



THE CAPITAL LETTER

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



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DEDICATED TO ROLLS-ROYCE & BENTLEY ENTHUSIASTS

Spring 2018



2018 Bentley Mulsanne W.O. Edition by Mulliner

**A RARE LIMITED EDITION
FROM CREWE**



From the Editor & President

hjmullinersw@bigpond.com



The saving of the best part of a page in *The Capital Letter* due to combining the President's and Editor's columns has arisen from your Editor now having the honour of also serving as your President. My predecessor as Branch President, Ian Irwin, has served us faithfully and extremely well in that role for five years, as well as continuing to serve with a strong resolve representing our Branch's best interests as Federal Delegate. Although I will do my best to attend every monthly Meeting during my term as President, in his new capacity as Senior Vice-President Ian has kindly undertaken to chair any Meetings that I cannot get to.

Congratulations and gratitude are owed to our Secretary Peter Hyland for his tireless and meticulous work in producing a history of our Branch. The first copy to be printed was presented at the August Branch Meeting and most members present who hadn't already ordered a copy, did so. The price to members of a colour copy – \$52 – is the cost to the Club with nothing added. It was decided by that meeting to send complimentary copies to each of the other R.R.O.C.A. Branches as well as to the Sir Henry Royce Foundation Australia. I cannot over-emphasise the achievement by Peter that this project and its end result represents.

In this edition we have no fewer than two informative and entertaining articles by Branch member Gos Cory, dealing with his Crewe factory tour and a visit to the Bugatti Trust, both during his June visit to the U.K. for, amongst other attractions, the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club Annual Rally (see our last issue). Perhaps we can hope that some of the other motoring heritage attractions that Gos took in and enjoyed will be covered in a further article in our next edition.

Having taken his 1951 Bentley Mk VI Park Ward drophead coupé B14MD to the U.K. for the R.R.E.C. Annual Rally, after our September Meeting Treasurer Ian Oliver announced that he was returning to the U.K. to re-join his car and take part in a tour of Devon organised by the R.R.E.C. Post-War 6-Cylinder Register before returning the car to Australia.

Also in this edition of *The Capital Letter* we bid farewell to Lawrie & Jane Nock for whom a vote of thanks was expressed and unanimously passed by those present at our September Meeting for their past substantial support and involvement in the Branch's activities over very many years. Peter & Denise Traynor and Ludy & Elizabeth Bobruk also decided not to renew their memberships when they fell due this year. Many members have enjoyed the friendships and involvement of Lawrie & Jane, Peter & Denise and Ludy & Elizabeth over the years and will join me in wishing them all the very best for the future.

We have recently heard from Jeanne Eve on behalf of the Sir Henry Royce Foundation Australia that the Foundation is obtaining maximum value from our Branch's substantial contribution, made after the 2017 Federal Rally which we hosted.

One of the big days in which we have participated for many years is of course the 'Terribly British Day', to be held this year on Sunday December 2nd at Queanbeyan Park. Local members of our Club who would be able to get there a little early and who would be prepared to be marshals either at the gate or at our allocated area within the site should please contact the Secretary to volunteer. Our traditional End-of-Year get-together lunch will be the previous day – see Events Calendar on the opposite page for details of this subsidised event, an easy, pleasant drive from Canberra, in a quiet country location. Looking forward to seeing you there.

Martin Bennett
Branch President



Front Cover: 2018 Bentley Mulsanne W.O. Edition by Mulliner, one of a number of special editions offered by Bentley Motors Ltd. See also Gos Cory's article beginning on page 4, dealing with his Crewe factory visit. Photo: Bentley Motors Ltd.

Branch Events Calendar

DECEMBER

Saturday December 1st: End-of-Year get-together and lunch at the historic Bushranger Hotel, just off the Federal Highway in Collector, N.S.W., 12.00 noon. A pleasant, quiet country environment away from the hustle and bustle of the city and traffic, yet an easy drive from Canberra. On the basis that Club funds are best used to benefit members, this lunch will be subsidised by \$25 per participating A.C.T. Branch member. Please advise the Secretary of your intention to attend on: 02 6286 4265 or phy40183@bigpond.net.au

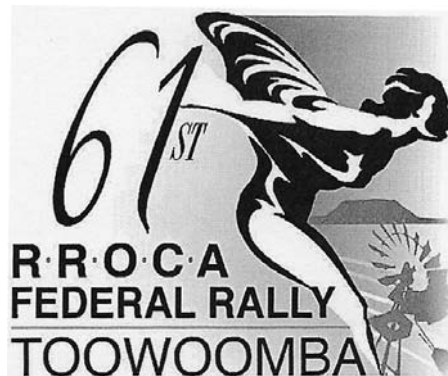
***NEXT DAY* – Sunday December 2nd:** Terribly British Day at Queanbeyan Park. Members are asked to please have their cars in place between 8.00 and 9.30 a.m.

Wednesday December 5th: Monthly Meeting at the Ainslie Football Club. Dinner from 6.00 p.m., Meeting at 7.30.

Please note that as per our usual practice there will be no Monthly Meeting in January 2019.

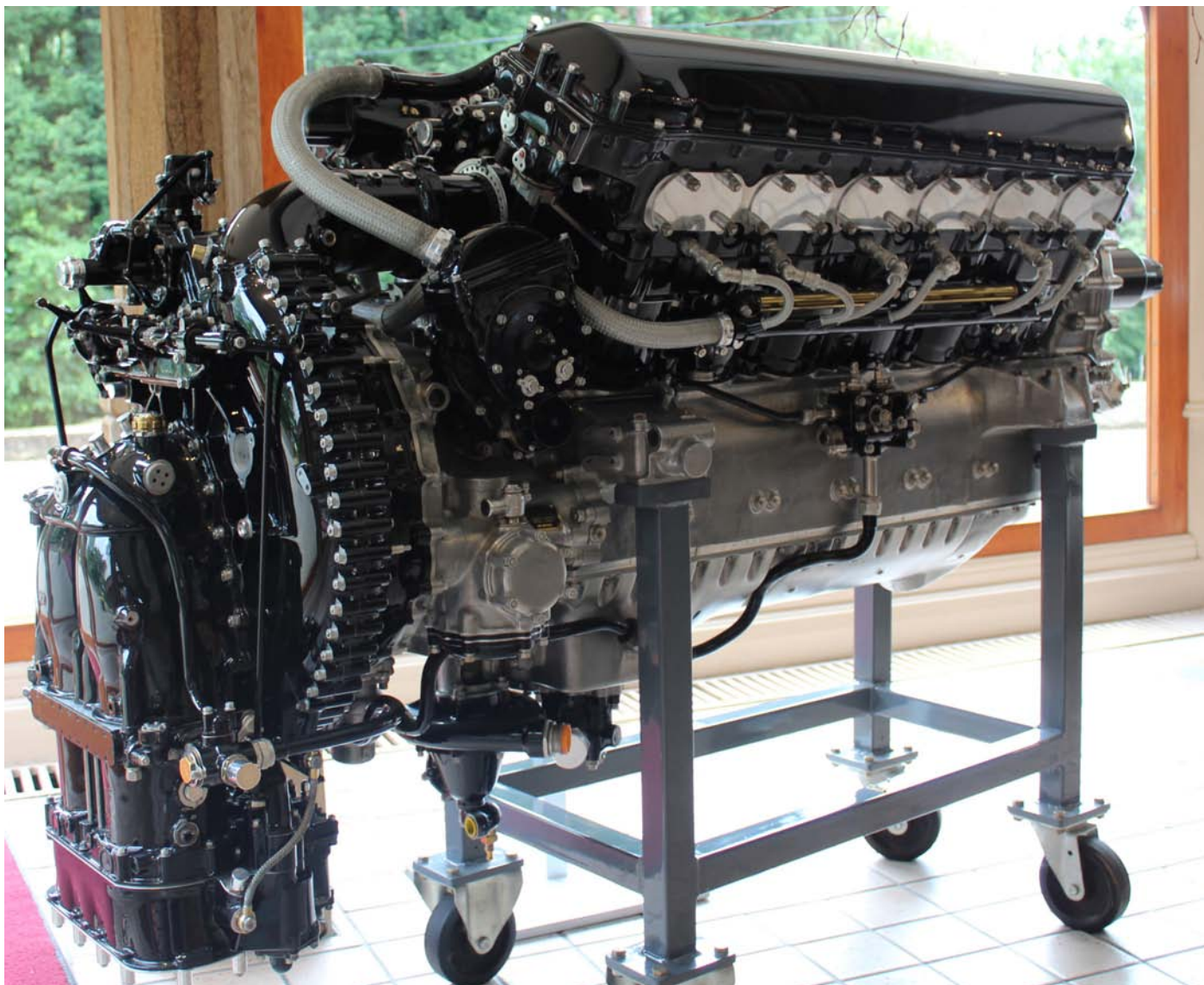
MAY 2019

Wednesday May 1st to Monday May 6th: Annual Federal Rally, Toowoomba, Qld, hosted by the Queensland Branch.



***Below:** When Fred English was photographer for the Victoria Branch, recording every Branch event, he took this shot of WCB16 during a Club tour of Tasmania in 1973. This 1949 Silver Wraith with Hooper 'Teviot' coachwork was delivered new in Australia but has not been seen for many years. Note the blade-type bumpers of 'Pyrene' manufacture then being fitted to export cars.*





Above: The Crewe factory built a significant share of the 160,000 Rolls-Royce 'Merlin' aircraft engines for World War 2. This example is displayed by marque dealers P. & A. Wood at their Great Easton, Essex showroom. Photograph: Gos Cory.

A Tour of the Crewe Factory

June, 2018

By Gos Cory

I had the opportunity of a motoring pilgrimage to Great Britain and plotted a list of attractions I had gathered over the years but somehow, in spite of a number of visits never managed to get to. High on this list was the Bentley factory in Crewe. This was partly because of its heritage of producing the legendary Merlin aircraft engine, partly because it is where the chassis of my Bentley Mk VI was made in 1949 and also because it now produces the fabulous Continental Flying Spur, Continental GT, Bentley Bentayga and Mullanne range. How many reasons does one need?

I had a tight window in which I could visit the factory, however I thought myself fortunate that I managed to book a visit in the week prior to the R.R.E.C. Annual Rally which I attended in the company of fellow A.C.T. Branch members Martin Bennett and Richard Mann. Money changed hands

and I received a map and some instructions. I was advised "Cameras and mobile phones with camera facilities will not be permitted..." My Box Brownie was duly secured in a locker at Reception. Our Guide, Rodger, was a very pleasant and very knowledgeable chap who had commenced in the upholstery shop some decades earlier.

Most of the buildings have direct links to the original factory. Obviously very successful modernisation has taken place but under the skin the original is often clearly evident. Rodger remarked that the view of the plant from above was planned to resemble a housing estate to deter German bombing.

We entered at the end of the coupé/saloon line where the final (pre-road test and final final) inspection was under way. The line conveys body shells (fabricated else-



Above: When peace came, motor car production was transferred from Derby to Crewe, beginning with the Bentley Mk VI, the build line for which is seen here in mid-1947, and the Rolls-Royce Silver Wraith, and has continued ever since. In a planned expansion, the well-known Pym's Lane will be re-routed to consolidate sites. Photograph: Editor's Collection.

where) from point to point where various sub-assemblies (dash/pedal assemblies, drivelines, etc.) are prepared on stations outside the line and moved across for installation. The mix of traditional trades and high-tech-

nology processes is striking. These processes are best described in the photographs, some of which were sourced from the public domain due to the constraint on photography whilst on the tour. ➡

Below: The more things change, the more they stay the same. One unchanged feature at Crewe is the extensive use of high-quality, fragrant hides for the cars' luxurious interiors.





***Above:** The GT and Flying Spur lines consist of 68 “stations”. Typically each assembly spends 12 minutes at each. Electronic notice boards display the line speed and output targets and progress.*

***Below:** The Bentayga line consists of 46 “stations”. Each assembly typically spends 16 minutes at each.*





Above: It is about a 40 minute process to finish a steering wheel. Part of the show is when an operator uses a fork to mark the spacing for the stitches in the leather covering.

We then moved to the upholstery shop where the range of seats and levels of sophisticated upholstery was displayed. These represented a spectrum between lightweight competition and luxury use. Rodger made a point of showing how other manufacturers had copied the “quilted” look so Bentley then introduced perforations as a further differentiation. In the manufacturing area I was struck by the size of the Scandinavian hides, several of which are needed per vehicle, reinforcing the considerable final weight of the vehicles. Each hide is manually marked for imperfections and then computer cut to avoid these and maximise the yield. A mix of technology and craftsmanship was evident as components progressed through to finished goods. This is the only area to run multiple shifts to maintain production targets.

Next was the timber shop. This is the outstanding example of just how traditionally these cars are still made. Over 20 standard timbers are available from all over the world plus, extraordinarily, a *rock veneer* can be specified. The veneers are laid up over a composite starting with an aluminium casting/pressing/extrusion and bases of less exotic veneers. Layers of heat-sensitive adhesive film are finally cured creating the item which is then lacquered and polished. Environmental constraints are paramount and some species are limited to already fallen trees. Hopes of a Yellow Box dashboard may be too optimistic.

The traditional coachbuilders Mulliner Park Ward are involved in special orders and they liaise with the factory specialists to specify and design one-off requirements for those requiring something exceptional and different.

The next part of the tour was the Bentayga (the SUV variant

released relatively recently) assembly line. The most voluminous output of the two lines with a 40 vehicle daily target. It has fewer stations where vehicles spend longer intervals and is equally impressive. We spent some time with the team assembling the leather headlining. The sheer size, glass roof ➡

Below: Don't try this at home – the use of a hot electric iron on nice new leather upholstery is not recommended by this journal, though the young man at Crewe clearly understands his trade.





Above: Note the build sheet (circled) that accompanies each sub-assembly. Asked if owners ever requested copies, our guide seemed puzzled and said he wasn't sure, noting it would be a very large document if they did.

Below: The entire drive train is assembled on the platform seen here, from major components. This assembly then travels across to be elevated, meet and be secured to the bodyshell. We were not shown any engine assembly lines.



Right: On display in the Crewe factory's Lineage area, a late-1930s Bentley 4¹/₄-Litre saloon and **(below)** Sir Henry Birkin's supercharged 4¹/₂-Litre of 1930 Le Mans 24-hour race fame.



panel and complex curves make this a very complicated task. A heat-cured spray adhesive is progressively applied and set to ensure the correct creaseless uniformity is attained.

We arrived back at the reception area where I retrieved my camera and we were ushered into the Lineage Exhibition area. When foreign companies take over British marques they ensure that the heritage (i.e. Britishness) is preserved and exploited. This is no different and while only a small part of the overall collection is on display the six or so vehicles are exceptional and representative of the Company's finest. Included is the oldest surviving Bentley (a 3-Litre, number EXP2) and what is touted to be the most valuable Bentley in the world – the actual and totally original supercharged 4¹/₂-Litre that Sir Henry 'Tim' Birkin raced in

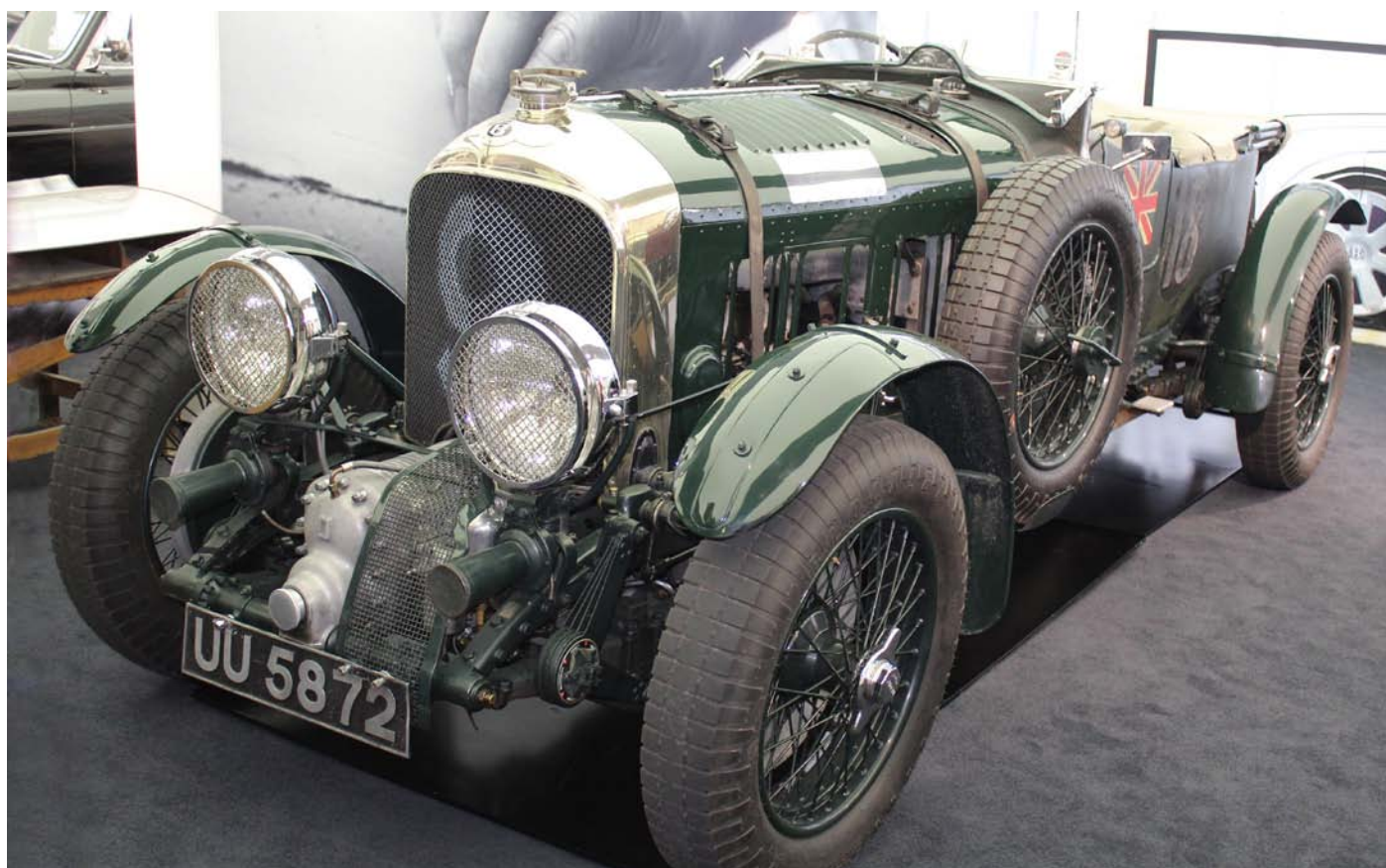
the Le Mans 24 Hours in 1930.

Due to another engagement I had to reluctantly forgo the refreshments provided at the Showroom further along the road. The United Kingdom truly capitalises on its motoring heritage. It is difficult to choose what to fit into an inevitably tight touring schedule.

This tour is recommended for:

- Serious Rolls-Royce and Bentley enthusiasts;
- those interested in modern vehicle production;
- those interested in how some of the traditional crafts continue to exist in the 21st century.

For these groups of enthusiasts this is a most worthwhile experience.





Above: The design, craftsmanship and materials in this Bugatti Type 35 straight-eight roller-bearing crankshaft inspire the greatest admiration. Note the bolts which are effectively cotter pins, locking the segments together more or less as bicycle cranks were done. Every aspect of this is superbly machined. Photographs by Gos Cory except where otherwise credited.

A visit to The Bugatti Trust Museum

Prescott Hill, Gloucestershire, June, 2018

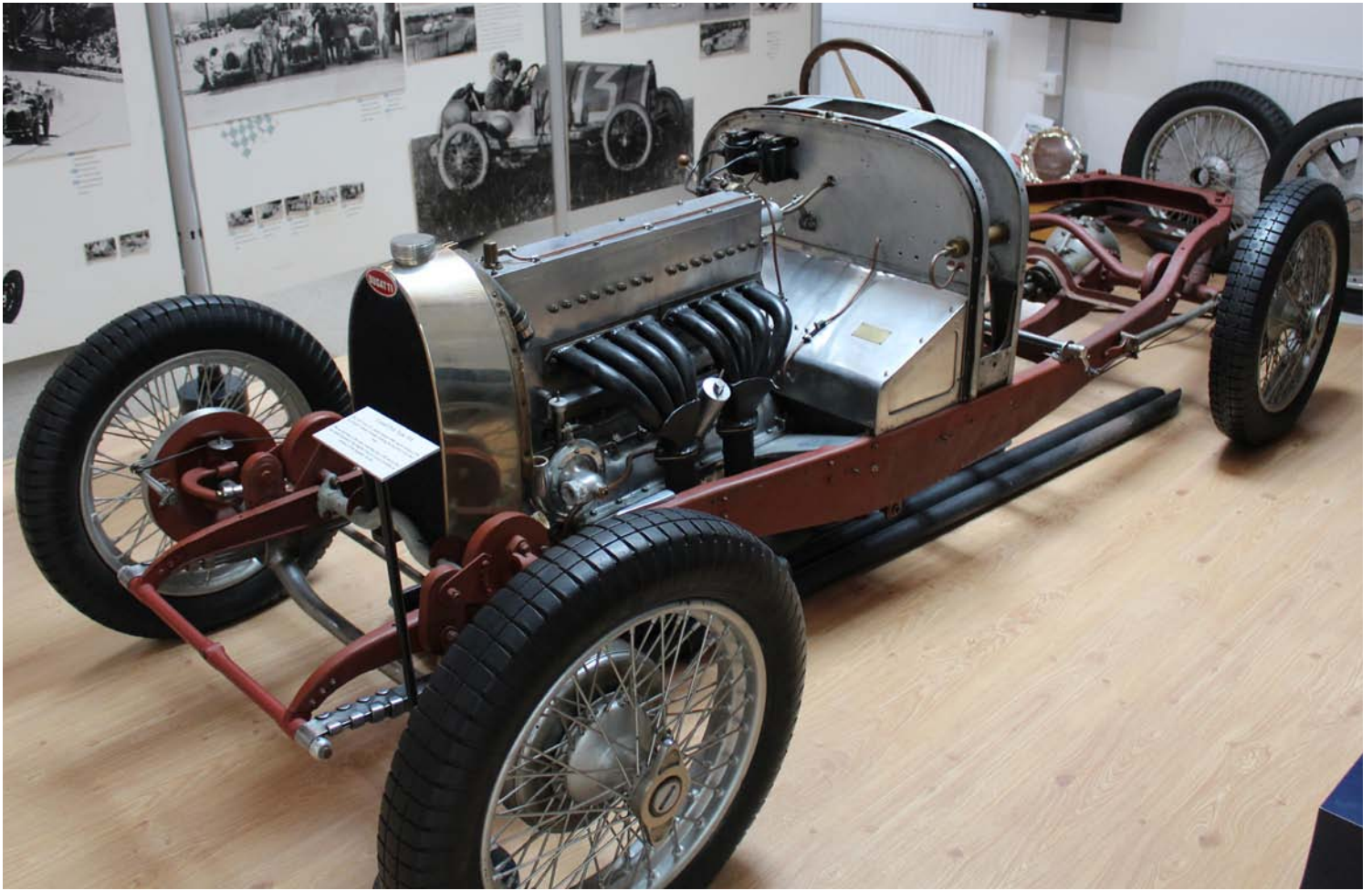
By Gos Cory

The Bugatti Trust premises are situated in the Prescott Hill Climb grounds, an iconic picturesque setting in the Cotswolds. This intriguing “boutique” museum and Trust headquarters is proof size isn’t everything, at least when it comes to car museums. I had visited several museums in the same week and enjoyed this collection just as much as the vast collections where one has to choose what to study and what to skip. I am a Bugatti student as well as a committed Rolls-Royce and Bentley enthusiast. Be they *plus grande camions*, *pur-sangs* or silver arrows I appreciate them for their role in a golden era of motoring and their different approaches to design and performance.

The exhibits capture the essence of the Bugatti spirit perfectly. There is a focus on the innovative designs and their

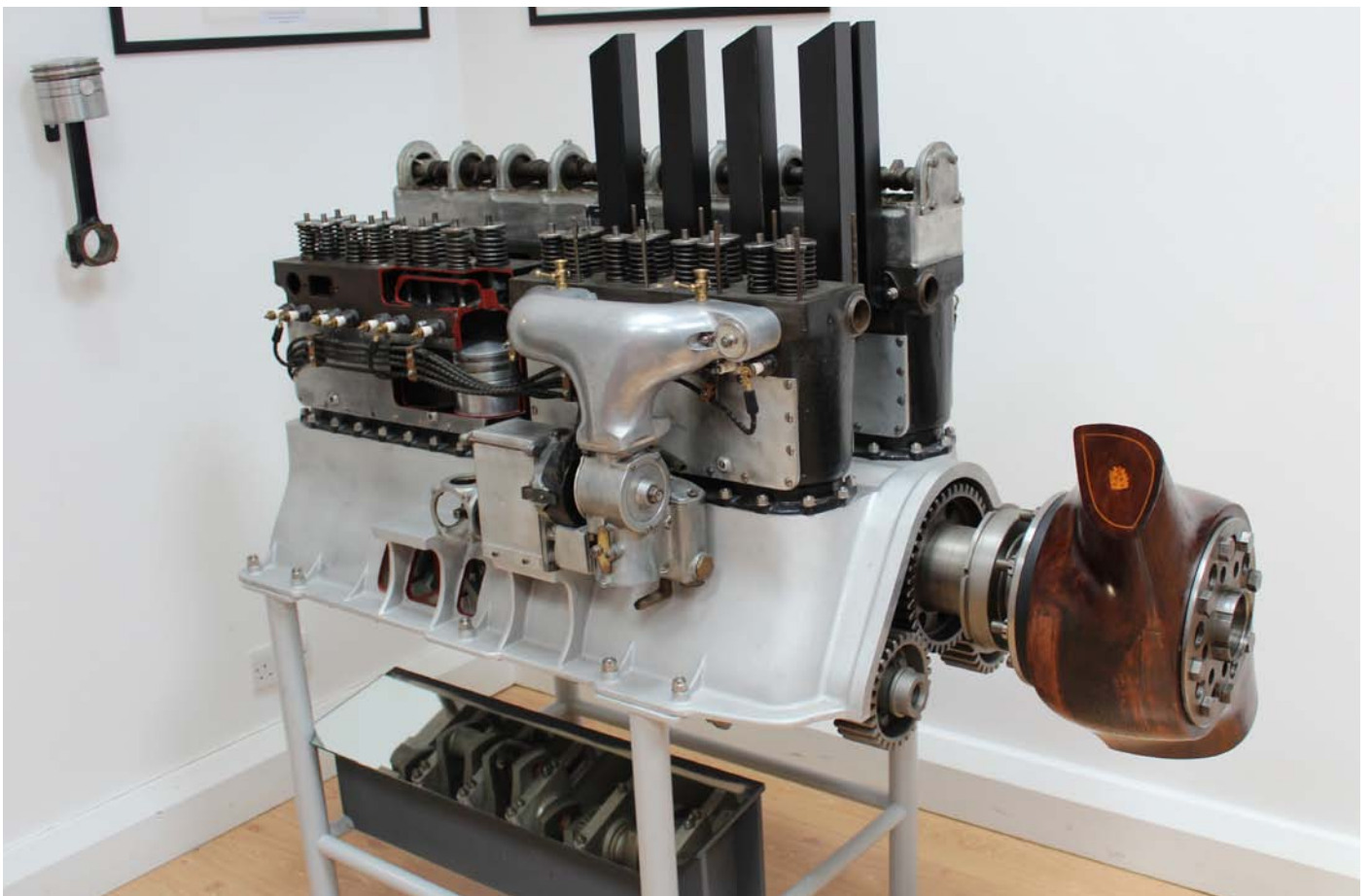
exquisite execution. It is helpful to understand some of the mechanical principles and subtleties as a start but, as an example, seeing a Type 35 roller-bearing crankshaft, displaying how it is “built up” compared to slipper or white metal alternatives, is a revelation. I found these numerous detailed exhibits the most interesting, other examples being a sectioned Type 35 gearbox and a display of the various types of wheels used over the generations of cars.

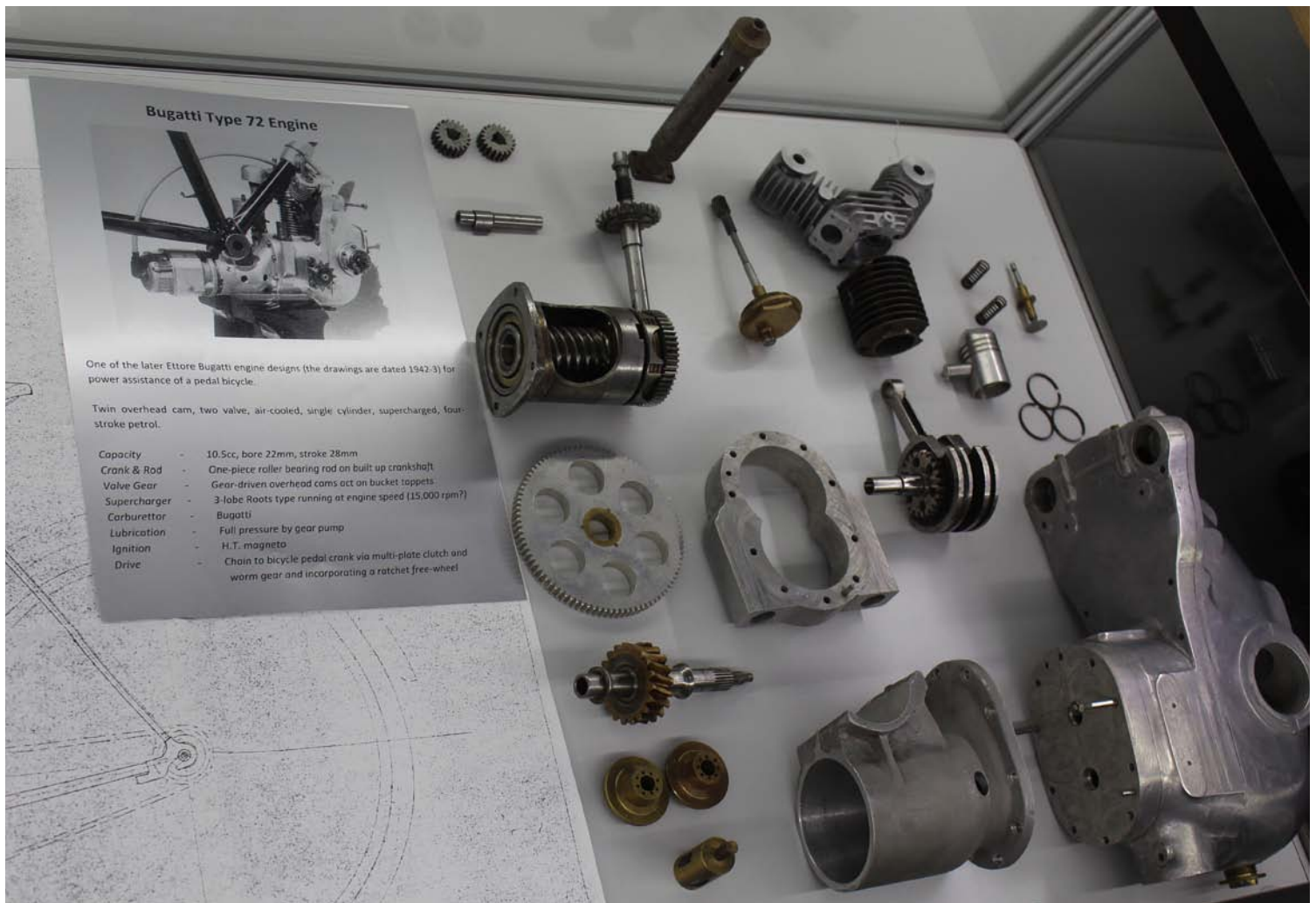
I did say it is small! The cars exhibited are owned, I understand, by members of the Bugatti Owners’ Club which purchased the Prescott site in 1937, and they change from time to time. There were two complete vehicles and one chassis on display when I visited. None are particularly significant in the spectrum of Bugatti grandeur. The two-seat sports



Above: An early un-supercharged Type 35 (late 1920s) with part of the wheel display in background.

Below: 1920s Bugatti aero engine – straight-eight x 2 = 16 cylinders and 64 valves, on a common crankcase. Note the 3-piece gear set at lower front which links the two crankshafts to the propeller drive gear and significantly reduces its revolutions.





Above: Again we see the exquisite design, craftsmanship and materials that characterise the work of Bugatti, in this instance a pedal-cycle assisting engine with a diminutive displacement of 10 c.c., designated Type 72. The air-cooled cylinder block, crankshaft with connecting rod, piston, piston rings and a camshaft may all be discerned in this superb display.



Left: The Bugatti Trust building. The club-house of the Bugatti Owners' Club is in the area, too.

Photograph: Bugatti Trust.

See: www.bugatti-trust.co.uk/

derived from a 1933 Type 51A looks delicious with a body fitted in the late '30s by an unknown coachbuilder, probably from Paris. A Type 38A engine and a Fiat gearbox were also substituted in the interests of tractability at the same time. In 2010 it was fitted to a newly built Type 51A style chassis allowing the original Type 51A raced by Madame Anne-Cecile Itier to be assembled with an original GP body and straight-eight engine. The two photographs on the opposite page show the car as displayed with one of Bugatti's early automotive designs, the Peugeot Bébé, in the background.

In sharp contrast to the 16-cylinder monster aircraft engine

is a display showing the components of Ettore's jewel-like 10 c.c. bicycle engine, complete with supercharger and DOHCs. This highlights how he managed to successfully design mechanisms ranging from a push-bike, all types of cars, trains, up to world record-challenging aircraft. One way or another all these aspects of his talents are represented along with a small selection of Bugatti sculptures.

I was fortunate to be the only visitor and received VIP treatment from the most helpful staff and curator. With so many museums in the UK to choose from this isn't for everyone but in my case it was totally worthwhile.



Above & below: A 1931 Bugatti fitted in the late 1930s with Paris-built (probably) coachwork, a Type 38A engine and a Fiat gearbox, then more recently a reproduction Type 51A chassis. In the background is one of Bugatti's early automotive designs, the Peugeot B  b  .





***Above:** Several A.C.T. Branch members were seen at Classis Yass, as well as a number of former members and one potential new member. Only two Branch cars, though – both Goulburn Silver Wraiths! WFC67 nearest the camera, WHD101 behind.*



Classic Yass Display Day

Riverbank & Banjo Paterson Parks, Yass, N.S.W.

Saturday November 3rd



Above: Branch member John Tetley looking in at WFC67, Hooper touring limousine.

Below: Branch members David Thurlow (left) and owner Bryce Ronning enjoying the luxury of WFC67's First Class compartment.



Letter to the Editor

Bentley Mk VI drophead coupé B14MD U.K. experience

After the U.K. visit I have now had time to reflect.

It would have been the best experience that I could have ever expected. Attending the 2018 R.R.E.C. Annual Rally with the attention that the car received at the Earls Court Motor Show Tribute event was a highlight. The experience of driving the car in the country lanes in the southern parts of the U.K. with the Post-War 6-Cylinder Register tour of Devon was a joy providing memories that will last forever. It was a real challenge driving on such narrow roads with stone walls so close.

Finally, driving the car back to the shipping container for its trip home without any damage was a huge relief.

The experience was not without incident due to the car experiencing possible stage-fright. After only 10 minutes of its first drive the first major incident involving a water pump seizure presented a failure to proceed. Thankfully we were amongst the right company with the P. & A. Wood convoy, who came to the rescue and were able to transport the car and attend to the repairs. The second incident, in Devon, involved a failure with the fuel-pump. Luckily we were carrying a spare in our newly acquired Continental Touring Kit.

At the Register tour in Devon I thought that our car would have been a certainty for the “furthest distance *travelled* to the rally award”. However, the judges disqualified our shipping container miles to the U.K.! Our car being awarded the “Members’ Choice” trophy more than made up for that loss and was a real surprise. Whilst the silverware was welcomed the real winners for us were the friendship, camaraderie and contacts that we have made with like-minded enthusiasts.

I am now looking forward to getting the car back home. The memories will be treasured and will last for a long time to come.

Ian Oliver



Park Ward Coachwork

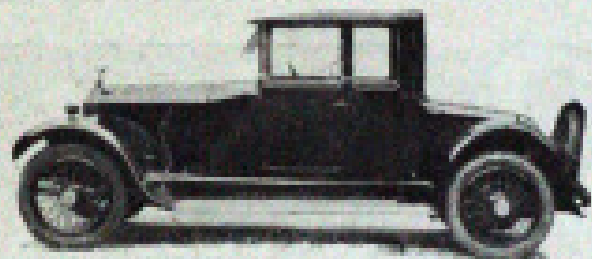
"the Highest Expression of the
Coachbuilder's Art"

PARK-WARD Coachwork has created for itself a unique position for artistic perfection of beauty of outline combined with comfort and durability.

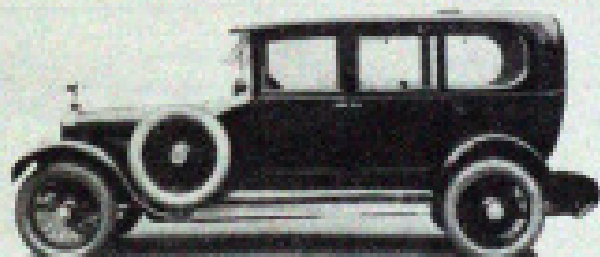
¶ To achieve this the use of carefully selected materials is essential, combined with highly-skilled labour in the various branches of coachbuilding.

Amongst the various types of body, special attention is drawn to the Park-Ward All-weather, which forms a perfectly open or closed car.

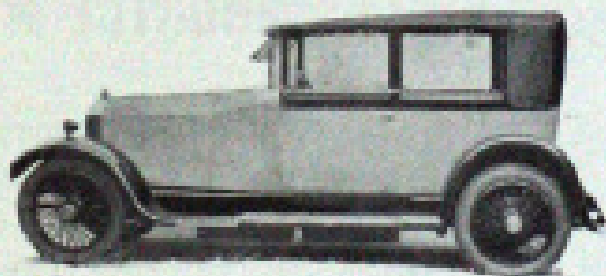
¶ Park, Ward & Company is the largest privately-owned firm of Coachbuilders and the business is run under the personal direction and supervision of the partners.



Count on 20 h.p. Rolls Royce. The ideal car for the lady driver.



Special Grand or Chaffeur Driver Saloon on 20 h.p. Daimler.



"V" From All-weather body on 20 h.p. Rolls Royce.

PARK. WARD & COMPANY

473, HIGH ROAD, WILLESDEN

Phone, Willesden 228-9. LONDON N.W. 10. Grams "Wardpark."



Sir Henry Royce Foundation Australia 2019 calendar

The revamped look of the new Sir Henry Royce Foundation calendar, including the double A3 size with wire centre join and higher quality paper, gives the calendar an exceptional finish. The price remains unchanged at only \$25.

After last year's overwhelming response it is hoped that the membership of the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club will continue to support this fine initiative and get behind this year's project and make it even more successful. It would be the ideal Christmas gift for the person who already has everything.

Please order from the Secretary: 02 6286 4265 or phy40183@bigpond.net.au



2019 CALENDAR

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Tailpiece . . .



Newly-built Bentley cars of various current models at the front of the Crewe factory in June this year. Photograph by Gos Cory.



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