ROLLS-ROYCE | MEDIA INFORMATION

CREATURE COMFORTS:

ROLLS-ROYCE APPRENTICES CREATE BESPOKE

DORMOUSE HOUSES FOR GOODWOOD ESTATE

Monday 20 January 2024, Goodwood, West Sussex

* Rolls-Royce Apprentices design and construct wooden nest boxes for rare dormice
* Boxes used in a monitoring and management project in a new woodland area
* Part of the marque’s long-term environmental partnership with Goodwood Estate
* Helping to conserve a charming but highly endangered native mammal

*“Studies have shown that our 42-acre site and the adjoining Goodwood Estate are home to some of Britain’s most important mammals, reptiles, birds, insects and plants – all of which we’re helping to conserve through our long-term environmental partnership. In this latest initiative, we’re working together to measure and monitor the local population of another rare and protected species, the hazel dormouse, using nest boxes designed and handmade by our Apprentices. The nest boxes are located in prime dormouse habitats and we’re very hopeful that these delightful but highly endangered creatures will soon take up residence in the palatial new accommodation we’ve provided!”*

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

Apprentices at Rolls-Royce Motor Cars have designed and handmade a series of nest boxes for one of the UK’s most endangered mammals, the hazel dormouse *(Muscardinus avellanarius)*, as part of the marque’s long-term environmental partnership with the neighbouring Goodwood Estate.

The hazel dormouse is a tiny creature, with a body 6-9cm (about 3”) long plus a tail of similar length, and typically weighs around 25g (1oz) – roughly the same as a pencil. The Apprentices based their design on detailed research, conducted online and through contact with various wildlife trusts, to determine the appropriate shape and dimensions for the nest boxes. Most importantly, they needed to ensure the entrance hole would be large enough to admit the dormice, while obstructing their many predators, which include owls, badgers and domestic cats.

The team then selected materials that would be durable and non-toxic, while allowing scope for Rolls-Royce design and construction flair. They eventually decided on oak, which is legendary for its natural longevity, quarter-sawn to show off its beautiful grain patterns, notably the medullary or pith rays created by thin, ribbon-like structures that radiate from the centre of the trunk. When oak is quarter-sawn – that is, perpendicular to the growth rings – these rays are particularly pronounced, creating a shimmering, iridescent surface effect called ‘ray fleck’. The nest boxes are finished with roofing felt to further protect them from the weather and increase their durability.

During an on-site visit, the Apprentices met the Goodwood Estate’s head of forestry and learned about the types of habitat favoured by dormice, and how to install the nest boxes into a new area of woodland.

The nest boxes have been placed in an area of hazel and other broadleaf species, with a dense understory including honeysuckle and ivy, which dormice use to climb into safe hiding spaces. Despite these promising conditions, to date, there has been no definitive evidence of dormice living in this area; the Goodwood Estate team hope that by installing the nest boxes, their presence can be confirmed. This monitoring will allow the team to identify and address any threats in the surrounding environment and enhance the habitat further. Managing the woodland more effectively for dormice will also benefit the much broader range of species living there.

The hazel dormouse is the only species of dormice native to Britain. Most commonly found in the south of England and Wales, its population has crashed in recent years; numbers are thought to have fallen by 52% between 2009 and 2018, mainly through the loss and fragmentation of the ancient woodland and hedgerows that make up its habitat. This, combined with dormice being nocturnal and arboreal creatures, makes seeing them extremely difficult and unusual.

Hazel dormice are protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, meaning it is illegal to intentionally kill, injure or handle them. This safeguard also extends to any location or structure – including the new Rolls-Royce nest boxes – that hazel dormice use for shelter or protection.

- 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. 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.

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