



News & Record



The Magazine of the 20-Ghost Club
The Oldest Rolls-Royce Car Club in the World

Issue 45 June 2015

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EDITORIAL

This is my first issue of the News & Record. I take on the role of Editor with some trepidation, but my predecessors, John Redmill, Nigel Hughes and John Kennedy, have been enormously kind in showing me how it can be done. I cannot promise to do as good a job as they did, but I will do my very best.

In this issue, you will find an article by our new Vice-President and outgoing Committee member, Jimmy Valentine, about his Phantom known as "Auntie". There is an introduction to the new members of the Committee, Ashley Carmichael and myself (latter in this Editorial). In each issue, I am planning to have an article on Cars and their Owners (or should it be the other way round?), one article about each event organised by the Club since the previous issue, something of historical interest, a technical piece and information about new members and future events. I am also planning to publish an index of previous articles going back to 2000, as this is meant to be a journal of record. Previous issues for the last 15 years are accessible via the website.

I would welcome contributions from all members, so if you feel inspired to put fingers to keyboard, please do get in touch, either by e-mail or by phone, and have a word. I will be happy to give you information about roughly how many words and what kind of approach I am looking for, as well as the deadline for receipt of material for the next issue. I am very keen that the *News & Record* should be of interest to all our members, including those who are not able to attend events, so even if you have not attended an event for a while, but have done some research on your car, or any aspect of pre-War Rolls-Royces, or even just read a book which you would be willing to review, please do get in touch. Contributors generally provide their own photographs, and I can give you some guidance about the kind of photographs that are suitable for publication, but do not worry if you haven't got anything suitable as I may be able to help. I am also planning to approach members who do not particularly enjoy writing to see if they would be willing to do an interview instead. This will be a wonderful opportunity for me to



Your new editor at the wheel of GRP 4, one of our 25/30s, at Lasham Airfield

travel round the country and meet some more members, as well as to see some beautiful cars, so I hope you will not be shy if I contact some of you about this.

John Redmill and I were appointed Champions for the Small Horsepower Cars at the last Committee meeting. The Club is keen to be as inclusive as possible, and in particular to encourage more participation by members who have small hp cars. With this in mind, I asked our Treasurer, Brian Fidler, to write a piece for this issue about the differences between driving a small hp and a large hp, and was pleasantly surprised to find that he found the small cars have many advantages, although there are more differences between some of the 20s and the later cars than I had expected. Brian's piece is complemented by one written in the 1950s by the Earl of Cardigan on Continental Touring in a Twenty. It seems that he found a small hp was if anything rather better for driving in the Alps, which was another surprise for me.

John Redmill has done a splendid map of the United Kingdom with dots showing where our members live, giving extremely valuable information about where the cars are concentrated. There were fewer members than I had expected in the north and in Scotland, but quite a few in the Midlands. With this in mind, the Committee is planning to organise more local events. It has

appointed regional organisers who will e-mail members within their area to invite them to join local events. People lead busy lives, but you may find yourself looking at the weather forecast and thinking where shall we go over the weekend? - and if so, please do consider joining one of these events.

Attendance at driving events tends to have about two thirds Ghosts and Phantoms, and one third small hps. This could be partly because those who have both prefer to drive the larger cars if the weather is reasonable, rather than their small sisters, but it could be because those with the smaller cars would prefer something closer to the garage, and maybe would prefer shorter events. We came to the conclusion that we need some more information about what the small hp owners would like. My husband, Henry Fitzhugh, and I have, with the help of the database manager, Nigel Hughes, put together a list of e-mail addresses of members with small horsepower cars. We propose to write to you with a short questionnaire (which can be completed and returned electronically) asking where you keep your car or cars, and whether there are any events you would like to see that we are not at present providing, and more generally whether there is anything that you would like the Club to be doing for you.

A short word about my husband Henry Fitzhugh and myself. Henry is an engineer who went down in the world from aeroplanes (MIT and Imperial College) to hovercraft, then further down to the Underground (where he was Marketing Director). He rose again to be Marketing Director of the Royal Horticultural Society and then retired, which gave him the opportunity to take up several new interests, including getting married (2003) and first one, then a second Rolls-Royce (these events are not unconnected with that in 2003). My father was also an engineer, and had an old car, a 1932 Wolseley Hornet which we both loved and I wish we still had (my mother did not entirely share this view). I became a barrister after I left university and joined the Government Legal Service where I had a wonderful career, advising central government on employment and European Union law and during the late 1990s on constitutional reform, when I was Legal Adviser to the Cabinet Office. I

decided in 2005 that I would like to try my hand at something else, and went back to university (UCL) to study archaeological conservation, initially part-time, doing an MA and then an MSc, and starting chemistry at 50 (and realising how much I had missed by not studying it before). My department was kind enough to offer me early retirement, which allowed me to concentrate full time on my studies. I then came to the conclusion that what I most enjoyed was the research, so from 2012 to 2014 I did an MPhil at Oxford in Classical Archaeology, studying gilded Hellenistic wreaths. I intend to pursue my research at Oxford further with a doctorate over the next two to three years. This will involve frequent trips to Greece, and probably also Southern Italy and Turkey.

You may think that gilded wreaths discovered after 2,500 years in the ground are a far cry from Rolls-Royce motor cars, and I suppose they are, but I did learn how to approach conservation more generally and was able to bring back the leather on our second car to what we think is an acceptable state. I propose to write about this in a future issue. Love of history and research, as well as an appreciation for something beautifully made, are the common threads, and I hope you will not mind seeing more historical articles appearing.

Henry and I acquired our first Rolls-Royce, a 25/30, in 2010 (GRP 4, named Emily), which we liked so much that we bought another in 2013 (GRP 49, named Grace), which has fewer miles on the clock and a recently refurbished engine, as well as other delights such as the original picnic and decanter sets. Both have disappearing divisions and are yellow and black. We generally wear matching clothes, as Henry is doubtful whether either car would go if we did not, and you will easily be able to identify the waspish-looking pair at events. We do not have a modern car, living in central London. I had wanted to buy a Rolls-Royce since I was about 8, and in fact our 25/30 was the first car I have ever owned – starting the way I mean to carry on! We have been members of the 20-Ghost Club since 2013, where we have been given the warmest of welcomes.

ROSEMARY JEFFREYS

THE 2015 AGM AND DINNER

28th February at Corpus Christi College Cambridge

John R. Redmill



Members of the 20-Ghosts in the Parker Library (photograph by Colin Hughes)

“‘Twas brillig, and the slithy toves did gyre and gimle in the wabe” I thought, as we set off from the Scandinavian clarity of the Møller Centre at Churchill College into the misty gloom of a dark Cambridge evening for our 2015 AGM and Dinner at the end of February. The swirling mist certainly seemed brillig; would Sir John make us gyre and gimble among the slithy toves in the Cam? To our relief he didn’t, but instead took us to the most wonderful mediaeval library in the

cloistered calm of this most illustrious of university cities.

With his extensive knowledge of Cambridge, Sir John had chosen Corpus Christi College as the venue for this year’s AGM and Dinner, and its Parker Library as the special private visit beforehand. As befitting one of the oldest colleges in Cambridge, its Library holds some of the oldest books and manuscripts in the country, and it was a rare

privilege and pleasure indeed to be able to enjoy all these. Matthew Parker was appointed Master of the College, on the recommendation of Henry VIII, in 1544, and Archbishop of Canterbury by Queen Elizabeth I. He endowed the library at Corpus Christi with an astonishing collection of books and manuscripts, including the oldest known copy of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* with King Alfred's *Laws*.

Sarah Tyson's tour of Devon in April, to be followed by the annual tour with the Irish Georgian Society organised as always by Jimmy Valentine and John Redmill. This had been in West Norfolk, where the weather had fortunately been extremely kind, as had all the country house owners – well, virtually all, but that's another story, not for these pages. Brian Palmer's light-hearted Concours D'Etat in June at the Shuttleworth Collection



Sir John Stuttard with the Committee at the AGM (photograph by Colin Hughes)

Learned discussions were held about some of the paintings in the Common Room, and in particular one which is thought to show the playwright Christopher Marlowe (certainly he did look rather racy) before we headed off for the Old Combination Room for drinks, and then the AGM itself.

Sir John welcomed those present, then listed those who had sent their apologies, including the Hon. President HRH The Duke of Gloucester, and our Hon Treasurer, Brian Fidler. He then recounted the blood, sweat and tears expended by Tim and Susie Forrest in making all the arrangements for the evening, and the Committee as a whole in organising the events of the last twelve months. These had started with Graham and

in Bedfordshire was great fun but had unfortunately coincided with the funeral of long-time member John Marsh, attended by many Club members.

The major event of the year was, of course, the tour of Flanders and Northern France, organised by the Chairman himself, to mark the centenary of the outbreak of the Great War. A special wreath-laying ceremony was held at the Menin Gate in Ypres, with visits to Tournai, Mons, Liege, Sedan and the Somme. The guide and mentor was Paul Wright, the senior chaplain of Sandhurst, who has subsequently been made Chaplain to the Queen, as Sub-Dean of the Chapel Royal. This tour also included journeying through the attractive Ardennes region, a police

motor cycle escort into Liege - and an abundance of fine food and fine wine, all as reported in *News & Record* 43. The final event of the driving season was the delightful weekend in West Sussex, organized by Tim and Susie Forrest, which included a visit to the Rolls-Royce factory at Goodwood.

Our heroic Hon. Treasurer, Brian Fidler, after fighting with the Icelandic Bank on the beaches of the Isle of Man and NEVER surrendering, having recovered all 100% of our money has, after that splendid achievement, decided after 7 years to hand over the reins at the 2016 AGM. Brian's excellent husbandry has also resulted in the membership subscription remaining at the same level for six years, when other clubs have increased theirs during that period. We have a year to find his replacement, and suitable words to thank him for all he has done for us.

John Redmill, after fighting for five years in his role of Editor of *News & Record* with his

computer, has often surrendered as technology overwhelmed him. Thankfully, Freddie his sub-Editor kept things on the rails to produce some stunning issues, but now both have decided to hand over to Rosemary Jeffreys, who was welcomed as the new Editor. Graham Tyson, having revamped the Club website, has passed the task of Webmaster on to Ashley Carmichael, to concentrate on being our Membership Secretary; 25 new members were enrolled in 2014, and 5 more in the first two months of 2016, which is most encouraging. Nigel Hughes continues to keep our database system up to date, and Ken Forbes, our new Company Secretary, has updated the Club's Memorandum and Articles of Association, and the Club's rules, and re-negotiated all our insurances.

Finally, the Chairman then announced that Jimmy Valentine had decided to retire from the Committee, having been a member of the club since 1967 – he did actually try to join in the late 1950s by gate-crashing a meeting at



Dinner at the AGM

Blenheim Palace – and came onto the Committee to ‘represent the young’ (further details of Jimmy’s career on the Committee are in the article by Jimmy in this issue). He has accepted the Committee’s unanimous invitation to become an Honorary Vice-President, joining Tim Forrest and John Kennedy. The Annual Report was then formally adopted, as were the Financial Statements, then the Elections of Directors, the Committee Members, and the Hon. Treasurer were duly held, all correctly proposed and seconded from the floor by members.

The forthcoming events for 2015 were then briefly outlined – a tour of Hampshire from 23rd to 26th April, which will also include the Annual Spring Lunch at Armsworth Park, courtesy of Strone and Alex Macpherson, the 36th annual Irish Georgian Tour, arranged as always by Jimmy Valentine and John Redmill and this year in the south of Ireland, to be



Anthony Armitage receiving the Alpine Trophy
(photograph by Colin Hughes)



David Crossley-Cooke receiving the Small
Horsepower Cup (photograph by Colin Hughes)

immediately followed by another week in south and west Ireland, also organised by John Redmill. The Club will be seen in late June at the Chalke Valley History Festival, near Salisbury, a three-day tour put together by Sir John Stuttard, and in late July at the Concours at Broughton Castle near Banbury, arranged by Brian Palmer. Ashley Carmichael has planned another three-day tour for late September in the Lake District, and the driving year will end with a two-night stay in Stratford-on-Avon, also thanks to Ashley Carmichael, and this will also include the Club’s Autumn Lunch at the Pudding Club. The ‘official’ part of the evening then concluded, the party moved into the Mediaeval Hall for a three-course dinner.

Toasts were made to HM The Queen and other members of the Royal Family including our Hon President the Duke of Gloucester, and to The Immortal Memory of the Hon Charles Rolls and Sir Henry Royce. After coffee had been served, the Chairman, who also announced that the Committee had decided that no member could be awarded the same trophy more than three times, presented the various awards. These were:

Alpine Trophy	Anthony Armitage
Woodmansee	not awarded
Small Horsepower	David Crossley-Cooke
Stanley Sears	Jimmy Valentine
Fergusson Wood	
Photographic	Henry Fitzhugh
Phoenix Restoration	John Redmill
Brian Wootton	Roy O’Sullivan

The Chairman presented Jimmy and Janet Valentine with a bottle of Pol Roger white label champagne, so much enjoyed by Sir Winston Churchill. Brian Palmer then presented Sir John with a journal named “*Pages from France*” in thanks for the Flanders tour, a task of heroic magnitude – in view of the scale of that Churchillian task, we should also have given him some extra-large cigars - after which the evening concluded and we returned to the reality of the Møller Centre at Churchill College, after a thoroughly enjoyable and victorious evening.

1 OR - “AUNTIE”

Jimmy Valentine

I understand that my parents’ wedding list in 1931 ended with ‘An umbrella’ and began with ‘A Rolls-Royce’. While I believe the umbrella was achieved, it was not until 1934 that Auntie the Rolls-Royce was acquired in return for £600 and my father’s Lagonda. Auntie was chosen by my mother Lady Freda Valentine from a selection made for her by Mr Bellringer of Rolls-Royce on the ground that it was the only one in which she did not feel sick when travelling in the back.

Auntie is a 1929 long wheelbase New Phantom (chassis No. 1 OR), the last series of that model and thus the ultimate development of the Silver Ghost chassis.

Her coachwork is a Weymann four-light saloon with wind-up division, built by H. J. Mulliner. I heard that when Mother was dissatisfied with the chauffeur Helier’s driving, she would wind down the division glass sufficiently to make her comments heard and then wind it up before he could reply.

A Weymann body is built somewhat like an armchair in that its wooden frame carries a network of webbing covered with wadding, which is itself covered with calico and an outermost layer of leather-cloth grained to imitate head-leather. Originally this was



1 OR – “Auntie” (2013)

Rexine, a heavy woven cloth with a surface coating of cellulose.

Most Club members will recall their first drive in their Rolls-Royce. Mine however was before I was born. My first memory is of having a tantrum on the floor in the rear because it was taking too long to get from Mayfair to the seaside at Brancaster in Norfolk where my father liked to play golf and the rest of the family had a seaside holiday.

In the summer of 1939 it became increasingly clear that war was coming and my parents decided to acquire a temporary home well away from London just for the duration of the war which was expected to last only a few months. They chose a house on the edge of the village of King's Sutton near Banbury. The lean-to garage which came with the property was too small for Auntie. There was however a disused malting house on the property so when the time came to lay up the car due to lack of petrol, a hole was knocked in the end wall, the car driven in, put up on blocks and covered with whatever came to hand. Corrugated iron sheets were nailed to cover the hole. So Auntie slept through WW 2 in her damp 'temporary' home while chunks of lime plaster 'torching' forming insulation on the underside of the slate roof fell on the car and disintegrated into fine powder, moths feasted on her headlining and mice nibbled at her door knobs.

Although the war ended in 1945, severe petrol rationing (and expensive annual road tax based on nominal RAC HP) continued so there was little incentive to disturb the sleeping car. Many such cars were sold at the time to businesses which had access to petrol such as taxis and the funeral trade which used the cars as 'followers' to convey mourners or the cars were converted into hearses. Extracting Auntie for such a fate was probably not in my parents' minds and would have been difficult particularly in view of the corrugated iron sheeting entombing her and which thus helped to keep her in the family.

On 26th May 1950, petrol rationing ceased and soon after the annual car tax for Auntie reduced from £42 to a standard £10 for all

cars. At the same time, as I was growing up I became interested in what was under the pile of old eiderdowns covered in plaster chunks and dust. So the decision was taken, a pair of wooden doors replaced the corrugated iron, a new battery installed, a large hole in the silencer covered and a mechanic brought the engine to life.

Auntie's appearance was distinctly scruffy at this stage. The leather-cloth from which the outer layer was made was 48 inches wide and thus the roof covering consisted of a central full-width panel and two side panels stitched to the central panel. The stitching had failed so black insulating tape closed the gaps.

In about 1956 we noted from the *Oxford Mail* that a Rolls-Royce club was to have a meeting at Blenheim Palace. So my mother and I took Auntie along. We found that it was a 20-Ghost Club event. We were met on arrival by Committee member Michael Vivian who explained that ownership of a Rolls-Royce did not automatically qualify for membership of the Club. The car (and by implication the owner) had to meet the Committee's approval. He pointed out that most of the nickel plating on the lamps had been worn away down to the brass and that the wheels needed to be shot-blasted and stove-enamelled. Disappointed with our reception we went home and joined the fledgling RREC but began to carry out some of the recommended works.

For their last term at Cambridge, undergraduates were allowed to have a car. I borrowed Auntie and applied to my tutor Fairfax Scott for the necessary permit: "make of car" "Rolls-Royce" "I've never had a pupil with a Rolls-Royce before" "it's a very old one" - "no matter". So Auntie conveyed three couples to the Magdalene May Ball.

In 1964 and 1967 the Rolls-Royce Clubs got together and organised memorable joint events at Goodwood - I remember seeing Silver Ghosts travelling round the car-racing circuit three abreast. About a month after the second event I was surprised to receive a letter from the Club Secretary Fred Watson asking if we would be interested in joining the



Arrival of the QE2 in New York (photograph originally published in *The 20-Ghost Club Record*, vol 10 No.2 1969)

20-Ghost Club “having seen your car at Goodwood”. We joined.

One of the first events available was a tour of the eastern USA, travelling with the car on the maiden voyage of the QE 2 to New York. This provided us with the impetus to improve the state of the car by replacing moth-eaten carpets and head-lining and substituting real head-leather for the roof and blue vinyl for the rest of the cracked and leaky Rexine. At the same time the engine was overhauled by non-specialists, the machining work being carried out by ‘Reg-the-Grind’ who after regrounding the crankshaft obtained suitable clearances by filing the shims (horror of horrors).

On the old Queens, cars had to be craned on and off but the QE2 had a door in the side through which all bar one (the organiser’s P1 now belonging to Andrew and Sue Taylor) could be driven into a lift which then descended and rotated to align with a somewhat cramped stall to receive the car.

The arrival at New York was the most memorable part of the voyage with the full complement of fire-floats and an escort of two prototype Harrier jets. Extracting the cars was made more difficult by conflicting directions from the group of stevedores who used to load and unload cars on the old Queens. As a result, Auntie had a small dent which we kept for some time as a memento of colliding with the QE2.

At the time of the tour, the annual travel allowance of foreign currency was £50 but the tour organiser, Committee member Lt Cdr Dymock Maunsell, persuaded the Authorities that our tour had sufficient prestige to support the export drive, with the result that the allowance was tripled. Meanwhile our US hosts, the Roll-Royce Owners Club of America, aware of our apparent penury, arranged accommodation with their members’ friends in the vicinity of each over-night stop. While such generosity was much appreciated and enjoyed, one met



The touring group with Silver Ghost 551
(photograph originally published in *The 20-Ghost Club Record*, vol. 10 No.2 1969)

so many delightful people that when one of them came up to talk, it was hard to remember whether we had stayed with them a few days earlier.

Happy memories of the tour remain: a meet with the RROC at the Brandywine racetrack, parking in Central Park, driving over the Chesapeake Bridge, a barbecue evening with a 56lb steamship roast, staying in a 17th century house in Pennsylvania where the kitchen block was separate from the house as a fire precaution, the threats by the RROC organiser Tony Guerrero that anyone who ran out of gas had to buy everyone a drink and that the police had orders to shoot anyone who got lost. On the last point, we were greatly relieved when trying to find our way round Philadelphia to see AX201 coming up behind us, equally lost as one of the route-indicating marshals had failed to materialise.

Amongst the many and varied tours travelled by Auntie, I remember Portugal in 1973, not just for the free petrol provided by BP but particularly for an evening in Oporto which started with a reception by the English port growers with white port in their 18th century Club house. This was followed by dinner provided by the Portuguese port growers with a different local wine with each course, culminating in both vintage and tawny port decanters circulating freely. In the coach back to the hotel, the 20-Ghost Club members sang merrily. The following evening at a hotel in the mountains, the cars were overseen by a military-looking guard carrying a Lee-Enfield rifle.

In 1978, Committee member Major Anthony Heathcote (allegedly the prototype for Pierre Daninos' Major Thompson) organised a tour to Leningrad (as it then was) via Helsinki. My mother was keen to see the Van Dyke portrait of a family member, the Earl of Danby, which passed via Robert Walpole and Catherine the Great to the Hermitage Museum. For this tour we, now including my fiancée Janet, required special visa documents which we presented at the Ruritanian-styled border post. The guard handed them into a window in a closed sentry box from which they were soon returned and

we were sent on our way. Thinking this was remarkably easy, were surprised to find after a few kilometres the real border post where young lads in blue uniforms fished in the petrol tank for drugs and wanted to know what was under the rear floor which was of course the road. Neither on the way in nor on the way out did they discover the tool space under the front seats.

Our itinerary promised a buffet lunch at the railway station in Vyborg. This turned out to consist of a small slice of rye bread carrying a slice of hard-boiled egg topped by a fragment of salt herring. To quench our thirsts, there was a ginger-beer machine topped by a tumbler which when pressed down was flushed by a stream of water. The tumbler was then held under the machine's spout, borrowed kopecs inserted into the machine and the resultant drink had to be rapidly consumed so that the next in line could repeat the process.

Altogether, the apparently interminable drive from Helsinki to Leningrad with a two-hour time change resulted in a very long day but was all made worthwhile by the sight of 18th century St Petersburg in the strong evening sunlight.

Two years later, Anthony Heathcote again took us through the Iron Curtain, this time into Hungary from Austria. When parked in Budapest we were much touched by an elderly lady who approached the car in tears, indicating that it reminded her of pre-war times.

In the 1970s I found myself co-opted onto the Committee to represent the younger members of the Club and to produce a Members' List from the card index system which in those days formed the Club's data base. Feeling desperately that I should organise some event, I was fortunate in that my mother had joined the Irish Georgian Society's London Chapter (as a result of her membership of the Irish Peers' Association) and had greatly enjoyed a coach trip with them to Cumbria. It occurred to me that there was an opportunity to replace the coach with our cars. This suggestion initially caused some consternation to both organisations

but eventually they decided to give it a try over the August Bank Holiday in Oxfordshire. Apart from one year when Ireland was to be the destination, and the Price sisters were on hunger strike, this has been an annual event. From my point of view, the great advantage is that all the hard work is carried out by the Irish Georgians.

In 1980, when returning from the IGS weekend, in Dorset, we were hit by a drunk driver who decided to overtake the vehicle he was following and hit Auntie's front offside wheel, wrenching it round to bend the chassis and disconnect the steering with result that we turned into the car he had just overtaken. So everything had to come off the chassis so that it could be sent to chassis specialists to be straightened. Dismantling and reassembly was entrusted to a Rolls-Royce specialist firm whose moving spirit and true expert had unfortunately recently died. The resulting deficiencies came to light over subsequent years.

In preparing Auntie for one of our then President's, Lord Elgin's, Scottish tours, I noted some shiny specks on the bottom of the container into which I had drained the oil. So after the tour Auntie went to Coldwell

Engineering for an engine overhaul which revealed the disintegrating big end and enabled some of the previous 'restoration' faults to be corrected.

Subsequently, Graham Ashley Carter has worked his magic on the car, including a higher ratio back axle. The many events in which we have since participated include John Kennedy's Pilgrims Route to Santiago di Compostella and his Battle of the Somme tour, the current Chairman's Marathon run in 2004 down to Monaco to celebrate the Centenary of the first meeting of Rolls and Royce and a tour of New Zealand in 2006/7, again arranged by John Kennedy.

So Auntie and I have enjoyed a variety of adventures together for around sixty years and at least seventy thousand miles. But the story continues as we head for Southern Ireland for this year's Irish Georgian Tour and subsequent 20-Ghost Club tour.

Editor's note: after over 40 years as a member of the Committee, Jimmy decided to step down, but we would not let him get away that easily! We are delighted that he has now become our third honorary Vice-President.



Our new Vice-President receiving the Stanley Sears Cup from the Chairman, Sir John Stuttard (photograph by Colin Hughes)

INTRODUCTION TO THE WEBSITE EDITOR

Ashley Carmichael

My family originated from Scotland arriving in Worcester in 1861 to work for the coachbuilder McNaught, a company that had a large carriage works and showrooms in the Tything area of Worcester. It was not long before the family decided to go into business on their own account, acquiring an interest in another coach builder then trading as Wilson & Fleming and Carmichael. The partners, Wilson and Fleming, retired and the business continued under the family name. By the time I was a small child, the business was manufacturing fire engines, bulk tankers, box vans, tippers and flat beds. Despite having started with a private education, I learned little at school until I was moved into the secondary system where I was not allowed to day dream at the back of class. But the Headmaster took me as a challenge and managed to get me to pass a few O levels.

Having moved out of the boarding system to a local school I had more opportunities to go to our various body building premises and workshops and often had holiday jobs long before I could drive so I developed a natural interest in heavy commercial vehicles, and of course driving cars.

My introduction to historic cars started when I restored a 1911 2 Cylinder Phoenix car. It had the charm and reliability of a London Brighton car without the ability to be used on such an event. There are three manufacturers for whom I have great respect: William Morris for the design and manufacture of the Bullnose Morris, Sir Henry Royce, whose Ghost has always been a must have, and similarly the Bentley Brothers with either a 3 or 4.5 litre car - all of which I could never afford.

The “never afford” comes from the fact that when you work in a large family concern in our situation all the hard earned cash was ploughed back year after year with the family taking a modest slice equivalent to the money you would have paid for a General Manager

so my passion for owning usable historic cars was put on the back burner.

In the years that followed I did approximately 36 rallies, initially at club level and towards the end at a national level. At that time it was pure road racing, with a handful of special stages. I started by using my Mother's Triumph Herald, suitably souped up - which didn't do the car much good. I then started modifying Minis until I built the ultimate in its day, a 1293cc Mini Cooper S, which absorbed all my spare cash. After this I bought a Ginetta and tried my hand at circuit racing which I found boring and unfulfilling. Aeroplanes came next, ending after about 10 years of flying in the part ownership of a 4-seater Rallye Minerva, which coincided with the decline of our motor trade activities and the arrival of two children - hence this hobby had to be abandoned.

During the early years of our family business I was employed running the commercial vehicle division. It was an interesting job as we used to have a large stand at the Commercial Vehicle Motor show as well as at many of the agricultural shows, so life was full of interest. Its future became uncertain however as Leyland Motors went into decline, as did another section of the company where we retailed Lancia and Fiat cars. The family attempted to diversify by changing the products that we retailed but in the midst of the 1980 recession we felt it prudent to cease retailing vehicles, as our losses were too much to finance, so we switched into a property company, an activity which took years before we could start drawing dividends.

It was at this time that it was necessary to start a new career, so as electronics were new and up and coming, this was the direction it took. The great thing about having your own Company is that everything you made was ultimately yours once the tax man had his



Ashley's bullnose Morris

40% so I could now indulge again in buying and driving fast cars - always Jaguars, as well as owning a modest family cruising yacht. It took a long time to build the Company, so it was not until I was in my 60s that I had any time to pick up my first interest in historic cars. I acquired a 1923 two-seater Bullnose

Morris with dickey which is a delightfully pretty car and quite drivable but not ideal for long distance touring. At last I could afford a Bentley but Adrienne didn't like the idea of an open car so reluctantly I accepted the reality and bought my present open drive Limousine, 47RE, from Alan Glew, restored its bodywork and trim and to date have had nothing but memorable touring with the 20-Ghost Club - the Alpine of 2013 being the ultimate. Apart from the driving experience Adrienne and I have met many interesting and helpful people all willing to share their experiences as well as advice from a vast range of knowledge on the Rolls- Royce marque. Each touring rally has its own individual worthiness when one has the opportunity to catch up with so many familiar faces. You have to own a Ghost and work on it yourself to understand the utter genius of its inventor Sir Henry Royce who appeared so far ahead of the competition.



The Carmichaels' 1920 Silver Ghost, 47RE

CULTURE & FUN IN HAMPSHIRE

THE SPRING TOUR APRIL 23-26, 2015

Henry Fitzhugh

A leisurely amble, under flawless blue sky, through the golden rape-seed fields, brought us to the Norton Park Hotel. We were immediately taken aback to be greeted by the Institute of Explosive Engineers, who were having their AGM, safely in the midst of open countryside, and offering help and career advice – Bigger Bang for a Buck, I suppose. My most fervent wish was for no demonstrations. Nonetheless, the hotel remained intact, and we proceeded to greet old friends and anticipate the joys to come.

Our first destination was Wilton House, ancestral home of the Earls of Pembroke. It was no ordinary stately home tour; the Earl himself and his business manager began with a lecture and presentation on how they run the massive estate. It was like a giant conglomerate – not all of which paid, and which required cross-subsidy from one part to another. The Earl's collection of extremely fast cars turned out to be a bigger draw in terms of visitor numbers than the artistic and cultural treasures of the house, even though they are some of the most magnificent in the country. Guidance in the lecture will no doubt be useful to Club Members on how to manage our own estates.

Having learned these valuable lessons, we were treated to a tour of parts of the house and gardens which are never open to the public. In fact, the whole house is normally closed at this time of year. The magnificence of the sculpture collection has to be seen to be properly appreciated, and it is good that the present Earl is adding to and improving its display.

The Earls of Pembroke have a rather diverse history, beginning with William Marshall, the greatest Knight of the Medieval Era. Since then they have endured no fewer than 9 Abeyances and 9 further Creations, which might be some sort of record. However, the most recent Creation has now lasted to the 18th Earl, with an heir to spare. One of the best-known of the Pembroke peers was not a



Strone Macpherson and our host, the Earl of Pembroke, outside Wilton House (with 1914 Silver Ghost 27BD behind)

man but a woman. Henry VIII created the original title Marquess of Pembroke for his future queen Anne Boleyn. Sparing a lot of barely fathomable detail, the present 18th Earl of the 10th Creation is actually the 37th Earl counting from the 1st Creation. Anne Boleyn was the 18th, except that she was one rank above all the rest as a Marquess (yes, an Honorary Male, not a Marchioness), so she outranked all of them, as well as being your correspondent's 13-times great-aunt.

After both poor Anne and her fickle husband were cold in the ground, the title was next revived as the 10th Creation in favour of Sir William Herbert, whose father, Richard, was

an illegitimate son of the 1st (or 20th) Earl of Pembroke of the house of Herbert in the 8th Creation. His grandson, also William Herbert, 3rd (or 22nd) Earl of Pembroke (1580–1630), was Chancellor of the University of Oxford in 1624 when Broadgates Hall was re-founded and named Pembroke College in his honour. By some Shakespearian commentators Pembroke has been identified with the “Mr W. H.” referred to as “the onlie begetter” of Shakespeare’s sonnets in the dedication by Thomas Thorpe, the owner of the published manuscript, while his mistress, Mary Fitton, has been identified with the “dark lady” of the sonnets. These identifications rest on very questionable evidence. In spite of the said William’s quarrelsome disposition, he was Chancellor of the University of Oxford, even though his foul language led to the remark that he was more fitted “by his eloquence in swearing to preside over Bedlam than a learned academy”. I wonder if he had Tourette’s Syndrome? In 1649, although a peer, he was elected and took his seat in the House of Commons as member for Berkshire, this “ascent downwards” calling forth many satirical writings from the royalist wits. He and his brother Philip are the “incomparable pair of brethren” to whom the First Folio of Shakespeare is inscribed.

His brother, Philip Herbert, 4th (or 23rd) Earl of Pembroke (1584–1650), was for some years the chief favourite of James I, owing this position to his comely person and his passion for hulking (towing ships with a rope around the waist) and for field sports generally. In 1605 King James I or VI of Scotland created him Earl of Montgomery and Baron Herbert of Shurland, and since 1630 both earldoms have been held by the head of the Herbert family. Then things went more quietly for two generations until we get to the 7th (or 26th) Earl, who was twice tried for murder, first in 1677 and then in 1680 for killing a London Officer of the Watch. Since all that, the Earls seem to have settled down and lived in peaceful enjoyment forevermore. Confused? I hope not - it’s really quite simple. But it does show that interesting Houses contain interesting people.

Our next port of call, Danebury Vineyards, near Stockbridge, Hampshire lies on the paddocks of what was a nineteenth-century racehorse training yard. In fact, their sparkling wine is called “Cossack” after the

most famous horse trained there. We were treated to a very full and informative explanation of how to make wine and champagne in England by Ernst Piëch, who bought an existing vineyard for that purpose in 1993. Many of us learned a great deal about how to manage our grapes by listening to his successes and tribulations. But, the finale was something no one could have imagined – his chef had constructed a Rolls-Royce! – a Phantom two-door coupé, body by Marzipan, which belched flames from its twin exhausts. They then sliced it up and we all had the unique and unforgettable experience of eating a Rolls-Royce.



The Marzipan Rolls-Royce (chassis no. 69XY)



The Marzipan Rolls-Royce backfiring

For our first visit on Saturday, we owe thanks to William Corbett, a 20-Ghost Club member, who is Chairman of the Trustees of St Cross and kindly arranged for us to visit St Cross in Winchester, together with a special tour and explanation given by himself. Legend has it that the Hospital’s foundation



The beautiful Transitional church of St Cross
(taken from the entrance to the Hall)

originated in a walk that Henry de Blois, a grandson of William the Conqueror, took in the Itchen Meadows. He was supposedly stopped by a young peasant girl who begged de Blois to help her people, who were starving because of civil war. The parallel with the Virgin Mary was not lost on de Blois, who was so moved by the girl's plight that when, a little further along the river, he discovered the ruins of a religious house, he resolved to use the site to establish a new community to help the poor. Appointed Bishop of Winchester in 1129 at the age of 28, he founded the Hospital of St Cross between 1132 and 1136, creating what has become England's oldest charitable

institution. It was founded to support thirteen poor men, so frail that they were unable to work, and to feed one hundred men each day. In medieval times, those hundred local men were fed each day in the Hundred Men's Hall. The thirteen men (now 21) became the Brothers of St Cross. Then, as now, they were not monks, St Cross being a secular foundation. Medieval St Cross was endowed with land, mills and farms, providing food and drink for a large number of people. Water was unfit to drink so copious amounts of ale and beer were needed! In the fifteenth century, Cardinal Beaufort added to the buildings and is widely regarded as giving St Cross the look it has today.

The Brothers gathered and ate in the Brethren's Hall for several centuries and almost all of the original features remain today: the central hearth for a charcoal fire, the stairs leading from the Master's lodging, the raised platform where he took his meals and the fine musician's gallery above the entrance. The Hall is still used by the Master and Brothers of St Cross to

celebrate special events and feast days. King Stephen's table (a gift from his brother Henry de Blois) can be seen in the adjoining room. There is a rather charming inscription in the Hall, part of which reads as follows:

"Here Hoary Age, disconsolate and
forelorn,
Midst fortune's frowns may cease its
fate to mourn..."

The Hospital is famous for its unique and ancient Cluniac tradition of providing the Wayfarer's Dole - a horn of beer and a morsel of bread to any visitors who request it. This was ravenously seized upon by hungry

drivers and navigators. It was as though the courtyard of the Hospital was constructed especially to display the cars we arrived in, and William Corbett's as well.

Our lunch was Strone & Alex Macpherson's traditional feast on their farm at Arlesford in a magnificent restored barn, but not before we had negotiated a very narrow bridge and a running water ford (photograph on front cover). For Rosemary and me, this champagne event brought happy memories as it was the first meeting we ever attended with the 20-Ghosts. Now as then, the hospitality and the lunch were exquisite, traditional shepherd's pie, with fizz and treacle tart. The sun shone on us in the

course that we were not put off by the gliders landing rather nearby over our car roofs. It quickly developed into a true Club sharing event – everyone driving someone else's car, riding in others, with some other owner at the wheel. It was even more gratifying to see so many sons, daughters and spouses trying their hand in an unfamiliar car or indeed for the very first time. This sort of thing must be further encouraged!

Watching the gliders seem almost motionless in the (blue?) sky, I realised that there must be a connection between the Serene Driving Experience of a Pre-War Rolls-Royce and the Serene Flying Experience of a glider. I can't wait to try the Novice Package, and just hope



Lunch with the Macphersons

courtyard, and your correspondent begged Strone and Alex never to change the menu. Some of us were slightly constrained because we were eager to get to the next event and partake of each other's cars, and we reluctantly departed to Lasham immediately after the coffee.

Lasham airfield, the centre of gliding in the UK, was specially available for us to drive around the perimeter road, provided of

that expertise with an unsynchronised gearbox somehow will help keep that glider up. I remember the advice from my postgraduate days: it is easier to fly within the edges of the air; the edges of the air can be recognised by mountains, trees, water, the ground, and interstellar space - it is easier to fly inside these; never fly in the same cockpit with someone braver than you; you know the landing gear is up when it takes full power to taxi to the terminal.



In the best of Club traditions – Nick Naismith and his son in the Forrests' Ghost 2154 at Lasham



Never too late to learn! (Mermie Karger, before – amazingly - taking her UK driving test, showing the Editor how to drive a Ghost, 2442)

On Sunday, we had a full morning's drive through the countryside on a route chosen to show off Hampshire at its very best, and it really was beautiful. We ended in Totford with a grand lunch that had the air of real conviviality and sorrow that it was all coming

to an end. But end it did, and we parted company genuinely wishing to see each other again soon, which I am sure we will. We are most grateful to Strone, Alex and Strone's E.A. Pauline for such an excellent tour.

	Surname	First	First	Model	Year	Body/Coachwork	Reg. No.
1	Armitage	Anthony	Jilly	Phantom I	1928	Tourer/Thrupp & Maberley	TY 5221
2	Barham Carter	Clive	Jane	20/25	1933	Barker	HS 492
3	Beach-Thomas	Anthony	Teddy	Phantom II	1929	Sedanca De Ville/Barker	GC 2819
4	Duce	Roland	Kimberley	Silver Ghost	1914	Replica	EL 2071
5	Eberhard	Albert	Monique	Silver Ghost	1922	Tourer/Wilkinson	EL 1743
6	Fidler	Brian	Wendy	Silver Ghost	1923	Cabriolet/Hooper	XR 4398
7	Fitzhugh	Henry	Rosemary	25/30	1937	Touring Limousine/ Park Ward	ELH113
8	Forbes	Ken	Jane	Phantom I	1927	Tourer/Robinson	YU 7464
9	Forrest	Tim	Susie	Silver Ghost	1912	Torpedo Phaeton/Barker	R 1487
10	Forster/Ingram	Gervase	Robert	Silver Ghost	1921	Tourer/Lopes	SV 6608
11	Heckman	Tom	Mary Jo	Silver Ghost	1914	Brooks Ostruk	6009
12	Hughes	Nigel	Ann	20/25	1934	DHC/HJ Mulliner	BLM 789
13	Huni/Bota	Lukas	Gina	Phantom III	1936	Sports Saloon	DGH 7
14	Karger	Colin	Mermie	Silver Ghost	1913	Tourer/Saotchik	BF 6606
15	Kennedy	John	Rae	Silver Ghost	1913	Tourer/Radley-Morison	R 827
16	Meier	Willie	Leonie	25/30	1936	Sedanca/Windovers	DN-RR- 2530-H
17	Macpherson	Strone	Alex	Silver Ghost	1914	Torpedo Tourer/Bridgewater	LR 6389
18	Naismith	Nick	Jo	Silver Ghost	1911	Tourer/Barker	CH 722
19	Palmer	Brian	Joan	Silver Ghost	1921	Tourer/Barker	KE 6676
20	Stuttard	Sir John	Lady (Lesley)	20/25	1934	Sports Saloon/Barker	BXB 12

DOES SIZE MATTER?

Brian Fidler

Tall or Short? Fat or Thin? Round or Square? Large or small horsepower? As Hamlet might have said “That is the Question”. Owning both, let me try to respond to the challenge!

By definition, the 20-Ghost Club was founded on, and caters for, both species of pre-war Royces – both were designed by the same man, both were built with the same obsessive attention to detail and (relative) disinterest in cost. Each was aimed at a different market, the Ghost setting out to be, quite simply, the best motor vehicle which money could buy, targeting the “carriage trade” and his partner Charles’ wealthy chums and acquaintances. The small horsepower car was the response of a canny Board to the boom and bust which followed the Armistice, and after the RR factory payroll had dropped from 8,000 to 2,000.

Marketing is an art not a science but it would be fair to say that the target buyer for the Twenty was the successful professional like a doctor or solicitor (accountants and dentists were still climbing the greasy pole!). The big differentiator was that the Ghost (and Phantom I) was exclusively a chauffeur driven car, whereas the small horsepower vehicle could be either a male owner/driver or alternatively a car for his wife to be taken to a social event or to the shops, but not on really long journeys. Certainly, the hefty shove on the brake or clutch pedal on a Ghost was not for those who “turned a neat ankle” but those with a well-muscled calf (or thigh!).

I have ownership experience of two Twenties (1926 GYK 4 and 1927 GAJ 15), the former a Thrupp and Maberley 6 light saloon, the latter a Brewster bodied brougham, whose first owner was the proprietor of the Plaza

hotel in New York, who wanted a car looking like an 18th century horse-drawn coach. Both cars exhibit the exquisite mechanical delicacy and refinement of what has somewhat unfairly been dubbed the “Gutless Wonder”, a soubriquet earned not contemporaneously but more post-war, when the survivors were both tired and burdened with heavy bodies suitable for taxis, weddings or funerals – delightful at 40 mph, capable at 45, much less so at 50 and waving a white flag both at anything more or the sight of a serious hill. But to collect Madam from the railway station or to motor gently to the shops in Bond Street, quite adequate and oh so genteel! Acceleration is a relative term; braking and fuel consumption real positives and ease of steering (indeed driving generally) a strong point. Based on experiences of the 20-Ghost Baltic tour, when we used a 20/25 (GWE 67, now owned by Nigel Hughes) and colleagues used a Twenty coupé, there is no major problem in keeping up with the “big boys”, and a real encouragement to owners of such cars to join our tours (short or long) without concerns about “keeping up” or feeling in any way the poor relation. And when it comes to parking in tight spaces, you can smile benignly at the heroic struggles of the folk with the 2.5 ton Ghosts and Phantoms! Plus 20 mpg v 10 mpg.

I also have a Phantom II Continental (1933 101 MW) and a pair of Ghosts (1921 96 NE & 1923 36 EM). So I have a choice of open or closed; two or four wheel brakes; centralised chassis lubrication or crawling underneath with an oil gun; synchro gearbox or quirky “lock in the slot” Ghostly crashing gears; monobloc overhead valves or two side valve whoppers stuck together on a common crankcase!



1926 Twenty, GYK 4



1927 Twenty, GAJ 15, now in the ownership of new members Richard and Penelope Samuel



1934 20/25, GWE 67, now in the ownership of Nigel and Ann Hughes



1933 Phantom II, Continental, 101 MW



1921 Ghost, 96 NE



1923 Ghost, 36 EM

In the case of the large horse power cars, albeit less so with the Continental, it's all about torque and staying in top gear, with huge flexibility and robust acceleration (my open car, 96 NE, has 6:1 ultrahigh compression pistons and 16:52 gearing – i.e. more speed for each engine revolution). Conversely, the Hooper cabriolet (36 EM) has its original low compression pistons and effectively 18:52 gearing via an Overdrive. This comment merits some explanation. With sports cars, and even more so with racing cars (we also have an ERA and a Bugatti), performance depends on high revs to develop and deliver high power outputs, typically showing maximum torque at revolutions twice the level of those ever achieved by Sir Henry's creations. The magic of the Ghost is that it delivered 90% of peak torque at little more than tick over – low compression; restricted valve timing. A huge flywheel and relatively small inlet valves were all deliberate, not an accident of the times.

The Phantom II had already started to move away from this with much higher compression (5.25:1); a larger carburettor and an overlap valve timing – but still plenty of “grunt”. Only the Bentley versions of the small horse power cars relied on revs to give of their best, with twin SU carburettors, better crossflow cylinder head design and higher but inflexible gearing on the MX overdrive series.

The detailed engineering solutions are both fascinating and foreboding, the 100 year old “cruise control” being all mechanical and totally non-electronic – the “Sphere” demanding attention every 500 miles; ignore at both you and your bank manager's peril. Rear wheel brakes only, when it is really wet, cause reduction in forward motion not easily measured by normal timekeeping; the only common link between Royce and Bugatti was the latter's comment “I make my cars to go, not to stop”.

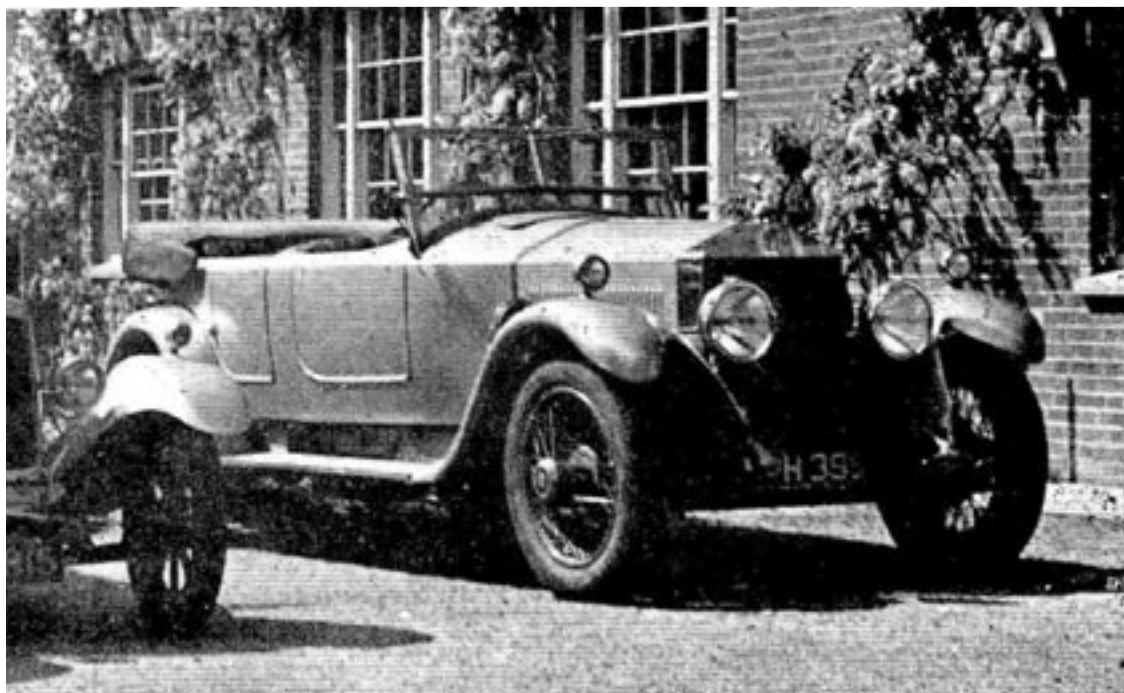
In addition to the large horsepower cars and the Twenties, I have owned two 20/25s

(1934 GWE 67, as mentioned above, and 1935 GRF 18 not illustrated) and one 25/30 (1937 GAN 37, not illustrated). The progression from the Twenty is steady and significant. Power increased not only because of a larger engine, but also higher compression and better breathing. The gear box got synchromesh on third and top, easing the owner-driver experience in a major way (you don't need first or second once underway). One shot chassis lubrication eased maintenance in an era when the full time chauffeur was increasingly uncommon, whilst the advent of the 25/30 brought much improved (not R-R manufactured) steering, courtesy of Marles, both lighter and more consistent.

Which would I recommend for either the complete newcomer or the more experienced twenty-first century user? The Twenty is fascinating, charming and exquisitely delicate – but so often over-bodied and consequently a little tedious on a 200 mile journey. The later 20/25 (post 1932) is a major leap forward, a much more realistic proposition for a 20-Ghost tour; whilst still very clearly under the watchful eye of Sir Henry, it had lost none of the magic but gained so much in practicality. The 25/30 is the easiest to drive and maintain. In short, there is a place for both sizes of horsepower in my garage and in my heart – and more importantly, in our Club. The 20- Ghost group is most certainly not just for people with 8 litres under the bonnet, with deep pockets and a taste for good living – it is for anyone interested in socio-economic history (like me) fascinated by simple but exquisite mechanical engineering (like me) and appreciative of beautiful craftsmanship of coachwork – all coupled with the company of charming and sincere fellow members. Stimulating conversation (not only about camshafts), interesting travel, helpful and friendly advice and a sense of unconditional belonging – truly a Club where the advertising slogan “Size Matters” is totally wrong.

CONTINENTAL TOURING WITH A “TWENTY”

Earl of Cardigan



The Earl of Cardigan's 'Twenty', GAJ 42

From the interest shown in my 1927 tourer when I take it across the Channel, I have the impression that not many owners of Vintage Rolls-Royces use their cars for holiday purposes beyond our own shores. The “Twenty”, however, is in many respects a well-designed car in which to make a continental tour—its only real defect being its deficiency in maximum speed. Had Royce supplied an indirect “over-drive” top gear (as he very well might have done had he not lost confidence, around 1909, in the ability of lesser men to use such a gear intelligently), this car could indeed be almost ideal in a holiday touring role.

As it is, the first few hundred miles on the continent show up the “Twenty” at its worst; for one encounters the long, straight Routes Nationales of northern France, and considerable strength of mind is needed to keep down to 45 m.p.h.—which I take to be

the speed at which one can cruise indefinitely without incurring any noticeable wear and tear. Where possible, I avoid main roads and select secondary roads running in the same direction: the secondary roads, being much narrower, provide the illusion that 45 m.p.h. is not such a contemptible speed.

Fortunately, as one progresses further in almost any direction, one begins to encounter first hills and then mountains—and it is then that one discovers a virtue in this car for which it is not given credit in England. When I first acquired my “Twenty” (which is of course the 4-speed model), I had the impression that the gearbox was not one of its assets. This may be fair criticism in England; but when dealing with one of the well-engineered mountain passes of the continent, one finds first of all that top gear is exactly right for all the minor inclines. A

good “Twenty”, for instance, can take almost the entire Brenner Pass in “top”.

For mountain passes of a sterner sort, the third gear (which seems so inadequate in England) shows up as being equally ideal. In my experience, it is exactly right for the majority of mountain gradients. I try to avoid dropping to second, owing to the slow change up again to third gear—and in this again the car's design favours the driver: the engine being so flexible and the road-holding so good, a “Twenty” can be thrown around most bends at such a speed as to enable third gear to be held. Thus, generally speaking, the further one goes beyond the plains of Northern France, the better account does this car give of itself. I have taken GAJ 42 abroad on three occasions, to Barcelona, to Venice and (via the Algeciras ferry) to Tangier—this last-named destination being one of some special interest in the case of my much-travelled “Twenty”. Through entering

Africa after having done her first twenty years' service in India, she can claim to have motored in three continents—a distinction which not many Rolls-Royces can match. (Too bad that she was not chosen for the American Rally, so as to make a fourth!).

Looking back on these three foreign tours, I can truthfully say that it was only on the first two days outwards and the last two days home-wards that I ever felt any discontent. Just for those stretches, I will admit, another 15 m.p.h. of cruising speed would have made a good car still better.

Editor's note: This article was originally published in *Early and Late*, the bulletin of the Rolls-Royce section of the Vintage and Sports Car Club, Issue 5, December 1957. I am glad to say that GAJ 42 is still owned by members of the Club (Sue and Andrew Taylor).



GAJ 42 still going strong at the Goodwood Pageant, 1967

TECHNICAL CORNER

FUEL FOR THOUGHT: NOTES ON UNLEADED AND ETHANOL - CONTAINING PETROL

Nigel Hughes

The Problem With Unleaded

Tetra Ethyl Lead was used from the mid-1930s as an additive to increase the octane rating of petrol, enabling higher compression ratios to be employed in engines and increasing their power. With the environmental and health risks associated with lead, it has largely been removed from the petrol available to us at the pump.

There was an outcry when lead was introduced, as some pundits argued that it would destroy engines. In fact, lead proved to be very friendly to valves and valve seats in engines where the valves bore directly on to cast iron in the cylinder head or block, providing a degree of dry lubrication. With the removal of lead, problems with so-called valve seat recession arose with some engines. This is caused when the very hot exhaust valve contacts its cast iron seating at high speed, causing microscopic areas where the two weld together. Then, when the valve opens, it tears tiny bits of metal from the seat, leading to rapid wear. We should note that high speed and high power together are the major factors resulting in this problem, which, broadly, only becomes significant beyond about 3000 rpm. Modern engines avoid this problem by using hard valve seat inserts.

Solutions

The first thing to note is the obvious point that most Rolls-Royce engines in the pre-1940 era were developed to run on unleaded petrol, as it was the only sort available. The later 40/50 hp cars of the period were fitted with aluminium cylinder heads with valve seat inserts. All replacement aluminium cylinder heads for pre-1940 Rolls-Royce engines are fitted with hard valve seat inserts which are proof against valve seat recession, including those used to replace iron heads on 20 and 20/25 HP cars.

On 15 February 1989, the Service Department at Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Limited, Crewe wrote in response to an enquiry from a Mr B W Johnson:

You will be pleased to know that all of the engines in all of the Rolls-Royce motor cars ever built are capable of running satisfactorily on unleaded petrol.

Well that would seem to be that. However, if there were exceptions to this rule, they would probably apply to the iron head, smaller horsepower, cars of the mid to late 1930s, as those engines were developed to produce maximum power at 3000 rpm and were capable of higher revs if pushed. Their big brothers such as the Silver Ghosts are unlikely ever to be driven beyond 2000 rpm. Engines which prove very susceptible to valve seat recession were the BMC A and B series engines fitted to the likes of Austin-Healey Sprite and MGB. These engines were geared to reach 4000 rpm or more in top gear and developed about twice the brake horsepower per litre of our engines. Even if our engines were driven very hard they would not approach the conditions in those engines unless perhaps the water passages were obstructed in the cylinder head, leading to poor valve seat cooling.

For members who wish to be cautious, a number of fuel additives have been endorsed by the Federation British Historic Vehicle Clubs (FBHVC) in conjunction with the Motor Industry Research Association. Those effective in combating valve seat recession are:

Millers VSP Plus (Manganese)

Red Line Lead Substitute (Sodium)

Castrol Valvemaster (Phosphorus)

Note that these use different chemicals and it is best to choose and stick to one, rather than chop and change. You can also obtain Tetra Ethyl Lead as “TetraBoost” if you wish to make your own leaded petrol.

Petrol containing Ethanol

The petrol available at the pump will increasingly contain ethanol (Ethyl Alcohol) at up to 10%. There are three areas of concern.

The first is compatibility with organic materials. Alcohol is an organic solvent which will attack things like rubbers, fibreglass and some lacquers which have been used to seal corroded fuel tanks. Areas of concern for us are likely to be fuel system gaskets, such as Autovac cover gaskets and fuel taps. Fortunately, alcohol compatible replacements are available from our specialist suppliers.

Next is corrosion. As I understand it, the problem arises from absorption of water by the alcohol or from the alcohol doing the same as wine and turning into vinegar (Acetic Acid). Both of these factors are insignificant if the car is used regularly. However, our cars are liable to have long periods of storage, for example over winter, and corrosion is a potential problem with almost all the metallic parts of the fuel system.

Finally, ethanol can have a small effect on the effective mixture strength, tending to make it leaner. This might be noticed as a slight loss of power and for most of our cars, a minor adjustment of mixture strength is easily achieved.

Solutions

FBHVC recommendations for fuel system corrosion inhibitors are:

VSPe Power Plus, VSPe and EPS from Millers Oils

Ethomix from Frost A R T Ltd

Ethanolmate from Flexolite

It is difficult to get much firm information about the contents of petrol, but generally speaking the super unleaded fuels appear to be ethanol free. So BP Ultimate, Esso Super Unleaded and Texaco Super Unleaded seem the best to buy for our cars; however, unfortunately in the South West of England (Devon and Cornwall) it appears that none of these is ethanol free, and the position in the North West is not entirely clear. Full details are available from <http://www.groups.tr-register.co.uk/wessex/ethanol-update.html>, which also has a link to Total website with a list of filling stations where E0 petrol can still be purchased.

Offer by Henry Fitzhugh. Out of pure love I do all of the routine maintenance on both our 25/30s. The R-R Handbook is very difficult to use while doing the work, unless you have at least a dozen spare and clean fingers to put between all the relevant pages, which need constant flicking forward and back. For that reason, I have written my own Maintenance Manual; anyone who would like to have a copy (18 pp.), complete with pictures shamelessly cribbed from all relevant R-R publications – along with a maintenance record and checklist as well as an Excel spreadsheet which will tell you at what mileage everything is due – has only to email me at henryfitzhugh@talktalk.net, and it will all be forthcoming. Advice and instructions given in these documents and spreadsheets are not the responsibility of the 20-Ghost Club. Although the author has endeavoured to produce accurate information illustrations and advice, he cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage caused by acting on such information. Any suggestions for improvement would be welcome.

NEW MEMBERS WELCOMED TO THE CLUB

TOM B. COLBERT
120, White Park Road, Ithaca
New York 14850, USA.
1921 Silver Ghost, 65UE, Reg. B1921, Cunard

SIR JOHN LINDSAY AND PATRICIA
LADY LINDSAY
1, Trodd's Lane, Guildford, Surrey, GU12XT.
1929 20hp, GVO60, Reg. GC 3593, Mulliner.

RICHARD AND PENELOPE SAMUEL
8 Tower Road, Branksome, Poole, Dorset
BH13 6HY.
1927 20hp Brougham de Ville GAJ15, Reg.
DS8665 (shown on page 756)

THOMAS SCHULTE
Holtrup 5, D-48308, Senden,

Germany NRW 48308.
1932 PII Sedan de Ville, 66JS. Reg. No
LHRR32, body Fernandez & Darrin



MALCOLM AND CLARE TUCKER
Butlers Farm, Ganybridge Lane, St Mary
Bourne, Hants, SP11 6EP 1920 Silver Ghost
10CW, Reg. RR7492, body Furguson of Belfast.



BOOK REVIEWS

HENRY FITZHUGH

SURVIVOR An Owner's Workshop Guide for the 20 HP & 20/25 Rolls-Royce, by Charles Vyse, £14.50

REBORN An Owner's Workshop Guide for the 25/30 Rolls-Royce, by Charles Vyse February 2015, £14.95

"Survivor" was reviewed by John Redmill in Issue 41, and tells us about "Bluebell", GXO 71, a Thrupp and Maberley 20/25: its manufacture and history as well how he restored it. "Humphrey", GRO 54, a 25/30 Barker, was in an even worse state when acquired by Charles and "Reborn" is just as interesting to read as the first. Both books will be enjoyed by those who are curious about the history of the cars, as well as those doing serious work and overhaul. For anyone who is doing serious restoration, or having it done for them, these books will be invaluable, going as they do far beyond what is in any of the R-R published manuals of any period, and copiously illustrated with photos and exploded drawings. Things like...everything to do with cleaning and restoring the cooling system; adjustment of the carburettor on the bench and on the road; all matters to do with the fuel system; causes of petrol smell inside the car; everything to do with the ignition system; ditto the charging system; how to rewire to modern lighting standards; complete relining of brakes; complete engine compression testing and rebuild. If you've ever thought of doing a "bottom-decoke", i.e. sludge trap clearance, think again, but if you do it, these books explain everything, together with some of the dirtiest pictures you will ever see! There is a complete chapter on diagnosing engine faults, and also on maintaining the one-shot system. Track-rods, shock absorbers, and wheel balancing are all covered. Fitting of an overdrive, renovating leather and woodwork all get lovingly covered. Everything you would ever need to do, or to have someone do for you, is covered to a depth that will give you understanding and confidence. Charles Vyse's books are self-published and available at <http://www.lulu.com/shop> (search on Vyse).

Editor's Note: As John Redmill pointed out in his review, there are rather more errors of punctuation etc. in these books than any of the editors of *News and Record* would have permitted, but these are minor when compared with the undoubted usefulness and interest.

COMING EVENTS

SUBSCRIPTIONS & ADDRESSES:

It is presumed that all members have now paid their correct 2015 subscription. If not, please send £50/euros 70 immediately to our Hon. Treasurer, Brian Fidler, The Eighth House, Vernon Avenue, Oxford OX2 9AU, or for those in the US \$90 (with a cheque made out to Mermie Karger). Anyone not currently paying by standing order can get our full bank details [including the euro account] by emailing Brian Fidler at brianhfidler@aol.com. Although we would hate to lose anyone, failure to pay the correct annual amount could result in you not being considered a member of the club, with all the consequences that might entail, which includes NOT being covered by the club's insurance when taking part in club events and tours. Please also send any changes in your e-mail address or postal address, etc., NOW to Graham Tyson, the club's Membership Secretary, The Old Vicarage, St Minver, nr Wadebridge, Cornwall PL27 6QH, or to his email address gtyson@outlook.com. If Graham does not have these details, the 20-Ghost Club will not be able to communicate with you or, even more importantly, send you copies of *News & Record*. Don't forget to look regularly on the Club's website for current information and updates about events; we are being forced to rely more and more on emails and the website for communicating information to members. If you have any problems at all in doing so, please contact Graham Tyson who will help you.

EVENTS:

There will be a memorial service for **Max Watson** on Saturday 17th October at 11.30 a.m. in Dorchester Abbey, Dorchester on Thames, Oxfordshire OX10 7HH. An obituary for Max by Peter Vacher appeared in issue 44 of the *News and Record*.

The following are correct at time of going to press, but may change as arrangements are progressed. Details, booking forms and other information available on the club website. If members do not have access to the website and wish to apply for an event, they should contact the event organiser to request further details and a booking form. Please note that the 2016 French Tour is already almost full; if you are interested in participating, please contact the organisers (Tim and Susie Forrest) to see if a place is still available, or if you wish to go on the waiting list.

Monday 22 to Thursday 25 June 2015

Chalke Valley History Festival and a Tour of West County Houses and Gardens (Sir John Stuttard)

Saturday 25th July

Broughton Castle informal Concours d'Etat (Brian and Joan Palmer) (do come, it is always great fun)

Tuesday 22nd to Friday 25th September 2015

Midweek Tour of the English Lakes in Cumbria (Ashley Carmichael) (some spaces still available)

Wednesday 21st to Friday 23rd October 2015

Stratford-on-Avon (with theatre visit) (Ashley Carmichael and Roland Duce) (some spaces still available for the tour; details of an alternative to the full tour, the autumn lunch on Friday 23rd, will be on the website later)

Friday 26 February 2016

AGM and Annual Dinner 2016 Armourers' Hall in the City of London

Tuesday 17th May to Sunday 29th May 2016

French Sunshine Tour and Concours (Tim and Susie Forrest)