


CLASSIC DRIVER



1932 Rolls-Royce 20/25 H.P.

Lot sold	USD 26 152 - 39 227 GBP 20 000 - 30 000 (listed)	Drive	LHD
Year of manufacture	1932	Condition	Used
Chassis number	GFT68	Location	
Number of seats	2	Fuel type	Petrol
Drivetrain	2wd	Exterior colour	Other
Lot number	121		

Description

1932 Rolls-Royce 20/25hp Sportsman's Coupé
Coachwork by William Arnold, Manchester
Registration no. XJ 811
Chassis no. GFT68

'This model was introduced to meet requests for a smaller, less expensive car in keeping with the trend after the First World War towards smaller cars for a wider market. Construction was simplified - but standards of workmanship were not compromised.' - Edward Eves, Rolls-Royce, 75 Years of Motoring Excellence.

Changing times after WWI eventually forced the abandonment of Rolls-Royce's 'one model' policy, an all-new 20hp car joining the existing 40/50hp Silver Ghost in 1922. The 'Twenty' reflected Henry Royce's interest in contemporary trends within the American automobile industry, incorporating unitary construction of the engine and gearbox, the latter featuring the modern innovation of a central ball change, together with a 'Hotchkiss drive' rear axle. The engine, Rolls-Royce's first with overhead valves, was a six-cylinder unit displacing 3,127cc. Favourably received as the Twenty was, its three-speed transmission's central gearchange was not to everyone's taste, and when four-wheel, servo-assisted brakes were introduced in 1925, a four-speed gearbox with right-hand, gated change replaced the original three-speeder. The Twenty's introduction enabled its makers to cater for the increasingly important owner-driver market that appreciated the quality of Rolls-Royce engineering

but did not need a car as large as a 40/50hp Ghost or Phantom. The car proved eminently suited to town use yet could cope admirably with Continental touring when called upon.

Its successor, the 20/25hp, introduced in 1929, updated the concept with significant improvements, featuring an enlarged (from 3.1 to 3.7 litres) and more-powerful version of the Twenty's six-cylinder overhead-valve engine. Produced contemporaneously with the Phantom II, the 20/25 benefited from many of the features, such as synchromesh gears and centralised chassis lubrication, developed for the larger model and would become the best-selling Rolls-Royce of the inter-war period.

The Rolls-Royce 20/25hp was, of course, exclusively a coachbuilt automobile and most of the great British coachbuilding firms offered designs, many of them unique, on the 20/25hp chassis. This example, 'GFT68', carries two-door Sportsman's Coupé coachwork by William Arnold of Manchester and is featured in Lawrence Dalton's 'Those Elegant Rolls-Royce' (page 267). There is an interesting hand written letter on file from Dalton stating that he contacted the then owner in 1966 enquiring if the 20/25 could be used in his publication. A thriving motor dealership, Arnold bodied cars as a sideline but its work was of the highest quality and throughout the 1920s always on the best chassis, though it seems that the firm did not body a Rolls-Royce until 1931. In the 1930s Arnold widened its appeal, adding the Standard and Humber makes to its portfolio, but after WW2 concentrated on the dealership side of its business.

First registered to Hartley & Sons, the Rolls-Royce was purchased at the Beaulieu auction in July 1978 by Mrs K Morley, its last owner (letter in history file). The car comes with MoT certificates dating back to the 1970s, a 1971 tax disc, an old-style logbook, a V5 registration document and correspondence with Rolls-Royce Motor Cars of Crewe, Cheshire. It also comes with copies of the original build sheets and appears to have only had six owners in its 83 years. Also present in the comprehensive history file, which contains material dating back some 60-plus years, is a letter confirming that the Rolls-Royce was laid up for five years during the war, from January 1940 until December 1944. Its engine running sweetly and its chassis apparently sound, 'GFT68' represents a rare opportunity to acquire a genuine unmolested Rolls-Royce 20/25hp, which would benefit from a new hands-on enthusiastic owner to return it to former glory.

Bonhams 1793

The logo for Bonhams, featuring the word "Bonhams" in a large, bold, black serif font.

AUCTIONEERS SINCE 1793

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