



# ROLLS-ROYCE ENTHUSIASTS' CLUB

## NORTH EASTERN SECTION



*NEWSLETTER*  
*Autust/September 2007*

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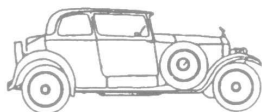
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# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The Teesside *Noggin and Natter evenings* continue on the second Wednesday of each month at The Hotel Baltimore, 250 Marton Road, Middlesbrough.

This is a social evening and not just technical talk about cars, though it is always possible that the subject of Rolls-Royce and Bentley may come up!

## 2007

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>12 August</b>         | 50th Anniversary 'Wheels on Road' celebration and North of England Rally, Harewood House |
| <b>9 September</b>       | Visit to the Stadium of Light - Paul   |
| <b>15 December (Sat)</b> | Carols at Fountains Abbey - Cynthia  |

## ADVERTISING RATES

Yearly:	full page	£75.00
	half page	£50.00

## Members' private advertisements - maximum space $\frac{1}{4}$ page

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## WELFARE

Barry Pickering is in Hexham General Hospital having had a second slight stroke. We all wish him a speedy recovery. I have just heard that Roy Booth has not been well but is now on the road to recovery and has just bought his old car back!

Members are asked to let the Chairman or Secretary know if they are aware of other members of the Section who are unwell or in hospital.

Cover picture:  
Nick Clark's 1934 20/25 Laundaulette by Rippon. Chassis No. GWE51.  
Photo taken at Eden Camp near Malton

## *Chairman's Chat*

I am more convinced than ever that Martin's months are worked on a two week basis! It really is no time since I last sat at this computer writing a "Chat". The reason for this - Martin is due to move within the next 10 days and he wants to get everything sorted out for the next Newsletter prior to his move. So on this occasion Martin – I understand the need for speed.



At the beginning of June we visited for the second time, an updated Eden Camp where nostalgia seemed to rule the day. We shared the special parking facilities with the East Midlands Section who were visiting as part of their Section weekend. We were welcomed most warmly with coffee and scones. The Camp has extended its history since we last visited and it was a push to get around and see everything in the time we had available as a day is simply not long enough to do the place justice. However, everyone seemed to enjoy the day which was sunny enabling those who wanted to picnic to do so in comfort.

Unlike the weather for the BBQ at Dennis and Lucy Wheatley's! Meeting at the Scotch Corner Hotel for morning coffee it was raining! Our ride through the countryside to the Wheatley's home – it was raining! It stopped raining just as we got there but by the time we had unloaded our cars with tables, chairs and food and got ourselves settled with the odd nibble or two that Martin and Jackie Vinson insisted we eat - it was raining! And so it continued to rain (stairods) for the rest of the afternoon! However, who but the English would laugh in the face of adversity and like many rainy BBQs from the past, we found a way to cook, hold an umbrella at the same time - and laugh. We thank Dennis and Lucy for the use of their home, for putting up with the muddy feet marks and for providing us with a wonderful day. It might have been a disaster weather-wise but socially it was excellent and dare we say that it might become an annual event?

I have been asked to repeat the event last held in 2004 when we visited Fountains Abbey just before Christmas for Carols and a meal. There is publicity about this event in the Newsletter together with a booking form, all self explanatory so I won't bore you with more details here.

The next event is Harewood and knees at the ready to be down on them praying for fine weather for what is to be a special event to mark the long ago beginnings of the Club. Full booking details are to be found in the Bulletin

and see you all there.

And finally – what happened during the last fuel crisis.

A man was driving down the road and ran out of petrol. Just at that moment a Bee flew in his window.

The Bee said “What seems to be the problem”?

“I am out of petrol”.

The Bee told the man to wait there and flew away.

Minutes later, the man watched as an entire swarm of Bees flew to his car and into his petrol tank.

After a few minutes, the Bees flew out.

“Try it now” said one Bee.

The man turned the ignition key and the car started right up.

“Wow” the man exclaimed. “What did you put in my petrol tank”?

The Bee answered “BP”!

Drive safely and watch out for those cameras.

***Cynthia***

### ***Secretary's notes***

Sunday 17 June turned out to be one fine day sandwiched in between some seriously wet weather, if the weather forecast is to be believed. For those who travelled down on the Friday to the Annual Concours and Rally at Kelmarsh Hall, it must have looked pretty bleak. Gordon and Margaret (Blacklock) who did, said that large parts of the site were under water and there was a thought about calling the whole thing off, though that would have been difficult at such short notice. As it turned out the day was perfect, the sun and a slight breeze dried the ground and apart from a large refuse lorry I did not see any vehicles that were bogged down, although some careful driving was still needed in places. Unfortunately the weather did, I suspect,

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put off some people from attending certainly for the Saturday if not the Sunday. Fifty six Silver Ghosts were entered coming from all parts of the globe and being at the end of their rally. The 'foreign Johnnies' were also well represented in all the other classes and also took some silverware home as a result of their efforts. A very glossy programme and souvenir plaque was presented to all who attended whether in 'cars of the Marque' or not.

Florence Hornsby has kindly sent in a write up regarding the barbeque at Lucy and Dennis Wheatley's house, see later.

A few hardy souls attended the Newby Hall rally despite a foul weather forecast. The ground was indeed very soggy with standing water in many places. Nevertheless there was a good turn out of many marques with several Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars on display at different stands around the grounds. The auto-jumble was as big as ever and very popular as usual.



1914 Silver Ghost Tourer, 1UB, by Connaught, being admired at Newby Hall

Martin

## WANTED

### Newsletter editor

If you would like to help the Section by producing the bi-monthly newsletter please let me or one of the committee members know.

I shall be giving up the role as editor at the end of this year but would be happy to give any assistance if needed. Please speak to me either at an event or by telephone to find out exactly what is involved.

Martin



Peter Kitching's 1936 25/30 GRM23 Limousine by Park Ward at Eden Camp, near Malton together with 1930 20/25 4 door Saloon by Windovers, Chassis No. GTR35

### *2007 Annual General Meeting*

Preliminary notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the North Eastern Section will take place at 11.00am on Sunday 2 December 2007 at The Hotel Baltimore, 250 Marton Road, Middlesbrough, Cleveland, TS4 2EZ. Nominations for membership of the committee should be made on the enclosed form, and returned to the Secretary, no later than 20 September 2007. Motions for discussion or determination at the AGM should also be submitted to the Secretary, proposed and seconded, by the same date. This is necessary in order to include formal notification of the meeting together with an Agenda in the October/November newsletter.

Richard Hall has announced that he will be standing down as a committee member with effect from the AGM this year and therefore a vacancy exists for a new member. If you would be interested in taking part in the running of the Section or would like to nominate someone, please complete and return the form to me as mentioned above.

## *Overdrive Bentley*

"Mit der Dummheit kämpfen Götter selbst vergebens." Wrote Schiller; "With stupidity the Gods themselves struggle in vain." This is a quotation that Herman Goering trotted out at his Nuremberg trial but it appealed to me enough to have it engraved on a brass plaque small enough to attach to a car dashboard. The intention would be to look at it whenever cut up by an idiot. Of course I have never actually got around to fixing it to a car but the thought is there. It occurs to me though that whether or not the Gods can cope with stupidity, wives don't seem to have any problem. Why else is it that, shortly before marriage, we exchange some ridiculous but enviable thoroughbred for a sensible frugal four-seat family car? (Perhaps the more beautiful the girl the greater the sacrifice.) In my case I sold a 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> litre overdrive Bentley and bought a Fiat 600. I am not making this up.



In early 1961 my mother came back from Kenya, which gave me a problem. The Mini I was driving, while registered in my name, had been paid for by her and she naturally wanted it for her own use. To replace it I looked around for something interesting in the Carlisle area and found the Bentley. The seller was a gentleman farmer from Crosby on Eden and he extolled the virtues of the car with enthusiasm. It had been built by Rolls-Royce at Derby. It was bombproof. It would never, could never, wear out. At seventy miles per hour in overdrive it was just "loafing along with its hands in its pockets". After more of the same I handed over the three-figure sum he was demanding and drove the car back to Spadeadam. With several other happy bachelors I was living in the old Wimpey construction camp there and had just

discovered that I could rent the disused camp fire station for five bob (Okay, 25p) a week. This was a timber building large enough to take two full size fire engines. Power, half a mile of strip lights and permanent tropical heating all came in the five bob. On one side, lost in the vastness, sat the Mini, which had not yet been delivered south to its rightful owner. On the other I parked the Bentley, closed the big doors and took stock.

What glistened in the generous lighting was a 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> litre steel saloon by Park Ward, Registered FLK 964 in 1939, Chassis number B139MR. The last two Bentley series made before the war, MR and MX, had the overdrive gearbox in which direct drive was via third gear and fourth was overdriven. This certainly made for restful long-legged cruising. Other features of the car were powerful mechanical servo brakes, twin coils, massive P100 headlights, four horns, big soft leather seats and a sunroof. The instruments were a star feature having pale grey faces and pink needles and numbers. The seller had told me that these were specially made for the first owner, an "aristocratic lady"! The effect was slightly spoiled by one of the windows, which displayed a combination white-on-black temperature and oil pressure gauge from a BMC sports car. Inspection of all these features indicated that the car had seen better days. It occurred to me that the oil might bear inspection. I hunted for the dipstick. No dipstick. Eventually under a coating of old oil and farmyard stuff on the port side of the sump I discovered a brass needle over a scale which not only displayed the oil contents but advised that it might be prudent to add some more.

Over the next couple of months I cleaned everything up, changed the oil and charged around the area between Hexham and Carlisle. Oil was consumed at about 500mpp, which was bearable. Some of the rattles were traced and the rest became old friends. Signs of faded elegance were sighed over, such as the doors dropping when opened, the drooping handles and the paint flaking away from the edges of the rear wings. All this depressing stuff was forgotten once one sat in the big leather seat, turned the little chromed ignition switch, pressed the starter and stared down the long bonnet at the winged "B". Along the military and the old Roman roads the car seemed to sweep inexorably along like a warship, wafting past lesser vehicles. I suppose by modern standards it was actually quite slow but it was much faster than a side valve Anglia even if the other driver didn't hastily pull over as many of them did. If nothing else it was a good demonstration of the first Baron Acton's dictum that power tends to corrupt. Fortunately there was not enough power to corrupt absolutely.

The open road called, just as it did to Toad in "The Wind in the Willows". I managed to persuade a beautiful Northumbrian to let me show her my home town of Portsmouth and we set off south. I soon noticed that we were not sailing over the crests of the A68 quite as I would have liked and, south of Scotch Corner, it was clear that the engine was misfiring. Investigation in a lay-by pointed to the coil. On the starboard side of the engine stood two very imposing coils side by side. Externally they were of terracotta coloured Bakelite and they were secured to the platform that bore them by bolts run into brass inserts in their bases. I cannot remember how, or even if, the LT supply had to be changed over but the HT lead had a prong on the end like a telephone jack, which was simply pulled out of one coil and stuck into the other. With the coils changed over I tried the engine. Nothing! Changing back again produced the same intermittent misfire so we pressed on like that. In Pontefract we

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consulted a mechanic who professed himself mystified and banged the plug gaps in a bit. It was possible to cruise at about 45 mph so we kept going. Night fell north of Leicester which was a bit depressing because the lovely big headlights looked a lot better than they worked; apart from anything else, the dipping solenoid in the nearside lamp made a noise like a dustbin falling over. We finally arrived after midnight more or less drained. The journey back north was made with a second hand coil taped to one of the defunct Bakelite ones and the car running perfectly.

Once back in my little wooden hut I reviewed the finances to see if I could afford to buy a replacement coil from Rolls-Royce. I assumed that they would send me another beautiful Bakelite and brass device and coughed up seven or eight times what I could have bought a coil for in Halfords. What I actually received was a standard Lucas coil (such as I could have bought in Halfords) and a rather crude bracket (such as I could have got our fitters to make me for nothing) for mounting it on the existing platform. Experience is a good school but the fees are high.

A few months on I said goodbye to rocket motors, handed back the fire station, loaded my possessions onto the back seat of the Bentley and went south to Bristol to develop gas turbine aero-engines. Although my salary was higher I was no longer on subsistence allowance so filling the car became a serious preoccupation. Furthermore I wanted to marry my Northumbrian. The car would have to go. Before I disposed of it the Bentley provided one more "experience". On a straight between Hedge End and Botley one evening the offside rear tyre burst at 65 mph and chewed itself to ribbons. The car wriggled slightly and slowed to rest under full control with as much dignity as possible given that it was listing at about five degrees to starboard. This was a moment of truth because throughout my ownership I had been uneasily aware that the imposing wing mounted spare contained air at atmospheric pressure and would not retain anything more. Someone up there looks after fools though, because we had come to rest only yards from a garage. The establishment was firmly closed but any port in a storm as the sailor said to Fanny Hill. I drove there on the rim, parked on the forecourt and hitched a lift to Portsmouth from a motorist who had observed the blow out and kindly stopped to assist. In the morning I called the garage. "Anyone seen a Bentley?" I asked. Once the proprietor calmed down he turned out to be an excellent chap and by lunchtime had found a tyre that was nearly the right size and fitted it. I found enough money to pay him by the usual method viz. borrowing, and collected the car that afternoon. I sold the car one night in the bar of the Portland Vaults pub in Clifton for a bit less than I had paid for it and the next day hitched down to Fareham where I had found a Fiat 600 for more or less the same money. If you are going to downsize you may as well do it properly!

© Richard Mundell 2006

*[This article appeared in a recent NECPWA newsletter and Cynthia thought it would be of interest. Of course coils can now be re-wound and the original bakelite cover retained. I can find no record of the car on the Club website though that does not mean that it is not*

*still on the road. I was interested that the coachbuilders were using steel at that time.]*

### *Cleaning of small rusted parts*

Take a gas-filled rubber ball and cut a small slit in it. Half fill the ball with sharp sand and add the parts - nuts, bolts, washers etc. Seal the slit or put the ball into a poly. bag. Place in a spin drier and give it a 2 minute spin. The parts should come out in pristine condition, as if sand blasted. Warning - before starting, ensure that your good lady is not around.

***Richard***

### *STADIUM of LIGHS*

#### *Sunderland Football Club*

*9th September 2007 at 12:15*

I know we have looked around Sid James Park and the Riverside but I thought it was time we visited the best football club in the area. (I hope the results this season prove that statement to be correct, although I am not holding my breath).

The visit will start at 12:30 with a look around the facilities at the ground and this will take about 90 minutes. We will then go to the directors' suite for a 3 course lunch followed by coffee and mints.

The cost of this visit and lunch will be £20.

***Paul***

### *Carols at Christmas - Fountains Abbey, Saturday 15*

*December 2007*

Those of us who enjoyed the above event in 2004 know what an excellent evening we had. To those of you who have asked for this event to be repeated Fountains Abbey is unquestionably one of the most evocative of all the ruined abbeys, the famous Cistercian foundation dates back to 1132 when a small group of intellectual monks broke away

from the Benedictine abbey of St Mary's in York to follow a stricter rule. After three years of hardship, the small community of Fountains were joined by the ex-Dean of York (Hugh) who provided the means to commence building the largest and most celebrated monastery of the time. From whatever aspect this site is viewed, it cannot fail to astound and amaze visitors. Fountains Abbey, surrounded by its landscaped gardens, is beautiful at any season, but is at its most romantic during the icing frost days of winter and this is where our very last event of the season has once again been arranged. The evening will commence at 6.30 p.m. with a live choral performance in the floodlit Abbey Cellarium with glasses of warm mulled wine available to keep the cold out. This will be followed with a four course meal in the Visitor Centre Restaurant where the choir will perform more songs and carols. Entertainment for the second half of the evening will be by a jazz band called Bejazzled. There will be a free draw for a special Fountains Christmas Hamper. The evening is expected to finish at 10 p.m. There is ample safe parking but a "proper" car is unnecessary.

The cost for this event will be £34.95 per person for Adults, £19.95 for children aged 5 to 11 years. Again not a cheap night – but as I said in 2004 how much will you pay for just a Christmas meal at that time of the year without any entertainment? Since 2004 the price has only increased by £5. So come on get the cheque book out again, treat yourselves to an extra Christmas present, spend the kids inheritance and cheat the Chancellor out of his inheritance tax! Only 20 places are available for this event so get the enclosed booking form back to me as soon as possible. The absolute cut-off date for booking is the **31 August 2007**. Please don't forget to enclose a stamped addressed envelope with your booking form. For bookings cancelled over 2 weeks prior to the event a 50% refund will be given. There will be no refunds for cancellations made within 14 days of the event. Full details together with a directions map will be sent nearer the time to those who have booked.

## *Dales Tour and Barbeque*

On Sunday 24 June we met at the Scotch Corner Hotel and enjoyed a welcome coffee, with a variety of tasty bites.

After this pleasant stop, we left in convoy, behind Dennis, to travel through the scenic route to Ilton. We drove under one or two showers and following groups of cyclists who seemed determined to split us up and lose us in the hills. However, we eventually arrived at The School House and descended onto the garden with our bags and boxes - and of course,

umbrellas. The barbeques were already set up and were quickly put into action. Lucy had prepared salads, buns, cutlery, dishes and so much more. Everyone joined into the swing of things and the busy tables and smiling



people with clinking wine glasses, translated into happiness.

Naturally, the rain had to spoil the party. Umbrellas went up, goods and chattels were collected and everyone headed for cover. How kind of Lucy and Dennis to allow us to invade their home and turn it into such a free for all! I am sure I speak for one and all when I say we had a wonderful day!

Lucy and Dennis gave us a really warm welcome. They generously opened their doors to so many wet feet and people carrying plates of food and glasses of wine. The thought of that is enough to make some people shudder. All the more reason to appreciate the fun and great satisfaction throughout the day.

I have no doubt we left Lucy with a mammoth cleaning job but she and Dennis were such good hosts, I am sure they will cope and tackle their challenge with great gusto!

***Florence Hornsby***

*Florence did not mention the impromptu fly past by the Battle of Britain Flight Lancaster which flew directly overhead and was much appreciated. Now how did Lucy and Dennis arrange that!*

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