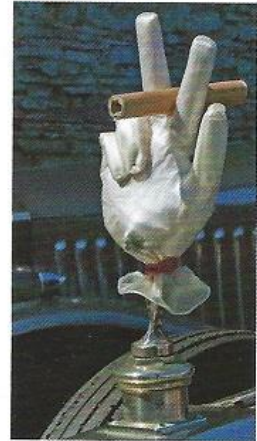


# Twenty

Newsletter

RREC



Number 25

September 2011



During the 20hp rally to Normandy **Nigel Tucker** captured this scene in the coastal village of Grandcamp-Maisy. It is near Pointe Du Hoc, a vital headland on Omaha Beach secured by 250 US Rangers; only 90 of them survived. The inscription reads:

**STATUE DE LA PAIX / WORLD PEACE STATUE  
AU PEUPLE DE NORMANDIE**



## Mascot Mania! Just Some Examples of the Many Creative Entries



Graham & Mary Moore  
Winners 20hp



Chas & Joan Vyse  
Winners non-20hp



David Love  
Runner-up prize



## THE TWENTY NEWSLETTER

No. 25

September 2011

The Twenty Newsletter is published twice-yearly, normally in May/June and November/December, for members of the 20hp Register of the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club. Opinions expressed and advice offered in this newsletter is not necessarily that of the RREC or its officials and no responsibility can be accepted for the results of following contributors' advice.

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### Cover Photographs

It seems appropriate to celebrate one of the themes of 2011 – **the centenary of the Rolls-Royce mascot** – with some images of mascots from the 20hp rally to Crépon in Normandy.

Nigel Tucker sent a dramatic photograph showing how we were constantly reminded of the sacrifices made by so many in 1944: 200,000 allied troops and support staff went to Normandy on the first day (D-Day) alone. Many of us paused for thought, at various places: war cemeteries, memorials, museums, churches and historic sites. Jane Else has written a rally report for the Bulletin, and we are grateful to Jane and David for producing a DVD 'story of the rally' and distributing it to all participants.

Our traditional decorate-the-mascot competition was fastidiously judged by Koen Sileghem, the hotel owner, and Clothilde, a local newspaper reporter. The small photograph on the front cover shows David and Jane Else's Churchillian entry which deserved its runner-up prize in the competition. A small selection of the many creative masterpieces is shown on page 2. Klaus and Manuela Reichardt, who live in both California and Germany, submitted The Baby Rolls mascot. Very clever but totally unacceptable.

The mascot photographs were taken by Simon and Angie Slaffer, and by Linda Jones.



### Editorial and Events

Thank you everyone who has contributed to this Newsletter by sending information, articles and photographs etc. Some of the contributions are being held for the next Newsletter because this one is so late! However, we do need more. I am happy to receive rough notes, articles for editing, or a finished piece of polished prose. In this issue we have a history of Weymanns, Gareth Morgan's progress report, a date with Madonna, news from long-term owners of 20hps, and many things technical.

**Register Donations:** this is specially for those who have not sent a donation to the Register within the last year. The Register needs to top up its funds to enable continued printing of this Newsletter and the Directory of members' cars and contact details. *Please complete the blue form enclosed with this letter and return it to the Registrar.* You can make your donation conveniently by credit card or by cheque.

The last (magenta) forms were sent out in November 2009 and I am hoping that everyone in the Register who has not renewed their membership within the last year will respond. Each Newsletter costs about £1,200 for printing and posting, and each edition of the Directory costs about £600. The RREC does provide a lot of support in terms of the services and general costs involved in running a Register, but your donations are required to ensure publication of future Newsletters and Directory booklets (Directories are only sent to those who have made donations). Please send in the blue form even if there are no changes in your personal or car details, so I have a record of your donation. I would like to give extra thanks to some members have been especially generous in their support.

### Forthcoming Events

**18 June-2 July 2012 Anniversary Rally to Le Canadel:** The new 20hp was announced to the public in 1922, so for the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary we are visiting the part of Provence where Henry Royce lived; according to Pugh in *The Magic of a Name*, Royce and his team of design engineers spent every winter in the village of Le Canadel from 1918-19 to 1931-32 (although other historians give slightly different dates). At Le Canadel they designed and developed our beloved 20hp car.

We have reserved the 35-room hotel Bastide du Calalou in the village of Moissac-Bellevue 22-29 June 2012. This is in vineyard country but close to the hills and canyons of the Verdun Parc Regional National, and the famous Route Napoleon. Of course we will make the pilgrimage to Le Canadel on the Mediterranean coast (next page) only 50 miles from our hotel, and also visit St Tropez. Just after the Annual Rally, we plan to catch the overnight ferry to St Malo, taking four days to drive to Provence, then another four days to return. At the time of writing, the 33 rooms are almost all taken, but please do contact me if you are interested in this rally.

**12-14 October 2012 Anniversary Weekend:** Plans are afoot to have a weekend rally "somewhere in the home counties north of London" to celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the actual month in which the 20hp was launched. This will be a Friday-Sunday event in a luxury country house hotel, with an open-to-all rally in the

grounds of a nearby stately home on the Sunday. Details are to be arranged so please pencil these dates into your diary.

**3-10 of June 2013 Visit to the Loire valley:** chateau hotels in the Loire are difficult to book for large groups because they invariably attract reservations more than a year ahead. I have managed to reserve the whole of the Chateau de Rochecotte hotel near the village of St Patrice on the river Loire from Monday 3rd June 2013 to Monday 10th June. The chateau is set in its own beautiful grounds, has 37 rooms and suites, excellent cuisine, and has offered us reasonable rates. The opportunity to experience luxury chateau life will, of course, cost rather more than our usual Continental rallies ... but we have 18 months to save the pennies! The chosen dates will give us time to travel back for the Annual Rally; also they avoid the UK Spring Bank Holiday (27 May in 2013) and will not overlap the Alpine Centenary Rally, which is scheduled later in June. For this rally to go ahead, we do need people to sign up soon - see further details and provisional application form on page 6, and please contact me if you want to be on the list.

### And speaking of Le Canadel ...

André Blaize explained why contemporary records refer to Villa Mimosa being at "Le Canadel", but Le Canadel does not appear as a village on modern maps. In 1925 there were five separate districts along that part of the coast: Le Rayol, Le Canadel, Le Fenouillet, Le Dattier and Les Pierrugues. Le Canadel merged with Le Rayol as long ago as 1949, for financial reasons. On the latest maps Canadel-sur-Mer appears to be part of Le Rayol - Canadel-sur-Mer.

Le Canadel is a fairly common name in the south of France, used to describe a place, just like "The Ridge", "The Grove" etc in English, but André does not know whether it has a particular meaning in any local dialect. However he does point out that in old Portuguese Canadelo means a place where people live and work.

Also of relevance to our Anniversary Rally, **Elizabeth Bennett** has kindly sent an interesting photograph of Henry Royce, taken at Villa Mimosa (see page 15). The following quotation is compiled from her emails:

"Here is the photograph that we think is taken at Villa Mimosa, Le Canadel. It appears to be Royce having a chat with someone on the terrace, with the Mediterranean in the background. It is also a good portrait of his companion ... both looking very cheerful don't you think? We are amused by the heap of newspapers(?) on the floor under the door. Every picture tells a story! On the reverse is written in pencil: 5640.

It may be that it is a known photograph of course, but we have not found it in publications yet; we are researching who his companion is\*. We have taken it out of the frame, and the mount and backing etc all seem to be of the period.

Kind regards, Elizabeth Bennett"

\* *Could he be Arthur Wormwald, General Works Manager at Derby? See Fasal page 39*





For June 2013, the hotel has offered us a good discount on this year's tariff provided we fill the hotel which has 37 rooms in total. The *expected* total cost for the rally (standard room, 7 days half-board, receptions, visits etc, but not the ferry crossing) is £1,750 for two persons sharing. There are 10 Standard rooms and 15 'Confort' rooms with a £90 surcharge for the week. There are 9 'Prestige' rooms with a £500 supplement and 3 very posh Suites with a £1,000 supplement. All supplements are for the week, for two people sharing, and are best estimates.

Please contact me for further information. Linda and I stayed at this hotel in 2005 (a non-RREC car rally); it is truly an experience. I have since recommended it to others, who have found it faultless. <http://www.chateau-de-rochecotte.fr/>

**Deposit:** In order to reserve the whole hotel, they require a deposit in January 2012. The deposit is to show good faith, in that they are willing to make it fully refundable until November 2012, when a further deposit will be payable. So, if you are interested in reserving a place, **please send a deposit of £150 per person (£300 per couple) as soon as possible.** You can copy this page and return it to me with cheque - or credit card details if more convenient (VISA or Mastercard only).

Please reserve me a place on the 20hp rally to the Chateau de Rochecotte Hotel, Loire, 3-10 June 2013.

Name(s) .....

Email/telephone .....

Type of room preferred (see above) .....

Please return this form, plus cheque for £150 per person (£300 per couple) to Tom Jones. **Cheques payable to "RREC Ltd"**, or fill in credit card details below.

Card No. .... Expiry ...../..... Security No.....

Name on card..... Signed..... Date.....

## Feedback and General Items

Contact the following volunteers for **Technical help and discussion** - 20hp cars.

**John Eastwood**, Staffordshire (mechanical, tuning) 01283 790442 – early evg  
(John also offers personal hands-on instruction on how to maintain your car in good running order, for which he charges an hourly rate. Topics include lubrication, tuning etc)

**David Else**, North Wales (mechanical, electrical)  
01492 531584 evg [elsedavid@talk21.com](mailto:elsedavid@talk21.com)

**Ben Grew**, Essex (spares prices)  
01702 476982 evg [bennygrew@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bennygrew@yahoo.co.uk)

**Tod Marshman**, Devon (originality, tools)  
01805 804352 [flies@turrall.com](mailto:flies@turrall.com)

**David Mead**, Sussex (mechanical, electrical, instruments)  
01892 661140

If anyone else is willing to offer advice and help to fellow 20hp Register members, please contact the Registrar.

## **20hp Ambassadors**

### **Dutch 20 Register Ambassador**

Letter from Roberto Verboon of the Netherlands

Dear fellow 20 Register members,

Here a Dutch letter from Roberto Verboon. I am not so long with the 20 Register, but I am a RREC member since 1999. Last year I was contacted by the Derby Bentley Register to become a Derby Bentley Ambassador.

Such an Ambassador in a country is most of all an enthusiast, who is there to help travelling club members. It could be very useful to members travelling abroad, who have problems or questions, regarding technical things, or even B&B or things to do. This is not a business, but local hands-on experience from Club volunteers. The idea came from Noel McIntosh in Australia, who is also with the Derby Bentley Register. This is a very good idea, I think, and our 20 Register should also have ambassadors.

I offer to be the Dutch 20 Register Ambassador and I hope more people will contact the 20 Register and do the same for their country, so contact the Register and become an ambassador in your country!

Kind regards,



Roberto Verboon, Hilvarenbeek robertoboonski@hetnet.nl +31 13 505 2323

PS: I am looking for a spare 21 inch, 12 spoke artillery wheel for my car. Please contact me if you can help. Many thanks.



### Choked up smoker to super smooth flying machine - a total transformation - by Geoff Devlin

When John Eastwood answered a call for help from a new member who had just purchased GAJ 65 and was concerned about the amount of black smoke emitting from the exhaust pipe and the quantity of petrol leaking from the carburettor, little did he know that within 3 weeks he would be heading north to the peace and tranquillity of rural Dumfries and Galloway for the challenge of his life.

Challenge indeed, as he soon realised that I had no mechanical knowledge whatsoever and had never held an oil gun or a spanner in my life! And I had just bought a 20hp? Hmm! I and my partner Pat fell for the charismatic charms of GAJ 65, a particularly pretty 1927 20hp with an Arthur Mulliner body, on a visit to London, when we saw her looking very sorry for herself in the corner of a dealer's showroom. That was it, love at first sight! We had to have her, bought her there and then and decided to call her Elizabeth, see photograph page 35.

As a long term Rolls-Royce owner I had the foresight not to try and drive her home from London in the state she was in, so we set about having her transported to Scotland where she would sit alongside Eleanor, our much loved and cosseted Silver Shadow II. It soon became apparent Elizabeth needed some urgent mechanical TLC and that is when I called John to ask his advice after reading the current 20hp newsletter. John realised there was no quick fix he could suggest over the phone and offered to drive to Dumfries and Galloway to teach me everything I would need to know to understand and properly maintain the car - an offer I jumped at. So John loaded up his trusty steed from top to bottom with a variety of oils, tools, spare parts, split pins, oil gun and of course a supply of his highly revered Rooibos tea - and headed north to the Solway coast.

Then followed three days of intensive hands-on tuition, the result being a total transformation of the car, from a choked up smoker to a super smooth flying machine. This was the best thing I ever did. John's approach was very much hands-on and I had to do everything under his watchful eye. He explained what had to be done, how to do it and why, then left me to see if I had been paying attention. The best way to learn, without a shadow of doubt. The result was he took me right out of my comfort zone and between us we got Elizabeth up to scratch and running as she should. We started at the front of the car and finished at the back, checking, adjusting and changing pretty well everything on the way; oh! and lots and lots of oiling. Since then she has been polished every day including her woodwork which

now looks nourished and cared for and her seats have been sympathetically repaired to retain her original patina as much as possible.

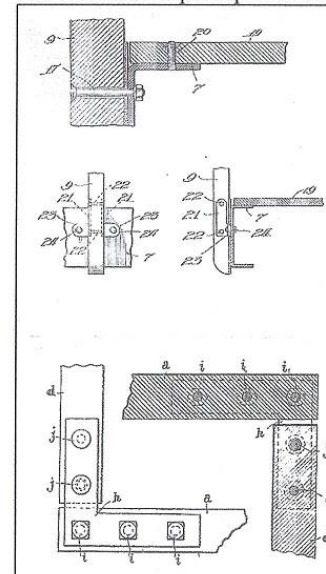
So Elizabeth is now ready to hit the road once again with confidence and this would not have been possible without John's help. "Thank you John!" The only thing that remains is to source the necessary tools to enable me to continue to maintain her. Any help would be much appreciated!



### Shake, rattle and Rolls by Tod Marshman

The Weymann fabric-saloon is a style of coachwork which is quintessentially 20hp - so too are its part-fabric counterparts.

Charles Weymann was an American born in 1889 to a French mother and American father. He was bi-lingual and lived most of his life in France. Weymann was a pioneer aviator, winning the Gordon Bennett Cup at the Isle-of-Sheppey in 1911. His interest in aviation led him to develop a fabric-covered flexible motor-car body based on aircraft principles and he produced his first Carrosserie Weymann prototype



in 1921. The body was built with an ash frame in a series of parallelograms and arches where the principle joints were made with T-, L- or I-shaped steel plates to bolt or screw the ash members together, instead of using traditional timber mortise-and-tenon joints, see diagram. Spaces were left between adjoining timber surfaces to avoid squeaks and the complete body was rubber-mounted on to the chassis frame.

Small metal panels formed the rounded corners. Straining wires were used inside the doors so they retained their shape when opened and custom-made locks ensured the doors moved silently within the framework when the body was subjected to stresses such as uneven road-surfaces. Large panels were covered with wire netting, followed by cotton cloth and wadding, over which either nitro-cellulose coated fabric (leathercloth) or other strong waterproof cloth could be stretched.

To promote his system, Weymann equipped a number of luxury European chassis such as Panhard, Voisin, Hotchkiss and Delage with fabric bodies. Since only a limited number could be produced in the Carrosserie Weymann workshops in Paris, most were built under licence by other European coachbuilders - the firm of Rotax initially selling licences to British coachbuilders. In 1923 a British subsidiary, the



Weymann Motor Body Co, was formed which two years later became a limited Company when Weymann purchased the Cunard Company and set-up their own coachworks at Addlestone in south-west London. Licensing offices were also set-up in Cologne, Germany, and New York in 1925. By 1926, 123 licences had been established worldwide.

Rolls-Royce were concerned that British coachbuilders were creating large, heavy bodies for the Twenty, and the Weymann body offered an excellent opportunity to reduce vibration and noise whilst also reducing weight and lowering the centre of gravity - thereby increasing performance. In the USA, light-weight Weymann flexible bodies were promoted by Stutz as "a new luxury in motoring". "There is an incredible quiet that results from the elimination of body noises, including the vibration called 'drumming', the feeling of swift floating flight as the car glides over the road, an undisturbed poise of the passengers cushioned on the deep seats firmly anchored to the frame".

These were admirable attributes which attracted much interest - with the Weymann system being offered to purchasers of Rolls-Royce chassis, particularly small-horsepower, by most of the principal coachbuilders. The journal *'Motor Body Building'* reported that a survey of all bodywork at the 1928 Olympia car show indicated that the popularity of the Weymann system was increasing, an opinion strengthened by the fact that many chassis manufacturers were including one or two bodies of this type in their list of standard models. It added that 'practically 50% of entrants in the premier drawing competition organised by the Worshipful Company of Coach-makers, the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, and the Institute of British Carriage and Automobile Manufacturers, including the first and second prize winners, favoured this form of construction'.

A total of 336 Twenties and Twenty/Twenty-fives were built - largely by H.J.Mulliner (175 bodies), but also by Weymann themselves (56), Park-Ward (19), Arthur Mulliner (18), Gurney Nutting (11), James Young (8) and a dozen others. But the vogue was comparatively short-lived with production spanning just a dozen years as follows

<u>20hp and 20/25 Weymann Bodies</u>			
1924	1	1930	78
1925	3	1931	20
1926	28	1932	4
1927	57	1933	3
1928	64	1934	0
1929	82	1935	2

It seems the public preferred highly polished paintwork to the matt finish of nitro-cellulose cloth which was only available in a limited range of colours. Rolls-Royce Ltd had mixed feelings towards these fabric bodies. In August 1926, the Sales Department circulated a memo: 'Will you kindly remind salesmen that in the opinion of the Company the appearance of a Weymann body is not what one usually

associates with a Rolls-Royce chassis'. Salesmen were instructed to direct determined purchasers of Weymann bodies towards H.J.Mulliner & Co Ltd.

In November 1929 Royce wrote: 'I have ridden in two 20hp saloon cars with fabric bodies. One is a Mulliner I understand, used by C. in London, which I think is extremely nice, with its one-piece screen, *the special feature being that the front scuttle is sufficiently rigid not to jelly*. The second one is a Park Ward used by Wor and has a narrow red line on it. This body not only looks of low quality, but the front jellies badly, and the whole car feels as though it was quite sloppy in the joints. I would not use this car at any price'.

At the 1929 Paris Motor Show, to counter criticisms of fabric-bodies, Weymann introduced a metal-clad version built on a Bugatti Royale which was described as 'semi-panelled' or 'semi-rigid' - this style having been developed by Vanden Plas using cloth above the waistline and aluminium below. Thirty-two such variants were built on 20/25s - twenty-five of them by Mulliners. The result proved pleasing, giving a sporting appearance to owner/driver saloons while still offering enhanced performance and a quieter ride. But the Weymann semi-panelled body was expensive and on 'Black Tuesday', October 29 1929, Wall Street suffered its crash - wiping away fortunes and heralding the great depression. With a falling market and tough economic conditions, the French Carrosserie Weymann closed in 1930. Production in the United States, which had been spearheaded by Stutz, ended in 1931. Charles Weymann resigned as Director of the British Company, which in 1932 joined forces with Birmingham-based Metropolitan-Cammell producing bus bodies and train carriages (becoming part of the new Metropolitan-Cammell-Weymann combine).

In March 1932, the Rolls-Royce Sales Department observed that fabric Weymann bodied cars were becoming hard to sell. Second hand prices offered were 15%-25% below those for metal bodied cars. They commented that Weymann bodies in good order could be converted to metal for £50-£75.

Weymann had attracted several competitors and a number of coachbuilders offered other 'silent' coachwork, and alternative fabric or part-fabric bodies instead of metal. The use of cloth or leather in a semi-panelled body was popular on the 20/25 chassis. The result looked good and was perceived to reduce drumming and weight. If the owner required more formal coachwork and a smooth paint finish throughout, then a large roof panel of leathercloth provided the solution.

Charles Weymann returned to aviation, manufacturing a monoplane and autogiro, whilst actively producing various motor accessories. He retired and lived quietly in France where he died aged 87 in September 1976. Most Weymann bodies did not survive so well, as they were prone to rot unless kept in a dry atmosphere. Even under ideal conditions, nitro-cellulose cloth was not the most durable of materials. Semi-panelled cars, or those with cloth roof panels, survived better.

*Ed. note:* Peter and Judy Herring own GEN 75 which is a Freestone and Webb 2-door Weymann saloon. They believe still retains its original fabric covering, see photographs page 35.





## Acquisition of GTM 2 Sedan de Ville by Windovers – Part 2

by Gareth and Angela Morgan

In the last Newsletter (No. 24) I gave an account of how I came to purchase GTM 2 (see photograph on page 35). Things have hardly been plain sailing since. I am the least mechanical of all RR owners. Be that as it may, I still derive untold pleasure from owning, caring and driving. Here are the confessions of the inexperienced “mechanic”.

Our first trip out after dark was a revelation. We visited a friend in Rhayader, Powys, to take her for a meal. It is a small town, 14 miles from where we live and well known for its dramatic scenery and famous reservoirs that supply Birmingham. The drive there was fun, GTM 2 went along proudly and the lighting system was quite good. As I pulled up outside Margaret’s home on a private estate, the engine stalled and all the lights went out. The absence of traffic was one comfort, so I pressed the starter only to receive no response. Thankfully I did know the whereabouts of the starting handle. I switched off the non-existent lights and in the almost absence of street lighting got the handle in. Half a turn and she started. My thoughts were: dynamo not functioning, battery flat. We limped to the restaurant, and parked GTM 2 on a slope, just in case. A good meal, half of bitter, and we were ready for home. Was it to be a taxi, or would GTM 2 oblige? Out with the handle again and she came to life. We drove home as fast as we could, with lights most of the way, but they gradually dimmed and almost expired as I entered our drive.

Next day, I lifted the floor in front of the rear seat and looked inside the battery box. The sales blurb had said “new battery fitted this year”. Well yes, that was true, but it was the sort of battery best suited for a 1930’s Austin 7. It half-filled the battery box, if that. I immediately purchased a new 12 volt heavy duty that just fitted the box. Having linked up the terminals, she started and all was well. The ammeter on the dash board registered a charge. All might be well after all. But I have not been out after dark in her since! Why? Because I think the ammeter is lying. That was not the only glitch. We decided on a sunny afternoon to visit Rhayader again. What a lovely drive we had, through the upper reaches of the Wye Valley, GTM 2 gleaming after a shampoo and polish. I felt really proud of her. We parked in the main street while we did a bit of shopping. When we got back GTM 2 was surrounded by a crowd of admirers all firing questions about her. Having given them some history, it was time to go home. I jumped in, put my foot on the starter; it refused to turn the engine and was clearly on strike. I have hardly felt more embarrassed in my life. So I got out, put on an air of confidence, went to the boot, got the starting handle, half a turn and she was running. What a relief! No one enquired why I had to use the handle; I think they assumed there was no starter. With her dignity intact, GTM 2 took us home in good form, watched by a small crowd until we were out of sight. From there on, the starter only worked intermittently. Now the implacable Norman Woolfenden has overhauled the starter motor, and it is utterly reliable.

I am now asking myself, is the dynamo charging? I have had it tested by a competent engineer; there is just the tiniest output. I fear the dynamo will need to be rewound. This I am putting off until the autumn. The one remaining obvious problem was that the engine was running very rich, evidenced by black smoke from the exhaust. I did all I could by adjusting the mixture. Things got better - less smoke. I went shopping one day to a nearby town and parked at an art gallery. I came back and GTM 2 started. I was off, only to find it stalled as I was driving close to the local bus station. I lost all power and stalled opposite the exit of several bus bays. I brought the whole place to a standstill. As I started looking for my AA membership card along came two bus drivers who said: “Please move from here, you’re holding up several local bus services”. My reply was: “I’m stuck, I cannot go forward or backward”. Thankfully they gave me a push into a safe area and I sat waiting for the AA engineer to come. For an hour I answered questions from a series of prying eyes. The AA man explained he had been to a good few breakdowns but never to attend to a vintage Rolls-Royce. By this time my wife was ringing me wanting to know why I was late for lunch, and what was more, my next appointment had arrived at the house, and how long was I going to be? I cannot really repeat what she said when I explained! Out came the plugs, sooted up. Fortunately I had a spare set, so they went in, and the car sprang into life at once.

That is not the only occasion when I had to call out the AA. One morning I took my wife and a friend to a garden centre. As we completed the first 14 miles the engine died. Similar symptoms to the bus station, so I diagnosed the problem from ‘my extensive experience’ as being the same plug situation. I still had no plug spanner, but did have a spare set of plugs. I rang the AA again and explained where I was. We will be there in one hour they said. While I was waiting a gentleman stopped with a white van, and asked if he could help. I explained that a mechanic was on his way. “I own a Silver Shadow” he said. He went on: “I tell you what I could do to help, how about swapping your car for my Shadow, I live nearby, and I have just spent £5000 refurbishing the brakes”. How does one respond to such generosity without being rude? I am pleased to say I kept a cool head, thanked him very much, but thought he was being far too generous to a stranger. To cut a long story short, the AA man, having first changed the plugs on my instructions, discovered I had run out of petrol. I had looked at the gauge before I left home, but I had not learnt the lesson that some gauges are totally unreliable particularly when they are over 80 years old. Oh dear, another lesson learnt.

And so the little problems continue. I have done 756 miles in just over 8 months, five of which we were inundated with snow, salt etc, when distinguished elderly cars are best kept indoors. Incidentally this compares with the 408 miles GTM 2 had done over the previous five years. The car was still running far too rich when my friend of 40 years, John Fasal came to stay. No better authority on our cars in the world. He adjusted my carburettor, and GTM 2 is climbing hills as she has never done before, and what is more, the black smoke has disappeared. Also he has sourced a number of original tools for me, but not yet that essential plug spanner. I



find him an inspiration with a brilliant sense of humour, an essential companion for every vintage Rolls-Royce owner. His own cars are a joy, and truly worth seeing.

Another problem: I could lock the back doors but not the front ones. The previous owner told me he had failed to get a key to fit and it had been a snag he failed to solve over many years. Without ringing the AA again, I decided to experiment, and removed the handles and locks, and all was revealed. The nearside handle and lock was fitted on the off side and vice versa. What is more the offside door handle shaft was bent and twisted. I went to a local small engineering works and asked if they could help. Within an hour the proprietor was at my door, with a straight shaft, both the twist and the bend had gone, and everything fits like a glove. "How much do I owe you, Mr Crowther?" I enquired. "Nothing" was the reply, "Glad to have been able to help". Both front doors can now be locked with the same key as is used for the back doors. Mid Wales may be miles from everywhere, but a warm community spirit is still alive here. What does the PM call it? The Big Society, I think!

GTM 2 and my other cars have just featured in a recording for a Welsh language television programme. This is a series where two well-known Welsh presenters visit different communities and feature various people, places, and businesses. It has yet to be transmitted; we wait with baited breath for the end product. Thank God they were not at the local bus station filming on my visit, nor hopefully do they have contacts with the AA! In conclusion, I must say I am having such fun with GTM 2. Driving her is a whole new experience, and from their friendly reaction, the local populace love her too. I have by now *almost* mastered the art of silent gear changing!

### Cars and owners

**David Davis** reports on noise in Australia. "I went for a 2-hour run in the Twenty yesterday, up through the northern beaches. Returning along Mona Vale road I heard a loud and odd mechanical noise which I frantically searched my brain about. It turned out to be a Tiger Moth having a look at the Twenty from the sky!

Nearer home, the brakes made a very metal to metal shriek which kept me awake for an hour. This morning, I went over my test run and it didn't happen so must have been a bit of dirt. The usual squeak was there, but I tried Barrie Gillings' trick of pulling the hand brake on a tiny bit and it stopped. Barrie has a chain of some sort which pulls the handbrake on a touch when the foot brake is pressed which he says stops the squeak."

**Craig Hannum** reports from Oregon, USA (see newsletters 18 page 13 and 23 page 34). "Good news! I finally finished my GMJ 6. I've only owned it for 25 years.

Initially, I really wasn't interested in the marque but when approached by someone selling from a divorce case, my offer was accepted. I suddenly had to 'think Rolls-Royce', but not before finishing a vintage motorcycle and Model A Ford restoration. The journey has been very rewarding. I've met fellow 20 owners from all over the

Elizabeth Bennett owns this original photograph showing **Henry Royce in relaxed discussions with a companion at Villa Mimosa**, see page 5. Does anyone know about the photograph, or recognise Henry's companion?

If so, Elizabeth would be pleased to hear from you: [eeb1@btinternet.com](mailto:eeb1@btinternet.com)



Villa Mimosa is a holiday let today and appears little-changed from 80 years ago.



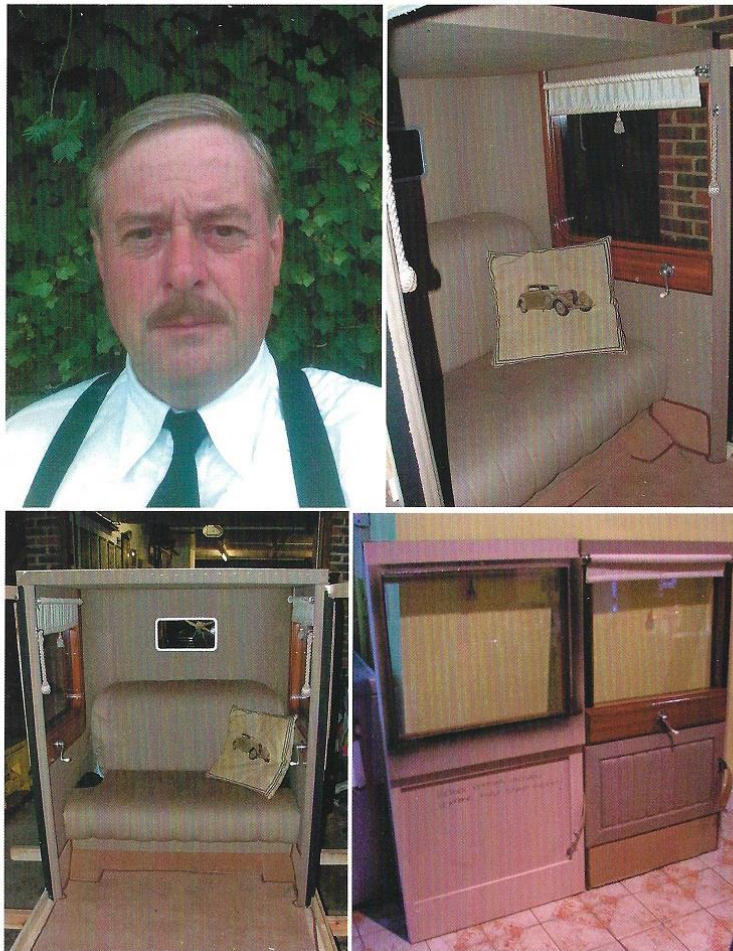
The colour photograph is copied from the web site of the present owners. It seems to have been taken from the same position in the same room.





'Allo 'Allo!

'Ere we see ~~René Artois~~ Nick Stow, with his replica 20hp car  
And more Madonna photographs on next page



Good moaning. Listen very carefully; I shall say zis only once. I have it on good authority that Madonna even paid £7.50 for Nick to have his hair cut. They stuck his moustache on with Copydex and used surgical spirit to remove it – painful, and he had to breathe carefully! He was told not to lose his falsie, but it fell off while he was changing. Thankfully he found it stuck to his shirt. See article page 24.

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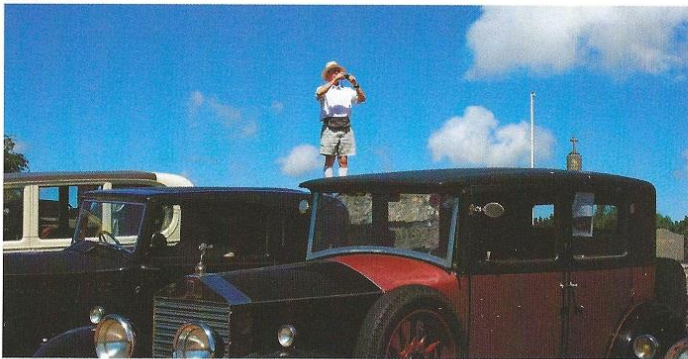




Some images from the Normandy Rally, June 2011



Road rage: **Chas and Joan Vyse** force a tank off the road



**Simon Slaffer** climbs all over the cars to get a good picture at La Pernelle



18 Privileged parking on the harbour side at **Honfleur**, courtesy of the Mayor



Used car lot in **Crépon**, Normandy



**David Blackburn's** stud farm and race horse training centre, Haras de Bouquetot



Parking-up at **Simon and Kate Howard's** Château de l'Angotière for a splendid luncheon party and hog roast



## Skiff in Australia



George Forbes from Melbourne owns **GOK 74**, with skiff coachwork. The body was made by Roger Fry in Australia, and copied from a French original. The car is used for long journeys and is maintained by Simon Elliott, who was featured in an article in *The Automobile* magazine last year. These photographs were scanned from the *Automobile* article.



George writes: "GOK 74 returned from an extensive trip to Western and Southern Australia where it was overall winner of the Annual Federal Concours in Perth. This was some 18 or so years, and 100,000 km, since Roger Fry built the immensely practical and rather attractive coachwork."

Simon Elliott is an old friend from motor racing days and has a first-class restoration and service company in Melbourne.



Our other 20hp GYK 47, a Park-Ward saloon limousine, is undergoing a big birthday at the moment: body off, repainting, replating, retrimming, tidying chassis etc. Both axles, the diff, springs, shackles, hubs, bearings, gearbox and engine have been rebuilt over the last five years. This will result in a really great car."

## Twenties Resurfaced



André Blaize reports that **GFN 73**, a **Binder cabriolet**, survives in Chile where it was delivered when new. It is now owned by Jesús Diez Gonzáles, son of Jesús Diez Martínez who was a coachmaker, mainly of buses. He founded the Antique Automobile Club of Chile in 1967 and his collection numbers about 90 vehicles. (Photo credit: Chamelfo Ropatras).



André also reports that **GTM 29** (below) was for sale in Poland. It carries its "special" saloon body by Coachcraft. Tom Clarke added that this was the first body Coachcraft built for Southern.

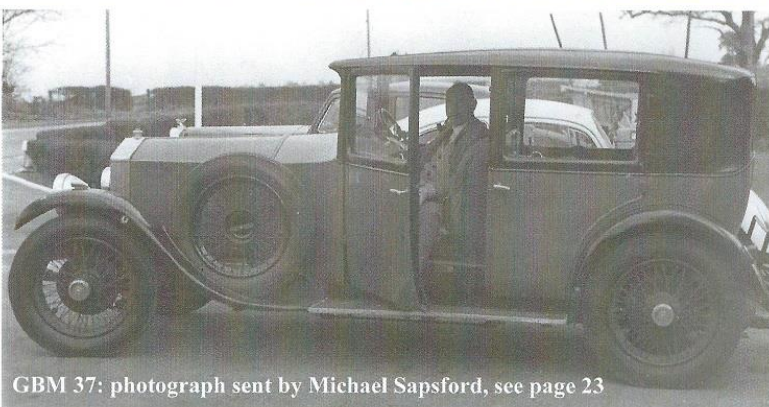






**Richard Valentine's GOK 41:** crossing the Pennines (A66) en route from Newcastle to Liverpool, Easter 1958. See page 23

**Julia's wedding**  
August 2009: Julia is one of the daughters of the baby in the first photograph



GBM 37: photograph sent by Michael Sapsford, see page 23

world, each time being enjoyable and educational. This year was Nic Møller in Curacao, Netherland Antilles at his outstanding Avila Beach Hotel. A real gentleman with a beautiful car that's similar to mine. I recommend his hotel, too! Next week Linda and I get to host John Leyland here from London while he attends a family reunion. John was CAR Howard's (London vintage auto boutique/broker) chief mechanic and restorer back in the late 1980s. While he is officially retired, he maintains the enviable task of tending to several private auto collections around the world. He's promised to fine-tune my car next week."

**Richard Valentine** from Slingsby West Yorkshire wrote to say: "we bought GOK 41 on 8 February 1958 and have run and maintained it to date, trying to keep it as original as we could. We cannot claim to have driven much in foreign lands, to have driven vast distances or to have returned the car to pristine condition. For a number of years it was the only car we had, being used to transport a growing family and for work. Now it only comes out occasionally."

I enclose for your interest a couple of photographs (left). The earlier one was taken on a journey from Newcastle to Liverpool, crossing the Bowes-to- Brough road in snow, Easter 1958. The later photograph was taken in summer 2009 at the wedding of one of the daughters of the baby in the first photograph."

The car as new is illustrated in Fasal's book, page 361.

**Jeremy Kilner** also from West Yorkshire wrote referring to Andrew Sington's letter, Newsletter 24 page 6. "I'm sorry if I disappoint him but he has five years less as an owner than me, since I bought GVO 38 in 1954. It is still in almost showroom condition but sadly I rarely use it because of a problem with petrol and the Autovac. Perhaps even more surprising is that I call this one my new one as I had another 20hp even before this one, but I upgraded to one with four-wheel brakes.

Oddly enough, I had GVO 38 for several months before a friend pointed out the registration number, JK 600. In those days personal plates were of little interest and no value!"

Since writing his letter, Jeremy has sold GVO 38 to Alan Botfield who lives in Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent.

**Michael Sapsford** sent an old photograph of GBM 37, left: "I enclose a picture of a car that I found particularly attractive. I must have taken it more than 30 years ago. The bloke at the wheel is Paul Wheeler, a small-time dealer in more modern cars. An old motor trader I knew called it an 'opera car' because it had a division but no occasional seats. I understood it went to a person called Young who took it to Australia with him when he emigrated. I wrote 'Paddon Bros sale label on dash' on the back of the photograph."

**André Blaize** sent some further information: "Graham Young bought it in 1970 or maybe before. He registered it with the RROC of Australia 1990-2001, but then he dropped out. The car has not resurfaced since, but must be in Victoria, somewhere."



**Peter and Regula (Rea) Velvart** had a long journey home to Switzerland from the Normandy rally. Peter emailed: "We got home well, drove the whole distance in one day (910km!), so nobody should complain RR did not build good cars! Driving that distance was easy on the car and engine but somewhat difficult for us. We did not do it to put ourselves in the book of records, but had another rally going the next day, so we tried to be back to unpack, repack and "re-oil" for the next drive in the Swiss Alps. We don't think one should do this on a regular basis ...

Never-the-less we feel proud, not about us but about our Twenty, which has done in last 5 weeks a trip to Sardinia, then to GB (the Annual Rally) and Normandie and finally Swiss Alps climbing without any complaints. Just great machinery made by great engineers from the past days and restored to the present condition by another great British guy (Graham Ashley-Carter).

For the time being we have to see about our next year's trip to Sicily, which is taking place around the same time of the Twenty Provence happening. So we keep you posted, but if we miss this one, we will definitely be joining the following year."



**My Date with Madonna** by Nick Stow  
(or should it be GNK 55's date with Madonna?)

After her first film role in *The King's Speech* (see Newsletter 23) GNK 55 was called upon once more to be 'Hero's Car'. During August 2010 the big screen beckoned for Madonna's yet-to-be-released new film *W.E.* (Wallis and Edward) which tells the story of Edward VIII's relationship with American socialite Wallis Simpson. GNK 55 was required for a viewing by Madonna, plus three day's filming. Unlike the *King's Speech*, where a stunt man was used for the chauffeur, Madonna thought that I was now ready for my first film role as chauffeur - not just an extra, but a driving part!

'Wardrobe' supplied a chauffeurs uniform, 'Makeup' a false moustache and a very short haircut (see photographs pages 16, 17) which did take some explaining at work, especially when my hair was cut the second time! The viewing of the 20hp took place on Wrotham Park Estate, Barnet. 'Madonna' or 'M' as she wished to be called climbed into the rear of the car and then into the front, deciding on what shots could be made. Yes GNK 55 was suitable, but for some of the close up filming it would be necessary to make a complete false rear compartment of the car. Within 4 days it was made, using the Hooper fitting from our car (a calculated risk) which I had carefully removed. Once the close-up work was completed at Earls Court, I arranged to collect all the fittings from near Heathrow, and was given the rear end 'Prop' of the car to keep.

A few days later GNK 55 was back together and I was ready for my first big part; 'Wardrobe', haircut, makeup, false moustache, on set for 13:00 and a 'sorry forgot to tell you it's a night scene 23:00 till 1:00 in the morning'. With actors in the rear

compartment, it was specially illuminated so they could be seen, and yes it is little old me driving over Lambeth Bridge in the dark!

Our final film date was for my big part ... and it turned out to be not quite as I had expected. Of course my night driving expertise was called for again; Wardrobe, haircut, makeup, false moustache all applied. The film set was a property in London that looked just like 10 Downing Street. Wallis and Edward, played by Andrea Riseborough and James D'Arcy, were seated in the back and Madonna decided to sit in the front passenger seat with me! The scene was that I would drive up to Number 10, Wallis and Edward would climb out, a news photographer would take photographs with much flashing of cameras while the press asked questions before the actors went into Number 10. 'Splasher' would spray GNK 55 with water because in the scene it had just rained - how nice! I ended up cleaning GNK 55 when I got home at the 3:00 in the morning.

After several attempts things were not going to plan. M had a film TV screen on her lap, which she called her 'Mouse's Ears', it had two aerials, one either side of the screen. Each time we pulled up outside Number 10, when the actors went to go into number 10, the light in the hallway which was hexagonal, with six bulbs inside blinded the screen that Madonna had on her lap. Several times I had to hold the screen while she consulted the set's crew while sitting next to me, asking if a dimmer switch could be fitted to dim the light. After several more runs and no success, the 'Props' department advised the dimmer switch they had tried to fit was broken! I suggested to M that perhaps three bulbs could be removed from the back of the light? She replied that's a good idea, let's try it and issued instruction out of the driver's window while I sat in the driver's seat.

By this time we were ready for our next run, I could see her door was not shut properly and politely excused myself and placed my arm around Madonna, explaining I did not want her to fall out, and shut the door properly. To my surprise she replied, 'No not when we are so near to the end of the film, thank you'. We approached Number 10, the actors got out and yes the light did not blind M's screen.

However, as the actors got out of the car, they were to look very happy as they looked at the cameras, but the press would then start to ask questions about Mrs Wallis's divorce, their expressions were to change. Directing from the 20hp M said you are supposed to look 'pissed'. I said to her; "I think you mean pissed off". M replied: "I forgot, it means the same in America" and then directed the actors to look pissed off. All went well and as we waited for another run Madonna asked me my name, if I owned the car and we had quite a chat. I told her a little of GNK 55's history, how it had spent a lot of its life living in a castle. She replied: "how cool is that?" (I said it was probably very cold!)

What did surprise me was that Madonna took time out to be with all of her children, even though she was directing filming: a real Mum. I met her children and had a great time on set and with her. The only mistake I made was to tell Madonna that GNK 55 is owned by my wife Claire, so I guess I 'blew it'. But my date with Madonna did last some one hour and 20 minutes - I've had shorter!





## Useful Tips

### David Else wrote:

You shouldn't use an impact screwdriver on a cast iron head or block. It can be very expensive. A correctly fitting screwdriver, one of those you can put a spanner on, is best. Then push it home with all your might and try to tighten it very slightly before undoing it. On occasion I've used a small ratchet type screw driver and held it in place with a 'G' clamp or even a piece of wood to give me mechanical advantage and stop it coming out of the slot.

Chas Vyse posted the following two useful tips on the RREC message board:

**Stainless steel exhausts:** I researched suppliers of SS exhaust systems quite carefully before buying a system for my 20/25. Be aware that not all "stainless" systems are fabricated from the correct grade of austenitic stainless steel.

*[Ed. note: I checked up with Chas's exhaust supplier and unfortunately the gentleman has just retired and does not want his contact details publicised. Pity! He told me he used Type 304L stainless steel - where L means the carbon content is less than 0.03%; the low carbon content results in better and stronger welds. Type 316L is even more corrosion resistant and is used in marine applications, but apparently has poorer heat tolerance.]*

**Wheel discs:** My long restoration of a 25/30 Barker sports saloon is now on the home straight and I turned my attention to the tyres. All five 19" wheels are fitted with what appear to be new Dunlop Forts - no tread wear visible! But as these tyres are marked 'Made in England' and have no moulded-in data, that makes them pre 1970 and way past their sell-by date. I started with the wing mounted spare wheel.

To remove the tyre without damaging the discs, I removed the discs; they needed re-painting in any case. Unlike my Thrupp & Maberly tourer which is fitted with outer wheel disks only, the Barker also has an inner wheel disc and the spokes are completely hidden. With the discs off I got a shock. The cast piece that fits around the hub (that the outer disc mounts on) had been fretting on the spokes. Not surprising when you consider that a spoked wheel is not as rigid as a cast wheel.

About 10 spokes had indentations that varied from paint removal to a cut about half way through the spoke. One spoke had actually sheared and was flapping around hidden by the discs. I removed both front wheels and took the discs off. Both wheels showed spokes with similar fretting, though none had yet broken. If the car had been on the road and I had 'raced' into a blind hairpin and then swung the wheel to make the corner, I think it possible that a front wheel would have collapsed. All three wheels are now with Motor Wheel Service International to be re-laced with new carbon steel spokes. When these are returned I'll remove and examine the two rear wheels. The thought occurs - how many other owners are driving around unaware of what may be lurking underneath their discs?

### Nigel Tucker wrote about hub tools:

I spent months looking for the original tools to remove the hubs on my 20hp. I could always borrow from a friend but that meant driving to both collect them and return them and I do like to have my own tools. Either the ones I wanted did not appear on ebay or the prices were out of this world, especially when it came to a puller and the castellated spanner to undo the hub rings. During my research I came across ([www.charltonclassiccars.co.uk](http://www.charltonclassiccars.co.uk)). I purchased the modern reproduction tools I was missing and they come beautifully machined in high grade stainless steel. Anyone wanting tools to do the job and who is not bothered about having originals, I recommend looking at their site. If anyone needs something particular, contact Gerry Coulter who is only too willing to remanufacture specialist tools of high quality and you will find them to a higher standard than the originals. ([jensengerry@hotmail.com](mailto:jensengerry@hotmail.com))



## Valve springs

In Bulletin 307 page 66 I wrote about servicing aluminium alloy cylinder heads, and emphasised the need for care in ordering new valve springs and valve stem seals. Here is more detailed information on 20hp valve springs for aluminium heads.

The 20hp aluminium head has a unique valve spring design. Like the 20/25 springs they have a tapered shape, but their "strength" or compressibility is similar to those of the original 20hp springs. It is known that original 20hp springs were designed to be only just strong enough. One benefit is that wear on the camshaft and rocker mechanism is minimised. On the other hand, valves are liable to bounce; the engine can occasionally emit a mild tinkling sound (valve-bounce) when throttled back. However it is important not to fit the stronger 20/25 springs to a 20hp; they can damage the rocker mechanism and cause excessive wear of the camshaft. Although new 20hp camshafts are available, they are expensive.

Bearing in mind the above, there seems there have been a couple of instances recently when new valve springs fitted to an aluminium head have proved to be below the specified strength, resulting in excess valve bounce. Will Fiennes informed me that he has clarified the situation with the spring manufacturer, and all valve springs now match the strength of original RR springs. If you are thinking of replacing valve springs as part of a general overhaul, or possibly because they are becoming "tired" after years of use, you are welcome to discuss your needs with Will Fiennes personally.

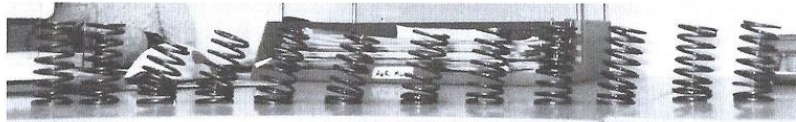
### Another Valve Spring Story (nothing to do with aluminium heads)

Many readers know Tony Hunt, who is a very experienced professional motor engineer and has spent much of his spare time over the last 30+ years restoring and overhauling pre-war RR cars. Recently he completed an engine re-build on his 20hp GSK 35. He fitted many new components, including valve springs. When he had finished the work, the car started first time (naturally), but after just 7 miles it was



obvious that all was not well. Equally obvious to Tony, on removing the rocker cover, was that the valve springs were in a seriously sorry state, see photograph.

GSK 35 still has its original iron head, and Tony had taken care to ordered the proper springs (here I emphasise that they were *not* supplied by Fiennes!). The actual supplier did replace the springs, but would not discuss the matter further and bizarrely insisted that Tony must have damaged the springs himself, by annealing them at an extremely high temperature!



New valve springs after just 7 miles use



### Piston Broke?

#### Some problems with new pistons, and small end bearings

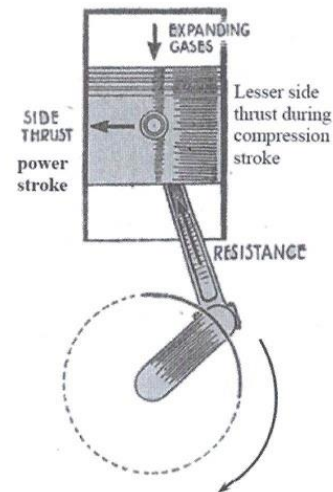
Several small-hp owners have had serious problems after fitting new pistons as part of an engine rebuild. In some cases the engine has had to be rebuilt - again - at great expense, and the process has caused distress and inconvenience to the owner. Several reputable engine restorers have been involved in this, including **Glen Grindrod** who has carried out an investigation and written the following:

"With regard to the piston problems on JP pistons: it has been our experience with JP pistons that in some instances they "pick-up". The damage starts on the thrust side of the piston with some more pick up on the cam-shaft side (see diagram next page).

Initially we thought that the engines had been suffering from overheating but after making extensive investigations and comparing notes with other specialist restorers and including other makes of cars I have determined that the problem starts with the oil control ring. I believe that the oil control ring is too tight in the groove and does not allow for the rocking movement of the piston. The tight piston ring (fixed as it is to a rocking piston) scrapes the cylinder bore and the metal scrapings act as an abrasive, thus exacerbating the problem. See the photograph of a Wraith piston which had only lasted a few hundred miles after a full engine rebuild.

There is a remedy and that is to fit cast oil control rings rather than the ones supplied. They are more flexible and allow for the lateral movement. Hope this helps."

Glen expanded on some of the details via telephone conversations with the Editor. The piston tilts a couple of thou (inch) or so from side to side as it is pushed away



Wraith piston after a few hundred miles

from the camshaft on the power stroke, and towards the camshaft on the compression stroke. The recent Duaflex bottom rings are sometimes so tight in the groove that they cannot flex, instead they act as scrapers. In the recent past Peter Hepworth manufactured pistons in the UK and used Wellworthy Duaflex oil control rings, as originally used by Rolls-Royce. However these particular rings became unavailable so Hepworth changed to using cast iron rings. Peter Hepworth is no longer involved in manufacturing pistons.

JP pistons continued to use a type of Wellworthy Duaflex ring, but in Glen's opinion these were sometimes too tightly held in the groove, and scraped the cylinder wall as the piston tilted from side to side. Glen thinks the problem cannot be solved by machining the JP pistons.

Glenn's advice to owners fitting new JP pistons is to speak with either:

A J Engineering (01590 644644) or

FW Thornton (01743 357081)

who are piston ring experts and familiar with this particular problem.

#### Small End Bearings

A 20hp Register member suffered engine damage soon after a full rebuild. It was suspected that the small end bearings were sub-standard, and metallurgical analysis indicated that the alloy was at fault. Glen has experience with making these bearings, and pointed out that it is essential to use the correct grade of bronze alloy. Also he said small end bearings should be machined from cast bronze *tube*, not cast rod which has different metallurgical properties.





## Overhauling the 3-Speed Box

by Michael Sapsford

I have been reading again the article in the 20hp newsletter about breaking gearbox main (third motion) shafts. In the diagram, Newsletter 23 page 7, the first motion shaft should be turned around and then it will appear as fitted in the box, with the third motion shaft on the left, the Hyatt spigot bearing in the middle, fitting up inside the helical gear of the third motion shaft.

Having just overhauled the 3-speed box from GA 11 some comments may be appropriate. In the 3-speed box the front and rear bearings cannot be replaced from the outside. The only way to attend to these bearings is to dismantle the box. Initial inspection suggests that RR assembled the gears and cast the box around them, however it will come apart. There is a small panel on the front flange in the bell housing. Remove this and undo the large nut on the front end of the second motion (lay) shaft. The larger front flange can now be removed. With this will come the first motion (input) shaft and the Hyatt spigot bearing. The bearing retaining plate at the back of the gearbox should be freed-off by undoing the nuts. The third motion (tail) shaft is then tapped to the rear. As it goes various gears and spacers drop off leaving the centre bearing in the casing. Some care is needed to make sure that the selectors do not bind and get bent while this is going on.

I suggest that it is the Hyatt bearing that wears - mine was slightly slack and second speed was noisy. If this is the case and the centre and rear bearings are sound the shaft will try to deflect just ahead of the centre bearing where it broke. The Hyatt No 26882 is the same for the 3 and 4 speed boxes but is no longer available. As this bearing runs directly on the shaft and inside the constant mesh gear, not much would be gained by replacing it if the shafts are worn. Much searching revealed that an SKF NA 69/22 is very close to size. This bearing has its own inner and outer. The spigot and inside the constant mesh gear only need a light grinding to fit. On GA 11 second speed is now much quieter.

While my box was apart I replaced the other seven bearings for the grand total of £72.43 including postage and VAT from Simply Bearings in Leigh, Lancashire (<http://simplybearings.co.uk/shop/>). Good service and astonishing prices.

## Refitting 23-inch (straight-sided) wheels to early 20hp cars

by David Davis, NSW Australia

It now seems fashionable to refit early Twenties with 23" wheels, however I notice that some owners have experienced slow speed wheel wobble as a consequence.

Years ago I put to Bert Ward, the doyen of matters Royce in Australia, the idea of refitting 42G1 with 23" wheels, ie removing the later 21" wheels which had been fitted in 1928. He firmly opposed the idea but did not explain why. Bert later wrote about wheel wobble and commented that the early Twenty front axle setup was

similar to the Ghost, however the Twenty developed slow speed wheel wobble. New kingpins and washers were designed and fitted to all chassis and this fixed the problem. When 21" wheels were introduced, further kingpin changes were made and retrofitted to all cars that had been fitted with the 21" wheels; in particular an additional washer to the top of each kingpin. The point of all this is when considering the refitting of 23" wheels one would be well advised to ascertain the kingpin setup of the particular car to decide if changes need to be made to that as well. Also, if hydraulic shock absorbers had been adopted as well, should they be replaced by friction shock absorbers? In some cases changes were made to the side and cross steering tubes. I can understand why owners want to refit 23" wheels in the hope of lighter steering as well as the spidery appearance ("originality") but the change is not as simple as it seems, if problems are to be avoided. The reality is that Rolls-Royce would not have fitted early cars with later 21" wheels unless they thought them better, especially regarding improved ride and more rubber on the road. The pursuit of lighter steering would be better attained by the fitting of 20/25 steering, but then where does one stop?

## Advice Needed – overdrive, or higher rear axle ratio?

This is an old chestnut and has been discussed on several Rolls-Royce message boards. I have had some requests for information and advice. Overdrives are especially popular where owners use their 20hps for touring, and I have only once heard of anyone thinking of removing an overdrive. Henry Royce himself is reported to have said that, when driving the Twenty, he felt that the car needed a higher gear. I have an overdrive (Payne) on GXL 39 and summarised my, perhaps biased, view in an answer to a recent enquiry from 20hp owner, Ian Hambridge. It seems to me that overdrives are better, especially for heavier coachwork. The 20hp is relatively low powered so a high axle ratio might give problems on hill starts etc, particularly if the car is heavily loaded (remember, changing the axle ratio changes all the ratios - including first and reverse!). For light bodies, either overdrive or high axle ratio should be OK, but even a light tourer, 4-up plus luggage, might have problems in the Alps if it has a high axle ratio!

In my opinion, overdrives have other advantages:

- can be removed easily, if you want to return to originality
- in effect you get two extra gears - eg third overdrive can be a comfortable gear to use on long steep sections of open road, see Table on next page
- you get to retain your normal top gear
- if you are a bit practical, you can fit an overdrive kit yourself, see Newsletter 24 page 13

The above does not necessarily apply to the Silver Ghost, which has higher torque, and can operate at lower engine rpm. Also it is difficult to fit an overdrive to a Ghost without expensive modifications, because of its torque tube.



Some extracts from other letters received are given below.

**Michael Foster wrote:** The article on page 11 of the number 23 Newsletter, May 2010, by Ralf Storandt was, for me, one of the most fascinating I have ever read in my 46 year membership of the RREC. I have had my 20hp (1928 GXL 64 with 19inch wheels) all this time. The only problem to my enjoyment has been its speed; cruising at 51mph is thrashing the engine somewhat at 2,550rpm. I find a comfortable speed for the car is 47mph (2,350rpm) - but I am constantly aware of (ie pushed by) traffic behind me. So, by changing the 11/50 standard rear axle ratio to 12/43, I calculate I could sweetly cruise at 55mph with the engine purring at 2,150rpm. Perfick! I made preliminary enquiries with specialist engineering companies, asking for ball-park costs: little change from £5,000, including an axle rebuild. May I ask you, my brother 20hp owners, your advice, please? Should I consider such a ratio change, or fit an overdrive unit which is about £1,000 cheaper, or leave well alone? My car is a 2-door dhc, weighing 1.6 tonnes. What do you think? 01455 202479

**David Davis** discusses overdrive vs changing the rear axle ratio: 42G1, when I bought it, weighed 36cwt and now rebodied, it weighs 27cwt so it became obvious that the car was under-geared at 4.55:1. It is now 4:1 but because 42G1 was fitted with 5.25x21 tyres in 1928 which have a slightly smaller rolling distance than the original 32x4.5 tyres the speed per 1000rpm is now almost the same as an original alternative 4.17:1 axle (see Fasal page 528). I think that the conclusions to be drawn are that a heavily bodied chassis is better in having an overdrive fitted, to attain effortless cruising whereas a rebodied car which is much lighter than original may benefit from a higher crown wheel and pinion, especially for hill starts and climbing as well as for cruising. I understand that some overdrives result in a high percentage increase in the final axle ratio which could result in having to drop back to top for even slight inclines.

\*\*\*

**Editor's Note:-** Michael Foster's proposal to fit a 12/43 rear axle gives 21% reduction in rpm for a given road speed, *in all gears*. You would lose the normal top gear ratio, so you might have to change down more often. David Davis's 4:1 ratio gives just 12% reduction in rpm for a given road speed. Would this be a worthwhile expenditure, even if the rear axle needed a rebuild anyway?

Standard 11/50 axle	
Gear	mph at 1000rpm
1 <sup>st</sup>	5.6
2 <sup>nd</sup>	9.0
3 <sup>rd</sup>	13.8
3 <sup>rd</sup> o'drive	17.7
4 <sup>th</sup> (top)	20.9
4 <sup>th</sup> o'drive	26.8

A typical overdrive gives 22% reduction in rpm for a given road speed, and works on the top two gears only, thus giving two extra gears, see Table, left.

Tim Payne believes that if you have an overdrive, you should use it often, and not just on the open road. He thinks you should not worry about switching it on and off as appropriate when driving in town. In this way you save fuel and enjoy a quieter drive.

If anyone has any particular expertise, experience or ideas to share, please contact the Editor.

## The Chinn Synchronometer, Part 2

continued from article in Newsletter No.24 page 36

Below is a 1922 article from The Motor magazine which describes the Chinn Synchronometer and says the instrument can be seen fitted to a 1922 20hp, at the motor show in Olympia, London. This article was kindly sent in by Tom Clarke.

On the next page is the letter which came with Jeremy Oates' Chinn Synchronometer, purchased by him at an auction. Jeremy knew his car was first owned by an electrical engineer in Manchester, so the letter provides good evidence that this is the actual Synchronometer which was fitted to Jeremy's car GOK 53 from new.

October 31, 1922

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### GEAR CHANGING BY ENGINE REVOLUTIONS.

The Synchronometer, which Combines the Functions of Speedometer and Gear-change Indicator.

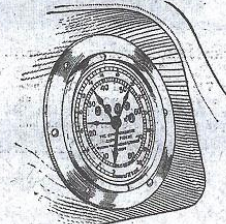
**T**HERE is hardly a motorist who has not experienced many a quail, during his apprenticeship at the wheel, at the very idea of changing gear, in particular of engaging a lower speed. Unless he is as unimpressible as cast-iron, the average beginner feels acutely the shrill grinding of teeth and the unnatural strain which is being imposed upon almost every part of the car when an attempt is made to engage a lower gear, with the engine and car-shaft revolving at widely different speeds.

A new instrument has been placed on the market which really combines three most useful devices, only one of which is fitted as standard to the average car. The speedometer is found on so many cars that it is considered an essential on all new models. A revolution counter, however, is seldom fitted, except to cars of the super sports type or at the whim of the owner.

**For Silent Changing.**

The third movement which is incorporated in the instrument which we are about to describe is, so far, to the best of our knowledge, not found upon the dashboard of any except a very few cars indeed. This is a gear-change indicator, which informs the driver exactly when to engage gear, so that an absolutely silent and easy change is assured. The Synchronometer, which is the patent of Mr. Chinn, is made by Sinton, Pocklington and Johnson, Scientific Instrument Makers, of 111, Clerkenwell Road, London, E.C.1. In appearance, this instrument is no larger nor more obtrusive than the driver's speedometer, and has the usual speed-indicator, dial and total-mileage recorder. It will be observed, however, that round the dial and outside the speedometer calibrations is a graduated scale marked off in hundreds of r.p.m.

The instrument has four indicating needles, one of which is coloured red, while the others, which are white, are labelled T, 3, and 2 respectively. The red needle simply registers the road



**THE SYNCHRONOMETER WHICH INDICATES THE PRECISE MOMENT TO CHANGE GEAR.**

speed of the vehicle, but the needle marked T registers the speed of the engine in r.p.m. The instruments, which are specially calibrated for cars of different makes, are so arranged that the speed-indicator and revolution-counter hands move together, so that when driving on top gear both needles point not only to the speed at which the car is being driven, but also to the number of revolutions per minute at which the engine is turning over. The other two needles move in proportion to the third one and occupy positions on the mileage dial, when their gears are engaged, corresponding to the rate of revolutions of the engine when top gear is engaged. Thus on the instrument designed for fitting on the 1922 Rolls-

Royce car, if at 52 miles an hour on top gear the needle T registers 2,000 r.p.m., the needle 3, would be somewhere around the 35 m.p.h. mark; that is to say, on third speed at 35 m.p.h. the engine is turning over at the same rate at which it would be revolving were the car doing 52 m.p.h. on top gear. Therefore, when changing from fourth to third speeds, and it is desired, for example, to reflect this change when the car is travelling at 52 m.p.h., it is only necessary to disengage, place the gear lever in neutral, and wait until the red needle indicating the speed in m.p.h. has moved back until it covers the needle 3 (at the 35 m.p.h. mark). The next gear can then be engaged without the slightest difficulty or noise. Similarly, should it be required to change down into second gear, it is only necessary to disengage, place the gear lever in neutral, and wait until the red hand is immediately over that marked 2, the next gear can again be engaged.

**For Notice or Expert.**

Thus gear changing at any speed becomes a simple operation, which even the novice can perform with the utmost assurance, while the experienced motorist, new to a particular make of car, can tell the first time he is at the wheel exactly at what speed he should engage the next lowest gear. The device should be of particular interest to those who are keen upon the maintenance of a high average touring speed, as by following the movements of the needle it is possible entirely to obviate the loss of time occasioned by climbing a gradient on too high a gear rather than make a downward gear change when the engine speed is still relatively high.

The instrument can be seen at Olympia fitted to a 1922 Rolls-Royce car on the stand of Barker and Co. (Coachbuilders), Ltd., 65, South Audley Street, W. 1.



Please return to

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WESTMORLAND  
3rd October  
1973

Dear Mr. Boyde,

Thanks for your cheque. I have packed up the Synchronometer and brushes, and these will set off tomorrow. With the instrument are THREE little gearboxes. Two, which are labelled - engraved - go onto the body of the instrument, and should be screwed home only lightly; the gearbox should just be able to swivel on the case to slide with the drive shafts. The third I have only just found and will save you a lot of trouble. The Tachometer drive is taken from the dynamo shaft of the car, and this little gearbox can be fitted to the cover of the vibration damper on the timing cover of the car, enabling the flex drive shaft to come off at an angle and so clear the radiator without rubbing. See sketch. The "Union" will have to be made as, of course, this went with the car when I sold it. The drive was a little peg, I think, screwed into the end of the shaft inside, but it is so long since I saw it I can't remember.

The speedo section is driven from the gearbox. I can't remember if there was another little angle drive there as well, but if there was it would probably be used to drive the replacement speedo I fitted 20 years ago. If a gear-ratio is needed here - and I can't see why it should be as the instrument is made for the RR "20" - if you may have to contact

I was led to believe that the bezel and glass are NOT the original. It certainly don't fit very well. But the first owner did mention an "accident" and I believe he adapted the present bevel and glass; he had an Electrical Engineering Instrument firm in Manchester. Had I been going to use it I would have done a bit of restoration here. Incidentally, the thing DOES work - very well, in fact - but as I had an electric RR speedo and a clock which were a matching pair I fitted these instead. (1956).

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

*John*

P.S. The Chinn Synchronometer is, by the way, a very rare bird in the instrument line. The car also had an Autovac Petrol meter, which registered each 1/50th gallon used!

P.P.S. The trip miles can be set to zero; originally a little button went through the hole under the lever on the top. The first owner fitted the "thing" that is there now, but the necessary plunger is missing.

Geoff Devlin with his GAJ 65. John Eastwood on the left, see page 8.

There is a photograph of GAJ 65 in Fasal's book, page 125

Below:

Gareth and Angela Morgan's GTM 2, see page 12

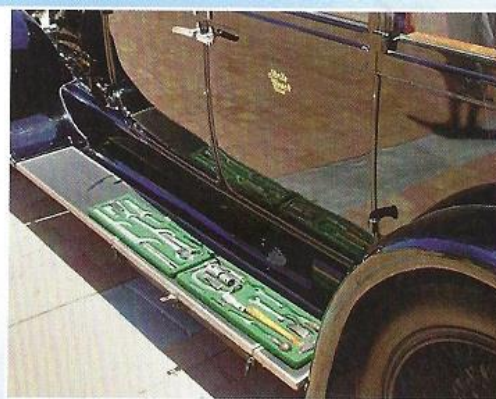


GEN 75 is a Freestone & Webb Weymann coupe. It is in a remarkable state of preservation; in particular it is believed to retain

its original fabric covering, even its roof, with just a few small

repair patches. Today it looks identical to its photograph on page 74 of Dalton's "Those Elegant Rolls-Royce". Peter and Judy Herring use their car regularly for rallies in the South West, and on the Continent. See Tod Marshman's Weymann article on page 9.





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GUK 44 Hooper Landulette, Photo: Derk Bolt