

Phantoms in a Postwar World

By Philip C. Brooks

In early 1945, Rolls-Royce placed a "teaser" advertisement in British motoring publications: "In due course the post-war Rolls-Royce will make its appearance. It will uphold the fame and prestige of its predecessor. When circumstances permit, a further statement will be made regarding prices and deliveries."

Above the text was an illustration of a car – perhaps an H.J. Mulliner-bodied Phantom III sedanca de ville, or perhaps a hint of a postwar car. Taking the illustration and the text into

account, one could have assumed that a postwar Phantom would be built. Maybe it would – but maybe it would not.

In July 1948, Rolls-Royce had to place an ad denying rumors that the Phantom III would be shortly replaced by an eight-cylinder Phantom. However, in 1939, an experimental car built as part of the development program for the "Rationalized Range" of motor cars appeared to be a replacement for the Phantom III. This was 30-G-VII, a Rolls-Royce with a Park Ward seven-



The Aga Khan's Phantom IV sedanca de ville by Hooper, 4AF20, now owned by Bob Shaffner.



Rolls-Royce's "teaser" ad from 1945. Promises, promises....

Photo by Larry S. Glenn

Image courtesy of Philip C. Brooks

passenger limousine body, fitted with the straight eight cylinder version of the new "B" series "Rationalized Range" engine. This car, affectionately known as "Big Bertha," was officially called the "Silver Phantom."

An eight-cylinder engine was also fitted to a Mark V Bentley as part of the testing program. This car had formidable performance and quickly became known as "Scalded Cat." It played a pivotal role in the decision to build a Phantom successor to the Phantom III.

At the end of World War II, the factory decided to go ahead with two six-cylinder models in the proposed "Rationalized Range": the Mark VI Bentley, available either with the factory's first standard steel saloon body or with coachbuilt bodies, and the Silver Wraith Rolls-Royce, available only for coachbuilt bodies. Rolls-Royce felt that economic conditions were not right for introduction of a new Phantom with the eight-cylinder engine. That car would have to wait.

However, in 1948, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, heard about Scalded Cat and asked if he might test it out. The Duke enjoyed the car immensely. When he returned the car, he apparently murmured about how nice it would be to have a car with performance in the Royal Mews. On November 15, 1948, not long after Prince Philip's fun with Scalded Cat and the day after Prince Charles was born, an order came through for a Rolls-Royce motor car for Their Royal Highnesses Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip. Such a car would have to meet their official needs, which meant it must be a limousine. It would have to have good performance, especially since Prince Philip intended to drive it a lot. The car would be the first official Rolls-Royce in the stables.

The factory seized on this opportunity to build the first Phantom IV. It was originally planned to be the only Phantom IV, a strictly one-off car. It would be built on the postwar chassis design, with a wheelbase of 145 inches, and would use the eight-cylinder version of the new engine. H.J. Mulliner was selected as the coachbuilder, and they prepared drawings for approval. The chassis, 4AF2, was delivered to Mulliner in July of 1949 for erection of the body, and Prince Philip visited Mulliner more than once while the car was being built. When the car was delivered to Clarence House in July of 1950, Princess Elizabeth was delighted with the car and felt that it was "a magnificent example of British craftsmanship."

The car was painted dark Valentine Green, with green leather and grey cloth interior, and had a silver mascot of St. George slaying the dragon. (The mascot was extensively tested at Crewe for stability.) 4AF2 had adjustable front seats; a rear seat that could be raised; a transparent roof panel; electrically operated windows, rear window blind, and division; a radio in the rear armrest; three heaters; face-forward occasional seats; and a curly mohair floor rug with silk pile border in the rear compartment. When Princess Elizabeth ascended to the throne in 1952, the car was repainted in the royal colors of claret and black, and the front upholstery was redone in dark blue cloth. An automatic gearbox was fitted in 1955. HM the Queen still has the car, to which she has referred fondly as "my old Rolls." 4AF2 caused a sensation, and its appearance in the Royal Mews sounded the death knell for Daimler as the royal car.

About the time that 4AF2 was ordered, Crewe received an order for three cars for Generalissimo Francisco Franco of Spain: two heavily armored limousines and a convertible sedan. These heavy cars would have overburdened the Silver Wraith chassis, so the factory decided to build the cars as Phantom IVs – especially since the Foreign Office suggested that Crewe could not turn down the order. The coachwork order was placed with H.J. Mulliner, who would supply their "standard"



Princess Margaret's Phantom IV by H.J. Mulliner, 4BP7, formerly owned by Bob Shaffner.

armor plating. Unfortunately, the Spanish military tested a sample of this armor plating and shot bullet holes through it. The English Steel Corporation supplied alternative plating, which was shot full of holes by Bill Allen of the Crewe design staff. The Spanish government then supplied samples of the desired armor plating, and English Steel modified their product accordingly. So far, the cars have not been shot up! These cars, limousines 4AF14 and 4AF16 and cabriolet 4AF18, were delivered in 1952 and remain today with the Spanish royal family.

Other Phantom IVs were built by this time. The second Phantom IV was 4AF4, the factory's delivery lorry/experimental vehicle. It had a handsome front body section by Park Ward and a pick-up bed behind, and it was fast enough – 90 mph – that Rolls-Royce drivers caught the beady eyes of the constabulary. It was dismantled at the end of 1963.

The third Phantom IV, 4AF6, was ordered by the Shah of Iran with a very modern H.J. Mulliner drophead body. It was delivered at the end of 1951, well before the three Spanish cars that had been ordered in 1948. The body of 4AF6 was too flexible, and the car was dismantled in 1959. The body was later fitted to Phantom III 3BT15 and caused much interest at a West Coast RRCC annual meet some years ago.

The fourth Phantom IV was 4AF8, built for the Emir of Kuwait, a handsome Mulliner saloon without division. It was delivered in September 1951, and the Emir was pleased enough with it that he later ordered two more Phantom IVs.

4AF10 was the first Phantom IV to be bodied by a firm other than H.J. Mulliner. HRH Prince Henry, the Duke of Gloucester, chose Hooper to build a body to his exacting specifications. The Duke and his family had recently returned from several years in Australia, where he served



Top: 5AS95, Phantom V James Young sedan de ville, design BV22SD, owned by Charles Bronson. The canework is original. **Above:** 5AT48 is a James Young Phantom V limousine, design PV10M, harkening back to that coachbuilder's earlier designs on Silver Wraiths, Silver Dawns, and R-types. The car is owned by Bill Borchert.

as Governor General, and the three Rolls-Royces that he had taken with him had accumulated great mileages. Replacements were needed, as the Duke and Duchess undertook many official engagements. Prince Henry had definite preferences in his motor cars, going back to his cars in the late 1920s; he favored Weymann bodies with their matte finishes, separate side and spot lights, and plain rather than figured wood trim. 4AF10 was designed by Hooper with twin side-mounts, matte black body panels and gloss black wings, separate side and spot lights, plain

walnut trim, a full leather interior, and face-forward occasional seats. The car also had a pneumatically inflated rear seat, a mohair rear carpet overlay similar to that on 4AF2, louvres over the door windows for ventilation, double glazing on the side windows, and sliding purdah panels for the rear quarter windows. The car was very imposing. It was also huge, and the late HRH Prince William of Gloucester told me that the family sold the car because it was too big. Delivered in September 1951, it was sold in October 1960 and is still in the U.K. The Duke and Duchess also ordered a Silver Wraith, ALW10, one of the first long-wheelbase Silver Wraiths, in November 1951; it had the same basic Hooper body design as 4AF10, with many of the same features and paint scheme. It was delivered in September 1952, and the Duke and Duchess kept it until the late 1960s. By this time, they had been driving their James Young Phantom V, 5AT30, for several years; it had replaced the Phantom IV and it met their needs very well. HRH Prince Richard, the current Duke of Gloucester, has used 5AT30 for many years.

Phantom IVs were ordered by other members of the British royal family and heads of state. The factory decided, apparently unofficially, that the Phantom IV would be reserved for royalty and heads of state. There was discussion of building Phantom IV cars for private customers, and coachbuilders' drawings exist for proposed cars for such good customers as Briggs Cunningham and James Melton. However, those orders never came about.

One other car was built, in a way, for internal use. This was 4AF12, a Hooper seven-passenger limousine for Lord Hives, Rolls-Royce managing director, upon his elevation to the peerage. Crewe sold it to Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent, in 1954, and she used the car for many years.

A very special Phantom IV, 4BP5, was built for use by HM the Queen. Known as "Jubilee," it was a state landaulette by Hooper and was perfect for parade occasions. It was built with the same internal dimensions as those on the Daimler state landaulettes still in the Royal Mews. Rolls-Royce loaned the car to the Palace at first, but the Palace bought it in 1959 along with two new Phantom Vs. It was displayed in the museum at Sandringham for several years and is now on display at the Hunt House.

Club member Bob Shaffner has owned two Phantom IVs over the years and has displayed them at the Rolls-Royce Foundation museum and at annual meets. One is 4AF20, a curvaceous Hooper sedan de ville that was originally ordered by the Aga Khan. The other is 4BP7, a Mulliner limousine originally ordered by Princess Margaret. Another Phantom IV, 4BP3, was owned by member Bill Davis for many years. It's a Hooper "Empress Line" limousine originally ordered by the Prince Regent of Iraq and is one of the most beautiful of that body style built. Its body proportions are so good that it's difficult to tell how large it is. All three of these cars are stunning.

The Phantom IV ceased production in 1956, after two more cars were delivered to the Emir of Kuwait and one more to the Shah of Iran. Eighteen cars were built altogether. By this time, the Phantom IV was not considered necessary for state use: Appropriate bodies had been built on Silver Wraiths, including a Hooper convertible sedan for Nubar Gulbenkian that was used at the wedding of Prince Rainier and Princess Grace. Another convertible sedan was built for the King and Queen of Greece. State landaulettes were built, one for Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia and others for use by governors-general. It was very possible to buy a Silver Wraith for state occasions, which worked well for the factory: Building a Phantom IV chassis proved to be a demanding and disrupting process.

Right: The rear compartment of 5BX38 shows James Young's craftsmanship at its understated best. **Far right:** Phantom V James Young limousine 5BX38, design PV22, is James Young at their styling apex. The car belongs to the Rolls-Royce Foundation.

Rolls-Royce was hardly done with Phantoms, though. The factory announced a new model, the Phantom V, and showed examples at the 1959 auto shows. This car had the Silver Cloud chassis, lengthened to 145 inches, and the new V-8 engine. It was practical to build profitably, which was more than could be said for Phantom IVs. Rolls-Royce built 516 Phantom Vs over the next nine years. In 1962, mechanical improvements were incorporated into the Phantom V, along with four headlights. At the same time, the upper half of the body received a more steeply angled windscreen and more razor-edged rear lines to the roof, rear quarter, and boot lines. The effect was more in the tradition of Mulliner.

Two Phantom Vs were built for HM the Queen. 5AS33 and 5AT34 were ordered by Buckingham Palace to update the royal fleet. Both had Perspex rear roofs, so that the royal family could be seen in inclement weather, and removable folding metal covers for privacy when desired. 5AS33 was delivered first, in 1960, with 5AT34 following in 1961. The two cars were the prime transport for the royal family for many years, with the two Phantom IVs acting as back-up vehicles. Known by their factory code names as "Canberra I" and "Canberra II," they still belong to the Queen.

The most commonly seen Phantom V has a timeless seven-passenger body, first built by Park Ward and later by H.J. Mulliner, Park Ward, after the amalgamation of the two firms. The factory also wanted to offer a five-passenger touring limousine, in order to compete with James Young's seven-passenger and five-passenger limousines. H.J. Mulliner had designed and built a five-passenger Phantom V, which was rather graceful and looked something like a very large Bentley Continental Flying Spur. However, Rolls-Royce wanted to start integrating Mulliner and Park Ward, so they squelched the Mulliner five-passenger car and had Mulliner build a series of eight cars that were a combination of Mulliner and Park Ward coachwork. These cars were Phantom V chassis delivered to



Mulliner with Park Ward bodies up to the beltline, the idea being that Mulliner would build a five-passenger body with a Mulliner razor-edge rear and Mulliner interior. The staff at Mulliner was not happy with this arrangement, but they produced a very handsome car. Members John and Sandy Matsen own 5LAT86, a car shown at Earl's Court and then delivered to its Oklahoma owner. The order took over two years to fulfill, but the end product was worth the wait.

Other designs were offered as well. Park Ward's state landaulette, modified by H.J. Mulliner, Park Ward after the merger, became a popular offering over the years. Hooper built a test mule for the Phantom V and then one seven-passenger limousine body, which they displayed at Earl's Court in 1959, and then went out of business. Member John Haulmark owns that car; it's handsome but very different from other coachbuilders' styling. Chapron built two limousines to Hooper designs.

The epitome of razor-edge, swept-tail styling was achieved by James Young on the Phantom V chassis, with their PV15 seven-passenger limousine and their PV22 five-passenger touring limousine. Designer "Mac" McNeil evolved his earlier James Young designs to reach an elegance of line that has yet to be surpassed, and the length of the Phantom V chassis gave him a frame that he needed. These cars were breathtaking

when new, especially when painted in the slightly metallic James Young Midnight Blue, an effect reached through the use of cuttlefish scale. They remain breathtaking today.

H.J. Mulliner, Park Ward built cars for HM the Queen, a landaulette for HRH the Queen Mother, and state landaulettes for other people. James Young built a few sedans de ville, one of which had canework sides, and all of which were distinguished. They also built special variants of their standard designs, including several with small rear windows and a very special limousine for HRH the Duke of Gloucester; it has a matte finish over much of its body and freestanding R-100 headlamps. Additionally, they built two coupes.

However, the writing was on the wall for James Young as Rolls-Royce switched over from the Silver Cloud and S series cars with separate chassis to the Silver Shadow and T series monocoque cars. James Young modified 50 Silver Shadow and T saloons into coupes, but these cars came out looking rather squared-off and were extremely expensive to build. In 1967, feeling that they could not stay in business building only a limited number of Phantoms, James Young closed their doors. Only Mulliner Park Ward, as now known, remained in the coachbuilding business.

Mulliner Park Ward had plenty of work building the Silver Shadow and T coupes and convertibles, the Phantom V, and,



Above: 5LAT86 is a handsome Phantom V H.J. Mulliner touring limousine, design 7516, and very different from the Park Ward limousine. It belongs to John Matsen. **Right:** The interior fittings of 5LAT86, with appropriate "goodies" by H.J. Mulliner.



as of 1968, the new Phantom VI. The Phantom VI was very much a continuation of the Phantom V but with mechanical modifications and some body redesign. The Phantom VI was in production, in numbers that grew more limited over the years, until 1992.

The prototype Phantom VI was built in 1966, with production commencing in 1968. Mechanically, the car used the Silver Shadow V-8 engine, with its improved cylinder heads, along with separate air-conditioning for front and rear seats. The same chassis was retained, with a wheelbase of 145 inches. A new dash was introduced, incorporating the "eyeball" air-conditioning outlets introduced a few years earlier. The "Alpha" version, which was armored, was introduced in 1969, and the car was made compliant with European safety standards in 1972. The Phantom VI was not submitted for federal crash tests and was never sold new in the United States. One car was delivered new under diplomatic protection to the British ambassador to the United Nations; he kindly displayed the car at

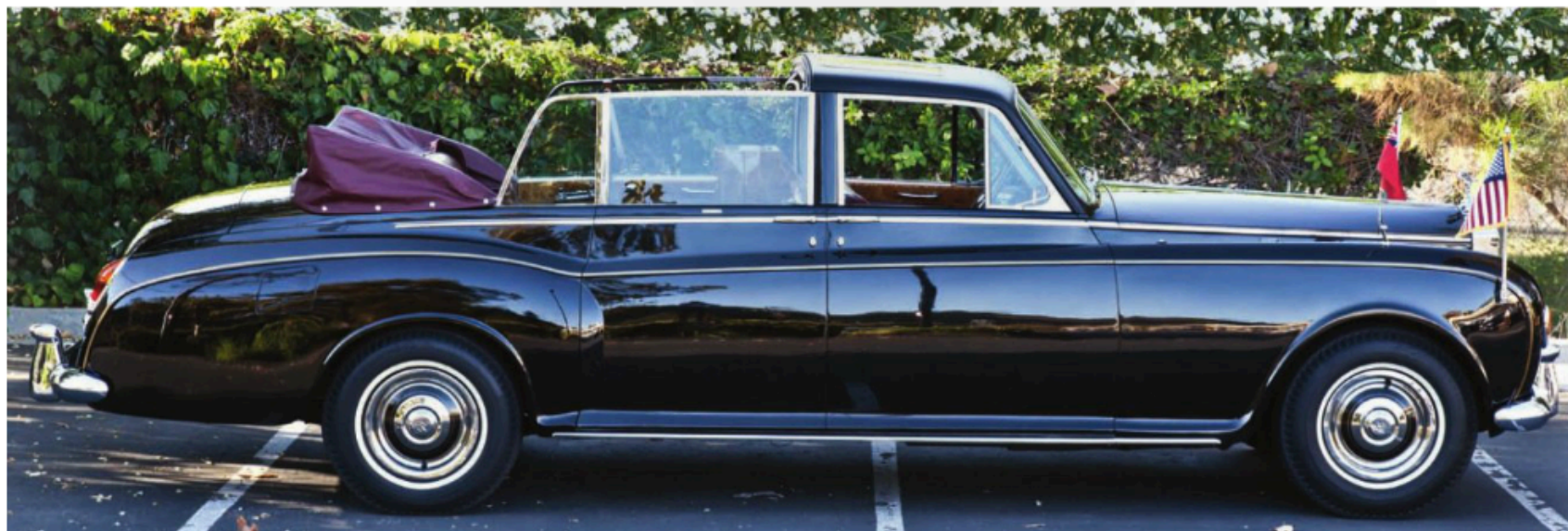
the 1978 RROC Williamsburg Meet. Several other cars have been brought into the United States in recent years.

In 1978, the bigger version of the V-8, at 6,750 cc, became standard on the Phantom VI, along with the GM 400 three-speed gearbox and the Silver Shadow-type braking system. This braking system had to be employed because the GM 400 gearbox could not be used with the old servo brake. HM the Queen's Silver Jubilee car was the first car built to the new specifications. These specifications became standard for the rest of the Phantom VI production run. There were a total of 374 Phantom VIs built over 26 years – far and away the longest production run of any Phantom model.

Two Phantom VIs were built for the Queen. The first was PGH101, the first "Alpha" version car, built as a Silver Jubilee present from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders and known as "Oil Barrel." It was built to much the same specifications as the two "Canberra" Phantom Vs, including fitting the Perspex roof, but with the "Alpha" mechani-

cal improvements. It had four headlights and, because of safety regulations, forward-hinged rear doors. The second Phantom VI was PMH10415, code named "Lady Norfolk," built with a standard roof but longer quarter windows and a glass insert over the rear seat. We saw the car being built at Mulliner Park Ward's Hythe Road works in 1986 and recognized it as being very unusual. It was quite handsome with its larger quarter windows and looked very Mullineresque. In fact, this car was designed, as were the earlier Phantom VI and the two Phantom Vs, by Park Ward's designer, Peter Wharton. Wharton joined Park Ward in 1934, retired in 1979, and was coaxed happily out of retirement in 1985 to design "Lady Norfolk." The car was delivered to Her Majesty in 1987 and is still in use today.

HM the Queen's cars are painted in royal claret and black. All have removable bumpers so that they could fit in the garage aboard the royal yacht *Britannia*, and all carry the St. George mascot when the Queen is in the car.



Top: John Ellison's Phantom V State Landaulette, 5LVF113, originally ordered by the Romanian government, which failed to take delivery. When the car was owned by Erle Heath, it was used by HM the Queen on state visits to Bermuda and the Cayman Islands. **Above:** John Ellison's Phantom VI Mulliner, Park Ward limousine, PRH4703, has a very different rear treatment to a Mulliner or a Park Ward Phantom V limousine. The rear quarter panels and boot are decidedly Mulliner, but the rear lights are quite different.

Phantom V and Phantom VI landaulettes are very special cars. Designed as parade cars for heads of state, they were built over the production run of the two models, with one of the first being for HM the Queen Mother and now used by HRH the Prince of Wales. Body designs varied, some with a fully opening roof over the rear compartment and others with an opening roof over the rear seat. Each car was somewhat different, particularly in the rear compartment. One of these cars, now owned by member John Ellison, was a Phantom V ordered by the Romanian government for use by President Ceausescu, but the order was cancelled. Late club member Erle Heath owned the car for many years and loaned it for the Queen to use on a state visit to the Cayman Islands. The last Phantom VI was built in 1992 as a state landaulette and was to be retained by the company. However, the Sultan of Brunei was the major customer of the company at that time: He decided that he wanted the car, so off went the very last Phantom VI to join his large collection of Rolls-Royces and Bentleys.

After that car was built, production of Phantom VIs ceased, and the Hythe Road factory closed down. Corniche production had moved to Crewe, and the remaining Hythe Road workers either moved to Crewe or were laid off. The people who built the Phantom VI were wonderful coachbuilders. We saw them at work on "Lady Norfolk" and two other cars and remember their talents, the care with which they worked, their pride in the cars they built, and their great decency. With their departure went the heart of the Phantoms for a postwar world. It would be several years and the formation of a new company in a new location before we would see any new Phantoms.