



News & Record

Issue 78 | Winter 2024





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March 2025

Saturday 15th – Sunday 16th
AGM and Charles Rolls Dinner in Cambridge. John Snook and Sir John Stuttard are organising accommodation at Churchill College, a talk and tour of the Churchill Archives, then a coach to Trinity College to visit one of the ancient libraries with a music recital before AGM, dinner and prize-giving.

Mary Narvell:

narvell@btopenworld.com

April 2025

Saturday 26th

Spring Lunch in Strone and Alex's barn - Armsworth Park House, Hampshire.

strone@stronemacpherson.com

May 2025

Sunday 11th – Friday 16th

The Irish Georgian Tour in County Wexford Ireland. Possibly another (optional) tour to be added at the end. The whole thing promises to be marvellous. John Narvell
narvell630@gmail.com

Friday 16th – Friday 23rd

Irish follow-on Tour. South and West of Ireland from Wexford to Cork, Kinsale, Killarney and finishing in Rosslare close to return ferry port. Easy driving days on the back roads are planned. Please register your interest in joining this tour NOW to gauge number of rooms required.

kennethforbes@btinternet.com

July 2025

Thursday 3rd – Thursday 24th

The Baltic Region in Summer
Sir John Stuttard is arranging a 22-night tour of Finland, Sweden, Latvia & Estonia.
johnstuttard@btinternet.com

Letters, Emails & Pictures

And 'my other car is'...a 1964 Alvis TE21 with that glorious Mulliner Park Ward saloon body. Andrew Ayres and his friend Karen Randolph invited me to lunch and we zoomed out in Andrew's Alvis which is his 'daily driver' classic. A wonderful car which really does shift and handles well – lunch was excellent too!



New Members

Graham Tyson reports that Tommy & Siobhan Dreelan who live in Milltimber Aberdeen have joined us as members, they own a 1922 SG, 84TG, Barker style tourer.

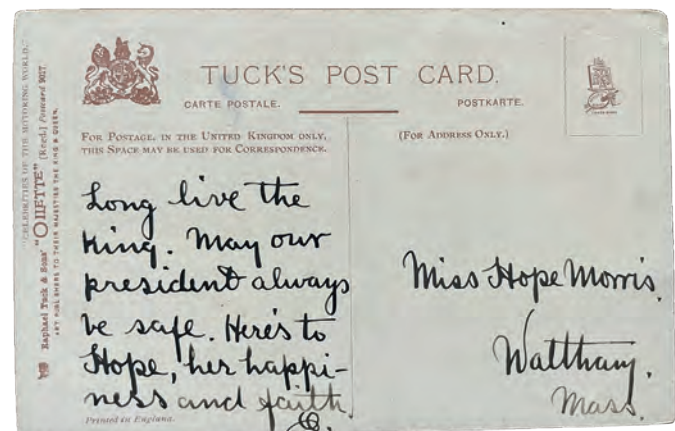


Persuade your friends to buy a pre-war R-R.
Propose them to Graham: *gtyson@outlook.com*



A nice picture of two Phantoms taken by John Deane in June during the Champagne to Provence tour at Fère-en-Tardenois. On the left is green 1934 PII 121RY previously owned by John and Kathy Deane but now owned by Murray and Ann Grant who were using it properly for the first time on the French tour this year. On the right is 1938 PIII 3DL28 which is John and Kathy's new R-R also on a 'shake-

down' being its first long outing after eight years in the garage whilst engineering the fitting of a Cloud I engine in place of a straight 8 military engine which had been originally fitted in the early 1960s. John tells me that he has recently purchased a James Young 1965 S3 Continental: apparently the final continental made in their Bromley factory. Picture next time please John!



Doug Magee sent through this lovely postcard which he found – looks a very wintry scene. Can anybody identify the car?



Dear Johnnie,

I was at Salon Privé last week for a couple of glorious days taking snaps for articles for 'Spirit & Speed' and the VSCC Bulletin. Here is a snap that you might like to use in the magazine. The car in the background is Anthony Bamford's 1933 PII Continental by Freestone & Webb which came second overall in the concours. John's 1701 gained an 'honourable mention'... which in reality means that it was second in the pre-war

class for Rolls-Royce cars, the winner of that class being a 1923 Springfield Ghost.

Many thanks,
Andrew Prestwich

With thanks to Andrew for sending in this great image but also just to say that John and Sandy are getting married in December – huge congratulations to the happy couple!

It is with great sadness that we must report the death of Fokko Keuning's wife Helène Boonstoppel aged 72. Helène was always super company on the many tours she came on and will be much missed by us all.



Sir Brian Williamson 1945 – 2024

Sir Brian has died aged 79. He was a member of the club for many years. He had a very active career in the City of London and was president of the Cresta Run from 2009 to 2014. He is seen here with his 1927 Phantom I 65LF with its distinctive Saoutchik/Cooper body.



The club's committee recently held a meeting at P&A Wood hosted by Louise Wood. After all the hard work of the meeting itself was done, Louise took us round the workshops. I've been to P&A Wood before but it is an amazing place, well worth a visit. One of the cars we looked over was Monty's 1937 PIII 3AX79 with the very unusual HJ Mulliner airline coachwork. This car is fairly well known but I hadn't seen the burn mark on the dashboard previously – which Louise told me was made by one of Churchill's cigars when he was riding in the front passenger seat. Lovely story – which might even be true!

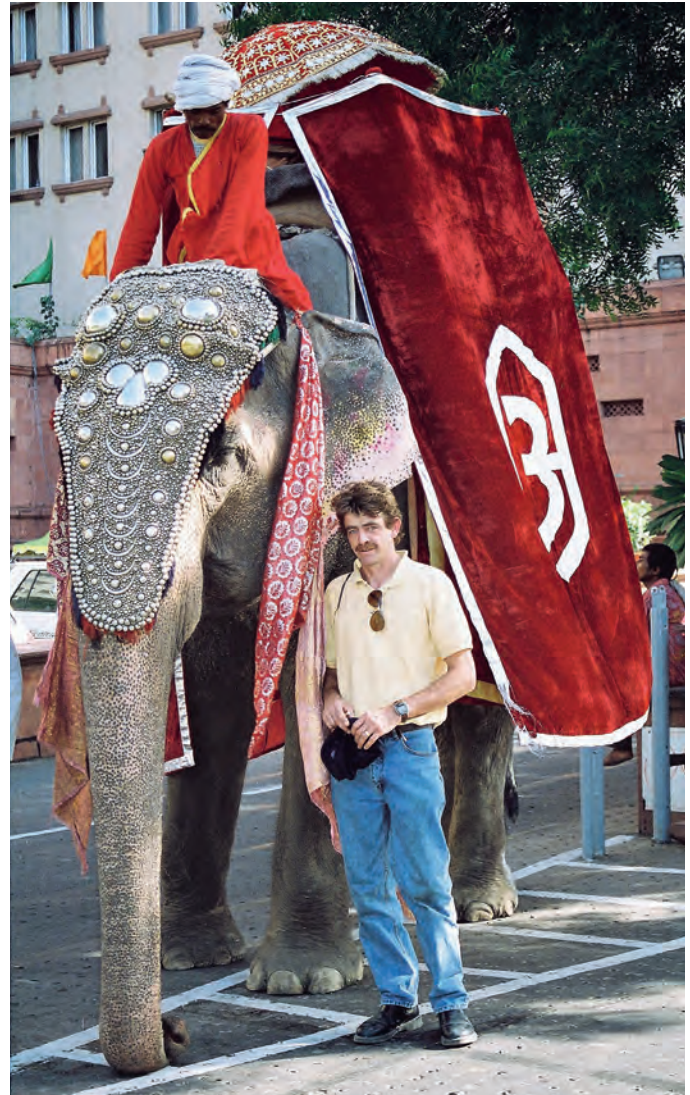


Earlier this year Bella Hoare was at Bicester Heritage and went for a spin in MDU 212 the Jaguar C-Type raced by Stirling Moss in 1952 who won the Reims 12 Hour race in it that year. Bella looks a little apprehensive before being taken on the track!





Philip Hall (AKA Herodotus) sent me through this advert from the Autocar archive. Seems funny to think of an advert for tinned salmon being included within a car magazine. I wonder whether Rolls-Royce were happy with the connection? But it does show that using the words Rolls-Royce to denote perfection was commonplace by 1924.



Following the sad death of Roy O'Sullivan earlier this year (see the tribute in Issue 77) various reminiscences and photos have been sent in. Gordon Barrass (not a member) knew Roy well and was on the fabled Peking to Paris trip with Sir John Stuttard, sent in this great image from that journey. Not a mode of transport where Roy needed to make use of his spanners!

I'm a big fan of the YouTube channels: Harry's Garage and also Tyrell's Classic Workshop. Both are worth subscribing to and have great content. Ian Tyrell's latest video is set at the NEC Classic Car Show and at the end features Doug Hill's utterly magnificent 1909 SG Chassis 939 (see very seasonal picture here) – the video is really worth a watch – click on the QR code:



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

The Club Mileage Trophies

Application Form

The raison d'être of the 20-Ghost Club is to encourage members to use their cars exactly as Sir Henry intended. Indeed, as past winners have proven, a sensibly maintained Rolls-Royce will cover prodigious distances, even in appalling conditions, with total reliability: entirely as befits "The best car in the world." We have three mileage trophies:

The Alpine is awarded to any car covering the highest mileage, on a formula multiplying the annual mileage by the age of the car. This rightly favours high miles in early cars. In this case it is the car that qualifies rather than the owner!

The Woodmansee is for the highest mileage in a Ghost.

The Small Horse Power as the name suggests, is awarded to 20, 20/25 and 25/30 cars.

We don't need a precise mileage just an approximation given the journeys you know you've done with a little explanation. We do trust you!

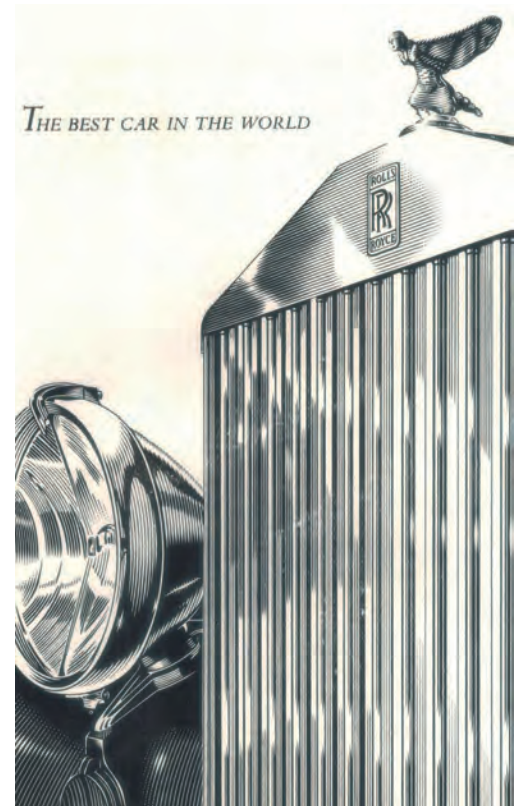
Simply scribble down the mileage you think you've done with a few lines about where you've been on the back of this flyer and post it off to:

John Snook, The Oaks, Tag Lane, Wargrave, Reading, Berks, RG10 9ST

Or email John at snookjt@outlook.com or give him a ring 0118 940 4061

Really looking forward to hearing from you!





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OTHER UK DIRECTORS: Johnnie Gallop; Fokko Keuning; Strone Macpherson; Doug Magee; Nick Naismith; Maurice Whitaker; Steve Wilks; Louise Wood

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

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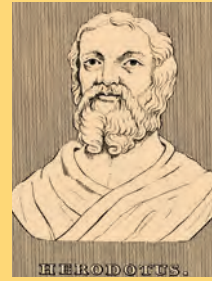
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Printed by Parchments Print of Oxford, Crescent Road, Cowley, Oxford OX4 2PB

01865 747547 print@parchmentuk.com

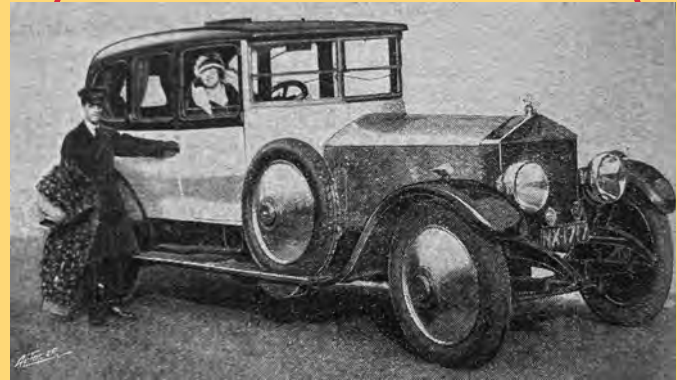
Just a century ago...

Herodotus casts an eye over R-R related matters within
The Autocar during October-December 1924.



Motoring in Cloudland

No finer scenes await the traveller than in the Rolle Pass in the region of San Martino, Dolomites. The scene shows a Rolls-Royce on the Bolzano branch of the Dolomite road, with mist clouds on the peak of Cimon della Pala.



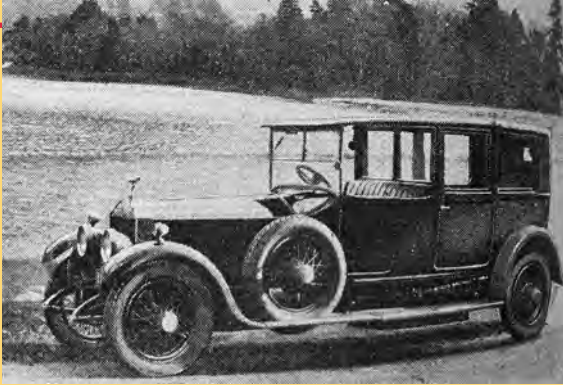
For a Principal Boy

Miss Dorothy Ward, who is to be principal boy at the London Hippodrome pantomime this winter, has just taken delivery of a 40/50 HP Rolls-Royce saloon which was supplied by Arthur Bray of Davies Street W1. Roof and doors are panelled with inlaid sycamore, the upholstery being in red hand-made tapestry.

A Dignified Carriage

A distinct impression of the old-time ceremonial barouche is conveyed by this 40/50 Rolls-Royce all-weather carriage with coachwork by W Cole and Sons Ltd. It is unusual in modern coachwork to find the scroll work at the front of the base of the front door.



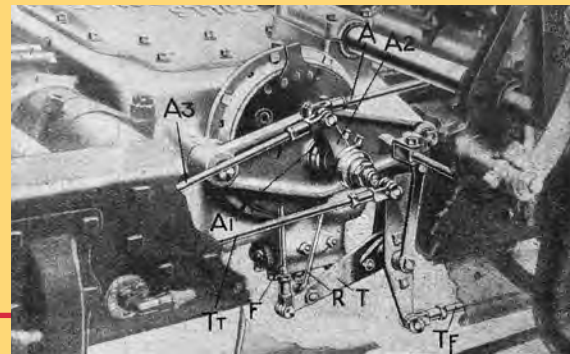


Mountaineering by Car

A two-day test was carried out on a run from London via the Lake District to Glasgow in a 40/50 Hooper six-seater landaulet. The first day's run covered the 259 miles to Windermere, ready for the Kirkstone pass, and the sharp descent to Patterdale and the narrow and winding roads round Brothers Water and Ullswater.

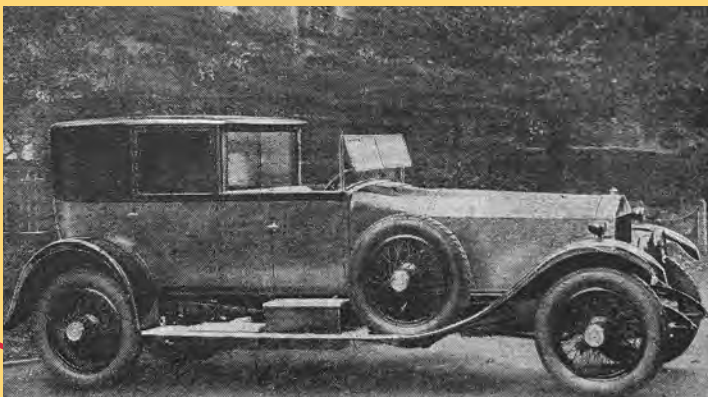
The most striking feature of the new Rolls-Royce braking system is its delicate operation. A mere touch of the pedal will slow down the car, whilst ordinary leg pressure will gently but firmly bring the car to a standstill in an incredibly short space no matter what the speed, with an absence of skidding.

Rolls-Royce cars which were ordered after November 1st 1923 will be fitted with front-wheel brakes free of charge.



An Unusual Design

A distinct note of originality has been struck by H J Mulliner, the constructors of the coachwork on this 40/50 HP Rolls-Royce. It is a coupé de ville built on the Weymann flexible fabric principle and is characterised by perfectly straight lines throughout, which although perhaps somewhat severe, are undoubtedly smart.



A Smart Town Carriage

The well-known racehorse owner, Mr A K Macomber has lately acquired a 20 HP Rolls-Royce with Leather top from Paddon Brothers Ltd. It will be generally agreed that the lines of this smart carriage have been exceedingly well contrived.

The Forbes Report

As our thoughts turn to turkey, mince pies and log fires, it is an opportune time to review where we are as a club and how we take things forward in 2025.

In recent years we have secured our financial position by establishing the tour reserve and a website development fund. We have also generated surpluses to preserve our funds and cover new initiatives. Steve Wilks has greatly improved our management accounting system and provides invaluable back up to Philip Hall in tracking and analysing all the transactions.

Researching our vehicle histories and making this information available to members is a continuing focus for Sir John Stuttard. It provides a great introduction to the special nature of the club for new members to benefit from John's detailed research on their cars.

The quality and appeal of our tours are a cornerstone of the club and we are renowned for actually using our cars as they were originally intended. The 2025 calendar is included with this issue.

But what of the future and how do we make the club relevant to the next generation? To the uninitiated, pre-war cars are of less practical interest, intimidating to drive and maintain, and less sought after as a result. We have a task to expose the next generation to the joys of our cars. We want to have more one-day, small, regional events accessible to people who are not retired and are suitable to bring a guest or younger family members. These don't involve the cost and time commitment of a tour and could be as simple as getting a group together to attend a local sporting event, hosting a picnic somewhere interesting or at home, or a small group drive out on your favourite back roads. The key is to encourage members to bring along someone they would like to introduce to using our cars. Can you arrange something in your area? We can put you in touch with other owners to invite.

In terms of attracting new members, John Narvell is busy with Mindworks in developing an improved website which will be more appealing for public view and work better on mobile devices. It will also build on the storage and accessibility of archive information, particularly video and photographs. This is a huge task and we are all grateful to John for his time and dedication.

There is a great deal to look forward to in 2025 and I hope all members will think about how to involve friends and family more. We are only a small club, so the contribution you make can be very significant. Wishing you a peaceful and Happy Christmas

Steve Wilks





An old picture this time – September 2021: Ken, Jane and 1924 SG 68RM, early morning, outside the RAC Club in London's Pall Mall at the start of the 110th anniversary of the London to Edinburgh 'top-gear' trial. 68RM was duly locked in fourth gear for the 800 mile trip to Rolls-Royce Edinburgh and, of course, completed the journey without fuss or bother.

“...And to the grape upon the sunny slopes her colour bring.”

George Macpherson reports on the 2024 Autumn Lunch at The Grange Vineyard in Hampshire.

The French Revolution did not get many things right, but the names of the months of their new calendar certainly did. It had just passed from the month of *Fructidor* to *Vendémiaire*, the month of the grape harvest (the vendange), when we rolled into Itchen Stoke, Hampshire, to taste the latest French revolution in this country, namely, the growing of grapes for champagne. We had the chance to sample the delicious English fizz they produced.

The hardest part about driving a Rolls is whether or not to have a small glass of something before getting into the vehicle to take the edge off the nerves. Recently I had experienced failure to proceed on a number of occasions because the car would not restart from hot. At the previous Spring Lunch I had managed to stall the Doctor's Coupé in the middle of the Chieveley Junction roundabout. Surrounded by mid-Saturday-morning traffic, vast passing juggernauts, and swerving family cars, I failed to get the car going from hot. Mercifully we were towed by the fast-appearing traffic police to the nearby service station, and after half an hour of cooling I managed to get it started by crank handle.

The line up headed by Strone and Alex Macpherson's 1914 SG 27BD.





George Macpherson at the wheel of 1930 20/25 GLR25 doctor's coupe, with Luna the dog carefully supervising the driving from behind.



The Grange's Series A Land Rover.

Nervously, on this Saturday I woke early and drove sober to the Grange aware that any stall could cost us valuable fizz-sipping time.

We arrived to find a splendid line of cars assembled in front of the Grange Winery, including Rupert and Jan Grey's India-travelled Rolls. At the far end the Grange's own branded Series A Land Rover provided a rustic complement. Conversation was in full flow and the tour soon started. The delightfully dressed Zam Baring, wearing the hat of a scarecrow and the waistcoat of an Austrian, led us along the vines of Pinot Meunier, Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

The sun came out and a line of Virgil came to mind: *astrum quo segetes gauderent frugibus, et quo / duceret apricis in collibus uva colorem* (Virgil Eclogue 9.48-49 'the star which gladdens all the fields with corn, and to the grape upon the sunny slopes her colour bring'). The rows of vines overlooked a beautiful valley with fields on the far side where mature hedgerow trees tinged yellow with the first signs of autumn. Zam informed us of the numerous variables that go into getting the harvest just right. How quantity could be sacrificed for quality, how various insects blighted the leaves, how the rain and weather affected the yield. At times it made one wonder if it was all worth it, but they were safe in the knowledge that Pommery had bought the estate to the east and Taittinger had bought the one to the west so they were certainly in good company.

Rupert and Jan Grey's 1936 25/30 GUN7.





The Wonderful Zam Baring pulls a properly Gallic face!

They had first planted in 2011 and it was only in 2017 that their first proper harvest came to fruit. The patience involved was almost generational. At this point a dark cloud threatened us on the horizon turning the field a dull grey. We made it into the winery as heavy drops started to fall, reminiscent as the French would say of the rainy month of *Pluviose*.

All the talk of wine and harvesting was certainly making me eager to sample the fruits of their labour, but we embarked on a fascinating and humorous tour of the winery itself. One room opened into another like some sort of viticultural labyrinth and we learned that the most profitable part of the business – so far – was in fact storing other people's wine in the vast warehouse! Soon, however, we sat down at large tables with a view looking south over the vines ready to sample the wines and eat.

The best of the wines we tried was the pink fizz (The Grange Pink NV) that really transcended all expectations. In my youth I had associated sparkling rosé with over-sweet and over-fizzy cava, but this

had a distinct and unique flavour, blending the right level of fizz, dry with low sugar, and the exquisite effervescence of strawberries and raspberries on the tongue leaving a satisfying after taste. This was both a wine for celebration and an easy drinker that could while away many an afternoon or evening.

It had won platinum in the Decanter awards and really smashed the competition. For those of the club who were not there, I would strongly recommend getting your hands on a bottle. I might have spoken of revolutions earlier, but this English one really does put the French to shame.

After lunch we drove back nervelessly. Our faithful hound joined us in the front seat and the passing cars were most amused to see the three of us in profile riding forward.

After such a fine lunch and heaven knows why, I managed to forget I was still in the overdrive when pulling up to some traffic lights. The car stalled and we had to wait another 40 minutes for the engine to cool. Roll on the misty month of Brumaire when the engine will cool faster!



At Swanage promenade the Banks family's 1922 SG 34MG is parked on the left as George and Monique Howitt come past in their 1939 Wraith James Young DHC WHC31.

A taste of 1930's luxury

Gervase Forster on the 2024 tour of Dorset.

20-Ghost Club members who had signed up for Steve Wilks' Dorset tour were eagerly awaiting details but could not have anticipated such a superbly detailed tour book which arrived by email in good time to plan. Not that there was much need for planning as Steve had covered every eventuality including precise route instructions, historical information, photographs and multiple loo-stops!

A huge amount of work must have gone into the planning and you can imagine Steve's shock reaction when he received news that Tyneham village, one of the early key attractions, had been closed because of an unsafe tree! That, coupled with a weather forecast that had promised unbroken sunshine which then turned suddenly to continuous rain. Indeed, for some who had made it early enough in open cars hoping for a view over Tyneham village, the tour started with a bang. A huge clap of thunder followed by a surprise downpour sufficiently intense to wash both the outside and inside of their cars!

But you can't dampen the spirits of a group of 20-Ghosters hell bent on enjoying themselves. Which we certainly did!

We eventually found our base, the Priory Hotel in Wareham, hidden away behind the church such that you would never know it was there. Dating from the 9th century and full of character, it is a maze of rooms with fine antique furniture dotted around. But more than that, it has an excellent kitchen and service by well-trained staff who believe that nothing is too much trouble.



The star line up at Athelhampton House.

Alas, the weather forecast was not wrong and Monday dawned damp albeit warm. Replete after a champion breakfast of kippers the temptation was to linger a while but we had a hundred or so miles of motoring to do and much to see.



Another at Swanage; Johnnie Gallop & Bella Hoare's 1934 20/25 'Peabody' GHA16 heads this line up, followed by Charles Rentoul's 1933 PII Continental 118MY, John Snook's 1911 SG 1701, the Banks family's SG, and finally Pascal Bego's 1924 20HP GMK74.

We set off along the Jurassic Coast encompassing some of the finest views that Dorset has to offer. Sadly on this occasion it was obscured by finest drizzle! It cleared on occasions and when it didn't, we had the excellent tour book photographs to fall back on! Fortunately it was clear as we passed Corfe Castle because Steve had arranged for a photographer to take pictures of our cars against a backdrop of the castle as we climbed up the hill. What hadn't been anticipated were road-works from exactly where the shot was to be taken. As the photographer crouched among scaffolding and traffic cones, he nailed the shots as the workmen tipped him off when one of our cars was approaching!

Swanage and Weymouth were well worth seeing. Also Lulworth castle with its fine exterior. Osmington White Horse carved into the hillside for us, was not very clear but we knew it was there.

Not to be missed and we didn't, was the fish and chip lunch at West Bexington overlooking where it was caught. The waitress couldn't identify the exact spot but assured us it was local. The taste proved her right!

Tuesday's journey to Athelhampton House took us via the new town of Milton Abbas (new in the 1700's that is) and Bullbarrow Hill, a high point in Dorset at a heady 899ft. I confess that our navigation went a bit awry for us at this point, becoming apparent when we passed the same lady on horseback for a third time!

Arriving back at the Priory just in time, it was a brisk walk to St Martins, a small, grade 1 listed Saxon church with 12th century frescoes. The connection with Lawrence of Arabia is the carved white marble effigy within. It ended up at the relatively insignificant church of St Martins due to being declined by both Westminster Abbey and Salisbury Cathedral for political reasons.

There followed an eagerly awaited talk by the Deacon, supposedly about Lawrence. His opening shot was that he doubted he knew any more than we did about Lawrence of Arabia and then proceeded to tell us about his Morris Minor restoration and the origins of his name, Merville. Who knew?! It was fun though!

Back at the hotel for more drinks and canapés, which turned out to be a continuation of Doug Magee's birthday which he had been celebrating since June! He had had the amazing willpower not to consume a magnum bottle of Champagne Chauvet, purchased whilst on the 20-Ghost French tour [See Charles Cole's great write up in Issue 77]. We were delighted to relieve him of this burden and keep the celebrations going right through dinner.

It would be a shame if not sacrilege to hurry the Priory breakfast, so we left a bit late for Shaftesbury on the Wednesday, arriving just in time. It was nice to experience the pleasure of the public who had gathered at Park Walk to see our cars. We made a good display overlooking Hardy's Blackmore Vale.



A shot at The Priory Hotel in Wareham featuring Michael Joy's splendid 1927 PI 74RF.

Coffee was taken at the Salt Cellar café, a prime spot right at the top of Gold Hill, looking down the cobbled street made famous by the Hovis advert and supposed to be Yorkshire! Presumably it was Rank Hovis McDougall's marketing department who had placed a giant plastic Hovis loaf against the wall at the top!

A visit to the Gold Hill Museum recommended by Sir John Stuttard then off to Stourhead and lunch at Gasper Cottage.

Parking our cars in an adjacent field we were careful to avoid the boggy bits and not get stuck as one person had done judging by the muddy furrows in the grass. Easily done in a 2 ton vehicle with narrow tyres.

Making our way to the cottage we meandered along winding paths past apple trees laden with fruit, through a wild-flower meadow. The wild garden gave way to a beautifully cultivated garden with carefully planted shrubs and flowers to give a

A happy lunch at Gasper Cottage.





Doug Magee's magnificent 1921 SG 2092 with a superb shot of Corfe Castle behind.

totally natural look. Nothing formal and just as nature might have created without intervention. But there certainly had been intervention, every species, colour and position had been carefully chosen by Bella, her garden being her passion.

A lunch was served in the cottage by Bella, Johnnie and Johnnie's daughter Flo. Afterwards Bella gave an informal talk on the Hoare banking family, their history at Stourhead and how Gasper Cottage and its environs came about.

Following lunch most of us wandered back down the garden to where Johnnie had created a layout for his railway amongst the tall grasses and vegetation and viewable at waist level. This is serious stuff, miniature replicas of the real thing with locomotives powered by steam.

The trains whizzing around were very impressive especially one that had been set at a rather optimistic speed without taking account of centrifugal force on the curve! Almost in slow motion it tipped on its side and fell into the undergrowth below. Quick to the rescue, Zelda also dived into the undergrowth eventually emerging with all the bits that had fallen off. Johnnie's expression changed from downcast to relief!

Returning to the Priory it was time to express our thanks to Steve for a job well done. The huge amount of effort he put in, had resulted in a wonderful time for us all.

Waiting for us in the dining room were the photographs of each car, taken as we drove up the hill from Corfe Castle. The castle in the background made a great setting and a perfect souvenir of our tour of Dorset.

The final dinner demonstrated yet more of the Chef's skill and it was entirely appropriate that he and his staff came out of the kitchen so we could show our appreciation. We responded with rapturous applause!

Despite having drunk rather too much wine plus a complimentary glass of pudding wine, we retired to the bar, anticipating a late start home in the morning! Yes, the weather could have been kinder, but do you know, it is actually hard to imagine that we could have had any more fun, laughter, friendship and great motoring on some really super roads.



The Corfe images were just too good not to use! Above, John Snook's 1911 SG 1701 and below, Sir John Stuttard's 1934 20/25 GSF29.

Centrefold: Gervase (our author) and Margaret Forster's 1921 Silver Ghost 60NE mounts the hill out of Corfe village with the castle ruins behind.











*“Eureka!
I’ve Got This!”*

James Banks chats to Johnnie.

James Banks lives with wife Debra and their two children close to Guildford in Surrey. He and his brother Andrew are the official owners of ‘JL1’ the Banks’ family’s very fine Alpine Eagle 1922 Silver Ghost (34MG). It has to be said, however, that we 20-Ghost Club members will be more used to seeing the car on rallies and tours when piloted by (its previous owner) Clayton Banks with Helen sitting in the navigator’s seat next to him.

Actually, the car was purchased by Clayton’s father Bill back in the 1950s making James and Andrew third generation custodians. You can read Sir John Stuttard’s account of the history of the car within the club’s 70th anniversary book (or just look on our website) but my particular interest was piqued when chatting to Clayton over dinner during the Dorset tour. He mentioned that James had been driving the Ghost – properly for the first time – during the Tim Forrest tour in Surrey a month or so earlier.

James has come along previously to some of our AGMs and, in fact, I had met him at the 2024 AGM dinner at Trinity House. We found the time for a chat about his experience driving the Ghost.

On leaving university James went to work for McLaren at their Woking HQ as a graduate engineer working on the design and manufacture of carbon fibre parts they use to build their road cars. He remained there for nearly 20 years, moving through the company, until finally ending up running their bespoke programme for hypercars. I confessed that I didn't really know what a hypercar was! James laughed:

"The term hypercar gets used more and more each year but really it's a top-tier performance motor that bests all or most of the elements of anything else on the road: acceleration, price, rarity, handling, top speed, sound and appearance. I'm still very much working in the hypercar world today and so my yardstick is possibly different from many others when it comes to driving cars, but frankly I've got little to no experience of pre-war cars.

Obviously, I wanted to please my father by learning to drive the Ghost and take on his passion, but actually I always had a slight terror of driving

such a huge car, with its straight-cut gears. An additional problem is that our Ghost had been modified sometime in the 1930s to have a Phantom I front-axle fitted. The idea had been that this would provide front-wheel brakes. However, the modification was never completed and the front-brakes were subsequently deleted but it left the car with extraordinarily heavy steering. Happily, dad has recently alleviated this by swapping to a slightly narrower tyre.

So, the whole notion of me driving the Ghost was quite daunting and compounded by the fact that dad is an accomplished engineer who spends hours in the workshop thinking nothing of undertaking complex tasks on the Ghost. Whilst I share an engineering education I simply do not have the same level of mechanical acumen.

I bought a 1959 Mk1 Healey, really as a way of developing some mechanical prowess. I wanted to get better-equipped to take on the Ghost (alongside my brother Andrew) and fiddling around with carburettors and ignition systems has proved a good introduction into the world of 'analogue' cars. It's quite a departure from my usual automotive experience which, for example, consists of plugging into a USB port and adjusting the fuelling in

James's 1959 Mk1 Austin Healey.





James's son William using sharp eyes to help his dad.

cylinders 1, 3, and 12 by a mere tap of a computer keyboard. Very different.

I guess that in years past, my trepidation meant I had actively 'swerved' any opportunity to drive the Ghost but then, recently, I was inspired by Katie Forrest. Her skill at driving her late father's car and then chatting to her and hearing how she takes on the maintenance tasks was a revelation.

All this led me to taking our car out for a 'quiet drive' last summer. I spent a little time driving round the lanes, on my own, where I could grind the gears and miss braking points without an audience. I began to realise it wasn't quite as terrifying as I had worked myself up into thinking, in fact it turned out to be... well actually, very good indeed!

You've probably worked out already that I'm a petrolhead and have been very fortunate to drive lots of impressive cars, but on balance I have to say that the Ghost is probably the most rewarding car I've ever driven.

But it is a completely different set of rewards. On the very rare occasion that one slips seamlessly from third to fourth gear without drama, you smile

knowingly, straighten your back and think: 'Eureka! I've got this! Yes, I am indeed a gentleman!'

And then you decide to slip back to third – ahh but suddenly there's a graunch! No matter: try second because third has now become a rather distant memory. You begin to form a slight expression of doubt as you wonder how good the brakes will be this time. And, then eventually, without finding any gear at all you coast to a halt at the side of the road and have a quiet word with yourself. But then you try it all over again and do a bit better next time round.

Where I have been a slow learner, is that I am used to very free-revving cars. The last fast car I drove was a Gordon Murray T.50 where the RPM pickup is an astonishing 52,000 per second! (This is the peak rate at which its revs increase – with the clutch depressed).

On the Ghost pressing the throttle of the straight-six 7.5 litre engine for half a second yields rather less output. Where I had been going wrong was that I needed to press the throttle harder and longer between the gears to build the revs and then as they start to fall make that seamless shift more deftly; but it's such a joy to experience.

For me the gearbox and the torque of that glorious engine are two great pleasures. But there are other things to think about: the brakes in particular - you can't just plant your foot on the pedal and let the servos do the rest - knowing that if you push too hard it won't matter because ABS will take over. There's none of that with the Ghost; you need to plan ahead. The average motorist on the public highway in their modern German car will think nothing of nipping around you to fit into the space in front of 'that old car' that's slowing down in the rain as it comes down the hill towards a T-junction. We must drive doubly...triply... more cautiously.

Anyway, when mum and dad were on the Tim Forrest tour a few months back, it turned out that the hotel was only a mile or so distant from our house. Usually, these car tours are a problem for me, as they take place over many days and miles away from home; just not compatible with family life. But this time I had run out of excuses not to join in.

I drove it with the whole family on board - and fairly successfully! I only came to an embarrassing halt once. The bit that kept catching me out was the detent in the gear selector grid, which means you have to knock it out of the gear that you are in before you shift to neutral. You need to remember it's there. If you forget, then the slight delay as you depress the clutch and find the gear-lever locked in place means you lose the perfect revs for the gearchange you were hoping to make. So that's something I definitely need to practice.

James Banks, looking much at ease at the wheel..





Until now this was James's more usual extreme automotive experience: the Gordon Murray T.50 (226mph!).

What really strikes me with the 20-Ghost Club is that whilst there must be wealth (I do realise that to run one of these cars one has to be quite fortunate in life) it's not showy. There is not a Richard Mille watch in sight! It is so different from turning up to the Lamborghini enclosure at Pebble Beach where the excess and wish to show off is really vulgar – you do really notice it. The 20-Ghost Club is the complete opposite which makes it a very special environment and one to be appreciated. It is what allows members to build these very great and deep friendships.

Dad has been superb at inviting us all down to the club AGMs which prove a great opportunity to meet people and to get the vibe – decent people who do things really well. It has been a great way for Debra and me to ease into the lifestyle side of the Rolls-Royce world. I feel very privileged to come to these and meet some of the fabulous characters.

I think the last thing to say is that driving the Ghost – in fact any pre-war Rolls-Royce – is an occasion. The reception these cars get is magical. All generations stop, smile and wave and you get so much support from onlookers. In the supercar world, ownership often becomes about the attention that the car attracts. 'Attention' is the word so often mentioned on the various WhatsApp groups and internet chats. And yet, if attention is what you crave then go out and buy a vintage Rolls-Royce. Everybody stops and smiles and waves and shouts 'Nice car mate!' It's lovely! "

So even if your son, daughter, niece or nephew passed up or (using James' brilliant word) swerved on the opportunity of driving one of our cars previously, that might have been some time ago. They might have changed – frankly the world has changed. It might be worth another crack! This time they just might get to grips with that pesky gearbox.

But a final word from James:

'We took a wrong turn - a Banks' family tradition. I saw a really wide opening on the right and thought – no problem I can just spin the Ghost round in there....only to realise that a Silver Ghost has a worse turning circle than a McLaren F1 GTR. That proved slightly problematic!'



A glorious late October morning in Suffolk. Duncan and Sue alongside 1928 20HP GBM37.

Just a mere recommissioning...

Johnnie ventures to Suffolk to see Duncan and Sue Young and enjoy their, near perfect, Twenty.

Duncan and Sue joined the club in 2019 but, in fact, were no strangers to the 20-Ghost fraternity having originally attended annual club dinners at the Hyde Park Hotel back in the early '70s. 'My brother Graham joined the club originally and we went to events with him and his wife', explained Duncan as he showed me the photos of happy dinners past. Some years later however Graham decided to emigrate to Australia and took the Rolls-Royce with him. 'I'm lucky enough to own lots of cars, but I confess I was rather sad to see the R-R sail off to the Antipodes.'

Obviously, Duncan and Sue made lots of visits to see Graham and his wife and the Rolls-Royce but, as the decades rolled by, the old Twenty became a little decrepit. Some work was done here and there but in recent years the car was sad, and down at heel, in his brother's garage.

During Duncan's most recent visit down-under the brothers went to look over the rather forlorn motor, one evening after dinner. 'Do you want it back?' asked Graham 'I'm sure it will be up and running in a jiffy.'

The car duly made the sea voyage and finally returned to Britain in 2019. 'As it rolled out of the container it looked rather worse than I remembered' Duncan told me, but thankfully he had a secret weapon in the shape of Chris Nunn, a local man who had begun restoring old Autovias many years previously. He subsequently moved on to Derby Bentleys. He hadn't done a Twenty before but was ready to take on the challenge.



'It's actually been a three-year recommissioning from the chassis rails up.' Duncan, Chris and I had a good chat on where recommissioning gives way to a full restoration. We agreed that it's a 'fine line' but Duncan asserts this is an extensive recommissioning rather than a restoration and I can understand what he means.

The engine had been previously rebuilt in Australia but that work hadn't proved successful and it all had to be done again from scratch.

A huge amount of bodywork attention was needed. Chris Nunn is immensely proud of small details such as the edging to the running boards - made from copper heating pipe which was cut lengthways and lead filled. It is a much more elegant alternative to the aluminium angle which is so often seen on running boards. The same method was used to replace the swage line running round the car.

With the interior, as much of the original leather has been preserved as possible but some had simply disintegrated and needed to be replaced. This has been done with sensitive patching rather than wholesale recovering. Similarly, lovely new pieces of veneers have been added to the rear compartment to match the existing wood trims and to protect the edges of the headlining.

We all know that a super paint finish is that final make/or break for any car. The colour has been changed from a faded blue to a marvellous shade of Brewster green, and the paint-job is stunning. This Twenty is dazzling!



Opposite: *The Austin Ruby was a 40th Anniversary present*

A 1929 Riley Stelvio 14/6 plus lots and lots of Austins!





Duncan's old family company was the Youngs' frozen fish business which I'm sure many of us recall fondly. The company was sold many decades ago, but it is well worth watching the short 1933 Pathé News Film: *The Whitebait Winners* which features Duncan's grandfather looking extremely smartly dressed for a man going fishing!

The newsreel talks about the whitebait catch heading off from Leigh on Sea to London by 'fast car' and in fact the fast car in question was a 1928 WO Bentley 4 ½ litre with a Vanden Plas sports tourer body which the family had bought in 1929 just a few years before the film was made.

Duncan was devastated when, as boy in the 1950s, he heard that the Bentley had been sold off after twenty odd years of family ownership. The car made its way out to the USA as with many classic British cars during that period. 'I thought we had lost it forever.' Duncan said wistfully 'but suddenly it appeared in an auction in Montana and I got wind of it just as we were going off on holiday - I suppose that was about 2000.'

Auctions were still 'old school' in those days and Duncan left a bid with the auctioneers and went off with the family awaiting the auction result on his return.

Thankfully the bid was successful and after months of waiting the Bentley was finally reunited with the Young family, albeit in need of serious restoration (or is that perhaps just significant recommissioning?!) After considerable work the Bentley has proved as reliable now as it was when the family zoomed to London and back each day. 'I use it a lot,' says Duncan 'but in more recent years Sue has suggested that something with side-windows to keep out the weather would suit us better. So I think the Rolls-Royce Twenty might be just the thing.'

To be fair, Duncan has a decent choice of other classic automobiles to choose from should he and Sue decide to go for a run. He is a major collector of the Austin marque and currently owns about 14 of them in all shapes, sizes and body styles. There are also two Rileys including a Stelvio. 'To my mind it's so clearly the design inspiration for the Phantom II Continental.' Duncan tells me 'I know that's a very controversial statement but in terms of timing and



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

looks it seems incontrovertible to me.' I expect this statement might generate a full postbag but I must say that it does seem a point well made.

Sue is also something of a petrolhead and during her university days in Edinburgh was always seen driving a pre-war car - usually an Austin 7. The car would often break down and she would go off to the phone box to ring Duncan to ask him to diagnose the fault over the phone and talk her through how to fix it. 'We got through lots of thrupenny bits on the payphone' laughs Sue 'but I was normally able to get the old thing going again after some tinkering post the call.' In later years Sue moved on to Triumphs and still owns a 1937 Gloria Southern Cross, purchased by her father just after the war.

All in all it was a thoroughly happy visit to see Duncan and Sue, blessed with great October sunshine. I must say that it's wonderful to see a late Twenty with all the final updates of that model whilst still retaining the distinctive horizontal radiator slats - which tells you immediately that this is the 20HP model rather than the later (dare I say it) 'common or garden' 20/25 cars. Yep, that comment will generate another full postbag of letters!

Duncan and Sue at the 20-Ghost dinner dance at London's Hyde Park Hotel c.1972.





Edinburgh 1971, Sue Moores (now Young) and her trusty Austin Seven.



Being a 1928 20HP GBM37 has front wheel brakes but retains lovely horizontal radiator slats.

The sun visor beyond the windscreen is a new addition.





Blowout!

Tim Maltin describes events en route to home from the 20-GC Concours.

Charlotte and I very much enjoyed attending the Polesden Lacey event and were particularly honoured to receive the Large Horsepower award for 66GX our 1931 PII Continental sports saloon. On the way home, at 70mph on the outside lane of the M3, the offside rear tyre suddenly deflated and ran on the rim! I had to fight with the car to keep her in a straight-ish line, but was able to negotiate traffic and come to a rest, safely, on the hard-shoulder [Ed: thank goodness there was a hard shoulder on that section of the M3].

There I, somewhat heroically, changed the deflated wheel for a spare wheel and tyre, using only the built-in jack at the wheel and the original selection of 1931 tools in my spare kit! Although I must admit that in 27 degrees of heat, the whole operation took much sweating and a full two hours! However, having now done it once in emergency conditions, I do believe I could now change a wheel in about an hour.

I normally like driving the car fast but Charlotte, rightly, insists on me adhering to speed limits. In this case the tyres were, relatively new, Blockleys which had already seen 95mph (I have driven the PII at 99mph on my old Michelins during previous Autobahn testing!).

So an investigation was in order. Upon inspection it was immediately apparent that the valve extension to the Ace wheel disc had become detached. But the metal “racing” valve had also been ripped out of the tyre, and I was concerned that this could have been the cause of the failure.



The inner tube was otherwise undamaged (and indeed held air when pumped up through the hole where the valve had been, and then taped over). The cover had also stood up well to the 100 plus yards/ metres of wrestling the car across three lanes of motorway to the hard shoulder.

So, with no damage to the inner tube or cover than the hole where the valve used to be, I consulted Julian at Blockley, who was most helpful.

We worked out that the valve was ripped out by the tyre turning on the rim after deflation, which we believe was caused by the valve in the end of the extension to the Ace wheel disc on that wheel working loose by vibration.

Certainly there was no indication of a trapped inner tube, and the tube was the correct size and the correct off-set type for our car.

I therefore recommend that members who enjoy fast touring and have wheel discs fitted to their vehicle regularly use a valve tightener to check both the inner tube and valve extension tube valves on all their wheels.

It is also important to make sure that the “collars” are tight, where the extensions come through the wheel discs, as any vibration here will cause the valves to work loose.

As belt and braces, I now also zip-tie the extenders to the wheel spokes, to avoid any fretting.

I recommend that everyone carry a handy pressure gauge in their glove box and check the tyre pressures before each long journey. If a slight deflation is detected then this is more likely to be due to a valve vibrating loose than to a slow puncture.

Then use your valve tightener to tweak up the tightness of both the inner and outer valves on that tyre.

Happy motoring and looking forward to seeing everyone at the next event.



The Ghost of Christmas
by Mary Narvell

*On Christmas eve, the elves
Have emptied all the shelves.
They've loaded up the loot
And Santa's donned his suit.
Mrs. Claus has baked her pies
Packing them as his surprise.
But what – no sleigh this year?
Yes, Santa's upped his gear!
Rudolph's lost his post.
St. Nick has bought a Ghost.*

*For travelling 'tween the poles,
What's better than a Rolls?
It will squire Claus in style
As he clocks up every mile.
Maneuvering's a cake
Since he splurged to get front brakes.
He may fear the double clutch
But he'll master soon that touch.
Santa's chest is puffed with pride
There is no finer ride.*

*Father Christmas must deserve
A vehicle with verve.
Why's a Bentley not his choice?
Can it really match a Royce?
While on a gifting spree,
Rolls' reliability is key.
Driving his new tourer,
Santa certainly is surer
Admiring looks he will amass,
He'll be known as Santa Class!*

*What a dream to ditch the sleigh.
For many years he did so pray,
Would there be a time when Nick
Could at long last get his pick?
He's delivered tons of toys,
Over centuries brought joy.
When's his turn to reach his goals?
Finally have a classic Rolls?
Well, Santa now can proudly boast
He's the owner of a Ghost.*

1933

THE ROLLS-ROYCE BULLETIN

Twenty-seven



Happy
Christmas

WE ARE MUCH INDEBTED TO MR. J. E. P. HOWEY FOR THE ABOVE PHOTOGRAPH. HE WRITES AS FOLLOWS:—

"AS AN OLD CLIENT OF YOURS I AM ANXIOUS TO GIVE YOU THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION. YOU HAVE NO DOUBT HEARD OF THIS LITTLE RAILWAY (ROMNEY, HYTHE AND DYMCHURCH LIGHT RAILWAY CO.), THE GAUGE OF WHICH IS ONLY 15 INS. WE HAVE ENTIRELY RECONDITIONED IN MY OWN WORKS MY 1914 ROLLS-ROYCE CHASSIS AS A LOCOMOTIVE TO RUN THE WINTER SERVICE ON THIS RAILWAY. DURING ITS TRIALS A SPEED OF 56 MILES PER HOUR WAS ACTUALLY REACHED WITH TWO PULLMAN COACHES. EACH OF THESE COACHES EMPTY WEIGHS 4 TONS. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME ANYTHING APPROACHING THIS SPEED HAS EVER BEEN REACHED ON A 15 IN. GAUGE RAILWAY. I HAVE JUST BOUGHT ANOTHER 1914 CHASSIS AND INTEND TO CONVERT THIS ALSO."

I put the word out to my contributors that I needed some Christmas related copy. Mary Narvell came right back with this brilliant Christmas poem telling the true story of Santa's new motor-car. Whilst Bella Hoare came up with a light re-touching of a classic photograph (with sincere apologies to both Cpt. Howey and Rolls-Royce Motorcars Ltd). Anyway these two fabulous offerings seemed to go together quite well and hopefully will raise a smile. A very happy Christmas to all our members and their families!

“I was calm with the chill melancholy of despair.”

Readers will recall the Kipling piece in Issue 76. Coincidentally, as we went to press with that issue, Graham Tyson came across a great letter.



I have recently been fortunate in acquiring a number of out-of-print motoring books, some from the very earliest days. Some give a chance to look back on adventures in England when there was little other motorised traffic, others are of a technical nature, whilst some are full of wonderful anecdotes and experiences with names we all recognise.

It is in one such book *Under My Bonnet* by G. R. N. Minchin MA., a man who seemed to be on first name terms with everyone from Henry Royce to Donald Campbell, taking in such luminaries as ‘Billy’ Morris, Viscount Nuffield on the way, that I came across a letter written by Rudyard Kipling on March 25th 1921 to Claude Johnson.

It is quite extraordinary to think of this level of service today, even with emails and text messages and fast motorways etc one would be hard pressed to think of any company doing as well. In some fields we have not progressed, indeed have lost what we had.

‘The Duchess’ referred to was, of course 1913 Silver Ghost 27NA which Kipling sold a few months after the above letter was written. Apparently he received some £200 more than he paid for it, remarking dryly that Rolls-Royces were the only cars he could afford to run.

Costebelle Hotels,
Hyères,
March 25 1921,

Began : 11a.m. Finished : 4 p.m.

Dear Claude Johnson,

Here is a story to the credit of your firm showing how business should be done.

I had been in Algiers for a month which is no place for a Christian's car: so I left the Duchess at home with orders to join me at Marseilles, on my return from Africa, for a farewell honeymoon tour ere I forsook her for another - my fourth, or fifth is it? - from the same harem.

I reached Marseilles on the evening of the 23rd March, the Duchess met me at the Docks, loyal and devoted as ever, but not quite well. On these cursed Avignon roads she had snapped a leaf of her offside fore spring and lost, or scraped off, her exhaust apparatus pipe behind the exhaust box. You can see the situation!

I gathered that with care and the cut out in use, she could hobble from Marseilles to Hyères without collapsing in front or lighting up behind. It was too late that evening to attempt to legislate for the situation. So, next morn, into Hyères she took us - 2'-45" for 50miles of hell's own pot-holes variegated with road trimmings and surface railways. (I had never been east of Marseilles before: nor had she, and we groaned in unison.)

Arrived at these hotels, I recalled that you had an agency in Nice. At this point the concierge, armed with a pre-war directory, assured me that you hadn't. I could get no definite address so in despair (after having killed the concierge who will appear in the bill) I sent off a wire to "Rolls-Royce Agency, Nice" and outlined my appalling situation. Simultaneously I wired R.R. at Paris for the Nice address, and resigned myself to the worst.

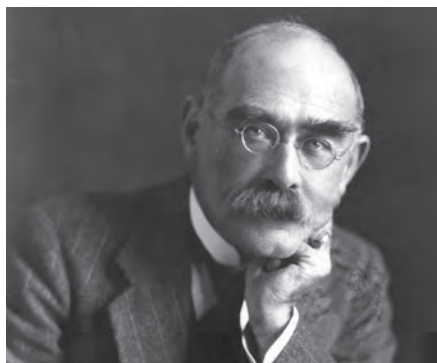
Remember that was Thursday evening (5.p.m.) before Good Friday; the Easter holidays were ahead of us; I had Mrs Kipling, my daughter and a niece with me, all the Riviera to play with for the next ten days; every conceivable wagon-lit berth filled up for a month ahead; all day trains occupied, as far as I could make out, the night before, and my sole link with life and decencies was a semi-paralytic, only too inflammable Duchess!

The utmost I dared hope was that I could send her alone to Nice (180 km). I might by Divine Providence, call her my own again after the Easter holidays. I was not angry. I was calm with the chill melancholy of despair.

This morning at 9.30a.m. (March 25th) I got a reply from the rue Malakoff giving me the Nice Agency address. To make sure then, I repeated my overnight telegram plus proper address, to Nice and sent it into the hotel office to be despatched. It was brought back to me with the announcement that the concierge assumed Monsieur would not now wish to despatch it as "they" had already arrived.

At first I took this for a bad jest of the sort that destroys ententes - but when I went to the garage - it was true. Parsons, who used to be in your Paris repair shop, and an assistant had arrived in an horizon-blue lorrylette, with spare spring and exhaust pipe. The Duchess' front was already jacked up and work was in full swing (10.15 a.m.) (morning of March 25th). They had got my wire, had pulled out of Nice at five in the morning when French telegraphists are abed, and to my hungry eyes they looked like fairies in goatskin coats.

They had all but finished, tried and done with by 3.p.m. this afternoon. Then they folded their horizon blue wings and vanished in the direction of Nice. A field ambulance could not have been quicker than that travelling circus. When did you start 'em?



(Incidentally at our garage lay an open body 1907 R.R. which in old age, had developed a habit of heavy drinking and could not do more than 8-m. per gallon. I presume this would be equivalent to inflammation of the prostate gland amongst the aged. Anyhow, when the Duchess' wants had all been attended to, I believe the travelling circus prescribed for the poor old dear).

And it is to make you all my compliments that I send you this with gratitude and admiration, still warm and panting after my rescue. Literally I was not delayed one minute; for, after the Havre-Hyères run she would have had a day off anyhow.

With every good wish,

Most sincerely,

Rudyard Kipling

I cannot end this letter without another gem, a snippet from a letter that Rolls-Royce had from an overseas customer with a 20HP car that had been towed in one day in a very bad state. The company wrote to the owner asking how the accident had happened. This is part of his reply:

"It was a very beautiful day so we made a promenade with the auto. I sing, the engine sing. The wasp, he fly in, settle on my face and he sting me. I do not sing any more. I make so and kill him. I look down to see if he dead. When I look up, we upside down in big ditch."

There is a wonderful seam of gold to be mined in these books, I shall enjoy sharing them.

John Redmill (1945 – 2024)

Mary Narvell remembers her great friend.

It is with great sadness that I write of the death of John R. Redmill, former editor of the 20-Ghost Club News and Record (alongside his faithful mascot cat Freddie) and, as such, a past member of the 20-GC Committee. John was a devoted volunteer sharing his talents, expertise, and friendship with many of our members who will mourn his passing in Ireland after a brief illness. Alongside his partner and former 20-GC member fellow architect Desmond Barry, John owned and widely toured in a 20/25 1929 Park Ward Saloon (sold a few years ago).



*Use this QR code
to take you to
the link to
Mount Temple.*

A renowned conservation architect, John was based in Dublin where he moved in 1978. His work on several prominent historic buildings led to his advice being sought as an authority in a multitude of high profile and standard-setting, sympathetic preservation and restoration projects. His vast catalogue of work and knowledge were the basis for his dedicated involvement with the Irish Georgian Society, both in Dublin and London, where he was Chairman of the London Chapter for 25 years, serving as its patron since 2018. To give you an example of John's work I attach a QR code to take you to a recent newspaper piece on one of his famous designs - Mount Temple

John was a founding organizer, 45 years ago, along with the late Jimmy Valentine, of the annual joint Irish Georgian/20-Ghost Club tours. He never ceased to share his enthusiasm for his work and architectural know-how with the many eager tour goers who benefitted from his itineraries and expert commentaries. Indeed, it was on one of these tours that this author first met John and, like many others, was captivated by his miraculous ability to make any architrave, pediment, quoin, or mantelpiece come alive. Equally, his razor-like intelligence and rapier wit endeared him to his friends who can remember many a huddled giggle relishing John's devilish glee and zest.

His many interests included tutoring in the Architectural Association Conservation course as well as contributions to many scholarly architectural journals. He frequently indulged his love of opera with attendance at music festivals. In his long career, he received many accolades not least a recognition as an Italian Cavaliere Commendatore, of which he was particularly proud.

Many on reading this will grieve for our droll, devoted friend. As we offer sincere condolences to Desmond, I add my prayers that John rest in peace. I have zero doubt that John will be keenly pronouncing the architectural perfection of Heaven's gates.



THE EDITOR WRITES:



Following John's retirement sub-editor Freddie prepares to leave GX097.

Susie Forrest (1942 – 2024)

Johnnie Gallop writes about a friend of us all.

Susie, together with her husband Tim, were key members of our club for decades. In fact, Susie had become a member of the committee before her husband, acting both as Secretary and Events Organiser (a job at which she excelled). In 1998 she also became Trophy Master, as well as taking on all the administrative arrangements for the AGM – which she proceeded to do, with aplomb, for a quarter of a century.

When seeking reminiscences, Sir John Stuttard wrote to me to say *‘Those of us who have been on the Committee for 20-plus years, will remember wonderful lunches accompanying committee meetings at the Forrest home at Chiddingfold, for Susie’s occasional fruity language when Tim had not done something he should have done, and for rallying round to collect trophies, planning the annual dinners and, generally, being a mainstay of the 20-Ghost Club. I remember she chided me as Chairman when I suggested that a committee meeting should be held elsewhere than a committee member’s house as this was so important in building friendships which is what the 20-GC is all about.’*

I too have very many recollections of Susie although they don’t go so far back at Sir John’s. Bella and I only joined the club in 2017. We decided to go along to the Autumn Lunch that year – I can’t recall where it was held (although the wonderful Brian Palmer was our host), anyway we were newbies and didn’t know ‘which way was up’ as we had only just bought our car. You know what it’s like turning up to a membership thing where everybody knows everybody else... apart from you. At dinner on the first evening Susie put herself between Bella and me (I think Tim was the otherside of Bella). She made us feel so relaxed. She had a charm and a magic and an energy. Within minutes you felt you had known her for years. The following day she called to us across the hotel car-park; *‘Hey, come for a ride with us in Nellie! [The Forrest family’s 1912 SG, 2154] Come on, you two! Jump in.’* We decided this was the club for us – and that was Susie’s doing.

For a real treat click on this QR code link, which will take you to a special December 1993 episode of Top Gear all about the 20-Ghost Club doing the Alpine re-enactment. The film features lots of Forrest and Nellie action (and many other faces you will recognise). But listen out for Susie at 20.38” *‘Hey – not so fast Forrest!’* but you know she was having a ball!



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



Ian Cameron (1950 – 2024)

Obituary by Philip Hall

Ian Cameron, an honorary member of the 20-Ghost Club, was murdered at his home near Munich on 12th July. A most terrible thing to happen. Ian's wife, Verena Kloos, managed to escape to the safety of a neighbour.

Ian was the designer of the first Rolls-Royce to be built under BMW ownership, the Phantom, introduced in 2003. He was determined that this car should be a unique Rolls-Royce and not merely a 'deluxe' version of a BMW. He sent key members of his team to The Hunt House in Paulerspury to soak up the Rolls-Royce ethos. The car benefitted from BMW's advanced technology, but had virtually no physical components in common with any other model. Ian's design was controversial and was severely criticised in some traditional Rolls-Royce circles. However, it has been highly successful, and twenty years on, is still in keeping with the modern trend. John Blatchley (who, before the war, as a very young man was chief designer for Gurney Nutting, and went on to design the Silver Cloud and Silver Shadow) described Ian's design as 'magnificent'. There can be few greater accolades than that.

Ian was born in 1950 to British parents. He studied automobile design at the Royal College of Art in London and started his career with Pininfarina in Turin. He joined BMW as a design studio manager in 1992 and was appointed design director in 1999. He left BMW in 2013.

A lifelong car enthusiast, Ian had a collection of fine cars and took a great interest in motoring history. He loved to visit The Hunt House, and never missed an opportunity to go there.





The Last Word

Being editor of this magazine is a cracking job but I will be honest and say that publication deadlines always seem closer than I would like. As I type this note in late November I'm really hoping that you will be reading it before Christmas! Fingers crossed!

I try to gather words and pictures from members and all manner of other sources and assemble everything into some kind of order. I like the magazine to be broadly coherent with a good balance of news and articles. Then I pass the whole thing over to designer Jaz Wiseman who lays it out and creates a marvellous finished product (huge thanks Jaz!)

Sometimes a member might send me an article and then be disappointed that it isn't in the following issue. Forgive me, because I should let you know if that's the case although I often fail to do this. I do hold pieces over but everything gets printed eventually.

The other thing to mention is that I edit almost everything I receive. Words take up a huge amount of magazine 'real estate' whereas, honestly, most 'readers' just look at the pictures. Is this dumbing down? Well possibly – but I would argue that an excellent picture is inspirational and can draw people in to reading something they might otherwise have passed over (remember I can only publish images which are greater than 1mb in file size and preferably 5mb+).

You all know that I have regular contributors and I thank the Lord for them. People become really attached to particular writing styles and columns and I would be hard pressed to put the magazine together were it not for my regulars who send in their copy and images like clockwork – and remind me of those pesky publishing deadlines!

One of the joys of the editor's job is inviting myself to members' houses to be driven in their cars, hear their stories and take pictures. I'm really game for this. I will travel anywhere in the UK to get a story and pictures. I've yet to travel overseas...but why not? Let's do it!

So, where is my rambling leading? Well, I would love more stories please. They need to be Rolls-Royce based or have somekind of R-R angle. Think about what you might want to see in the magazine and come up with something; or give me a ring or email me and make a time for me to come to see you. Oh, and book a table at the local pub so we can have lunch!

Wishing us all a peaceful Christmas and great motoring in 2025. As ever, thanks for your company and see you next time,

Johnnie





