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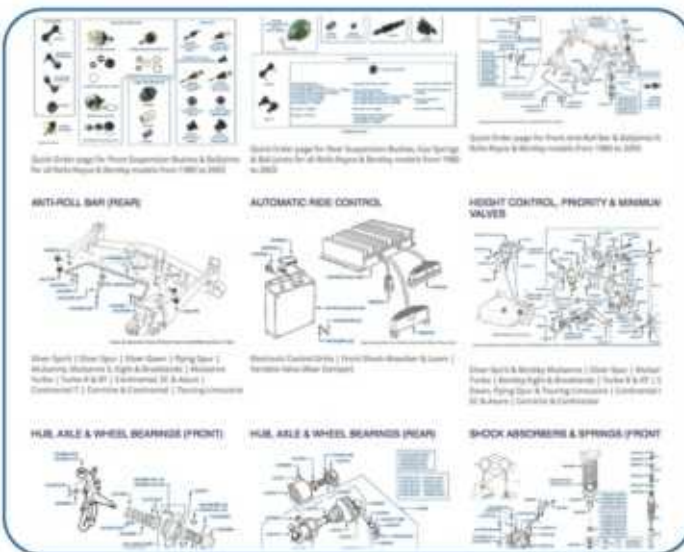
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Welcome

Welcome to the first issue of Rolls-Royce and Bentley Driver, the new magazine devoted to the history of these two great marques.

Primarily, we look at the cars produced while these two companies were firmly linked, though as you'll see overleaf, there's far too much either side of that relationship to ignore entirely. We have a detailed look at the life of Sir Henry Royce, examine vintage Bentleys at VBE Restorations, and sample a Bentley Arnage Red Label – produced during the difficult transition as the two companies began to head in different directions.

This has been a very enjoyable magazine to put together, and owners, specialists and clubs are a large part of the reason why. We're tapping into a very enthusiastic world, and it's a joy to see. So, we've got a section for the clubs to let you know what they're up to. We're pleased to have the RREC and BDCL on board from the UK, and special guests the RROC in America. We know owners exist all around the world, and will be attempting to cover this global fan base.

The choice of lead feature was an easy one. To me, the Silver Cloud remains one of the most classy designs ever to emerge from Crewe. It's been fascinating to compare with the Bentley Arnage, a direct descendant with the same famed V8 engine – albeit in a rather different state of tune. Similar in some ways, yet so very different too, each perfect for its time.

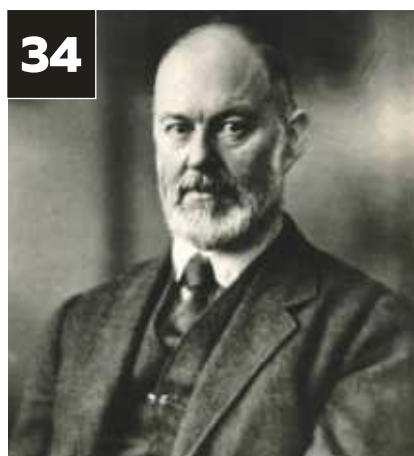
I hope you enjoy the magazine. Please do let us know what you think, and hopefully we'll see you at one of the events this summer.

Ian Seabrook

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CONTENTS

6 NEWS

Phantom Duo up for grabs.

10 ORIGINAL CLOUD

Driving a one-family beauty.

18 BUY & OWN Mulsanne

Get yourself a great Bentley, for minimal hassle.

24 FIRST-TIME TEST

Our writer's first RR encounter, with a Silver Wraith.

32 PRODUCTS

New and essential items to buy.

34 SIR HENRY ROYCE

The life of the great engineer.

40 TIME FOR AN ARNAGE

We sample a Red Label.

48 VINTAGE BENTLEY WONDERLAND

Behind the scenes at VBE Restorations.

54 PRE-WAR RUBBER

What are the correct options for your pre-war car?

62 ENGINE EXAMINATION

We take a detailed look at the mighty L-Series V8.

70 BUYING FOR A BUDGET

What does £20,000 actually get you?

76 THE CLUB HOUSE

See what the clubs are up to.



80 THE END OF THE LINE

What happens to a dismantled Rolls-Royce?

86 FROM THE ARCHIVES

A look through the past, via promotional material.

92 THE SHADOW YEARS

Exploring the changing face of company and cars.

96 THE BIG PICTURE

Back to 1927 at Le Mans, for a surprising victory.

98 THE FINAL PAGE

Editor Seabrook sums up his thoughts on Rolls-Royce and Bentley.

10



18





The delightful highlights of a new collection for sale – Phantom II, Camargue, Arnage T.

REMARKABLE COLLECTION FOR SALE

A remarkable collection of Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars has come up for sale in the East Midlands, consisting of a stunning pair of Phantom IIs, an immaculate Camarge and a pair of Bentley Arnage Ts.

The collection is being sold by Landspeed, a garage business fronted by Discovery TV presenter Paul Cowland and fellow TV star Adam Hornby, as they have been appointed by the estate of notable collector Harry Prew-Smith. Prew-Smith was the owner of Exclusive Cars in Nottingham, until his death in 2014.

Paul says, "Harry was well known in all sorts of club circles, from Routemasters to Rollers, as a guy that had the best of everything. All of the cars have been maintained regardless of cost, as in addition to being his collection, most were used as a wedding hire fleet."

Arguably the most interesting items are the pair of Wilkinson-bodied Phantom II Tourers – one a 1929 and the other from 1931. Both have acquired plenty of RREC rosettes in their time, yet when Prew-Smith purchased them, they had Jagaur XJ engines fitted.

"Harry tracked down the original engines [35 and 45] and, at huge cost, had them rebuilt and reinstated. They both drive as you'd expect – perfectly," says Paul. "We're interested in offers around £100,000 each."

Another beauty is the 1976 Camargue. Paul says, "This has led a cosseted life as Prew-Smith's own toy. No wedding work for this one. It had been repainted gold at somepoint, so Prew-Smith had the car stripped back to bare metal, then repainted in the correct shade of green. It drives like new and is very unmolested, with a perfectly patinated interior."



The second Phantom, also a Wilkinson-bodied Tourer. There's another Arnage T too.

We'd like £33,000 for this one."

Finally, replicating the pair of Phantoms is a pair of Arnage Ts. "They're both from 2002," explains Paul, "so they're the last of the proper 6.75-litre Crewe Cars. One is absolutely mint, has covered 58,000 miles and is up for £27,000. It was often used as Mayoral transport in Nottingham. The other has covered 112,000 and has an asking price of £23,000."

The cars are all based at Landspeed's new headquarters in Netherfield, Nottingham and are available to view and drive. For more details, contact Paul directly on 07973 236240.



Wonderful steering column detail on one of the Phantoms. Gorgeous.

SMALLEST EVER ROLLS-ROYCE!

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars has built its smallest car ever, the SRH. Built specially for the St Richard's Hospital Paediatric Day Surgery Unit, the tiny Rolls-Royce has been designed so children can drive themselves to the operating theatre, reducing stress levels at this time, for children and parents alike. Pictured is 'test driver' Hari Rajyaguru, who was part of a team carrying out important pre-delivery inspection checks at RR HQ.

"We are a proud member of the community here in West Sussex. The Pediatric Unit at St Richard's Hospital, Chichester does such vital work in providing essential care to young people and their families," said Torsten Müller-Ötvös, CEO, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars. "We hope that the Rolls-Royce SRH will serve to make the experience for young people during treatment a little less stressful."

Below: An important test drive of the smallest Rolls-Royce.



MARKET OPINION

Rolls-Royce enthusiast and auctioneer Justin Lazic gives his thoughts on the market.

A SPIRIT – BUT NOT AS YOU KNOW IT

There are few models which span such a value range as the Silver Spirit and its derivatives – all 30 of them.

This was amply demonstrated when Anglia Car Auctions sold a 1996 Silver Spirit (colloquially but not officially referred to as a Spirit IV) for a premium-inclusive £20,737 on 28th January. This followed SWVA selling a 1985 Bentley Mulsanne for £2160 a day earlier – believed to be the lowest ever price for an MoT-carrying Rolls-Royce/Bentley at a mainstream classic car auction in the UK. Both cars have 6.75-litre engines which are naturally aspirated, and both were made in the same factory using broadly the same materials.

Yes, the Spirit is injected rather than carburetted and it has a 4-speed automatic transmission rather than the earlier 3-speed GM transmission, but these are incremental differences in the grand scheme of things. The real insight into these large price variations is how skilful Rolls-Royce were at revising their models with subtle deftness to ensure that year-to-year the changes were imperceptible, but over a long period they became more apparent.

If you park a Spirit III or IV next to a Spirit I, which in this case the Bentley Mulsanne effectively is, there are a number of direct visual changes which

become immediately apparent for a model that shares the same chassis and outer panel pressings. Chromed disc-style alloy wheels first appeared on Spirits in the 1990s and these markedly contrast with the more fluted and matte finish of the Bentley alloys, which were first-generation for the marque.

SUBTLE CHANGES

Door mirrors were relocated in 1995 to flush-fit where the front window quarter glass had been previously, and were an integral unit to the door rather than sprung on a rotational pivot known for wobbling at speed. These new mirrors were also chromed but could also be had in body colour – another first. The Bentley's vinyl roof was a likeable homage to another age but with tastes changing, contemporary views saw to it that a body-coloured steel roof was the order of the day, excepting the long wheelbase Spur models.

The 1985 Mulsanne still retained the earlier style rear seat bench rather than the attempt of rear bucket seats which the Spirit IV effortlessly combined with optional electric adjustment, which was not a standard options-list selection until well into the 1990s.

It gets even more interesting in the front seat department, with 1985 being the last year of the mandatory manual front seat back adjustment, which actually is quite a pleasant action but nonetheless not entirely qualifying for a claim of "fully electric" seats. The Spirit IV has full power seat adjustment with four memory settings per front seat occupant.

A number of induction upgrades had gifted the later Spirits with more power than the earlier models but these "ease of use" features combined with more updated and streamlined styling, such as a smaller hood ornament, do make a Spirit IV look and feel like more than just a facelift of the earlier models, to the point where they do attract a considerable price premium than earlier examples.

In spite of these conditions, the Spirit IV has prospered to the point where the Anglia example at nearly £21,000 is approaching recent market prices for equivalent mileage Seraphs – an impressive display given the relative production numbers and length of offering. And yes, mileage and servicing do play a part in realising final values – but only against direct competitors, for example one Turbo R versus another.

In comparing the very last of Rolls-Royce's longest ever factory-bodied production saloon car to the first, we can learn what is arguably the finest legacy of RRB in the post-war years: its ability to deftly improve without isolating those who had bought one for life in an earlier year.



Purity of Spirit I and Mulsanne yet to find favour in classic circles. Values are temptingly low as a result.



The last of the Spirits are still commanding a premium. Anglia Car Auctions sold this one for £20,737 inc premium.

RREC ANNUAL RALLY

This year's RREC Annual Rally sees the club celebrating its Diamond Jubilee. From eleven enthusiasts in 1957, the club now boasts over 8500 worldwide.

The club's flagship event, the Annual Rally and Concours d'Elegance, will see one of the largest gatherings of Rolls-Royce and Bentley Motor cars, when it takes place at Burghley House, Stamford on 23-25th June. From pre-war cars to current models, there will be a vast range of vehicles on display. The event is members only, but surely that's just another great reason to join the club. More at www.rrec.org.uk



The RREC celebrates its Diamond Jubilee at Burghley House in June.

BDC SUMMER RALLY & CONCOURS



Expect a wide range of Bentleys on display at the BDC Summer Rally.

June really is the month for main events, as the Bentley Drivers' Club will be holding its own annual event on 18 June, based at Sudeley Castle & Gardens in Gloucestershire – a building with a fascinating history.

The main Concours will take place with the castle and gardens forming a dramatic backdrop, with judging to begin at 11am. The club is keen to point out that the rally is not just for 'serious trophy hunters,' but that every member with a Bentley has an opportunity to win a prize, with classes for patina and a 'ladies choice.'

The BDC Competitions Committee will also be organising a Motoring Gynkhana 'to gently test man and machine.' Bentley Motors itself will have a Bentayga on hand, for gentle off-roading tests and closer examination.

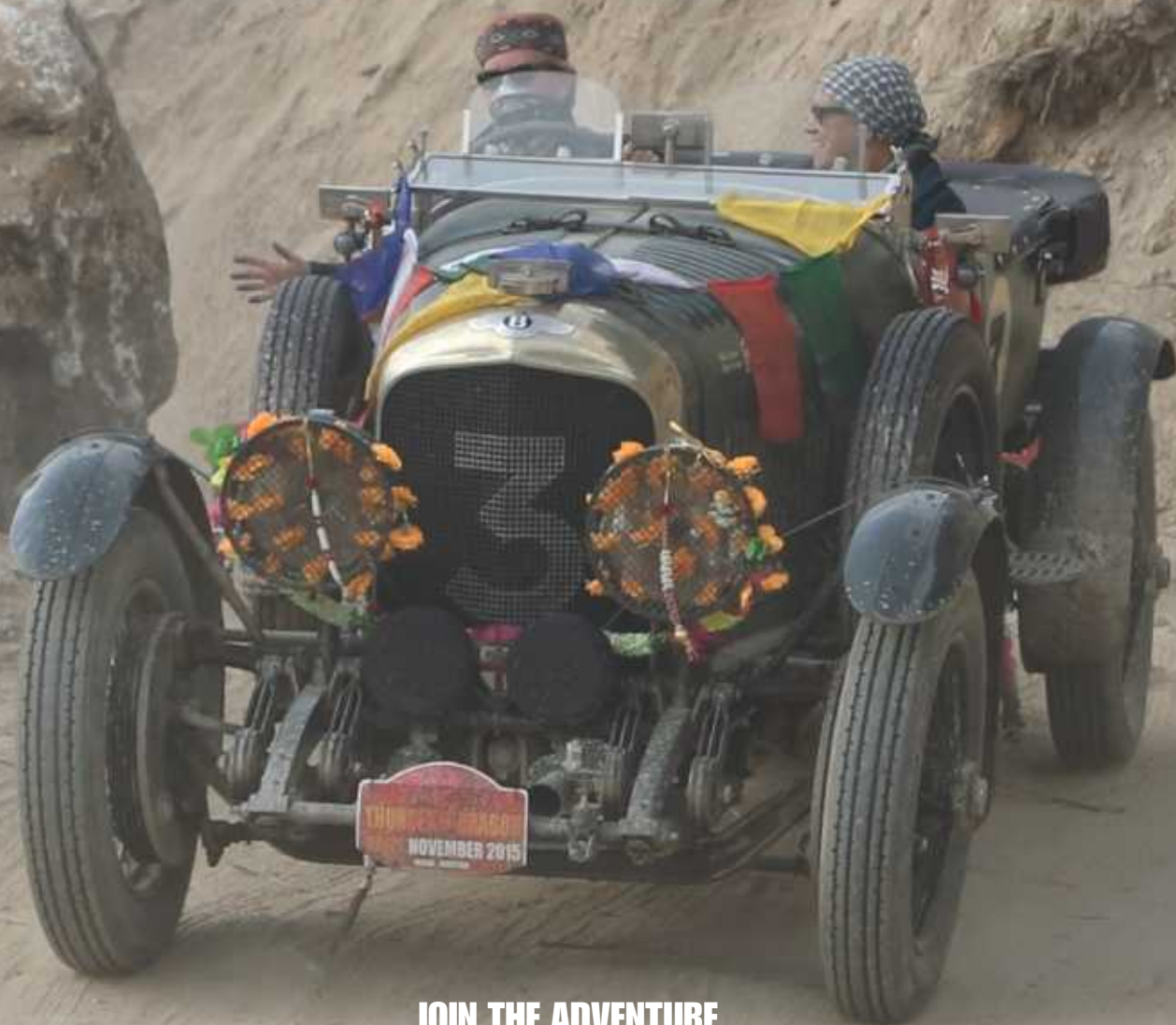
Non-members are welcome to attend, though pre-booking is preferred and will save you £10 on the gate price. Call Alexandra in the Club Office on 01295 738 886 or visit www.bdcl.org where you can find a booking form.

DISHEVELLED SHADOW

When we visited the Practical Classics Classic Car & Restoration Show, 31st March to 2nd April, we were astounded by the lichen-coated Silver Shadow in the Barn Finds section. Owned by Chris Pearson, it has been parked up since 1984 on a farm as the previous owner found it attracted too much attention. It attracts even more now! Photos by Darran Rungasamy.



Where do you start restoring a Shadow like this?



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• DRIVEN •

SILVER CLOUD II

We find a highly original, thoroughly beautiful Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud, and consider whether the II is the best of the breed.

WORDS: IAN SEABROOK PICS: MATT RICHARDSON

The post-war era was a challenging one for Rolls-Royce. While the development and production of the Merlin and Meteor V12 engines, for aero and tank applications respectfully, had kept the company busy, the return to car production could have been problematic. Austerity was raging in Great Britain, with war having left the cupboard bare. There were also societal changes, and Rolls-Royce saw a new kind of buyer. A chauffeur was no longer an essential part of Rolls-Royce ownership, and buyers were also increasingly keen to hand over cash and take a car away. These new buyers didn't want to go to the trouble of recruiting a coachbuilder to finish things off.

The Silver Dawn of 1949 marked Rolls-Royce's response, with the Wraith moving upmarket to offer the traditionalists something of comfort. But, with its standard steel bodywork, the Silver Dawn was the first car built fully-finished by Rolls-Royce.

The very similar Bentley MkVI was a strong seller, with more than 5000 sold. Of these, over 80% featured the standard steel body. By contrast, the Silver Dawn sold in very small numbers – a mere 761. However, both cars were looking rather dated – a little too much like warmed-over pre-war designs. That

was ok in the late 1940s, but positively unfashionable by the early 1950s.

So, Rolls-Royce turned to in-house chief stylist, John Blatchley, who had joined the company during the war years. He had proved his worth with the Silver Dawn and MkVI, where he had crafted the interior and ensured the door hinges were concealed. This is hardly surprising, for he had studied his craft at noted coachbuilder Gurney-Nutting. In fact, he became chief designer there at the age of just 23.

CONTINENTAL STYLE

His first sketches for the new Rolls-Royce were deemed a bit too radical, though he carefully filed these away for use later – these were the first thoughts along the lines of the Silver Shadow. Instead, Blatchley managed to beautifully bring some traditional style to a more modern design. The Silver Cloud was born. It was clearly influenced by the Bentley Continentals by HJ Mulliner, with similar rounded wings falling somewhere between the increasing tastes for full-width styling, and the flowing, separate wings of the past. Similarly, the wingline continued down to a notable 'hip' ahead of the rear wheel, before rising over said wheel, and tapering down to the rear. »



Interior ambience is quite magnificent, with plenty of quality materials.



'Upside down' speedometer, Right: Woodwork as exemplary as you'd expect.



Interior is actually quite snug and the Cloud feels far narrower than it actually is.

The Cloud II hides its mechanical revamp well. This example is Sand over Sable.



The retention of a separate chassis meant the Cloud sat high, giving driver and passengers a commanding view. The width and length of the flowing rear styling gave a great boost to luggage space at the same time.

The curved, raked windscreen also helped mark the Cloud out as a leap forward into a new age. Blatchley's style was also very nicely proportioned. It didn't look as ponderous as some cars of this era. Conversely, the thick C pillar was an obvious nod to earlier designs, and gave some privacy to rear seat passengers.

With its enlarged 4887cc, six-cylinder, inlet-over-exhaust engine, the Cloud could hit the magic ton, despite compulsory automatic transmission. The new car comfortably outsold the Silver Dawn by some considerable margin – 2238 finding homes in four years of production.

MAKING THE GREAT EVEN BETTER

The old engine was rather running out of potential development, however. America was falling in love with the V8 engine, a configuration rarely seen in the UK. Despite this, Rolls-Royce would engineer its own fine V8, the fabled L-series – an engine which, in much-modified form, is still in production today.

Effortless power was the order of »



Rear seat is particularly cossetting, with obligatory picnic tables (above) mounted in the front seats.

DRIVEN SILVER CLOUD II

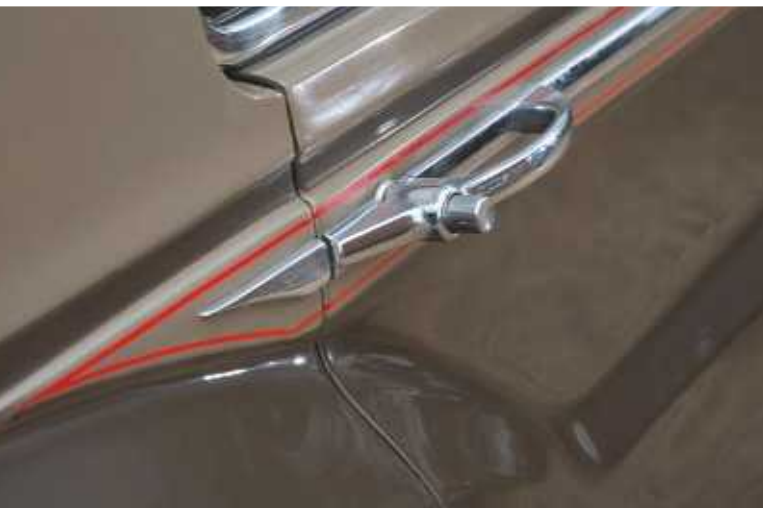
the day, so the massive leap in capacity – up to 6230cc – was accompanied by a generous, but not ridiculous leap in power. It was no struggle at all for this new powerplant to put out the 180–200bhp it is thought to have had, at under 5000rpm too. It was all about the torque really, which allowed an 11% increase in gearing for

the Cloud II. That made it even more relaxing, yet able to hit 115mph. Over one second was whisked from the 0–60mph time too – now 11.5 if one felt churlish enough to make an attempt.

The new engine was a rather tight fit in the engine bay, and pity the poor unfortunate tasked with replacing the spark plugs. They were fitted

beneath the exhaust manifolds. Not that this was of any great concern to the occupants, who could just enjoy the refined performance, though at a slight increase in fuel consumption.

The styling was not subject to great change. Why meddle with what has been proven satisfactory? Another 2417 eager buyers purchased short-



“The styling was not subject to great change. Why meddle with what has been proven satisfactory?”





wheelbase Cloud IIs, making this the most commonplace of the Clouds. Yet, it has taken these Clouds longest to find favour, with enthusiasts seeming to prefer the perceived purity and comparative simplicity of the Cloud I, or the tweaked four-lamp styling of the Cloud III, with its clear link to the upcoming Shadow. But has the wider world been missing a trick?

'OUR' CLOUD EXAMINED

Sold new in November 1959, the featured Cloud was one of the earliest with the V8 engine, just two months into production. The build record shows a number of potential owners before a Mr G Paterson of Norwich finally took delivery. Clearly, the car found a happy home, for it remained in the property of this family until coming up for sale this year. The car passed to Mr A Paterson in 1987. By 1968, the Cloud had covered 57,000 miles, to which a mere 7000 had been added by 1987. During our test drive, we took that total to a touch over 67,000, so the Cloud has been enjoying semi-retirement for some time. The history file contains a wealth of bills from Mann Egerton, with more recent work carried out by Ghost Motors, who have the car for sale today. In 2012, over £14,000 of work was carried out, »

L-Series V8 is a tight fit under the Cloud's bonnet.



Tool kit and jack remain in place.



DRIVEN SILVER CLOUD II

including a full service, replacement of one of the heater matrices and rechroming of the brightwork.

That seems to have been largely it as far as restorative work goes. The Cloud retains a delicious, highly-original air, with the tan interior being a fine match to the Sand-over-Sable exterior. This really is a fine looking car, and one that feels ready for use. Those with a keen eye will have noticed that the wipers are parked incorrectly. It didn't escape our notice. During a test drive, the park function did not seem to be operating, but a brief switch to fast speed and back restored function, though only after the photographs had been taken. We suspect this isn't a car that has seen an awful lot of rain. This detail may not seem hugely important, but this writer never misses an opportunity to focus on windscreen wiper related matters. Don't pity me. I've always been like this.

Returning to the more important facts of the car, the engine fires up in that lazy, relaxing manner and settles

John Blatchley's shape blesses the Cloud with an enormous boot.



“...a remarkably pleasant car to drive, and one you could pilot in modern traffic without a hint of bother”



**Enormous Cloud
feels surprisingly
small on the road.**



to a very smooth idle. Power steering was, thankfully, standard fitment on the Cloud II, and it makes manoeuvring effortless. A gentle prod of the throttle encourages progress and a gentle burble is all you can hear of the engine. The GM-licenced transmission is not the first word in refinement, with changes definitely perceptible, if not always hugely noticeable. What you do feel is that great wall of torque that allows speed to build surprisingly rapidly, with no great effort. Be as crude as to give the throttle a shove and the Cloud will lift its nose and gather pace more abruptly, though never with anything like the growl of later incarnations of this engine. In the Silver Shadow, more attention was given to the carburettor specification, but here, smoothness is very much the king.

The steering requires close attention, lacking the direct, easy feel of a rack-and-pinion set-up, but it's amazing how narrow the Cloud feels from the wheel. That's entirely at odds with reality – it is a full three inches wider than a Shadow. It somehow doesn't feel it though, perhaps due to the lofty perch.

THE POWER OF DRUMS

The main surprise comes from the brakes, which simply do not feel of this era unless you include the revolutionary Citroën DS. The stopping power is remarkable, albeit only once you're

moving at a good pace. The initial application of the brake pedal in reverse can be somewhat daunting, thanks to the mechanically-driven servo. Power comes from the transmission, so you must be moving forwards for the necessary boosting effect. Of course, the brakes must be good when you consider the 2000kg of car that could need stopping from 115mph. Even so, drums rarely feel quite so reassuring.

Overall then, this is a remarkably pleasant car to drive, and one you could pilot in modern traffic without a hint of bother. It is a car that attracts entirely the right sort of attention too. It is graceful, not flamboyantly ostentatious. For me, this really is the perfect Cloud. I adore the earlier lines, but have a huge soft spot for a V8 engine. It makes for truly effortless motoring.

This is certainly a very fine car that is well worth a closer look, we suggest. Cars that have not been through restoration can be all the more appealing for that, and originality is not something that is easily reproduced. An appealing display of Blatchley's art for sure. ■

1959 Silver Cloud II

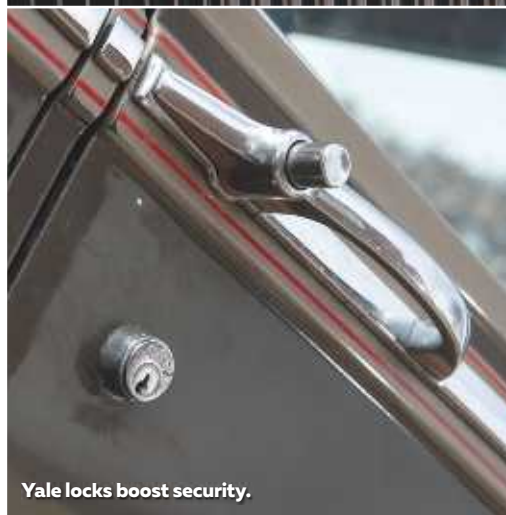
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• BUY & OWN •

BENTLEY MULSANNE

It isn't just the mighty Turbo R that should be of interest from this era. The humble Mulsanne, and the many derivatives, are also well worth exploring.

WORDS: IAN CUSHWAY PICS: KELSEY MEDIA ARCHIVE

Work on a replacement for the Bentley T-series and Roll-Royce Silver Shadow range, initially referred to as the SZ generation of Bentleys, started back in the mid 1970s, using the floorpan and running gear from the existing model, but with radical, sharper styling courtesy of Fritz Feller. In truth, Feller was a forward thinker and more of an engineer than a designer – and that perhaps explains why he chose to ditch the rounded, more classic features of its predecessor.

The new Mulsanne finally broke cover in 1980 with the same V8 powerplant as well as several engineering developments already

tried out on the Camargue and Corniche previously – most notably a revised suspension lay-out introduced on the latter a short time prior to the new saloon's introduction.

Despite the fact that both the Rolls-Royce Silver Spirit and its Bentley variant were identical, save for a few trim details, and even shared the same price tag (£49,629), uptake for the Bentley variant was disappointing. After 12 months, against a total of 3014 Silver Spirits, just 151 Mulsannes found new owners. In light of such devastatingly poor sales results, Bentley hatched a plan to reverse its fortunes. The strategy was to distance the Mulsanne from the Rolls

by reinforcing its sporting heritage – and to do that, it needed an ace up its sleeve in the performance stakes.

MODEL CHANGES

Enter the model that was to mark the firm's renaissance, the Mulsanne Turbo, unveiled at the Geneva Motor Show in 1982.

Featuring the same 6750cc V8 with a Garrett T04 'blower' grafted on, power was raised by 50 per cent. Well, that was the official line – in real terms that meant an increase from around 200bhp to approximately 300bhp with a proportional kick up the posterior in terms of acceleration

and top speed to go with it.

The 'poverty spec' Eight was announced in 1984 at £6000 less than the Mulsanne, with less equipment to lure younger buyers, and an even hotter Turbo R model with a hefty 328bhp on tap and beefed up suspension appeared in 1985. A host of other improvements, including a new dash, were implemented across the range at about the same time.

In 1987 Bosch electronic fuel injection became standard, making the cars smoother and more economical, and the Mulsanne S joined the range. It was basically a stock Mulsanne with a Turbo R interior.

The addition of four round headlamps in 1989 further reinforced the growing differences between the Bentley and its Rolls-Royce cousin while the launch of the Series 2 cars a year later, with new interiors, alloy wheels and various engine, suspension and handling changes, widened the gap even further.

Bentley dredged up another name from its sporting past when it merged the Eight and S and called it the Brooklands in 1993. There was a power increase in 1994 with the arrival of the Series 3 cars.

More interior tweaks were implemented in 1996 before the final variant, the Turbo RT, with its mesh grille and body-coloured bumpers, broke cover in 1997. It's an absolute thriller, but no doubt the £148,990 asking price deterred all but the most well-heeled buyers. Of more interest here is the Brooklands R, which was all but a Turbo RT with a low-pressure turbocharger. For those who consider 'adequate' power entirely enough, this is all the Bentley you'll ever need.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR?

Before getting into more depth about engines and running gear, lots of cars can be ruled out over the phone if they are devoid of any history. In a nutshell, a Mulsanne that isn't accompanied by lots of receipts showing precisely what's been replaced and when is likely to prove to be a money pit and should be avoided.

As always, you get what you pay for – and anything that looks too good to be true is probably hiding something...

BODYWORK: Rust shouldn't really be an issue but don't be surprised if you find corrosion in the sills, wheelarches, rear valance and the bottom of the »

The Mulsanne Turbo began Bentley's sporting revival.



Unsurprisingly given these cars' grand dimensions there is a truly cavernous boot.



BUY & OWN BENTLEY MULSANNE



The Turbo R boasts performance figures of 328bhp, which can propel this gigantic gentleman's express from 0-60mph in seven seconds.

front wings. The doors, bonnet and boot are alloy so shouldn't rust but the steel fittings can rust and they can oxidize where there's a break in the paint. Bubbles under chrome trim can be particularly tricky to sort and if you end up needing a respray a cheap car will soon become less of a bargain. Also, check the panel fit and be wary of any inconsistencies in terms of the paint colour and finish, which points to badly

Below: The Mulsanne has an almost unrivalled feeling of luxury inside – a level of luxury that's difficult to replicate should trim need replacing...

executed repairs and possible bodes.

Underneath, things can get a bit more serious; the rear crossmember has been known to split and the floor itself can also rot out. While on the driveway, try to check the rear spring mounts as well as the front outriggers. Meanwhile, a bent longeron points to a front-end smash.

ENGINES: As you would expect, engines are strong and long lasting. However, sludging (due to infrequent coolant changes) can cause damage to the wet liners, which will lead to

piston damage. If the engine is noisy when warm (and you are able to rule out a noisy hydraulic tappet), walk away. Head gasket failure can also be an issue, so watch for a rapidly rising temperature gauge.

Other things to look out for include excessive blue smoke, worn turbos and poor starting on turbo-charged carburettor cars due to high underbonnet temperatures.

STEERING, SUSPENSION & BRAKES:

The complex suspension and braking system features accumulator spheres





Making a poor interior look as nice as this is likely to be very costly.

“Remember, this is a complex car and diagnosing problems post-purchase is likely to prove an expensive headache”

to maintain brake pressure and suspension spheres for (you guessed it) the rear suspension and self-levelling function. Make sure the car is sitting on an even keel and, with the engine running, check that the car rises accordingly when someone climbs in the back. A clatter from the pumps is a sign that the accumulators are losing their nitrogen while a knocking from the rear on a test drive points to a tired self-levelling system.

Due to its weight, the Mulsanne gets through brake components with alacrity so make sure the pads aren't down to their metal. Seized callipers can also be a problem on seldom-used cars, so beware of any car that doesn't pull up in a straight line.

INTERIOR & ELECTRICS: Condition is everything inside because replacing

damaged or worn leather trim or faulty switchgear can prove pricey. While in the cabin, make sure the air-con is blowing cold air not hot, because the pipework is prone to corrosion and leaks. Also, check that all the warning lights come on and go off as they should. Remember, this is a complex car and diagnosing problems post-purchase is likely to prove an expensive headache.

In a nutshell, when viewing a Mulsanne it's important not to get carried away with the glamour of the occasion. Keep a cool head and go through everything with a fine tooth comb, making a mental note of everything that needs doing. Wistfully overlooking what might seem like small niggles at the time is guaranteed to cost you big time later on if you choose to go through with the purchase. »

THE RISE OF VALUES

After years in the doldrums, Shadow and T1/T2 prices have firmed up considerably in recent years, making the Mulsanne the new kid on the block when it comes to affordable Crewe-built luxury saloons.

Bear in mind that cars made before 1984 didn't enjoy brilliant build quality and cars with carbs aren't as desirable as the later examples with fuel injection. This all means you should be able to find a less-than-perfect example from around £5000, though you could well find yourself with some large repair bills before too long. A really nice Mulsanne may be as little as £10,000.

The under-specified Eight sold for less new and indeed values today continue to reflect this, so don't pay a premium for one of these. At the other end of the spectrum, Turbo models will always be more sought-after with prices starting at around £10,000. The R model usually loiters – or should that be 'wafts'? – around the late teens. You will need £25,000 for a half-decent RT model and the rare Turbo S, although that's a small price to pay for something that cost the price of a small semi-detached house in Harpenden when new...

Tech Specs	Mulsanne	Turbo	Turbo R
Years	1980-1987	1982-1985	1986-1998
Engine	6750cc V8	6750cc V8	6750cc V8
Power	200bhp	298bhp	328bhp
Top Speed	119mph	135mph	146mph
0-60mph	10 secs	7 secs	7 secs
Economy	14mpg	12mpg	14mpg



OWNING A MULSANNE

The key to keeping running costs down is to have bought a healthy car in the first place, avoiding examples with an extensive list of previously ignored maintenance issues. Putting right jobs that should have been attended to years ago will instantly put your Bentley balance sheet out of

kilter and ruin any notion you had of running one as an affordable classic. After all, a car that can be run and maintained on a shoestring, this is not!

Now the good news. If you've truly secured an honest car that's had countless hours of workshop time lavished on it, routine servicing

will be within the ability limits of most reasonably competent home mechanics. On low mileage cars with reams of history, be wary though. Value will be lost if there are gaps in the history. Home servicing is best reserved for cars with higher mileage and/or patchy history.

Ignoring coolant changes can spell an unceremonious early demise of that V8 engine, so make sure it's done annually using the correct concentration of anti-freeze to prevent internal corrosion. Head gaskets can fail on the turbocharged models, especially in the 60,000-80,000 mile area.

The engine's oil and filter should be replaced every 3000 miles or even sooner if the vehicle only sees occasional use – the special hexagonal key in the tool kit to remove the sump plug also fits the rear axle filler/drain.

Still under the bonnet, regular checks should be made of the engine's five drive belts and any that are showing signs of cracks or perishing should be replaced as soon as possible.

In a similar vein, check the condition of the high-pressure fuel lines on fuel-injected models, making sure there are



Even from the back the Mulsanne is a vast looking motor car.

no leaks. Any repairs or adjustment, however, is best left to a specialist.

Spark plugs should be changed every 12,000 miles – it's a fiddly job and one that shouldn't be rushed because some may be stuck firm and there's also a risk of cross-threading when fitting the new items. The whole affair is made considerably easier if you use a proper plug socket rather than the tool supplied with the car.

BRAKES & SUSPENSION

There are servo-assisted discs all round on the Mulsanne with twin calipers at the front and single calipers at the rear – the car's US-style foot-operated parking brake actuating pads on the rear discs. Replacing front discs and pads is doable on the driveway, but at the rear a puller is required to remove the hub, so unless you can get hold of one through a club, replacement is best done by a specialist. Due to its high operating pressure any hose replacement work is also best left to a professional.

The Citroën-like self-levelling suspension is pretty reliable, so as long as you keep an eye on the fluid level in the hydraulic reservoir in the engine bay and ensure all the hoses are okay, there shouldn't be too many problems.

Obviously, any creaks or groans from the suspension will point to worn bushes, mounts or bearings – and replacing these can be time-consuming and expensive. Steering racks can develop gaiter leaks, so look for signs of escaping fluid.

Beware of particularly rusty spring mounting pots, which can allow the coil spring to drop out if particularly badly affected by tinworm.

As with the braking system, the suspension on the Mulsanne operates at high pressure, so repairs should be made by experts only.

PARTS AVAILABILITY

While the general supply of parts is excellent, don't be lured into the



mindset that, like the cars themselves, replacement components will be dirt cheap. Specialists such as Flying Spares and IntroCar give owners the option of choosing between genuine Crewe parts, aftermarket items, reconditioned components or recycled (used) bits and pieces – so it will be a case of shopping around and buying according to your budget.

Here, joining a club, such as the excellent Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club or Bentley Drivers' Club, will help. Not only does the former offer technical training seminars at its Northamptonshire headquarters, but the whole ethos of such organisations is to help genuine enthusiasts find the most cost effective way to keep their cars on the road.

VERDICT

It would be disingenuous to suggest that running and maintaining a Mulsanne will be anything other than an expensive affair. Even if you do all the regular service stuff yourself, you should still put aside roughly £1000 a year for servicing and every couple of years you may have to double this. If you factor in mid-teens miles per gallon economy on the turbo, it's easy to predict the

impact on your bank balance. Yet, despite this, we wouldn't rule one out.

In terms of pure prestige, the Mulsanne will deliver by the Wilton-lined bootful and if you build in club involvement, parts support and the sheer joy of owning something this well made – and this British – the scales soon start weighing in its favour. ■

USEFUL CONTACTS

CLUBS

Bentley Drivers' Club
www.bdcl.org

Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club, www.rrec.org.uk

SPECIALISTS

Flying Spares
01455 292949
www.flyingspares.com

IntroCar
020 8546 2027
www.introcar.co.uk

Colbrook Specialists
01733 243737
www.colbrookspecialists.co.uk

Hanwells
020 8567 9729
hanwells.net

Hillier Hill
01234 713871
www.hillierhill.com

RH Parts
01865 400703
www.rhparts.com

Royce Service & Engineering,
01737 844999
www.royceservice.co.uk

EXAMPLE PART PRICES

Courtesy of Flying Spares. VAT not included.

Aftermarket Spark Plug	£11.17
Aftermarket Air Filter	£14.79
Genuine Oil Filter	£17.89
Aftermarket Front Wheel Arch	£146.00
Aftermarket Outer Sill Panel SWB with Swage Line	£166.42
Aftermarket Trailing Arm Repair Kit	£101.97



WRAITH IN VELOUR: FIRST TIME IMPRESSIONS

Do you remember your first time? We sent Jack Grover to experience his first Rolls-Royce. We decided to dispense with leather, just to make it extra special.

WORDS AND PICS: JACK GROVER

As the motor industry moved towards unitary construction, the famous independent coachbuilders dropped out of business one by one. This meant that Rolls-Royce was in danger of losing what was, in effect, a large part of its production

capability. The tastes of the market were changing too. A complete car, ready to go is what the buyer wanted.

Crewe responded with one of the most extensive development projects in its history, with the aim of not only putting the firm back in contention as a bastion of quality, but also to be

so advanced as to leapfrog its rivals and move the idea of the luxury car onto a whole new level. This, of course, gave birth to the Silver Shadow in 1965. The Shadow's more modern design, innovative engineering and less imposing nature, combined with the usual Rolls-Royce quality

in materials and build made it very popular – by Rolls-Royce standards at least – with over 30,000 examples of all Silver Shadow variants made between 1962 and 1980. It remains the most-produced single model of Rolls-Royce in the company's history.

While many of the old body building firms had gone under, others had, like Rolls-Royce, adapted to changing circumstances. One was the firm of HJ Mulliner, Park Ward, which had become a leader in making alterations and modifications to existing monocoque bodysHELLS. In conjunction with Crewe, Mulliner produced a two-door saloon, a two-door convertible and a long-wheelbase four-door saloon.

The LWB saloon had an extra four inches let into the wheelbase at the B-post to provide extra rear legroom – all other dimensions remained the same. This put the wheelbase at 123.5 inches and brought the LWB Silver Shadow's length to a shade over 17 feet. All LWB cars started life as standard bodysHELLS that went directly from Pressed Steel to the Mulliner works, where they were cut in two and the extra metal was let in as required. The bare shells then went off to Crewe to be finished in the normal manner. All LWB Shadows came with an Everflex roof covering to hide the joins between the extension section and the original body, and had an additional Rolls-Royce badge on the rear quarter panel. Otherwise it took a practised eye to spot a LWB Shadow by its elongated rear doors.

In 1976, a round of modifications were announced for the Silver Shadow for the following model year. This led to the Silver Shadow II, and Rolls-Royce took the opportunity to differentiate the special versions of the car with their own names. The two-door coupé and cabriolet versions became the Corniche and the LWB became the Silver Wraith II (the numeral was to differentiate it from the original Silver Wraith introduced in 1946). The Wraith incorporated the same changes as the Shadow II and in other respects was identical to the older Long Wheelbase model. The Shadow II had a number of improvements from a driving perspective (chiefly a switch to rack-and-pinion steering) which only enhanced its appeal from behind the wheel.

It is a very late Silver Wraith II that I will be driving here. It is such a late car that, in fact, it was registered »



The interior of the Silver Wraith doesn't look very special at first glance but that's not the point – it's the details you can't see that make the difference.



This car is unusual in having colour-coded velour seats fitted (at significant cost) over the standard leather ones.

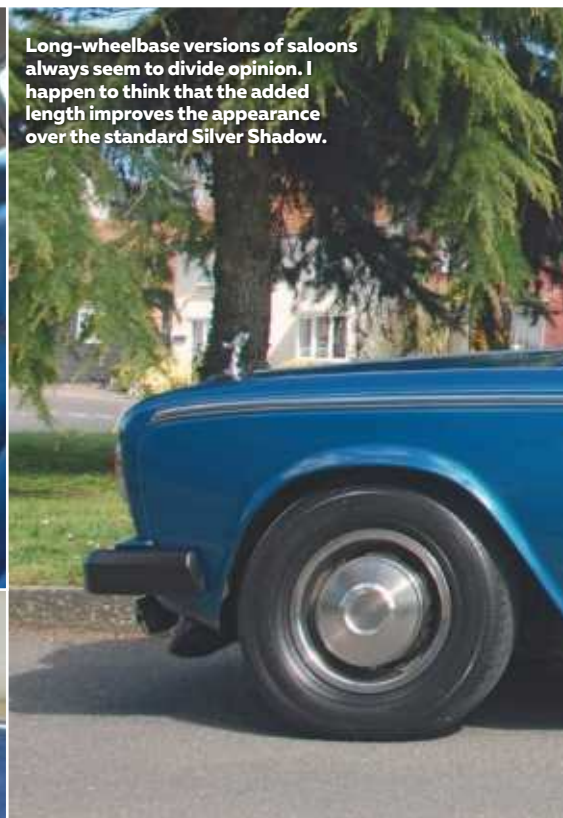


There's very little point in trying out the back seats on most road tests, but this is an exception.



The whole point of the Silver Wraith was to offer more space for those in the back seats. This is one of the few cars where you can really stretch out in the back

Long-wheelbase versions of saloons always seem to divide opinion. I happen to think that the added length improves the appearance over the standard Silver Shadow.



the year after Wraith production ended – hence the X-suffix (1981) number plate. It therefore represents the 'ultimate Silver Shadow' in more ways than one – age, size and price.

As standard, the Wraith had a smaller rear window (for extra privacy for those in the back). This was called the 'opera window', even though this term strictly refers to the little 'porthole' windows found in the C-posts of many contemporary American luxury cars. This could be deleted as a no-cost option and many Wraith buyers, including this one, opted to do so. The original buyer also chose to have the rear picnic tables installed – it seems strange that these were optional on a car where passenger comfort was the priority.

The most obviously special thing about this Wraith is the interior. For cars that represent the very best in luxury craftsmanship you would expect a Rolls-Royce to have a leather interior and in the vast majority of cases you would be right. However the seats in this Wraith are trimmed in crushed velour matched to the exterior colour. This was a rarely-specified cost option at the time. Whether the owner had an aversion to leather or this is just something to chalk up



to the sometimes dubious stylistic tastes of the early 1980s is unknown.

PROUD AS A PEACOCK

The colour of this car is, rather appropriately for something meant to be a symbol of wealth and success, Peacock Blue and rarely has a shade been more appropriately named. The quality of Rolls-Royce paintwork is, of course, exemplary and when seen in soft springtime sunlight the bodywork of the Wraith has such a deep lustre that you feel you could almost fall into layers of paint.

Inside, the theme is still 'blue, and lots of it'. The grain of the velour cloth on the seats reflects light in a way that makes it seem iridescent, just like the neck of the bird from which it takes its name. The door trims are made from the same material while the thick Wilton carpets on the floor are a more sombre shade. Of course the dashboard itself is made from slabs of walnut veneer between squashy sections of leather-coated rubber crash padding.

The first real surprise comes on starting the engine. By reputation, a Rolls-Royce is supposed to be whisper quiet at all times but the 6.75-litre all-

alloy V8 sounds remarkably uncouth when you twist the tiny key in the right direction. It quickly settles down and retreats into the background – a barely discernible throb of latent power through the car's structure and a quiet swish of precision engineering on the other side of the bulkhead.

ALL AHEAD FULL

The Wraith uses the same GM400 automatic transmission as the standard Shadow, better known as the TurboHydramatic in America (you could never imagine Crewe using such a name!). It may not seem very cutting edge when compared to the rest of the Silver Shadow but it can easily cope with the V8's power; three speeds are all you need for luxurious wafting when you have such a torquey engine and the unit is a smooth operator at all times. The only thing Rolls-Royce added was electrical gear selection. The column-mounted lever looks conventional but is just an electrical control for a set of relays and servos under the floor that actually change the gears. This means that slipping the Wraith into 'Drive' can be done with one finger and barely any effort.

With all the controls hydraulically

or electrically assisted, the feeling is very much akin to standing on the bridge of an ocean liner sending orders down to the engine room. There's a brief pause as oil is directed to the required parts and then the Wraith beings to glide away with so little drama that only the fact the view out of the windscreen is now slowly changing tells you that you are moving.

For the first few minutes of my time in the Wraith I couldn't really concentrate on analysing how it drove because all that was going through my brain was "I'm driving a Rolls-Royce!". The Spirit of Ecstasy may be one of the most familiar corporate symbols in the world but now I was seeing it from a whole new angle – behind, at the end of five feet or so of polished bonnet. I was also feeling more than a little self-conscious; partly because I was driving a bright blue car nearly 20 feet long with a frankly preposterous radiator grille through a business park and partly because said business park had a number of mini roundabouts and a nasty width restrictor with uncomfortably solid-looking steel posts to get through.

As things transpired, the Wraith does not feel anywhere near as big as you would think when you are behind »

the wheel. With rear-wheel drive and independent front suspension the turning circle is surprisingly good and the light steering makes it easy to wind on all the lock that is needed to thread the Rolls through tight spots or out of awkward junctions. You do have to remember how long the car is and steer wide of kerbs, as if you're driving a small lorry (the Wraith is longer than the longest factory-specification long wheelbase Land Rover) but you very quickly adapt.

SMOOTH & SILENT

Heading out into the rolling Essex countryside, the most noticeable thing was the refinement. I have never driven a car that so cossets the senses of its occupants. In terms of the ride, it's on a par with a hydropneumatic Citroën (which is not surprising) but the level of mechanical refinement is in such a different league to anything else that it's hard to describe. I can only keep up the ship analogy – you have the sense of all this propulsive force that's driving you along somewhere far below your feet. When pulling away there's a bit of burble from the tailpipes (about nine

feet behind you) but otherwise there's just the swish of air moving past the glass and a bit of tyre noise. On this car, there wasn't even the creak of leather to disturb the library-like hush.

In terms of the actual driving experience, it seems almost wrong to judge the Silver Wraith on such terms. One doesn't drive a Rolls-Royce, one 'proceeds' in it and proceeding is something it does very well. Naturally Crewe never stated the engine's power output but it's around 220 horsepower, which results in almost exactly 100 horsepower per ton. This means that the Wraith is no slouch, but neither is it particularly fast. The gearbox is surprisingly responsive and there's much less 'slush' than I was expecting but it's still an auto 'box from the 1960s. All this means that the Rolls is not especially rapid. All that engine capacity and power is simply to make over two tons of finest British craftsmanship move

“One doesn't drive a Rolls-Royce, one 'proceeds' in it and proceeding is something it does very well”

along at a respectable pace. Speed isn't what Rolls-Royces are about – it's about having enough power to drive normally with sufficient reserve to be worthy of the term 'luxury'.

In terms of handling, it needs to be said that the Wraith did not feel like a 17-foot long car weighing over two tons. I was expecting it to be ponderous and reluctant but it was not. It's certainly not nimble. Its sheer size means that on many rural roads you have enough on your plate just keeping the near side away from the hedges without taking up too much of the opposite lane. The extreme lightness of the controls means that there isn't much in the way of feedback but the Wraith is so stable and predictable that you quickly learn how much you need to turn the wheel to go around a particular corner, and with its independent suspension assisted by hydraulics, it always remains composed and unruffled. You would



The six-and-three-quarter V8 engine is hidden under a maze of pipework, which is appropriate for a motor so refined as to be almost indiscernible.

expect nothing less. The high level of assistance also makes the Wraith very easy to drive – it is no more physically difficult to pilot than a supermini.

Pulling into a bumpy lay-by or cutting across the raised centre of a mini roundabout at low speeds can produce wallow akin to an old-fashioned American ‘land yacht’ but, at any normal driving speeds, the car is simply as steady as a rock – but in no way is it rock hard. It takes a deep pothole to produce anything more than a quiet, well-isolated ‘thump’ from the undercarriage.

CONCLUSIONS

The thing that really eluded me for much of my time with the Wraith was any sense of actual luxury. Cutting-edge air conditioning system aside, the Wraith didn’t seem to have much in the way of gadgets and gizmos. It had plush seats, a nice dashboard and a silky-smooth ride but then so do plenty of cars that cost (then and now) a fraction of the price.

But that was because I was thinking of luxury in the modern sense, where it’s all about fancy equipment, »



Above: When the weather gets this hot you'll be glad of the Wraith's powerful air conditioning! Essex in March doesn't reach 30 degrees; the high reading was down to heat soak from the engine when the car was left standing.

The Silver Wraith drives with an ease that totally belies its weight and size.



DRIVE SILVER WRAITH II



From the front the Wraith is indistinguishable from the standard Silver Shadow, and you're not going to confuse it with anything else!

infotainment screen, multi-mode suspension, in-built social media connectivity, variable-colour panel lights, Steinway piano trim and monogrammed dashboard panels.

That was not the Rolls-Royce way and it's something you can only really appreciate after you've spent some time with the car. Rolls-Royces are billed as 'The Best Car In The World' and that has nothing to do with gadgets and toys. Never let it be forgotten that Charles Rolls was a salesman and Henry Royce was an engineer – neither of them were an interior designer or a marketing director. Rolls-Royces are built on the principle that quality is, in itself, luxury.

Other, less expensive, cars may equal or better the Wraith on the superficial things but what the original buyer was paying for (aside from the prestige of the marque itself) was the engineering behind it all. It's all the things you can't



see that show how far Rolls-Royce took the principle of 'good enough is not good enough'. Take the Wraith's headlamps, for example. Each unit has a secondary filament that kicks into life if the main one burns out, along with a warning light on the dash to remind you to change it. Fair enough. But the headlamp circuit also contains a special relay which, if the headlamps fail due to a short circuit, will operate the circuit in five-second bursts; enough for you to find your way to the hard shoulder of a dark motorway without risking sending your car up in flames. I would doubt that this relay has ever activated itself on a Shadow in real life but every single

one has it sitting there – just in case.

That famous radiator grille was built by a team of 12 people, each with years of skill in making one particular part. While it looks fairly simple it has been designed with architectural principles – every 'straight' edge is actually slightly curved so that when viewed as a whole they appear straight. It's a principle called entasis which was developed by the ancient Greeks.

Few other manufacturers have put that level of thought into what their cars are like to own and to drive, rather than merely to look at and buy in a showroom, and Rolls-Royce is the only one to survive. The best car in the world? Yes, without a doubt. ■



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PRODUCTS: ALL THE KIT YOU NEED



▲ SPIRIT/MULSANNE DAMPERS

IntroCar has worked for four years to develop new, aftermarket rear dampers for the Silver Spirit and Mulsanne, including the active ride cars. From 1980 right through to 1987, IntroCar has the dampers you need. Hundreds of hours of testing were involved in getting the ride just right, and the dampers are made in the UK. Prices start at £438.55 plus VAT for a pair of dampers for a car with Active Ride, rising to £479.95 for all other derivatives built from 1980 to 1991, including the Corniche and Continental. The kit includes mounting bushes, gaiters, drain tube fixings and o-ring seals. All Prestige Parts from IntroCar come with a three-year warranty. Call **020 8546 2027** or visit **www.introcar.co.uk**

BIG END BEARING SET ►

If your bottom end is starting to knock, then there's a pretty good chance that the big end bearings have seen better days. If you've bought a neglected car, the chances rise somewhat. Fear not though. Flying Spares has an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) set of big end bearings available for £250 plus VAT. The set, part number RH2504P, is suitable for nearly all Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars that use the L-Series V8, from Silver Cloud/S2 right up to Arnage Red Label. It's still a fairly involved job to fit them, but they're on the shelf, ready for despatch. Call **01455 292949** or visit **www.flyingsparses.com**



▲ SEALEY SPRING CATALOGUE OUT NOW

Sealey is pleased to announce the launch of the latest edition of its Tool Catalogue. More comprehensive than ever before, the latest catalogue contains over 2200 new lines, including battery-less jump starters, top of the range Premier Black sockets with Total Drive ability, a one-battery-fits-all range of power tools, and also new variants of its award-winning 360 degrees inspection lamps. Sealey's tools are fully supported by warranties and promise an unrivalled aftersales service and technical support, to ensure that even the oldest and most loyal tools can continue to work alongside new and innovative models. The new catalogue is available from Sealey stockists nationwide or you can request your copy from the Sealey website **www.sealey.co.uk**



◀ KEEP YOUR CLOUD CROSSPLYED

Crossply tyres don't always deserve the resentment they often get, with poor grip more often down to age and tyre condition than the construction of the tyre itself. Indeed, many people reckon a car designed for crossplies will always drive better when so equipped. The Silver Cloud is one such car, and Vintage Tyres offers the Avon Turbospeed 820H15 tyre for £249 plus VAT. Check our pre-war tyre guide on page 54 to see what you should fit to earlier Rolls-Royce and Bentley motor cars. **www.vintagetyres.com**



▲ AUTOGLYM KITS

The 2000-on Bentley Arnage and Rolls-Royce Silver Seraph moved from glass headlamp lenses to plastic. These can degrade in UV light, leaving the car looking rather mucky even when clean. It can also reduce light output sufficiently to cause an MOT issue. Thankfully, Autoglym has an easy-to-use kit that has everything you need to restore some shine. You'll need some bravery, as you need to use an electric drill with the included sanding discs to remove degraded plastic, before using a cutting polish for the final step. The kit includes easily enough to do several headlamps and retails for around £25. If your car has bodywork issues, the new Scratch Repair Kit might do the trick. Again, the kit includes all you should need, and might just help ease away troublesome damage without the need for a bodyshop repair. This kit costs around £17. www.autoglym.com



▲ GRAN TURISMO DRIVING GLOVES

Motoring gifts, accessories and lifestyle company Me and My Car is delighted to announce that its continued and successful collaboration with Suixtil has been expanded to include these new Gran Turismo driving gloves. Only available in the UK from Me and My Car, they're ideal for chilly days or even for an evening drive with the roof down. Made from super-soft ink blue lamb leather, with a one-piece palm and red over stitching accents on the back, these gloves also include a 100 per cent cashmere knitted lining and cuffs to keep your hands super warm. Order yours today by visiting: www.meandmycar.co.uk or order over the phone by calling: **01865 883061**. Expect to pay £115.

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THE MEN BEHIND THE MARQUE: SIR HENRY ROYCE

“You can’t be an engineer and still go to church”, he once said. An improver rather than an innovator, work was Royce’s religion in his unyielding pursuit of excellence. We examine this great man’s life.

WORDS: JEREMY SATHERLEY PICS: SIR HENRY ROYCE MEMORIAL FOUNDATION/RREC



“WHO IS THE AUTHOR OF THIS ‘SINKER’?”

On the shop floor at Cooke Street, Manchester, workers freeze in their tasks as a sharp-faced, bearded man appears in their midst, holding up a steel component. Someone has machined a part that is too heavy. It has not met the boss’s exacting standards for lightness, balance or perfect finish, and will not even be considered for the usual testing, re-testing and exhaustive assessment before it is fit to be part of one of his machines. In Frederick Henry Royce’s establishment, even if you were the school-leaver who swept the floor, you did it properly or not at all. Hence the great man’s motto, which would come to be displayed in the entrance hall at the Crewe factory: ‘Quiduis Recte Factum Quamuis Humile Praeclarum’ – ‘Whatever rightly done, however humble, is noble’.

‘Humble’ certainly described Royce’s upbringing, which has the character of a Dickens novel. He was born on 27th March 1863 at Alwalton near Peterborough to Mary and James Royce. Royce Senior was a flour and bone miller, but attempts to mechanise his mills using steam power ran him into financial difficulties by 1867. With a wife and five children to support, he moved the family to London to seek other opportunities, which only brought more hardship. James Royce died when Henry was nine and the children were sent out to work to help make ends meet. Aged 11, Henry managed a year of schooling in between selling newspapers for W H Smith and delivering telegrams, before a rescuing aunt back in Peterborough funded an apprenticeship for him with



the Great Northern Railway works. She also paid for his lodgings with the family of a Mr Yarrow, a skilled machinist, which meant that whether at work or off-duty in Yarrow's garden shed, the lad learned much about the essentials of engineering and working with machine tools.

Just as things were going well, his aunt ran out of money, forcing the 16-year-old Royce to abandon his apprenticeship and to try to find engineering work elsewhere. Striking north, armed with good references, he was taken on by a Leeds toolmakers and studied electrical engineering in his spare time. The studies paid off. After gaining valuable experience of generators and electric motors with the Liverpool-based Lancashire

“Royce’s workshop and dockside cranes soon established a reputation for quality and reliability; but at a price...”

Maxim and Western Electric Company, he set up a small electrical firm in Cooke Street, Manchester, in partnership with fellow engineer Ernest Claremont, who became his brother-in-law when they each married the daughters of an Alfred Punt.

Beginning with lighting filaments, sundry switchgear and doorbells, the partners’ main output graduated to electric cranes in 1894 when the business was officially reformed as Royce Limited. Royce’s workshop and dockside cranes soon established a

reputation for quality and reliability; but at a price, which meant that by 1900 they were being undercut by competitors and patent-infringers from abroad, while Britain was gripped by an economic slump. The time seemed ripe to diversify.

Up until then, Royce had not considered the upstart automobile a great deal. That is, until he began motoring with a French De Dion quadricycle and 10hp Decauville, and decided he could produce something better.

A BETTER MOTOR CAR

Ignoring opposition from fellow directors, Royce diverted factory resources into car manufacture, and as there was yet no component industry to speak of, all parts for the cars were made in-house. It was a practice Royce insisted on for the rest of his lifetime and which lingered in the company for years afterwards, even when it no longer made economic sense.

Appearing in 1904, the first three cars were 1.8-litre, 10hp twin-cylinder models similar in concept to the Decauville, but improving on its design shortcomings with pushrod-operated valves, modified carburation, a two-throw crankshaft for better dynamic balance and precisely-cut camshaft gears not only enclosed in a dirt-proof timing case, but running in oil – a best practice from the crane-building side. Royce also paid close attention to reducing vibration and »



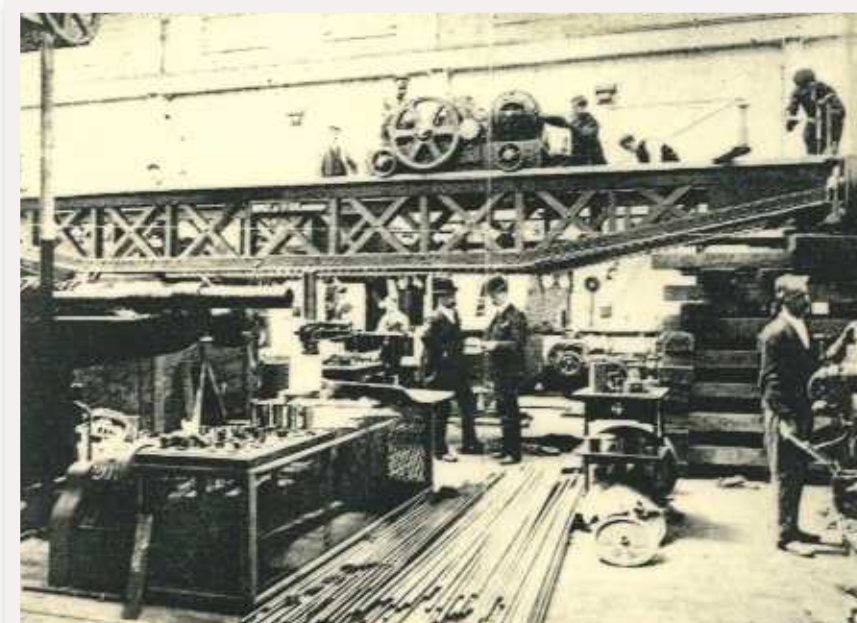
THE MEN BEHIND THE MARQUE

SIR HENRY ROYCE

noise by isolating the engine and gearbox in an underframe, and adding an outsize silencer to the exhaust.

The 10hp was a thoroughly high-quality job, enough to prompt the Hon Charles Stuart Rolls to provide a sales outlet for it. The story of how the aristocrat joined forces with the gifted artisan has been told many times, except to say that this unlikely bonding of characters is worth commenting on. An influential business acquaintance of Claremont's, Henry Edmunds, had seen Royce's car and rated it an ideal selling proposition for his friend Charles Rolls' retail motor business in London. Edmunds was keen for the two men to meet, and though Royce refused to go to London, he agreed to meet Rolls over a frugal lunch at Manchester's Midland Hotel. Despite the social difference, Royce must have been pleasantly surprised by Rolls' engineering qualifications and electrical knowledge – suggesting a 'trade' mentality untypical of a gentleman of his class. What was more, with a foot in both trade and high-society camps, the debonair Rolls would be the ideal salesman, relieving Royce of fighting personal awkwardness to promote his products.

Rolls obviously liked the 10hp, but preferred to be selling something with more than two cylinders, which explains why, as part of the agreement reached in 1904, Royce found himself on a deadline to extend the range with three-cylinder 15hp, four-cylinder 20hp



The Royce Ltd workshop in the early 1900s, in Trafford Park, Manchester.

and six-pot 30hp models, all in time for the Paris Salon that December. This Royce achieved by standardising as many parts as possible in all except the 15hp's case (which relied on three separately-cast cylinders), merely doubling up on the twin-cylinder block for the 20hp and trebling it for the 30. Meanwhile,

never satisfied, Royce had already redesigned the original 10hp to feature a three-bearing crank and improved lubrication system. Of this extended

range the 20hp was the best all-rounder in terms of power-to-weight ratio, handling and smooth running, making it most suitable for the marque's first participation in motor sport. Of the two examples entered in the 1905 Tourist Trophy, one came second driven by Percy Northey after Rolls broke the gearbox of the other car.

Royce's next design, in 1906, seemed a paradox – a 3.5-litre V8 governed to

the prevailing national speed limit of 20mph. But it was intended as a quiet, smooth-running unit to emulate the electric town car, its shallow, compact proportions easily accommodated under the floor of a bonnetless vehicle. A landaulette ordered by press baron Lord Northcliffe proved a virtually one-gear car, but the restricted performance made it very much a niche product, and only three were built. Nevertheless, the V8 proved a useful design rehearsal for Royce's subsequent masterpiece, the 7-litre, six-cylinder 40/50, or Silver Ghost, which



Royce in his early 40s.

The legendary 40/50 Silver Ghost set the benchmark for luxury cars.



was to set new benchmarks for build quality, refinement and performance.

Meanwhile, the company title of Rolls-Royce Ltd was officially registered in March 1906. That Royce was more than content to leave the ongoing promotion of the cars at home and abroad to Rolls went without saying. But Rolls had brought another invaluable asset to the company: his associate Claude Johnson.

AN IMPORTANT APPOINTMENT

Johnson had previously run Rolls' imported-car business in London and had been secretary of the Automobile Club. The self-styled 'hyphen between Rolls and Royce', Johnson assumed the role of company administrator, public relations officer, events organiser and – increasingly after Rolls' death – Royce's minder. His role in protecting Royce from the realities of commercial life was very significant, leaving the master free to concentrate on design and indulge his perfectionist procedures. With the decision to separate car production from crane manufacture in 1906, it was Johnson's legwork which secured favourable terms with Derby Corporation for opening a new car factory in the town, and to him also goes the credit for establishing a one-model policy with the Silver Ghost to take on the prestige six-cylinder market. And once the Ghost was launched, Johnson's organisational



Royce enjoying Le Canadel.
A move here saved his life.

“Rolls would be the ideal salesman, relieving Royce of fighting personal awkwardness to promote his products”

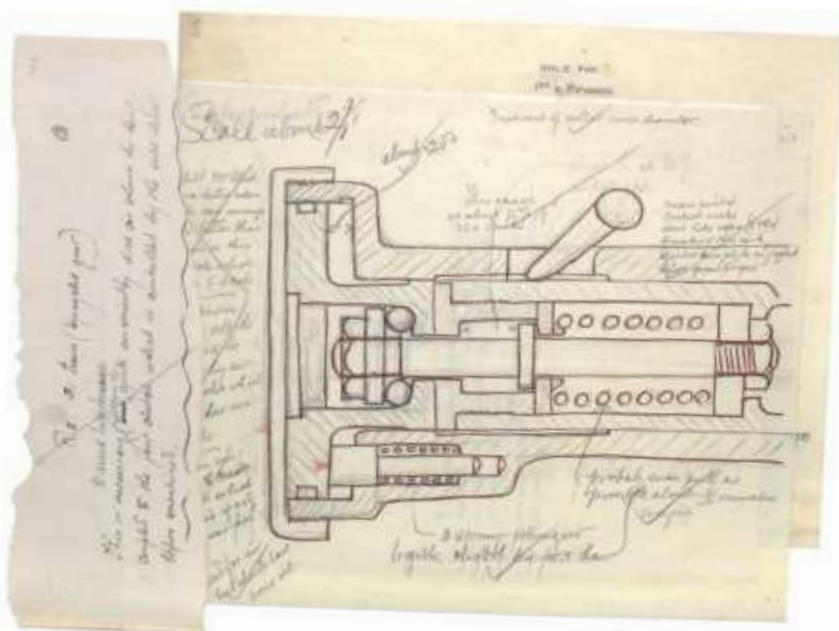
talent ensured that the new model was effectively showcased in events such as the 15,000-mile trial, Isle of Man Tourist Trophy, Austrian Alpine Trial and Scottish six-day event.

Rolls meanwhile was devoting more and more time to aircraft interests, which proved his undoing in July 1910, when the tailplane of his Wright Flyer broke up at a Bournemouth air show and he was killed instantly on hitting the ground. Rolls had been absent from board meetings so often in the preceding months that the daily running of the company remained virtually

unaffected with Johnson at the helm. But this period also marked a sharp decline in Royce's health. Long hours, reluctance to delegate and a poor diet consisting typically of scrappy sausage and sandwich meals eaten at the bench had taken its toll. In 1911, Johnson took the exhausted Royce on a long holiday to Egypt, returning by car through Italy and France. Passing through the still-unspoiled Côte d'Azur, Royce was captivated enough by the surroundings to have a villa built at Le Canadel, where a drawing office was installed for use in the winter months. During the summer, his fairweather work environment was transferred to a succession of houses in the south of England, finally settling by 1917 on West Wittering in Sussex. This self-imposed exile suited Royce so well that he only visited the Derby factory once more in his lifetime. But it didn't suit his wife Minnie; they had parted in 1912 – the culmination of a barren partnership which had probably contributed to Royce burying himself so much in his work. Instead, he was to depend on nurse Ethel Aubin, who provided him with all the care and companionship he needed for the rest of his ailing years.

WAR MARKS FURTHER CHANGES

The onset of the First World War marked a switch to matters aeronautical for Rolls-Royce, the luxury car market having evaporated at a stroke. After making many redundancies, the »



One of Royce's sketches. For many years, these sketches were his only contact with the factory.

THE MEN BEHIND THE MARQUE SIR HENRY ROYCE

company was reduced to assembling Renault V8 aero engines for the Royal Flying Corps. No respecter of French engineering since his Decauville car days, Royce again felt he could do better making his own engines. His board agreed only out of patriotic duty, fearing that putting all resources into government aero work could seriously affect their post-war car sales should hostilities end, as some thought, 'by Christmas'. But Royce had already begun designing the Eagle V12 aircraft engine, operational in a Handley Page bomber by late 1915 and followed by almost 5000 of a more powerful version, pouring from the works to power several different types of aircraft. With other engines, including the six-cylinder Hawk for trainers and airships and further V12s in smaller Falcon or larger Condor guises for fighters and bombers, Rolls-Royce was eventually responsible for 60 percent of all British aero engine production. An impressive statistic, although it was no surprise, given Royce's exacting standards, that the company was often criticised for delivery delays.

"the company was reduced to assembling Renault V8 aero engines for the Royal Flying Corps..."

When the war ended, Derby's fears of disappearing car sales proved unfounded. The Silver Ghost resumed production and continued to sell well with only minor changes, including Royce's newly-designed dynamo and starter, and a boost in estimated power output to 75bhp on a 3.8 to 1 compression ratio, yielding 75 mph. Apart from the 1924 addition of front-wheel brakes assisted by Royce's gearbox-driven servo, it received no further modification. Meanwhile, a pent-up post-war demand for cars encouraged the company to broaden the marque's appeal with Royce's project Goshawk, a 'baby' Rolls 20hp of 3-litre capacity which appeared in 1922. Those accustomed to the Ghost's Edwardian grandeur may have looked askance at its modest performance and American-style three-speed central floor change, working in an invisible

gate. But the legendary quality was all there and the Twenty was soon widely appreciated for its handy size (not every wealthy buyer wanted a huge car) and ultra-refined 50 mph cruising ability. The most successful of Royce's inter-war automotive creations, it formed the backbone of Derby's production, growing up into the 3.7-litre 20/25 of 1929, and then the 4257cc 25/30 and Wraith of 1936 and 1939 respectively.

Royce's larger post-WW1 designs began with the New Phantom or Phantom I of 1925, retaining the chassis layout of the Ghost, but endowed with a 7668cc six-cylinder OHV unit of an estimated 100bhp, which could tick over at 150rpm. The Ghost silkiness remained, although enhanced performance made it an even thirstier car and it had a more ponderous feel. Nor was Royce's succeeding Phantom II of 1929 deemed by aficionados

LUXURY WITH PURPOSE
FOR 1927



A BRILLIANT FUTURE from the surest sea of the season. A woman of position and influence comes from a concert. After shopping a young woman leaves homeward. This is the gay, the fashionable world—the world of Rolls-Royce.

The appeal of Rolls-Royce to women of good taste is inevitable. This motor-car carries the assurance that it is worthy of its owner. Its reputation for refinement and luxury is more marked today than ever before. Coachwork is designed and built by Brewster & Company, who since then have furnished fashionable equipages to the first families. Through these generations of serving the market, the

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We should be pleased to consider with you the building of a motor-car suited to your requirements—and at the same time expensive of your taste. Rolls-Royce, Fifth Avenue at Fifty-sixth Street, New York. There are branches in principal cities.

ROLLS-ROYCE
BREWSTER COACHWORK

THE ADVERTISER
ADVERTISEMENTS
May 21st, 1927

ROLLS-ROYCE
THE BEST CAR IN THE WORLD

'By general consent—and this embraces the United States and the Continent, as well as the country of its origin—the Rolls-Royce stands pre-eminent among the "Cars of To-day"—a fact due more than anything else to the unceasing pains taken by its manufacturers to produce the most perfect chassis in the world.'

THE ILLUSTRATION, on March 21st, 1928

Rolls-Royce Ltd. are manufacturers of motor-cars and aero engines. They are not the makers of any kind of motor or motor apparatus.

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to be as rewarding to drive as the Ghost, although the engine, now with manifold improvements, provided more speed – over 90 mph in short-chassis Continental versions – while chassis and suspension modifications rendered it outstanding for its size in the braking and handling department. The Phantom III, which succeeded it in 1936, was Royce's grand automotive swansong. Its V12, wet-liner 7.3-litre engine, borrowing from aero-engine practice and featuring hydraulic tappets à la Packard, was more an exercise in engineering for its own sake, and a rather more complex car than Rolls-Royce management would have preferred to make.

THE SEARCH FOR POWER

Away from the cars, Rolls-Royce's aeronautical business during the 1920s had been losing ground to firms such as Bristol and Napier. Until that is, the company was approached by the Air Ministry to design an engine to power the Supermarine S6 experimental aircraft – a floatplane – for the prestigious 1929 Schneider Trophy race. Derby's technical team took up the challenge, after Royce allegedly sketched out the basic design for the supercharged V12 Buzzard 'R' engine in the sand at West Wittering, and the S6 won the competition at over 328mph. Royce was honoured with a baronetcy in 1930 for his services to aviation, and with further improvements the 'R' engine in a succeeding S6B plane achieved a world record of 408mph. Using the 'R' as a basis he began work in 1932 on the PV ('Private Venture') 27-litre single-stage supercharged V12 unit, which led to the first Merlin engine. But he would not live to witness the vital role it was to play in the Hurricane and Spitfire fighters, or even hear it running for the first time.

Sir Henry Royce died aged 70 at West Wittering on 22nd April 1933, having been sketching away at some project only the night before. It brought to an end the constant shuttling to and fro of personnel between the works and his seaside retreats, or the experimental shop manager at Derby putting up with waspish memos peppered with comments like, "We must settle down to some real work", or, "A great deal of work is done at West Wittering which produces no results. Either we [the regal 'we'] are stupid, or you have

not the capacity I imagined". With managing director Johnson's death from pneumonia in 1927 had ended the protective buffer this Mr Fixit had maintained between master and factory, leaving staff more exposed to Royce's vacillations and bad temper.

It would be a similar story for their respective companies with Henry Ford and Lord Nuffield. Royce had become out of touch, hindering decision-making and long-term planning. But when all was said and done, it was Sir Henry who had set the quality standard on which the Rolls-Royce could justify, for a time at least, its title of 'The Best Car in the World'. Now it would be up to the drive and energy of general manager-elect Ernest Hives (a Rolls-Royce employee since 1908) to reinterpret Royce's philosophy in a reappraisal and reorganisation of the company's methods and products.

That Royce was a refiner rather than an innovator was emphasised by L J K Setright in his book *Drive On!* when he stated that among the founding fathers of the British motor industry, 'too few had the sense to see that aggrandised mechanics was all that they were', and counted Royce among this few, 'staunchly setting their faces against the progress real engineers should have made' – 'real engineers' meaning the likes of Dr Frederick Lanchester, whose vision had, in motoring journalist Jeff Daniel's words, 'foreseen almost every worthwhile development' before the 1890s were out, 'even if he lacked the materials and the techniques to make them work'. But in Royce's time it was conventional design which sold cars in any number. Displays of intellectuality, particularly in the prestige market, such as Gabriel Voisin's eccentric triflings with straight-twelve engines, or Laurence Pomeroy Snr's 1926 sleeve-valve Daimler Double-Six, often proved too complicated for their own good. Until it was time for Rolls-Royce to review its laurels in the mid-1930s, Sir Henry's uncompromising insistence on quality

DEATH OF SIR HENRY ROYCE
FAMOUS ENGINE DESIGNER

Sir Henry Royce, director of Rolls-Royce, Ltd., and the designer of the engines which enabled several new speed records to be set up in the past few years, died at his home at West Wittering, near Chichester, on Saturday.

He was 70 years of age and was made a baronet in 1930.

Lord Londonderry, the Secretary for Air, has sent the following telegram to Mr. A. F. Sidgreaves, managing director of Rolls-Royce, Ltd.:

"On behalf of the Air Council, I desire to express our profound regret at the death of Sir Henry Royce and the termination of his long and distinguished association with the work of the Air Ministry in peace and war.

"His death will be a serious loss to British aviation as well as to his firm, to whom I wish to convey our sincere sympathy."



SIR HENRY ROYCE

was rewarded with an appreciative and unquestioning clientele. Granted, those who bought Derby's products as symbols of personal success never tired of telling you they had a 'Rolls'. But 'old money', the landed gentry who bought a car and expected it to last for decades like a good pair of sensible shoes, referred to it understatedly as 'the Royce'. Perhaps that says it all. ■

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• THE TIME TO BUY •

BENTLEY ARNAGE

R E D L A B E L

The price certainly seems to be right for these fearsomely quick, next-generation saloons. But, do they really make a sensible purchase? We take a closer look.

WORDS: IAN SEABROOK PHOTOGRAPHY: MATT RICHARDSON

Rolls-Royce had never been a company to rush new models into production, with the Cloud (10 years), Silver Shadow (15 years) and Silver Spirit (18 years) all enjoying lengthy lives. Bentley itself had undergone a major resurgence during the Silver Spirit years, as the badge-engineered Mulsanne was steadily developed into a formidable performance machine – the Turbo R. Huge power was still making the headlines when this Bentley design was over a decade old, but the cracks were starting to show. A new car was needed.

So far, company owner Vickers had avoided huge development costs, buying Rolls-Royce just as the Silver Spirit had been readied for production. There was no escaping such costs now and, to its credit, the Silver Seraph was largely a ground-up redesign. The Silver Spirit owed much to the preceding Silver Shadow but, despite evolutionary styling, the Seraph was a different animal. It had a remarkably lengthy gestation period for a start, with thoughts for the new car forming in the late 1980s, with styling locked down in 1994.

The styling was judged well, hitting the market when 'retro' styling was

very much the fashion. The Rover 75 and Jaguar S-Type both played the heritage card strongly, and so did the new car. It was unmistakably a Rolls-Royce, but also looked refreshingly modern. At a stroke, the previous generation began to look its age.

ENGINE CONTROVERSY

Arguably, the new shape better suited the body-coloured Bentley grille, though the bigger news concerned what lay behind it. BMW power was the new solution, with the Silver Seraph employing the mighty 5.4-litre V12. This feature focusses on the Bentley version however, which instead used a 4.4-litre twin-turbocharged V8. Could the adoption of two turbochargers really make up for the loss of over 2-litres of raw displacement? The motoring press of the time was not entirely convinced, despite a 0-60mph time of six seconds.

Of course, there was plenty of upset at the time about the use of German engines in a reassuringly British car, though little did people know what lay ahead. The Arnage was very much developed with BMW's assistance. This must have set the scene for the bigger »





Arnage has great presence, with its retro styling.



changes that lay ahead. As we well know, BMW wanted to purchase Rolls-Royce, but was outbid by Volkswagen. In a clever turn of events, BMW did manage to buy the Rolls-Royce Motor Cars name, but it would not have access to the car it had helped to develop. That was lost to Volkswagen.

This left Volkswagen with a problem. It now had Bentley, but the Arnage used BMW's engine. Far from satisfactory given that the two companies were hardly on friendly terms after this tumultuous tale. Given there were also reservations in the press and amongst buyers about the BMW engine, it was deemed sensible to dust off the famous L-Series V8. Yes, the 6.75-litre Turbo R powerplant made a come back.

THE L-SERIES RETURNS

This change became a production reality in 2000, with the BMW engine remaining available as the Arnage Green Label, and the revised 6.75-litre version as the Arnage Red Label. On paper, the new car was much quicker, but that didn't really account for the very different feel of the car. The 413lb/

"This 2.5 ton leviathan could reach 100mph in just 15.4 seconds. Excitement levels were right back where they needed to be"

ft of the Green Label was not bad, but was entirely dwarfed by the mighty 603lb/ft of the Red Label. Maximum power was now produced at just 4000rpm, compared to 5500rpm with the BMW engine. The Red Label was all about effortless grunt. This wasn't an engine you needed to extend.

Needless to say, the new car with the old engine was quicker, with the 0-60mph dash now dispatched in under six seconds. This 2.5 ton leviathan could reach 100mph in just 15.4 seconds. Excitement levels were right back where they needed to be. Journalists and buyers alike seemed to approve. Later, the engine would be reworked considerably, to produce even higher levels of power (the Arnage R and Arnage T). For now, we'll focus on the Red Label, which remained in production only until 2002. In just two years, 2272 had been produced, making it the most numerous of the Arnage models. This

was an incredibly important car in the forging of Bentley's new future away from Rolls-Royce, yet, you could now buy one for as little as £20,000.

A CLOSER LOOK

We visited IntroCar, with managing director John Tupper offering us a chance to explore his own Arnage Red Label. John explains, "This is one of the most comfortable cars I've ever owned. I used it for a trip to Germany last year and it was an absolute pleasure. I feel these are some of the best cars Rolls-Royce and Bentley ever made."

That said, one of these cars is always going to be expensive to run. "It's a big, heavy car," explains John, "so it's hard on the brakes, steering, suspension and tyres. A big problem with the 6.75-litre V8 is that the head gaskets tend to fail between 60,000 and 80,000 miles. A lot has to come out of the engine bay »



Interior appointments mostly first class, wood and leather as expected.



No more column gear selector.



Exceptionally comfortable seats.

THE TIME TO BUY BENTLEY ARNAGE



L-Series V8 made a comeback for the Red Label. Below: 255-section tyres help restrain this heavyweight.



Engine builder still identified.



Enormous Garrett turbocharger.

to do the job, and you'll be looking at £4500-5000 in total. If you're looking at one, ask whether this work has been carried out. The Silver Seraph is better in that regard. The 5.4-litre V12 is bombproof. It's a very good engine."

Easing myself aboard the Arnage, the first thing that strikes you is how it feels like a Mulsanne, but somehow smoother. The doors have the same heft, the leather has that same lovely feel, though perhaps pared down just a little. You don't hear the leather squeak as you drive along in quite the same manner.

It's not all good news, though. The BMW development shines through, with the same cheap, black plastic controls for the air conditioning that you'll find in any 1990s BMW. That's rather at odds with bespoke switchgear, like the lever used for indicators and wipers. It's far too hefty to describe as a stalk. It has a very pleasant action. The woodwork impresses as well, as it should. There's still a lot of labour behind this car, and it is very obvious.

DELICIOUS BURBLE

The engine fires up as smoothly as you'd expect, and burbles quite deliciously, though never obtrusively. Few engines sound so pleasant at a mere 1500rpm. Even threading your way through the tight streets of London, this car is very enjoyable. The ride is not the finest by any stretch. With such vast performance to keep in check, compromises have been made. You do feel the bumps, even if you are never jarred by them. It does not have the float of a Silver Spirit.

It's surprising what attention this car gets, too. I'm going to dare to say it. I'm not sure a modern Bentley attracts attention in the same way. We saw primary age schoolgirls admiring the lines of the Arnage, mothers, teenage

Smooth rear styling is a clear nod to earlier generations.



Rear accommodation is also beautifully plush.



boys and adults alike. It's a car that gently commands attention. It does so without the vulgarity of a Lamborghini. It is classy, even to a non-car person.

Pottering around London, you can entirely forget about the potent performance on offer. During rare moments when the traffic clears, the throttle can be given a good squeeze. It has a very lengthy travel, something of which the Germans are fond. Extend all the way and the Arnage gathers pace very briskly indeed. The gearchanges come quickly and smoothly from the General Motors four-speed. Jump off the throttle and you can just hear the

flutter of the wastegate. It's just one of many beguiling noises that emanate from this car. It doesn't need the sharp, shriek of a modern supercar to attract attention. This is the symphony of a pipe organ, and the bass notes are just as pleasurable as the rest. Perhaps more so.

LIKE AN ELECTRIC MOTOR

The feeling during acceleration is almost akin to an electric motor. The engine growls, but the performance response just doesn't feel appropriate. It's like kicking a football and seeing it land

in the next county. I'm afraid to say that it feels rather addictive, and you being to welcome any opportunity to experience it again. Of course, actual ownership of such a car would bring some consideration of fuel economy, and the needle certainly dropped quite a way during our mostly-gentle city driving. John admits to once hitting the dizzy heights of 150mph in this car on a German autobahn, just to see what it could do. Drink an awful lot of fuel seems to have been the response. Happily, John reports that the car itself felt fine at such speeds, and actually ready to accelerate further. The reality is »

Handling almost
defies belief.



that 20mpg is likely to remain a distant dream with such a car. But then, luxury should not come cheap. It is said that the later Arnage models, the R and the T, which employed twin turbos and an entirely reworked engine management system, can achieve such noble aims.

Turn into a sharp bend, and the Arnage almost defies belief. Bodyroll is very well controlled, and the car simply goes where you point it. This is at least something it shares with the later Mulsanne-based Bentleys. Something this large, and this heavy, should not respond so ably. Well-defined bolsters hold you in place and while the steering lacks feel, there is prodigious grip on offer from the 255-section tyres. That said, knock the traction control off and we don't doubt for a moment that the fearsome torque of the engine could rub tread from the rear tyres very swiftly indeed. Such antics are best kept hidden away in the world of a certain tall, curly-haired motoring journalist though. This bearded writer is going to have more respect for the car.

There is a little more disappointment however, and it is levelled at the parking brake. I'm a rare person that uses such a device, even on an automatic, and the foot-operated pedal here is just awful to use. You have to press the pedal very hard indeed, then there's an awful clunk when you operate the release, which sits down by your right knee. It feels entirely unbecoming to hear such an awful noise in a car that should be all about refinement. Still, at least it isn't electronic.

Trivial matters aside, this is a mightily impressive machine. When you consider that a nice one might cost you £30,000, then look at what other classic cars are fetching such money, the Arnage makes plenty of sense. Sure, the running costs will be greater than most, but you don't buy any Rolls-Royce or Bentley without recognising such.

Is now the time to buy? Absolutely! Already, Silver Seraph prices have firmed up – fewer were produced, so there's rarity value there. An Arnage offers that spectacular performance though,

as well as the sportier looks. Really, it seems more realistic to ask why not? ■

Thanks to IntroCar for its help with this feature. www.introcar.co.uk

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine	6750cc/V8/OHV
Power	400bhp@4000rpm
Torque:	603lb/ft@2100rpm
Top Speed:	150mph (limited)
0-60mph:	5.8 seconds
Gearbox:	4-speed automatic

PARTS PRICES

All prices are courtesy of IntroCar's Prestige Parts and do not include VAT.

Front brake disc	£195
Front brake pad set	£224
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Upper balljoint	£153
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Well, one has to
cover up one's
keyhole.



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The main assembly area with several Bentleys in progress.

• SPECIALIST VISIT •

VBE RESTORATIONS

We visit one of the most respected names in the world of vintage Bentley restorations.

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY: IAN SEABROOK

One of the most enjoyable perks of my job is driving around the countryside, arriving at random, agricultural buildings, and finding remarkable cars and people lurking within.

That was very much the vibe as I arrived in rural Warwickshire, to visit VBE Restorations. On arrival, I genuinely did think that my sat nav had done me wrong once more. This steel clad barn surely couldn't be right?

Stepping into the workshop has a certain, Tardis-like feel going on

though. A huge contrast exists, and you find yourself standing amongst a row of vintage Bentleys, with the odd classic curiosity standing nearby too – in this case, a very early E-Type roadster, and a Hillman Aero Minx.

That variety is something promoted by Tim Cresswell, who now runs the business. It was started in 1993 by his father, Richard, whose working career had seen go from apprentice to head of vehicle proving, taking over from Norman Dewis. In his spare time, Richard steadily restored several vintage Bentleys. It was a job that

required a great deal of engineering, and hobby became business in 1993.

VINTAGE BENTLEY ENGINEERING

VBE stands for Vintage Bentley Engineering, and that's a fair reflection on the work carried out here. Restoration of these cars requires a high degree of remanufacture. You simply cannot buy everything you need off the shelf.

Tim was always keen to get involved with the business, but he was never



These days, it might be called 'shabby chic.' Wonderful condition.

going to have the company handed to him on a plate. In fact, Tim spent four years on a Mechanical Engineering apprenticeship at GEC-Alsthom, before becoming a turbine engineer. Richard thought it very important for Tim to learn skills outside the business, something Tim appreciates, even if at the time, he was very keen to jump on board. "The apprenticeship was great. I was taught how to use lathes, milling machines and much more. Working with turbines meant I learnt about stress and fatigue of materials. That has transferred really well to the work we do now."

After two years working in the UK, Tim transferred to an Australian subsidiary of Alsthom for two years, VBE had expanded to such an extent that Richard invited Tim to come on board. He joined VBE in 2007, working in all areas of the business, and took over the running of the business from 2013, allowing Richard to retire in 2016.

Currently, VBE employs eight employees in total, with six of those in the workshop. As ever, finding people »



A rebuilt engine is almost ready to refit.

SPECIALIST VISIT VBE RESTORATIONS



Setting up a differential is a specialist task in itself.



Close-ratio gearbox conversion a popular upgrade.



This is a 3-Litre, up-gunned to 4½ litres.



Wonderfully constructed fuel tank, all done in-house.



This is a definite body-off restoration.

with the right skills is a challenge, all the more so because the vast majority of the work VBE does is in house, whether forming complex body panels, retrimming an interior or making small components for the engines. "These cars were pretty much hand-built when new," explains Tim. "That means machining parts for them is an essential part of the process. It would be a nightmare if we had to keep getting external companies to make parts for us when we need them."

Certainly, as I walk around the workshop, I take in all of the many machines used to make these parts. "About the only thing we farm out is paint," explains Tim. Every inch of the

current workshop seems to be taken up with machinery, car parts and at least nine cars currently being worked on. These cars range from a wonderfully shabby 3-Litre, which is being recommissioned but left in a state of originality. "The owner is keen for us to get the car working properly, but leave it looking as it is," says Tim. I'm glad. There's character here that's impossible to recreate if you went the whole hog.

Similarly, the 4½-Litre next to it is a full nut-and-bolt restoration of the highest order under the skin, but again, the body will largely be left as it is. Naturally, should you wish, a car could be completely restored from the ground up, but I find it charming to

know that there are those who would ensure a car is fresh and fit under the skin, but leave it with its external flaws on display. One car even has its hood seemingly held in place with ratchet straps. An aged body is something that is entirely impossible to recreate. The passage of time leaves marks and scars that are part of a car's story, and I love to see them. This is the closest a car can get to wearing its heart on its sleeve.

UPGRADES APPLIED

Upgrade work is carried out too, and another 3-Litre is having the steering box upgraded to the 4½-Litre gearing, which makes it much lighter. It's an

Rod is a master trimmer, with considerable experience.



Hides await their chance to become seats.



A heavy duty sewing machine. Old, but still going strong.



invisible change, that doesn't detract from the look of car, but does make life a lot easier for the driver. Next to it is another 3-Litre, having flowing Vanden Plas-style wings reinstated rather than the simple 'cycle' fitted to many cars in the 1960s. There's also a new spare wheel carrier being fabricated from scratch, so the wheels will be held at the rear rather than the sides. It's a fine display of craftsmanship.

A Speed Six is undergoing a gearbox conversion, with closer ratios again making life easier for the driver, and performance easier to access. Another 3-Litre is being upgraded to a 4½-Litre engine. That rather typifies the preferred upgrades here. It's the sort »



Fresh oil for this rebuilt gearbox.

SPECIALIST VISIT

VBE RESTORATIONS



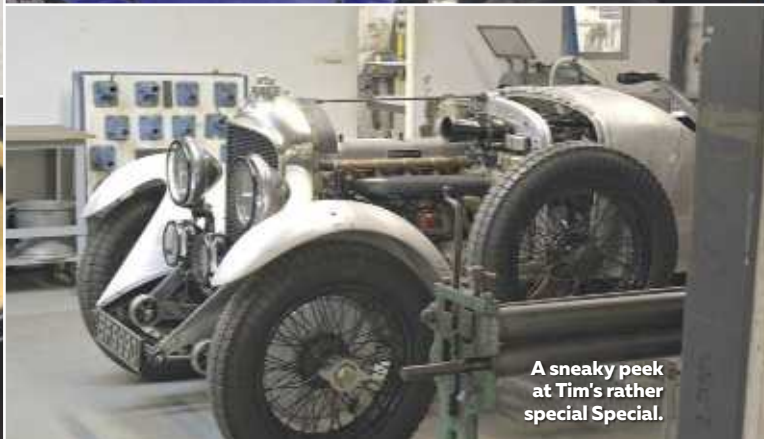
Richard Cresswell's own 3-Litre.



Tim Cresswell now runs the business, after working in all areas.



Beautifully crafted dashboard for Tim's Special.



A sneaky peek at Tim's rather special Special.

of thing that would have happened in period. It isn't simply bolting on some modern parts and losing what makes these cars special in the first place.

Upstairs, Rod the trimmer is hard at work. He worked for many years at HJ Mulliner Park Ward. Here, entire interiors can be crafted, and it's not just for Bentleys. Seats are also being made for an Audi RS and a Porsche 964. The same skills can be used for many decades. Rod is, to be kind, working past retirement age, and that highlights an issue here. "It's very hard to find people with the right skills," explains Tim. "Younger people don't seem to be interested in learning these skills." And skills they are too, with some very fearsome-looking sewing machines standing ready to use. You need decent power to get through some of the hides used in these cars. If you have such skills, VBE are currently looking to recruit, so do visit the website.

Another car sitting in the workshop is Richard's own 3-Litre. This car contains a great many upgrades. The engine is now 5.3 litres and the body is a Birkin-style sports body after the original saloon one had perished beyond repair. The car was completed in 1996 and

has been used extensively for tours and competitions, including the Rallye Des Alpes, the Classic Marathon and appearances at Silverstone. "It's a workhorse and also a demonstrator," says Tim. "It's also surprisingly brisk. It surprises a lot of people!"

A RATHER SPECIAL PROJECT

Tim has his own project on the go as well, though this is very much still in progress. We got to see elements of it, but it's fair to say we really cannot wait to see the fully-finished car. There's some serious bodywork skill in this car, and it was wonderful to see the panels still in bare aluminium. Tim grins as he calls it "the ultimate vintage Bentley for the modern driver." That said, you don't need to worry that it's going to have ECUs, power steering and disc brakes. It will have hydraulic diaphragm clutch, hydraulic brakes and maybe overdrive, but will still very much be a vintage machine.

To be honest, I'd find it very easy to just sit and watch the engineers at work here. As something of a failed engineer myself, it's such a pleasure

to see lumps of metal turned into bushes or washers, and to watch a transmission being refitted with its gears. These skills are much in demand, and it sees cars from all over the world visit these workshops. Tim says, "I'd say 20% of our workload comes from America, 30% from Europe and 50% from the UK. It's very much global."

So yes, I have a very privileged life, which allows me to discover these wonderful workshops. It's reassuring to know that yes, we do still make things in this country. Perhaps not on the scale of previous decades, but the skills are still there. If you're a younger reader considering what to do with your working life, heading down the road of vintage vehicle restoration looks fantastically varied, is as in demand as it ever was, and you'll get the chance to work on some truly remarkable vehicles. I'm starting to wish I was 18 once again. ■

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• TECHNICAL •

PRE-WAR RUBBER

Find out the difference between a beaded edge and a wired-on design of tyre with our guide to crossply tyres for pre-war Bentleys and Rolls-Royces.

WORDS AND PICS: **ROB HAWKINS**

Tyre technology is one aspect of a Rolls or Bentley that often gets overlooked, so it is easy to put our trust in a brand name without really having an understanding of what we have chosen. And when it comes to pre-war models equipped with crossply tyres, this is an entirely different subject to modern radial tyres that are fitted to most post-war vehicles.

The construction of a crossply usually consists of at least four layers of textile fabric running from one sidewall, across the tread and to the other sidewall at approximately 45

degrees, to form a complete structure.

The earliest crossply tyres fitted up to around 1924 were of a beaded edge design, and like many crossplies, they were equipped with an inner tube. The beaded edge crossply consists of a substantial rubber tyrewall (sidewall) that includes ridges of hard rubber (beads) designed to hold the tyre to the rim of a beaded edge wheel using the pressure inside the inner tube.

With a recommended pressure of at least 60psi on any beaded edge tyre (but 80-90psi on a Ghost), they were designed to cope with loose surface roads of the 1920s, which were often

littered with debris and where high speed was not an option. At the time, this was the only pneumatic tyre available, but as Dougal Cawley of Longstone Tyres explains, "As more and more roads became tarmac, the extra side forces on the tyre brought about the grip on these sealed roads, tended to pull the tyres off the rim."

Julian Majzub of Blockley Tyres has some interesting comments regarding beaded edge tyres. "I have a number of Bentleys myself – a few 3 Litres including a few early cars on beaded edge, which is why I made the beaded edge range," he says. It's worth noting



If you're exploring the mountains in a Ghost, decent rubber is a must.

that beaded edge tyres require the rims to be in the very best condition. Julian continues to explain, "People are rightly fed up with the trauma of failures with beaded edge, but all the Indy 500 Miles Races and so on were of the beaded edge era with far fewer problems! I've made mine exactly as they should be and would be encouraging people back onto them."

Ben Field, the MD at Beaulieu-based Vintage Tyres agrees with Julian in encouraging people to use them. He points out that, "with the careful use of today's modern technology, our range of Ensign Chevron Cord beaded edge tyres are better today than beaded edge tyres have ever been and providing the rims are in good condition and an adequate pressure is maintained, owners should not be afraid to use them."

The beaded edge tyre was eventually replaced by the wired-on tyre that's also known as a straight sided tyre or a high pressure tyre in the USA. This features an in-extendable bonded wire hoop around the bead of the tyre (where it fits against the wheel), so the circumference of the tyre doesn't change and there is consequently no risk of the tyre falling off the wheel. With an inner tube fitted, the recommended pressure is around 65psi, according to Longstone Tyres.

Changing tyres in the event of a puncture (horseshoe nails were a massive problem) or a tyre falling off wasn't particularly easy until the split rim was introduced on the Silver Ghost and used with straight sided tyres. Initially, this was a rim that could be detached from a wooden wheel, which enabled the tyre to be removed easily

before fitting a new one or refitting it, and securing the rim back in position. This design progressed to wire wheels where a detachable flange was fitted, allowing the tyre to be removed and refitted. According to Longstone Tyres, this design is still used on some modern heavy goods vehicles.

The well-based wheel was introduced towards the end of the production of the Silver Ghost, which allowed for lower tyre pressures. This design of wheel features a well where the bead of the tyre can sit inside, whilst the opposite side of the tyre is slipped over the flange to enable fitting, rather than the detachable flange. It has continued to be used today, but back when it was introduced, the advantage of a well-based crossply tyre was to enable running at a lower pressure of 35-40psi on vehicles such as a Silver Ghost, enabling a more comfortable ride and absorbing the undulations of the road.

CROSSPLY DIMENSIONS

The dimensions of a crossply tyre are indicated on the sidewall. A number such as 700x21 represents a tyre that can be fitted on a 21 inch diameter wheel and the section of the tyre is 7 inches wide with a tyre wall that is also 7 inches tall – early crossply tyres have a 100% aspect ratio, so the width and tyre wall height are the same dimensions. However, as Dougal at Longstone explains, "Beaded edge tyre dimensions tend to be described in mm. For instance, a Silver Ghost fits an 895x135 tyre, being 895mm overall in diameter with a tyre section being 135mm tall and wide. A similar system of measurement »



Lucas 33x5 crossply is the best crossply for a Ghost with straight sided tyres in Longstone's opinion – the centrifugal ribs grip well on tarmac and keep the noise down.



650x19 Custom Classic from Longstone, favoured as a taller, longer legged tyre for the 20/25 and 25/30.

TECHNICAL: TYRES PRE-WAR RUBBER

Beaded-edge tyres should not be feared when it comes to pre-war Bentleys.



700x21 Michelin is the best crossply for late Ghosts on 21-inch wheels, according to Longstone Tyres.



Vintage Tyres now make this Ensign 895x135 that both they and Longstone believe is the best crossply for the Ghost.

was applied to straight sided tyres for a Ghost, being 33x5 – 33 inches overall diameter and 5 inches wide and tall.”

Other numbers that may be displayed on the sidewall include a four digit code, which represents the week and year of manufacture. 3315 for instance, means the tyre was manufactured in the 33rd week of 2015. However, this system wasn't fully introduced until 2000.

Many tyre manufacturers recommend a maximum lifespan of six or seven years for a tyre before it should be renewed, even if the tyre is hardly worn. During its lifetime, the structure of the tyre weakens, resulting in a breakdown of the sidewall and a greater risk of air escaping, or at worse, a blowout. Plus, sunlight (including ultraviolet light from the sun) and heat cycles where the tyre warms up and cools down, add to the ageing process.

The rules and regulations concerning a pre-war vehicle's tyres appear to be quite vague in many cases. In the UK, they are exempt from the MOT test (any vehicle registered before 1960 is exempt). However, the law stipulates a minimum tread depth of 1.6mm across 75% of the tyre, but only where tread wear indicators are found between the tread. These tread wear indicators (TWI for short) look like small squares of rubber between the tread and should be present on all road legal crossply tyres. The minimum tread depth is greater in countries such as Germany. Plus, many European countries require winter tyres to be used when the weather is cold.

TYRE TROUBLE

If the tread is excessively worn along the

outside and inside edge, the tyre's pressure may be too low. One worn edge on the front tyres suggests the steering geometry needs to be checked, or the car has endured hard cornering. Scrubbing of the sidewall also suggests hard cornering that's too much for the pressure in the tyre, but as Dougal at Longstone notes, "The front tyres on a vintage car predominantly wear the outside edge first because they have positive camber to keep the steering lighter."

Bulges or tears in the sidewall mean the tyre must be replaced before the tyre carcass fails. Small cracks in the sidewall are a sign the rubber is perishing, which will allow moisture to penetrate and cause the tyre to delaminate, and this also means the



Blockley's 650/700x21 has a three-stud pattern and is suitable for the Rolls-Royce Phantom I.

tyre is no longer gripping as well as it should because the rubber is changing. Such a tyre should be renewed.

QUALITY COUNTS

Good quality inner tubes are just as important as tyres. Longstone recommend using Michelin inner tubes as they have found them to be constructed from a thicker rubber of the best quality when compared with other brands they have used. Most inner tubes are supplied with a crystalline French chalk coating, which should not be removed. It helps reduce friction when fitting and when fitted, which in turn reduces heat.

Both Blockley and Vintage manufacture their own range of thick butyl inner tubes. As Julian Majzub of Blockley Tyres explains, "This is a critically important component on the

car, yet probably the least expensive item when putting a car on the road." He also points out that, "just because your inner tube may have a myriad of tyre sizes printed on it, however impressive the brand name, make sure that it is genuinely compatible with the tyre by lightly blowing it up and placing it inside or over the tyre. It is for this reason that Blockley have needed to make thick bespoke butyl inner tubes to suit their tyres."

Many specialists recommend fitting the same brand and type of tyre for all four wheels to ensure the same level of grip is maintained under cornering and braking.

Ben Field says, "Tyres should at least be replaced in axle pairs, however, due to different tyre construction characteristics, this can, on some occasions, lead to over or understeer, and so we would

generally advise at the very least, like-for-like replacement or, better still, the replacement of all four tyres".

Switching to different sized tyres has to be researched carefully. A tyre with a taller sidewall will help to increase the rolling radius and thus increase the top speed, which allows for a better cruising speed at lower engine revs. Wider tyres are usually fitted to help improve handling, and whilst they often provide greater road holding if the load is there to benefit from it, they do not provide better handling. Instead, thinner tyres give better, more progressive handling, whereas wider tyres can spoil the handling and potentially, for a Rolls Royce, create heavier more numb steering, which is less precise.

Ben Field at Vintage says, "We have many customers with Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars who have been persuaded to fit excessively wide tyres »

Julian Majzub from Blockley Tyres outlines his recommendations for beaded edge tyres on various pre-war Bentleys and Rolls Royces.

"For Bentleys I make beaded edge (Bentley sizes are 820x120, and 880x120 for the Colonial cars), small and larger 21-inch and a 700x21 for 8 litres. I have a number of WO Bentleys myself - including a couple of early 3 litres (one has engine no 1 in it) on beaded edge, which is why I started the beaded edge project. For the Derby cars I make the 550x18 in a Triple stud period looking pattern, but by this stage the three-stud pattern was going out of favour so I make a different pattern 550x18 which is more correct visually, and especially on a saloon car the tread is a quieter one. We use this same tread pattern in 600/650x17 for the Derby 4 1/4's and Wraiths. All of these Blockley tyres are 130mph tested which I do, not because anyone will be holding this speed for an hour like the test, but it shows the build quality is good with round tyres, without heavy spots or wobbles. For the Rolls-Royces, I make the 895x135 for the Ghost, and 33x5 for the later Ghosts. I would absolutely recommend the use of the Blockley beaded edge

on an early Ghost, although other specialists recommend that the Straight sided 33x5 be used, but this is not necessary and I would encourage people back onto beaded edge now that a quality item is available - lighter delightful steering as it was designed. The 32x4.5 straight sided tyre is good for the 20HP with a triple stud pattern. And we have 700x21 for the Phantom I - the triple stud pattern is correct for a Phantom I, but since they have been unavailable for so long the owners don't realise these are correct - and ours have an 8 ply construction for good handling. We make a 650x19 while we have 600x19 which is factory fitment for the 20/25, although many prefer the bigger 650x19 tyre."



TECHNICAL: TYRES

PRE-WAR RUBBER



Cracks in the sidewall indicate the rubber is perishing, so the tyre is no longer gripping as well as it should because the rubber is changing.

Below: Blockley's A6C pattern is available for 17- and 18-inch wheels including the Derby cars and the Wraith.



Vintage Tyres warns that fitting wide tyres to a 20/25 like this impairs looks and performance. Keep it narrow.



on their cars at some point. Sadly they have later discovered that this is a mistake and have requested that they be replaced with the correct size and profile. Fitting wide tyres not only makes the car look wrong, but the performance is often impaired."

Experimenting with different tyre pressures has its limits. If the pressure is too low, the tyre could overheat, resulting in a greater risk of puncture, damage and a blowout. Plus, a lower pressure in a tyre reduces its directional stability and will cause over or understeer. However, Rolls-Royce often recommended low tyre pressures to help create a more comfortable ride

quality, but Longstone have found the recommended pressures should be increased by at least 10% on a pre-war Rolls-Royces to make the cars more suited to modern roads.

Choosing the best tyre for your pre-war vehicle isn't always straightforward. Remember that most of these vehicles and their tyres at the time were designed when such cars could not drive at the sort of speeds we drive at nowadays as tarmac surfaced roads were not so prolific. But Ben Field at Vintage points out that their range of Rolls-Royce and Bentley tyres are speed rated to at least 90mph and most are rated

to 130mph, and so would generally encourage people to use crossply tyres to get the best authentic feel. ■

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ENGINE EXAMINATION: L-SERIES V8

WORDS: **ANDREW EVERETT** PHOTOGRAPHY: **PAUL WAGER**

The Rolls-Royce and Bentley V8 engine will soon enter its 59th year of production, making it the longest-running engine series ever made, eclipsing even the Austin A-Series, Volkswagen flat four and the Chevrolet V8.

Since entering production in 1959 to power the Silver Cloud and Bentley S-Series, it has powered not only the Silver Shadow and Spirit ranges but has also been revamped to power the latest Bentley Mulsanne in twin-turbo form. It's a superb engine built to very fine tolerances and one that has no major weaknesses. Even 300,000 miles wouldn't be a problem but given that so many old ones end their lives as neglected wedding cars, they do take

an awful lot of neglect and keep going.

We're indebted to the team at Flying Spares near Market Bosworth in Leicestershire for their assistance. Started in 1995, they're one of the foremost suppliers of both used, new and reconditioned Rolls-Royce and Bentley parts and the expertise of their engine builders was invaluable. If you're tempted by the idea of being able to run a Rolls-Royce or Bentley on a real-world budget then find them on 01455 292949 or at www.flyingsparses.com.

HISTORY

The Rolls Royce L-Series V8 went into production in 1959. Referred to as the L410 unit internally at Crewe

(due to its 4.10 inch bores) it was an all-alloy pushrod V8 with pressed in steel liners. Blocks were reputedly cast and then left for a few months to relieve any casting stresses before machining and assembly.

To the centre of this block were bolted cast iron holders for the hydraulic tappets. The crankshaft was a nitrided EN40B steel unit initially with integral balance weights but later on, bolt on weights. Connecting rods were forged from high grade steel and cast alloy Hepolite pistons were used.

The cylinder heads were designed with porting not dissimilar from the famous Merlin engines and are held down by no less than four rows of studs. The camshaft is driven

by a gear, as is the oil pump.

All through the engine there is evidence of meticulous design and assembly. As well as having the four rows of head studs, the heads are also dowelled to the block and where BMC or Ford would use a bolt, Rolls Royce used a stud and a nut.

As the engine builders at Flying Spares say, it's a lovely engine to work on because it's so well made yet simple – if you can rebuild a Rover V8, you can rebuild one of these.

The L410 was used in the 1966 Silver Shadow and Bentley T-Series with minor modifications, the main one of which was a new camshaft with two extra lobes to operate the brake pumps that are bolted into the centre vee of the engine.

In 1970, the L410 was increased in capacity from 6230cc to 6750cc by increasing the crankshaft stroke from 3.6 inches to 3.9 inches. This gave extra power and more importantly torque but as you know, Rolls-Royce never quoted power figures. In reality though they gave about the same sort of power as a good American V8.

In this form with the same twin SU carburettors, the 6.75 (or 'six and three quarters') engine was carried over into the 1974 Shadow II but the repositioning of various ancillaries meant that the block casting was different in places and the two units cannot really be interchanged. SU HIF (horizontal float) carburettors arrived in the later Shadow II cars just before the unit was carried over into the Silver Spirit, a car that used a lot of the underpinnings from the late Shadows.

We can't carry on without mentioning the magnificent Rolls-Royce »



Silver Cloud II first to use the L-Series V8.



As well as being secured by four rows of studs, the head on a L-Series V8 is also dowelled to the block with five smaller studs.



Eight cast alloy Hepolite pistons are connected to the L-Series' nitraded crank by forged high grade steel connecting rods.



Although the L-Series engine is a very reliable unit, head gaskets can blow on turbo-powered cars.

ENGINE EXAMINATION

L-SERIES V8



Phantom VI one of the largest cars to use this engine.



Continental R and T were new cars, with the same legendary powerplant.

Camargue, a car that was undoubtedly conceived to see just how much Rolls could charge for a car. This Pininfarina styled machine used the same engine as the Shadow II but a lower bonnet line meant that Rolls replaced there twin SU carburettors with a single Solex 4A1 DVG unit, at that time very popular with BMW and Mercedes Benz - but not with mechanics! We'll discuss the Solex carb a bit later however.

THE '80S, '90S AND TURBOS

By 1980, the Bentley badge had become just that, a badge for a Rolls-Royce for folk who didn't want a Rolls-Royce. That was about to change though because in 1982, the Bentley Mulsanne Turbo was launched complete with a single turbo version of the 6.75 motor. Like Lotus was doing with the Esprit Turbos, Rolls engineers sealed the carburettor (a Solex 4A1 DVG) inside a cast alloy box to pressurise the unit. The turbo was a pretty standard Garrett unit and by 1987, the carburettor was replaced by Bosch MK Motronic fuel injection for better economy and reliability.

The Turbo R was revised again in 1995, now using a Zytec engine management system, and there was the limited edition Turbo S. This tweaked engine was fitted to twelve Bentley Continental S cars and a tiny number of special built Rolls-Royce Silver Spirit S cars - it's thought that only three examples were built.

Next was the Bentley Continental, launched to much fanfare in 1991. Here was a Bentley of the proper sort, an extremely expensive and beautiful two-door coupe that put the likes



The inlet and exhaust porting on the L-Series' head is very similar to that of the famous V12 Merlin aero engine fitted to the Spitfire.



No overhead camshafts for the L-Series engine, just 16 traditional pushrods to operate the valves.

of Mercedes firmly in their place. Powering this magnificent machine was the Turbo R unit with the same 325bhp and 450lb/ft of torque. In 1994, the engine was given a makeover by Cosworth Engineering who were part of the same Vickers Group that owned Rolls-Royce and Bentley. A very limited run of 375bhp Continental S cars were built the same year with a liquid cooled intercooler. This was introduced on the regular 1996 model car, along with EMS-3 Zytec engine management that improved efficiency as well as accurately controlled turbo over-boost. It was also the first time that Rolls Royce or Bentley publicly stated a power figure and while 385bhp was respectable enough, the torque figure of 550lb/ft was staggering. More was to come however with the Continental T with around 405bhp and 590lb/ft and for the 1998 model year – 650.

1998 AND BMW OWNERSHIP

To the dismay of many at first, Volkswagen and BMW were to purchase the Rolls-Royce and Bentley marques in a complex deal. This all rather overshadowed the launches of the Rolls-Royce Silver Seraph and the Bentley Arnage, which controversially did not use the L-Series V8.

The Silver Seraph was not a huge success, being made for just four years and a shade over 1500 units before being replaced in 2003 by the all-new Phantom model.

The Bentleys though were to return to the old 6.75 engine, with production now outsourced to Cosworth who were handling the development of the unit. Initially in much the same form as used in the Turbo R, this engine was revamped considerably in 2001, boosted by two turbochargers and retaining the four bolted main bearing caps of the original Turbo units from decades previously. By 2005, the latest 6.75 engine had lost the last remaining parts that were interchangeable with the original 1959 L410 but it was still the same basic unit with a traceable lineage.

Engine management was now by Bosch Motronic ME7.1.1 to replace the old Zytec system and a pair of Garrett T3 turbos were used. From 2007, the Garrett units were replaced by smaller but more efficient Mitsubishi turbos and the engine capacity increased to 6.8 litres (or 6761 cc), the first capacity



Missing out oil changes can cause the V8's tappets to chatter, a sure sign the engine is past its best and due an overhaul.



The hydraulic tappets on the Rolls-Royce L-Series V8 are machined to very high tolerances and don't have any oil seals.

increase since 1970. This new engine was used in the Bentley Arnage T and developed around 500bhp.

2009 AND BEYOND

2009 saw the end of Bentley Arnage production and with it the last remnants of the unfortunate BMW and VW clash. It was also the 50th anniversary of the Rolls-Royce V8 engine. By now there was no real need to build the old unit and it was obvious that the engine should really

be pensioned off: 50 years isn't a bad innings and by now the Continental GT was using a VW-based engine that seemed to do the trick.

However, in 2010, an all-new Bentley Mulsanne was launched and to the delight of Bentley traditionalists, under the bonnet was not a VW-type unit but the real deal, a turbocharged 6750cc OHV monster. Think of the Stones' performance at Glastonbury a couple of years ago and that's what it's all about – whilst Keith Richard's lambasted Jagger's Arnage for 'not »

ENGINE EXAMINATION

L-SERIES V8

having a separate chassis' he would no doubt be impressed to know that the new car is powered by the same basic V8 as his 1966 Flying Spur. Not that the old unit isn't bang up to date for current emissions regs because it meets Euro 5 regulations helped by tricks like variable cam phasing and cylinder de-activation.

So there we are, the Rolls Royce L410 V8, still being built after 56 years with no end in sight. Now developing a monster 512bhp, the old stager is back at Crewe being built with the usual care, taking 30 hours apiece to build. Like the final A-Series and Beetle engines, the Rolls-Royce engineers who designed the unit back in the 1950s will recognise most of it and get some satisfaction that the architecture was so sound, so long ago.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The basic carburettor unit is an immensely strong engine - they could have made a good diesel unit from it if needed. Given regular use plus oil and coolant changes (mineral oil such as Castrol GTX) it will just run and run and it's a unit capable of huge mileages. You won't find too many cars that have had the engine rebuilt yet and many originals are still going after 30, 40 or 50 years. Sadly, many Silver Shadows and Spirits began life high, but then became tired bangers that were given yearly doses of filler and white paint to



The Rolls-Royce L-Series V8 is built to very fine tolerances and with correct maintenance, could easily run to over 300,000 miles.

chug along as wedding cars. As a result, many are full of black death, never fully warm up and wear out. Actual weaknesses are few: the phosphor bronze oil pump gear can wear out until the teeth are razor sharp, piston rings will eventually wear out and the hydraulic tappets can start to chatter.

Older units in the Shadows have

a scroll type rear crank seal - that's where the alloy rear cover is a very close fit to the crank and has a thread machined into it so that any oil that comes back is drawn back around the 'thread' and into the engine. Tired units with worn rings will develop a lot of piston ring blow-by thus increasing crankcase pressure and the likelihood of oil leaks. Later type rear covers with a rubber oil seal can be fitted but it's not essential. Crankshafts rarely suffer any problems and a light polish is normally all that's needed unless the car has been seriously neglected.

The hydraulic tappets are indeed very similar to GM units and they don't have oil seals, merely extremely tight tolerances. Often they can be dismantled and cleaned up for re-use.

While the cam lobes for the tappets last well, the lobes for the brake pumps on Shadow and Spirit models can wear badly resulting in a tapping sound and a new cam is about the only answer. Pistons are very hardy but should a new set be required, be aware that they are around £250 each although Flying Spares are introducing an aftermarket piston for about half the price to make engine rebuilds more cost effective.

Should you need another engine, used ones start from £3000 and a fully rebuilt unit is around twice that whilst Flying Spares can rebuild your existing



In later cars, the famous engine was demurely hidden beneath layers of plastic.



Crankshaft is a mighty piece of engineering, very rarely requiring much work.



The nitrated crankshaft on later L-Series engines is fitted with bolt-on balance weights.



Turbo's carburettor was housed in this pressure chamber to maximise boost.



Twin carburettors are a bit easier for DIY than the later fuel injection.

unit to retain the matching numbers.

Turbo models are quite well known for head gasket problems, but if caught early they can be replaced with the engine in situ. Unlike cheaper engines, the V8 has steel helical type thread fitted to the block so there's little chance of head studs pulling out and there aren't any stretch head bolts either.

Camargues and other models such as the early Turbos use the Solex 4A1 carburettor that doesn't have a great reputation. This is mainly down to the three sections of the carb body warping. These can be separated,

"Rolls-Royce engineers who designed the unit back in the 1950s will recognise most of it"

made flat on a plate of glass with fine emery paper and reassembled with new gaskets that Flying Spares supply. Another trick we've been told about is to remove the centre stud that retains the air filter lid and drill through the entire carb body and into the manifold, tapping a thread and using a long stud and a 7/16 or 11mm nut and washer to effectively clamp the carburettor in the centre to prevent warping. Flying Spares sells a conversion kit to replace

the troublesome Solex with a pair of traditional SU's for around £1500 and for £2500, a brand new Solex carb. Expensive but it's a simple bolt-on and when new, the 4A1 was a decent carb.

As stated earlier, the older non-turbo units really need a non synthetic 20/50 oil of the type recommended by Rolls-Royce. Turbo models though need a synthetic of the recommended grade. Old engines suffering from black death need caution. Whilst it's not »

ENGINE EXAMINATION
L-SERIES V8



recommended by anyone as such, you could run them on a high detergent diesel-type oil to gently clean the unit, changing the oil every 1000 miles with a new filter. Be warned though: flushing oils can be too aggressive and block oil ways with loosened debris. Up until the latest generations under VW ownership, the engines all used old AF type nuts and bolts. No millimetres here except for ancillary parts.

As for the electrics, the L-Series V8 used points ignition through the 1960s and much of the 1970s, with both Lucas and AC Delco units that used two sets of points. This was eventually replaced

by Lucas Opus electronic ignition that appears to be more reliable than when used on the Jaguar V12, possibly due to less heat being generated. These days there are kits such as the Aldon Ignitor, Lumenition was well as 123 Ignition to get rid of the contact breaker points.

The old Lucas starter motor is a stout old thing but it's best replaced by a more modern unit such as the Hi Torque units – these really spin the V8 over quickly giving a much faster start up time and less chance of flooding. Similarly, alternators that are engineered to look like old dynamos using Denso internals

and a great upgrade and neither these of the Hi Torque starters detract from the originality. ■

L SERIES ENGINE TYPES
L410 6.25 engine in the Cloud 11 and Bentley S Series
L410B 6.25 unit with brake pumps for the Silver Shadow and T Series
L410 (1970) 6.75 version
L410D Turbocharged variant for the Bentley Mulsanne
L410I Fuel injection, normally aspirated version
L410IT Fuel injection version for the Bentley Mulsanne Turbo R
L410MT Light pressure turbocharged version for 1997 model year
L410MT/S Turbo engine for the S version.
L410TT Twin Mitsubishi turbo engine with liquid cooled intercooler
L410HT Twin turbo Mulsanne engine from 2010.

CARS THAT USED THE L410 ENGINE
ROLLS-ROYCE:
Cloud II and III
Phantom V and VI
Silver Shadow and Wraith
Silver Spirit and Spur
Corniche
Camargue
BENTLEY:
S2 and S3
T1 and T2
Corniche
Continental, R, S and T
Mulsanne and S
Mulsanne Turbo R, S and T
Eight
Brooklands
Azure
Arnage Red Label, R, RL and T
Mulsanne(2010)



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BUYING ON A BUDGET: £20,000

If you have £20,000 to spend on a Rolls-Royce or Bentley which models should you buy? Which ones are the best value, which ones would be a brave choice and which ones should be avoided at all costs? We speak to the experts to find out

WORDS: JACK GROVER PHOTOGRAPHY: KELSEY MEDIA ARCHIVE

"If you couldn't afford to run one when it's new, you can't afford to run when it's old" is a maxim that gets trotted out a lot in the world of classic cars, and prestige marques such as Rolls-Royce and Bentley in particular. It's definitely a good rule of thumb but it's not strictly true. Many Crewe-built cars have surprisingly low service costs; yes, they still cost more to service than a lesser car of the same age but it can be quite manageable. There is now a network of independent specialists for older Rolls-Royce and Bentley models which rivals, if not surpasses, the coverage of the official dealer network for both marques, so finding somewhere to care for any new purchase is not an issue. Obtaining parts is no longer a matter of

arcane rituals and codes whispered over the Crewe parts counter; several firms supply parts for modern and classic products. So it seems that you really can buy and run a car that you couldn't afford when it was new.

But in this feature we're not talking about how little you can buy a Rolls-Royce or Bentley for; instead we've given ourselves a hypothetical budget of £20,000. This is a very reasonable budget for someone who has had a bit of a windfall or had a nest egg building up for a while to spend on a special sort of car – someone who has perhaps always promised themselves a car with the Spirit of Ecstasy or the Flying B on the prow and has now saved up a tidy sum to get one. It's also a budget which encompasses a huge range of cars, from

stately 1950s limousines to 21st century grand tourers. But which are the ones to buy, which ones are risky and which ones should be avoided at that price?

Before we get into the specifics, it's worth saying that all the specialists we talked to were unanimous on one point: that whatever the model and whatever the budget it is not worth buying a lower-priced car in poor condition with the hope of 'making it good' – it will always be easier, quicker and more cost-effective to buy as good an example as possible in the first place.

SILVER SHADOW

The past five years or so has seen the Shadow's fortunes turn around; now very good and well-maintained

EXPERT ADVICE

"If you want a car that will appreciate in value, I'd recommend a Silver Shadow. If you want something that will be practical to use every day I'd go for a Silver Spirit. For ultimate value for money, it has to be a Bentley Turbo R." – Colin Ayres, Colbrooks Specialists.

examples showing average mileages (of around 100,000 miles or more) can be found for just below and just above our budget.

Low-mileage cars, those with exceptionally complete service histories or those with a rare or special specification, can command several times our amount. Sticking to our limit, or slightly below (it's never a good idea to spend all your money to hand on the purchase of a car; save a little for sorting any niggles that appear post-purchase and to cover those other first-year running costs), there are good number of standard Silver Shadow IIs available. The original Shadow Is are more valuable so while you can buy them on our budget, they are correspondingly higher mileage or lower condition; a £20k Shadow I should by no means be avoided but better value will be had with a later car unless you really desire the appearance of the original version.

Colin Ayres at specialists Colbrooks said that, "the Silver Shadow is the best value Rolls-Royce at the moment, both in terms of the quality of car you



ONE TO BUY

It may not, in the most literal sense, be a Silver Shadow, but there's a 1974 M-reg Bentley T1 at Royce Service & Engineering. These are less rare than the T2 and with 128,000 miles on and the unusual Surf Blue interior this Bentley isn't going to attract the same values, despite an extensive history file. The £14,950 price would leave a lot of extra spending money in the budget.

get for your money and the fact that values are finally on the rise." Colin did caution that while a few years ago our budget would have virtually guaranteed a perfect car, that is no longer the case and Shadows at between £15,000 and £20,000 still require careful checking for body rust, suspension problems, worn leather and damaged wood veneer

on the interior. At this price these problems should not be significant (if they're there at all) but "another car at the same price could be much better; there's no reason you should have to gamble when buying one at this level."

When the Silver Shadow was current, and for a long time after production ended, the Bentley variant (the T-Series) was much less desirable and so was also lower in value. That is no longer the case as the revitalisation of the Bentley marque and the rarity of the T-Series (a mere 558 T2s were built against over 8000 Shadow IIs) mean that the values are usually out of our range for decent examples. Colin advised that "you couldn't get a good T2 for £20,000. Any one up for that price would need a lot of work to be dependable, or be hiding big potential problems for the future."

CORNICHE

The special two-door variants of the Silver Shadow generally sit several times over our £20,000 spending money but you see the occasional one that's in budget. Should you be tempted into getting what was for over 20 years considered the epitome of luxurious and elegant motoring »



You won't get much Corniche for your £20,000.

BUYING ON A BUDGET £20,000

for what seems like a bargain?

Our experts were understandably cautious. "A Corniche at that price is probably going to be hiding all sorts of corrosion in the bodywork and structure," said Colin. "Even if it's mechanically sound that will be a big problem in the long term and a Corniche is even more expensive to rectify than a standard Silver Shadow." Stephen Brown at London-based specialist Hanwell's agreed: "Nothing in this life is cheap and good Corniches simply go for more than that." When pushed on if a Corniche could be anything other than a financial sinkhole at his price level, we were told that "if it was an older fixed-head car with a standard specification that had had some light restoration or repair work on the body a few years back, was in straight but not remarkably good cosmetic condition and had patchy service history but evidence of being well-looked after by the owner, it could be worth a close look. But be very, very cautious." It would also be possible that a car with a respray to good (but not Rolls-Royce) standards could have its value drop to this level while still being viable.

SILVER SPIRIT/SPUR

As far as Rolls-Royces are concerned this is where all our specialists advised buyers on our budget to go. The Rolls-Royce of the 80s and early 90s has long been (almost literally) overshadowed by its predecessor but rising values of the Shadow has seen interest in the Silver Spirit (and its long-wheelbase Silver Spur sibling) rise.



ONE TO BUY

Maxing out our budget at £20,000 is this delightful, 24,000-mile Spirit at Ghost Motors. Finished in Light Ocean Blue, with matching blue hide with magnolia piping, it's an eye-catching car that is unlikely to lose value.



£20,000 certainly buys you a lovely view.

These models are also beginning to mature as classics rather than merely as second-hand Rolls-Royces. Stephen summed up the situation; "These are definitely improving in price as the poor-condition and worn-out ones have all gone to the breakers. The survivors are generally in lovely condition and the image of the Spur and Spirit has noticeably improved as a result.

"Low mileage Spirits – those with 80,000 miles and under – are fetching slightly over your budget," Stephen told us, "but you could still get very tidy examples. Higher mileages don't really bother Rolls-Royces so long as they're serviced properly; there's nothing to

fear in a car that has been well-used if the maintenance has been kept up. A Spirit II with fuel-injection would be the one to go for as a sweet spot between age, price, practicality and condition."

While the ropiest examples of the Spirit have been despatched to the scrapyard or broken for spares, do not assume that any survivor is free from trouble, even at this price point. Like most old Rolls-Royces it's corrosion in the lower body and the doors that causes the most trouble, as well as wear in the suspension and especially electrical issues as these later cars begin to carry much more in the way of gadgets than was the norm in previous decades – the self-levelling suspension is electronically rather than mechanically controlled, for instance, and the Spirit II adds computer-controlled dampers to the mix, as well as electronic fuel injection and more complicated climate control systems.

"Really you're getting cars in slightly better condition for the same price when you look at Spirits over Shadows," said Stephen, "but you're also getting a much-improved design. The Spirit has a reputation as just a facelifted Shadow but there are lots of detail changes and they're vastly more refined and modern to drive. It's in another era." The Silver Spur was, inevitably, produced in smaller numbers than the Spirit but that rarity makes them collectible now and they carry a slight premium.

Colin at Colbrooks had this to add on the matter of Silver Spirits: "The



ONE TO BUY

Hanwell's currently has three sub-£20,000 Turbo Rs for sale. Our pick would be the 1997 P-reg model in (what else?) British Racing Green with cream interior with green piping, a full service history and 68,500 miles. The asking price is £17,950.

Spirit III and IV models are rare as the production numbers had really shifted over to Bentleys by the mid-1990s. The Spirit IV in particular was made in small numbers but as the last Rolls-Royces to be built at Crewe with the Rolls-Royce engine they are going to become very desirable in the future."

BENTLEY TURBO R

It's inevitable that someone with £20,000 to spend is going to at least consider a Turbo R; here is a chance to buy what was for many years the world's fastest and most powerful saloon car, and one which remains renowned for its blend of performance, handling and 'British bulldog' character. The good news is that this budget will give you a wide selection of Turbo Rs in excellent condition. "You'll find plenty of very good, low-mileage Turbo Rs in clean condition and with good service history," said Colin. At Hanwell's, Stephen concurred, saying that "a Turbo R is better value for money than a Rolls-Royce; the values are lower, simply because there are more of them around, so the condition

will be better when comparing like for like, and of course you're getting the extra speed and handling as well."

When dealing with these high-performance cars the service history becomes even more crucial as neglect can cause expensive engine and ancillary problems while tired suspension and worn bushes will make the road manners downright unpleasant, if not dangerous. "The more service history the better, of course," said Colin, "so long as that servicing is from a reputable specialist. And if the history has gaps then it's the recent service record that you should place the value on. A few missed services 10 years ago clearly don't matter if the car is still in good shape now and has been looked after properly since then – but don't pay the same as for a Turbo R with a complete record."

There is a big cost waiting for the Turbo R owner to be aware of. Cars built before 1995 had 15-inch 'turbine style' alloy wheels which took unique Avon tyres. Those are no longer manufactured and neither are the Pirellis of the same size which were also available for a time. "It can

cost £400 per corner for Avons from stock," said Colin, "and as you can imagine a Turbo R can get through tyres quite quickly." A solution is to fit the later 17-inch wheels, which can take a much wider selection of tyres. While this detracts from a car's original specification it saves so much hassle that it doesn't affect the value too much. "However you do need to beware of earlier cars on the smaller wheels with very old and worn tyres or tyres of the incorrect size or speed rating."

Stephen summed up the Turbo R situation: "This is the perfect price point for these cars; you'll have a good range of cars in excellent condition with prices slightly below the budget so you can be picky and have some 'spending money' left over once you've bought one. Just don't overreach yourself and go for a Turbo RT or a Continental because those are worth significantly more and anything you find at that budget is going to be ropey."

BENTLEY MULSANNE/EIGHT/BROOKLANDS

The 'low-performance' Bentleys from the 1980s are, oddly enough, rarer than the all-conquering Turbo R but are also less desirable – while the price difference between a Turbo R and a Brooklands (and even the smaller one between a Mulsanne and an Eight) was significant when the cars were new these essentially disappeared on the used market. Colin agreed that the »

EXPERT ADVICE

"While I'd obviously like anyone buying one of these cars to do so from us, the really key thing is that they buy one from a specialist. They know the specific quirks and weaknesses of the models and we can spend thousands of pounds servicing and fettling a car before it goes on sale – all of which is included in the asking price." – Stephen Brown, Hanwells of London.

BUYING ON A BUDGET £20,000

Mulsanne Turbo does without brash Turbo R looks, though also lacks handling prowess.



market "is essentially for 'Turbo R' and 'others'. The lower-spec cars are worth less, so you'll be able to get a truly immaculate Eight or Brooklands LPT [low-pressure turbo] with low mileage for your £20,000. If you just want a really good Bentley this is the way to go." The very definite performance and handling differences of the Turbo R (especially in relation to the earliest Mulsanne and Mulsanne Turbo models) is very real but, as Colin put it, "the others are not exactly slow and you can rarely use the full performance of a Turbo R on UK roads anyway."

BENTLEY CONTINENTAL GT

The first true product of Crewe's era under Volkswagen ownership has been with us for 14 years now, and a question

that intrigued us when we began putting this feature together was "could you buy a Continental GT for £20,000, and if you could, should you?" The first part of that question is easy – there are a number of early Continental GTs for sale within budget (especially if you allow for a bit of haggling room). For the second part, we asked Neil Tetheron at Junction 17 Cars. "Don't do it!" was Neil's immediate answer before elaborating: "It's from an electrical point of view more than anything else. I've never seen a bad one body-wise unless it's been accident damaged. We've never had to do an engine strip-down. It's the electronic bits and the ancillaries that cause the trouble, and often it's due to the labour needed to repair them rather than the cost of the bits themselves."

For example, a turbo wastegate hose that costs £3.50 requires dropping the

engine from the car to replace because the engine and all its bolt-on parts are assembled on a subframe which is then fitted to the body. "At over £120 per hour for labour at a Bentley dealer that becomes a very expensive bit of hose, and without it the engine will be in permanent 'limp home' mode." Stephen at Hanwell's backed up all of this: "The common factor between Continentals at that price range is that they're early cars with poor service history. These cars, more than many other Rolls or Bentley models, need dedicated and knowledgeable servicing." Neil gave another example with "early cars had a design flaw where the cabin air plenum chamber drain ports blocked up, which led to rain water collecting and then backing up into the ECUs which are on the bulkhead. Replacing all of those modules and the wiring loom at Bentley prices could write off a car, and you need to know to regularly clean out the plenum to stop that happening." ■



Continental GTs are rapidly heading towards this budget, but values could yet drop further.

EXPERT ADVICE

"Continentals are still depreciating. The viable ones which are now £30,000 will be £20,000 cars in a few years, and the rough ones which are £20,000 now will be broken for spares by then. If you're set on a Continental GT at that price, wait a little while." – Neil Tetheron, Junction 17 Cars

CONTACTS

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01733 243737
www.colbrookspecialists.co.uk

Ghost Motors

01732 886002
www.ghostmotors.co.uk

Hanwells

0208 567 9729
www.hanwells.net

Junction 17 Cars

01733 247222
www.junction17cars.co.uk

Royce Engineering

01737 844999
www.royceservice.co.uk



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**Bentley Drivers' Club
Annual Concours
is on 18th June.**



BENTLEY DRIVERS' CLUB

Ron Warmington, chairman

Heartiest congratulations to Kelsey Media, from all of us here at the Bentley Drivers Club, on the launch of this exciting new magazine. We're absolutely delighted that the extraordinary and prestigious motor vehicles produced by Rolls-Royce and Bentley Motors, and the people who own and drive them, will be filling its pages.

The Bentley Drivers Club, in its 33 Regions around the world, will continue to deliver exciting and photogenic events for its members and I'm certain that many RR&BD readers will, on reading about their exploits, wish they'd been there too.

The BDC is essentially a drivers club and our members reckon its one of the best social clubs in the world. Formed in 1936, these days our members' cars range from the instantly-recognised-by-all pre-war 'WO' vintage heavy metal, though the elegant 'silent sports car' era of post-1931 Derby Bentleys, and the muscular Crewe sports saloons, to the absolutely fantastic cars produced in the re-energised Crewe factory under Volkswagen Audi Group ownership.

Some of our members' cars have perfect provenance. Others have gorgeous looks or blistering performance.

Some have all three. But we are a club of people with cars and a 'Broad Church'... so, if your car is your pride and joy, then it's ours too, even if it doesn't have a 'winged B' on its bonnet. Some of our members don't own, or no longer own, a Bentley and do you know what? It matters not a jot to us. We don't treasure their company any the less!

The Club, its Regional Committees and its members organise hundreds of events every year, ranging from regular Pub lunchtime or dinner meetings, through steam rallies and railway 'days out'; classic boat trips; long distance rallying and touring within the UK and all over Europe, the Americas, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and, essentially, anywhere that has roads... and in some places that have yet to build them. We also organise track days, sprints and races as well as posh black tie dinners; and much, much, more.

One of our premier club-wide events is approaching: On Sunday, 18th June we will be gathering for our Annual Concours meeting. This year we will be at Sudeley Castle in the Cotswolds (GL54 5JD). This isn't an event that will only appeal to car nuts. Yes, there will be trade stalls and masses of elegant metal; but there'll also be opportunities for picnics and snacks as well as high-end dining; driving tests; new models to pore over and maybe to test drive; a children's play area; beautiful gardens; and the stately home, and the stunning local town of Winchcombe, to explore.

We'll also be holding an 'Open Day' at our Wroxtton Club HQ and Museum (OX15 6ED) on the Saturday and, with plenty of lovely nearby hotels and B&Bs, many of our members will be making a weekend of it. If anyone wants to take a peek at what the BDC has to offer, do come along. If you join our Club on that weekend, we'll throw in Concours attendance (which if booked in advance normally costs £35 per car or £45 on the day – regardless of how many people you've crammed into it!) for free. Please call Alexandra in our Club Office on 01295 738886 to pre-register for Concours.

For those you who prefer to see 'Bentleys in Action' – look out for our annual Race Day at Silverstone on 5th August. www.bdcl.org

**The BDC is at Silverstone
on 5th August.**



ROLLS-ROYCE OWNERS' CLUB, USA

Bob Austin, executive director

The Rolls-Royce Owners' Club was founded in 1951 to help the owners of Rolls-Royce motorcars here in the United States to preserve, restore, maintain, drive and enjoy the fine cars manufactured by Rolls-Royce and Bentley. Rolls-Royce motorcars occupy a very special place in the United States as they were manufactured here in Springfield, Massachusetts from 1921 through 1931. While early members were required to actually own a Rolls-Royce and have an existing member sponsor them, today the club does not have an ownership requirement and welcomes anyone who has a passion for these two great British Marqueses.

Members of the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club enjoy a wide variety of benefits. Without a doubt one of the most highly regarded aspects of membership is a subscription to the Club's bi-monthly magazine, *The Flying Lady*. Organized as a scholarly journal, and the winner of numerous awards, the *Flying Lady* provides how-to articles, covers club events, highlights new product developments from the Clubs namesake brands, and reviews key events in the collector car hobby. Each issue also contains a section for members to buy and sell cars, named Bazaar.

Another benefit of membership is access to the RROC Club Stores. Here members may shop for RROC branded gifts and wearables, along with beautiful items displaying the Rolls-Royce and Bentley trademarks. These items are unique, handsome, and may only be sold to current members of the RROC. Among the items stocked in Club store are a wide variety of books on the brands and even reproductions of out of print Owners' Manuals.

Each year the RROC stages an Annual Meet at a different venue which has been picked to provide an attractive place for a summer meeting, surrounded by beautiful roads perfect for great driving, and large enough to handle between 500 and 1000 RROC members from around the country, and around the world! Part of each Annual Meet includes a series of technical seminars for a variety of different vehicle years and models. Members also have the opportunity to look for rare and obsolete parts, vehicle accessories, and other interesting products in the Vendor Area. The highlight of each year's Annual Meet is Judging Day, where more than 100 cars are gathered to be displayed and critically evaluated by expert judges to establish their correctness and quality. As you might expect, these five to seven day events also represent a great opportunity to meet with your fellow members.

In addition to the Annual Meet, each year the RROC offers at least two Tours, generally one staged in the East and the other in the West. Tours are typically shorter in the number of days than an Annual Meet and the focus is on driving rather than meeting. Of course members are encouraged to bring their Bentley and Rolls-Royce motorcars, but for those who do not own one, or cannot bring it, other members are always more than happy to make seats available to those who might not be able to drive.

Headquartered in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania with approximately 6000 members, the vast majority

living here in North America, the RROC prides itself in being friendly, helpful, and welcoming to all who wish to share our passion for Rolls-Royce and Bentley motorcars. Please, visit us at: www.rroc.org



Bob Austin, RROC executive director.



American Rolls-Royce enthusiasts gather in large numbers.



The Rolls-Royce and Bentley Foundation museum is located at the RROC HQ.

RREC

Alas, no-one from the RREC was available to meet our deadline for the first issue, but *RR&BD* was treated to an examination of the facilities at The Hunt House, the club's substantial headquarters in Northamptonshire.

We were shown around by Philip Hall, librarian for both the RREC and the Sir Henry Royce Memorial Foundation which shares the site. A room is dedicated to the life of Sir Henry Royce and contains photos and artefacts from his life – some of which you can see in our profile of his life earlier in this magazine.

The site also includes a museum, with examples not only of the engines built by Rolls-Royce, but also electrical components built by Royce before he met Rolls. To lovers of engineering, it's quite a spectacle, with cut-down engines showing off the impressive skills employed in establishing the Rolls-Royce reputation. Two cars are on display: a Dawn convertible loaned to the club by Rolls-Royce Motors, and a Phantom IV that was delivered in 1954 to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The club also boasts a fine technical workshop, which contains several cut-down engines and cars for demonstration purposes. A cut-down Silver Shadow II makes quite a sight, though it's reassuring to see rust bubbles upon it. Clearly, this was not a prime example before it became a working model, though Philip assures me that it can actually be driven – some of you may have seen it on the RREC stand at the recent NEC

Restoration Show in Birmingham.

The club puts on technical seminars throughout the year, proving that there are plenty of owners prepared to get their hands dirty. Or, perhaps they just want a better appreciation of the engineering that goes into their cars. Much of it is hidden from the wheel, and only appreciated in the detail.

We also had a tour of the substantial archives. The club holds the build records for many Rolls-Royce cars, especially from 1965. The club is therefore often called upon by owners

and specialists alike, as they confirm early details of cars in their possession. It also holds a vast collection of historical images, with both major UK clubs (RREC and Bentley Drivers' Club Ltd) taking on large swathes of archive material during the time when Rolls-Royce and Bentley parted. Indeed, both manufacturers often approach the clubs for historical information.

The club does offer tours of its HQ to its members. It's an offer that should definitely be accepted. www.rrec.org.uk

1954 Phantom IV on display at RREC HQ.



Brand new Dawn is on loan from Rolls-Royce Motor Cars.



Sir Henry Royce Memorial Foundation has fascinating objects on display.



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THE END OF THE LINE

We visit Flying Spares to see what happens when a Rolls-Royce reaches the end of its life. How does it happen? Which bits are most in demand?

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY: IAN SEABROOK

It's sadly true that not all cars will make it into the cosy bosom of preservation. Inevitably, some will always fall victim to accident damage, corrosion or some other disaster that renders them unable to return to the road. Yet, for some of us, witnessing this demise is always accompanied by a certain sense of dread – a desperate wish to find some way of allowing the car to survive. Or maybe it's just me. Despite this, I visited Flying Spares in Market Bosworth, Leicestershire, to face up to my fears. Besides, I was curious to know, what happens to all the considerable number of components that make up a Rolls-Royce?

First, a bit of history. Flying Spares was set up by Ben and Lucy Handford in 1995. Back then, the company was little more than a portakabin and a couple of

cars for breaking – a Bentley T1 and a seven-year old Eight. The company has expanded greatly since then, currently employs 43 staff and supplies a huge range of brand new parts. In fact, these days, parts from dismantled cars make up only around 10% of the total parts sold. Ben explains. "Actually, the cars for dismantling have a far greater value to us than just that ten percent. Dismantled cars also provide the core units that we use for rebuilding, whether that's engines, hubs, axles or hydraulic units. We don't often sell engines straight from the car. We usually at least rebuild them, replacing items as necessary, or fully recondition them with new off the shelf components. For a Shadow, an untouched engine will be in the region of £2500 (all prices exclude VAT), a rebuilt one £4000-5000 and a fully reconditioned unit £8000-9000."

Ben also describes the process for new arrivals. "All cars are tested when they get here. We need to know what works and what doesn't, so we will try and get non-running cars working so we can decide how much work is needed. At this stage, we may put a car in for an MOT. If we think it could pass with not too much work, it may be sold as a project. Not every car that arrives for dismantling will be dismantled.

"The car will then be given an FSD number (Flying Spares Dismantling) so we can trace all of the parts."

DISMANTLING IN ACTION

At this stage, we head to the dismantling area, where technician Phil Evans is reducing a Rolls-Royce Silver Spirit to its component parts. Already, major mechanical components have



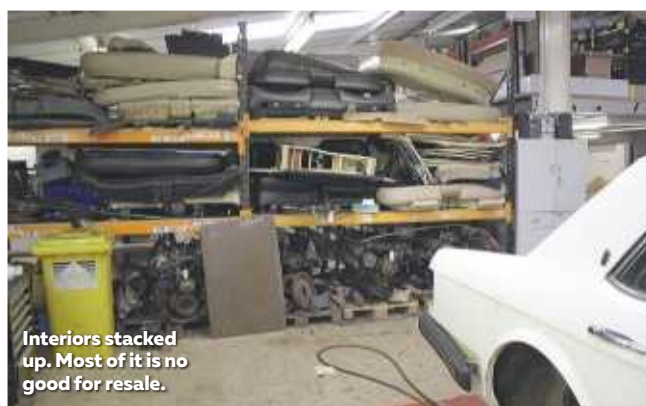
Each breaker gets an FSD number, so parts can be traced.



It's always slightly distressing to see a Rolls-Royce reach the end of the road. Or is it just us?



Spirit's engine and gearbox removed complete with front subframe.



Interiors stacked up. Most of it is no good for resale.

been removed, along with much of the interior. Phil says, "If a component is needed urgently, a car, such as this one, might jump the queue. We needed the rear hubs from this one, but we're now dismantling the rest of the car." The interior is stacked up on racking behind the car. "To be honest," says Phil, "most of that will go in the bin. By the time cars reach us, the interiors can often be in poor condition. We will keep parts that are good, but otherwise, we strip out switches and motors and only keep what we think has a reasonable chance of being sold again."

In the next bay, the engine and transmission for this car sit awaiting separation. Both are dropped out complete with the front subframe. Having been assessed while still fitted, the decision can now be made whether to rebuild the engine, recondition or sell as-is. Most rebuilding and reconditioning is done on site in a separate unit. Here, we see suspension spheres being rebuilt. Unlike Citroën items, Rolls-Royce designed its spheres to be rebuilt. You can even replace the rubber diaphragm »



Stripping a car down like this takes around five days.

THE END OF THE LINE DISMANTLING A SPIRIT



Interiors give up plenty of usable parts, such as switches and gauges.



No shortage of doors! They are usually stripped for motors.



Beauty is sadly only skin deep for this Silver Shadow.

inside, and a fascinating test rig allows all items to be pressure tested – the system runs at up to 2500psi, so you want to be sure about this.

Height control valves are another component that is often required for reconditioning, and we see several being stripped, fitted with new seals, getting cleaned up and then prepared for sale. Ben says, "the biggest issue is getting hold of core items so they can be rebuilt." That's not helped when some replacement spheres are more like the Citroën items, and designed to be thrown away rather than rebuilt.

Moving into the storage units, I can see there certainly isn't a shortage of doors. Sales manager Peter Johnson says, "Every car in for dismantling brings another set of four doors. We don't sell that many, so most will simply be stripped of parts. People are always after switches and motors when it comes to interiors, but the woodwork is often in very poor condition."

That's sadly something that comes with the territory of these low-value cars. After all, you don't dismantle good cars. Peter says, "We quite often see cars that may have been taken off the road just for a small job, but then the years pass by and that job never gets done. In the meantime, other components begin to fail. These cars don't like not being used. Before you know it, the car now needs several thousand pounds spending for it to see the road again."

Peter points at a rather delightful, at first glance, Silver Shadow sitting in the car park. "It looks like a nice car, and we had someone interested in taking it on as a project. We let a specialist take a look and quote us to get it back on the road again. Underneath, it's rotten as a pear – it lived near the sea. You could spend £10,000 getting it back on the road, and it still wouldn't be a great car."

OWNER-ENTHUSIASTS

It is pleasing to learn that a great deal of Flying Spares' business is to owner-enthusiasts, who do the work themselves. Ben says, "There are lots of individual owners who buy parts from us. These are actually quite a basic car in some regards, especially the carburettor cars." There is also a healthy trade in parts that historically go missing. "There's always demand for handbooks, tool kits, hubcaps and access panels," says Ben. "Around 70% of our sales are overseas, though that's mostly new parts. The US is



Wood often badly damaged, but not here.



Garrett Turbo awaits a new home.



Turbo R driveshafts, cleaned and ready for sale.



Need a sun visor? Flying Spares has one or two.



A large quantity of grilles.

perhaps our biggest market, but we sell parts all around the world."

Flying Spares has already broken several Continental GTs too. "It's electronic components that will be most in demand for those. I suspect their values will drop a fair bit more yet," predicts Ben. The appearance of fairly modern Bentleys and Rolls-Royces is typical of the changing face of the dismantling market. "When we started," says Ben, "we could buy a MkVI for just £1500, and Clouds for £3000-4000. Prices for those have now rocketed up. You can still buy cheap Shadows though. Values for the best are rising, but they were sold in much larger numbers, and there are still quite a few poor cars out there. Spirits are the cheapest at the moment."

Indeed, as we traversed the many units and storage areas of Flying Spares, we saw the odd stripped Cloud bodyshell, displaying some of the key rot areas very nicely indeed. There is even a MkVI sitting on top of a shipping container, looking rather the worse for wear. But, it's Spirits and Shadows that make up the majority of vehicles. Often, the dismantling begins before the cars are wheeled into the main disassembly area. Grilles are missing from most of the cars, though a newly-arrived Shadow highlights one issue. Marketing manager Ross Garner says, "Often, cars have already been partially dismantled even before they arrive." Certainly, this Shadow is already lacking most of the interior, the bumpers, grille and rear doors. Again, it looks quite

solid at first glance, but there's plenty of rust visible beneath the rear seat.

"If particular parts are needed," says Ross, "then we'll start taking bits off while the cars are still outside. The sales team keep a close eye on the cars that come in, so they know which bits will be available." You can keep an eye on @FlyingSpares on Twitter to see the vehicles coming in if there's a particular part you are after.

PRESERVATION vs PARTS

As for getting the balance between preservation and parts supply right, Ben admits it's a challenge. "Every car broken is another one you then can't sell new parts for," says Ben. "On the "

THE END OF THE LINE DISMANTLING A SPIRIT



Racking is packed with used parts ready for sale or rebuilding.



Rebuilt suspension spheres.



Spot the difference. Rebuilt (left) differential vs as arrived.

other hand, some say that reducing the number of survivors pushes up values of the remaining cars. Still, we will sell complete cars where we can. Naturally, the hope is that you can then sell new car parts to the new owner as they recommission the car."

So, how long does it take to dismantle a Rolls-Royce? Ben says, "We generally aim to start on Monday and be finished by Friday. A MkVI takes a little longer, as does a GT. Because not many have been broken yet, the sales team always get quite excited when one is in for breaking."

In conclusion then, this has been a very useful visit. I'm still an over-emotional fool who hates to see any car reach the end of its life, but it is heartening to see how much work each car generates, with that constant stream of items for rebuilding. All of these parts will help keep other cars on the road, and that's a good thing. Silver Spirits especially can still be bought very cheaply, so it's good to know that there is a second-hand option for those running these cars on lower budgets. Dismantling may now be only a small part of the Flying Spares operation, but it is still a very useful one. ■



Remarkable apparatus for testing hydraulic components.



Cheap Shadows are still plentiful. Restoration often uneconomic.

CONTACTS

Flying Spares

01455 292949

www.flyingspares.com

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

We take a look at some of the most fascinating, most innovative and most successful Rolls-Royce and Bentley models via an array of period brochures, adverts and images.

WORDS: PAUL GUINNESS PICS: VARIOUS

THE TWO-DOOR OPTION

Although the new Corniche of 1971 was effectively a two-door version of the Silver Shadow, it certainly wasn't the first such vehicle. That accolade goes to what was officially sold as the Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow 2-Door Mulliner Park Ward, shown on both this single-

sheet promotional leaflet (from my own collection) and a separate monochrome photograph (supplied to us by the Sir Henry Royce Memorial Foundation).

The leaflet was a simple affair, featuring a handsome red two-door on the front and a list of the car's

technical specification on the reverse. Power came via the Silver Shadow's familiar 6230cc V8, while the car's unique two-door bodywork was hailed by Rolls-Royce for its 'stressed steel monocoque construction of great strength and rigidity'.

The undated black and white image is fascinating, as it appears that the Mulliner Park Ward featured (which was first registered in October 1967 as PRC 808F) is still around. According to a quick online search, it has an MoT until March 2018 and is presumably still in use. If you're the proud owner of this early two-door model, we'd be delighted to hear from you.



STYLE AND SPLENDOUR

The new Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud – and its closely-related cousin, the Bentley S1 – arrived in early 1955, effectively replacing the Silver Dawn and proving to be the mainstay of the company's line-up until the launch of the Silver Shadow a decade later. Built on a heavy-duty chassis featuring coil-sprung independent front suspension, the Silver Cloud was powered by a 4.9-litre version of the familiar straight-six engine, which would last until the arrival of the V8-powered Silver Cloud II in 1959.

Use of a traditional separate chassis provided bespoke coachbuilders with various opportunities, although the vast majority of the 7372 Silver Clouds produced came with the standard-design four-door bodywork produced by the Pressed Steel Company Ltd. This early publicity shot for the Silver Cloud shows just such a model.





THE AXE INFLUENCE

The late Roy Axe had an influence on British car design throughout his long career, a process that began when – at the age of 29 – he was promoted to the role of chief stylist at Rootes Group. In later life, however, Axe headed up his own independent company (Design Research Associates) and was commissioned by Rolls-Royce Motors to create the 1994 Bentley

Java concept car. This in turn led to him designing the Rolls-Royce Silver Seraph and Bentley Arnage of 1998.

After the ultra-square look of the Silver Spirit, the Silver Seraph marked a major change of style, with a curvaceous touch in keeping with the latest trends. Sadly, however, both the Silver Seraph (shown here in this pair of launch-year promotional images)

and the Arnage were destined for short careers thanks to the ongoing change of company structure, which began with Vickers' sale of Rolls-Royce Motors to Volkswagen in 1998 and the subsequent agreement for BMW to become the custodian of Rolls-Royce from January 2003. The final Silver Seraph was produced in 2002, by which time it cost a hefty £155,000-plus.



REFINEMENT FOR AMERICA

Rolls-Royces are renowned for their refinement, a feature that in the 1950s led to a rather impressive claim: 'At 60 miles an hour the loudest noise in this new Rolls-Royce comes from the electric clock'. That quote was from the technical editor of The Motor magazine, but was soon adopted by Rolls-Royce – and made a memorable headline in this American advert for the Silver Cloud.

With American cars being gargantuan at the time of the Silver Cloud I's 1955-58 career, this advert boasted that the Rolls-Royce had been 'designed as an owner-driven car' thanks to an overall length that was 'eighteen inches shorter than the largest domestic cars'. Any American buyers who didn't fancy a Rolls-Royce, meanwhile, were offered the Bentley S1: 'Except for the radiators, they are identical motor cars'.

THE YELLOW ROLLS-ROYCE

Who remembers this movie from 1964, starring Ingrid Bergman, Rex Harrison and Shirley MacLaine? Joining the big-name stars was the brightly-hued 1930 Rolls-Royce Phantom II that gave the film its title and which featured throughout. Set mainly in the pre-war years of the '30s, The Yellow Rolls-Royce focused on the trials and tribulations of the car's numerous owners, set against some of Europe's most spectacular backdrops. But critics of the time weren't over-complimentary, with the New York Times describing the film as a 'pretty slick vehicle that is pleasing to the eye and occasionally amusing, but it hardly seems worthy of all the effort and the noted personalities involved'.





POST-WAR PERFECTION

Just eight months on from the cessation of hostilities in September 1945 came Bentley's inaugural new post-war model, the MkVI. Announced in May '46, this was the first Bentley to feature all-steel bodywork, and went on to be a major success, with 5208 cars sold by the time production ceased in 1952. These period illustrations – kindly supplied to us by the WO Bentley Memorial Foundation – show both

the MkVI Standard Steel saloon and the very rare Drophead Coupe built to order by Park Ward.

The steel bodies for the MkVI saloon were actually built by Cowley-based Pressed Steel Company Ltd, an independent manufacturer of bodywork since June 1930, when Morris Motors' previous involvement in the company was officially severed. Pressed Steel went on to produce bodies for a number of major

manufacturers over the years, until its eventual takeover by BMC in 1965.

Initially launched with 4257cc straight-six power, the MkVI was upgraded to 4566cc (usually referred to as the Big Bore version) in 1951. When The Motor magazine put the larger-engined MkVI through its paces soon after its debut, the magazine's testers reported a top speed of exactly 100mph, with 0-60mph being achieved in a sprightly 15 seconds.



EXCLUSIVELY CAMARGUE

Nine years after the debut of the last two-door Rolls-Royce came the 1975 Pininfarina-styled Camargue, featured here in a simple leaflet from the late '70s. The Camargue featured sharp, coupe-like styling and a price tag that made the Silver Shadow look like a bargain. By 1978, for example, the Camargue would set you back £47,367, at a time when the Silver Shadow II was priced at 'just' £26,740.

Based on the floorpan of the Silver Shadow but with unique bodywork by Mulliner Park Ward, the Camargue appealed to those who craved the ultimate in exclusivity, hence its success in the Middle East. Rolls-Royce described the Camargue as an 'elegant and sophisticated two-door saloon of exceptional grace and beauty', and yet just 531 had been sold by the time production ceased in 1985.

CARS OF QUALITY

That's what Swanmore Car Sales of Bournemouth was claiming in the early 1950s, when this advert appeared. This particular garage specialised in secondhand Rolls-Royces and Bentleys at the time, boasting that distance was 'quite immaterial' to this 'cash purchaser of Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars'.

So what exactly was Swanmore Car Sales tempting us with 65 years ago?

One of the newest models on offer was a 1950 Bentley MkVI saloon, yours for £3375; or you could save a useful £900 by opting for a similar-spec vehicle from two years earlier. The list of tempting-sounding Rolls-Royces, meanwhile, included a 1949 Silver Wraith at £3745, a 1937 Mulliner-bodied 25/30 at £1675, and a 1937 Phantom III (also by HJ Mulliner) at a mere £1075.

CARS of Quality

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1946 BENTLEY Mk VI 4.25, saloon	£2875
1944 BENTLEY Mk VI 4.25, saloon	£2500
1942 BENTLEY Mk VI 4.25, saloon	£2125
1940 BENTLEY Mk VI 4.25, saloon	£1750
1938 BENTLEY Mk VI 4.25, saloon	£1375
1936 BENTLEY Mk VI 4.25, saloon	£1000
1934 BENTLEY Mk VI 4.25, saloon	£625
1932 BENTLEY Mk VI 4.25, saloon	£250
1930 BENTLEY Mk VI 4.25, saloon	£125
1928 BENTLEY Mk VI 4.25, saloon	£125
1926 BENTLEY Mk VI 4.25, saloon	£125
1924 BENTLEY Mk VI 4.25, saloon	£125
1922 BENTLEY Mk VI 4.25, saloon	£125
1920 BENTLEY Mk VI 4.25, saloon	£125
1918 BENTLEY Mk VI 4.25, saloon	£125
1916 BENTLEY Mk VI 4.25, saloon	£125
1914 BENTLEY Mk VI 4.25, saloon	£125
1912 BENTLEY Mk VI 4.25, saloon	£125
1910 BENTLEY Mk VI 4.25, saloon	£125
1908 BENTLEY Mk VI 4.25, saloon	£125
1906 BENTLEY Mk VI 4.25, saloon	£125
1904 BENTLEY Mk VI 4.25, saloon	£125
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Mr. Swanmore, with his car and a portrait of a man in a military-style uniform.



QUALITY ASSURED

Many improvements were made during the Silver Shadow's 15-year career. Its 6230cc V8 was enlarged to 6750cc by 1970, giving improved performance to match its superlative ride, its smooth GM400 transmission and its opulent feel. And then there was the arrival of the Silver Shadow II in 1977, complete with rack and pinion steering, improved suspension and a host of other upgrades.

According to this brochure for the Silver Shadow II, however, the car also offered 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'.



BEGINNING OF THE WRAITH

The original Rolls-Royce Wraith (shown in this period promotional photograph) was launched in 1938, powered by the same 4257cc straight-six engine found in the previous 25/30 but featuring larger valves, a new crankshaft and a crossflow cylinder head. The Wraith was an advanced machine for the time, boasting coil-sprung independent suspension among its list of modern features. Production ceased in 1939 with the outbreak of the Second World War, after a run of just 491 cars. Updated variations on the same theme entered production in the post-war years, however, bearing the moniker of Silver Wraith.



A SUPERCAR FOR THE NINETIES

That was the description of the exciting new Bentley Continental R when it made its motor show debut in Geneva, on March 5th 1991. In the official press pack issued at the show, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Ltd explained that this was 'the first new-style Bentley since 1952', as all recent Bentley models had shared their bodywork with contemporary Rolls-Royces.

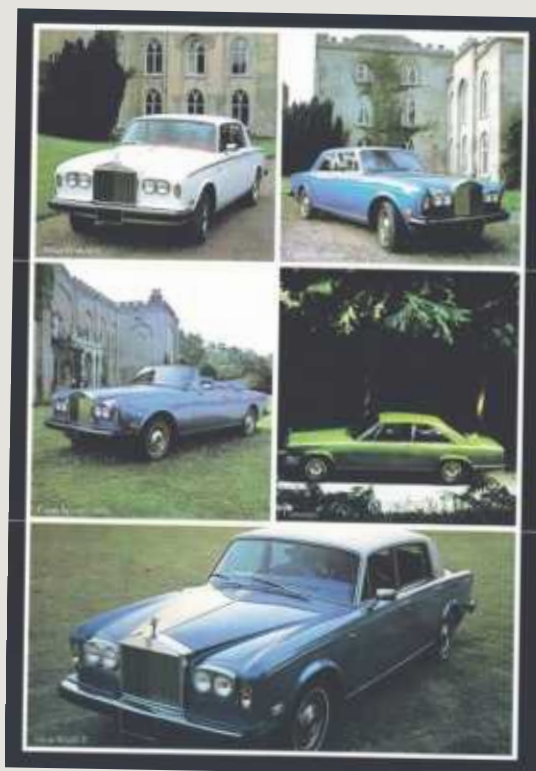
The rapid expansion of Bentley sales throughout the 1980s justified the marque having its own bespoke model by early the following decade. But as the press pack of the time explained, the newcomer was a very exclusive offering: 'Only 70 models of the new Bentley Continental R will be built for each major market', while in the UK 'the indicative price will be £160,000'.

The press pack went on to describe the Continental R as a 'major landmark in the evolution of one of the world's most famous sporting marques', a coupe that had been designed as a 'civilised sporting supercar for the 1990s'. Small-scale production finally began in 1992, by which time the Continental R's launch price had risen to £178,000.

THE FULL LINE-UP

Carrying a front-page headline of 'The heart and soul of a masterpiece' was this fold-out US-spec leaflet from 1978, which featured the full range once it was extended to its A4-size maximum. This was at a time when the Rolls-Royce line-up was extensive, starting with the entry-level Silver Shadow II and finishing via the exclusive two-door Camargue. In between came the Corniche Saloon, Corniche Convertible and the Silver Wraith II.

But what did Rolls-Royce mean by the headline mentioned at the start? Well, it was all rather romantic: 'Through the finer workings of man runs a common, many-stranded thread. It is readily identified in art, literature and music, but is just as present in architecture, science and engineering'. As the leaflet explained, 'it is elusive, intangible, rare... but plain for all to see'.





RARER THAN A ROLLS-ROYCE

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. With its monocoque construction, modern styling and independent self-levelling suspension, the newcomer was advanced in its design. The vast majority of buyers who could afford the Bentley, however, tended to opt for the Rolls-Royce instead. That's why a mere 2280 four-door T-Series Bentleys were sold, compared with almost 28,000 Silver Shadows.

By the time this brochure for the latest T2 was published in 1977, the Bentley was getting on in years, although some usual revisions had recently been announced. Suspension modifications had improved its handling, whilst the adoption of rack and pinion steering helped the car to feel more precise than before.



STIRLING INSPECTS THE 'SHADOW

At the Earl's Court Motor Show of 1967, racing legend Stirling Moss was photographed inspecting the latest-spec Silver Shadow. The 11-day event had opened its doors on October 18th, almost exactly two years after the show debut of the Silver Shadow. And since its launch, Rolls-Royce's first ever monocoque-designed model had been a major success, appealing to a fresh generation of forward-thinking buyers.

With its sharp, angular styling, all-independent self-levelling suspension and disc brakes all round, the new-for-1965 Silver Shadow was seen as almost state-of-the-art by Rolls-Royce standards of old. This was the car that helped to dramatically transform its maker's image and customer base; and in 1967, it looked like 38-year-old Stirling Moss was certainly impressed.

EXTRA LEGROOM

Soon after the launch of the crucial new Silver Spirit (created to replace the long-running Silver Shadow in 1980) came the announcement of the long-wheelbase version. It was a trend that had begun with the extended-wheelbase Silver Shadow of the late 1960s; this time, however, Rolls-Royce decided that the extra-length version of its newcomer deserved its own separate

name, and so decided upon Silver Spur.

With 'only' four inches added to its wheelbase, the difference in appearance between the Silver Spirit and Silver Spur was fairly subtle; but for Rolls-Royce buyers who demanded the ultimate in space, that extra length made all the difference. This pair of official press photographs from the 1990s shows the Silver Spur in all its

(monochrome) glory, although the whitewall tyres fitted to this particular car might not to be everyone's taste.

There was always a major difference in price between the Silver Spirit and Silver Spur, with both models having evolved into Series II guise by the end of the '80s. In 1990, for example, a Silver Spirit II would have set you back £85,610, while the Silver Spur II was listed at £99,758.



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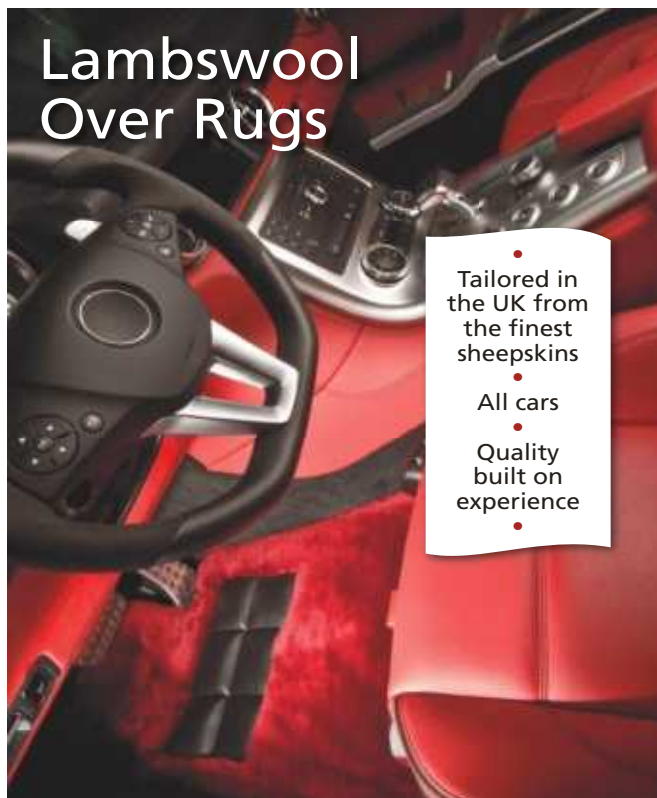
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THE SHADOW YEARS

The Silver Shadow experienced some of the most turbulent years in Rolls-Royce history. We take a look at how the 1970s panned out.

WORDS: JACK GROVER PHOTOGRAPHY: RREC

To meet the demands of a new, more demanding world, Rolls-Royce would have to build a smaller, lighter and much more advanced car that would be built in relatively large numbers and at a relatively low cost to fill the emerging market gap between the likes of Jaguar, Mercedes-Benz and Lancia in Europe and Lincoln and Cadillac in North America. Work on developing such a car, which would by necessity be almost entirely new, started in 1956 and various directions were explored before the characteristics of the new model began to crystallise. One of the most dramatic innovations was the decision to adopt a monocoque body – a first for a Rolls-Royce and a clear departure from the established way of a hand-built bespoke carriage. But it was inevitable; it would greatly improve the car's interior space while allowing the external dimensions to be trimmed

down. It reduced the overall weight and the centre of gravity, improving fuel consumption and high-speed handling. And it was the only construction method truly suitable for the production volumes Rolls-Royce was anticipating.

Fully independent suspension was another new adoption necessary to reclaim the marque's reputation for peerless comfort and to further help produce the high-speed abilities required. Rolls-Royce saw no shame in going to the undisputed master of suspension technology at the time and acquired a license to use Citroën's hydropneumatic suspension technology, although the actual parts used were designed at Crewe and built by Rolls-Royce's own contractors. Unlike the Citroën system, the Rolls-Royce was sprung by conventional coil springs, with the hydraulics providing self-levelling to maintain the ride quality regardless of load. The hydraulic

system also powered four-wheel disc brakes to provide reassuringly strong stopping power for a car which, even if it was light by Rolls-Royce standards, weighed over two tons.

The new car, after nine years of development, was announced in October 1965 as the Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow and the Bentley T-Series – there was no difference between the two other than the Bentley's simpler grille (made from chromed press steel rather than handmade from brass like the Rolls-Royce item) which allowed it to be priced £50 lower than the Silver Shadow, although at well over £6500, the cars still cost twice the price of a Daimler DR450 and four times as much as a Rover 3-Litre. But it was half the price of a fully-equipped Phantom V limousine and a third of the price of the similarly-advanced Mercedes-Benz 600 Pullman.

The Silver Shadow was justifiably

described as “the most radically new Rolls-Royce for 59 years” – not since the original Silver Ghost had Crewe made a car so thoroughly ahead of its competitors. It was praised to the hilt by all who drove it, with its sublime ride quality and high-speed refinement.

CAUTION, TURBULENCE

But the good reviews and undoubted pride that those at Crewe could take in their achievement in the Silver Shadow was small comfort to Rolls-Royce’s accountants. The majority of the firm’s activity and profits came from its aero engine division and the development of the Silver Shadow had, inevitably, incurred heavy costs in the motor car division. This was entirely expected but it took a distressingly long time for those costs to begin to be recouped.

Rolls-Royce as a whole remained profitable and Crewe went as far as to launch the final development of the Phantom, the Phantom VI, concluding the development of a lineage that had begun in 1925. This car, with a price tag of well over £12,000, was built in very small numbers – well under 20 cars per year – but remained available until 1990.

Unfortunately, the aero engine division was about to encounter problems of its own. In 1965, Rolls-Royce had signed an agreement with Lockheed of the USA to be the sole engine supplier for its innovative new airliner, the Tristar, and the engine would be the RB211, which used an innovative and unique ‘three spool’ design and carbon fibre fan blades. Unfortunately, Rolls-Royce hit recurrent problems with the RB211’s development and after many delays and over £190 million spent, the project was still not complete by 1970. Rolls-Royce then announced that it lacked the funds to continue the project and that even if the RB211 made production, the firm could not build it profitably for the price contracted with Lockheed.

Rolls-Royce declared insolvency in January 1971 and Lockheed was forced to suspend the Tristar project, which in turn put its own finances in peril. At this stage, international politics took over. As the engine supplier to the RAF and dozens of air forces worldwide, Rolls-Royce was vital to Britain strategically as well as economically. Similarly, the American government would not look kindly upon having one of its major defence contractors brought down by

Silver Cloud was fine, but not exactly brimming with technology.



Crewe in the 1960s, preparing for the Shadow’s launch.



Bentley name was near-dormant, accounting for only 5% of sales.



the failure of a British company. Prime minister Edward Heath nationalised Rolls-Royce Limited, bringing an end to the original firm founded in 1906. The new entity in government hands was Rolls-Royce (1971) Limited. It was widely agreed that the focus had to be on resuscitating the aero engine division and completing the RB211 project. To that end the motor car division was

spun-off in 1973 as Rolls-Royce Motors.

The car division had been strangely unaffected by all this turmoil. Just two weeks after Rolls-Royce Limited went into receivership, the company announced a new model – the Corniche. This was a variant of the Silver Shadow available as a two-door saloon or cabriolet with bodywork built by Mulliner Park Ward, the London »

HISTORY

THE SHADOW YEARS

coachbuilder that had been owned by Rolls-Royce since 1939. MPW had offered similar bespoke versions of the Silver Shadow since it had been launched but this was the first time such cars were available 'off the peg'.

BIGGER IS NOT BETTER

When Rolls-Royce Motors gained its new-found independence in 1973, the existing product plan remained in

“the biggest rip-off in the motoring world or the most profitable sales gimmick ever”

place. Towards the end of the 1960s, it had been decided that a model was needed in the range, which combined the sheer luxury, prestige and price of the Phantom VI with the modernity of the Silver Shadow. The Shadow's unparalleled transcontinental high-

speed cruising abilities had led many reviewers to ponder its potential as a grand tourer and Rolls-Royce acted on the same lines, proposing that the new car should be a large, luxurious coupé in the manner of the old Bentley Continentals: By this time the Bentley marque was essentially dormant, with Bentley T-Series making up only five per cent of Silver Shadow production, with Crewe not even seeing fit to remove the Rolls-Royce badges from the T-Series' instruments or the engine's rocker covers.

Unusually, the design work was handed out of house to Pininfarina, which was instructed to produce a car that could be built by Mulliner Park Ward on a variant of the Shadow platform and running gear. The result was the unmistakable Rolls-Royce Camargue. When it was introduced in 1975 it was the most expensive car in the world, selling for £29,950 in the UK – or twice the price of a Silver Shadow (which then retailed at £14,830). The Camargue's V8 engine was tuned in comparison to its stablemates and it boasted a world-leading two-zone climate control system, which Rolls-Royce said had taken eight years to develop. Unfortunately, the Camargue was released in the middle of troubled times with much of the world reeling from a recession caused by the 1973 Energy Crisis. The car's styling was also highly controversial, with its forward-raked grille and strangely plain rear styling coming in for particular criticism. The sheer price of the car proved to be something of a psychological stumbling block, with MotorSport magazine wondering if it represented “the biggest rip-off in the motoring world or the most profitable sales gimmick ever”. Only 530 Camargues were built in 11 years and it remains one of the few truly unpopular Rolls-Royces.



Controversial Camargue certainly made an impact.



Corniche two-doors were announced just after financial meltdown.



Phantom rebuffed Shadow's advanced tech, retaining drum brakes until 1990.

SHADOW REVISIONS

The Camargue did feed back into the Silver Shadow, with the Series 2 model (called the T2 in Bentley parlance, although very few were made) introduced in 1977, featuring both the Camargue's climate control system and its rack and pinion steering. Combined with a raft of suspension revisions, the

Silver Shadow was now even more of a Rolls-Royce for the 'owner driver'. It was also hitting its stride in terms of sales, despite the economic troubles, finding itself in a unique market position above mass-produced luxury saloons but below hand-built oddities such as the Camargue. Production was now averaging just over 2000 four-door cars per year plus around 800 two-doors, which was just enough to cover its costs. Peak production would actually be 1978, when 3347 were built.

Despite this, the team at Crewe was already working on the Shadow's replacement, battling a shortage of development funds. That issue was resolved in 1980, when Rolls-Royce Motors was acquired by the engineering firm Vickers. This was the rump of the Vickers-Armstrong industrial conglomerate that had built the Vickers Viscount airliner which, powered by Rolls-Royce Dart engines, had been the world's first turboprop airliner. The Rolls-Royce Avon engine propelled the Vickers Valiant nuclear bomber and the Conway engine had powered the Vickers VC10 airliner. Mergers, demergers and nationalisation in the aircraft and shipbuilding industries meant that by 1980, Vickers was concerned mainly with armaments manufacture and marine propulsion systems, but there was plenty of shared history between the two names already.

This secured Crewe's long-term future but just a few days after the sale was announced came the reveal of the Silver Shadow's successor, the Silver Spirit (also available in long-wheelbase form as the Silver Spur and in Bentley form as the Mulsanne). These were really just their Silver Shadow/Wraith/T-Series predecessors with modernised styling and a few minor technical changes, with a lower body waistline, greater glass area, more aerodynamic detailing and, most strikingly of all, rectangular integrated headlamps. The design of rear suspension was also revised to improve refinement and further improve the amount of boot space, but it remained fundamentally the same concept as that used on the Shadow. The last four-door Shadows were built in 1980, bringing the production total to just over 25,000 cars. The Corniche would remain available until 1995, adding nearly 5000 cars to that total, but even without it, the Shadow was still the most successful Rolls-Royce in the marque's history – a distinction it maintains to this day. ■



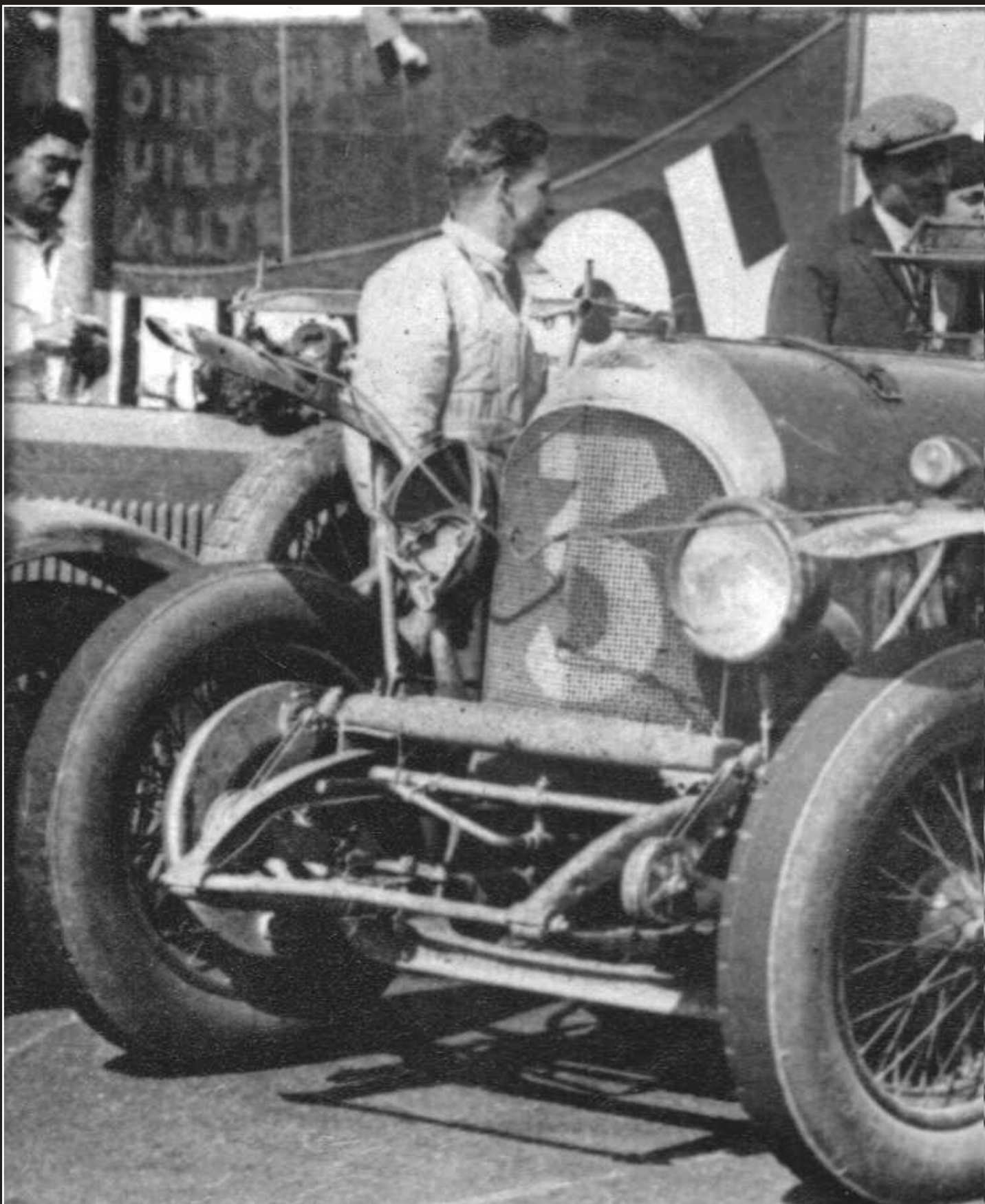
Corniche Convertible remained in production until 1995.



The engine that did all the damage, the RB211.

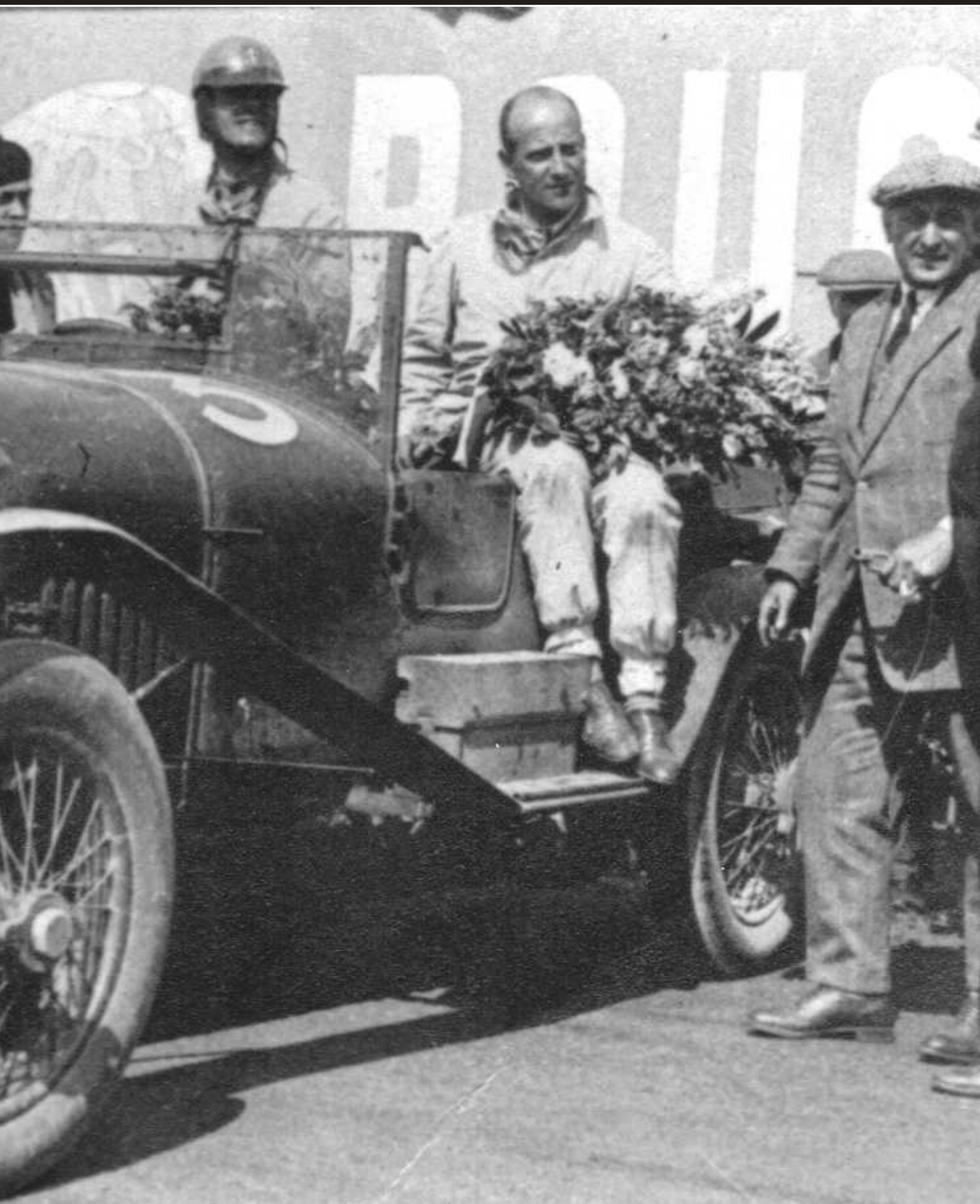


Shadow II launched 1978, with sales peaking the following year.



Perhaps the greatest victory for the vintage Bentley was the 1927 Le Mans, where Bentley motors entered a team of three cars: two 3-litres and the new 4½-litre.

WORDS: ALAN BODFISH PICS: WO BENTLEY MEMORIAL FOUNDATION



After 5½ hours racing, at the White House corner, there was a 6 car pile-up which included all three of the Bentley team. Only one Bentley, a 3-Litre driven by Sammy Davis and Dr. Dudley Benjafield, was able to be extricated and returned to the pits, where it was straightened out enough to continue. Eventually, with less than an hour of the race left, it caught and passed the Aries driven by Chassange and Laly which had taken the lead after the crash. The Aries then suffered ignition failure. The Bentley beat a Salmson driven by de Victor and Hasley into second place to win by 21 laps.

THE FINAL PAGE

Editor Seabrook grabs a cup of tea to reflect on this first issue of *Rolls-Royce and Bentley Driver*.

Well, that appears to be it. Thank you for reading this first issue of *RR&BD*. I do hope you've enjoyed it.

I thought I'd allow myself a little more room than my editorial on Page 3 just to discuss my own love for the motor cars of Rolls-Royce and Bentley. Normally, you fall in love with the cars of your childhood – for me, that was a Hillman Hunter, a Morris Minor and a Morris Oxford Series VI Traveller. This was in the 1980s, when these vehicles were all ancient and unfashionable. I wasn't fortunate enough to have a rich uncle with a Rolls-Royce, or to have friends whose dad owned a Bentley, so these cars didn't have a direct impact on my young life.

Only they did, because my aunt, who owned the Morris pair, would buy classic car magazines. I would trawl through these for hours on end, from the age of about eight. She never threw an issue away, so I had a vast library to enjoy. I well remember trawling through, the challenge being to find the car with the largest asking price. Sure enough, even in these early days of the classic car market, Rolls-Royces and Bentleys would inevitably be attracting the largest sums. I gawped at beautiful Continentals, dramatic Flying Spurs and the vast, beguiling range of coachbuilt specials. It seemed that no two coachbuilt cars ever looked the same. Hooper, HJ Mulliner, Park Ward, James Young and many

more exotic designs added a rich variety that is sadly lacking in the modern world. Even back then, I was astonished at how beautifully styled these cars were, with metal shapes that almost seemed to come alive and dance from the pages.

It would be many years before I would get anywhere near one of these marvellous cars, but I've tried to make up for it since. That's why this magazine has been a joy to put together. Now, as someone rather older than I was when I first encountered the Rolls-Royce name, I can appreciate the feel of the cars and the engineering might. This is an appeal that you don't get merely from photographs in a magazine.

Yet, we've largely stayed away from the coachbuilt cars this time around, instead focussing on the vehicles produced as complete units from Crewe. That's the good thing about Rolls-Royce and Bentley. At a glance, it seems that very few models were ever produced – just four saloons, excluding the limousines, between 1955 and 2002. But, those coachbuilt cars are another avenue in themselves entirely. Hopefully, we'll be able to explore these handsome creatures in much more detail next time. For now, here's a beautiful photo showing the contrast between the original Bentley Continental, and its more modern equivalent – a Bentley fast gathering a classic following all of its own. ■





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