

# Mrs Penfold Hyland and the Colour Grey

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"Sydney's most glamorous car is Mrs. Gladys Penfold Hyland's current Rolls Royce. It's battleship grey and the chauffeur is dressed to tone." This was reported in the Adelaide newspaper, 'News', on 1 July 1951. Echoed in the Sydney newspaper 'The Sunday Herald' on the same day, "Much discussed is Mrs. Frank Penfold Hyland's new grey Rolls Royce with a chauffeur in a uniform of palest grey to match." In the 1950s Mrs Penfold Hyland never travelled without Bevan the butler or Myrtle the maid. The car is 1950 Silver Wraith, chassis WHD93, an H J Mulliner sedanca de ville, delivered through the Sydney

Rolls-Royce agents, York Motors, on 17 January 1951. Her next two Rolls-Royces were also grey.

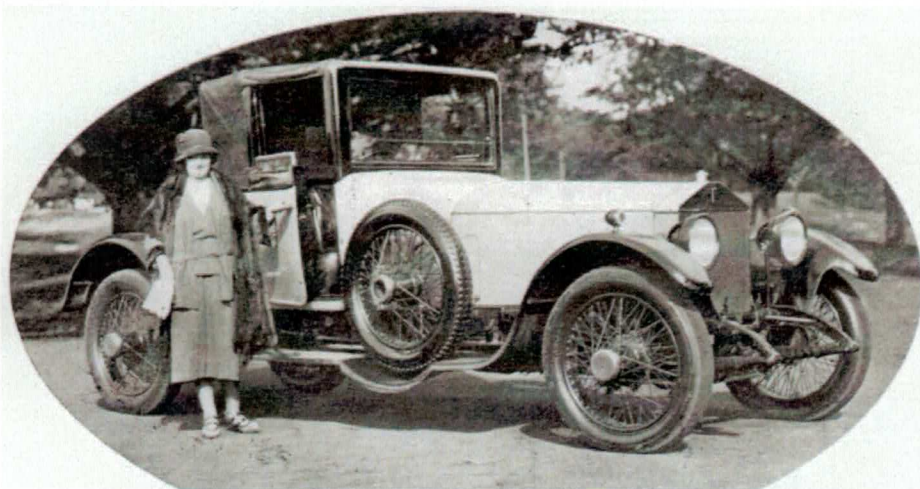
Gladys Penfold Hyland (1886-1974) was described as domineering, a trait that may have been useful when she found herself in the equally domineering male upper echelons of the business world. Her husband, Frank Astor Penfold Hyland (1873-1948), was the governing director of Penfolds Wines Ltd, established in 1844 by Dr Penfold, his grandfather. Following her husband's death, Mrs Penfold Hyland inherited his majority shareholding in Penfolds and was chairman of the board

from 1948 to 1961 and a director until 1963 after Penfolds was registered as a public company in 1961. Mrs Penfold Hyland was winemaker Max Schubert's ally in his efforts to make a top red wine - Grange Hermitage.

The Penfold Hylands amassed a prodigious collection of old silver, paintings and antiques which adorned 'Toft Monks', their ornate, brick Edwardian mansion at Elizabeth Bay, Sydney. One prized item was a rare late sixteenth-century silver gilt standing salt (salt cellar). Made in 1583 it was once in the collection of the House of Rothschild. Mrs Penfold Hyland made it available for a silver and porcelain exhibition at the Sydney David Jones department store in 1953. It was described as the most exquisite, most valuable piece of silver in Australia. Mrs Penfold Hyland presented it in 1964 along with paintings, a fine collection of British porcelain, other silver and furniture to the Art Gallery of South Australia in memory of her husband. The Elizabethan salt had an estimated value of \$500,000 in 1981.

The Penfold Hyland's first Rolls-Royce was 1920 Silver Ghost, chassis 143BW, a Van den Plas (Brussels) two-seater cabriolet. The colour has been recorded as amethyst in one account and cream in another, both with black mudguards. Either way it was not grey. They then purchased, near new, 1924 Twenty, chassis GAK33, a Hooper landaulette. The colour is not known.

Bert Ward wrote in the June 1977 issue of *Præclarvm*, that the Silver Wraith, "was ducoed a special grey which was Mrs. Penfold-Hyland's favourite colour, which was made up for her by Mulliners. When she ordered ... a 1959 Silver Cloud we had to send a sample of the colour to Rolls-Royce so that this car could be ducoed the same colour." The car was 1959 Silver Cloud, chassis SMH227, Bassoli & King in



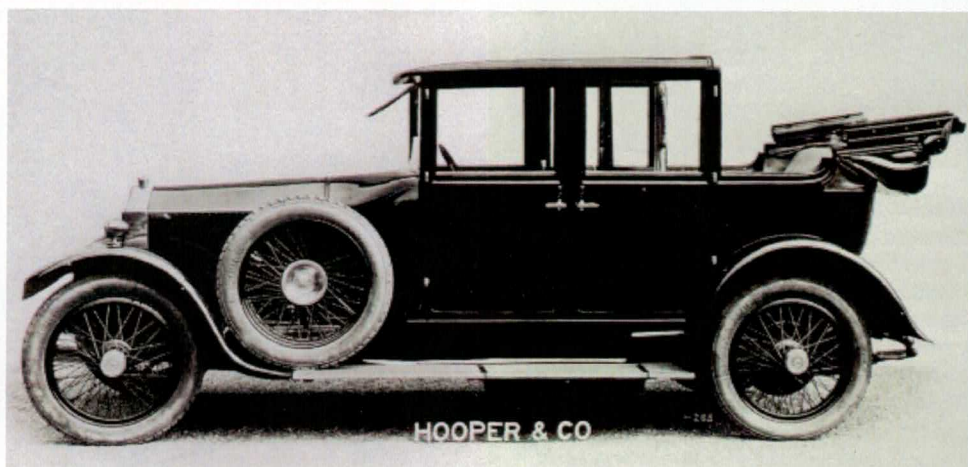
**above top:** Mrs Penfold Hyland with their first Rolls-Royce, 1920 Silver Ghost, chassis 143BW, a Van den Plas (Brussels) two-seater cabriolet. She was described as stocky in build and generally dressed in beautifully tailored suits, often with initialled brass buttons.

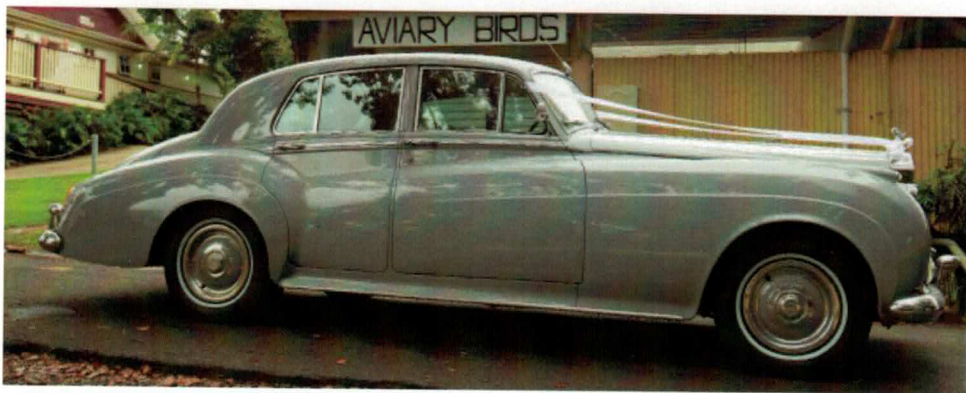
[*Australian Motor Owner*, July 1922.]

**above:** For illustration, the body on Mrs Penfold Hyland's 1950 Silver Wraith, chassis WHD93, an H J Mulliner sedanca de ville was similar to this H J Mulliner body on Silver Wraith, chassis WYA65. [Courtesy of Martin Bennett]

**right:** For illustration, the body on the Penfold Hyland's 1924 Twenty, chassis GAK33, a Hooper landaulette was likely to be similar to this body on Twenty, chassis 64H4.

[Courtesy of John Fasal's book on the Twenty]





'Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud I & Bentley S1' recorded the colour as "Special grey" with the notation "Special Belco grey ref. M900-2789", a reference to the 'Belco' Automotive Colour Service. The original owner is listed as Penfold Wines Pty. Ltd.

Peter Howard, Queensland Branch Club member is the current owner and has had SMH227 for 45 years. He bought it from Len Evans, a doyen of the Australian wine industry. Len Evans told Peter that on the death of Mrs Penfold Hyland the car had been in storage in South Australia. So we learn that SMH227 was still with the Penfold company at the time of Mrs Penfold Hyland's death in 1974. It is likely that Len Evans simply arranged the sale because of his connection to the wine industry and perhaps because of his interest and experience in classic cars. He owned 1964 Bentley S3 Continental, chassis BC72XC, and in fact had joined the NSW Branch of the Club in 1972. Bert Ward noted, "The Silver Wraith was sold on arrival of the Cloud; she was very pleased with the Cloud".

Bert Ward's recollections continued, "In the middle 1960's the Phantom V came into production (sic – the Phantom V was introduced in 1959) and she fancied one of these, one fitted with a 7-passenger limousine body by Park Ward Mulliner (sic – Mulliner Park Ward), with all fittings such as air conditioning ordered and again she required grey

upholstery and her usual colour grey paint-work. A plate was made here of the exact colour and air mailed to London. The car duly arrived in a large case, and we unpacked and prepared it for the road. Her chauffeur came to see the car and it was registered with her favourite number plate, No. 285 which was removed from the Cloud and fitted to the Phantom V. The chauffeur took delivery and drove it back to Elizabeth Bay. Mrs. Penfold-Hyland had a look at the car, had a short ride in it, did not like it and so the number plates were changed over again." The car was 1965 Phantom V, chassis 5VD81.

Mrs Penfold Hyland donated the Phantom V to the Royal Blind Society. She was untiring in her charitable work and in 1967 this was recognized with The Order of the British Empire – Commander (Civil) for "Community and Charities".

Back to Bert Ward: "The next we knew was when the Government Garage at Glebe phoned me for some instructions on the car as it was now Government property for the use of the Governor!" The Governor was Sir Roden Cutler, awarded the Victoria Cross the highest award for gallantry in World War II, during which he was seriously wounded and his leg had to be amputated.

My late father, Ray Neely, told the story of a Club member who was standing outside the York Motors showroom in William Street, Sydney one evening. He was admiring the Phantom V, as was a gentleman standing nearby. The gentlemen made a comment along the lines, "I must get the people to buy this." With that he turned and walked off. The Club member turned around and noticed the gentleman walking away had a pronounced limp!

**above top:** Mrs Penfold Hyland's 1959 Silver Cloud, chassis SMH227, has been owned by Queensland Branch Club member Peter Howard for 45 years and retains the grey colour. [Courtesy of Peter Howard]

**below and bottom left :** Judith Merlin, NSW Branch member and HLM, took these photographs of 1965 Phantom V, chassis 5VD81, a Mulliner Park Ward limousine on vice-regal duty when Sir Roden Cutler visited Port Macquarie in 1968. Judith has cleverly captured the grey colour of the Phantom V in these photographs! [Courtesy of Judith Merlin]

**below bottom right:** The Phantom V is now in the Museums Discovery Centre at Castle Hill, Sydney. [Courtesy Museums Discovery Centre]

