

A Dozen Rolls-Royce Owners in South Australia in 1926
“J. M. Reid, Victoria Avenue, Unley Park”
1924 Twenty, chassis GRK81, a Barker (UK) Torpedo Cabriolet

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 Symons, Walkerville: T.R. Scarfe, Eden Park, Marryatville: and Miss M. F. Simms, Moseley Street, Glenelg.”

John Marshall Reid (1859-1932) was the principal of the firm of John Reid & Sons, tanners and leather merchants. They operated the Victoria Tannery at Hindmarsh. Born at the Melbourne suburb of Windsor, Victoria, Reid was the second son of John Reid (1832-1888) and Margaret Marshall (1839-1871), both of whom came from Scotland. His father founded the firm in 1873 having previously been a partner in Reid Brothers, tanners of Hindmarsh. Another branch of the Reid family operated the David Reid, Limited, Stirlingshire Tannery also at Hindmarsh.

Below: John Reid, the original owner of GRK81, with his sister-in-law Freda on the left and his third wife Lena on the right. Taken around 1930. [Ancestry.]





Above: A leather medal presented by John Reid & Sons, Ltd, illustrating the factory and showing the date the firm was established in 1873. [Ancestry.]

Reid was educated at Whinham College, North Adelaide. He left the college aged 15 and joined his father in the tannery business. Reid outlived his first two wives. In 1880 he married Eliza Sincok (1854-1904), then in 1905 married Jean Wright (1862-1927) and in 1928 he married Bertha (Lena) Helene Jacobi (1898-1985). He died at his residence 'Tarrangower', Unley Park in 1932.



Above: John Reid was educated at Whinham College on the corner of Ward and Jeffcott Streets, North Adelaide, pictured here in 1894. The building is now a Lutheran Seminary. Note the horse tram. No. 63 was one of the trams of the Adelaide & Suburban Tramway Co. Horse trams ran in Adelaide from 1878 to 1914. [State Library of South Australia.]

Below: Tram No. 63 of the Adelaide & Suburban Tramway Co. pictured here in 1899. By 1907 this company had 90 trams and 650 horses. [State Library of South Australia.]



Reid was involved in a number of community organisations. He was mainly responsible for the establishment of the Hindmarsh Volunteer Fire Brigade in 1884. He was the superintendent for 16 years and retired from the position in 1900.



Left: John Reid in this portrait is wearing the uniform of the Superintendent of the Hindmarsh Volunteer Fire Brigade, a position he held from 1884 to 1900. [Ancestry.]

Below: Members of the Hindmarsh Volunteer Fire Brigade in 1899. Superintendent John Reid is standing on the top row far left on the left vehicle. [State Library of South Australia.]



Reid was President of the Adelaide Bowling Club when in October 1919 with Mrs Jean Reid they welcomed the Governor, Sir Henry Galway, to open the new clubhouse and green. Reid was president of the Club for four years.



Above: John Reid, President of the Adelaide Bowling Club, on the far right delivered an address on 28 October 1922. From the far left is Lady Barwell, then Sir Henry Barwell, Premier of South Australia, Sir Lewis Cohan, Mayor of Adelaide, and Jean Reid. [State Library of South Australia.]

Below: The arrival of Lady Weigall, wife of the South Australian Governor, on the left, Jean Reid centre and John Reid on the far right for the official opening of the J M Reid Children's Playground on 26 November, 1921. [State Library of South Australia.]



In 1921 the Reids made a substantial contribution to the J M Reid Children's Playground in the Port Road reserve at Hindmarsh. Around 1920 the Hindmarsh Municipal Band collected funds to build a bandstand in the Port Road reserve. At the same time Lady Weigall, wife of the South Australian Governor, proposed that a children's playground be built in the reserve. The projects were combined and the Reids donated £1,250 (\$106,000 in 2021 value) towards the playground's construction. At the official opening on 26 November 1921, Reid "Made a felicitous speech", which was reported in Adelaide's 'The Journal', "in which he told the young folk that they were indebted for the playground to a lady like unto a fairy, who had seen their need. Now in one guess he asked, who was the lady? A chorus of Lady Weigall went up from the children. Mr Reid called for three hearty cheers for Lady Weigall, which were lustily given."

Reid was also active in the world of commerce beyond his own industry. He was President of the South Australian Chamber of Manufacturers from 1903 to 1906. In 1924 he went to England as one of the honorary commissioners for South Australia at the British Empire Exhibition held at Wembley Park, London.

Who's Who in Adelaide

(By kind permission of Associated Publishing Service, Australia.)



JOHN MARSHALL REID.

Governing Director of John Reid & Sons, Ltd., tanners. Born at Windsor, Victoria, in 1858. Second son of John Reid, the founder of the firm (1873). Educated at Whinam College, North Adelaide.

Ex-President of Federated Chambers of Manufacturers. Director Colonial Mutual Fire Insurance Co. Honorary Commissioner to the Christchurch International Exhibition, and also Franco-British Exhibition.

Donator of J. M. Reid's Children's Playground at Hindmarsh.

Member of Leopold Lodge of Freemasons and United Ancient Order of Druids.

Hobbies—Bowls and gardening.

Recreation—Reading and writing.

Home address—"Tarrangower," Victoria Avenue, Unley Park.

Left: The subject of this "Who's Who in Adelaide" caricature is John Reid. It appeared in the May 1922 edition of 'Critic' an Adelaide publication produced 1897-1924. The little boy is asking, "What's that one Mr Reid?" to which Reid replied, "That's the Leather Plant, Sonny!"

Note, "Whinam College" should read Whinham College.



Above: Where the money came from. The premises of John Reid and Sons, Limited, at Hindmarsh. [State Library of South Australia.]



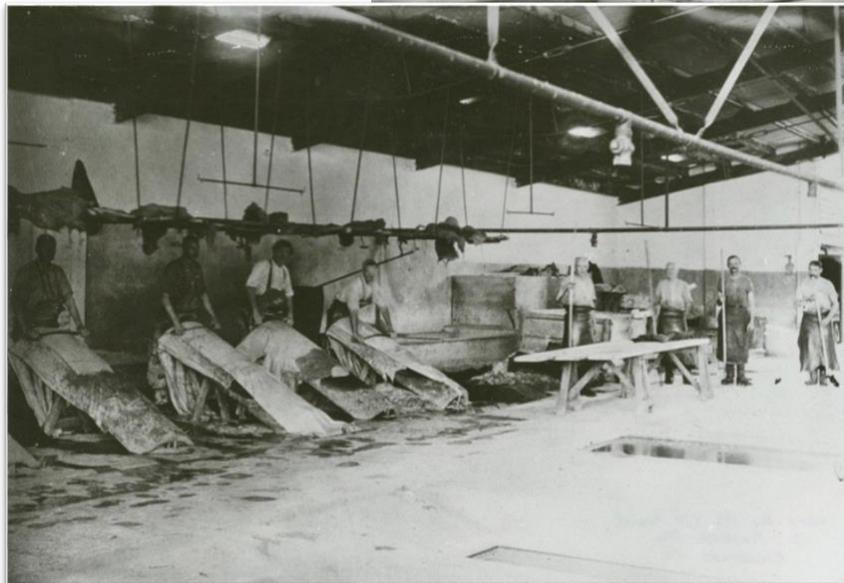
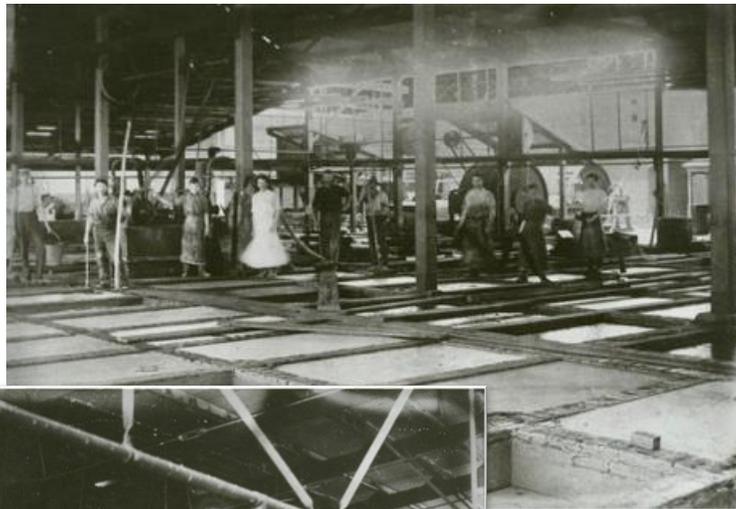
Right centre: A steam engine working at Victoria Tannery, Hindmarsh, about 1910. [State Library of South Australia.]

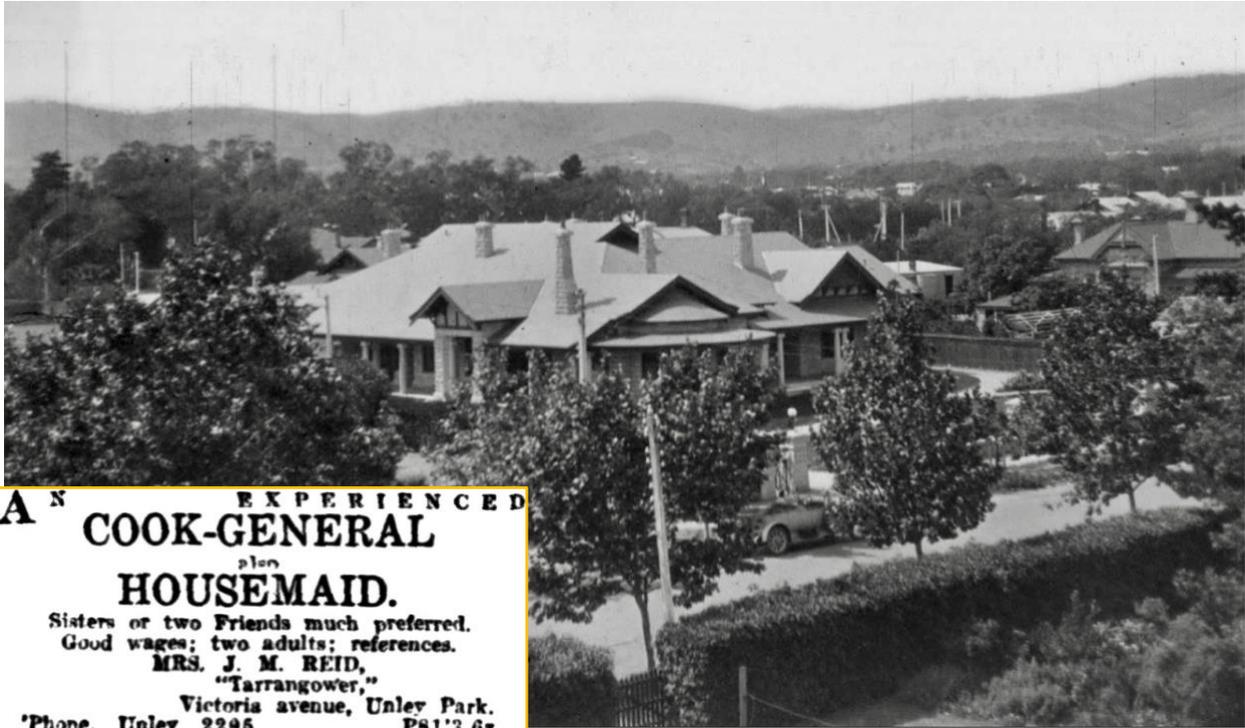


Right below: The Victoria Tannery workshop about 1910. [State Library of South Australia.]



Typical working conditions in a tannery in 1914. These men are working in the David Reid Ltd's Stirlingshire Tannery. [State Library of South Australia.]





Above: 'Tarrangower', 21 Victoria Avenue, Unley Park, was designed for Reid in 1916-17 by the prominent Adelaide architect, John Quinton Bruce. Pictured here in 1928. [Ancestry.]

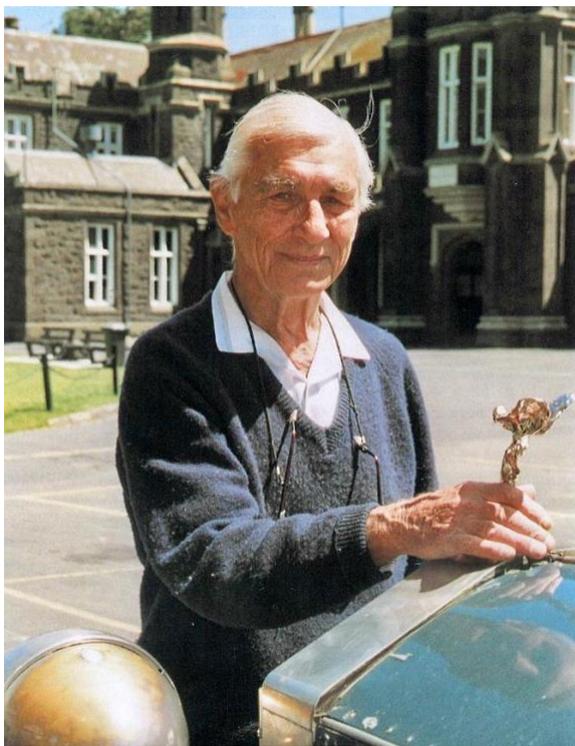
Inset: An advertisement for an experienced Cook-General and Housemaid for 'Tarrangower'. They were provided with accommodation comprising two bedrooms and a bathroom. [Advertisement in 'The Journal', 24 March, 1924.]

Below: The driveway at 'Tarrangower' led to an, "Attractively fashioned building, which accommodates Mr Reid's motors (including the latest Rolls-Royce)." The article continued, "The external walls of the house are specially cut Mount Lofty freestone and the Welsh blue slate roof adds to the harmony of the whole scheme." 16 March, 1925, 'The Australian Home Builder'.]



Chassis GRK81 was sold on 30 July 1924 to Dalgety & Co., 68 Leadenhall Street, London, for J. M. Read Esq. The chassis was "Off Test" on 6 September 1924 and delivered to Barkers on 15 September for the torpedo cabriolet body, their 'Carrosserie Transformable', to be fitted. Barkers were the leading specialist in coachwork on Rolls-Royce chassis. The car was shipped to Adelaide on board the SS 'Beltana' on 12 January 1925. Reid took delivery of GRK81, from the Adelaide Rolls-Royce agents, Motors Ltd, in March 1925.

The registration number SA-44429 for a Rolls-Royce was recorded in the 'Adelaide Observer' on 25 April 1925 for "D. (sic) M. Reid, Unley Park." The car was probably sold after Reid's death in 1932. It was next owned by Hinton brothers and then Alfred C Hughes during the war years, 1939-1945.



Patrick Kane-White (RROCA HLM-1969) purchased GRK81 in 1946 and ten years later both he and GRK81 were at the inaugural meeting of the Victoria Branch on 7 April 1957. At the second meeting on 28 April 1957 Patrick was elected as the first President of the Victoria Branch. He served as the Branch's President again in 1966/67, 1974/75, and 1975/76. Patrick also served as the Federal President 1963/64.

Patrick owned GRK81 for over 50 years during which it covered a prodigious mileage. He drove it from Melbourne to Sydney 12 times and Adelaide 37 times. In all, it is believed that GRK81 clocked up some half a million miles.

Left: Charles Patrick Kane-White (1918-2000) with his beloved 1924 Twenty, GRK81, a Barker Carrosserie Transformable, which he owned for more than 50 years. [Jim Kelso.]

Right: Patrick at the wheel of GRK81 on 8 March, 1962 at the Vintage Car Rally at Kalorama, Victoria. He was competing in the Wiggle-Woggle though whether this manoeuvre is a wiggle or a woggle was not recorded! [RROCA 'Quarterly Magazine', Autumn, 1962.]





Above: GRK81 on the far left was one of six cars at the inaugural meeting of the Victoria Branch on 7 April, 1957. Founded by Wally Vears, he held the first meeting at his home in the Melbourne suburb of Highett. One of the cars had left by the time Wally took this shot. [Wally Vears.]

In 2000 the car passed to Patrick's dear friend and fellow RROCA member Jim Kelso (RROCA HLM-1977), who completed a magnificent restoration. Neil and Louise Matthews (VIC) purchased GRK81 in 2020.



Above: Jim Kelso at the 2006 Orange, NSW, Federal Rally where GRK81 won the Best Pre-war Trophy. [Robert Bruce, Orange.]

1924 Twenty, GRK81, holds a unique position in the history of the RROCA. It has been continuously owned by RROCA members since the first meeting of the Victoria Branch in 1957 and retains its original coachwork in splendid condition.

Below: Jim Kelso's magnificent restoration of GRK81. On each front window frame is a plate inscribed 'Carrosserie Transformable' with the French Brevet Baehr Patent No. 2312. It's an open and closed case. [David Neely.]

