

"The Most Magnificently Startling Rolls-Royce"

1933 20/25 h.p. GYZ6 Park Ward 'Continental' Saloon

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Our appreciation of older model Rolls-Royces is often enhanced by contemporary accounts. This is certainly so in the case of GYZ6, with a description penned over 80 years ago under the heading, "A ROLLS THAT IS DIFFERENT", in the 23 November 1933 issue of the Sydney newspaper, 'Referee'.

"The most magnificently startling Rolls-Royce in Australia. Startling is the word - imagine a Rolls with a pastel blue and aluminium colour scheme! But the lines of the magnificent fittings take away what, in another car, would be genteel garishness. That sounds rather paradoxical, but the fact is that the appearance of the job leaves one in a dither. It is a 20/25 with a short-coupled saloon by Park and Ward, of London. It is the property of H. Arnott."

Harold L. Arnott (1888-c1971) was a member of the Sydney biscuit manufacturing family enterprise commenced by his grandfather, William Arnott, in 1865. In addition to owning a fine Rolls-Royce, Harold had a fine residence and a magnificent motor cruiser, on which, as we shall see, he faced peril close to home during the Second World War.

Harold and Nellie Arnott had two sons and a daughter. Haden Edwin (1913-2004) who served as a Sub-Lieutenant in the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) from 1942 to 1946. Terence Harold (1914-1988) who was a Lieutenant in the Royal Australian Navy in the Second World War and was mentioned in dispatches in March 1943 for, "Good service in towing a merchantman to safety." Their daughter, Laura Dorothea was born in 1917.

As part of a prosperous Sydney family Harold and Nellie enjoyed a fine house, 'Brockby Lodge', in the fashionable Sydney suburb of Strathfield. Designed by architect A L Buchanan, it is an Arts and Crafts mansion built in 1923. Harold was also able to pursue his interest in boating and deep-sea fishing. In 1938 he commissioned Messrs. Hayes and Son of Careening Cove to build a power cruiser 63 feet long, with a beam of 16 feet. It was described in 27 July 1938 issue of 'The Sydney Morning Herald', "It will have a diesel engine of 100 - horsepower, which will give it a range of 1,000 miles under power alone. It will also carry 1,700 square feet of sail. Its two masts will be 84 ft and 50 ft in height respectively. Among the facilities on board will be a nine-valve radio set, a cooking stove and refrigerator, and a fireplace in the saloon. A hot-water service for the bath and

shower will be served by a non-explosive gas shipped in cylinders. The bathroom and galley are tiled and the saloon and cabins are in polished rosewood. An open cockpit aft is fitted with two chairs for big-game fishing." The Sydney newspaper, 'The Sun' reported on 9 November 1938 that it was launched on that day and named 'Lauriana' after Harold and Nellie's daughter.

The 'Lauriana' was at anchor off Sydney's Palm Beach where the family enjoyed a Christmas party in 1938 in this idyllic summer setting.

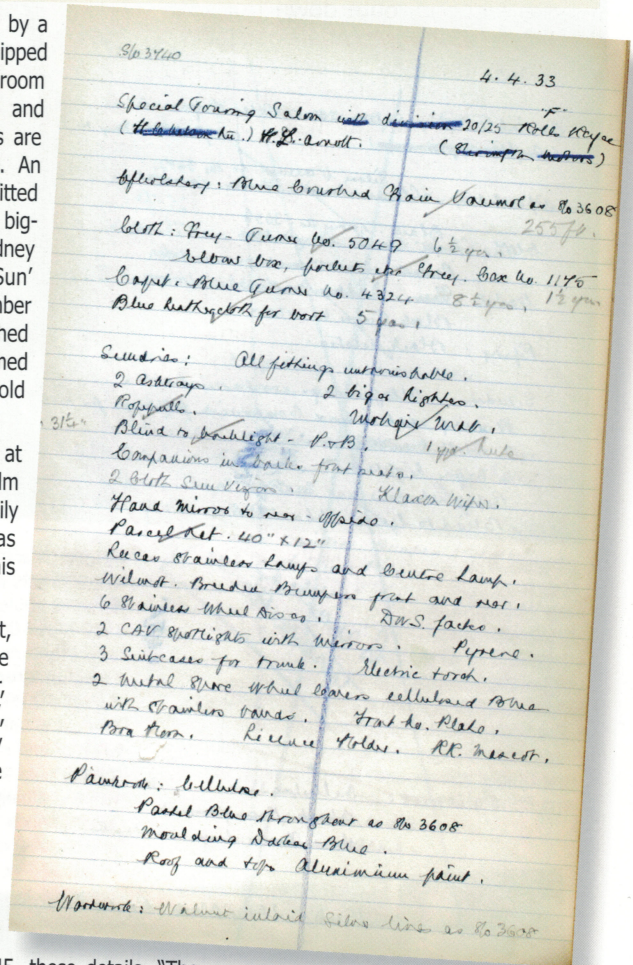
In marked contrast, in 1942 during the Second World War, HMAS 'Lauriana', now a naval auxiliary patrol vessel in the RAN, gave the first alarm of the Japanese midget submarine attack on Sydney Harbour. The Adelaide "News" reported

much later, in July 1945, these details, "The Lauriana, skippered by its owner, the biscuit manufacturer, Mr. Harold Arnott, was near Sydney Heads, unarmed when the submarines entered late on the night of May 31, 1942. The crew said the first warning was a terrific explosion as a midget submarine a mile from the Lauriana blew itself up. A few minutes later the Lauriana's forward lookout reported a break in the water and by searchlight the crew saw the tip of a conning tower. The Lauriana signalled a navel minesweeper, which rushed across and dropped depth charges." Three midget submarines were ultimately destroyed but not before a torpedo fired at the US cruiser 'Chicago' was deflected and sank the depot ship HMAS 'Kuttabul', killing 21 sailors, 19 RAN and 2 Royal Navy.

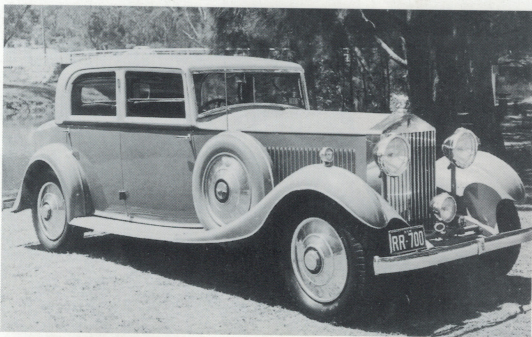
HMAS 'Lauriana' also served in New Guinea where one naval volunteer related his experiences after the war was over, in the January 1946 edition of the Perth 'Western Mail', "Got a bit of a break when posted to Lauriana, a 64 - foot launch, owned by 'Biscuits' Arnott, who had the best of everything installed - refrigeration, electric fans, etc. He was a good sport, too, and every month we received a large tin of Arnott's mixed biscuits." Sub-Lieutenant H.E. Arnott, Harold's eldest son, assumed command of HMAS 'Lauriana' on 10 October 1945. In November 1945 a RAN monthly report indicated, "This vessel is to be paid off and returned to the owner."

A stunning Rolls-Royce, an architect designed Arts and Crafts style mansion and a luxurious motor cruiser make up this remarkable story of Harold Arnott and his family in peace and war.

[My thanks to Tom Clarke for corrections/suggestions and especially to Colin Hughes (UK) who provided a colour photograph of the original colour scheme of GYZ6 so we can see what so enthralled our newspaper correspondent in 1933.]



above: The Park Ward finishing instructions for GYZ6. Note for "H.L. Arnott". [Courtesy of Colin Hughes (UK)]



left upper: 1933 20/25 h.p. GYZ6 Park Ward 'Continental' saloon, Body 3740, first owned by Harold Arnott, is pictured here in the 1950s while owned by George Sevenoaks. Unfortunately, it was in a very poor condition by the 1980s and went to the Philippines in the 1990s for restoration. [Courtesy of George Sevenoaks via Judith Merlin]

left: This photograph by Colin Hughes (UK) shows 20/25 h.p. GEX76, Body 3608, restored with its original colour scheme. It illustrates the colour scheme that so enraptured our newspaper correspondent in 1933 because as Colin explained, Park Ward did a number of bodies in this colour scheme. He kindly provided the Park Ward finishing instructions for the entry for 3740, the body on GYZ6, "Paintwork: Cellulose. Pastel Blue throughout as 3608. Moulding Darker Blue. Roof and top Aluminium paint."

