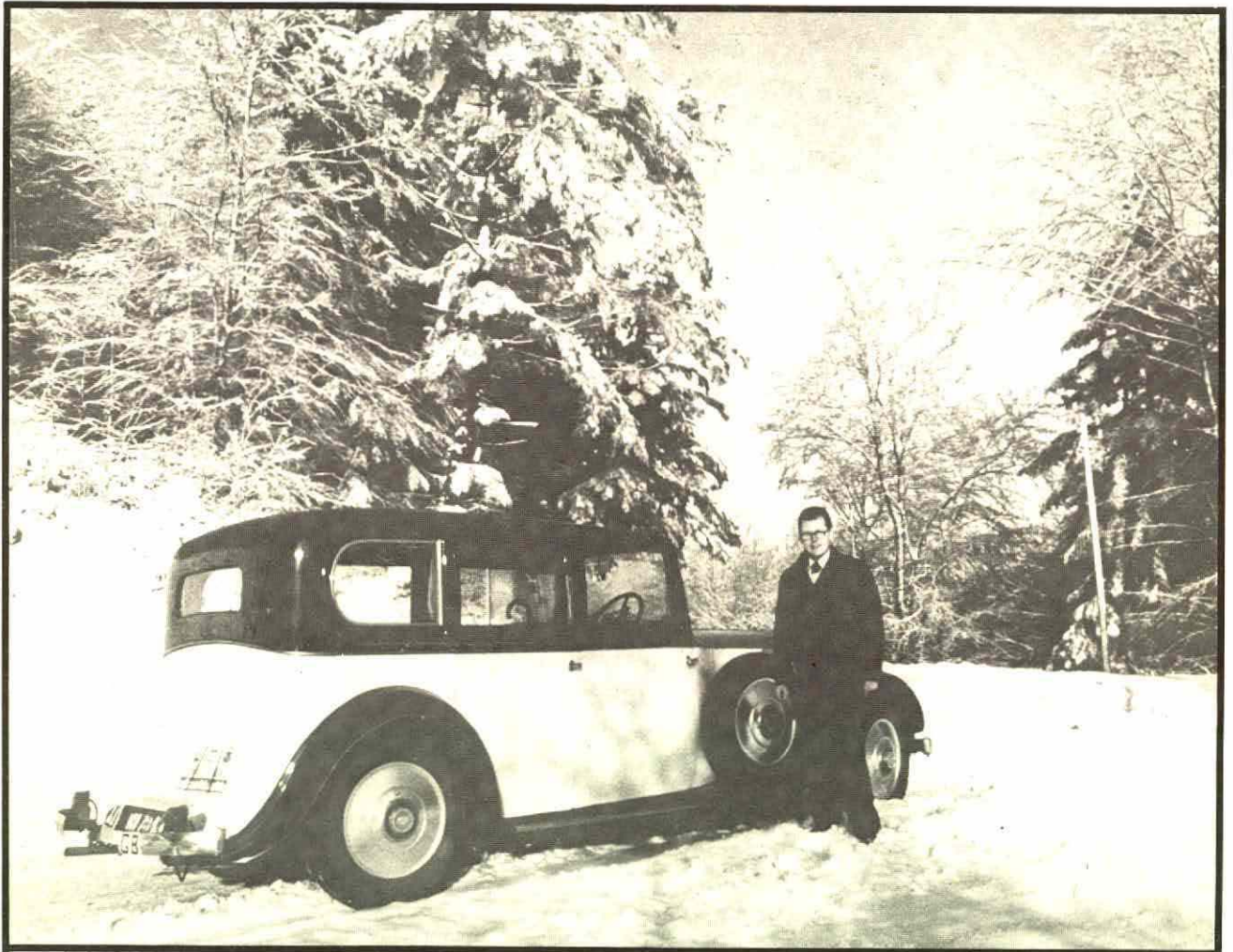


The 20-Ghost Club Record



Volume 20
1978





20-Ghost Club Record Volume 20 ~ 1978

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The Chairman Writes...

I have the honour - totally unexpected and undeserved - of having been elected Chairman of the Executive Committee at the last Annual General Meeting of the club.

I have met with my fellow members of the Committee on four or five occasions since then to consider a variety of subjects of concern to the club.

By far the most important subject which has been discussed has been ways in which the club can continue to provide a programme for its members of events which may distinguish the club from other motoring clubs.

Our membership covers enthusiastic owners of Rolls Royces - in the great majority of cases pre 1939 - although that criterion is no longer rigidly adopted. The Committee felt that the general body of our members enjoyed attending meetings or rallies, where those also attending were producing Rolls Royces in absolutely first class condition.

Your Committee have embarked on next year's programme with enthusiasm and have sought to produce one which will attract our members. The success or failure of these meetings, however, depends inevitably on the support which they receive.

We have so far only been guided by what has happened in previous years. Times change and the interests and views of people also change.

As Chairman, I would value enormously the views of a very large majority of our members on the kind of annual programme which would appeal to them.

There are those who like a concours d'Etat or driving tests or club luncheons or dinners outside London or local weekend tours or tours abroad and so on.

Please write in to me and say what kind of function would most appeal to you to attend and I would especially welcome an indication of whether you yourself, with or without others, would be prepared to make arrangements for it.

Sir Thomas Lund, C.B.E.

FROM YOUR EDITOR

With the country in the grip of winter and threatened by strikes, we hope you will find in the accompanying volume a few hours escape into a saner world.

The major event in 1978 was undoubtedly the tour to St. Petersburg. We have tried to give impressions of this from several points of view, and if the photographic coverage is sparse, blame the Russian police for over officiousness! Seriously I've never been in an Iron Curtain country, but one must be perpetually apprehensive lest one should accidentally photograph a telephone kiosk or other military establishment and get thrown into the Lubjanka jail or at least have the film confiscated. I expect happy snapping is an art unknown there.

We have a long article on life in an R-R armoured car unit, by courtesy of Will Larson of the U.S., which originally appeared in the New Zealand Rolls-Royce Owners Bulletin.

Two further instalments of our members Homes and Hobbies series should prove interesting, and there is a first rate report of the Tour of Oxford houses. Together with a collection of reminiscences, they make up our offering for Volume 20.

Patrick Brewer has had to relinquish the office of Secretary, as he is now permanently located in Devon, and a round trip of several hundred miles to attend meetings coupled with domestic problems have forced this resignation upon him. However, Lyn Brua, now back in this country after a sojourn in Belgium has stepped into the breach and is already making his presence felt.

Plans are afoot for an ever more exciting foreign tour, so all we now need is for the Chancellor to forget we exist for six months and then we can all go and have some fun.

*Nigel Fredrick,
66 Alcester Road, Lickey End, Bromsgrove,
Worcs B60 1JQ. Bromsgrove 74163*

Note: Opinions expressed in articles, letters or editorials may not be construed as being necessarily those of the 20-Ghost Club.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

April 17th 1978

St. Peter
Jersey,
Channel Isles.

Dear Mr Fredrick,

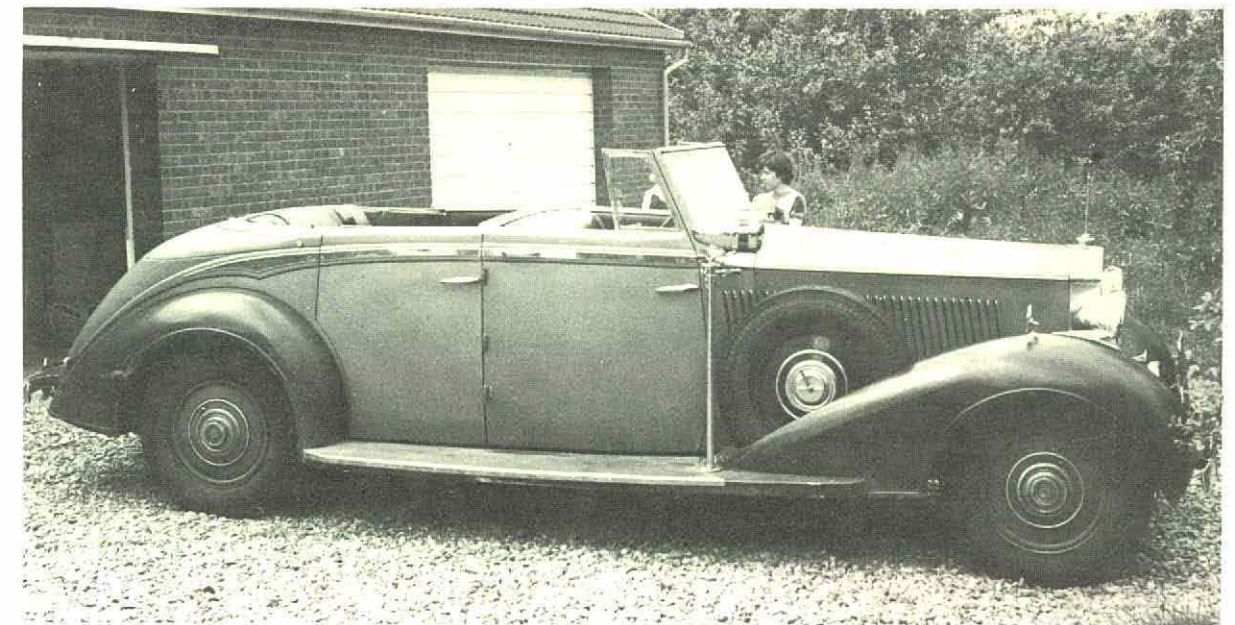
Volume 19 of the 20 Ghost Club Record came safely to hand and I have read it with interest, it is a nice large one and I compliment you on the production of it, though personally, I loathe the Art Paper as if it happens to get wet it is totally ruined and I am one of those people, who in order to keep the Club together would prefer to see two or even three copies of the magazine published per year. I know all about the cost of publication and this is the principal worry as I am the author of 'The Hyphen in Rolls-Royce' and 'The Rolls-Royce 40/50hp Ghost, Phantoms and Spectres'.

It is the letter from my old friend Hugh Keller, which has prompted me to write to you as I think it was Dr Adrian Belsey, who was the brain child behind the formation of the 20/Ghost Club, therefore the following should be of great interest to present day members as it is all so long ago now.

Just after I was demobbed from the RAF in May 1946 and was living with my Mother in Chesham Street, Belgravia, SW1 and things were endeavouring to try to get back to pre-war days, Dr Belsey was living in Sloane Street and he was running a 20hp RR with rear wheel brakes and three speed centre change with a type of coupe body on it.

It must have been in June 1946, when the Horse Showing season had started once more and in the evening after dinner our chauffeur and I were washing our family car a 1928 Austin Twenty 'Ranelagh' Limousine Index No PN22 (this car now belongs to Bidwell-Topham, who is the nephew of Mrs Topham of Aintree Racecourse fame, Bidwell-Topham also has a very fine Phantom II Gurney Nutting drophead foursome coupe chassis No 74 PY and two Phantom III chassis Nos 3-BT-203 and 3-BU-162 and various other cars in his collection). My own 1928 Buick 20/60 'Empire' saloon was being washed at the same time, when Dr Belsey came strolling along Little Cadogan Lane, which is behind Chesham Street and where we garaged our cars.

As the Austin and the Buick were so old, he stopped and got into conversation with me, telling me that he lived in Sloane Street and owned an old RR 20hp which I had seen many times. He said that he thought the time had come to start a Club specially for preserving the 20hp and the latter type of 40/50 RR as so many were going into the breaker's yards and unless something was done fairly soon there would be none left.



At this time there was still petrol rationing 7 gallons per month for any car of 20hp and above and the licence was £1.5.0. per horsepower, the pre-war 40/50 RR was already taken care of with the Veteran Car of Great Britain extending the age limit to a new class known as Edwardians, but no one was in the least interested at the time in the post-war 40/50s or the early 20hp models.

I believe what gave Dr Belsey the idea was the formation about this time of the Sunbeam Register, which is one of the earliest of the one-make clubs.

It was not until three years later that Dr Belsey was able to put his ideas into practice and this came about as walking by the Serpentine one day he saw two 20hp RRs parked and got into conversation with their owners. At the outset, it was decided to take in all pre-war Derby built RRs as there simply were not enough of the old type 40/50 and 20hps to form a Club and Stanley Sears was asked to join with a very fine collection of the later models, including the Pierpoint Morgan 'New Phantom' Chassis No 109 WR, a Phantom II Continental Chassis No 7 MW and a Phantom III chassis No 3-BU-118. Personally, on this note I think it is a great pity that post-war Crewe built cars were ever admitted into the 20/Ghost Club, I said so at the time and still hold that view today.

I hope the above is of interest as it is entirely due to Dr Adrian Belsey that the Club came into existence.

The second thing that prompts me to write to you is the Article headed 'A visit to H.J. Mulliner' and the picture of HM King Saudi of Arabia's Phantom III. This car is chassis No 3-CM-25 and it is by no means the last Phantom III, which is 3-DH-11 and was fitted with an H.J. Mulliner Limousine which was only partly completed and then shipped out to New York, where it received its interior trim by J.S. Inskip and it was sold to Mrs Helen Mackay in the USA. You

will find a picture of the car on page 196 at the bottom in 'Coachwork on Rolls-Royce 1906-1939'.

As for 3-CM-25 this chassis was sold on July 1937 to Windovers Ltd who bought it for Stock and mounted a Windovers Limousine de Ville on the chassis, the car was still unsold at the end of the War. I am given to understand that Winston Churchill was determined to give HM King Saudi, a present in recognition of his assistance to the Allied cause during the war and when the King was asked what he would like, he replied saying 'A New 12 cyl Rolls-Royce with open coachwork'.

It was in trying to find such a vehicle that 3-CM-25 came to light and the Windovers Limousine de Ville body was removed and the chassis went to Hooper & Co who built the present coachwork and the car was presented to HM the King Saudi and it was the very first car body which Hooper & Co built after the War was over. There are two very good pictures of this car in my Book 'The RR 40/50 Ghosts, Phantoms and Spectres' see page 257.

Incidentally I saw 3-CM-25 at Stanley Brunts last September when I took chassis No 101 SK up to Stan for him to do some minor work on my car. 3-CM-25 is not a pretty car, Phantom III do not lend themselves to open touring coachwork, the bonnet line is far too high, the extremely wide running boards so that outriders can be mounted on them do not improve its appearance, the car was in a shocking state being smothered in sand, I gathered the King had sent it back to the UK for total reconditioning aboard a Jumbo Jet. It has done a very small mileage and is seldom used as owing to his religion he cannot sit on the left hand side of the chauffeur.

With kind regards,
Sincerely
Wilton J. Oldham

News & Views

Mr. Theodore E. Reich, of 4980 S.W. Hewitt Boulevard, Portland, Oregon 97221, U.S.A. has written to enquire if any member has a spare copy of the superb hardback colour programme Anthony Heathcote prepared for the Kensington Concours in 1975. Anthony tells me they were all sold and I have only my own copy. Mr. Reich has been a member for some years and it would be appreciated if we can help.

For anyone finding problems insuring a Rolls-Royce or Bentley, especially the newer models I understand there is a special facility set up by the City brokers Richardson, Hick and Partners. By attracting a substantial number of such cars equitable premiums can be charged, which are likely to be lower than those generally required in the open market.

Ian Lloyd, Conservative M.P. for Havant and Waterloo, and former President of the Cambridge Union has recently published three books, viz "The Growth of a Firm", "Rolls-Royce, the Years of Endeavour", and "Rolls-Royce, the Merlin at War." We have not seen these books, but it is claimed that he has had full access to the Companies archives, the first time this has been granted to an independent historian. The retail price is £10.00 each book.

Mr. Hopkins of Morway, Wrenwick, West Runton, Norfolk, offers his services as a restorer of lamps. We have no knowledge of his standard of work and would welcome an opinion from any member who is in a position to comment.

UNWANTED RECORDS
Mr Nigel Berry, Chairman of the East Yorkshire Section of the R.R.E.C. would like to acquire a complete set of back numbers of the Record. Since the cost of purchasing them from the stock held by the Hon. Editor would be a formidable sum for a private individual, Mr. Berry wonders if any member, perhaps recently retired, would be able to help. Letters can be forwarded.

The following is taken from THE TIMES, 7th September 1978, and was reproduced under the title of "The Tribal Notice Board" in the OBSERVER colour supplement on 28th January 1979. We would apologise for the poor quality of reproduction, but the original photograph, kindly offered to us by the photographer, Mr Julian Plowright, failed to reach us from its previous users.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr J. Valentine
and the Hon Janet Weir

The engagement is announced between Francis Anthony Brinsley (James), younger son of the late Dr F. C. O. Valentine, FRCP, and Lady Freda Valentine, of A11 Albany, London, W1, and Janet Sibella, daughter of the late Viscount and Viscountess Weir and stepdaughter of the Dowager Viscountess Weir, of Kilwinning, Ayrshire.

Loose ends:

Overheard at a club meeting:

Notable Club Member, politely, *What car have you come in?*
Second member, sheepishly, *Actually, I've come in a tin car.*
Notable member, shocked, in tones redolent of Lady Bracknell, *Is it... a Ford?*
Second member, aghast, *Oh no, Lady Freda, I've never sunk that low!*
Chuckling, Lady Freda and tin car driver move out of earshot.

Scene, outside a London Tube Station, at the height of the homeward rush-hour
Newsvendor, *Pyeper! pyeper!*
Young gent in business suit, *What papers have you got?*
Newsvendor: *Ve Staeendard, mite, Staeendard!*
Young gent, puzzled, *I've never heard of it. Haven't you got the Birmingham Mail?*

Newsvendor, stricken to the root of his soul stands agape, young gent is swept away in the crowd.

East may tentatively seek rapprochement with West, but it is comforting to know that the gulf between London and the Provinces yawns as vast and unbridgeable as ever!



A Gold Ghost Next?

America does give rise to some eccentrics, perhaps even more than England. Wayne Pritchard, proprietor of a garage in Great Bend, Kansas, is a millionaire and an eccentric. He also owns 17 oil wells and half a dozen ranches.

In about 1947, he bought a 1920 Pierce-Arrow opera coupe for \$62.50, stripped it down to the bolts and re-finished everything in nickel, silver and 23-carat gold. He then put it all back together in running order. It took 28 years of secrecy and he has all the bills to prove it.

It was finished in 1974, and was subsequently sold to the Dutch Wonderland Museum in Pennsylvania for \$180,000. In 1975, at the age of 81, sanity returned, however, and he bought a Phantom II Sedan de Ville to tour Europe.

"With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding" JOB xii. 12

A Tour of Oxford Houses

2nd, 3rd September 1978

What could be a more fitting arrangement than to travel from one great English house to another in a fleet of those aristocrats of the road, the Rolls-Royces of the 20 Ghost Club, their silent advance heralded only by the scrunch of yielding gravel on the ancestral avenue, their gleaming bodies moving with the grace and precision of a corps de ballet as they shimmer to a standstill before some patrician portal. It was truly as ghosts of the spacious days of English country house life that they haunted in turn six of the finest houses around Oxford one weekend in September last year. The occasion had been arranged by the Irish Georgian Society, and at the inspiration of Jimmy Valentine, fifteen members of the 20 Ghost Club joined the party bringing with them some of their magnificent pre-war motor cars.

The party made its first impressive assembly in front of the railway station at Oxford early on Saturday morning before moving off in stately procession, loaded up with picnic lunch, for Palladian Kirklington, former home of the Dashwoods, for whom it was built in the 1740's complete with flanking pavilions, ornate plasterwork and 'singerie' decoration. Unlike Kirklington which was sold by the Dashwoods in 1910 our next stop, Rousham, remains in the possession of the Dormers for whom it had been built in 1635 and for whom the famous architect William Kent made alterations some hundred years later. Here Kent's Praeneste in the landscaped grounds formed the arcadian setting for our lunch, hastened only by the organisers' anxiety that we should not be late for tea at Lady Freda Valentine's. The well-known concern of the Irish Georgian Society for its stomach became evident, but was later appreciated by all when Lady Freda's feast was finally revealed at The Gatehouse, King's Sutton. As the light softened to evening, we drove on to Heythrop Castle, not so much a castle but a great house of the very early eighteenth century, designed by Thomas Archer, one of England's most

idiosyncratic architects, and now run as a training college by the National Westminster Bank. After a full day, dinner at the Bell Inn brought the day to a convivial close.

Happily, after the technological nightmare of our stay in James Stirling's Florey Building in Oxford, the sun shone for us on Sunday morning, and seats in Mr. Williams' open tourer were much in demand as we set off for Major Miller's house, Shotover Park, just a few miles East of the city. From the drawing room windows of this house, built over an arcaded ground floor in 1714, we looked out along the grand axial canal to the pretty Gothic temple which terminates the view. Major Miller's hospitality extended to a tour of the bedrooms where scarcely any detail can have been changed this century, a striking contrast to Wotton House where we went next and which was our only stop in Buckinghamshire. Wotton had been saved from the hands of the demolition contractor in 1960 by its present owner Mrs Brunner who had not only repaired the house, which was in a poor state, but had restored the interiors designed by Sir John Soane. Our picnic that day was savoured beneath the sun in front of the house looking across the lawn to Capability Brown's lake. After showing us the house, our hostess, with extravagant gestures, waved us farewell from a wall-top until we finally disappeared from view at the end of the long drive and turned on to the road for the last of the weekend's treats, Woodperry House. For most of us, Woodperry was perhaps the most covetable of all the houses we saw, for apart from its delicious architectural qualities, it was by today's standards the most manageable. Built in about 1730, of five bays width only, a contemporary described it as a 'neat snug box' — linked with curving arcades to a pair of flanking pavilions, its forecourt enclosed with a beautiful wrought iron screen.

It brought to a happy conclusion a weekend of many treats, not least of which was the pleasure of making new friends, and of seeing great houses in a way to which they were accustomed, and to which perhaps few of us were!

Nicholas Thompson
January 1979

Links with the Past

Several ladies of advanced years have recently departed this life. The remarkable Miss L. Overend of the Airfield, Dundrum, Dublin ran her 1926 H.J. Mulliner tourer GMJ 52 almost single-handed and kept the Club flag flying in the emerald isle, but is alas, no longer with us.

The death was reported on 29th December 1978 of Dorothea, widow of the late Dr. F.W. Lanchester, one of the most brilliant and far-sighted of the early motor builders, whose classic papers to the Institution of Mechanical Engineers in the 1900's are a must for any student of car design. His first car was built before the turn of the century and it is remarkable that this link with a contemporary of F.H. Royce has only just been severed.

A great loss was the recent sudden death of Ron Haynes, who was such a fund of knowledge on the pre-war cars and one of the few people left in the Company with such experience. I'm sure many members have benefitted from his skills and will join in expressing our sympathy to his family.

The Osiris Repertory Company may seem a far cry from Rolls-Royce matters, but this all-female theatre company, founded in 1927, used to tour Britain in a succession of elderly Rolls-Royces, including a 1922 40/50 known as Great Aunt Maud. There must be some stories to tell about their exploits (Great Aunt Maud is reported to have sunk a ferry in Scotland!) but Miss Nancy Hewins, who founded the Company and used to maintain the cars herself, passed on in January 1978, just after I heard of her activities. I still hope to find out more and share the fun with members. ●

Armoured Car Memories...

Duty in Iraq in the 1930's in a Rolls-Royce Armoured Car

ROLLS-ROYCE. . . What dreams these two words conjured up to a young Englishman in 1935 whose only mechanical acquisition was an indifferent bicycle. Such was my position in early January. The fulfilment of a desire for a service career found me an Aircraftman 2nd Class (under training) at Uxbridge by mid-February. Many sore shoulders, many miles of traversing the square and many guard duties later, I found myself a fully fledged A.C.2 and on the way to my first station. This turned out to be a 'Summer Camp' under canvas. A flight of three 'Westland Wallace' bi-planes towed practice drogues for territorial gunners during their annual camp.

Strangely enough these aircraft, apart from the novelty, caused no undue enthusiasm. My main interest lay in the Motor Transport Section: an ambulance body on a 1914 Crossley tourer chassis, a Morris ten wheeler with tanks and extinguishers as a fire tender, and a number of 1915 Leyland 3 tonners with various stores, wireless and workshop trailers.

This was it! I knew now what I wanted. It was here I first met real armen as opposed to the instructors and permanent staff at the depot. Here was a very different world. Here was comradeship, relaxed discipline of dress and working conditions, tales of service overseas, and of the Armoured Car companies equipped with Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost motors.

As soon as was permissible I submitted my application for training as a driver (petrol). At this time the R.A.F. had three grades of drivers — steam, electric and petrol. It was with some impatience that the required year of service passed and in January 1936, I received my orders to report to Manston, the then Motor Transport Training School.

Now followed a concentrated but

enjoyable six months. The vehicles in the greatest numbers were very large, elderly, but extremely friendly Leyland three tonners, followed by the Morris ten wheelers with various bodies. Still in fair numbers was the Model "T" Ford, a few as vans but mainly as 'Huck' starters, a mechanical means of turning the engines of aircraft. Among the light vans the most predominant was the comical 'Trojan' single chain drive. It had a solid back axle, two stroke engine under the driving seat and a diabolical starting device guaranteed to crack the elbow of eight out of ten. The passenger staff cars were a range of Hillman and Morris types, mainly the 'Hawk' saloon, a Morris Open Tourer and a special R.A.F. type known as the 'Hillman Wizard'. Moving up the scale came the Humber 'Snipe' and the 'Pullman'. Needless to say the last two were not included in the training syllabus.

The not so pleasant parts of the course were the theoretical periods. Differentials, gear boxes, magnetos, the Otto cycle, carburation, etc., broken by periods of actual maintenance.

Qualifying as an A.C.1 driver (petrol), I was posted to Lee-on-Solent. I'd hardly found my bed space and been allotted a vehicle before I applied for a Drivers Training Course (armoured car crew). Luck was on my side, for within weeks I was on my way to the Isle of Sheppey for a course in communication including Morse by flag, lamp and key. Semaphore, and orders by signal flag. Gunnery naturally was an important subject. Vickers and Lewis 303, fired from a moving car at both moving and stationary targets, rifle and revolver both from a moving car and from the range.

We were trained in mild steel 'mock-ups' of the Rolls-Royce Armoured Car with normal road wheels and tyres. This taught us the driving position, the con-

trols and the limited vision with all 'Battle Shutters' closed. In action they were fitted with sand tyres and heavier wheels. Nor did the course include the heat, dust and sandflies that were joys to come. The one piece of realism came in the form of the 'Isle of Sheppey mosquito', which introduced us to sleeping under a mosquito net.

Training now over, it was goodbye to Eastchurch and 'Merry England' and off to the Middle East. . . destination unknown.

Once aboard the 'luxurious' vessel Dorsetshire, that served as a troopship during Spring and Autumn and a banana boat for the rest of the year, speculation as to our destination was rife. We stowed our kit, then went on deck for a last look at home. The Aquitania towered over us, a grand old lady of the sea. At dusk we cast off, and were on our way, unaware that we would not return for five years. Arrival at Port Said put us out of our misery. Some joined No. 1 Company: IRAQ; others No. 2 Company: PALESTINE; or the least popular No. 3 Company: ADEN. My destination was No. 4 section, No. 1 Armoured Car Company based at Shaibah, fourteen miles south of Basrah on the Persian Gulf. Also known as Ash Shuaybah or Shu-Aiba it was in the 30's a mere speck out in the desert. Now I understand it is a thriving oil town.

We shared the camp with the No. 84 Squadron, at that time flying 'Vickers Vincents' as a bomber squadron. Our accommodation was two large and one small barrack blocks, a long shed with fourteen bays and two pits, a wireless transmitter room, an armoury and offices.

The make-up of a section at that time was:—

8 Rolls-Royce Armoured Cars
2 Rolls-Royce Wireless Tenders, mounted on Silver Ghost chassis.
2 Scout Trucks, 10cwt Morris Commercial Taxi Chassis, 17.9 engine
2 Lorries, 30cwt, Morris Commercial 6 wheel twin rears, 15.9 engine

After a few days of celebrations for the men returning home and a welcome for us — the 'long awaited reliefs' — life came back to the normal

routine. This period as we discovered afterwards was our testing time. The right approach to the experienced crew members was most important; too confident an attitude was liable to be construed as 'cockiness', nervousness as weakness. The training programme was in the hands of the car to which one was attached.

My own initial period was uneventful, my driver being an older man on his second tour of duty with 'The Cars'. Any grinding of the gears, stalling or sticking in soft sand was met with words of encouragement and explanation. I considered myself extremely lucky to have such an instructor.

I was sorry at the time to be transferred to an 'Armoured'. Here one had to learn all over again. The extra weight called for a longer period in each gear, far more 'revs' on the change down; and in these early days we had not progressed to the 'clutchless change'. The steering too was vastly different, any violent snatch on the wheel and you were liable to find yourself battered by sliding ammunition boxes, not to mention the comments of the other crew members. More important was to roll on the crust of the sand. Any dig-in by the front wheels breaking this crust and the car was liable to roll — this misfortune overtook the 'Cheetah' as she mounted a bank and turned too sharply at the crest.

Most of the instruction during this period was the recognition of the desert, (so called) and the identification of colour of the different types of soil. This was the end of the dry period; and training was carried out again during the rainy season to compare the difference. This was not important as on occasions the section would break convoy and each driver pick his own tract.

Our first trial run was hilarious. Away we went sedately following the car ahead, our eyes glued for flag signals, eager to impress our superiors with our speed of recognition; when the order came to stop. Then the blow fell. The new men were to take the wheel. Away we went again, up went the signal to break convoy, and in minutes cars were stuck everywhere. We now learned the use, and felt the weight of the long running boards. Those who had never handled a pick and shovel had a great apprenticeship

with blisters to prove it. Freeing six tons of armoured car with its petrol tank nestling firmly on the ground is quite a challenge. As a further assistance in these times of stress, each car carried a steel tow rope, but unfortunately the 'Lords' of the Air Ministry omitted to supply gloves. This was no help to those who were fastidious about their hands and fingernails.

It would be fair to say the Rolls-Royce armoured car was never designed; it just happened. The first date back to 1914/15 with the R.F.C. and R.N.A.S. These original cars had heavy quarter inch armour as opposed to a later batch especially built for the R.A.F. which had a plainer style and three sixteenths of an inch plate. Various ventilating grilles were found to be unnecessary and were discontinued.

A heavy disc wheel designed to use the original size tyre was later to be superseded by a heavier wheel and sand tyres. This resulted in heavy steering, the correction being a wedge under the front springs to alter the angle of the king pins. The lighter wireless tender did not need this modification. The only other alteration to the standard 'Ghost' was a cut-out in the exhaust system, by-passing the silencers and blasting directly on to the ground ahead of the gear-box. As a fighting vehicle the design was adequate, although the traditional comfort left much to be desired.

From front to rear this was my home away from home; the starting handle was left in position and held by a leather bucket; the radiator was shielded by shutters, closing to a 'V'; the engine was protected by side plates and hinged top plates; butting on to this was a square section that formed the driver's 'Battle Shutters'. When closed, visibility was restricted to a slit a mere 1½" x 9" for driving forward, and a small square by the driver's head at the side, needed when executing battle formations. The body sides were five feet long, curving at the rear to meet the curve of the turret, again with shutters closing to a 'V'. Over the rear wheels were tool boxes that served also as seats when on non-combat duties.

From behind the front wings to a point under the tool boxes were heavy running boards. Beneath these were

heavy planks, tapered at each end, known as 'long running boards', very useful for bridging water or soft sand. On top of each side was a detachable water tank (40 gallon), a short running board mainly used as a platform for the jack, and a five gallon drum of petrol.

At the rear of the well, formed by the tool boxes, was a rear spring, a half shaft and a steel tow rope. The reputation of R.R. half shafts not breaking certainly did not apply here. At least one every three months was not unusual.

Fixed to the turret was a high powered searchlight, and stowed behind the water tanks were six foot lengths of canvas with slats of wood attached, known as 'sand mats'. Other equipment consisted of a full set of tools per car, funnel and chamois to filter petrol, a two gallon can of engine oil, Aldis lamp, semaphore flags, instruction flags, six one-gallon water bags (known as Charguls) for immediate use. A pick, shovel, compass, and binoculars completed the list.

Armament consisted of one Vickers MK. 1 (water cooled) per car, one Lewis (air cooled) all vehicles, one rifle per man, one .45 Webley per man, one Verey pistol per vehicle, one grenade-adapted rifle per half section and a Stokes 2" trench mortar per section.

The cars in Aden and Iraq had lift out planks for flooring; the Palestine cars had armoured shields. These Silver Ghost Rolls-Royce had three Achilles' heels. As big hearted and willing as the Rolls were, they could be easily immobilised in close street fighting by driving a flock of sheep into them. The first few carcasses fouled the steering. This trick had been used effectively during the troubles of the 1920's. The two other weak areas that affected them as successful fighting vehicles were their turning circle; and finally the angle of fire through the ports combined with the wooden floor. It was possible to let a car pass, run to the side of the car and roll a bomb or light a fire under the car, without the crew being able to see the enemy or fire at them. Naturally we were quite uneasy each time we were sent to assist in Palestine with our Iraq model armoured car.

The driving position was an early

cockpit seat bolted to the floor. A standard brake and six inch cut-down gear lever were there and to the left of the clutch was a small lever that could be hooked back by the heel and operated the exhaust cut-out. All other controls were standard 'Silver Ghost'. Running on 'Mag & Batt.' was usual.

Among the tricks we had to learn was driving on the hand accelerator alone, moving up and down the gear-box and missing specific gears (1st — 3rd, 2nd — top), using the clutch. I'm sure Mr. Royce would not have approved of rolling changes without the clutch, a technique that was needed on four occasions to my knowledge.

Driving on normal reconnaissance with all shutters open was reasonable. One soon became accustomed to the limited forward vision. Although the heat was to be expected, there was a certain amount of through draught. What were not so pleasant were the occasions we drove with the battle shutters closed. In the terrific heat, with no draught, the Commander sat on the floor next to the driver watching for orders to be transmitted by signal flags. The Gunner slackened the clamps on the turret and crouching over the gun braced his back against the turret to swing it in the required direction. In an area roughly 6' x 4', with no headroom, were three racks of rifles, the Lewis gun in its clamps, the boxes of ammunition, an emergency ration box and three grown men. Not exactly ideal conditions for a leisurely spin! Normally the driver would be alone inside while the other two crew members sat astride the tool boxes, holding a rail fastened to the turret. With the rear flap in the turret open conversation was possible. Although I have referred to 'the driver' all members of an Armoured Car Company took their turn at the wheel. Cooks, Wireless Operators, and Medical Orderlies drove the auxiliary vehicles, but were not required to drive the Rolls-Royces. Similarly with the exception of the Medical Orderlies, we were proficient in the use of all weapons carried.

Our main role was Police and Search duties. The exception being No. 2 Company in Palestine which had a more military role in support of an army unit.

Because of certain incidents during World War One, the army was not welcomed by the Iraqi Government. The Navy, although patrolling the Persian Gulf from a small establishment at Basra, was not equipped for full land duties. The supplying of a "military presence" therefore fell to the R.A.F. Their aircraft formed part of a chain of defence for the Near, Middle and Far East, while the armoured cars carried out ground duties.

Apart from 'showing the flag' at intervals in major towns, the routine task was the marking and inspection of the tracks that served for roads. Strangely enough these tracks were of great use to aircraft. Each track had a number in Roman Numerals marked on a mound of earth (Mutti) at ten mile intervals, and an identification letter. Any pilot flying off course, came in low, picked up a track and followed it. By referring to his map he could then identify his position, and by observing an increase or decrease in the number determine his direction, i.e. 'A' track Basra 'O' — Bushiyah '120'; if there was an increase in numbers he was flying away from Basra.

During a sandstorm it was quite easy to run off track. We had many calls to find bus loads of pilgrims on their way to Mecca which had met this fate. The markings would become blurred by drifting sand in summer and heavy rains in winter, thus requiring a six monthly inspection, which was the main reason for the picks and shovels on all vehicles. Most of the tracks were reasonably firm, with the exception of 'K', which was known as 'fighting K'. It ran through an area of soft mutti which, after the rain, became a bog for 30 miles.

Iraqi deserts are nothing like the rolling sand deserts of Egypt. There is plenty of soil which, if irrigated, could bear a rich harvest. For some distance inland from the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates there are now rich date plantations. In my day, however, apart from literally a few yards on either side of these rivers which bore some cultivation, mostly melons, the desert was stark and bare. The only serious cultivation I saw was a date plantation at the junction of the two rivers, Satt-el-Arab, at the port of Basra

which was American owned and operated. There are some stretches of sand, but not so much as is expected, and stones and rocks are plentiful. Travelling north from Bagdad, through the oilfields of Kirkuk and Mosul, passing Erbil (reputed to be the oldest inhabited city in the world) the going becomes increasingly rugged. The ranges become steeper until you arrive at a vertical mountain wall at the Persian border.

Some of these routine trips could last up to five weeks from the base station and the mobility of the section was of prime importance. Nothing of a personal nature was carried on the cars and all bed-rolls and kit were stowed on the Albion. Tents, a bread-box, food supplies and any heavy stores were loaded on the Crossley. One scout truck carried the officers' kit, the other, the food, cooking utensils and the cook. He would put up a scratch mid-day meal as camp was only formed at night. The one exception being the crew of the wireless tenders. As they often had a signal watch after we had broken camp and moved on, they carried their own kits on these vehicles. With only the wireless equipment these tenders were much lighter than the cars and therefore travelled faster. Over these long periods we relied on aircraft of 84 Squadron to drop us fresh supplies of bread and other food-stuffs about every three days. The petrol we carried was purely for emergency use, and our main supplies came from dumps in the ground at 100 mile intervals. The oil companies had a contract to inspect these and keep them filled. Water normally caused no problems. We usually camped at a fort manned by Iraqi Levies, with water tanks filled by pumps. This gave us plenty of cooking and drinking water — personal hygiene however was very sketchy. As complete as a section was, it hadn't got around to portable baths or showers.

Life at base camp was pretty humdrum. Down to the bays at 6 a.m. (summer) or 7 a.m. (winter). Unlock your car, start it up, check it over, sign the daily inspection form and then tinker. The general rule here was: if it moves — salute it, if it doesn't — polish it! Polishing, painting and inspecting took up most of the time,

but occasionally we had competitions for changing wheels, half shafts, and even springs under active conditions away from workshop facilities.

One trick to impress the uninitiated was to ease the side shutter, reach in to the hand pump, pump 2 lbs of air, switch on and flick the ignition lever. If the engine was tuned correctly it would start. You then nonchalantly strolled round, unlocked the rear shutters and climbed aboard.

Apart from the driving aspect, weapon handling and range practice filled in certain periods; as did communication exercises with morse key, flag, lamp and that very useful method — Semaphore.

Even forming camp was brought to a fine art. This required vehicles in correct position, gunpits on the corners, turrets swung, gun covers off, kitchen site and fire-pit dug, wireless mast erected and earth mat buried, auxiliary vehicles unloaded and tents erected. When on the outskirts of a town during a 'showing the flag' recce., we even went to the extent of a flag mast flying the R.A.F. ensign.

The introduction to active Armoured Car Section in those days was in the tradition of the pre-war services, no pampering, straight in at the deep end. . . . On arrival, having had our pure white knobby knees admired and the sartorial elegance of our issue khaki drill ridiculed, we paraded before the Flight Sergeant of the section. He handed us down to the Sergeant, and so down to the Corporals, each of whom were Car Commanders. Having made it plain that they despaired of us being able to do anything right, and commenting that this time the Air Ministry had definitely scraped the bottom of the barrel, we were allocated to vehicles as gunners. I was relatively lucky as my first steed was the wireless tender Pathfinder. Not being a fighting vehicle, and having a Wireless Operator as part of the crew, the spirit aboard was far more relaxed than that on an armoured car.

In camp, cleaning was the order of the day, having been taken over the tender to find what was carried and

where it belonged. I soon found out that great emphasis was put on cleaning equipment, a mixture of paraffin (kerosine) and engine oil being high in priority, followed by metal polish and paint. All pipes and unpainted parts were polished. Painted parts were continually touched up. All grease nipples were painted red, the drip trays under the engine shone, and the Commanding Officer should be able to use the radiator as a shaving mirror. The body, springs and transmission were washed with the paraffin/oil mixture, the surplus wiped off and the parts polished. It was surprising, especially during the rainy season, how clean the vehicles kept. The dirt and mud simply fell away.

The Rolls-Royces having loose floorboards made the cleaning of the transmission relatively easy. The Albion and Crossley lorry bodies being mounted high on the chassis were a little more difficult. The drivers of the scout cars however, really had problems. Sufficient to say that these vehicles were the least popular, although occasionally driving one, I was never actually allocated to one as a crew member. These cars were usually reserved for those men requiring a little discipline, or those who were not up to the required standard in all other skills.

Having made mention of Instruction or Order flags a further explanation is due. Whenever cars moved off, the correct drill was observed.

All crews stood in front of their vehicles.

Verbal Order
Get mounted
Start up

Flag Orders
Stand by to go ahead (when shown)
Go ahead (when lowered)

ALL VEHICLES
Extend to column distance (shown)
Drop back to four cars length (lowered)
Open to dust distance (when shown)
Drop back from the dust of the car ahead (when lowered)

On approaching the camp site the convoy would close up to column distance on the flag being shown. This would be followed by:—

Flag Orders

Form camp (left showing)
Stand by to stop (when shown)
Stop/switch off (when lowered)
Form line ahead (when shown)

ARMOURED VEHICLES ONLY

Execute (when lowered) Section Commander in front
Form line astern (when shown)
Execute (when lowered) Section Commander in rear
Line abreast to Port (when shown)
Execute (when lowered) Section Commander on right
Line abreast to Starboard (when shown)
Execute (when lowered) Section Commander on left
Line abreast of Port and Starboard (when shown)
Execute (when lowered) Section Commander in centre
ALL cars 90 degrees to Port (when shown)
Execute (when lowered) All cars turn quarter circle left.
ALL cars 90 degrees to Starboard (when shown)
Execute (when lowered) Cars turn quarter circle right
Form 'V' (when shown)
Execute (when lowered) Arrowhead Car Commander at point
Retire (when shown)
Execute (when lowered) All cars turn through half circle

The origins of these signals go back to the early influence of the Royal Naval Air Service before amalgamation with the Royal Flying Corps to form the R.A.F.

Another connection with these early days was the practice of naming cars, although this seemed rather elastic and depended largely on individual Section Commanders; this personal whim also reflected on the colour of the cars. Over the years it ranged from dark green to light sand.

The prefix to the name also seemed to be one of personal choice and not an Air Ministry directive. Some cars displayed the letters H.M.A.C. while others aspired to R.R.A.C. As a rule the non-fighting vehicles carried a name only, but there were exceptions.

During my tour with No. 1 Company, this was the rule with No's 1, 2 and 3 Sections, but in 1937 No. 4 Section acquired a new commander who preferred the cars in a light sand

colour, dispensed with a prefix, and standardised the names to begin with the letter 'C'. After all these years memory has faded and it is not possible to remember the old and new names, or the sections to which they belonged.

The names still recallable are:—

NO. 4 SECTION

Armoured Cars

Relentless	Chimaera
Tigris	Centaur
Satire	Charon
Jubilee	Cerebus
Cheetah	Cyclops
Curlew	Jaguar

Wireless Tenders

Pathfinder
Panther

Auxilliary Vehicles

Zerka	(Crossley)
Amadia	(Albion)
Magnolia	(Scout)
Moy	(Scout)
Morten	(Morris 30 cwt)

NO's 1, 2 and 3 SECTIONS

Armoured Cars

Thunderer	Buffalo
Dhibban	Adder
Diana	Avenger
Astra	Virginia
Terror	Vulture
Jackal	Victory
Bloodhound	Intrepid
Explorer	Vengeance
Lion	

Wireless Tenders

Wanderer
Wayfarer

Auxilliary Vehicles

Barzan	(Crossley)
Comet	(Ford 1 ton)

These are the faded tatters of the memories of my youth. That this article exists in print stems from my idle comment during a New Zealand Rolls-Royce and Bentley Club dinner that I had served in one of the original Royal Air Force Armoured Car Companies — my introduction to Rolls-Royce machines and to an undying love match.

Frank Canvin



"EXCELSIOR"

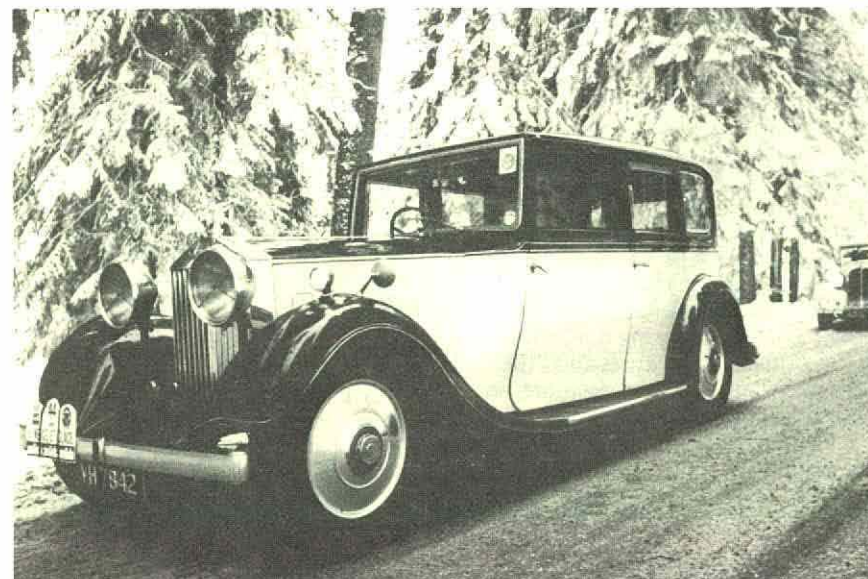
The 1978 Snow and Ice Rally

by Nicholas Taylor

It was a miserable cold wet morning in November. There were two letters waiting for me — one from Grenoble and one from the Government. The latter was dealt with in the usual manner; torn in half and thrown in the litter bin. The letter from Grenoble was carefully studied and opened; inside an invitation to attend the 1978 Snow and Ice Rally. All very interesting. I read further — a rally for old cars in the Haute Savoie terminating in the Alps at Les Gets. Next thing to do was to find a map; easy enough but Les Gets was not marked. However, after diligent searching on another map it was located — tucked under Lake Lausanne in Switzerland.

The fee for accommodation, food etc. was very reasonable especially with the good exchange rate at that time. I decided to enter using my brother's 20/25 (the one with the heater). The entry form was duly completed, an international cheque obtained and posted to Grenoble.

Christmas approached and passed. The New Year dawned. Not until six days before the rally was due to start did I receive a letter to say that my entry had been accepted. Amongst the normal regulations such as carrying a red triangle, fire extinguishers etc. there were one or two special items to be carried i.e. a shovel, tow-rope and



snow chains. According to the 20/25 handbook snow chains can be fitted on the rear wheels and front left hand wheel only. I thought this would only be for exceptionally bad weather and I therefore decided to prepare only 2 chains. These chains were from a Land Rover and they had to be extended to fit. Using the DWS jacks and after some practise it only took 10 minutes to fit them. The engine oil was changed, headlights painted yellow, tyre pressures, screen washer topped up and the car was ready. The "green card" was rushed through and the boat booked by 'phone.

With all my luggage carefully packed I set off for Southampton on Wednesday, 11th January. The journey through Stow-on-the-Wold and Swindon was made in increasingly bad weather. I finally reached Southampton where I refuelled the car (the last cheap petrol for some miles) and myself at the local hostelry of culinary expertise and enjoyed a Germanic beverage. Making my way to the docks was no real effort, just following the car ferry signs. The queue of just four cars moved at a snail's pace. My turn now — my name, booking reference and plastic passport to paradise (credit card). No need to leave the car. The wind was by now reaching gale force proportions. After securing the car safely to the deck I made my way to my cabin.

Sailing time was 10.30 pm and

arrival time should have been 7.30 am. During the crossing many drivers were called over the tannoy system to go to the car deck and re-secure their cars. At one time during the night the sounds of falling crockery penetrated the cabin walls. The creaking, cracking and banging was so bad that I thought the ship would break under the strain. However, there was nothing I could do about it, so I turned over and went to sleep. Next morning, feeling slightly mal de mer I made my way to breakfast but the sight of someone else eating was too much and I returned to my cabin. The boat finally arrived at Le Havre five hours late because of a Force 10 gale. The French customs had gone home and it wasn't until 2.30 pm French time that I left Le Havre.

With just 23 hours to get to Grenoble efficient driving was essential. From Le Havre to Chartres, stopping for dinner on the banks of the Loire from here to Moulins. I was feeling quite tired by now. I stopped at a lay-by, moved into the back of the car, pulled the blinds down and got into my sleeping bag. Surprisingly comfortable, plenty of room, head on the arm rest. There I slept for some time. After waking I set off again in the dark with yellow headlights of only 36 watt, but a Rolls always knows where to go.

Dawn broke just in time for me to drive through Lyons. From here I decided to use the toll roads if possible.

It is quite amusing to come across one of these totally automatic barriers. Coins have to be thrown into a plastic funnel before you can proceed. What happens if you haven't got the right money I do not know. Just outside Grenoble I stopped for lunch and was quite surprised to see how dirty the car was. Into Grenoble and straight to the Tourist Information Office (the rally was to start from here), down into the underground car park, somewhat anxious about the height of the car but all was well. There I was greeted by the President of the Club (he was driving a Facel Vega!) I asked if I could wash the car. The answer was 'Yes' and with a pair of mole grips I was able to extract water from an otherwise untappable source. After making a sort of brown car into a sparkling blue and white and fixing the rally plates I made my way to the hotel. Aperitifs were taken in the Tourist Office and speeches of welcome made. Then back with some Swiss acquaintances for an excellent dinner in the hotel.

Early next morning the rally started in earnest. The instructions were easy to follow and the route well "arrowed" so even lame ducks could find their way up and up the serpentine roads higher into the Alps. First freezing fog and then snow getting thicker and thicker. Many of the other competitors stopped to fit chains; the 20/25 was doing well. I must admit that on one corner opposite lock was necessary — not very dignified for a limousine but most effective. At a little village we stopped and were given hot wine, very warming, but once outdoors again what an effect! The timed section now started, we had to choose a speed to average over a short distance. I chose 30 k.p.h. This timed section was soon over and on to lunch at Albertville — another excellent meal. We were now getting close to Les Gets, the last few kilometres were again a timed run and the last part was very steep and icy. However, this was accomplished quite easily. It was about 6 o'clock, dark and cold (−5°C) but hot wine was once again dispensed. The competitors' cars were supposed to be garaged in the basement car park of the hotel. The 20/25 was too tall and it therefore had to be parked at the base of the ski lift. The hotel for that evening was truly magnificent —

swimming pool, sauna, solarium etc. The dinner for two hundred lasted until early next morning. We were told to be at the car park at 9.00 am the following morning. I was there at the appointed time but nobody else was!

By about 10 o'clock everyone had gathered and there was plenty of fun and games going on. Handbrake turns in a 1920 Peugeot; some "friend" shovelling snow under my wheels! All in good fun though.

The next part of the rally consisted of a driving test on an ice rink. This was great fun to watch. The passengers of the Morgans had to sit astride the rear end so that traction could be maintained. Speeds were slow and slides were long. The Rolls was not allowed to compete because of its weight. An excellent five course lunch preceded the final part of the rally — a hill climb between four foot high snow walls around tight turns, and up above the clouds. I decided to fit the chains. This was the first time I have driven with chains and would never hesitate to use them again. Once at the top we had to wait whilst the other cars reached the lofty heights. A 1927 Delage was stuck and required a push.

The prize giving was held at the Cine Club, and there was a plentiful supply of awards. I was given a huge bottle of Beaujolais (a Jeroboam I think) a model Camargue, a model Phantom III, a T-shirt and a key ring. What for I do not know. Another excellent dinner over, I said my farewells.

Next morning I headed for Switzerland, Lake Lausanne, Geneva and Basle. I made my way to Mulhouse to see the Schlumpf Collection but the opening hours were not convenient and so I had to leave without seeing this amazing museum. I headed for Paris and spent the night at a hotel on the banks of the Mosel and sampled a passable bottle of Pinot Noir. At 9am start to skirt Paris and onto Calais stopping only for fuel and to wash the car, £1.50 but well worth it.

At Dover I declared the booty to the rather attractive customs officer. She said "what did you get all these for?" Thinking to myself that Customs

Officers never have a sense of humour I gave the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. I was allowed to pass without having to pay anything. Quickly into London and onto Birmingham, arriving at 2.00 am having completed 791 miles on that day.

As to the car? Fuel consumption — I didn't check it. The only maintenance jobs on the journey were — checking the tyre pressures; adjusting the screen washer jet and tightening the 2BA nut on the autovac. The expression "they don't make 'em like this any more" is certainly true. These cars are a credit to the country and should be used as much as possible.

Nicholas Taylor
February 1978

For the younger members, the title is drawn from Longfellow:

*The shades of night were falling fast,
As through an Alpine village passed
A youth who bore, 'mid snow and ice,
A banner with this strange device,
Excelsior!*

Birmingham Motor Show

Whether you regard the show held recently at the N.E.C. as a success or a catastrophe seems to depend on prejudice more than reason, and it has received news media coverage ad nauseam. But some good came out of my visit.

Schrader still makes that most useful of gadgets, their spark plug air pump. Tyres on Rolls-Royces of any age take a lot of puff to inflate, and this device is fitted in place of one of the sparking plugs, the hose coupled to the tyre valve and the engine started. This then acts as a compressor, drawing in clean air, not petrol mixture. Very handy especially on foreign tours; there are two versions, the standard at £4.29 and one with a built in gauge at £7.92. If not stocked locally, Schrader at 829 Tyburn Road, Birmingham 24 will oblige.

If you have difficulty getting any of those little ball-joints for throttle linkages, Messrs. Illston and Robson Ltd. of Herbert Road, Small Heath, Birmingham B10, have a huge selection of types including proper ones in brass, and are willing to help those of us with old cars.

You can even still get hand-operated Klaxons, as well as the electrical ones. They look just like the veteran ones except that they're mostly steel now, not brass, but you could get them plated. They, too, are in Birmingham, at Warwick Road, Tyseley, Birmingham 11.

(I haven't picked them because they're Birmingham firms, it just happened. Honestly).

Finally, if you want some horns to beat all horns, Hatcher Components, of Broadwater Road, Framlingham, Suffolk, are agents for the most superb American trumpet horns you ever saw, some of them three feet long, such as you see on the roof of the cab of American trucks. The only snag is they need compressed air to work them. A real road-hog's dream. Of course, Schrader make a 12 volt electric air compressor. I wonder if it is suitable. . . ?

MOTORING NOTES

PURE ECSTASY

By JOHN TAYLOR

TWENTY-FIVE years ago this month, just about every town and village in this country was celebrating the Coronation in some way or another. Apart from the ceremony itself, London could lay claim to a wide variety of events aimed at reflecting the joy of the people and the dawn of what it was hoped would be a golden new Elizabethan era for Britain.

One of these assorted tributes was the gathering together of a splendid display of Rolls-Royce cars in Kensington Gardens in the July of that year. It was a *concours d'elegance* staged by the 20-Ghost Club and included some historic examples of the marque, among them the 1904 10 h.p. 2-cylinder Royce (Rolls had yet to appear on the scene) and the TT20 of a year later.

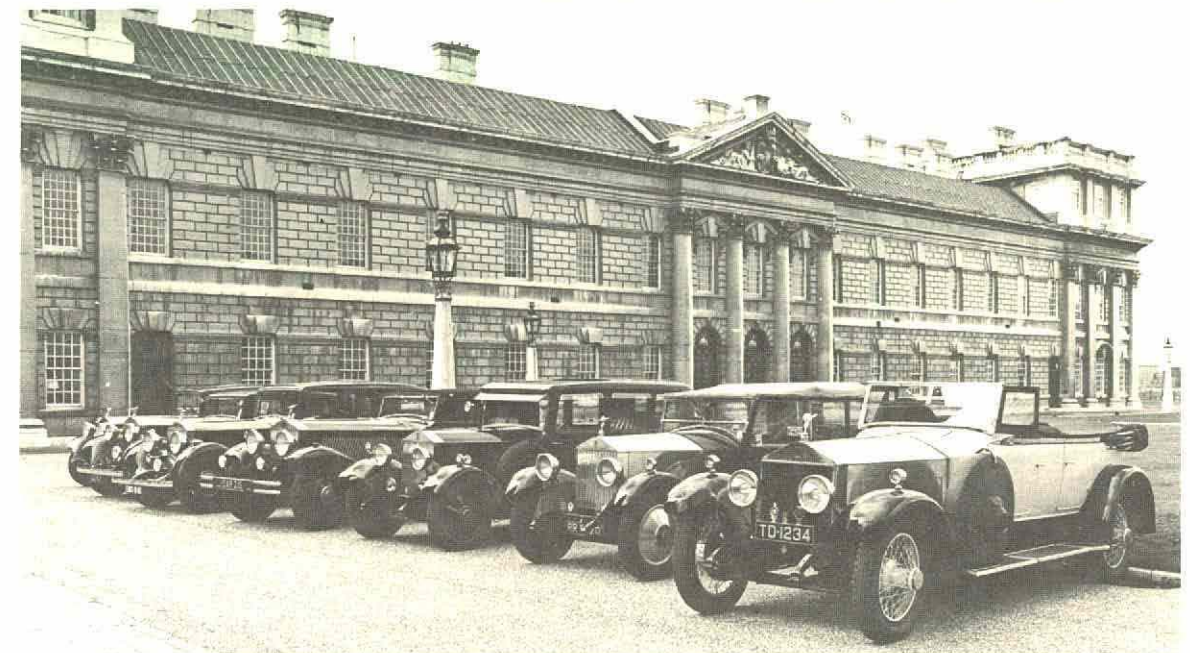
the birth of the Hon. C. S. Rolls at Hendre, some four miles from that town. The two clubs also sit down each year with Rolls-Royce Motors, the Rolls-Royce Owners' Clubs of America and Australia, the Bentley Drivers' Club and Appleyard Rippon (which handles spares for the older models) to discuss points of mutual interest.

The birth of the 20-Ghost Club took place on February 14, 1950, a significant date with which to mark the love of man for his machine. This was some seven years before the R.R.E.C. was formed. Appropriately, the founding was at a dinner staged at the Café Royal in London, haunt of many Rolls-Royce owners over the years.

The 25 that launched the club under the presidency of Stanley Sears, now elevated to

This is the opening leg of their Tour to St Petersburg, probably the first-ever British motor club foray into Russia. In the past, parties of members and their cars have ventured to Portugal, where they rallied last year at Vigo, to Spain, Norway and the Dordogne, but this year's excursion is the most ambitious yet. There will be 20 club members including half-a-dozen Americans and an Australian in cars ranging from a 1927 Phantom I to a Corniche convertible 50 years its junior.

The route takes them to Gothenburg, thence by road to Stockholm and ferry to Helsinki, over the Russian border to Vyborg and on to St Petersburg (Leningrad), where several nights will be spent in the one remaining pre-war hotel before setting out on the



A GATHERING OF THE 20-GHOST CLUB AT THE ROYAL NAVAL COLLEGE, GREENWICH, IN AUTUMN 1976

That gathering was the first in a series that has become an annual event with the club. This coming Sunday sees this year's *concours d'etat* (as they now term it) in the grounds of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, starting at 2pm. It will be the third *concours* at Chelsea, the rest having been in Kensington Gardens.

To the uninitiated, the 20-Ghost Club sounds like a supernatural gathering, but to the venerated of the products of Crewe and, more properly, Derby, it simply defines a band of people interested in the 40/50 h.p. Silver Ghost and the 20 h.p. cars; nowadays it takes in post-war 6-cylinder models as well.

Although not a large club in numerical terms, the 20-Ghost Club is one of the best-known of the one-make bodies. In the issue of April 13, I described the activities of the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club, a far larger body covering all Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars, with members the world over. The 20-Ghost Club pursues a rather different path, though the two bodies work together in the common cause. This was seen to advantage last August, when both jointly organised a rally at Monmouth to mark the centenary of

the status of Master, reached decisions that set the pattern for the years that followed. They agreed that the club was not to be large and all-inclusive and that membership would be by invitation of the committee. Furthermore, to maintain the amateur status, "persons engaged in the motor trade" would not be eligible.

What it means in present-day terms is that the average age of the 250-strong membership is rising. However, there is some hope in that while the second generation was generally not interested in the club, the third-generation grandchildren now coming along show signs of rekindling the initial enthusiasm. Even so, one feels that the club must look more actively for new blood if it is to survive, and if the new owner-members show the right spirit this could be very much to the good.

Unlike some one-make clubs, the 20-Ghost Club has no aspirations in competition, racing or hill-climbing, other than in the pitching of one car against another in a well ordered *concours d'elegance*. However, the membership is by no means sedentary. Seven cars will be giving this weekend's gathering a miss and heading for Felixstowe.

return by way of Estonia, Tallin and Travemunde to Denmark. An interesting objective on the return is the visit to the famous motor museum and castle of Baron Raben-Leventzau at Nyland.

Organising this motorcade behind the Iron Curtain has been a long, involved business, and the size of the party was limited by the availability of ferry and hotel capacity at this busy time of the year. Despite the reams of paperwork the club vice-president, Major Anthony Heathcote, said that the Intourist officials had proved very helpful.

What the inhabitants of Leningrad make of it all, one can only imagine. Those that have ventured to Moscow will probably have seen the Rolls-Royce once owned by Lenin and now preserved as a relic of the founding father's life. Certainly a journey to be cherished and remembered in a mundane modern car, but in a vintage Rolls-Royce a unique experience.

(Details of the 20-Ghost Club may be obtained from the secretary: P. D. M. Brewer, JP, Meade House, Courtenay Road, Newton Abbot, Devon.)

Illustration: Christopher Curtis.

FORTY YEARS ON

by Nigel Fredrick

Whilst groping through the dust of the Editorial attic, a copy of the 'Autocar' for 1938 was unearthed, especially interesting because it was the Motor Show number, nearly an inch thick and priced 6d.

I thought it would be amusing to browse through it with you, and see what the scene was like in those distant days.

On the front cover is announced the new 8 h.p. Morris, later to be known as the 'E series'. It set a new trend with its headlamps built into the wings, even if the rear springs did tend to come through the floor after a time.

James Grose, the big mail order company, would sell you a 12v 'Heavy duty starter battery' for 37/6 or a 5.50 x 18 'Heavy Cord' tyre for the same price.

A Type 'C' Speed Model Aston-Martin with streamlined all metal body, the same as that which had obtained a class win in the R.A.C. TT would set you back £775. The prices are different but the offerings are much the same, though, whatever happened to Carless Coalene, the petrol made from British Coal?

Lea Francis and British Salmson are gone, Meadows engines — I never knew they made 12 cylinder units — likewise. Chevrolet were selling here, and Chrysler (I bet it used to be Kreiser) were trumpeting about their 'foolproof' steering column gear change. (May they never re-appear).

The Editorial bemoaned a case of a motorist with 32 years clean record being fined £2 for exceeding the 30 mph limit while shoplifters and car thieves got put on probation. Plus ca change, plus c'est le meme chose...

But to Rolls-Royce matters. In their report of the Rolls-Royce stand, Autocar said 'There are two examples of the Phantom III, a

Thrupp and Maberley saloon with division, of the close-coupled type seating five, the equipment of which includes an interior heater and radio, the price being £2,960. The other car is a Hooper sedanca de ville of six-seven accommodation, also with a heater and radio, and an electrically operated division window. This magnificent vehicle is finished in silver and priced at £2,970.'

The improvements to the 25/30 such as the 4 inch longer wheelbase, wider track, independent front suspension, second gear synchromesh, permanent jacking and improved gear lever and handbrake are noted. There are two 25/30 H.P. Wraith cars, one with a newly designed enclosed limousine body by Park Ward providing appreciably more room than in the previous car of this design. The price is £1,610. Also there is a Sedanca de ville by Windovers, priced at £1,965, with a sliding roof over the driver's compartment which disappears completely, converting the car into a coupe de ville. A point of interest in both bodies is that the division behind the driver is operated electrically. The Wraith was taxed at £22.10s p.a. and the Phantom III at £38, as compared to the Austin Seven at £6 p.a.

Among the 27 coachwork exhibitors, of Arnold of Manchester Autocar said "On a 4½ litre Bentley chassis is fitted a Slip Stream sports saloon which provides comfortable accommodation for four or five passengers. This is a four door body with a spacious rear boot which can accommodate golf clubs..." Carlton of Willesden, London, showed a Bentley drop head coupe two seater with adjustable bucket front seats with Dunlopillo seating and a comfortable dicky seat.

Cockshoot's enclosed limousine on a 25/30 h.p. chassis had "the angled roof line treatment" and cabinet work in figured mahogany.

Freestone and Webb surprisingly had no Rolls-Royce exhibit, nor did Gurney Nutting, both preferring to employ Bentley 4½'s, the latter with one of their striking sedanca coupes with side mounted spares.

Hooper, of course, had a PIII 4-seater sedanca with fitted leather suitcases in the rear boot. "The interior is luxuriously finished with Burry Bass and walnut woodwork, there being a centre cabinet, a heater, and a radio set." (What on earth is Burry Bass?)

Mann Egerton displayed a 25/30 limousine with particularly comfortable occasional seats "and the rear windows are hinged for ventilation."

H.J. Mulliners, in addition to a pillarless saloon on the Bentley chassis, also had "The 25/30 h.p. Rolls-Royce touring limousine (with) excellent visibility since there are no front pillars. A sunshine roof is fitted over the rear compartment, which has also an observation panel with a sun shutter. The division is electrically operated, and beautifully carried out cabinet work and tables are fitted at the back of the division. The sedanca de ville Phantom III, finished in black, has two revolving armchair-type occasional seats, a sliding panel extension at the front, and an electrically operated division window."

The Wraith shown by Park-Ward had the (by now customary) slim front pillars and electric division, but in the touring limousine on the 40-50 h.p. chassis "... a novelty is the fan type blinds fitted to the quarter windows." This is all interesting but not very exciting, and the Rippon and James Young stands sound more fun.

"Since in coachwork competitions following rallies Rippon coachwork so often carried off the premier award in its class one naturally expects something superlative, and the Rolls-Royce Phantom III touring limousine, finished in black with a fine blue line, certainly warrants the adjective. The lines are well balanced and the interior is beautifully carried out in Air Force

blue fine grain leather with cloth roof lining to tone and woodwork of finely grained grey sycamore. Over the front compartment is a sliding roof with an inlet glass panel and over the rear compartment is an electrically operated sliding roof. The quarter windows also slide and there are no pillars to the top part of the rear doors so that an uninterrupted view is obtainable. Revolving armchair seats fold out of the way when not required or can be bodily removed. Finished in ivory is a 25-30 hp Rolls-Royce sportsman saloon having an extremely comfortable interior with grey sycamore woodwork and Air Force blue leather upholstery. There is ample luggage accommodation and special provision for carrying fishing tackle, golf clubs and gun cases." Ah! that's more like it. What a stable they would make today!

Thrupp and Maberley had an enclosed drive seven passenger limousine, on a Wraith chassis, so did Windover, who also exhibited a Phantom III enclosed limousine de ville with streamlined wings and running boards, finished in dark brown and golden beige, with dark brown leather for the front seat and leather in two shades of straw for the rear seat cushion and squab. Let's leave the Young display to finish off the look at the coach-builders. "The 25-30 h.p. Rolls-Royce sedanca de ville is a Barclay design with accommodation for three on the main seat and one on an occasional seat. The de ville extension over the front compartment is in the form of a sliding panel, the division window is electrically operated, and a beautifully carried out cocktail cabinet is arranged on the opposite side to the occasional seat, between the two being another cabinet incorporating heater and press-button radio. There are also two tables fitted with mirrors, writing materials and so on, and sliding windows of purdah glass are fitted to the quarters on the inside of the body to obviate sun glare. The exterior is all black, the front compartment is upholstered in brown pigskin and the rear compartment in fawn cloth. A luxurious

four-five seater coupe on a Phantom III chassis shows the angular treatment, and the sliding roof has a conventional top panel electrically operated, and below it one of Perspex glass (sic), which can be brought forward when the upper roof is opened so as to give vision and light without draught. Parallel opening doors are used, and ample luggage accommodation is provided in the large boot fitted with suitcases." Doesn't it sound splendid?

Turning aside from Rolls-Royce cars for a moment, Sir Malcolm Campbell, on September 17th at Lake Hallwil, broke the world water speed record at 131 mph, and chose Wakefield Patent Castrol motor oil for his Rolls-Royce engine, and Captain George Eyston again used Ferodo linings on his record breaking Thunderbolt at 357 m.p.h. also using Rolls-Royce engines, although the final victory in the struggle for supremacy between Captain Eyston and Mr. John Cobb went to the latter's rather antiquated Napier Lion engines, which suggests that Captain Eyston was less well served by his aerodynamicist than was Cobb by Reid Railton.

The accessories hold few surprises, the same firms making the same things as today, from steering wheel gloves (ugh) upwards, although a car radio weighing 35 lb. would be cumbersome.

An Eccles caravan with bay window, gas lighting, heating and cooking was £365. But the real punch that lies behind different money values appears in the second-hand car prices, remembering that a Wraith chassis was £1,610 a PIII chassis was £2,670 and an Austin Seven was £108.

How about a "1934 PII Continental 4-door Sports Saloon by Park Ward, sliding head, black, brown leather, ride control, disc wheels 21,000 miles 695 gns."? A "1931 Hooper Sun Foursome Coupe (model unspecified), £350"? There's more — "Rolls Ghost limousine, one owner, £35." — yes, really! "1931 Phantom I 7-

passenger Landaulet, exceptional condition £275." "1928 20 hp 5-seater saloon, exceptional, £145." "Rolls-Royce Phantom I Full 7-seater, forward occasionals, balloons, nice order £95."

Are your teeth gnashed down to stumps yet? How about "1937 (September) Rolls-Royce Phantom III sports 5-passenger Sedanca de Ville by Barker, 4000 miles, unused during 1938, fitted with numerous special features cost new £3,200; offered at £2,250". Nearly £1000 depreciation in one year — ouch! At least he didn't say 'snip'.

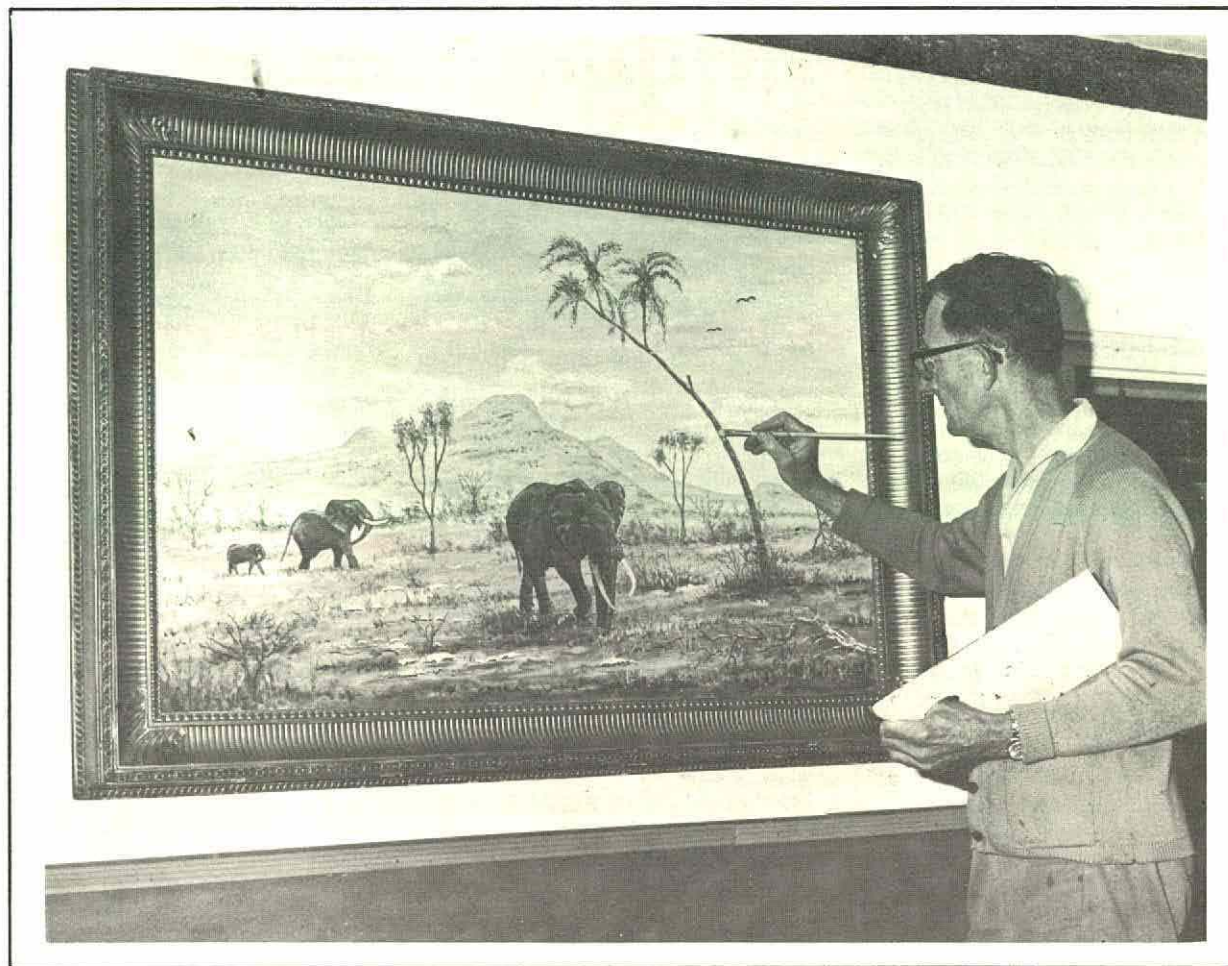
Jack Olding and Company offered: "Rolls-Royce 1936 25 hp Sports 4-door saloon by Messrs. Hooper, finished black and blue, blue leather upholstery, discs, sliding roof, mileage only 8,000 indistinguishable from new: £895."

It's cruel to go on really, but just look at Bentleys, a la W.O. "Bentley 1930, Speed Six 4 door Sports Saloon, blue, leather upholstery, two spare wheels, rear trunk etc., excellent condition 35 gns or £4 deposit." A 1931 8-litre Freestone and Webb 7 passenger limousine for 75 gns or an absolutely original 3 litre Red Label for 125 gns.

Looking further afield, J. Lemon Burton would sell you a "Bugatti 2 litre supercharged Roller Bearing Grand Prix Racing Car, capable of 125 mph, road equipment available; £175" and George Newman & Co. offer "1934 Series Bugatti Type "46" 7 seater saloon with division, originally listed over £1,400, excellent condition: £95."

And so it goes on, Brough Superior, Auburn, Cord, Crossely, Stoewer, Hudson, Jowett, Lammas-Graham, Marendaz Special, the panoply of a different age, when an office worker earned £4.10s a week, petrol tax had just gone up from 8d. to 9d. a gallon, but the price had dropped from its 1932 peak and now was not unreasonable at 1/7d per gallon.

Exit left, sobbing gently. ■



Members' Homes & Hobbies

No 4 Mr & Mrs K.L. Rossi

ROGUES HILL HOUSE, PENSHURST

The end of the war with Japan found my wife and me in Africa, in British Somaliland in fact. Our daughter was the second white child ever to be born in the country and when she was only a few months old we drove in our Ford one-ton truck, which we had built up from the chassis in our garden, to Kenya. We lived there for eighteen years when father came out and asked us to come home and take over from him the family wine business, which was in a sorry state. So, after twenty-one incredible years in Africa we set sail for home; it was 1965.

To start with we parked Ann with our aunt and got to work on the business. All our worldly possessions were in crates stacked against a wall in our cellars off Tottenham Court Road where grandfather started in 1906. We slept out of sight in the office as the lease prohibited occupation at night but with the aid of torches and a primus stove we avoided the eagle eye of the nightwatchman.

After a few months of 1906 dust in our lungs and no daylight, we decided we could look for a home as the busi-

ness was not quite as dead a duck as it had at first appeared. (My wonderful wife is an accountant as well as a Guys nurse).

House searching comprised of wading through a pile of Country Lives as father had drawn a circle on a map as the most suitable area for us with the village of Penshurst underlined. An ageing house of Lord de L'Isle was the only thing for sale in Penshurst so off we set. We wanted a large dilapidated house as we wanted plenty of room to move about but did not have plenty of money to pay for it. It turned out to be just that but the pheasant that

flew up as we opened the garden gate really made the decision for us. The building society surveyor was taken away in a dead faint so no mortgage, but we hoped with luck to salvage enough money from Africa to pay for it before the bridging loan gave up the ghost.

Dry rot, wet rot, woodlice and creaking floors were an improvement on 1906 vintage dust and the overrun garden, though three feet tall in grass, gave us plenty of daylight and it was more than one hundred years old.

We installed our old hi-fi to drown the noise of the death watch beetles while we put solignum on the floors with watering cans.

We retrieved our three ageing Pekinese from pawn (6 months quarantine) and they approved. We moved formidable aunt into the lodge; she only half approved.

The house was fun. Large enough for me to indulge my eccentricities and for my saint of a wife to lose me for hours at a time.

The family business did not collapse nor did the house, in fact, the business actually made money.

Working on the principle that when we are dead we are dead for a long, long, time and knowing that if reincarnation is a fact, I shall end up as a black beetle with a gammy leg (as the deity concerned knows of my lechery even if nobody else does) we decided to go mad and buy a Rolls Royce, hence this diatribe in the Club Record.

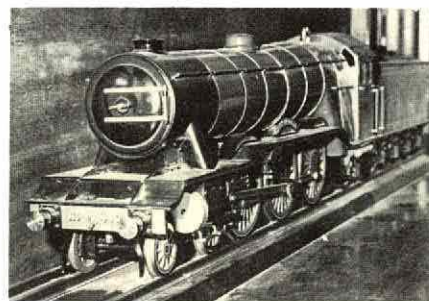
The house had bare walls in great abundance and to remedy this I visited several local picture framing establishments. Very fortunately, they had a number of moulded frames surplus to their requirements, and I bought all I could. Cutting hardboard to fit them and painting this white on the rough side gave me the necessary wall coverings. The procedure was to then hang the bare frames on the walls concerned, then remove the hardboard, paint an African animal scene from memory and photographs in oil,

then put the wet painting in the frame on the wall to dry. The result was nostalgic bliss for me and horror for everyone else.

Two aviaries (one for the introverts and one for the extroverts), a small bar with oak bark offcuts, three aquariums and my wife's lovely tapestries on chair seats, helped to put some character into the old house. Later, a wintergarden, made by putting a clear roof and one glass wall to cover in between three walls of the house, was added. This, with a small waterfall made out of a giant pacific clam running into a gold-fish pond was the ideal place for lunch on a cold winters day if the sun came out of a clear sky and very rapidly heated it up.

The old well established garden was great fun to bring back to life. A collection of nearly 250 different dwarf conifers was our addition to it as well as a water garden with four connected ponds.

Then tragedy struck. The farmer in the adjoining field set light to the corn with the hot exhaust pipe of his tractor while harvesting in the great drought. Tinder dry, it soon spread, and the wind blew it towards our garden and by the time the fire brigade arrived 75 yards of old hedge and a yew arch 100 years old and many other cherished plants were black cinders.



Only because the farmer was a gentleman and admitted that his tractor had the incorrect type of exhaust for harvesting corn did we get compensation for the damage. (One of the advantages of living in a civilised society).

Out of evil springeth good, my father often said. My wife suggested we grow soft fruits, also espalier and cordon apples and pears. We built a 75 yard fence well inside our boundary with a wire netting fence on the boundary itself, supported by steel uprights (old water pipe). We covered the top and boundary side with strong black bird netting, thus forming a 75 yard tunnel, 6 feet wide and 6 feet tall. In went the apples and pears, then gooseberries grown as cordons, blackcurrants, red and white currants, loganberries and cultivated blackberries, covering the 150 yards of tunnel sides. No fruit the first year as the book told us, but this year the picking and freezing was such a job my wife doubted the wisdom of her own suggestion.

The last eccentricity is the garden railway. The 3½" track threading its way around the perimeter of a large lawn between many and various heathers and dwarf conifers is certainly attractive. Steam locomotives were acquired from "Steamage" off Sloane Square, but the rolling stock has to be made at home. All was set (in the mind) for the grand opening.

So far it has been a matter of man proposes and God disposes. The engines are so heavy they almost rupture me getting them onto the track, also the leaves from the trees tend to block the line and have to be cleared before the event. Eyes bigger than my stomach, no doubt. However, a solution to the problems is being hatched. How sad it would be if we did not have problems to solve and things to do, I would call it mental bankruptcy.

Now with retirement planned, with Ann to take over the business, we intend to enjoy this, our last home. It is certainly in a lovely country with such lovely people and none more so than they of the 20 Ghost Club. ■

No 5 Lt.Col. J.C.E. Harding-Rolls

Rockfield House, near Monmouth, has the merit of being of a size convenient for everyday living without the armies of servants whose disappearance has inconvenienced the owners of many country houses, and yet it has about it the aura of more spacious days. It is the home of Lt. Col. J.C.E. Harding-Rolls, the nearest surviving relative of the Hon. C.S. Rolls, joint founder of Rolls-Royce.

The accompanying photographs will scarcely do justice to a pleasant house where the Editor was privileged to spend a weekend. The gardens were largely created by the owner, the damming of a stream forming a small lake, the home of two swans, "Loh" and "Grin", who are so tame that they will take food from the hand. Also, there is a water garden, fashioned from the old vegetable garden which now has several ornamental water fowl gracing the pools and waterfalls.

The house contained many mementos of a long and varied career, as well as souvenirs of Charles Rolls, such as a telegram from King George V after Rolls' double Channel flight. We were shown many fascinating things, such as a copy of a mediaeval book of hours (the original, alas, disposed of to meet death duties) with magnificent illustrations, and a diary kept by Col. Harding-Rolls during a visit to the Far East and sent home in instalments to amuse his children.

The Hendre is shut up now. "Not a single decent room in it" and most of the estate given over to forestry, but on a tour round the area we were shown estate workers' cottages all in a common architectural style, so far from the Hendre that it was difficult to grasp just how big the original estate had been. The estate roads used to be kept tidy with a twelve foot border of



Above: The Dining Room. The Chimney piece is a painting of the Rolls children. Alongside: Col. Harding-Rolls feeding Loh and Grin.

grass mown by a gang mower pulled by horses with big wooden shoes to stop their feet making dents in the turf!

A delightful house and an unfailing charming host who is obviously regarded with great affection by family and staff alike. ■



To Russia by Rolls

as reported in *Country Life*,
December 14th 1978

The background and some of the activities of the 20-Ghost Club of Rolls-Royce owners were described in our issue of 22 June, including a forecast of the imminent visit of a small group of the cars to, of all places, Leningrad; or, as some of the more mature and much travelled members still irresistibly call it, St. Petersburg.

By whatever name, such a journey for cars stretching back to the Vintage years presented a formidable prospect in terms of distance, organisation and potential political problems; but, in the event, all of these were successfully dealt with and the trip — the first of the Club's annual outings to go behind the Iron Curtain — has been voted an outstanding achievement by all who took part in it.

To ease the logistics, the motorcade was kept intentionally small — six cars and nineteen people — but the selection of models could scarcely have been bettered if it had been intended for a British Week. Ranging from two 1929 machines — a 20hp Barker Tourer and a Phantom I Mulliner Saloon — to a 1977 Corniche Convertible, with the other cars spread felicitously between these dates, such a fleet, it can safely be said, has never before been seen in Eastern Europe, and inevitably aroused intense interest wherever it appeared.

Its route ran from Felixstowe to Gothenburg by sea, a pleasant drive to Stockholm, by ferry to Helsinki, and thence along the road to the USSR. A somewhat ominous passage of the frontier proved the only shortcoming. Thereafter, with an Intourist guide in each car, the city itself completely lived up to their expectations. The broad, empty avenues, the magnificently restored palaces and other buildings, the great golden domes and spires glistening in the hot sunshine which lasted throughout their stay, even the faded grandeur of the pre-Revolutionary Hotel Astoria provided

a milieu in which the Rolls really looked at home, despite some incongruities.

It was with real regret, therefore, that they retraced the road back to Helsinki, then by ship to Lubeck and

through Denmark home; pausing only to visit the motor museum at Aalholm, the largest in Europe. Undoubtedly a memorable new chapter in the Club's history, and, with the political overtones, possibly something of a motoring saga in its own right.



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THE 1978 CLUB TOUR TO LENINGRAD

Lynn A. Brua

We assembled at Felixstowe on Sunday, June 25 for departure on "Tor Scandinavia". Our leader, Anthony Heathcote, was in his 1935 25/30 accompanied by two American friends. There were two 1929 cars, Leo Williams' with wife Jane and two guests, and Lady Freda Valentine's driven by son James and his fiancée, Janet Weir. Lynn and Midge Brua with two daughters were in their 1931 Phantom II. Also in the group was the 1957 Silver Cloud I of Claude and Peggy Curtis with Connie and Cecil Chapman. The newest car in the party was John Bailey's 1977 Corniche.

There was a lot of excitement boarding the ship — photographers, reporters and a bottle of champagne for each person, followed by drinks in the captain's cabin. We landed in Gothenburg, Sweden on Monday evening and again were met at the dock by reporters and photographers and our picture appeared in the Swedish national press the following day. Gothenburg is Sweden's second largest city but lacks Stockholm's charms, so our overnight stay there was uneventful.

After spending the next night at

Jonkoping in central Sweden we were guests for lunch at the stately home of the Ekman family, personal friends of the Valentines. We were lead the last 20 miles to their home by a car flying large Swedish and British flags. The whole family of 18 were on the front steps of the house in national costumes and a small orchestra played "God Save the Queen" on our arrival. Following a typical Swedish smorgs-bord we were shown through the house, parts of which date back to the 13th century.

That night we were in Stockholm, having been escorted into the city by Swedish Rolls Royce representatives. The next day some of us spent several hours at the Carl Milles home and sculpture garden as well as at the Stockholm Town Hall. We sailed from Stockholm in the evening and for the first few hours the ship wove its way through hundreds of islands in the Swedish archipelago of the Baltic Sea, one of the most lovely boat trips we have ever taken.

We landed early the next day in Helsinki and were soon on our way to Russia. The Finnish border guards joked and laughed with us and took our pictures: a mile beyond at the Russian border, all was serious. There were many forms to be filled in, money counted, receipts given, all without a smile. After an hour our passports were returned and we were ordered to proceed to Vyborg where, we were told, Intourist would have lunch waiting for us. The road was almost nonexistent in places, and we went through several military check-points, presumably because we were crossing a sensitive military area. When we arrived at Vyborg we were met by an Intourist guide who said that there was no lunch. We finally had a few bottles of foul beer from the station lunch counter where we also watched people queuing at a water vending machine and sharing a communal glass. We arrived at the Astoria Hotel in Leningrad at nine pm. It is the only pre-Revolutionary hotel in the city and is where Hitler planned to have his victory banquet after conquering the city. The hotel had once been very elegant but now is a bit seedy, and the food was edible but not very appetising.



The next morning we met our six guides, one for each car, and had a guided drive around Leningrad. The city is hard to describe because of its many contradictions. It is the most beautiful one we have ever seen, but we seldom forgot that we were in a tightly controlled police state.

To appreciate fully the beauty of Leningrad and the achievement of its people, one must first realise what happened to it during the last war. It

was besieged for 900 days, during which time one million civilians (one-third of its population) died of starvation and bombardment. Every third building was destroyed and few escaped undamaged. The Germans got to within eight miles of the centre.

Leningrad is made up of 42 islands with hundreds of bridges connecting them. The drawbridges are open at night to allow ships through. The most famous building in the city is the



Winter Palace, now part of The Hermitage Museum. It contains two million works of art, most of which were evacuated to Siberia during the war. Unfortunately we were only able to spend a few hours there. Perhaps the second most important building is St. Isaac's Cathedral which looks very much like St. Paul's in London, only smaller. Today it is a museum which memorialises the 400,000 serf/craftsmen who built it over 40 years. Photographs of the city are not allowed to be taken from its dome, one small indication of Russian insecurity.

There are many other architecturally interesting onion-domed churches in the city but only about 20 are functioning today for a population of five million. One striking feature is the many gold domed and spired buildings covered with thousands of pounds of 24-carat gold, something we have never seen in any other city. The Neva River, flowing through the city, forms a most beautiful setting for even the more ordinary buildings which have been restored to their 18th century beauty and elegance. The Peter and Paul Fortress, of which they make a great deal because of its historical and

revolutionary importance, is not worth a visit.

During our five-day visit we spent an afternoon at the Pavlovsk Palace 20 miles outside the city. This beautiful palace built by Catherine the Great for her son Paul was occupied by the Germans and virtually destroyed. Restoration is still going on but the half of the building which has been completed gave us some idea of what Versailles must have been like the day it opened. Again, no gilt was spared in the ornamentation and we had to wear special slippers to protect the beautiful parquet floors made up of 20 different kinds of wood.

The next afternoon was spent at Catherine the Great's palace at Pushkin another marvellous example of restoration. Using mere fragments of wall-coverings, china, furniture, and sculpture as references, the Russians reconstructed the entire palace. We got the impression that they are as dedicated to restoring and preserving their Czarist heritage as they are to their space programme.

The last and most spectacular palace that we saw was Peter the Great's at Petrodvorets which we reached by hydrofoil along the Gulf of Finland. Less restoration of the interior has been completed, but the grounds are breathtaking. There are over 2,000 fountains, some of which are concealed to soak unsuspecting visitors. In front of the 850-foot long palace facade is a series of cascades and fountains decorated with gilded statues.

We were fortunate to get tickets for ballets, operas, and folk dancing every night we were there, seeing both the Kirov ballet and Kirov opera. The standard of the performances was very high.

Our superficial encounters with the Russians were friendly but any contact with police or army personnel tended to be stern and slightly unnerving. To give one example: Lynn Brua parked in an unrestricted area outside the main department store while his wife and daughter went in for a look. The inevitable but larger than average crowd gathered around the car. A policeman pushed his way through the crowd and

indicated through an impromptu interpreter that Lynn should return to his hotel at once. When Lynn said that he was waiting for his family the officer grumpily relented and moved to the outside of the crowd. A few minutes later Lynn tried to take a photograph of the crowd but the policeman immediately stopped him. Back at the car Lynn asked the interpreter why this was done. His first reply was, "He just is not very clever". Then he added, "Now you get some indication of what our life is like, understand?"

A few more words about the cars. We were told that we were the first foreign car club ever to rally to Russia, and we probably doubled the R.R. population of Russia when we crossed the border (Brezhnev has one and Lenin's is in a museum in Moscow). We were surprised that people reacted to the cars much as they do everywhere: staring, pointing, touching and asking the usual questions, "how old, how fast, how much?" We expected more resentment at our flaunting of these capitalistic symbols, but we did get expressions of disbelief that we owned them personally, and one person asked if we made them ourselves.

Silvergirls to Leningrad

Convoy of old cars from England Translated from UUSI SUOMI I. VII. 78

Early on Friday morning the Flying Lady Mascots returned to the car deck when Stockholm Liner Svea Corona came to Helsinki's Olympia quay. The girls had spent the night in the cabin so that they would not get lost amongst the crowds.

The 'Flying Ladies', climbed into the front of their respective Rolls. In front of them they had a long and hurried journey from Helsinki towards the Russian border and Viipuri and their final destination Leningrad. The lady from the front is removed as it is a much demanded item and a very valuable one on the black market. Its value is between £40-80, said the leader of the English team, Major Anthony Heathcote. The girl has only been fitted with screws on top of the cooling espalier.

Our guides were all university graduates, some with advanced degrees, and most were very friendly and open. It seemed that there was no question about Russia they couldn't answer and they were very proud and protective of their country. For instance a guide was asked about a street fight we had seen and she said, "Oh, they were probably foreigners!"

We left Russia over the same route we entered, with exit formalities taking one and a half hours. The moment we reached Finland we were struck by the big friendly smiles of the people and the vastly better condition of farms and villages. This was our longest day's drive, about 275 miles, and we spent the night at a skiing and swimming complex north of Helsinki, which struck us as palatial in every respect after Russia.

The next day we took a car ferry from Helsinki to Travemunde, Germany (near Lubeck), a 36-hour trip. Our entry into Germany proved to be as difficult as into Russia, but for a different reason. The authorities found minor faults in the headlamps of three of the cars and for a while it looked as though we would not be allowed into

the country. We spent the night in Lubeck, an interesting medieval Hanseatic League city, and then drove through Schleswig-Holstein into Denmark, staying that night at Vejle. At dinner at our hotel we presented Anthony with a book on Leningrad in appreciation of his fine arrangements for a difficult trip.

Sunday we went our various ways around Denmark, then assembled at Esbjerg. We sailed at five pm for Harwich and arrived there the next day around noon to the usual reception of press and radio. Pictures and stories of our junket appeared in British, Swedish, Finnish and Danish papers and are scheduled to be in Intourist's October issue of their multi-language magazine distributed in 60 countries.

All of us decided that this was the most exciting and memorable trip we have ever taken, both because of the adventurousness of the undertaking and the vision of "the opposition" it gave us. ●

Royce fans. The members own a total of 300 Rolls Royces. Also some other makes are in their possession but those are not taken into account.

The Club got its name from a Rolls Royce model which was produced in the early twenties, it was so called 20 horsepower type, and 40/50 horsepower, which is often called by a nickname 'Silver Ghost'.

FIRST TIME TO LENINGRAD

In the club's information magazine it was announced that the trip abroad for 1978 would be taken behind the Iron Curtain and it would be Rolls Royce's first trip in its history to a country behind the Iron Curtain.

Destination is St. Petersburg, which is explained in brackets meaning Leningrad. The fleet left England on a car ferry across the North Sea on 25th June, drove across Sweden to catch the boat to Finland and the calculated arrival time in Russia was Friday. Also the return journey is taken via Finland

and they catch the boat to Travemunde on the 5th July and are back in England on 11th July.

The journey to Stockholm went very smoothly without any difficulty. But in the front yard of the Grand Hotel one of the 'car elderly' bumped into his parked brother. There was no time to repair the bump. By the time the fleet arrived in the port the members were looking for buckets and water to clean the dirt which had been caught during the journey.

It is '20 Ghost Club's' habit to travel abroad, these days the trip is taken once a year. In 1975 they visited Norway, then France and last year the team participated in the old car rally in Vigo in Spain.

It was natural that the patron for 1977 trip was the King Carlos of Spain and as members of organisers were Prince Rainier of Monaco and Prince Metternich and Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte.

The club's trips are sponsored by the Rolls Royce Motors Ltd., and most valued factory workers are offered to become honorary members of the club. Otherwise people working in the car business are not allowed to become members.

HOBBY OF THE ELDERY

People in Stockholm said the team looked as if they were out of Agatha Christie's book, but they said it with admiration. The escorts of the Rolls Royce's silverladies could hardly get lost amongst the ordinary car tourists.

The whole atmosphere is very English indeed, a bit eccentric, slow moving and friendly in an absent minded way and very helpful. The members regret the increase in the average age of the members. Their children have little interest to share the hobbies of their parents, the members dare to hope that their grandchildren might carry on their hobby. Although the headlines of the members magazine reminds: If you have inherited one and are forced to sell it, I would ask you to examine the matter very carefully. How has the expected new owner kept his present car? This gives a hint if he is going to

be a good new owner and suitable person to keep up the inheritance.

Prices of old quality cars have increased enormously. When Lynn Bruce, American citizen but now living in England, registered his car in Belgium, bought his Phantom II car made in 1931 in 1961, he was asked £850 for it, now its value is £20,000.

Most of the members have been driving their Rolls Royce more than 10 years. Having a membership car of the 20 Ghost Club does not have to mean that the owner is a millionaire but it helps.

LEGEND ABOUT PEOPLE

Lots of noise about a car, that is a typical attitude to the Rolls Royce aureole and the stories around them. Interpreted in a condesend form it is only a question of a certain car factory and cars that it produces.

Interpreted in a wider scale the legend includes also the people who invented Rolls Royce, those who drive it and perhaps in the first place those who listen, tell again the stories of Rolls Royce. Rolls Royce is part of the 20th century's cultural history.

How much are these worth, repeated Major Heathcote. A cynical person is such a person who knows the price of everything but never knows the value of anything, he continued and admitted that he had borrowed the thought from Oscar Wilde.

Major Heathcote has been the owner of a blue 1938 model, 25/30 type Rolls already nearly for 20 years. The trip for Major was already his second to Finland, before the war he drove with a motorbike all the way to Petsamo. From that trip are the very bad roads still in his memory.

The Major says his car is very reliable and his opinion is shared by all the other members.

"Some problems have occurred only due to my own negligence, not because of the car" said Leo Williams who lives in Surrey.

"If some faults occur the best help there is are the fellow members", said

Mr Williams. 20 Ghost Club has never stayed on the road because of lack of spares.

"I bought this car because it was born the same year as I was", said the 1929 model Mr Williams about his car.

"I was searching for it for 17 years but it all was worth the trouble. Both of us were under production' on the factory floor' at the same time."

Mr Williams has driven over 60,000 kms in his car. Total journey of the Rolls Royce with Barker produced bonnet is abt 560,000kms.

SERVICE BILL FMK 8000 (Finnish Marks)

Surprisingly few faults insisted Mr Lyn Brua. His smart Phantom has a total of 240,000kms behind it, out of which 72,000 kms made during his ownership. "Recently I had a new cylinder top put in and that cost me £1000. Before that it was repainted and that cost another £1000."

Driving in the traffic is actually very easy as others give way as they give way to an old lady in a flower hat. In a crossing others let us go first so that they can admire us in peace, said Mr. Brua.

Phantom which has a 7 litre 6, is a heavy car, travelweight is about 3 tons. Speed it travels abt 80/100km per hour but at its best a big Rolls Royce can reach 160km/hour. For 100km it needs abt 26 litres of fuel. Phantom II as well as the other old Rolls Royces of the fleet is a heavy car to drive, especially the gears are difficult to handle. Even the owner himself is not able to operate the bottom gear without it squeaking, and in the past the drivers used to drive their big cars with only two gears. This one starts easily with three and even four gear starts, said Bruce. When the respectable fleet of the old cars started their journey towards Viipuri (via carwash of course) it was easy to realise how the yellow 1977 Rolls Royce Corniche sports car stayed in the shade of the old ancestors. ●

"SITTING ON THE RIGHT SIDE IS A TYPICALLY ENGLISH WAY"

To Leningrad in an old Rolls Royce

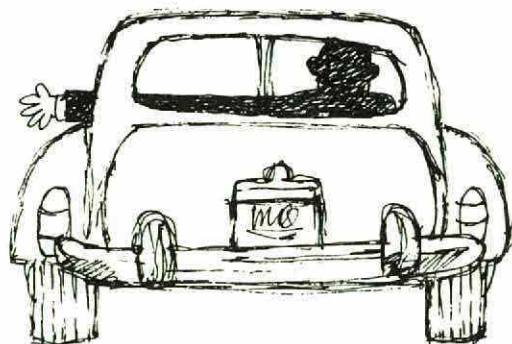
translated from the Finnish in Helsinki Newspaper:—

The '20 Ghost Club' left England for their summer holidays. Of course in their 6 old Rolls Royces, and that would make anyone green with envy. The club members, as one can already guess from the name, take great pride of their old Rolls Royces.

The cars travelled from England to Sweden and from there yesterday morning to Helsinki, where the 20 head team unloaded their cars to bring them out for the crowds to admire.

Only one car member of the team is a more recent model and this is the service van, the eldest is nearly half a century old, from year 1929 and would gladly be accepted by any car museum.

In the going there is lots of dignity. The car is square, the step is high, you practically have to climb to the seat and on the seat you sit as if you were sitting on a church bench.



But in the going there is enough speed, the average speed when travelling through Sweden was 80km per hour. There was no lack of fun, when the fleet turned around the corners as direction was shown by indicator, signal and the driver's hand. The driver of course sat on the right side in a typically English way and the door was closed in a funny way, the hinge is behind and the lock in the front.

The eldest of the travellers could have been driving his Rolls al-

ready half a century ago, the youngest is still a school girl. Yesterday the fleet continued their journey toward Vaalimaa, in Viipuri they planned to lunch and final destination was Leningrad. They left Helsinki with shining sides, the dirt of Sweden was washed away in a service station.

It is not all that easy to obtain old Rolls Royce, real museum type. But only a few buy new ones. For example Silver Shadow costs abt FMK 400.000.

Ilta Sanomat 1/7/78

(Very unofficial summary — translation of an article by I. Fominikh in unidentified local Soviet newspaper of indeterminate date, but probably Leningradskaya Pravda.)

What's your hobby?
VERY OLD CAR

With each year pre-war cars are more rarely seen on the streets of Leningrad. This is understandable. Technology advances. Thus the first Moskvich's and Pobedas are already examined with special attention, for they are leaving the roads and disappearing. Naturally, even more interest is evoked by passing prewar "Gaz M-1", "Ford", "Mercedes", "Packard", "Opel", "Shteer" and other rare cars.

A year ago a "History of Transport" section was founded in the Vassilio-strovsky regional council of the All Russian Voluntary Automobile Amateurs' Society. Its mission was to bring to the attention of the population

of the city and region the old and rare cars and motorcycles, popularise the history of the development of automobile technology, preserve the predecessors of today's means of transport as a cultural-historical value.

Only in the first half year around 30 very old cars and motorcycles were provided? by members of the section. In May in Leningrad the first parade-rally of rare cars was organised in the Russian Federation. And at the end of August they were invited by the Riga "Club of Antique Automobiles" to take part in the rally Riga-Talsi.

Exactly a year has passed since the section "History of Transport" has been operating. . . . There are already more than seventy veteran cars, most of which are able to fight the winds on good roads. . .

We have also a collection of "auto-geriatrics" and "auto-pensioners" which can't operate for lack of spare

parts. We preserve them anyway as exhibits for a future "Museum of old cars" which we wish to found in Leningrad. And such a museum must assemble antique cars today! Otherwise tomorrow the . . . potential exhibits will be . . . just so much metal. . . The quantity and variety of exhibits of such a museum might increase as technical help arrives from the population. . .

31 October in our country we will observe the Day of the Autotransport Worker. On this day, from the Palace of Culture S.M. Kirov will begin a column of very old and rare cars and motorcycles which will pass through the central streets of the city. Owners of rare cars who wish to take part in the parade-tour will gather at 11 a.m. on the square of the palace of culture.

I. Fominikh
President of the Section
"History of Transport".

CONCOURS d'ETAT

SUNDAY 15th OCTOBER 1978
PENNYHILL PARK



Competitor/Car	Sections						Total
	a	b	c	d	e	f	
D. Silcock Phantom I	65	94	96	85	139	220	699
L. Brua Phantom II	58	97	91	67	140	210	663
F.A.B. Valentine Phantom I	63	84	65	49	130	200	591
D. Wills Silver Ghost	63	93	75	76	70	200	591
B. Wooton 20/25	70	99	97	87	140	225	718
C. Curtis Silver Cloud I	70	93	98	78	139	230	708
C. Meachen Silver Cloud I	63	90	85	47	139	220	644
A. Heathcote 25/30	66	95	84	66	130	190	631
G. Price 20/25	64	93	74	68	139	190	628
P. Collinson 25/30	55	88	84	59	139	188	613
C. Chapman 20/25	44	92	65	34	139	190	564

Sections:

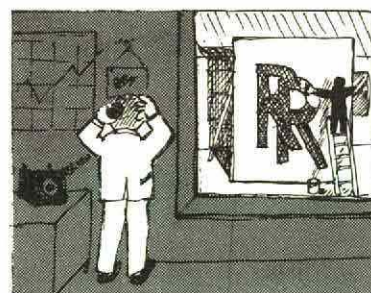
	Total 800
a) Interior cleanliness and smartness	100
b) Exterior cleanliness and smartness	100
c) Under-bonnet cleanliness and smartness	100
d) Chassis cleanliness	100
e) Originality — lack of anachronisms	150
f) Mechanical state	250

Driving Tests Results

SUNDAY 15th OCTOBER 1978 — PENNYHILL PARK

Competitor Name	Wobble-Wobble	Miss the Pedestrian	On the Spot	Width Judging	Total	Pos.
C. Chapman	58	35	201	9	303	8th
D. Wills	—	29	47	50	—	—
L. Williams	16	97	16	14	143	4th
C. Meachen	40	100	40	29	209	5th
L. Brua	20	36	43	3	102	2nd
P. Collinson	16	52	52	18	138	3rd
D. Silcock	20	97	178	69	364	9th
C. Curtis	58	63	85	26	232	6th
B. Goodman	10	23	0	7	40	1st
F. Valentine	16	130	225	56	427	10th
A. Heathcote	13	38	115	71	237	7th

Red to Black



Has the myth become truth, or was it true all the time? So ponders Jim Hand of the Midland Rolls-Royce Club in a recent item in their Newsletter, reproduced below.

My story starts in a printing office when I was waiting for my order, and the conversation turned as you might guess to Rolls-Royce, seeing that all the rest of the company had an interest in vintage vehicles.

Of course, there was the man who knew the reason why they changed the emblem from red to black on the death of Mr. Royce. I immediately discounted this as fantasy, and just one of these tales that come about. It was at this point that Mr. Roger Wilkinson contradicted me, as he worked for the firm Joseph Fry Ltd. who were the

suppliers of the Rolls-Royce motif, and he tells of the time when the director of the company, Mr. Bernard Fry, sent his son George Fry on his first job for the company, and one of his calls was to Rolls-Royce to pick up further orders for motifs.

He was given an order, and was told to change the colour from red to black. Thinking nothing of this, he 'phoned the order back to his father. Mr. Bernard Fry telephoned back to Rolls-Royce thinking that his son had got the order wrong, and was told that it was right. Mr. Fry then asked the reason, and was told it was done as a mark of respect on the death of Mr. Royce."

This should start some controversy. — Ed.

1977 Trophy Results

ALPINE TROPHY

Presented to the Club by Rolls-Royce Ltd., (now Rolls-Royce Motors Ltd.) Awarded to the car which covers the greatest mileage, according to age, during the year.

	Model	Year	Mileage	Age Allowance	Total
A. Heathcote	25/30	1938	6333	38	240654
L.H. Jamieson	SG	1924	3320	52	172640
A.P. Taylor	20/25	1935	3769	41	154529
P. Taylor	SW	1958	4740	18	85320
N.M. Taylor	20	1927	1400	49	68600
W.F. Watson	SG	1913	969	63	61047
C.J. Curtis	SC1	1957	2429	19	46151
N.M. Taylor	20/25	1933	914	43	39302
S.J.S. Boord	20/25	1933	501	43	21543
W.F. Watson	P11	1935	477	41	19557

DYMOCK-MAUNSELL TROPHY

Presented by Lt.Cdr. J.C. Dymock-Maunsell, R.N. in 1962. Awarded to the member who obtains most marks for rally attendance.

	No. of events attended	Points
A.P. Taylor	3	2453
J. Townrow	3	1859
R.D. Dale	3	1431
N.M. Taylor	2	1188
C.A. Chapman	2	1050
J.I. Yates	2	660
W.F. Watson	1	608
C.J. Curtis	2	585
J.C.S. Spry-Leverton	1	576
T. Lightfoot	2	449

(first ten places only)

HARDING-ROLLS TROPHY

Originally won by the Hon. C.S. Rolls and presented in 1962 by Lt.Col. J.C. Harding-Rolls. Awarded to the member who in the opinion of the Committee has contributed most either by individual meritorious service or use of a Rolls Royce motor car.

Awarded to Philip Taylor for his many years of dedicated service to the Club.

THE PHOENIX TROPHY

Presented by the late Captain R.B. Honnywill, R.N. in 1970. Awarded to the member who in the opinion of the Committee has carried out the most interesting and thorough reconstruction on an old chassis. It is not awarded annually of necessity but only when there is a worthy recipient.

Awarded to Nicholas Taylor for the restoration of a 1933 20/25 saloon.

FERGUSON-WOOD PHOTOGRAPHIC TROPHY

There were no entries for this competition.

Driving tests were not held in 1977 and as the results of these tests are a factor in the calculation of the marks for the following Trophy competitions: — Messervy — Stanley Sears — Fergusson-Wood these trophies were not awarded in 1977.



OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

MASTER: S.E. Sears
PRESIDENT: The Rt.Hon. the Earl of Elgin D.L. J.P.
VICE PRESIDENT Maj. A. Heathcote
CHAIRMAN: Sir Thomas Lund CBE
SECRETARY: Lynn A. Brua, Tir Na N'og, Coombe Riding
Kingston Hill, Kingston, Surrey
TREASURER: C.A. Chapman
Little Court, Hambledon, Godalming, Surrey

COMMITTEE:

D.G. Silcock Lt. Cdr. BSC
P.J. Taylor
F.A.B. Valentine
L.N. Williams

OTHER OFFICERS:

Historian and Librarian: Dr. R.O. Barnard
Trophies: C.J. Curtis
Recorder: Clifford Meachen
Editor: Nigel Fredrick
Membership List: F.A.B. Valentine
Solicitor: Frank Hellings

General Notes

Library — Members are reminded that the Club Library contains a considerable amount of Rolls-Royce literature, most of which may be borrowed from the Librarian. This includes issues of "The Flying Lady" instruction books, Rolls-Royce Bulletins and files of cuttings.

Insignia — Club insignia are available from the Treasurer and include lapel brooches (for ladies and gentlemen) in sterling silver, Club ties, silver cufflinks and car badges.

Magazine — Back copies of most issues may be obtained from the Editor.

Club Tie — a new silk tie in blue, embroidered with the Club badge in red, may be purchased from the Treasurer, price £4. each.

Events for 1979

A.G.M. and Winter Dinner (Black Tie) Arranged by Sir Thomas Lund. Organiser: Lynn Brua	Friday 2nd March
Spring Luncheon at King's Head, Ivinghoe, Bucks Organiser: Philip Taylor	Sunday 8th April
Driving Tests, Biggin Hill Organiser: Leo Williams	Sunday 27th May
Concours d'Etat, Royal Hospital, Chelsea Organiser: Anthony Heathcote	Sunday 17th June
Irish Georgian Weekend Organiser: F.A.B. Valentine	Sat/Sun 2st/2nd September
October Cotswolds Weekend Organiser: Anthony Heathcote	Friday, Saturday, Sunday 6th, 7th, 8th October

Although Entry Forms for the above events will be forwarded to members, it would be appreciated if those interested would contact the Organiser.

Photographs

We are obliged to the following for providing photographs for this volume of the Record:

Nigel Fredrick	Pages 3, 18 and 25
Nicholas Taylor	Front Cover, Pages 10 and 11
K. Rossi	Pages 16 and 17
Philip Hiss	Pages 19, 20 and 21

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