ROLLS-ROYCE | MEDIA INFORMATION

ROLLS-ROYCE ‘MAKERS OF THE MARQUE’:

HENRY EDMUNDS

20 MARCH 1853 - 18 NOVEMBER 1927

19 March 2024, Goodwood, West Sussex

* A brief overview of the life and career of Henry Edmunds, born 20 March 1853
* Earned his place in history as the man who arranged the historic first meeting between his friends Henry Royce and Charles Rolls on 4 May 1904
* First in a series profiling the principal characters in the Rolls-Royce Motor Cars foundation story, each released to celebrate the subject's birth date, as the marque celebrates its 120th anniversary
* Insights into the people, personalities and intertwined relationships that indelibly shaped the marque’s creation, development and lasting legacy
* Personal histories underline and celebrate the essential human dimension of ‘the best car in the world’, as exemplified in the modern era through Bespoke and Coachbuild commissions

*“This year we celebrate the 120th anniversary of the first meeting between Henry Royce and Charles Rolls. But while it’s their two names that became world-famous, Rolls-Royce as we know it might never have existed without the intervention, influence and contributions of others. In this series, as well as the founders themselves, we remember those crucial actors, perhaps less recognised by posterity yet absolutely essential to the Rolls-Royce story – beginning, appropriately, with the man who arranged that first historic encounter.”***Andrew Ball, Head of Corporate Relations and Heritage, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars**

Henry Edmunds was born on 20 March 1853, in Halifax, West Yorkshire. His father, an engineer and iron merchant, gave him an informal apprenticeship, from which the young Henry developed an enduring passion for the then-new world of electricity. Having befriended Joseph Swan (the inventor of the incandescent lightbulb) he became a salesman for the Swan Lamps company. Among his customers was the Royal Navy: in 1881, HMS *Inflexible* became the first British warship to be lit with electric bulbs. He was also friends with Thomas Edison (the inventor of almost everything else) and was present at both the first successful sound recording and telephone call.

In 1886, Edmunds became a partner in electrical cable-makers WT Glover & Co, based in Manchester. The company’s fortunes were transformed with the opening of the Manchester Ship Canal in 1894 – and, more specifically, the docks and the world’s first dedicated industrial estate, Trafford Park, alongside it. Glover’s won the contract to supply the cabling for the vast arc-lighting system, which was designed and manufactured by another Manchester company, F H Royce & Co, owned by one Henry Royce.

To complete the works, both Royce and Glover’s needed capital. Through a complex series of reorganisations, changes of name, mutual shareholdings and management overlaps between their respective firms, Henry Royce and Henry Edmunds became established business associates and close friends.

In 1899, Edmunds joined the Automobile Club of Great Britain & Ireland (later the Royal Automobile Club, or RAC). Edmunds was captivated by motoring and eagerly applied his agile, inventive mind to the infant technology’s myriad challenges and possibilities. The following year he entered the 1,000 Mile Trial from London to Edinburgh and back, organised by the Club’s imposing and ebullient secretary, Claude Johnson. Among his fellow entrants was The Hon. Charles Stewart Rolls, and the three became firm friends.

By 1904, Edmunds had taken a business interest in the Parsons Non-skid Co Ltd, which made ‘chains’ that fitted to car tyres to prevent what was known as ‘slide-slipping'. They entered a competition, the Slide Slip Trials, at the end of April that year, but at the last minute found themselves without a suitable car. Edmunds asked Royce if they could use his first 10 H.P. car. Royce agreed and the car was hastily sent by train to London, where Edmunds drove it successfully in the 1,000-mile event. Charles Rolls also took part, but there is no record of his having anything to do with the Royce car.

Edmunds was enormously impressed by the 10 H.P. He also knew Rolls was desperately looking for a high-quality British-made car to sell in his thriving London dealership. He was determined to bring the two men together, and earned his place in history when, on 4 May 1904 at The Midland Hotel in Manchester, he announced: “Henry, may I introduce Charles Rolls”.

- ENDS -

## FURTHER INFORMATION

You can find all our press releases and press kits, as well as a wide selection of high resolution, downloadable photographs and video footage at our media website, [PressClub](https://www.press.rolls-roycemotorcars.com/rolls-royce-motor-cars-pressclub).

You can also follow marque on social media: [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/rolls-royce-motor-cars/); [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/user/RollsRoyceMotorCars);[(X) Twitter](https://twitter.com/rollsroycecars); [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/rollsroycecars/); and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/rollsroycemotorcars).

EDITORS’ NOTES

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars is a true luxury house, creating the world’s most recognised, revered and desirable handcrafted Bespoke products for its international clientele.

There are over 2,500 people working at the Home of Rolls-Royce at Goodwood, West Sussex. This comprises both its global headquarters and Centre of Luxury Manufacturing Excellence – the only place in the world where Rolls-Royce motor cars are designed, engineered and meticulously built by hand. Its continuous investment in its facilities, products and people has resulted in a series of ‘record years’ for global sales, peaking in 2023 with over 6,000 motor cars sold worldwide. An [independent study](https://www.press.rolls-roycemotorcars.com/rolls-royce-motor-cars-pressclub/article/detail/T0414618EN/%C2%A34bn-for-uk-plc%E2%80%99%3A-rolls-royce-motor-cars-%E2%80%93-the-great-british-success-story) by the London School of Economics & Political Science confirms that since the company first launched at Goodwood in 2003, it has contributed more than £4 billion to the UK economy and adds more than £500 million in economic value every year.

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars is a wholly owned subsidiary of the BMW Group and is a completely separate, unrelated company from Rolls-Royce plc, the manufacturer of aircraft engines and propulsion systems.

120TH ANNIVERSARY

In 2024, Rolls-Royce marks the 120th anniversary of the first meeting between its founders, Henry (later Sir Henry) Royce and The Hon. Charles Stewart Rolls on 4 May 1904. The meeting, at The Midland Hotel in Manchester, was arranged by a mutual friend, Henry Edmunds. Rolls agreed to sell all the cars Royce could make and the rest is, literally, history. Together, Royce and Rolls created what was soon dubbed ‘the best car in the world’ and gave their names to a dynasty of motor cars that continues to define superluxury motoring across the world.

The Rolls-Royce ‘Makers of the Marque’ series:

* Henry Edmunds, born 19 March 1853
* Henry Royce, born 27 March 1863
* Eleanor Thornton, born 15 April 1880
* Ernest Hives, born 21 April 1886
* John Walter Edward Douglas-Scott-Montagu, born 10 June 1866
* The Hon. Charles Stewart Rolls, born 27 August 1877
* Claude Johnson, born 24 October 1864
* Charles Sykes, born 18 December 1875Eric Platford, born 25 February 1883

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