



News & Record



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

Issue 41 January 2014

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JANUARY 2014

THE 20-GHOST CLUB LIMITED REGISTERED NUMBER 5224633

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PRESIDENT: HRH The Duke of Gloucester

CHAIRMAN:

Sir John Stuttard 01747 853570 <johnstuttard@btinternet.com>

AUSTRALIAN CHAPTER:

CHAIRMAN: David Vann

HON. VICE PRESIDENTS:

Tim Forrest 01428 684208 <forresttim@aol.com>

John L Kennedy 01344 883033 <jlk@talktalk.net>

VICE-CHAIRMAN:

Peter Crauford

COMPANY SECRETARY:

Ken Forbes 01675 442529 <kforbes@meteorgroup.co.uk>

HON. SECRETARY:

David Davis

TREASURER:

Brian H Fidler 01865 726959 <brianhfidler@aol.com>

TREASURER:

Bruce Humphries

OTHER DIRECTORS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Nigel Hughes Technical Editor & Database Manager
Hollybank, 43a Wellhouse Road, Beech, Alton, Hampshire
GU34 4AQ 01420 89982 <hughesn@aol.com>

Roland Duce 01636 830202
<roland@thurgartonpriory.co.uk>

John R Redmill News & Record Editor
24 Royal Canal Bank, Broadstone, Dublin 7, Ireland
00353 1 8301271 <barred@indigo.ie>

Michael Lyndon-Stanford - 01379 384748
<ingals@echointernet.net>

Graham Tyson Membership Secretary & Website Editor
The Old Vicarage, St Minver, nr Wadebridge, Cornwall PL27 6QH
01208 862951 <gtyson@outlook.com>

Nick Naismith 01732 860148
<nick@naismith.com>

Strone Macpherson 01962 735562
<strone@stronemacpherson>

Brian Palmer 0116 2862417
<brian@bandjpalmer.com>

*FOR FULL CONTACT DETAILS OF ALL THE ABOVE,
PLEASE CONSULT THE CURRENT MEMBERS LIST*

Jimmy Valentine
020 7352 8503 [weekends 01295 811215]
<f.valentine215@btinternet.com>

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YOUR EDITOR WRITES:

RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT N&R:

I am delighted to report that quite a number of members, more than anticipated, went to the trouble of completing and returning the questionnaire that I issued with *N&R*40, and I am extremely grateful to everyone who did so, particularly those from the USA and Australia. Your replies will help shape *N&R* in the future, I hope to your continuing approval. Some useful suggestions were made about the contents, although most felt the balance was about right, with about 60% wanting more short articles on technical and maintenance issues, and 'tips & hints', and nearly 70% wanting more articles about members' cars. A large majority said the events write-ups were long enough as they are, and only 30% asked for larger photographs – so not so many have fading eyesight like me!! Most interestingly, virtually 90% did not want more than 3 issues annually of 16 to 20 pages each, which is what is produced at present, and the suggestion of larger issues with any more pages was rejected by 94% of the membership! Several made the point that *N&R* is a newsy and enjoyable read, NOT serious or technical, and that it should stay as that, leaving *The Roycean* to be the serious technical publication – I, as Editor, agree!! One of our US members also said that *N&R* "is the glue that hold the club with members on distant continents together". Another requested better quality paper – I'll ask the Hon. Treasurer to approve that before proceeding! So it has been a very useful exercise for me, and I do thank all of you who responded. I particularly thank those who offered to contribute articles for future issues; this is very much appreciated, and be assured that I will be contacting each and every one of you soon to agree what you would like to write, and when – so be prepared!

STORAGE OF YOUR N&R:

What do you all do with *News & Record*, once it has arrived and you have avidly read it cover to cover? Carefully file, or even bind, them for posterity? Leave them lying around, for visitors to leaf through during lulls in the conversation? Bung them out with the next recycling collection, for the refuse operatives to enjoy over their mugs of tea? At the AGM last February, in response to a question from Philip Hall about the storage of *N&Rs*, I promised to investigate this thorny matter and report back in due course. Well, despite considerable research, I can find no totally suitable ready-made solution with which I am satisfied. Personally, I don't like punching holes in them, like the SGA journal, to go into a ring binder or lever arch file – I think it spoils them. Most box files look really dreary, and not for placing on a proper bookcase or shelf. There are many magazine storage boxes available now from various High Street shops, including Ryman, Ikea, and WHSmith, but they all look as if they're designed for junior school children, none seem to have dust-proof lids and, if they're sold in pairs, they come in two slightly differing sizes so they fit into each other – but sets of magazines, such as *N&R*, are always of the same size – so different sized boxes are useless!! There is a company near Southampton that makes very handsome pretend leather-bound tomes that are in fact magazine storage boxes, which undoubtedly would look excellent on shelves or a bookcase, and can be 'customised' with the name of the club at no extra cost, but are very expensive. So, unless someone can solve this for me, for the moment I reluctantly suggest that you decide what sort of box or file you prefer; we can ask Parchments to provide self-adhesive strips for the spines, full-width, with our logo and the words 'News & Record' in red, and a space for you to write the year dates yourselves if you so wish.

REVIEW OF 'SURVIVOR' by CHARLES VYSE:

As some of you already know, I barely know one end of the engine from the other, let alone how it works. I once pointed to a strange metal object under the bonnet of GXO97 and asked Jimmy Valentine what part of the engine it was; his slightly withering reply was "that, John, is the jack"! So I was delighted to receive a copy of the new very recent publication by Charles Vyse entitled 'SURVIVOR – An owner's Workshop Guide for the 20HP & 20/25 Rolls-Royce', an apparently modest little paperback, but packed with useful, easy-to-read, practical information, through his experiences with 'Bluebell', his own GXO71, a 1929 Thrupp & Maberley Tourer of extreme elegance. After a fascinating account of the car's manufacture, history and ownership, Vyse then devotes each following section to an aspect of the car's mechanics and how to deal with these on the side of the road when the car fails to proceed. It seems exactly the sort of thing to have in the car so it can be consulted at any time – don't forget the torch for when the failure happens at night and the print and photos are large and clear. My only criticism, and it is slight, is that there are rather too many typographic and punctuation errors for my satisfaction, but these are minor when compared to its undoubted usefulness. Copies can be obtained on line, by going to www.lulu.com/shop and clicking on 'books', then 'engineering', and then, if necessary, on 'survivor' [lulu is an American self-publishing company]. It costs €14.77 or about £12.50, plus postage; it took about 3 weeks to arrive, but it's well worth it.

THE NEW WEBSITE:

To access the website, please contact Graham Tyson web editor, gtyson@outlook.com



The car in 2009 – not much more than a chassis and engine, really - as Henry Royce himself intended!

A GHOST OF INDIA – part 2

Graham Tyson continues to raise 97AE from the dead

In issue 36 of News&Record, June 2012, Graham Tyson recounted how he discovered the remains of a Silver Ghost, 97AE, and decided to restore it. This is Part 2 for that story, which concentrates on the various repairs that had to be done. Graham found the whole experience to be an enormous learning curve, which he would like to share with us all! And so the saga continues

I counted myself very lucky to have had the services of Ben Smith, a very talented motor engineer happy for an inexperienced owner to work alongside him. He guided me throughout and nothing seemed to faze him. He did the 'intelligent' work whilst I concentrated on the dismantling and cleaning. Although the first Silver Ghost with which he has been involved, he is very well versed in all small horsepower Rolls-Royces plus Phantoms and other pre-war Rolls-Royces and Derby Bentleys. Ben asked how far I wanted to go with repairs and I rather vaguely said I thought we should start dismantling parts and to see 'how we got on'. The further we went, the further we realised we had to go. All oil passages and oiling cups were blocked solid with what I now know was old vegetable oil. The rear axle took over a week to drain, by filling it with thinners and leaving it to stand - the gearbox was the same, both were filled with thick black goo. They were both solid, again with vegetable oil as described by Mike Evans in some very helpful emails.

I finally decided that we should carry out a full 'chassis up nut and bolt' restoration with a view to bringing the car back to near original condition as possible, being careful not to destroy all of its history by trying to create a car in better condition than original, something occasionally seen in 'total restorations'; - it would be a difficult balancing act. So, everything came off, was photographed, labelled and stored in boxes. Every single nut and bolt was taken apart, the back axle was dismantled, thoroughly cleaned and checked for wear, all bearings were replaced and, after reassembly and checking for backlash and checking the meshing with blue, it was primed and painted as shown in the photograph ready for re installation. We did the same with the gearbox, stripping it down to just an empty box, replacing the bearings, thoroughly cleaning everything, checking for wear throughout and reassembling it - one of many challenging tasks!



Front axle cleaned, now to check its integrity



The car finally completed and receiving its award at the RREC Annual Rally in June 2012



Chassis about to go for shot blasting



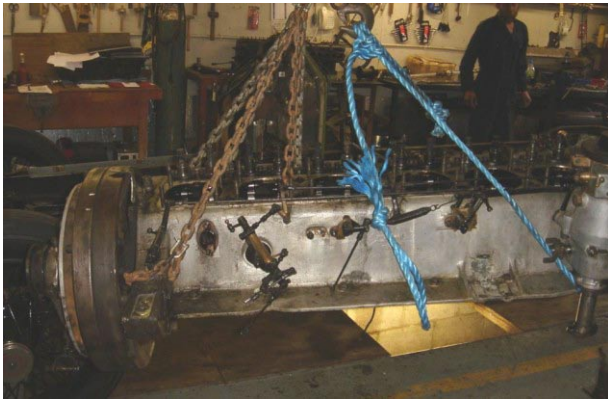
Finally finished - 12 coats of paint, mainly done by me!

The water pump was dismantled and inspected; we found worn bushes and shaft so bored out a worn hole in the drive for which an aluminium plug was turned and welded in place. The bearings in the starter motor, which was totally rebuilt, were replaced. The bare chassis was sent off for shot blasting and upon its return was painted with ten coats of primer and two top coats, all flatted down by hand [mostly mine!]. The steering box was dismantled, cleaned, checked for wear, new seals put in and re assembled. I bought from the SGA their rather expensive seal that they say stops oil leaks – we shall see.

I was very surprised when we dismantled the Sphere to find a cork in the end of the prop shaft; I had not been expecting to see that and it seemed rather incongruous to me. I initially thought someone had stuffed in an old champagne cork as we had found many odd repairs during dismantling, presumably as a result of its long sojourn in India. Incidentally, unless anyone reading this is particularly masochistic, I recommend they think very carefully before attempting to dismantle a Sphere themselves, as it is appallingly complicated. We made new leather seals for it, remade the UJ bushes, fitted hardened sleeves, and replaced the cork. The oil pump was badly worn and, as the price of a new one was mind blowing, we sent it off to FJ Engineering who had some experience of Ghost oil pumps and where I had the worn bearings bored out and bushed at a far more reasonable price! It came back looking like new.



The Sphere being dismantled and then restored



The restored crankcase



The crankshaft being checked for wear etc

We turned our attention to the engine and again totally dismantled it - it is amazing just how many parts there are in an engine! - and cleaned examined, measured and photographed everything. We found significant wear due perhaps to lack of proper lubrication, as evidenced by the blocked oil-ways. The crank and blocks, etc, went off to Coventry Boring and after searching worldwide I bought a new set of high ratio pistons from Fiennes [they are actually made by F-J Engineering but they cannot sell direct] plus new valve springs, valve guides and sundry other necessary items. Once again, all the bearings were replaced as has been my policy throughout. Sadly I could not retrieve the original cast iron pistons from Coventry Boring, which was disappointing, as I had intended keep everything that had to be discarded and replaced.

Once the re-bore had been completed, we were able to start re-assembling the engine back in the chassis over the following few weeks. We de-coked the ports and combustion chambers, lapped and checked valve seatings, matched the rods and pistons by weight, checked the piston fit [with blue], etc. etc.; the list was seemingly endless. The sheer weight of such items as the crankcase, blocks, clutch assembly etc. make the handling by just two people with a block and tackle quite interesting. We checked and re-checked all the clearances and I found a great deal of invaluable information in several of the SGA Tourer magazines. We found it quite a trial to align the engine and gearbox and had to move the rear of the engine to the nearside by reducing the length of the mounting and shimming. We adjusted the front by changing the shims and adjusting the bellcrank to set the height, after which we adjusted the shim at the front of the gearbox. Finally the whole assembly was correctly aligned to very small tolerances, and I believe it is now far more accurately set up that it had been when new. The carburettor air valve spring was missing, various parts were bent, the carburettor had incorrect bolts holding the body to the lower casing, and the throttle return spring was broken. It was surprising we had been even able to start the engine!



New pistons and rods etc: white metallurgy re-done



Now, let's look at the steering box.....



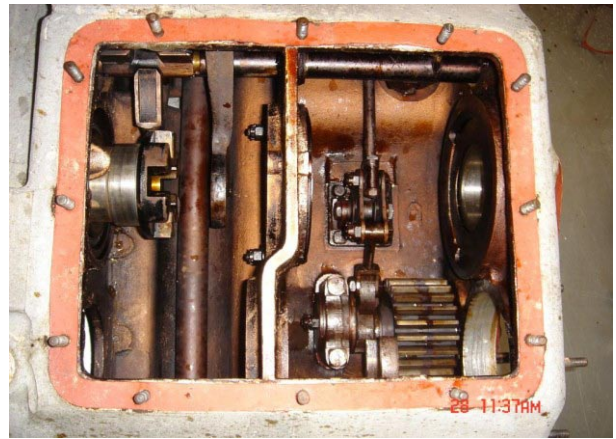
Every part of the back axle was restored



This looks more recognisable!



After a week of draining.....



At last all nice and clean



The gearbox has a lot of parts!



Everything back in, nothing left over!

The steering wheel was badly damaged, possibly as a result of damp reacting on the aluminium and breaking the Ebonite covering, so was restored. Curiously I found that quite a lot of items I would have expected to be solid nickel silver were in fact plated, and badly worn over the years. Derby Plating Ltd was therefore to be kept busy, and would continue to be so throughout 2011. The magneto was fully rebuilt. I found the dynamo was not original nor it did work, so I called Alan Glew for advice. He was extremely helpful as ever and recommended that I should change to an alternator and change the earth, which I did. So don't blame me - blame Alan! We obviously carried out a complete re-wire and I learnt how to whip ends with original type waxed cotton. The ballast resistor was missing and I was able to track one down and fit it. At some time in the past someone had changed from the pressurised fuel system to an Autovac, which I removed.

The brake equalizers were seized so they were dismantled and sorted out, the brakes found to be useless so new linings were fitted, the brake springs were all checked and tested after thorough cleaning, and a couple were replaced; the list just went on and on. The main silencer was original but pitted with holes, so it was re-skinned; luckily the rest of the exhaust system was in good order, and I was delighted to find the exhaust cut-out intact. We found the original end pipe and fishtail, and used them, so the new stainless steel ones I had had made by RJ Lonsdale were not required, even though I knew from past experience that they would have been indistinguishable from nickel once they had become 'blued' with exhaust gases.



The brake equalisers restored



Brakes restored with new springs, etc



The steering wheel just back from the restorers



Black American Walnut looks really good

Sadly, I found that the dashboard [bulkhead] had a large number of holes that were not meant to be there, including those made for the Autovac, so therefore decided to make a new one. On removing the chassis plate for repair - yet another hole had been drilled right through it - and in readiness for fixing it to the new dash, we discovered that the dash had originally been highly polished, so I decided to recreate this with the new one. The chassis plate had gone dark brown and no amount of proprietary cleaners would clean it. I also used various other chemicals, some less than pleasant, with the same result - it stubbornly stayed dark brown. In desperation I put it in a plastic box and covered it with Coca Cola [non Diet] and left it for 36 hours before removing it - it came out looking distinctly lighter! I gave it a light polish with Autosol after washing it under the tap, and it came up sparkling bright, looking brand new - it's simply incredible what Coca Cola can do!! We then carefully filled in the hole with silver solder and it can now only be discerned by the most minute of examinations. The radiator was cleaned, flow tested and refitted with new shims. A lot of the work, especially the cleaning that takes the longest time, was desperately tedious although very rewarding, and in my case involved spending many hundreds of hours carefully scraping surfaces with a razor blade. In the end, I found this the best way of getting rid of crud that had seemingly been baked on to surfaces. Once this had been removed, we put the various pieces into baths of suitably gentle cleaner depending on the piece in question, and finished them off with very fine wire wool and a soft cloth. Ben Smith and I had spent well over 1400 hours between us, and of course there was still an enormous amount to do when it was back in the workshop following the restoration and fitting of the Cunard body.

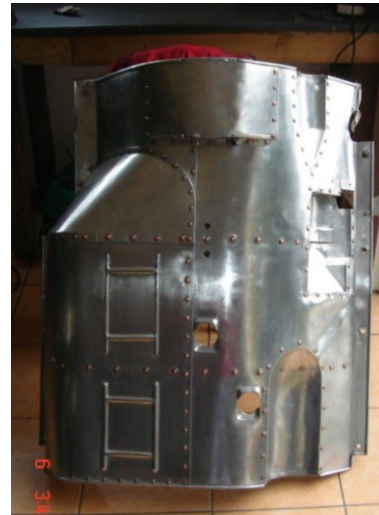
In this I had been incredibly lucky. I acquired the remains of a Cunard tourer body from a 1921 Silver Ghost [58CE] that needed an entire new ash frame, having been removed from the car in 1935 and stored partly in the open under a tarpaulin for many, many years behind a general grocer's store in Kent. I subsequently discovered that this shop had been where my late mother-in-law and her mother before her had regularly ordered their weekly supplies, and indeed whose proprietor, who owned the Ghost remains, had himself delivered the weekly groceries to their home - an amazing coincidence! There is sadly no record of what happened to 58CE following its conversion into a fire engine after the body had been removed. I checked with the SHRMF at the Hunt House who had no information apart from the build cards. On the mantelshelf in my study I have a Matchbox 'Models of Yesterday' model of the car in its fire engine guise.

By April of 2010 the car was in a sufficiently mobile state - it could be pushed and steered - to be put onto a trailer and taken to the coachbuilder who had the challenge of making the new ash frame to fit the original panels of the Cunard body. Prior to taking the car and panels to the coachbuilder, I'd had each panel carefully restored and blasted with tiny glass beads, and then professionally treated and polished, to remove corrosion and bring back some of the flexibility that had been lost over the years and looking almost like new. Luckily the body did not have any acute bends and therefore the panels fitted the new frame very well. The car was with the coachbuilder until December 2010 when I was able to have it brought back to Devon, through thick ice and snow, and fitted with its re-instated tourer body. At the time I thought that the coachbuilder had done quite a good job, blending a few new panels with the original ones and making new wings and running boards of exactly the right proportions. Sadly however we soon discovered that all was not as it should be, and were forced to spend well over five months trying to put right some major and some hidden serious errors - very disappointing and very expensive. In the end we were forced to make the heart breaking decision of removing most of his work and I found a retired coachbuilder who did a wonderful job of remaking the frame to which he fitted the original panels.

The fuel tank caused me some unexpected problems, as although it had looked fine with its coat of black paint, some of the rivets had disappeared and it had a suspicious bulge. After doing everything necessary over a few weeks to rid it of fumes, etc, we took a sander to it and discovered it had been coated with filler, in some places over 1/8 of an inch thick. Once removed, it looked as though it had been attacked at some time with a sledgehammer. The tank was so bad that it was decided that it was not worth patching up so another one was acquired. Apart from the fuel tank of course, all parts that were replaced with new were carefully tagged and stored, to form part of the records of the car.



No wonder this didn't hold pressure – or fuel!



I worked on the under-tray for 3 weeks

It was a very emotional moment when we fired up the car and had it running properly for the first time in over thirty years. Ben then lashed up a seat and we spent a few hours each day driving around the Devon lanes doing remarkably few running adjustments. Once it was registered and had its MoT, the car went back to North Devon to John Beckley, a friend of Ben Smith, who also worked on his own in a little shed, this time with a spray booth attached, and he painted it grey with black wings. He did an incredible job, one of the best paint finishes I have seen. I was told by one of his customers, an RREC judge, that his finishes are of Concours-winning standards. I had been sceptical – not any more! Yet another lone individual in North Devon then did black pin lining on the bonnet. Following this, the car went to the trimmer, also on North Devon, but the trimming had to be done three times [and I was charged each time!] as each time I was not satisfied with the results. It was undoubtedly a very good job technically but looked like an over-stuffed sofa, so I then sent it to Alpine Eagle for them to re-do it properly.

The Hunt House had no information whatsoever on the car, apart from what appeared on its build cards, nor had any knowledge of a UK registration number. I acquired an appropriate number, CE 454, first issued I understand in 1904, from Ray at The Real Car Company. The DVLA sent a sheaf of papers to deal with the first registration of the car and the transfer of CE 454, and insisted on seeing the car before they would agree to the registration – not over helpful as this entailed trailing it to Truro for a five-minute inspection. This turned into a half-hour session, with the inspector having his photograph taken beside the car, in the car, on the car, as well as others of his colleagues! They were a pleasant bunch, genuinely interested in the car.

In June 2012 I drove the car straight from the trimmer to the RREC National Rally at Rockingham Castle in some dreadful weather, but the car behaved faultlessly the entire way, apart from a involuntary stop just as I arrived, due to some dirt in the carburettor. This had been caused by the painter having used a dirty Jerry can of petrol when he had to move the car - most irritating, as all the lines and tank were new! I subsequently had a fuel filter fitted. The car arrived in a filthy condition and, despite my spending until 3.00am under a tarpaulin cleaning it, it was still very dirty the next morning at the Judging field. I observed a couple of other cars driving onto the field, in very clean condition, from the opposite direction where there appeared to be car transporters parked and teams of professional people working on some of the cars bringing them to showroom finish despite the weather. However, I was very pleased indeed to be awarded the 2nd prize for the restoration of the car, and am sure I could have taken the 1st prize had the conditions been more favourable. This was the second award I received during 2012, as in February I was honoured to receive the far more prestigious Phoenix Trophy from The 20-Ghost Club, at its AGM.

Following the RREC Rally, I took the car back to Ben Smith, a round trip of around 550 miles, for some last minute adjustments before Sarah and I set off in late June to Harwich to join the tour of the Baltic and Scandinavia. Some concerns had been expressed about the appropriateness of bringing a car that had done such a small mileage after a major re-build, but both Ben Smith and I were confident there would be no problems - and indeed there were none. From home in Cornwall to Harwich, Denmark, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia and Finland, then via Immingham back to Cornwall, the car averaged 12mpg and drove without a hitch, apart from one occasion when the car ran out of fuel!

In the twelve months since the restoration that took over 5,500 man-hours, we have travelled over 10,000 miles without any hitches, including the very important journeys earlier this year to Sussex for our son George's wedding, and to Kent to celebrate my mother's 100th birthday. We took the car on the Mid-week Malverns Spring tour of Worcestershire and Herefordshire this year, following which the car went to Alan Glew for some minor ignition work, so I also took the opportunity of having him re-set the rear springs again. This had first been done in 2010, but they appeared to have settled somewhat and the car was not sitting quite true. This work has now all been done and we look forward to the various upcoming events the Club has planned, especially the WW1 tour in August 2014.

I hope I have been able to convey the massive and total amount of work done during this 3½-year restoration, without it merely being a tedious list of works that have been done, and that it shows what one can become involved in when innocently starting such a project. I learned the hard way, that apart from Ben Smith Engineering and John Beckley the painter, both of whom I shall not hesitate to use again in the future as I found them both superb, restoration work should be done by the recognised professionals, as whatever the cost it should only need to be done once, which always saves money and heartache in the long term.

I would particularly like to thank the following craftsmen who worked so hard to bring 97AE back from the dead:

Ben Smith of Ben Smith Engineering, Paddons House, Hollocombe, Nr Chulmleigh, N. Devon EX18 7QE, who carried out all the mechanical restoration and electrical work, John Beckley, Magnum PB, 3 Berry Cottages, Dowland, Winkleigh, Devon, EX19 8PD, who did the preparation and painting, John Hodgson & Team of Alpine Eagle, The Old Mill, Mill Lane, Little Clanfield, Oxfordshire, OX18 2RX, who stripped out the upholstery I had done three times elsewhere and did it properly, and finally and just as important, I should like to thank Gordon, the cabinet maker friend of Ben Smith, who was responsible for the very fine quality of the instrument panel and wood cappings etc.

Photographs © Graham Tyson



I made this new trunk from scratch



The new hood being made at the trimmer's



And the Crossely-Cookes in NE-7996 are ready to go, following Sir John

CHILTERNS TOUR & KOP HILL CLIMB!

Jimmy Valentine

20th - 22nd September

On the Friday afternoon, summonsed by organisers by Gervase and Margaret Forster, eight cars assembled in the car park of the renowned Compleat Angler in Marlow. On checking in, we received our route books detailing the routes for Saturday and Sunday and brochures for various places to visit. The first major navigational problem was however to find our rooms in the labyrinthine maze presented by the hotel. Eventually we found our excellent room, after trying several blind alleys, on the top floor with a wonderful view of the suspension bridge and the church on the opposite bank of the Thames. The bridge, opened in 1832, was designed by a pupil of Thomas Telford, one William Tierney Clark, who had also designed the Széchenyi Chain Bridge, linking Buda and Pest, over which we drove on the 1981 tour of Hungary. We gathered in the bar for a welcome and briefing by Gervase before the first of two excellent dinners in the hotel.

On Saturday morning we set out across the bridge on a picturesque route through unknown and unspoilt countryside and delightful villages (occasionally along challengingly narrow lanes populated by shoals of weekend cyclists). Our destination was the Priory Vintage Car Company where the partners Ian Wylie and Carl Ford and his staff welcomed us with coffee. They showed us around their premises in historic timber framed barns where among a variety of jobs in hand was a Silver Ghost engine completely dismantled – all components spotlessly clean and laid out in an orderly array on large sheets of paper. Also present in the car park were two survivors of the Peking to Paris Rally still wearing stone guards and some of the dust collected *en route*. The peace of the morning was briefly disturbed by the arrival of Graham Ashley Carter, not in his expected Phantom 1 but in his Bugatti, whose engine in R-R surroundings sounded as if it was about to terminally disintegrate!



Gathering outside Priory Vintage Car Co – the Marshes' SG A-2343, the Forsters's S-6608, & the Palmer's K-6676 to the left

We then drove a short distance to the Lord Nelson pub in Brightwell Baldwin, for a pub lunch in traditional surroundings, complete with a wood fire. After lunch, we were offered a choice of interesting destinations including the Hellfire Caves near West Wycombe, the Swan Antiques Centre, Cliveden Gardens and Henley town. We chose to visit Greys Court, a Tudor house in the care of the National Trust and much as furnished by the Bruner family in the 1930s. Particularly interesting was the Well House containing a 12ft diameter wooden treadmill wheel on a horizontal axle (complete with external contracting brake) to be powered by a donkey. As the donkey turned the wheel, one bucket filled with water from the 200ft deep well was winched up while a second bucket was lowered. When the full bucket reached the top of its travel, its rim hit a projection that caused the bucket to tip and empty its contents into a tank. With brake applied, the donkey was turned round, the brake released and the second bucket, now filled was raised. The whole installation dates from Elizabethan times and was in use until 1945. We returned to the hotel for

another briefing from Gervase about the next day's events, and another excellent dinner.

On the Sunday morning we headed north again over the bridge to the outskirts of Princes Risborough to join in the Kop Hill Climb event. Here we found a large field full of vehicles of all ages and makes ranging from 19th century veteran cars and motorbikes up to post-WW2 Classics. Since 2008 the event has raised money for local charities by reviving a long-discontinued event that was held from 1910 to 1925 when a spectator was hit, leading to a ban on competitive events on public roads. Originally the object was to climb Kop Hill in the shortest time [then on an unsealed road]. On arrival we were efficiently marshalled to our appointed area and the drivers were required to attend a safety briefing and to receive a wrist band entitling them to drive up the hill. It was emphasised that the event is non-competitive and cars would not be timed. In due course we were lined up at the Start, briefly interviewed over the PA system and then flagged off for the climb.



A general view of the crowd



The chimney sweeps – or are they Laurel and Hardy?

Particularly for those recently returned from the Alpine, the Hill turned out not to be much of a challenge. Tim Forrest amused the spectators by roaring up the hill in second gear in his 1912 Ghost with the exhaust cutout open while our P1 sauntered up in third gear. We then looped round to return to our parking spaces. Our Chairman John Stuttard had recently been installed as the first Master of the newest City Livery Company, the Worshipful Company of Educators and had invited members to ride in our cars up the Hill. In recognition of this, the Company subsequently made a donation of £350 to the Aylesbury Youth Motor Project, one of the local charities supported by the event, and which was very much appreciated.

The afternoon provided a flypast by the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, sadly without the Lancaster, which had technical problems, and a second chance to climb the Hill. The final activity of the day was a visit to Hughenden Manor, the home of Queen Victoria's Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli, and which is set up almost as a shrine to his memory. During WW2 the house was requisitioned as a base for the production of specific maps for night bombing raids, including the Dambusters, showing only the details recognisable at night. The basement contains an excellent exhibition detailing this work.

So thank you, Gervase and Margaret, for a really fascinating weekend.



Sir John, shirt colour-coordinated with the Union Flag, is about to take off



Arthur Forster, the youngest member of the 20-GC?



David Crossley-Cooke inspects the cars, including the Valentines' UV1923 and the Fiddlers' X04485

PARTICIPATING MEMBERS & CARS:

All events:

Gervase & Margaret Forster	1921	SG	SV-6608	Lopes Open Tourer
Graham & Sarah Tyson	1920	SG	CE-454	Cunard Tourer
Andrew Taylor	1927	20HP	XV-4	Hooper Tourer
Jimmy & Janet Valentine	1929	PI	UV-1923	HJMulliner Weyman Limousine
Allan & Diana Watkins	1937	25/30	ERA-530	Hooper Sports Saloon
Brain & Joan Palmer	1921	SG	KE-6676	Barker Tourer
John & Kay Marsh	1923	SG	VA-2343	Barker Shooting Brake
Stanley & Angela West	1929	P11	GCH-4690	Mulliner Weyman Saloon

Saturday:

Andrew Ayres	1928	PI	RR-9956	Bampton's Boat Tail
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Saturday evening & Sunday:

John & Lesley Stuttard	1921	SG	XF-7647	Park Ward Car Mart
Anthony & Gilly Armitage	1928	PI	TY-5221	Thrupp & Maberley Open Tourer
David & Elspeth Crossley-Cooke	1926	20HP	NE-7996	Cookshoot Doctor's Coupe

Sunday - Kop Hill Climb:

Brian & Wendy Fidler	1921	SG	XO-4485	Hooper Open Tourer
Shaun Dowling	1931	20/25	JJ-2309	Windover Saloon
Strone & Alex Macpherson	1914	SG	LR-6389	Bridgewater Torpedo Tourer
Tim & Susie Forrest	1912	SG	R-1487	Barker Torpedo Tourer
John & Mary Narvell	1939	Wraith	985-BGW	James Young 4-light Saloon
Graham & June Ashley-Carter	some sort of a Bugatti, apparently			



"How fast will it go?"



"Ooohhh, on a good day might do 60 with the wind behind it"



"And can I remind you - no speeding up the hill please"



"Didn't you hear what she just said - NO SPEEDING UP THE HILL!"

LUBRICANTS

Graham Ashley-Carter

This is now a highly sophisticated subject, on which I might not be qualified to lecture, but as far as our cars were concerned, oil technology at the time was relatively unsophisticated, and viscosity was the main consideration. So here are a few thoughts gained from long experience in correcting and avoiding mechanical problems in chassis running gear.

When the 4-speed Hydramatic gearbox was being considered [R Type, S Type, SW] it was suggested that the Borg Warner 3 speed gearbox as fitted to Jaguar and other cars might be tried, to which some wag at RR replied that this was the finest known method of heating oil. This illustrates, admittedly in an indirect way, some of the points to be made about lubricants in our cars. The engine has received the most attention [and publicity] from the oil companies, as this is clearly where by far the greatest volume of oil is sold, so there is little I can usefully add, but the various transmission assemblies receive much less attention [and oil sales], and this is where potential problems can lurk.

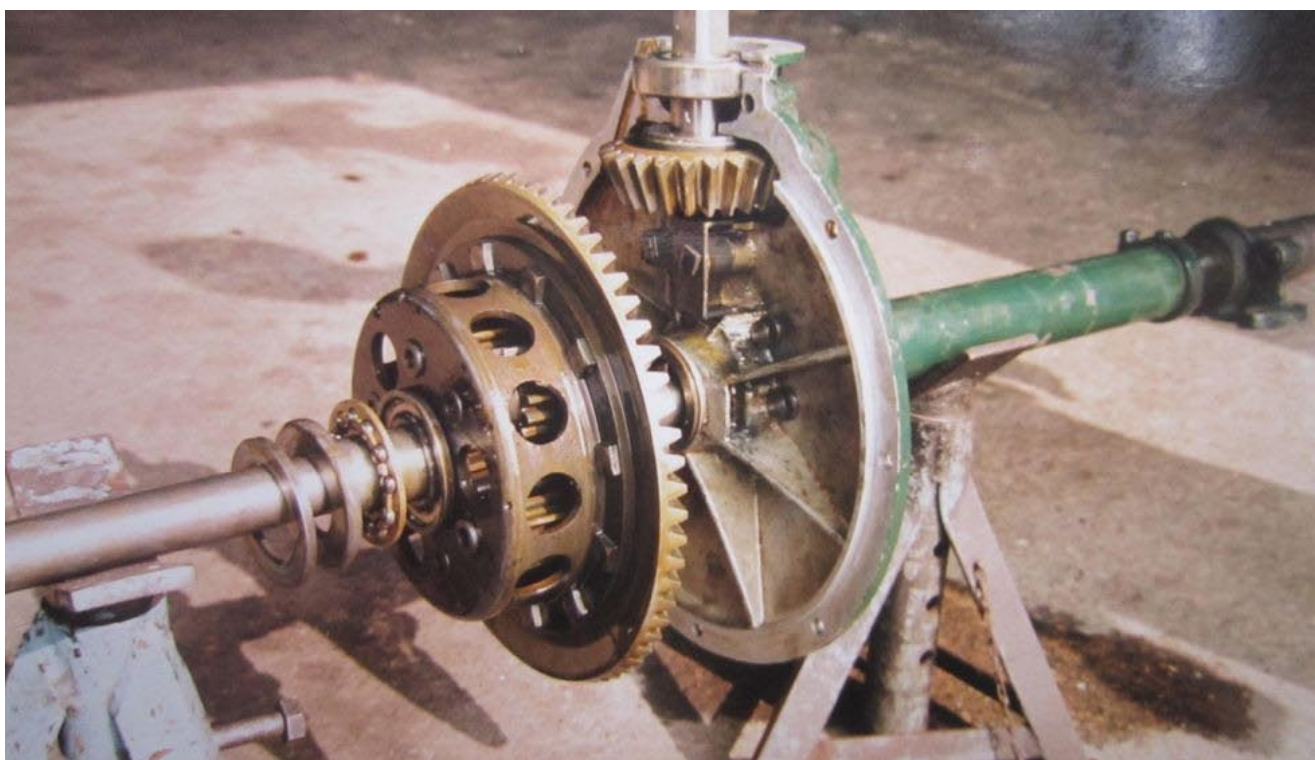
It needs to be understood that oil viscosity is in direct ratio to oil drag which absorbs power, creates heat, and of course, fuel consumption, hence the comment above. Having a high viscosity [say 250 or 140 grade oil] in a gearbox has various adverse effects. From the drivers point of view, gear changing cannot be properly judged due to the wide change in viscosity as the gearbox warms up, with ambient temperatures adding a further imponderable. Less apparent to the driver are the bearing races, in which the balls cannot freely rotate in their cages - as distinct from revolving in their tracks. This causes the balls to skid in their tracks, which scuffs the balls and tracks and the bearings become noisy, at the same time releasing small metallic particles that circulate in the oil - an excellent reason for inserting a magnet into the drain plug to collect this debris. It is assumed that these heavier, more viscous, oils will quieten the gearbox. This may be true for the first few miles, due partly to the extra cushioning effect between the gears and the tendency of the oil to stick to the inside of the gearbox as a form of sound proofing, but the churning effect of the oil causes considerable drag and heating of the oil, and the gearbox temperature will soon rise in accordance with speed and the grade of oil used. There will be an increased tendency of the bearings to spin in their housings. As an example, try turning by hand any ball bearing lubricated with 250 weight oil and again with only engine oil. The drag rises exponentially with speed and it is not easy to hold the bearing with the 250 oil.

The rear axle is more interesting and more critical, especially with Silver Ghost and P1, and in a different way with the P111. The Silver Ghost, P1, and the earliest 20HP axles use the 'three piece' type of thrust bearings composed of a 'sandwich' of two grooved flat plates with a ball race between. These look after the tendency of the gears to separate under load, and are mounted respectively behind the bevel pinion and the crownwheel, which are both provided with adjustment to optimise lash and silence. This type of bearing had serious speed limitations due to the centrifugal action of its balls, also difficulty in obtaining a sufficiently secure mounting against rotation of the narrow bearing plates, and the bearing's inability to cope with the smallest misalignment or deflection of the parts under load, requiring assemblies to be unduly rigid and therefore heavy.

The crown and pinion gears are of the spiral bevel type which have a rolling action rather than the later hypoid type which have a sliding action, so wear is not normally measureable. The pinion, it will be appreciated, runs at crankshaft speed in top gear, so oil drag can become a serious problem at higher road speeds, leading to an increasing tendency to dislodge the thrust bearing from its housing or mounting. In fact this became the main weakness of the Silver Ghost and P1 axle in which drivers noticed a distinct gear whine on the overrun. This was caused by the pinion thrust bearing coming loose on its pinion shaft. This gear noise in turn caused some owners / repairers to change to an even heavier oil. Other bearings removed from these axles are usually noisy [not audible on the road] due to the above mentioned oil drag and scuffing. The other feature of this axle is the spur type differential using straight cut planet spur pinions as a normal practice of the period. These also suffer wear from the use of heavy oils that cannot easily flow into their plain bearings when cold. The fitting of overdrives, whilst enabling higher road speeds at lower engine rpm, can exacerbate these problems and bring forward rear axle major overhauls. The RR answer to this was to install a higher rear axle ratio for which 4 different gear sets were available ranging from the lowest 3.7:1 up to 3.0:1 the standard ratio being 3.5:1, and the Alpine ratio being 3.2:1. Springfield tended to favour the lower 3.7 ratio. 3:1 has been found most suitable for motorway use on most but the heaviest and least aerodynamic of our cars, and gives a 13% increase in road speed per unit rpm over the standard 3.5:1 Chassis 1701 [101 m.p.h.] was an interesting exception. For those interested, the 13% ratio increase gives an almost identical decrease in fuel consumption under normal driving.

Another customer concern is the oil tightness of the unit using thinner oil, especially in regard to oil reaching the brakes. Apart from wear or faulty assembly [or driving on the Brooklands banking], this should not be a problem. There are no oil seals in the system and the most likely cause of oil loss would appear to be frothing whilst using unsuitable oils. In view of the above, an oil no heavier than 90 weight is recommended for all prewar axles, observing the hypoid requirement for the later, and all post war cars as appropriate. Castrol's latest offering is their 'Universal 75.W90', which they say is safe for use in both spiral and hypoid types. Interestingly, the very early Silver Ghost Owners Manual mentions the use of the cars for racing or speed events, and recommends changing the transmission

oils to a vegetable oil such as Castrol R., so they would undoubtedly have been aware of these problems and the extra power available at the rear wheels with the thinner oil. A much more unusual source of axle gear noise can afflict the P111, and to a lesser extent the Bentley, again through the use of incorrect oils. This relates to later cars with Hypoid gears being driven very fast and the throttle suddenly snapped shut, when an incorrect oil can cause the trailing, or overrun face of the crown gear teeth to pick up resulting in a scuffed surface and consequent permanent gear noise. This is just one of the reasons why it is important to use a correct hypoid oil in all Bentley, Wraith and P111 axles. It's all a matter of reliability, cost, and conservation.



The rear axle unit from a 1905 Light 20, chassis number 26350. The gears are straight cut rather than spiral [for silence], but illustrate that arrangement perfectly in showing the 3 piece thrust bearing hanging on the near side axle shaft – the one on the pinion can just be seen behind the gear, still assembled. Also the spur-type planet gears of the differential assembly are visible behind the crown gear. Note the plain pinion nose bearing.

Graham Ashley-Carter is Consultant to Priory Vintage Car Co. Ltd.



The west front of Blickling, improved by all the Rolls Royces

VERY FLAT, NORFOLK!

Desmond Barry

11th - 14th October

The weekend began on Friday afternoon as the Indian summer slowly ebbed away. Fifteen Rolls Royce cars, their owners and passengers, gathered at the Knight's Inn Hotel just outside Kings Lynn. Participating cars ranged from Tim and Susie Forrest's 1912 Barker Torpedo Tourer to Sue Taylor's 1939 Wraith Touring Limousine. Very unfortunately, Brian and Wendy Fidler had a problem on the way to Kings Lynn with their 1921 Hooper Tourer, and it failed to proceed further than the hotel.

The tour began with a visit to Sandringham later on Friday afternoon where we were given an excellent private 'after normal opening hours' tour through the principal rooms of the mansion, that had been built in the 1860s for the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, and his wife Alexandra [pronounced locally as 'Alexander' we were told]. Despite its size, Sandringham had a very comfortable and homely atmosphere and we understood why the Royal Family have always found it such a good place to relax and to spend Christmas. Several of us spotted our President, HRH the Duke of Gloucester, figuring in a large portrait of the Family hanging in the entrance hall, and as a young boy in an intimate family photograph taken at Christmas 1951, a few weeks before King George VI died there. On Friday evening we enjoyed an excellent dinner at the hotel.

The Saturday tour involved a rather early start in order to reach Blickling Hall by 10am for a private tour of the house. Our route took us across the very pleasant, and not really so flat, countryside of northwest Norfolk. The first sight of Blickling was memorable, a sumptuous confection red brick and limestone, Dutch gables and turrets framed by massive yew hedges. Built first in the second decade of the 17th century by the Hobart family, the house has been much altered over the years but has remained a great Jacobean mansion. It

passed by marriage in about 1800 to the Marquesses of Lothian, and was bequeathed to the National Trust in 1940 by the 11th Marquess. Blickling is of particular importance as it was the prototype for one of the most important conservation initiatives of the 20th century, being the first example of a country house being left to the nation in lieu of death duties. We were somewhat surprised when rather more Rolls Royces arrived than had set off from the hotel, but then Strone Macpherson explained that he'd asked a number of his chums to join us there, including Sir John Cook of the travel company family. Following a tour of the house, the librarian, who is in the early stages of a twelve-year project to catalogue Blickling's huge and important book collection, gave us a most interesting and enjoyable lecture.

Following a light lunch at Blickling, we headed across country to Houghton Hall through Melton Constable and Fakenham. Houghton is a spectacular Palladian house built from the 1720s onwards by Sir Robert Walpole, Britain's first Prime Minister and whose remarkable art collection was sold in 1779 by his bankrupt grandson to Catherine the Great, Empress of Russia. Over two centuries later the house was hosting a 'once-in-a-lifetime' revisit of much of the original collection from The Hermitage to its splendid William Kent-designed interiors, which had been extended by 2 months due to the unprecedented demand from the public. The owner, the 7th Marquess of Cholmondeley, greeted us on our arrival, and very kindly showed us his photograph album of the cars, many of which were Rolls Royces, owned by his family over the last one hundred years or so. Following a wonderful tour of the house we took the short drive back to our hotel in Kings Lynn.



Lord Cholmondeley welcomes, Fokko Keuning & John Stuttard to Houghton



The cars belonging to, from the left, Banks, Macpherson, Whitaker, Taylor, Elliott, Forbes, Holmes, Valentine, & Stuttard, in front of Houghton

That evening we enjoyed a very good dinner at the Bank House Hotel and Brasserie in Kings Lynn. We were ferried to the restaurant by coach, and the dinner was preceded by an unplanned tour of the old town, which was enjoyed by all. Kings Lynn was one of the Hanseatic League ports and has many beautiful Caroline and Georgian town houses of that period, in particular the Custom House of 1704.

On Sunday we drove to the north coast of Norfolk to the Muckleburgh Military Collection, situated overlooking the sea at Weybourne near Sheringham. Muckleburgh has an astonishing collection of armoury, ranging from handguns through armoured cars and

tanks to guided missiles with almost every kind of military hardware you can think of in between, all housed in war-time air force buildings. We were hosted by Sir Michael Savory, the owner of the collection, who gave us a very full and personal tour. He also arranged for five of our members, whose names had been drawn by ballot at dinner the previous evening, to try tank driving; Gervase Forster, Nick Whitaker, David Colvin, Brian Fidler and Tim Forrest enjoyed themselves enormously, all of whom endured very blustery and cold conditions as the weather threw everything it could at them, as did the onlookers, who were constantly reminded of Captain Mainwaring and Sergeant Jones in 'Dad's Army'!



Tim Forrest stands to attention WHO SAYS



Ken Forbes is ready for it



DAD'S ARMY? Nick Whittaker has some style



All the cars parked facing the same way at Muckleburgh – except one, for some reason



HRH The Duke of Gloucester in the tank, Sir John Suttard and Sir Michael Savory, and XF-7646 & R-1487 behind

Our President, HRH The Duke of Gloucester and his equerry Jeremy Nicholson joined us at Muckleburgh for the remainder of the tour. HRH was also given the opportunity to drive a tank and impressed us all with his driving abilities, especially when he seemed to be hurtling rather too close to John Stuttard's Silver Ghost! Following a delicious and interesting buffet lunch provided by the Collection, everyone was at leisure to take a drive that particularly interested them during the afternoon. Many decided to drive west along the coast to Holkham Hall, the magnificent 'Roman palace' of the Earls of Leicester, built in the mid-18th century. The coastal landscape here is especially interesting overlooking salt marshes and long beaches and passing through very pretty villages such as Cley-next-the-Sea, Wells-next-the-Sea and Brancaster Staithe. The journey was somewhat marred by the very poor weather, but this did not dampen the evening, when all had a most convivial dinner at the hotel. The Editor of this publication announced at the dinner that the winner of the 'Spot the Deliberate Mistake in the Driving Instructions' competition was Janet Valentine [loud applause all round], and that her prize was to write up the tour for the next *N&R* [even louder applause all round]. But, like so many of the Editor's jokes, this one fell flat on its face as everyone - even Janet - believed him.

The tour finished the following morning with a drive to Elveden, the magnificent and very extensive estate of the Edward Guinness, 4th Earl of Iveagh, near Thetford. We were met by Lord Iveagh at the Courtyard retail and gourmet centre he has developed in some disused buildings on the property. He then led us on a drive through the beautifully planted estate, although some managed to do this via a long detour on the A11, to the main house where we had a fascinating tour. This enormous mansion was extended and remodelled in the late 19th century by Maharajah Duleep Singh, ruler of the Sikh Empire and owner of the famous Koh-i-Noor diamond, much of it in the 'Indian-Gothic' style. Inside it resembles a Mughal palace. After his death in 1893, Elveden was sold to Edward Cecil Guinness, 1st Earl of Iveagh, great-grandfather of the present Lord Iveagh, but it is unoccupied at present, Lord Iveagh living in a smaller house on the estate. His 1928 20HP shooting brake, formerly owned by the late Alan Clark, MP, was parked outside for us. Lord Iveagh is carrying out a major programme of restoration works to safeguard the future of this enormous house. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the weekend, despite the unseasonable weather; its success was the result of the very hard work of Helen Banks and John Redmill in organising the event, which everyone enjoyed immensely - despite the unfortunate weather.

Photographs ©Brian Palmer, Gervase Forster, John Redmill, & Jimmy Valentine

NORFOLK PARTICIPANTS & CARS:

Clayton & Helen Banks	1922	SG	34MG	JL-1	Hooper Tourer
Ashley & Adrienne Carmichael	1920	SG	47RE	PX-1780	HJMulliner Limousine
Michael & Angelika Elliot	1933	PII	80MY	AGN-333	Barker Drophead Coupe
Brian & Wendy Fidler	1921	SG	94NE	XO-4485	Replica Hooper Tourer
Ken & Jane Forbes	1937	25/30	GRP68	BSG-527	Thrupp & Maberly Sports Saloon
Tim & Susie Forrest	1912	SG	2154	R-1487	Barker Torpedo Tourer
Gervase & Margaret Forster	1921	SG	60NE	SV-6608	Lopes Tourer
Bernard & Sylvie Holmes	1934	PII	71RY	TSU-855	Barker Saloon
Fokko & Helene Keuning	1933	PII	47MW	AM-2040	Barker Sports Saloon
Strone & Alex Macpherson	1930	PII	62GY	GH-2966	Hooper Dual Cowl Tourer
Brain & Joan Palmer	1921	SG	149AG	KE-6676	Barker Tourer
John Redmill & Desmond Barry	2013		Fiat 500		Hertz
John & Lesley Stuttard	1921	SG	33LG	XF-7646	Park Ward Car Mart Tourer
Sue Taylor	1939	Wraith	WHC7	HLL-34	Park Ward Touring Limousine
Jimmy & Janet Valentine	1929	PI	1OR	UV-1923	HJMulliner Weyman Saloon
Nick Whitaker & Andrew Keeshan	1937	PIII	3AZ168	DLY-380	Gurney Nutting Sedan
HRH The Duke of Gloucester & Jeremy Stephenson					
David & Caroline Colvin					



Sue Taylor buffs up Jeeves's mascot at Blickling



Lord Iveagh and HRH The Duke of Gloucester, in front of the late Alan Clarke's 1928 20HP Shooting Brake

NEW MEMBERS:

NEW MEMBERS WELCOMED TO THE CLUB SINCE OCTOBER 2013:

MAJOR MICHAEL TAITT

Wester Bodylair, Glass HUNTLEY, Aberdeenshire AB54 4XR



1933 20/25, GLZ60, Hooper Sports Saloon, CG-5281



1927 20HP, GHJ17, Park Ward Pullman Limousine, FG-2766

GEORGE & KATHERINE TYSON

Our first Family Members

49 Mathews Road, CAMBERLEY, Surrey GU15 4LY
[Tyson's family 1920 SG, 97AE, Cunard Tourer, CE-454]

CHRISTOPHER & MARGARET COX

Leochel Cushnie House, ALFORD, Aberdeenshire AB33 8L
1924 SG, 82EM, Torpedo Tourer, EE-522

PETER & LINDA BROOK

12 Ormesby Chine, STH WOODHAM FERRERS, Essex CM3 7AR
1925 20HP, GNK74, Barker Tourer, GP-6367

ROLF KUHNKE

Kirckenweg 20, BOESDORF, Holstein 24306, Germany



1932 20/25, GTZ40, Owen Sedan by Gurney Nutting, AUU-253

TONY STEPHENS

Elm Cottage, Forshaw Heath Road, EARLSWOOD, Solihull, W,
Midlands B94 5JX

1920 SG, 1PE, Cockshoot cabriolet, N-175
1923 Springfield SG, 359HH, Tilbury Landaulette, BS-9126
1923 20HP, 71A6, Barker Cabriolet, EL-1017
1923 20HP, 83K1, Hamshaw Torpedo Tourer, BC-8358

CHRIS & SOPHIE EVANS

12 Criffel Avenue, LONDON SW2 4AZ
1925 SG, 42EU, new body, CXU-973

STEWART WILKIE

13 York Place. DUNFERMLINE, Fife KY12 0DA
1939 Wraith, WMB11, Park Ward Saloon, FLW-7



GXO97 is revealed for the first time to me

GXO97 – a late 20hp or an early 20/25

John R. Redmill

It was love at first sight really, although there was a certain amount of deception involved. How many other Club members have experienced the same when acquiring their 'eligible' vehicles, I wonder? Having coveted a beautiful car for many years from a distance, I finally decided in late 2006 that I had to finally put my money where my mouth was, and make a purchase. The 20-Ghost Club was calling me, as was the Irish Georgian Society for the annual joint tour, and I couldn't carry on relying on such good friends as Clive Barham Carter allowing me to drive their cars any more. So I persuaded a friend, whom I knew was a dead-cert sucker for big boys' toys, to sneak off with me to look at a few 'possibilities', without either of us saying anything to anyone. Sale catalogues were trawled through, adverts were pored over, and then, in January 2007 at Gavin McGuire's near Gatwick Airport, a garage door was opened – and I instantly knew that "this is IT"! Even just seeing, through the gloom, the radiator with its shallow windscreen for the first time was enough – I could immediately tell that GXO97, an early 20/25 from 1929, was quietly sitting there, like a crouching cat, waiting for me to sit behind the wheel. When started, the quiet purring of the engine said the same – and I realised that Toad of Toad Hall was a mere beginner compared to me. The aforementioned Clive kindly agreed to come over to give his opinion, and the following week we both set off into the Surrey countryside to give GXO97 the 'once-over'. Clive's conclusion, as the car zoomed up hills and round corners, was that it had 'plenty of poke'. Sargeants inspected it and said that, from what they could see, while the body was not in good condition, the

engine and chassis seemed fine. So the deal and the paperwork were done, and GXO97 was ours!

Graham Tyson recounts in his article about 97AE, there was then the small issue of informing innocent spouses and partners of what we had done. Those who inherit their sets of wheels miss out on such cliff-hanging situations, which include creeping around on tip-toe, and atmospheres that only a knife can cut!! It only took us a mere six weeks to come clean, and a few more to recover from the consequences; finally GXO97 made the long journey by road and sea to Ireland, appropriately arriving on St Patrick's Day, and majestically running out of petrol about 100 yards from home, which somehow took the edge off 'The Grand Arrival'. We weren't to know this was to become a regular occurrence, due to the permanent objection of the wretched Hobson's Telegauge 'to proceed' – does anyone have one that actually works?

I had been given an introduction to the great Jim Boland, of Naas, near Dublin, the hero of everyone in Ireland when it comes to veteran and vintage cars, and the owner of a fabulous collection himself [about 75 altogether at the last count], and he agreed to look at the car. He bluntly confirmed both Clive's and Sargeants' views – 'the body, although original, is ****'.!! As David Collier said in N&R37, the purchase price is merely the down payment; my comrade-in-crime then wisely decided to concentrate on other big boys' toys, so Desmond Barry my partner bought him out, and we could then decide together what to do.

As a conservation architect for forty years, my aim has always been that no one should be able to see my work to an historic building, and I felt any works to the car, however necessary, should be as invisible as possible. But first I had to do some research on its history, and what a fascinating story I discovered. One problem was the actual name of its first owner, James Putnam [1876-1960], of Farringdon House near Exeter – it had been Putman originally, but this apparently had sinister connotations during World War 1, so he changed it to Putnam. The car, an ‘Owner Driver’ 4-light saloon, had originally been ordered in June 1929, and supplied as black with white lower panels, and a grey leather interior. A few days beforehand, he had also ordered another 20hp, GEN76 / DV2196, a 6-light limousine, Park Ward bodying them both. Why two, and so close together in date?

The grandson of Thomas Coombes, one of his three chauffeurs, told me that the [now vanished?] limousine was for the chauffeurs and the children, and that GXO97 was for Putnam to drive Violet and her dogs – she apparently wanted a lot of room in the rear for them, hence the inordinately large space between the front and back seats. Why had ‘my’ car been sold as a 20/25, a model not introduced until October 1929? Apparently he and about 29 other recent purchasers of 20hps had felt rather miffed during the autumn of 1929 to discover that Rolls-Royce was about to introduce the new 20/25, so returned their cars to Rolls-Royce, who replaced their engines with the new 20/25 ones, hence “the poke”. This would also explain why its chassis and registration numbers were then changed from GVO71/DV2278 to GXO97 & DV4035 [ZV4501 since 2007]. Presumably the ‘chauffeurs’ car’ didn’t rate this improvement – it would have become too fast for them to be trusted!

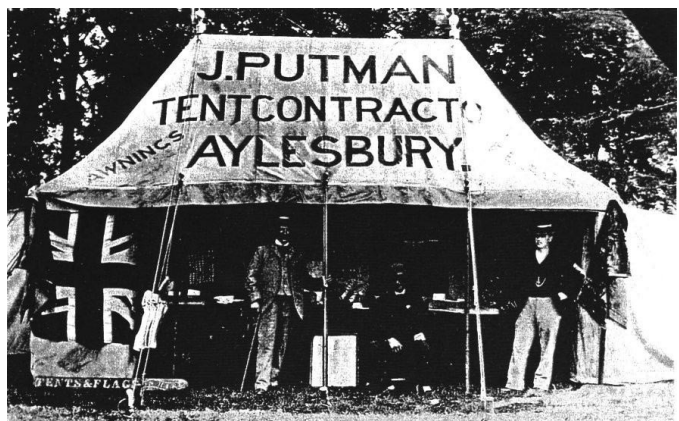
Putnam had really started from nowhere, being the youngest son of a tent maker, also James, in Aylesbury, who died in 1900, leaving the 24-year-old James with the business; Putman’s [sic] Tent Contractors, which also made rope and flags. His first wife died in childbirth in 1904, leaving him with a baby daughter Frances, but in 1906 he married Violet Weeden and prospered, clearly making a large amount of money during the First World War, selling tents and canvas to the British Army, and having four more children. By mid-1918 he had sufficient funds to buy the Farringdon House Estate of 10,000 acres and set himself up as a country gentleman, with Violet and the children.

Already a car enthusiast, he declined to invest in the local Morris Bicycle Shop – soon to become Morris Motor Car Co. [!] – as too risky, and started buying Rolls-Royces, works of art, superb horses and Friesian cattle. He also indulged Violet in her passions of trotting horses and breeding Pekinese dogs. In 1920 he had bought into the car-making side of Cubitt Engineering, the construction company, but when that went bust 5 years later, Putnam lost heavily; it is thought that only 5 Cubitt cars now remain in running order in the world.

More information has been provided by Christopher Broadbent, one of his grandsons, as well as some fascinating photographic evidence, including a short film of the car touring Spain and Morocco in late 1929 and, in 1930, Germany, France and Italy; only one and a half minutes, but utterly amazing! This early film and the photographs show both cars, which were usually painted navy and magenta, Putnam’s racing colours, with horses’ head mascots, instead of Spirits of Ecstasy. I wonder who many other members have any film of their cars in their first few months of existence?



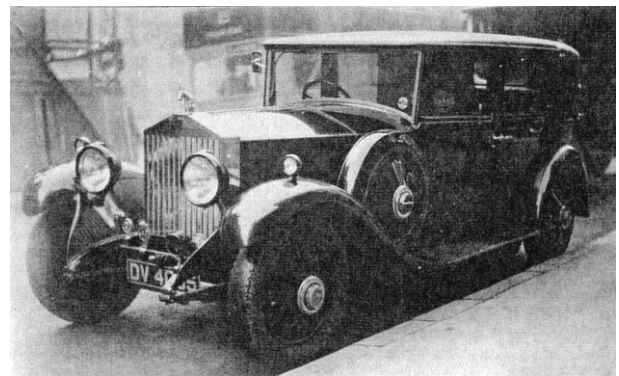
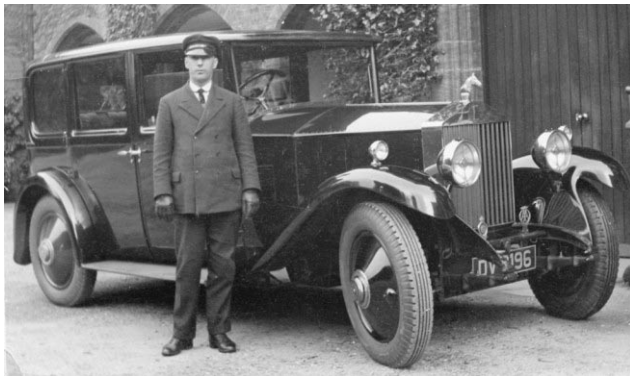
James Putman senior's shop in Aylesbury



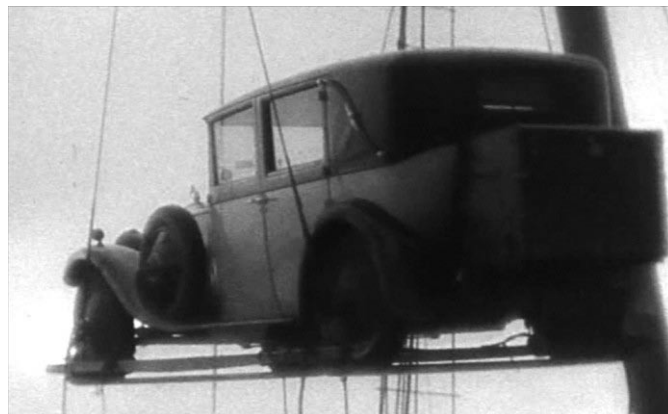
Three generations of J Putman Tent Contractor



James Putnam, his wife Violet, their children Mary, Philip, Eric, Sheila and, on the right, Frances [clearly quite a racy little character!] the oldest, photographed at Farrington in 1930



Chauffeur Thomas Coombes with GEN76/DV2196 – note the horse head mascots – GXO97/DV4035 with Mary Putnam inside



GXO97 is swung aboard to ferry for the sea crossing to France in 1930



Outside a Monte Carlo hotel with Violet & Eric



At the Franco-Italian border, with the customs officials

James Putman up-graded his cars in 1935, buying a new 25/30, and selling GXO97 to a Mr Grinling of Angmering-on-Sea, from whom it was bought in 1941 by a Mr Barclay of Eaton Square. Unused during World War 2, the car was sent back to Crewe in 1950 where the engine was rebuilt at the considerable cost of £418. Barclay's son sold it in 1954 to Paddons, from whom it was bought by a Lt-Col F Ramsey for £350 – by then it was black and grey, but still with its grey leather interior. Within the next six months it had been sold twice – for £300 and then for £275 – and it then went to Middlesbrough until 1963, when it went to the USA, to a Mr Elgi, in Topeka, Kansas. The car had at least 4 owners in the USA's Mid-West, but I know nothing of its life amid those wide prairies until August 1999, when it was acquired by the Real Car Company; by then it had a brown leather interior and buff head-lining, both of which had become rather tatty, to say the least, by 2007.

James Putnam had continued buying Rolls-Royces after the war, and was a constant visitor to the Conduit Street showroom, which was near to Putnam's other business, Gunter's Tea Rooms in Curzon Street. On the spur of the moment when he was 81, he sold his Silver Cloud and bought a H J Mulliner-bodied model at the 1955 London Motor Show. He died in 1960, followed by his beloved Violet in 1963.

James and Violet in 1957 with their last R-R



Photographs from film of 1929 & 1930, courtesy of Christopher Broadbent, grandson of James & Violet Putnam

When Nick Whitaker first saw GXO97, he said “it oozes authenticity”; I was fully aware it was also oozing various other things, so felt that, in the words of the then Prince of Wales in 1921 – “something has to be done”! Jim Boland suggested that the car should go to John Wilkinson of Rathoe, Co Carlow, for what I thought was to be a little ‘roof job’ – take off old covering, maybe a little structural repair, apply new roof covering – easy-peasy. So in January 2010, wearing its new Irish number plate ZV4501, it trundled down to his works on the countryside, and so he started. Two weeks later, John's first phone call caught me off-guard – “I've decided to convert your saloon into an open tourer – hope you don't mind” – this is going to be fun, I thought!

I've been used to dealing with historic timber-framed buildings riddled with dry rot, but I didn't realise that historic vehicles could suffer from the same disease – they can! John carefully took all the panels off, leaving the car not so much an open tourer but more an open chassis. He then made a perfect replica frame from seasoned ash, and fitted the original panels with all their little quirks and distortions back onto the new frame – a beautiful job. The treatment of the interior required much discussion, and regular visits and discussions ensued, but about 5 months later, towards the end of June, the works – or, should I say, the first phase of the works – were finished. This recent phase in the car's life will be told in another instalment, when further works are finally completed



GXO97 with its new Irish number plate

COMING EVENTS:

2014 SUBSCRIPTIONS & ADDRESSES:

Members are reminded that their 2014 subscriptions are now due, so should pay this in their chosen currency [ST£50.00, EUR€70.00, or US\$90.00] to our Hon. Treasurer, Brian Fidler, The Eighth House, Vernon Avenue, Oxford OX2 9AU, using the enclosed subscription form. 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. Some members have informed Graham Tyson, the club's Membership Secretary, of their address changes. If you have moved recently, please send your new postal and e-mail addresses, etc, **NOW** to Graham at The Old Vicarage, St Minver, nr Wadebridge, Cornwall PL27 6QH, gtyson2@tiscali.co.uk [and not to any other Committee member, please!!]. REMEMBER, if he does not have these details, the 20-Ghost Club will not be able to communicate with you or, even more importantly, send your copies of News & Record with the flyers about future events, and other information, etc, including "The Roycean"! Don't forget to regularly look 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:

Please download details, bookings forms and other information for all events from the club website. The following are correct at time of going to press, but may change as arrangements are progressed.

Friday 21st February:

2014 AGM and Dinner at The Travellers' Club, Pall Mall, London SW1 [Susie Forrest]

Friday 23rd to Monday 26th May:

Annual Tour with Irish Georgian Society
Norfolk [Jimmy Valentine & John Redmill]

Tuesday 22nd to Friday 25th April:

Mid-week in West Devon
[Graham Tyson]

Friday 13th to Sunday 15th June:

Weekend and Annual Concours at Flitwick Manor
Bedfordshire [Brian Palmer]

Saturday 26th April:

Spring Lunch at Danebury Vineyards, Hampshire
[Brian Fidler]

Monday 28th July to Sunday 10th August:

WWI Tour of Belgium & Flanders
[John Stuttard] – this is already virtually full

DATES OF OTHER EVENTS IN 2014 WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN DUE COURSE



Outside the Lord Nelson, Brightwell Baldwin, the cars of Andrew Taylor, Gervase Forster & Brian Fidler and horses create an idyllic scene