

THE SPIRIT OF ECSTASY

THE STORY OF
THE ROLLS-ROYCE RADIATOR MASCOT



BY DAVID HARDING

A SUPPLEMENT TO THE GHOST CLUB MAGAZINE

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DAVID HARDING

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PREFACE

This document was precipitated by a friend who, just before Easter 1994, responded to a quiz on radio but was eliminated by a question on the name given to the Rolls-Royce radiator mascot. He had often heard me refer to it as *The Spirit of Ecstasy* and gave that as his answer but the adjudicator stubbornly insisted it is called *The Flying Lady*.

What my friend should have done (knowing both names are legitimate) was concede the point, answer the remaining questions and scoop up the prize - dinner for two at a high-class restaurant with transport there and back in a vintage Rolls-Royce, and I would have been delighted to accompany him, of course! But instead he stuck to his guns, forfeited the prize and, next day, came to me seeking further information.

At the time, my knowledge on the mascot was sketchy so I began scouring the books on my shelves and had soon written a summary of the information thus obtained. But my research had given rise to a number of questions and I sent a copy of the summary to André Blaize, in the hope he could provide some answers.

André told me the story of the mascot had already been written in the *Ghost Club* magazine but this was before I joined and there were no spare copies of the relevant issue, GC7. He did, though, send a copy of its text and what's more,

to my surprise, invited me to submit my more-detailed article for publication in a future issue, for the benefit of newer members.

Just then, a serious illness intervened and compelled me to set the article aside. However, it was never far from my mind and in the following months, even as my medical treatment proceeded, I started searching for books and other likely sources of answers to the remaining questions. The search was not without success and the outcome is the document here before you.

What I have done is summarise information set down by others and I hasten to acknowledge my debt to these authors and their publishers. But my document may be of merit in that it embraces all the essentials in a single publication instead of being spread over several, some of which are out of print and - as my experience showed - now difficult and costly to obtain.

Instead of submitting it for inclusion in the magazine, in which space is always at a premium, and to save putting extra work on André, I decided to publish and print the document here and post it direct to members. This was done without notifying André, so it will come as a complete surprise to him as it has to everyone else and I hope each of you excuses my impertinence!

David Harding,
Sydney.
February 1995.

INTRODUCTION

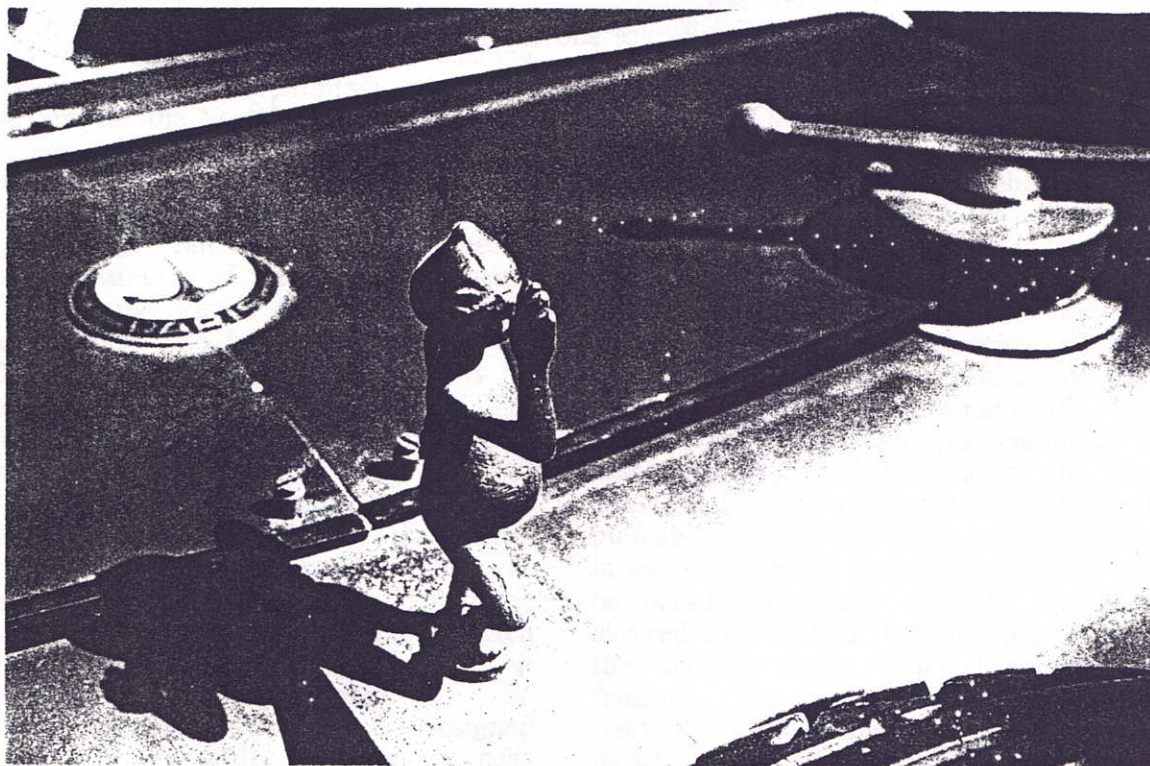
In the early days of motoring, radiators were typically placed at the front of the cars and their filler caps were often surmounted by water temperature indicators. But by the time of the first Rolls-Royces, in 1905, water temperature gauges had become commonplace, positioned conveniently close to the driver. This improvement left the radiator caps bare and eventually, as an expression of individuality, car owners started decorating them with ornaments known as radiator mascots.

At the time, cars were very much a plaything of the rich but it was noted that many owners, notwithstanding their wealth, had such bad taste that they would fit anything in the guise of an ornament; and while some mascots reflected an eye for aesthetics, all too frequently the choices were silly things such as

golliwogs, cats, comic policemen or even lewd depictions of the female form.

These latter did not amuse the directors of Rolls-Royce so in 1910, by when they realised the fad was not going to simply go away (it was, in fact, near its zenith), they authorized their Commercial Managing Director, Claude Johnson, to commission the design of a mascot that would be entirely in keeping with the dignity of "the best car in the world" (a slogan conferred not by Rolls-Royce themselves but by a journalist). What follows, then, is the story of this mascot.

This, however, is no ordinary story; it is, as Paul Tritton has written¹, the most romantic of the many legends that add a touch of fantasy to the Rolls-Royce story itself. And this legend, unlike some of the others, is founded on fact.



This cheeky brat is typical of the mascots that so-offended Rolls-Royce. When last seen, he was riding on not the radiator cap but the tail of a Bugatti, in Australia; and a reward may be on offer from Crewe for his capture? (Photograph: the author's collection)

¹ John Montagu, *Motoring Pioneer and Prophet*, (Golden Eagle/George Hart)

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THE LEADING CHARACTERS

For a proper appreciation of the story of the mascot, it is necessary to know something of its leading characters and the chain of events that brought - and was to hold - them together in friendship and business alike. This chain began long before the conception of the mascot and, indeed, some years before the advent of Rolls-Royce itself; and it will be seen that the key link was Claude Johnson.

Claude Johnson had been among the very pioneers of motoring in England and in 1897, having proven himself to be a talented administrator and publicist, became the inaugural secretary of the recently founded Automobile Club of Great Britain and Ireland. Under his administration, the club prospered and he was soon compelled to hire an assistant, a 17 years-old beauty named Eleanor Velasco Thornton. Note the name for she eventually became the heroine of our story.

JOHN MONTAGU

In that same year, 1897, a dashing politician named John Montagu (the Tory member for the New Forest Division, and the son of the first Lord Montagu of Beaulieu) was given his first ride in a car and immediately succumbed to the delights of motoring. But with the ride came an abrupt awareness of the legal impediments strewn in motoring's path, and Montagu was appalled. So he set about using his influence in the House of Commons to obtain a better deal for motorists; this, naturally, bringing him into contact with Claude Johnson. The next year, Montagu bought his first car and in 1899, at Johnson's instigation, joined the Automobile Club. Within months, he was made a member of the club's committee and thus it was that Johnson and Montagu found themselves closely bound in endeavour as well as friendship.

In December 1902, Johnson resigned from office at the Club, to enter business with another of motoring's pioneers, the celebrated racing driver, the Hon. C.S. "Charlie" Rolls. C.S. Rolls & Co., as the business was named, were purveyors of quality cars to the aristocracy and the wealthy and, at the time, sold only European cars. But the partners yearned,

for patriotic reasons, to represent English marques, if only one meeting their high standards could be found. In 1904, their wish came true, when an engineer in Manchester, Henry Royce, built three 2-cylinder, 10 H.P. cars which, although small, were of hitherto undreamed-of refinement, smoothness and silence. Rolls, an astute judge of cars, immediately contracted to take as many of these Royce cars as could be produced, while the clever hand of Johnson may be seen in their endowment of a double-barreled name as was then fashionable; this being, of course, Rolls-Royce. The first so-named cars, bearing their soon-to-become-famous radiator shell, were offered in 1905.

Simultaneously, larger models were developed and when these, in terms of refinement, proved equal to or better than the smaller ones, a new company was enthusiastically formed; this being Rolls-Royce Ltd and officially registered in March 1906, with Claude Johnson as its Commercial Managing Director. It was one of these larger cars, the 40/50 HP, or *Silver Ghost* series, that established the Company's reputation and for which, of course, the mascot of our story was initially created.

ELEANOR THORNTON

John Montagu, in the meantime, had remained a committee member of the Automobile Club but additionally, in 1902, decided to begin publication of a new motoring magazine, called *The Car Illustrated*. His experience in the field of publishing was quite limited and he was, in any case, busily engaged in politics; so he persuaded Eleanor to help and later allowed that without her untiring efforts, the venture might never have reached fruition. The fact is, Eleanor had, right from the start, shown uncommon ability in her duties at the Club and her quick intelligence had turned her into what we now call a career woman.

For the record, Eleanor resigned from the Club just before Claude Johnson, but there is every reason to think he followed her subsequent activities with great interest. For, what we now know is that

Eleanor and John Montagu were more than mere business associates; they had become lovers and were completely devoted to each other.

John Montagu was already married but had no desire to divorce his wife, so marriage to Eleanor was out of the question. Yet we can be sure that Johnson and other close friends knew of the romance and it is a measure of the esteem in which both parties were held that the secret was revealed only long after Lord (John) Montagu's passing, in 1929.

It is also worth recording that some 50 years later, another, deeper secret came to light when Edward, the present Lord Montagu, commissioned a candid biography of his father and it was therein revealed that Eleanor had given John Montagu a daughter.

To the world at large, though, Eleanor remained known and respected as Lord Montagu's private secretary, and a very competent one at that. As well, her dark Spanish eyes and long raven hair attracted much attention, while she dressed stylishly and knew how to make the most of the flowing gowns and large, flamboyant hats that were then fashionable. Eleanor was indeed a popular figure in London society.

But she led a double life and in private her existence bordered on the Bohemian. She dwelt in a large group of buildings that had been converted into live-in artists studios and since it is said she was of a free-spirited outlook and hated wearing clothes, it may safely be assumed she was perfectly used to posing - probably nude - as an artists model.

CHARLES SYKES

Little wonder, then, she became a favourite of the artist who, at the inception of *The Car Illustrated*, had been appointed its chief illustrator. This was Charles Sykes, the fourth and last of our significant characters, who was another of Johnson's friends and had been introduced by him to John Montagu. It is said Sykes wasn't a keen motorist at first, but John Montagu must have had an eye for hidden talent, since Sykes' drawings immediately proved to be an outstanding feature of the magazine; which, incidentally, covered all forms of mechanised transport including

railways and aviation and was deliberately aimed at the Upper Crust. As a matter of interest, John Montagu's wife Cis, under the pseudonym *The Goddess in the Car*, contributed notes on fashionable ladies' motoring attire, a novelty in magazines at this time, and I expect these notes were accompanied by drawings by Sykes. Was Eleanor his model in these, I wonder?

Be that as it may, it is known that Sykes used her frequently. In one famous painting, she is clearly identifiable as Martha washing the feet of Christ, while another of his works - a statuette of Phryne, the celebrated courtesan of ancient Athens - featuring Eleanor, was exhibited at the Royal Academy.

There remains only one thing more to add to this chapter. From the time of his first car in 1898, John Montagu's preferred marque was Daimler but in 1906, undoubtedly as a result of his friendship with Claude Johnson and Charlie Rolls, he purchased a Rolls-Royce, one of the four-cylinder, 20 HP cars; and, in 1908, the first of his four Silver Ghosts. Thus it was that the artist Sykes became used to travelling aboard Rolls-Royces and appreciative of their admirable qualities of smoothness and silence. . . and so too did Eleanor Thornton.



Eleanor Thornton wearing a hat typical of the era, while posing as an artists model.

THE MASCOT

When, in 1910, Claude Johnson was authorized to commission a mascot for Rolls-Royce, he naturally turned to his friends John Montagu and Charles Sykes. Montagu, incidentally, was by then the second Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, having been elevated to the peerage in 1905 when his father died. But this had little or no effect on his motoring activities; *The Car Illustrated* continued as before and his endeavours on behalf of motorists were now conducted from the House of Lords.

At first, it is said, they were of a mind for a mascot synthesising the qualities of the *Silver Ghost* and the distinctive Grecian shape of its radiator shell; the Greek goddess of victory, *Nike*, being a possibility. But her martial airs were considered too majestic and dominating, so they turned to something a bit more subtle which, fortuitously, happened to be not far from hand, as follows:

A year or two earlier, Sykes had presented to Lord Montagu a personal radiator mascot, for which his model had been none other than Eleanor Thornton. This mascot was called *The Whisper*, an appropriate name, given the secret behind its origins. Four were cast and two of these are still owned, but rarely used, by Edward Montagu. *The Whisper* depicts, in the *art nouveau* style of the time, a shapely woman in gossamer raiment, leaning forward tip-toe on one leg and holding a silencing forefinger to her lips; and it was much admired.

Now, this suggests to me that Johnson and Sykes had for some time been dwelling on the matter of mascots. It was Johnson who first brought to the Rolls-Royce board's attention the craze for silly mascots and I suspect that *The Whisper*, Sykes' first mascot, was but a lead-up to their ultimate goal - a mascot of enduring distinction and beauty for Rolls-Royce. What is certain is that *The Whisper* was the basis for Rolls-Royce's mascot, but this time the woman's arms were swept back and seemingly bewinged by her flowing raiments.

By now, Miss Thornton was 31 years-old and, while attractive, was not really the slender woman depicted by Sykes;

hers was more the Juno-esque figure then so beloved by artists. Also, the mascot's face isn't really the image of hers so from time to time, the question is put: might someone else have posed for Sykes?

Well, according to Jo Phillips (Sykes' daughter), it was Eleanor who posed for the mascot and it is unlikely, if not impossible, he would have chosen anyone else. Edward Montagu even wonders whether his father himself might have proposed she be chosen for the task. Actually, though, the lack of definite identity in the mascot can be explained as follows: it was an idealised figure that was created, not the precise reproduction of a lady, who would in any case have been at a loss if asked to maintain the necessary pose for any length of time. And I mischievously wonder if Eleanor herself may have asked Sykes to trim her of a measure of excess baggage!

It was suggested, via the letters pages of *Motor Sport* in 1976-77, that a French woman named Violette Raphoul (a friend of Sykes' wife Jessica) might have posed for the mascot; and I'm sure there have similarly been other contenders, one of whom might indeed have been the model but... we have no proof. The truth will probably never be known and the most likely candidate remains, to this day, Eleanor Thornton. My final thoughts are these:

I'm reminded of the closing scenes in



The Whisper

the film *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence*, when an old newspaper hack proffered the following pearl of wisdom to his cadet journalist: "Son," said he, "When it finally comes to a choice between the truth and the legend, always print the legend." So, until somebody comes up with a better legend than the one here set down. . .

*

The mascot was at first called *The Spirit of Speed*, a name earlier given to a painting Sykes had produced for the cover of *The Car Illustrated*. But as has already been noted, Johnson had a flair for publicity - he used to give names to certain Rolls-Royces, for instance, on the basis that the public would thereby the better remember each car's achievements in racing or trials - and in a letter to Lord Montagu he wrote that when Sykes designed "the graceful little goddess", he had in mind "the spirit of ecstasy, who has selected road travel as her supreme delight and alighted on the prow of a Rolls-Royce car to revel in the freshness of the air and the musical sound of her fluttering draperies". Thus the name was struck: *The Spirit of Ecstasy*, and it was only recently we were reminded of the almost-forgotten original name.

In America and some other countries, the mascot is called *The Flying Lady* and Rolls-Royce doesn't like this (not least because she hasn't got wings!) but accepts the name, for legal reasons to do with protection of copyright. In Roßfeldt's book (please see my list) the name *Emily* is mentioned but this, thank Heaven! is seldom heard. However, the imp in me laughs heartily when told that at the time of the mascot's introduction, the pundits named it *Eleanor in her Flowing Nightie!*

*

I can't say whether Johnson's fellow directors at Rolls-Royce knew the background to the story as described in this document but they were mightily pleased with the new mascot and instructed Sykes to commence production of replicas. These were cast, one at a time, by a centuries-old technique known as the *lost wax process*, an expensive method but the only one that would meet the high standards demanded by Rolls-Royce; and

each one was signed on its completion by Sykes. In fact, Sykes (and later his daughter Jo) was responsible for every one of the thousands of mascots made until 1948, since when they have been made by Rolls-Royce's own craftsmen.

Credit should be given to Sykes' assistants, too, since without them the task may have been impossible. Their duties included detailed preparation of the wax figures used in the casting, while the first foundryman, an Italian artist named Angeloni, would cast the mascots and then pass them on to Sykes for polishing and final retouching. When Angeloni died, his place was taken by a Jersey craftsman named Lemonnier who remained with Sykes to the end of their production contract, in 1948. Sykes died just two years later, in 1950.

The Spirit of Ecstasy was first offered in mid-June 1911 as an optional extra, but within a short time had become a compulsory option - a mascot went with the delivery of every Rolls-Royce, like it or not! Only a few customers were allowed to order a Rolls-Royce without one and then, presumably, only after they had given assurance that no other mascot would be fitted in its place. The exceptions to this rule included certain members of the English Royalty who desired to fit their own mascots. The Queen, for instance, adorns her car with a solid silver figure of St. George slaying the dragon; but even so, note, when she is not aboard the car, *The Spirit of Ecstasy* returns to its rightful place. Private owners granted exception included James Radley, who figured so prominently in the Alpine Trials of 1912-14. In the main, though, the mascot found favourable acceptance.

The first mascots were cast in white metal, which was quickly replaced by silver-plated brass. But this was expensive and later mascots were of highly polished nickel steel, although special finishes - silver-plated or gold-plated, for example - have always been and still are available to special order. A gold-plated version won first prize at the *Concours International des Mascottes Automobiles de Paris* in 1910.

Over the years, the mascot has under-

gone subtle changes in design but visible reduction in size, so as to present less obstruction to the driver's view. Indeed, for this reason, in 1934, Sykes introduced a kneeling version – though, be it noted, myth has it the kneeling mascot was meant as a token of courtesy to Rolls-Royce's Royal clients. Another myth says that when the model is standing, the car is being chauffeur-driven, while the kneeling mascot indicates the owner is at the helm. There are many myths surrounding Rolls-Royce, some being merely amusing while others, like the above, strike me as delightful in their ingenuity.

An earlier change was occasioned by the fact that the mascot had to be turned sideways to avoid damage when opening the bonnet of a pre-war Rolls-Royce. A five-inch prototype with short "wings" was made, to get rid of the nuisance, but Sykes did not approve of it and persuaded Rolls-Royce to return to the original.

However, apart from the above and one other instance, it was not the actual statuette that changed but the dimensions of its base, and these and other details may be found in a later chapter.

HENRY ROYCE AND THE SPIRIT OF ECSTASY

It is on record that Henry (later Sir Henry) Royce did not like radiator mascots of any sort and *The Spirit of Ecstasy* was no exception. He regarded them as extravagant baubles which interrupted the carefully-thought-out bonnet line of his beloved cars; and this is why at first the mascot hardly ever graced any Rolls-Royce in his custody. Indeed it may be fair to say that if Royce had been the sole arbiter, there might never have been a Rolls-Royce mascot.

However, in 1909, poor Royce took ill and was requested by the Board to relinquish his executive responsibilities and reserve his energies for engineering design. Thus the Board found itself free to consider enhancements other than those solely related to the technical excellence of the cars. For instance, the Company's sales brochures from this time became quite beautiful, often featuring superb renditions by Charles Sykes (these brochures, by the way, are now collec-

tor's items and command formidable prices). And, as explained in my introduction, it was deemed appropriate at this time to adorn the Rolls-Royce with its own, elegant radiator mascot.

This is not to suggest that Royce was blind to commercial reality; far from it, for he fully appreciated the enormous symbolic value of Rolls-Royce's distinctive radiator shell and the badge with its interlocked twin Rs. But sometimes his arm needed bending. . . and it is pleasing to report that in the end, as the camera confirms, he succumbed to *The Spirit of Ecstasy*. Later photographs show him seated proudly aboard Rolls-Royces with *The Spirit of Ecstasy* commanding its rightful place. And it is now doubtful, in spite of the pleadings of the Company's accountants, that these costly, hand-crafted items – radiator shell, badge and mascot – will ever be eliminated. For without them, a Rolls-Royce would simply not be a Rolls-Royce.

*

But what, you may ask, of the mascot's creators? Fair question too, for this document would not be complete without an account of their fates, and the following chapter comprises a mixture of triumph and great sadness.



The kneeling mascot, and it's amazing how often it is illustrated "the wrong way round", the negative being inadvertently reversed and the model thus kneeling on the wrong leg. (Phew! I got it right!)

AFTER THE MASCOT

Henry Royce's story has oft been told and does not bear repeating here.

Lord Montagu, as noted, remained an enthusiast of Rolls-Royce and during his life bought no fewer than four Silver Ghosts and a Phantom I. But he also happened to be a military man and with the outbreak of World War I, Lord Montagu was quick to foresee the benefits to be obtained from mechanized transport and that the strength and reliability of Rolls-Royces made them particularly suited to this rôle. As well, during war service in India, he played a part in the deployment of the famous Rolls-Royce armoured cars, elsewhere used so effectively by Lawrence of Arabia and others (amazingly, as testimony to their durability, some of these armoured cars were still in service with the Spanish army in the 1950s!). But of perhaps greater, albeit indirect, importance was Lord Montagu's part in aviation, as follows:

Royce's original partner, the Hon. C.S. Rolls, had been one of the first to foresee the future of military aviation. When he died, in an aircraft crash in 1910, Lord Montagu and Claude Johnson took up the cause and, in spite of the blind indifference of the English Government, were instrumental in Rolls-Royce's establishment of an aircraft engine division in 1915. Had it not been for their farsightedness, the war might well have had a different outcome - and to England's great shame, incidentally, a similar situation just prior to the Second World War was saved only by Rolls-Royce who, on their own initiative, had developed and built their superb *Merlin* engines which, thankfully, made possible the *Hurricane* and *Spitfire* aircraft. But I digress. . .

In 1915, Lord Montagu, accompanied by Eleanor Thornton (officially his private secretary, remember) was en route to a military posting in North India when their ship, the *S.S. Persia*, was torpedoed off the coast of Crete. Miss Thornton, sadly, perished and her body was never found.

Lord Montagu survived but was not found until some days later and returned

to England only to read his own obituary in *The Times*! The Gieve waistcoat he had been wearing and which undoubtedly saved his life is now on display at Palace House, Beaulieu, together with his watch, its hands stopped at 1:10 on that fateful afternoon. Incidentally, the *Persia* was one of the last of the single-screw P&O passenger liners.

Motoring seems to have run in the blood of the Montagus and after the Second World War, Edward (the present Lord) Montagu established, at the family estate, Beaulieu, the Montagu Motoring Museum, which has since become the National Motoring Museum; and Rolls-Royces (and Bentleys) are there featured prominently, of course.

Claude Johnson, a remarkable man, is nowadays acknowledged as one of the most significant of all people associated with Rolls-Royce - in fact W.J. Oldham entitled his superb biography of Johnson *The Hyphen in Rolls-Royce*, a fitting accolade. For, at about the time of the mascot's introduction, Henry Royce suffered a serious illness that resulted in Johnson virtually running the Company while, at the same time, devising means by which Royce could continue to function as chief engineer, away from the factory. Johnson died, of overwork, in 1926, but fortunately, by then, had instituted systems of management, design, testing, production and financial control that enabled the Company to prosper. Thus it can safely be said that were it not for Johnson, there would not today be a Rolls-Royce Company. And it is unlikely that Johnson would have tolerated the scientists' (not to mention the British Government's!) bravado which, in 1971, resulted in Rolls-Royce's receivership and subsequent rescue by the Government.

Unfortunately, I have little knowledge on the artist Charles Sykes, apart from that herein disclosed. But I'm told that many of his works of art incorporate images of his favourite model and whenever I see a Rolls-Royce passing by with *The Spirit of Ecstasy* at its prow, I think of her - Eleanor Velasco Thornton.

PRODUCTION AND SPECIFICATIONS

I am indebted to André, whose article, originally published in GC7, was the basis

of the following summary and showed me the way to further research.

PRODUCTION

When Charles Sykes created the Rolls-Royce mascot, four original bronzes were cast, on 6 February, 1911, and we can reasonably think these were dispersed as follows: one each to Lord Montagu and Claude Johnson while two were retained by the artist and used as masters for the production of replicas. At the same time, a solid silver example (specially cast and thought to be the only one made entirely of a precious metal) was presented to Eleanor Thornton - further evidence, perhaps, that she did pose for the mascot? On Eleanor's death, this unique trophy became the property of her sister but was stolen during a burglary, not so many years ago, and has never been recovered.

Later, six 22-inch (560mm) castings were produced for display in exhibition halls; and reductions were made for presentation to employees of the Company as trophies, lamps, ashtrays and so on, but these are no longer approved by Rolls-Royce.

From the outset, as already mentioned, the mascots were produced by means of the lost wax process; and due to certain vagaries inherent to this process, and because every mascot was retouched by hand after moulding by Charles (or later Jo) Sykes, no two mascots are exactly alike. Each one is thus a unique piece of art and for this reason, when very early mascots are offered for sale, prices of £2,000 or more can be realized depending on condition and other characteristics.

After 1935, when the volume of production stretched the capacities of the Sykes family, sand-cast mascots were introduced, to save time. But still they continued to be retouched by hand and Charles or Jo controlled the quality of the mascots until 1948, since when they have been produced by Rolls-Royce's own craftsmen. Rolls-Royce at this time re-introduced the lost wax process but on a large scale and using new moulds which could accept stainless steels.

VARIATIONS

As already noted, the mascot was subject to subtle variation in design and considerable reduction in overall height. But it is important to note that while the shape of the base (and the composition of the metal) varied, the actual statuette didn't and, in fact, only three different statuettes have existed on Rolls-Royce cars, these as follows:

- ★ The large 40/50HP model found on Silver Ghosts and Phantoms;
- ★ The medium-sized model found on the Twenty, 20/25 and 25/30 and, of course,
- ★ The kneeling mascot.

Jo Sykes certified that only these three correspond to the three masters she owned and were used by her and her father to painstakingly produce their thousands of mascots over the years.

In the following specifications, it will be noted that for reasons to do with the various casting methods employed, very slight variations in size do occur from time to time. However, in all cases, the master derives from one or another of the above-mentioned, original Charles Sykes statuettes.

SPECIFICATIONS

★ SILVER GHOST 1911-1914:

The first examples were cast in white-metal but this was hastily substituted by silver-plated brass (85% copper, 7.5%

zinc and 7.5% tin). Some mascots were gold- or silver-plated to match the brass finish of the brightwork commonly found

on the early flat-bonneted cars. And for the sake of continuity, I should here record that before 1920, a few mascots were made of highly polished nickel steel, which eliminated the expensive silver plating. From 1920 to 1931, all mascots were of nickel steel.

The 1911-1914 mascots were engraved as follows: all around the base is written, "Rolls-Royce Ltd., Feb. 6th 1911", and the right-hand side of the dome upon which the figure is standing carries the signature, "Charles Sykes, R-R Ltd.,

★ SILVER GHOST 1918-25:

Post-war mascots generally have flat bases but these were sometimes damaged when they came out of the mould. So the "cheese" was slightly domed, but these cannot be mistaken for the former ones because their height is noticeably smaller. The base is not hollow because there is a leather washer between the mascot and the

★ TWENTY 1922-1929:

Cast in nickel steel, same signature as the preceding mascot. (Overall height:

★ PHANTOM I 1925-1929:

Identical to 1918-1925 mascot except

★ PHANTOM II 1929-1936:

First made of nickel steel (1929-1931) but then chrome-plated bronze when the radiator shells were made of stainless

★ 20/25 AND OTHERS 1929-1939:

Same remarks as for the Phantom II. The base and stud were modified when the radiator cap incorporated a safety valve. (Overall height: 4 3/4 inches, or 120mm.)

When the chrome plating technique had been completely mastered, the compos-

★ THE KNEELING MASCOT; 20/25 TO SILVER DAWN 1934-1954:

The kneeling mascot was created in January 1934 to suit the lower lines of the small HP Rolls-Royces, and subsequently offered as an option for other models until 1954. They were sand-cast so the quality is often inferior. From the outset, the kneeling mascots were signed "C. Sykes" and dated

6.2.11". Under the left "wing" we can read, "trade mark reg." while under the right wing, in the case of mascots destined for the U.S.A., is written, "US pat. off." The lettering on the base and under the wings can vary because it was done by hand on the wax model, prior to casting.

These mascots had a hollow base and attachment to the radiator cap was by a stud.

(Overall height: 6 7/8 inches, or 175mm.)

radiator cap, to facilitate turning the mascot without moving the cap and thereby avoid damage when opening the bonnet. Also, the signature, "Charles Sykes, R-R Ltd., 6.2.11" was engraved further up the dome than on the earlier mascots. (Overall height: 5 7/8 inches, or 150mm.)

4 3/8 inches, or 110mm.)

overall height, 5 1/4 inches, or 135mm.

steel. Same signature as preceding models. (Overall height: 4 7/8 inches, or 125mm.)

ition of the bronze was made 90% copper and 10% zinc, because the presence of tin had caused the plating to swell, necessitating a nuisance layer of nickel between the two. At this time, too, a few mascots were gold- or silver-plated, to special order.

26.1.1934, but the signature was deleted when Rolls-Royce began production of the mascots. Post-war, the kneeling mascot graced many a Silver Wraith and was recently re-introduced on Silver Spurs built for the Middle East market. (Overall height: 3 1/8 inches, or 80mm.)

☆ SILVER CLOUD 1954-1965:

No markings on the base, which looks like a tall cheese. The alloy used was titanium, often giving poor definition at

foot level and in the folds of the raiments. (Overall height: 4 5/8 inches, or 115mm.)

☆ SILVER SHADOW 1965-1981:

Almost identical to the Silver Cloud mascot but made of stainless steel, it leans slightly off upright to stand correctly on the radiator shell which slopes forward at the top to match the bonnet line (this also applies to the Silver Cloud III). There are two versions: one with a mounting stud and the other with a spring-loaded protrusion, the latter for countries where

safety regulations demand it. Prior to this safety device, cars delivered in Switzerland had their mascots stowed in the glove box. No markings on base, according to André, but some I have seen are inscribed "Rolls-Royce Motor Car Company, England". (Overall height: 4 3/8 inches, or 110mm.)

☆ SILVER SPIRIT 1981 TO PRESENT:

I have every reason to think these are identical to Silver Shadow mascots. However, they are mounted on a device

which, at a touch, causes the mascot to immediately retract into the radiator shell and out of harm's way.

NOTE: Remember that variations in overall height are due to changes in the base while the height of the statuette, except as noted, remains constant. However, the dimensions and even the shape of the statuette can vary by enough to be visible to an experienced eye, and this is why the dimensions here given have been rounded off to the nearest 1/8 of an inch, or 3mm. In the first place, according to Jo Sykes, such was the heat in the workshop that the wax models sometimes sank down or distorted to a degree. Moisture content, too, had an

effect on the size of the mouldings. Modern mascots, those made since 1955, are slightly smaller because they have been made not from the original masters but from copies of the masters. On the other hand, mascots cast in sand are slightly larger than those cast in wax, because they suffer less from shrinkage.

In the final analysis, though, the question of size may be academic, for as time goes by, nearly all Rolls-Royce mascots are bound to grow smaller and smaller. . . due to wear and tear from wedding ribbons, of course!

REFERENCES

As well as thanking André for his information, I should like to acknowledge my reference to the following public-

ations, all of which are recommended as further reading.

☆ *The Rolls-Royce Motor Car*, by Anthony Bird and Ian Hallows, 4th Edition (Batsford).

☆ *The Early Days of Rolls-Royce - and the Montagu Family*, by Lord Montagu (Rolls-Royce Heritage Trust).

☆ *Rolls-Royce, Alpine Compendium 1913 & 1973*, by Christopher Leefe (Transport Bookman Publications, in conjunction with the R.R.E.C.).

☆ *John Montagu of Beaulieu - Motoring Pioneer and Prophet*, by Paul Tritton (Golden Eagle/George Hart)

☆ *Rolls-Royce and Bentley*, by Klaus-Josef Roßfeldt (Haynes).

☆ *Motoring Mascots of the World*, by William C. Williams (Graphic Arts Centre Publishing Company and Robert Ames; U.S.A.).

☆ Various magazines including: *The Car*, *Motor Sport* and *Car* (U.K.), and *Road & Track* (U.S.A.).

READER'S NOTES