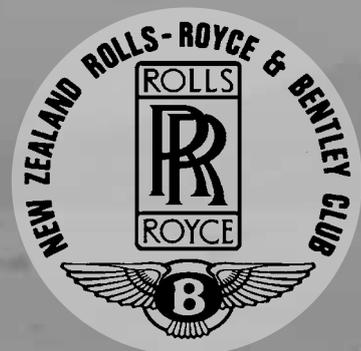


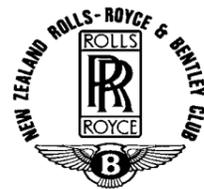
New Zealand Rolls-Royce & Bentley Club Inc Issue 12-6, 2012





NEW ZEALAND ROLLS-ROYCE & BENTLEY CLUB (INC)

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NEXT MAGAZINE:
Deadline for receipt of all material for Issue 13-1 is 22 January 2013.

(Front Cover)
The Riddle Family - Eddie and Joy, daughter Lauren and son Graeme, arrive at Unity Park in their Barker Limousine 20/25 GKC15.

Membership

MEMBERSHIP of the New Zealand Rolls-Royce & Bentley Club Inc is open to anyone with an interest in these two distinguished marques, whether or not they are the owner of a Rolls-Royce or Bentley. Your Membership SUBSCRIPTION includes the Club Magazine (6 issues annually), the right to attend all Club events and activities, and to partake in Club management.

FEES: Registration Fee \$ 10.00 (once only)
Membership Fee \$115.00 (annual, reduced to \$100 for prompt payment)

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Chassis Records

The Company's Construction Records, which accompanied every Rolls-Royce and Bentley chassis (since 1931) through its production at Derby or Crewe, are a valuable resource for subsequent owners. They detail the original order, any special equipment, and the results of tests and inspections prior to dispatch. The records for all cars over 10 years old are held by the RREC in the UK, and copies are available to members of that Club. The number of pages for early cars may be up to 20 or more. Records for a Silver Shadow can amount to even more pages and cost around \$NZ150. To obtain a copy of your car's records, contact the Club's Post WW2 Technical Liaison Officer, Roy Tilley, on 04 566 0850 E-mail rmt@xtra.co.nz

Advertising

Classified advertisements pertaining to Rolls-Royce and Bentley are free to Financial Members who do not deal regularly in Rolls-Royce or Bentley cars or services. All classified advertisements must be submitted to the Editor, Tom King, Phone 03 3398 309, e-mail the.king@xtra.co.nz 191 Sparks Road, Christchurch 8025. Commercial advertisements will be the subject to a charge to the advertiser. Colour advertisements are charged at \$220 per half page and \$300 for full page, payable to the NZRR&BC Inc.

Mainland Comment

Another year and one perhaps best described as "survivable." Most or all of us will have faced adversity and lost friends and family during 2012, but here's a toast to us all for Christmas and the New Year.

This is the 28th magazine in the A4 all-colour format first suggested by our Past Chairman Richard Hadfield, and your editor would like to pass on very sincere thanks to all our contributors, advertisers, readers, and supporters both here and overseas. There is no shortage of material, whether original, reprinted, or still bouncing around in the squash courts of our minds (with apologies to Michel Legrand). For 2013, subject to always welcome suggestions, we can promise the same blend of Club and Company news, technical and historical features, and a complete lack of political comment. The Editorial Board, also known as our Proof-reader and occasional Help Desk, suggests that the magazine's layout would be enhanced by white space, but your editor remains influenced by:

There was a young man from Japan
Whose limericks no-one could scan.

When told this was so
He replied "Yes I know,

"But I always try to get just as many words into the last line as ever I possibly can."



(Above) Miss Lucy Wills driving her 4½ litre Bentley NX3464, Vulcan Hotel, St Bathans, during a Bentley Drivers Club event, October 1982

Northern Region at Ardmore, by Glynn Williams



De Havilland DH98 Mosquito KA114 with Vampire DH115 over Auckland city, photographed from the two-seater Supermarine Spitfire by Gavin Conroy, who has given his kind permission to use his image. Rolls-Royce powered both these aeroplanes.

This was an event which seemed to tickle everyone's fancy, as we had around 30 members and their families in attendance. British Car Clubs were invited to attend, and it was a traffic jam of interesting vehicles waiting to get into the event by around 8.00am. Our club cars ranged from the oldest, Peter Morelli's Bentley 8 Litre, to the latest Rolls Royce Ghost brought along by Neil D'Arcy-Brain of Rolls-Royce Motors. The Mosquito fighter plane, KA114 of World War 2 has undergone a seven year restoration and looked magnificent. Prior to the event there were lots of rumours that it would not fly on the day.

However, that proved to be wrong. We were treated to the sight of it passing back and forth low over the crowd, the twin Rolls-Royce Merlin engines making music to our ears. Later in the day it did some low passes in close formation with the Vampire and that was really impressive.

Such was the attraction of this event that the roads around Ardmore were gridlocked for some hours. The weather on the day was predicted to be showers, but no rain fell at the airfield. Everyone had come armed with umbrellas but we needed sun hats, for a most enjoyable day.



Elizabeth Mitchell took these photographs of Lois and Richard Hadfield arriving in GSR65, and KA114 with attendant Supermarine Spitfire, North American Mustang P-51D, and Curtiss P-40.



Combined Central and Northern Region Labour Weekend Event at New Plymouth; Report and Photographs by Wendy Bryce and Other Participants

While the Taihape Road is now completely sealed it still traverses remote countryside and to start our weekend we drove from Hawkes Bay through sleet, hail, strong winds, rain and roadside snow. I don't know who named the road *Gentle Annie*; it was an adventure!

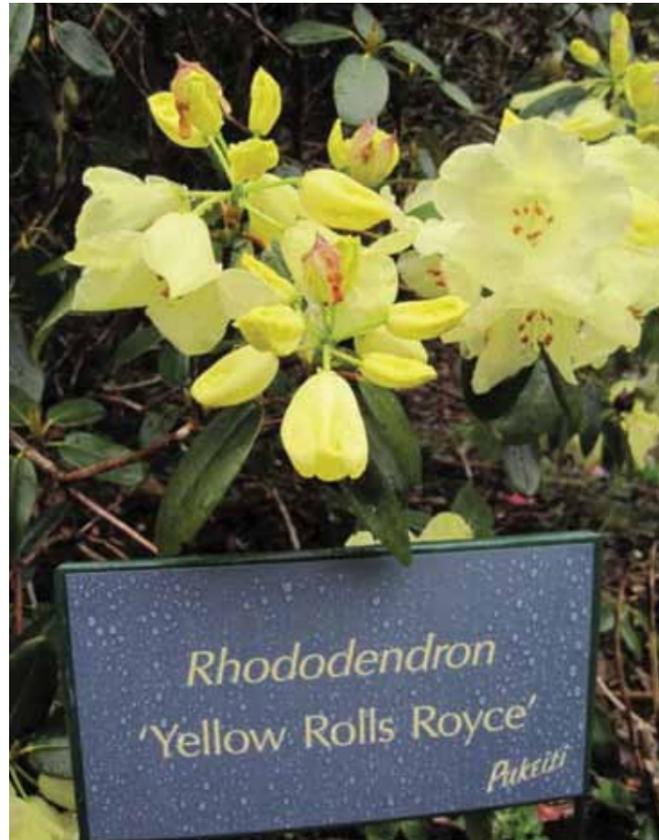
A sunny Saturday gave sight of a spectacular Mount Taranaki with a dusting of snow and we joined the group for lunch and then visited the Rolls Royce 20HP chassis 71A7 of John Matthews, who has owned it for over 50 years. (See the story about this car in Issue 08-6 of the club magazine.)

Bryce Cameron, the mechanic, showed us around John's collection of vehicles and military memorabilia. There were tank transporters from Desert Storm (The Gulf War) and the Vietnam and Korean wars. A self propelled Scorpion 95mm anti tank gun appeared to be guarding the 20HP. We also inspected a very old wooden gun carriage and an original D8 Caterpillar bulldozer from the 1940s still in operating condition. Bryce explained that there were many projects still waiting, including the 20HP.



1954 Silver Dawn SOG76 in the grounds of Dove Garden

When visiting the Barnett property Michael Wolfe had generously invited us to visit his own home, a replica Swiss chalet, to view his taxidermy collection and model railway. So on Monday he welcomed us with morning tea and anecdotes of Switzerland. We admired the trains and villages he had created, the Matchbox toys; in all a children's paradise. From the waterwheel outside the house to the wolf skins on the floor and wall it was an amazingly diverse assemblage. Michael is an enterprising and energetic man.



A happy dining group at The Autolodge

We Welcome the Following New Members

Bruce Gordon and Marsha Thomson
P.O. Box 15303, New Lynn,
Auckland 0640
Phone (09) 834 0570 and (021) 074 6355
bruce@webexpress.co.nz
1988 Bentley Turbo R Saloon
Chassis SCBZSOTA4JCH23426

James and Elvis Flynn
P.O. Box 204258, Highbrook,
Auckland 2161
Phone (021) 222 8741
james@coverstaffrecruitment.co.nz
2008 Rolls-Royce Phantom Drop-head Coupé
Chassis SCA2D680X8UH07027

Mike Todd
P.O. Box 343, Taupo 3351
Phone (07) 376 9095 and (021) 223 4047
mike.todd@xtra.co.nz
2008 Bentley Brooklands Coupé
Chassis SBCC42M79CH13832
2010 Bentley Continental Super-Sports Coupé
Chassis SCBCG43AC063186

Letter to the Editor

Hi Tom,
The unidentified Bentley on page 11 in the last magazine is Speed Six LR2778 belonging to the Maharajah of Jaipur. It bothered me as I was sure I had seen it in another magazine. I found it eventually in the BDC Club Advertiser. I have attached the pictures. It would seem to have been in the hands of R C Moss, but I didn't find any pictures on their website.

The registration doesn't appear in the BDC "Members and their Bentleys" but he might have not wanted his details published. If you have access to Hay's book *The Vintage Years* page 392 shows chassis LR2778 was re-imported from India in 1937 and registered DUU618. Peter Morelli.



Glynn Williams, who has spent so many happy hours at Tupare, points out features to Michael Midgley and Clive Edmonds.

John & Irma Hughes
121 Bushy Hill St.
R.D. 2 Tapanui 9587
Phone (027) 222 4261
jhughes@esi.co.nz
1986 Silver Spur
Chassis SCAZN0001FCH12513



John and Irma Hughes's Silver Spur at Tairaroa Heads on 17 November, beside B175KU and SCB2B03A5NCH42184



Bryce Cameron opens the bonnet of 71A7

'Dove Garden', the home of Bryce Barnett was our next stop where we were greeted by Michael Wolfe, the custodian of Bryce's cars. It was a beautiful spring afternoon, and the property immaculate. The eclectic collection of vehicles ranged from Aston Martin through Austin Devon, modern Morgan Aero, 1954 Rolls-Royce Silver Dawn and Triumph Stag to VW Convertible. The assortment included "child friendly" autos in a replica "Herbie", a couple of micro cars and an ice cream cart!

Separate accommodation (it would be an insult to call it a shed or a garage) housed the American representatives, Corvette, Mustang and Hummer with an unrestored '39 Buick 8 convertible ex France, the favourite of some connoisseurs.

On then to Tupare and the Chapman Taylor house built for Sir Russell and Lady Matthews.

Tupare is magnificent. Transformation from gorse and bracken began in 1932 and now the gardens and landscapes are superb, and in the gardener's cottage are displays on the history of this beautiful property.

A very convivial group dinner ended the day.

We began again on a misty, rainy Sunday morning following Merv Warner on his Taranaki tour, 'Maunga to Moana' (Mountain to Sea).

Through glorious virgin bush we drove to Pukeiti Gardens where, carrying our umbrellas, we set off around the park. The watery light enhanced the colours and we enjoyed the waterwheel, bush, bird life and flowers including the Rhododendron, 'Yellow Rolls Royce,' surely put there especially for us!

We lunched at Opunake, before making a damp trip to the local beach, followed by a misty, atmospheric run to Cape Egmont where the replica lighthouse museum featured the story of Ernest, Lord Rutherford. The climb up the spiral staircase to the light was a spectacular experience, but we did not see The Mountain, at all, all day.

Rolls-Royce - Simply an Amazing Experience by Alan Race with Rolls-Royce Supplied Images

Touring the Goodwood assembly plant and being hosted at the Rolls-Royce stand at the Paris International Motor Show were unforgettable experiences for Alan and Janine Race during their recent trip to UK and Europe.

During negotiations with Rolls-Royce Motor Cars in Auckland over the purchase of our 2010 Ghost a chance remark about being able to see the assembly plant during a planned trip to UK and Europe resulted in our being 'royally' hosted on a tour of the award winning Rolls-Royce plant in Goodwood near the southern coast of England. What a marvellous way to spend a day. Imagine the impression you give other hotel guests when a black, chauffeur-driven Phantom glides to a halt at the hotel entrance and this is for you.

Our chauffeur, Colin, was a delight and very interesting to talk to. How he managed to glide this large European spec Phantom (left hand drive) on those narrow roads with such ease is a mystery to me. When we arrive at the famous Goodwood motor racing circuit it is just a few hundred metres further on that you turn into the gates of the Rolls-Royce commercial estate but at this point there is absolutely no sign of anything but paddocks.

Cresting a rise in the drive reveals this magnificently modern low-rise assembly plant, up until then totally hidden from view.



The living green roof is planted in similar vegetation to the surrounding country side to ensure there is no visual disruption to the beautiful Goodwood Estate owned by Lord March. Once at this state of the art production facility, which has natural lighting to ensure the best working conditions for their vehicle assembly including shutters that follow the sun, we were greeted by Sue Carling (Sales Support Manager for Asia Pacific) and taken in to a well appointed boardroom for light refreshments before we commenced our one and a half hour factory tour.

We all know that Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars have always been synonymous with quietness but I never expected to encounter this in the factory that builds them! The first thing that struck



me was how quiet everything was; no banging or noisy machines, just passionate employees busily fitting the various items as each car in the process of creation moves quietly from station to station collecting more components with each stop. With the bodies being built in Germany and shipped as 'bodies in white' to Goodwood, the aspect of manufacturing which would create the most sound is avoided here.

The next surprise to me was the number of cars in the process of assembly; at least 11 Ghosts and 9 Phantoms, and every car on ei-

ther the Ghost or Phantom assembly line is pre-ordered. This is the busiest period in Rolls-Royce's history with nearly 20 cars being completed on average each day. No wonder that Rolls-Royce has just celebrated its record sales year with over 3,500 new cars sold. Clearly, somewhere is not having a global financial crisis!

When an order is received, the body of the car is moved to the painting division where the colour chosen from a range of 44,000 colour options (and that is not a typing error) is sprayed by the only robots in the plant. Four coats totalling 32 litres of paint are perfectly applied by this process aided by staff members who spray in to the areas where the robots are unable to access. Before the painted body is moved on to the assembly line the paintwork, once hardened, is hand rubbed to a mirror-like lustre for 5 hours. Make no mistake these are still very much hand-built cars in true Rolls-Royce tradition.

Once the finished body is ready for assembly it enters the plant where the vehicle's doors are removed and placed in a cradle which follows the body until the point of re-attachment is reached. The first components are also fitted at this initial station. At about the halfway stage the marriage of the suspension sub frames, engine, transmission and drive trains takes place after which the transformation from a series of parts to completed car gradually takes shape as it progresses through each subsequent phase of assembly, moving from station to station with every item installed by hand.



It is amazing to see the passion displayed by the assembly technicians as they apply their particular skill to aid in the creation of one of these beautiful cars.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of Rolls-Royce production is their bespoke department where, quite literally, anything is possible. If a signature is desired to be inlaid in the wooden dashboard or on the chrome sill finishers or even stitched into the head rests that can be arranged. If you want purple paintwork with orange leather – no problem (but you have to live with the end result). There is a huge option list available from cocktail cabinets to refrigerated chilly bins, illuminated Spirit of Ecstasy to stars in the roof lining, as well as any colour for the paintwork and leather choice.

On completion, the cars are then thoroughly checked for several hours on the rolling road, then to the water spray test to ensure



water tightness from drizzle to monsoon conditions before a practical drive test on the roads around the Goodwood estate. Once the engineers are satisfied the car meets their exacting standards, it is cleaned down and hand rubbed for a further 4 hours before proceeding to the despatch area. In all it takes 20 days involving 60 pairs of hands to complete a Ghost, which, for a hand-built car, is extremely efficient.

There are two wonderful stories to emerge from the Rolls-Royce plant. A sign writer was observed applying his trade on a hotel sign by a senior manager of Rolls-Royce who was most impressed by what he saw. After a conversation, Mark Court now applies the hand-painted coach-lines to the Phantoms! To see the skill with which these hand painted lines have been so perfectly applied is astonishing. Imagine not just painting one line but following it underneath with another usually thinner and sometimes in a different colour and creating lines so perfectly that it is impossible to see any join where the brush has had to be reloaded with paint. Even the application of lines by tape couldn't match that. There is a video on You Tube showing an interview with Mark which readers may wish to view. It is still hard to believe he does it. We saw a Phantom that Mark had just finished and we were allowed to view his work providing we didn't touch as it was in the process of drying. A second story is that in which a request was made for a specific emblem to be applied to a set of headrests. Whilst they were experimenting with the embroidery for this design, a young woman, not from this department, made comment that she felt she could create the design they were looking for as she did embroidery as a hobby. When offered some leather off-cuts to take home and work with she duly returned the next day with a stunning creation which was promptly adopted for the order and she now heads that department for Rolls-Royce.

We were told that Rolls-Royce Motor Cars selected the Goodwood site for a variety of reasons, and two key benefits were the close proximity to ports for the delivery of the bodies from Germany and the subsequent exporting of cars, as well as the considerable talent of skilled staff which was available in the district already renowned for quality boat building.

After our factory tour, Sue hosted Janine and me to a beautiful lunch back in the boardroom where we chatted about what we had seen, and about the Ghost we had just bought and of which we were awaiting delivery. Seeing the cars actually being built has made us appreciate how very special this brand is. In the reception area at the plant, there are several classic Rolls-Royces on display; including a Phantom II and a rare Continental Silver Cloud III 4 door saloon and drop-head coupe. Whilst at the factory I also noticed a beautiful pale blue Phantom drop-head coupe and a two-tone Ghost in silver over blue. I have never been particularly keen on the silver bonnet option either in brushed stainless or painted, but the two-tone paint work was quite stunning. Little did I know I would see them again a couple of weeks later.

Our visit soon came to an end and with a two hour drive back to central London it was time for Colin to return us to our hotel. Cruising along in the serene silence and ambient comfort of the black Phantom capped off a very special day for us which now, some weeks later, still seems surreal. At least I have some photos to prove it did actually happen.

Our second encounter with Rolls Royce hospitality was two weeks later. After leaving London we flew to Venice and then on to Nice before thoroughly enjoying a 250kph dash up through the middle of France to Paris in the TGV. These trains are pretty incredible

and our 900km trip took just 6 hours with stops. The benefit over flying is that you also see the country through which you are passing, something that aeroplane travel totally eliminates. Once in Paris we included in our agenda a visit to the Paris International Motor Show, which was only a 45 minute walk from our hotel.

Buoyed by a visit to the Eiffel Tower, the 10 am boost of bubbly at the top, and the sun breaking through the clouds just in time for us to be able to see Paris from the top level, we made our way to the Port de Versailles and this world renowned car show held only every two years. Of course the display I particularly wanted to see was the Rolls-Royce stand where we were duly welcomed into the restricted area and shown the cars specifically made for the Paris show and finished with art deco elements in the trim to match their art deco show theme.

The Ghost on display looked very familiar in two tone silver over blue as did the drop-head Phantom beside it and I recognised that these were the cars I had noticed at the factory. The Rolls-Royce hostesses and staff at the display were very professional and welcomed us warmly as Ghost owners. We enjoyed the most perfect



Rolls-Royce treatment in their special hospitality area including a glass of champagne (our second for the day) as we chatted to the various personnel on duty at the stand who were excellent hosts and hostesses.

Their knowledge of the product was very comprehensive and I was given tips on driving the Ghost and shown some features I never realised the car had and which I would encounter when we duly took delivery. This was a very special display, superbly fitted out, with their hospitality area displaying the new limited addition Aviator Phantom Coupé. This area was presented as a Rolls-Royce showroom and featuring art deco artwork and the customary display boards featuring the extensive wood, paint and leather options available for the standard range of car. The whole ambience of this area seemed very familiar as we had made several visits to the Auckland showroom of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars in Newmarket.

There is no doubt that Rolls-Royce owners are treated as very special people whenever you encounter their operation, and the same is true of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars in Auckland who also gave us superb treatment when we were considering our purchase. There is definitely more to a Rolls-Royce than the product itself and every aspect of the dealings we have had at every level of their organisation has been truly amazing and our encounters in Goodwood and Paris have added another special element to what was already a unique experience.

I wish to thank Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Ltd for allowing the use of publicity photographs to enhance the commentary on our factory tour which is the feature of this article.



The limited Aviator Edition of the Phantom Coupé at the Rolls-Royce stand of the Paris International Auto Show, 4 October



Congratulations are due to our members and printers, Ed and Hinemoa Boyd, on Ed's being awarded the John L. Goddard Trophy, for outstanding service to the Vintage Car Club of New Zealand, specifically the large part Ed played in the successful organisation of the 2012 Vero Rally.

familiar, and which powered HMTS *Aquitania's* motor lifeboats, *Aquitania* being Dad's home as an engineer from 1939 to 1948. "I well remember Jumbo's desert boots, sans socks, and sash cord in lieu of belt (even on his wedding day, I am informed). Also, I have treasured a shot in a film I took during the 1972 New Zealand International Rally of Len Southward explaining to Jumbo, with the aid of a piece of wire, how he was going to modify, on the grass with a nail and an egg beater drill, the carburettor off George Horodisky's Vauxhall, to cure a miss."

Eileen Lees Writes:

"I was very pleased to discover your very comprehensive write up on John "Jumbo" Goddard in your magazine 12-3 when surfing the net.

"We own the huon pine boat formerly named *Golliwog* that JJG designed and had a mention in your article. It was built at Halvorsen Gowland in Sydney, and was apparently shipped over here in 1978 as part of a deal with Tom Wheatcroft.

"The boat is being restored by my youngest son, Elliott - who also happens to build Bentleys for Petersen Engineering. My reason for writing is that Elliott is writing a blog on this restoration, and it would be good to use some of your information on JJG to give it the human interest angle."



On 8 March 1965 John King was standing beside Gavin Bain at Mt Cook during the International Rally. Gavin's photograph of John "Jumbo" Goddard appeared on page 4 of our 12-3, and here is John's photograph of John Goddard, John Rowley and Cameron Millar in their 30/98 Vauxhalls

This is an extract from Ian Heather's article in the October 2012 issue of *The Vintage Car*, the bi-monthly magazine of *The Vintage Sports Car Club of Australia Limited*, where our John "Jumbo" Goddard article had been reprinted in their August issue.

"... a lot of members seem to have "Jumbo" recollections, ours centring mainly around Hartley Holyoak's Tasmanian Tour in 1977. We travelled down with the cars in the *Australian Trade*, and in the lounge, after clearing the Heads, Dad met up with Jumbo and they then realised that they had worked together before the War at Thornycroft's. A tour of the engine room ensued later in the voyage. Their joy was apparent later in the tour at Pearne Bros' vast collection of traction engines etc near Launceston, where they discovered a Thornycroft motor of a type with which they were

The article on John Goddard from our 12-3 is being re-printed in the December issue of *Præclarvm*, the bi-monthly magazine of the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of Australia, together with a Prologue of memories compiled by Barrie Gillings with the help of Philip Kinsella and Robert Evans. We plan to include this additional material in our 13-1.

Sadly, we have heard of the death in England on 3 November of our long time member Ian Scoggins. He and Anne, a New Zealander, alternated their time between Britain and New Zealand until Ian's declining health intervened last year. They had ownership of some interesting cars in both countries, including S3 Bentley Continental and Phantom III, a Rolls-Royce Corniche Coupé and an Alvis TC21 Drop-head Coupé. Goodbye Ian, and our condolences go to you, Anne.

Eoin Young's article on E.R. Hall in 12-5 brought back memories of June 1950, and my trying to get Le Mans news from the BBC. Hall finished 8th, but could Derby have won at Le Mans if Hall hadn't waited for 14 years?

THE BORING RULE BOOK

To answer that question we have to take a look at the changing rules that governed 'sports car' - or originally 'touring car' races between the wars.

Any sort of competition between 'stock standard street-cars' is like down-town with a spoilt child. There is constant nagging for more concessions. Thus races that intended to be run for normal four seating touring cars, gradually gave way by adding superchargers, allowing short chassis 'sports cars' that were virtually racing cars, and eventually 'sports prototypes' - most of which were never intended for production at all.

The Derby Bentleys were proper touring cars, able to carry four seat bodies and thus entirely within the spirit of the original rules - and thus at a big disadvantage in some later events.

LE MANS 1936

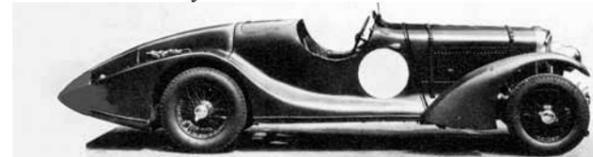
For 1934 blowers were banned from the Tourist Trophy. This encouraged Hall to run a Bentley, and after his successes in 1934 and 1935, Hall planned his Le Mans debut in 1936. Could Hall have won?

The most serious entry was Sommer's supercharged 8-cylinder Alfa. There was also a flock of 6 cylinder Delahayes, three Talbot Lagos - not yet fully race worthy - and a Lagonda that had won the year before. Hall had beaten Lagonda twice in the TT, and would expect to do the same at Le Mans. Bugatti, caught in the industrial turmoil, didn't enter

Strikes cancelled Le Mans, but a 24 hour race was held in Belgium. Sommer's Alfa won from two Delahayes and a Lagonda. Therefore, I think that if Sommer's Alfa had lasted, it would have won at Le Mans in 1936. That's a big if, because Sommer ran blown Alfas again in the following two years, but retired each time.

The Delahayes were short two competition two seaters, but although no fewer than eight finished at Le Mans over the next four races, none exceeded the distance ultimately covered by Hall in 1950. They proved faster than Hall's car in the TT, but he beat them, and, on those statistics, could well have done so at Le Mans.

So yes, if Hall had outlasted Sommer in 1936, he could have won Le Mans for Derby. And that's not all.



The J.R. Engineering of Shepherds Bush body as first completed for the 1936 Le Mans race. Photographs are from Tom Clarke.

REWIND

Although Hall had again made fastest time in TT, Rolls-Royce were not convinced about the 'stream-lined' open two seat body fitted to Hall's car for the 1936 TT.

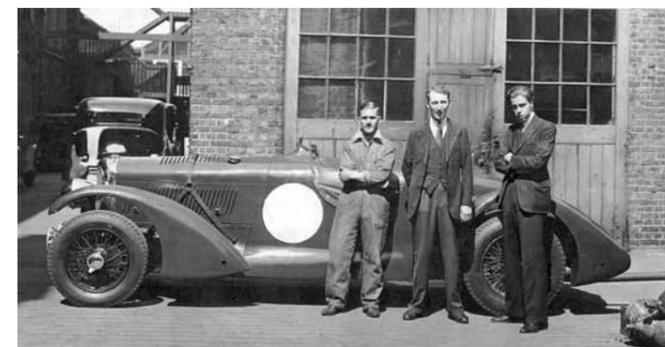
But let's go further back.

The first three prototype 3½ litre Bentleys were all tested at Brooklands with a best lap speed of between 83 and 87 mph. Ivan Evernden, earlier responsible for the Continental Phantom II, was not satisfied with these figures and designed a 'fastback' two door saloon with cycle type mudguards. This was fitted to a production chassis (B23AE) and with the higher optional ratio (4.1) achieved a lap speed of over 94 with cut-out open, and a timed half mile at 99.45 mph. All on just 3½ litres, only four years after W.O. Bentley needed 8 litres for a saloon to crack 'the ton'.

Several similar fast backs were built, but more conventional mudguards and other fittings meant few could replicate this impressive performance. It was also at this time that B35AE, (Hall's car) was being prepared for the 1934 Tourist Trophy with a light, open racing body. In spite of engine modifications, there was some difficulty in getting much over 100 mph. This confirmed Evernden's views on the superior shape of the streamlined closed

car.

At Ulster in 1936, Hall had not only his works prepared open racing car - still B35AE, but with 4¼ litre engine fitted for Le Mans - but also a practice car with full race engine, and using the open 4 seat body Hall had raced in 1935. Hall used this car (B106GA) for practice, making second fastest time. Rolls-Royce were not satisfied with Hall's latest 'streamlined' open racing body. After the race, the Firm conducted exhaustive tests at Brooklands, swapping engines and bodies between the two cars and proving conclusively that the simpler 1935 one was fractionally better! All this again confirmed their general suspicion of open cars. It illustrates the very thorough way this supposedly 'straight-laced'



B35AE at the Barker works in 1936 with designer Harold Beach far right. The car is now in its modified 2-seater form for Ards.

firm approached racing, and indeed all their experimental work.

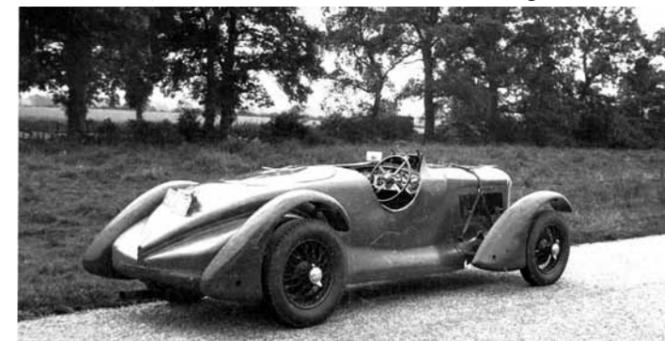
BACK TO LE MANS?

Hall did not return to Le Mans in 1937. A Bugatti won at record speed. In 1938 two Delahayes took the top places at a much lower speed, after Sommer's Alfa retired.

In 1939, publicity gained by Lagonda's new V12, and the positive response to the streamlined saloon Bentley (B27LE) built for Embiricos, caused memos to fly at Derby.

Should they attempt more publicity at Le Mans with B27LE at Le Mans? W.O. Bentley had entered two Lagondas.

Mild dissatisfaction was expressed that Hall's car - on which so much effort had been expended - had done nothing of late. George Eyston, who received Derby support for many record achievements, was consulted. He offered to manage a Le Mans



B35AE wearing Derby trade plate 112-CH (hence photographed by Rolls-Royce probably) showing the later rear modifications for the larger petrol tank (i.e. wider tail and raised in the area adjacent to the rear wheels). (Courtesy of Bryan K. Goodman, U.K.)

Bentley team, suggesting two drivers - Charlie Dodson, who had twice thwarted Hall at Ulster, and Bentley old-boy Sammy Davis. Davis had not raced since 1935, but his experience of Le Mans as driver and manager entitled him to consideration, as did his position as *The Autocar's* sports editor.

Hall was expected to bring B35AE and find a co-driver - if he wanted one. Embiricos must have wondered if he was ever going to get his car away from Derby!

Time began to run out and Derby shelved Le Mans in favour of a one hour run. The experimental department was fully occupied with two new prototypes, the Corniche based on B27LE, and a 5.4 litre straight eight with formidable acceleration. Le Mans 1939



Fresh off the boat; just days after arriving in South Africa, Hall finishes 3rd in the 110 mile Fairfield Handicap at Durban, 23 January 1948. The Bentley made 2nd fastest time in the race to Basil Beall's ERA. B35AE carries the earlier four-seat racing body. Note Hall's racing clothes. Photo courtesy Robert Young

went off without Bentleys. Bugatti won at record speed with a supercharged car. The two Lagonda V12 cars ran into trouble early in the race, and finished at a reduced revs, slightly faster than the winning Delahaye the previous year - or the figure Hall ultimately achieved.

ONE HOUR RUN

Paris branch manager Walter Sleator averaged 107 mph in B27LE at Montlhery. This drew an immediate response from Bugatti, Robert Benoist putting the figure well over 110. Eyston then agreed to drive B27LE at Brooklands - considered a slightly slower track - and covered 114.63 miles in the hour, followed by a ten mile sprint at just over 115.

All this confirmed the superior speed potential of the streamlined closed car. Tentative proposals were, therefore, drafted for a team of streamlined straight eight saloon Bentleys for Le Mans in 1940.

POST-WAR

Despite the destruction, a definite market for luxury cars emerged in post-war Europe. Pre-war performance cars were in demand, including extant Derby Bentleys. Examples were rallied as motor sport made a halting recovery, one winning the prestigious Lisborn rally in 1948.

As in 1938/9, Sleator was insistent that there existed a specialised European niche for new, lower, faster Bentleys. The first such chassis (B323CD) with lowered steering column and reduced bonnet /radiator height was shipped to France at the end of April 1948, the fore-runner of a series of at least 12 special 'Cresta' versions of the Mk VI, several bodied by Facel-Metallon. In December, Ivan Evernden sampled a Cresta and was not impressed with a 96.7mph maximum. Weight had crept up to 2 tons. Sleator's nagging eventually paid off, stimulating the development of the later and lighter R Continental bodied by Mulliner.

A high-speed Bentley was seen by Sleator as the flagship in a significant export market. French grande marques did not recover well from the war. Using basically pre-war designs, Delahaye/Delage completed only 483 cars in 1950 and 77 the following year. Talbot completed 433 in 1950 - the year they won Le Mans - declining to a mere 10 in 1952. Thus Sleator had a point, for up to 1951 some 260 Mk VI Bentleys were supplied to European

customers - one third of all Bentley exports.

Against this background, came the entry of a Bentley for the first post war Le Mans 24 hour race in 1949.

LE MANS AT LAST

Old B27LE had a new owner. H.S.F.Hay had very little racing experience and his wife none at all. Their intention to drive at Le Mans was rash and Sammy Davis, never unkind in print, did not even mention their Bentley in his pre-race *Autocar* feature. What Sammy did write was that 'of all races one would judge this to be the last in which a competitor should begin his racing career'. It appears Mrs Hay was turned down by the organisers. Tommy Wisdom - like Davis a driver/journalist - was approached. Reportedly, Wisdom was surprised when the Hays asked pointedly about his experience!

The Hays undertook the race as part of their European holiday and in distinctly amateur style.

B27LE cruised round and pit work was slow. The first fuel stop took 8 minutes, no doubt to the exasperation of Sammy Davis in the press box. By half time the car had climbed to 12th. In spite of a lengthy puncture stop and losing the overdrive top, it finished sixth, second British car after a stark Frazer Nash, and first full four seat ('GT'). This surely reinforced Bentley's position in French eyes as the foremost British performance touring car at that time.

MEANWHILE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Eddie Hall had settled in South Africa, and after 12 years of absence from racing, he began making a new career in such all-comers events as were offered. He knew the speed he had hoped to average at Le Mans, and must have compared the 1949 Ferrari's 82.282 mph with the 82.355 of the winning Delahaye in 1938. An engine overhaul convinced Eddie that unfinished business might still be brought to a satisfactory conclusion, and he sent in his Le Mans entry for 1950.

Hall's car now acquired an unsightly but effective streamlined top - a consequence of Bentley's 1936 research.

Le Mans rules now allowed 'prototypes - virtual racing cars - but confidence in the old Bentley was fully justified when the basically 16 year old car finished 8th, averaging 82.951 mph in spite of half an hour lost at the pits when a wheel jammed. And

Hall drove the whole race himself!

As a postscript to the aborted 1936 race, Hall was faster than the best speed ever put up by a Delahaye. Hall's was the first full touring chassis to finish, followed by Cunningham's Cadillacs over 3 laps behind. Had the original regulations still applied, it would have been the winner.

HAY'S HOLIDAY

Profiting by experience, Hay ran again in 1950 and improved his race average by over 5 mph. This would have been good enough for 3rd the year before, although there had been some improvement to the track.

In 1951 Hay returned to Le Mans for a third time, now with T.G.Clarke who hoped for more co-driving than Hall had given him. Frankly there for the fun, they scraped into the top 25 after six hours, only to suffer dynamo trouble that left flickering lights and lost still more time with a reluctant starter, finally placing 22nd, but failing to complete the minimum distance to requalify for 1952.

To finish with a sweeter taste, Hay headed off to Paris and the

That Radiator



(Clockwise from above)

Maurice Sizaire (1877-1970) left the Sizaire-Naudin Company and designed the **Sizaire-Berwick**, built first in France and then in England. The radiator had a resemblance to the Rolls-Royce, who sued Sizaire-Berwick. Sizaire-Berwick had registered the design, whereas Rolls-Royce hadn't, but the dispute was settled out of court, with Sizaire-Berwick agreeing to a shallow "vee" shape. Maurice Sizaire had been an architect, but designed his single-cylinder car with the aim of far fewer moving parts than more conventional cars of the period. His brother Georges carried out experimental work, and their partner Claude Naudin was responsible for the building of the cars. Leon Witte, who lives near Christchurch, travelled to Paris to meet M. Sizaire in the mid-1960s, and remembers his modest but well organised life style, and his excellent English. For more about M. Sizaire, see George Calder's appreciation of the late Bob Turnbull on the next page.

The **Eric-Campbell** was built from 1919 to 1926, by Hugh Eric Orr-Ewing and Noel Campbell Macklin, later the designer of the Invicta and Railton cars, and the wartime Fairmile motor launch. The tiny production presumably did not spike Rolls-Royce's interest. The car in the photograph competed in the 1992 Vintage Car Club's International Rally.

Auto Restorations have just completed the restoration of **Silver Dawn SMF72**, and the Uruguayan body makes this car look very different from its contemporaries. A Southern Region member thinks the radiator, nestled between the front wings, reminds him of the influence of Hollywood starlets. Whatever can he mean?

One of our roving reporters photographed this vision in Kohimarama during September. It started life as a **Mazda MX5**.

For his NCEA Metalwork qualification at Ashburton College, **Andrew McIlroy** has made a mirror with a stainless steel surrounding of a shape possibly familiar to readers.

Montlhery track where B27LE had put over 106 miles in the hour in 1939. Three Le Mans and 70,000 miles later, the old streamliner did another hour flat out - just one mph slower than before. Cunningham, who had also had a bad race, went along too, but his Chrysler powered racer dropped out before the hour was up.

The Hay family then piled their luggage in again and continued their holiday, as scheduled.

VERDICT?

Sleator's claim of a European market for a high speed Bentley was justified. Continentals accounted for 33% of all R-Types sold in France, and 40% of Swiss sales.

The durability of the Derby Bentleys was outstanding. Hall's car completed three TTs and one Le Mans. Hay's car did three Le Mans races, three one hour maximum speed runs, and in 1955 came out of retirement to finish a close second to a works Aston Martin DB2/4 in a minor saloon car race at Castle Combe.

There can be no 'if' in motor racing. The best laid plans go horribly wrong, but, yes. Derby Bentleys could have won at Le Mans, not only in 1936, but very possibly 1938 and '49 as well.



Our Fellow Enthusiasts - Bob Turnbull (1931-2012) by George Calder

Some of this article appeared in *Beaded Wheels* No. 316 June/July 2012 in truncated form, and George has revised his article to help in our appreciation of one of the great achievers of the Vintage Car Club of New Zealand.



Edfoto of Bob Turnbull and the Sizaire et Naudin at the Dunedin Road Races in the early 1980s

Bob Turnbull was involved pretty much from the beginning of the Post War interest in old vehicles and joined the Vintage Car Club of NZ as an 18 year old Canterbury University student in 1949. He was very involved in the development of the club during the 1950s.

Bob was an identical twin, with brother Bill and during the '50s they did most things together, both graduating from Canterbury University with degrees in mechanical engineering. Bob excelled as a design engineer, becoming Chief Design Engineer at C. W. F. Hamilton and Company, where he worked until his retirement. While Bob did not own Rolls-Royce or Bentley cars, he had friends who did. His close friend Tony Julian owned a 20/25 Rolls Royce, and Bob showed great interest in the work being done at Bruce McIlroy's workshop and was always forthcoming with his great knowledge about mechanical matters. My own association with Bob went back to the mid-1960s when I was one of his draughtsmen at Hamilton's, and I owe him much for having taught me well, and his continued assistance over the years. If I ever had a tricky problem all I had to do was write to Bob and back would come pages of theory and calculations!

Bob's motoring and motor engineering exploits are quite legendary right from the early days and throughout his life. He was still doing long days working on the restoration of his Bugatti Type 57 when he became unwell a couple of years ago. He passed away at the age of 81 earlier this year in Central Otago where he lived in his retirement.

In the early days of vintage motoring, Bob and his identical twin brother, Bill, attended events in a 1904 Humberette. In 1952, Bob and Bill did a trip from Christchurch to Dunedin in this car, driving non stop, apart from topping up with fuel and water. They left Christchurch at 5am and arrived in Dunedin just under 20 hours later with, and I quote from an article written about the trip, "acetylene lamps blazing." The reason given for doing the trip was to experience what early veteran motoring was like. It was quite an achievement for such a small car, capable of cruising at only 25 mph, to complete this journey. My own great-grandfather also had the same model of Humberette when new in 1905. However, diary entries from the time tell us that he only attempted trips to town and back, a distance of about 25 miles. Bob obviously enjoyed this experience, and over the years he was to do many more epic veteran car journeys, particularly in his 1907 Sizaire et Naudin which he was best known for.

After graduating from University Bob worked in Dunedin for a time, and in 1955 he was employed by C.W.F.Hamilton Company Ltd in Christchurch as a design engineer, a position he was to hold for the rest of his working life. In the early days most of his work involved the design of hydraulic pumps, control valves and machinery. In later years he was responsible for the design of large commercial water jet propulsion units, particularly the impellers, and

some of his work is still used to the present time. Bob was an expert mathematician and he would often bring the subject into conversation to prove or disprove a point he was making! He also frequently quoted the laws and theorems of engineering and science which he knew off by heart. He spent most of the working week at work and after office hours he would go over to the factory, where there was a night shift, and he would work on his vintage projects until late at night. He never seemed to bother about having an evening meal and he would finally head off home when the night shift finished. As well as designing components, he could make and repair them as well. He was always very free with his knowledge and loved to help other car enthusiasts when they had an engineering or mechanical problem.

For transport in the early days Bob used an early Austin 7 and in



John King's photograph of Bob Turnbull and the Panhard Levassor during a wintry late 1960s Irishman Creek Rally.

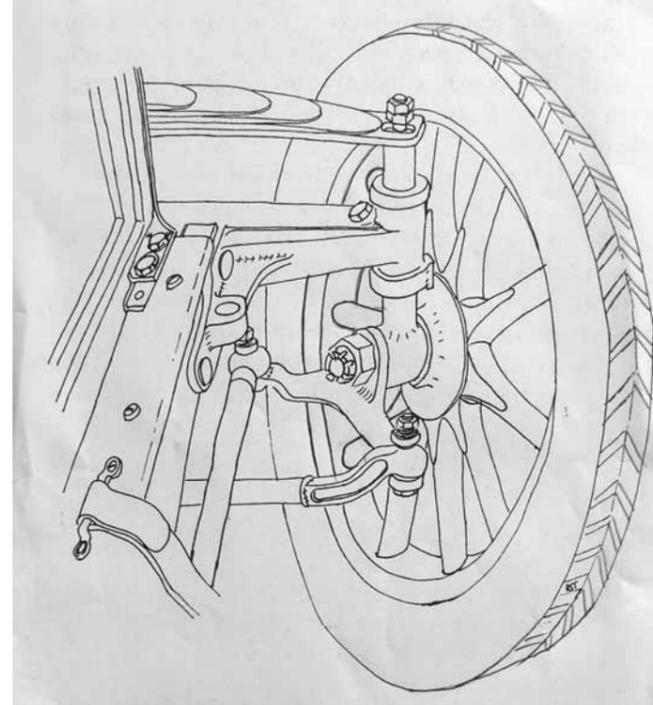
the late '50s he purchased a 1937 Type 57 Bugatti. He also had a veteran Panhard Levassor. In 1957 he acquired the remains of a 1907 Sizaire et Naudin which had been found on a farm north of Christchurch. It was basically an incomplete kitset of bits and pieces and one major item, the engine, was missing. Bob was intrigued with the car as it was a rare sports model. Historically they had been successful in voiturette racing on the continent. He also liked the ingenuity of the rear axle gearbox where gear changes were affected by the changing of pinions to the Crown wheel! The single cylinder engine had a capacity of 1357 cc, which would be quite interesting to crank handle start! The chassis was wooden. Also, the Sizaire, as Bob preferred to call the car, had sliding pillar independent front suspension, quite something for 1907! Even though he didn't have an engine, he commenced the rebuild of the car. In 1960, while attending an Easter Rally in the North Island in the Bugatti, he managed to arrange the purchase of an engine which he had been negotiating for in Paraparaumu. The haggling went on for three days,



David McIvor's photograph of Bob Turnbull and the 1907 Sizaire et Naudin at Bendigo Station during the 2009 South Island Veteran Rally, the last time he and the car competed.

the result of which Bob felt was very unsatisfactory! During the rebuild Bob found out that the original designer and builder of the car, Maurice Sizaire, was still alive, so Bob went over to France and met him, continuing a correspondence with him until his death in 1970. Maurice Sizaire was an architect by profession and was quite proud of his unorthodox designs which some engineers of the day said would not work. After the First World War Maurice Sizaire was involved with the building of Sizaire Berwick cars which in appearance were similar to Rolls Royce. Because of this there was a legal action from Rolls Royce for copying their radiator design.

Bob's rebuild of the Sizaire continued over the next five years and a huge day and night effort went into getting the car finished for



Bob Turnbull's drawing of the Sizaire et Naudin front suspension

the 1965 International Haast Rally. The rebuild was finished just in time. However, there were a number of teething problems prior to and during the first few days of the rally. These required more all night sessions to rectify problems and then flat out motoring to catch up with the rally, which he eventually did. This was the first of many epic journeys Bob did in the car. During the 1972 International Rally an inlet valve broke just as he arrived in Wanaka. The next day Bob managed to find another valve in a derelict stationary engine at a local saw mill which was large enough to modify. He then proceeded to work all night to machine the valve to size, in a borrowed lathe, and re-assemble it into the engine. By then he was a day behind the rally schedule so he drove non stop and did 360 miles in 11 hours to catch up with the rally at Westport. The Sizaire was his motoring life, not just for events. He did many major private trips and often used the car for every day transport which created huge amounts of good will for the old car movement. One private trip of note was to have the Sizaire loaded onto the S.S. "Earnslaw" at Queenstown as deck cargo, using the steam winch of course, and then being off loaded at Mt Nicholas Station. He took enough provisions for a

Chairman's Message

Having just had the opportunity to attend the Southern Region Touring Rally I was delighted to see the large turnout from Dunedin and Christchurch areas, as well as participants from the North Island. This can only augur well for the Club, as both old hands and enthusiastic new members join in and contribute to organisation of events, and hospitality to visitors. With the wide network of roads and venues to visit, the South Island based members of the Club are truly blessed.

I would like to remind members our annual subscription will be called for by the end of this month, and is due to be paid by the end of the year. Payments from New Zealand based members received by 31 December qualify for a discount, and please note the sub remains at the same level as in 2012. On behalf of both the Membership

Registrar and the Treasurer I plead for you to answer the call to pay upon receipt of the invoice. An inordinate amount of time, money and effort has been spent in past years chasing recalcitrant payers, and life would be much simpler for everybody if you could meet this charge when it falls due.

As this is the last edition of the magazine for 2012, on behalf of all club members I would like to congratulate our editor Tom King on the excellent issues during the past twelve months. I would also like to wish all readers a Merry Christmas, a prosperous New Year, and safe motoring over the holiday season.

Cheers,
Rob.



George Calder's photograph of the Gangloff bodied Type 57 Bugatti in Bob Turnbull's Ophir workshop

The rebuild of the Bugatti would fill a book to describe the trouble he went to, to have everything as he wanted it. He did have the Bugatti on the road briefly in the mid 1990s but he was unhappy with the suspension and road holding so he decided to redesign it and rebuild it the way Mr Bugatti should have done it! This work, which was done in the Bugatti style, was not completed, and had consumed every moment of his time for the rest of his days.

Bob Turnbull was a very special person, a quiet, quite shy man and much respected. We will never forget him and his Sizaire et Naudin veteran car. He was a true motoring hero.

If you are interested in how the Sizaire pinion gear changing mechanism to the crown wheel works, there is a short demonstration on 'You Tube' under the heading 'Sizaire et Naudin Transmission'.

Southern Region Run to Dunedin 16 - 18 November by John King



The keen eye may notice the water splashing from the bonnet of GXK10, but Ramon Farmer was still clad in his traditional shorts and Swandri, and John Davies seems to have recovered from fixing all those punctures on the way south from Mt Maunganui.

As motoring clubs go, this is an unusual organisation. Just about any other New Zealand car club anybody could name has a competitive element in its activities, whether it's the shiniest wheels, the fastest time up a hill or around obstructions in a paddock, or the challenge of not getting lost and keeping to time when following route instructions.

Not so the Rolls-Royce and Bentley Club. Here the social aspect prevails. Members don't appear to be interested in fast times, although their cars are capable of far higher average speeds than the usual run-of-the-mill stuff. Nor do they compete in that oft-misspelled concours, whether it be d'état or d'élégance, although their cars are invariably immaculate. They burn not inconsiderable amounts of petrol — their cars are not noted for undue economy — in driving long distances to get to a rallying point, stopping frequently although their cars are among the most comfortable ever designed.

And what do they do when they get there? They stand around chatting to old friends, meeting new people who grow into more friends, comparing new-found cafés and the relative quality of the coffee and food, with mention of cars thrown in. Just occasionally they might be persuaded to try a motoring outing for a couple of hours — nothing competitive, mind — or visiting an interesting collection of appropriate motors, but the emphasis is firmly on the social and gastronomic side of a bunch of fine people and their choice of transport.

The Southern Region's recent run to Dunedin is a case in point. Spend all Friday, Canterbury's Show Day, driving to Dunedin, eat in surroundings of considerable elegance Friday evening, fill in Saturday morning doing whatever you like, drive along narrow and winding Otago Peninsula roads in persistent rain to Taiaroa Head for afternoon tea, eat dinner at Dunedin's arguably most interesting Italian restaurant that evening, inspect two disparate but fascinating and almost adjacent collections in Dunedin's wharf area and drive home again on Sunday.

Dull? Prosaic? Don't you believe it. Toss in a mix of some 20 (nobody ever seemed to quite get around to counting them) Bentleys and Rolls-Royces ranging over 90 years from 1922 to current production, nearly 50 people for dinner, both locals and

from as far away as Auckland and covering a remarkably similar age range, and it can be hard to find the time to fit everything in.

Alan Race (Ghost) was the man on the spot persuaded to organise things, although David Thomson (Phantom II Continental) did his bit by arranging the Saturday evening dinner at Etrusco. Alan's choice of the Dunedin Club for Friday's dinner was inspired, with Fernhill's elegance perfectly matched to the cars drawn up outside. Keith Hunter (S3) provided a monologue on John Jones and Fernhill's history, although his grasp of the various future Kings George IV to VI could be debated.

Michael Haggitt, 3-litre Bentley owner, was noted among the Webb caricatures of past Dunedin Club presidents lining the walls but without mention of his motor, paper darts rather than bread rolls were tossed about, and it was late by the time the last carousers were evicted.

Saturday grew damper as the day progressed, and the folly of following a local Mark VI to the motel starting point for the road section was demonstrated when it (the Mark VI, not the motel) turned into a succession of ever-decreasing streets and finally a driveway,

presumably its owner's. Alan Race provided navigational material and a briefing, seats were found in assorted cars for those who wanted them, and a convoy duly arrived at a scenic spot where a fine outlook over Dunedin would doubtless have been obtainable had it not been obscured by low cloud and heavy rain.

Another pause, rather shorter, at a car park, and by the time the convoy reached Taiaroa Head along Otago Peninsula's interesting roads the rain had started to ease. The albatross colony denizens were far from active in the very light breeze, although the local



Alan Race's briefing for the Otago Peninsula Tour, while outside...



red-billed gulls more than made up for activity, if not elegance, but the generally gloomy conditions persuaded nobody to linger.

Dinner that evening was in Moray Place, a decent stroll or short minibus ride from the motel, at Etrusco, an Italian restaurant whose liveliness echoed the gull colony's but with considerably better order. Conversation was limited by the background noise provided by hundreds of people in one room, but in many ways the food was even better than the previous evening's. By the time the last walkers arrived back at the motel the first signs of the next front were apparent.



Three generations of Company products; Alan Race's Ghost, 1971 Bentley T Type, and Eddie Riddle's 20/25 GKC15 at Taiaroa Heads

Sunday morning was not for the layabouts, and before 0930 a convoy was snaking its way in watery sunshine and chilly conditions to the wharf area where Bruce McLroy (Silver Ghost) had arranged with Julian Smith for a collective peek at his collection.

And what a collection! This reporter may have missed one or two, but among the Model A Fords, Morris Minors and a couple

of other marques were seven cars acceptable to this club — a 1922 Silver Ghost with original and elegant Windover open coachwork; a brace of 20/25s, one a roadworthy tourer and the other a limousine long-term rebuild project; a Corniche; and, on the Bentley side, an attractive open "W.O." 3-litre in dark blue; a 4¼ droph-head; and a Brooklands. Most were started up and driven around the block, and members suspected the Silver Ghost, at least, had been pre-warmed by the way it started instantly on the button.

Canterbury members expressed discomfort at the way such a priceless collection was housed in elderly brick industrial buildings, but Alastair Scott (Silver Shadow) demonstrated a notable geological and mechanical steadiness by balancing a dollar coin on the radiator of the idling Silver Ghost.



Alastair Scott's retirement fund sitting happily on the radiator of Julian Smith's Silver Ghost 60ZG

Just around the corner was part of another collection of utterly different character but with definite Rolls-Royce connections. Alastair had arranged a visit to Action Engineering's premises where managing director Mark Cameron explained his Daimler Ferret scout car and FV432 armoured personnel carrier, both powered by Rolls-Royce engines.

But whereas the scout car had a B60, basically an F-head 4¼-litre engine of the sort related to Mark VIs and Silver Dawns, the APC had a 240 hp K60 opposed-piston engine unfamiliar to most. With two crankshafts and its pistons meeting at a common combustion chamber on the two-stroke principle, burning just about any type of fuel between second-hand fish-and-chip oil to petrol, it was an inter-



(Left) Mark Cameron's Rolls-Royce Meteor engine, with the B60-powered Daimler Ferret Scout Car in the background (Above) our new member, John Hughes, feels comfortable in shorts beside Ramon and Trish Farmer, and Vicki Newbegin, as they watch Julian Smith back the 3 litre Bentley chassis DE1217 out of its shed.

The Meteor was an unsupercharged and detuned V12 Merlin used in British heavy tanks from the Cromwell onwards, and the series has been well covered in previous editions of this magazine.

The visits demonstrated, if members needed reminding, just some of the diversity of Rolls-Royce and Bentley engineering over the years. Club members were grateful to the owners of the collections, and those who arranged the visits, for expanding their knowledge of the companies' products and expertise.

So it's not all socialising, although that aspect remains one of the

club's priorities. It can also be hard work, and one member, driving a T1 northwards on Sunday afternoon, remarked at how the silence of passage allowed him to note that none of his three passengers snored, so he had to resort to other means to stay awake himself.



The Mark VI Bentley is generally considered one of the best cars of its era, and one which had a great deal to do with the survival of the car division of Rolls-Royce in the difficult post-WW2 days. Four fine examples were at Dunedin; three "big bore small boot" Standard Steel Saloons, and one 4¼ litre Saloon by H.J. Mulliner. Interestingly, they were all "Home" models, with the smaller bumpers than the "Export" cars. Here are B274MD and B67HP, with B358MD just edging in. B307MB, also present, escaped our photographer.

Deeper Into the Mainland Comments

What a pleasure it was to travel to an apparently thriving city, where there was not a high-visibility jacket, hard hat, or traffic cone to be seen. Dunedin's architectural triumphs were there on display, and the way the city has integrated the "town and gown" elements is a fine example of a traditional European ideal.

The Dunedin get-together was a happy outcome of low-key organisation, underpinned by Alan Race's and David Thomson's

arrangements, and Alastair Scott's co-ordination. Thanks to the organisers, and to the supporters who came from every region, with the result that the weekend was very much a "light blue touch paper and retire."

It was a pleasure to see Eddie and Joy Riddle taking part in a Club event again, supported by their son, Graeme, and daughter Lauren.



(From left) Alan Race doing doorman duties for Dorothy King, and Gwen McPherson alighting, with her husband Peter holding Alan's Ghost's door after their arrival at Taiaroa Heads.

(Right) A week or two before the Dunedin weekend, here in bright Ashburton sunshine are Scott Thomson's Phantom II Continental Touring Limousine by H.J. Mulliner, chassis 101RY; and John Ferguson's Phantom III Limousine by Thrupp & Maberly, chassis 3DL22. Both cars were present at Dunedin, en route to a holiday in Bluff while their crews crossed to Stewart Island.



Central Region AGM Weekend, Wanganui 24/25 November

Wendy Bryce reports that a very successful Central Region Annual General Meeting weekend was held in Wanganui, and the hospitality organised by Ed and Hinemoa Boyd, and Alex and Lyn Garrett has made the new Central Region Committee resolve to organise a weekend there during Wellington Anniversary, 19 to 21 January 2013, where we will join the mix of local Vintage celebrations, including paddle-steamer on the Whanganui River.

The new Committee comprises Roy Tilley again as Chairman; Wendy Bryce as Secretary; Martin Taylor as Treasurer; Clive Edmonds as Events Co-ordinator and Newsletter Editor; joined by Lesley Tilley, Elliott and Carol Snelling on the Committee.

A Photograph Taken During H.R.H. Prince Charles's 2012 NZ Visit



Philip Eilenberg took this photograph at the Auckland War Memorial Museum during H.R.H. Prince Charles's recent visit. The British Airborne Forces in New Zealand Society (Inc) have Prince Charles as their Colonel in Chief, and (second from left) is Roy Tilley, the society's secretary, who served in the British Territorial Army's 65th Signal Regiment from 1960 to 1965.

Bentley Drivers Club 2013 Tour of New Zealand



3/4½ litre Bentley chassis 1215 seen during a mid-1980s Bentley Drivers Club run to Chateau Tongariro during Geoff and Shirley Owen's long ownership, and during a refurbishment at Bruce McIlroy Ltd in time for the 2013 Tour.

- Christchurch:** Sudima Hotel 19 to 22 January
- Ashburton** – Hotel Ashburton 23 Jan **Franz Josef** – Scenic Hotel 24/25 Jan
- Wanaka** – Wyndham Vacation Resort 26 Jan **Queenstown** – St Moritz 27 - 29 Jan
- Te Anau** – Distinction Villas 30 31 Jan
- Invercargill** (via Mandeville) – Ascot Hotel 1 2 Feb
- Dunedin** – Scenic Hotel Southern Cross 3 4 Feb
- Mount Cook** – The Hermitage 5 Feb **Tekapo** – Peppers Blue Water Resort 6 7 Feb
- Hanmer Springs** – 8 Feb **Nelson** – Grand Mercure Monaco Resort 9 10 Feb
- Blenheim** – Scenic Hotel Marlborough 11 12 Feb
- Masterton** – Copthorne Solway Park 13 Feb
- Napier** – Scenic Hotel Te Pania 14 15 16 17 Feb (Art Deco Festival)
- Taupo** – the Hilton 18 Feb **Rotorua** – Novotel Rotorua 19 20 Feb
- Tauranga** – Sebel Trinity Wharf 21 Feb **Takapuna** – Spencer on Byron 22 Feb
- Paihia** – Copthorne Bay of Islands 23 24 25 Feb
- Taipa Bay** – Taipa Bay Resort 26 27 Feb
- Auckland** – Crowne Plaza 28 Feb 1 March
- Cars load 2 March



The New Bentley Continental V8 - Photos by Bentley Motors and Edfoto



On a characteristically perfect late spring afternoon, the new Bentley Continental V8 was launched in Ashburton. Three cars, a V8 convertible, a W12 Continental Coupé, and a Flying Spur saloon, were shipped from Bentley Auckland in an articulated lorry, accompanied by Bentley Auckland staff members, Lee Small and Paul Shorter. They were arrayed outside Bruce McIlroy Ltd's premises, where an appreciative crowd clustered around them. On the lawn was the now traditional collection of Marque cars owned by club members and others, while Other Marques were discreetly out of sight in a paddock. Inside the workshops was a delicious buffet meal, catered for by Maria Trengrove, as well as various liquid refreshments, and we are very grateful for the hospitality

extended to us by Bentley Motors and Bruce McIlroy Ltd.

The specifications of the new car read, in "old money," like classic Bentley dimensions, with an overall length of 15'9", a 9 foot wheelbase, a 20 gallon fuel tank, and 20 inch wheels. Slightly less traditional, perhaps, is the power output of 500 bhp at 6,000 rpm, torque of 487 lb-ft at 1,700 rpm, an 8-speed automatic gearbox, a capacity of 4 litres, acceleration to 60 mph in 4.6 seconds, and a top speed of 188 mph. All this comes with drive to all four wheels, a 40/60% power split front to rear, and 26.9 miles per gallon combined fuel consumption - urban (18.4 mpg) and touring (36.7 mpg).



Lee Small, Bentley Auckland Sales Manager, gave us an introduction to the new car



This W12 Coupé is wearing the optional 21 inch wheels

Paul Shorter has told us that the pricing in New Zealand is the cheapest of just about any market, and that equates, for the basic Coupé, to \$325,000, and for the Convertible \$375,000. There is, of course, a considerable list of options to this already extremely well equipped car, and the web site www.bentleyauckland.com is very well organised for information.



(Above) Mr Stephen Fowler is soon going to be testing the rear seating accommodation of the W12 Bentley Continental Coupé (Right) The inviting accommodations of the V8 Convertible, with Miss Kate McIlroy apparently ready to be driven to her finishing school by Mr Bernard Egan of The Ashburton Guardian



There was quite a queue of prospective drivers, and your reporter did not push himself forward, but four of us were sent away in a W12 Continental Coupé towards the test circuit, a network of charming country roads. As an exercise, Stephen Fowler occupied one of the rear seats while your reporter drove, and reported the comfort adequate for short journeys; those of us who know Stephen's generosity of dimensions will take that as a great compliment to the Coupé. This image captures the insertion of Stephen, and his feet, into the Coupé. After a decent interval which included a very pleasant drive, and a certain amount of relief from Prue Freda that your reporter didn't do any damage, Stephen took the wheel and delighted us all with the snarl produced by those 12 cylinders. The good manners of the chassis enable all that power to be transmitted without any drama, and the gear changes are imperceptible.

go into the making of the Bentley. The Company have, scattered about through the works, significant cars from the marque's history, as well as those displayed in the foyers, and obviously that history, under the various ownerships, is taken very seriously. We were shown every phase of production except the painting, and it was most interesting to see each component, assembled as a unit, having a "trail" whereby it has passed inspection (or not - a seat had failed, but the technician handling the certification knew what the problem was, and how he was going to rectify it) and so pass the inspection regime for whatever market the car is bound before it ever arrives there. It is now so different from those days when New Zealanders, the farthest-flung market from Britain, were expected to carry out the works development engineering of so many companies for them, with a warranty scheme lampooned by Romsey Quints and Fred Fowler of Australian *Sports Car World*, where we had "the well-known 6-6 Warranty; 6 miles or 6 hours,

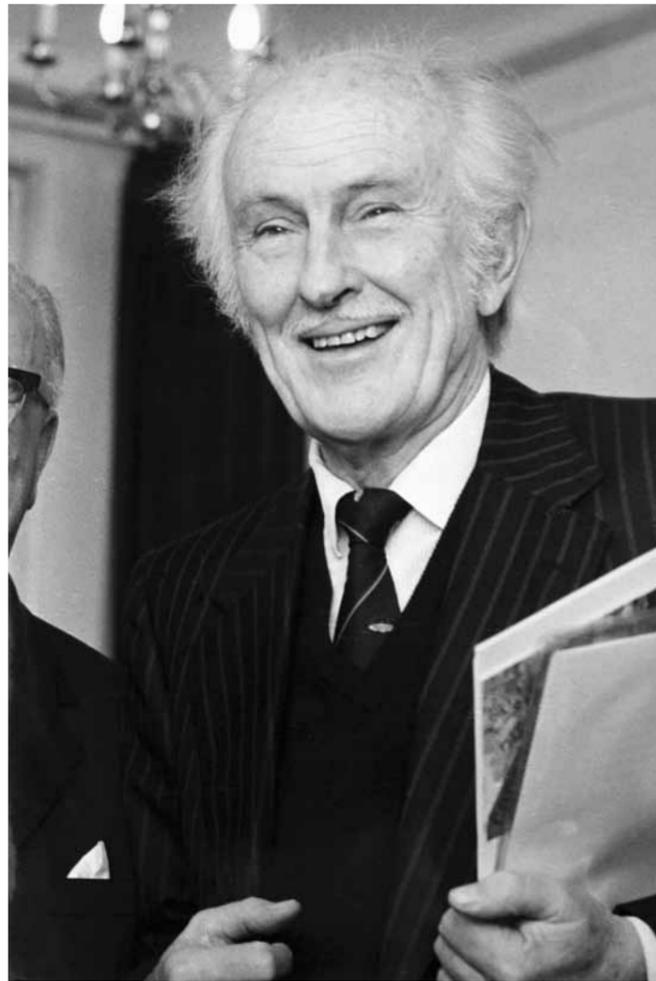


Last year some of us were lucky enough to tag along with a Bentley Drivers Club tour of the Bentley factory at Crewe, and the occasion of the launching was a good time for memories of the care, craftsmanship, and general good humour of the work force which

whichever comes sooner."

But I digress. Thank you again, Bentley Auckland, and Bruce McIlroy and his team, for your hospitality.

Mr Supercharge - Amherst Villiers, Man of Many Careers, Talks to Eoin Young



'When I'm poised on the brink of some new achievement, fate steps in and turns over to the next chapter. This sort of thing has been happening all my life and it really is infuriating'. But Amherst Villiers has been over the brink more often than fate has intervened. If he had not been that one step in front some quite spectacular achievements would never have reached fruition, and motoring as a whole would have been worse off as a result.

I was probably the first journalist to interview Villiers in post-war years, after being introduced to him by his old colleague Raymond Mays at the launching of Tom Wheatcroft's Grand Prix museum at Donington in 1974. He was 73 then and eager to take on complicated new career challenges. He died in 1991.

For half a century Villiers had been in the centre of the speed business. Fifty years earlier he worked with Bugatti at Molsheim, trading his advanced knowledge of high-performance engines for a new Brescia Bugatti. In 1926 he laid out the chassis for Malcolm Campbell's Napier Lion Bluebird, and he was the man who designed and built the superchargers for the famous Blower Bentleys of Le Mans fame.

His researches into the means of extracting more horsepower from engines led him into the aircraft industry and at the end of World War Two he was in North America deeply involved in the birth of the aerospace programme, becoming president of the American Rocket Society in 1948. For a brief period he displayed his brilliance in another field: painting portraits, and even designing the special car which Ian Fleming used as a basis for his children's book, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang.

At 73 Amherst Villiers still crackled with the urge to create. Born in London, he spent his early years in Brighton. His father was a Member of Parliament and Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines, landing on the Hove lawns in the days when powered flight meant as much to man's endeavour as moon flights do today, prompted Amherst's life-long interest in aeronautics.

If you wondered whether they would be flying, you licked a

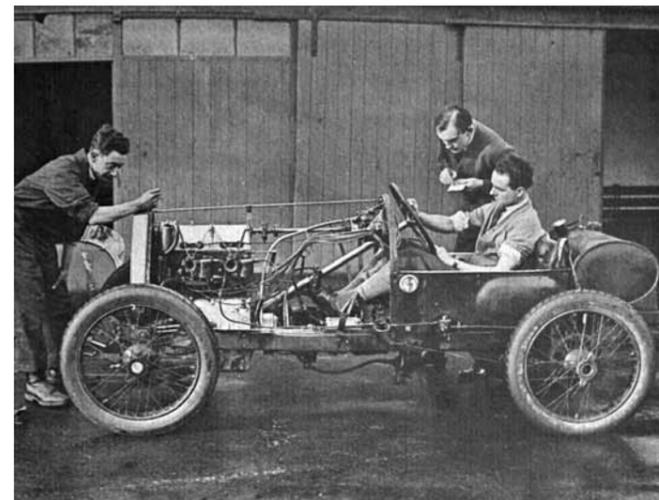
finger and held it up ... if it was cold on one side they wouldn't take off that day.

Amherst's first efforts at self-propulsion came with a four-cylinder, shaft-drive FN motorcycle which belonged to the chauffeur, the family car then being a 35/45 Renault in which Villiers learned to drive. The first motorcycle young Villiers owned was a New Imperial and, at 14, his first engineering challenge inspired him to swap his rook rifle for the builder's cycle which had stripped its timing wheels – a terminal disaster, for there was a war on. However, Villiers filed up a pair of new bronze gears, carefully forming each tooth, and from then on he was very much a motorcycle man working his way up through Brough Superiors, Indians and the like.

At school at Oundle Villiers met his first Curtis Ox V8 water-cooled aero engine. And Raymond Mays. The engine had been sent by the Air Ministry and put in the science block with a daunting Do Not Touch notice on it. Villiers approached the headmaster to ask permission to take leave from all his studies to make the aero engine run as an experiment. Approval was granted and with a friend helping, Villiers built a test shed and ran the engine. From that point it was logical that he should involve himself with the Air Force; the War was still on, so he again asked the headmaster if he might join the Royal Aircraft Factory; permission was granted and the headmaster arranged for Villiers to become a Special Apprentice in E Department (engines) and K4 Department (experimental flight).

On the day Villiers was due for his commission into the Royal Flying Corps, the armistice was signed. Peace was never more grudgingly received.

And thus to Cambridge where he studied physics under men like Rutherford and J J Thompson who even at that time were knocking on the door of an atomic break-through. Villiers was more interested in motorcycles and he spent more time on them than lecture benches. As a post-graduate course he went to Norway to design hydro-electric installations; the project palled and he came back to England to join up with Raymond Mays – they had met again at Cambridge – who had by now traded his Speed Model Hillman on a Brescia Bugatti.



Their first engine test on the little 1.5 litre four-cylinder Bugatti was for Mays to accelerate as hard as he could in low gear while Villiers watched the revs. 'They went up to 4200 and the needle just stopped.' The first mod was a set of stronger (Terry) valve springs and the revs ran on to 5000 rpm before a valve stretched and the experiment ended. When they pulled down the little engine Villiers decided something would have to be done about the camshaft. Even to suggest that Ettore Bugatti was vaguely in error now seems like sacrilege, but this was the 22-year-old Villiers applying his new-found scientific theory to a straightforward mechanical operation.

'I sat down', he recalls, 'and analysed it when I had taken the engine apart. It was generally thought that a cam opened a valve

and a spring shut it but then I realised that the valve is stationary both at the bottom of the lift and again at the top of the lift; therefore there must be a point of reversal somewhere halfway up the lift. The spring has to work while it is lifting to hold the valve on to the nose of the cam so it doesn't fly off. The moment you've got that solved it's a matter of providing the longest time for the spring to work and going into the question of accelerations, points of reversal and the rest of it – which I did before I made those little Brescia cams.

'I chanced my arm with a bit of overlap. I said "This thing is going very, very fast so I can't believe that it gets the stuff in when you open the valve, there must be a delay"; so I was able to open up a very big overlap which hadn't been done in those days ... we were opening the exhaust at about 70 degrees before bottom while Bugatti was opening his at about 45 degrees before bottom.'

Being a couple of undergraduates without much money, Villiers and Mays arranged for a small engineering shop to machine up a camshaft. Then Villiers cut out the cams on postcards, stuck them on, filed them up and stoned them. Then he had a one-off, hand-built camshaft for the little Brescia that raised the revs to 8,000 rpm!

Making Bugatti's engine work twice as fast brought other problems. The first to rebel was the rather optimistic lubrication system: small jets aimed oil at grooves milled into the crankshaft, but as the speed rose the oil turned to smoke. Villiers' answer was to weld up small purses, or traps, for the oil which condensed it before it vaporised. These traps were most successful in prolonging the Brescia's active life.

Mays was one of the top drivers on the sprint and hill climb scene and word of this prowess had spread to France. At the 1923 London Motor Show Villiers and Ettore Bugatti met for the first time; Villiers interested to meet the man who made the motor car but Bugatti even more interested to meet the man who made it go so much faster.

A deal was worked out whereby Mays and Villiers would bring the Brescia to Molsheim for factory study of the modifications. In return Mays would be provided with a brand new Brescia for the 1924 season. Villiers worked at the Bugatti factory for six months but it was an uncomfortable meshing of great minds.

'I don't think he liked me too much,' says Villiers, 'I don't think he liked the idea of some young chap coming in and modifying his car, but he was able to use my ideas on camshafts in his new grand prix cars.'

'He was really very non-communicative. I would go into his office and talk about problems with production, or difficulty in getting a certain part; he was always very polite, but distant. He spoke a bit of English but he didn't go for my French. He was a great genius, but a real martinet.'

Back in England with a brace of Brescia Bugattis at his command for the 1924 season, Mays named one Cordon Rouge after his favourite champagne and the other Cordon Bleu after the French brandy. He was unbeatable.

Villiers' reputation was spreading. In 1925 he was asked by Malcolm Campbell, who then held the land speed record at 150.87 mph with an 18.3 litre V12 aero-engined Sunbeam, for suggestions to improve the performance of the record car. Villiers' immediate suggestion was that Campbell should forget the 350 bhp Sunbeam and build a new car using the 22.3 litre, 450 bhp broad arrow Napier Lion aero engine that he remembered from his aviation days.

Campbell invited Villiers to join the project and design a car to take the Napier engine. Villiers agreed and the chassis was built to his design in the Vickers West Gunshop. Despite a reputation for sparing no expense on his record attempts Villiers says Campbell was very conscious of his budget and anxious to cut costs wherever possible. With this in mind Villiers arranged a deal with a man named Joseph Maina, who had designed an epicyclic gearbox, and was prepared to donate it to the Bluebird programme for the publicity the record attempt would achieve for his transmission. Since neither Campbell nor Villiers had drawing offices Villiers decided they should work from Maina's premises in Hampstead. However, after six months Villiers discovered that Campbell had made an arrangement for Maina to take over the complete car.

The page was being turned on another of the Villiers chapters.

Campbell raised the Land Speed Record to 174.883 mph with the

new car in February 1927, and came back with a revised version of Villiers' design to reach 206.956 mph in February, 1928.

By now Villiers was well advanced in the study of supercharging principles. His enthusiasm for forced induction was sparked by the performance of the 2.0 litre supercharged straight-eight Fiats in 1932; Fiat had first supercharged their six-cylinder Grand Prix engine in 1922 using a Wittig, low-pressure vane-type unit which gave a power output of 130 bhp at 550 rpm but for the Italian Grand Prix at Monza in 1923 they switched to a Roots-type supercharger and finished first and second. It was the first major race to be won by a supercharged car.

Determined to discover everything about superchargers Villiers began by tracking down a Roots blower for study. He found one on a farm near Banbury where it was doing menial duties: blowing chaff. Before he set about the design of his own unit he talked with the various people involved with supercharging, men like M Rateau in Paris.

'I went to see Rateau because I didn't know how much to blow and he said "just a *souppçon*". I asked him how much a *souppçon* was and he told be a tenth of an atmosphere.'

Villiers returned to England and made up his mind to build a supercharger that would blow a full atmosphere. 'It might blow the lid off the engine but at least it would be a development. I couldn't afford to build something that only blow a tenth of an atmosphere.'

He embarked on two supercharging projects in 1925. One was a 1.5 litre racing AC on loan to Mays from the factory, and the other was a 3.0 litre TT Vauxhall owned by Humphrey Cook. Villiers enjoyed the simplicity of the little AC engine with its cleverly balanced two-bearing crankshaft but he faced a problem with the head-sealing arrangement which was complicated and less than efficient. With the sealing problem cured and a blower fitted along with a new three-valve head, designed by Villiers and made in bronze, Mays ran the car in the 200 mile race at Brooklands; he lasted only 11 laps before retiring with a leaking radiator. Villiers later bought the car from AC and developed it further before selling it in monoposto form to Tim Birkin.



The Vauxhall Villiers in 1984, when owned by Anthony Brooke, and in Vauxhall's red finish. Raymond Mays painted it white.

The TT Vauxhall was one of three built for the Tourist Trophy race in 1922, using Ricardo-designed engines that were 3.0 litre, four-cylinder, 16-valved power units developing 129 bhp at 4500 rpm, and described by Laurence Pomeroy in The Grand Prix Car as one of the most remarkable power units of all time. A switch from 3.0 litres to 2.0 litres as the international racing formula in 1923 meant the TT Vauxhalls had a short career as front-line works cars, but they continued to excel in private hands.

Humphrey Cook commissioned Villiers to supercharge his car, the arrangement being that Vauxhall would handle all the machining if Villiers supplied them with the drawings. The car had only just been completed and delivered to Cook before the 200-mile race at Brooklands where Mays was running the supercharged AC. Cook drove an Aston Martin but the brakes failed as he went into the first hairpin on the first lap and the car overturned pin-

ning driver and mechanic underneath. The mechanic was quite badly injured and Cook was furious. He sued Aston Martin, sold the just-delivered, now supercharged Vauxhall to the one and only Jack Barclay, and summarily announced his retirement from racing.

Villiers took a dim view of Cook's action in selling the car so quickly. 'It was not a nice thing to do because he didn't give me a change to let any of my friends know the car might be on the market.' He did, however, hold a trump card. While the car was being supercharged at Vauxhall, Villiers was working on the design of new pistons to handle the extra power and he decided to keep these until the car was delivered to Cook and the modifications could be made in his own workshops.

The car was sitting in pride of place in Barclay's Great Portland Street showroom when Villiers went in to warn the new owner about the standard pistons in the engine. He offered to make up a set of the special pistons free of charge, but Barclay scoffed at the idea of Vauxhall building up such a special car without the proper pistons, rejected the offer, and blew the engine up on its first run. Barclay had previously raced one of the other two TT Vauxhalls in unblown form so he had the supercharger removed and raced it unblown until the car was finally offered for sale. Villiers arranged for a friend of his to buy it.

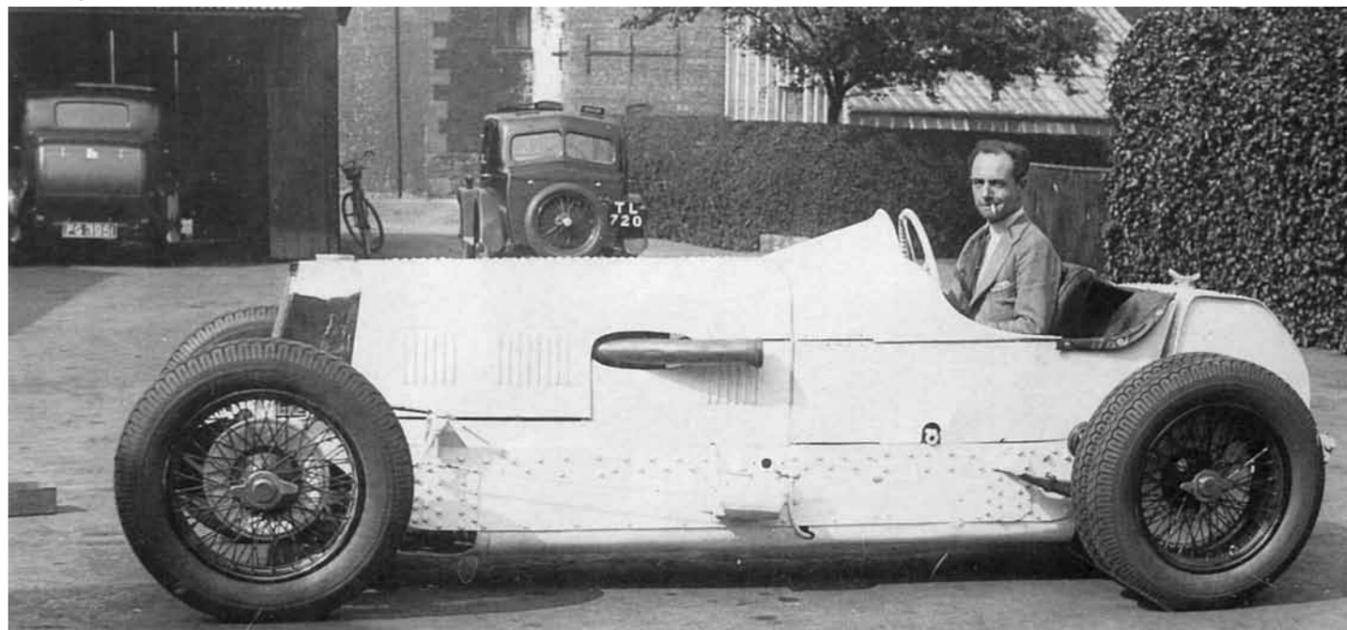
Villiers then bought all the spare parts of the TT project from Vauxhall including the other works car. He now owned two of the TT cars and all of the remaining spare parts. David Brown was an emerging young industrialist with a manufacturing company that Villiers engaged to build his superchargers, and he gave the spare car to Brown so that he could supercharge it and use it to experiment with his worm-drive rear axles – officially anyway.

The precise history of David Brown Vauxhall is a little uncertain although at one stage it was supercharged to the specification of the Mays car.

his tight budget could absorb – twin rear wheels! The four rear tyres were run at low pressure and they gave Mays the extra grip he needed to break the Shelsley Walsh record and head Davenport in 1929. It was the first time a racing car had been fitted with twin rear wheels; the area of contact was beginning to be recognised as a vital factor in traction.



The exhilaration can be seen on Raymond Mays's face as he competes in a 1928 hill-climb, the Vauxhall still in red livery. The twin rear wheels Mays fitted are shown in the photograph below.



Raymond Mays with his characteristic cigarette, anxious expression, and Vauxhall Villiers at his home in Bourne, Lincolnshire, with his 2-litre Lagonda and Riley 9 Biarritz also present. Mays's racing activities expanded and Bourne became home to ERA and BRM.

In his book *Split Seconds* (G.T. Foulis, London 1951), Mays says the engine was originally designed in TT form to run for long periods at between 4000 and 4500 rpm with bursts to 5000. In Villiers' modified version for the 1928 season 'few if any alterations were made to the chassis or engine, apart from new-type pistons with thicker crowns and, of course, the Roots-type supercharger with necessary drive and fittings. Also the coil and battery ignition was replaced by two special BTH magnetos driven from the rear of the two camshafts. The supercharger was housed vertically and driven through bevels off the front of the crankshaft. Two Zenith aero carburettors were fixed direct on to the supercharger which was to give maximum boost pressure of 11 lb.'

During the 1928 hill climb season Mays was being beaten by Basil Davenport in his GN special Spider, but a Villiers modification over the winter brought four-wheel-drive to Mays at a price

These competition outings with Mays were really sideline activities. Villiers was heavily involved with the affairs and contracts of Amherst Villiers Superchargers Ltd, working on a contract with Bentley Motors to supercharge the 4.5 litre car. Despite the Bentley preoccupation Villiers found time, working with Mays, Peter Berthon and Murray Jamieson (who had joined the Supercharger company) to bring about a major transformation on the Vauxhall which was re-named Villiers Supercharge.

For the 1930 season the car appeared with a new radiator and bonnet in place of the almost shy fluting of the Vauxhall, new co rods, new brakes and a distinctive cylindrical magnesium casting on the side of the bonnet which formed the outer case of the supercharger intercooler that lowered the temperature of the mixture between the supercharger and the cylinders. Blower pressure was now raised to 20 psi, revs to 6000 and the power doubled over that

which Sir Harry Ricardo had originally envisaged for his engine in 1922.

'Mays thought the car snaked a bit,' says Villiers, commenting on the reason for bolting the hefty reinforcing plates along the chassis that prompted speculation in later years that a new chassis had been fitted. These reinforcements and the new Dewandre brakes helped raise the weight to 3360 lb but Mays continued to compete with the car during 1930 and 1931 before finally, and almost regretfully, deciding to pension the faithful old dicer off in 1932 – 10 full years after it had been designed.

One of the first supercharging projects for Villiers predates the Vauxhall exercise and lured Amherst into a comprehensive work programme on a Phantom One Rolls-Royce. It was Villiers' view that the proper way to supercharge aircraft engines was to drive the supercharger by its own engine so that it did not leech power off the main engine to drive itself. The turbocharger was eventually proved as the most successful way of boosting aircraft engines but this came much later; in the middle 1920s Villiers set about supercharging the stately Phantom.

'I decided to design a special little engine to be made very much in the same architecture as the Rolls, so that it would be like a miniature of the bigger motor; this would drive the large Roots blower.'



Amherst Villiers's 625 cc engine and supercharger, and its mounting on the nearside running board of Jack Kruse's Rolls-Royce Phantom I. Images courtesy of Tom Clarke



A sure way to bristle the Villiers eyebrows is to relay suggestions that the engine he used was an Austin 7! In fact, it was a special 625 cc unit that revved to 8000 rpm and was in unit construction with the supercharger. It was a four-cylinder with two valves per cylinder and a single overhead cam. The engine had its own coil ignition, electric starter, exhaust system and water pump with a dry sump lubrication system. A hefty counterbalanced crankshaft in a deep and rigid crankcase helped to make the little engine as vibration-free as the big one. Both main and auxiliary engines were served by the single Roots supercharger.

Villiers took the 7.7 litre Rolls-Royce engine down and fitted it with his own cam-shaft, valves and pistons, revising the lubrication system and converting it to dry sump. The engines were pneumatically synchronised so that a constant blower pressure was maintained at all speeds. This very special Phantom One was owned by Jack Kruse, a director of the Paris Daily Mail. Along

with the Paris newspaper that Rolls-Royce has disappeared and Amherst would very much like to meet up with it again. Surely a Rolls-Royce with such an amazing engine specification doesn't just vanish?

Villiers and Kruse got along splendidly and over lunch on the day of delivery Kruse handed him a car key saying he was making him a present of a new straight-eight, 2.0 litre GP-type Bugatti because his wife felt that it was too fast for him.

During the 1928 season Mays raced the Bugatti on occasions, as well as the Vauxhall Villiers; at a Southport beach race Villiers drive the Bugatti himself on one of his rare competition forays. Very dangerous, it was. He finished fifth.

In the winter of 1928 Tim Birkin suggested in all the right places that Amherst Villiers should supercharge the 4.5 litre Bentley. The more forcible side to the argument was that Birkin refused to race the then-new 6.5 litre and insisted that his team, backed by the Hon Dorothy Paget, should be equipped only with special Blower Bentleys. Villiers felt that they should have supercharged the 6 ½ litre Bentley, but Birkin had already made the decision that the 4 ½ should be the basis of the exercise.

Although Birkin's move had the assent of money-man Babe Barnato, then in a controlling position at Bentley Motors, superchargers were not exactly dinner table subjects of discussion with WO Bentley. He reasoned that if you required more power, you built bigger engines – hence his new 6.5 litre Speed Six. But he was committed to work with Villiers on the project and he did so with scant grace. When the two men met, WO made it clear that he didn't want the blower under the bonnet cluttering up his clean engine room. It has to be mounted out in front. The conversation took a chillier turn when Villiers raised the subject of modifications if the engines were to be supercharged. Bentley thought perhaps they might need to lower the compression slightly ... Villiers was talking in terms of a complete rebuild with new pistons, rods, crankshaft and dry-sump lubrication!

This was history revisiting Villiers. He found himself in a position identical to the tense period he spent working with Ettore Bugatti – neither Bentley nor Bugatti were men who cared to have their design ability called into question. It says something for the reputation of Villiers that he was ever in a position to question it, let alone do something about it.

He was not impressed by the crankshaft in the Bentley. 'I couldn't understand how the centre bearing could remain in, because here were these two big weights with the centre connecting rods coming round and nothing but the poor little centre bearing to hold it straight. I'd talked with some of the chaps who raced Bentleys at Brooklands and they told me they picked up another 500 revs when the centre bearing was on the way out – but that didn't last



This car, chassis XT3626, was originally a very late 4 ½ litre Coupé by Mayfair, but by the time it competed in the 2011 Bentley Drivers Club Tour of Great Britain it was very much a "Blower Bentley" in Le Mans trim.

long before the oil pressure went, of course.

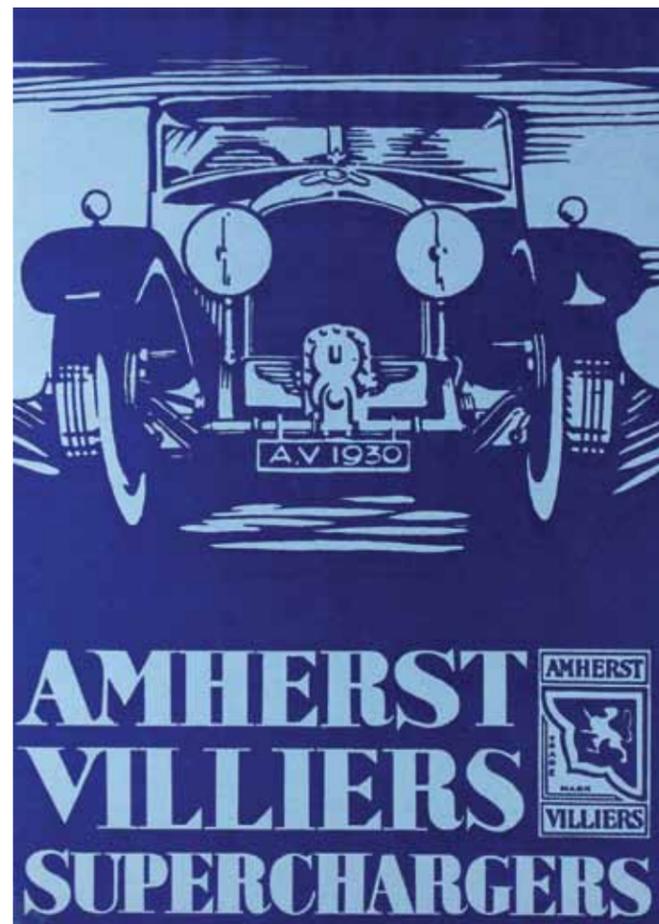
'I designed a new crankshaft with proper heavy balance weights on a Saturday afternoon in Birkin's flat.'

If Birkin was to run at Le Mans with the Blower Bentleys, a total of 50 would have to be built. Villiers' contract called for him to deliver three superchargers for Birkin's team cars and the remainder were to be produced by David Brown's company. The contract also called for the Villiers trade name to appear on all the superchargers (in accordance with his agreement to forgo royal-

ties) and in the Bentley catalogue.

Clive Gallop became the man in charge of the project and Villiers soon found himself being edged further and further to the outside. When Gallop decided that the engines did not require conversion to dry-sump, Villiers' arguments were not heeded. This contributed directly towards the succession of racing failures with the supercharge Bentleys in the first year. The works Bentley team even laid their race strategy on the assumption that the Blower cards would fail after making the initial running to soften up the opposition for a works walkover. This sort of reputation did nothing for Villiers' personal standing in the engineering community; the final indignity in the whole transaction came at the London Motor Show when Villiers arrived to find that his name had been filed off the blower casings and not mentioned in the catalogues, contrary to his contract. He initiated legal proceedings against Bentley Motors but before he could extract proper settlement the company went into voluntary liquidation.

He was so pleased with the Blower Bentley project that he wrote and produced 50 copies of a booklet on his engineering career, one for each buyer of the powerful new Bentley. But when he arrived at the Motor Show to find his name removed from the blower casing, he stormed out and threw the booklets in a bin. Then he change his mind and retrieved just one copy as a souvenir. He let me reproduce a new batch as a souvenir of a great career...and these are now collector's items!



Yet another rug had been pulled from under Amherst Villiers's feet.

His design company was now installed at Piccadilly House in London and Villiers was deeply involved with the design of aircraft engines for a firm in the United States. One of his smaller projects in 1932 was to contract with Sir Herbert Austin to supply his brand of supercharging to the Ulster racing Austin 7. Murray Jamieson was looking after this programme while Villiers pushed ahead with his aircraft engines, and Jamieson eventually went to the Austin Motor Company with the car and stayed to design their single-seater twin-cam racing cars.

The vintage hey-day of Amherst Villiers was ending but before World War Two he just had time to chalk up another chapter. He embarked on the design of a special-bodied version of the su-

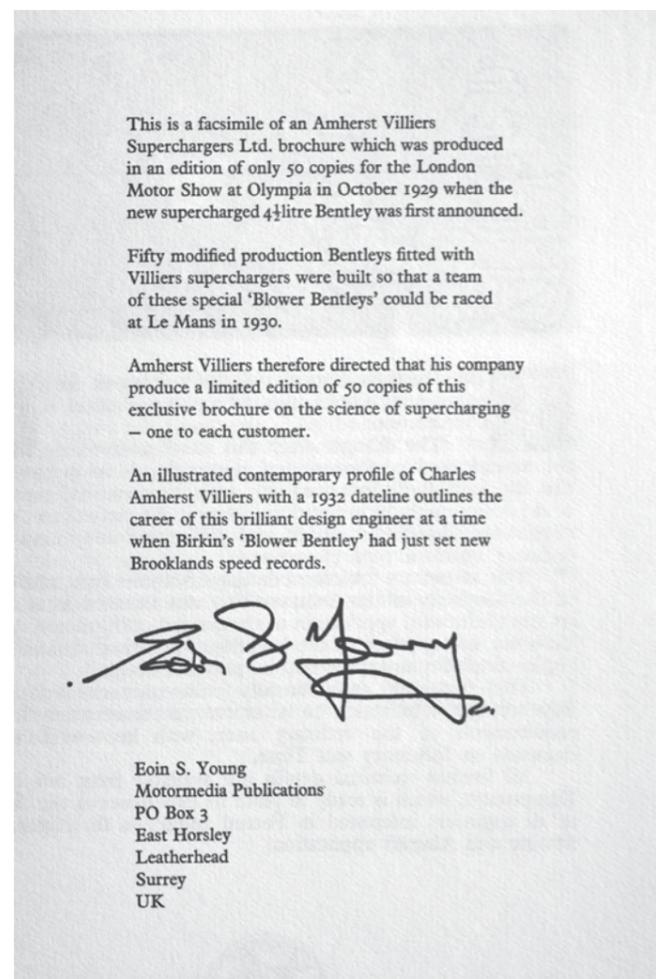
percharged Graham-Paige to be sold as the Villiers-Graham. In haunting Villiers fashion the first prototype was delivered to him the week that War was declared ...

He flew in the Air Transport Auxiliary for two years before being released at the request of the Canadian Government to take over research at Canadian Car and Foundry in Montreal. From there he went to California and when the War ended he was already involved with what was to become America's aerospace programme to put men on the moon. The aerospace world became too much in the early 1960s and Villiers returned to his home in London to indulge in another of his loves: painting. Among a distinguished clientele, he produced portraits of Graham Hill and Ian Fleming, creator of James Bond. It was for Fleming that Villiers designed a car to fit the role of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang which Fleming was using as a theme for a children's book. The result was based on an SSK Mercedes with the round radiator from a Delaunay-Belleville.

Back in aerospace harness again with Douglas in California, Villiers was working on Project Empire to put men on Mars. But the de-escalation of the American space programme meant that the chances of his projections taking shape within the century were remote.

Now, once more in England before wintering in Palma, Villiers rushed between appointments to see old friends, wondering why he ever decided to buy a troublesome 10-year-old Ferrari GT, and trying to bring a semblance of order to the studio-house he designed for himself in Kensington. Large cardboard cartons served as makeshift filing cabinets. One is marked: BENTLEY (Supercharged 4.5-litre). A box beside it is labelled: H16 BRM (four-valve head) in memory of another project that was nipped in the design bud all too early on.

How did a man of 73 start to wind down after a career packed with so many careers? He has no intention of winding down. Too much to do, he says. Next on the agenda is a book that foretells the great genetic leap of man ...



FOR SALE: 1960 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud II Chassis SVB331. Good condition, imported new, always garaged. Present owner for 35 years. Comes with spare new windscreen, full set of tools (including some special), original handbook and set of workshop manuals. \$35,000 o.n.o. For more details phone Merv Warner (06) 751 2414

FOR SALE: 1967 Silver Shadow Drop-head. CRH3358
Asking price: \$80,000 or near offer. Immaculate in black with white upholstery. A very early example with the 6230 cc engine, recently refurbished. Contact Roy Tilley, 04.566.0850. rmt@xtra.co.nz (selling on behalf of owner). Car can be viewed in Carterton.



FOR SALE: 1993 Bentley Continental Corniche 111 Convertible. Chassis no 30587. Brooklands Green. 55000 Kms. Original, unmarked and impeccable. Owned for 10 years with 1 previous owner. Ring R.B. Cleave, (09) 5758115 or 0274 984259
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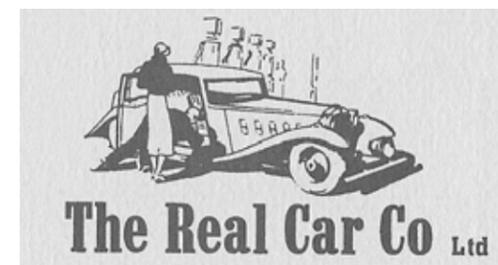
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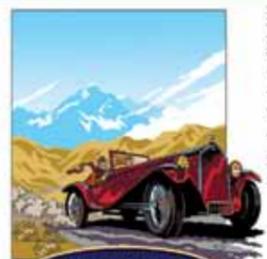


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Left, a 1960 Alfa 2000 Spider by Touring and Rolls Royce Silver Cloud III James Young at Autovia's workshop.



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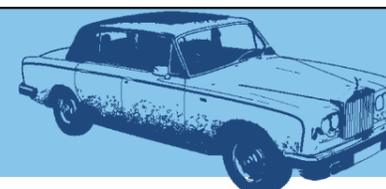
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Club Calendar

Full details are also contained on our Web Site www.nzrrbc.co.nz



National

2013 A.G.M. 6 & 7 April Chateau Tongariro - the painting above hangs in the Chateau's stairwell.

A block reservation has been made at the Chateau Tongariro for 20 rooms for our next A.G.M. Those who were there last time will remember what a great weekend it was.

Pre-dinner drinks have been arranged, and dinner will be in the Ruapehu Room, the main dining room. The hotel is very busy at that time of year, so it is ESSENTIAL to make your reservation soon to be assured of a room. The hotel will hold our block booking for only a limited time.

The nightly rate negotiated is \$319.00 (G.S.T. included) which is a rate for two including dinner and breakfast. If you subtract the cost of a three-course dinner at a nice restaurant, and also an unlimited breakfast buffet, this rate is not much different from a fairly ordinary motel.

Group Name – Rolls-Royce & Bentley Club #356596

Please phone the Reservations team on 0800 242832 or e-mail stay@chateau.co.nz and quote the group name and number.

Central Region

Wellington Anniversary Weekend 19 to 21 January: A run to Wanganui, coinciding with the Vintage Weekend there. Further details will be published in "TotC."

Southern Region

Sunday 27 January 2013: Martin Vincent is organising another of his popular and now traditional visits to a Canterbury historic homestead. Further details will be notified in the Southern Region Newsletter for December.

Invitations

Sunday 10 February 2013: the 26th British Car Day 10am to 3pm Trentham Memorial Park (Use Barton Road, off Fergusson Drive, Upper Hutt) \$5 per display vehicle. Once again the British Car Club will be donating proceeds to keep the Wellington Free Ambulance free. There will be a good range of food and drink available and the usual range of British vehicles to admire.

British Car Day Committee C/- Secretary 9 Cassis Place Crofton Downs WELLINGTON 6035 Contacts: Lyn /Keith Shackleton
Phone: (04) 973 2904 E-mail: theshacks@paradise.net.nz

Great British Car Rally 17-22 February 2013

On Sunday 19 October 1997 the NZ-UK Link All British Car Rally set off from Auckland bound for Christchurch. As you know, it was an incredible journey with over 400 cars competing at different stages throughout the week.

Fifteen years later it seems to us that the time has come to repeat the journey and take another thrilling ride from Auckland to Christchurch. But this time branded the GREAT British Car Rally.

It will start in Auckland on Sunday 17 February and finish in Christchurch on Friday 22 February; the second anniversary of the Christchurch earthquake. We would like to put on a GREAT car show for Christchurch.

The GREAT British Car Rally will be fundraising for four charities: Starship Children's Hospital, Save the Children (Wellington branch) and two charities based in Christchurch: the Christchurch City Mission and a charity with mental health focus (which is yet to be confirmed).

You will be pleased to hear that once again Ross Church has agreed to be our Rally Director. So together, we will create a buzz and level of excitement that will sweep down the country as we make this GREAT journey with events in each main city promoting the best of Britain.

We have also been in touch with Pat Alston, the mastermind behind 1997 rally, and we hope that she may be able to join us for part of this GREAT journey.

The rally will be open to all British cars - both classic and new and we will follow the same route from Auckland to Christchurch. As in 1997, you will be able to join us for the whole rally or complete as many stages as you wish. All the information is available on our website: www.ukinnewzealand.fco.gov.uk/GREATbritishcarrally.

Ross has very kindly offered to donate a prize to the participant and car from the Link rally that also completes the 2013 GREAT British Car Rally. This will be judged on the basis of "those that best represent that British/New Zealand spirit of motoring".

We hope that many of the 1997 rally participants will join us for another INCREDIBLE JOURNEY along with other British car enthusiasts.

Please contact us via the website or email Amanda Anslow at: greatbritishcarrally@gmail.com to register your interest, or phone Amanda on (04) 4764659. Our website will be updated regularly to keep you up-to-date with all the latest information.

In June 2013 the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club is organising a Centenary Celebration of the Rolls-Royce success in the 1913 Alpine Trials.

Their Past Chairman, Tony James, writes: "If you or any of your colleagues would like further information, please contact the prime organiser of the rally, who is Len Meades - e-mail lenmeades@btinternet.com or Tel: +44 (0)1346 730 373."