



News & Record

Issue 82 | Winter 2025





CONTENTS



16

Front Cover: Tim Maltin in 1931 PII Continental 66GX braves the snow and ice at a very wintry Bicester Heritage Scramble in January 2025 (see also Last Word in this issue).

Back Cover: David Redfern, in correct attire, parks up 1923 20HP GA23 prior to dinner in Am Mellensee, Brandenburg, Germany (see page 16).

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 October - December 1925.

The Forbes Report

Page 14. Ken Forbes.

Lady Elinor has headed east.

Page 16. Johnnie on a jaunt to Germany to meet David Redfern for a drive in 1923 20HP, GA23.

Somerset Tour

Page 22. Anthony Armitage on Georgian Bath, Medieval Wells, the Cheddar Gorge & the Fleet Air Arm Museum.

The Masters of Mint

Page 30. Bella Hoare on the Autumn Lunch gathering at the Colman family's Malshanger Estate.



22



30



34



40

Rolls-Royce: Tea, Toddy and Architecture in Ceylon.

Page 34. Sir John Stuttard provides a foretaste of his new book.

A Rolls-Royce is Exclusive... Really?

Page 40. Henry Fitzhugh describes a trip to Castelfranco in Italy – the home of the supercar!



42

Ready for anything!

Page 42. Michael Power talks through his decision to purchase a Ghost and ready it for the toughest of all trials: The Peking to Paris.

The Last Word

Page 50. Johnnie gets the final say!

March 2026
Friday 20th
The 20-Ghost Club Annual General Meeting. To be held at the Honourable Artillery Company and likely to be attended by our President, HRH The Duke of Gloucester plus six Finnish members as thanks for their contributions to the Baltic Tour. Murray Grant:
murray_grant77@hotmail.com

April 2026
Saturday 25th
Spring Lunch in Strone and Alex's barn - Armsworth Park House, Hampshire. Once again Strone and Alex have agreed to host us. It's the driving season opening event and never to be missed. Strone Macpherson:
strone@stronemacpherson.com

June 2026
Thursday 4th to Monday 8th
The Irish Georgian Tour to Devon. We will be based at Moreland Hall, Dartmoor and a super route with some truly excellent homes (not always open to the public) are to be visited. John Narvell:
narvell630@gmail.com

June - July 2026
Saturday 27th to Thursday 9th
Normandy & Brittany Gardens – Steve Wilks has organised an excellent tour to northern France where we will see some spell-binding gardens, stay in lovely accommodation and eat glorious local produce. Note the tour is currently full but well worth contacting Steve to be added to the waiting list as places do sometimes become available. Steve Wilks:
rslwilks@gmail.com

Letters, Emails & Pictures

Andrew Prestwich wrote in:

By virtue of my membership of the Silver Ghost Association in America, I've just been offered a reconditioned magneto (American Bosch, exactly the correct model) at \$3,000 plus shipping. I'd quite like to have a spare for my Springfield chassis but this seems ludicrously expensive. Any thoughts, please, on whether it's worth having a spare and, more particularly, whether these things really fetch this sort of money? Kind regards, Andrew

Hamish McNaught replied:

Hello Andrew, firstly, I assume that you have an original/standard fitment Bosch magneto currently affixed to 312KG?

I concur that \$3,000 is excessive; I would have valued a fully functioning and working magneto at no more than \$2,000 in today's market – depending on the depth of any previous overhauls, originality and provenance of the device.

Personally, I would say that having a spare is unnecessary because there are specialist companies, such as Armoto in Chesterfield, who are able to re-wind and recondition magnetos.

Realistically, if the magneto fails it takes a fair amount of time to remove/swap (minimum 2 hours) and roadside repair is unfeasible for a magneto; especially as you would have to re-time the ignition etc etc – far too much hassle at the best of times!

Kind regards, Hamish.



Andrew and Heather Prestwich's 1922 Springfield Silver Ghost, 312KG.



Editor: For some reason a note from the Reverend Ian Murray to Sir John Stuttard, which Ian sent back in summer 2024 got lost in the dark reaches of my inbox. Ian was commenting on John's words following the death of Jimmy Valentine (Issue 76). My apologies for the delay in reproducing for us all here.

Dear John,

I also wanted to say how much I appreciated reading your tribute to Jimmy in the *News & Record*. I've probably already mentioned this, but it was through his brother and sister-in-law, Danvers and Jennifer Valentine, who lived just south of my first parish, that I met Jimmy and Janet. They turned up (in Auntie) at the Manse in Blair Atholl, and we had the most wonderful day together. My mother, who was visiting, took Janet up to the gardens at Blair

Castle, and I took Jimmy out to the garage where I had three 20hp cars, two turret clocks and several longcase grandfather clocks in different states of disrepair. Later, I gave Jimmy one of the turret clocks for his stable block at their house in King's Sutton. A fork-lift lowered it into the back of my Volvo estate, and with its nose in the air and its backside almost scrubbing the road, we very carefully drove from Blair Atholl to their house in King's Sutton [about 420 miles!] He later sent me photographs of the clock's restoration. Everything beautifully turned and rebushed, refaced and polished. Probably better than it was when new in 1850.

Many thanks again, and all good wishes,

Regards Ian.

Badges for sale.

Hello Johnnie,

Here in Germany I'm helping a widow to clear out some of her late husband's collection of car memorabilia. I have found an early RAC membership badge, a Spanish automobile club badge (must be pre-Spanish civil war) and also a number of early AA badges.

Do you know anybody who may be interested in purchasing any of these?

Regards David Redfern redferndavid48@gmail.com





Gerald Davies was a mileage trophy winner in 2024 - can you win this year?

Putting on the Miles!

Our Trophymaster, John Snook writes:

Reflecting over your Christmas lunch of the year past is a good time to recall all the happy miles in your favoured Rolls-Royce. This should stir you to apply for one of the Club's impressive mileage trophies. These are for the total miles you have covered in any one club-eligible R-R car during 2025. They don't need to have been miles done on our tours – any miles count! There are three trophies awarded annually and the details are on the Club website but briefly:

The Alpine - awarded to any car covering the highest mileage on a simple formula of age in years (that's car not driver) multiplied by the mileage.

The Woodmansee - for the highest mileage in a Ghost.

The Small Horse Power - for the highest mileage in a 20, a 20/25, or a 25/30.

Forms will be sent very soon, but now is a good time to begin to tot up your miles travelled during 2025.

Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost – Tyre Options and Performance Observations.

Editor: Within my inbox there has been an interesting exchange on tyre options for Ghosts. The total correspondence is way too long to reproduce here but I thought I would pop in an excellent response from Andrew Whittaker to a question from Bryan Stringer – would be interesting to hear other members' views and, indeed, options for other models.

Dear Bryan,

Over the years, I have covered many thousands of miles on Blockley tyres fitted to my vintage Bentley. Their grip - both in wet and dry conditions - is exceptional, and their high-speed stability is the best of any vintage tyre I have tried. It is no coincidence that they remain the preferred choice for most Bentley competition cars. That said, they are undeniably noisy. After sampling a friend's Bentley fitted with Michelin tyres, and with my Blockley tyres approaching the end of their life, I opted to make a change. The reduction in road noise was immediately apparent, with only a modest sacrifice in ultimate roadholding - albeit at a considerable increase in cost.

My Silver Ghost (61NE) was delivered with nearly new Lucas tyres, which I used for approximately 8,000 miles, including extended runs to the Alps and Norway. While they proved durable and pleasantly quiet, I found their straight-line stability disappointing and their cornering behaviour disconcerting - issues that ultimately prompted a switch to Blockley tyres last year. I did consider Goodrich tyres at the time, but the only sets available were of a soft compound, and based on observation of friends' cars, their wear rate appeared excessive - especially at the price being asked.

Accordingly, I fitted a complete set of six Blockley tyres (including inner tubes) to 61NE. Since then, they have performed admirably on the 20-Ghost Club Dorset Tour, the RREC Isle of Wight Tour, and both the Irish Georgian and Tour of Ireland events. As expected, their performance has been excellent - secure and predictable in all conditions, maintaining outstanding straight-line stability, and even providing slightly lighter steering. The only drawback remains the characteristic tyre

noise, which becomes intrusive around 40–50 mph on smooth, dry tarmac. My wife Andrea can certainly attest to this!

However - my principal disappointment with Blockley lies in their limited 12-month warranty, which is not related to tread wear. Earlier this year, one tyre developed a significant sidewall split, and despite contacting the manufacturer, I was informed that as the tyre was more than a year old, no remedy could be offered. That tyre now resides as a side-mounted spare.

I have recently ordered a set of Goodrich tyres - these are now reportedly produced in a more durable compound - which I plan to fit to my Phantom I. For the time being, the Ghost will remain on Blockley tyres, and when funds and enthusiasm allow, I will replace the damaged spare.

Kind regards, Andrew.



Call to action!
Please do read all of the following.

Important information from our Club Webmaster, John Narvell.

New Subscription Renewal Process: a Marmite moment that you will either love or hate, but not in moderation!

As we complete the first quarter of the 21st century, the 20-Ghost Club is migrating membership renewals to an internet-based process with the facility for credit card payments. The good news is that once it is set up, you won't have to change it again. For members paying by Standing Order (UK bank accounts), nothing needs to change for the time being but we still need you to logon to the website to verify that your personal and vehicle details are correct.

So, all members are requested to logon to the website. For most of you, this will be the first time that you will have signed-in to the refreshed 20-Ghost Club site and this might create some technology fear. But fret not! The log-on process has already been mastered by scores of your colleagues.

Our website is located at: 20-Ghost.org and in the upper right-hand corner is a button for "Members Login."

For those who have not logged in in 2025, you will need to reset your password. After clicking "Members Login" scroll down and click the "Forgot your password?" box. On the next screen type your email address and press "Enter". You must use the email address that is on file for the Club. You will receive an email that will allow you to set a password and then login.

If you need to change your email address, please email me at: narvelluk@gmail.com Similarly, for any changes to addresses, phone numbers, vehicles, etc. please send me an email with the updated information. We have purposefully restricted data entry and this function has been centralised.

The renewal process will be live on/after 15 December and a reminder email will be sent to all members at that time. Detailed instructions will be provided. As mentioned above, for those of you in the UK with Standing Orders, even though no action is required for the renewal, we still ask you to log on and check your member and vehicle details.

I realise there are bound to be problems but do give it a try and if you run into issues then send me an email and I will attempt to assist you. Once again: narvelluk@gmail.com

Best wishes, John Narvell

Extracted with thanks from
'The East Hampton Press'
October 30, 2025.

A4 ON THE BEAT

THE EAST HAMPTON PRESS | OCTOBER 30, 2025



John and Mary Narvell passed through Sag Harbor last week on a tour of the northeast in their 1939 Rolls Royce Wraith. STEPHEN J. KOTZ

**Prewar Rolls-Royce
Makes Sag Harbor Stop**
Yasmine Primrose cruises Long Island on a scenic tour

BY STEPHEN J. KOTZ

When Mary Narvell stepped out of the pale yellow and black Rolls-Royce Wraith that her husband, John, had parked on Long Wharf in Sag Harbor last Thursday, a bystander called out, "What a beauty!"

Narvell, who said she had heard that line too many times before, quipped, "Do you mean me or the car?"

Another common question the couple is asked, she said, is if they are the original owners. Even though the car, a 1939 model, couldn't be delivered until after the end of World War II because of production restrictions, that is still a bit of a reach, she said.

The Narvels, of Cranston, Rhode Island, passed through Sag Harbor on October 23 while taking Yasmine Primrose, as they have christened their car, on a tour across Long Island, up the Hudson River Valley through Hyde Park, Rhinebeck, Saratoga Springs and on to Lake Placid before returning to Rhode Island via the Berkshires.

They are writing about their outing for "The News and Record," the club magazine of the 20 Ghost Club, the oldest Rolls-Royce owners club in the world.

Narvell said she was hoping the antique car won't have any breakdowns, which Rolls-Royce euphemistically calls "a failure to proceed," on their autumn outing.

Granted, in the fabled Hamptons, where exotic cars are not out of the ordinary, seeing a Rolls-Royce is not a big deal. But it is rare to spy a prewar model, especially one like the Wraith, of which only about 500 were built between 1938 and 1939.

In those days, Rolls-Royce only made the chassis portion of the car, and buyers had to choose from among several coachbuilders, who would supply custom bodies, for the rest of their vehicle. The Narvels' Rolls sports a body constructed by James Young Ltd.

Made for a British buyer, the car has right-hand drive, a privacy window between the passenger compartment and the front seat, and folding trays in the back.

Narvell said she carries a jar of Grey Poupon mustard for those old enough to remember that television commercial.

The car also has a number of advanced features for its age, including a synchromesh transmission, push-button lubrication system, and an in-line six-cyl-

inder engine that is remarkably quiet for its age.

It is said that between two-thirds and three-quarters of all the cars produced by Rolls-Royce since its founding in 1904 are still on the road.

The next logical question is: What do they mean by "on the road"?

While many sit in museums or private collections, where they may be driven just a few miles a year, if at all, Yasmine Primrose is — pardon the term — a real working girl.

The Narvels bought their car in 2015 and shortly afterward took it on a rally in the Italian Alps, including 46 switchbacks in the Selvio Pass without the benefit of power steering.

Over its lifetime, Yasmine Primrose has also visited France, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, and the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Narvell said her husband owns two other Rolls-Royces: a 1931 Phantom II Continental, which she described as very "Great Gatsby"-like, and a 1938 Wraith.

She said he has been considering purchasing the sister car to Yasmine, an extremely rare 1939 Wraith convertible, also with James Young coachwork, but that she has counseled that he have a "chassectomy."

New Members

Graham has brought in seven new members this time round!



Nigel & Jacqueline Aggatt,
Stoke Manderville, Bucks.
1923 20HP tourer GF54.



Jeremy & Jenny Freeman,
Ford End nr Chelmsford, Essex.
1930 20/25 GTR4.



Tom & Sam Harris,
Grove, Leighton Buzzard, Beds.
1910 Silver Ghost 1302, 1936 PIH 3AZ146, 1937 PIH 3BT139.



Neil & Susan Ross,
Ryme Intrinseca, Dorset.
1925 PI 59LC.



Lancelot & Rebecca Sheldrick,
Ely, Cambs.
1925 20HP GPK4, landaulette.

Norbert Dudek,
Schwen, Germany.
No car as of yet.

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

A huge welcome to you all!

Lawrence Whittaker,
Stoneyhurst, Leicestershire.
Associate member, son of Andrew.



THE 20-GHOST CLUB LIMITED REGISTERED NUMBER 5224633

PRESIDENT: HRH The Duke of Gloucester.
CHAIRMAN: Ken Forbes kennethforbes@btinternet.com
HON. VICE-PRESIDENTS: Brian Fidler, Sir Michael Kadoorie, John L Kennedy, Rory Poland and Sir John Stuttard.
COMPANY SECRETARY: John Snook.
WEB: John Narvell narvell630@gmail.com
TREASURER: Steve Wilks.
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Graham Tyson gtyson@outlook.com
OTHER UK DIRECTORS: Johnnie Gallop; Murray Grant; Strone Macpherson; Tim Maltin; Doug Magee; Hamish McNaught, Nick Naismith; Steve Wilks; Louise Wood

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

Opinions expressed in any articles, letters or editorials may not be construed as being necessarily those of the 20-Ghost Club. Although the Club, its editors and contributors of all articles, always endeavour to produce accurate information, illustrations and advice, they will not be held responsible for any loss or damage caused by acting on such information. In particular, technical articles may reflect the author's or individual member's views or experiences and, unless otherwise stated, do not constitute formal Club recommendation. Independent advice should always be sought.

The News & Record is circulated privately to members of the 20-Ghost Club; all articles and photographs are the copyright of the Club and contributing authors, unless otherwise stated. Anyone wishing to reproduce photographs or extracts should seek permission from the Editor.

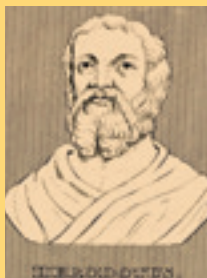
Copyright 2025 The 20-Ghost Club Limited

Designed by Jaz Wiseman.
07538 386114 jaz_wiseman@yahoo.com

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 1925.



20 hp Rolls-Royce and saloon bodies

A reader had enquired about *"the efficiency of the 20hp Rolls-Royce to carry a saloon body."* There were three replies:

Sidney Harrison had completed 16,000 miles in his 1924 Twenty fitted with a saloon body. *"In my opinion, it is superior to any other 20hp chassis and suitable for a saloon body, provided it was not too heavy. I have had many cars over the past 20 years, but not one of them has given me the pleasure that I have derived from this. It is very quiet and fast, and quick at picking up in top gear. I have every confidence in recommending this model."*

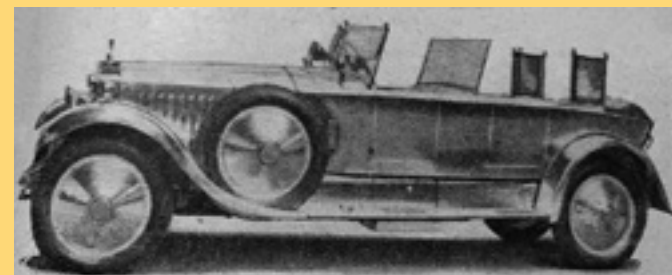
A G Hillary wrote *"The body of my car is a limousine built by Hooper and Co. It weighs about 30cwt, including two spare wheels, full equipment of tools, etc. I have driven it over 4,000 miles under all weather conditions and the experience proved that the engine is capable of doing its work with the greatest ease, either in town or touring. Acceleration in top-gear is very good and the car will pick up from a crawl without the slightest trouble. Vibration is practically negligible and the car is delightful to control in traffic. Petrol consumption is about 22 mpg. The suspension is wonderful. My opinion is that the 20hp Rolls-Royce fitted with a saloon body is a most efficient car with a reserve of power."*

S F Edge commented, *"I own one of these cars and have driven many thousands of miles on it. It is a most beautiful and sweet car to use when driving personally. The suspension is perfect and gives no trouble of any kind. One cannot have a finer presentation of a car for private use. Everything that it does, it does in the kindest way."*

Snow Time in the Highlands:

"She was a phantom of delight when first she gleamed upon my sight."

A George Abraham travelogue in a Rolls-Royce Phantom.



A Wonderful Car for India

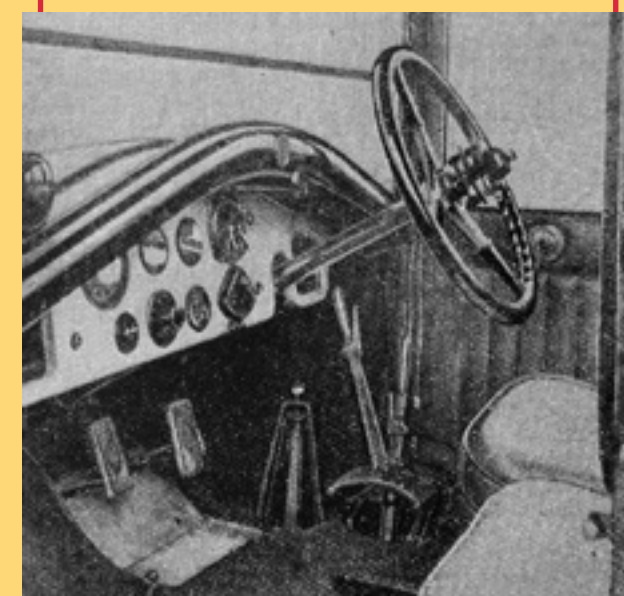
His Highness Maharajkumar of Vizianagaram has just acquired a New Phantom with coachwork by Windovers. The car is specially equipped for sporting purposes and all the glass is triplex. There is lavish equipment in the fore part of the rear compartment. A special set of Brooks trunks has been supplied. A huge net arranged on the near side running board is large enough to accommodate two dead tigers. Ammunition is carried in the valances and gun racks are provided on the offside running board. Many of the fittings are in solid gold and others in silver.



A Fascinating Phantom

Mr. G R N Minchin lent his New Phantom to the Autocar staff for a test run. The car was a short-chassis model with a Weymann four-seater body built by HJ Mulliner. *"Considering the space limitation on the short-chassis the work has been well done. The seats are extremely comfortable, the large windows and a skylight combine to make the body very light. The front windscreen division is below the driver's line of sight and the window curtain can be lowered from the driving seat. The doors have the new type Weymann lock, so that three of the four doors can be secured from inside and the fourth by an ordinary key outside. In case the key is lost a secret pocket outside the body contains a duplicate."*

In one side of the scuttle is a jack and in the other side a fire extinguisher. The instrument board is fully floating and has a most attractive finish, rather like the machine turning on a cigarette case. The offside lamp on the wing has at the back the new Lucas driving mirror. The car runs beautifully and its performance in top gear would be very difficult to equal."



The Forbes Report

The driving season finished with two events in September. Firstly, the short tour, perfectly organised by Steve Wilks, in Somerset. And then our final outing to the Autumn Lunch at the Colman family mint farm, thanks to Strone Macpherson. It lived up to the 20-Ghost Club traditions of finding a special and unusual venue, with excellent catering.

This is also our financial year end and I am pleased to report that we are in a strong position. Tour surpluses have enabled us to continue in website development - particularly to our unseen back-office functions. We need to automate renewals and I hope an announcement can be made for 2026 subscriptions very soon.

I am pleased to announce that Richard Fitton will join the board. Along with Louise Wood and Hamish McNaught, we now have representation of those well below pension age! Richard will also represent the views of northern members and will be looking at organising events to include a fun and mildly competitive element.

Our membership secretary plays a key role in attracting true enthusiasts and Graham Tyson has performed this role with aplomb for the last 14 years and we are very grateful for all his efforts. Johnnie Gallop is keen to take on this role but to do it justice, we need to recruit a new editor for News & Record to gradually take over from him. If you would be interested in taking this on, do contact Johnnie or myself.

Next year we start with our annual dinner at Armoury House, home of The Honourable Artillery in London on Friday, 20 March. The club concours will be held on Saturday, 12 September at Thurgarton Priory in Nottinghamshire, thanks to Roland Duce. Prior to this, there will be a 4-night short tour in Leicestershire, finishing at the concours. Look out for flyers for these events in due course.

Planning ahead, our main tour for 2027 is likely to be in the Czech Republic, starting near Nuremberg and finishing in Prague in early June. More details to follow. The short tour will probably be in Yorkshire.

On the domestic front, the onset of cooler weather prompted me to get my 25/30 Thrupp & Maberly saloon functioning again. A trip to the experts at Allan Glew's soon rectified some recurrent issues and I enjoyed a spectacular drive home in the sunshine.

I wish you all a Happy Christmas and look forward to your company at a club event in 2026

Best wishes
Re



The Forbes's 1937 'Razor Edged' 25/30 GRP68.

Lady Elinor has headed east

***Johnnie on a jaunt to Germany to meet
David Redfern for a drive in 1923 20HP, GA23.***

There's a 1 in 12 hill ahead and we are doing 22mph in top. The temperature gauge is reading 68 degrees and the oil pressure is at 20lbs. David smiles and says 'Right, let's see what she can do here - come on Elinor!' This early Twenty answers him happily and the engine note doesn't alter as we begin the ascent; but the hill is long and the gradient constant. Nevertheless, after two minutes we are halfway but still at a creditable 15mph. Lady Elinor does not falter and eventually we reach the summit at 11mph and slowly begin to regain speed. The oil pressure has remained constant and the only evidence of exertion is the water temperature which has climbed to 86 degrees but now starts to fall.

Of course, the gearstick has remained untouched in top (third gear) all the way.

Regular readers will know that I'm a devotee of the 20HP, but I haven't had much experience of the very early cars so, when David Redfern invited me to Berlin to ride in his 1923 Hooper Landauette, I jumped at the chance.

David had been looking for the right car for about ten years. With a youth devoted to riding classic British motorcycles he graduated from two to three wheels and has been the proud owner of a 1947 Morgan 3-wheeler (an F4 10HP) for nearly 10 years. But finally he decided he would like a Rolls-Royce. 'It's the engineering that convinced me' he says 'It's an art form and having studied the various models and their iterations I decided that an early Twenty displayed Henry Royce's genius at its peak.'

Being the owner of a late Twenty, I protest that David's car only has rear-wheel brakes and a meagre 3-speed box, but he is having none of it. 'The brakes are no problem so long as you drive accordingly and, dare I say, with my memory of riding old BSA bikes, you learn to read the road carefully. As for the gearbox you simply get it to top gear and leave it alone.' He is of course correct and I realise that my own Twenty's 4-speed box would have demanded a drop to 3rd in the hill climb earlier.



Pausing for morning coffee in Jänickendorf.



Our lunch stop in Baruth.



Notice the centre gear-lever and handbrake.

But there is also a joy of driving in eastern Germany which really suits our cars. Post war East Germany was forced to pay significant reparations to the USSR and any manufacturing was moved further east. As the West was massively industrialised during the 'golden age' of 1960-1980, the east rather stagnated. But today, as we motor along, wide, traffic-free, Prussian roads, bathed in the sunshine with deep forest on either side I am having a super time.

This car is a joy. It's open drive with a beautiful lacquered wooden roof above us. Behind is a truly first-class passenger cabin – it can only be described as sumptuous and really shows off Hoopers of Kings Road at their best. But it's the car's livery of light and dark Prussian blue stripes that sets us apart from almost everything else. I'm used to our cars attracting attention but this Twenty takes that to a new level. *'The Dutch striping - at least I think that's what it's called - is such fun. It means that everybody knows that whoever is in the back is very special. In the towns everyone waves at us, excitedly, and we wave back.'*

This isn't a motor for the shy and retiring driver and yet there is something undeniably 'proper' about it.

'I try to wear the correct clothes,' smiles David, 'Harris Tweeds, a greatcoat, and good gauntlet gloves for when it's cold. Justyna wears a proper frock and always waits for me to help her out of the car when we go for a drive or to dinner.'

'I saw the Twenty on the V&P website and must say that Richard Biddulph couldn't have been more accommodating. I bought it, sight unseen (other than the web photos) at Christmas and Richard drove it over to Belgium in January. I met up with him in Rotterdam and we drove it back to Antwerp via the Belgium motorways. He was a great teacher.'

David has spent most of his adult life in Germany and I ask about his background. *'I originally went to university to read engineering but subsequently switched to archaeology at Durham which was a passion. My father had been in the RAF and we had spent some of my*

childhood in Norway where I had seen and admired Viking finds especially their jewellery.

After graduating I followed an old girlfriend to Germany and, whilst that relationship didn't work out, I realised that I enjoyed the German culture and way of life in East Germany which is still similar to living in the UK when I was young. I built a career as a field archaeologist and studied the nomadic Scythian culture that occupied the west European steppes in the 8th to the 3rd centuries BC. They developed significant technology particularly in gold metallurgy which was more advanced than the classical Greek manufacturing techniques. It was not until the early medieval period that gold smithing technology of western Europe reached the same technological level.'

David and Justyna used to live in the centre of Berlin but about 15 years ago decided it was too busy and moved to an old 1907 village school/church building quite a way out to the west of the city. The building is listed because it was the only original structure remaining in Brandenburg (Prussia) after the war as everything else had been destroyed. 'It was a complete restoration project and initially we lived in one room as polecats occupied the rest of the house! Eventually we managed to complete it but it's been a tough job. We did most of the work ourselves but some things had to be done professionally; I remember that our roofer obtained his master's certificate for rebuilding our roof!'

David is now retired but Justyna still works as a primary clinical research associate. She sometimes works away from home involved in medical research and clinical trials of new medicines and David will often collect her from the railway station in the Twenty when she returns. 'I can feel Justyna relax in the Rolls-Royce on the journey back home. The car is a type of therapy for us, I suppose.' I ask about the name they have christened the car: Elinor. 'Well Lady Elinor Hammick of Torquay was the second owner from 1929 until her death in 1942. From what we can learn, she would have been well suited to riding in the rear compartment and taken to visit the various schools



David prefers starting the car on the handle.

and other good works where she was a governor or patron. We like naming our cars and Elinor seemed to fit perfectly.'

I must say that I can understand how riding in Elinor, the 1923 20HP, is a stress-relieving therapy. Quintessentially British for sure, but unflappable, relaxed, reliable, glorious, very well driven, and situated in a place of wide roads and elegant manners.

My sincere thanks to David and Justyna Redfern for their hospitality and fun.



Happiness! Justyna, David and Elinor.

Somerset Tour 7-11th September 2025.

***Anthony Armitage on Georgian Bath, Medieval Wells,
the Cheddar Gorge & the Fleet Air Arm Museum.***

Having been on Steve Wilk's tour of Dorset last year we had no hesitation in booking to join his tour of Somerset. Once again it was planned and explained down to the last detail. The Tour book gave us good descriptions, lots of history and beautiful photographs together with detailed route maps of how to get to and from without travelling on traffic bound main roads.

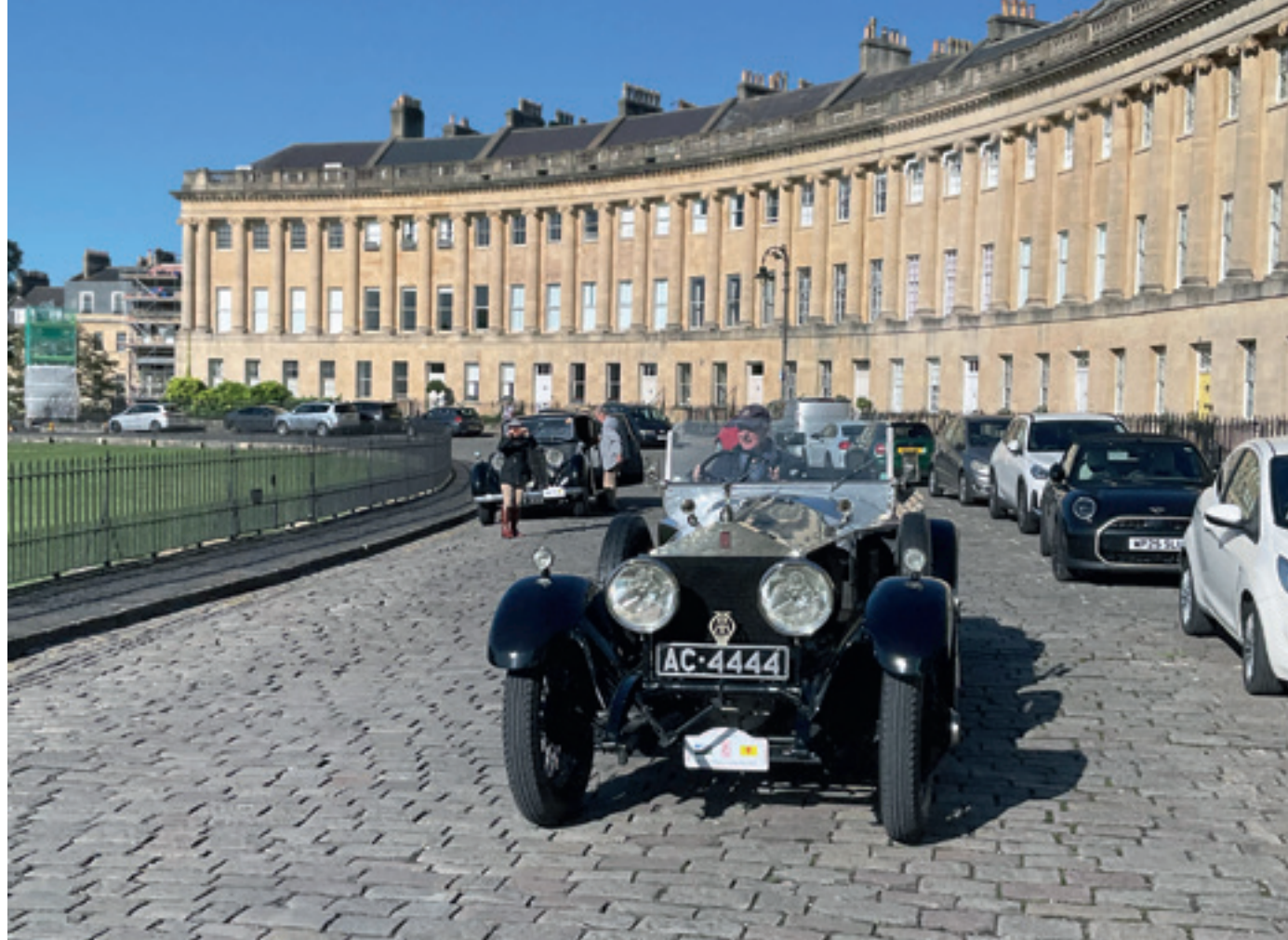
Our son Charles, a newish member had never been on a 20-Ghost tour before, volunteered to help with the driving. In the event Gilly and I were chauffeured throughout and learnt to see the countryside from the back seats. New Phantoms, as they were originally called, were more often chauffeur-driven and the driver, seated nearly half way between the front and rear axles, had a much smoother, wind free and drier drive whether the hood was up or down. We fortunately do have a split screen and side screen rear windscreen and a hood.

On our way to the Homewood Hotel, just south of Bath, on Sunday we made an early visit to Great Chalfield Manor. Charles is also an Alvis owner and there was an Alvis picnic there in front of the Manor. Great Chalfield is a beautiful medieval manor house with a small church which was started in the 14th Century and like many of our cars has been restored regularly ever since perhaps with less regard than we give to originality which was much in evidence in the seventeen cars on the tour, nine of which were Silver Ghosts and were 100 or more years old.

Monday saw the proper start of the tour. The sun was out and saw us all in Bath parading round the Royal Crescent and going up and down numerous hills with lovely Georgian architecture on both sides. From there we went to Castle Combe and the Manor House for coffee. I well remember some years ago being confronted on the narrow drive past the cottages by a large grey carthorse wearing spectacles. They were filming Dr Doolittle. Going out of the village just over Castle Combe's much photographed little bridge, Steve had arranged for our cars to be photographed there too, another of his treats.

Opposite: 1914 SG 29NA piloted by Priscilla Giles at Cheddar Gorge.





Philip Entwistle's 1919 SG 51TW at the Royal Crescent in Bath.

Next south to Lacock Abbey and its village both of which have featured in recent television programmes such as *Cranford*, *Wolf Hall*, *Downton Abbey*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Harry Potter*! On a different plane, the Talbot family inherited Lacock in 1714 and the most famous Talbot to us was William Henry Fox Talbot who was a scientist and pioneer photographer born in 1800. It was he who in 1835 achieved the world's first surviving photographic negative which is of the south gallery of the Abbey.

We had a light lunch at The George organised by Steve. Organised, prepaid lunches were an excellent feature of the tour. They encouraged much talk and saved much time, very necessary with so many places to visit and so much to see. Dinner that evening was preceded and enlivened by a fascinating lecture by Dr Gabrielle Malcolm on Jane Austin and her life in Bath and her mixed feelings about living there.

On the second day we visited Wells, and had special parking on Cathedral Green where our cars were much appreciated by other visitors. Wells was very welcoming and Steve had arranged tours of the Bishop's Palace and the cathedral. With its Roman and Saxon origins, a major medieval development of the cathedral included a quadruple scissor arch added between 1338-48 to support the central tower; but it sagged before construction was even completed! Also, in the cathedral, is the second-oldest clock in Great Britain dating from 1390. Under jousting knights that rotate every quarter of an hour, is a 24-hour face decorated with a pre-Copernican universe showing the sun and moon revolving around the earth. Nearby is Vicars' Close, thought to be the oldest residential street in Europe with its houses still intact. Wells is a very charming little city – as it has to be with its own cathedral.



Steve and Ann Wilks in 1933 20/25 3-position DHC GHA28.

The Armitage family's 1928 PI 65CL leads the line up at Yeovilton.





Priscilla and friend Annabelle Bowman-Shaw cross the bridge in Castle Combe.



The Swordfish and Ghost Club! The plane is a Fairey Swordfish Mk1, ID number W5856. It is the oldest airworthy Swordfish in the world; first flown in 1941.

Arriving at the Manor House Hotel in Castle Combe for a coffee stop.



From Wells to Glastonbury saw us crossing part of the Somerset levels to Cheddar and then up the Gorge. Steaming up the Gorge was for Charles the best drive of the tour. There was no traffic either way. The tour as a whole was never bedevilled by traffic of Home Counties proportions. We are lucky in the West.

Cheddar was where Priscilla Giles in her 1913 Ghost had a puncture in a front tyre and much appreciated Philip Entwistle coming to her rescue. Philip drove and navigated the whole tour alone in his 1919 open Touring Ghost, a sterling effort with never a hood to be seen.

The final day took us 32 miles south to The Fleet Air Arm Museum and Navy Wings at Yeovilton. Navy Wings restore aircraft and keep them flying and after a Steve arranged a photograph of all of us with a Fairey Swordfish complete with torpedo, we explored their in- progress restorations picking up tips from their splendid volunteer fitters.

Then across the aerodrome to the Museum itself which had almost too much to take in from life on an aircraft carrier to Biplanes, Harriers and the second prototype Concorde.

Home via the Haynes Motor Museum two miles away. Well worth it for those with the stamina.

After breakfast on the final morning, Andrew Whittaker chairman of the RREC presented Sir John Stuttard with the Evernden Shield on which were mounted the tools of Ev's trade, a slide rule, compass and dividers. The presentation was in recognition of Sir John Stuttard and Roger Tanners' book: *Rolls-Royce in East Africa*.

It was great tour, brilliantly organised, great fun and great company, some of whom we first met 25 years ago. Many, many thanks Steve for all your hard work and boundless initiative which deserved and was much appreciated by everyone.

We sincerely hope and trust our sons and daughters-in-law and many more of that generation will start and then continue to tour, hopefully with us in the back of the Phantom for many years to come.

The Masters of Mint

Bella Hoare on the Autumn Lunch gathering at the Colman family's Malshanger Estate.

On a perfect sunny, crisp autumn day, eleven fine Rolls-Royce Motor Cars appeared in the elegant surroundings of the Malshanger Estate which has been the home for three generations of the Colman family. Having enjoyed the initial process of admiring each others' cars and catching up over a cup of tea, proceedings were further enlivened by a glass of bubbles and an excellent introduction to the estate and their innovative approach to farming. Jamie Colman explained how his family were first movers in the branded goods sector, putting mustard powder into a distinctive yellow tin and then marketing it across the world.

However, it was on a trip to Tasmania they came across mint as a farm crop and decided to reintroduce this to the UK. The Black Mitcham peppermint is a traditional English crop, however due to changes in agriculture following two world wars the rootstock had become no longer available. The family was able to source the plant from the USA but found it harder to establish than they had thought. At the same time, the technical aspects of extracting the essential oils also required considerable innovation and creativity. Once they had solved those problems, they faced the even greater challenge of finding a market. It rapidly became clear that they needed to develop their own products using their high-quality mint essential oil and develop a brand to support this. Summerdown Farm was established three decades ago and now boasts a truly impressive range of delicious products.



The Master of Mint himself, the magnificent Ian Margetts, walked us down through the farm and explained the process of essential oil production. It is interesting that when you come across a person like Ian, who is truly passionate about his work and surroundings you become equally enthused. We all chatted to him for ages and he was very patient with our many questions. We then had the opportunity to taste their award-winning mint tea and organiser Laura Thomas was positively swamped with 20-Ghost club members jostling for a place in the queue to buy tea, chocolate, cosmetics and more from the small Summerdown Farm gift shop in a repurposed farm building. As Ken remarked, it was totally different from the National Trust “please exit via the gift shop”!

The array of club cars was a full representation of Ghosts, 20HP, 20/25, plus two out of the three Phantom models (I think we were missing a PI but that’s excusable!) Of course all the cars looked amazing but, playing the ‘which one would you secretly want to take home’ game, I would pick George and Monique Howitt’s (new to them) Wraith. This was a gorgeous car, in truly 1930s style, that I hadn’t seen before. George told us that chassis WHC49 is a 1939 Wraith by Gurney Nutting with metal sedanca roof. I was amazed to learn that is has covered only 89,000 miles from new!

After a good time perusing cars we enjoyed a very fine lunch of mint marinated lamb (obviously) and delicious salads all served by the wonderful Heidi and her team. The volume of chat endorsed the usual wonderful bonds of friendship between us all. It was a fine way to close the season’s driving events, and a huge thank you to Strone and Alex for their organisation.



Phil and Katha Macpherson

George and Monique Howitt’s 1939 Gurney Nutting Wraith



Adrian and Catherine Dickens and behind their 1937 PIII 3BU176.

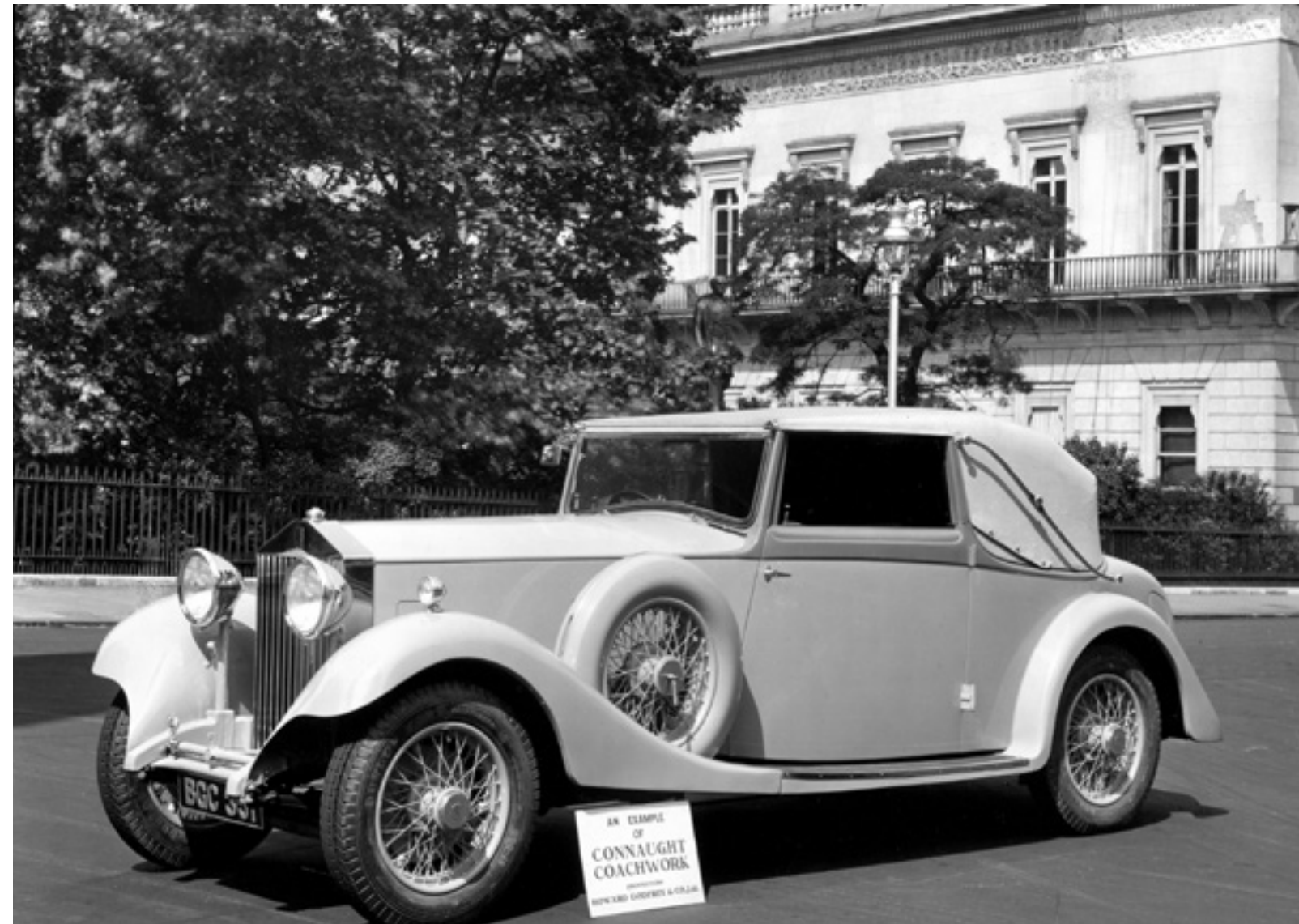
Rolls-Royce: Tea, Toddy and Architecture in Ceylon.

*Sir John Stuttard provides a foretaste of his new book (co-authored with Roger Thiedeman):
Rolls-Royce in Ceylon.*

Tea first came to the UK in the 1650s when it was imported from China by the Dutch East India Company. The British became one of the world's largest consumers of tea. Indeed by the end of the 18th century, the country's trade imbalance with China was so great, with the huge imports of tea, that in 1792 George III sent Lord Macartney on a mission to petition Emperor Qianlong to open up trade with Great Britain. This failed and led to the shameful Opium Wars of the 19th century.

Fortunately, a remedy was at hand, albeit some decades later. As part of the growth of the British Empire, the island of Ceylon was gradually captured from the Dutch by the British East India Company in the late 1790s and became a British colony in 1802. To begin with, coconuts, coffee and rubber were important agricultural products. But in 1866, the coffee crop failed and tea was first planted the following year in Ceylon by a Scotsman, James Taylor. It was a huge success and the tea industry grew rapidly, soon becoming the country's major export, accounting for an annual 22,900 tonnes in 1890. Many British families moved to Ceylon to participate and such well-known brands as Liptons and Brooke Bond were developed.

When the motor car first appeared in Ceylon, British models featured and, inevitably, Rolls-Royce was among the brands to be imported, mainly second or third hand but also a few new cars. While tea planters were among the buyers, many Ceylonese landowners appeared as early owners. Their wealth had often originated from their plantations where coconuts were used to make a potent alcoholic beverage known as arrack, from which toddy is derived. They not only made arrack and toddy but owned licensed taverns which were rented out. Like British brewers with their tied houses, this was a well-trodden path of creating enough wealth to be able to acquire a Rolls-Royce motor car. Four Ceylonese (JLD Peiris, Mrs PJ Dias, Sir Ernest de Silva, described below, and CEA Dias) are recorded as buying new cars.



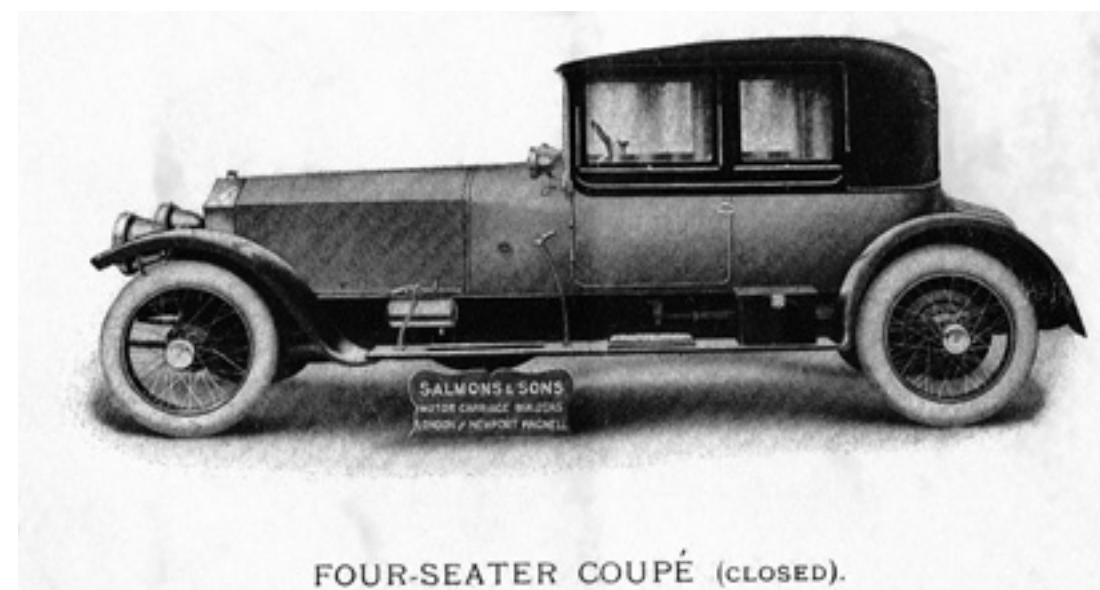
A coachbuilder's photograph of 1934 GKC4 later owned by Geoffrey Bawa and which he took to Ceylon (picture courtesy of Tom Clarke).

The first Rolls-Royce to arrive in Ceylon was a 1914 Silver Ghost (1RB) Salmons Cabriolet, which had been acquired by its second owner, Frank Alford, in 1919 and shipped in 1921 on the *s/s Naldera* to Colombo, where he was described as a tea planter. His sister Gladys had announced her engagement that year. So perhaps there was need for a special wedding car – often the spark for buying a Rolls-Royce.

Interestingly, the car was spotted in Ceylon in January 1922 by Viscount Northcliffe who was on a round the world tour. Perhaps better known as Alfred Charles William Harmsworth, Northcliffe was a newspaper and publishing magnate, who owned, over the years, the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Mirror*, *The Observer*, *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*. He was also a friend of Claude Johnson, Chief Executive of Rolls-Royce and, during the years preceding the First World War, he became an enthusiast of the Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost car. His intimate knowledge of the marque is borne out in the book *Lord Northcliffe – and the early years of Rolls-Royce*. He and his wife owned no fewer than twelve Rolls-Royce motor cars between 1906 and 1921. Northcliffe wrote in his diary about his stay in Ceylon: ‘One of the first things we met on entering Nuwara Eliya was a Rolls-Royce, driven by a woman. She gave us the exact amount of room needed to avert an accident, and no more.’ Most probably this was Frank Alford’s mother, Margaret, who was perhaps in a hurry to finalise preparations for her daughter’s wedding.



Lord Northcliffe.



Salmons leaflet from 1914 showing a SG perhaps like the first R-R in Ceylon (picture courtesy of Tom Clarke).

In 1927, the Crown Agents acquired a former Trials car, 1925 Phantom I (101MC) Barker Landaulette, for use by His Excellency The Governor of Ceylon. The fourth Governor to enjoy this stately means of transport was Sir (Reginald) Edward Stubbs, GCMG, JP who served from 1933 to 1937.

It was in September 1934 that His Excellency and 101MC enjoyed their highest profile when HRH Prince Henry, the Duke of Gloucester, visited Ceylon. His mission, at the request of his father King George V, was to restore to Ceylon the Crown and Throne of the last King of Kandy, taken by the British in 1815. Nearly 120 years later, King George V’s decision to return the remaining appropriated items was welcomed by the people of Ceylon as a refreshingly new, benevolent and progressive attitude on the part of the British Government, and His Majesty the King in particular, and a positive step toward granting of self-government. Consequently, HRH The Duke of Gloucester was hailed as a hero wherever he appeared during his four days in Ceylon. The Governor’s Phantom (101MC) conveyed Prince Henry on arrival in Colombo and then again in Kandy, where the official hand-over ceremony took place amid pomp and pageantry. Photographs appeared in the *Rolls-Royce Bulletin* of January 1935.



Seen in both photographs, 1925 PI 101MC in Kandy, January 1935 (Credit Rolls-Royce Bulletin).

Of the four Ceylonese who acquired new Rolls-Royce motor cars, Sir Ernest de Silva had a high profile. A graduate of Clare College, Cambridge, he was called to the Bar at London’s Inner Temple and was a close friend of the future first Prime Minister of independent India, Jawaharlal Nehru. Returning to Ceylon, de Silva inherited his family’s estates which he ran competently. These comprised thousands of acres of land, including the 1,200-acre Salawa estate (used as a rubber plantation) and land in the expensive Cinnamon Gardens area of Colombo. He developed an export business which shipped local produce such as cinnamon, coconut products, cacao, tea and rubber, all grown on his estates, to buyers in various parts of the world, but especially to the UK and Europe.

In 1926, de Silva acquired 1926 Phantom I (92TC) Saoutchik All Weather Tourer which had been presented at the Paris Show by the renowned French coachbuilder Jacques Saoutchik.

A wealthy and influential polymath, in 1939 de Silva was the Founder Chairman of the largest bank in Ceylon, the Bank of Ceylon, and he was the Governor of the State Mortgage Bank, which was established to provide financial assistance to the island's low-income earners. Ernest and his wife's philanthropic activities were prolific. In January 1946 de Silva was knighted by King George VI for his public services to Ceylon.

Ceylon's most prolific owner of Rolls-Royce motor cars was Geoffrey Bawa, an architect of great repute in Ceylon in the post-War period. Geoffrey's father was a lawyer of Eurasian descent who served as Acting Solicitor-General of Ceylon. After studying at the University of Colombo, Geoffrey graduated in English from St Catherine's College, Cambridge in 1942 and then qualified as a lawyer. Returning to Colombo in 1946, he acquired his first Rolls-Royce, a 1925 20HP (GNK25) Penman Saloon, which he owned for less than a year. By the end of 1946 he was back in Europe for an extended stay and he bought his second Rolls-Royce, a 1925 Silver Ghost (60EU) Park Ward Tourer which he brought back to Ceylon in 1948.

Meanwhile, in Ceylon in December 1946, he acquired a 1925 Phantom I (122HC) Barker Tourer, which he sold soon afterwards to his elder brother, Bevis, who is known for creating a spectacular garden at his home, named Brief, near Bentota, 30 miles south of Colombo. In London, in 1950, Geoffrey bought the fourth of his six Rolls-Royce cars, a 1934 20/25 (GKC4) Connaught Drophead Coupé, which he later toured on the Continent of Europe as well as in the UK, before bringing it to Ceylon.



Banker, farmer, lawyer, Sir Ernest de Silva, immortalised on a postage stamp.



Geoffrey Bawa (courtesy of the Geoffrey Bawa and Lunuganga Trust Archives).

60EU in 1948 at Brief, Bentota, the country estate of Geoffrey Bawa's older brother Bevis Bawa. On the left is a 20/25 GXO33, then owned by the Bawa brothers' cousin Ronnie Schrader.

Geoffrey Bawa's heart was not, as his mother had hoped, in the legal profession and, in 1952, he returned again to the UK, this time to be privately tutored in civil engineering subjects at Cambridge and then at the Architectural Association in London. After this he began practising as a fully qualified architect in Ceylon in 1957 and the scene was set for nearly four decades designing wonderful buildings. As Geoffrey Bawa's reputation as a brilliant, innovative architect grew, so did his portfolio. He was commissioned to design buildings ranging from private homes to large hotel resorts, universities and public buildings. Beyond Sri Lanka his work encompassed projects in India, Indonesia (Bali), Japan and Mauritius. Arguably Bawa's most important assignment was the design and construction of Sri Lanka's new Parliamentary complex at Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte, the country's legislative capital 12 kilometres from Colombo's central business district, an enormous task that was completed in only three years since initiated in 1979. His design of The Steel Corporation Building at Oruwela might be described as a fusion of the East and Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

His favourite car was the 1934 20/25 (GKC4) Connaught Drophead Coupé, which is now housed at his former Colombo residence.

Editor's Note: This article gives a snapshot of some of the content of the club's latest publication, *Rolls-Royce in Ceylon*. Co-authored by club members John Stuttard and Roger Thiedeman, the book describes the 29 chassis, over 190 pages, with more than 400 illustrations, of those pre-War Rolls-Royce motor cars (and two special Silver Wraiths) with a connection with Ceylon. The book will be published in the New Year and copies can be obtained as described in the flyer which is being posted to members with this issue of *News & Record*.



Bawa's favourite car was 1934 20/25 GKC4 Connaught Drophead Coupé, which is now housed at his former Colombo residence.

A Rolls-Royce is Exclusive... Really?

Henry Fitzhugh describes a trip to Castelfranco in Italy – the home of the supercar!



In the Pagani Museum: the lamp-posts seem rather incongruous!

Let's be honest. Many of us feel a twinge of pride and self-satisfaction at driving a Rolls-Royce. But is this the pinnacle? Apparently not.

We found ourselves in Castelfranco, not far from Modena in northern Italy. The thirty miles or so of this sub-region is the home of all the Italian supercars - Ferrari, Lamborghini, and all the rest. Most important it is the home of Pagani, the most exclusive car on the road.

Horacio Pagani himself was born in Argentina and dreamed of designing the most beautiful and technically advanced cars from a very early age. He abandoned his university studies in Argentina to pursue his own research and through his friend Fangio, the Formula 1 champion, got an introduction to Enzo Ferrari and Lamborghini. This led to his move to Italy. He is a perfectionist and was the first

to introduce use of carbon fibre in cars, which he offered to Lamborghini before setting up in business himself.

In a factory and museum occupying the space of about two football fields, 300 employees turn out one car a week. They are all very proud of Pagani cars and some lead the tours. It is spotlessly clean, and all employees are in company uniform. The bodywork is carbon fibre and entirely hand done. The engine is a Mercedes-Benz V12, turbocharged of course. Every part, down to nuts bolts and washers is engraved with the name Pagani just so you don't get the bits mixed up with your other workshop pleasures. In all, about 500 cars have graced the roads in thirty years. We've never seen one on the road - not even in central London. But you could have one. Yours will, of course, be custom built. Prices start at around two million euros.



The Pagani Huayra.

The Pagani Zonda HP Barchetta.



Ready for anything!

In a two-part series Michael Power talks through his decision to purchase a Ghost and ready it for the toughest of all trials: The Peking to Paris.

In May and June this year my friend Nigel Parsons and I did the Peking to Paris Rally in my 1920 Silver Ghost, 58CW, and Johnnie asked me to write an article. There was a piece in October's *Automobile* magazine on the story of our trip so I will give a brief summary here but will aim to talk about the car in more detail.

Before going further, many of you will recall the fire at Bicester Motion on 15 May which led to the loss of two firefighters and one member of the public. I'm the chairman of Bicester Motion and following this tragedy I knew I had to break off from the rally and return to the UK.

What this meant was that Nigel would have to handle the first section of the trip on his own. However, he had little experience of driving the Ghost so we had a one-hour crash course in the complexities of starting, driving and stopping 58CW, in central Beijing at 6:30am on the first morning, before I dashed to the airport in a cab.

The intention was that I would return in a few days after I had done all that a non-exec director can do in such tragic circumstances. But, once back in the UK, I realised that my visa only allowed one entry into China - which I had already used. Obtaining another visa was going to take too long so there was nothing else for it but for Nigel to drive solo for the entire length of China: two fifths of the entire rally. We had WhatsApp conversations when I gave him encouragement and talked through the most important maintenance tasks, but it really was an incredible feat. Two weeks later I was able to fly to Almaty in Kazakhstan to meet up and complete the rally.

Readers will recognise this shot from the cover of Issue 74. 'At Full Lock' Michael Power in his 1920 Silver Ghost, 58CW, competing in the VSCC Winter Driving Test at Bicester Heritage in 2022. Photo Peter McFadyen.





Michael's estate car 1929 20/25 GXO85, seen outside Goodwood House (see Issue 76.)

I thought I would divide this article into two parts. Below, I deal with the history of the car prior to my ownership as well as the 'fettling' since I bought it 18 years ago. Part two, in a future issue of this magazine, will deal with the rally preparation and how the car actually performed.

I took part in the 2007 Peking to Paris (the centenary of the original race) in my 1923 Vauxhall 30-98. On that rally I was in awe at the performance of the Silver Ghosts. They were not the fastest but were the most resilient and reliable. Consequently they did very well in the awards. As a result of all of that I purchased 58CW in October 2007.

Originally, the first owner was Mrs Gromme of Regent House, Victoria Park, Manchester, in February 1920. Unusually for 1920 the car was specified with a brass radiator and all the other parts, which would normally be nickel, were made of brass or brass plated. This was possibly achieved by finding pre-war brass parts and might explain why the price was lower than other chassis of the period. Full payment of £1,305 was made on 1 May 1920 and three days later the chassis went to Cockshoots of Manchester to have a landaulette body fitted.

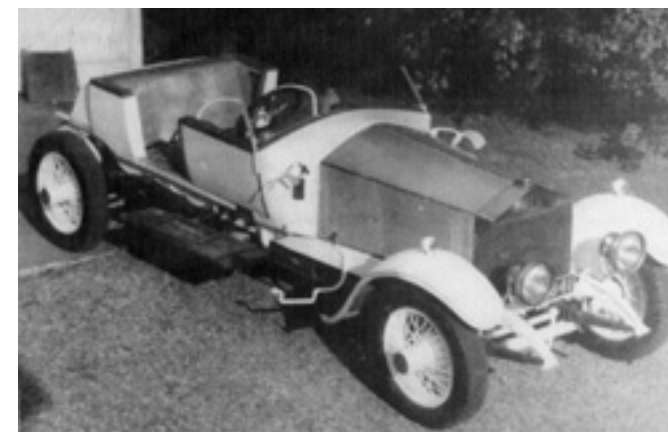
The car was first registered on 14 February 1921, reg no NC841, which it still has.

By 1930 the car was recorded on the R-R chassis cards as belonging to a Captain Hannay of Fenchurch Street, London. Perhaps the real-life inspiration for John Buchan's hero in *The Thirty Nine Steps* and the other Greenmantle novels!

The next twenty years are blank and the car's war time activity is unknown. Some of the paintwork was light-grey and suggested that perhaps it was RAF or ambulance related. At some stage the car was used as a taxi and I noticed on the petrol tank, when cleaning it, the remains of the words HACKNEY CARRIAGE.

A nephew of one of the owners in the 1950s sent me two photos of the car showing it both as a tourer and also as an estate car.

I prefer the estate car – but then I already own 1929 20/25 GXO85 Estate [Editor: see the article on Michael's R-R Woodie in issue 76]



58CW in 1950's, as (left) a tourer and (right) an estate.



As mentioned earlier, in 2007 having completed the Peking to Paris in my Vauxhall, I was wondering about buying a Silver Ghost and noticed 58CW advertised in *The Automobile*. I told the vendor that I would buy it if he could show it running, which he did... just. The fuel system was not connected, there was no wiring on the car, the body which he offered with it was sitting ON it, but not attached in any way and didn't fit at the bulkhead. There was no question of it moving itself. Anyway, as an R-R chassis it appeared to be complete and I had it delivered to my home.

Initial work was fixing up the petrol supply and air pressure system. Also rewiring the car, fitting the body supplied, making up a dashboard and getting the essential instruments to work: oil pressure gauge, ammeter and air pressure gauge. The car was licensed and on the road for my son's wedding in July 2008 having obtained an MOT. I recall that passing the test required fitting a new king-pin but otherwise, everything else, was okay.

I discovered that the body was American, made in the 1920s - ostensibly to fit a Ghost. And it did, indeed, fit in terms of length and width but the scuttle height was two inches too high. Frankly I wasn't keen on the body shape or style.



You can just about make out 'Hackney Carriage' on 58CW's petrol tank.



Early in Michael's ownership with work just beginning.



July 2008 dressed up for my son's wedding. Note the two inch uplift from bonnet to bodywork.

I cast around for some considerable time hoping to find a body rather than go to the enormous expense of commissioning one and eventually found a light tourer body for sale. It had been made sometime post-war to fit a 1919 chassis. The vendor had bought the whole car as a project but did not feel the body was suitable. I thought that it would do me fine.

By June 2015 the wheels had been rebuilt to take straight-sided tyres, rather than well-based tyres. The car was not yet upholstered or painted and the seats were ex-Morris Minor!

At about this time, when I thought I had got the car running reasonably, I thought I should get it checked over by some professionals. After asking around I took it to Allan Glew of A J Glew who did what I required, which was to discover some things which needed doing of which I was unaware and to some extent beyond my ability. Namely he identified that no oil was reaching the timing gears at the front of the engine and he also identified a worn clutch release bearing which necessitated taking down a chunk of the transmission and the clutch. During this process he commented that the clutch lining was the original one, and we agreed to leave it, because it looked okay. It's still there working away after 105 years, protected by regular oiling! Whilst I had rewired the car and the electrics all worked, I had done it with tasteless plastic wires. Allan persuaded me to let him rewire the car with the correct armoured cable properly clipped to the bulkhead.



In June 2015 with newly acquired body fitted. I took the car - and importantly myself - on a three day R-R Ghost technical course.



Painted, upholstered and hooded, December 2020.



At Chateau de Sermet, April 2023.



The Stelvio Pass!



Much relieved to be at the top of the Stelvio in June 2023 on the 20-GC Alpine Tour.

The car was starting to become a usable proposition, albeit looking very scrappy with random paintwork and those Morris Minor seats and so the next stage was to do something about painting, upholstery and hood.

Painting was done by Alex, whose day, and sometimes night, job is manning the gate at Bicester Motion. With some oversight by Harry Fraser the upholsterer at Bicester, the original wings were repaired soundly but visibly and the whole thing painted black in line with the colour of the original bonnet (original Ghost bonnets have their chassis number stamped on them). Alex painted it in just the way I wanted. It is not a bare metal respray to make it look brand new. It was an exercise in getting back to a sound surface onto which to stick paint. It continues to show all the bumps and scrapes which the car has endured in its various guises over the years, elegant landaulette limousine, Hackney Carriage, estate car, tourer.

Harry then made the front bench seat and upholstered the car, got someone to make the very substantial hood frame and then made the hood and the tonneau cover.

The car had become genuinely usable and we did some Vintage Sport-Car Club driving tests at Bicester, which are agility tests driving around cones for which the R-R Ghost is totally ill-suited!

It has been to France down to the Dordogne to visit Club des Autos, at the Chateau de Sermet.

In June 2023 the car took part in the Alpine Tour, in memory of the 1913 Alpine Trial which helped to establish R-R as the best car in the world, climbing numerous Alpine passes, including the Stelvio.

In all of these trials and exertions the car performed without any major problems and proved itself worthy of consideration for Peking to Paris. And so the preparations were begun. What we did, and how the car performed, will appear in Part Two of this article next time.

The Last Word

Hello everybody, I've been out and about on magazine business a fair bit over this year. I was delighted to visit David and Justyna Redfern in Berlin some months ago and the story of their car appears in these pages. It was an adventure jumping on a plane to meet them and then getting to know them. I still have a few stories 'in the bag' for the next issue but I ran out of space this time.

It's fun to browse our membership list (enclosed here or coming soon) and see who else is close to you, geographically. Why not ping your nearby members a quick email and suggest a Sunday lunch? We did just that, just the other weekend, and met up with Greg Leniston and his partner Laura, and Tim and Charlotte Maltin. I accept that, in deep winter, you might think twice about taking out the R-R but if you can dodge the rain and salt on the road it's great to give our beauties a blast.

I think I'm coming towards the end of my time as your editor. The wonderful Graham Tyson is stepping down as Membership Secretary (after 13+ years!) and Ken has asked me to take on this role. Initially I will do it in tandem with the editor job but going forward I think the magazine could do with some fresh ideas. So I guess the question is: Any volunteers?

Initially I used the Adobe software but then I found Jaz Wiseman who now designs the magazine for me. Jaz is great and creates the professional product you see. As editor, I simply collect emails/comments which form the 'news' and then send over the stories and images to Jaz who puts it all together. Also, you don't need to be an expert on Rolls-Royce Motor Cars (or cars at all actually) – there are lots of experts around who kindly proof-read everything and make sure the facts are right. My role is really not that hard, but just needs a little enthusiasm and a bit of organisation. It's exciting to see the magazine land on the doormat and know that you've had a lot to do with getting it there!

So look, give it some thought. You definitely have the capacity and could do a bit more to engage with the club. This is fun – and I reckon you're just the right person! Give me a call (07930 531231) or drop me an email (jgallop66@gmail.com) and let's have a chat.

But in the meantime, thank you for your company. Have a great Christmas and New Year – see you very soon, best wishes,

Johnnie



