



# 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**

**October / November 2017**





# Branch President's

## Report to the 2017 Annual General Meeting

Some said we couldn't do it. But we proved them wrong. The 2017 Federal Rally was a really wonderful success from beginning to end. Our team was a cohesive unit, experienced, and willing to put the shoulder to the wheel.

A special Thank You to Di & Al Kinloch who undertook a huge amount of the load. And without a murmur! Their contribution is an inspiration to the membership. Likewise, to Peter Hyland, my grateful thanks for handling the Federal Rally Entries, and the associated event finances, while also juggling the day-to-day business affairs of the Branch paperwork and finances. A monumental achievement. And I think he even enjoyed it all.



There were others too: Martin Bennett, Ken Baldwin, Chris O'Rourke and Ken Lo were all there to take on tasks as they arose. Ida and I did many tasks running about and setting up things. Peter Toet did a great job on the laying out of the public display. And we can all take credit for the brilliant and well-timed fly-past on the two consecutive nights at Old Parliament House and the National Gallery! To date we have not received the bill for that from the RAAF, so we'll take it as sponsorship in kind.

The Federal Rally aside, it's been much the same as usual. Events have varied in attendances, but there was really wonderful support for the Terribly British Day last December. Our stock of cars spanning many decades is impressive.

My thanks to all who have served on the Branch Committee in 2016-2017, and special thanks once again to Martin Bennett who has continued to carry the burden of the regular production of *The Capital Letter*. It's a top quality production, and we all appreciate your efforts on our behalf. Thanks also to Lawrie Nock for his handling of the Branch affairs at the Council of A.C.T. Motor Clubs on a monthly basis and for keeping us well informed on Council matters. I hope I have not forgotten anyone, but forgive me if I have please.

As we face another year in the life of the Branch, we will find ourselves at a new venue for the Terribly British Day this year. I take this opportunity to thank each and every one of the members for playing their bit to keep the show on the road. If you have any suggestions that might vary our activities, please don't hesitate to speak to someone on the committee. The fibre of the Club is what we collectively make it.

Ian Irwin O.A.M.  
President.  
6th September, 2017

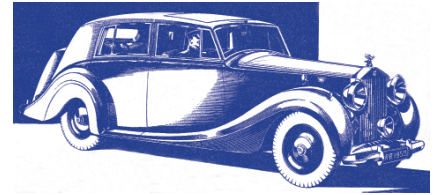


**Above left:** Secretary Peter Hyland writes that these cocktail sets were made for the U.S.A. and U.K. markets, (but not for Australia) and so he believes they may be unique to his car in this country. The **right** picture shows how they are installed in the pockets behind the front seats with the original footrests and after-market lambswool overlays also visible. The car is of course the Secretarial 1982 Silver Spirit ASC04176.

**Front Cover picture:** Owner Julian Walter sent this and our rear cover shot, showing his recently-restored Bentley Mk VI B392BH. The coachbuilder, Freestone & Webb, sometimes fitted a pair of 'centre lights' rather than the usual single one. The same feature may be seen again on Gos Cory's car in the background of the photograph on page 10.

# From the Editor

[hjmullinersw@bigpond.com](mailto:hjmullinersw@bigpond.com)



For my sins it appears that I am still your *Capital Letter* Editor. I really don't mind putting a bit into the Club, and realistically I probably receive back more than I contribute. In fact, from time to time I contemplate the benefits of R.R.O.C. membership and invariably arrive at the conclusion that they are incalculable, as well as superb value for money, particularly in our very economically-run Branch. You enjoy the camaraderie of a great Club, you receive Federal and Branch journals, members with older cars are enabled to participate in low-cost concessional registration schemes – need I go on?

But from time to time something comes out of the blue to drive home the point even more forcefully in terms of the sheer conviviality of the Club and the often-seen generosity of members to each other. When my car was being judged at the Canberra Federal Rally I produced my “complete” tool-kit for the judges, only to find that the little 2BA spanner had somehow gone AWOL. Having patiently awaited that moment since triumphantly adding the last tool to the kit after years of collecting them, mostly one by one, perhaps you can imagine how disconcerted I was at the apparent loss!

How does this emphasise the benefits of membership? Well, when the loss of the spanner was discovered, N.S.W. President Bruce Duncan, hearing of my distress at finding that I hadn't a complete tool-kit after all, showed real concern, and after the Rally sent me a spare 2BA spanner. After that very kind and thoughtful gesture I gave Bruce an undertaking that if I was ever able to obtain a replacement, or if my own turned up, I would return his spare spanner.

Having failed to obtain a 2BA spanner after searching the trade stands at the R.R.E.C. Annual Rally in June, shortly afterwards the mystery of where the lost one had been hiding was solved. I had occasion to brake fairly hard in the Silver Wraith and the elusive little devil shot out of the heater duct between the front seats. Manuela picked it up off the carpet and asked “what's this?”.

Accordingly, Bruce's spare 2BA spanner was on its way back to him the following day.

The benefits of Club membership? To me they become more self-evident as the years go by.

*Martin Bennett*

**Right:** Our newly-elected Treasurer Ian Oliver after winning Best of British at the 'Battle of Waterloo', Queanbeyan Park, with his glorious 1951 Bentley Mk VI Park Ward drophead coupé, B14MD.





## 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.

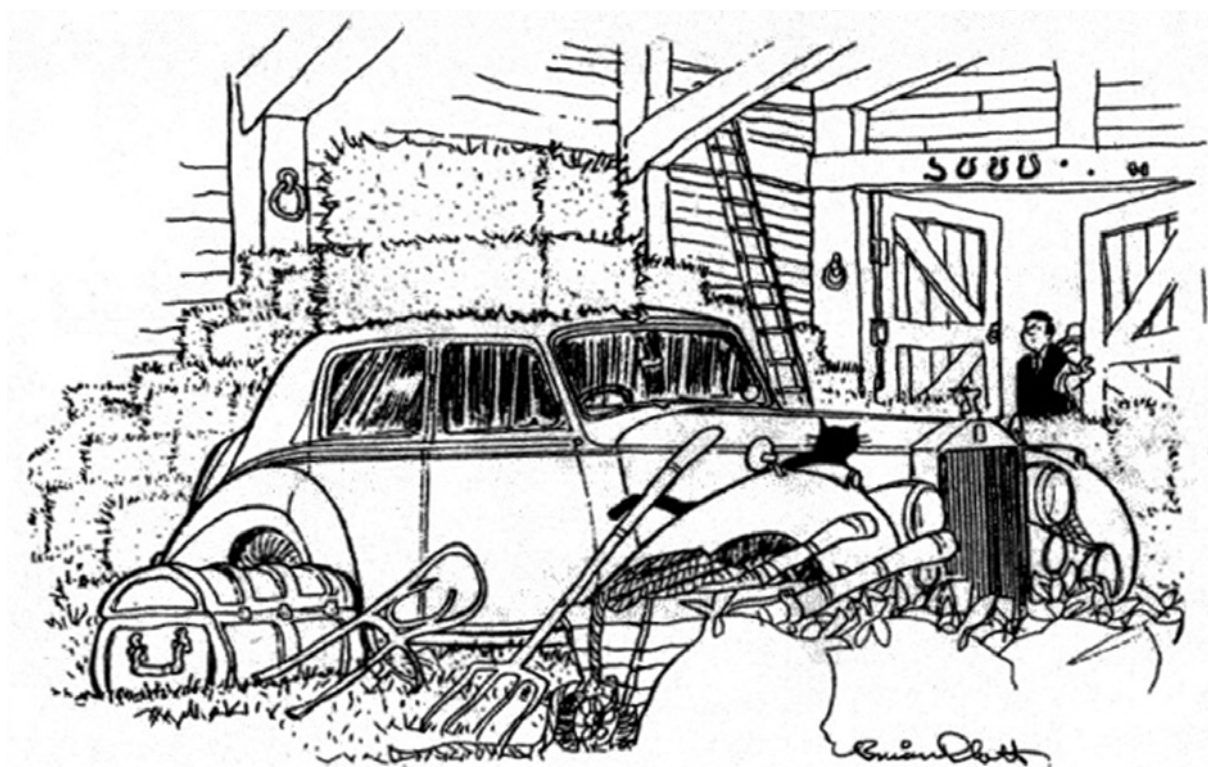
**Wednesday October 4th:** Monthly Meeting at the Ainslie Football Club. Dinner from 6.00 p.m., Meeting at 7.30.

**Sunday October 22nd:** Lunch Run to the 'Bushranger' pub in Collector. Please advise Secretary Peter of your intention to participate.

**Wednesday November 1st:** Monthly Meeting at the Ainslie Football Club. Dinner from 6.00 p.m., Meeting at 7.30.

**Saturday November 4th:** Classic Yass. Members have been emailed an Invitation and Entry Form to Classic Yass 2017. Entry Forms for Classic Yass and the Billycart Derby are also available on the Classic Yass website: [www.classicyass.com](http://www.classicyass.com) Entries by last mail October 13th, please.

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



"ARR.. THE OL' CAR BE IN 'ERE SINCE FORTY-NINE ...  
DON'T SUPPOSE SHE BE WORTH MUCH NOW ? "



*Above: The Bentley Mk VI standard steel saloon is more than rugged enough to be successfully brought back from this kind of condition, and parts are readily obtainable, both new and second-hand. The right-hand photograph shows the plain, unpleated leather seats that characterised the earliest standard steel saloons like this one – a 1947 car. It was owned when new by the Hoskins family of Australian Iron & Steel, Port Kembla.*

## Former A.C.T. Bentley Mk VI lives again – a good news story!

*By Peter Colwell*

1947 Bentley Mk VI B348BH, once owned by A.C.T. Branch member Ken Lo, and which has been lying unloved in a Dubbo back yard for some years, has found a new owner and restoration is well under way.

Starting at the beginning, Mark Nugent, well known quality coachbuilder in Dubbo, who has re-bodied a number of Rolls-Royce Owners' Club member's cars including Nigel Price's Silver Ghost, had in his back yard, Bentley B348BH. It was being used as a source of information for a special exotic project Bentley body being built by Mark (worthy of another story). It was in very poor condition – engine seized, basically a basket case. Paul Allan, an enthusiastic member of the Dubbo Car Club, who is a restorer and owner of numerous British cars, had asked me if I knew anything about B348BH. The answer was no, but it did have an early registration plate attached. Lo (no pun intended) and behold, *Rolls-Royce & Bentley in the Sunburnt Country* had a record of the car and

its early history. It was recorded as being owned then by one Ken Lo. Could that be our Ken Lo of the A.C.T. Branch?

Indeed it was Ken's car, and he provided me with much history, and some sad information about how the car came to be lying unloved in a Dubbo back yard. A story of an accident, followed by time spent in the hands of a fly-by-night nefarious repairer, then lost and scattered, until it ended up in a Dubbo back yard.

In June 2017, the Bentley was rescued from its grave and taken a short distance to its new home in Dubbo, where it is in the company of some very nicely restored Jaguars and other cars. The interior has been gutted, and currently Paul is dealing with removal of a very stubborn cylinder head. Eventually it will join a 1947 Jaguar Mk IV in Paul's garage – a car which was originally in worse condition than B348BH but is now a pristine prize-winning car.





# A.C.T. Branch funding of a Sir Henry Royce Foundation project.

By Ian Irwin

The Sir Henry Royce Foundation, as you would be aware, is based in Melbourne, with another centre currently being developed in Queensland. Australia's tyranny of distance makes it prohibitive for many who would wish to access the Foundation's resources and archives personally. At the 2016 and 2017 Federal Rallies, some of the precious artefacts and rare items were on display for those who were able to attend. While we are one of the closest Branches of the R.R.O.C.A. to the physical location of the S.H.R.F., few of our members have yet been able to see at first hand, this national collection of treasures.

The S.H.R.F. has an advisory group meeting at each Federal Rally, attended by a delegate from each state branch of the R.R.O.C.A. At the 2017 Federal Rally, I raised the matter of 'getting the S.H.R.F. message' out to potentially interested parties, both within and beyond our fraternity. It is such a marvellous thing that the S.H.R.F. is doing, that its message should be shouted from the rooftops.

The S.H.R.F. is still developing strategies for growth, and those of our membership who have attended recent meetings have embraced the idea of a small package to assist.

The foregoing is by way of background information for A.C.T. Branch members, some of whom are in outlying regions of the Southern Tablelands, the South Coast, the Southern Highland and the Central West.

The morning after our September monthly meeting I wrote on behalf of the Branch, to Russell Rolls, Chairman of Trustees of The Sir Henry Royce Foundation.

The essence of my letter to Russell is reproduced here:

*"You will recall that we have previously discussed possibilities for getting the Foundation's message out to the Branches of the R.R.O.C. of Australia, and to other sympathetic organisations, so that the wonderful work being done can be more widely appreciated across the country.*

*"At the last couple of meetings of the A.C.T. Branch, we have discussed the possibility of a gift of some form, to the S.H.R.F., from the Branch, to address the above issue.*

*"This matter was discussed once more last night, and after careful thought over time, it has been decided that the A.C.T. Branch would like to gift the S.H.R.F. the sum of \$5,000 exclusively dedicated to a commercial production, or at least a high quality private production, of a video documentary covering the widest possible range of aspects related to the operations of the Foundation. We would like to see included, some of the range of treasures held, a walk amongst the archives along the shelves, with specific documentation of merit illustrated and spoken about. You would know the type of thing I'm sure.*

*"We are reluctant to place any constraints on the gift, but we would like it to be undertaken within a realistic time frame, say perhaps 12 months. If it is a realisable concept, we would like it to be acknowledged on the film, as a gift from the A.C.T. Branch, with copies provided to all State Branches of the R.R.O.C.A. We are, of course, amenable to discussion of this of proposal to get the best possible results.*

*"If the amount is inadequate to undertake the project that we envisage, we would consider approaching other State Branches, and perhaps some of the state Rolls-Royce and Bentley agencies or the Rolls-Royce Company, to make a contribution to assist. At this stage it is over to the SHRF Trustees, and we look forward to hearing your thoughts on our proposal."*

Russell Rolls had been overseas, and on 13 September he replied:

*"Your suggestion is timely – there is a Trustees Meeting in Melbourne on Saturday afternoon (September 16). I have circulated your e-mail to the Trustees for review and discussion.*

*"You will be aware that Jeanne Eve has recently accepted an appointment as a Trustee. Jeanne has expressed an interest in The Foundation's communication and marketing activities. For example, she is suggesting a revamp/modernisation of the website. So, you can see that we have already taken some initiatives as a result of your suggestions at the March Consultative Committee Meeting.*

*"I think the A.C.T. Branch suggestion and donation would fit nicely with the ideas that Jeanne has articulated.*

*"On behalf of the Trustees I wish to express gratitude for the A.C.T. Branch's support of the Foundation."*

Russell also promised to report back to me after the Trustees Meeting.

Following that meeting, Russell replied with the following good news:

*“As I am sure you would have expected, the Trustees were delighted with the support of the A.C.T. Branch. Jeanne Eve has volunteered to work with you to develop a specific proposal for the documentary. Jeanne will contact you to initiate the process. It is envisaged that the formal proposal will be put to the Trustees for approval at the next Meeting, scheduled for late November.*

*“Again, our thanks to you personally and to the A.C.T. Branch for the support of the Foundation with this project.*

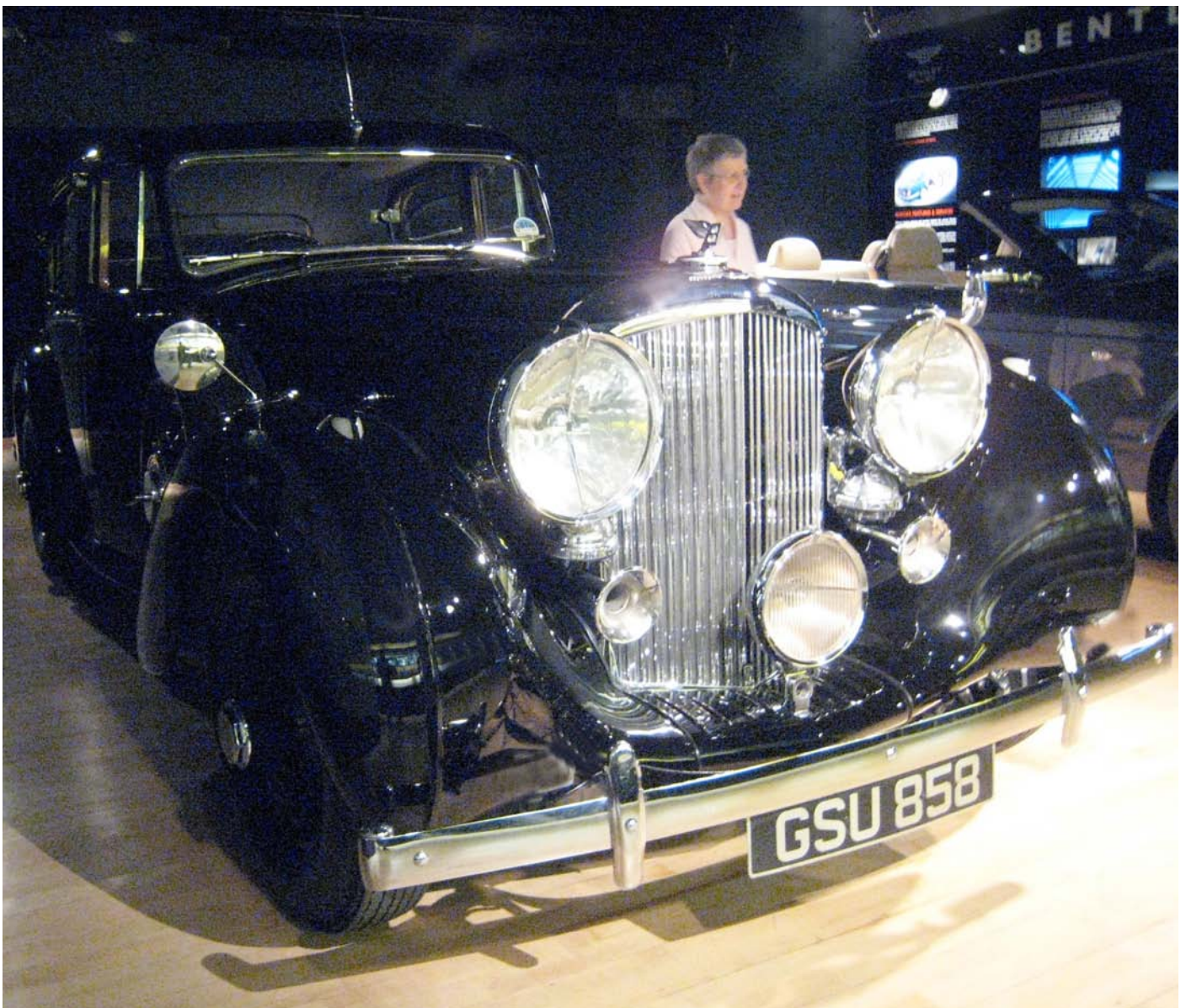
*“With kind regards, Russell”*

Where to now?

It's very much a matter for the S.H.R.F. to establish the best way to handle this project. It will be a great outcome for the Foundation when there is a DVD that can be circulated to the Branches of the R.R.O.C.A., but also made available, we would hope, to other organisations across the country, car clubs included. I look forward to liaising on this with Jeanne Eve in her new role with the S.H.R.F., and will keep members informed of happenings on this matter as it progresses.

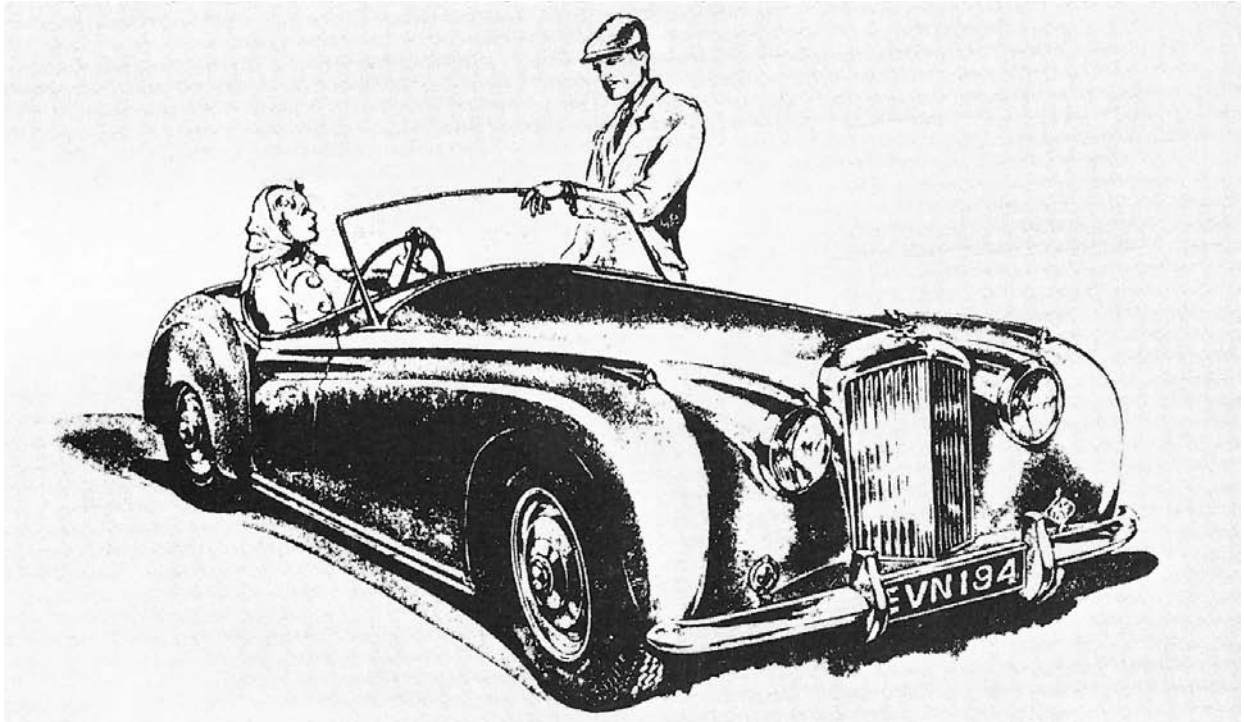


**Below:** Bill Wolf (U.S.A.) sent this shot of 1940 Bentley Mk V Park Ward saloon B32AW that he took at the Crewe factory. The Mk V was the last pre-World War II model and the first manifestation of the 'Rationalised Range' project which really only came into fruition after the War, involving standardisation of chassis frames (in various lengths) and mechanical components across the whole range of models. The outbreak of war curtailed Mk V production before many more than a handful had been built, with several more left unfinished.





## *The Bentley 'Blizzard'*



*Above: The Bentley 'Blizzard' was an early post-war proposal intended to compete with cars such as the Jaguar XK120. A nice idea, but it wasn't to be and although it never progressed beyond concept drawings like this, a replica 'Blizzard' has been produced by a company in England (**below**), presumably based on Bentley Mk VI components as the original would have been.*







**Above:** Bill Wolf, one of your Editor's American correspondents and a valued and helpful friend, sent this photograph of himself. There will be a small prize for the first reader identifying the make, model and coachbuilder of the car. Photo by Bill Imre.

**Below:** David Neely (N.S.W.) sent this ComCar photograph of one of the four Commonwealth Silver Wraiths having H.J. Mulliner coachwork. Unfortunately there is no way of telling these four HJM cars apart in photographs without some registration number certainty, and although Rolls-Royce & Bentley in the Sunburnt Country has ZRV-102, -103, and -104 in the Supplement index, all remain unidentified by chassis number. Note the blue 'police' light above the windscreen – a feature of all cars intended for possible royal use. Just behind that is the mounting bracket for the Royal Standard.







**Above:** During the Canberra Federal Rally Sunday display on the Patrick White Lawns there were so many cars of great interest to see and photograph that your Editor neglected to take any pictures of his own car. However, several members came to the rescue including Branch member Matthew Swift who sent this shot of WHD101 with owner. Behind is B474DA, another early post-war A.C.T. Branch car, driven from north of Brisbane and back for the Rally by owner Gos Cory.



**Left:** Despite the individual items becoming increasingly difficult to obtain, Branch Treasurer Ian Oliver has collected no fewer than three early post-war handtool kits, which is appropriate given that he owns three early post-war Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars. The fine condition of the kit shown in this photograph is very evident. Right in the middle is the little 2BA spanner – the one that temporarily disappeared from the Editor's similar kit (see Editorial page 3).



### **Wanted: back-issues of *The Capital Letter***

The Sir Henry Royce Foundation Australia has written to ask our assistance in acquiring the editions of *The Capital Letter* that are missing from the Foundation's collection. There are occasional single editions missing but those gaps are probably due to no edition having been published in those months. However, there are large blocks of missing editions, in some cases amounting to entire years in which the Foundation holds no copies at all. Although we have not always been very consistent in the publication of our newsletter, we have never allowed whole years to go by without one being published!

The years most affected are 1997 to 2001. Although I only have the editions back to 2005, it is perfectly possible that other members may have kept their copies further back than that. If any member has copies of *The Capital Letter* from around the years mentioned and are willing to donate them to the Sir Henry Royce Foundation Australia, they are asked to make contact either with me or directly with the Foundation's Archivist Gilbert Ralph on 03 9889 6471 or [gilralph@bigpond.net.au](mailto:gilralph@bigpond.net.au)

*Martin Bennett*





*Above: Gos Cory, on holiday in Italy with Liz, sent this shot of a Bentley Azure, right-hand drive, U.K. number plates '4 BDC' and Bentley Drivers' Club badge. Lake Como in the background.*

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## Tailpiece . . .



*Our front cover car, B392BH, when viewed from three-quarters rear, exhibits some unmistakable pre-war Gurney Nutting styling traits. In any event, it is a particularly stylish and highly desirable coachbuilt Mk VI, superbly restored.*

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