



THE CAPITAL LETTER

Newsletter of the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of Australia (A.C.T. Branch) Inc.
Serving the Australian Capital Territory, Goulburn, Wagga Wagga and surrounding areas.



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FOR ROLLS-ROYCE AND BENTLEY ENTHUSIASTS

January / February 2016



From the Branch Secretary

With our President enjoying a rendezvous with fellow Silver Ghost enthusiasts at the Annual Napier Art Deco Festival over in New Zealand, our Senior Vice President Gos Cory having moved to live in the Sunshine State and our Junior Vice President Martin Bennett, who is also our Editor, contributing elsewhere in this edition, I have been asked to pen this one-off missive for the Capital Letter.

Our Branch endeavours to provide a programme of events of interest to a wide range of you, our members. We try to include runs to nearby spots of interest, to significant motor-themed events nearby or to events especially suggested by you. As you will have deduced from our recent events survey, it seems we are missing our target somewhat because there is little enthusiastic response or attendance at any of them. For this Branch to continue its past success, we rely on your ongoing interest and support – and to this end, we will tailor all future Club events to the expressed responses we've received to date in the hope that they are more attractive to many more of you.

To try something new, and at the suggestion of a few regular meeting attendees, our first meeting for the year was held at the George Harcourt Inn. Although only seven members attended, we conducted a successful meeting and received offers from two of those present to organise an outing in the near future.

The next Club event is a joint run with the Jaguar Club from Bungendore to Goulburn on Saturday 12th March. We will be meeting in Bungendore at 09.00 a.m. and having lunch at the old Goulburn Brewery at 12.30. Following that run the next major event will be the National Rally being held in Bendigo 12th-16th May. It would be encouraging to see a number of A.C.T. members attending and enjoying fellow enthusiasts' camaraderie and the programme the organising committee have planned.

Until our next issue when President Ian will be back in the chair, proceed happily and safely!

Peter Hyland,
Secretary, Treasurer, Public Officer & ACT Delegate.



Front Cover picture: Later Silver Wraiths, particularly on the Long Wheelbase chassis, look and feel very different from the early cars introduced after World War II. Although the Long Wheelbase chassis was often used for very spacious limousine coachwork, some coachbuilders took advantage of the extra six inches to produce very elegant and beautifully-proportioned owner-driver coachwork. Here we see this phenomenon very clearly in a saloon designed by the Crewe factory's Chief Styling Engineer John Blatchley and built by Park Ward & Co. – by then a wholly-owned subsidiary of Rolls-Royce Ltd. – Photographed in Baden Baden by owner Klaus-Josef Rossfeldt.

Member Rob Swain has come to the rescue regarding ownership of the Bentley 4½-Litre in the November/December edition of *The Capital Letter* (page 8). It belongs, Rob tells us, to Ian Kenney. “We are almost neighbours”, he writes. “It has a “heavy crank” and runs a ‘C’ type gearbox”. Perhaps we will be fortunate enough to see more of this magnificent car in the future. Also in the last issue, in my Obituary for Kerry Bos I made a small though significant error: Kerry spent childhood time in *post-war* Holland, not in war-time. After that edition was printed I realised that I had jumped ahead one event by covering the ‘Terribly British Day’ but not the previous month’s lunch run to the Collector pub! That has been rectified in this issue with a selection of photographs.

I was not surprised to hear that some members believe that our Branch is not capable of hosting the 2017 Federal Rally, because every time it is our turn we hear the same thing! Those who feel it is a task beyond our capabilities may feel free not to contribute, but it is gratifying to be able to report that the 2017 Federal Rally arrangements are already well advanced.

We have lost another member, John Filler, who passed away at the end of 2015. Although he and his wife Sandra have lived in southern Tasmania for many years, our older members will remember them with fondness. We extend our sympathy and best wishes to Sandra.

Martin Bennett

CLASSIC VEHICLE LOG BOOK TRIAL (for eligible vehicles registered in N.S.W.)

Transport for N.S.W. and Roads & Maritime Services have developed a Classic Vehicle Log Book trial, which allows classic vehicles to be used for 60 days of general use (i.e. maintenance and personal use) each year, outside of club organised events. Each day of general use must be recorded in a log book issued at and by a N.S.W. Motor Registry. A classic vehicle is 30 years of age or older.

Previously a classic vehicle on concessional registration could only be used for official club events and for the normal maintenance requirements of the vehicle. The log book trial will operate for two years commencing in October 2015, with an evaluation to be completed during this period as part of Roads & Maritime’s review of the overall Conditional Registration Scheme.

The A.C.T. Branch of the Rolls-Royce Owners’ Club of Australia applied to join the scheme in November 2015, and many thanks go to member Matthew Swift for his dogged determination to have Roads & Maritime Services finally update their records to include our Branch on the list of approved clubs just last week. Members wishing to participate in the scheme can obtain the necessary documentation from their local N.S.W. Motor Vehicle Registry, and more information is available on the Roads & Maritime website <http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/roads/registration/get-nsw-registration/historic-vehicles/log-book-trial.html>

Ian Dunn

Below: The Editor’s garage with his WHD101 on the left and Gos Cory’s 1949 Bentley Mk VI, B474DA. The Silver Wraith has H.J. Mulliner coachwork while the Mk VI is by Freestone & Webb. We have lost Gos, our Senior Vice-President, to Queensland, though the car remains for the time being.



Branch Events Calendar

Most fortunately, for our Monthly Meetings I have been able to take up an arrangement at the Irish Club in Weston. However, a change of meeting night is necessary and for the time being we will be meeting on the SECOND Wednesday night of each month.

Peter Hyland

Sunday May 15th: Shannons 'Wheels' Day, on the Old Parliament House lawns.



L.T.C. Rolt and a tale of two Silver Ghosts

Some members may have heard of L.T.C. Rolt. Among other significant achievements 'Tom' Rolt is considered to be the father of the now-huge railway preservation movement in Britain, having been instrumental in the restoration of the Tallyllin Railway in Wales in the early post-war years – almost certainly the first abandoned railway in the world to be preserved by enthusiasts. He was also a driving force in the restoration of the nation's system of canals and their locks, with some 2,500 miles now restored to working condition after falling into dereliction before, during and after World War II.

L.T.C. Rolt's autobiography tells us that in the mid-1930s he and a partner established Phoenix Green Garage in Hartley Wintney, Hampshire. Needing a break-down vehicle they purchased a 1911 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost for ten quid (they are worth rather more these days) and set about converting it to a break-down truck – a process that was far more common than might be supposed. He reported that he had "never driven a Rolls-Royce before and delighted in the meticulous precision with which all the controls operated and the silence of the big engine under the long aluminium bonnet that extended before me to that well-known figure of the winged goddess that topped the brass radiator". When he overhauled the engine he found that it had been sadly neglected, with bearings "in small pieces" and the oil in the sump "black sludge the consistency of butter", yet the Silver Ghost engine ran beautifully and was "too well-mannered to complain".

One of the cars the partners rescued with their break-down truck was another Rolls-Royce – a hearse that was probably either a later Silver Ghost or an early Twenty as it too had been built with two-wheel brakes. However, it had been fitted with front brakes of a non-Rolls-Royce type, and had broken a stub-axle, almost certainly due to the additional forces imposed on them. Rolls-Royce Ltd, writes Rolt, knew about this and declined to supply the required parts until assured that these "alien brakes" had been removed! This filled the garage-owners with admiration, not just for the Company's exacting engineering standards but for the quality of their record-keeping. The "alien brakes" were of course consigned to the scrap-heap.

Martin Bennett



Lunch Run to ‘The Bushranger’, Collector

Sunday November 22nd

Above: John Tetley's 1981 Bentley Mulsanne, BSB03228.

Right: The commemorative monument near The Bushranger perhaps suggests that whilst we might bemoan today's crime statistics, things might not be as bad as they once were.







Opposite page top: Bryce Ronning's 1949 Silver Wraith WFC67 with touring limousine coachwork by Hooper is now stopping strongly (see page 8) in addition to going strongly. Several members sampled the luxurious and spacious rear compartment.

Opposite page middle: Lawrie & Jane Nock's 1973 Corniche DRH16855 with convertible coachwork by Mulliner Park Ward. Cool, over-cast weather is ideal for touring with the top down.

Opposite page bottom: Peter Hyland's 1982 Silver Spirit ASC04176 offers a high level of comfort, performance and safety.

Above: Gos Cory's 1949 Bentley Mk VI with saloon coachwork by Freestone & Webb bears little or no resemblance to the much more usual Mk VI standard steel saloon. Around one Mk VI in five had coachbuilt bodies.

Right: Within certain limits and in addition to the body style being entirely different, coach-builders could introduce changes not seen on standard steel saloons. In the instance of B474DA Freestone & Webb duplicated both the centre-lamp and the horn grilles, with the second pair of grilles used for fresh-air intakes.





Bryce's workshop with WFC67 being made ready for its front brake and master cylinder overhaul.

Restoring brake efficiency

By Bryce Ronning

Owning any car will require maintenance and, at some time in its life, repairs. More so if it is a Rolls-Royce or Bentley of some age. The following may be of some assistance to fellow members with similar cars.

I had noticed that my 1949 Silver Wraith WFC67 had been taking longer to stop, with more pedal effort than used to be the case. To provide some background to this, the early post-war models had mechanical rear brakes, assisted by the famous Rolls-Royce gearbox-driven servo, with hydraulic front brakes, servo-applied. Because the brake pedal is not connected directly to the master cylinder, loss of fluid in the front hydraulic system does not result in a soft or collapsed pedal, the pedal 'feel' remaining unaffected other than requiring more pressure to stop. On investigation I found that the master cylinder reservoir was empty except for a small amount of black sludge.

My choices were:

1. just top up the brake fluid, bleed the system and hope everything else was good, or
2. dismantle and rebuild the master cylinder and front wheel cylinders. I decided on the proper overhaul, option 2.

I could have taken it to a reputable Rolls-Royce mechanic for a professional job, for big dollars, or have a go at it myself – but only with help as I am not from a mechanical background. The help was in the form of Martin Bennett, Gos

Cory and the Workshop Manual.

The first step was to order a master cylinder rebuild kit, new rubber 'cups' for the front expanders (wheel cylinders) and new brake hoses, all of which Martin arranged. All of these parts are readily obtainable and reasonably priced. The master cylinder with its integral fluid reservoir is of Lockheed manufacture, of a type common to several British cars, and the wheel cylinders are Girling (these two firms later amalgamated to form today's 'Girlock').

The next step was to remove the master cylinder and the wheel cylinders, and dismantle them on the bench. Before we did that we discussed whether perhaps it might be advisable to have these components refurbished by a professional. In the case of the wheel cylinders consideration was given to replacing them with new ones. They are still available new from U.K. suppliers but for big pounds (i.e. bigger dollars!), so it was decided to refurbish the originals. A good decision as they were found to be in excellent order. A thorough clean, a light polish of the internal moving parts and bores, and fitting the new rubber piston 'cups' made them like new. The same process was carried out on the master cylinder and the rebuild kit replacement components were fitted. After repainting, the refurbished master cylinder was re-installed in the chassis and filled with new brake fluid.

In refitting the wheel cylinders we encountered our only seri-



***Above left:** Gos Cory examining one of the hydraulic expanders prior to dismantling and rebuilding. The picture **(right)** shows one of these after removal and before dismantling and rebuilding.*

ous problem – one of them had a cracked fixing stud boss, and when the stud was screwed back in the casting broke. A quick run out to Martin's garage to remove a cylinder from his car solved that problem in the short term. Peter Anderson of Tasmania supplied two from his parts car, providing a longer-term cure as we now have a spare that Martin, Gos or I can use in the future if needed.

After the wheel cylinders were re-fitted and new hoses connected, we bled the system, which involves pumping the master cylinder by hand – remember the pedal is not directly connected to it. With that final task completed we took the car out for a test drive. The difference in braking was startling – very powerful brakes, all working perfectly. It is good to

have both front and rear brakes again, and reassuring to know that if the front brakes fail the Silver Wraith will stop quite well with rear brakes only.

When I said “have a go at it myself” I meant that I washed and painted parts, supplied coffee and lunch and watched Martin and Gos do the hard bits. In all it was a good learning experience for me, and showed the benefits of being a member of a Club such as ours where we can help each other maintain our cars and save some dollars in the process.

P.S. – Before this work my car's electric clock was not working. It now is, so there must be some connection between the front brakes and the clock!

*A master cylinder rebuild kit containing replacements for all of the rubber and brass internal components was obtained and fitted. The rebuilt master cylinder **(left)** is seen ready to refit to the chassis. **Right:** the empty space at the top of the brake drum back-plate awaits its rebuilt hydraulic expander.*





The internals of the hydraulic wheel cylinders, or expanders (**above left**) were thoroughly cleaned, lightly polished and new rubber cups (top of picture) fitted, as well as new hoses. The **right-hand** picture shows one of the expanders after overhauling and ready to re-fit to the car. The two bosses into which the securing studs are screwed are clearly in evidence: these need to be closely examined before refitting to the car as they are prone to cracking.

A misty winter's morning as Bryce & Marcia arrive at the Bennetts' in WFC67 for one of our regular breakfast runs before the front brake overhaul described here was carried out.





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Tailpiece . . .



Jane Nock arriving at one of the 'Wheels' events in CBH1672, the 1966 Bentley T Series with two-door saloon coachwork by H.J. Mulliner, Park Ward. Like many cars with exceptionally good styling, these coachbuilt Silver Shadow-series cars convincingly pass the test of being observed or photographed from the three-quarter rear view. Photograph by Jordan Devine.

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