



The History of The North-East Area



by
Anna R Gunn

The History of the North-East Area

The early days

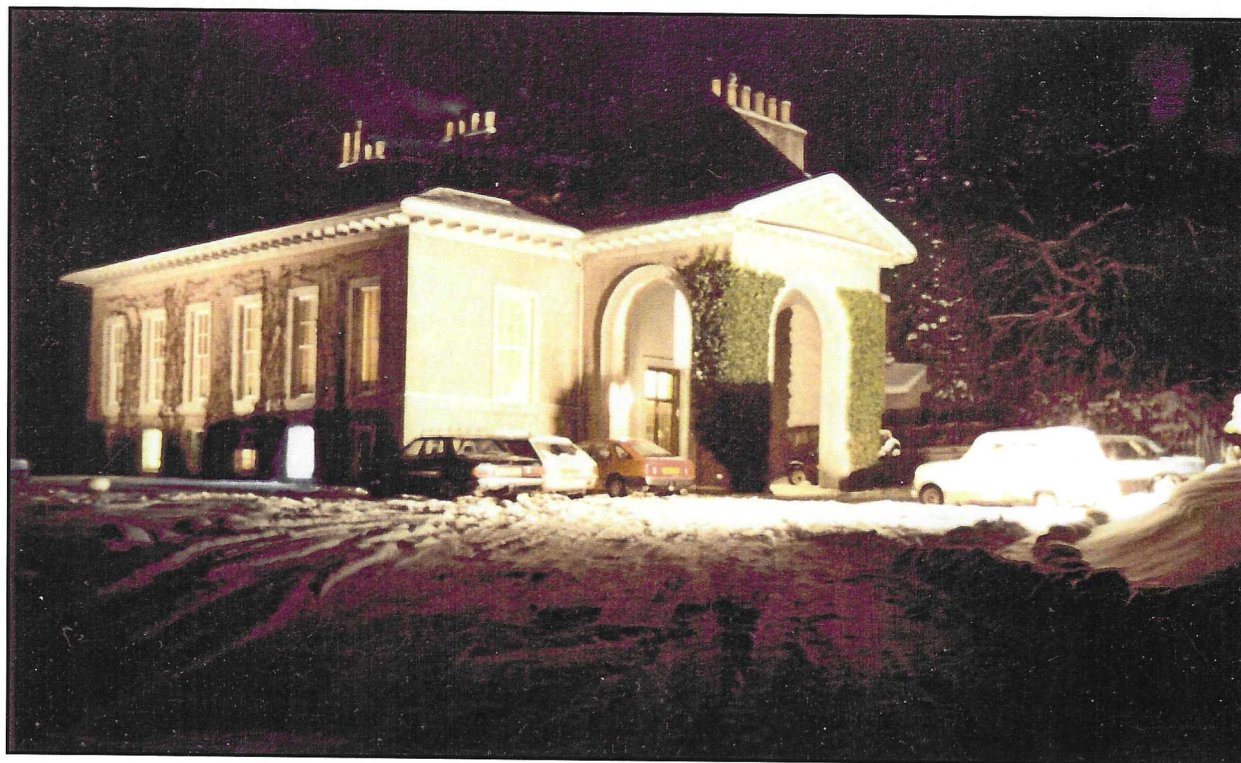
In setting out to record the beginnings of the North-East group it is helpful to place them in the contemporary context of Rileying in the North of Scotland. The Riley RM Club, which started in 1969 was the club to which most Riley owners belonged, and although there was an excellent magazine *R.Memoranda*, and a Scottish Secretary, the only meeting took place in the central belt at the Silverburn Hotel, Newarthill about 200 miles from Aberdeen.

Even then the demands of distance on Rileys meant that an annual get together had to be conveniently located for the greatest number of potential participants. This meant that the second Scottish Secretary, Bill Harris, always arranged his Annual Scottish Weekends in the Scottish Borders, based at the Philipburn Hotel in Selkirk. This location secured excellent support from Rileyists in the North-East of England but seldom, if ever, any from the North-East of Scotland.

With a change of Secretary, came a change of Annual Scottish event venue, and it then became more feasible for North-East members to attend. So the RM Club's new Scottish Secretary, Bob Miller, was able to report in the *R.Memoranda* that among those in attendance, at his first Family Day-Out held at Craigton Park, St Andrews in August 1984, were three North-East cars from Aberdeen: Alastair Duncan in his Drophead FKG300, Jamie Young in his 1948 RMA SY8610 and Harry Paterson in his RMF RUG605. Doug Thurston was also there, and was asked by the Aberdeen folk if he would organise an evening at a local inn. Doug wrote to *R.Memoranda* saying that he would be happy to do that, and asked anyone interested to contact him.

Jamie Young was obviously interested; his enthusiasm for Rileys was demonstrated in the article he had written for *R.Memoranda* in October /November '84, in which he related his and his family's interest in the marque. Jamie would have been aged about 18 years at that time, and had bought his first Riley when he was 16 years of age.

In December, Doug was able to report in *R.Memoranda* that two inaugural meetings had taken place in the Thainstone House Hotel, and 12 Rileyists had attended. Arrangements had been made to have regular monthly meetings, and so the Northern Area Group meeting of the RM Club was born.



Nineteen Eighty-Five



In January, Ranald Smith arrived, having travelled 105 miles from Inverness (just how enthusiastic was that?) – and Alistair Simpson had come from Edzell, some 45 miles away.

The group was still awaiting the arrival of an actual Riley car, though a Dinky model had made it to the meeting. It is hardly surprising that Rileyists in the North were all travelling in Modern cars, as the weather at this time of year in these latitudes is simply atrocious, and the roads are covered in salt, which is not guaranteed to keep the Rust Bug at bay.



It was April when Jamie Young attended with his 1½, then in May, Ranald Smith's RMB PPC414 put in an appearance, and in June, Harry Paterson's 2½ RUG attended. Norman Glen was elected Branch Secretary, and the group had plans for attendance at various venues, some close to home like Oldmeldrum, and others further afield like the Glamis Extravaganza.

In June, at the Scottish Transport Extravaganza at Glamis Castle, the group exhibited a club stand and with a great deal of sweat, but no tears, managed to get



four Rileys to the show. Harry Paterson's RUG and Ranald Smith's PPC managed to get there under their own steam while Norman Glen's RME Project SE9131 and Alastair Simpson's RMB TPC666 had to be taken to the event on trailers.

Lachlan Gray was also there acting as Riley Support in a Land Rover, which was acting as an honorary Riley for the two days. He was also acting in the office of head gardener, and to equip for this, he had brought the family motor-mower to make the Glamis turf more acceptable.

The stand had many visitors including the Thurston family, Peter Christie and notably Jim Dunbar and his family who arrived in their RMA.

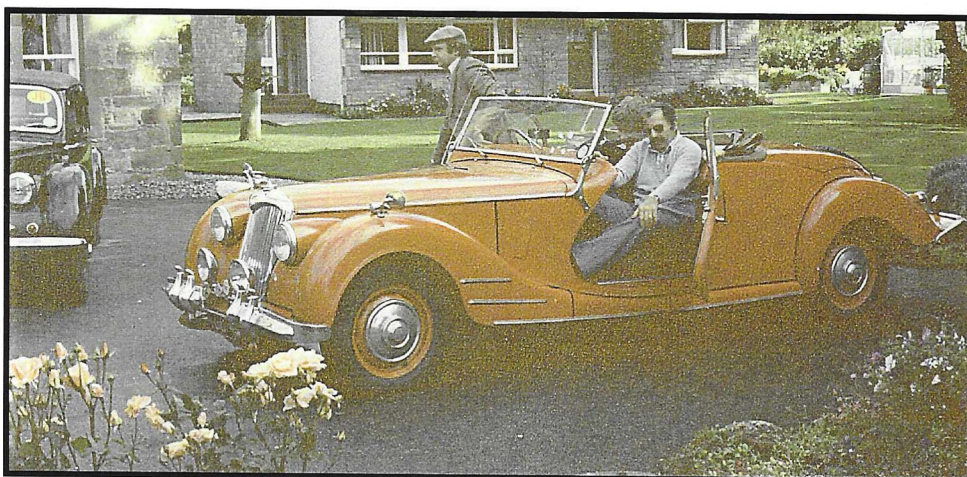


Later that year, the newly –fledged meeting, not one year old, held its first week-end event at Tarradale House, in Muir of Ord, Inverness-shire. Tarradale was, and is, a Field Centre for the Geography Department of Aberdeen University and it had been made available through the good offices of Lachlan Gray, an employee of the University.

Molly and Lachlan were already installed when the others arrived, and were able to welcome them as they arrived at Tarradale.



Doug had arranged an enjoyable weekend's activities, including Road Runs, Driving Tests, and a Guest Speaker, none other than Alec Gatherer. Alec is a Huntly-born Mancunian, well-known to RM Club members, although this was the first time members of the North-East meeting had made his acquaintance.



Six Rileys and twenty people attended the first Tarradale from as far away as Wick in the North, Dundee in the Central belt, and of course, Alec and his wife Barbara from the North of England. In writing an account of the weekend in the *R.Memoranda*, Doug described it as:

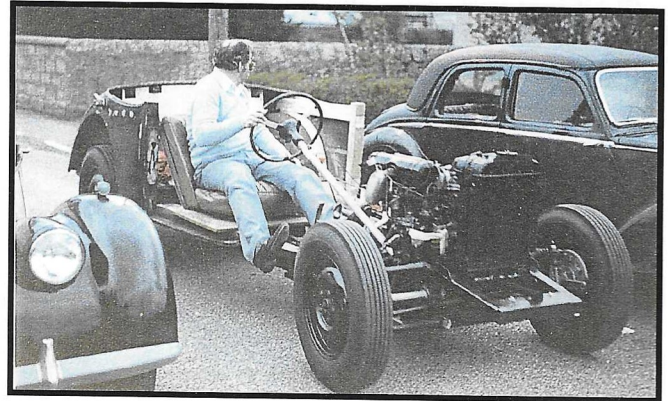
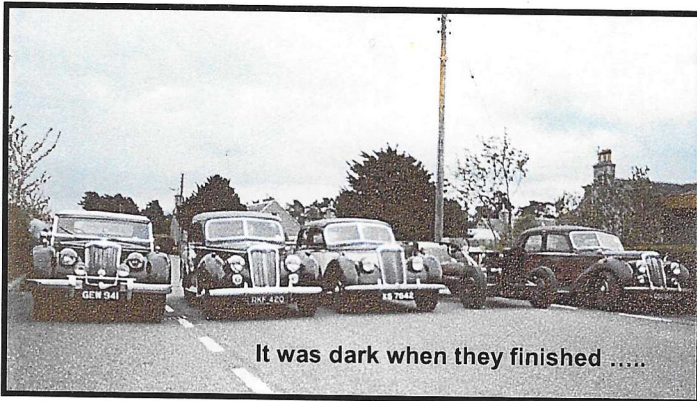
“ a very enjoyable and successful event”

Nineteen Eighty-Six

In the April issue of *R.Memoranda*, Doug reported that the Northern group had enjoyed an annual Dinner at Thainstone House:

"We had a great time, the conversation and wine flowed freely. John Garden, a renowned enthusiast whose proud boast was that he had owned Rileys for 50 years, was there, recalling cars and events over the years"

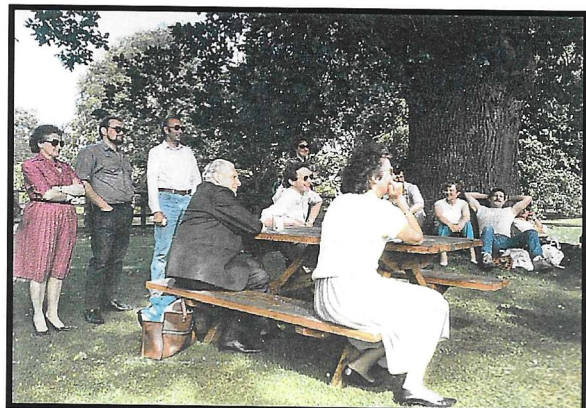
In July the group held its first "at Home" meeting with a visit to the home of Doug and Judith Thurston at Sauchen, where seventeen enthusiasts enjoyed a tour of Doug's garage.



Norman Glen described this as: "The best meeting ever of the Aberdeen branch"

Why was it so good? Simply because the group were able to get "Hands On" experience of Doug's Bonallack Rapid Coupe (1½ litre RMA DAN93) as they helped get the chassis "engined up", and because Judith had provided a "veritable feast" which was happily demolished!

The second Tarradale weekend was held in August. Jack Taylor, a Riley owner from Thurso, was the guest speaker. He regaled the company with a talk on the History of the Motor Industry in Scotland. Jack started with the Albion marque, then moved on to Beardmore taxis. It is not known if he managed to go through the entire alphabet, but it is known that he did have around thirty-six slides, so he may well have done so, after all, his car restorations suggest a very thorough person!



Nineteen Eighty-Seven

In Doug's article for *R.Memoranda* of June, he recorded the holding of the group's annual dinner, which he had attended in the RME AJS765 belonging to Jamie and Lindsey Gow of Nairn. The Gows had left the car with Doug to enjoy while they were on holiday abroad. Doug had arranged to give John Garden a lift to the Dinner, and was amazed when John mentioned that although he had always owned a Riley,

"... it is over 20 years since I last had a ride in an RM."

John was the first Patron of the N-E group, and was a well known figure in Riley circles, and an historic figure in the development of Motor sport in Britain, as an RAC Scrutineer.

The third Tarradale event was held in August. The highlight was a talk by John Garden, supplemented by photographs and slides of motoring happenings and cars etc. from the late twenties, but the by-now familiar Road Runs, Quiz and Driving Tests were also features of the weekend, which ended with a run to Cawdor Castle for a picnic lunch and prize-giving.

In November, Riley folk from Tayside augmented the Thainstone meeting, and a sub-committee was formed to come up with ideas for a Scottish Weekend for 1988. The group enjoyed a presentation on Steam railways by Roger Richards. Jim Dunbar summed up the event this way:

"The whole evening is one we will remember for some time to come."

The December issue of *R.Memoranda* contained an article by Norman Glen detailing his efforts in helping Jim Dunbar mount an exhibition at Arbroath Library on:

"Transport in the County of Angus over the Years"

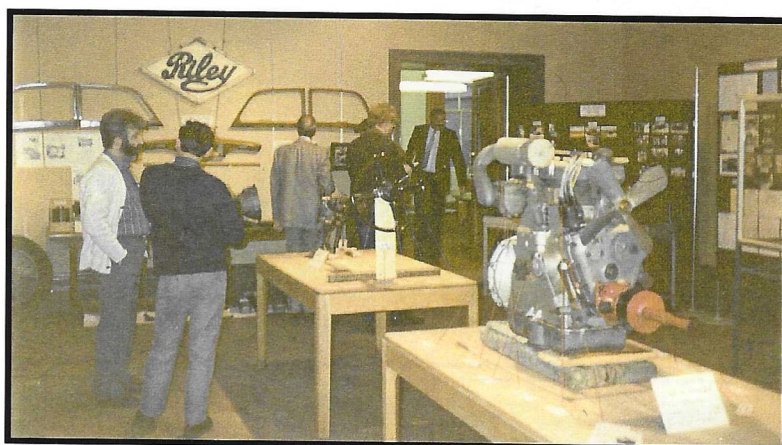
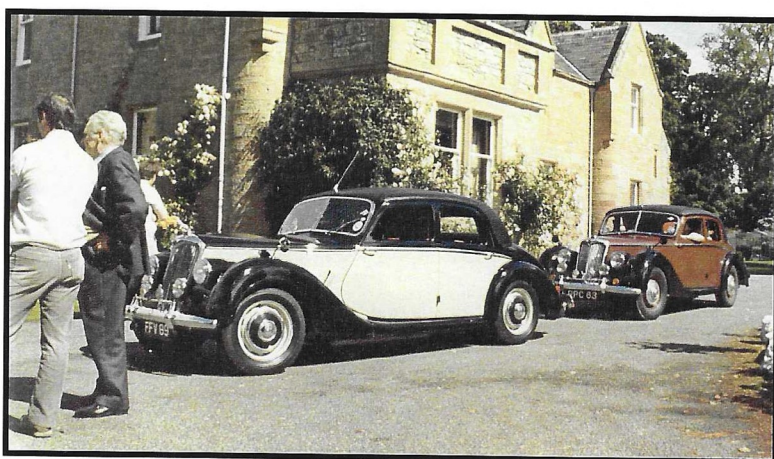
Norman had collected various Riley "goodies" from Aberdeen members, and with the other "goodies" sourced from Tayside by Jim, had helped provide a "Really Magnificent" display. Members of the Northern Area met the Tayside Area to view the display, and joined together for a Noggin and Natter afterwards. Norman wrote:

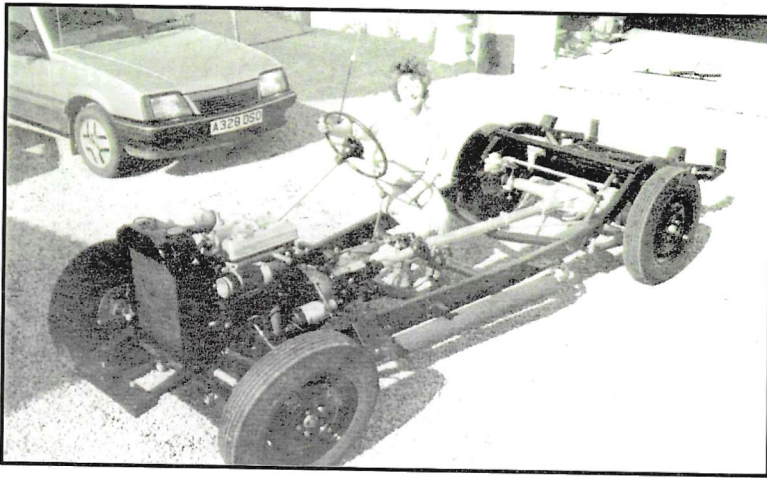
"let's hope that this will be the first of many Joint efforts between Aberdeen and Tayside."

History was to show that Norman got his wish, and many subsequent meetings were to follow.

Colin Watt made his first appearance at the December meeting at Thainstone, where he showed photographs of his recently purchased Pathfinder (in need of much work). Doug wrote:

"We all wish him good luck, who knows, he may join the club one day!"





Nineteen Eighty-Eight

Judy Thurston became a cover girl for the January edition of *R.Memoranda*, perched prettily on the RMA chassis of Doug's Bonallack Rapid Coupe.

Doug reported on the firing –up of the engine and having driven the chassis, with Judy as passenger, up and down his drive, much to the amazement of the neighbours.



In May, many of the Aberdeen group made their way south to attend the first Scottish National Riley Weekend that was centred on Stirling University, and everyone enjoyed the event, according to the almost lyrical account in *R.Memoranda* that had been written by a North-East member.



September found members of the North-East group enjoying their end-of season weekend previously based at Tarradale House.

This event was styled "*The alternative Tarradale*" because it was held at the Marine Hotel, Rosemarkie, on the Black Isle.



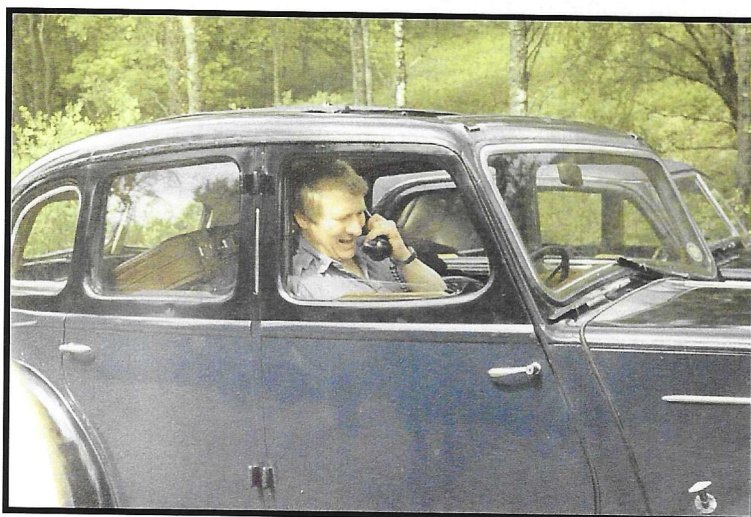
The Road Runs, the Quizzes, the fun and enjoyment of good food and good company was all as before, just moved to an alternative location.

Nineteen Eighty-Nine

This year got off to a fine start with the Late Christmas dinner at Thainstone, and the programme of events for the year proposed by Doug was as varied as ever.

The highlight of the year was the second Scottish National Riley Rally held at Callendar.

On Saturday the event visited the obligatory Distillery at Glengoyne, and the evening was spent competing in a Trivial Pursuit Quiz. The picture makes it look as if Norman needed to "Phone a Friend" on the Irish Adelphi Car-Phone!



The Sunday outing was a drive through Achray Forest followed by trip to Loch Katrine and a sail on the 1901 vintage steamship *Sir Walter Scott*.

Manny Rosenberg, writing in *R.Memoranda*, congratulated the Scots on behalf of the Sassenachs for a marvellous weekend, only bemoaning the fact that he had just come last in the Trivial Pursuit Quiz.



For the first time, the 5th Northern Weekend, held again at Rosemarkie, was attended by a Pre-war car, the Monaco AG7384 belonging to Mike Cartney from Dunblane.

The Saturday drive round the Black Isle was beautiful, and writing about the Sunday activities, Jim Dunbar reported that:

"...another change to previous rallies was the visit to the first Inverness car show in Bucht Park, where we made an impressive line-up of Rileys among a good display of other cars. The weather was great, the atmosphere relaxed, altogether Rosemarkie was an excellent event."



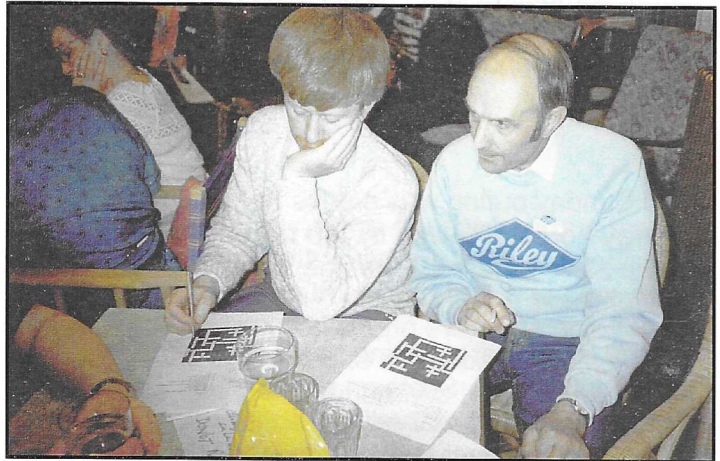
Northern Weekend farewell line up at the Bucht Park event

Nineteen Ninety

In January, Riley owner Alistair Simpson of Edzell departed to participate in the Monte Carlo Challenge in his Sunbeam Rapier.

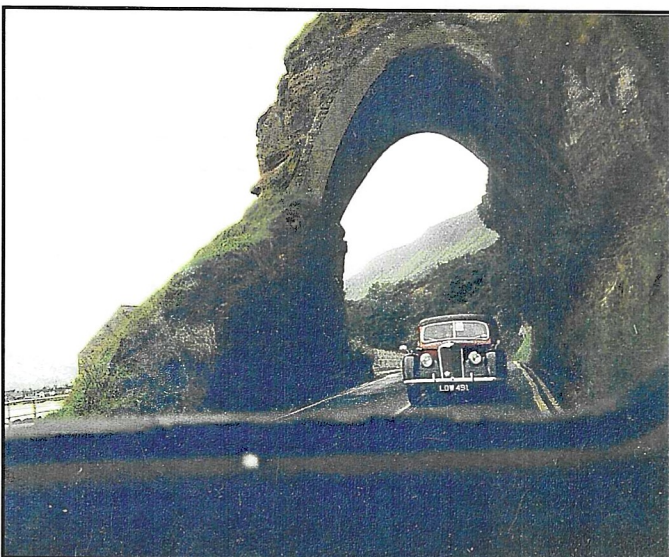
In April, some members of the Aberdeen and the Tayside groups met in Stonehaven, where John Garden, former Secretary of the Riley Motor Club Highland Centre, was reunited with contemporary Rae Falconer, former Secretary of the Riley Motor Club Lowland Centre, neither having met for many years since they last worked together in competitive motoring events. It was good to see the two enjoying the chance to recollect Rileys, and other cars, they had known.

In May, the third Scottish National Riley Rally took place in Kinfauns Castle near Perth, and although the Tayside Group arranged the accommodation and Runs, the social events were organised by Doug, Alex Back, and others of the Aberdeen group.



This weekend was particularly memorable for the Saturday dinner of vegetarian Haggis for everyone, followed by a tug of war, perhaps to help relieve the after effects of the haggis?

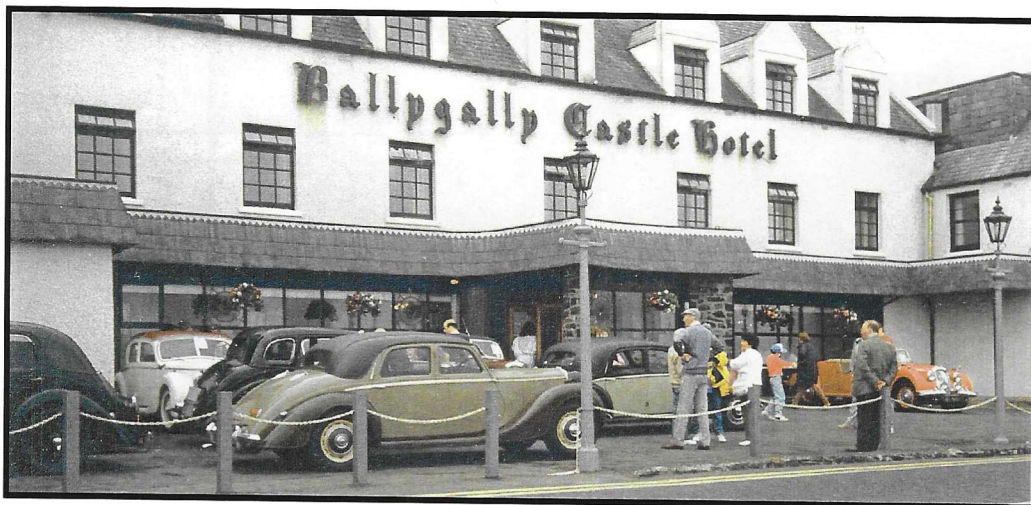
In June, the Thompson Memorial Rally in Stonehaven was well attended by Rileys and drivers from Tayside and Aberdeen, although the event itself was nearly washed away by the weather. Colin Watt of the North-East Group won an award in the Concours, with an entry that was not his Riley, but his Austin A30. Colin's love of cars is not confined to Rileys; because like Heinz, he likes variety. However, by December of the same year he had become a fully paid-up member of the Riley RM Club.



In the June *R. Memoranda*, a certain couple, Anna and Alasdair Gunn "with their lovely RMA" (*it is actually a Running Board RME, LOW491*) was mentioned as having relocated to Aberdeenshire. Actually they had been living there since the previous September, but like the Mills of God, Riley news can "grind exceeding slow" at times.

Over the first weekend of September, a fairly large party of Aberdeenshire members participated in the 20th Anniversary Rally of the Ulster Riley Club at Ballygally Castle, Co. Antrim.

The Gunns were being piloted in LOW491 by Norman Glen, due to Al having damaged his back changing the engine of the Riley, Alex Back and Judy Quinn with Alastair Simpson were in Alex's RME RKF420, the Grays and the Watts were in Moderns, and the Thurstons with Margaret Stewart and John Garden in Eric's RMB.



John was heard to remark: ("It's exactly thirty-two years to the week since I was last at an Ulster car event.")

This was a truly marvellous event with that special flavour that only the Irish can infuse.

The 1990 *Northern Weekend* was again held in Rosemarkie in September, and Jim reported that

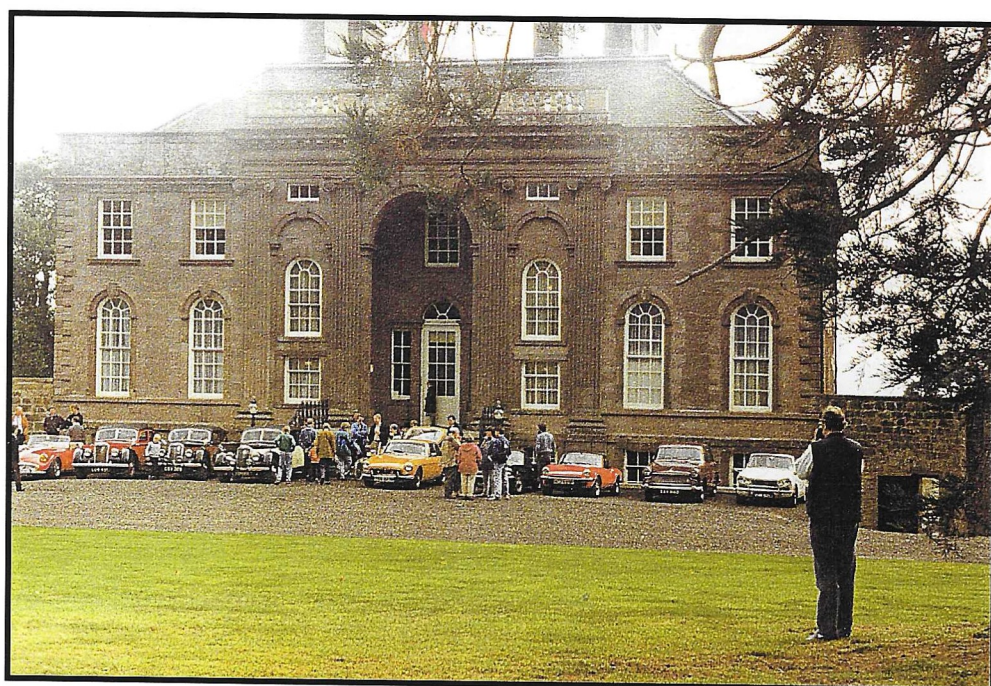
"The weather was kind and we joined the big rally at Inverness"

By that he meant the event in Bucht Park again, and this time it was bigger and "better" than on the previous year, being augmented by pleasure flights in a helicopter, which it turned out was uncomfortably near to the cars, resulting in the bootlid of the Thurston Daimler SP250 being blown off by downdraft from the Rotor. That was the last time the Rileys risked a call-in at Bucht Park.



In the same month, The Rileysts of Tayside and Aberdeen met again for a joint visit to the recently opened National Trust for Scotland property, *House of Dun* near Montrose.

The visit coincided with a visit from other Classic cars, unfortunately not Rileys, but there was a generally cordial atmosphere and some useful meetings with other enthusiasts.

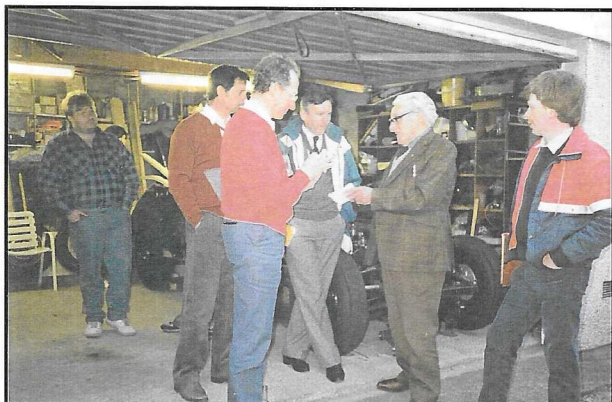


Nineteen Ninety-One

The Aberdeen area held its sixth traditional late Christmas dinner described by Doug as:

“good food, wine and bonhomie, thoroughly enjoyed by all”

Two “At Homes” were held:



The first was at Doug and Judy Thurston's home in Sauchen, where Rileys managed to block the main street with Colin Wood's '32 9 hp Two-seat and Dickey Coupe in company with RMs of various ages.

The second was at Alasdair and Anna Gunn's home, where five Rileys parked on the lawn. The gardener (Anna) would not allow that to happen again. Rileys are very welcome, but only on the drive!



Arrochar—Rest & Be Thankful
old road in the rain

The fourth Scottish National Riley Rally was held in Arrochar, at the Cobbler Hotel, and was notable for the Basil Fawltly – like character who said he was the hotelier. Despite him, the event was a real success.

The event Visits were:

Saturday: Inverary, its castle and for some unfortunates, its Gaol.

Sunday: A boat trip on Loch Lomond, departing from Tarbet pier, and arriving by one of two possible courses, at the landing ramp at Inversnaid on the eastern shore of the Loch, lunch in the Hotel there, and returning as we came.



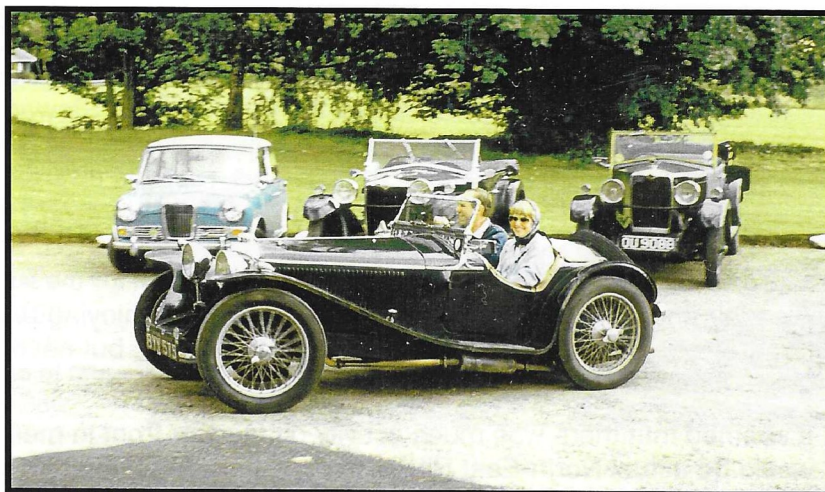
Manny Rosenberg reported on becoming the (proud?) recipient of the Mucky Boot Award, having entered a suitably-prepared real old boot with a “Cow-pat” made of dirt and pastry mixed with brown paint.

He had failed to appreciate that this award was for a mucky CAR BOOT; trust Manny, where would we be without him?

In August, Aberdeen members were among a group of Scottish Rileyists who met a party of Riley Register members from England at the *Kings of Kinloch* hotel near Meikle in Angus.

The visitors were in three cars on a recreation of a classic tour of the thirties, and included David, Sarah and Harriet Allberry from Cirencester, with their 12/6 Lynx, John and Claire Gathercole with their Imp and Roger and Mary Simpkins in their 9 hp Special Tourer.

A fourth car, the 9 h.p. Special Tourer of Ian and Yvonne Stainburn, with James and George, had been forced to stay back at the campsite because of grumbling fuel pump unreliability. Patrick Whitty was able to nip back home to collect his spare SU pump and return in time to hand it over as a loan to the visitors before they had to depart again. In the meantime, the rest of the gathering enjoyed a splendid lunch in the Hotel and the opportunity to meet new friends and take photographs of the cars.



The seventh Northern Weekend was again held at the Marine Hotel in Rosemarkie, and proved to be a most auspicious occasion. The event programme was as usual full of the customary road runs, crossword etc, with a small diversion through the pine woods north of Garve, and finishing with a picnic at Brodie Castle. On the Saturday evening a presentation by Jim Dunbar produced a discussion that led to the momentous decision to form Scottish Riley Enthusiasts.



In October, the Aberdeenshire meeting was given over to discussions about the 1992 National Rally that the North-East group had agreed to host. This was to be the first Scottish National Riley event that Jim Dunbar and the Tayside group had not organised.



In December came the Inaugural meeting of Scottish Riley Enthusiasts at the Glencarse Inn near Perth. Fifteen people attended, four of these being adherents of the North-East group. Anna Gunn acted as Group Photographer for this occasion.

Nineteen Ninety-Two

The Group had a good start to the season by celebrating the seventh Late Christmas Dinner in February at Thainstone House. The locals were augmented by the Stewarts from Dundee and the Taylors from Thurso. Then in March at the Tayside Noggin, Frank McKee, Secretary of the Ulster Riley Club, formally presented Alasdair Gunn with a Trophy. This trophy is awarded annually for Merit "by popular acclaim" at the URC AGM, and in that year it had been decided to award the Trophy to Alasdair and Anna Gunn for :

"An enthusiastic and plucky undertaking of a prolonged tour of the Province in their recently acquired Kestrel, and for the meritorious example that was set for the fainter hearts among us by so doing."

Alasdair and Anna had thought that they were just enjoying another Riley adventure while in Ireland during the previous season, and nothing meritorious in that, but nevertheless Al accepted the award in a suitably grateful manner, and Anna kept it polished for the year!

It seemed that there was much activity on the Car front in members' garages to make sure that there would be actual North-East Rileys attending the first North-East organised National. Colin Watt was rushing, with the help of his Dad Ian and others, to get his RME restoration finished on time. The Gunn's RME needed ANOTHER engine transplant, Doug had sent off the Speedo from his RMA XS7642 for refurbishment, while also hoping to have the re-veneering of the instrument panel completed in time. Norman Glen even went as far as buying RKF420 while a consortium of Colin Watt, Lachlan and Phil Gray acquired a Pathfinder TSM777. Was this serendipitous or what?

Eventually the great day arrived. Cars started to appear from all points of the compass to meet at the Craighaar Hotel, Bucksburn, near Aberdeen.

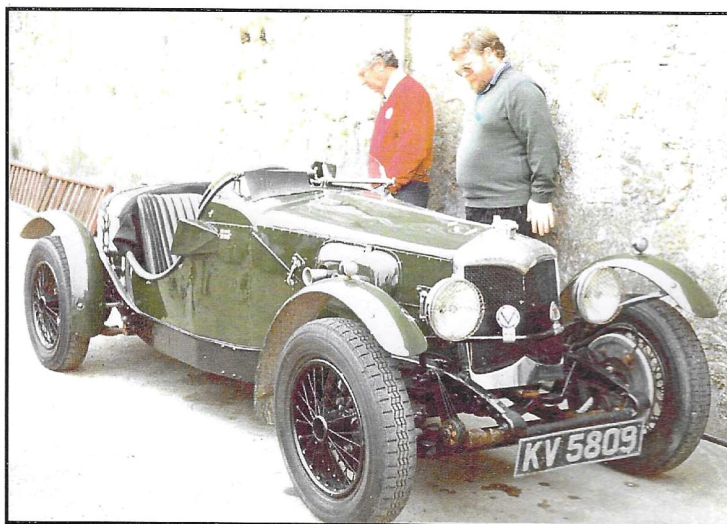


The Craighaar was just round the corner from the Watt's home, so everybody knew they would not be in the running for the Distance award!

For the organisers, and remember that this was their first National, the anxiety was extreme, but mostly hidden behind big smiles. This was vouched for by Manny Rosenberg, who wrote in a report for the *R.Memoranda*:

"We were made welcome by the already assembled early arrivals and felt immediately at home. ...We settled down to dinner with Alasdair Gunn and family and Doug Thurston.

...Saturday's programme was a drive to Balmoral or a vintage bus ride round Aberdeen but we went for the shorter rally calling at Doug Cameron's garage which had a yard and sheds full of restored and unrestored cars...."



"...We also had a tour of a whisky distillery.....On to Fyvie Castle for a relaxing afternoon then back to the hotel. A quick change and then an evening of dining, wining and dancing and a lot of merry making....."

"Sunday (took us to) Grampian Transport Museum at Alford with ideal amenities for our Cars, especially a small go-cart track, ideal to have our Driving Tests on

(Picture: Norman Glen "Driving" and Doug Thurston "Navigating" on the GTM Track—or perhaps vice versa if the invisible car is LHD

...That is what you call a Rally. Plenty to do if you want, or otherwise. Nothing but praise is due to the organising committee. Worth every mile of the 994 miles we did that weekend... The Rally Fee just £5-00 ...How do they do it?"



It was a relief for the organisers to read Jim Dunbar's assessment:

"May I on behalf of the membership thank Doug Thurston and the Aberdeen team for all their hard work in putting on such a great show. Important aspects such as safety, presentation of publicity material, sponsorship, revised entertainments were thoroughly prepared and provide us with a strong framework for future National rallies. Well done Lads!"

I think it is fair to say that this was the point at which the North-East Group came of age. They had all had a hand in getting the show on the road, attending all the Planning team meetings, checking out the Hotel, the Road runs and the entertainment. For many, the relief was considerable when everything came together to produce a fine event; and with this relief came the recognition of all the effort that Jim and the Tayside group had expended in organising the preceding Nationals. I know someone who was very glad that the North-East Group would not have to organise another National for four years, and I dare say he was not alone in that thought!

After all this Doug and Judy set off in their RMA for a tour round the North of Scotland to give the car a thorough testing before taking off on a Continental adventure. Their Bed and Breakfast host in Brora turned out to be none other than the brother of David Clarkson of the Edinburgh group. Riley connections are to be found everywhere.

Alasdair and Anna Gunn joined them at Loch Broom in LOW to start out on the Last Great Motoring Adventure left in Scotland. This was the run across the Applecross road, which the Rileys did in great style even leaving a memento behind in the Riley diamond-shaped cairn among all the other more usual shaped cairns strewn over the moor.

The cars having been truly tested it was off to the Continent. Their journey took in several of the North German towns and ended in Göttingen, a large university town near the former DDR border of Federal Germany, there to attend a friend's church wedding, or *Hochzeit*, and Al's LOW491 served as the Bridal car.

After the wedding, the Riley party navigated their way back to Holland (hardly getting lost at all) to take part in the 15th Anniversary event of Riley Club Holland at Petten an Zee.



The Dutch rally was, as ever, an excellent and well-organised event including visits to a Cheese Farm, a Heritage day in the West Friesian town of Schaagen where the locals got up in the dress of turn-of-the-century time, and flaxen-haired wee girls performed familiar-looking, but definitely Dutch, folk-dances; then on to a Lily-Show, and AT LAST to a working Windmill pump – well after all we WERE in Holland....



The eighth Northern Weekend was again held at the Marine Hotel, Rosemarkie, and this year three pre-war cars attended. There were the usual activities plus an evening video presentation of Classic Car Rallying given by Alistair and Linda Simpson.

Some of the more Historically-minded there, - well it was myself, actually - thought that Doug's choice of Fort George for the Sunday venue was a little short of sensitivity – it is, after all, where the British King accommodated a garrison whose duty was to suppress the wild Highlanders after the 1745 uprising.

However, even I had to forgive Doug as he had worn a kilt at the National Rally! No greater love hath an Englishman....



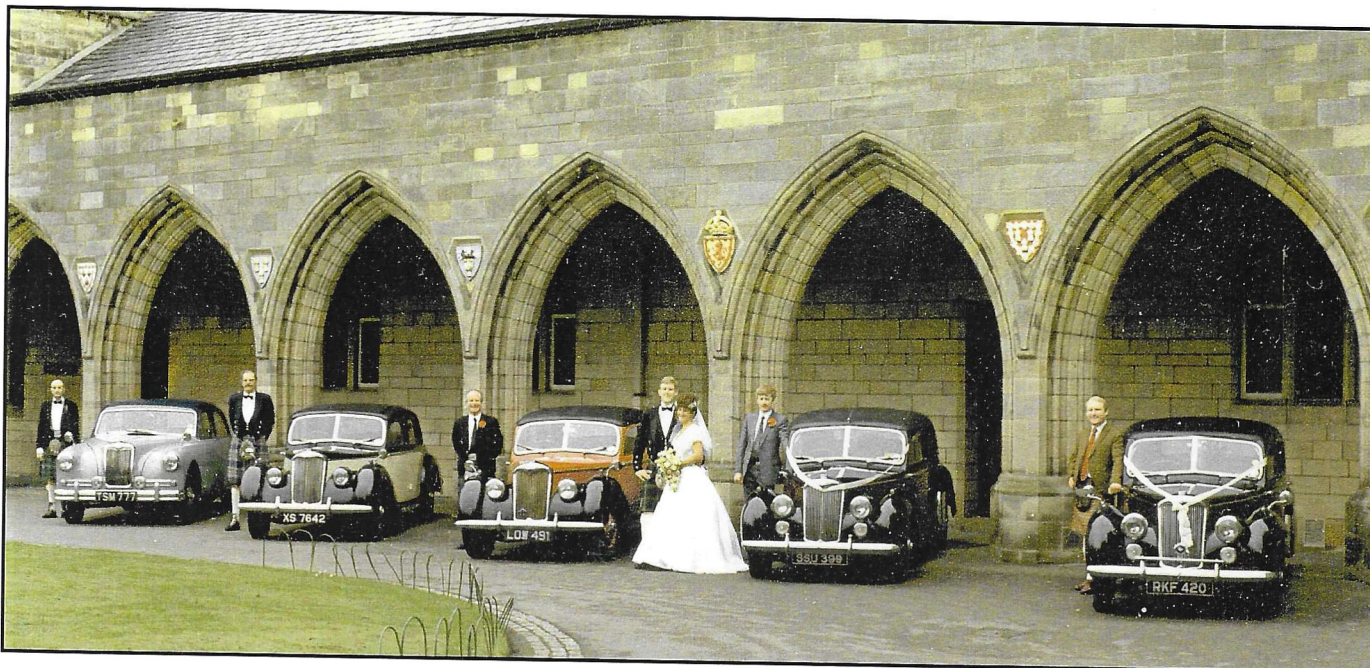
Doug had also written a short Foreword to that Northern Weekend programme about the place Rosemarkie had played in the beginnings of SRE:

"Rosemarkie will long be remembered as the venue at which our thoughts of conceiving Scottish Riley Enthusiasts were first mooted. Then followed some searching and quite heated discussion resulting in the embryo SREwe are now a united body and ... the members like it that way."

Jim Dunbar presented Doug with the Elizabeth Skelly Award for the Club Member of the Year in recognition of all he had done for Riley in Scotland over the years. Doug later wrote in the *Newsletter*:

"I am probably the proudest SRE member since its formation. I could hardly believe my ears when Chairman Jim launched into his speech. This is not me, I thought, I am only a catalyst. I will treasure the memory, but I must state that without the support of many friends and members, nothing would ever happen."

The members of the North-East Area were only too aware that without Doug's interest and enthusiasm for the Riley Club, the North-East Area would not have become the vibrant and energetic group that it was. Doug, with Judy's support, was the mainstay of the Area.



The North-East had its own Riley wedding when Alex Back married Judy Quinn. The bride, of course, was beautiful but so also was the line up of Rileys. Black-over-Maroon RMEs conveyed the main participants and other Rileys conveyed the many Riley member guests to the event in King's College.

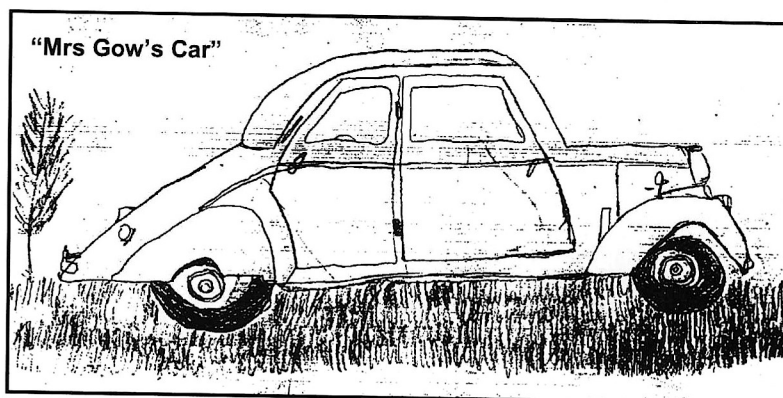
The November issue of the SRE *Newsletter* contained an interesting contribution by Lachlan Gray, in which he congratulated Colin Watt on getting his Riley RME SSU399 back on the road after a long and extremely comprehensive restoration. Colin had worked long hours to have the Riley ready to take part in Alex and Judy's wedding.

The car had suffered from severe corrosion in the front suspension cradle. Co-incidentally and almost miraculously, Colin had found an unused chassis with an owner who was willing to sell, and so a deal had been struck. Lachlan wrote that it had transpired that this chassis "had at one time been owned by John Garden, Patron of the Northern group, who had purchased it with a view to building yet another Special, but had never done so." Of such finds are dreams made!

The Club is always worried about how it can encourage young people to take an interest in Rileys. Lyndsay Gow, a teacher, was working in Cawdor Primary School, where the pupils were doing a project on

"Travel through the ages".

Not only did she take the family RME AJS765 to school, but she allowed the children to sit in it and experience the thrill. The children drew pictures that later appeared in the *Newsletter*, and some of their comments were precious; for example:



- "My favourite bit was the indicators. They were brilliant. They weren't like any indicators they stick out from the side, but people don't see them and they shake their fists at Mrs Gow."
- "The seats were bouncy, and the smell of walnut was magic, the leather smelt just as nice."
- "Its Top Speed was ninety miles per hour, but I don't think Mrs Gow would want to do that speed."
- "I thought it was very comfortable, but Christopher and Nicol liked modern cars better."

On taking a Straw Poll, it would appear that most of the pupils of Class 5B loved the RM, but that Mrs Gow would need to do more work on Christopher and Nicol.

Nineteen Ninety-Three

While things were progressing happily in the North-East, and in SRE in general, it was not always as amicable elsewhere. In the RM Club, for instance, there was an ongoing debate over the amount of interest and Club support there was, or ought to be, in the RMH Cars. One of the more literate members of the North-East Area could be found putting pen to paper in his own inimitable manner. Norman Glen was once again restating things Riley as they were to be found in Scotland:

"Experience in Scotland has shown the value and pure enjoyment to be gained from All-Riley involvement with the foundation of Scottish Riley Enthusiasts; not a separate club, but a social focus for all Rileyists, welcoming in equal measure friends from Ulster, England, Wales and indeed from overseas. SRE events give an added sense of perspective of the marque, and mutual respect for the enthusiasm of others."



Troon—Molly, Lachlan and Pathfinder

The pure enjoyment Norman experienced at the Troon National Riley Rally in May was very obvious, in his hilarious tale in *R. Memoranda* of what befell him there, not to mention his photographs of strange people wearing very strange garb ... Others of the North-East Area also attended the Troon event and thoroughly enjoyed it.

The Ninth annual Northern Weekend, now styled "*The alternative Tarradale and Alternative Rosemarkie*", took place in the Achilty Hotel at Contin. Over forty people attended, showing that this event was just keeping on getting bigger.



Before leaving for the Saturday run, the visitors had a brief surprise when a 1911 Seabrook Roadster (the "Underslung") roared into the car park. This almost prevented the Run from getting away from the Hotel because everyone gathered round to view this incredible snorting monster that offered motoring of the hairy-chested, flies-in-the-teeth kind.

The Run was a tour round another kind of ancient spectacle, the Pictish stone monuments of which the locality has many. The tour was led by Graham Watson, the Archaeological Officer of the Ross-shire Council. Graham conducted the party round three of the Class III Christian Symbol stones from about 750 AD, and pointed out the particular meanings of the symbols as he went along, and the party were riveted by the closeness of the vanished past, as well as by the beauty and workmanship of the stones.

One of these stones is housed within a disused church, and Graham mounted the pulpit, the better to deliver his remarks to the Rileyists who all sat in the pews below. It was just as well that a photograph or two was taken to record this most unusual occurrence, otherwise nobody would have believed it possible to get the normally rowdy Riley mob inside a church.



Still on the subject of Ecclesiastical Stones, this was the first time that Noel and Jean Stone had attended the N-E Weekend. As Patrick Whitty wrote in the *Newsletter*:

"Noel, a retired Australian naval vicar, would be the life and soul of any group he bounced into, and I should think ..(that).. even his funerals must have been hilarious."

Members of the N-E Group quickly learned never to leave their beer unattended when Noel was about!

On Sunday the party had a train ride on the Strathspey Steam Railway, with hot soup and bacon rolls while the scenery went gently by. The Award-giving took place in the Boat of Garten Station car park after the train trip, and was an excellent way to wind up another Northern Weekend.

A small group from the North-East still had another event to attend. This was the Ulster Riley Club 's Weekend in Bunbeg, Co. Donegal. Norman Glen's advert promised:

"Miles of empty roads, really marvellous scenery, unparalleled hospitality, and the very best of excellent company - Ah Yes; and interesting cars as well!"

Even before the official SRE visit to attend the Irish event, Lachlan, Molly and Phil Gray had enjoyed a week of *"Pathfinder's Irish Holiday"* at Killaloe, and Lachlan described it this way:

"A very pleasant week's holiday with many local journeys on what can only be described as the worst roads in Europe, but picturesque with it ... As for the people ... helpfulness and kindness was typical of the lovely Irish people that we met on our various journeys."

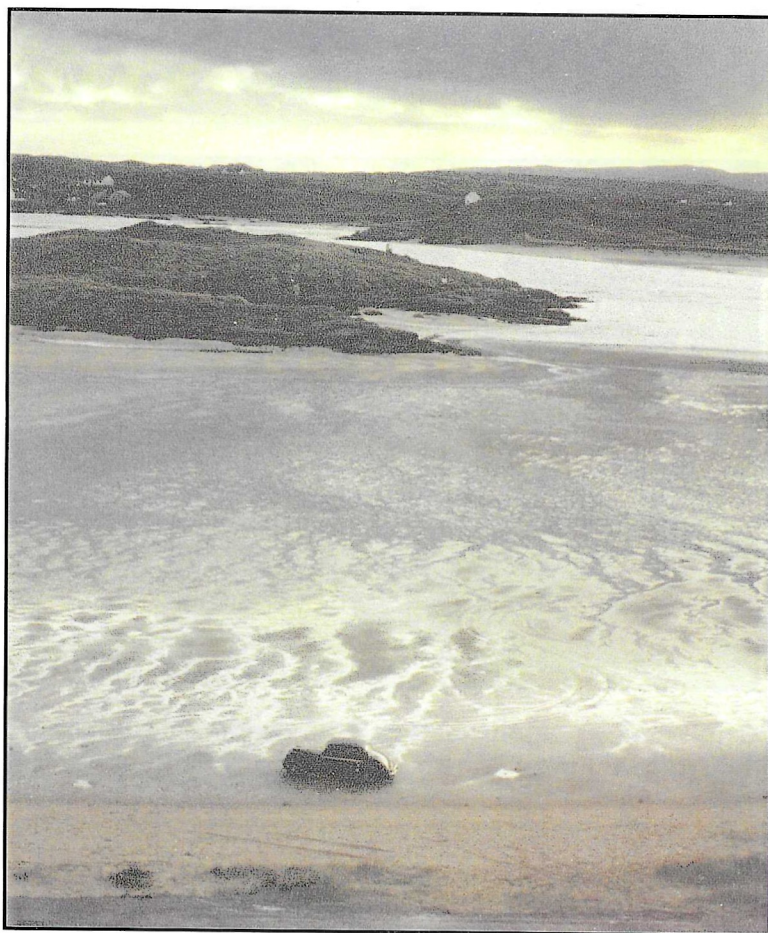
All that Norman had promised, and more, was experienced by those who safely arrived at the *Ostan Gweedore* hotel perched above a lovely sheltered bay and the village of Bunbeg, one of the most beautiful places in the world. The view from the beach, only marred by some mad person's parked RM (well, he might say – *enhanced*) was truly magical. If you could have seen the next landfall it would have been America.

Back home, Forbes Gordon joined the Aberdeenshire Noggin group, and it was never the same again. Forbes had acquired an RME, having previously worked on the restoration of a '32 Riley Sportsman's 2-seat and dickey coupe. It was not just on the topic of Rileys that Forbes could wax lyrical, but also on any topic under the sun. And his stories were simply incredible.

Doug and Judy held an "At Home" evening in Sauchen to display Doug's latest work on his Bonallack and so yet another year of Rileying ended in the North-East.

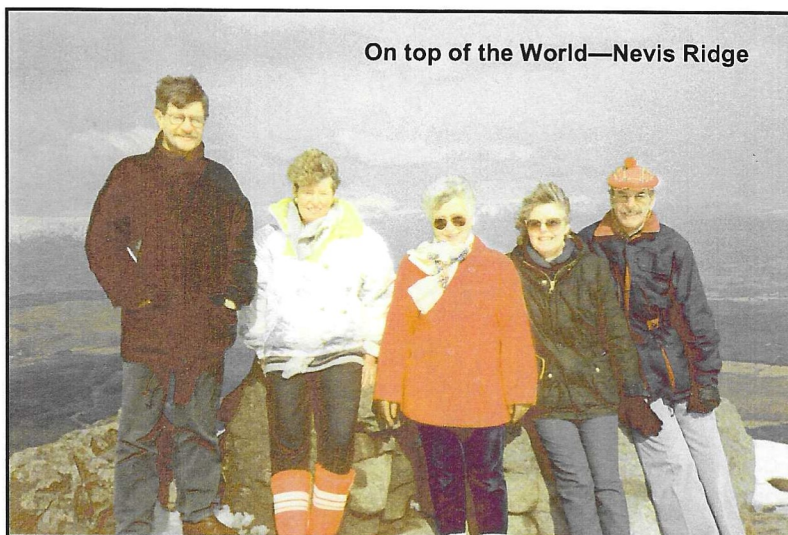


The Ecclesiastical Stones



Nineteen Ninety-Four

This was the 10th year of the North-East Area, and the Annual late Christmas Dinner was as enjoyable as ever. Plans were afoot to take part in all the usual events, and another Ulster visit was being discussed.



On top of the World—Nevis Ridge

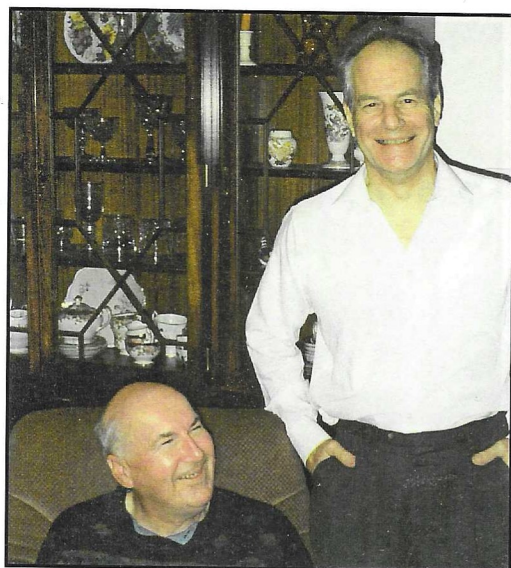
Some members of the area went on a pre-season jaunt to Fort William that had been organised by Tom Alexander. Rileys were left at home because of the dreadful weather. Nevertheless North-Easters foregathered in company with members of the Ulster Riley Club, and enjoyed an excellent weekend that included a Gondola ride up the Ben Nevis ski-slopes. This was quite a start for this cardinal Anniversary year and the group that had attended felt set-up for the rest of the season.

The National was held in Kelso, being the first to be hosted by the Edinburgh Area, where the Rileys and their owners were invited to a civic reception. The North-East was represented in numbers; nothing to do with the free drink of course....

In September, the North-East Area really celebrated its 10th year in style. Graham Watson had introduced the visiting group to Morangie House Hotel in Tain when he had organised the Saturday Lunch there the year before. The group had enjoyed the meal so much that they decided to make it their base in 1994. On the Saturday the group visited the Glenmorangie Distillery, which is hardly a stone's throw from the hotel, then went on to the Falls of Shin for lunch, returning to the hotel for a magnificent Dinner and the Chairman's speech by Jim Dunbar.

The Sunday programme was a trip over the Struie Hill, followed by lunch, presentation of awards, and break-up at Foulis Ferry on the Cromarty Firth. All in all, this was quite a birthday celebration.





In September, members of the North-East Area had the pleasure of meeting Victor Riley. This was the first time that Victor had met any of us except Jim Dunbar. His visit to our locality had sprung from contact by Alasdair Gunn, and was in response to a letter Al had written regarding the perceived insularity of ARC.

Jim Dunbar reported the function to the *Newsletter*, under the heading of "*Victor Riley visits SRE*". Jim had come up from Carnoustie, leaving at 5.30 pm in his 22T Kestrel, and didn't get home until around 2.30 am. What that man does for Rileys!

The opportunity to meet Victor at the Gunn's home was a very happy social event, but it also allowed SRE members to sort out a potentially difficult situation, and was the start of Victor Riley's cordial association with SRE, all in all a good way to bring yet another season of Rileying to a close.

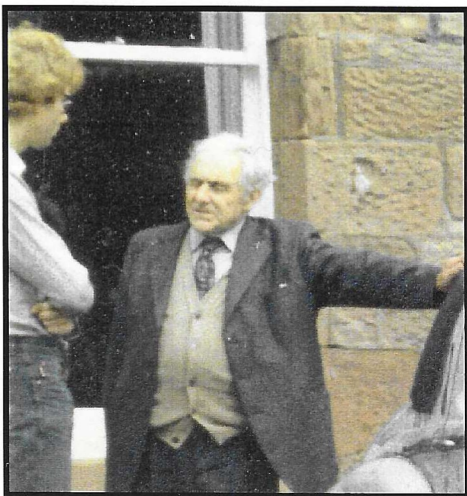
Nineteen Ninety-Five

The late Christmas dinner was not held in the Thainstone House Hotel in 1995. Thainstone had been extended and upgraded during the previous year, and was obviously hoping to cater for people who wanted more than just coffee and sandwiches from the Noggin venue, with the occasional beer when Norman was in attendance. So despite our ten-year association with Thainstone, the group had decided with regret to move to a new place with fewer pretensions, and after a lot of searching, found the Gight House Hotel at Methlick which seemed to fit the bill. Norman enthused over this in his article in the Spring 95 *Magazine*:

"At last the wandering tribe of Riley has found a new oasis in the deserts of Grampian Region. Our leaving of Thainstone has meant much debate in our midst, with an offer of hospitality from Mrs Savage at Harthill Castle amongst others. After a couple of test runs to see if the camels liked the water at a couple of oases, a doughty foursome set out one frosty night in March to complete the recce on the well recommended Gight House Hotel by Methlick. We were given a warm welcome and encouraged by the crackling fire, the very tasty beers and (the sure way to a N.E. Rileyman's heart) the excellent sandwiches and coffee, we have decided to pitch our tents at this caravanserai for a serious try-out."



The Christmas Dinner in the Gight House Hotel was certainly Late this year, as it did not actually take place till April, but was nevertheless thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended.

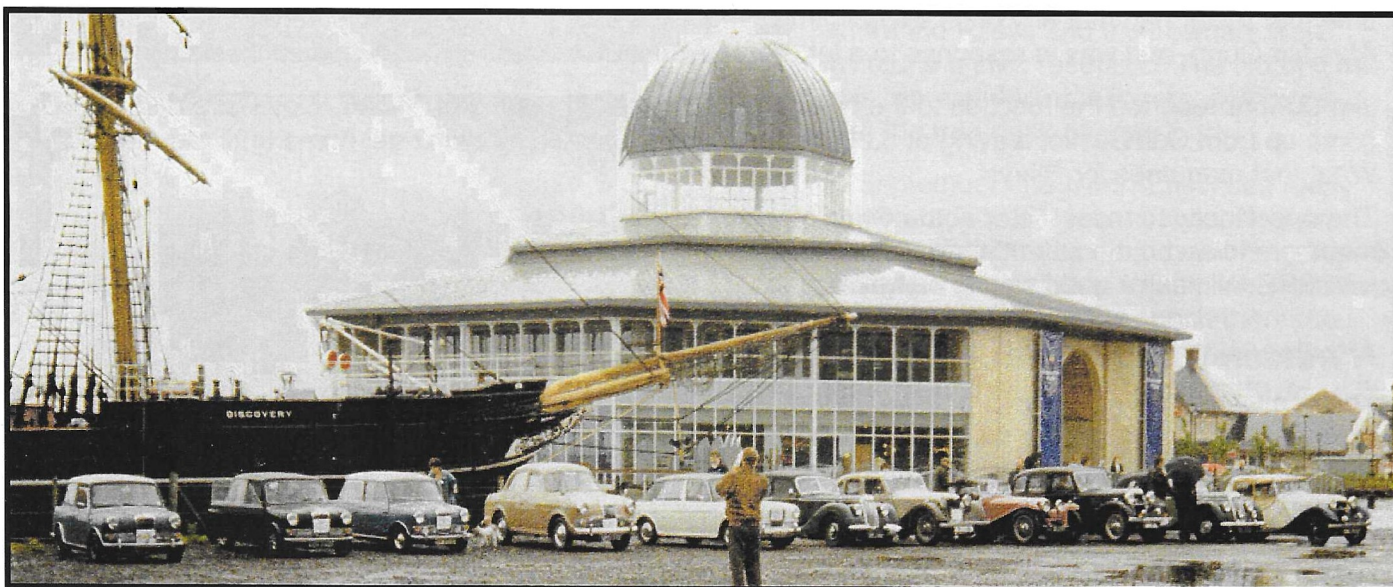


Nineteen Ninety-Five

In April, sadly the North-East group lost their Patron when John Garden died. He was a real Riley enthusiast for well over 50 years, a "Scroot" at most of the classic motor sport competitions held in the thirties to the sixties, and had attended many of the events held in the North-East and further afield, and was a link to the Glory days of the marque.

In May, the North-East group welcomed their newest, and youngest, member. This was 15 year old Kirsten Junker from Forgue. She had recently bought her first Riley, a spatted RME OXL827, and with her came her father Hal, a Riley Man of many years standing. The family had moved into the locality, coming from the Mole Valley part of Devon.

The National in the same month was held in Dundee, and had a rather nautical theme, with a visit to Discovery Point with its excellent museum and Capt. Scott's ship *Discovery*.



Saturday Night's dinner was served on tables on the roofed-over upper deck of the 19th Century frigate *Unicorn*, and most of the weekend seemed to have been spent under water, as Norman's "McGonigal's Lament" illustrated:

*By the Tay, the Tay, the silvery Tay,
The rain it dinged on doon -
Sometimes it stotted up again,
More often ran away,
Unlike the Rileys and their owners brave,
Who tholed it and had fun always.*



The North-East group's fearless leader, Doug, had to miss out on all the nautical Tayside fun of the National, having been himself laid-up in dock having a Hip Replacement joint fitted.

Later in the year there was a Family Day Bar-B-Que with the Tayside group in Edzell, with superlative Burgers supplied by Alastair Simpson; and even later than that, a Club Stand at the Alford Cavalcade with newly refurbished signs and stanchions.

Then it was time for the Northern Weekend, again held at Tain, where there is a superb historical interpretive centre and museum entitled *Tain through the Ages*. One wonders how long the Riley Northern Weekend would have had to make its annual appearance in Tain to become itself a feature of the montage.



This weekend was called "Tain Tenth" on the programme, although pedantic people would realise that this was in fact the eleventh running of the Northern Weekend but Norman clearly found Alliteration's Artful Aid too seductive to resist. Sorry Norman! - this is a History of the group and it is hoped that most of the facts are accurate!

What was really Historic was the brave little group who left Morangie House early on the Saturday to drive across the country from coast to coast. It consisted of Mike Cartney in his Monaco AG 7384, with Victor Riley in the Passenger seat and Doug and Judy in the back; Jamie and Lyndsey Gow in their RME AJS 765, and Bob and Helen Miller with Fred and Elspeth Carss in Bob's 1.5. They drove to Ullapool, where they saw Atlantic seals, solemnly poured a bottle of east coast seawater into the west coast sea, and then returned to Tain by a different route totalling 172 memorable miles.



Some of the North-East group retraced the road to Cairnryan to attend the Ulster Riley Club's 25th Anniversary Rally, which was held in Newcastle, Co. Down, where the Mountains of Mourne really DO sweep down to the sea. A highlight of that weekend was watching a local Rally Driver doing exciting gyrations in his Rally-prepared Mini – some of us would have loved a "shottie".



Nineteen Ninety-Six

The second Gight House Late Christmas Dinner took place in their new tile-floored Conservatory that had been constructed on the south-facing frontage of the original building to give the hotelier lots more space for parties. Unfortunately, on that frosty night, the use of a portable Calor gas heater resulted in the cold tile floor swimming in condensation. Fortunately nobody fell and the food was also brought to the table (eventually) without any accidents.



In April, Roy McGregor of Drumnadrochit brought Ranald Smith of Inverness to the noggin in the GHH in his modern car, his restoration of the ex-Glen RME VPB664 being still in progress. This was a considerable effort for the two R's as the distance involved needs about two hours hard driving over roads that are not always adequate for the traffic they have to take, so it was good to see them.



In June, John Ellam made his first appearance at the noggin in his 1930 fabric-bodied Monaco VC5151, which he had inherited from his father who had owned the car for many, many years.

The main event of the year was of course the ARC Rally to celebrate the Centenary of the Riley Car. This was held in Coombe Park, Coventry, and ARC had been pushing for the gathering at Coventry to be brought about through what was called *Feeder Rallies* from the more remote points of the country, to provide more of a spectacle for welcome publicity, and to provide support for those with cars unaccustomed to catering for the expectation of actually arriving.



The Feeder from Scotland was organised to start from Stirling, and that year's Scottish National scheduled to be run by the North-East group was postponed to 1997 to permit members to concentrate on the preparations for the journey to Coventry and the momentous event.

The 1996 National had been replaced by a one day "Send Off Rally" on the Sunday, where there was a choice of visits to Wallace Monument, Bannockburn or Loch Katrine; then in the early evening a Farewell Reception by the Provost of Stirling.

Amongst those participating in the Scottish Feeder was a minibus full of Australian couples and introductions were quickly made and cordial associations immediately formed.

Next day the Feeder swept off majestically, and arrived at Jedburgh, where a stop in the car park near the Abbey revealed the automotive problems shaken-out by the first sixty or seventy miles. Fergus Robertson was in need of some help and so Eric Stewart and Alasdair Gunn gave the necessary assistance. Next day the Stewarts and the Gunns got separated from the rest of the group and after Beamish, they never quite met up again until Coventry.



However, the rest of the North-East members, led by Norman and Colin Gray, who did manage to stay with the Feeder, did reach Coventry without significant delay, having had an uproarious time on the way by all accounts.

It must have been hard to miss the arrival of the Scottish Feeder at Coombe Park as they carried a large Saltire flying from a pole that could be brandished out of the window. They say there is no such thing as bad publicity

Hal Junker drove to Devon to borrow a Riley Special, then on arriving at back at Coombe Park had to give Shotties to the lustful

After the incredible adventure of the Centenary Rally at Coventry, it was back to more mundane if equally enjoyable events and in the North-East, the first was a Summer Barbecue at Bill Pirie's home in Fettercairn, meeting the Taysiders again, and enjoying a visit to Fasque House, home of the Gladstone family (No—not IAN Gladstone, WILLIAM EWART Gladstone), which is Very Original and full of mementoes of the former Prime Minister.

August brought a trip to Aucharnie, Hal and Judy Junker's farm where the group took part in driving tests cunningly arranged by Hal.

Kirsten's RM OXL was performing beautifully, if in rather a naked fashion. (No not Kirsten lads, the car!) The car was minus the wings and roof covering but nevertheless was a sight to behold and a credit to the girl's grit and determination to have a Riley on the road – with maybe just a little help from her Dad. The barbeque consisted of a whole sheep being roasted on the fire but eating this under the watchful gaze of the rest of the flock was just a little difficult for the more sensitive souls in our midst.

September brought our Northern Weekend with yet another change of venue. Morangie House Hotel was undergoing much-needed extensions to add bedrooms and dining room conservatories. Anna Gunn and Alison Jaffrey had scouted and planned the whole thing.

The Stotfield Hotel in Lossiemouth was the base for the weekend, and Jim warned the participants to come

“armed with notebooks and pencils as there will be a strong educational bias – History, Archaeology, Architecture – covering topics such as Pictish Stones, religious buildings and various other finds and discoveries of our past.”

Despite all this, Jim did enjoy the event and thanked the planners for their “inside knowledge”. The Leader of the Weekend thought that for once, all the money he had spent on women's university education had “done good”.



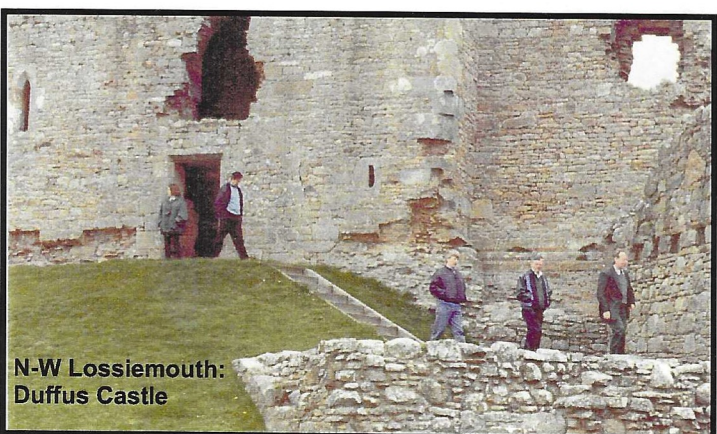
Riley 100: The Bearers of the Standard



Riley 100: Norman driving Hal's borrowed Special



Bill Pirie's Picnic



N-W Lossiemouth:
Duffus Castle

Nineteen Ninety-Seven

The first Noggin of the year saw Colin and Duncan Gray in their newly-acquired Elf, as well as Ranald Smith and Roy McGregor, the furthest-flung members, in attendance.

The late Christmas dinner was held at Gight House on 25th January, so of course, something had to be included to celebrate the Immortal Memory. Five members submitted their Burns / Riley parodies and each received a small prize.

The March meeting was also a bit different! This was a Quiz and Stovies Fun Evening to raise funds for the National Rally, which the North-East group were hosting in this year. If you do not know what Stovies are, you cannot be a North-East member – they are the local equivalent of an edible shibboleth! The event raised £140.



In May, Doug accepted the invitation on behalf of SRE to organise a team to compete in an Inter-club Driving event at Doune with Wolseley, MG and Morris clubs. Rileys did not win, but neither did they come last and the participants had a day to remember.



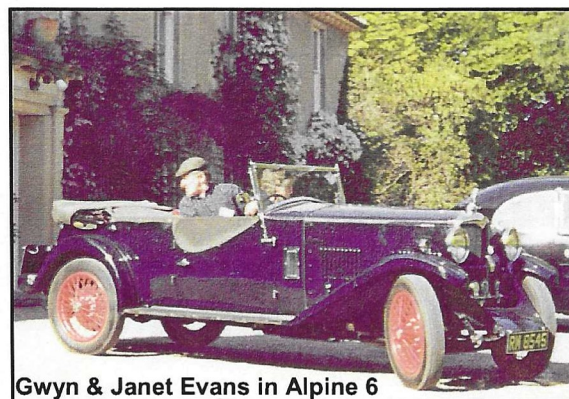
The Fontanas with Mary at Glamis 1995

The big event of the year for the North-East group was of course the National, and this was based at the Marriott Hotel in Dyce. For some, just the getting there was a major event in itself:

Fay and Henry Fontana's trip from Essex in their '29 Mk IV 9 hp Tourer DV3084 Mary was a mammoth display of grit and determination in poor weather without side curtains. The car brought a memorable remark from a little Aberdeenshire lad who expressed his opinion:

"That's a bonny wee car, but you'll soon need to be getting a new one."

The Fontana's story of their epic journey, which would normally have had everybody's attention, was however upstaged by Gwyn and Janet Evans' incredible effort to get to Dyce.



Gwyn & Janet Evans in Alpine 6

Their total mileage was 1136 miles, simply because their '32 Alpine 6 Tourer RM8545 had mechanical trouble near Moffat, necessitating being trailered home to North Wales by a motoring rescue organisation, then garage work until 3.30 a.m. then a return journey to Aberdeen, arriving in time for the Saturday dinner.

It was little wonder they were awarded the Craighaar Cup for the Spirit of the Rally.

The Fontanas did not go home empty-handed however, as they were awarded the Challenge Cup for Effort, and really deserved this.

Another notable award was the James Pearson Salver to Kirsten Junker for the first appearance at a National of her hands-on restoration of her Spatted RME OXL827. The Saturday Runs included a stop at Aucharnie, the Junker home, where there were driving tests in one of the fields.



Norman Glen had a little help from the others in the organising of the National, but it is true to say that he took on the Co-ordinator's role with aplomb. His feelings as expressed in the *Newsletter*, showed some of the stress he had been suffering. The sheer relief when the event was over was little short of palpable. The Riley clubs, and SRE in particular, could not exist without people willing and able to achieve far more than they might ever have believed themselves capable of attaining. In recognition of his part in the Dyce National Rally, Norman was presented with the Elizabeth Skelly Cup.

The North-East Group, in recognition that Doug Thurston was experiencing "Many and time-consuming commitments which have kept him from coming along as often as he would have liked of late .." invited him to become Patron of the Group, which he accepted. It was proposed that Alasdair Gunn should take the Chair of the North-East Area, and that Norman should continue as Secretary / Treasurer, and this duly came about.

The building work at the Morangie House Hotel in Tain had finally been completed, so the North-East group returned there for its September Northern Weekend. Due to the Organiser being out of the country during the run-up to the event, the planning of the weekend's activities had fallen to the next generation of the Riley Family (well, the Gunn family actually). Alison had previous experience as she had helped with the Lossiemouth trip, and for the next challenge she had arranged for a visit to Foulis Castle.

Norman reported in the *Newsletter* on this visit, and commented particularly on the tour of the Castle conducted in person by Mrs Munro the "delightful Chatelaine" of this beautiful Adam mansion House. What amazed the female visitors was the sight of the aforementioned Chatelaine making the tea and serving it, and her own home baked scones, by herself. Now that doesn't happen every day!



Sunday brought a trip to Dornoch, some of us attended the morning service in the Cathedral, then the whole group went on to lunch at Lairg, followed by a visit to the Ferrycroft Countryside centre, where we climbed the Ord Hill on an Archaeological trail. This brought the weekend to a close, and with it another year of Riley enjoyment.

The Dinner at Morangie House had been much easier to enjoy as the additional space and bar facilities reduced the crowding pressure that had been the norm before. The food was as good as ever, but it was clear that there had been a step change in the level of restaurant business that the Morangie House was doing.

When it was later discovered that one N-E Riley family, who had been obliged to miss the Saturday dinner for reason of illness, had been turned away from the Morangie on the Sunday evening following, and on a very flimsy pretext, it was generally felt that a new venue should be sought for the following year.



Nineteen Ninety - Eight

Christmas dinner started our year in January. The conservatories that had been built in 1996 had provided the Hotel with the space to serve more diners, but the management had not, it seemed, provided resources to cater for additional business, and the service had deteriorated to a snail's pace. The participants, however, managed to rise above it and still have a good time.

Of especial Note was Lachlan Gray's parody on Tam o' Shanter – well it WAS 24th January – but this Tam's steed was not a horse but a Riley 2½ that lost her boot handle to the grip of witch Nannie with the cutty sark! Strange lot the North-Easters!

In February, John Ellam took to print in the *Newsletter* with the history of the family heirloom, the Monaco VC5151. Unfortunately the reproductions of his photographs were very poor, but for those who had seen the car in the Fabric (as it were), this did not matter too much.

The group, through Lachlan, were invited to the Bridge of Don Vehicle Testing Centre where a member of the GVRS had his Morris Minor put through a full examination by a senior examiner. Unfortunately the car failed due to drag on two wheels but the evening was anything but a drag.



The first "away weekend" was the National at Strathaven, and the Magazine Editor took the opportunity of getting a decent, indeed coloured, photo of John Ellam's Monaco which later appeared in the Magazine.

Another photo showed Hal Junker going to Stuart Ritchie's help when the Falcon ASC 962 suffered a puncture. Nice folk we have in the North-East Area!

In July, nice people were meeting up again in Feeder rallies all over the country. This time all roads were leading to Gaydon for the second Centenary Rally. (Did you ever think you would live to the age of 200?)

The Scottish Feeder Rally started at John O'Groats and for one member this meant hosting a Dutch couple for a week before they took part in the feeder run. During the week Herman and Henny Rouwhorst, members of Riley Club, Holland, were able to attend a North-East noggin and met most of the group.

No North-East member took part in the Scottish Feeder rally but one way or another, some did manage to attend the Gaydon event. One couple actually went via Woodbridge with the Essex group but that is another story!



The Riley Marque was well represented at the Thomson Rally at Stonehaven. Three Pre-war and two BMC models attended, while unusually, there were no RMs, however, Riley owners drove away with four awards, three to the North-East Area, and one to Tayside.

In August, Rileys were very well represented at the *Garioch VRS* event in Oldmeldrum, (where Lachlan and Molly Gray are among the leading lights). So much so, in fact, that the Rileys got a parade and microphone interviews to themselves. Not that Lachlan could be accused of partiality!

Joan Bruce was driven round the Arena in her late father's very rare and newly restored '34 14/6 MPH, much to everyone's delight. (Her father was John Garden)

September brought the annual North-East end-of-season Weekend, this year held at Grantown-on-Spey. The programme included trips to the Revack Highland Estate and Ballindalloch Castle, finishing off with a run on the steam train at Boat of Garten. Our poor Chairman had hoped to attend in his Mentone ST7775 but big end trouble meant *Betsy* had to stay at home while Frank and Betty came to the event in a modern.

Richard Osborne once again demonstrated the fact that Rileys are those most-loved things in a Riley man's heart when he took his '54 RME DDC731 on his honeymoon. It has to be admitted that he also took Dora, his wife, and the car took them both Magnificently on their tour of Ireland.

In the December issue of the *Newsletter*, Alasdair was extolling the delights of young members after Kirsten Junker and Alan Glen had attended the noggin thereby succeeding Colin and Phil as youngest members of the North-East area. Isn't it awful when you have to move up a generation! Alan Holmes made his first appearance at Gight with photographs of his recently inherited Kestrel HS8878, and Dora Osborne made her first acquaintance with the group. So with auld acquaintances and new acquaintances, what better way to end another Riley year?

Nineteen Ninety-Nine

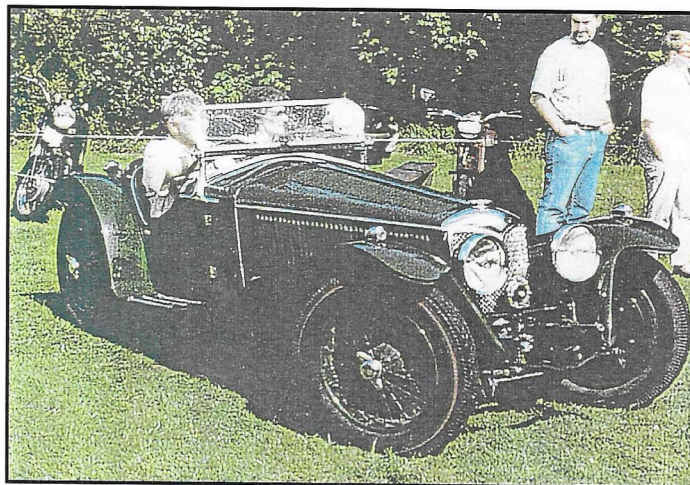
At the start of a new year the topics at Gight were just as varied as ever. The Gray's special Christmas Card displaying a Pathfinder was marvelled over, it could only have been bettered by finding a real Pathfinder in a Christmas stocking! Hal's Special's brake rigging was pondered about and so the year was off again.

The late Christmas Dinner found a new and much better venue at the Rothie Inn where the food, service and surroundings were just great.

This year seemed to be the year for changes of venue, first the Dinner and then the Noggin.

Alan Holmes had invited Hal and Al (sounds like a Music Hall turn) to view his '36 9 hp Kestrel HS8878 and suggested that the Torryburn Hotel might suit as indeed it did, and the April Noggin took place in its new hostelry.

Gight House had served the group well enough for the regular Noggins, but the owner had become less and less welcoming, so the gang took the message and jumped before they were pushed.



The latest member of the Riley clan was introduced, well not in person but in spirit anyway – Alasdair Glen, Norman's son had arrived in the world on 13th March and the group were happy to "wet the bairn's head" in good traditional style. Norman had also been the happy recipient of the *James McMahon Memorial Trophy* from the Ulster Riley Club although he was not too sure that he had actually done anything to merit the award.

Kirsten found herself published in the *Press and Journal* when she wrote a piece on Rileys. In May, the National was based at the Pitlochry Hydro Hotel, hosted by the Tayside group and coordinated by Bill Webb. Two North-East members received awards, David Simon won the Dickson Shield for the best BMC Riley with URS372, and Kirsten Junker received the RM Challenge Cup for Effort with OXL.



The July *Newsletter* could almost be described as an Alasdair Benefit, as it contained in the words of Gordon McAllan, Al's "Andrex-lengthed eulogy" (*what a great phrase!*) telling of the trip to Dumfries-shire in Colin's Transit Van with Trailer that he and Colin had taken to pick up Al's newly-acquired '34 9h.p. Kestrel US5923 bought from Lockhart Jackson, and of Colin's collection of an RMA from Bob Miller, both actions taking place in the worst storm of rain and wind seen for some time. Not only that, but the *Newsletter* had enough space left to report the usual half page of Doings from the Torryburn, the local watering hole.



The Doings included the colourful tales of the installation of the great red phone box at Norman's house



..... and Colin's great white knight act when he helped to rescue a damsel (Kirsten) in distress (her RM had lost the fluid from the hydraulics).

Ranald Smith got the distance award, well he would have if there had been one, as he had driven down from Inverness just to take part in all the fun.

The usual Northern Weekend did not happen in 1999 as the Organiser was off on a foreign adventure when he, Anna and Colin Watt travelled to Switzerland to take part in the Swiss Riley Club's 20th Anniversary Rally followed by a four day "Mini Tour de Suisse" organised and led by Edi Preiswerk, one of the Swiss Rileyists.

Colin, on his first venture onto foreign soil, discovered the joys of open-top Prewar Riley motoring, first as a mechanic, assisting with the fixing of the Magneto of the Mazzotti Special, then as a passenger, courtesy of the Dicks, and of the Akkermans.

Thomas Gough, a prospective Riley owner, made his first appearance at the Torryburn, and it was not long before he became the proud owner of '48 RMA HON259.

In November Jim Dunbar came to the North-East Noggin give a presentation on the topic of "Bodywork". This was exceedingly appropriate as Alasdair had just had some bodywork done on his knee – *Thinks: - Jim could probably have performed this bit of restoration!*

As always, Jim delivered a "captivating address" and fired the folks with renewed enthusiasm. Jim was back again the next month as he was in the area helping Norman sort out some problems with his 6-Light Kestrel BRW511.

Here are a couple of pictures that amply illustrate: -

- a) Jim's qualifications to tell others how to do bodywork design, and a few other things too!



- b) What it feels like to give the Beastie some Welly up the Aucharnie drive.



To look at the faces of the two folk in the car, you can see that the Grin factor is obviously in excess of 110%.

Lachlan, Molly and Phil Gray held up the North-East's reputation when they attended the Central Area's Taynuilt Weekend, which included a scenic run via the Bridge over the Atlantic to Seil Island.

This was certainly not a bridge too far even if Lachlan and Molly's RMA XS7642 had to be returned home under the good offices of the AA Relay after an attack of the *Volcanic Radiator*.



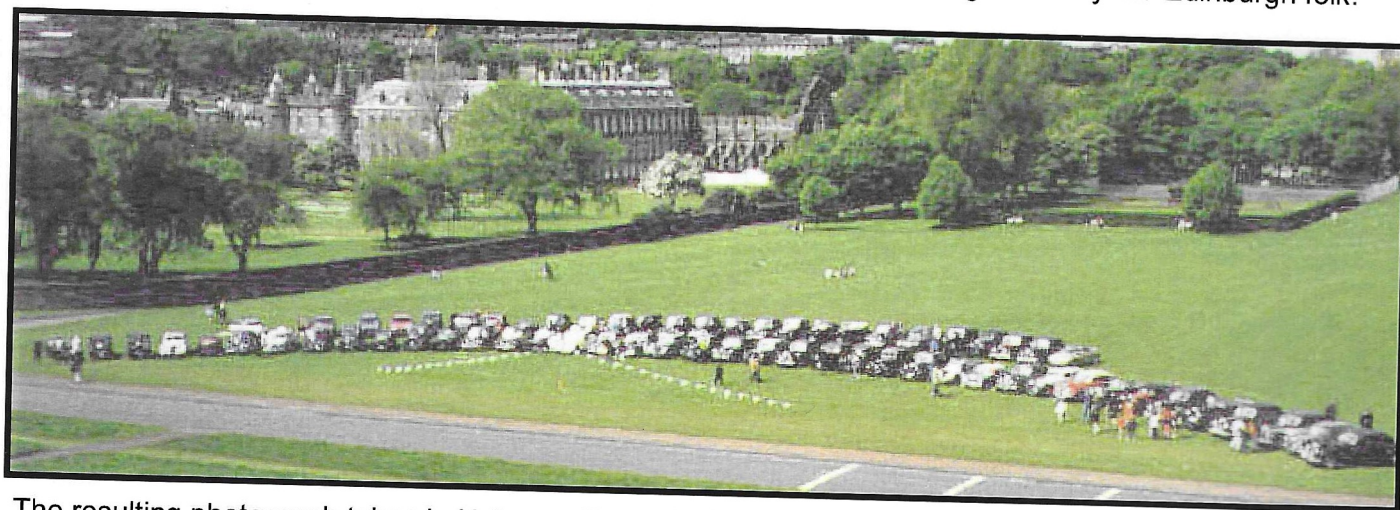


The North-East area started this Millennium Year with the usual late Christmas Dinner again held at the Rothie Inn and again Alasdair said he had intended to try to mix people more with a kind of Paul Jones approach to the seating arrangements – but it never happened. However the attendees seemed to enjoy themselves nevertheless.

Doug made one of his infrequent visits to the Noggin in March. He had brought some documentation that he wanted to pass on, as he was trying to clear his desk. Yes, you are right, some of it landed on my desk! Thanks Doug. I think he must have enjoyed the evening because he was back again in April.

In May, Alasdair was back after his second knee replacement operation and the meeting was as eclectic as ever. How anyone ever manages to report these meetings in an anyway sensible manner simply defeats me.

Practically every member of the North-East group managed to get to the extra special Millennium National held in the Barony Castle, Eddlestone organised by the Edinburgh folk.



The resulting photograph taken in Holyrood Park of the 61 cars lined up together was indeed historic, as was the part played by the Rileyists taking part in the rerun of the Riley Motor Club's run from London to Edinburgh, who joined in the SRE event.

In July, Hal and Judy again hosted a Barbeque at Aucharnie and folk could look the sheep in the eye as they were all safely in the field and none of their number on the barbeque.

Doug was back this month driven by Colin to the Noggin as he was still recovering from his first cataract operation.

Later in July, the Gunns, in company with the Tayside Stewarts, took their RM's to York to attend the RM Club National Rally. It certainly seemed strange after so many years attending only Scottish Riley events, to be back at a single model Riley event, having got used to the all-Riley-inclusive events in Scotland, but it was good to meet up with old friends. For Alasdair and Eric the highlight of the weekend was a Run to the Yorkshire Aircraft Museum at Elvington while the women did their own thing and went walkabout in York.

In August Kirsten was home for the holidays and she and Alan and Stephanie Glen all got to the noggin so once again in the North-East, young folk abounded.

Back home it was decided that it was time to return to Northern Ireland to support the Ulster Group's 30th Anniversary Rally, and although this decision was heartily endorsed, it was not so easily achieved because of the petrol shortage due to the tanker blockades of Fuel Depots in response to rising prices. However the Watts, the Grays and the Gunns, ever resourceful, got there in the end and when they arrived in Ireland it was to find a land flowing, not with milk and honey, but with petrol, and at an extra cheap price in Southern Ireland. Letterkenny was the base and the Holiday Inn provided for almost all of our needs.

The Ulster Club, as always, put on a great weekend with visits to a Victorian complex of Flax and Corn mills and a visit to the home of Derek Hill, the figurative landscape artist.

The awards this time were based on *"The Last of the Summer Wine"* television programme.

Lachlan's XS won

"The Nora Batty award for the RM roof with the most wrinkles".

(Well, at least it was the RM roof, and not the RM Owner)

Alasdair's LOW won

"The Marina award for the car with the most glamorous colour scheme".

Unfortunately there were no awards for Colin as he had come improperly dressed in his Nissan.

At the AGM in October, the retiring Chairman reviewed this Millennium Year and said that looking back it had been filled with special Riley events, of which the highlight was surely the Scottish National with more than 60 Rileys, Prewars, RMs and BMCs all lined up together at Holyrood Park.



Epilogue

Back in 1991 at the inauguration of the SRE no-one would have imagined that SRE would have grown to such an extent, or that the North-East area would have played such a pivotal role in its development.

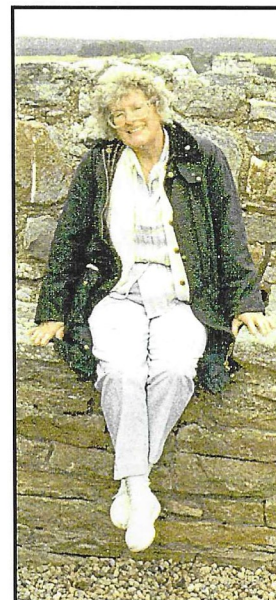
Without a man like Jim Dunbar, SRE would probably never have happened; but without men like Doug, Lachlan, Norman, Alasdair and others, the North-East area would not have grown into the vibrant group that it has become.

Acknowledgements

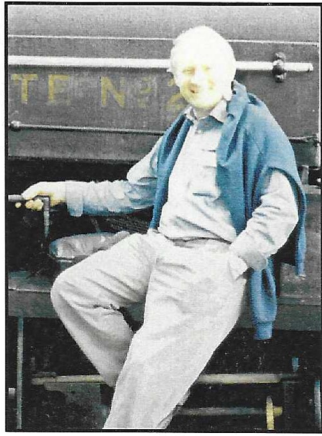
The Sources used for the creation of the text were the *SRE Newsletter*, and *SRE Magazine*, and *R.Memoranda*. Photography was purloined from the pages of the *SRE Newsletter* and *SRE Magazine* and from the Gunn family archives plus those of many other members.

The writer wishes to record her grateful thanks to the Editors of the organs mentioned, and to the owners of the photography and of the literary work used, particularly the Riley RM Club. She would also like to thank fellow members of SRE who have provided their time and invaluable help, and that includes her husband, with especial thanks to him for the production of the finalised documents of this History.

ARG



The facing page carries a photo-montage of some of the movers and shakers of the North-East Area.





The History of the North-East Area

by

Anna Gunn

This Volume is one of a uniform suite of six Club Histories published by Scottish Riley Enthusiasts. The History of Scottish Riley Enthusiasts is an overview of the development of the Club until 2000. The others cover the period from their beginnings till 2000, and these are related from the perspective of one of the Club's local Areas.

The other Volumes in the suite are entitled:

The History of Scottish Riley Enthusiasts	by Anna Gunn
The History of the South-West Area	by Bob Miller
The History of the Tayside Area	by Eric Stewart
The History of the South-East Area	by Frank Hutson
The History of the Central Area	by Mike Cartney

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