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## IN MEMORIAM

Little did I think when compiling the 'Royal Rolls-Royces' feature to mark the Platinum Jubilee in our July/August issue that we would witness the end of the reign of Queen Elizabeth II just a few short months later. The presence of the Queen as the Head of State and at the head of the Royal Family seemed constant and even eternal, which of course is impossible, but she was as much a part of the country we all knew as the landscape itself. Perhaps in that way, we took her presence for granted, which gave the period following September 8th a surreal quality. What was indeed real was the Queen's enduring support for Rolls-Royce and more recently Bentley as suppliers of State cars to the Royal Mews. I know many readers value this connection enormously – as a few of you have written to express on the letters pages of this issue – and the signs are that the links will remain as strong as ever.

This issue of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* features cars from as early as 1929 and as recently as this year, in the case of the fleet of vehicles supplied by Rolls-Royce for the charity event with the Sporting Bears – see page 68. It's been rather refreshing and encouraging to see how the distant past and the present can remain so close for both 'our' marques, with the cover story on Vintage Bentley's factory-standard restoration of a 1930 Speed Six coupé a perfect example. What was done then – in exact detail – matters more than ever now, if we're to preserve our motoring heritage. Other attractions include a drive in a car created for Sir Henry Royce to assess in the south of France in 1929, a buying guide to the temptingly varied and capable Bentley Mk VI and R-type family and a day in the Australian sun with an ex-Elton John Corniche convertible. In other words, we continue to enjoy the present day while celebrating a glorious past, which seems about right at this time.

### Nigel Boothman

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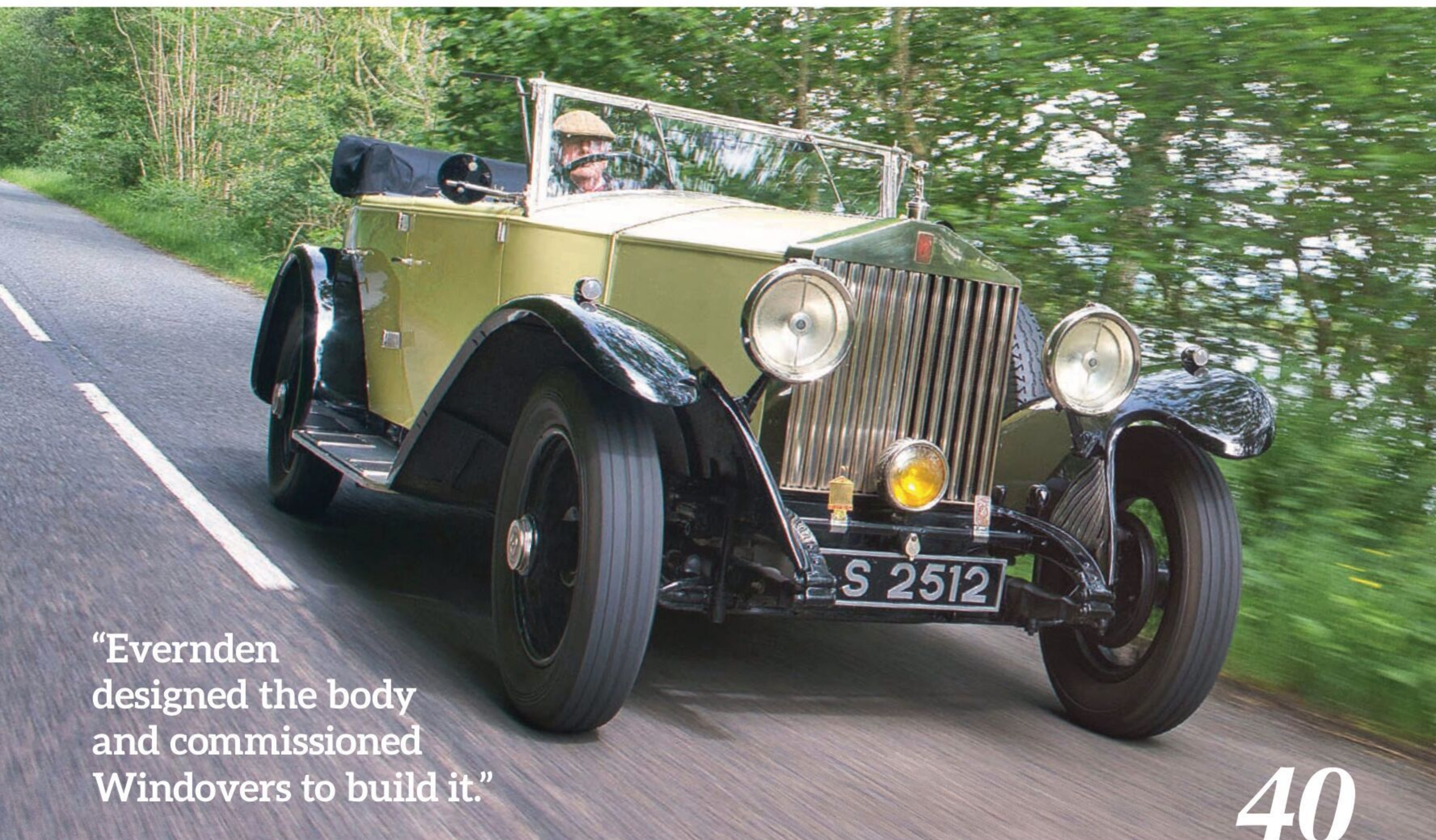
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As usual, Blenheim made a magnificent back drop

## OLD AND NEW GLORY AT SALON PRIVE

Salon Privé's 2022 event at Blenheim Palace proved well up to par, with some dazzling cars spanning well over 100 years of motoring history. Rolls-Royce and Bentley were well represented, with one car from each marque scooping a major award: Best of Show third place

for a spectacular 1931 Bentley 8-litre Saloon by Freestone & Webb and the Churchill Cup for Most Exceptional Design for an even more rakish 1933 Rolls-Royce Phantom II Continental coupé by the same coachbuilder, and part of the Bamford collection.

The 8-litre naturally took the class

win for Class D too – 'pre-war closed / elegance'. Amongst the honorary awards, a 1929 Rolls-Royce 20hp 3-position Cabriolet by Windovers took the prize for 'Most Opulent', while a 1933 Rolls-Royce Phantom II Continental drophead-coupé by James Young was awarded for 'Best Interior'. There were plenty more cars to interest the connoisseur outside of the prize-winners, notably EXP4, the last of four experimental Bentley 3-litre chassis built by the factory. It was constructed in 1922 and used to



Arriving in style



Phantom II Vanvooren Coupé is part of the Bamford collection



prove the concept of four-wheel brakes, viewed with deep suspicion by some at that time, and it served as a test-bed for the first 4 ½ litre engines. It's recently emerged from a sympathetic restoration by William Medcalf's team at Vintage Bentley, who have also been busy with our cover car – see page 12.

## LAUNCH MODE

In all, there were a dozen Rolls-Royce and Bentley entries, outnumbered only by Ferrari, of course. Such is the prestige of the show (and the demographic of the audience) that more and more car makers are using it as a launch event for new models, as with events at Monterey Week in California. While some of the more radical hybrid supercars (and even a high-performance quad bike based on an Audi R10) felt a little out of place next to the grace of the 20th-century classics, it was a perfect spot for Rolls-Royce to debut the current Phantom in Series II form.

The press corps saw the sheet whisked back and listened to the description of the changes from Series I specification – limited mostly to cosmetic alterations such as a continuous sweep of light through the top of the radiator grille and into the headlamps, we think. Indeed, Rolls-Royce tell us that 'clients have implored Rolls-Royce not to make any major changes to an already iconic motor car. In answer to these client demands, only the lightest of design touches, embellishments, and adaptations have been incorporated.'

The car on display showed off Rolls-Royce's bespoke services and was presented in Black over Monteverde Green with a Peony Pink coachline. Inside, Scivaro Grey leather was offset by Peony Pink, with 'Obsydian Ayous open pore wood and canadel panelling.' Not to everyone's taste, but that's the point – Rolls-Royce want customers to dream up their own perfect specification, no matter how off-menu it might seem.

## BEST OF THE REST

Older cars that offered more general appeal included a Bentley 3-litre pick-up kitted out as a works service vehicle, with extra instruments, an air compressor, little leather holsters in the cabin for spare parts and a deep tool chest in the front wing. We



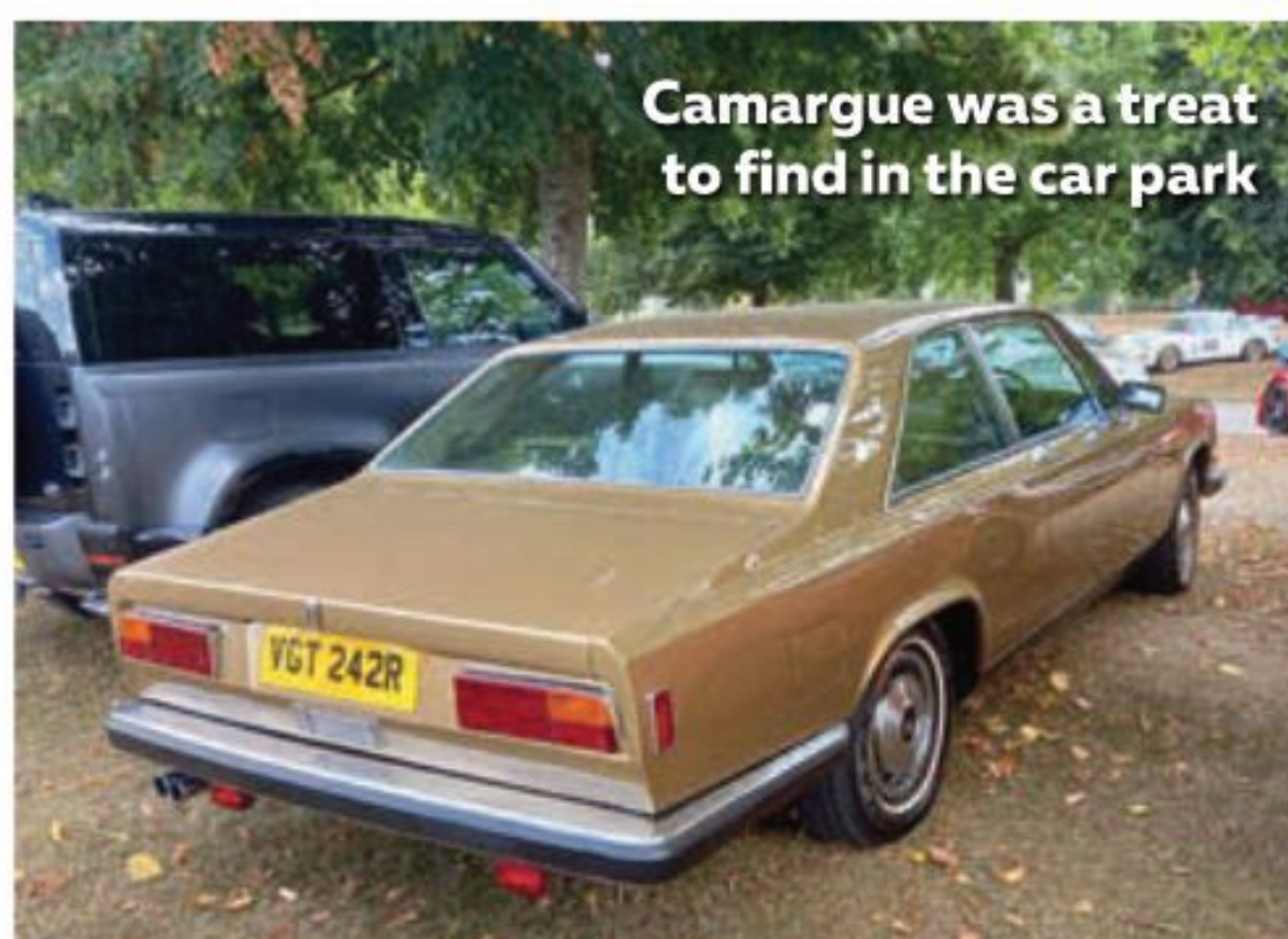
8-litre saloon by Freestone & Webb won the Churchill Cup



Bentley 3-litre 'works' pick-up charmed all who saw it



EXP4, fresh from a recent restoration



Camargue was a treat to find in the car park



Judging is organised and serious



Just shy of £1m asked for this R-type Continental



Phantom VIII Series II is revealed to the media

couldn't find the owner to ask about the car's origins – it's presumably a recreation of something that could have existed in period, but whether original or not, it was totally charming and completed to a fantastic standard.

For those with the means to act on a whim, some glorious cars were offered by traders, including a seductive R-type Continental listed by Graeme Hunt at £975,750; quite a diverting

sum to see on a piece of paper in a car's windscreen. There were plenty of attractive cars in the parking area outside the show too, thanks to Salon Privé's ability to pull in visitors with the right kind of transport. We noticed one attendee in a brown Silver Shadow, reminding us of the one we are restoring (see page 86) and which spent its whole life at Blenheim – will it be our transport to next year's Salon Privé?





**The Bentley outside Bushells tea, Sydney, Australia c 1936**



**Once-lovely Derby Bentley has been laid up too long to be an 'oily rag' runabout**



**Pram irons and curvaceous spats are very much of their period**

## 68 YEARS IN A CART SHED FOR DERBY BENTLEY

This exciting semi-streamlined 1935 Bentley 3 1/2 litre drophead coupé hasn't turned a wheel since 1971, by which time it had already been garaged in a cart shed on a Dorset farm since 1954. But an MoT failure in 1968 – worn kingpins, apparently – sent it into storage with only a brief emergence three years later for a few repairs, before it was pushed back inside.

The car is being offered by Charterhouse in their sale at the Haynes International Motor Museum in Sparkford, Somerset, on Wednesday 12th of October. It is estimated to bring between £50,000 and £70,000. Richard Bromell of Charterhouse ranks this one right at the top of his many barn-fresh classics.

'Growing up as a child I thought every farm had old buildings hiding away classic and vintage cars,' he said. 'Although I have seen and sold many barn finds at Charterhouse over the decades, this one certainly trumps all other previous discoveries.'

It's an unusual car with a rare Thrupp & Maberley body seen on only a few other Bentley chassis and with some distinctive features: spatted rear wings and almost helmet-form front wings are separated by long, gently-curving running boards. The car's early history is Australian, as it was ordered by a wealthy Australian tea merchant called Philip Bushell, who is assumed to have selected the coachbuilder and the body style. It

returned to the UK, probably in 1947, but little is known of its ownership until it appeared for sale at a garage in Shaftesbury, Dorset, in 1954.

Here, a 73 year-old local farmer seems to have fallen for it and handed over £1050 – a huge sum for a 20 year-old car back then. Even more surprising, he is said to have spent another £500 having it repainted from yellow to black, in which it remains to this day. With the farmer's grandson, and now his own son, realising they will never get around to restoring this beautiful Bentley, a decision was made to contact the auction house. Though rightly described as 'requiring full restoration', the car appears essentially sound and complete.

## BATUR SHOWS NEW DIRECTION FOR CREWE

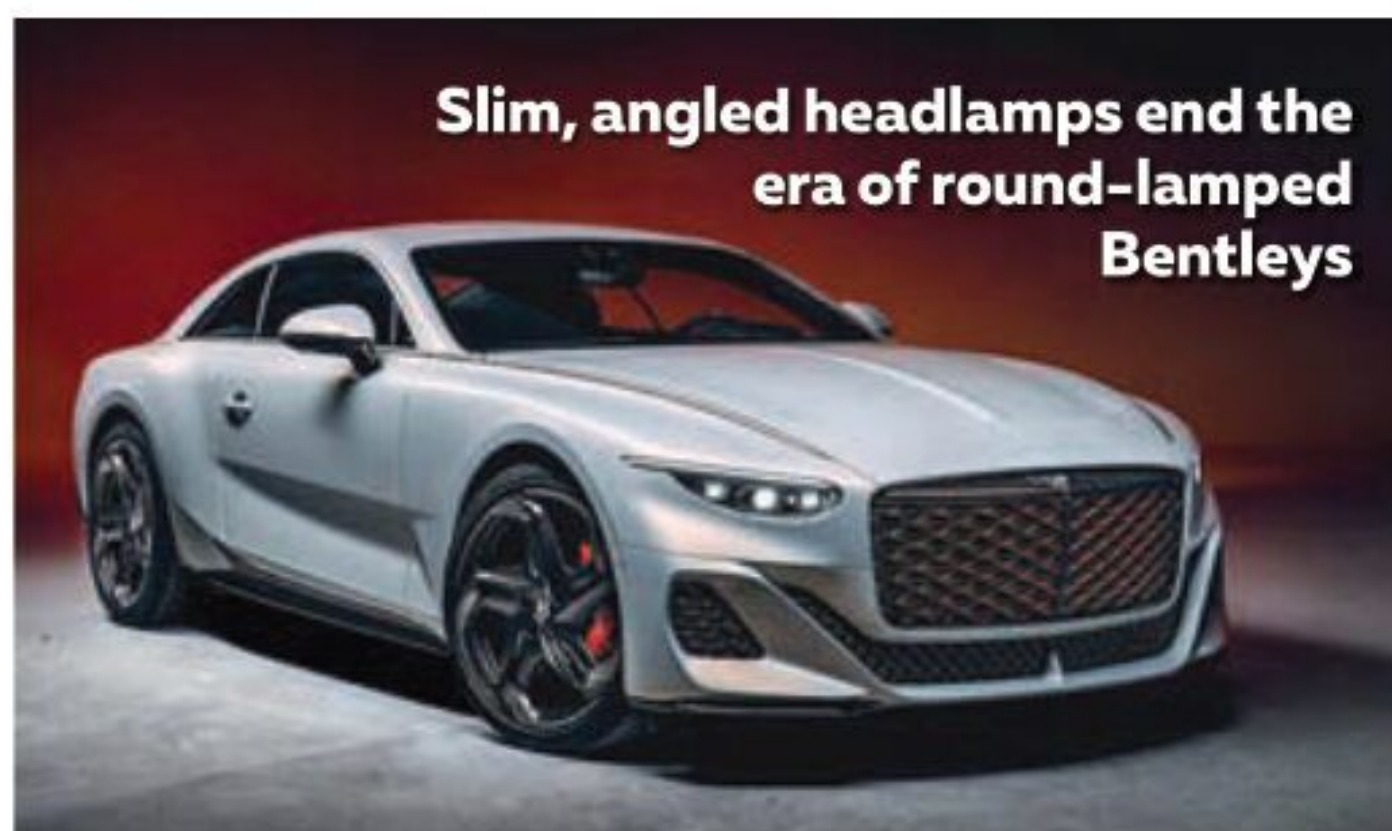
Rolls-Royce were not the only marque to unveil a new model at this season's concours shows, as Bentley revealed a coupé called the Batur during California's Monterey week. In some ways it's a follow-up to the Bacalar, the coachbuilt and extremely limited-edition convertible, of which just 12 were made by Mulliner, Bentley's home of special products. Like the Bacalar, it shares the basic structure and drivetrain of the Continental GT, entirely revised with upgraded power and unique

styling. With this new coupé, Bentley are using the chance to show how other Bentley models will soon look.

'The Batur is a significant car for Bentley,' said Chairman Adrian Hallmark at the Batur's launch event. 'Far more than the heir to the highly successful Bacalar, the Batur showcases the design direction that we're taking in the future as we develop our range of BEVs. Director of Design Andreas Mindt and his team have reimagined the classic Bentley design cues into a stronger, bolder design that

remains both elegant and graceful.'

It's immensely potent under the skin, too, making this eye-catching statement: the Batur is the most powerful Bentley in history. The W12 engine is tuned to give more than 740ps (730bhp) and 1000nm (738lb ft) of torque. The four-wheel steer system from the new GT Speed is incorporated too, but the main emphasis on the 18 Batur's – all reserved by existing Mulliner customers, despite the £1.65 million price tag – is on bespoke materials and personal choice.



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OBITUARY

## DEAN JAGGARD, 1973-2022

The Rolls-Royce and Bentley scene lost an enthusiastic and influential supporter in July of this year with the sad passing of Dean Jaggard, after a long battle with cancer. Well-known for his popular Facebook forums and in-depth knowledge of Crewe's classics, he helped countless owners through technical advice and friendly encouragement.

Dean had been immersed in his love for the two marques since starting his career via a five-year apprenticeship at the prestigious restoration company and service agent, P&A Wood, eventually achieving his City & Guilds and National Craftsman's Certificate. This led to a role as general technician, working on all models from 1965 through to the latest releases. He advanced to becoming a Bentley master technician trained at Bentley Motors in Crewe, as well as a Rolls-Royce master technician through Rolls-Royce Motor Cars at Goodwood.

More than 60 training courses are thought to have been completed by Dean between 1992 and 2017, at which point he began working for another famed Rolls-Royce and Bentley restoration company, Clark

& Carter, working on a number of interesting and challenging projects over a three-year period.

Dean decided to finally branch out on his own in 2020, launching Jaggard Rolls-Royce & Bentley and soon establishing a loyal clientele. He subsequently joined forces with friend and fellow marque expert Steve Moore, with Boreham-based Jaggard & Moore opening for business in April 2021.

It was via his popularity on social media, however, that Dean was perhaps best-known to thousands of today's enthusiasts. Although involved with several online forums, Dean was the driving force behind a Facebook group (Rolls-Royce & Bentley Cars Topics, Faults and Resolutions) that grew to a 6500-strong following. And it was through this group that Dean helped countless owners with their technical problems, making many friends along the way.

Dean was also a great supporter of Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver, as former editor Paul Guinness explains: 'I was delighted to get to know Dean during my four years at RR&BD. His enthusiasm for the two marques was infectious, and



his in-depth knowledge was awe-inspiring. He contributed to the magazine during my time at the helm, and entertained many of us with his features. I remember Dean's tale of how he was flown to Singapore to fix a non-starting Flying Spur, and another time he flew to the Seychelles to carry out repairs to a Phantom VII. Dean had a wealth of experience and will be missed by so many, both personally and professionally.'

All of us here at RR&BD send our sincere condolences to Dean's family and friends.



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# TO FACTORY STANDARDS

When William Medcalf had the chance to re-fit the original – and unique – coupé body to his family's Bentley Speed Six, he set a new standard for factory-correct historical detail. But how would the Pebble Beach judges react?

WORDS: NIGEL BOOTHMAN

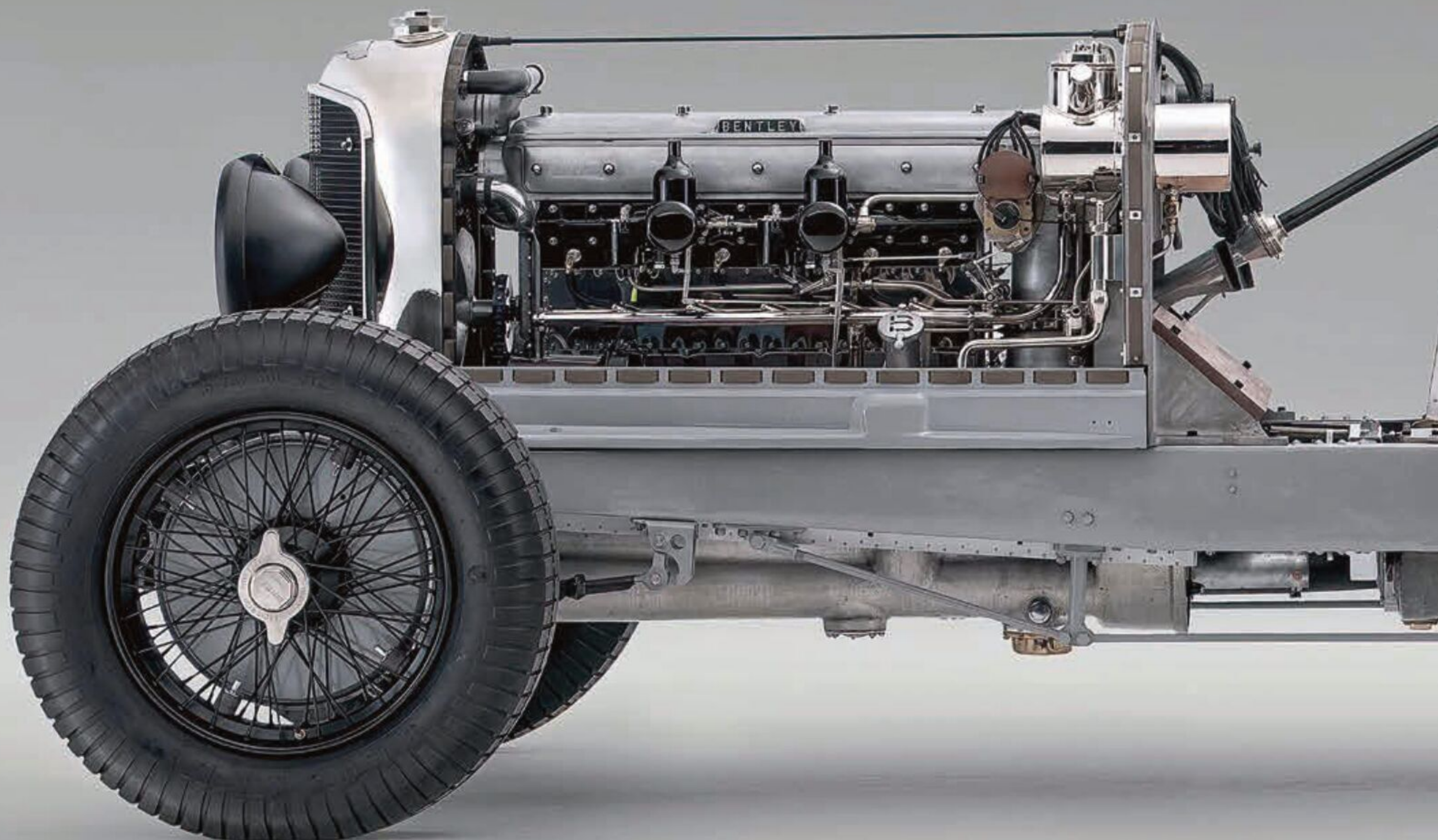
PHOTOGRAPHY: VINTAGE BENTLEY / EMMA KEYS / TIM SCOTT / IN MOTION IMAGES / AKOMOS

For any restoration business, entering a car to the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance is a nerve-racking experience. You are there to say 'here is our best work – now judge us against our peers',

so you must be confident. This often means that cars on the lawns of this famous north Californian golf course verge on being over-restored in the eyes of some observers: things that were never chromed or nickel-plated

are suddenly bright and shiny; paint that was once applied with a brush is now a glassy-smooth spray job.

What if you bucked the trend? What if you reached for the brush instead of the spray gun, and didn't mind fitting





components with whatever finish the supplier would have used, rather than a uniform, immaculate re-plating? You'd need a good story to tell the judges, and indeed a good reason for doing it. Fortunately, William Medcalf had both.

He is the proprietor at Vintage Bentley in West Sussex and grew up around the cars. Well, one of them in particular – GJ 755, a 1930 Speed Six. When William's father bought the car in 1981 it wore a replica Van den Plas four-seat tourer body, which it retained for the next 40-odd years as Mr Medcalf senior and the rest of the family enjoyed it on trips and tours all over the country and around the world. But it wasn't always a tourer. Indeed, its early history reveals what an important car it is.

Chassis SB2761 was ordered in late 1929 by one Viscount Mandeville. Commander Alexander George Francis Drogo Montagu was something of a rake, it seems, or at least an unusually dashing driver with an impressive list of motoring mishaps on his record. He seems to have bought the car on his

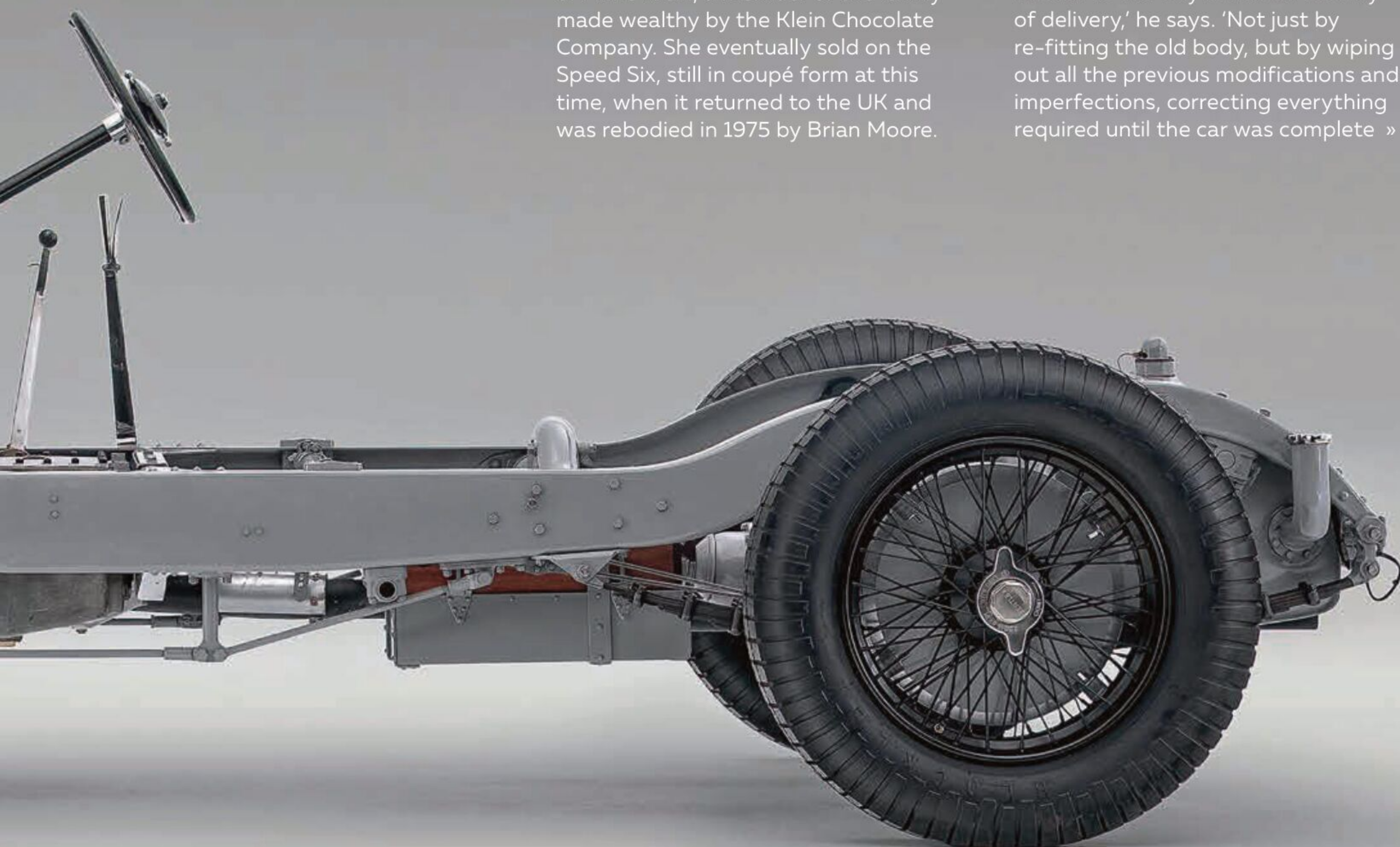
retirement from the Royal Navy at the age of 28, and one can imagine it making exciting transport from the family seat at Kimbolton Castle in Huntingdonshire to clubland life in London. The chassis was fitted with engine number KR 2700 – the very first 'Sport' or Le Mans-specification engine in a customer car, as William later discovered – and dispatched to Martin Walter Ltd in Folkestone, Kent, in May 1930. Only 17 days later the car had been bodied as a close-coupled coupé, sent back to the Bentley works in Cricklewood for final inspection and delivered to the Viscount.

Within two years, Mandeville had run it off the road and into a tree, and back it went to Martin Walter and then Bentley for repairs, after which it was sold by Jack Barclay. They sold the car again in 1934, each time generating valuable records that would survive for William to study when questions of specification and colour arose. One wartime owner was reputedly the only British serviceman posted in Poland; a retired policeman who can only have been a spy. After the war the car found its way to America and the ownership of Anne Klein, a member of the family made wealthy by the Klein Chocolate Company. She eventually sold on the Speed Six, still in coupé form at this time, when it returned to the UK and was rebodied in 1975 by Brian Moore.

Here came a huge stroke of luck. Rather than ending its days on a bonfire, like so many irreplaceable examples of pre-war saloon and coupé coachwork, the body was carefully preserved by the coachbuilder with the interior woodwork, seats and trim stored in an attic. When another customer fancied it for his own 6 ½ litre Bentley, it was still in very sound condition. But this car too changed hands and was re-bodied as a Le Mans replica, so the coupé coachwork found its way onto a third 6 ½ litre car. When this, too, was eventually rebodied as yet another Le Mans replica, the bodywork was saved once more and William Medcalf's phone rang. Was this the body from his father's old Speed Six? And would he like to buy it?

He would, of course. But William has been rather busy building his business and years went by before anything happened about GJ 755. In fact, it took the first lockdown to prompt a beginning. Not that the old coupé body had slipped William's mind, by any means. He had, in fact, been giving it serious thought.

'I'd been dreaming of returning the car to the way it was on the day of delivery,' he says. 'Not just by re-fitting the old body, but by wiping out all the previous modifications and imperfections, correcting everything required until the car was complete »





## COVER STORY

### BENTLEY SPEED SIX RESTORATION

exactly as Bentley had done it.'

This sounds simple enough, in concept, but it had implications for almost every part of the rebuild. For instance, Bentley finished and road-tested the chassis before delivering it to the coachbuilder, so William and his team would do the same before fitting the body. And because the coachbuilder was provided with a set of drawings and instructions that strictly limited what they could remove from the running chassis during body fitment, the staff at Vintage Bentley would have to approach the fit-out in the same way, with all that this meant for access to painting, wiring and so forth.

Needless to say, it wouldn't end there. After decades around Cricklewood-built Bentleys, William has extensive experience of what's original and what is not. The correct finishes for carburettors, fuel pumps, coils and so forth may differ from each other

**'It had to be a total strip – not just the body and driveline removed from the chassis, even the rivets out and the chassis members apart for checking and making true.'**

and look less 'of a piece' in the engine compartment than they would if all enamelled the same way, but that's as it should be. Even the engine castings themselves had a labour-intensive finish particular to Bentley that's often polished away, because it's so hard to replicate. Hard, but not impossible.

### WORK BEGINS

The previous coachwork was removed in the early summer of 2020, as soon as that first alarming lockdown eased

off slightly. The car was in good health at this point, though with signs of use after a long and happy period that included trips to Australia, New Zealand and Canada. Would it be possible to swap the body over without doing much to the chassis and running gear? Not if you really want to hit the goals William was aiming for, as he explains.

'I wanted to get the finished car looking as good as it did on the day it was delivered, so the thought of having to pull it apart again if a mechanical issue arose didn't make any





sense. It had to be a total strip – not just the body and driveline removed from the chassis, but even the rivets removed and the chassis members apart for checking and making true.'

It sounds drastic but bear in mind what William was trying to replicate – the build of the car as it had been done in 1930. So he began where they began...bar the discovery of some ancient accident damage.

'When the Viscount ran off the road and hit a tree, we know from the records that the car needed a new stub axle on the near side. Once we'd stripped the chassis we also found the impact had damaged a huge tubular crossmember; whether it had been removed, straightened and replaced or just whacked with hammers in situ, I don't know – but we could improve on what we found.'

The 6 ½ litre and Speed Six chassis could be ordered in various wheelbases, with the longer examples often bearing quite heavy bodywork. If this was the case, Bentley would fit a clever tensioning system to the chassis that involved threaded rods acting on pillars projecting down from the main chassis rails. They run in line with each rail and can be tightened to prevent the chassis flexing beyond a certain point, for instance the point where the doors of a saloon body might un-latch themselves over a nasty bump. GJ 755 is built on the 11ft 8in chassis and seems to be the only Speed Six at this length fitted with stringers. It may have been overkill, but Bentley played it safe when they anticipated Martin Walter's sturdily built close-coupled coupé.

Meanwhile, this coupé body went away to a sub-contractor for minor repairs to aspects of the wood frame, included the gratifyingly simple job of converting it back to fit the original chassis length.

'The previous car it had been fitted to was on a 12ft wheelbase,' says William, 'but thankfully all they'd done to adapt the body was to move the rear wings back a bit. By removing the bits of wood used to re-mount the wings and replacing what would have been there before, it was easy enough to re-site them'

William's team were amazed at the condition of the panels under the paint, finding that the aluminium bonnet, for instance, looked virtually new when stripped – entirely ripple-free. Apart from that early brush with the scenery (and subsequent repair by the original »



## SPEED SIX: BEST OF THE VINTAGE BENTLEYS?

As early as 1924, W.O. Bentley was sufficiently concerned by the hefty coachwork appearing on 3-litre Bentley chassis to begin developing a bigger six-cylinder engine. This was intended to be a quieter, smoother powerplant more suited to formal limousine bodies, and would have been 4 ½ litres in capacity had it not been for a chance encounter with a prototype Rolls-Royce 'New Phantom' on test in France. An unexpectedly close result to this impromptu road race persuaded W.O. to increase the new engine's dimensions to give 6597cc. So it would remain in its production life from 1926 to '30, during which 544 chassis were completed, of which 171 were Speed Six versions with a

higher compression ratio and twin SU carburettors.

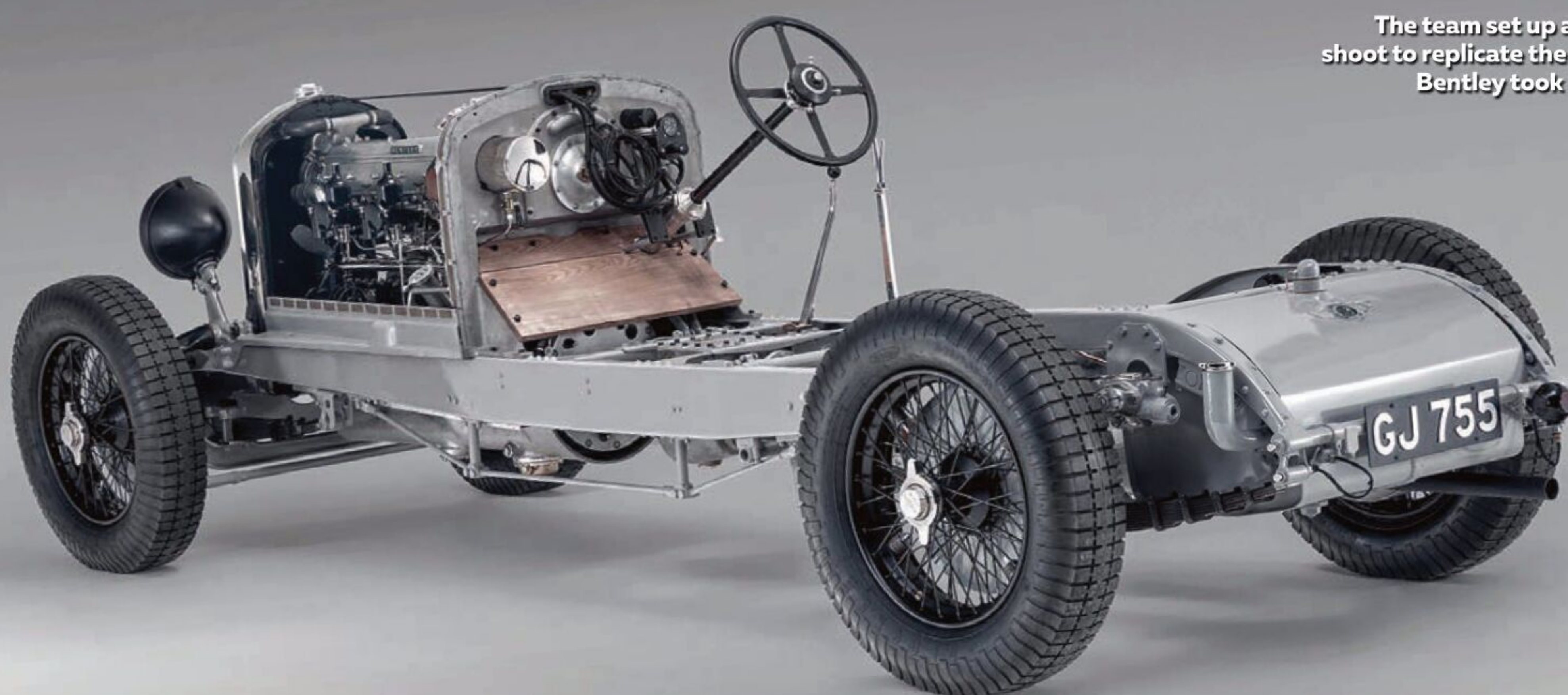
For an engine designed for dignified road use, it made a tremendous competition car, winning Le Mans in 1929 and '30 and outdoing even the 4 ½ litre 'Blower' models. Yet is it really that different on the road from the muscular, deep-chested four-cylinder cars?

'They're silky smooth,' says William Medcalf. 'A good Speed Six can feel like a big armchair, with all this torque that just keeps pulling. They eat hills. There's a lovely whine from the camshaft that you hear at higher revs, so if you drop from top into third and give it the beans, the whine blends with the exhaust and it sounds great. They're majestic cars.'



## COVER STORY

### BENTLEY SPEED SIX RESTORATION



The team set up a studio shoot to replicate the photos Bentley took in 1929

coachbuilder) the bodywork had clearly led a pampered existence. But the real stroke of luck came when work began on what was inside – or rather, what wasn't.

#### KEEPING IN TRIM

Although the body had been carefully preserved, the trim was eventually replaced when it found its way onto the first of its subsequent chassis, which could have presented a big problem: how to establish what was there, when the only other Speed Six made with this body – the Motor Show car – does not survive? Well, William was lucky enough to track down the

trimmer who removed the original trim and re-upholstered the coupé.

'He was around 76 by this time, so I was testing his memory by asking him whether he could remember details – how many flutes in each seat, and so on. And not only could he remember, he'd taken photos of it! He also knew that he'd copied the pattern of what was there exactly, changing nothing but the hide itself.'

This allowed a perfectly accurate re-trim to the original shade, a mottled brownish-burgundy finish. The interior timber was in remarkable condition and did not need to be replaced or copied, while the instruments were

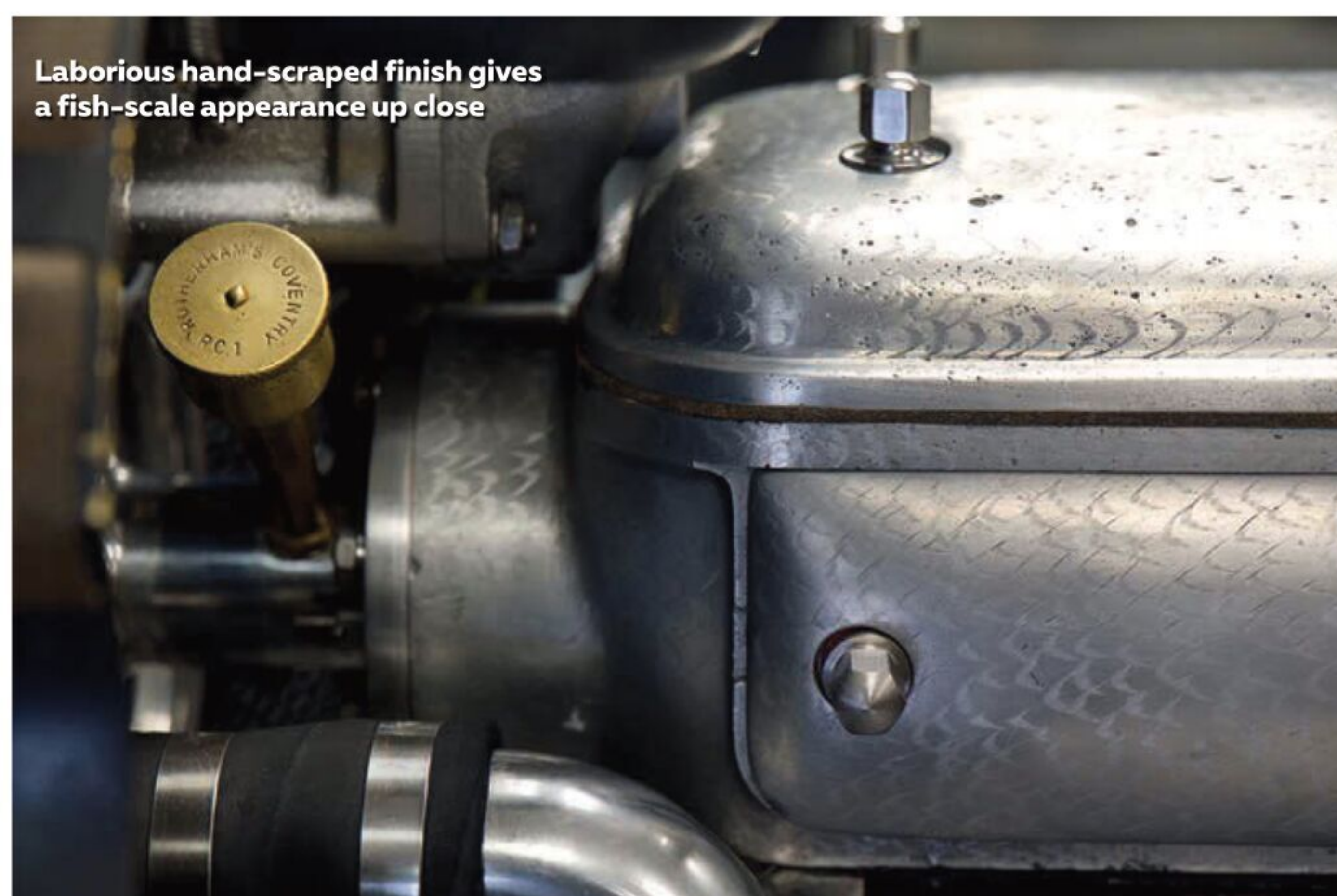
cleaned and serviced as required, but otherwise ready to go.

All that remained of the original paint was a black & white photo and a written description: 'Ivory and Brown'. With no remnants of the original paint to match (the body had been re-painted with at least one colour change over the years), it was up to William to choose the two tones. He was conscious of avoiding any ivory shade that veered too close to wedding white, and explains the logic of this combination that includes an aged, almost yellow-ivory tone.

'The brown shade we chose was as dark as possible to give the ivory a chance,' he says. 'I think »



Ancillaries from outside suppliers were finished as they would have been from new





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## COVER STORY

### BENTLEY SPEED SIX RESTORATION

it's hit the right balance of being authentic to the original finish without looking out of place today.'

The paint would originally have been cellulose lacquer, applied with a spray-gun, so that's what was used this time. Six coats, with each coat allowed to dry, then flatted back before the next coat went on. The final flat-and-polish has left the car with a nice even gloss that's exceptionally smart but rather different from the almost wet-look, glassy shine of modern two-pack or water-based paint.

### A CLOSE SCRAPE

'We'd had this engine apart twice before since our family owned it,' says William. 'The first time, when I was still a youngster, my father had raced the car at Silverstone and the engine seized on the way home, so

we took it apart together. Then much later, we did it again before the car went on a trip in Australia. I lost my father nine years ago, so it was nice to revisit what we did together.'

The engine retains all its major castings, but many of the moving internals have been replaced over the years, with William taking the view on the latest rebuild that it should be done properly and for good, so in normal use it should never really need revisiting.

'These six-cylinder engines depend on proper maintenance,' he says. 'Look after them and they're fine, especially with a stronger crankshaft, camshaft, connecting rods and so on. They also need to be set up correctly, for instance the three-throw drive.'

This involved bit of engineering is a clever W.O. Bentley touch: a mini three-throw crankshaft is gear-driven off the main crankshaft. Vertical

connecting rods link this to another mini crankshaft integrated into the overhead camshaft. It allows for smooth cam drive and therefore consistent valve timing, even with the cylinder block expanding vertically more than 12 'thou' (0.012-in) from cold to hot.

For a factory finish to the engine castings, William and his team had to learn a lost skill.

'Bentley hand-scraped the engines,' says William, 'which was their way of diverting your eye away from unsightly imperfections in the cast surface but also of adding a decorative finish. It's done with a tool a bit like a chisel, essentially the same thing you'd use for scraping white metal bearings to produce an even surface. You have to get the knack of pushing the tool onto the casting so it just digs in a tiny a bit – the "strike" – and then scrapes onward, "the feather". This has often



William Medcalf, wrapped up and ready to go



been polished away on old engines, except in hard-to reach areas.'

Yet it's almost never reinstated because it's very tricky without lots of practice; William describes the need to acquire muscle memory. Then you have to plan your approach perfectly and not find yourself in a corner or a radius that leaves you unable to continue the same pattern.

'There's no rubbing out and starting again, so it's very intimidating!'

Now though, William and one other member of the team have mastered the technique and after a solid two days of focused, laborious scraping, the castings could be reassembled and the engine completed.

## TEN STRONG MEN

With the engine built up, it was reinstalled in the chassis as the other »

## MARTIN WALTER

This firm took an unusual route into coachbuilding, via saddlery, sporting goods, bicycles and motorcycles, finally exhibiting car bodies for the first time at Olympia in 1921. The owner, W. Martin Walter and his brother-in-law, Spencer Apps, built a car dealership business alongside the coachbuilding firm which would stand them in good stead when the Depression slashed the sales of new coachbuilt models. Through the 1920s, though, Martin Walter made bodies for Hispano-Suiza, Bianchi, Panhard, Lagonda, Mercedes-Benz and Rolls-Royce chassis, with Talbot, Lanchester, Daimler and Vauxhall becoming the most favoured marques, and

for which Martin Walter offered standard (i.e. catalogued) bodies. They became known for drophead-coupé styles and built two very handsome, purposeful DHCs on Bentley 4 ½ litre chassis, plus a handful of saloons and a tourer before constructing just two close-coupled coupés on six-cylinder chassis – the Motor Show car, for which the body is long gone, and GJ 755, our subject here. Martin Walter made munitions during the war, then in the 1950s came up with the Dormobile motor caravan body for Bedford and other van and estate car conversions. Changing names and identities, Dormobile Ltd went into receivership in 1994.



William turned a few heads while out and about on the test route

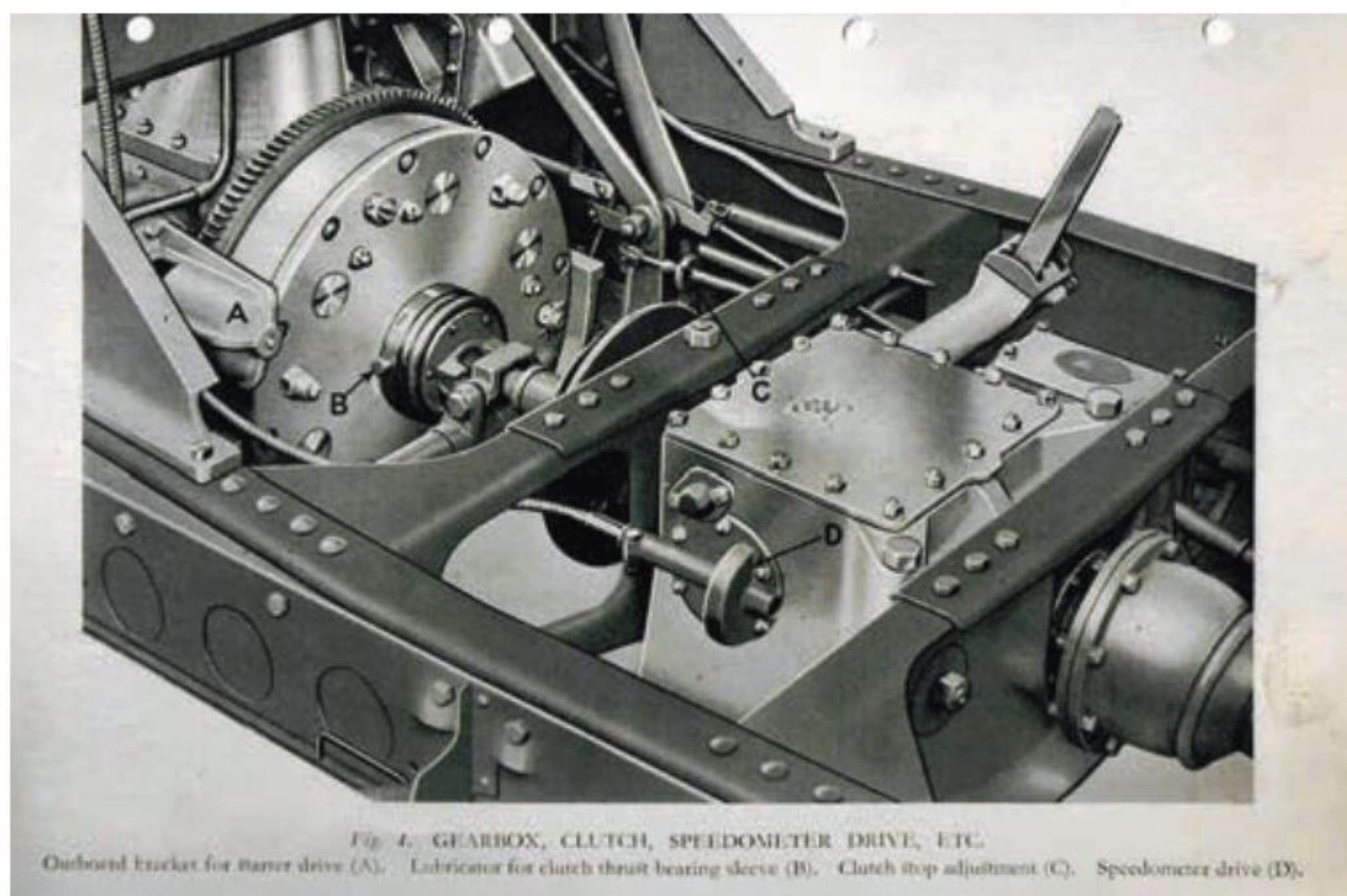
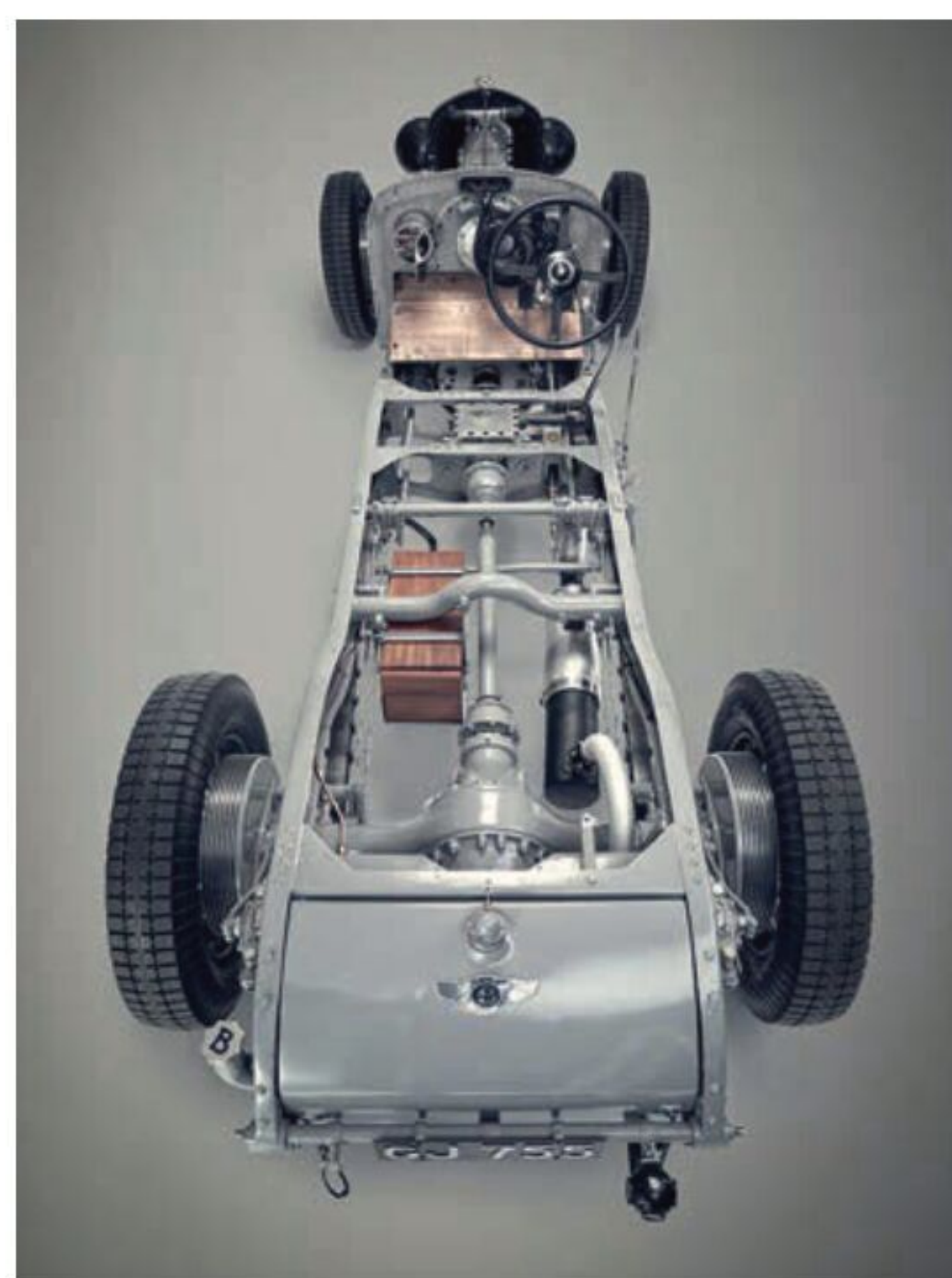
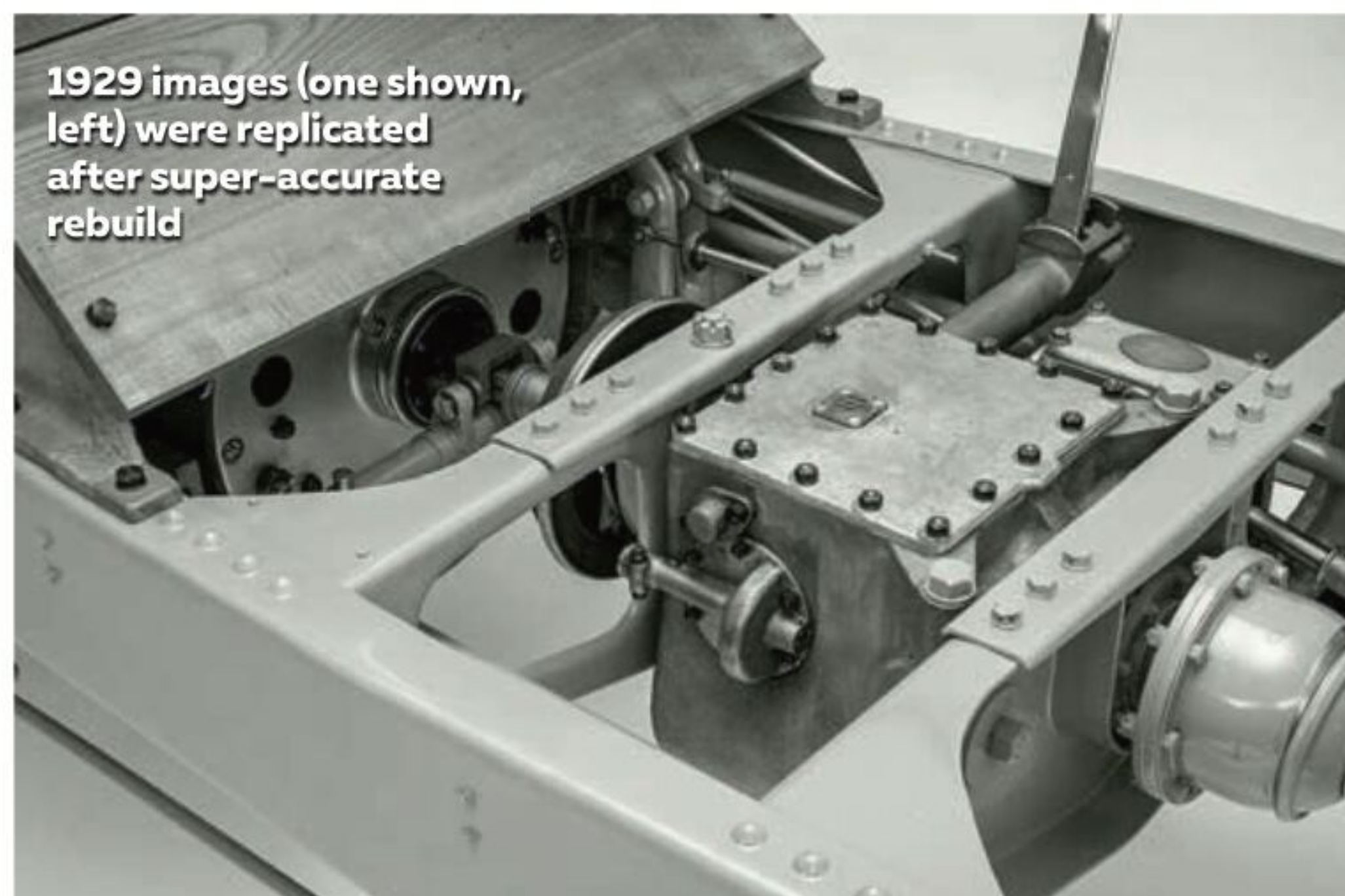


Fig. 4. GEARBOX, CLUTCH, SPEEDOMETER DRIVE, ETC.  
Outboard bracket for main drive (A). Lubricator for clutch thrust bearing sleeve (B). Clutch stop adjustment (C). Speedometer drive (D).



1929 images (one shown, left) were replicated after super-accurate rebuild



## COVER STORY

### BENTLEY SPEED SIX RESTORATION

elements of the running gear came together. Both the gearbox and back axle had been stripped down and rebuilt without encountering any notable horrors, while the brakes and steering assemblies received only the attention they needed to bring them back to prime efficiency. By about February of 2022, the team had a running, rolling chassis, and so they took the next step exactly as Bentley did.

'We know from records that they managed 86 miles on test with the completed chassis,' says William, 'so we also drove it on the road to get everything working as it should. It was pretty chilly driving a bare Speed Six in February!'

Luckily, there were cameras present to document this unusual day, as seen on our front cover. But next, a challenge: how do you re-unite a hefty but freshly-

painted coachbuilt coupé body with a large Bentley chassis? Well, you ask everyone to stop what they're doing in the workshop and gather round.

William makes what happened next sound easy, but we can imagine a nervous and stressful few minutes.

'We got ten of our blokes to find somewhere to hold it, gave it a lift and on it went. Sure enough, all the holes lined up – you could tell it was meant to be there!'

From here, the car suddenly took shape and something of the finished form with wings and bonnet could be visualised. It provided extra motivation, which was just as well considering the workload that remained: fitting the glass, the wiring loom and dashboard instruments, the interior trim, the remaining panels and brightwork, and so on. This left barely two or three

weeks between completion and the car's date with destiny, or rather with a large air freighter at Heathrow.

'We managed 150 miles of testing before the trip,' says William, 'so we were pretty confident, and the car was fine. It landed in San Francisco, we picked it up and went straight out on the 70-mile tour that all the concours entrants to Pebble Beach must do, and it coped very well. It can be 100 degrees a couple of miles inland but then feel freezing at the coast.'

So how did it go down with the judges? Could they forgive the fact that the stove enamelling on the SU carburettors was different from that on the Autovac or Bosch components, because that's how each company supplied them in 1930? When told the story, yes they could.

'They really understood the approach,'

**'We got ten of our blokes to find somewhere to hold it, gave it a lift and on it went. Sure enough, all the holes lined up – you could tell it was meant to be there!'**



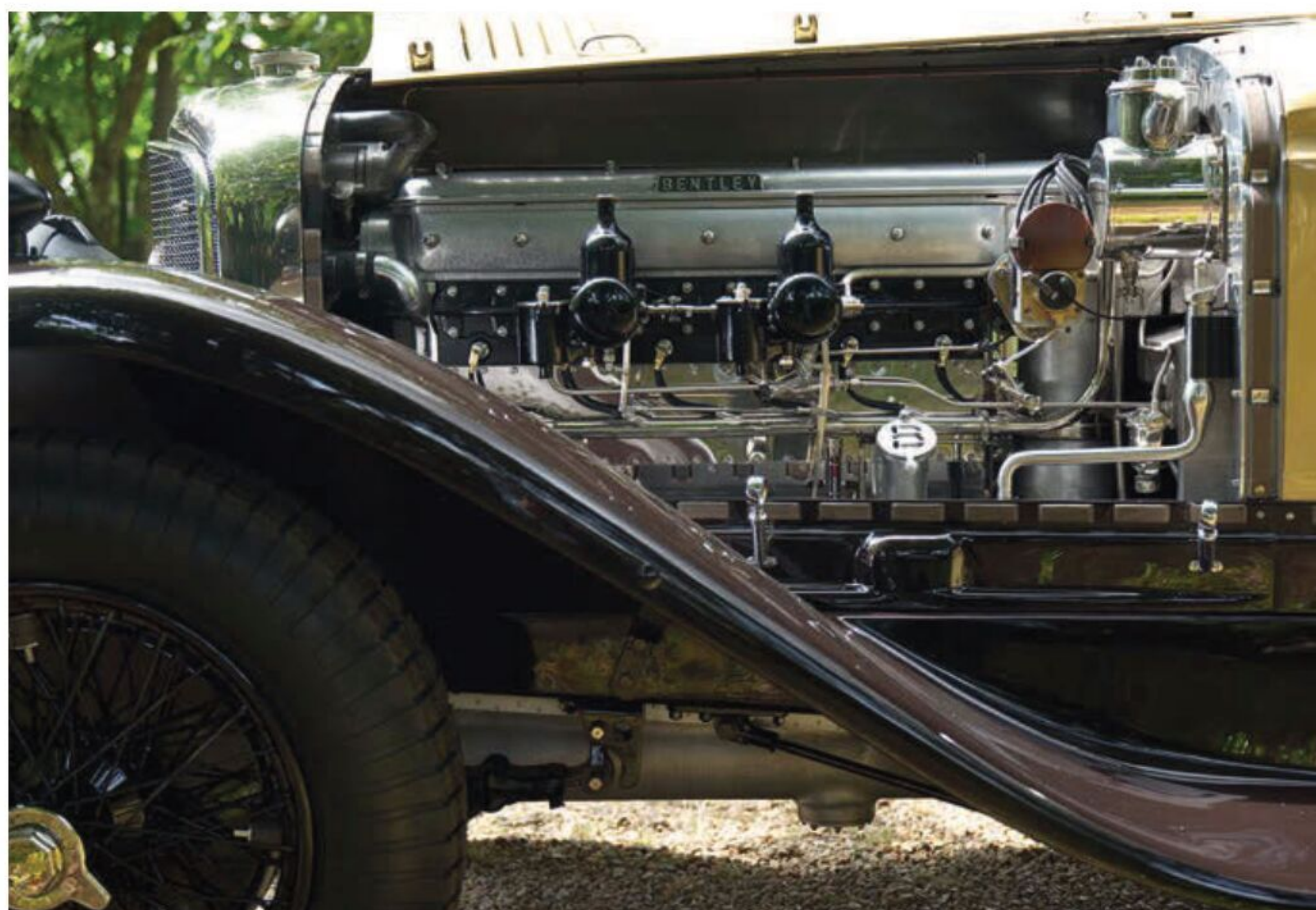
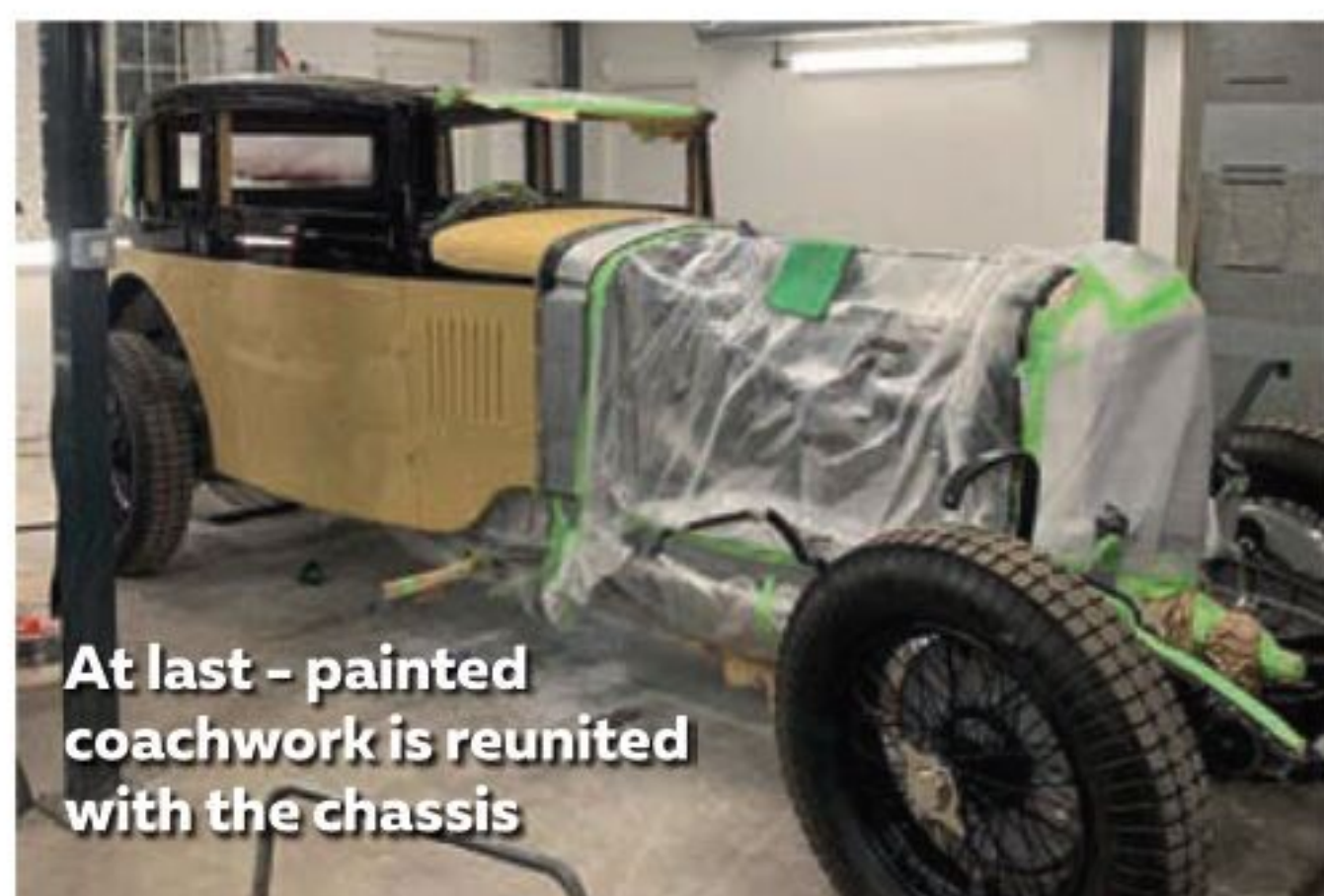


says William, 'and appreciated what we were trying to do. So it was scored as a hundred-point car for condition, which left only the scores for presence and elegance, worth just three points. It got two of those points, but a Talbot-Lago with a Figoni teardrop body was given one point more for elegance, which is understandable – so we got second in class. Which is an amazing result, especially as the Talbot-Lago went on to be the overall runner-up to Best in Show.'

All the effort was worth it, and this unique approach paid off too. It's a more expensive, painstaking way to restore a car, but you could argue it's the only truly accurate way to go. After all, we're preserving history here, and this magnificent car is now more than a handsome, exciting vehicle; it's a living historical document and a benchmark to those that follow. ■



The Councours road run was conducted in glorious Californian sunshine





# 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



Still a very handsome car; the shape has been slow to age



325bhp is enough for rapid progress

## ELTON'S CONTINENTAL R – SOUNDS GOOD!

Perhaps it's the same with Rod Stewart and Lamborghinis, but we keep running into Bentleys once owned by Sir Elton John. As well as the lovely Corniche featured from page 26, we heard of this 1992 Continental R passing through the hands of online auctioneers Car and Classic. It was listed in mid-September, fetching plenty of bids over a seven-day period and topping out at £39,500.

The car was ordered in Metallic Midnight Blue with grey leather and delivered in 1992 with one or two

extras, notably a 14-speaker MB Quart audio system that would appeal to any music lover – or music maker.

'This Continental R encapsulates the two essential elements in Sir Elton's life,' says Car & Classic Head of Editorial Chris Pollitt. 'The music legend is well known for his love of interesting cars and it is befitting of such a vehicle and original owner that music would not come through any ordinary audio system: there's a trio of amplifiers behind a panel in the boot, driving the 14-speaker MB Quart install.'

Sporting vast swathes of extremely well-preserved leather and burr walnut trims, new tyres and factory alloys, the car is in excellent condition. It was bought by the recent vendor from Elton John's management company William A Bong Ltd in 1996. With only two owners and plenty of paperwork, including a letter from the vendor stating the circumstances of his purchase, it's amongst the most desirable early Continental Rs to hit the market in recent times.

The history folder is pretty full, with comprehensive service records and the odd big-ticket item like a gearbox replaced under warranty back

in 2002. Only the car's mileage of slightly more than 95,000 was against it, and the fact that the desirable private plate was retained by the vendor – though the car's original mark, K93 UPE, isn't bad either.

The Continental R made 325bhp in its first three model years, with a whopping 450lb ft of torque, which is really the figure that matters for projecting a two-tonne coupé to 60mph in 6.6 seconds. The damping features automatic ride control and managed to combine slightly firmer, more controlled cornering characteristics with a well-insulated ride that rivalled the four-door Bentley and Rolls-Royce contemporaries for refinement. Values for the R and its later variants, the S, the short-wheelbase T and the targa-topped SC, plus special editions, have been hard to assess recently with wide margins between standard R models and the lowest mileage, best-preserved Ts. While the best of the latter still enter six-figure territory, there are smart high-mileage Continental Rs at the lower end with good service history that look like fabulous buys – they're dropping below £30,000.



At least 14 speakers – and three amps – fill the cabin with sound



# CLOUD VALUES: UP IN THE SKY OR DOWN TO EARTH?

The Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud and Bentley S-series are worth more than either their predecessors – the Mk VI and R-type Standard Steel saloons – or their successors, the T-series / Silver Shadow saloons. This seems to be down to all models (and especially the V8-powered S2/S3 and Silver Cloud II/III) hitting a sweet spot that combines older looks and interior charm with almost modern-car capabilities, though without the Silver Shadow's daunting high-pressure hydraulics. We spoke to Charles Baseley of Ghost Motors in Kent about the subtle differences that seem to be affecting value.

'The first Silver Cloud and Bentley S with the six-cylinder engine is a more passive, softer car to drive and it does feel different to the later two,' he says. 'The steering wheel is larger and it's a slightly less responsive car to drive. Then the S2 and Cloud II are a bit less

economical than the S3 and Cloud III thanks to different carburettors, but the grille is a little higher so they look more majestic than the younger model. Inside, the dash is slightly nicer for the last S2s and Cloud IIs and the S3s / Cloud IIIs than it is on the earlier cars, which used a front bench seat rather than the individual seats. These are nice because you can adjust each of them to suit driver and passenger. So there are all these minor details to consider when you decide what you want.'

There is one thing that all of them have in common, of course, which is the high cost of repairs – especially to the body, which does a lot to define the value of each example.

'All the S-series and Silver Cloud models are very similar to work on,' says Charles, 'and they all rot in the same places – inner sills and body mounts, especially on the near

side. You should also be looking for nice sharp "eyebrow" contours over each wheel arch. Shiny paint can hide a lot of sins so these cars need careful inspection. Don't ignore the details, either – a full tool kit is nice to have, along with the original handbook and the correct battery box and clamp, which is often lost.'

Telling someone to buy the best they can afford is an oft-repeated bit of advice for many classics and almost every Rolls-Royce or Bentley; it's very appropriate here. You may see S2s and S3s offered at £30,000 or less but there will be a reason why they're not in the £60,000 – £85,000 bracket that the best cars command. Ghost Motors steers clear of cars with needs and has several of the best Bentley and Rolls-Royce variants of these models on the market.

'A Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud is more valuable than the equivalent Bentley S-series saloon by about 15% to 20%,' says Charles. 'We have a 1962 S3 at £55,000 and another at £60,000 with a full engine rebuild we carried out, then a very good Silver Cloud III with 49,000 miles at £85,000. Below that is another lovely Cloud III with air conditioning at £78,000 and Cloud II with very low ownership at £70,000.'



**Imposing Silver Cloud II in Sand over Sable**



**Silver Cloud III's grille is slightly lower than predecessor**



**Single-tone Bentley S3 could be sleekest of all, but worth less than similar Silver Cloud III**



**All variants are very spacious cars**



**Only under-bonnet difference is Bentley valve covers on S3**



**Individual front seats and later dash appeal more to some**



## TURBO R AUCTION PRICES NEED A BOOST

We bid a sad farewell to our project Bentley Turbo R this issue, to make way for another Crewe-built fleet car – details to be confirmed, and you can find out more about its last journey in our care on page 88. The car was under offer as we went to press, though the £7000-£9000 estimate seemed realistic. Excellent value for someone who doesn't mind living with the cosmetic shortcomings!

Perhaps we shouldn't have been surprised – at the Anglia Car Auctions sale in late August, four Turbo Rs sold with only one reaching its modest lower estimate. Bargains for buyers but perhaps a sign that the market is experiencing more supply than demand for examples that are some way below Condition 1. Still, just £9990 for the two-owner 1997 Turbo RL below showing less than 60,000 miles (albeit with some of the history missing) seemed an excellent buy.



## OLDEST 3-LITRE BENTLEY

Also making its stately way across the block as we went to press was the oldest surviving Bentley saloon, chassis 203 with its original Gurney-Nutting six-light coachwork, which was offered by Bonhams at the Goodwood Revival. At first glance you might assume this to be rather a formal body but a peep inside reveals it to be a more sporting, forward-looking 'owner-driver' approach with no division and seating that looks equally attractive, front or rear. It was restored in the late 1960s or early '70s to a high standard, including a re-trim that required a trip to France to source the best match for the original material. Since then it's mellowed somewhat but still presents very well and still retains its original engine, now with two 'sloper' SUs to give a bit more performance – but still without front-wheel brakes! Despite all this it didn't sell, with an estimate of £200,000 to £250,000.



## STUNNING PHANTOM II FINDS A NEW OWNER

Of all the glamour on display at Pebble Beach this year, and in the Gooding & Co auction nearby, few could hold a candle to the 1934 Rolls-Royce Phantom II Continental with the Streamlined Saloon bodywork by Park Ward. Estimated at \$800,000 to \$1.2m, it sold for an on-target \$885,000 which reflected its spectacular restored condition but was perhaps held back slightly by the car's familiarity on the circuit – it's a multiple award winner at previous Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance.

Taken as a piece of art, or indeed craftsmanship, chassis 86SK is one of the purest shapes to emerge from the great fad for streamlined styling that had an early peak in 1934. It was shown at the Olympia Motor Show that year and would have dazzled visitors with its sheer scale, its wonderful proportions and its details, such as the hidden hinges and all-enclosing rear spats. Will it finally return to the UK, having lived across the pond since 1960?





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**FEATURE CAR**  
**BENTLEY CORNICHE**







# ELTON'S FAVOURITE

Stars of the pop world are renowned for buying wonderful cars and Elton John couldn't have chosen a more splendid example than this 1975 Bentley Corniche – said to be his favourite

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: RICHARD HOLDSWORTH

**T**oday, what was once the pride of a pop star's garage has found an excellent home a long way from Sir Elton's old stamping ground. That lucky owner is Rodd Levy, a leading man in the legal profession in faraway Melbourne, Australia. Rodd acquired the Bentley in England in 2012 and I was fortunate in being able to meet both Rodd and the car in the Victorian State capital after a Covid lockdown kept us apart for much of 2021. It was well worth the wait! Rodd tells me so much, clearly full of knowledge about this rare and precious machine. 'My car is one of just 45

Bentley Corniche series I convertibles. This is the series with the classic chrome bumper bars rather than the rubber compound that came with subsequent series.'

The Bentley Corniche convertible is a high-performance car, making around 10% more power than the four-door Silver Shadow or T-series Bentley. It is capable of 120mph or 195kph – a purely academic figure on Australia's roads given the limit in most

states is just 110kph, or just under 70mph. Nevertheless, it must be nice to know how much power is under the bonnet if one wants to show a clean pair of heels at the traffic lights!

Rodd goes on to tell me more facts that bring me up to speed on his Corniche. 'It is a very rare car even when compared to the Rolls-Royce version. In the period from the launch of the Corniche in 1971 to the introduction of the revamped model with rubber bumper facings in 1977, a total of 1,233 Rolls-Royce Corniche convertibles were built compared to only 45 Bentley Corniche convertibles. This was the era in the early 1970s when Rolls-Royce, affected by financial issues, concentrated on Rolls-Royce badged cars. The proud name Bentley almost died out.'

What's more, the stylish flared wheel arches on Rodd's Corniche were a feature on only nine Bentley Corniche Is, those made after the introduction of the flared arches in March 1974 but before the arrival of the Corniche series II in 1977.

It is known that Sir Elton was something of an avid collector of special motor cars and built up an impressive list over the years, consisting of Ferraris, Aston Martins, Jaguars and Rolls-Royce as well as Bentleys. He purchased this particular car from the Mayfair showroom of Rolls-Royce and Bentley dealer, Jack Barclay Ltd, in 1975. Sir Elton owned it for 25 years, save for a »



## FEATURE CAR BENTLEY CORNICHE



It may not be Sir Elton behind the wheel but the Corniche still turns heads

12-month period in 1998-99 when it was owned by his personal assistant, Robert Halley, before being re-acquired by Sir Elton. He used the Bentley Corniche extensively and it is reported that he once remarked 'I've had a lot of people in it, Princess Margaret has been in it, everyone's been in it!'

He said that he took the Princess to the cinema in the car. It also featured in the video created for his hit song I'm Still Standing. The year was 1983, the car was in its original Silver Mink colour and the scenes were filmed in and around Cannes, in the south of France.

### BENTLEY AT AUCTION

However, by 2001 Sir Elton came to the decision that he had too many cars and offered 20 at a special auction to be held by Christie's in London. It was in June of that year and the Bentley Corniche was one of nine

Bentleys listed. All were maintained in impeccable condition, but as he did not drive them on a regular basis, he decided it was time for someone else to get the enjoyment...and he needed extra space to house some of his growing collection of art. Elton John paid tribute to them, saying 'They are beautiful hand-built British cars that you will not see the likes of again.'

It was in the 2001 Christie's catalogue that Sir Elton said that the 1975 Bentley Corniche was amongst a handful of his cars for which he had most affection and had used extensively.

The car was duly sold, and ownership passed to Mr Kevin Farr in Essex. Mr Farr apparently used it sparingly, though he had work performed on the car by the well-known Rolls-Royce and Bentley dealership and service centre, P&A Wood, also in Essex.

Rodd Levy takes up the story.

'The car came up for sale again at »



Rodd Levy and his Bentley Corniche



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1910 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost "Rois-Des-Belges" style tourer by Cadogan  
**£750,000.00**



1933 Rolls-Royce Phantom II Continental Sedan de Ville by Barker  
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1925 Rolls-Royce Phantom 1 Hooper all weather cabriolet  
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## FEATURE CAR BENTLEY CORNICHE



Melbourne skyline and winter  
sunshine set off the Seychelles Blue paint

Bonhams' auction in Oxford on 12 June 2012, and I saw it in a pre-auction publication sent to me by Bonhams. It was love at first sight! I immediately dreamt of owning the car as it was so beautiful. A few weeks later Bonhams were advertising the auction on their website. There was quite a bit of publicity and the fact that an ex-Elton John owned Bentley was up for sale was featured in various UK publications.

'The website said that the car was in generally good condition and that the current owner had spent over £10,000 with P&A Wood restoring the interior four years earlier; that also increased my interest. The car had been owned by Sir Elton for 25 years and I felt that, if anything had ever needed attention, he would have had it done and done to a high standard. On this reasoning, I considered it would be a very good car to own and enjoy.

'So, I had a good look at the photographs of the car, received some more information from Bonhams and

spoke to Robert McDermott, a well-known Melbourne-based Rolls-Royce and Bentley expert. I had known Robert for some time as he looked after some other cars for me; an S3 Flying Spur, a Camargue and a T2. My experience dealing with Robert gave me confidence that, even if there was an issue with the Corniche, I would be able to have it fixed quite easily.

'However, despite all of this enthusiasm, as time went on, I grew nervous that the car would sell for a very high price. I guess that is pretty normal for anyone who wants to buy a special car, but I would need to also pay shipping and other costs to get the car to Australia and I calculated that, at the top of the estimated price range, I would also need to pay a substantial amount in Australia's punitive luxury car tax (which is roughly 33% of the value over A\$66,000). Based on these considerations, I felt that I was not really in a position to compete with a local UK buyer. Coupled

with the fact that I had not seen the car in person and could not inspect it, I reluctantly decided that I was probably wasting my time thinking about buying the car and so I gave up on the idea of bidding at the auction.'

### AUSTRALIA IN THE PICTURE

Our story may therefore never have reached Australia – but Rodd wasn't ready to let things rest there.

'I was naturally curious to see how the auction went, so the morning after the auction I looked it up on the internet and found, to my amazement, that it had been passed in. I thought that here was my chance to put in an offer. I spoke again to Robert McDermott and he then called Paul Wood at P&A Wood in England. After that provided a positive response, I called Bonhams in London and made an offer, which was accepted within the hour. I purchased it for £43,000





Bentley Corniche frontal treatment still has great grace and beauty

## **‘The Bentley Corniche convertible is a high-performance car, making around 10% more power than the four-door Silver Shadow or T-series Bentley.’**

which I considered very reasonable at the time – and I am pleased to say that prices for this model Bentley have increased substantially since then!’

When Rodd bought the car, it came with a letter from Sir Elton confirming that he had owned the car from new. There was also a copy of the 2001 Christie’s catalogue along with the usual owner’s handbook and other original papers.

‘Bonhams helped with the shipping, which was through CARS (Classic Automobile Relocation Services) in the UK and Austorient Freight Services in Melbourne. I needed Australian Government approval to import the car, which is rather protracted and it

took a few months. The car was put in storage while that was sorted out and it eventually left the UK in August 2012, arriving in Melbourne in early October 2012 in a container on the Thai registered container ship, the Wana Bhum. The total cost (including taxes) was approximately A\$13,500.

‘The car went straight to Robert McDermott in his Melbourne garage, where it was inspected and the amount of work assessed. I talked it over with Robert and we decided that we had to bring the car up to the highest possible standard given the provenance and unique status of the car. It was clear that it had received some small knocks to the bodywork during its life and

Robert also found a little rust beneath the car and a small amount on the coachwork – nothing to raise concern. The paintwork was in fair condition, but we decided to repaint the car entirely to bring it back to a pristine finish.

‘The wheels on the car were not the original type and had evidently been fitted in 1998 when it was briefly owned by Sir Elton’s assistant Robert Halley; it seems it was an attempt to freshen up the looks. They matched the style of wheels that would be fitted to a 1980s Bentley Continental. The same was true of the steering wheel which was not correct for a 1975 car but also from a 1980s model. We soon decided to restore those features to »



## FEATURE CAR BENTLEY CORNICHE

original specifications. Fortunately, Robert found the correct Corniche spun stainless steel wheel discs from another car in Melbourne and, with an incredible amount of luck, he also dug up a correct 1970s Bentley-badged 15-inch Nardi wooden steering wheel. This steering wheel was available as an option on Corniches in the early 1970s, though rarely fitted. Robert's research found

it at a spare parts dealer in England, so we also purchased that item. I have to say it was at considerable cost but when you have a car such as this in your keeping, it behoves you to do it justice and that includes ensuring the car has a correct and authentic sporty look.'

I agree with Rodd. In today's parlance the decision was a 'no-brainer'!

'The chassis sub-frames, front and

rear suspension, brakes and pipework were all dismantled, sand blasted and re-enamelled. All under bonnet items were re-plated or re-enamelled to restore them to original appearance. Robert reported little wear and it was appropriate to the mileage, which stood at 48,700 miles at the time.

'The car had been repainted by Robert Halley in 1998. The original



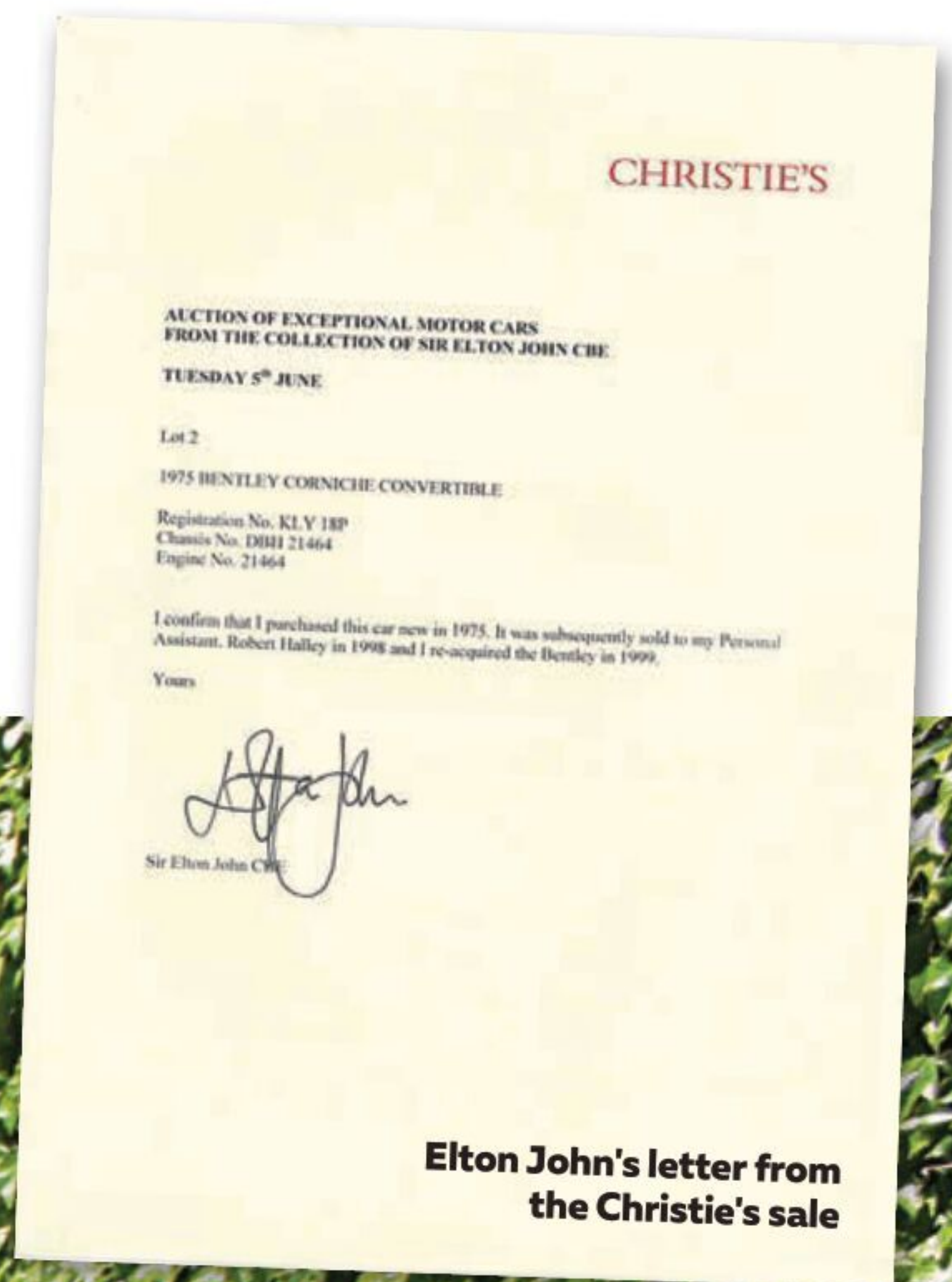


colour was Silver Mink – the colour when the car appeared in the film clip for the Elton John song, I'm Still Standing. In the short period that Robert Halley owned the Bentley, he had it painted Seychelles Blue. I decided to keep that colour.'

I cannot help but agree when Rodd tells me he feels the colour is appropriate and adds to the car's

presence. The Bentley Corniche looks superb as we gaze at it in Melbourne's winter sun. But what about the interior? It looks absolutely as new. Was much work required there?

'There was very little wear, so the walnut woodwork and leather upholstery only needed minor attention. I was told »



Elton John's letter from the Christie's sale



It just begs you to go for a drive, doesn't it?



## FEATURE CAR BENTLEY CORNICHE



Though the Corniche was immensely expensive when new, it's quite an understated car – especially in darker colours

that P&A Wood had done the work in 2002 after the car was sold at the Christie's auction. And it has remained in excellent condition since.'

As befitting a man in the music industry, Sir Elton John had fitted the latest technology of that period and it featured a late 1990s Motorola International 2700 car phone and an Alpine radio-cassette car stereo from the same era.

'I thought about replacing these features to bring the car back to original 1975 specifications,' says Rodd, 'but decided to keep them as an interesting part of the car's history. The telephone no longer works (as it requires an analogue telephone network), but I get a lot of questions and comments about it, given how prominently it sits on the car's dashboard. The stereo works perfectly and is incredibly powerful and loud. It has a remote control and extra amplifiers in the boot, which require their own cooling fans to avoid overheating, such is the power they produce. People love it when I play Goodbye Yellow Brick Road at high volume!

It can be heard for miles around.'

As your Australian correspondent can confirm!

### THE VERDICT

Any casual observer would be fearful of buying a car that has not been inspected personally, that the prospective buyer has not been able to drive nor have his or her own trusted mechanic inspect. But by taking counsel with people from both sides of the world and who make these cars their profession, the risk is minimised – and as they say, fortune favours the brave! Whatever, Rodd Levy is now the owner of a magnificent Bentley and all the better for it. I'll let Rodd spell out his thoughts for anyone who feels trepidation at stepping into this relative unknown.

'I would always recommend people go ahead if a car of the type they are seeking comes up at an auction. You can usually do a little homework and speak to whoever was looking after the car mechanically. You may be able to buy the car on favourable terms, as

other potential buyers may be scared away, and you may never get another chance. If there are issues with the car, they can always be corrected, and all special cars deserve to be given that chance and maintained to the highest possible standard. I have no regrets whatsoever about purchasing the Bentley Corniche, despite the rigmarole of having to import it to Australia and undertake some remedial work. I didn't mind having this work done and I now I enjoy the car immensely.

'While Elton John's music is not at the top of my playlist, I do appreciate his choice of car! And as a member of both the Bentley and Rolls-Royce owners' clubs in Victoria, it is pleasure to present the car at the many social functions organised by the two excellent clubs.'

Celebrity ownership is a nice addition to any car's history, but we suspect that for Rodd, it's the rarity, the beauty and the sheer quality of this Series I Bentley Corniche convertible that makes it so satisfying to own. Just the same features, in fact, that attracted its famous first owner back in 1975. ■



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# • YOUR SHOUT •

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## THE KING'S CHOICE

At this sad time of reflection it is good to see that the new King has chosen to use the Phantom IV, chassis 4AF2, as his official transport for the time being at least. This car, as most of you know, was built to the special order for the Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip and is said to have been a gift from the King. It was based on the Silver Wraith with a chassis extended by a foot to accommodate the 5,675 cc 'B80', 8 cylinder in-line version of the celebrated 'B' series engines, since the Prince was reputedly anxious for the new car to be less sluggish than the Royal

Daimlers of the time. The Phantom was mechanically completed in July 1949 and the coachwork completed by H J Mulliner for delivery in 1950.

The Phantom IV design shared many mechanical aspects of the Silver Wraith and Bentley MkVI cars. 4AF2 was originally supplied with a manual transmission but was later updated with a Crewe built Hydramatic automatic transmission to provide smoother progress at low processional speeds.

A second Phantom IV, a landaulette by Hooper, joined the fleet in 1959 and after over 40 years' service was

sold in 2002. A total of 18 Phantom IV cars were built until 1956 when production ceased, since sales were restricted to royalty and heads of state. The 6-cylinder 'B60' series engines were used for the MkVI, 'R' and 'S' type Bentleys and the Silver Wraith, Silver Dawn and Silver Cloud 1 Rolls-Royces. Military versions were highly successful with the B40 in the Austin Champ, the B60 in the Daimler Ferret and the B80 in the Saracen armoured personnel carrier.

God Save the King.

**Bryan McGee**  
**Derbyshire**





## AN AMERICAN TRIBUTE

Once again I want to thank you for your talented efforts with my favourite publication! After a recent car show following the loss of Queen Elizabeth II, I thought I would share these pictures and the story behind them. Though an American across the pond with Irish and British heritage, I often feel more British than American. My 1973 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow is the pride of my collection and was appropriately named Queen Elizabeth II as seen on her rear tag registration. Everyone at car shows knows her as Queen Liz II and

she attracts a great deal of attention with many people wanting selfies with her. At a recent show I paid homage to the late Queen for whom I had the greatest admiration and affection. I placed a framed photographic flag from her Diamond Jubilee, which I attended, at the front of the Rolls-Royce grill with black ribbon streaming down from around the flying lady as well as black ribbon around the rear tag registration denoting her name of QN LIZ II. Needless to say, the crowd in attendance were quite

impressed and numerous photos were secured as people expressed their love and appreciation for everything Queen Elizabeth II represented and accomplished during her amazing reign. I am proud to inform you that Queen Liz II took home 1st Place at the show! Upon receiving the award I made it clear that this win was for the Queen! I thought you might be interested in this event and thanks again for your great publication.

**Jeff Kelley**

**Mustang, Oklahoma, USA**



## IN PRAISE OF THE PHANTOMS

In his book 'Rolls-Royce State Motor Cars' (1991), Andrew Pastouna wrote [The State Phantom IV] "is said to be the favourite of Prince Charles and if that is the case it is assured a future". When the new King drove from London after his Accession Council it was this vehicle which took him to Northolt for his flight to Edinburgh and in his hectic first week

as King he has only ever been seen in State Rolls-Royce cars on formal occasions. It was noticeable that on his drive back from Westminster to Buckingham Palace after the late Queen's Lying in State ceremony His Majesty and the Queen Consort were in the State Phantom VI and a State Bentley followed on.

Whilst the two State Bentleys are

undoubtedly beautifully crafted, their appearance does not match the dignity of a Rolls-Royce - well certainly that of the present State Phantoms! It seems likely that the new reign may see a return to Rolls-Royce becoming the principal State car of the new King.

**Rob Foster**

**Stratford upon Avon**



## A GLORIOUS PAST?

Around the late 1940s when I was living in the UK, we acquired a 1929 two-door 40-50hp Rolls-Royce, an experience I've thought about a lot since then. She was a victim of the war and had been converted to a Perkins diesel engine because of the shortage of petrol, and was abandoned when peace came. It wasn't everyone's cup of tea, so it suited us! It was with us well into the 1950s and was a beautiful car to drive; very economical, quite quick and created a lot of interest at our local Young Farmers' Club. My wife learned to drive in it in the mid-Fifties.

Being a pre-war diesel, starting in very cold weather was a complicated affair and a two-person job: a tin of diesel was fixed to the bulkhead with an oily rag in it; one sat behind the wheel and the other lifted the bonnet, set light to the oily rag and held it under the intake, and when the signal was given the starter was pressed and it roared into life, surrounded in smoke until it warmed. You could imagine what it was like coming out of a dance on a cold, frosty night. People came from everywhere – they may have thought we were trying to burn it! All the Rolls-Royce bits performed perfectly but the bodywork was a wooden frame with an aluminium skin and alas the vibration of the diesel engine was too much for wood screws. Some ten years later we moved to West Australia to grow wheat, a move we never regretted, but we wish we still had the old Rolls-Royce.

**John Smith**

**Mukinbudin, West Australia**

**John later added more detail, explaining that vibrations ruined the coupé body so the Phantom's chassis was used to rebuild a hay trailer! Are there any farmers in the Bicester area with an unusually sturdy old trailer in the yard?**

## DECOROUS LANGUAGE

I always read your magazine with great interest, but would like to highlight a very common mistake that should not happen in a specialised publication like yours. The Bentley S1 never existed, nor the Silver Cloud I. The 1 and the I were added later to distinguish these models from the later S2 and S3, Silver Cloud II and Silver Cloud III respectively. But on page 68 of the last issue, one should not talk about 1955 being the year 'the Bentley S1 and Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud' were first introduced. At least the mistake is made only with Bentley, but it somehow makes it worse!

Keep up the good work.

**Georges Kiener**

**Geneva, Switzerland**

PS: I also think that to start the article on page 80 by using the word 'Aussie' for 'Aussie reader' is not appropriate. A certain decorum and proper language (and behaviour) should always be associated with our beloved marques. This is not a magazine about barbecue equipment!

**You are right, of course, about the S1 and Silver Cloud I, and the inconsistency on page 68 is annoying. But we can all think of many cars for which the first example is now universally known as the Mk 1 or Series I purely for clarity, though never named as such when new. When names and letters are re-used many times over different generations – S, R, Continental and so on – clarity wins, for me. I will leave our many Australian readers to respond to your dislike for the term 'Aussie'!**



## NO CHOICE FOR KEEN KIWI

I'm a new reader to RR&BD – it's quite hard to find down here in the South Island of New Zealand but I've really enjoyed the last two issues. I'm writing to you because the piece on the Rolls-Royce and Bentley scene in the USA was interesting to me as it has a few similarities with New Zealand: not that much specialist support, quite a good club scene from what I can tell (I'm not a member yet) and prices higher than in the UK. But one huge difference: we have hardly any cars to choose from, which I guess keeps prices up!

I get very jealous looking at UK sales sites and auction results and seeing useable Turbo Rs and Silver Spirits, which are the generation I would choose, selling for between £5000 and £10,000. Sure, nice ones cost more, but for comparison I was just looking at a 1989 Silver Spur advertised here for more than £31,000. Yes, a clean LWB



example with low kms on the clock, but painted 'wedding white'. Apart from this, there are a couple of decent-looking Turbo Rs around the £20,000 mark. So it could be a while before

I become a Rolls-Royce or Bentley owner as well as just a reader! I hope all you Brits know how lucky you are...  
**Leroy Grimwood**  
**Wellington, NZ**



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**2005/55 2006 Model Bentley Arnage R** in Silver Tempest with electric sunroof and Flying B mascot. Cotswold interior with French Navy piping and Walnut veneers, with door inlays, picnic tables, heated rear seats, upgraded audio system and rear park camera. Only 2 owners with just 19,700 miles and FSH..... **£39,999**



**2002/52 2003 Model Bentley Arnage T.** Finished in Silver Storm with electric sunroof and 19 inch split rim alloys, with Oatmeal interior and Nautic Blue secondary hide. 2 owners and just 29,000 miles with full history, this car is truly outstanding throughout and is unmarked. Unbelievable value at only ..... **£31,950**



**2000 X Bentley Arnage Red Label.** One of my favourite colours, Verdant Green, with 18 inch alloys and Magnolia interior piped in Spruce Green, with Spruce Green carpets and Walnut veneers. Known to us and maintained regardless of cost for last 11 years. Immaculate condition throughout..... **£21,250**



**1998 S Rolls Royce Silver Seraph.** Finished in Silver Tempest with Cotswold interior piped in French Navy and French Navy carpets with Cotswold piping. Supplied by us 5 years ago, this car has only covered 24,600 miles and can only be described as like new ..... **£45,250**



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**1970 Rolls Royce Silver Shadow Series I.** Finished in completely unmarked Seychelles Blue with a single Shell Grey coachline. The Shell Grey interior is in almost new condition. The French Navy carpets with Shell Grey piping are as new. Very comprehensive history. Immaculate throughout, an investment at only ..... **£25,950**

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**FEATURE CAR**  
ROLLS-ROYCE 20-25 'RIVIERA TRIALS CAR'





# TO SIR HENRY'S SPECIFICATION

This pretty, lightweight, open tourer was sent to the south of France for the personal appraisal of Sir Henry Royce. How does it drive now, some 93 years later?

WORDS: DAVID WATT PHOTOGRAPHY: NIGEL BOOTHMAN, DAVID WATT

Any enthusiast (and, if you're reading this, that probably includes you) approaches a drive behind the wheel of a vintage Rolls-Royce with an equal degree of excitement and trepidation. When the car in question is unique and closely connected with Sir Henry Royce himself, those sentiments are doubly heightened.

GGP8 was designated by the factory as the 'Riviera' trials car. Trials cars were either what would today be described as press demonstrators or were used by staff for evaluation and development purposes. This car was sent to the south of France for the personal appraisal of Sir Henry who, exhausted through years of over-work by the late '20s, was living there for the sake of his health. A small staff of trusted engineers and draftsmen worked with him. Back in Derby, the directors and engineers no doubt anxiously awaited the verdict of the great man.

In the case of GGP8, the key criterion was weight reduction. Royce was obsessed with reducing the weight of his cars wherever possible, realising the benefits this would bring to performance and economy. The company's 20hp engine was not renowned for its power output, which was never publicly quoted, of course. The later 20/25hp engine found in this car had a usefully greater power output but, for all its undisputed engineering quality and reliability, was still open to the accusation of lacking the 'oomph' of some key rivals. According to GGP8's owner, Christopher Broom-Smith, Royce "simply loathed" the thought of overweight bodies



on his lower horsepower cars. Hence the focus on reducing weight.

Out on the open road, GGP8's (relative) light weight becomes obvious straight away. It can best be summed up by the word 'flexibility' which in this machine is remarkable. Always starting off in second gear (except on steep hills), you can move up confidently into 3rd and top at far lower speeds than you might expect – and then stay there. I found plenty of pulling power in top from as low as 15mph. In fact, so much torque is there that for long stretches along hilly, twisty country roads there is no need to change down at all and it feels rather like driving one of the company's later automatic models. Approaching a sharp right-angle bend, Christopher insisted I did not change down from top, even to 3rd. Fearing an embarrassing stall, I did as I was instructed and was amazed how smoothly and strongly the car pulled away and unhesitatingly began to gather speed again.

Royce's obsession with saving weight was shared by Ivan Evernden who,

at the time, was working as a senior designer directly for Royce and was one of Royce's closest colleagues. Evernden designed the body of this 'Trials' car before commissioning the famous coachbuilders Windovers to construct it (at a cost of £475). Upon completion and delivery back to Rolls-Royce, the car was despatched to France for the boss's evaluation. The main weight-saving features employed on GGP8 include:

- No bumpers (Henry Royce hated bumpers)
- No internal veneered woodwork
- No lining on the inside of the folding roof
- Only one spare wheel (though a second, wing-mounted spare was added later)
- No glass side windows and, therefore, no heavy winding mechanisms

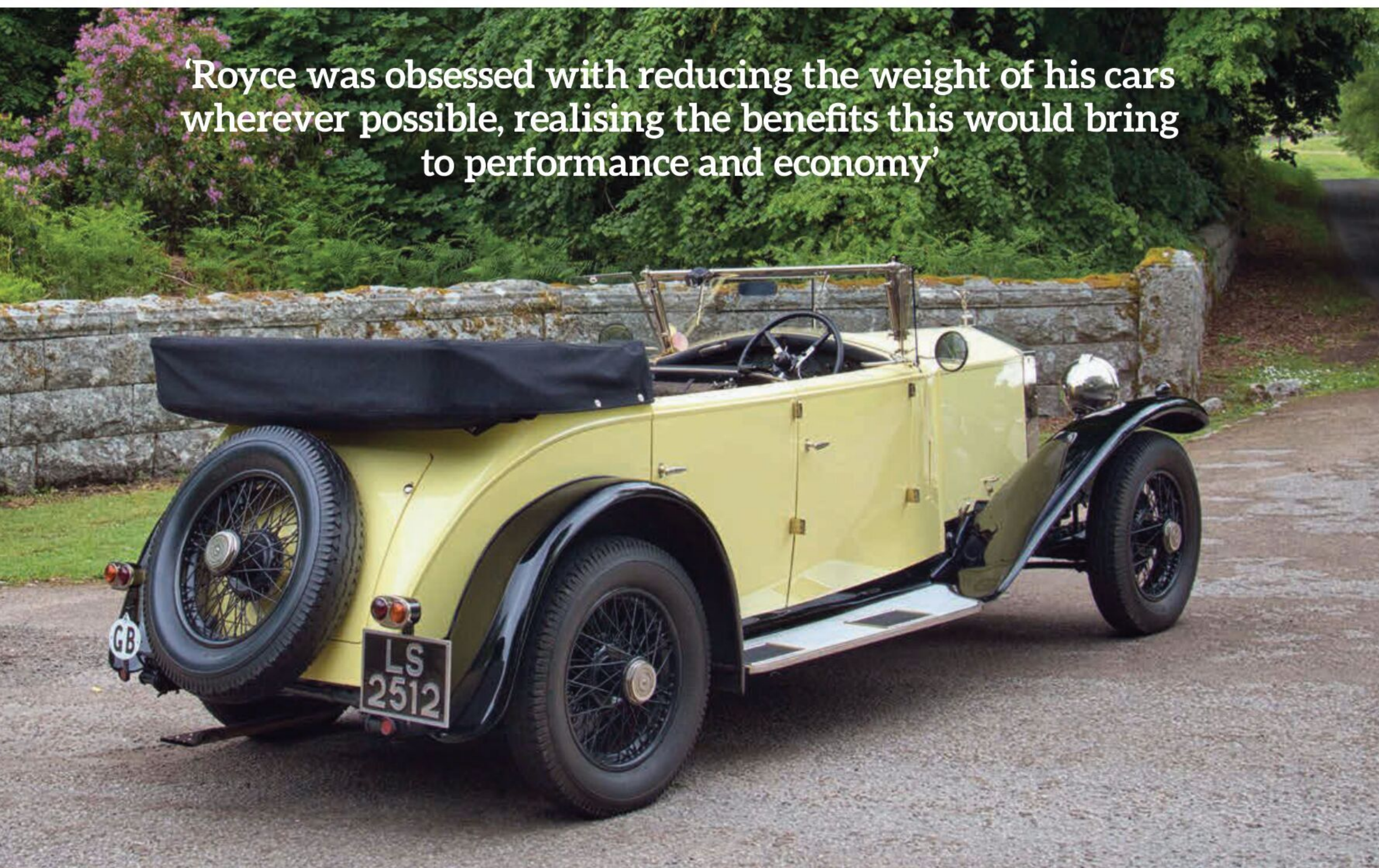
The combined weight saving is significant. Instead of the usual glazed side windows, this car has see-through celluloid panels which, when needed, slot securely into holes along the door »



## FEATURE CAR

### ROLLS-ROYCE 20-25 'RIVIERA TRIALS CAR'

'Royce was obsessed with reducing the weight of his cars wherever possible, realising the benefits this would bring to performance and economy'



tops. With the folding roof closed, Christopher claims these lightweight 'windows' offer exceptional wind and rain protection. In fair weather, the window panels are neatly stowed out of sight behind the easily detachable door cards. It is a little surprising that the car was also specified with a heavy, full-width glass 'Auster' screen for the comfort of rear passengers. This is stored behind the front seats and incorporates a canvas apron which covers the legs of those in the rear, further protecting them from the elements. In the interests of weight-saving, I suppose this substantial item could be left behind in the garage when travelling only two up. As for the second spare wheel, it was added in the 1930s when the car was sold to Scotland. 'In some ways,' says Christopher, 'this spoils the wing line but, as I have found out, when you have a puncture 1,000 miles from home, having a second spare is a comfort!'

Four-door, open tourers were not a common body style in the late 1920s. GGP8 is one of only two such bodies

mounted by Windovers on a 20/25 chassis. Driving the car demands total concentration. It is best to climb in via the passenger door, thus avoiding having to negotiate the in-board gear lever and handbrake protruding from the floor to the right of the driver's seat. It's at this point you realise that cars of this vintage were not designed for the taller driver. The broad, non-adjustable, black leather seat would be fine for anybody up to about 5' 8". My 6' 3" frame struggled!

Once installed, the starting procedure is a piece of theatre for anybody not used to cars of this age and complexity. First, turn on the fuel tap located on the bulkhead beneath the dashboard. Next, activate the starting carburettor via the dashboard-mounted switch. Then retard the ignition, close the throttle and fully enrich the fuel mixture using knobs on the steering wheel boss before turning on the ignition. Finally, press the floor-mounted starter motor pedal and, after a second or two, the silky-smooth engine comes to life. Even inside the garage it was whisper quiet. Outside, it



## WINDOVER – EVERNDEN'S CHOICE?

The firm of Windover (now often called Windovers, with or without an apostrophe) dated back to 1856. They established an upper-crust reputation despite being based in Huntingdon rather than London, becoming associated with the best names in motoring early on, particularly Daimler and Rolls-Royce. They took the step of moving to Colindale, north-west London, in 1924, which brought both advantages and disadvantages, especially once economic conditions took a drastic down-turn in 1930. But

through the 1920s the relationship with Rolls-Royce appears to have been strong – though we can't know if it was a personal preference of Ivan Evernden's to choose Windover for the construction of this Trials car body. It seems likely to be a combination of factors – from the small pool of coachbuilders Rolls-Royce trusted to complete top-quality work on schedule, who had the capacity to do the job when required? Maybe Windover's own taste for neat, clean design like the Phantom II coupé



above merely mirrored Evernden's own. The firm survived the war but made mostly bus and coach bodies afterwards, eventually being bought up by Henlys, the car dealer, in 1956.



Dials gathered in centre of the dash set off understated cabin

was inaudible! I accused Christopher of having sneakily warmed her up before I arrived. But no, he assured me she hadn't been started up for at least ten days. Mightily impressed, I could only smile in respectful admiration.

### ON THE ROAD

With the starting procedure so unfamiliar to me, I was relieved to find that the gearshift was the traditional 'H' pattern and, looking down at my

feet and taking nothing for granted, that the clutch, brake and accelerator pedals were also in their normal positions. In the centre of the plain, black painted wooden dashboard sit a large speedometer, clock and an ammeter. Above them are gauges for fuel level, water temperature and oil pressure. You move off in 2nd gear, the clutch being heavy but forgiving in its progress towards the biting point. I was thrilled I didn't stall once which says it all! The gearshift has a high quality,

mechanical feel to it and is surprisingly light. It is easy to slot the lever into each gear aperture though best to do so slowly as there is no synchromesh on any of the four gears. Changing up, a brief pause in neutral ensures smooth changes. Coming down, double declutching is a must. Of course, all that torque minimises the number of gear changes needed in the first place.

On the move, the steering is lighter than I had imagined it would be and extremely direct and accurate, though »



## FEATURE CAR

### ROLLS-ROYCE 20-25 'RIVIERA TRIALS CAR'

Chris Broom-Smith has covered over 16,000 miles in the car



'feel' is obviously lacking compared to modern cars. As was usual in those days, the enormous wheel is positioned very close to one's chest, calling for a splayed arms posture which takes a little getting used to. Constant small corrections are necessary especially on the rough country roads we were on, but you very soon get used to that, too. Besides, I was fully occupied by two other first impressions... Firstly, how incredibly smooth the ride is, surface bumps and ridges on the road being soaked up with amazing aplomb with no rattles anywhere. It feels amazingly solid and well screwed together. Secondly, how effectively the windscreen and its two glass side wings protect occupants from any wind buffeting. Even at speed, the sheltering effect is remarkable. So, with no wind rush, no rattles and perched on wide, softly sprung chairs, you bowl along in the sort of silence and comfort which would put most modern convertibles to shame. On the move, it really does feel a surprisingly modern and spritely car.

But it is still a heavy machine, of course, and while the four drum brakes worked faultlessly and entirely noiselessly, the brake pedal did require a hefty push and I feel sure a longer drive would have inspired more confidence. This is not a criticism – Rolls-Royce brakes were as good as any in period – merely an observation from this inexperienced vintage Rolls-Royce driver! »



Note the folding Auster screens for the rear-seat passengers



When erected, the Auster screens over plenty of shelter





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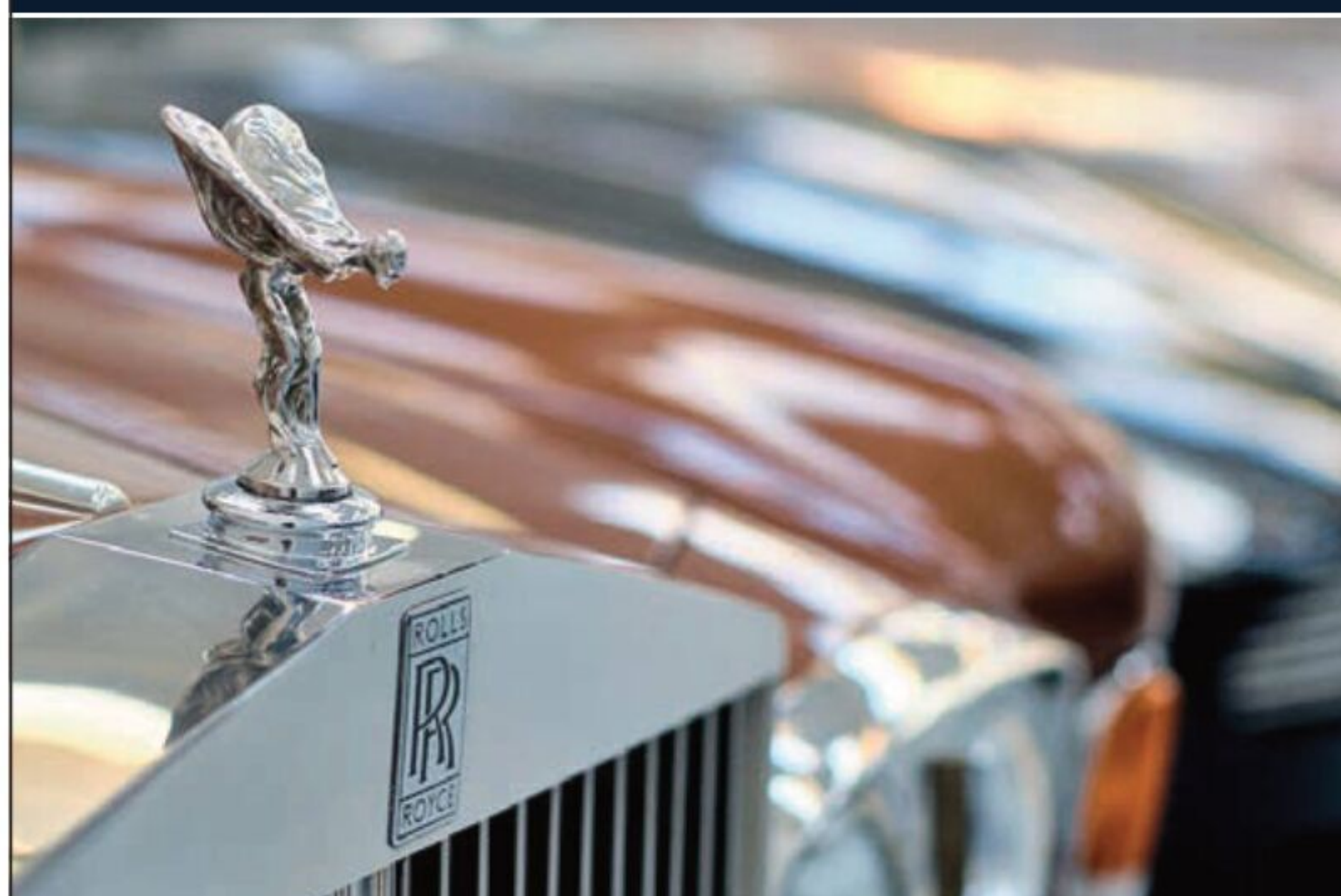
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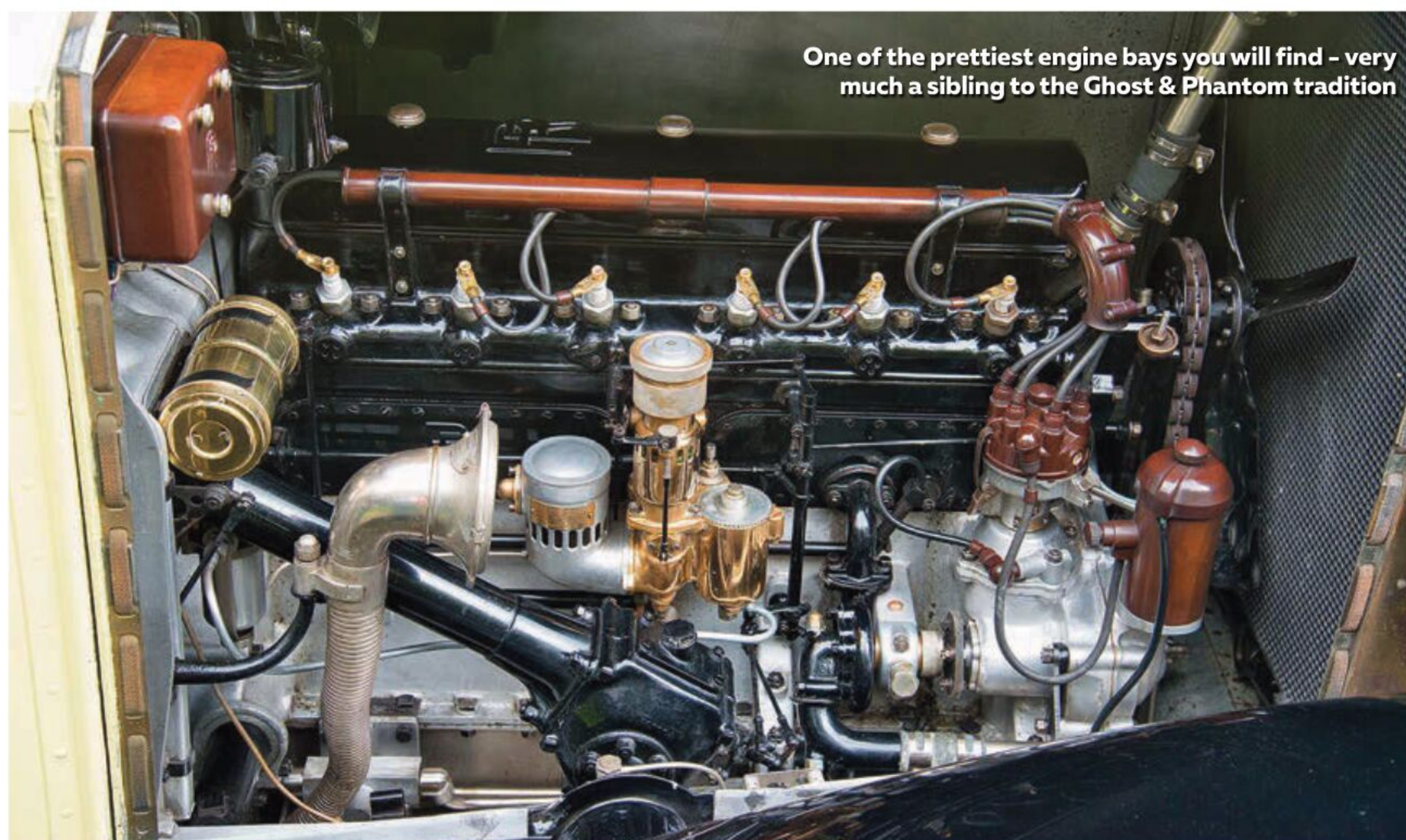
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## FEATURE CAR

### ROLLS-ROYCE 20-25 'RIVIERA TRIALS CAR'



## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Having owned the car since 2007, Christopher has carried out a great deal of meticulous research into its history. His bookshelves positively bulge with files full of paperwork and documentation from Rolls-Royce and the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club archives. These include the original logbook as well as copies of the build sheet and a November 1929 internal memo from Evernden to Harvey Bailey in the Rolls-Royce drawing office instructing him to supply drawings of the car 'in the usual way'. A full service record (with invoices for all work carried out) stretches back to 1950 while every tax disc dating back to 1948 is carefully filed away. Christopher is convinced there is more to discover about the car and his research continues. While its Riviera Trials status is beyond doubt,

as yet no photographic record has emerged of Sir Henry with the car. However, it is surely inconceivable that, inquisitive and perfectionist as he was by nature, he did not take it out on the beautiful sun-baked roads of the Riviera in order to evaluate the various innovations it embodied, mainly to the coachwork and trim specification.

Adaptations Christopher has made to the car are minimal and include the fitting of an overdrive unit and a modern spin-on oil filter. Sympathetically installed seat belts provide more modern levels of protection in the event of an accident. Since 2007, Christopher and his wife have covered some 16,000 miles in the car, including taking it to St Moritz for the British Classic Car Week, a visit to the Shetland Classic Car Show and a tour of Scandinavia and Holland. It goes without saying that it has been meticulously maintained down the

years and is in concours condition.

However, disaster struck on New Year's Eve 2015 when torrential rain fell in the hills around their home in Galloway. The nearby River Ken rose an unbelievable 25 feet, burst its banks and caused extensive flooding in the area, making headlines on the national TV news. The garage was soon under four feet of water - only for half an hour but that was enough. The car was transported to Ristes Motors in Nottingham for the damage to be repaired with instructions to retain as much originality as possible. Mechanical damage was severe. Engine, gearbox, back axle and overdrive were all full of water and had to be drained and re-built. All electrics - dynamo, magneto, distributor, starter motor - needed re-building. Every bearing in the chassis had to be replaced. All the brakes were seized. Internally, everything had to



**‘Surface bumps and ridges on the road are soaked up with amazing aplomb with no rattles anywhere. It feels amazingly solid and well screwed together.’**



be stripped. Happily, all the original leather and other fittings were saved, only the webbing and horsehair from the seats having to be replaced.

Restoration took 15 months, the full story being worthy of a separate article. Work was carried out against a tight deadline as Christopher had entered the car in the 2017 RREC annual concours at the Club's National Rally. The upshot was that the car won First in Class.

That this unique and original car exists today is testament not only to the skills of Rolls-Royce engineers and the craftspeople at Windovers, but also to the current owner and his four predecessors. Often, revealing insights into company thinking and experimentation exist only in the pages of books. Not with GGP8, however, a car which is still going strong and occupies an important place in Rolls-Royce history. ■





MEET THE EXPERTS

# CLASSIC CAR LEDS

Ever wanted to upgrade the lighting in your classic Rolls-Royce or Bentley, or simply wished to reduce the current draw on a marginal system? The choice of LED products is confusing – best talk to the expert, then

PHOTOGRAPHY: CLASSIC CAR LEDS

**How did you get started in this very specific niche, Duncan?**

'I'd always loved classic cars, and I started off as a teenager with an 1969 MG Midget. I bought it for £500 and spent £800 fixing it up, and then one day I was followed home by a couple in an E-type. The chap pulled onto my drive and got out, saying "My girlfriend wants your car". I told him it wasn't for sale, so he said "I'll give you £4000", and I said "Here are the keys!" That was the first of many restorations, but I happened to be doing an MGB when

I looked at upgrading all the lighting to LEDs. I was shocked at the price and the variable quality, so I thought I would offer something better.'

**What did you have to learn? Did you have a background as an electrical engineer?**

'No, I'm self-taught, but I like to think I have an analytical mind and I certainly have a retentive memory for obscure facts. I learned that there is a huge variation in quality in the components that make up the products, especially

the Surface Mounted Diode or SMD, the actual light-emitting part, and the driver behind it. There are H4 LED bulbs out there for £6 each – by the time you remove shipping from China, tax, duty, packaging, marketing, profit margin and everything else, how much do you think they cost to make? We sell H4 LEDs at around £70 a pair and make very little on them, but that's because they're a far, far better product and cost much more to construct. As one example, the 5050 SMDs we use for dash lighting produce 20 lumens and the cheap ones might make 8 lumens...for the short time they last.'

**So do you identify a need and create the products you sell, or hunt around for ready-made products you think are worth selling?**

'A bit of both, but mostly the former. What I really like is a problem one of my customers brings me that I can sink my teeth into, and lots of products have come about in that way. I've spent nearly ten years speaking to LED manufacturers and I've designed many of our products, almost always as "plug and play" solutions; many people don't like re-wiring something and are happiest if what they can use is a direct replacement for the old bulb. We now have around 600 products available and resellers and regular trade customers along with a great many personal customers in the UK and across Europe, North America and Oceania.'

**Have you seen a benefit for Rolls-Royce or Bentley models, in particular?**

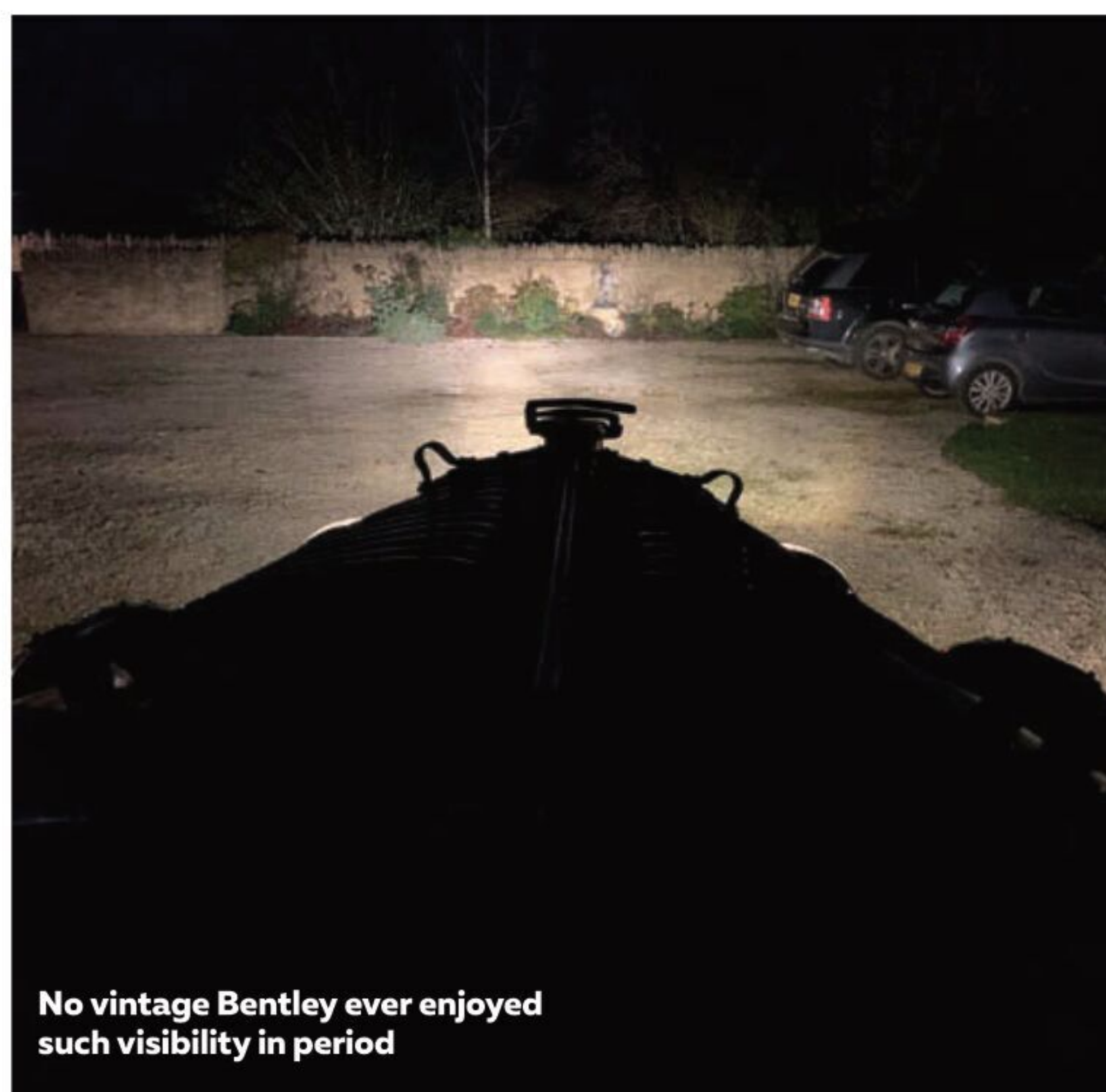
'Yes, a couple of examples come to mind. Pre-war cars have pretty hopeless headlamps and tail lamps, and even those with huge, silvered reflectors in the lamps rely on bulbs







Many prefer 'warm white' LEDs with their less modern-looking colour temperature



No vintage Bentley ever enjoyed such visibility in period



Even the Silver Spirit's dash lighting can be much improved

The BA20D is a typical 'plug and play' headlight upgrade



Below: Dual Colour LEDs allow sidelight and amber flashing functions



like glow-worms. If the silvering is intact, an LED bulb makes an instant difference, but if it's corroded or dull, there's still a fix that works. I have a customer with a 1929 Blower Bentley with Zeiss headlights who fitted the projector LED bulbs we offer that simply replace the existing bulb – they have a main and dip beam and need no reflector, they project forward with the right beam pattern regardless of the condition of the bowl. The gentleman says that these, together with LEDs in the tail lamps, stop lamps and driving light have given him the

confidence to use the car anywhere, knowing he won't defeat the battery or become the cause of an accident!

#### What about younger models?

'Current draw is a concern for lots of cars, especially if the wiring and charging system isn't as healthy as it should be. I examined a customer's Silver Spirit and I think we counted 47 bulbs in the interior, by the time you've covered the dashboard and all the festoon bulbs in the rear quarters, door apertures, roof and so on. Converting that lot to LED would

knock down the current draw by 70 or 75%. LED indicator units are another huge improvement for older cars, especially if you only had sidelights as standard – We have a unit that shines white for side lighting but flashes amber when required as an indicator. You'll need an LED-specific flasher unit, but it's easy to wire in and replaces the mechanical flasher. If you want to allow your LED indicators to function as hazard lights, We'll send you the wiring diagram you need free of charge. We can usually sort out a solution to anything you come across.' ■





# FIRST IN ITS FIELD?

The last 20 years have seen no shortage of powerful, glamorous convertibles from prestige marques, but the Bentley GTC could rule them all. We tried a 2014 GTC Speed to find out

WORDS: NIGEL BOOTHMAN PHOTOGRAPHY: GREG EVANS

Insert key, reach down past the hazard lights and seat heaters, and press the Start button. There's the briefest whirr and then a subdued boom as all 12 cylinders catch and send a deep, liquid-sounding idle out of the large exhausts. The engine note on the GTC is well-managed, like everything else on this highly accomplished product, which benefits from the many revisions introduced for the model's second series in 2011.

If the gear lever is left in 'D', the car will drift about in a subdued, civilised mode like any other automatic. Well, any other 600bhp automatic. But knock it over to the left, to the plus and minus positions, and some clever control unit turns up the volume on the exhaust. It's expecting you to make use of the shift paddles on either side of the steering column. These are the

same as those in the GT, of course, and the Continental Flying Spur saloons, and they're a model of their kind: sufficiently far from the stalks below, the right distance back from the wheel, the right size and shape and with a satisfying feel. The only problem is finding somewhere large and empty enough to give them a good workout.

We're in built-up metropolitan streets, having borrowed this car from Stephen Brown of Hanwells of London. In some ways, this is a more testing environment for a large, fast car than a twisting A-road through the country. After all, coping with potholes and speed bumps and stop-start traffic is not at the top of every developer's list when it comes to fine-tuning a 200mph supercar. Bentley, though, knew how important it was for their cars to cope with city life and the ride is amazingly well insulated

from small bumps and ridges, not even crashing down into the deeper bumps that catch out many cars of two tonnes or more. Never mind a convertible that was designed and introduced as a hard-roof coupé; there isn't a suggestion of scuttle shake anywhere. Yet when we can finally speed up a bit and dig into a corner, only the mildest body roll is detectable. 'Compromise' seems a bit of an insult for such an achievement.

You could say the same about the engine. It is utterly docile, thanks largely to a really well-judged throttle pedal with just enough weight and travel to prevent unintentional lunges. Get a bit of open road in front of you, though... The subdued boom becomes a whoosh and then a roar and finally a bellow, and you pull in another gear, and another, at peril of your licence. Regardless of what the limit is, to be





W12 engine bay is a miracle of packaging – but not roomy to work on



Thirsty around town, yes – but a long-range motorway car



honest: when you have a top speed of 202mph, quite a large proportion of the car's ability is beyond what's legal.

So it's that instant thump of acceleration that you start to crave, even if you can only use it for a few seconds. Look at the specification box, and the torque figure: 590lb ft at 1700rpm. More torque than 2022 V8 hybrid Range Rover, but barely off idle...and it remains that high right through the rev range. This means that at whatever speed, and in whatever gear, there's all the throttle response you could ever need.

## TAKING A BREATH

Perhaps it's time to calm down a bit and take a more objective look around this car. The exterior colour is Beluga, near

as makes no odds to glossy black, while inside is Linen hide with Beluga stitching and carpets. You are given notice of this car's status as a notch above the standard GTC by the 'Speed' sill plate in the door aperture and there are winged Bs on the headrests, with diamond stitching on almost everything that can take a stitch. The huge windscreen is on a steep rake so if you're tall, you're conscious of the top of the screen looming closer to your head than in older convertibles. While the relationship between steering wheel and paddles is perfect, the wheel itself is still too far away, even on maximum extension, when the seat is all the way back.

Outside, we have a bright spear across the sill and door bottoms that does a neat job of reducing the apparent depth of the car's flanks. This

feature is echoed in the trim on the door handles and door mirrors and indeed on the piece that runs right around the cabin. The roof can be a bit of a weak point on older GTCs with operating faults and / or torn fabric not unknown, but this one is in fine fettle. The rain comes on with some force near the end of our drive, and we're grateful for the ease with which the roof comes up: one button, and the tonneau panel lifts, the roof extends two third of the way, the tonneau panel drops again, the rear of the roof settles on it while the front moves forward to the cant rail and grabs hold. The side windows curtsey and then rise again of their own accord while all this is going on. Better still, it's genuinely watertight and spookily quiet, almost to the extent of a convertible coupé. Quite the year-round »





“The subdued boom becomes a whoosh and then a roar and finally a bellow, and you pull in another gear, and another, at peril of your licence”



SPECIFICATION

2014 BENTLEY  
GTC SPEED

LENGTH: 4806mm WIDTH: 1947mm

WEIGHT: 2495kg ENGINE: W12 turbo

POWER: 616bhp@6000rpm

TORQUE: 590lb ft @1700rpm

TRANSMISSION: 8-speed automatic

0-60MPH: 4.1s TOP SPEED: 202mph

ECONOMY: 12/19/27mpg,  
urban/combined/m-way

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car. Its one failing, which seems to be designed in, is that opening a window to have a word with someone outside while it's still raining causes water to stream in, and you get a damp arm before you can wind the glass up again.

## THE RIVALS

What was the Bentley GTC up against back in 2014? Aston Martin's pretty DB9 Volante was still current and is the most obvious comparator: V12 engine, paddle-shift automatic and a British badge of great prestige. A nice DB9 Volante from the same year as our GTC would set you back a similar sum. It's a more overtly sporting car being purely a two seater, though while the GTC's rear seats are certainly better than a token 2+2 arrangement they can't claim legroom suitable for four adults...so does it matter? If you occasionally need to carry a child or two, it probably does.

The DB9 has developed a less than perfect reputation for dependability, and while the Continental GT family isn't blemish-free either, the second-generation cars from 2011 onwards are rather better. On the road, the Aston is firmer and sharper in feel with

a less compliant ride, but in terms of press-on driving, the limits of both cars – especially the 4WD Bentley – are so high as to be irrelevant on public roads. As for residuals, the Bentley seems to be holding its value a little better.

Anything else? There's the Mercedes SL of course, in R231 form from 2012. The SL 65 AMG's 6-litre V12 Biturbo engine is extraordinary and the folding hard-top the best of its kind, but the interior is a little too familiar to anyone with a C-class as their daily driver for it ever to feel as exciting as the Bentley. There's the Maserati Gran Cabrio, introduced in 2010, with a wonderful 4.7-litre Ferrari V8 and four seats – sort of. Many of the old Italian car clichés seem alive and well – great looks, attractive but ergonomically awkward interior, charismatic engine and patchy build quality. Porsche 911? You'd find a 997 Turbo Cabriolet for 2014 GTC money. While it's a superb car and a very capable GT, there are still many more Porsches on the road than Bentleys.

What about the rival within the same range – Bentley's own GT and GTC but in V8 form? We asked Stephen Brown when we reluctantly returned the car.

'I actually have a W12 GT myself,' he





Vents and vent-pulls carry over the look and feel from 20th-century Bentleys



Discreet W12 badges let you know what's in store



The roof erects in about 25 seconds and is as snug as a hard-top



The Linen hide is a masterclass in high-quality trimming



says. 'I get 27mpg from it on a run – it's a 2013 model. I think that's incredibly good for a 6-litre, 200 mile-an-hour car, and it's a lot more exciting than the V8. It's smoother, which is part of the character, and of course it's faster – especially from a standstill. I love it.'

Would he consider an older model from the first series of GT and GTC production?

'Yes, if the weak spots are sorted,

they can be just as good. They're not that different and still a very fine car, you just have to spend a bit more than the average for whatever year and model you're looking at, and try to buy a properly looked-after car from a specialist.'

It's been an intoxicating couple of hours. The reaction the car would provoke was a minor worry, but this is no scarlet Ferrari and most

responses seemed like polite curiosity or respect, or in the case of every teenage boy we passed, wistful envy. Well lads, I hope you can still enjoy one of these things when you're old enough to try it – the Bentley GTC Speed is a thrilling experience. ■

**Thanks to:** Hanwells of London, where the car (and others like it) is for sale. See [hanwells.net](http://hanwells.net) or call 0208 567 9729



# AN ANATOMY OF... **THE ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER SPIRIT AND BENTLEY MULSANNE VARIANTS**

The straight-edged form looked right for the 1980s, but the Rolls-Royce Silver Spirit and its Bentley offshoots were the final hurrah for engineering that harked back to the Silver Shadow in 1965.

WORDS: RICHARD GUNN PHOTOGRAPHY: KELSEY ARCHIVE/RICHARD GUNN

In general, there is a timeless elegance to Rolls-Royce and Bentley models that means they look good no matter what the automotive fashions around them. It's the reason that a Bentley R-Type Continental is still absolutely drop-dead gorgeous 70 years after its first appearance, or that the Silver Shadow could survive from 1965 through to 1995, at least in Corniche form, with few changes to its overall shape.

However, the magic doesn't always work. There was the Camargue, of course; Pininfarina's distinctive 1970s and 1980s flagship which divided opinions when it was current and continues to do so today. And in 1980, Rolls-Royce replaced the much-loved Silver Shadow and Bentley T-series models with the first of the SZ series; an angular update of the previous generation that was very of its era and thus showcased a more

straight-edged style that reflected the square-rigged trends of the time. Over the years, the razor lines haven't aged as well as those of the more curvaceous cars from Crewe, with the result that the Silver Spirit and its Bentley derivatives – at least the normally-aspirated versions – aren't nearly as valued as some of their predecessors and successors.

Now, the SZ models are not unattractive machines – they are, as with all Rolls-Royces and Bentleys, handsome, imposing, dignified and prestigious vehicles. But as with many cars with finely chiselled looks, when motoring tastes turn back towards





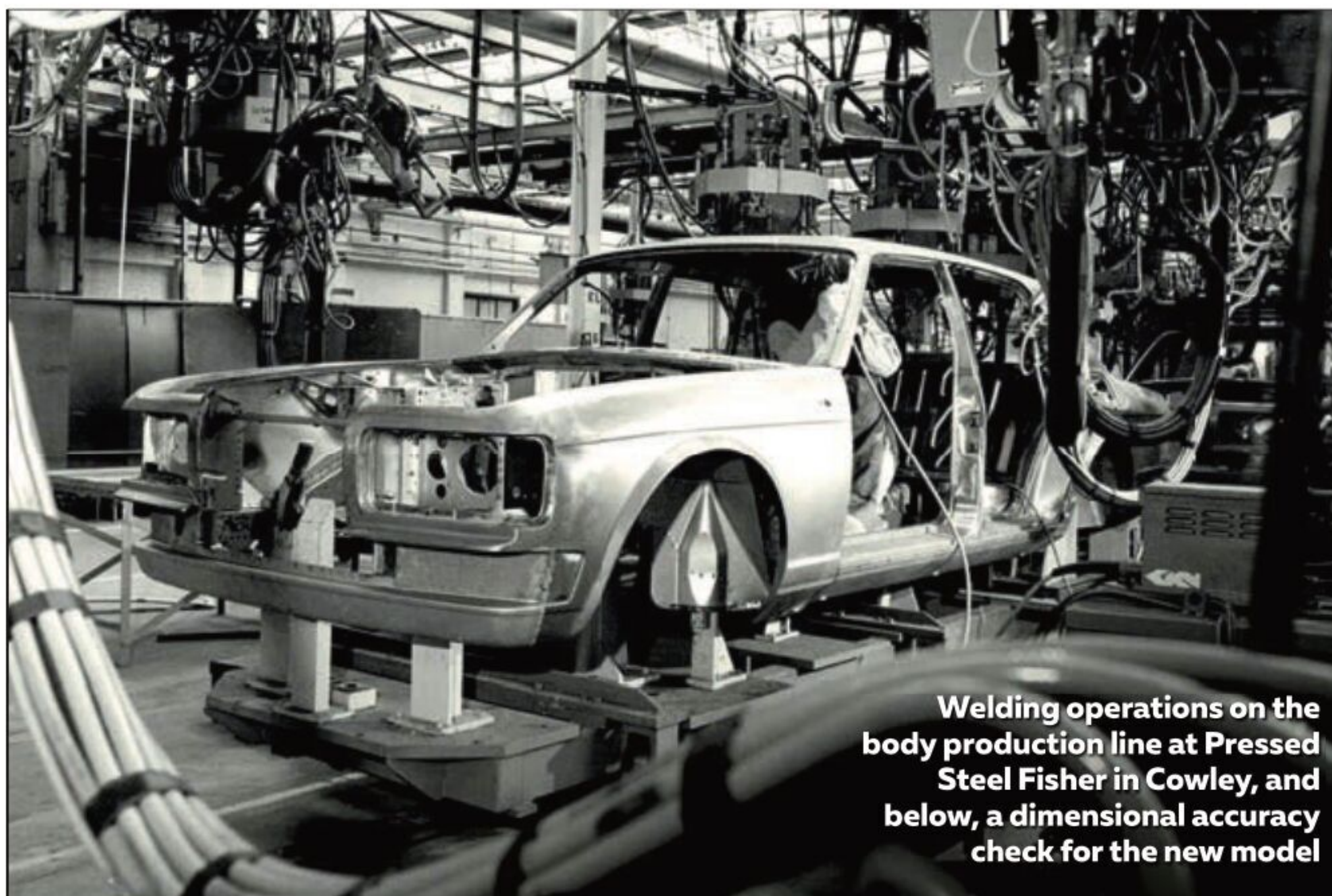
curvaceous bodies, they tend to age quicker than their more voluptuous counterparts. Nevertheless, the Silver Spirit lasted through until 1997, the Bentley Brooklands survived until 1998 and the long wheelbase Silver Spur made it through to the dawn of the 21st century, thanks to nips and tucks over four distinct marks that gradually took away some of the original abruptness.

It was in 1969 that work began on the SZ series – the title referring to the internal codename following on, logically enough, from the SY, better-known as the Silver Shadow/T-Type. This was only four years after those cars had been launched, but Rolls-Royce's perception was that the SY might have a life of around 10 years. It also planned that, while it would have a different look to the Shadow, the SY's platform and much of the same running gear would be utilised including, naturally, the V8 engine. Another consideration was that it had to look bigger than the car it was replacing without actually being so. Leading the design team was the Austrian-born Fritz Feller, who'd taken over from chief stylist John Blatchley in 1969. After the more rounded shapes of the 1960s, the 1970s had ushered in straight lines and pronounced angles, typified by the 'folded paper' creations of Giorgetto Giugiaro. Over in the USA – always a very important market for Rolls-Royce – sharp-edged styling had been even more embraced than on this side of the Atlantic. So the SZ inevitably followed this trend.

The first SZ proposals had a very blocky appearance, in some respects quite similar to the Ford's MkIV Zephyr and Zodiac, albeit writ even larger. As the form evolved over the years though, a more gentle profile was adopted – but compared with its predecessor, it still looked lower, wider, smoother and more contemporary. The design was more or less cemented by 1977, when the first definitive prototype, dubbed Z-4, was completed and began road-testing.

## BLUFF LOOKS

It was at the front where the bluff looks were most apparent, with a radiator surround (at least on the Rolls-Royce variants) that was three »

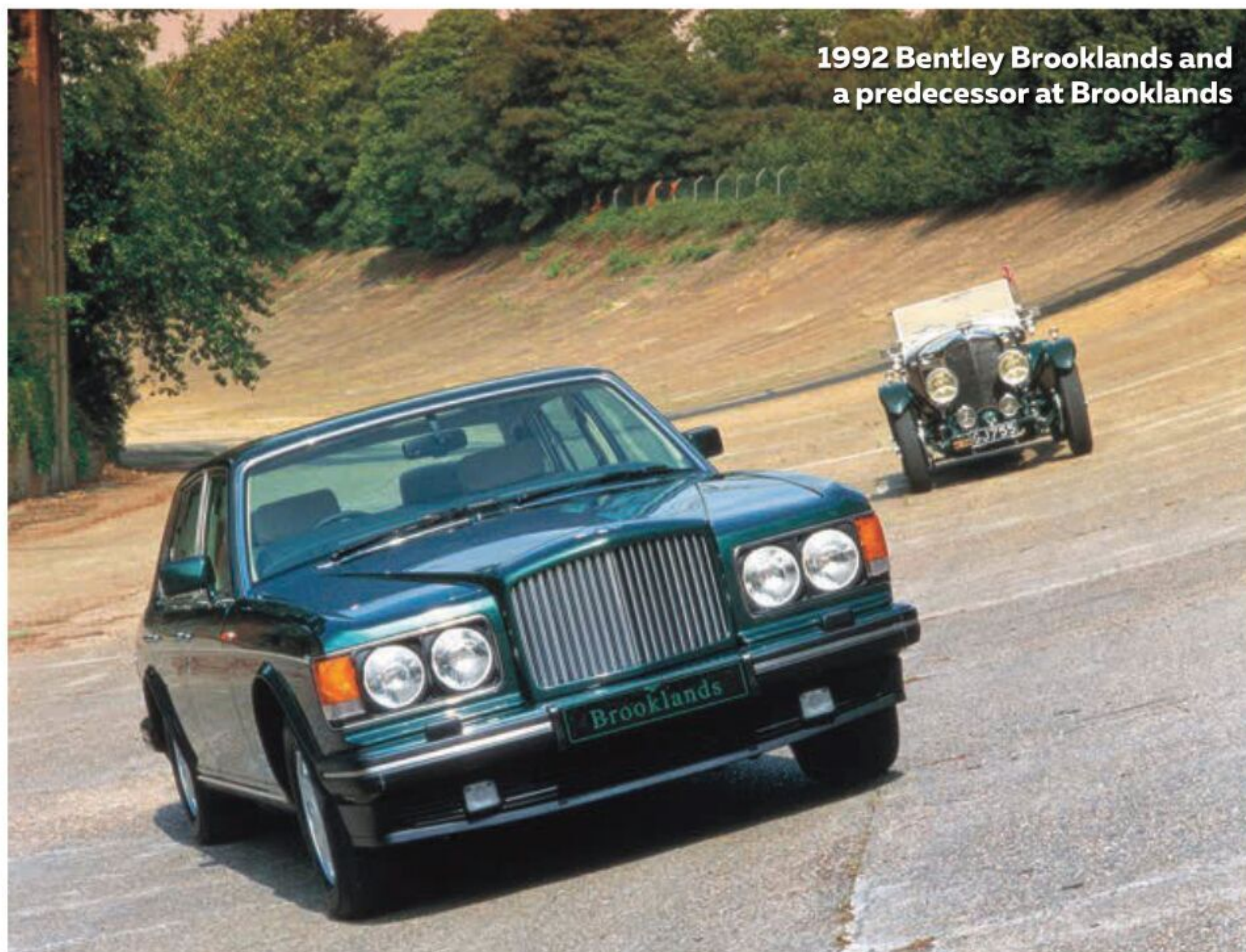


Welding operations on the body production line at Pressed Steel Fisher in Cowley, and below, a dimensional accuracy check for the new model



Mulsanne modernised in 1987 with various changes and new wheels





**1992 Bentley Brooklands and a predecessor at Brooklands**



**Bespoke six-door limo for Sultan of Brunei**



**Early US Spec Car with sealed beam headlamps**

and a half inches wider and one inch lower than before. In place of round headlamps, flush-fitted rectangular fairings concealing twin lamps were adopted and integrated with the indicators. US regulations demanded separate square sealed beam headlamps, however, which gave the cars a somewhat Transatlantic demeanour. American rules also dictated prominent black 'rubber' bumpers capable of withstanding a 5mph impact.

A novel feature was the fitment of a retractable Spirit of Ecstasy. Deemed an additional pedestrian

hazard in an accident, the 'Flying Lady' was spring-loaded so that it promptly disappeared into the radiator surround in the event of any impact and had to be fished out again by hand to restore her to her rightful place. No such consideration was needed for Bentleys, for the traditional 'Winged B' was now a badge rather than free-standing mascot – an indication, perhaps, of just how overshadowed by its parent company the marque was at the time. Of the first 3000 SZs built, only 200 would be Bentleys.

As much as the exterior might

have changed, the interior was very familiar territory for any long-standing Crewe customer. Naturally, there were acres of leather, high quality carpeting and walnut veneer, but the dashboard arrangement was largely that of the Shadow II, albeit with a digital display panel reflecting how electronics were increasingly finding their way into cars. Its read-out only showed the outside temperature, clock and elapsed time indicator – more complex information was still some way into the future.

Shortly before the Silver Spirit and its Bentley equivalent – christened »

## KEPT IN SUSPENSE

It's generally considered that, however radical or different the Silver Spirit might have looked, underneath it basically perpetuated the running gear of the Silver Shadow. That's true to a certain extent – and understandable, given that the most major suspension consideration was how softly the model rode rather than how well it handled. However, one significant upgrade was the rear suspension. While this retained the semi-trailing arm layout of the Shadow, the arm angle was increased and the self-leveling dampers – connected to the oleo-pneumatic system, of course – were also repositioned. The coil

springs were shortened and the rear wheel track widened by three inches when compared to the first Shadows. Two crossmembers supported the revamped subframe containing the rear suspension and final drive, with Metalastik mounts also incorporated in the set-up. The benefits of the new arrangement were reduced road noise and less roll on bends, which in turn somewhat enhanced handling. The set-up had initially been trialled on 1979 Corniches before making the jump from SY to SZ – Rolls-Royce tended to fit new enhancements to its two-door cars first, almost as if to quietly test them out in customer service, before extending them to



other models. Up front, the so-called 'compliant' suspension arrangement first seen on Shadows from mid-1972 was installed practically unchanged, save for some spring and damper setting tweaks.



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## **‘Deemed an additional pedestrian hazard in an accident, the ‘Flying Lady’ was spring-loaded so that it promptly disappeared into the radiator surround in the event of any impact’**

the Mulsanne in tribute to the marque’s glorious but distant Le Mans past – were due to be launched, the Dunlop run-flat tyres intended to be fitted were dropped. An unfortunate by-product of this was that not only did the front arches now appear too big for the wheels, but the wheels themselves looked off-centre in the space. Fritz Feller was far from happy about the situation but his attempts to have the arches modified were to no avail; the SZ was too far down the line for anything to be done.

The Silver Spirit and Mulsanne debuted in October 1980. As well as the standard wheelbase (120.5in) cars, priced at £49,629 whether in Rolls-Royce or Bentley form, there were also long wheelbase models, dubbed the Mulsanne L and Silver

Spur. For £56,408, buyers of these got an extra four inches in the middle, a vinyl-covered roof and smaller rear window – although this lasted less than a year before the rear window grew to be of the same dimensions as on its less well-endowed siblings.

The Silver Spirit and Mulsanne came out to good reviews, save for criticism about the lack of anti-lock brakes (ABS) on such an expensive and prestigious range. The handling (or lack of it) and fuel economy – around 12-15mpg – also provoked comments. That last factor became an even bigger issue when there was a global economic downturn soon after the model’s introduction, prompted by soaring oil prices. After having sold 514 cars by the end of the 1980 model year, expectations of selling at least 2700

to 2800 examples per year had to be trimmed back to just 2000 for 1982.

The introduction of the turbocharged Bentleys during that year – which we covered in Rolls-Royce and Bentley Driver’s July/August 2022 issue – proved a welcome fillip to sales before the global economic situation began to improve during 1984. By that time, it was also clear that giving Bentley more of its own distinct identity was paying dividends, and so 1984 also saw the launch of the Bentley Eight. This was conceived as an entry saloon, with a simpler specification. This meant cloth upholstery, steel wheels and a mesh grille, along with a generally lower level of equipment, although the suspension was firmed up to improve handling. At £49,497, it was



A 1990 Silver Spirit II



£5743 less than the Silver Spirit and Mulsanne, and by being under the psychological barrier of £50,000, it did help attract new customers.

## WHEN TWO BECOME FOUR

During 1986, fuel injection – previously reserved for US market cars – became standardised on Rolls-Royce and Bentley products worldwide, replacing the long-established twin SU carburettor set-up. There were also engine tweaks. The effect of all this was to raise power to around 240bhp for the 1987 models. ABS was also fitted at last. By now prices were £54,692 for the Eight, £64,721 for the Mulsanne, £68,994 for the Silver Spirit and £81,702 for the Silver Spur. The Mulsanne changed designation in 1987 to become the Mulsanne S, adopting the Turbo R's alloy wheels, interior and firmer suspension but, of course, lacking its turbocharger. A year later, during the autumn of 1988, all Bentleys swapped their two rectangular headlamp units for four circular lights – a look which wasn't extended through to the Rolls-Royces.

However, for those Spirit of Ecstasy enthusiasts seeking change, Rolls-Royce provided it in 1989 with the arrival of the Silver Spirit II and Silver Spur II models at the Frankfurt Motor Show in September. The fascia layout was revamped but the real progression was the fitment of electronic adaptive damping, which automatically tightened or softened the shock absorbers to suit what the car was doing. The result was enhanced handling with less roll when



Silver Spirit Interior

Spirits were subjected to spirited driving. For the driver input, the steering wheel rim finish switched from traditional Bakelite to padded leather. There was a further break with the past in winter 1991 when the GM400 three-speed automatic transmission, dating back to the Silver Shadow, was replaced by the more up-to-date four-speed GM 4L80-E.

Another worldwide recession from 1991 saw sales fall dramatically again – for the 1992 model year, just 805 Rolls-Royces found homes, as opposed to 2886 the previous year. The company cut its break-even point from 3000 vehicles to just 1300, also halving its workforce to 2400 employees. The more public manifestation of the troubles was the »

## PRODUCTION FIGURES

Rolls-Royce Silver Spirit (1980-1989)	<b>8126</b>
Rolls-Royce Silver Spur (1980-1989)	<b>6214</b>
Rolls-Royce Silver Spur Limousine (1982-1985)	<b>17</b>
Rolls-Royce Silver Spur Limousine (1984-1988)	<b>84</b>
Rolls-Royce Silver Spirit II (1989-1993)	<b>1152</b>
Rolls-Royce Silver Spur II (1989-1993)	<b>1658</b>
Rolls-Royce Silver Spur II Touring Limousine (1991-1993)	<b>56</b>
Rolls-Royce Silver Spirit III (1994-1995)	<b>234</b>
Rolls-Royce Silver Spur III (1994-1995)	<b>465</b>
Rolls-Royce Silver Spur Touring Limousine III (1994-1995)	<b>36</b>
Rolls-Royce Flying Spur (1994-1995)	<b>134</b>
Rolls-Royce Silver Dawn (1995-1997)	<b>237</b>
Rolls-Royce New Silver Spirit (1996-1997)	<b>145</b>
Rolls-Royce New Silver Spur (1996-2000)	<b>802</b>
Rolls-Royce New Silver Spur Touring Limousine (1996-1998)	<b>9</b>
Bentley Mulsanne (1980-1987)	<b>482</b>
Bentley Mulsanne LWB (1980-1987)	<b>47</b>
Bentley Eight (1984-1992)	<b>1734</b>
Bentley Mulsanne S (1986-1992)	<b>909</b>
Bentley Mulsanne S LWB (1986-1992)	<b>61</b>
Bentley Brooklands (1992-1998)	<b>1343</b>
Bentley Brooklands LWB (1992-1998)	<b>188</b>
Bentley Brooklands R & LWB (1997-1998)	<b>79/12</b>



1982 Rolls-Royce Silver Spur Limousine





amalgamation of the Bentley Eight and the Mulsanne S into one model during summer 1992. The Brooklands – another nod to Bentley’s racing glories – was effectively a Turbo R in all but turbocharger, although it was also given its own dash layout.

Four years after the Silver Spirit II and Silver Spur II, both these Rolls-Royces progressed to a third series. There was an engine revamp, with revised cylinder heads, enlarged valves, improved manifolding and reworked fuel injection. Power was now around the 250bhp mark and fuel consumption improved, albeit only by an additional 2.5mpg or so. Even the engine bay cosmetics were improved, with a cover now shrouding most of the V8 from inquisitive eyes and hands. The dashboard was refreshed, something made necessary by the incorporation of twin airbags. Prices now reached £96,453 for

the Brooklands and £112,237 for its long-wheelbase sister, while the Silver Spirit III was £104,774 and £119,428 for the LWB Silver Spur III.

For 1994, the company did something quite logical, if a little out of character, and produced a turbocharged Rolls-Royce. The Flying Spur was a Silver Spur boasting the 360bhp V8 of the Bentley Turbo R as well as its suspension settings and bigger wheels. Originally conceived as a limited run of just 50 vehicles, 134 were constructed through to 1995. The USA alone also got the Silver Dawn, a Silver Spur III with reduced radiator surround and mascot height, as well as electronic traction assistance and heated rear seats. While this model didn’t initially filter through to the rest of the world, the squatter radiator shell was adopted for the MkIV cars that saw the light of day worldwide in late 1995. Except Rolls-Royce didn’t officially apply

that designation – reputedly because the number was regarded as a bad omen in some Far Eastern markets. Instead, these 1996 model year Rolls-Royces were known as the New Silver Spirit and New Silver Spur.

Modifications included reprofiled bumpers which, in combination with the smaller grille, did much to make the cars look smoother and sleeker. The front quarterlights disappeared in favour of the door mirrors being mounted in their place, and there was yet another reworked dashboard giving greater harmony with the centre console. Cosworth was brought in to extract more torque from the engine, and the wheels expanded in size by an inch.

## **TURBOCHARGING FOR (NEARLY) ALL**

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**1982 Silver Spirit Engine, with SU carbs**



**1989 Silver Spirit engine with fuel injection**







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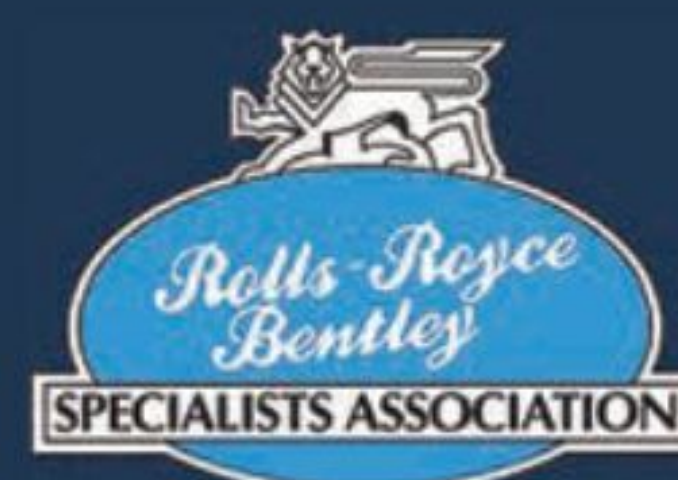


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Arnage were just a few years away from launch, but the significant improvements weren't quite over yet. July 1996 saw light pressure turbocharging introduced on both Bentleys and Rolls-Royces, upping power to approximately 300bhp. This enabled an outright velocity of 140mph. The Bentley Brooklands, at £106,866, was by now the only short wheelbase model left; both the Brooklands L (£115,618) and Silver Spur (£135,242) became long wheelbase 124.5in examples. There was a non-turbo option, in the form of the Silver Dawn, which finally became available to customers beyond North America, but at £118,557, it didn't seem great value compared to the Bentleys, especially given that marque's ongoing renaissance now meant that it accounted for 70 per cent of total output.

As Rolls-Royce geared up for the imminent Silver Seraph and Arnage, Cosworth took over V8 engine production, allowing SZ manufacture to be moved to the Crewe factory's old engine plant so that main assembly facilities could be prepared for what was to come.



**1999 Rolls-Royce Silver Spur**

The last series Rolls-Royce four-door saloons were completed in December 1997, save for four bound for the USA that weren't completed until summer 1998. The Bentley Brooklands also lingered into 1998, albeit now known as the Brooklands R and featuring the upgraded suspension of the Turbo R combined with the light-pressure turbocharged V8. However, Mulliner Park Ward, Rolls-Royce's own coachbuilding arm, continued to take very limited commissions for hand-crafted, modified Silver Spur-based saloons

and limousines through to 2000.

The SZ series can be regarded as the last of the 'old school' Rolls-Royces and Bentleys, even if their looks (still) aren't to everybody's taste. They used older technology derived from the Silver Shadow generation that remained credible for many years simply because it was so advanced when new.

The SZ closed the chapter on the Rolls-Royce and Bentley of the 20th century, ready for a new century where things would be very, very different. ■

## THE IC IntroCar VIEW

**John Tupper,**  
*managing director*  
*of IntroCar, says:*



The first models of Silver Spirit, Silver Spur, Mulsanne & Eight, are probably at the nadir of their popularity. Their rather boxy style will appear dated to many. Add to this a relative lack of features when compared to later models in the series and the ownership proposition, at first glance, seems a little thin.

Dig deeper, and there is more to it. Firstly, what looks dated now will inevitably become eccentric, then a bit cool, before landing squarely in the category of 'classic'. Values can only rise – although an investment

they probably aren't. Secondly, good examples are affordable armchair limousines that still get you parked out front of your favourite hostelry, and purring round country lanes (if not city cul-de-sacs) remains a real pleasure. Thirdly, they are eminently maintainable, although you'll probably need a specialist for the hydraulic and electrical systems. While Bentley Motors' spares offering is thinning out, the aftermarket suppliers have this model more or less sewn up.

The further you proceed in the SZ-series, the more you will see iterative advances in sophistication, capability and style, but there remains a place for the early models too. Do consider a long wheelbase model (i.e. a Silver Spur or Mulsanne L), as the additional cubic feet in the rear genuinely adds grandeur for the passenger and comes at little, if any, extra cost.

Check carefully for rust and make sure the suspension bushes and ball

joints are up to scratch. These cars can drive beautifully and quietly with half the suspension falling to bits. The effect is cumulative, along with the repair bill, as one worn out part swiftly dismembers another. Check that the air conditioning and heating works, try all the windows and central locking system, including the boot/trunk, and the seat switches. Check that gearchange is completely smooth, including when selecting reverse. Check there is no white or black smoke from the exhaust and beware of 'tappety' noises, which can emanate from the hydraulic lifters or the brake pumps. Not such a problem if they die down quickly after start-up. Check for leaks from the two tell-tale holes on either side of the crankcase – about halfway along. Any fluid means that the piston liner seals have failed and this is expensive!

Take your time and find a well-maintained example. A few thousand on the price for the right example will repay itself many times over.





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# EASTICK DOUBLES UP

Club Competitions Captain claims the blue-riband Times Challenge Trophy crown for a second successive year at the 74th BDC race meeting at Silverstone. By Stuart Newman

**B**en Eastick retained his Times Challenge Trophy crown with a superb victory in the Bentley scratch race at a baking hot 74th annual BDC Silverstone race meeting on Saturday 13 August.

The meeting – an institution on the British club motor-racing calendar – saw another day of fantastic racing at its very best, with the Times Trophy encounter the blue-riband event of a packed 10-race programme which saw many Club members competing. Ben's potent 6.2-litre supercharged T-Type single-seater crossed the line at the end of the 10-lap Times Trophy event some 32.9 seconds ahead of runner-up Oliver Llewellyn's 3/8 Special. After pre-determined starting time penalties had been applied, Ben's margin of victory was just 2.9 seconds.

With the BDC Competitions Committee unwilling to risk leaving the cars sitting on the grid for fear of boiling over in the sweltering temperatures, the Padgett Motor Engineers-sponsored race (and all events bar the Bentley Handicap) was switched to a rolling start. An excellent grid of 31 cars started the combined Times Challenge Trophy and Pre-War Challenge event (the latter race for marques other than Bentleys), and by the time the chequered flag had fallen, pole-sitting Ben had lapped all but five of his rivals. For good measure, he also recorded the overall fastest race lap of 1min 10.790 secs (83.42mph) – the perfect performance.

Third place, as in 2021, went to the current BDC Racing Driver of the Year, Clive Morley, who displayed his usual verve and commitment at the wheel of his 3/4½ Litre. The next highest placed Bentley runner was impressive debutant Vernon Moore, who convincingly won the battle of the Mk VI Specials to come home fourth. Class winners in the Times Trophy were Ben Eastick (Class D), Oliver Llewellyn (Class C), Clive Morley (Class B) and Club President Duncan Wiltshire (Class A), who finished a fine eighth in the Bentley race in his 3 Litre.

For the want of those aforementioned 2.9 seconds, Oliver Llewellyn would have enjoyed a Bentley 'clean sweep' after roaring through the field to dramatically win the Bentley Handicap encounter, grabbing the lead from eventual runner-up Vernon Moore on the final lap. Showing great determination, Oliver's 3/8 Special caught and passed Vernon's Mk VI Special to claim victory by the narrow margin of just five seconds in the P&A Wood-sponsored eight-lap encounter. Completing the podium in third place was the evergreen Adam Stacy-Marks (3/4½ Litre Speed Model LM). Marques including Morgans, MGs, TVRs, Jaguars, Alfa-Romeos, Aston Martins, Lotuses, ACs, Austin Healeys and Triumphs shared the race programme with the Bentleys.

Elsewhere, Chris Mann's Alfa-Romeo 8C Monza took the honours in the Pre-War Challenge race as he did last year. And Oliver Bryant won both AR Morgan Challenge races – a repetition of his double successes in 2018, '19 and '21. Aside from the racing, there was plenty to enjoy as the Club once more embraced the summer garden-party ambience for which it's renowned.

The ever-popular Bentley procession saw around 100 Members' cars of all ages take to the track for a few laps at



**Ben Eastick's T Type single-seater retained the Times Challenge Trophy** (image: Chris Dicken)



**The 3/8 Special of Oliver Llewellyn (no32) claimed a dramatic last-lap Bentley Handicap victory** (image: Peter French)



**Around 100 BDC members' cars, old and new, enjoyed the traditional Bentley track procession** (image: Matt Welch)

lunchtime. We saw showcases aplenty, including R Type/R Type Continental-themed displays from both the Club and the Bentley Motors Heritage Collection to commemorate the model's 75th anniversary. There was also a 1922 Isle of Man TT display, to mark the centenary of Bentley winning the Team prize at the prestigious 1922 race, and a line-up of prize-winning cars from this summer's BDC Concours. ■ [www.bdcl.org](http://www.bdcl.org)



# Bentley

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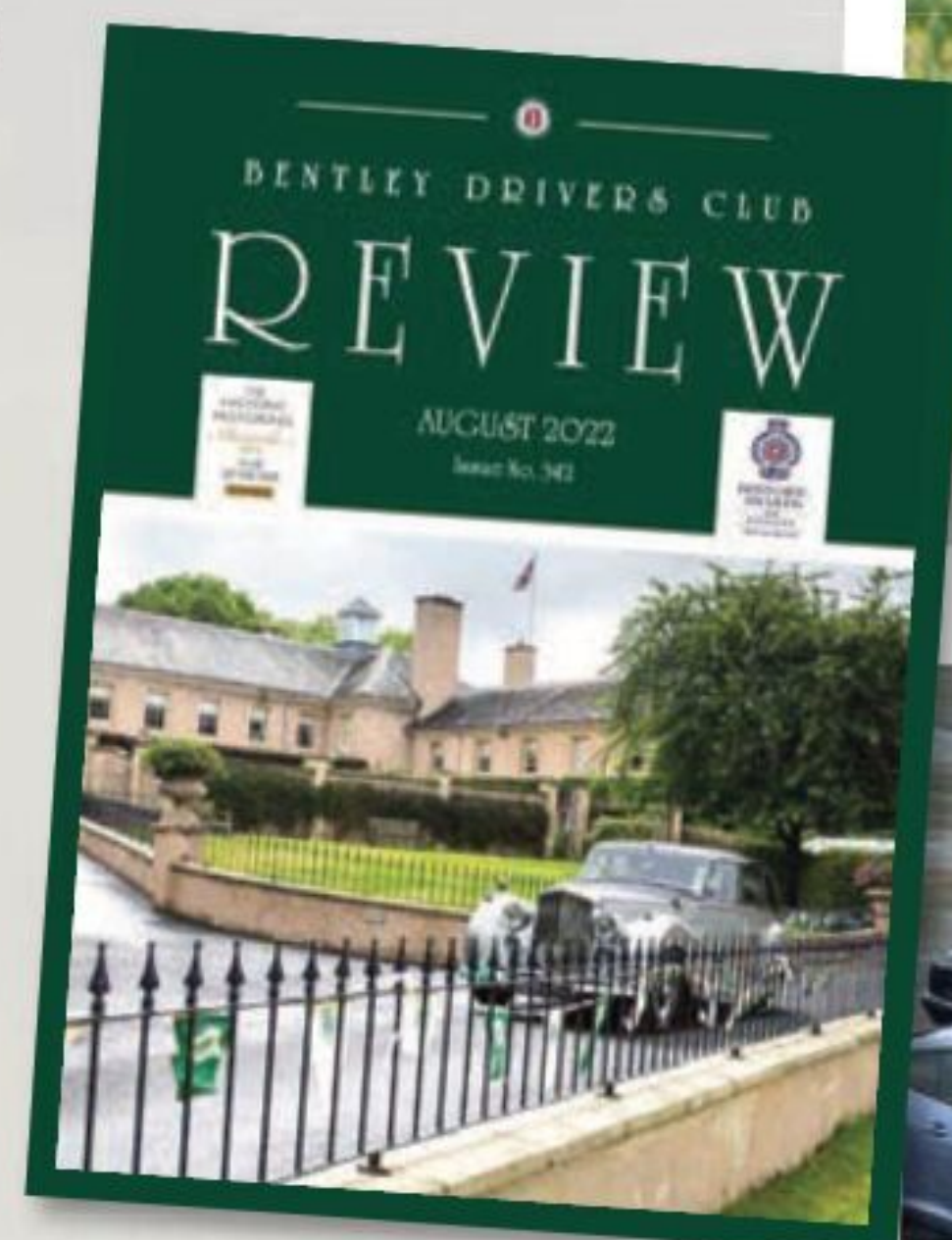
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# HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

This issue, the RREC's Club House page is given over to the following tribute

**O**n 8th September 2022 we united with the people of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Commonwealth and the world to mourn the death of

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

For so many of us in the club, Her Majesty was the only British Monarch that we knew. Queen Elizabeth II was a paragon of dedication and calm during

many turbulent times. Throughout her extraordinary 70 year reign she was an inspirational leader respected by all.

We extend our heartfelt sympathy to the King and his family. ■







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1.36123 196/25. 1 New set of 6 High tension leads.  
1.36919 235/15 Various parts.  
1.36744 N/12853 1 Distributor rotor.

Inspection Questions O.K. Sheet No. 4  
From 1 to 18  
REMARKS.  
Run in oil  
Rather noisy - side shaft.  
But improved with running.  
all sound, dash in gear.

Inspection Questions O.K. Sheet No. 11  
From to  
REMARKS.  
Special car for S.R. Trials.  
Real silver fittings.  
Radiator bent leaked on test  
due to fan catching.  
Ignition good, trouble with compression.  
19 throat & 6 before } over  
Power of Engine. Good  
Weight of Chassis. ?  
Load on Chassis when test. 4 1/2 awt lbs.  
Miles covered. 8.0  
Petrol consumption. ? miles per gall.  
Flywheel plugged or not. Yes  
Size of wheels - back 36" x 4" front 36" x 4" all round  
Tyres fixed when despatched. Yes Dunlop (by 100)  
How despatched. Road. M. Johnson  
Max. speed. on gear  
Lowest regular speed. 14 gear  
Type of Plugs. Pos Size. 24 x magnet.  
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# A SPECIAL DAY

Once a year, the motoring charity Sporting Bears creates an amazing day out for deserving children, and they do so with the help of Rolls-Royce. The charity's Rahil Hashmi reports from this year's event

WORDS: RAHIL HASHMI PHOTOGRAPHY: SPORTING BEARS

To those passing by, it was a spectacle unlike anything they had seen on the streets of London. Ten brand new Rolls-Royces including Ghosts, Phantoms and Cullinans; an array of police vehicles, and the entirety of Westminster Abbey closed just for the occasion. Most assumed that it was a member of the Royal Family, or perhaps a celebrity trying to show off – but this was far from the truth. Inside these cars were ten children who live lives far more difficult than our own. With them were their families, all out for a day away from hospitals, machines and other stress.

## A DAY OUT FOR THE FAMILIES

The convoy was parked outside the Hilton Metropole Hotel in London. To see ten of Rolls-Royce's latest vehicles all parked in one majestic parade was something truly magnificent. As the families stepped out of the hotel, they were greeted by this fascinating display.

I had a chance to speak with one of the families just before they saw the cars. I said that one of my favourite features of the car they were going out in, a brand new Rolls-Royce Ghost, was its starlight headliner. I said that if you look for long enough, you'll see a shooting star. I was later told by the mother that her daughter had spent ten minutes gazing at the roof, keeping an eye out for these shooting stars – she was absolutely amazed, saying she wished all cars had this feature.

After the families had finished looking around the cars, it was time to set out on the road – and what a scene it was. The cars had previously been driven as a convoy, but not with a police escort. Now, though, the motorcycles would travel ahead and clear the roads until these ten Rolls-Royces came cruising through. From the Hilton Metropole to Westminster Abbey is a mere three miles which, especially under a police escort, isn't a lot of time to experience a car. Fortunately, the convoy took a more scenic route which not only allowed the families to

experience the joys of the cars, but also showed them famous sites such as The Mall and Buckingham Palace.

They soon arrived at Westminster Abbey which, within a matter of seconds, was flooded with hundreds of people gazing at the cars – but even more people were paying attention to who was stepping out, which proved to be a highlight for many of the children. Inside the Abbey, which had been closed just for the families, a tour guide detailed every point of interest for us. This was enjoyed by all, especially the younger children who managed to put many of us to shame when it came to knowledge about the famous individuals buried at the Abbey. In total, the families had roughly five hours of uninterrupted fun. This was more than just a break for the children; it provided respite to the parents too.

## THE CARS

This year, Rolls-Royce supplied us with three of their current models: Phantom, Ghost, and Cullinan. There







New Ghosts leading the line outside the Hilton Metropole hotel



A day he'll never forget!

were also variations within these models regarding specification, so we had both Black Badge and 'standard' Cullinans, for instance. The car that received the most adoration from the families was the Black Badge Cullinan, finished in a Royal Blue. It does away with the brightwork, opting for gloss black trim instead. These black accents tie together with the car's blue finish to create a look that somehow exudes both stealth and flamboyance.

There was also an entirely black Ghost, with narrow white-wall pinstripes on each low-profile tyre. According to Rolls-Royce, these tyres present the 'perfect portrayal of a contemporary take on a classic design'. I asked some of the families what they thought of this feature and while it didn't find favour with everyone, some liked it as it made the car stand out. But despite the detail differences, each and every one of the cars was absolutely perfect for the task at hand. »



Families - not just the children themselves - got so much from the event







We believe there is not another set of vehicles that would give as much pleasure to the families involved on this day out.

Liam, a father of two children aged 8 and 10, said, "You can't buy an experience like this. It's a once in a lifetime thing that they can talk about with their friends and cherish for life."

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

To pull all this off, not only did we require the help of Rolls-Royce, we needed volunteers including

**'We believe there is not another set of vehicles that would give as much pleasure to the families involved on this day out'**

drivers, individuals helping with luggage, catering and refreshments, photography, planning and logistics, safeguarding and more. Not a single volunteer at any of our events is on a salary; everyone sacrifices both their time and money – and this is

the Sporting Bears ethos. Without this commitment, the event would not have been able to run every summer for over a decade.

Then comes the involvement of the other organisations such as the Metropolitan Police's Special Escort





Group, dealing with arguably the most complicated aspect of the event. The SEG usually only provides police escorts to select individuals and organisations, with the majority of their time spent with the Royal Family. In order to provide escorts to foreign leaders and large car convoys, the SEG are required to practice on public roads – but this is easier said than done given the costs and planning involved. Fortunately, Sporting Bears acts as the perfect solution to this, as we provide the cars and drivers for free.

Rolls-Royce has provided assistance with the event every summer without fail – and the company has always gone the extra mile. Incidentally, Rolls-Royce has never used this for its own marketing. The company is involved for the sole purpose of putting smiles on these children's faces.

## A LONG, REWARDING DAY

For the Bears, the event started a day before when they took delivery of the cars from Rolls-Royce's second home at the Bognor Regis technology centre. From there, it was a three-hour drive to a military site in central London, where the cars were stored overnight... surely the safest place to park £3-4 million worth of cars.

The drivers then met at this same location the next day to collect the vehicles and drive to the Hilton Metropole, the starting point for the families. We're fortunate to have drivers with a high level of professionalism and expertise in handling these cars both in a convoy and with a police escort. The cars all travelled in a specific order, with the pack fronted by the three Ghosts, followed by the three Phantoms, and then came the four Cullinans. This was mainly for the purpose of the drivers getting used to being in a position



No wonder bystanders stare – being in a police escort is a unique experience

## WHO IS SPORTING BEARS?

Sporting Bears is a Motor Club with the goal of raising money for children's charities and putting smiles on the faces of children less fortunate than our own. The club has roughly 1500 members and attends over 50 public events per annum. At these events, the Bears raise money for children's charities in numerous ways, the most popular being their Dream Rides. Many of you will have seen Dream Rides on offer at large car shows – unique passenger ride experiences in the car of your dreams, in exchange for a donation. Whether it's a Ferrari F40, an Ariel Nomad or a Rolls-Royce, the Bears' 2000+ car collection has something for everyone to enjoy. All expenses, such as fuel and

accommodation, are covered by our members – meaning every penny received is a penny which ultimately goes towards making a difference.

The event on these pages, which has been dubbed 'London in Style', is an example of a Sporting Bears closed event. Here, we operate solely for the deserving children and their families. But we're kept constantly busy with fundraising too: at the British Motor Show alone we raised almost £46,000 for children's charities. In November, we aim to surpass £3 million raised for children's charities since our inception in 1989. After this, we will use our current momentum – which is stronger than ever – to start our 2023 events in fine fashion. See [sportingbears.co.uk](https://sportingbears.co.uk)

behind and in front of specific cars... and also because it looked cool!

Upon arrival at the hotel, the drivers went to meet the families and children they would be spending the day with.

The drivers, many of whom are parents themselves, wanted to make sure the children were familiar with them so they could enjoy the drive to the fullest. As the families were touring Westminster Abbey, members of the public took the opportunity to snap a few pictures – which is when we unlocked all the cars and offered the chance to sit inside.

Just before the convoy set off once more, the volunteers made their way to the hotel to help the families when they got back. At just past 9pm, everything was complete – apart from the return of the cars. The drivers left for the final time in the Rolls-Royces, back to Bognor Regis, before heading home – and concluding a long but rewarding day at four o'clock in the morning. ■



Three Cullinans added extra presence to the gathering





• BUYING ADVICE •

# MK VI & R-TYPE: BENTLEY'S BEST BUY?

The Bentley Mk VI and R-type saloons represent amazing value when compared to the drophead and Continental versions. But lower values can mean less spent on care, so you must know where to look to avoid trouble

WORDS: NIGEL BOOTHMAN PHOTOGRAPHY: KELSEY ARCHIVE / GREGORY OWAIN

## MODEL HISTORY

As Rolls-Royce's first post-war model, the Bentley Mk VI went into bat on something of a sticky wicket: a battered nation with little spending money offered an uncertain market and the demand from crucial overseas territories was difficult to gauge. Add to this the car's major gamble – a new Standard Steel saloon body – and it's no surprise that Rolls-Royce launched the car in Bentley form while quietly continuing with the coachbuilt Rolls-Royce offering in the form of the Silver Wraith. Indeed, it would be more than three years after the first Mk VI

Bentley was delivered that the Rolls-Royce version, the Silver Dawn, made an appearance as an export model. By which time success was assured.

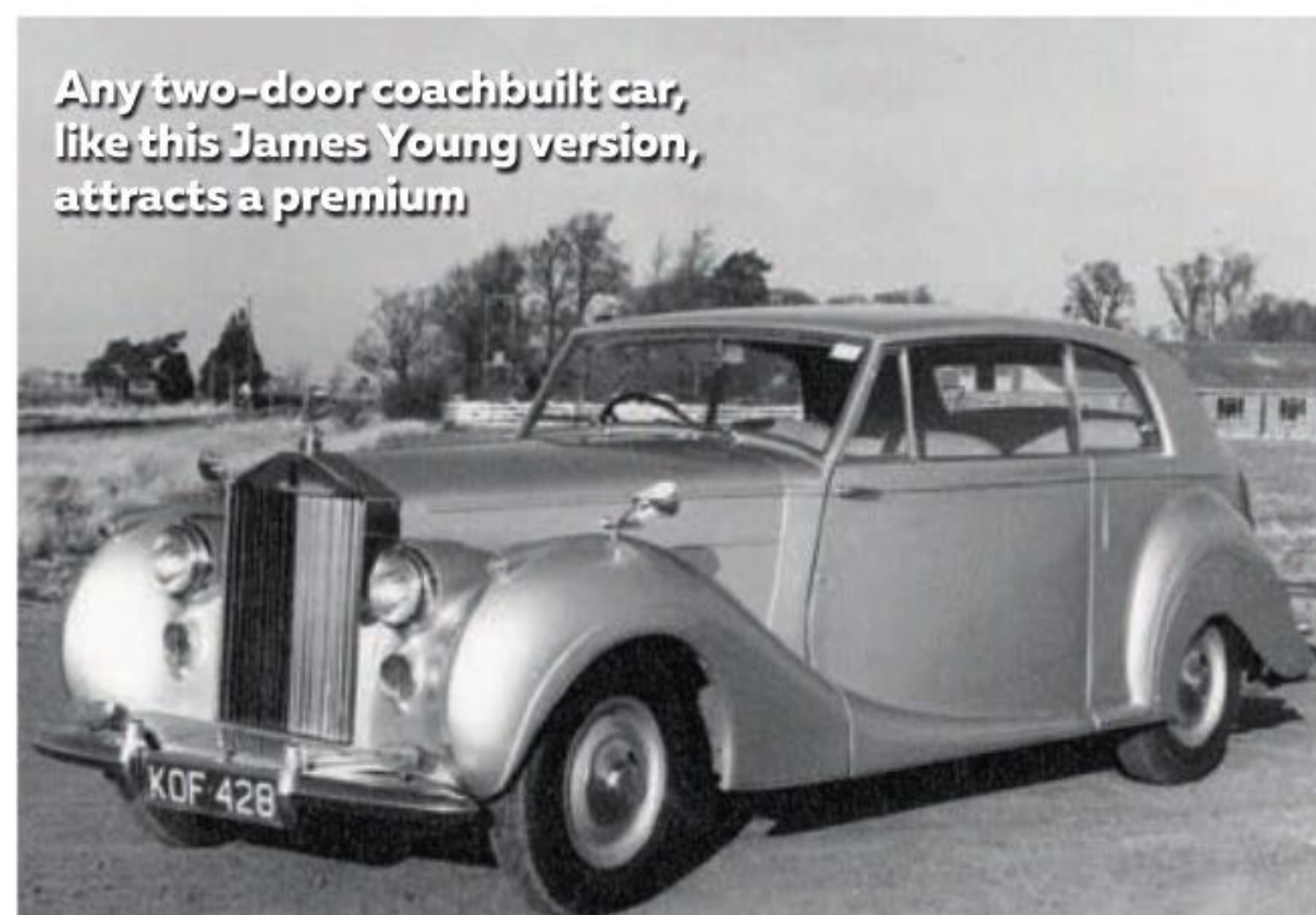
This was down both to the car's attractive looks (thanks largely to John Blatchley, once of Gurney-Nutting and key to so much Rolls-Royce styling) and a well-judged mix of features. The Mk VI carried over some aspects of the scarce Bentley Mk V of 1940, notably the independent front suspension, but added a new inlet-over-exhaust six-cylinder engine of 4.2-litres, which was notably quiet and smooth with an

improved output compared with the 4.25-litre 'Derby' Bentley and especially with the Rolls-Royce Wraith. It was still based on a separate chassis so while there was a standard factory offering for the first time, various coachbuilt options also appeared. Most often seen are the decorative H.J. Mulliner saloons and later, more modern-looking 'Lightweight' versions from the same builder. Many other saloon, coupé and drophead bodies from the likes of Hooper, Freestone & Webb, James Young, Park Ward, Vanden Plas, Abbott and overseas constructors like Pininfarina,





**Mulliner 'Lightweight' looked very modern when launched in 1951**



**Any two-door coachbuilt car, like this James Young version, attracts a premium**

Franay or Graber found enthusiastic buyers. The mechanical details in this guide can be applied across the board but coachbuilt bodies come with their own foibles and often with much higher values – expert inspection is vital.

In mid-1951 the engine capacity increased to 4.5-litres, when the steering geometry was altered to reduce grumblings about the Mk VI's behaviour in corners. The drum brakes were hydraulic at the front with mechanical rods for the rear, both boosted by a gearbox-driven servo. Then, in 1952, a revised body with a much larger and more useful boot was introduced as the Bentley R-type. Rolls-Royce versions retained the Silver Dawn name. Soon after came the Continental, a tuned R-type chassis clothed in a beautiful flowing fastback body and for a time, the fastest four-seater car in the world. Nowadays, the best of these soar past £1m in value while standard R-type saloons can be found from £20,000 – and Mk VIs at even less.

Certainly, nothing can touch the Continental for glamour and the saloons concede 20mph of top speed, but the chassis and engine are very close and the engineering integrity and heritage is identical. Bentley Mk VIs and R-types are very high quality cars; fast, durable and capable, and yet they still represent extraordinary value – if you avoid a money pit.

## BODYWORK & EXTERIOR

The saloons bodies for both the Mk VI and R-type were made by Pressed Steel in Cowley, Oxfordshire, then sent to Crewe for assembly onto Bentley chassis. For the first few years of production, post-war steel was of poor quality and it's these early Mk VIs that rusted most seriously. We are now 75 years on from manufacture, so you'd

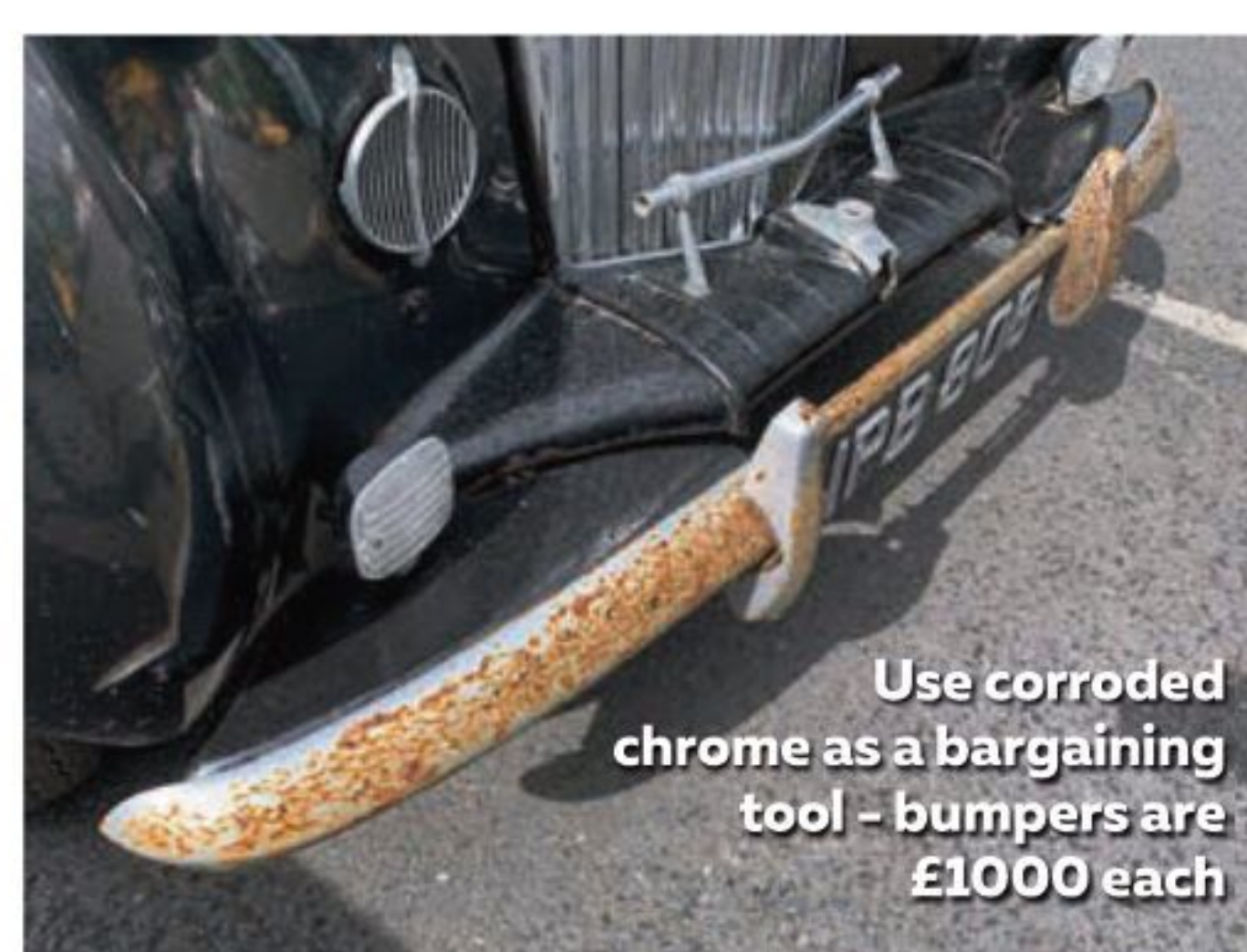
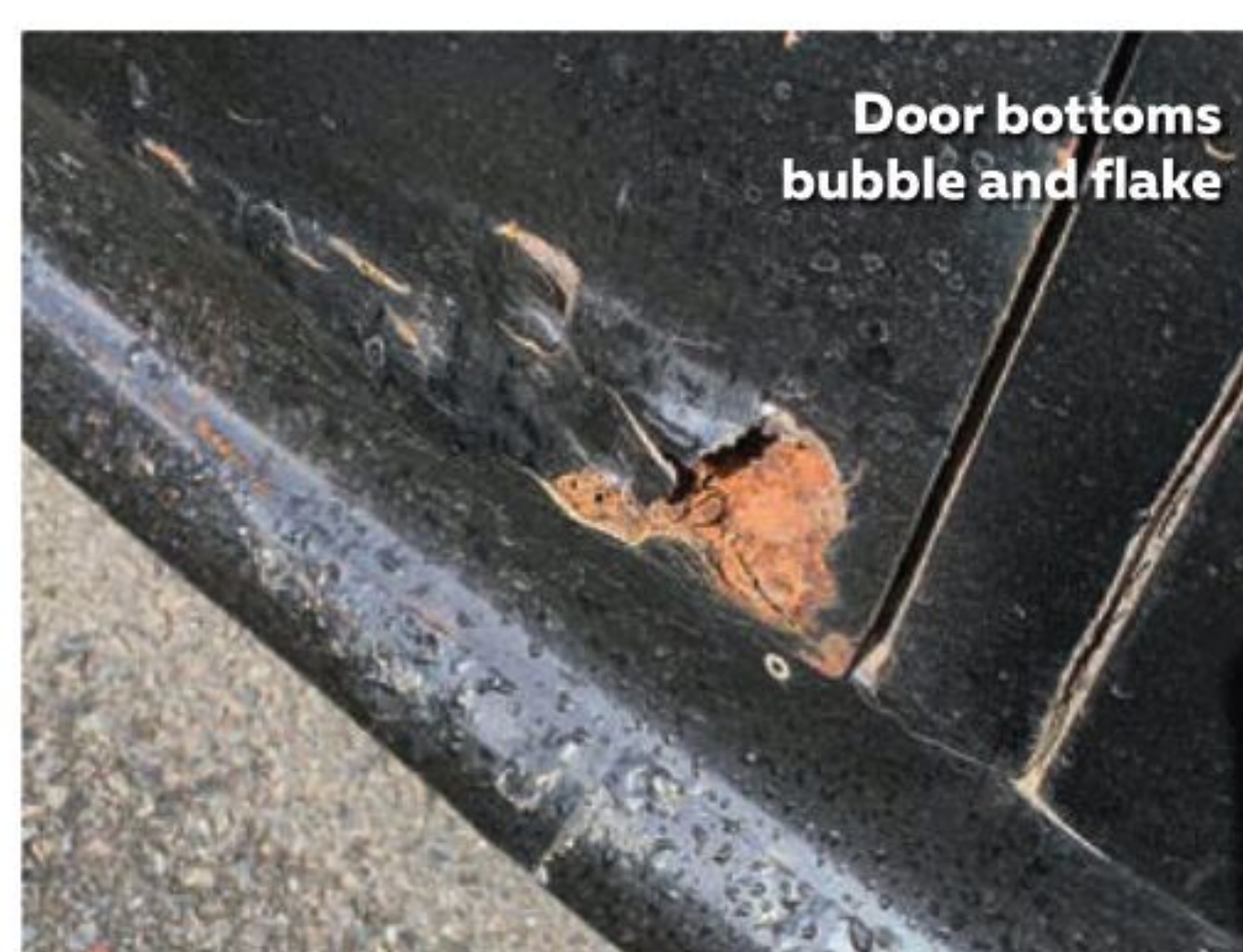
think surviving cars have either been restored or pampered in dry garages, but don't be too optimistic: the chassis is sturdy and can support a bodged-up body much longer than a monocoque car might have lasted. We asked Jeremy Padgett of Padgett Motor Engineers, specialists with this generation of Rolls-Royce and Bentley, for advice.

'They rust in the front and especially rear wheel arches, around the spring mounts, again both front and rear, and in the rear body mounts. It's worth checking under the whole of the rear half of the body and chassis, as it tends not to get the same protection from minor oil leaks as the front half. Other areas – around the wing-top side lights and the door bottoms – are pretty obvious but more unsightly than structurally serious.'

Lift the carpets and check the floors, the base of the B-pillar and inner body

panels. Get into the boot and check the floor and walls, both of which can be affected by trapped water and road debris thrown up from below. Real rot as opposed to surface rust in any of these locations should put off anyone who is unwilling to take on a rolling restoration. It's very easy to spend more than a rough MkVI or R-type is worth when putting it into good order, and a rotten body can swallow money just as fast as rough mechanical components. At best, think £150 each for wheel arch and door-bottom repair sections; at worst, think of £3000 a side for new front wings – and these are parts prices, without labour.

Advice for coachbuilt cars is similar with two serious provisos: many have ash framing in the structure that can rot behind aluminium panels (does the interior smell damp? Are the doors »







Mulliner Mk VI Sports Saloon  
is one of the more often-seen  
coachbuilt variants\_b

dropping, or panel seams bubbling? Beware!) and the second problem is an almost total lack of repair sections, so repair work demands real craftsmanship. Whatever the car, don't overlook the brightwork – scruffy body mouldings on Standard Steel saloons can be replaced with relative economy but new bumpers will set you back nearly £1000 at each end. For other models, re-plating is your only solution.

## **SUSPENSION AND BRAKES**

A Bentley Mk VI uses a blend of older and younger technology: independent front suspension by rubber-bushed wishbones mounted on a beam crossmember, with coil springs and an anti-roll bar. At the rear, though, there is a solid axle with leaf springs in leather gaiters damped by adjustable units powered from an oil pump on the gearbox – and controlled from the steering wheel. Front brakes are hydraulic via a single-circuit master cylinder; rear brakes and the parking brake are actuated by mechanical rods. There is servo assistance for the brake pedal driven from the right side of the gearbox.

'When set up to workshop manual specifications, it's a terrific system,' says Jeremy Padgett. 'They'll stop a Continental from 120mph, straight and true. You just have to keep on top of maintenance so every adjuster and

## **'Don't worry about a puff of blue smoke but the engine shouldn't be mechanically noisy.'**

expander is free and the brake balance from front to rear is right. You'll soon know if there's a serious problem, for instance on a car fresh out of storage: it should stop firmly and neatly and give you plenty of confidence.'

Service parts are quite affordable: £110 for a full axle set of reconditioned brake shoes from IntroCar, £50 for a master cylinder seal kit, £90 for a handbrake cable.

Suspension and steering are not areas to worry about unduly, though these tough cars will put up with a lot of ill-treatment and you may find sloppy, worn kingpins have resulted from irregular use of the Bijur lubrication system, which should get a pump on the floor-mounted pedal every 100 miles or so. New kingpins are £250 each. Too much play in the Marles steering box can often be adjusted out.

## **ENGINE, GEARBOX, REAR AXLE**

One reason, apart from the larger and much more useful boot, that R-type saloons are valued higher than Mk VIs is to do with the engine. The 4.5-litre unit makes around 150bhp to the 4.2-litre's 130-odd, feeling a little more muscular

and capable even in the heavier R-type. It's also somewhat more durable. Up to about April/May 1949 the Mk VI used engines with flash-chromed upper cylinder bores which wore and led to excessive oil consumption. Replacement by drop-in chrome liners and then two-piece chrome and iron liners did some good, but a full-length alloy liner is a proper permanent solution. If there's evidence of a rebuild including this, it's a valuable tick in the car's assessment.

Another improvement on initial specification came in late 1950 when aluminium timing gears replaced those with fibre teeth, which were quiet but prone to stripping. Again, evidence these have been replaced on 1940s Mk VIs is reassuring – an 'A' stamped into the timing cover should indicate this. But how to assess engine health overall? Jeremy has some suggestions.

'Don't worry about a puff of blue smoke but the engine shouldn't be mechanically noisy. Try to do a compression test and look for values of 120-150psi, though don't worry too much if they're not all the same. Less than 100psi is not a good sign. Beware of claimed mileages; without strong evidence like long ownership and old MoTs, assume it's been round the clock,





**Rolls-Royce Silver Dawn**  
often seen with whitewall  
tyres, especially in America



**R-type's more gracious side-  
profile, thanks to longer boot**

## MK VI AND R-TYPE SPECIALISTS IN THE UK:

### **Padgett Motor Engineers**

Sleaford, Lincs, 01529 240400

Website: [padgett-bentleyrestoration.co.uk](http://padgett-bentleyrestoration.co.uk)

### **Mulsanne Motors**, Edinburgh, 0131 654 9331

Website: <https://classiccarwebsite.com/item/mulsanne-motors/>

### **N Sandell**, Middlesex, 020 8758 2322

Website: [www.nsandell.com](http://www.nsandell.com)

### **Ranmore Service & Engineering**, Surrey

01737 844999, Website: [rsande.co.uk](http://rsande.co.uk)

### **Derek C. Mowat**, Edinburgh, 07836 740333

Website: [www.dereckmowat.co.uk](http://www.dereckmowat.co.uk)

### **Vintage & Prestige**, Northampton

07967 260673, Website: [www.vandp.net](http://www.vandp.net)

### **Hillier Hill**, Buckinghamshire, 01234 713871

Website: [hillierhill.co.uk](http://hillierhill.co.uk)

### **Pride & Joy Classic Cars**, Essex, 01702 615999

Website: [www.prideandjoyclassiccars.co.uk](http://www.prideandjoyclassiccars.co.uk)

## SPARES SPECIALISTS:

### **IntroCar**, London, 020 8546 2027

[www.introcar.com](http://www.introcar.com)

### **Flying Spares**, Leicestershire

01455 292949, [www.flyingsparses.com](http://www.flyingsparses.com)

maybe more than once! Also keep an eye on the coolant – if it's plain water, say in a car from a hot climate, the engine may have serious internal corrosion thanks to the lack of an inhibitor from the antifreeze. Old blocks and especially heads are getting leak-prone as a result.'

With the cost of a full specialist rebuild of a Mk VI or R-type engine nudging £20,000, do be sure what you're buying.

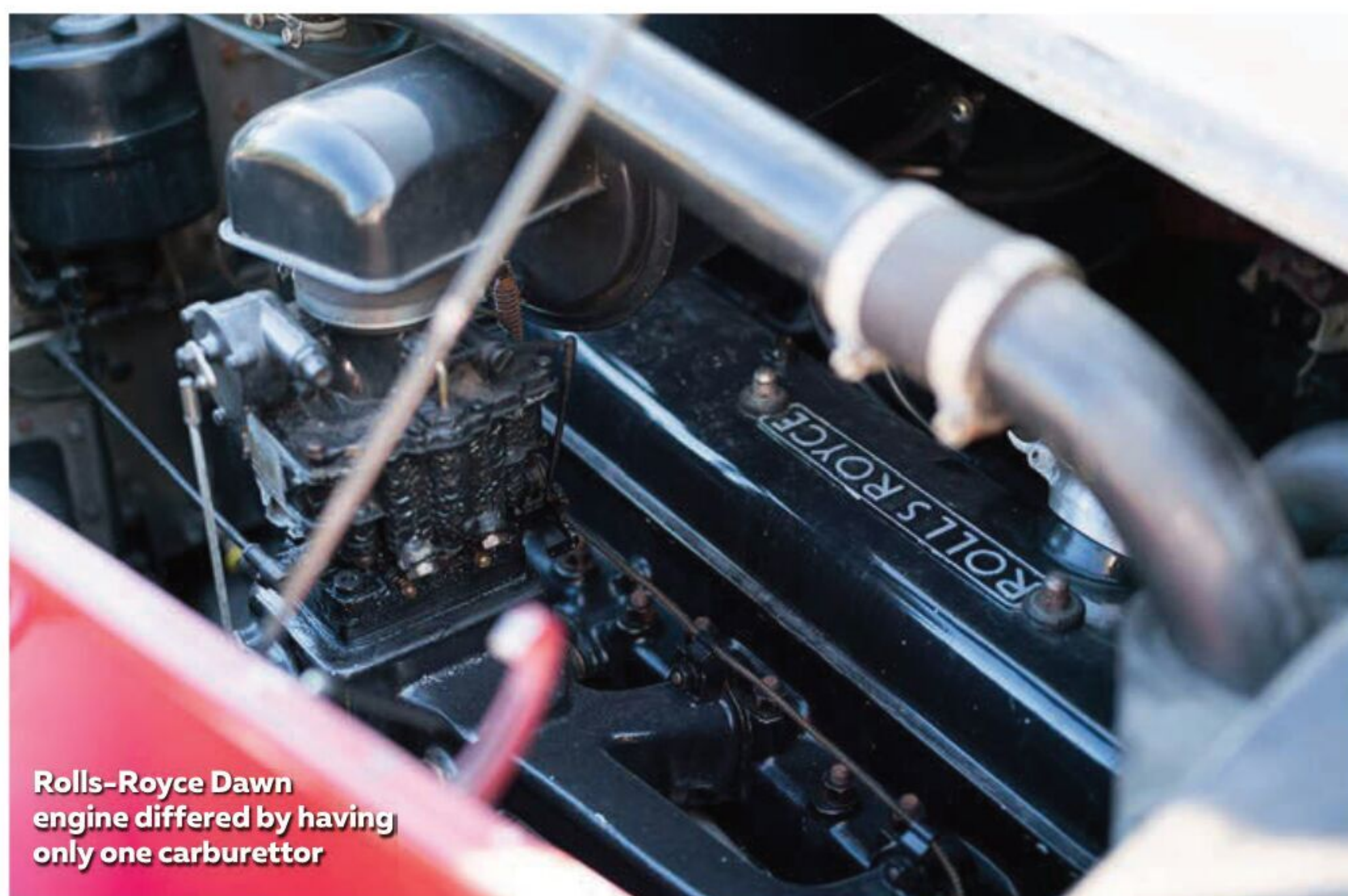
Gearboxes, at least, are tough. First and reverse have no synchromesh so be careful as you select them, though you can ignore any whine – they all do that. They should be much quieter and slicker through second, third and top. Instead, pay attention to the clutch and ensure it doesn't slip or judder. The old Mk VI and R-type clutches are hard to rebuild and adjust now, so diaphragm-type replacements are recommended. Unhappily, they'll cost £2800 to £3200 to buy and fit. Jeremy points out one other aspect to check:

'None of the engines are very oil tight as they use a left-handed scroll thread on the ends of the crankshaft to throw oil back into the crankcase, instead of a true seal. If there's oil around the bellhousing it may be contaminating the clutch and you could be in for some expense to sort all that.'

Soon after the introduction of the R-type, automatic transmission became an option. This is a four-speed General Motors Hydramatic and generally tough, smooth-acting and reliable but care should be paid to ensure it selects all four gears without undue jerks or slurs – look for clean fluid on the dipstick that does not give off a burnt smell.

'On your test drive, listen to see if you can hear rumbling from the rear axle,' says Jeremy. 'Lift off and then apply power again – can you feel any vibration or sense a lot of play in the driveline? The half-shaft bearings can wear out.'

Again, major failures get expensive though thankfully it's rare to find serious damage to the crown-wheel and pinion. »



**Rolls-Royce Dawn**  
engine differed by having  
only one carburettor



## BUYING ADVICE

### BENTLEY MK VI & R-TYPE

Shorter-booted Mk VI looks right from rear 3/4 view



A complete reconditioned differential is £5100 to £6300 from Flying Spares, depending on ratio, and new half shafts are £1550 each. Even rear wheel bearings are £415 a side so evidence of previous work – and a silent, vibration free axle – are huge plus points.

## INTERIOR CHECKS

It's obvious that the cost of re-trimming a really rough leather interior (£7000 to £10,000) may seem out of proportion to the purchase price of a scruffy Mk VI or R-type. But it's amazing what can be done to renovate tired-looking leather, even to the extent of letting sections of old hide into torn seats

to match the texture, then cleaning, re-colouring and reconditioning the whole. Work like this still calls for costly professional input but grubby, scuffed leather trim can often be transformed by a patient weekend of DIY effort.

A tatty dashboard is no reason to walk away either; it doesn't stop you using the car and there are plenty of people who can re-finish timber with discoloured or peeling lacquer. Most instruments are available as replacements from Flying Spares at relatively modest cost (from £48 for an ammeter up to £550 for the four-in-one gauge cluster) while the right headlining material is still available off the roll in both grey and beige.

Small tool set under dash – a shame if it's missing



## WHAT TO PAY

The dog-eared Mk VI saloon has been a common sight on auction blocks for decades, and values at the bottom of the market have not shifted much – £10,000 to £20,000 is still 'danger money'. Here, you will usually find 4.2-litre Standard Steel examples with a patchy history and cosmetic defects, but whether the car is an honest old bus from a loving keeper or a much-abused wreck waiting to swallow your money can be difficult to judge at first glance.

Inspection by an experienced owner (or better still, a professional specialist) should reveal concerns a first-timer has not spotted and could save you thousands. This remains true right through the price range, though

### SPECIFICATION

	MK VI	R-TYPE
ENGINE	4256cc/4566cc	4566cc
0-60 MPH	16.5s/15s	14.5s
MAX SPEED	94mph/102 mph	102mph
LENGTH MM	4865	5170
WIDTH MM	1753	1755
WEIGHT KG	1879	1910





**Mk VIs use right-hand change manual gearbox; auto option with R-type only**



**Dials in centre of dash for most Mk VI, R-type and Silver Dawn, but detail differences exist**



**How we like them  
- patinated but  
sound interior**



**Wood and leather  
are both costly  
to correct. Hold  
out for a good  
example like this**

obviously the horrors should diminish somewhat as the cost of entry rises. For £20,000 to £27,000, expect nicer 4.2-litre Mk VIs, less-than-perfect R-type saloons and some of the coachbuilt Mk VI saloons, again with room for improvement. By the time you get near £30,000 and on up to £40,000, you find much better R-types and 'big bore' 4.5-litre Mk VIs, plus the very best 4.2-litre Mk VIs, often from a dealer. These ought to need nothing more than annual servicing.

Cars with large recent expenditure that present in show-standard condition can fetch £40,000 to £50,000 with more being asked for really outstanding examples by some dealers. Only the nicest and most interesting coachbuilt saloons are worth more (a really good

Radford Countryman, for example) and there's then quite a jump to coachbuilt two-door coupés and convertibles, with £100,000 to £150,000 needed for a smart Park Ward drophead. Rare and important cars may fetch more but need to be assessed as individual cases.

Rolls-Royce Silver Dawns were made in far smaller numbers and fetch a significant premium over Bentley equivalents. Occasional rough ones appear with auction estimates around £20,000 but most are pampered and fall between £40,000 and £70,000, with the upper end reserved for the best coachbuilt examples and mint, low-miles cars with big boots and automatic transmission. Bentley R-type Continentals now seem to start around £650,000 and rise to perhaps £1.5m

depending on specification, condition and history and so are somewhat outside the scope of this guide.

Any four-door Mk VI or R-type still represents tremendous value. The R-type was the final model Bentley offered with manual transmission and they still feel like genuine sporting saloons, satisfying and capable. Yes, some parts prices are high, but these are cars that a competent home mechanic can look after and the spares support from the likes of Intro Car and Flying Spares is spectacularly good. If you want pre-war charm but with motorway-munching performance and good brakes, these are the cars for you. ■

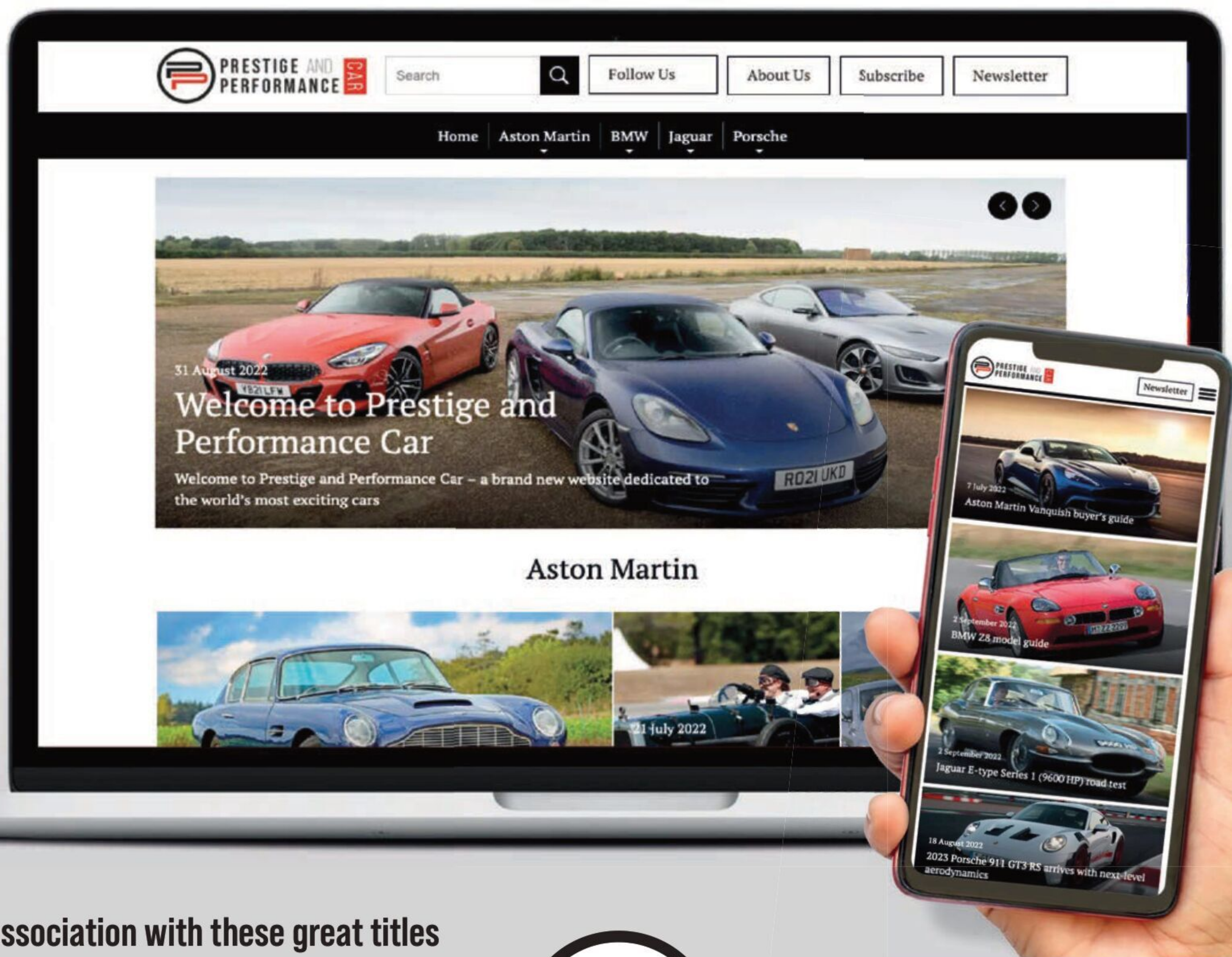
**Thanks to: Jeremy Padgett, Ross MacLeod, Ernie Warrender**



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# HOW NOT TO DO IT **PART 2**

Geoff Lang introduced us to his almost accidental purchase of a 1948 Rolls-Royce Silver Wraith in our last issue. Now, he tackles the reality of running the car

WORDS & PICTURES: GEOFF LANG

**A**fter three months holiday in Perth, Western Australia, it was time to go home to Sydney, and retrieve my 'unsighted' Rolls-Royce, Silver Wraith WAB37. Another little challenger faced me: where to park it. After negotiating with one of my very kind apartment neighbours, who had a spare parking space, and making sure it was large enough, I could now welcome it home with a safe, undercover, dry, Rolls-Royce 'bedroom'.

My wife, and primary investor, was

delighted. What a car, so mighty, so beautiful, so huge... Joanne has named the Silver Wraith 'The Baron' in homage to the second owner, Baron Hives, and for a bit of fun as well.

Being the proud owner of a 1988 Silver Spirit, I was ready for a little pain, and budget surprises. But I had not driven a manual car since 1965, so first, I must master the machine's gears, brakes, light controls and so on. Fortunately, the original Owner's Manual is in the car, and after a few weeks I mastered the gears, switches, lights, fuses etc,

and I have, by accident bought a car that started and stopped every time.

What I quickly found out was that the car was basically in very good condition, all electrical devices, partition, heater, demister, lights, rear window electric privacy blind, turn indicators, brake lights, wipers, all worked. I breathed a sigh of budgetary relief.

The first drive home from the auction house indicated the basic machinery was also in a very usable condition. The brakes worked (rear mechanical, front hydraulic, power assisted), and that







Out for a damp Sunday drive



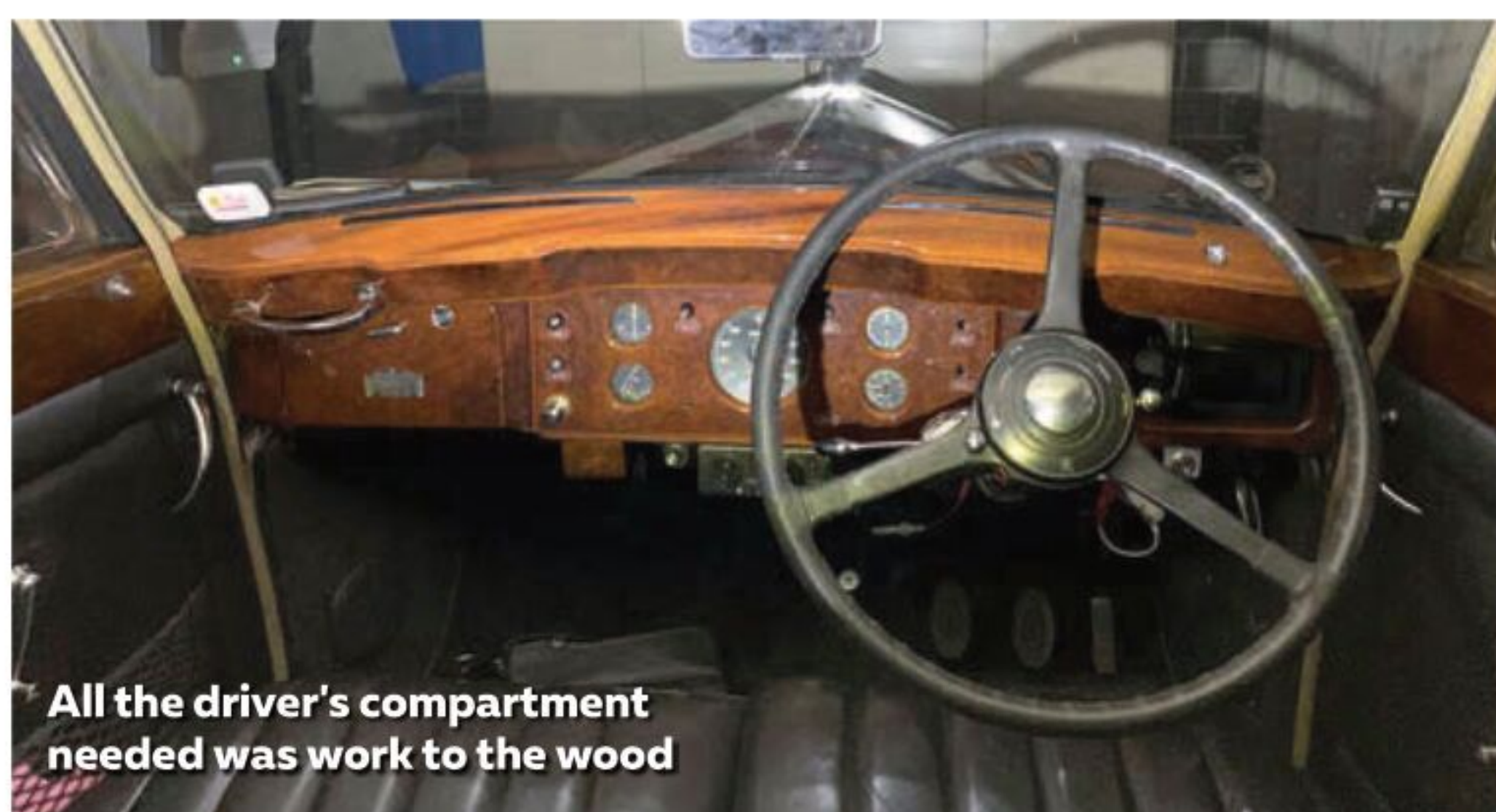
Tony the trimmer in jovial mood - before or after the work, we wonder?



Original seat base in perfect condition underneath



New rear seat in progress



All the driver's compartment needed was work to the wood



Stunning refinished woodwork, thanks to John Adamson

the engine was quiet and produced a very strong pull. The wheels created no squeaks or squeals, the clutch worked easily, all four gears operated smoothly (a little tricky in first, which is non-synchro), the cooling system operated, the Packard-type front suspension was soft and supple with no rattles or squeaks, so there was another very big sigh of relief from both of us.

After about a month of proud and

reliable progress around Sydney, one morning 'The Baron' simply refused to start, and showed no signs of life. In desperation I contacted Garth Selig of Repair and Restoration, an Australian expert for older Rolls-Royces, who kindly offered to take my car in and give it some love. I asked him if it could be ready for our upcoming trip to Berrima in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales. After four weeks,

my car magically reappeared and ran like a Swiss watch. A full service, a detailed inspection with correction and adjustments all over the place had done the trick. How could it be better?

I now have all the original build records, and previous owners' service records dating back to 2009 and discover there has been a full engine rebuild very early on by Rolls-Royce and a more recent full top and bottom »



engine re-build. Also regular services to renew registration, so hopefully all the basics are taken care of. So what next?

## GEOFF MAKES A PLAN

Well, after six months' driving experience, I drew up a 'master plan' to make this Rolls-Royce mine. My needs are very basic...and amazingly, they exactly match my wife's priorities!

**#1** It must be safer to drive

**#2** It must be more reliable to go on RR events (500km radius) and come back again running

**#3** It must look good, not perfect or concours, but pretty, for my wife.

**First step:** to make it safer, install

seat belts in the front. This required a brace wrapped around the chassis for strength, and certification of the work by an NSW state road engineer. At least now, if we have a crash, they will find us in the car. Along the way, the chassis and underframe of the car was expertly examined, and found to be in excellent condition, no bends or even wear marks, and all cables were secure and recently replaced.

The grab straps in the rear cabin had been wrongly placed, and would easily pull out, so one strap had to be re-wound. As they were of silk, I had to locate an expert in this niche area. My friend Dennis was working on a historic boat restoration, and located a suitable, older person, with these exact

skills. They were relocated so that they would support an adult entering and leaving the car, as intended.

**Next step:** get all the lights working, install a 'classic' style blinking turn indicator stalk, on the same side as my Silver Spirit, replace the dismal dim 1948 bulbs with LEDs on all internal and external lights except trafficators, get window wipers and original washing jets working, make sure 'suicide doors' close and lock correctly, and finally install a discreet rear vision camera, on full-time, as a reversing camera, and as a complimentary rear mirror aid.

After another few months' driving, I realised that the manual hand brake was excellent, but too difficult for me to operate doing uphill starts, so I have installed an electric hand brake. This pulls the existing cable connected to the handbrake mechanism, and appears as button on the dashboard, with an indicator light to show it's on, just as you would find in a modern car.

**Next Step:** Take in on as many daily local drives as possible and see what happens. It worked perfectly, starts, stops, but was a little down on power. I did have a 1948 1.5 litre Jaguar MkIV in 1966, and this was about the same power and performance. Not knowing what to expect from a fine but chubby 1948 RR limousine, it seemed fine, so I decided no mechanical work was required at the moment.

**Next Step:** Make it look more loved. The rear cabin had wear and tear holes in the West Of England wool fabric seats and door panels, the jump seats were tatty, the carpets needed replacing, So I went to see my favourite motor trimmer, Tony Huggins, who did a great job on my Silver Spirit project, and watched his eyes roll when I asked if he would take on a rear cabin retrim in soft cream leather and the best wool carpet.

Covid isolation was scheduled to start within a week in NSW, on August 2, 2021, to be exact, so I was in a bit of a hurry and persuaded Tony that it could not be all that difficult. He agreed, so right away we took all the rear cabin out, seats, door panels, jump seats, carpets, and left these with him to progress as fast as he could. Thankfully there were no surprises, no rotten wood, no recent leaks. The roof lining, West Of England wool cloth, was in good condition, and the interior light and partition were fully operational from buttons in the armrests and dashboard.

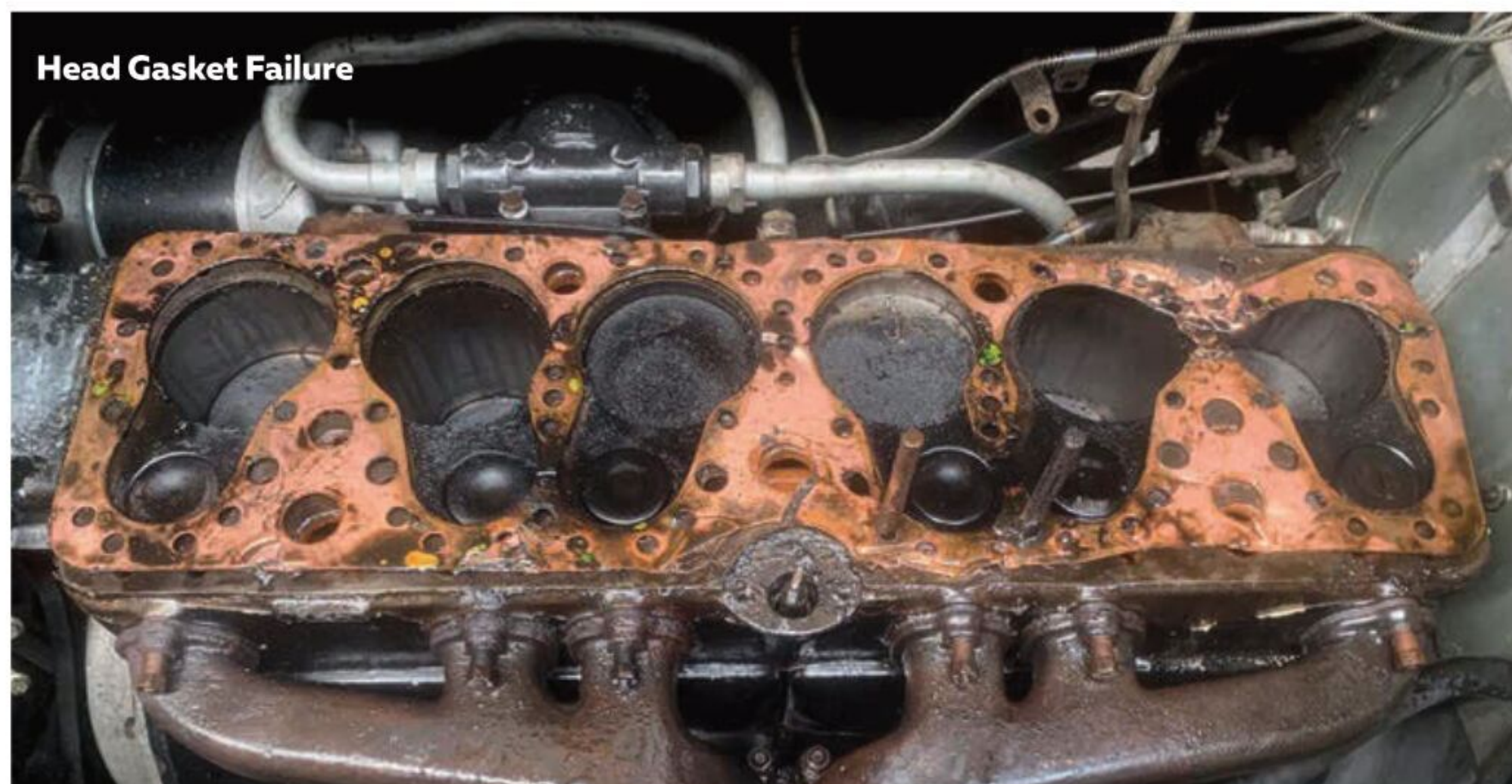


The day the lockdown begins, 2021 - and it's off to the workshop again



Reconstructing the rear cabin - without the car





So again, another lucky break.

The front cabin was in reasonable condition except for the dashboard woodwork, non-working clock, and oil pressure gauge. I engaged the same person who did the work on my Silver Spirit, John Adamson, to come and take the dashboard wood off and bring it back to better than new, with materials better suited to our relentless Australian summer environment and make additional walnut panels for the rear cabin area, covering the area behind the front seats, to brighten up the drab 'poverty pack' 1948 rear cabin. A small deviation from delivery design, but Park Ward Design 51, was very basic, and they could have done better. Perhaps the UK Government was a little down on funds at the time.



## A NASTY SURPRISE

Now the real trouble began, I could not start the engine to drive home from the trimmer. I contacted Garth Selig again and at short notice we agreed he would make it work, so the day our COVID isolation started, the car was put on a trailer from the trimmer, and shipped direct to Garth. Back to Step 2 in my master plan...make it reliable.

Garth discovered that my engine was working very well on 4 cylinders, and

had zero compression in the other 2 cylinders, so a 'head job' was essential, at the very least. Not in my plan, but let's get started. The problem was explained this way: the previous head removal was not followed up by a usage period, and then retightening of the head bolts. It also appeared that non original exhaust valves, guides and springs had been used, so off to Flying Spares for brand new ones. Amazingly they came in weeks.

So the car was now in three pieces; wood, cabin interior and the rest, with three different people working as much as they could during COVID. But where could I go even if I had the very best Silver Wraith? Nowhere... so just sit and wait it out. ■

**Next time: will Geoff's Silver Wraith make a triumphant return to the road? Will his bank manager – or Mrs Lang – ever forgive him?**

## 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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Wheels off, and the brake bleeding marathon can begin

# THE MARCH OF PROGRESS

The past few weeks have seen encouraging developments. It's not the beginning of the end, but could it be the end of the beginning?

WORDS & PHOTOS: NIGEL BOOTHMAN



Thread on new-old suspension cones was too rough to use

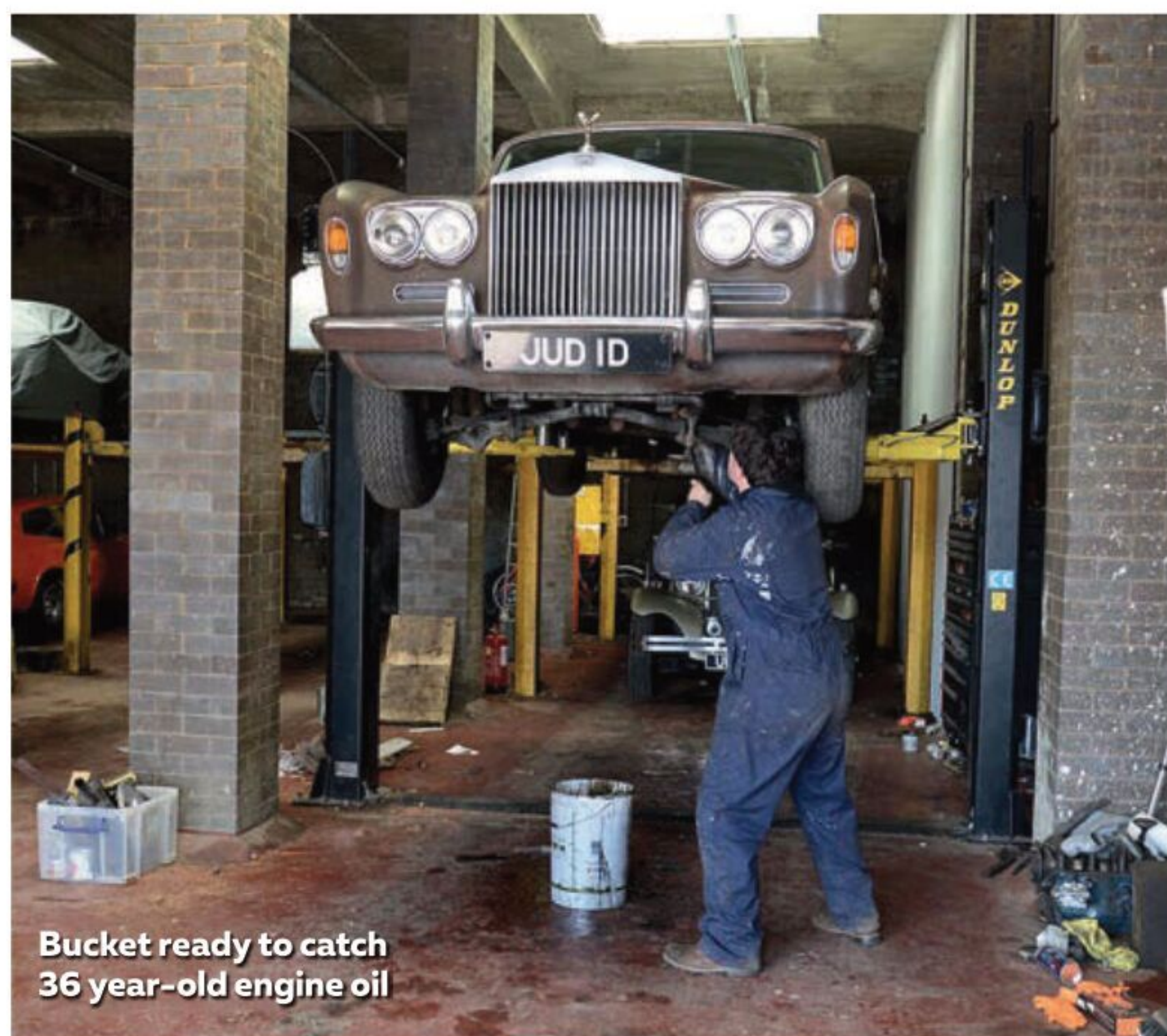
We ended the last report with a daunting tick-list of jobs to do before we could consider using the car on the road. We had dreamed of a long-distance adventure to the Goodwood Revival, but it soon became apparent that this was to remain a dream. What we did achieve, however, has been hugely encouraging and should mean we have a debut appearance at an event of some kind to report on next time. Though now I see that written down, it makes me nervous!

Back to that list of jobs. The car was still with Stephen, our friend and mechanical mentor, and before it could leave him, he had to re-seal the levelling rams in the rear suspension

and assemble everything. This involved re-fitting the rear springs and shims, and the cones (more like long, cup-shaped isolators) that rest inside the tops of the springs and screw onto the base of the rams. As standard, our car came with a rubber section in the cones and on one side this had collapsed, so Nigel Sandell recommended finding solid ones from a later Silver Shadow. This I did, but when they arrived, the threads were too badly damaged to screw onto the rings. Happily, the vendor soon supplied a better replacement set and Stephen could build everything together.

Yet the ride height was still off: too low on one side, about right on the other. Stephen manfully tried





**Bucket ready to catch  
36 year-old engine oil**

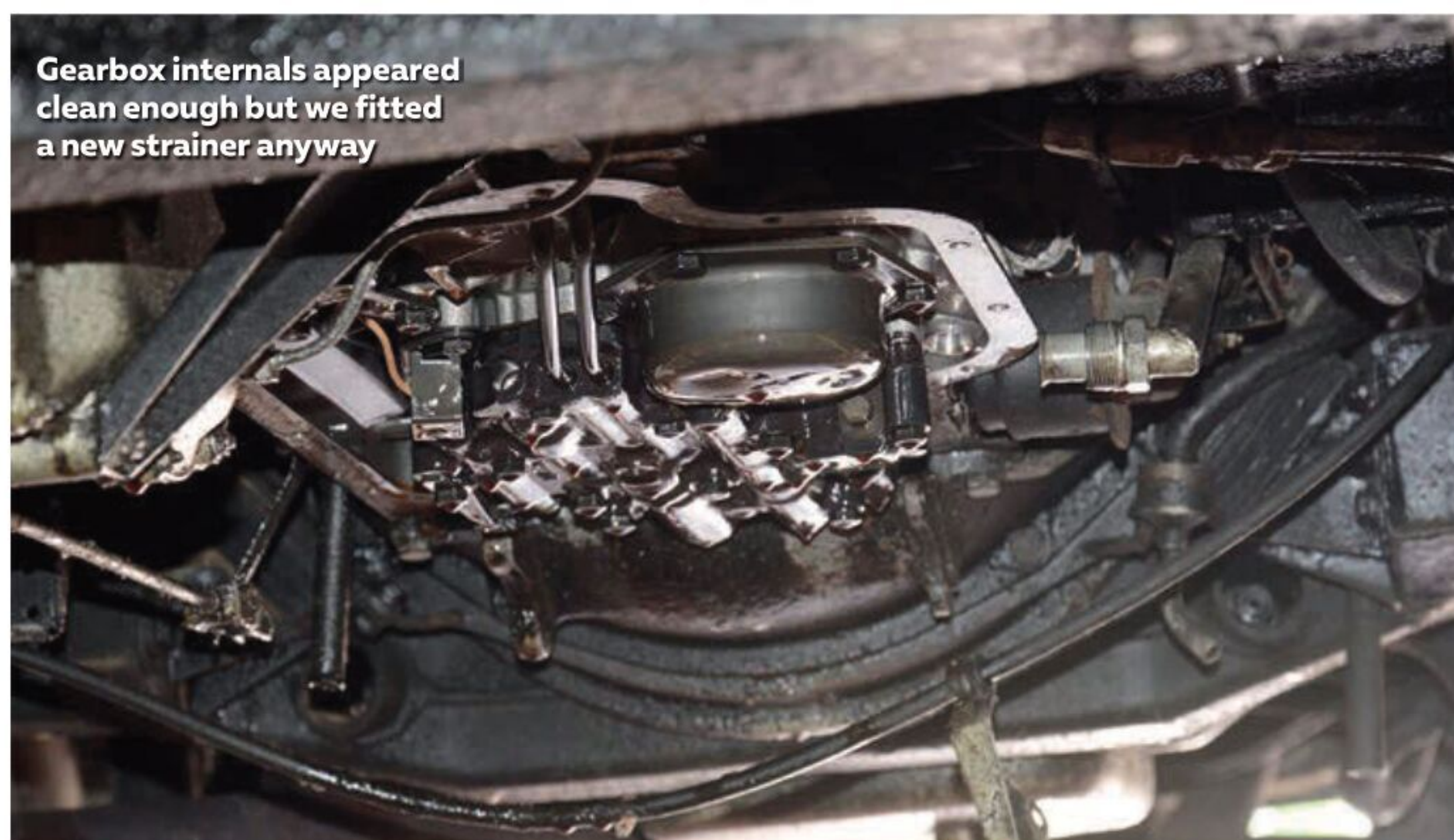


**New oil filter  
element ready to fit**

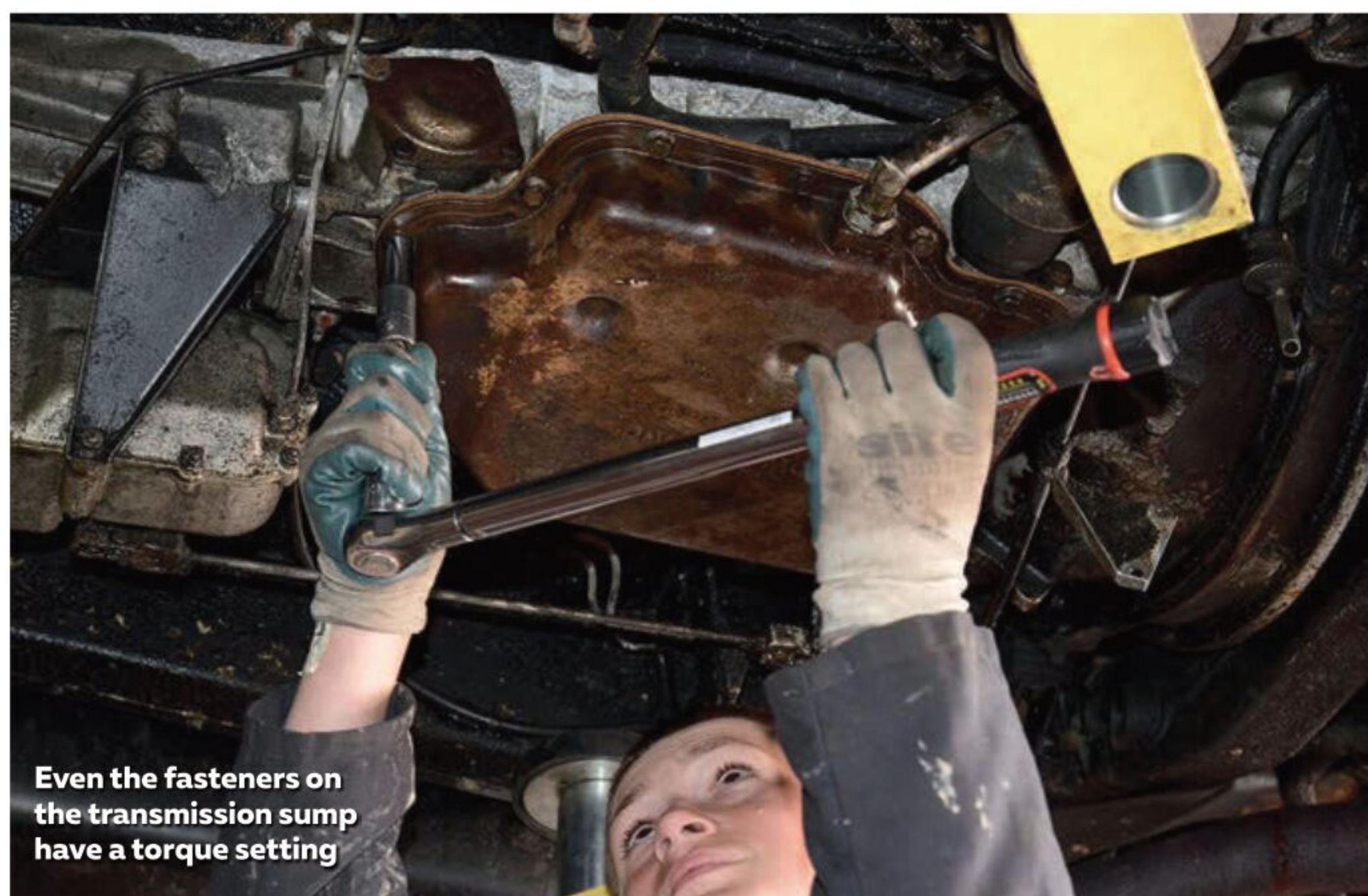
again, re-shimming the low side and in surprisingly few attempts, found what looked to be a correct and even ride height that would not cause the rams to activate just to maintain 'showroom height'. With the gremlins in the switchbox sent away on leave (to return when?) Stephen put the dash fascia back in place and the car was ready to drive onto a trailer for its next step forward.

We had the use of a sturdy two-post lift for just a few days, so with Findlay Wyatt, my partner in this restoration, I drew up a list of parts to order from Flying Spares and assembled the necessary oils and fluids. We set about the service tasks as methodically as we could, using the excellent handbook supplied with the car. Draining the old engine oil wasn't the usual horror show – no black tar here, just something that still had a yellowish tinge and must have been replaced soon before the car was laid up. With the new element in the filter housing and a wipe of oil on the new seal, we poured fresh 20w/50 into the housing and secured it in place, then filled the sump.

Next came the transmission. Findlay drained the fluid – again, not too bad-looking – and withdrew the many small machine screws, while I removed a triangular pipe-mounting bracket that prevented the sump pan from descending. The old strainer, a kind of multi-layer tin tray, came away with the pipe that plugs into it and a new one went on, together with fresh o-rings for the pipe and a new sump gasket. »



**Gearbox internals appeared  
clean enough but we fitted  
a new strainer anyway**



**Even the fasteners on  
the transmission sump  
have a torque setting**



Refilling with fresh ATF could be done to an approximate level but no more – more on this later. My son William found the torque setting for the sump screws and gently nipped them up.

At the back axle, Stephen had wrestled on the expensive new boots that fit over each inboard driveshaft joint, so all we had to do was remove the threaded cap from the top of each joint and insert 150ml of EP90. This is only really possible with a syringe, and heaving 150ml of thick oil through a narrow pipe is tiresome, so Findlay, William and I took it in turns. With fresh oil in the differential, that was the back end dealt with.

Now the fun part – brake bleeding. The system was full of the Dot 3 we had used to wash out the old, very dirty fluid, and it should really be RR363, the factory-specified stuff. So I invested in six costly bottles of the latter and we began the process.

## PARTS USED THIS ISSUE FROM FLYING SPARES

DESCRIPTION	PART NUMBER	RREC DISCOUNT PRICE, +VAT
Oil filter kit	RH10003P	£28.80
Transmission strainer kit	RH10009P	£38.78
Driveshaft boots, each	UG11121	£96.98
RR363 hydraulic fluid, each	RR363L1P	£17.33
Air filter	UE36200P	£24.82

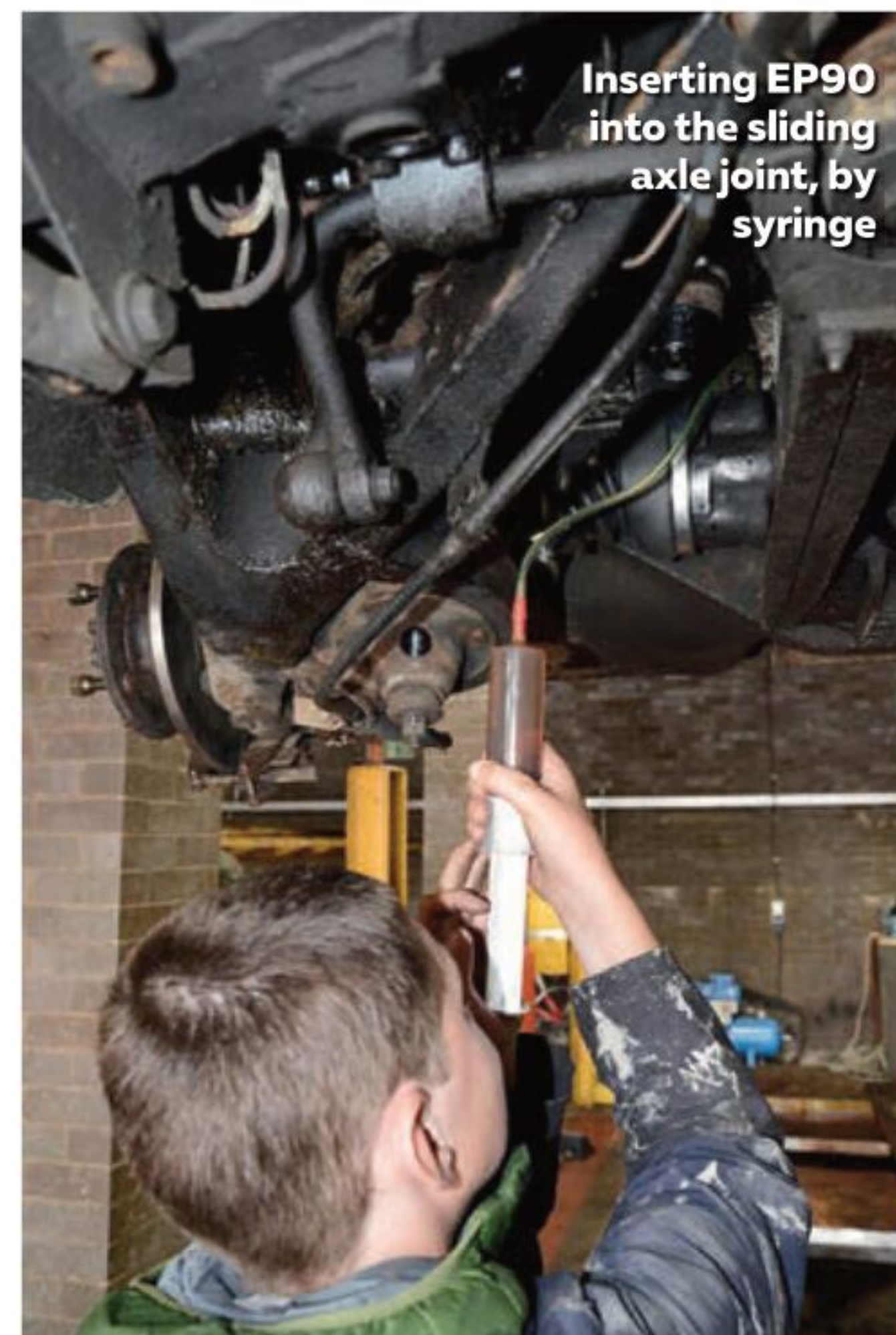
There is a specific order in which the brakes should be bled, and it seemed logical to start with the master cylinder circuit, without running the engine and charging the accumulators, giving us a full pedal stroke. This we did, and when happy with the quantity of fluid we'd pushed through, we turned the engine on for five minutes and moved to the high pressure system. Bleeding the accumulators themselves, the first task, was the hardest – burning a forearm on the hot exhaust while struggling to undo the bleed nipple was par for the

course. Ah yes, the bleed nipples. Like a good boy I had bought fresh new ones from the motor factor only to find, after fitting and nipping up tight, that they leaked. So the old ones went back in. Rolls-Royce specific, we assume?

We thought we'd finished, but upon testing and observing what we had, found that the brake warning light was coming on after only 25 or 30 pumps, and that fluid seemed to be moving from the rear part of the reservoir to the front, i.e. from one circuit to another. Had we replaced a return



Findlay gets on with draining the old axle oil



Inserting EP90 into the sliding axle joint, by syringe



Was fluid really transferring from rear compartment (right) to the front?



Old and new bleed nipples are similar but different



pipe incorrectly when cleaning out the reservoir? No, it was just that one accumulator was inadequately bled and we hadn't been too careful about filling to the right levels. So one more bleed of the rear accumulator produced lots more bubbles and froth, then both reservoir levels sank and refilled as expected when the system was charged and discharged, and no brake warning lights came on before 65 or 70 pumps. We celebrated by assembling a new air filter into the inner wing (far harder than expected) and giving the car a wash. This was made easier by some of ClasX's task-specific products; a concentrated shampoo for winter (or barn-find) levels of grime, and a spray-on cleaner for lighter, localised areas. I look forward to trying their leather and interior trim cleaners on our dingy seats.

Dare we sneak off for a drive? The car is MoT exempt, insured, freshly serviced and entirely roadworthy, so off we went for all of 600 yards to the nearest roundabout and back. It drove beautifully, bar a front-end shimmy set up by a bump, which needs investigating. All the gears and indeed kickdown functioned nicely but when we got back, it refused to select Park, something that we thought we'd spotted before – the car must be running in Park for accurate checking of the transmission fluid. Testing continuity through the switch contacts on the steering column seemed to show all was well so the problem lies a bit deeper. Seems we've found our next task. ■

**Thanks to: John Wyatt,  
ecosseclassiccars.co.uk**



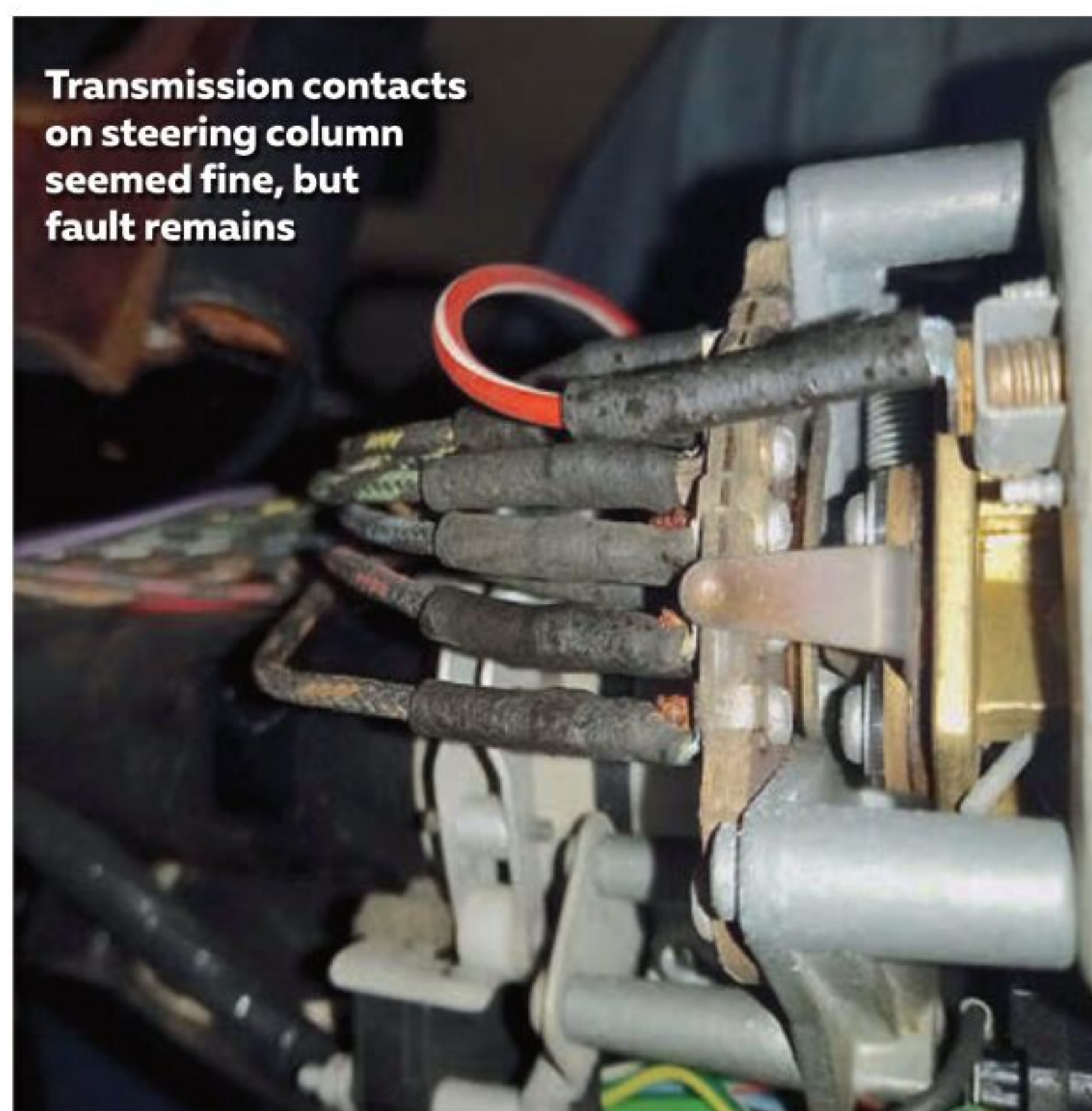
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- touch wood**



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**A remarkably helpful  
guide to keeping  
the car roadworthy**



**Transmission contacts  
on steering column  
seemed fine, but  
fault remains**



**Suds and water give  
a hint of the shine we  
hope to recover**



# GOODBYE, OLD FRIEND

Our much-loved 1990 Bentley Turbo R has left us to find a new custodian. Who better than Paul Wager, who oversaw its arrival, to say farewell?

WORDS & PHOTOS: PAUL WAGER

Although I was responsible for acquiring our Bentley in the first place, I haven't seen it for quite some time, so when one of our regular project car logistical puzzles saw me exchanging a Mk1 VW Golf GTI Cabriolet for the Turbo R, I was keen to revisit the majestic experience.

Both were registered in 1990, but as you can imagine, it's hard to picture two more dissimilar cars.

Since I last had it in my possession the Turbo R has gained a new steering rack and a rebuild of the rear brake calipers as part of a series in our sister title Classics World, while RR&BD editor Nigel then looked after it for some time. It's he who takes the credit for getting the shift quadrant and selector lever to line up correctly, plus having the air conditioning gassed up with the gratifying surprise result that it was blowing cold on the sweltering August day when I picked the car up – which was just as well since the passenger window seemed slower than I remember, which made me reluctant to open it.

A rebuilt 'DIP' warning light panel also means you can now see which gear has been selected, but sadly it's not a perfect job as the fuel gauge now refuses to function and the engine coolant warning is permanently lit despite the level being fine. Despite that, as I sped along the M4 on a Sunday evening the Turbo R felt like a familiar, faithful companion and I found myself slightly saddened that my ultimate destination was the Brightwells sale on September 14, where we planned move the car on so we can immerse ourselves in another Crewe-built project.

In the meantime, though, the need for an extra pair of hands on a photo shoot saw my 18-year old son volunteering unusually enthusiastically for camera car driving duties. Would we be using the Bentley? Of course we would... and it seemed an entirely appropriate time to repair to the rear seat where I



could answer emails in a most civilised way whilst being chauffeured.

It's a suitable end for our time with the ultimate early-Nineties executive bruiser, and while it's given us plenty of wince-inducing bills, it's also been great fun. Perhaps most telling of all, every person who drove it, either for a brief trip here and there or for a period of weeks and months while they acted as its keeper, has been converted. Many were agnostic at best about the Turbo R before they tried it, but the car's combination of comfort, power and roguish charm won them over. What's coming next? You'll have to wait and see! ■





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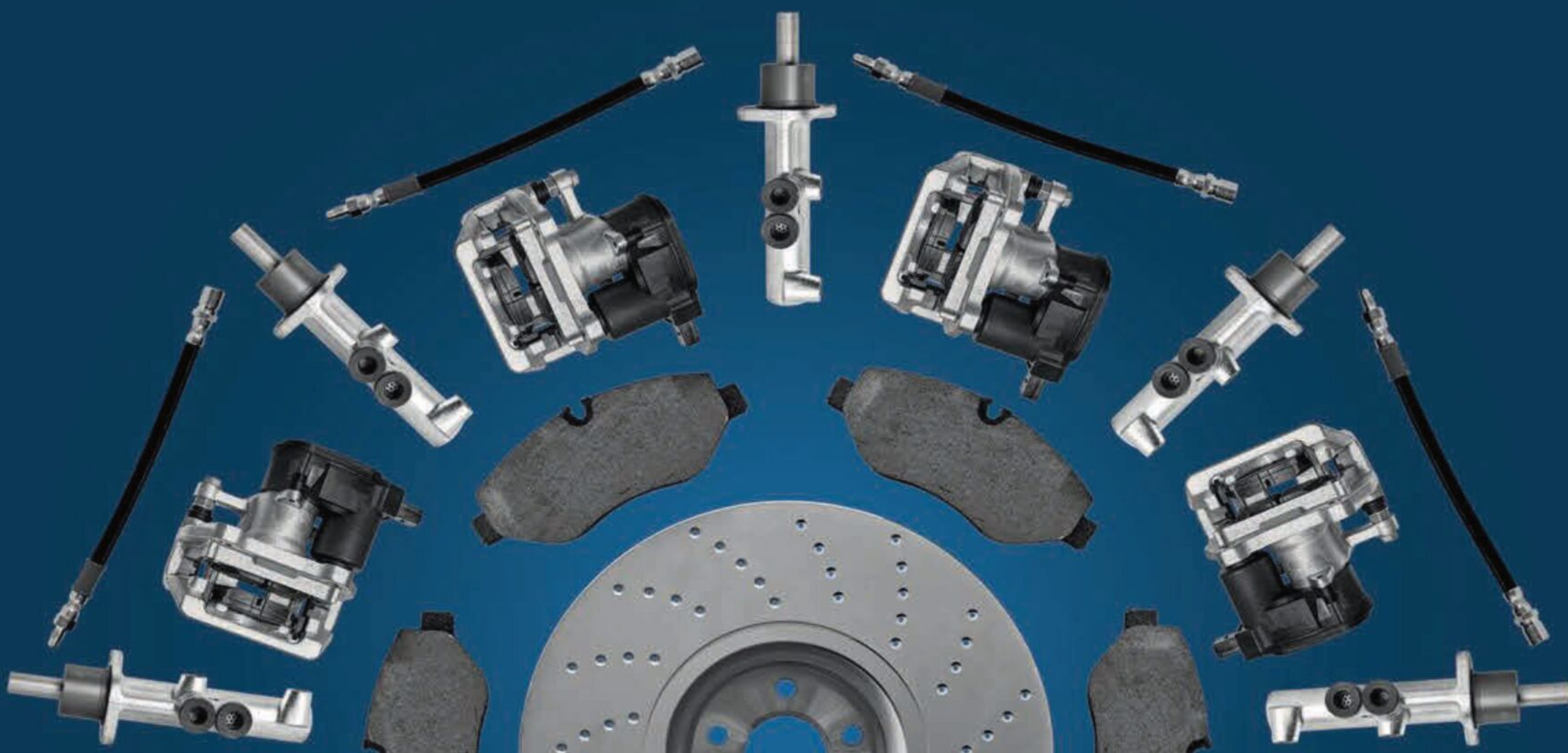


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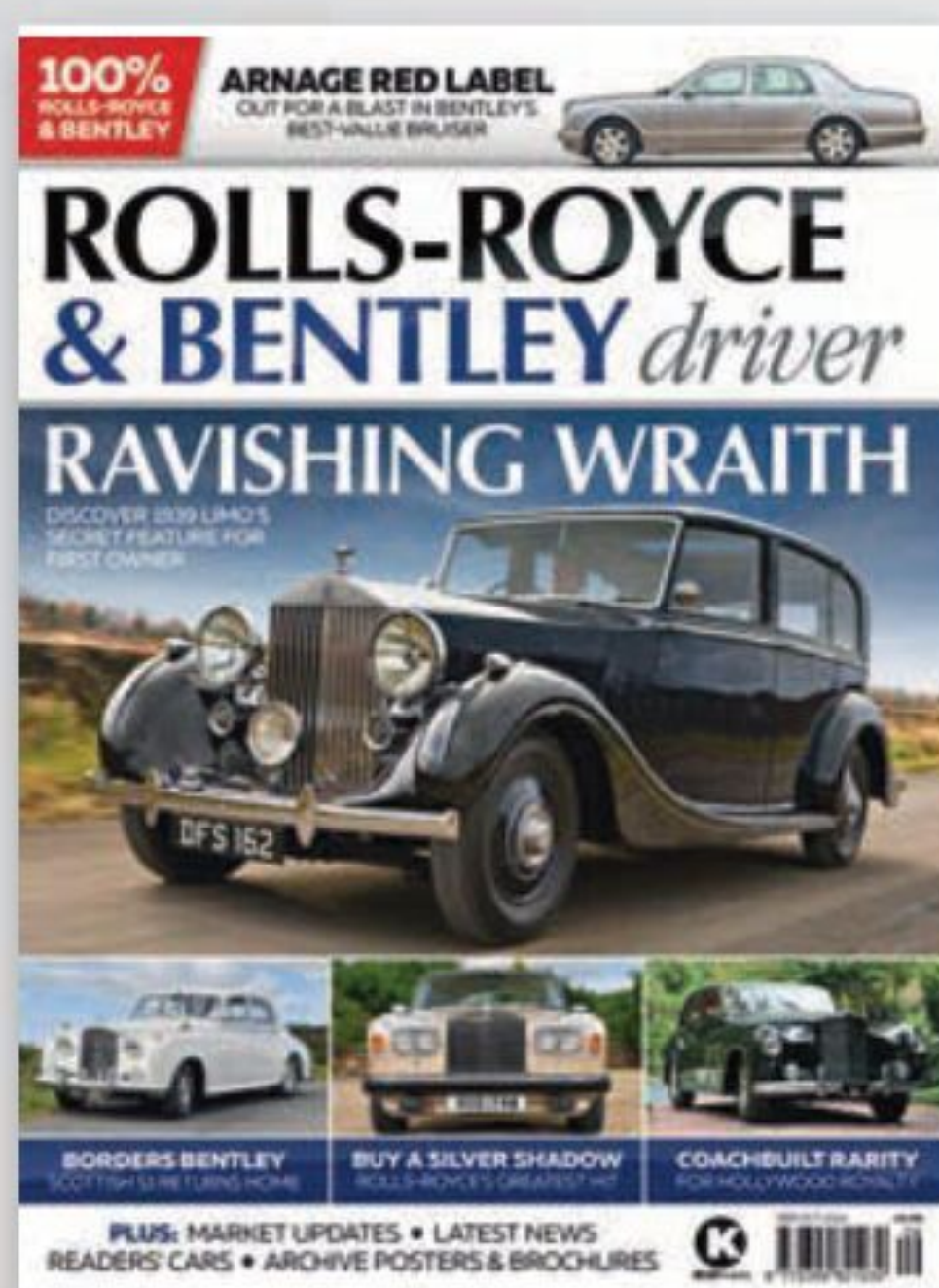


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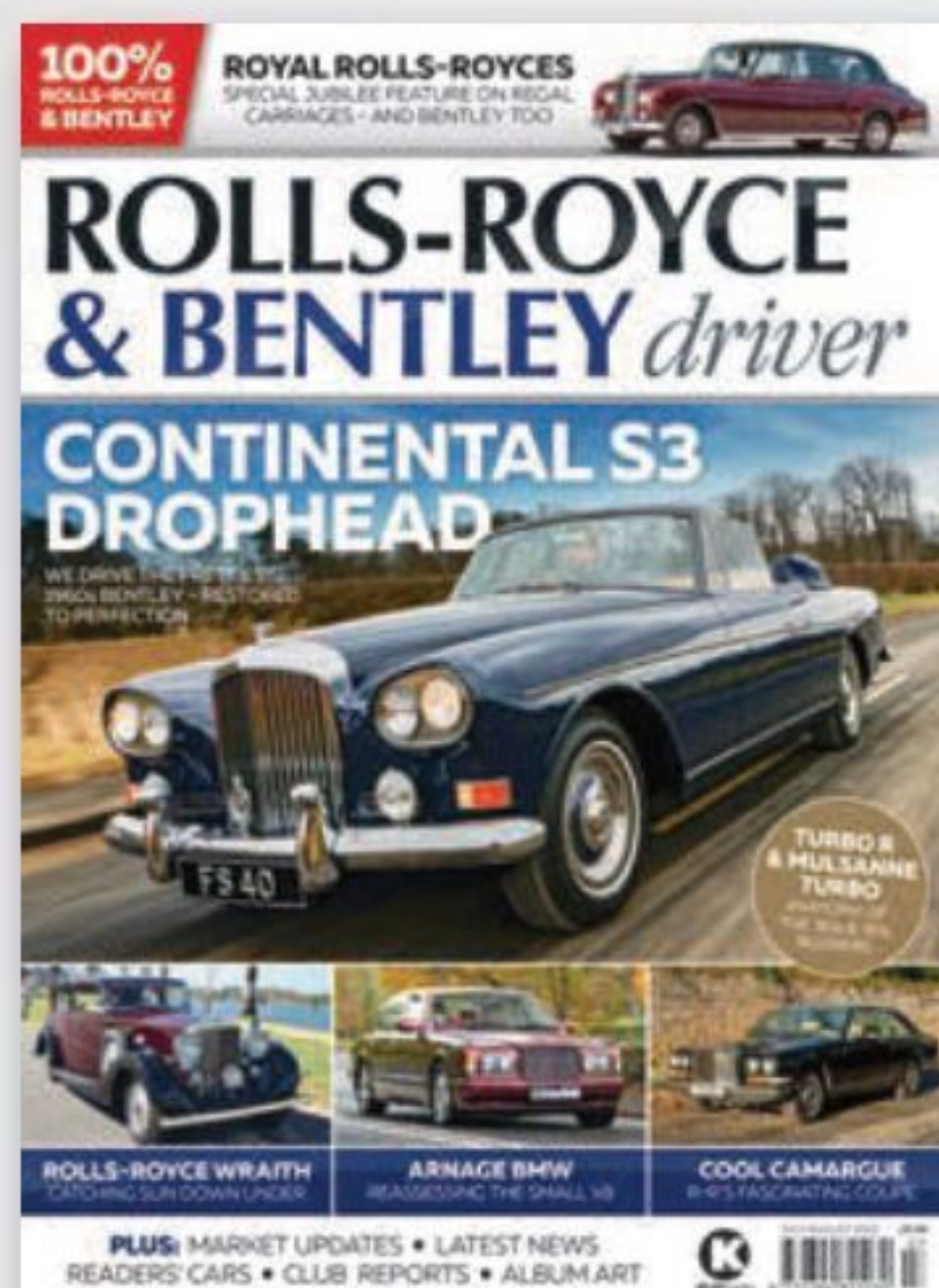
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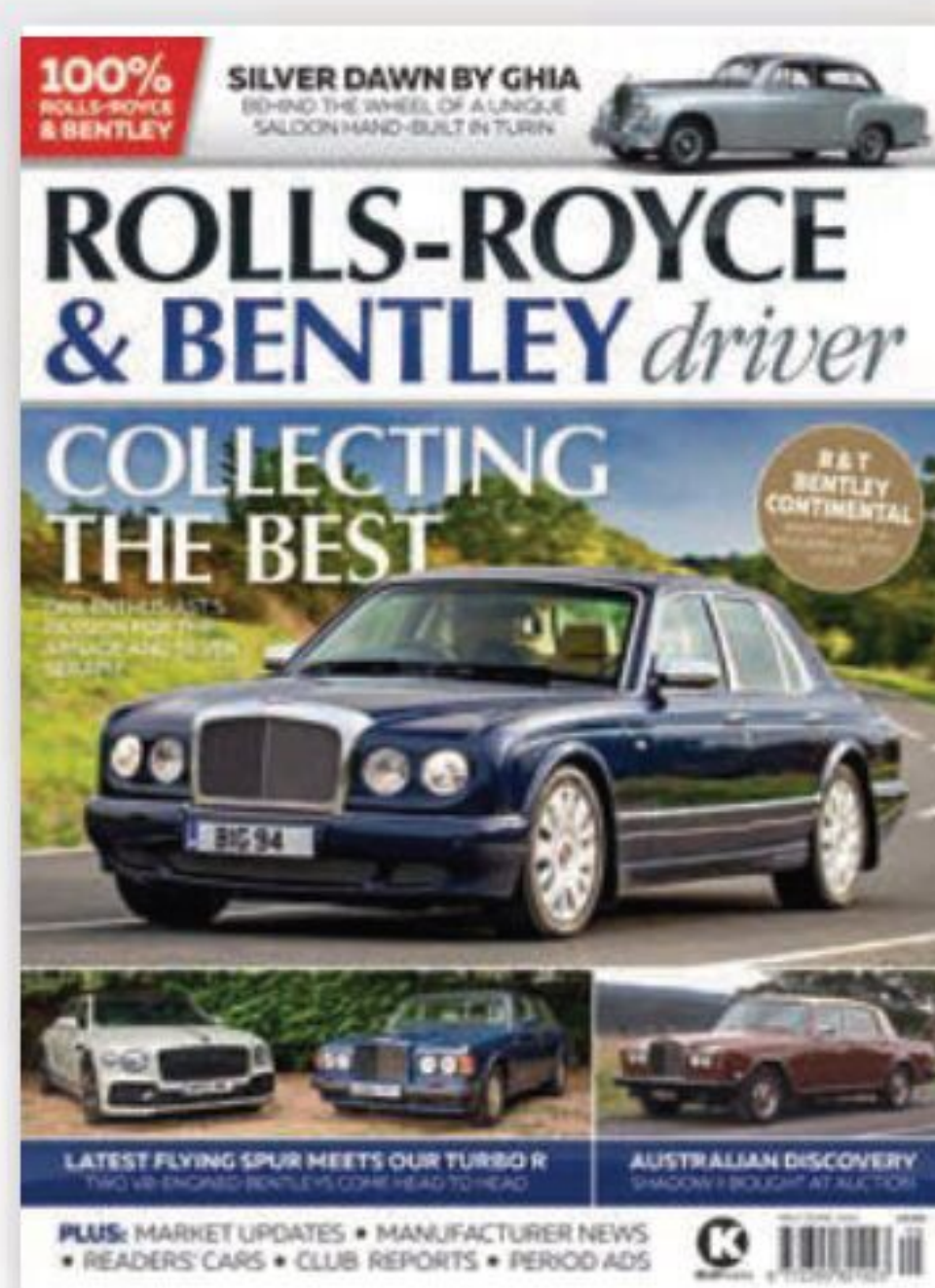
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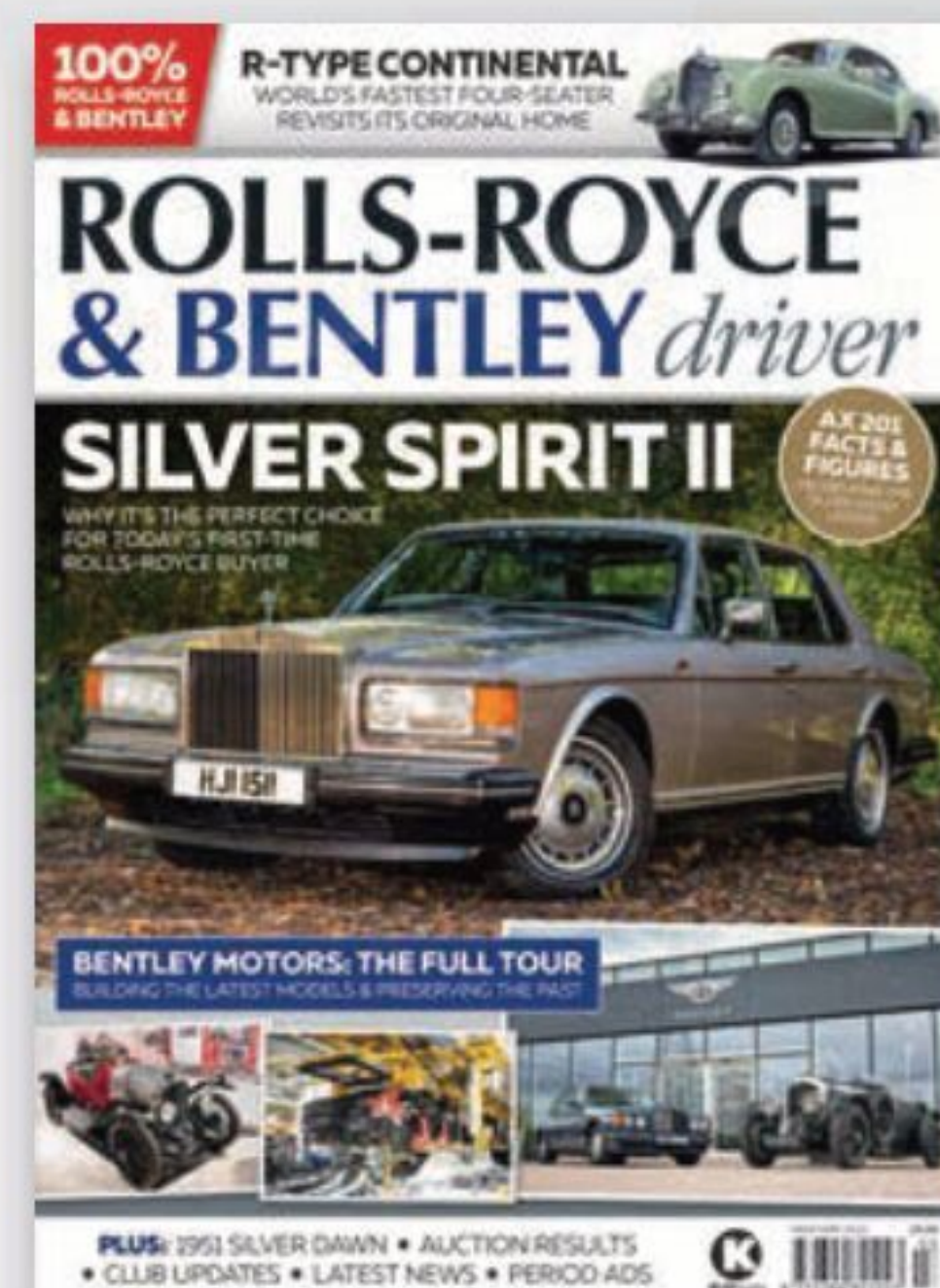
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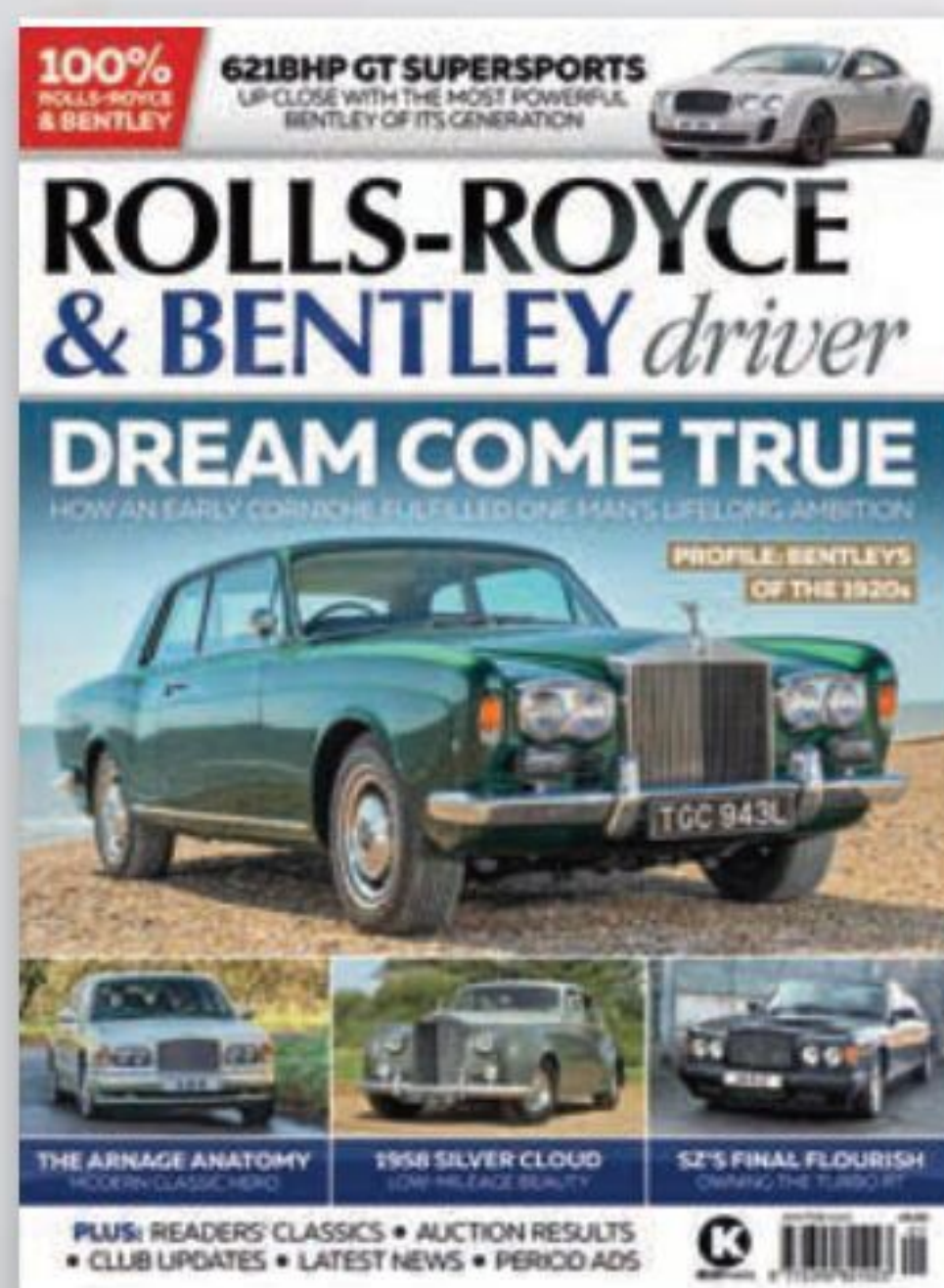
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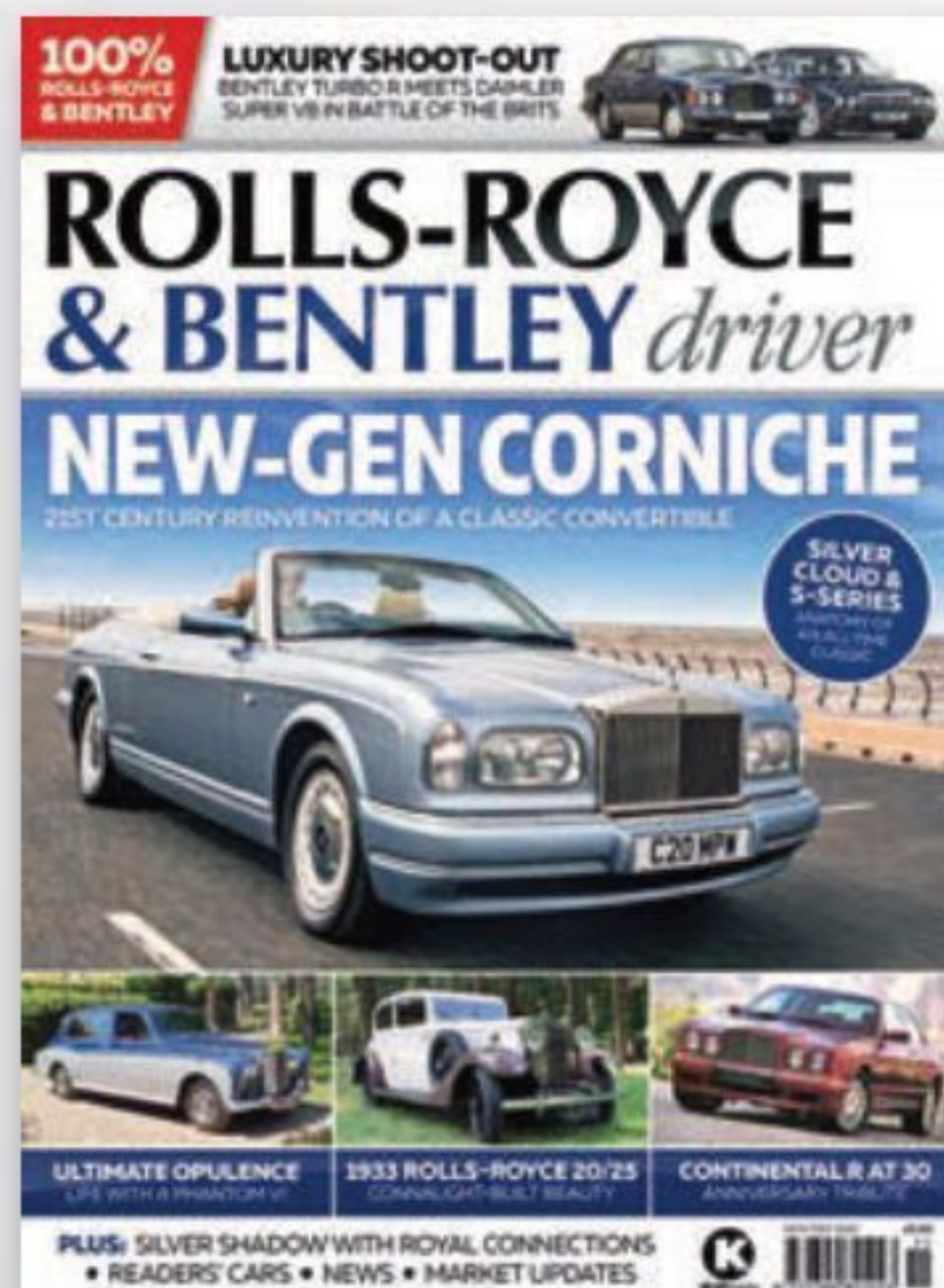
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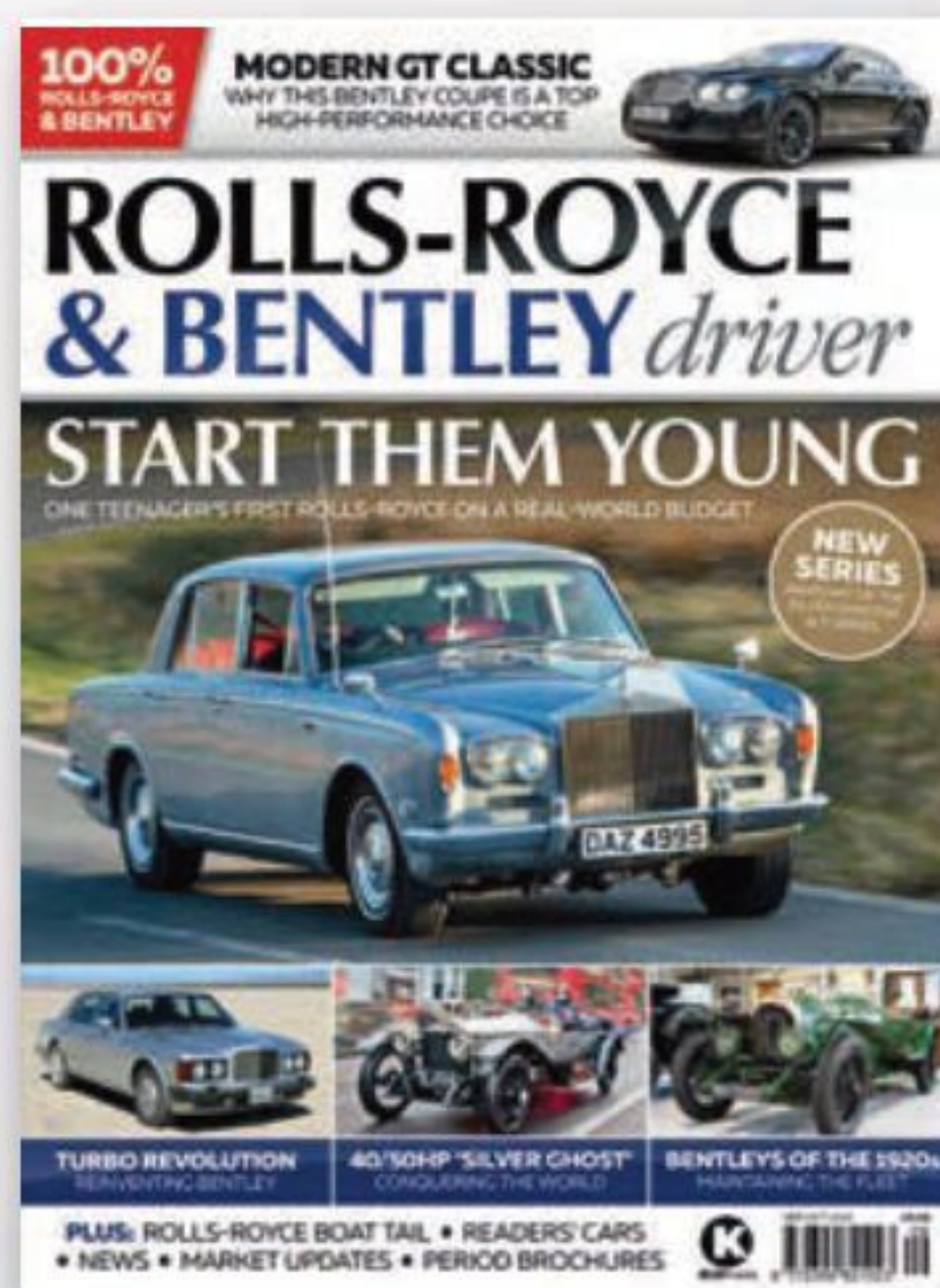
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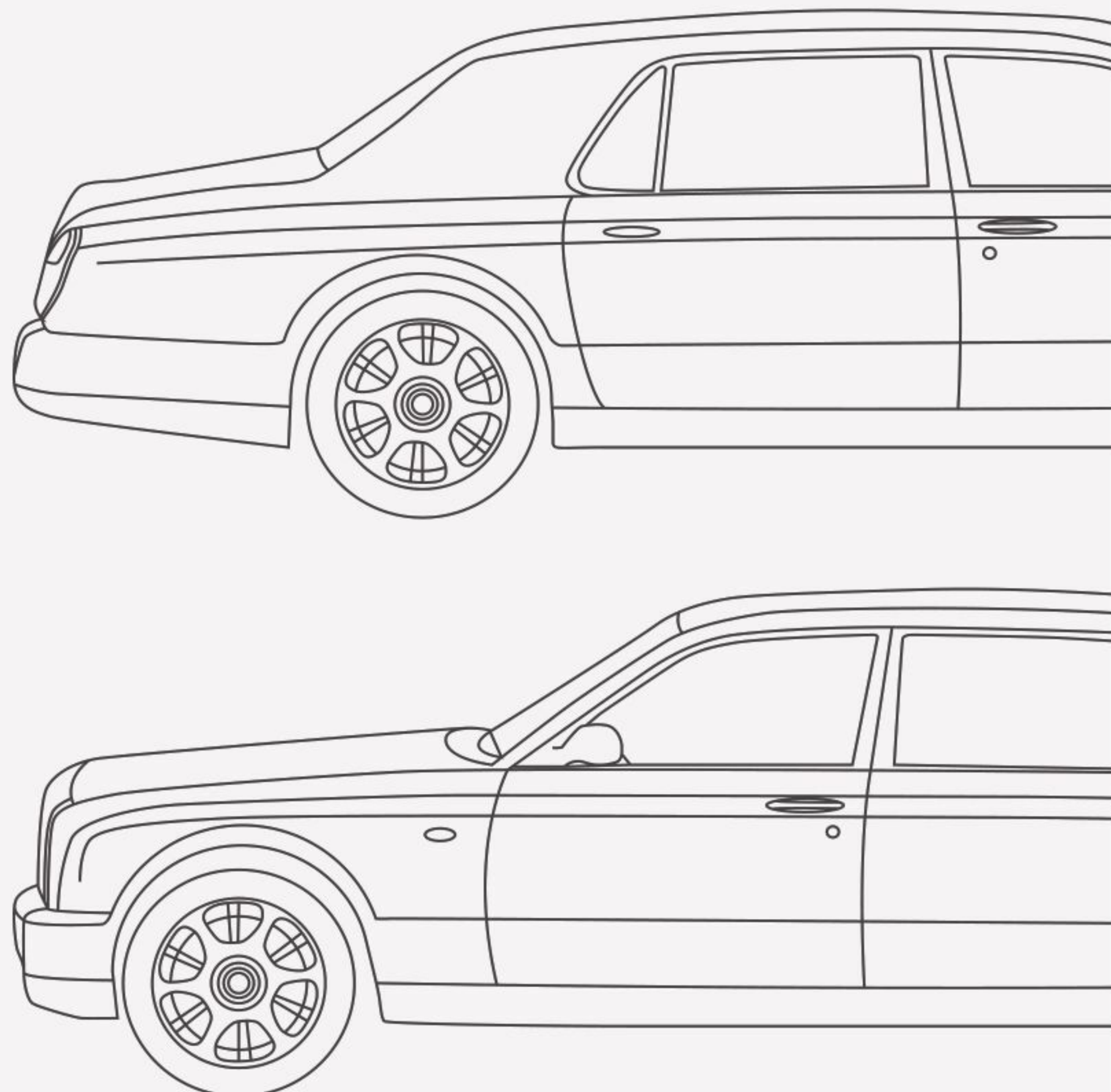
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## NIGEL BOOTHMAN

The first comprehensive history of Rolls-Royce was published way back in 1938, before being reprinted many times – and the author is almost as interesting as his subject

It was a book I'd been meaning to buy for a long time, so when I came across a 1961 copy of the revised edition, retaining its dust jacket in excellent nick, it was an easy decision. *The Magic of a Name* is famous amongst the hundreds of books published on aspects of Rolls-Royce and its history. Though Sir Henry Royce, Claude Johnson and the Hon. Charles Rolls had all departed by 1937, so many of those who worked alongside them and helped make the company what it was, were still involved.

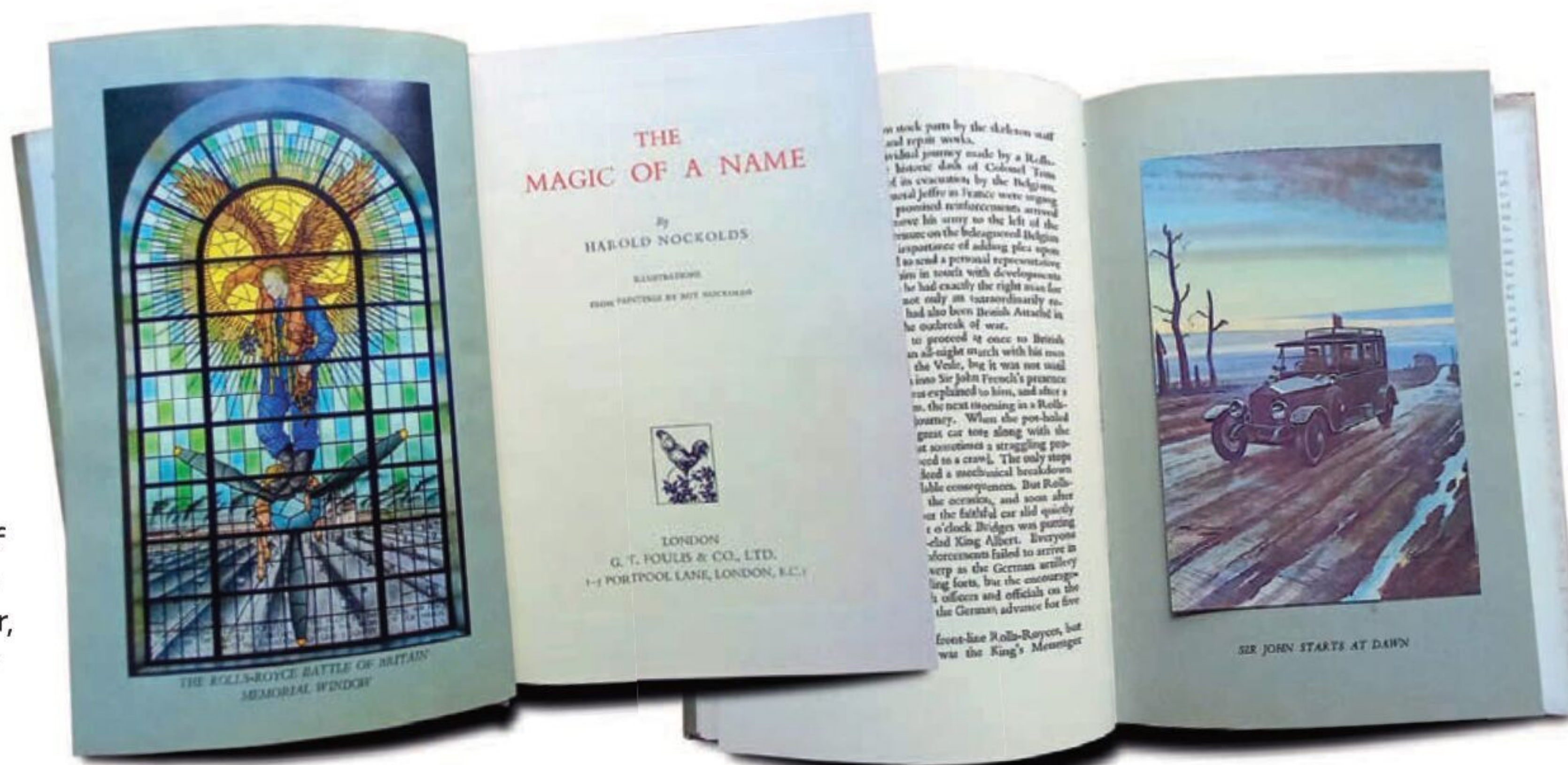
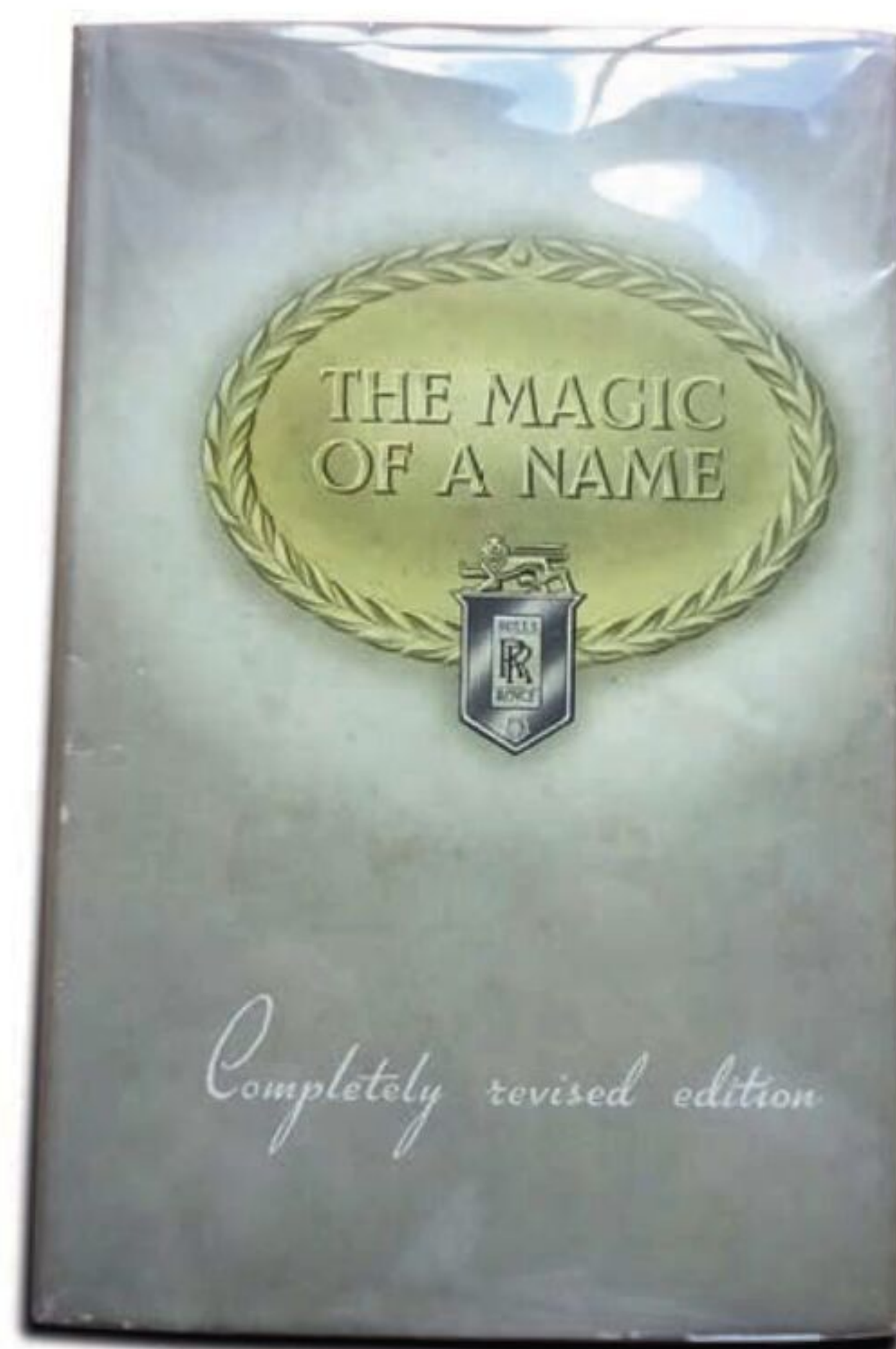
This gave Harold Nockolds, the author, opportunities that no subsequent biographer of 'the Name' could enjoy. Indeed, Nockolds thanks many of the senior staff in his Author's Note, particularly Ernest Hives, then Managing Director, and Lieutenant-Colonel Fell, Technical Sales Manager, who read the manuscript. It's therefore an 'official' history of the firm, approved and improved by those involved, but brought to life by Nockold's lively if rather reverential prose.

Harold Nockolds was born in 1907 and wanted to be a motoring journalist from his school days. After starting out at *Motor Sport*, he left to become the *Times* motor racing correspondent in 1936, and soon after was contacted by the publisher G.T. Foulis with a suggestion for the book that would become *The Magic of a Name*. Nockolds had a reputation for being an immaculate dresser and though sometimes thought aloof or remote, seems to have commanded much respect. Bespectacled and with a large balding dome of a head, he looked every inch the intelligent communicator, and clearly found an affinity with those at Rolls-Royce who trusted him to do them justice in print.

**"This gave Harold Nockolds, the author, opportunities that no subsequent biographer of 'the Name' could enjoy."**

If the name Nockolds is familiar for another reason, it's down to Harold's younger brother, Roy, an eminent automobile artist who was contributing to titles such as *The Autocar*, *Motor* and *Motor Sport* almost from adolescence. He served as an official war artist in the RAF and became even better known for his depictions of the Battle of Britain. His illustrations, both of cars and aircraft, light up *The Magic of a Name* as colour plates, loosely gummed to heavy pages at intervals through the book.

Both brothers continued on their chosen path into old age, Harold first editing *Motor* and then rising to the top of two magazine publishers, while still writing books. But his name will live on for one publication above all others, of course, and though the text has now dated a good deal (its worshipful style reflects the tone of most car magazines back then), it's still a great start for anyone who wants to know how the Rolls-Royce name gained its magic. ■





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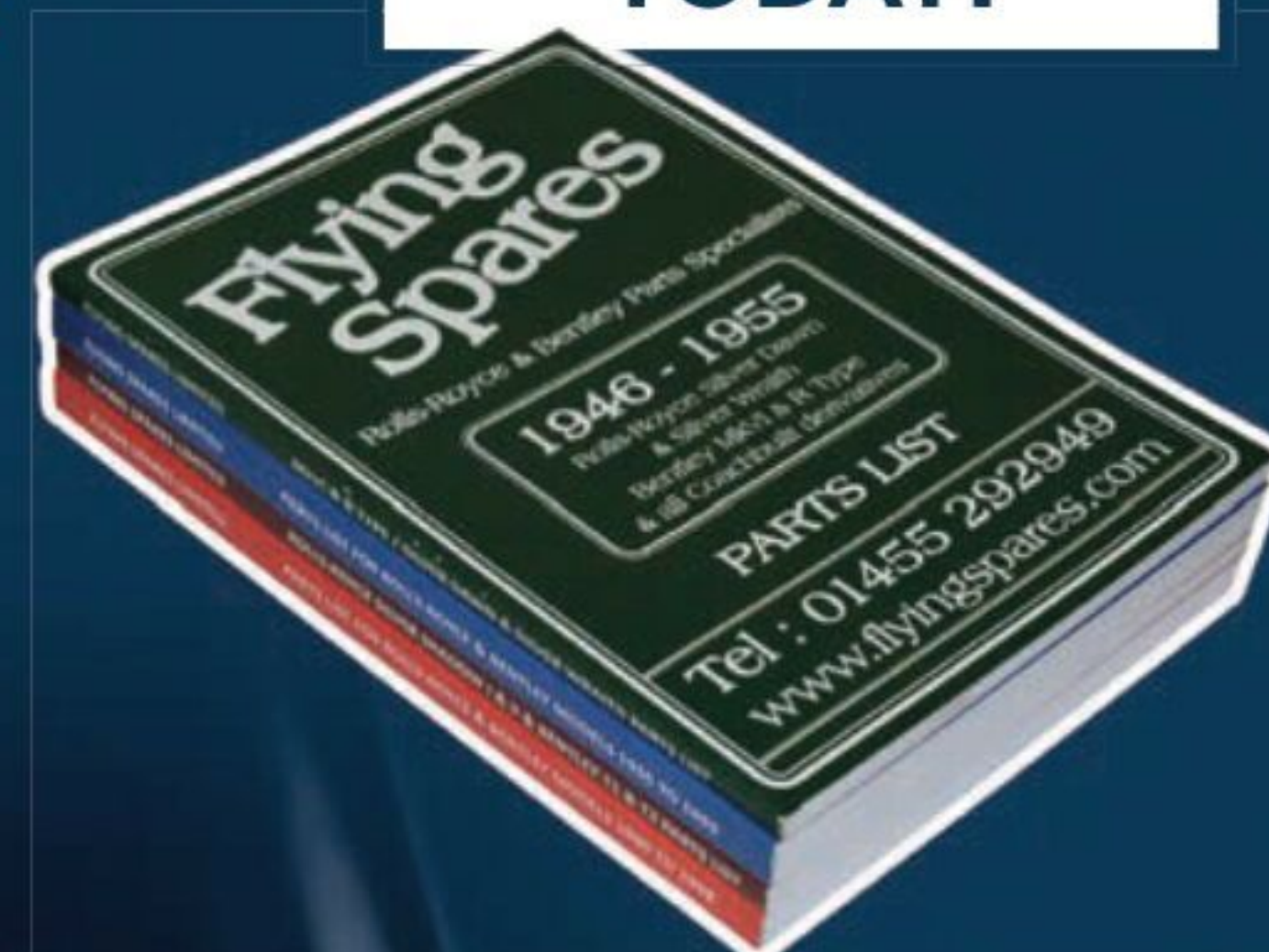
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