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ISSUE 29



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.

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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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Front Cover:

Malcolm Richardson from Western Australia has recently completed the full restoration of his 1928 New Phantom 33CL. This was a ground up rebuild and the results speak for themselves.

The car retains its original Grebel headlamps and Barker dipping mechanism. Sidelights and spotlights are also Grebel with much repair work carried out by 'Genius of the Lamp' in the UK.

Please see page 6 for the full story of this car and the whole project.

Coming Events

October 11 - 17, 2026

2026 National Tour, Red Hill

The Lancemore Lindenderry Estate in Red Hill is on the Mornington Peninsula. There is still some accomodation available but you need to book as soon as possible. Lindenderry can be contacted on (03) 59892933 and ensure you mention the 20-Ghost Tour. We are working through the details of the rally and TryBooking for the event will open at a later date.

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October 10 - 15, 2027

2027 National Tour, McLaren Vale, South Australia

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The 1930 Rolls-Royce pictured was bodied new by Martin & King of Melbourne. Chassis 60GN, which is now in England, is a particularly attractive example of the many Rolls-Royces that had Martin & King coachwork fitted. See the article on Martin & King page 11. (Photo courtesy of coachbuilt.com)

Chairman's Report

There can be no doubt that we are living in interesting times. It easily takes in excess of twelve months to plan our rallies, and as we all appreciate, execute a varied and interesting program for members to enjoy as they participate.

None of us could have foreseen the current turmoil in the Middle East, the resultant disruption to petroleum products throughout most of the world would be a logical consequence of that altercation however and that certainly has occurred. Our tours of Yarrowonga and Port Lincoln have been understandable casualties of the Iran conflict together with the war in Lebanon.

I have absolutely no doubt that our respective decisions to defer these tours was the correct call. As it turned out the availability of fuel wasn't critical when these tours were scheduled to occur but the reputational damage to our Club would have been an unknown and potentially significant unwanted and unwelcome consequence.

I know, having been closely involved with the final planning for the Port Lincoln Tour, that just before we cancelled, we received an invitation to discuss our intended rally with one of the commercial television networks here in South Australia. That kind invitation was politely declined. It's the sort of attention our Club doesn't need. Although not directly discussed with Greg Wayman the Yarrowonga Tour might have attracted unwanted attention too.

It's a long way away but our National Rally in October will hopefully proceed but none of us have a crystal ball! Importantly if you haven't booked as yet there are a few rooms available.

Our Club has been greatly saddened by the deaths of Rory Poland and Mary Humphries.

Much has been said and written about Rory, and appropriately so. He was a great contributor, working tirelessly for the Club, a treasure trove of knowledge and a great event organiser.

It has been said that behind every great man is a greater woman, and no disrespect to Bruce Humphries, but Mary always struck me as the quiet but formidable presence behind our longstanding recent Treasurer. She had a wicked sense of humour, often delivering her comments with a mischievous glint in her eye!

Both Rory and Mary will be greatly missed.

So what we must do is seize each and every day, drive our cars but not too much and in a way that might attract unwanted attention in these days of fuel sensibility.

We will await brighter days, and I remain steadfastly confident that they will come, because despite our current hiccups, there has never been a better time to be alive on this planet than 2026.

Michael Henningsen

Editorial

Malcolm Richardson has completed the restoration of his New Phantom 33CL, and it is an award winner. To Malcolm's credit this has only taken five years and has not been the multi-decade exercise that so many ambitious (overly ambitious?) projects turn out to be. He only acquired the wreck in 2021, and Malcolm has provided the full story of this outstanding undertaking.

Martin & King had their first foray into motor bodies in constructing the bodywork on the 1888 Thomson steam car; a car which is now on display at the Melbourne Museum. But it was not until the early 1920s that the enterprise focussed on motor body building. Martin & King built bodies on many high-grade chassis including, it is thought, 33 new Rolls-Royce chassis ranging from the New Phantom through to the Wraith. Not too many survive with their original coachwork, but in 1930s the company also constructed new bodies for older chassis and, no doubt, this helped the business survive during the depression. There is a lot to the Martin & King story, and it is well worth understanding how significant the company was to the motor industry in Australia and to Rolls-Royce. With permission, we have reproduced the comprehensive 1979 *Restored Cars* article by the late Max Gregory in this issue.

James Baxter has provided an article on some upholstery improvements to his 25/30. These enhancements cannot be seen to the eye but James assures you can tell as soon as you sit in the car! Please do send in details of your projects, small and large so that we can share the information with other members. Technical stuff is certainly of interest.

Note that the mileage trophies for distances driven in our cars will once again be awarded in October at the National Rally. However, you do not need to be an entrant on the rally. If you wish to enter for an award, please note the mileage you have travelled over the 12-months from 1st July 2025 to 30th June 2026 and submit it when we call for entries. John Rowney has taken over the stewardship of the trophies and the process and, in the Spring *Gazette*, will be publishing the full details of all Club awards including those of the UK club that are also available to our members.

Ian Berg



Valē - Rory Poland

Michael Henningsen

29 May 1942 – 24 February 2026

We have lost one of our most dedicated and respected members with the passing of Rory Poland.

Rory will be remembered first and foremost as a devoted husband to Lizzie, a loving father to Ben and Emma, and a proud grandfather. Beyond his family, he was a central figure in the Mitcham and Unley communities through his many years in business as a newsagent. However, it was within the Rolls-Royce and broader car club community that many members came to know him best.

Rory's association with Rolls-Royce clubs spanned more than four decades and encompassed both the 20-Ghost Club and the South Australian Branch of the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of Australia (RROCA).

Rory served as immediate Past President of the Australian Chapter of the 20-Ghost Club, the oldest Rolls-Royce club in the world. Over many years, he held numerous roles within our Club and became widely respected across Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.

His current motor car, the 25/30 HP affectionately known as 'The Mistress', achieved multiple concours successes at both state and federal level. Prior to this, Rory and Liz were custodians of a 1922 Silver Ghost, in which they participated in numerous rallies throughout Australia—including extended outback events—and in New Zealand.

Rory's leadership was characterised by practical judgement, generosity, and a deep commitment to the Club. His contributions were recognised with Honorary Life Membership of the Australian Chapter, as well as Honorary Life Membership and an Honorary Vice Presidency of the United Kingdom body.

He was also widely acknowledged as a mentor, offering guidance and practical advice to fellow custodians of pre-war Rolls-Royce motor cars. His involvement in the planning and delivery of national rallies contributed significantly to their success and standing.

Rory was also a member of the South Australian Branch of the RROCA for more than 40 years. During this time, he served in all executive roles—President, Secretary, and Treasurer—on multiple occasions.

In 2013, during a period of internal difficulty, Rory stepped into the role of President at short notice. His steady leadership restored unity and strengthened governance within the Branch, reflecting his characteristic calmness and sound judgement.

Even in later years, when not formally on the committee, Rory maintained an active involvement in Branch activities. He continued to organise runs and events and remained an important source of continuity and guidance.

Rory was also instrumental in the organisation of Federal Rallies hosted by the South Australian Branch

over many years. These events were consistently noted for their quality, organisation, and strong sense of camaraderie. In addition, he played a leading role in organising "Overlander" trips to interstate rallies—well-planned journeys that fostered connection and enjoyment among participants.

In recognition of his exceptional service, Rory was awarded Honorary Life Membership of the South Australian Branch and, in 2022, Honorary Life Membership of the Federal body—an honour granted to very few members.

Across both clubs, Rory was regarded as a mentor of the highest calibre. He was consistently generous in his interactions, collegial in approach, and deeply respected by members of all ages. His extensive knowledge and strong sense of continuity made him a valued source of advice and guidance.

Rory's contribution to the Rolls-Royce community was substantial and enduring. Equally important, however, was the manner in which he made that contribution—with warmth, generosity, and a genuine interest in others.

He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.



The Rebirth of Phantom I Chassis 33CL

Malcolm Richardson with photos by Malcolm, Kieron Hayter and as indicated.



Pictured at the RROC Western Australia concours in April with from left to right Malcolm, son Jono and grandson Cody.



Some restorations begin with a plan. Mine began with a surprise. In March 2018, I travelled to Sydney intending to bid on a 1932 Rolls-Royce Phantom II—a long-forgotten car that had sat idle on blocks for nearly four decades following the passing of its owner, John Coleville. The auction itself was memorable and I acquired the car, subsequently fully restoring the running chassis to show condition (*Editor's note – the story of Malcolm's restoration of the Phantom II chassis 18MY can be found in the Autumn 2024 issue (# 20)*

of the Gazette. This car is now owned and having new coachwork fitted by Warren Crawford). But what came after the auction proved significant in this story. Afterward, Mrs Coleville handed me a shoebox filled with her late husband's papers—service records, correspondence, fragments of history. Buried among them was something unexpected: documents relating not to the Phantom II, but to another car entirely—a 1928 Rolls-Royce Phantom I, chassis 33CL. That discovery set in motion a second pursuit.



The car when new. (Photo: Tom Clarke)

Chassis 33CL had an enviable pedigree. Originally bodied as a Sedanca de Ville by Windovers, it was displayed at the Paris Salon before being shipped to Australia for its first owner, Captain R Gordon Chirnside of Skipton, Victoria. Over time, like many cars of its era, it evolved—its body converted into a saloon by Martin & King during the 1930s, reflecting changing tastes and practical needs. By the 1970s it had passed into the hands of Roger Giles in Sydney. It took patience, but eventually I tracked him down. After a series of conversations—and a visit in person—we reached an agreement. By March 2021, I found myself the custodian of not one, but two cars from the Coleville collection. The Phantom I would become the greater challenge—and the more rewarding story.



A 1950s photo clearly showing the conversion of the body to a saloon from its original sedanca de ville configuration. (Photo: SHRF)



As found in a storage unit in Bathurst, and subsequently acquired by me from Roger Giles.



33CL is photographed in 1950 when owned by John Barber. Barber had acquired it from Chirnside in 1935 and had Martin & King modify the car into a saloon. Barber also owned the pictured Silver Dawn (SFC34) which was new at the time and the 1935 Bentley B179CW which was the car that was ultimately restored by the late David Jones. The photograph was taken at the Barber family estate Coliban Park, south of Bendigo which is still owned by the family. All three of the cars were eventually purchased by the brothers Donald and Bruce Shanks. (Photo: Tim Barber)



Recovery from the storage unit in Bathurst and ready to ship.



Safely in my workshop and ready for restoration. I removed this coachwork which was original to the car, and this body is now owned by Bruce Gardner in Melbourne who hopes to use it on 1928 chassis 43CL which he owns along with Phantom I chassis 56KR.

By April, the work had begun in earnest. The condition of the body, after years of damp storage, left little room for compromise. It was clear that a full rebuild would be required. The old body was removed, and what remained was taken back to first principles: two chassis rails. Every component—axles, suspension, drivetrain—was dismantled, inspected, and either restored or replaced. The chassis itself was cleaned, blasted, primed, and repainted, establishing a solid foundation for everything that would follow.

The process was methodical. Springs were stripped and rebuilt. Kingpins and bearings were renewed. Every bush, every shackle pin, every moving surface was examined with the expectation—not hope—that it would meet Rolls-Royce standards.

Some elements of the project required more than restoration—they demanded reconstruction. The wheels, for instance, were beyond saving. Severely rusted rims necessitated a complete rebuild. The original hubs were retained, but the spokes were cut away and the assemblies sent to Wales, where new 21-inch rims and spokes were fitted before returning to Australia for painting and assembly.



The chassis is starting to take shape.



The engine is now all fresh following a complete rebuild.



The newly restored steering wheel controls.

The engine told its own story. Though it had been rebuilt in 1976, closer inspection revealed work that fell short of the marque's exacting standards. The decision was made to strip it entirely. New pistons were installed, along with replacement through-bolts—some of the originals having been previously welded. Fortunately, earlier work had included a new aluminium cylinder head and fresh bearings, which provided a solid base for the rebuild.

The radiator, too, revealed hidden issues. Poor flow suggested internal blockage, and it was sent to the United Kingdom for a complete overhaul, including a new core—an investment in reliability as much as authenticity.

The braking system was fully relined and rebuilt, including the servo unit and linkages. The fuel system was cleaned, sealed, and reassembled, with the Autovac unit sent to the UK for specialist attention. The torque tube and drivetrain were dismantled and inspected, with new seals and couplings fitted where required.

Electrically, the car was rewired throughout using correct braided cable, preserving both function and period appearance. Instruments were restored to 'as-new' condition, while the lighting system—including the distinctive Barker dipping mechanism—required custom machining to return it to proper working order.

With most of the chassis and major components now complete, attention turned to one of the most important decisions of the entire project: what form the car should ultimately take. After considerable thought—and more than a little time spent studying period photographs and coachbuilding styles—it became clear that an open tourer would best suit the character of the Phantom.

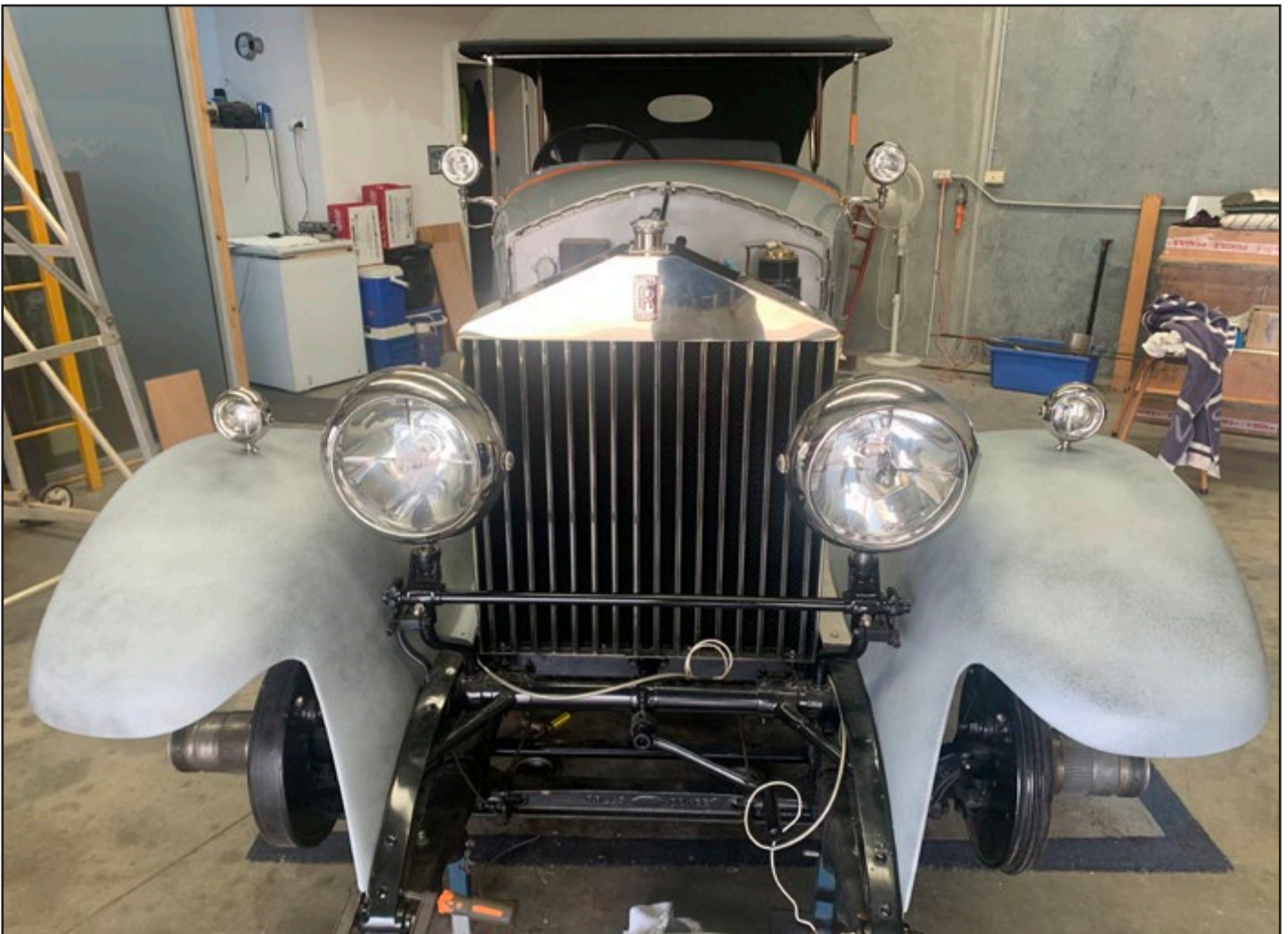
A trip to the United Kingdom in July–August 2022, originally planned as a family visit, was extended to include a meeting with Wilkinson Coachbuilders in Derbyshire to discuss commissioning a new body. But, as had happened more than once with this project, events took an unexpected turn. The day before that meeting, a call came from a friend: he knew of a complete Phantom I body including guards, running boards and all—built in the style of a Barker barrel-sided tourer by Crailville Motors, traditional English coachbuilders. Commissioned in 1995 but never used, it had remained in storage in the Bristol area for nearly three decades. The opportunity was too good to ignore. There was one complication: the body could not be purchased separately. The entire car had to be bought. Fortunately, a quick call to a contact in Perth produced another stroke of luck—a dealer in pre-war cars, located just an hour away was prepared to buy the chassis on which the body was sitting. Within days, a deal was struck. The complete car was transported to his workshop, where the body was carefully removed and set aside, awaiting crating and shipment to Australia.



The 'new' Phantom I body had been in storage since the 1990s, it is shown crated and ready to ship.



My forklift came in handy on many occasions during the restoration.



Progress is being made.



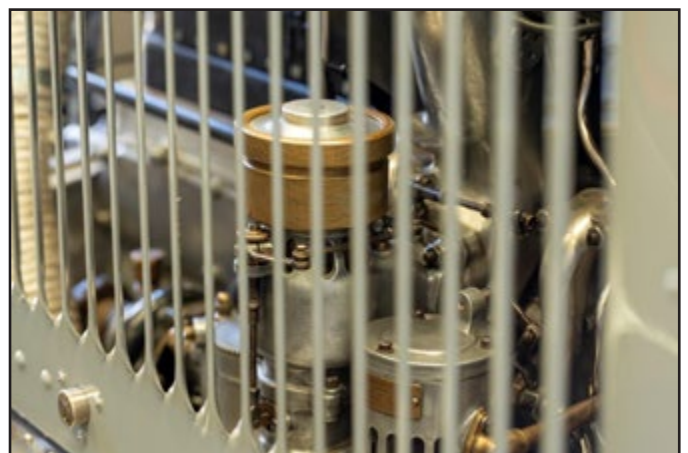
Even the logistics seemed to fall into place. A chance conversation at a local pub led to a contact in the same village who could build a suitable shipping crate. Arrangements were made on the spot. Seven weeks later, the crated body arrived safely in Perth.

Looking back, it is hard not to feel that the project benefited from more than its fair share of good fortune—saving both considerable cost and, just as importantly, at least a year of work.

With the body secured, the Phantom began to take on its final identity. The open tourer body was carefully adapted and trial-fitted before being prepared for paint. Finished in Bentley Grey with charcoal mudguards, the car presents a restrained but unmistakably elegant appearance. Running boards were crafted from Tasmanian blackwood, while the interior was trimmed in dove grey leather, complemented by burl maple veneers across the dashboard and fittings—including a period-style cocktail cabinet.

With paint completed, final assembly could begin. Interior components were locally made, trial-fitted, then removed and refitted after finishing. Mechanical systems, already rebuilt, were brought together with the newly completed body.

The transformation was now fully realised, and it was time for the reveal. The first public showing came on Sunday, 19 April, at the local Rolls-Royce Owners' Club concours. In perfect weather and surroundings, the car was presented to fellow enthusiasts and the public for the first time. The response exceeded all expectations with the Phantom awarded Best Phantom, Best Private Restoration, and ultimately the Outright Winner—an extraordinary result, and a fitting conclusion to the years of work invested in the car.



Reflecting on the project, some people have asked why I did not undertake a similar re-bodiment (is there such a word?) of my earlier Phantom II (18MY). The answer is simple: cost and time. Selling that car ultimately freed the resources needed to pursue this project to the standard it deserved. The restoration of 33CL has never been just about the car itself. Like most restorations, it is also a reflection of the skill and dedication of an extensive team of craftsmen and specialists who, together with me, have completed the job. What began as a chance discovery in a shoebox became a full-scale resurrection - with lady luck lending a bit of a hand along the way.

Coachwork by Martin & King

Max Gregory, 1979, with photographs from sources as indicated.



Martin & King premises at 77-87 High Street in Malvern. (Photo: SLV)



The Martin & King body plates were typically affixed to the door sills. (Photo: R Swaney)

Few firms involved with the motor industry in Australia can look back on a life span of 90 years, a period comfortably encompassing the entire beginnings and growth of the motoring scene which we all now take for granted. Yet this is the operational timespan of the body-building concern of Martin & King, which, by virtue of its work on the high-quality chassis, particularly Rolls-Royce, is one of the best known and remembered of the Australian purveyors to the carriage trade.

Although Martin & King never produced a car of their own, as some others attempted to do, they closely identified with the needs of the unique Australian environment throughout that time. Beginning as far back as 1898 with a body built wholly on horse-drawn carriage principles for the Thomson steam phaeton, they blossomed forth during the heyday of the custom motor body building in the 1920s, and to a lesser extent the 1930s, with work which was so often the subject of lavish praise. After World War Two assembly became the way of life and out of their enterprise grew the manufacturing facility of Volkswagen (Australia), nowadays Nissan (Australia). Over the period of years, too, was developed a close relationship with the Victorian Railways which continues to this day. Thus, it may be seen that, at Martin & King, there have been three distinct eras of carriage building — the horse-drawn carriages, the carriage trade motor bodies and the carriages for the railway.

The firm of Martin & King was founded in 1888 by a partnership of Mr Alan Martin and Mr Joseph Henry King in a shop measuring only 30ft x 20ft which was owned by Mr J Graham in High Street, Armadale,

Victoria. Alan Martin was the coachsmith and Harry King the bodymaker but the partnership only lasted a year as, due to the financial difficulties which were so prevalent during those depressed times, Martin was forced to withdraw. The name of Martin & King was, however, retained.

As business improved a move was later made to larger premises at 85 High Street which measured 30ft x 110ft, while the greatly expanded business of the twenties brought about the need for an extension which was located at 77–79 High Street. Finally, a frontage of 500ft in High Street was taken for the factory which embraced both of the previous sites in the one large premises.

It is perhaps not surprising that Herbert Thomson should have called upon Martin & King for the bodywork of his 1898 steam phaeton which is now remembered for its epic overland journey from Bathurst to Melbourne in 1900. Being both denizens of High Street in Armadale, about half-a-mile apart, there was a certain amount of interchange between the two firms as they called upon each other to carry out specialised tasks. Amongst the jobs on which the two firms worked was the construction of a new round-about for the St Kilda beach in about 1912. This was powered by a Thomson tandem-piston steam engine while much of the superstructure was made by Martin & King including the long crankshafts, to operate the galloping horses, which were formed in their forge.



The Thomson steam phaeton pictured at a demonstration run in Bathurst in April 1900. The car was driven from Bathurst to Melbourne in 56 hours and 36 minutes to prove its viability. (Photo: VCCA Vic)



The Thomson steam car was restored by Bill Buchanon and it is shown during the Golden Fleece Veteran Car Club (Victoria) rally in 1958. Owned by descendants of Thomson, in 1960, it was gifted to Museums Victoria where it is on display today. (Photo: VCCA Vic)

The son of JH King, Thomas Henry King entered the trade as a lad in 1910, working for his father as an apprentice body-maker to learn the ways of the calling from the bottom of the ladder. During the period from 1910 to 1919 he worked at the coach factory by day while taking a four-year course, at the Working Men's College, in coach body making and panel beating. From 1919 to 1923 he was a professional musician at the Palais de Danse in St Kilda whilst, at the same time, working during the day at the Martin & King shop. In 1923 the Senior King offered Tom a partnership in the business if he would agree to give up his involvement with professional music. As it was never his intention to make a career in music and having a belief in the great potential of the motor body building business, Tom King agreed to this on the condition that he would assume the position of Managing Director. This was, after much deliberation by the older King, who had no belief in the future of motors, finally agreed upon and the younger generation moved immediately and resolutely into motor body building.

As Tom King had long been aware that heavy involvement in motor body building was going to require the services of a qualified motor engineer, he conceived the idea of his younger brother carrying through with his education with the objective of joining the firm in this capacity. The brother, William James King, accepted the proposal and made a study of engineering. He won scholarships which aided him to complete his course at the Melbourne University in 1925 with the Degrees of Bachelor of Electrical Engineering and Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering. By this time the growth of the business, brought about by the production of motor bodies, had made the services of an engineer quite necessary. Steel, with the tools necessary for its application to motor body building, had become the modern pattern, and this presented the opportunity for Bill King to join the firm as an equal partner.

Martin & King had made a tentative start on metal motor bodies in about 1916 when one was built for a High Street draper, Mr Edward Green, on a Ford chassis. Mr Tom King recalls that he first had to sell the idea of having the body built on his chassis to Mr Green and then had to sell the idea of building a motor body to his

father who had a distinct aversion to working with metal panels. However, with the great interest of the young King in the matter, and with the after-hours and weekend guidance of a panel-beater named Huggins, the job was carried off successfully.

From 1923 motor body building was the prime consideration of the firm and up until 1925 production of bodies on a regular basis for, firstly, Ansaldo and Aurea chassis was carried out along with bodies for such other chassis as Bayliss Thomas, DFP, Hillman and Wolseley. From this time great emphasis began to be placed on the carriage trade work with the order for bodies on Delage chassis.

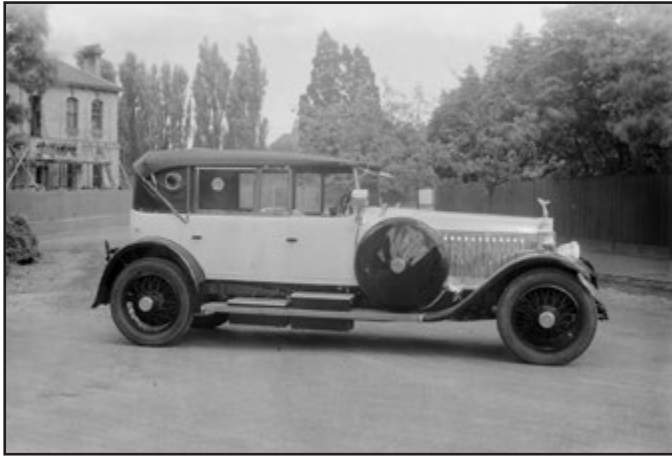
In 1925 the beginnings of a long association with the Victorian Railways were made with the winning of a contract to build four bodies for coaches to serve the Mount Buffalo Chalet in the Australian Alps. At that time the Chalet was a particularly popular tourist attraction and holiday venue operated by the Victorian Railways. These coaches, which met the visitors at the Bright and Porepunkah railheads and conveyed them up to the Chalet, were built on 50hp White chassis and were the height of luxury for those days, having plate glass windows, a commodious external luggage compartment and interior heating from the exhaust system. These coaches, called sedans by the Victorian Railways, were early examples of a body type which became known as parlour cars. These parlour cars, with external doors for each row of seats, succeeded the earlier open char-a-bancs and lasted until about World War 2 when legislation in most States brought about a change to the present style of tourist coach. There was initially something of a problem with the design of these Mount Buffalo coaches as it had been laid down by draughtsmen more versed in the ways of railway practice. When the deficiencies were drawn to the attention of the Railways engineer-in-charge, Martin & King were told that they would have to tender as per the drawings but that if they were successful tenderers, then the changes would be authorised later as an extra cost item. Although they were relying on a verbal arrangement, this was the way it eventually worked out, to the benefit of both parties.

Much attention and favourable comment was gained by Martin & King in 1926 when they built a special mottled finish aluminium sports body on a Delage chassis for exhibition at the Melbourne Motor Show. This was an outstanding design, having folding seats in the boot, a totally disappearing hood and it put the firm very much in the public eye.

On another occasion, at a motor show, a special sports saloon on a Delage was shown which, indirectly, led to Martin & King building bodies on Rolls-Royce. This car was finished in black for the body with red for the helmeted mudguards and red drum-grained leather for the interior. In place of running boards were four independent cast aluminium footplates set close into recessed sections of the body sills.

This car was a car of most commanding presence which attracted the attention of a gentleman of Chinese descent named Mr Sam. When Mr Sam went to the stand to discuss the purchase of the car he was refused

admission because the salesman objected to his not wearing a tie. He promptly went across to the Rolls-Royce stand where he bought a 40/50hp chassis on the understanding that it was to be fitted with a body like the Delage. Subsequently a body was designed which met the requirements of the chassis and yet was still a very striking and distinctive motor car. This was accepted by Mr Sam, approved by the Rolls-Royce factory representative for Australasia and marked the beginning of a long association between the two firms.



New Phantom from 1926 - thought to be the one Mr Sam purchased from the Rolls-Royce stand at the motor show. (Photo: SLV)

The Rolls-Royce Company were quite satisfied with carriage work produced by Martin & King for their chassis, as was evidenced by the fact that a car of their own for the use of their factory representative, Mr BA Peat, was shipped to Australia as a chassis to have a Martin & King body fitted to it. Rolls-Royce also approved the substitution of the usual aluminium scuttle by one of steel when fitted with a Martin & King body for Australian use.

From that time bodies were designed and fitted to many other of the higher priced chassis such as Alvis, Armstrong-Siddeley, Daimler, Humber, Riley, Sunbeam and Talbot. (*Editor comment – see sidebar story page 18 about an Alvis bodied by Martin & King*)



A Martin & King image of New Phantom 48YC. This car is owned by Ian Berg. (Photo: D Belcher)

During the fashion for the flexible frame type fabric bodies, as popularised by Weymann, in the latter part of the 1920s, Martin & King produced a design of their own on similar principles to the imported Alvis and Weymann types and these were fitted to many makes, notably Alvis and Delage. Indicative of the great interest

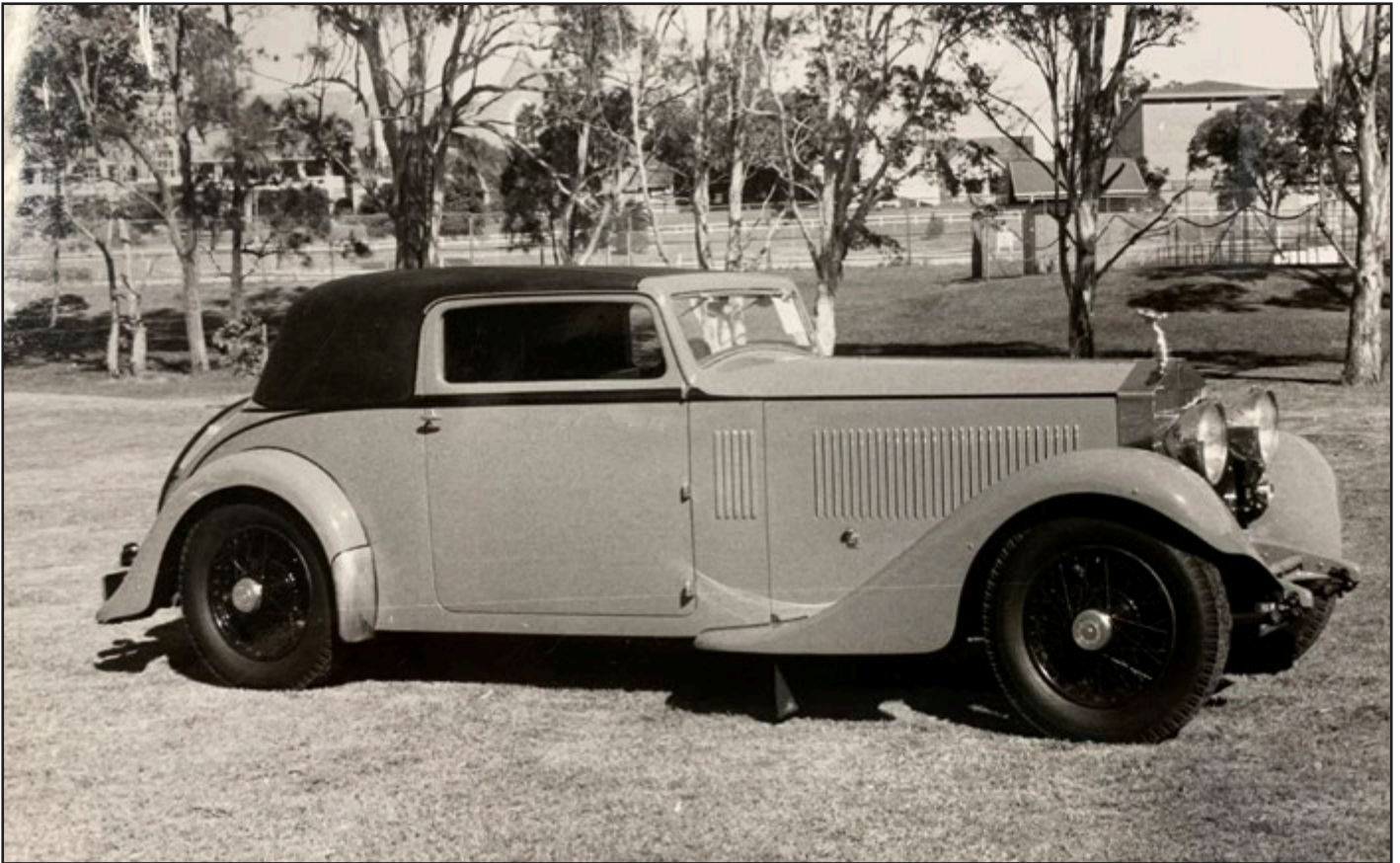
in this form of body construction at that time was the fact that fabric bodies were to be found on 15 makes of car at the 1929 Melbourne Motor Show ranging through from the Austin Seven to Rolls-Royce. Even the advanced Lancia Lambda, which had been notable for some years for its unitary construction, became available in chassis form so that it would be readily clothed in fabric body styles. This form of construction quickly became unpopular due to the large number of bodies being built by sundry body works using an ordinary rigid frame covered with fabric. These could not flex sufficiently in sympathy with chassis movements and soon gave trouble, resulting in all fabric bodies coming under the cloud of suspicion, finally to go out of production altogether.

High praise was earned by the work of Martin & King, as instanced by the following excerpt from the 1929 Motor Show report of the *Australian Motorist* journal. After commenting on the utter luxury of the Cadillac and the innovation of an Auburn convertible sedan the text continued: "It was difficult to say which was the finest example of bodywork so much has been done in this respect in the last twelve months; but one feels inclined to give the laurels to the four-door coupe by Martin & King on a 6-cylinder Delage, and it is interesting to note that the same local builder was successful in pleasing us most in this respect at the previous show. They have been most successful in securing an extremely attractive line, and in giving the car a quiet dignified appearance, one that one says immediately: 'There is a gentleman's car!' The clever handling of that difficult rear panelling — a roadster-type cowling — the displacing of running boards in favour of individual steps, and the louvred valances, the treatment of the windscreen framing, the excellent workmanship in the upholstery and everywhere else, and the unusual colour scheme of green relieved with maroon, and red interior finish, all go to make a car which would occupy a place of pride in a show in any part of the world. An excellent fabric saloon by the same builder was also exhibited."

To work profitably with small production runs the firm had to develop some special techniques, amongst which was the making of steel-faced reinforced concrete press dies. These were satisfactory for normal work, deep draws into corners etc, excepted, and this helped to make small volume work economic. For short production runs also, dies made of lead and zinc were used for custom body work and later, too, for the production of aircraft components.

These lines of operation, in the field of high-quality work were continued through the trying 1930s but on a much-reduced scale of volume. Martin & King were able to maintain their workforce during the Depression years, however, by the adoption of a policy of working half-time.

Once the Second World War commenced a supply of chassis soon ceased and a complete change over to war production was made. Martin & King were soon recognised for their ability to improvise and tooling techniques developed for their body building proved of great value to the Department of Aircraft Production, as they were shortly supplying much needed parts which could not be supplied from overseas.



Martin & King came up with some very stylish one-off bodies. This is the 1932 Phantom II chassis 76MS from 1932 with coachwork fitted from new. The car was photographed at an early RROC Victoria event and has since been exported. (Photo: SHRF)



A one-off 1935 Rolls-Royce 20/25 'Airline' coupe with coachwork by Martin & King. The car, chassis GLB27 is owned by Ian McAllister in Western Australia. (Photo: RROC WA)



A late 20hp chassis GV02 which was rebodied as a sporting two-seater by Martin & King in the 1930s. It has since been rebodied again and is now owned by Rick Thege in Ballarat. (Photo: SHRF)



A Martin & King photo of a newly rebodied Phantom I, chassis 12RC. The car survives in unrestored condition, but its whereabouts are presently unknown. (Photo: N Lang)

Wartime conditions meant frantic work deadlines, great production pressures and expansion into numerous scattered premises around the Armadale and Malvern areas. A great deal of work was done for aircraft production, and the lead into this came when a US shipment of Brewster Buffalo fighter aircraft arrived without their engine exhaust collector rings. There was a tremendous rush for these parts and Martin & King fabricated them from Satin-X panel steel in a mere 8 days. The fact that before they could be fitted another ship arrived carrying the missing collector rings did nothing to mar the impression of efficiency that had been made upon the authorities. The bulk of this work was done for the Department of Aircraft Production in the building of the Bristol Beaufort bomber and the Bristol Beaufighter. Critical items produced by the firm included the engine and wing mounting bolts

which had to undergo two different types of crack testing before acceptance. Work was also done for the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation and the De Havilland Aircraft Co. At the peak of wartime effort Martin & King were employing 450 workers although for most of this period Mr Bill King was not with the firm, having been pressed into service with the Department of Aircraft Production to locate and evaluate the abilities of factories which could possibly be turned to aircraft production work.



Beaufort bomber production in Melbourne in 1942. Between 1941 and 1944, Australia produced 700 Bristol Beaufort twin engine torpedo bombers with assembly was at the Dept of Aircraft Production plant at Fisherman's Bend in Melbourne, where this photo was taken, and at Mascot in Sydney. Components were manufactured at numerous facilities including Martin & King. (Photo: SLV)

Like so many factories which were hard pressed with a heavy workload during the emergency, the outbreak of peace saw a certain problem at Martin & King in maintaining the flow of work, and several avenues were explored for their potential, amongst them being the production of incubators and brooders for the poultry industry.

Another was the design and development of electric and gas stoves for the domestic market. The company was proud of its design for a gas stove which incorporated a number of advanced features such as spill pans and a gas governor which allowed safe and economical operation regardless of local gas pressure. Unfortunately, despite having been approved and being in receipt of a large order from department stores, an allocation of the required type of steel could not be gained in those austere early post-war years, and the design was eventually sold off.

One of the earliest post-war body production contracts was from the Ford Motor Co. which had landed a shipment of 500 8hp Anglia chassis and scuttles in 1946. As Ford policy was not to start up a production run for quantities of less than 2000, an approach was made to Martin & King about building tourer bodies on these chassis. The arrangement arrived at provided that Martin & King would not be credited as being the builders, the name having become associated, over the years, with carriage trade work. Ford promotional material for this model, however, took the opportunity of referring to it as the 'Anglia coach-built sports tourer'. Armadale production for the Anglia ran initially at 3 units per day, peaking at 6 units per day and in the final tally 2500 were built in five separate contracts during the currency of the model.



Anglia tourer bodies under construction at Malvern. Note also the railcar under construction in the background. (Photo: SLV)



Martin & King was a key manufacturer of bus bodies for the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board from the late 1930s until 1954.

During this time the motor body activity was being carried on at the Armadale premises, but it was becoming evident that residential pressures in the district were going to eventually interfere with plans for premises large enough for future needs. Therefore, an investigation was in hand to examine new sites with the necessary potential and a promising lot in the Clayton area, on the Dandenong line, was found, being of 50 acres and having the required access to the railway. This Westall estate, however, had the disadvantage of being swampy ground which could lie under water during wet winters but, as it met all other requirements, it was bought for 80 pounds per acre. The first task was to solve the flood problem and so a large drain was extended across the site while the next thing was to construct a building with a 10-ton crane bay at the rail siding for unloading the crates of 1000 or so GY railway wagons coming from England to be assembled and finished for the Victorian Railways. The move to Westall was a protracted one, being done piecemeal as the work program allowed, and was fully completed by 1952.

Whilst this development was progressing at Westall bodies for Walker Railcars were being built at Armadale. These rail motors, from Wigan in England, were destined to operate the distant country spur lines of the Victorian rail network and were powered by a pair of Gardner diesel engines. The bodies were transported in the early morning, when there was little road traffic abroad, from Armadale to the Newport railway workshops where they were mounted on their bogies. The company has, since that time, remained a substantial producer of railway rolling stock, continuing through the Harris Blue trains of 1954 up to the present Silver trains.

Australian assembly of the Jowett Javelin saloon was undertaken in 1952 for the local market at Westall and Mr Tom King recalls that the panels which were received for this project were the roughest pressings he had ever seen in his long associations with the trade. He remembers that the average body took about 22 lbs of solder and body wiping metal during assembly but, when completed, was a sound job. As the Javelin structure was specifically designed to be light so as to benefit both performance and economy, this testimony

of a self-defeating situation lends credence to the proposition that the withdrawal of Jowett from car manufacture at about this time was brought about by problems of obtaining body pressings from outside suppliers.



A Walker railcar. Walker railcars were of 153hp and were a combination of power units built by the Walker Railcar company, Wigan England and bodies built Martin & King. Pictured in Woodend 1948. (Photo: SLV)



An Australian Jowett Javelin assembled by Martin & King.

Following the Javelin came the Volkswagen which contrasted markedly in that the panels for this job were the very best that the firm had experienced for a precise fit. Some other tasks in this post-war era were the supply of some body pressings to Rootes (Aust) for the production of the locally built Hillman Minx and crew cabs were supplied to BMC for Austin trucks as supplied to the Postmaster General's Department.

Due to changes in motor manufacturing practice and the steady disappearance of the separate chassis, Martin & King realised that the prospects for the carriage trade work were not good in the mass production era, and indeed, made only one such body during the period. This was a beautiful 2-door sports saloon which was fitted to a Delahaye 135MS chassis and displayed at the 1953 Melbourne Motor Show, which cost so much to build that an immediate decision was taken to discontinue custom work.

In 1955, shortly after the advent of Volkswagen in Australia, Martin & King sold out to the Sydney-based engineering firm of Clyde Industries. A long-established company, Clyde had interests in many fields including that of railway rolling stock so the enterprise at Westall fitted into their pattern of operations quite well. The name Martin & King was sold with the works and Mr T H King continued an association with Clyde by becoming Deputy Chairman of the Martin & King operation.

Volkswagen production remained the major activity during the ensuing period and, as a result of the tremendous sales success of the Beetle, Volkswagen (Australia) purchased the Westall facility from Clyde in 1959 and expanded it into a full manufacturing complex. The Martin & King operation of Clyde Industries then moved, initially to Port Melbourne, and finally to Somerton, near Broadmeadows, where construction of the blue train carriages continued and a further move into the motor market was made in 1959 with the contract to assemble the Renault 750 and Dauphine models for Australian sale.

In common with so many of the local body building enterprises which have served as a nucleus for the growth of a major component of the Australian industry, Martin & King have provided a core from which has evolved the plant which has produced Jowett, Volkswagen, Volvo, Mercedes-Benz trucks and now the models of the Nissan/Datsun range.



The VW plant at Clayton in 1969 which first produced Volkswagen Beetles in 1954. It was demolished recently to make way for a data centre. (Photo: Monash Public Library)

Growing out of the original assembly contract for Volkswagen in the Victorian distributors, Regent Motors, in 1954, was an ever-increasing involvement in the project by the Volkswagen parent firm at Wolfsburg which led to the formation, in 1957, of Volkswagen (Australia) Pty Ltd to control the ever-growing activities of the company in this country. This VW subsidiary was owned 51% by the German concern while the remainder of the shareholding was spread amongst the Australian firms, Clyde Industries, Lanock Motors, the N.S.W. distributors and Regent Motors, the Victorian distributors. At the beginning of 1959 this VW offshoot purchased the Westall plant from the Martin & King operation of Clyde Industries and set about a massive expansion program to raise the capability of the facility to full manufacturing status. This included a greatly increased floor space, the installation of heavy presses, the purchase of an additional 33 acres of land fronting the Princes Highway for an administration block and a spare parts warehouse and the furnishing of laboratory and other facilities to bring the plant up to the standards of Wolfsburg.

One such item was the 7½ ton body jig which ensured that every body constructed to the exacting standards then synonymous with VW production. It was one

of only three such jigs in the world, the others being in Germany and in Brazil. Mr WJ King retained his directorship in this enlarged enterprise and was, from 1961 to 1968, Chairman of Volkswagen (Australia) Pty Ltd. During this time he had certain reservations about the VW parent company policy of making Westall, along with the Brazilian plant, a major manufacturing entity in its world-wide strategy, a view which, unfortunately, was found to be justified when the Australian VW manufacturing program was forced to cease in the late 1960s.

Although not directly connected with Martin & King or any of its factories, the formation of the well-known motor transport industry firm Freighters Ltd. took place with a good deal of involvement by Mr TH King. This came about at the end of the second World War when a specialist in the design of semi-trailers, Mr HN Peel, and a stockbroker, Mr JC Morrison, who were impressed with the possibilities of large-scale manufacture of trailers and related equipment, approached Martin & King seeking their participation in such a venture. At the time, however, Mr King was aware that the McGrath trailer firm was having problems, a tremendous over-capacity situation having been brought on by the loss of large orders formerly received from the American forces in the Pacific area. He therefore suggested that the two should approach McGraths, giving them the assurance that, if a satisfactory arrangement could be negotiated, he would join the company and accept their proposition that he should become Chairman of the Board. This came about and Mr King made a study tour of Europe and the USA in 1948, not only in his capacity as a director of Freighters and of Martin & King, but also as the President of the Vehicle Manufacturers Association, to fully acquaint himself with the latest developments in road transport technology, and he retained his Chairmanship until 1950.

Freighters also absorbed the old-established South Australian body-building firm of JA Lawton in the early 1950s, and this branch became an important facility in the total operation of Freighters. Lawtons had, at this time, begun design studies for a project on a general-purpose four-wheel-drive vehicle in the Jeep, Land Rover, etc. Freighters carried through with this Lawton Imp program to the prototype stage, one vehicle being built which was unfortunately written-off while undergoing trials with the Army, and the project was not proceeded with further. Freightier Industries, of course, remain a prominent supplier of transportation equipment and bus bodies to the present time.

Thus, as the foregoing selection of examples may illustrate, the activities of the Martin & King concern, which is itself now confined to railway carriage construction, were an influential factor in the growth and development of Australia's motor industry.

The writer wishes to thank Mr TH King for unstinting guidance and assistance in the preparation of this article and Mr P Robinson for his co-operation.

1927 Alvis 12/50 (Chassis 4948) – a Martin & King Example

Rowan Swaney

Together with his brother Simon, Club member Rowan Swaney owns and has restored the New Phantom chassis 85MC. It happens that Rowan also owns a vintage Alvis from 1927 and it is fitted with its original Martin & King coachwork. Rowan outlines the story:

The car was imported into Australia by Regent Motors as a bare chassis and displayed at the 1927 Melbourne Motor Show. It was purchased directly from the show by the Winter-Irving family and, in keeping with the practice of the time, sent to Martin & King in High Street, Malvern, to be bodied. The company produced a four-seater tourer in the style of the English Cross & Ellis bodies. The body cost £200, bringing the completed car to £650.

While visually aligned with contemporary English practice, the Martin & King body reflects Australian conditions and priorities. Its timber frame and overall construction are notably more substantial than the lighter Cross & Ellis equivalents. This additional strength has proven beneficial over time, giving the car durability and structural integrity well suited to long-distance and rural use. However, the same robustness brings extra weight. Compared to English-bodied 12/50s, chassis 4948 is marginally less lively in outright performance. The trade-off, though, is clear: the car is exceptionally solid and notably comfortable, with a road presence that feels more planted and composed.

The Alvis is believed to have spent its early decades in Victoria's western district before relocating to Deniliquin after the Second World War. It later passed to Bob Baylis, whose wife was a member of the Winter-Irving family. In 1988, the car was acquired by Bruce Feldtmann, a skilled engineer and proprietor of Egg Engineering, who began a long-term restoration. Over the following years, Feldtmann restored the chassis to a rolling condition, while the Martin & King body was entrusted to Terry Cornelius of Corowa.

The body restoration involved careful repair of the original timber frame and the renewal or fabrication of panels where required, preserving the integrity of the original coachwork. The completed body was then trimmed by Geoff Davies of Merrijig, and final assembly took place at Dookie.

Although meticulously rebuilt, the car initially proved difficult to tune. It was later discovered that the Solex carburettor had incorrect internal components, and the magneto suffered from intermittent firing due to a soldered-over safety gap. These faults were eventually resolved, allowing the car to perform as intended. Since its return to regular use, the Alvis has demonstrated impressive capability. It cruises comfortably at around 60 mph, with a top speed of approximately 65 mph, and its strong torque allows it to maintain speed even on inclines—an admirable performance for a 1600 cc engine.

One memorable incident underscores the car's resilience. On an early rally outing, travelling at approximately 40 mph, I hit a small kangaroo. The impact hit the front drag link, forcing the steering onto full right lock. The car crossed the road, mounted an embankment, and came down—remarkably—on all four wheels. It was repaired after several months of work and returned to the road in excellent condition. Today, chassis 4948 stands as a compelling example of Martin & King coachbuilding, heavier but stronger than its English counterparts - a distinctly Australian interpretation of a classic Alvis design.



As found, the car was complete but derelict.



As it is today.

What You Cannot See Might Not Hurt You. Then Again...

Dr James Baxter

Rarely, I find, what seemed like a good idea at the time turns out even better than initially imagined. And yet, that is exactly what has recently happened with the work I commissioned on Humphrey's front seats. In August 2021 Charles Vyse described himself in *Reborn: An Owner's Workshop Guide for the 25/30 Rolls-Royce* as 'the current custodian of GRO54, a 1937 Rolls-Royce 25/30 Barker Sports Saloon'. I assumed that mantle in 2022 when I bought and imported GRO54 *Humphrey* from England. At that time, the dealer (Ghost Motors) described its interior as having had a full re trim in green hide as well as a raft of other work. The result is a 25/30 which drives faultlessly and thus has been used for many continental rallies over the past few years. The work which has been carried out to the car has been done to the highest of standards, not least the interior trim which is breath taking.



The interior of the car prior to work being done. Nothing has changed – it looks just the same but feels totally different. (Photo: The author, 2025.)

When auctioned by Bonhams on 22 November 2005, it was described inter alia as being

An exceptionally original car, retaining a fine patina and still furnished with its original brown leather upholstery, GRO 54 is equipped with sliding roof, opening windscreen, centre driving light, matching trumpet horns and a metal-cased, offside spare wheel per its original specification sheets. The vendor reports the car as running well, although during its 33 years of ownership having a tendency to run warm only in congested traffic.

In *Reborn* Charles Vyse explains precisely what the 'tendency to run warm' really meant, and the thick lever arch file from him that came with the car contains all the rebuild receipts that led to the car "driving faultlessly". He did not dwell on the retrimming process unfortunately.

I have already recorded the process and what was done to land the car in Australia (*20-Ghost Gazette*, Issue 16, Autumn 2023, pp5-9). To an extent, that article, and this, form an addendum to *Reborn*, outlining the car's history in Australia. It had work done on it when it arrived in Melbourne from the United Kingdom and has been regularly serviced since. With Simon Elliott's expert knowledge, it is driving faultlessly, and is a joy to drive. It seems to me however that the old adage of what seems like the perfect car on paper will always need some work or tinkering done on it holds true. There is no doubt in mind that this also reflects personal taste and requirements as well.

On the 20-Ghost Club National Tour to Lancefield in 2025 I found that I was suffering from a sinking feeling and was peering through the steering wheel Foo-like rather than commanding the view from above it. Simon introduced me to Mick Stevens (Mick's Motor Trimming Pty Ltd) who has recently relocated his workshop from Pakenham to Drouin, and in time GRO54 (*Humphrey*) was delivered to West Gippsland to have the seats re-bolstered.

The leather is top quality Ingleston hide, in Ocean Green: 7 hides were bought in June 2011, with the work on the complete re-trim of the car presumably done soon after by 'Alec Tillet with a labour cost of £5,500' handwritten on the receipt for the leather. His business card was found within one of the seats, now accompanied by Mick Stevens'. Ghost Motors were more or less correct – it looked terrific, although maybe not literally 'breathtaking' as such, and when you first hopped in there was a feeling of soft luxury as you'd expect from a 1937 Rolls-Royce. Trouble was on any trip involving distance it was just too soft. In GRO54 the two front seat cushions lift out to reveal tool storage underneath. The back seat similarly has two cushions, but thinner than those to the front. They were boosted in this process but not replaced. The driver's cushion has the usual inset to accommodate the gear lever. It transpired that the cushions were never sprung.

Mick worked within the confines of the leather, unpicking cushions and squabs as needed to reveal what was inside. What he found were the apparently original innards, with Dunlopillo forming the main component. I had no idea that Dunlopillo latex was available in 1937, but discovered that it was developed in 1929 and marketed from 1933, becoming an upholstery staple in the 1930s. No doubt Barker felt that it was a quality, British material and therefore quite suited to its body building. I do fondly remember my Dunlopillo pillow from the 1950s – back then it was still considered a superior product. I'd wondered if the

seat frames were original to the car, but any doubt was quickly sorted when the correct Barker body number 7273 was found chalked onto one of them. Only a small piece of the original leather was found under a tack. It was a walnut colour, which would have been perfectly acceptable had the leather been re-done in that shade. The chosen green makes a bolder statement against the exterior paint combination of black over velvet green, which is as original. *Humphrey* remains largely true to its original specifications, apart from the colour change to leather and carpet.

Before being retrimmed in 2011 the seats may well have been held to be comfortable and hence left as original. The fact is not any form of criticism but an observation that what suits one owner may be entirely the opposite to the next – the adage in practice, however what looks breathtaking on the outside is not necessarily breathtaking beneath. Time had also taken a toll on the latex. The following photos, courtesy of Mick Stevens, indicate the process of reholstering and the state of what was underneath beyond gaze:



The driver's seat once removed from the leather.



What was in the driver's seat. Someone had spent time putting new foam blocks into the old Dunlopillo.



Back of seat showing chalked body number.



The passenger seat stripped down with the original Dunlopillo filling. The opening is for the toolbox under.



Squab ready for the leather to be replaced.



The completed job.

I was also able to take the opportunity to have some repairs done to the head lining around the sunroof, and to get padded covers made for the headlights and driving light. Mick found the Velcro that had been used in parts to secure carpet, and he replaced it with correct fasteners. The adage again – Charles Vyse felt that industrial Velcro was better than glue; the new fasteners are seen to be a better option to Velcro. 1-2-3. I'd wondered where to put the fire extinguisher: Mick made an executive decision and it now rests on the base of the front passenger seat, but with a matching vinyl cover to hide it from immediate view. Little extra observations and action really set a true professional out from others. All I can say is that if you are having issues with seating or trim, help is at hand! For me, the idea of doing something to fix the bolsters has proved to be a very worthwhile venture. It was like driving a different car on the return trip home. Same old Monash Freeway, however...

For Sale and Wanted

FOR SALE

I have a small collection of pre and post-war Rolls-Royce and Bentley parts surplus to my requirements. Please email me if you would like a list.

I also sell BSF, BA and other rare fasteners to suit our cars. Details on our website - bsfbolts.net

Contact Bruce Gardner

Email - brucegardner666@hotmail.com

New Members

Paul and Michelle Michael recently acquired the 1924 Silver Ghost chassis 58TM and have been busy recommissioning the car, after its years of storage. We welcome Paul and Michelle who recently presented the car at the 2026 Sydney Harbour Concours d'Elegance Cockatoo Island held in February.

At the same event were the 1930 20/25 GTR5 of Bob Roberts, the 1933 20/25 of John Milverton as well as the 1937 Rolls-Royce Phantom III 3CM45 of Stephen de Bono. John took out the Pre-War Best of Show with his car.

John is pictured driving the car off the ferry onto the island.



1925 Rolls-Royce 40/50 Hp Silver Ghost Chassis Number 122EU

Denis Deasey

This 1925 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost is a long-wheelbase example and is believed to be among the very last built at Derby—possibly the latest surviving. As the fourth-last chassis constructed and the second-last delivered, it was completed on 14 January 1925, tested at Windovers, Hendon on 6 March 1925, and then handed to its first owner.

That owner was the Australian industrialist and financier William Sydney Robinson (1875–1963), who was based in London between the wars. The original build sheets for the enclosed-drive limousine body run to four pages and reveal a car of exceptional luxury and refinement. It featured wheel discs, ebonised interior woodwork, and fully silver-plated brightwork. Today, the car remains in the Robinson family, owned by his great-grandson.

The current body, a striking two-seater coupé by T. H. Gill of Paddington, London, was fitted for the second owner around 1929. While a departure from the original limousine, it retains key elements from the initial specification, including the magnificent Zeiss headlamps. A Stephan Grebel spotlight complements the lighting ensemble. Two-seater coupé bodies on such large chassis are highly unusual, giving the car a distinctive character—arguably the ultimate ‘selfish’ motor car.

Like many vehicles of its era, 122EU experienced a long period of decline when such cars were considered outdated and costly to maintain. It passed through several owners for modest sums—often between £150 and £200—and at one point in the 1930s was fitted with a Ford V8 engine, a common but unfortunate modification of the time. It was not until the renewed interest in vintage cars during the 1960s that restoration to original specification became viable.

The engine currently fitted, U105, is from chassis 6EU and is of the correct series. Chassis 6EU was originally delivered to the Nobel family in Paris and carried a French-built body. No trace of that car has emerged since the 1930s, and it is presumed lost. Despite these alterations, the chassis of 122EU remains remarkably original and complete, and it retains its extensive original Rolls-Royce tool kit.

Since its acquisition in 2000 from a Swiss collection, the car has undergone a careful and ongoing program of mechanical restoration. It now runs exceptionally smoothly and quietly, cruising comfortably at around 80 km/h and returning approximately 12–13 mpg. Significant improvements include rebuilding the wheels to their original 23” x 5” specification, restoring the light and precise steering, and resetting the suspension to factory settings, returning the car’s renowned comfortable ride. The registration number, XY 4893, is the car’s original London registration and has been reissued in Victoria under the personalised plates scheme—providing a fitting link to its origins.

With regret, I have now decided to sell this lovely car.

FOR SALE

1925 Rolls Royce 40/50hp, long-wheelbase chassis number 122EU.

Paint, plating and trim in superb condition with all running gear overhauled during my 26 years of ownership, including a full engine rebuild about 4000 miles ago. A discreet electric power steering is fitted, entirely reversible. Running on its Autovac with auxiliary electric pump which is engaged by a simple switch. A 16:52 differential is fitted, ideal for touring. Full toolkit, including feeler gauges, and extensive documentation. A fine two case trunk by ‘Innovation’ of Paris is included in the sale. A comprehensive photo file is available. A very reliable car which has never left me stranded over thousands of miles. \$450,000.

Contact Denis Deasey on 0419 374 688 or deaseydenis@gmail.com







*A back view on the back page:
Denis Deasey's 1924 Rolls-Royce with body by Gill is a beautiful example of the remarkable Silver Ghost. It is a very late Silver Ghost with a very unusual coupe body. See the story of this car on page 22.*