



News & Record

Issue 74 | Winter 2023





CONTENTS



Front Cover: ‘At Full Lock’ Michael Power in his 1920 Silver Ghost, 58CW, competing in the VSCC Winter Driving Test at Bicester Heritage in 2022. Michael told me: *‘The Ghost proved surprisingly agile, but still considerably less nimble than the Austin Sevens which are of course about half the wheel base.’* Photo Peter McFadyen.

Letters, emails & pictures

Page 4. The postbag, new members, memories of members and friends, thoughts and suggestions.

Just A Century Ago...

Page 14. Herodotus reports on *Autocar*’s R-R related matters from Oct-Dec 1923.

The Forbes Report

Page 16. Ken chats through recent events and some forthcoming plans.

Back Cover: A 1920 advert from the company which has a hint of ‘Christmas ball’ about it. Both the front and back covers feature a 1920 model but at polar opposites!

Ben Smith Engineering

Page 18. Johnnie travels to Devon to meet the R-R restoration wizard.

Loire to Normandy Tour 2023

Page 24. Sandy Sayer reports on a journey through northern France.

The Intrepid Explorer

Page 32. Strone Macpherson uncovers an excellent book on the life of Ian Graham.



Autumn Tour 2023

Page 40. Maurice Whitaker reports.

From West Sussex to Bangladesh and back...

Page 42. The simple life of Rupert and Jan Grey.

Cars, Tiaras and Honeymoons

Page 50. Sir John Stuttard tells of Polesden Lacey, its owner, and one of her cars.



Car ‘Porn?’ Ho, Ho, Ho!

Page 56. Mary Narvell provides some festive fun.

The Last Word

Page 58. Johnnie gets the final say!

February 2024
Monday 19th
2nd Zoom Lecture by Greg Votolato from the V&A on Car Interior Design.
narvell630@gmail.com

March 2024
Friday 15th
AGM & Annual Dinner, Trinity House, London, EC3N 4DH.
jo.naismith@yahoo.com

April 2024
Saturday 20th
Spring Lunch. Armsworth Park House, Old Alresford, Hampshire, SO24 9RH.
strone@stronemacpherson.com

May 2024
Date TBC
IGS Tour. North Yorkshire.
narvell630@gmail.com

June 2024
Friday 7th – Tuesday 18th
Champagne to Provence.
(Tour full, with waiting list)
johnstuttard@btinternet.com

July 2024
Wednesday 17th – Saturday 20th
The Tim Forrest Tour & Concours, Polesden Lacey, Surrey, KT23 4PZ.
whitaker.maurice@gmail.com

Friday 19th
The 20-Ghost Club 2024
Concours, Polesden Lacey, Surrey, KT23 4PZ.
whitaker.maurice@gmail.com

September 2024
Sunday 1st – Thursday 5th
Tour of Dorset. Based at the Priory Hotel in Wareham, Dorset BH20 4ND.
(Expressions of interest being received)
rslwilks@gmail.com

Letters, Emails & Pictures

Many of you contacted me to say how much you enjoyed the late Sir John Aird’s story about his car GAU69 in Issue 72 so it was wonderful to hear from Lady Fen Aird that she has recently passed her driving test for manual cars (rather than just automatics) in order that she can continue to drive GAU69 in club events.

‘When I moved from USA to UK, I thought I would never drive manual geared cars. So I just took my automatic car for the road test.

Since my darling John’s health has problem, John started to encourage me to take manual driving test, so we could continue to join 20-Ghost Club events. Sadly John’s health then went to worse quickly and also I failed my first manual test.

After John passed away, I feel it is my duty to keep the family car running. I decided to take manual test again. Luckily I found a very experienced driving instructor to help me and, with ten hours coaching, I passed road test. Afterwards I told the tester the reason I take the manual test and showed our R-R picture to him, he said: Well done! I would love to see you to drive in it.’

Fen recently attended the P&A Wood ladies’ day event and had a thoroughly good time trying out several other interesting cars.



‘Yes, I drove other cars including Silver Ghost, Derby Bentley and Silver Cloud III. I think the event is good way to encourage women to get into classical car world.

I believe my darling John would be very happy to see me to drive our car on the road of the club rally. Thank you, to all my friends in the club for the encouragement.

All the best, J/Fen’

Thanks to Roy O’Sullivan for the pictures of Fen driving GAU69 and the other cars at P&A Wood.



In our **Australian Chapter** club stalwart **Rory Poland** has stepped down as chairman. Incoming chairman Michael Henningsen sent me these notes:

Rory Poland has stepped down as Chairman after almost 30 years of involvement with the Australian Chapter of the 20-Ghost Club. A generous, diligent and well-respected member, Rory is the definitive 'go to' person in relation to the pre-war models of our marque within Australia.

His first veteran car was an American 1912 Flanders purchased in 1958 with a two-seater body which he had remodelled in Adelaide when his two children arrived in the early 1970's. Vintage motoring was definitely a family affair with his wife Lizzie and the children as stalwart companions in their open tourers in whatever weather conditions this wide brown land delivered.

Rory and his brother became custodians of a rebodied 20HP GH21 early on but this and other cars were sold in 1985 when Rory purchased 1921 Silver Ghost 8CE from the late Peter Crauford which he restored and rebodied with a Bradbury tourer body.

In 1998 after selling 8CE he purchased 1937 25/30 GR04, a delightful car, with a Martin and King saloon body. This he rebuilt and restored and it subsequently become a serial concours winner.



He is an extremely skilful event organiser and has been responsible for a multitude of famous rallies and meetings with both the 20-Ghost Club and the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of Australia. Some of these events have almost acquired legendary status with lobster luncheons, grand buffets and dinners - a virtual cornucopia of culinary delights not to mention the finest wines.



Rory Poland.

He has nurtured exceptional camaraderie within the 20-Ghost Club during his chairmanship and has, by his sage leadership, considerably strengthened the Australian Chapter.

We are all delighted to announce that **Rory Poland** has been appointed as an **Honorary Vice-President** of the 20-Ghost Club to recognise his contribution to our club over the 30-year period, starting with the founding of the **Australian Chapter** in 1992, and reflecting his two terms as chairman of the chapter (from 2007 to 2012 and again from 2020 to 2023).

Michael Henningsen is an Adelaide based Orthopaedic Surgeon on a transition to retirement. A long-time member of the Australian Rolls-Royce Owners' Association he is the past Chairman of the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of South Australia and a Member of the 20-Ghost Club Australian Chapter.

He is the proud custodian of a very original low mileage Phantom III 3CM157 limousine by Hooper. The Phantom was imported into Australia just prior to the Second World War. He hopes, together with the committee and membership, to continue the fantastic camaraderie of the 20-Ghost Club Australian Chapter.



Back in late summer a few members attended a concours at Chatsworth in Bakewell. **Bryan McGee** sent through these photos taken by the official photographer Duncan Botham. Both pictures here are cars owned by Wojtek Kordel, the green Phantom II is 60MS a 1932 Hooper saloon whilst GNS65, the grey 20/25 is a 1931 Park Ward 3-position drophead coupe with dickey. Apparently Wojtek's cars scored maximum points but did not qualify for awards according to the four-year rule that disqualifies a repeat award in that time. Bryan mentioned that, following a flypast of the Lancaster and then the Red Arrows there was a minor kerfuffle:

'In order that the older cars can get home before dark the organisers arrange a convoy of the display cars to be escorted to the 'Golden Gates' at the north end of the estate at 6.00pm. The traders are forbidden to leave before 7.00pm. However, many of the traders had sold out due to the good weather and took umbrage, barricading the gate so that no one could leave before them. The police were called but seemingly to little avail. Not to be defeated the estate kindly arranged an escape route through to the southern end of the park and onto the public highway!' Goodness!





Sir John Stuttard and Bryan Stringer attended an open day at Compton Abbas airfield. Sadly, fog that day meant the Spitfire didn't fly but it afforded a great photo opportunity for their Silver Ghosts: Sir John's 1921 33LG and Bryan's 1924 62EU.

An important message from our webmaster John Narvell. Members! Check your email address please!

Dear Members, we have realised that some of you are not seeing the emails we circulate to all members. This is a concern because, in nearly every case, the first notification of a new tour or event is sent by email and the places might have been filled by the time you see the flyer which gets sent with *News & Record* sometime later.

Could we ask you to double-check the email address we have for you (either look on the members page on the website or against your entry in the annual members list). You might also make sure that our emails are not going into your spam folder.



John and Mary Narvell with Phantom II Sedan Coupe.

Please send any corrections through to me at narvell630@gmail.com

Esso have added ethanol to their super-unleaded fuel. For the last couple of years Esso super-unleaded fuel has been ethanol free however their website advises they are now adding 5% ethanol. Sadly therefore, this brings Esso in line with the other UK petrol suppliers.

'From September 2023 our Synergy Supreme 99 will transition to contain up to a maximum of 5% ethanol at all Esso pumps irrespective of which part of the country they are located. The labelling at our pumps will remain as E5 for Synergy Supreme 99 unleaded.'

Brian Fidler sent through this picture which, I feel, captures just how resourceful and free thinking we 20-Ghosters are...if, perhaps, just slightly dotty! Apparently when Brian took delivery of 1919 Silver Ghost 9PP (see N&R Issue 67 Spring 2022 for a feature on Brian's cars) he was surprised to find that it was too tall to fit in his garage. But no bother – simply employ a little man with a Kango hammer to make two grooves in the floor and now 9PP fits like a glove. Perfect!



Have you got all those essential Christmas presents yet?

There is JUST time to contact Graham Tyson at gtyson@outlook.com to buy the perfect fleecy scarf (superbly modelled in the pic here) - just imagine the delight as this is unwrapped on Christmas morning! Or, indeed, a 20-Ghost badge which is the 'must have' finishing touch for your car. Only £25 for the scarf or £40 for a badge – but stocks are limited so hurry!

The *20-Ghost Club News & Record* goes to press four times a year at the end of March, June, September and December. Why not drop Johnnie an email with some words and pictures. The pictures have to be as high resolution as possible (email has a nasty habit of making them smaller). Or we can pop out to visit, take photos write the story and have a pub lunch!

Do get in touch:
jgallop66@gmail.com 07930 531231.

Charles Howard (1936 – 2023)

Obituary by Sir John Stuttard



Charles Howard with 1938 Phantom III (3DL94).

Photo by James Brown Photography. Copyright: James Page, K500 2023

Charles Howard, who died on 28th August, without doubt owned and sold more pre-war Rolls-Royce motor cars than anyone else. At his peak, in the 1980s and '90s, he was much sought after by purchasers of fine cars and helped build significant collections. Many cars owned by 20-Ghost Club members passed through his hands.

From a modest background in suburban Surrey, he had a truncated schooling and two years' National Service. His career began in London's Petticoat Lane market where he had a nose for things which were undervalued. He acquired stock by visiting auctions selling the assets of companies in receivership. By 1960 he was operating an antique shop in Kensington Church Street specialising in porcelain.

In October 1968 he acquired his first Rolls-Royce at auction; a 1926 Phantom I two-door Cabriolet with dickey. Within six months he owned half a dozen. In early 1969 a man entered his shop and asked who owned the Rolls-Royce parked outside and did he want to buy more? Howard asked how many he had to sell, the reply came 'Five at £5,500 each. Four are on a boat from India, arriving in a month'. Howard replied, 'I'll have them all', not knowing how he was going to pay for them. It was through the purchase of these cars that Howard met Alan Clark MP, who was to become a great friend.

An encounter with royalty occurred in 1971 after he purchased The Queen Mother's 1955 Daimler Limousine. Some weeks later he spotted HRH's new Daimler which had made an involuntary stop on the Cromwell Road. The chauffeur was distraught. Howard's garage was close by and he immediately lent Her Majesty her old Daimler so she could finish her journey to Windsor. The old Daimler, duly royally polished, was delivered back to Howard with a letter, written by her senior equerry, of grateful thanks from the Queen Mother.

In 1972 he purchased the business of Coy's of Kensington in Queen's Gate Mews and his motor car dealing began in earnest. In his own words: 'It struck me that the car world did not value the best cars at very high prices.' From 1972 until 1981, Howard became well-known in the veteran and vintage motor car trade. In a 1973 *Motor Sport* advertisement he parodied Bunty Scott-Moncrieff's slogan which was "Purveyors of Horseless Carriages to the nobility and gentry since 1927" with the headline "Purveyors of Fine Motor Cars to the Proletariat and Peasantry since 1972'. The two dealers were good friends.

In 1981 Howard began trading under his own name with great success. He was a regularly seen at Pebble Beach and Louis Vuitton in London and Paris and a regular participant on the London to Brighton Run and the Rallye Monte Carlo des Voiture Anciennes. From 1986, he went into partnership with Terry Cohn, trading as C.A.R. Howard International Ltd. Initially they generated large profits but as the market turned sour in the early 1990s the company was made bankrupt.

This episode bruised his reputation but did not break Howard's will or enthusiasm. For the next ten years he continued to trade in his own name and many beautiful cars passed through his hands. He also enjoyed tours with his German-born wife, Ute, and they participated in 20-Ghost Club events, including the 2013 Centenary Alpine Trial in a 1926 Springfield Silver Ghost (S317PL) which had been attractively rebodied as a London to Edinburgh style Tourer. And he facilitated a memorable visit in 2009 of club members to Saltwood Castle, the home of Jane Clark, the widow of his friend, Alan.

In his retirement, Charles Howard had time to write his autobiography, an informative and amusing book *An Auto Biography*, published in 2014 by Piston Power Press, from which much of this obituary has been drawn. He described many of the thousands of cars that passed through his hands and related stories of fellow dealers and of collectors. He was critical of auctioneers and suggested how they might improve and operate in the future. He wrote candidly about his successes and failures. He gave some gems of advice which are worth repeating:



- 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 my 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 worthy of illustration but refuse to pay for the cost of the photograph.

Charles Howard was unique – a man who appreciated beautiful objects and understood the world of fine motor cars. He was a formidable dealer who was engaging company and fun to be with on a tour, over dinner and when trying to explain the compelling performance of a Phantom I or a Silver Ghost. He did much to help in the preservation and conservation of pre-War Rolls-Royce motor cars, which we so much appreciate and enjoy. Our condolences go to his widow, Ute.

New Members

Graham Tyson reports four new members this time.

Bill & Laura Finney
New York, USA
Currently hunting for the right Silver Ghost!



Priscilla & Magoo Giles
Pudding Norton, Norfolk,
1913 Silver Ghost 29NA Tourer.
Priscilla is shown above with children Otis and
Lola in the back seat.



Lance & Joan Hultgren
Orange County, California, USA
1920 Silver Ghost 25AE Hooper Tourer.



Renzo & Madliana Zanolari
Chur Switzerland
1928 Phantom I 15CL Brewster Tourer.

A huge welcome to you all

Persuade your friends to buy a pre-war R-R.
Propose them to Graham:
gtyson@outlook.com



THE 20-GHOST CLUB LIMITED REGISTERED NUMBER 5224633

PRESIDENT: HRH The Duke of Gloucester.
CHAIRMAN: Ken Forbes kennethforbes@btinternet.com
HON. VICE-PRESIDENTS: Brian Fidler, Sir Michael Kadoorie, John L Kennedy, Rory Poland
and Sir John Stuttard.
COMPANY SECRETARY: John Snook.
WEB: John Narvell narvell630@gmail.com
TREASURER: Philip Hall.
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Strone Macpherson; Doug Magee; Nick Naismith; Maurice Whitaker;
Steve Wilks.

Please see the website for full contact details of our committee, directors and the Australian Chapter

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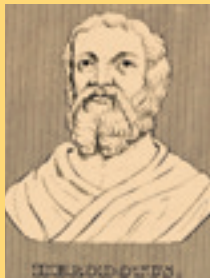
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07538 386114 jaz_wiseman@yahoo.com

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Just a century ago...

Herodotus casts an eye over R-R related matters within *The Autocar* during October-December 1923.



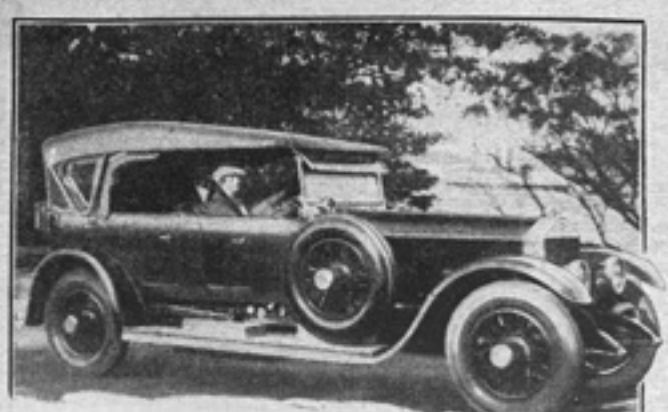
Rolls-Royce announce Front-Wheel Brakes

'So obvious were the advantages of applying braking action to the front as well as the rear wheels of a motor car that it was not surprising to learn that, after several years careful study of the problems involved, Rolls-Royce are now fitting front-wheel brakes to their 40/50 HP chassis.' The magazine went on to explain that the company refer to their brakes as semi-servo, mechanical-hydraulic (sic). *'The Rolls-Royce has six brakes comprising two servo-operated on the front, two on the rear by pedal and servo, and a further two on the rear by hand lever.'* There was no increase in price for this advancement.



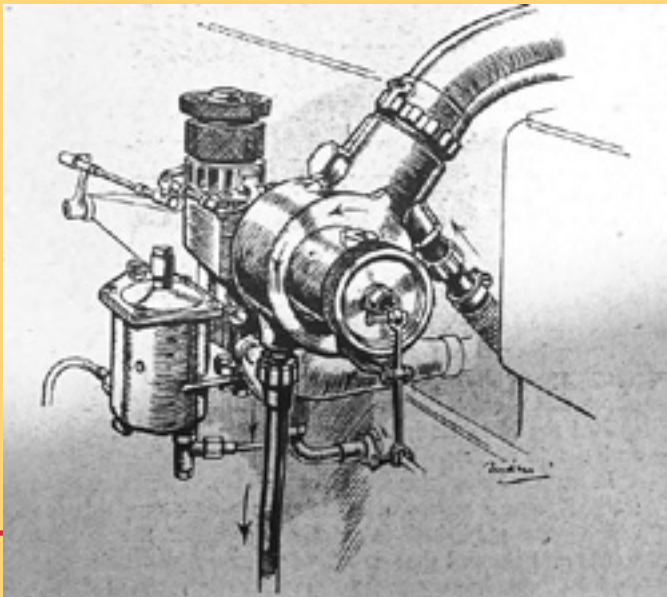
Down Under

Discriminating Australian motorists were said to be quick to realise the merits of high-grade British cars. It showed a photograph of Lady Clarke of Sydney in her 40/50 HP Rolls-Royce on the shore of Sydney harbour.



London Motor Show

Commenting on the London Motor Show the magazine said of Rolls-Royce *"It is perhaps hardly necessary to enlarge on the perfections of what is claimed by not a few to be the world's finest car."* Nevertheless the piece went on to explain about the new four-wheel brakes, starting carburettor, engine vibration damper and a new centrifugal governor to control ignition advance and retard.



M E Rear Screen

The equipment provided with this Hooper touring body on a 20HP Rolls-Royce included an M E rear screen. This gives exceptionally good protection for the rear seat passengers. A feature of this screen is that it can, by a simple adjustment, be divided and used in place of storm side curtains when the hood is up.

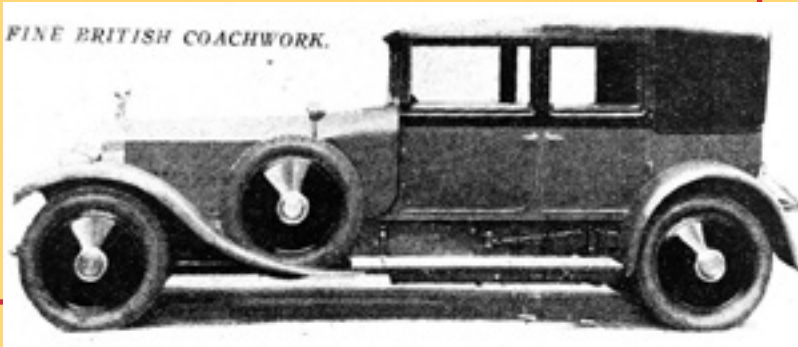


Clark Saloon Division

The Autocar included a sketch showing the interior of a 20HP saloon by Clark with a triple-paned division (presumably improving legroom for the front passenger) that could be raised or lowered to any position.

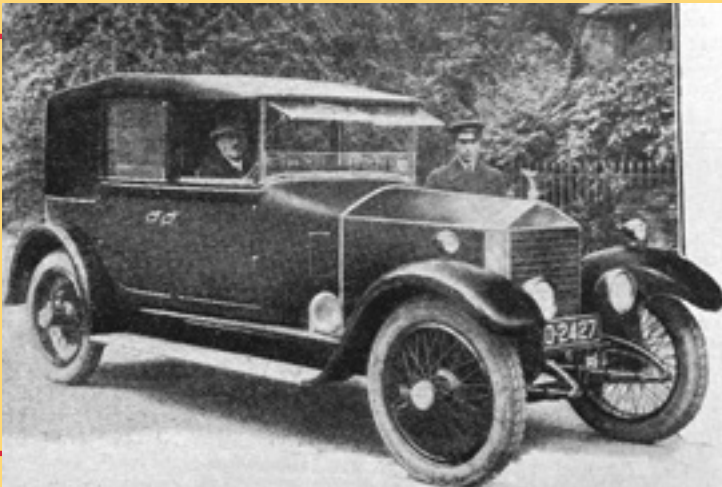
Most Expensive Car

The Autocar remarked that the most expensive car shown at the Paris Salon was a 40/50 HP Rolls-Royce with convertible cabriolet coachwork by Barker. It showed a sketch of how the occasional seats folded away into a narrow locker behind the central partition.



An Author and his Car

A photograph showed a Barker 20HP cabriolet with its owner, Mr Max Pemberton, at the wheel. Mr Pemberton was a pioneer motorist and well known as a man of letters.



The Forbes Report

We can reflect on a busy year with some varied and vibrant events enjoyed by many members. Our Autumn trip to the Loire enticed many of our US regulars to leave their cars in the UK after the Alpine and return for this relaxed and enjoyable tour. We finished 2023 with a visit to the King's garden at Highgrove. We have lots planned for 2024, including some one-day events, to broaden the appeal.

We are fortunate to benefit from strong support and encouragement in our activities from some key individuals, over many years, and at a recent board meeting we made the following awards:

Honorary Vice President – Sir Michael Kadoorie, particularly for his commitment to saving AX201 for the nation and promoting its active use (notably on the Scottish tour when it drove every mile of the route) to be seen and enjoyed by all.

Honorary Vice President – Rory Poland (Australian Chapter), for 35 years service to the running of the Australian Chapter.

Honorary Membership – Torsten Müller-Ötvös, retiring Chief Executive of Rolls-Royce Motor Company at Goodwood. Torsten has been a great supporter of the club and has invited us to events at Goodwood on numerous occasions. I wrote to him and his reply is printed on the right which highlights his great respect and affection for our club and its members.

It is also heartening to report that we were shortlisted for 'Best Car Club' at *Octane* Magazine's 2023 Historic Motoring Awards. In fact, I'm writing this the morning after the event held at London's Dorchester Hotel. The nominees were The 20-Ghost Club, The Aston Martin Owners Club, Benjafields Racing Club, The MG & Triumph 100, and The Vintage and Sports Car Club, and host Amanda Stretton described it as the most hotly contested and debated award of the evening. The joint winners were the Aston Martin and MG/Triumph clubs but we received a 'Highly Commended' accolade and were the only other shortlisted club to be mentioned.

Obviously, I would have liked us to have won, but frankly for the 20-Ghost club to have been highly commended, given the sheer scale of the other clubs we were up against (let alone all the other clubs which weren't nominated), is no mean feat. The judges were impressed with our commitment to researching and recording the history of our cars and bringing this to life with international tours marking significant events in Rolls-Royce history. We should be rightly proud.

Our AGM and Trophy Awards on 15 March will be held in the grand surroundings of Trinity House in London. Founded by Henry VIII in 1514, its fascinating history in the service of mariners and lighthouses will be described in a presentation as an additional feature on the night. Do sign up for this and get your application in to Jo Naismith as soon as possible.

Jane and I wish everyone a very happy and peaceful Christmas and look forward to seeing you out and about in your cars again before too long.

Best wishes
Ken

From Torsten Müller-Ötvös:

Dear Ken, thank you very much for your letter. I have greatly enjoyed spending time with the 20-Ghost Club in my 'official' capacity over the past 14 years: your gracious invitation to become an Honorary Member in my own right came as a wonderful surprise. I am, of course, more than delighted to accept.

My tenure at Goodwood has been a time of near-perpetual change. We have built the contemporary Rolls-Royce brand from scratch, taking what was a small, niche luxury motor manufacturer and transforming it into a global luxury house. The 20-Ghost Club has been one of the few constants in that time and a real source of strength; I have appreciated your unfailing support, enthusiasm and friendship enormously.

I have been acutely conscious of our responsibilities as custodians of the marque's unique heritage and the influence of the Club has been of immense importance. Events such as the Alpine Trial re-enactments – one of the most treasured memories in my Rolls-Royce career – remind us of all we have inherited and must ensure we live up to. And while 'passion' is a much-overused word these days, I see it in its true sense in those I can now proudly call my fellow Members! Their knowledge and devotion highlight the very personal relationship between Rolls-Royce motor cars and their owners that underpins every aspect of the modern company's operations and philosophy.

Retirement means more time for my various hobbies and interests. I can assure you that maintaining my long and happy association with the 20-Ghost Club is one of the things I am looking forward to. With sincere thanks once again,

Torsten



Torsten, at speed, driving Jim Black's 1913 Silver Ghost 2224 on the 2023 Alpine.
Picture: Rolls-Royce Motor Cars.

Ben Smith Engineering

Wonderful wizardry in the West Country!

It was a gorgeous mid-October day to be pottering through Devon. To be fair ‘pottering’ might not be the right word because I was actually in Bella’s XJS on my way to meet Ben Smith the well-known west-country Rolls-Royce engineer. So, more accurately, I was hooning along single-track lanes grinning from ear to ear. However, as I neared my destination (with thanks to excellent directions from the man himself) I was able to calm my inner-hooligan – not least because I rather wondered if I would suddenly meet one of ‘our’ cars coming in the opposite direction.

I turned into Ben’s drive and my first realisation was that this wasn’t merely his workshop it is actually Ben and Wendy’s home set within the deepest, lushest countryside and farmland anywhere.

I parked up by an office and workshop and Ben bounded out to meet me. The energy and warmth of a welcome, to make you feel instantly at home, can never be underestimated. Both Graham Tyson and Henry Fitzhugh had told me that I had to meet Ben and I knew straightaway that this was going to be a fun and interesting morning.

Almost immediately, with a mug of steaming tea in hand, we were admiring a rare, Brewster-bodied, Twenty landaulette. ‘*You should have seen it on arrival from Real Car,*’ grinned Ben ‘*Everything needed doing. Major ash frame restoration was carried out by our expert joiner Gordon, with steel and aluminium panels repaired as required. Of course, I thoroughly overhauled the chassis and engine, including arranging for new white-metalling; whilst trimmer Pip studied what was left of the interior to create new seats, door cards and wood all of which are as close (and very possibly better) than the original*’ Ben dug out some pictures of the car as delivered to him, and the transformation is amazing. ‘*This one, GNK87, is a 1925 chassis; one of the very last fitted with two-wheel brakes and a three-speed, centrally mounted, gear change. There were only 29 three-speed Twenties sent to the USA with just fourteen for coachwork.*’ [GNK87 is owned by our member John Milan.]





On leaving school in the very early 1980s Ben started out working on motor-cycles. 'It's funny really thinking how bikes would eventually lead me to caring for our wonderful pre-war Rolls-Royce and Derby Bentley motor cars, but there are engineering similarities between them and some of the traditional British bikes, such as Triumph, as well as the older Harleys. There were also motorcycle and sidecar combinations where I learned about weights and castor angles as well as spoked wheels!'

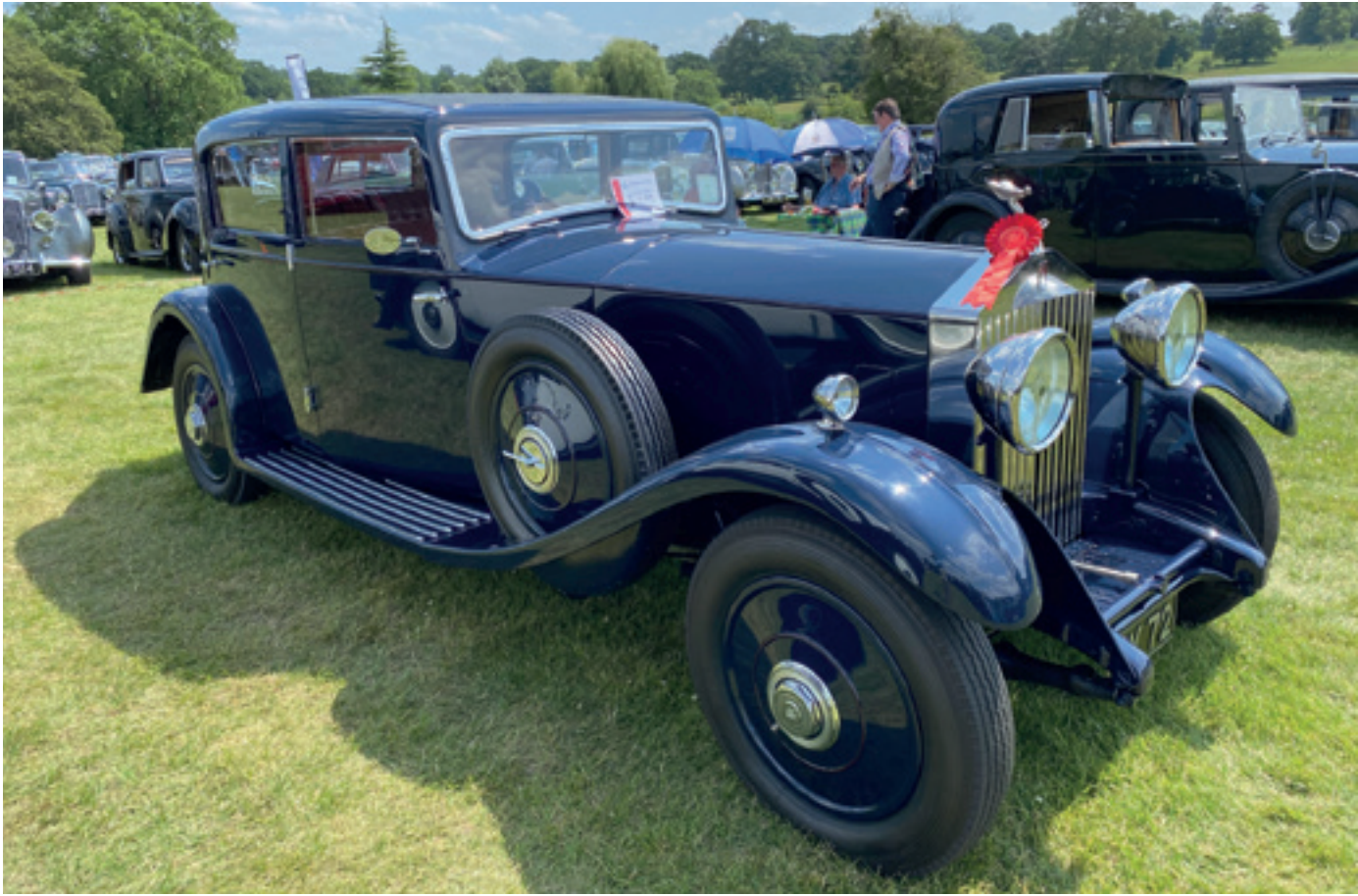
Four-decades on and the depth of Ben's knowledge of 'our' cars is astonishing. 'I see about 60 to 70 cars per year. Most just come for a simple service and fettling, but there are normally two or three cars here for full restoration during any given year – such as the Brewster 20HP.'

I quizzed Ben on the subject of restoration asking specifically, what happens when somebody else, often the customer themselves, has made a start on

work. 'Well it can be tricky because sometimes prior work hasn't been done to a high enough standard and sometimes it needs to be undone to rectify something else. Generally, though, communication with the customer is key. I take lots of photos and email things through so that there are no surprises.'

During our chat it became clear to me that, in addition to the necessary engineering prowess to work on pre-war Rolls-Royce motor cars, Ben also has the skill required to assess the timelines and work out all the processes involved in completing a restoration. It's all a matter of organisation which doesn't come naturally to everybody

'Lots of customers might want a full restoration but need to do it progressively as their budget allows. That is absolutely fine and I go through costs and stages at the outset. Often there are specific jobs that a customer wants to do between times and then return the car to me, maybe a year on, for the next section of work. The



Above: GMU37 Concours win.
Opposite: GNK87 interior and dash on arrival and after restoration.
Below: GXL60 mid-restoration and completed.

important thing is keeping the car on the road with the understanding that, eventually, it will reach concours standards (or retain its original patination but still run exquisitely).'

So far, eight of Ben's full restorations have achieved first place at RREC concours events one of which was Graham Tyson's Silver Ghost. 'That was a special car' recalls Ben 'We had to take the body off, which is not something I normally advocate. It is usually more sympathetic, to the car, to leave the body on during a restoration. But needs must and I was delighted when Graham told me that the judges had awarded him the red rosette!'

There were lots of Derby Bentleys alongside the Rolls-Royces in Ben's workshop. But does he work on any other makes? 'I find it best to specialise. Frankly I know the Derby (and Springfield) built cars like the back of my hand. And there is enough work on them to keep me and the team busy. But I have agreed



to look after just one other marque of car for a special customer...’ That’ll be our Graham again with his Delahaye (see issue 72 for his full account of the purchase and ongoing restoration)!

Whilst Ben’s customer-base is generally south-west England centric that doesn’t mean clients don’t come from all over the country. *‘These days it is relatively cheap and easy to arrange to transport from almost anywhere. So we look after cars from all over.’* Explained Ben as he showed me round a car which had come in from Kenya for over-haul.

Up in the house, looking out over the stunning valley, Wendy had kindly prepared us a delicious lunch. She is an accomplished artist specialising in abstract paint techniques as well as wonderful images of local wildlife (and some dragons!)

Does Ben own a Rolls-Royce personally? *‘Well no – I love them and thoroughly enjoy working on them but my passion is farming our 60 acres. We have small fields here with lots of hedgerows and I have 50 ewes who normally produce about 80 lambs each year. Of a weekend you will usually find me working in the fields or pottering around on my 1964 Super Dexta Fordson Tractor, which I inherited from my father.’*

It was a joy to meet Ben and his team. If you are thinking you might need some work on your car and are unsure where to go, then you really should put Ben on your list of people to ring for a chat.



Ben with beloved Fordson.

Loire and Normandy Tour

Words by Sandy Sayer, photographs by Ron Elenbaas, Bryan Stringer and Sir John Stuttard

An abundance of fairy tale châteaux, ancient abbeys and beautiful gardens awaited us in France. Scenic country roads, interrupted by the occasional route barrée avec déviations to test the navigational nerve provided entertainment on this action-packed tour.



John Snook and Sandy Sayer in 1911 Silver Ghost 1701

We gathered at Château de Rochecotte, a late 18th century château situated in the Loire valley midway between Tours and Saumur. Surrounded by Bourgueil vineyards, this elegant hotel would be our base for six nights. A majestic 200 year old cedar of Lebanon dominated the château and its vast canopy provided the venue for candlelit dinners.



In 1940, France's original copy of the Treaty of Versailles was stored at Rochecotte and was mistakenly handed over to the Gestapo under the château's cedar tree. The document was subsequently burnt in Hitler's railway carriage.

This ancient tree also provided the setting for three enjoyable vignettes during our evening drinks receptions - Suzanne Halusa's informative journey through the wines of the Loire, Steve Wilks' origins of the Plantagenets and Fokko Keuning's amusing speech on the differences between the English and the French. On the final evening a group from the Société des Trompes Chasse de Saumur entertained us playing French hunting horns.



Left to right: Dom Bernaz, Lesley Stuttard and Alain Niepceron. The Tour organisers at Fontevraud-l'Abbaye.

Our first ancient abbey was at Fontevraud-l'Abbaye, en route we created a bouchon in the narrow streets surrounding the Place des Plantagenets. Fontevraud Abbey, founded in 1101, is one of the largest and historically most important surviving monasteries of the middle ages. Final resting place of several members of the Plantagenet dynasty, the reclining effigies of King Henry II, his wife Eleanor of Aquitaine and their son Richard the Lionheart dominate the abbey nave.



Clive and Virginia Lloyd arrive at Château de Montgeoffroy in 1179.

Opposite

Dominique Bernaz in GEN81 (top). Line up outside Moulin de Villeray (bottom).

Stunning Château de Chenonceau is one of the most photogenic of all the Loire châteaux and other than the Palace of Versailles, the most visited château in France. Its elegant gardens were delightful and on one of the hottest days of the tour (36° / 97°) the cooling water mist sprays dotted about the paths were most welcome.

Over 115,000 colourful flower and vegetable plants including blue leeks and red cabbages created the sensational and unusual Renaissance-style gardens at Château Villandry. A team of ten gardeners are kept busy pruning over 30kms of box and 1,000+ lime trees. The château interior was equally impressive and beautifully furnished.

Another Loire gem Château de Montgeoffroy, privately owned and occupied by the same family, survived the French Revolution without damage, protected by an army of local workers and craftsmen who built the château. In a remarkable

state of preservation with period furniture, wooden floor and panelling, the subject of one particular portrait displayed on the wall bore a remarkable resemblance to Ken Forbes. Our general conclusion though was that it was good for someone else to inherit.

Gathered round the lawn, Château de Gizeux was the last Loire hurrah. The château is home to a large collection of 17th century mural paintings depicting royal châteaux and royal life.

The murals which were protected by the villagers during the French Revolution with a thick layer of cob, have been restored to their former splendor as part of a 10-year restoration project.

We headed north into the Normandy countryside, past orchards growing over 9 million cider apple trees, their harvest transformed in part to Cider and Calvados that we would sample later in the tour.





Above

Dominique Bernaz in 1929 20HP GEN81 arrives alongside Bryan Stringer's 1924 SG 62EU.

Opposite

Boat trip at Saumur 4. Jane Forbes, J Martin Halusa, J The Skipper and Alain Niepceron (top).

Unsuitable headwear for open top motoring. (bottom).

Centre Spread

A super image from Ron Elenbaas capturing a very special sunset at Château de Rochecotte with 1676 and 23EM.



Giverny, the country home of the renowned Impressionist painter Claude Monet was a Normandy highlight. The house, where he lived for over four decades has a dramatic dining room painted a vibrant yellow. The garden, in two parts, a flower garden Clos Normand in front of the house and a water garden with its famous Japanese bridge and iconic water lilies, the subject of numerous Monet paintings.

Nights in Normandy were spent in typical French country hotels, two charming converted water mills set in tranquil grounds and Château de Sissi, the 18th century former summer residence of Empress Elisabeth I (Sissi – aka Sisi) of Austria. The château's large terrace was the setting for our final evening's music and dance entertainment. The Machus du Havre folklore group, dressed in traditional costumes performed various dances and were joined for the finale by several members of our group. One lady's huge headdress was, however, deemed unsuitable attire for open car motoring.

Au revoir France. Our wonderful French foray complete, we scattered far and wide. Although for many it was just à bientôt until the Champagne to Provence tour in 2024.

Warmest thanks must go to Alain Niepceron, Dominique Bernaz and Sir John Stuttard for their dedication, passion and meticulous planning in making the entire tour such a great success for us all.



The Intrepid Explorer



Lord Donald Graham (son of the 7th Duke of Montrose) is a cousin of the late archaeologist Ian Graham, and also a great friend of our own Strone Macpherson. Lord Donald dropped Strone a line with some excerpts from Ian Graham's autobiography.

Ian Graham OBE (1923 – 2017) - pictured above - was born in Suffolk and traced his Scottish lineage as a grandson of the 5th Duke of Montrose. He went to Winchester College and then Cambridge although was sent down for being lazy – and because there was a war on. He joined the navy for the remainder of the hostilities, and afterwards managed to get a place at Trinity College Dublin reading physics. On graduation, he got a job in the scientific department of the National Gallery in London studying the chemical properties of old paint. He enjoyed a vivid social life in 1950s London. Photography became his hobby and, in 1958, led him on expedition to Mexico.

'Unexpectedly, it was in Mexico that by happy accident I picked up a trail that would lead me into a field of activity completely new to me, Mayan archaeology and never in the fifty years that I've spent tilling that field have I regretted doing so. I can think of no other occupation that would have been half as rewarding.'

So far you can be forgiven for wondering why this article is appearing in a car club magazine! But Graham was also a motoring enthusiast with a passion for fine machinery and engineering.





1928 Phantom I experimental chassis 16EX with lightweight sports body created by Barker seen here in Naples.

'My grandmother's conservative outlook was reflected in the car she used. It was a huge Daimler limousine of immense height, purchased in 1910 and maintained thereafter in pristine condition, with just one concession to modernity, the replacement of its acetylene headlamps with electric ones. The speedometer had an extra needle that recorded the highest speed attained during a journey. This my grandmother seldom failed to inspect on alighting from it, to make sure that the chauffeur had not exceeded 25mph. (But once, when she was not on board and I was sitting in the front next to Hanman, the chauffeur, he got it up to nearly fifty on the flat.)'

'At the outbreak of WW2 the car was laid up for later use, but when,

following my grandfather's death, my grandmother moved out of the mansion to make way for the next generation, the car was sold to a scrapyard for £5. That broke my heart. If I had known what its fate would be, I'd have saved up my sixpences and pennies to purchase it. A dozen years later, however, my undimmed admiration of that beautiful and silently running car was partly responsible for my purchase of that very different one, also thirty years old, which eventually took me to Mexico.'

In 1950s London there can be little doubt that Graham was egged on in his motoring passions by his best friend and flatmate The Hon Patrick Lindsay (1925-1986). Lindsay is well known as a racer and collector of some important cars. At that time his daily driver was a Phantom II.

The friends shared a small 2-bed flat behind Sloane Street and a feature quite out of keeping with their (then) modest circumstances was that Lindsay parked up his striking blue PII right outside. Ian Graham duly purchased a 1928 Rolls-Royce Phantom I Sports Tourer: one of the rare experimental chassis 16EX (UK registered as GK-12) with a lightweight sports body created by Barker.

'One might conclude from our possession of these chariots that we were a couple of exhibitionist toffs, but Patrick was no exhibitionist. He was a dashing sportsman who courted danger on the motor-racing track and in the air, engaging in these activities to please himself not to impress others. As for myself, no one could call me dashing, and I bought the Rolls-Royce out of sheer love of its beautiful engineering, and the craftsmanship of the bodywork. But to some extent, perhaps, I may have been trying to keep up with my flatmate.'

Ian must have really caught the Rolls-Royce 'bug' because in 1954 he bought a second car, a 1930 20/25 fixed head coupé bodied by Hooper, GSR60, Reg GK-2084. His purchase of that car was recorded by Rolls-Royce, on 7th May 1954, with his address shown as 66 Pavilion Road, London SW1 – the flat he shared with Patrick Lindsay.

1930 20/25 Hooper fixed head coupé GSR60 purchased by Ian Graham in 1954 and owned by him until he passed it on to his daughter and son-in-law late in life.

But by the late 1950s funding for his work at the National Gallery had come to an end. He needed to find something else to pay the bills and having had success as an amateur photographer he decided to become a professional photographer of architecture and art.

In 1958 this work took him to New York working for photographer Irving Penn. He decided to take the Phantom I with him and shipped it across by liner. The Rolls-Royce was parked up in a friend's garage on the Upper East Side and used frequently for trips out to Long Island and elsewhere. Ultimately, however, the plan was to sell the car and his idea was to take it to Los Angeles where the hot climate meant he should get a better price when selling a convertible motor. So he embarked on a road trip heading west, although en-route to California he detoured to Mexico which he found to be a land full of wonder.



However, in Mexico, in the border town of Nogales, he returned to the Rolls-Royce to find a crowd pressing against it so hard that they had cracked the windscreen. This made him angry and when a policeman wrote a ticket for a parking violation (where there was no restriction), he angrily screwed the ticket into a ball and threw it down at the cop's feet. The policeman duly arrested him for littering and sent him to jail. He was tried the following day and fined \$60...happily suspended as he only had \$13 to his name. He headed off to San Diego; first filling up with Mexolina 'a sulfurous-smelling gasoline that cost only twelve cents a gallon – half the price of gas in the States. Of course, with an octane rating of fifty-five, any postwar car would have choked on the stuff, but to an old Rolls-Royce it was mother's milk. By accelerating to 70mph and then coasting with the engine switched off, I reached San Diego with some gasoline and few dollars to spare.'

Finally, having had some cash wired to him, he was able to continue to LA. He visited the offices of Road and Track magazine in Venice and persuaded the editor to feature the car in a road test, and then put an ad into the *LA Times*. Whilst in the newspaper's office he was approached by a photographer who asked him where he was from 'oh from Mexico via jail in Nogales' replied Graham. The photo made the front page!

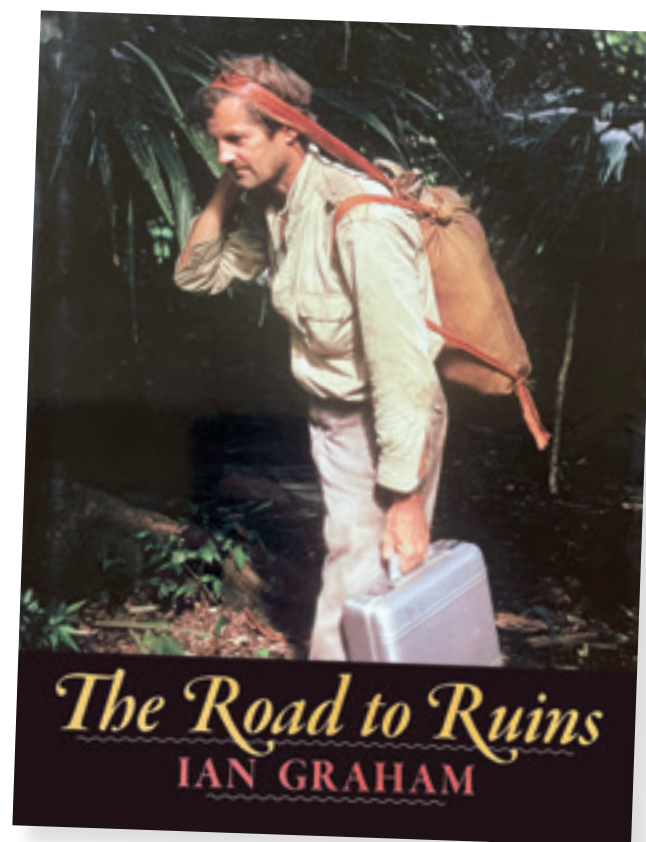
Eventually the Phantom I found a buyer. 'The sum I got for the car was not vast but it was about four times what I paid for it.'

Ian Graham returned to London but went back to Mexico (and other South-American countries) many times, engaged in a life's work on the Mayan civilisation, involving numerous discoveries and breakthroughs. His autobiography is fascinating but beyond the scope of our magazine.

But there was another, significant, Rolls-Royce adventure to come.

'On returning to England in 1962 my old friend Patrick Lindsay reminded me that I had agreed to join him on an adventure that did, at first, sound a little audacious – driving a maharaja's Rolls-Royce from India to England by way of Afghanistan.

The roots of this plan went back to Patrick's honeymoon where he and his wife Amabel had stayed at Rambagh Palace Jaipur as guests of the maharaja



and maharanee, known to their friends as Jai and Aisha. Patrick's passion for cars had taken him to the garages at the back of the palace where Jai kept a stable of, mostly, Rolls-Royces.'

One, in particular, had attracted Patrick's attention, a 1930 Phantom II touring car. [22GX, a 1930 Phantom II Barker Tourer.] It was painted maroon with the wings, wheel-discs and upper surface of the bonnet all in unpainted, polished, aluminium. The odometer read 12,000 which apparently had been mainly done in first gear parading behind elephants. Patrick plucked up the courage to ask Jai to sell him the car "Oh no, no Patrick" replied Jai, "I cannot sell it to you...No, I will give it to you!"

From that point the idea of driving it back to England grew in Patrick's mind. Patrick was a superb driver and pilot – he even flew his own Spitfire – but he was not a mechanic and knew that I had some knowledge of those old cars.

Now he shipped off six new tyres to Jaipur and I joined him on the flight to Delhi. It had been ten years since the Lindsay's honeymoon and during the intervening period the fortunes of Indian princes had drastically reduced. The Rambagh Palace had been turned into a hotel and the Jaipurs now lived in a comfortable house, previously the home of their British agent.



The day after arrival we visited the garages to inspect the car and I raised the bonnet to obtain some impression of past maintenance. Patrick hissed that this was not suitable behaviour. So, with the new tyres fitted and an oil change we set off. Jai and Aisha were convinced we would not go more than ten miles before we broke down but actually it ran for a good 140 miles before that happened.'

Cleaning out the fuel line eventually cured that particular problem. But then between Agra and Delhi the car began to overheat. In Delhi, Ian got the car onto a ramp. The oil drain plug was seized and it became apparent that the oil had not been changed...merely topped up. Eventually the thickest black goo oozed out. But how much hardened in the oilways – how soon might a main bearing or big end fail as a result?

'Once more on the road and, shortly after leaving Lahore, we encountered a tributary of the Indus, two feet six inches deep but a 100 yards wide. We had to recruit a number of locals to push us to the other bank. Back on dry land I would

22GX crossing the Bactrian Desert with some friendly locals ready to drag the car out of soft sand.

Opposite top
The Road to Ruins, Ian Graham's autobiography.

have liked to drain the oil (and water) from the pan but we didn't have enough oil to refill it and were told not to expect to be able to buy any for another twenty-five miles. But Rolls-Royce bearing loads are very low and an oil/water emulsion would suffice.

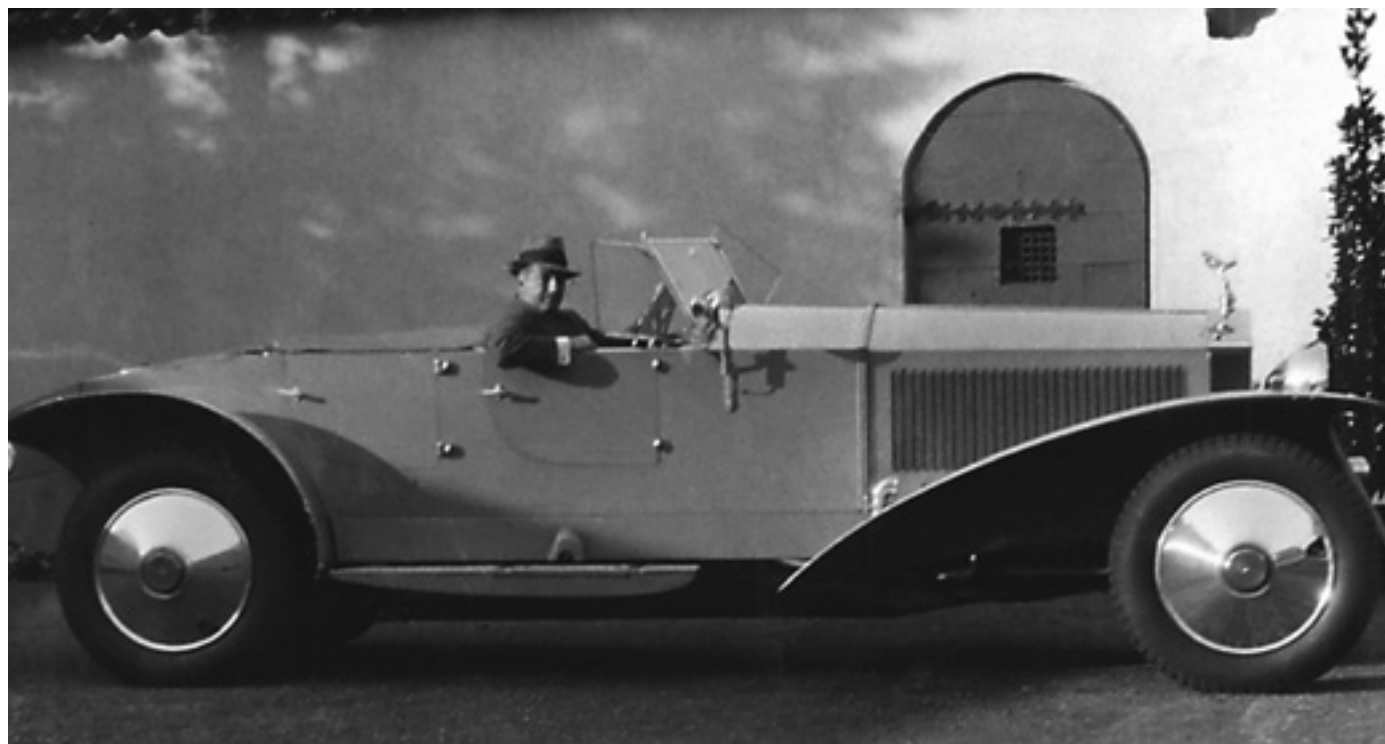
The Khyber Pass presented no difficulties nor the terrible road leading to Kabul. We were anxious to see the northern regions and so wanted to go up into Iran. We hoisted a 50-gallon drum of petrol onto the back seat but didn't need it as, although we never came across a filling station or pump, in every town somebody had a galvanised tank hidden away and would shuttle to and fro with a tin pitcher and a funnel.

We made our way along tough tracks but had confidence in Rolls-Royce craftsmanship and our new tyres.

We took a minor road through the Hadijek Pass 11,000 feet above sea level. The views were splendid and it was fascinating to see caravans of Kuchi Nomads. Shortly before the top we came upon a broken-down bus and had no



Use this QR code to see footage of 22GX in action.



Side view of 1928 Phantom I 16EX during the later ownership of Capt Jack Kruse..

1930 Phantom II 22GX at speed in 2018. Now owned by Patrick's Lindsay's son Valentine (photo James Mann – Classic & Sports Car).



difficulty towing it to the top, with the weight of our extra gasoline tank over the back axle greatly assisting traction.

The road north from Bamiyan continues through a steep-sided ravine. At the bottom is fertile soil and beside the road runs a stream, the Daria Qanduz. The water is canalised for the irrigation of tiny plots and every so often the road crosses one of the ducts. Whilst only a foot high, to a long car this presented a significant problem and when faced with the worst of these 'bridges' we decided there was nothing for it but to jump it.

I backed up for a quarter of a mile, and then accelerated at full power. On hitting the bridge there was a crash, with the front wheels briefly leaving the ground. The car ceased to steer, skidding to a halt. We got out fearing damage to our spoked wheels but they were intact. Under the car the aluminium tray had been broken by the hump of the bridge and caught the two brake-cable levers. A few well-directed blows freed them and we were on our way.

Our next trial was a long stretch of desert. There were three faint tracks left, right and straight on – we chose the straight-ahead route hoping it would lead to Mazar-i-Sharif. All went well until we strayed slightly and found ourselves stuck in soft sand. We had some food and water but the situation was certainly worrisome as we hadn't seen another vehicle. At last a small cloud of dust appeared and an Afghan bus came into view. The passengers (all men) connected a tow rope and having picked up a smattering of Pashto we did our best to render into the vernacular 'one, two, three, heave!' It worked and some volunteers joined us in the Rolls in case further help would be needed.

It is a pleasure to recollect the friendliness we encountered, and the willingness of the Afghans to try to communicate with strangers. The car, of course, was a source of wonderment wherever we went, but neither adult nor child ever touched it – making stroking or patting motions without actually touching the metal. Later in Iran, bystanders would demonstrate greater familiarity with the car by putting handprints on the radiator or kicking tyres and exclaiming "Ahhh Ford!"

Before we left London we had debated whether to buy revolvers, but to our surprise we found the Afghans peace loving and well mannered. We were unaware that we had chanced upon the brief golden age of modern Afghanistan, a time when music was heard in the streets and women could show their faces, and even

sit as deputies in the national parliament. A more enjoyable motoring adventure could scarcely be imagined.'

The two friends drove to the Persian Gulf and shipped the car back to England from the Iranian port of Abadan, and then flew home.

Ian Graham was responsible for recording and cataloguing the single largest collection of Mayan sculpture, carving and monumental artwork. He was, for many years, involved as a consultant and witness in criminal cases of looted art, including in artifact repatriation. His photography and drawings are still used as legal evidence, preventing the sale of looted and illegally and illicitly obtained art and artifacts. He was awarded the OBE in 1999.

Ian Graham died on 1st August 2017 aged 93. His obituary was written by Dr David Pendergast of UCL an excerpt of which reads: "Although he was unquestionably an anomaly in the world of archaeology, an upper-class English gentleman walking countless miles to find new monuments and record them, his contribution to the study of the Mayan people was great. On top of that, he recognised the ludicrous quality of much of life, and he knew how to laugh at it and at himself. I will miss him greatly."

Remember the 1930 20/25 Ian Graham bought in 1954? Well, he kept that car for the entirety of his driving career gifting it, late in life, to his daughter and son-in-law who still own it and enjoy it greatly.

And the Phantom II 22GX given to Patrick Lindsay by the Maharaja of Jaipur is also still going strong. It is now owned by Patrick's son Valentine and was the subject of an article in *Classic & Sportscar* back in 2018.

With thanks to Tom Clarke and Sir John Stuttard for identifying the cars mentioned above. Please see Tom and John De Campi's article: 'The Continental Phantom I: 10, 15, 16 and 17EX' in the RROC's 'Flying Lady' Sept/Oct 2005 p.7856-65. I am grateful to Lord Donald Graham and to Ian's daughter Silvy Weatherall for permission to draw excerpts from Ian Graham's memoir *The Road to Ruins*, (2010). This is out of print but I have a copy which I am happy to lend to members – it is a tour de force – and will put to bed any thought that archaeology is a dull occupation!

Autumn Tour 2023

Maurice Whitaker.



Above

Tom Jones' 1927 20HP GXL39.

Right

One of the two groups on their guided tour round Highgrove. Your author, Maurice, is far right second row.

*I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine:*

And so started The Highgrove Tour. A late summer tour, rather than a midsummer one, but nevertheless, a dream.

Conceived and flawlessly curated by Adrienne and Ashley Carmichael, the last event of the year, often referred to as the Autumn lunch, turned into a banquet of beauty. Blessed by the last warming rays of the retiring sun, our three days in the Cotswolds, stationed at the Hare and Hounds, was always going to be about the star attraction - a guided visit to Highgrove to experience the beautiful private gardens created by His Majesty King Charles over the last forty years.

Much security was required in advance and each of us were doubtless vetted, however on the day we were greeted by a cheery bearded policeman at the gate and ushered up the hallowed drive (no stopping, no photographs). The seamless service was then handed over to our designated greeter who watched on as we (mostly) dutifully parked in the approved Rolls-Royce fashion before being met by our hugely knowledgeable guides.



The fascination of this garden lies not only in the horticultural but also in the philosophical and psychological. King Charles having taken on the house in 1980 as a relatively young bachelor with many turbulent events ahead of him, clearly found great joy in creating his own private world rooted in and expressing his own beliefs. His leadership in organic and natural land and food management, once regarded as eccentric, is now mainstream and all in play here. His views on global warming, also similarly disbelieved, here brought to the fore, and his understanding of the function of bees, gloriously celebrated. As our guide was to point out on more than one occasion – “*here the bees are treated like royalty*” – as attested by their miniature stately home (kindly supplied by Fortnum and Mason).

But maybe other factors are also at play: the house is overgrown by climbing plants to the point where some windows are totally obscured, the yew hedges clipped to perfection sit in contrast to the wild thyme and moss that envelops the pathways, and the wildflower meadows are allowed to form as they will. It all sits somehow as a metaphor for an unpredictable world where our desire to control events is often fruitless.

Events, which all dedicated Rolls-Royce owners are familiar with, soon descended upon us with lashing rain the following day. The team scattered to points various, with your writer's destination being Newark House – a wonderful gem, now “safely” in the hands of the National Trust, formed as an amalgam of a Tudor Hunting Lodge and a four-square Georgian country house. Benign neglect allowed us to make out the joins from afar.

Sadly (as the old French proverb goes) *l'ennemi du bien est le bien*, the gardens didn't quite match those of Highgrove... where the wild thyme blows.

From West Sussex to Bangladesh then back...

The simple life of Rupert and Jan Grey

I got chatting to Rupert Grey at the Spring Lunch this year and he mentioned that he was in the process of writing a book on Bangladesh. I decided to learn more and on a bright August day I turned up at Rupert and Jan's home in deepest West Sussex.

'I arrived here in about 1956' smiled Rupert as he showed me round. *'Father had just bought the property back then and in the late eighties it became the family home.'* The Greys' home is wonderful; there is no grand house nor fancy accoutrements, it is one of those beautiful properties which has everything one could ever need and where what you need falls right to hand exactly when required.

It is the sort of English country property that we all dream of really. And of course, sitting there, foursquare in the barn, is GUN7, Rupert and Jan's 1936 25/30 and the co-star of the movie *Romantic Road*. Now, if you've read this far, but not seen *Romantic Road* - pause a moment - and at the very least watch the trailer which you can view on your mobile phone by pointing your camera at the QR code below. Better still go to Netflix and spend 88 minutes revelling in multiple, happy, and complementary, love-affairs.

It took several years to edit the footage into a film, but it has proved something of an unexpected hit. *'I was walking across to the National Gallery the other day, crossing the road when a motorcycle courier pulled over, took off his helmet, shook my hand with the words "I'm so glad to have met you!" Quite extraordinary!'*



Watch the film here: Use the QR code for a direct link to the YouTube video.





Sylhet Province, Bangladesh, a Rolls-Royce makes everyone happy.



Shahidul Alam, sits on top of GUN7, as they parade through the streets of Dhaka at the launch of Chobi Mela Festival of Light.

1936 25/30 GUN7 helps with the thatching sometime in the 1960s.



Rupert explained that his passions are as a photographer first and lawyer second although a career in the law has allowed him to pay the rent. As a leading libel solicitor he has acted in just about every significant case which you can bring to mind over the last quarter century or so. And you can see why - there is a calm warmth which pervades our conversation but peppered with insight, common sense, and humour. This is a man you want on your side of the ring.

But that book on Bangladesh he mentioned at the Spring Lunch now exists and Rupert handed me a copy. Bangladesh is a country we have all heard of but many would hesitate a moment before being able to point to it on a map. Once known as East Pakistan it became the autonomous state of Bangladesh in 1971. Perhaps some will recall, former Beatle, George Harrison's benefit concert of the early 1970s. These days the country is probably best known for the supply of cheap clothing to Primark stores and online catalogues. Rupert and Jan are extremely well travelled people - what on earth does this flat, humid, featureless land on the northeast of the Indian sub-continent have to offer?

'When I first got there in 1992 I saw a sign at the airport which said "welcome to Bangladesh before the tourists get here"... well it's now 30 years later and I can tell you they still haven't arrived!'

In the *Oldie* magazine recently, Rupert recalled a moment on a huge wooden boat in mangrove

swamps by the Bay of Bengal. The owner of the vessel, the 6 foot 6 tall Major Zia, was standing for Parliament and the boat was his election HQ.

'The election team consisted of ten Europeans, six gunmen, four cooks, a boatman and a photographer. Our parliamentary candidate was a freedom-fighter and pirate-King, widely revered for his courage in battle. He was to be fatally wounded in a gun-battle with other pirates some years later.'

The photographer, Shahidul Alam, now a prominent human rights activist, was sitting on the gunwales, dressed in dark green kurta, twinkling eyes above a dense black beard with three Nikons round his neck. The image lives with me still.

Shahidul was a professional photographer fiercely critical of imperialism. On the face of it there was little common ground other than the role of the camera as a non-violent and effective weapon for publicising injustice and oppression and changing public opinion. But the friendship, which began that day has continued for 30 years. There can be little doubt that Shahidul helped me understand the language of Bangladesh and allow it to speak to me, warm my heart and inform my understanding.

Cartier-Bresson once said "Think of your camera as a flame-thrower... It's a lot more effective than bullets."

Okay okay – let's get back to the Rolls-Royce! 'Well perhaps the least likely episode happened on the streets

“It even had its very own angel, of which we were appointed guardians. Who was going to get to put her on at the beginning of the journey and to unscrew her at the end?”

of Dhaka with Shahidul sitting cross-legged on the roof of GUN7 as we drove through the streets at the head of a boisterous trumpeting crowd at the launch of Chobi Mela Festival of Light.’ [the biennial festival of photography and Human Rights.] Later, when Shahidul was selected as *Time Magazine* Person of the Year - the international news reels carried footage of him grinning at the crowds from the top of Rupert and Jans’ 25/30. Thus a Rolls-Royce, that ultimate symbol of wealth, became for a brief and glorious moment the standard-bearer for equality and human rights. In 2018 GUN7 was awarded the Club’s Harding-Rolls Trophy for its adventures.

The car’s paintwork is original aside from the door-panels, which were repainted in 1968, and one of the rear wings, which was knocked off by a black cab in the Portobello Road a few years later. It bears eight-decades of scars resulting from unexpected encounters with Sussex hedges, a 44-gallon Indian oil drum, Carpathian rocks, Bangladeshi rickshaws and other minor obstacles but the engine purrs all the same.

There are no famous owners and no concours wins. But for Rupert and his brothers, as children, GUN7 was the ultimate in motoring, immaculate walnut-veneered tables, deep pile carpets, and running boards perfectly designed for them to ride the wind. *‘It even had its very own angel, of which we were appointed guardians. Who was going to get to put her on at the beginning of the journey and to unscrew her at the end?’*

‘We accompanied father on his medical rounds, were collected from school, learned to drive, impressed (or dismayed) our first girl-friends and, much later, departed from the church with our new wives.’

Following the death of Rupert’s father in 1982 responsibility for GUN7 fell to Rupert and Jan. At first its role remained the same: school runs, daughters’ weddings, and grandchildren’s christenings. But then Rupert & Jan realised that GUN7 was the perfect vehicle for their vision of the 21st century Grand Tour, of which the 7,000 mile journey through India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh has formed just one segment.





GUN7 on the Brahmaputra River. This photo was memorably used in Rosemary Jeffreys' excellent article in N&R Issue 50, February 2017. Do have a re-read on the club's website

As a boy Rupert once asked his father how many miles the Rolls-Royce had covered. "It's just about got to the moon", was the reply. "It's up to you bring it back." They are on track.

Homage to Bangladesh by Rupert Grey is available easily online from Amazon, or through Waterstones Bookshops. £30 – well worth buying a copy.



Rupert's other classic is this fabulous 1954 Series 1 Landie, which is well used on a daily basis.



Rupert's workshop might be a little draughty but every tool is perfectly to hand.

Cars, Tiaras and Honeymoons

*Sir John Stuttard tells of Polesden Lacey,
its owner, and one of her cars*



A year ago, Lt Col Hans B Hindborg Sørensen, a retired Danish Air Force officer, contacted the club. The research he initiated into 90PY, a 1933 Phantom II Continental Park Ward Cabriolet De Ville, led us to the stately home of Polesden Lacey and the origin of the British royal family’s amazing tiaras.

Starting with tiaras, Dame Margaret Greville, the owner of Polesden Lacey died in 1942. In her will she left many items of jewellery including several precious tiaras to the then Queen Elizabeth (latterly the Queen Mother). Since then they have been worn by the late Queen Elizabeth II, and more recently by Queen Camilla and other members of the royal family. The ‘Greville Tiara’ is made almost entirely of diamonds and was worn by Camilla on her marriage to Prince Charles in 2005. It is one of her favourites and she is often seen wearing it. Another spectacular tiara, known as the ‘Greville Kokoshnik Tiara’, was purchased by Margaret Greville in 1921 at Boucheron in Paris. Consisting of emeralds and diamonds, it was worn by Princess Eugenie at her wedding in October 2018.

Rolls-Royce motor cars, diamonds and stately homes are often linked and research into 90PY proved no exception. The Phantom II was the fifth car from Derby to be owned by Dame Margaret. She was the illegitimate daughter of William McEwan, a Scottish brewery millionaire and philanthropist, later MP for Edinburgh Central, and Helen Anderson. McEwan made arrangements for Helen to give birth to Margaret in London and for William Murray Anderson, who worked at McEwan’s Brewery, to pretend to be the father, by signing the birth and baptism certificates. But Margaret was always supported financially by McEwan who had no other children. By the time of his death in 1913, McEwan’s wealth had increased to £1.5 million, which he bequeathed solely to his daughter, Margaret.

In 1891, Margaret married the Hon Ronald Greville, the eldest of four children of the politician Algernon Greville, who was the 2nd Baron Greville. Ronald was not wealthy but he was a member of Edward VII’s inner court (also known as the Marlborough House Set). The couple lived at number 11 Charles Street, in London’s Mayfair, a house provided for them by William McEwan where Margaret became used to entertaining King Edward and many other royals.

*Margaret Greville photographed
on 5 October 1900 at the Lafayette
studio in London (© The Victoria &
Albert Museum).*

*Ronald Greville (© National Trust /
Andrew Fetherston).*

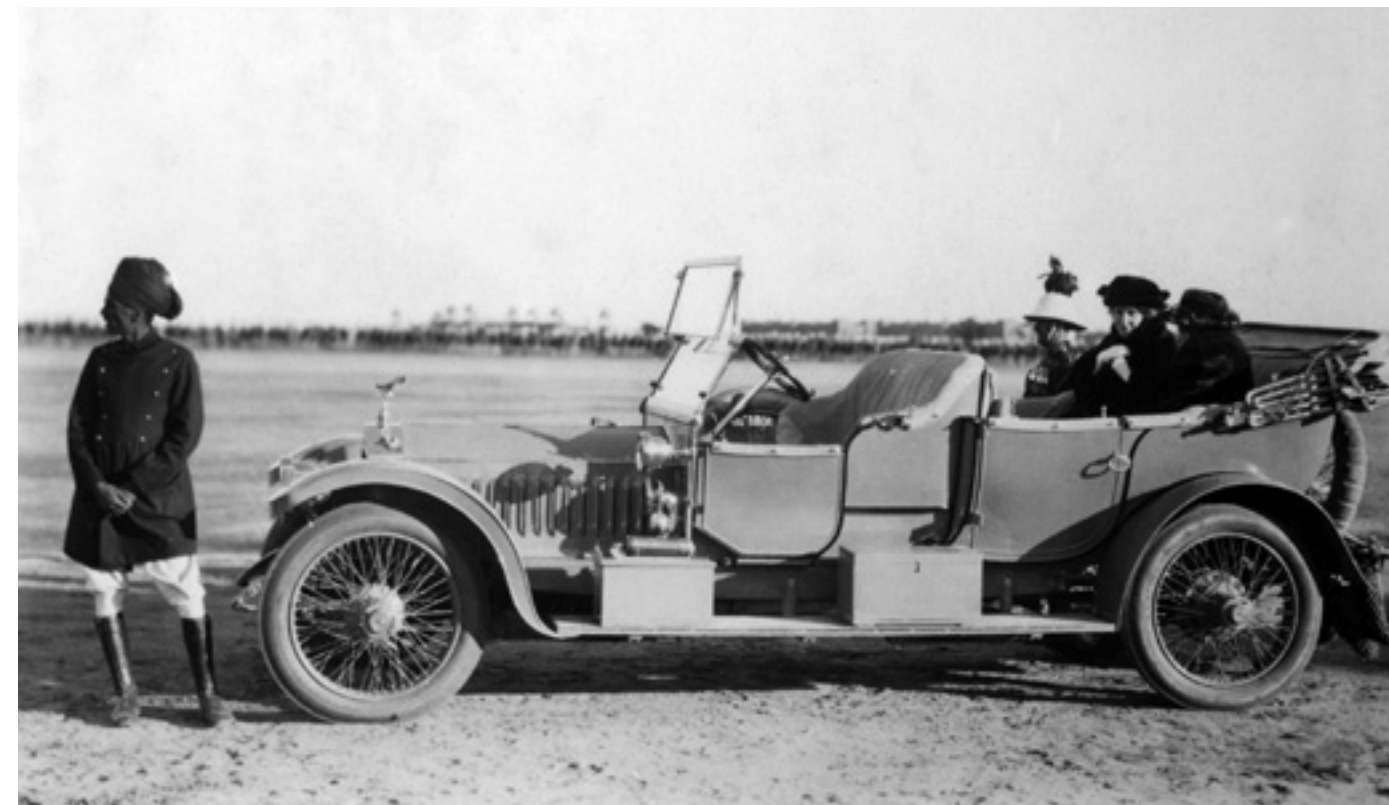




Polesden Lacey (© National Trust Images).

Ronald was to die in 1908 but a year earlier Margaret purchased Polesden Lacey in Surrey for £80,000, a sum given by her father. Margaret immediately set about extending and refurbishing the house to the standard required to entertain the upper echelons of society.

Margaret became a most successful society hostess, enjoying close friendships with the British royal family. She entertained international royalty, including Maharajas. Many notable politicians were frequent guests. She was a philanthropist and contributed funds to the war efforts during both world wars. She was made a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire (DBE) in 1922. She donated a Spitfire (P8643) to the nation in 1941.



In 1921 Margaret travelled to India and was photographed with the Viceroy's wife, the Countess of Reading, in a 1912 40/50 (chassis 1928) Barker Roi-des-Belges, owned by the Maharaja of Bikaner (photo above). She later entertained the Maharaja at her home in Charles Street.

In April 1923 Dame Margaret Greville invited the Duke and Duchess of York (later King George VI and his wife Queen Elizabeth) to spend their honeymoon at Polesden Lacey. The newly-weds stayed for ten days on the estate, before travelling on to Scotland.

The wedding party in three cars: the Duke's Armstrong Siddeley, a Daimler and one of Dame Margaret's Rolls-Royce Landaulettes pausing outside St Nicolas' church, Great Bookham on their way to Polesden Lacey. (© David Molyneux and The National Trust).

Turning to her Rolls-Royce motor cars, she possessed five in all:

- 1915 Silver Ghost (29RD) Barker Landaulette, registered LO-6311
- 1922 Silver Ghost (20YG) Hooper Landaulette, registered XN-3825
- 1929 Phantom I (112KR) Barker Landaulette, registration not currently known
- 1933 20/25 (GEX81) Thrupp & Maberly Cabriolet de Ville, registered AGN-432
- 933 Phantom II Continental (90PY) Park Ward Cabriolet De Ville, registered AXM-119 (which she sold in late 1937 or early 1938).



Two earlier Silver Ghosts between a Morris 'Snubnose' van and a Daimler lorry at Polesen Lacey. (© National Trust Images).

90PY was acquired by engineer and entrepreneur, Thomas Fildes. He is recorded by Rolls-Royce as the owner in February 1938. His company, Samuel Gratrix, made Spitfire components. After their Manchester factory was bomb damaged in 1940 Fildes continued at temporary premises. According to his widow, he changed the rear end of 90PY to make a large boot capable of carrying Spitfire parts – albeit perhaps lacking the elegance of the 'Type 6' luggage grid previously fitted.

After a subsequent owner the car went to the USA and remained there for almost 40 years. In 1995, the car was acquired by Finn Randrup, of Funen, Denmark. Finn began a restoration and, sometime later, researcher, Hans B Hindborg Sørensen, uncovered the history of the car (with help from Rolls-Royce Foundation Museum in Mechanicsburg, PA and The 20-Ghost Club in the UK).

Finn plans to restore the car to its original condition by removing the boot and reinstating the luggage grid with a removable trunk.

The concept of The 20-Ghost Club arranging a visit to Polesden Lacey was hatched with help from volunteer research historians at the house: Janet Durbin and Pam Burbidge. The idea developed of organising a concours and inviting Finn Randrup to bring Dame Margaret Greville's Phantom II back to her former home.



Finn Randrup with his wife, Karen Klintholm, and son, Adam (© Henrik Mohr, fyens.dk)



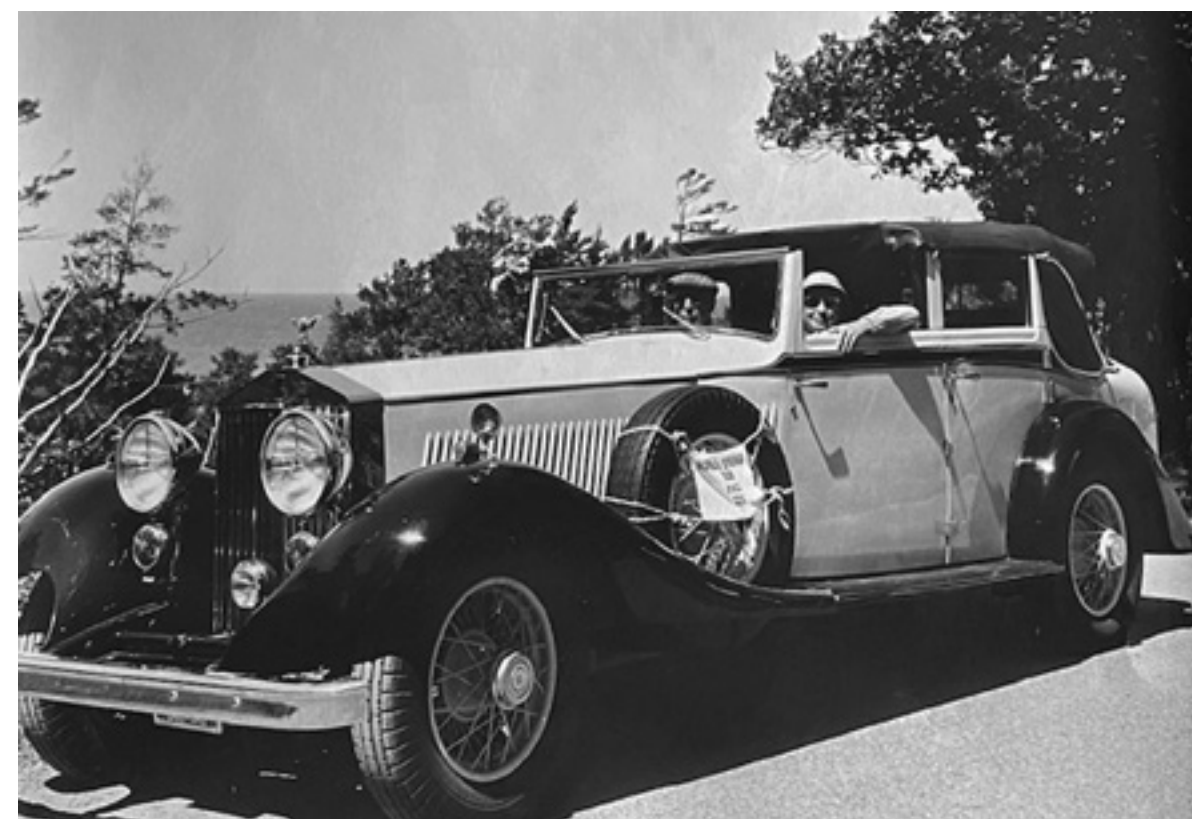
Susie & Tim Forrest at Goodwood.

Coincidentally, discussions were taking place with 20-Ghost Club members, Susie and her daughter, Katie Forrest, to organise a short tour of Surrey and Sussex in 2024. This would commemorate the life of Susie's husband and Katie's father, Tim Forrest, a long serving member of The 20-Ghost Club and chairman from 2003 to 2009. This resulted in the organisation, by Katie Forrest and Maurice Whitaker, of a tour from 17th to 20th July 2024 to be known as 'The Tim Forrest Tour'. The tour will be based at the Barnett Hill Hotel in the Surrey Hills near Guildford. One day of this tour (19th July) will be devoted to a visit to, and a concours at, Polesden Lacey with grateful thanks to Hilary Jarvis, Christian Osbourne and Hannah Malmcrona of the National Trust.

We hope that Finn Randrup will attend with 90PY and his family – and hopefully the originator of this story, Hans B Hindborg Sørensen.

A flyer for the tour will be issued shortly so that 20-Ghost Club members will be able to enjoy a few days in Surrey and Sussex and come to the 2024 Concours at the special location of Polesden Lacey.

PS A full description of the history of 90PY can be found on The 20-Ghost Club website.



At the RROC's Annual Meet at Greenfield Village, Dearborn in 1962. David Isquick was awarded 1st prize in the Phantom II classification.

Car 'Porn?': Ho Ho Ho!

Mary Narvell provides some festive fun.

Might searches on car auction sites
For vintage chariots of old
Indicate a moral blight?
I offer this idea so bold.

Car addiction is a habit
Many find quite hard to shift.
Just like a copulating rabbit,
Numbers somehow lose their drift.

Cars are sold and others bought.
They are added to the stable.
Proud owners do not need be taught
Their 'new' babies must be cradled.

In luxury, cars sit and preen
Awaiting visits to 'the spa'.
There, a mechanic oh so keen
Repairs engines deemed not up to par.

And so, the appetite is whet
To add another horn.
Might this search be proven yet
To be a kind of old car porn?

We speak of peaking under bonnets
To spark the dead to life.
But this is not an English sonnet:
Too many cars can lead to strife.

There's no denying Rolls-Royce charm
And Bentleys' if I'm pressed.
But beware the adage 'Do No Harm',
With multiples comes stress.

I mean not to discourage sales,
Nor wish motors left discarded.
I speak only with a wifely wail.
Husbands **should** be guarded.

Trawling through those car sale ads
Is a clear and present danger.
This behaviour is so bad,
Wives might need to call in rangers!

So, beware temptation to acquire
Another chassis and its keys.
Santa Claus need not be hired
To park more motors under Christmas trees.

A happy Christmas to all 20-Ghosters, family and friends.



The Last Word

Mary Narvell's Car 'Porn?' poem on page 56 made me laugh out loud. I spend countless hours on my iPad considering and salivating over the gorgeous automotive leviathans offered on the web.

However, Mary's poem also touches on the responsibility of ownership and we all know that the purchase price is just the down-payment. The real cost comes with all the work you will have to do. Bella's favourite three little words go round in my head: 'No More Cars!'

For a 20-Ghost Club member the primary benefit of R-R ownership is enjoyment, whether this is participating in our major international rallies or just happy days pottering around local lanes. This is the 'dividend' of ownership. We also take pride in maintaining our cars and preserving them for the future. This is our legacy to future owners (and potential club members).

I have been chatting to a couple of members who, having owned their cars for many years, are now looking to sell. The simple answer is – right now is not a good time. The hike in interest rates is having a real impact. According to several dealers the classic car market, which wasn't in great shape early in 2023, is now utterly dire. There are depressing tales of cars only finding buyers at half the original asking price. But is this really a tragedy?

If a seller has been counting on a, possibly optimistic, asking price then the current situation is painful. However, an alternative angle is to say that the accumulated 'dividends' from a long ownership combined with the pride in the 'legacy' of a beautifully preserved pre-WWII car is more than enough reward. Expecting a significant tax-free gain as well could be considered as verging on the greedy!

As a club we could, instead, focus on who might want to buy these wonderful cars and ensure that we are doing all we can to create a new generation of enthusiasts. Price is simply a factor of supply and demand. We know the supply of these cars is finite so the current price challenge is down to a lack of demand from younger car enthusiasts. My stepson Tom, would rather have a 1990's Japanese sports car – but I'm working on him!

I wish us all happy holidays and a peaceful 2024. Thank you for all the fun and support this year. Keep the photos and articles coming in and I shall see you at a club event next year.

Best wishes

Johnnie



Off on Jonathan Wood's Autumn Amble in Peabody (GHA16) along with several other 20-Ghosters. As Bella discusses route options with Jonathan's workshop supervisor Sam, I'm just ready to enjoy the day ahead!.



ROLLS-ROYCE