

**ROLLS-ROYCE
ENTHUSIASTS' CLUB
SOUTH WESTERN SECTION**
January / February / March 2026 NEWSLETTER

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**This car belongs to John & Liz Field : Rolls Royce 1929 20/25 Chassis GGP6
The family have owned her since 1982**

As I type this page early in January I am sorry to tell you that our President and Editor, Beryl, has been unwell for the last couple of weeks, which is the time when this edition of the newsletter should be put to bed. Her son, Russell, has been a great help and is arranging for the printing, but there remains the stuffing of envelopes, then addressing and stamping them, so please forgive us if this newsletter reaches you a little later than usual.

Last year I invited you to participate in the national survey of our hobby organised by the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs. I don't know how many of you did so, but there was a national total of over 19,900 responses and the results have now been published. A brief summary:

- There are 1,934,178 historic vehicles registered with the DVLA.
- The historic vehicle sector contributes £7.3 billion annually to the UK economy.
- There are an estimated 690,777 historic vehicle owners who on average each spend £4,567 per year maintaining and enjoying their vehicles.
- Historic vehicles account for only 0.2% of all miles driven in the UK, with the average vehicle covering just 837 miles annually.
- The average age of an owner has risen to 66.

There is a lot more detail in the full report and I can send you a link to find it if you are interested.

On a similar subject, those of you who read the Daily Telegraph may have seen an article that included the information that a typical classic car driven 1,200 miles will emit about 563 grams of CO₂, against up to 6.8 tonnes of CO₂ to build an electric vehicle.

The finding in the FBHVC survey that the average age of an historic vehicle owner has risen to 66 probably understates the situation in the RREC because many younger enthusiasts perceive our cars as being too expensive to buy and maintain. I remember back in 1980 when I wanted to buy my first pre-war Rolls-Royce my wife, Liz, was worried about the costs of running it, so I suggested that she should call Eric Barrass, the wonderful Club Secretary, and seek his advice. Eric assured Liz at very great length that maintaining a pre-war Rolls-Royce would cost no more than maintaining a Ford Cortina. Of course, he lied, but I got my 20/25!

The fact remains that we need to give serious thought to how we may attract younger members, and I venture to suggest that perhaps we should follow the lead of some other car clubs and make a big effort to welcome any enthusiast to join us, even if they do not currently own a Club car. Having a few other makes of car parked outside our monthly gatherings would do no harm, and would give us the opportunity to welcome their owners and provide the opportunity to demonstrate the appeal of owning a Club car.

If all goes according to plan you will find with or within this newsletter the report of our AGM, and a copy of the presentation given by Antony Channing as a representative of the RREC Board. If you've not already heard then news, I am very sorry to tell you that shortly after the AGM Antony resigned from the Board – a great loss because he was probably the only Director who represented the true wishes of many members, and Antony's request that in future you use every opportunity to use your vote in Club affairs should be taken very seriously.

Lastly, although it is a long way ahead, Liz and I will invite you all to a garden party at our home on 15th August. Please put the date in your diaries and try to keep it free because the catering arrangements are very number-dependent.

Our Treasurer, John Eaton, organised a lunch at this venue last October which was so enjoyable that it was decided to return this October, and John once again made all the arrangements. The event attracted twenty-four of us in an interesting selection of Club cars, both pre and post war models, and we were delighted to welcome Ruth Brinkley to her first Section event.

The plan was to meet for coffee at noon before moving into our private dining room at 12:30 but, as usual, friends old and new enjoyed catching up and chatting so we were about half an hour late in picking up our named place cards and taking our seats, but this didn't faze the excellent staff who promptly moved in to take further drinks orders and serve our starters.

Unfortunately, at this stage in the meal a lady in our group was suddenly taken ill and an ambulance had to be called. Probably due to the hotel's remote location it took a very long time to arrive, but Ruth, Ria Dart, and Eryl Stapleton, together with the Hotel Manager, stepped up and provided valuable help and comfort during the wait. Meal service was suspended during this period but the Chef did a great job and when service was resumed the excellent food showed no signs of having been kept waiting to be served.

By the time it came for us to take our leave, and after a thorough check by the ambulance crew, the patient was well enough to return home in her husband's car, and I've since been told that she made a full recovery.

The Ilsington is the perfect venue for one of our monthly events as its location is reasonably central in our patch, it has plenty of parking spaces, good grub, and accommodation should anyone require it. I'm sure it will become one of our regular venues.



Front car:
Peter & Eryl
stapleton's
R-R
1934
20/25
Chassis :GK 618
=====



Front car:
Charles
Master-Curtis's
1926 R-R
20hp
Chassis:
GOK54



Peter Hazel's
2008
Bentley
Continental.
Outside
the
Ilington
Country House
Hotel
=====



Tony & Linda
Hunt's
1936
Rolls-Royce
25/30
Chassis
GHL34
(In their recognised
Company's colours)
=====



David & Marilyn
Jobson-Scott's
1980
Rolls-Royce
Silver Shadow 11
Chassis:
SRH 40021
They have owned
this car for 20 years
=====

From left to right:

Dean Ash
(our committee
member who takes
many of the
newsletter photos)
with
Hug & Mary
Stephenson.

Mary is also a
committee member
and responsible for
typing up the
Minutes of
meetings etc.



Left:
Peter Stapleton.

Right:
Phil Dart:
(a fairly new
member who
purchased their
1937 Derby
Bentley from
'Bill & Rita
Campden when
they moved up
north,)

=====

MOTORISTS OF THE VERY EARLY DAYS : AS REPORTED BY:
LORD MONTAGUE OF BEAULIEU
Exceeding the speed limit.....

Walter Arnold was charged on 28th. January 1896 at Tonbridge with exceeding the 2 mph speed limit at Paddock Wood. It was estimated that he was doing 8 mph when stopped by a policeman on a bicycle after a five mile chase.

He was fined one shilling.

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Page 7. Minutes of the RREC South West Section AGM
held on Sunday 16th November, 2025. Report by Mary Stephenson.

Present

Dean & Collette Ash
Tim & Mandy Baker
Bernie & Sue Batchelor
Antony & J
Jill Channing
Phil & Ria Dart
John & Sue Eaton
Robin Edwards
John & Liz Field
Rod Fitzhugh
Glyn Holford
Tony & Linda Hunt
Tom & Linda Jones
Tod Marshman
William Marshman
Hedley & Ruth Piper
Howard Ridley
Joseph Read and Scarlett
Patrick Simpson
Hug & Mary Stephenson

Apologies

Jim & Daphne Barnes-Phillips
Robert Crawley
Roger Holland
Peter Houlihan
Terry Lee
Chris Mower
Peter & Eryl Stapleton
Beryl Stone
Trevor & Lyndsey Welch
Brian & Susan Wills-Pope
Ruth Brinkley?

Minutes of the last AGM

These were approved. Proposed: Phil Dart Seconded: Sue Eaton

Chairman's Report

John Field welcomed Antony Channing and his wife Jill and thanked Antony for attending as Guest Speaker representing the Board.

He made the point that the AGM only concerns the south west section as set out in the agenda. He then informed those present of the events that had been organised over the previous twelve months, particularly noting that the evening dinner event organised for June had to be cancelled owing to lack of interest.

Treasurer's Report

A copy of the accounts was circulated. The Treasurer pointed out that the income for 2024-25 was larger than usual. This was due to £773 paid to the section by Hunt House. Although much appreciated, he was unable to say why we had received it. Another boost to the year's income was a one-off payment of £175 being the income from the late John Pearce's memorabilia.

Anticipating a rise in the cost of postage stamps, the Chairman and Treasurer had agreed to buy a substantial supply of stamps at the earlier price. This resulted in a surplus of stamps, thus bring the expenditure figure for the 2024-25 year down.

The matter of cost for printing the newsletter is one that needs to be addressed and the committee will be discussing finances at their meeting in January 2026.

The Treasurer asked if there were any questions from the floor; the Chairman promptly rose and reminded him that questions were not allowed.

Approval of Accounts

The accounts were then approved. Proposed: Tod Marshman Seconded: Liz Field.

Election of Officers

The committee, all having agreed to stand and with no further nominations, were re-elected en bloc. Proposed: Phil Dart Seconded: Linda Jones.

Events for remainder of 2025 and beyond

Before listing the events proposed, the Chairman made the point that following a fall in numbers at events the committee would appreciate members letting them know what kind of events they would like to attend, e.g. picnics which is something other sections organise; ideas are always welcome.

Xmas Lunch – Saturday 13th December at the Victoria Hotel in Sidmouth – organised by Collette and Dean Ash. Raffle prizes needed please. Booking form in the last newsletter.

31st January – Lunch at The Ley Arms. Organised by John Field. Booking form in the last newsletter.

25th February – Lunch at The Plume of Feathers, Mitchell, Cornwall. Organised by Mary Stephenson. Booking form in the next newsletter.

29th March – Lunch at The Commodore Hotel, Instow. Organised by Collette and Dean Ash. Details in the next newsletter.

26th April – Drive-it-Day somewhere on Exmoor. Organised by Tony Hunt. Details to follow.

24th May – Visit to The Robey Trust followed by lunch at The Horn of Plenty. Organised by Collette and Dean Ash. Details to follow.

Next committee meeting will be on 25th January.

The Chairman formally closed the Annual General Meeting. He also announced that the presentation of the Graham Pearce Attendance Trophy had been postponed as the winners were unable to attend the AGM.

He then welcomed Antony Channing to the front as our Guest Speaker.

=====

South West Section: Speech from Anthony Channing. (As writ en by him.)

Thank you, Chairman. I seem to recall that there were a greater number of members here last year and perhaps your chairman made a mistake in inviting me to be the Board Director to tell you what is going on since clearly my efforts last year have put people off.

Last November I made a passing reference to the staff leaving The Hunt House which had only just happened. Another move has just taken place to serviced offices at Pury End. Many people, quite rightly, have queried the decision to leave The Hunt House since the Club is still committed to paying the rent and other outgoings specified in the Lease. The Board vote was heavily in favour; my pointing out that the facilities at The Hunt House were specifically built so that the Club could fulfil its offer to the members, did not carry any weight. Recently I have returned to this subject since the Club served Notice on the Sir Henry Royce Memorial Foundation, as provided for by the lease, which means the Club will vacate totally on 15th June, 2027. My enquiries concerning how the Club's offer to members will be fulfilled have, so far, elicited no response. I am sure that you can all see that a number of the published benefits will need to be offered in a different form once the Club is no longer entitled to use The Hunt House. Nor will the Club have a prestigious HQ. Ideas that I have heard suggest that some of the activities such as the Seminars, Fireside Chats and tool hire may be devolved to Sections. However, falling out with the Foundation will have a major impact on the provision of build records and chassis cards; the agreements between the Foundation and Bentley – which I should remind you started life as Rolls-Royce Motors Limited (in 1971) – are the basis for the Club's ability to offer these with a commission then paid to the Foundation. There is a possibility that the Foundation with Bentley's backing will no longer permit this.

Turning to the principal activity of a car club, which is a restricted occurrence on the Board so all-consuming is the spat with the Foundation, reports indicate that the Rally to Cologne was a very enjoyable experience for those who took part and it is intended to replicate this "International" event in 2027 with a suggested visit to Italy and in 2029 to Spain. I have heard rave reviews for the Silver Shadow event organised by Michael Marshall-Clarke at Brooklands – the staff there were flabbergasted to find that, with proper organisation, 178 cars could be brought in through the gates and lined up for photography within 90 minutes. The one anniversary that probably did not secure as much attention as it should have done was the centenary of the introduction of the New Phantom; those of you who peruse our monthly magazine will know the Derby Wings and Wheels event in May had a small side show with four Phantom 1s present. The next major anniversary for which planning is starting is, believe it or not, the Seventieth Birthday of the Club in 2027 – sadly we do not have the opportunity to go back to Windsor as we did for the late Queen's Silver and Golden Jubilee celebrations and I will add Eric's usual comment; "God Bless Her".

Next year we are back with a UK based Annual Rally which will be at Kelmarsh, a location previously used, and known to some of us who were there in 2005 as quite damp – assurances have been given that such problems will not recur.

Our Chairman, initially, took on the responsibility for making sure this rally was an outstanding success but in the last three months has handed the job of supervision at Board Level, over to the Events Director Philip Hopson. Philip was in charge of the 2024 event. Happily, we have Trevor and Patsy Baldwin amongst those helping with the organisation. Recent announcements have made much of a reduction in the staff costs. These have been achieved by not replacing staff who have left, other than the appointment of David Robinson as Interim General

Manager to replace Claire Seymour who resigned in March. David is providing his services at something like half of the amount paid to Claire and doing a very good job, to such an extent that I have become concerned about his workload – and twice have suggested he take time off to recharge his batteries. His input has identified much that needs correction in terms of waste and unnecessary outside services. Cutting out these costs will improve the finances of the Club but at present; despite asking, I have not seen any preliminary year end figures: the only “Headline” is that the club will again be in deficit and the extent of that will depend on the situation with the Foundation.

I referred last year to the question of the rent review on The Hunt House. That was settled at the figure put forward by the Foundation of £60,620 per annum. The story behind that would take some time to relate so I will move on.

I know not many of our members take a day-to-day interest in how the Club is run but it is a matter for regret to me that many major decisions are being taken and implemented without consultation with the members.

I will close by, once again, asking you to use your votes. It is extremely important that a members' club reflects the views and wishes of the members, and in particular I suggest, let the new Chairman, Philip Brooks, know how you feel about decisions.

Questions from the floor

Tom Jones asked how many members there are currently. **AC replied:** Currently the membership total is around 7,000 but allowing for joint members and life members, including me, those paying full subscription total around 5,500.

Tim Baker asked if the deficit was growing. **AC replied:** It is not going to be as great as it was in 2024 but depends on the decision of the Board regarding The Hunt House. There is a possible liability of £350,000 which is calculated by adding the outstanding rent to June 2027 to the potential cost of dilapidations identified in the survey from December 2024. The Club is going back on some of the ownership agreements made with the Foundation and this is causing political problems.

Patrick Simpson asked about insurance; who pays for what, e.g. the Library? **AC replied:** The Foundation is responsible for the Library. There is provision in the agreement as to who pays what. The figures are 62% of costs such as heating and lighting etc and 38% for matters such as rates, insurance – the calculation being based on staff numbers for the first type of expense, and floor area occupied for the second (as at the time of the lease being drawn up by the Club).

Glyn Holford expressed his respect for Antony Channing ‘hanging in there’ and asked if he knew what the wider membership thinks about what is going on at Board Level/Hunt House. **AC replied:** He had attempted to ascertain this and had talked with RRBSA specialists dealing with Club members who suggested – 60% don’t agree with what is going on.

Rod Fitzhugh asked what is happening to The Hunt House building. **AC replied:** It is being used this weekend for the Foundation Heritage weekend and checking with John Steward (a trustee) on Friday it was watertight and fit for use but for a small leak in a 50 square foot flat roof to the rear of the property.

John Field asked if it was true that the current Chair had once been excluded by BDC. **AC replied:** Yes. And if anyone is interested, he was also disqualified as a company director in about 2000.



Committee members -From left to right: Bernie Batchelor (our newest recruit) Tom Jones from Cornwall. John Eaton (Treasurer) John Field (Chairman: opening the meeting) Collette Ash (Secretary) Mary Stephenson and Tony Hunt



Anthony Channing addresses the Meeting
Also showing the Graham Pearce trophy awarded to the member(s) who have attended the most events during the year and Dean Ash (far right) who takes many of the photographs.



The members chatting and awaiting the meeting to commence.

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CHRISTMAS LUNCH 13TH DECEMBER, 2025, at The Victoria Hotel, Sidmouth.

Write-up by John Field... Photos by John Field & Tony Hunt.

This year's Christmas lunch was organised by Dean and Collette Ash and after a very slow start eventually attracted 21 bookings. (it doesn't seem all that long ago that we had 80 participants at the Livermead House Hotel in Torquay for our Christmas meal). We received a warm welcome from the hotel staff who offered mulled wine on arrival, followed by a three course lunch in the lovely Jubilee Restaurant where tables had been reserved for us, together with space to hold our traditional raffle.

Unfortunately, the day prior to the lunch Dean and Collette had to cancel their bookings due to health reasons, another lady thoughtfully cancelled because her daughter had 'flu and she was concerned that she might be carrying the infection. Then just before midnight another couple cancelled because they had blocked drains! The hotel coped very well with the necessary reorganisation of the tables and provided clearly written place cards for us to take into the restaurant to indicate our choice of seating, and the final score was just 16.

As expected from the Victoria, the food and service were excellent, and when the meal was finished Tony Hunt conducted the raffle which raised £70.

Tony Hunt giving out a raffle prize

Left: John & Sue Eaton sitting with
Bernie & Sue Batchelor








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Left: restoration of 1932 20/25 completed in 2023 & winner of the 20/25 class Concours d'Elegance at the RREC rally June 2023 - one of a number of first prize winning restorations we have undertaken.

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