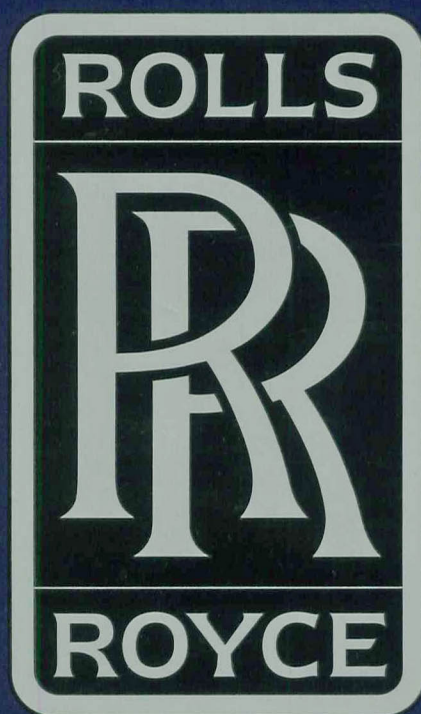


The Magic of a Name

THE ROLLS-ROYCE STORY

Part Two: The Power Behind the Jets



Peter Pugh

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INTRODUCTION

As I said in the Introduction to the first part of this history, *The Magic of a Name*, *The Rolls-Royce Story*, *The First 40 Years*, many books have been written about Rolls-Royce over the years. The Bibliography on pages 328 to 332 shows nearly fifty specifically on Rolls-Royce cars or aero engines or both, and there are hundreds more which devote many words to Rolls-Royce's products and their importance. However, most of these books are either biographies of the leading personalities, or works that tackle specific aspects of the cars or aero engines.

The last publication to attempt a truly comprehensive history of Rolls-Royce was Harold Nockolds's *The Magic of a Name*, published by Foulis in 1938 and reprinted several times until a third edition was finally printed in 1972. This book, with the one published last year, and the third part to be published to coincide with the hundredth anniversary of the meeting of Royce and Rolls, is the first attempt to cover comprehensively the story of Rolls-Royce from its earliest days until the present. The Rolls-Royce name is magic, made so by the calibre of the people and its products, and the title *The Magic of a Name* is singularly appropriate. Foulis, now owned by Haynes Publishing, has kindly allowed us to use the title again.

The first part of this trilogy took the story from 1904 to 1945 with all the excitement of the meeting of the great engineer, Henry Royce, and the aristocratic motor car enthusiast and salesman, the Hon. C.S. Rolls, through

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the early pioneering days with the best car in the world, the Silver Ghost, on to the design by Royce and production by Rolls-Royce of the leading aero engine of the First World War, the Eagle. We moved on to Royce's design of an aero engine which enabled Britain to retain the Schneider Trophy. This association with the aircraft designer, R.J. Mitchell, led on to the Spitfire and Rolls-Royce's Merlin engines. As we saw, without the Spitfire and the Hurricane, and the Merlins that powered them, the Battle of Britain would have been lost. Finally, we saw how Ernest, later Lord, Hives realised the significance of the jet engine and how he backed Sir Frank Whittle to the hilt.

And that is where we pick up the story in this part, with Whittle and the jet engine. We see how Rolls-Royce adapted itself quickly from mass-producing piston aero engines to designing and producing gas turbine engines, initially for aero engines but later to power ships and power stations also. At the same time, Rolls-Royce returned to the motor car business and for the first time produced complete cars, not just engines and chassis. It also began to manufacture diesel engines.

We shall see how the leaders of the company realised that Rolls-Royce must win orders in the USA if the company was to survive as a major force in the aero engine business, and how this led to the design of an innovative and world-beating three-shaft engine, the RB 211. Unfortunately, we shall have to go through the pain of how the development of this engine so over-stretched the company that it was forced into receivership.

However, we shall end on the happy note of Rolls-Royce emerging from sixteen years under Government ownership, facing a promising future with its reputation for designing and producing engines of the highest quality untarnished.

Peter Pugh
January 2001