# ROLLS-ROYCE | MEDIA INFORMATION

ROLLS-ROYCE ‘MODELS OF THE MARQUE’:  
THE 1900s – THE ROYCE 10 H.P. & ROLLS-ROYCE 10 H.P.

24 April 2024, Goodwood, West Sussex

* A brief history of the Royce 10 H.P., the first motor car built by Henry Royce, and the Rolls-Royce 10 H.P., the inaugural model for the newly established marque
* First in a series celebrating a landmark model from each decade of the marque’s history, from its foundational years in the 1900s to the contemporary Goodwood era
* Year-long retrospective marks the 120th anniversary of the first meeting between Henry Royce and The Hon. Charles Stewart Rolls in 1904
* Each motor car represents significant developments in design, construction, engineering, and technology that continue to influence the marque’s products today

*“We begin this retrospective series with not one, but two motor cars built by Henry Royce in the early 20th Century. The Royce 10 H.P., completely reengineered from an existing, well-regarded machine, was the catalyst for the partnership between our founders; the Rolls-Royce 10 H.P. was the first motor car built and sold under the Rolls-Royce name, setting a template for the company and its products that endures to this day. These models are inseparable in their origins and the story of the company’s foundation. Individually and together, they have a unique place in our history and therefore deserve equal recognition in the pantheon of early Rolls‑Royce motor cars.”***Andrew Ball, Head of Corporate Relations and Heritage, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars**

In 1903, electrical engineer Henry Royce was running his own manufacturing company in Manchester. Though successful, trouble was brewing for Royce and other British companies, in the form of a growing tide of cheaper, imported electrical goods. Ever the perfectionist, Royce refused to lower his standards to compete, and instead looked to diversify into new areas. It was a decision that would change history.

In September 1902, Royce had bought a small French car, a 10 H.P. Decauville. It was a highly regarded model from a well-respected make, and among the very best available at that time. Characteristically, however, Royce swiftly identified numerous flaws and weaknesses in its design, engineering and construction.

Earlier that year, he had read a newly published book, *The Automobile: Its Construction and Management*. This convinced him to use the Decauville as the basis for a better motor car of his own. He began by carefully dismantling it, making detailed notes and drawings of every component. His new design sensibly retained some of its key features, but also introduced a plethora of innovative improvements to the bearings, radiator, carburation and transmission.

He was also obsessed with reducing the motor car’s overall weight, which he achieved through meticulous engineering and metallurgy, together with simpler measures like dispensing with the Decauville’s cast bronze warning bell that alone weighed around 20kg (over 40lb). Perhaps most significantly, Royce designed and built his own twin-cylinder engine, the first in the long line of legendary powerplants for both motor cars and aircraft he would create during his distinguished career.

On 1 April 1904, his first complete motor car – the Royce 10 H.P. – took to the road for the first time. For Royce, and the world, nothing would ever be the same again.

Meanwhile, in London, an aristocratic motoring and aviation pioneer had opened one of Britain’s first car dealerships in 1902. He was The Hon. Charles Stewart Rolls and business was booming, but Rolls was frustrated that all his stock was designed and manufactured overseas; no car produced domestically met his clients’ needs, or his own standards as a Cambridge-educated engineer and successful competitive driver.

A friend, Henry Edmunds, had been loaned one of the first production examples of Royce’s new 10 H.P. motor car. It was, he enthused, exactly what Rolls was looking for. On 4 May 1904, at the behest of his friend Edmunds, Rolls travelled to Manchester to meet Royce and try out the motor car. Though entirely different in background and temperament, the two men bonded immediately, and Rolls was smitten with the motor car. There and then, he declared he would sell every motor car Royce could make, through a new company and under a new name: Rolls-Royce.

Launched the same year, their first motor car, the Rolls-Royce 10 H.P., was a similar twin-cylinder model derived from the earlier Royce cars, but with many further design and mechanical improvements. Through this diminutive but epochal motor car, the fledgling brand rapidly gained the reputation for engineering excellence, comfort, performance and reliability it retains 120 years later.

By 1905, Rolls-Royce had added three, four and six-cylinder models, whose successes in both trials and sales were built on the twin-cylinder 10 H.P. model's foundations. All perfectly embodied Royce’s most famous principles, which still inspire the marque today: “Take the best that exists and make it better,” and “If it doesn’t exist, design it.”

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

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

* 1900s: Royce 10 H.P. / Rolls-Royce 10 H.P.
* Watch this space for more…

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