



# ROLLS-ROYCE ENTHUSIASTS' CLUB



## NORTH EASTERN SECTION

*Newsletter*  
*May - June 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!

### **Welfare**

**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)

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.

### **Front cover:**

**Bentley Mk VI Chassis No B4MD owned by George Milburn looking rather cold in the car park of the Hilton Hotel, Northampton on the Sunday morning of the club conference**

## Chairman's Chat

Unless you have a lap-top computer, (which I no longer have) there is a certain amount of difficulty in typing at a computer whilst elevating a right leg! Owing to having had some surgery on my foot recently – that is what I am doing. Again owing to this surgery, I was unable to attend the Annual Conference this year. It was a toss-up of which I took – the surgery date or the Annual Conference and after waiting months for this surgery – there was just no competition. However, Martin found a companion in the guise of Dennis Wheatley to go with him. No doubt a report of the Conference will appear somewhere in the Newsletter and the Bulletin in the coming weeks.

The clocks may have gone forward and officially summer time is with us – but the weather has decided to play the usual tricks with us. Whilst the snow looked lovely this last weekend some of the roads were again reduced to chaos and hopefully none of you had to suffer because of this. I was thinking of Martin and Dennis making that long journey back north from the Hunt House in the teeth of such wintry conditions. Surely by 11 May when our first event of the season takes place the weather will have started to behave itself. Speaking of the first event, there are again a multitude of Section events for us to attend this year. The first one organised by Dennis in May is at the Tees Pumping Station. Again in May we have our very own “Heartbeat” day organised by Grahame, at the NY Railway and Derek is taking us back in time to Seaton Delaval Hall in June. July sees the MG Owners Club at Corbridge to which we have again been invited to join in with and Martin has taken responsibility for this event. The much awaited completion of the “Tornado” steam engine will be given the once over by us, hopefully at an event to be organised by Ray and Margaret and we pray for a nice day when we again go to Dennis and Lucy’s BBQ this year in August! I don’t think Peter will be driving the bus he is arranging for us to travel on for a sightseeing tour of Newcastle (much as he would like to!) In September and Tony and I hope that the Weardale Railway is still in existence at the end of that month when we hope to visit it again. Plenty to choose from and I hope that as many of you will support these events as possible – holidays and cruises permitting. Our AGM venue is changed this year so make a note of the date and new venue as printed in the last Newsletter. And the “car” bit this month. After the little Fiat Cinquecento now comes the Trabant. Apparently the Fiat is now in full production and has been fully road tested. The Trabant is an unknown quantity so watch this space – somehow or other though a Rolls Royce Trabant doesn’t sound quite right! Found in a ladies magazine (fancy that!) – The first Rolls-Royce was sold in 1906 for £400 – thousands of ladies in the land will be grateful for that little bit of information. [That just shows you should never believe what you read in ladies magazines! Ed]

And finally .....

A car thief took off in an unattended 4x4 without noticing the enormous Great Dane/ Alsatian cross asleep in the back. The hapless criminal failed to spot 11 month old Dax through the Toyota’s steamed-up windows but got the fright of his life when the nine-stone, six foot animal sat bolt upright, woken by the engine. Police found the vehicle abandoned 30 yards from where it had been parked.

“There’s no alarm (in the car)”, said the owner. “But who needs one when you’ve got the

Hound of the Baskervilles?” “Dax is a big softy,” added his owner’s wife. “He probably thought it was time for walkies”.

Drive safely and watch for those cameras, big dogs, thousands of well informed ladies and flashing speed signs!

Cynthia

### **Secretary's notes**

I heard the sad news that Les Dickinson from the Yorkshire Section, who was known to many in the North Eastern Section died last month. Les was an active member for many years and lately was President of the Yorkshire Section. I believe he often came to North Eastern Section events and some Section Weekends though perhaps not recently.

At the time of writing the response to the visit to the Tees Pumping Station for Sunday 11 May, has not been overwhelming! Another booking form is included for this most worthwhile visit, but if you would like to come along do please contact Dennis immediately as numbers have to be given to the hotel for lunch within the next few days. Something for everyone especially if you are interested in the local heritage. Similarly Grahame is looking for more members to come to the North Yorkshire Moors Railway day, the following Sunday, 18 May and the deadline for booking has been put back until 14 May. Again another booking form is enclosed.

I have not heard from Derek about the response for his visit to Seaton Delaval Hall. If you have not booked and would like to go please contact him as soon as possible as the deadline is about to expire. Entries are coming in for the Classic Vehicle Show at Corbridge, mentioned later, but more would be welcome and it would be excellent if we could put on a good display.

Cynthia mentioned in her ‘chat’ the proposed visit to Tornado. Again at the time of writing there is no news about this proposed visit. I hope that I will be able to make details available in the next newsletter.

The last newsletter I sent out by post and e-mail and asked for feed back regarding peoples preferred method of receipt. I have had a few replies and will work towards e-mail where possible. However, I decided to continue with the posted version this time for everyone together with an e-mail version for those who can receive it. If you receive an e-mail and would prefer a hard copy please let me know and, vice versa.

Martin

### **Visit to Crewe**

Cynthia, Tony, Jackie and I took some time off in March to spend a few days in Cheshire at one of the Warner hotels near Crewe. Apart from an enjoyable mid-week break we were

also treated to a chauffeured ride in a Bentley Continental Flying Spur in the ownership of a local firm who specialised in chauffeur driven limousines and high quality cars. Our route took us along country lanes and also along the M6, just to see how comfortable it was at speed.



On the following day our party of 14 were taken to the Bentley Motors factory at Crewe where we were given a most interesting tour seeing the Continental range and also the Arnage under construction. It was fascinating to see how modern technology dealt with such items as cutting out leather and dealing with veneer. Included in the tour was a visit to the Mulliner coachbuilding works. Unfortunately souvenir cars were not on offer, so we are still waiting for the lottery to provide the loot!

### **Classic Cars at Tynedale Park—Sunday 6th July**

Just a reminder about this event. A booking form is enclosed again for what has in the past been an interesting day.

The show is open to all makes of vintage, veteran and classic vehicles classified as follows for judging purposes: all RR and Bentley cars are welcome of any age:

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.

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.

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

### **Barbeque at Ilton - 17 August 2008**

Dennis and Lucy have very generously invited us to their house for another barbeque. Last year we had a most enjoyable day despite the weather. While we hope for a fine day we are fortunate that Dennis and Lucy are able to provide shelter for us inside the house, as well as for the barbeques in the garage. (very large) Details of cost and a booking form will be in the next newsletter but the format will be the same as last year. We will meet for coffee at a convenient location then take a short scenic drive to Ilton. In order to keep the cost to a minimum members are asked to bring their own meat to barbeque as last year.

### **The Alpine Eagle as a Touring Car**

The following article was taken from Edition No. 7 of 'Early and Late' being the Bulletin of the Rolls-Royce Section of the Vintage and Sports-car Club. Thanks to Roger Hall for lending it to me!

*Being some experience of the Rolls-Royce that triumphed in the Austrian Alpine Test as a motor carriage for home service.*

*By H MASSAC BUIST*

For the second year in succession Rolls-Royce have given the world's motor constructors food for thought by reason of the nature of the car's performance in the arduous Austrian Alpine touring competition, concerning which readers of THE MOTOR WORLD have been very fully informed. The fact that this year the Rolls-Royce made the outstanding performance of all the competitors by reason of supplementing the necessary proofs of reliability in the guise of achieving non-stop runs with making the fastest times up the mountains, has naturally given occasion for some inquiry as to whether or not this is a highly specialised car, such as bears no direct relationship to the standard product supplied to the public. Feeling that the best way to answer this question in satisfactory fashion was to examine the vehicle, and follow up that process by trying it under the same conditions as you would run the standard product, I seized an opportunity over this weekend to make a tour of some 588 miles on the "Alpine Eagle", as the triumphant Rolls-Royce has been aptly styled. In the result I was extraordinarily impressed with what might be called the versatility of this car. While it plainly surpassed the Rolls-Royces, as we have come to know them, in the matter of its surprising power and speed, nevertheless those qualities proved merely supplementary to the ordinary Rolls-Royce features of refinement, which have not been sacrificed in any way, but which have instead been incorporated with those necessary qualities to enable the vehicle to carry British colours to the very forefront in a competition of the most thoroughly representative international character.

### **Features of the Car**

The car itself scales light, not that the chassis weighs less than the standard product, but because the four-seated touring body is a mere streamline shell, weighing little more than 3cwt. The fact that part of the routes embraced in the Austrian trial were highways of exceedingly indifferent surface, and that many such passages had nevertheless to be travelled at high speed to make good times in the matter of hill climbing, caused the chassis, despite the lightness of its body, to be equipped with limousine springs to make the suspension sufficiently hard for the purpose of achieving speed. Thus to this extent the machine is not as smooth in suspension as the standard product, because it has proportionately a lighter body and stiffer springs. But when you get it going at the high speeds of which it is capable, you realise the purpose of this, particularly if the road is a poor one, because then you travel very fast in an extraordinarily smooth manner. It is only when going very slowly in town, over smooth roads, that it dawns on you that, for a Rolls-Royce, this car is stiffer in the springs than ordinary, albeit the suspension is such as to deserve high praise, were it not for the fact that the firm itself has set higher standard(s) for this work. You will, therefore, observe that in this mere stiffening of the springs, substituting one set of standard steel leaves for another, there is nothing in the product as used for one competition which is not as supplied in the standard vehicle. For example, if for home service you fitted a limousine body to this chassis with limousine springs, your proportion in this connection would be precisely as in standard Rolls-Royce practice today.

### **Departures from Current Practice**

For the rest, the machine is a standard product, even to the engine dimensions, but the cams give a bigger lift to the valves, and the moving parts of the motor are somewhat lightened, with the result that there is a higher compression and a higher range of engine speed. The standard Rolls-Royce gives its best torque at 1,900 turns of the crankshaft a minute, whereas the "Alpine Eagles" gives its maximum power at 2,300 revolutions a minute. There are, besides, on the dashboard one or two "gadgets" not needed for ordinary touring, but necessitated by the particular regulations for this test, as, for example, means, without getting out of the driver's seat, of switching over from one petrol tank to another for the journeys were long, and replenishment of supplies was effected as seldom as possible. There are also a few little taps and things to enable the motor to be started up easily should the car be above the snow line. You are to understand that the Alpine test was a sealed bonnet competition, so that no opportunities were provided to "tickle the carburettor" to assist in starting and so forth. None of these devices, however, are necessary for the home service, yet none of them are freak schemes. On the contrary, all of them are eminently desirable for the service of the motorist using the Rolls-Royce regularly in such parts of the world as those in which the Alpine trial took place. I dwell at this length on this phase of the matter because, for all that has been written about the Austrian Alpine Trial, little or nothing in the way of description of the features of the cars that have been triumphant has been published.

## **In Civilised Life**

Realising from the features specified, therefore, that here is a machine submitted to competition in a manner in which it is needed by the public, and which departs from the standard product only in the trifling details mentioned – which departures, moreover, are all suitable for standardising absolutely in an Alpine model – I wanted to put the motor to the test, and see whether or not, supposing such a model to be in the hands of Rolls-Royce patrons abroad, it would at the same time and without alteration, be suitable for service at home. For one thing, the extent to which it would be suitable would reveal the flexibility and adaptability of the machine. In the Austrian trial, in the manner so popular abroad, the car was run in what is for Rolls-Royce comparatively unsilenced condition, whereas on being brought back to this country, a silencer was fitted, therefore we went about the country like reasonable citizens. In our trial there was to be no adjustment of the carburettor to suit hills when we came to them, or traffic when we found ourselves among such conditions, in that the chief point was to arrive at flexibility. Therefore we started by driving into London and out of it through the **ten miles limit** areas in a westerly direction on to the Bath Road, being careful to observe all speed limits in this connection.

(to be continued)