

# The Prodigal Ghost

**A founding car of the RROCA, the Dabee Ghost, chassis 64EU, survives complete and intact despite challenges**



**T**he Dabee Ghost is a prodigal son of the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of Australia, a Silver Ghost that was delivered new to Australia, was one of the Club's foundation cars in 1956, left for a life in the USA in 1958 and returned to the fold in 2002. It has travelled widely here and in America, Europe and South Africa. Through all this, over 101 years, it not only retains its original Australian-made Smith & Waddington body but it resides just 60km from its first home in rural New South Wales.

## The wool baron's choice

WOOL PAID for the 1924 Rolls-Royce chassis 64EU, a four-wheel brake car from the last series of the Derby-built Silver Ghosts. Dabee Station (pronounced Day-bee) was one of the first established in what's now the Rylstone district, in the 1820s, soon after Europeans crossed the Blue Mountains. Former Irish political prisoner Richard Fitzgerald, an emancipated convict, set it up and his descendants still owned it until the early 21st century. In 1923, Robert Fitzgerald Evans (c1875-1954) bought it from the family estate and in subsequent years achieved record prices for his wool clip, which the *Mudgee Guardian* described as "one of the finest wools grown in the world" when reporting on a 1929 sale to a French buyer. In 1924, Evans ordered a Silver Ghost through Dalgety's agency at 136 Phillip St, Sydney, from where the company's Hudson and Essex franchises continued to operate.

Rolls-Royce Ltd had commissioned 64EU as a stock chassis for which an enclosed-drive cabriolet body was intended, but when Dalgety's order came through on 21 November the card was updated to suit Evans' desire for a seven-seat tourer. The factory mistakenly recorded the customer as RE Evans. The chassis had C-rake steering and a nickel finish, at a sale price of £1850. The chassis cards only mention the inclusion of one spare wheel for 64EU, and only one is written on the invoice, but the car seems to have been delivered with two spares.

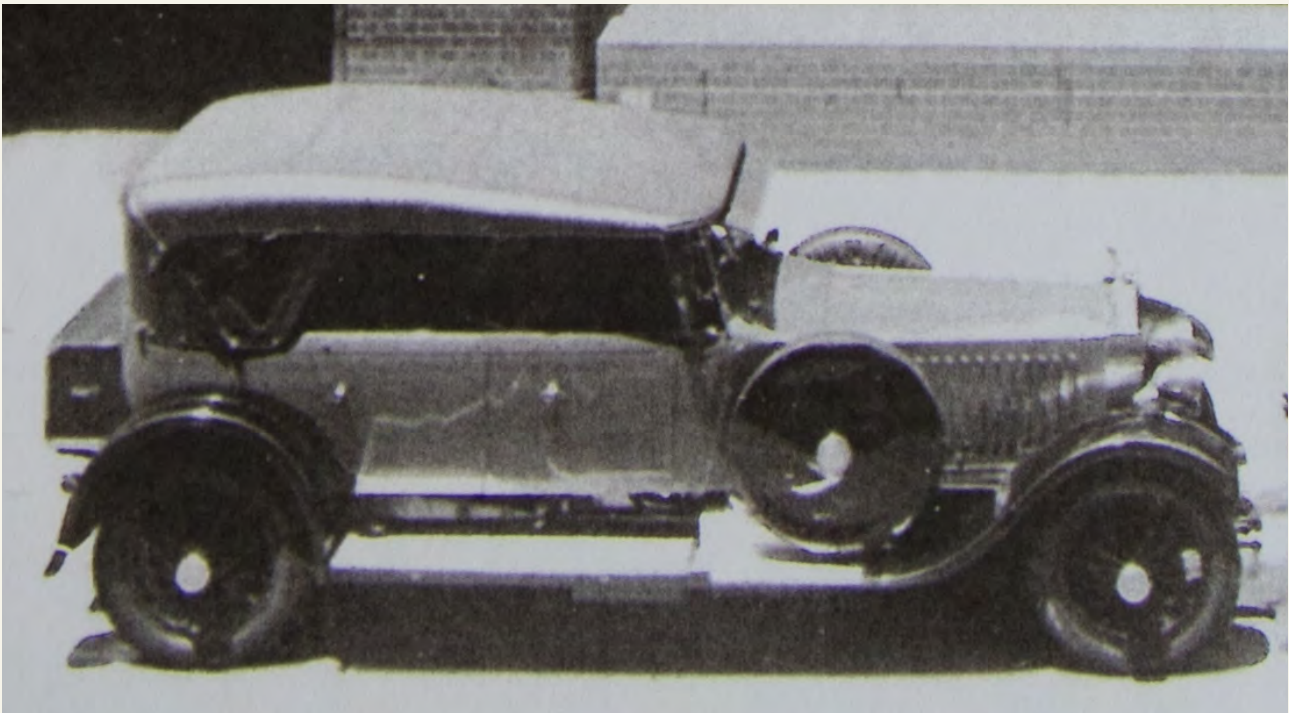
The first entry on the chassis card, written on 28/10/24, noted that the chassis would carry a cabriolet body weighing 13-14cwt (660-710kg), and it specified spring weights to suit. On 25/11/24 the card was revised for the weight of the open touring body, at 8½cwt (430kg). Despite that difference, 64EU was eventually fitted with the same rear suspension springs intended for the cabriolet and with front springs that were another 50lb *heavier*. The spring test card, completed on



64EU at Dabee homestead, near Rylstone NSW, in 2010. This was the car's original home from 1925 until about 1950.



64EU when new in 1925, parked outside the Dalgety agency in Sydney. The Smith & Waddington body is fitted, along with the replacement louvred bonnet sides supplied by the Rolls-Royce factory. The 20hp chassis in front has not been unidentified. Photo courtesy of Ian Irwin.



Enlarging the photo of 64EU outside Dalgety's, some details of the Smith & Waddington body are evident. The colour was said to be bottle green but there is no confirmation of this.

20/12/24, clearly states the chassis was destined for Australia. Perhaps the specification hints at the harsh conditions an Australian car would face compared with an English gentleman's limousine.

The chassis was off test on 29 December 1924 and shipped to Australia a week later. After arrival, it was sent to the renowned Camperdown-based coachbuilder Smith & Waddington Ltd to have its body made and fitted, including some intricate marquetry in the timber cabinets behind the front seat. Smith & Waddington was one of the biggest Australian coachbuilders and occupied a purpose-built, multi-storey factory on Parramatta Rd that still stands today, albeit now housing people instead of workshops.

It may be that the original English-specification bonnet was fitted to the chassis, possibly causing overheating problems, because Rolls-Royce supplied a replacement set of louvred side panels in June 1925. The finished Silver Ghost was eventually delivered to Evans on 11 November 1925, about a year after his initial order. Much later, descendants of Robert Evans remembered it may have been painted bottle green, which is backed to a degree by a black-and-white period photo of it outside the Dalgety building. They have also mentioned a painting of the car beside the Dabee Station woolshed, but in yellow by then.

Incidentally, 64EU is variously described as being a 1924 model or



A period Smith & Waddington advertisement.

1925, probably because of the late-1924 off-test date and its delivery and initial registration in 1925. If you go by Rolls-Royce records, it is 1924, having come off test on 29/12/24, but the NSW authorities have it registered as a 1925 car.

## Country life, war and yachting

THE DABEE Ghost was used extensively. One anecdote suggests it was famous for driving from Rylstone to Sydney and back in just 12 hours, a remarkable feat in the 1920s. Robert's son Dick recalled it as a cold car and when he complained, with snot streaming from his freezing nose, his father said, "It's not cold. Cold won't kill you!" During WWII, with rationing and a desire to not appear ostentatious, Evans put 64EU on blocks and stored it away.

By then, young Dick — Richard Kelynack Evans (1922-2008) — was a RAAF pilot in his 20s, flying Hurricanes and then Thunderbolts against the Japanese in India and Burma. He survived being shot down once, and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. Soon after coming home, he took over Dabee Station and, with it, the Ghost. Dick was a staunch and influential Liberal Party member, and was elected to the NSW upper house from 1969 to 1978.

Late in his life, Dick recalled driving 64EU along New South Head Rd in Sydney, running late to pick up his father in Edgecliff. Being late was something Robert did not approve of, so when Dick saw a tram coming across his path he kept going, hoping the tram would give way. It didn't — they collided. The Rolls-Royce was still drivable, with minor damage to the front, so Dick pulled up just beyond where his father was waiting, hoping the damage wouldn't be noticed. The ploy worked and Dick quietly had the car repaired, only to discover that his father had heard all about the accident on the grapevine anyway. It wasn't the only bingle. At some point, 64EU had to be dragged off an embankment near Rylstone when an Evans family member ran it off the road.

Farming and fine motoring were not Robert Evans' only pursuits. He bought the famous Sydney-based 63-foot staysail schooner *Mistral II* and entered her in the first Sydney to Hobart yacht race in 1945, plus the four subsequent races. Reports suggest Evans was skipper in a nominal sense only, and Frank Barlow was the true skipper. Shortly before the 1950 race, the Sydney *Daily Mirror* detailed the roles of all the crew, saying Evans would



Dick Evans DFC was a RAAF fighter pilot in the Second World War.

have only “special work to perform”.

Many of his adventures — hair-raising and humorous — are documented in *Blue Water Warriors*, the book by Craig Harris on the early Sydney to Hobart events. When Evans sold *Mistral II* in 1951, the *Daily Mirror* described it as Australia’s largest ocean-going racing yacht. Like 64EU, it is a survivor today, one of only two or three yachts from the inaugural race that still exist today. She is being restored at Hobart’s Constitution Dock by the Windward Bound Trust.



RF Evans owned Sydney to Hobart competitor *Mistral II*.

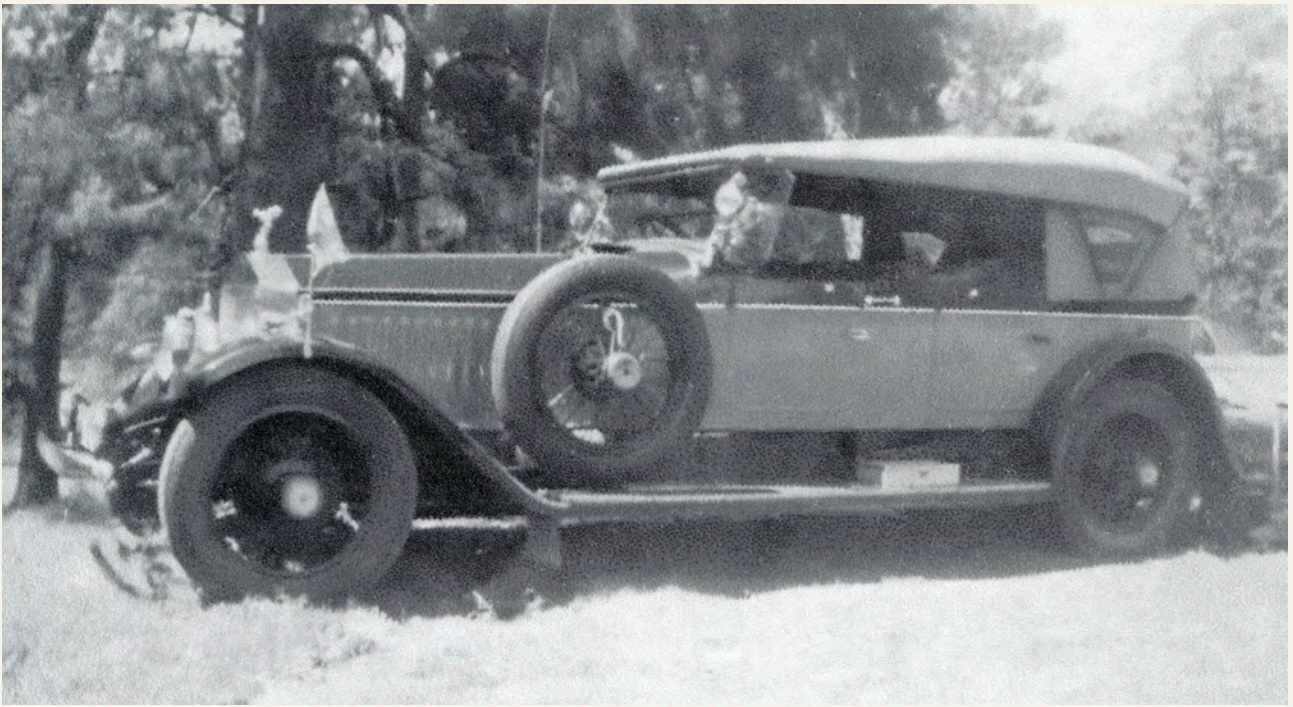
## A new look and life in the big smoke

FAMILY LORE has it that Dick didn’t like the Silver Ghost and struggled particularly with the crash gearbox. He sold it in about 1950. There is a fragment of a letter written decades later by Ken McManus, whose father was the likely buyer. Ken recalls his father saying he’d “found her under a haystack on a farm in Hay [in western NSW], and all it took was a fresh battery to get the engine running”. However, “Hay” is probably a false memory. Dick Evans’ son Gordon, who is now a RROCA NSW member, says 64EU was a bit of a mess under hay in the shed at Dabee when sold. Besides, there is little space in the timeline for a detour to ownership in western NSW.

McManus reportedly did a basic restoration, painting the car black over grey and fitting a new grey top. Ken took photos of 64EU in 1950/51, showing it fitted with a New Phantom grille, chrome strips down the sides, chrome bumper, white-wall tyres and maybe even a radio! In at least two of the photos, there’s



Mr McManus used 64EU as his family car in Sydney for about two years.



McManus gave 64EU a 1950s-style facelift, with lots of added chrome including a New Phantom grille, and a black-over-grey paint scheme with a new grey hood.

what appears to be an aerial sticking up from behind the off-side spare wheel. It also had different side panels on the bonnet, with lower louvres. The Dabee Ghost had become a suburban family car.

“Dad acquired the car just before we moved from a flat at Bondi to a house at Kingsford where he had a garage large enough to house it and I’m pretty sure that we had it for around two years before the impracticality of having this as the only car made it necessary to sell it,” Ken wrote. “I had my first driving lesson in it, a year or two before permit age but Dad was never one to let regulations stand too much in his way.”

## **George Sevenoaks and the RROCA**

MCMANUS POSSIBLY sold the Silver Ghost to Ron Grant, a western Sydney-based vintage and veteran enthusiast. *Rolls-Royce and Bentley in the Sunburnt Country* and *Silver Ghosts of Australia and New Zealand* (SGANZ) both mention Grant as one of the owners in this period, and the timeline would place him here, because the next record we have of 64EU is an entry in the ledger of used car dealer George Sevenoaks (1908-2000), noting he had bought it from a John Gray of Chatswood, unregistered for only £100 on 20 March 1953. SGANZ adds Gray had a farm near Goulburn.

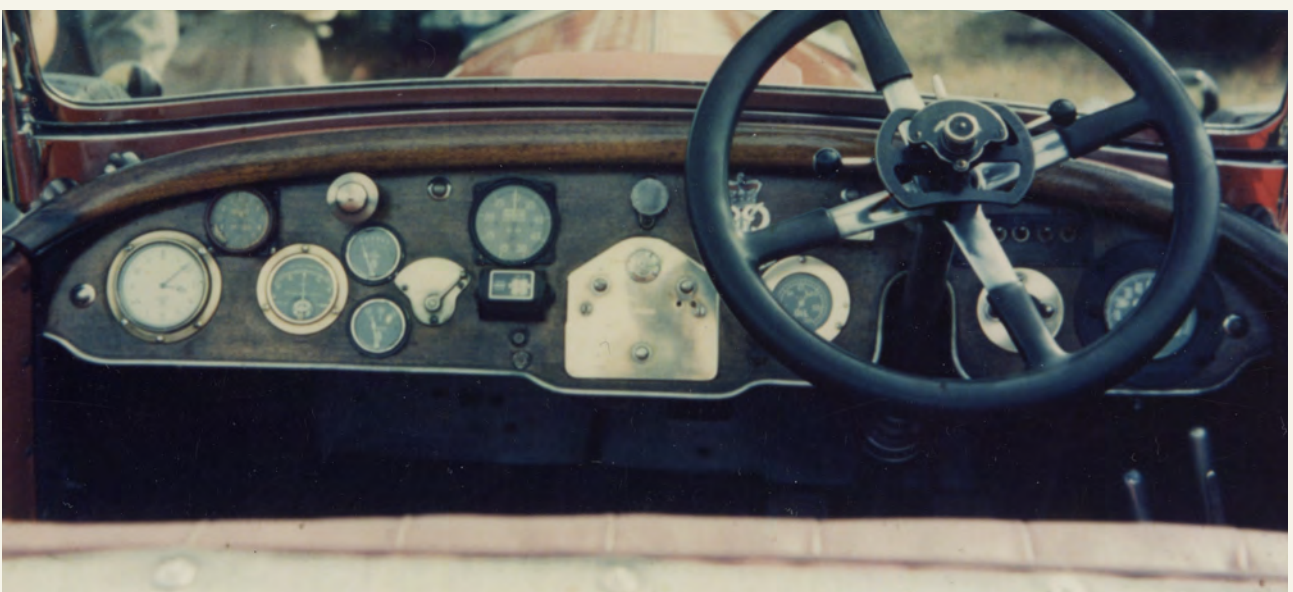
Sevenoaks had established himself as a foremost dealer in prestige brands including Rolls-Royce, Bentley, Hudson, Daimler and more. He was an enthusiast and, from its foundation, a lifelong member of the RROCA. Rather than sell her on, George kept 64EU for five years and drove her extensively.

Photographs taken during Sevenoaks' ownership show 64EU painted red, with red leather inside. The bumper had been removed, a front apron fitted, and the full roof replaced by a folding top over the driver's cabin only and a tonneau for the rear. The grille and chrome strips remained in place; Sevenoaks is often credited with having fitted them, but this seems unlikely unless he had previously owned 64EU, before McManus; there is a suggestion Sevenoaks did own the car twice but I've not found evidence of this.

Notably, photos taken later in this era show a change of headlights. Sevenoaks installed a stately pair of large, high-mounted Zeiss headlamps. SGANZ asserts they were from a Phantom I and RROCA member Peter Limon says it was 1927



George Sevenoaks painted 64EU bright red and added his own styling touches, like the front apron. This photo was taken before the Zeiss headlamps were fitted. Note Evans' dealer licence plate, A669.



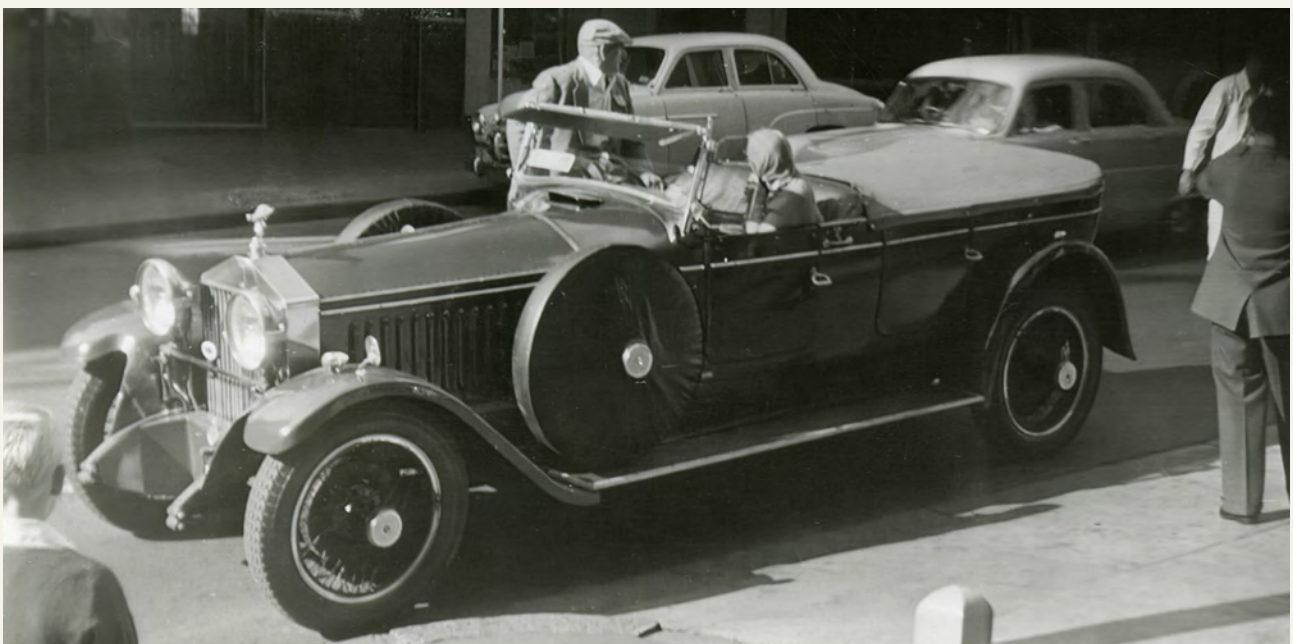
By the 1950s, the dashboard was cluttered with extra gauges. The speedo is of a more modern style than the original AT unit. Note the red upholstery of the seat.

model 57LF, which he owned many years later. Such swaps were not uncommon. 57LF originally wore identical Zeiss lamps, but ended up with headlights that look “too small and close together for a Phantom,” according to Peter. Peter tried to track down 64EU in the US — not so much for the car as for the Zeiss headlamps!

Another 1950s photo reveals a speedometer in the dashboard that is distinctly more modern looking than the original AT unit, as well as a busy array of extra gauges, lights and badges right across the timber panel.



A dapper Sevenoaks at the wheel in the 1950s, with his father-in-law George Heckingbottom standing alongside and a friend, Philip Wilson of Mayville station, Baraba, in the passenger seat.



Ian Irwin, now a renowned Rolls-Royce historian, was a teenager when he took this photo outside Sydney Town Hall. Sevenoaks, standing on the running board, had just completed a vintage car rally in the Blue Mountains. 64EU has the Zeiss headlights in place now.

Sometime between its life on Dabee Station and the late 1950s, 64EU became known as a Windovers tourer, but it's impossible to pinpoint which of its owners might have started it. The Smith & Waddington sill plates disappeared. The Windovers name brought higher status than any Australian body. It is plausible that McManus gave the car this new identity during his restoration, but it also likely it was Sevenoaks, a canny dealer with a sharp eye for an overseas sale, as we shall see. Even if McManus was responsible, Sevenoaks, with his knowledge of prestige cars, surely could not have been blind to the fraud.

A story also circulated at the time that the Rolls-Royce had been used as a plough.

Sevenoaks had owned 64EU for three years when, on 20 June 1956, he and a group of fellow enthusiasts, including Ron Grant, founded the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of Australia. The Ghost is prominent in a photograph taken under the Sydney Harbour Bridge in December 1956 on one of the Club's first runs. In a June 1958 list of cars registered with the NSW Branch, Sevenoaks' 1924 Rolls-Royce is included; chassis numbers weren't recorded but we can take it 64EU was the one.

While Australian Rolls-Royce enthusiasts were celebrating their new community, the country itself was in the throes of its adulation for Betty Cuthbert, a national heroine after becoming our first triple-gold medallist at the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games. A remarkable runner, she not only set world records in a 100m qualifier and a 200m heat, but she won both finals and added her third gold when she ran the last leg of the 400m relay. Two years later, she won two silver medals in the Cardiff Commonwealth Games and was still setting world records, and she added a Commonwealth Games gold in the relay at Perth in 1962 and finally another Olympic gold in the relay at Tokyo in 1964.



On an early RROCA run, 64EU is parked second in line under the Sydney Harbour Bridge. In front is Silver Dawn SDB78, then the youngest car in the club; it is still owned by RROCA members. Photo by Barrie Gillings.



Australian Olympic champion Betty Cuthbert paraded through Parramatta in 64EU.

On 10 December 1956, Betty rode in style when she was given the keys to the city of Parramatta. She paraded along Church Street to the town hall in the back of 64EU, waving to the six-deep crowd. Sevenoaks was at the wheel, with marching bands in front and an unidentified Rolls-Royce behind. You can see a [colour video on Youtube](#).

## An American adventure

VIC HYDE was a man who'd have added comic flare to such a parade. A renowned American performer, he was a multi-instrumentalist and could play four trumpets at once. Hyde was also a quirky motoring enthusiast who became famous for having the largest collection of micro-cars in the USA and owned one of the 12 striking Futurliner buses made by GM. He had joined America's Rolls-Royce Owners' Club (RROC) within a year of its foundation in 1951, becoming a charter member, and in the 1960s served as a director. He toured Australia in 1958 and got to know Sevenoaks, who ended up selling him the Dabee Ghost on 14 July 1958. Hyde named the car Matilda and was sure it was a Windovers tourer.



Vic Hyde took 64EU back to the US with him.

“I drove it around Sydney a lot before shipping to USA ... good photos at Bondi Beach,” he wrote to Sevenoaks in 1993. “I had it shipped to New Jersey port, drove it 800 miles to Michigan, terrible exhaust manifold leak and no charge from dynamo. So at home decided to rectify. Kept taking things off. In that the coachwork was cancered, and the frame gobbled with black enamel over the grease, decided it would be a complete restoration, body lifted. The crankshaft, that is hollow, was jammed up with hard crud.” Hyde did a lot of work in the four years he had the car, but “in a soft moment” sold 64EU for \$US1000 to a neighbour who’d been helping him.

Hyde wrote in 1968 that he’d “had a wonderful time with Matilda ... never drove her over 1500 miles, but my pleasures were four years, every possible night at home spent in redoing components that were worn badly. A thousand times I have rued the sale of her.” In the 1993 letter he concluded, “I have owned over 100 top class auto but the one I have great love for was Matilda.”

The buyer was Sy Morris, a fellow RROC member, who by 1965 was, according to Hyde, “having all the fun, spending a fortune. When completed she will be a 100% 100 point mint original Windover [sic] prize winner. He expects it will be about one more year.” Things didn’t work out that way, though. At some point, Morris sent the chassis to a renowned Rolls-Royce restorer, Joe Loecy, but we don’t know exactly when. In the May 1966 issue of the RROC’s *The Flying Lady*, he



Vic Hyde took this photo of 64EU on the shores of Sydney Harbour. “I drove it around Sydney a lot before shipping to USA,” he recalled of the car he had “great love for”.

advertised the “1925 Windover” tourer as being “disassembled but complete” but with no mention of any restoration work that may have been completed; same again two issues later but this time it was a 1924 model.

Seven months later, in late April 1967, Hyde visited Loecy’s workshop and reported Joe had done a “mint” job of the motor and chassis for \$US7000 and was preparing to tackle the body and trimmings for another \$US5000. The body was delivered to the workshop while Hyde was there. In July that year, Morris ran another ad, this time with a photo of 64EU looking exactly as it had in Australia, with a backdrop that looks suspiciously like Sydney Harbour. This time the ad read, “1925 Windover ... engine rest’d professionally. Body needs att’n.” He repeated the text of this ad in January 1968, this time adding a price of \$7295 for both 64EU and another Ghost project, 1925 Springfield chassis S131MK, “or take Cloud trade”. (S131MK was much later restored to concours condition and is still active in the US today.)

Hyde was a successful entertainer. He frequently towed a trailer full of props and instruments behind his 1958 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud.

Hyde must have been watching, for in March 1968 he wrote to Sevenoaks, first reporting that the “cancerous coachwork ... is piled in a corner” at Loecy’s, and then: “Joe wants another \$7000 to do the body. Sy wants to swap my beautiful Silver Cloud I, 1958, for 64EU. My wife says ‘no’ in that we have blown all our bank account on a new huge museum type building for restoration work on my 25 cars. Time will tell.” Time brought no deal and Morris still owned the Ghost in 1969.

Hyde then heard very little of his Matilda until early 1993 when another RROC member, Millard Newman (1918-2001), approached him “while I was honking away



In the July 1971 edition of the RROC’s *The Flying Lady*, 64EU was pictured (top centre) at the Spring Meet of the club’s North Central Region. It had only recently been reassembled and was owned by Ted Wilkinson. This is the only image to come to light so far from this period.

on my Wurlitzer organ” at a festival. Newman announced he’d just bought 64EU. “I damned near dirtied my pants!” Hyde wrote.

There were two intervening owners documented between Morris and Newman, US RROC members Theodore “Ted” Wilkinson from April 1969, and Richard T Conard from September 1977 until Newman’s purchase. With Wilkinson, 64EU was complete and running, looking freshly restored in a photo from the RROC North Central Region’s Annual Spring Meet in 1971. The black-and-white image shows its body and wheels painted a pale colour, black guards and a light-coloured full canvas roof. It still had its high-mounted Zeiss headlights, and there’s a touring trunk on the rear.

Wilkinson then moved to Florida. His address was only 13 miles by road from where Conard subsequently had the Ghost. We have no documents to prove it, but it is apparent that Wilkinson sold 64EU to Conard.

## Mr Silver Ghost to the rescue?

WHAT HYDE saw at Newman’s house appalled him. A lot had changed on 64EU: the left-side spare wheel was gone, replaced by a “huge spot light on stanchions”; a “rare and valuable Cobra bulb horn ... Sy had pinched it” — this Cobra horn was part of the original 1924 order; radiator grille and chrome trim gone; the Zeiss headlights replaced by smaller ones (possibly the King of the Road lamps fitted to this day); “horrendous” upholstery installed that was “very bulky, bulging unmercifully”; a full top “but not authentic”; and the manifold leak still there, “so Loecy did not do a good rebuild”. You can almost sense the plaintive tone when he concluded, “oh, they have painted Matilda a sick looking cream”.



This photo, taken at what may be Bob Barrett’s place after Newman’s time with 64EU, is at odds with some of the information reported by Vic Hyde in 1993 (see text) in that the Zeiss headlamps are in place. The left-side spare wheel has been reinstated, replacing the spotlight Hyde complained of.

Despite Hyde's comments, there is a photo of 64EU taken in the 1990s with the Zeiss headlamps still mounted; see above.

By some miracle the Smith & Waddington body had survived despite its derelict state at Loecy's. Most of the rot was likely to have been at the very back, because many details shown in 1950s photos are still the same today. Importantly, the beautiful marquetry behind the front seats remained intact, if . Recent investigation revealed some timber below, behind and beside the rear seats had been worked on or replaced, but most of the other timber retains Smith & Waddington numbers or is a match.

Millard "Mr Silver Ghost" Newman had a deep passion for Silver Ghosts. A gregarious and well-known man, he set up his house so that visitors walked in through a display of pristine Ghosts. He organised trans-continental tours of the US, participated in many overseas tours, was a charter member of the RROC and served as its president in the 1970s. He was the founder and first chairman of the Silver Ghost Association (SGA). He completed many top-class restorations and Hyde reported that 64EU was intended to be another.

"Millard is excited like a little boy with a new toy with the Ghost 'Matilda' and said he is willing to spend \$150,000 to make it a prize winning mint show piece," Hyde wrote to Sevenoaks. However, for whatever reason, Newman didn't follow through and kept the car only a couple of years or so. He does not seem to have done very much to it.

By 1995, Newman had sold the Ghost to Robert Barrett (1946-2020) of Angola, NY. Barrett was a vintage and veteran car enthusiast who worked full time repairing and restoring them. However, he barely used 64EU. He completed a few repairs but, "because of the number of others cars I have," didn't make much progress. One photo of 64EU, which appears to have been taken at Barrett's place, shows



After being dismantled in the 1960s, 64EU was put back together with its original body after some restoration work had been completed. A lot of details had been changed, such as headlights, upholstery and hood. This picture was taken by Bob Barrett in about 2000, shortly before he sold it.

the Zeiss lights in place but in others they are gone. The photos suggest Barrett may have been the one who ditched the spotlight and replaced the spare wheel mount, albeit with one that doesn't quite match the original factory mount on the right-hand side and uses a Rolls-Royce hub to secure the wheel.

“When I purchased the car, I only drove it about 10 miles,” he wrote. “I decided then to have some of the components rebuilt, and there it sat.” After Barrett bought 1913 Silver Ghost 2555 from Newman, he advertised 64EU for sale in 1999 as a Smith & Waddington tourer, not the Windovers it had been previously described as.



Pausing outside Villa Mimosa, formerly Henry Royce's home in southern France, during one of several European tours this century.

## Home to Australia

MY FATHER, John Matheson, saw the ads and was captivated by the car's Australian heritage, so got in touch with him. Barrett knew of the reports that 64EU had been used as a plough in the 1950s and was fitted with a Windovers body, but recognised that this was “a serious mistake,” as he told Matheson in a letter. “There is no evidence of this. 64EU has its original Smith & Waddington body, no doubt about it. Also, the car is very complete and includes all the engine pans and transmission pan.”

Barrett may have received little interest from potential buyers as his ads had been running for at least a year by then, and perhaps to encourage Matheson's purchase he got the car running. “I performed a good repair to the intake manifold and installed the rebuilt parts to the engine,” he wrote, adding that he also replaced the coil, ballast resistor and condenser. “The car runs beautifully. Within the past few weeks I have driven the car about 150 miles. I will have no problem in keeping the car if I do not sell it. The four wheel servo-assist brakes are GREAT! The engine will start on the switch in neutral or in second gear on the level.”

A deal was done in late 2000 and Matheson commissioned an initial mechanical restoration at a workshop



Neurosurgeon from “Down Under” Retrieves Aussie-Built Rolls; Enjoys Local Breakfast

John M. Matheson (left) and companion Jeanne Eve, cordially standing still long enough for our Prying Photographer to take a shot of them in the parking lot behind the Friendly  
 ning series of storage compartments in the back of the front seat. The instrumentation was equally impressive.  
 Somehow the Rolls found its way  
 2012, when it has been for about

John Matheson and Jeanne Eve collected 64EU in the USA and entered two events before coming home. This slightly tongue-in-cheek article appeared in the *New Hampshire Gazette* on 28 June 2002.

in Kansas. He and Jeanne Eve began their time with 64EU by driving 3000 miles in 2002 on an SGA Wholly Ghost Tour of New England followed by the RROC Annual Meet in Virginia — but not without troubles. They then shipped the Ghost home to Australia to complete the restoration. They chose the Primrose over black colours that it now wears, and had the front seats re-upholstered in the same bulky style that Hyde had complained about but which is exceptionally comfortable for touring. An electric overdrive was fitted, as well as air and oil filter systems available from the SGA. Apart from what's been mentioned above, the only other thing of note was that the speedometer was now a white-faced Smith's unit.

Soon after, RROCA member and historian Ian Irwin gave Matheson an original Smith & Waddington sill plate from his collection. Matheson had three copies made, along with a dashboard plate, and they were screwed into their rightful places. The Dabee Ghost finally had its Smith & Waddington identity back again.

Inveterate and adventurous travellers, John and Jeanne had already done extensive overseas and local touring in Rolls-Royces and Bentleys. They twice shipped 64EU to Europe, driving it on 20-Ghost tours to France (2004) and to the Nordic and Baltic countries (2012); to the 2012 RREC Annual Rally; and, best of all, on the RREC's 2013 Centenary Alpine Trial. The car proved a dependable and comfortable tourer, and they clocked an estimated 50,000 miles. They owned 14 marque cars over the years but 64EU was the favourite, just as it was for Vic Hyde.



John Matheson clears ice from the windscreen of 64EU while crossing Pordoi Pass in a storm during the European Alps during the 2013 RREC Centenary Alpine Trial. Photo by Jeanne Eve.



As restored by John Matheson and Jeanne Eve, looking bright in Primrose paint.

“The Australian history of the Ghost, and the travelling we did in it, made it special,” Jeanne said. “It was also the one we put the most effort into, importing it from the US, restoring it and taking it to so many places.”

In 2014, they passed on 64EU to Anne Baker and me. To date, we have travelled 23,000 miles in it and don’t plan to give it up. One of our memorable moments was taking the aforementioned Gordon Evans for a ride along with his son and grandson; five generations of the Evans family have now ridden in this car. With us, the Ghost resides only 60km as the crow flies from its original home at Dabee Station. In this area, it was once a very well-known car and on two occasions older locals recognised it as “Dick Evans’ car”. Two months after its 100th birthday, it completed a 2200-mile (3500km) tour to Tasmania and back.



On the Hay Plain, which 64EU has crossed several times — but it has surely never been derelict there under a hay stack, despite the stories!

Mechanically, everything is good; we had a new intake manifold made which finally cured the leak that had intermittently troubled the car since 1958. The body is due for freshening up, hardly surprising some 60 years since the last time it was lifted from the chassis.

Over its 101-year life, it has virtually been around the world and back. The Dabee Ghost has mixed with wool barons, fighter pilots, Olympic champions and a range of notable characters in the Rolls-Royce community, and has had an association with Rolls-Royce clubs that's as long as the RROCA is old. It has had rebuilds, restorations and re-decorations, but it is the same Australian-bodied Rolls-Royce delivered new to RF Evans in 1925.

*Major sources: Personal documents of previous owners; Rolls-Royce and Bentley in the Sunburnt Country, by Tom Clarke and David Neely; Silver Ghosts of Australia and New Zealand, Cameo Histories of the Post-Armistice Cars, by Ian Irwin (post-war volume); miscellaneous articles and references in Praeclarum (RROCA), London & Derby (RROCA-NSW), The Flying Lady (RROC), Silver Ghost Tourer (SGA); archives of the Sir Henry Royce Foundation, Australia; Rolls-Royce Ltd Derby chassis cards; RROC Inc Archives; 20-Ghost Club archives; Rolls-Royce Foundation (USA) archives; Dalgety Archives; The Noel Butlin Archives, Australian University, Canberra.*

*Thanks especially to Tom Clarke, Ian Irwin, David Neely and Jeanne Eve for assistance and encouragement.*

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Now more than 100 years old, 64EU has a diverse and interesting history. It is surprising but fortunate that it has retained its original Smith & Waddington body.