



THE CAPITAL LETTER

Quarterly journal 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

Summer 2017 / 2018



B25CT

1960 Bentley S2 saloon

Ian & Tina Oliver

From the Branch President

It's nice to have the opportunity to enjoy a little 'down time' in the festive season. It seems our lives are hectic through much of the year, and the quiet times are few and far between. My grateful thanks to all who have undertaken administrative roles in the club in the year past, and those who recently were elected for the forthcoming year. Many hands make light work.

I hope all members and their families have had a wonderful family Christmas, and I take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy New Year for 2018.

At this time of the year, many folk make New Year's resolutions. That's not something I have done regularly, for resolutions made on the spur of the moment can be hard to live up to. But in 2018, after much work in various areas of the electrics of our car, I'm hoping that 2018 will see the car running much better. There have been periods of joy and other times of frustration, but many areas have been tweaked, and with some forthcoming complex work on the distributor, touch wood, we'll be getting more of the enjoyment that we seek from the massive 36-year project.

A little time now for review and reflection.

In 2017, our Branch hosted a truly successful Federal Rally, and I hope it was memorable for you all. There was a sad event with the death of one of our founder members, Bob McCulloch. Bob was the owner of the 1922 20 Horsepower 43G7, and a 1952 Silver Dawn SRH46 with magnificent two-tone green Hooper 'empress-line' coachwork. Bob and his wife Deidre brought both of these cars when they emigrated from the U.K. They also owned a Silver Shadow later in their membership. Bob was Branch President in 1993-4 and 1994-5. They retired to the north coast of N.S.W., but returned a few years back. Bob and Deidre were actively involved with the early growth of the A.C.T. Branch.

I attended Bob's funeral service at the Crematorium. It was a packed room, and there were many wonderful tributes to him. All mourners who attended were given a sheet, an extract from the book 'Fly Navy – The View from the Cockpit, 1945-2000', by Charles Manning in which Lieutenant Bob McCulloch had given an account of a breath-taking experience in his early post-war service in the British Naval Air Service. I have passed a copy to Martin to include in this magazine, for I'm sure you'll all salute the courage of Bob and his crew of the Sea Venom. (Page 18. – Ed.)

In Mid-December, I had a call from another former Branch President, John Burns and his wife Joy, a former Branch Secretary, who were to be in Canberra for only a couple of days in mid-December. A brief meeting with them over morning tea was hastily arranged. John Burns was President in 2003-4 and 2004-5, and Joy was secretary for four years prior to that. John and Joy have both experienced medical issues in recent years, and are planning to move from their idyllic home in Victor Harbour, and downsizing into an inner Adelaide location so they can attend more theatre productions and shows. They wished to be remembered to all our members with whom they served.

And at our Branch Christmas Lunch at Café Charisma at North Lyneham, we were joined by Sandra Filler. Sandra and her late husband were active members also. John was Editor of *The Capital Letter* for a few years, and both were active in organisation of Federal Rallies hosted by our Branch. It was really wonderful to catch up with Sandra, who now lives in Port Macquarie. It's always nice to meet up with past members who have moved interstate, and nice to know that their association with our Branch has left them with fond memories of their time with us.

Thank you to all who participated, A.C.T. and N.S.W. Branch alike, with or without their car(s) at the Terribly British Day. It was an excellent and varied display of Club cars that attended. The display was held on the hard stand area of the Queanbeyan Bus Interchange. Special thanks to Lawrie Nock for his involvement with the organising committee of the event on behalf of the Branch.

And finally, just after the Terribly British Day display, Peter received a message from a prospective member, Edward Summerville who has recently purchased a Silver Spirit. I rang and we had an enjoyable chat, and he is thoroughly enthused with his car. We will embrace him within the Club when we meet early in the year.

Best regards,
Ian Irwin O.A.M.



Front Cover picture and opposite page: Ian & Tina Oliver's 1960 Bentley S2 B25CT, photographed by Tina in the driveway of Martin & Manuela Bennett's home.

From the Editor

hjmullinersw@bigpond.com



An important decision affecting all members has been made by your Branch Executive. Effective from the start of 2018, the frequency of *The Capital Letter* will be reduced to four editions per year. For my part I have informed the Executive that I can accommodate myself to the change, and it may well be that the total number of pages over a year will remain unchanged, depending on member contributions. The four editions will be date-lined 'Summer', 'Autumn', 'Winter' and 'Spring' – so welcome to the 'Summer 2017 / 2018' edition of your quarterly journal.

B25CT, on our front cover and below, was the first Rolls-Royce product your Editor was ever privileged to drive. This took place around 1966 during a Victoria Branch run to the disused airfield at Fisherman's Bend. Being off the public roads, the runway provided an opportunity for members to indulge in speeds that might otherwise have been highly illegal! It also provided me with the opportunity to drive before I possessed a licence to do so, courtesy of owner John Salter. As the car was only six years old, it was a superlative car then and, having had a series of very good owners since, it remains in lovely condition today in the ownership of our Treasurer, Ian Oliver. It is good to see it back in our Club.

Five Club cars turned out for November's 'Classic Yass' display day: not a bad effort for our first participation in this event. All are seen on pages 12 & 13 in this edition. It will be noted that rather than being formed into the usual formal ranks, the cars were displayed "motor show" fashion, which often meant that cars adjacent to each other might be facing in opposite directions! It seemed to work quite well.

When Bryce and I set out for the Terribly British Day in dirty weather the possibility of a wash-out could not be overlooked, but it cleared up on the way down to Queanbeyan and the wet-weather venue remained dry all day. If our own numbers were down a little, perhaps due to the weather, it was compensated by our enjoyment of the company of a significant contingent from the New South Wales Branch, and our photographic coverage starting on page 14 is mainly a tribute to our guests.

The car on page 9 (top) of our last issue is B167JN, a Bentley Mk VI with coachwork by Facel Metallon of Dreux, France, who won the contract to build the bodies for a series of Pininfarina-designed Mk VIs called 'Cresta'. As no member provided the correct answer, the small prize will be held over for a future 'mystery car' question.

Martin Bennett



Branch Events Calendar

FEBRUARY

Wednesday February 7th: Monthly Meeting at the Ainslie Football Club. Dinner from 6.00 p.m., Meeting at 7.30.

Sunday February 11th: Relaxin', Eatin' and Talkin'. A Picnic under the shade trees. Cotter Reserve. Arrive by 10.00 a.m.. Make you own way but remember ground and parking space in summer is at a premium. BYO food and drinks, chairs etc. No fuel, café or drinks available in the area since the Canberra Bushfires.

MARCH

Sunday March 4th: 'Wheels' 2018 display day at the Queanbeyan Showgrounds.

Wednesday March 7th: Monthly Meeting at the Ainslie Football Club. Dinner from 6.00 p.m., Meeting at 7.30.

APRIL

Wednesday April 4th: Monthly Meeting at the Ainslie Football Club. Dinner from 6.00 p.m., Meeting at 7.30.

Wednesday April 11th - Monday April 16th: R.R.O.C.A. Federal Rally, Clare South Australia.

MAY

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

Sunday May 12th: Crookwell Potato Festival Show & Shine. Members wishing to drive in a group please contact the Editor.

JUNE / JULY

Date TBA: Lunch Run to Fireside Inn, Goulburn.



Above: Our U.K. counterpart club, the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club, sent this photograph of the 16th Century Burghley House near Stamford, Lincolnshire, as part of an invitation to their 2018 Annual Rally in June at that magnificent location, during which, in addition to the usual 1,000 or so Rolls-Royce & Bentley cars, there is to be a re-enactment of the 1948 Earls Court Motor Show.



***Above:** The annual London Motor Show was an important event for car manufacturers and importers, coachbuilders, and accessory manufacturers. In the early post-war period the Show was held at the Earls Court Exhibition Centre. Rolls-Royce and Bentley had separate stands, and most of the coachbuilders had their own stands. This is the Rolls-Royce stand at the 1954 Show and the cars, clockwise around the stand from nearest the camera are Silver Wraith Park Ward touring saloon DLW39, Silver Dawn standard steel saloon LSTH43 in left-hand drive, Silver Wraith H.J. Mulliner touring limousine DLW46, and Silver Wraith Hooper 7-passenger limousine DLW47.*

SMART Register (Silver Spirit, Bentley Mulsanne and related types)

June long weekend in and around Cowra, N.S.W.

Arrangements are almost finalised for SMART Register weekend on June 8th to 11th, 2018. This is the Queen's Birthday weekend.

We will be visiting Grenfell to enjoy some time at the Henry Lawson Festival, have a private viewing on a moon-free evening at the local observatory, a visit to the Age of Fishes Museum at Canowindra (one of only two in the world), visit the scene of the Japanese POW camp where the

Cowra breakout occurred in August 1944, visit the Japanese Gardens and a few surprises. In keeping with the elegance of our vehicles we will enjoy a black tie dinner in elegant surroundings!

Book your accommodation now as it will be very busy over the long weekend. Contact the Cowra Services Motel, 02 6341 1999, and let them know you are part of the Rolls-Royce group.





Above: Goulburn members meeting at their customary rendez-vous beside the Hume Highway at Yarra. From left to right the cars are WHD101 (Martin & Manuela Bennett), BEP46078 (Rob Young) and WFC67 (Bryce Ronning).

Pub Lunch Run to the ‘Bushranger’, Collector

Sunday October 22nd, 2017





***Above:** John Tetley's 1981 Bentley Mulsanne BSB03228 must have been one of the first SZ series cars to arrive in Australia. It is still in excellent condition and for Club outings John seems to show a preference for it over his more modern Bentley Turbo R.*

***Below:** Lawrie & Jane Nock's 1973 Corniche Convertible DRH16855.*





Above: The Secretarial Silver Spirit ASC04176, a 1982 model.

Below: Manuela Bennett (left) and Ida Irwin.

Below: Frances & Ken Lo arrived in their splendid 1986 Silver Spirit ASG15800.

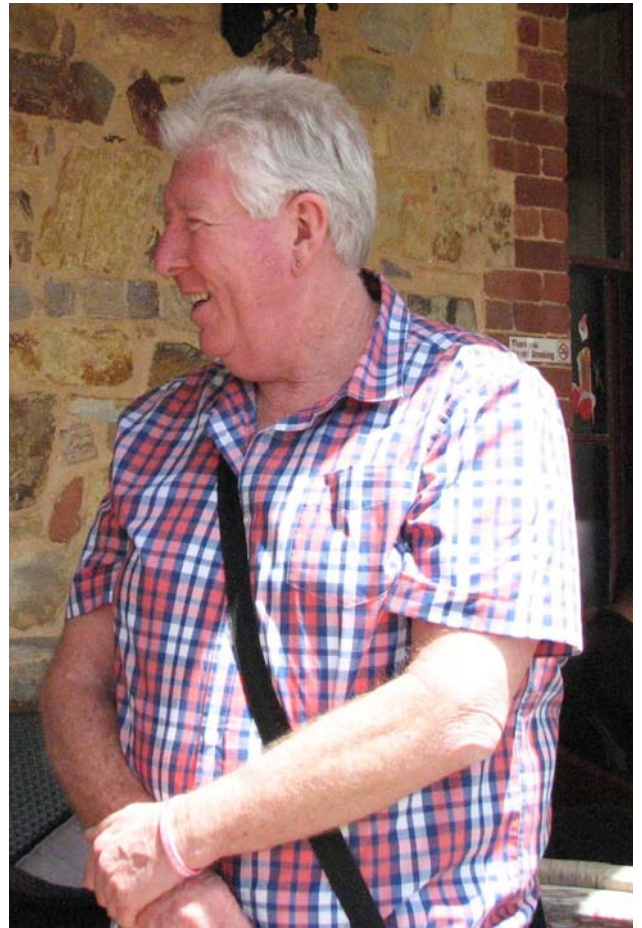




Above, left to right: Peter Hyland, Jason Bennett, Lawrie Nock.

Below: Jane Nock and Peter Hyland.

Right: John Tetley.





Above: The early post-war steering centre lever fulcrum pin, part number RF4075, and its bronze bushes. The ready supply of spare parts for these cars, at often more than reasonable prices, must be the envy of owners of less well-supplied marques.

Early post-war front suspension and steering

Applicable to Silver Wraith, Bentley Mk VI/R-type, Silver Dawn and Phantom IV

By Martin Bennett



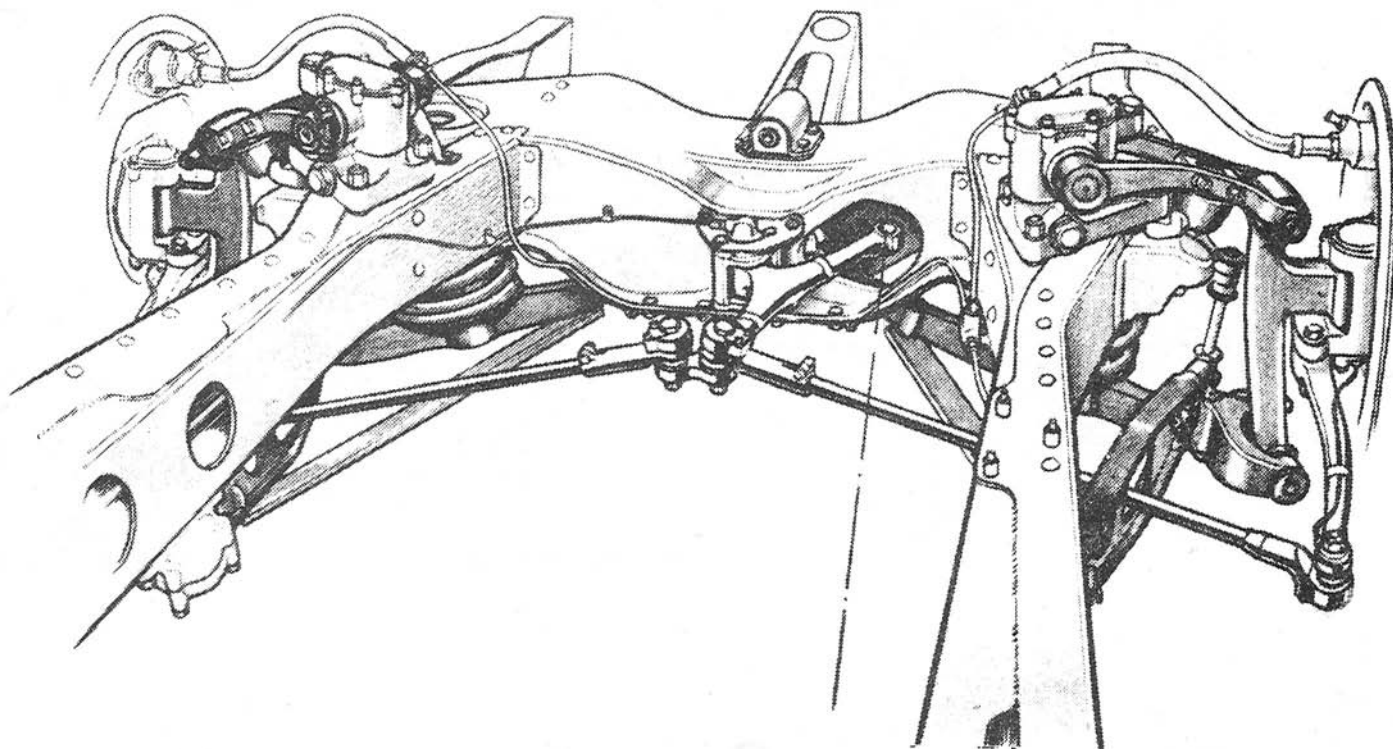
The independent front suspension system used on the pre-war Phantom III and Wraith was a 'knee-action' design with horizontal coil springs in oil-filled housings. The design was based on General Motors practice and was expensive both to make and to maintain.

The post-war system, on the other hand, used exposed vertical coil springs and was less expensive to make and far easier to maintain, as well as being ruggedly built and immensely strong.

Nevertheless, some maintenance is of course called for from time to time, and in the case of my own car I have started with the various rubber bushes. These are the anti-roll bar pivots and link bushes, the 'tennis ball' bushes where the rear ends of the torque arms attach to the chassis, and 'Silentbloc' bushes in the outer ends of the lower suspension wishbones and inner ends of the upper wishbones.

Another front end component that was found to need attention was the fulcrum pin of the steering centre lever. A new pin and bushes were obtained from the

Left: Shiny new rubber bushes fitted to the anti-roll bar vertical links. New rubbers were fitted to the pivot points of the anti-roll bar, too.



Above: The front suspension and steering of the early post-war models. The pivot point of the steering centre lever and the housing of the pin and its bushes (opposite page, top) are clear in this drawing.

U.K. along with the rubber suspension bits. In a nutshell, the replacement pin and bushes are fitted by disconnecting the three ball-joints from the centre lever then disconnecting the oil supply from the centralised lubrication system from the top of the fulcrum housing. The top of the housing may then be removed, providing access to the pin. Any wear is of course more likely in the bronze bushes than in the hardened steel pin.

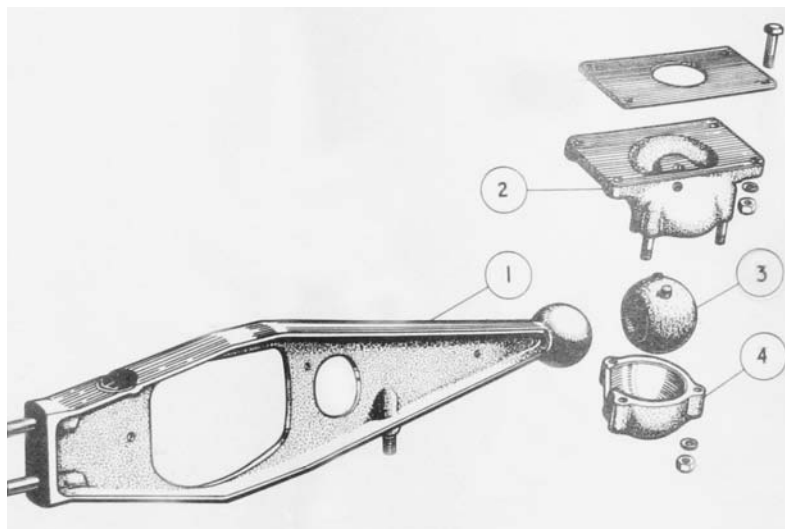
The moderate price of the new pin and bushes was unexpected: there are still pleasant surprises like that to be had from time to time.

On later cars the steering geometry was revised, with twin centre levers and other differences which need to be taken into account when ordering parts. These changes took effect on the Silver Wraith from chassis WME1, Bentley Mk VI from B1GT and Silver Dawn from SCA1.



Below: The torque arm rubber bushes, known in the trade as the "tennis balls", had yet to be fitted at the time of writing. As the old ones are the consistency of bakelite a significant improvement may be expected once the new ones are fitted.

Below: The front suspension torque arm (1) has a ball and socket joint where it pivots vertically at its rear end, and is insulated by means of the rubber bushes (3) known as the "tennis balls". These fit into the socket (2) and are held in place by the cap (4).





Above: Ian & Tina Oliver's 1951 Bentley Mk VI Park Ward drophead coupé B14MD.

‘Classic Yass’ Display Day

Saturday November 5th, 2017

Below: Chris & Narelle O'Rourke's 1957 Silver Cloud SED51.





***Above:** The Editor's WHD101 with, behind, Bryce Ronning's WFC67, Silver Wraith touring limousines by H.J. Mulliner and Hooper respectively. **Below:** 'Morty', Phil Sproston's 1968 Silver Shadow by Panelcraft, SRH4032 – once a hearse but now a very practical estate car, or station wagon.*





***Above:** This 1953 Bentley R-type B142WH was driven up from the N.S.W. South Coast by owner Jim Heaton. Its paintwork, which does not depart from the factory colour distribution for two-tone colour schemes on a long-boot standard steel saloon, lends it a certain quiet dignity.*

‘Terribly British Day’

Queanbeyan

December 3rd, 2017

***Below:** Coralie Ogle’s 1974 Corniche CBH16177, being a Bentley, is a rare variant of a popular model. The elegant two-door saloon coachwork is of course the work of Mulliner Park Ward in London.*





Above: Sand over Sable was a popular original colour scheme on Silver Clouds and Bentley S Types. The first of the three Bentley S1 cars owned by your Editor, in the early 1970s, wore this colour scheme. This 1957 example is B193EK owned by Bob Adby, who heads the team organising the 2020 Federal Rally to be hosted by our N.S.W. friends.

Below: The 'Gentlemen's choice' trophy was presented to Mal & Robyn Henderson for their 1936 Bentley 4 1/4 Litre Gurney Nutting coupé B201HM. This car is immortalised in the front cover masthead photograph of this journal where it will remain until after the next A.C.T.-hosted Federal Rally in 2023.





Above: Charles Chelliah brought this handsome Bentley Arnage saloon. On the performance capabilities of this model, Bryce Ronning quipped that “it can do half an hour in twenty minutes”.

Below: Ian Oliver drove the 1951 Bentley Mk VI Park Ward drophead coupé B14MD while Tina drove the S2 B25CT, our front cover car.





Above: The two Goulburn Silver Wraiths, WFC67 and WHD101. Coachwork by Hooper on the left, H.J. Mulliner on the right. Bryce Ronning's WFC67 has been a regular at 'Terribly British Days' for quite a few years, but this was the first appearance for your Editor's WHD101.



Below: Gos Cory sent this shot of his Mk VI Freestone & Webb saloon, B474DA, showing the refurbished interior woodwork which he has recently completed.



Exert from 'Fly Navy – The View From The Cockpit 1945-2000'

Lieutenant Bob McCulloch

Observer, Sea Venom, 894 Squadron, HMS Eagle , Moray Firth 1957

In August 1957 Eagle was in the Moray Firth (Scotland) off RNAS Lossiemouth, preparing for the annual NATO 'autumn war'. Exercise STRIKEBACK, usually held in foul weather up in the Iceland-Faroes gap. Appropriately, work-up operations were being made difficult by sea fog and a stagnant warm front.

I was airborne on 9 August in a pair of Sea Venom NF22s doing practice radar intercepts, when towards the end of the sortie the weather suddenly closed in. The only way of getting back on deck was going to be a primitive Carrier Controlled Approach (CCA), Air Traffic Controllers using the ship's radar to talk us down until we were close enough to see the deck and land.

Such was the theory. In fact none of the ship's radars was designed for such precise close-in work on a small fast-moving target, and not surprisingly we saw nothing of the ship on our first approach. Next time round, after a large missed-approach pattern that consumed a lot of fuel, in our eagerness to get aboard we probably went a little lower than we should, for very shortly after the controller advised 'Look ahead for the mirror...' Eagle's 150ft grey superstructure, bristling with aials, flashed past our left wing-tip in the fog. It should have been on the other side. Half the line-up error and we would have flown square into the back of the funnel. I made our feelings known to the controller as pilot Bunny Warren powered us back up into the cloud and all aircraft were then ordered to divert and land ashore.

RNAS Lossiemouth being closed for runway repairs, RAF Kinloss a few miles along the coast was nominated as our diversion field. A major air base, Kinloss was equipped with precision GCA Ground Controlled Approach radar with which to talk us down on to their enormous runway.

Such was the theory. In practice Kinloss GCA operators were used to dealing with one or two slow-moving Shackleton maritime patrol aircraft movements a day. Eight or ten Navy jets, short of fuel, all clamouring for immediate landing in marginal weather, were another kettle of fish and things did not go smoothly. As far as Bunny and I were concerned, our fuel gauge told us we could not afford to take our turn in the Kinloss 'stack'. Cloud-base was 200 feet and getting worse. It was a matter of *sauf qui peut*. We would do our own approach. Using the sharp coastal echo on my AI-21 radar, I conned Bunny down below cloud over the sea and into Findhorn Bay towards the western end of Kinloss's east-west runway. But we shot past it in the mist without seeing anything until in desperation Bunny called for the runway control van to fire some Very lights. Seeing the glow of one of these, he did a very tight circuit, extremely low, and just managed to put the aircraft on the concrete before the engine stopped. Both tyres burst on touchdown. Our momentum was just enough to get us off the runway to let the others land, which they all did safely.

During the few days we spent ashore being splendidly entertained by the Royal Air Force, a notable event was an invitation to drinks after a formal Mess Dinner for the Royal Scots Guards, our odiferous flying overalls clashing wonderfully with their magnificent finery.

Above: An extract from the book Fly Navy – The View from the Cockpit, 1945-2000, by Charles Manning in which Bob McCulloch, our late member and twice-President, gave an account of a breath-taking experience in his early post-war service in the Royal Naval Air Service (see From the Branch President, page 2).

Car For Sale



1936 **Bentley 3½ Litre** (B66FB) Drophead Coupé by Roger Fry. Completed 2009 in the style of Oxborrow & Fuller in blue & cream with blue leather. Less than 1,000 km. since restoration and rebuild. Fitted with overdrive. \$265,000. For further information please 'phone Jeremy on 08 9457 2629 or mobile 0416 192 122 or email: millside@westnet.com.au

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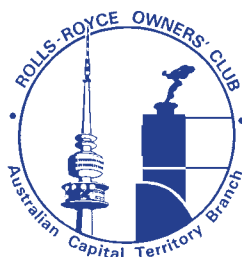
Telephone: 0405 090 774 or 02 6258 1619

Email: scpcarservices@gmail.com

Tailpiece . . .



Nearest the camera at the Bushranger Hotel in Collector during our October run is John Tetley's 1981 Bentley Mulsanne BSB03228, with Lawrie & Jane Nock's 1973 Corniche Convertible DRH16855 in front.



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