

A Dozen Rolls-Royce Owners in South Australia in 1926
“T.R. Scarfe, Eden Park, Marryatville”
1922 Silver Ghost, Chassis 40RG, Tourer

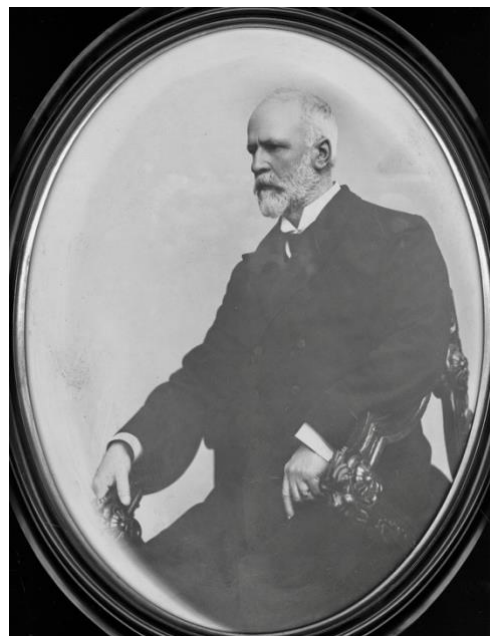
David Neely, Historical Consultant, Sir Henry Royce Foundation, Australia, 2022

“Rolls-Royce Owners – Twelve in State” was the heading of an article in the 26 January 1926 edition of the Adelaide newspaper ‘News’, which was published from 1923 to 1954.

It continued: “There are 12 owners of Rolls-Royce cars in this State so far as can be ascertained from records. On account of this rather small number casual observers usually look twice if they happen to see a Rolls-Royce purring along. Among those who are stated to own one of these cars, which are regarded as the aristocrats of the road so far as the British automobile industry is concerned are Messrs T. E. Barr Smith, Glen Osmond: T. Tait, Oaklands: C. H. Angas, Angaston: G. Milne, Brougham Place, North Adelaide: J. M. Reid, Victoria Avenue, Unley Park: J. P. Lewis, Nelyambo Station, Wilcannia: Napier Birks, Park Terrace, Parkside: Mesdames W. T. Mortlock, Martindale Hall, Mintaro: L. Hughes, Lee Lodge, Strangways Terrace, North Adelaide: M Symonds, Walkerville: T.R. Scarfe, Eden Park, Marryatville: and Miss M. F. Simms, Moseley Street, Glenelg.”

Mrs T. R. Scarfe was a widow. The initials T. R. were for Thomas Roger Scarfe (1843-1915), whom she married in 1895. She was Teresa Mary Gertrude Birrell, born in Paddington, Sydney, in 1862. Known as Gertrude and by now a widow of seven years, Mrs Scarfe was an Adelaide society matron of some renown. She presided over lavish entertainment and charitable events at the family mansion ‘Eden Park’ at Marryatville. Her seaside home, ‘Beachcroft’ in Grange was used by her family in the summer months.

Left: Mrs Gertrude Scarfe (1862-1942). **Right:** Mr Thomas Scarfe (1843-1915).
[State Library of South Australia.]





Above and below: Thomas Scarfe purchased 'Eden Park' in 1900. Most of the old home was pulled down and rebuilt as the mansion in the pictures here. [State Library of South Australia.]



It was a genteel life at home and abroad. In 1926 Mrs Scarfe returned from a year's holiday in America, the United Kingdom and Europe. She was a devout Catholic and staunch supporter of the Church. In 1929 she hosted a garden party at 'Eden Park' for about 300 delegates to a conference of the Catholic Women's League. She recounted from her overseas trip, "In Rome I had two audiences with the Pope [Pius XI] at the Vatican, and went to a private Mass at 7 o'clock in the morning. The Pope is a beautiful old man whose countenance radiates kindness. The vestments in which he was robed by two cardinals were gorgeous."



Above: Mrs Scarfe, third from the left, was one of the passengers on an early flight from Adelaide to Perth about 1930. Another member of her husband's family, Ernest Elywyn Edmund Scarfe (1889-1947), is fourth from the left with his son Elwyn Bewell Scarfe (1918-1970). Ernest was the manager of the Mortlock estates at Martindale Hall. They are pictured here at Parafield aerodrome, Adelaide. [State Library of South Australia.]

Right: On the left is Ernest Scarfe, manager of the Mortlock estates, when Mrs Rosina Mortlock launched her son's yacht 'Martindale' on 18 July, 1932. On the right is her son Jack Mortlock. [State Library of South Australia.]



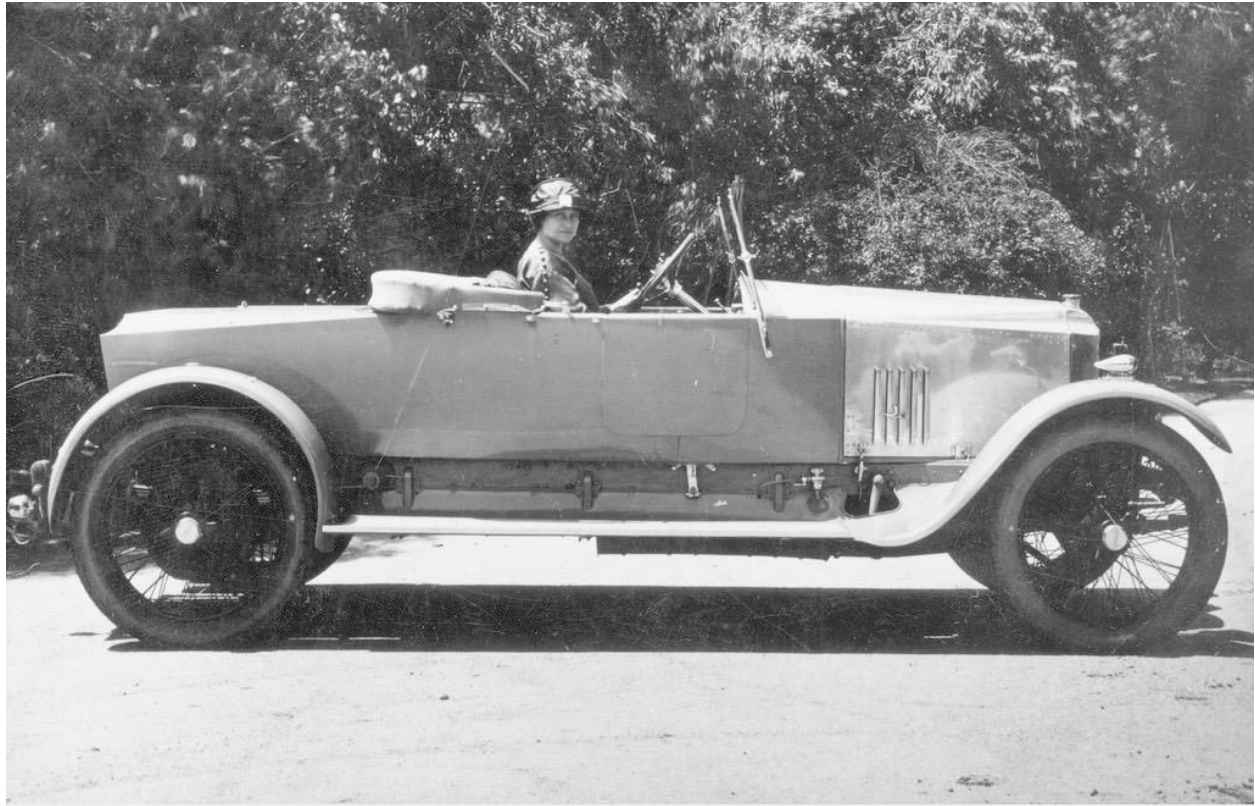
Thomas Scarfe was born in 1843 in St Marylebone in London, England. He acquired business experience with a leading mercantile house in London. His elder brother George had arrived in South Australia in the early 1850s. In 1862 George Scarfe went into business with George Harris, whose firm was established ten years earlier. Messrs. George P Harris, Scarfe & Co. progressed to become the largest hardware establishment in the State. A branch of the business was established in Western Australia in 1890. George Scarfe died in 1903 leaving an estate valued at £800,000. Thomas Scarfe joined his brother in the business in 1878 having arrived in South Australia in 1874. A life member of the Naval and Military Club, he was said to have a soldierly bearing. He died in 1915 and left an estate of £495,000, representing the cost of about 165 new Silver Ghost limousines at the time. Unlike his wife, Thomas was an Anglican. Nevertheless, he left many bequests to Catholic institutions.

The Broken Hill newspaper reported on Monday 1 November 1909, "Mrs Thomas Scarfe on Saturday handed over to the Board of Governors of the Botanic Gardens a drinking fountain presented by her to the gardens." The background was provided earlier by the Adelaide 'Chronicle' on 5 June 1909, "Mrs. Tom Scarfe, wife of the senior member of the firm of Messrs. G. P. Harris, Scarfe, & Co., has asked the Board of Governors of the Botanic Gardens to accept the gift of a chaste and ornamental drinking fountain, which she has had made in England for the purpose. The fountain will stand 7 ft. 6 in. high, on an ornamental pedestal, and it is of elaborate design, with water-spouts, basins, and drinking utensils on each of its four sides. It is to be erected on a site near the residence of the director."



Left: Mrs Scarfe donated this elaborate drinking fountain to the Adelaide Botanic Gardens. Mr and Mrs Scarfe were present for the dedication ceremony in 1909. The T. R. Scarfe Drinking Fountain is still in the Botanic Gardens. [State Library of South Australia.]

The Scarfes had two daughters, Irene Mary Gertrude (1896-1982) and Ellinor Doris (Nellie), who was born in 1900. Nellie became a keen motorist in the 1920s.



Above: Nellie Scarfe commissioned Autocars to build a body to her own design on this Vauxhall 25 HP D-Type chassis in 1921. The iconic Vauxhall fluted radiator and bonnet are echoed in the rear section of the body. A stylish design for a modern 21 year old woman about town. [State Library of South Australia.]

The Silver Ghost chassis Mrs Scarfe ordered through Motors Limited was 40RG. Factory testing of the chassis was completed in September 1922 and it arrived at Motors Limited on 30 October. It was a short chassis and variously described with an open and closed body. Although the body style and the firm that built it was not recorded, Motors Limited did note "own 5-seater" implying an open body. It is now clear from the auction sale of the contents of Eden Park in 1942 and the Scarfe's connections to the motor industry that a tourer body was built on 40RG by the Adelaide firm of Autocars Limited. The body was finished in dark blue, black mudguards, black wheels and blue upholstery. A number of members of the Scarfe family were associated with Autocars Limited and had bodies built for their cars. While the Sphinx Motor Garage has been mentioned in connection with 40RG no link has been found. Mrs Scarfe's Rolls-Royce was registered in February 1923 with the number plate SA-5656.

Scarfe family interests in the motor industry go back to at least 1910 when Frederick G. Scarfe (1867-1961) was Chairman of Directors of Murray Auger Limited. He was a nephew of Thomas Scarfe and by 1912 the chairmanship passed to Alfred Augustus Scarfe (1869-1944). Alfred was a

pastoralist and also a nephew of Thomas Scarfe. Established in 1908 as Murray Aunger Limited it changed to Autocars Limited after Aunger retired in 1917. A visit to the Body Building Department in November 1917 was reported in 'The Mail', "Only the best wood and upholstery were being used. It is worthy of mention that all the panels are hand-beaten by the employees, and every part of the manufacture of the motor body is done on the firm's own premises." Autocars employed 85 men by 1919. As early as 1912 they were selling American makes including Overland cars. The company also handled English cars, notably Vauxhall, as well as European makes.

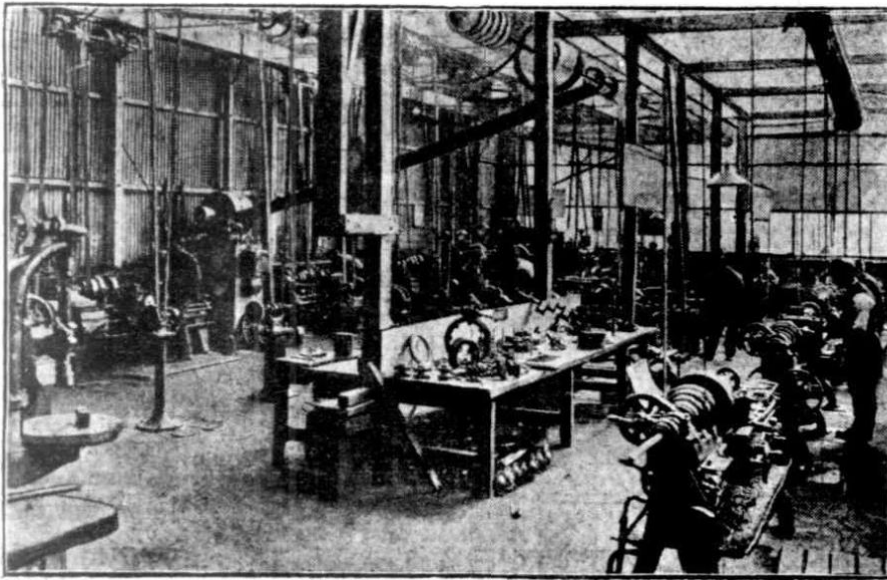
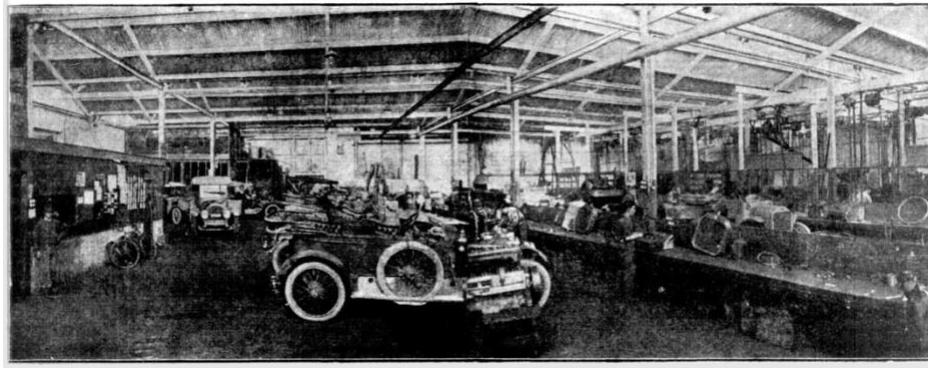
Mrs Scarfe had a Minerva in 1915, registered SA-5656, later transferred to her Rolls-Royce. She also had Overlands in 1917 and 1921 and a Talbot in 1922. In 1923 Mrs Scarfe had a Cadillac registered SA-565, an early number that must have been transferred to this later model car.

Irene, Mrs Scarfe's eldest daughter, had a Renault in 1916 registered 7077. Nellie the younger daughter had an Overland registered 6387 in 1920. She commissioned Autocars to build a body to her own design on a Vauxhall 25 HP D-Type chassis in 1921. In February 1923 Nellie purchased the latest Vauxhall 23/60 HP chassis and again commissioned Autocars to build a body, once more to her own design. Vauxhalls were favoured by women motorists at this time.

In further Scarfe family connections with Autocars, A. C. L. Scarfe had an Overland in 1919. Frederick G. Scarfe had Talbots in 1907 and 1908 registered 59 and 552 respectively and a Vauxhall 23/60 HP in 1922. C. L. Scarfe had a FIAT in 1922. A A Scarfe had a Talbot in 1908 and a Sheffield-Simplex in 1910.

Below: The Autocars Limited premises in Flinders Street, Adelaide, in 1917. [Adelaide newspaper 'The Mail', 24 November, 1917.]





Above and right: Autocars Limited was a substantial enterprise and by 1919 employed 85 men. [Adelaide newspaper 'The Mail', 24 November,



Mrs Scarfe died in 1942. 'Eden Park' was bought by the South Australian Government in 1946 and used as a Nurses Home from 1949 to 1969. It is now part of a school campus. The contents of 'Eden Park' were auctioned in December 1942 and included in the lots was, "Rolls-Royce Touring Car (1922 model)". After 1942 nothing further is known about Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost 40RG.