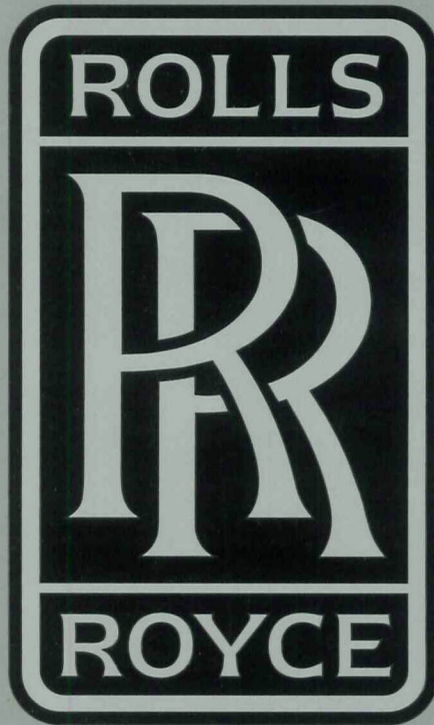


The Magic of a Name

THE ROLLS-ROYCE STORY

The First 40 Years



Peter Pugh

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION		VII
AUTHOR'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS		IX
NAMES IN ROLLS-ROYCE		XI
CHAPTER ONE	THE PRIME MOVERS	1
CHAPTER TWO	'THE MOST PERFECT CARS'	33
CHAPTER THREE	'THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A THINKING DESIGNER'	60
CHAPTER FOUR	THE ACME OF REFINEMENT	89
CHAPTER FIVE	'WE MUST NEVER BE SATISFIED'	121
CHAPTER SIX	'ARE WE IN THE AERO ENGINE BUSINESS?'	146
CHAPTER SEVEN	PREPARING FOR WAR	169
CHAPTER EIGHT	'THE WHOLE STORY IS ENGINES, MERLIN ENGINES'	199
CHAPTER NINE	HOLDING IT ALL TOGETHER	246
CHAPTER TEN	'THE TURBINE ENGINES HAVE ARRIVED'	268
SHORT BIOGRAPHIES		293
BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BOOKS CONSULTED		325
PHOTO CREDITS		330
INDEX		331

INTRODUCTION

Many books have been written about Rolls-Royce over the years. The Bibliography on pages 325 to 329 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 the aero engines.

The last publication to attempt a 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 and its sequel, to be published in 2001, is the first attempt since Nockolds 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 its 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.

When I was asked three years ago to undertake the task of researching and writing the story of Rolls-Royce I was extremely excited at the prospect. It was surely a great story. In fact, as I soon found out, it is much more than that: it is several great stories. The genius and dedication of Royce, allied to the flair for publicity of Rolls, led to the production and worldwide sales of the best car in the world, the Silver Ghost. Shortly afterwards, Royce's skill

INTRODUCTION

as a designer quickly produced the leading aero engine of the First World War, the Eagle.

By the 1920s, Royce's reputation was such that he was asked, almost ordered, by the Government to design an engine for Britain to retain the Schneider Trophy. This association with the inspired aircraft designer, R.J. Mitchell, led on to the Spitfire and Rolls-Royce's Merlin engines. It is safe to say that, without the Spitfire and the Hurricane, *and* the Merlins that powered them, the Battle of Britain would have been lost. Finally, in this book, we look at the advent of the jet engine and how Ernest (later Lord) Hives realised its importance for the future of air travel and backed Sir Frank Whittle's development to the hilt.

Rolls-Royce has become world-famous above all for the quality of its products and these have been analysed in great detail elsewhere. This book is not a technical one. It attempts to put Rolls-Royce products and Rolls-Royce people in their context. Royce and Rolls set the highest standards, and when you have read this book I think you will agree that the tradition has been carried on faithfully by all who have been lucky enough to work with them and after them in Rolls-Royce.

Peter Pugh
November 1999

The value of money

In a book about a business, we cannot ignore the changing value of money, and – with the exception of the inter-war years – the twentieth century has been inflationary. There is no magic formula for translating 1900 prices into those of 1999. Some items have exploded in price, others have declined. We have to choose some criterion of measurement, and I have chosen the average working wage.

The Victorian age was one of stable prices, but prices started to rise just before the First World War, and rose sharply at the end of it. (Wars are always inflationary, because they distort supply and demand.) Immediately after the war, prices were more than twice as high as in 1914, and although they declined somewhat in the depressed economic conditions of the 1920s and 30s, they remained about twice as high as those before the war.

Price controls and rationing were imposed in the Second World War, but as these were withdrawn, prices again doubled. Inflation continued at about 3 per cent a year through the 1950s and 60s, but then rose sharply, almost catastrophically, in the 1970s. Although it was brought under control by the end of that decade, there were two more nasty upward blips in the early and late 1980s before the more stable 1990s.

I have used the following formula:

Late nineteenth century – multiply by 110 to equate with today's prices

Early twentieth century – multiply by 100 to equate with today's prices

1918–45 – multiply by 50 to equate with today's prices