

# From the Sir Henry Royce Foundation

## The Sir Henry Royce Foundation Archive and You

### Gilbert M Ralph Hon. Archivist SHRF

The Sir Henry Royce Foundation, Australia, was initiated when a number of members of the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of Australia, who were impressed with what the Sir Henry Royce Memorial Foundation had achieved in UK, conceived the idea of forming a similar organisation in Australia. They found immediate support for the concept and at the Federal Rally of RROCA in Wollongong on 28th April 1996 it was agreed that "an irrevocable Trust for charitable purposes be established and that it be called the 'Sir Henry Royce Foundation, Australia.'"

The founding trustees were, David Jones (Chairman), Malcolm Johns, James Kelso and David Vann. Since the time of the formation there have been some changes in the people serving as Trustee. David Neely and David Davis were appointed, David Jones retired and David Vann became Chairman. Later Russell Rolls, Eric Henderson and Brian Crump were appointed and David Davis, David Neely and Malcolm Johns retired. The current Trustees are; Russell Rolls (Chairman), David Vann, Eric Henderson and Brian Crump.

The original document states that; 'The charitable objects of the Foundation are the advancement science and technology of mechanical engineering for public benefit and the advancement of education.' It went on to state that, 'The collection policy is to: collect, document and exhibit any objects whatsoever illustrating or connected with the science of mechanical engineering and especially related to the work of Sir Henry Royce.' The 'Collection is to include such items as:



above: Victorian Branch members attended the opening of the Lionel Gell School of Instruction which was donated and equipped by benefactor, Lionel Gell, a member of the Branch.

right: Benefactor, Jean Allsep and the then Chairman of Trustees of SHRF, David Vann, at the official opening of Bill Allsep House on 10th March 2011



- The published and unpublished records of experiments, research and work of the late Sir Henry Royce,

- Any objects whatsoever illustrating or connected with the science of mechanical engineering as it relates to Sir Henry Royce,

- Those items that illustrate the activities associated with motor car manufacture, sale and distribution.'

The Foundation was officially launched on 1st October 1999 at a meeting of interested supporters at the Fox Classic Car Museum in Melbourne at which there was gallery displaying cars, engines, motors, models, photographs, memorabilia and related items collected and assembled by the Trustees. Initially David Jones and his then secretary, Jennie Wickham, cared for the collection. The bulky display items were initially housed in the Fox Museum and the records and

memorabilia were temporarily stored in a secure area at Tattersalls, St Kilda Road Office. There was a steady growth in donated funds followed by physical items and memorabilia which formed the basis of the present collection. The Foundation found support from established organisations such as the Museum of Victoria and the Australian War Memorial who loaned three Rolls-Royce aero engines.

When David Jones retired from his role as Managing Trustee at Tattersalls the Foundation was obliged to move the collection and Neil Matthews kindly made space available in his warehouse at Berwick. When Neil closed his Berwick based business we were obliged to find another location for the expanding volume of donated material. Next we went into a rather cramped storage unit in Kings Storage at Burwood. It really was

Trustees who have now retired are left: (l-r) James Kelso and Chairman, David Jones with lower left (l-r) Malcolm Johns, David Neely and David Davis.

Present Trustees are right: David Vann, Russell Rolls (Chairman), Brian Crump and Eric Henderson.





top left: A drivable model of a Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost (and a 20 H.P.) built by the late Claude Mason, an early member of the RROCA, are on display at Bill Allsep House (BAH).

top centre: One of three Royce electric crane motors in the Foundation's collection

above: One of the ten display cases at BAH. This is one of two cabinets donated by the South Australian Branch.

lower centre: Rolls-Royce Avon engine built by Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation donated to SHRFA by Richard Knight and Nicholas Knight son and grandson, respectively, of Herb Knight a former Director of CAC.

centre left: A Merlin aircraft engine on loan from Museum of Victoria at BAH.

lower left: A painting by Maxwell Wilks, winner in 2012 of the SHRFA Art Prize conducted in association with the Sherbrook Art Society which adorns BAH. The car is a 1910 Silver Ghost, chassis No 1388.

conditioning system, overhead projector, a table and other items. Others have assisted with modifications to the building, painting and decorating.

Returning to the Archives which is the topic of this article I am pleased to say we have been well served by an enthusiastic group of volunteers who meet regularly at the Archive to carry out a variety of tasks to store, sort, catalogue and care for the collection. The volunteers are Bryan Harper, David Kenway, Richard Knight, David MacArthur and more



a squeeze and for much of the time we were working in the passageway. Then in 2010 following a very generous donation from Jean Allsep the Foundation was able to purchase a substantial building at Rowville in which the Foundation's archival collection is now housed.

A second property has also been acquired in a nearby street following a very generous donation by Lionel Gell. It has been set up with car hoists, benches and workshop facilities specifically for use by the enthusiastic Victoria Branch

Technical Group under the leadership of Jnr Vice-President Robert Wort. This facility has been well illustrated in previous editions of *Præclarvm*.

In keeping with its objective of encouraging the advancement of education in areas related to motor car manufacture the Foundation has, for several years, made an annual award at the Kangan Institute of TAFE in Melbourne to a student who has excelled in its automotive course.

Following a generous donation from Lionel Gell another award has now been introduced to recognise a student in Kangan's aeronautical engineering course.

The archival records collection is kept in a separate room and several display cases together with bulky machines, large items and posters, etc, are on display in the main hall at Bill Allsep House. Under agreed terms, the Victoria Branch of the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club have the use of the building as their club rooms and the Branch have been responsible for setting up the meeting room and providing the related services and equipment. In this respect a dozen or so members of the RROCA Victoria Branch have generously donated an air-



left upper: Hon Archivist, Gilbert Ralph, left presenting the SHRFA Award to Chris Couwenberg at the Kangan Institute in 2014.

left lower: John Reis, a recent Volunteer on the Archive team is also Property Officer for the Victoria Branch.

left: The Archive volunteers, 1-r David MacArthur, Gilbert Ralph, David Kenway, Richard Knight and Bryan Harper during the relocation of the Archive



above top: The collection of the information researched by David Neely in preparation for writing *In The Rearview Mirror* - a history of the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of Australia

above lower: A collection of microfilms of Rolls-Royce General Arrangement Drawings, donated by Barrie Gillings and Malcolm Johns which is now available as a CD from the Foundation

below right: A Silver Ghost catalogue in the Collection

recently John Reis. The two Davids are no longer members of the RROCA but have brought with them a wealth of knowledge from their involvement in the early days of the Victoria Branch as do long-standing members Richard Knight and John Reis. I am greatly indebted to these volunteers for their continuing support.

The Foundation's collection has benefited from many donations of cash and items from members of the RROCA from all States and several other interested motoring enthusiasts. Jean Allsep donated a further sum to establish an Archive Futures Fund for the exclusive use of the Archive and this fund has enabled the Archive to purchase unique items, display cases, additional equipment and bind collections of periodicals and magazines. Other donations of a computer, a scanner/printer, cabinets and desks have enabled us to operate comfortably and efficiently.

The majority of items in the collection result from donations from motoring enthusiasts with a sense of history and an appreciation of the value of records and relics. All items donated are acknowledged by a letter with a list of items donated. Accessions are identified by a letter (A for ACT, N for NSW etc) followed by a sequential number (and sub number where there is more than one item in the donation).

To date the Register lists 7 items from

ACT, 385 from NSW, 5 from Overseas, 57 from QLD, 6 from TAS, 842 from VIC and 31 from WA. These numbers can be misleading as in many cases a single donation may contain hundreds of individual items such as photographs, books, magazines etc. For details look up the Foundation's website where the Register can be viewed.

The Foundation has an extensive library at Rowville which contains hundreds of books which are also listed on the Foundation's website. Whilst we do not loan books we are prepared to copy relevant parts when it is permissible to do so. In addition to general books the library has a huge collection of Rolls-Royce company publications including handbooks, manuals, service manuals, parts books, sales brochures, catalogues, newsletters, magazines (Bulletin, Pinnacle and Symbol). In the magazine library we have long runs of RREC Bulletin, RROC Inc, Flying Lady, Bentley Driver's Club Review, a bound set of Restored Cars, all the Roycean magazines and hundreds of periodicals from other motoring clubs such as Austin, MG, Victorian Veteran and Vintage Club, Vintage Sports Car Club and many others. In addition we have lot of Auction Catalogues from Australia, UK and USA and a number of coachbuilders catalogues too.

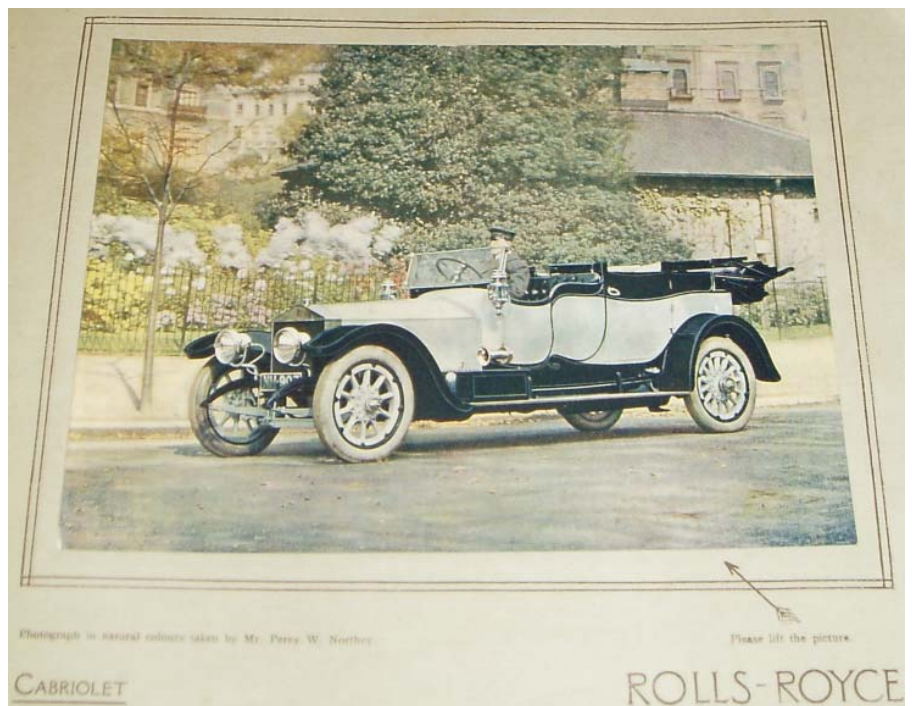
In the area of imagery the Foundation has an estimated 10,000 photographs which have come from individual donors from all over Australia and others from manufacturers and suppliers from here and overseas. We are currently cataloguing the collection which will be available on the website in due course. We are prepared to make copies available at a reasonable cost. In addition to black and white, and colour photographs we have an extensive collection of VHS and DVDs of Rolls-Royce and Bentley

historical and marketing films and others showing RROC of Australia Federal Rallies, Branch events and other activities.

There is huge collection of car service histories from York Motors in Sydney which we are fortunate to have in our collection. There are about 6000 records in all and we have rearranged them from owner order into Chassis number order to facilitate locating them. We have already copied several hundred for members of the RROC in Australia and would be happy to copy any others on request. The cost is a dollar per page decreasing as the number of pages rises over 50. The files vary - some have only a few documents whereas others run into hundreds of pages. Most recipients seem to have been pleased to learn the history of their car while others may have been surprised at the extent of work done to keep a car in good working order.

One of our objectives is to collect as much of the history of the RROC Branches as possible and in this respect some Branches have been very helpful. For example the NSW Branch have deposited a complete bound set of London & Derby and we have recently bound a set of Præclarvm and Victoria Branch Newsletters. Queensland, WA and SA collections have yet to be completed. Whilst the Foundation has collected many programs and give-aways for recent Federal Rallies, we are missing some of the published material from earlier rallies. If you have some please let us know.

The Foundation also houses the archival collection from the Australian Chapter of the 20 Ghost Club of which the majority of members are also members of the RROC of Australia. They have two magazines; Record & News from the UK and the excellent Australian



Newsletter edited by David Berthon. The 20 Ghost Club is the oldest dedicated Rolls-Royce car club in the world.

Donated items become the property of the Foundation and it reserves the right to swap, sell or otherwise dispose of such items where there is a duplication. The funds so raised allow the Foundation to expand its collection. Some book donors have commented that they are pleased to know that their donations have gone to help other enthusiasts. As a consequence of this policy we are able to offer the surplus books and brochures as detailed below to interested members. In addition we also have a large number of duplicate periodicals which may be of

interest to members wishing to complete their collections. Other items for sale from the Foundation include its own unique items, also detailed below.

Our website has recently been expanded to give a full description of the Foundation's history, activities and Archive as well as providing information on general items for sale. Please visit it at <http://roycefoundation.com.au/home>.

If you have an enquiry please contact the Hon Archivist especially for the items listed below, to ascertain availability before sending money. As Australia Post rates vary according to weight and location such charges will be added to

any items despatched. Payment can be made by cheque or Money Order (in favour of the Sir Henry Royce Foundation, Australia) or by VISA or MasterCard when the name, card number, expiry date and CCV number are given.

I am sure we have something of interest to many readers of *Præclarvm*. If you wish to visit the Archive it is open on Victoria Branch meeting nights (second Thursday of each month) or by prior arrangement. Please call or write to Gilbert Ralph, 2/52 Glen Iris Rd, Glen Iris, Victoria 3146, phone 03-9889-6471 or email [archives@roycefoundation.com.au](mailto:archives@roycefoundation.com.au).