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ISSUE 28



20-GHOST GAZETTE

The oldest Rolls-Royce car club in the world - Australian Chapter



The 20-Ghost Club Australian Chapter Incorporated

The 20-Ghost Club was formed in England in 1949, and the Australian Chapter of the Club was formed in 1992. The Australian Club is an incorporated association registered in New South Wales (INC9886558)

The Club is dedicated to the preservation of pre-1945 Rolls-Royce motor cars. The name of the Club was taken from the legendary 40/50 hp Silver Ghost and its smaller counterpart, the 20hp model. The Club activities revolve around the early cars including Silver Ghost, 20hp, Phantom I, II and III, 20/25, 25/30 and Wraith.

Eligibility for membership extends to owners of all pre-1945 Rolls-Royce motorcars.

Club Mailing Address

15 Avenue Athol, Canterbury, Victoria 3126, Australia.

Committee and Appointments

President: Michael Henningsen
e: michael@michaelhenningsen.com.au
t: 0418 818 767

Vice President: Andrew Bayley
e: aobayley@bigpond.net.au
t: 0417 142 779

Secretary: Ian Berg
e: bergathol@gmail.com
t: 0419 364 427

Treasurer: Greg Wayman
e: greg.wayman13@gmail.com
t: 0402 009 901

Editor: Ian Berg
e: bergathol@gmail.com
t: 0419 364 427

Committee: Noel Baker
e: noelbaker@yahoo.com.au
t: 0428 597 994

George Blenkhorn
e: blenkhorn@gmail.com
t: 0429 139 902

Mick Matheson
e: mick@phantom2.com.au
t: 0415 666 147

John Rowney
e: johnrowney@bigpond.com
t: 0413 676 833

Bruce Humphries
e: Bruce@Humphries.com
t: 0407 545 037

20-Ghost Gazette

The *20-Ghost Gazette* is the journal of The 20-Ghost Club Australian Chapter Inc. Contributions for the *20-Ghost Gazette* are welcome, and should be forwarded to the Editor preferably via email, or posted to the Club's address. When submitting digital photos, please send as JPEG files attached to an email at the highest resolution available. Please do not embed photos within Word documents.

Editorial Policy

Opinions expressed in The *20-Ghost Gazette* are not necessarily those of the Editor, the Club or its Officers. Technical, historical, reference or other information is published in good faith and no responsibility for their accuracy or efficacy is accepted.

The Committee reserves the right to edit or omit any material submitted, including letters to the Editor, for inclusion in the *20-Ghost Gazette*.

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Faris Palfreyman had what is thought to be the largest collection of early Rolls-Royces in Australia. Here he is pictured with 1913 chassis 2412 which he had just imported from England in 1962. The car came out in a large box - this was the era before shipping containers.

The vast majority of cars in his collection were sourced within Australia, and many were restored or partially restored before the collection was sold off in a large auction in 1969, and others separately in the 1970s. While many of the cars, predominantly the veterans, have since been exported, a large number remain and are now with our Club members today. The Palfreyman story is hugely significant for the Rolls-Royce collector hobby in Australia, and it can be found on page 8.

Coming Events

April 8 - 13, 2026	Port Lincoln Tour, South Australia Combined with the RROCA SA Branch, the 20-Ghost Club is hosting this event on South Australia's Eyre Peninsula. It is fully subscribed, but there is a waiting list available should current registrants be unable to proceed with their bookings. Deposits have been paid already for the current registrants and rally entry will be via TryBookoing and will open soon - please keep your eye out for the email.	Director: Michael Henningsen Phone: 0418 818 767 Email: michael@michaelhenningsen.com.au
April 19 - 23, 2026	Yarrawonga Tour Silverwoods Resort overlooking Lake Mulwala will be our accommodation for this 4-day event in 2026. Accomodation can be booked now, and by 27 December latest, by calling 03 5745 9100 and mentioning the 20-Ghost Tour. Rally entry will be via TryBookoing and will open soon - please keep your eye out for the email.	Director: Greg Wayman Phone: 0402 009 901 Email: greg.wayman13@gmail.com
May 13 - 16, 2026	The 'Macquarie Breakout' of the Sydney Basin This rally will visit the Old Government House in Parramatta, Elizabeth Farm at Harris Park and Camden Park Estate at Camden to see where the wool industry was born. Then a visit the first point of departure from the Sydney Basin at St. Aubin's to travel up over the Blue Mountains. Accommodation is at The Colonial Motel, Richmond, phone (02) 45781166. There are 12 rooms booked in the name of Bob Roberts. Please call the motel and book directly. These rooms will be held for us until 13 April.	Director: Bob Roberts Phone: 0407 002 350 Email: bob@robertspv.com.au
October 11 - 17, 2026	2026 National Tour, Red Hill The Lancemore Lindenderry Estate in Red Hill is on the Mornington Peninsula. Accomodation can be booked now and is limited to 40 rooms only. Please call(03) 59892933 and mention the 20-Ghost Tour. TryBooking for the event will open in 2026.	Director: Ian Berg Phone: 0419 364 427 Email: bergathol@gmail.com Director: Greg Wayman Phone: 0402 009 901 Email: greg.wayman13@gmail.com
October 2027 - Dates TBA	2027 National Tour, McLaren Vale, South Australia	Director: Michael Henningsen Phone: 0418 818 767 Email: michael@michaelhenningsen.com.au

Front Cover:

Pictured in front of what was originally the Callan Park Hospital for the Insane as a background is the 1920 Silver Ghost of Will Notaras. The 1880s sandstone building, located in Lilyfield, New South Wales, is heritage listed and a part of the Sydney College of Arts.

Will has recently completed the restoration of this early post-armistice Ghost and relays his story on page 4.

Chairman's Report

I hope everyone enjoyed a pleasant Christmas and New Year. With our National Rally now well behind us, we can turn our attention once again to getting out and about in our delightful cars.

To this end, the Committee has been very active in ensuring that members are well catered for with events and runs in the lead-up to our National Rally in Red Hill this October.

In South Australia, the tour to Port Lincoln will be held from 8–13 April. Victoria will host a tour at Yarrowonga from 19–23 April and New South Wales will run a Tour based around Richmond from 13–17 May.

My thanks go to Rory Poland, Greg Wayman, and Bob Roberts respectively for organising these events.

The Committee met on 28 January, and I am pleased to report that the Club continues to thrive. One small area of concern, however, has been the number of late re-enrolments, with several long-standing and valued members yet to renew their subscriptions. This may be a consequence of the Club's move to TryBooking for membership renewals. If you are contacted regarding your membership, I encourage you to ensure that your subscription is paid promptly. We greatly value every member of our Club.

The re-incorporation of the Club—approved unanimously at the AGM held at Cleveland Estate—is progressing very smoothly and is expected to be finalised by the end of the current financial year, in accordance with the motion passed. I would like to acknowledge Ian Berg and Greg Wayman for their work in progressing this important change.

Membership continues to grow steadily, and with it we are seeing more interesting pre-war cars joining our ranks.

One matter I would like to raise with members concerns our association with the UK Club. This relationship gives us the opportunity to post events and news on their website. Many of you will be aware that the UK Club's website is of an exceptionally high standard, and this presents a valuable opportunity for our Australian Chapter to benefit from a truly first-class platform. As current Committee members are already heavily committed, I would welcome hearing from any member who might be willing to assist by managing Australian content for the UK website. Please feel free to contact me if you are able to help in this area.

Finally, looking ahead, the National Rally for October 2027 will be hosted in the Southern Vales Wine Region, south of Adelaide. While the exact dates are yet to be confirmed, this promises to be another outstanding Club event in a region renowned for its excellent food, wine, and driving opportunities.

Please stay well and keep driving those beautiful cars.

*Michael Henningsen,
Chairman*

Editorial

In the 1930s, Faris Palfreyman imported numerous Rolls-Royce chassis into Melbourne and commissioned new coachwork before on-selling the cars. In the 1950s and 1960s, he became a major collector of the marque, and many of our members now own cars that were once a part of that collection. His story is of interest because of his Rolls-Royce connection, but also because many of these cars still appear on our rallies today. Thanks to Achalen Holmes, Palfreyman's grandson, for providing the story in this issue.

Will Notaras has now completed work on his Silver Ghost, a car he inherited from his father, and this achievement is a fitting tribute to the late member Angelo Notaras OAM. It makes for compelling reading. Ian Irwin also provides some deep-dive research, into an interesting Edwardian Silver Ghost that underwent an unusual rebody in the 1930s. As Ian asks: 'Does it survive somewhere, well-hidden as a secret family treasure? It surely wasn't ever scrapped.'

Finally, it seems Clive Palmer's new museum in Brisbane will include several pre-war his Rolls-Royces. I am told he recently acquired the 1928 Phantom I chassis 96AL, which was owned by Malcolm Johns (the original Club chairman), and a 1923 Twenty, part of the McFeeters Motor Museum in Forbes which was sold off in February.

Ian Berg, Editor

Not Receiving Emails?

Did you know we send news emails weekly? Aside from the *Gazette*, the Club no longer sends out any hard-copy mail to members. All member communication, including renewal notices, news and rally entry forms are sent by email.

To send our emails we use the contact management system 'Vision6'. If you have not been receiving Club emails (email address: 20ghostaus@gmail.com), it is likely they are being filtered out by spam software on your computer. If you are not receiving them, first please check your Junk mail and unblock them. You may need to do this periodically as your spam software is updated. A safe workaround is to add the Club's email address as a 'Contact', so your system knows these emails are not Junk.

Ian Berg, Club Secretary

35AG - Another Silver Ghost Restoration is Completed

Will Notaras

I am very excited to advise that I have now completed the restoration of my Silver Ghost!

History

35AG is an Australian-delivered car and has never left Australia. Its original owner was John Henry Connell, a well-known Melbourne publican nicknamed 'the King of the Counter Lunch' for his practice of offering free meals with the purchase of a three-penny imperial pint of beer (568 ml). Connell was also an avid art collector and philanthropist, donating his collection to the National Gallery of Victoria, where it was displayed for many years.

The car was ordered on 11 November 1919 through Dalgety & Company Ltd in Melbourne but was not shipped until December 1921. Connell took considerable time deciding on both the body and the distinctive finish. The selected coachbuilder was the Cunard Motor and Carriage Company, and they built a touring body on the chassis. Extensive documentation of the car appears in Ian Irwin's *Silver Ghosts of Australia and New Zealand: Cameo Histories of the Post-War Cars*. Notably, Connell specified Michelin disc wheels—commonly used on Rolls-Royce armoured military vehicles of the period—which remain fitted to the car today.

Over the decades, 35AG passed through several owners and wore several different bodies, including a roadster utility body. During the Second World War it is said to have been fitted with a gas producer. For many years the car sat in a paddock at Woori Yallock in Victoria, where it was well known and admired by local enthusiasts.



Will and Angelo Notaras photographed in 2006.



Angelo worked for many years on his beloved Silver Ghost but sadly did not see the project completed.



Current Ownership and Restoration

My father, Angelo Notaras OAM, purchased 35AG in 1984 from Russell Hubert of St Ives. At the time, he had just completed the restoration of his 1933 20/25 (GDX11)—a car I still own—when he caught the restoration bug once again. While running his manufacturing business, Atom Industries, he spent decades restoring 35AG on weekends. My father was a Rolls-Royce enthusiast for as long as I can remember.

When he acquired the car, it already carried a new body and guards built by Brian Hawke, who had also assisted with the restoration of my father's 20/25. This body, which remains on the car today, is relatively narrow and closely follows the chassis. Although my father considered replacing it, he ultimately decided against doing so due to the time and cost involved, referring to it as a 'Speedster' body. He was, however, dissatisfied with the plain appearance of the guards and commissioned Brian Hawke to fabricate a new, more detailed set—an undertaking he described as both technically challenging and very expensive.

Over the years, my father travelled extensively, visiting concours events and swap meets around the world, particularly in England, sourcing many original components for 35AG. One vivid childhood memory stands out: after my father had completely overhauled the engine himself, he attempted to start it for the first time in years. Expecting difficulties, he was surprised when it fired immediately filling the closed garage with smoke.



This is the only known photo of chassis 35AG with the original coachwork. It was taken in Melbourne and provided courtesy of Ian Irwin's book 'Silver Ghosts of Australia and New Zealand'



Photographed in 2018, the project was well advanced when Will's father Angelo passed.

Unable to stop the engine, I ran to open the garage door as fumes billowed out. A neighbour, alarmed by the smoke, called the fire brigade, who arrived within minutes as the station was just down the street. My father eventually cut the fuel supply and the engine stopped. Only then did he realise the ignition was on magneto, rendering the battery switch ineffective. That the engine started so readily after years of inactivity was a testament both to Rolls-Royce engineering and to my father's mechanical skill—he had begun his working life as a mechanic.

In November 2018, my father Angelo Notaras OAM sadly passed away at the age of 88, having completed approximately 80 per cent of the restoration himself. I subsequently purchased both cars from the family, determined to finish the restoration of 35AG to my father's specification. Seven years later, I am proud to say that the project is complete.

During the final stages, I engaged Garth Selig of Repair & Restoration Services to oversee the mechanical work. John Abbott undertook the fitting of the body and guards, while Ezio Favretti crafted the custom timber dashboard and door trims. The upholstery and hood were completed by Sydney Motor Trimmers. Completing the restoration has been an immensely rewarding experience, involving countless decisions and, admittedly, a budget that was well and truly exceeded. In the end, I chose not to take any shortcuts—and sometimes simply closed my eyes when paying the invoices.



The newly painted body ready to be refitted to the chassis.



Faris Palfreyman and the Silver Ghosts

Achalen Holmes

From Commerce to Custodianship (1920s–1969)

Among the defining chapters of Australian Rolls-Royce history, few stories span as completely—or as quietly—as that of Faris Palfreyman.

Collector, motor dealer, importer, and ultimately custodian, Palfreyman's relationship with the Silver Ghost began not as a hobby, but as a matter of practical motoring commerce in the inter-war years. By the time his collection was dispersed at auction in 1969, it represented the culmination of nearly half a century of engagement with the marque.

Early Years and the Making of a Motor Man

Faris Palfreyman's story began well before his association with Rolls-Royce. He was educated at Scotch College, and on leaving school took an adventurous path, securing a contract to build the Overland Telegraph Line from Adelaide to Alice Springs. The experience gave him an early exposure to logistics, machinery, and the practical realities of operating in remote Australia.

On returning to Melbourne, he established a motor business in Chapel Street, South Yarra, on the site now occupied by Como House. From the outset, the clientele was diverse and often colourful. Faris imported both new and used motor cars, but he later told me that

his greatest commercial success came not from luxury vehicles, but from Federal trucks. He imported the chassis in quantity and sold them to local governments, where they were bodied locally and put into service as buses, dump trucks, and municipal work vehicles.

During the 1920s, Faris made numerous trips to the United States to observe developments in the automotive industry. On these visits he met many of the key figures shaping modern motoring, including Henry Ford. On his return to Melbourne, he would brief others in the local motor trade on what he had learned—particularly the lessons of mass production, distribution, and scale emerging from America.

He also spoke, with some amusement, of travelling during the Prohibition years with two suitcases: one containing clothes, and the other bottles of whisky. The latter, he said, ensured good hotel rooms, smoothed the passage through customs, and opened doors wherever he went.

These experiences shaped Faris Palfreyman into a shrewd, worldly operator—one whose understanding of the motor industry extended far beyond Australia, and whose later appreciation of Rolls-Royce was grounded as much in practical experience as in admiration for engineering excellence.



Faris is pictured while on the contract to erect a telegraph line from Adelaide to Alice Springs, the photo taken somewhere near Oodnadatta.

The Inter-War Years: Seeing Value Where Others Did Not

In the years following the First World War, Rolls-Royce Silver Ghosts occupied an uncertain position. They were no longer new, yet not old enough to be considered historic. During the economic upheaval following the 1929 crash, new car sales collapsed—but the reputation of Rolls-Royce endured.

It was during this period that a Melbourne-based syndicate began importing second-hand Rolls-Royce chassis from England and France, shipping them to Australia without bodies to reduce import duties, then rebodying them locally—often by Martin & King or similar coachbuilders. The intention was not preservation, but value: to deliver a high-quality motor car at a price the market could bear.

Faris Palfreyman emerged as the leading figure in this syndicate, coordinating imports, refurbishment, and resale. Approximately fifty Rolls-Royce cars—including Silver Ghosts, Phantom I, and 20hp chassis—were brought to Australia under this arrangement. Chassis were modernised, refurbished, and fitted with bodies suited to Australian conditions and tastes, while often retaining original radiators and bonnets.

This work gave Palfreyman an intimate familiarity with the Silver Ghost in all its mechanical and dimensional variations—knowledge that would later underpin his collecting philosophy.



Faris with a Chevrolet pick-up truck while on the telegraph line contract.



Through the 1920 and 1930s he had numerous cars including Bentleys and European makes – a favourite was this Lancia Lambda, pictured c1931.

Douglas Garage and Palfreyman Motors

Palfreyman's commercial activities were anchored in Melbourne's motor trade. His business lineage traced back to Douglas Bros Pty Ltd, founded in 1898, selling motorcycles and later motor cars. By the early 1920s, operations were centred in Chapel Street, South Yarra, with a city showroom in A'Beckett Street.

In August 1934, the enterprise was formalised as Palfreyman Motors Pty Ltd, acquiring Ernest N. Morey's business at 670 Chapel Street. The firm specialised in high-class second-hand vehicles, including Rolls-Royce, Bentley, and Lagonda, and also held agencies for Federal trucks and Pierce-Arrow.

The company undertook special commissions that reflected both its technical competence and its place within Melbourne society—including, famously, the armour plating of a Hudson for Squizzy Taylor.

By 1938, Palfreyman Motors expanded further with new backers and extended premises. However, as the decade closed, Palfreyman withdrew from directorship. The company was renamed Lawrence Motors Pty Ltd, and Palfreyman stepped away from daily commercial life—though not from Rolls-Royce.

Rolls-Royce in Service: Hire Cars, Taxis, and Working Lives

Parallel to Palfreyman Motors was City Motor Service Pty Ltd, a luxury hire-car and taxi operation based at 52 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, with which Palfreyman was closely associated.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Rolls-Royce taxis in dark red livery became a familiar sight on Melbourne streets. These chauffeur-driven cars—often Phantom II and rebodied Rolls-Royce saloons—were hired for society events, interstate journeys, and official engagements.

This period reminds us that many Silver Ghosts and early Phantoms lived working lives, accumulating mileage, modifications, and stories long before collectors sought originality. Palfreyman understood this reality better than most, having seen these cars evolve from prestige transport to utilitarian service vehicles—and, later, to historical artefacts.



A City Motor Services advertisement c1934 showing a Phantom, at the time recently rebodied by Martin & King.



Phantom I chassis 60RF from 1927 with mid-thirties body and now owned by Greg Wayman. Most likely this was a Palfreyman import with Martin & King commissioned to rebody the car.



John Reis' 1927 New Phantom 44EF, another Martin & King rebody and likely a City Motors car.



David Furniss' New Phantom 103HC from 1925 is also thought to have been from City Motor Services cars.

From Dealer to Collector: The Palfreyman Collection

By the late 1930s, Palfreyman had moved away from the motor trade entirely, first farming in Victoria, then relocating to Queensland and later the A.C.T. Yet his withdrawal from commerce marked the beginning of a new phase.

By the late 1950s, Palfreyman began seriously collecting Rolls-Royce cars, focusing primarily on Silver Ghosts. Many were acquired within Australia—often cars he had known earlier in life—while others were imported. His approach to restoration was pragmatic and systematic: incomplete cars were completed using parts from damaged examples, components were exchanged, and work was undertaken on what was later described as an ‘almost production-line principle.’

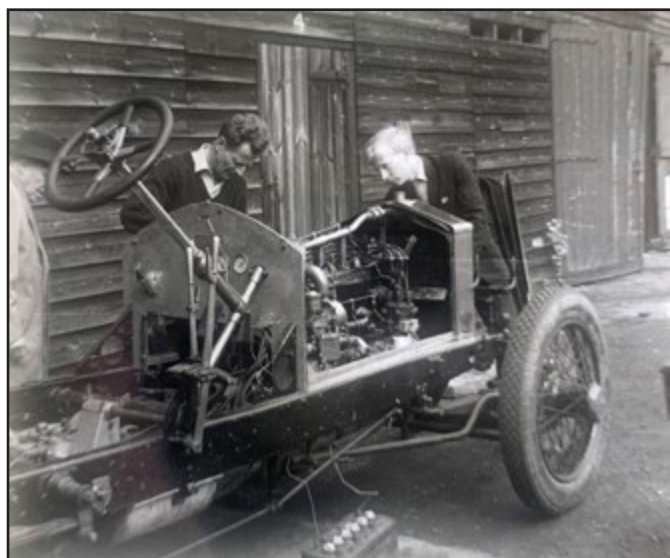
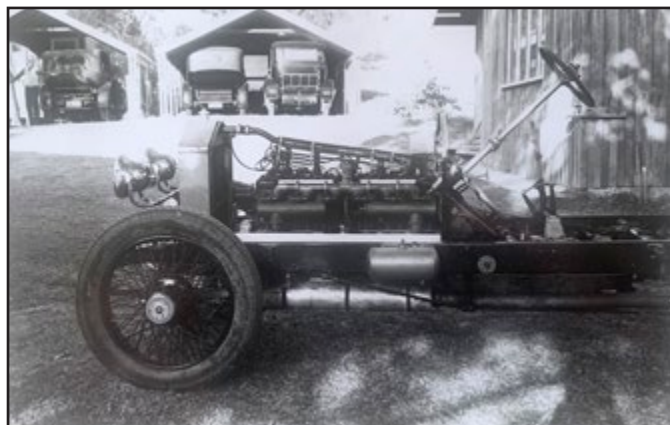
While this occasionally led to later confusion over identities, it ensured the survival of cars that might otherwise have been lost. Palfreyman was preserving Rolls-Royce history before preservation was fashionable.



Recovering Silver Ghost chassis 1ZG – a precarious exercise. Note the person on the chassis – high in the air.



Silver Ghost chassis 85AG with Phantom I Chassis 17TC in the background.



A veteran chassis, number 2412. See also photo page 2.



Recovering the Silver Ghost chassis 38EM along with another Silver Ghost chassis.



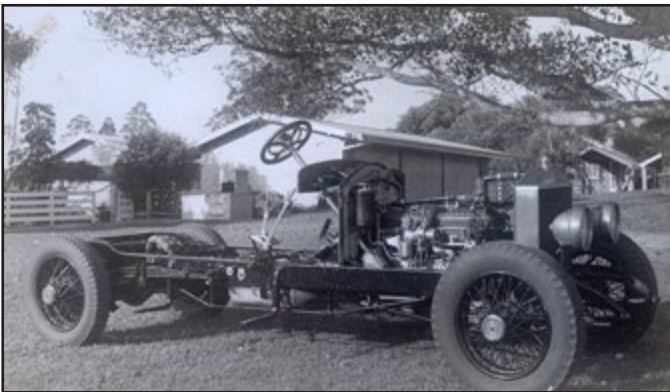
Left: 1928 Phantom I chassis 96AL.

Below: Silver Ghost chassis 26PK – note the shutters fitted at some later date.





Silver Ghost 6TB, photographed in 1964 with an early reproduction touring body.



Silver Ghost 85AG from 1921 as a restored chassis.



85AG subsequently fitted with an American Packard touring body. The car is now owned by Russell Holden in Mudgee, NSW.



The cars on display in Palfreyman's purpose-built display barn.



1913 veteran chassis listed as 2317 with a Peel's body ex a veteran Sunbeam. The body was later transferred to chassis 2583.



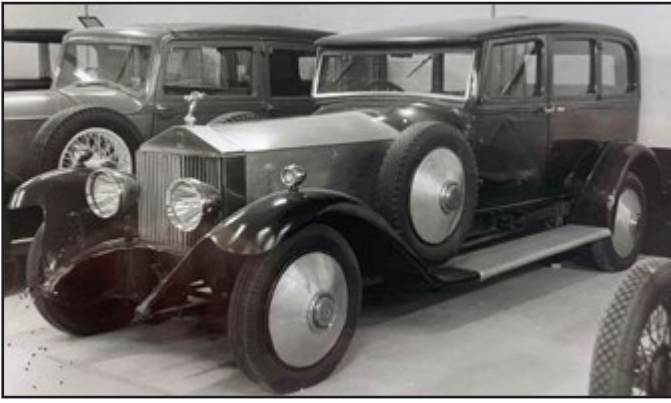
Chassis 2583 in restored condition.



Silver Ghost sedan 6TM.



Chassis 1520 is a 1911 model.



Silver Ghost 2ZG with a later body.



Chassis 2412 fitted with a roadster body from another veteran make. This body was interchanged with other chassis as were parts from several of the cars during the time of Palfreyman's ownership.

By the late 1960s, Palfreyman had assembled eighteen Silver Ghosts, along with other Rolls-Royce models—one of the largest concentrations of the type ever gathered in Australia. At the same time, international interest in veteran Rolls-Royce cars was rising sharply, stimulated by high-profile sales such as the Sword Collection auctions in England earlier in the decade. Against this backdrop, Palfreyman made the decision to sell.

The Ingleside Auction – March 1969

The auction, held at St Helen's Farm, Ingleside, Queensland, in March 1969, immediately became a landmark event.

Fifteen Silver Ghosts were offered, alongside additional Rolls-Royce chassis and components. The cars were displayed in orderly ranks on the property—an image that has since become iconic. Attendance exceeded 700–1,000 people, including collectors, club members, journalists, and overseas buyers. Security was unusually tight, and several cars were sold by telephone to interstate and international bidders.

Prices achieved were unprecedented for the time:

- An average of approximately \$3,000 per car
- Total proceeds exceeding \$25,000, a record for a veteran car auction in Australia

Contemporary club commentary described the sale as 'historic', noting that such a concentration of Silver Ghosts was unlikely ever to be offered again at public auction in Australia.



An aerial view of the cars on offer. The veteran silver ghosts were not part of the auction, it was only the post-armistice cars up for offer. The veteran Rolls-Royces were sold by Palfreyman later.



Chassis 1884.



Chassis 58TM.



The lineup included numerous Silver Ghost and other models including several cars sold as 'restored chassis'

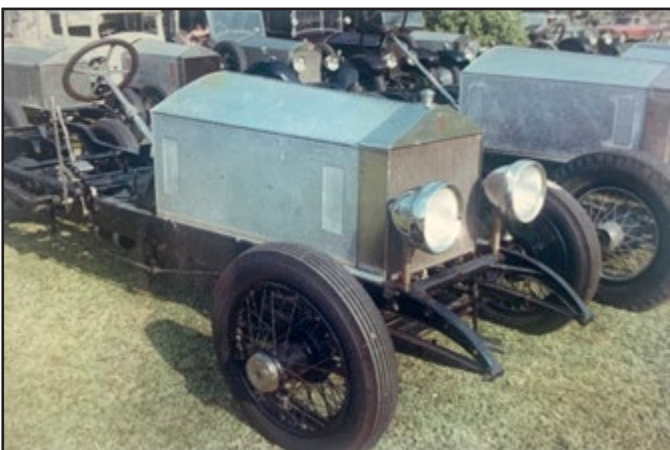


The crowd at the auction was large and the weather was hot.

A Turning Point

In hindsight, the Palfreyman auction marked a decisive shift. Veteran Rolls-Royce cars were no longer regarded merely as old vehicles, but as heritage artefacts. Many Palfreyman cars entered significant private collections in Australia and overseas, where several remain today.

The auction also helped galvanise the Rolls-Royce enthusiast movement, reinforcing the idea that these cars deserved careful stewardship.



Chassis 62JG.

Legacy

Faris Palfreyman never sought recognition. Yet his influence is woven through Australian Rolls-Royce history—from the Depression-era rebodied Ghosts, to chauffeur-driven city taxis, to one of the most significant veteran car auctions ever held in this country.

For today's Silver Ghost owners, his story is a reminder that we are not merely owners, but custodians, standing in a long line that began when these cars were still part of everyday life.

A Selection Of The Palfreyman Cars Today



1921 Silver Ghost chassis 62JG was sold as a chassis at the auction and in recent years fully restored and fitted with coachwork by Roger Fry. It is owned by Ian Berg.



Chassis 58TM was also sold as a chassis and it too has been rebodied by Roger Fry. The car was recently sold by auction and believed to be in New South Wales.



Silver Ghost Chassis 38EM from 1924 retains the original Park Ward saloon coachwork and is owned by Rick Thege in Ballarat.



A 1928 Windovers fabric bodied Phantom I limousine, chassis 96AL. The car was extensively restored by Malcolm Johns and was recently sold at auction. It is now thought to be in the Clive Palmer collection.



The Phantom I, chassis 17TC is now fully restored with a reproduction touring body which was fitted in the 1980s or 1990s. It is owned by Keith Berryman in New South Wales.



1921 Silver Ghost chassis 76JG was sold as a chassis at the Palfreyman auction. Subsequently restored and fitted with sporting touring coachwork, it is owned and regularly toured by Adrian Akhurst from Adelaide.



The 1923 20hp 83K5 with original Smith & Waddington coachwork has been owned for many years by Richard Jones in Sydney.



Silver Ghost chassis 26PK – This car was rebodied using parts from a Barker limousine many years ago by Eric Rainsford in South Australia. It is currently for sale though the Carsales website.



Chassis 6TB from 1914 photographed at the dealership P&A Wood in the UK following its export. The car was owned for many years by John Milverton. Photo courtesy of P&A Wood.



22G has now been restored, fitted with new touring coachwork and is owned by Jim Redman in Sydney.



Chassis 1502 from 1911 is now owned by Robert McDermott in Melbourne and is photographed at the 2017 RROC (Vic) concours.



Left: Silver Ghost chassis 2583 from 1913 – David Berthon fully restored this car which is fitted with a Peels body ex a veteran Sunbeam. It was exported in recent years to the USA. (photo courtesy of Shannons)

A Personal Beginning

My own interest in Faris Palfreyman's Silver Ghosts began long before I understood their significance.

I was six years old when I first encountered them at my grandfather's farm at Ingelside, Burleigh heads hinterland. The sight of those great cars—parked quietly in the sheds and the purpose-built brick barn —made an impression that never left me. From that time until their auction in 1969, I regularly visited the collection, and on many occasions was taken for drives in the Ghosts. To a child, they seemed immense, alive, and entirely unlike any other motor car.

After the auction, when Faris moved to Canberra, he retained several veteran cars. Remarkably, when I was just fourteen, I bought one of them. I drove it around Canberra—no licence, no rego, and apparently no one thinking it odd that a boy of that age should be driving a veteran Rolls-Royce through the streets. The car had no started motor c1913, and I vividly remember the constant anxiety of stopping at traffic lights, worried it might stall and must jump out and crank start it. Happened only once and other occasions a quick flick of the ignition controls sufficed

That early exposure never faded. After university, my interest in the cars re-emerged and then accelerated in the years that followed, evolving from childhood fascination into a lifelong engagement with the Silver Ghost and its history. Hence my current interest in bringing the Ghost experience with developing a touring company CARRR <https://carr.com.au/> to a new younger generation of drivers with the opportunity to use a ghost on a self-drive tour starting c2027.

Rolls-Royce Owner's Club (Victoria) Concours

Ian Berg

The concours is held each year at Cruden Farm in Cranbourne and always brings out a broad selection of cars. Sometimes it brings out a broad selection of weather too, and it did so on this day. Pictured are several of the pre-war models that were entered in the concours.



Kevin Kane entered his 1932 20/25 touring car, chassis GHW8.



It was excellent to see Larry Picker out with his 1935 20/25 chassis GPB72. This is a very original Windovers bodied car.



A beautifully restored 1920 model chassis 15TW owned by RROC member Rod Levy.

Starter Motor Replacement for a Twenty

John Scott

With old cars, it pays to be pragmatic. There are times when the original components are just too unreliable and hard to deal with, as John Scott recently found this with the starter on his 20hp. Following some research, John was able to find a suitable modern replacement, and it seems you can find a replacement modern starter to suit many pre-war Rolls-Royce models. John relates his experience here:

My father, Jim Scott purchased our 1923 20hp Rolls-Royce 73A4 at the auction in 1984 of 'George Green's Motorcade' museum at Leppington New South Wales. The vehicle was on loan from Frank Illich, a car dealer in the Sutherland Shire of Sydney and had been on display at the museum.

Over the years the Rolls-Royce has been used on many family occasions and even appeared in some television and movie work. It has always been very reliable. However, in recent times the starter motor became unreliable, instead of turning the motor over it started to make a whirling noise. At first, we thought it was a solenoid problem and by rocking the car in gear seem to enable us to start it. However, it got progressively worse, and it just would not spin fast enough nor properly engage the flywheel.

I approached my good friend and mechanic Phill Breckell to help me investigate the problem. Getting access to starter was by removing the interior carpet, which is press studded to the floor, and then removing the floorboards by removing the very old wood screws holding them in place. Be careful when doing this as there can be a build-up of grease & grime attached to the underside of the floorboard. We then proceeded to remove the original starter motor and disassemble it. Fully stripping it down, we found:

- a. Bendix failure
- b. Clutches worn out
- c. The outer cover had been repaired previously and was soldered together.
- d. Looking inside the Bendix housing, we found a retainer nut stripped from the shaft and lots of metal filings inside the housing.
- e. Checking the parts available for the starter and having to assess the correct parts and was difficult. There were different types of starter-motors fitted within the 1923 series and information about their repair appeared inconsistent.
- f. We learnt the hard way not to bench test the starter out of the vehicle.
- g. We disassembled the stator and brushes.

Finding the starter-motor main shaft damaged to the point it was unrepairable, we were very concerned; looking for replacement parts was daunting and overwhelming. We tried within Australia, only to be disappointed, so went on the internet and after some rewording of searches found a company in England that

only makes starter motors, for a vast range of vehicles with smaller electrical motors than originally fitted, but running through a gearbox that has been machined to suit a few Rolls-Royces in the 1923-1924-1925 series; it was a great find. They were AES - <https://www.autoelectricsupplies.co.uk/p/20hp-20-25-derby-bentley>

We then ordered the starter motor which required confirming which teeth configuration was required and the year and model along with the chassis number. Payment was in pounds sterling and delivery was very prompt although Australian import tax is high.

Fitting the new unit was a dream although you need to remember to check your bolt lengths and to add the packing plate or the teeth won't disengage properly. There was an initial electrical scare as the Rolls-Royce starter has a large solenoid with a high voltage wire yellow with black traces on it that is for the charging system. It spikes at high voltage on startup so be careful.

Overall, this has been a very successful upgrade; the starter spins over fast and is of course very reliable. Problem solved.



As it is today, 73A4 is a very pretty example of an early Twenty.



Removal of the starter motor starts by removal of the front floorboards.

For Sale and Wanted

FOR SALE

1937 Rolls-Royce 25/30 chassis GMP12

Much admired Park Ward sports saloon in excellent condition. A great touring car with heater, tools and an overdrive which provides for 100-110 kmh cruising. \$120,000.

Contact John Mcquay 0412 322 297



FOR SALE

1924 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost chassis 103EM

This is a four-wheel braked Silver Ghost that has been rallied very successfully for many years, including numerous interstate tours. The body is a fixed head coupe by Gibson of Hobart built in 1984 on an original and complete chassis. This is a comfortable enclosed car in very good condition. Asking \$160,000 but willing to accept genuine and realistic offers.

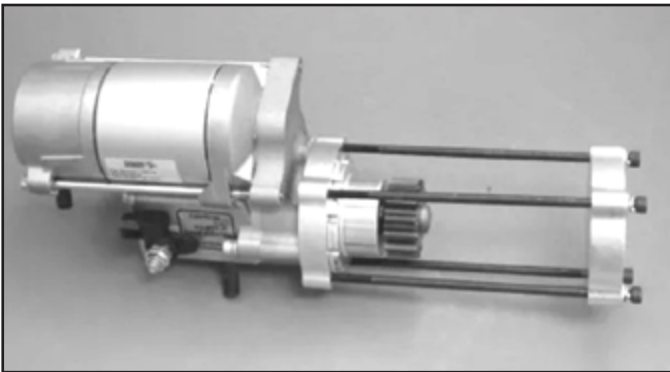
Contact Warwick Dobson 0412 166 355.



A file photo of an original starter from a small horsepower Rolls-Royce of the 1920s through the 1930s.



The original starter motor in my car.



The new starter motor as purchased.



The new starter motor successfully fitted.

Unknown History Of An Edwardian Silver Ghost Emerges

Ian Irwin OAM (ACT) © 2026

Preamble:

As our long-time readers well know, we still have much to learn about many individual Australian Edwardian and Post-WW1 Silver Ghost car histories. And well do we know that this often comes about from unexpected sources. This story is yet another of those that had passed due to lack of information *for over a hundred years*. And amazingly over 50 years of history opened up virtually upon my doorstep.

It was in late 2021, or perhaps very early 2022 that I received in the Australia Post mail a sheet with random notes that at first did not make much sense to me. The page had been somewhat crumpled, as though it might have escaped the rubbish bin, and at the last moment been saved.

At the time my late wife was in deteriorating health, and my first priority. We had made the decision to move from our home in Flynn, Canberra, with winter views to the snow-topped Brindabella Ranges, to a retirement village on a single level in Canberra. I put the seemingly cryptic message aside for attention at another time.

We moved home and workshop in the winter of 2022, and sadly Ida's condition deteriorated. She passed away in September 2022.

In late 2024, the 'filed' mystery document surfaced amidst other Rolls-Royce papers, and for probably the first time I studied it quite closely. On the reverse was a brief note signed by 'Narelle'. I knew of only two persons of that name, one in Mudgee NSW and the other a member of our ACT Branch, Narelle O'Rourke.

On the back of the page was a brief message asking, *'Ian, are you able to help me find my friend's grandfather's car?'*

I contacted Narelle O'Rourke in December 2024, and while she didn't initially recall too much of the circumstances, it soon came back to her mind. At some time in 2021, she had been having lunch with another senior Clinic Sister at the Canberra Private Hospital when the subject of Rolls-Royce cars came up. When Narelle recalled the occasion she linked me to Jill Holloway, the lady she had last been talking to several years earlier. These two ladies were about to retire after a lifetime in their profession.

In the interim, I had established in my mind, that the car the ladies were discussing was likely to be the 1915 Model Silver Ghost, Chassis 34ED. The confusing notes had made passing references to various features including steering wheel with metal levers, body, top, lamps etc, and that Jill's father had used the vehicle on his cattle property at Snowtown in South Australia and in the 'long paddocks' during drought conditions. Narelle told me that the family did not have any photos of the car nor any of her relatives.

I located Jill Holloway, and we had a phone conversation. Curiously she and her husband John run a cattle property about 10 kms north of the village

of Murrumbateman just to the east off the Barton Highway between Canberra and Yass. Until 2013 we had been living at our farm, about 8 kms south of Murrumbateman on the western side of the highway. Our paths had never crossed. It's a small world!

I raised the topic of the Rolls-Royce car of which she had spoken with Narelle a couple of years previously, and we both learned some important history on that day, with hopefully more yet to come. I arranged to meet with the Holloways early in January 2025, along with the O'Rourkes at the Murrumbateman pub over a counter lunch. Unfortunately Narelle and Chris were unable to attend as Chris had been hospitalised for an emergency operation.



One of a batch of 34ED images taken upon delivery to Lieut. Ronald Angas in London and used in his military service in the UK.

From much of the information documented by Narelle and from Jill, I was able to identify that the car of which Jill Holloway had known was definitely Chassis 34ED, the last pre-WW1 Ghost to be delivered new to an Australian in the WW1 period. But her recollection was of the car in a much different format in the mind- to late 1950s.

The pre-meeting information was somewhat confusing, for Jill Holloway said that her maiden name was Crowley. I questioned that, asking if perhaps it was Crowle, but Jill assured me it was definitely Crowley. She even referred to her marriage certificate showing her maiden name as Crowley.

I prepared a schedule for the occasion, with a wide diversity of photographs of the actual car 34ED, when new, and various iterations over subsequent years, and had a nicely bound A4 version prepared for her.

The meeting certainly promised to be interesting!

Then began something like an inquest, for I asked Jill what her maiden name was. She responded with Crowley. But knowing otherwise by then, I said, *'With respect, I don't believe so, I am sure it was Crowle,'* which (as my grandfather might have said,) *'knocked the wind out of her sails.'*

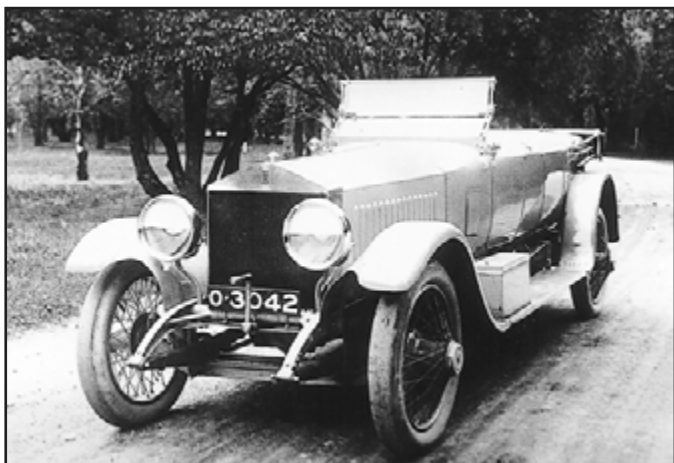
I proceeded to show her the accompanying image of one of her great-grandfather's family business premises in South Australia. Pre-1910 he had four agencies dispersed across the state.



The motor Garage of Eyes and Crowle at Cowell.

I gave her a verbal summary of the history of W.A. Cowle and of the firm Eyes and Crowle Ltd, from his c1907 entry into the motoring world.

William Alfred Leopold Crowle (1880-1948) was Jill's great-grandfather, (we'll call him WA) who had passed away shortly before she was born. There was absolutely no question about that and Jill had realised that this was truly the case, difficult as it was for her to believe.



34ED was delivered new to Ronald Fife Angas (1890-1978 in London on 26 Nov 1915 and used by him in his military role during WW1. It was impressive and very meticulously maintained when imported into South Australia in 1919, and registered to him at Collingrove, Angaston, with the plate (SA) 0.3042.



An undated image of 34ED reveals its classic high-sided London-Edinburgh coachwork when owned by Ronald Angas (plate 0.3042) stretching its legs with 4 adults aboard in South Australia.

Then we moved away from the complex family issue to focus on the car itself, Silver Ghost 34ED. But the early photos were just another confusion for Jill.

Until relatively recently, the history of 34ED during the period from c1921/22 was nothing but a mystery to us all, and in the years from then until the 1930s was a complete enigma.

Recalling that Jill had said she had no photos of the car, nor any of the family over that period. Neither did her brother in Victoria with whom she had spoken on the family history

So as we sipped a cold drink, the years of mystery unfolded in the brace of images I presented.



34ED has been sold, and its departure from Collingrove, Angaston is imminent.

First we see the handover, with 34ED still in its original form, but with the hood erect for once, we find the Angas family and the Crowle family as the departure from Angaston looms. The photo is undated, but fortuitously we glimpse one of two new Delage cars acquired by the Angas family. I have left it to Jill and her family to identify family members in this and other group photographs

The presence of a 5hp Citroen car of c1922 in the left background of the above image helps date this image and the occasion to that period.

The South Australian Delage car agency was one of many franchises held from before WW1 by WA Crowle. He would have likely serviced and maintained 34ED from its arrival in 1919.



Our pictorial cavalcade brings us to 34ED about to depart from Angaston. Amongst the vines, Mrs Crowle poses while the car is captured on film by Jill's grandfather. The plate was later returned to be fitted to a Delage and to numerous other Angas family cars in subsequent years.

Jill helps with some family knowledge of the family's use of 34ED.

We clearly learn from further images, that 34ED was driven overland to Sydney. But what we don't know is just when. She was able to advise that her family (great-grandfather?) had taken the car to their property at Snowtown, in the mid-north of South Australia, around 175 miles north of Adelaide, on the Augusta Highway, on the main road and rail link between Adelaide and Perth.

Yes, the same Snowtown that became famous for ‘the bodies in the barrels’ decades later.

The Crowles ran a large beef cattle property at Snowtown, and also another near Broken Hill. Searches have failed to locate the site of the latter, or even to establish property names. The Broken Hill Historical Society has been unable to assist and referred me to their Adelaide counterpart. With no success, once again, some untold history remains to yet unfold. Maybe a South Australian Branch member can help on this missing link, and maybe try to find photos of the car while being used along the roadsides in drought times.

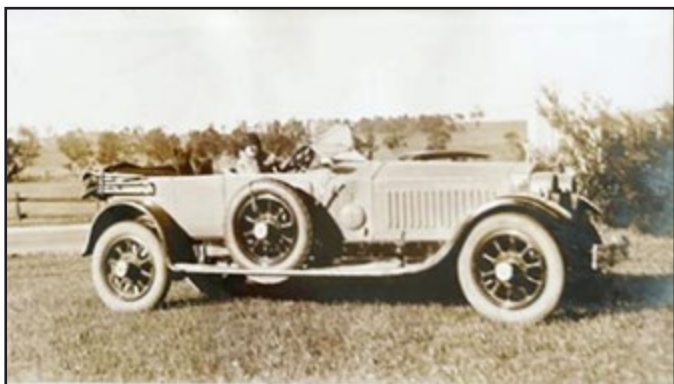
When 34ED began its journey from South Australia to relocate to Sydney, we believe it travelled via Broken Hill, before the route swung in an easterly direction. But from this point its pathway is uncertain.

A group of photos depict the car on its travels, but unfortunately they cannot be dated or sequenced or their locations established. Until this journey we know that 34ED was still clad with its original Great War period London-Edinburgh coachwork. Some changes to that were to begin to transform the car by the late 1920s.

Some images exist of 34ED and the family in the snow-covered Snowy Mountains, at Mt Kosciusko, at the Mt Kosciusko Chalet and elsewhere.



The car had captured the hearts of the family, but images like this are unfortunately not very helpful. We can only deduce that its southern NSW high country. Looks like it was a cold day, but the hood is down.



34ED was subjected to several phases of significant customising in the mid-to-late 1920s.

Upon arrival in Sydney, 34ED was registered with the NSW plate 37745, and the iconic plate 0.3042 was returned to Ronald Angas.

By the late 1920s we begin to see evidence of the American influence that Crowle would have seen at

the Springfield plant during his comprehensive 1920s trip to study the American motor industry. The original coachwork had remained untouched at this stage. No British Silver Ghosts of the era had bumper bars as factory fittings, but the Springfield cars from the early 1920s and into the Phantom I period were fitted with single bar front bumpers.

Crowle went further and added a chunky 3-braided commercial after-market front bumper bar. Around this time, the original Lucas electric headlamps were replaced with the distinctive Bausch & Lomb (B&L) nickel-plated ‘drum’ headlights.

Replacement of the original standard-fitment Dunlop wire wheels was another modification. The substituted wheels were of the new British all-steel Sankey brand, with the hub protruding well outwards. I think readers would agree, that they are so obtrusive, they look positively hazardous.



WA Crowle stands beside 34ED as the car leaves from Wyldefel to be delivered to Smith & Waddington for removal of the body and new coachwork and wheels. Crowle was shortly to depart for a holiday in Europe.

[Image: Milton Kent, Sydney.]

Jill did know that the car had ever been owned and later gifted by her grandfather to her father. She had assumed it was a car that had been purchased at some unknown time by her father.

We now know that in her family, it was with her grandfather’s at first, and then her father’s car before being driven to Sydney where the family resided variously in Lindfield, Neutral Bay and the Randwick and Coogee area, from information Jill was able to provide.

Born in the 1940s, Jill had some childhood memories of the car. Her recollection was that was painted maroon, with a form of ‘dickey seat’ mounted on the ‘inside wall’ of the body, where she recalled she sat on occasions.

I asked Jill if she knew where the car was garaged. Imagine my surprise to find it was most commonly under a fruit tree in the backyard regardless of the weather.

I do not feel at liberty to publish more than a couple of the private family photographs of the car and the gathered family at Wyldefel, Potts Point.

{Wyldefel had previously been the expansive luxurious home built by Walter and Eliza Hall whose had made a fortune from copper mines in Queensland. After Walter's death, Eliza had purchased the two Edwardian Silver Ghosts Chassis, 2009 and 40YB.



A family gathering at Wyldefel, Potts Point, with the car carrying NSW plate 37.745. Prior to the meeting we had, Jill had not ever seen this family photograph.

We have long been aware that 34ED had been entrusted to the premier Sydney coachbuilding firm of Smith and Waddington at some time around 1929-1930. But this firm had gone into receivership by 1930.

In any event, Chassis 34ED was submitted to a major coachwork rebuild, of which we have several images that thankfully tell us something of the extraordinary task undertaken.

In the image below, we find 34ED with a unique form of very stylish Close-Coupled Coupe body fitted. It has been suggested by Tom Clarke that this body may well have been inspired by another one-off design.

Jill's recall of features of this car with Narelle very was clear. For a girl of quite tender years when she knew this car well, her recollection of specific details was remarkable.

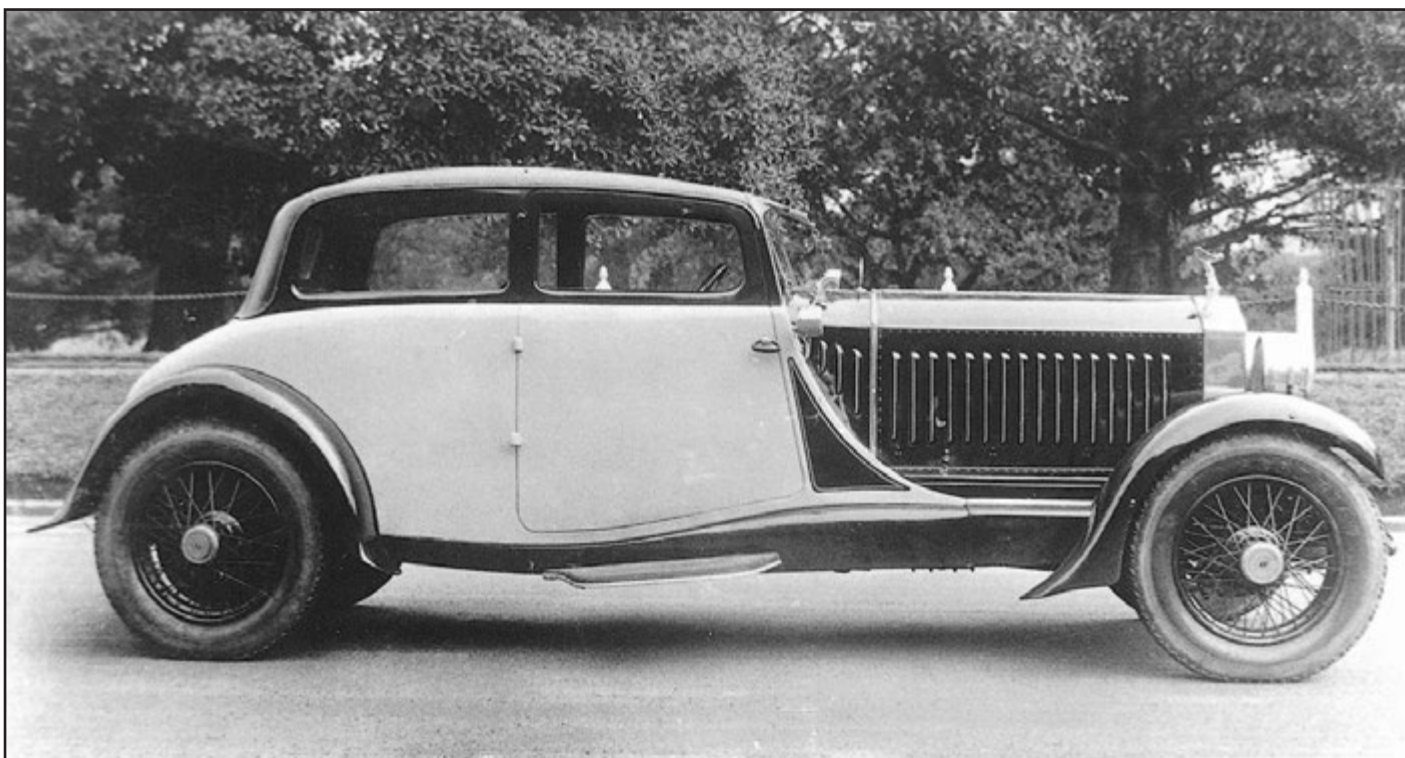
Equally remarkable was Jill's memory of being driven over the Sydney Harbour Bridge in the car in 1958. Until we had this small detail, the known history of the car had come to an abrupt halt in c1930 at the S & W premises. This revelation extended the known life of the car by close upon 30 years. And of course, the fact that someone acquired the car in 1958 would suggest that it was then a much-valued vehicle.

How the buyer came to know it was for sale is yet another mystery. Whether the 1958 buyer had some association with one of the Crowle family is unknown. But Tom Clarke, David Neely myself and several to whom I have related this story, find it hard to believe that the car would have been scrapped in the late 1950s or 1960s. The body style was a masterpiece of automotive art for that period.

Jill enjoyed passing on her recollections of sliding down the front independent mudguards as a child in the early 1950.

By then enthusiasts everywhere around the globe were searching for old Silver Ghosts, both pre-Great War and Post War. Australia was a popular hunting ground as the survival rate of these cars was higher than in any other country in the world. It is tantalising indeed to consider just what may have become of it.

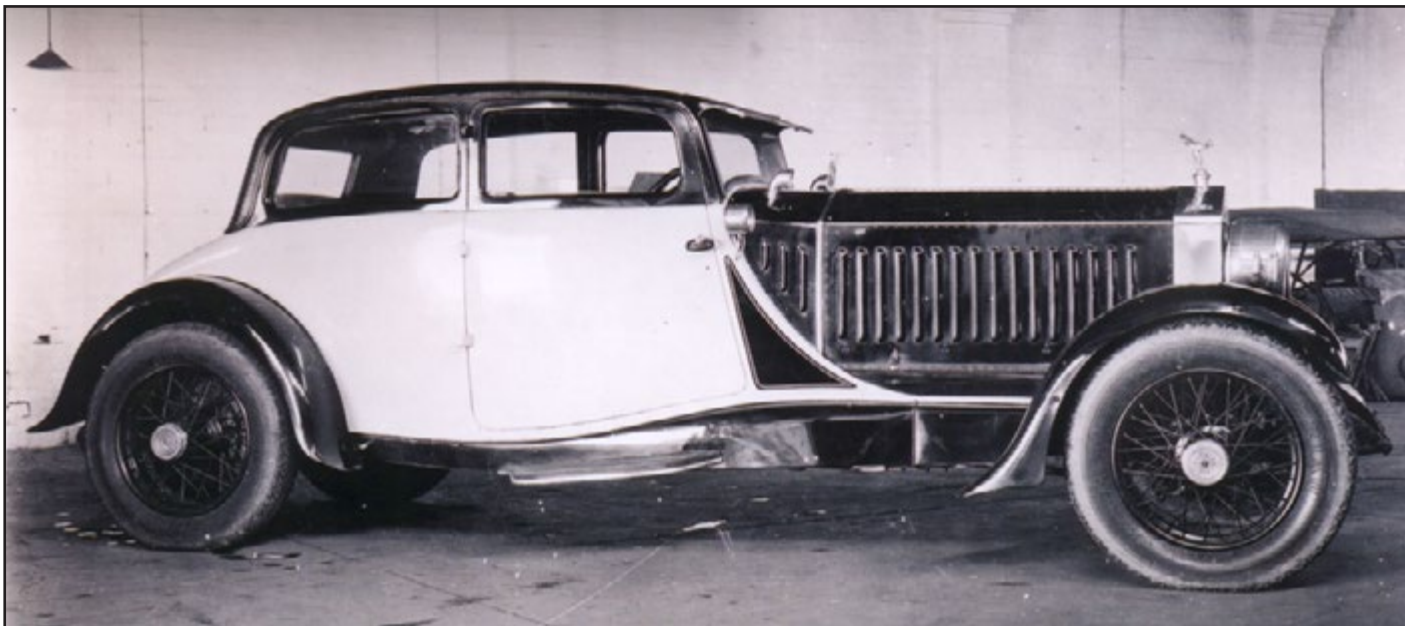
Does it survive somewhere as a well-hidden secret family treasure.? It surely wasn't ever scrapped.



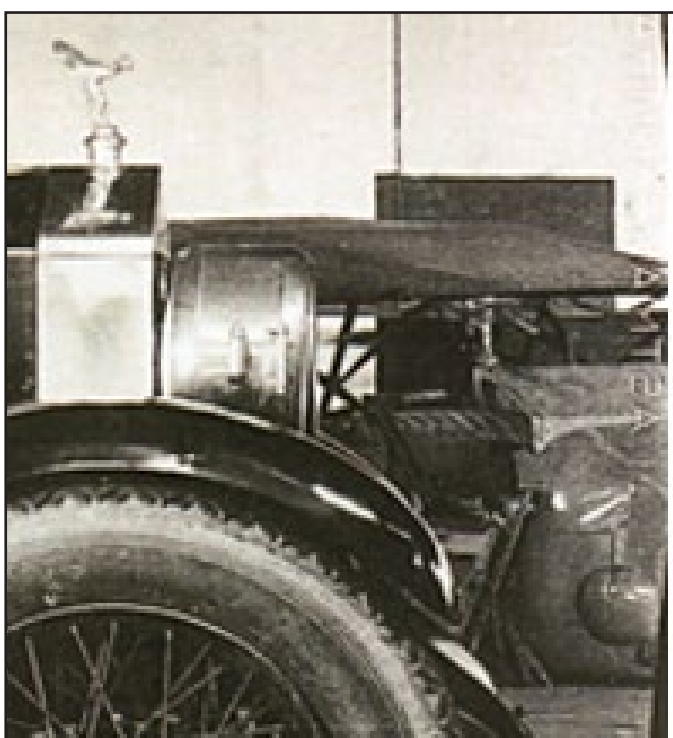
Many features of the side elevations of the Lancefield (London) coachwork variously described as a Four-Light Coupe and a Sports Saloon body style fitted to the Speed Six Bentley (pictured right) in 1932 can be seen mirrored in the unfinished Smith & Waddington coupe body (pictured below). When we incorporate information recalled and provided by Jill Holloway, of this car in the 1950s a spare wheel{and Jill thinks possibly two} mounted on the boot lid, we can appreciate there is a remarkable resemblance in design. But we will never know for certain if the Sydney coachbuilder had access to the Lancefield concept.



Are these the only two cars known to have this form of coachwork fitted? Your editor will welcome any information or comments.



Both Tom Clarke and I have run our eyes over the above image of the unfinished bodywork, and the clipped frontal section close-up to the left. Beyond the car on the right, lies the then rejected (and dejected?) original Grosvenor London-Edinburgh coachwork of 34ED.



No further evidence needed, this is undisputedly 34ED with a new lease of life.

Tom also noted that the bonnet fitted here has one more bonnet vent at the rear than when on the (UK) Grosvenor body to ensure there would be no blank rear end section of the bonnet exposed where it met the vented cowl section. Also the radiator had been raised, a common outcome when Ghosts were rebodied in the 1920s and 1930s.

There is another fascinating side to the Crowle family history. Nick Lang has taken time out of his busy diverse life and interests, to pick up the threads on this. While it does involve automobile showrooms in Sydney, it also covers the Crowle Australian Franchise for the massive Wurlitzer Organs when they were popular in town halls and theatres in the late 1920s and onwards.

Acknowledgements: Jill Holloway (nee Crowle) , Tom Clarke, John Dunn (ComEng.), David Neely. All photos from the Ian Irwin Rolls-Royce archives.

William Alfred Leopold Crowle

Nick Lang

William Alfred Leopold Crowle (1880-1948) was born in Albury NSW.

Moving to Adelaide in his youth, he set up business as a bicycle mechanic and later worked his way to the USA.

Whilst in the USA he worked at Edison Laboratories gaining experience with early storage batteries, phonographs and lighting.

Returning to Adelaide he gained the backing of Sir Langdon Bonython and formed the partnership of 'Eyes & Crowle' to import and retail new motor cars.

The venture prospered allowing Crowle to move to Sydney in 1915.

He set up a new company that eventually gained agencies for White Trucks, Dennis Fire Engines and Citroen motor cars along with Goodyear, Delco and Redex products.

Crowle spent part of each year travelling to Europe or the US in search of new products or art for his substantial private collection.

Crowle was clearly fascinated by mechanical and electrical technology and was aware of the increasing use of electricity to power the air supply blowers and valve actions of self playing musical instruments and large pipe organs.

In 1906, The Wurlitzer Company in the US had acquired the patents for the use of electricity in pipe organ actions from Robert Hope-Jones who had pioneered them in England. (Essential components for his prototype instruments were manufactured by Royce Limited of Manchester well before the days of the Royce motor car.)

Crowle became the Australian agent for Wurlitzer in 1917, importing most of the 16 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organs that were installed in Australian Theatres. The largest instruments were those installed in the Sydney and Melbourne 'State Theatres'. The total installed cost of these approached £25,000 each.

He had a small demonstration instrument installed in his Rose Bay home which he replaced in 1921 with a larger instrument. His home organs featured a roll player allowing the instrument to play itself along with a conventional console allowing an organist to play it.

He sold this instrument in 1927 (it still exists & plays in the Geelong area) replacing it with an even larger instrument for his new home 'Wyldfel' in Potts Point. The last new instruments were sold in 1929 as the market had virtually evaporated.

In 1933 he sold his home instrument for installation in a new theatre in suburban Sydney which was his last Wurlitzer sale. This instrument was later reinstalled in a western Sydney residence where it remains although it's future is of great concern at this time.

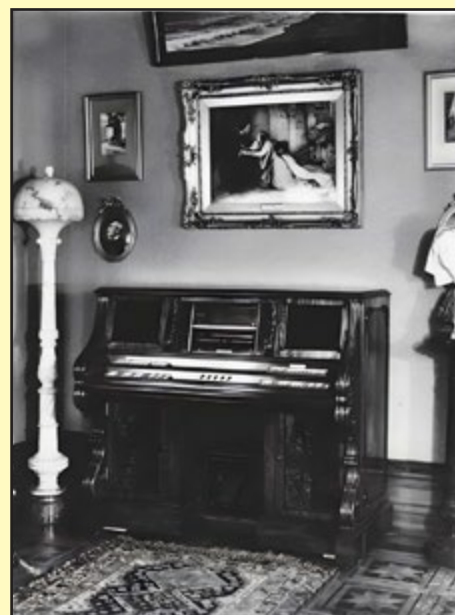
Other Crowle business ventures included importing Kelvinator & Frigidaire products. He was also active philanthropically, funding a boys home in Ryde NSW that continued to operate well after his death.



These large brass plates were affixed to the consoles of the organs Crowle had installed. They have just about all vanished now. This one is still attached to an instrument in Sydney.



The instrument installed in 'Wyldefel' in 1928. Factory Photo prior to shipping.

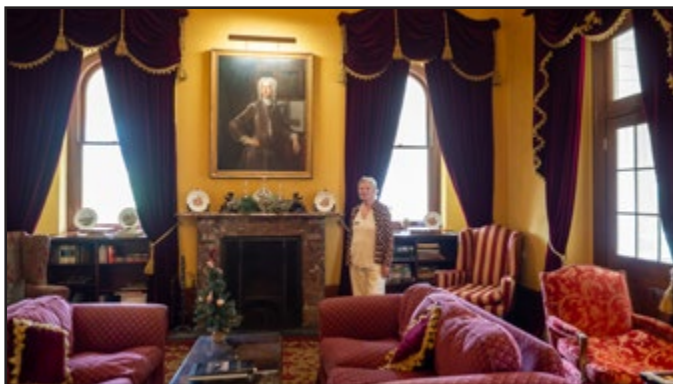


The player for the 1928 organ photographed in Crowles home. These used a much wider roll than a pianola.

Christmas Luncheons

Victoria

Our Victorian Christmas luncheon for 2025 was once again at Chateau Yering in the Yarra Valley. This is a magnificent mid-19th century homestead within one of the oldest vineyards in Australia. We had an excellent roll-up on what was a warm and pleasant day with four special cars in attendance and everyone enjoying the start to of the festive season. Included was a very good tour of the historic house. Unfortunately, the venue has been undergoing some changes recently and the food and service did disappoint. So next year – something different! Thanks to Noel and Greg for the organisation of the event.



Ian and Sue Berg departing in the Silver Ghost.

Right: Mark and Katrina Roberts' 1925 20hp chassis GSK49.

South Australia

The South Australian Christmas Lunch was held at Vintners Bar and Grill at Angaston in the Barossa Valley. The words Bar and Grill do not give justice to this establishment; it is a first-class restaurant as well. Nestled amongst vineyards and is one of the Barossa Valley's longest operating restaurants with high quality service and food.

Food selections were distinctive and brilliantly balanced dishes with wine to match, and the staff excellent. A surprise new showing was the 1927 Phantom, chassis 27RF (pictured below), a recent purchase by Adrain Akhurst.

There were 21 members and guests attending and we all had a most enjoyable day. Thanks to Rory and Michael for arranging the event.



New Members

We welcome from Melbourne new members Paul and Kate McBeth who are now custodians of GOK69 (pictured below), the 1926 20hp which was restored by Paul's late father Peter.



In addition, David and Adele Cohen have joined us and David recently imported his 1912 Silver Ghost chassis 1950E (pictured below).



The first New Phantom to be imported into Australia was 1925 model chassis MC10 (pictured below) which has recently been acquired by new member David Crossley-Holt from South Australia. David wisely plans on recommissioning the car, a 1930s Martin & King re-body with plenty of patina after its years of storage.



Finally, we welcome Paul Creighton and Lindsay Porter from Queensland who own the 1913 Silver Ghost chassis 2317 (pictured left). Paul has rejoined after some years absent from the Club.



The Victorian Christmas luncheon attracted 30 members and four proper cars, seen here at Yering Station in Yarra Glen. Pictured are the 20hp (GTM10) of Noel and Janis Baker, the 25/30 (GGR45) of Murray and Chris Stack, the 20/25 (GYD29) of Peter Jordan-Hill and the Silver Ghost (62JG) of Ian and Sue Berg.