
1920 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost

Lot sold	USD 204 616 - 245 539 GBP 150 000 - 180 000 (listed)	Drive	LHD
Year of manufacture	1920	Condition	Used
Chassis number	10CW	Location	
Number of seats	2	Fuel type	Petrol
Drivetrain	2wd	Exterior colour	Other
Lot number	306		

Description

1920 Rolls-Royce 40/50hp Silver Ghost Alpine Eagle Tourer

Registration no. RR 7492

Chassis no. 10CW

A rare and highly desirable Alpine Eagle Speed Model, this Silver Ghost, chassis number '10CW', was purchased in Wisconsin, USA in November 2007 by motoring author, Malcolm Tucker, who commenced its restoration in March of the following year.

Factory records show that '10CW' - confirmed as an Alpine Eagle Speed Model - came off test on 21st February 1920 and in April was invoiced to coachbuilders J B Ferguson of Belfast, Northern Ireland. Its first owner was a Mr J H McGugan of Belfast, and there are two further owners listed on the chassis cards. Chassis cards also show that this car's gearbox and that of '21FW' were swapped, and confirm that '10CW' retains its original engine, 'J171'. It is not known for certain when the Silver Ghost was exported to the USA, though an entry on the chassis cards suggests August 1922.

Records held by the R-ROC Foundation show that '10CW' once belonged to one L I Dimm, who in 1932 sold the car to Mr Al Gross of Long Island. Some five other owners are recorded. While in the USA, '10CW' carried a sedan-limousine body by coachbuilders Brooks-Ostruk of West 66th Street, New York City. Brooks-Ostruk was part of Rolls-Royce of America's 'Custom Coachworks' initiative, whereby its standard bodies were built by a number of the USA's most prominent coachbuilders,

though a Rolls-Royce customer to could still take delivery of his or her car in bare chassis form for bespoke bodying.

By the time Malcom Tucker bought the Rolls-Royce, it had been off the road in an open-fronted barn for over 40 years. The Brooks-Ostruk body had deteriorated badly, but fortunately the chassis and mechanical components had survived in much better condition and were around 95% complete. Restoration of the mechanicals was entrusted to Mike Knowles, proprietor of Ro-Ben Cars of South Stoke, Surrey. Inspection revealed that the Brooks-Ostruk body had not been made for a Silver Ghost, and it was decided that an open touring body, as close to the Ferguson original as possible, would be more appropriate.

Once a substantial portion of the mechanical overhaul had been completed, the refurbished rolling chassis was despatched to the coachbuilder while work continued on the engine, clutch, and gearbox. Western Coachworks of Mickleover, near Derby was chosen to make the new body, which was constructed to Malcolm Tucker's own Ferguson-inspired design using Rolls-Royce's instructional booklet for coachbuilders. With the body tub completed by the end of July 2012, the Silver Ghost was returned to Ro-Ben for the engine to be reinstalled.

Unforeseen circumstances (Mike Knowles being unwell) meant that the mechanical restoration had to be completed elsewhere, and the task was assigned to Allan Glew. Trevor Hirst of Christchurch fabricated a new set of wings and new bonnet sides, the original bonnet being retained. By July 2015, '10CW' was ready for a registration application to be made to the DVLA, and after a seemingly endless succession of bureaucratic obstacles had been overcome, the car eventually received the highly appropriate registration, 'RR 7492', in March 2016. Later that same year, the Silver Ghost was acquired by the current vendor, who advises us that fewer than 3,000 miles have been covered since the restoration's completion.

Beautifully proportioned, the Silver Ghost is finished in grey with contrasting red hide buttoned seats to the interior, while the convertible hood is of black double duck and folds down into a matching hood bag. There is a useful luggage rack at the rear, and a pair of tonneau covers comes with the car. The dashboard is beautifully made from a single piece of American cherry wood, as are the door cappings, while twin cherry wood boxes of cabinet-maker's quality are mounted on the running boards. The original under-trays are in situ, and a nickel-plated klaxon horn is mounted on the bulkhead.

Malcolm Tucker's fascinating account of the history and resurrection of '10CW' is available in the form of two (copy) magazine articles on file, and the car also comes with invoices issued by the various specialists involved totalling circa £231,400. This fine sporting Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost remains in beautiful condition, wants for nothing, and is ready to be enjoyed.

Bonhams 1793

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