

One man's contribution to the SHRF Archive

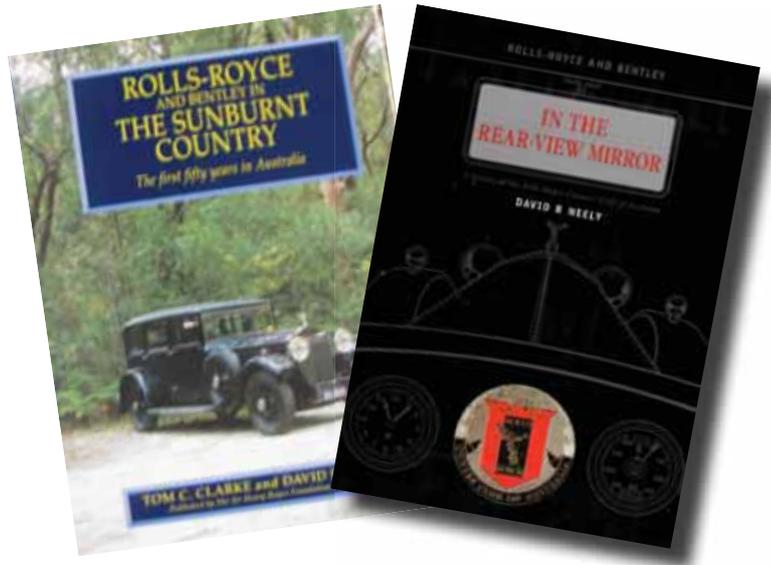
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Hon Archivist

I am not sure what prompts people to collect things, but from time to time you learn about people who have amassed large collections of tea pots, stamps, coins, books, art, plates and all manner of items which attract their attention. One of the strangest collections I have seen is of barbed wire. It would not surprise you then to learn that within the Rolls-Royce movement there are people who are passionate about Rolls-Royce and Bentley motor cars and related memorabilia.

One of the functions of the Sir Henry Royce Foundation, Australia, is to collect anything related to Sir Henry Royce. The Archive, which is located in Bill Allsep House in Melbourne, is the repository of the Foundation's collection and regular attendees at the meetings of the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club, Victoria Branch, have the opportunity to see some of the larger items which are on display in the meeting room. Others who venture into the Archive itself see very little apart from a vast collection of archive boxes stored neatly on the rows of shelving. The six volunteers working in the Archive know what is hidden in these boxes and are able to immediately retrieve any item listed on the Archive Register. So that visitors can also enjoy the material in the collection we have several cabinets in which to display items of general interest. The most recent of these contains a small selection of the hundreds of items donated by one man – David Neely.

David Neely joined the RROCA NSW Branch in 1980 and over 32 years of membership has owned a Phantom I, a Phantom II, a Bentley SI, a Silver Cloud III and a Silver Spirit. He has been an active member of the NSW Branch and has served on the Branch Committee and Federal Council as Register and later, for a period of five years, was Editor of *Præclarvm* magazine. At the formation of the Sir Henry



Royce Foundation, David was appointed a Trustee and he has made a very significant contribution to the activities of the Foundation until his recent retirement.

I doubt that there is a more dedicated researcher and author on matters Rolls-Royce in Australia than David Neely. He co-authored *Rolls-Royce and Bentley in the Sunburnt Country* with Tom Clarke in 1999 and in 2004, entirely on his own, wrote *In the Rear-view Mirror – A History of the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of Australia*. Both of these large volumes were published by the Foundation and they remain the most important reference books for collectors in Australia.

Recently David donated the greater part of his collection of motoring memorabilia to the Archive and a few of the visually attractive items are now on display in the meeting room. The remainder of his diverse collection is housed in the Archive itself and one needs to see it to appreciate the meticulous manner in which he prepared the material before sending it to the Archive. All of the source material for the two volumes mentioned above and the many other articles he has written over the past twenty years have been carefully collated in matching lever-arch folders or albums in the case of the hundreds of photographs he collected. In my thirty year association with museums and archives I have never seen a more thoroughly prepared donation. His attention to detail is to be admired and members are welcome to visit the Archive to inspect his collection.



around the page: parts of David Neely's legacy and collection, now in the SHRF Archive

