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Corniche appeal

When it comes to my favourite cars, I tend to gravitate towards the least predictable. And so I was particularly pleased when we managed to arrange a photo shoot of the Westminster Blue fixed-head Corniche featured on the front cover of this issue. Being an early example, and a car rescued from long-term hibernation, it's a machine I find particularly appealing – and I hope you enjoy the seven-page feature that starts on Page 12.

But is it really the least predictable Corniche? From its launch in 1971, the new two-door range was a success for Rolls-Royce; and thanks to its hand-built status and appropriately high pricing, it was an invaluable income earner. But let's not forget that the fixed-head Corniche bowed out after just ten years on sale, whereas its convertible cousin went on to enjoy a 24-year career.

Most marque aficionados seem to lust after the soft-top version, imagining themselves cruising their nearest seafront or local boulevard with the top down and the sun shining, one arm on the door as they listen to their favourite tunes and enjoy the admiring glances. Me? I'd take the hardtop version, revelling in its glorious styling that's somehow less flamboyant but no less pleasing to my eyes. And in that sense, maybe... just maybe... the fixed-head model is the ultimate Corniche, less predictable but highly appealing as far as I'm concerned. Whatever your own opinions on the Corniche duo, I'd love to hear them via the email address below.

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Paul Guinness

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RECORD BENTLEY SALES

Bentley Motors achieved total sales of 11,206 cars in 2020, an increase of 2% over the previous year despite the challenges of a market affected by the Covid-19 pandemic – including a seven-week shutdown that began

in March, plus reduced output for a further nine weeks. New-model introductions helped to provide the boost, enabling Bentley to achieve its highest ever annual sales performance.

The Continental GT and GTC

together accounted for 39% of global Bentley sales in 2020, finishing the year as the company's bestselling model line. And although there were inevitable delays in getting the latest-generation Bentayga into full-scale production, Bentley's SUV proved to be its most successful single model, achieving 37% of total sales.

The Americas region remained the biggest market, delivering 3035 cars (an increase of 4% on 2019), while 2880 new Bentleys were sold in China – representing an increase of 48%. European sales fell by 18% to 2193 cars, while the UK market saw 1160 Bentleys delivered – a fall of 22%. A total of 735 cars were sold in the Middle East in 2020, while the Asia Pacific region posted an increase of 6% – with 1203 new Bentleys sold.

Commenting on the company's 2020 sales result, Adrian Hallmark, chairman and CEO of Bentley Motors, said: "Even though we anticipated greater sales before the pandemic struck, when you consider the level of restrictions around the world for the majority of the year, to achieve a record sales performance is a strong measure of our potential."



CLASSIC INDUSTRY GROWTH

The results of the 2020 National Historic Vehicle Survey have been announced by the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs (FBHVC), revealing that the classic car industry contributes £7.2 billion to the UK economy. Growth in the sector has seen an increase in the number of historic vehicles recorded with the DVLA, with 1.5 million now registered – representing 3.4% of all vehicles.

Historically, the Federation has undertaken this major survey every five years, the previous one being completed in 2016. However, with the impact that Covid-19 has had on the habits of historic vehicle owners, this latest survey was conducted earlier to represent a more typical year in 2019. It's claimed to be the largest and most detailed survey of historic vehicle ownership anywhere in the world, the results of which provide the FBHVC with vital facts and figures needed to protect the

future of transport heritage in the UK.

The historic vehicle sector's contribution to the country's economy – representing more than the equestrian sector – is significantly up on the £5.5 billion for 2016. The revenue is generated from the nearly 4000 businesses that support the movement, employing over 34,000 people. These businesses are also working on ensuring the future of the movement, with over a third either employing or considering employing an apprentice.

David Whale, chairman of the FBHVC, commented: "The significant value to the UK that the historic vehicle industry generates simply cannot be ignored by those in power. We face the most challenging times ahead over the next few years and these results give us the justification to ensure that our freedoms to enjoy our transport heritage continue unhindered."



FRIDAY SPECIALS

Followers of our Facebook page can now join in a new Feature Car Friday conversation, which we're hosting in conjunction with Flying Spares. Each Friday, we post a photograph of a classic Rolls-Royce or Bentley and invite our followers to add their thoughts. Models featured so far include the Silver Seraph (with readers voicing their opinion as to its classic status) and the Silver Shadow (for which we asked, is the Silver Shadow II the better choice?).

It's good fun and a great way to get 'chatting' with fellow enthusiasts via the comments sections. To see for yourself, go to Facebook and search for *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver*. Oh, and don't forget to 'Like' or follow our page!



BESPOKE OFFERINGS

The Rolls-Royce Bespoke Collective – a team of engineers, designers and craftspeople based at the company's Goodwood headquarters – enjoyed a record 2020, with the vast majority of new Rolls-Royces sold last year being tailored by this specialist division. Despite the challenges that the year brought in terms of Covid-19 effects, with designers and customers alike confined to their homes, the company-client relationship provided via the Bespoke Collective is said to have been as strong as ever.

According to Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, there was a "change in source of inspiration from travel and its associated items of luxury grandeur, to rich and textural surroundings of the home, architecture and moments of stillness found in nature". The Bespoke Collective saw a "robust increase" in commissions last year compared with 2019, with a marked growth in "personalised elements woven into the fabric of each motor car".

Among the creations from the Bespoke Collective was the 'Dusk in Tokyo Collection', celebrating Japan's capital



city via special versions of the Phantom, Wraith, Dawn and Cullinan. Each car featured multi-faceted white paint containing aluminium and mica flakes, creating subtle tones in low light to characterise Tokyo's "high-rise glass and concrete buildings bathed in the warm light of early dusk".



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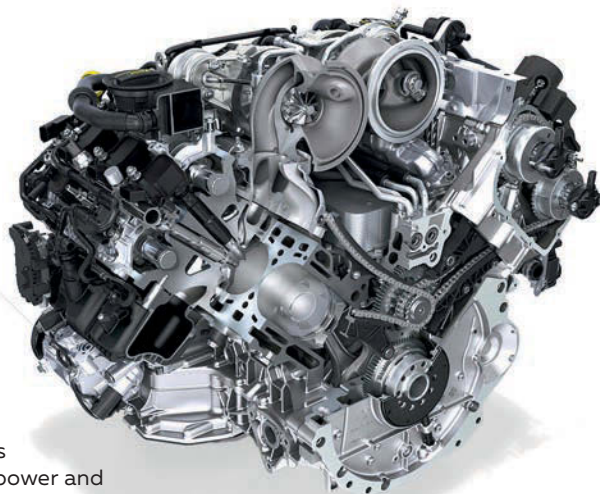
Bentley Motors has issued a press release explaining how the latest Flying Spur V8 builds on the company's six-decade tradition of using cross-plane V8 engines, pointing out that the latest super-saloon from Bentley "offers a characterful engine note, greater range between fuel stops and a reduction in CO2 emissions", yet still manages to offer hugely impressive performance thanks to the latest in "engineering knowledge and technology".

The Bentley 4.0-litre V8 engine features a block cast from high-strength aluminium and with twin-scroll turbochargers and primary catalytic convertors positioned in the V of the engine. Fuel injectors and spark plugs have been centralised within each combustion chamber to ensure optimal spray patterns and combustion paths, and the camshafts are variable by up to 50 degrees, with the ability to deactivate half of the cylinders when the engine is running at part load.

The compact V configuration uses

a five-bearing crankshaft, harnessing the power from the lightweight pistons. To minimise frictional power losses, the crankshaft also directly drives the water pump and timing chains via an intermediate shaft to improve efficiency. An exactly square engine, matching the stroke length to the 86mm cylinder bore, gives what Bentley claims is the best balance between power and torque. With the help of the twin-scroll turbos, this latest powerplant offers more than 135bhp per litre (542bhp in all), endowing the Flying Spur V8 with a 198mph top speed.

According to Bentley, the new Flying Spur V8 has been engineered to deliver a driver-focused experience, as well as offering passengers the "refinement, comfort and technology expected from a grand limousine".



ULTIMATE ACCESSORY

For anyone seeking the ultimate in shooting stick-style luxury, Rolls-Royce has just added the Pursuit Seat to its accessories range, bringing what the company calls "ease and style to clients' ever diversified lifestyles". The Pursuit Seat's main support is made from carbon fibre and polished aluminium for an optimal strength-to-weight ratio, fully height-adjustable to ensure maximum comfort.

There's a discrete pocket on the outer leather seat (ideal for storing tickets at any motorsport event), while a slim aluminium torch – finished with the double-R logo – is stored in the hinge. The seat itself is made from "the finest Rolls-Royce leather" and embossed with the Spirit of Ecstasy, and clients can

choose from an array of colours to match their car's interior. The flared aluminium ferrule on the end of the stick provides a solid grip on hard surfaces, while the cleverly concealed retractable spike offers the same security on grass and other soft ground.

The Pursuit Seat is available through the Rolls-Royce Boutique at dealerships worldwide, with prices starting at around £6500 excluding local taxes.



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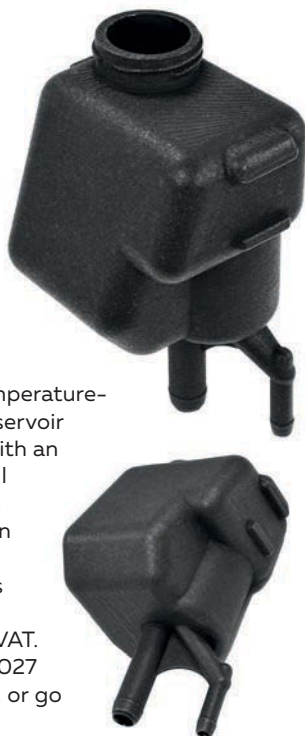
PRODUCT NEWS

We catch up with the latest must-haves aimed at today's classic Rolls-Royce and Bentley owner

REPLACEMENT RESERVOIR ▲

New from IntroCar at the time of writing is this original-style power steering reservoir, the latest addition to the company's Prestige Parts range and suitable for most of the SZ-generation models (from Silver Spirit and Mulsanne to Flying Spur and Turbo R), as well as the Bentley Continental R/T and Azure.

Manufactured from high-temperature-resistant sintered nylon, the reservoir is resin-sealed and equipped with an internal magnet to trap harmful particles circulating in the fluid. Inlet and outlet pipes have been metal reinforced to promote secure fitting of the hoses. This high-quality item is available right now, priced at £299 plus VAT. To order, call +44 (0)208 546 2027 quoting part number UE46315, or go online to www.introcar.co.uk.



UPDATED CATALOGUE ▲

Flying Spares has launched an updated version of its catalogue for the 1965-80 Rolls-Royce and Bentley ranges, catering for some of the most prolific models – including, of course, the Silver Shadow and T-series. This hefty catalogue is available free of charge, either as a PDF download via the company's website or you can ask for a printed copy to be posted out to you.

The catalogue is packed with the full range of parts available for these ever-popular classics, from service items through to everything you'll need for a major restoration. To order your copy, head to www.flyingspares.com or call +44 (0)1455 292949.



CAMARGUE BUMPERS ►

Proving that even the rarest Rolls-Royce classics are catered for by today's specialists, IntroCar has announced the reintroduction of bumper sections for the Camargue – one of the rarest cars of its era, with just over 500 examples built between 1975 and '86. As with all Prestige Parts bumper mouldings, the Camargue bumper range is constructed from a microcellular polyurethane synthetic rubber (as per the factory-spec Rolls-Royce items), but where they differ is in their stainless steel internal reinforcement – ensuring that the rust and distortion of the original components is no longer a concern.

All four bumper corners are available from stock, as are the centre section rubbers for both the front and rear of the car. Putting such items into limited-run production is a costly business, yet IntroCar has managed to bring these items to market at competitive prices – starting from £350 plus VAT for a left- or right-hand front corner.

For any Camargue owner, the fact that these items are once again available brand new (and to a higher spec than the originals) is surely great news. To find out more, visit www.introcar.co.uk or call +44 (0)208 546 2027.



STYLISH MASKS ►

If you're looking for an alternative face mask for when you're out and about, and you fancy supporting one of the biggest names in Rolls-Royce and Bentley parts, Flying Spares is now selling these fully-adjustable branded items at just £6 each plus VAT. To order, go online to www.flyingspares.com and enter FSMASK into the search bar.



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FEATURE CAR
ROLLS-ROYCE CORNICHE

RESCUE MISSION

WORDS: PAUL GUINNESS PHOTOGRAPHY: ADE BRANNAN



We take a trip to London to meet the proud owner of this pleasingly early Corniche, a car he rescued from long-term storage after an unexpected telephone call

It's not unusual for a ringing phone to lead to the following question for Paul Gershon: "Would you be interested in buying my car?" As a London-based dealer, he's always on the look-out for quality stock. But sometimes, just sometimes, the phone call can lead him on a personal quest, acquiring a special car that goes on to form part of his own personal collection

– involving serious quantities of time, money and effort in the process. And the 1972 Corniche FHC featured here is just such a machine, one that's truly got under Paul's skin since he acquired it in the summer of 2018.

"The lady who called told me she had a car that she wanted to sell and she thought it was a Rolls-Royce," recalls Paul, as we wander around

his impressively well-preserved early Corniche. It turned out that the car belonged to the caller's mother-in-law, whose husband had died some years earlier. It had subsequently languished in the family garage, untouched for a decade and obviously in need of some attention by the time Paul managed to make an appointment to view it.

"Fortunately, the garage was bone »



FEATURE CAR

ROLLS-ROYCE CORNICHE



The Corniche's interior benefits from new carpets and retreatment of the hide upholstery

dry, which had obviously helped to preserve the car during its ten years of inactivity," he explains. "But of course, it was covered in dust and filthy dirty. The story was that the Corniche had broken down, was towed home, pushed into the garage and left there. The subsequent passing of its owner was why it then sat untouched for so long."

Viewing the Corniche wasn't easy, as it was essentially a non-runner and

was parked tight up against one of the garage walls: "I could only really see down the one side of it," admits Paul, "which wasn't ideal." Nevertheless, the car looked as though it was solid and obviously had plenty of potential. Discussions about its future began, with Paul very conscious of the fact that the Corniche had been owned by the family for so long and obviously carried with it precious memories

of its now-deceased owner.

In fact, those talks went on for almost a year, during which time Paul made an offer on the Corniche, aware that he would have some serious expenditure ahead if he took on the project: "It turned out that somebody else had offered slightly more, but there was a complication. The Rolls-Royce had on it a cherished registration number that the family wanted to retain, but

HARDTOP STYLE

Although both versions of the Corniche – the fixed-head coupé (FHC) and convertible – arrived in 1971, they were little more than mildly updated versions of the previous Silver Shadow two-door by Mulliner Park Ward. The modifications were useful, however, with the famous V8 engine now boasting 10% more power, while the interior was reworked with some extra wood, a rev counter and new-style centre console. The radiator grille was made deeper and new wheel trims were fitted, which also aided brake cooling.

Despite a 10% price hike – plus continuing uncertainty about Rolls-Royce's future, which wouldn't be resolved until the car division's independence in 1973 – the Corniche built upon the success that the MPW two-doors had started. And the upgrades continued, either concurrent with or ahead of the Silver Shadow saloon. In 1977, for example, the bulkier (and arguably less attractive) shock-absorbing bumpers of the Silver Shadow II were adopted, along with the same front air dam, slightly flared wheel

arches, rack-and-pinion steering and enhanced suspension. Then during 1979 the rear suspension from the forthcoming Silver Spirit was adopted, notably improving road manners.

With the 1980 launch of the Silver Spirit marking a major change of style for Rolls-Royce, the following March saw the end of the Corniche FHC, which by then was priced at £62,000. But the convertible (costing an extra £4000) continued, eventually becoming one of the longest-lived of all Rolls-Royce models.



which couldn't be transferred until the car had passed an MoT test. I guaranteed – and offered to put in writing – the fact that I would transfer the registration back to the family once I'd got the Corniche on the road, and so we finally came to an agreement."

EXCLUSIVE CHOICE

The more Paul learned about the Corniche, the more interested he became in its history – as well as its future potential. The car was delivered to the supplying dealer, Jack Barclays, with an invoice from Rolls-Royce (dated 3rd October 1972) showing a total retail price of £12,133, including various extra-cost options like Lucas Quartz Iodine

headlamps (£11.50), a badge bar (£7), wing mirrors (£7) and a pair of reading lamps (£10). That list price equates to more than £173,000 in today's money, taking into account the UK's inflation rates of the last half a century.

The car – chassis number CRH13862 – was registered in the name of its first owner (a Harley Street doctor) in November 1972, delivered to him in his preferred colour scheme of Westminster Blue coachwork with contrasting Magnolia hide upholstery, complemented by the carpets and headlining being finished in Beige. It was a very pleasing combination, and one that makes this eye-catching Corniche all the more appealing on today's market.

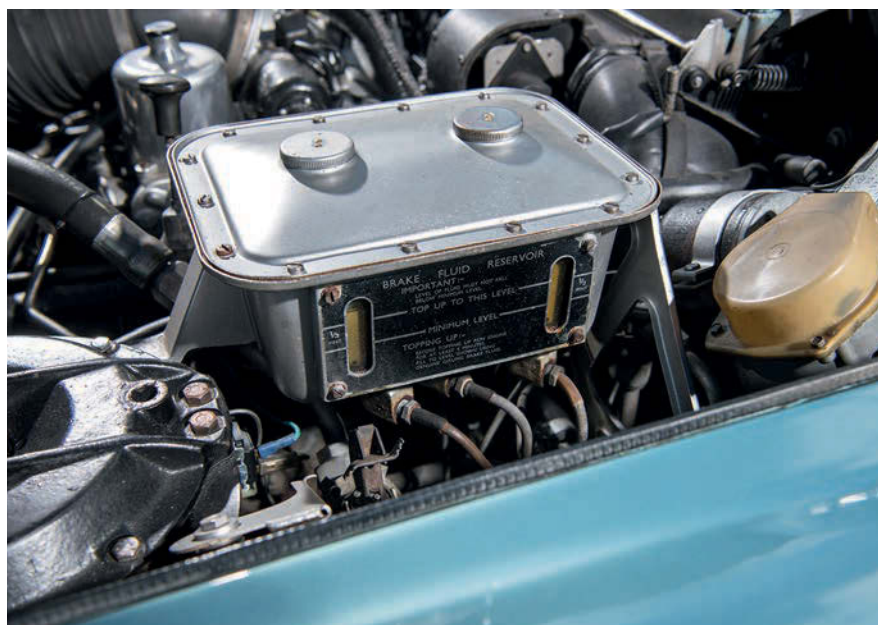
With Paul and the previous owner's family finally agreeing a price for the car, the next challenge was removing it from the rather inaccessible garage where it had spent the previous ten years. The process was complex, and involved a recovery truck with lifting gear – but finally the Corniche was free and was immediately transported to a contact of Paul's, a retired specialist who'd worked on Rolls-Royces his entire career: "He really knows these cars inside out, so I asked him to go over the Corniche in detail and do absolutely everything that was needed. I didn't want to take any chances with a car that had been inactive for so many years."

There was plenty of good news, as the engine wasn't seized (it turned over »

FEATURE CAR
ROLLS-ROYCE CORNICHE



“The car was supplied new to Jack Barclays, with an invoice from Rolls-Royce showing a total retail price of £12,133”



at the first attempt), the transmission was in full working order, and even the hydraulics were well-preserved and functioning. Nevertheless, as part of the in-depth recommissioning process, Paul made sure the Corniche was treated to all-new pipework, fresh fluids, a brand new radiator, new dampers, replacement air conditioning, an exchange steering box from Flying Spares (to cure the slight play in the steering) and a set of correct-spec Avon tyres. Various minor issues made their presence felt (including faulty electric windows, which meant rebuilding the motors), but the list of jobs gradually grew shorter and the car was ready for collection and mechanically sorted after about eight months.

“I like to think I have high standards, and I like my cars to be just right,” explains Paul, “so I took it back to my friendly specialist a few times

Paul devoted a lot of time and effort to detailing the car's now superb engine bay



just to sort the inevitable teething troubles you can get with any fifty-year-old car that's suddenly being pushed back into use. I made sure it was fine-tuned again once I'd done some miles in it, and I can honestly say it's now running beautifully."

MINOR DAMAGE

Paul's high expectations also stretch to a car's aesthetics, and the interior of the Corniche was something he

was keen to tackle: "Although it had been dry-stored for a decade, it had obviously had nearly forty years of use before then. And where rainwater had run down inside the doors during that time, it had damaged the back of the door panels, although the leather trim itself was still in perfect condition. I therefore had new door cards made from thin plywood, onto which the original leather was fitted. The carpet at the bottom of each door was also damaged, so I had this replaced with

new Wilton carpet, and at the same time had the entire car – including the boot – professionally recarpeted. As a finishing touch, I also had matching floor mats made, all trimmed in leather."

The hide-covered seats (in their original Magnolia hue) now look superb, but were less than perfect when Paul bought the Corniche, and so he had the leather carefully stripped, cleaned and re-Connollised. With regular treatment and conditioning since then, the leather is now far more supple »



than when Paul first acquired the car.

The bodywork of the Corniche has survived the years remarkably well, remaining in rust-free condition and with its Westminister Blue paintwork extremely presentable. However, an aftermarket vinyl roof that had been fitted many years ago wasn't to Paul's taste, and so he had it carefully removed and the roof expertly resprayed to match the rest of the car, along with the bonnet that was showing minor signs of paintwork wear.

The rest of the coachwork is largely untouched, although benefiting from plenty of elbow grease thanks to the car's latest owner's attention to detail: "It polishes up really well and I'm very happy with the way it looks," explains Paul. "However, the engine

"The Westminister Blue bodywork has survived the years remarkably well, remaining in rust-free condition"

bay wasn't great after such long-term storage, so I decided to strip it and properly detail it." Four weeks of labour-intensive hard work ensued, the end result being a beautifully finished underbonnet area that wouldn't look out of place at any concours d'elegance.

Being such an early example of a Corniche, and one that boasts a from-new mileage of only 49,000, this is a particularly special example of its type. The fact that it was in its last ownership

for so long (its previous owner bought it way back in 1979) gives it added appeal as far as Paul's concerned. And as soon as lockdown restrictions ease in the UK, he's due to take it back to that owner's family for them to see the work that's been carried out. Rescuing this much-loved Rolls-Royce from long-term hibernation has been extremely gratifying – and Paul's now looking forward to putting more miles under its wheels during the coming summer. ■



THANK YOU

We're grateful to Paul Gershon for allowing us access to his highly impressive Corniche. Paul runs London-based Different Class Cars (www.dcc.co.uk), supplying a wide range of used models as well as sought-after classics – although, of course, the Corniche forms part of his own personal collection.



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MARKET WATCH

Each issue, we take a look at some of the most tempting cars for sale and report on others that have sold – covering everything from affordable modern classics through to the most premium-priced gems



6500-MILE CORNICHE

One of the most impressive classics on sale with Vintage & Prestige at the time of writing is this 1989 Corniche II, a stunning looking example that has covered a mere 6500 miles from new. Hailed by V&P's Richard Biddulph as "the best Corniche we have ever seen", the car has been in the same ownership since it was four years old, when it was acquired with just 1000 miles under its wheels. The Corniche apparently "looks, drives and smells like new", and is described as a "real time warp for those who want the best available".

The Corniche II (available in the USA from 1986 and elsewhere from '88) featured a number of updates, including revamped seats, anti-lock brakes, new wheel trims, plus colour-coded bumpers and door mirrors. This incredibly low-mileage survivor is finished in a subtle two-tone colour scheme of Graphite Grey metallic over Ebony metallic, while the immaculate



interior offers grey leather throughout, along with grey lambswool rugs. The dashboard and door inserts feature burr walnut veneer, and a drinks cabinet is fitted within the driver's door.

This special Corniche is said to have been maintained regardless of cost but will undergo a further full service once

a sale is agreed. Having always been garaged and never used in the rain, it's rust-free "to the point where all the bolt heads in the engine bay appear in as-new condition". The asking price is £150,000, and you can find out more by calling Richard on +44 (0)7967 260673 or by going online to www.vandp.net.



COACHBUILT VALUE

What are colloquially referred to as the 'Chinese eye' models, the final Silver Cloud III-based two-doors from Mulliner Park Ward are now highly sought after, resulting in today's hefty asking prices. At £110,000, however, this tempting looking survivor offers excellent value for money, described by the selling specialist as a "good, sound, correct and original example in lovely condition throughout".

The car is also said to drive superbly, with an excellent engine and gearbox. This original-looking gem has been in the hands of one family for the last four decades, and there's every chance that the indicated mileage of 78,000

is correct. The Real Car Co says this is no pristine or freshly restored car, but is instead "delightfully undisturbed" and boasts a "very appealing interior, including leather that's soft, nicely

matured and just as it should be". Chassis number SHS325C is ready to drive away and enjoy – and you can find out more via www.realcar.co.uk or by calling +44 (0)1248 602649.



SECOND-GENERATION AZURE

Ideal for anyone seeking a low-mileage modern-classic Bentley is this glorious example of the second-generation Azure from 2006, a 25,000-mile car that's had just two owners from new. Featuring immaculate Fountain Blue

paintwork with a Linen hide interior, it comes with a full Bentley service history and is described as a "stunning example".

This superb Azure is apparently in as-new condition, having been kept in a heated garage as part of a private

collection and never taken out in bad weather. To find out more about this highly impressive survivor, which is priced at £95,000, give Stewart Walker a call on +44 (0)1635 866833 or go to www.stewartwalkerltd.co.uk.





CHERISHED PHANTOM VII

Launched in January 2003 as Rolls-Royce's first model under BMW control (and the first from its new headquarters at Goodwood), the £250,000 Phantom VII proved to be something of a game-changer for the marque. Bristling with technology, it was immediately hailed as the finest ultra-luxury saloon in the world – and on today's modern-classic market, it has its own following thanks to early examples being relatively affordable.

Few that come to market are as

special, however, as this example from 2007. With only around 14,000 miles covered from new, this Silver metallic over Black Kirsch metallic (which in the right light shimmers with a deep black-cherry hue) is as close to a new Phantom VII as you're likely to find these days. The unmarked interior is in Cotswold Stone leather and has all the usual standard features, including the options of TV function, mobile phone prep, parking cameras front and rear, and so on.

This Phantom has just been released from a private collection and comes HPI-checked, with an MoT 'til August 2021. It was first registered in November 2007 and is described by the selling specialist as being in "as-new condition". The asking price of this rather special modern-classic Phantom is £99,500, and you can find out more by calling John Smith on +44 (0)1728 830935 or +44 (0)7929 091371. Alternatively, go online to www.tudorblack.co.uk or send an email to info@tudorblack.co.uk.



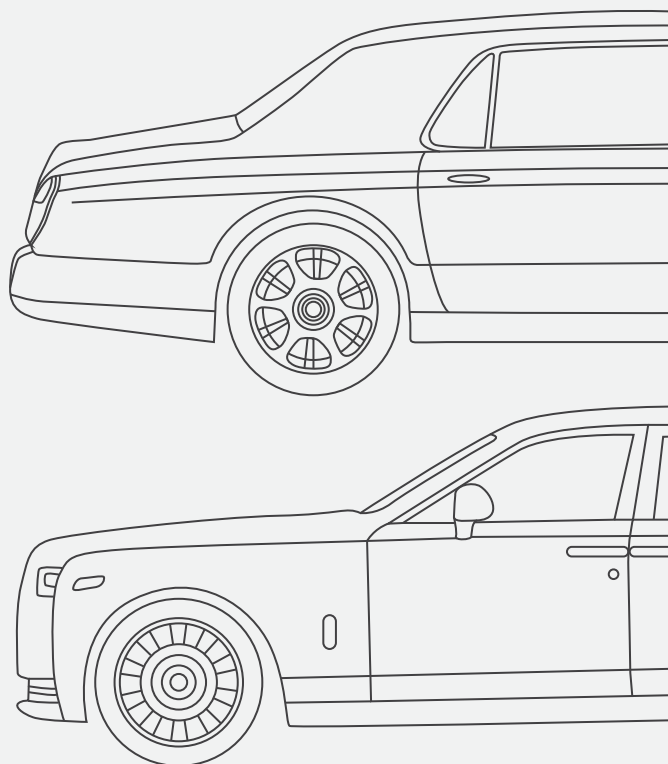
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CONTINENTAL

Shift

Behind the wheel of the R-Type Continental from Bentley Motors' heritage collection, we rediscover the joy of what was once Britain's most expensive car

WORDS: PAUL WAGER PHOTOGRAPHY: BENTLEY MOTORS





Stepping out of a latest-spec Bentley Flying Spur recently, I was struck by the thought that whatever you might think about the automotive choices of Premier League footballers, the Volkswagen Group has done a pretty effective job of returning Bentley to the spirit of its glory years. The modern-day Spur is simply unique, its W12 engine providing a savage thrust the equal of pretty much no other large saloon, yet all delivered with impossible levels of refinement that makes you wonder why anybody would ever bother with a cramped, impractical supercar.

The general complexity of the modern cars may be light years away from Bentley's models of the 1950s, but there is a parallel between the modern-day Spur and the R-Type Continental we're experiencing here. At launch, this was quite simply the fastest four-seater luxury saloon in the world.

Basis of the car was obviously the R-Type, which was essentially a facelifted version of the MkVI, itself the first new post-war Bentley model and the first to be factory-supplied with 'Standard Steel' bodywork rather

than as a rolling chassis to be bodied by the buyer's chosen coachbuilder. The evolution from MkVI to MkVII (the R-Type's original internal name) was little more than a facelift of the 'Standard Steel' model, the most notable feature of which was an enlarged boot. Indeed, the front end was all but identical to the later MkVI. And, of course, the R-Type was powered by the same alloy-headed straight-six found in the later MkVI (which meant 4566cc and 130bhp), an 'F-head' design that used overhead inlet valves but sidevalve exhausts.

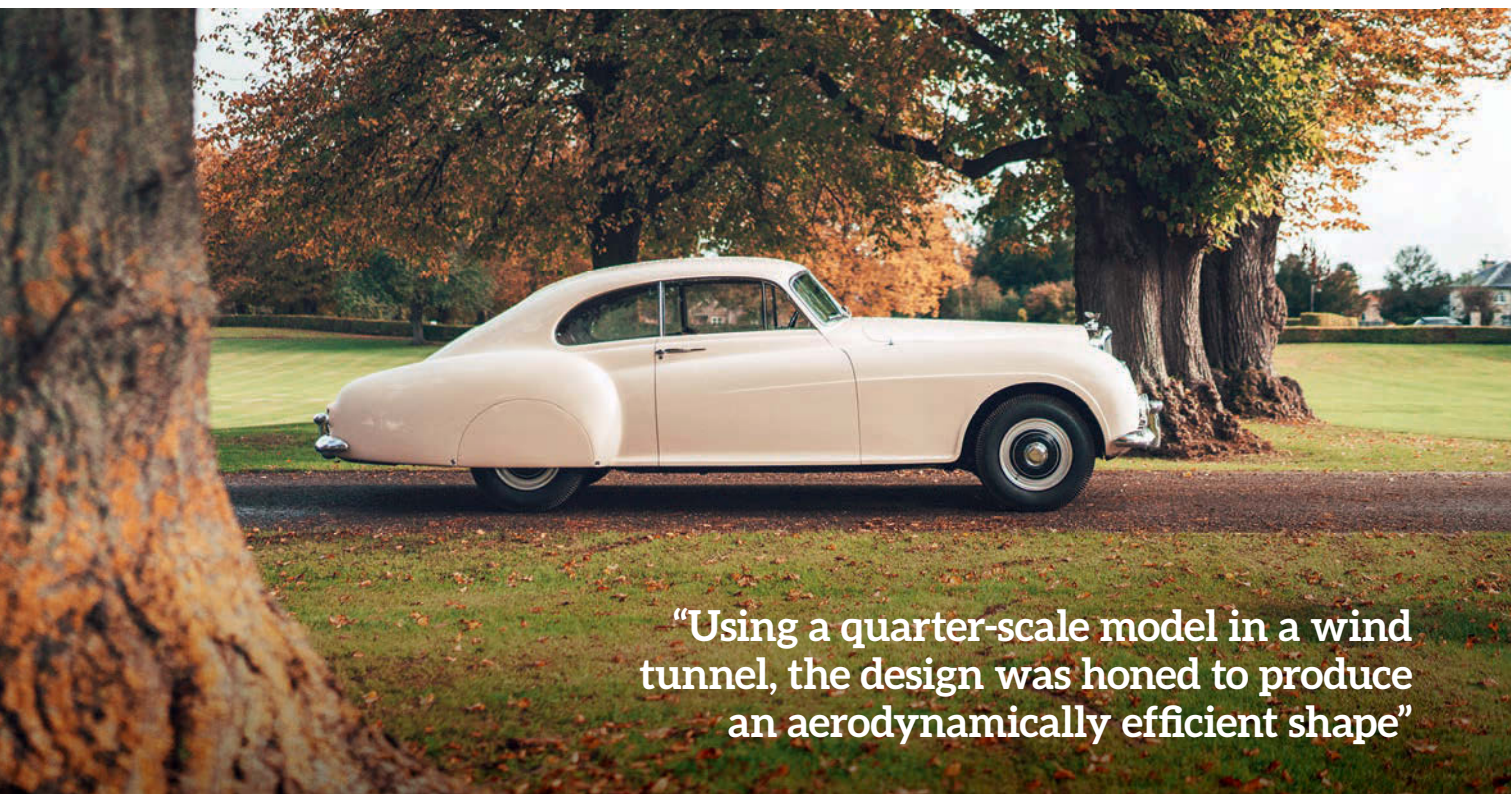
The Continental was first envisaged under the project name Corniche II in 1950, when chief project engineer Ivan Evernden investigated the possibility of creating a MkVI car with increased performance but without detracting from its legendary refinement. The company was no doubt stung into action following the reception of a small series of MkVI cars rebodied by Pininfarina at the request of the Parisian Bentley importer. Known as 'Cresta', they featured more flowing lines than the staid standard Bentley style, and also featured a lowered steering

column and a higher final drive ratio that permitted more relaxed high-speed cruising on European routes.

There was a stronger economic impetus at work, too. Prime Minister Stafford Cripps' imposition of severe austerity measures included a hefty 66.66% tax on luxury cars, meaning that the market for Bentleys was effectively overseas – and that meant creating cars that would appeal more to European and American tastes. The following year, John Blatchley arrived as styling chief, and he and Evernden worked up a concept with flowing bodywork reminiscent of the pre-war Embiricos Bentley project styled by Georges Paulin for the Greek shipping tycoon and Bentley enthusiast, André Embiricos.

UNIQUE BUILD

The general move to standard bodywork meant that the coachbuilding business was hit hard, with the more enterprising companies beginning to look at ways of diversifying. One of these was HJ Mulliner, long famed for its Rolls-Royce and Bentley work, which had developed a lightweight »



“Using a quarter-scale model in a wind tunnel, the design was honed to produce an aerodynamically efficient shape”



steel body construction technique. This used aluminium panels over a frame of Reynolds alloy tubes, with further weight saving achieved by using aluminium tubing for seat frames, bumpers and window frames.

It was for this reason that construction of the prototype Bentley was entrusted to Mulliner rather than the in-house coachbuilding division, Park Ward. Using a quarter-scale model in a wind tunnel, the design was honed to produce an aerodynamically efficient shape presenting a smaller frontal area than the regular Bentley saloons, with the steeply raked front screen and fastback rear all contributing

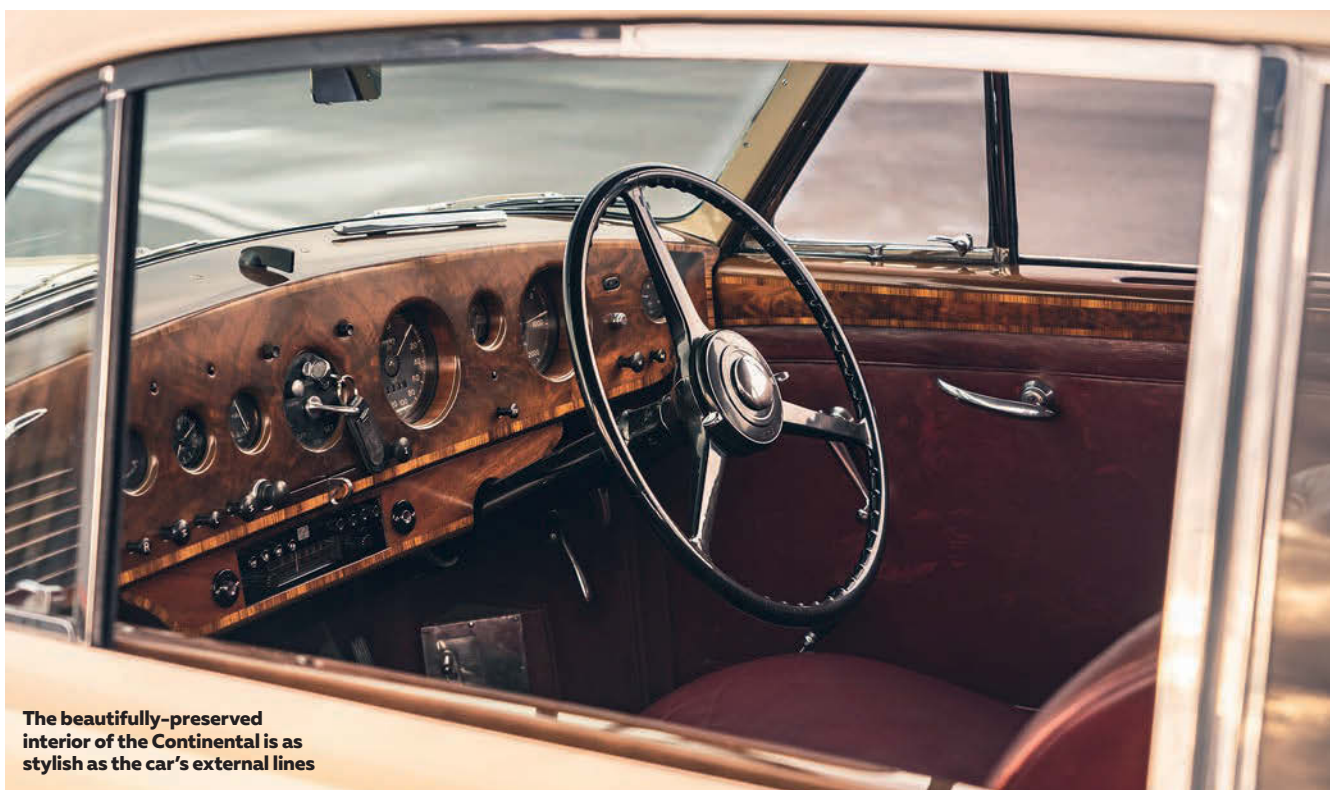
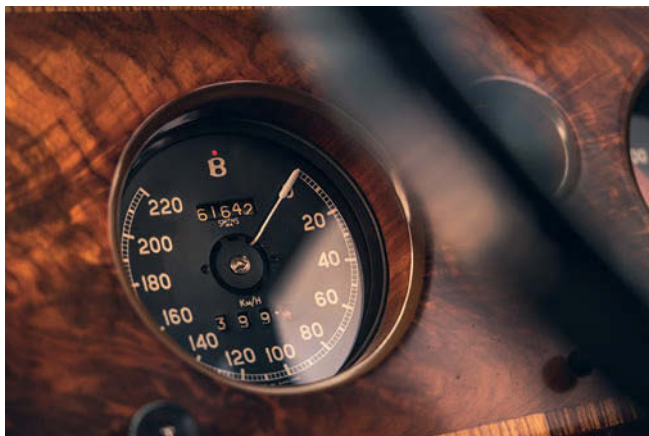
to its slipperiness. Meanwhile, the distinctive finned rear wings were added to improve high-speed stability as well as resistance to side winds.

Marque historians suggest that the stylists wanted a streamlined front end but this would have been a step too far for conservative management. A compromise was reached, which saw the traditional Bentley grille retained but lowered by 1.5 inches and raked backwards noticeably.

The brief for the car included a maximum weight of 34cwt (around 1700kg) and a top speed 20% better than that of the regular MkVI, which meant 120mph. Interestingly, although

the requirement to keep the weight down obviously assisted the car's acceleration, the overriding priority behind the brief was the tyre choice. Back in the early 1950s, the only tyres capable of sustained speeds of 115mph were restricted to a weight limit of 435kg per corner. This wasn't a problem for the lightweight Jaguar XK120, which was the only other production car to achieve this kind of speed, but it was a pressing issue for the big Bentley.

The running gear was carried over from the MkVI but the Continental gained a high-efficiency exhaust system, good for an extra 25bhp. The lowered steering column and raised final



The beautifully-preserved interior of the Continental is as stylish as the car's external lines

drive were copied from the Cresta cars and a prototype was built up in 1951. Testing showed that the car topped out at 114mph with 500rpm still to go, the result being that the 2.79:1 final drive was lowered to 3.07:1, in which form the car was successfully tested to 120mph. An indication of just what a limiting factor the tyres were is that the speeds were recorded on Dunlop's Medium Distance Track tyres, while the tyres fitted to regular production MkVIs lasted for just twenty miles.

Meanwhile, acceleration was similarly impressive for the period. The Continental was just 0.2 seconds quicker to 50mph than the standard MkVI, but

above that point it began to show its mettle, reaching 100mph in 36 seconds – almost impossibly quick for 1951.

HIGH PERFORMANCE

Testing complete, the R-Type Continental car was launched as a production model in June 1952 and wowed the world with its ability to make 80mph in second gear and 100mph in third. (It was also Britain's most expensive production car, a theme that would be revisited with the Continental R models of the 1990s.) In total, 207 production cars and a single prototype would be

constructed, with the Continental's appeal to overseas buyers making it a useful foreign currency earner.

This particular car – Bentley's own heritage example – left the factory in 1953 and was ordered by a customer in Switzerland. Oddly though, it was specified in right-hand drive, since its owner – Dr Rowland Guenin – was later to take the car to Australia, where it would remain before returning to Bentley in 2001.

Thanks to it enjoying such a dry climate for so long, this R-Type Continental has survived in beautifully original condition, with just the perfect amount of patina to let you know it's »



not an over-restored static exhibit. Indeed, Bentley Motors isn't afraid to send the Continental out and about on classic events – something that's very much to the firm's credit, since it means its cars get seen in use. Nevertheless, it's still a privilege to be allowed behind the wheel of such a significant (and valuable) machine – and despite its age, it still feels like something special. Simply opening the door shows you just how much care and craftsmanship went into creating these cars, with the mechanism operating with the kind of precision other automotive offerings of the 1950s simply don't have.

Being a later car, this '53 Continental is reassuringly familiar, since it needs only a turn of the key and stab of the starter button to fire the straight-six. (Earlier cars used a mixture control ring on the steering wheel, whereas these later models employed an automatic choke.) The Continental was known

“This particular car – Bentley's own heritage example – left the factory in 1953 and was ordered by a customer in Switzerland”

for having a different exhaust note from the regular MkVI and R-Type thanks to its performance system, and it certainly sounds more purposeful than the near-silent R-Type saloon.

This car is fitted with individual front seats, but to allow for three passengers the shift lever is on the right, which means regular Continental pilots get used to leaving it in second to allow easier entry and exit. It takes a few minutes to get used to what your brain tells you is a left-hand drive gearshift in conjunction with a right-hand steering wheel, but in all other respects the Continental is easy to drive.

Despite the big wheel, the steering is heavy at walking speeds but eases as soon as the car gathers pace, while the clutch and shift action all feel surprisingly modern. As we approach a cattle grid, I mentally adopt Morris Minor mode, remembering to double-declutch before selecting first on the move, something which gets a nod of approval from the Bentley custodian in the back seat.

Given the age and value of the car, it's the worst kind of savage who mashes the pedal into the carpet at the first

opportunity, but it's still tempting to see what she'll do – and the answer is plenty. The Bentley six-cylinder isn't a revvy engine in the modern sense – peak power is at just 4000rpm – but it still feels lively considering its 'F-head' layout, with speed gathering surprisingly quickly. And, it must be said, with surprising refinement. Back in the 1950s, cars with any kind of performance were generally hard-riding and uncompromising sports cars, yet even under hard acceleration it's still possible to hold a civilised conversation in the R-Type Continental, its engine note seldom more than a purposeful growl.

This Bentley remains delightfully true to the original weight-saving ethos of the Continental, which translates into a car that feels easy to handle despite its size. No, we didn't explore the outer envelope of its grip, nor can I tell you what the wind noise is like at 120mph, but I have no doubt that it would still manage that speed quite happily. The fact that it would do it with such style and refinement reinforces just what a unique proposition the R-Type Continental was when compared with any of its contemporaries. ■

TECHNICAL SPEC
R-TYPE CONTINENTAL

| | |
|-------------|------------------|
| Engine | 4566cc 6-cyl |
| Max power | 153bhp @ 4000rpm |
| Max speed | 117mph |
| 0-60 mph | 13.8 secs |
| Economy | 22-25mpg |
| Length | 5.2m (17ft) |
| Width | 1.8m (6ft) |
| Kerb Weight | 1700kg (3748lb) |



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FEATURE CARS
SILVER SPIRIT & SPUR



EARLY PAIRING

Representing the Silver Spirit and long-wheelbase Silver Spur in their original, purest forms are these impressive examples, the relatively recent acquisitions of a particularly fastidious enthusiast

WORDS: PAUL GUINNESS PHOTOGRAPHY: MATT RICHARDSON



“I’d always wanted an early Silver Spur in Mason’s Black,” explains Greenwich-based marque enthusiast Justin White on the day of our photo shoot. “Then one Saturday in July 2019, whilst looking at cars advertised online, I stumbled across this one for sale in the Netherlands – and I just knew I had to go and see it.” The following Monday saw Justin calling to enquire about what looked like his ideal Silver Spur, a low-mileage example with a full history. And within a matter of days he found himself on a plane heading for the Netherlands, where he’d visit the specialist

dealer that had the car in stock.

Justin is an unashamed admirer of Mason’s Black, being the proud owner of a Corniche FHC (featured in the Jan/Feb 2021 issue of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver*) and a Silver Wraith II finished in the same hue. The temptation to add to his collection an early Silver Spur in the same original colour scheme was hard to resist, which is why he wasted no time in checking out what’s now a fairly rare member of the SZ saloon range.

“I think this is about the 150th Silver Spur that Rolls-Royce built,” explains Justin. “It was completed on 3rd December 1981 and was »

FEATURE CARS

SILVER SPIRIT & SPUR



After just 31,000 miles, the Silver Spur's interior is still in immaculate condition

delivered to its first owner, a wealthy Arab gentleman who lived in Weybridge, Surrey." Vehicle number SCAZN0006BCH03431 had originally been ordered from Lex Mead of Weybridge in January '81, with the all-important Mason's Black paintwork being neatly contrasted

by a Magnolia leather interior, also featuring Oatmeal headlining and Cumberland Stone carpets.

Having always entrusted his Rolls-Royce classics to marque specialist Royce Service & Engineering (RS&E) for maintenance, Justin decided to seek their advice before viewing the Silver

Spur: "In the most amazing coincidence, when I called Paul and Patrick at RS&E to ask about buying a Silver Spur, it turned out that this actual car was owned by one of their clients. He'd ship it over from the Netherlands whenever it needed servicing or any repair work, and so it was a car they

REPLACING A LEGEND

The styling of Rolls-Royce's new SZ-generation saloons of 1980 was entrusted to the team led by Fritz Feller, an Austrian-born engineer who had come to the UK as a child. Mindful of the conservative nature of Rolls-Royce's clientele, great care was taken not to produce too radical a design whilst at the same time creating something distinct from the Silver Shadow – a car that by the late 1970s was arguably starting to look a little old-fashioned.

In the important US market, the Rolls-Royce was also physically smaller than much of the competition, and as a result lacked the imposing presence it enjoyed on European roads. The

easy solution would have been to create a significantly larger car, of course, but this was impossible given the engineering constraints of using the Silver Shadow's underpinnings.

Clever detailing and styling tricks were therefore used to make the Silver Spirit appear at a glance far larger than its predecessor, despite being only marginally longer and wider. Indeed, the roofline was in fact lower by half an inch. This was achieved by enlarging the glass area by some 30 per cent, lowering the waistline and using less decorative trim, together with more angular lines, a flatter bonnet and a more horizontal design to the front and rear lights.





“A deal was struck with the Dutch trader... and arrangements were made for the Silver Spur to be shipped to the UK”

knew extremely well. They could vouch for the fact that its mileage was genuine – it’s currently done just 31,000 – and that it was in original condition and came with a full history.”

Confident that it was worth a trip to view the two-owner Silver Spur, Justin arrived at the selling specialist’s premises and asked for the car to be put on one of the company’s ramps, enabling him to take a good look underneath whilst on the phone to Patrick, who talked him through every aspect of the inspection. “There were only a couple of minor issues,”

recalls Justin, “including very slight weeping from a couple of the struts and a small problem with the central locking, but that was all. Everything else about the car was as expected – it really was an excellent example and exactly what I was looking for.”

A deal was struck with the Dutch trader selling the car on behalf of its owner, and arrangements were made for the Silver Spur to be shipped to the UK, where it would head straight to RS&E for a professional check-over and for the minor issues to be attended to. With a service carried out,

various aged hoses replaced and the car given a clean bill of health, Justin was able to collect it in November 2019, finally completing his trio of Rolls-Royces in Mason’s Black.

“I was delighted with the Silver Spur – and still am,” he admits with a smile. It’s an impressive example for sure, with superbly preserved paintwork, no rust issues and as comprehensive a history as you’re likely to find with any member of the SZ family that’s been used so sparingly over the years. It’s absolutely complete too, even down to the original chauffeur’s manual that »



Justin enjoys collecting early SZ promotional material

FEATURE CARS

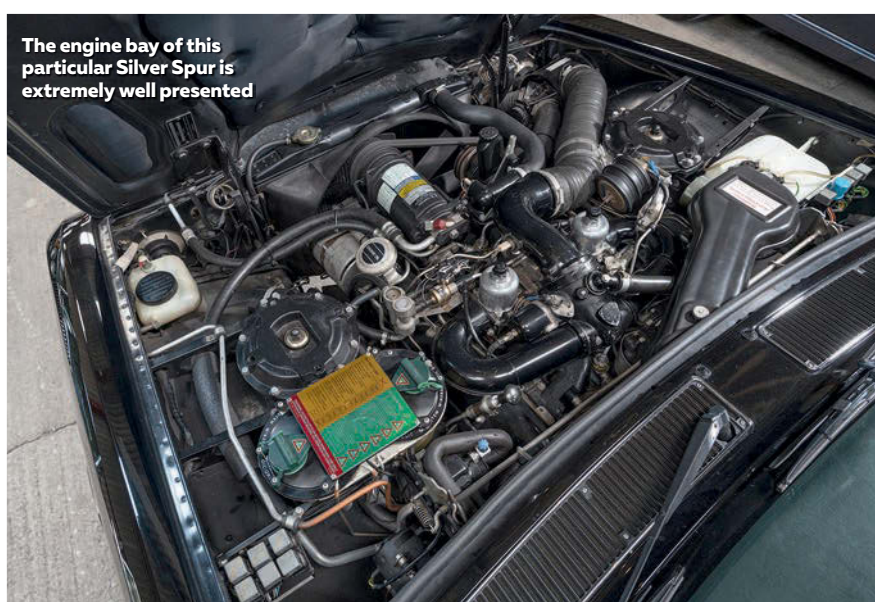
SILVER SPIRIT & SPUR



was supplied new with the car. So, with his collection looking rather impressive by now, can we assume that Justin was satisfied with his lot? Well, not exactly...

ENTER THE SPIRIT

"Another classic Rolls-Royce I've always craved is a very early Silver Spirit, but it had to be in Cotswold Beige – a colour I've admired for many years," explains Justin. This explains the presence of the suitably-hued Silver Spirit within this feature, a car that Justin has owned since May 2020 but which, intriguingly, he first spotted for sale on eBay three years earlier: "I saw what was then a Y-reg car advertised online, but from the photographs it was hard to work out the exact colour. It looked as though it was probably Ice Green, but by the time I made any enquiries »



THE SILVER SPUR

The inevitable long-wheelbase version of the Silver Spirit was launched as the Silver Spur, boasting a 124-inch wheelbase – an inch longer than its Silver Wraith II predecessor. For the Silver Spur, instead of the bodysHELLS being modified after production, a different 'body in white' shell was built by Pressed Steel. The 'extension' was created in front of the rear seat and extended floor panels, with a double-skinned transmission tunnel also fitted

to serve as a heater duct to the rear.

Lengthened rear doors were fitted, as was (obviously) a lengthened roof skin, created on early Silver Spurs by welding two standard panels together. Rolls-Royce claimed that the work was so neat it was hard to find the join, although the majority of Silver Spurs came with an Everflex roof. Perhaps surprisingly in view of the extra length, the Silver Spur weighed in at just 60kg over the weight of the Silver Spirit.



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2009/58 Bentley Arnage T Mulliner Level II. Finished in Beluga with electric sunroof, Le Mans wing vents and limo style rear window, Beluga interior with Cream stitching, piano Black veneers, picnic tables and vanity mirrors, rear screens and a DAB radio. Only 31,000 miles with full history. Immaculate throughout..... **£52,950**



2007/07 Bentley Continental GTC. Finished in unmarked Beluga with a Black hood and 20 inch multi-spoke alloys, with Soft Black interior, Piano Black veneers and also Piano Black inlays in the doors and rear quarters. Only 74,000 miles with Full Service History. Immaculate condition throughout..... **Only £31,750**



2002/02 Bentley Arnage T Mulliner. Finished in unmarked Silver Storm with 19 inch alloys, electric sunroof and light coloured privacy glass. The interior is in Cotswold with contrasting stitching and Flying B's in French Navy, with Walnut veneers. Only 59,800 miles with full history. Immaculate condition **Only £26,250**



1996 Model Bentley Brooklands. Finished in Wildberry with Cream coach lines and 17 inch alloy wheels. The interior is in Magnolia with Mulberry piping, Mulberry carpets and Walnut veneers. Only 71,000 miles with a very comprehensive history. A credit to its previous owner. Outstanding value at **Only £16,950**



1989 F Rolls Royce Silver Spirit ABS EFL. Finished in Claret with Gold coach lines and whitewall tyres, with Cream interior and Cream carpets. Only 3 owners and known to us for last 9 years, with history. Low mileage, a stunning car in outstanding condition throughout..... **Only £15,950**



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FEATURE CARS

SILVER SPIRIT & SPUR



The Silver Spirit's driver's seat seemed to 'hug' Justin as soon as he sat in the car

the car had already been sold."

Fast-forward to just over a year ago and, during one of his fairly regular visits to RS&E, Justin mentioned to Patrick that he would love to own an early Silver Spirit in Cotswold Beige. By a strange quirk of fate, Patrick explained that the company was currently storing just such a car on behalf of a client, who was at that time

thinking of selling it. Justin immediately accepted the invitation to view it, and just a few minutes later found himself gazing at the very same car he'd missed out on via eBay in 2017: "It was the most amazing coincidence," explains Justin, "although the timing was lousy. I said to Patrick, 'What have you done?' I wasn't in the best position to buy the car there and then, as I'd got

various other projects on the go. But how could I miss such an opportunity?"

The decision was made once Justin opened the door of the Silver Spirit, admired what looked like an immaculate interior, and then climbed aboard: "I've never experienced this before, but as soon as I sat behind the wheel, the seat seemed to hug me. Honestly, it was the most bizarre



Dark Brown piping neatly contrasts the Silver Spirit's Beige upholstery





“Another classic Rolls-Royce I’ve always craved is a very early Silver Spirit, but it had to be in Cotswold Beige”

experience. And that was it... I knew then that I had to have the car.”

Justin asked RS&E to carry out a full inspection, which revealed nothing major: “The diff was a little noisy and there were a few little jobs to carry out, but again this was an extremely well-preserved car,” recalls Justin. “A deal was struck with the owner and I asked Paul and Patrick’s team of experts to get the car ready for me. I had new Bilstein front dampers fitted, a full service carried out, the air conditioning re-gassed and so on. When I viewed the Silver Spirit, it featured a quad- »

HISTORY REPEATING

The photo shoot with Justin White’s SZ twosome for *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* was almost a case of history repeating, thanks to Rolls-Royce Motors’ use of a Cotswold Beige Silver Spirit and a Mason’s Black Silver Spur in its marketing of the two newcomers. This is one of the well-known photographs from an early Silver Spirit and Silver Spur brochure.



FEATURE CARS

SILVER SPIRIT & SPUR



headlamp Bentley-type conversion, although the original headlamps came with it and were in perfect condition – and so, as I’m a stickler for originality, I had those reinstated.”

Justin finally had his ideal Silver Spirit (chassis number SCAZS0001CCH04657), featuring his favourite colour of paintwork complemented by a Beige hide interior with Dark Brown piping, Oatmeal cloth headlining and Dark Brown carpets. It’s a very pleasing combination. And although most of the bodywork has been resprayed at some point over

the years (apart from the roof), the original shade of Cotswold Beige has been applied to a high standard and presents itself very well.

“There’s something about the earliest Silver Spirits that I absolutely love,” explains Justin, “as they have plenty of minor details that are different from the later cars. My Silver Spirit was ordered from Jack Barclays in September 1981 and finally left Crewe in August ’82, so it’s a fairly early survivor. Since buying it though, I’ve changed its registration number to one from 1980, which I think suits it well.”

Justin’s first proper drive in his Silver Spirit was to the location of our photo shoot in June 2020, during which it performed faultlessly – as did its long-wheelbase cousin. So, what lies ahead for this particularly handsome duo of early SZs? “Once restrictions lift, I’m determined to enjoy them both as much as possible in 2021. Covid-19 has dominated our lives throughout my ownership of these two cars, so hopefully I’ll get to take them to a few events this year – and spend time behind the wheel on some decent journeys. I can’t wait!” ■



Justin White,
custodian of two
early SZ models





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EVERY CLOUD...

California-based Gene Beley recalls his wife's family's Silver Cloud, a car he got to know in the early '60s – but one that his brother-in-law, John, has mixed memories of

When I was dating my now wife, Jill Muir, back in 1961, her parents (James Creighton and Margaret Muir) had a 1956 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud that I loved to wash and wax for them on their driveway. I'd met Jill in a journalism class at San Jose City College; and once we were married, her parents would entrust the Rolls-Royce to us when they went on one of their trips to Europe, as they didn't want it being left unused for extended periods of time.

By then, I was fresh out of UCLA with a master's degree in journalism, working full time at a daily newspaper, the *Ventura County Star-Free Press* in Ventura, California. One day I asked the city editor, Ross Stubbart, if he wanted to go to lunch in the Rolls-Royce. As we were pulling out of the driveway of the old newspaper building, the publisher, Julius Gius, was standing on the street corner talking to the young business manager and son-in-law of the owners of the Scripps chain of newspapers. "Gee, I wonder who owns the Rolls-Royce in Ventura?" the publisher asked the business manager. "Well, Julius," he replied, "I think that's one of your men!"

Another time, on my last day of five and a half years in the Army National Guard Reserves, where I was their public information officer but had never progressed beyond being a very unmotivated PFC (private first class), I decided to take the Rolls-Royce to the meeting. Of course, when I showed up in it, all the other weekend warriors clamoured around and asked: "Beley, where did you get the Rolls?" I replied, jokingly: "I stole it."

I knew that a general was coming from Los Angeles to inspect the local hospital, so I suggested to the Ventura commanding officer that I chauffeured him. On the way to the hospital, he

asked the commander in the back seat: "Who is the PFC driving the Rolls?"

"That's PFC Beley," the commander told the general.

"Does he have a college degree?" asked the general.

"Yes, I believe he does."

"Then why isn't he an officer?"

While the general was inspecting the hospital, he assigned three of his men to try to persuade me to stay in the Army National Guard. "Did you know you could make \$75 a month if you stay in and become an officer?" I was told. I laughed at them and said if I couldn't figure out a way to make \$75 a month more doing anything else, I still wouldn't be interested!

CHAUFFEUR DRIVEN

When I worked as an advertising salesman for the *San Leandro Morning News* in the San Francisco Bay Area, I got the idea of producing the annual industrial spotlight edition with a Rolls-Royce tour of each business. So I had my brother-in-law, John Muir, dress up as a chauffeur, while a good friend, Ed Starr, sat on the back seat like he was the VIP being picked up at the airport. We took the photos in front of my in-laws' San Jose home. Back in those ancient pre-digital days, we had to reduce each photograph to make the magic work on the master paste-up page. That effort was very labour intensive, but successful and fun.

Once, when friend Ed Starr visited us, I picked him up at Los Angeles Airport and took him on a tour of Hollywood, Sunset Boulevard, Holmby Hills, Beverly Hills and Bel Air, which was considered a step up from Beverly Hills. Several times we would mischievously pull into a driveway for

a closer look at the mansions. One time, when a man asked if he could help us, I just smiled, said "Wrong address" and pulled back out of the driveway. At least we looked like we belonged in the neighbourhood!

My wife, Jill, remembers when our two young boys, Scott and Shaun, were sleeping on the back seat of the Rolls-Royce in the age before child seats. She had to go through a yellow light because she could see in her rear view mirror that a pick-up truck was following too close behind her. She got stopped and ticketed by a Ventura policeman, even though the pick-up truck also went through the yellow light. She fought the ticket and won by saying it would have been more dangerous to slam on the brakes and have the boys thrown forward onto the floor and probably have the pick-up hit them.



Above: US advertising of the Silver Cloud focused on its refinement

Other memories my wife recalls were when our oldest son, Scott, teethered on the rear door wood panel on the way to a family gathering while sitting on her lap. Another time, when he was three years old, he vomited in the car, suffering from travel sickness on the way to Lake Tahoe: "His Nana still loved him, though," Jill said.

FAMILY MEMORIES

After my parents-in-law died, my brother-in-law, John, bought the car from the estate. Before I wrote this article, I asked him to contribute some of his experiences. To my surprise, he said most of them were negative, mentioning something about a "snake pit". Why? Because, he said, he grew up with others thinking of him as that rich kid because his father was one of the early ob-gyn physicians in Santa Clara County, driving a Rolls-Royce as well as a Model T at weekends.

"At 12 years old, I was finishing a turbulent period of education at The Children's Country School, located in Los Gatos, CA," John began, saying he had mixed emotions about the car. "The school was a decidedly progressive institution with a strong emphasis on a classic education coupled with an equally strong emphasis on arts and crafts. The fact there was a horse stable located on an adjacent property was also a plus. A perception was slowly dawning on me that I was being raised to be a prince. The arrival of the sleek, black Rolls-Royce only confirmed this belief!

"But there was a slight problem. Other kids of my acquaintance from my days at public grade school thought the young prince should get his ass kicked. One way to avoid these ceremonies of manliness was to host swimming parties at our backyard pool. Come to think of it, this may be one of the reasons my parents enrolled me in classes at a judo academy while I was in middle school. The main reason my father had purchased the car was because he was a successful physician who hated paying taxes.

"As a physician, the normal business deductions others could take were not available to him, so his accountant



Gene took this photograph of his brother-in-law, John Muir, adopting the role of chauffeur for a newspaper initiative

"I got the idea of producing the annual industrial spotlight edition with a Rolls-Royce tour of each business"

suggested he buy the most expensive car he could find and write it off as his business car. That lasted four or five years and then he gave it to my mother. She promptly named it Mrs Weatherby. One odd memory, given my mother's usual demeanour and the nature of the vehicle, was that Mom loved jackrabbit starts off the line at street signals – and Mrs Weatherby always came through like a champ! The car had a huge straight-line six-cylinder engine with matching gear ratios that allowed her to get the jump on anybody. That was definitely a hoot.

"I was the last child still at home at that point. My oldest sister, Bonnie, was at Northwestern University, while my brother, Jim, was at Stanford University. My other sister, Jill, was at a college preparatory boarding school. Four years later that was

my fate too, attending Shattuck Military School there where my father attended and later taught English before becoming a doctor.

"That was the beginning of living the life of a Gemini. I sat proudly in the front seat of the Rolls-Royce when my mother drove us through the Gates of the Castlewood Country Club in Pleasanton, a former Randolph Hearst estate before it became a country club. However, I tried to hide so nobody would see me if we were driving the streets of San Jose on some errand. Schizophrenia is the word we are all searching for to explain my life then."

When John bought the Cloud out of the estate, he was in his mid-thirties: "I was single, a photographer living in the Marina neighbourhood of San Francisco, and I drove a Rolls-Royce. I never went home alone." ■



THE BEST ARMOURED CARS IN THE WORLD

Richard Gunn investigates the early associations between Rolls-Royce and the military, a connection that began in 1914 when the 40/50hp Silver Ghost answered the call of duty

PHOTOGRAPHY: THE TANK MUSEUM, KELSEY ARCHIVE

In 1907, *Autocar* magazine branded Rolls-Royce as the maker of "the best car in the world", an expression that continued to be associated with the company for many decades afterwards. The particular model that prompted this gushing honour was the

40/50hp, which debuted the previous year. The firm may have been young, with the partnership between Charles Rolls and Henry Royce only having been formalised in 1904 and Rolls-Royce Limited being officially founded in March 1906. But with the 40/50hp, which first

saw the light of day in November of that year, it did have a remarkable machine that was truly worthy of the accolade.

It wasn't just that twenty years after Karl Benz invented his Patent-Motorwagen, most automobiles were still underpowered, primitive,

slow, unreliable and prone to shaking themselves to bits on the atrocious roads of the era. The 40/50hp was incredibly well-built, powerful and robust – in terms of both its mechanicals and engineering. This was incontrovertibly proven by AX 201, the sixth example built, which was retained by the company as a demonstrator. Finished in eye-catching aluminium paint and christened 'Silver Ghost', it would become famous thanks to its exploits during the Scottish Reliability Trials of 1907, as well as the 15,000 miles of tests it successfully completed straight afterwards, including travelling between London and Glasgow 27 times. Such was the enviable reputation for quality and reliability it forged for itself and Rolls-Royce that all 40/50hps soon became known as Silver Ghosts.

In 1914, however, Rolls-Royce's best cars in the world found themselves facing an even greater challenge than multiple jaunts betwixt London and Glasgow. On August 4th, Britain entered the First World War and the government – in urgent need of military machines – turned to Rolls-Royce. The outcome was the Rolls-Royce Armoured Car, a fighting version of the Silver Ghost that arguably equalled its civilian counterpart by being the best of its type on the planet. It proved so capable that examples even went on to serve in the Second World War.

Along the way, these Ghosts with attitude initially served in France, Germany's African colonies, Gallipoli, Russia and India, then excelled themselves in the Middle East, where they enhanced their reputation still further alongside Major Thomas Edward



The Silver Ghost proved itself in some of the most challenging road trials, making it a fine choice for the basis of an Armoured Car

Lawrence – better known as Lawrence of Arabia, of course – during the First World War's Arab Revolt against the Turks. Lawrence later said: "A Rolls in the desert was above rubies... great was Rolls and great was Royce! They were worth hundreds of men to us in those deserts."

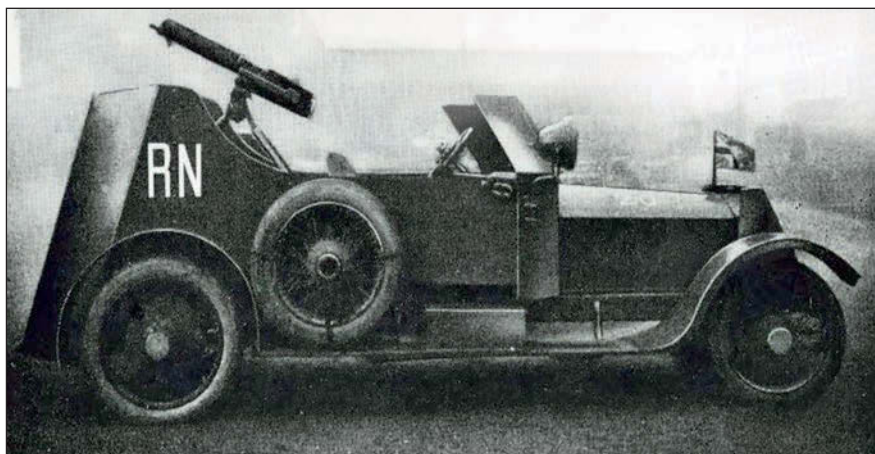
During the 1920s and '30s, the vehicles were used for policing in Ireland, the Middle East, India and even made an unexpected incursion to China. They were still to be found in Ireland, the Middle East and India when the Second World War broke out. And given the advances in military technology from the first global conflict to the next – biplanes to jets, reconnaissance balloons to radar, horses to tanks and

Jeeps – it's testament to the toughness and dependability of what Rolls-Royce created in the Edwardian era that it would linger on into the new Elizabethan period, for the Irish Army wouldn't sell off the last of its fleet until 1954.

EARLY YEARS

It was during the very early days of the First World War that the first Rolls-Royce Armoured Car appeared. The British government had looked at acquiring some Rolls-Royces back in 1906, but at £525 they were deemed far too expensive. Remember, at that time the 40/50hp wasn't supplied as a complete vehicle; it came in (very sturdy) chassis form with 7036cc six-cylinder engine and characteristic Palladian grille, not yet crowned by the Spirit of Ecstasy – that wouldn't become an official accessory until 1911. It was up to customers to have a coachbuilder of their choice design and fit bodies; not really a problem for those well-heeled enough to afford to commission the finest craftsmen, but rather more of an issue for a country at that point enjoying a rare (if temporary) period of peace.

However, eight years on from 1906, things had taken a distinct turn for the worse. The Eastchurch Squadron of the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) had transferred to Flanders in France during August 1914, where its rather renegade leader – Commander Charles Samson – became fond of passing the time between flights by using the private »



The very first Rolls-Royce Armoured Car was an unofficial conversion by the Flanders-based Eastchurch Squadron of the Royal Naval Air Service in 1914

vehicles of his pilots for reconnaissance missions and raids against the Germans. Unfortunately, they had a tendency to fight back, prompting Samson to add armour plating to three cars during September or October. They were a Mercedes, Wolseley and Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost, the latter likely to have been Samson's own car. His brother, Felix, was responsible for the design of the 6mm steel plating, which was applied by the Dunkirk shipyard of Forges et Chantiers de France. While it was quite basic and didn't offer fully-enclosed protection to the open tourer it was applied to, it was nevertheless a radical coachbuilt Ghost; after all, not many Rolls-Royces sported a Maxim machine gun mounted on a platform at the rear, and a metal plate for a windscreen!

News of Samson's exploits soon

"Britain entered the First World War and the government – in urgent need of military machines – turned to Rolls-Royce"

spread, so much so that even the Admiralty back in London got to hear about them. Overseen by the First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, a further 60 armoured cars were commissioned, 18 of which were Rolls-Royces. It seems that, initially, chassis intended for civilian customers were requisitioned or existing fully-built cars donated by their patriotic owners, such was the pressing need. Later, Rolls-Royce would build frames specifically for the War Office, which could be identified

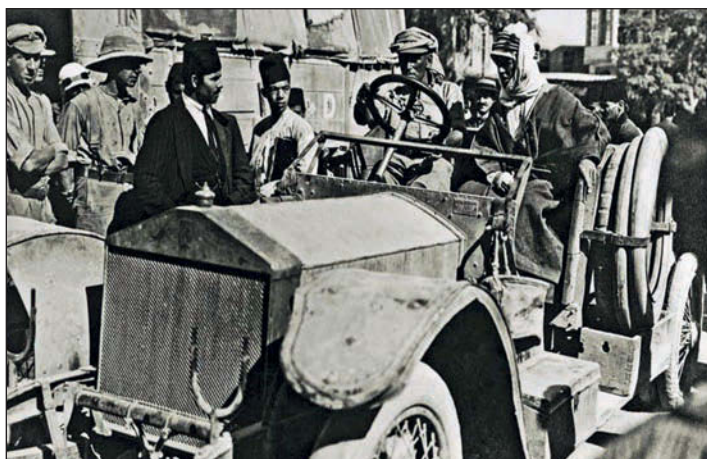
by the suffix 'WO' to the chassis number. The bodywork was penned by British politician Lord Wimborne and somebody simply known as Mr Macnamara. While apparently superior to their Wolseley and Clement-Talbot counterparts, they afforded even less protection than Samson's original conversion. Crews had to lie down to get any sort of protection from whatever the enemy might throw at them, while the plating was just 4mm thick, albeit backed by oak planks.

These original Admiralty Pattern Rolls-Royces were sent to France, where Samson modified one with sloping upper sides meeting to form a roof. Unfortunately, they arrived just as trench warfare was bringing an end to any form of mobility on the Western Front. "At the moment when the new armoured car force was coming into effective existence at much expense and on a considerable scale, it was confronted with an obstacle and a military situation which rendered its employment practically impossible," wrote Churchill.

Despite the stalemate, the Admiralty pressed on with a new design, the 1914 Pattern. Perhaps better informed this time by the criticism from Samson and his men, its armour was a lot more convincing, totally enveloping the vehicle and any occupants, and topped off with a machine gun turret. There were



The Tank Museum's Rolls-Royce Armoured Car – one of just two working survivors – is a 1920 Pattern vehicle that served in Ireland and Shanghai (photo: The Tank Museum, Bovington)



Lawrence of Arabia in a non-armoured Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost in Damascus during 1918; the driver may have been SC Rolls, who wrote about his exploits with Lawrence in the 1937 book, *Steel Chariots in the Desert*



TE Lawrence was a big motoring enthusiast, whether in an actual Rolls-Royce or on "the Rolls-Royce of motorcycles", a Brough Superior SS100

two new designers: Flight Lieutenants Arthur Nickerson and Kenneth Symes. The bodywork was by Beardmore of Glasgow, although sent in kit form to London coachbuilders such as Barker & Co and JE Thomas. The first was put together entirely by Beardmore in Glasgow though, and then driven from there to the Royal Naval Armoured Car Division's (RNACD) headquarters in North Kensington, London, on November 15th 1914. Given the exploits of the Silver Ghost in 1907, a single trip from the Clyde to the Thames was hardly a challenge, especially since Rolls-Royce had introduced a stronger, more powerful 7428cc engine in 1910.

This time the armour plating was 8mm thick, meaning a weight of around four tons; quite a burden even for a Rolls-Royce boasting a chassis hefty enough to cope with the decadent whims of the British aristocracy for lavish and heavyweight coachwork. Only the wheels (and spare wheel) were left exposed; even the radiator, with its ornate chrome surround still featuring Rolls-Royce's famous intertwined Rs, had metal shutters that could be operated from inside. The turret was manually operated and fitted with a .303 Maxim machine gun, but Vickers equivalents were introduced on later cars. The standard complement was three crew members. A total of 89 of these 1914 Pattern turret cars were built, adding to the 18 earlier open models known as First Admiralty Patterns.

Because of the trench stand-off in France, the Rolls-Royces there found themselves generally being little more than officer taxis through danger spots such as Ypres, although they did take part in tussles. There were some trials with using them to tow three-pounder cannons, but unless conditions were very favourable – which they usually weren't in the hellish shell-blasted quagmire of the Western Front – this proved generally beyond even a mighty Rolls-Royce. Most seemed to have returned to Britain during 1915, where they were transferred from Naval control to the Army, and its Machine Gun Corps (Motors). Some did subsequently go back to France and were engaged alongside the new technology of tanks at the Battle of Arras from April to May 1917. However, all Rolls-Royce Armoured Cars had been withdrawn from the theatre by October 1917.

Eight were deployed to the disastrous Allied Campaign on Gallipoli in what is now modern Turkey, but aside from

A 1920 Pattern Rolls-Royce being used by the North Irish Horse in Northern Ireland during January 1941



In this 1922 shot outside the Gresham Hotel in Dublin during the Irish Civil War, the Rolls-Royce Armoured Car seems to be standing up rather better than building alongside it

limited action in June 1915, they seem to have spent most of their time hidden in dug-outs or on board ships. Still, this was a safer, quieter life than the unfortunate troops around them on the peninsula were having. The same year, twelve also went to south-west Africa, where they remained until German forces surrendered their colonies there during July. Four remained for mopping-up operations until the start of 1917, before they were sent to Egypt. Between 1914 and 1918, Rolls-Royces were also in East Africa to combat German forces there.

MISSING CAR

At least one Rolls-Royce – and possibly two – served in Russia against Bulgarian forces, but the one that was definitely in action there seems to have disappeared during the 1917 Russian Revolution. Three Armoured



The Royal Air Force was the last of the three British forces to use the Rolls-Royce Armoured Car, with this being a 1920 Pattern example in RAF colours

Cars were introduced to India from 1915, championed by locally-based officer Captain Anthony Clifton and Lord John Montagu of Beaulieu, India's Inspector of Mechanical Transport. It was, incidentally, Montagu's secretary and mistress, Eleanor Thornton, who was the model for the Spirit of Ecstasy radiator figurine. However, these three cars were converted from local civilian machines – many Maharajahs owned Silver Ghosts – and, because machine guns were scarce, only one was initially so equipped. All had open tops. Closer to home, the 1916 Easter Uprising in Ireland prompted the dispatch of seven cars there.

Where the Rolls-Royces truly excelled, however, were North Africa and the Middle East, where they gained considerable renown. That heavy, two-wheel drive vehicles on skinny wheels should prove so adept on sand and in extreme heat is somewhat surprising. »

but the military Ghosts seemed to come into their own in these extreme circumstances. The first examples went out to Egypt during March and April 1915, where they proved outstanding under the command of the Duke of Westminster in March 1916 by rescuing the 91 crew members from HMS Tara and HMT Moorina being held captive by the Senussi tribe at Bir Hakeim – a place that would become infamous in the following world war for the major battle there. To

retrieve them, a convoy of vehicles led by Rolls-Royces had a difficult 120-mile trip through the desert, where Armoured Cars led the fighting before the long trek back to safety. The Duke reputedly purchased the Rolls-Royces himself, something that cost him a princely £30,000 for the twelve cars plus three Seabrook trucks – the equivalent of over £2.6 million today. Still, it probably helped that he was Britain's richest man.

The Armoured Cars' fame only spread

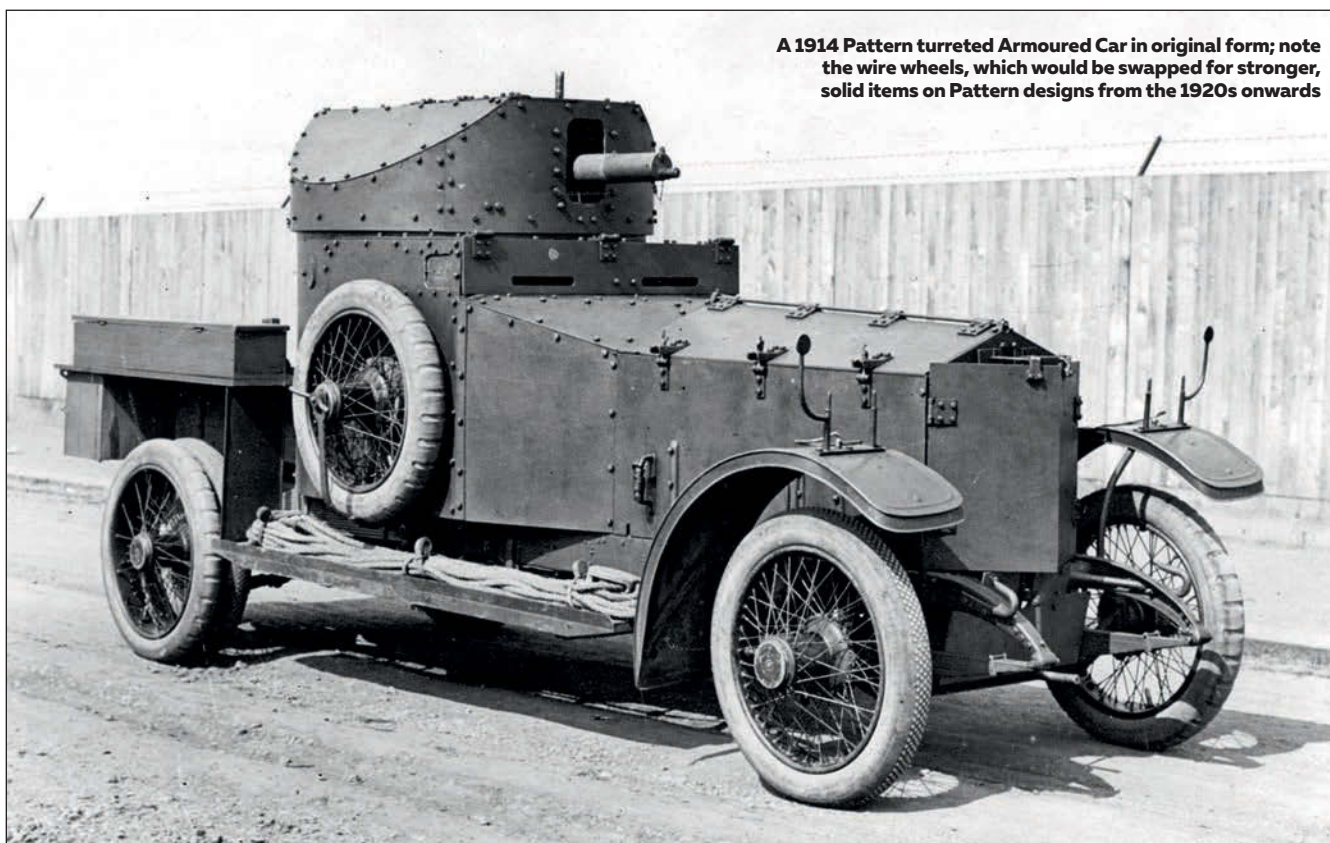
further when they came into the orbit of Lawrence of Arabia. His Hedjaz Section supported the Arab Revolt against the Turks, and initially had two Rolls-Royce Armoured Cars and two rebuilt tender variants. Another two Armoured Cars arrived in 1918. Whatever the romantic image of Lawrence on camel- or horseback (even though it seems he genuinely disliked camels), he was a major advocate of the use of military machinery and described



A 1920 Pattern Armoured Car in RAF service; the policy of naming the cars (this is His Majesty's Armoured Car Victory) dated back to their Naval ownership days



When the Second World War broke out, Rolls-Royce Armoured Cars squared up to Italian forces along the fortified border between Egypt and Libya



A 1914 Pattern turreted Armoured Car in original form; note the wire wheels, which would be swapped for stronger, solid items on Pattern designs from the 1920s onwards

his experiences with Rolls-Royces as "fighting de-luxe". The Armoured Cars were crucial in the sabotage and raid missions undertaken by Lawrence, giving a crucial strategic edge to the local forces of Sherif Hussein bin Ali.

Although David Lean's 1962 movie epic *Lawrence of Arabia* obviously takes some cinematic licence with the story of the man whose life it portrays, it does show how the Rolls-Royces were typically utilised. Two replica Armoured Cars were built for the film, albeit with genuine Ghosts – 1924 chassis numbers 68RM and 82EM – underneath. The vehicles certainly made an impression on the real Lawrence, for when asked by a journalist what he most valued, his response was: "I should like my own Rolls-Royce car, with enough tyres and petrol to last me all my life". Even the Brough SS100 motorbikes that Lawrence favoured in later life – and which ultimately led to his death in 1935 – were commonly referred to as "the Rolls-Royce of motorcycles".

PATTERN UPGRADES

The end of the First World War saw further developments to the Armoured Car. There was the 1920 Pattern MkI, with a bigger turret, disc wheels replacing the wire ones, and thicker armour around the radiator. MkIA cars had a turret with a ball-mounted Vickers plus a commander's cupola. One year later came the 1921 Indian Pattern, with additional, more rotund hull armour giving additional space inside, plus a domed turret with four machine gun mounts. This new offshoot was specifically intended for



The Silver Jubilee of King George V was marked by a parade of RAF Rolls-Royce Armoured Cars on Allenby Street, Tel Aviv, in 1935

the subcontinent, but at £2100 for just the chassis alone, the Indian authorities could only afford 19. And when Sir Henry Royce recommended an extra £600 for an improved rear axle, they refused to pay. Finally, there was the 1924 Pattern MkI, with a more modern cupola-equipped turret. These 1920s variants numbered 77, along with 11 chassis retained for instructional use.

Some of the new batches stayed in Britain, mostly with the Tank Corps at Bovington – where they must have triggered memories for one local resident, a certain TE Lawrence, who lived at nearby Clouds Hill from 1923. Others went to Germany – where there

were British occupying forces until 1929 – as well as India, the Middle East and Ireland. The creation of the Irish Free State in December 1922 led to civil war; some Rolls-Royces stayed south with the Irish National Army, others went to Northern Ireland. The Royal Ulster Constabulary, Northern Ireland's police force, also found itself in possession of six ex-British Army 1920 Pattern models.

There was also an extraordinary excursion to yet another civil war, when some ex-Northern Irish machines travelled all the way to China, via the fracas of the 1926 British General Strike. The 16 cars arrived in March 1927 to help safeguard British interests there »



This photograph from the 1917 Battle of Arras shows how trench warfare, mud and heavy shelling didn't make it easy for Armoured Cars, hence the invention of tanks



This pair of Irish National Army Rolls-Royce Armoured Cars – dubbed 'The Big Fella' and 'The Fighting 2nd' – would have been transferred from British stocks when the Irish Free State was established in 1922

as part of the Shanghai Defence Force, and stayed until January 1929. In one incident, Chinese rebels opened fire with machine guns on one vehicle, which was hit 93 times; remarkably though, its crew survived and it was towed out of trouble to fight another day.

In 1922, the Armoured Cars serving in Iraq, Palestine and Aden were taken over by the Royal Air Force, where personnel soon nicknamed them Tin Can Trams. One intriguing but ultimately stillborn experiment was transferring the bodies from two vehicles to tracked Dragon artillery tractors, to create makeshift tanks. In general, quite a few of the older cars found themselves getting less exclusive chassis supplied by Fordson (Ford's truck and tractor arm). We can't imagine, however, that the switch from Rolls-Royce to Ford underpinnings necessarily represented a major upgrade in quality...

The last Rolls-Royce Armoured Cars were built in 1927, one year after civilian Silver Ghost production had ceased,

"The last Rolls-Royce Armoured Cars were built in 1927, one year after civilian Silver Ghost production had ceased"

and 76 remained in service when the Second World War broke out. Those in Egypt fought early battles against Italian forces on the border with the Italian colony of Libya, but by 1941 all had been replaced by more modern machinery. In Ireland, they lasted until 1944, when a lack of Michelin tyres forced them off the roads, despite efforts to adapt them with Morris truck rims. The Irish Army sold the last of them – bar one – in 1954, with armour removed, for spares or conversion into private cars.

In Britain, the Rolls-Royces survived in Yeomanry service, patrolling and protecting locations such as airfields and beaches. The Home Guard also used armoured models, albeit DIY

conversions from civilian cars using whatever materials were available. While fighting effectiveness was questionable, they probably boosted the morale and impression of battle readiness of any 'Dad's Army' units they were attached to.

Interestingly, not every Rolls-Royce Armoured Car was out of military hands by the mid-1950s. One named 'Sliabh na mBan' was kept by the Irish Army because of its historical significance; it's believed to be the one present when the National Army's Commander-in-Chief, Michael Collins, was killed in an Irish Civil War ambush on 22nd August 1922. Now maintained by the Irish Defence Force Cavalry Corps and regularly used for events and parades, it is officially the world's oldest serving armoured vehicle – a real testimonial to a Rolls-Royce born over a century ago. ■



'Sliabh na mBan' – a 1920 Pattern model used in three wars by three different armies – is the world's oldest serving armoured vehicle

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We're grateful to the Tank Museum in Bovington (which has a working 1920 Pattern Mk1 car in its halls) for its assistance with this article. The Tank Museum brings history to life, with the world's best collection of tanks and explosive live displays. With over 300 tanks on display, visitors can hear about amazing experiences via nine powerful exhibitions, covering over a century of history – including the brand new 'WW2: War Stories'. For more details, visit www.tankmuseum.org.



Rommel inspecting a damaged Rolls-Royce Armoured Car in Libya – and looking somewhat bemused that an essentially Edwardian creation should still be fighting in the 1940s



Replica Rolls-Royce Armoured Cars were built for the 1962 Oscar-winning epic *Lawrence of Arabia*, giving a good indication of how the vehicles were used in the Middle East



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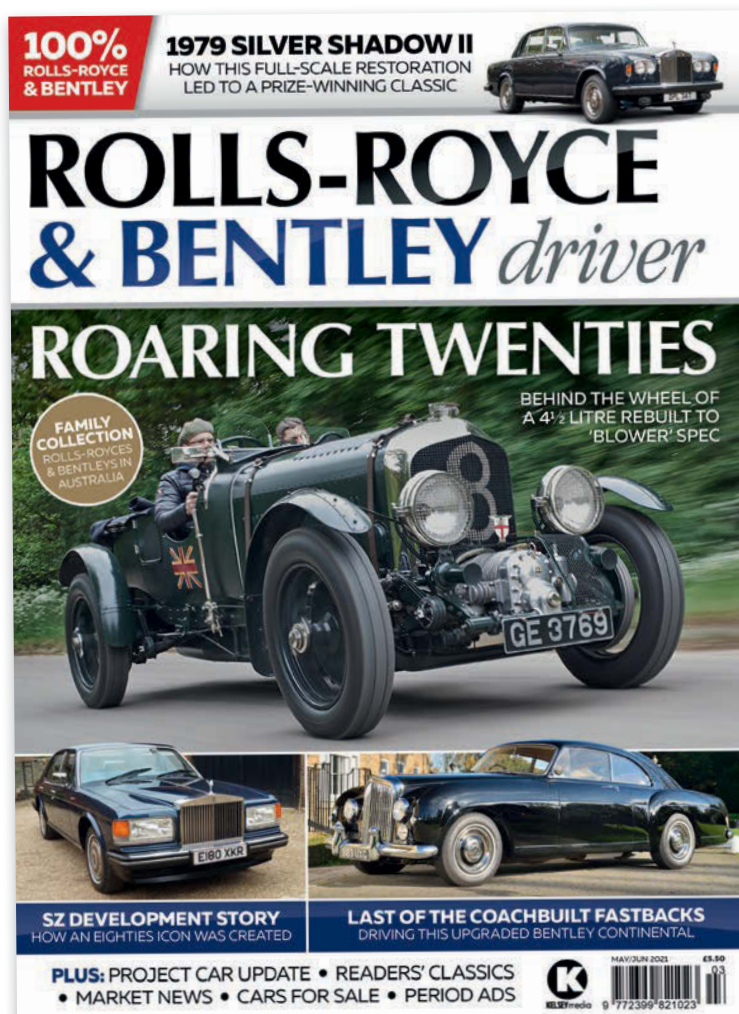
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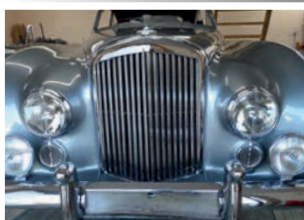
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Most responsible owners of older Rolls and Bentley models recognise that the lighting needs upgrading to make the cars safe to use in modern traffic. This has involved quite a lot of time and effort in the past, but now Better Car Lighting of Warwickshire have announced a revolutionary new conversion which uses the latest technology to make the upgrade surprisingly quick and easy to install.

At the front a new LED bulb replaces the original sidelight unit.

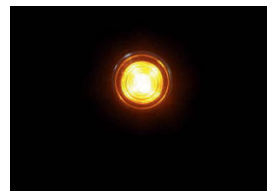


Bright news for older cars

It is very bright warm white until the indicators are activated, and then it changes to flashing orange.

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replaces the original and gives a brighter tail light and brake light and flashes orange through the red lens when the indicators are activated.

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CHANGING THE RECIPE

The original BMW-engined Arnage might not be as hearty as Bentleys of old, but it still offers a delicate balance of features that sets it apart as something special

WORDS: **AARON MCKAY** PHOTOGRAPHY: **GREGORY EVANS**

When Rolls-Royce introduced its L-series V8 in 1959, few could have predicted it would go on to enjoy a career spanning six decades, powering a wide array of ultra-luxurious saloons and high-performance behemoths. And thanks to the company's adoption of turbocharging for Bentleys of the 1980s and beyond, the classic V8 managed to remain competitive (in terms of power and performance) well into old age. Once thoughts turned to replacing the long-running SZ-series cars with an all-new generation of Rolls-Royce and Bentley saloons, however, the L-series was effectively on death row thanks to one major issue: emissions.

Unsurprisingly, after forty years of service, it was decided that developing a new engine would be more effective than trying to educate the old pushrod V8 in the ways of a world it simply didn't understand. The problem was that Rolls Royce and Bentley owner Vickers didn't have the money to pursue either route as well as developing the new car so desperately needed to succeed the ageing SZ series that had begun with the Silver Spirit and Bentley Mulsanne of 1980. A proprietary engine

shortlist was made, including a modular V12 from Ford and General Motors' latest Northstar V8, but the serious contenders were from Mercedes-Benz and BMW. A majority of management and some champions in the engineering departments settled it: BMW engines would motivate a new generation of Rolls-Royce and Bentley models.

I know, you don't have to like it. But here's why you might. Introduced in June 1998, two months after its V12-powered Rolls-Royce Silver Seraph sister car, the Bentley Arnage featured a new type of 4.4-litre V8 from BMW, with Cosworth overtones. Leaving the BMW factory, this M62-code engine retained the headline features like double-overhead cams, 32 valves and even fracture-split connecting rods, but was fitted with lower compression pistons in preparation for Cosworth's work. Also owned by Vickers at the time, Cosworth Engineering added two low-inertia turbochargers cleverly sited in a casting close to the exhaust manifold, for sharper response. The result wasn't a spectacular swelling of outputs, with 350bhp and 413lb.ft. representing around a 25% gain on what you'd find in a normally-aspirated BMW 740i (and »





FEATURE CAR BENTLEY ARNAGE

it's actually less than the previous Turbo RT's output), but there were hidden advantages that we'll discover later. It was an impressive technical specification, certainly a sporting one, as well as allowing Bentley to refer to it as the return of the 4½ Litre.

Anthony Kearsley, owner of the 1999 Arnage you see here, remembers it well. From behind a sales desk at Jack

Barclays in the '90s, he saw the last-of-the-line of SZ models practically fly through the door – in both senses of the word – and the turbulent Silver Seraph and Arnage era that followed. An appreciation of the old school is clear – there's a Brooklands R Mulliner, Bentley T2, plus more of the pre-1990s in his collection – but Anthony remains a stout defender

of the original Arnage: "It's amazing that some people change the badges to red, just to hide the engine. It's really a dream partnership, BMW and Cosworth, so why would you hide it?"

SPECIAL ORDER

For him, however, it's not just the engineering behind the Arnage. This



The dashboard design and finish are fitting for a modern-classic Bentley



This particular car was ordered with a bespoke rear bench seat



particular car is special to Anthony because he's the one who managed the order back in 1998, and it was quite an unusual one. The call came out of the blue, directed from aboard a yacht. The car had to have parking sensors, blinds, umbrellas and a bit more stretching-out room in the back. To this day, Anthony won't divulge his customer's name (a Jack Barclay policy that survives past retirement), but suffice to say that money was not a discussion point and the car was promptly paid for in full. The final specification was agreed and the build began, with Anthony visiting to check on its progress more than a dozen times.

One feature in particular took a little extra time and, of course, money: a bench seat in the rear, replacing the individual seats normally separated by a centre console. Absolutely this could be done, Sir, and so the car was built with a temporary seat before the bespoke item was made up and fitted by in-house Mulliner Park Ward. Specially formed, including a central headrest, curiously it still retained the recline function, operated via a switch mounted centrally in front of

the seat bottom. Both this and the seat itself look completely normal at first, so you might not realise it was never a standard option; but the reality is that Type Approval had to be obtained before it could be delivered.

The Arnage stayed with that original owner for just a matter of weeks, serving its purpose as stylish ferry to the Royal Ascot races before being sent back to Jack Barclay to be sold on commission. This was a difficult time for the original Arnage, and this specially prepared example sat waiting in the showroom for a while. Eventually, however, it found an owner and went off to the south of France, but not before securing a lasting impression on Anthony. For the time being, the trail went cold and he didn't see the car again until 2016, when he spotted it for sale at marque specialist, Hanwells of London.

Anthony decided he had to have it, but he was too late – the Bentley was already being prepared for its next owner. An offer with profit to the new owner didn't work either. This wasn't nearly as disheartening as when it came up for sale again in 2018, this time in

“Introduced in June 1998, two months after the Silver Seraph, the Bentley Arnage featured a new type of 4.4-litre V8 from BMW”

the Bentley Drivers Club magazine, and halfway through negotiations the sale fell through. Anthony began to believe it was never to be, that he wasn't supposed to have this car.

Then just a matter of months later, in 2019, while in Esher for a meeting, Anthony decided to pop in to the nearby Barons classic vehicles auction... and there it was: an early Arnage, in Iridium and with a single rear bench. The registration number confirmed it – this was the car, and this time he »





"This Arnage was ordered with a rear bench seat, replacing the individual seats normally separated by a centre console"

wasn't too late. Although he feared a final battle of bids to win, Anthony was relieved when there was no dramatic showdown. After such a long wait for the car that had captured his imagination even before it was built, the Arnage was finally his.

BEHIND THE WHEEL

During Anthony's early ownership of the Bentley, he got to enjoy his first long trip at the wheel, heading to the south of France for a holiday. More recently, however, the car had to get used to being locked up for longer periods than it might prefer, thanks to the Covid-19 crisis and the restrictions it has brought. On the day of our photo shoot, however, carried out when the UK isn't in a major lockdown, Anthony turns the key and the car starts effortlessly and immediately, whooshing its pulleys powerfully in that trademark Rolls-Royce and Bentley

fashion. A nice touch, Anthony tells me, is a reserve battery that ensures the car will always start – a bit of modern convenience already showing.

Just sitting in the Arnage is a soothing experience, and so it is when you get the car moving. I reckon I'd get 30mpg just as easily as Anthony did on the autoroutes, not just because it'll sit under 2000rpm at 70mph but because it is truly enjoyable to feather the controls and access the easy, gliding torque behind the throttle. It rides beautifully too, filtering out low-speed bumps with ease but remaining supremely dignified even across the most awkwardly of staggered mini roundabouts, demonstrating excellent spring and damper control. It feels even better at speed, providing just enough float to give it that wonderful feeling of taking long strides into the distance.

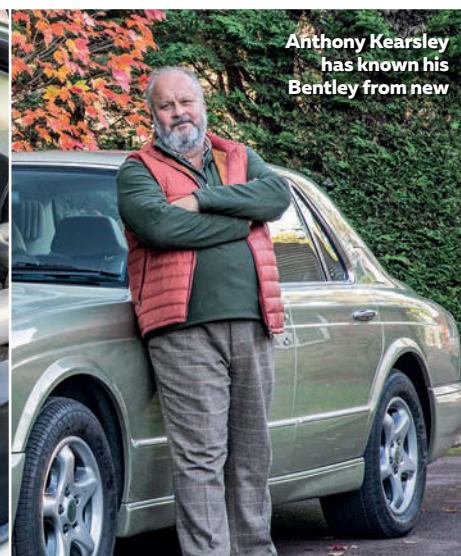
Press a little more towards the carpet (because, of course, you can't help it) and you'll hear the muffled

throb of a V8 at 3000rpm, with the speed escalating rather alarmingly. It's a quick car, there's no doubt about it, and there's so little sensation of speed that it does indeed feel 'Bentley quick'. And yet it's not how the twin-turbo V8 fires this two-tonne car down the road which impresses most; if it were, then by all means take a Red Label. It's all the bits in between.

Big, comfortable and powerful cars can be really frustrating to drive fast. It's almost always an exercise of early on the brakes, careful on the steering and even more careful on the throttle before you and the car can take a deep breath again and 'floor it' down the next straight. The BMW-engined Arnage is not like this. It's not frustrating and it's not a series of dangerous exercises; it's actually enjoyable. It feels 'together', particularly at the front where the steering is surprisingly weighty and provides crisp control; even on cold,



The Arnage's BMW-supplied V8 was uprated by Cosworth



Anthony Kearsley has known his Bentley from new

damp roads you can begin to feel what the car is doing, where the grip is. The pedals that at one moment allow soft stops and smooth getaways also have a helpful degree of precision when worked harder. It hustles with satisfying ease, never feeling uncomfortable. And even approaching its impressive limits, when the 2302kg is more noticeable, it's not threatening thanks largely to a 50:50 weight distribution. Whether you're going fast or at a cruise, this is a driver's car, albeit with maximum refinement.

The engineer that lives inside every keen driver will also appreciate the Arnage's set-up, beyond that fine BMW-Cosworth V8. Developed with the Mayflower Corporation, the structure is 65% stiffer than the SZ series and uses double wishbones all round. The springs are 40% stiffer than on the Silver Seraph, there are uprated anti-roll bars, and the dampers are more aggressive too. It's also a

nice touch that the Sport button on the gearshift automatically primes the dampers in a stiffer setting. That's an adaptive five-speed gearbox by the way, not the four-speed seen in the later Red Label cars.

CHASSIS UPGRADES

I have to talk about the Red Label for a bit though, as it resulted in improvements to the Arnage's chassis and packaging when introduced in 2000. There was a stronger floorpan and transmission tunnel, while a new cast-alloy brace reinforced the engine bay, and minor revisions were made to the suspension and traction control. This was to help contain the all-British 6.75-litre V8 that was being brought back to life (via generous funding from Bentley's latest owner, Volkswagen), ultimately replacing the 4.4-litre BMW-Cosworth unit in what would now be known as the Arnage Green Label for

the rest of its short career. For just one year, buyers could order a 4½-litre Bentley with these upgrades, including the extra two inches of legroom and an inch of extra headroom afforded by new front seat backs and a lower floor.

Regardless, there is every amenity for your comfort in the original Arnage. Seat adjustments, warm or cool air or both, arm rests and, of course, that deafening quiet once you close the door. This car even has the optional rear sunblind and parking sensors neatly illustrated on a little panel ahead of the leather and chrome gear selector. All of this stuff – yes, even the BMW switchgear – is absorbed into the general opulence of the cabin, though. Masses of Light English Oak here, complemented by Savannah leather with Spruce leather dash-top and carpets. The dials are a bit old world with their cream backings, but even so the set of five in the centre look suitably »



“The engineer that lives inside every keen driver will also appreciate the Arnage’s set-up, beyond that fine BMW-Cosworth V8”

Bentley. The seats are a little on the firm side, but you still sink into this interior. Naturally the carpeting is as plush as every other material around, while even the headlining is leather.

It’s a tightly packaged car, not having an appreciably greater footprint than the previous SZ generation. That it’s actually 5mm narrower probably does make the special rear bench particularly welcome. But as far as design goes, I’d say there is a great deal to appreciate about the Arnage. It sits confidently on the road, with a 59mm wider track – at 1608mm front and rear, in fact, it’s wider than any contemporary luxury saloon you care to mention. But only a little, and all the way around the car there’s a careful balance of self-assured elegance. The highest impact features are the aluminium-mesh grille at the front and weighty C-pillar that continues its Bentley S-series evocation into an elevated boot. Yet thanks to this measured restraint, the rest of the car’s details tie in neatly.

Aerodynamic bumpers reduce a bit of the visual bulk front and rear, tasteful bits of chrome meet tailored creases in the bodywork, while dark accents in the wheels and black headlamp fixtures highlight the bits that mean business. Smoked tail lamps presumably serve as a cool dismissal of those you overtake.

So, is a Bentley without its six-and-three-quarter V8 also lacking its defining character – the very essence of what makes it a Bentley? Some purists might think so. But Rolls-Royce Motors’ decision to seek BMW propulsion for its dynamic new duo of 1998 (a twin-turbo V8 in the case of the Arnage, a normally-aspirated V12 for the Silver Seraph) was entirely understandable, given the lack of budget at that time and the pressure brought by future emissions constraints. The original 4½-litre Arnage surely deserves its place in Bentley’s glorious history. If Anthony weren’t so attached to his, I reckon I might have pinched it... ■



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Is the original BMW-engined Arnage of 1998 a worthy classic Bentley, or is it a model that’s always at its best with traditional 6.75-litre V8 power? As ever, we’d love to know your thoughts. Send us an email via: rrb.ed@kelsey.co.uk.

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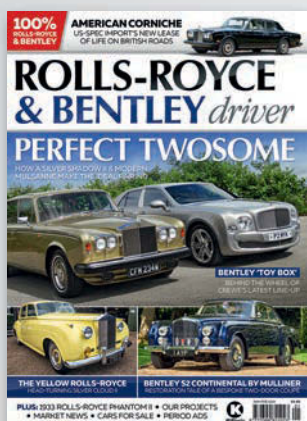
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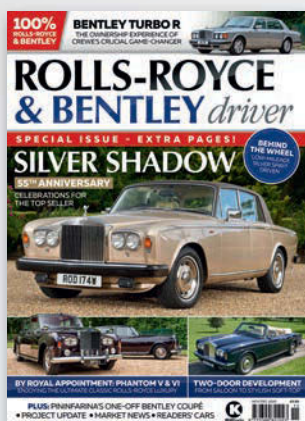
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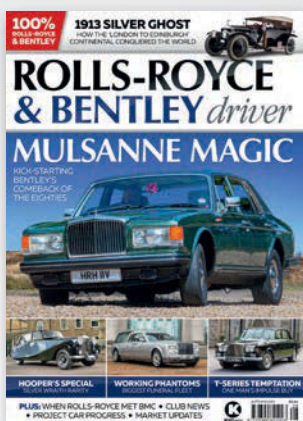
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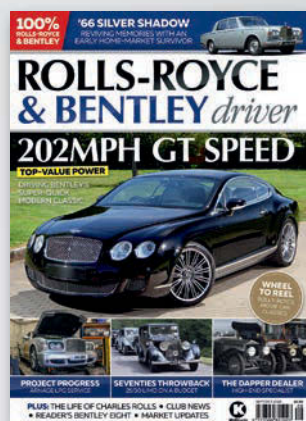
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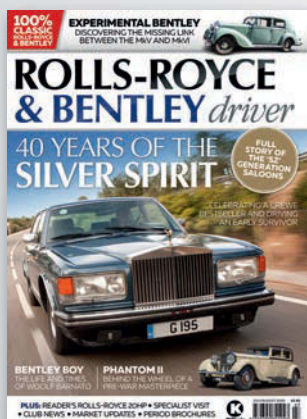
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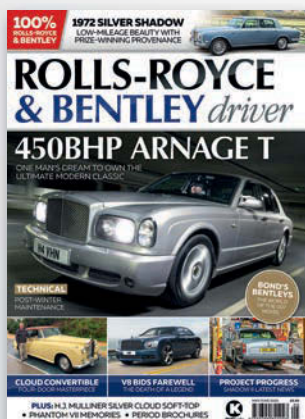
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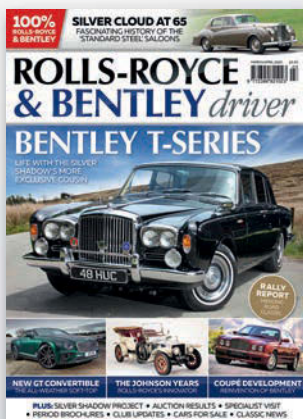
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• PROJECT CARS •

TAKE A BRAKE

As Dan Furr's Silver Shadow II comes of age, his Bentley Arnage T reminds him just how punishing the twin-turbo super-saloon can be on front-end chassis components

PHOTOGRAPHY: DAN FURR

After the last issue of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* went to print, and in an attempt to break away from the doom and gloom of recent months, I celebrated two personal Rolls-Royce and Bentley ownership anniversaries. The first occurred mid-December and marked six years since I acquired Pandora, my Silver Shadow II. Bought as something of a 'doer-upper' and mechanically restored following a lengthy spell in a state of suspended animation, the Silver Mink survivor still puts a huge smile on my face when I lay eyes on it and whenever I get the opportunity to find myself

behind the wheel, adding to the not insignificant number of miles the car has covered since being first registered for the road on 11th November 1980.

This date is significant, because it means Pandora (as she's affectionately known) has finally turned forty and is, therefore, eligible for free-of-charge Vehicle Excise Duty. Not that there's much opportunity to hit the highway right now. Besides, an annoying fuel pump complaint has returned to haunt me.

Readers who have been following the story of the car's resurrection will recall the failed twin-pump assembly I had to deal with at the beginning of

2020. Assumed to be original to the car (I can find no paperwork to suggest the unit has ever been replaced), it decided to give up in dramatic fashion when the engine's carburettors and fuel weakener system were overhauled, commanding more of the pumps than they'd been used to in recent years. After dumping what seemed like an ocean of fuel onto the workshop floor at Cambridgeshire-based Rolls-Royce and Bentley specialist, Daniel Moore & Co, the knackered pump assembly was dismissed in favour of a brand new SU set-up. So far, so straightforward, but an annoying ticking noise – increasing and decreasing in frequency in line »

with engine revs – occurred soon after, indicating air is being drawn into the pumps from somewhere. Further investigation is required.

Burlen (the parent company of SU, Zenith and Amal) has offered to take the new pump assembly back to its Wiltshire base and run the unit on its test rig to determine whether there's an issue with the supplied hardware. This is all well and good, but lockdown restrictions have limited the opportunity I've had to get the car in the air and remove the suspect parts. The same complaint applies to my Bentley, which is in need of new braking and suspension components.

ARNAGE ANNIVERSARY

This brings me neatly on to the second of the two anniversaries I mentioned in the opening paragraph: the days between Christmas and New Year marked my first full year of Arnage T ownership. I've loved every minute of being in charge of this twin-turbo cathedral on wheels, despite the rationale behind my purchase proving folly. As hinted at in the May/June 2020 issue of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* (coincidentally, the same issue of the magazine featuring Pandora's failed fuel pump assembly), my intention was to make the car pay for itself by using it as a wedding hire vehicle. Over the years, I've been asked numerous times whether Pandora was available for such duties, but the car's less-than-pristine cosmetic state meant I always rejected the idea. Buying a 'ready to go' Arnage T struck me as the perfect way to kill two birds with one stone; being able to immediately put the car to work as a luxury private hire vehicle would not only generate extra income, but give me the perfect excuse to add one of my dream cars to an already bulging fleet. I reasoned that if demand was strong enough, chauffeuring brides on their big day would also justify treating Pandora to a full respray, probably in the car's original shade of Caribbean Blue.

Last year, however, was the absolute worst time to have decided to launch a wedding car hire business. On the plus side, I was left with an amazing Arnage T to use as exclusively as a plaything (and, as it turned out, my daily driver). These cars are heavy on the front end, however, and piling on miles between periods of lockdown soon highlighted the need for replacement

front suspension control arm bushes and ball joints. I also felt it was time to renew the car's brake discs and pads.

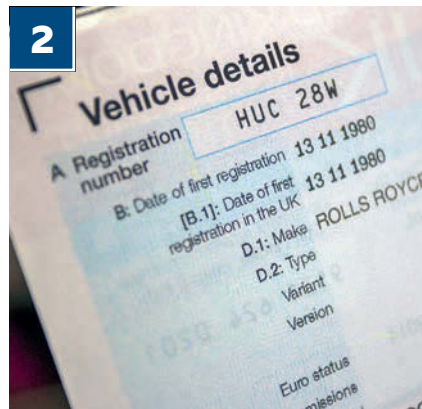
As mentioned in last month's update, the renowned manufacturer and retailer of genuine and aftermarket Rolls-Royce and Bentley parts, IntroCar, offers a fit-and-forget bundle for Arnage owners experiencing the effects of wear and tear on the front of their cars. Comprising 'Easifit' polyurethane bushes for the upper and lower arms, as well as the associated upper, lower and damper ball joints, and attracting a huge 25% discount over the cost of buying the parts on an item-by-item basis, the kit forms part of IntroCar's own-brand Prestige Parts product portfolio, matching (or, in most cases, exceeding) OEM standards of

quality and manufacturing, but without the Crewe-generated price tag. There was only one snag: the application list published on the IntroCar website for the suspension component bundle I was interested in buying included the Silver Seraph and Park Ward, Arnage Green Label, Red Label, Birkin and Le Mans, but no mention of the T.

A chat with IntroCar managing director, John Tupper, revealed minor differences between the design of bushes for the aforementioned models and the Arnage T, hence no mention of the 'Black Label' variant. On the plus side, IntroCar's prototype polyurethane parts for the Arnage T were nearing the end of development and the company was looking for a test vehicle to fit them to before commencing series



Forty years passing since Pandora's date of first registration means the car now qualifies for free-of-charge Vehicle Excise Duty



Frustratingly, applications for VED 'exemption' cannot be conducted online; the government website insists a visit to a post office is necessary, which seems odd considering you can tax and SORN your car online



IntroCar's Silver Shadow handling kit is more comprehensive than similar offerings from other aftermarket manufacturers, and will be fitted to Pandora as part of a round of updates the car will be treated to as the year progresses



Beforehand, however, there is the not insignificant matter of air entering the new SU twin fuel pump assembly to contend with

production. My enquiry appears to have occurred at exactly the right moment! At the time of writing, the prototype bushes and the kit's accompanying ball joints are being shipped to Nigel Sandell, the Isleworth-based Rolls-Royce and Bentley sales, service, repair and restoration specialist that IntroCar has invited to fit the parts to my car. In the meantime, I've taken delivery of a full complement of new Arnage T braking components from the Prestige Parts range which, as mentioned earlier, offers amazing value for money.

The high-quality discs are manufactured to strict UK, EC and US statutory specifications and are supplied Geomet- plated, ensuring their preservation. They follow a design fully road tested and are covered by

"These cars are heavy on the front end, and piling on miles highlighted the need for replacement control arm bushes and ball joints"

comprehensive worldwide protect liability insurance, while IntroCar brake pads are supplied to the company by major European OEMs and incorporate either genuine friction material or an equivalent compound approved to European R90 homologation, exceeding the original manufacturer's specification. The same is true of the handbrake shoes, fitting kit (including springs and pins) and pad wear sensors that I ordered at the same time. With

new hoses and a healthy dose of fresh Castrol brake fluid waiting in the wings, I'm looking forward to fitting the parts.

HANDLING KIT

Buying gifts for your car is an enjoyable pursuit, but there's something even more pleasurable in ordering items through choice rather than necessity. It's with this in mind I've indulged in a purchase I've been meaning to »



Similarly, the Arnage T's braking system and front suspension components are in need of overhauling, these jobs finding themselves on Dan's 'need to do' list, as opposed to the Shadow handling kit being placed on Pandora's itinerary of 'nice to do' items



Inspection of the front discs, pads, control arm bushes and ball joints suggested the switch to new parts was long overdue...



...and it was a similar story at the rear



Front and rear discs from IntroCar's Prestige Parts range are now patiently waiting to be installed...



...as are these fresh front pads, also from the Prestige Parts portfolio



A matching set of rear pads was ordered at the same time

get around to for some time: I've ordered one of IntroCar's Silver Shadow handling kits. The most comprehensive handling package available for the Silver Shadow and its derivatives, including the Shadow II and corresponding Bentleys, the kit promises to eliminate the boat-like roll experienced in these cars when cornering at speed. A straight swap with the host Rolls-Royce or Bentley's original suspension equipment, the kit comprises uprated front and rear anti-roll bars, uprated coil springs, upper and lower spring seats, all fixing hardware and polyurethane bushes throughout. IntroCar holding the largest stock of suspension components for these cars means that John and his team have been

able to build a handling package several times more comprehensive than any of the more widely known kits on the aftermarket, which only include anti-roll bars and springs.

As far as I can tell, the only deviation from standard equipment applies to cars built without a rear anti-roll bar at the factory. This is largely the case for Shadows built prior to chassis 4584 (notably, those supplied new to Australia, where rough roads were not conducive to the application of a rear sway bar), but it's widely accepted the presence of a rear anti-roll bar improves handling, delivering a countervailing force to that produced by the front anti-roll bar on top cornering forces. For cars without a rear anti-roll bar, IntroCar has developed

a supplementary kit employing a version of the original ball joints and necessary bracketry, though the age of Pandora means I don't need to add to an already mountainous parts pile.

What I might be tempted to do, however, is stockpile a few more pennies and buy a set of Prestige Parts dampers designed to complement Pandora's new handling kit. Yes, dear reader, you've seen straight through me – I'm trying to scratch the itch of not being able to get out and drive by tweaking and tuning instead. At least all the money I'm saving by not having to fill my V8-powered luxobarges with fuel during times of lockdown is helping my hobby. All I need to do is find the time to get busy with my spanners. More next issue! ■



11
Pad level warning sensors are easy to forget when ordering new braking components; this is the rear sensor (only one required per car)



12
This is the front pad wear sensor, again with only one required per car; you'll note how sensors are colour coded to ensure avoidance of incorrect fitment



13
Next up is a new set of handbrake shoes...



14
... and this is the corresponding handbrake shoe fitting kit, including pins and springs – with all parts being from IntroCar's Prestige Parts range



15
Though available for other variants of the Arnage, IntroCar has yet to put the required polyurethane bushes into series production for the Arnage T, and so these prototype parts will be fitted to Dan's car to undergo thorough testing



16
The accompanying ball joints will be fitted at the same time, with work to be carried out at Nigel Sandell's workshop in Isleworth

PARTS SOURCING

There is nothing more frustrating for an owner or a technician to find that the part they needed to finish a job is not available and so a core focus for IntroCar is the resurrection of products otherwise discontinued from the factory.

IntroCar has done more than any other organisation in the world to make new parts available for post-war Rolls-Royce & Bentley motorcars. We excel at finding specialist manufacturers who have unique skills and equipment which enables us to develop and bring to market products no one else can.

We have released well over 5,500 products as part of the *Prestige Parts®* range, all of which are sold with a 3 year worldwide warranty, and are produced to meet or exceed the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) specifications (bit.ly/prestigeparts).

In the last 10 years we have introduced parts for all models from 1946 to present day. We

dedicate significant time and capital to develop parts that fulfil a need in the marketplace, not just with the reintroduction of products but also providing cost effective solutions to help to keep these cars on the road.

The most recent *Prestige Parts®* additions are Polyurethane Suspension Bushes for the Arnage and Seraph. Dubbed as 'Lifetime' bushes thanks to the longer lasting material but also easier to fit due to the adapted and improved design:
bit.ly/lifetimesuspensionbush.

Another design improvement upon an existing range of products are our coolant hoses for six-cylinder cars. Remanufactured to concours level design, featuring the characteristic stockingette material, external convolutions and also meeting the modern standards for internal cotton reinforcement.

All our remanufactured products are available

online alongside over 245k original, recycled and reconditioned options for these cars.

Contact us to find out more about new products. In the meantime, happy motoring!

USEFUL LINKS

ONLINE PARTS CATALOGUES

Models 1945-1955: bit.ly/1945_55
Models 1955-1965: bit.ly/1955_65
Models 1965-1980: bit.ly/1965_80
Models 1980-2003: bit.ly/1980_03
Models 1997-2010: bit.ly/1997_10
Models 2003 onwards: bit.ly/2003on

TECHNICAL

Technical Videos: bit.ly/RRandBtv
Workshop Manuals: bit.ly/RRBManuals

COMMUNITY

Restoration Group: bit.ly/RRBResto
Owners Marketplace: bit.ly/RROwners
Saving Pandora: bit.ly/SavingP

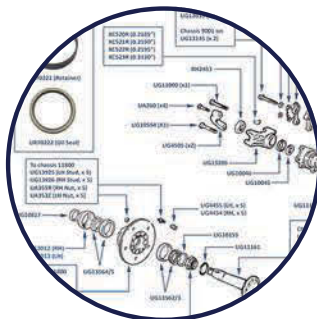
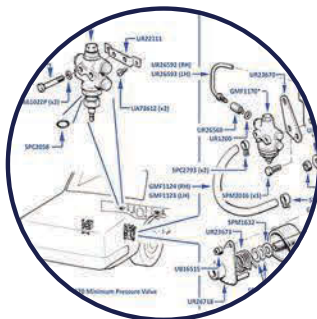
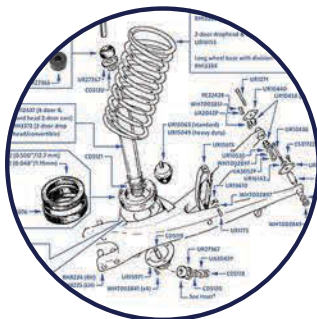
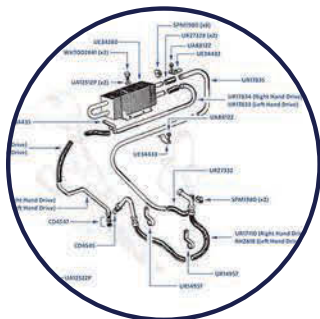
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INSURANCE FOR ALL

The RREC explains about its insurance scheme, which enables even the youngest of today's drivers to enjoy their Rolls-Royce classics on the road

The great thing about Rolls-Royces and Bentleys is that they appeal to such a wide range of people. You can pretty much guarantee that passers-by will stop to admire one whenever they see it parked on the side of the road – no matter how young or old they are. It's one of the reasons why the RREC welcomes such a wide range of enthusiasts of all ages.

Take 13-year-old Alexander Nixon-Newton, for example. He was inspired to join the club after a chance meeting not long ago with a group of RREC members who were en route to join a rally in Scotland. The line of cars parked outside their lunch stop caught his eye and he was soon in conversation with the owners, explaining how he would love to know what happened to the Silver Shadow bought new by his great-great uncle back in 1967 and later passed on to his grandfather. The family thought it had been scrapped and new RREC member Alexander was delighted to discover the car was restored, alive and well in the ownership of another club member.

The dream of Rolls-Royce ownership became a reality for 20-year-old Cormac Boylan when he became the proud owner of a 1989 Silver Spirit. He remembers collecting the car from Sheffield and driving home: "It was a very special event. I will never forget sitting behind the wheel, admiring the Spirit of Ecstasy and the acres of bonnet stretching ahead. On the same day that I picked up the car, I took my mum for a shopping trip to Aldi. The Silver Spirit is so big, it was like trying to manoeuvre Westminster Abbey and we needed two parking spaces. Before I could even get out of the car, other shoppers came across and were bombarding me with questions about the Rolls-Royce."

Much as Cormac loved driving the car, getting insurance for a Rolls-Royce was a real challenge. However, the RREC can come to the rescue here with the club's specialist insurance scheme, which welcomes enquiries from younger members who have at least one year's driving experience and a clean licence. Initially, cover will be offered on a 'warranted accompanied basis', which means the young member would be driving whilst



Thirteen-year-old Alexander Nixon-Newton discovered his family's old Silver Shadow was alive and well in the ownership of another RREC member

under the supervision of the owner of the vehicle. After one or two years of this (or if the individual is over 21 and has a clean licence), they will be considered for driving solo, for which an additional excess will apply. In all cases, the young driver must have access to an everyday car and use their Rolls-Royce or Bentley fairly infrequently, as well as ideally having it garaged or parked on a driveway (postcode-dependent).

RREC member Sam Lebbon found this a big membership benefit: "I was lucky enough to be only 19 years old when I bought my Silver Shadow. However, I found it difficult to find a company willing to insure me to drive alone and I had to sign the V5 over to my father and have him drive the car to club events for the first year and a half – although he didn't complain! From my 21st birthday onwards, I could be insured to drive the car, provided I was accompanied by a driver over the age of 25. This was an excellent solution because I seldom needed to drive the car by myself. My dad and I took turns driving to and from events, covering up to 2000 miles per year between us. But now I'm a bit older I have the added bonus of being able to drive alone." ■



Twenty-year-old Cormac Boylan enjoyed an early introduction to Rolls-Royce ownership when he bought a Silver Spirit



The RREC insurance scheme allowed Sam Lebbon to drive his own Silver Shadow as soon as he reached the age of 21



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BACK TO THE FUTURE

After the depletion of its social calendar in 2020, the BDC hopes the Covid-19 pandemic relents sufficiently to allow events to resume as normal this year

As you read this, the UK will still be in the icy grip of winter... and the Covid-19 pandemic. The traditional start of the motoring season is just around the corner, but whether we'll all be allowed out to play in our beloved Bentleys is very much in the lap of the coronavirus. So, what does this mean for the Bentley Drivers Club? Regular readers will be aware that, in common with other car clubs, our 2020 calendar was decimated last year, with the Concours d'Elegance cancelled and the Silverstone race meeting held behind closed doors.

We, like everyone else, are hopeful of a brighter 2021 (once Covid-19 restrictions are eased), enabling us to rev up our cars once again and fully enjoy the BDC's packed events calendar. And first up will be the celebration of 100 years of Bentley racing success at Brooklands (on 15-16th May), where the marque enjoyed so much glory in the 1920s. To commemorate 1924 Le Mans winner Frank Clement scoring Bentley's first-ever race victory, winning the Junior Short Handicap in the company's 3 Litre EXP2 at Brooklands on 16th May 1921, the car will return to the track 100 years to the day since that maiden triumph. It will be the undoubted star of a weekend of fantastic festivities, organised by the club and the Brooklands

Museum, to mark this significant event in Bentley racing history.

The following month, over the weekend of 5-6th June, the club's annual Concours d'Elegance – renamed the Summer Concours & Party for this year – will take place at Cubberley House. The idyllic countryside estate (home of club member Dean Kronsbein) in Ross-on-Wye, near Hereford, successfully held the BDC Midlands Region's centenary summer gala two years ago and will prove an ideal venue for our annual showpiece. Following a Friday evening hog roast, members will enjoy a countryside drive and planned visits to the Morgan Motor Company and Wythall Estate Vineyard on Saturday, before a special evening champagne reception and dinner back at Cubberley House. Sunday is, of course, Concours Day, with the formal judging and prizegiving supplemented by a brass band, delicious lunch options and stands/stalls – all helping to create the perfect garden-party ambience.

The 73rd consecutive BDC Silverstone race day will take place on August 7th, with the club's Competitions Committee hoping to attract spectators with more grids than for many years. Eleven races are planned, with the traditional Bentley scratch and handicap races supported by events for (amongst others) Morgans, MGBs, TVRs and FISCAR. ■

■ The benefits of the BDC's new e-membership offering (see advert opposite) has already resulted in a significant uptake from existing members. "It proves we made the right decision to introduce it and hopefully we will see more overseas members signing up during 2021," says club chairman, Richard Parkinson.

■ The club is sad to report the death of its oldest member, Don Showell, who passed away in December, aged 105. Don will be much missed by everyone at the BDC.



The BDC's Concours & Summer Party takes place at picturesque Cubberley House



More grids are planned for the 73rd consecutive BDC Silverstone race day



100 years of Bentley racing success will be celebrated at Brooklands

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While some follow in the tyre tracks of the iconic 'Bentley Boys', competing in races and rallies, others take pleasure watching their modern-day counterparts in the latest GT3 race cars.

Off track, some simply enjoy driving their Bentley on the road, frequently in the company of other enthusiasts.

No matter what your inspiration, the BDC can help enhance your Bentley ownership and take your appreciation of this classic marque even deeper.

A great feature of our club is the excellent events we hold, both at home and abroad. These include our annual long-established Concours d'Elegance and Silverstone race meeting plus numerous tours and social occasions organised by our ever active Regions worldwide.

So, with lots of activities to hopefully look forward to in the future, what better time is there to join us?

Members enjoy a range of benefits with the BDC:

- Bi-monthly Review and monthly Advertiser & Diary publications plus frequent e-newsletters
- Access to comprehensive archives through the club's association with the WO Bentley Memorial Foundation, providing a deep insight into the marque's history
- Access to the spares schemes, covering the three key eras of Bentley production
- Favourable insurance rates and service plus undisputed valuations (for insurance purposes)
- Club forum offering the chance to discuss all things Bentley.



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PERSONAL CHOICE

Here at *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver*, we invite readers to share photographs and stories of their much-loved cars. Check out this latest arrival...

1954 BENTLEY R-TYPE

OWNER: NIGEL LAWFORD, DERBYSHIRE

My very first vehicle was acquired back in the 1970s, a Ford Anglia van that had the dubious distinction of costing considerably less than my father's new lawn mower. Their top speeds were about the same, and yet that van opened up a whole new world to me as an eighteen-year-old. There followed a succession of varied and, some might say, esoteric choices, which included a Citroen Dyane, a Triumph 1500, a Lancia Fulvia, a series of Golf GTIs, Alfa Romeo GTVs and eventually a couple of Maseratis. However, it's taken nearly fifty years for me to discover the very special world of Bentley, initially in the form of a 1997 long-wheelbase Turbo R.

This was just the start. Perhaps a combination of advancing years and an acceptance of a slower pace of life has

drawn me back to a world of motoring almost forgotten. A dose of nostalgia has undoubtedly helped to inspire the purchase of another considerably older Bentley. This one is just two months younger than me and it's a sobering thought that it has been on the road as long as I've been on this planet.

The car in question is a 1954 R-Type automatic, a 'Standard Steel' sports saloon in Oxford Blue over Shell Grey and with its original cream leather interior. Associated paperwork, including many old MoT certificates, indicate that only 76,000 miles have been travelled in its 66 years. I bought the car just before the UK's first national lockdown of 2020; and whilst from my perspective, collecting a classic Bentley was obviously an 'essential

journey', I felt dutybound to comply with government restrictions and had the car transported from Worcestershire to its new home in the Peak District.

The previous owner, a precision engineer, had carried out an excellent restoration some twenty years earlier, since when he'd used the car only sparingly, adding fewer than 2000 miles. Like most old cars, there are always things that can be fettled and hopefully improved. My approach has been to carry out work that ensures it remains looking very presentable and, above all, drives like an R-Type should. Rolls-Royce and Bentley specialist Bowling Ryan, who look after my Turbo R, checked over the mechanicals and treated my latest Bentley to a full service, as well as some attention to the brakes and heater.

One area that demanded careful consideration was how to improve the R-Type's interior leather. Although it was badly cracked and looking the worse for wear, I was reluctant to opt for replacement as the hide appeared to be totally original and, in my view, an important link to the car's past. Fortunately, I found a specialist in Cheshire and we agreed that stripping and refinishing with a close colour match was the way forward. The result looks excellent in that it has retained the original character and happily avoids perfection, which to my mind would be out of place in a car that's been around for almost seven decades.

Possibly even more thought was given to the matter of tyre choice. The existing rubber was essentially unworn but getting very old. Dunlop RS5 crossplies had been fitted after the restoration, and whilst these would have met with Bentley's approval, I found it was like driving on marbles and required constant correction. This was entertaining at first but, with the notoriously winding roads and narrow lanes of the Peak District, I soon found that the 'fun factor' waned. Following





The original leather has been thoroughly reconditioned in recent months



“The previous owner, a precision engineer, had carried out an excellent restoration some twenty years earlier”

a call to Longstone Tyres, a set of Avon Turbosteel radials was duly fitted; they not only look the part, they have all but eliminated the ‘tramlining’ issue.

The latest task has been fitting period-style seatbelts, the ones in the rear to keep our spaniel, Humphrey, safe. The supporting framework in the boot has been configured by a friend who used to design landing gear for Boeing aircraft, and I am assured that the fixing points are sufficiently robust to restrain a baby elephant in a 100mph emergency! Trips out have been very limited due to Covid-19 restrictions and

so, with time on my hands, attention turned to researching the car’s past.

HISTORY PROJECT

For me, part of the fascination and joy of owning an old car is reflecting on its history. And in this case, it meant finding out more about who owned the Bentley back in the 1950s and ‘60s and imagining some of the journeys they might have undertaken together. Fortunately, the R-Type came to me with files packed full of old bills, letters and even a couple of

telegrams from a time long before the internet. I discovered that the first owner was a Henry C Martineau, who was born in Chicago in 1904. Sadly, his mother divorced when he was five years old, and Henry travelled with her to England where she met and married Hubert Martineau. He was a first-class cricketer with his own ground, and organised cricket tours to Egypt and New Zealand in the 1920s.

Henry attended Eton and then Trinity College, Cambridge – as indeed, it seems, did most offspring of the well-to-do of that era. Like his stepfather, »

he was a keen sportsman specialising in winter pursuits, and by 1928 he was a bobsled captain and represented Great Britain at the Winter Olympics in St Moritz. Credited with designing a 'skeleton' sled with a lower centre of gravity, Henry strove for even faster times on the formidable Cresta Run. With the outbreak of war, however, he trained as an RAF pilot and then, for reasons as yet unclear, transferred to the Welsh Guards before being drafted into Special Operations as an agent, serving in Belgium and France.

Henry was a dedicated fan of Bentley cars, having owned several during the 1920s and '30s, including a 3 Litre and a 4.5 Litre before eventually purchasing 'my' R-Type in April 1954. He sent telegrams to Jack Barclays requesting that the car be fitted with a special switching arrangement so that the headlamps dipped to the correct side when travelling abroad (possibly to his winter home in St Moritz?), and also instructed that the driver's seat be lowered by one inch; he must have been taller than me, as I have had to have it raised back again, requiring two sacksful of horse hair padding! In 1956, Henry sold the R-Type back to Jack Barclays with 19,000 miles on the clock.

The car's second owner was Major Thomas H Hohler, descended from a courtier who accompanied George I from Hanover when he ascended the British throne in 1714. Like Martineau, Hohler came from a wealthy family with connections to the diplomatic service. Thomas also had a distinguished war career; as Captain Hohler, he was awarded the Military Cross for gallantry when he took on enemy tanks with a few of his remaining brigade at Anzio in 1944, suffering a shattered forearm in the process. After the Second World War, he bought a flat in London's fashionable Eton Square, having married a Belgian Comtesse. From here the Bentley would have added mileage commuting between London of the swinging Sixties and Hohler's country



The R-Type looks at home in its current Peak District setting



retreat, Wolverton Park in Hampshire.

There is an invoice indicating that the Bentley required substantial repairs in 1958 as a result of one of Hohler's motoring accidents. It's possible that his wartime injury could have contributed to him losing control of the car; it's certainly likely that he may have struggled due to the lack of power steering, as indeed do I on occasions. Whatever the cause, it must have been quite a prang, as the repair bill equates to around £18,000 in today's money.

Further research has revealed that Thomas and his wife had a daughter, Isabelle, later to become the Countess of Erroll. I was hoping to contact her to see if she had any memories of her father's Bentley, or perhaps even a faded black and white photograph, but this was not to be; sadly, Isabelle

recently passed away and I thought that to pursue this particular line of enquiry would be inappropriate.

I consider owning an old car to be a privilege, and I derive a great deal of satisfaction from attempting to uncover its history. Some physical signs of the Bentley's past remain with the car, such as 'nicks' on the driver's door handle where the owner's ring has repeatedly caught the chrome. Did the ring belong to Martineau or Hohler, or perhaps to someone later in the car's history?

My delving has unearthed a little of the R-Type's past, added to which I have concluded two other things. One is that the old Bentley is, thankfully, in far better condition than myself. The other is the irrefutable fact that its current keeper is unlikely to match its early owners' illustrious achievements... ■

SHOW US YOUR PRIDE AND JOY

If you fancy seeing your own Rolls-Royce or Bentley within these pages, it couldn't be easier! We're interested in any model of any age – and even its condition isn't important, as we're just as keen to see ongoing projects as we are potential prize-winners. All you need to do is email us a small selection of

good quality jpeg images – and we'll do the rest. Within your email, don't forget to tell us a bit of history about your car, details of any work carried out, or perhaps your future plans for it. The more information, the better!

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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

JAMES YOUNG SPECIAL ▶

This advert for Jack Barclay Ltd dates from late 1966, when James Young was producing its own bespoke two-door version of the Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow – of which just 35 examples were built in total. It was a particularly short-lived model, ceasing production in 1967 and thereby leaving the way clear for Mulliner Park Ward's own two-door Silver Shadow, the car that would go on to be renamed the Corniche in 1971.

The James Young two-door is highly collectable these days, with marque enthusiasts appreciating it as one of the rarest members of the SY generation. Fifty-five years ago, however, it was available brand new for £7905 including Purchase Tax, with the advert promising early delivery of a car that was "individually built for the very few who demand the ultimate in motoring luxury and refinement".



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◀ TAKE YOUR TIME

This launch-year brochure for the new Rolls-Royce Corniche – a mildly upgraded version of the previous Mulliner Park Ward two-door models – boasted that the car's bodywork was "completely assembled and finished by hand to exacting standards", complemented by paintwork that comprised "between fourteen and twenty layers of fillers, primers and colour coats all applied, rubbed down and polished by hand". Rolls-Royce insisted that the Corniche's "aluminium doors, bonnet and boot lid must fit with constant clearances all round", which partly explained why each car took four months to build. As the brochure pointed out, "the work of the craftsman cannot be hurried."



NORTH-WEST DEALER ▲

If you were a resident of Lancashire – a major county in the north-west of England – in the 1950s, you might have been familiar with Loxham's, a Preston-based official dealership selling the latest Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud and Bentley S-series. It was the latter that featured in this simply-illustrated advert, which also boasted of the company's "service facilities to Rolls-Royce standards".

The main text, meanwhile, posed a tempting suggestion for readers of the time: "May we quote you for your present car in part-payment for the new Bentley Series S or the new Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud". If you remember (or had any connection with) Loxham's of Preston, we'd love to hear from you.

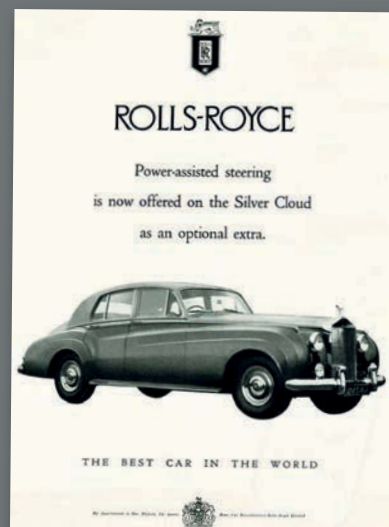
MOBILE BAR ►

Having a Rolls-Royce in the background of any advert was an effective way of emphasising the quality of the product in question – and this charming advert from 1961 is a perfect example, featuring a Silver Cloud II. Aimed at its American home market, the Trav-L-Bar looked like "fine hand luggage" when closed, but opened up to reveal a bespoke portable bar containing a silver tray, goblets, mixing sticks and more, as well as space for up to three spirit bottles.

Produced by Chicago-based Ever-Wear Inc and priced at between \$14 and \$75, there were nine different designs of Trav-L-Bar available at the time, each one representing the ultimate in mobile cocktail cabinets. If you're the proud owner of a surviving example, we'd love to see a photograph...

EASIER STEERING ►

This simple looking advert for the Silver Cloud focused on the model's latest feature, with the text above the photograph boasting that "power-assisted steering is now offered on the Silver Cloud as an optional extra". Meanwhile, the strapline below simply reinforced what fans of the marque already knew, hailing the Rolls-Royce as "the best car in the world".



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 5th March 1991, with this official press pack describing it as "the first new-style Bentley since 1952". 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 coupé 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.

STRETCHING THE POINT ►

Although an extended-wheelbase version of the long-running Silver Spirit was offered for many years (badged as the Silver Spur, as featured in this issue), there were some customers who demanded even more space, opulence and prestige. And so, in the model's twilight years, came a significantly longer derivative, launched in 1996 as the Rolls-Royce Park Ward Limousine – boasting an extra 24 inches over the Silver Spur, as well as a raised roofline.

The Park Ward Limousine featured a pair of rearward-facing fold-down seats, helping to provide sumptuous accommodation for up to five people behind the electrically-operated chauffeur's division. Any VIPs craving a drink whilst being chauffeured in style, meanwhile, could take advantage of the lead crystal decanter and goblets that came as standard in the on-board cocktail cabinet. Only



around fifty examples of the Park Ward Limousine were built in total, seven of which are thought to have been bought by UK-based clients.



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104855

BENTLEY



1933, £155,000. 3 1/2 Barker 2+2 Sports Coupe. Striking, almost certainly unique design by Barker with some very unusual touches and lovely light flowing wings. Excellent condition throughout, drives very nicely. Please call 01248 602 649, North Wales.

BENTLEY JAMES YOUNG



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103717

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105168

ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER SHADOW



1976, 77000 miles, £28,000. Magnolia hide interior. Comprehensive history file with 2 fully stamped service books. Exceptional. Please call 01732 886002, South East.
105441

ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER SHADOW



1978, 67000 miles, £28,000. Brown Hide. Excellent history file. Stunning original example. Please call 01732 886002, South East.
105440

ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER SHADOW



1972, 113000 miles, £19,000. Grey Hide. Just 2 owners from new. 2 stamped service books. Overall an exceptional example of this scarce and desirable model. Please call 01732 886002, South East.
105438

ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER SPIRIT



28000 miles, £18,000. Magnolia piped Blue. Full Service History. Beautiful low mileage example. Please call 01732 886002, South East.
105436

ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER SPIRIT



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PAUL GUINNESS

The Silver Shadow II of 1977 brought with it a wide array of upgrades, as highlighted in this recently rediscovered launch-year road test

I recently stumbled across this copy of *Motor* magazine whilst sorting through some of my archives. It's cover-dated 21st May 1977 and features the title's first full road test of the crucial new Silver Shadow II – making it fascinating reading all these years later. The introductory paragraph made a promising start, proclaiming that this latest Rolls-Royce “embodies a number of significant improvements” and that the magazine's testers had “yet to try anything better”.

The road test acknowledged the fact that the Silver Shadow was “by far the most successful car Rolls-Royce have ever made”, with over 20,000 of the “rather conservative looking but magnificently constructed cars” having been built by 1977. It also admitted, however, that there were other cars on the road that provided certain advantages over the Crewe-built bestseller: “By normal standards, as you would expect for an outlay of £23,000, it is extremely comfortable, quiet and refined – but

the Jaguar XJ12, costing very much less, is superior on all counts.”

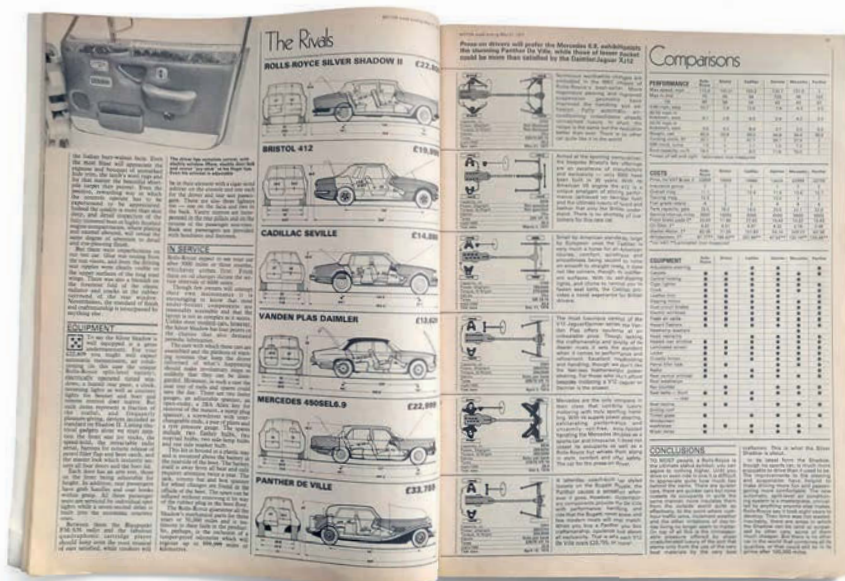
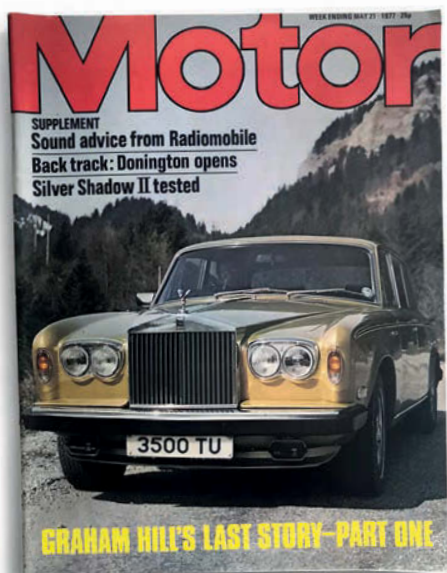
Marque enthusiasts needn't have worried, as the *Motor* test team truly appreciated the latest Silver Shadow's unique position in the market as well as its all-round appeal: “Despite Rolls-Royce's failure to make the Shadow a match for any rival in every department, the majority view here is that no other car we know cossets you quite so well or provides quite so much in the way of sophisticated creature comforts in such luxurious and rich surroundings”.

That brings us neatly to the subject of which cars of 1977 could genuinely be seen as possible rivals to the Silver Shadow II, an important point given *Motor* magazine's tradition of featuring five competitors at the end of each road test. The Rolls-Royce was obviously one of the most expensive models of its time, with a list price of £22,809. Perhaps surprisingly, however, Mercedes-Benz offered a four-door saloon that was marginally more expensive, with its 450SEL 6.9 being pitched in Britain at just a pound short of £23,000. The German rival was impressive and, according

to *Motor*, was the only car in its class to “combine luxury motoring with truly sporty handling”, despite the improvements made to the latest Silver Shadow's suspension set-up. The magazine admitted though, that the Mercedes didn't “cosset its occupants as well as a Rolls-Royce.”

Other rivals listed by *Motor* were far cheaper than the Silver Shadow II, including the £14,888 Cadillac Seville and £13,629 Daimler Double-Six Vanden Plas. And because there were so few natural matches to the Rolls-Royce, the magazine also included a couple of bespoke hand-built British specials in the very different shapes of the two-door Bristol 412 (at £19,999) and the 1930s-style Panther DeVillie – the latter being incredibly expensive at £33,755.

It was a disparate line-up by any standards, yet still the Silver Shadow II shone through, with the test highlighting the car's noticeably improved steering, suspension and overall driving style. It concluded by claiming “there is no other car in the world that combines all the [Rolls-Royce's] qualities, or that could still be in its prime after 100,000 miles.” ■



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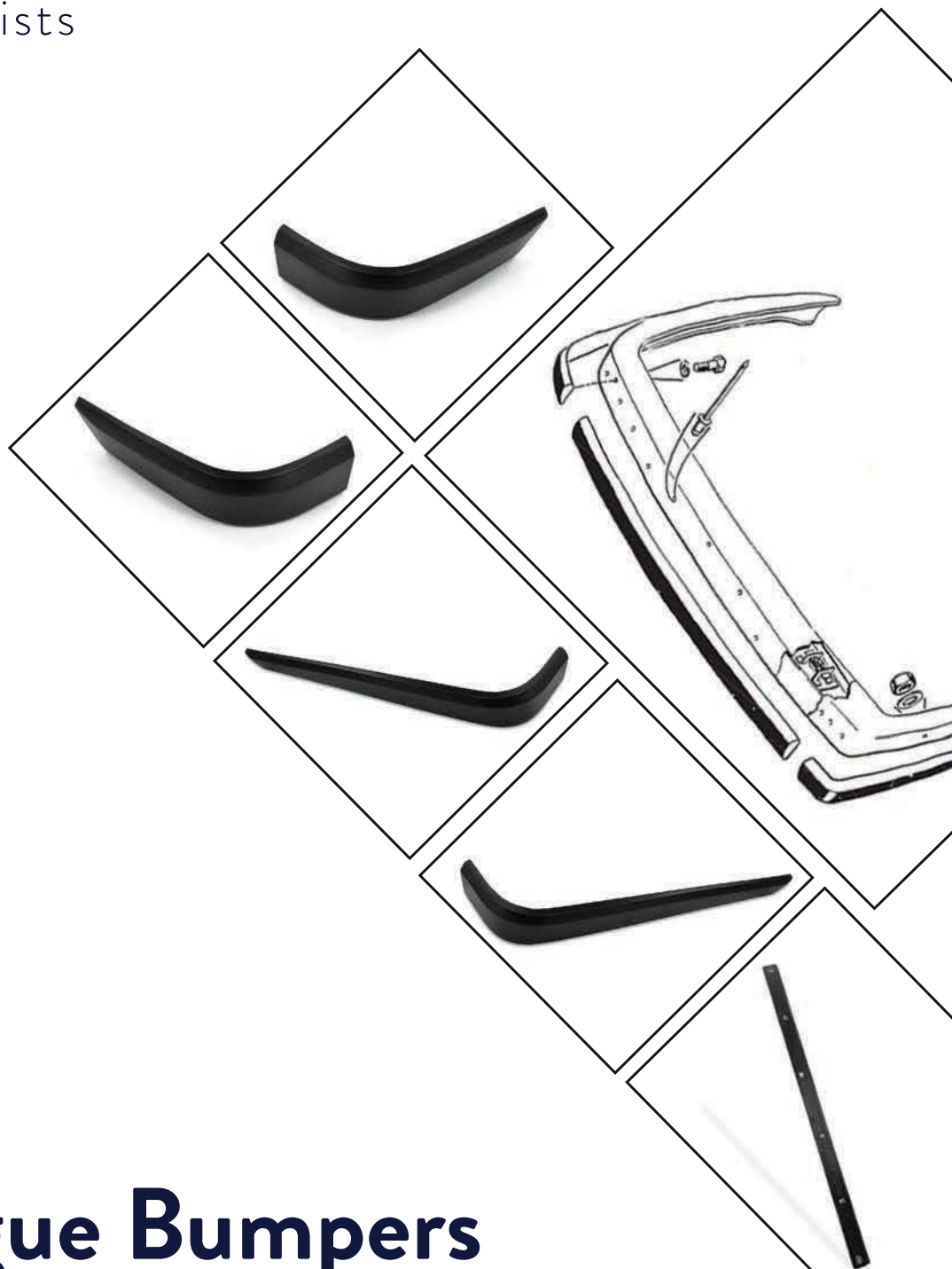
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