



# THE CAPITAL LETTER

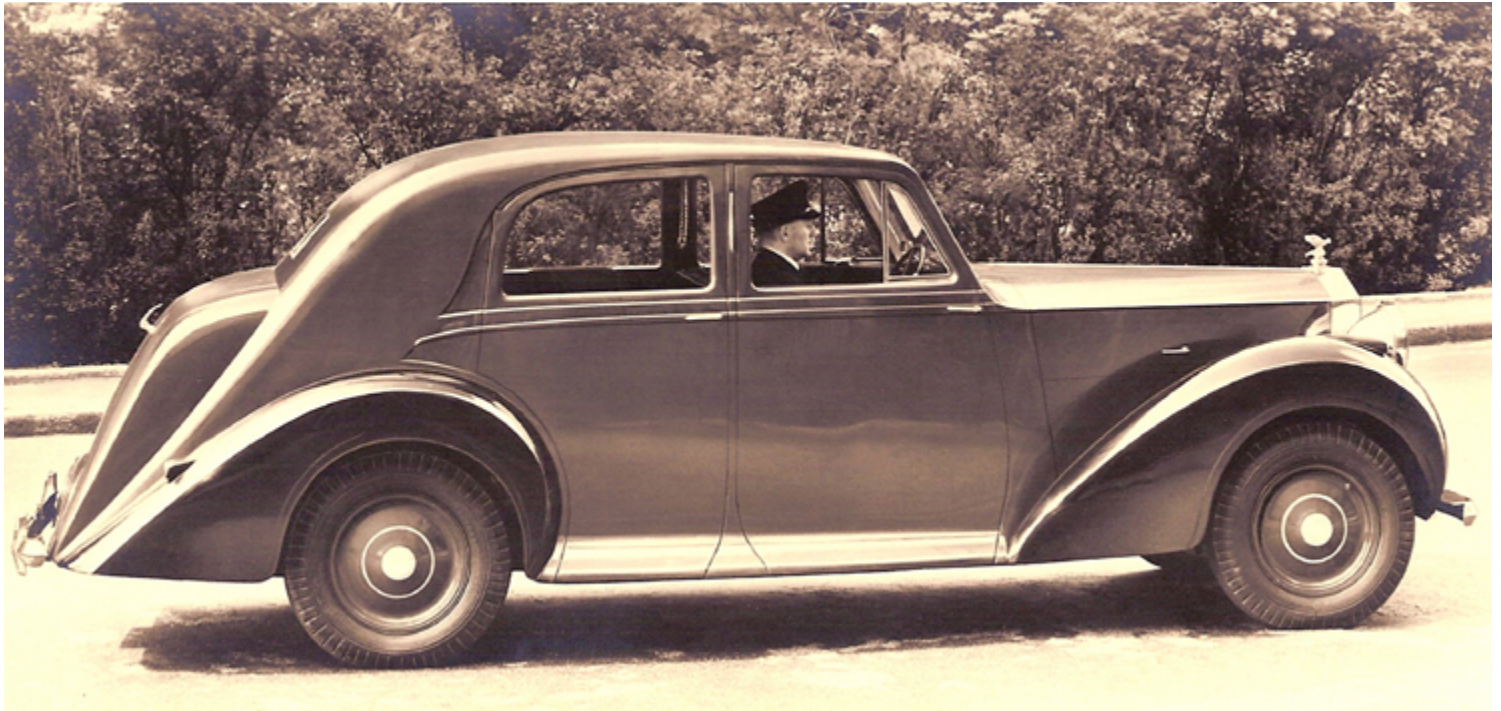
Quarterly journal of the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of Australia ACT Branch Incorporated  
*Serving the Australian Capital Region*



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**DEDICATED TO ROLLS-ROYCE & BENTLEY ENTHUSIASTS**

**Winter 2025**



WTA32

1947 Silver Wraith Park Ward saloon

**The first post-war Rolls-Royce to arrive in Australia**



# From the President

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Club Website: [rroact.org.au](http://rroact.org.au)



6th August was the date on which an EGM and this year's AGM were held. The purpose of the EGM was to amend the Club's Constitution to more fully define the eligibility of cars. The revised definition was approved and implemented in accordance with the Constitution.

As a result of some former Committee members wishing to stand down, a new Committee was duly elected at the AGM and I welcome the three new Committee members – Mike Mulvihill (Vice President), Tina Oliver (Secretary) and Ken Wedgwood (Treasurer). Other members who also play important roles to keep the Club's wheels turning are Ian Oliver, Peter Toet, Ian Dunn, Martin Bennett, David Neely and Luke Drady. I thank them all for agreeing to continue in their respective roles.

Unfortunately, the October General Meeting could not proceed due to the lack of a quorum (five members). In an attempt to include more interstate members in the bi-monthly meetings, Zoom meetings are now available and links to enable this are distributed as part of the meeting notices. Our next General Meeting is scheduled for 3rd December.

Our Webmaster, Luke Drady successfully updated our site to more correctly name us as the ACT Club and not as the former ACT Branch. Other minor tweaks will occur as they are worked through.

Although we don't have a designated Events Captain/Organiser, we are still able to run Club events to nearby venues. In August 12 members enjoyed a Sunday lunch run to the Royal Hotel in Dalton, just north of Gunning. We have been there before and we were not disappointed this time either.

Despite good intentions, the proposed Saturday lunch run to the Old Goulburn Brewery has had to be postponed twice due to the venue's popularity. Once a firm booking can be obtained, the run will proceed as planned.

Several ACT members were able to participate in the recent 'SMART' Register run through north-east Victoria (see separate report starting on page 8).

The next event at which we normally participate will be the Terribly British Day (TBD) at Queanbeyan Park on 2nd November between 10 am and 2 pm. It is the 50th anniversary of the event and full details can be viewed at [events@cacmc.org](mailto:events@cacmc.org). As previously advised, our traditional End-of-Year Get-together is being held at the Statesman Hotel in Curtin on Saturday 6th December at 12.15 pm. At the time of writing we have thirteen confirmed attendees, so if you're still intending to come along, please contact me.

*Until next issue, happily proceeding!*  
Peter Hyland



**Left:** Two two-door 'SMART' cars in Beechworth during the recent tour by that Register. The cream car is 1984 Rolls-Royce Camargue AJE08943 owned by John & Marjorie Wilson (Vic.) and the blue one is 1997 Bentley Continental R BBW63021 owned by our member Graham Lawrence. See also page 8 et seq.

**Front Cover:** WTA32 was the first post-war Rolls-Royce to arrive in Australia. It is seen here when new in London in 1947 just prior to shipping to Sydney. See also page 19. Photograph from the Editor's collection.



# From the Editor

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*While every care is taken to check information published, no responsibility can be accepted for errors. Views expressed by the Editor and contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the policies of the Club. Nothing in this journal, including any advertisement, should be construed as endorsement by the Editor or the Club of the quality or suitability of any product, service or procedure.*

Following the AGM, our new Committee comprises Peter Hyland (President), Mike Mulvihill (Vice-President), Tina Oliver (Secretary) and Ken Wedgwood (Treasurer and Public Officer). Contact details are on the back page of this editions of *The Capital Letter* of which, for my sins, I remain Editor.

Ian Oliver has acquired a memento of the 1966 Federal Rally held in Canberra and has sent them to me for publication (page 18) to which I have added some covering notes.

We were sorry to hear that long-time member Suzie Parkhurst has decided not to renew her membership. The three wonderful cars she owned with her late partner Michael Zwar have long since been sold and it was only on very rare occasions that the opportunity arose for her to participate in any events. So all our very best wishes to Suzie for the future.

Our Sunday lunch run to Dalton on 17th August may easily be considered a success, with a round dozen people in a variety of cars, not all of which have previously been seen on our runs. Another car club turned up a little after us so a brisk trade was enjoyed by the historic Royal Hotel (see page 4). The Spirit, Mulsanne & Related Types ('SMART') Register's 'SMARTing to the Silos' 5-day event was fabulous as always (see page 8 *et seq*).

*Martin Bennett*



## Branch Events Calendar

Members should please note that dates and details of events listed here are in some cases indicative only and are subject to change. Timely notice of each forthcoming event is provided by group email and/or text message but in the event of any doubt please contact the Secretary or President to confirm – contact details on the back cover of each edition of *The Capital Letter*.

### NOVEMBER

**Sunday 2nd November:** Terribly British Day – the annual display day of local British car clubs, Queanbeyan Park, Lowe Street. Please note that this is a month earlier than in the past.

### DECEMBER

**Saturday 6th December:** End-of-Year Get-together lunch, 12.15 pm, Statesman Hotel in Curtin.

### FEBRUARY 2026

**Wednesday 4th February 2026:** Our first General Meeting of the year, 7.00 p.m., 72 Gladstone Street, Fyshwick.



**Above:** The historic Royal Hotel in Dalton, New South Wales, which dates from 1865. Bryce & Marcia Ronning's 1949 Silver Wraith WFC67 on the left.

## Royal Dalton Hotel Lunch Run Sunday 17th August

**Below:** Sonny Pirotta's 1981 Bentley Mulsanne BSB03714.







*Above, from left to right: Manuela Bennett, Marcia Ronning, Bryce Ronning.*

***Right:** During our time at Dalton your Editor presented Sonny Pirotta with an Italian language Silver Spirit and Bentley Mul-sanne Owners' Handbook which needless to say is an extremely rare and unusual artifact which came from the extensive Richard Mann collection.*

*Photograph by Bryce Ronning.*

***Below:** President Peter Hyland's 1994 Silver Spirit III ASR54357.*







*Above: Chris & Narelle O'Rourke's 1957 Silver Cloud SED51, which they have owned for 24 years.*



*Below: Martin & Manuela Bennett's 1960 Bentley S2 B25CT.*





*Above: Club diners at the Royal.*

*Below: It was a pleasure to see David Kimmorley with his 1986 Silver Spirit ASG14563.*





*Above: The Silver Spirit III is a relatively rare model, with only 211 built and only a half dozen or so in the Club nation-wide. Remarkably, two are owned by A.C.T. members and both of those were on this Tour. This 1995 car is ASS55726, owned by Ian & Tina Oliver. The grain silo artwork at St James, Victoria, depicts G.J. Coles (Sir George from 1957). The Rolls-Royce connections that often crop up are always surprising and when your Editor enters a Coles supermarket it brings to mind the Rolls-Royce Silver Wraith, WVA46, of which G.J. Coles took delivery brand-new in July 1947. It had the same Park Ward saloon coachwork style as the front cover car of this Capital Letter. He later owned a Silver Cloud.*

## SMARTing to the Silos

Tuesday 7th - 11th October

*By the Editor*

These Register tours are always extremely enjoyable. The Spirit, Mulsanne and Related Types ('SMART') Register tours organised by their Registrar, our President Peter Hyland, are particularly so. This year, eight A.C.T. people took part, out of a total of 18 participants.

We began in Gundagai with 12 people, including our Federal President Louise Matthews and her husband Neil. Unfortunately they unavoidably parted company from us after the second night, in Beechworth.

From Beechworth we drove to Glenrowan, where famously the infamous Kelly gang's 'last stand' took place. We were able to re-live that historical event courtesy of an extra-

ordinarily impressive 'animatronic show' in which we were transported back to those events in 1880. Far better and more convincing than might be expected.

From Glenrowan we began the silos tour which gave this event its name. The silo art, to which the photographs here can scarcely do justice, is well worth the drive. Ending in Yarrawonga we found our motel on the shores of Lake Mulwala, which is a widening of the River Murray by damming. Later in the afternoon we boarded *Cumberoona* – a traditional side-wheeler paddle-steamer equipped with both its original 1906 steam engine and a modern diesel.

Nexr day – Friday – we headed off to Tocumwal to visit the





***This page:*** The ‘SMART’ family of Rolls-Royce and Bentley motors cars includes several two-door coachbuilt types including the two models on this page. ***Above*** is Graham Lawrence keeping his 1997 Bentley Continental R BBW63021 in its characteristic immaculate condition in Gundagai. John & Marjorie Wilson’s 1984 Camargue AJE08943 in Beechworth. Both cars are ‘SMART’, or ‘SZ’ series models. Although the Camargue was introduced as a Silver Shadow derivative, it continued into the ‘SZ’ period and this example is one of those.

Aviation Museum there. This is situated within the largest aerodrome in the southern hemisphere and the largest base ever operated by the Royal Australian Air Force.

In the evening was our ‘black tie’ Farewell Dinner at which the winners of two trophies were announced – one for the ‘SMART’ car trivia quiz, won by David Ross, the other for the car that members would most like to take home, which was won by John & Marjorie Wilson for their 1984 Camargue.

Manuela and I drove home from Yarrawonga, sharing the driving, via the Riverina Highway and the town

of Corowa – “the Birthplace of Federation”, where in 1893 a conference laid the groundwork for the establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia., our S2 having completed a total of 725 miles, or 1,160 trouble-free kilometres.

Congratulations are certainly due to Peter Hyland for the very high standard of his organising skills. which were very much appreciated by all.

Please enjoy the photographic coverage on these and the following pages.







**Above:** ‘SMART’ cars assembling in Gundagai at the Historical Museum, which was packed with countless artifacts of earlier eras. Registrar Peter Hyland is locking his 1994 Silver Spirit III ASR54357.

**Below:** Tour cars outside Kellyland in Glenrowan, scene of the Kelly gang’s last stand in 1880. Nearest the camera is 1981 Silver Spirit ASB02134, owned by David Ross (N.S.W.).







***Above:** The Olivers' 1995 Silver Spirit III again, this time with the silo art at Devenish as a backdrop, featuring local heroes of the Great War, 1914-18.*



***This picture:** The silo art at Katamatite, featuring steam and horse-drawn transport, with Martin & Manuela Bennett's 1960 Bentley S2 B25CT – the earliest car on the tour.*





*Above: 'SMART' Registrar Peter Hyland's 1994 model ASR54357 is the slightly earlier of two Silver Spirit IIIs on the tour.*

*Below: Mike Mulvihill's 2017 Bentley Continental GT, BNH61369, was the newest car taking part in the tour.*







*Above: We had two Silver Cloud / S Series cars on this 'SMART' event, just as we always have 'SMART' cars on 'Head in the Clouds' tours. Although well over 60 years of age, they will do anything asked of them including effortlessly keeping up with modern traffic. This is John Bidgood's 1963 Silver Cloud III SCX245.*

*Above: 14 of us enjoyed a cruise on Lake Mulwala aboard the side-wheeler paddle vessel Cumberoona.*







*Above: Those who chose the upper deck enjoyed an excellent view of the passing lake scenery.*

*Below: Those on the lower deck, from left around the table we see here: Manuela Bennett, Nan Bak, John Wilson, Peter Hyland and David Ross.*







***Above:** Richard & Norma Harradine's 1993 Bentley Brooklands BEP46262.*

***Below:** John & Marjorie Wilson have owned their 1984 Camargue AJE08943 for several decades. Registrar Peter Hyland is presenting John with the prize for the car participants would most like to take home.*





**Above:** Participants came and went throughout this tour as other obligations were pursued, and 12 people were present for the Black-tie final dinner on the shores of Lake Mulwala. They are, clockwise from left: Richard Harradine (Qld), Norma Harradine (Qld), Manuela Bennett (A.C.T.), Martin Bennett (A.C.T.), David Ross (N.S.W.), John Bidgood (Vic.), Mike Mulvihill (A.C.T.), Graham Lawrence (A.C.T.), John Wilson (Vic.), Marjorie Wilson (Vic.), Nan Bak (A.C.T.), Peter Hyland (A.C.T.).

**Below:** Registrar Peter Hyland presenting David Ross with his SMART car Trivia Quiz prize. Trophies kindly donated by Bohemia Trading Pty Ltd, Sydney.



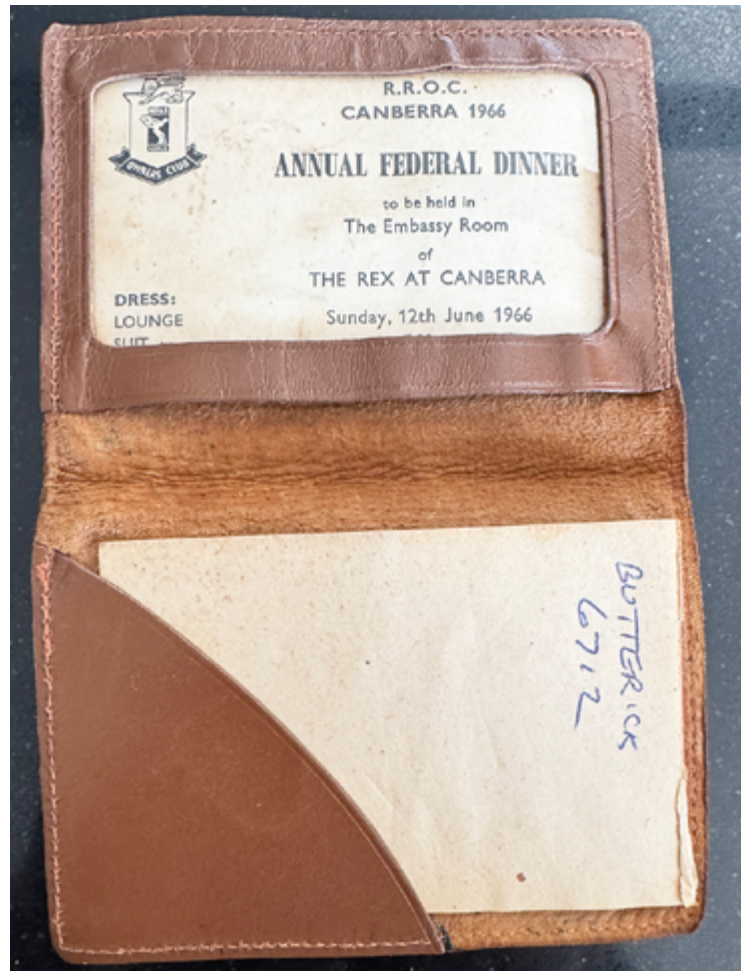




***Below:** Tom Clarke (Vic.) sent this shot taken during a local event in which we see, at the preserved Castlemaine railway station, Tom & Fiona's 1951 Silver Dawn SDB26 in the foreground, then two cars further back, 1950 Silver Wraith H.J. Mulliner touring limousine previously owned by your Editor but now by Eddie Newton in Victoria. The heritage train is headed by one of 60 'J' Class locomotives built for the Victorian Railways in 1954 by Vulcan Foundry in Lancashire.*







## An Historical Acquisition

*Photographs from Ian Oliver,*

*notes by the Editor*

Ian Oliver sent these two photographs of a memento of the 1966 Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of Australia Federal Rally in Canberra.

In 1966 the R.R.O.C. of Australia comprised four Branches, those being the original 1956 New South Wales club, which hosted the 1966 Rally in Canberra featured here, the Victoria Branch which followed in 1957, the South Australian Branch of 1958 and the Western Australia Branch which was formed in 1965. There was not yet a Queensland Branch, and our own A.C.T. Branch was still the best part of 20 years away.

For historical context, in June 1966 the Silver Shadow had only been introduced a few months earlier and the first examples delivered in Australia had not long arrived. One was present at the Rally courtesy of York Motors.

The Club was called Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of Australia

from the outset, though it was often referred to simply as "R.R.O.C.".

This memento of the Rally, which Ian acquired at an auction of the effects of the late David Jones (Vic.), would have been in the 'goody bag'. It includes a hand-written note that appears to be a knitting or sewing pattern number, Butterick being a leading name in that field.

It is interesting that the dress code for the Federal Dinner was then "Lounge Suit" in those days, though that evolved over the following four years to "Black Tie", or Dinner Suit, as it has remained ever since.







*Above: Our front cover car, 1947 Silver Wraith WTA32, with saloon coachwork by Park Ward, photographed in the United States, still displaying its early New South Wales registration plate.*

## The first post-war Rolls-Royce in Australia

*By the Editor*

In May 1947 Silver Wraith WTA32 arrived in Sydney.

From an Australian perspective this was an historically important car, being the very first post-war Rolls-Royce to arrive in Australia, as well as being only the 31st Rolls-Royce built following the end of World War II.

WTA32 was used by York Motors as a 'trials' car – i.e. for customer and press demonstration purposes – before being delivered to F.T. Wimble & Co. Ltd, manufacturers of printing inks and distributors of imported printing machinery. Finished in maroon with black 'wings', it was a Park Ward saloon of the first post-war design by that coachbuilder, which although perhaps a bit plain was not lacking a certain indefinable charm.

In comparison with the traditional construction methods employed by other coachbuilders, the Park Ward coachwork was relatively advanced, using a steel body frame of a design covered by their own patent. This imparted a solid structural strength, lower weight and comparative freedom from rattles and creaks.

In 1986 WTA32 was taken by its then owner to the United States, where it remains at the time of writing. However, I have been informed by the owner that it is for sale, for the first time in several decades, so there might be a window of opportunity for an Australian enthusiast to bring it 'home', which would be a fine outcome!



## Tailpiece . . .



*Club cars near the Royal Hotel, Dalton, Sunday 17th August.*



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