

COLLECTOR'S EDITION

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO THE

# ROLLS-ROYCE **SILVER SHADOW**



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# THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO THE ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER SHADOW

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Yours truly, seven years ago experiencing his first Rolls-Royce in the form of a very blue Silver Wraith II. I felt it important to sample it from both the front and back seats.

WELCOME



# WELCOME

I will admit that I had little interest in Rolls-Royce cars when I was young and forming my opinions on such things. I had much more time for their aero-engines - the sight of the intertwined 'Rs' on the cowl of the Lockheed Tristar taking us on a family holiday, or the snarl (overlaid with shrieking of a supercharger) of a Merlin at an airshow was much more likely to get me excited. Even when old cars did become a passion, Rolls-Royces were pretty much at the opposite end of the spectrum to where my interests lay - give me a fun little Mini or a back-to-basics Land Rover rather than some preposterous saloon with a chintzy radiator grille and a ludicrous bonnet mascot that, surely, in any other context would be considered extremely gaudy?

I certainly had no direct experience of the marque to enlighten me. Some close friends of my grandparents on my mum's side had done very well for themselves with a local chain of record shops and a caravan park on the Kent coast, and they owned a Silver Shadow - in extremely 1970s gold with brown interior. I never saw it go anywhere. It seemed to sit permanently in the their garage. On visits I was permitted to view it through the glass of the garage door, but not to go any closer.

My indifference to Rolls-Royce swiftly

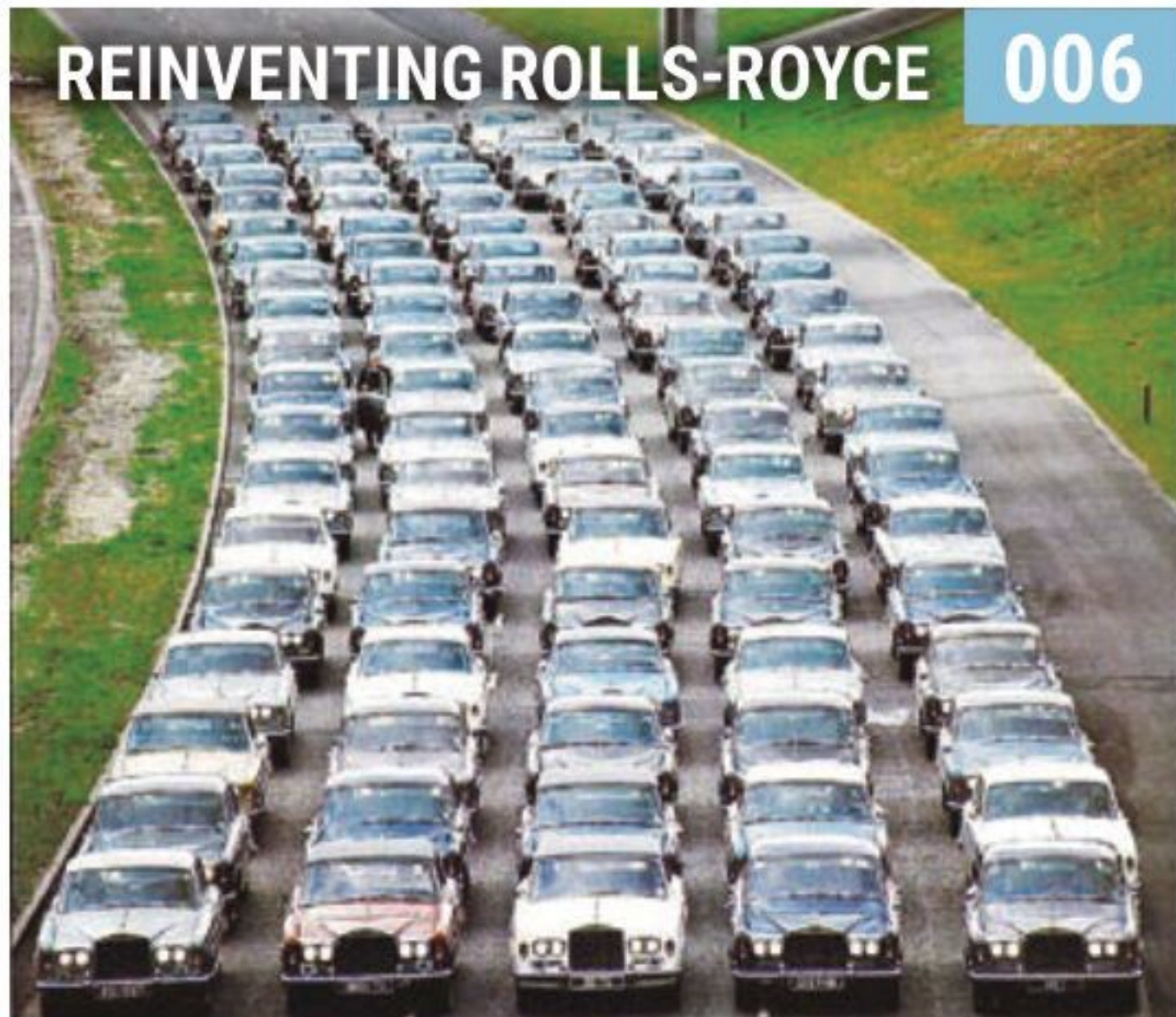
ended when, as a mostly-fledged motoring writer, I had my first chance to not only sit in but drive a Rolls-Royce. It was a Silver Shadow. In fact it was a Silver Wraith II (the long-wheelbase version). A very late one in aptly-named Peacock Blue. Ensconced in blue velour, staring down what seemed like acres of bonnet to the rear view of the Spirit of Ecstasy, I had never felt more conspicuous in a car before.

That Silver Wraith proved to me that, while you can quibble over the oft-made boast about 'The Best Car In The World', the Shadow is certainly in the running for the title. More compellingly, Rolls-Royces have a very likeable character that is all their own, and a very distinctive approach to luxury - one that's about ease, relaxation and a pleasure in simple things done well than obvious trinkets, gizmos or party tricks. And when I got back to the office and began reading up on the history and engineering of the Shadow, my positive impression grew into deep respect, because it's the fine details and materials that really sets the Silver Shadow apart. From that moment it's been a great pleasure to get to know these charismatic cars all the more, and I hope to keep doing so. ■

**JACK GROVER** EDITOR



## REINVENTING ROLLS-ROYCE 006



## 016 LABOUR OF LOVE



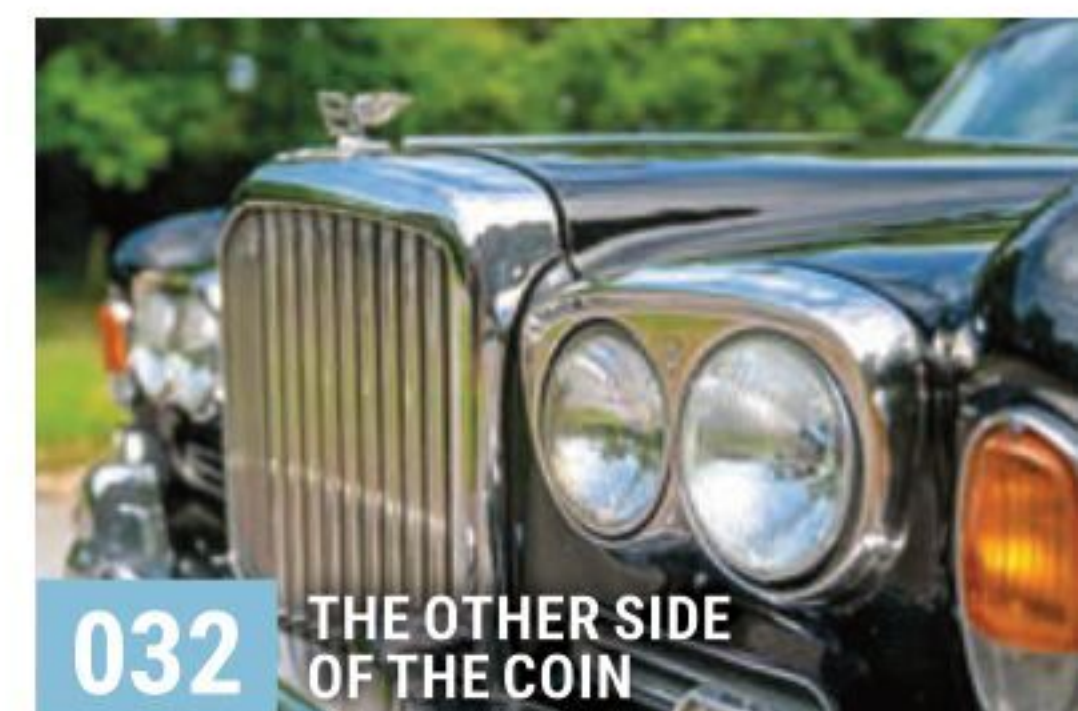
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A complete history of the development of the game-changing Silver Shadow and its long production life.

## 016 LABOUR OF LOVE

We meet a marque devotee who has owned his Silver Shadow for nearly 30 years , having restored it from down-at-heel to a prizewinning example.

## 022 SELLING THE BEST

Even a Rolls-Royce needs to be advertised. We look at the various ways and means Crewe convinced those lucky first buyers to choose a Silver Shadow.

## 024 LIFE WITH LUXURY

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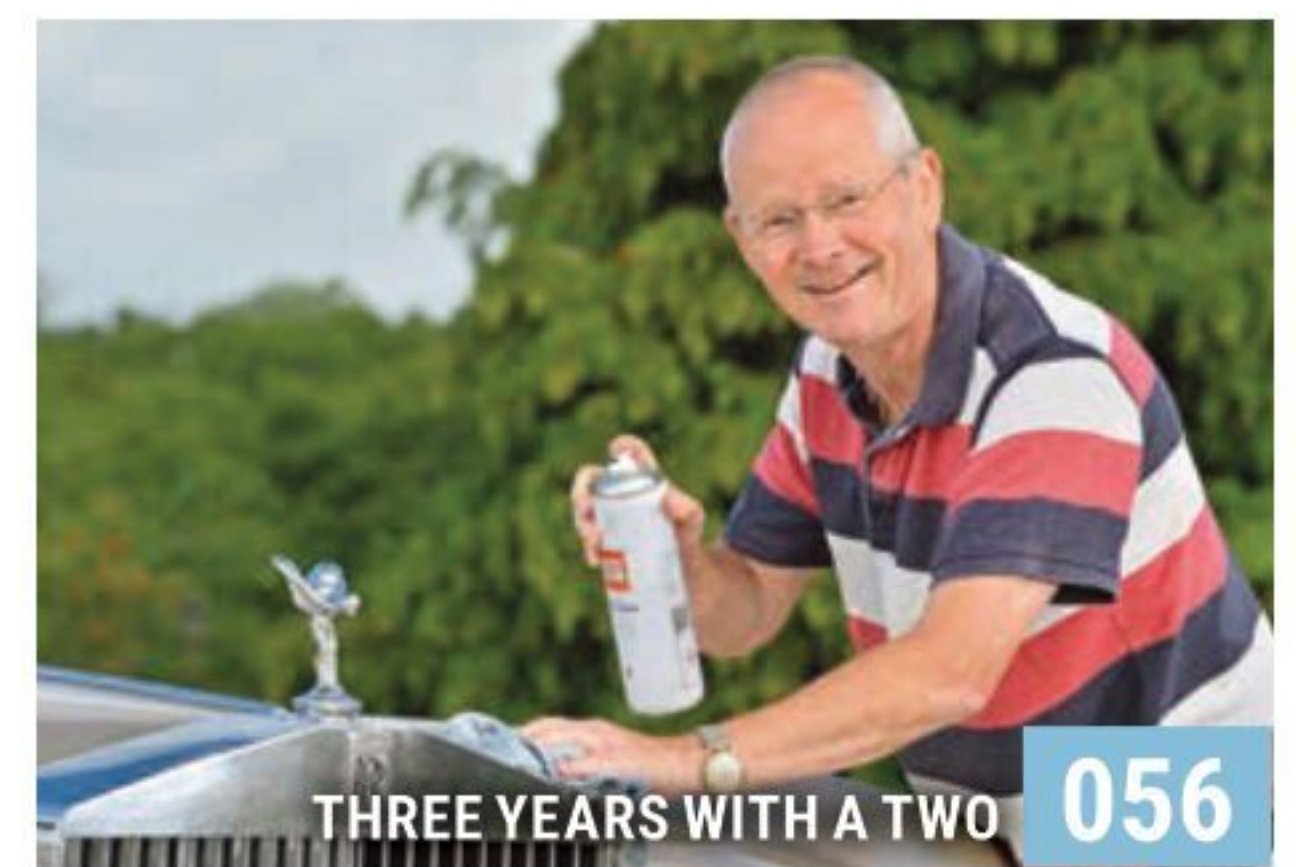
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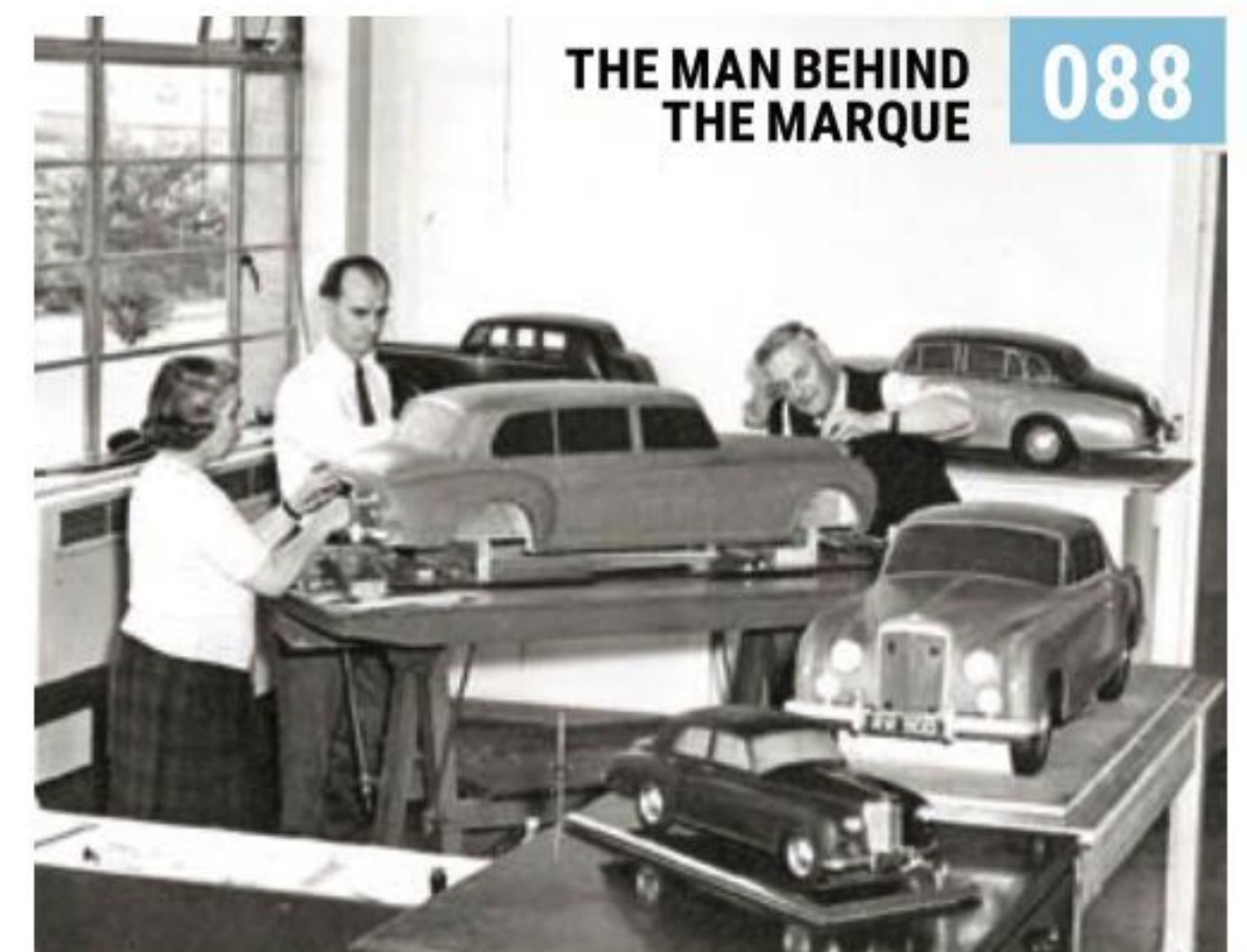
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UNITARY PURPOSE





# REINVENTING ROLLS-ROYCE

*We take an in-depth look at the Silver Shadow – the legendary saloon that reinvented the best car in the world, leading to numerous variations on the same theme*

Words **PAUL GUINNESS**

**T**o say that the innovative new Silver Shadow shocked onlookers when it first took a bow in 1965 is no exaggeration, with the newcomer grabbing attention not only for its drastic change of style compared with its Silver Cloud predecessor, but also for its levels of hi-tech modernity. Moving Rolls-Royce

technology forward in such a profound way, however, enabled the Silver Shadow to enjoy an extended career, with the four-door saloons remaining in production for an impressive 15 years – and their two-door derivatives for even longer.

Rolls-Royce had, of course, enjoyed considerable success with three generations of

Silver Cloud – and Bentley S-series derivatives – throughout its decade-long production run. Launched in 1955, here was a car that stayed true to tradition, with its separate-chassis layout enabling Britain's dwindling numbers of specialist coachbuilders to offer their own bespoke versions. There were modern touches to the Silver Cloud saloon's aesthetics →





The Silver Shadow not only redefined Rolls-Royce for the 1960s, but for the rest of the 20th century...and beyond.



The sales success of the Silver Shadow was immediate, with Crewe being unable to meet demand for several years.





## BENTLEY EXCLUSIVITY

Up until the arrival of the Silver Shadow, Bentley tended to rival Rolls-Royce when it came to sales success. The Silver Cloud of 1955-65, for example, was actually outsold by the Bentley S-series equivalent, with the early S1 in particular being significantly more popular than the Silver Cloud at that time.

The generation before had also seen Bentley enjoying considerable success in the luxury car market. The 1946-52 MkVI sold over 5200 units in total, with its R-Type successor of 1952-55 (derived from the MkVI and featuring modified rear styling) attracting 2323 buyers. By comparison, the Rolls-Royce Silver Dawn (another MkVI derivative of 1949-55) achieved a mere 760 sales.

The arrival of the innovative new Silver Shadow in 1965, however, marked a remarkable fall from grace for the Bentley marque. Rolls-Royce's first monocoque-bodied model went on to be a major success, with 19,497 of the original four-door saloon (prior to the Silver Shadow II of 1977) being sold over twelve years. By comparison, just 1712 of the Bentley T-series (before the T2 of '77) attracted buyers, leading Rolls-Royce to contemplate dropping the Bentley marque altogether when work began on a Silver Shadow successor in the 1970s.

Fortunately, however, that never happened, and Bentley went on to enjoy renewed appeal – and booming sales – throughout the '80s and beyond, largely thanks to the success of the high-performance Turbo R.



The Silver Shadow was produced in unprecedented volumes for a Rolls-Royce.



when it first went on sale, moving Rolls-Royce and Bentley successfully on from the previous Silver Dawn and R-Type era. But car design was evolving rapidly by the start of the '60s, which meant that Rolls-Royce's chief stylist, John Blatchley, faced a dilemma when it came to creating a Silver Cloud successor.

Even at the upper end of the new-car market, there was a noticeable shift in demand. There would always be wealthy buyers who wanted – and could afford – the ultimate in traditionalism and prestige, which explains why Rolls-Royce continued to enjoy steady demand for its 1959-on Phantom V limousine. But as the 1960s dawned, John Blatchley knew that a successor for the Silver Cloud family needed to cater for a new breed of buyer – the owner-driver who didn't employ a chauffeur. The newcomer needed to offer the kind of luxury that a Rolls-Royce always should, albeit in a slightly more compact, more manoeuvrable package.

Blatchley also knew that the way the car was built needed to change, as the world was moving away from the separate-chassis layouts of old. The use of monocoque construction might have caused consternation among Britain's traditional coachbuilders, but it was a must for any new Rolls-Royce that needed to bring extra sales and increased profits to the car-building side of the business. Adopting a modern

## “JOHN BLATCHLEY KNEW THAT A SUCCESSOR FOR THE SILVER CLOUD NEEDED TO CATER FOR A NEW BREED OF BUYER”

monocoque layout would enable the new Rolls-Royce to be both lighter and smaller than the Silver Cloud, which in turn would have an effect on both performance and fuel economy; and it would enable Rolls-Royce to build in larger numbers than before.

What became the Silver Shadow of 1965 wasn't just modern in terms of its construction, of course. It also needed to offer a smoother ride, much-improved handling and more stability at high speed than the Silver Cloud, hence the adoption of fully independent suspension. And with Citroën being world leaders in terms of suspension technology, Rolls-Royce wisely chose to licence the French firm's hydropneumatic system, albeit redesigned at Crewe to incorporate conventional coil springs. The hydraulics provided self-levelling to maintain the car's ride quality irrespective of load, as well as powering its four-wheel disc brakes to →

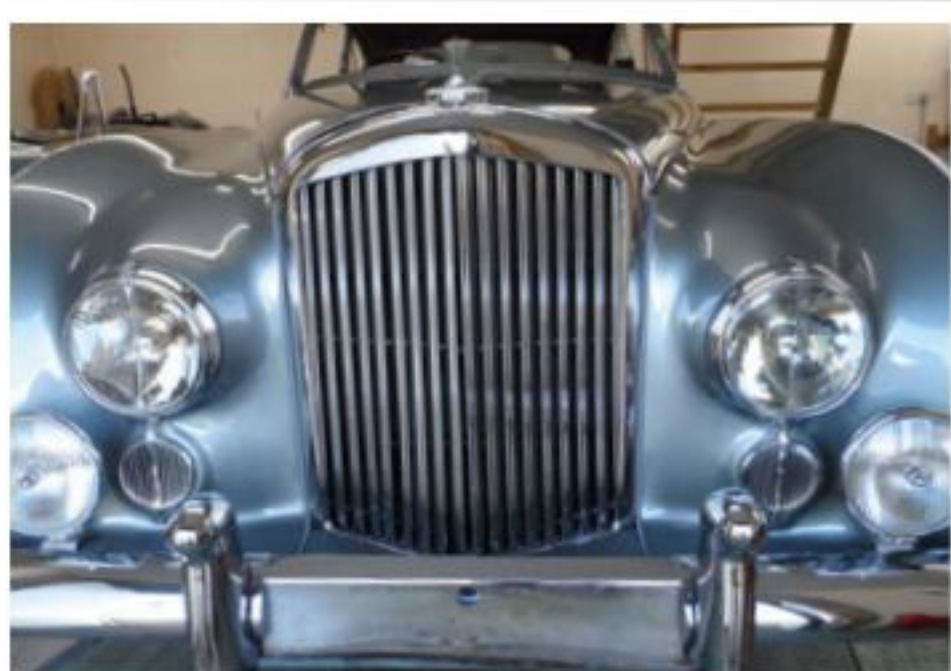




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ensure reassuringly strong stopping power.

One of the few elements of the Silver Shadow that was carried over from the Silver Cloud III was its 6230cc V8 – a unit that was capable of endowing the smaller, lighter newcomer with superior performance compared with its predecessor. In every other respect, however, the Silver Shadow was a genuinely new design, hailed as “the most radically new Rolls-Royce for 59 years”. Indeed, not since the original Silver Ghost had there been a Rolls-Royce so genuinely advanced compared with the competition.

### QUESTION OF STYLE

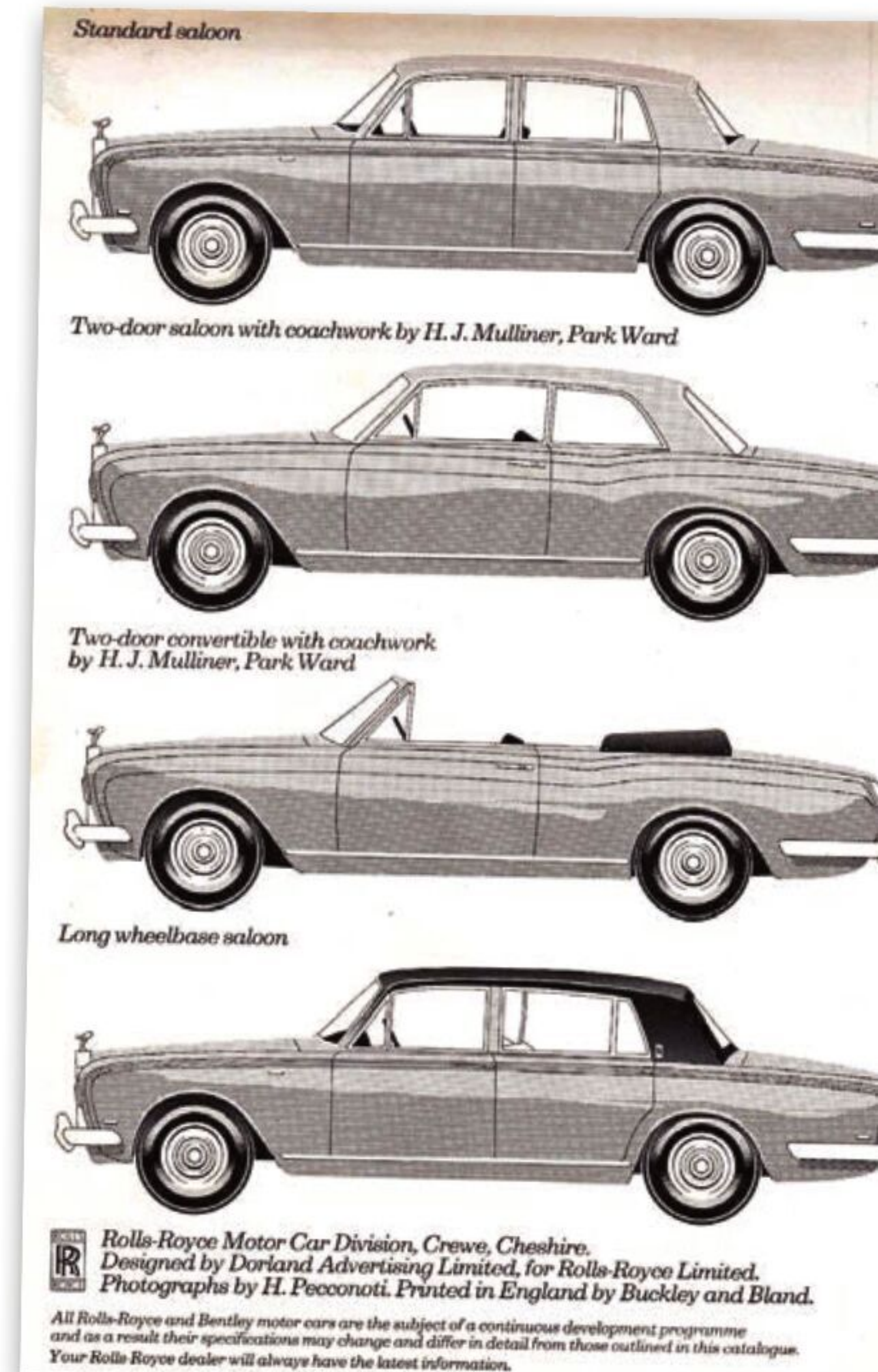
Work on a successor to the Silver Cloud began while that car was still in its infancy, with John Blatchley focused on the need for modernity: “Styling this car was very much an architectural exercise... the specification demanded it be lower, narrower and shorter with more luggage space and a bigger petrol tank. My biggest challenge was getting all this paraphernalia, plus passengers, into a car that still looked right.”

Prototypes began to appear in the late 1950s and early '60s, codenamed Tibet (for the Rolls-Royce) and Burma (for the Bentley), the original plan being to make the Bentley the smaller of the two. Even at that early stage, the final shape of the Silver Shadow was beginning to emerge, although the wraparound screens and reverse-angle rear door windows made those initial cars look dated compared with the eventual production model.

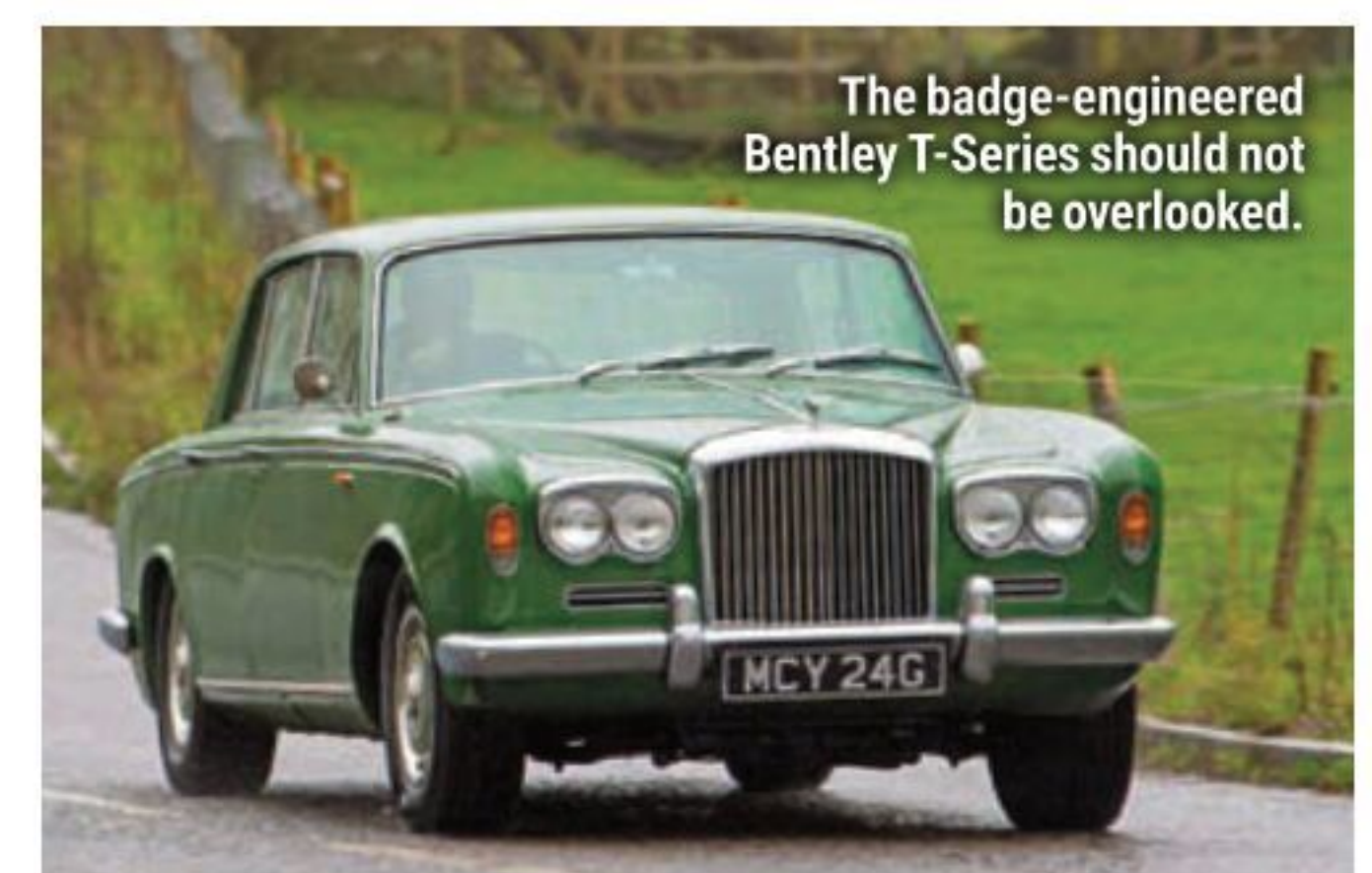
The grille treatment of the early prototypes was also controversial, as Blatchley experimented with numerous options (including a full-width grille design incorporating quad headlamps) before deciding on the final version. Martin Bourne, another member of the Rolls-Royce design team from 1959, recalled the many changes made during the Silver Shadow's early development: “Hardly a day went by when some small detail of its appearance wasn't being considered”.

Rolls-Royce was also working with the British Motor Corporation (BMC) at this time, the idea being to adapt one or two of the bigger

## “BENTLEY DRIVERS CLUB PRESIDENT STANLEY SEDGWICK BORROWED A NEW T-SERIES IN 1966, AND WAS IMMEDIATELY IMPRESSED”



With its mix of very British qualities and new style and engineering, the Silver Shadow became an icon of the Swinging Sixties.





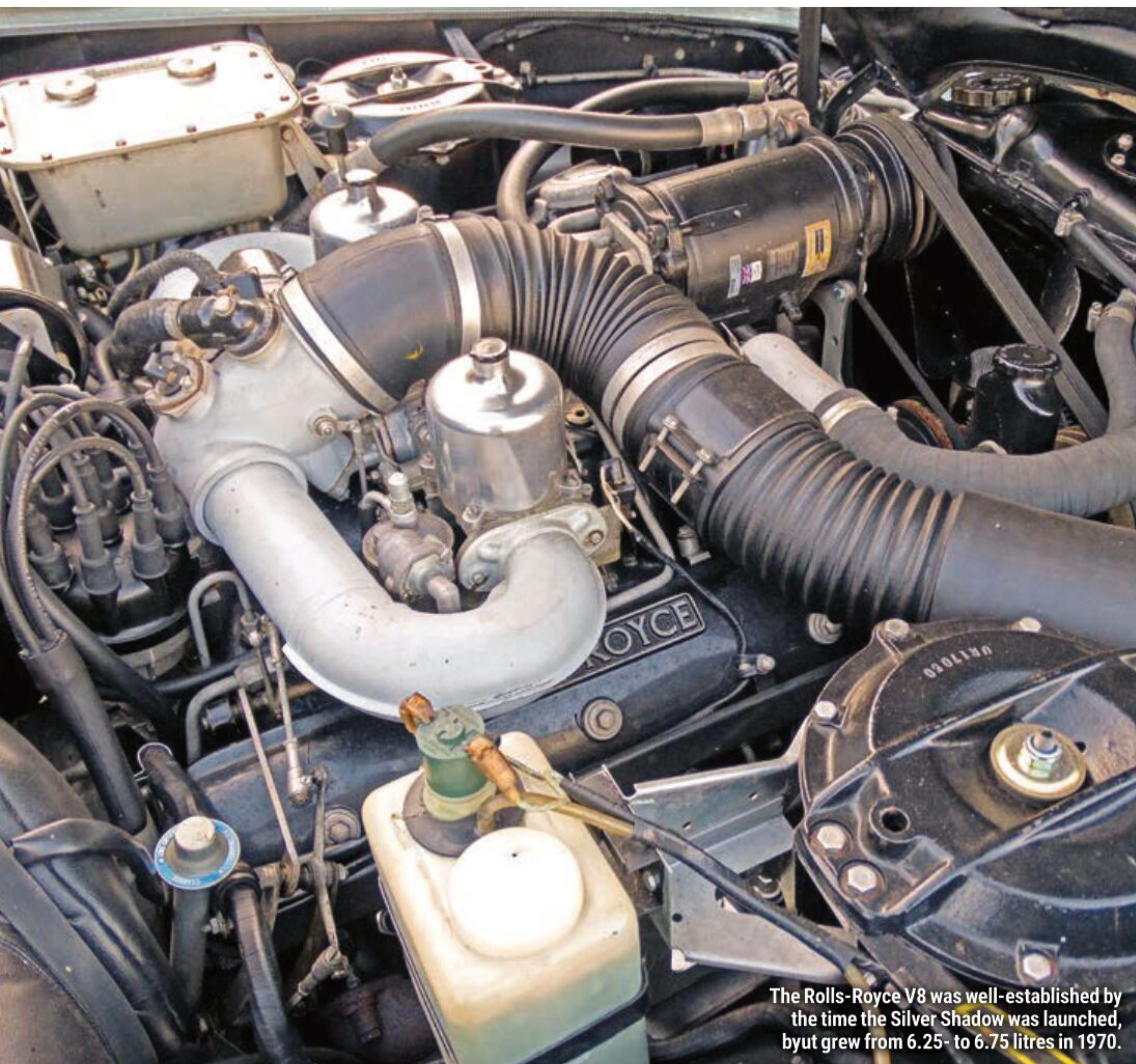


## CREATING THE CAMARGUE

Although not strictly a Silver Shadow derivative, the new-for-1975 Camargue shared essentially the same floorpan. It appeared nine years after the debut of the last two-door Rolls-Royce (the Silver Shadow Mulliner Park Ward two-door, later renamed the Corniche), and was certainly one of the more controversial members of the clan thanks to its distinctive styling by Pininfarina.

It was also one of the most expensive cars on sale in the UK, and remained so throughout its career. By 1980, for example, a brand new Silver Shadow II would have set you back £41,960, at a time when the hardtop Corniche could be had for £62,479. But both cars looked almost bargain-like compared with the Camargue, which forty years ago carried a list price of £76,120.

Rolls-Royce described the Camargue as an “elegant and sophisticated two-door saloon of exceptional grace and beauty”. By the time the last Camargue was built in 1985, however, a mere 530 examples had been sold worldwide – reinforcing its reputation as one of Rolls-Royce’s most exclusive models.



The Rolls-Royce V8 was well-established by the time the Silver Shadow was launched, but grew from 6.25- to 6.75 litres in 1970.

company’s models into a higher-volume Bentley employing Crewe’s 4.0-litre, six-cylinder F60 engine. And so while Blatchley and his team worked on development of the Silver Shadow, he also created a front and rear restyle of the Vanden Plas Princess 3 Litre (codenamed Java) to accommodate a Bentley grille between stacked quad headlamps. This eventually evolved in to Java 3, a concept with definite overtones of the Silver Shadow. In the end, however, as we revealed in last issue’s in-depth look at the relationship between Rolls-Royce and BMC, the idea of a BMC-based Bentley came to nothing.

## BRAVE NEW WORLD

The Silver Shadow made its motor show debut at Earl’s Court in the autumn of 1965, with Autocar magazine explaining that a “new Rolls-Royce is an event of a decade”. It hailed the newcomer as “the most advanced and intricate car the company have introduced” thanks to such headline features as monocoque construction and that all-independent self-levelling suspension. The Rolls-Royce stand of ’65 featured three examples of the Silver Shadow, finished in Shell Grey, Regal Red and Dawn Blue.

Members of the motoring press were highly impressed with the newcomer, of course, with Basil Cardew of the Daily Express describing it as “smaller, roomier, lighter, swifter” than its predecessor. John Blatchley’s brief that the Silver Shadow should be lower, narrower and shorter than before (the Silver Cloud was three and a half inches wider and seven inches longer), whilst offering more space for people and their luggage, had been well and truly delivered.

How would the Rolls-Royce and Bentley fans of old take to such an advanced design, though? Bentley Drivers Club president Stanley Sedgwick borrowed a new T-series in 1966, and was immediately impressed: “I accepted the design of the body for what it was. I liked it and I think the S-Types really did look dated beside the car. The more I saw of the car, the more I considered it better-looking than any of its contemporaries.”

There were inevitably complaints from the company’s more traditionally-minded clients, some of whom couldn’t initially accept the Silver Shadow’s modernity, not least its lack of a separate chassis. But in much the same way that the new Rolls-Royce Cullinan of 2018 divided opinion (yet attracted large numbers of orders from new customers even before going into production), there were enough well-heeled luxury car buyers willing to give the Silver Shadow a chance – ultimately ensuring it was the most successful individual Rolls-Royce model of the 20th century.

## STEADY DEVELOPMENT

The standard Silver Shadow saloon also did exceptionally well for itself, surviving for a decade and a half before finally giving way →



to the new Silver Spirit of 1980. Throughout that time, however, Rolls-Royce carried out innumerable upgrades and improvements to ensure it stayed ahead of the luxury car pack.

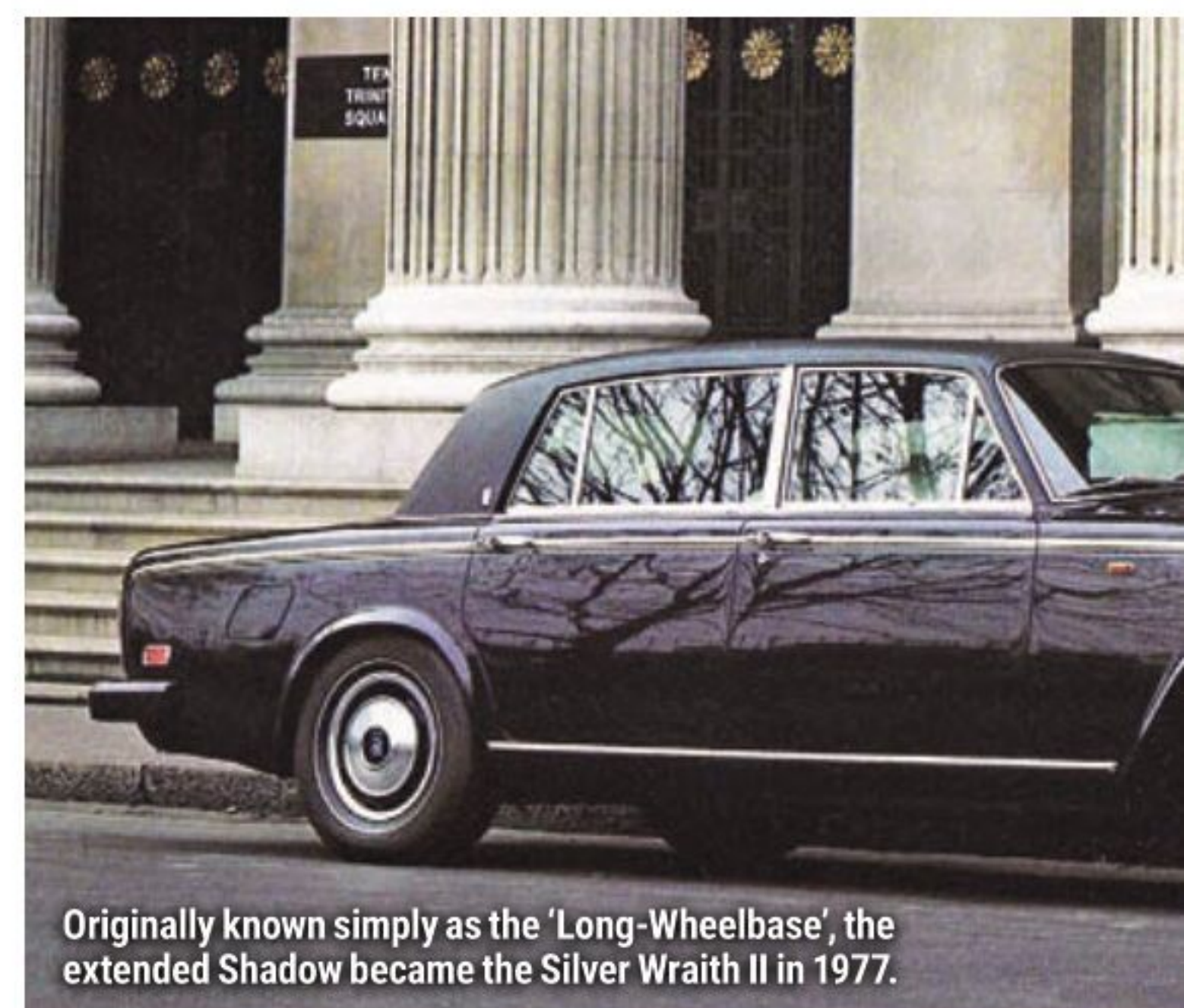
Many of these changes were subtle, such as the early adoption (at the end of 1965) of a lighter brake pedal movement, while October 1967 saw a Saginaw power steering pump replacing the original Hobbourn Eaton type, complementing the Saginaw recirculating ball steering system that was fitted to the Silver Shadow. At the same time, the car's opening front quarter light windows were changed to fixed units, while in 1968 the Silver Shadow received a revised handbrake, higher-ratio steering, an uprated front anti-roll bar (as well as a rear anti-roll bar for the first time, although not on US-spec cars) and the latest GM400 automatic transmission from General Motors.

Rolls-Royce made a habit of improving on what had already been developed by other manufacturers, of course. Its use of monocoque construction wasn't exactly an industry first, for example, yet the Silver Shadow's bodyshell was widely recognised as the stiffest of its kind at the time; and while the company took the sensible approach of licensing Citroën's suspension technology, it found ways in which it could be upgraded to suit the company's exacting standards. And so it was with that

## "SALES OF THE SILVER SHADOW HELD UP VERY WELL ONCE THE COMPANY WAS RECONFIGURED AS AN INDEPENDENT CAR MANUFACTURER"

latest automatic transmission – although the GM400 unit was bought in straight from Detroit, the electric remote gear selection was not part of the purchased unit, instead being a system entirely devised and installed at Crewe to offer the combination of finger-tip control and refinement (with no direct mechanical link between drivetrain and cabin to transmit vibration and noise). Of the many end-users of this transmission, Rolls-Royce was the only one to use such an arrangement.

Other relatively early changes to the Silver Shadow included the deletion of self-levelling front suspension in 1969, which might have seemed like a retrograde step at the time. In truth, however, the self-levelling front end had relatively little work to do, and its deletion actually managed to improve the car's →



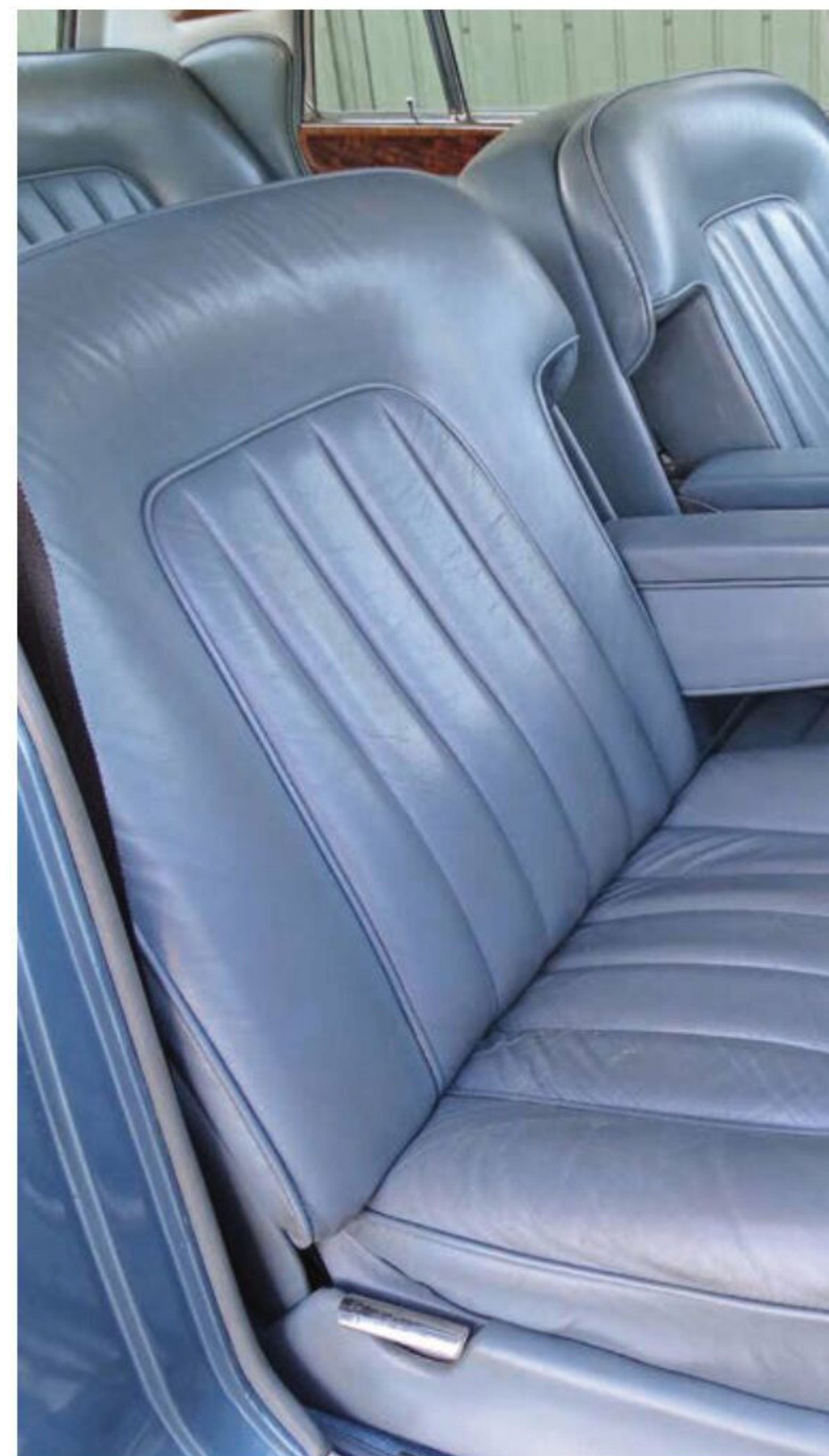
Originally known simply as the 'Long-Wheelbase', the extended Shadow became the Silver Wraith II in 1977.



## FINAL BODYSHELL

With the Silver Shadow due to be replaced by the Silver Spirit for the 1981 model year, this photograph shows the old car's final bodyshell being produced by the company then known as Pressed Steel Fisher (PSF). The image features workers at PSF's Cowley-based 'V' plant gathered around the last 'shell'. But they needn't have worried about the loss of the Silver Shadow, as PSF was gearing up to produce bodyshells for the Silver Spirit at the company's nearby 'R Building'.

The Silver Shadow was an important model for PSF, with around 65 bodyshells being built each week by the late 1970s – thirty years after the company became involved with Rolls-Royce body production.







Fitting in to no one styling trend, the Shadow's looks aged incredibly well and scarcely changed throughout its life.



Although it lost its all-wood treatment for safety-conscious padding, the Silver Shadow's interior was always glorious to behold.





Early cars (right) can be distinguished by their chrome bumpers, deeper grilles and additional vents beneath the lights.



handling and steering (which some testers had found to be a little vague). The biggest upgrade at the end of '69, however, ready for the 1970 model year, was the introduction of the latest 6750cc version of the venerable L-series V8 engine, created via a redesigned crankshaft, which in turn lengthened the stroke. Although Rolls-Royce refused to disclose any power or torque figures, it was estimated that the Silver Shadow now had somewhere in the region of 220bhp at its disposal.

The difference in driving style was immediately noticeable by all those who tested the car, as Malcolm Bobbit explains in his Silver Shadow book: "John Bolster, testing the 6.75-litre-engined Silver Shadow for Autosport in December 1970, was impressed at how much low-speed torque had been improved. Overall speed had also increased, and he found the car easily achieved 118mph."

## SECOND GENERATION

The process of improving the Silver Shadow continued unabated, although disaster occurred in 1971 with the collapse of Rolls-Royce following difficulties with its aero-engine division. The appointed receiver realised the importance of 'business as usual' for the

car-making side of the company, however, and ordered that production of the Silver Shadow should not be affected.

As part of the restructuring, the car-making division was sold off in 1973 as Rolls-Royce Motors, but this was something of a double-edged sword; the firm was now free from the risk of being dragged down by the troubles of a parent group, but resources were much more slender. Although ideas for a Silver Shadow replacement had been part of management discussions for some time (the original plan being for the car to enjoy a ten-year production run), its eventual successor wasn't to appear until the start of the '80s – which meant extending the life of the company's best-selling model.

Indeed, sales of the Silver Shadow held up very well once the company was reconfigured as an independent car manufacturer, with 2720 Rolls-Royces being built in 1973 – up from just over 2000 per annum at the start of the decade. But it was obvious that a facelift would be required at some point if the Silver Shadow was to retain its crown as the best car in the world, hence the announcement of the Series II in February 1977.

The most obvious visual changes included

plastic-faced alloy bumpers with polyurethane side pieces, while below the front bumper was a spoiler (aimed at improving high-speed stability) and a pair of front fog lamps. Inside the car, the Silver Shadow II boasted a new-look fascia with revised instrumentation, while the air conditioning had been upgraded to a split-level system. Most important of all, however, was the adoption of rack and pinion steering and a modified suspension system, ensuring that the Silver Shadow II offered the kind of sharpened-up handling and more precise steering that luxury car buyers of the late 1970s expected.

Production of the Silver Shadow officially ceased in late 1980 (although some cars weren't despatched from Crewe until early the following year), at a time when Rolls-Royce was preparing itself for the launch of its successor. What had been a hugely successful model for the company was finally being consigned to the history books, although its Corniche convertible cousin was scarcely halfway through its production run by then. During its 15-year career, the Silver Shadow had gone from being a cutting-edge design packed with modernity to the highly respected elder statesman of the luxury saloon world. It left the automotive stage with dignity – and remains the most prolific classic Rolls-Royce to this day. ■





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# LABOUR OF LOVE

*When it came to buying a car for himself in the early 1990s, there was only one choice for marque specialist Nigel Sandell – a Silver Shadow II, subsequently restored to a prize-winning standard and still with him all these years later*

Words **PAUL GUINNESS** / Photos **MATT RICHARDSON**





**B**uying your first Rolls-Royce at just thirty years of age is inevitably seen as something of an achievement. That was certainly the case for Nigel Sandell, who acquired the car featured here as long ago as 1993. In reality, it wasn't an unexpected event thanks to Nigel already being involved in the Rolls-Royce and Bentley scene, having joined the Royce Service & Engineering (RS&E) team three years earlier, as well as previously working for a Rolls-Royce dealership. Nevertheless, it marked a major moment in his life and the fulfilment of a long-term ambition.

"We're going back to September 1993," explains Nigel, as we meet at the London base of his N. Sandell company, the independent specialist in Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars that he founded seven years after buying his Silver

Shadow II. "The car arrived with Paul and Patrick at RS&E and I was immediately taken with it. Some cars feel just right, and this was one of them. With Rolls-Royces, I've always had a thing for dark paintwork and light-coloured interiors, and I immediately fell for this Athenian Blue car with its Magnolia hide."

Not that the car was originally meant to be finished that way: "Funnily enough, the original order for this car was for Georgian Silver paintwork, and I've got the factory paperwork from February 1979 showing this. However, the first owner changed his mind about the colour, altering the order to Athenian Blue. As part of the total restoration that I carried out after buying the Rolls-Royce, I stripped it to bare metal and there was no sign of any silver paintwork, so the order must have been changed just before the car was built."

What would have been a £27,000 Silver Shadow II became a £29,420 one due to the change of colour, with Athenian Blue being what Nigel calls a "coachbuilt colour" rather than one from the standard palette for the model. Nevertheless, John Halbert CBE, the client who'd placed the order with Jack Barclay and awaited delivery of the car in the summer of '79, must have thought the extra investment was well worthwhile. Fourteen years later, Nigel Sandell was in full agreement, acquiring a used Silver Shadow II that just happened to be in one of his favourite colour combinations.

#### NEW OWNER

Nigel remembers paying £9100 for the car in 1993, a not inconsiderable sum for a thirty-year-old at that time: "I inherited some money when an uncle of mine passed away, and so I had —>



just enough to buy the Rolls-Royce and insure it.” As an already experienced specialist in all aspects of Rolls-Royce and Bentley maintenance and restoration, however, Nigel inevitably had plans for the Silver Shadow II and, despite a very limited budget, set about bringing it up to an exemplary standard.

“I had the car at home in a workshop measuring sixteen feet by twenty feet,” says Nigel. “There was just enough room to have it on axle stands and to be able to work around it, and so I began gradually stripping it. There was nothing major wrong, although one piston had ‘picked up’ and I decided to strip the engine to make sure everything was in good order. The Rolls-Royce had done 83,000 miles at that stage and it turned out there was very little wear. However, as I was planning on keeping the car long-term, I ended up fitting new pistons, tappets, valve stem oil seals and so on. It was a thorough job, with genuine parts used throughout.”

As well as evenings and weekends at home, Nigel would work on various components during his lunch hour at RS&E, gradually stripping,

## “WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN A £27,000 SILVER SHADOW II BECAME A £29,420 ONE DUE TO THE CHANGE OF COLOUR”

examining and rebuilding his way around the car. What was particularly time-consuming, however, was his decision to strip the entire bodyshell back to bare metal, a process that was essential if he was to achieve the required standard of finish: “In my workshop, I gradually began stripping all the paint by hand, after removing the aftermarket vinyl roof fitted by a previous owner. The doors, bonnet and boot lid were all removed as I wanted to get rid of every bit of paint from every return and in every nook and cranny. It took two and a half months in all, but it was time well spent as I could then be sure of the state of the bodyshell.”

### BODYWORK STRIP

Fortunately for Nigel, his stripped Silver Shadow II turned out to be in very good condition, with no major repairs necessary. One rear door had suffered from a previous repair with filler, but Nigel managed to source a brand new factory replacement for just £400, at a time when the retail price was three times as much. The only rust that the strip-down revealed was in the usual place at the bottom of each front wing, and so new sections were skilfully welded into place.

The rolling bodyshell was then ready for its first trip to the body shop that Nigel had chosen for the respray, where the panels were all trial-fitted, lined up and removed again prior to being primed. After this, the bodyshell was partially painted in Athenian Blue, focusing on all the inner areas including the door shuts, insides of the panels and so on, at which point



Nigel Sandell has owned his Silver Shadow II for nearly 30 years, and has no desire to part with it.







the bodyshell was returned to Nigel's home-based workshop in order to become a running shell that could be started and driven with a temporary driver's seat in place: "With that complete, the running shell went back to the body shop for the final paintwork to be applied," recalls Nigel. "In the end, the guys there spent well over 300 hours on the car. I was really pleased with the end result."

The time-consuming process of reassembly then began, with Nigel once again carrying out the entire task at home: "The interior took a lot of effort. The woodwork went off to a specialist for repolishing, while I set about re-Connolising the leather. One of the things that really attracted me to this car was its Magnolia interior and its leather headlining, although I really wanted to add the optional cocktail cabinets and picnic tables that were mounted into the backs of the front seats of some models. In the end, I bought another Silver Shadow II just so I could use its cocktail cabinets in my own car. Unfortunately, the owner decided to keep the two cut-glass decanters and four glasses for nostalgic reasons, so I ended up commissioning a new set from Rolls Doulton."

With the interior refitted, all external trim

reinstated and the final finishing touches carried out, Nigel's Silver Shadow II was completed in time for the RREC's 1996 Annual Rally, held that year at the Althorp Estate in Northamptonshire. Funds were still tight for Nigel, as he recalls with a smile: "I was keen to enter my car in the concours d'elegance. I had enough petrol money to get to and from the event – but on the off-chance that I should win a prize, I didn't have enough to buy a round of drinks!"

It's a testament to Nigel's skill and incredible attention to detail that his newly completed Rolls-Royce not only went on to win first prize in Class 15 (against other Silver Shadow IIs) but was awarded Car of the Show, scoring an astonishing 97 points out of a hundred. At that stage, Nigel was the youngest ever Car of the Show winner and in the most modern car, a record that almost certainly still stands to this day.

## STRICT CRITERIA

A further tribute to Nigel's prize-winning skills came when, soon after his Rolls-Royce's inaugural attendance at the RREC event, he was made an offer of £30,000 for it: "That was almost exactly what the car had cost seventeen —>



## RESTORATION MEMORIES

Nigel's restoration of his Silver Shadow II began soon after buying the car in 1993, as shown in these period photographs.



Nigel stripped his car to a bare shell and found the bodywork needed no major repairs



One rear door was replaced, and new front wing bottom sections were skilfully fitted



The bare rolling bodyshell was given several coats of primer after final panel alignment



Nigel's chosen body shop spent more than 300 hours working on his Rolls-Royce



At long last, the partly reassembled car was ready for its final Athenian Blue paint job



The engine was removed by Nigel and completely stripped to ascertain its true condition



The engine was fully rebuilt by Nigel, who also detailed it prior to it being reinstated



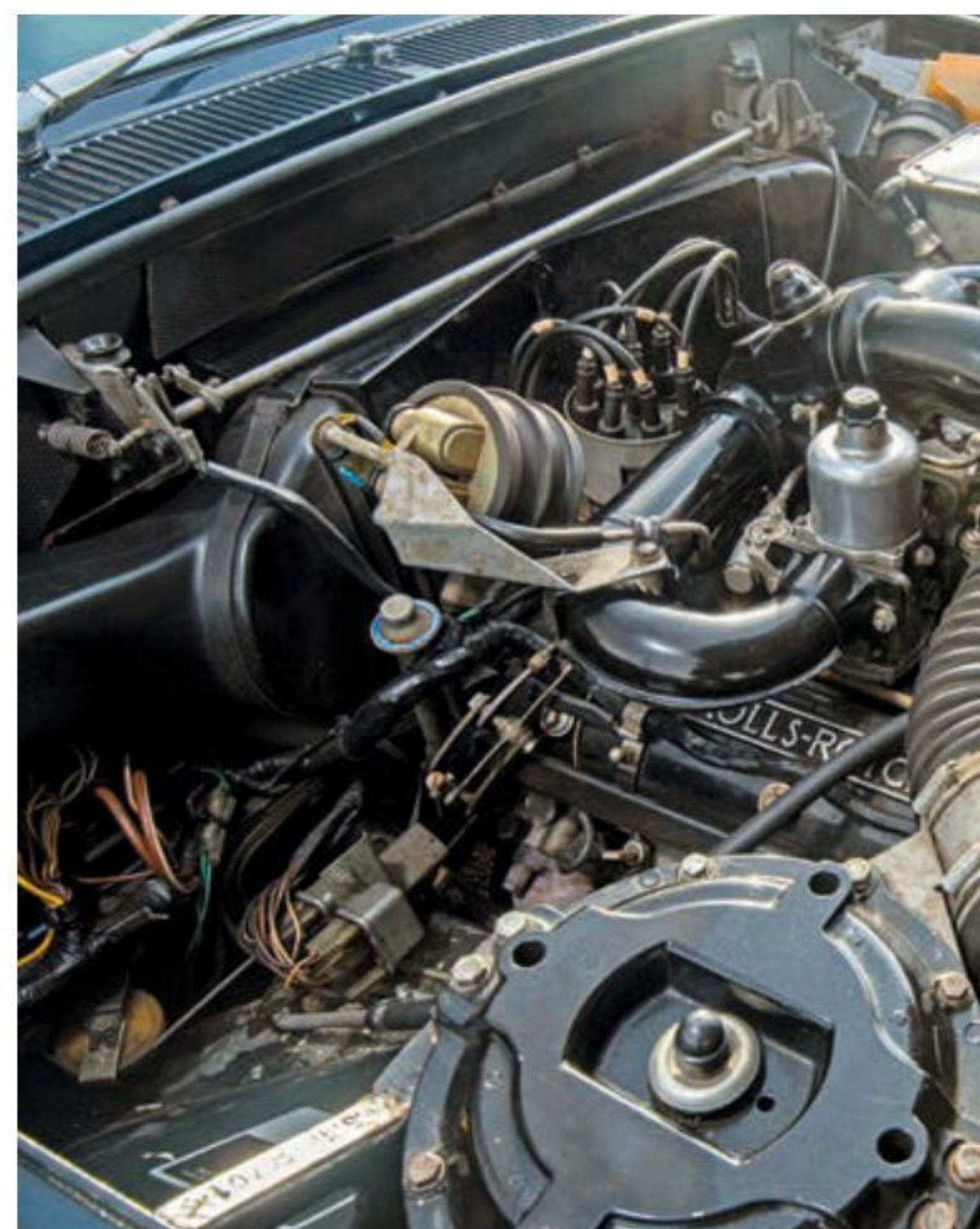
The subframe was given the same attention to detail to ensure the perfect finish



Refitting everything into the fully-stripped engine bay was a painstaking procedure



Nigel won his class as well as Car of the Show at the RREC's 1996 Annual Rally







Time, effort, care and not a small amount of money has gone into making this Silver Shadow both an award winner and a reliable workhorse.



## “NIGEL WAS THE YOUNGEST EVER CAR OF THE SHOW WINNER AND IN THE MOST MODERN CAR, A RECORD THAT ALMOST CERTAINLY STILL STANDS”

years earlier when it was new. Remember, this was at a time when Silver Shadow values weren't what they are now, so it was a very tempting offer. My wife, Jackie, who had been so patient and supportive throughout the restoration, politely told me that I could sell the car if I wanted to... but that I wasn't to do another!" Happily, Nigel decided to keep his Silver Shadow II and, almost 28 years after agreeing the purchase, he's still the proud owner of one of the finest examples of its kind.

"I had very specific requirements when I bought this, my first Rolls-Royce," explains Nigel. "It needed to be a 1979 example, as that was the year when I first started my career working on these cars at a Rolls-Royce dealership. And it had to be the kind of spec and colour scheme that I admire most, with dark paintwork and a light-coloured interior. When you're buying a house, the old adage is that it's all about location, location, location. But when you're buying a Rolls-Royce, I always say it's about specification, specification, specification."

Further work carried out on Nigel's Silver Shadow II since what he estimates was a 600-hour restoration has included a full (and expensive) retrim of the interior in 2000, when he could afford to buy up to twelve complete

hides and have the seats and door trims fully re-covered. New carpets throughout completed the transformation, enabling Nigel to improve on what had already been hailed as a 97-point concours winner.

These days, of course, Nigel is a well-known figure in Rolls-Royce and Bentley circles thanks to the success of his N. Sandell company, based in West London since 1999. For the last thirty years he has also been on the committee of the RREC's Middlesex section, of which he is currently chairman. This is a man for whom Rolls-Royce and Bentley are a way of life, having experienced vast numbers of them – classic and modern – throughout his career. And it's therefore reassuring that 28 years after he first started its restoration, and with almost 30,000 miles added to its odometer during that time, Nigel's adoration of his '79 Silver Shadow II is as strong as ever. The chances of this car ever appearing for sale again are remote in the extreme. ■

**THANKS** We're grateful to Nigel Sandell for making his glorious Silver Shadow II available to us for this feature. To find out more about the services he can offer today's Rolls-Royce and Bentley owners, go to [www.nsandell.com](http://www.nsandell.com) or call +44 (0)208 758 2322.



# SELLING THE BEST

*To round off this issue's tribute to 55 years of the Silver Shadow, we take a look at some of the brochures and ads from its lengthy career*



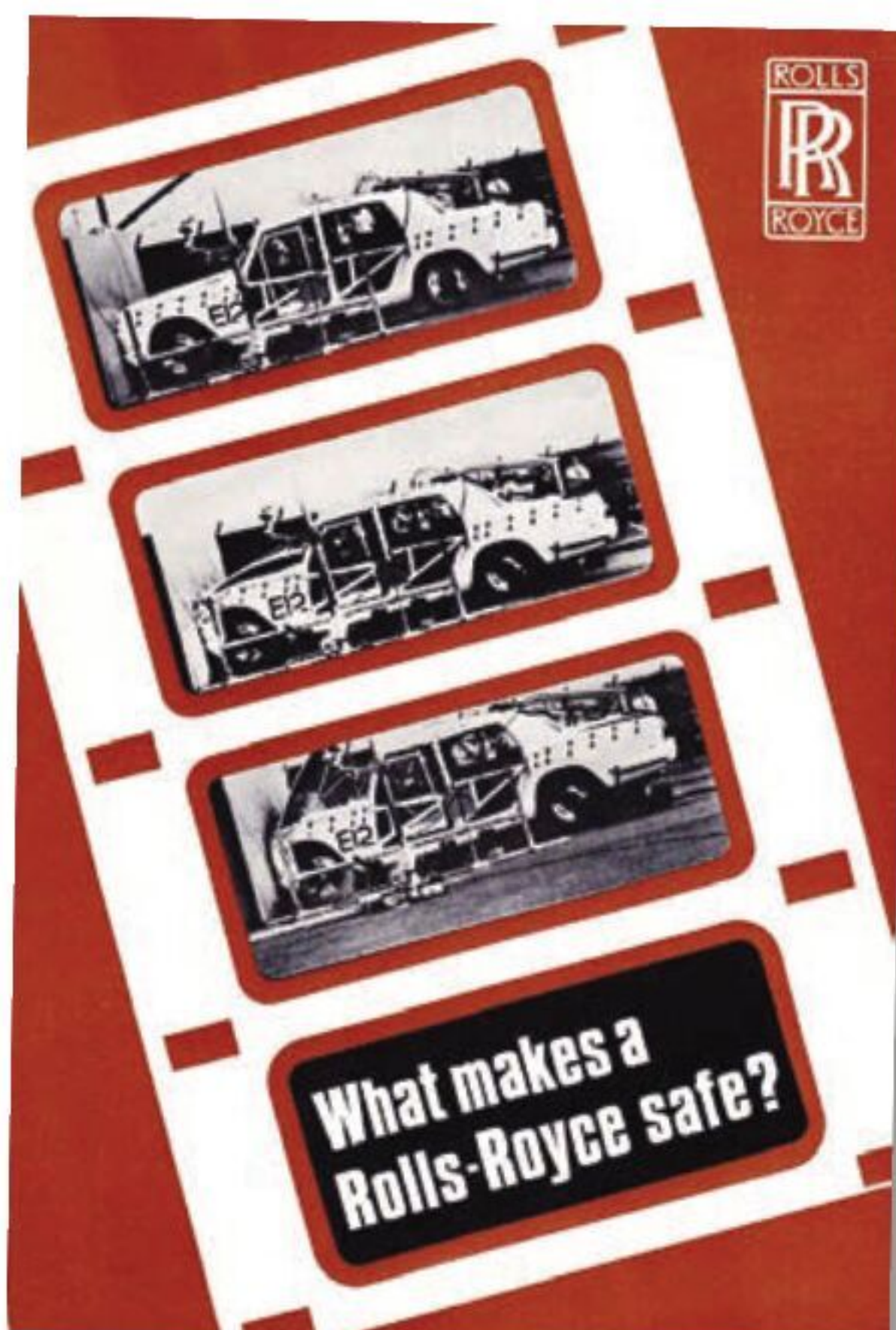
► **This large-scale brochure was published in 1969**, with the Silver Shadow being featured in an unusually industrial setting across a double-page spread. The accompanying text explained that "beneath the gleaming finish and luxurious interior of the Silver Shadow is some of the most advanced automobile engineering in the world". The extensive list included "an exceptionally smooth and flexible 6.23-litre V8 engine, automatic transmission with electrically-operated gear selection, all-round disc brakes... and independent suspension with automatic ride height control."

◀ **Many improvements were made to the Silver Shadow** during its 15-year career, although it was in early 1977 that the biggest changes came via the Silver Shadow II – featuring rack and pinion steering, improved suspension and a host of other upgrades. According to this particular brochure, the Silver Shadow II provided unrivalled quality and reliability: "Every Rolls-Royce engine, once complete, is test-run on a bench for the equivalent of 150 miles" it explained, pointing out that a "Rolls-Royce is designed to run for 100,000 miles without major overhaul."



► **"What makes a Rolls-Royce safe?"** was the question posed on the cover of this 1972 publication, in which Rolls-Royce went into detail about the safety features of the latest Silver Shadow. The brochure explained that "the safety, comfort and well-being of driver and passengers has always been a major concern for the engineers who design and develop Rolls-Royce motor cars."

The Silver Shadow boasted primary safety features that included "disc brakes on all four wheels", as well as handling that was aided by "automatic ride height control". It was all very reassuring to Silver Shadow buyers of the early 1970s.



▼ **Period photographs taken inside the Rolls-Royce factory at Crewe** are always fascinating, particularly when they involve a completed car's final inspection – with this one showing a Silver Shadow undergoing detailed checks before being signed off and approved for dispatch. The white-coated expert in the photo is shown examining the body and paintwork up close, aided by an inspection lamp and a polishing cloth. Such attention to detail!





▼ Taken from a 1975 brochure is this double-page spread showing the entire SY-generation of Rolls-Royce models – a line-up that comprised the Silver Shadow in both standard and long-wheelbase guises, plus hardtop and convertible versions of the more exclusive Corniche. A decade on from the debut of the original Silver Shadow, the range had grown significantly – which meant extra sales for Rolls-Royce Motors in the mid-1970s, by then a successful separate company in its own right.



▲ As with its Silver Cloud predecessor, the new Silver Shadow of 1965 was to spawn a Bentley version in the shape of the T-Series, evolving into the T2 version after twelve years and featuring the same improvements as the Silver Shadow II. The T2 – featured in this launch-year brochure – was always a much rarer sight than its Rolls-Royce sibling, with just 558 of the standard-wheelbase models being produced, compared with 8425 examples of the Silver Shadow II.

▼ By the time this double-sided leaflet was issued by Rolls-Royce in 1978, the Corniche had gone through the same kind of upgrades as the Silver Shadow II – although, of course, it remained a much more exclusive (and expensive) offering. The leaflet boasted that the Corniche offered “coachwork of steel integral construction by Mulliner Park Ward”, resulting in the Corniche having a more labour-intensive build process – which inevitably meant a hefty price tag. By '78, a Silver Shadow II would have set you back £26,740, compared with a £38,879 for the hardtop Corniche – with the drop-head version coming in at £41,289.



► Dating from the mid-1970s is this classic brochure image of the Silver Shadow long-wheelbase – a studio-based profile shot showing a reflection of this most expensive four-door version of the time. With an extra four inches added to its wheelbase, this 'extended' Silver Shadow was aimed at those buyers who craved extra rear legroom, and it proved to be something of a hit – with a total of 2780 built by the time it was usurped by the Silver Wraith II in 1977.



## WHEN SHOULD YOU TRADE IN YOUR 1976 ROLLS-ROYCE?

When most people purchase a new automobile, they already know how long the relationship will last. They recognize, from the outset, that the car they drive out of the showroom today will rapidly lose both its value and its appeal.

Fortunately, there is an exception to this rule. The Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow or the Rolls-Royce Corniche. Traditionally, these cars have been designed, engineered and built not for the moment – but for the ages. Of all the Rolls-Royce motor cars built since 1904, more than half are still on the road. Perhaps this is why the Rolls-Royce holds its resale value better than any ordinary luxury car.

**1979** After just 3 years, most luxury cars have been separated from their original owners in the classic syndrome of trade-in or trade-up.

Meanwhile, you and your Rolls-Royce are still enjoying the honeymoon. Practically every day you're still discovering new Rolls-Royce features: A sympathetic green light that comes on when your fuel supply is down to three gallons, an automatic speed control system, eight different adjustments for leg room, seat height and angle. Your Rolls still smells like a new car with its English-leather bucket seats, all-wood carpets and rare wood work.

**1986** Maintenance is important with any car. Your Rolls-Royce owner's manual reminds you that after every 96,000 miles you should fit new flexible hoses into the braking systems. It is interesting to note

that every Rolls carries out one, but three, independent braking systems, including two sets of massive disc brakes.

**1994** An automobile with 180,000 miles under its belt can usually be expected to develop some rather disturbing noises and malfunctions.

Your Rolls-Royce will surprise you. The front and rear suspension systems will continue to support you with unfappable dignity, regardless of speed. The aluminum V8 engine will purr in muffled silence, responsive to your every wish.

**2011** Any 35-year-old car, which is still on the road, is certain to make heads turn. But it won't be dated styling which people will admire in your Rolls. It won't even be the miracle of mechanical endurance, for this has come to be expected from these fine motor cars. Rather, your Rolls will represent a worthy and almost timeless investment in the highest art of 4-wheeled transportation.

At your earliest convenience visit your Rolls-Royce Dealer (check listing on opposite page). And at the same time send for the 186-page, leather-bound Owner's Manual – a virtual encyclopedia of fascinating information on the specifics, maintenance and operation of this legendary motor car. Mail \$50 to Mr. Lynn Perkins, Public Relations and Advertising Manager, Rolls-Royce Motors Inc., Department S306A, Box 564, Farmington, NJ 07652.



▲ The American-market advert posed an interesting question: “When should you trade in your 1976 Rolls-Royce?” Issued that year, it went on to offer several suggestions, including 1979 – at which point your three-year-old Silver Shadow “still smells like new”. So how about 1986? Your ten-year-old car might have almost 100,000 miles under its wheels by then, but being a Rolls-Royce it would still be in fine fettle. The advert suggested you might even want to keep your Silver Shadow until 2011, by which time it would be 35 years old. But the ad insisted that “it won't be dated styling that people admire” about your car, but rather the fact that your Rolls-Royce represents a “worthy and almost timeless investment in the highest art of four-wheeled transportation”.





# LIFE WITH LUXURY

*So you're tempted by a Silver Shadow? A fine choice, but does the dream live up to the reality? We look at what it's like to live with the ultimate classic Rolls-Royce*

Words **NIGEL FRYATT**

It's an intriguing fact that when introduced in 1965 the Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow opened a completely new market for the prestigious manufacturer, and now – over 40 years later – the same thing can be said about a second-hand option. Search carefully and a Silver Shadow could be yours for around £10,000-£12,000, which could be a great deal of luxury and comfortable cruising for what has to be said is a budget price. But buying a classic Rolls-Royce is one thing, what is it like to live with?

## TECHNICALLY SPEAKING

Under the bonnet the first Silver Shadows had the venerable 6230cc V8 engine, from the previous Silver Cloud. Modifications to the

cylinder head gave a more efficient combustion shape that actually moved the spark plugs into a more readily accessible position, above the redesigned exhaust manifold – something any owners who intend doing their own servicing will certainly appreciate. The four-speed automatic gearbox with fluid couplings was also carried over, having been originally introduced in 1952.

It would be wrong, however, to think of the Silver Shadow as merely a new body with old mechanicals and when introduced in 1965 commentators were calling the model the most technically sophisticated production saloon in the world. The monocoque construction body was mounted on subframes front and rear, with all-independent suspension that included anti-

dive at the front and anti-lift at the rear. This was coupled with a hydraulic self-levelling system to ensure the Silver Shadow maintained an optimum ride height and attitude regardless of load, or how it was distributed. Certain features of this hydraulic system were patented parts from Citroën, not something shouted about →

## TECH SPEC

**ENGINE** 6230cc v8

**TOP SPEED** 118mph

**0-60MPH** 10.9sec

**WEIGHT** 2114kg

**PRICE WHEN NEW** £6670





Buy a Silver Shadow with a fine interior like this and there are few better cars to make the distances melt away.

## JOIN THE CLUB

One essential for all Silver Shadow owners (or Bentley T Series versions) is to join one of the clubs. The Rolls-Royce Enthusiast Club ([www.rrec.co.uk](http://www.rrec.co.uk)) was actually formed back in 1957, meaning it was around before the Silver Shadow was even built!

It is based at the impressive surroundings of The Hunt House in Northamptonshire, a working HQ and a very impressive museum. At present there is a Phantom IV that was delivered to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1954 and a brand new Dawn convertible on display.

Tours of the club house are available to members, but more significant is that - when the world is running more normally! - they run technical seminars and offer invaluable technical advice. Members also get sent the high-quality magazine The Bulletin, plus a whole range of other benefits, including discounted motor insurance.

If you pay by Direct Debit the annual fee is £82 – worth including in that annual budget. For those with a Bentley T-Series 'Shadow' model, there is also the Bentley Drivers Club ([www.bdcl.org](http://www.bdcl.org)), which has its headquarters in Banbury, Oxfordshire. Very much a driver's club, this one was actually formed back in 1936.

It would be erroneous to imply that living with a Silver Shadow is something of an inexpensive, bargain budget affair, but then that would be wrong for a Rolls-Royce, wouldn't it? However, as an entry level Rolls-Royce, the Silver Shadow can be within range of a lot of enthusiasts.

There are some excellent specialists out there to help, spare parts – original, reconditioned and even brand new aftermarket – are readily available to help you out. OK, so it's thirsty, but it's also magnificent.



The high-quality engineering means that Shadow's are durable cars, but they need regular and proper maintenance.



at the time, but it was all about the resulting ride and handling that mattered.

Stopping a vehicle that weighs close to two tons needed a four-wheel disc brake system, incorporating two independently powered circuits cleverly linked to the suspension hydraulics to ensure there was no dramatic nose-diving in the event of hard braking.

Steering for the first models was by recirculating ball, which was replaced with rack and pinion for the Silver Shadow II. It's an important point as the early model cars can feel rather vague – we have all got used to the precision of rack and pinion and Rolls-Royce is no exception. The second version also got a further modified engine, with capacity increased from 6230 to 6750cc, thanks to increased stroke. Any increase in power, however, was absorbed by the emissions equipment that was needed to meet increasing regulations initially in North America, but also for Australia and Japan.

A three speed GM automatic gearbox was fitted to North American models first, and this became standard on right-hand drive models from 1968.

## ROAD MANNERS

We often describe some classic vehicles as being 'a real driver's car'. This description usually relates to sports cars, or certainly performance saloons, and can mean that you need to flex those biceps and manually hustle a car along. Enjoyable though that can be, it is not what happens in a Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow, but it is certainly fair to say that this is a 'driver's car'.

Once you have found yourself sitting comfortably in the sumptuous leather, wood and Wilton carpet interior, switching on that big engine under the bonnet creates the faintest background rumble that indicates you certainly have 'sufficient' power. (Rolls-Royce never released official power outputs, but the smaller capacity V8 will produce 172bhp, with the larger 6750cc unit raising to just under 190bhp.) As the self-levelling rises to the correct height anticipation also rises, and the Silver Shadow will deliver. Of course this is not a performance machine – one doesn't hustle this luxury saloon, it merely proceeds with a grace and manner that few other cars, even modern ones, can match.

When it was launched, Paul Frere, Le Mans 24 Hour race winner, engineer and a highly-respected journalist, road tested the Silver Shadow. He said: "I did the trip from Brussels to Monaco in one day, actually starting as late as 11pm. It felt strange speeding down the autoroute at 110mph with no noise coming from the engine or road and the air-conditioning keeping the temperature inside the car perfect. On reaching Monte, one impression of the Silver Shadow was dominant. I was fresh, relaxed and not the least tired – a remarkable tribute to the car after having driven 700 miles."



## LET'S BE PRACTICAL

Despite the reasonable purchase costs of a second-hand Silver Shadow today, owners should be aware of the practical costs of running what, let's not forget, is a sophisticated and technically quite complex Rolls-Royce! For one thing, having a big V8 engine under the bonnet smoothly gliding you about on a magic carpet ride does consume fuel. Officially around 14mpg was the fuel consumption figure mentioned, but owners will tell you that it's probably closer to 10-12mpg in the real world. Estimating that you do around 3000 miles a year, at present day prices that's going to cost you over £1300.

Assuming that you have been able to purchase a model that is not experiencing excessive rust, something that sadly many models have suffered from, you are going to want to keep it that way. Keeping your Silver Shadow garaged is the ideal situation, but for those with the 'normal-size' garage that might be a problem – even if you can get the car in, you'll not be able to open the door to get out! For some owners, it will be a case of keeping the Rolls on the drive, so purchasing a decent, breathable car cover is a sensible suggestion.

The engine should be capable of 150,000 miles before any need for a serious rebuild. You will, of course, have bought a model with a full service history to ensure it has been well looked after; and service costs are as you might expect.

The weight of the Silver Shadow and the nature of the suspension does mean that tyre wear is higher than what might be described as 'average'. Original models were fitted with cross-ply tyres, and the radial option for the Silver Shadow is sized 205x15. Recommended rubber includes: the Avon Turbo Whitewall, the Michelin XVS, and the Pirelli Centurato. These tyres will cost between £200 and £450 each, so re-shoeing a Shadow can be a costly business.

Many of the earlier Shadows qualify for free road tax. Insurance for the vehicle, if done to an agreed value, need not be excessive, but will depend on personal circumstance, location and whether you can garage the car overnight. If parked on your drive, it could be sensible to have an immobiliser fitted by a specialist.

When owning a Silver Shadow, you should budget for annual running costs of at least £2000. Add to that 3000 annual miles worth of fuel, plus a few other necessities that will always come up and the total could easily rise to £4000 per annum. It's not excessive given it is a Rolls-Royce, but as a proportion of the value of the car, it's significant and needs to be included in your thoughts when you see those tempting second-hand prices in the classified pages.



It's not at all difficult or expensive to ride behind one of the most famous mascots in motoring.







**“ONE DOESN’T HUSTLE THIS LUXURY SALOON, IT MERELY PROCEEDS WITH A GRACE AND MANNER THAT FEW OTHER CARS, EVEN MODERN ONES, CAN MATCH”**

Of course, 1965 was a different motoring era, but all owners of Silver Shadows should make the pilgrimage to Monte Carlo at some time (although remember that speed limits may well have changed since the ‘60s!).

### **CALL THE SPECIALISTS**

If you are the sort of owner who likes to do their own maintenance, which is certainly possible and will keep those annual costs down, then you have a good selection of specialists to help.

Flying Spares (01455 292949, [www.flyingspares.co.uk](http://www.flyingspares.co.uk)) are based near Nuneaton and supply post-war Rolls-Royce parts, genuine spares, aftermarket, reconditioned and recycled, so should have something to suit all budgets.



We would also suggest that you check out what IntroCar has on offer. These guys are based in South Wimbledon and have an impressive set-up. Starting as a breakers in Kingston in 1993, things have changed quite a lot. Since 2000, besides selling genuine parts, with some used and reconditioned, IntroCar now has a lot of parts built new, often by the original Rolls-Royce suppliers. Managing director John Tupper said: “We exist because we try to stop people buying used spares. Take brake calipers. No one just puts a used caliper straight on a car. People will spend £80-£200 on reconditioning a used caliper and buying new bits and pieces for it. “You will have to clean it, parts of it will be loose, parts of it will be seized. By the time



you have done that, logic and maths tell you to put a new one on. Buy a new caliper from us and there’s no surcharges, no exchange units – which is something we have tried to get rid of, since more than 60 per cent of our business is overseas, so exchange parts were a nightmare.

“Plus, we give a two-year warranty on everything we sell, and for products in our own brand of Prestige Parts, we give three years’ warranty. No one else does that.” IntroCar also has an interactive website with what are described as Look Books, allowing you to search, find and order just about every nut and bolt you could need to keep your Silver Shadow on the road. Trust us, it’s worth a look – most Silver Shadow owners will find it indispensable. ■





Silver Mink over Caribbean Blue - two highly evocative colour names that make up a very attractive combination.

# PERFECTLY PAMPERED

*While some Silver Shadows led a high-mileage life of corporate duty, this little-used example has enjoyed a rather more relaxed existence, hence its sub-21,000-mile odometer reading of today*

Words and photos **PAUL GUINNESS**

**T**he Silver Shadow remains one of the most popular choices on today's classic Rolls-Royce scene, with the relative value for money offered by presentable examples making them a desirable choice among marque aficionados. Inevitably, however, there are Silver Shadows out there with price tags beyond the reach of many potential buyers thanks to

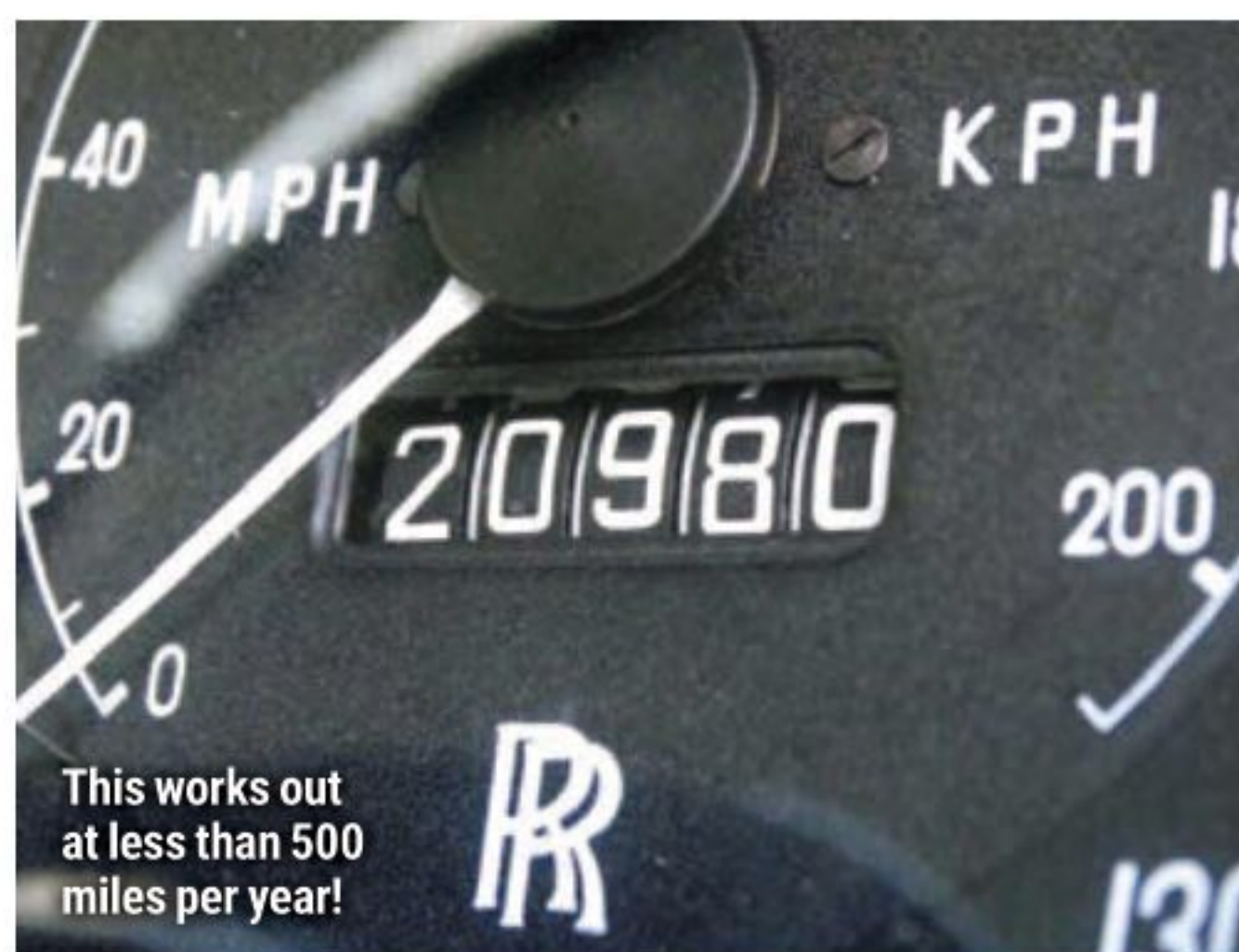
them being... well, something rather special.

The 1972 example featured here is no exception, currently on the market with marque specialist Royce Service & Engineering at an asking price of £44,950 – making it one of the dearer examples of its type. Inevitably, however, this car stands out from the crowd not just for its astonishing condition throughout but also for the fact that its odometer showed a genuine

20,980 miles at the time of our recent photo shoot, making it one of the lowest-mileage examples of a first-generation Silver Shadow currently available.

Before we get into the intricacies of this immaculate survivor, it's worth reminding ourselves just what a step forward the Silver Shadow was for Rolls-Royce in the mid-1960s. At the time of its arrival, Autocar magazine





admitted that a “new Rolls-Royce is an event of a decade”.

There were inevitably complaints from the company’s more traditionally-minded clients, some of whom couldn’t initially accept the Silver Shadow’s modern spec, not least its lack of a separate chassis. But in much the same way that the new Rolls-Royce Cullinan of 2018 divided opinion (yet attracted large numbers of orders from new customers even before going into production), there were enough well-heeled luxury car buyers willing to give the Silver Shadow a chance – ultimately ensuring it was the most successful individual Rolls-Royce model of all time.

## STEADY DEVELOPMENT

The Silver Shadow survived for a decade and a half in total, finally giving way to the new Silver Spirit in 1980. Throughout that time, however, Rolls-Royce carried out innumerable upgrades and improvements to ensure it stayed ahead of the luxury car pack.

Many of these changes were subtle, such as the early adoption (at the end of 1965) of a lighter brake pedal movement, while October 1967 saw a Saginaw power steering pump replacing the

original Hobourn Eaton type, complementing the Saginaw recirculating ball steering system that was fitted to the Silver Shadow. At the same time, the car’s opening front quarter light windows were changed to fixed units, while in 1968 the Silver Shadow received a revised handbrake, higher-ratio steering, an uprated front anti-roll bar (as well as a rear anti-roll bar for the first time, although not on US-spec cars) and the latest GM400 automatic transmission from General Motors.

Rolls-Royce made a habit of improving on what had already been developed by other manufacturers, of course. Its use of monocoque construction wasn’t exactly an industry first, for example, yet the Silver Shadow’s bodyshell was widely recognised as the stiffest of its kind at the time; and while the company took the sensible approach of licensing Citroen’s suspension technology, it found ways in which it could be upgraded to suit the company’s exacting standards.

Other relatively early changes to the Silver Shadow included the deletion of self-levelling front suspension in 1969, which might have seemed like a retrograde step at the time. In truth, however, the self-levelling front end

## “IT’S ONLY WHEN YOU ENCOUNTER CARS LIKE THIS ‘IN THE METAL’ THAT YOU COME TO FULLY APPRECIATE WHAT’S ON OFFER”

had relatively little work to do, and its deletion actually managed to improve the car’s handling and steering (which some testers had found to be a little vague). The biggest upgrade at the end of ’69, however, ready for the 1970 model year, was the introduction of the latest 6750cc version of the ten-year-old L-series V8 engine, created via a redesigned crankshaft which in turn lengthened the stroke. Although Rolls-Royce refused to disclose any power or torque figures, it was estimated that the Silver Shadow now had somewhere in the region of 220bhp at its disposal.

## HEALTHY SALES

The process of improving the Silver Shadow continued unabated, although disaster





occurred in 1971 with the collapse of Rolls-Royce, following difficulties with development of the RB211 aero engine. The appointed receiver realised the importance of “business as usual” for the car-making side of the company, and ordered that production of the Silver Shadow should not be affected.

The car featured here was produced after the company had gone into receivership, at a time when sales could well have suffered given the negative publicity of the time. In truth, however, the Silver Shadow continued to sell extremely well by Rolls-Royce standards, and in 1973 Rolls-Royce Motors was formally configured as a separate business. During that year, Rolls-Royce managed to sell an impressive 2720 cars – a 35% increase on the number it was producing at the start of the decade.

The original-style Silver Shadow was finally usurped by the logically-named Silver Shadow II in February 1977, a model that brought such obvious cosmetic changes as plastic-faced alloy bumpers and a front spoiler aimed at improving high-speed stability. Useful upgrades included the adoption of rack and pinion steering and a modified suspension system, usefully sharpening up the car’s handling. But in today’s classic market, it is the original chrome-bumper style that appeals to large numbers of Silver Shadow buyers thanks to its purity of design.

Happily, this also happens to be the most ubiquitous of all Silver Shadows, aided by a production run lasting more than eleven years. Between 1965 and the start of ’77, a total of 16,717 regular-wheelbase Silver Shadows were built, plus a further 2780 of the extended-wheelbase version that arrived in 1967. Throw in the 1721 Bentley T-series models produced during the same period and you have a very large proportion of the entire SY-series family being represented by the original Silver Shadow.

## SUPERB SURVIVOR

The car photographed here is a particularly eye-catching example thanks to its two-tone hues of Silver Mink over Caribbean Blue, complemented by a blue hide interior with matching carpets. It’s a combination that works beautifully both inside and out, although the overall effect is obviously enhanced by the car’s impressive lack of use. This is an extremely low-mileage machine that has clearly been cossetted throughout its life.

The Royce Service & Engineering team has known the car for many years, having been involved in its maintenance and regular servicing since 1993. Even then it was an unusually well-presented example, and the following year achieved the first of several class wins at the RREC’s National Rally. Indeed, the car has quite a collection of awards to its name, testament to the fastidious approach of its previous long-term owner. In fact, this unusual Silver Shadow has been with the same family



Correct tyres, perfect chrome, original embellishers. All the signs of a time capsule car.



Unsurprisingly this car has already won awards with the RREC.

from new, which helps to explain its high standard of presentation.

It’s only when you encounter cars like this ‘in the metal’ that you come to fully appreciate what’s on offer. Any car can be restored, of course, and often to a standard even higher than that achieved by the factory. But originality is something that can’t be recreated, which is why a virtually untouched example of just about any classic will always appeal to many buyers more than a recently renovated one.

Wander around this particular Silver Shadow and it’s not hard to appreciate the stunning paintwork and the glorious condition of the chrome. But it’s only when the doors are opened and you get your first glimpse inside that you know for sure this car has experienced very little use. The leather upholstery looks as it would have done on the day the Rolls-Royce first emerged from Crewe, and the wood veneer trim is equally ‘as new’, with no signs of cracking or discolouration. The carpets are completely unworn, and the matching-colour lambswool

overmats are also in superb condition both front and rear.

Firing up the car’s familiar 6.75-litre V8 is as much of a joy as you’d expect, with the engine soon settling to a rattle-free and wonderfully muted tickover once it’s at normal operating temperature. And, of course, out on the road this particular Silver Shadow behaves exactly as it would have done back in 1972, with none of the suspension creaks, rattles or evidence of wear that can afflict much higher-mileage examples. It’s arguably as close to having a ‘new’ Silver Shadow as you’re likely to get with a budget in the mid-£40,000s – and for the right aficionado, the kind of enthusiast seeking one of the most treasured examples on offer, it’s a car with an abundance of appeal. ■

**THANKS** We’re grateful to Paul, Patrick and the rest of the team at Royce Service & Engineering for allowing us access to their low-mileage Silver Shadow. For more details on their current stock, call +44 (0)1737 844999 or go online to [www.rsande.co.uk](http://www.rsande.co.uk)



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**I**'d not been looking to buy such a vehicle at the time, nor any other classic car. In fact, I was browsing the internet looking for another Jaguar XF 4.2, having traded in my 2008 model for a newer 3.0-litre diesel version. I was regretting parting company with the petrol XF and was therefore 'just looking'. But the big mistake – or so I thought at the time – was to ask my son to also have a look.

"Dad! Come and look at this!" was the result. "You have to be joking," I said. "What am I going to do with that?" However, I agreed that we'd take a trip to Woking to view what he'd just spotted, a trip that was to mark the start of my love affair with Bertie the Bentley (named

after my late father, who would have just loved the car).

The car turned out to have been originally owned by the 11th Duke of Devonshire, while the keeper before the one I bought it from (who owned it for just five months) was the renowned film musical director, Leslie Bricusse. To add further to its celebrity, the Bentley was mechanically renovated during Bricusse's ownership by musician Toby Smith of Jamiroquai fame, who ran a classic car restoration business at the time.

I was impressed with the Bentley – looking splendid in the original hue of Masons Black – and immediately fell for its charms. The vendor and I haggled for a while, before finally agreeing

on what I thought was a decent price. And yet I was still full of trepidation. I mean, why had I bought it? Well, I'm happy to report that this was four years ago and I still love Bertie, despite me having spent as much on it since then as it cost to buy.

### INSTANT ATTRACTION

I'd never previously thought of owning something like a T-series, but Bertie seemed to urge me to take the plunge (I decided this wasn't a 'female' car, more of a stately old gentleman). This was despite him looking a little sad and unloved, in need of some TLC both inside and out. I drove the car home to the south coast and was a little concerned about the feel of the →





# THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

*The Silver Shadow did not stand entirely alone – there was the Bentley-badged version as well. Although only a few chose the Flying B over the Spirit of Ecstasy in the 1970s, Philip Bacon is a self-confessed Bentley convert – despite some unexpected expenditure since buying his car*

Words PAUL GUINNESS / Photos LEE MILNER











**“THE VENDOR AND I HAGGLED FOR A WHILE, BEFORE FINALLY AGREEING ON WHAT I THOUGHT WAS A DECENT PRICE”**



brakes; I didn't know how they should feel, but I was sure they shouldn't be the way they were. However, there were no other noticeable problems and the drive home was careful but enjoyable.

In the cold light of day, with some concern over what I might have landed myself with, I arranged for my local main dealer to have a look at Bertie, performing a very extensive health check and presenting me with a list of issues as a result. Oh no, I thought! What had I done? As I suspected, there was indeed a problem with the brakes, with the system requiring a thorough flush and bleed in order to get the rear end functioning properly. The caliper wasn't working on one set of pistons, and so we needed to strip and free off the calipers. Tyres were also replaced at the same time, as the two rears were low on tread and – more worryingly – were starting to crack.

I'd already noticed some minor leaks but

wasn't sure where they were coming from; they didn't look like engine oil to me. One turned out to be a leaking height control valve, which needed rebuilding with a new seal kit and the height control system bled. There was also a 'knock' from the rear suspension, which was being caused by the rear subframe mountings; the compliant cushions had failed, causing the whole subframe to move around. This could be felt through the car and might have been dangerous if not attended to. The car's rear standing height is obviously set by the springs, and where these had sagged a bit over time, the back end sat slightly lower than it should; if we were to have the subframe bushes replaced, it made sense to re-shim the rear springs at the same time.

In addition to all of this was a problem with the power-assisted steering, which was weeping fluid from two of its pipes. The garage advised that these should be replaced, as again the →





## THE TROUBLED T-SERIES

Words **JACK GROVER**

The T-Series represented something of a low point in Bentley's history, and certainly in the marque's fortunes since its purchase by Rolls-Royce in 1931 and the combining of production alongside Rolls-Royce's own cars at Derby and Crewe. Since the purchase all new Bentleys had, at the least, been based on Rolls-Royce chassis and drivetrains. The amount of bespoke design in a Bentley decreased throughout the 1950s and reached its minimum with the Bentley version of the Silver Shadow, the T-Series. Early on in the development project that would result in the Silver Shadow there had been investigations into producing a truly distinct Bentley as a smaller, sportier and more modern sort of car alongside a traditional Rolls-Royce, but various factors played against this and the Silver Shadow in fact incorporated many of the advanced engineering and design ideas that had originally been proposed for the never-born Bentley. So as it was the T-Series was very literally a badge-engineered Silver Shadow. It had a different grille, of the expected round-shouldered shape that was as characteristic of the marque as Rolls-Royce's 'Grecian temple' design. This also required a bonnet with a slightly different leading edge profile. Otherwise the Bentley T-Series, launched concurrently with the Silver Shadow, was structurally, mechanically and cosmetically identical to the Rolls-Royce other than for its badges. The less labour- and material-intensive grille meant that the Bentley's basic price was around £50 less than the Silver Shadow's (£5425 instead of £5475 – not a great difference at these sorts of levels!)

Unlike with the preceding S-Series (and other Bentleys prior to that) there was no Continental model with any sort of tweaked specification or bespoke engineering. The Bentley offered nothing tangibly different from the Silver Shadow and was effectively treated as the base model of the Silver Shadow range by Crewe. While over 1300 Bentley S3s had been built in three years (against just over 2000 Silver Cloud IIIs), the Silver Shadow and T-Series diverged strongly from the moment they went on sale, with only 1712 T-Series built up to 1977 versus over 16,700 Silver Shadows.

By this time Crewe's attitude to the Bentley had become diffident verging on hostile, although it did at least follow exactly the same technical progression as the Silver Shadow. While the radiator, steering wheel, hubcaps and bootlid retained their Bentley badging, the engine rocker covers said 'Rolls-Royce', the instruments carried the intertwined 'RR' on their faces, the chassis plate



said 'Rolls-Royce Motors' with no mention of Bentley and no sign of the Flying B, and the owner's handbook and other documents were Silver Shadow items. For a number of years in the 1970s there was no mention of the existence of the Bentley in any Rolls-Royce publicity material or catalogues. It's unsurprising therefore that the second-generation of the Bentley, the T2, fared even worse than the original, with just 558 being built as opposed to nearly 8500 examples of the Silver Shadow II.

Despite this, there was a hard kernel of Bentley buyers who would not accept anything else – in fact they were in many cases drawn to the T-Series' exclusivity and rarity. The fact that it wasn't even acknowledged by the manufacturer meant you had to be something of a connoisseur to own one, and it not being a Rolls-Royce meant that the owner could avoid accusations of merely wanting a Rolls-Royce to

be seen in one. By contrast the Bentley driver didn't care about having the most expensive car with the most famous name, most distinctive radiator or most iconic mascot but instead appreciated the more subtle qualities and excellence of a Crewe product. In the world of 17-foot-long two-ton luxury cars with 6.75-litre V8 engines, the T-Series was the subtle, restrained choice.

Without this small cadre of Bentley loyalists, it's quite possible that the marque would have been left to wither away entirely. But because the T-Series kept trickling out of Crewe, Bentley was still – just about – going when Vickers acquired Rolls-Royce in 1980 and began its revival of the marque which would see the sales figures for both types reach parity in 1991.

For many years the less favoured status of the T-Series was repeated on the used and classic car markets, with Bentleys being worth considerably less than an equivalent Silver-Shadow. That all began to change about ten years ago as people realised that the T-Series was a rare machine that, because of that, was interesting and collectable in its own right. It was, of course, no different from a Silver Shadow in how it drove or how easy (on the toolbox and the wallet) it was to own. And the average T-Series was in much better condition than the average Silver Shadow, since all too many of the latter were then still near the bottom of their values and being run (or, more accurately, neglected) on shoestring budget by those who wanted 'a Rolls-Royce' on the cheap. These days a T-Series is worth virtually the same as a Silver Shadow when the conditions are equal.







**“I DECIDED TO LIVE WITH THE SILLS AS THEY WERE FOR A WHILE LONGER, AND HOPEFULLY TACKLE THE REPAIRS THE FOLLOWING YEAR”**

problem would only get worse if neglected. All of the aforementioned work was therefore commissioned and completed, at a cost of around £5000. However, this was not the end of the extra expenditure, as I still had to deal with some non-urgent matters. The main dealer told me that whilst their inspection showed the car to be in generally good overall condition, the outer sills were displaying signs of corrosion and had been poorly repaired in the past. The cost being quoted to replace the outer sills and rear valances, repair a dent in one door and repaint where necessary was £3199. I therefore decided to live with the sills as they were for a while longer, and hopefully tackle the repairs the following year; after all, I'd already spent what I thought was a small fortune. →



Bertie's interior brought better news, as all that was required was a new carpet set and to track down a couple of footrests. Even the original lambswool over-mats were still in place. I'd set about organising a leather repair kit so I could deal with some minor wear to the driver's seat cushion, but instead ended up buying a pair of used seats from Flying Spares. One of them was in better condition than the other, and so the repair kit was used to great effect and we now have a pair of pretty smart seats up front. Everything else about the interior was really quite good, which is probably as expected given that Bertie has covered just 73,000 miles to date.

## LATER WORK

As time went by, with Bertie having attended various classic car shows (attracting much attention in the process), I decided it was time to get the sills sorted. However, I'd be using the services of a local workshop that had quoted a much better price than the main dealer, and a significantly lower price than another local

bodywork specialist who'd quoted me £6000 for the same work. In fact, I contacted quite a few firms for quotations, many of which didn't bother quoting or simply declined the job, and so I had little choice but to go with the cheaper quote.

The work on the sills became more problematic as the work progressed. There were some old, very corroded sills still fitted that had been pushed up, enabling new sills to be added over the top. All of this had to be removed before brand new sills could finally be fitted properly, while issues with the paint meant that by the end of the process both sides of the car had to be resprayed. What I thought was a relatively straightforward job had turned out to be a real saga, and something that at the time I began to regret tackling.

Almost a year on from that episode, only a few minor jobs remain to be done. The car does show some signs of its fifty years on the road, but then it was never my desire to transform it into a concours-style example. After all, what's wrong with a little patina? A few months ago,

however, we did have some work done on Bertie's front suspension, carried out by a very competent local classic car specialist to whom I'll be returning for regular servicing and repairs. I had already decided not to return to the main dealer, as it was getting very expensive thanks to labour charges of around £150 per hour.

Meanwhile, it seems that Bertie has really started something for me, as I now also find myself the proud owner of a 1956 Daimler Conquest and a '69 Wolseley 16/60. (I'll just have to keep convincing myself that my classics are an asset, both personally and financially.) Oh, and I've also added a 1950s Triang North Star pedal car to the collection, having made a promise to my wife that there would be no more classic cars arriving... honestly! ■

**THANKS** *We're grateful to Lady Colin Campbell for allowing us access to the grounds of Castle Goring for this photo shoot. For further details of this splendid venue, visit [www.castlegoring.com](http://www.castlegoring.com).*







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**T**here's no shortage of young enthusiasts on today's classic car scene, with many of the UK's best-known single-marque clubs having special sections dedicated to under 25s. It's the clubs' way of encouraging young first-time buyers to enter the world of old-vehicle ownership, which is why it's not unusual to see a Morris Minor or a 1980s supermini with

someone in their late teens or early twenties at the wheel. What is unusual, however, is when a 19-year-old ends up buying and owning a Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow – surely one of the most unlikely classics for anyone still in their teenage years to choose.

"I suppose it's not an obvious choice for most people of my age, but it's the car I've wanted since I was a small child," admits James Popps,

who lives near Chelmsford and works as an administrator for a finance company. "It must run in the family, as my father had a couple of Rolls-Royces when I was growing up. In fact, my first ever ride in a car was when my dad brought me back from hospital as a baby in his Silver Shadow."

James has been collecting Rolls-Royce and Bentley scale models most of his life, and →





# TEENAGE KICKS

*While few 19-year-old car enthusiasts dream of owning a Silver Shadow, and even fewer make that dream come true, James Popp was determined to achieve this unusual ambition*

Words PAUL GUINNESS / Photos MATT WOODS





## MEET THE OWNERS

has always had an abundance of marque-related items – including a Rolls-Royce radiator grille on his bedroom wall when he was just eleven years old. His purchase of a 1971 Silver Shadow in June 2019, however, marked the fulfilment of an ambition that James has had for as long as he can remember.

We first got to hear about James when we received a phone call from Stephen Brown, founder of Hanwells of London, who told us: “I’ve just sold a Silver Shadow to our youngest ever buyer. He’s only 19 years old. It’d make a great story.” And so it was that we headed to Essex a few weeks later to meet one of our youngest readers and to learn more about his extremely well-preserved Rolls-Royce.

### NEW ARRIVAL

“My dad and I started looking for a suitable Silver Shadow and enquired about quite a few,” explains James. “I really wanted a blue car with a cream-coloured interior, but none of the ones we’d spotted for sale were in the right sort of condition. Then we decided to pay a visit to Hanwells of London to see what they had in stock, and were told of a Tudor Grey Silver Shadow that had just arrived. It hadn’t even been advertised at that point, but we were allowed to take a look – and, colour aside, it —→

## “WHAT IS UNUSUAL IS WHEN A 19-YEAR-OLD ENDS UP BUYING AND OWNING A ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER SHADOW”



James' ideal car would have been blue but the condition and history of this Tudor Grey example won him over.



At 19 years old James Popps was the youngest ever Rolls-Royce buyer at long-established dealer Hanwells of London.













## MODEL DEVELOPMENT

Launched in 1965 as Rolls-Royce's first ever monocoque-bodied offering, the Silver Shadow (and its Bentley T-series cousin) was steadily developed during their early careers, a key change occurring when the old General Motors-derived Hydramatic four-speed automatic transmission was dropped in favour of the smooth-operating GM400 in the summer of 1968. That same year saw the dashboard redesigned on left-hand drive cars to comply with the latest American safety legislation, with right-hand drive versions following suit in May '69.

The L-Series V8 engine that had first appeared in 1959 was adopted by the Silver Shadow and T-series, initially in 6230cc form before being upgraded to 6750cc in July 1970. That makes James Popp's 1971 car desirable in many ways, as it benefits from the extra power that arrived for the '70s whilst still possessing the classic good looks of the original model, prior to the arrival of the Silver Shadow II in 1977.



was exactly what I'd been looking for."

With just 64,000 miles under its wheels, this 1971 example of Rolls-Royce's bestseller looked very well-preserved and came with an impressively comprehensive history, with invoices and paperwork dating back over the decades. This isn't unusual for a car that has perhaps had just a couple of owners, but chassis number SRH10273 had passed through around a dozen custodians prior to James discovering it – although judging by the history file, each of those owners must have been of the caring variety, ensuring that the Silver Shadow was meticulously maintained at all times.

One of the car's more recent owners was Gerald Garratt, who lives in Buckinghamshire and acquired the Silver Shadow in 2007, keeping it for a total of nine years, as Hanwells' Stephen Brown explains: "Mr Garratt worked in engine development at Rolls-Royce and, being very proud of the product, this was about the sixth Rolls-Royce or Bentley that he'd owned. Then in 2016, Mr Garratt bought a Silver Spur from us and we took the Silver Shadow in part-exchange. It was in such beautiful condition that we decided to retail the car and, after carefully checking it over and servicing it, we then sold it to a very nice couple with a young family, this being the first time they'd owned a Rolls-Royce."

The Silver Shadow's latest owners looked after it well but decided they fancied a change in 2019, says Stephen: "Having enjoyed a taste of Rolls-Royce ownership, they wanted to exchange the Silver Shadow for another one of the iconic marques, and this time they chose one of our Bentleys. With the car being in such superb

## "EVERYTHING ABOUT THIS SILVER SHADOW IS A TRIBUTE TO ITS FASTIDIOUS MAINTENANCE OVER THE YEARS"

condition still, we decided to retail it once again, which is when James Popp – our youngest customer to date – came along and fell in love with the Silver Shadow."

### DETAILED HISTORY

It's easy to see why James was so impressed with this particular example, its Tudor Grey paintwork still being in superb order, as is the car's brightwork and its beige hide interior with walnut veneer trim. Everything about this Silver Shadow is a tribute to its fastidious maintenance over the years, and James is particularly delighted that its history file is bulging with paperwork, previous MoT certificates, bills of sale and more: "I like a car with plenty of history, and this one even came with copies of its original factory build sheets. I've also got all the names and addresses of its previous owners, which is fascinating as it's a car that has moved around a lot over the years."

EFH 525J first hit the road in February 1971, its inaugural owner being Theodore Emms Ltd, a steel specialist based in Dudley. It remained there for five years, with its second owner re-registering it as RB 123 when he bought →





James describes the driving experience of the Silver Shadow as 'effortless'.



## “WITH JUST 64,000 MILES UNDER ITS WHEELS, THIS 1971 SILVER SHADOW LOOKED VERY WELL-PRESERVED”

the car in 1976, selling it seven years later – at which point the original registration number was reinstated. The Silver Shadow then passed through a series of relatively short-term owners, some of whom kept it for just a year or two. Its eighth owner acquired the car in 1990, at which point it was re-registered as WKC 706 – the cherished number that then stayed on the

Rolls-Royce right through to recent times. Now though, it benefits from having had its original registration reallocated once again, much to James' delight.

“I like the originality of the car and the fact it hasn't been modified in any way,” explains the Silver Shadow's latest – and youngest – owner. “It was also very well prepared by Hanwells, who treated it to a full service and a 100-point check-over, and also agreed to fit a set of lambswool rugs for me.”

James is delighted not only with his choice of Silver Shadow but also his choice of specialist: “I must say, the service from Hanwells has been excellent. The car developed a bit of an oil leak not long after I bought it, and it was sorted without any hassle. The car was collected from

me and delivered back again once the fault had been fixed, no problem at all.”

Having owned his first Rolls-Royce for only a few months so far, is James as pleased with the overall experience as he expected? “It's been brilliant,” he smiles. “I just love driving the Silver Shadow, it's so effortless. Nothing about the car has disappointed me.”

So what about future plans? Not surprisingly, James is determined to ensure his car continues to receive the best care and attention: “I'll make sure it's looked after, and will obviously keep the service records up to date. It's not an everyday car for me, as I prefer to keep it for weekend enjoyment when the weather is decent. It's got to last me a long time as I've no intention of ever selling it.” ■



#GODO



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# THE TWO FROM CREWE

*A trip to Manchester – the original home of Rolls-Royce – yields an enthusiast with a very different pair of classic Crewe products. How does a classic Silver Shadow compare to one of the latest products from the famous factory?*

Words and photos **PAUL GUINNESS**





**T**here's no shortage of Rolls-Royce and Bentley enthusiasts who appreciate the concept of running a modern example for everyday use and a classic for those weekends when the sun's shining and there's pleasure to be had out on the open road. For Bobby Singh, however, a marque enthusiast who hails from the Heaton Park area of Manchester, his particular classic

tends to get used just as much as his choice of modern equivalent, simply because he adores driving it. "There's something about the Silver Shadow II that always puts a smile on my face," he admits, as he manoeuvres his cars into position for our photo shoot.

Bobby's Willow Gold Rolls-Royce – a late-model survivor from 1980 – is kept company by another Crewe-built machine, albeit in the very

different shape of a 2012 Bentley Mulsanne. Both are relatively recent acquisitions, although Bobby's history of car ownership makes impressive reading. Eight years ago, he acquired a 1999 Arnage Green Label that was later replaced by a 2002 Arnage T. This gave way to a '98 Silver Seraph after a while, before Bobby acquired another Arnage T – this time a 2006 example, which was subsequently swapped —→





for a '96 Bentley Brooklands and an Aston Martin DB7 Volante.

The Mulsanne shown in the photographs was acquired in November 2019, after Bobby spotted it for sale at a Bentley dealership in south-east England: "I'd been after a Mulsanne but I wanted one that really stands out, and this one does thanks to its pearlescent grey paintwork – a £6000 option when the car was new – and Piano Black interior. It was exactly what I wanted. And being advertised by an official dealer, it obviously came with a proper warranty."

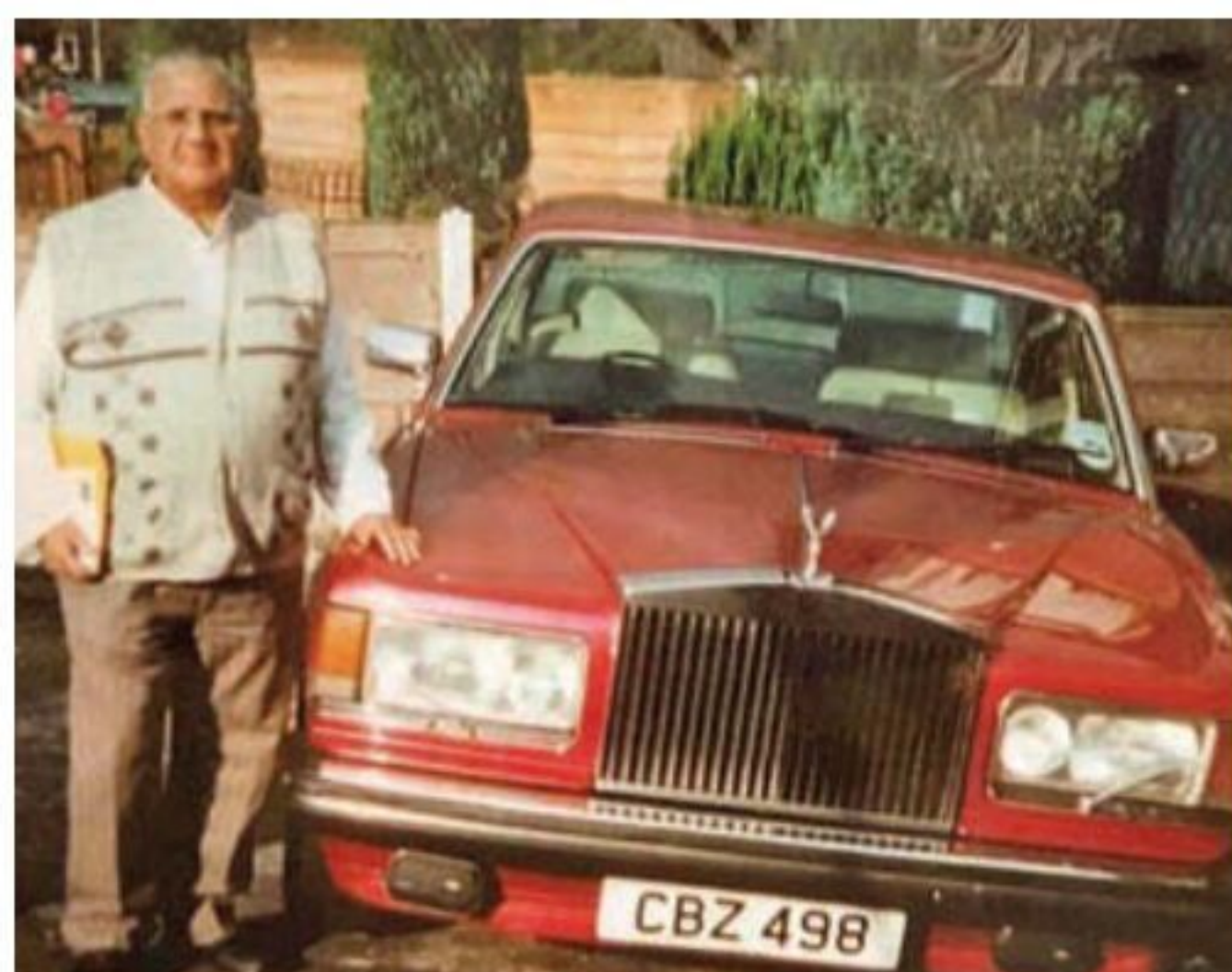
The latter proved to be particularly important, as Bobby ended up having a few issues sorted out not long into his ownership: "It was all fairly minor stuff, but it was dealt with under warranty. One of the LED lights was replaced, as was a door handle after I spotted a small area of chrome underneath it was starting to peel. The most annoying thing though, was a slight judder from the car, mostly at low speed as I started to accelerate. In the end, the dealership fitted new bushes and all-new tyres in its attempt to cure it, which certainly proved the benefit of a comprehensive warranty."

The Mulsanne had covered a mere 39,000 miles when Bobby bought it just over a year ago, and now the odometer shows 46,000.

He's certainly enjoyed his time at the wheel, and has appreciated the Bentley's luxury and refinement. But how does it compare with previous cars he's owned, including the Arnage T duo? "These early examples of the new Mulsanne are something special. It's a model that really transformed Bentley, and I think the styling was spot-on when it launched – and it's aged really well."

Bobby does cite one area, however, in which the Mulsanne could be better: "I do think the car needs more power. I appreciate it's got 505bhp but it's a very big, very heavy car – bigger than the late-model Arnage T, which had 500bhp and was seriously quick. Don't get me wrong, the Mulsanne is a pleasure to drive – I just wish it was as exciting as the most powerful →

## "BOBBY HAS APPARENTLY ADAPTED WELL TO THE SILVER SHADOW II'S MORE LAID-BACK APPROACH TO MOTORING"



### FAMILY TRADITION

Bobby's love of cars – and Rolls-Royce and Bentley in particular – continues a family tradition that began with his paternal grandfather, Jagjit Singh Bhaker, shown here alongside a family-owned Silver Spirit. Mr Singh moved to the UK from India in 1947, and the family's first Rolls-Royce – a Corniche – was acquired by his second-eldest son in the '70s.

"My grandfather sadly passed away in 1999," explains Bobby, "but he was a major influence on me. It was through him that I started to admire Rolls-Royce and Bentley, and he owned some lovely cars over the years, including Jaguars and Mercedes."

Bobby's grandfather became well known among the motorists of Manchester, opening the area's first ever five-minute hand car wash (on Stockport Road) in the late 1970s. What is now a common sight in just about every major town was virtually unheard of back then – and, of course, it proved to be a major hit for the entrepreneurial Mr Singh.















Bobby Singh uses his 1980 Silver Shadow just as much as his 2012 Bentley Mulsanne.

## “THE MULSANNE WAS ACQUIRED IN NOVEMBER 2019, AFTER BOBBY SPOTTED IT FOR SALE AT A BENTLEY DEALERSHIP IN SOUTH-EAST ENGLAND”

Arnage.” The solution? “If Bentley had offered a W12-engined version of the Mulsanne, it could have made all the difference.”

### OLDER COUSIN

Keeping the Mulsanne company since April 2020 is Bobby’s aforementioned Silver Shadow II, a very tidy example still in its original Willow Gold hue. But what’s the appeal of this all-time classic to a man who obviously appreciates a high-performance offering? “I was watching the Top Gear India Special a while back, the episode that features a Silver Shadow, a Jaguar XJ-S and a classic Mini. I decided there and then that I had to buy a Silver Shadow, having never

owned one before, and so I got in touch with a local specialist and asked if he knew of any available locally. By sheer chance, he told me he was selling a Silver Shadow II that he’d recently bought back, after owning it several years ago. Needless to say, I had to go and take a look.”

The specialist in question (now retired) had maintained the 1980 car for some time and could vouch for the fact that it was in good health. It wasn’t particularly low-mileage (its odometer currently sits at 132,000), but it looked to have been very well cared for throughout its first forty years – and Bobby was delighted to become the car’s next custodian.

Obviously, the driving style is very











different from that of his much younger Mulsanne, but Bobby has apparently adapted well to the Silver Shadow II's more laid-back approach to motoring: "I just love driving the Rolls-Royce," he admits. "Its ride quality is second to none, and it's so smooth and effortless in every way. It's one of those cars that makes you feel really special whenever you're behind the wheel, looking down that long bonnet at the Spirit of Ecstasy."

What started out as a classic to enjoy and use fairly sparingly has become a regular choice of transport: "I've done quite a few miles in the Silver Shadow recently, despite all the obvious restrictions of 2020," smiles Bobby. "I'll use it on

**"IT WASN'T PARTICULARLY LOW-MILEAGE, BUT IT LOOKED TO HAVE BEEN VERY WELL CARED FOR THROUGHOUT ITS FIRST FORTY YEARS"**

all sorts of journeys, including the school run. It's one of those cars that makes me feel great, and attracts so many compliments from other people – even youngsters. It turns even more heads than the Mulsanne, I guess partly because of its colour."

The Rolls-Royce was originally bought by Bobby as a birthday present for his father, Mike, who is equally impressed with the car. Helping it to stand out from the crowd, meanwhile, is its unusual interior treatment, with the seats featuring dark brown fabric centre sections by way of contrast to the cream-coloured hide. It's a combination that Bobby finds particularly appealing, perfectly complementing the car's gold paintwork.

So, having owned a number of different Rolls-Royces and Bentleys in recent years, what are Bobby's plans for his current twosome? "The Silver Shadow is definitely a keeper – I can't imagine ever selling that. But the Mulsanne? I don't know. I'll probably change it for something else from Crewe at some point, but I'm not sure when." Given his impressive car ownership history of recent years, we look forward to eventually seeing what Bobby's next model choice turns out to be... ■





# THREE YEARS WITH A TWO

*A Rolls-Royce is the dream of many, but how does that match the reality? We talk to an owner who took the plunge to see what the first three years of Silver Shadow ownership is like*

Words **PAUL GUINNESS** / Photos **MATT WOODS**





**A**n enthusiast who has yet to take the plunge into Rolls-Royce or Bentley ownership often has one question uppermost in their mind: which model makes the best first-time buy? It's a dilemma faced by many potential owners, and the answer inevitably varies according to their list of priorities – and of course, their available budget. In many cases, however, the finest choice has to be the most prolific classic Rolls-Royce of them all – the Silver Shadow.

Admittedly, a Silver Spirit offers better value,

while a Silver Cloud provides perhaps a touch more majesty. A Bentley R-Type offers early post-war charm in abundance, while a 21st century Continental GT gives sensational performance at a tempting price. But for those seeking real classic luxury in a car that's still capable of effortless long-distance cruising, coupled with the ability to turn heads and attract favourable comments just about everywhere, there's little to touch a well-preserved Silver Shadow.

One relatively recent convert to Rolls-Royce ownership is David Coote, who lives in

Letchworth, Hertfordshire, and whose previous on-road passions had just two wheels: "I've been a biker all my life," explains David, "but decided to give it up when I reached the age of fifty. My wife, Janice, and I liked the idea of a classic car but it had to offer both quality and comfort. It also had to be modern enough to use on long-distance trips but old enough to have character. It didn't take long before we decided the Silver Shadow offered an ideal solution."

It was in early January 2019 (the same month in which he was due to retire) that David —→







Carburetors were rebuilt by Hanwells, but David plans on renewing the fuel pump himself.

## “OPTING FOR A SILVER SHADOW ISN’T THE END OF THE DECISION-MAKING, AS BUYERS ALSO HAVE TO DECIDE BETWEEN THE FIRST- AND SECOND-GENERATION MODELS”

took a trip to Hanwells of London, a well-known and long-established independent specialist in Rolls-Royce and Bentley models of all ages, although there’s usually a wide selection of carefully selected Silver Shadows in stock. “I was going to be spending a considerable sum on a retirement present to myself, and so I wanted to make it as safe a purchase as possible,” recalls David, “which is why I chose to buy from a marque specialist. It also meant I could view several examples on one site, which made life easier.”

Opting for a Silver Shadow isn’t the end of the decision-making, of course, as the potential buyer also has to decide between the first- and second-generation models. For David, however,

this was a fairly straightforward choice: “I do like the chrome-bumper look of the original Silver Shadow, but I did a lot of research and decided that a Silver Shadow II was more suitable. I would appreciate the car’s improved handling, and Janice liked the idea of the split-level climate control system for the ultimate in long-distance comfort.”

### FINAL DECISION

At the time of David’s visit, Hanwells had three suitable Silver Shadow IIs available for sale, in three very different colours: “I looked at a deep red and a light blue car, but I really liked the Silver Sand example. I asked lots of friends and fellow car enthusiasts what they thought and

they all agreed with my choice. I think Silver Sand with the contrasting Everflex roof suits it perfectly, and so I agreed to buy the car – which I immediately nicknamed Rodney thanks to its registration number.”

Just over a week later, David collected his newly acquired Silver Shadow II from Hanwells and immediately put it into regular use: “The car had covered just 70,000 miles and was in impressive condition, but I wanted to make sure everything was working as it should. It came with the usual two-year warranty from Hanwells, but for the first two months absolutely everything is covered – even down to a light bulb – and so I wanted to check that all was well. I used the Rolls-Royce for just about every trip, including local ones to the shops and back, which wasn’t good news when it came to fuel consumption!”

One thing that did arise was an intermittent starting problem, and so the car was returned to Hanwells: “The issue was solved by having the carburetors fully rebuilt,” says David. →





David Coote is a newcomer to Rolls-Royce ownership, and is certainly smitten with his Shadow.





“It was all done free of charge and was all part of the service as a car-buying customer. I must admit, I was very impressed. And it proved to me the benefit of dealing with a specialist and having a decent warranty.”

The car’s Silver Sand paintwork is thought to be largely original, and the Everflex roof is also as it came from the factory. At some point, however, the hide interior had been recoloured by a previous owner, with the poorly-applied beige finish being less than ideal for David: “It had been done about five years earlier and it didn’t look good. I therefore decided to take the plunge earlier this year, stripping out the entire interior and starting all over again. This all coincided with the UK going into lockdown due to Covid-19, and so I spent a total of ten weeks working on the interior. I used various products from Colourlock.com, first of all cleaning and preparing all the leather before recolouring every piece in cream. I’m really pleased with the end result, which has totally transformed the look of the car inside and has attracted a lot of favourable comments.”

With the Silver Shadow II’s woodwork being very well preserved, the condition of the whole interior now matches the impressive state of its bodywork and mechanicals. The ultimate aesthetic touch, however, occurred when David’s local RREC group arranged an official visit to Autoglym’s headquarters, where his car was chosen to be fully detailed by the experts.

## FULL HISTORY

With this particular Rolls-Royce coming with a comprehensive history, containing details of

every service from 1981 onwards, David was obviously keen to keep the car well-maintained. And so in January 2020, he sent it back to Hanwells for its latest service: “I’d had the car for a year at that point and obviously didn’t want to skimp on its maintenance. Hanwells carried out a major service, including renewal of all the fluids. They also changed the front exhaust sections and the downpipes, as these were past their best by that stage. And they fixed an issue with the climate control, which had suddenly stopped working properly – a fault that was traced to nothing more than a broken wire. One modification I asked for at the same time was fitment of a dashcam, although I wanted it well-hidden, properly wired in so that it didn’t show.”

The cost of such work soon adds up, but David was wise to commission it thanks to his and Janice’s regular use of the car: “I didn’t buy it to potter about in or just to polish and admire,” he explains. “From day one, I was determined to get as much use and enjoyment out of it as possible, using it on long journeys and overseas trips.”

When we spoke with David in September, the odometer displayed approximately 78,000 miles – an 8000 increase from when he bought the car. Inevitably, fewer miles were covered in 2020 thanks to the proliferation of cancelled holidays and postponed events, but the previous year was a particularly active one for David, Janice and their newly-acquired Silver Shadow II: “We enjoyed quite a few lengthy journeys in the Rolls-Royce in 2019, including a 1300-mile round trip to Germany, spending a week touring around. It was a great experience, with the comfort and luxury of the Silver Shadow II



Silver Sand paintwork with a contrasting roof really suits a later Shadow II.

A boot more than large enough for European touring trips.







Good use was made of enforced garage time during lockdown to refresh the car's interior.



## BETTER HANDLING

Rolls-Royce's launch-year brochure for the Silver Shadow II featured this dramatic photograph of the company's latest model being pushed hard into a corner – and with good reason. The accompanying text explained that if you wanted to appreciate the car's latest enhancements, "you will have to put your foot down".

It was at speed that you would most notice the "modifications to the suspension, which keep the front wheels more upright when cornering", while the car's roll angle was also dramatically reduced. The brochure's copywriters boasted that the "extremely precise and sensitive" new rack-and-pinion steering provided "the positive 'feel' that experienced drivers expect". And in conclusion, they explained that the Silver Shadow II was "an immediate and ever-growing pleasure to drive and to own".

making it feel quite effortless."

On the upside, the lack of use last year enabled David to improve it still further, with the revamping of its interior being followed by renewal of all four door seals: "It's another task that I thought I might as well tackle, given the fact that we were using the car less due to the pandemic. I got a full set of seals from IntroCar and did the work myself. It was fairly time-consuming but the end result was well worthwhile, with Rodney being a lot quieter at speed now."

A future job for David is replacing the car's fuel pump, purely as a precautionary measure: "The current one seems to be working fine, but at some point it's sure to give notice so I'd rather change it before it presents any problems." It's the kind of forward-planning that helps to keep any classic fit and healthy for future use, especially important when it's a car that's intended for relatively high-mileage use.

Indeed, with his Silver Shadow II now looking and driving exactly as he wants, David hopes that the future will provide opportunities to cover many more miles: "Rodney is definitely a keeper," he smiles, "which is why I'm determined to keep him in peak health. But for me, owning a classic is all about driving and enjoying it, taking it on adventures and holidays – particularly as

## "THE CAR'S SILVER SAND PAINTWORK IS THOUGHT TO BE LARGELY ORIGINAL, AND THE EVERFLEX ROOF IS ALSO AS IT CAME FROM THE FACTORY"

I'm now retired. We're thinking about a trip to Portugal next year, turning it into a proper road trip in Rodney rather than flying there as we have done previously. I think that would be a great experience."

For anyone doubting the suitability of a Silver Shadow (or Silver Shadow II) as the ideal first-time Rolls-Royce choice, an hour spent in the company of David Coote should be enough to convince them otherwise. For him, owning a late-model example has been a joyful experience so far – reinforcing his conviction that he made exactly the right choice. ■

**THANKS** We're grateful to the team at The Black Horse at Ireland ([www.blackhorseireland.com](http://www.blackhorseireland.com)), based in Shefford, Bedfordshire, for providing the location for the photo shoot.





# GETTING THE BEST OF THE BEST

*Arguably Rolls-Royce's most important model to date,  
the Shadow still represents excellent value*

Words **SAM SKELTON & JACK GROVER**





The V8 engine is well-made and sturdy, but is not immortal...and overhauls can be extremely costly.

So much of the appeal of a Silver Shadow is in its interior, and it needs to be right.



**T**he Silver Shadow has always been in demand. From the moment it was introduced in 1965 it set new records for a Rolls-Royce in terms of both the rate and volume of sales. It had been specifically intended to be a more accessible Rolls-Royce that would be desirable and attainable to more people, over-turning established principles that had held sway since the days when any sort of motor car was a luxury owned by the fortunate few. In the age of 'the affluent society' when virtually anyone could be a car owner if they wished, the Silver Shadow was a new Rolls-Royce for this new, more egalitarian world.

But for all that, the Silver Shadow was obviously – unmistakably – a Rolls-Royce. Nothing else on the road looked like the Shadow. John Blatchley's superb styling work meant that the Silver Shadow aged very well. It was a curious mix of modern and traditional even in 1965, and it still looked the part a decade later.

Even 20 years after launch, a Shadow didn't appear as passe as a lot of other cars from 1965.

This combination of factors kept interest in, and demand for, Shadows relatively high even after it was superseded by the Silver Spirit. But while demand was high, supply was even higher. With more Silver Shadows being built than any Rolls-Royce before or since – 38,000 of all variants – these were not rare cars passed around a few select dealers. Found far and wide when they were new, the same went for when they were second hand. Like all cars the Silver Shadow depreciated – but service costs were steep and the price of repairs on a car with a few years and miles under its (very expensive) tyres meant the depreciation of a Shadow as it entered middle age was steep and fierce. The Silver Shadow slipped down the automotive hierarchy, falling into the orbit of owners who very much liked the idea of Rolls-Royce ownership but balked at the expenses involved.

The nadir of the Shadow's reputation was the

mid/late 1990s, when the market was awash with very tired examples that had been run on a shoestring and were showing the usual signs of distress of any 20-plus-year-old car with a mild steel body. In many cases it was a real 'for want of a nail' situation, whereby a (relatively) small expenditure in the past would have saved a massive, value-killing bill in the present. Not all Shadows suffered this fate – many were still kept in the manner for which they were intended and to which they were accustomed, but the low average condition of much of the 'stock' kept values down and buyers wary.

The tide began to turn about 15 years ago and the Silver Shadow's fortune have really picked up over the past decade or so. Rising interest and values has meant that restoring a Silver Shadow is now much more viable than at any time in the past, which combined with losing the worst of the breed means that the condition of your average Silver Shadow is now much better than it was in the past. The availability of parts →



is much better both in scope and price too, with owners no longer so reliant on pricey genuine Rolls-Royce items. Many of those scruffy Shadows have been stripped of decent parts by breakers to keep better cars on the road, and there are several outfits now remanufacturing parts at a variety of price points.

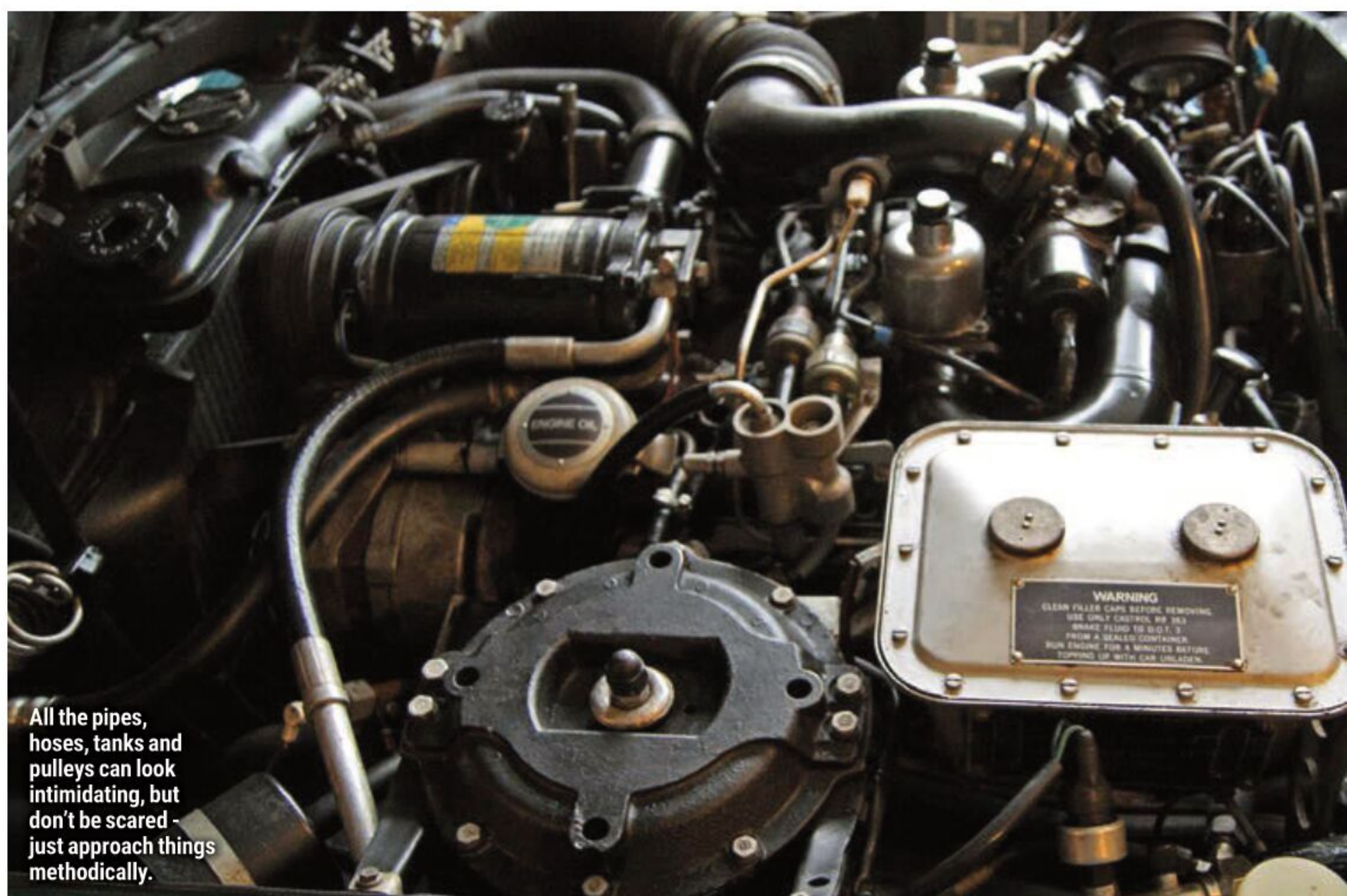
This doesn't mean that buying a Shadow is entirely plain sailing, though. The rising values means that there are some cars out there which have been cosmetically freshened up but still hide worn-out mechanical parts or hidden corrosion. With the newest Shadow now being over 40 years old (and the oldest well over 50) even the mostly lovingly cared-for car can be showing signs of old age. And let's not lose perspective – while Silver Shadow ownership is a much easier and more viable than it once was, putting good any flaws can quickly mount up to a giant bill that outstrips the car's value. It's still quite possible to put £30,000 into a Shadow and end up with a £20,000 car. A good Shadow is a fantastic car to own, but a bad one can be an expensive misery.

With all that in mind, what should you look for?

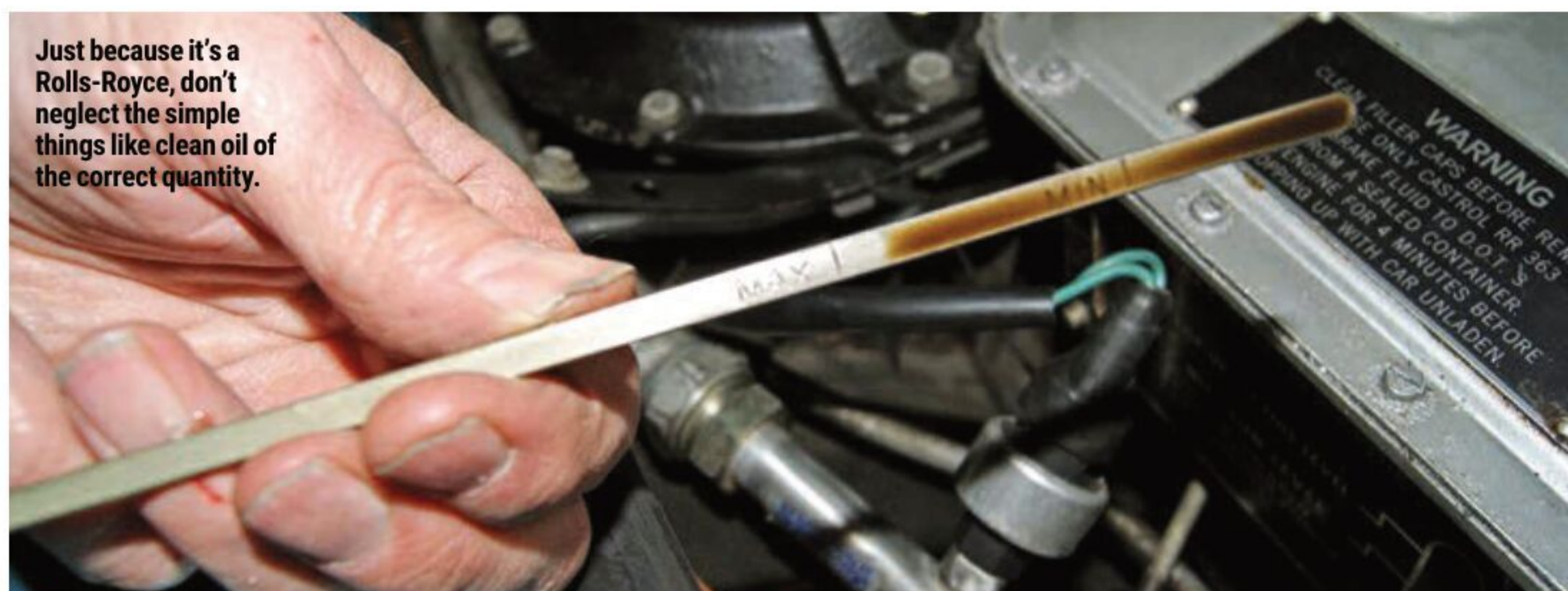
## THE CAR

It's still the best advice to buy a car from an established and reputable Rolls-Royce and/or Bentley specialist (it's worth noting that, with the modern form of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars being an entirely new creation, it is Bentley that is the present-day official custodian of the Silver Shadow). This is certainly the best option for the newcomer to Rolls-Royce ownership. Specialists have a vested interest in accurately and honestly describing a car, and have little reason to get involved with basketcases (unless they're being sold on as restoration projects, of course). A specialist will be able to offer advice, both in general as to which sort and specification of Silver Shadow would meet the new owner's needs and with regard to individual cars. Some specialists can even source a car to your own requirements. None of this is provided for free of course, and a car bought through a specialist will end up costing more overall than an identical car bought privately.

But a car bought on the private market doesn't come with the support and peace of mind. However they can be significantly cheaper to buy overall, making it a tempting route into Shadow ownership, especially if you have more experience with these cars. If you don't, but have a knowledgeable friend or can draw on the services of one of the dedicated clubs then this can still be a good way to go. You can split the difference too, since many specialists and dealers provide a service whereby they can inspect and assess a potential purchase, providing a valuable 'second pair of eyes'.



All the pipes, hoses, tanks and pulleys can look intimidating, but don't be scared – just approach things methodically.



Just because it's a Rolls-Royce, don't neglect the simple things like clean oil of the correct quantity.

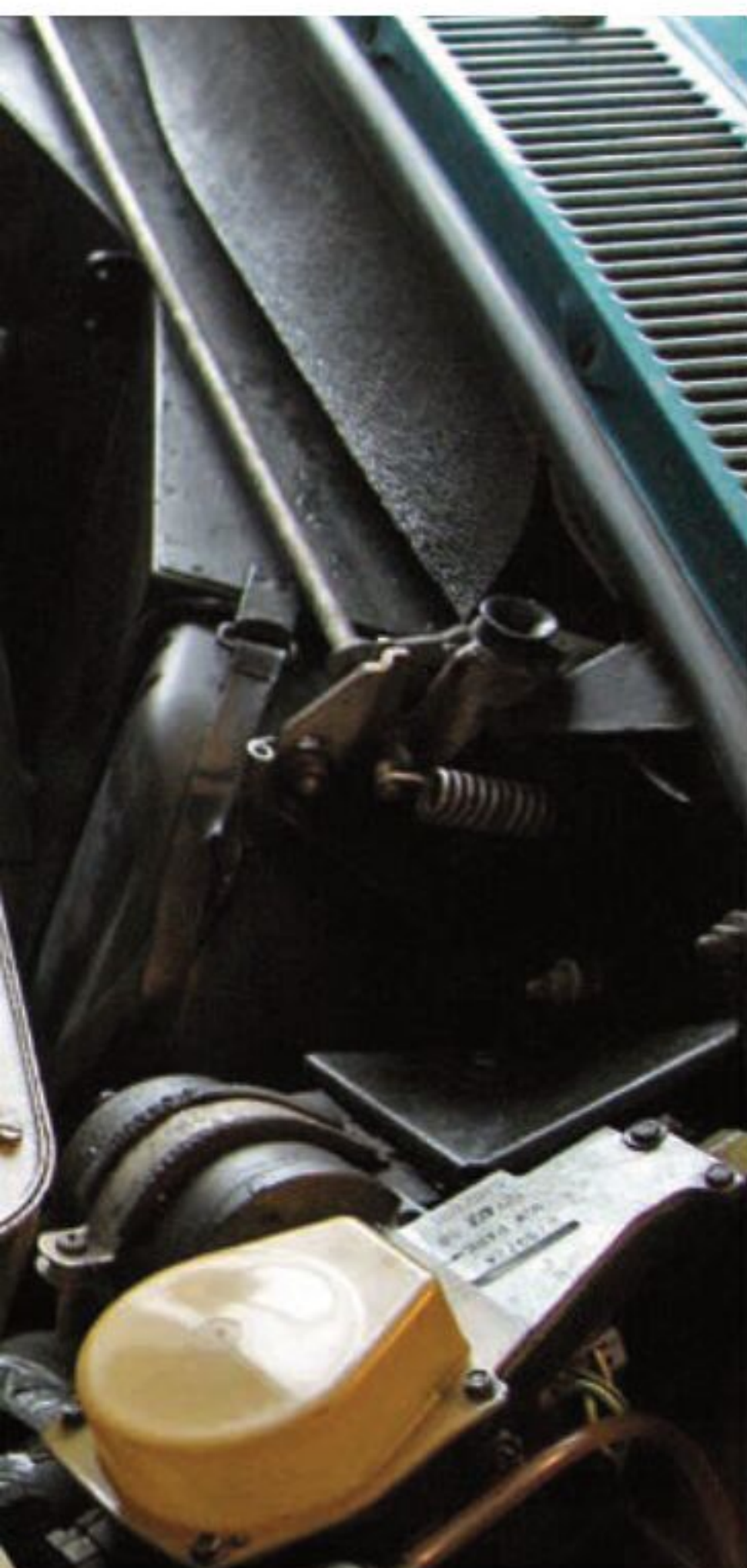
## "IT'S QUITE POSSIBLE TO PUT £30,000 INTO A SHADOW AND END UP WITH A £20,000 CAR. A GOOD SHADOW IS A FANTASTIC CAR TO OWN, BUT A BAD ONE CAN BE AN EXPENSIVE MISERY"

Auctions are the third way of finding a car. This is where the biggest bargains can be found but, as for any car, there is also the biggest risk. This applies all the more to Silver Shadows, where faults can be so expensive to rectify and many of the most serious issues can only be sussed out with close inspection or a test drive – something not possible on the auction floor. This is really the preserve of the very experienced owner or the specialist expert, who can quickly assess a car, often making a judgement by time-earned instinct and gut feeling than working down a checklist.

Don't worry about cars with high mileages – the Shadow was designed to waft up and down motorways day in, day out – so long as there

is a service history to go with it. You want to see regular services and receipts for parts and work from a recognised specialist, not a general garage. Also note that, like any other car, Rolls-Royces need servicing on a calendar interval as well as mileage. It's all well and good a car being serviced every 6000 miles...but if it only does 1000 miles per year then any number of parts and fluids could degrade, perish or deteriorate. Lack of use can be a real problem-causer for any car, but the complex Silver Shadow really doesn't appreciate it. A car that has consistently covered a good number of miles should, by necessity, be in pretty good shape and kept as such – certainly any faults should be obvious. A car that lingers in a garage could be brewing





Jacking points are a starting point for rust in the sills.



One of the Shadow II's proudest features was the new twin-zone automatic climate control. Be sure that it works as it should, since repairs need specialist knowledge and equipment.



up a catalogue of issues, many of which may not reveal themselves until a new owner starts putting miles on the car. Many experts will say that they'd want to see a comprehensive service history much more on a car that gets little use than one which is driven regularly and properly.

## BODYWORK

A Rolls-Royce doesn't rust. It simply fails to maintain structural integrity. Now we've got the wisecrack out of the way, the Shadow was Rolls-Royce's first monocoque and there were a number of unintended rust traps. The other thing to consider is that a Shadow is a car like any other – there's just more of it than most. That also means there's more to corrode.

Paint is crucial – flat paint can ruin a nice example, especially if it's white. Be wary of anything too new though, it might be hiding low quality repairs. A good, deep, lustrous paint job that doesn't look suspiciously new is what you want to see. A repaint to the

proper standards is an expensive business to contemplate - £6000 or even more, so don't think that a tatty car can be brought up to spec easily. On the other hand, a generally sound and solid Shadow which has received a decent (but not Rolls-Royce standard...) paint job can be relatively affordable so long as the relative lack of paint quality doesn't bother you.

Exterior trim tends to be fairly durable – thick gauge steel for bumpers and well-built trim, plated with high quality chrome. It's all available from specialist breakers too, in case you have any issues with it – you should have no problem restoring a shabby car to its former glory, though it's important to note that everything is more expensive than it would be for a more mainstream car purely by dint of the relative rarity of parts for handbuilt cars. The attachment points for the external brightwork (badges, chrome finishers, body beading strips, light units and so on) are often the starting point for rust.

It's entirely possible that the arches will be

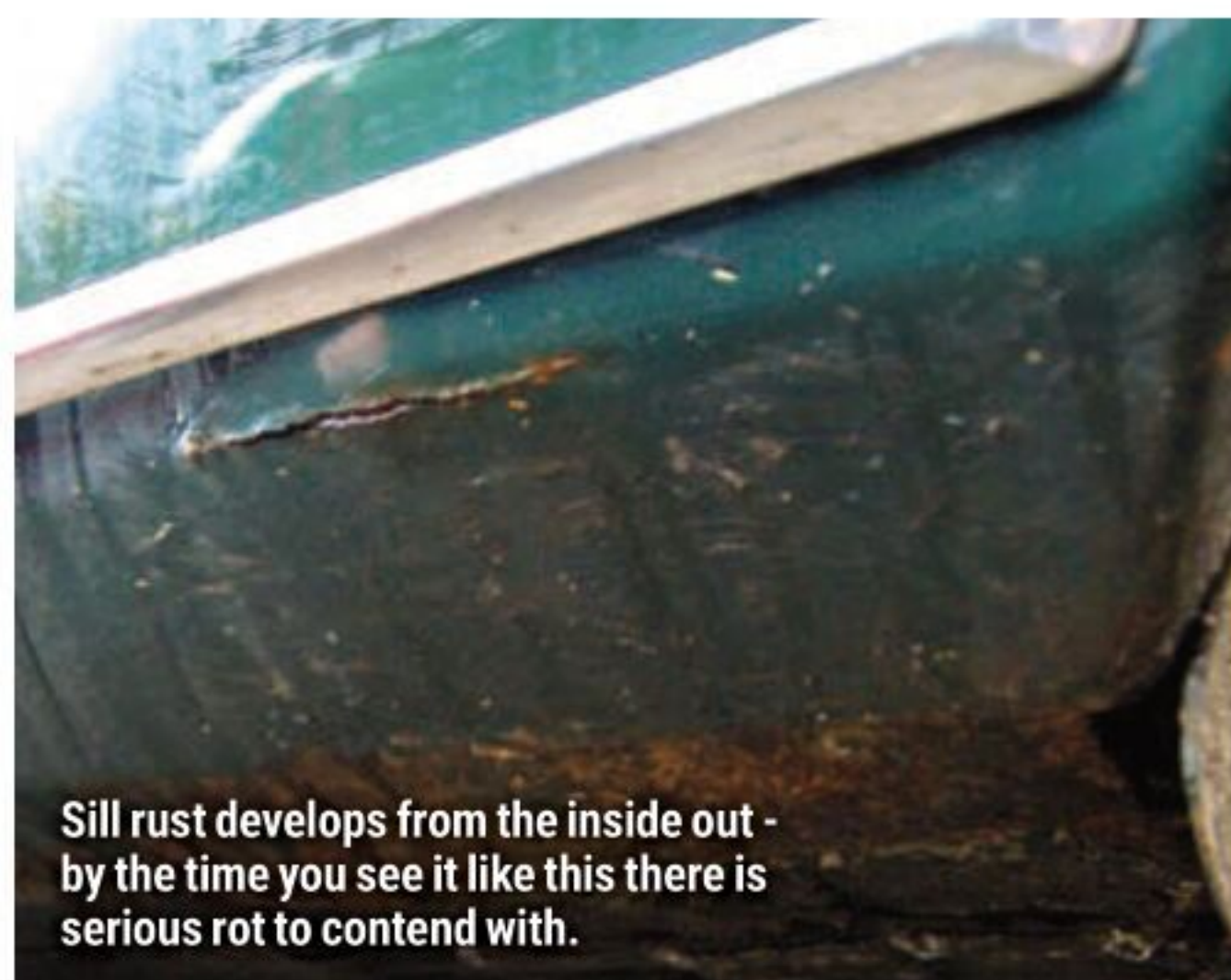
full of filler on a cheap Shadow, so take your magnet with you. If you're spending strong money, you shouldn't be finding filler in the same quantities as in a £7000 car – though as long as it's well-done and not hiding rust it shouldn't be the end of the world. We wouldn't be scared of cars that have had welding as long as it's a good standard. Check especially at the front of the sills and around the rear spring perches – while not as prone as the later cars, these are known trouble spots on the Shadow body.

Some standard Shadows, and all long-wheelbase/Silver Wraith II models, had Everflex vinyl roof coverings. This can harden, shrink and crack with age, especially on cars that have lived outside for most of their life (all the more so in cars from hot and sunny parts of the world). Check the perimeter of the roof for signs of shrinkage, especially the roof gutters. Splits in the covering can allow water to collect underneath, rusting out of the roof skin – look carefully for bubbles under the skin or →

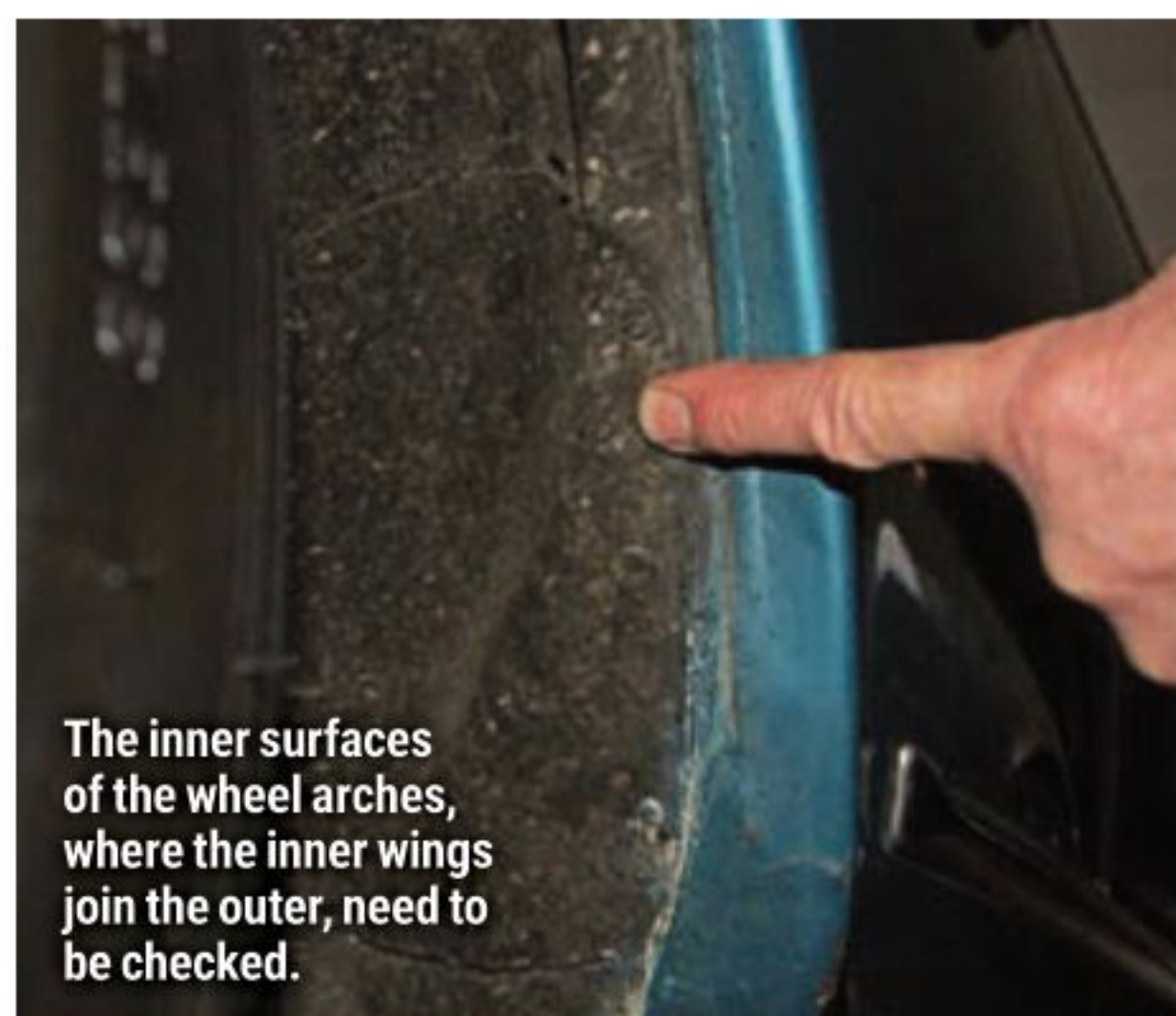




A classic Shadow rust spot is the wheel arches which - as here - collect large welts of rust.



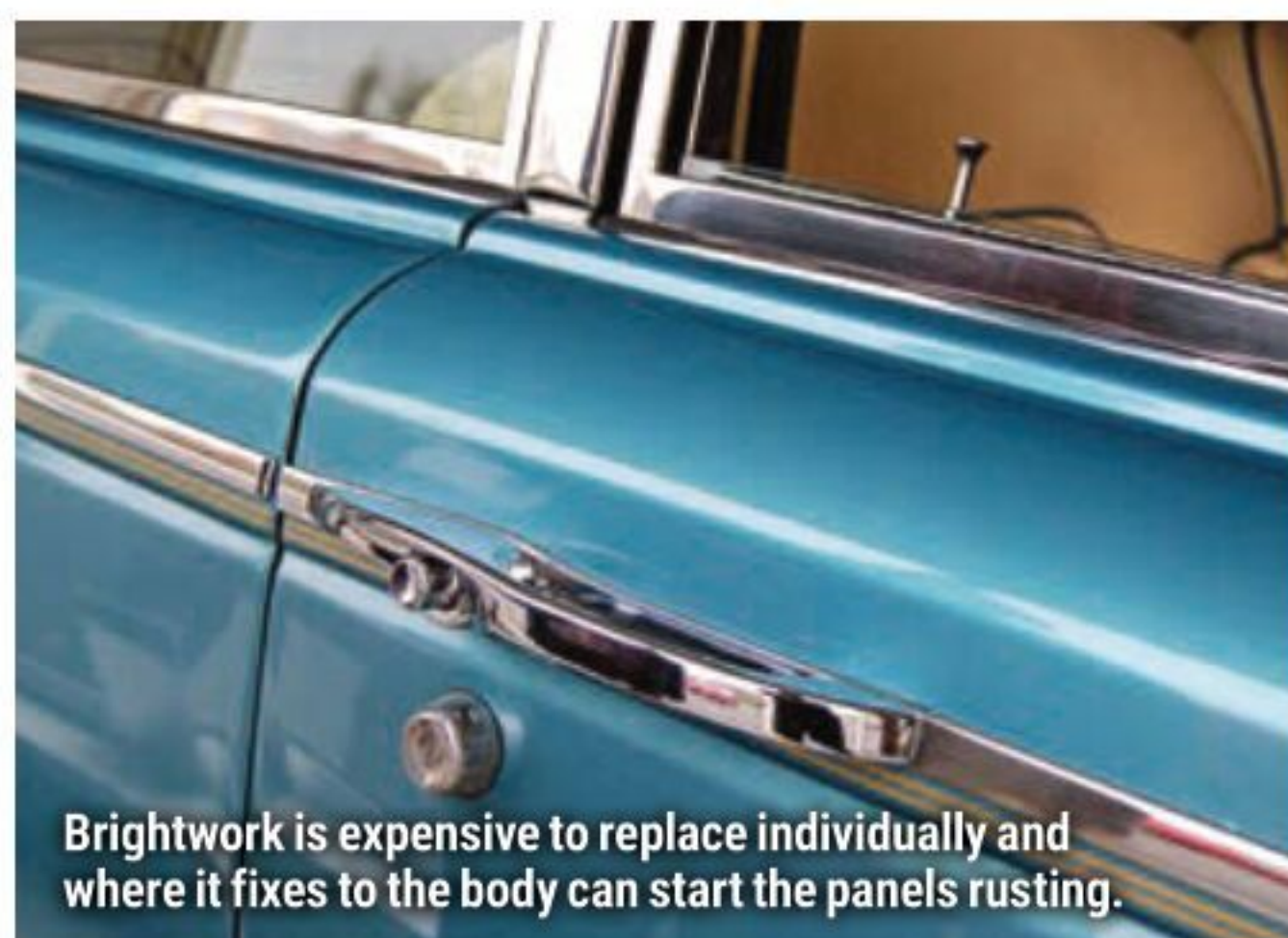
Sill rust develops from the inside out - by the time you see it like this there is serious rot to contend with.



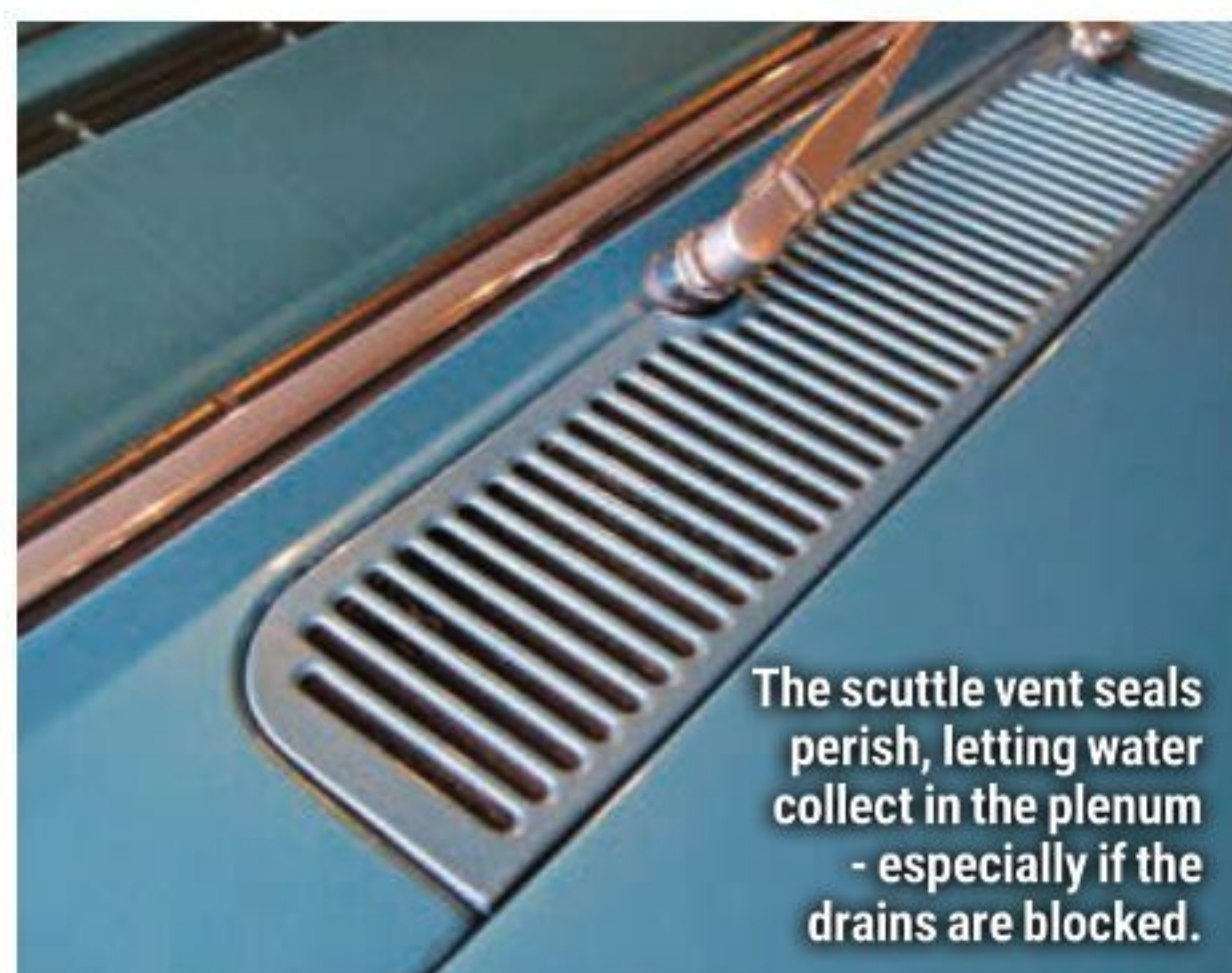
The inner surfaces of the wheel arches, where the inner wings join the outer, need to be checked.



With an Everflex-covered roof, check for shrinkage, tears and signs of rust bubbling underneath, especially at the edges.



Brightwork is expensive to replace individually and where it fixes to the body can start the panels rusting.



The scuttle vent seals perish, letting water collect in the plenum - especially if the drains are blocked.

signs of the Everflex peeling away from the roof. Replacement is possible but expensive, especially as it often required removing and replacing both front and rear screen seals.

## ENGINE

Rolls-Royce's L-Series V8 powered all Silver Shadows, though there were differences depending upon the model year. It's a pushrod V8 with wedge-shaped combustion chambers, initially rumoured to be a licence built American design but actually developed in-house by Crewe. It was in production - in greatly modified and modernised form - by Bentley until last year, which makes it one of the longest-lived engines in motoring history.

Up to the 1970 model year the engine was the same as that in the outgoing Cloud; 6230cc, with twin carburettors. While Rolls Royce never stated power outputs for road use (preferring the term "adequate" initially as a means of restraint and then as an excuse as rivals swiftly overtook their peak power output), the engine was also sold for marine use and rated in that form at 220-240bhp.

Later models used the larger 6750cc derivative originally developed for the Phantom VI, again with twin carburettors. Power output remained similar, though torque was notably improved.

Rolls-Royce engine blocks can corrode, and a full rebuild involved stripping it back to the point where the liners are removed. It won't be a cheap business. Tappets wear - don't be surprised to find bills for GM sets from yesteryear, but the quality has dropped. Specialists now advocate the use of the correct items sourced from Bentley, but they're £1500 a set. DIY servicing is viable, but the right bills will make it more desirable and more saleable car further down the line.

Even a Rolls-Royce engine can leak oil but it should never be dripping or raining off the underside. If it is, suspect either a failed crankshaft seal or high crankcase pressure. Check for the latter by popping off the oil filler cap while the engine is running - puffs of oil vapour indicate worn cylinder liners, requiring an expensive (and specialist) rebuild. Unsurprisingly, the V8 should run smoothly and silently, especially at idle. Tapping or rattling sounds mean that something is worn, either something like broken or partially-seized piston rings from overheating, slack in the timing gears or worn camshaft and followers. Again, this means big bills ahead to fix.

## TRANSMISSION

All models used General Motors-sourced automatic gearboxes - initially the GM Hydramatic, later the three-speed GM Turbo



Hydramatic 400. Both boxes are reliable in service, and have been used in so many applications that just about any competent automatic gearbox specialist will be able to rebuild them if needed.

Check the colour of the ATF – it should be bright red, not reddish brown. Any discolouration is bad news, and could indicate the need for a rebuild.

Check the condition of the diff by repeatedly shifting from R to D and back. Any clonking is bad news, though a little initial take-up is unsurprising given the amount of torque.

## SUSPENSION

The ride should be near faultless, but there are plenty of things that can affect the ride quality of your Rolls-Royce. Front balljoints can knock – it's not a rare issue, but budget £300 a side to have it sorted properly. Rear suspension spheres can pose problems too, if your car feels hard at the back then this is probably why. They're of a design licenced from Citroen, which means that any Citroen specialist can rectify the issue if you haven't got a Rolls-Royce specialist nearby. While it can be a DIY job (source your spheres from Sphere Shop at half the price), we'd recommend you leave it to a specialist if you

haven't done it before.

It is worth noting that all Silver Shadows use a specially-developed fluid – RR363 – in their hydraulic system. Fluid should be clean and up to the correct level in both circuits of the system. Despite the hydraulic system coming from Citroën, it should not use the French firm's characteristic green LHM mineral oil – this was adopted by Rolls-Royce after the Silver Shadow ceased production. The two fluids are not compatible.

Cars riding on original spec Avon tyres should be valued slightly more highly – simply put, if an owner is prepared to spend out on the right rubber, there's less chance of corners having been cut than there is on a car with the cheapest available option.

## BRAKES

Silver Shadow brakes are a complicated triple-circuit setup derived from a Citroen setup – they're complicated, and we'd want

to see recent brake service work in the history file. If there's an issue and you need a braking system rebuild, expect no change from £3000. Ignore weeping fluid at your peril – they're high pressure using a system licenced from Citroen, and a weep could easily become a flood more quickly than you might expect. Knocking under braking suggests that the hydraulic pump's getting tired, so negotiate accordingly.

Don't neglect to look at the basics just because the rest of the system is so unusual – this is a car that tips the scales at over two tons, after all. Look for rusted, worn or warped brake discs, leaky wheel cylinders and pads running out of friction material.

## INTERIOR

The majority of Silver Shadows left the factory with leather trim, which means that they're relatively easy to get retrimmed if your car of choice has a tired interior. But given that retrimming a Silver Shadow is far from —→

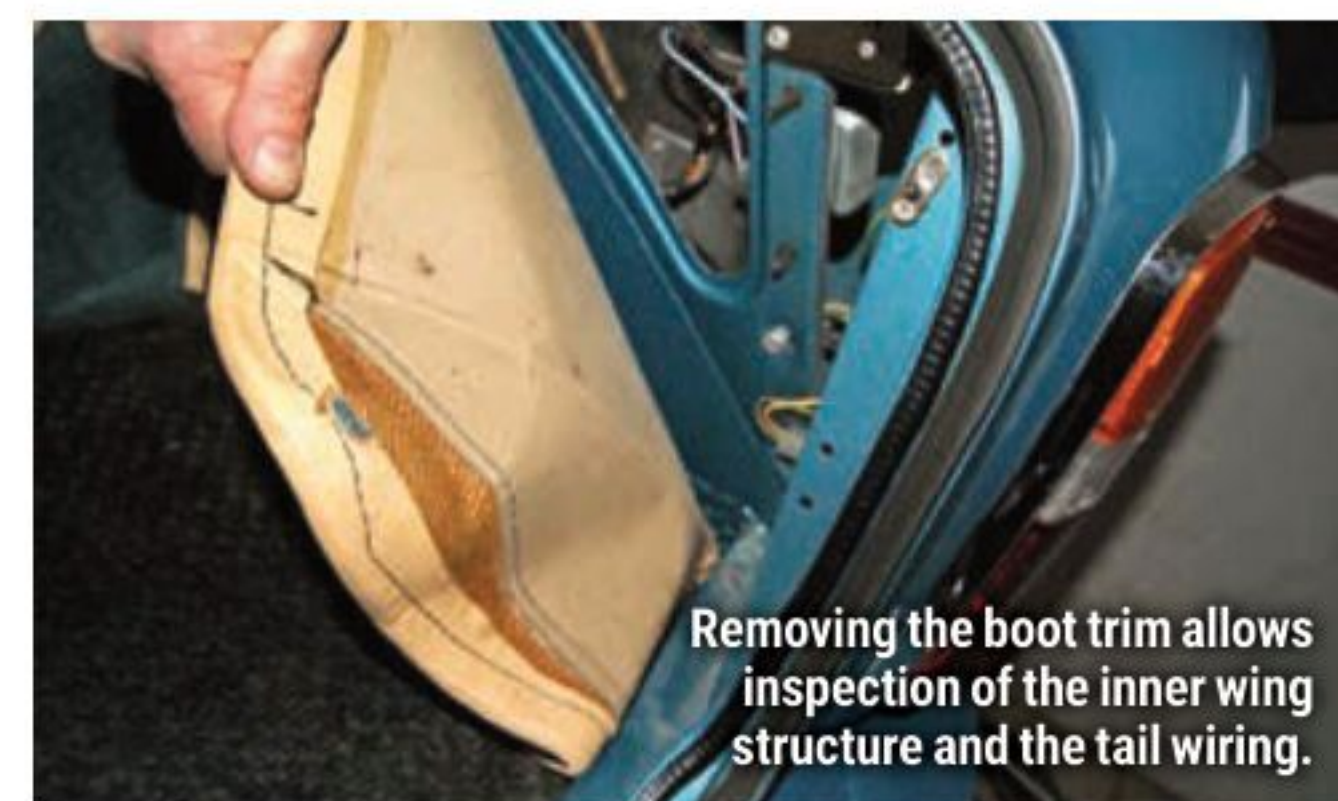
**“THE RIDE SHOULD BE NEAR FAULTLESS, BUT THERE ARE PLENTY OF THINGS THAT CAN AFFECT THE RIDE QUALITY OF YOUR ROLLS-ROYCE”**







Later interiors with the safety padded surround are less desirable but more durable and easier to repair.



Removing the boot trim allows inspection of the inner wing structure and the tail wiring.



This wingnut in the boot holds the battery earth cable in place as an isolator switch. Check the condition and security.

## FLYING SPARES

If you're DIY-minded then there's a lot you can do yourself on these cars and it won't be too long before you find yourself on first-name terms with the helpful sales team at Flying Spares. Starting out as a specialist dismantler, the firm has evolved over the last 25 years to offer owners the ideal choice between used parts, OEM-quality equivalents or original Bentley-branded products, as well as operating its own remanufacturing and reconditioning programme for mechanical items.

Flying Spares can supply parts for any Rolls-Royce or Bentley from 1946 and our own Turbo R is already wearing a selection of their products. Without firms like this to support these cars, they would certainly be a whole lot more tricky to own and it's certainly made our life easier already: only Flying Spares was able to supply a set of four correct Avon tyres, so without them we'd still be purchasing around on 19-year old Pirelli Scorpions. Find out more at [www.flyingsparses.com](http://www.flyingsparses.com).



cheap, we'd advise you to find a car with a good interior or to make use of specialist breakers such as Flying Spares to get hold of secondhand trim.

Likewise the wood – it's easier to get a car with good wood than to spend out on refurbishment. This has an added benefit. Silver Shadows can let in damp – this takes its toll on veneers as you'd expect. A car with good wood is less likely to suffer from water ingress, and this should be used as a barometer for the overall condition of the car.

Carpets are freely available, though expect the price to reflect the quality. We certainly wouldn't want to be fitting a cheap carpet set, it will both look and feel horrifically out of place in such surroundings.

Smaller items of trim such as switches and handles are shared with the later Silver Spirit, and are thus easily available through specialists such as Introcarr and Flying Spares.

## VERDICT

Silver Shadows were overproduced, but the attrition rate is such that the majority of

survivors now are good examples. That doesn't mean you shouldn't buy with care, though. It's still possible to find cars full of filler, or pretty on top but nasty underneath. But get hold of a good one and values are rising considerably – where three or four years ago you could buy a very nice example for £10000, you'll need double that these days. The £5000 Shadow does still exist... but you don't want it.

We'd avoid the coachbuilt models and stick to the standard saloons – these are more common, and better value. Early 6.2-litre cars attract a 10-15 per cent premium, while the value difference between a later Shadow I and a Shadow II depends upon who you ask. At present the market seems to value Shadow IIs slightly higher – though the price disparity is rarely more than between five or ten per cent.

From an ownership perspective the Shadow II is a better and more enjoyable bet – we'd look to spend up to £20,000 on the very best Shadow II we could find. Keep it in good condition and have it maintained by a local specialist, and it's an infinitely better bet than keeping money in the bank. ■

## TECH SPECS

	SHADOW 1	SHADOW 1	SHADOW 2
ENGINE	6230cc	6750cc	6750cc
0-60 MPH	10.9secs	11.8 secs	10.5 secs
MAX SPEED	120 mph	116 mph	118 mph
LENGTH MM	5169	5169	5170
WIDTH MM	1829	1829	1803
WEIGHT KG	2067	2067	2118



# Flying Spares

## Bentley T Series & Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow Wheel Arches & Lower Wing Repair Panels

All of our body repair panels are made exclusively for Flying Spares. They have all been tooled from new, genuine Rolls-Royce panels to the same gauge of metal as the original. We believe they are the best fitting panels available on the market. See our full range of rust repair panels on our website, [www.flyingsparses.com](http://www.flyingsparses.com)

### Non-Flared Wheel Arch



**RH FRONT WING  
FRONT REPAIR SECTION**  
Part Number: SSNF6  
Condition: Aftermarket Part  
Applicability: 1965-74

Price: £96.21 exc VAT

Also available: LH Front Wing Front Repair Section (SSNF5)



**LH FRONT WHEEL ARCH**  
Part Number: SSNF1  
Condition: Aftermarket Part  
Applicability: 1965-74

Price: £147.48 exc VAT

Also available: RH Front Wheel Arch (SSNF2)



**RH REAR WHEEL ARCH**  
Part Number: SSNF4  
Condition: Aftermarket Part  
Applicability: 1965-74

Price: £144.82 exc VAT

Also available: LH Rear Wheel Arch (SSNF3)



**LH REAR WING  
REAR REPAIR SECTION**  
Part Number: SSNF9  
Condition: Aftermarket Part  
Applicability: 1965-74

Price: £83.54 exc VAT

Also available: RH Rear Wing Rear Repair Section (SSNF10)

### Flared Wheel Arch



**LH FRONT WING  
FRONT REPAIR SECTION**  
Part Number: SSF5  
Condition: Aftermarket Part  
Applicability: 1974-80

Price: £83.54 exc VAT

Also available: RH Front Wing Front Repair Section (SSF6)



**RH FRONT WHEEL ARCH**  
Part Number: SSF2  
Condition: Aftermarket Part  
Applicability: 1974-80

Price: £149.06 exc VAT

Also available: LH Front Wheel Arch (SSF6)



**LH REAR WHEEL ARCH**  
Part Number: SSF3  
Condition: Aftermarket Part  
Applicability: 1974-80

Price: £147.48 exc VAT

Also available: RH Rear Wheel Arch (SSF4)



**RH REAR WING  
REAR REPAIR SECTION**  
Part Number: SSF10  
Condition: Aftermarket Part  
Applicability: 1974-80

Price: £83.54 exc VAT

Also available: LH Rear Wing Rear Repair Section (SSF9)

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# EFFORTLESS ADVENTURES

*When it comes to cruising through Europe, what could be more effortless – and more comfortable – than a long-wheelbase Silver Shadow? Paul Capper is one owner who's not afraid to take his much-loved Rolls-Royce on long-distance adventures*

Words PAUL GUINNESS / Photos PAUL CAPPER AND PAUL GUINNESS





**F**or any enthusiast lucky enough to own an immaculate example of their favourite classic, there is an understandable temptation to limit its use for fear of wear and tear. Keeping a classic car in outstanding condition is hard enough without the extra pressure of tackling long-distance jaunts and overseas adventures. But Paul Capper, owner of this glorious long-wheelbase Silver Shadow I since 1997, is no such person; for him the real joy behind the ownership of Nellie (as she's affectionately known) has been more than doubling the 63,000 miles showing on the odometer when he first acquired her.

In many ways, an 'extended' Silver Shadow makes the perfect pan-European touring machine, particularly when unencumbered

by the chauffeur's division fitted to many of the long-wheelbase models. Proud owner Paul appreciates the extra space and practicality of Nellie over a standard-length Silver Shadow, as well as the sheer pleasure he gets from being behind the wheel. Indeed, he describes the whole experience as "like driving your favourite armchair", which helps explain why he's covered a high mileage (by classic vehicle standards) over the years.

"Of the five Rolls-Royce motor cars that I've owned, Nellie has always been my favourite," admits Paul. "And although I have often travelled extensively in her throughout the UK and beyond via well-organised Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club rallies, I had never been brave enough to venture to foreign fields solo."

A few years ago, however, Paul decided to

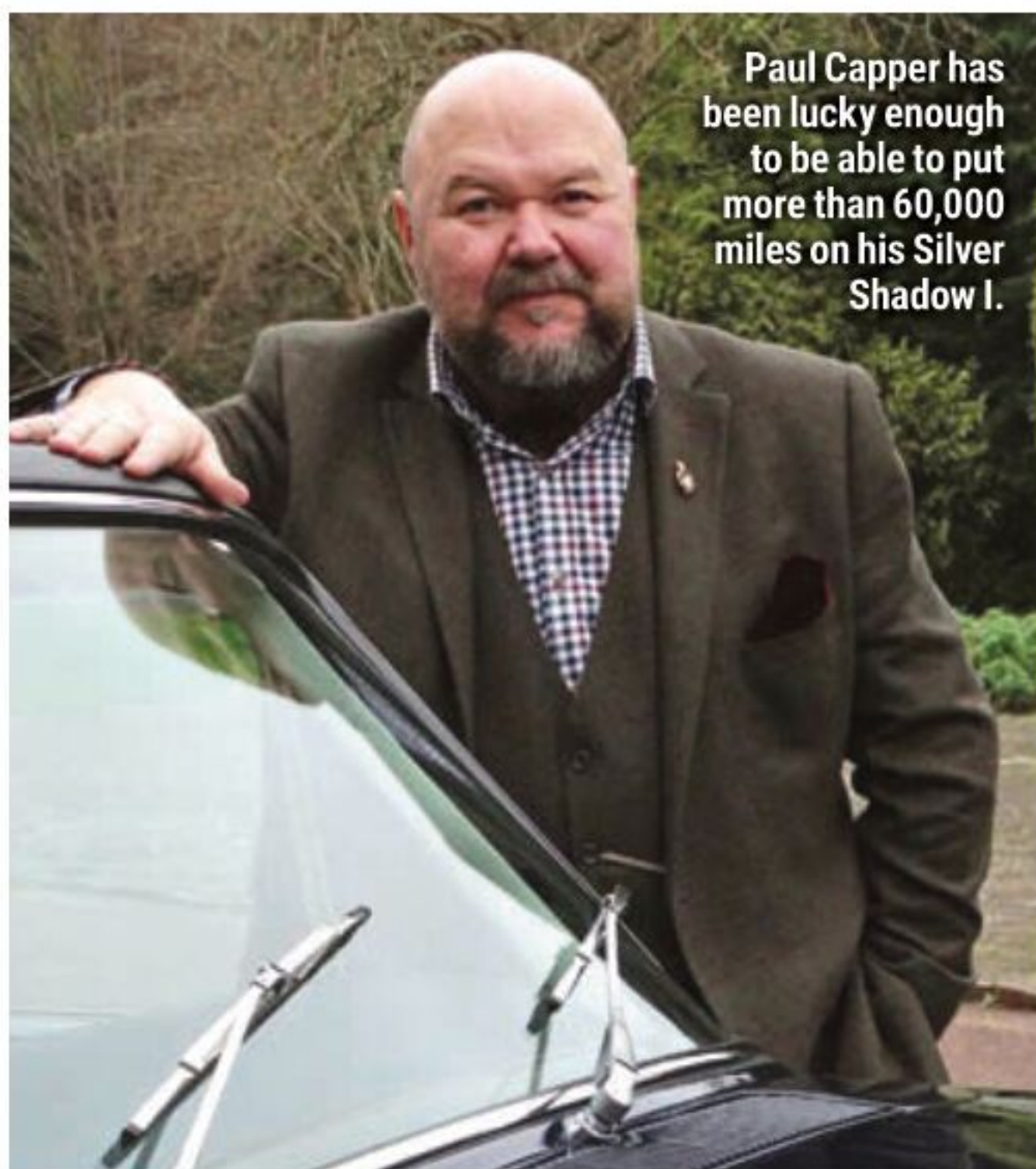
take the plunge, taking Nellie on an adventure he'd never forget: "The idea was to head from the UK down to my aunt's home in southern Spain, with a friend acting as my human sat-nav. We hurriedly acquired the appropriate maps and booked the ferry tickets in order to fulfil our first Spanish adventure."

## BOUND FOR SPAIN

Paul departed Portsmouth for the 36-hour crossing to Bilbao, and was lucky enough to experience calm water on a stretch of sea that's renowned for being unpredictable. But his arrival in Bilbao was initially a little daunting: "We somewhat nervously joined the Bilbao rush hour at eight o'clock in the morning and made our way south to Lograno, the lively capital of Spain's premier wine region. But as it was —→







Paul Capper has been lucky enough to be able to put more than 60,000 miles on his Silver Shadow I.

our intention to reach Alicante in one day, we joined the main AP-68 motorway south – with Nellie continuing to perform faultlessly – and made good headway, arriving in Zaragoza by lunchtime. We then continued our southerly journey towards Valencia.”

Throughout the journey, Nellie managed to look the part thanks to the discrete Union Jack that Paul had cheekily attached to her front end: “This produced some very favourable comments from fellow British motorists and expats alike,” he recalls with a smile.

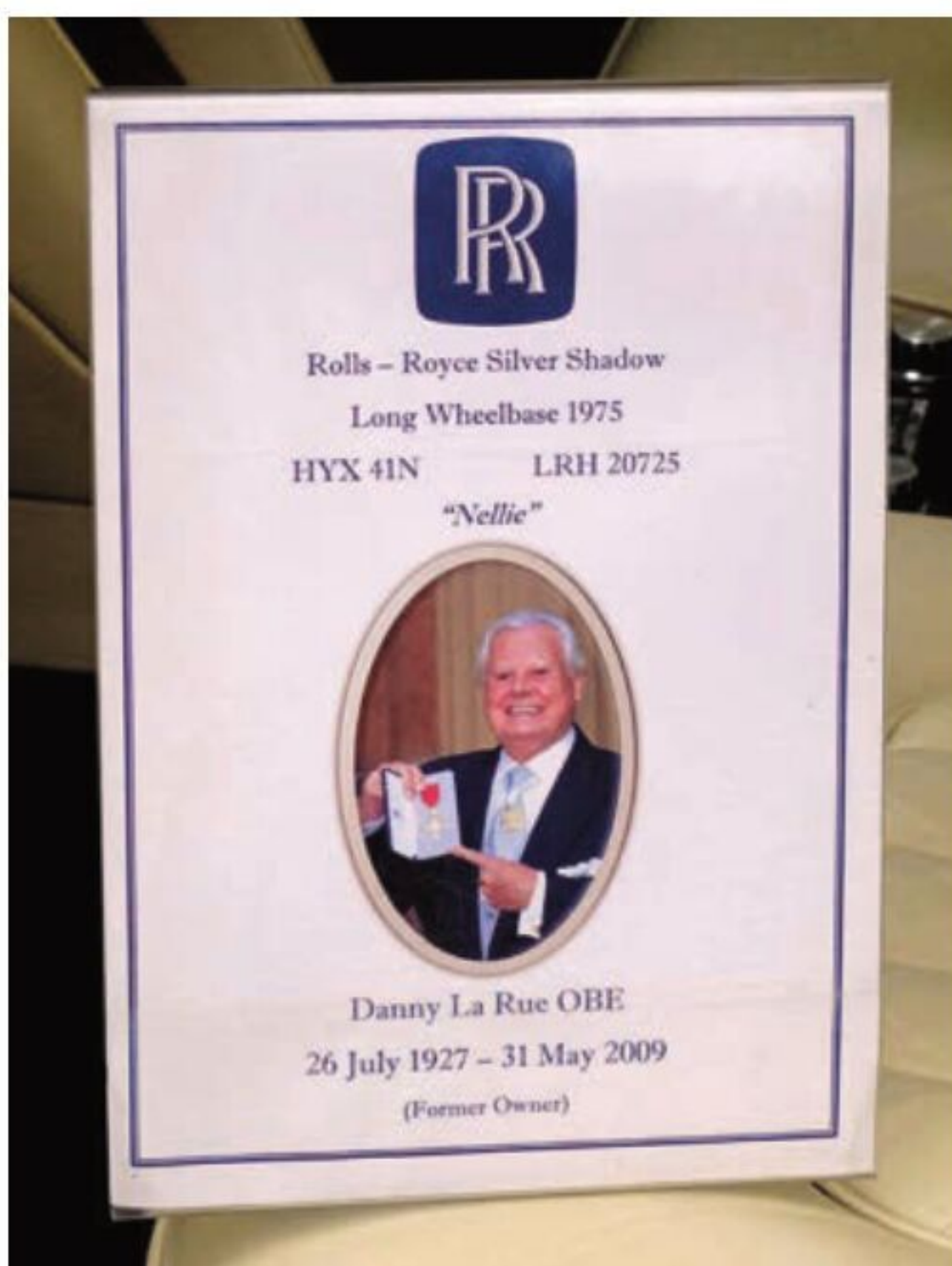
Many travellers might have considered a stop-off at historic Valencia, but Paul was determined to continue on his epic one-day jaunt: “We carried on through Gandia, with its breathtaking cliff-top and mountain roads overlooking the Mediterranean, and passed by Benidorm on our way towards Alicante. It was whilst driving through Alicante that we then spotted a billboard advertising a classic car event, and so we made a mental note to pay a visit to the show a few days later. It turned out to be the highlight of our fourteen days away – a stunning event that was as exciting and as well-attended as any British offering at the NEC.”

Having spent a little time in Alicante, Paul was determined to press on with the journey, particularly as his car was continuing to perform faultlessly: “Leaving Alicante and

its almost chariot race-like rush hour behind us, we arrived at our destination of Torre de la Horadada just before eight o'clock in the evening, and were able to enjoy a sunset picnic on the beach after an eventful and enjoyable day's driving in what was entirely virgin territory for me. This was to be the scene of many a photograph over the next few days, with Nellie taking pride of place along the beautiful and deserted white beach nestling at the foot of a sixteenth century castle tower.”

After a few days of relaxation, Paul decided he'd head back to Alicante on the first Sunday of his stay with his aunt, to take a look at the classic car show he'd spotted the billboard for: “My dear aunt, Diana, then noticed in the local newspaper that a Torrevieja-based classic car club was holding a gathering at the main marina on the same day, and so we headed out in torrential rain to be greeted by a very enthusiastic group of expats with an interesting selection of classics. After spending some time there, we then decided to head to Alicante's indoor classic car event, which turned out to be an annual show that combined the best of Spain's classic car clubs with a very well-attended autojumble. It was a superb day in every respect.”

The next few days saw Paul heading to Murcia on numerous occasions, fascinated as he was by the city's spectacular architecture:



This car first belonged to singer and entertainer Danny La Rue.

**“IN MANY WAYS, AN ‘EXTENDED’ SILVER SHADOW MAKES THE PERFECT PAN-EUROPEAN TOURING MACHINE, PARTICULARLY WHEN UNENCUMBERED BY THE CHAUFFEUR’S DIVISION FITTED TO MANY OF THE LONG-WHEELBASE MODELS”**



The key is in the ignition, just waiting for the start of the journey...







A patriotic send-off for a great British car.



From one side of a continent to the other, the Rolls-Royce has proved wholly reliable, and on 'untouched' engine, transmission, suspension and brakes.



"I'd always dreamt of taking a photograph of Nellie in front of the Cathedral de Santa Maria, but as we walked around we couldn't see any way of gaining vehicular access. All of the approach roads were for emergency vehicles only, and so we decided to drive Nellie back to my aunt's house. But it was as we were leaving that my pioneering spirit kicked in, and to my friend's great surprise I began to reverse down a one-way street with my hazard warning lights flashing. This was, I'd realised, the shortest route to the cathedral – but just as we reached the granite square, we were stopped by the Guardia Civil. I explained that I was a mad Englishman who'd driven all the way from the UK in the hope of having my car photographed in front of the beautiful cathedral. Whether it was the heat of the day or the fact that I was getting on his nerves, the officer finally relented and gave me permission to drive there very slowly for dos momentos."

### SPECIAL HISTORY

Paul came away from his two-week trip to Spain determined to carry on exploring in his long-wheelbase Silver Shadow, spurred on by the reaction he'd had from onlookers →





Even a Rolls-Royce enjoys some time on the beach every now and then...



It's not just about eating up the motorway miles either - a Silver Shadow can be a pleasure to drive on a windy coast road too.



Wherever she goes, Nellie the long-wheelbase Rolls-Royce gets admiring looks.





throughout the trip: “We received a great many favourable comments about Nellie from the Spanish and expat Brits alike, and she became the focus of many a bystander’s photograph. And, of course, as our fortnight drew to a close, Nellie made her way back to Bilbao with the same effortless decorum as our journey there.”

Other adventures enjoyed by Paul since acquiring Nellie all those years ago have included one particular trip to France, which took in the Loire Valley and a visit to Le Mans – the latter involving some very non-regal behaviour when Paul took to the track in his highly admired Silver Shadow: “When taking her around the Bugatti Circuit at Le Mans,

straight lines were great, but the bends and cornering were like The Poseidon Adventure. I was expecting to see Shelley Winters sail past at any moment!”

It’s always refreshing to come across an owner who isn’t afraid to tackle long-distance challenges in their car, particular when theirs is such an immaculate example of its type. In the case of Paul Capper, he has covered more miles in his Rolls-Royce than the car’s previous three owners put together. And whilst on the subject of other keepers, this brings us neatly round to the fact that this 1975 example of the most opulent Silver Shadow was once owned by Danny La Rue OBE.

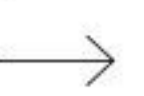
Anyone who grew up in the 1960s or ’70s, or who enjoyed variety shows during their TV heyday years, will remember La Rue for his on-stage cross-dressing, his impersonations of female stars (like Zsa Zsa Gabor and Marlene Dietrich) and, of course, for his singing voice (who could forget his 1968 version of ‘On Mother Kelly’s Doorstep’?). For many years, Danny La Rue was one of Britain’s highest-paid entertainers, and he made sure that his chosen modes of transport reflected his fame and success.

At the same time that La Rue owned this long-wheelbase Silver Shadow, he was also the proud possessor of a regular Silver Shadow and a Silver Cloud, although the car featured here was his preferred mode of transport for London. With La Rue’s cherished registration number – DLR 2 – each end and his chauffeur up front, it would have been an imposing sight. By the time the car was finally about to be sold, however, this Silver Shadow wasn’t in the best condition, as current owner Paul admits: “It still looked lovely from a distance, if you squinted... but close-up it was a different story, and parts of the car were a mess.”

Nevertheless, Paul went ahead with the purchase in 1997 and was delighted with his latest acquisition: “For me, the ultimate Silver Shadow was always the long-wheelbase model but without the chauffeur’s division, a feature that robbed the car of the extra legroom created by the four-inch increase in wheelbase.”

## PERFECT PROJECT

The fact that his newly acquired Silver Shadow wasn’t in top condition was something that Paul was determined to put right once funds allowed: “As soon as I bought the car I started using it and taking it to RREC events, but



Even on the Spanish Mediterranean coast, Paul has a copy of the RREC magazine to hand!





it was obvious that its condition left a lot to be desired,” he recalls. And so after two years of ownership, Paul took the decision to give his long-wheelbase Silver Shadow the attention it deserved, entrusting most of the work to London-based OSC, specialists in classic vehicle bodywork repairs and restoration: “The car was stripped and, with all the necessary work carried out, treated to a bare-metal respray.”

Most of the notoriously rust-prone areas (such as the rear wheel arches, lower rear quarter panels, sills and so on) were very solid, but the front wings were in a poor state. The offside wing was repairable, with new metal being expertly welded into place, but the nearside ended up having a half-wing replacement thanks to its decay. The repairs were carried out extremely well, however, and the paint finish achieved by OSC (in original Oxford Blue) was superb. The final bill of around £12,000 was no surprise given the standard of the work and the impressive attention to detail throughout.

While the bodywork restoration of the Silver Shadow has stood up extremely well to the miles and years that have since passed, Paul uncovered an extra problem whilst having his car MoT'd in 2014. The tester spotted a thumbnail-sized hole underneath, in the middle of the back seat area, and so Paul took

the Silver Shadow to marque specialist Hillier Hill for further investigation. Remarkably, it was discovered that a minuscule gap between the rear window seal and the bodywork had allowed water to penetrate into the car, running under the back seat and remaining there, quietly creating a problem.

The only way of repairing the damage was to completely strip the interior of the car (even down to its soundproofing) and weld in a new section of floor. The Everflex roof was also removed and replaced with an exact replica, prior to everything being reassembled back to original. With the help of insurance advisors from the RREC, however, it was ascertained that the issue with the rear screen seal was down to more than ‘wear and tear’ and, after much discussion and support from both the club and Ray Hillier of Hillier Hill, an insurance claim was agreed upon:

“The insurer, Equity Red Star, was aware of the significance of the car as a prize-winning example, and so agreed that any issues with wear and tear would have been picked up over the years by the club’s concours d’elegance judges,” explains Paul. The final bill of £14,000 was therefore paid by the insurers, much to the relief of all concerned.

Since then, Paul’s Rolls-Royce has continued to win awards at RREC gatherings, achieving





the accolade of Best Silver Shadow at various events, as well as being nominated for the club's Master Class section in 2015. It's a remarkable achievement for a car that, despite its previous celebrity links, looked rather down-at-heel when it came into its current ownership.

It's also an impressive tribute to Rolls-Royce engineering that the car has needed remarkably little in the way of mechanical work, with initial problems of fuel starvation (caused simply by an incorrect fuel pump being fitted in those early days) being the only issue. The engine and transmission remain original and virtually untouched, as do the steering, suspension and

brakes – aside from routine servicing, of course.

Long may that continue, because despite Paul's Silver Shadow long-wheelbase gaining numerous concours d'elegance trophies and being in impeccable condition throughout, it is still very much a car that gets used – and that's not going to change at any point, insists its owner. So where's he off to next? "I've always wanted to drive her to Austria, so hope to be doing that sooner rather than later," he replies. And frankly, we don't blame him; when a car is this comfortable and this effortless over long distances, further exploration of Europe is surely a must. ■

**"LEAVING ALICANTE AND ITS ALMOST CHARIOT RACE-LIKE RUSH HOUR BEHIND US, WE ARRIVED AT OUR DESTINATION OF TORRE DE LA HORADADA JUST BEFORE EIGHT O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING"**



Paul had to negotiate with the Spanish Guardia Civil to get this long-sought-after shot of the Rolls-Royce outside the cathedral in Murcia.





Daimler and Vanden Plas - two famous names coming together to create one fine car.

# TOUGH AT THE TOP

*When launched, both these cars were described as the 'The Best Car In The World' by the British press. But which of these '70s super-saloons really deserves the accolade?*

Words **JACK GROVER**

**T**hink of 'Rolls-Royce' and you think of a marque that is the pinnacle of motoring so far as luxury, quality and engineering are concerned.

But nothing can be entirely without peer or rival, even Rolls-Royce – the car of royalty. What about the car that royalty chose before Rolls-Royce? The patriarch of all British car firms and the oldest name in internal combustion. The marque that established itself as the car of choice for the great, the good and, well, the Establishment when Henry Royce was still making crane motors and Charles Rolls was selling Peugeots. What about Daimler?

For all its early prestige, a long history of engineering innovations and a long list of

illustrious customers, by the 1950s Daimler's star was definitely dimming. In 1953 the firm lost its Royal Warrant as the supplier of motor cars to the British royal family, which it had held since 1902. That distinction now went to... Rolls-Royce. In 1960 Daimler fell into the hands of Jaguar, which wanted the firm for its factory more than anything else. Over the course of the next decade Daimler cars gradually ceased to have any real identity becoming badge-engineered Jaguar saloons. In the same decade, of course, came the Silver Shadow, proving that Rolls-Royce could be just as innovative as Daimler had been in its prime, and pitched straight at the prosperous owner-drive market that the mid-size Daimlers of the

1940s and 1950s had been. But Daimler and Rolls-Royce now moved in very different circles. While a Silver Shadow cost around £6500 the Daimler Sovereign (based on the Jaguar 420) was a mere £1780.

## RENEWED RIVALRY

But that made it all the more shocking when, in 1968, Jaguar announced its new XJ6 saloon model, which set new standards of refinement, ride quality, performance and handling for the upmarket saloon class. The Daimler version of the XJ6, the Sovereign, added a dose of genuine luxury. If the XJ6 made Crewe uncomfortable, things really must have been awkward in 1972 with the arrival of the XJ12 – the same car but with a brand new 5.3-litre V12 engine. Offering a V12 in a saloon car was unique at the time (and seemingly much more prestigious and advanced than Rolls-Royce's 6.75-litre V8). The Jaguar XJ12 was the fastest four-door saloon car in the world, which went equally for its Daimler Double Six sibling (Double Six being an illustrious name from Daimler's past, recalling a line of models from the inter-war period with sleeve-valve V12s). Faster than a Rolls-Royce, with a more advanced, more refined engine, ride quality and interior comfort which many commentators and customers struggled to discern from the Crewe product...and all in a car that cost only a little over half as the starting price of a Silver Shadow.

Rolls-Royce might have consoled itself with the thought that a Silver Shadow represented the last bastion of traditional coachbuilt craftsmanship, with every car being lovingly





The Rolls-Royce made the 'best car in the world' in the 1960s, but ten years on was that still the case?



fitted out and finished by skilled experts to the highest standards. A Silver Shadow was no mere Jaguar, mass-produced on a product line and given a fancy grille. But that comforting thought was dashed when, hot on the heels of the XJ12/Double Six came the announcement of the Daimler Double Six Vanden Plas. Vanden Plas was a long-established name in luxury coachbuilding from the earliest days of motoring. With the creation of British Leyland Jaguar and Vanden Plas were now stablemates and it seemed absolutely logical to offer Vanden Plas 'finishing' on the Daimler Double Six to create the ultimate version of the ultimate Jaguar.

The production process for the Double Six Vanden Plas was eerily similar to that that Crewe used for the Silver Shadow. Both cars used all-steel unitary construction bodysells, in both cases stamped out and assembled into the 'body in white' by Pressed Steel (albeit at different plants). These were then both dispatched for finishing to the appropriate standard – the Silver Shadow body went to Crewe while the Daimler's went to the Jaguar Browns Lane plant (the original Daimler 'shadow factory' before being purchased by Jaguar) where it was assembled into a basic, just-about-drivable 'rolling chassis' with no interior, trim or paint other than a protective coat of matt black. Then it was driven to the Vanden Plas works at Kingsbury in north London, where it was completed to the highest standards. Daimlers already boasted grain-matched veneer, but the wood selected by Vanden Plas was of a higher quality. →





## “THE DAIMLER FEELS LIKE A FAIRLY ORDINARY SALOON CAR WITH A FANTASTIC ENGINE AND TRULY GIFTED SUSPENSION ENGINEERS. THE SHADOW FEELS LIKE AN OUT-OF-THE-ORDINARY CAR IN EVERY WAY”

The paint was applied by hand in more layers and with more rub-downs and preparations (again by hand) between them. Coachlines either side of a unique chrome side strip were applied by hand, as was the leatherised vinyl roof. As well as all the usual Daimler creature comforts, Vanden Plas fitted leather-faced seats to a bespoke design, automatic air conditioning as standard, front and rear cigar lighters, rear reading lamps and deep-pile Birstall carpets with an extra layer of sound-deadening underneath topped with nylon wool over-rugs.

On the face of it, this was serious Rolls-rivalling levels of luxury, teamed with essentially equal ride comfort and superior performance, all for about half the cost of a Silver Shadow.

But is it really the case? Does a Double Six Vanden Plas really offer the same true, better-than-skin-deep luxury as a Silver Shadow for half the price – a differential that applies as much today for cars of equal condition as it did in the mid-70s?

### AIRS AND GRACES

If space is a prerequisite of true comfort and luxury, the Double Six is somewhat deficient from the moment you sit in the front or the back. One of the downsides of basing a luxury Daimler on a Jaguar is that Jaguars, being

sports saloons, traditionally have snug-fitting cabins and equally snug-fitting seats that belie their generous external proportions. Not so appropriate for a Daimler, especially once you’ve added the tightly-stuffed seats and thick carpeting of the Vanden Plas. By contrast the Silver Shadow is a much bigger car and feels it from the inside – Rolls-Royce made the full use of the switch to unitary construction to give generous, airy-feeling accommodation with big light-giving windows front and rear.

In terms of refinement, it is very hard to separate these cars. The Silver Shadow’s V8 is by no means noisy and idles with a distant heartbeat-like throb more felt than heard. The Daimler’s V12 makes more mechanical noise at tickover but there are zero physical signs that it is running. That gap provided by the initial impression widens once the cars are on the move. The Daimler provides almost negative amounts of noise, like the sound is being sucked out of the cabin and aside from a hushed whir from the transmission and rear axle, there is no real sense of being propelled by internal combustion unless you really provoke the gearbox into dropping a gear and make use of the V12’s prodigious power – then it returns a smooth, wailing chorus. But even that doesn’t do justice to the Daimler’s silence, since the distant whisper of the mechanical parts is only

discernable due to the complete absence of road noise. No tyre roar, no suspension creaks, no thuds (and certainly no crashes) through the body. Very big lumps in the road taken at low speeds induce a bit of a tremor through the shell, but the faster you drive the less the effect is until at motorway speeds all physical sense of progress is removed. It takes a big bump to even make the leather seats creak. When the air-conditioning compressor kicks in, the click of the relay is almost startling. At high speeds you get wind noise, especially whistling around the windscreen pillars and through some less-than-perfect door seals, but in general it’s library-like calm in the Double Six.

By contrast, the Silver Shadow’s mechanicals are probably just as whisper-like, and even when pressed the big V8 and the automatic transmission with its fully remote electric selector refuse to make their presence known. But there is more road noise. The two-and-a-bit-tonne car makes those huge, wide, squashy radial tyres rumble at low speeds, and this is when you can detect imperfections in the secondary ride quality too, with a tendency for the car to patter over little, low-amplitude bumps like repair patches in tarmac or expansion joints in concrete, and potholes transmit a modest but detectable amount of ‘thump’ to the body, although credit to the Shadow’s interior trim, seats and the mechanical isolation of the steering that this is heard rather than felt from behind the wheel. At higher speeds the Shadow’s superb primary ride takes over, with a definite sense of floating just above, rather than along, the road surface. There is essentially no wind noise and just a distant below-decks thrum to suggest that mechanical propulsion is taking place on the other side of the bulkhead. Once cruising the Shadow absorbs bumps, crests, dips and holes with a disdain that is at the very least the equal of the Daimler, but its body control is from another era altogether. The body is always in motion, with a gentle but continuous ‘nodding dog’ movement. It is well damped and never feels unnatural, but it contrasts with the rock solid, seemingly gyroscopically stabilised calm of the Daimler.

### HURRIED LUXURY

When it comes to handling the Daimler also shows its Jaguar parentage. The Daimler has been given neutral but very capable road manners, with well-assisted but responsive rack-and-pinion steering, strong anti-roll characteristics in the suspension which allow the big car to lean in, settle on its springs and then just grip, right up to speeds that are scarcely credible for a car of its size. Any well-heeled merchant bankers or ICI directors in the back would not thank their chauffeur for driving the Double Six in such a fashion, but it can do it. And for the modern driver owning one



as a classic, you'll find an unexpected level of precision and adjustability in both the steering and the way the car reacts to throttle changes in a series of flowing bends. This car is in no way overwhelmed by either its weight or the presence of a 245hp V12 under the bonnet.

Which brings us to the Silver Shadow, which shows Crewe's traditional approach to issues of cornering performance and driver engagement – none at all beyond what is needed for safety and comfort. It feels top heavy, although this is more to do with the high driving position. There is quite a lot of body roll, although how

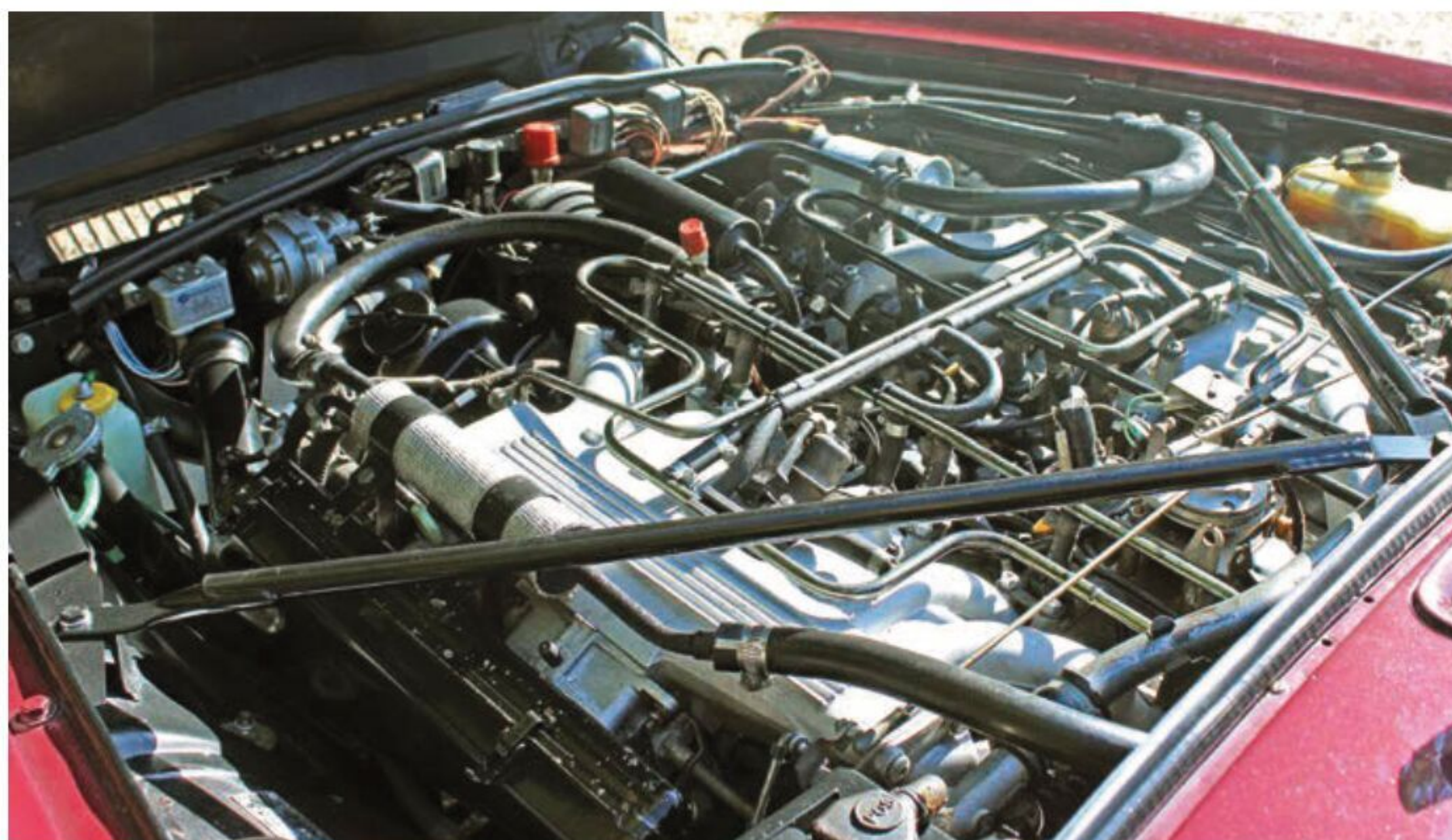
much is dependent more on how briskly you steer than by how much.. The Shadow's steering is even lighter than the Daimler's, has even less feel (i.e. none) and is remarkably sensitive. You find yourself chopping away making and undoing little corrections until you adjust, and that sets the body bobbing from side to side. Master the correct technique – tiny, finger-tip inputs made slowly – and things settle down and in terms of directional stability the Shadow is a masterclass of composure. What's most surprising about the 17-foot long, two-ton Rolls-Royce is that it never feels ponderous. Large and

weighty, but never ponderous. Rather like how a giant bulldozer can move with centimetric-precision in the hands of a skilled operator. Try and drive the Rolls-Royce with the same sort of verve that the Daimler not only copes with but actively rewards and it will mush into a mess of understeer and body roll...but why are you driving a Rolls-Royce like that. It can actually cover ground with remarkable pace and deportment, so long as it is driven intelligently.

## VERDICT

So it seems that the Daimler Double Six has the Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow absolutely licked in terms of performance, handling and driver engagement, an equal in terms of ride comfort, being better in some key aspects of refinement and apparently giving little away in terms of luxury or technology. And all for half the price. Victory to the Daimler, then? In the sense that the Double Six is the better car, and certainly the better one to drive. Let's not also forget that as well as being cheaper to buy it's more affordable to run and service too. But that's to ignore the less effable qualities of the Rolls-Royce, and that's where the marque's prestige has always lain. It's easy for a company to provide 90 per cent of what goes into a Rolls-Royce for half the cost, which is effectively what the Daimler does. But the extra cost and effort goes into that extra 10 per cent, and the character and ambience it instils in both the car and the lucky driver. For instance, both cars have deep walnut-veneered dashboards with a fairly comprehensive set of instruments and switches. But the Shadow's dashboard has a deeper veneer with chamfered edges around the sections and the holes for the dials, while the Daimler has simple cut-outs. You don't have to look too closely or deeply to find literal rough edges, while the Rolls-Royce is finished to high standards throughout. The Daimler's switchgear is all from the Lucas parts bin, and feels it. The Shadow's old-fashioned chromed switches operate with a solid, high-quality click. On the outside, the Daimler may well have better paint quality than the standard Jaguar offering, but the Shadow's paintwork gives of such a sense of depth that you feel as if you could fall into it. And yes, the Shadow's imperious driving position, spacious cabin and deep glass area make it feel special and luxurious in a way that the Daimler, for all its prestigious badges, doesn't quite match.

The Daimler feels like a fairly ordinary saloon car with a fantastic engine and truly gifted suspension engineers. The Shadow feels like an out-of-the-ordinary car in every way, even in its weak areas. The Daimler proves that by the mid-1970s Rolls-Royce's boast of making 'The Best Car In The World' was no longer self-evident and that there was serious competition. But at the end of the day, it was still a Rolls-Royce and that counted (and still counts) for a lot. ■



The Daimler is an astoundingly good car, but an ordinary car none the less.





**L**ook up the word corniche in a dictionary and you'll find it usually refers to a road that travels close to a cliff edge – a definition that seems somewhat apt when considering the Rolls-Royce Corniche, the first model launched after the collapse of its maker in 1971. Indeed, Rolls-Royce Motors was still in the hands of the receivers at the time of the Corniche's debut, which meant that life at the Crewe factory was probably almost like being on a cliff edge. Could the newly

created car division – now known as Rolls-Royce Motors – survive, let alone prosper in the years ahead?

Let's not forget, of course, that problems with Rolls-Royce's aviation division were what had caused the collapse of the firm on February 1st, 1971; and although there was inevitably a knock-on effect in terms of public image, the subsequent separation of the car-building side helped to minimise this. The fact that the new Corniche was ready to be unveiled in 1971 meant excellent timing; demand →



# CORNICHE CLASS

*Despite not taking its name, the Corniche was really the ultimate form of the Silver Shadow, and for many it was the ultimate form of motor car. A day behind the wheel will quickly convince you why that was, as we found out for ourselves*

Words and photos **ROB HAWKINS**





for the company's cars remained strong, and so the high-priced Corniche was soon helping Rolls-Royce Motors to become a profitable car manufacturer in its own right.

Although obviously a derivation of the previous Silver Shadow-based two-door Mulliner Park Ward duo, the Corniche was announced as a new model, again available in a choice of two-door hardtop or convertible guises – although only the latter went on to enjoy an astonishingly long career, with the final example being produced in 1995.

The fixed-head Corniche disappeared in early 1981, which meant just a ten-year run and – as a consequence – a touch of extra rarity today. Indeed, just 1108 hardtop Rolls-Royce Corniches were produced during that decade, as well as a further 63 Bentley versions. Production of the Corniche appears to have been a logistical challenge, with the bodies being manufactured

by Rolls-Royce's in-house coachbuilding arm of Mulliner Park Ward – based at Willesden, London – before being transported to Crewe for completion of the build.

Early-model fixed-head Corniches are now a relatively rare sight (certainly compared with their Silver Shadow cousins of similar vintage), and so when the Yorkshire-based Classic and Sportscar Centre offered me a chance to get behind the wheel of the example you see here, I could hardly refuse – especially as this car's price tag of £39,995 makes it one of the most affordable entry points into Corniche ownership.

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Looking over the Rolls-Royce's Midnight Blue exterior, with the winter sun sinking deep into it and providing detailed reflections of anything nearby, it's obvious that this is a colour prone to

attracting dust and road dirt. And so it proved to be, forcing us to apologise to the workshop team at the Classic and Sportscar Centre when we returned the car after several runs along a nearby country lane, only to ask them to then prepare it for some car-to-car photography. Happily, it does look superb when clean – and I was looking forward to my first encounter with an early Corniche.

Compared with a Silver Shadow, the Corniche's doors are (obviously) significantly longer, swinging wide open to provide a hint of the access situation for the rear seats. A hard-to-miss push button on the outer top corner of each front seat suggests some means of tilting its top half forwards, although it needs a good push down with your thumb and a gentle push frontwards of the seat back to allow it to hinge forward. Sure enough, there's then room to clamber into the rear – although if you

## CREATING THE CORNICHE

Although there was little to differentiate the new Corniche from the extant Silver Shadow two-door saloon and drophead by Mulliner Park Ward, it was treated as a new model by Rolls-Royce Motors. Exterior differences between the Corniche and its forebears were minor; a slightly different radiator grille, rectangular reversing lamps, fog lamps, special wheel trims and a different dashboard formed the bulk of the cosmetic changes, while the engine was subtly reworked to produce 'adequate plus 10%' power.

There was no need for major change thanks to the already handsome looks of the MPW cars, with Coke-bottle hips and an angled rear giving them more panache than a standard Silver Shadow saloon. Styled by John Blatchley, the shape was clearly derived from that of the Silver Shadow but reintroduced elements of historic Rolls-Royce design.

Running gear was also carried across from the standard saloon, which in the case of the Corniche meant a 6.75-litre L-series V8, SU-fed and driving a GM400 three-speed automatic gearbox at launch. And, of course, the Corniche also shared the suspension of the equivalent-era saloon, with independent coil springs with oleopneumatic self-levelling at the back, powered hydraulic brakes and power assisted steering.

The individual models of Corniche can't be tracked alongside the saloons, because upgrades and changes to nomenclature were made at different times. The biggest visual upgrade came in 1977, with the Corniche gaining the same 'rubber bumper' look as the new Silver Shadow II, as well as a new lower spoiler, new dashboard and (particularly welcome) rack and pinion steering. The Corniche was not rebranded at this time, despite the amount of advertisements which today refer to these cars as Corniche II.

After the successful launch of the Silver Spirit in late 1980, Rolls-Royce ceased production of the Corniche fixed-head model the following March, bringing to an end one of the company's most exclusive offerings.

The Corniche's interior was distinguished by the inclusion of a tachometer.



All Corniches were built and finished by Mulliner Park Ward, Rolls-Royce's own coachbuilding outfit.







The coupe version of the Corniche was long-outlived by the convertible version, and is still somewhat overlooked.



Corniche may be an exotic word for a coastal road, but for many more people it means the ultimate in luxury motoring.



need more space you can simply switch on the ignition and operate the door-mounted electric mechanism to slide the seat forwards.

In this particular car, the leather is impressively well-preserved, with only a few creases suggesting age-related patina to the dark blue hide. The carpets also appear to be original and genuine, and there's a plaque on the top of each sill to identify the Corniche's association with the London-based coachbuilder. The first impression is of upmarket opulence, with the car being a visual testimony to the coachbuilding skills of Mulliner Park Ward.

Sitting inside the Corniche is familiar territory for anyone used to Rolls-Royces of the early 1970s. There's an array of clearly labelled switches arranged across the dashboard, including one for the cruise control which can be switched on and, when necessary, engaged and resumed. (Switching off involves pressing the brake pedal or flicking the appropriate toggle switch.) There are also controls for switching on a parking light, illuminating either

## "SITTING INSIDE THE CORNICHE IS FAMILIAR TERRITORY FOR ANYONE WHO HAS DRIVEN A SILVER SHADOW FROM THIS ERA"

the left- or right-hand depending on which side of the road the car is on. And, of course, the neat arrangement of Rolls-Royce labelled instruments is housed in a walnut-veneered dashboard of the highest quality, with 83,351 miles showing on the odometer as we clamber aboard.

### ON THE ROAD

A twist of the ignition key in the centre of the dashboard sees the V8 fire into life; and as I make sure my foot is on the brake pedal, the light-to-use column-mounted gear selector is set to 'D' and we're ready to go. There's no sign of lurching or creeping as I release the umbrella-type handbrake lever, and as I press down on the accelerator our progress is calm and relaxed. On

paper, this Corniche could reach 60mph from stationary in around ten seconds when new, though we won't be trying any such antics on this particular drive.

The gear changes are almost seamless as we work up some speed, although the power-assisted steering takes some practice for a first-timer. It initially feels vague and far too light, with seemingly too much rotational play; but then it becomes apparent that I need to relax, avoid over-correcting and let it do its job. I soon begin to tune into what the steering is doing, appreciating that it was designed in an era when light controls were a sign of luxury and high-quality engineering. Compared with a modern classic of similar luxury status, this Corniche demands a much more delicate touch. →





On the road, a Corniche is no grand tourer but there are few better machines to carry you great distances.

All this talk of delicacy is soon forgotten, however, when I decide to properly test the brakes, which prove reassuringly competent at bringing this hefty machine to a halt. Less frantic braking is also effective, without the feeling of fighting against the engine and the automatic gear selection. And, of course, the Corniche's ride quality should also come in for praise, with the self-levelling rear suspension set-up helping to ensure refinement at all times, although the car's handling – especially when cornering at speeds – requires special consideration.

Combine such soft handling with the ultra-light steering mentioned earlier and it almost feels like you're manoeuvring a barge through a gentle corner of a canal; it's controllable,

but naturally not as positive and responsive as a modern vehicle. All of this, however, is something that the Corniche (and original-spec Silver Shadow) owner soon gets used to. Indeed, after just a few hours of piloting this Corniche around some of the twisting B-roads ideally located close to the Classic and Sportscar Centre's headquarters in Malton, North Yorkshire, I find myself enjoying what was a fresh and relaxing experience.

The overall dimensions of the car can take some getting used to, however, particularly the marginally wider rear track, which can easily be forgotten if you use only the front wings for guidance. Those slightly curvaceous and bulbous rear arches don't protrude far, but it's enough to clip a kerb if you're too accurate with

the front.

As with any Rolls-Royce, the Corniche can suffer from a number of major and expensive problems when neglected, with corrosion being near the top of that list. The example we're driving here, however, appears to have no such issues, having received some bodywork restoration – as well as a glass-out respray – four years ago. New inner and outer wheelarches were fitted, along with front and rear valances, prior to that respray – with the end result being a bill for £20,000. There are also receipts within the history file for re-chroming, fitting new front brake discs, renewing some suspension bushes and steering components, a few oil seals (gearbox and diff), as well as replacing several dashboard instruments and one of the electric



window motors. A modern update to the interior is an aftermarket Pioneer stereo head unit with retractable screen, which includes satellite navigation and Bluetooth connectivity.

That's not all, as there are also receipts dating back to 2002 totalling £45,000, covering a list of work that includes an engine rebuild, plus new accumulators, hydraulic pumps, gearbox oil cooler pipes, an alternator and overhauled brake calipers, as well as new rear discs and flexi-hoses. The engine rebuild paperwork lists replacing the seals for the liners, which is perhaps reassuring considering the aluminium engine block uses cast-iron cylinder liners

## "AS WITH ANY ROLLS-ROYCE, THE CORNICHE CAN SUFFER FROM A NUMBER OF MAJOR AND EXPENSIVE PROBLEMS"

that are wet-mounted (cooled), so they can be removed and refitted to ensure they sit sufficiently proud to the top of the engine block and help to seal the two cylinder heads with the aid of the head gaskets. There are also receipts to show that the aluminium cylinder heads were re-faced, something that should be at least checked prior to refitting to ensure they are sufficiently flat.

This particular Corniche also comes with its original factory specification sheets, handbooks and manuals, as well as a service history booklet that starts at 42,680 miles in 1988. The car was originally sold by Lex Mead of Manchester and delivered on January 31st, 1974, with its first owner choosing a list of extra-cost options that included plain Sundym glass throughout, head restraints all round and black lambswool rugs.

At the end of my day at the wheel of this relatively early Corniche, I came away with enormous respect for what is one of the rarer members of the Silver Shadow-based family. The level of finish achieved by Mulliner Park

Ward in the early '70s still impresses, with this example having also benefited from some fairly recent restoration work in order to maintain its excellent condition.

You could, of course, spend substantially less than this car's near-£40,000 asking price on a similarly well-preserved Silver Shadow; but for those who crave real exclusivity, a fixed-head version of the Corniche still manages to offer decent value for money. It may be overshadowed by its convertible sibling in terms of ultimate desirability, but the money saved by opting for the fixed-head Corniche surely makes this a seriously tempting choice – with the added appeal of it being one of the rarer models produced by Rolls-Royce in the 1970s. ■

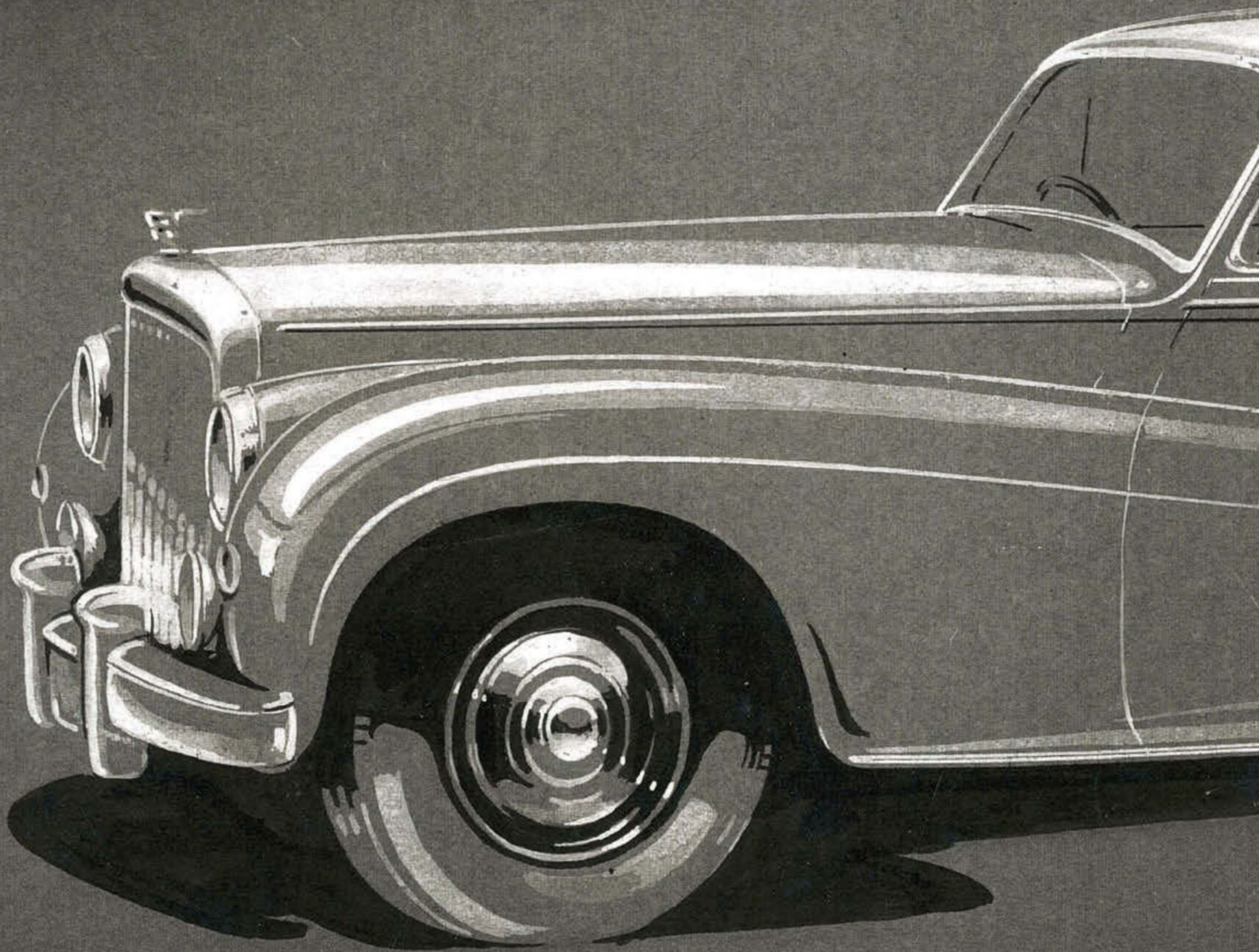
**THANKS** We're grateful to the Classic and Sportscar Centre for supplying the Corniche featured here. For more details of the company's current stock, visit [www.classicandsportscar.ltd.uk](http://www.classicandsportscar.ltd.uk) or call +44 (0)1944 758000



No more power under the bonnet, but as ever the V8 engine is 'sufficient' and so smooth while being so.





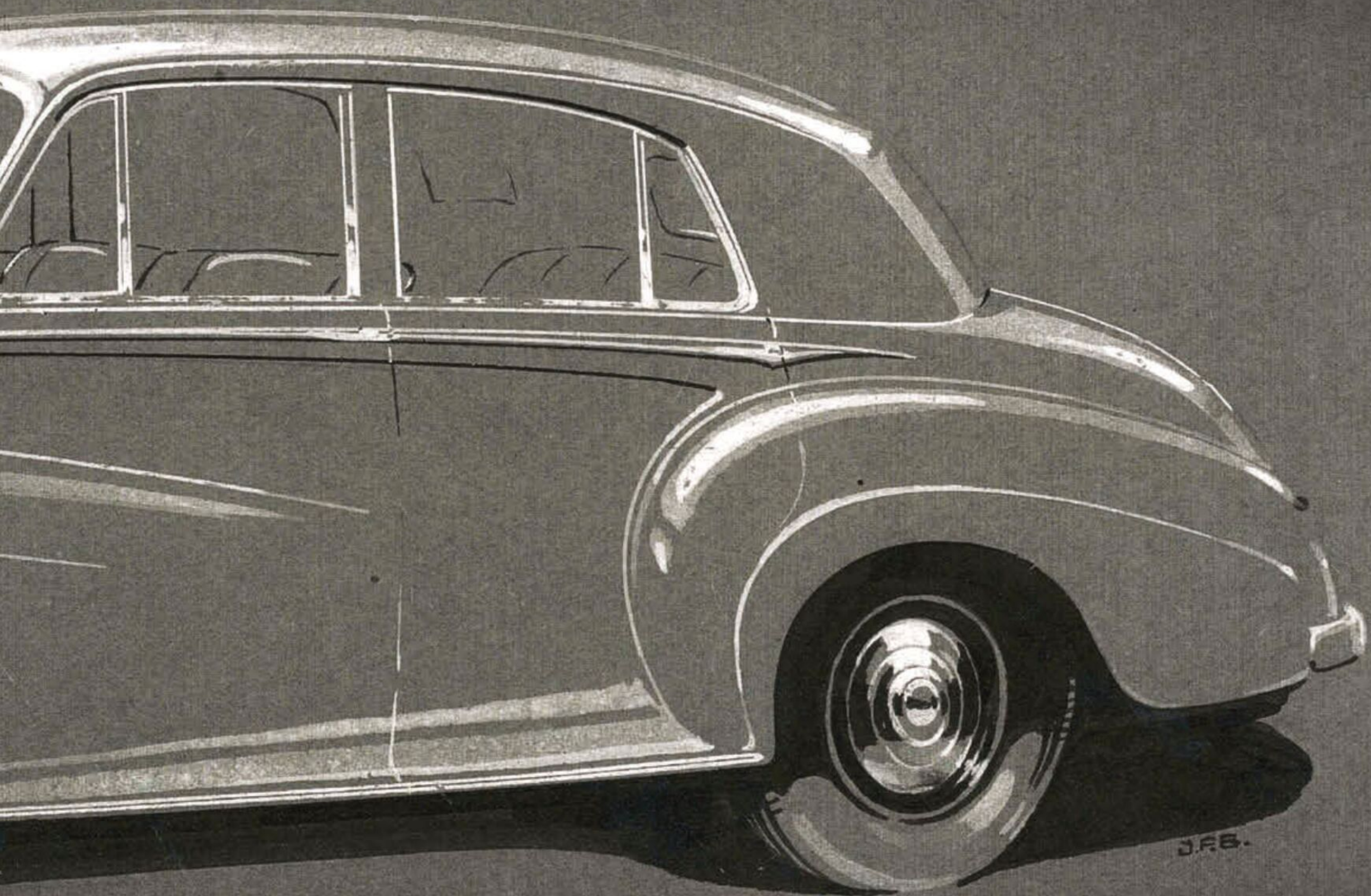


# JOHN BLATCHLEY

*So much of the appeal of the Silver Shadow rests in its looks, which have proved a timeless mix of imposing grandeur, svelte grace and delicate beauty. This was all down to one person: John Blatchley, the shy man of style who played a major part in Rolls-Royce's post-war success*

Words JEREMY SATHERLEY / Photos SIR HENRY ROYCE MEMORIAL FOUNDATION





Blatchley created this drawing in 1951 as the starting point for styling of the Silver Clouds and Bentley S-series.

**B**ack in 1975, General Motors said this of its latest Monte Carlo: 'If your eye, your instinct and your bones tell you Monte Carlo satisfies your taste, trust them'. And although a Chevrolet might seem an unlikely vehicle to deserve a mention in Rolls Royce & Bentley Driver, it serves to answer a point once made by motoring author Graham Robson. It was Robson who stated that despite the impressive development work and chassis detailing that had gone into Crewe's new models of 1955, 'it was a miracle that the Silver Cloud and Bentley S-series went on to sell so steadily and so well for the next ten years'.

Perhaps such success and longevity was down to the fact that these cars satisfied the 'eyes, instincts and bones' of Rolls-Royce customers, not only constructed with superb craftsmanship but also having a sculptured grace devoid of

mainstream styling gimmicks – something that mattered more to many buyers' perception of the marque than the lack of say, disc brakes, space-efficient interiors or cavernous luggage boots. And the man behind that near-miracle was Rolls-Royce's chief body engineer, John Polwhele Blatchley.

Born in Hendon, North London in July 1913, Blatchley spent much of his boyhood drawing cars, something that saw him through a three-year convalescence from rheumatic fever from the age of twelve. Sketching out car shapes helped him to decide upon his future career and, although he failed to get into Oxford University, he graduated with distinction in design studies from Regent Street Polytechnic, to then be offered a job by A F 'Mac' McNeil, chief designer at Gurney Nutting coachbuilders.

A young firm for this kind of work, founded in 1918, Gurney Nutting already held the

royal warrant for commissions from the Duke of York, Duke of Kent and the Prince of Wales. Between the wars, the company and its competitors shared a lucrative market at a time when the likes of Rolls-Royce, Bentley, Alvis or exotic imports such as Hispano-Suiza and Isotta-Fraschini provided just the chassis, and customers shopped elsewhere for their bodywork.

Gurney Nutting had fitted out many Bentleys in the vintage period and were reputable practitioners of Weymann construction (which reduced stresses by allowing felt-insulated coachwork joints to flex in sympathy with the chassis) and stunning sedanca coupé styles, notably on some of the Delages appearing at Olympia Motor Shows during the 1930s. John joined the Lacland Place, Chelsea firm in 1935 and made his mark with such creations as a roadster body for the Maharajah of —→



Indore's Duesenberg. Having taken the brief, the procedure would begin with Blatchley producing 1:16 scale drawings for the customer's approval, then progressing them to full-scale equivalents from which the craftsmen beat out their artistry. Well aware of John's potential from the start, boss McNeil had every confidence in him, and when 'Mac' left to join James Young in 1936, 23-year-old Blatchley succeeded him as Gurney Nutting's chief designer.

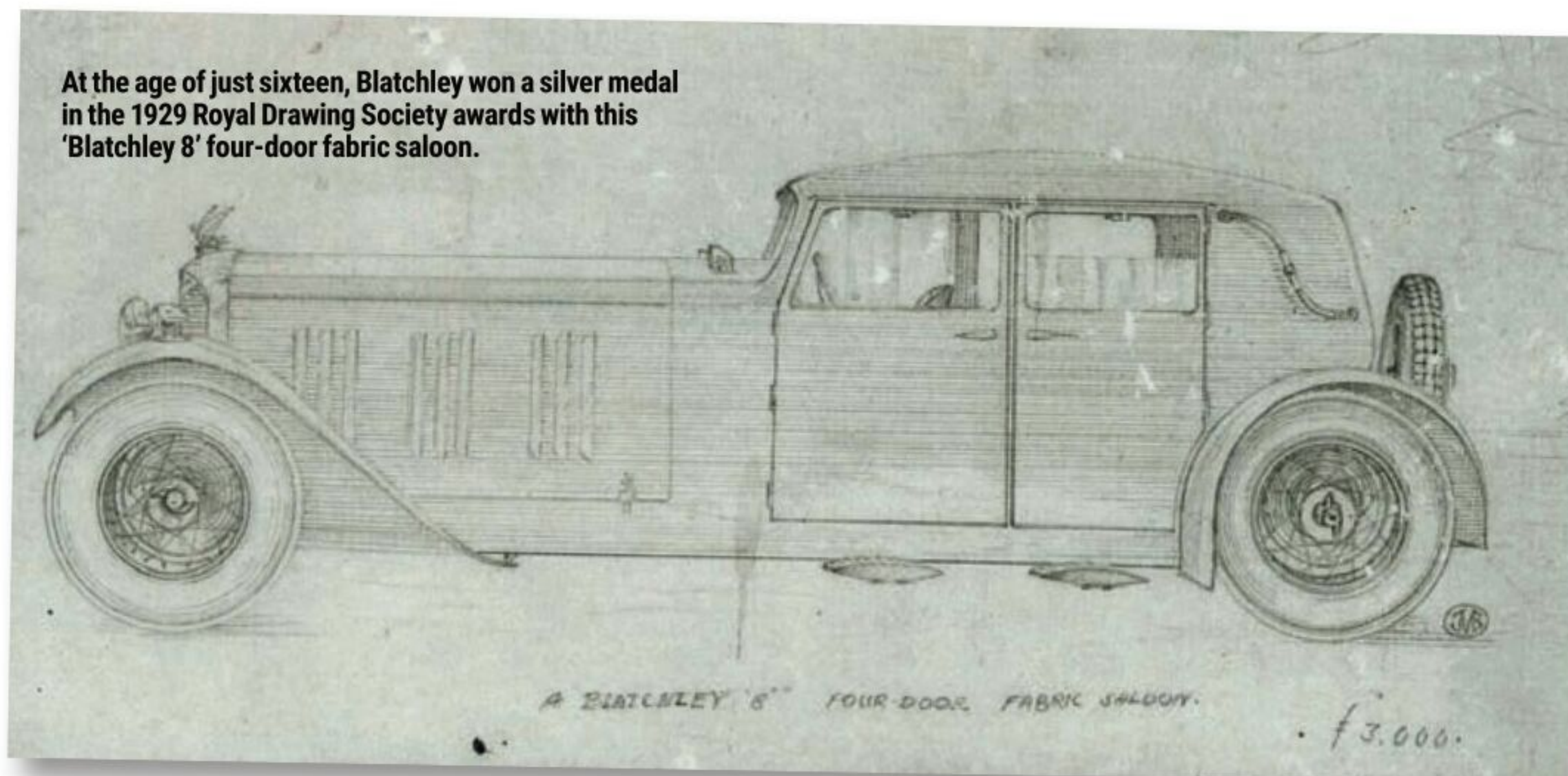
Inevitably, coachwork commissions dried up at Lacland Place with the outbreak of war. Precluded from active service by a heart murmur and hoping to keep within the motor industry, Blatchley joined Rolls-Royce, but he must have wondered if he'd backed the wrong horse. Despatched to the company's aero division at Hucknall, he was put on designing engine cowlings for aircraft such as the Bristol Beaufighter and Avro Lancaster bomber. Worthy though this occupation was, John found the experience boring and "the most miserable of my working life. I hated anything to do with aeroplanes!" It must have been doubly frustrating for him to learn of the establishment in 1944 of a styling department under Ivan Evernden for the company's post-war cars, at the Clan Foundry in Belper. Eventually, after much pestering, he got himself transferred the following year.

## JOINING THE CLAN

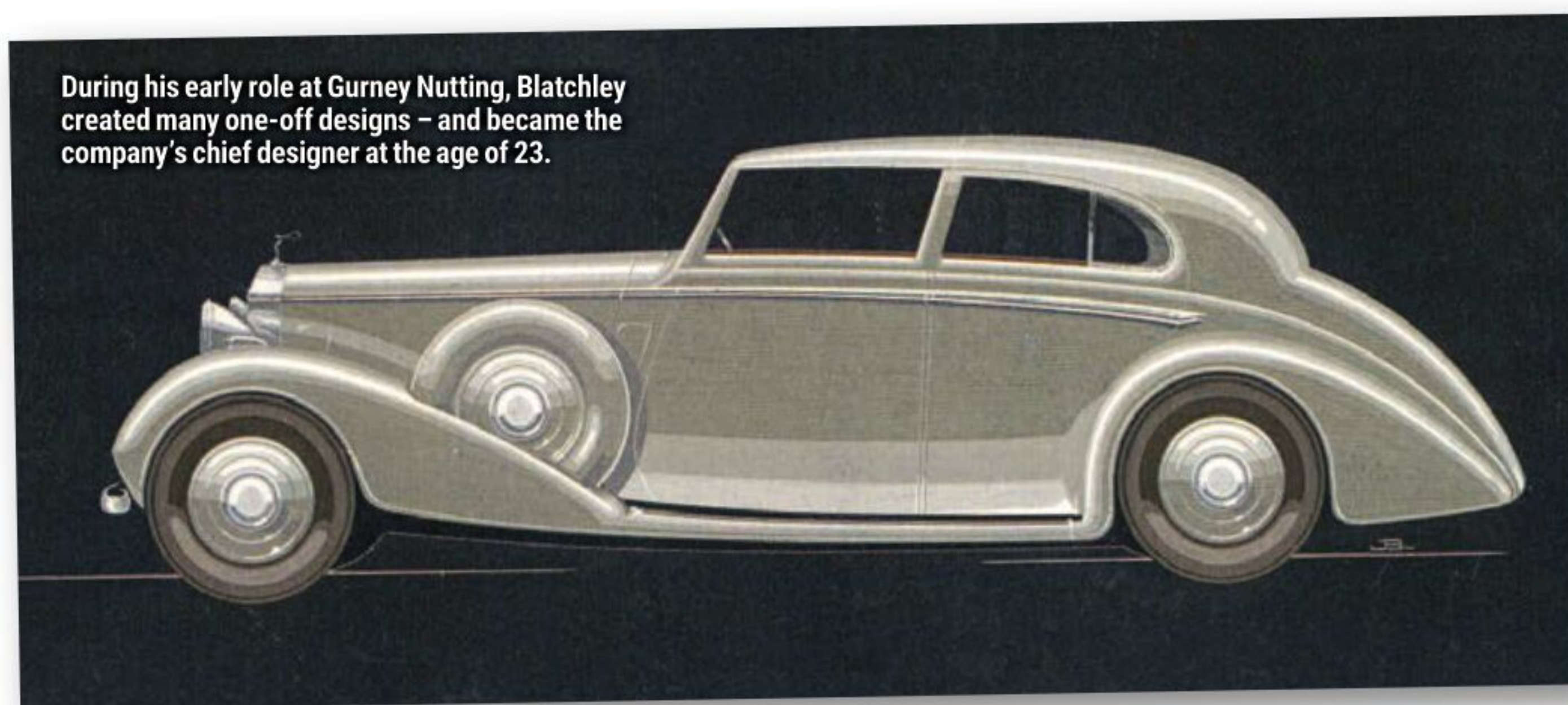
No state-of-the-art studio, the Clan Foundry alongside the A6 was a motley collection of blackened, forbidding-looking workshops which had originally produced fireside fittings and manhole covers. After this activity ceased in 1938, the premises were leased by Rolls-Royce as part of its wartime overspill plans, and it became an important centre for aero-engine repairs, development work on the Cromwell tank (for which the Merlin engine was successfully adapted), the evolution of other military engines and a host of vehicle research projects. The whole operation was overseen by W A Robotham – 'Rm' in office-memo parlance, but familiarly known as 'Rumpty' – from whose house a squash court had been removed and set up at the Clan to form the floor area for a design office.

By the time Blatchley stepped into these makeshift surroundings, the Bentley MkVI was already in working-prototype form – and he wasn't entirely happy with it. This was, after all, a milestone model for the company: their first to be supplied complete with a 'standard steel' body. "They had a prototype but nobody there had a clue about body design," he recalled. "My first job was to put a little finesse into it – it had no elegance at all. I had to make something that would be stamped out by the thousand look like a craftsman-made motor car. I also had to completely design the interior – seats,

At the age of just sixteen, Blatchley won a silver medal in the 1929 Royal Drawing Society awards with this 'Blatchley 8' four-door fabric saloon.



During his early role at Gurney Nutting, Blatchley created many one-off designs – and became the company's chief designer at the age of 23.



## "MUCH EFFORT HAD GONE INTO CREATING SOMETHING THAT LOOKED LIKE A RESPECTABLY UP-TO-DATE POST-WAR CAR, FREE OF ANY VISUAL EXCESSES"

dashboard, everything".

The 'little finesse' that John applied, such as eliminating the prototype's exposed door hinges, smoothing things out here and there and giving it a decent interior, resulted in a much-liked model. Appearing in May 1946, it continued with little external alteration until October 1952, when John substituted a more sweeping tail to create the R-type. Meanwhile, the MkVI style was adapted with a mere change of grille for a Rolls-Royce Silver Dawn version, appearing in 1949, initially as export-only to markets like the USA where Bentley was less well-known than its sister marque.

The Dawn kept pace with Bentley changes up to 1955, apart from a single Stromberg or later Zenith carburettor instead of twin SUs. If you still wanted a bespoke Rolls-Royce however, you could order the identically-engined, longer-wheelbase Silver Wraith chassis for despatch to what remained of the dwindling coachbuilding industry. The Bentley chassis could also be farmed out in this way, although the number of customers taking this option post-war was very small, fully justifying the *raison-d'être* for the

Standard Steel MkVI.

Other late-1940s projects in which Blatchley was involved were more exploratory and experimental, but no less intriguing for that. There was the four-cylinder Junior, for instance, a 14hp car that had already been built with a pinched-looking Park Ward body when John arrived. It looked very '1939', which may have explained Blatchley's sketch for a more modern frontal treatment with faired-in headlamps and side grilles. From the side it bore strong traces of MkVI, but its narrow grille and modest length made it look more like a Lanchester. Although bearing a 1946 registration, it wasn't proceeded with – and in any case, John would not have approved of its exposed door hinges!

Blatchley was more deeply involved with styling exercises for models beyond the MkVI, such as the Bentley Farnham (a large, straight-sided car with a gaping, fan-shaped grille bodied by Abbott) and the Park Ward Bentley Estoril, an amalgam of contemporary Buick-like bulk and Healey-esque grille. In both cars, particularly the Farnham, could be seen the likely proportions of the Silver Cloud. He also worked



One of John Blatchley's early post-war projects was this 1946 restyle of the proposed four-cylinder Junior.



JUNIOR CAR. - J1 MK.1.

on a two-seater sports concept named the Bentley Blizzard; whether this was conceived before or after the Jaguar XK120's appearance is unknown, but it certainly had spats and a similar wing-line and sidelamp treatment.

## CONTINENTAL CREDIT

A final Foundry project was the original (and to many, best-looking) Mulliner-bodied Bentley Continental. Conscious of what he was capable of, it could well have been attributed to Blatchley, but he was at pains to maintain otherwise: "Evernden gave me some credit for it, but I don't feel it's right. I had some early input, but it's how you struggle with the realities, all the calculations to make it work, that counts." Nevertheless, his initial drawings as part of Evernden's brief to "develop a car not to only look beautiful, but possess a high maximum speed" clearly showed a handsome fastback commitment from the start.

The challenge must have been to avoid the result looking 'too Detroit'. Over 1948/9, General Motors had come out with a range of attractive two- and four-door fastback styles and, as John admitted later, "it was difficult not to be influenced by the American cars, and I was particularly amazed by the Cadillacs". His artistic input apart, Blatchley was believed to have participated in wind-tunnel testing of a quarter-scale model, indicating he was included in the Continental's technical shaping process, finalised, it is suggested, by Stanley Watts.

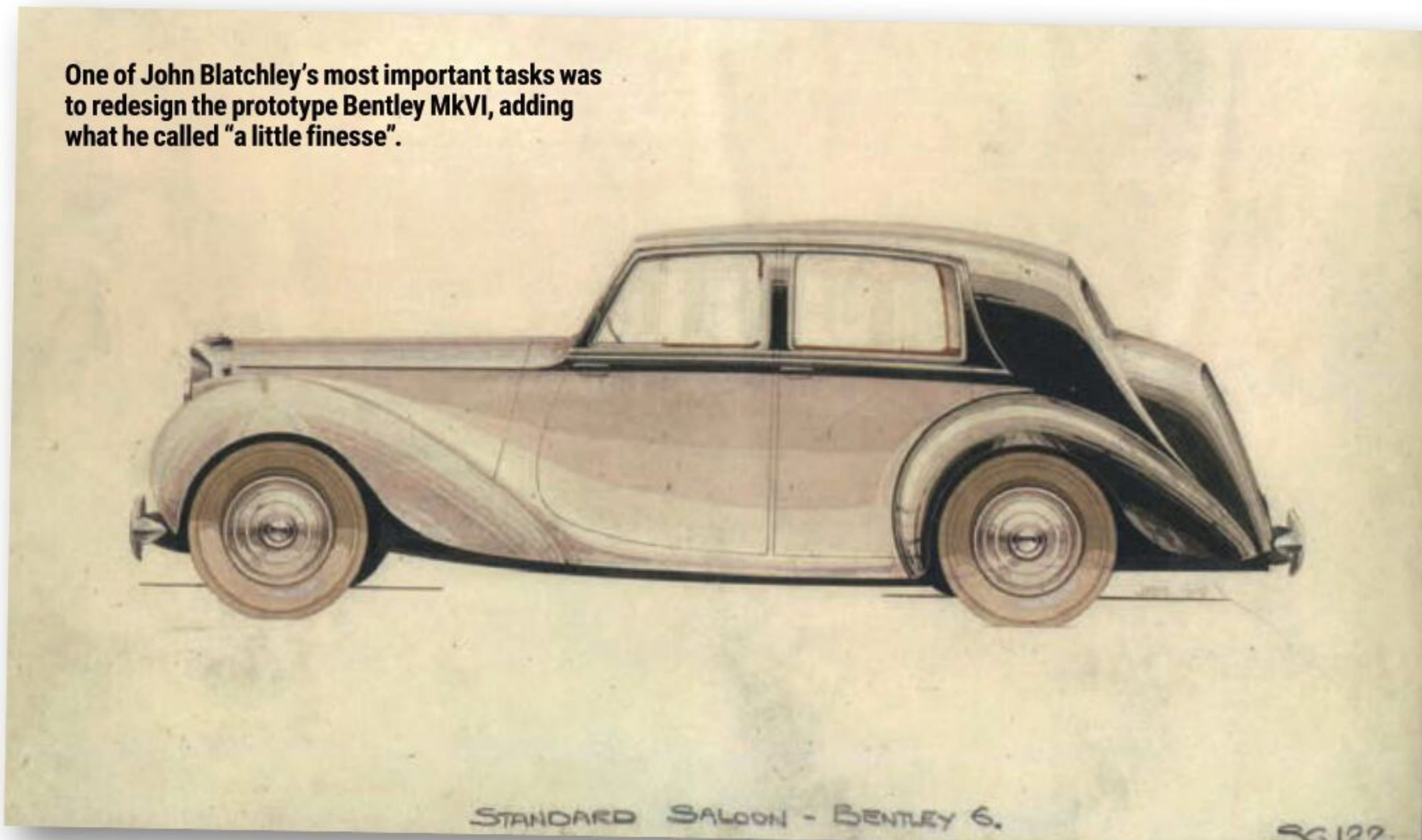
With the closing of Clan Foundry in 1951, the move to welcome new offices at Crewe and Ivan Evernden's departure to other duties, Blatchley's career moved up a gear with his appointment as chief styling engineer. The following year he also assumed responsibility for styling at Park Ward coachbuilders, a Rolls-Royce subsidiary since 1939, an early outcome being his crafting of their R-type Continental. Another two-door coupé, it was a notch-back interpretation this time, with a squarer tail. Later on, a further Blatchley success with Park Ward would be the Phantom V/VI limousine, which eventually

bowed out after a 33-year run in 1992 as one of the last purpose-built, properly-proportioned limousines amid the emergence of the graceless 'stretch'. Meanwhile, there was more significant fish to fry, with work on the R-type and Dawn's successors.

## TEN-MINUTE WONDER

Blatchley and his small team of Cecily Jenner and Bill Allen clearly didn't hang around, for the 'Siam' project – destined to become the new Silver Cloud and S-series – had begun in the closing years of the Clan Foundry. →

One of John Blatchley's most important tasks was to redesign the prototype Bentley MkVI, adding what he called "a little finesse".



STANDARD SALOON - BENTLEY 6.





Derived from the Bentley MkVI was the Rolls-Royce Silver Dawn of 1949-on, initially launched as an export model.

## “THE MKVI WAS ADAPTED WITH A MERE CHANGE OF GRILLE FOR A ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER DAWN VERSION, APPEARING IN 1949 INITIALLY FOR EXPORT ONLY”

Working drawings and supporting artworks dating from 1950 already suggested a Cloud glasshouse and rear section, but featured a more straight-through, flush wing-line from the rear doors forwards and ending with headlamps set in the front wing extremities. Much effort had gone into creating something that looked like a respectably up-to-date post-war car, free of any visual excesses. Yet the result, presented to the top brass in 1951, was rejected as ‘too modern’, as Blatchley recalled: “So I was asked to do a quick sketch of something more traditional, more in keeping with the Rolls image, which I did in about ten minutes. It was taken into a board meeting and they decided to make it there and then”.

With a last-minute fashioning of full-blown, sculpted front wings, headlamps set closer together and a sharper roof and window

profile, the ten-minute wonder embarked on a ten-year production run from April 1955 in both Rolls-Royce and Bentley forms. “The best thing I ever did,” was how John later described his handiwork. The styling was altered subtly only once, for the Silver Cloud III and Bentley S3 models in October 1962, when twin headlamp units were successfully grafted on together with a lower bonnet line, squarer-edged front wings and repositioned flasher and sidelight units.

### NEXT GENERATION

By the time those Series III cars appeared, Cloud and S-series sales were falling off, although plans were well in hand for the succeeding models. Indeed, a planning programme had begun several years earlier, with much chopping and changing along the way before a timeless style and size common to both Rolls-Royce and

Bentley versions was agreed on. For Blatchley, the responsibility he first felt when preparing the MkVI for a discriminating market must have intensified ten-fold with the prospect of the Silver Shadow and Bentley T: “Styling this car was very much an architectural exercise... the specification demanded it be lower, narrower and shorter with more luggage space, and a bigger petrol tank. My biggest challenge was getting all this paraphernalia, plus passengers, into a car that still looked right”.

Coded ‘Tibet’ (for the Rolls-Royce) and ‘Burma’ (Bentley), the prototypes emerging in the late 1950s and early ‘60s reflected the original proposal to make the Bentley the smaller of the two. Photographs taken at this time show that the general shape of the final cars, with their flush sides relieved only by a waistline crease, was already well on the way, albeit sporting pleasant but ‘dateable’ semi-wraparound screens and reverse-angle rear door windows. Of the two, the 1961-registered Burma looks more ‘together’ and closer to the size of the final concept, although its neat execution of a grille with surrounds encapsulating quad headlamps might have raised a hackle or two. “Everything except the doors had been altered” during this





development period, remembered Martin Bourne, who'd joined Blatchley's team in 1959. "Hardly a day went by when some small detail of its appearance wasn't being considered".

While these deliberations were going on, Rolls-Royce was hedging its bets by collaborating with BMC over adapting one or two of the corporation's models as possible candidates for a high-volume Bentley, using Crewe's 4.0-litre, six-cylinder F60 engine. Thus began, as a kind of sub-plot, a series of design studies with Blatchley's department, from a mild top-and-tailing of the Vanden Plas Princess 3-litre (coded 'Java') to accommodate a Bentley grille between stacked quad headlamps, through to 'Java 3' featuring a smaller interpretation of the gestational T-series shape. Other attempts, such as the 'Bengal' and 'Rangoon' (scale models based on the proposed Austin 3-Litre shell) came to nothing when it was realised that attempting to disguise the hoi-polloi Landcrab origins with a virtually reworked body was a costing impossibility. Of these studies, only the 1964 Rolls-Royce-engined Vanden Plas Princess 4-Litre R reached production reality, although it proved to be rather unsuccessful – hardly justifying —→



From left to right: Cecily Jenner, John Blatchley and Bill Allen. The three-person styling team behind the post-war Rolls-Royces. They are working on what would become the Phantom V.



The revised look of the proposed S-series and Silver Cloud was created by Blatchley in just ten minutes – and was approved without delay.



The Silver Cloud III showed how Blatchley's efforts were transitioning from the stately pre-war design standards to the more streamlined, full-width designs that would lead to the Silver Shadow.





So brilliantly timeless was the styling of the Silver Shadow, it managed to remain in production for an impressive 15 years.

BMC's optimism to produce 100 per week. It has been claimed, however, that Rolls-Royce learned some useful lessons on unitary construction from the collaboration.

### POSITIVE REACTION

"Smaller, roomier, lighter, swifter" was trilled by Daily Express motoring correspondent Basil Cardew's response when the Silver Shadow and T-series finally appeared in October 1965. The brief of lower, narrower and shorter with greater accommodation had been answered absolutely, within an almost linear but softly-edged shape that owed little to stylistic whims. It tastefully cloaked Rolls-Royce's most technically-advanced specification to date, in arguably the firm's most significant concept since the Silver Ghost.

Borrowing the works-demonstrator T-series (famously registered 1900 TU) in 1966, Bentley Drivers' Club president and patron Stanley Sedgwick recorded: "I accepted the design of the body for what it was. I liked it and I think the S-types really did look dated beside the car. The

more I saw of the car, the more I considered it better-looking than any of its contemporaries". Better-looking enough, in fact, to remain in production for 15 years and achieve nearly 32,500 combined Rolls-Royce and Bentley sales – double the number of Silver Clouds and S-series. And that doesn't include the drophead Corniche, originating from Blatchley's beautiful work on the Mulliner Park Ward two-door Fixed Head Coupé version of the Shadow in 1966, and which remained in production until 1995.

### HONOURABLE RETIREMENT

The MPW coupé was, in fact, John Blatchley's swansong. The genial discussions he had long enjoyed over styling decisions – "never a single voice raised in anger" – with managing director Dr Llewellyn-Smith and chief engineer Harry Gyrlls evaporated with those two gentlemen's retirements in 1968. Succeeding management proved more abrasive, as Martin Bourne recalled: "An utterly pointless exercise prompted by one of the newcomers to 'tart up the Shadow's back end a bit, can't you?' fortunately came to

nothing, but slowly and surely John's world was beginning to crumble around him". Blatchley himself termed it "a horrible period", with everything having to go before "endless committees" and proliferating red tape. So at the age of 55 he quietly walked out, to retirement in Hastings.

Although always self-effacing, John Blatchley was not forgotten by his staunch admirers. Honoured by the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club, he was not only made a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Coachmakers and Coach Harness Makers in 2005 – the first car designer ever to achieve this status – but was approached by BMW in 2002 for his opinion on their relaunched Phantom. "BMW showed me their possible designs," said the then 89-year-old. "There was literally only one I thought was any good, and it's the one they've built. I think they've done a marvellous job".

It's often said that the most famous or notable British cars have tended to be those bearing the stamp of one personality. Blatchley, one of the last of a breed before the era of design by



## “PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN AT THIS TIME SHOW THE GENERAL SHAPE OF THE FINAL CARS, WITH THEIR FLUSH SIDES RELIEVED ONLY BY A WAISTLINE CREASE”

committee, was just such a person. In contrast to the brutish bulges and scowling front ends of some of today's styles, his work stands out as a natural appreciation of proportion and balance that achieved just the right blend of studied elegance. Even in the latest Phantom saloon, we still see subtle acknowledgements to the Silver Cloud in the 'edge' to the front wings, the slant of the rear window and the raised profile of the bootlid. Lasting proof, if any were needed, that for John Blatchley it was indeed “the best thing I ever did”. ■

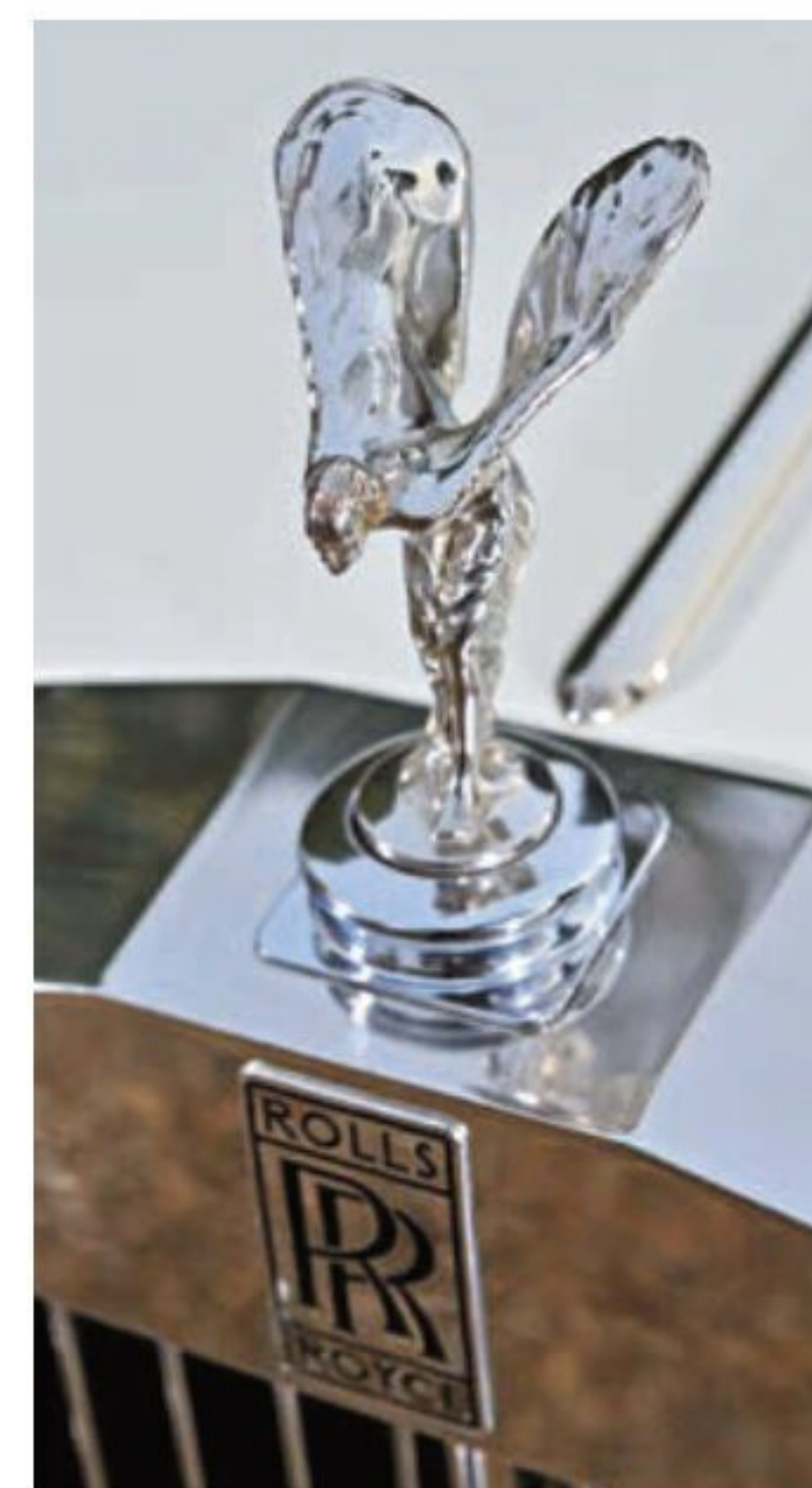
This was the first prototype of the convertible version of the MPW two-door, photographed here in December 1966.



The Silver Shadow-based Mulliner Park Ward two-door coupe of 1966 proved to be the last design before John Blatchley's retirement from Rolls-Royce.



The Silver Shadow was intended to meet new rivals like the big Jaguar, and it certainly did that - and more!



# UNITARY PURPOSE

*These two luxury saloons both employed state-of-the-art engineering to provide the best luxury motoring thought possible in the 1960s. Now more closely rivalling each other than ever, which should you buy?*

Words **AARON MACKAY**

**M**any of those who would have bought a Rolls-Royce in the 1960s wouldn't have even considered the Jaguar MkX. For the Crewe loyalists, comparisons would have been considered crass. But until 1965 comparisons would have revealed that the company long heralded as the one by engineers for engineers was being eclipsed in motor vehicle technology

by the renegade William Lyons with his latest Jaguar. It was time for a latest Rolls-Royce. Introduced in 1965, the new Silver Shadow featured the new engineering and design to keep it on top of its game, crucially its unitary construction. Strangely enough, the Rolls-Royce sold just as well as the Jaguar and over a period five years longer than the MkX's nine-year production run. More than 30,000 Rolls-Royce

Silver Shadows found customers. Today, a much smaller proportion of the Jaguars made remain so that while enthusiasts have a wide range of Silver Shadows to consider, a MkX buyer will have to be a bit more patient. These are the factors that have brought the values of these two cars closer together than ever before. So, if you are looking for a classic luxury car with impressive engineering and design





The Mark X was Jaguar on a new scale and with a new style. It seemed to offer as much as a Rolls-Royce for a third of the price.



features, should you spend your £15,000-£30,000 on the timeless Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow or the vast Jaguar MkX?

## ENGINEERING ADVANTAGE: JAGUAR

Certainly the Silver Shadow is the more complex car underneath. The tip of this engineering iceberg is its hydropneumatic self-levelling suspension. In fact, not only did Rolls-Royce ditch the pump and ram for the front axle because it was found to be unnecessary, but owners of the pre-1969 models have lately removed them just so the system can go wrong in fewer ways. This is reassuring given that the brakes also use the same system. The Silver Shadow was the first Rolls-Royce to employ a hydraulic servo rather than the mechanical servos on previous models. The brakes themselves were strong which was important not particularly for the performance given by the 6.2-litre pushrod V8 or even the later 6.75-litre version, but for the kerb weight of over two tonnes.

However, thanks largely to the new unitary construction, the Silver Shadow weighed a massive 762kg less than its Silver Cloud predecessor, although that's still 167kg more than the Jaguar MkX. The 6.2-litre V8 had been given only light revisions since its use from the 1959 Silver Cloud II, notably better access of the

## “THE JAGUAR MAKES ITS TALENTS KNOWN MOST CLEARLY ON THE ROAD, WHILE THE SILVER SHADOW CAN IMPRESS LONG BEFORE YOU EVEN TURN THE KEY”

spark plugs which were now above the exhaust manifold. In performance terms, it's outgunned by Jaguar's 3.8-litre XK engine in the MkX. In the same basic state of tune as in the XK150 3.8S and E-Type sports cars, it featured two overhead cams, a straight port head and three SU HD8 carburettors. In 1965 the 4.2-litre was made available and while it apparently made no more power, the torque increase from 260ft. lb to 283ft. lb lower down made a big difference in drivability. For more relaxed driving, it's definitely worth seeking the 4.2-litre models out. It was only in 1970 that Rolls-Royce enlarged their V8 to 6.75 litres, but the performance gains merely rebalanced the additional weight of the later cars and never got the Silver Shadow close to the Jaguar's acceleration.

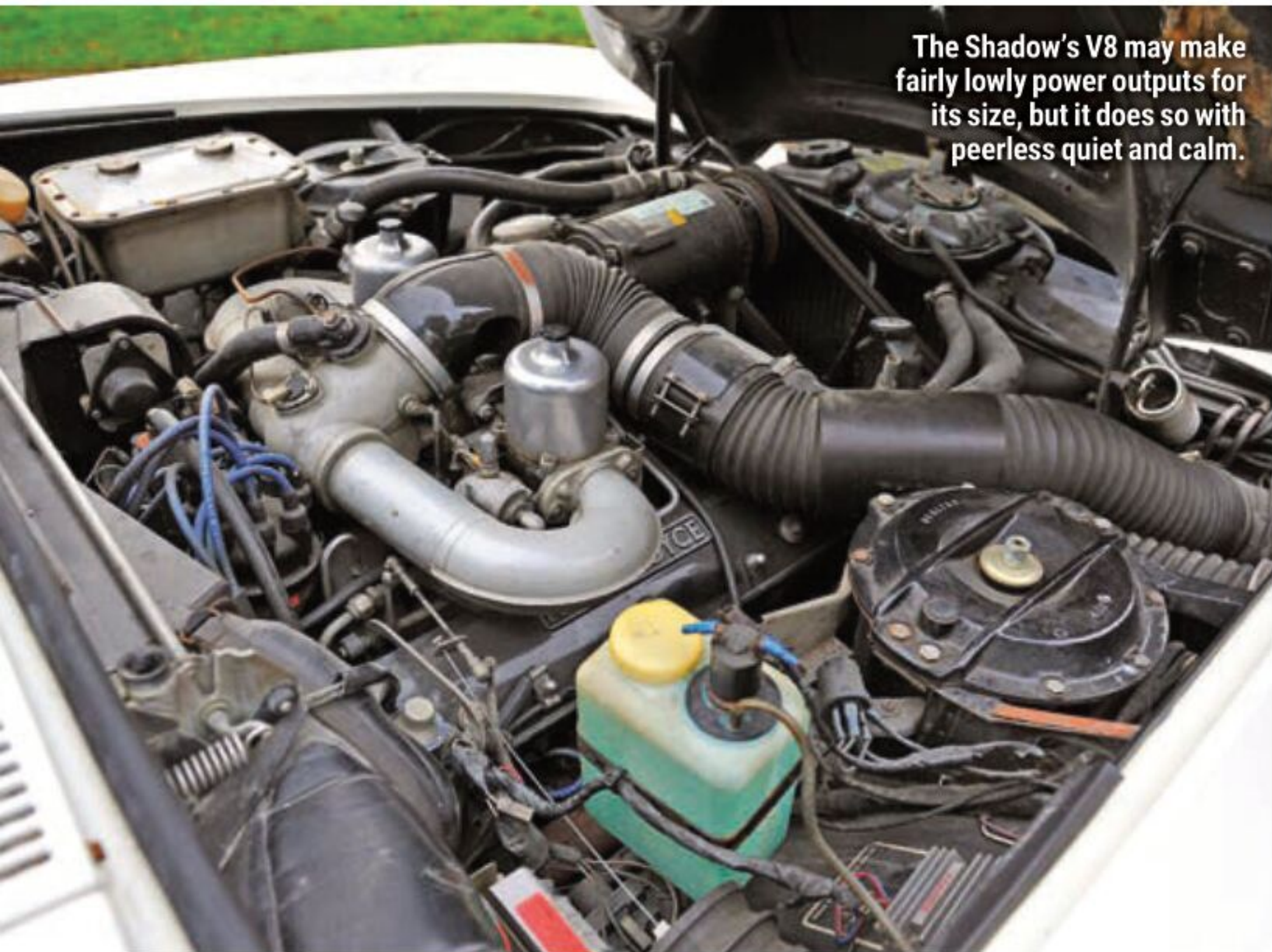
The Jaguar's ride and handling is another way in which Coventry beat Crewe. Even with the front anti-roll bar fitted, the Silver Shadow simply can't match the lithe agility of the MkX. The Rolls-Royce, now with independent suspension all round on front

and rear subframes, rides well but can lurch about uncouthly if driven above even the most leisurely speeds, inviting complaints from swaying passengers and squealing tyres far earlier than you might expect. The Jaguar is much more dynamically talented. Its suspension, employing a wider version of the E-Type's independent rear end, is just a few good dampers away from being the perfect blend of comfort and stability. It's by no means simple, but it manages to achieve much greater results with far less complexity than the Rolls-Royce.

## LATER IMPROVEMENTS

As well as the desirable 4.2-litre engine, later Jaguar MkXs received variable power steering which varied from 21.5:1 at the straight ahead to 13:1 when turning. This makes the car much more pleasant to manoeuvre. Gearboxes for the 4.2-litre cars were also improved, offering smoother and less obstructive changes, while the last of the line 420G models enjoyed revised interiors that could now include optional —→





The Shadow's V8 may make fairly lowly power outputs for its size, but it does so with peerless quiet and calm.



The famous XK6 is a better racing engine than a luxury motor, especially in 4.2-litre form. It's potent but raucous.

air conditioning.

1969 finally saw the end of Rolls-Royce's rather clunky automatic gearbox as it was then replaced by the smoother-shifting three-speed automatic from General Motors, a unit already fitted to export models. Radial ply tyres were fitted in 1972 and two years later these became lower profile. The Silver Shadow II came out in 1977, given more improvements including: a new rack and pinion steering system, revised front suspension geometry, and a freer flowing exhaust system with twin pipes to compensate for more restrictive H1F carburettors.

DESIGN  
ADVANTAGE: NONE

The MkX is wider than the Silver Shadow and even the earlier Silver Cloud. That dominates your impression of it whether from inside or out, although it still manages to look rather well proportioned. Its side profile is particularly attractive, its low-slung roofline and drooping shoulder line making it seem longer than the Silver Shadow, even though it isn't. Of course, the MkX is the genesis of the now famous quad-lamp nose and it seems fitting that it hasn't even been displayed larger than this since.

The Silver Shadow is a masterful exercise in trimming down the excesses of Rolls-Royce design while keeping its presence. It's over 200mm shorter, 70mm narrower, and marginally lower than the old Silver Cloud. Decoration was kept to a minimum and, although later models' polyurethane bumpers do look a little incongruous, the car enjoys an almost timeless look today. Like the Jaguar, it has helped that its basic design was used as inspiration for models into the 2000s.

Opening the doors of a Silver Shadow is just like any other Rolls-Royce before it, with a satisfying click and weighty feel despite their being made of aluminium. Opening the Jaguar's is more of an event. The sloping-up

sill and widthways curvature of the doors are suggestive of the chassis' sporting origins. Both enjoy the benefits of unitary construction with lower than otherwise floors and a good amount of space, although the Jaguar's rakish roofline cuts into the rear headroom a bit.

LUXURY  
ADVANTAGE: ROLLS-ROYCE

Both have vast dashboards inlaid into wooden trim, deep and wide seats trimmed in leather, and even the picnic tables for the rear passengers that seem to get so many people excited. The difference between the two is small but decisive. As you'd expect, the Rolls-Royce wins here simply on the basis of its quality of materials and attention to detail. It's not just the richness of the leather or the depth of paint, but the little things like the way the switchgear clicks with a honed precision, or how even the ashtray feels expensive enough to be sold separately. In this way, the Rolls-Royce is in a class of its own, but you knew that already.

VERDICT

It's a tricky one this. The usual argument remains true that the Jaguar is probably the best to drive and the Rolls-Royce is more special to be driven in, but there are more factors at

play here. You may notice that I've been careful with my words. The Jaguar is, in fact, the better riding and more stable car, therefore arguably the most comfortable for passengers. However, while it certainly has plenty visual drama, it's still not quite a Rolls-Royce. The Jaguar makes its talents known most clearly on the road, while the Silver Shadow can impress long before you even turn the key.

You can buy either of these for £15,000, £20,000 or £30,000. However, while you'll really have something special on your hands for £30,000 in the Jaguar's case, you're only just getting into the rarefied heights of Rolls-Royce perfection at this point. You can spend much more, especially for the special coachbuilt models. A Silver Shadow can also cost you more to run than a Jaguar MkX, but specialist support is comprehensive and there are far more enthusiasts to discuss your Rolls-Royce ownership with than those for the much rarer Jaguar MkX.

If you're considering either, you can't go that wrong. Buy the best 4.2-litre MkX you can or a Silver Shadow with some of the later refinements and you'll have a very special luxury car with all the benefits of modern engineering. For this writer, it's behind the wheel of the Jaguar he'd rather be – not behind a picnic table. ■

TECH SPECS		
MODEL	ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER SHADOW II	JAGUAR MKX 4.2-LITRE
ENGINE	6750cc V8	4235cc straight-six
POWER	189bhp	265bhp
0-60MPH	11 secs (est)	9.9 secs
TOP SPEED	116mph	114mph
ECONOMY	13mpg	14mpg
BUY ONE FOR	£12,000-£50,000	£10,000-£25,000

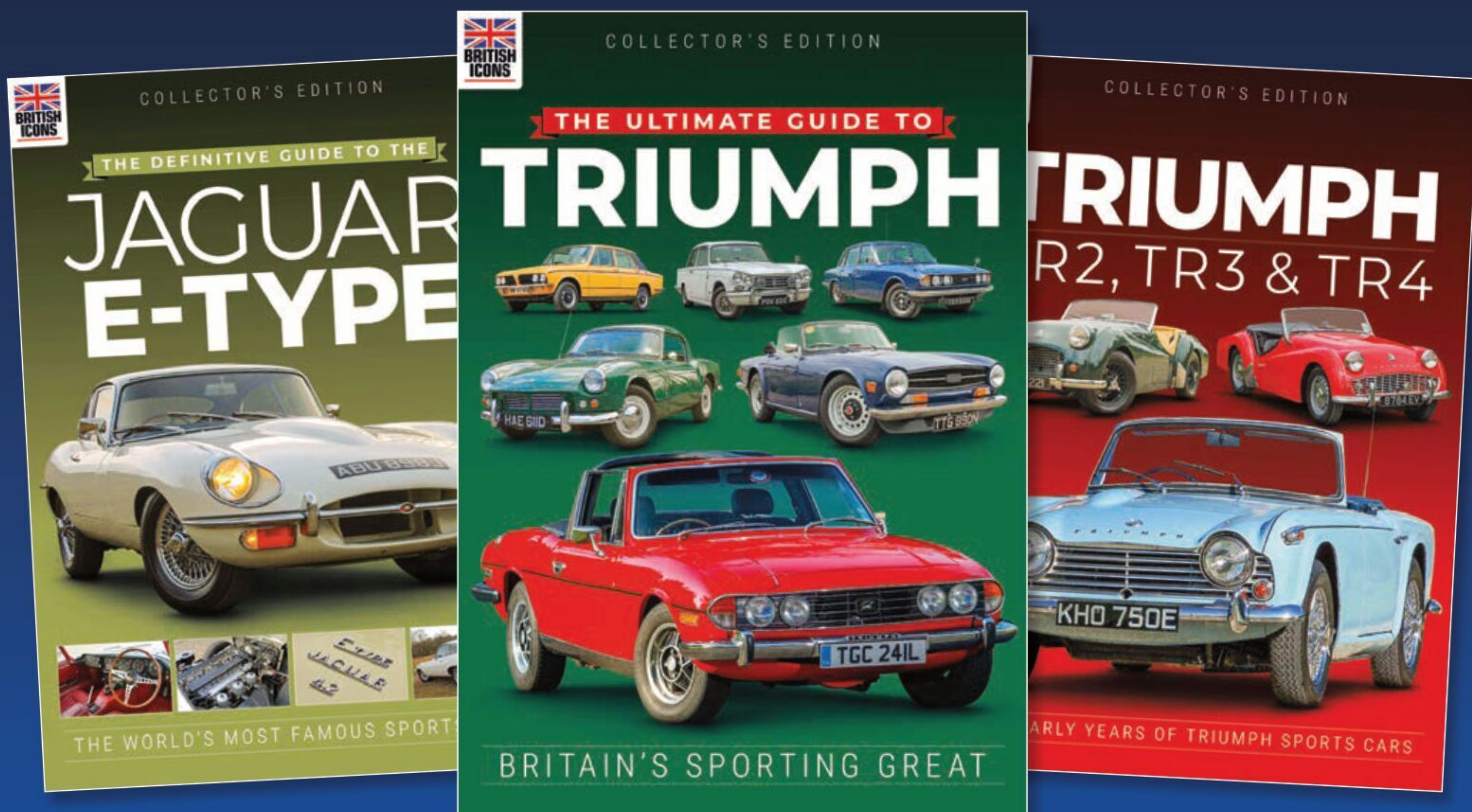


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At a stroke the Silver Shadow redefined what a Rolls-Royce could be, and it went on to define an entire era as the pinnacle of luxury motoring for a world swept up in glamour, celebrity, aspiration and rock-and-roll. Justly described as 'The Best Car In The World', the Shadow was also a more modern and accessible sort of Rolls-Royce - one that could (just possibly...) be bought, run and driven like any other car. That not only helped make the Silver Shadow the most successful Rolls-Royce ever made but an enduring object of dreams and desires for over 50 years. Whether its the imposing but graceful looks, the exquisite luxury of the interior, the fanatical attention to material quality, its unmatched ride comfort or its innovative engineering, the appeal of the Silver Shadow is as timeless as the Spirit of Ecstasy itself.

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