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Rolls-History

DUTCH COUPLE TRAVEL IN ROLLS WITH RICH HISTORY

By: Yai Ban King

SEPANG, Oct 28 (Bernama) -- Many of us would have balked at the idea of owning a car which is almost a century old, not least because it would cost a lot to overhaul it and some of its parts are no longer in production.

A Dutch couple, however, are most happy to own a 1928 Rolls-Royce because of the particular car's rich history.

Hans and Hanny Stefels are part of the contingent of 200 Rolls-Royce and Bentley car owners that did several laps at the Sepang F1 Circuit yesterday to mark the start of their 18-day tour of Malaysia.

The 1,920km tour-cum-car exhibition was flagged off by Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir at Dataran Putrajaya.

According to Hans, his Royce was the car used by the last British Governor of India, Lord Mountbatten.

On the Indian Independence Day in 1947, the car was used to ferry Mountbatten and Mahatma Gandhi.

The 73-year-old six cylinder car was later bought by a Dutchmen who shipped it to the United States.

When he died, his grandson inherited the car and shipped it to the Netherlands where the Stefels found and brought it.

Hans said he had spent a fortune refurbishing the car into its present state of grandness.

The car found its way back to India last year when the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club held a tour cum exhibition there.

Built in Derby, England, the Phantom 1 (also known as the New Phantom) was the earliest car to be built under the Phantom series, which were probably the most sought after Rolls-Royce models.

Hanny said her fondness for the simple life of people in the countryside was the reason for the couple's visit to Malaysia.

"I have fond memories of India and I thought we can also get to see the countryside and village people in Malaysia. That's what that interest me, not the big cities," she added.

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