



THE CAPITAL LETTER

Quarterly journal of the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of Australia ACT Branch Incorporated
Serving the Australian Capital Territory and surrounding areas



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DEDICATED TO ROLLS-ROYCE & BENTLEY ENTHUSIASTS

Winter 2023



From the Branch President

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Since the last Autumn edition of *The Capital Letter*, I can happily report some positive developments relating to our Club's A.C.T. Branch.

We have secured a new voluntary Webmaster! – very long-term Branch member (since 1987 as a 16-year-old), Luke Drady has agreed to take over this relatively new role from past member Tim Collins, who very ably set up our website in time for our hosting the 2021 Federal Rally. MANY thanks Luke for taking on this increasingly important role. Long before my time as a member, Luke was the Manager of the Branch shop (now defunct) for three years from 1990 and he has for some time been the proud owner of a Silver Spirit ASB02236 which he regularly displays at local events.

We held our August monthly meeting followed by the Annual General Meeting on 17th August in Fyshwick within Branch and Federal Treasurer Ian Oliver's newly acquired premises. Ian has a proposal to host a local chapter of the Sir Henry Royce Foundation Australia within the premises and providing a permanent venue for our Branch meetings as well as a home for our library and other assets. A part of his exciting proposal is to open his venue to the public with displays of not only Rolls-Royce & Bentley cars and memorabilia, but several other categories of cars which will appeal to a wider audience. The A.C.T. Branch Committee fully endorses Ian's proposals.

Speaking of the A.G.M., for the most part there was the usual annual "re-shuffling of the deck chairs" amongst members to form the new Committee. Elsewhere in this edition, appears a full list of members who have been re-elected, or agreed to take on the various roles. I'd like to welcome Chris O'Rourke, a former long-term Committee member and Branch President back onto the Committee as our Junior Vice-President. Also, Mike Mulvihill has agreed to join Ian Oliver to become one of our Branch's Directors and a Federal Representative (formerly Delegate). Shane Mortimer also agreed to become our other Representative, both for a term of two years. So, on behalf of all A.C.T. Branch members, thank you to all our on-going volunteers who keep our Branch alive and functional.

Happily proceeding
Peter Hyland



Left: In September Ian & Tina Oliver participated in two Canberra events – the 'Distinguished Gentlemen' drive and the Camp Quality fund-raiser. The photograph shows them during the former event with their 1951 Bentley Mk VI Park Ward drophead coupé, B14MD. See also page 13.

Front Cover: Bentley S2 B25CT in a snowy scene east of Hotham Heights, Victoria, during this year's Silver Cloud, Bentley S Series & Phantom V/VI Register spring tour, 'Head in the Clouds 2'. Photograph by Kate Colwell.

From the Editor

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The attendance at our Annual General Meeting in August was significantly higher than in recent years. The venue in Fyshwick, through the generosity of Ian & Tina Oliver, is probably our 'home' for our future Meetings every second month. On this occasion we were again treated to a most excellent array of refreshments, with Ian & Tina doing us proud as they always do.

The primary function of the A.G.M. is of course to elect office-bearers for the forthcoming Club year. On this occasion the following were elected:

President: Peter Hyliand
 Snr Vice-President: Bryce Ronning
 Jnr Vice-President: Chris O'Rourke
 Secretary: Martin Bennett
 Treasurer: Ian Oliver

We record here our gratitude to Peter Toet for his past service in both Snr and Jnr Vice-President roles. Peter is staying on as Technical Registrar and is the 'go to' member for the stamping and signing of A.C.T. concessional registration forms.

The Meeting also confirmed Ian Oliver as an A.C.T. Branch appointed Director of the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of Australia Limited and appointed Mike Mulvihill as our second Director. Also appointed (for two years) were Shane Mortimer and Mike Mulvihill as our Representatives at the Annual General Meetings of the R.R.O.C.A. Limited, held during Federal Rallies, and at any other Meetings or deliberations that could be held. Our congratulations and thanks are extended to all of these members.

It is with pleasure that we welcome into the Club Robert McMahon of Forrest, A.C.T. We hope to see Robert at future meetings and events and wish him a long, happy and mutually beneficial association with the Club.

Martin Bennett

Right: Newly-joined member Robert McMahon's 1972 Rolls-Royce Corniche two-door saloon CRH13522.



Branch Events Calendar

Members should please note that dates and details of events listed here are in some cases indicative only and are subject to change. Timely notice of each forthcoming event is provided by group email and/or text message but in the event of any doubt please contact the Secretary or President to confirm – contact details on the back cover of each edition of *The Capital Letter*.

OCTOBER

Sunday 22nd October: lunch run, destination to be advised by group email.

NOVEMBER

Wednesday 8th November: mid-week 'Cars & Coffee' run.

DECEMBER

Saturday 2nd December: End of Year Get-together, Kingston Hotel.

Sunday 3rd December: Terribly British Day, Queanbeyan Park.



Above: Norman Lee's 1976 Silver Shadow SRH23090.

Lunch Run to Bungendore

25th June 2023

Below: The Presidential 1994 Silver Spirit III ASR54357.





Above: Martin & Manuela Bennett's 1960 Bentley S2 B25CT, outside our lunch venue, The George.

Below: From left to right we see Jane Beer, Narelle O'Rourke OAM and Manuela Bennett.





Above: From left-to-right, Peter Hyland, Wayne Millar and Paul James.

Below: Shane Mortimer's 1974 Silver Shadow SRH19825.



Above: Ray & Raine Gulson.

Below: Bryce & Marcia Ronning's 1949 Silver Wraith Hooper touring limousine is regularly the earliest car to participate in our driving events.





***Above:** The author, Peter Colwell, bought this 1969 Morris Mini Cooper 'S' new. Of that were not remarkable enough, it is still in amazingly original, beautifully kept condition. Here Peter explains how that is done.*

Preserving a classic car, indefinitely.

By Peter Colwell

I have now lived long enough to realise that my two one-owner-since-new original cars, now 54 and 49 years old, are going to outlive me, easily.

So what is the secret, what did I do to arrive at this happy state of affairs?

There are two separate issues here, mechanical, and cosmetic, long term preservation. The methods may seem trivial, but applied consistently over many years, they have a proven dramatic effect on longevity.

Both cars start easily and run very well. Neither has had any major work, head lifted, valve work, clutch or gearbox attention or major replacements. Expendable items like brakes have of course been refurbished. Both cars still have original Lucas electrics that work

perfectly. And both are thankfully devoid of any hint of electronic tribulations.

To understand how to do this we need to first understand what the long term enemy is. It is water corrosion in its many forms, mechanically, and UV light, cosmetically. So it follows that if the car is going to spend lengthy periods inactive, it is imperative for its internals to be as dry as an Arab sandshoe.

Mechanically speaking

Rule 1:

DO NOT EVER start the engine unless you are going to drive the car at least enough distance to get it properly hot. Starting and then stopping and leaving longer than overnight, simply fills every crevice of the engine and exhaust system with water and acid,



Above: The interior of the Cooper 'S' – from the floor up, is every bit as original as the exterior and in perfect condition.

which together will destroy everything. It follows that after a drive I put the car in its final resting spot and turn it off, fully hot.

The worst thing to do is actually what most people do – i.e, running the engine stationery. The idea of starting the engine just for a few minutes is a huge mistake, and unnecessary.

At the other end many people will stop the car at home after a drive, then have a cup of tea, or walk the dog or something, and then two hours later, start the now cool parked car and put it in the garage. Just enough time to fill every crevice with the most corrosive substances known to man. Very bad plan!

It follows that I always take the car for an extended drive after a wash, to clear all water from the brakes especially, and nooks and crannies. If you can't drive it (e.g. unregistered) then just turn it over frequently, but do not start it at all. I did this for thirty years with my well-stored Mini Cooper S, and on the day of resurrection, after appropriate preparation, it started easily, and ran as though it was running yesterday.

There were some tears but that's another story. Did you know that once familiar sounds and smells can remain dormant in your brain for thirty years, only to come flying back instantly? Amazing! It was like I was on the rally starting grid.

In a nutshell, either start it and drive it until its hot, or don't start it at all. And always put it way red hot.

The Cooper S had a tough initiation of rallying, with some success, in its early life, but since being reincarnated, it has been to Hay, Canberra, Newcastle, Tamworth and more. Not one failure to proceed. No oil leaks at all. Remember this car was not started even once in thirty years. A few years ago, it was the subject of an article in Survivor Cars magazine. While the journalist and Mini-tragic journalist and I were out for a drive, I asked him how it sounded to him. His response was that it ran better than some restored cars he has seen.

Rule 2: Starting

There is much more to this than turning the key. Heat and distortion is a major factor in engine wear and



tear. So, this means thoughtful attention when starting from cold. I mentioned in an earlier article that starting cold, running for a few minutes and then briefly stopping the engine, will allow initial heat in the head to disperse through the engine, minimising distortion. Then take it for a good brisk drive. A properly tuned engine in good condition will start easily. Modern oils are a godsend. Use the best. The newest oils are wonderful at keeping the internals clean and functioning properly, free of gunge. Also they are kind to oil seals.

Stopping?

What does that mean? It means that if the engine is really hot after say an hour's run, you let it idle down in neutral, at least until it is idling smoothly. Do not ever just pull up and turn off instantly. I leave the engine idling while I shed the seat belt, apply the handbrake or whatever, and prepare to alight. The last thing I do is turn off the key. This step is absolutely critical if you have just climbed a long hill or similar heavy load.

***Below:** The Mini Cooper 'S' interior again – completely original and in perfect condition.*



Another trick once home, is to open the bonnet and leave it open for a time. This allows the heat soak effect to dissipate without cooking the various hoses and wires and bonnet paint, as the heat rises but can't escape. Large iron engines are a massive heat sink.

For those who are engine tragics, the rewards are immense. Easy starting, and fine reliable running. A useful diagnostic tool is an infra red heat gun. You can check various places to see if all is in order. For example, point it at different places on the cylinder head to see if there are any hot spots. Similarly check the bottom radiator tank. If it is cooler then the top, all is well and there is reserve cooling capacity. The radiator is not clogged. Check the sump temperature occasionally. Be on the alert for odd smells, they never lie.

My Mini Cooper in particular is interesting in that it is not a lazy big V8, which are noted for longevity. It is an excited highly tuned (for its day) engine that has

spent much of its life above 4,000 rpm. It must have rotated tens of millions of times in its 54 years, yet its oil consumption is modest, and oil pressure (high, 75 psi) has not changed since new. It gives absolutely no appearance of being tired.

Preservation, Cosmetically speaking

Rule one is to always seek and park in the shade. Ultra violet light is the culprit. No exceptions except for short period. Nothing devalues a car like a cracked dashboard. Or peeling wood. Rule two is to use a lot of modern rubber and leather preservatives on every soft surface, often and frequently. Heat even in a dark garage, will rot plastic and rubber, but modern chemicals will halt the process of deterioration. The 54 year old original seats in my Mini Cooper are as soft as when new. Rule three is to leave the doors ajar, allowing the rubber seals to 'relax'. That works wonders in preserving the seals especially in combination with Rule two.

Below: The author's 1974 Land Rover is another object lesson in conservation and good keeping.





Above: There cannot be very many Land Rovers nudging 50 years old in this condition.

I mentioned that both cars have their original Lucas electrics. Given that the Mini still has its SU fuel pump, and distributor (and even its original plug leads) which work perfectly, I see no point at all in electronic replacements for these items. Similarly my Silver Cloud also has its original twin point Delco-Remy distributor. It works perfectly and has not given me a moment's trouble in 17 years of ownership and some long trips.

There is however one frustrating problem; sceptics, and the yes/but syndrome. When my Mini or Land Rover appear at a car show some people are always sceptical of my claims of originality. I take the op-

posite view. How is it that some people can destroy a car in a short time, and then complain about failure of parts that, with proper care, will actually last indefinitely.

My 1950s Caterpillar bible says it all; "An anti-friction bearing, properly lubricated with clean lubricant, will last INDEFINITELY."

And so will your car if you take some very simple rules. I've proved it.

One more, once the car is properly hot, drive it with enthusiasm!





*Ian & Tina Oliver with their Bentley Mk VI B14MD during **(above)** the 'Distinguished Gentlemen' day and **(below)** the Camp Quality fund-raiser.*



PRESIDENT'S REPORT to the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

17th August 2023

It is with pleasure that I table the following 2022/23 annual report.

We commenced this membership year with 57 financial members, and with the welcoming of Prue Wedgwood, Shane Mortimer and Norman Lee as new members and the sad passing or resignations of six other members, we currently have 54. Of these only 27 live within coo-ee of Canberra - so we continue to be the smallest Branch.

Despite these small numbers, the committee has held regular bi-monthly meetings and Martin Bennett has organised five well patronised club runs; between four and eleven cars were also displayed at other organised activities. These numbers confirm that we have a small but dedicated core of enthusiasts.

Three A.C.T. Branch Committee members also hold "Federal" positions – Ian Oliver as Treasurer and Martin Bennett and myself as Registrars for our respective models. I wish to acknowledge the work and ongoing record keeping that our Club Registrars – Ian Dunn and Peter Toet provide for our collective Branch membership. It's probably opportune at this point to remind all members to inform Ian Dunn of ANY changes to their marque car ownership details – and the Secretary of ANY changes to emails or postal addresses. I fear that our club membership records are not completely accurate.

I am also able to announce "hot off the press" that long term member Luke Drady has agreed to take over the role of Webmaster from Tim Collins who very capably set up a most useful Branch resource. As I write, Luke is going through the hoops of establishing his credentials with the domain host. Many thanks Luke!

Perhaps one of the biggest changes for the R.R.O.C.A. nationally, has been its incorporation. Maybe this is of little interest for individual members, but it has some overall legal benefits for the individual Branches. Speaking of Incorporation, our A.C.T. Branch has been an incorporated association for some decades so we are fully compliant with the local Council of A.C.T. Motor Clubs' requirement that we be incorporated so that we comply with all of its regulatory reporting responsibilities.

Treasurer Ian Oliver's report will have more detail, but we owe a deal of gratitude to Ian for his on-going efforts to ensure that our "books" are accurate so that they pass muster at the end of each Financial Year before they are submitted to the A.C.T. regulatory authorities. Ian also initiated the Branch funds being re-organised so that we get a maximum return on them.

In closing I'd like to thank my fellow Committee members for their assistance and support during the year and of course, our members for their ongoing interests in their cars and the Club.

*Peter Hyland
President.*



Left: Branch member Joe Quattrocchi's 1969 Silver Shadow SRH6847 amongst the heritage architecture of Clunes, Victoria, during the recent Early Post-war Register event in the Ballarat region.



The Editorial Bentley S2 found itself in good company recently after we returned to the car in Goulburn with this 1962 Jaguar Series 1 E-Type parked nearby.





Luke Drady's 1981 Silver Spirit ASB02236 at this years 'Battle of Waterloo' display day. Photograph by the owner.



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