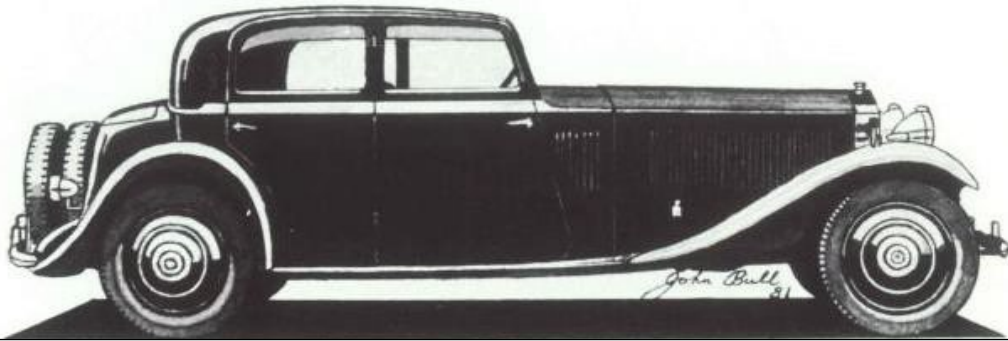


IN THE REAR-VIEW MIRROR

ROLLS-ROYCE STOLEN - HIGH SPEED CHASE



The car was 1933 Phantom II 26MY short Continental chassis with a Thrupp & Maberly saloon delivered in London to Capt. T. E. (later Sir Tom) Barr-Smith and shipped to Adelaide. This splendid drawing of 26MY by the late John Bull of the South Australia Branch appeared in the June 1981 edition of 'Praeclarum' on page 664.

"THIEVES RACE POLICE CARS Youths' Wild Night in Adelaide 100 m.p.h. THROUGH CITY STREETS ADELAIDE,"

was how the headlines appeared in 'The Courier-Mail' (Brisbane, QLD) on 26 February 1937.

"Roaring through the city in the early hours of to-day at speeds from 80 to 100 m.p.h., in a stolen Rolls Royce motor car, valued at £2500, thieves led police motor cars and cycles a merry chase before the Rolls Royce caught on fire in Colonel Light Gardens, and was abandoned. Residents along the route of the chase left their beds and stood on the kerb in their night attire to watch the speeding cars. Crowds were gathering in King and William Streets as the Rolls Royce, estimated to be travelling at more than 80 m.p.h., speeded across intersections regardless of any late traffic. Five high-powered cars were stolen last night and used by the thieves in their night escapade, which extended for nearly eight hours. The value of the cars stolen aggregated £5300.

The Race Starts. The first car was stolen at 8.40 o'clock, last night, and the thieves, two young men, who were accompanied by two young women, drove in the car, and then returned to Glenelg. The girls then left the men, who broke into a garage and stole two cars, each valued at £500. Taking a car each the thieves raced towards the city. On the way one of the cars was abandoned, and a powerful foreign car was taken from the home of Dr. Clifford Roberts Eugene Dowling. It is valued at £1500. Still continuing the race in the stolen cars, the men drove through the city streets to North Adelaide, where Dr. Dowling's car was abandoned, and a Rolls Royce sedan, belonging to Mr. T. E. Barr Smith, was taken. One man remained in a Wolseley car and the other drove the Rolls Royce until the vehicles collided outside the detective office. The Wolseley car was damaged and abandoned. Detectives immediately gave chase in a police car.

They pursued the Rolls Royce to North Adelaide, where they lost sight of it. The car was later seen in another suburb travelling at breakneck pace, whence it roared back into the city.

Tyre Blew Out. Two police cars and 10 motorcycle outfits had now joined the chase. The fleeing car dashed out of the city, and it is believed that a tyre blew out on the railway line. The tyre was torn to shreds and the rim of the wheel was damaged and so overheated that it set fire to the car. The thieves made off on foot and a police net was immediately spread. Later two men were detained.

The story made news around the country being reported as well in 'The Daily News' (Perth, WA), 'The Canberra Times', 'The Argus (Melbourne, VIC), 'The Mercury' (Hobart, TAS), 'The Advertiser' (Adelaide, SA), 'Cairns Post' (QLD), 'Townsville Daily Bulletin (QLD), 'Barrier Miner' (Broken Hill, NSW), 'Examiner (Launceston, TAS), 'Border Watch' (Mount Gambier, SA), 'The Northern Miner' (Charters Towers, QLD), 'Kalgoorlie Miner' (WA), 'The Longreach Leader (QLD).

"JOY RIDE SEQUEL Gaol For Men Who Stole Cars In Adelaide" was reported in 'The Mercury' (Hobart, TAS) 4 March 1937, "In the Adelaide Police Court today, Eric Seeley (21), motor driver, of St. Leonards, was sentenced to imprisonment for 12 months, and Sydney Arthur Nixon, of Camden, to eight months, on charges, which they admitted, of having illegally used five motor-cars on the night of February 24."

"Taking Car to England" was the headline when the 'The Mail' (Adelaide, SA) reported on 13 March 1937, "The damaged Rolls Royce car of Mr. T. E. Barr Smith, jun., will accompany him to England when he leaves in the 'Strathnaver' on March 25. The car, which was valued at £2,500, was damaged to the extent of £1,500 when it was taken by two men a few weeks ago and used on a joy ride, during which a speed of between 80 and 100 m.p.h. was reached. The men were subsequently convicted and sent to gaol. Mr. Barr Smith explained today that it was necessary to take the car to England because the guarantee given him by the Rolls Royce Co. stipulated those repairs to the car should be done only in the company's factory at Derby, England."

[Acknowledgement: This item comes from 'Trove', a National Library of Australia website (trove.nla.gov.au), which provides access to digitised newspapers.]

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