ROLLS-ROYCE | MEDIA INFORMATION

ROLLS-ROYCE CELEBRATES THE OPENING OF THE SUMMER SEASON AT THE HURLINGHAM CLUB

Thursday 26June 2025, Goodwood, West Sussex

* Rolls-Royce Motor Cars London kicks off the Summer Season, serving a gentle presence at the Giorgio Armani Tennis Classic at The Hurlingham Club, West London
* Historic location in the annals of Rolls-Royce with enduring links to The Hon. Charles Stewart Rolls
* Part of a series of carefully selected occasions for clients and guests throughout the summer

*“At Rolls-Royce, we strive to offer our clients unique experiences and encounters, in pinnacle enclaves and settings that reflect their tastes, lifestyles and interests. As one of Britain’s most prestigious private members’ clubs, The Hurlingham Club is a perfect fit; its unrivalled facilities, magnificent sporting occasions and London location, which is home to many of our clients, only add to its appeal. It’s also a place with real meaning for Rolls-Royce, indelibly associated with the marque’s co-founder, The Hon. Charles Stewart Rolls and his own remarkable sporting exploits at the dawn of the 20th Century. It is the perfect beginning to what promises to be another glorious Summer Season for Rolls-Royce and our clients.”***Boris Weletzky, Regional Director, United Kingdom, Europe and Central Asia, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars**

*“Our return to The Hurlingham Club marks not only the opening of the Season, but a continuation of our long-standing commitment to creating occasions of quiet distinction for our clients. This setting, only a few miles from our London showroom, in Mayfair, is steeped in elegance and historical significance. It mirrors the qualities we value most: discretion, excellence and heritage. Hosting guests here, amidst world-class tennis and timeless surroundings, is an opportunity to deepen relationships through moments that are both rare and personal. In every detail, this is Rolls-Royce – refined, relevant and enduringly British.”***Claus Andersen, Brand Director, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars London**

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars London marks the opening of the Summer Season with its return to the Giorgio Armani Tennis Classic at The Hurlingham Club in West London this week. It is the first in a series of high society occasions in which Rolls-Royce will serve a gentle presence across London and further afield in Britain during the summer months.

First held in 1994, the Giorgio Armani Tennis Classic is one of the world’s most prestigious exhibition tournaments. Played on The Hurlingham Club’s sublime grass courts, it has long been used by many ATP players to polish their skills ahead of the start of the Wimbledon Championships the following week.

For the duration of the tournament, Rolls-Royce clients will delight in a carefully curated experience, set in the stunning 42-acre location on the River Thames in Fulham.

Since its foundation in 1869, the Hurlingham Club has represented the apex of sporting and social life, and is indelibly linked with exclusive and glamorous summer pursuits. In 1873, it published the official rules of polo, and was the venue for ‘the game of kings’ at the 1908 Summer Olympics. While polo is no longer played there, Hurlingham remains its spiritual home and gives its name to the British sport’s governing body. The Club is still, however, the world centre for another classic summer game, croquet, regularly hosting top-ranking international tournaments on its immaculate lawns.

**THE ROLLS-ROYCE CONNECTION**

The Club offers precisely the kind of environment and ambiance in which the marque’s co-founder, The Hon. Charles Stewart Rolls, would have felt entirely at home. Aristocratic, well-connected and wealthy, he was also daring and insatiably competitive. He raced bicycles as a student at Cambridge, then motor cars; and by the time he turned 30, he had enthusiastically embraced the latest craze sweeping his social stratum, ballooning, for which Hurlingham had quickly become the central hub in Britain.

The attractions for an audacious, pioneering spirit like Rolls, who had successfully raced every available innovation since his youth, were obvious. Ballooning was new, adventurous, ripe for record-setting and, of course, potentially extremely dangerous. The most obvious hazards were in flight, when a shift in the wind could set the balloon on a collision course, with the hapless pilot essentially powerless to take evasive action. Rolls himself had close calls with a factory chimney near his family home in Monmouth, and a gasholder at Battersea, in 1906; and when flying from Hurlingham, there was the ever-present possibility of becoming entangled with a tree on take-off.

Other perils awaited the pilot on landing. One summer day, Rolls disrupted a cricket match by coming to earth on the pitch, and even though the outraged players were eventually pacified, the fragile balloon suffered grave damage from their spiked cricket boots.

To add further spice to the proceedings, these early balloons were filled not with inert hot air, but with coal gas – a roughly equal mix of hydrogen and carbon monoxide that was both extremely flammable and highly toxic. As the sport’s focal point, Hurlingham had its own dedicated supply via a pipeline installed by the Gas Light & Coke Company in 1908.

On 24 June 1908, the Aero Club of the United Kingdom organised a pursuit race, known as a ‘hare and hounds’ and still popular with balloonists today, from The Hurlingham Club grounds. As the ‘hare’, Rolls set off first in his single-occupant balloon ‘The Imp’ and flew to a predetermined spot where he landed and laid out a target on the ground. The pack of 11 ‘hounds’ then followed, in balloons with evocative names including ‘Pegasus’, ‘Valkyrie’ and ‘Enchantress’ (whoever named balloon number 10 ‘Icarus’ clearly had either a poor grasp of mythology or a particularly mordant sense of humour). Their task was to locate the target and attempt to drop a weighted bag onto it from the air: whoever struck closest to the mark received a special cup presented by Rolls himself. The pilots and their passengers – almost all titled and/or military officers and professional people, including a Doctor, a General and a Viscountess – perfectly encapsulate Rolls’ elevated social milieu, and the personal connections on which he built Rolls-Royce’s early success.

Balloon racing continued from the Club in 1909; but by 1910, Rolls had moved on to aeroplanes, becoming only the second person in Britain to obtain a pilot’s licence. On 2 June, his first-ever double crossing of the English Channel, flying non-stop from Dover to Calais and back again, made him a national hero. His Wright Flyer, designed by the legendary Wilbur and Orville, was built under license in Britain by Short Brothers, who also produced ‘The Imp’.

After the record-breaking 90-minute flight, the aircraft required a major overhaul, so Rolls and his team took it to a hangar at Hounslow Heath airfield, conveniently close to Hurlingham where it was to be put on public display. Sensibly, the team made the trip from Kent at night, having decided that towing an aeroplane behind a motor car on the public highway was ‘probably illegal’. Flying an aeroplane in metropolitan London, on the other hand, was definitely against the law. Typically, this did not stop Rolls attempting a test-flight from Hurlingham: after narrowly avoiding a tree, he was persuaded not to try a second time.

The extraordinary pace of development would continue in aviation. Just 61 years after The Hurlingham balloon races, Concorde crossed the Atlantic at twice the speed of sound – powered by engines bearing Rolls’ name.

FROM THE LAWNS OF HURLINGHAM TO THE STREETS OF MAYFAIR

As summer begins, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars London reaffirms its place at the heart of the Summer Season – both through its presence at carefully chosen occasions such as The Hurlingham Club, and at its showroom on Berkeley Street in Mayfair.

This part of London also holds particular significance for the marque: just a few streets away, on Hill Street, Charles Stewart Rolls was born in 1877. It was also in Mayfair that he established offices for his fledgling motor car business, C. S. Rolls & Co. – an enterprise that embodied the ideals and ambitions that would later give rise to Rolls-Royce, now regarded as the most revered name in the world of luxury.

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TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Spectre: WLTP: Power consumption: 2.6-2.8 mi/kWh / 23.6-22.2 kWh/100km. Electric range 329 mi / 530 km. CO2 emissions 0 g/km.

Further technical information: [**https://bit.ly/3XtQW7q**](https://bit.ly/3XtQW7q)

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 the marque on social media: [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/rolls-royce-motor-cars/); [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/user/RollsRoyceMotorCars); [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. 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.

CONTACTS | GOODWOOD

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| Director of Global Communications  Emma Begley: +44 (0)1243 384060 [Email](mailto:emma.begley@rolls-roycemotorcars.com) | Head of Corporate Relations Andrew Ball: +44 (0)7815 244064 [Email](mailto:andrew.ball@rolls-roycemotorcars.com) |
| Head of Global Luxury and Corporate Communications Marius Tegneby: +44 (0)7815 246106 [Email](mailto:Marius.Tegneby@rolls-roycemotorcars.com) | Sustainability and Corporate Communications ManagerLuke Strudwick: +44 (0)7815 245918 [Email](mailto:luke.w.strudwick@rolls-roycemotorcars.com) |
| Head of Global Product CommunicationsGeorgina Cox: +44 (0)7815 370878[Email](mailto:Georgina.Cox@rolls-roycemotorcars.com) | Global Bespoke Communications  Malika Abdullaeva:  +49 151 6019 7646 [Email](mailto:Malika.Abdullaeva@partner.rolls-roycemotorcars.com) |
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CONTACTS | GLOBAL

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| --- | --- |
| The Americas Gerry Spahn: +1 201 930 8308 [Email](mailto:gerry.spahn@rolls-roycemotorcarsna.com) | Asia Pacific (South) and India Juliana Tan: +65 9695 3840 [Email](mailto:Juliana.Tan@rolls-roycemotorcars.com) |
| Central/Eastern Europe and Central Asia Frank Tiemann: +49 160 9697 5807 [Email](mailto:frank.tiemann@rolls-roycemotorcars.com) | Central and Western Europe  Ruth Hilse: +49 89 382 60064 [Email](mailto:ruth.hilse@rolls-roycemotorcars.com) |
| China  Ou Sun: +86 186 0059 0675 [Email](mailto:Ou.Sun@rolls-roycemotorcars.com) | Japan and Korea  Yuki Imamura: +81 90 5216 1957 [Email](mailto:Yuki.Imamura@rolls-roycemotorcars.com) |
| Middle East and Africa Haya Shanata: +971 56 171 7883 [Email](mailto:haya.shanata@rolls-roycemotorcars.com) | United Kingdom and Ireland  Isabel Matthews: +44 (0)7815 245127 [Email](mailto:isabel.matthews@rolls-roycemotorcars.com) |