



ROLLS-ROYCE
ENTHUSIASTS' CLUB



*North Eastern Section
Newsletter
March/April 2008*



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!

2008 Preliminary ideas, dates to be confirmed where not specified.

11 May Tees Pumping Station - Dennis and Lucy

18 May North Yorkshire Moors Railway day visit at Goathland - Grahame

1 June Seaton Delaval Hall - Derek and Viv

30 June Committee meeting

6 July Classic cars in Corbridge with the MG Owners Club at Tynedale Park -
Martin and Jackie

July TBN 'Tornado revisited' - Margaret and Ray

20 July Newby Hall Rally

17 August BBQ - Dennis and Lucy

7 September Sightseeing tour of Newcastle by bus - Peter

28 September Weardale Railway - Cynthia and Tony

6 October Committee meeting

7 December AGM at Blackwell Grange Hotel, Darlington.

(Please note new venue)

Welfare

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.

Chairman's Chat

At the end of January, Tony and I took the opportunity, to book a last minute holiday on a cruise to the Canaries. As this was our first cruise we were very excited in anticipation of having a good time. We were not disappointed and this, we hope, is only the start of many to come. However we were upset by the change in temperature when arriving back at Newcastle Airport to cold, damp slush after having been in temperatures of between 70 and 80 degrees!

A bright sunny day on Sunday, 24th February saw 44 of us enjoying a superb meal on our first event of the season. This took place at the Honest Lawyer at Croxdale. In spite of the name of the Restaurant and the jokes that had been bandied about in the run up to the lunch, it turned out to be a lovely meal and the social aspect was truly magnificent. I was so pleased to see some new members and many members who had not been to an event for some time. It was particularly pleasing to be able to welcome Barry and Norma Brighton to the lunch and to see just how well Barry is looking. We certainly hope they will both come along to more events in the future. Having so many people on the day, I took the opportunity to ask them why they had come to this particular event and if they were enjoying it, why they didn't come to other events run by the Section? Apart from some voices saying it was because they were hungry, the consensus of opinion was that it was because it was the first event of the season and was a time when there were not many people on holiday so I was pleased to note that the events we organize are popular with those members who have the time to go to them during the rest of the year and that it was only holidays that got in the way. My thanks to Martin and Jackie who organised this lunch – another good eating place to add to our list.

Tony, myself, Jackie and Martin are going on a visit to the Bentley works at Crewe within the next couple of weeks and before many of you say "why can't we go" this is part of a 5 day holiday visit to the Bourne Leisure group's Alvaston Hall in Cheshire who have organized a Bentley Experience. As many members know, I have tried organizing a visit to the factory over the past few years with little or no response forthcoming – so we decided to go it alone. No doubt one of us will write a little something about our visit in the next Newsletter.

Watch the Newsletter for the list of events coming up – there are some good things organized.

And finally – the “car” (or similar) bit for this Chat:-

Two police patrol officers from North Berwick were recently involved in an unusual incident, whilst checking for speeding motorists on the A1 Great North Road.

One of the officers, who are not named in the MOD report, used a hand-held radar device to check the speed of a vehicle approaching over the crest of a hill, and was surprised when the speed was instantly recorded at over 300mph. The machine then stopped working and the officers were not able to reset it.

The radar had in fact latched on to a NATO Tornado fighter jet over the North Sea, which was engaged in a low-flying exercise over the Scottish Borders.

Back at police headquarters the policeman had to report that the radar gun was no longer working and his chief constable fired off a stiff complaint to the R.A.F. Liaison office.

Back came the reply in true laconic R.A.F. style.

"Sir, Thank you for your message, which allows us to complete the file on this incident.

You may be interested to know that the tactical computer in the Tornado had automatically locked on to your 'hostile radar equipment' and sent a jamming signal back to it.

Furthermore, the Sidewinder Air-to-Ground missiles aboard the fully-armed aircraft had also locked on to the target. Fortunately the Dutch pilot flying the Tornado responded to the missile status alert intelligently and was able to override the automatic protection system before the missiles were launched".

The reply concluded "BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU ARE POINTING THINGS AT IN FUTURE!!!"

Drive safely and watch for those cameras, low flying aircraft or flashing speed signs!

Cynthia

Secretary's notes

First of all, apologies to Steve Howitt for nearly driving into his very nice Bentley with my very dirty Ford after the lunch at The Honest Lawyer on Sunday 24th February. It was so big and red I just didn't see it, though Jackie kindly pointed out to me that I might have done if I had looked!

There are various booking forms included with this newsletter. Please return them to the appropriate people in good time. Events are proving difficult to arrange this year for various reasons, so watch out for the announcements. The next event will be on Sunday 11th May, and is being organised by Dennis and Lucy Wheatley with a visit to the Tees Pumping station followed by lunch nearby. This visit is followed by an invitation to the North Yorkshire Moors Railway on 18th May, organised by Grahame McDonald. A visit to Seaton Delaval Hall has been arranged for 1st June by Derek and Viv. Looking further ahead, we have been invited by the Northumbrian Region of the MG Owners' Club to attend their Classic Vehicle Show at Tynedale Park, Corbridge on Sunday 6th July. Previously this was held at Dilston Castle, but they have decided to move to a larger venue with better facilities. Watch out for other announcements in due course. Including a possible visit to 'Tornado', a bus sightseeing tour of Newcastle, a visit to the Weardale Railway and, of course, Dennis and Lucy's barbeque. The AGM has been booked for Sunday 7th December at the Blackwell Grange Hotel, Darlington just off the A167/A66 roundabout. Please note the new venue.

Cynthia and I will be attending the Club Conference in April. It is now too late to put forward new matters for discussion to be included in the agenda, but if anyone has anything that they feel is of importance and would like mentioned, we will do our best to have a word in the right places.

Martin

New members

A warm welcome to Mr & Mrs J Clark of Northallerton and Steve Howitt from Bedale, who, I think have strictly speaking joined us via the Yorkshire Section. I hope that you were made to feel welcome at the lunch in February and that we shall have the opportunity of seeing you again at other events during the coming months.

Lunch at the Honest Lawyer.

We had a very good turn out of 44 members and guests on 24th February. It was particularly good to welcome two recently joined members, Steve Howitt and Jim Clark, both friends of Colin Hutchinson. Cynthia has already mentioned that we were all pleased to see Barry and Norma Brighton again.

The restaurant was busy with their usual Sunday lunch trade and we were politely asked to move into the room set aside for us rather than clutter up the bar. As there

were 44 of us that seemed a reasonable request. A carvery had been arranged and the food was good, hot and efficiently served. There was time to socialise and renew acquaintances after the winter break.

As half past four approached I was wondering whether we would be asked to leave but most were on their way by then or soon after. All in all an enjoyable lunch and one that might be worth while repeating sometime.

Martin

Tees Pumping Station—Sunday 11th May

Tees Cottage Pumping Station is a Victorian waterworks in Darlington in the North East of England which began supplying water to Darlington in 1849. It is a Scheduled Ancient Monument with two completely original pumping engines in full working order. These are displayed running under their pumping load. One engine is a two-cylinder compound steam beam engine, still supplied from its original Lancashire boilers and driving its original pumps. The other engine is a two-cylinder gas engine, the largest preserved example in Europe, also driving its original pumps

The engines are housed in their own purpose built buildings, dating from 1847 to 1901, in themselves superb examples of Victorian architecture. The engines and buildings are carefully maintained, preserved and run by volunteers, supported by the site owner, Northumbrian Water. The visit is planned for 11.00am when we will be welcomed with coffee and cake, which will be followed by a tour of the site led by one of the dedicated volunteers. Please be aware that there are steps and stairs which may be difficult for some. However there is plenty to see at ground level. Following the visit we will drive a short distance to the Blackwell Grange Hotel for



lunch. The cost of the whole day will be £23.50 to include the visit to the pumping station, coffee and cake on arrival and a three course lunch.

North Yorkshire Moors Railway—Sunday 18 May

Following participation in their 'Vintage and Classic Vehicle Weekend' last summer, our Section has been invited by the North Yorkshire Moors Railway to hold our OWN 'Rolls-Royce and Bentley Day' at Goathland (Heartbeat's "Aidensfield") station on Sunday 18th May 2008. The station car park at Goathland will be reserved exclusively for our use that day, but ONLY for "Rolls-Royce" and "Bentley"



cars; (anyone arriving in 'everyday' cars will need to find alternative parking).

To increase the number and variety of cars attending, the invitation has been extended to both the 'Yorkshire' and 'Northern' Sections of the RREC although, of course, anyone from other Sections will also be very welcome.

To enable participants to ride on the (mainly steam-hauled) trains to view the beautiful scenery and visit the other stations along the route, members who arrive in 'proper' cars will be able to purchase 'All-line Day Rover Tickets' at a 50% discount (ie £7.50 instead of £15), which allows unlimited travel for the day on the train services of the North Yorkshire Moors Railway between Grosmont and Pickering. 'Aidensfield' village and the "Aidensfield Arms" are a short stroll from Goathland station where our vehicles will be displayed.

In order to afford complete flexibility for participants to enjoy the trains, villages, scenery and, of course, 'fellowship' with other members and their cars, there will be no specific times arranged for arriving/meeting/eating/departing. Most of the locomotive-hauled trains include 'Buffet Car' facilities, and some offer an additional at-seat 'trolley service'. Train services through Goathland commence at around 10am and continue through until late afternoon.

It must be emphasised - our reserved parking at Goathland station is ONLY for “Rolls-Royce” and “Bentley” cars, and the ‘50% discounted’ All-line Rover Tickets are only available to those drivers and passengers who arrive in such cars. Normally this discount facility is offered to just two persons per vehicle, but we are being offered that facility for up to four persons per ‘car of the marque’. The NYMR have aborted another event at Goathland that same day in order to accommodate our event, so please try very hard to attend this visit and justify their faith in our being able to participate in sufficient numbers to afford a good display of our cars, whilst also enjoying the railway’s own facilities.

Please complete the participation form which accompanies this issue of the Newsletter, and return it to Grahame McDonald, 60 Mount Road, Sunderland SR4 7NS as soon as possible (and in any case by 30 April 2008). There is a modest administration charge of just £2 per VEHICLE, which should accompany the completed form. Please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for return of entry confirmations etc, which will be despatched a few days before the event. Any queries, please contact me on 0191 528 4222.

Grahame

Visit to Seaton Delaval Hall Sunday 1st June

Seaton Delaval Hall is an English baroque house, built between 1718 and 1728 for Admiral George Delaval. The house is regarded as the finest example of design by Sir John Vanbrugh; who also built Blenheim Palace and Castle Howard. Of



particular note are the Coach House with a collection of interesting vehicles and a restored Ice House. The gardens were designed in 1947 by James Russell and have been enhanced by Lady Hastings. A walk around the ground reveals statues; topiary; a pool and fountain and is a relaxing and pleasant way to spend an hour .

A slideshow of recent photographs of the hall is now available, along with a slideshow showing the gardens in full bloom. Visit www.seatondelaval.org.uk/history/seaton-delaval-hall.htm.

Following the visit we shall adjourn to the nearby Horton Grange Hotel for lunch. Horton Grange Hotel is located off the A1 just north of the A19 junction leading to the Tyne Tunnel. Visit their website at www.horton-grange.co.uk for full information.

Visitors are immediately captivated by the distinctive mix of traditional and contemporary decor on offer at Horton Grange. Real fires, fresh flowers and antique furnishings blend with the conservatory dining room to create a relaxed atmosphere.

Sympathetic furnishings compliment the traditional character of both the cosy bar and the light airy restaurant, overlooking the Japanese Garden.

The cost of the visit including entrance to the Hall, morning coffee and scone, and three course lunch will be £26. Arrive at 10.30 for coffee at 11.00.

Derek

Classic Cars at Tynedale Park—Sunday 6th July

We have again been invited to join the MG Northumbria Region at their annual Classic Vehicle Show which this year has a new venue. The following has been received from their organiser.

“Having outgrown our previous site at Dilston Castle, we are delighted to have found a new location just down the road at Tynedale Park, Corbridge. This very attractive setting is surrounded by picturesque countryside and within easy walking distance of the historic town centre.

The show is open to all makes of vintage, veteran and classic vehicles classified as follows:

Cars: Pre-war, 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, 1970s; Historic Commercial Vehicles; Classic Motorcycles; Other Interesting Vehicles.

Trophies will be awarded for Best in Class and Best in Show – please tick the box on the entry form if you wish your vehicle to be judged.

Club Stands can be catered for by arrangement with MG Northumbria.

The show will open to entrants at 9.30 and to the public from 11.00. It will close with the presentation of awards at 4.00.

Other attractions will include musical performances, various stalls and refreshments.”

If you would like to enter the show, please return the enclosed booking form to me as soon as possible. We hope that we will all be able to park together and put on a good display of Rolls-Royce and Bentley motor cars. Other marques are, of course, welcome and members arriving in other classics will, I am sure, be able to park with us on speaking nicely to the marshals! Jackie and I would be pleased to welcome all members of the RREC at our gazebo for a drink before lunch. Let's hope for a fine day.

Martin

Tornado revisited?

It is now about three years since we visited 'Tornado' an A1 Class locomotive and the first to be built since the demise of the steam power on the railways.



We thought that it was about time to see how it was developing especially now that it is virtually complete and the boiler has been tested and the safety valve lifted! We hope to arrange a visit, possibly in July, but nothing has been arranged yet. However, enquiries are being made and full details will be included in the next newsletter if this can be arranged. For those on the internet, Google 'Tornado locomotive' for more information!

Opportunist or Optimist?

Last summer whilst enjoying a weekend in Worcestershire, we went to look at a 1948 Mark VI with 4 door body by James Young. It was offered for sale at £15,000 by a Club member, and appeared to be in good condition and with a full history. It also transpired that it had been at the first and twenty-fifth Harewood Rallies. As it turned out, it had sliding roof problems, the n/s rear door would only half open and the rear wings had bulges under the paint where there were steel brackets underneath. All side windows were badly scratched but the owner had sourced a supplier for replacement curved glass. There were also a host of less vital faults. I felt that it was a good restoration project at about £12,000 (but not for me). Nobody else wanted the car and so it was auctioned last December at an estimated price of £11,000 – unfortunately I don't know the hammer price. It is at present advertised in the Bristol area “bodily and mechanically sound” for £18,975.

Richard Harrison

The following was ‘lifted’ from an edition of sporting Motorist dated June 1967, price 3/-.

VINTAGE YEARS

1934 Rolls-Royce Phantom II

FIFTY-TWO hundredweight of pink vulgarity. This is how Roger Hall's well-known Rolls-Royce Phantom II must appear to many people, but in fact the colour scheme has been part of the car since it first saw the light of day in 1934—and although the colour has had 33 (now 74) years in which to mellow, it still turns heads at vintage meetings even now.

The Continental Phantom II was introduced in 1932, and eventually replaced by the V12 Phantom III in 1935—fitted with raised compression and rear axle ratios (giving a lazy top gear speed of 28 mph per 1000 rpm!) and, in some cases with a highlift camshaft—Mr Hall's “Pink Paraffin” is one of these—giving a maximum speed of around 95 mph. With 75,000 miles on the clock, there's only a very slight crazing of the pink paintwork to betray the car's age, and the only mechanical repair of any size was the replacement of the camshaft from stock for £32—bores and bearings are still in perfect condition.

Starting the car requires a different technique from modern cars. The ignition

advance and retard lever mounted on the steering-wheel boss is set to full retard, and the hand throttle mounted next to it opened to quarter-throttle. The engine should then start on the first pull—in fact, if it's warm enough, it's sometimes possible to start it by flicking the advance and retard lever without touching the starter button, an old Rolls-Royce owners' party trick which never fails to amuse. Silence is supposed to be a Rolls-Royce prerogative, and although the car is anything but noisy, there are several modern saloons which beat it on noise level when driven gently. The main offenders are the engine fan and the carburettors. But the 7.6 litre ohv unit stays quiet even under full throttle, and the lazy gear ratios allow it to work hard without having to move too fast. Fortunately, it's extremely flexible—although it cruised happily at around 70 mph (about 2500 rpm in top!) it was still beefy enough to lift a stalled Zephyr **and** its caravan up the 1 in 3¹/₂ Sutton Bank hill.



In cold figures, the Continental is no longer as exciting as it must have been in 1934. Acceleration isn't up to the standard of many present-day small saloons—0-50 mph in 14¹/₂ seconds, 0-60 in 19¹/₂ seconds and 0-70 in 28 seconds, according to contemporary road-tests. Fuel consumption is around 11 to 13 mpg—but at least you can use the cheapest petrol, as the “high-compression engine” has a ratio of 5.25 to one!

It's a big car—17ft 8 ins overall, with seven feet of that taken up by the imposing bonnet—but the lightness and precision of the steering makes it a surprisingly easy car to handle. One can't very well talk about understeer or oversteer when testing a borrowed car of this grandeur, but it felt extremely stable and was moderately swerveable, even at speed.

The stout right-hand gearlever controls what feels like a set of very large cogs. Third and top have effective synchromesh, and the change is light when taken slowly, although the driver has to work harder if he's in a hurry. Bottom and second are unsynchronised, and the change from first to second is best made immediately after moving off, otherwise it takes a long pause in neutral for all the works to slow down. **[I always thought that one should double-de-clutch on the change from first to second. I did on my 25/30 and on the Silver Ghosts that I have occasionally been allowed to drive, comments please, Roger! ed]** And there's an exhaust by-pass, operated by a foot-pedal with a stern warning about the legal consequences of its use. Risking the full might of the law I tried it out—the result was a mixture of coarse agricultural noises and a terrible throbbing vibration. Never again!

Although a pvt, **[post vintage thoroughbred]** the Phantom II still feels very much a vintage car in conception, despite its refinement. The character of the earlier Rolls-Royces is still there—very quiet running, freedom from noise and vibration, yet a definite feeling that the engine is bottled solidly **[sic]** to the chassis. Not a car for heavy traffic, but very satisfying on a long run.

oOo

Roger tells me that during the war the car was used for testing parachutes! No, not by dropping it out of aeroplanes but by attaching a parachute to a frame fixed to the rear and then deploying it while driving up a runway and measuring the amount of retardation. I think the holes used for fixing the frame are still there.