
1933 Rolls-Royce 40/50 H.P.

Lot sold	USD 414 829 - 553 105 GBP 300 000 - 400 000 (listed)	Drive	LHD
Year of manufacture	1933	Condition	Used
Chassis number	69MW	Location	
Number of seats	2	Fuel type	Petrol
Drivetrain	2wd	Exterior colour	Other
Lot number	238		

Description

1933 Rolls-Royce 40/50hp Phantom II Continental Sedanca Coupé

Coachwork by Barker & Co

Registration no. AGN 345

Chassis no. 69MW

'69MW, as the R-R Enthusiasts Club would refer to the car, has been a superlative possession. It had covered 59,000 miles when we took her over: now the clock reads 220,000. It has travelled the Continent, done the shopping, towed racing cars, won prizes in Concours d'Elegance, won its class in a speed trial on the Carriogrohane Straight in Munster and whispered its way round the West End of London. Impeccable in all things.'

That is how Kenneth Neve, engineer and Past President of the Vintage Sports Car Club, described ownership of '69MW' in his excellent book, 'A Bit Behind the Times', published in 1988. His enjoyment of this magnificent car continued until his death in the 1990s, man and machine clearly having remained in perfect harmony to the last.

This Phantom II's history begins on 15th June 1933 when it was on test with Rolls-Royce, destined for delivery by Barker & Co Ltd to their esteemed customer, Capt. Thomas Lee Hardy of Lloyds Bank in Pall Mall, London. Captain Hardy was a polo player of some repute who mixed in distinguished company, and his selection of Barkers to construct the coachwork was an impeccable choice as he

required a car that would reflect his sporting prowess and yet command respect amongst his senior banking colleagues. He was particular in the detail of his order, specifying, amongst other things, bonnet louvres running into the bulkhead at an angle of 16 degrees, and of course his model choice was the top-of-the range short chassis Continental. '69MW' clearly proved 'impeccable in all things' to the Captain as it remained in his possession through the war years, passing in 1952 to the aforementioned Kenneth Neve of Stretton in Cheshire. Far from the West End of London, '69MW' must have cut a dash in rural Cheshire, despite its age, and was destined for extensive further mileage in its new engineer-owner's hands. Following the death of Kenneth Neve, the car was loaned to renowned test pilot, Peter Henley, finding itself once again in sympathetic hands, and a detailed log (as one would expect from a test pilot), was maintained recording his use of the car and maintenance/repair schedules. It is clear that the highest standards were required of '69MW' and no expense was spared in maintaining the car to appropriate levels.

'69MW' was acquired by the immediately preceding owner, by coincidence also a previous owner of Neve's London-Edinburgh Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost '1701', in 1999, joining a stable of exceptional Rolls-Royce and Bentley motor cars, all fastidiously maintained and prepared for the most demanding journeys. '69MW' was immediately entrusted to Classic Restorations of Alyth, Scotland and renowned marque specialists Ristes Motors of Nottingham to ensure that it met the same criteria, each aspect of mechanical condition being scrutinised in the course of the restoration and repaired or replaced to meet the new owner's demanding standards. The opportunity was taken during this restoration to equip '69MW' with overdrive and power steering, the latter since removed. Related records and bills totalling £118,000 are on file. At the same time, coachwork and cosmetic presentation were addressed to ensure that, as in Kenneth Neve's ownership, '69MW' would be a certain winner on the concours d'élégance lawns. Coachwork was refinished in green livery, seats were reupholstered in best quality leather, carpets replaced, woodwork re-polished, and all brightwork refurbished to the highest standards. Ace-type wheel discs were sourced and fitted, enhancing further the commanding presence of Barker's superlative sedanca coupé.

The current vendor purchased '69MW' in December 2006 at Bonhams' Olympia Sale (Lot 667), since when further substantial sums of money have been spent on maintenance and refurbishment. Various works were carried out by Classic Restorations (in 2007 and 2010) while in May 2008 a complete engine rebuild was undertaken by Taylors of Chichester. M J Pickles of Macclesfield and various other specialists also worked on the car, with expenditure during the present ownership totalling £78,235. The odometer was zeroed at the time of the engine rebuild in 2008 and now reads 15,622 miles.

There is little doubt that among Continental Phantoms '69MW' stands 'head and shoulders' above most in the elegance stakes and is equipped in every way for the Continental tour. Driving equipment includes Lucas lighting and alto horns, centre driving light, and Marchal spotlights, with driver's pillar-mounted spotlight and rear mounted spares, along with bumpers front and rear, and a fishtail exhaust. A luggage carrier is provided for the longer trip and matching GB plates fitted, while a full complement of tools is carried under the bonnet.

'69MW' is one of those rare cars that exude elegance and quality from every angle. As a Continental model it offers performance equalled by very few of its peer group, being arguably the fastest British production car of its era. In short: as Kenneth Neve so succinctly put it this beautiful Phantom is 'a superlative possession.'

'69MW' is described by the vendor as presented in excellent condition and comes with a good history file containing restoration records, copy factory order and build sheets, copy of the original Barker & Co order and specification sheet, V5 registration document, and an old-style logbook, ready for only its fifth owner in 85 years.

Bonhams 1793

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<http://www.bonhams.com/auctions/24878/>

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