

# PEBBLE BEACH 2015 – HISTORY AS ADVOCACY



Yesterday I was again at Pebble Beach Concours d'Élegance – that rather exclusive and impressive gathering of car collectors and connoisseurs [Link]

I was there to wind up our Stanford class concerned with the historical significance of the automobile (Jon Feiber, David Kelley, Reilly Brennan and myself running ME200). Since April we have been debating just how an artifact such as an automobile can gain historical significance. The objective? To award the Revs Prize to what class members judge to be the most historically significant car at the Pebble Beach show.

The winner was a 1914 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost with Torpedo Phaeton coachwork by Kellner of Paris and now belonging to Doug Magee Jr of Wolfeboro, New Hampshire [Link] Congratulations to Doug on this artifact that takes us back to much forgotten times and experiences, and also raises questions about mobility of every kind – movements through culture and class as well as city and country.

## Historical significance?

Of an artifact, a machine such as an automobile? Is the question a matter of assessing cars according to a scale of “historical value”, however that may be defined? This year the class took up with energy and remarkable insight my proposition that historical significance is a matter of advocacy – that history is about *making a case* for historical significance, *on various negotiated and contested grounds* – connection with an event or person, being a paradigm or exemplar of styling, precipitating key technological change etc etc [Link].

Our twenty or so students who could come to Pebble Beach applied their research and inquisitorial skills to a short list of finalists and their owners.

(Click on images for larger versions)

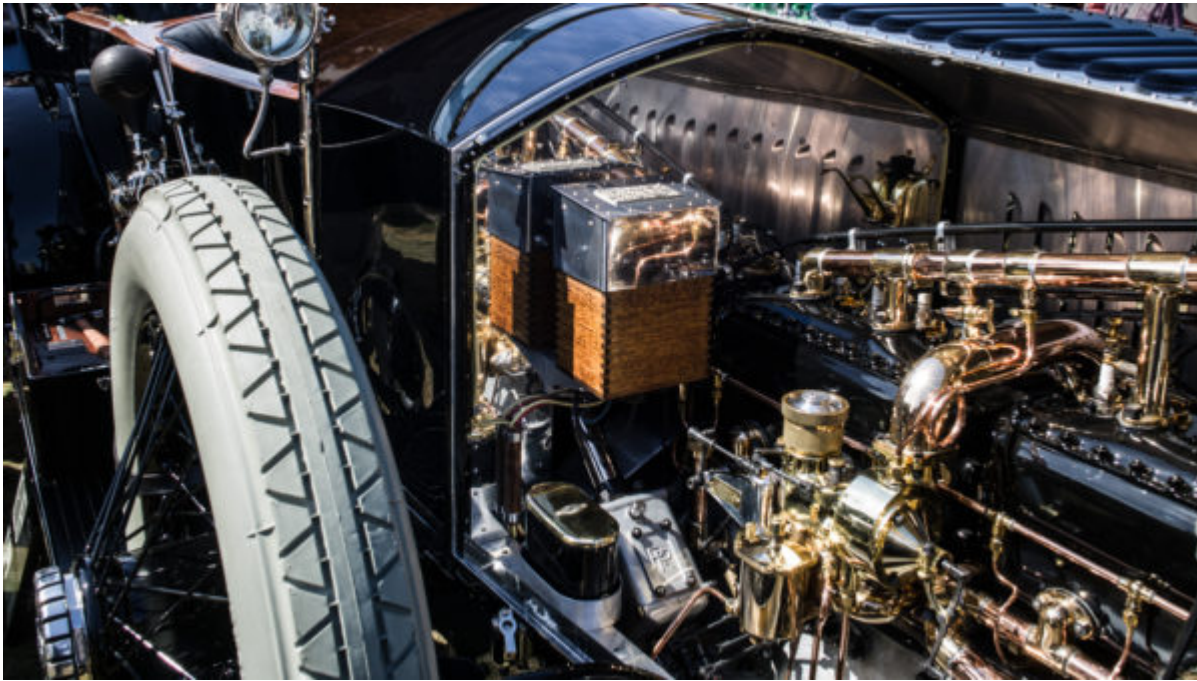


“Dawn Patrol” – the cars arrive at first light on the 18th hole at Pebble Beach golf course



Michael Bock (Director, Mercedes-Benz Classic) introduces the 1955 300 SLR, "722" in which Stirling Moss, with navigator Denis Jenkinson, won the Mille Miglia, the great road race around Italy, at a record average speed of 92 mph. The account of the adventure, written by "Jenks", is one of the landmarks of automotive journalism





Details of the Rolls Royce Silver Ghost – the extraordinary mechanicals and the passenger accessories that transport us into a quite different historical experience and mindset of mobility, class, industry, and technology



John Shirley starting up his 1949 Ferrari 166 MM Touring Barchetta – a racing machine from the beginnings of the Ferrari legend





Deborah and Arturo Keller share with the students their unique 1931 Alfa Romeo 6C 1750 Gran Sport Touring Spider – the “Flying Star”. Competition engineering combined with coachwork in stunning white by Carrozzeria Touring of Milan



The team witness assessment by the regular official Pebble Beach judges of Jon Feiber's 1960 Ferrari 250 GT SWB Scaglietti Berlinetta Competition – not short listed for the Revs Prize, but here offering insights into the judgement of scaleable attributes and qualities



Jonathan Segal of San Diego tells with great passion and elegance the story of this 1956 Maserati A6G 2000 Frua Coupé which only recently emerged from deep storage since 1959 in the collection of “garagiste” Roger Baillon of Paris



History as advocacy – arguing and voting on the cases for the cars



Jon and David moderate the debate and verdict