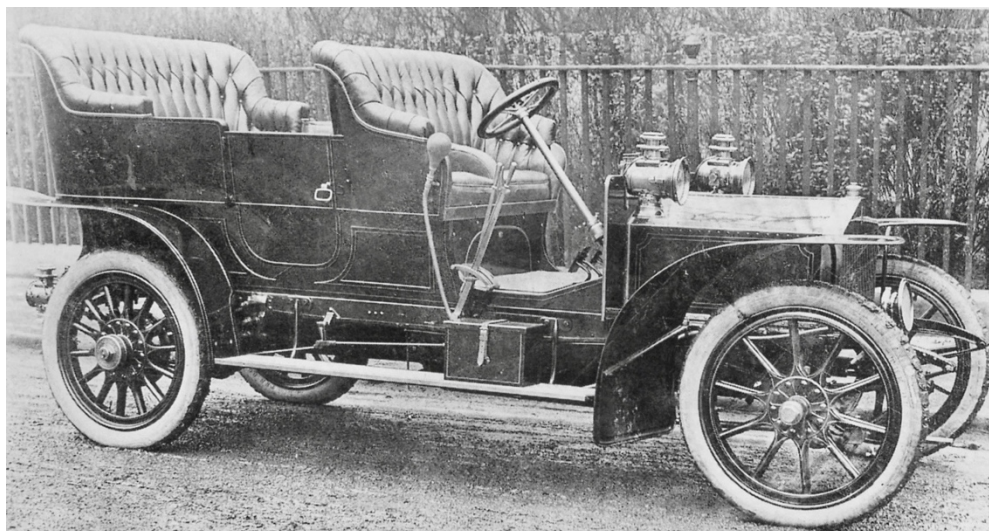




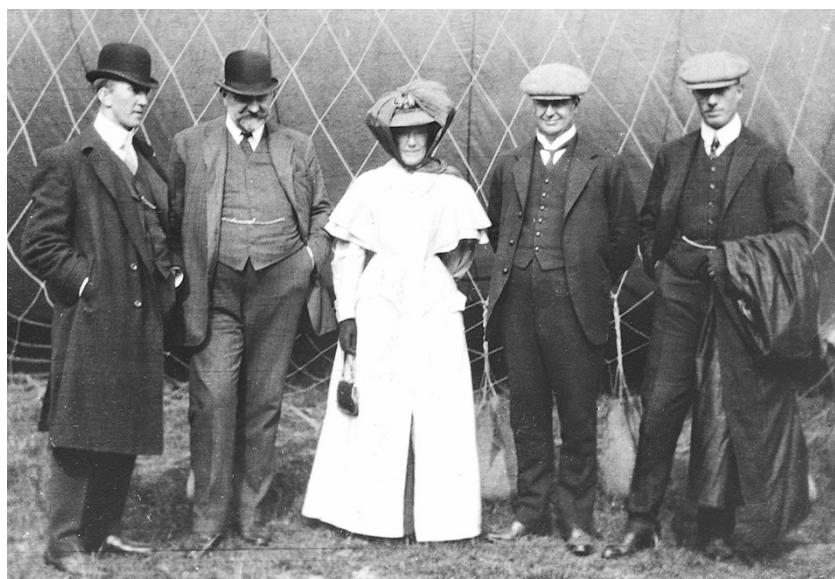
The Kellow Motor Company, Melbourne
Australia's First Rolls-Royce Agency

David Neely
History Consultant
The Sir Henry Royce Foundation, Australia

The significance of Charles Kellow's part in the history of Rolls-Royce in Australia was not fully appreciated in Clarke and Neely's *Rolls-Royce and Bentley in the Sunburnt Country* when it was published by The Sir Henry Royce Foundation in 1999. It stated that Kellow, ".... became the first Australian Rolls-Royce agent in 1908 [sic]." Also, there is a photograph on page 14 of a group of people during preparations for a balloon ascent with Charles Rolls in 1908 in London. Kellow, who has now been identified in the group, was not recorded in the caption at the time of publication.

Above: The first Rolls-Royce to come to Australia 1906 Heavy 20 h.p. 40509 Barker Standard side entrance tourer. [Fasal & Goodman The Edwardian Rolls-Royce]

Right: Charles Kellow on the left and Arthur Staughton on the right during preparations for an ascent in Charles Rolls's balloon in 1908. Kellow was not identified when this photo was included in *Rolls-Royce and Bentley in the Sunburnt Country*. [Courtesy of Lady Holden]



However, Ian Irwin brought to light Kellow's pre-eminent position in the history of Rolls-Royce in Australia. His research, which dated Kellow's Rolls-Royce agency back to 1906, was published in the October 2018 issue of *PRÆCLARVM* in the article, *The 1906 Heavy Twenty, Chassis 40509, Our First Australian Rolls-Royce*. Irwin is the author of the two volumes, *Silver Ghosts of Australia and New Zealand* and *Silver Ghosts of Australia and New Zealand Cameo Histories of the Post War Cars*. The first volume has a number of handsome advertisements by the Kellow Motor Co., one with pictures of Siddeley, Talbot and Napier cars in 1909.

Irwin's source was his discovery of this item in the Sydney newspaper *The Referee* from their Melbourne representative on 10 October 1906, headed "A Rolls-Royce Car". It continued, "A recent cablegram from London gives particulars of a brilliant motor race win recorded by a 20 h.p. 4-cylinder Rolls-Royce car, the contest in which it scored so signally in being the principal one in England. Mr. C. B. Kellow, Melbourne, has lately secured the direct agency for this class of car, and by the end of the present month a sample car will arrive from England to his order for stock. It will be of exactly the same class and power as the one referred to in the cablegram, and considerable interest centres in the fact of this importation owing to this being the first representative of the make to arrive in Australia."

Good Motor Cars.
HUMBER,
TALBOT,
NAPIER,
ROLLS-ROYCE.
ALL BRITISH MAKE.
Catalogue and Particulars from the Sole Agents
Kellow Motor Company,
188 EXHIBITION STREET, MELBOURNE.
Estab. 1889.

*Above: Thought to be the first advertisement for Rolls-Royce in Australia.
[The Referee 10 October 1906]*

The same issue carried what might now be called an advertorial, "The Kellow Motor Co., Melbourne, notifies by advertisement in the present issue that it is the sole agent for the Humber, Talbot, Napier and Rolls-Royce cars, all of British make, also, that full particulars, with catalogues, will be supplied on application. This company has worked up an immense business since it went into the motor car 'line', and is now entitled to rank among the leading motor operators in Australia." Irwin identified this as the first advertisement for Rolls-Royce in Australia.

Below: The 20 October 1906 advertisement announcing the imminent arrival of the Rolls-Royce. [The Australasian 20 October 1906]

(By Special Appointment to their Excellencies the Governor-General and the State Governor.)

**HUMBERS,
TALBOTS,
- NAPIERS, and
ROLLS-ROYCE.**

**UNEQUALLED for VALUE, RELIABILITY and GENERAL EXCELLENCE.
BRITISH-BUILT THROUGHOUT.**

At the Recent Heidelberg Hill-climbing Contest, **Humber** and **Talbot Cars** Secured the **First Eight Places** for Fastest Times.

A 20-H.P. ROLLS-ROYCE CAR Won the Recent International Tourist Trophy, for a Race over 161 Miles, Covering the Distance in 4hr. 6min., averaging 1min. 31sec. per mile, and Defeating 28 Competitors.

1906 MODELS HUMBERS, TALBOTS, NAPIERS, Arriving, and Open for Inspection This Week.
Sample **Rolls-Royce** Arriving End of Month.

PRICES, from £385.

SOLE AGENTS— KELLOW MOTOR CO.,
188 EXHIBITION-STREET, MELBOURNE. (Established 1880),
THE LARGEST AND MOST UP-TO-DATE GARAGE IN AUSTRALASIA.
All Makes of Cars Repaired, Garaged, and Hired. Trial Runs By Appointment.

Irwin's next discovery was an advertisement in the Melbourne paper *The Australasian* of 20 October 1906 which stated, "A 20 h.p. Rolls-Royce car won the recent International Tourist Trophy, for a race over 161 miles covering the distance in 4hr. 6min., averaging 1min. 31sec. per mile, and defeating 28 competitors." The advertisement added, "Sample Rolls-Royce arriving end of month." Also stated in the advertisement, "By special Appointment to their Excellencies the Governor-General and the State Governor". In January 1905 Kellow had placed an order for a Talbot 12-16 h.p. for the Governor-General Lord Northcote.

The "Sample Rolls-Royce" was 1906 Heavy Twenty chassis 40509. "Heavy" referred to the long wheelbase. It was imported through the London agents Tozer, Kemsley & Fisher. While it didn't arrive at the end of October, it did arrive in February 1907 and Irwin then traced Kellow's first-hand account of the trial of the new car. It was reported in *The Referee* of 6 March 1907, again from their Melbourne representative, with the heading, "A 600-Mile Trial Run". It started, "We had a glorious trip with the new Rolls-Royce car that arrived last week", said Mr. C. B. Kellow, Melbourne. "Four of us, Mr. Guy Madden, Mr. Jas. Moffatt, Mr. Lee Faulkner [sic], of Boonoke, Riverina, and myself, went on a trial run of 600 miles all over the Western District. We left Friday evening, and got back Monday at midday, and I must say the car is the finest I ever sat in for a long journey. It performed splendidly with us, and mile after mile was ticked off in 1min. 14sec. and 1min. 15sec. There was no variation of the speed where the roads were good and no trouble

when the roads were bad. It was a grand run.” Leigh Sadleir Falkiner (1880-1952) no doubt told his older brother Ralph Sadleir Falkiner (1877-1946) about the trip. Ralph Falkiner became Kellow’s business partner in 1913 and the Melbourne firm of Kellow-Falkiner was formed. The Falkiners were wealthy pastoralists in the Riverina. After a few years Falkiner disposed of his share to Kellow.

Kellow had been driving and competing in cars for about six years before he drove the 1906 Rolls-Royce Heavy Twenty, Rolls-Royce’s fifty-eighth car. So he was well qualified to give his verdict, “performed splendidly”, about his first encounter, at least in Australia, with a Rolls-Royce. The area chosen for the trial was familiar to Kellow because the previous year in 1906 he and his co-driver, Harry B. James, covered 556 miles in 24 hours around the Western District roads in a Humber 4-cylinder 10-12 h.p. Kellow’s business was booming and in the first two weeks of December 1906 Kellow sold seven Humbers, two De Dions, a Talbot and a Napier.

Returning to the 6 March 1907 article which concluded, “A Western District squatter bought this car for £1,050, and it was sent to him as soon as it had finished its trial trip.” And finally, “We did hills of one in five”, said Mr Kellow, “without changing gear.” The “squatter” was Arthur John Black (1859-1912) of *Mt Noorat*, Terang, Victoria and his ownership of 40509 is well documented.



Above: The Rolls-Royce Heavy 20 h.p. outside Arthur Black’s home Mt Noorat at Terang, Victoria. The mansion was demolished in 1939. [*Pastoral Homes of Australia* 1910]

Inset: Arthur John Black (1859-1912) the first owner of a Rolls-Royce in Australia.

Arthur Staughton of *Keayang*, Terang, owned 40509 after Black from 1912 to 1929. Prior to that he purchased 1908 Silver Ghost chassis 60747, a tourer by the English firm of Alford & Alder. Staughton accompanied Kellow on a trip to England in 1908, about which more later.

Kellow was named at birth Henry Brown Kellow (1871-1943). He changed his first name to Charles by deed poll and was known as "C. B." or "Charlie". He was born at Castlemaine, Victoria, the youngest of 10 siblings. His father Joseph (1827-1910), was born in Bodmin, Cornwall, England. His mother was Elizabeth (née Patterson) (1828-1908), who was born in Alnwick, Northumberland, England and migrated to Melbourne in 1852. They were married in 1856 in Melbourne. The family were wealthy graziers at Sutton Grange north-east of Castlemaine and south-east of Bendigo, Victoria. A remaining link between the family and the district is Kellow Street in Sutton Grange. Kellow was educated at King's College, Fitzroy (not Clifton Hill as recorded in some sources). Aged 15, "H. Kellow" was awarded a special prize for "General Improvement" at his school speech night in December 1886. While the name of the college may suggest royal patronage it was a private enterprise established by Mr King in the 1870s. Kellow married Flora McRae Coles (1876-1923) in 1898 and they had four girls, Gwendoline Margaret, Winifred Elizabeth, Jean Flora and Florence Hope. He married Lucy Maude Sommerville Hutchings (1876-1965) in 1926.

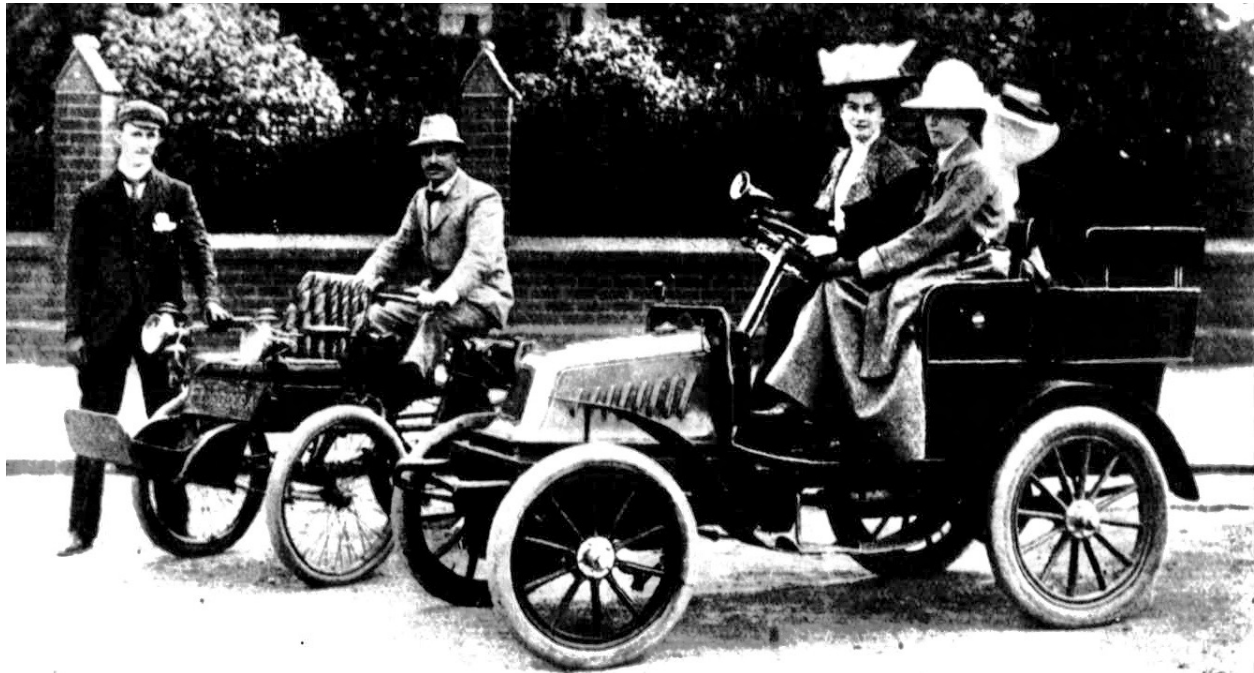
Kellow was in the midst of the bicycle boom of the 1890s as a champion racing cyclist and businessman. He won the Austral Wheel Race, cycling's equivalent to the Melbourne Cup, in 1896. Gold prospecting in Western Australia was next. Business enterprises went from bicycles and motorised bicycles in the late 1890s to motor bikes and cars in the early 1900s. He had aeronautical adventures in 1908. A balloon flight with the Charles Rolls in England and an aeroplane flight in France. Horseracing was a passion and Kellow won the Melbourne Cup with *Hall Mark* in 1933. H S Broadhead in his entry in *The Australian Dictionary of Biography* gave this opinion, "Kellow was enormously energetic, personally popular and commercially audacious to the point of illegality." Illegality? That certainly requires further exploration.

In 1895 Kellow went into partnership with William Howard Horatio Lewis (1868-1939) as Lewis & Kellow, Nimrod Cycle Agency, at 358 & 360 Elizabeth Street and in 1896 as Lewis & Kellow at 154 Swanston Street. The Red Bird bicycles they sold received a tremendous boost from the publicity after Kellow's Austral win. The partnership was dissolved in March 1898 and Kellow took over the management of the firm.

When Lewis left the bicycle business he joined Harley Tarrant (1860-1949) in the Tarrant Motor and Engineering Company in 1899. They were joined in 1903 by William Stuart Ross, a Scotsman who came to Australia after working at the British Argyll car factory.

Kellow imported a 4-seater Darracq in 1900 and was at the wheel for what seems to be a publicity run as this item from the *Chronicle* of 29 March 1902 reveals, "Miss Grace Palotta, the popular member of Mr. J. C. Williamson's Opera Company, is exceedingly fond of motoring. Recently Mr. C. B. Kellow took Miss Palotta and some lady friends up to Mount Macedon and back aboard his racy – looking motor car. The car succeeded in climbing the Mount, and is the first that has accomplished that feat. Although only out for pleasure, fast travelling was accomplished on the run, especially on the home trip, when, despite a stay for a light breakfast at Keilor, the 38 miles from Macedon was rattled off in two hours. Miss Palotta was in raptures over the run, no pace, even down the steepest hills, being too fast for the popular artist. The car used was Kellow's fine 6-horse-power Darracq voiturette, with seating accommodation for four people."

Kellow's Darracq was followed by a De Dion 6 h.p. used during the big Victorian Railway strike in 1903. With newspaper deliveries disrupted, the rival papers, *The Age* and *The Argus* were faced with the problem of at least partial distribution to regional centres such as Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong. *The Argus* quickly got an option on the service of the few motor cars in Melbourne and enlisted Kellow, Harry James and Syd Day to take control of the small fleet and arrange a campaign of action. The flagship machine under the *Argus* banner was Kellow's De Dion and he and James on one trip succeeded in getting their load of papers to Bendigo, despite midwinter night driving, some hours earlier than *The Argus* had ever previously been delivered by rail.



Above: Kellow is on the extreme left. In the driver's seat of the quadricycle is Syd Day and at the wheel of the De Dion is Miss Grace Palotta, the well-known actress in the early 1900s. Next to her is Mrs James and in the rear is Harry James whose face is obscured by the voluminous motoring veil. Taken in Melbourne in 1904, the De Dion 6 h.p. was Kellow's second car. [The Sydney Mail 29 November 1933]

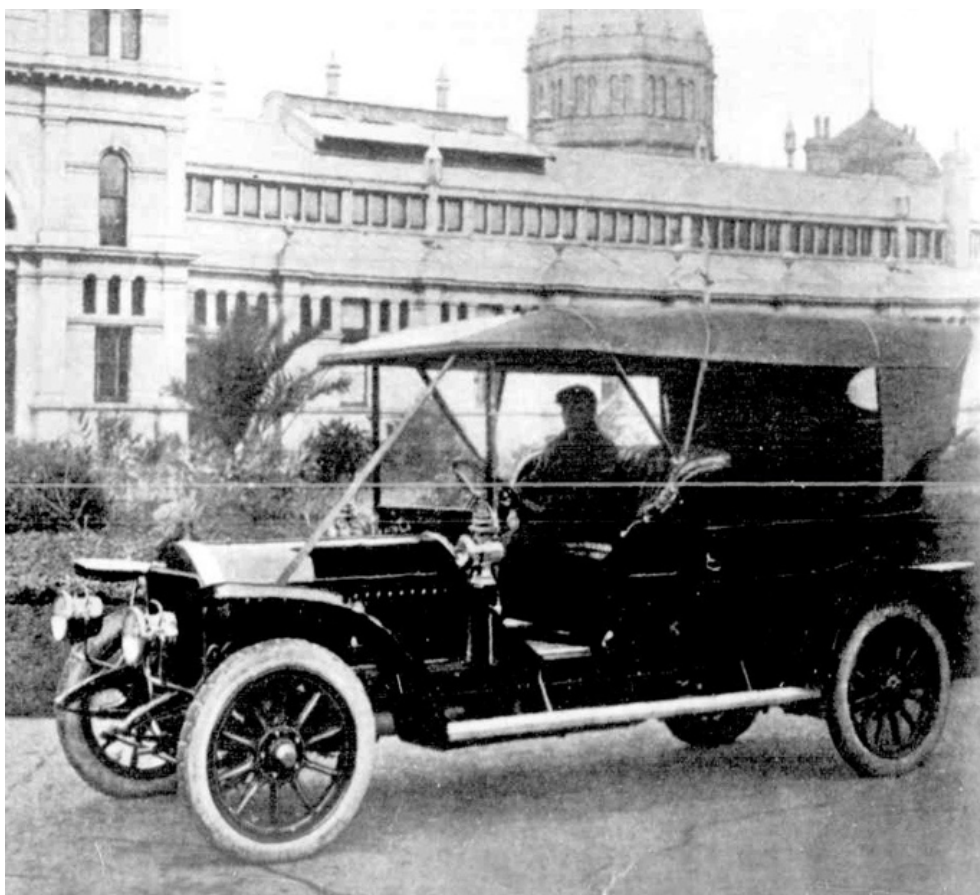


Top: Kellow's showroom in Exhibition Street about 1908 with signage for Rolls-Royce.

Below left: Sir Reginald Talbot, who is quoted in this advertisement, was governor of Victoria from 1904 to 1908. [Punch 27 October 1904]

Below right: The Kellow Motor Co. stand at the 1909 show including signage for the Rolls-Royce agency. [Punch 2 September 1909]





Above: The Victoria Government's new Napier 30 h.p. in 1908 was supplied by Kellow's. [The Australasian 29 August 1908]



Right: The showroom, office and garage of the Kellow Motor Co. at 206 Russell Street, Melbourne, in 1909. [The University of Melbourne 1960.0003.00028]

In 1903 C. B. Kellow was the sole agent for Beeston-Humber Cycles and Motors and the Werner Motocyclette, which was a motorized bicycle and in turn developed into a motor cycle. In October 1903 Kellow raced on a 2¾ h.p. chain-drive Humber.

The 17 December 1903 issue of *The Australian Cyclist and Motor-Car World* reported that Humber, Werner and Kellow motor bicycles could “be inspected at the Kellow factory, 355 Lonsdale Street.” It also reported, “The motor garage recently opened at the Kellow Cycle Works, 355 Lonsdale Street, is now in full swing.... In this department bicycles and cars can be stored and repaired.”

The 27 October 1904 issue of *Punch* carried this item, “C. B. Kellow landed per the *Scharnhorst* a shipment of the latest pattern genuine De Dion Bouton 6 h.p. cars. Included in the shipment is a fine specimen of a doctor’s car, fitted with hood, glass screen and all conveniences suitable for medical men. These cars are well worth intending purchasers’ inspection, as they have been specially built to Mr. Kellow’s design for the Australian conditions.”

Again, in *Punch* on 15 February 1906, “The Kellow Motor Company have just landed one of the Siddeley Motor Company’s latest models, known as the ‘Silent Six’. This is a 6 h.p. car with two seats, and is specially adapted for ladies owing to the ease of starting. It is very strongly built, and in England has proved itself a most reliable and inexpensive running machine.” It added, “The new showroom of the Kellow Motor Company has during the past week been much admired. There are on exhibition Talbots, Humber, Siddeleys and De Dions, and a large assortment of the latest in lamps, horns, etc.”



Above: The Talbot 12-16 h.p. with canopy top was imported by Kellow’s for governor-general Lord Northcote. “The chassis was sent from the Talbot establishment to Lord Northcote’s own coachbuilder.” [*The Referee* 22 November 1905 and 24 January 1906]

Right: Lord Northcote was Australia’s third governor-general in office from 1904 to 1908.



The motor trade in the 1900s was essentially an import business. So, it was inevitable as it expanded it would come under more scrutiny from the Customs Department. Kellow first clashed with Customs in 1907 and it concerned the 6-cylinder 40 h.p. Napier that he drove in the 1906 1,000 miles Dunlop trial around Victoria, when he won the heavy class.

The value of the Napier was questioned by Customs officials in a case recorded in *The Herald* on 14 March 1907. They claimed the car had entered at £123/3/2 less than its proper value for duty. Kemsley, the Melbourne representative for the English firm of Tozer, Kemsley & Fisher, said his firm had executed the order for £100 less than the ordinary price because the Kellow company wanted the car for exhibition purposes. Kemsley added that the purchasing firm can exhibit it to promote sales. The £100 defrays the cost of putting it in order for subsequent sale. Kellow added, "Recently the Humber people allowed us £100 for a 24 hours' reliability run with their car. The Napier car took part in a week's reliability run as soon as it arrived." The Customs officers maintained their position and the matter was to be referred to the Minister for Customs for decision. While there is no record of the outcome Kellow would cross swords with Customs again. The Humber was the car in which Kellow and James drove 556 miles around the Western District in 1906 in 24 hours.

Right: Kellow with the Napier 40 h.p. with which he won the Baillieu Trophy for Class D, for multi-cylinder cars with total cylinder capacity of over 200 cubic inches, in the Dunlop 1,000 miles contest. It was run from 12 November to 17 November 1906 over various routes radiating from Melbourne. [The Autocar 5 January 1907 courtesy of Tom Clarke]



Kellow imported a Napier racer that failed to find a buyer. In June 1907 *The Referee* reported on 26 June, "A short time ago Mr. C. B. Kellow of the Kellow Garage, Melbourne, imported an 80 h.p. (sic) Napier racer, but there is nothing 'fit to live with it in Melbourne', so it goes back. While it was at the garage the importer tried to lure other car owners to 'have a go' for a hundred pounds or over, but none could be lured.' The car was wasting its time in a garage, Mr. Kellow thought, and he made up his mind to re-ship it to Europe and claim the drawback of duty paid on it when brought in. The amount he expects to obtain from the Customs Department is about £200, and if things can be fixed up satisfactorily with the Department, the Napier greyhound will go away by the next ship for England."



Above: Kellow failed to sell a Napier racer. If the "Napier greyhound" looked like this, that might explain the difficulty Kellow had in finding a buyer. [Courtesy of Tom Clarke]

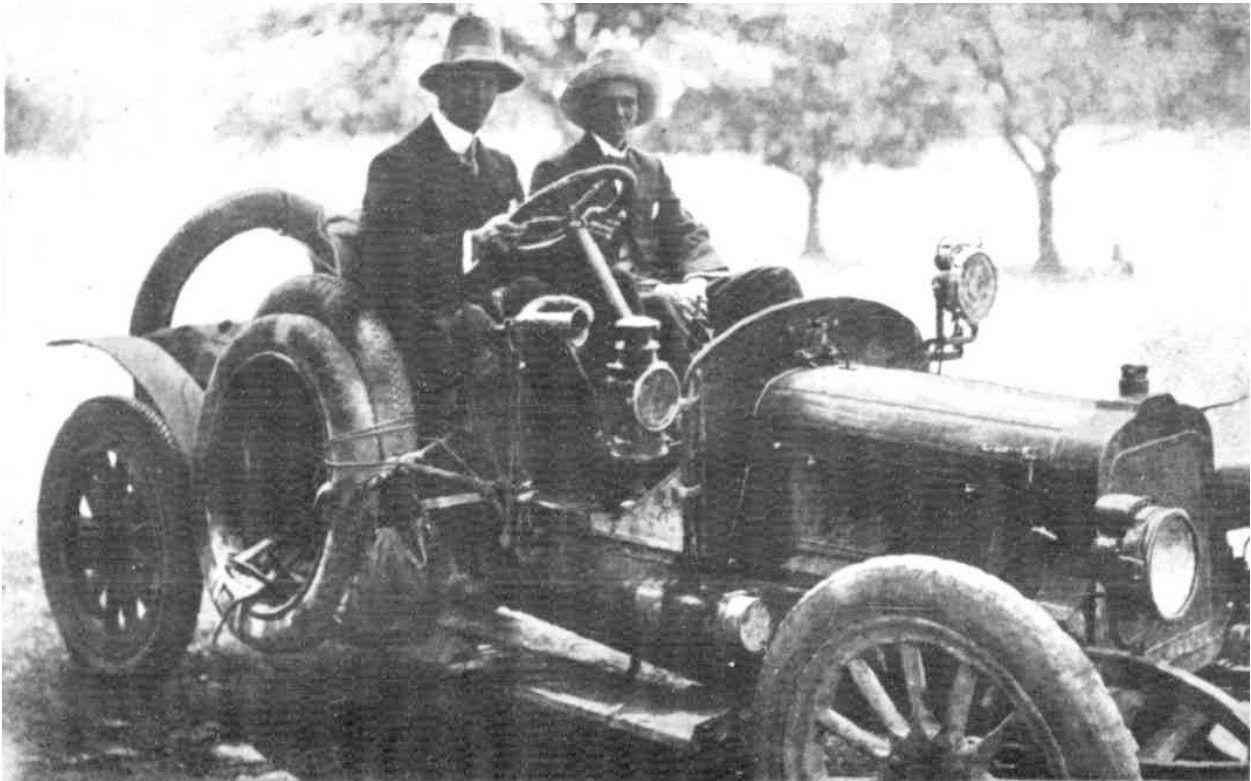
Another customs case in 1907 concerned tool cabinets being entered as furniture attracting less duty payable. This was also referred to the Minister for decision.

Reporting on car sales in Melbourne *The Referee* on 10 April 1907 noted, "Mr. C. B. Kellow of the Kellow Motor Garage, Melbourne, reports remarkable briskness in business, the number of his sales lately having been made in respect of cars yet to arrive. By the *Moravian* eleven cars of the Talbot, De Dion, and Humber makes will arrive, nearly all of these having already been sold. Among the lot will be the first Beeston Humber 30 h.p. to land in Melbourne. It has been sold to Mr. Walter Manifold for £800. Another of the *Moravian* lot is a Coventry-Humber 15 h.p., which has been sold for £550 to Mr. Andrews of Hamilton. A week ago Mr. Kellow landed by the *R.M.S. Omrah* five Humbers, all of which have been sold, the total value being over £2,000."



Left: Kellow in a Talbot during the 1905 Dunlop Reliability Motor Contest. [The Sydney Mail and NSW Advertiser 1 March 1905]

On 16 January 1908. Kellow and James set out in a Talbot from Melbourne to Sydney (572 miles or 920 km). An inauspicious time in the height of summer. Not surprisingly then, it was 116 degrees (47 °C) in the shade at Gundagai and bush fires lined the road from Goulburn to Picton. Sydney was reached in 25 hours 40 minutes. It was hailed as an outstanding feat when, "Hundreds of miles of the route were in an appalling condition, fit only for bullock teams." *The Bulletin* on 19 March 1908 made the wry observation that Kellow and James, "are about the most reckless pair of dare-devils that ever got loose in a car."



Above: Kellow and James aboard the Talbot which they used on the epic drive from Melbourne to Sydney in January 1908. [The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser 22 January 1908]

Later in 1908 Kellow was in England. *The Bendigo Independent* of 25 May 1908 reported news from London dated 22 May, "Messrs C. B. Kellow and A. J. Staughton, of Melbourne, who are visiting England and the Continent, have had some interesting experiences. Yesterday they made an ascent from Battersea (London) in the Hon. C. M. [sic] Rolls' balloon. The balloon went to a height of 4,800 feet, and travelled to the shore of the North Sea, going at the rate of 40 miles an hour. Mr. Kellow has also made an ascent at Paris, in Mr. Henry Farman's aeroplane." Farman (1874-1958), an Anglo-French aviator, acquired a Voisin biplane in June 1907 and this is most likely the plane Kellow flew in.

Kellow made his initial trip to England in 1891. It was the first of some 15 overseas trips. It is likely that he met Charles Rolls before the 1908 balloon adventure. Kellow advertised in the 16 June 1906 issue of *The Argus* that his company had, "secured the sole Victorian

agency for the world-famed British-built Napier car.” It was at the same time as the Rolls-Royce agency announcement. Perhaps Kellow was in England at around this time when he may also have negotiated with Humber and Talbot.

While in England in 1908 Kellow and Staughton explored the idea of forming a syndicate to introduce taxi-cabs in Melbourne. The venture led to the Taxi-cab company. The *Victoria Police Gazette* on 26 January 1911 listed registration numbers 3336 to 3342 for seven taxis for the company.



Left: A Renault taxi in London of the type that Kellow and Staughton would have seen in 1908. [London Vintage Taxi Association]

In 1911 Kellow and Raymond Ewart Kemsley were charged with two counts of conspiracy against a syndicate prior to March 1909 and the other against the Melbourne Taxi-Cab Company into which the syndicate was formed. It was alleged they conspired with R Millbourn of London and others to defraud the members of a syndicate known as the Melbourne Motor Co. or the Taxi-Cab Co. by means of false statements as to the cost of taxi-cabs imported for the syndicate. There were two trials. In the first the jury failed to reach a verdict and the second in May 1912 found both not guilty. The jury may have been persuaded that Kellow was the agent for the Renault cabs in Victoria and members of the syndicate expected Kellow would receive some profit. Also, it was noted that Kellow had declined to become a director because of his business position and the directors then drew up a special article to allow him to do so and thereby give the taxi company the benefit of his experience.

Kellow became enthralled with flying after that flight in 1908 with Farman. *The Age* reported on 26 July 1911, “He has made many ascents during his present visit to England with, among other well-known airmen, Mr Grahame-White and Mr. S. F. Cody.” *Punch* on 12 October 1911 reported that during Kellow’s six months abroad he, “purchased a flying machine, which will be shipped to him at a later date.” Kellow purchased two aeroplanes from the International Exhibition and was quoted in July 1929, “I consider flying will soon be as popular as motoring. I will use the planes for business and pleasure, mainly flying from the city to my station.” Kellow owned Gundaline Station on the Murrumbidgee River. What’s more, he had ambitious plans for planes. *The Herald* on 2 September 1929 reported that Kellow had secured the Avro agency and planned to sell and service aeroplanes through the Kellow-Falkiner company.



*Above: Kellow had his first flight in Henry Farman's Voisin biplane in 1908.
[Library of Congress, Washington]*

The Tarrant company ran foul of the Customs authorities in 1911. Customs brought actions against Tarrant, Lewis and Ross for evading import duty. German tyres were repeatedly passed off as British products, which enjoyed a preferential rate of duty and a car body was undervalued. Adelaide's *The Advertiser* recorded the verdict on 21 September 1912, "He (Mr Justice Issacs of the High Court) accordingly convicted the defendants of the offences charged and imposed penalties of £265 for the first offence and £200 for the second. The defendants (he said) would have to pay costs of the action."

Kellow in 1910 was charged with evasion of custom duties during the period 1905 and 1910 in "The case of the King v. Charles Brown Kellow". Kellow pleaded guilty to 33 of 148 charges. The case was reported in the 16 December 1910 issue of *The Brisbane Courier*, "In the High Court today an interesting case under the Customs Act was heard by his Honour Mr. Justice Higgins. Charles Brown Kellow, of the Kellow Motor Co., importer and dealer in motor cars, had, according to the statement of claim alleged against him, evaded payment of duty, with an attempt to defraud the customs.... the duty evaded amounted to £1,500. Mr. Starke, who appeared for the Commonwealth Government said the facts were that Kellow indented orders through Tozer, Kemsley and Fisher, Ltd., of London. There was no duty on the chassis of British manufacture, but on foreign manufacture the duty was 5 per cent, car bodies were 30 percent cent and 35 percent, while tyres were 20 and 25 per cent. The tendency was to value the chassis as high as possible, and cut down the value of the tyres and bodies. Manufacturers were induced to give false invoices to perpetrate fraud by making deductions and calling them allowances.... He (Starke) asked the Court to impose a penalty of £60 for each of the 33 cases that had been admitted by the defendant.

"Mr. Justice Higgins said he thought the Crown had been very lenient in what was proposed, and it was his duty to call attention, not only to the defendant, but also to the mode in which, if these alleged facts were true, firms in England lent themselves to the grossest frauds against the Customs. It would be extremely desirable if the Customs

Department would call the attention of those in authority to the extraordinary conduct of Kellow and those with whom he had been doing business. He formally ordered the defendant to pay £60 in respect to each of the 33 offences, amounting to £1,980 in all, with costs." Kellow also had to pay duty which brought the total to £3,300, equivalent to \$543,000 in 2023.

"The Customs Department has benefitted considerably by the prosecutions of motor firms for alleged contraventions of the Customs Act.", reported *The Herald* on 17 February 1912. The Customs Department received £11,000 from the prosecutions. Kellow, Phizackerley and the General Motor Company each paid £3,000 in fines, equivalent to \$435,000 in 2023.

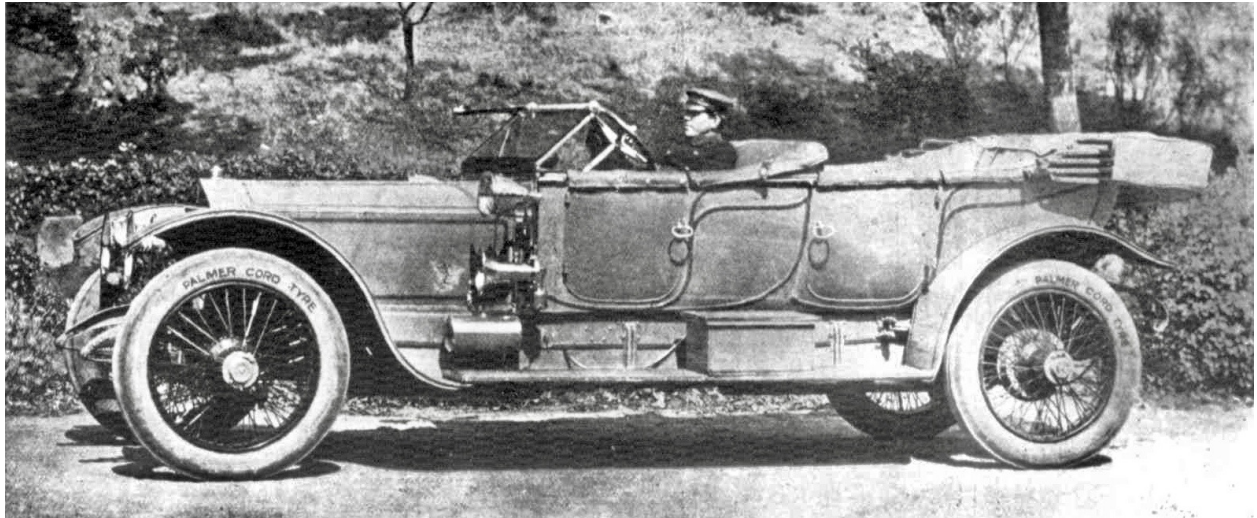
Accusations of customs fraud moved to London when the Australian Customs Department brought an action in the Bow Street Police Court in June 1913. It was alleged that the companies in England supplying the Talbot, Swift, Belsize, Napier and Argyll cars put unduly low prices in their invoices in order to defraud the Federal Customs authorities." Letters were presented that, Tozer, Kemsley & Fisher wrote to the Belsize Company directing that packing should not be mentioned in future invoices in order to avoid duty. It also wrote to the Swift Company, asking that catalogues should be packed in the seats of motor cars, and to the De Dion Company suggesting that the cost of footboards and wings should be included in the price of the chassis." The Australians implicated in the London case included Charles Kellow, William Crowle and Issac Phizackerley.

The case was dismissed in January 1914 but some interesting pieces of evidence were given. Mr Shorland, the manager of the Clement Talbot Motor Car Company, denied his firm had been persuaded to issue false invoices. Though at a later hearing Shorland admitted that clerical errors had occurred in 15 invoices between September and December 1909 in which the net price of tyres was treated as the gross price.

Mr Hora, the director of a coach-building firm, gave evidence about bodies supplied for Darracq cars. His firm charged £40 a piece and the Darracq Company invoiced them at £26. He stated that if the manufacturers got a good price for their chassis they did not charge the full price for bodies.

A letter was quoted to the court. Tozer, Kemsley & Fisher in London wrote to their Melbourne representative with reference to cycle sets to be shipped abroad. Part of the contents were read to the court, "Sooner or later, it will get us into trouble with the customs authorities, and that will be bad generally for our business."

Was there an element of a cat and mouse game between the customs officials on one side and the motor traders and the shippers on the other? If so, it was a serious contest because at stake were pounds, shillings and pence. Kellow had six encounters with Customs as recorded in the press. The score was Customs and Kellow with two victories each and two outcomes unrecorded. Enough for a charge against Kellow of being "Commercially audacious to the point of illegality"?



Top: Sol Green's 1912 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost 1853E with the Kellow's body.
[Punch 15 May 1913]

Below: The Age 3 September 1912 noted that the 1912 Melbourne Motor Exhibition featured, "The star car of the exhibition, Mr Sol. Green's Rolls-Royce, has a body built completely in C. B. Kellow's factory." It is here the ghostly image on the far far right.
[Photo by Darge via Punch 5 September 1912]



Tom Clarke noted in a presentation about Kellow, "In 1921 there was an unpleasant surprise: Rolls-Royce Ltd ended Kellow's agency and gave it to Dalgety's throughout most of Australia but in Victoria it went to the All British Motor Co based in Kellow's own building!" Kellow resumed the agency in 1933 and Kellow-Falkiner thrived after World War II before finally closing in 1988.



Left and below: The 1920s grand showrooms of Kellow-Falkiner in St Kilda Road built in the Spanish Mission style.



By the time the Rolls-Royce agency went back to Kellow-Falkiner the Bentley marque was included. Kellow was in England in August 1934 when a report reached *The Herald* on 13 August 1934 that Kellow, "has been so impressed with the qualities of the new Bentley that he has ordered a chassis to be shipped to Melbourne for his own personal use."

Kellow-Falkiner imported 1934 Bentley 3½ litre B175BL, an English Park Ward saloon, for Win Fowles of Carlyon's Hotel in September 1934. Fowles owned hotels in Brisbane before he moved to Melbourne. He purchased Carlyon's in 1923. It was located opposite Spencer Street Railway Station and Fowles advertised, "Train travellers pay no taxi fares" – at most a railway porter could carry your luggage across the road. For motorists there was, "Free garage accommodation."



Above: The 1934 Bentley 3½ litre B175BL Kellow-Falkiner imported for Win Fowles of Carlyon's Hotel. [The Herald 5 November 1934]

Below: 1934 Phantom II 51RY pictured here was built for John Bell of Wentworth. The "4-door 4-light close-coupled semi-sports saloon was designed and constructed at the Kellow-Falkiner bodyworks." [The Herald 11 March 1935]



In 1937 Kellow acquired Woodlands Homestead from Ben Chaffey after he died. Chaffey was a pastoralist and owner of 1911 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost chassis 1732 which was converted to an ambulance in 1915 and donated for the war effort. Kellow lived at Woodlands with his daughters Winifred and Hope until his death in 1943.

A legacy of Charles Kellow, through his family, is held in the Australian War Memorial. It is not related to his business career or other pursuits. It is an artwork. In 1929 Kellow purchased for 2,000 guineas Australian artist Captain Will Longstaff's 'Immortal Shrine'. It depicts ghostly soldiers marching past the cenotaph in London on Remembrance Day 1928. It follows Longstaff's 'Menin Gate at Midnight'. Kellow and Longstaff were old friends from schooldays in Ballarat. Apart from being one of Kellow's first customers for a car, Longstaff was the first to ride in a taxicab. He watched the first taxi being unpacked and filled with petrol at Kellow's garage and immediately hired it. It was said the shilling and sixpence fare he paid was suitably preserved. Longstaff was a war artist and Officer in Charge of Camouflage in World War I. Following Kellow's death the work was presented to the War Memorial in 1943 by Kellow's surviving daughters, Gwendoline, Winifred and Hope.



Left: Will Longstaff posed with 'Immortal Shrine' in 1928 [The West Australian 26 December 1928]

Below: 'Immortal Shrine' shows ghostly soldiers marching past the Cenotaph in London. [Australian War Memorial ART14196]



References: Tom Clarke's dissertation on the pre-40/50 h.p. cars in Fasal & Goodman's *The Edwardian Rolls-Royce*. A presentation by Tom Clarke to the Victoria Branch of the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club at Creswick on 13 July 2024, *Charles Brown Kellow: his sales success with Rolls-Royce in the Western District*. The National Library's Trove. The Reserve Bank of Australia's Pre-Decimal Inflation Calculator. Special thanks to Tom Clarke for editorial assistance. D Neely, Sydney, 2025.