



News & Record



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

Issue 59 February 2020

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EDITORIAL

December 2019 was marked by the death of Tim Forrest, who has contributed so much to the Club over many years. Our chairman, Ken Forbes, has written a lovely obituary which celebrates his life in the Club. I was very touched when Susie Forrest said that she and the family wanted the photograph which is on the front cover with his beloved 'Nellie'. I remember asking Tim if I could take a picture of him at the Concours at Broughton House, when he won the Large HP Trophy in 2015 (Issue 46). He was a little surprised, but readily agreed, and I am so glad to have this picture of him with his car. It was in the days before I got to know him well, but for the next four years he was a great contributor to the *News and Record*, for which, and for his guidance on how to produce a good magazine, I am immensely grateful – as for so much else, as Ken describes.

I am delighted to have had the opportunity to do an interview with Peter Blond, who had an exciting career as a racing driver, and now drives four beautiful pre-War Rolls-Royces: a 20/25, a 25/30, a PII and a 20 (the current favourite!). Henry and I so much enjoyed our conversation with him, one winter afternoon in London, and I think you will be equally charmed.

You may remember that I invited readers to get in touch if they had an interesting pass-time that they would like to share with other readers. I was very pleased to get an e-mail from Commander Michael Norman, offering to write something about his life in the Southern Oceans. Since serving in the Falklands Conflict, he has returned to the South Atlantic several times. I had to reduce his contribution for the magazine, but I suspect there will be many readers who would like to learn more about Shackleton (one of Mike's heroes) and the birds and animals, so we are putting the full version of the article on the website. Mike may be persuaded to write a continuation in future. I have a further contribution on a different subject in mind for the next issue, but please do get in touch if you have an interest which has some connection with cars or engineering!

The book by Sir John Stuttard on the first 70 years of the Club has now been sent out to all members, and I am sure you will be as delighted as Henry and I were to receive a copy. It was an immense amount of work on the part of John, Tim Forrest and the other contributors, but the final product justified all that effort. It will be an essential reference item for those interested in cars in the first half of the 20th century. If any members would like to purchase one extra copy, they may do so for the special price of £50 if collected in person from the Hunt House or £75 if sent by courier, by contacting Philip Hall. The book is a treasure-house of information, and I have included in Members' News a passage about Balloon Cars researched for the book on the joining of a new member, Steve Haines, who has one of these.

Sir John Stuttard made some exciting discoveries about his Ghost, which turns out to have had its body made by Harrison, rather than Park Ward, and has contributed a short article. Curiously enough, his 20/25 is known as 'Harrison,' by coincidence! Henry has contributed a short article about the website, with examples of what this wonderful tool can do to support our research interests. It proved its worth during the writing of the book, but Henry has kindly set out how we can all make use of its magic, and even suggested one or two extra ways in which he might be able to help further. Fokko Keuning, in his own inimitable, lively, style, has written a short piece talking about the differences in driving/flying a PII and a PIII.

Thanks to a great deal of hard work by all concerned, the Club now has a permanent base in which to store books, magazines and trophies at the Hunt House, the RREC headquarters. John Redmill was asked to re-design the room and has written an article with photos showing it before and after, which you will find in 'Members' News'. Please do go and visit if you are in Buckinghamshire, but make sure to let the Hunt House know in advance, and do time your visit during working hours Monday to Friday as the room has to be kept locked.

INTERVIEW WITH PETER BLOND

Rosemary Jeffreys

Peter Blond joined the Club a year or so ago, but he has driven Rolls-Royces for some 50 years. He has a 25/30 very like ours, and several other cars. I first met him at the Spring Lunch in 2019. He has had an exciting life, and I thought readers would like to know more about him and his cars, so I approached him about an interview for the *News and Record*. When we arrived, he had got his 20/25 out for us, and after admiring it together, Henry and I spent a wonderful afternoon with him.



Peter and his 20/25, GAV64

Ed: How did you come to acquire the 20/25 we saw outside?

Peter: I bought it fifty years ago. It happened quite by chance: I went to buy tools for my Bentley and got into discussion with this chap about buying his Rolls-Royce, but he couldn't make up his mind. In the end, I went with a trailer and Bill Snook (who looked after all my cars), picked up the car from outside his door at 5 a.m., and slipped a cheque under his door for a bit more than he had said. I gave him a ring later in the day, and told him what I had done – he was

quite all right about it. It needed a lot of work to restore it.

Ed: What was it that attracted you particularly to Rolls-Royces?

Peter: I was fascinated by the workmanship and the design of Rolls-Royce. They are really huge fun to restore. When I first started, 50 years ago, Hoopers had an extraordinary collection of craftsmen, some of whom did a bit of work on the side. I love having the chance to bring the cars back to their original state. All my cars are

in the same colour scheme - velvet, green and smoke. The 20/25 has a body by Gurney Nutting, and has an ivory steering wheel, ivory gear and brake knobs and several other special features in the back- 'companions' for the lady to keep make up etc. It is said to have been owned by the Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII).

I got to know the head of 'veneer' at Rolls-Royce. I am particularly fond of light woods, and I remember going into a shop that sold cigar boxes, and seeing one that was particularly attractive, made of sycamore with a mahogany inlay. I didn't buy the box but we did use the wood combination, which was very successful!

Ed: How did you feel about moving to the rather more sedate Rolls-Royces after racing cars?

Peter: Well, I stopped racing to get married: it really was too dangerous. I transitioned to Rolls-Royces through Bentleys. I first started with restoring a 4 ½ litre Bentley, which won a trophy as the best Derby-Bentley at the BDC. I had to drive it into the Dorchester Ballroom, and I remember we all danced around it in some sort of pagan rite! I also drove it to the Mille Miglia

Storico, in which it came first among the pre-War cars. The Bentley is quite quick, and I have had an overdrive fitted to all my cars, except the 25/30. So they are all quite quick, really: the cruising speed of the Phantom is 70mph, less on the others. But you adjust to driving at a slower pace.

Ed: What cars did you race?

Peter: Quite a few, really. My first car was an SS 100, a 2 ½ litre. My father had promised to buy me a car if I didn't smoke or drink until I was 21. It was quite tough, but I was so keen to get a car, I managed it. My mother made up the extra £100 to get the SS 100. I used to drive it, for work, back and forth to the North of England. Then I bought the ex-Salvadori XK120, which I raced at Silverstone, but those cars didn't really stop, so I got a C-Type, ex Ecurie Ecosse, thanks to my step-brother-in-law David Susman in South Africa, for £3000. I drove it down from Edinburgh in snow and sleet, and then to Goodwood for a practice day. I raced it for several years, helped along by Lofty England who told me that I had a really remarkable car, which I must respect. He was right. But after a few years, I realised that the D-Type was a bit quicker,



Peter driving the C-Type.

so I sold the C and bought the D from a young dealer called Bernard Ecclestone. The C-Type sold a little while ago for \$13million. My wife said I should have kept it! I said 'I kept you, which was better'. The D-Type was a brilliant road car, so safe, cosy and warm. I only sold it when I did a season with HWM from George Abecassis. Later I drove a 3 litre Lister Jaguar at Le Mans. I used them all as road cars too.

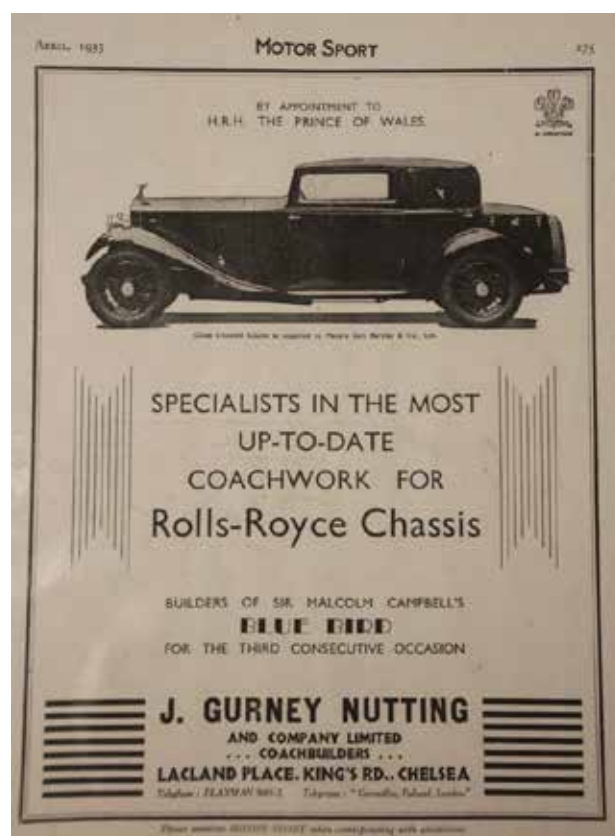


Peter racing the D-Type

I became a member of the BRDC (the British Racing Drivers' Club) after I won a race at Brands Hatch. I remember Graham Hill came second!

Ed: Was everyone an owner-drive in those days?

Peter: Pretty much. We were known as 'privateers'. I was in the textile business, but we all had other jobs. You couldn't make a living out of racing but if you were lucky you were spotted and invited to drive by someone like Duncan Hamilton. It was all right to use these cars as road cars, providing you were reasonably careful. You needed to be, if you were going to race the next weekend! You practised the day before, drove to the circuit, got the tyres pumped up and off you went. You could drive in three races on the same day – Sports, Formula Libre and Saloon cars – in my case a 2.4 litre Jaguar ! You used the same



Original advertisement for the 20/25

tyres on the road and on the track. There were 'wet weather tyres' but they were not much different. But as time went on, a lot of people were having accidents. We didn't have safety belts of course, or even roll bars.

As I said, I had my own textile business, and also a car restoration business, Vintage Enterprise. When I was 59, my wife Virginia wouldn't let me retire after selling my company. Luckily, I knew someone at Sotheby's, and when I went to a party one evening, being known as a bit of an 'oily rag', I was offered a job by them in the Car Department. Later I worked for their Realty Department, and indeed I am still working there. As my mother said, I moved from the rag trade to second-hand cars to being an estate agent - how much lower can you go!

Ed: Could you tell us about the other Rolls-Royces you have had?

Peter: After the Bentley, I got the 20/25 (GAV64), then the PII (64MY), followed by a 25/30, ex Josephine Baker, which Eric Barrass borrowed, and another 25/30 (GWN23). I still have the second 25/30, and my daughter got married in it. I later bought a PIII, but I sold it, and a Corniche Bentley which I still have. My

most recent car is a 20 (54S9). When my wife died, two years ago, she said 'you must get yourself a project'. I did what she suggested and stalked a 20. It was owned by a nice man in the West country. When I got it, everything was wrong with it: it overheated, but now it runs as cool as a cucumber.

Ed: Do you drive all your cars?

Peter: I don't drive them enough! I keep two in central London, another with Nigel Sandell, a brilliant mechanic with a brilliant team, who is just outside, and one in the country. Nigel looks after all my cars in the UK now. I have still got the Derby-Bentley too, which lives in France. I love driving there, the roads are so much quieter. The first 25/30 I had I didn't drive. I bought it when I was in the textile business, because I had met Eric Barrass, who was a great Rolls-Royce enthusiast. I used to supply Marks and Spencers, and went for a spin to Tunbridge Wells in the Bentley. I parked it outside the M&S store, but Eric, who was the Manager, insisted I should park in the Directors' car park at the back. We got on like a house on fire, and shortly after I bought the 25/30, I handed it over to Eric, who used it for 30 years. He wrote me letters about it, and eventually I sold it to him.

Ed: What was it that attracted you to the PII: was it the extra speed?

Peter: I was intrigued by the 8-litre engine. I went to see it in the country, and the lady who was selling it explained how much her husband had loved it etc etc. I asked if it started, and she looked a bit startled and said 'it should do'. When I went to the garage I noticed that the radiator was warm, so it had obviously been out recently, but I didn't say anything. We went for a spin together. It was heavy, but it had guts so we did a deal, and I started to drive it back to London. I found after about an hour that I was getting a bit light-headed, so I got out and had a look. There was a huge hole in the silencer which was letting all the fumes in! We set about restoring it – it took about a year. We painted it in my favourite colours, put a second spare wheel on the back, swapped the headlights for Marchals and put on Bosch horns. Someone said it was a 'typical Continental' – little did they know! I have still got it, but I am going to put power steering on it as it is a bit heavy.

Ed: Which is your favourite?

Peter: Actually, I really like the 20. It is so light and delicate, and runs so quietly. Royce had a lot of good engineers at the end of the First World War, and by that stage a lot of women wanted to drive too, who wanted lighter cars. It is barrel-sided. The number-plate was registered in 1903, but the car itself is from 1923. It has an amazing clock, which winds on the bezel. It is quite scary with no front wheel brakes, but I put an overdrive on to improve its performance. I don't drive at 55 in the rain, though.

Ed: Are your family keen on cars?

Peter: My wife made a good show of liking the cars, and encouraged me, but she wasn't really an enthusiast. We were married for 56 years. Virginia was a brilliant navigator, as well as being very beautiful – she modelled for Dior. I remember taking it on a Louis Vuitton Boheme trip to Budapest, then Vienna and Prague. I persuaded my wife to come, and everyone wanted to follow us because her navigation was so good. All the cars were tracked by satellite, to make sure we didn't cheat. She enjoyed the trip in the end, partly I suspect because it was Louis Vuitton! My daughter is interested, but she has her own business as a theatrical agent.

Ed: What are your future plans?

Peter: Well, I was 90 on November 5th last year and I took 30 friends and members of the family to Annabel's, of which I am a founder member. I got hold of nine helium balloons, and took them, with the 20, to Annabel's. We had a really good evening, and my daughter Rebecca gave me a fantastic present of half an hour in a Spitfire at Biggin Hill, which I am looking forward to immensely!

Henry and I could have continued much longer, but we didn't want to impose. We offered to go and wave Peter off when he goes on his Spitfire flight in our 25/30 which lives just up the road. We were immensely impressed by his energy and joie de vivre, and wish him many more happy years flying and driving. We look forward to seeing him at many more events!



Phantom II, 64MY



25/30, GWN23



The new 20, 54S9

A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY: 1921 SILVER GHOST (33LG) ALL WEATHER TOURER BY R HARRISON & SON, REGISTRATION NO XF-7646

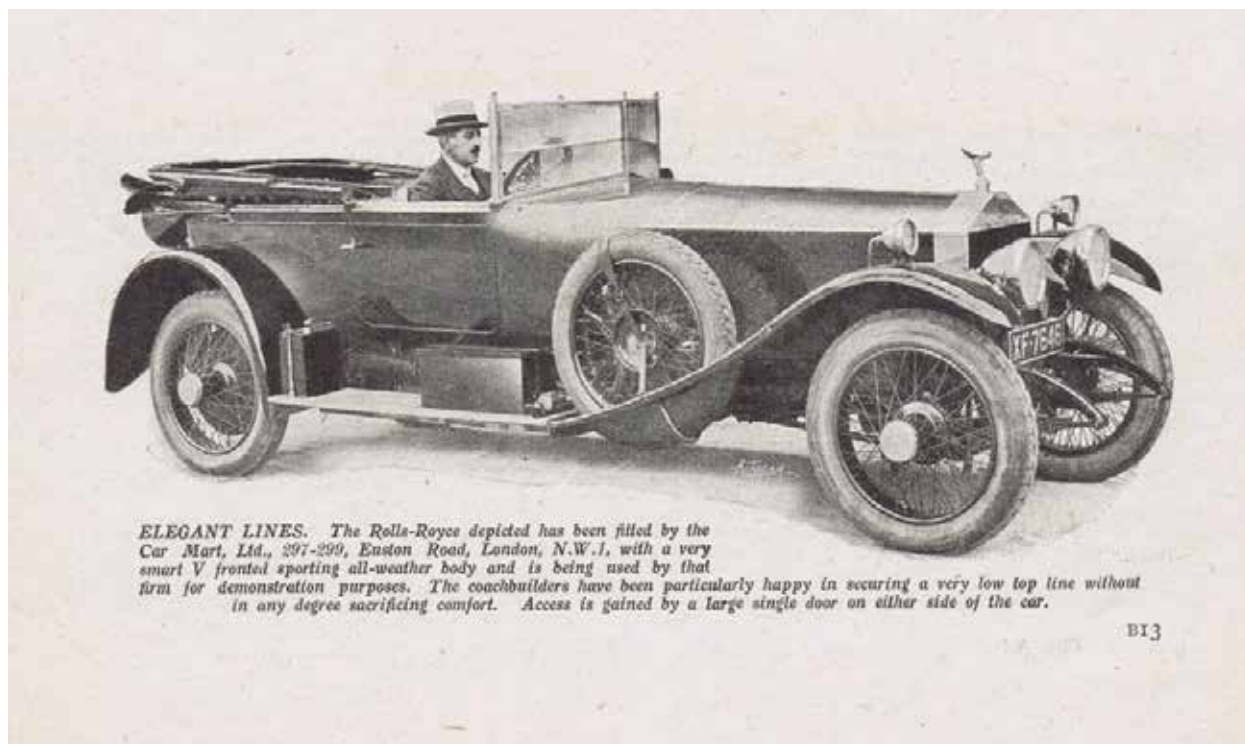
Sir John Stuttard

A Silver Ghost chassis was ordered from Rolls-Royce on 10th February 1921 for delivery to Car Mart Ltd, a well-known London dealership, based in Euston Road, London NW1. The 40/50 horsepower engined chassis (No 33LG) was of a 'Speed' as opposed to 'Standard' specification, with an Alpine Eagle engine (No 0.262). With its high compression pistons and low rake ('D' rake) steering, this car was intended for high performance touring. The car was 'on test' on 2nd March 1921.

Matching the specification of the chassis, The Car Mart, Ltd arranged for a light 'All Weather' body to be fitted. A four-seater, with much legroom in the back, the car was made to look sporty, with just two doors and an attractive V-shaped windscreen that made it immediately distinguishable and gave it a racy appearance. Car

Mart arranged for the car to be advertised in the 2nd July 1921 edition of *The Autocar* which shows a photograph of 33LG, with its registration number XF 7646, and the text 'Elegant Lines. The Rolls-Royce depicted has been fitted by Car Mart ... with a very smart V fronted sporting all-weather body and is being used by that firm for demonstration purposes. The coachbuilders have been particularly happy in securing a very low top line without in any degree sacrificing comfort. Access is gained by a large single door on either side of the car.'

Car Mart was a dealership which acquired and sold cars from named coachbuilders or contracted out the construction of the bodies on the cars they sold. These included Cunard, Harrison, Hooper, H J Mulliner and Park Ward. Often Car Mart removed all coachbuilder



Advertisement from *The Autocar* for 22LG

identification from the cars that they sold and fitted their own coach plates to them such that owners and others had no means of identifying the true coachbuilder. In the case of 33LG the car carried only the Car Mart plate.

33LG was purchased by His Highness The Maharaja Sir Natwarsinhji of Porbandar, K.C.S.I. (1901–1979) who took delivery on 30th September 1921 at an address shown in Rolls-Royce records as 82 Eaton Square, London SW1. The Maharaja was just 20 years old and had ascended to the throne of Porbandar, a 13-gun salute state in Gujarat, in 1908, at the age of seven. The Maharaja kept the car in the UK until 1926 when it was shipped to Bombay on the S/S Rawalpindi which sailed on 16th April 1926. In 1932 he captained the first All India cricket team to visit England and, in the same year, the ownership of 33LG was transferred to a lady (Mrs SN Dady) living in Malabar Hill, Bombay (today's Mumbai).

After the Second World War, 33LG was owned by Pestonji Adenwalla, a Parsi who lived in Bombay. The next owner was a businessman, Ramesh Thakkar, who built up an old car collection in Poona (today's Pune).

In 1969, Ramesh Thakkar wrote to the RREC seeking to establish the name of the car's coachbuilder since the footplate at the bottom of the two doors showed just the name of the dealer, Car Mart. This enquiry was possibly prompted by Bill Meredith-Owens, the fine car collector, who wished to acquire pre-war cars in India before the Indian Government placed a ban on the export of 'antiques' including pre-war cars. In his book *Private Motor Car Collections of Great Britain* (Dalton Watson, 1973), Peter Hugo records that, in 1964, Bill Meredith-Owens had placed an advert in *The Times of India* seeking old cars for sale. 33LG was featured in Peter Hugo's book with a photo taken in Poona in 1969 by John Fasal, a noted expert on Rolls-Royce motor cars in India. The car was in a dilapidated state and brought back to the UK in 1970 for a complete restoration. Interestingly, in Peter Hugo's book, he refers to 33LG as carrying an All Weather body 'possibly by Hooper'.

As a result of Thakkar's enquiries about the coachbuilder, at the time the car was being

returned to the UK, in 1969, there was speculation as to the name. Correspondence on this took place recorded in the *RREC Bulletins* No 53 (March 1969): page 22, No 54 (May 1969): page 36, No 56 (September 1969): page 42 and No 59 (March 1970): page 8. The names of Barker, Hoopers, Park Ward and Harrison were all mentioned.

There were two other very similar Silver Ghost All Weather Tourers known to have been made by Park Ward in the early 1920s, including a 1921 Silver Ghost (58NE) and a 1922 Silver Ghost (71ZG) pictured on page 162 of Lawrence Dalton's *Those Elegant Rolls-Royce* (Dalton Watson Ltd, 1967). 33LG does not appear in any of the Park Ward records of the 1920s and has no numbers on the body to associate it with Park Ward. However, based on comparison with the two Park Ward All Weather Tourers (58NE and 71ZG) and the fact that Car Mart sold Park Ward cars, the consensus was that 33LG carried Park Ward coachwork. Thereafter the body was referred to as Park Ward – *RREC Advertising Supplement* (November 1975): front cover and *RREC Bulletins* No 118 (January 1980): page 25, No 164 (September/October 1987): page 39 and No 211 (July/August 1975): page 19.

33LG has been referred to as having Park Ward coachwork for the last 50 years. Recently, prompted by Dr Steve Hubbard and as part of current renovation and repainting of the car's body by Peter Baylis of Clanfield Coachbuilders, a further detailed analysis of the design and style of the body and of its fittings has been undertaken. This led to the conclusion that the body was constructed not by Park Ward but by R Harrison & Son who, like Car Mart, operated from London's Euston Road. Harrison 'supplied fully finished bodies to the trade' as well as operating as 'coachbuilders on high class chassis made by Bentley, Hispano-Suiza and Rolls-Royce'.

Those involved in this re-assessment of the name of the coachbuilder were Dr Steve Hubbard, Will Morrison, Robert McDermott (from Australia) and Tom Clarke, as well as Peter Baylis. 33LG was compared with the other similar bodied car in Australia (16PG) and two other similar bodied cars (58NE and 71ZG); these last two were known to carry Park Ward coachwork. Marked

differences were found between 33LG & 16PG, on the one hand, and 58NE & 71ZG, on the other. At Robert McDermott's suggestion the body style, design and fittings were compared with coachwork by Harrison on a 3-litre Bentley car. The conclusion was reached that 33LG was bodied by Harrison. There were a number of influencing factors: the design of the main side pillars of the windscreen, the extreme V-shape of the windscreen, the distinctive and narrow side waist moulding along the body, the hoop shape of the back panel, the wooden framed windows of 33LG and, finally, the hidden door hinges, a feature of Harrison coachwork.

For 50 years since 1949, 33LG has had a mistaken identity and I am grateful to the various experts, named above, for their part in correcting this. 33LG carries All Weather Tourer coachwork by Harrison & Son.

[Note: The Stuttard family acquired 33LG in 2000 since when the car has enjoyed being driven in Malaysia, New Zealand and many European countries, including the 1913 Alpine Trial Re-enactments of 2003 and 2013].



Offside windscreen upright



Offside windscreen upright



RREC Advertising Supplement, November 1975



V-shaped windscreen from the interior

TRAUMA AND BEAUTY IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

Cdr Michael Norman

It was four days into the war, 4 May 1982. The Argentine missile-armed Cruiser, GENERAL BELGRANO, had been sunk two days previously by one of our nuclear attack submarines and with this came the realisation that we were now at war with Argentina. All diplomatic efforts had come to nought. There were no more thoughts of rattling our sabres, and defiant posturing, which would miraculously cause the Argentine military to withdraw from the Falklands Islands and the island of South Georgia. I was the Second in Command and Executive Officer of one of our Guided Missile Destroyers, HMS SHEFFIELD. She was the first of a new class of air defence destroyer, powered entirely by Rolls-Royce gas turbine propulsion with a crew of 285. She was commissioned in 1976 and was the pride of the British fleet. We had been at 'action stations' since dawn, expecting a reprisal attack on the Task Force. But no attack came in the forenoon. We had just had lunch and I set off on my inspection of the ship below decks, checking on watertight integrity and security.

I was not sure what came first; whether it was the loud bang or the hammer-like blow to the chest, followed by all the air being sucked out of my lungs. "What the hell was that for Christ's sake?" I thought, or some other such expletive! It came out of nowhere; no "Take Cover" warning on main broadcast from the Bridge or the Operations Room. No low-flying aircraft screaming overhead. A submarine launched torpedo maybe? But it didn't feel like an underwater explosion. So perhaps a major catastrophe in one of the main machinery spaces? There was a myriad of possibilities. Black acrid smoke quickly enveloped me and all the lights went out. Then it suddenly dawned on me. "Exocet". We had most likely been hit by an aircraft launched sea-skimming missile, which had been the subject of much discussion at our threat briefings. They were the most difficult weapon to detect and destroy, skimming along at wavetop height at many hundreds of miles an hour. I heard screams as the noise of running machinery, the heartbeat of the ship, began to fade and an eerie stillness descend. Picking myself

up I crouched down where the choking dense smoke was a little thinner. The emergency lighting came on and I could see members of the ship's company coming out of the gloom from the Operations Room, some with flash burns around the eyes where the skin was exposed. I led them forward to the escape hatch onto the fo'cstle and fresh air.

And so began my war in earnest in a very distressing and ignominious way. As the saying goes: "War is 95% boredom and 5% terrifying". This was my



HMS Sheffield on fire after being struck by an Exocet missile

5% moment and is, of course, another story. But this was the beginning of my association with the South Atlantic, its beautiful islands, in particular South Georgia, its unforgiving climate and Antarctica.

It is curious to note that this whole business began when some Argentine scrap metal merchants, supported by the Argentine Army, landed on South Georgia at the Leith whaling station in the middle of March to salvage scrap metal. They had apparently done a deal with the UK owner, Christian Salvesen. However, there was no notification or diplomatic clearance for this and certainly no approval to raise the Argentine flag at Leith. Why was this scrap metal so important to them anyway? Well I had heard a rumour that a lot of the steel bar and raw material used to make repairs to buildings and whaling ships was manufactured prior to the first atomic explosion and was therefore in high demand for use in hyper-sensitive scientific instruments. It allegedly had a high market value in relation to its specific molecular structure but I am not sure if this has a basis in fact. More likely the landing at Leith was an intelligence gathering mission to assess the Royal Marine garrison strength at King Edward Point (KEP), Grytviken, a few miles to the south. Later, on 3 April, the day after the invasion of the Falkland Islands, a superior Argentine invasion force landed at KEP but not without a heroic fight being put up by the small garrison of twenty two Royal Marines. They were all taken prisoner. When the main UK Task Force arrived on station, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher immediately ordered the re-taking of South Georgia. And so began this conflict 8000 miles from home..... South Georgia was retaken on 25 April and the fight back had begun.

A few years later, well 1987 in fact, I was given the opportunity to return to the South Atlantic as the Senior Naval Officer, Falkland Islands. My area of operations also covered South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. Not setting foot on the islands during the war, (the survivors of SHEFFIELD were repatriated after a matter of weeks) I made it my business to get to know the Falkland Islanders. They are a lovely people and so grateful for giving them back their islands in 1982. But it had been at a price of course. I felt they were more British than we were and of the

same mentality as, I imagine, the people of the Hebrides. They had a cheerful DIY attitude to life, living in such remote farms and communities. As one of the 'Homesteaders' said to me, 'If your tractor breaks down you are the only one who is going to fix it!'

After the war the UK beefed up the defences of South Georgia at KEP, with a larger Royal Marine garrison and better equipment and communications. In addition they also had the responsibility for supporting the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) in their scientific research activities. With no airport on the island, resupply was by sea from the Falkland Islands using one of the guardships, HMS DUMBARTON CASTLE and at the first opportunity I jumped onboard for the 850 mile trip to visit the far reaches of 'my patch' as it were. It was November and Spring was in the air but the cloak of winter was still very much in evidence.

On the way we stopped briefly over the spot where SHEFFIELD lay and I laid a wreath for the twenty crew members who did not come home. Their grave was the black stillness of the ship in the icy depths below me. It all came flooding back; the unchecked raging fire below decks and no means to fight it - the water main had been severed on point of missile impact; survivors escaping to the upper deck, in some cases nylon clothing fused to their skin; the soles of our boots melting and sticking to the deck from the blast furnace below our feet. It was difficult to hold back the tears, it could have been yesterday.

After another three days steaming we approached the islands from the west on a bright spring morning, passing the odd iceberg and accompanied by dolphins riding our bow wave, with killer whales making themselves visible and keeping a watchful eye on us. Later the snow-covered mountains of South Georgia reared up out of the sea to over 9000 feet on an island which is only 22 miles wide at its widest point. It was awe inspiring. The tallest summit of Mount Paget was magnificent with snow streaming off the top in a downwind flurry. Even in summer the mountains were snow covered right down to about 1000 feet above sea level.



Mount Paget in South Georgia

We sailed into Cumberland Bay on the far side of the island the following morning. The scenery was like something out of National Geographic, with the snow-covered mountains reflecting their mirror image on the flat calm surface of these sheltered waters. The bay was mostly clear of ice.

King Penguins were darting all around us like out-of-control mini torpedoes! KEP came into view and further in the distance was Grytviken, the rusty remains of the first whaling station, set up in 1904 by a naturalised Briton of Norwegian extraction, Carl Anton Larsen.



King Penguins at Cumberland Bay

As we were to sail the following morning and with camera at the ready, I took a stroll round the small bay to the whaling station. There were Fur Seals everywhere, curious by nature but the male of the species could be quite threatening. There were King Penguins everywhere, naturally inquisitive and resembling little men in dinner jackets, waddling around on their flat feet. The smell was awful, something akin to rotting fish, which of course it was!

As I neared the collection of dilapidated wood and corrugated tin buildings I saw the two beached whale catchers on the far side with their bow harpoons pointing upwards as if to say 'We are ready and waiting'! It was a terribly cruel business and for what purpose? I used to think that the oil produced from whale blubber was used to keep the wheels of the post-Industrial Revolution period turning and therefore a practical necessity at the time. This was true in part with whale oil being a superior lubricant to mineral oil but the majority of the whale oil was used worldwide in the production of foodstuffs, cosmetics and nitro-glycerine. It took sixty years for a worldwide ban to come into place by which time 175,250 whales had been processed at South Georgia whaling stations and 1.4 million from the Antarctic region as a whole. The Southern Ocean's whale population was hunted almost to extinction. The enormous oil tanks were probably the largest structures in evidence where the oil was stored until piped aboard tankers to be taken away to the industrial world in the Northern Hemisphere. I noticed there were markings with levels and dates painted on the sides of these huge tanks, 1963 being a prominent date when whaling was temporarily banned by international treaty. I was astonished to see that there was still a lot of oil in these tanks and subsequent markings indicated the rate of seepage into the ground through the rusting



Michael with one of the whaler catchers. Note the harpoon gun at the bow



Penguins and Fur Seals

structure. I continued on my walk around the bay, noting how brightly the sun reflected off the odd lump of floating ice, to the sealers' and whalers' cemetery. I was pursued by Fur Seals and an inquisitive variety of penguins, mostly 'Kings'.

In the cemetery, by far the most prominent grave was that of Sir Ernest Shackleton, marked by a huge monolithic headstone of granite, which had been brought from Scotland in 1928. Shackleton was undoubtedly a national hero whose death in 1922 here in South Georgia, brought to a close the "Heroic Age" of Antarctic exploration. He was the embodiment of all that was good, courageous and noble in human endeavour. Popular and hugely respected by his men he displayed outstanding qualities of leadership in



Shackleton's grave at Grytviken

the most demanding of situations. He was my childhood hero and here I was, standing by the grave of this great man. It was humbling. He died of a heart attack onboard the *QUEST* while at anchor in King Edward Cove and was buried here at the request of his wife, Emily. He was about to embark on his latest challenge which was to survey and chart about 2000 miles of coastline around Antarctica. He was only 47.

The next morning we were up with the lark. The Government Rep had asked the Captain to look in on the derelict whaling stations in Stromness Bay as we made our way up the northern coast to Bird Island off the north western tip of the island. After collecting the mail for the UK we let the lines slip and nosed out into the bay on another bright sunny day. We had been lucky with the weather so far which could change in the space of half an hour from a benign windless sunny day to a raging storm with huge steep seas and howling winds blowing the tops off the waves.

All the whaling stations in South Georgia are on the leeward northern and eastern side of the island in the shelter of the Allardyce Range, which forms a spine that runs down most of the island. Natural harbours offer further protection. The weather is generally more favourable on the leeward side of the island due to the 'Föhn effect' afforded by the mountains. There are seven whaling stations in all. In the north of the island there is Prince Olav Harbour in Possession Bay.

Coming south to where we were headed was Leith Harbour, Stromness and Husvik in Stromness Bay. South of Grytviken there are two more stations; Godthul and Ocean Harbour. We turned northwest towards Stromness Bay with a few small icebergs to keep an eye on.

After an hour or so we came abreast Stromness Bay. The Captain had decided we did not have time to visit all three whaling stations and

that we would visit the largest one first, Leith where the trouble began in 1982 and one other, probably Husvik in the south of the bay which had not been visited for a while. There were "Bergy bits" in the bay but nothing much to worry about.

We nosed into Leith Harbour and dropped anchor surrounded by all manner of wildlife - Fur Seals, Elephant Seals, the odd Leopard Seal (we needed to watch that one) and a whole cast of playful penguins darting all around us. It was magic to behold! We lowered the 'Gemini' into the water by single davit and were soon nosing up to the rather rickety jetty. We climbed up hoping that pieces of the wooden jetty would not come away in our hands! It was disconcerting to see there were dominant male Fur Seals barring our way ashore, lazing in the weak sunshine. A Royal Marine persuaded them to go for a swim!

This was a ghostly place to behold, almost like the remains of an ancient civilisation on some distant planet. There was heavy engineering machinery everywhere; lathes, milling machines and a plethora of other stuff that I had no comprehension of, which surrounded the jetty head. So the "Argies" had had the intention to remove a lot of the machinery which they had purchased from Christian Salvesen. But five years on, left out in the open, it was very rusty and now probably not salvageable except for scrap. I wandered off into the jumble of rusting

corrugated tin buildings. Walking in through an open door the pungent suffocating stench hit me, a foulness like I had never experienced before. Then I detected some movement and grunting noises nearby. I kept perfectly still until my eyes adjusted to the dark gloom of the interior. To my horror I was surrounded by a large number of Elephant Seals. I remained perfectly still. I could make out a huge male with a large wobbling proboscis-like nose. These brutes could regularly weigh more than two tons. The rest of those in my immediate vicinity appeared to be the smaller females. So this was his harem. The brute took one huge wobble of its belly towards me with a roar and I smartly backed away towards the door, keeping my eyes fixed on his. On retracing my steps to the jetty I wondered why there was all this machinery here and raw material when there was very little at Grytviken. I concluded that Christian Salvesen had set up Leith as a repair depot with specialist engineers, to provide support to his other stations, in addition to the work of processing whales.

With the anchor housed we went the short distance down the bay past Stromness whaling station. Husvik came into view and from a distance it seemed somewhat more intact. Perhaps it was more sheltered in this deeper 'fjord'. After dropping anchor again, the fo'castle party were earning their pay today (!), we clambered into the Gemini once more and motored to the jetty.

Once more I set off, this time accompanied by a Royal Marine. Perhaps the Coxswain was concerned for my safety in case my over-developed sense of adventure got the better of me! We entered a building with lots of tables and chairs. Clearly this was the Mess Hall. There were dirty plates, knives and forks still on the tables where whalers had sat for their last meal. I picked up a faded printed menu. It was dated 13 December 1963 with the details of the last meal, in Norwegian, all unintelligible to me! The IWC Ban, albeit temporary, had come into force and they had left, perhaps in somewhat of a hurry, thinking that they would be back next season when the ban would be lifted after a lot of lobbying. In fact they did not return as stocks of whales was so low it was no longer commercially viable. I picked up the menu and popped it in my pocket as a souvenir.

We entered another much smaller building. I was surprised to find it was a chemistry laboratory with jars still filled with all sorts of different coloured liquids and pickled specimens. Here was another example of Christian Salvesen providing a facility that supported his other stations, in this case a research laboratory. There were handwritten notes still on the bench top and locked filing cabinets too. This was all very spooky. I half expected the steam whistle to sound for a 'down tools' break, or a whaler suddenly appearing from around a corner. This whole station was beginning to feel like the "Marie Celeste"!!

Making our way back to the jetty by what was probably the Station Manager's office and house, there, outside his front door was a whale harpoon gun bolted to a concrete plinth. And beside it on the ground were some harpoon heads. I picked one up, or rather I struggled to pick one up! It was terribly heavy, made of cast iron and probably weighing about 10kgs. The thought of that being explosively fired into a whale at short range was horrifying. I motioned to 'Royal' to carry it back to the jetty for me, politely of course! I would use it at a later date to show how brutal this business was, during my talks on whaling and South Georgia. (I still have it at home, now in service as a substantial doorstopper!)

Back onboard a bit of a 'chop' had built up in the bay and the ship was tugging at its anchor cable. Time to get underway and on our way for an overnight passage to Bird Island at the north western extremity of this island group. The wind had got up from the west and it was racing down the mountain's eastern slopes towards us. Goodness knows what it must be like on the windward side. We hugged the coast with everybody onboard tying down everything that could move so that it did not become a missile in the anticipated wildly bucking motion to come. I feared we were in for a rough night. Supper was cancelled and the chef produced some meat pies and sandwiches for collection from the galley. That would have to do for now. I spent most of the evening on the bridge watching the sea build in all its power. Fortunately we were going into the sea more or less head on, which was certainly preferable to a sickening rolling corkscrew motion caused by a quarter sea. A beam sea was

the worst resulting in heavy rolling. We found a comfortable speed which was about eight knots.

I went below to my cabin and lay on my bunk fully clothed, with my lifejacket and foul weather gear close beside me. I put my bunk side cage up to prevent me from rolling out or being thrown out while asleep. My experience in SHEFFIELD had told me always to be prepared for the unexpected. One develops a sort of sixth sense at sea, with experience and in the dark, feeling the motion of the ship and comparing it with what you are expecting and listening for any unexpected or out of the ordinary sounds. Sleep didn't come easily.

The next day I woke to a calmer sea and went up on deck to see what the day had in store for us. It was still overcast and about Force 4 on the Beaufort Scale but the barometer was rising so that was promising. We were scheduled to deliver mail to the small BAS base on Bird Island but I was unsure if we would be able to get in to the jetty. There seemed to be quite a lot of brash ice hereabouts. We tried to raise the BAS on VHF but there was no reply. Well it was very early in the morning, about 0700. We made a cautious approach to within half a mile of the jetty and stopped. The chart was a bit imprecise about water depth closer in so the Gemini was lowered into the water and four of us piled in, fully clothed in our foul weather kit and life jacket. The Captain said he would stand out to sea a few miles and come back in two hours or so. We did a radio check with the ship and that was OK. Then we nosed out of the lee of the ship into a long swell heading towards the small jetty we could see in the distance as we crested a wave. As we got closer the loose 'brash' ice began closing in around us and getting thicker. We had to slow down to protect the propeller. Eventually we had to get the paddles out to push the ice to one side. It was slow progress. At one point we thought we might not be able to get any further but we persevered. It was important for these chaps to get their mail. The last delivery and collection had been over three months ago. We pressed on.

After about twenty more minutes of laborious work we arrived at the small jetty leading to a large hut. There was nobody to be seen. We tried the radio and there was no answer. So I hailed them: "The Royal Navy is here with your mail. Is there anybody about?!"

There was no answer so we shouted again and again. After about five minutes the door opened and out stepped a tall lanky individual with long hair, a full beard and boot laces trailing behind him. Well I wasn't expecting anybody in a white coat and spectacles! He came lumbering up and I repeated again that we had mail. He didn't say anything, just stared at us. I thought: 'Crikey, is this what isolation does for you.'

We disembarked from the Gemini and followed him down the jetty to the hut. There were Fur Seals everywhere, even on the duckboards surrounding the hut. Here they seemed to be quite tame, even partly domesticated perhaps? The BAS scientist pointed to a large sleeping seal on the small beach. "Careful wi' that one" he said. 'He does speak then', I thought! I looked a bit closer. It was a Leopard Seal which could be dangerous. They have an immensely powerful jaw and sharp teeth which could take your foot off if provoked. Their staple diet was penguins of course and there were plenty of those around.

We kicked the snow and ice off our boots and removing them, entered the hut. Formal introductions followed. There were three of them and they slowly started to open up to us. We handed over the small sack of mail and were offered a 'brew' of tea. We got to hear all about the scientific surveys they were conducting on the resident population of Wandering Albatross, a year round operation. They did three years of voluntary isolation here, with one changing over each year at the end of the austral summer. No female scientists allowed! I concluded that it took a special type of person to live in such a confined area with just two companions for three years.

There were other species of Albatross here as well but in much smaller numbers. The island had a high plateau enabling easy take-offs and landings for these large ungainly birds. But of course in the air, with their six foot wing span, soaring, diving and swooping, skimming the wave tops and taking advantage of the small up draughts afforded by rolling waves, they were the most gracious creatures on the planet.

Unfortunately it was quite a climb up to the plateau taking about twenty minutes, we were told. They offered to take us up there if we had time. 'Chicks' were still on the nest and a long way

from fledging. But sadly we had to be on our way. As if on cue our radio crackled into life. The ship said they would be ready to pick us up in half an hour. So we collected their mail for posting and said our goodbyes. Boots on, we were out in the cold air once more leaving the nice warm 'fug' in the hut behind. The three of them came too. I noticed the Leopard Seal was still there with one eye open.

The Coxswain got the engine going and we climbed in. Gemini outboard engines had the reputation of being notoriously unreliable. They reminded me of my petrol lawnmower at home where I had to try every combination of choke and throttle to get the damn thing to start! We fended off with our paddles and got us pointing in the right direction and gingerly we set off parting the 'brash ice' again with our paddles. If the rubber buoyancy chamber became holed, life expectancy in these ice cold waters was minutes not hours. I looked back over my shoulder to see the scientists waving from the jetty. I waved back. I expect they hadn't had that much excitement for months! As we nosed out of the cove the swell picked up which had the effect of loosening up the ice.

We were soon back onboard and we debriefed the Captain. The Officer of the watch (OOW) set course for the three days passage back to the Falkland Islands. This brought to a close my first encounter with this beautiful, magical island in all its treacherous moods, its history and whaling heritage. But most importantly its unspoilt habitat was a key factor in supporting a most magnificent and diverse array of wildlife, both in the ocean, on land and in the air. I promised myself that I would return here one day to continue my exploration of this wonderful unspoilt place.

It was four years later in fact, in January 1991 when I was able to return to the South Atlantic and its wild inhospitable seas. I had been appointed to HMS ENDURANCE, the Royal Navy's ice patrol ship of Falklands fame, as an additional officer, to help out with an extensive period of survey work in and around the South Shetland Islands. At home the BBC World Service News kept us up to date on the progress of the war in Kuwait and Saddam Hussein while we ploughed up and down our survey lines off Deception Island, building a picture of the seabed

contours and depths with our towed side scan sonar. The war seemed a world away from here, which of course it was! The Lynx helicopter and surveyors had positioned a number of base station theodolites on nearby hill tops so that we could lock everything together geographically. It was interesting to see the seabed contours grow. In the midst of this rather tedious but important work for the Naval Hydrographer we received a message from the Fleet Commander to the effect that when we returned for our mid survey break at Port Stanley in the Falkland Islands, we were to give passage to The Honourable Alexandra Shackleton to Grytviken, so that she could visit her Grandfather's grave for the first time. This would be a welcome break for the crew and uplifting news for me. It was quite unexpected and of course it would enable me to keep the promise I made to myself that I would return there one day!

After three more days on the survey ground to complete the work around Deception Island and the recovery of all our surveying kit ashore, we headed north crossing the Drakes Passage once more, also referred to as the 'Roaring Forties'. It invariably was roaring as the winds circulated around the Antarctic continent at the bottom of the world, with nothing in their way to impede their ferocity. With a beam or quarter sea most of the way and no stabilisers fitted it was a passage to test the most hardy sailors amongst us. With huge forty foot waves the ship would heel over to quite sickening angles and one was left wondering if she would come back up again. But the 'old girl' or 'Red Plum' as she was affectionally known, always did. Well she had to. There was very little chance of being rescued down here with life expectancy in the water a matter of minutes, not hours or days. In a lifeboat the odds would be more favourable but not hugely so.

After two days R&R at Stanley, we set off with Alexandra Shackleton and her husband safely onboard. Like everybody else destined for these islands, they had flown from the UK using one of the 'Air Bridge' RAF Tristars, stopping to refuel at that barren volcanic speck in the Atlantic, Ascension Island which played such a crucial role in the retaking of the Falkland Islands in 1982.

Our visitors were the personal guests of the Captain and on the first evening at sea en route

to South Georgia I was invited to join them for dinner in the Captain's cabin along with a couple of ship's officers. I was fortunate to be seated next to Alexandra Shackleton and this turned out to be the start of a long friendship. While the Captain was holding forth at the other end of the table, I had Alexandra almost to myself. I was very happy about that and was a good listener! Her knowledge of her Grandfather was through the boyhood recollections of her Father, Edward Shackleton. He was the youngest son of Sir Ernest and was born in 1911.

I had been so absorbed and distracted talking to Alexandra that I almost missed the question that was directed at me from the head of the table! "Do you know what fish we are enjoying for the main course Mike?" I sensed this was a trick question or more likely this was designed to embarrass me in front of his guests or perhaps punishment for hogging the attention of the principal guest for most of the dinner thus far! I must have looked a bit like a startled rabbit in car headlights! I looked at my plate but there was no clue there for I had eaten it all without giving it any thought whatsoever! It was delicious I do remember that, served in a creamy sauce with capers and mashed potatoes. From my time as the Queen's Harbour Master, Falklands Islands, with some responsibility for policing the catches of deep sea trawlers, I made a hasty guess at South Atlantic cod! That would be a safe bet I thought. No such luck! The Captain beamed a triumphant smile. "It's Patagonian Toothfish." At which point the whole table fell silent! Nobody wanted to ask the obvious question and show their ignorance! Had we been eating some prehistoric sea monster from the deep waters off Patagonia perhaps? Seeing he had now got everyone's attention, in particular Alexandra, he proceeded to show off his prowess about the subject in hand. We all dutifully listened intently.

My first flippant thoughts were in fact not far from the truth. These large fish, sometimes weighing in at up to 100 kgs, were ugly in the extreme with a mouth full of razor-like teeth that could crunch up crustaceans on the sea floor at great depths, down as far 12,000 feet. A quick mental calculation meant that these fish could live and survive at depths where the pressure on their bodies was 400 times that at the surface. That seemed hard to believe. Apparently a relatively

new industry had sprung up, driven by a Japanese desire to include this delicacy in high class 'Sushi' restaurants, where some of the larger specimens could sell for as much as USD 2,000.00 each.

Next morning I was on deck watching the wild beauty of the Southern Ocean and Albatross swooping and riding the thermal above the funnel. I could hear the distinctive sound of the Lynx helicopter getting closer and I made my way aft towards the flight deck. The landing would be interesting to watch with the flight deck pitching and rolling in a corkscrewing motion. I had an appreciation of the difficulty factor, having spent many years previously as a naval helicopter Pilot and Observer, detecting and tracking Soviet nuclear submarines during the Cold War era. The Lynx approached from astern and came to a hover in the 'wait' position abreast the flight deck on the port side. It was important to watch and wait to observe the cycle of pitching and rolling. There was invariably a pattern to it with a few seconds of relative calm in which to make a dash for the deck. The flight Deck Officer was also making his own assessment as to when to indicate to the pilot to move across and land, using his wands. At the right moment the aircraft moved across smartly and landed in the manner of a 'controlled crash'! The undercarriage of naval helicopters is specially strengthened to take it. As soon as the wheels were on the deck, the pilot pushed the collective lever down to the bottom of its travel so the rotor blades went into negative pitch forcing the helicopter to 'stick' to the deck. He then engaged the hydraulic harpoon 'hold down' into the grid in the flight deck and tensioned it. Only then could he shut down the engines and rotors. Landings in this sort of weather were particularly challenging at night.

I met the aircrew as they walked into the aircraft hangar and their radar had indeed showed quite a large number of significantly sized icebergs about fifty miles to the south of our intended track so nothing to worry about there. But more importantly there were at least two large ones close to our track about ninety miles ahead.

Next day I had the Morning Watch as normal and was able to see the dawn break with the usual bright orange flash heralding the start of a new day. The mountains of South Georgia on our starboard side were gradually being exposed to

the sunlight, first the summits and then downwards, awesome in their enormous grandeur and magnificence. I checked the Captain's Night Order Book for what time he wanted calling. There were icebergs inshore, probably 'grounded', but it was all clear ahead. I checked the Ship's Log for the previous day's iceberg sighting by the Lynx crew. We had passed close by them at 22.10 the previous evening when it was dark. Their position had been monitored and plotted on the chart over the last twelve hours and were seen to be tracking north west. I called the Captain on the intercom and made the standard report. The promise of a new day on this pristine island of South Georgia and the opportunity of paying my respects to the great man again, at his graveside, filled me with 'a good to be alive' feeling. "Let's face it" I thought, "How many people get to visit Shackleton's grave in one of the remotest places on earth?" And here I was about to do it for a second time. After handing over the watch at 0800 I tucked into a hearty breakfast of scrambled egg, bacon, sausage and beans. We would be dropping anchor off KEP at around 1100.

Formalities over, I caught up with the cemetery party as they were walking through the Grytviken ruins, fending off the odd Fur Seal here and there with my walking pole. Much remained as it was during my last visit in 1987. On approaching the cemetery there were Fur seals everywhere. Someone had left the gate open in spite of the clear signs to the contrary. Select cruise ships were visiting here with increasing frequency and there was a danger that this area would become overrun with tourists so a system of licences had been introduced by the local Government. But there was still the potential for long term harm to the environment, the flora and fauna.

There was a short delay while the Fur seals were cornered and ushered out! Alexandra said: 'You know, he was on his way back to the UK for burial, escorted by fellow explorer Leonard Hussey, when his wife, Emily, came to the realisation that Ernest would probably like to be buried on South Georgia, as quoted in a

telegram to Hussey, "amongst the mystic crags and glaciers of the island in the Southern Ocean which had meant so much to him".

This request from Emily reached Hussey while on a short port call in Montevideo where the authorities there had staged a memorial service for him with full military honours. So on 15 February 1922 Hussey set off to return to South Georgia with Shackleton's body onboard the steamer WOODVILLE. The funeral service that was to be held in St Paul's Cathedral on 2 March 1922 went ahead as a memorial service, at which the King and other members of the Royal Family were represented. Finally, Shackleton was laid to rest here in the Sealers' and Whalers' cemetery on 5 March, two months after his death, following a heart attack. Alexandra was sure her Grandfather would have wholeheartedly welcomed this change of plan, being amongst friends and at rest on the island that witnessed his greatest achievement.

We arrived back at the KEP jetty where the ship's motor launch was waiting for us. I collected the outgoing mail from 'Posty' and we said our goodbyes. We were soon on our way back to the ship, looking picture postcard perfect, with her red hull, yellow funnel and white upperworks reflecting brightly on the surface with the brilliantly white snow-capped mountains behind.

[Ed: The full version of this article can be found on the website, and I hope to persuade Michael to write the continuation another time.]



HMS Endurance at KEP

HOW TO USE THE WEBSITE AND DATABASE

Henry Fitzhugh, Webmaster & Database Manager

The Club's website that was developed from 2016 is extremely powerful and comprehensive, and is available for Members' use at any time. This article describes what information is available and what you can get directly from the site, as well as what I can provide upon request from the underlying database.

Let's start with **what you can find for yourselves**. It is assumed that Members have Word and a PDF Acrobat Reader. The latter can easily be downloaded by Googling its name and downloading from adobe.com.

Begin by logging in to the Members' Website, <https://20-ghost.org/> If you have never logged in or have any difficulty, email henryfitzhugh@talktalk.net.

- On the **Members' Area** page, before any further searching, just below the picture of 3 cars, there is a tab to download the **Members & Cars List** for the current year. Members are sent a hard copy of this each year, but it can always be downloaded here in PDF, which is searchable by keying **Ctrl+F** and filling in a search term.

Members	Search
Upcoming Events	
Past Events	
Club News	
New Members and Cars	
News & Record	
List of Members	
List of Vehicles	
Committee	
Merchandise	
Club Trophies & Winners	
Club Insurances	
Statutory & Legal	
Committee Documents	

- Near the top of the screen, click on a tab **Members** and see a number of tabs drop down from it, as on the left.

- Upcoming Events** will give all of the flyers and booking forms.

- Next on the dropdown, **Past Events** show the same for all past events, often of interest for any reason.

- Further down the menu, **News & Record** shows all the issues of N&R and its predecessors back to 1959, as well as the **Australian Gazette**. On a particular issue, under the picture of the first page, choose **Read More...**, and then **Click here to Download** at the bottom of the screen to get the issue in PDF, which is searchable. The keys **Ctrl+F** will produce a search box in which to insert a search term.

- The first document shown under **News & Record** is a **Table of Contents** for all issues, downloadable as above in Word, which is searchable. Titles, Chassis numbers, technical articles and book reviews are listed.

- The next dropdown **List of Members** gives all of the Members in alphabetical order, with a search box. Putting something referring to a Member such as a surname, first name, part of an email address, or indeed most things that differentiate Members, will give all those that contain the search term. Clicking on a specific Member will give the **vehicles owned**, and all address and contact information. These data are all personal and must not be released outside the Club membership. **Clicking on a vehicle** will give all its data.

- The following dropdown **List of Vehicles** will give all those in the database, with model, year, chassis and registration numbers, and colour. Filling in the **Search Box** with any of that information pertaining to a particular vehicle will call it up – even incomplete numbers or text will find all vehicles containing the information given. All photos and documents of the cars will be shown. Clicking on one **photo or document** will enable it to be downloaded and then saved as usual.

- Following tabs give **Committee Members**, **Merchandise for Sale**, and **Description of Club Trophies & Winners**, the last giving the year, name of winner, and chassis number if appropriate.

- **Club Insurances, Statutory & Legal Notices** follow to complete the dropdown tab. Details of Club insurance on Tours are contained therein.

- Returning to the top of the **Members' Area** page, go left to the **Pre-War Rolls-Royce Cars** tab. On its dropdown there is **History of Each Pre-War Model**, and a further tab **Chassis Series**. At the bottom of that page is a click box for the Word document **Rolls-Royce pre-1940 Chassis Series** in which every chassis number is covered. A great deal of information is given on the history of modifications and developments on each model.

- For example, from your own chassis number, the **Chassis Series** mentioned above will tell you other chassis numbers near to yours on off-test date, and a search on chassis numbers, using just the lead figures, would tell you whether any vehicles like yours were in the Club. A simple search on **year of manufacture** would probably suffice.

What can be found upon application to the Database Manager

The database is far more comprehensive than appears just from the pages above available direct to Members. Much more can be found for Members by asking the Database Manager for it, and the following are the important types available. Contact henryfitzhugh@talktalk.net for any query.

All of the **Histories** of the vehicles can be searched at once, revealing upon search, for example, that 74 cars have nickel radiators, or how many have replica bodies. Vehicles can easily be searched by body builder, registration number, chassis or engine number. All of the descriptions of colours can be searched. For example, there are 52 vehicles in Black and Yellow, but only three that are Purple and, mercifully, none that is Gold. Sadly, there are only five shooting brakes and nine hearses. It is not recorded whether the latter are for hire or loan, but they could be contacted by the means described above. All of the common body styles are searchable, but

searchers must be aware of the multitude of different names used.

Finding the owners of any particular model is often useful. Your correspondent once sent a special maintenance manual to all of the owners of 25/30s. This could be very useful for finding Members from which to get specific model advice. Moreover, with some work, all of the owners within a distance of a certain place could be found.

All of the back issues of **News & Record**, and its predecessors back to 1959, as well as the **Australian Gazette**, can be searched at once, with a list of occurrences of a search phrase presented. You might like to find out what your car was doing in the 1960s, and who some of the previous owners were. Many pictures of vehicles in action are buried in very old articles, and these are almost always findable from their chassis number.

Members can be sorted by postcodes, county, country or any other address parameter. Some Members have used this to meet fellow Members in remote parts of Australia.

Any photo in the Archive, and there are thousands, can be located, provided its title or filing information contains something meaningful, like a name, number, location or whatever.

Specialised communication between and with Members can be achieved with email address lists constructed according to criteria like owners of particular models, members living in specific areas, vehicles of a certain age, or whatever. It is also possible to produce mailing labels for groups of Members' postal addresses if required.

The Club receives a steady stream of enquiries from non-members regarding particular cars. We try to answer all of these within the bounds of GDPR. Recently, an existing Member was reunited with an old photo album from the 1960s containing thirteen photos of the Member's car.

In summary, for seekers of knowledge, the best route is first to try the website, and if that is not fully satisfying, then ask the Database Manager. There is a good chance it will come directly, or a workaround can be constructed to find it.

A COMPARISON

Fokko Keuning

Now that I own a PII Continental 1933 Barker saloon and a PIII 1937 H.J. Mulliner saloon I am sometimes asked which of the two is the better car. The answer to this seemingly simple question may be a bit more convoluted than you think. Of course you know that in order to compare two objects, they should have at least have some similarity but should not be identical. There is little to be gained by comparing two brand new golf balls from the same production batch. It is also not very rewarding to compare an elephant with a ballistic missile, other than to find that they are both likely to be grey and can make a lot of noise. When trying to make a comparison the mind runs the gamut of similarities. In our case this is rather simple: both objects are cars, both are saloons, both date from the pre-war period and most importantly, they are both Rolls-Royce. That they also have four wheels, an engine and a steering wheel is irrelevant. We have found our supreme similarity. If it were a mathematical exercise, which it is obviously not, we would have found the greatest common denominator. And now things are going to go wrong. Why, you may ask. Well, according to doctrine all Rolls-Royce cars are the best in the world. So logic dictates that both cars are the best and one cannot be better than the other. We have not yet progressed to grasp the concept of “bestest” but judging by the latest commercials, we may soon do. Our comparison has resulted in this rather inane result. How disappointing. Frankly, it is my own fault, because I let myself be influenced by doctrine and logical thinking. What is it they say nowadays: try to think out of the box. Critical, emphatically or what? You will realise I only mention these concepts (gleaned from the little known work: Basic philosophical thought easily explained for the under fives, by Prof. Dr. Z. Kowalsky) to hide the fact that I am not very good at any thinking, of whatever sort. So rather than comparing the cars on quality, we can perhaps try to compare them on character. Now I will tell you: the PII is a horse and the PIII an aeroplane. What drivel you will perhaps exclaim or you might rightly question how I can possibly vent such opinions when it is evident that I know nothing about horses and that I am not a pilot. To this I could respond that I briefly tried to ride a pony when I was in my teens and that I have made numerous flights, albeit as a passenger. But that would be completely beside the point. Because the fact is that it is so much easier to formulate an opinion on a subject if one knows nothing about it.

For instance, if you were to ask an eminent scientist about the dangers of CO₂ emissions, the answer would be extremely lengthy and nigh to incomprehensible. What is more, when you were to pose the same question to another eminent scientist, the answer would also be lengthy but the conclusion different. That is why the world at large has realised it is more rewarding to put such questions to, say, a sixteen year old girl from Sweden. So a horse and an aeroplane it is.

If one sees a PII Continental, the long, long bonnet attracts attention. It is sleek and gives a powerful impression. Like the neck of a horse. You are inclined to stroke it and to speak caressing words. With its low point of gravity, the car looks poised to burst into a gallop. You take the reins and off you go. The car groans and snorts and you thunder along, oblivious of any obstacle that may be in your way. You have to sit tight, you have to try to control this mighty beast and you start to sweat. Double clutch and double de-clutch, take the whip and you arrive ahead of anybody else. By contrast, the PIII looks almost squat but inside everything is airy with a whiff of high tech. You survey a myriad of switches and depress the starter. The mighty engine purrs into life. You move, faster and faster and you have the sensation that you are taking off. And you do, you are above mere mortals. You sit high above the traffic, which parts like the Red Sea to grant you passage. You are king of the road. You do not sweat, you do not double clutch, or, God forbid, double de-clutch. You glide, you swoop, the controls are precise, you have no fear of flying. You are the pinnacle. You look through your cockpit window and see that you are being overtaken by a PII Continental! But what do you care. You have arrived.

MEMBERS' NEWS

New Members welcomed to the Club – Details on the Website

Gary and Sheryl Hunter, California, USA 1911 SG chassis no. 1830; 1923 SG chassis no. 327KG	Tom and Linda Jones, Cornwall, UK 20hp, chassis no. GXL39
Woytek and Penny Kordel, Cheshire, UK 1931 20/25 hp chassis no. GNS65; 1932 PII Continental, chassis no. 60NS	G. Macpherson, Buckinghamshire, UK 1930 20/25 hp chassis no. GLR25
Markus S. and Jasmin Rieder, Germany. 1931 PII Continental chassis no. 11JS	Andrew and Andrea Whittaker, Lancashire, UK PII chassis no. 91RY
Steven K. Haines, USA. 1911 SG chassis no. 1513 (balloon car – see below); 1914 SG, chassis no. 35PB	

Victory in Concours: I am delighted to say that John Fasal won First Prize among the Silver Ghosts with the Patiala Car (32PP) at the RREC annual rally in 2019, and was also voted Best in Show at Hampton Court! Many, many congratulations!

Balloon cars

Chassis number 1513 was 'On Test' on 16th January 1911. The completed chassis was despatched on 10th March 1911 to Barker & Co for fitting Landaulette coachwork after being ordered by JB Ferguson of Belfast in 1910 for Mrs William T Carter, of 2116 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Lucile Carter was the wife of William Carter who inherited a large fortune in 1893 on the death of his father, who had coal and iron interests and owned mines in Carbon County, Pennsylvania. Carter and his family were passengers on the *Titanic* during her maiden voyage when she hit an iceberg on 14th April 1912. Mrs Carter and her children left the ship in a lifeboat and later boarded the *Carpathia* which was rescuing survivors. There she found her husband who had managed to find a place in another lifeboat together with Joseph Bruce Ismay, a director of the White Star Line. Carter and his wife were divorced in June 1914. Mrs Carter alleged that her husband had deserted her and their children aboard *Titanic* and had shown signs of unpredictable behaviour and mental and physical abusiveness. Mrs Carter swiftly remarried.

At present, nothing is known about the history of the car in the inter-War years. Then, by 1960, the car had passed into the ownership of Mr M George of Massachusetts. In 1968, 1513 was acquired in a dishevelled condition by the well-known Rolls-Royce collector, Millard Newman of Florida, for US\$7,500. Around 1970 Millard supervised the construction of two replicas of the Hon Charles Rolls' 'Balloon car' by Wilkinson & Sons of Derby. Charles Rolls was a keen balloonist as well as an automobile enthusiast. In 1908 he commissioned HJ Mulliner to create a special body that was originally termed a Victoria de Luxe on chassis number 60785. The body was conceived as a Two-Seater with a cape top and a long platform behind the seats, where Rolls' balloon basket could be loaded at the conclusion of a flight. This bespoke concoction became known as the famous 'Balloon car'. The replicas also provided for a dickey seat on the platform where the balloon would have rested.

Of Millard Newman's two replicas, one went to the Harrah Collection in Reno, Nevada, while Newman kept the second car (1513). After restoration, 1513 won 'Best of Show' at the RROC's concours at Greenfield Village. In 1973, Newman sold 1513 for US\$52,500 to S Prestley Blake, co-founder of Friendly Ice Cream and an early major collector of prestigious antique and classic cars. Blake kept 1513

until August 1991, when he sold it for US\$650,000 to fellow Rolls-Royce enthusiast Richard J Solove, who maintained and showed the car. Under his ownership, 1513 earned AACA National First honours and took first place in the Early Ghost class at the Rolls-Royce Owners Club annual meet in Monterey, California in 1991. In August 2011 at an RM Sotheby's auction in Monterey, in its red livery, 1513 was sold by Richard Solve's estate and acquired by the Frederiksen Collection in Denmark (for US\$484,000) and repainted aubergine. This collection was dispersed by Bonhams in September 2015 when the car was acquired (for US\$487,963) by the current owner, Steven Haines. Since then, the car's transmission and engine have been brought up to factory specifications and 1513 has been toured in the United States. On a journey in 2016 a distance of 2,500 miles was covered in three weeks on the Red Rock Rendezvous in Wisconsin, Minnesota and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. In 2017, 1513 participated in an SGA tour in Quebec for two weeks. Looking to the future, the owner intends refreshing the coachwork and placing a period balloon basket on the back deck of the car, to hide luggage on progressive long tours. In memory of the car's first owner, 1513 has been affectionately named 'Lucie'.

20-GHOST CLUB FINALLY FINDS A HOME!

John Redmill

After 70 years as homeless itinerants, the 20-Ghost Club and its members finally have a home – at The Hunt House, the headquarters of both the Sir Henry Royce Memorial Foundation and the RREC, in Paulersbury, Northamptonshire. I'm not for a moment suggesting that any of you have actually been sleeping in your RRs (although I know some of you have done stranger things than that); no, the room dedicated to the Club is to be the repository of our precious trophies, books, and other valuables, and also for small meetings, etc. Your loyal attendance at many Club events over the years has raised the sum of £10,000 that the Committee, on your behalf, presented to The Hunt House for this work, and which is very much appreciated.

The Hunt House is a handsome Grade II listed 3-storey house built around the middle of the 19th century in a late-Georgian style as the headquarters of the Duke of Grafton's Hunt, perhaps for His Master of the Hunt. Built of the local greyish limestone ashlar with rust-coloured ironstone corner quoins and dressings to the openings, and with a steeply pitched slate roof and two large chimneystacks, it is one of the most distinctive buildings in the village. The large courtyard entered through gates to the south, and the extension to the west, are probably originally coeval with the main house but have been greatly altered in recent years, particularly after the SHRMF acquired it in 1978. Its interior is rather simple, as befits its original use and occupancy. The ground floor room immediately to the left (west) of the main front door onto the High Street, and perhaps therefore originally the main reception room, had become a junk room and is the room designated for the 20-Ghost Club. About 4.5 metres (15 feet) square, with a single sash window facing south onto the High Street, it has a relatively low ceiling and a simple grey marble chimneypiece. It also has a walk-in safe – very useful for our trophies, we thought. About 20 years ago the SHRMF provided a cabinet in the Library for the 20 Ghost Club's books and archives, and quite recently Philip Hall suggested to Jane Pedler, when she was Chairman of the SHRMF, that the Club could make use of the room when it deposited the Steuben Trophy and other items in The Hunt House.

So nearly two years ago John Stuttard asked me if I would look at the room and produce a scheme for its improvement and redecoration. When I first saw it, my heart sank – how dreary it seemed, with totally unsuitable furniture, especially the ugly hanging cabinets each side of the fireplace, and a soulless colour scheme. So I produced a design proposing what I felt would be appropriate for a mid-Victorian gentleman's study, for the Committee to consider, with drawings and sample boards of wallpapers, colours, curtain fabrics, new lighting, and so on, as visuals. It's always best to suggest the most 'authentic'

scheme and to then gradually reduce it if necessary, particularly if the costs proved too much - which they did. Nor had we realised that two issues would then arise to delay the works – the unavailability of the chosen builder, and the complications of whether VAT would have to be paid or not. Both took well over a year to resolve.

But now the main works have been done; while the original proposed scheme has indeed been reduced – the new cabinets were simplified, and yellow paint is much cheaper than yellow wallpaper if not so authentically ‘Georgian’ for instance. All the same, I’m pleased that the overall appearance and effect is very much what I’d intended it would be. My suggestion that the panelled doors be painted dark brown to emulate expensive mahogany, as was done throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, was first received with some scepticism. But I persevered, it was done – and I’m so relieved that everyone seems delighted with the result. Jane Pedler very kindly contributed a large carpet for the room, but there are still some items needed to complete it: the window needs curtains to tone in with the yellow walls, so preferably of mainly grey fabric, two or three table lamps, and four or six chairs, and two small armchairs, relevant paintings, and a mirror for above the chimneypiece – might anyone have something they think could be suitable for the Committee to consider? When those are in place the room will be properly finished, and a visit can be arranged for Club members to see their room, as part of a future event.



Before: North wall and chimneypiece



Now: New cabinets, paint cleaned off chimneypiece, etc



Before: Looking west, with door to Strong Room



Now: Walls & door painted, new radiator case, carpet

OBITUARY: TIM FORREST

Our Chairman, Ken Forbes, writes:

Tim's smiling face alongside his beloved Nellie on the cover of this edition of N&R reflects our collective affection for him personally and his enthusiasm for the Club. It will have brought to mind our own individual memories of Tim, which are guaranteed to centre on his enthusiasm and help he will have given us at some point.

Born in 1943, he had a very successful business career and was a founding Partner in Andersen Consulting. Retiring in 1999 enabled him to devote more time to immersing himself in Silver Ghost matters.

Since the announcement before Christmas that Tim had finally lost his battle with cancer, tributes both from 20-Ghost Club members and associates have continued to pour in. The universal theme has been what a true enthusiast and lovely person he was – always ready to help, advise and pass on his wide knowledge of our cars. A true gentleman, who was guaranteed to make people welcome at any event and widely respected both within the Club and in the old car world. He would retain detailed knowledge and records of cars he came across and would often have more knowledge of the history of a car than the owners themselves. His contribution to the Club, along with Susie, was immense over the 30 years he was a member. This was exemplified in his major contributions to the 70th Anniversary book, which he was determined to complete, despite his failing health. That there are 70 references to him and his cars in the book speaks volumes for his involvement in all aspects of the Club over an extended period.

His knowledge and experience came from all aspects of owning a pre-war Rolls Royce - organising, conserving, restoring, driving and research, initially with a 20HP, before he acquired his beloved 1912 Silver Ghost, 'Nellie', which won the Club's Phoenix Trophy in 1992. Once he had Nellie back to perfect working condition, he would drive it extensively, undertaking two anniversary Alpine tours, a 4,000 mile Australian Outback Tour and the London to Edinburgh Top gear Re-enactment, along with numerous Club tours. Susie would always be by his side. They were often joined by their two daughters, Erica and Katie, smiling away in the back seat. Tim was immensely proud to see Katie take on the care and driving of Nellie in the last few years and many of us have lovely pictures of them three abreast in the front seat, full of smiles. Tim did a series of videos of touring maintenance requirements for Katie to follow, so her Dad is always with her when out in the car on her own.

He also undertook two superb prize-winning Silver Ghost restorations in this period, starting with 1912 Silver Ghost 2121, taking the Club's Phoenix Trophy in 1998 and both the RREC and 20-Ghost Club's Concours the following year, for which he also won the Club's Large Horsepower Trophy in 2015. Tim's next project was 1924 Silver Ghost 16RM, a two-door 'All-Weather' Tourer, which went on to win the RREC and 20-Ghost Club Concours yet again and the Phoenix Trophy in 2017.



Tim receiving the Large Power HP Trophy (for 16RM) from Brian Fidler in 2017

He made contact with the Australian Chapter whilst on a business trip in the early 1990s and maintained close ties thereafter. He was also widely respected for his detailed research on RR matters and his contributions to the Roycean.

A Committee Member for 22 years and Chairman for 6 years, he was made a Vice-President, in recognition of his great contribution to the club over an extended period. With Susie, they held the Club together in the late 1990s, rescuing News & Record from the doldrums, promoting and raising the profile by organising key milestone events in Rolls Royce history, as well as organising and assisting with many tours, AGMs and Annual Dinners. He delighted in producing wonderful menu covers for these. He maintained close relations with Rolls Royce Motor Company and made many friends there. Tim was always a lively contributor at meetings, with a keen eye on the future of the Club.

A true stalwart of the Club and pre-eminent Silver Ghost enthusiast, he will be sadly missed by members and friends worldwide. There will be a Memorial Service at Tim's local church sometime after Easter, with details to follow.

We all look forward to seeing his legacy live on through Susie, Katie and Erica at future events with Nellie and we will enjoy seeing them all.



Tim at the wheel of Nellie in Regent Street, celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Spirit of Ecstasy, with Katie and Susie beside him.

COMING EVENTS

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

6th March 2020

70th Anniversary AGM and Annual Dinner, Goldsmiths' Hall, London (Jo Naismith)

15-18 May 2020

Tour of South Derbyshire with Irish Georgian Society (Jimmy Valentine and John Redmill)

18 April 2020

Spring Lunch at Armsworth Park House (Strone Macpherson) (flyer attached)

13-25 June 2020 (or 16-28 June) 2020

A 12-night tour of Scotland and the Isles (Ken Forbes)

22-24 July 2020

Concours and two-night stay at Mallory Court Warwickshire (Brian Fidler) (flyer attached)

6-11 September 2020

Tour of Southern Holland and Belgium (Ernest van Arendonk) (flyer attached)

14-16 September 2020

Tour to Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire, with private tour of the Memorial Flight (numbers for this are very limited and it is at present full, but please contact John Snook if you would like to go on the reserve list john@jsnook.plus.com)

Late September

Autumn Lunch

13 March 2021

AGM and dinner, Oxford (Brian Fidler)

May 2021

Tour with Irish Georgian Society (Jimmy Valentine and John Redmill)

11th -26th June 2021

The Glories of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Sir John Stuttard and Angelika Elliott)

July 2021 Five nights

London to Edinburgh Top Gear Run (Nick Naismith)

August/September 2021

Tour of Wiltshire, based near Stourhead (Johnnie Gallup)