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THE HEART OF MATTERS

When all is said and done there is nothing new about a rationalised range. Royce had adopted this course almost from the beginning, although it seems likely that the prime mover here was Rolls (whether from vision, or prejudice against two-cylinder cars in general).

As is well known the first Royce vehicles were ten-horsepower machines of this type, having nominal cylinder dimensions of four inches by five and a capacity of 1,800cc. (These are the figures actually quoted by Royce; however, most authorities agree that the bore diameter was actually $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches, later $3\frac{15}{16}$.)

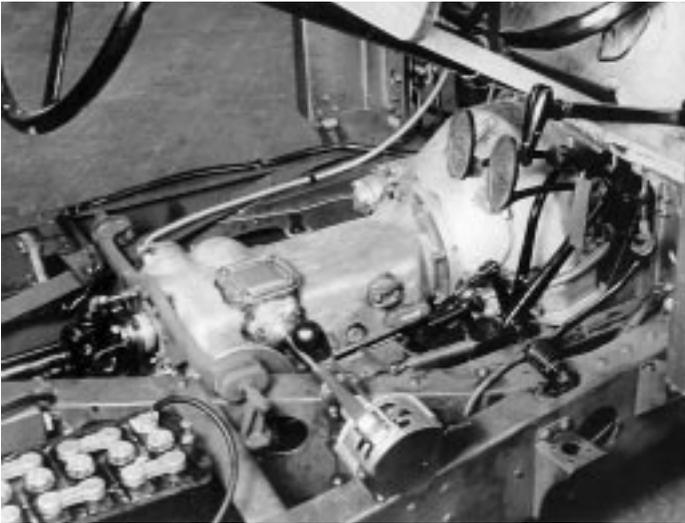
At the time Rolls operated a company selling mainly the quality Continental cars of the day, including such long-forgotten makes as the petrol-engined Mors, and Gardner Serpollet steamers, the rather more main-stream Minerva and Panhard et Levassor, and the incredibly obscure London-built Whitlock. Rolls was desper-

ate for a main-stream British car to sell but attached little credibility to species like the Royce - certainly in evidence by 1904. Fortunately for enthusiastic motorists everywhere he was persuaded otherwise when he had sampled the reliable, smooth-running, delights of the Royce.

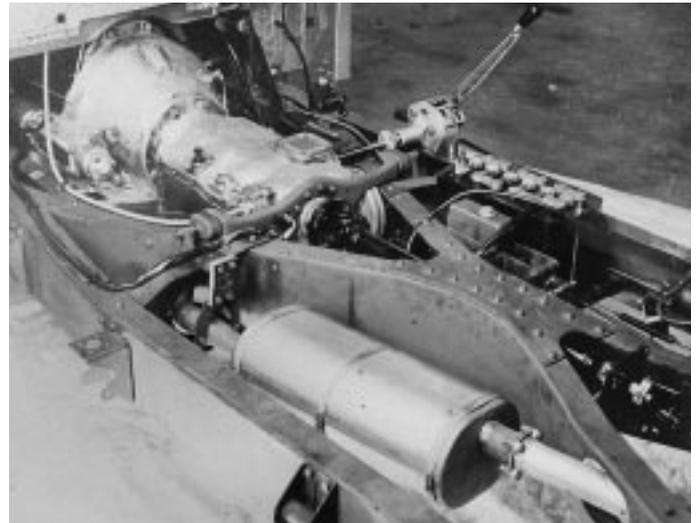
Rolls and Royce first met face-to-face, of course, in May 1904 at the Grand Central Hotel - now the Midland - in Manchester. At that momentous lunch Royce mentioned that he was intending to develop a range of cars based on the 10hp, to include a four-cylinder and a six. This was music to the ears of Rolls - the rationalised range in embryo. Rolls had felt the twin cylinder pulled like a four and was convinced that with a six available as well, his wealthy, discerning clients would be enraptured. He put pressure on Royce for a full range of cars, including - obstinately and obtusely - a three-cylinder, to take to the Paris Salon the same December

*How to win friends and influence people - The Hon. Charles Rolls demonstrates this Rolls-Royce 40/50 horsepower to some rather dour companions. The Silver Ghost type was the epitome of a car Rolls could sell to his rich friends and was the successor to the rationalised range he had persuaded Royce to develop.
(Courtesy Sir Henry Royce Memorial Foundation)*





In the close-up of the gearbox the top inspection plate is important, as we will discover later. Clearly visible also is the cross member, sometimes described as the 'cow horns', which help support the back of the gearbox, and just to its left centre the flexible 'ride control' hose taking gear oil from the gearbox-driven pump to the rear shock absorbers.



In the wider-angle shot of the chassis taken from the left-hand side, the bell housing, devoid of the strengthening webs that were fitted to later cars, is clearly visible as is the mechanical brake servo's flywheel, nestling beneath the right 'horn' of the gearbox cross member. A little further back alongside the battery is the brake master cylinder. Both would be accessible after removing the driver's seat squab, a panel in the floor and a plastic cover. Note too the giant cruciform, riveted on this early car (and of which much more later) and - nice to see - a joint at the back of the silencer that Royce himself would have been proud of!



Now, looking from underneath, all the major suspension and steering components are visible. Note the massive front cross member above the spring and the square jacking pad which was of a different type to that generally used in volume production. The strut between the triangle levers in the middle of the photograph is a brace.



And so to a detail of the rear of the chassis and fuel tank. Automatic lubrication pipes are in evidence around the springs as are the threaded shackle pins, often considerably worn on neglected cars. See too the absurdly inaccessible fuel filter poking up through the chassis cross member on the right side, and the unusually shaped silencer to the left.



Another car to test one's powers of coachwork identification. H J Mulliner perhaps, or maybe Park Ward. Not a bit of it, but certainly living proof that the finest techniques of the traditional coachbuilder still exist.

This glorious touring body on a Mk VI was recently created by Healey Brothers (AE) Ltd of Irthlingborough, Northants. It was built precisely not to look like a contemporary Mk VI bespoke style, but to employ as many of the classic ingredients of the standard steel saloon as possible.

Eric Healey, who designed the body

says: 'We wanted to incorporate features like the front bonnet panels, shape of the front and rear wings, curve of the sills and form of the standard front doors. But also to improve the rear end somewhat by providing a rather more commodious boot to meet touring needs. What we've done there is to remove the spare wheel from the luggage compartment altogether, place it under a cover on a boot lid that owes something to the standard R Type but now needs to be downward hinging.' The line of the boot top has been lowered slightly to waist level, thus avoiding any 'humpiness' at the back. The extra capacity in the boot has enabled the parcel shelf to be dispensed with and the rear seats moved back slightly. The centre pillar has also been set back and the two doors elongated accordingly. This allows rear entry and egress by sliding the standard front seats forward without resort to a folding type.

The floor structure of the car between the front of the rear seat and the centre pillars has been stiffened, thus eliminating the body flexing that many original designs to this style suffered. Subtleties of execution that place the craftsmanship at least on a par with, and probably ahead of, any in a period car include the imperceptible lengthening of the sweep of the wings; also matching the curve of the wider doors to that of the sill and extending the swaging line at waist level.

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COLOUR GALLERY



Proud as a potentate is the current owner of this most striking of 'Teardrops'. Arvind Apte, former Indian test cricketer and now resident in Bombay, is seen here with his daughter Tejaswini. This particular car, B 214 EY, was ordered in 1949 by Bentley devotee the Maharajah of Mysore and shipped from London to Madras on the SS Mutlah on 6 March 1950. It is one of six 'Teardrops', two of which were built by Gurney Nutting and four - B 214 EY included - by James Young.

The Maharajah specified power-operated windows with, wisely, manual back-up, a power-operated rear window blind, sliding picnic locker fitted behind the rear seat squab, concealed roof lighting and special cabinet work. Further comforts included two flasks and Thermos jugs, four sandwich boxes and matching cutlery plus a soap box and scent bottle all in silver, hair and clothes brush and comb and china cups, saucers and plates with two linen serviettes - the entire assortment supplied by top London firms Asprey and Mappin & Webb.

The Maharajah and his family must have been pleased with the Mk VI, which had cream leather upholstery to match the lower section body colour, as he kept her for more than 15 years. It is thought the car was a particular favourite of the Maharanee, who used it to visit the temple. From the palaces of Mysore B 214 EY passed to the Britannia Biscuit Company in Bombay and, subsequently to Arvind, who used her around Bombay from 1968 until the mid-1970s. In the early 1980s the car was brought to the UK for a total restoration. Speaking of the appeal of the Mk VI Arvind says: 'I first sat in a Mk VI as long ago as the 1960s, and that did it. Here was one car that had everything: comfort, silence and grace, and I had to have one. I missed a Park Ward coupé that had belonged to the Nizam of Hyderabad early on, had a rather unhappy spell with a neglected Derby 3 ^{1/2} but have now had nearly thirty years without tears from the Teardrop.'

The lines of the Gurney Nutting/James Young sedan coupé have lost none of their allure after nearly fifty years. At a recent Bentley Drivers' Club concours d'élégance in the UK, Arvind Apte's car was voted 'most appealing' by the women present. The period picture, which has only just been unearthed, shows B 214 EY in her regal days. The occasion is believed to be Dassera celebrations in Mysore.

B 142 CF, this time by Gurney Nutting and without the 'teardrop', shows how these cars look with the forward compartment closed. The 'hood' irons are, of course, dummies.

