladder of Perfection*". The house was used as the residence of the Bishop of Southwell until about a hundred years ago.

During the interval, Roland and Kimberly had arranged drinks and canapés in their beautiful garden by the Orangery. The sun came out bang on cue. Not surprisingly, the church was seated to capacity, and we enjoyed talking to some of the other guests and admiring the cars parked outside the Priory.

After the interval, we were treated to the Mozart Requiem. Some people think that Mozart wrote it as his own Requiem. It was commissioned by an anonymous donor, who knocked at the Mozarts' door in 1791. The piece was left unfinished by Mozart at his death, and his wife Constanze commissioned one of his pupils to finish it. We now know that the mysterious stranger was Count Franz Walsegg, who commissioned the work in memory of his young wife Anna, who had died earlier the same year. It was a truly memorable experience to hear this beautiful work in the most lovely of surroundings with fine acoustics. This may have given their performance of the Requiem an extra poignancy.



Dinner in the Orangery

After the concert, Roland and Kimberly had arranged a delicious supper, which took place in the Orangery, surrounded by (what could be better) beautiful cars.

The next day, Sunday, Roland suggested people might like to visit the VSCC hill climb at Harewood House, some 60 miles away. Henry and I decided against this, as we had quite a journey south, but having enjoyed the drive to the south so much the day before, we decided to drive Simon Marriott's route all over again before heading back to London. It was just as good the

second time around, and we are going to keep the directions in case we go back to Nottinghamshire!

Our heartfelt thanks to Roland and Kimberly for their gracious hospitality and huge generosity. If they can be persuaded to make this event an annual occurrence, I shall be making a special request to Henry to go every time.



Henry at the wheel of our 25/30, GRP49, in the beautiful Nottinghamshire countryside

Name	Year	Chassis Number	Registration Number	Model	Coachbuilder
Daniel Ghose & Maxine Fay Miller	1911	1557	F-4431	SG	Rippon
Roland Duce, Kimberley Hughson & James Duce	1914	30EB	EL-2071	SG	
Stuart Evison & James Stevenson	1914	11AB	R-2114	SG	Mulliner
Michael & Linda Hilditch	1920	50RE	MH-2245	SG	Barker
Brian & Joan Palmer	1921	149AG	KE-6676	SG	Barker
Guy & Gude Baird	1925	GCK43	YM-9546	20	Park Ward
Knud & Katerina Sassmanshausen	1928	91EH	YV-5819	PI	Hooper
Greg Leniston & Kristina Holland	1935	36UK	BYU-155	PII	Barker
Henry Fitzhugh & Rosemary Jeffreys	1937	GRP49	RD-753	25/30	Park Ward
Susan Taylor	1939	WHC77	HLL-34	Wraith	Park Ward
Tom & Mary Jo Heckman	modern				
Strone & Alex Macpherson	modern				

TOUR OF TASMANIA

26TH FEBRUARY-9TH MARCH 2016

David Davis and Susan Chung



Participants in the tour included nearly all pre-War models

Friday 26th Feb.

Participants from the mainland gathered at Station Pier, Port Melbourne, to board the Spirit of Tasmania for the night crossing to Devonport. A rather bumpy crossing, but not too bad!

Saturday 27th Feb.

We were met by our tour organizers, Marg and Andrew Bayley, and a small contingent of others. Andrew led us to the Waterfront Function Centre, where a hearty breakfast was served and information packs distributed. We set off for what promised to be a wonderful week and a half of motoring around Tasmania. Our first stop was Home Hill, in Devonport, the former residence of Joseph Lyons, Premier of Tasmania and later Prime Minister from 1932-39, and Edith Lyons, the first woman elected to Federal Parliament and the first woman in the Federal Cabinet. We were given a tour of the residence and a most informative talk of the family life, and the life of public service of Joseph and Edith.

We left Devonport and drove through rolling countryside, cultivated for market garden produce. We drove on through the towns of Forth and Sprent, to Wivenhoe where we stopped on the sea-front for lunch at a local

bakery, before continuing on to Wynyard. Here we visited the Wonders of Wynyard Veteran Car Exhibition, which contained several unique early Fords including an A Type of 1903 and a large K Type built just before the introduction of the T. It was the size of a Silver Ghost! There were three early Cadillacs as well as a high-wheeled International Harvester, which could have climbed Ayres Rock! We drove along coastal roads and rolling hills as we made our way to Tall Timbers in Smithton, where we were to spend the next three nights.

Sunday 28th Feb.

With rainy patches our drive today took us from Smithton to Arthur River, where we boarded the "George Robinson" for what turned out to be a very interesting and informative several hours on the river in the Tarkine Wilderness, including time ashore to walk amongst the trees, and enjoy a BBQ lunch in the midst of the forest. We viewed at very close range the various forested areas of coastal heath and Tea trees, and saw 500 year old "man" ferns and ferns that "hosted" giant trees. On the journey we viewed a family of Sea Eagles and their gigantic nest built over 50 years, in the crutch of an enormous gum. They are very

territorial and we observed a battle for space between the Sea Eagle and Wedge Tails. The ferry crew used fish to entice the eagles to feed and it was interesting to see the female training the youngster. Our skipper, Rob, shared his knowledge of all matters relating to the river, as well as delighting us with a very well delivered rendition of Australian poetry.

Driving to and from Arthur River we passed through picturesque rolling hills, pastures of grazing beef and dairy cattle, and the ever-present tall timbers along the way. At the end of the day we taken by bus to Zanders restaurant in Stanley, where we enjoyed an excellent meal.

Monday 29th Feb.

Today we started slowly, as our itinerary had been changed due to bush fires in the Tarkine Forest area, our planned destination. Instead we visited the nearby Allendale Gardens, a former dairy farm, just a short drive from Smithton. We began our visit with morning tea of scones, jam and cream, served in the garden-themed tea-room. We then spent an enjoyable hour or so wandering through the 7 acres of landscaped gardens, a rain forest area, over little bridges and around ponds. From Edith Creek we drove on to Stanley to wander at leisure through the little township, and to lunch as we pleased.

In the evening we gathered at the Greys Function Room, Tall Timbers, for pre-dinner drinks. Sofija Virgo presented an outline of the plans for the 2017 20-Ghost Rally, celebrating 25 years of the club. This promises to be a very special 3-week event, with participants from overseas joining local members. An excellent meal was served, and during the evening we enjoyed the viewing of a DVD of the RREC 2015 European tour, thanks to Richard and Annie Bourke who had attended in their 20 HP. At this point we said goodbye to Richard and Annie, Peter and Suzanne Willcox and to Rosemary Holt, who were with us for just the start of the Tour.

Tuesday 1st March

Our drive to Launceston was a distance of 255 km, and we set off with the promise of rain in the air. The expected rain fell, the wind blew, and along the coastal road we witnessed choppy seas and the wind-swept coastal trees and terrain. We crossed Detention River at its outlet, and the Rocky Cape National Park. For a while we left the coastal drive and were again driving through the rolling hills with market gardens as far as the eye could see.

At Sheffield we stopped for lunch. Sheffield is a town known for its murals, painted directly on to buildings, and also displayed on movable surfaces, which are part of the annual mural competition. We stopped at the historic Entally Estate, where we were able to wander at leisure through the house, built in 1819, and the very extensive grounds, which included wonderful gardens, a vineyard, and many out-buildings displaying agricultural equipment, as well as many carriages and carts. From here we continued on to the Country Club at Launceston, where we spent the night

Wed. 2nd March

The drive from Launceston to Hobart was quite a long one – 221 km – and because it was expected that the temperature would be high it was decided that we should set off early to complete the steep terrain of the Central Highlands before the heat set in. We were especially concerned about an 8 km steep and winding incline which may have proved a challenge for some of the cars. The 8 km climb was a winding road, with quite spectacular views. The landscape now had become quite rugged, with evidence of recent fires, and the valley below was shrouded in mist. Along the way many took a break at The Steppes Sculptures, some interesting works by artist, Stephen Walker, before arriving in the pretty little town of Bothwell.

An informal excellent lunch was served to us at the Bothwell CWA rooms. We went on our way refreshed, and ready for last 80 km through the Southern Midlands and into Hobart, to the Grand Chancellor Hotel, overlooking the picturesque Constitution Dock, where we were to spend the next 5 nights.

Thurs. 3rd March

Our day started early with a 7.45 am pick-up for our bus trip which took us from Hobart to Kettering, where we crossed by ferry to Bruny Island, and on to Adventure Point. We had a brief stop at The Neck, a narrow land section connecting the north and south sections of the island. Here we climbed the 200-plus steps to the top of Big Hummock, where we had a magnificent view along the very long stretches of beach.

Morning tea awaited us at the cruise departure point, before we boarded a boat for the three hour Wilderness Cruise, which took us along the rugged coast to view some of the most



Government House in Hobart

spectacular granite rock faces and formations, as well as caves and passageways. Many sea birds were evident, including Sea Eagles, Cormorants and Mutton Birds. At the far end of the island the boat stopped at a large colony of seals basking on the rocks. The dolphins we had hoped to view at sea were unfortunately not to be sighted.

Dinner that evening was at Cornelian Bay, where we enjoyed a good meal in a wonderful setting overlooking the River Derwent.

Fri. 4th March

Today we drove 90 km to the Arve Valley, southwest of Hobart, along the Huon Highway to Franklin. Here many visited the Wooden Boat Centre and saw clinker dinghies being built out of Celery Top, King Billy Pine and the famous Huon Pine. Alongside were rowing boats, yachts, a commuter launch of about 1910 with a huge single cylinder engine. The 100- year old ferry, Carteela, was moored there as well. The Carteela came into fame when the Tasman Bridge collapsed, it being the only large ferry in Hobart. It had been retired shortly before this incident, but was quickly returned to everyday service until the bridge was repaired. We drove on inland to the Tahune Forest Reserve, before we walked amongst the magnificent giant trees of the forest. The specially constructed Tahune AirWalk takes visitors up amongst the trees, well above the ground level and perched high in the forest canopy, and eventually to an extended arm with a view over the confluence of the Huon and Picton Rivers. The drive back to Hobart provided some extensive views of the Derwent, which made one

realize how large it is - much larger than Sydney Harbour!

Our dinner that evening at the Hill Winery was equally special, with an excellent meal served in a very lovely setting. Prior to our meal we had the pleasure of a delightful presentation of Australian poetry, delivered by the author himself, Mr Philip Rush. He kept us all amused with his excellent delivery, and especially so with his just composed poem "Rolls-Royce".

Sat. 5th March

This was a day free of organized sightseeing, It was a glorious day, and perfect for

whatever choices were made.

No group meal had been planned for this evening, however Mike and Liz Williams had invited us to their home for an informal meal, and many accepted their kind offer. We extend our thanks to Mike and Liz for their kind invitation and for their generous hospitality.

Sun. 6th March

Andrew had arranged a special visit for us today -a visit to Government House. The cars were lined up before the House and we were welcomed by the Governor, Kate Warner and her husband, Richard. The Governor then conducted us on a most relaxed tour of the extensive gardens, and then through the public rooms of the house. It was built in the 1850s in the then popular Neo Gothic style. The Ball Room was clearly modelled on Westminster Hall, complete with hammerhead ceiling. The Reception Room had a ceiling of which Pugin would have been proud, and the Dining Room was more than ample. We all enjoyed the informality of the visit, and were thankful to Andrew for arranging it.

We left Government House for the drive to Mt Field National Park, a distance of about 120 km, across the River Derwent, on to New Norfolk and to Hamilton. We arrived at Mt Field National Park, where a light lunch was served at the Waterfalls Café, before many took the easy 20- minute walk to Russell Falls. Unfortunately, they were not as grand as they might have been, due to the drought affecting this area and much of Tasmania. On leaving the park we took a



From left to right: Andrew and Marge Bayley, the Governor of Australia, Professor Kate Warner, and her husband Dick

shorter route back to Hobart, via Glenora and Busy Park, where we saw vast stretches of hop fields, and where some visited the Salmon Ponds, built in 1861.

Mon. 7th March

We left Hobart for our drive back to Launceston, crossing the Tasman Bridge and travelling first through areas of cherry orchards and berry farms, then further north through grazing country. The dryness of the countryside was very noticeable as Tasmania has experienced a severe drought. The sheep were being grain fed and the hydro dams were at 15%, resulting in worries about the electricity supply for the state.

From Oatlands we made our way on to Ross, regarded as perhaps the finest heritage village in Tasmania, and home of the third oldest bridge still in use in Australia. The Ross bridge was constructed by convict labour in 1836. The Tasmanian Wool Centre was a good stop to learn something of the heritage of the region. We stopped at Woolmers Estate, another early home and farming community reflecting the early colonial life. It had been established in 1817 and has been in the Archer family for six generations. The nearby historic village of Evansdale

was also a reflection of times long past.

Our farewell dinner that night was at the Clarendon Room of the Country Club, where we enjoyed a pleasant meal. Farewell speeches were made and a special presentation to Ken and Billie by Andrew. Participants couldn't thank Andrew and Margaret enough for what had been a truly excellent time in Tasmania.

Tues. 8th March

We awoke to an overcast sky on what was to be a very relaxed day, with choices to suit the individual. In Beaconsfield there was Seahorse World and Platypus House to visit, as well as the Mine and Heritage Museum. This mine had been



Andrew and Margery Bayley's 1929 Phantom II 98WJ, Ian and Sue Berg's 1921 Silver Ghost 62 JG and Keith and Robyn Drew's 1923 Silver Ghost 88LKI

the site of an internal collapse some years ago, and the dramatic rescue of trapped miners. As the distance to our lunch spot was just 60 km, for many it was an unhurried start, and a pleasant drive out of Launceston past wetlands, vineyards and with wonderful views back towards Launceston.

As we drove the final leg back to Devonport we ended our time in Tasmania as we had begun it – driving through the forested land and market gardens that had greeted us just 11 days before. We made our way back to the Waterfront Function Centre where we gathered for farewell drinks and a wonderful selection of food items, prior to boarding the ferry. Good byes were said and thanks expressed to Andrew and Margaret for such a wonderful tour. The ferry sailed before dark, providing a last glimpse of the receding shoreline.

Andrew and Margaret Bayley planned a very successful Tour that was different to any other in that it provided the opportunity to see the variety of natural features and the wilderness which is the real attraction of Australia, rather than the built environment. Tasmania does, however, provide an insight as to what colonial settlement was like in view of the fact that much of the Mainland's colonial past has long disappeared. The pace was just right for the cars. Special mention must be made of Ken Redford and Billie Rowley from Warnambool, in their 20 HP. – both 21 plus some months of age! They were an inspiration to us all in the competent way they conducted the car. No one had any serious problems, which is a credit to the preparation that went into them. Those who did not have Club cars were made most welcome.

Name	Year	Model	Chassis No	Home	Coachbuilder
Ian and Sue Berg	1921	SG	62JG	Victoria	Roger Fry & Son
Will and Margaret Kirkby	1921	SG	56NE	NSW	Jason, Jackson & Collins
Keith and Robyn Drew	1923	SG	88LK	Tasmania	Roger Fry & Son (2004)
Rod and Bambi Hanson	1924	20HP	GAK76	Victoria	Hooper
Richard and Wendy Shenfield	1924	SG	15RM	Victoria	Vale & Pretty
Denis Deasey	1925	SG	122EU	Victoria	T.H. Gill (1930)
Ken Redford and Billie Rowley	1927	20HP	GAJ29	Victoria	George Maddox & Sons
Richard and Annie Bourke	1928	20HP	GBM32	Victoria	Martin & King
Malcolm Johns and Nick Illek	1928	PI	96AL	NSW	Windovers
Andrew and Margaret Bayley	1929	PII	98WJ	Tasmania	Roger Fry & Son
Peter Jordan-Hill	1931	20/25	GNS60	Victoria	Barker
John and Sofija Virgo	1934	PII	80SK	SA	Arthur Mulliner
Mike and Liz Williams	1934	20/25	GRC24	Tasmania	Park Ward
Geoff and Rosemary Holt	1933	PII	50PY	NSW	Windovers
James and Susan Chung	1939	Wraith	WEC46	SA	Hooper
Peter and Suzanne Willcox	1939	Wraith	WHC36	Victoria	Hooper
Also attending:					
Bruce and Mary Humphries				NSW	
David and Jean Vann				Victoria	
David and Clare Davis				NSW	

MEMBERS' NEWS

New Members welcomed to the Club

Martin and Susanne Halusa
Chesa Albanatscha, Via D'Aroevens 35, CH-
7504 Pontresina Switzerland
Tel 41 81 834 5755 Mobile: +41 79 511 5755
Email: martin@halusa.com
1912 Silver Ghost chassis no 2079, engine
126W, Reg. No. BF5491.

Rupert and Jan Grey
Hampshire Cottage, South Harting, Nr
Petersfield, Sussex GU31 5LP
Email: Rupert@rupertgrey.co.uk
Tel Home 01730 825411, office: 020
75209577, mobile: 07712 047200
1936 25/30, chassis no GUN7, engine N25R.
Barker four door salon body.

Tony and Jean Coburn
4 Norris Close, Whitehall, Bordon, Hants,
GU35 9EG
Email: tony@coburnonline.com
Tel home 01420 489653, mobile 07831
800206.
1925 PI, chassis no. 27HC, engine VE45, Reg
25JY, Hooper Tourer, yellow and black.

Ben & Adrienne Grew
61 Loxwood Road, Lovedean, Waterlooville,
Hampshire, PO8 9TY
Email: bennygrew@yahoo.co.uk
Tel Home 01702 476982
1923 20HP, Barker Chassis 66H9, Polished
Aluminium.

Donald Hulsman and Renée van Loon
Le Châtenet 1, 24300, Abjet sur Bandiat
Email: ABCSSS@neuf.fr
Tel 0033 5 53 60 56 23
1926 20, chassis no. GYK3, engine G1810,
Reg. No. YR 5085 Barker Prince of Wales
Cabriolet de Ville.

Zbigniew and Dagmara Krystowczyk
Olsztynska 8, 86-031, Niwy, Osielsko, Poland
Email: zkrystowczyk@gmail.com
Tel: +48 607 173 120
1931 PII chassis 237AJS, engine B85M. No
Reg. Brewster B7315, body Keswick Town
car/6 Light Limousine, colours Cream/Black
– currently being restored
1926 PI, chassis 56SC, engine CN85, No Reg.
Bare chassis, awaiting restoration

William D. Johnston & Rhonda E. Stryker
211 South Rose Street, Kalamazoo, Michigan,
49007, USA.
Email : Bill@greenleaftrust.com
Tel Home : 269-323-8361
1911 Chassis 1676, Engine 114P Roi des
Belges, 1913 Chassis 2617, Engine 11A Roi des
Belges Tourer, 1923 Chassis 23EM, Engine
S22, Coach work in the style of Hooper. The
1911 & 13 are owned jointly in a car collection
with Ronald Elenbaas, the 1923 owned
independently.

Items of News

Robin Dean sent me a wonderful photograph of his 20/25 Tickford Salmons "Sunshine Saloon" GRW52 parked beside his step son-in-law's Tiger Moth G-ANRN in the Vale of Clywd. The Tiger Moth had just flown in from Dorset (a photograph of the two of them is on page 862). As Robin says, the picture of the two old ladies greeting each other is a scene from the 1930s which is truly an occasion to remember.

Bryan McGee writes: My 1937 25/30 GRP 29 with Touring Saloon body by Thrupp and Maberly won first place in the post-vintage (1931 - 1940) class at the Chatsworth Country Fair on Saturday 3rd September, 2015. No one was more surprised than me! The weather was awful on Saturday, the day of judging, and thus presentations were made under cover. Fortunately, the afternoons were fine on both Friday and Sunday when the Red Arrows and Household Cavalry did their splendid displays.



Greg Leniston went to Mallorca for his daughter's wedding. May we wish her and her husband many years of happiness. Greg's Phantom II, 36UK, of course did the honours.



Members' Cars for Sale

Jan Miller Rolls-Royce 20HP (GEN9) was delivered new in 1929 to George H. Powell and first registered CV1. She started life as a Weymann Saloon, subsequently re-bodied by Crosbie & Dunn as a two-seater Drop Head Coupe with a dickey seat. It is believed to be the only example of this body. GEN9 underwent a comprehensive, body-off restoration in the nineties and is still in excellent condition. The wooden under-frame has



been renewed and the body is in cellulose black with a polished aluminum bonnet and excellent red hide interior with red carpets. The full weather equipment includes side curtains and protects well. With an overhauled engine (K7T) benefitting from a new cylinder head, an overhauled gearbox with new bearings and new clutch, an overhauled water pump, fuel tank, carburetor and Autovac-fuel system as well as overhauled axles and shocks, new electrics and battery, the technical status is excellent. The five tyres are brand new and the wheels are balanced. The car still has V5C. This car is being sold by Jan Miller who wants to make room for a Phantom. For more information and pictures visit: www.rolls-royce-twenty.de. You can contact Jan via email dr.jan.miller@web.de or by telephone +49172-4105140. Asking price is 65,000 GBP. The car is located in Bremen, Germany (there is a direct Ryanair flight from London).

James Chung 1926 20HP (GUK76) 4 speed gearbox/four-wheel brakes. Coachwork by Bryden & McKay of Sydney, Australia, fitted in the early 30's. Finished in burgundy over black, with leather interior in art deco style; in good condition. Rebuilt engine, overhauled clutch and suspension, original tools. We have owned the car for 15 years, and we are the 4th owner. The car is now superfluous to our needs as we have recently purchased a 1939 Wraith. The car is located in Adelaide, South Australia. Asking price: GDP50,000. Contact: James Chung, by email at thechungsa@adam.com.au.



OBITUARIES

Tim Forrest writes: It is rare for us to cover the death of a non-Member, but **David Dudley** gave our members with Silver Ghosts exceptional service and also helped build good relationships between our club and the RREC. With John Kennedy he organised and ran that most wonderful of events, the 1993 Alpine Trial and then followed this up by organising the 1997 Scottish Trial with Harry Watson. Both were attended by exceptional numbers of members from around the World. Although never owning a Silver Ghost, he edited the RREC's Silver Ghost Register magazine on a shoestring for 20 years, persuading members of both clubs to write interesting articles, particularly on technical matters. He kept in touch by driving what he called his "Super Ghost" a fast New Phantom tourer, which was a Ghost all bar the engine. His enthusiasm, persuasive powers and boyish charm will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

Peter Crauford writes: **Kerry Ely** was born Kerry Dorrell and grew up in Lithgow, Australia. She trained as a nurse in Canberra and first married Keith Wherry. They had three daughters: Sarah, Katherine and Emma and were both heavily involved in the old Rolls-Royce movement. Kerry played a major role in the very successful Silver Ghost tour to Ayers Rock in the early 1990s. After Kerry and Keith went their separate ways she married Lachlan Ely and they continued Rolls-Royce touring in their Phantom. The onset of Lachie's illness began an increasingly difficult period for Kerry. She cared for Lachie as long as she possibly could until he died a year ago. Kerry's own health was declining but she kept caring for Lachlan and I think many of us now realise just how great her sacrifice has been.

Kerry was vibrant, bright and funny, the life of the party and a kind and generous friend. Many will remember the wonderful marmalade she brought on tours to be enjoyed by us all. I will miss her cheery voice, her throaty chuckle and her infinite compassion and kindness. She was a rare and wonderful person. She is survived by her mother, Mrs Dorrell, brother Brian and sister Lauren and daughters Sarah, Kath and Emma. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to them in their sad loss. She will not be forgotten.

COMING EVENTS

The following are correct at time of going to press, but may change as arrangements are progressed. Details, booking forms and other information are available on the club website.

Friday 24 February 2017

AGM and Annual Dinner 2017 at Cutlers' Hall with prior visit to the Old Bailey, in the City of London (Susie Forrest. forrestsusie@aol.com)

Wednesday 19 to Saturday 22 April 2017

A three night tour of the Isle of Wight (Ashley Carmichael - ashley@aacarmichael.co.uk)

Saturday 22 April 2017

Spring Lunch at Armsworth Park House (Strone Macpherson - strone@stronemacpherson.com)

Sunday 7 May 2017

A day at Brooklands Museum, Test Hill, Driving Tests and Lunch (Brian Fidler - brianhfidler@aol.com)

May 2017 (dates to be fixed)

Irish Georgian Society Visit – location to be decided (John Redmill - barred@indigo.ie)

3–18 June 2017

A tour of the Iberian Peninsula, starting and finishing in Santander (Ken Forbes - krf@draytongroup.co.uk) – tour full, with waiting list

Thursday 29 June to Sunday 2 July 2017

A three night tour of South Dorset and NT houses based around the Chalke Valley History Festival (John Stuttard - johnstuttard@btinternet.com)

Wednesday 26 & Thursday 27 July 2017

A flexible two day tour and visit to Sudeley Castle with informal Concours (Graham Tyson - gtyson@outlook.com)

August 2017 (date to be fixed)

A one day car tour and a Concert at Thurgarton Priory (Roland Duce - roland@thurgartonpriory.co.uk)

Early September 2017 (date to be fixed)

One day at a Concours at Hampton Palace or the Goodwood Revival (Tim Forrest - forresttim@aol.com)

Mid-September 2017 (dates to be fixed)

A four night tour of South East Holland (Ernest van Arendonk - E.vanarendonk@taigle.nl)

Sunday 10 September to 1 October 2017

A three week Southern Aurora Tour of South Eastern Australia celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Australian Chapter (Sofija Virgo – virgos@airnet.co.au or UK contact: Roland Duce roland@thurgartonpriory.co.uk)

Friday 6 to Sunday 8 October 2017

A flexible two night tour of the Cotswolds and Autumn Lunch (Brian Palmer - brian@bandipalmer.co.uk)

Early March 2018 (date to be fixed)

AGM and Annual Dinner – venue to be determined

April 2018 (date to be fixed)

Spring Lunch at Armsworth Park House (Strone Macpherson - strone@stronemacpherson.com)

Late May 2018 (dates to be fixed)

A short tour of South and South West Cornwall (Graham Tyson - gtyson@outlook.com)

Sunday 24 June to Sunday 15 July 2018

A two or three week tour of Poland and East and North Germany (John Stuttard - johnstuttard@btinternet.com)

End of August 2018 (dates to be fixed)

A few days in the Yorkshire Dales, with an evening at the International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival in Harrogate (Terry Bramall - terry@bramallinc.com)

Mid to late September 2018 (dates to be fixed)

A day at the Kop Hill Climb with one or two nights locally (Brian Fidler - brianhfidler@aol.com)

September 2018 (dates to be fixed)

A tour of Scotland and the Isles (Strone Macpherson - strone@stronemacpherson.com)

February 2019 (date to be fixed)

AGM and Annual Dinner – venue to be determined

Late April (dates to be fixed)

A short visit to the Champagne region to buy champagne (Rosemary Jeffreys - rosemaryjeffreys@talktalk.net)

Late June or September 2019

A two week tour to Switzerland (Strone Macpherson - strone@stronemacpherson.com)