New Zealand Rolls-Royce & Bentley Club Inc

Issue 10-1, 2010

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The 2010 National Meeting 19 to 21 March

A separate document has been sent out to members, but here is the Programme of Events:

Saturday 20 March 9 a.m. departure on National Park Perimeter Rally to National Army Museum and lunch
2 p.m. depart the National Army Museum to drive to Omori Estate for wine tasting and nibbles
5:30 p.m. Annual General Meeting in the Atrium Room, Chateau Tongariro
6:30 p.m. Happy Hour followed by Dinner in the Ruapehu Restaurant at the Chateau, with cash bar
Sunday 21 March 9:30 to 11 a.m. National Concours d’Elegance
11 a.m. Our Honorary Life Member Ivor Aspinall will be available for a Technical/Historical Forum
12 p.m. Platter Luncheon and awarding of Concours trophies
2 p.m. Depart for home

Various optional activities being arranged include visits to local wineries, a rock and roll evening, classic rides on the WA165 steam train, harbour cruise on the Takatimu Tug, and an excursion to Opotiki through the Motu Gorge on the route used for the Heatway Rally.

Features of the Public Display Day will include New Zealand’s only open national Concours d’Elegance, an Auto-gymkhana and static car display in association with the Gisborne branch of the Vintage Car Club and Surf City Hot Rod Club as a fund raiser for the Riding for the Disabled.

First held in 1995 in Christchurch, the six-day NZ National Classic Rally was previously sponsored by AA Insurance but is now supported by a range of prestigious firms associated with the classic car movement including NZ Classic Driver magazine.

While not a speed event there is a mildly challenging but not compulsory competitive element, as the primary objective is to simply enjoy the pleasure of driving the better cars of yesteryear along back roads and byways through scenery seldom seen by those who remain on the well-travelled routes.

The rally always attracts a wide range of classic vehicles of all ages from the 1920s right up to the latest collectable marques. Several Silver Shadows have taken part in the past with some distinction and at least one has already been entered in the Gisborne event. All vehicles considered by the owners to be classic, regardless of age or country of origin, may take part and owners do not have to be members of any motoring club or hold a competition licence.

For more details Rally Co-ordinator Roy Hughes can be contacted at 03 332 7500 or royhsyncom@xtra.co.nz.
Mainland Comment

What with comings and goings of friends and family over the holiday period, Christchurch Airport has become a familiar place for your editor, who hopes he is not alone in being thoroughly irritated by the general level of inconvenience inflicted on travellers and their friends by the continuing construction work taking place there. Once the car has been parked a sign of infuriating inanity “Change is Good” has to be passed, and one cannot but wonder how the consultants being paid large sums of public money have remained ignorant of George Orwell’s writing. Egad!

One of your editor’s conspiracy theories is that news media and those who control us have conspired to ensure that by the time our “three score and ten” has been reached we are all so suffocated that we are glad to depart this mortal coil.

On a brighter note, the following message has arrived: Hello,
This is from The Sporting Car Club of South Australia, and we are looking to purchase the Book “Silver Ghosts in Australia and New Zealand” Volume 1 by Ian Irwin.

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Thanking You,
New Zealand’ Volume 1 by Ian Irwin.

Chairman’s Report

I am writing this with a slight feeling of regret as it will probably be the last Chairman’s Report I will put together. It has been two years since I was first elected to the position and I hope I have made a difference to the club for the better.

My own style has been very much hands off the day to day running of the club. Working within the thrust of the new constitution, I have watched the regions develop in its own way without the heavy hand of the national committee directing affairs.

I was so very pleased to be instrumental in-re-enlivening the South Island regional committee and I have watched it mature to a successful, may I say a most successful affair. Under the guidance of the regional chairman and secretary/treasurer, Michael Midgley and Tom King respectively, they have gone from strength to strength.

Our Magazine editor has done a simply wonderful job in conceiving and developing our new look magazine, I have not heard a single word of criticism about it. Unfortunately we have been subjected to world wide forces in that advertising revenue is down in the whole field of magazines by over twenty five percent. We ourselves have lost two of our major advertisers to this trend over twenty five percent. We ourselves have lost two of our major advertisers to this trend.

Consequently the cost of the executive has been reduced dramatically which has allowed us to expand the magazine and hold subscriptions for the last few years. As I said above, that period of grace has now passed and we must review the position to avoid running into debt. Consequently the cost of the executive has been reduced dramatically which has allowed us to expand the magazine and hold subscriptions for the last few years. As I said above, that period of grace has now passed and we must review the position to avoid running into debt.

Members will have to face up to the fact that we have not had any change in our subscription levels for over ten years while costs have increased in almost every area. The current executive will put a motion to the A.G.M. that we increase our subscription costs has increased in almost every area. The current executive will put a motion to the A.G.M. that we increase our subscription costs has increased in almost every area.

As I intimated in the first paragraph, I do not propose to stand again for this position. It is my firm belief that any club, in fact all clubs, benefit from drawing on their membership for different types of expertise over the years. Some come to the position to offer financial skills, some to offer organisational skills, some social skills and so forth.

I woke up the other week to realize that I currently own three Bentleys and a Rolls-Royce and I have found that by using the “reply all” button, a meeting can be held quite satisfactorily albeit over a couple of days rather than a couple of hours.

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Bentleys and records seem to be made to have an uneasy relationship, one just waiting to be broken. One of the most famous was that between the Speed Six Gurney Nutting Coupé which Capt Wooll Barnato may or may not have used to beat the Blue Train from Monte Carlo to London in 1930 by 4 hours. In New Zealand beating a train in a Bentley could be compared to shooting fish in a barrel, and although Samuel Clemens, as Mark Twain, was able to start his lecture tour of the 1890s by train in Bluff, there did not seem to be much point in looking for a passenger train there to beat. Perhaps we have spent too much time watching the BBC television programme “Top Gear”, but…

FoC John King wrote a book called “On the Road” (Harper/ Collins 1995), and on Page 8 he wrote the following passage, all too easily interpreted by a Bentley Chap as a challenge: “Neither has anybody managed to drive from Cape Reinga to Bluff in a day, a single stretch of 24 hours between midnights. It’s probably feasible to drive the road section if you’re not too concerned about speed limits, but the delay incurred in ferrying a car across Cook Strait from Wellington to Picton would make a single-car, single-day journey impossible.” Our Southern Region member Malcolm Graham read the book and took up the challenge on his BMW K100RT motorcycle in 1999, making it to Cape Reinga with about 2 minutes to spare; although he had adjusted his departure time from Bluff to 10:30 one Saturday morning to coincide with the fast ferry then operating, so it was not a midnight to midnight operation.

Malcolm had corresponded with John at the time, and one recent afternoon over a beer he mentioned this trip to your editor. This being a small country, it did not take long for the relationship between John and Tom King to become clear, and Malcolm started thinking about a Bentley operation which could include the brothers King. John had made the trip from north to south when he was writing his book, and Tom had started from Bluff in March 1985 in the 1951 Mark VI Bentley B146KM. That journey, almost 25 years ago, was organised by the Vintage Car Club of New Zealand (Inc) to celebrate 100 years of the motor car. A friend, the late Bruce Winder, had two sports/racing Rileys - a 1930 Brooklands and a 1934 Imp - that he wanted to enter for the challenge, and he invited two other friends from Northern Ireland, another from England, and suggested that the Bentley would make a suitable car to carry baggage for six people, who included Tom’s son, then aged 9, for the two week journey. The photograph gives some idea of the minimal luggage capacity of the three cars involved; not for nothing was that Bentley called the “small boot” model, and Tom’s pathological hatred of clutter in a car meant that some considerable time was spent each morning, after the eventual mustering of the troops and their baggage, cramming said baggage into the Bentley. Well, we weren’t out to break any records 25 years ago, and, apart from all the municipal ceremonies we missed, it probably didn’t matter in the long run how long it took for the Englishman to cash his weekly traveller’s cheque. I think the record for that operation was two hours, in Ashburton, as the beleaguered bank teller determined, by numerous telephone calls, how much £5 was worth in $NZ that day. Possibly it wasn’t as a studied insult to New Zealand and the debased status of our 1985 dollar that this ritual took place; it only seemed as if it were, as he received almost $25 for his £5, but suggestions that the cashing would take one minute just one hour up the road in Christchurch IF WE COULD JUST GET MOVING had no effect.

Malcolm had done his research well, and had negotiated a very attractive rate with The Interislander, to which organisation we are very grateful. A combination of one ferry’s being out of service for pre-Christmas maintenance, the Brynderwyn hills south of Whangarei being closed from Tuesday to Thursday nights so that components of the new Eden Park stadium could be carried south, and Malcolm’s annual leave meant that instead of returning to our homes after the Feasting at Fleur’s weekend, we headed south to Bluff to start on Monday 16 November.

Each of us was happy with a standardised driver’s seat setting. Our drill for refuelling stops had been organised so that the driver being relieved cleaned the windscreen, the person from the back refuelled, while the front passenger paid for the fuel. A comfort visit was in the equation too, but the distance to wherever the toilets were hidden helped to make our stops longer than we would have liked.
Malcolm’s 1994 Bentley Turbo “R” RCH54119 is really three cars in one. Tom, knowing the earlier “T” Series Bentley, felt utterly comfortable with the “R”’s Fast Touring mode, and its 20 miles per gallon is easily achievable in that guise. Pressed a little more the “R” becomes a sports car, and since the ride quality had defaulted to “Sports” it, and John felt very happy with it as a sports car. A professional driver such as Malcolm, who knows the car and the road well, while being well aware of the necessity to maintain an unblemished driver’s licence, is able to bring out the true Mr Hyde quality available as the “R” becomes a racing car. However, it is a racing car with comfortable leather seats, Wilton carpet with lambswool covers, figured walnut veneer, a daunting array of controls, and a high gear cruising gate of 40 mph per 1,000 engine revolutions a minute.

The café just above the signpost at The Bluff is appropriately called Lands End (cue in a Goon Show “The Annual Lands End to John ‘o’ Groats Bass Drum Race” of hallowed memory, where Peter Sellers in his best Raymond Baxter voice introduces “The Italian ace Count Giuseppe (Fred) Supponi at the sticks of a very fast sports drum” which we hear accelerating into the distance. Neddy Seagoon is then heard lamenting that he lacks the wherewithal to buy a real racing drum. “How much wherewithal do you need?” “About £7.10.0. wherewithal.”) The café proprietors agreed to convert their Bed and Breakfast rate into Dinner and Bed, so after an excellent meal of blue cod we had our showers and settled down to a few hours of sleep before the massed choirs of alarm mechanisms awoke us in time for our midnight departure from The Bluff. The night was cold at 6°C with rain not exactly horizontal, and as the midnight pips of Radio New Zealand National died away John was in the driver’s seat for the first leg to Oamaru.

Towns came and went, with speed limits adhered to, and the weather gradually improved from the sleet occasionally noticed, so that by our second driver swap and refuelling, at Amberley, it was obvious that it was going to be a pleasant day. John’s photograph was taken as Malcolm drove through Kaikoura at 0725, and we arrived quite early for our sailing from Picton. Our
(Above) RCH54119 at The Bluff.

(Left) Malcolm wears a t-shirt commemorating the triumphant return of Bentley to Le Mans in 2001.

(Below) John King took this photograph as RCH54119 passed through Kaikoura at 0725 on 16 November 2009.
A passing crew member of The Interislander took this photograph of RCH54119 and its crew ready to leave Picton.

John King’s photograph of the refuelling at Cape Reinga shortly after midnight on 17 November. Which way to the Concours d’Elegance?

diet of muesli bars and water meant that we were not particularly hungry for the food available on the Interislander, and the Club Class thoughtfully provided by the management was perhaps less conducive to sleep than the chairs in the normal lounge. The frequent glasses of fruit juice and cups of coffee were appreciated, and after a pleasant crossing in flat calm we were on the road right at the 1315 scheduled arrival time. Because Tom had most recently lived in Wellington he drove that leg; possibly a more aggressive driver would have been able to take advantage of overtaking opportunities. As it was, we seemed to be engulfed in the Annual Nissan Sunny 90 Kilometres per Hour Tour in the Fast Lane Rally through the Lower North Island. When John’s turn came we were part of the Traffic Officer Surveillance Scheme, which continued most of the way to our final refuelling stop at Wellsford, where Malcolm took over for the last leg to Cape Reinga. There was very little traffic on this Monday evening, but by the time we approached the Mangamuka hills south of Kaitaia only some very spirited cornering to use the full capabilities of the Bentley kept our goal of Cape Reinga by midnight a possibility. However, the last 20 kilometres of Highway 1 are being prepared
Malcolm’s photograph neatly shows the stop lights signifying that this car is about to slow from the 90 k.p.h. it achieved in the right lane of the passing lane.

for sealing, and this process seems to have involved spreading a thick layer of mud where a road surface would normally be expected. The Bentley’s traction was seriously tested, and one hesitates to think of how inexperienced tourists’ cars could fare.

There are few road signs to show how far Cape Reinga is away, and we were all a little too busy to refer to a map, but 24 hours and a maddening 15 minutes after we had left The Bluff we pulled in to the parking area at Cape Reinga.

We had carried 20 litres of fuel, which we added to put out the “evil eye” before heading south again to Kaitaia, where we refuelled at the 24-hour petrol station. Here we discovered the reason why our lights had not seemed very effective; a thick layer of red mud over the lenses, which eventually responded to treatment. Each of us drove for short stretches,

stopping when we felt it was unwise to continue, to Kiwaka, where there is a selection of cafés, and after a solid breakfast we felt ready for the drive to Auckland, where we felt better still after showering and shaving at John’s home.

Ever the optimist, Malcolm points out that there is an upside to our failure: the Maori translation of “The land of the standard wheelbase, red Turbo-R” couldn’t possibly slip off the tongue as easily as “Aotearoa”.

We called to see our Chairman on the way back in to Auckland, and Malcolm’s caption to John’s photograph is “And just why won’t you loan us your new Arnage for our next little trip?” Note the mud dropping from the front wheel arch of the “R” as it dries.
Stephen Fowler recently celebrated a milestone birthday, which gives us an excuse to include this photograph, taken during the Mt Cook weekend in July last year, of Stephen wearing garments gathered during his extensive travels overseas.

FoC Allan Winn is returning to New Zealand briefly to attend a Midgley family wedding, and this magazine hopes to recruit him as an occasional UK correspondent. Originally from Nelson, Allan read engineering at Canterbury University, and edited the University Car Club’s magazine. He enjoyed this so much that he remained at university to gain his journalism diploma, and set off on his O.E. in 1974. He was soon working for an engineering magazine in London, but that magazine folded, and with the redundancy money Allan bought a 3-litre Bentley, one of the last built; then landed a better journalism job within a week, and rose through the profession to eventually hold the top editorial position with the influential *Flight International* magazine. Allan has recently become Museum Director at Brooklands, the birthplace of British motor sport and aviation, so who amongst us has research topics to pursue?

Philip Eilenberg’s photograph of Max Morris’s 20/25 Sports Saloon GRW32 by Hooper has since been repainted, and appeared at a car show in Auckland and we look forward to some new photographs.

Your editor was fortunate to recently meet our Honorary Member Ivor Aspinall and his wife Doreen as they were staying with our Past Chairman Henry Green and his wife Joy. Ivor and Doreen will be at our AGM at Chateau Tongariro, so here is a chance for us all to absorb the wisdom of a gentleman who began his apprenticeship with Rolls-Royce in 1935.
In the late 1950s and early 1960s, a small group of Rolls-Royce owners in the Wellington area would meet informally to discuss their cars and to share their knowledge and information in much the same way that car enthusiasts still do, some 50 years later. This was at a time when import controls in New Zealand were at their most stringent and new cars, and even spare parts, were extremely difficult to obtain without extreme amounts of cash, personal connections, or both. One can therefore imagine that much of the discussion consisted of ways and means of keeping their beloved and aged cars running. Remember that these men were not necessarily wealthy business men, but mainly practical engineering types who understood the needs of their cars and who would cheerfully get their hands dirty, when necessary to meet those needs. So was born a mutual aid or self-help group of the sort that is not unknown today. (Photos 1 & 2).

Having decided on the need for a more formal organisation, Fred Spencer, a plumber from Lorne Street in Wellington, together with other enthusiasts, Ken Boosey, Jack Craven and George Banks, formed the Rolls-Royce Owners’ Club of New Zealand. The club’s objective was to provide a forum for members to discuss all aspects of their RR’s to their hearts’ content. The cars were the binding force, not the members alone. The initial subscription was £2/2/0 ($4.20) and ownership of a Rolls-Royce was obligatory.

George Banks’ son, Doug, describes many informal meetings at their home in Lowry Bay, between these owners and enthusiasts, together with A C Kellett, Ken McMillan and others, photos of these gentlemen and their cars being shown below. The late Cliff Olsen, who will be remembered by many of us, was their secretary for some time. (Photo 13).

The writer has been fortunate enough to be given this Club’s original minute book together with copies of their journals and correspondence, and from these one can gain an idea of the activities of the RROCNZ, amplified and illustrated by photographs from the Banks and Boosey family albums.

August 7 1960: First meeting.

Meetings were apparently held regularly, every second Monday in the month, at the Banks’ home at 45 Howard Road, Lowry Bay (Photo 11) and it’s worthy of note that Mrs Mabel Banks (Photo 12) as an accomplished, perhaps compulsive, cook, was perhaps partly responsible for the frequency of these meetings! Certainly the minutes of all committee meetings held at the Banks’ home, end with an appreciative comment on the provision of a prepared supper after the meetings.

During summer 1960/61 the Club had a run to the Banks’ bach at Otaki. (Photo 3). During that afternoon, a cake, suitably decorated with the Club’s insignia, was presented to the Club and was cut by Mr & Mrs Banks. (Photo 5).

The cars of Messrs Craven, Boosey and Banks represented the
Club in other events including the Wellington Festival, followed by a parade sponsored by the Island Bay Festival Committee. George Banks’ car won the Concours d’Elegance, and he was presented with a large bottle of champagne. The same three members and their cars also took part in a display at Hutt Valley High School, to raise funds for the school baths.

Club cars were also used to collect Hector, the parrot from the Auckland Farmers’ Trading Co. store, on his arrival by air (how else?) in Wellington, and to take him to the Farmers shop in Cuba Street (presumably to take part in the Farmers’ Christmas Parade.) Later they took a number of boys from the Island Bay orphanage to a show at Trentham Memorial Park.

The formation of the RROCNZ was reported approvingly, in the editorial page of the December 1960 issue of the VCCNZ’s ‘Beaded Wheels’, wherein it was noted that the RROCNZ was apparently the first one-make car club to be formed in New Zealand. Also it was hoped that the formation of this, and other one-make clubs, might ease the chronic spares problem at that time. However there is little indication in either the minutes or the Bulletins, that RROCNZ put much effort into solving the problem of spares supply.

June 1961:

First newsletter. Membership stood at 20. The club had become an incorporated society. Contact had been established with the 20 Ghost Club in the UK, the RROC in the USA and the RROCA in Australia, all of whom had assisted with formulating Club rules and procedure.

October 1961:

The first National Rally was held at Otaki on Labour weekend.

Seven cars met at the Banks’ bach, but without Mr Janes of Tauranga (Phantom III), Henry Gaisford (Phantom 1) due to an overhaul, and Hugh Nevins. Also Sir Charles Norwood (Photo 10), elected as Patron at the first meeting of the Club, was absent, being in Australia.

Mr McParland had bought his 1951 Silver Dawn (SDB112, (Photo 6) rebuilt in the 1990’s by John Stewart as a drophead coupe to Park Ward design) only a few months previously, and this was the latest model in the Club. He had been anxious to make contact with the Club, and living at Otaki, he was able to do so, and to become a member.

The Saturday morning was the time for meeting and greeting other members and their cars. George Banks was particularly pleased see the Phantom II (3GN) that he used to own, but now in the possession of Ken McMillan. A picnic lunch was followed by the Annual General Meeting at which the following members were elected to office:
President, for life: George Banks, Chairman: Fred Spencer, Treasurer: Ken Boosey, Secretary: Mrs Frances Craven, re-elected temporarily, though the pressure of work meant that she wished to retire from this position. After the AGM, members visited Mr McParland’s garden and then on the Sunday, they set off for a picnic at the Mangahao dam. This was a particularly gruelling trip on account of the extremely narrow road up from the Power House, where it was impossible for two vehicles to pass. (Photo 4). On the following day, Monday, most members returned home but three remaining members and their cars accepted the invitation of the Mayor of Foxton to take part in their Gala Day being held at the Domain.

Members: (as elected at the first meeting).

Patron: Sir Charles Norwood KB, 9 Upland Road, Wellington, Founder and Chairman of Dominion Motors Ltd (later merged with Magnus Motors to form New Zealand Motor Corporation (Motorcorp)). He was at that stage the owner of a Silver Cloud 1, SGE326, and celebrated his 90th birthday on 23rd August, 1961. He was reported as attending his office between 10.00 am and 4.30 pm daily. Sir Charles will also be remembered as the founder and Patron of the Wellington Free Ambulance, which still flourishes today. (Photo 10).

President: George William Banks, retired engineer and transport operator who, lived for many years at 45 Point Howard Road, Lowry Bay. This house is described in the book ‘Open Home’ and is noteworthy as the venue of the first meeting of the Rolls-Royce Owners’ Club of New Zealand in 1960. This was the birthplace, then, of the RROCNZ and hence of its successor the New Zealand Rolls-Royce and Bentley Club, founded by Roger Lloyd in 1971. Photos of 45 Howard Road are shown below and are reproduced by courtesy of Random House Ltd. (Photo 11).

George is believed initially to have owned a Silver Ghost but details of this car have yet to be confirmed. It was followed by a 1933 Phantom II, 3GN, the only one in NZ at the time, and then a 1936 25/30, GWN55. The Phantom II was supplied by Rolls-Royce to NZ as only a bare chassis with running gear. Originally it was fitted with a locally-built body by Johnson & Smith of Christchurch, but this was replaced by George Banks with a Humber Super Snipe body. Chairman: Fred Spencer, 25 Lorne Street, Wellington, plumber, owner of a Barker-bodied Silver Ghost limousine 47YG, CN5689, bought around Christmas 1959. The writer remembers seeing this car in the mid 1960s with a large royal coat of arms emblazoned in gold leaf across the rear panels. At a much later date this car was also restored by John Stewart as a tourer. Fred Spencer was also sometime owner of 20/25, GHW6, CL6518, later 1932RR, with Carlton Carriage body, since late 1959. Having then sold the 20/25 to Mr Geoff McCarten of Wellington, he became the owner of Silver Cloud 1 SGE326, CS1619, the first owner of which had been Sir Charles Norwood. This car was later the property of the late Ken White, and now of Stephen Atkinson.

Technical adviser: Jack Craven, 105 Sutherland Road, Wellington. Owner of a 1931 Hooper-bodied 20/25 tourer, GFT36, later registered as L11930, brought out from UK in 1955. He had worked on Rolls-Royces for many years, and had attended numerous courses. At a later date he owned a Park Ward-bodied Silver Wraith WCB41, which was eventually exported to Australia.

Treasurer: Ken Boosey, 70 Sydney St, Petone, engineer, owner of a 1933 20/25 saloon, GHW6, CL6518, later 1932RR, with Carlton Carriage body, since late 1959. Having then sold the 20/25 to Mr Geoff McCarten of Wellington, he became the owner of Silver Cloud 1 SGE326, CS1619, the first owner of which had been Sir Charles Norwood. This car was later the property of the late Ken White, and now of Stephen Atkinson.

Secretary: Sonja Rathgen, who later became Mrs Doug Banks.

Members: Dr Ken C McMillan, 101 Grey St. Invercargill, Hugh Nevins (Wanganui/Marton?), Alan Anderson, who had recently
bought a 20/25, GED46, with Mann Egbert coachwork.

**Bulletins:** The RROCNZ committee recognised the value of regular communication with its members and produced their own Bulletin, initially every three months or so giving details of past and future events, together with a technical dissertation on a different model in each issue. The first one was published in June 1961.

**1963:**

Club activities included visits from technical specialists from Shell and Castrol, who showed films on fuel and oil, and displaying cars at the Dominion Motors showroom as part of the celebrations of Sir Henry Royce's centenary in 1963. The membership list printed in 1963 contained names and addresses of 18 members with handwritten additions of nine more. In addition to those members listed above, these were B W Stent, D F Banks, H F Finley, R V James, T A Thompson, L B Southward, J R White, H D Travers-Ellis, P W Pinckney, H Gaisford, Dominion Breweries, J R Butland, J A McEwan, W H Close, C R Olsen, W A Brown, J B Yaldwyn, K Ivory, P E Fox, J J White, J Ferguson, Mr Rothwell, G J McLeod, C D Austin and G J Griffen.

**1964:**

In 1964, the RROCNZ was visited by Michael Sedgwick, curator of the Montagu Motor Museum at Beaulieu, and later by Lord Montagu himself. See attached photos. During a visit to Wellington, Lord Montagu of Beaulieu stayed with the Banks at their home in Lowry Bay. (Photo 7).

**1965:**

In 1965 the Club mourned the death of George Banks. Fred Spencer reported on a lengthy trip that he and his wife had made in his 20/25 to north of Auckland visiting many RR owners on the way. Cliff Olsen was elected Secretary but then departed on a trip to the UK, keeping contact with the Club through numerous letters to the Chairman. Alan Anderson was elected secretary for the duration of Cliff Olsen’s absence. In August 1965, the Club published a list of some 60 owners’ names and addresses. A picnic was held at Days Bay in June with seven cars attending, and a Christmas party was held on December 13th.

1965 also saw the International Veteran and Vintage Rally in which a number of Rolls-Royces were entered from NZ and from overseas. How many of the NZ cars were members of the RROCNZ is not known.

**1966:**

May 1966, saw the publication of Bulletin no 13, the last (in the writer’s possession) of the RROCNZ Bulletins and it is notable that they have contained no reports of any club activities since June 1965 although one or two members have submitted letters and photos of their cars; these last issues have consisted primarily of copies of company and other press handouts. As six editions were published between October 1965 and May 1966, one could wonder if the only active member was the magazine editor.

The minute book also shows little in the way of reported activities, the meetings being primarily concerned with correspondence and administration. However, at the end of 1966 correspondence with Rolls-Royce in Australia took place, concerning arrangements for a visit by Jack Vidler, Manager of their Car Division.

**1967:**

The visit of Jack Vidler took place in February 1967 and included a reception hosted by the Club, and to which all R-R owners were invited. It was regarded as a great success and as a result Jack was elected as an honorary member of the RROCNZ. (Photos 8 & 9).

However a general lack of activity seems to have prevailed from then on, probably due to declining membership. As only Rolls-Royce owners were eligible for membership, but not Bentley owners, nor even aspiring, but unfulfilled R-R owners, this decline and fall is scarcely surprising.

The need for a new organisation encompassing both Rolls-Royce and Bentley owners was recognised by Roger Lloyd, the New Zealand Rolls-Royce and Bentley Club was formed, and had its first outing on Queen’s Birthday 1971.

The writer has seen no indication of any other activities by the RROCNZ until its formal dissolution in 1975, but if anyone has any further information then they are asked to make contact.

**Official Records.**

A search of the National Archives revealed the following:

The following 15 people signed the original application for incorporation, dated 1st December 1960.

1. Frances M Craven, 29 Puru Crescent, Lyall Bay, Wellington, Clerk.
2. John T Craven, 29 Puru Crescent, Lyall Bay, Mechanical Engineer.
3. K E Boosey, Sheet Metal Worker, 70 Sydney Street, Petone.
4. P M Boosley, 70 Sydney Street, Petone.
5. G W Banks, Retired, 45 Howard Road, Lowry Bay, Wellington.
6. M W Banks, Housewife, 45 Howard Road, Lowry Bay, Wellington.
7. Winifred E Cameron, Housewife, 15 Bellevue Road, Lower Hutt.
8. Stuart Cameron, Consulting Engineer, 15 Bellevue Road, Lower Hutt.
15. G (George) E Wright, Farmer, Mountain View, Annat, Sheffield, RD.

After the submission of a Constitution, the application was approved by the Registrar of Incorporated Societies who issued the Certificate of Incorporation on April 6th, 1961. The Rolls-Royce Owners’ Club of New Zealand Incorporated, file number 1961/25 contains returns of income and expenditure for subsequent years. The RROCNZ was dissolved on 10 October 1975.

A letter from Pat Boosey on behalf of the treasurer, Ken Boosey, of 70 Sydney Street, Petone to the Department of Justice, dated 29 September 1975, quoted a motion from “...the remaining members of the RROCNZ (who) have agreed to dissolve the above-named club.” Enclosed with the letter was a receipt for the remaining funds ($45) donated to the New Zealand Rolls-Royce and Bentley Club Inc.

Those who have been involved with the production of the...
NZRR&BC’s current revised constitution, which runs to some 15 pages, will be interested to know that the RROCNZ’s Constitution covered just one side of a piece of A4!

Author’s footnote.
In producing this article, I must acknowledge the assistance, including access to family photograph albums, of Doug Banks, Pat Boosey, Roger Lloyd and Merv Warner.

This article will form part of my forthcoming book ‘Rolls-Royce and Bentley in the Land of the Silver Fern’ which will chart in varying degrees of detail, the history of our cars and their owners in New Zealand.

Readers will appreciate that such a history is never complete, but with the help of all who have been associated with these cars, gaps in knowledge can be progressively filled.

Accordingly I beseech anyone with photographs, newspaper cuttings or family reminiscences to contact me as soon as possible. Any material loaned will be treated with the utmost care and returned to the owner after scanning or photocopying.

Note that photographs do not need to be of professional standard, because many family albums consist of photographs, like some of those in this article, which are of little more than ‘Box Brownie’ or ‘Kodak Instamatic’ quality, but they are still a most valuable record of life in days gone by.

So if you can help in any way, please contact me on 04.566.0850 or rmt@xtra.co.nz
Roy Tilley.

12. George and Mabel Banks on their golden wedding anniversary.

7. RROCNZ members with Lord Montagu of Beaulieu.
L to r: Mrs Kellett, A.C. Kellett, E.M. Delaney, Lord Montagu, George Banks, Fred Spencer.

9. Jack Vidler’s certificate of honorary membership of the RROCNZ.

(Left) 1963 RROCNZ Member John Ferguson is wearing his badges during the Southern Region/Rolls-Royce & Bentley Touring Club (Inc) run to Mt Cook, July 2009.

(Next Page) A page from George Banks’s photograph album.
Dear Sir,

As a long time member of our Club I commend Richard Hadfield our National Chairman for notifying the need for a modest increase in our annual subscription, which has remained unaltered for several years.

Even though over recent years we have all enjoyed an amazing improvement in the quality and content of our two monthly magazine, all associated cost increases have been well controlled and even absorbed, thanks to the management skills of our Editor Tom King, who has been able to attract a remarkable increase in advertising revenue to match said extra costs.

But costs continue to increase, and in order to survive let alone thrive, our Club needs to make a profit each year. The two monthly magazine is not only the vital communicator among our members but in fact is the life blood of our Club, so it is essential its two month frequency is retained and not changed in an attempt to reduce Club expenses.

Surely our members will approve unanimously this proposed modest increase in our annual subscription.

Jim Sawers.

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Reading Richard’s most interesting article in 09-1 about Rajistan and the traffic encountered brought back memories of a visit we made to India some years ago.

We travelled with Indian friends and stayed with their relatives in Delhi and Madras [now Chennai] This gave us a great insight into this large and completely chaotic country.

We arrived at Delhi International airport late at night which like all international airports was a blaze of lights. The smog was at zero feet and visibility a maximum of about 30 metres. Our friends went with their family in the family car. We hopped into a taxi and had no sooner cleared the environs of the airport than the headlights on the cab went out. As I said the smog was horrendous and in some alarm I asked the driver if he had blown a fuse or some other fault had caused the sudden descent into stygian blackness. "No Sir, turned them off - saving electricity". I then noticed that most of the other traffic was also driving blind. Later in Madras Kris’ brother Murthi followed the same custom and nothing I could say would convince them that there was an alternator under the bonnet of the Ambassador [Morris Oxford] generating regardless.

By the [very] occasional street light I was petrified to see the number of close shaves as we avoided cows, bikes, camels and most notable of all, an elephant with a cyclist's battery-powered lamp fastened to its tail. Motor scooters were everywhere with entire families aboard. The maximum load I saw on that occasion was five on a scooter; Father driving, two small ones standing in front, and Mum and a larger one on the back. Judging from Mum’s girth there may well have been another in the womb.

Richard mentioned the truck driving against the traffic. We witnessed this on several occasions, and not just with trucks. In a cab once again we were proceeding at a far from leisurely pace against the traffic on the wrong side of the road. In tones of what I hoped was withering sarcasm I asked, "What side of the road do you drive on in this country?" "Oh, where there is a gap Sir", completely serious and not at all put out. Obviously my sarcasm failed to penetrate.

On another occasion we went down from the Hill Station of Ootacamund to Coimbatore and the driver had a photo of Ayrton Senna on the dash. The road was ill-surfaced and extremely winding and he was obviously determined to emulate his idol by setting a record Ooty to Coimbatore in an Ambassador. You do not believe that a Morris Oxford will go on two wheels before it rolls? Take my word for it - it will! I seem to remember that Senna was an extremely fast driver but died young. I can only hope his disciple did not follow suit.

Whilst driving in India has its moments Muslim counties are worse if possible. "Inshallah"; the will of Allah appears to dominate and experiences in Pakistan and Iran have seared themselves on our memories. But as Kipling would say, “That is another story”

Richard is not the only Westerner to not visit the Taj Mahal. Richard was confined to bed rest but I finished up in Hospital. Beth made a day trip there in a taxi and found out that at the end that the driver had not slept for 24 hours and by the time they returned to Delhi was opening his eyes every few seconds to avoid camels, cows, sleeping people etc.. She was accompanied by the Doctor sent to escort me home. Born in Sri Lanka, reared in Glasgow, graduated from Medical School in Glasgow, resident in N.Z. He spoke with the broadest Glaswegian accent and was very highly qualified.

David Merryweather
My first contact with AX201 was in the Gold Coast Showrooms of the Queensland Rolls-Royce agent, where I was permitted to sit behind the wheel, having first removed my shoes. The car was nearing the end of a world wide publicity tour, having recently been the subject of a total restoration. To say the result was magnificent is barely doing the vehicle justice. The car was to continue its tour in New Zealand in a few weeks.

Later, after my return to New Zealand, I had a call from Trevor Hudson, Managing Director of British Vehicle Importers Ltd., inviting me to become involved in the de-boxing of the car on its arrival for the NZ leg of its tour, and to participate in my Ghost on a run through Auckland City and Newmarket which had been arranged for publicity purposes. The container in which the car had travelled from Brisbane was to be unloaded outside Coutts’s premises in New North Road and it was here the trouble started. The shipping company, the press, TV, and others were lined up with more camera gear than I had seen before awaiting the extraction of this magnificent beast from the Container. As I had some experience with Ghosts, Trevor asked me to drive the car out of the Container and in to the showroom. He provided a mechanic to do the cranking (no starter on this veteran) who cranked and cranked and cranked. And if you have ever tried to crank a 7.5 litre Ghost engine you will know how tough this can be. We finally had a feeble response from the engine with clouds of foul smelling smoke but it would not keep running. There was nothing for it but to manpower the car across the foot path and into the showroom; so much for the publicity shots. A quick sniff of the fuel tank clearly identified the problem. The odour was similar to turpentine which is typical of very stale petrol. I suggested the tank be drained and refilled but was told this was not on, as the car was now on Public display and it would not be proper to be seen working on it. Furthermore the potential fire danger to their nice new showroom was something they were not prepared to risk.

The next day I turned up with my Ghost to participate in the city parade and as AX201 was out in the yard I assumed the fuel problem had been dealt with. In fact, as I learned later, all that had been done was to add some fresh fuel to the tank and hope for the best. As it turned out the best was not good enough. As we were about to move off, I made to get in my car and Trevor said no, he had secured a clearance from Rolls-Royce UK for me.
to drive AX201 and he will drive my car. As can be imagined Rolls-Royce are pretty fussy about who drives this famous vehicle, and I am privileged to be on their short list of those approved.

We set out along Karangahape road, and the car was not running at all well. However we made it to the top of Queen Street and then had an uninterrupted downhill run to the Victoria St, Queen St. Intersection, probably one of the busiest in NZ. We struck a red and came to a halt, first car in line. I had the hand throttle set for a pretty fast idle which didn’t sound good so after a quick discussion with my riding mechanic, a really nice guy, we decided on a slower idle as the engine was now warmed up; big mistake. She promptly stopped, and there was only one thing to do; that was to crank up in front of a considerable audience, including some press photographers. The accompanying picture which appeared in the Dominion with most unflattering caption tells the story.

We continued without incident down the rest of Queen St. to Parnell Rise which she climbed with absolutely no effort whatsoever. It is one of the fascinations of these cars that most hills are climbed with only a slight increase in carburettor hiss and little else to indicate a change in gradient. In Parnell we swapped cars and Trevor continued in AX201 down to Newmarket and, as had been prearranged, proceeded down the centre of the main Street. Two thirds of the way through the township a lunatic anti Royalist charged towards the car armed with a galvanized bucket, three quarters full of fresh horse manure. He hurled the contents towards the car and made a fair old mess of the bonnet and windscreen and poor Trevor Hudson who copped a good dose all over. Apparently annoyed that he had failed to distribute the entire contents of the bucket as intended, the nut case threw the bucket at the car, severely damaging the side light and part of the windscreen frame. He then lost his balance and crashed in to the back guard of the still moving car and made a complete mess of that. A police car arrived very promptly and the occupants arrested the guy who was being restrained by members of the public.

I had a camera on the seat of my car and as I was only a couple of car lengths behind I was able, from my grandstand position, to get excellent photographs of the whole incident. At the subsequent court case where the perp, as they say, was charged with Willful Damage, Disorderly Behaviour and Common Assault. I was called as a witness and was able to produce my pictures, which left the outcome in no doubt.
My driving impressions of AX201

Despite the handicap of lousy fuel I was hugely impressed with way the car drove and handled. The steering was light and positive, much better than mine. The brakes were good and again better than mine. The gearshift was diabolical but I am sure would be mastered with experience. The clutch was the usual superb Ghost item. The engine performed very well and was delightfully smooth. However, I was surprised that it was not as mechanically quiet as I expected it to be. In all a fantastic experience which sadly gave Rolls-Royce some publicity they could not have been expecting.

Footnote to story

Trevor Hudson, having read a draft of the above tale, tells me that there is a little more to the story of the visit of AX201 than I was aware of when I wrote the above notes. It seems that Trevor, although senior sales representative of the New Zealand agents for Rolls-Royce, was not aware that AX201 was on a world tour, not including New Zealand, until the car was about due to leave Australia for the Middle East. On being alerted to the fact, Trevor immediately phoned the factory and managed to persuade some of his good personal connections that it would be a great idea to divert the car to Auckland on its way to the Middle East. This was agreed to, but because of a very tight shipping schedule only 3 days would be allowed for the vehicle to be in NZ. As a result there were only a few hours to clean the car of horse manure before reloading it into the container for export the next day.

The day after the Newmarket incident, an expert brass worker in the Waikato, having read of the damaged side light in the press, phoned Trevor and offered a complete repair at no charge to Rolls-Royce; however by this time the car was containerised and on its way.

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

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