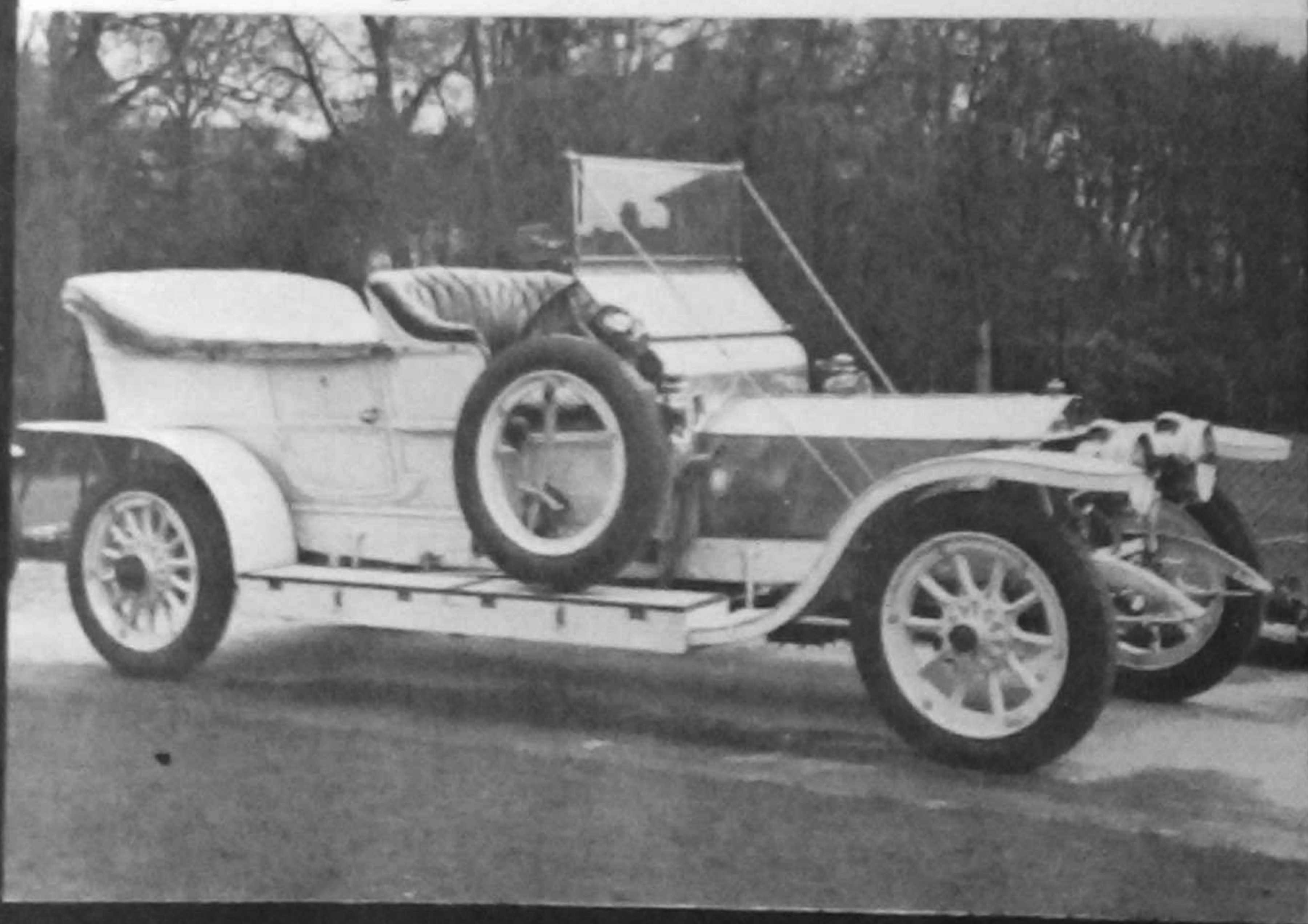
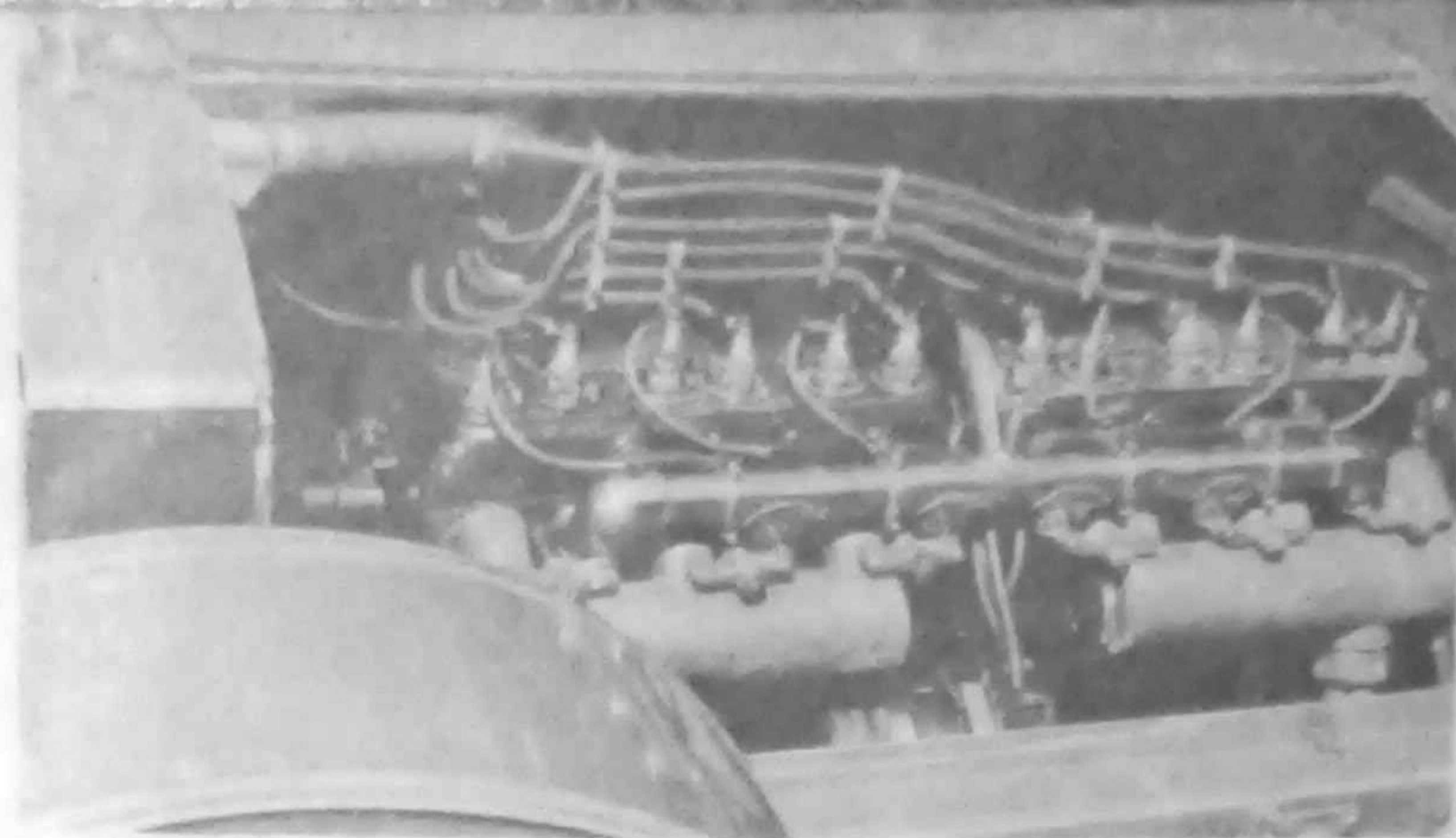




ROLLS-ROYCE

The Best Car in the World?
Sixty years of dedicated craftsman-
ship can provide only one answer.





The classic Silver Ghost motor here in #750 chassis, built in 1908.

► Laurence Pomeroy senior, creator of the immortal 30/98 Vauxhall, once described the Rolls-Royce as "A triumph of engineering over design." Said of the classic Rolls-Royce cars, those built up to the beginning of the Hitler War, this is pretty just comment. For if you were to take away the exquisite craftsmanship and the thousand-and-one refinements that make the Rolls-Royce what it is, you would be left with a basically not very interesting truck chassis, the sole merit of which would be that it would be impossible to wear it out.

Happily this hypothetical machine, the basic unrefined Rolls-Royce, does not exist. It has been submerged in fifty years of building, virtually regardless of cost, for ultimate refinement. And, post-war, the Rolls-Royce company has continued—and this was supremely difficult—to build the best car in the world within limits imposed by present-day economic conditions. This has not been accomplished without jettisoning many costly traditional features: the famous self-locking wire wheels, for example, standard since about 1908, replaced by ordinary "cheap" pressed-steel wheels secured by nuts. And the chassis is no longer held together by tapered bolts, each one hand-fitted into a hand-reamed hole. In fact, this so-called "commercialism" went so far that one senior member of the company, who had been with it since the beginning, resigned on the grounds that "The Company no longer builds motor-cars fit for gentlemen."

However, the results of this alliance between the traditionalists and the forward-looking commercialists have been very happy indeed. For the new "S" model not only gives one as much pleasure to drive as its illustrious forefathers, but it has enough go to satisfy any driver who is not in a really *big* hurry. And everything it does, of course, it does in absolute, total silence.

Like the partnership between the giant Marquis de Dion and the pint-size Monsieur Bouton it was an alliance between a wealthy, aristocratic patron and a plebian technician that produced the Rolls-Royce in the beginning. Henry Royce built electric cranes, in a small way, in Manchester, England. Early in the century he bought an automobile which was not only very unreliable, but the construction of which violated every principle of engineering ingrained in Royce. Like the Packard brothers, who bought a Winton about the same time, he decided that he could build a very much better car himself.

By David Scott-Moncrieff

The result of this resolution was a splendid little car, beautifully engineered, as good or better than anything of its class and age. Soon it went into limited production in two, three and four-cylinder versions. Charles Rolls, the son of a wealthy nobleman, Lord Llangattock, already in business as an agent for Panhard et Levasseur, was so impressed with the car that he optioned the entire production, as Jelinek had with Daimler, a few years previously. In 1904 and 1905 Charles Rolls raced the 20 horse-power four-cylinder model, winning the Tourist Trophy in the latter year. (It seems odd to recall it now, watching a Silver Wraith town-car run softly down the boulevard, but the early R-R cars were as useful for competition as a Porsche is today.)

Legend to the contrary, the earliest Rolls-Royce did *not* have the famous squared-off radiator shell; they carried one that looked much like the then contemporary Panhard radiator. Late in 1904 they appeared with those of the traditional shape, basically unchanged today, 52 years later. The design was based on the Parthenon Temple at Athens in Greece. The company didn't bother to patent the design, and in 1913 it appeared on another car, the Sizaire-Berwick, duly protected by British patent! Berwick, who had left Rolls-Royce to join Sizaire, had simply taken the design along with him, and for more than 10 years Rolls-Royce had to pay a royalty to Sizaire-Berwick for the use of the Rolls-Royce radiator design! When the Sizaire-Berwick firm crashed in the late 1920's they bought it back!

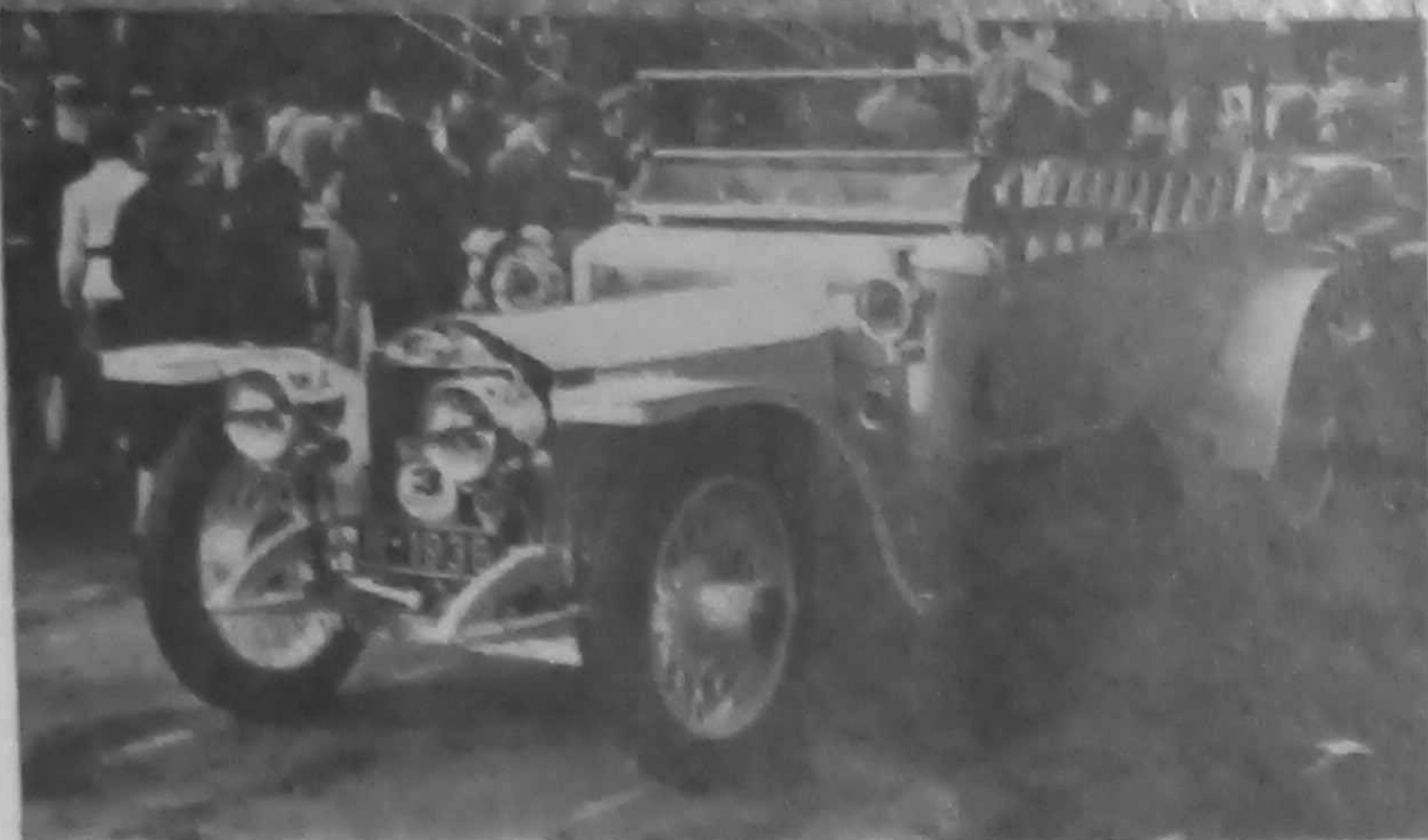
The early R-R cars were good cars, but the company did not really hit the jack-pot until 1907 when the "Silver Ghost" appeared, and stayed in production for 19 years without major change—one of the four longest model runs in history the other three being the Model T Ford, the Jowett, and the Citroen.

A very large number of the *cognoscenti* swear that the "Silver Ghost" is the most *satisfying* car to drive that has ever been built. One wealthy acquaintance of mine who can afford, and does possess just about everything automotive engineering can offer, habitually drives his "Alpine Eagle" model "Silver Ghost" for sheer pleasure. I have tried to analyse this sensation, and this is as near as I can get to it:

(1) Being wafted along in absolute silence, like a motorless yacht with a following wind, while sitting in a seat

A Sizaire-Berwick wearing the "classic" Rolls radiator patented by Berwick.





A 1910 Silver Ghost at the start of the 1954 Anglo American Vintage Rally.

more comfortable than any modern arm-chair, high enough to see well over the heads of lesser folk.

(2) The mechanical perfection and positive action of all controls, including the steering.

(3) The smug satisfaction of knowing that every single part of the car, whether you can see it or not, is made, often quite unnecessarily, to tool-room standards of precision and machined to a show finish.

There is an indefinable something else, too—the pride of using an almost unique possession. As another writer has said, just the act of putting one's foot on the running-board of a fine old car makes one feel like a millionaire.

The "Silver Ghost" had a forerunner in a 30 horsepower, six-cylinder car of advanced design, virtually a 20 horsepower four-cylinder with two cylinders added. It is very doubtful indeed that a single example of this interesting model remains in the world.

Gone with the wind too is the fantastic "Legal Limit" 90° V-8 Rolls Royce. (Ed. note: See European Newsletter.) Rumor is that the Company did not think this as successful as it should have been, bought back every single car and broke them up.

The perfection, mechanically, of the "Silver Ghost" coupled with its splendid performance in the Royal Automobile Club 1,000 miles trial soon made it the best seller among European luxury cars, a position that had been held previously by the mighty Napier. Mercedes were building good sporting and racing cars at the time, but their luxury cars were not too good, and certainly could not compare with Rolls-Royce or Napier.

Some of the earliest "Silver Ghosts" had an overdrive in addition to the normal three speeds. This growled like a dog (being R-R, it was, of course, a very well-bred dog!) and enabled one to work the car up to something in excess of 70 miles per hour. In 1909 the overdrive ceased to be built and the stroke was lengthened from 114 mm. to 121 mm. It had hitherto been a "square" engine, decades before this became the very latest thing. The rear springing changed from semi-elliptic to cantilever in 1912 and in this form the "Silver Ghost" went on, with modifications, such as front-wheel brakes, up to 1925.

Charles Rolls was killed in a flying accident in 1910, but a very able team, led by Royce and Claude Johnson, car-

ried on and in 1913 they built the high-compression, four-speed "Alpine Eagle" semi-sporting tourer, one of the most desirable collectors' pieces in the world.

During the Kaiser War, the firm built armored cars and airplane engines. Royce completed the design and development of a V-12 engine by Christmas 1918. He presented it to the Government, asking permission to go into production. Ostrich-like, the Government replied, "Don't you know the War is over? We don't want any more flying machines." During the next three years Royce cut the engine in half and used one block as an automobile engine. This engine was known as the "Goshawk" and is still referred to by that name by old hands at the Works. It appeared, after trials conducted in the strictest secrecy, in a chassis somewhat lighter than the "Ghost" chassis, in 1923, as the "20" Rolls-Royce.

There are still several hundred of these remarkable little cars (1923-1930) on the road today. They have one very curious feature. Although they're completely lacking in performance, with a top speed of barely 60 miles an hour, they are capable of putting up an astonishingly good average speed over long distances. The first dozen or so built, I know, because I had one, were relatively brisk performers. The company then decided that they were too fast for the back-wheel-only brakes and cast a new cylinder head, restricting the breathing. If you attempted to open up the ports you found yourself quickly in the water passages. Even after the introduction of four-wheel brakes in 1925 the use of the restricted head was continued.

The Rolls-Royce "20" with its "Swiss watch, jewelled in every hole" feeling and its economy of operation (over 20 miles to the gallon) is still a great favorite, even if it does move away from traffic lights with all the celerity of a horse and buggy. A perfect specimen of one of the last of them will still bring \$1500.

The Phantom I appeared in 1925, and had it come out in 1914, the design still would have caused little comment as being new or revolutionary. No firm of manufacturers has ever made haste more slowly than Rolls-Royce. Still, the directors of the company were perfectly correct in their policy: Rolls-Royce customers wanted then, and still want, perfection, not novelty. Incidentally, there may still exist several unique Austrian-built P-I chassis. They resulted

J. C. Sward's 1923 Silver Ghost with Park Ward body.



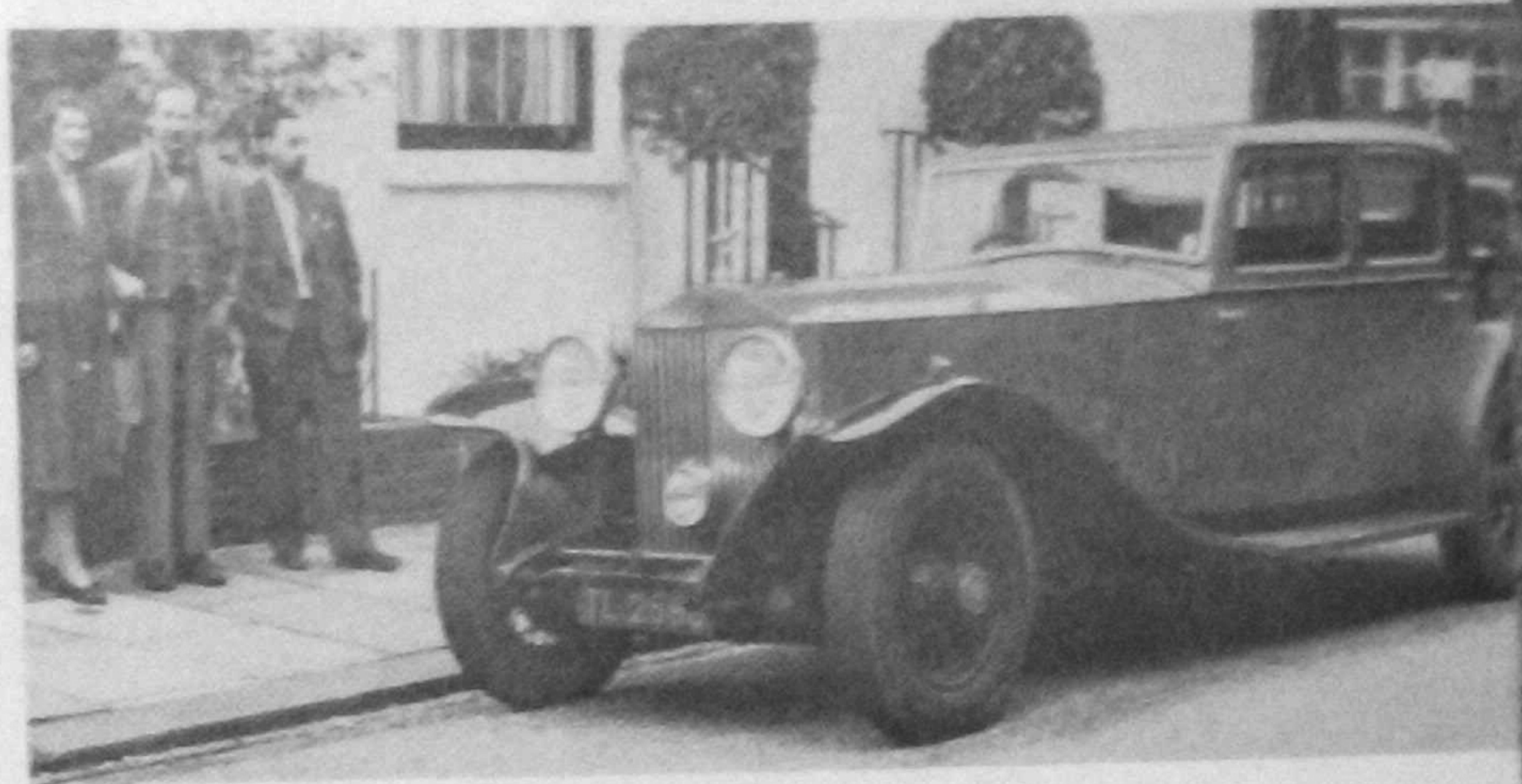
from a law-suit brought by R-R against the old Austrian firm of Graf und Stift, for patent infringement. The Austrian courts found for the English firm and awarded very heavy damages. But Graf und Stift's funds were blocked in near-bankrupt Austria. So Rolls-Royce commissioned the Austrian company to build several P-I chassis from drawings which they supplied. Each chassis was completely hand-built in the Graf und Stift tool-room!

I never cared for the P-I; it used to frighten me too much. The top speed approached 80 miles an hour, the chassis was high and the coachwork often rather top-heavy. To say that it was a bit hairy in the higher speed ranges would be an understatement. It would have been as bad a man-killer as the "K" model Mercedes if it had not had infinitely better brakes.

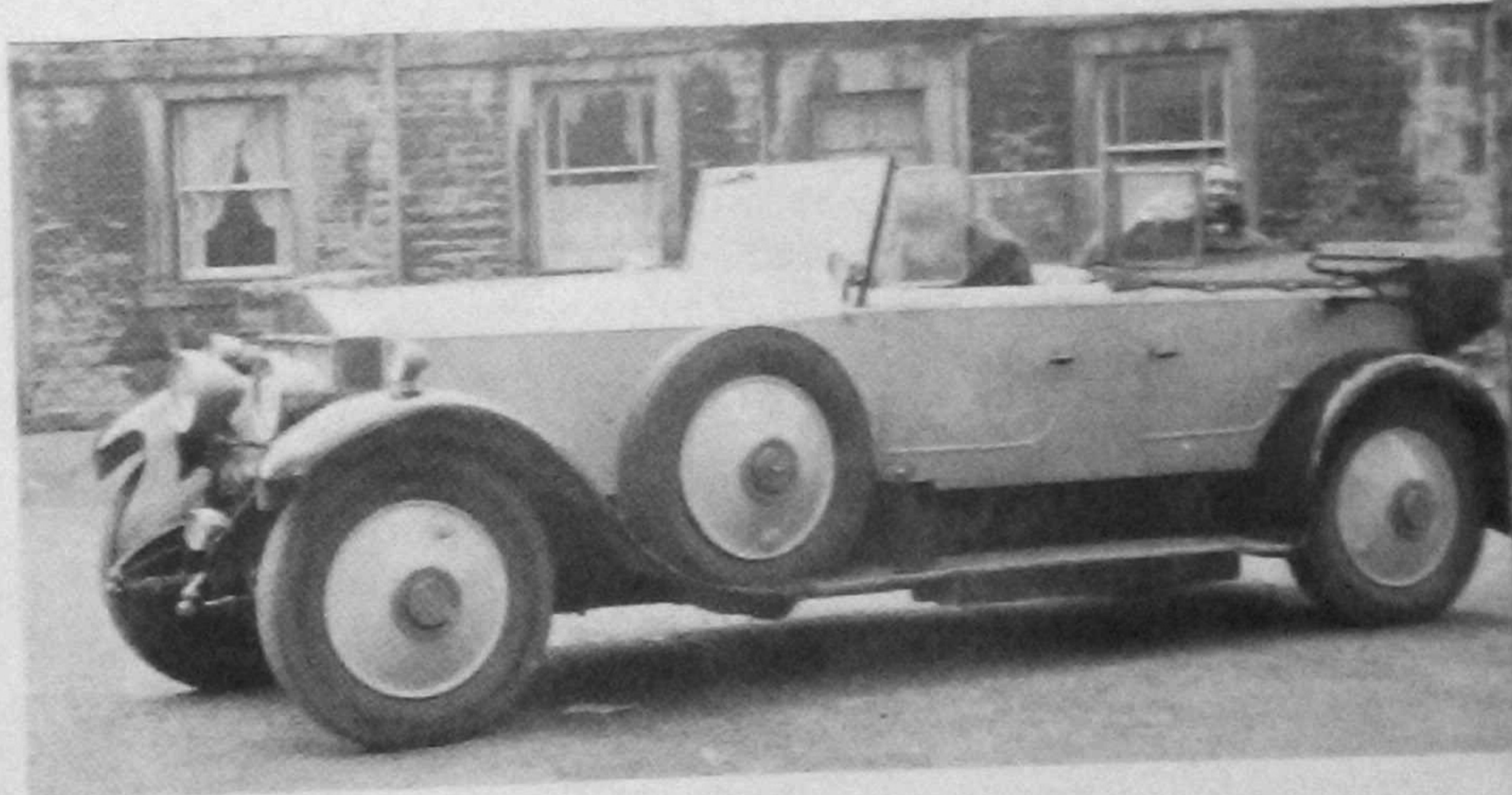
There were a few exceptions, mostly among the last model P-Is, which had two plugs per cylinder, fitted with lovely open coachwork by Barker or Hooper. These behaved better, due to the lower and lighter bodies. One of them was fitted with a very light Weymann fabric sedan body, on a specially-modified chassis. The car was built for Philip Padden, a friend of Charles Rolls. It went like a scalded cat and cornered marvelously. It would be interesting to know how many cars were turned out with special features for friends of the Company. Certainly it was not an uncommon practice.

In 1930 two new models appeared, the "25" and the Phantom II. Also, there began to be built, to special order only, for approved customers, the car I think the best of all: the short chassis, hopped up Continental Phantom II. It's got everything any other Rolls-Royce ever had, plus performance, very reasonable road-holding and splendid brakes. Top speed of the Continental is 92 miles an hour, which it reaches very quickly with no sound but a well-bred sigh. The Board of Directors have decreed a maximum speed of 92 mph and that's it. There is little or nothing you can do to get more. A wealthy chum of mine got so exasperated that he vowed he would make his do 100. He spent \$4,000 and finally had to button on a supercharger to get it. There are, however, a few individual cars built for old friends of the firm that will do the hundred, and a shade more, with complete silence and lack of fuss.

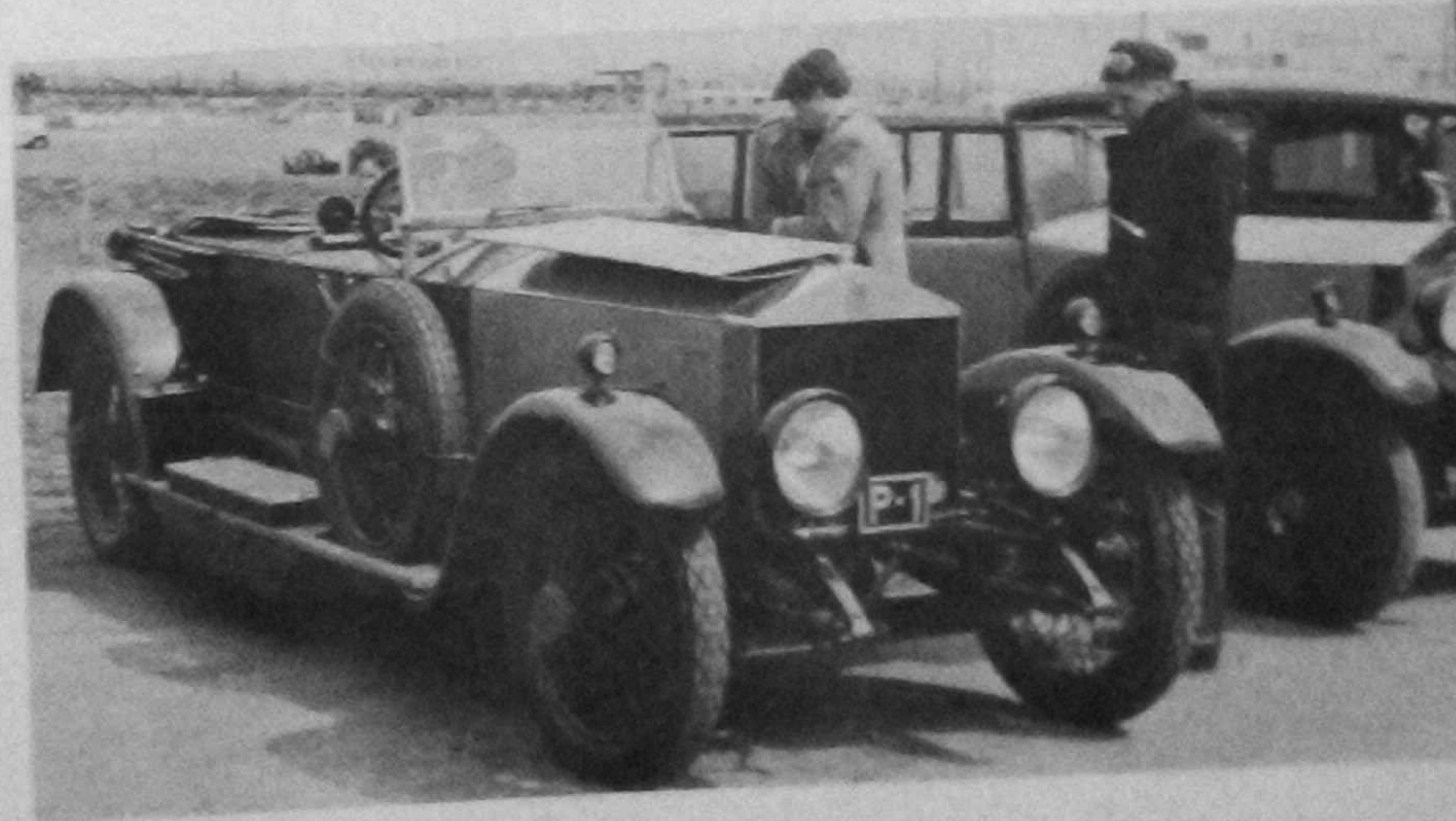
The "Continental P-II" is to my mind the most nearly
(Continued on page 93)

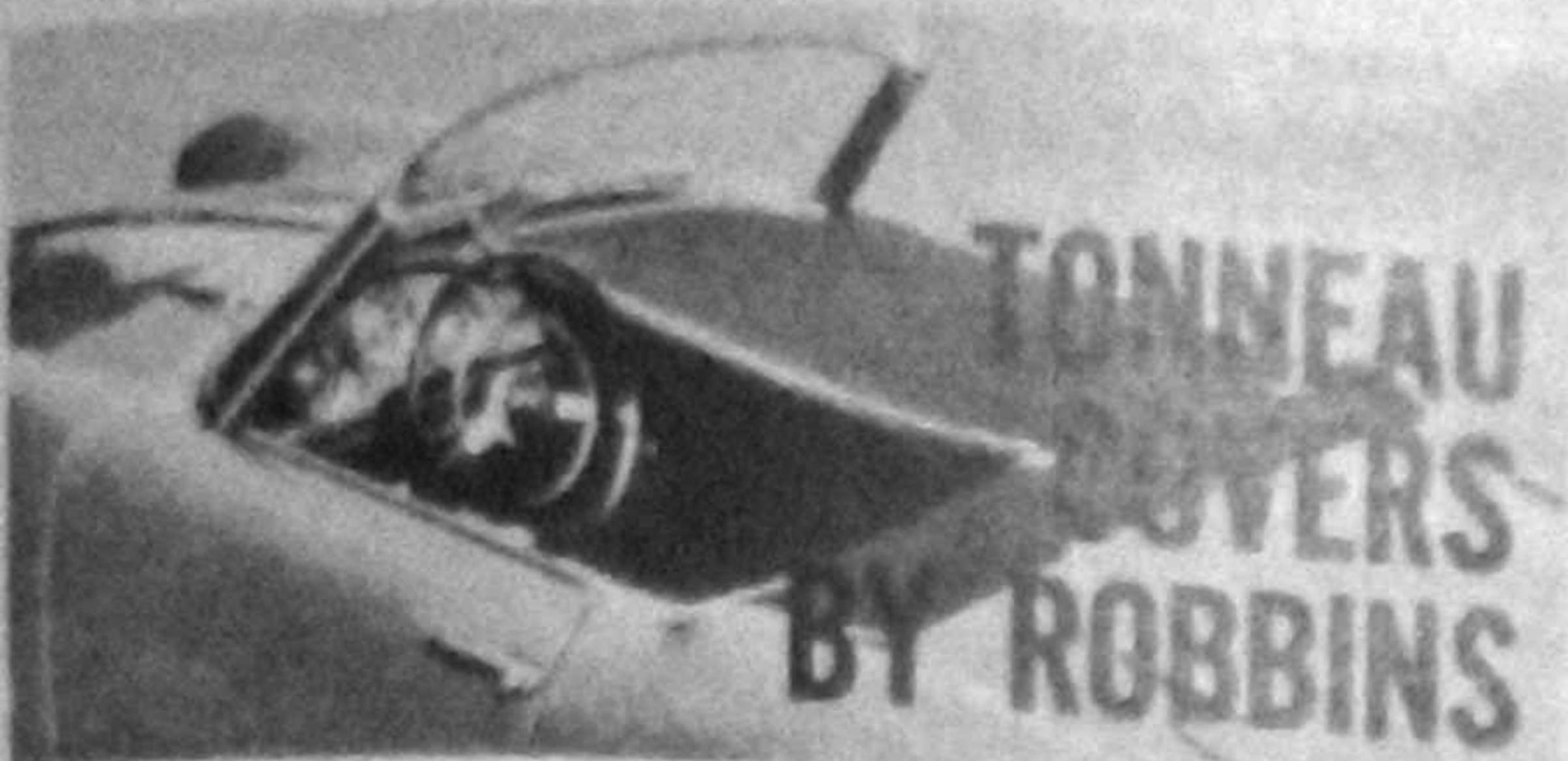


Above: One of the author's Continental Phantoms, his dearest love among Rollses. Below: Phantom I Park Ward tourer with immaculate black and yellow coachwork.



Below: A 1915 Silver Ghost the chassis of which carried an armored car body during World War I. The present body is of earlier vintage, 1911 or 1912.





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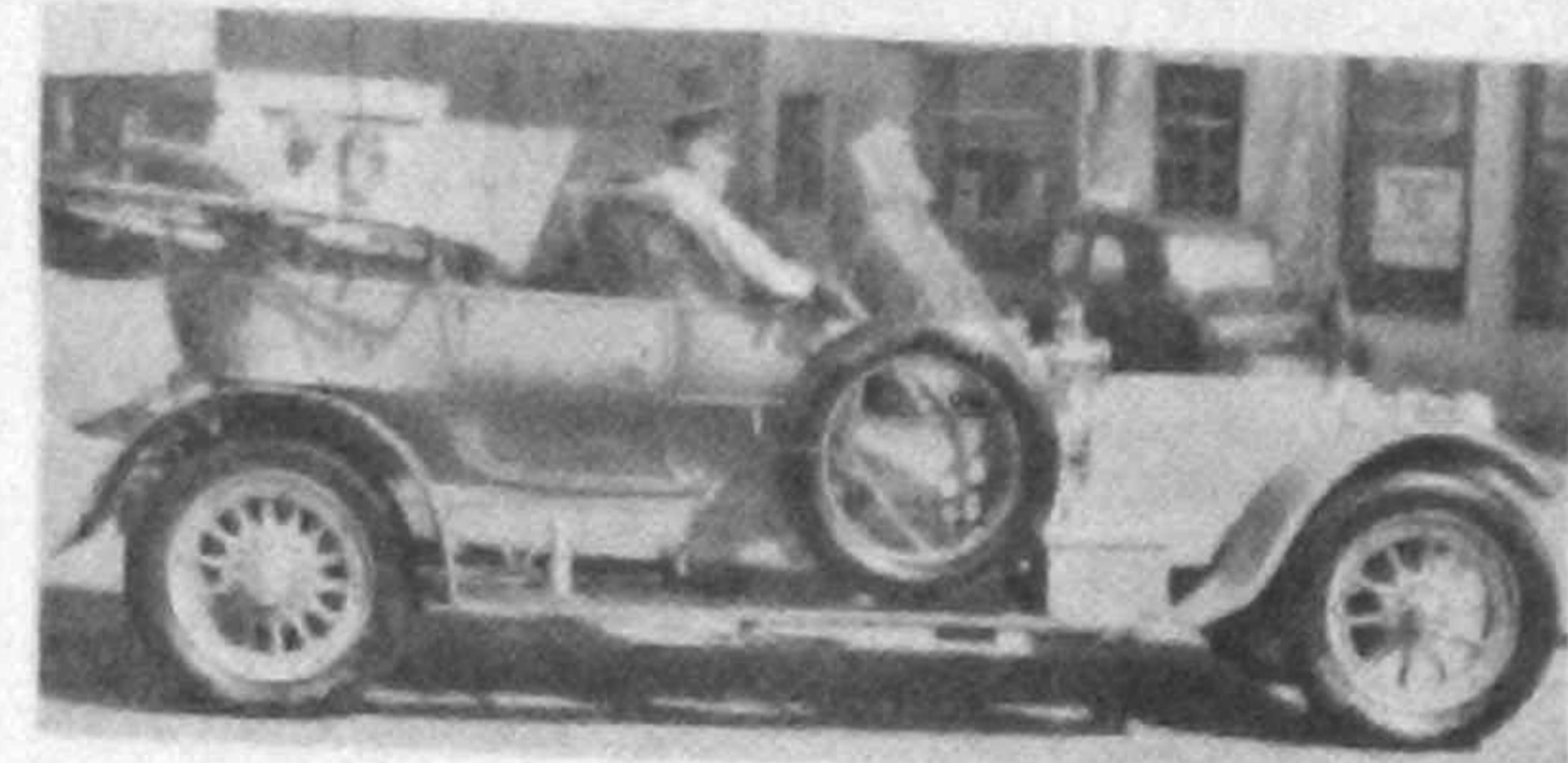
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The Best Car In The World?

from page 67

perfect combination of a town car and a fast touring car ever built. It has only one disadvantage: it burns gasoline at about 9-11 miles to the gallon. With good fuel around 75 cents a gallon in Europe, not many Continental owners can afford to use for every-day driving the car that may be a greater joy to handle than anything else ever built.



Henry Royce died in 1934, but by that time the company had been cast so firmly in the mold of his mind, and that of Claude Johnson, that there was no danger of any fall-off in quality. Royce's death did bring one change: after due and deliberate consideration, it was decided to change the color of the enamel on the Rolls-Royce radiator badge from the traditional red to a mourning black, in perpetuity.

In 1935 the Company launched two new models. These were the "25-30" with a slightly increased engine capacity and the old, madly complicated but wonderfully efficient Rolls-Royce carburetor replaced by a Stromberg. The fuel consumption dropped from 21 miles per gallon to 16 and the performance was not greatly improved.

In 1931 Rolls-Royce had bought up Bentley Motors. It was widely believed at the time that this was done to put to death the 8-liter Bentley, which, had it been properly developed, would have been an infinitely better car than the Phantom II.

The Rolls-Royce company took the Goshawk based "25" engine and said to their experimental department, "Here you have an engine with a virtually indestructible bottom end. Build a dead silent sports car engine that can perform in no uncertain manner." This they did, and very well. The result was the 3 1/2-liter Bentley, built by Rolls-Royce and put on the market in 1934.

A sufficiently well-heeled customer therefore had the choice, in 1935, of the new Phantom III Rolls-Royce, the 3 1/2 and shortly afterward the 4 1/2-liter Bentley, and the heavier, slower, slightly less economical "25-30" Rolls-Royce.

The Company was now ready to produce its ultimate effort, probably the most thoroughly refined automobile ever built: The Phantom III. Its like will certainly never be put into production again. Occasionally, even today a maharajah or a business tycoon orders one: the factory builds it for him at a cost that is said to be around \$50,000—and at that R-R makes only a token profit!

The 12-cylinder 7 1/2-liter P-III did everything, and more, that the P-II did, and did it with even more charm and grace.

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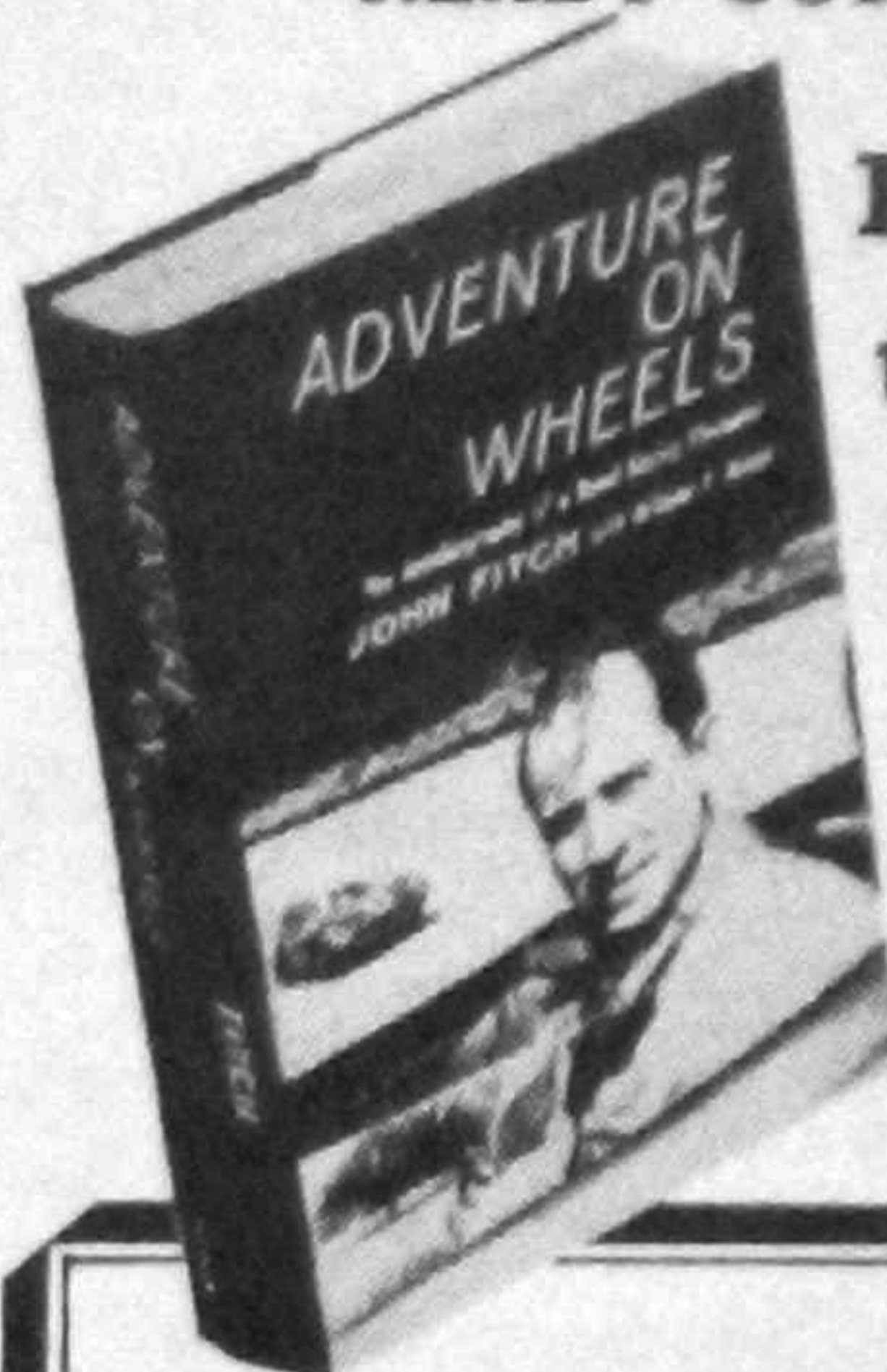
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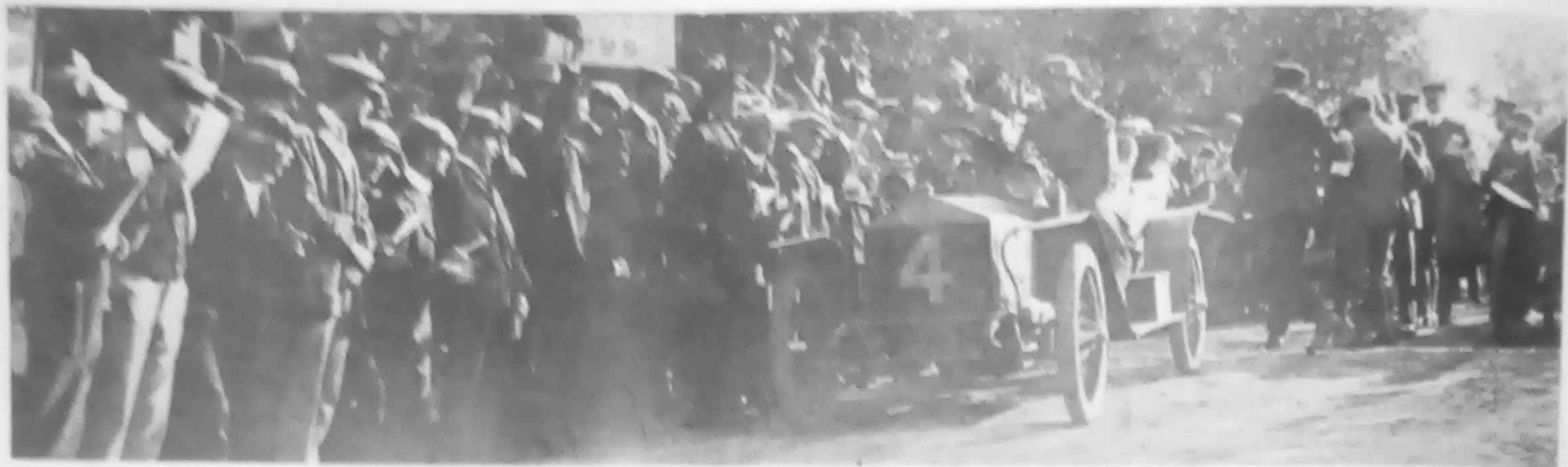
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Rolls comes over the summit in the first classic ever won by the "Best Car In The World." It was the start of a long partnership.

Below: The start of the '06 TT finds Sir Charles rolling down the ramp at the beginning of his, and the cars, drive to fame.




**ROYCES
THAT
RACED**

by Dennis May



Above: the whispering, by comparison. Light Twenty crosses the line the winner in more ways than one. Wire wheels were optional.

The Hon. C. S. Rolls corners with verve on his winning ride in the 1906 Tourist Trophy. Car is the Light Twenty Rolls Royce.



► To our generation, Rolls-Royces in the rough and tumble of competition are as hard to imagine as Vestal Virgins vying for the Miss Rome title of whenever it was. Yet in its formative years, the firm not only raced and contested free-for-all trials, it also traded challenges with a well bred *élan*. Rolls-Royce Limited didn't put on those Best Car In The World airs by just a vote of self-esteem—they won the right to the slogan in the teeth of bitter opposition in races and tests of endurance.

"First" was the indispensable word in the story of the RR debut in speedwork. The even chosen was the first Tourist Trophy. The Hon. Charles Rolls's entries were the first to be filed. The TTs of Edwardian days featured interval starts, Targa Florio style, and C. S. Rolls rolled first. Finally, alackaday, his Light Twenty was the first car to quit, gaunching to a halt only a few miles from the start with severe gearbox trouble.

All was not yet lost, however, because the factory's second string, another Light Twenty in care of a skillful whip called Percy Northey, was still in business. The course consisted of four laps of a 52-mile circuit in the Isle of Man, involving quadruple ascents and descents of Snaefel Mountain, and Northey was running third after one lap; heading him were John S. Napier's two-cylinder Arrol-Johnston and N. Littlejohn's Vinot, a French make. Northey's second lap average, 33.8 mph, beat everybody except Napier; on the third round he outsped the whole 42-car field at 34.1 mph; and the fate of the Tourist Trophy was narrowly decided in Napier's favor on lap four. Overall, the speed differential between the winning Arrol-Johnston and the next-up Rolls was a mere 0.3 mph, and Northey scored the incidental distinction of setting the highest nonstop average in the race.

As a sequel to this opening bout in the series that today is Britain's ranking event in the world sports car championship, Charles Stewart Rolls, having stooped to conquer (without conquering), stooped a little further to lodge a protest. His action, so uncharacteristic of the aloofness and hauteur symbolized by the intertwined Rs, was directed against the successful Arrol-Johnston. Contrary to the rules, Rolls pointed out, it had run part of the race in an unsilenced state, with its muffler dangling by its broken neck. Protest overruled.

In their shoes, anyone except C. S. Rolls and Henry Royce, perfectionists both, would have been pretty darned pleased with the outcome of the 1905 TT. The hyphenated marque had after all been on its feet less than a year, so there surely was no cause to go slitting wrists because they'd had to bow the knee to just one of the many longer established and more experienced makes ranged against them in Manxland. But Rolls and Royce, the former specially, didn't see it that way. Rolls, an adventurous and debonair spirit, had been racing assorted continental iron on the European mainland for years before providence gave him a nudge into Royce's orbit, and this background qualified him to judge automobiles shrewdly. He knew,

with a conviction that was soul-deep, that any car his partner designed and built was The Best Car In The World; *ergo*, competition placements lower than first were not to be condoned.

True, there was that unfortunate incident of the gearbox failure in the TT to dispose of, and in fact it never was satisfactorily explained. *The Motor's* theory was that Rolls had caused the damage himself by neglecting to get into gear before coasting off the starting ramp, then trying to bully 'er in on the move. But Rolls denied this. Another theory, more acceptable to Rolls, was sabotage.

On the face of it, 33.7 mph, Northey's average for the full 208.5 miles of the inaugural TT, doesn't sound exactly like a Mach-busting pace, even allowing for the bad state of the Manx roads and the Snaefel obstacle, rising a respectable if not horrific 1350 feet above the start-finish area. But there were mitigating circumstances. Back then, *tourist* was the operative word in the Tourist Trophy formula, and on paper anyway you didn't have much latitude for monkeying with stock specifications. Full and effective silencing, as Rolls's disqualify-Napier plea underlined, was obligatory. Most important of all, there was a strict fuel consumption limit, same for everybody regardless of engine displacement — a minimum of 18.8 miles per U.S. gallon. The Automobile Club of Great Britain and Ireland, later to become the RAC, enforced this ration by simply issuing a standard gas dole to each competitor and leaving it up to him to make it last 208.5 miles. Some did, many didn't, but there were no prizes for doing a Jehu for three laps and running dry on the fourth.

There was a maximum weight limit, and here the spirit of the regulations took their worst beating. One car was rigged with a cardboard hood, another had cloth hubcaps, yet another sported "cord brakes", whatever this meant. More conservatively, the Rolls-Royces were fitted with lightened bodies and had their chassis "ventilated". High-point of skulduggery (to revert to mpg) was reached when the scrutineers discovered a car with an elaborate arrangement for replenishing the regular and visible fuel tank from a concealed auxiliary supply — after the official seals had been affixed.

The good performance of the 4-cylinder Light Twenty, like that of many later scions of the RR line, was owed to superior materials and manufacturing precision, rather than advanced or unorthodox design. The Light Twenty, like Hiawatha's arrow heads, was "smoothed and sharpened at the edges, hard and polished, keen and costly". Among the keener and costlier items were a frame and front axle made from nickel steel. Bore and stroke measurements of the Northey car — 95 x 127 mm — were the same as the two- and three-cylinder Royces of the period; its engine developed 19 bhp at 1000 rpm. C. S. Roll's machine was overbored to 100 millimeters, equal to 4 inches, and gave off 21 bhp at the same turnover. Otherwise the two cars were alike. Prophetically, both

(Continued on page 88)



The Royces That Raced

from page 69

featured overhead inlet and side exhaust valves, an arrangement that the firm was to abandon but reembrace many years later. The Silver Clouds and Wraiths of today, of course, in common with the Bentley cousins, have this top end layout.

In the transmission department too, Bentley practice of Georgian times was foreshadowed on these Edwardian Royces: they had four-speed boxes with direct drive on the third ratio, fourth being geared up and effectively an overdrive. Although maximum speed for the faster of the 1905 TT cars was only about 50 mph on the flat, his higher-than-high fourth speed enabled Rolls to hit seventy on the Snaefel descent. He never got as far as the damn mountain in the race itself but he'd demonstrated his three-score-and-ten capability during training.

The thing that set the Light Twenty right apart from the competition, however, was its supreme silence. Noise and power being synonymous in most peoples' minds half a century ago, the arrival of the spectral Royces at race headquarters in Douglas, Isle of Man, hadn't exactly spread panic among the devotees of rival makes. On the contrary, they jumped to the satisfactory conclusion that the parvenus from Manchester—where the origi-

Trophy into a rout, winning by better than twenty-six minutes from a French Berliet and raising the race record by over 5 mph. He could have done better too, if Claude Johnson, the firm's astute commercial brain, hadn't given him a series of go-slows as his lead mounted and multiplied. Or more probably, if it hadn't been for Johnson's dumbshow from the pits, Rolls would have ranked as a record breaking non-finisher, because at the end of the 161 mile course (the circuit had been altered and shortened since '05) he had just over a pint of gas left. It was Northey's turn to cop the annual Act of God: his car broke a spring and retired on the first lap.

A pattern of modesty, and always ready to render unto Royce the things that were Royce's, Rolls disowned the plaudits that were lavished on him after his TT victory. "As I had nothing to do but sit there and wait until the car got to the finish, the credit is obviously due to Mr. Royce, the designer and builder," he told reporters. But for one eighteen-mile stretch, as it afterwards transpired, his role hadn't been quite as sedentary as he told it. While sparring for an opening to take a fast Bianchi that had started several intervals before him, both lenses of his goggles were shattered by flying stones and his mechanic had to dispense with the customary handholds to wrap his arms protectively around his head and face.

The 1906 TT cars were basically unchanged from '05 but had cylinder bores of 101 millimeters and developed 22 horse-

power. Also they were fitted with wire wheels in place of the old wood spoked artillery type. And thereby hangs a tale of financial stringency that smacks amusingly in the light of the company's subsequent *richesse*. Harold Nockolds, in his fine biography of the marque, *The Magic of a Name*, tells how Royce mentioned to Claude Johnson he'd have liked to specify wire wheels but didn't think the firm could afford them. To hell with the cost, said Johnson in a mood of bravado, and the wire wheels were accordingly fitted. The bill, at present exchange rates, came to around \$120.

Indirectly and inadvertently, Northey's spring breakage in the 1906 TT may have been an Act of Rolls rather than a divine visitation. Prior to the TT, the Hon. Charles' ego had been stung in a tender spot by the establishment of a London to Monte Carlo record by an English motor-ing celebrity of the period, Charles Jarrott, driving a Crossley. The record, *qua* record, maybe wouldn't have bothered Rolls, but Jarrott's boast that Crossley's time was unbeatable by any ordinary touring car was hard to take. Rolls girded up his loins and beat it—by ninety seconds.

He and his navigator, Massac Buist, a well-known automotive scribe, elected to make the run in reverse, northwarding from Monte Carlo to London. Practically everything went wrong that could go wrong—except the Light Twenty, which ran faultlessly and incidentally was giving away 20 horsepower to the Crossley. Lashing rain turned Buist's route sheets and other papers into a lapfull of porridge, with the result the travelers lost their way and used up two hours tacking back to roads they recognized. Off course, they traversed some appalling surfaces that would have shaken a lesser car apart at the welds. Earlier, on the way down to Monte, they had taken the precaution of prealerting the keeper of a key grade crossing so he'd be awake at their estimated time of arrival in the middle of the night. But when they did show he was fast asleep, bribes notwithstanding, and kept right on snoring for ten priceless minutes against a barrage of horn music and cultured goddams.

Nevertheless, the Light Twenty's time to Boulogne, the embarkation port for the Channel crossing, was 3 hours 21 minutes inside Jarrott's figure for the same journey back to front; which was fine, except for the fact that Rolls had 3 hours 11 minutes to sweat it out on the waterfront before the next steamer steamed (Jarrott had timed his arrival at the corresponding English port so he didn't have to wait). On English soil at last, Rolls came to a misunderstanding with an ambiguous signpost and lost his bearings again; overruling his navigator, he blundered on into a labyrinth of Kentish lanes rather than backtrack and start afresh. Finally, after a solo drive equal in duration to 156 Le Mans races, albeit with a short respite while afloat, Rolls purred unobtrusively up to the ACGBI portals in London's West End, having taken 37 hours 28½ minutes for the whole trip and bested Jarrott by exactly a minute and a half.

The Monte Carlo record breaker was afterwards allocated to Percy Northey for the 1906 TT, and it was deduced, probably correctly, that the beating the suspension took during Roll's unrehearsed detour in outback France had weakened the spring that broke in the Isle of Man. Having scraped the barrel for 120 dollars worth of wire wheels, presumably Rolls-Royce were in no position to replace road springs as well.

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Of the Volkswagen, Renault, and Fiat, which fail

(According to Chrysler) to properly steer, Since their engines, alas, are encased in the rear.

While General Motors, in counterattack, Claims a quieter ride with the boost in the back.

Whatever the outcome, the roads will be full

Of nice little engines that push cars or pull, And no one need squander ten million to find

The relative merits of front or behind.

—JEC

nal RR plant was located—wouldn't pull a robin off its eggs.

When, after the 1905 race was over, they were forced to face the unpalatable truth, these wellwishers changed their ground, whispering it around that the RR's ultra-high fourth ratio—the "sprinting gear", as the makers rather unwisely called it—left the car bankrupt of flexibility. The *canard* evidently reached the ears of the TT organizing committee, for the 1906 regulations introduced two qualifying tests expressly framed to put the finger on poor pulling power. The first was an observed hillclimb on a 16.66 percent gradient, the other a top-gear slow running test in which the cars were timed over a set distance at a maximum average of 12 mph. Both proved a pushover for the Rolls men.

Spared any Acts of God this time, Charles Royce turned the second Tourist

power. Also they were fitted with wire wheels in place of the old wood spoked artillery type. And thereby hangs a tale of financial stringency that smacks amusingly in the light of the company's subsequent *richesse*. Harold Nockolds, in his fine biography of the marque, *The Magic of a Name*, tells how Royce mentioned to Claude Johnson he'd have liked to specify wire wheels but didn't think the firm could afford them. To hell with the cost, said Johnson in a mood of bravado, and the wire wheels were accordingly fitted. The bill, at present exchange rates, came to around \$120.

Indirectly and inadvertently, Northey's spring breakage in the 1906 TT may have been an Act of Rolls rather than a divine visitation. Prior to the TT, the Hon. Charles' ego had been stung in a tender spot by the establishment of a London to

ferred on it in '07, refused to lend its offices to the deal. So although the timing of Radley's run was handled by irreproachable authorities, it was strictly unofficial.

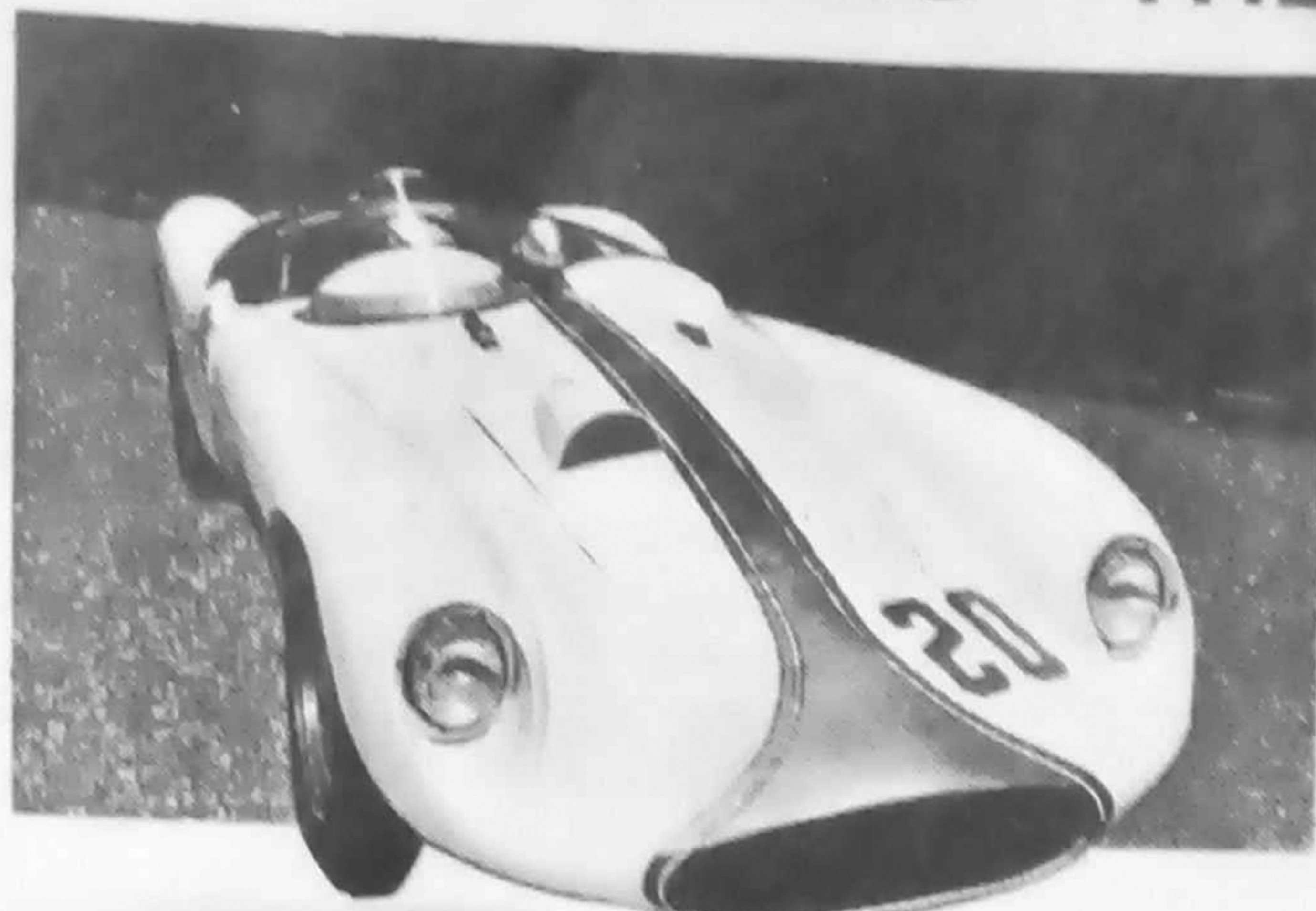
Radley's car was a big 40/50 Silver Ghost, carrying a task force comprising the driver-entrant; a navigator in the person of Billy Rhodes-Moorhouse, who was soon to earn the first Victoria Cross awarded to a flyer in WW I, and to die doing it; an RR factory mechanic named Ward (how his employers came to let him enlist on Scuderia Subrosa is a mystery); and a fourth passenger, anonymous.

Unsanctified as it was, the Radley expedition seems to have been efficiently organized. Embarkation and disembarkation, and the associated formalities, went through at a gallop, with not a minute's unnecessary delay at the ports. The south-bound run through France—Radley started from the London end—never deviated a parish from the planned itinerary. To cut down on refuelling time the car was fitted with an auxiliary tank located between the back seat passengers; this cistern was replenished at intervals—on the run, of course—from cans of gas piled into the tonneau. Hindered by the lurching and jauncing as Radley swished 'er around corners with a *brío* somewhat unbecoming to so majestic an automobile, Ward and his collaborator sometimes copped facefuls of essence during fillups, and a good deal of the stuff overspilled onto the carpets and upholstery rather than entering the tank. But these were minor inconveniences.

What really threatened to foil the whole enterprise was the Klaxonproof slumber of the crossing keepers at successive railroad intersections along the route. These fellows didn't merely nod at their posts, they were repeatedly found to be in bed and dead to the world. And when the travelers did eventually blast them into consciousness they'd flatly refuse to come out and operate. So Radley and company took matters into their own hands, poking a heavy tire lever into the padlock U-bolts and hauling them out by the roots. "Genius," as Dr. Johnson so rightly said, "is nothing more than knowing the use of tools."

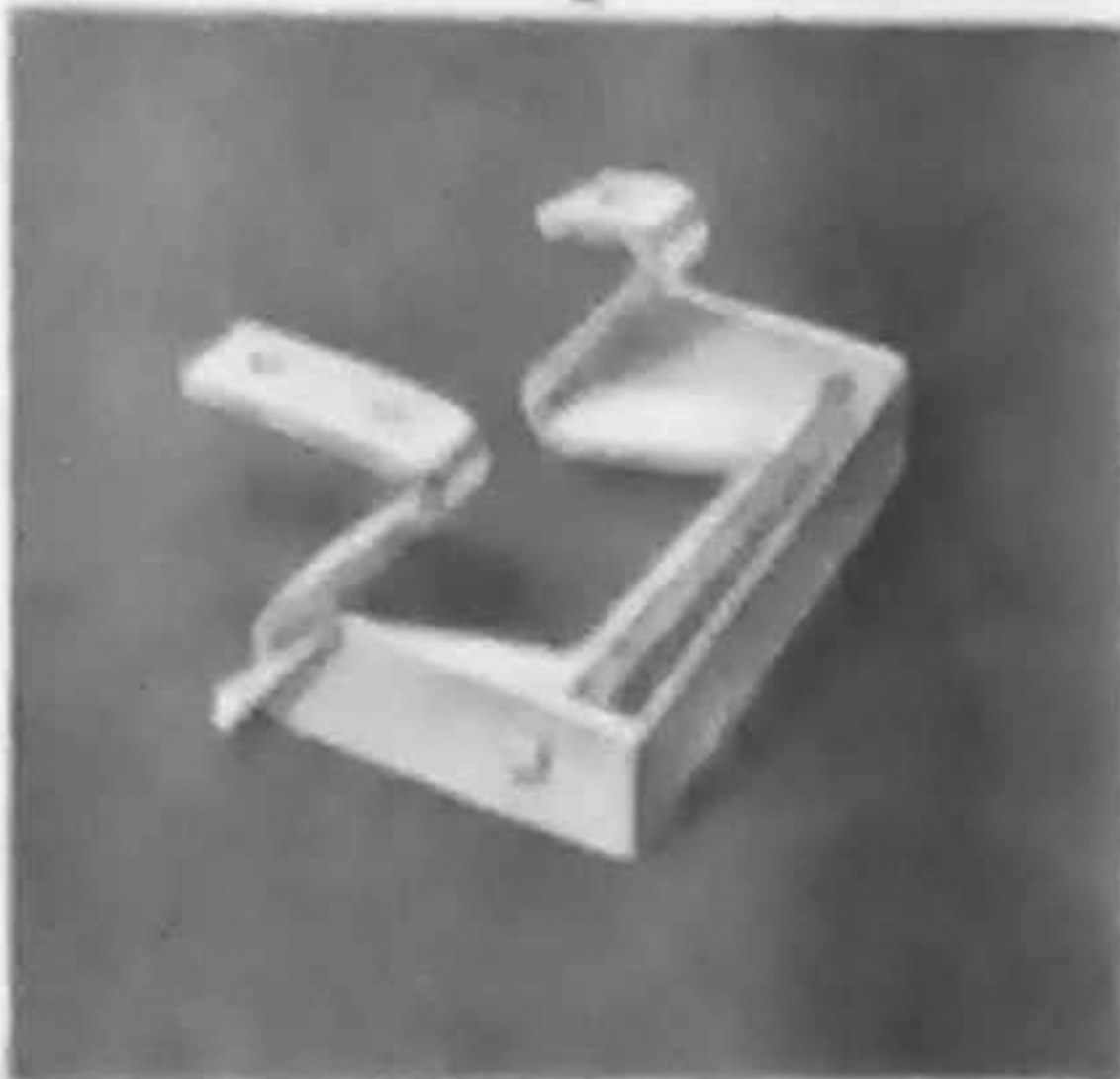
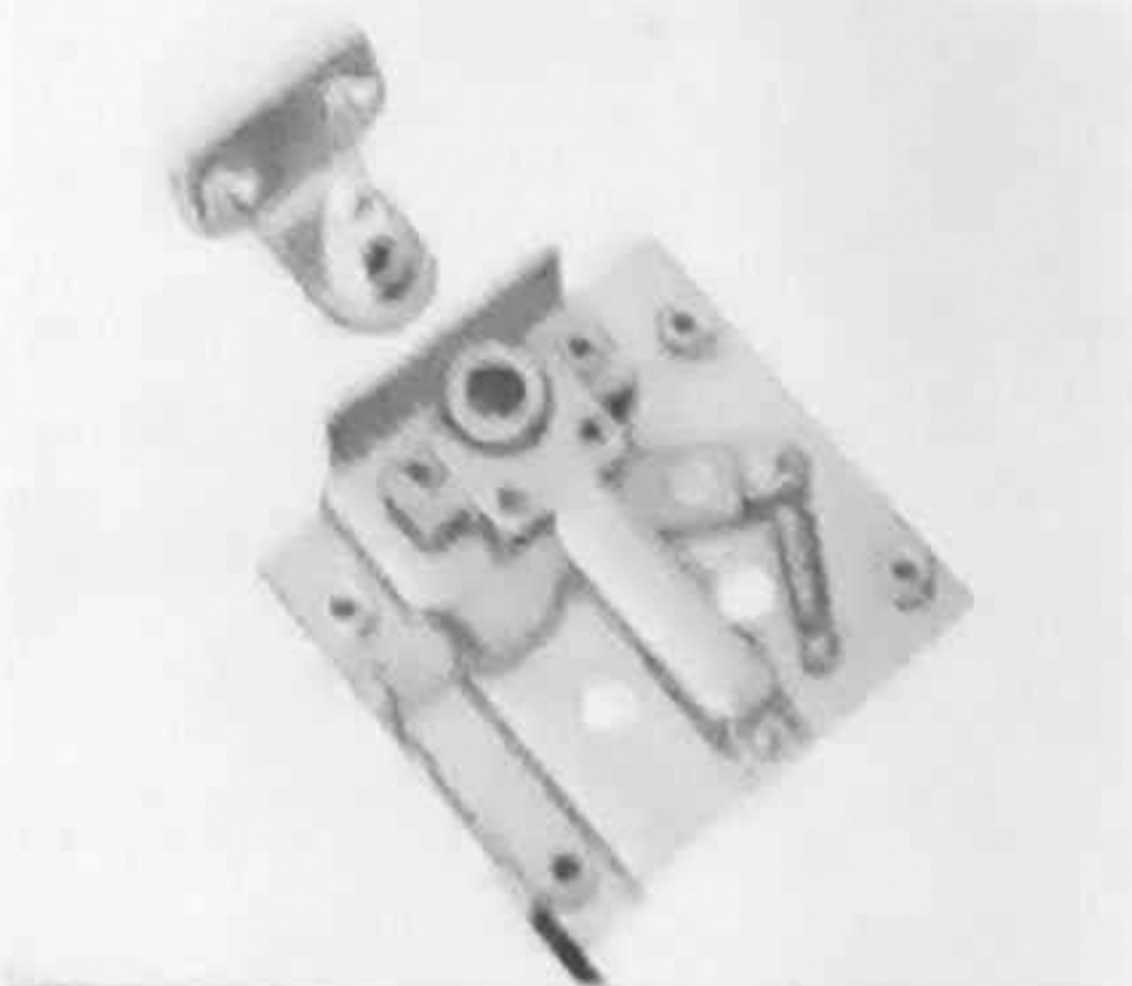
The Ghost burbled into Monte Carlo just 26 hours 4 minutes after leaving the Automobile Association premises in Cov-

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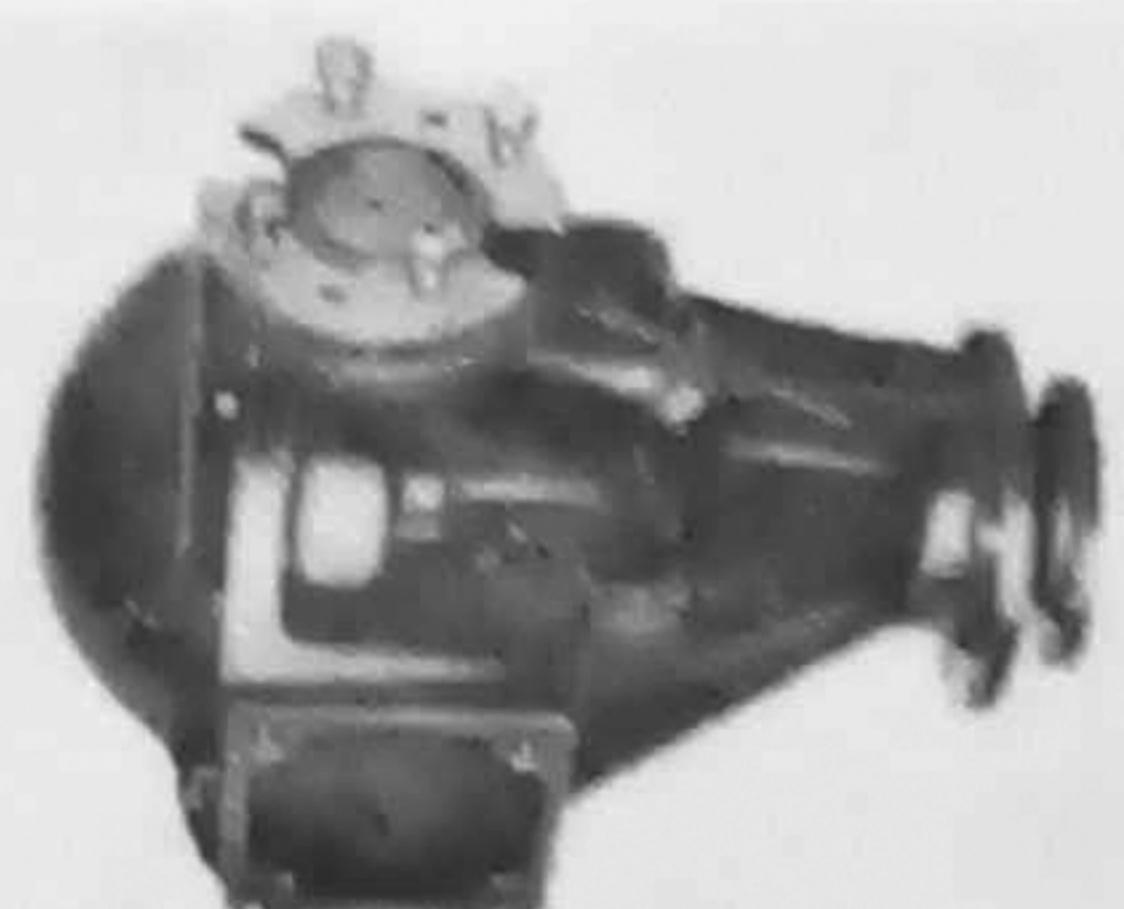


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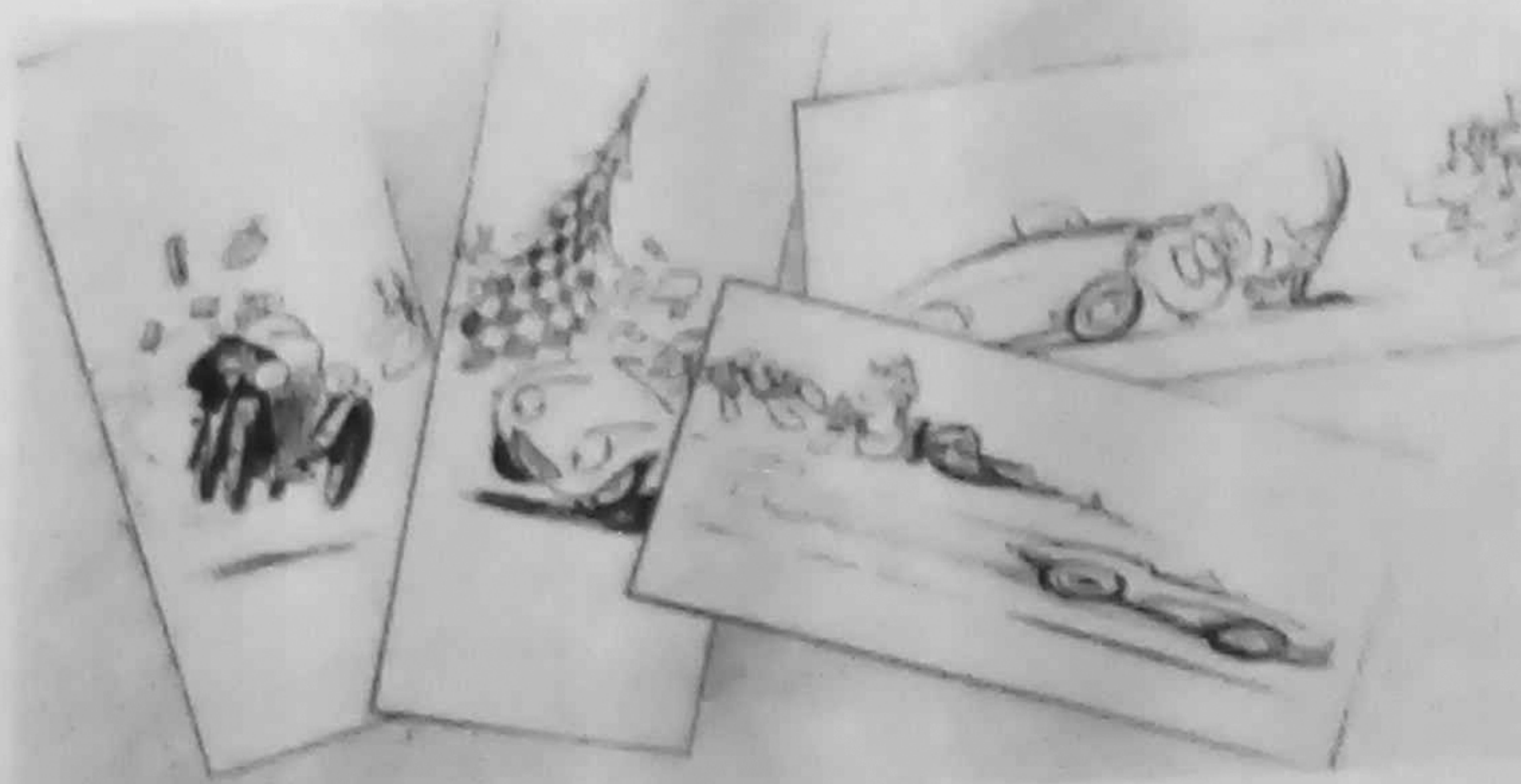


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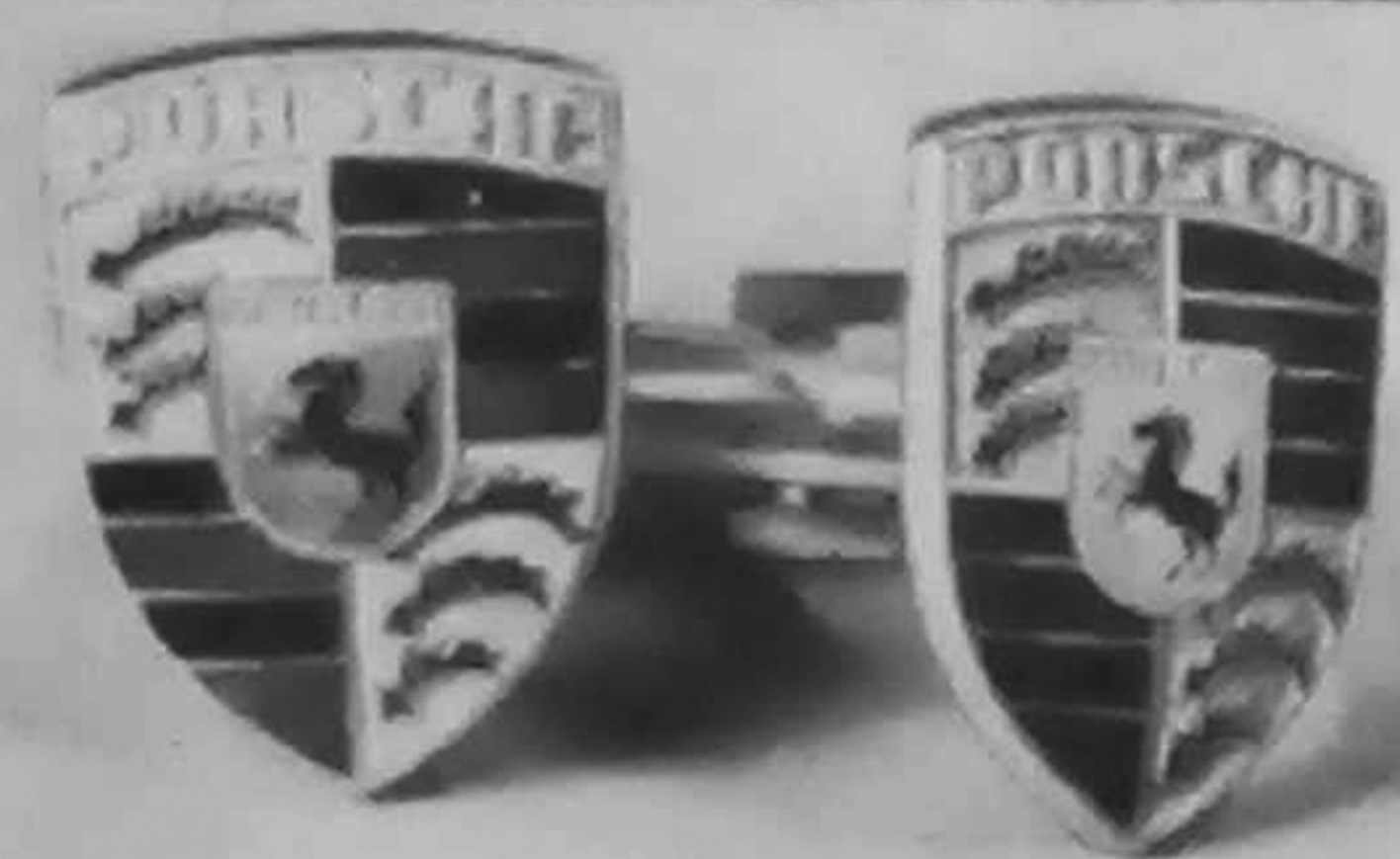
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The Royces That Raced

from preceding page

entry Street, London, W.1. The public mood didn't permit Radley to claim this as a record, but it surely was a “record.”

Americans had their first sight of the rectangular RR badge in the winter of 1906, when Charles Rolls visited New York with the Light Twenty that Northey had driven in that year's TT. Rolls raced this car on the Empire City track during his stay, winning a five-mile event for machines up to 25 horsepower. Back in Britain a few months later, he told the London correspondent of a New York newspaper what he thought of contemporary U.S. car design and quality, which wasn't much. Upshot of the interview was E. R. Thomas, designer and builder of the 60 hp Thomas Flyer, angrily challenged Rolls to race from New York to Chicago and back to New York.

“Rolls's reply,” records Nockolds, “was to express willingness to take part in a competition that would test more important aspects than mere speed, namely reliability, fuel consumption, silence, flexibility and other qualities desired by intelligent motorists.” In any case, Mr. Thomas having said the round trip contest must take place within thirty days of the challenge's issue, or not at all, acceptance was a physical impossibility for Rolls.

The following year an RR Twenty scored a noteworthy success in Florida during an Ormond Beach meeting, breaking the international five-mile record in the 60 hp class and winning the world touring car championship.

During the period Rolls-Royce were participating in competition, E. R. Thomas's challenge was I believe the only one the firm or its individual members received without jumping at it and, as the time limit had reduced this proposition to the academic level, it can fairly be discounted. Among the gages RR picked up almost before it had the floor was one tossed down in 1906 by a certain Captain H. H. P. Deasy, who had bees in his bellhousing on the subject of four cylinders *vs.* six. Four was the multiple beloved of Deasy, exemplified by a car called the Martini. Writing to *The Autocar*, the captain suggested the merits of the rival types should be put to a public test. Although Rolls-Royce had used their 20 hp four in the preceding year's TT, and were about to do so again, they'd recently added a 30 hp six to their repertoire, and probably foresaw the day when their whole resources would be concentrated on sixes.

Claude Johnson, who was a polished driver as well as a business man, therefore took it on himself, with his co-directors' approval, to take up the Deasy challenge. He went further and drew up a blueprint for the *kampf* that became famous as the Battle of the Cylinders. His Rolls and Deasy's Martini, cars of comparable power, would compete side by side in the upcoming Scottish Trials, a contest renowned



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as a criterion of reliability. Additionally, they would travel *à deux* from London to the Scottish starting point, and subsequently back to London again, under Automobile Club observation. All-in mileage totalled 1660. The ACGBI were to be arbiters of hill-climbing powers, gas consumption, reliability, ease of gearchanging, and speed, while a London Stock Exchange committee was to adjudicate on silence and freedom from vibration.

What the Battle of the Cylinders triumphantly proved was that Deasy needed a couple more. Johnson winning with nearly 400 marks to spare. In the Trials themselves he didn't drop a single point, and made only one enforced stop in the whole five-day event—forty seconds out for a brake adjustment. The beaten Martini's engine, interestingly enough, was way over-square—150 x 140 millimeters.

But in case the idea should get around that *all fours* were inferior in performance, RR products included, Rolls himself staged a hillclimbing demonstration with a Light Twenty on a well known urban acclivity in South London with a gradient of 17 percent. Piling nine 185 pound men aboard, he stopped and restarted with evident ease halfway up this hill.

Enamored as Rolls was of dering-do in all its forms (he'd been a racing cyclist in early youth, later became an enthusiastic balloonist, finally met his death while piloting a plane in 1910), it would be natural to assume it was he who set RR's wheels in the competition groove. In fact, though, the initial prompting came from an outside source, namely, one Arthur Briggs, who had bought the first Heavy Twenty ever built. That was early in 1905. When the ACGBI issued regulations for the first Tourist Trophy, Briggs urged Rolls to take advantage of the event as a forcing ground for development and an instrument of publicity if—as would undoubtedly happen—the marque acquitted itself well.

The original Rolls-Royce car was the progeny of two associated but nonetheless separate firms, Royce Ltd. on the one hand, which handled the manufacturing side, and C. S. Rolls and Company on the other, responsible for commercial exploitation. Briggs effected the amalgamation whose fruit was Rolls-Royce Limited, and became one of its founder directors. Shortly afterwards, when public investment fell ominously short of the figure needed for essential expansion, and the firm's extinction in infancy was threatened, it was Briggs who came to the rescue with a check for £10,000. On the death of this lifesaver in 1919, RR's annual financial report was printed with a heavy black border around it.

Rolls, incidentally, continued to race other makes for some while after the birth of the Rolls-Royce, notably Wolseley. His company also carried on with its several flourishing dealerships, including New Orleans and Minerva. It was (quite unapropos) with a small Peugeot that, many years earlier, he had had the most ignominious motoring adventure of his career. Somehow, while cranking the Peugeot in the courtyard of a hotel at Gloucester, England, it had knocked him down and run slap over him, then continued into the road beyond and collided with a pony trap that happened to be passing.

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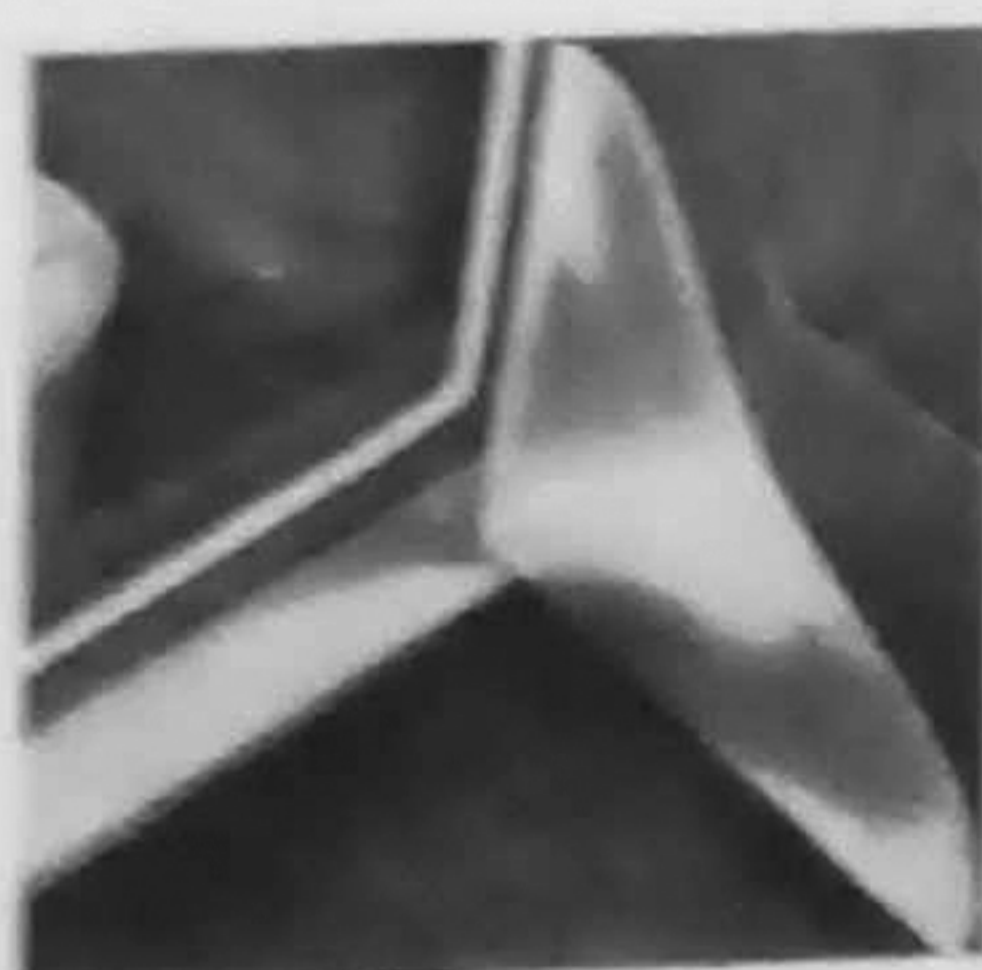
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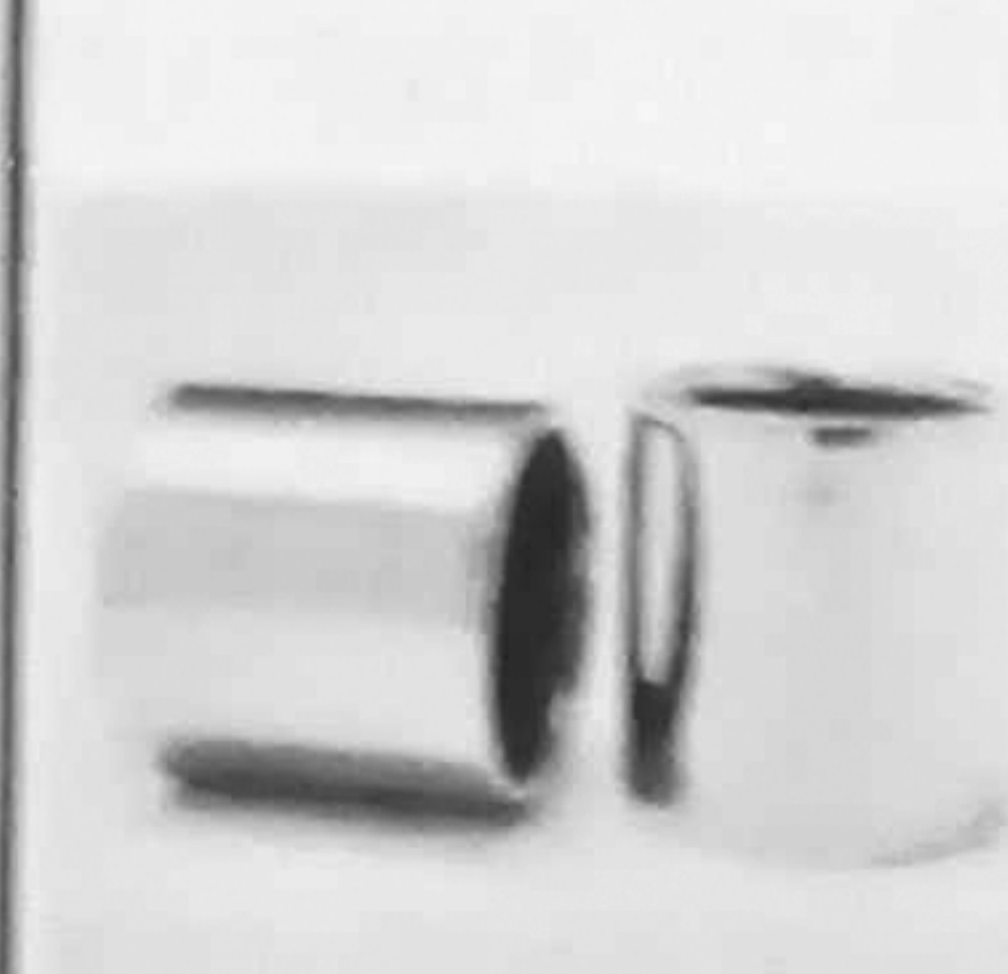
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Many and varied were the successes of the 7-liter Silver Ghost, patriarch of the spectral family that was to yield Phantoms and Wraiths by turn. In 1908, Johnson pitted a Ghost against the contemporary world record for nonstop reliability, held by Siddeley at 7089 miles. Driven by a team consisting of entrant Johnson, C. S. Rolls, Eric Platford and S. Macready, the big silken sidevalver knocked the Siddeley's figure for a row of ninepins, putting 15,000 miles on the dial, of which 14,371 were nonstop except for Sunday layoffs, before the marathon was voluntarily discontinued. The whole deal was conducted under RAC surveillance and it included, almost incidentally, successful participation in the season's annual Scottish Trials. The sole involuntary stop (outside of the 14,371 miles stretch) was no more than momentary—result of a fuel tap being shaken into the off position while traversing some fierce terrain in the Scottish event. When the whole thing was over, Johnson had the RAC officials dismantle the car to the last nut and bolt and replace any component that showed the minutest vestige of wear. Cost of the parts replaced, at present money values, was around six dollars.

In general, the marque was seldom represented in Brooklands races, for the obvious reason that Royces, the epitome of luxury and silence, were not normally fast cars. Once, in 1911, just for stately fun, the makers fitted a Silver Ghost with a lightweight touring body and a high gear ratio and timed it over a flying quarter mile on the English track. It turned 101 mph.

Nothing resembling a grand prix car, in the regular sense of the phrase, was ever built at the sign of the Double R; but if your automotive library includes a copy of Monkhouse's *Grand Prix Racing* (as it should) you'll see by the statistical section that a Rolls-Royce won the original Spanish Grand Prix in 1913. Winning driver was Don Carlos Salamanca, who averaged 54 miles per hour for the prescribed 192 miles, and another Rolls man, Eric Platford, placed third. The race was King Alfonso's idea; like his son after him, he was a fool for speed on wheels. For any thing aspiring to the title of Grand Prix, this race was something of a curiosity. Only touring cars qualified, hoods were sealed throughout, and no water replenishments were allowed. As the 64 mile circuit involved two ascents and descents per lap of the formidable Guadarrama Mountains, and the action took place in shade temperatures of 90 degrees (where there *was* any shade), the prohibition on topping up radiators wasn't funny.

But it didn't cause the RR element any anxiety, and Salamanca, the Spanish concessionaire for Mr. Royce's remarkable automobiles, finished a clear three minutes ahead of the second place car, a Lorraine Deitrich. Platford, at third, was nearly half an hour in front of the traveling dust-cloud enclosing the fourth finisher.

The mainspring of some great drivers is cooperative sense, team spirit; others are irked by shared responsibility and hit their highest bent as individuals. Such a one was James Radley, hero of the Monte Carlo "record" that wasn't a record because it couldn't be mentioned in God-

fearing society. Following a moral victory for maker-sponsored Ghosts in triplicate in the 1913 Austrial Alpine Trial, the company passed up the '14 event, leaving it to Radley to run his privately owned 40/50 as a loner. As on the occasion of his Monte Carlo dash, however, they lent him the invaluable mechanic Ward.

In the face of opposition from bigger displacement cars than his own (factory teams from Benz and Austro Daimler, among other heavy artillery) Radley kept the RR pennant flying bravely for the first four days of the trial. On famous passes like the Pordoi, Rolle, Loibl and Falzarego he stood out as the star performer. Once, at a railroad crossing, their old *bête noire*, he and Ward were nearly beheaded when the keeper started lowering the pole when the Ghost was irrevocably committed to bisecting the tracks. Another time Radley missed the route, beat his way back to it after agonising delays, sidled into the tail of the crocodile, survived a series of waking nightmares in passing other cars on the brinks of precipices on his way up to his rightful place in the listed sequence.

Then, at Innsbruck, came the appointed day of rest. Rest for everybody, that is, except the mad Englishman, Radley. The talk at Innsbruck was of nothing but the Turracherhöhe, a new and horrific hill slated for the seventh day, which, the buzz had it, had never been climbed on wheels.

There wasn't any law against previewing the Turracherhöhe, just so you could get there and back in the one day that was available. Anyway, it was 250 miles away. Anyway, you couldn't use your competing car because all such cars were officially impounded during the rest day. It did just happen, though, that Radley had a friend, right there in Innsbruck, who had another Ghost, practically the duplicate of his own. The friend, the *Autocar's* reporter, Charles Freeston, was persuaded to unhand his Rolls. Leaving Ward behind, Radley lit out for the Turracherhöhe, traversing roads he'd never seen before.

A couple of hours before the trial was due underway again, Ward's anxiety was becoming pitiable. Half an hour short of zero time — still no sign of Radley — the mechanic was verging on panic. Fifteen minutes to go . . . and the wandering boy wandered in, practically invisible under his outer pelt of dust but otherwise none the worse.

Yes, he'd reconnoitred the Turracherhöhe. Yes, it was quite a piece of geology at that, but with the advantage of a few practice climbs he didn't think it was going to bother him. It didn't. Come the dreaded seventh day and, as Nockolds puts it: "Many failed on the steep stretch a hundred yards before the hill itself began; but the Rolls-Royce swept up with ease, arriving in Salzburg in its usual position at the head of the procession".

Frederick Henry Royce, Baronet, Officer of the Order of the British Empire, once described himself as "just a mechanic". By the same evaluation, James Radley was just a driver. But it was mechanics and drivers of the caliber of Royce and Radley who won Rolls-Royce the title of The Best Car In the World. And it was in competition they did it.

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