



# 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**

**August / September 2017**



# From the Branch President

Hello to all,

Well winter is upon us, and this year with a vengeance. I cannot recall, in the 58 years that I have lived in and around Canberra, any frosts as heavy as those we had recently: minus 7.8 degrees and minus 9.4 on consecutive nights! It's got to be related to global warming for sure! And with this intense cold we're still feeling, there's little enthusiasm for heading out on a day's run. For those who do not know what frost is all about, below is a photograph our daughter Alison took near Gunning on the minus 7.8 degree morning. The ice on the barbed wire fence says it all.



So I've been busy in my study. Some will recall that I've been talking about the book on the history of my car. Well, from now on, less talk and more action! It's been redrafted, and I'll be meeting with a publisher before you receive this. The Foreword has been written by the current Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, and there are copious photographs related to the car and its various owners through its 107 years. Want to know more? I'll let you know when the wheels of industry take over from my computer.

Stay warm.

*Cheers,  
Ian Irwin O.A.M.*



**Above:** It's been chilly in our region lately! Time to ensure there is a good anti-freeze in that special car.



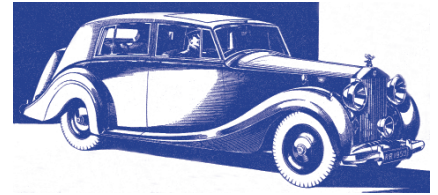
**Left:** Showing off its new grille is our front cover car, John Tetley's 1987 Bentley Turbo R, BSH21535, photographed by Heather Watt with Karen Bos's 1974 Silver Shadow SRH19346.

**Front Cover picture:** John Tetley's 1987 Bentley Turbo R, BSH21535, after being fitted with its new 'mesh' grille. Photograph by Heather Watt.



# From the Editor

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After our 20-page post-Federal Rally edition, we are not yet back to our regular 12 pages. This is your journal and the more contributions you make to it the better our chances of maintaining what we now have. Not that I have any grounds for complaint: on the contrary, contributions from our members come in regularly. In this edition we see how John Tetley has been maintaining and improving his 1987 Turbo R – one of two 1980s Bentley cars that he owns and runs. Both are regulars on Branch runs and events – and there is a lovely article by Rowena Sargent about an outback adventure in 1925 Phantom I 109MC.

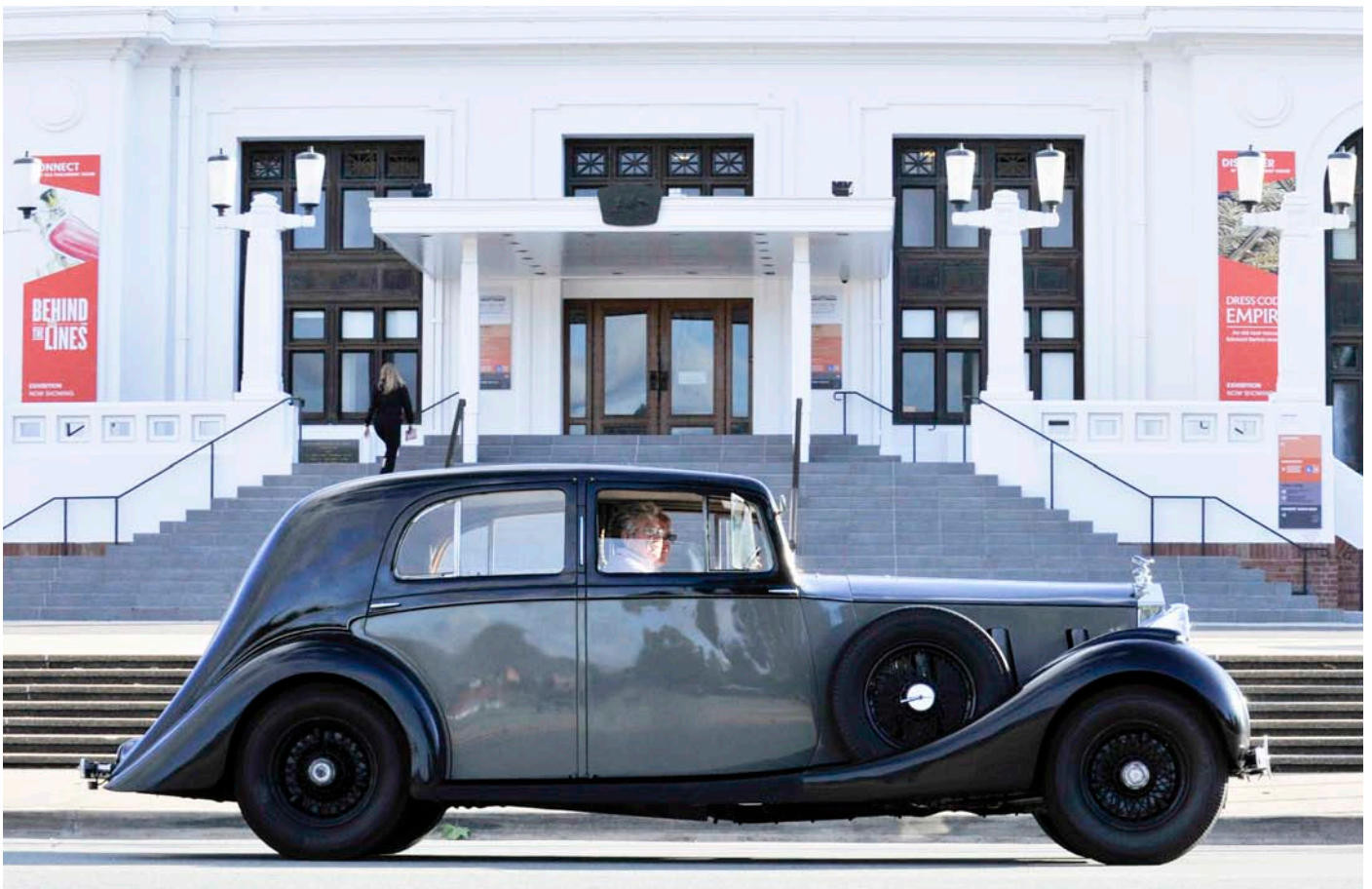
In June and early July I enjoyed a couple of weeks in the U.K. I had received an invitation to attend a Rolls-Royce authors' dinner in Stamford, Lincolnshire, during the weekend of the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club Annual Rally which was being held at nearby Burghley House, a grand country house completed in 1587 for Sir William Cecil and still lived in by the Cecil family. Having not been to a R.R.E.C. Annual Rally for some years, and having declined invitations to previous authors' dinners, Manuela and I decided that I should go this time or risk being removed from the invitation list!

The Rally, as always, was a superb spectacle, with over 1,000 Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars gathered at a venue of such magnificence as to defy adequate description. A bonus was free admission – a gesture associated with celebrating the Club's 60th Anniversary. There are some photographs in this edition of *The Capital Letter*.

I was also fortunate enough to have obtained some parts I needed for WHD101, including an early post-war glass for one of my foglights. Having already acquired one of these, acquisition of the second one has allowed the mid-1950s type with which the car had been incorrectly fitted at some point in its history to be replaced by the authentic earlier ones with a flatter lens and without the chrome 'spinner' in the middle of the glass. Just a detail, I suppose, but a satisfying one.

*Martin Bennett*

*Brian Carson (Qld.) sent this photograph of your Editor at the wheel of 3CM45 during the Federal Rally, with Old Parliament House as a backdrop. This 1937 Phantom III, with saloon coachwork by Windovers, proved tight, nimble and powerful to drive. It is owned by Honorary Life Member Keith Wherry (N.S.W.) who brought two wonderful cars to the Rally.*





# Branch Events Calendar

*Our past long-standing arrangement with the Ainslie Football Club for our monthly meetings and bistro meal get-togethers has been re-established following the extensive refurbishment of the Club's facilities, so our monthly meetings have regained their former familiarity.*

**Wednesday August 2nd:** Monthly Meeting at the Ainslie Football Club. Dinner from 6.00 p.m., Meeting at 7.30.

Forms for 2017/18 Committee Nominations have been emailed to all members. Nominations will close on 23rd August, with the AGM on 6th September. Members should give some thought to nominating – some new blood on the Committee would be useful.

**Wednesday September 6th:** Monthly Meeting and Annual General Meeting at the Ainslie Football Club. Dinner from 6.00 p.m., Meetings commence 7.30.

**Sunday December 3rd:** Terribly British Day, Queanbeyan Park (located immediately behind the Queanbeyan Police Station and Court House).



**Below:** Steve Stuckey sent this picture which, if you admire the 1980s to mid-90s Rolls-Royce cars and love your coffee, should prove a doubly satisfying image.







## 1925 Phantom I 109MC Renmark and Broken Hill or bust

*By Rowena Sargent*

We have just undertaken a trip in our 1925 Rolls-Royce Phantom I out-back across the Hay Plains to Renmark and to Broken Hill and home again across remote highways of south-east Australia. This was inspired by a journey undertaken by its original owners in 1927. It was recorded in the papers of the day to have stopped in Renmark and Broken Hill on the way from Melbourne and Adelaide to Queensland.

Well we were setting off into the unknown with lots of anticipation getting us and our Phantom I ready for the journey. The last straw was the failure of the windscreen wiper on the way home the night before our trip. This was fixed by substituting a similar one from our Rolls-Royce Twenty Horsepower.

Shannons Cars, Bikes and Coffee was an excellent start. Information put out by the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club and Shannons websites brought out Rolls-Royce Club members and other enthusiasts.

A mid-day start from Canberra meant we arrived in Wagga Wagga at sunset, a difficult drive into the direct sun. After this we got into a good rhythm of starting late and arriving early to avoid driving into the sun and the kangaroos. The 150 to 250 kilometre days, cruising at about 70 km/h were perfect, along the straight and remote country highways where the huge rigs could see us and easily overtake.

The third day on the road took us along the Olympic Highway across the Hay Plains. We woke up next morning in Hay to a dull day, light drizzle and thunderclaps having a dampening affect on things. I always say in a 1925 car with a leaky windscreen it is the R-R owner's wife's job to mop up the leakages and wring out the chamois to keep things dry inside. Luckily there were several weather changes during the day and the sun eventually came out under the thunder clouds.

However all did not go to plan, to say we had some mechanical issues would be an understatement. The morning in Mildura was the one to present a challenge. The car was hard to steer, blowing a whole lot of smoke, backfiring and running on fewer than six cylinders. Barry identified the problem as the vacuum tank which had failed to proceed and had flooded the engine with fuel. With the help of the RACV workshop in Mildura an electric fuel pump and a pressure reducer were fitted thus by-passing the original old vacuum tank. We were on the road again, driving along the remote 140 km to Renmark on a cloudy afternoon. The low sun gave a shower of white rays in the Murray Sunset National Park. It was quite beautiful.

We had a leisurely morning in Renmark meeting with a journalist from the *Murray Pioneer* and *Australian River Record*, the newspaper which had reported the visit in 1927. Lots of photos later and visit to the Renmark Hotel Museum we were



*Above: Under-bonnet view with the spring top-plates removed ready for replacement. Photographs by Heather Watt.*

## Bentley Turbo R spring-tops and updating the grille

*By John Tetley*

Having decided to fit my 1987 Bentley Turbo R, BSH21535, with a new grille of the 'mesh' type, I removed the existing vanes which was a difficult job as most of the top screws were rusted into place.

I then fitted the new mesh grille to update the look of the car.

Another job was to investigate and correct some knocking

that was noticed when driving on less than smooth roads. It was found that after some miles/kms the holes in the top plate where the front shock absorbers are fixed can become oval, and the bushes wear, so these should be checked from time to time.

Replacing the top plates and fitting new rubber grommets cured the problem.





*These are John Tetley's front spring top plates (**above**) and shock absorber grommets (**below**) of his Bentley Turbo R. In both photographs, the new items are on the left and the old on the right.*







*Above: Unfortunately this photograph fails to do full justice to the magnificent 16th Century architecture of Burghley House – still occupied by the descendents of the original owner, Sir William Cecil, who was Lord High Treasurer and Chief Minister in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.*

## The 2017 Annual Rally of the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club

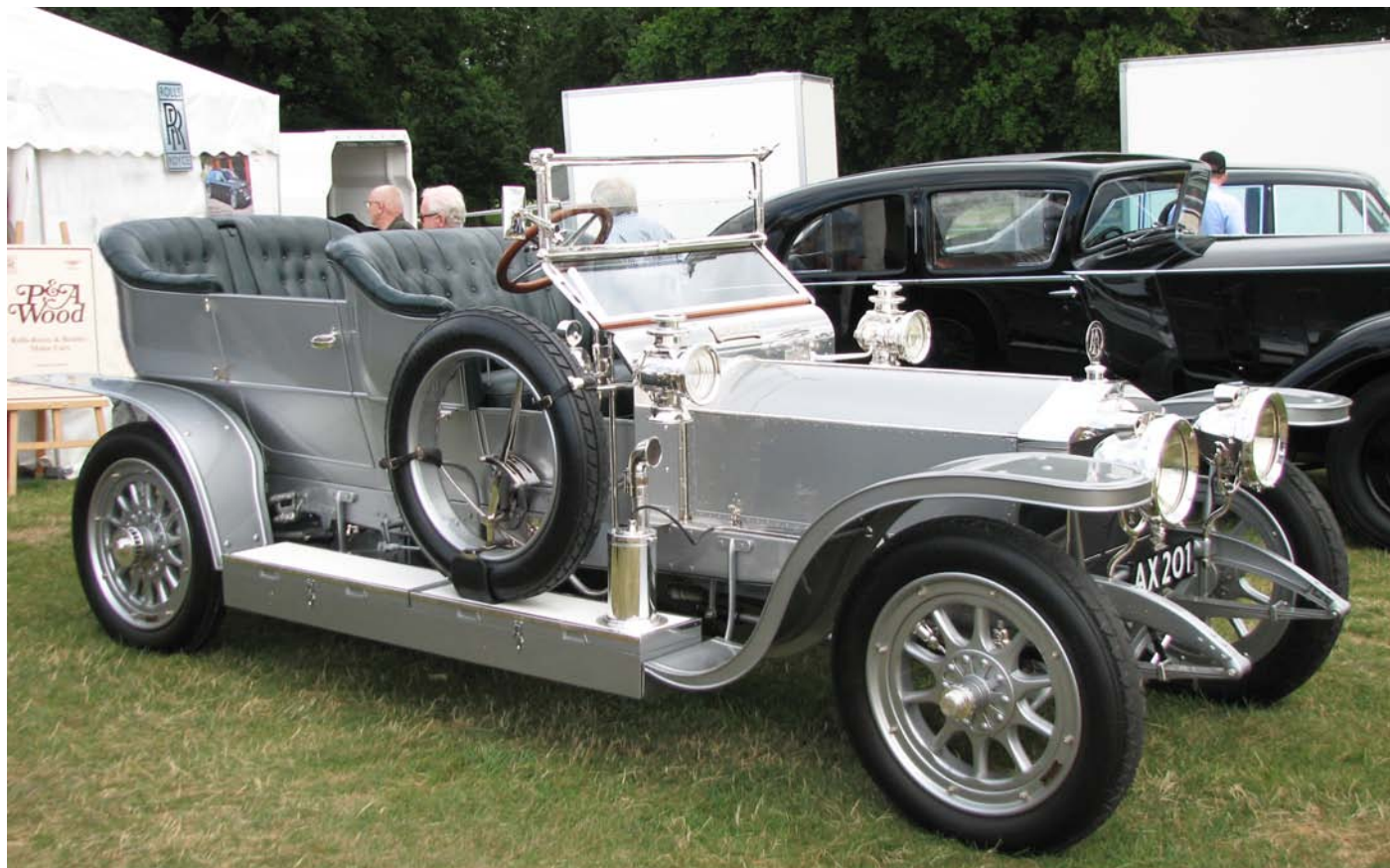
Burghley House, Stamford, Lincolnshire  
June 23rd – 25th

*Photographs by the Editor except where otherwise credited*

*Below: Traditionally, an Australian group photograph is taken at each R.R.E.C. Annual Rally at noon. Most of the Australians taking part are visitors to the U.K., though some live there, and this year there was even an Australian who lives in Poland. Our Federal President is in the centre, your Editor second from right. Photograph courtesy of Tim Dean.*

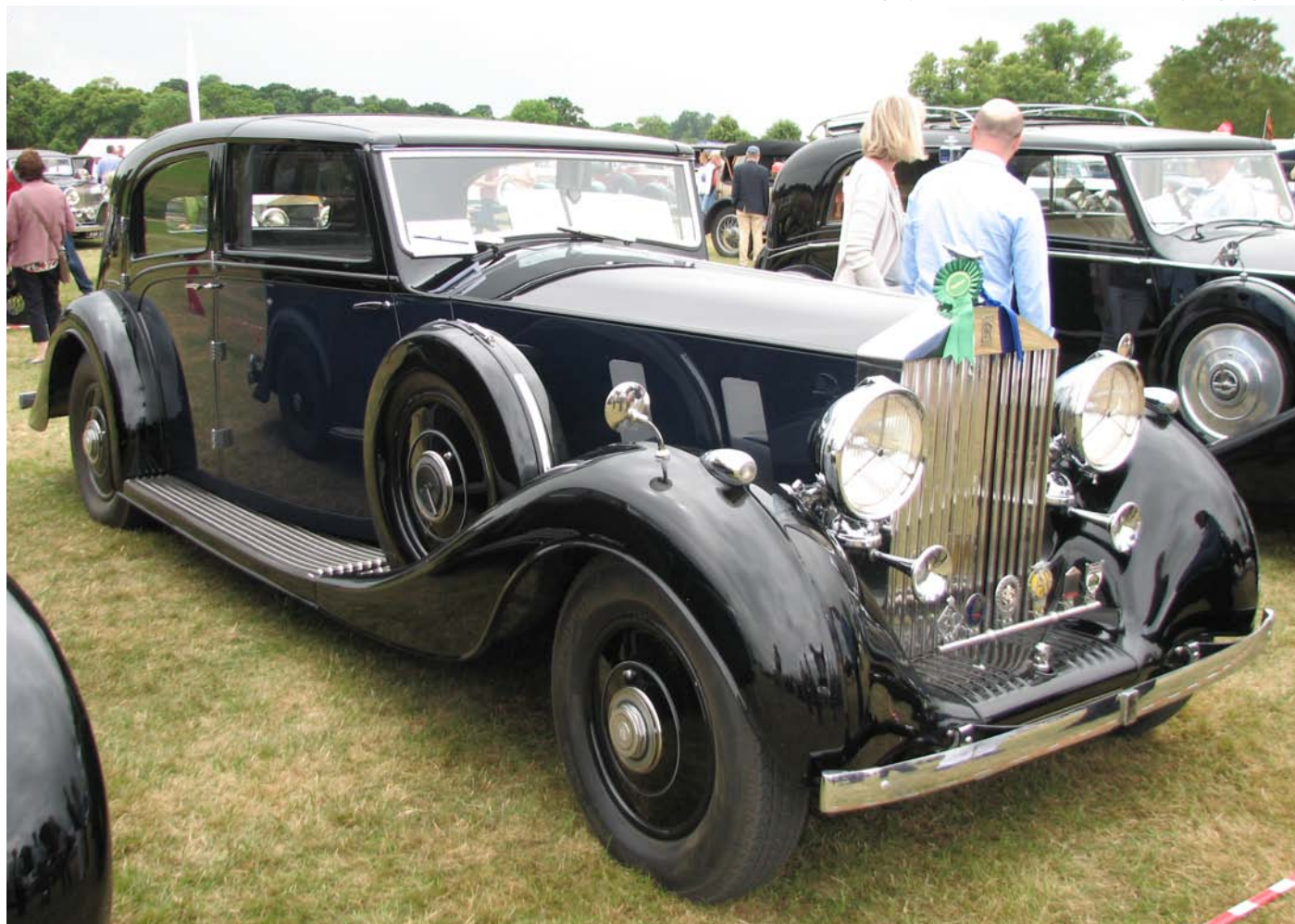






**Above:** 1907 40/50 h.p. Barker tourer 551 was called 'Silver Ghost' and singled out for exhaustive reliability tests. The car, universally known by its registration number AX-201, gave its name to the model. It is almost certainly the most valuable car in the world and its owner, Bentley Motors Ltd, Crewe, is frequently obliged to turn down vast offers.

**Below:** 1936 Phantom III Freestone & Webb sedan de ville, 3AX59. The rosette signifies a win in the concours judging.







*Your Editor did a double-take on catching sight of this Bentley S1 James Young saloon, B470AN. Same coachwork style, same colour and only nine chassis numbers away from B488AN which until quite recently occupied the Bennett garage.*







**Above:** 1937 Phantom III H.J. Mulliner saloon with division, 3AX79. This unusually-styled car was used by Field-Marshal Viscount Montgomery during World War II, which has given rise to an enduring myth that Monty ordered the car with the forward-leaning windscreen so that the north African sun would not reflect off it, giving his position away to the Luftwaffe. In fact, however, Monty did not acquire the car new, and in any case the War was a couple of years away at that time and the owner and coachwork designers probably didn't foresee the future need for a Field-Marshal to evade the Luftwaffe!

**Below:** 1950 Silver Wraith James Young saloon with division, WHD29, owned new by entertainer George Formby.







**Above:** Need a station wagon, or estate car? Here's a classy one with lots of room in the back for the shopping. It is not a modern conversion but one carried out when this Silver Cloud was new, by Harold Radford (Coachbuilders) Ltd.

**Below:** A particularly beautiful and desirable 1939 Wraith James Young drophead coupé, WHC31. This pre-war model is sometimes confused with the post-war Silver Wraith, which was in fact an entirely new model in all particulars.







**Above:** When new, the Phantom V with coachwork by James Young commanded a price some £200 higher than one with Park Ward or (later) Mulliner Park Ward coachwork. On today's collector market they are often several times the price!

**Below:** 1949 Bentley Mk VI Park Ward drophead coupé, B294CF. The sidemount spare wheel freed up extra luggage space but had become a rarity by the early post-war period.





on the road again comfortable in our repairs. We retraced our steps toward Mildura, turning north shortly before the city for the short jaunt to Wentworth. All is going well, the weather is perfect for driving.

The next morning was a blue, blue day, just perfect for a drive, not a cloud in the sky and a huge horizon. The car is running smoothly, powering north towards Broken Hill. We stop and take a photo of the car against broad horizon thinking of how did they make this journey in 1927, without roadhouses and along dirt tracks. Then the car coughs and splutters as if we have run out of fuel. We empty the jerry-can knowing the Coombah Roadhouse is about a kilometre away. Needless to say the car had not run out of fuel, just challenging us with the complex problem of the fuel system, a glitch in the electric fuel pump. It was exciting to see the hills outside Broken Hill and finally the mine-shafts. We had reached both destinations of the trip. Now Broken Hill is not a small town. We meet people who had passed us on the road, people who have read about us in the local paper, and someone from the local car club, which just happens to be meeting for a chat and a beer tomorrow afternoon. An invitation is extended, and we will be there.

We wandered through Broken Hill looking at the magnificent architecture and old buildings of a rich bygone era. We had a wonderful afternoon with the Broken Hill Veteran and Vintage Car Club, sharing a beer and tales of driving old cars. Afterward we go to the garage of one of the members to check his collection of Chryslers, Plymouths and other cars. An amazing day we thought, especially the afternoon and evening, as we drove home with the lights on for the second time in the trip. Next day we take more photos in

Broken Hill, posing Maude outside the Palace Hotel, made famous by the movie, *Pricilla, Queen of the Desert*, we have our own “Maude, Grande Dowager of the Desert”. And we then farewell the Broken Hill Club on its monthly drive out to Silverton, pity we have to get going in the opposite direction to Wilcannia.

Homeward bound, the car is running beautifully. An Oasis, “Warrawong on the Darling”, just outside the town of Wicannia, gives us a bush walk in the red dirt, billabongs and water birds, a Happy Hour with happy campers, a fire pit and bush dinner. I love this sunburnt country.

The drive to Cobar, is beautiful, “Kangaroos next 240km”, emus crossing the road, goats alongside with their kids. This is the only road that we know the car took in 1927. How did they do it, it was a dirt track then, where did they get fuel, where did they dine and stay overnight? And how did they avoid the kangaroos and emus?

However, the car, after running perfectly all morning played up again after our lunch stop, or at least the electric pump did. After frequent stops Barry improvised a shorter fuel line to the spare jerry can, and we finally arrived in Cobar, for a repair job and a new fuel pump.

Two long driving days home, staying overnight in Dubbo, winding our way along the Golden Highway, and Maude is travelling graciously. It was an amazing trip, a long drive full of challenges, insights and adventure. Rolls-Royces do not break down, and ours didn't fail to proceed, she just made it on her own terms.







*Above: Ian and Tina Oliver's 1951 Bentley Mk VI Park Ward drophead coupé B14MD won the award for Best British at the Anniversary Battle of Waterloo in Queanbeyan Park on June 18th.*

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*Tailpiece . . .*



*Ian & Tina Oliver with B14MD at the Crookwell Potato Festival.*

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