



News & Record



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

Issue 60 June 2020

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PRESIDENT: HRH The Duke of Gloucester

CHAIRMAN: Ken Forbes kennethforbes@btinternet.com

HON. VICE-PRESIDENTS:

Brian Fidler brianhfidler@aol.com

John L Kennedy kaka943@icloud.com

Sir John Stuttard johnstuttard@btinternet.com

Jimmy Valentine f.valentine215@btinternet.com

COMPANY SECRETARY:

Brian Fidler brianhfidler@aol.com

TREASURER: Philip Hall 10 Lodge Park, Whittlebury, Towcester, Northants, NN12 8XG Pah.rr@btinternet.com

OTHER UK DIRECTORS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Ashley Carmichael Ashley@aacarmichael.co.uk

Roland Duce roland@thurgartonpriory.co.uk

Rosemary Jeffreys News & Record Editor 56 Argyle Street, London WC1H 8ER rosemaryjeffreys@talktalk.net

Fokko Keuning fwf.keuning@gmail.com

Strone Macpherson strone@stronemacpherson.com

Doug Magee dmagee@magner.com

Webmaster and Database Manager: Dr Henry Fitzhugh, henryfitzhugh@talktalk.net

Deputy Editor: Johnnie Gallop jgallop66@gmail.com

AUSTRALIAN CHAPTER:

CHAIRMAN:

Peter Crauford

VICE-CHAIRMAN:

David Davis

HON. SECRETARY:

Ian Berg

TREASURER:

Bruce Humphries

Nick Naismith nick@nicknaismith.com

Brian Palmer brian@bandjpalmer.com

John R Redmill barred@indigo.ie

Graham Tyson Membership Secretary

The Old Vicarage, St Minver, nr Wadebridge, Cornwall PL27 6QH
gtyson@outlook.com

FOR FULL CONTACT DETAILS PLEASE SEE THE CURRENT MEMBERS LIST ON THE WEBSITE.

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EDITORIAL

In this issue, we have fewer reports of events than usual at this time of year, and more articles about other things. The first three months of the driving season have of course been dominated by Covid-19, and most events have had to be postponed. I must emphasise that they are only postponed, not cancelled: we are now planning to run the tour to Scotland in September 2021, instead of June this year, and the Spring Lunch 2020 will be combined with the Spring Lunch 2021. The tour with the Irish Georgians is deferred to May 2021, as is John Snooks' event. There is one which may be able to take place this year: the two nighter in Warwickshire organised by Brian Fidler, originally scheduled for July, but which we are now hoping to run, if the hotel can accommodate us, at the end of September/early October, possibly combined with the Autumn Lunch. In Brian's words, we will move mountains to make it happen. Things are too fluid at the moment to produce a flyer and booking form, but do keep an eye on your emails and the website for updates. The only 'flyer' with this issue is a list of corrections to the Book: please pop it in your copy.

I am delighted to say that Ken and Jane Forbes made it back safely from South Africa, having had an extended stay there due to the country being locked down very quickly. They were accommodated by friends who I am delighted to say immediately joined the Club, and we look forward to getting to know Karl and Tilly Reitz as soon as possible.

I hope that you are managing to get out with your cars and do some driving in the glorious weather. Henry and I went out as soon as it was possible to do so, and went walking in the lovely Kent countryside, which was an absolute joy. Dragonfly Rally Plates have produced stay at home rally plates, which we immediately acquired, and Ken took his cars on a Stay at Home drive around the field.

I felt strongly that it was important to produce a *News and Record* in June, as usual, and I am delighted that our printers, Parchments, were able to oblige, printing and sending the magazine

out for us (I am however sending only a PDF to Australia for distribution there, as suggested). I am so grateful to all authors for providing me with their articles illustrated with great photos. You will find a report of the only event so far, this year's AGM, written in his inimitable style by John Redmill. It is good to think back on the splendours of the Dinner lit by chandeliers with real candles, the gold objects of the Goldsmiths glowing behind us, excellent food and drink and, most important of all, excellent company. John Stuttard introduced me that evening to a new member, Alain Niepcéron and his wife Dany. Alain told me that he had a passion for 1930s Leicas, and readily agreed to write an article about them. I found it fascinating, and I think you will agree that they have a lot in common with our cars. Mary Narvell has shared her thoughts on their 1939 Wraith acquiring a step-sister: a beautiful new addition to their nursery, a Phantom II Continental. I guarantee that her article will bring cheer to all households.

A major event celebrated in this issue is the acquisition by one of our members of AX-201, the original Silver Ghost. Johnnie Gallop, our new Deputy Editor, describes how she came into the Club, and I put together (with a lot of help) a short piece about her years with the Hanburys. We are extremely fortunate that Sir Michael Kadoorie came forward and rescued her from being taken outside the UK. Most importantly, he is keen for her to be driven again, and we are all longing to see her on the road again – let us hope for Scotland next year.

Johnnie has also written a lovely article about the Springfield cars, whose centenary is commemorated this year. I enjoyed reading it very much, and I think you will too.

Nigel Hughes sent me an article about 'close plating' before the lock-down, from which I learnt a lot, and we have several items in Members' News, as well as two book reviews from Sir John Stuttard. May I wish you all well in these changing times, and please keep your news rolling in!

2020 AGM & DINNER GOLDSMITHS' HALL

John Redmill

6 March 2020



The assembled throng in the splendour of the Goldsmiths' Hall. Photo by Colin Hughes

‘The last shall be first, and the first shall be last’ is surely one of the best known sayings from the Bible. I do hope you won’t be offended, in our present circumstances, if I use these words to start this account of our AGM and Dinner on 6 March, as they do seem somewhat apposite for what then happened only a week or so later. I’m not of course using them in their original meaning, but purely because this event was our most recent to take place, and little were we to know that it, the first event of 2020, would immediately become the last we’d have for quite some time. But, hey, we went out with the most enormous bang, rather than a pathetic little whimper, totally due to all the stunning planning and arrangements made by Jo Naismith – what a triumph! This was also her first time to do this for the Club, having only recently accepted this chore from Susie Forrest – and what an act that was to have to follow! But so good was everything that there’s no need for her to worry about not being asked to do this again in 2021, and 2022, and 2023, and [repeat continuously every year until whenever].

The venue, the Goldsmiths’ Hall, is close to the Bank of England and the Mansion House, and lies in the shadow of St Paul’s Cathedral. Four buildings of truly Roman magnificence, together they symbolise the power and majesty of the City of London over many centuries, and continue to do so today. It’s the third building on this site for the Goldsmiths’ Company, who first occupied the site in 1339. Nothing is known about this Hall or its appearance, and it was completely rebuilt in 1634 during the reign of Charles I, only to be extensively rebuilt after being badly damaged in the Great Fire of London of 1666. This was then demolished in the 1820s to be replaced by the present building from the architect Philip Hardwick. His grand English Baroque / Neo-Classical design perfectly suited the taste and aspirations of both the period and the Goldsmiths, and excellently captures the spirit of grandest Renaissance *palazzi* of Florence and Rome. Laid out around a huge central staircase, just like many of the London club buildings of the same date in Pall Mall, the sumptuously lavish [and almost out-of-scale] interiors create the grandest effect possible, and reflect the



Champagne reception graced by photos on screen. Photo by Rosemary Jeffreys

Goldsmiths' wealth – a real case of 'if you've got it – flaunt it' and why not?

By the time we'd all passed through the noble entrance and swept up the Grand Staircase [an Imperial one, of course], we were all in the mood for the champagne reception which started the Club's 70th anniversary celebrations. Unfortunately it wasn't very long before our

Chairman, Ken Forbes, announced that he was about to open the 70th AGM and welcome our Hon President, HRH The Duke of Gloucester, and the other guests. He then skilfully whistled through the preliminaries, thanking Sir John Stuttard for compiling the great 70th Anniversary Book for us all, Jonathan McCullough for designing it, and Jo Naismith for organising the whole evening. He also recorded the sad loss of



Ken's address. Photo by Colin Hughes

two of our most loyal members, Tim Forrest and Lenox Jamieson, both of whom had done so much for the Club over many years. The Annual Accounts were approved, the 2019 events were recalled, and the Directors and Committee were all re-elected. Johnnie Gallop accepted the invitation to become a Committee member, and to assist our Editor in the production of *'News & Record'*. I can confirm from my time as Editor that it is a great help to have a sub-Editor /Assistant. But, Rosemary, I won't be able to help you if Johnnie starts doing what mine did – purring loudly while rolling all over the computer keyboard; if he does, just put the photographs in your next *N&R* please, for us all to enjoy.

Ken also reported that our room at The Hunt House has been completed, and now provides a permanent home for all our documents, books and records. Susie Forrest was then especially thanked for all her various contributions to the life of the Club over the last 25 years and, in recognition of this, has been made an Honorary member of the Club. He then outlined the events organised for the year.

With no further business, the AGM was then formally closed - and DINNER was announced!! We all moved into the Hall, overwhelmingly grand and reminiscent of Ancient Rome, where the well-trained staff soon placed a superb dinner

before us all, and the Rev'd Canon Paul Wright said Grace. In the present time of lock-down home catering, recollections of the Marinated Salmon, that perfect Fillet of Beef, and the concluding Apple Tart with Bay Leaf Ice-cream and Petit Fours now drift into my mind, rather than those of Ancient Rome. Between animated conversations with both old and new friends, we had time to enjoy this wonderful space, stunningly redecorated in 1871, and to find the name and coat-of-arms of the architect Philip Hardwick in one of the stained –glass windows. Some absolutely splendid pieces of the Goldsmiths' vast collection of plate looked back down on us from their horizontal [side] boards high above the top table, but what was even more splendid [and a very rare sight now, what with 'Elf and Safety'] was the blaze of candles, hundreds of them, flickering in the enormous glittering chandeliers and filling the whole space with the most wonderful warm light.

All too soon the dinner was over, and Ken called us to our feet for the Toasts, and then the final formality, the presentation of the awards by our Hon President HRH Prince Richard, The Duke of Gloucester, to complete this real humdinger of an evening. Our fond farewells were made, with many anticipations for the forthcoming events of the year – the Spring Lunch, the Tour of Derbyshire's country houses with the Irish



One of the glorious chandeliers, with real candles. Photo by Rosemary Jeffreys

Georgian Society, the 2 interwoven tours of Scotland in June, the list goes on. Little were we to know, as we watched all those scores of candles being carefully extinguished, one by one, by a young woman from the top of a cherry-picker [!], what would, only just over a week later, begin to engulf all those carefully made plans.

But - *courage, mes amis* - all is not lost. If I may also presume to paraphrase Sir Henry's famous response about Rolls Royces breaking down ---- - no, these events have NOT failed to proceed, but have merely been deferred to a somewhat later date so that we can then enjoy them even more.

So while this last event was our first event of 2020, this first event will most definitely not be our last; we will all be together again, and the sooner the better!

LIST OF TROPHIES & WINNERS:

Alpine

The Alpine Trophy is one of two cut glass decanters originally given by the Archduke Leopold Salvador of Austria as one of the prizes in the 1913 Austrian Alpenfahrt. It was won by Curt Friese for a fault free run and subsequently presented to the Club by Rolls-Royce Limited. Awarded each year to the owner of the car which achieves maximum marks based on the highest mileage coupled with the age of the car, it was awarded to **Gerald Davies** from Botswana, having done 6000 miles in his 1929 20HP. Sadly, Gerald was not able to attend, thus depriving



Gerald and Fran, on their first tour with the Club in 2018. Photo by Kimberly Hughes



Our President preparing to announce the Trophies.

Photo by Colin Hughes

everyone of seeing shorts and flip-flops teamed up with a DJ and bow tie.

Woodmansee:

The Woodmansee Trophy for the maximum mileage by a Silver Ghost was won by **Terry Bramall**, for 4500 miles in his 1914 Ghost, including to and from the Swiss Tour, and faultlessly up [and down] all the mountain passes.

Harding Rolls:

The Harding Rolls trophy for notable performance was awarded to **Gerald Davies**. Despite living in Botswana, Gerald toured extensively in UK, Spain, France and Switzerland in his 20HP....Lands End via N Wales, Picos mountains and Galicia in Spain, then rural France to Switzerland and back. Unshaken by mistaking the Last for the First - Lausanne for Lucerne, and arriving at the finish rather than the start, he drove 400 miles in a day to get to the start of the Swiss Tour on time.



Susie receiving the Stanley Sears Trophy. Photo by Colin Hughes

Stanley Sears:

The Stanley Sears Trophy was given to the Club by Stanley Sears in 1962 to be awarded to the member who, in the opinion of the Committee, contributed most by individual meritorious service to the Club. This year, there could only be one winner; for her dedicated service to the Club in her own right over 25 years – **Susie Forrest.**

Small Horsepower:

For the third year running, the mileage trophy for the Small Horsepower cars was won by **Henry**

Fitzhugh and Rosemary Jeffreys in one of their two 1937 25/30s, with 3447 miles.

Fergusson Wood Under 35:

This trophy can also be awarded to the most active new members of the club, so was therefore awarded to the very enthusiastic **Andrew & Pippa Walker.**



Andrew and Pippa receiving the trophy from HRH. Photo by Colin Hughes



Nigel Hughes receiving the Harry Watson Trophy. Photo by Colin Hughes



Fokko Keuning receiving the Brian Wootton Trophy. Photo by Colin Hughes

Fergusson Wood Photographic:

The Fergusson Wood Photographic Trophy is normally awarded for the best photograph or photographs taken recently by a member and published in News & Record. This year to acknowledge his great efforts made in sourcing period photographs for the 70th Anniversary book, it was awarded to **Tom Clarke**, for his invaluable contribution to its authenticity and relevance as a reference book.

Harry Watson:

For engineering accomplishment, it was awarded to **Nigel Hughes** for his contribution to the technical content of the 70th Anniversary book.

Phoenix:

For the restoration of an eligible car of sufficient merit awarded, for the Patiala car, to **John Fasal**.

Brian Wootton:

This is given for assistance on tours so, for his pastoral care of participants on his Swiss Tour, was awarded to **Fokko Keuning**.



John Fasal receiving the Phoenix Trophy. Photo by Colin Hughes

AX-201 THE SILVER GHOST

Johnnie Gallop



It was last summer when I read that AX-201 had been sold and, perhaps like many other members, I slightly pursed my lips. The suggestion was that the car had been acquired by an ‘unnamed American collector’ and the thought it might be ‘lost’ for a generation in a sealed-up private museum seemed very sad.

That said, it had always seemed rather odd that VW Group had been the prior owner. There had been something faintly undignified about the scramble for Rolls-Royce and Bentley brands when Vickers had off-loaded the company back in 1998. The fact that this, most important of Rolls-Royces, had ended up in the hands of the new owner of Bentley was, to my mind, incongruous.

Because AX-201 (known by registration rather than chassis number) is not just a Rolls-Royce,

nor even just a car. It is the epitome of what is best in life; of true excellence; of human prowess. If Armstrong’s ‘*One small step...*’ puts a lump in your throat, then so does AX-201. It’s the same thing.

One Christmas when I was very small, Mum and I watched the very silly film *Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines* on our black and white telly. It was one of those Christmas TV premieres back in the day. AX-201 had a starring part and my Mum said ‘*Look Johnnie, a Rolls-Royce! That’s the best car in the world.*’ Next day I used some Christmas money to buy the Matchbox model of a Silver Ghost. I was delighted. From then on I understood that Rolls-Royce was synonymous with the best. That’s what AX-201 means.

So imagine how I felt, well how we all felt, at this year’s club AGM when Ken Forbes announced



that, in fact, Sir Michael Kadoorie had bought AX-201, and then Michael stood to say a few words. He's bought it, P&A Wood will continue to fettle it, and he's going to rally it! You could hear the collective sigh of relief from all around the room! This is right. It is proper.

So, enough reverence, what's the story of this most wonderful motor car? Most of you reading this know it all anyway but I make no apology for writing it out again. Henry Royce made his first car in 1904 and had partnered with The Hon Charles Rolls by the end of that year. The newly founded Rolls-Royce concern being most ably managed by Claude Johnson.

The company's 40/50 hp chassis was first exhibited in Paris in 1906 but Press vehicles didn't emerge until May 1907. AX-201 (chassis number 60551) was, in fact the twelfth 40/50 chassis. So not the first Royce, not the first Rolls-Royce, nor even the first 40/50. Why, then, so special? That was down to Claude Johnson. The gorgeous Barker body was painted silver with silver plated fittings – a polished aluminium dashboard replaced the normal teak plank. And

the Press simply fell in love. The Autocar, April 27th 1907: *'It has been christened the "Silver Ghost" – silver because...the body is finished in aluminium paint, and "ghost" by reason of its extraordinary silence and stealthiness.'* Stealthiness! In an era when the automobile was infamous for its unreliability (the song *'Get out and get under'* wasn't written until 1913) Royce's engineering was without parallel, but in its guise as The Silver Ghost, AX-201 showcases the work of Claude Johnson at the top of his game. Johnson was not only a brilliant business manager but also a marketing genius – a trait not always shared with his fellow Edwardians. Charles Rolls always seems to be the underdog in this trio but, in fairness, had the good sense and acumen to bring them all together.

The Silver Ghost ran on and on throughout 1907 and, by July, Johnson focussed on breaking the 7,089 mile world record for a non-stop run (no breakdowns – other than punctures – with routine maintenance at the end of each day's run). The record was smashed; and AX-201 duly completed 15,000 miles on the 8th August (London to Glasgow 27 times). The RAC

recorded 14,371 miles as 'non-stop' despite the fact that the petrol tap had shaken itself closed at 629 miles! The Rolls-Royce legend was born.

AX-201 was sold by Rolls-Royce the following year. The new owner, Daniel Hanbury, looked after The Silver Ghost for forty years, and on his death the car was sold back to the company. Our first President, Stanley Sears, advised Rolls-Royce on the restoration of the car, which was then used for many publicity appearances throughout the 1950s and '60s.

In the 1970s and '80s it made several overseas trips – including tours of Australia and Canada. In 1977 Her Majesty The Queen inspected the car at Windsor Castle as part of her Silver Jubilee celebrations and a decade later it transported her and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh to the Rolls-Royce factory at Crewe.

By the late 1980s a fresh restoration was required and this time brothers Paul and Andy Wood of Essex were entrusted with the task, beginning their long and happy association with the car. Fully refurbished, AX-201 took centre stage on the Rolls-Royce stand at the 1990 motor show, some 83 years after her first motor show appearance!

Over the last two decades of VW ownership AX-201 has only rarely seen the light of day. You can understand that it didn't really fit with their Bentley brand.

But now the car has a new owner, who really appreciates the worth of *The Silver Ghost* and wants to show her off to the world once again. At the grand age of 113 years AX-201 has begun a new era of life on the road. Perhaps, somewhere, Claude Johnson is smiling.

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THE AUTOCAR. APRIL 27TH, 1907.

THE 40-50 H.P. SIX-CYLINDER ROLL-ROYCE.

By way of an attempt to carry the vexed question of high-tension magneto v. accumulator fed high-tension distributor ignition a little farther by practical test Mr. Claude Johnson offered to make for us a few trial runs with the 40-50 h.p. six-cylinder Rolls-Royce, which is fitted with Simms-Bosch high-tension magneto and the exquisitely made accumulator high-tension distributed Rolls-Royce ignitions. The run from town to Bexhill was made by way of Ewell, Burgh Heath, Reigate, Red Hill, Nutfield, Godstone, East Grinstead, Forest Row, Maresfield, and Ninfield, and after the trial runs on the private road the return journey was made by Lewes, Haywards Heath, Cuckfield, Handcross, taking Handcross Hill on the main Brighton Road, and into town by Reigate, Sutton, Mitcham, and Streatham. The impression made upon us by the running of this car during the short drive, which has been already briefly chronicled in *The Autocar*, was emphasised by our experiences of last Thursday week.

At whatever speed this car is being driven on its direct third there is *no* engine so far as sensation goes, nor are one's auditory nerves troubled driving or standing by a fuller sound than emanates from an eight-day clock. There is no realisation of driving propulsion; the feeling as the passenger sits either at front or back of the vehicle is one of being wafted through the landscape. We cannot refrain from describing the production of such an engine as this as a great triumph of engineering skill on the part of that engineering genius, Mr. Royce. It is impossible to convey anything like a clear idea of the running of this car, part of the excellence and luxury of which is undoubtedly due to the suppleness of the springs, the blades of which are much thinner and more numerous than is the rule.

On the downward journey, of course, there was nothing to trouble the car on its direct third in the shape of a climb, but on the return journey it sweepingly surmounted Handcross on its direct third, while Reigate was also taken on the same speed, the clutch being slipped very slightly just under the foot bridge,

and there only. When tuned right up to concert pitch, as it will be before it starts in the Scottish Reliability Trials, it will, we are convinced, take Reigate Hill from bottom to top without the slightest hesitation.

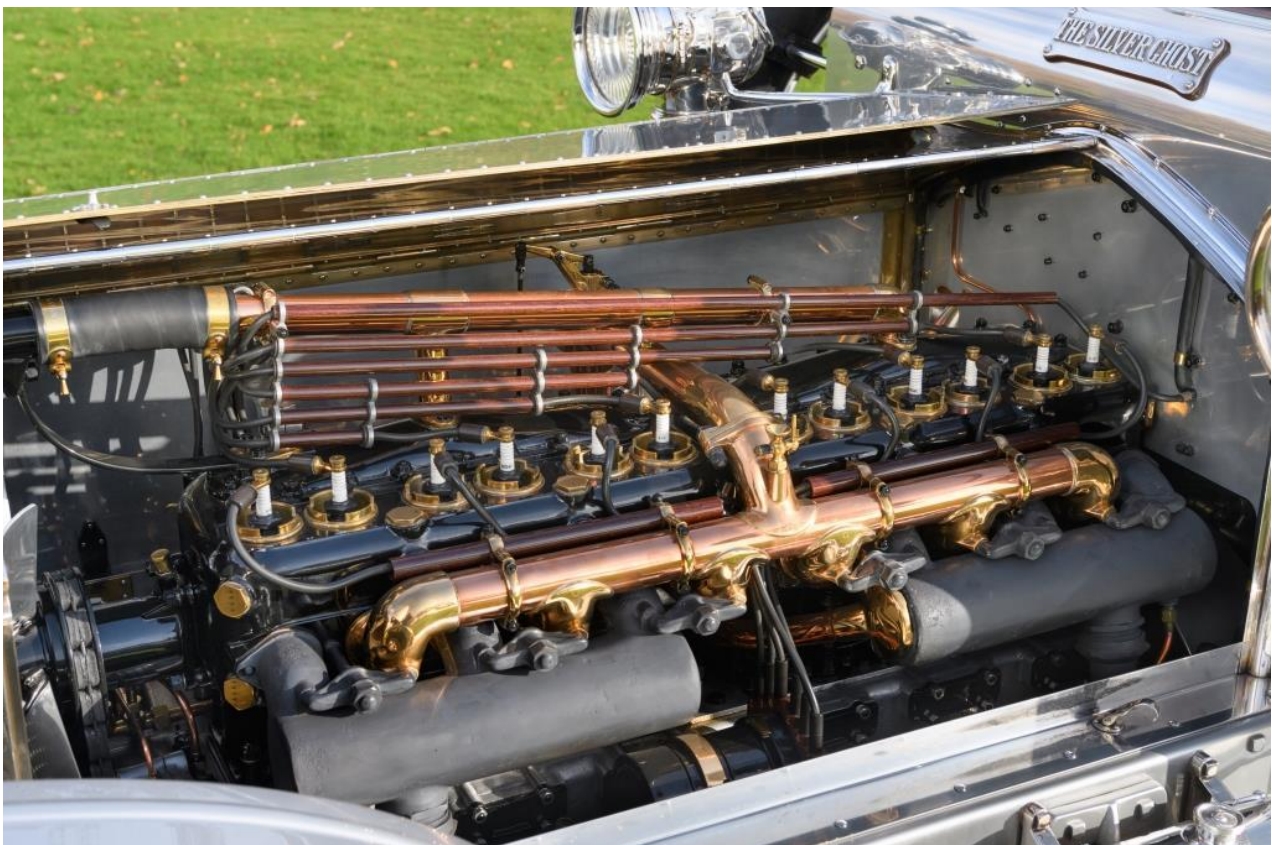
It should be noted that the ascents of the test hill, to which we referred last week, and the two hills previously mentioned, were made on the direct or third speed, which at 1,000 engine revolutions per minute is reputed to give thirty-eight miles per hour, but which in the flying quarter ignition tests at Bexhill we proved to our satisfaction to afford a speed on the level of over fifty miles per hour if required. It is not desired at the moment to publish the actual speeds attained on the fourth speed, but as evidence of the elasticity of the engine we might say that we timed the car over a quarter of a mile running on its second speed, and found it to cover that distance at forty-one miles per hour, although the gear ratio at 1,000 engine r.p.m. is only calculated to give thirty-two miles per hour.

The car only left the Rolls-Royce works on the Saturday previous to the occasion in question, and the run above chronicled was merely a part of its testing drive. It has been christened the "Silver Ghost"—silver because the metal parts are to be silver plated and the body finished in aluminium paint, and "ghost" by reason of its extraordinary silence and stealthiness.

Now, with regard to the runs over the flying quarter on the Bexhill track, the results showed that with magneto ignition it averaged .6 of a second = $\frac{3}{5}$ better over the quarter than with accumulator ignition. The two ignitions were advanced to as near an equal point as possible. One run made with the accumulator ignition as far forward as it was possible resulted in a trip slower than the previous accumulator trips by $1\frac{1}{5}$ s. No improvement over the magneto runs was derived from running both ignitions together. Thus we were once again faced with proof that the difference in the running afforded by either or both systems of ignition was infinitesimal.



Silver Ghosts line up at the Cat & Fiddle prior to the 1907 Scottish Reliability Trials, 22 June 1909.



Inside the beautiful machine

AX-201: LIFE WITH THE HANBURYS

Rosemary Jeffreys

Many readers will know far more about AX-201's life than I, but I must admit that when this car joined the Club I needed to know more about its early history, and in particular its life with the Hanburys. I talked to Tom Clarke, who managed to provide me with a copy of the 2004 *Automobile* article which had lots of information about this period (particularly useful in these days with libraries closed). My grateful thanks to him, and to the author of the article, Jonathan Wood, who carried out most careful research, and also to Will Morrison, from whom I learnt so much more about the body of AX-201.

Daniel Hanbury took delivery of the car, chassis no. 60551, in September 1908. He was the second of four children and aged 32 at the time. The family fortune had been made in the Far East, where his father Thomas Hanbury had traded as a merchant in Shanghai in tea, silk and spices. Dan went to the same college in Cambridge as Charles Rolls, but it is not known whether they met: there was a year's difference in

age between them. Dan was very keen on electricity and introduced it to his home in Hampshire. He also installed it in the house he had bought in Italy, only 35 miles from his father, who on his retirement lived in a villa in Italy, at Ventimiglia, near the French border. Dan Hanbury was a natural for motoring, and bought two cars before AX-201, for which he had a particular need – to drive the 900 mile journey to his home in Italy. The servants and most of the luggage went by train, while Dan, his wife Sylvia and later their two daughters went by road. The journey took five days travelling via Southampton, where the car was loaded onto the ship. The family also used it for ski-ing holidays in Switzerland. Older brother Cecil acquired a Rolls-Royce, which gave Dan Hanbury the idea of some modifications, including the fitting of a hood – no doubt a great comfort to his family, particularly in the winter. In 1910, Dan acquired a second Rolls-Royce, built by Mulliner, and the two generally travelled in convoy.



The Silver Ghost and the Hanburys' other 40/50 waiting to board at Southampton. Katharine Hanbury, later Coryton, is standing in the back, and on her left is Alec Coryton.



A haunting evocation of another age: The Silver Ghost at the family villa in Italy in the 1920s.

The side-entrance tonneau body of The Silver Ghost was built by Barker, who were the preferred coachbuilders of C.S. Rolls & Co as well as Rolls-Royce Ltd. Some records confusingly record it as a Windham, but the sales sheet described the car as a 'Special side entrance (semi

Roi des Belges)' by Barker. The term 'semi' Roi des Belges almost certainly referred to the absence of curlicue scrollwork associated with the Roi des Belges.



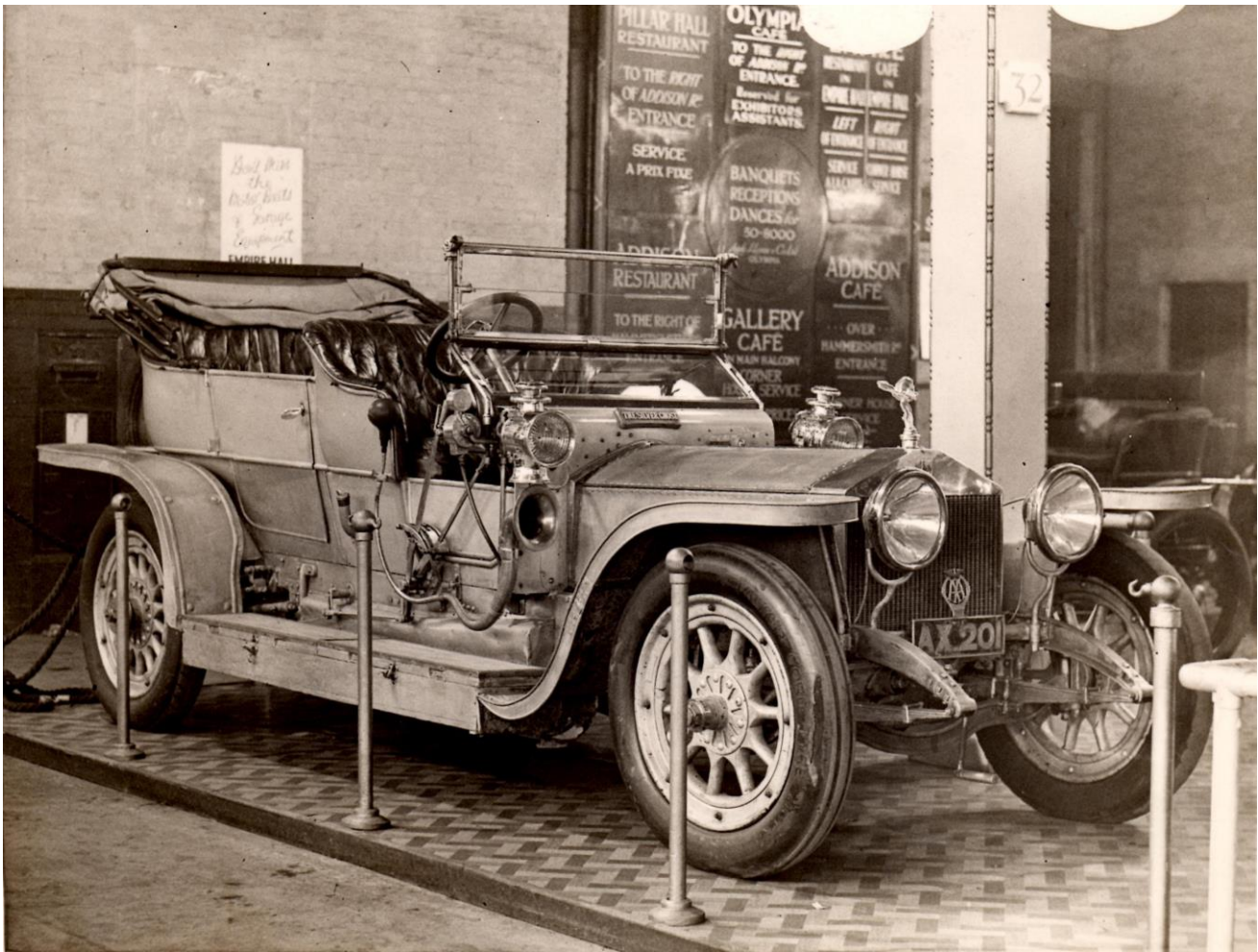
'The Silver Ghost 'somewhere in Switzerland' (original caption). The quiet road is probably a motorway by now.



The Silver Ghost in Italy, with members of the Hanbury family



The Silver Ghost winter-sporting in Switzerland



The Silver Ghost at Olympia, October 1930 (photo courtesy Tom Clarke)

After WWI, life resumed, including the annual pilgrimages to Italy, but the world had changed. A frequent guest at their home was William Alec Coryton, who had served in the Royal Flying Corps and married the Hanburys' elder daughter Katharine. He later became Air Chief Marshal of the RAF. The Silver Ghost however suffered a broken chassis on a trip to Italy in 1925, and was little used after this. The fracture was on the offside front of the frame, just behind the rear engine mounting. Henry Royce had recognised the problem and redesigned the later chassis to prevent such problems from recurring. The Silver Ghost is said to have covered over 350,000 miles while owned by Dan Hanbury. He was keen to get it running again, and his son-in-law passed this on to Rolls-Royce when he visited the factory in Derby in 1947. Before anything was done, Dan Hanbury died at the age of 72. He left the car to his son-in-law, Sir Alec Coryton. Death duties faced with family with some difficult decisions, and eventually it was

exchanged with Rolls-Royce for a modern Bentley. Once back in Rolls-Royce's hands, the car underwent a good deal of maintenance and appeared at several car shows as well as in the films, as mentioned by Johnnie. Following the financial collapse of Rolls-Royce it was owned by Volkswagen/BMW and for many years was on loan at the Hunt House, the RREC headquarters.

Further reading:

Jonathan Wood 'The Original Silver Ghost', *The Automobile* April and May 2004.

Will Morrison 'C.S. Rolls's semi-detached partner: Walter G. Windham and his detachable coachwork', *The Roycean*, 2015.

The rise and fall of Springfield or 'Rolls-Royce at Springfield: 1920 to 1931'

Johnnie Gallop



The Rolls-Royce plant at Springfield Massachusetts... then and prior to demolition in 2011

Sir John Stuttard rang me the other day and mentioned that this year marks the centenary of Rolls-Royce's Springfield factory in the United States. 'Would seem an important milestone on which to base an article, Johnnie...' The gauntlet having been duly laid down I reached for the John Webb de Campi book *Rolls-Royce in America* whilst John sent a flurry of emails with all sorts of good contacts and great pictures.

Unsurprisingly it was the great entrepreneur Claude Johnson who organised the first foray of Rolls-Royce into the USA's fertile automobile market in 1906. Charles Rolls was sent as the company's envoy but with limited success. Seven years later Johnson tried again, this time creating a formal distribution agreement with New York dealers Schuette (already the agent for Barker), and a service facility at Brewster's coachbuilding concern at Long Island. By 1919 nearly 400 Rolls-Royce cars were on the streets of New York City but Johnson had realised that the USA had embraced the arrival of the motor-car like no other nation. More cars were being sold in

America than in the rest of the world combined, but high import tariffs protected a thriving home market. Nothing changes much!

Mind you, in the UK, the post-WW1 government restricted the transfer of cash to the USA. So if Johnson was to establish manufacturing in America to dodge their import duties then he would need local finance to set it up. Johnson, by now a regular trans-Atlantic commuter, worked his magic and found cash backers including the heir to the Gillette razor fortune along with an electric power industrialist, L.J Belnap – a man whose vast frame matched the monumental power stations he built. Apocryphally Belnap was fond of swinging on his seat during board meetings causing several chairs to disintegrate under the considerable strain. One can only hope that the leaf-springs on his cars were set up for the correct payload!



Dave and Kimberly Shadduck's 1929 Phantom I SI38FR. Inskip rebodied the car with this fine Newmarket coachwork in 1933

Rolls-Royce of America was created in early 1920 and purchased the old American Wire Wheel Co. plant in Springfield, Mass. Shareholders put in \$3.5m and bank debt added a further \$2m. Fifty-three Derby employees were drafted to the USA (along with their families) to start the new works and by summer 'teaser' adverts in the US automobile press stressed that their cars would be produced by 'British mechanics under British supervision'.

In fact, production was slow to get going, whilst some engines were made during 1920 the first 40/50 chassis was only assembled in January 1921. The new Springfield Ghost retailed at \$11,750 which was actually cheaper than the British version. 1921 saw 135 chassis made but only the first few were identical to their Derby cousins as more readily available US components supplanted English equipment – which meant the Springfield cars could be serviced more easily in the USA.

But there was another substantial difference. In the UK (and in Europe) manufacturers, such as Rolls-Royce, Napier and Daimler built chassis and engines to which their well-heeled customers fitted custom coachwork. In the USA, however, premium makers such as Packard and Cadillac produced finished cars with a range of standardised body styles. Rolls-Royce of America knew they had to take the competition head-on and arranged for a number of local coachbuilders to prepare standard designs. Bodies were then produced in batches, to be fitted to Rolls-Royce chassis prior to sale.

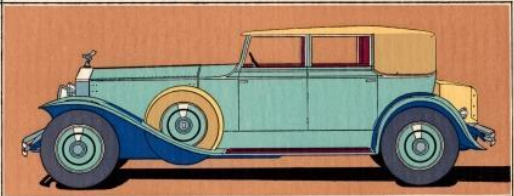
If American customers would buy only complete cars from showrooms then it meant that Rolls-Royce could only get money once the finished automobile drove away. By late 1921 less than fifty cars had been delivered to their customers and nowhere near enough cash receipts had been generated to keep the Springfield afloat. A further \$2m was raised in share capital to make ends meet - an early indicator of trouble down the line?



1924 Silver Ghost (3AU) Locke Roadster owned by Gil Fuqua

NEWMARKET

A brilliant scene—blue sky and dazzling sun—and every one lured by such weather to the Club for golf, bridge or gossip. What satisfaction, then, to glide up the curved driveway, the collapsible top down on one's Rolls-Royce Newmarket, what a gratifying sensation of being smartly correct—in the best sense. The Newmarket carries five passengers in its beautifully built Brewster coachwork. A graciously adaptable car for people of action or people of leisure.

Phantom I Brewster Newmarket (The Roycean Issue 5 2014)

But the quality of the cars rolling out of the Schuette dealership was beyond reproach, including the styling of the bodywork – light, rakish, and beautifully executed. Gradually the cars ‘Americanised’ until in 1925 – most controversially – the chassis became left hand drive with a centre-change gearbox.

A \$300k loss in 1922 was countered by a \$300k profit the following year, but in 1924 profit was just \$15k (0.3% return on sales of \$5m). At the time a Salamanca Convertible Town Car cost \$15k whilst a chassis on its own was priced at \$11k.

1925 was better, showing a \$500k profit, but one of their favoured subcontractors, Brewster coachworks, were in trouble. They owed unhappy bond-holders \$1.4m and Rolls-Royce of America now provided a \$400k guarantee. This was not a take-over but gave Rolls-Royce control of Brewster whilst ‘ducking’ the \$1.4m liability.

In early 1926 a night-shift was established at Springfield to try to keep up with orders, which was great news. But in April, came the devastating blow that Claude Johnson, the visionary founder of Rolls-Royce of America, had passed away. The other stress that year was switching over tooling to produce the New Phantom, including the re-design for left-hand drive and all the other ‘Americanisms’ demanded. But 1926 turned out to be another good year and the company paid a dividend - the first in five years.

Springfield executives were unwilling to refer to the New Phantom as a ‘40/50’ and changed the designation to 40/65. Whilst the very first Phantoms left the factory with only two-wheel brakes (they were recalled and updated later to four) the American cars came equipped with the Bijur chassis lubrication system, a new oil filter, air cleaner, and automatic radiator shutters. Whilst British Rolls-Royce catalogues were stately and sombre in hue, their US counterparts were printed in ten colours on large art-paper pages. The catalogues reflected the cars...and their intended owners.

Brewsters brought out a series of new bodies for the Phantom, with many devastatingly handsome designs over-seen by John Inskip who had previously replaced Schuette as the main New York dealer. By 1929 the Brewster Trouville

Town Car retailed at \$20k against a chassis only price of \$13k and that year sales hit an all-time-high of 350 units.

However, the Wall Street crash brought the good times to an abrupt end. Over in the UK the Phantom II had come out but everybody knew that converting Springfield to make the new car would be hugely time-consuming and expensive. They ploughed on with the old model but orders were down to a trickle, and they lost \$700k in 1930. The following year only 73 cars found new owners and manufacturing at Springfield ended.

Rolls-Royce of America soldiered on for a while longer, importing Phantom IIs and fitting Brewster bodies; but whilst Derby was profitable during the early 1930s the depression in the USA continued for years. In 1932 a bankruptcy petition against Rolls-Royce of America was dismissed but the writing was on the wall. Brewster started building its own cars based on Ford mechanicals (and looking ever-so-similar to the Rolls-Royce ‘Henley’ model) and sold them at 20% of the price of a Phantom II. The UK parent was displeased and in September 1934 Rolls-Royce of America changed its name to the Springfield Manufacturing Company. Liquidation finally began in mid-1936 and by September 1937 everything had been sold off.

In ten years (1921-31) Springfield made just under 3,000 cars but crucially established Rolls-Royce as the premier brand in the USA. By the time of the Phantom II, the Derby factory had sufficient facilities to produce enough cars to satisfy world demand (including left-hand drive versions) and America was the most important export market.

*With thanks to the many members who have chatted to me about their Springfield cars – more to follow on that. Also to acknowledge John Webb de Campi’s book *Rolls-Royce in America* (Dalton Watson Ltd 1975).*

A PASSION FOR ANOTHER TYPE OF PRECISION ENGINEERING

Alain Niepcéron



The Leica Standard 1932 – Elmar 1933

About 12 years ago, my wife gave me a small digital Leica. This camera was able to adjust speed, light and focus without my doing anything (and depriving me of that pleasure). To get back into photography, which was my first profession, though little practised, I bought a 1967 Leica M3. But I felt impelled to trace it back to its source, which led me back to the 1930s, and so a passion for collecting began! Rosemary asked me for an article for the News and Record, so I am offering a short history of the pre-War Leicas, which begins in 1911 with the arrival of Oscar Barnack (1879-1936) at the Leitz company in Wetzlar. Barnack was a precision engineer, and also a photographer.

In 1913 he was working on the idea of a camera for shooting cinema images and came up against the problem of grading of films which are not consistently sensitive to light. He thus got the idea of building a small instrument to carry out tests to determine exposure time. This

instrument box was designed to expose fixed images on a section of cinema film mounted on an interior reel. Although he suffered from asthma he was a photographer who loved to ramble, so he got the idea of replacing his camera (made of wood), as well as the tripod and the glass plates which were too heavy to carry, with something else. The idea was to transform his small instrument fitted with 35mm cinema film, so that it used film with a 24x36mm format. For a century, his idea revolutionised photography. This new system of course implied the use of an enlarger and so not only required work in a laboratory (printing, cropping and correction) but also permitted a new type of photography, which was now freed from the need for tripod. It allowed unusual angles, speed and ease of use. It could be used by more photographers and above all it gave a new quality of image.

The first tests took place in 1914 with the prototype UR (patent deposited on 12 June



A selection of Leicas, with (in the EKOZ case) a Leica II Couplex, at the back (right) III F (1934) and Standard 1932 towards the front (right)

1914). The Great War interrupted its development, but the basic characteristics were in place: a case to cover the mechanism, loading through the base, a focal plane shutter, the combining of arming the shutter with advancing the film, a retractable lens and an exposure counter. In 1918 and 1920 research led to improvements in the little camera and in 1923 Leitz made 30 boxes with the serial number 'zero'. In 2018, one of them was sold by auction at Vienne for 2.4 million euros and another from the same series sold for 2.1 million euros in 2016! All that was needed was to test the reaction of photographers and work out a method of production.

When it met with the approval of the first users, Ernst Leitz II decided to produce 'Barnack's camera' in 1924. The following year, it was presented at the Leipzig Fair under the name LEICA (LEitz and CAmera). It has been estimated that about 860 examples were produced in 1925 of the Leica I model A. The new camera - so portable, compact and practical - was very successful, and 21,000 were produced in the first five years. Its production ceased in 1932, with 58,735 cameras.

Leica I model C (1930-1933) followed: the lens was interchangeable but had to be adjusted to the body, which was not standardised, and the viewfinder only allowed framing. The distance from the subject to the body had to be entered on the lens and you also had to consult a table for depth of field!

In March 1932, THE Leica II, model D (also called 'Couplex') finally appeared, which had a rangefinder coupled to the lens. The lens could be chosen from a range between the Elmar 3.5cm and 13.5cm, with in between the Hektor and Summar lenses designed by Max Berek, the optician of the house of Leitz, providing you used a dedicated view-finder for framing. The Leica III model F had an eyelet for fixing a strap and a slow speed dial on the front. It was produced between 1933 and 1939. To increase the use of its cameras, Leitz completed its range with a large number of accessories with esoteric names: ABLON, COOLU, FIBLA, FISON, LYKAN, NOOKY etc.

So Leica cameras, used by the great names of reportage photography before the War - from Henri Cartier Bresson to Robert Capa and Ilse

Bing - built up a reputation for quality, trustworthiness and excellence which recall something else with a reputation for excellence: our Rolls-Royces.

You know, of course, the wonderful feeling of driving which your pre-War Rolls-Royces give you: driving demands all your attention, your experience, your knowledge of how they work and their maintenance demands. The old Leicas are very similar. They will not excuse ignorance: if you have not cut off the first 12cm of film, you risk blocking the focal plane shutter. Insufficiently precise focussing and you will have a fuzzy image! What can we say about using the exposure meter to measure the light (incident or reflected) and transferring the details to adjust the aperture on the ring of the Elmar lens - but when you are about to fire the shutter, the sun goes behind a cloud! You have to start again.

Leicas and Rolls-Royces are the result of the practical intelligence of two great mechanical engineers, Oscar Barnack and Henry Royce. The solutions they arrived at require admiration: they were reached at a time when electronics, computers and software to standardise their design did not exist. Camera or car, the work is solid, trustworthy, silent, designed for use and so ... beautiful!

To conclude this short evocation, it should be pointed out that Ernst Leitz II took action to oppose the Nazi regime by organising the departure from his factories of Jewish employees for England, France and the USA, each given a Leica. It would be interesting to see some of the pictures they took...

[Translation by the Editor, Rosemary Jeffreys. The article in the original French can be found on the website]



Alain's Leica IIIIf (1934) with Okaro filter, Vidom viewfinder and 9cm telephoto lens on the seat of his 20/25 (1933)

ADOPTION

Mary Narvell



Hyacinth Celeste in her previous home

To the many Rolls Royce collectors who subscribe to the ***“News and Record”***, you may relate to my characterisation of acquiring classic cars as adoption. On hearing my husband was adding to our family, I thought the idea our beloved 1939 Wraith, christened Yasmine Primrose, was gaining a stepsister seemed far more palatable than my immediate reaction. Initially that could only be described as unattractive jealousy “oh no, he is going from a mistress to a harem!” Far better I thought to view this acquisition through the prism I imagine collectors might. They would understand the need to “parent” cars and care for multiple generations. They would be familiar with the individual personalities of their “babies.” Entering their heated cavernous garage would not seem very different than entering the home extension they built in excited dutiful preparation for their growing household.

You are likely wondering then who is our new family member. Well Yasmine now has an “older sister”, a 1931 Phantom II Continental. As a result, we find ourselves going through all the stages one might associate with welcoming another child.

I shall summarise these as: Research – Private Adoption or Commercial Agency; Name Selection; Preparing the Nursery; Plans to Introduce the Siblings; and the most important of all: Choosing the Paediatrician.

To begin, the decision to adopt came with relief from birth anxiety (not to mention wonderment at my advanced age that “conception” would even be possible). Thank goodness I did not have to suffer delivering our baby's substantial girth. Any trepidation as to that process would be for my husband to endure. He would arrange overseas transport of the highly anticipated bundle of joy carefully swaddled. As a friend noted, “unaccompanied children are such a worry”.

I next found myself experiencing moments of tender wonderment stealing secret glances at my husband as he perused classic car websites and advertisements. How sweet he looked dreaming (and plotting!) on becoming a father a second time. This is what I have named the Research stage. John decided to go public buying at auction having found no candidate that stirred his soul from a private owner. I find it curious though that

the gestation period of our baby oddly matched the trimesters of a pregnancy. (Strange too, it echoed the nine month creation of AX-201, the spiritual mother of all our cars.) We experienced initial joy in the first trimester, i.e, the decision to adopt. This was followed by some degree of apprehension and growing fatigue as we passed the sixth month – would we ever get our baby? Entering the final term, we hoped for rapture on her introduction. This expected delight we have yet to experience as our selection has been only through photos and long-distance bidding. We await the moment she is dropped on our doorstep. Perhaps I should say gingerly parked or John would need oxygen were he to spy any dents, dings, or damage. Like all parents, we pray only that our delivery is healthy.

Name selection, thankfully, has been an easy process. The Phantom's white and blue colour scheme led us to immediately settle on Hyacinth Celeste. This floral theme followed seamlessly from our Yasmine Primrose offering the benefit of proactively nipping any latent sibling rivalry in the bud, pardon the pun. We were encouraged, too, that the name Hyacinth meant sport, play and constancy. What better moniker for a Continental famed for its lower slung coachwork and stiffer suspension tuned to the sportier drive. She should certainly squire us on many a playful jaunt. It seemed best as well to anticipate and subliminally suggest to a child your expectation that her performance rarely disappoint her proud parents – reliable constancy would be the aim. The fewer breakdowns the better for all concerned given the possible exception of the paediatrician's profits, but more on that to come.

Celeste as a synonym for blue highlighted the cerulean interior that echoed John's eyes. Even though we do understand our

child is adopted, we have nonetheless imagined those characteristics we can attribute as “inherited.” Naturally if Hyacinth is stylish, hopeful of a sleek exterior that invites widespread admiration, she takes after me. To be balanced in attributions, skittishness and occasional engine misfiring might also be my legacy. Difficult handling or a certain stubborn resistance in steering would mimic her father. Dare I mention her Sedanca roof with its partial covering calls to mind John's head/hair ratio? Our choice to adopt an older child would seemingly reassure us Hyacinth has long outgrown the terrible twos. We pray any rebellious adolescence is also a distant memory and that she has settled into a stable maturity though not prematurely suffering creaking joints.



Hyacinth's Cerulean Interior



Bespoke Luggage

As for preparing the nursery, the big question is where will it be? Will Hyacinth be domiciled as a UK resident or will she find a garage in the United States? Oddly enough her pedigree straddles both countries having been born in the UK and spent her formative years there only to then be transported to American shores (the reverse of her adoptive parents). It is there on the hallowed ground of Pebble Beach, California that she was heralded in the famed Concours. Currently she resides in Florida from where she will be gently coaxed out of retirement. We stand prepared for any potential culture shock on her repatriation to England. London is where she will first meet her sister who is already being primed to welcome her. They will initially share a home with their respective gleaming grills and Flying Ladies reflecting each other's individual beauty. No sibling rivalry will be tolerated. Should it erupt, we will consider separate quarters if not continents to alleviate any competitive squabbling. So too, as attentive parents, we will avoid favouritism. Jealousy should not be cultivated.

The residency decision though really hangs on the most significant consideration of all – Where is the best healthcare for our baby? (Oddly this comparison is one we are frequently asked by American friends and relatives who marvel at the NHS while the USA endlessly unsuccessfully tries to legislate national healthcare.) This is the Paediatrician question – aka Mechanic. Conclusion: It is a sure bet the caring cautious father would not even contemplate any initial check-up nor countenance immunisations from anyone other than a British practitioner. Hyacinth

will definitely be nursed on English petrol long before (if ever) she is weaned onto American gas. And despite her mother's Italian ancestry, no lubrication with olive oil will be permitted nor will she run on Pirelli tyres.

You see my theme, I hope? Classic car ownership is not dissimilar to raising a family. There is always one's pride, one's worries, steering a child to her best behaviour, terror at any breakdown. And the ultimate wrenching moment – empty nest syndrome when our babies leave the garage. No, it isn't easy being a collector if we dare so identify ourselves at only two cars. I can emphatically assert, however, my hope that we will not be a growing family. I have counselled my husband that perhaps he should consider enduring a “chassis-ectomy” - aka stop looking at car auction brochures. I haven't even met Hyacinth and am already overwhelmed by the responsibilities of shared custody. But I have faith John will be an excellent father as he has been to our firstborn. He has cared assiduously for her good health, shielded her from bumps in the road all while steering her on wondrous adventures. Going forward we will be Two for the Road in more ways than one.

Postscript: Delivery day arrived recorded in the photo of John meeting Hyacinth offloaded from the carrier. Bonding was immediate especially when she fired up after a jiggle of the Autovac.

I spent the months waiting for Hyacinth researching her pedigree. A previous owner, Mrs. G. Marvel, not only shared a similar surname but lived in Ithan, Pennsylvania. Unbelievably our last US address North Ithan Avenue is the road leading directly to this hamlet ten minutes from our garage. Hyacinth's rear trunk was commissioned by Mrs. Marvel and still contains custom luggage ordered by a later owner. Mrs Marvel was the former Mrs. Cornelius “Sonny” Vanderbilt Whitney, so daughter-in-law to artist Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, founder of the Whitney Museum, New York. Both ladies summered in Rhode Island, my birthplace.



Mary and Yasmine Primrose in Ireland



John and Yasmine Primrose in Spain



John admiring the New Arrival, Hyacinth Celeste

TECHNICAL CORNER

CLOSE-PLATING

Nigel (Dampfen von Krankenschaft) Hughes

Rolls-Royce used a Nickel-Silver finish for brightwork on most of the post-1910 chassis up till circa 1930. Earlier cars had brass brightwork and later cars chrome plating. There were transitional periods when brass remained available for Silver Ghosts and mixed finishes were found on cars around 1930. Coachwork fittings generally remained in step with the chassis brightwork, stainless steel being sometimes used to complement stainless radiators.

Nickel silver is an alloy of roughly 60% copper, 20% zinc and 20% nickel. It contains no silver but polishes to a brilliant shine with a light yellowish tinge, very like Nickel plating. In the engine-room, there are many nuts, drain plugs and knobs of solid Nickel-Silver. The attractiveness of these small parts, when polished, is described by some as Rolls-Royce jewellery. The basic structure of parts like gear and handbrake levers and the steering column is steel, but this was originally given a nickel silver finish by 'close plating'. Close plating is a process where nickel silver sheet is soft soldered to the surfaces of the steel parts. The sheet is much thicker than nickel electroplate and will survive years of polishing. Close plated parts sometimes show thin silver lines of soft solder where the various sheets meet. The absence of these suggests that parts may have been restored with electroplated nickel at some time.

Close plating was applied to some nuts requiring the strength of steel but the appearance of nickel silver. Examples are the nuts on handbrake racks and the clamping nuts retaining Silver Ghost steering wheels on the end of the column. These nuts can be very tight and are easily destroyed. If an open-ended spanner is used, the load applied on the flats of the nut can be sufficient to cause the nickel silver sheet to slide on its solder, resulting in severe damage. Close plating can be replaced but this is a major challenge. I honestly do not know if close plated nuts will withstand the load from a box spanner, but that should be the first port of call if the nuts must be removed.

Nickel silver which has been neglected for years develops a pitted surface sometimes with a brownish tinge. This is caused by the zinc corroding away preferentially, leaving behind the copper. I have personally found the restoration of the shine to nickel silver parts hugely satisfying. While some resort to use of a buffing wheel, I prefer to polish by hand, as this is more controllable in the hands of the amateur. In extreme cases, it may be necessary to start with a rust remover followed by 1000 grade Wet or Dry abrasive paper. Used wet and with a cork or rubber backing pad, this can be very effective in getting rid of the pitted surface of heavily weathered flat exterior parts such as radiators. In many cases, however, it can be sufficient to use a mildly aggressive polish such as Solvol Autosol. By starting with that, it will soon become apparent whether the more aggressive wet or dry paper is required to produce a smooth surface. Solvol Autosol is quite adequate to remove the residual scratches left from Wet or Dry paper and may be followed up by a finer polish such as Silvo or Auto Glym metal polish. Interior parts, particularly of closed cars involve many curved and moulded surfaces and Solvol Autosol and multiple rags is fine. Tooth brushes are the standard way of polishing complex parts and I look forward to trying an electric tooth brush when I have a brush head no longer suitable for teeth. Getting at the lower end of the steering column is eased by removing a front seat but it always involves its own form of yoga. Watch out for pulled back or neck muscles. Areas often neglected are radiator side plates, particularly at the bottom. A rag wrapped round a ruler can help with polishing a SG radiator where the side plate is shielded by the chassis frame. Repeated polishing will continue to improve the appearance as the surface becomes ever smoother and shinier. Other polishing compounds than those mentioned are available.

MEMBERS' NEWS

New Members welcomed to the Club – Details on the Website

Russell Cook, Bridgnorth, Shropshire; 1928 20 GWL40; 1936 25/30 GAN52; 1926 PI 65TC.	Karl & Tilly Reitz, Wilderness, South Africa; 1921 Silver Ghost, 45SG
James Waldegrave, Radstock, Somerset, 1928 20 GXL41; 1934 20/25 GKC26	Thurston & Andrea Twigg-Smith, Vermont, USA
Michael & Janet Chipperfield, Nr Canterbury Kent; 1925 20 GSK39	

On a visit to Sydney in February, Sir John & Lady Stuttard were entertained to dinner by the Australian Chapter Committee at the Union Club. Those present included (from Australia): The

Chairman, Peter Crauford, and his wife Elizabeth, the organiser of the dinner, David Davis, and his wife, Clare, Bruce Humphries, Keith & Marie Wherry, John & Liz Milverton and David & Diana Berthon. In an after dinner speech, John thanked the two Davids for their contribution to the Australian chapter in the Club's 70th anniversary book and congratulated the Australian members on their achievements over the years. He also made reference to his and Lesley's recent holiday in Tasmania, with significant help and kindness from Andrew & Marg Bayley, Chapter Committee members who live in Hobart. He agreed with Peter Crauford who had described Tasmania (or Tassie as it is referred to) as Australia's hidden jewel and he wished that he and Lesley could return to join the 20-Ghost Club's tour of Tasmania in 2021 being organised by Andrew Bayley. With its small population and excellent weather, Tassie has wonderful scenery, quiet roads, an interesting history, excellent food and wine – and great hospitality.



Facing the camera (left to right): Clare Davis, Keith Wherry, Marie Wherry, John Stuttard, Lesley Stuttard, Bruce Humphries

Backs to the camera (left to right): David Davis, Liz Milverton, John Milverton, Elizabeth Crauford, Peter Crauford, Diana Berthon

David Berthon took the photograph.

We regret to announce the death of Graham Ashley-Carter on February 26th, a member of the Club for many years. We pass on our sympathies to his wife Jane and son Piers. He was one of the most knowledgeable Rolls-Royce engineers whose skills were highly appreciated by many of our members.

Michael Moran has managed to put together a splendid blog, which I enjoyed very much. He raised a glass to the memory of the immortal meeting on 4th May 1904. Do take a look <https://casualcars.blogspot.com/2020/05/the-honourable-charles-stewart-rolls.html>.

BOOK REVIEWS

Sir John Stuttard has kindly reviewed two books by Charles Howard.

An AUTObiography

Over 400 pages long, weighing over 2.5kgs, with literally hundreds of illustrations, Charles Howard's autobiography is a significant read. He recounts his early career as an antique dealer and then how he became one of the world's leading fine motor car dealers. He describes many of the thousands of cars that have passed through his hands and relates stories of fellow dealers and of collectors. He is critical of auctioneers and suggests how they might improve and operate in the future. He writes candidly about his successes and failures. For anyone interested in fine motor cars and in the art of buying, selling or restoring old vehicles the book is a mine of information. Gems of advice pour from the pages, including:

- *Many collectors fall for the temptation to restore badly neglected cars which will never be worth even a quarter of the cost of the restoration*
- *The best value in buying cars is to purchase a car that someone else has spent too much on*
- *Very few post-1918 Ghosts are viable candidates for costly restorations and 1922 Silver Ghost (14RG) Windovers All Weather was the first, but not the last, restoration that I should not have attempted*
- *A frequently used, slightly dubious trick that auctioneers have in their armoury is to tempt a potential seller with suggestions of a high price that it will be possible to achieve under the hammer. Then, when the seller is mentally already spending the proceeds, they suggest that the interest in the lot is not as great as expected: 'Perhaps we should lower the reserve by as much as 25%?'*
- *When selling through an auction house, insist on a photograph if worthy of illustration but refuse to pay for the cost of the photograph.*

I found *An AUTObiography* a very good read. It contains valuable insights into the old car world and into the man himself. I will leave the last word to Charles Howard:

If there is someone out there who, inspired reading this book, wishes to get involved in this wonderful hobby and, who has more money than they know what to do with, please contact me. I can help you to acquire some of the world's greatest old motor cars and advise you how to enjoy their use.

Old Contemptible

The second book, *Old Contemptible*, narrates the fascinating history of chassis number 2095, a 1912 Silver Ghost, which Charles Howard found in Celina, Ohio in 2008. He describes the meticulous restoration of 2095 and recreation of a new body which replicates the coachwork built by its first owner in 1914. With the help of some of the UK's best restorers and craftsmen, led by Jonathan Harley, Charles Howard arranged for 2095 to be brought back to the perfect condition in which it would have been seen in 1914, except the quality of the finish of the coachwork is today infinitely superior. He also arranged for the DVLA to grant the original registration number R-1493. Charles sold the car in 2014 to a Dutch collector. The book is a fascinating description of the history of a special car with an interesting provenance. Over 45 pages and with 69 illustrations, it is a good read and informative about the role Silver Ghosts played in the First World War. And why is the car named *Old Contemptible*? This stems from the Kaiser's statement in August 1914 exhorting his men to 'walk over General French's contemptible little Army'. This prompted those who participated in the gruelling retreat from Mons to refer to themselves as 'Old Contemptibles'. The first two owners of 2095 were each awarded the 1914 (Mons) Star and, because of this and its role in the War, the car also merits this title.

Charles Howard's two books are available via his e-mail address, card.howard@btconnect.com, at discounted prices for members of The 20-Ghost Club:

An AUTObiography for £55, including postage – the normal price is £75 (ISBN 978-0993008504)

Old Contemptible for £12, including postage – the normal price is £20 (ISBN 978-0-993008511).

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 will be available on the Club website.

30 September 2020-2 October 2020 (to be confirmed)

Concours and two-night stay at Mallory Court Warwickshire (Brian Fidler brianfidler@aol.com)

Autumn Lunch Friday 2 October 2020 (to be confirmed) (Brian Fidler brianfidler@aol.com)

Saturday 13 March 2021

AGM and dinner, Oxford (Brian Fidler brianfidler@aol.com)

April 2021 (provisional)

Spring Lunch at Armsworth Park House (Strone Macpherson)

11-12 May 2021 (provisional)

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)

13-17 May 2021 (provisional)

Tour of South Derbyshire 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)

September 2021 Five nights (provisional)

London to Edinburgh Top Gear Run (Nick Naismith)

September 2021 (provisional)

A 12-night tour of Scotland and the Isles (Ken Forbes) (**postponed from 2020**)

September 2022? (tba)

Tour of Wiltshire, based near Stourhead (Johnnie Gallop jgallop@gmail.com)