



News & Record

Issue 80 | Summer 2025





CONTENTS



16

Front Cover: 924 SG 60AU Robinson & Neale Tourer owned by Crispin Menefee followed by 1932 20/25 GMU37 Freestone & Webb Sports Saloon owned by Tim and Ann Dukes. Both on the Irish Georgian Tour – see page 30. Picture by Nick Bradshaw of the Irish Times.

Letters, emails & pictures

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

Just A Century Ago...

Page 12. Herodotus reports on *Autocar's* R-R related matters from April - June 1925.

The Forbes Report

Page 14. Ken Forbes.

Back Cover: The Fab Four! Charles Cole, Bryan Fitton, John Horsfield and John Snook who volunteered to help load participants' cars onto the Transfennica Ro-Ro at Tilbury on 26th June prior to the start of the Baltic Region Tour (full report to come in Issue 81). Doug Magee's 1912 SG 2092 is in the background.

The 2025 Spring Lunch.

Page 16. The traditional season opener.

The Peaks of the Andes!

Page 20. Gerald and Fran Davies describe their astonishing 3,500 mile tour in 1927 Rolls-Royce Phantom I, 95LF.

Céad Míle Fáilte

Page 30. Mary Narvell along with help from friends describes the 2025 20-Ghost Club and Irish Georgian Tour to Ireland.



20



30



36



40

There are no strangers here; Only friends you haven't yet met.

Page 36. Tim Dukes reports on July 2025's Irish 'follow-on' tour in 1932 20/25, GMU37.

Death And Transfiguration: the rise of the Rolls-Royce revenant: Part 2.

Page 40. Cassandra concludes the piece on our cars' transmogrification to hearses – and back again.



46

Stanley Sears – Motoring Legend'
Page 46. By Sir John Stuttard.

The Last Word

Page 54. Johnnie gets the final say!

August 2025
Saturday 16th
 Club Concours at P&A Wood
 louise.wood@pa-wood.co.uk

September 2025
Sunday 7th – Thursday 11th
 Tour of Somerset
 rslwilks@gmail.com

Saturday 27th
 Lunch at Malshanger Estate
 strone@stronemacpherson.com

March 2026
Friday 20th
 AGM and Annual Dinner at
 Armoury House, City Road,
 London EC1Y 2BQ,
 the home of The Honourable
 Artillery Company.
 Murray Grant:
 murray_grant77@hotmail.com

April 2026
Exact Saturday TBC
 Spring Lunch in Strone and
 Alex's barn – Armsworth Park
 House, Hampshire.
 strone@stronemacpherson.com

June/July 2026
 Tour of Normandy Gardens
 and Brittany. Steve Wilks is
 organising, what promises to
 be a super trip. Dates TBC.
 Murray Grant:
 rslwilks@gmail.com

Letters, Emails & Pictures

I get emails from the Phantom II Society - a US based organisation – and this exchange came through recently. I had never thought to use the governor control to help with down-changes on a non-synchro box. Does anybody have any thoughts on this? Thanks to Butch Murphy for allowing me to publish his reply.

Good morning guys, a question for you all with experience of early pre-syncro Phantom 2 chassis like my 1930 car. Try as I have over the 20 years since completing the full restoration in 2005, I have never been able to master slick changing of gears, especially when changing down, often getting serious and embarrassing gear grinding from this non synchro “crash” box. Best to all, HD, Rhode Island

Hello HD, The hardest part of making a downshift is matching increased engine revs to vehicle speed. In the handbook, there is a section under starting and driving that describes methods to achieve this. One way to help is when you are traveling at speed, just before attempting your downshift, is to temporarily raise the hand throttle to maintain the speed of the car which keeps the engine from slowing. Then with a little patience when shifting, as the vehicle speed slows, it will shift smoothly. If the shift doesn't happen right away, then you must release the clutch and then try again. I was driving a PII Cont (synro in 3rd and 4th) in a wedding in downtown Chicago with heavy stop/go traffic. Constantly had to shift 1st, 2nd and occasional third. I remembered reading the handbook and decided to give that method a try - worked great - all downshifts went smoothly.

Take your car to a vacant parking area and practice nothing but your 1-2 upshifts and 2-1 downshifts. The vehicle speed is low as well as engine speed which makes mastering these shifts easier. Once you get a feel, then step up to the 2-3 and 3-2 shifts and so on.

Best, Butch Murphy.



Early PIIs like this 1930 (62GY) owned by Strone Macpherson had no synchromesh at all – changing gear is a dark art!



My great proof reading pal Peter Brown dropped me a line in relation to *Issue 79's* German Excursion article starting on page 32.

Hello Johnnie, on page 34, the author says he has no information on 1927 20HP GHJ30 - let me help a little. The car started with a Weymann fabric saloon body and was sold new to a Harold James. Later it was exhibited in Homer Fitterling's collection in Indiana (he had 24 Duesenbergs). Kruse auctioned off his stable in 1989 and later this car turned up on eBay in Austin, Texas in 2008. I attach a picture of the car in the Indiana collection in 1989, best wishes, Peter Brown.

Teddy, Katie and (young) Freddie Forrest Towers attended the Hurlingham Club Concours d'Elegance in June. Teddy sent in a note:

Johnnie, just to let you know that we won Best In Show in the Concours d'Elegance beating off a Blower Bentley, a Speed Six, big Lagonda and numerous other modern and old classics of all ages - I must say we were jolly proud!

We “raced” the blower home in convoy on the A3 in our black tie, post dinner, in the rain and dark. Got home at midnight - could have been the 1930s again!



Recent new member Toby Foster sent through this great shot of his PII (1932 14MY) which is nearing the end of a very long term restoration. Stunning! I'm super excited to see this car when it's done. Toby has promised to keep us updated.



Mary Narvell dropped me a line in response to the request for new members article in Issue 79:

Dear Johnnie

In response to your excellent article on bolstering membership in the 20-GC, perhaps the recruitment focus could also be on the “vehicle member” in addition to the driver/navigator? The idea of exclusivity as it applies to a vehicle is less open to potential negative interpretation than the suggestion individual members are screened. A USP of the club that could be successfully marketed is the status membership in the 20-GC gives to the R-R itself - a kind of exclusive seal of approval given by the acceptance of the car in the club's fold vs. other car clubs that accept any age vehicle. I wonder if the idea that one's R-R receives a type of approbation provenance going forward does not aid it in resale, especially if supplemented by the excellent car histories Sir John Stuttard researches. These bonuses are also potential enticements to membership recruitment. Indeed we only bought the first car in John's “harem” in order to gain access to the club.

Mary Narvell

Interesting thoughts from Mary (shown here with 1939 Wraith WEC20). The validation and approbation gained by a car's recognition within the 20-GC circle is not something I had considered when writing my piece in the last issue. Perhaps this is akin to the provenance provided to a classic racing car by being on the track in a modern Goodwood Revival meeting?

What do others think please? How can we capitalise on this and drive up the aspiration to join the club?



As mentioned by Ken, in this issue's Forbes Report, we are delighted that our great friend and member Philip Hall has been made an Honorary Vice-President of the club in recognition of his long service as Treasurer as well as his wealth of knowledge of pre-war Rolls-Royce motor cars. Philip is seen here receiving the Ivan Evernden award for technical writing in 2008.

Recovered!

I'm sure that most of us had heard of the theft of the Fitton Family Silver Ghost whilst en route to the Baltic Tour. Emails were circulated by Ken and also the RREC and there was a piece in the Telegraph. The wonderful news is that 1920 Silver Ghost 39EE has been found, with little damage. Thank goodness - what a huge relief! This great shot was taken by RRMC whilst on the 2023 Alpine Tour: Bryan, son Richard, and grandson Ollie and, of course, 39EE.



Dear Johnnie, I was pleased to notice that in Issue 79, the car shown crossing the river on page 33 is Anthony and Teddy Beach Thomas's 1929 Phantom II 81XJ.

I have sent it to them and we expect to see them in a fortnight.

They have both stopped driving now but seemed in good spirit when I last spoke to them.

All the best, Anthony Armitage



New Members

Graham has brought in three new members this time round!



Anthony and Nikki Northon,
Boxton, Derbyshire.
1925 20hp Barrel sided tourer
GCK74.



Ben and Deborah Fidler,
Islington, London.
Ben is the son of Brian and Wendy
Fidler and taken over the family's
1933 20/25 GT218, Hooper
3-position drophead.

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

A huge welcome to you all!



John and Sarah Horsfield,
Halifax, West Yorkshire.
1928 20HP 4-seater tourer GXL73.



THE 20-GHOST CLUB LIMITED REGISTERED NUMBER 5224633

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Doug Magee; Nick Naismith; Steve Wilks; Louise Wood

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

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The 20-Ghost Club, 2025 AGM Weekend

In mid-March Mary Narvell and John Snook organised a great weekend for us in Cambridge. On Saturday morning Andrew Whittaker threw open the Lister Cars factory for a tour and to see the amazing work being undertaken. Then we met at Churchill College where we were treated to excellent talks by Allen Packwood, director of the Churchill Archives, and Adrian Dickens on the meeting of Rolls and Royce. Afterwards, Ken and John Snook took us through the AGM followed by a chance to look round some of the artifacts held at the archives.

That evening, dinner at Trinity College was preceded by a recital from The Frazer Quartet in the Wren Library with the annual awards ceremony taking place during coffee afterwards.

On Sunday, Wojtek Kordell hosted a trip to Imperial War Museum Duxford to see the Catalina Flying Boat *Miss Pick Up* where chief pilot Phill Pettit gave the tour.

It was non-stop, hugely informative, and lots of fun.

Pictures by Colin Hughes.



The Frazer Quartet in the Trinity's Wren Library.



Ken and John get to work hosting the AGM.



Hamish with the Wootton Trophy.



The Churchill Archives.



Steve Wilks won the Stanley Sears Trophy.



Andrew Whittaker in his own Lister Knobbly.



Elliot Anderson won the Fergusson-Wood.



Sandy Snook presents the Phoenix Trophy to Tim Dukes.



Chief Pilot Phill Pettitt at the controls of the Catalina.



A huge thanks to Mary Narvell.

Just a century ago...

Herodotus casts an eye over R-R related matters within *The Autocar* during April-June 1925.



Impressions of The "New Phantom" Rolls-Royce
Rolls-Royce has a reputation which is a source of legitimate pride to its makers and the cause of no little envy on the part of their rivals. Yet it would be difficult to select any particular point as the origin of the great name justly borne by the car. The latest model is a worthy successor to the line of vehicles to have borne the name of Rolls-Royce. Its chief attributes are an extraordinary smoothness coupled with considerably more power than hitherto.



The matter of silence is interesting because the new model has overhead push-rod operated overhead valves which makes no greater noise than the former side valve version.

It is not only the engine which is silent; the intermediate gears are phenomenally quiet even at speeds as high as 40 or 50 mph and at full throttle. Technically speaking, the Rolls-Royce is not meant to be, and is not, a very fast car considering the engine size, yet it will run quite comfortably at 70 mph, without giving the slightest suggestion that any part of the chassis is working hard. Maximum speed is claimed to be in the region of 80 mph. Top gear is the most important of the four, since, without touching the clutch or the ignition lever the car can be handled the whole time, whether in traffic or not, on this gear alone.

Owing to the fact that the accumulator ignition can be switched on without the magneto, slow running on top gear is exceptional. The engine still has the pleasant habit of starting on the switch, albeit the starting motor when used is practically silent. An excellent feature. The new clutch is simpler than the old one, and does not need the famous "stick" at night.

As regards detail, it is practically hopeless to go into any one point for there is not a single minor component of the chassis which has not its interest and is not carried out in a manner suggesting that the designers were able to deal with every problem unhampered by cost.



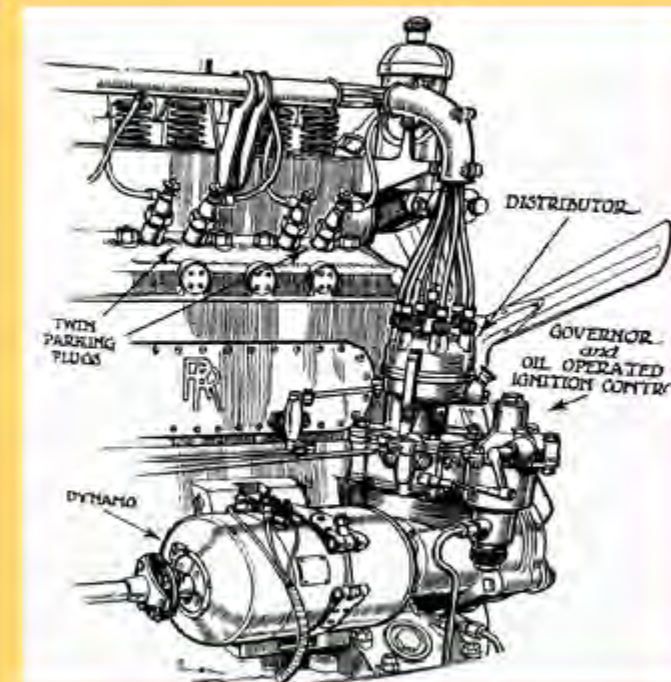
Premier's Choice

The Right Hon Stanley M Bruce P C Prime Minister of Australia seen with his 20HP car. This Commonwealth Premier is a keen sportsman and eleven years ago rowed in the winning Cambridge Eight in the University Boat Race.



Protecting the Rear Passengers

A specially mounted rear screen fixed on a deep scuttle forms an almost perfect method of protecting the rear passengers in an open touring car. How neatly this may be carried is indicated by a view of it on a 40/50HP Rolls-Royce with coachwork by Barker.



The New Rolls-Royce

Few are the firms engaged in motor car manufacture who enjoy quite such a reputation as Rolls-Royce Ltd. Almost the conjoined names have become the household word for luxury, and every novelist imparts a distinguished air to any character by crediting him or her with the possession of one of this firm's cars. For more than a year rumour has followed rumour concerning the probable appearance of an overhead-valve engine 40/50 HP chassis

The new model has a push-rod operated overhead-valve engine, its cylinders in two blocks of three, with its mechanism neat and most modern. Hand controlled radiator shutters operated from the instrument board have been adopted. In the new car there are two mechanical governors; one acts on the throttle exactly as before, but the other controls the ignition advance in relation to engine speed. There have been one or two minor alterations to the carburettor. The filter is more accessible and the jet chamber is heated by exhaust gas. The air silencer and automatic air valve remain as before and the car has a disk clutch.

It is interesting to record that the new engine had been adopted after Rolls-Royce Ltd carried out extensive and searching tests with a twelve-cylinder V-type engine and a straight-eight.

The Forbes Report

Steve Wilks has taken over as Treasurer, after the long and tortuous process of updating bank signatories thus allowing Philip to step down. Please refer to Steve for all payment matters from now on (rslwilks@gmail.com). Steve has been busy refining and automating our accounting and payment tracking process through the Xero accounting software, which will enhance the process of event accounting. In his spare time, he is also organising both the Somerset Tour for September and the Normandy/Brittany Tour for next summer! Thank you, Steve, for all of your efforts on behalf of the club.

We are pleased that Murray Grant, Tim Maltin and most recently Hamish McNaught have all joined our board and look forward to their input in the development and running of the club.

Philip Hall has been made an Honorary Vice-President of the club in recognition both of his long service as Treasurer, alongside his wealth of knowledge of pre-war Rolls-Royce motor cars.

As I write, the Baltic Tour, another 20-Ghost Club adventure, is imminent. John Stuttard has put together a varied programme of events and teamed up with Rolls-Royce Motor Cars to celebrate the century of the Phantom, with receptions and events in Finland, Sweden, Latvia and Estonia. As usual, John has worked tirelessly to ensure everything is perfectly organised.

In May we celebrated our 45th anniversary with the Irish Georgian Society. Our tour, based in Wexford, continued the successful formula of us taking the Irish Georgians as passengers in our cars in return for access to remarkable houses, not normally open to the public. We enjoyed a delightful lunch at the home of the IGS President, Sir David Davies, in glorious sunshine. The number of participants was boosted by having a follow-on tour justifying the effort of getting the cars to Ireland. The fine weather continued to bless us throughout, enabling us to see the south and west of Ireland at its best – see full reports elsewhere in this issue.

The club concours at P&A Wood on Saturday, 16 August promises to be a special day. Every department within the firm will be open with lots of cars, both old and new, to enjoy. Many of our events are often fully booked, so this is an ideal opportunity to bring family and friends to experience what the club has to offer and share the fun. With catering at just £25/head, there is minimal cost involved, so please think about who you would like to bring and get your booking form back to me as soon as possible.

The new club website is now live and John Narvell is continually developing and updating the content. Do log on and have a look if you have not already done so.

Happy summer touring everyone!

Best wishes




Ken and Jane in 1924 Silver Ghost 68RM looking properly ready for whatever weather the Baltic can throw at them!

The 20-Ghost Club 2025 Spring Lunch

Strone and Alex Macpherson hosted their 27th Spring Lunch for us in April. The sun shone and members turned out in droves for the annual season opener! Lots of happy car comparison – lots of happy chat – and the usual, but still wonderful, shepherd's pie followed by treacle tart all washed down with plenty of fizz. Delicious!

Don't forget the 'season closer' event this year – Saturday 27th September – also arranged by Strone at the Malshanger Estate in Hampshire (near Basingstoke just off the M3). There is a flyer/booking form enclosed with this issue. Really will be an excellent event so do sign up asap to bag your place.

Photos by Rosemary Jeffries.



Left to right: 1937 25/30 GH049 James Young Bromley Saloon owned by Tim & Charlotte Maltin, 1928 Springfield Phantom I S197PFP Brewster St Andrew Town Car owned by Charles & Deborah Cole and 1923 Silver Ghost 36EM Hooper Cabriolet owned by David O'Connor.

Right: 1930 Phantom II 62GY Hooper Dual Cowl Tourer owned by Strone & Alex Macpherson. Middle: 1921 Silver Ghost 60NE Lopes Tourer owned by Gervase & Margaret Forster.



1912 Silver Ghost 2154 Barker Torpedo Phaeton owned by Katie Forrest. 1931 Phantom II 20JS Mulliner Tourer owned by Charles Hoare.

1933 20/25 GHA28 James Young 3-position DHC owned by Steve & Ann Wilks. 1920 Silver Ghost 97AE Cunard Tourer owned by Graham & Sarah Tyson.





Left: 1913 Silver Ghost 2358 Tourer owned by Pete & Susan Walton
Right: 1924 Silver Ghost 22LM Gill Tourer owned by Nick Whitaker.

Left: 1914 Silver Ghost 50YB Holmes Tourer owned by John Snook.
Middle: 1930 20/25 GTR38 Mann Egerton Six light Sunshine Saloon owned by Hamish McNaught.
Right: 1914 Colonial London to Edinburgh Silver Ghost 27BD HJ Mulliner Torpedo Tourer owned by Strone Macpherson.



1931 Phantom II Continental 67GX Carlton Sedan Coupe owned by John & Mary Narvell.

Left to right: Ken Forbes, Strone Macpherson, Charles Hoare (and guest) in his PII.



The Peaks of the Andes!

Gerald and Fran Davies describe their astonishing
3,500 mile tour in 1927 Rolls-Royce Phantom I, 95LF





An email from Via-Flaminia in early 2023 advertising their *Peak of the Andes* tour piqued my interest and I registered as the second participant (hence car #2 in the photos).

Being a citizen of Botswana, I had to jump through a multitude of administrative hoops requiring four visas, Chile, Argentina, Bolivia and Peru. Despite very early applications the wheels of the various government bureaucracies ground slowly and it became a sweat with Argentina only granting their visa in early September 2024 which included having to send a messenger to Johannesburg to collect my passport.

By that time our Phantom (which we bought from Ken Forbes several years back now) had already left the UK (where it is based) on board the CMA Carl Antoine bound for Valparaíso, Chile.

We arrived in Santiago on 30th September to acclimatise to the time difference and do some sightseeing before travelling to the port of Valparaíso some days later where, on the morning of 5 October, all drivers were collected by bus and taken to the warehouse to “import” our cars and “dress” them with tour regalia – it was great to be re-united with 95LF!

At the welcome dinner, held at Palacio Astoreca Valparaíso that evening, the participants were introduced and the road book and tour documents handed out.

Our group was properly international and hailed from Australia, Belgium, Botswana (us), Czech Republic, England, France, Germany, Netherlands, Scotland, plus support from a Peruvian fixer and an Argentinian doctor. Our tour mechanic, with a comprehensively equipped BMW X5 was to follow us. We also had satellite phones to use in an emergency.

The following morning the drive out was very misty and, as all vehicles are shipped with minimal fuel, we headed with caution to the nearest petrol station. After brimming the tank, our first destination was to Hotel Jardín del Lago, Las Cabras via Casablanca. However, that evening, we learned that our planned route into Argentina from Talca, Paso Pehuenche, had been closed due to heavy snowstorms. Our tour organisers jumped on the problem and set about plotting a



new way. However the solution was very much ‘off the beaten track’ with many dirt roads and stream drifts: stunning scenery and challenging driving. We thoroughly enjoyed driving via Pichilemu against the Pacific coast and then onto Los Andes.

Part of the challenge however was that 95LF had begun to consume lots of fuel and was coughing. Unusual and worrying – but on arrival at Los Andes, I found the problem was fairly straightforward in that one spark plug was broken. I fitted new plugs, set the timing and adjusted the fuel mixture and all was right once more.

Others were not so fortunate and after only two days two cars were already on their way home: a Bentley Mk VI Special with a damaged gearbox, and a Bentley Speed Six with an incurable slipping clutch. Very sad, but both participants hired cars and completed the full tour.

We were all on the road at 7am the following day, excited to challenge our first big climb

from Los Andes over a wonderful pass from Chile into Argentina: Paso Cristo Redentor, (altitude 3199m) then onto Barreal. In Argentina, just after passing through the border town of Uspallata, I found our coil was smoking and red hot. Happily this was replaced in minutes and we were back on our way enjoying the stunning views of the Sierra de Famatina Mountains but on gravel roads with huge water puddles/ drifts leaving our car very dirty!

At Chilecito was the famous Chilecito Mine established in the early 20th century, featuring a 35km cableway system built between 1903 and 1905. The system, one of the longest and most complex of its time, transported gold ore from the high-altitude mine (4,600m) to processing facilities in the town.

We toured through Argentina: San José, Salta (rather crowded and impersonal) and on to Purmamarca renowned for its hill of seven colours with a final check of the cars before the next big climb. It was a long 400km drive as we crossed back to San Pedro de



Atacama in Chile climbing to 4834m and not without some fuel vaporization issues. In the end we removed our back-up fuel pumps and the one-way fuel valve and brought the system back exactly as “Henry” designed it. Although we did move the fuel pipe away from the engine block to reduce the fuel heating before it got to the carburettor and occasionally afterwards had to use cold water to cool down the Autovac and fuel lines.

San Pedro de Altacama is said to be the driest desert in the world and is surrounded by dormant volcanoes. It was utterly surreal and we were lucky enough to be able to take a balloon flight in the very early morning light. And then to San Cristobal, Bolivia via Calama for fuel and more stunning scenery, active volcanoes, salt pans and coloured saline lakes.

We found the Bolivian border closed for lunch! But we all managed to do our on-line entry formalities to while away the time. Eventually when the shutters re-opened we got through in just over an hour, but then the officials wanted to ‘check our cars’ and have ‘selfies’ with them. A problem to have a photogenic motor-car! We were the second last to leave the border in the end.

A restful night and then a short drive took us to Uyuni to see the train cemetery and onto Palacio de Sal which is on the Salar de Uyuni salt pan – the largest in the world. Petrol in Bolivia is heavily subsidized as a political strategy by the government to win over the voters.

However, it turns out that fuel is in short supply, perhaps because it’s so cheap. We arrived early to fill the tank at the only station at the pans only to find queues of vehicles lined up and waiting. After much begging on my part we were permitted a meagre 5 litres, although we took the opportunity to do a full chassis lubrication service.

A wonderful sunset was witnessed on the pan after which a splendid dinner under the stars was enjoyed but the temperature dropped alarmingly and we were eager to get back to the hotel for fireside drinks and bed.

We were up bright and early for a 300km drive to Oruro but not before our Bolivian fixer Richard brought 150 litres of petrol to be shared among those who needed it and who were willing to pay US\$. I bought 40 litres knowing that 95LF uses a litre for every 3km. At Santiago de Huari we managed to fill the car again but it was an ordeal with the gas station owner needing passports to document the sale of fuel to foreigners.

Arrival in Oruro was chaotic and slow moving to the hotel Eden (which was far from what the name might suggest). And the next morning was frustrating as we had to wait for a police escort out of town which took time to organize. In hindsight, however this was a blessing in disguise because it would have been a nightmare to navigate the inner-city traffic. On the way we witnessed the police presence on the road conducting mop up operations after a night of political rioting.

150km later at Tolar we learned that petrol would only be sold to Bolivians. We negotiated with some youngsters for “black market” fuel and found they were more than willing to help, especially since they were being paid

way over the market price in US dollars. They scurried back and forth with our 20 litre Jerry cans securing us 200 plus litres to share based on need.

From Tolar we passed through El Alto at 4150m and above the Bolivian capital of La Paz. The dual carriageway entering El Alto had every petrol station with queues kilometers long in both directions waiting for any available fuel. There was humanity everywhere to be seen. All trying to eke out a living. The high altitude and slow pace meant we had several vapour locks so getting through the town was a challenge but we succeeded and went onto Lake Titicaca.

We arrived in the late afternoon to allow time to relax and attend to the car. We were not the only participants to experience fuel vapor lock at El Alto with some arriving well after 9pm, low on fuel, having driven on dark and unfamiliar roads at very low speeds.

We remained alert to the political and petrol situation in Bolivia and were keen to get to Peru soonest. Our fixers, Richard and Peto, did wonders, obtaining fuel, I wonder if, without them, because some of us would still be there!

We crossed Lake Titicaca at San Pablo de Tiquina on some dodgy barges (quite an experience) and wondered at the terraced hillsides attributed to the Tiahuanaco and Inca civilisations.

On arrival in Peru our first stop was at the nearest petrol station to fill up cars – what a relief!

The Hotel Lago Titicaca is a grand building perched on a peninsula overlooking the lake. Pity it was for one night only.





The scenery en route to Arequipa was spectacular, I always say this, but it was: lakes, plains, barren spaces. But once again, the high altitude and cold winds created vapour locks. We soldiered on. I think the vapour lock, on this barren icy windblown plain, was down to low fuel in the tank being heated by the exhaust. Once we cooled, we were okay, and brimming the tank cured the problem completely. We found you needed cold fuel in the tank, cold fuel in the Autovac and then the carburettor.

Despite a three-hour delay caused by road construction we finally arrived at the Peruvian town of Arequipa approaching sunset with a slow, cautious, drive to our hotel in the dark with ancient lights shining up the road ahead. We took our cars off to park at a car museum a short distance away because the next few days would involve a flight to Cusco and then on to see Machu Picchu the “lost city of the Incas”.

You gotta experience this yourself to appreciate the wonder of this place. ‘Wow!’ is how I describe it.

Back in Arequipa, we collected our cars from the museum and endured a depressing drive past copper mines as we climbed up cement-like hills. But as we descended to Mollendo, we glimpsed the Pacific and the mountainsides were alive with a riot of yellow and blue flowers fed by the mists carried from the ocean.

After that all our daily drives in Peru varied between 250 and 350km along the magnificent Pacific coastal road.

At Chala and Porto Inca was an abandoned Inca port with abundant ruins around the bay. Did the Incas enjoy holidays here or was it a fishing port? No-one knows.

And then to Q’ero for our second last night of the tour at Hotel Vinas, a fine modern vineyard estate with all manner of facilities, spas, pools and car museum. We much enjoyed our five-star Michelin meal that evening.



Next morning was our final drive to Lima, 300km up the coast, but as fate would have it 95LF would not start. She cranked but would not fire and we were the last at the hotel.

I unpacked my tools and removed the distributor cap to find that the points had detached. Fortunately, the spare set was to hand, quickly changed, and we were on our way.

On the final day the drive along the coast took us past holiday resorts just like any around the world and then into thick lunchtime traffic to the Country Club Hotel in the ambassadorial area of Lima. That evening a fleet of low-loaders took our dirty but utterly fabulous motors off for their return sea voyage back to the UK and Europe on the Istanbul Express. We waved goodbye to 95LF: a truly wonderful machine. Until next time.

For the Peaks of the Andes tour we drove 5725.8km (3,558 miles) - a wonderful experience never to be forgotten. Would we do it again? Without hesitation: yes!

Editor’s note: Gerald and Fran suggest members should check out Via Flaminia the company who arranged the Peaks of the Andes Tour which is run by Bart Kleyn (who has been very helpful in the preparation of this article in sending through the wonderful photos).

Do go online to: www.via-flaminia.com

Bart emailed to say: The idea of Via Flaminia Rallies started over ten years ago and has stayed true to its motto: “A rally with a smile.”

With a maximum of 30 teams on any tour, the atmosphere remains relaxed and friendly. For those who enjoy a bit of competition, there’s a small contest to spice up the conversations at the bar. To make the experience more authentic, we always aim to find special accommodation in castles and authentic villages.

For 2026, we have availability on the pre-war Via Hellenica, running from Igoumenitsa to Olympia, followed by the Via Flaminia from Bari to Florence — both taking place in May.



Céad Míle Fáilte

Mary Narvell along with help from friends describes the 2025 20-Ghost Club and Irish Georgian Tour to Ireland.



The gathering at Russborough House in Wicklow.



The Narvell's 1938 Wraith WXA90, a svelte, Chapron-inspired, roadster was making its 20-GC debut in Ireland.

For 45 years, the 20-Ghost Club has partnered with the Irish Georgian Society on a country house ramble. The brilliant idea to have those who appreciate classical architecture as passengers in our vintage Rolls-Royce motor cars was the brainchild of the late Jimmy Valentine. So, it was poignant to have his widow, Janet, along on this anniversary trip echoing her presence on decades of past adventures. This year we visited the Counties of Carlow, Wexford, and Wicklow, Ireland where the typical hospitality of Irish hosts was abundant. It was easy to feel the truth in the Gaelic phrase C  ad m  le f  ilte - A hundred thousand welcomes.

Monday saw the usual scrum as IGS passengers jockeyed to find a spot in their preferred Rolls-Royce. While fourteen cars had been organised this year, one sadly experienced a 'failure to proceed' before the ferry. Thirteen proved lucky, however, with all cars completing the trip and none (pardon the Irish pun) failing to leave onlookers 'green with envy'.

Our first stop was The Deeps, a lovely Regency villa style house with a colonnaded frontage facing the River Slaney. The idyllic walled garden invited us to linger under its wisteria clad pergola, but the typical Irish 'Gorge-ian' feast beckoned us past the original Georgian lock cased door. Against a backdrop of stencilled wallpaper in a groin vaulted hall, we tucked into the yummy morning tea of pastries and early season strawberries.

Proceeding through a patchwork quilt of fields in the shadow of the distant Wicklow hills, we passed road signs naming towns beginning with Bally or Kill. As is habit on these jaunts, some were directionally challenged despite the SatNav and written directions.

Delwyn Klevenow Greene writes *"I travelled alone in our modern car to Woodbrook House as we were one seat short in the 'old' cars for the Georgians. Some 45 minutes after everyone else had arrived, Jeremy and his three passengers had not. I called him to find he was parked somewhere on a crossroads with all claiming to 'know the way' while pointing in different directions. Luckily, as discussions were growing heated on the fear lunch would be missed (food always the priority), our organiser took an educated guess at their location and drove off to find them so that neither the house tour nor lunch were missed. Jeremy earned the 'Most Patient Driver Award' on the day."*

I was stunned when I immediately recognised Woodbrook's owner as the man from whom I had purchased a ruined cottage over 25 years ago. He and his son showed us Woodbrook's stunning 'flying staircase' which appeared to float between floors, but I could see the property remained a work in progress!"

Doug Magee at the helm of 1912 SG 2092. (Photo by Nick Bradshaw of the Irish Times)



On leaving Woodbrook, drivers were interviewed by an *Irish Times* reporter on their passion for vintage car motoring despite its challenges. 'Chauffeurs' and passengers were all invited to assemble for a photo op. After an awkward moment of hesitation by the photographer, we were informed the subject of the photo was not ourselves but rather the cars we had thoroughly obscured in our eagerness to be captured by his lens! A quick reshuffle and the real stars of the show were snapped.

Tuesday offered a 75-mile drive to three properties including a Pugin Victorian chapel rarely open to visitors. Hoping to avoid the 'lemming principle' that had led several drivers to blindly follow the car in front to the wrong destination, John Narvell offered to lead our cars in convoy. Arriving together under a crenelated arch, drivers expertly parked in their usual formation with grilles front gleaming in the unexpected sunshine. At both Borris House and Monksgrange, we learned the histories of two uniquely Irish houses held remarkably intact in the same families for generations despite heirs lost to wars, the burden of inheritance tax, and the threats from Irish rebellion. As an Irish Georgian set forth with a recitation linking Demeter to Dionysus and

Greek architectural references mystifyingly always representing agricultural plenty, I felt faint. Might some of that bounteous food and wine revive me soon? Amidst a bucolic setting where racehorses were invited to train, our cars offered a different definition of horsepower. They impressed homeowners who had assembled guests to review the stunning display of vintage Rolls-Royces arranged on their forecourts.

Doug Magee, whose Shamrock green Ghost nestled into the Irish landscape like an emerald mascot, writes of Wednesday's itinerary, "We began with a visit to Coollattin House, reputed to be the largest house in Ireland. Once in the ownership of the Fitzwilliam family, this accolade is appropriate as the family's English house, Wentworth Woodhouse, is famous for having the longest frontage in the UK. Completely neglected over the past 50 years, Coollattin is now adjacent to a golf club and in need of everything after its purchase in 2021 by a syndicate of seven. I suggest doing a check back in a few years to see if their enthusiasm is matched by adequate funds to realise their wonderful visions for the property."

Our next stop was Huntingdon Castle, a wonderful higgledy-piggledy family home. Standing in the dining

Ken and Jane in 68RM in a light Irish mist caught by Nick Bradshaw of the Irish Times who put out an excellent report of the tour.



room hung in Bedouin tents, the owner noted a 1625 hearth where generations of children had played hide and seek. Entering the Castle, the visitor is welcomed by the hide of a crocodile shot through the eye decades ago by an intrepid female owner. Alongside other skins, it was a clue that Huntingdon is NOT a politically correct zone! Interesting, too, the Walt Disney connection to the property when former landowners De Renzi anglicised their name to Disney. This is now memorialised in a colourful mural in the conservatory painted by the family's children in the 1930's to include Mickey Mouse. It sits alongside a cutting from a vine taken in the 16th century from Hampton Court reminding us how richly multi-generational these homes are. The live music and dance floor we encountered as we left proved irresistible for some 20-GC and IGS members. Unfortunately, all photographic evidence of these revelries was confiscated by the dancers!"

Perhaps the most impressive backdrop for our cars was the Neoclassical masterpiece Russborough House, our first stop Thursday for another sunny day of touring. The curved Palladian wings emanating out from the central portico block seemed to embrace our Rolls-Royce motor cars facing the distant Wicklow Hills. Travelling



through the rugged rock-strewn landscape of the Wicklow Gap, we reached a trip highlight – Killougher House, the home of the charming Irish Georgian Chairman, Sir David Davies who welcomed our group for lunch. Again, guests had been invited by our host to savour the rare treat of so many pre-war cars. So special were our chariots deemed that even the owner's sister had been instructed not to park her modern Saab anywhere in view. It was perhaps then unsurprising when her sister-in-law, on spying the intruder as an unwelcome blot on her line of sight to perfectly aligned Rolls-Royces, was furious to see this mandate ignored. Could her shaken state be why she displayed some lack of politesse opining a car was a curious colour reminiscent of something I will exercise politesse in not repeating here?!

The last morning of our tour found us quickly visiting the Victorian Gothic Revival Johnstown Castle before saying adieu to our passengers. Nick Whitaker writes "All crenelated towers without and panelling within, the house had been designed by Daniel Robertson around 1840. In the late 19th century, its disputed inheritance between two sisters aged 14 and 25 had been settled in true Irish style. No long, drawn-out legal battle for them. Dressed in full hunting attire and riding period side saddle, they raced each other over a five-mile course through their landscape park and fields

beyond winner taking all. The triumphant younger sister lived at Johnstown happily for the rest of her life."

As Delwyn adds, "A 20-Ghost Club/IGS Tour is always charged with an energy akin to stepping onto a new pontoon for the first time. It may float or sink. There is a sense that 'anything could happen' and it often does."

Our trip delivered architectural and certainly motoring revelations. For example, the welcome discovery of what we thought was a Ghost tool kit, left behind to accommodate passengers, was instead filled with, as Clayton Banks noted, "fluids needed for a journey – red wine, white wine, and Grappa". The fact that our SatNav spoke back to us might be an indication of heightened voices occasionally overheard in our car? Nor was the sporadic short-circuit in our horn a welcome addition and undoubtedly why a perturbed non-R-R driver accused us of being "horny." And I am still reeling from the shocking discovery that many of the Irish Georgians who claim to need walking sticks somehow miraculously tossed them dancing with abandon at our gala reception. Had they perhaps drunk from St. Patrick's Well for a cure to their infirmities? These count among the many quirky mysteries we love about the 20-Ghost Club/IGS collaboration as we look forward to where we will ramble when we meet again.

***There are no strangers here;
Only friends you haven't yet met.***
Attrib W.B.Yeats



GMU37 at Tracashel in County Cork.

***Tim Dukes reports on July 2025's Irish
'follow-on' tour in 1932 20/25, GMU37***

The Yeats quote is truly an appropriate place to begin a narrative of our visit to that great poet's homeland. As new 20-Ghost members, Ann and I had taken part in 2024's joint Irish Georgian trip to Yorkshire and this year, in Wexford, Carlow & Wicklow, we repeated the experience of '*visiting old houses with old people in old cars*', expertly documented elsewhere by Mary Narvell et al. However, the seven-day journey around South-West Ireland that followed was to be our first experience of a dedicated 20-Ghost Club tour. It was from that perspective, during the convivial post-prandial period on the first evening, that Ken asked if I could write a few words for the magazine.

To kick off, it is said that 'the sun shines on the righteous'. With a passing nod to being referred to as the 'Holy Ghost Club' by one of the Irish Georgians, we were blessed with glorious weather for virtually the whole time. This not only made the driving more pleasurable but also enabled the spectacular scenery to be enjoyed in full. We were told, on many an occasion, that the weather was totally uncharacteristic and this made the trip an even more precious and rare experience.

The Irish Georgian concluded on the Friday lunchtime following a final visit to Johnstown Castle. Janet Valentine returned home in her 1954 Silver Dawn, whilst Trevor & Hilary Kells joined in their 1933 20/25, GAW35; thus doubling the small horsepower contingent of the tour. Interestingly, both their car and ours are Freestone & Webb 4-door 4-light saloons differing only by one year in age. Now, relieved of chauffeuring duties, with goodbyes said, and with good weather and the prospect of quiet, well-maintained, roads (read here: no pot-holes) stretching ahead, there was an upbeat mood as we departed on the first stage of the follow-on tour from Wexford to Dungarvan.

With clear evidence of copper mining history, in a landscape reminiscent of Penwith in SW Cornwall, the 65-mile run to Dungarvan hugged the coastline. On arrival at the Park Hotel in Dungarvan, we were joined by John & Sandy Snook in 1914 Silver Ghost, 50YB, and John & Kathy Deane in 1938 Phantom III, 3DL28, completing the tour contingent of 15 cars.

Two themes which ran through the week became apparent over dinner that evening. Firstly, Irish plate portions are, to say the least, generous and I doubt if any of us returned home weighing less than when we arrived. Secondly, the Irish are very warm with their welcome and love to talk. Our waitress told us enthusiastically that she actually had two jobs – the second being a ‘car-wrapping’ business (*‘Google’ it – I did*). There were however no takers from our table!

The next morning we drove the back roads into the Comeragh Mountains, past Mahon Falls to the historic town of Lismore. Robert Boyle, father of modern chemistry, was born in 1626 at Lismore Castle, which was once also owned by a distant relative of Alex Macpherson. This link secured the privilege of parking the Macpherson’s 1930 PII, 62GY by the Riding House in the Garden but, sadly, did not extend to Dennis (the Butler) unlocking the gate.

Tim Dukes with Trevor and Hilary Kells.



The third day - the longest single day of driving - was 133 miles southwest along the Wild Atlantic Way, before heading north to Sheen Falls Lodge, near Kenmare. Coffee at Cobh (the last port of call for the Titanic in 1912) seemed a good plan before boarding the small ferry to Monkstown and then on to Kinsale. Alas a text message *‘Ferry Cobh broken so land route to Kinsale’* received whilst enjoying our caffeine fix added a further 25 miles. The final ten miles from Glengarriff required concentration as we climbed the Caha Mountains.

After such long distance and arduous (but fun) motoring, the following day was for relaxing. John & Crispin Menefee (1924 SG, 60AU) signed up for falconry whilst George and Monique Howitt (1939 Wraith, WHC31) walked into Kenmare for luncheon. Others undertook routine maintenance on their cars.

On the excellent advice of Delwyn Greene (1923 SG, 41EM) we retraced our steps to Glengarriff to explore the Beara Peninsula. We were rewarded by spectacular scenery and quiet roads. In Lauragh, we enjoyed the tranquillity of the 19th century Derreen Gardens framed by views of the sea and mountains. It has a sub-tropical feel and is famed for its collection of tree ferns. There is a perspective to a 20-Ghost



Refreshments at Cappoquin.

tour beyond just the vehicles and the roads, beyond simply reaching the next hotel in time for drinks and dinner. Our day on the Ring of Beara reinforced that and we returned to Sheen Falls relaxed and in very good spirit.

The next morning dawned dull with the threat of rain, conditions that we had become unaccustomed to since our arrival on the Emerald Isle. Leaving Kenmare, we headed north over Moll’s Gap and onward to Ballyvaughan in County Clare. This was the furthest north that we would travel and we experienced generally busier roads. The 20-minute crossing of the Shannon estuary gave some respite and allowed Ken and Jane Forbes (1924 SG, 68RM) time to dry off after a short but torrential rain shower caught them with their hood down. Deterred by parked coaches we did not stop at the Cliffs of Moher and returned to quiet minor coast roads. The sun broke through as we reached Gregan’s Castle Hotel, our destination for that night. Idyllically set in the Burren landscape, this country house hotel with its elegant bedrooms and gourmet food was an oasis of comfort. Holding one of only 14 Michelin keys in Ireland, it promised to be a highlight of the tour and did not disappoint.

Full bore sun returned by the following morning as we began the two day return to Rosslare. The Swiss Cottage in Cahir was a fanciful realisation of an idealised country cottage intended for picnics and fishing trips. Designed in the early 1800’s by



Cars at Sheen Falls.

John Nash, it had fallen into disrepair before being restored, with the help of the Irish Georgian Society – a pleasing link to the previous week.

We overnighted in Kilkenny prior to the final 50 miles to Kelly’s Resort Hotel in Rosslare. Originally begun in 1895 as a beach tearoom Kelly’s is still family owned and houses a fine art collection. Visited by the Irish Georgians the week before, for a meal rather than the architecture, it was a pleasure to return for our last evening.

All too soon it was time for the final group photograph. The conversation and wine flowed freely as Mr Kelly himself served dinner. Ken was thanked and Jane presented with a shawl as a thank you for her support (and being all-round great company).

To conclude, the brief for this article was a reflection of the Irish tour from a ‘newbie perspective’. There are many components that contribute to the success of a tour. Good weather, beautiful scenery, comfortable hotels and no serious failures to proceed. This tour had all of those but the keystone to true success, the glue that binds all those other components together, is the fellow traveller. In Wexford, we joined a group, many of whom were already bonded by miles travelled and time passed together. To go back to the Yeats quote which heads this piece: we departed Rosslare having said *au revoir* to new friends.

Death and transfiguration: the rise of the Rolls-Royce revenant: Part 2.

Cassandra concludes the piece on our cars' transmogrification to hearses – and back again.



Unloved but unconcerned: 116RC languishes at the Jack o' Lantern Garage in 1959. Modified to a hearse by Woodall Nicholson, who built its original limousine body. Reassuring for the bereaved that the undertaker was in the AA so if an FTP occurred en route to the crematorium then help was swiftly at hand.

A Revenant is something or someone returned from the dead, literally a 'coming back', a theme spectacularly depicted in Alejandro Iñárritu's eponymous 2015 film of chilling violence starring Leonardo DiCaprio. Rolls-Royce designated Ghost, Phantom, Spectre, Wraith, Cloud, Shadow, and Spirit from its cast of model names from the paranormal so the reborn cars discussed in this article may appositely be called 'Revenants'.

What better source material for the hearse builder than a recycled Rolls-Royce? Impeccable credentials, tough underpinnings ideal for the carriage trade, reliable running gear, dirt cheap to buy, and kudos not accorded to any other make. Working class aspirations recognised the majesty of the marque and knew that their final journey could be conducted post mortem on board a sombre, bible-black charabanc, courtesy of the local undertaker. Step forward Dottridge, Woodall Nicholson, and Alpe & Saunders, who turned tired cars of a previous era into the refined and imperious funeral coaches of the 1930s and beyond. Much has been written of these three specialist coachbuilders, but a brief summary below puts that sector of the industry into the context of the time.



To this day A W Lymn maintains a large fleet of Rolls-Royce hearses and following cars; the pomp and ceremony of Nottingham's magnificent war memorial provides a suitable backdrop.

Dottridge Bros represented The Compleat Angler of the funeral trade, supplying undertakers' requisites from horses to hearses to embalming fluids. Founded in 1835 by Samuel Dottridge in Hoxton, East London, the business was a building contractor with a funeral sideline that grew into a fully-fledged undertaking concern. Joined twenty years later by his eldest son Samuel and then by other sons Edwin, William, and Henry, the boys founded Dottridge Brothers Limited on their father's death and operated from his premises, an old coaching yard called Dorset Works, in East Road, Hackney. The firm prospered. A timber yard and woodworking mill were acquired, and agencies set up regionally and internationally. By 1913 the works had been rebuilt and employed more than 320 people. Assets included 115 black horses, three motor hearses and a fourth under construction. The hearse division expanded into a separate coachbuilding business, which also made a few private cars, including bespoke bodies on used Rolls-Royce chassis. The last Dottridge family member left the firm in 1983, which by then employed 200 people across 30 funeral directors in the South East. The company was sold in 1988 to Kenyon Securities PLC for £11.5 million and, after further mergers, the last Dottridge Bros. branch, on Roman Road in the heart of London's East End, closed at the turn of the twenty-first century.





Originally a Windovers sedanca, this imposing Phantom III, 3CP190, was elegantly transformed in 1955 by Alpe & Saunders for Leverton Funeral Directors in north London. A B80 straight eight engine supplanted the original V12 in 1967 and twenty years later plans were made to fit a Leyshon-James drophead coupé body but this did not materialise, the relics of the car instead being kept in Germany by the last known owner.

Real Car Co has sold 16 hearses, some in really dire straits. 144MY started life in 1933 as a limousine by Mascot Motors. Dottridge modified it post-war to a hearse for undertaker J R Norris in Kettering. Sold by RCC in 1990 with a dismantled engine, it was magnificently rebodied by Peter Plunkett's Automobile Services in Manchester, precisely to a Gurney Nutting three position drophead and RCC sold the car again, in its new guise, in 2012. It was offered by Bonhams at the Goodwood Revival last September, estimated at £90,000 - £120,000.



In his article *'The Last Ride: a history of Woodall Nicholson coachbuilders'* (Flying Lady Mar/Apr 2005 p.7657-7662, Praeclarum Oct. 2010 p.5744-47, NZ RR&B Club 18-6 2018 p.15-20) Tom Clarke has written a comprehensive account of perhaps the biggest of the three major hearse coachbuilders. Suffice it to say, Tom identifies 71 pre-war Rolls-Royce chassis bodied at Woodall Nicholson's Halifax works as hearses or private cars. Their 1938 brochure 'Really Modern Carriages' printed in lugubrious mourning purple, features five hearse styles on Phantom I chassis along with others on Daimler and Austin platforms. Post-war, Woodall Nicholson expanded, merged with coachbuilder Coleman-Milne in 1983, and today is one of Europe's leading specialist vehicle builders. The firm was acquired by Belgian entrepreneur Guido Dumarey in December 2023, whose automotive group employs 3,000 people.

G Wylder and Co., Coachbuilders was founded in 1923 with a works at Station Avenue, Kew Gardens. Messrs A F Alpe and William Howard Saunders took an early interest and were on the board by 1929. They had bought out the original company entirely by 1937 and the name of the firm changed to Alpe & Saunders. They specialised in landaulettes: vehicles for the taxi trade and advertised as the industry's 'largest builder'. Although some private cars were built on new and refurbished chassis at Kew, as the era of the landaulette taxicab receded so the firm's main output turned to hearses constructed on overhauled platforms by Rolls-Royce, Daimler, and Austin. They supplied the funeral trade until 1966.

The re-bodying of a private car into a commercial vehicle often meant that it was re-registered by the licensing authority, causing untold difficulties for future enthusiasts when it came to identifying chassis numbers. The procedure was as follows: the funeral director would commission a suite of, say, Rolls-Royce vehicles. This might comprise a hearse with three following limousines. The hearse would be ordered from a specialist coachbuilder who would source a suitable used vehicle, strip off its body and build new coachwork on a refurbished chassis whose running gear had also been overhauled. Following cars could be new or re-purposed second-hand vehicles.



Small HP cars led by GTM21, rebodied as dour funeral followers, pictured outside the Ranalah works in Merton Park, south London.



A newly converted PII by Ranalah, photographed by C K Bowers on 1st July 1939.

The difficulty posed by non-original registration numbers often confounds the listologist and, for pre-war cars, precise hearse numbers and their converters are consequently vague. Among six of the eight contemporary Rolls-Royce models, hearses have been identified in numbers as follows: 28 20HP cars, 45 20/25s, 27 25/30s, 17 Wraiths, 45 PIIs and eight PIIs. Reliable lists of PIs and Silver Ghosts are not yet available. As mentioned in the last issue, Rolls-Royce did not supply chassis to hearse builders before 1939 but times were harder once post-war production resumed and this policy was relaxed. The Scottish Co-Operative Wholesale Society was the company's biggest buyer for this niche market and between 1946-56 the in-house coachbuilding division of the grocer-cum-undertaker bought 27 new Silver Wraith chassis for hearse conversion.

Such was the unburstable resilience of pre-war chassis that, following one career with an original body, then a very different one in the carriage trade, many 40/50hp cars and their smaller brothers are enjoying their third or even fourth lives with retro-replica bodies mounted on hearse wrecks rescued from scrapyards or worn out in service.

To some, the sin of rebodging ranks with the crimes of Heliogabalus but that may be a blinkered take. Many Silver Ghosts, PIs, and PIIs that spent a leisurely decade or two cruising at 10mph between the undertaker's garage and the cemetery have subsequently been reincarnated as dropheads and sedancas, although one might draw the line at 'new' boat-tail speedsters (an

iconic body style first applied in 1929 to the Auburn 115 by the brilliant Ukrainian designer Count Alexis de Sakhnoffsky and plagiarised relentlessly ever since). However, some modern-day coachbuilders have faithfully executed original designs using blueprints from the 1930s, thus paying respectful tribute to their famous predecessors. In the 1960s the old car movement was not well established in Britain and while parts were still available from breakers like the fabled Adams & Oliver at Great Gidding, the Jack O'Lantern Garage near Romsey or from the legendary Struan Erskine, founder of Introcar (known as 'Erskine the Hearse King'), lack of items like cylinder heads and even tyres could arbitrarily put a vehicle off the road forever. Thus, it was a case of survival of the fittest. Four that made it are New Phantoms IIUMC and IHC and Phantoms II 144MY and 167TA.

Recycling is fashionable today, so it is heartening that a significant number of redundant Rolls-Royce motor cars, have transmogrified over the decades from staid workhorse limousines with their original owners, then to huge hearses to convey the dearly departed on their final journeys, and (hopefully) finally through to natty sports saloons and continental tourers. They escaped Peer Gynt's Button Moulder, who melts down mediocre and failed souls, and have instead gone on to new lives, in new clothes, to make a significant contribution to the continuation of engineering excellence that has characterised the Rolls-Royce ethos for the past 120 years.



Swan to Ugly Duckling. Bodied as a Windovers Limousine, New Phantom IHC was registered in London on the last day of 1925 and kept by its first owner until 1936. It was re-registered in Leicester in 1952 with a new funeral follower body. Sold in 1982 as a rolling chassis by W T Aked & Co. of St. Annes in Lancashire, the buyer commissioned that company to restore the car in the style of a Barker barrel-bodied tourer, which work cost £39,000.

Thanks: Tom Clarke (in spades), Sue Jones, Steve Stuckey, Thomas Dinsdale, Bernard King, Toby Newbury, Kelvin Pryce, Dan Young, Mollie Stoneman, Klaus-Josef Roßfeldt, Rick Ford, Rob Whatling, Bonhams, Alexander Jansen and A W Lymn.

144MY after conversion.



Started in 1923 as Silver Ghost 59PK with experimental four-wheel brakes, 11UMC was one of three updated by the factory in 1926 to New Phantom spec (including the ohv engine). Registered XW133, as a Hooper limousine, Birmingham coachbuilder Flewitt erected a hearse on the chassis ten years later. A Swansea funeral director sold the car in 1963 for £17.50 with a rebuilt engine and the hearse was exported to California, where it was restored in the 1970s before long term storage under a parachute in a furniture warehouse. James McKarns of San Mateo bought it in 1985 from an estate sale in San Francisco and Real Car repatriated 11UMC in 2002. The third body, an elegant roadster, was made by Penny Vintage Carriage Bodies Ltd in Banbury to exacting standards, for proprietor Steve Penny personally, and P & A Wood subsequently sold the car, which currently resides in Cheltenham.

Stanley Sears – Motoring Legend

by Sir John Stuttard

The motor car world has many legendary figures: The Hon Charles Rolls, Sir Henry Royce, Herbert Austin, Juan Manuel Fangio, Stirling Moss, Ayrton Senna, Bruce McLaren, Michael Schumacher and Lewis Hamilton – the list goes on. They will each be remembered for their achievements and successes. In the world of veteran and vintage cars, there is one man who stands out – Stanley Sears, a titan who did so much during and after WWII to preserve these treasures from destruction and to foster enthusiasm to preserve them and drive them. In particular, he built up a large personal collection of motor cars and was President of the VCC, as well as being a founder member and the first President of The 20-Ghost Club.

Stanley Edward Sears (1903-1988) was fortunate to be born into a Northamptonshire family which owned a successful shoe business (True-Form Boot Co Ltd) which had been established by his father. Sears was educated at Eastbourne College and Emmanuel College, Cambridge, where he owned a 12/40 Alvis, and then joined the family firm, later leaving to start farming in Bolney, Sussex. Having obtained an engineering degree, he also fulfilled his ambition of an engineering career and became a director of John Allen & Sons, agricultural mechanical, electrical and general engineers and public works contractors, based in Oxford, and for whom he worked until retirement in 1966.

But his passion was collecting and restoring old cars. His car collection dated from 1936 when he witnessed the London to Brighton Run – he was immediately fired with enthusiasm and acquired a 1904 Darracq and then a more energetic 1903 Clement Talbot. But he was particularly fond of Rolls-Royce motor cars, a marque he admired because of the quality of their construction. His first experience had been in 1932 when, at the age of 28, he purchased a brand-new Phantom II Continental (31GX) Park Ward Weymann Saloon. It was the first of his very many Rolls-Royce motor cars, and he was clearly very fond of it, describing 31GX as ‘the most lively Phantom II he has ever driven’ - while adding: ‘however, the car got very hot inside’. This car lost its original body and was converted into a hearse in 1950. Now with a Wilkinson Dual Cowl Tourer body, 31GX is today owned by club members The Hon Michael and Janet Cochrane.





As his every day driving cars and for participating in RAC rallies, Sears preferred models with speed and style. He had earlier been given a 1925 Leyland 8 Saloon by his family. The Phantom II Continental was followed by a 1934 3½ Derby Bentley (B28AH), bodied for him by Salmons & Sons of Newport Pagnell. Then there was a straight eight Packard, a Cord 810, a 4¼ Derby Bentley (B119HM) and, finally, a Phantom III.

In early 1938 it seems that Stanley had his 4¼ Bentley, a James Young Drophead Coupé, with Rolls-Royce for repair after an accident, and he was loaned 3AZ38, a 1936 Phantom III Barker Saloon with division, which had been used as a Trials (demonstrator) car and for Continental testing in the Alps. So pleased was Sears with the car that he arranged to buy it on 24th February for £1,700 with the Bentley traded for £1,200 and a £50 'special allowance'. Indeed, it has been said that he was so impressed by 3AZ38 that he talked his mother into buying another Phantom III (3DL76) Thrupp & Maberly Saloon.

Acquired at 1938 Earls Court Show the Sears family owned 3DL76 for 79 years, until 2017. After Stanley's mother died in 1952, he inherited the car and drove it on rallies and hill climbs. In 1983, Stanley gave 3DL76 to his son, Jack, who owned the car until his death in 2016.

Sears' passion for rescuing and restoring old cars had no bounds. One of his more important finds was the 1905 Light Twenty (26350) Isle of Man TT Tourer. 26350 is the oldest Rolls-Royce motor car owned by a member of the club, John Kennedy, who with Rae, now lives in New Zealand. It is a four cylinder Light 20, one of only three surviving examples of the early 20 – two Light and one Heavy. 26350 was the third such car to be built and the first production model; it is one of the earliest surviving Rolls-Royce cars. It is similar to the two prototype cars which Rolls and Percy Northey drove in the first Isle of Man Tourist Trophy Race in September of that year. This model, the only true early sports car made by Rolls-Royce, was raced in Ireland, the Isle of Man and the USA between 1905 and 1907, enabling

A line up of cars once owned by Stanley Sears with Rolls-Royce Limited's 1907 10HP (20165 J Reg No SU-13) fourth from the left.



1934 Derby Bentley B28AH.



PIII - 3AZ38 finishing the 1939 RAC Rally in Brighton.

Rolls-Royce cars to gain an early reputation by taking second place in the 1905 Isle of Man Tourist Trophy race. This chassis (26350) was actually never raced but first bodied by Barker & Co with Roide-Belges coachwork. Its first owner was Charles H Benton of The Terrace, Knutsford, in which area it remained until acquired in 1926 by Thomas Ayrton Stuttard who, from 1934, lived at Brae Cottage, Sir Henry Royce's former home in Knutsford. During the Second World War, 26350 remained at Brae Cottage and was put on blocks, a common practice during the war, when petrol was hard to come by and thirsty Rolls-Royces became impractical to drive.

Then, in 1945, Errol Punt, Sir Henry Royce's wife's nephew, heard about this early Rolls-Royce car which had been stored at Brae Cottage. He and Stanley Sears discovered 26350 in the garage underneath the 1920s extension of the cottage. Sears undoubtedly saved it from probable destruction by owning and restoring it. 26350 was rebodied in 1953 by Harrington, with an Isle of Man TT Replica body.

In 1949, Stanley Sears was one of seven enthusiasts who met to found The 20-Ghost Club. In 1950 at the first formal minuted meeting, he was chosen to be the Club's first President, an office he held until 1966, when he retired to Bermuda, later moving to the Algarve in Portugal. On stepping down as President, he was appointed 'Master' which he held until he died in 1988.

During his time as President, Sears was inspirational and very much the driving force behind the Club and its many new initiatives. As a result, from 1950 to 1966 membership grew rapidly. As part of its contribution to the Coronation Rally, in 1953, Rolls-Royce Limited presented to the Club a pair of decanters won by CC Friese during the International Alpine Trial of 1913 and subsequently given to the Company. At the time of the presentation the Company expressed the wish that one of these should be given to Stanley Sears. At its meeting in July 1954, the Committee agreed that the decanter won by him at the Coronation Concours d'Elegance should be retained by him permanently and that the second decanter should be awarded annually to the owner of the car which achieves maximum marks between 1st December and the following 30th November for mileage relative to its age.

Stanley Sears died at the age of 84 in the Algarve, where he had lived in his later years. In the words of the well-known Bill Boddy, MBE, Editor of Motor Sport writing in February 1989 'He [Sears] had a profound knowledge of cars, especially of the veteran and vintage ones of which he was so fond and many of which he subjected to meticulous restorations. Indeed, he set fresh standards of excellence in this pursuit.'

The growth and stature of The 20-Ghost Club owes much to the leadership and contribution of Stanley Edward Sears.

The author is grateful to Tom Clarke and Steve Stuckey for their help and for photographs in compiling this article.



3DL76 - With 20-GC badge on the windscreen. Oldham photo bought by Steve Stuckey. Ex D B Tubbs's book The Rolls-Royce Phantoms in 1964.



3DL76 - Photo at Firle Hill Climb, 5 September 1954, from the Sears Family Archive - improved by Steve Stuckey..



26350 at Brae Cottage 1945 (RRLtd, W79770).



The Stanley Sears Collection in 1946.



STARTERMOTOR

Based at Bicester Heritage and counting several of our members among its trustees, StarterMotor which gets the next generation into the driving seat and (crucially) under the hood of 'our' cars. I asked General Manager, Steve Cootes, to set out what they do.

StarterMotor was formed in 2016 to reduce the average age of those who own and work in the 'old' car world. There are three things we want to do i) build awareness of the sector and the welcoming community that exists, ii) engage a younger demographic and get them involved in owning and enjoying what's on offer by being part of this community and iii) assist this younger demographic to find jobs and build careers in the sector.

Our target audience is 'Gen-Z' aged between their mid-teens and mid-20s. We reach them via direct engagement with schools and colleges and run careers events at Bicester Motion. We also have a group of young volunteers, known as Ambassadors, who represent the charity at a range of events – they're the true face of StarterMotor.



There's nothing like driving and maintaining classic cars to engage, educate and inspire youngsters, of course. For this reason the Charity has a small fleet of cars, mostly loaned by generous benefactors. The profile of the fleet tends to change quite regularly, but one of the favourites is a 1934 Austin Seven Speedy Type 75 (pictured above). Also in the pre-war category, we have a nicely maintained 1933 Singer Nine Tourer, and an Austin 10/4 Clifton, known by the family who have owned it for decades as 'William'. These cars go beyond mechanical 'A to B' devices, they are works of art with distinctive personalities. In terms of Post-war cars, we have a 1953 Morris Minor, another favourite of the Ambassadors, and a 1963 Riley One-Point-Five. The most recent arrival is a 1973 P6 Rover 3500S. We did have a beautiful 1960 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud II (pictured opposite, chassis SWC376), but the loan ran its course and so it's now safely back in the hands of its owner.

We find that typically about 3-5% of any school year group have an interest in apprenticeships, with a further 10-12% interested in motorsport or automotive work more generally. So, my task is somewhat akin to panning for gold! Once I've found a 'nugget' or two, my goal is to find work experience for these young students who are just starting to form their thinking on career direction.

StarterMotor collaborates with further education institutions to integrate historic vehicle-related learning into curriculum and extracurricular activities. From workshops to guest lectures by industry experts, these partnerships aim to raise awareness about the artistry, engineering, and cultural significance of classic cars.

StarterMotor's efforts have had a transformative impact on both individuals and the larger motoring community. By investing in education and engagement, the charity ensures that the skills and stories associated with historic motoring are preserved for generations to come. Several of our young volunteer Ambassadors have gone on to pursue careers in restoration, engineering, and similar fields, bringing fresh talent into an industry steeped in tradition.

Despite success, StarterMotor faces challenges in sustaining and expanding its initiatives. Funding remains a critical concern, given the high costs associated with maintaining historic vehicles, organising and participating at events, and having a marketing presence.

Looking ahead, StarterMotor aims to expand its reach to more schools and learning communities, particularly in areas where access to historic vehicles is limited. A promising relationship with the British Motor Museum is taking shape, and I chair the Bicester Schools' Forum where multiple schools share best practice and costs to support those students who have shown a keen interest in automotive issues to attend events and courses.

Thanks for taking the time to read all this. I truly believe that StarterMotor is a movement fuelled by passion, dedication, and a shared love for motoring history. If you would consider setting up a small, but regular, donation then it would make a difference to a young person's career and strengthen the historic vehicle community for the future.

www.startermotor.co email: info@startermotor.co



The Last Word

Our call for 'new member' picnics hasn't gained as much traction as hoped. The first three dates were cancelled due to a lack of attendees – which I think is because we didn't give enough notice. Happily though, we had a good turnout at Gasper Cottage in mid-July. I was delighted that new members, David & Barbara Miles, Toby & Bella Foster, and Will Bate joined us and other friends. Will drove his super original 1926 20HP GMJ41 (AKA *Daffodil*) from Beckenham Kent all the way down to us.... and then back again. The return journey, on a sweltering Sunday afternoon, heading east on the A303, was a monumental 4 hours! Blimey!

After we had all eaten our fill, Tim Maltin suggested that we take turns to 'show and tell' each of our cars. It was a great way to round off the afternoon as owners took ten minutes to relate the history of their car, why they had bought it, and then talk through the quirks and fun bits. You couldn't do this if you had masses of cars but we had six club motors parked up and everybody really enjoyed this aspect. Simple, but really worth repeating I would say.

By the time you read this another gathering will have taken place at Brian and Wendy Fidler's house in Oxfordshire – and I'm really looking forward to it. Next year we will plan with more notice.

On a separate matter I made several errors in Issue 79:

Graham Tyson became our Membership Secretary in June 2012 rather than 2016 as I stated. Since then he has introduced around 200 new members.

I managed to spell Bryan Fitton's name incorrectly when announcing he had won the Woodmansee Trophy (sorry Bryan!). Good spot Bryan McGee.

And on the new members page I allocated Toby Foster two cars: his PII (see P5) as well as Will Bate's 20HP *Daffodil*. Apologies all.

Finally, I just need to say how immensely relieved I was about the safe return of the Fitton Ghost (see p7). The news of the theft was both upsetting and astonishing. How could thieves expect to sell (or worse) break up such a car? Maybe that's why it was located a few days later or, just maybe, even the thieves realised the great wrong they had done by kidnapping such a motor. Either way it got me thinking about security. Currently I never lock my cars and whilst I turn off the battery and the petrol these are hardly major barriers to a determined thief.

Years ago when I was young and very foolish, I attended a stag party in a dodgy pub in Lewisham, South London. Somebody came running in to say that my new Ford Capri, parked outside, was being eyed up by a known gang of car thieves. I bought a round of lagers and took them outside on a tray, passed them out to the boys gathered around my car, and asked them to look elsewhere – which they did!

Johnie



