ROLLS-ROYCE | MEDIA INFORMATION

MODELS OF THE MARQUE – THE 1950s:

THE ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER CLOUD

Thursday 3 October, Goodwood, West Sussex

* A brief history of the Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud, launched in 1955
* First Rolls-Royce motor car launched following the appointment of legendary designer John Blatchley to the role of Chief of Styling
* Last Rolls-Royce offered as a separate rolling chassis, as well as a complete motor car
* Sixth in a series celebrating landmark models from the marque’s history
* Year-long retrospective marks the 120th anniversary of the first meeting between Henry Royce and The Hon. Charles Stewart Rolls in 1904

*“The Silver Cloud is, without doubt, one of the most transformative and iconic motor cars in the marque’s illustrious history. Its launch signalled the beginning of a new era of Rolls-Royce motor cars, at a time when the automotive industry was changing rapidly. Recounting the story of this incredible model and its remarkable coterie of owners is somewhat bittersweet; it was the final Rolls-Royce to be offered as a separate rolling chassis as well as a complete motor car, the last to be worked upon by the great coachbuilders of the 20th century. Two of the most important figures in our history – Ivan Evernden and John Blatchley – were at the forefront of its design, and the enduring legacy of their innovation and ingenuity lives on at Rolls-Royce Motor Cars today.”*

**Andrew Ball, Head of Corporate Relations & Heritage, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars**

By 1955, the automotive world was changing rapidly. The Silver Dawn, launched in 1949, was a roaring success, but it was built upon design principles conceived in the late 1930s, an issue that Rolls-Royce’s design team were aware of as early as 1947. Cue the introduction of one of the most transformative models in the history of the marque: the Silver Cloud.

The Rolls-Royce Styling Department, headed up by Ivan Evernden, recruited highly experienced designer John Blatchley in 1940. Blatchley originally joined Rolls-Royce from renowned London coachbuilder Gurney Nutting; unable to fight in the Second World War due to a heart murmur, he worked in the Aero Design headquarters at Hucknall, Nottinghamshire, where he was responsible for the cowling for Merlin engines used in Hurricane and Spitfire fighter aircraft.

Although Rolls-Royce suspended motor car production between 1939 and 1945 to focus on building aero engines, design work on a new model continued in the background. The new team launched the highly successful Silver Dawn in 1949, but in the background, work had already begun on a new model, one that would blend the modernised, ‘New Look’ style of the day with the elegance of traditional, British conservative design.

Under Evernden’s watchful eye, Blatchley, appointed to the newly created role of Chief Styling Engineer in 1951, conceived a quarter-scale model that same year, codenamed ‘Siam’. Seven prototypes later, the larger, full-scale Silver Cloud was born. Blatchley’s ingenious full-width body design, coupled with the inspired placement of chassis and mechanical components, allowed for a significant increase in cabin size. This in turn facilitated a grander, more luxurious seating and trim design.

It wasn’t just the cabin that grew in the new model; the wheelbase was lengthened by three inches (7.6 cm) – then by an additional four inches (10.2 cm) for the 1957 extended wheelbase version – while the straight 6-cylinder engine expanded to 4.9 litres of capacity. Even this enlargement didn’t occupy the engine bay entirely, though, which was purposely designed even larger to one day accommodate a V8 engine.

The upgrades didn’t stop there. The Design team’s engineers, overseen by Evernden and Blatchley, also made great strides with the chassis design, its welded box section yielding a torsional rigidity improvement of 46%. An automatic gearbox became a standard offering for the very first time, with power steering following in 1956. The Silver Cloud will forever be remembered as the last Rolls-Royce motor car to be offered both as a complete car and as a rolling chassis, upon which discerning clients could commission fully bespoke bodywork from specialist coachbuilders.

So successful was the Silver Cloud, Rolls-Royce produced two subsequent designs that bore the same name; Silver Cloud II, launched in 1959, would make full use of the enlarged engine bay with a formidable 6.2 litre V8 power unit, eliciting a 20% increase in engine power. While this version was largely unchanged to the previous on the outside, the Silver Cloud III received a considerable aesthetic facelift. Launched in 1962, the redesigned bonnet sloped forward to facilitate a reduced radiator height of around 1.5 inches (3.8 cm). Dual horizontal headlamps replaced the single units, while the sidelights were moved down from the top of the wing to the middle, incorporating one of the period’s great safety innovations – flashing turn indicators.

By 1965, Silver Cloud had run its course, replaced by the Silver Shadow. All three of its iterations were wildly successful in their own right, and the model is fondly remembered to this day; a beautiful example of a coachbuilt Silver Cloud III formed the centrepiece of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars’ annual presence at the world-famous Goodwood Revival earlier this year.

Such was the esteem with which former Chief Styling Engineer John Blatchley was held, he was consulted for his thoughts on Phantom VII in the early 2000s, when the marque was planning to relaunch at the new Home of Rolls-Royce in Goodwood. Rolls-Royce Motor Cars’ first Chief of Design, Ian Cameron, showed him a series of concepts for the new Phantom. Blatchley approved of just one: the same design that would go on to become Phantom VII.

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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); [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
* 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.
* 1910s: Rolls-Royce 40/50 H.P. ‘Silver Ghost’
* 1920s: Rolls-Royce 20 H.P. the ‘Twenty’
* 1930s: Rolls-Royce Phantom III
* 1940s: Silver Dawn
* 1950s: Silver Cloud

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