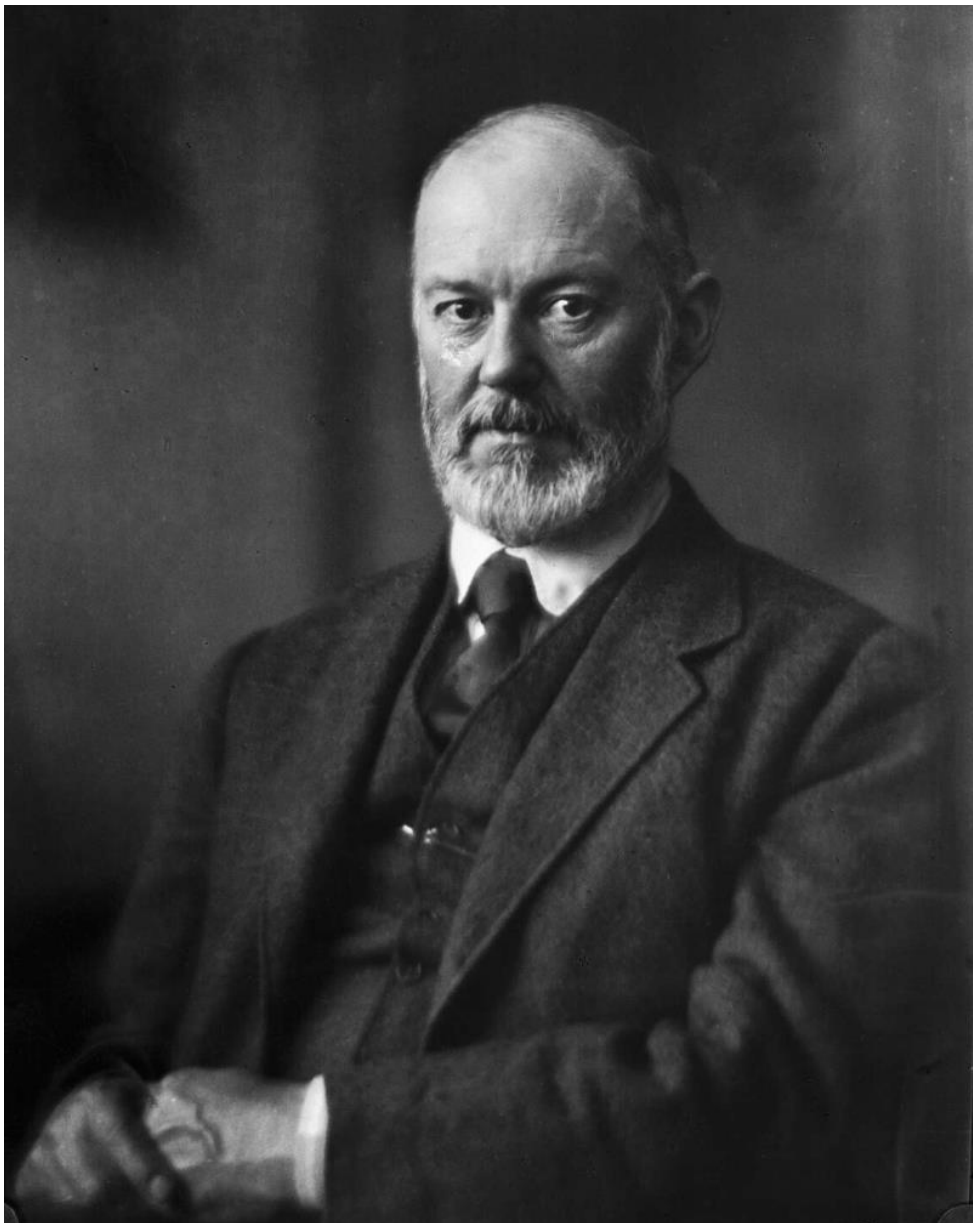


IN THE
REAR-VIEW MIRROR

SIR HENRY ROYCE
SIMPLE FUNERAL



This is the second portrait by Albert Starling that was on display at the luncheon to commemorate the unveiling of the statue of Royce in 1923. It differs from the other Starling portrait in that it is larger and shows Royce's hands. Its whereabouts is not known.

Sir Henry Royce died on 22 April, 1933 and his passing was noted by the Motoring Correspondent in the 24 April, 1933 edition of the London 'Morning Post', Hugo Massac Buist (1878-1966). He was an aviation and motoring pioneer and publicist. Buist was a friend of Rolls and was one of the passengers in the first Royce car in the Automobile Club's Sideslip Trials in April 1904.

"Sir Henry Royce, the man who gave the world not only a motor-car, but also a new word to express superlative excellence, died on Saturday after a lifetime spent in the pursuit of an ideal.

Mechanical perfection was that ideal, and Sir Henry Royce allowed nothing to stand in the way of its attainment. When it came to a point in design, whether of motor-car or aero-engine, his sole criterion was merit. He was impatient with those who put any other point of view, such as that of expediency, and on such occasions he could become an autocrat with whom it was unwise to differ....

In the Rolls-Royce motor-cars the hand of Sir Henry Royce can be traced in the smallest components. Nothing passed him if he thought that there was any means of improving it. His design and experimental engineers were imbued with the same spirit of idealism. Their many years' training under Sir Henry equipped them to carry on the standard he set, and to live up to the motto which he said contained the principle upon which his work was founded: "Whatever is rightly done, however humble, is noble.'

Although his latest and greatest aero-engines have attracted most attention, not only when used in aircraft but also when used in Sir Malcolm Campbell's' record-breaking car, and Lord Wakefield's motor-boat, his earlier aero-engines were almost equally remarkable.

The machine that made the first non-stop flight across the North Atlantic was fitted with two Rolls-Royce engines, and the Bristol Fighters that did such good work in the war were also equipped with Rolls-Royce engines."

The Autocar', on 28 April, 1933 noted, "Sir Henry was one of the few men in whose honour a statue was erected during his lifetime which is testimony to the esteem in which he was held, being in the form of a life-size bronze by the late Derwent Wood, erected at Derby in 1923."



Four wreaths inscribed 'As a token of respect to our great chief' were placed at the foot of a statue of Sir Henry in Derby. They came from the employees at the Rolls-Royce works, who observed a minute's silence at the time of the cremation on 25 April 1933.

As a baronet Sir Henry was entitled by law to have a pall supported by two men, a principal mourner and four others assisting at his funeral. However, he chose a private funeral. His typically precise instructions were carried out to the letter.

Tom Clarke wrote in 'The Roycean', Number 4, 2013, "Royce's body was taken in a Silver Ghost hearse from 'Elmstead', West Wittering, to London by funeral directors Leverton & Sons of north London. The funeral and cremation took place on 25 April in strict privacy at Golders Green cemetery in north London where Royce's brother James had been buried in 1921. In accordance with his instructions there were no flowers and no wreath, no clergyman conducted any service, not a word was said, and apart from funeral staff only two people were present. They were Albert W. Claremont and George H. R. Tildesley, senior partners in Claremont Haynes, the Rolls-Royce solicitors. Albert was the brother of Royce's former partner and brother-in-law, Ernest A Claremont (EAC), and was briefly Rolls-Royce Chairman after EAC's death in 1922. Tildesley went on to marry Royce's companion and nurse Ethel Aubin. It is curious that Royce chose not to be interred near or in his mother's grave in Knutsford (also inscribed to his father) or even back in his birthplace Alwalton which he held in high regards. The funeral might have been conducted in this way to avoid any light being shone on his separation from Lady Royce, still living, or his relationship with nurse Aubin. Lady Royce died in 1936 and nurse Aubin in 1967."



Albert W. Claremont was one of only two mourners at Sir Henry's funeral. [Courtesy of Tom Clarke]

A newspaper report, "The two men who attended – one elderly with a beard, and the other middle-aged – declined to say who they were."

Tom Clarke continued, "The ashes had been willed to nurse Aubin but, after discussion with the company, it was agreed the Royce's heart had always been with his workforce and so the ashes were taken to Derby and placed in a tiled bay inside Royce's original No. 1 Shop (1907, now demolished with most of the factory). This bay accommodated the bust of Royce created by the renowned sculptor William McMillan, R.A, (1887-1977) in 1934 – the bust was later moved, without the ashes, to niches inside the newly-completed Marble Hall in 1938 when this became the main entrance. A later bust of Rolls by McMillan was also installed. Not long after becoming the new General Manager of the company in 1936 (and a director in 1937), Ernest Hives asked Dr. F. Llewellyn-Smith to have the urn interred at St Andrew's Church in Alwalton and this was done on 9 August 1937. A plaque was affixed to a wall, and a marker placed in the floor, inscribed "F H R", to show where the urn is interred. Given that Royce had little religious conviction it is possible a religious service was not held for the occasion although there would have been a blessing."

THE SIR HENRY ROYCE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP IN 1935

Tom Clarke continued, “Royce left an estate worth £112,598.8s.11d, probate granted in London on 6 June 1933 to Albert William Claremont and Ethel Aubin. His will stipulated that a fund of £11,000 be created for research into the common cold and influenza. Called The Sir Henry Royce Research Fellowship at University College, London, it was managed by Aubin and Tildesley for many years and was also awarded for research at Manchester University. The award was £500 per year for a re-newable three-year Fellowship. The first recipient in March 1935 was Charles H. Stuart-Harris, then only 26 but later a professor and knighted. The fund was active until relatively recent times.”

THE HENRY ROYCE INSTITUTE IN 2020

Sir Henry’s name lives on in the 21st century in an ambitious scientific venture as The Henry Royce Institute, operating with its Hub, called The Royce, at The University of Manchester. It is a hub and spoke collaboration and the wheel analogy seems somehow appropriate.

The Hub is The University of Manchester in partnership with UK universities, Cambridge, Imperial College London, Liverpool, Leeds, Oxford, Sheffield, the National Nuclear Laboratory and the UK Atomic Energy Authority.

It is designed to accelerate the invention and take up of new materials systems that will meet global challenges and enhance industrial productivity.



The Henry Royce Institute, described as a Cathedral to Science. The Henry Royce Institute Hub Building on the campus at The University of Manchester is expected to be fully operational in 2021.

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