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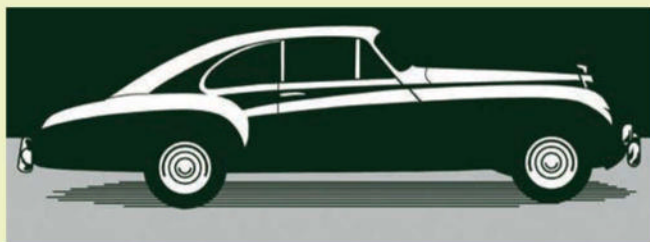
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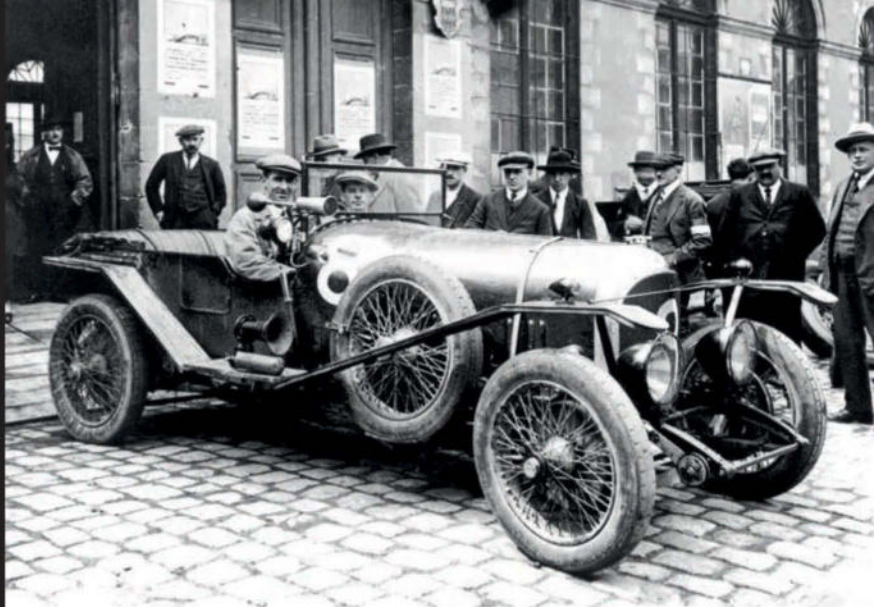
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A Century of Speed

On June 15th, exactly 100 years will have passed since John Duff crossed the finish line at Le Mans in the Bentley 3-litre he had shared with Frank Clement. That win changed Bentley's fortunes overnight. A succession of further victories created a legend that's loomed over the Bentley brand ever since. Rather than tell the Le Mans tale yet again, we've assembled a bumper-sized issue to include many generations of Bentleys with a greater or lesser sporting edge. How much of that Le Mans heritage makes itself felt – and does it matter to us?

One of the cars on our cover – the wonderful S3 Flying Spur – is subtitled 'Gentleman's Express', and that would be an accurate (if sexist) way to describe much of Bentley's output. Yet one of the most dashing and unusual cars in the issue, the Abbott-bodied Mk VI drophead (p.26), is enjoyed to the full by a lady owner, whose mother owned and drove it before her. To question our assumptions a little further, we have a car that's worn both badges: a Corniche coupé, born a Rolls-Royce, converted by a Rolls-Royce dealer into a Bentley. Does it affect the car's character? If you prefer the Spirit of Ecstasy to the Flying B, you'll find advice on the Silver Cloud range from p.104. Our Technical Guide (p.114) tackles the intimidatingly complex Continental GT while our historical feature (p.58) looks at the life of Amherst Villiers, the engineering brain behind the Blower Bentleys.

On a personal note, this is my last issue editing *RR&BD* before I move on to new projects, though I'll be popping up now and then as a contributor. It's been a fascinating job, involving the finest and friendliest corner of the classic car movement. Best of all, I can exit with some good news for *RR&BD* readers: from the next issue, the Editor's chair will once again be occupied by my friend Paul Guinness – welcome back!

Nigel Boothman

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GOODWOOD'S LUXURY AMBITION: LATEST DROPTAIL AND SPECIAL EDITION GHOST

Rolls-Royce's apparent transformation from a car manufacturer to a fashion & luxury house gathered pace with the recent announcement of the latest bespoke Droptail build and the production of a limited run of special-series Ghosts, created 'in tribute to the world of fashion'.

The 'Arcadia' Droptail is the third of this brief run of coachbuilt cars, each created to a theme of its own. Some of the bullet points from the car's specification are eye-popping, even by Goodwood's usual standards: the wood

sections took 8000 hours to create; the car features the most complex clock face in Rolls-Royce history for which assembly alone took five months; the timbers are protected with a bespoke lacquer created to protect them in tropical extremes of climate, which took 1000 hours of testing to perfect.

The name comes from the ancient Greek concept of heaven on Earth, which is a high bar to clear for any bespoke build. The Singapore-based clients were closely involved throughout the process, said Rolls-Royce's Chief Executive, Chris Brownridge:

'Clients curate every facet of these masterpieces, which are brought into being by what I believe is the most talented team of experts in the luxury industry. Arcadia Droptail exemplifies this approach. This motor car is deeply connected to the client's personality and preferences, and in capturing their character we have been empowered to make inspiring design, craft and engineering statements that show the world our ambition, and our unparalleled abilities.'

The Droptail is the third of the grand coachbuilt adventures on which Rolls-Royce embarked, following on



from the Boat Tail and Sweptail, and is perhaps even more ambitious as differences between individual cars go beyond skin deep – the Arcadia, for instance, has a ‘less casual’ roof that requires a couple of people and a few minutes to put on. The price has been guessed at by various sources, with \$30m (£23.5m) forming the consensus of internet opinion.

For only a little more than 1% of that – perhaps £325,000 – Rolls-Royce customers with a fondness for couture can acquire the new Ghost Prism. In a bold move for a company that has traditionally separated itself from fashion in the hope of remaining timeless, this new run of 120 cars marking 120 years of Rolls-Royce deliberately ‘Embodies the preferences of clients from the fashion and design industries, increasingly compelled by dark, neutral tones with bold strokes of colour.’

In practice this has delivered four Gunmetal grey examples in press release photos, each with a different ‘accent colour’ (Phoenix Red, Turchese, Mandarin and Forge Yellow) applied to lower bumper inserts, brake calipers, coachline and – most challenging to old-school sensibilities – the steering wheel. Yet whatever traditionalists think of Rolls-Royce’s startling colour palette, pricing structure or image, record years of increasing sales indicate that the world, as a whole, approves.



FLYING SPARES ADDS NEW GREEN AND PURPLE COOLANTS

Flying Spares has updated its free online guide to bringing your classic car out of winter storage with a new video and two new coolant products: 5-litre PHC Green and 5-litre genuine Bentley Violet/Purple.

Breaking down the ungaraging process into five steps – paperwork, in-garage checks, start your engine, in-car essentials and the shakedown drive – it emphasises that replenishing your coolant will protect against overheating during the hot summer months. The new PHC Green (part number UE70936L5P) is suitable for virtually all 1946-2010 Crewe-built models, while the Bentley Violet/Purple (part number JNV862564) covers Continental GT, GTC and

Flying Spur up to 2018, plus Bentleyga 2017-2020 models.

Further top maintenance tips start with a plea to not head straight out for a drive. ‘Before starting the engine after an extended period of storage, always give your car a thorough visual inspection, both inside and out,’ said Andy Thwaites, Technical Services Division Manager at Flying Spares, and the author of our Tech Guide on page 114.

‘Grab a torch and have a look underneath. Any signs of deterioration – cracked paint or corrosion on the exterior, damp on the interior? Then pop the bonnet, check your fluid levels, and look for leaks. Rubber belts and hoses will have expanded and



contracted with temperature changes – any obvious perishing? Are all clamps in place? No loose connections?

‘The final step is the shakedown drive – a short run of only 10-15 miles, so you’re close to home should anything go wrong. If you have any concerns, consider a spring service – safety is paramount and it’s a great way to get peace of mind.’

For the full guide, visit flyingspares.com



ROLLS-ROYCE GRAVITY RACERS RESTORED

These are RR-0.01 and RR-0.02, the first Rolls-Royce cars made at the Goodwood factory, following the company's change of ownership to BMW. They were created to take part in the Soapbox Challenges at the Goodwood Festival of Speed in 2001 and 2002, but being created by a factory working hard to stun the world with the soon-to-be-launched Phantom VII, they are rather more than conventional soapbox racers. They feature a lot of carbon fibre and even composite honeycomb plates with precision-machined aluminium

components, while 0.02 has a true race-style steering rack with slick tubular tyres. Both cars won on debut, with Rolls-Royce's then Design Director Ian Cameron overhauling the Bentley entrant on the final corner in 2001 and taking the prize again in 0.02 the following year.

They went on display in the main reception area but came out of retirement for the final Soapbox Challenge in 2013, on which occasion 0.02 hit the frankly terrifying speed of 72mph as it crossed the finish line. After more than twenty years, both cars were

put through a full body and mechanical restoration performed by a team of Rolls-Royce Apprentices. This included some repairs probably never performed on any soapbox racer before – though common enough on full-sized roadgoing Rolls-Royces. The Palladian front grille of 0.01 needed a tricky fix after damage incurred during racing, which the beautiful wood veneer that does the job of a screen on 0.02 was re-made entirely. Sadly there are no immediate plans to race them again, but visitors to the RREC's headquarters at the Hunt House will see them on display there.

SAVE £2500 ON A RADIATOR GRILLE

It seems impossible, but that's the price difference between the sum charged by two different suppliers for just the right-hand half of the radiator vanes on Bentleys made between 1980 and 1995. As one of their current promoted parts, IntroCar are offering part no. UB71748-P for £200+ VAT, while the same item is available through Bentley for £2899. The mesh grille for the 2010-on Mulsanne is £300 from IntroCar and

would be £2499 from Bentley...if it were available. In each case, these are new, original-equipment parts.

Other stark differences exist for parts specific to 21st-century models. A headlight with gas discharge lamp (3W1941015H-P) suitable for LHD Continental GT, GTC and Flying Spur models are £295 rather than £1999, while steering racks for the same models are £525 with IntroCar versus £2099 from Bentley.

Many car manufacturers are under enormous pressure from the vast cost of stocking parts for even relatively recent models, because model ranges have expanded so far and so fast. With owners of everyday cars complaining of a lack of parts availability before the vehicle is ten years old, is it becoming easier to look after second-hand Bentleys than some more numerous, less costly vehicles, without the same independent support we enjoy?



1924

3 1/4 LITRE

BLUE RN



1928

4 LITRE

LE MANS REP NUMBER 7



1926

3 1/4 LITRE

3 1/4 WITH ORIGINAL COACHWORK



1929

SPEED SIX

MATCHING NUMBER SPEED SIX



1928

4 LITRE

THREE GENERATIONS OF ONE FAMILY OWNERSHIP



1924

3 1/4 LITRE

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AVON TYRE SUPPLY SUSTAINED AFTER FACTORY CLOSURE

Some recent online discussions have spread unnecessary panic over the closure of Avon Tyres' UK factory at Melksham in Wiltshire. Avon cross-plys and radials are the OEM fitment for many classic Rolls-Royce and Bentley models, and while some sizes have been out of stock or delayed, none are being discontinued – production moves elsewhere, as Ben Field of Vintage Tyres explained.

'There will be some delay in certain sizes, but they *will* be made again. For example, the 235/65R16s used on many SZ models such as Rolls-Royce Silver Spirits and Bentley Turbo Rs are currently available in black wall only, while the tyres for the earlier Silver Shadow and Bentley T (205VR15) and wider 17-in sizes for the Bentley Turbo RT and Continental R are currently



being readied for production in a new plant. However, the 235/70R15 CR11B for slightly later SY cars are both already back in production in black wall and whitewall. That news is counter to the doom-laden prophecy that's being doing the rounds on the forums.'

The cross-ply Avon Turbospeeds in 890-15 and 820-15 for the Silver Cloud / Bentley S range remain in stock, as do the Turbosteel 670H16 and its radial-constructed brother, the 670R16 Turbosteel, which are also reported to be in good stock for the Bentley R-type & Mk VI. There is one substitution suggested for the 17-in tyres for faster 1990s models while we wait for production to commence, as Ben Field explained.

'The 255/55R17 CR228D for the Turbo RT, Continental R and others is currently available in a black wall Michelin. It will be back in Avon, but in the meantime, I suggest would-be 255/55R17 buyers get in touch about the alternative.'

See vintagetyres.com or call 01590 612261



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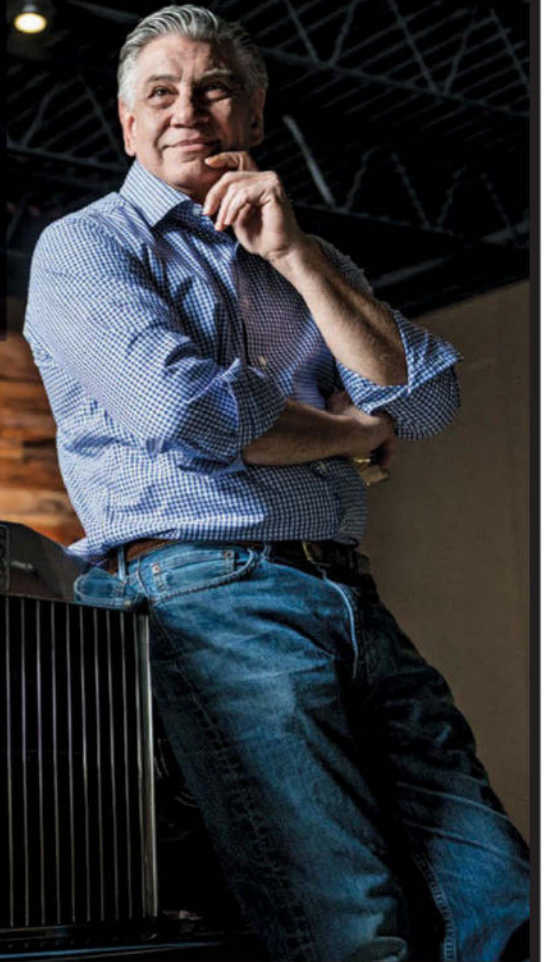
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TWO BENTLEYS AND A TIGER

What has fixing the teeth of a Sumatran tiger got to do with a brace of Bentleys? The answer is Wayne Fitzgerald, the Australian vet who restores Bentleys with the same skills, love and affection he lavished on the tiger

WORDS: RICHARD HOLDSWORTH PHOTOS: CHRIS BARBOUR,
WAYNE FITZGERALD, RICHARD HOLDSWORTH



Wayne Fitzgerald is a perfectionist. He is one of a very few practicing Australian veterinarians with a special skill in dentistry. It is a discipline that requires years of postgraduate study and practice before climbing the ladder step-by-step towards that glow of perfection, via some very challenging tasks – see the box on the next page. It is exactly the same approach he took with the

restorations of his 1924 Bentley 3-litre and his 1934 3½-litre Derby Bentley.

'If you are going to restore a car,' says Wayne, 'Why not the best – and one deserving of the best attention to getting it right?'

Melbourne holds an annual show of classic cars under the title of Motorclassica and it was at the car auction held at its first event in 2010 that Wayne Fitzgerald bought his 1934 3½-litre Derby Bentley. He was not

new to classic cars having previously owned and restored two Mercedes-Benz 190SL sports cars, 1957 and 1963 models. Wayne tells me they were great touring sports cars and he regularly used them locally and interstate.

'My Mercedes-Benz ownership ceased one fine day when an admirer made a spontaneous and generous purchase offer. But unfortunately, this left a noticeable empty space in my garage.' »

COVER STORY

VINTAGE & DERBY BENTLEYS

Wayne wanted to fill this void with a car with equal prestige and engineering excellence – but from a much earlier period. The opportunity came at the Motorclassica auction.

ONE OF A PAIR

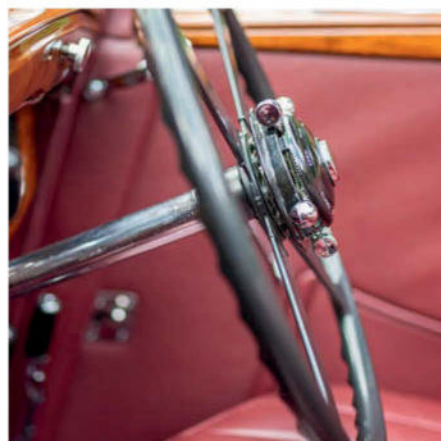
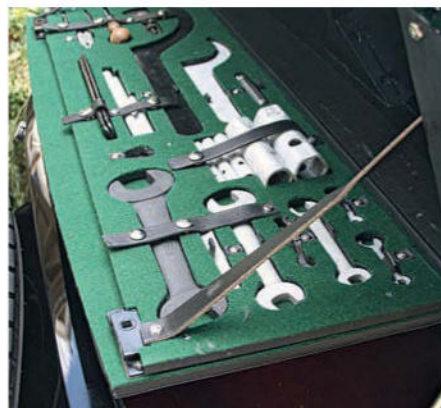
The first owner of the Derby was a Mr R H Wilkinson, a gentleman from South Yarra, a prestigious suburb of Melbourne, who wanted both saloon and open cars for his garage. The first would be a Rolls-Royce 20/25, chassis number GED30, while the open car that took his fancy was one of the recently launched Derby Bentleys. And so, in 1934, he placed the order. The Bentley was allocated chassis number B107BL and engine number U7BG. The 20/25 rolling chassis was delivered straight

from the Rolls-Royce works to Park Ward for the fitting of the body, as was the Bentley, which would soon be graced with body number DHC B211.

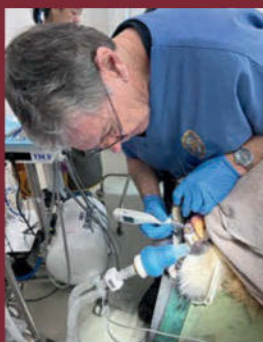
This Melbourne man had very specific requirements that the coachbuilder was pleased to accommodate. In the main, Wilkinson wanted the cars to match – same waist moulding detail, same integrated front side lamps, full length doors with hidden hinges, bonnet louvres that flowed through to the scuttle, the same wheel discs and rear mounted spare wheel while he also specified that the boot lid should be top-opening and accommodated a drop-down tool tray. This detail was just part of the specification he drew up for the coachbuilder. And while the car was being built, Bentley also took on board his specific requirements

including a three-inch longer clutch pedal (Mr Wilkinson had an artificial leg), a 22-gallon fuel tank, column hand control for three-quarters of the throttle movement and a two-inch longer steering column.

When Wayne Fitzgerald became the new owner, he was provided with a large folder containing receipts, papers and photographs of the car and details of the work that had been carried out



REALLY LOVE THOSE TIGER TEETH!



This beautiful Sumatran tiger had suffered three fractured canine teeth. This calls for root canal work of the highest order – not something taken on by every National Health dentist in the High Street. Especially for a patient who wouldn't respond to the instruction 'Open wide, please...'

Wayne was able to complete some amazing work repairing the tiger's fangs, meeting with the same success as he previously has with zoo animals as diverse and exotic as meerkats, Tasmanian devils, African wild dogs and even a gorilla! Naturally, dentistry is an oblique diversion from the real story of restoring two iconic cars, but these disciplines have something in common – skills and patience of the very highest order. Wayne has those qualities a-plenty and they first emerged when, as a youngster,

he took on building scale aircraft as a hobby. I can lay testament to the challenges as I did the same, although not to the degree that young Wayne achieved: he made flying replicas of First and Second World War aircraft, including magnificent Spitfires (with Rolls-Royce engines, of course!) and an Australian designed and built aircraft, the Boomerang, with an eight-foot wingspan that now holds a pride of place in the Victorian Museum.

This hobby continued into later life. As Wayne says, 'It provided relief from the pressures of my veterinary work,' and I can imagine there is plenty of that when working on wild animals that could easily take great chunks out of you, if you got it wrong. For Wayne, it's the same as restoring cars with a unique pedigree; it gives some respite from the rigour of his work.

over the past years. Wayne felt the car looked sound – it had five new Blockley tyres, new leather interior and carpet, new tonneau and the wood trim had, in his words, 'been done very nicely'.

The car was sent for servicing and a roadworthy check at the Derby Works, a Rolls-Royce specialist and classic car garage operated by Simon Elliott at Mount Waverley, some ten miles south-east of the city of Melbourne. I'll let

Wayne take up the story.

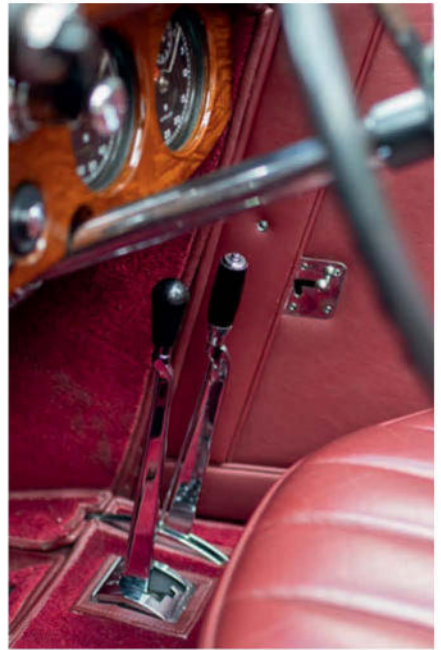
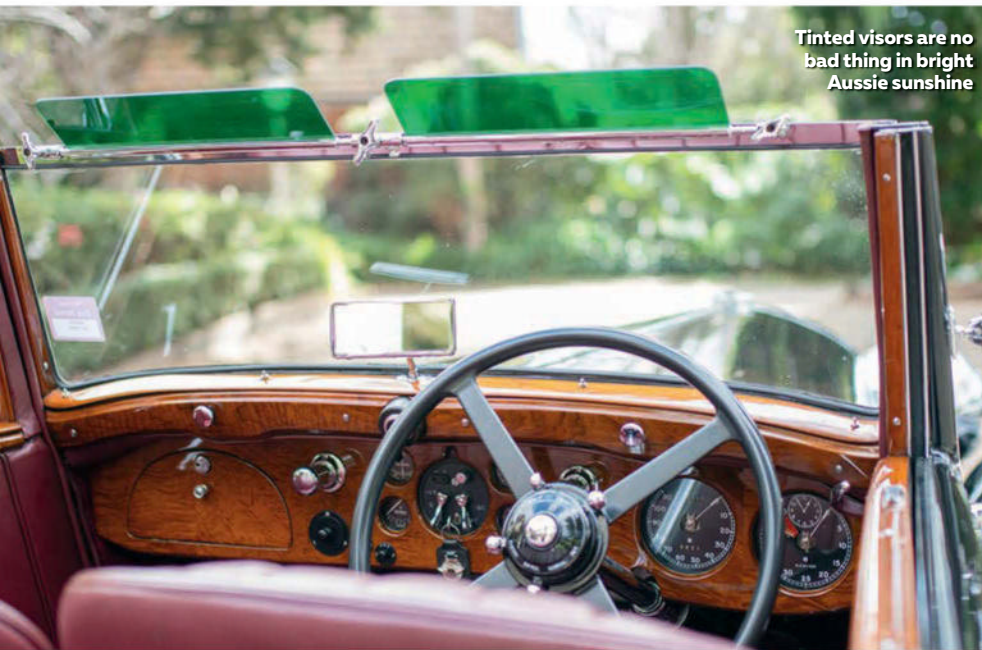
'It was then that we found a problem or two! Bent front axle, frozen right kingpin as the One-Shot oil system on that side had been ineffective, and there was grease on the brake shoes, while we also found that the front shockers had to be rebuilt. Another disconcerting problem became apparent when I took the car out on the road – the steering became "sticky"

as it warmed up.'

Notwithstanding this, Wayne drove the Derby to an important Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of Australia event in Canberra in April 2011.

RUNNING BUT ROUGH

'The car seemed to run okay but was spewing a lot of rusty coolant from the radiator overflow pipe,' says Wayne. »



Park Ward's beautiful lines show through, even in glossy black



“No wonder it caught the judges’ attention at the 2023 Rolls-Royce Owners’ Club of Australia annual gathering in South Australia, where it took Best in Class plus the overall concours winner’s trophy”

‘This didn’t make sense as Simon Elliott had thoroughly flushed the system through. Our collective heads came together. It was obvious that the problem needed much deeper investigation, and it was then that we found the black paint on the head concealed three old bronze welds – two of which were leaking. The water pump was also leaking but this was not the end of it. Clearly the major coolant loss was from the radiator overflow pipe.’

Wayne says that they decided to

remove the engine thus allowing a better diagnosis and a thorough engine bay clean up by Wayne himself.

‘It soon became clear that the cylinder head was beyond repair. Then, on removing the sump, we found that a heavy layer of gritty, treacle-like, black sludge coated the engine’s interior. The white metal bearing surfaces and the bores were badly scored. There was nothing for it – a full engine rebuild was necessary.’

Bad enough, but as Wayne describes,

worse was to follow!

‘We went to a specialist company by the name of Crankshaft Rebuilders in the Melbourne suburb of Blackburn, and they found that the crankshaft was fatally cracked. It was clear that the full engine rebuild was the right decision and I gave the go ahead using many new parts; new pistons and rings, re-honing of the liners, new rods and modern bearings and seals to replace the white metal. They made a new fully-balanced crank – »



Immaculate engine bay picks up the camera flash!



Wayne with partner, Ruth, and trophies for Best Derby Bentley and overall winner 2023 Federal Concours

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**Beautiful in blue - Wayne's
1924 Red Label tourer**



“If you are going to restore a car,’ says Wayne, ‘Why not the best – and one deserving of the best attention to getting it right?”

watching it being made from the initial blank of forged steel was an amazing experience! And the new alloy head was sourced from Fiennes in the UK.’

With the engine and radiator removed, they discovered the full extent of the work to be done, as Wayne explains.

‘The wear was worse than expected and the build-up of grime took us by surprise, however there were a few more surprises to come, which tipped the balance of where we should go from there.’

AN ANCIENT SHUNT?

They decided to dismantle the chassis, have it sand blasted and primed. However, they spotted that at some time in the distant past the

car must have been involved in an accident that damaged a main chassis cross-member, and the shock from the impact had been transferred to the left side of the chassis, which was bent as a result. Wayne even wondered if it could have been this shock that cracked the crankshaft.

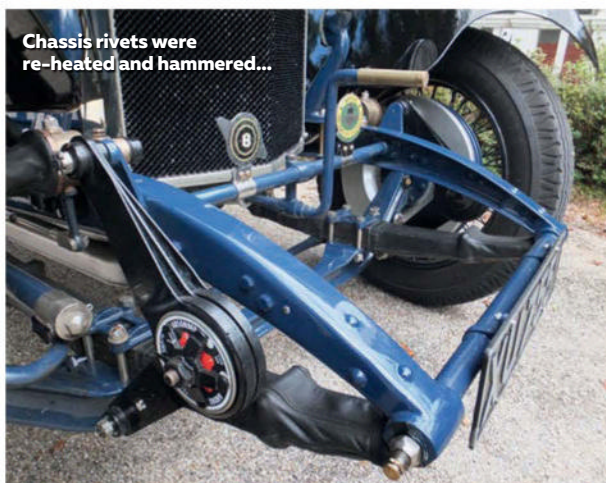
The bare chassis was sent to Scott Mahoney’s company, Metal Master Panels in West Heidelberg (another Melbourne suburb) where it was straightened. Wayne also asked Scott to help with what he thought were a few minor repairs for the Park Ward body.

‘At some time in the history of the car, the spare wheel had been placed on the left front wing. I wanted it back where it should be at the rear, just as the coachbuilders

had fitted it originally in 1934.’

As work progressed, it became apparent to Wayne and Scott that other problems needed to be dealt with; there were areas of corrosion on the body and previous repairs which they thought were of dubious quality. Poor alignment, plus what Wayne calls ‘thin and overworked’ metal and a lack of symmetry were all addressed. Wayne smiles, ‘We replaced the running boards too, as the old ones looked as though someone had replaced the originals with straight floorboard timber!’

The chassis was finished as per original. Wayne found that it left Park Ward in red primer with black paint applied to the outside. ‘This allowed us to rebuild to a rolling chassis stage, just as it would have



Chassis rivets were re-heated and hammered...



...while engine grew to 4.5-litres



emerged from the Rolls-Royce/Bentley factory in 1934,' he says.

Wayne's research suggested that the finished Park Ward body was delivered in black with white pin-striping. Often, a final touch of class for cars of the time was to have the owner's family crest painted on the doors. The decision was made to follow suit and paint the body in black but with the pin-striping changed to red. Finally, Wayne had the Fitzgerald family crest applied to the doors.

After some years of searching, a company in the UK called Genius of the Lamp sourced and restored a pair of Carl Zeiss headlamps. 'These were originally specified by Wilkinson and are real gems,' says Wayne. The end product of so much effort looks fantastic, as it should, and no wonder it caught the judges' attention at the 2023 Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of Australia annual gathering in South Australia, where it took Best in Class plus the overall concours winner's trophy. This is

the trophy to win in the Rolls-Royce and Bentley world in Australia!

Throughout the restoration of this beautiful car, Wayne has been at the side of the skilled men who have carried out the work. It is no surprise to learn that he classes himself modestly as 'apprentice.' 'It was enjoyable work,' he says, 'although challenging at times – the perfect foil for my day job!'

FROM DERBY TO CRICKLEWOOD

Three years after acquiring the Derby, Wayne Fitzgerald couldn't resist this 1924 3-litre tourer. The car is a 'Red Label' Speed Model with raised compression ratio, a sportier camshaft, four-wheel brakes and two 'sloper' SU carburettors giving a claimed 110 bhp (and which it will now actually produce, following an engine upgrade!) and a top speed approaching 90 mph.

Chassis number 668 was originally bodied by Connaught, a small coachbuilder from South London,

as an open 2-seater. Connaught only built three bodies on Bentley chassis and of these, Wayne's car was the sole dicky-seat roadster. It was apparently a demonstrator for Hillstead and like all their cars, was beige with burgundy wings. Wayne believes the car was owned by Stanley Mann in 1982 who had it restored by Dick Moss, when the Connaught body was replaced by a Vanden-Plas style open 4-seater. The car was originally accorded the UK registration number XU 7551, which it still carries today.

It came to Australia in March 1983, having been purchased by Geoff Venn of Canberra. In 1997, it moved to South Australia with a new owner, Bruce Lindsay, and it was he who tried to locate the original Connaught body but to no avail. If it had been fitted to another chassis, Bruce Lindsay claims he would have been prepared to seek out and buy that car! In 2006 it moved again, this time over the border to the State of Victoria where the new owner, Roger Cameron, rallied the car »

COVER STORY

VINTAGE & DERBY BENTLEYS

both in Australia and overseas. The outback un-paved roads in Australia took their toll and chassis repairs had to be carried out on two occasions in makeshift workshops set up beside hot, dusty remote Aussie tracks!

Wayne Fitzgerald has also used it in conditions where many current production cars would not tread. The car has travelled around Australia including once crossing the Nullarbor Plain, the challenging desert that covers some 77,000 square miles across South Australian and Western Australian territory, and at its longest straight point extends almost 700 miles. Temperatures well in excess of 40C are the norm. Wayne admits, 'I did put the hood up on a couple of days...'

Crossing the Nullarbor was accomplished along with a number of other WO Bentleys that met to

mark 100 years since Australian troops embarked from Albany, Western Australia, for the Gallipoli campaign. Wayne has also taken the Bentley on an Alpine Rally, and once drove Formula One's Daniel Ricciardo in the passenger seat for the support demonstration to the 2015 Australian Grand Prix.

ANOTHER JOURNEY BEGINS

In 2017, Wayne decided a full restoration was needed. The car was stripped and a crack was found in the chassis near the handbrake, with two substantial welded plates trying to make good a potentially disastrous situation. The new repair involved removing the make-do plates, taking out a 'V' that included the crack,

replacing the metal and neatly fitting specially fabricated plates inside both chassis members. This work was done at Derby Works by one of Simon Elliott's men with experience in fabricating hot-rod chassis.

'We also found that many of the chassis' rivets were loose,' says Wayne. 'The cure was heating them to cherry red before re-hammering so that as they cooled, the metal contracted and tightened the join, as in the original manufacture. We also decided to make chassis stiffeners as was common on the long-chassis WO Bentley cars.'

Finally, the chassis was primed and a top-coat painted along with the differential, fuel tank and sundry other items. Wayne did all the work himself and as he puts it, 'to the satisfaction of Simon Elliott, my 'Boss' who demands the appropriate Bentley standard!'



The best cars take effort, and Wayne worked for years to bring each up to standard

The engine block was replaced with a 4½-litre unit which Wayne calls a common modification, making the car more tractable in modern traffic conditions. 'Interestingly, the new block was made in New Zealand, the restoration work over there on classic vehicles and in the aircraft world being exemplary. The engine machining work was carried out by Crankshaft Rebuilders here in Melbourne as they did such good work on my Derby three years earlier.'

The radiator was re-built by another Melbourne craftsman, Jeff Edwards of Artisan Coachworks, and he used a new honeycomb core from the UK.

'Jeff had to do a lot of restoration work on the German silver shell as it had seen better days,' says Wayne, 'but the finished radiator is like brand new and has such a big impact on the

"They're different animals. The WO is much more challenging to drive when compared to the Derby, a remarkable car that I find more refined and limousine like"

car's looks. It really makes it shine! We retained the original camshaft but the rockers and so forth were replaced with 4½-litre rated parts that include roller bearings. Of course, the water and oil pumps were both uprated.'

During all this work, the fabric-covered body had been suspended from the rafters in the Derby Works' workshop. Now the time had come to re-unite it was the finished chassis, then the engine

and gearbox were installed and finally the radiator. Re-wiring was next using the appropriate colour-coded wires. 'Simon had re-wired my Derby Bentley a few years earlier and having watched him at work you couldn't help but be impressed just how much effort and skill goes into this complex task,' says Wayne.

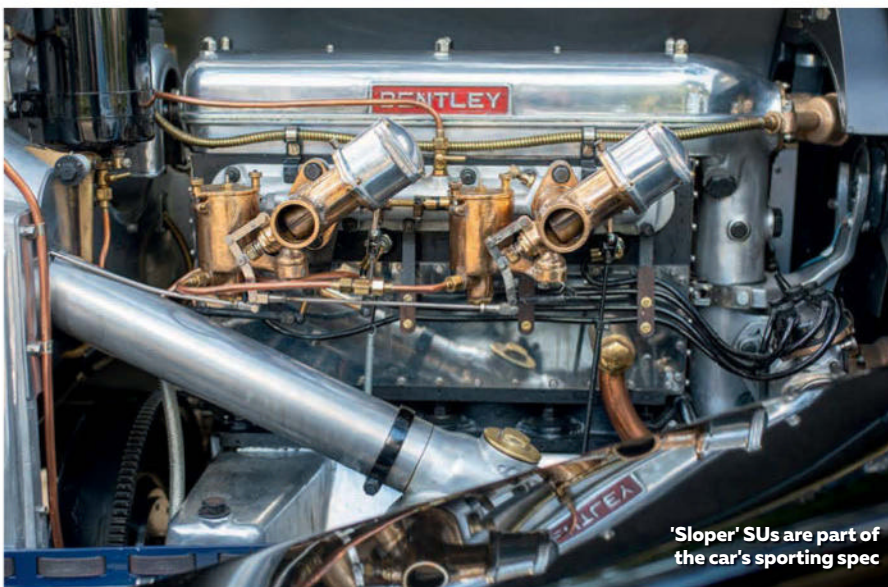
Fresh paint, in blue over black, after gapping and fit-up by Scott Mahoney of Metal Master Panels finished the job. After this work, the car was entered in the hotly contested 2019 Motorclassica Exhibition in Melbourne and, not surprisingly, won the prestigious 'Restoration of the Year' award.

So, a brace of wonderful Bentleys restored to virtual perfection. Wayne enjoys driving both, but they offer contrasting experiences, he says.

'They're different animals. The WO is much more challenging when compared to the Derby, a remarkable car that I find more refined and limousine like.'

After bringing two such special cars up to this amazing standard, almost anything must have seemed straightforward - even dental repairs on a Sumatran tiger! ■

THANKS TO: The Gables on Finch (Malvern East, Melbourne) for allowing our photoshoot at their venue



'Sloper' SUs are part of the car's sporting spec



Now with power to spare - pull down the goggles!

AUCTION TRACKER

This edition's Auction tracker covers the full 12-month period from March 2023 to February 2024, with the trend assessed on a 12-month rolling basis vs. the previous two months.

WORDS: **PETER LAVERS** PICTURES: **VARIOUS**

STEADY AS SHE GOES

January and February are the quietest months in the auction calendar, but with online auctions never stopping a solid 100 motor cars were recorded as sold in the first two months of 2024 (vs. 93 in the same period last year).

The number of cars offered has again increased, driven by Bentleys sold online. Trust in online auctions is now firmly established as an alternative to traditional classified ads. The total market value has slipped

slightly from the high registered two months ago, with Rolls-Royce declining most. Bentley remains the dominant marque in volume and value, although its average value did slip somewhat in line with the online trend. The 1.6% fall in average values is connected with another large rise in project cars being sold (mostly online). About one in eight Rolls-Royces or Bentleys sold in the period were classed as projects.

	Total Market		Rolls-Royce		Bentley		Physical		Online	
	Latest 12m	Trend	Latest 12m	Trend	Latest 12m	Trend	Latest 12m	Trend	Latest 12m	Trend
Offered for Auction	1,805	4.6%	684	1.3%	1,121	6.8%	571	-1.0%	1,234	7.5%
Number Sold	937	0.6%	369	-1.3%	568	2.0%	365	-1.4%	572	2.0%
Total Value of Sales	£33.5m	-1.0%	£11.0m	-2.8%	£22.5m	0.0%	£18.9m	-1.3%	£14.6m	-0.5%
Average Value	£35,762	-1.6%	£29,718	-1.4%	£39,688	-2.0%	£51,732	0.1%	£25,571	-2.4%

MODEL RANGE TRENDS

The latest 12-month rolling trends for model ranges where 15 or more cars have been offered are presented in the tables below and opposite. Project cars are not included.

ROLLS-ROYCE MODELS

Four Rolls-Royce models registered higher average values in the latest 12 months, three held steady, and four declined. The Silver Seraph is still riding high on the

	Ave. Value	Trend
Silver Seraph	£33,640	9.7%
Silver Dawn/Wraith	£27,094	7.4%
Silver Shadow / Corniche DHC	£60,141	6.1%
Silver Cloud I, II & III	£26,027	1.9%
Silver Shadow / Corniche FHC	£29,254	0.4%
20HP-Wraith saloons	£23,769	-0.9%
SY saloons	£11,811	-1.0%
SZ saloons	£9,881	-2.3%
Goodwood 2-dr	£127,201	-3.1%
Silver Ghost / Phantoms I-III 4-dr	£76,666	-6.5%
Goodwood 4-dr/SUV	£103,052	-9.7%

auction scene, so it's a surprise that Manor Park Classics' lovely low-mileage example didn't sell in February despite it being estimated spot on our Tracker value.

The gap between SY and SZ saloons has widened, helped by Car & Classic's sale of a 'show quality' 1969 Silver Shadow in January for £26,000. Another February sale highlight was Brightwells' 1965 Silver Cloud III DHC, a rare beast that sold for £105,058. Otherwise, values were affected more by what had fallen out of the analysis from 13 and 14 months ago than by the new sales in the two months.

Indeed, volumes were down at both ends of the Rolls-Royce age scale. Very few pre-war motor cars came through, and similarly none of the newer Goodwood models were sold at a classic car auction in the first two months of 2024, which has depressed the figures recorded.





BENTLEY MODELS

As mentioned, Bentley's results were dragged down somewhat by a greater mix of online sales. Only three model ranges rose in average value, while six fell. As with the Rolls-Royce results, this was as much to do with the 2023 results falling out of the analysis as the new sales that were registered!

Whilst writing the Feature Car article on Michael Campbell's 2002 Bentley Azure Mulliner (see p.96) I noticed that a model I mention in the text came up on Car & Classic – a 2011 Azure T. It sold for £133,000 on 1 March, so will be included in the next set of figures.

Another remarkable Bentley drop head result in early March was the fabulous 1987 Continental Convertible at Historics' sale at Ascot. It sold for £164,640 – over double its low estimate! I had a nice chat with its new owner and told him to subscribe to this magazine!

The Arnage model range held steady, with one of the rare RL models sold by Morris Leslie

	Ave. Value	Trend
MkVI/R Type 2-dr & Special	£63,367	7.6%
S Series Continental/c'built	£229,457	6.2%
New Mulsanne	£53,394	2.0%
SZ Nat Asp Saloons	£9,244	0.5%
Continental GT Coupe	£23,952	0.4%
Arnage	£17,401	-1.0%
MkVI/R Type Saloons	£18,574	-1.2%
Cricklewood Bentleys	£382,299	-1.5%
S Series Saloons	£28,835	-1.9%
Continental R, T & Azure	£48,503	-2.2%
SZ Turbos	£10,020	-3.6%
Continental GTC	£38,375	-5.5%
T Series/T2	£13,461	-6.8%
Continental Flying Spur	£20,539	-20.7%

in February for a respectable £30,520.

Its next-generation little brother, the Continental Flying Spur, seems to have collapsed in value, but this is entirely due to one nearly-new vehicle sale from Feb 23 dropping out of the figures. Mathewsons sold a lovely 2007 example for an above-estimate £22,890 in February.



AUCTION HOUSES

If you are one of the increasing number of people willing to sell or buy at a classic car auction, which could you choose? Well, the top ten account for 85% of the volumes sold.

Ebay is by far the most popular choice, but beware, values are the lowest and the sale rate is just a third of the cars offered! The other top ten auction houses with Rolls-Royce and Bentley results averaging below £20k (i.e. everyday classics) are Manor Park Classics, Mathewsons and ACA.

In the next tier up of value (£20-40k average) you can choose from H&H, Bonhams, Car & Classic, Brightwells or Historics – all well-respected with decent sale rates, though Car & Classic has taken a dip recently.

In the upper echelon of value, only CollectingCars is in the top ten but has a sub-50% sale rate for our marques. It appears that we still tend to entrust higher value vehicles with the more niche physical auction houses – RM Sothebys, Gooding & Co, and Iconic (which comes in 11th), however as the examples in this column show, a fabulous specimen will sell pretty much

anywhere. I can't conclude this column, however, without a shout-out to all the other auction houses – new and old – who make up the rich tapestry of the classic car auction scene. I am now tracking no less than 39 different houses!

Top Ten Auction Houses					
	Offered	Trend	Sold	Sale Rate	Ave.Value
eBay	602	9.9%	214	35.5%	£10,129
CarandClassic	304	4.8%	164	53.9%	£28,567
Mathewsons	116	5.5%	78	67.2%	£16,171
Bonhams / Cars Online	100	-2.0%	73	73.0%	£36,378
H&H	104	0.0%	72	69.2%	£39,815
CollectingCars	139	0.0%	69	49.6%	£67,185
Historics	96	-7.7%	62	64.6%	£30,341
Anglia Car Auctions	32	14.3%	22	68.8%	£12,118
Brightwells	30	3.4%	22	73.3%	£26,503
Manor Park Classics	32	-8.6%	21	65.6%	£19,618



MARKET WATCH

Each issue, we take a look at some of the most tempting cars for sale, from affordable modern classics through to the most premium-priced gems

DO YOU PREFER SHOW, OR GO?

Photos: Tim Scott/Fluid Images



Charles Prince is currently offering two extremes of the pre-war Rolls-Royce and Bentley market. The first is the extraordinary 1926 Rolls-Royce Phantom Brougham de Ville created (not just built!) by Charles Clark & Son Ltd of Wolverhampton for Clarence Gasque, an American director of Woolworths. He ordered the car as a birthday present for his wife, Maud, a Woolworths heiress. The story goes that he simply asked for the car to have a French theme and let the coachbuilder loose on an 'open chequebook' basis, which led to a bill of £6000 for the body alone at a time when a conventional body might cost £800. The results are like a Rococo daydream, with Aubusson tapestry, satinwood marquetry, gilt,

ormolu, enamel and a painted ceiling. Charles thinks there must be more to the tale than that, though.

'I would love to know how the communication went between customer and coachbuilder – who really chose all this?' he says. 'And why go to a coachbuilder in Wolverhampton... was there someone there with a connection to this kind of work?'

The cost of acquiring such a startling piece of art history is £1.2m but you get a tremendous car to go with it – the amazing bodywork has led to very restricted use and little wear, with the car feeling tight and rattle-free. It's even on its original clutch. Charles freely admits he likes cars with more go than show, and has a good example – a 4 ½ -litre Bentley 'Blower'.

It's not one of the original 50, but a Le Mans replica built to the highest standards with all the right bits.

'It will probably take you to 125mph,' he says. 'A good Blower is quite something.'

For £3m you could buy an original, but at £875,000, this one is every bit as thrilling. See www.charlesprinceclassiccar.com



TWO AT THE TOP

It's nice for any dealer to say a car he offers is the best of its type, and Bob Bentley of Classic Automobiles can say as much for at least two of his. There is a 1963 Rolls-Royce Silver

Cloud III Adaptation convertible by HJ Mulliner (see p.48 for the story of the Adaptation cars) ordered new by the Chairman of Harrods, Sir Hugh Fraser. It was one of 12 right-hand drive

Adaptations built as Silver Cloud IIIs, and in Bob's own words was 'already a very nice example' before it was subjected to a 2400-hour restoration, completed in 2020.

Even more unusual is what Bob calls 'the best Silver Dawn in the world.' This 1951 example is a left-hand drive Export version with one striking difference from other Standard Steel Silver Dawns – the pair of immense Lucas P100 lamps rather than fared-in headlights. Being LHD, it also has the rare feature of a column shift for the manual transmission. Yours for £69,950. See classic-car-london.com.

Photos: Anthony Bentley



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A RARE BEAUTY

This 1950 Bentley Mk VI Drophead Coupé stands out because the coachbuilder, Abbott, chose a more advanced look than the standard Mk VI 'face', yet only 14 were sold. Naturally we jumped at the rare chance to drive one!

WORDS: DAVID WATT PHOTOS: NIGEL BOOTHMAN

'Soulless' might best describe any person who, gazing upon this gorgeous Bentley drophead coupé, could not instantly picture themselves at the wheel, wafting along some sun-kissed coastal road on the French Riviera. Roof down, sweeping bends, wind in your hair, the deep blue Mediterranean sea sparkling in the warm sunshine, a romantic table for two awaiting. You're there now, aren't you! And so was I when given the privilege of driving this rare car recently, albeit along rather less glamorous roads near Linlithgow in central Scotland.

TSJ 174 is a 1950 Bentley Mark VI drophead coupé (chassis no. B257FU) whose striking coachwork, by the respected firm Abbott of Farnham, sumptuously clothes Bentley's renowned 4¼-litre, straight six engine (no. B378F) and one of the loveliest interiors I've come across. Owners, Ros and Alan Stewart, tell me the 73,000 miles on the odometer is correct. With seating for four people, Abbott called this body style a 'foursome drophead coupé'. They built 14 examples of which it is thought maybe nine survive. So it is a rare beast – and a rare treat to find myself sitting behind the wheel.

First impressions? Well, any delusions about the south of France quickly fade

as the day in question is rather cold and cloudy, leading our Editor to return another day to shoot our photos in the sunshine. For now, we'll keep the power-operated roof firmly closed. This creates a very intimate atmosphere inside, especially for rear seat passengers, with only a tiny, letterbox-sized rear window and no side windows at all to let light in. There is, however, plenty of leg room in the back, I'd say more than in the standard Bentley Mark VI. Front passengers have large side windows and a narrow windscreen through which to enjoy the views. But one's focus is not on the scenery. Instead, it is captured by the view along the glorious dark blue bonnet to the winged B in the distance, the car's beautiful front wings rising up gracefully on either side.

KEYLESS GO

This era of Bentley is the last not to be started by the simple twist of a key. Nevertheless, it comes as a surprise to find that starting the engine is 'keyless', several decades before this became the norm. Instead, you set the ignition switch in the centre of the dashboard to 'on' then turn the battery on by means of a similar, beautifully damped switch. Pressing the chromed starter button to the left of the ignition »





FEATURE CAR

BENTLEY MK VI ABBOTT DHC



Huge front wing line seems to shrink longer rear overhang

switch brings the engine to life, its deep rumble setting your heart racing that bit quicker. On this particular car, the traditional wheel-mounted controls – throttle, mixture and ride – have been disconnected as part of modifications made by the previous owner, which we'll cover later. A manual choke was installed at the same time.

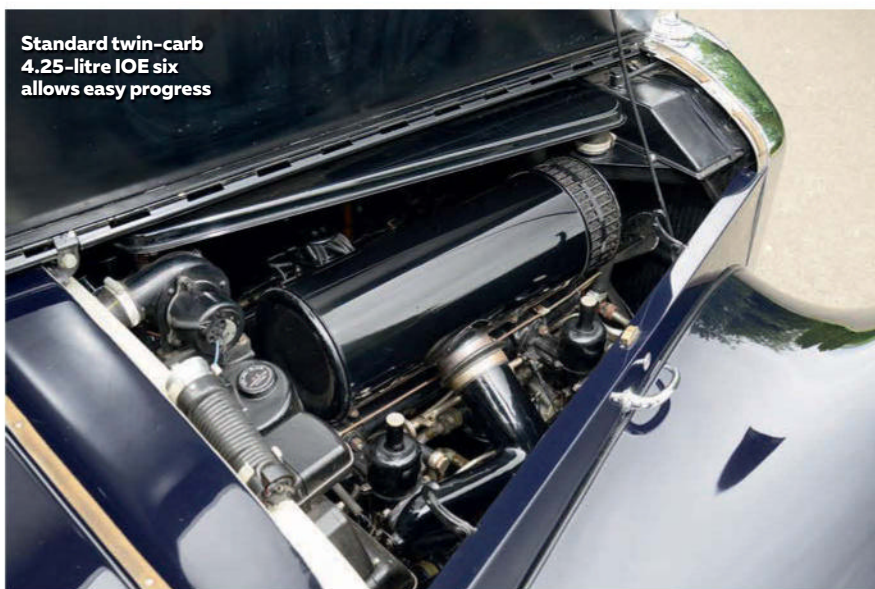
Pulling away into traffic, one is immediately struck – alarmed might be a better word – by the poor visibility directly behind and in the rear three

quarters area, the result of the lack of glazing. The two door mirrors are essential if you've any hope of overcoming the huge blind spots. Reverse parking this beauty in town is not for the faint-hearted! The clutch has a shorter travel than I was expecting but is smooth and progressive in its uptake. The all-synchromesh gear box, operated by the short, floor mounted gear lever to the right of the driver's seat – as was normal for Crewe products of the period – requires a firm,

deliberate movement into each of the four ratios, but is solid and 'mechanical' in feel and, therefore, straightforward to use if you concentrate.

It is best to move off in second. Once on the move and, in common with all vintage and classic Bentleys and Rolls-Royces I have ever driven, the next thing you notice is the torque. Of which there is plenty. The rule is always 'get her into top as soon as you can and just stay there'. The powerful engine gathers speed steadily from as low as 15 or 20mph and carries you effortlessly on your way with hardly a gearchange necessary unless attempting a steep hill or coming to a T junction. Double de-clutching will appeal to the purists but is not actually necessary with this lovely gearbox. Just as well, since it remains a skill your current correspondent is yet fully to master. The gearbox is forgiving towards novice drivers and the clutch is kind too.

The ride is eerily smooth, imperfections in the road producing no rattles, thumps or complaints from the chassis or bodywork. This is a heavy car which doubtless helps the suspension smooth out the road surface, yet it's rather less heavy than a Standard Steel saloon and the body is not braced by a solid roof, so this insulation is rather impressive. Coupled with the roof's excellent sound deadening properties (I could hear virtually no wind noise »



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1935 Bentley Speed 8 Petersen Lemans Special
£350,000.00



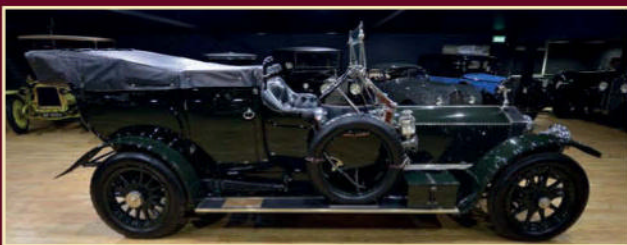
1931 Bentley 8 Litre Vandenplas Style Tourer
£680,000



1925 Bentley 3 Litre Gurney Nutting Tourer
£185,000.00



1913 Rolls Royce Silver Ghost Colonial Open Drive Landaulette by Barker.
£420,000



1912 Rolls Royce Silver Ghost Parallel Bonnet
£780,000.00



1930 Rolls Royce Phantom 2 Barrel Sided Tourer
£185,000.00



1925 Rolls-Royce Phantom 1 Hooper all weather cabriolet
£150,000.00



1920 Rolls Royce Silver Ghost Henri Binder Victoria Hood.
£210,000.00

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Ros, at speed – West Lothian looking its best!

“They built 14 examples of which it is thought maybe nine survive. So it is a rare beast – and a rare treat to find myself sitting behind the wheel”

even at 50mph which, given the traffic conditions, was as fast as I dared), this is an amazingly quiet and serene vehicle, the gentle rumble of the engine audible only if one listens out for it. I suspect it's only ever the driver who is aware of any engine noise at all, and even then only because he or she wants the reassurance that there is plenty of power in reserve for when it may be needed. Pressing firmly on the accelerator results in nothing more dramatic than the bonnet line rising slightly – the word 'imperiously' comes to mind – in acknowledgement of your command. Speed is then swiftly and silently gathered.

CARE IN THE CURVES

The assisted steering of this car is non-original but makes manoeuvring

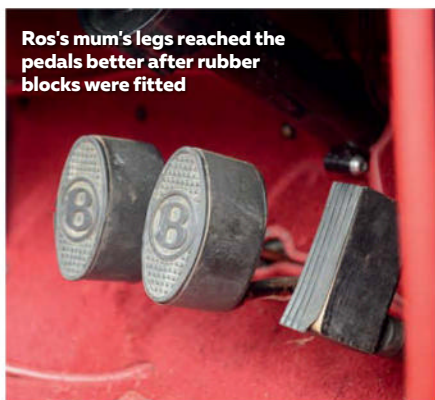
at parking speeds much easier than it would originally have been. Crossply tyres, in my experience, require constant small adjustments from the helm in order to maintain the best line, offering the driver less feel than modern motorists would be comfortable with. This is perhaps exacerbated by the power assistance system. Even so, after a few moments to acclimatise, placing the car 'just right' is never a problem.

Of course, this type of vehicle is not designed with particularly aggressive driving in mind. While there's no doubt she can lift her skirts when bidden, this is a car for gently wafting down (hopefully) traffic-free A-roads in serene (there's that word again) comfort and luxury. In this regard, B257FU is peerless.

Talking of comfort and luxury, what of the interior? Well, the heavy doors close

with the sort of solid, reassuring clunk you only get with a coachbuilt car such as this. It's like closing a bank vault. Then the aroma of the leather hits you. And what leather! All original, it was called 'St James Red' by the people at Abbott. It is absolutely stunning, filling the car not only with a sensuous smell but also a rosy red, deeply luxurious glow throughout. It goes wonderfully with the external deep blue paintwork.

Then your eye is caught by the superb walnut veneer on the dashboard and door cappings, again all immaculate. Delicate touches abound as you sink into the seats just as you would your favourite armchair. The long, slim door pulls are made from walnut and flow seamlessly out of the cappings – I've never seen that before – and the separate miniature chrome winder to open the quarter »



Ros's mum's legs reached the pedals better after rubber blocks were fitted



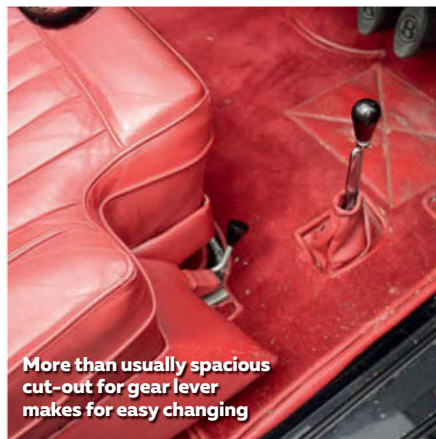
The classic Mk VI layout



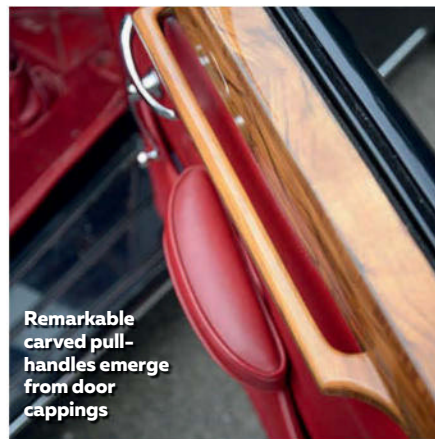
Under-dash HMV radio is a really handsome unit



Tool tray and petite clock on passenger side



More than usually spacious cut-out for gear lever makes for easy changing



Remarkable carved pull-handles emerge from door cappings

FEATURE CAR

BENTLEY MK VI ABBOTT DHC



Barrel ashtray handy – if rear-seat passengers' ash hasn't blown away



BDC cushions are a lovely home-made accessory



Rear lamps are stylish with ridged lenses



Ros Stewart is a second-generation keeper for this car, with no plans to move it on

light window...nothing screams 'coachbuilt' as loudly as these features do. Then there's the clock set into the glove box door and, beneath that, the walnut tool box tray which pulls out smoothly revealing a full set of tools. The instruments and various switches for wipers, heater etc are clustered in the middle of the dashboard in usual Bentley Mark VI fashion: speedometer on the right and the usual combined amps/water temperature/oil level/fuel gauge to the left. Above them is the self-cancelling switch for the trafficators (more recently, and sensibly, converted to discreet indicators front and rear). In front of the steering wheel on the dashboard sits a cream Bakelite switch which, once two header rail latches above the windscreen have

been undone, operates the dark blue folding roof, lined in traditional Old English cloth. Abbott's term for the roof was a 'hydraulically operated opening head'. The tonneau colour is in matching dark blue. All very chic.

The cabin, then, is a very special place to be and, in period, must have gone a long way to justifying the £6,000 purchase price, enough to have bought you a substantial detached house in the Home Counties at the time.

In common with the standard Bentley Mark VI, boot space cannot truthfully be described as capacious though Abbott's designers did succeed in making it slightly more commodious than the standard offering thanks to the longer rear overhang. No mean feat, given the swoopy coupé lines



“Over the years, they have enjoyed taking the car on a variety of tours, including to Italy, Spain and Denmark.”

and the necessary housing for the roof and its mechanism when folded. Worth also noting that the folded roof ('head') sits only six inches above the body work, making the car especially elegant when proceeding topless.

KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY

The car is owned by Ros and Alan Stewart. Ros's parents, Ian and Midge Bett, have long been classic car enthusiasts and have owned a number of prestigious cars, among them vintage and pre-war Bentleys and SS Jaguars. Later cars included a Healey Silverstone, a Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow and a Bentley Mulsanne. There have been others, too. In 1999, they asked their friend and fellow Bentley Drivers' Club member, Ken Lea, to

look out for a suitable new purchase for Mrs Bett. He found TSJ 174 through Frank Dale & Stepson and the Betts became her next custodians. Over the years, they have enjoyed taking the car on a variety of tours, including to Italy, Spain and Denmark. In the UK, the car has attended many rallies including the 100th anniversary of Bentley Motors at Blenheim Palace in 2019.

About 20 years ago, a few

adaptations were made to make the car easier to drive. These included installing power assisted steering and a manual choke, disconnecting the trafficators and fitting modern flashing indicators, while the addition of large rubber blocks on each of the pedals helped Mrs Bett reach them more easily. Throughout its history, it hardly needs saying, the car has been professionally maintained by marque specialists. She was resprayed »



FEATURE CAR BENTLEY MK VI ABBOTT DHC

in the original colour in 2003.

By 2019, Mr & Mrs Bett felt they were not using the car often enough and decided to sell. Happily, the classic car bug is shared by daughter Ros and her family, so it didn't take them long to agree to buy the car and keep her in the family. Since then, they have taken her on several Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club rallies and outings. Ros says she never drove the car before her parents' decision to sell. She was then allowed a drive for the first time, her parents surely knowing she would be utterly and helplessly

smitten and would buy the car. Like all the best plans, it worked! Since then the car has enjoyed plenty of use and starred in a very special day indeed – the wedding of Ros & Alan's daughter Johanna in Edinburgh in May 2023.

We should always try to look at old cars through the eyes of contemporary viewers. The powered roof seems extraordinarily advanced for 1950, but it's not the only forward-looking aspect of this car. One feature of note with TSJ 174 is the position of the headlamps, which are integrated into the front wings rather than situated

in-board between the wings and the radiator. The sidelights sit beneath the headlamps rather than on the wing tops as on the standard-bodied cars. These were very modern design elements in 1950 and would have marked the car out as stylishly cutting edge. Together with her gracefully flowing lines and rear spats, the immaculate and lustrous blue paintwork and the proudly prominent radiator grille, this is a car which would look very fine indeed cruising along the French Riviera – or even West Lothian. Or, come to that, any point in between. ■



One of the rare occasions when the Flying B is needed to confirm identification



It's a looker with the roof up too

E.D. ABBOTT LTD

In his marvellous 2007 book *Bentley Mk VI*, respected Rolls-Royce and Bentley historian Bernard L. King, who sadly died in November 2022, tells us that Abbott built a total of 20 bodies for Mk VI Bentleys (plus 16 bodies for the R-Type which succeeded the Mk VI), of which 14 were drophead coupés like this car. E.D. Abbott Ltd was established in 1929 by Edward Dixon Abbott (born 1898) who, after a design apprenticeship with Wolseley Motors Ltd, joined the coachbuilders Page & Hunt. When that company failed in 1929, Edward took over its Farnham works in Surrey. The years either side of World War II saw the company build bodies for a variety of upmarket manufacturers including Daimler, Lanchester, Lagonda, Armstrong-Siddeley, Sunbeam Talbot,



One of Abbott's amazing R-type Coupés changed hands recently. We're jealous!

Healey and Jowett. Drophead bodies were a particular specialism. In the wake of the Great Depression in the early 1930s, the company found work wherever it could, even constructing bodies for commercial vehicles and vans. This included a handful on Rolls-Royce chassis – as you might



The Healey Abbott DHC was almost series production with 77 built

imagine, to the disapproval of Rolls-Royce management. A change of ownership in 1955 saw the company renamed Friary Motors. Under that name, it was best known for constructing estate bodies for Mark 2, 3 and 4 Ford Consuls, Zephyrs and Zodiacs. The company closed in 1972.

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• YOUR SHOUT •

Got something to say about anything Rolls-Royce or Bentley related? Then we want to hear it!

Send an email to rrb.ed@kelsey.co.uk or write to: The Editor, Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver, Kelsey Publishing Ltd, The Granary, Downs Court, Yalding Hill, Yalding, Kent, ME18 6AL



BRUNEI BENTLEY TURNS HEADS

I am totally fascinated by the Bentley Val D'Iserre as reported in the latest edition of *RR&BD*. The profile of the car from whichever angle you look at it, is just perfect; the balance of the design exudes perfection and I'm sure it creates interest wherever it goes.

I think the reduction in overhang at the rear sets the car off, coupled with the fact that the rear view is

just 'meant to be'. I don't think the design would work with a Rolls-Royce – I think there would be a conceptual conflict – but it certainly does for a Bentley. I suspect in the day the cost of conversion was huge hence that no others were produced except for the Sultan of Brunei.

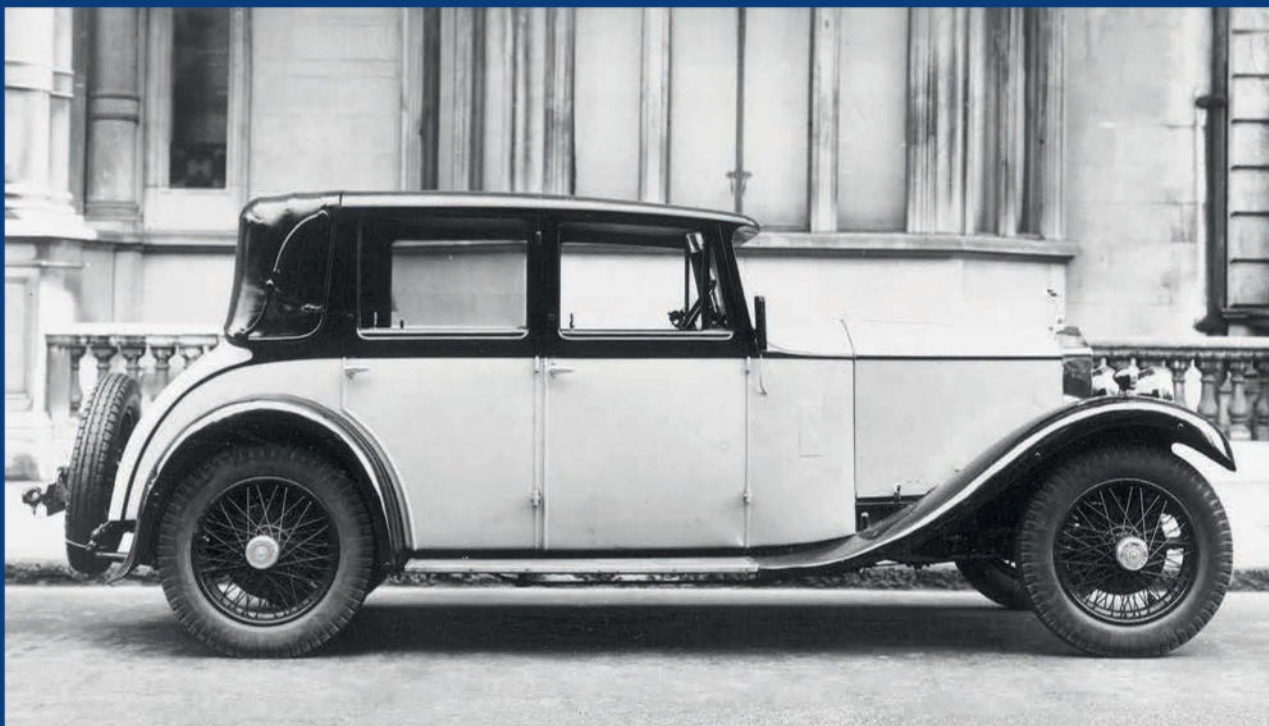
My only criticism would be the interior colour scheme but like Martin

Lee, the owner, I think I'd live with it as it is part of the history of the car.

Keep up your very good work.

Alan Harris

Thanks for the message, Alan. There were a few built outside the Brunei order – numbers aren't well established, but the cost was undoubtedly huge – Ed



PRE-WAR PANIC?

How low will prices for pre-war 'small' Rolls-Royce models drop? The fall in demand for the 20hp, 20/25 and 25/30 seems real enough when you look at the auction results, though as mentioned in the Auction Tracker pages in the March/April issue, the values of Silver Ghosts, Phantoms and Cricklewood and Derby Bentleys seem less troubled. But the problem with a falling market is that any potential buyer (and I count myself as one) has to accept

that the car they buy might be worth less next year than they paid this year. Simple question then – will I be able to buy a nice 20/25 saloon for £15,000 by this time next year?

**Terry Flint
Solihull**

Not likely! While it's true that sale prices at auction have dropped back, it's important to remember that there is often a significant difference (not always obvious

to see) between cars marketed by reputable specialist dealers and cars without much recent use sold via auction. The former should be on the button and in no need of immediate expenditure; the latter can swallow thousands just getting them back in healthy running order. True, there are some genuine bargains to be had at auction and dealers are finding some cars sell more slowly than they once did, but they still sell -Ed

IN PRAISE OF THE TECHNICAL GUIDE

Thank you for including some technical content in the magazine. I don't know what proportion of Rolls-Royce and Bentley owners work on their own cars – maybe it's lower than for some other marques, but that still leaves quite a lot of us. I was initially a bit disappointed that the subjects covered were very basic, with oil changes and such like, but some of the detail in the way Flying Spares approach apparently simple tasks has been interesting. And what are quite

basic tasks on most classic cars are not always simple on SZ generation cars! I'm glad to see some more involved challenges in the last issue or two.

Perhaps I am biased because I own a 1950s six-cylinder Bentley (though I've owned a Silver Spur and a Turbo R in the past) but I would love to see something more involved about the tasks that become necessary for owners of these earlier cars. There's a lot to cover on the brakes alone, with the gearbox servo. Or

suspension and steering repairs? People think cars of that generation go rusty while the mechanical parts never wear out, but that depends on how they've been treated!

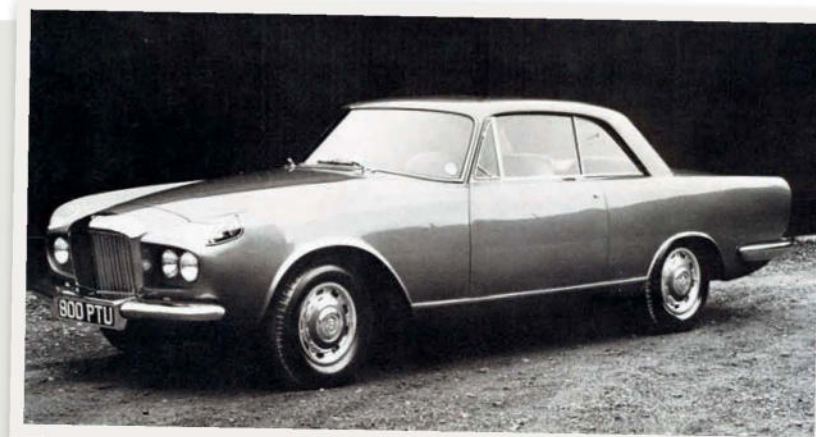
**Nick Barrett
Surrey**

We've just jumped forward a generation in this issue to look at the Continental GT, and we may well jump further back in forthcoming issues – there's a lot to cover! -Ed

THE GREAT 'WHAT IF?'

Did Rolls-Royce make a mistake when they decided not to go ahead with the Bentley Burma and Rolls-Royce Tibet? When you look at how hard they struggled to keep the development of one model like the Silver Shadow and its replacement up to date, never mind two or three models, you'd have to say no. But I would like to make a different argument.

I really enjoyed 'In the Spirit of Experimentation' (*RR&BD*, March/April 2024) though it made me think about how things could have turned out if they made the other choice. Selling a Rolls-Royce of reduced size and price might well have damaged the brand, but offering a downsized Bentley – as long as it had plenty of performance – could have kept some real separation between the marques and done no harm to Bentley's sporting image. From my own reading on the subject, I know there was also a proposal for a two-door coupé on the shorter wheelbase, called the Bentley Korea. This and the Burma together could



have filled a huge gap in the market – or taken sales from less costly models. I have a collection of old car magazines from the 1960s and '70s with new car prices, and in 1966 (for example) you could buy an Aston Martin DB6 for £4998, a Bristol 409 for £5149, a Ferrari 275 GTB for £5973, a Jensen FF for £5249, an Iso Grifo for £5950, a Mercedes 300SE coupé for £5260...or a Bentley T Mulliner two-door for £9789!

If Bentley offered a fast, handsome two-door coupé for £6000, it could have given the Crewe factory

the turnover it needed to develop the Silver Shadow more rapidly, so the Silver Spur was more than a re-bodied version of a 1960s model, which in turn would have put the company in a better place in the 1990s, maybe avoiding the need for takeover. It would also have provided a smaller, lighter, less costly platform to try out turbocharging. Imagine something like the Continental R, but launched ten years earlier!

Karim Shah (age 16 so not a Bentley driver yet!)
Leeds



Would you choose a Turbo RT Mulliner...



Or an Arnage Red Label?

LATE SZ OR EARLY ARNAGE?

I have been meaning to write in for a year, ever since the bumper issue on the SZ generation cars made me seriously consider owning a late Turbo R or RT. I was hoping that in that time I might be lucky enough to see a buying comparison between one of these models and the car that replaced them, the Arnage. They seem to be similar values in decent condition – about £20,000 to £25,000 should buy a car that can be enjoyed without having a big bill on the horizon.

But how different are they? I like the traditional interior of the Turbo R but the exterior has dated much more than the Arnage. Are they very different to drive, or is the choice more about looks than road manners? Any plans to publish a comparison?

Vic Hunter
Swanage, Dorset

You don't say whether you're drawn to the 4.4-litre Arnage in BMW-engined form or the 6.75-litre 'Red

Label' and later cars. The Red Label's powerplant is practically the same as the Turbo R's engine (all low-down torque and instant response) while the BMW is also quick and smooth but with a different character – it needs revs. A good Arnage does indeed feel more modern and with less hand-built 'creak' than a Turbo R, but the high seating position, muscular power and sense of occasion are very similar! Good luck, and send us a picture when you decide – Ed

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2008/08 Bentley Continental GTC Mulliner. Finished in Silver Tempest with 20 inch Mulliner alloys and a Black mohair hood. The interior is Portland with Bentley embossed in the seats and contrast stitching. Fitted with Walnut veneers and Black carpets. Low mileage with FSH. Immaculate throughout **£32,750**



2006/06 Bentley Arnage T Mulliner Level II. Finished in unmarked Moonbeam Silver with quad exhausts, Le Mans wing vents and 19 inch split rims. Beluga interior with Piano Black veneers, machined alloy dash and door capping inserts. A fantastic spec. with only 67,000 miles and full history. Only **£29,999**



2003/03 Bentley Arnage R. Finished in Moroccan Blue with 18 inch alloys. Cotswold interior with French Navy secondary hide and carpets, Walnut steering wheel and Walnut veneers. Only 48,000 miles with Full Service History. Known to ourselves for last 9 years. Immaculate throughout **£25,950**



2001/51 Rolls Royce Silver Seraph Last of Line. A very rare car finished in Amethyst with Cotswold interior piped in French Navy and French Navy carpets. All the usual extras including electric sunroof. Only 78,000 miles with Full Service History. Outstanding value for Last of Line **£42,950**



1999 V Bentley Continental T. One of only 95 RHD cars built. Finished in Sherwood Green with pristine bodywork and looks like a new car. Cotswold interior leather with secondary hide in Ascot and all veneers in Walnut. Only 29,000 miles and maintained to highest standard with comprehensive history file..... **£98,950**



1999 R Bentley Turbo RT. Finished in Black Emerald with Cream coachlines and 17 inch 5-spoke RT alloys. The interior is like new with nice fresh Sandstone leather and Spruce carpets, with Walnut veneers. This car is really immaculate throughout with Full Service History. An investment in a real classic car **£24,950**

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BEHEADED BEAUTY

Cutting the roof off a Standard Steel saloon seems a distinctly after-market solution, but Rolls-Royce and HJ Mulliner performed it to great effect when these cars were new

WORDS: NIGEL BOOTHMAN PHOTOS: GREGORY OWAIN



If you appreciate classic Bentley and Rolls-Royce cars but don't claim to be an expert, you may not notice anything special here. After all, we're looking at a drophead coupé version of the familiar Bentley S-series Standard Steel saloon – two doors rather than four, a folding roof, but otherwise very similar. So what's the secret?

For most of the S-series production run (1955-'59) there was no drophead version of the Standard Steel saloon. There was the Continental DHC, bodied by Park Ward in aluminium, of which 94 were built. Then there were other coachbuilt 'specials' offered by the likes of James Young, Graber and so on and mostly built on the standard chassis, while HJ Mulliner bodied 22 dropheads in their own all-

aluminium Style 7409. See page 42 for photos of these sometimes very similar cars. But as Rolls-Royce saw it, that still left a gap in the market – or at least a gap in the price lists.

You could have a Standard Steel saloon for £4669 including purchase tax, but a Continental in either coupé or drophead form was almost twice that. Shopping around for a chassis to be bodied at one of the independent coachbuilders wouldn't result in much of a saving, if any. Rolls-Royce, therefore, instructed their in-house coachbuilder Park Ward to adapt a completed Standard Steel saloon body – effectively a cut-and-shut of the bodywork on the standard wheelbase. This proved almost equally expensive, at least the way Park Ward did it, so

the idea was about to be scrapped when HJ Mulliner got wind of the concept and asked if they could try it.

OFF WITH ITS HEAD

Rolls-Royce consented and sent a factory four-door bodyshell to Mulliner's premises in Chiswick, west London (HJM were not merged with Park Ward on the Willesden site until 1961) where work commenced. Mulliner's craftsmen removed the roof and central pillars, discarded the rear doors and welded in special steel panels to fit new, longer front doors, then sent the result back to Crewe for trimming and painting, before the car returned to Chiswick once again for the fitting of a hydraulic hood mechanism. It sounds an expensive »



FEATURE CAR

BENTLEY S-SERIES HJ MULLINER DHC

process, but because of the hundreds of hours saved in not needing to fabricate aluminium panelling and support for the front and rear sections of the body, plus the saving in using standard bumpers and much of the exterior and interior trim, Rolls-Royce found they could offer the car for around £7500 rather than the £9000-odd needed for the Continental and fully coachbuilt bodies.

This process gave rise to the name for these cars – adaptation convertibles – and it's one that's liable to cause confusion if seen in a sales listing or on a show-board without further explanation. It would be easy to assume the work was done later, by someone wishing to add fresh air and value to a tired saloon. Indeed,

“One source states that Sir Bernard went out and bought two Rolls-Royce Silver Clouds in an act of spite against Daimler”

that has happened, and telling a well-executed car from a proper Mulliner-built original is tricky without good provenance or a very experienced eye. But in their day, these adaptation cars were amongst the rarest of the lot, because the idea was barely off the ground before the V8-engined S2 came along to supersede the six-cylinder S-series. There were 13 built as Rolls-Royce Silver Clouds and only two as

Bentleys – one in left-hand drive and one in right-hand drive – this one.

It belongs to James Grinter, who has been immersed in a fondness for old Rolls-Royces and Bentleys all his adult life, and has acquired an abundance of both knowledge and experience through his enjoyment of many different models. In other words, he knows what he likes. This car, as James explains, ticks a lot of boxes.

IN-CONTINENTAL CONFUSION...

Some of the delight of Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars made up to 1965 is the variety of coachwork you could find on very similar chassis. In the pre-war years it was, of course, the norm, but when the Standard Steel bodies arrived in the post-war era, it was easy to forget just how much variety remained. What's puzzling to modern eyes is the range of choices that seem to vary only in small aesthetic details. We've looked at it before with coachbuilt saloon alternatives to the Silver Cloud and S-series Standard Steel, and the case is very similar with the convertibles – or Drophead Coupés, as they're usually known.



Park Ward Continental DHC

The classic S-series Bentley Continental drophead has a strong swage line running up from the front bumper, all the way along the front wing and the door, then a small kick over the hip and on back to the high-mounted rear light.

59 RHD, 31 LHD



HJ Mulliner DHC, Style 7409/7410

Mulliner's direct rival to the Park Ward Continental, though not usually built on a Continental-spec chassis. 7409 was the Bentley style, 7410 identical bar the Rolls-Royce front end. Rear wing is slightly more distinct than on Park Ward car and rear lights are lower.

Bentley: 7 RHD, 5 LHD.

Rolls-Royce: 9 RHD, 12 LHD



James Young DHC

The two James Young dropheads built in Bentley S1 form are closer to the saloon look, or Adaptation DHC, with a higher bonnet line. If you know of others than the two built in this unusual two-seater form (Style SC15VL) let us know!

2 LHD



Graber DHC

Better known for his beautiful work on 3-litre Alvises, Hermann Graber of Switzerland bodied a handful of Crewe chassis in this generation with distinctively clean, modern lines that were slow to age.

Bentley: 1 RHD, 1 LHD plus 1 RHD Continental chassis.

Rolls-Royce: 1 RHD



HJ Mulliner Adaptation DHC

Here's the catalogue shot of the HJ Mulliner Adaptation in the Bentley S3 generation, still almost unaltered from the S1 version we see in our main shoot.

Bentley: 1 RHD, 1 LHD.

Rolls-Royce: 3 RHD, 10 LHD.

Figures from 'Every Cloud has a Silver Lining' by Davide Bassoli



'I think it's very beautiful – more attractive than the coachbuilt HJ Mulliner drophead coupé, to my eyes, which seems a little slab-sided in comparison without that falling waistline. Then there's the colour, which is the original combination of Shell Grey with Red Hide, and only the roof has changed. It was once a putty-coloured Everflex but is now black mohair. The condition was hugely attractive too, with only 50,000 miles on the clock and it's been through a really good body and mechanical restoration while the original interior was allowed to survive. Finally, it had great provenance; the car's whole life story was well recorded.'

James would understand provenance even without his fondness for cars, as he is a fine art and antiques auctioneer. The firm he manages, Reeman Dansie, sometimes holds classic car auctions but he had to venture to a different house for the sale of this Bentley.

'It was with Silverstone Auctions, sold in May last year. It had been part of a massive collection belonging to the Jaguar Land Rover Trust and I knew it would need a little recommissioning after doing very few miles in recent



years. But I've owned two other Silver Cloud and Cloud II convertibles and I know roughly what it's likely to cost to get one driving really well, so I knew what to bid. There were lots of modern classics in the same sale, fetching fortunes, and some of the older cars seemed a little overlooked.'

James's earliest motoring influences

were from Daimler, as older family members ran examples of the marque. After he passed his driving test, James owned a couple of 1950s Daimlers, but by the age of 20 had saved up enough for his first Rolls-Royce. This was a 20/25 Thrupp & Maberley D-back limousine, and it proved to be something of a gateway drug to »

FEATURE CAR

BENTLEY S-SERIES HJ MULLINER DHC

At speed on a country road – a happy place for car and driver



the addictive world of vintage and classic Rolls-Royces. James worked his way through other 20/25s and 25/30s, Phantom II and III generations before moving to post-war cars with Silver Wraiths. He strayed back to Daimler when the remarkable chance came up to own the late Queen's first State Daimler limousine, registered HRH 1. He has also sampled fastback Continentals and SY, SZ and indeed 21st century cars, so having seen the best of various eras, it's interesting to know what attracts him now. As he hinted above, a significant part of the appeal with any car is in its story.

A BEGUILING BIOGRAPHY

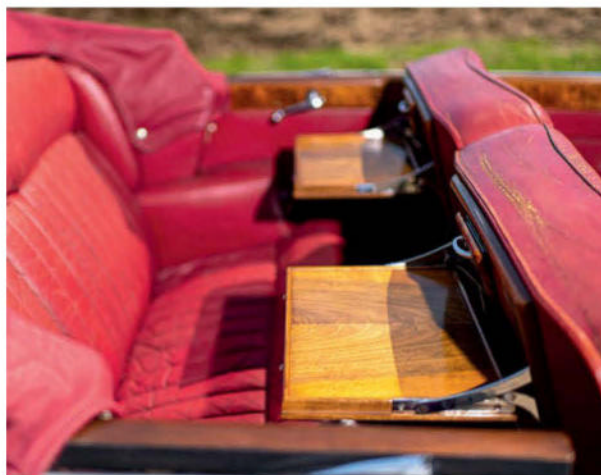
'This Bentley has a really interesting history, which begins when it was ordered new by Sir Bernard Docker,' says James.

There's another Daimler connection. Sir Bernard was Chairman of Daimler's parent company, BSA, and took on the role of Managing Director in the 1940s. By the early 1950s, he and his colourful second wife, Norah, had started commissioning the famously flamboyant Docker Daimlers, bodied by Hooper, who were also owned by the BSA group. The Dockers' high public profile and some snobbery over Norah's humble origins (and, perhaps, her ostentatious spending) backfired on Sir Bernard who also drew unwelcome headlines for failing to declare the correct sums of money taken out of the UK for trips in their superyacht to the casino in Monte Carlo. He was ousted from another role, that of Chairman of the Midland Bank, and then in 1956 removed as Chairman of BSA in a boardroom coup. He and Lady Docker fought back, spending huge sums on

campaigning for their reinstatement, but when details of their extravagance and in particular, of Lady Docker's 'business expenses' became public, they were obliged to admit defeat. One source states that Sir Bernard went out and bought two Rolls-Royce Silver Clouds in an act of spite against Daimler.

He certainly bought this car shortly after the affair with Daimler came to an end. And it was his own, not Lady Docker's – the initials 'B.D.' were painted on the doors. His specification on the order sheet included a badge bar, electric windows and powered roof, plus a zip-out rear window for better air flow through the car when the roof was up. Work was completed on 27th August 1959 and the car was sold through The Car Mart Ltd, delivered to Sir Bernard on 10th September.

He kept it for less than a year, moving it on to a gentleman named Neville »

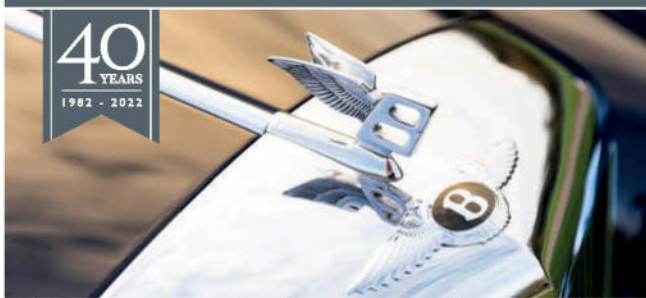


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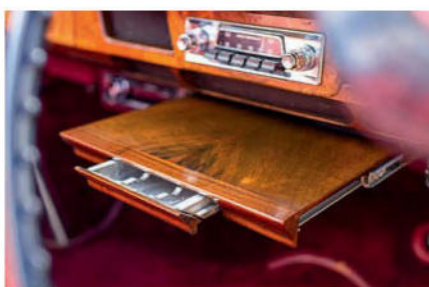
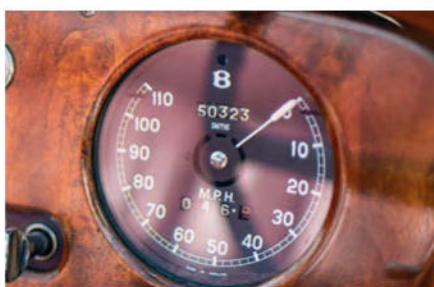
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FEATURE CAR

BENTLEY S-SERIES HJ MULLINER DHC



Beautiful dash with cubby-hole, radio, table and ashtray



Hamwee of Regents Park, quite possibly a friend of the Dockers – James has discovered he was also a neighbour of theirs in Jersey, where they owned property. He in turn quickly sold it again, perhaps therefore acting as an agent or go-between to find a new owner. This was Maureen Constance Hamilton-Temple-Blackwood, the Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava. She was born into the wealthy Guinness brewing and landowning clan, and was known as one of the three ‘Guinness Golden Girls’, as she and her two sisters Aileen and Oonagh were high-profile socialites in London in the mid-1920s. By the time she bought the Bentley in November 1960, she was living apart from her third husband and had no need to rely on her charm, as James describes.

‘She seems to have been a bit of a baggage! She kept on using her title even though her first husband, the Marquess, had died during the war. But she was very well connected and used to throw a party for the Queen Mother every year at her home, so I don’t suppose anyone argued with her.

“Only one mystery remains: why didn’t Rolls-Royce follow this approach from the beginning of S1 production, or come to that, from 1946 with the Mk VI Bentley?”

She had her coronets and monogram painted on the doors after changing the car’s colour to dark blue and she installed the Cartier silver St Christopher badge on the dash, which is still there.’

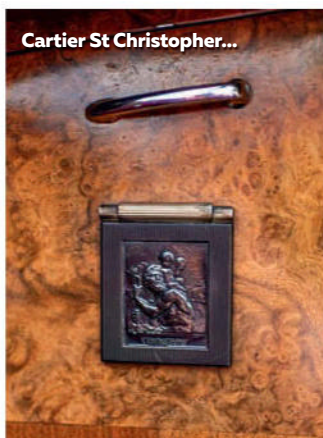
Lady Maureen sold the car in November 1985 for £22,000 to JP Carroll of Bexleyheath, Kent, who saw it through some minor refurbishment and upkeep, as it hadn’t been used much in its later years with the Marchioness and was slightly tired. Then, in 2007, Mr Carroll sold it on to Dick Hickton who had it properly restored by Barry Price of Lea-Francis Cars between 2008 and around 2010, very wisely opting to conserve the original seats, carpets and even headlining of the hood, as well

as returning it to its original Shell Grey. Sadly, Mr Hickton died in 2011 before he got much enjoyment from the car and it was sold to James Hull, the dentist and entrepreneur who quietly assembled Britain’s largest car collection. He put all 543 cars up for sale in May 2014 with an asking price of £100m, after which they were acquired by Jaguar Land Rover for an undisclosed sum, where it remained until the auction sale in 2023.

BACK WHERE IT BELONGS

Quite the life story. After James acquired this Bentley, it was recommissioned by Harvey Wash of »

Rear angle shows how seamlessly
Mulliner blended its work
with Standard Steel panels



FEATURE CAR

BENTLEY S-SERIES HJ MULLINER DHC



Kelvedon in Essex and for perhaps the first time since the restoration was completed, it now drives as it should.

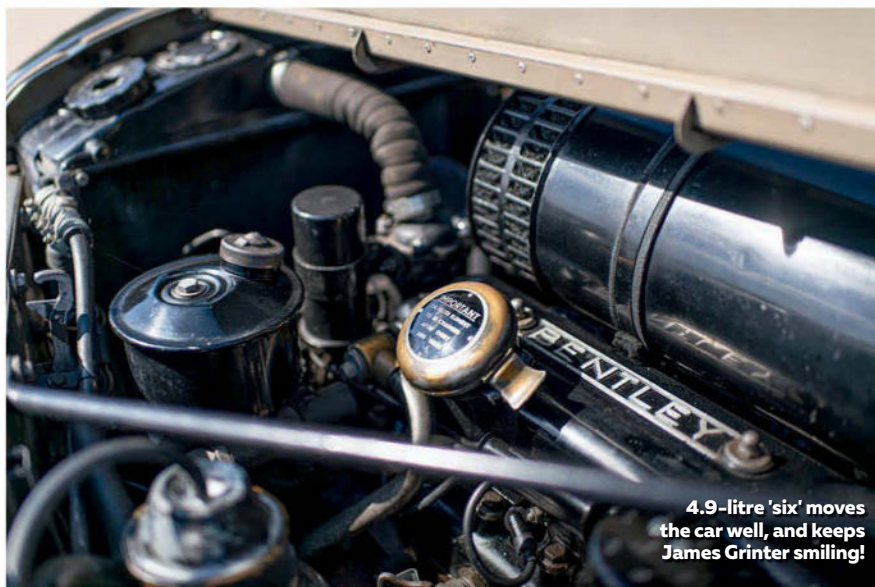
'Yes, it drives beautifully,' says James. 'I think the S1 is more refined; smoother and quieter than the later V8s, which I've also owned. Yes, the V8 is faster, but I find the engine of the Silver Cloud II and Bentley S2 more brash, somehow. There's also a flat spot in the S2's V8 engine that appears between 50 and 60mph, though Rolls-Royce improved the carburetion for the S3 and fixed it.

'This one, despite looking rather more dashing, drives very much as a saloon, and with the hood up, is as quiet inside

as a saloon. In theory it should be lighter but there is probably more weight added to keep the body stiff; it certainly avoids any scuttle shake, despite solid body mounts instead of the rubber mounts the saloons use. It cruises at 70mph all day long, and it's quieter than a Bentley Azure I used to own!'

This, as James describes it, is stylish motoring in the grand style, and it's no wonder that HJ Mulliner continued the practice of offering these adaptation convertibles through the remaining Silver Cloud and S-series generations, with greatly increased sales, particularly in America where the Silver Cloud II

sold 107 units versus just 21 examples of all the fully coachbuilt drophead options combined. Indeed, from the S2 generation, the adaptation DHCs were catalogued alongside the saloons, while the 'specialized coachwork' Continental offerings appeared in a different brochure. So now you know the reason why this familiar-looking convertible Bentley is genuinely unique in right-hand drive, and only one mystery remains: why didn't Rolls-Royce follow this approach from the beginning of S1 production, or come to that, from 1946 with the Mk VI Bentley? It works very well indeed. ■



4.9-litre 'six' moves the car well, and keeps James Grinter smiling!





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**2000 Rolls-Royce Corniche
Stock#16228**

This low-mileage 2000 Rolls-Royce Corniche featured merely 10,954 miles on the odometer and finished in its factory color Black combined with the same color interior. Equipped with an automatic transmission, V8 engine, embroidered seats, and Rolls-Royce branded wheel center caps. An extremely refined British classic that is available in a captivating triple-black color combination and is mechanically sound. For \$84,500



**1949 Bentley MK VI Saloon
Coachwork by Freestone & Webb
Stock#16993**

This right-hand-drive, Saloon Coachwork by Freestone & Webb, two-tone blue exterior Light blue interior, with complementing dark blue piping and carpets, creates a visually stunning contrast. 4-speed manual transmission, 4.257cc OHV inline-six-cylinder engine, and 3-spoke steering wheel. Mechanically sound. For \$29,950



**1976 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow
Stock#17086**

Finished in its factory color Oxford Blue complemented with a Beige interior. Automatic transmission with steering column control, V8 engine, and Rolls-Royce branded hub caps. This timeless design, luxurious interior, and maintenance history make it a highly desirable classic car. Mechanically sound. For \$19,750



**1953 Bentley R-Type Left-Hand-Drive
Stock#16956**

Left-Hand-Drive, finished in Silver with Gray leather and wood trim interior. Column-mounted manual transmission, 4.5-liter straight six engine, dual carburetors, Smiths instruments, dual exhaust outlets, chrome trim/bumpers, chrome radiator grille, "Flying B" hood ornament, Lucas-branded front fog light, 3-spoke steering wheel, Bentley-branded hub caps, jack, full-size spare tire fitted in trunk. Mechanically sound. For \$32,500



**2004 Rolls-Royce Phantom
Stock#16907**

86,783 miles, finished in factory color Silver with a Magnolia interior. Automatic transmission and a 6.8-liter V12 engine. Striking exterior, luxurious interior, and array of convenient features, offers a driving experience like no other, in a phenomenal color scheme as well as mechanically sound. For \$79,500



**1953 Bentley R-Type Saloon
Stock#17180**

Left-Hand-Drive, finished in cream with beige interior. Automatic transmission, straight six engine, SU dual carburetors, and Smiths instrumentation. Whether you're a seasoned collector or a passionate enthusiast, this vehicle offers a rare chance to own a piece of automotive history. This British classic is a true gem that will appreciate in value over time. For \$26,500



**1961 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud II
Stock#15640**

Left-hand-drive, finished in black combined with tan interior. Automatic transmission, V8 engine, Birmingham SU dual carburetors, Smith instruments, and Rolls-Royce branded hub caps. Power windows, dash-mounted rearview mirror, rear folding picnic trays, analog clock in the dashboard, and a glass partition to keep your conversations private. For \$49,950



**1948 Bentley Mark VI Hooper
Drophead Convertible Right-Hand-Drive
Stock#17270**

Right-Hand-Drive, finished in black over Cotswold Green exterior with tan Leather interior. Factory correspondence letters, original order specification sheets, books, service records, restoration receipts, and even the original tools. Mechanically sound. For \$98,500



**1991 Rolls-Royce Silver Spur II
Stock#17127**

73,509 miles, finished in factory color Magnolia (9510418) with Cream interior. Automatic transmission, V8 engine, power steering, and "Silver Spur II" badging. If you are in search of a classic luxury vehicle that exudes timeless elegance and offers unparalleled comfort, look no further than this sophisticated vehicle that is mechanically sound. For \$19,750



**1954 Bentley R-Type
Right-Hand-Drive
Stock#17182**

Finished in a two-tone burgundy and cream with a brown interior. Post-war British classic with amenities including folding picnic trays, sun visors, fender-mounted side mirrors, manual-crank windows, Solid State AM/FM radio, and a passenger dash grab handle. Mechanically sound. For \$24,750



**1934 Rolls-Royce 20/25 Saloon
Stock#17110**

Finished in a two-tone Blue and Silver with Blue interior. Equipped with a 4-speed manual transmission, straight-six engine, soft top, single exhaust outlet, chrome bumpers, interior wood trim, trafficators, and wire wheels with BF Goodrich Silvertown whitewall tires. This vintage Rolls-Royce is sure to turn heads and make a statement wherever you go. Mechanically sound. For \$46,500



**1936 Rolls-Royce 20/25
Sedan De Ville by Park Ward
Stock#15687**

This right-hand-drive, finished in a color combination of grey over a light grey interior. Equipped with a four-speed manual transmission, and a Spirit of Ecstasy hood ornament. There are also copies of history documentation and also service receipt copies totaling over \$14,000 that have been invested into the vehicle. Mechanically sound. For \$49,950



**1990 Bentley Turbo R
Stock#16523**

46,840 miles, finished in White with Beige interior. Equipped with an automatic V8 transmission, cruise control, air conditioning, and power mirrors. Includes owner's booklets, service record copies, clean CARFAX report, and full-size spare tire in trunk. An extremely clean Bentley Turbo waiting for a new home that is mechanically sound. For \$16,750

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GETAWAY CAR

There's something a little raffish about this handsome Bentley coupé, thanks in part to the potent V8 engine that's ready to get you out of trouble - or into it?

WORDS & PHOTOS: NIGEL BOOTHMAN



We're whirling ever upwards, left and right through the lanes and eventually climbing to a long straight between the shoulders of two mountains. Snowdonia is looking its best today, with bright sunshine and a sky almost as deep as the Circassian Blue on this S2 Continental. Next to me is Huw Williams from one of the best-known specialists in the classic and vintage Rolls-Royce and Bentley scene, the Real Car Co. Huw has an interesting take on this vehicle, which conveys a lot about the way it feels compared to its predecessors.

'It's like a posh getaway car,' he says. 'It's got a lot of power and torque and gets going very well from

a standstill. I guess you'd get three or four bank-robbers in here, alongside the driver, and in 1962 I don't suppose anyone would have caught you!'

When you think back to the BBC's Z-Cars, launched the year this car was built, you have to admit that Stratford Johns, Brian Blessed et al would have struggled to keep up in a Mk 3 Ford Zephyr. But it's all a joke, anyhow – it seems highly unlikely that a Bentley S2 Continental was used for such a nefarious purpose, especially with the streets full of ageing Jaguars just begging to be borrowed. Indeed, you would rarely have seen a car like this Bentley on the streets at all. Just 71 of these H.J. Mulliner two-doors were constructed in right-hand drive; only

a couple of dozen per year, and not all of those destined to stay in the UK.

IT ALL ADDS UP

Low numbers are not a surprise when you consider the cost. It would have been hard to find a more expensive and exclusive motor car than this Bentley in 1962; after adding up the invoice column on the order sheet, we arrived at a total a little over £9185. That started at £6015 for the list price, the car described on the sheet thus: 'S2 Series Cont. Chassis with Mulliner 2-door Saloon body'. But it ramped up alarmingly thanks to £2606 in purchase tax, which was calculated not just on the list price but »



A simple shape, but an elegant one, with a subtle kick over the hip

FEATURE CAR

BENTLEY S2 CONTINENTAL

The S2 was the last Bentley with the classic two-headlamp look before the quad lamps came in for the S3 generation



“Autocar concluded that ‘few cars would provide as rapid, restful and satisfying transport from say Paris to Nice’”

on the car's exciting range of extras.

We have electric windows (£69), an electric aerial (£23/13), a 'Blue Spot' Köln radio (£59/5) an illuminated altimeter (£24/10), wider Reutter bucket seats and associated fittings (£48/10) a foglight (£5/10) and 'curled type lambswool mantle rug to rear' for a steep £30. With petrol, safety belts (£32/5), sundry surcharges and credits mixed in, the final price would have bought an enormous house, with plenty left over for a new runabout. We often make price comparisons from the period with other cars, because it's fun to realise just what unobtainable wonders these Rolls-Royces and Bentleys were, yet this one is particularly striking: in 1962 you could have ordered a Ferrari 250 GT California Spyder for £5607...and that's *including* the purchase tax.

Today, values are wildly out of kilter – even the less desirable long-

wheelbase 'Cal Spyder' is now a £7m car in top condition, which would buy 27 copies of this S2 Continental, currently advertised at £255,000. The market knows what it likes, but if I had a spare £7m, I might take a little time to consider what value was placed on the cars by the people who built them – and bought them new. In the case of this Bentley, Chassis No. BC87CZ, that customer was Harold Watson Hall.

Mr Hall, apparently known as Watson rather than Harold to friends, was a member of a wealthy East Yorkshire family with interests in farming and commercial fishing, and he seems to have had a taste for fast cars. Sue Jones, Real Car Co's PA and ace investigator, discovered Watson incurred a summons for speeding as far back as 1940. His part in the war effort consisted of intelligence work for the RAF, though his unfortunate brother Donald served in the East Riding

Yeomanry and died in the retreat to Dunkirk aged 29. A young man in wartime, Watson would therefore be in middle age when he ordered this car – perhaps approaching his 50th birthday, feeling like he deserved one last dashing motor car before surrendering to a more mature pace of life. Perhaps, even, it was a Valentine's Day gift – the car was delivered on 16th February 1962, two days after Cupid's arrows were due to fly.

There are clues that Watson was a big chap, perhaps both upwards and sideways. The special instructions for the build of his Bentley include the following: *Provide wider type of front bucket seats with Reutter fittings. Both front cushions to be ¾-in lower than standard.* Whatever his physical characteristics, he seems to have been a careful and conscientious owner, as the car remained in fine condition when it next popped up in our timeline



Altimeter is an unusual requirement - but the first owner was ex-RAF



Automatic transmission was the only choice for this generation, but doesn't seem to blunt performance



Is there a better-looking dashboard, anywhere? We doubt it

in 1986, with P&A Wood. They sold it to James Kirby Dobbs III of Memphis, Tennessee, who bought it as a 40th birthday present to himself. Three years later, it moved on to Dr Morris Gardner of Allison Park, Pennsylvania, and then in 2000 it transferred to a Fifth Avenue address in New York city with a restaurateur, Herbert Wetanson, whose

initials remain painted on the doors. In 2019 it returned to Europe with an owner in Belgium and now awaits a new keeper from the peace of Real Car Co's garages at Bethesda, North Wales.

CREWE'S BIG RISK?

The S2 and Silver Cloud II were

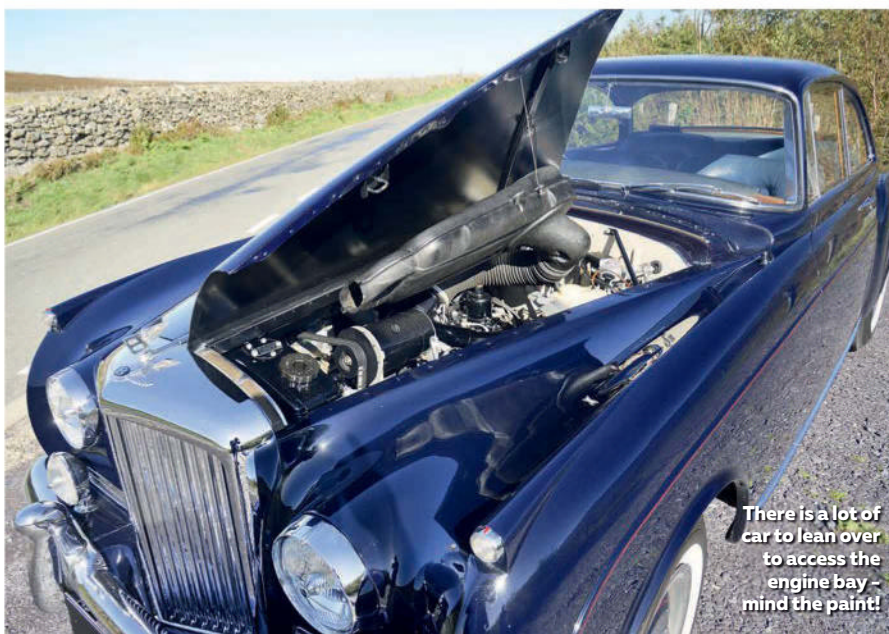
highly important models for Rolls-Royce, because of the introduction of the new V8 engine. Looking back to contemporary assessments of it, it's clear that not everyone was convinced, at least to start with. It must have been a very nervous couple of years for Rolls-Royce, which had decided to create its own V8 using an »

FEATURE CAR

BENTLEY S2 CONTINENTAL



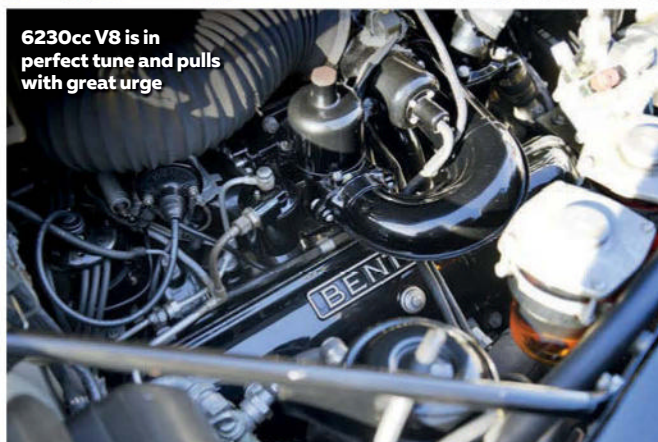
Red pinstripe lifts the dark Circassian Blue finish



There is a lot of car to lean over to access the engine bay - mind the paint!



V8 fits in an engine bay designed for a straight six, but only just - steering had to be rearranged



6230cc V8 is in perfect tune and pulls with great urge

aluminium cylinder block and heads. This produced a far lighter engine, which was desirable, but brought problems too – cast-iron liners were needed for the cylinder bores, adding to manufacturing cost, and mechanical silence was harder to achieve than in an all-iron engine. Hydraulic tappets helped, but the new V8 would never be quite as quiet and smooth as the straight-six engine it replaced. Ironically, having waited so long (compared with American rivals) to introduce a V8, Rolls-Royce may have been able to abandon their use of aluminium if they'd waited just a year or two longer and adopted the thin-wall iron casting techniques developed in America.

Still, the new V8 was indeed a lightweight for a 6.25-litre unit, coming in at 30lb less than the old 4.9-litre straight six. Power output jumped by around 50bhp and torque by at

least 50lb ft, transforming the cars from stately performers to genuine expressers. For the S2 Continental chassis, this was particularly true, as the taller rear axle ratio allowed relaxed cruising on Europe's expanding motorway network at 80 or 90mph without blunting acceleration – light aluminium bodywork saw to that.

Nonetheless, when *Autocar* tested a James Young-bodied Continental in 1961 they found a few points to complain about. Mostly these were ergonomic; the pedals being rather small, of uneven height and the steering column being angled slightly to the right. They also disliked the way the automatic transmission allowed the car to creep forward in traffic, as the familiar mechanical servo brakes had virtually no assistance at crawling speed and needed a harder push than felt relaxing to keep the car stationary

while in gear. But they were impressed by the handling and in particular the lack of body roll, though the 18 gallon fuel tank was felt to be insufficient – only 250 miles or less between fills. For a car of 60 years ago to be fast and comfortable enough for it to be annoying to pull over every 250 miles is impressive, and indeed, *Autocar* concluded that 'few cars would provide as rapid, restful and satisfying transport from say Paris to Nice'.

BEHIND THE WHEEL

Perhaps I'm not being as objective as a car journalist should be, but I have to report that none of *Autocar's* concerns showed up on my radar. The first thing that strikes you on settling into the driver's chair is the sheer beauty of the dash. Indeed, this must be as good as dashboards get – there's a

“Just 71 of these H.J. Mulliner two-doors were constructed in right-hand drive; only a couple of dozen per year, and not all of those destined to stay in the UK”



Car's identity is a mystery to some passers-by - from this angle, it is less obvious.jpeg

slight wraparound effect, framed in a different veneer from the figured walnut over most of it, housing well-placed, handsome, sober dials. And an altimeter! It's still there, and it seems to be reading a slightly over-high 1200ft. What's missing is Watson Hall's personal compass, something he asked Rolls-Royce to install (they did so, at a cost of £1/10s), having removed it from his previous car. Perhaps it left its location described in the Special Instructions – dead in front of the driver – when Mr Hall sold the Bentley.

The seats are broad and soft but not the swamp of comfort you might find in a Standard Steel saloon, especially in the back. Legroom is limited back there but head and shoulder-room is not, so this is still a comfortable and capable four-seater. When exploring the car before we set off, I found the boot to be long and wide though not very high, »



The best view - inside and out - any driver could wish for



“After all, you’d want silence and refinement in a stately four-door saloon, as you would in a convertible, but if you want the option of making your heart beat a little bit faster, this car can offer that”

so fitted (or at least slender) luggage would be an advantage. Visibility is excellent from behind the wheel, rather better than a fastback Continental. It’s not as dramatic a shape as Mulliner’s classic fastback R-type and S1 bodies, but the styling is very well proportioned, so it does a good job of making a large car seem elegant. It would be interesting to see the same example without whitewall tyres. Would it make this Continental sportier, or spoil the visual balance of wheel size versus body proportions? Whatever

SPECIFICATION

**1962 BENTLEY S2
CONTINENTAL**

LENGTH: 5364mm / 17ft

WIDTH: 1822mm / 6ft

WEIGHT: 1918kg / 4219lb

ENGINE: 6230cc OHV V8

POWER: 200bhp @ 4000rpm (est)

TORQUE: 325lb ft @ 2000rpm (est)

0-60MPH: 11.8s

TOP SPEED: 120mph

COST NEW: £9185

we think about that, red pinstripes are the finishing touch to a very dark finish and prevent it from being sombre.

The ingredients are adding up to a very high score for a Grand Tourer already, and that’s not counting the driving experience. The moment we pull over for our first photos we encounter a walker, whose reaction might be the most common one you’ll get in one of these Continentals: ‘That’s beautiful! What is it?’

Even the Flying B seems to go un-noticed. No-one guesses its age very well either, probably because it’s not as heavy-looking as large 1950s cars, not as fussy as many exotic 1960s cars and it has none of the clues you’d get from a 1970s car – straight lines, sharp corners. On the move again, I’m considering Huw’s words about it being a ‘posh getaway car’. I know what he means. There’s a slightly rakish quality, probably produced by the combination of silent, hulking presence and the ability to whoosh up to exciting speeds with a quick prod of the loud pedal. It really doesn’t mind corners, either, rushing through these little bends while remaining commendably level.

Elsewhere in this issue you’ll find praise for both this car’s predecessor, the S1 / Silver Cloud generation, and its successor, the S3 / Silver Cloud III. The S2 is sometimes seen as falling between these two high points, bringing a few teething troubles with the new engine and its carburetion, offering less silence and a more brash response, but with the exception of that latter point, it’s difficult to agree on the evidence of this example. Whoever looked after it has got it working very nicely indeed, with no hesitation or flat spotting. Perhaps the new V8 went best of all with this body. After all, you’d want silence and refinement in a stately four-door saloon, as you would in a convertible, but if you want the option of making your heart beat a little bit faster, this car can offer that. It will settle down to cruise with the utmost serenity... until you see a sign off the *autoroute* and fancy taking the more direct road over the mountains. Paris to Nice? Not bad, but how about North Wales to Monte Carlo, or to St Moritz or Rome? Forget bank jobs – that’s the kind of getaway I’d like to do in this car. ■

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THE SPIRIT OF EXPERIMENTATION

THE SUPERCHARGER

SUPREMO

Charles Amherst Villiers is best-known for his involvement with the 4½-litre 'Blower' Bentleys, but his spirit was one of true experimentation and achievement in many fields

WORDS: RICHARD GUNN PHOTOS: KELSEY ARCHIVE / BENTLEY MOTORS / ROLLS-ROYCE MOTOR CARS

Look at any supercharger fitted to an original 'Blower' Bentley and you should find a small plate identifying it as an 'Amherst Villiers Mark IV'. Without these industrial-looking contraptions

almost clumsily bolted onto the 4½-litre leviathans, some of Britain's most extraordinary and charismatic sports and racing cars might never have existed. The man behind them was Charles Amherst Villiers and while

most now know him for the magic he worked on these Bentleys, they were just a small part of a long career that also encompassed astonishing Rolls-Royces, Formula 1, aeronautics, rocket science and even the worlds of James Bond and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*.

It was on 9 December 1900 that Charles Amherst Villiers emerged into a world of late-Victorian privilege and affluence. His father, Ernest Amherst Villiers, was a prominent clergyman about to enter politics as a Liberal MP while his mother was the Honourable Elaine Augusta Guest, daughter of wealthy industrialist Baron Wimborne. Through her, he was related to Winston Churchill and the future British prime minister would eventually become godfather to Villiers' son.

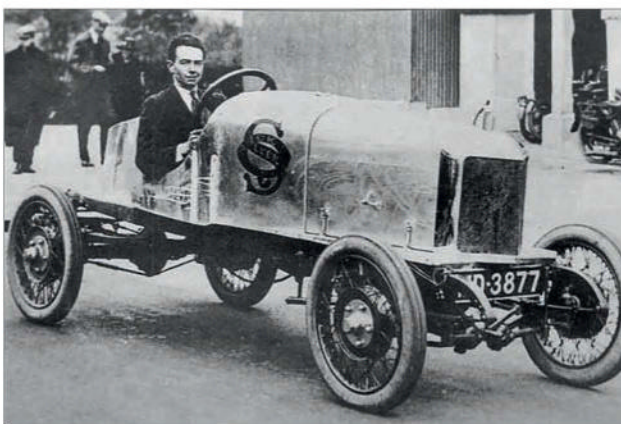
At the age of 11, Villiers was sent to Windlesham House school in Brighton



The young Charles Amherst Villiers during the 1920s.



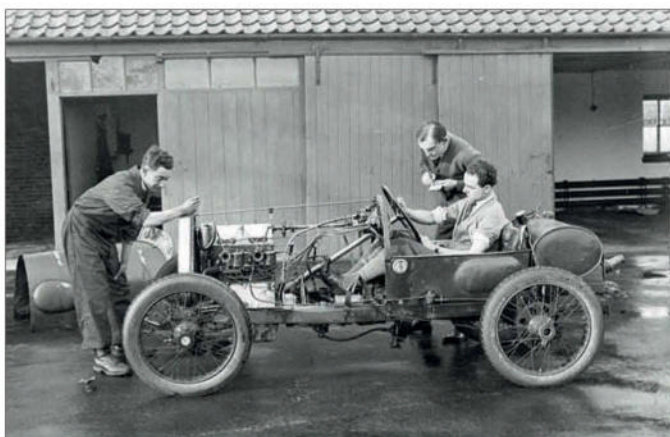
The workshops of Oundle School in Northamptonshire were where the young Villiers first began modifying engines.



Raymond Mays in Quicksilver, the Speed Model Hillman that was the start of Villiers' first car tuning and modifying efforts.



Raymond Mays racing a biplane at Skegness Sands in 1923, in one of the Brescia Bugattis tuned by Villiers.



Brescia Bugatti tweaks; Villiers is making notes while Raymond Mays operates the controls.

where he became fascinated by early aviators using nearby Hove as a makeshift aerodrome. His interest in mechanised transport was also indulged by the chauffeur, who let him try out the family Renault 34/45 as well as his personal FN motorcycle. In 1915, Villiers moved on to Oundle School in Northamptonshire. There, he particularly relished tinkering in the school workshops, including rebuilding a Curtiss OX V8 aircraft engine donated by the Air Ministry. One of his fellow students at Oundle was Raymond Mays, who'd later found English Racing Automobiles (ERA) and British Racing Motors (BRM), and the pair forged a friendship that lasted long beyond their school days.

Villiers left Oundle just before the First World War ended and was briefly apprenticed at the Royal Aircraft

Establishment in Farnborough before continuing his education at Gonville and Caius College in Cambridge. With Mays also studying nearby, both became members of the Cambridge University Automobile Club. Mays had recently acquired a Speed Model Hillman and Villiers couldn't resist tinkering with it, raising its top speed from 56mph to a more competitive 80mph. The pair campaigned *Quicksilver*, as they christened it, at hillclimbs and circuits, including Brooklands. Eventually, motorsport so took over Villiers' attention that he left Cambridge in 1921 without completing his degree.

Mays embarked on an almost full-time racing career and part-exchanged *Quicksilver* for a new Type 13 1.5-litre 'Brescia' Bugatti, giving Villiers something new to play with for the

1923 season. He modified and tuned it to its limits, so impressing Ettore Bugatti in the process that the pair were invited to Bugatti's home in Molsheim, France so *Le Patron* could probe Villiers for his secrets. This also resulted in a second Bugatti being purchased; the older car would be christened *Cordon Rouge* while the new one took the name *Cordon Bleu*. With its Villiers' modifications, it proved just as formidable as its older sister.

FIRST FORAY INTO SUPERCHARGING

For 1925, Villiers decided to try something new. He was familiar with supercharging (forcing more air/fuel mixture into an engine to create a bigger explosion, thus generating more power) from his Royal Aircraft »

THE SPIRIT OF EXPERIMENTATION

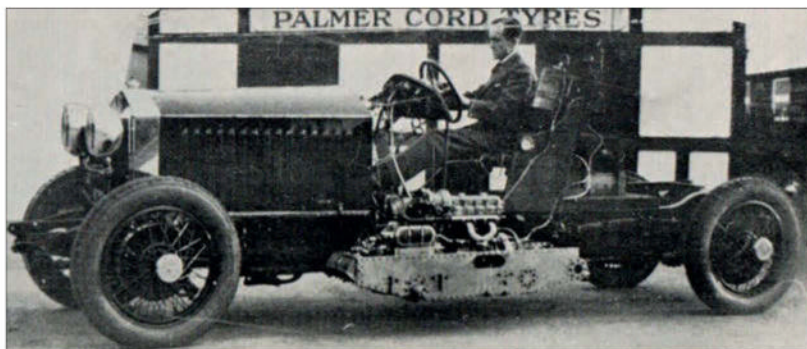
CHARLES AMHERST VILLIERS

Establishment days, but the technology was now finding its way into sports cars. Villiers and Mays patriotically chose a 1.5-litre AC to experiment with. At its heart was a Villiers-designed twin-rotor supercharger based on a Roots-type example that he'd rescued from agricultural use on an Oxfordshire farm. This first foray into forced induction proved disappointing, with the AC suffering many problems and compromised performance. The engine, with its blower, eventually ended up in a speedboat owned by future 'Bentley Boy' Sir Henry 'Tim' Birkin, while the development costs forced Mays to temporarily exit racing and concentrate on clearing his debts as a dutiful – and probably very bored – employee at his father's wool and tannery business.

Nevertheless, while the AC may have been regarded as a failure, its innovations had got Villiers noticed. Malcolm Campbell approached him to assist with building a land speed record car, aiming to breach the 180mph barrier. The result was the Napier-Campbell *Blue Bird II*, fitted with a monstrous 22.3-litre 450bhp W12 Napier Lion aeroplane and maritime engine. While Campbell and Villiers ultimately fell out, and Villiers departed the project



Malcolm Campbell in *Blue Bird II* at Pendine Sands in 1927. Villiers did considerable work on the record-breaker before he and Campbell fell out.



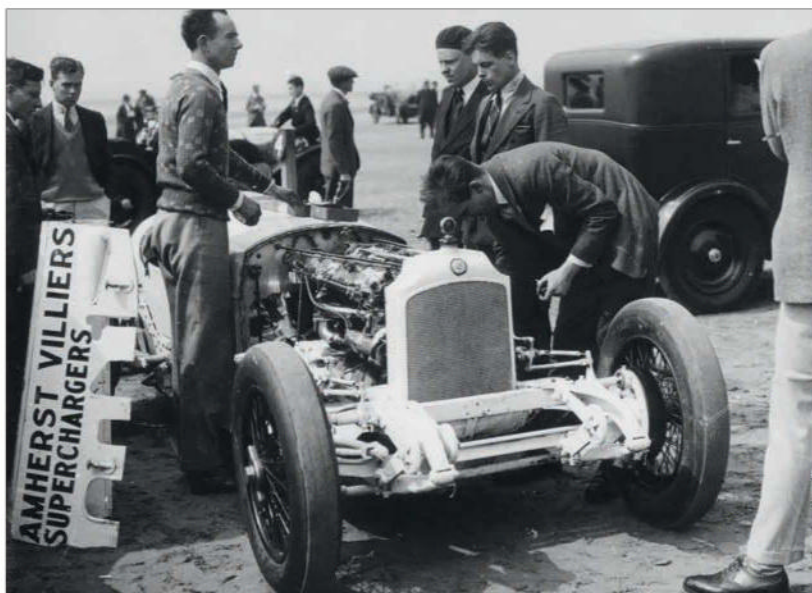
Villiers testing the Jack Kruse Rolls-Royce Phantom at Brooklands, with its secondary engine, used to power the supercharger, in uncovered form mounted on the car's left-hand side.

prematurely, the car managed to achieve 195mph in 1927 and, in 900bhp rebuilt form, 206.96mph in 1928, and 212mph in 1929.

What came next was one of the

most remarkable Rolls-Royces ever created. A wealthy businessman, Captain Jack Kruse, commissioned Villiers to supercharge his torpedo-bodied 1925 Rolls-Royce Phantom. Money was no object, Kruse reputedly having told Villiers to 'Do something with my Phantom. Have some fun. Do something exciting'.

Something fun and exciting was most definitely what resulted. Rather than simply fit a supercharger that would initially sap some of the engine's power, Villiers decided to take the extraordinary course of mounting a small 625cc engine he'd built himself on the Rolls-Royce's left-hand running board. The 10hp motor drove the supercharger which forced extra air into the Phantom's main 7.7-litre engine. The experiment cost around £16,000 but provided Kruse with a Rolls-Royce capable of 110mph, albeit with considerable noise and woeful fuel consumption. Villiers eventually ended up owning the Phantom himself after Kruse sold it. It had passed through a few hands – and was test-driven by Tim Birkin around Brooklands – before Villiers acquired it in 1932 for £250. One »



Villiers (right) makes some final adjustments to the Vauxhall Villiers during an event in Southport in 1929, alongside Raymond Mays (left). Note the publicity-seeking engine cover.



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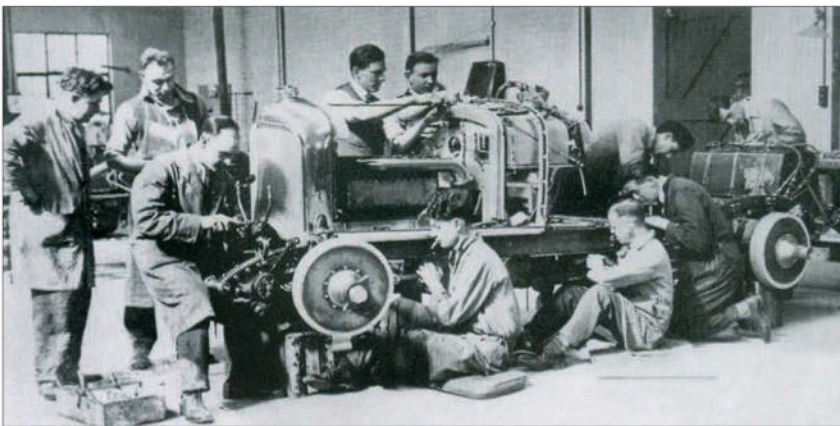
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of his first actions was to remove the supercharger and its separate engine. He may have created the world's first supercharged Rolls-Royce, but it seems that he also realised that, as an everyday vehicle, this idiosyncratic experiment was utterly impractical.

With Raymond Mays having cleared his AC debts, Villiers teamed up with his old friend again to campaign a 3.0-litre TT Vauxhall. Supercharged and with other alterations to justify it being named the *Villiers Vauxhall* and later, after even more tweaks, the *Villiers Supercharge*, it proved a far more potent and reliable weapon than its AC predecessor, and its triumphs over several seasons helped establish and enrich Mays to the point where he was able to found English Racing Automobiles in 1933.

Amid all this, Villiers embarked upon the project with which he is most associated; the invention of the 'Blower' Bentleys. Tim Birkin, who'd resumed racing in 1927 after being away from it since 1921, became convinced that the way to get more out of what Ettore Bugatti had dismissed as 'the world's fastest lorries' lay with supercharging. WO Bentley was vehemently against the idea, saying that 'to supercharge a Bentley engine was to pervert its design and corrupt its performance'. Nevertheless, Birkin pushed on with the idea of building a fleet of blown 4½-litre Bentleys (50



Construction of a 'Blower' Bentley underway at the workshops that Tim Birkin set up in Welwyn Garden City. Villiers was really only involved with the project for around a year.

production versions of which were required for Le Mans homologation purposes). Having already encountered Villiers' supercharging expertise in the ex-Kruse Phantom as well as the AC-engined speedboat, he was the obvious go-to engineer to help make the vision a reality.

BIRTH OF THE BLOWERS

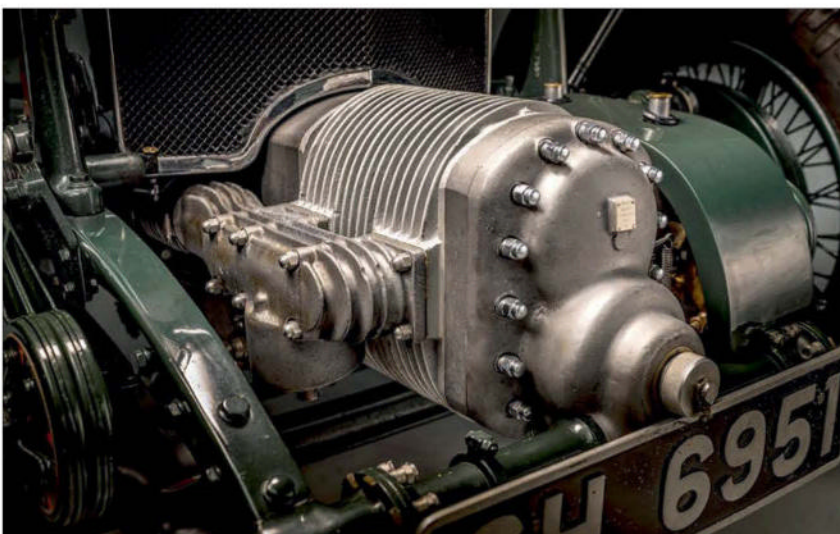
Villiers began working with on the Blower scheme in late 1928. Famously, the Roots-type crankshaft-driven superchargers, of his own design, were mounted ahead of the Bentleys' radiators, jutting out almost brazenly because WO Bentley,

having begrudgingly accepted the case for supercharging, didn't want them cluttering up his engine bay. Other changes initiated by Villiers included a counter-balanced crankshaft, stiffened cylinder block, and shorter, stronger connecting rods to enable tougher, flat-top pistons. In normally-aspirated form, the 4 ½-litre models had 110bhp for road use and 130bhp for racing purposes. Supercharging boosted these figures to 175bhp and 242bhp respectively.

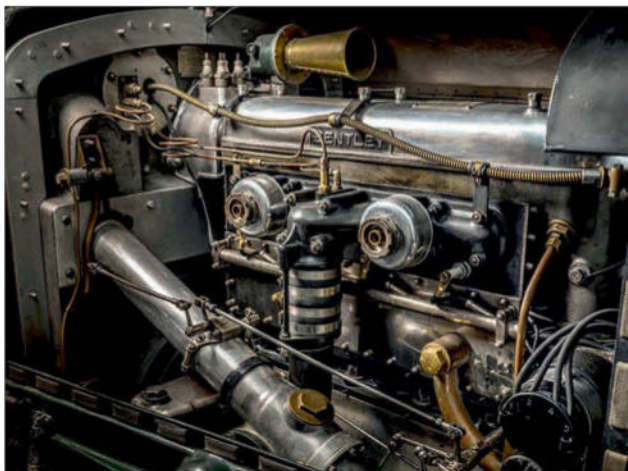
Although Villiers has become renowned for his Blower Bentley work, thanks to his name being stamped on the superchargers (in lieu of royalties) he was involved for less than a year.



Sir Henry 'Tim' Birkin initiated the 'Blower' Bentley project and brought Villiers onboard because he was already familiar with his supercharging expertise.



An Amherst Villiers Supercharger Mark IV in its natural home, on the front of a Bentley 4 ½-litre. Note the small plate identifying it, which Villiers took out an injunction against Bentley to have fitted.



The engine of a Bentley 4½-litre; W O Bentley refused to allow Villiers to fit a supercharger inside the bay because he didn't want it cluttered.



The 'Amherst Villiers Supercharger Mark IV' plate attached to the device on most 'Blown' Bentleys. Villiers had originally wanted much larger, more prominent branding.

The Villiers name will forever be associated with the 4 ½-litre 'Blower' Bentleys for which he supplied the superchargers and also carried out other engine modifications.



There's some conjecture that he fell out with other members of the engineering team, most notably WO himself, whom he later referred to as 'Old Pussy Face'. He definitely wasn't happy when he attended 1929's London Motor Show at which the Bentleys were launched and found his name had been omitted from the supercharger casings as well as the accompanying publicity, and took out a legal injunction against Bentley until the matter was resolved.

Ultimately, the 'Blower' Bentleys proved quite unreliable, and Bentley's withdrawal from motorsport in

1930 and the sale of the company to Rolls-Royce a year later meant that their teething troubles were never satisfactorily tackled. In the end, they became more legendary for what they set out to achieve, rather than what they did.

Nevertheless, Villiers emerged with his reputation further enhanced. During the 1930s, he did consultancy work for English Racing Automobiles and others, and also built a supercharged Austin Seven Ulster for Sir Herbert Austin. He also returned to aero engines, something he had

dabbled with during and immediately after school. He acquired a Gloster IV biplane with the intention of fitting it with a Napier Lion engine to try and break the world landplane speed record. While this scheme ultimately came to nothing, it did lead to him meeting his first wife, Marietta Nungovich, a widowed singer known professionally as Maya de Lisle. They married in July 1932, just weeks after being introduced by a mutual friend involved with the Gloster record attempt. A few years later on, Villiers designed a 120/130hp »



The RMS Queen Elizabeth during wartime; this was the liner on which Villiers sailed to a new role in Canada during the Second World War and which was nearly torpedoed en route.



Ian Fleming, the author of the James Bond novels, with a 'Blower' Bentley. He gave 007 one to drive in his books as a nod to his friend, Villiers.

four-cylinder aero engine which he christened Maya, but it didn't make it into production despite proving very promising in testing.

During the Second World War, Villiers served with the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) as a pilot ferrying new, repaired and damaged military aircraft around, thus freeing up RAF pilots for battle. He also worked with Rolls-Royce on its aero engines but in 1942 accepted a position in Canada with Canadian Car and Foundry, working on aircraft for the war effort. His voyage across the Atlantic on the RMS *Queen Elizabeth* only narrowly avoided being ended by a German U-boat.

Villiers decided not to return to Britain after the war, and simultaneously his marriage to Maya ended. He married again, to Juanita Lorraine Brown, in 1945 following a whirlwind romance after they met in New York. Their daughter, Veronica Jane (known as Janie) was born in 1946, Charles Churchill Villiers – Sir Winston's godson – followed in 1951. Villiers' aircraft experience secured him a role with Grumman developing rocketry. To bring himself up to speed, he studied captured German V2 rocket plans.

Later employment, with Hamilton Standard and Boeing, involved him with fledgling space technology as the Americans and Russians tried to outdo each other in the race to the stars during the 1950s.

BOND AND BEYOND

Something else Villiers contributed to, albeit a little less proactively, was the world of James Bond. Ian Fleming had known Villiers since 1927 and when he wrote *Casino Royale*, the first 007 adventure, during 1952, he gave his hero a supercharged 4½-litre Bentley to drive. Fleming specifically namechecked his friend and made much of how considerably Villiers' invention enhanced the Bentley's capabilities. When *Casino Royale* became Daniel Craig's 007 movie debut in 2006, M's assistant was given the name Villiers in tribute to the man who had supercharged Britain's least secret spy. The real Villiers also advised on some aspects of Fleming's children's story, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and *Caractacus Pott* (only 'Potts' in the film version!), the book's eccentric inventor, may even have been based on Villiers himself. He also produced some

illustrations of what the magical vintage car should look like, and although these never saw the public light of day at the time, the formal painting that Villiers – whose many talents also included being a gifted artist – produced of Fleming, did appear. It was used to decorate an edition of *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* and later went on to hang in London's National Portrait Gallery.

In 1960, Villiers briefly moved back to Britain, where Raymond Mays was happy to have his old colleague's expertise at his British Racing Motors Formula 1 team. In 1963 though, it was back to the USA for a job with Douglas, complete with a 1931 'Blower' Bentley that Fleming had helped him acquire and which he planned to use as an everyday car in Los Angeles. Once again, Villiers was involved in the US space programme but this time, his stay was shorter and in 1965, aged 65, he retired. He stayed on in America for a while but when it was discovered that Juanita had cancer, the family opted to go back to London. The Bentley, which had been freshly restored and just won its class at the Pebble Beach Concours, and which Villiers had planned »

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THE SPIRIT OF EXPERIMENTATION

CHARLES AMHERST VILLIERS

to pass onto his son, was sold.

The resources of the NHS were unable to save Mrs Villiers, and she died in September 1968, aged 50. It left Villiers, approaching his seventies but with a daughter in her early twenties and a teenage son, rather lost. He relocated to the Spanish island of Mallorca to paint, renting out his Kensington house, and bought cars and boats to occupy him. He also spent some time living on the Beaulieu estate as a guest of Lord Montagu, who regarded him as 'a British motor racing hero'. Work for BRM and Graham Hill's Embassy Hill team helped top up his finances as and when.

In 1973, Villiers acquired a Rolls-Royce Phantom III (reputedly found mouldering in a field) and set about building the 'most fabulous Rolls-Royce ever'. His plans included a bespoke five-seater sedan body and twin-turbochargers added to the 7.3-litre V12. Progress was slow until 1982, when Bentley launched its Mulsanne Turbo. Villiers contacted Rolls-Royce and pitched himself as the last surviving link with the old 'Blower' Bentleys. He somehow struck a vague deal whereby the company would complete the remaining work on the Phantom (estimated at around £15,000) and then use it for publicity purposes. All seemed well until 1985 when Rolls-Royce, under a new managing director, informed Villiers that all work was to cease and he could

either have the partially completed car back or pay for its completion. Crucially, the turbochargers hadn't even been fitted.

Lord Montagu intervened and was told by Rolls-Royce that £100,000 had already been spent on the rebuild and that turbochargers would just be too much for the venerable V12, but that the car would be finished within a few months. That didn't happen and more years passed during which Rolls-Royce claimed to have spent an extra £100,000. In July 1991, Villiers, by then a frail nonagenarian suffering from cancer, took Rolls-Royce to court for breach of contract.

During the third day of the High Court Hearing, the Phantom was brought to the Royal Courts of Justice in London for inspection, where Villiers referred to it as 'a bastardised thing, a sort of folly'. That night, he fell down the stairs at home and broke his hip. The case was postponed until the end of August,

when the jury came to Villiers' house to hear him give evidence, but he was clearly very unwell, and proceedings were further delayed. They did resume with Villiers still alive, but weakened by cancer and the stress of the legal fight, he died on 12 December 1991. It wasn't until 1996 that the court case was finally resolved with damages of £160,000 awarded to Janie Villiers and Rolls-Royce ordered to pay considerable costs. The general consensus was that the whole episode had reflected very poorly on the marque.

It was an inglorious ending to a very long life that, in so many other respects, had been utterly glorious in its richness, variety and achievement. Villiers was a remarkable man of many talents and contributed greatly to automotive, aeronautical, rocket and space engineering throughout much of the 20th century. Along the way, he became just as legendary as the 'Blower' Bentleys he helped create. ■

The Amherst Villiers Supercharger Mark IV, which helped make its creator so famous.



Villiers and his son in the 'Blower' Bentley that Ian Fleming helped him acquire in the early-1960s. He took the car to the USA with him, where it was restored, but it then had to be sold when he moved back to Britain.



An elderly Villiers with his Phantom III during the court case against Rolls-Royce in 1991. The V12 was meant to be twin-turbocharged, but this was never carried out, part of the reason why Villiers took legal action.

Photo: PA Images / Alamy Stock Photo.



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FEATURE CAR
BENTLEY S3 CONTINENTAL FLYING SPUR



It can be hard to accept when such innocent good looks conceal bad deeds. Rather like the 'butter wouldn't melt' expression adopted by an angelic child accused of drawing on the walls, you could gaze at this graceful Bentley Flying Spur and assume nothing so pretty would do you wrong. Superb engineering, fine craftsmanship, aluminium bodywork – no rust there. And if it came with a fresh MoT and a

promise to deliver it to your doorstep, you may well shake hands on the deal.

Alan Rowlinson's decision to buy the car was an understandable one, then – many of us would have done likewise. As Alan admits, it was a case of 'right place, right time', with no pre-existing plan to seek out the best S3 Flying Spur he could find.

'I had owned a Silver Shadow since 1991, when I joined the RREC. My wife

Rose and I enjoyed every minute of the shows and trips we did in that car, but by 2005 I was ready for a new challenge. I would be hanging on to the Silver Shadow, but I had my eyes open for something else.'

Alan had already dipped a toe into ownership of an older model with a Bentley S2 standard steel saloon but says no-one could get it to run as smoothly as he felt it should. In the

WORTH THE EFFORT

A patient, attentive rolling restoration has turned this S3 Flying Spur from an unroadworthy liability into a delightful grand tourer and a concours winner.

WORDS: NIGEL BOOTHMAN PHOTOS: GREGORY OWAIN



end, Alan concluded that this was a feature of that first generation of the L-series V8, and that later versions were subtly improved to produce smoother performance. So having let go of his S2, he was open to the idea of trying one of the succeeding S3 models.

'My business was taking me to the East Midlands in those days, and it was at a dealer in that part of the world that I found this car,' says Alan. 'We

agreed a sale and the dealer drove it up the motorway to my home in York. On closer examination I couldn't believe it passed an MoT...or that he had managed to drive it up the M1!'

A LONG ROAD AHEAD

Alan describes how the front brakes were virtually non-existent, and indeed both front and rear brakes on the

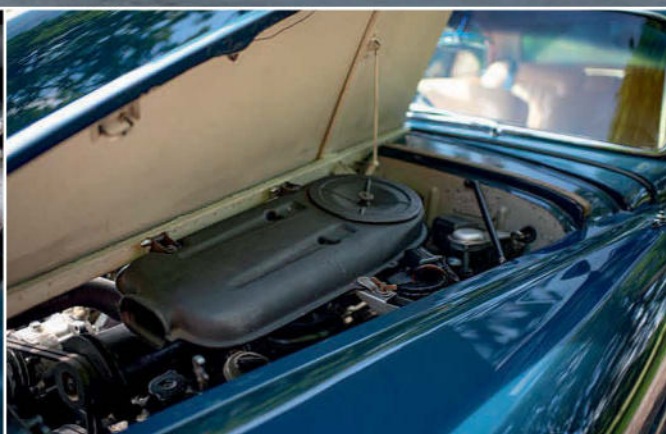
nearside were almost dead. The offside rear brake was working a little, but the tyres were perished and cannot have been safe. Fortunately, Alan had some skilled and knowledgeable help to call on, from his friend David Oldfield.

'David, who is a mechanical genius, re-did all the brakes. I sourced the parts needed from Flying Spares, and new tyres from another supplier. I also saw to the other work that would be needed »

FEATURE CAR

BENTLEY S3 CONTINENTAL FLYING SPUR

6.25-litre V8 sorted for S3 generation - makes for a potent, capable grand tourer



before it could pass a proper MoT,' he says. 'That took a year, but at the end of the process, the car was roadworthy but still with a lot of work to do.'

It was only the beginning of the work the car would receive. David found various aspects that could be improved upon. For example, he installed electronic ignition, overhauled the suspension and other necessary jobs. Meanwhile Alan sorted out other serious elements such as body repairs, and also aesthetic considerations like interior and exterior trim. A closer look at the chrome bumpers and over-riders showed serious corrosion, particularly inside the over-riders – faults not noticed at the original inspection. All the chrome work was removed and sent to Derby Plating, and Alan was very pleased with the work they did. Even so, being concerned about future corrosion, Alan painted the inside of the newly chromed bumpers with Hammerite and poured it into the over-riders too; typical of his

attention to detail on this renovation.

'The idea that aluminium-bodied cars don't corrode is all wrong, of course,' says Alan. 'It doesn't rust like steel but there's salt corrosion and the electrolytic corrosion you get from steel and aluminium parts being in contact with each other. There were lots of areas like that where the spacers between steel and alloy had failed with age. Because you can't buy body sections for these cars, every repair section must be made by hand. Luckily, I knew a good aluminium welder and when these repairs were complete, I had the car stripped and repainted in the same shade of blue.'

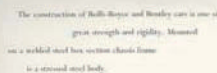
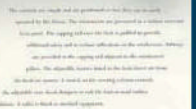
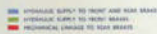
This, says Alan, is called Dawn Blue (one of the original options for the S3), and it replaced the car's original shade of Shell Grey in 1989, at which time the interior hide probably changed from blue leather to the current beige. But more of the history anon. Now that the car was solid, functional

and externally fresh and tidy, Alan moved on to the finer points.

'With Rose's help, I totally stripped the interior, cleaned everything and replaced it. I think it's stood up very well. I also paid for someone to refurbish the veneers professionally; that's not something I'd want to tackle at home.'

A quick glance at our photos of the interior (overleaf) will reveal what a success this blend of amateur and professional efforts has produced. It will also reveal a new panel below the centre of the dash that you might not realise is new – it's a very well-judged addition by RR&B Garages of Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, to whom Alan took the car for the installation of air condition.

'They did a fabulous job,' says Alan. 'I was adamant that I wanted the picnic tray that used to live below the dash to remain, so they found a way of mounting it below this new unit that looks like it's meant to be there. We can still slide it out »

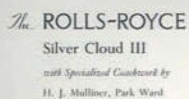


BEAUTIFUL BROCHURES

Amongst the many lovely full-colour brochures produced for the Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud and Bentley S-series generations were these two, printed in 1962 and '63. The more compendious one shows off both marques' standard saloon offerings while the 'adaptation' convertible and the smaller second one details the special coachwork


from HJ Mulliner, Park Ward. Both were printed by William Hodge & Chilver Ltd of London EC1 and feature hand-drawn and painted artwork rather than photos. The renderings of the cars exaggerate length and lowness in some views, and perhaps do the special-bodied Silver Cloud IIIs no favours by depicting the quad headlamps smaller than they really

were. The larger brochure, for the main Rolls-Royce & Bentley models, includes detailed accounts of braking systems, general specification and engine data, supported by a cutaway drawing by Vic Berris of *Autocar*. There is also a colour chart for paint (18 choices) and upholstery (8 choices), plus the seven shades of Wilton carpet available.



FEATURE CAR

BENTLEY S3 CONTINENTAL FLYING SPUR



Thin pillars and lots of glass help create a light, airy cabin

and stand a glass of champagne on there when we're having a picnic.'

THE ODD HICCUP

With so much progress, it was surely time to put some miles under the wheels and enjoy the car. In fact, Alan had been able to get some use from it during the periods it spent on the road between these little projects, so three or four years of club rallies and other events gave him the chance to get to know the car before longer adventures. However, one of these ended with an ignominious return on a lorry, when the transmission failed on a tour of the north of England.

'I started the car one morning outside the hotel and found it would go backwards but not forwards,' says Alan. 'This led to the gearbox being rebuilt by Auto Transmissions of Barnsley, who did a super job. It's still working very nicely today, more than ten years later.'

What led Alan into this life of enjoyment and expense that old Rolls-Royces and Bentleys tend to bring?

'It goes back to when I left school

and joined JCB, who make the famous yellow diggers. The boss at the time, Joe Bamford, was a great Rolls-Royce fan he provided my first introduction to the marque and to engineering excellence. He would sometimes give me a lift home in one of his cars, but it was decades before I was ready to have one of my own.'

Eventually, in 1991, Alan's friend was having to sell a first-series Silver Shadow and the timing was right for Alan, who has had the car for 33 years and counting. That car may one day be a subject for an article of its own, but this time we're concerned with EGF 224B, as the Flying Spur is currently registered.

It has borne a few different numbers in its time, not an uncommon feature for cherished cars owned by wealthy people, but even so, very few of them have worn a number as distinctive as P2. This was the plate on which it was registered in the hands of its second owner, one Stephen Pilkington of Ormskirk in Lancashire (of Pilkington's Glass? The factory is only a couple of miles from Ormskirk) who Alan suspects

kept the car in the family until 1984. According to the Gov.uk website, that memorable plate is now adorning a 2019 Aston Martin Rapide, the 6-litre V12 four-door grand tourer – another fast, expensive, sporting four-seater.

The Flying Spur's first owners had been a firm of shopfitters, Bluemels Brothers of Waltham Cross in Hertfordshire. They probably placed the order and specified the car with electric windows and an electric aerial; if not, it was built this way for stock with H.R. Owen, who arranged the sale. The finished chassis was delivered to Mulliner Park Ward in August 1964 and the finished car delivered on November 9th that year.

After Mr Pilkington's ownership the Bentley was owned by a company called Harrison & Jones Holdings Ltd, then in 1989 by a Mr Nicholas Tompkin, by which time it was back on the B-plate it wears now. In 2001 it cropped up with a dealer in Stalybridge and in 2005 with another dealer in the East Midlands, where Alan found it.

'It had hardly been used since

Lovely exterior and upgraded interior: new a/c panel, restored seats and DAB radio, below



the early 1990s,' says Alan. 'I have lots of old MoTs for it and you can see annual mileages of a few dozen to a few hundred miles – only far enough for something to go wrong, or a trip to the garage.'

THE LAST OF THE FIRST?

The Bentley S3 generation would be the last to offer Continental models with different bodywork from standard saloons, at least until the Continental R came along in 1991. In truth, the Continental concept was diluted almost as soon as it was introduced – first the purity of the fabulous R-type Continental was gently eroded by demand for automatic gearboxes and heavier, more comfortable seats, then with the S-series of 1955 came a rapidly increasing choice of bodies – the Mulliner fastback remained but was joined by a Park Ward two-door 'notchback' and by a drophead coupé, as featured in this issue of *RR&BD* on page 40. In 1957 Mulliner introduced their four-door Continental, the Flying

Spur, which found instant favour even at an eye-watering £8034; almost twice as much as the Standard Steel saloon and ten times the average annual salary.

With the S2 came the V8 engine and adjustable damping for the rear axle controlled by a 'hard/soft' switch, but the differences between a Continental chassis and a standard chassis were fading. Though still lower built and with a higher rear axle ratio, the new engine was fitted in the Continental in the same tune as the standard car, and the lingering option of a manual gearbox was gone before the arrival of the V8.

By the time the S3 Continentals debuted in the autumn of 1962 even the rear axle ratio was identical to that of the standard saloons, and what's more, you could have a Rolls-Royce grille on your Continental drophead coupé, two-door saloon or even your Flying Spur, transforming all into Silver Cloud IIIs. If it seems confusing in retrospect, Rolls-Royce did its best to illustrate it with handsomely produced brochures shown on the previous page. The Flying Spur's style retained its

continuity from S1 and S2 generations, only changing to a four-headlamp nose created under the tasteful judgement of Herbert Nye at Mulliner, along with Blatchley and Evernden at Crewe.

While the original concept of the Continental – light weight, low drag, high speed – was rather blurred by progress, these cars still sold well for £8500 status symbols and really did offer something different to the driver, as Alan is able to explain.

THE CONTINENTAL DIFFERENCE

'It actually feels a slightly more modern car to drive than my Silver Shadow,' says Alan. 'The Bentley's ride is fairly firm by comparison and it doesn't wallow in corners, especially if you set the damping to "hard". The Shadow is very soft and smooth, and it does wallow, but that's wonderful! It's a delightful way to travel, it's just less sporting than the Flying Spur.'

Which is as it should be, after all. What about performance? Can »

FEATURE CAR

BENTLEY S3 CONTINENTAL FLYING SPUR

Flying Spur feels more modern to drive than his Silver Shadow, says Alan



Room for holiday bags!

the car with the separate chassis and the smaller V8 compete with the SY's unitary construction and extra cubic capacity?

'The Flying Spur is not as smooth but it performs slightly better – I assume lower weight has something to do with that. The transmission does make a noticeable change from second gear to third gear, which is less refined than the 3-speed unit in the Silver Shadow; I think that's a superb gearbox.'

If the Flying Spur will out-handle and out-perform a Silver Shadow, it must be every bit as capable of long journeys at high speed. Has Alan explored this ability?

'Yes, we've been to France, Belgium, Holland – all over northern Europe, I suppose. It's very happy in motorway traffic. I generally sit at a little less

than 70mph but if you need to pull out and pass something, it'll whoosh past 80mph with a touch. There's some wind noise at that speed, even after I replaced the door seals and quarterlight seals, but you can't help it with coachbuilt bodies of this era. Anyway, I don't want it to be just like a modern car – what would be the point of owning it?'

Modern cars don't win prizes at classic car shows, and Alan's Flying Spur has been doing that quite often. Over more than ten years of large and small tasks to steadily improve the car, Alan has taken it from a somewhat edgy survivor in mechanical ill health to a concours winner. In 2019, the car first won its class and then Best in Show for elegance at the RREC Annual Rally. A short time after, it won Best Post-War Bentley at the Northern show too.

All this experience has left Alan in a position of some wisdom, at least compared with his first year of Flying Spur ownership. So what advice would he pass on to anyone who's fallen for a similar car?

'Don't believe the old idea that aluminium-bodied cars don't corrode, don't believe an MoT certificate means anything and if you're serious about owning one, learn about it. Learn how it works and how it's built, and you'll get a lot more out of it and find you understand any repairs required. Personally, I'd choose an S3 over an S2 because I believe Rolls-Royce improved the way the engine runs.'

Sound advice, we're sure, but don't be surprised if you're won over by the looks before you know what's underneath. It does happen! ■

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This story concerns a car that has worn two different names, and it's a tale that reveals something about the respective history – and changing fortunes – of the two marques. But it's also the story of a press demonstrator, a car that Rolls-Royce used to show off the very best the company could offer in 1973.

Most car makers had a considerable

press fleet with an ever-changing roster of cars covering every new and existing model, but for a firm like Rolls-Royce, there was so much value tied up in each vehicle and so much time taken to create it that one or two cars had to do the job of many. That's probably why this car appeared not only in an *Autocar* road test but as part of a wall chart on 'The Changing Shape

of the Rolls-Royce' from the same magazine, and there may have been many other newspaper and magazine appearances long since lost. It was even the subject of a handsome front three-quarter view reproduced on the box of Corgi Toys' Rolls-Royce Corniche.

It was painted a fashionable (this is 1973, remember) Olive with a matching Everflex roof, and Dark Olive hide to the

IDENTITY SWAP

This Corniche two-door saloon began life as a Rolls-Royce but later became a Bentley – does the change in identity alter the way we think of the car now?

WORDS: NIGEL BOOTHMAN PHOTOS: GREGORY OWAIN



interior. As an antidote to the rather flash image some of Rolls-Royce's newer customers were creating (see box-out, page 79), it's a wise choice that suggests old money and restrained good taste. As with all Mulliner-Park Ward cars of the SY generation, there's the feeling that the veneers and the Connolly hides that found their way in here are of an even higher standard than those

used in the four-door cars finished at Crewe. Here, the timbers are very highly figured but a little darker than normal, toning perfectly with the olive greens, the grain continuing in a long sweep through the dash and glovebox lid. It's a very elegant car and an unusual one, both because of this combination of shades and because of that grille on the front – what was once a Rolls-Royce is

a Rolls-Royce no more, at least as far as identifying marks go. The car's owner is Guy Seymour, and he can tell us why.

BACK TO THE DEALER

'After the car was sold on by Rolls-Royce, I think when it was a year or 18 months old, it went into private ownership. It remained a Rolls-Royce »

FEATURE CAR BENTLEY CORNICHE



Badge bar is an old-world touch, as are yellow-tinted spots for Continental driving

until 1988, when the person who owned it at that point took it to Broughtons of Cheltenham, a Rolls-Royce and Bentley agent, and had it converted to a Bentley. I have the invoice for this work in the car's history folder and it was pretty expensive – £3800 was a lot of money in those days.'

Indeed it was; it would just about

have bought you a small new hatchback. If it seems an eccentric thing to do to a 15 year-old car, remember that while the 2-door saloon left production in 1980, the Corniche convertible was still a current car. Perhaps the makeover seemed almost as good to the owner as ordering a new one. Yet the conversion job was not entirely thorough, if we're

including details such as the rocker covers, which remain Rolls-Royce rather than Bentley. Some of the pre-Corniche cars, described as Mulliner Park Ward 2-door saloons, certainly had Bentley-branded dials and pedal rubbers with a B rather than RR logo, though these subtleties may have disappeared soon after. What's more important is the reason for the change, which is not recorded – but Guy has a shrewd idea.

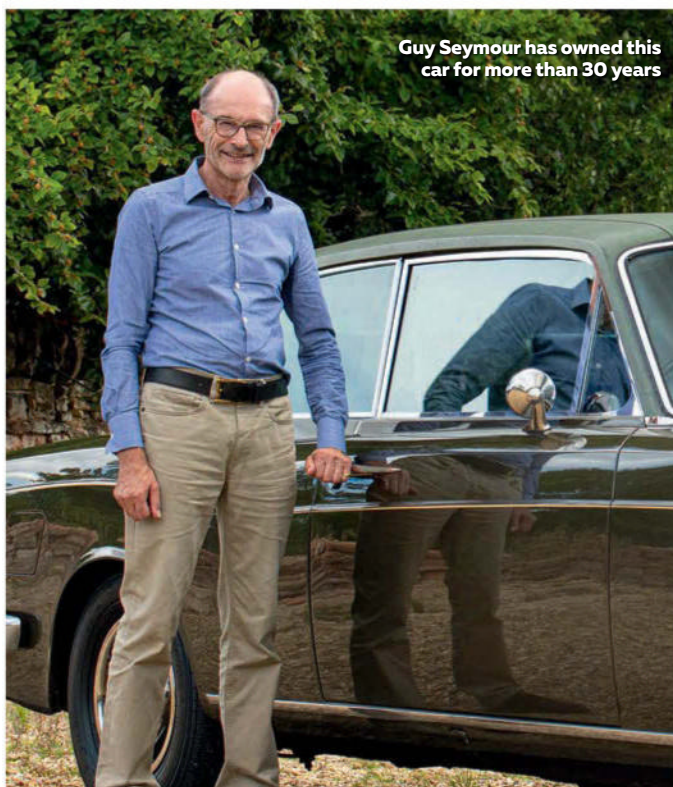
'I think the work was done because the image of Rolls-Royce and of Bentley had changed,' he says. 'Rolls-Royce was seen as more old-fashioned and perhaps ostentatious, while Bentley was more desirable again, with some of its sporting identity returning.'

Certainly, the five years prior to the conversion job had seen a colossal makeover for Bentley's public profile. First, the Mulsanne Turbo had shown us the world's most luxurious wolf in sheep's clothing, and then the Turbo R allowed a bit more of the wolf to show through the wool and improved the handling to match the performance. Suddenly, everyone wanted a Bentley again.

Nonetheless, the owner of this car was ready for a change after five years with its new Bentley identity, and it was advertised for sale in 1993. Guy Seymour happened to be on the lookout for a



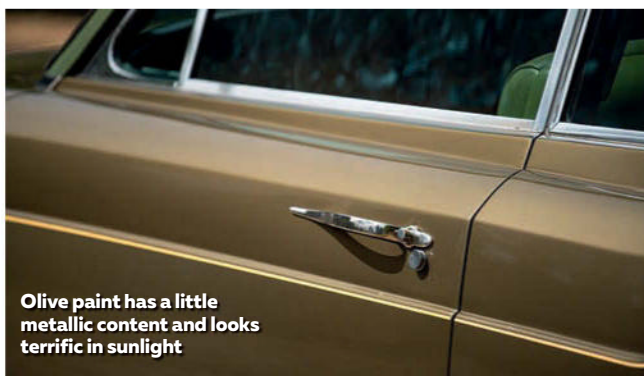
Important items from the car's history include Corgi model box and magazines



Guy Seymour has owned this car for more than 30 years



It's a Bentley at both ends



Olive paint has a little metallic content and looks terrific in sunlight

Corniche saloon – the marque mattered less to him than the model – and came upon this car with a specialist dealer.

'It felt very quick and smooth, so I bought it,' says Guy. 'Over time, I've kept doing little bits to it, and a lot of it's been resprayed. Anything the car required has been done. It's been

serviced every year and the leather has been restored and fed, so it's now back up to original standard.'

Daniel Moore & Co have looked after it for the last ten years; though better known for their speciality in Mk VI and R-type Bentleys, they have kept this car on song beautifully.

'Dan looks after my Mk VI too, and has done for a while,' says Guy. 'It has an R-type Continental gearbox, exhaust and other parts, and it now has more power than a "big bore" car, though it's a 4.25-litre, made in 1950. I never go more than 60mph in it, but it pulls away so well and I enjoy »

BENTLEY'S BARREN YEARS: LARGE CARS IN SMALL NUMBERS

Perhaps the Swinging Sixties were to blame, or perhaps it was Rolls-Royce themselves. Bentley's decline from one of the most aerodynamically advanced and desirable cars in the world – the R-type Continental – to a badge-engineered afterthought less than 20 years later, is remarkable. Certainly, fashions changed in the 1960s as young, working-class celebrities found themselves with unimagined riches and spent it on traditional indulgences – big houses, fancy clothes and a Rolls-Royce. Not a Bentley; that was a fine gentleman's carriage, but it wasn't what you chose when you wanted to cruise your old neighbourhood and announce you'd made it...especially if you needed a chauffeur because you didn't have a driving licence. Michael

Caine is one example; in 1968 his new Rolls-Royce MPW Convertible served exactly that purpose. Corniche owners Paul McCartney, Frank Sinatra, Tom Jones, David Bowie and Elton John all chose Rolls-Royce over Bentley.

Crewe, meanwhile, had done Bentley no favours with the inexorable erosion of anything that made the marque special. The last Bentley-only bodies, the Continental successors to the R-type, soon began to appear with Rolls-Royce grilles. By the Silver Cloud III generation, what used to be exclusive Bentley Continental drophead coupés, two-door saloons and Flying Spurs were catalogued separately in Rolls-Royce form. And anyway, the once-significant differences in a Continental chassis

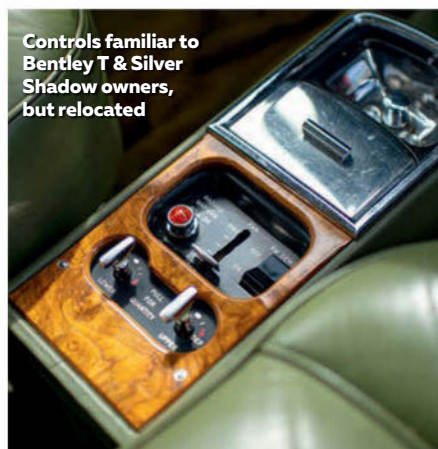
like extra power and longer gearing were gone. So, therefore, were reasons to choose a Bentley. This showed up starkly in the sales of the new SY generation, with Silver Shadows outselling Bentley Ts by 30,053 to 2288 between 1965 and 1980. In the same time period, the two-door saloon versions with Spirits of Ecstasy on the front beat the Flying Bs by 1714 to 177. From 1965 to 1977, there were 1738 Rolls-Royce convertibles and just 84 Bentleys.

It seems surprising in retrospect that Rolls-Royce bothered maintaining the brand, though it's just as well they did – has there ever been such a reversal of motoring fortune as that kicked off by the turbocharged Bentleys of the 1980s?

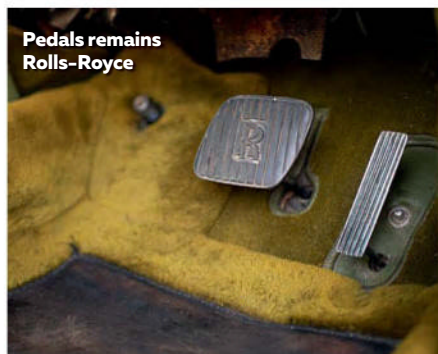
FEATURE CAR BENTLEY CORNICHE



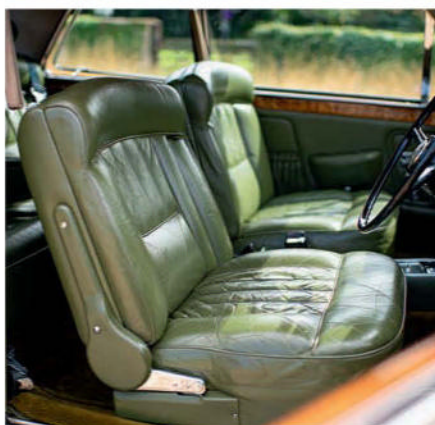
Better-equipped dash than the four-door saloon cars



Controls familiar to Bentley T & Silver Shadow owners, but relocated



Pedals remains Rolls-Royce



Quarterlights open under power



Graphic equalizer looks 1980s - same age as car's marque swap?

the performance up to that speed.'

POINTS OF DIFFERENCE

Back to the Corniche. Electronic ignition has been Guy's only non-standard upgrade, but it's a very well-equipped car anyway: air conditioning was standard, as was cruise control. There is central locking of course, and the rear quarter windows hinge out sideways under power, which Guy demonstrates for us - it's strangely satisfying, perhaps because it's unusual. Up-and-down electric windows we take for granted, like pop-out quarterlights with a catch, but the powered kind? Rare indeed.

Guy points out some more differences between the Corniche and the four-door relatives, not least the front wings. You'd be forgiven for thinking that the panels are shared, but these front wings are a more rounded shape than the Silver Shadow or Bentley T, says Guy, and the wheel arches differ too.

We peer inside and out, looking for other changes between this car and the Editorial Silver Shadow, which is just a little older. Here, we find headrests in the back only, which Guy says was also a Shadow feature for a few years. No thought of whiplash prevention, just an aid to reclining in comfort. This car had an eight-track tape player when

it was a demonstrator, but apparently the first owner asked for it to be taken out, and it's since been replaced with a Blaupunkt radio-cassette and graphic equaliser, which looks like it may date from around the time the Bentley conversion was done. The fan controls are the same as a Silver Shadow but situated in a smart centre console, ready for your left hand to drop down and do it by touch. There's a rev counter, unknown on the Silver Shadow, and with a yellow band starting at 4500rpm. A temperature gauge too, also absent on the four-door saloon. The door speakers are original, thinks Guy, as is the mohair or wool cloth headlining,

“The image of the two marques had altered a good deal by the late 1980s and one was seen as more desirable than the other”



which was an MPW feature and is rather richer than the vinyl that's standard on Crewe-built cars. The ball compass on the overhead console is a nice touch too. You'll never be truly lost.

Is there any work left to do?

'I think I'm getting corrosion under the roof covering, so at some time I'll have to change it,' says Guy. 'It's got slightly worse in recent years. No rush though.'

As well as a Mk VI, Guy has a Continental R that's 22 years younger than this Corniche. How does owning and driving such a diverse pair contrast with this SY-generation Bentley?

'You can leave the Mk VI for much longer without using it, and it starts and runs very easily; it's much simpler to look after,' says Guy. 'The Continental R has done only 30,000 miles. I bought it from P&A Wood and they service it every year – it's a prime example of a model where you need to find a really good one. It feels much larger than this Corniche, and it's nice because the turbo makes it go so well, but the Corniche is much easier to park and manoeuvre. I am fond of this one – I've kept it the longest of all my cars.'

ROAD TEST RAMBLINGS

The Corniche's original registration

plate (RMB 300L) changed when it left the factory fleet and it wore different plates with subsequent owners, but it's been on the same age-related number throughout Guy's ownership. It's time to head out and do some driving, but before we start up, we're leafing through the old copy of *Autocar* Guy has brought along.

'They commented on a tick from the dashboard at about 35mph, and 20 years later when I bought it, the tick was still there,' he smiles. 'It turned out to be a speedo cable, just touching something it shouldn't.'

The *Autocar* road test makes interesting reading. Published on April 6th 1974, it came only a month after Edward Heath resigned and Harold Wilson formed the new Labour government. This came in the wake of the infamous Three-Day Week, introduced at the beginning of the year to conserve energy during a crippling miners' strike. Industrial relations in all sectors were poor and rampant inflation would continue for much of the decade. Only six months earlier, the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries had applied a total embargo to many nations that supported Israel in the previous Arab-Israeli war. A month before *Autocar* published its road

SPECIFICATION

1973 ROLLS-ROYCE / BENTLEY CORNICHE 2-DOOR SALOON

LENGTH: 5169mm / 16ft 11 ½

WIDTH: 1830mm / 6ft

WEIGHT: 2190kg / 4816lb

ENGINE: 6750cc OHV V8

POWER: 220bhp (est)

TORQUE: 330lb ft (est)

0-60MPH: 9.6s

TOP SPEED: 120mph

COST NEW: £15,104, 1974

test, the embargo was lifted...by which time the price of oil had risen 300%. It was, by any measure, an appalling time to build and sell large luxury cars.

Yet the road test kicks off by quoting the then-current delivery time for a new Corniche as three years – such was the waiting list. On a list price of £15,000 (and growing every month) pre-oil-crisis prices at auction for second-hand examples apparently touched £28,000; a crazy figure but one that perhaps proved there were enough wealthy customers left even in the worst times for demand to exceed supply.

Putting the state of the economy »

FEATURE CAR

BENTLEY CORNICHE

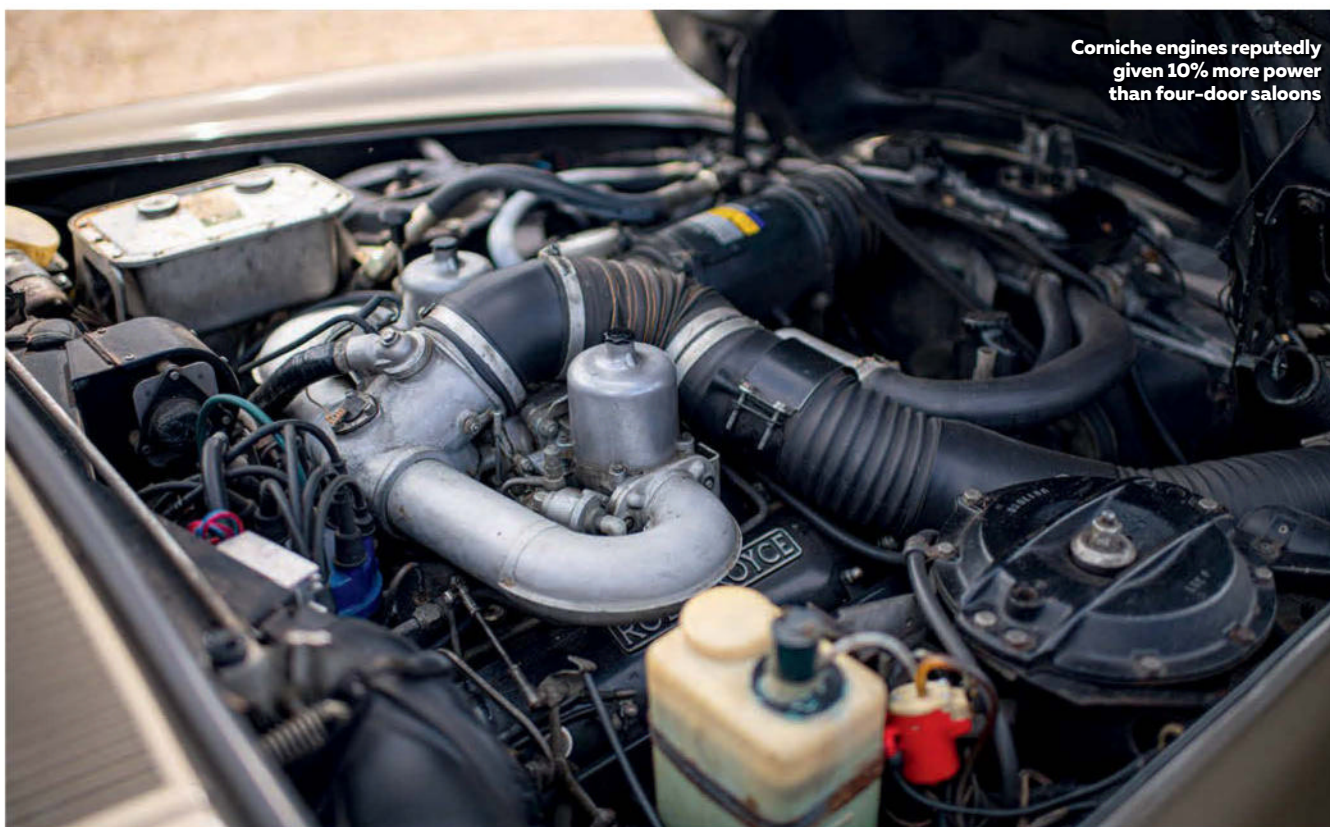


Corniche nameplate appeared first in 1971

to one side, the testers felt justified in focussing a little more on performance and driver appeal than they had for previous tests of four-door Silver Shadows. After all, the Corniche's separate identity included a reputed 10% hike in power, plus the accoutrements of a more sporting cabin that we see in this example – a rev counter, no less! The best one-way speed they recorded was 122mph, with a 0–60mph time of 9.6 seconds, both of these a measurable improvement on a Silver Shadow or Bentley T. The price for this entertainment? 11.9mpg, versus 12.2 for the Silver Shadow. Before you

faint, remember that magazine road testers were famously heavy-footed and very little of the 1400 miles they covered were driven in the genteel manner most owners would enjoy. Indeed, they complained that on a Continental trip with cruising speeds around 100mph, the 24-gallon tank would give just over 200 miles of range. However, the magazine's figures for consumption at constant speeds gave 17.2 mpg at 60mph and 15.8 at 70mph, so if Guy stays legal, he should see more like 380 miles from a tank on a long trip.

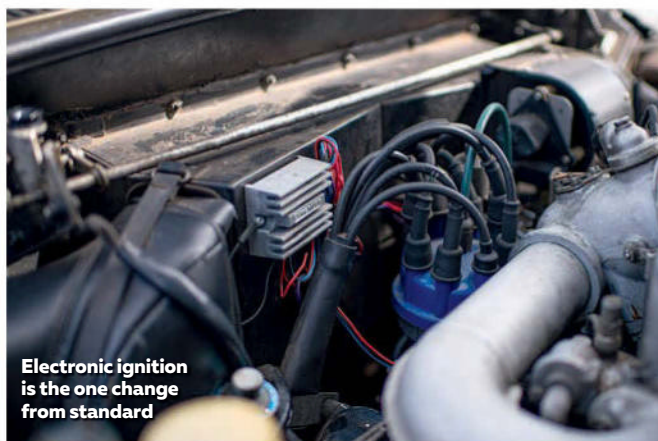
Autocar's testers were much more complimentary about the ride and



Corniche engines reputedly given 10% more power than four-door saloons



One giveaway to the car's original identity



Electronic ignition is the one change from standard

handling balance, which they felt was a major improvement over the 1972 Silver Shadow, and it seems justified today. The Corniche proceeds through fast, sweeping bends with no loss of composure, though of course the ultra-light power steering is always there to remind you this is no sports car – it's a luxurious grand tourer with just enough ability in the corners to allow high average speeds on cross-country roads. Keen readers of car and motorbike magazines may even recognise the location for our cornering shots. These are the 'Elton Bends' near Peterborough, through which countless thousands of cars and bikes have been pushed by keen drivers while a photographer got his shot. They're tighter than they seem on approach, with a change in height as well as angle from one to the next, yet the Corniche is unfussed.

IDENTITY – DOES IT MATTER?

Brief trips through country lanes are never the best way to appreciate everything a mile-munching GT car can achieve, but 1400-mile road trips into France and back are now difficult to squeeze out of magazine budgets – more's the pity! Have we paid more attention to performance and road manners with this car than we would have done if it still wore the Rolls-Royce grille? Perhaps we have, but



Splendid combination of angles, colours and contours at the C-pillar...with Bentley 'B'

when the difference between Bentley and Rolls-Royce equivalents is no more than skin deep, it's probably foolish to read too much into a change of attitude between one and the other.

In this case, what's superficial is what matters: as Guy points out, the image of the two marques had altered a good deal by the late 1980s and one was seen as more desirable than the other. You could argue that this subtle, subdued colour scheme always suited the Bentley persona better than Rolls-Royce anyway. There's a bit of inverse snobbery to enjoy too, as the Bentley Corniche two-door

saloon is outnumbered by its Rolls-Royce opposite number by about 17 to 1. You just don't see them. This car, though, has such an interesting early life as a press car and demonstrator, plus the later change of identity, that it has an appeal all its own.

If you thought the end of the separate-chassis models in 1965 meant the end of Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars with individual quirks and unique stories, think again. They continue to fascinate from one generation to the next, and after a day with a delightful oddity like this, all we can do is end with another question – what else is out there? ■



Corniche corners without excessive body roll

CELEBRATING THE LE MANS LEGEND

Much to look forward to in the BDC this year, with the centenary celebrations of Bentley's first of six wins at Le Mans central to the activities

One hundred years ago Bentley set in motion its legendary status at Le Mans – scoring the first of its six victories courtesy of John Duff and Frank Clement's 3-Litre Sport. To mark this momentous occasion, a special 'Le

Mans 100' celebration race, entitled the John Duff Trophy and Frank Clement Cup, will serve as a main attraction on the programme at the Club's 76th annual Silverstone race meeting on 10 August.

It's hoped that a magnificent grid of some 40 WOs (or Vintage) Bentleys

will be lined up to help pay homage to the centenary of the Bentley's maiden victory in the legendary 24 Hours. Incidentally, the Club is looking forward to celebrating the marque's inaugural triumph with a special trip to La Sarthe itself for this year's race in mid-June. The one-off event will feature alongside the meeting's usual blue-riband race, the Times Challenge Trophy (Bentley scratch), in which the Club's Competitions Captain Ben Eastick (T-Type single-seater) will be seeking his fourth consecutive victory.

As ever, Bentleys will be joined on the programme by a variety of other classic marques including Morgans (Morgan Challenge double-header and Morgan Techniques Trophy), Aston Martins (AMOC St. John Horsfall Trophy), FISCAR (Fifties Sports Car Club).

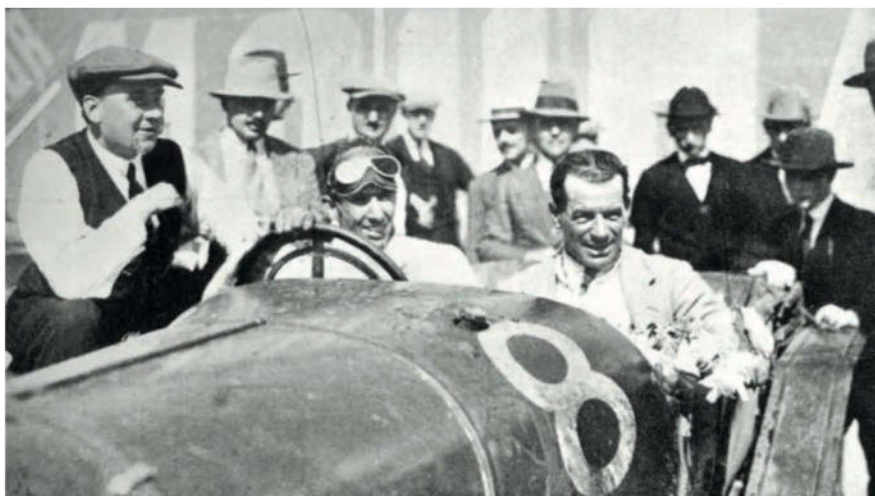
The day will also feature the popular lunchtime track parade of around 100 magnificent BDC members' Bentleys of all ages. Tickets for the meeting are now on sale via the Silverstone website (www.silverstone.co.uk) priced £17 (advance) or £19 on the day.

Prior to Silverstone, the Club will be holding its 76th annual Summer Concours, this time returning to the Clubhouse at Wroxtton for the first time since 2016, over the weekend of 20-21 July. A full weekend package of events is currently being put together, including a gala dinner on the Saturday evening at the elegant Walton Hall Hotel & Spa, situated just a few miles from BDC HQ.

The weekend will also feature a homage to the Derby Bentley, which celebrated its 90th anniversary last year, with a must-see display of examples owned by club members. Derby expert Jeremy Marshall Roberts, whose 3½-litre recently appeared in the TV drama series *Good Omens*, is due to supply an informative talk on the model.

The Club and the Bentley Memorial Foundation (BMF) were privileged that Bentley Motors Chairman & CEO Adrian Hallmark accepted its invitation to provide a fascinating keynote presentation at the third annual Talks Day in early April. Adrian was joined at the sell-out occasion by former Bentley Director of Motorsport Brian Gush, speaking about the three eras of Bentley Motorsport, and former BMF Chairman Ken Lea, on the true story of the Corniche.

Finally, the Club is due to hold its 87th Annual General Meeting at the Clubhouse on 21 April. ■ www.bdcl.org



Making the Centenary Tour to Le Mans in June? Duff and Clement would be proud



Bentley Chairman & CEO Adrian Hallmark spoke at Talks Day



The AGM: A date with Club President Duncan Wiltshire on April 21st

Bentley

DRIVERS CLUB



Founded by enthusiasts for enthusiasts. The Bentley Drivers Club is proud of its ethos: a club of friends who share a love of all things Bentley. It's also the only club directly affiliated with Bentley Motors.

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

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

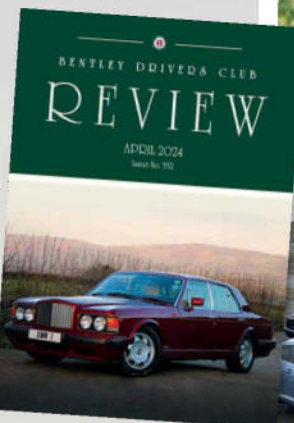
No matter what your inspiration, the BDC can help enhance your Bentley ownership and take your appreciation of this classic marque even deeper.

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

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

Members enjoy a range of benefits with the BDC:

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



Driving adventures... Driving exhilaration... Driving friendships

We look forward to welcoming all Bentley enthusiasts to the Bentley Drivers Club

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WOMEN WITH DRIVE!

On Sunday 3rd March 2024, the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club was delighted to host 38 members of the Women Driver's Social Club (WDSC) at its HQ, The Hunt House

The purpose of this excellent event was to celebrate International Women's Day on 8th March and to acknowledge the significant contribution that women are making to the motoring industry. The WDSC ladies turned out in style, bringing with them a wide selection of different makes and models of classic cars: from Singer to Ford Mustang, VW Beetles to MX5s. Hosting this special event was the RREC Chairman Julian Foster and his wife Rosemary, who arrived in their 1962 Bentley S2 Continental. The centrepiece of the day was a stunning 2023 Rolls-Royce Spectre, kindly provided by Georgina Wood and the P&A Wood team.

Visitors enjoyed a tour of the local Northants countryside in a splendid 1965 Commer bus and the chance to see the RREC's HQ and substantial Archive collection. Over a light lunch, guests had the chance to mingle and network. The day was rounded off with a fun quiz and informative talk hosted by Emma Airey, Head of RH Insurance and her team. The Chairman thanked RH Insurance for their generous sponsorship of the event, which allowed the WDSC to donate the proceeds from their ticket sales for the day to The Girls' Network, a charity that sets young women and girls from disadvantaged



backgrounds up with mentors to help them achieve their full potential. The RREC also contributed to this charity, making a £500 donation in total.

The RREC would like to thank the members of the Women Driver's Social Club, especially Becca Treston who organised this fantastic celebration. The Club hopes that it can continue to work in partnership with more guest car clubs to ensure that International

Women's Day is celebrated each year.

Thanks go to St James House for kindly providing the photographer, Grant Frazer, and to Charlotte Munday from Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Financial Services for their support too. ■

Annual Rally & Concours d'Elegance 2024, 21-23 June, Burghley House, Stamford - Advance tickets now on sale until Friday 10 May





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**ROLLS-ROYCE
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ENTHUSIASTS



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AS PRESTIGIOUS AS THEY COME

Any Bentley Turbo RL is a special car, but this one was ordered for the Emir of Qatar with a host of special features. Could the new owner ship it to Australia? No worries!

WORDS: **RICHARD HOLDSWORTH**

PHOTOS: **CHRIS BARBOUR, RICHARD HOLDSWORTH**



In a lifetime in the motor industry, one comes across some exceptional cars. A certain XJ-S Jaguar, the only Jaguar that has won Bathurst 1000, Australia's great long-distance race. Or the Porsche 956 that conquered Le Mans with the Australian, Vern Schuppan at wheel. The door blew off at over 200mph on the Mulsanne Straight, but it still went on to win.

But surely the most prestigious car is the one I am gazing at now – the 1994 Bentley Turbo RL that once held pride of place in the London garage of His Highness Sheik Khalifa Bin Hamad Al-Thani, the Emir of Qatar. This car has presence! It also has a dazzling array of special features, as you might expect with such provenance. It's based, of course, on a car that

was already something special.

The Bentley Turbo RL replaced the Mulsanne Turbo LWB for 1985 and continued until 1997, when it was replaced by the Turbo RT. For Bentley customers, it combined high performance and cornering power (the R stood for Roadholding, of course) with the extra space and luxury of the longer passenger cabin. By 1993, the



model was using Bosch MK-Motronic fuel injection and performance was increasing steadily. Rolls-Royce has always been shy of revealing the power that their engines deliver but this one is said to produce 355 BHP/265 kw and 550ft-lb/750Nm lb/ft torque.

To match the enhanced power, the Bentley Turbo RL has enhanced suspension to give those sportier driving

characteristics. Bentley owners can thank the appointment of Mike Dunn in 1983 as the new Engineering Director to build these attributes into the car. His intention was to provide the Bentley Turbo R with an overall 50% increase in roll stiffness against the proposed 10%. Spring rates remained the same as on the Mulsanne to allow ride comfort to be maintained, but the anti-roll bar

rates increased; the front was 100% stiffer and the rear 60%. Firmer shock absorbers gave a more controlled ride and further added to the car's sporty performance out on the road. A Panhard rod was fitted to the rear subframe and that reduced side-to-side movement when cornering, while anti-lock brakes were fitted from 1987 to bring the car to a halt more safely. »



“Rolls-Royce has always been shy of revealing the power that their engines deliver but this one is said to produce 355 BHP/265 kw and 550ft-lb/750Nm lb/ft torque”

From the 1992 model year, the company's three-speed automatic transmission was replaced with a GM four-speed unit that also brought a change from column-mounted shift to console lever.

EXTRAORDINARY SPECIFICATION

If the foregoing doesn't cast its spell, this particular example of the Bentley Turbo RL is exceptional in many other ways. It now graces the streets of Melbourne, Australia, and that is where we meet the Bentley and its owner, Dr Howard Wraight, the President of the Victoria branch of the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of Australia.

Howard tells me that in 2021 he came upon the car in an online posting by its second owner, a prominent UK collector. 'He was thinking of selling the car at the time, but we lost contact, so you can imagine my excitement when in 2023 I saw the car listed with Bentley specialists in the UK,

Silver Lady Services. I was very keen to add such a wonderful car to my collection and we negotiated a price that suited both the seller and myself.'

SCBZP03C2RCH54625 was originally ordered on November 11, 1993, through H.R. Owen, for His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al-Thani who was at that time the Emir of Qatar. The meticulous attention to detail in the building of all Bentley cars saw the work completed on 25 February, 1994. The car had a particularly exacting specification including more than 20 non-standard items specifically at the Sheikh's request. They included special interior trim in ivory hide with spruce piping including piping to each door pad at the joint with the door capping rails – the result is beautiful, as can be seen by the pictures accompanying this article.

Green exterior badges were specified as per all 1993 model Bentleys. A touring limousine smaller rear window was fitted, and all exterior badges and handles are gold plated. Curtains in green silk to match the spruce piping

are fitted to both rear side windows and are electrically operated.

All the timber is in birds-eye maple with oak crossbanding including picnic tables, steering wheel rim and gear knob, while a tissue box in maple is affixed on the rear parcel shelf between the rear seats. The telephone handset is also veneered Maple. The rear seats are not the standard bench style seats but individual items like those usually found in the LWB Rolls-Royce and Bentley models, but here electrically operated and with Bentley fluting. Illuminated vanity mirrors are installed in the rear compartment headlining with push-open operation. A refrigerator is fitted to the luggage compartment and means the car requires twin batteries, one for the main car electrics and the other for the chiller. Also, part of this unique specification is the installation of a roof-mounted telephone aerial. The car has a CD changer / radio-cassette player with 4 x 25-watt amplification, and to make absolutely sure they hear you coming, twin air horns!



Birds-eye maple, Ivory hide and Spruce piping make a spectacular interior

To complement this specification, the car is finished in Sherwood Mica with the radiator shell and vanes painted the same colour. Howard tells me, 'This car really is striking and commands a stunning presence.' I don't think anyone would argue with this assessment.

But there is one more factor that sets this car apart – the Bentley has seen very little time on the road, being stored unused for 25 years in the basement garage in one of the Emir's properties in London. It has covered a mere 6000 miles in its 30-year life and represents the truest interpretation of the over-used expression, 'as new'.

BENTLEY MEETS MELBOURNE

As stated earlier, Howard Wraight had aspired to own the car back in 2021 but the owner was ambivalent

about parting with such an exceptional example, being from the estate of the deceased Emir. However, once the sale with Silver Lady Services was agreed in 2023, Howard set the wheels in motion to transport the car to its new home. This was soon followed by the ramifications of complying with rules and regulations that various Australian authorities require before a car can be driven on Australian roads.

First among the requirements was to satisfy the authorities with regard to asbestos. Over to Howard.

'Australian customs and quarantine regulations are very strict about the importation of asbestos in any form. As we were not certain that the original brake pads were asbestos free, it was immediately decided to replace all the brake pads on the car with the latest non-asbestos materials prior to shipping. This was done

expertly by Silver Lady Services.

'The next step was obtaining an import permit from the Australian Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts. This is in the form of a Concessional RAV Entry Approval. Approval allows entry of the vehicle onto the Australian Register of Approved Vehicles (RAV). The Bentley was granted this approval under the Older Vehicle classification for vehicles built 25 years ago, or before.'

Howard had to decide the method of shipping, and the use of a roll-on, roll-off ship was not considered to be appropriate in the case of the Bentley Turbo RL. Although it is easier and less expensive, the new owner felt the Bentley deserved individual attention and it was packed in a sealed container and loaded onto one of those massive container ships we see plying the seas »

FEATURE CAR BENTLEY TURBO RL

today. This was the HMM Hanbada of the Hapag-Lloyd line and it set sail from London on 18 April 2023, bound for Singapore. In Singapore, the container was transferred to another container ship, the Conti Annapurna, and finally arrived in Melbourne on June 18, 2023.

Howard is fortunate in having experience with export specialists. In Melbourne, it is Greg Gibson of Gibson Customs and Forwarding and in the UK, EM Rogers Transport of Northampton.

'Greg is highly experienced in the field of importing vehicles into Australia and managed the whole process seamlessly,' says Howard, 'including navigating container unpacking, quarantine and customs inspections, duty payment and finally delivery to my front door.'

'Once unloaded, the container was taken to a customs depot and then subjected to customs and quarantine inspection. Steam cleaning of the undercarriage of the car was required to meet strict biosecurity requirements.'

Then the less pleasant bit – forking out the Australian Customs dues including GST (the equivalent of UK VAT) plus Australian Luxury Car Tax and Quarantine Fees! Howard explains.

'Duties include 10% GST applied

to the total landed cost of the car including shipping costs, and then a Luxury Car Tax of 33% applied to any value above the threshold cut-off which currently sits at AUD\$76,950.' Howard smiles. 'Fortunately, the recently signed free trade agreement between the UK and Australia came into effect prior to the Bentley landing in Australia which saved a further 2.5% duty being added to the bill!'

FACE TO FACE AT LAST

Howard was finally allowed to meet his new car. Having bought it unseen, you can imagine his delight. He told me on the phone, 'Richard, the Bentley has arrived in Melbourne and I have been able to see my purchase for the very first time! It is a magnificent vehicle... everything I expected and more.'

Even the truck driver who delivered the car to Howard's home in the Melbourne suburb of Camberwell was so impressed that the final hand-over was delayed for a few moments while he took photos. In all his years he had never delivered such 'a stunning car'.

But this is not the end of the story. The next hurdle to overcome for any

Australian importer is to obtain vehicle registration. Those embarking on this journey will be aware that each Australian state has different rules, and in the case of Howard's home state of Victoria, there is a requirement for two certifications that must be obtained with an inspection at a VicRoads (Victorian Roads) facility. Having imported a 1938 Rolls-Royce Wraith from Canada and a 1972 Rolls-Royce Corniche from the UK, Howard is experienced in this department.

'First, the car must comply with the Australian Vehicle Design Rules that were applicable at the time of manufacture, in this case, 1994,' he explains. 'To obtain engineering compliance certification one needs to have the car inspected by a specialist Government approved vehicle engineer who issues a Certificate of Compliance, the Vehicle Assessment Signatory Scheme (VASS) approval. And to do this, the Bentley required two modifications – a high-mounted brake light and child restraint anchor brackets fitted to the rear parcel shelf.'

This was done by Cartech Consulting and M Carter Automotive Engineering. These two companies are based in »



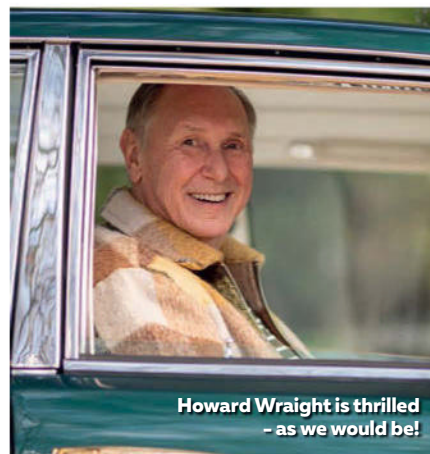
Sherwood Mica paint finish looks fabulous in strong sun, featuring on radiator shell and vanes too



The opulence is greater still for rear-seat passengers



Large fridge allows occupants to chill out



Howard Wright is thrilled - as we would be!



Green badges a feature of all 1993 Bentleys



Mighty single-turbo V8 hides under smart covers

FEATURE CAR

BENTLEY TURBO RL

Howard enjoys all
550lb ft of torque
the RL delivers



the Melbourne suburbs of Camberwell and Nunawading respectively. After all this, the door was virtually open for Howard to get behind the wheel of his magnificent Bentley. The Turbo RL looked as though it was about to pass its next hurdle, the roadworthiness inspection, without a problem. However, the rules call for the engine number to be recorded and, frustratingly, the inspector was unable to find the number despite three hours' intensive search. As Howard confirms,

'The inspector must see the actual engine number stamped on the engine to issue the necessary papers for VicRoads registration. Without this number, no registration!'

The mystery of the elusive number was finally solved with the help of an engineer and fellow Rolls-Royce Owners' Club member, one Angelo Baker of Autofarm Engineering, another Melbourne specialist in Rolls-Royce

and Bentley cars. With the use of a flexible endoscopic camera, the engine number was finally tracked down, stamped underneath the turbocharging and fuel injection piping at the front of the block and not on the rear as is common practice. Thus, registration for Australian roads was finally complete.

DRIVING THE BENTLEY TURBO RL

Needless to say, the paintwork and interior are as new, especially having been stored for such a long time away from the usual effects of sunlight, rain and road grime. But, having said that, Howard felt the car deserved the extra mile with the benefits of full detailing, paint correction, polishing and application of a protective coating. The company chosen was Gloss'd Premium Detailing of Moorabbin in Melbourne. The company has an excellent reputation for this work, which is evident in all of the photographs of the car.

'Having finally achieved registration I am thrilled to report that the car drives as one would expect of a brand-new car; certainly a car that has only travelled 6,000 miles. Although the engine feels tight and new, barely run in, the immense power and performance of this car is astonishing,' says Howard with a broad smile. 'The throttle response is immediate, and the massive surge of torque is exhilarating, especially for a car of this size and weight. Although the cabin is quiet, I love the pleasing deep burble of the V8 and distant whine

of the massive Garrett turbocharger whenever you press on the accelerator.'

And I have to ask for a comment on the suspension that was specially tuned to give the Bentley Turbo R's driving experience a distinct sportiness. 'The suspension is tight, again benefiting from very low mileage and it demonstrates a fine balance between ride quality and competent handling. And I am impressed with how swiftly you can press on with great composure through corners at speed!'

Readers of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* will not be surprised to read that Howard finds every conceivable excuse to get his new acquisition out of his garage and on the road.

'The driving experience is extraordinary for a car of its era, and other road users frequently acknowledge the presence of the car with a wave or thumbs up as I waft by!'

The final word from Howard sums up a very positive addition to the garage.

'What was already a wonderful car in great condition has now been transformed to another level. In my view, this Bentley Turbo RL is an outstanding example of bespoke Bentley engineering and craftsmanship in the late 20th century. A very fine car to use and a significant car for any Rolls-Royce or Bentley collector. It's a wonderful journey back in time to an era of automotive luxury and indulgence.' ■

THANKS TO: the owners of The Gables on Finch, Melbourne, for allowing their venue as a back-drop for our photographs.

SPECIFICATION

1994 BENTLEY TURBO RL (AS STANDARD)

LENGTH: 5410mm / 17ft 9

WIDTH: 1890mm / 6ft 2½

WEIGHT: 2470kg / 5434lb

ENGINE: 6750cc OHV V8,
one Garrett TO4 turbo

POWER: 355bhp@4000rpm

TORQUE: 550lb ft@2000rpm

0-60MPH: 6.5s

TOP SPEED: 146mph

COST NEW: £150,672 (1995)

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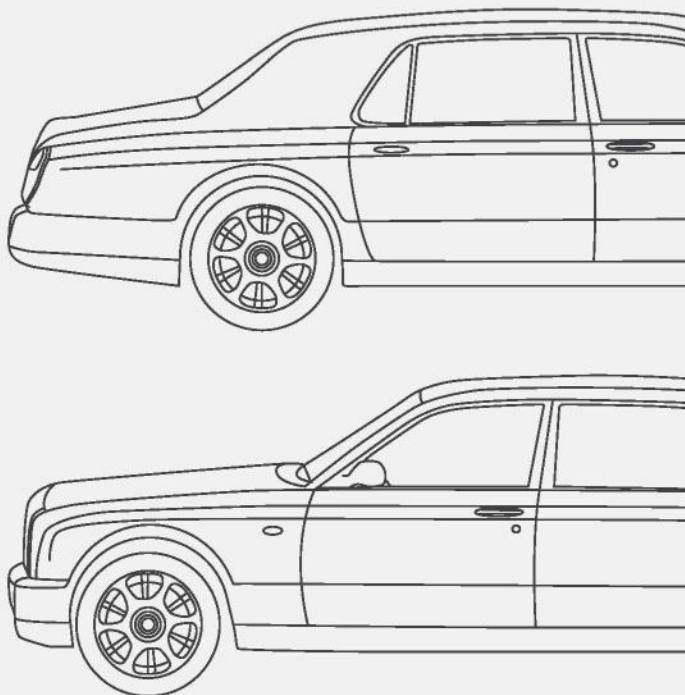
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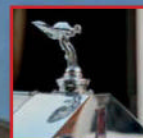
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BLOWN AWAY

A life-long love of cars combined with success in business led Michael Campbell to discover how involving Rolls-Royce & Bentley ownership could be – especially with exciting models like this twin-turbo Azure

WORDS: **PETER LAVERS** PHOTOS: **GREGORY OWAIN**

Michael Campbell is a self-confessed petrol head. His first car as a 17-year-old was a 1982 Alfa Romeo Alfasud Sprint Veloce 1.5, which used to 'spontaneously break down'. His busy career in IT was

accompanied by numerous bread-and-butter cars interspersed with some supercars such as a Ferrari F355 GTS, Aston Martin Vanquish S and Honda 3.2 NSX, all manual!

His career took a turn in 2010 when he joined forces with his wife to help his

specialist change management training company, CMC Partnership Global, grow internationally. They eventually sold it in 2022. For his 40th birthday his wife gifted him an Aston Martin DB9 Volante, and over the time since he has added to his selection of fun



weekend cars with both a 1971 Porsche 911T and a 1997 Porsche 993 Turbo.

The success they achieved also enabled Michael to turn his attention to Rolls-Royce and Bentley motor cars, and in September 2020 he purchased sight-unseen a 1990 Bentley Turbo R in the UK, via the internet, from Singapore. That story will be told separately in a forthcoming issue of *RR&BD*, but safe to say he fell in love. His motoring stable has since been supplemented with a Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow (two in fact – one was too much of a project and has been replaced by a pristine example from Ranmore Service & Engineering), the ex-Peter de Savary Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud III (purchased at the 2023 Bonhams Goodwood Members' Meeting auction),

and the stunning 2002-manufactured Bentley Azure Mulliner featured here.

THE ULTIMATE BENTLEY CONVERTIBLE?

The story of the Bentley Azure is inextricably linked with the Continental R coupé on which it is based, and also with the secretive relationship that this new coupé sparked between the company and the Brunei royal household. The Continental R's history was eloquently told by Richard Gunn in the May/June 2022 edition of this magazine. It covers how the 1991 Geneva Motor Show car had no Brunei involvement, but was immediately purchased by the Sultan for a sum 'too good to refuse'. The blossoming

relationship subsequently led to numerous further orders including the commissioning of unique specials (internally referred to as 'Blackpool cars' at the factory). These commissions included 12 Continental R convertibles built in 1993 and 1994 (according to Marinus Rijkers' excellent website www.rrsilverspirit.com).

Pininfarina were commissioned to build these Brunei specials (codenamed P100), and subsequently partnered with Bentley and contributed to the building of the production version – the Azure, launched in 1995. We can therefore thank this illustrious royal family for at least part-funding the development costs for this magnificent motor car.

The Azure was produced in two distinct series (see box-out, page »

FEATURE CAR BENTLEY AZURE

Sleek contours have aged very well - and the second-series Azure of 2006 retained similar looks



99). The first series continued until 2003, and although there were numerous special editions marketed throughout its life, from 1999 the Mulliner versions represented the apex of the whole Bentley range. From 2003 there was a three-year break before the Arnage-based replacement was introduced along with its coupé brother, the Brooklands, in 2006.

Michael's Azure Mulliner (affectionately named Kiki by the family) was manufactured in 2002, so is a very late example from the first series of production. His particular model

is highly specified with features from the previous year's Le Mans edition. These include quilted Redwood leather to seats and door panels, contrasting Slate stitching, Le Mans style gear lever with integrated sports mode button in Redwood leather, power folding door mirrors body coloured (Dark Oyster) as well as a Le Mans style console with Continental T upper and Continental R lower. It was initially a NEC motor show car, then the company's demonstrator, and thereafter part of the Heritage Collection.

Along with the 2003 Final Series,

2010 Azure T, and the 2017-announced 'Grand Convertible' (if any were indeed actually delivered - see box-out), this example is right up there with the most exclusive, most powerful and most desirable Bentley convertibles ever made. They also still command significant values in the modern classic market. Despite having the choice of coach built convertible Bentleys stretching back to the 1930s for similar money, Michael didn't consider them because he loved the way his Turbo R drove. He was intrigued to see how the formula had been



The familiar L-series V8, here in 420bhp form, disappears under covers



One of the two Garrett turbos that boost output so high

AZURE PRODUCTION



2006 second-gen Azure used the Arnage platform

The Bentley Azure was launched at the 1995 Geneva motor show, just four years after the Continental R's dramatic show-stealing reveal of 1991. First series production totalled 1,311 cars manufactured up until 2003. These included 155 Continental T-engined Mulliner versions (made between 1999 and 2003), of which just 23 were right-hand drive. Michael's is therefore a rare beast! Styling changes for the Azure Mulliner included extended wheel arches, mesh



Did Bentley really build and sell 19 Grand Continentals in 2017?

vents to front wings and bumper, 'dual twin' exhaust tailpipes, wider track and Mulliner badging. They ran on 18 Inch five-spoke alloy wheels shod in Pirelli P-Zero 285/45 tyres.

The second series of production commenced in 2006, with production totalling 796 by the close in 2010. These included 80 of the mighty 500 bhp Azure Ts at the end of the production run in 2010, of which (coincidentally!) 23 were right-hand drive. There was no direct replacement



First-year Bentley Azure from 1995

for the Azure, but Bentley did tease a Mulsanne-based 'Grand Convertible' in 2014 and then announced a very limited production run of just 19 left-hand drive cars in 2017 at an undisclosed but multi-million pound purchase price. This model is therefore more comparable with the Brunei specials rather than the production Azures, and it is unclear how many of them were really produced and delivered. Do any readers know?

Source: www.rrsilverspirit.com

developed from the original naturally aspirated four-door saloon version into a two-door convertible with twin turbos and over 400 bhp!

Incidentally, we also have Brunei to thank for the development of the twin turbo engine - for their super-fast Continental R (SUFACON) models. Chassis number CH01150 was sent by Bentley to P&A Wood for storage in 2021, and permission was granted a year later to sell it with just 12,200 miles on the clock. After an eventful test drive, which we'll come to later, Michael signed on the dotted line and

became the first private owner of the Azure despite it being 20 years old.

THE DRIVING EXPERIENCE

Since taking delivery just two years ago Michael has put more than 5,000 miles on his Azure, including extended runs to their place in France and to events such as BDC's Silverstone race day and Birkin Tour, the Goodwood Revival, and R-REC's Welsh weekend and Annual Rally. It's therefore not a daily driver or shopping excursion »



Even the tiny apertures under the headlamps have wire mesh grilles!



Huge brakes do a fine job of hauling down all that momentum



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FEATURE CAR BENTLEY AZURE

Living the dream!
An open car and
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regular, but excels at grand tours, effortlessly eating up hundreds of miles with Michael noting how fresh he still feels after the journey. He particularly praises the engineering of its NVH (noise, vibration, harshness) and the unmatched ambience of the cabin – in a car that ‘roars like a dragon’ when the accelerator pedal is pressed down hard.

However, for a car with such

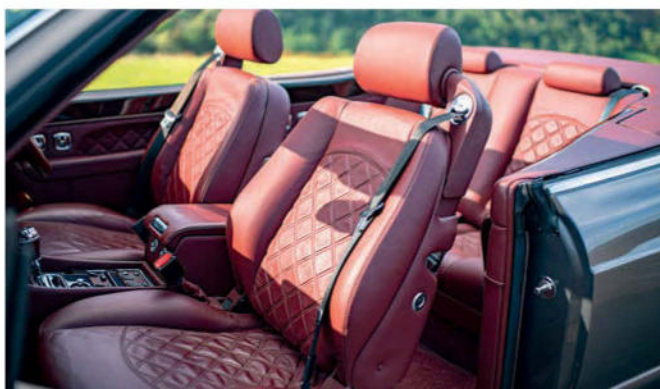
impressive performance figures Michael concedes that it's not a sports car. He believes that ride and handling were probably engineered with the American market in mind – as a boulevard cruiser rather than as a motor car evoking the sporting spirit of the Bentley Boys. This doesn't detract from its appeal, though, because that's not why he bought it. The blend of style, four-up

comfort and sense of occasion when driving the car – along with copious reserves of power when needed – suit him very nicely, thank you.

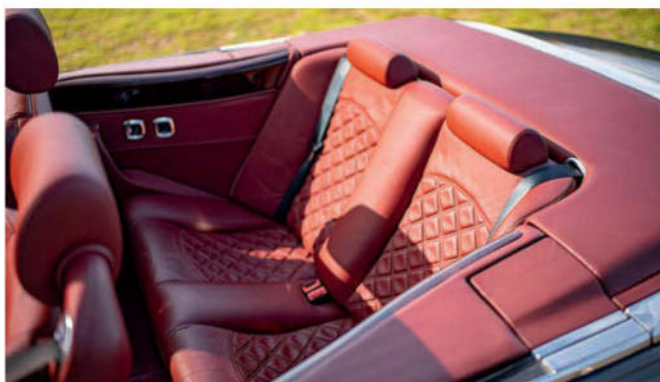
His decision to purchase has also been affirmed on numerous occasions with admiring comments and glances from the general public and fellow motoring aficionados. He made one French mechanic's day when he



Sport switch on gearlever is a special feature of the model



Left: Le Mans style console with Continental T upper and Continental R lower. Above: Not Oxblood but Redwood, and with a distinctive diamond pattern. Below: Azure is a genuine if cosy four-seater



needed a new tyre for the Azure and booked it in to be worked on among all the usual suspects of everyday motoring in southern France.

THE OWNING EXPERIENCE

Buying a 20-year-old 'modern classic' is a very different proposition from the more analogue motor cars that many of us *RR&BD* readers enjoy. This particular car had additional challenges beyond its Noughties complexity and electronics, namely its low volume coachbuilt nature and its period of prolonged storage. Buying one is not for the faint hearted.

Michael's first impression of the vehicle left a lot to be desired as it cut out on the test drive, but this was before P&A Wood had finalised all the recommissioning required after its substantial period off the road. Once back in regular use and servicing, the motor car has performed reliably except for its notoriously complex hood mechanism. When launched it was claimed to be the largest fully-automatic hydraulic soft top ever engineered, and consists of multiple motors and high-pressure

cylinders and hoses, much of which needs replacing or refurbishing every ten years. It has failed twice, but at least there is a manual ratcheting mechanism to get it up or down fully so that it can be rectified.

One of these hood failures was on the Tim Birkin tour last year, a Bentley Drivers' Club event. Michael had the interesting experience of becoming better acquainted with the Chairman and President of the BDC as they showed him how to ratchet the roof up so it could get back to P&A Wood for attention. Naturally, the mechanism was given a thorough going-through back in the workshop after that incident.

The Azure is still maintained by P&A Wood, whereas Michael's other cars are looked after more locally to his UK home by R-R&B Garages in Bromsgrove. He is of the definite opinion that these motor cars deserve to be driven, commenting 'why bother driving around in something else when you are fortunate to be the custodian of one of these?'

Michael is an active member of both the RREC and BDC, but was somewhat perturbed that the Azure is often lumped into the 'oddball' category of models at shows and events rather »



A very special badge on any Azure or Continental



Michael Campbell is the first private owner of this car, despite only owning it since 2022

“It’s not a daily driver or shopping excursion regular, but excels at grand tours, effortlessly eating up hundreds of miles with Michael noting how fresh he still feels after the journey”



than being recognised for the range topper that it is. He has therefore set up a dedicated Facebook group for Azure owners, which is starting to gain traction. Please search for ‘Bentley Azure Owners Group’ on Facebook and do join if you are lucky enough to own one of these fine motor cars.

ADVICE TO OTHER NEW OWNERS

Our interview concluded with a question about what advice Michael would give to those considering their first Rolls-Royce or Bentley, or those who have just taken the plunge

SPECIFICATION

BENTLEY AZURE MULLINER EDITION

LENGTH: 5350mm / 17ft 6½

WIDTH: 1920mm / 6ft 3½

WEIGHT: 2610kg / 5742lb

ENGINE: 6750cc OHV V8

POWER: 420bhp@4000rpm

TORQUE: 645lb ft@2200rpm

0-60MPH: 6s

TOP SPEED: 155mph (governed)

COST NEW: £247,925 (2003)

STYLING CHANGES: Extended wheel arches; mesh vents to front wings and bumper; ‘dual twin’ exhaust tailpipes; wider track; Mulliner badging

Source: www.rrsilverspirit.com

themselves into ownership. He came up with five nuggets of wisdom:

- Be clear about your purpose for the model you’re considering. The factors involved when buying a regular driver are very different to those for a collector grade motor car or a concours contender. Budget accordingly, remembering that there are no cheap options!
- Be as informed as possible about the model you’re considering and get it checked out by someone who knows what to look for. Get the build sheets from RREC or BDC once you’ve purchased it. These are available for most older models, but not for the VW- and BMW-platformed models.
- Low or high mileage isn’t the most important factor when considering the vehicles on offer. Condition, regular use and recent expenditure are much better indicators of expected reliability.
- These motor cars are best looked

after by specialists who know them and work on them day-in and day-out. Don’t scrimp on their maintenance and they will reward you. If you can afford to, look to improve and not just maintain them at annual service time.

■ Drive your car regularly and far! They don’t respond well to sitting unused for extended periods. Who knows what the future holds for the internal combustion engine, so enjoy it as much as you can, while you can! So, what’s next for Michael? Sticking with the ‘oddball’ theme, he rather fancies a Rolls-Royce Camargue, having been inspired as a child by seeing Richard Attenborough driving past in one. As long as he sticks to his own advice, he should be successful. We look forward to hearing the story!

THANKS TO: Michael Campbell; to Marinus Rijkers for his assistance in researching this article.



Bentley brollies - for when the roof declines to rise?



Part of the complex and sometimes troublesome power roof mechanism



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YOUR FIRST ROLLS-ROYCE?

The Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud and Bentley S-series saloons might seem intimidating as 'starter' classics, but the more you learn, the more realistic it becomes

WORDS: NIGEL BOOTHMAN PHOTOS: LEWIS HOUGHTON

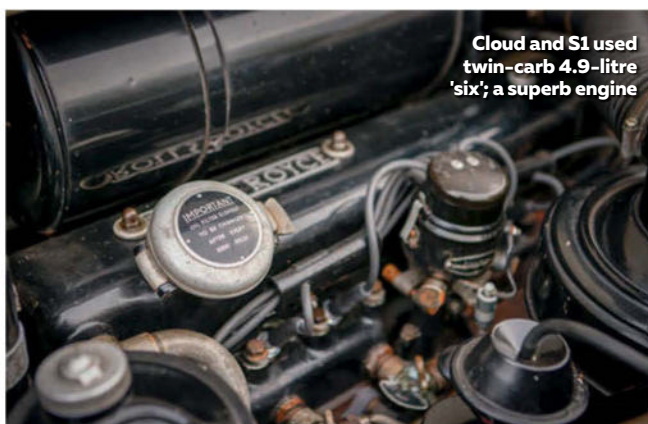
If you're reading Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver we can assume you're already partial to large, gracious, luxurious classics. Quite a few of you, though, may not yet have one in the garage – or perhaps you've taken the plunge with a younger model from the SY or SZ generation, or indeed a 21st century Goodwood or Crewe machine. Whatever your position, if you're attracted by the 1950s splendour

of the Silver Cloud, we think we can persuade you that ownership is not only feasible but straightforward.

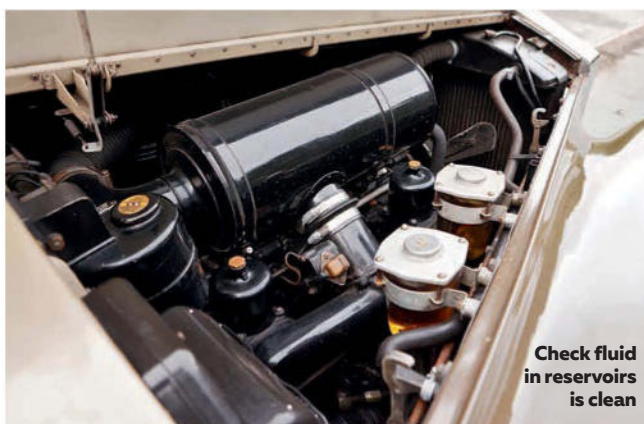
To find out more, we paid a visit to the Classic & Sportscar Centre near Malton in North Yorkshire. Father and son team Nick and James Szkiler and their Sales Manager Andrew Welham almost always have classic Rolls-Royce and Bentley motor cars amongst their stock, and we found a splendid example to sample:

this 1959 Silver Cloud Sports Saloon.

The car was supplied new to a Middlesex property developer who must have been doing rather well, as he changed this one for a Silver Cloud II in 1961 and moved on to the Silver Cloud III in 1965. Our car's second owner took a different view, and felt that such a nice example was in no need of replacement, so it stayed in the family for three decades before it found a new



Cloud and S1 used twin-carb 4.9-litre 'six'; a superb engine



Check fluid in reservoirs is clean



Check for smoke, drips and lack of silence - tired ones expensive to rebuild



Eighteen gallons will proceed forward at roughly 17mpg



Pin-striping should be hand-applied paint and not bits of thin tape

“We can regard this one as a well-loved, original car in splendid condition. In other words, it’ll show us what a good Silver Cloud should be like”

owner in the early 1990s. In 1996, it was in the hands of P&A Wood and had by that time covered only 35,000 miles.

Since then, it’s covered another 16,500 miles and has passed through the ownership of the proprietor of Royce Motor Services in Gloucestershire. Almost £20,000 has been spent on upkeep over the last 20 years, including an £8000 overhaul to brakes and power steering. We’ll come back to the likely costs of looking after a car like this later in the article, but for now,

we know we can regard this one as a well-loved, original car in splendid condition. In other words, it’ll show us what a good Silver Cloud should be like.

MEET THE EXPERT

For a bit of guidance on assessing and owning these cars, we have Nick Szkiler’s expert advice. Nick founded the Classic & Sportscar Centre back in 1991, operating it as Grundy Mack Classic Cars before the name change in 2006. Since then,

Nick’s son James has taken on the role of CEO while Nick remains as Chairman. Over three decades, Nick has run classic Rolls-Royce and Bentley motor cars of his own, and he recently owned a very late Rolls-Royce Silver Dawn with an elegant Hooper Empress body.

‘I’ve always thought the Silver Cloud era was the ultimate expression of the chassis-built Rolls-Royce,’ he says. ‘They have a combination of elegance, comfort and ease of use in modern road conditions that I »

“Before you know it, a serene 60mph is accomplished. Pushing on to 70mph differs only in what the speedo tells us; it’s no noisier or less refined”



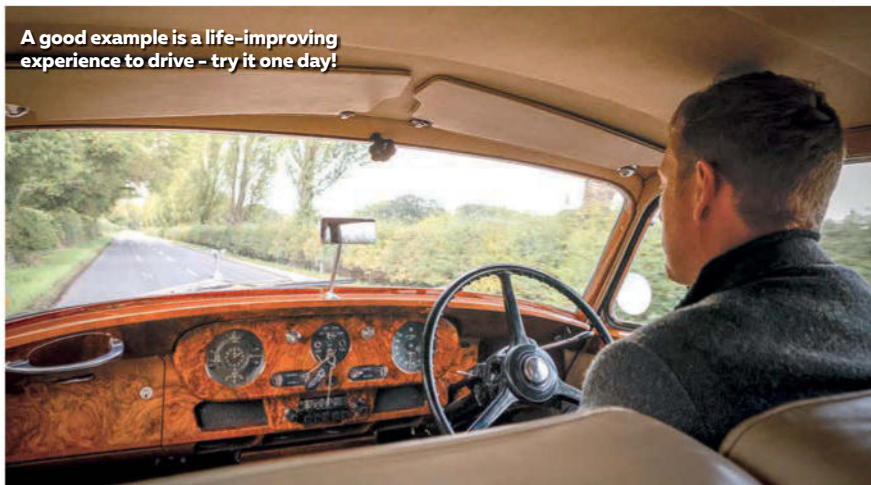
think makes them unbeatable.’

The Silver Cloud and Bentley S-series straddled a gap. Before their launch in 1955 came the Mk VI, R-type and Silver Dawn, whose development began in the war years, and after them came the thoroughly modern Silver Shadow and T-series of 1965, with their high-pressure hydraulics and three-box styling. What the Silver Cloud offers now is a sweet spot, both in looks and technology. There is relative simplicity and ease of maintenance compared with the SY generation, but standard four-speed automatic transmission and hydraulic brakes to all four wheels, plus greater power and better suspension than the Silver Dawn or R-type saloon could offer. Power steering, original on many examples and retro-fitted to others, is a common benefit too. They are more relaxed motorway cars than their predecessors and that larger Standard Steel saloon body offers greater interior space, but the swooping contours have an olden-days grace that would never quite return once the model was superseded.

DRIVING A DREAM

The Silver Cloud and S-series changed their power plant after the first generation, using the 4.9-litre, six-cylinder engine in the 1955-’59 cars, then the 6.25-litre V8 of the 1959-’62 Silver Cloud II and S2, and Silver Cloud

A good example is a life-improving experience to drive - try it one day!



III and S3 (1962-’65). Today, we’re experiencing the traditional appeal of an inlet-over-exhaust ‘six’, and first impressions are very agreeable.

It starts immediately with a polite cough and settles into a nice, low idle that’s hard to detect if you’re inside the car with the windows wound up. Nosing out of Nick’s premises, there is plenty of torque to surge forward with modern traffic and I soon discover the indicators self-cancel, like a much younger car. We make gentle progress to warm the car through, finding time to flick switches and turn knobs. Sure enough, all the little lamps work and so does the valve radio, coming to life with a quiet hum. What a pity there’s no more

cricket commentary on Long Wave!

As the road begins to swing through a series of bends, it’s plain we’ve moved on from the more firm, forceful, perhaps more sporting approach one takes in a Mk VI or R-type with a manual gearbox and unassisted steering. Here’s it’s all about the fingertip approach. From this point on, Rolls-Royces would be guided with effortless inputs from a driver reclining in a comfortable armchair, and if that sounds less fun than the old way, don’t believe it! We have all the urge we need from the long-stroke straight-six and flexing the right ankle provides much satisfaction. There is a switch on the steering column to stiffen the rear dampers for press-on »

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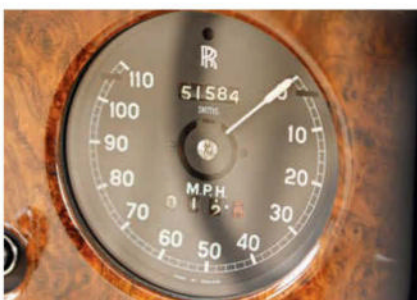
BUYING & OWNING ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER CLOUD



Check the car's stance – should be dead level, like this, not sagging at either end



A working valve radio adds charm and value



Downward-swinging speedo and rev counter were well-established features before Silver Cloud's launch



Picnic table and ashtray, intact and easy to open – it should be clean, too!



You can leave it in '3' for urban driving, then move to '4' for the open road

driving, though the shortcoming to this approach is the wide, un-bolstered seat that allows driver and passenger to topple over in faster corners.

There are wing mirrors fitted a great way off at the far end of those front wings, perhaps the furthest anyone has had to look to get a view of such a mirror. Indeed, for drivers too short-sighted to see to the far end of this lengthy Rolls-Royce, there is a little door mirror fitted by the quarterlight too.

Huge door bins make practical use of very large doors, and though it is a vast car by the standards of the day, it doesn't at first seem huge on the inside. However, the deep, soft springing of the seats means that once you're in, you sink in such comfort that there's more legroom than you anticipated. If you really had to have a limo-like acreage in the rear footwells, there was the long-wheelbase option, a consistent seller throughout the Silver Cloud generations. Quite a number survive.

Twin carburettors were an obvious step to improve power over the old Silver Dawn and they contribute to the ample supply. Plant the accelerator and the engine sends back a deep, thrumming note as we whisk past 30mph (the first



Interiors are vastly expensive to restore – a lovely, mellow, original like this is ideal

automatic gearchange), then 40mph (the second) and before you know it, a serene 60mph is accomplished. Pushing on to 70mph differs only in what the speedo tells us; it's no noisier or less refined. I ask the photographer, currently lording it in the rear seat, what the experience is like from the back. 'B****y lovely' is all he can manage.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

If, like us, you're now firmly convinced you want one of these marvellous cars, this is a good moment to take some specific advice from Nick.

'Condition is everything. The restoration cost is so high that it doesn't make sense to have it all done professionally to a tired car, so while the advice is the same as it is for many other classics – buy the best you can afford – for one of these, it really matters.'

Before you close the magazine in disappointment, don't think we're telling you that only top-money concours cars are safe to buy. Indeed, Nick has a great deal of time for unrestored, original cars that may not gather rosettes at shows, but which have authenticity.

'Choose the model you look for to

tailor your budget,' says Nick. 'The earliest Silver Clouds and S-series Bentleys are still worth a little less than the Cloud II / S2, and Cloud III / S3 generations. We had a lovely Bentley S1 saloon that was almost what you'd call Condition A, but sold for a price that would barely buy you an edgy B-grade S3.'

Colours are important too, and here Nick has a very interesting observation.

'If you sold new Daimlers or Jaguars in the 1960s, the reds, blues and gunmetal greys would shoot out of the door while the fawn, Sable Brown or Willow Green would hang about. I think the same is true with Rolls-Royce and Bentley, to a point – the cars in more subdued colours are often better preserved. My theory is that they were sold to more mature customers, say a company chairman's

final car, gently driven, the one he took with him when he retired. Think of Dusk Grey, Sage Green or Sand over Sable, like the car in these pictures. Always looked after, lower owners, lower miles. They might not be fashionable colours compared to two-tone combinations of blue, black, Burgundy or silver, but they can be a clever buy.'

In the end, there's no substitute for careful inspection (ideally by a professional assessor or marque specialist) and once again, Nick can offer a view on what should be most worrying if bad news is reported.

'These cars do rust if neglected. If you have to compromise on one area of the car's condition, don't do it on the bodywork. What starts as a bit of paintwork can reveal the need for a terribly expensive body restoration.' »

"If the best you can afford isn't £60,000 but £30,000, do not assume that every affordable car needs tens of thousands spending on it before it can be enjoyed"

Second to the body, beware of cars with interiors that have passed on from 'patinated' to 'tatty', or have been retrimmed so poorly that it needs doing again. It doesn't stop you driving the car, of course, but to fully restore the interior of any Silver Cloud or Bentley equivalent costs about the same as buying a lower-end example of the whole car!

'They are tough, dependable machines, mechanically speaking,' says Nick. 'You can buy almost everything but none of it is cheap.'

You'd avoid a car with obvious running faults, while evidence of regular recent use and servicing is a good sign. About the only part of the car that's unconventional by 1950s standards is the mechanical brake servo driven from the gearbox, so ensure the brakes pull the car up powerfully and evenly. Much reduced stopping power at parking speeds is normal, though!

Amongst desirable features to look out for, power steering tops Nick's list.

'It's ideal for older owners or indeed anyone used to modern cars with light

"The restoration cost is so high that it doesn't make sense to have it all done professionally to a tired car"

steering. They're easier to park and easier to sell, should the time come. Watch out for the tyre choice, especially on non-assisted cars; most are now on radials rather than the original-spec cross plies, because they're less costly and more stable at speed. But they can make the steering very heavy at low speeds, especially the American brands with soft sidewalls.'

WHAT TO SPEND

As Nick indicated, the younger cars are valued over the older ones, with the final Silver Cloud III / S3 generation with its quad-headlamp looks fetching most.

'I'd say about £70,000 or a little more is now the top for a really good Cloud

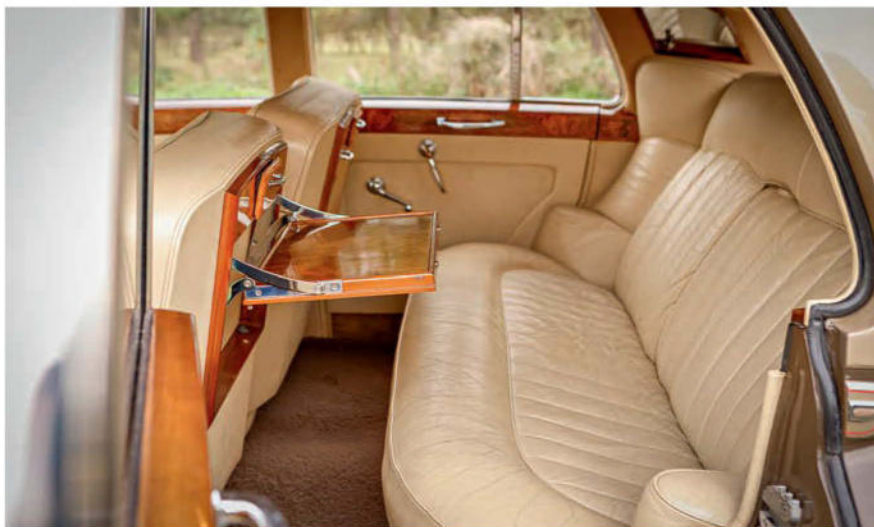
III, but I think that's still good value. When I started selling them in 1991 the same car would have been £30,000; same price as a good Aston Martin DB6...which would now be £400,000.'

Good examples of the Cloud / S1 and Cloud II/S2 are somewhat less, and Nick has another interesting comparison to make.

'A good Jaguar Mk 2, a really smart 3.8-litre car in a strong colour might be £50,000. That would buy a nice Silver Cloud or S1 which are in a different league in terms of luxury and quality.'

You can buy roadworthy Silver Clouds at £25,000 and you can pay £75,000. From ten feet away, the difference between the two may not be as obvious as £50,000 ought to make it, which is where the experience of inspecting different examples will help. In general, the price asked will be a rough guide to the likely future expenditure, hence Nick's advice about buying the best you can afford.

It's important to avoid the wrong conclusion here, though. If the best you can afford isn't £60,000 but £30,000, do not assume that every affordable car needs tens of thousands spending on it before it can be enjoyed. The task alters a little – follow Nick's warnings about bodywork and ruined interiors and find a safe, enjoyable buy at that price. Patchy history, a non-original registration number and one or two colour changes might harm the value but make zero difference from behind the wheel. Mileage, too, is worth thinking about – low miles add value to the car but a high-miler in regular use may



Rear seats even more capacious than they look – you sink into them!



Table timber, like all in the car, costs a great deal to refinish or replace – check it's good!



Rear three-quarter vanity mirrors should have working lamps, like this



What buyers love to see – the car's original handbook



Spare wheel swallows much room but boot is still large enough for full-on family holidays



Original jack, torch and tools are signs of caring ownership

well be nicer to drive (and potentially less expensive to fine-tune) than a 40,000-mile example that's barely turned a wheel since Lockdown.

Coachbuilt saloons are often a good deal more expensive and yet take longer to sell, so we'll leave those to one side for this article. What about the long-wheelbase versions of Standard Steel saloons, though?

'It depends whether they have a division or not,' says Nick. 'The market for cars intended to be chauffeur driven can be tough and owner-driver examples without a division are more in demand, and more comfortable up front. Otherwise there's not a huge difference in values.'

So there are wise buys to be made and savings to be had, but these are still costly cars to run compared with most contemporaries. If the car is fit and healthy, budget £1500 a year for servicing and minor repairs from a good independent specialist. If the car needs recommissioning after a lay-up but is otherwise sound, budget £3000 to get it going and stopping as it should once more. Time and again, you'll see the big-ticket spending in a car's history folder comes after a period of storage.

We'll leave the last word to Nick Szkiler. If there's an ideal combination of model, condition and value, what would Nick go for?

'I'd be looking for a 1957 or '58 Bentley S with power steering, in a discreet colour scheme and with very original, slightly imperfect charm. It's like buying houses, but instead of "location, location, location," think "condition, condition, condition". Just remember great condition doesn't always mean a fresh coat of metallic paint and brand new leather.' ■



'I BOUGHT ONE'

This one, in fact! Michael Hanson is hardly a first-time Rolls-Royce owner, having grown up with them, and over the years, he's assembled a fascinating collection. But with interests stretching from his 20/25 Salmons Tickford Cabriolet to a pair of Silver Spur IV limousines, he still homed in on this Silver Cloud.

'I've had a later Silver Cloud III convertible, which was quite a nice car, and also a Bentley S3 saloon that was a complete lemon – the floors were made of fibreglass. So I was only interested in a really good, genuine car. I remembered seeing this one with P & A Wood many years ago, then later with Real Car Co, so when it appeared with the Classic

and Sports Car Centre, still looking as good as ever, it got me thinking. I had a Turbo RT and an Arnage I wasn't using much, so I contacted Nick Szkiler and discussed a deal. I drove my Silver Shadow over from Lancashire to view the Silver Cloud and a brake hose rubbed through on the way, which wasn't ideal, but Nick kindly arranged a transporter. Of course, I liked the Cloud and it's home with me now. All I've done is feed the leather and clean it on top and underneath, and it's delightful. I was going to fit a towbar so I could tow my 1958 Andrews slipper launch behind it, but it's too nice for that – I'm looking at a Jaguar Mk VII instead. The Silver Cloud is a keeper.'

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Nigel Boothman,
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TECHNICAL GUIDE

CONTINENTAL GT SERVICING

We look at routine service jobs on a 2003 Bentley GT, giving a glimpse into how the professionals tackle them – and how you could do so at home, too. Our guide is Andy Thwaites of Rolls-Royce & Bentley parts specialists Flying Spares.

WORDS: ANDY THWAITES PHOTOS: FLYING SPARES

Welcome to our fifth technical guide. And now, as fans of Monty Python will appreciate, for something completely different. After replacing the steering rack on a Rolls-Royce Silver Spirit II in our last column, we're back to jobs which most classic car owners could reasonably undertake...except this time on the most modern car we've featured so far: a 2003 Bentley Continental GT.

Our test car is one of the earliest first generation Conti GTs, notable for being the first brand new Bentley released under VW's ownership. It was the first Bentley to be mass produced and, at a mere £110,000, the price was less than half that of the old Continental R. With its 6-litre twin-turbo W12

engine, this GT is an absolute beast of a car, but (how to put this politely?), it is not renowned for being trouble-free. The engine compartment is cramped, electrical problems are reasonably common, and the air suspension system requires careful handling, as we'll see.

Regular maintenance is the single best way to keep your GT at its high performance best so, over the next few pages, we'll look first at an oil and oil filter change, then replace the wiper blades, and finally fit new air and pollen filters. The oil change includes putting the GT into 'jack mode', which is absolutely essential. If you don't, the self-levelling system will exhaust its air trying to maintain ride height, risking suspension collapse when lowered. Even doing wipers

involves going into the 'maintain & service' bit of the infotainment system, but thankfully this doesn't pose the same potentially catastrophic risk!

Braking on the GT is interesting too, but we'll save that for another day. In the meantime, the usual caveats apply. Please note that these articles are intended as general guidance only. For model-specific instructions please refer to your owner's manual. Finally, and I can't emphasise this enough: safety is paramount. Please use the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and dispose of waste products responsibly. Good luck and mind your head! If you have any questions, queries or tips please get in touch on 01455 292949 or email sales@flyingspares.co.uk



ABOUT ANDY

Andy Thwaites is one of the UK's leading Rolls-Royce and Bentley specialist vehicle technicians. He first joined Flying Spares aged 18 and studied his apprenticeship at Leicester College, winning their Apprentice of the Year Award, before joining Jaguar Land Rover aged 23, working mainly on future engines and electric drive units within their **prototype** division. He **rejoined** Flying Spares in **2021**, as **Technical Services** Division Manager, and is responsible for the company's extensive parts **reconditioning** programme.



GT OIL & FILTER CHANGE

1



Prep: Purchase new oil and oil filter and put on appropriate PPE. Now, for an oil change on the GT, there are couple of essential set-up jobs.

2



The first is to place both batteries on charge to prevent all-too-common voltage drop fault codes.

3



The second – vital! – is to engage 'Jack Mode' by switching on the ignition and pressing and holding both the ride height and damper setting buttons for 5 seconds.

4



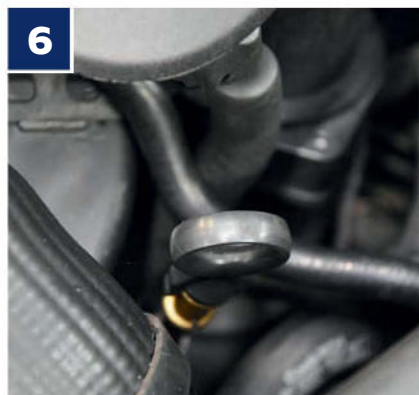
With Jack Mode displayed in the driver information panel (and self-levelling disabled), safely lift the car in Park with handbrake applied.

5



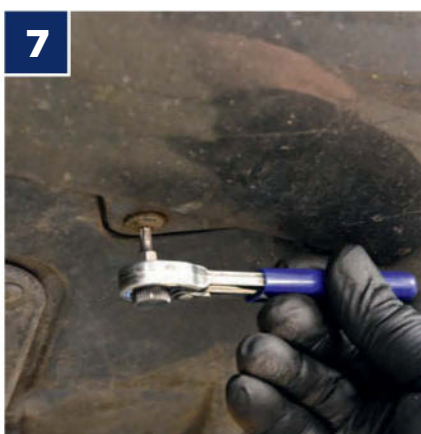
You can now raise the bonnet and crack on with the actual oil change!

6



To limit potential air lock within the crankcase, slightly pull out the engine dipstick and slightly undo the oil filler cap.

7



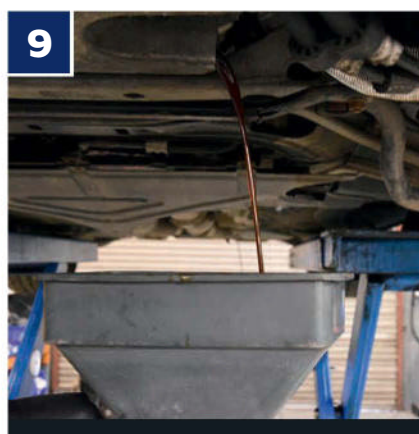
Remove the undertray, which is held in place by several torx-headed bolts.

8



Position a suitable engine oil collection tub.

9



Use a 19mm socket to remove the engine sump plug, allowing all the old oil to drain until the flow stops.

GT OIL & FILTER CHANGE (CONTINUED)

10



Once the old oil is fully drained from the sump, the oil filter can be removed.

11



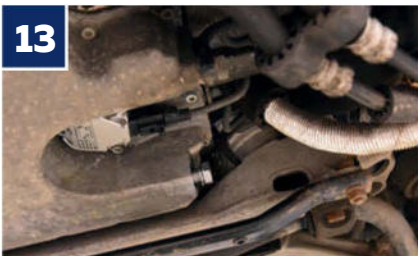
Use a 36mm oil filter socket to unscrew the oil filter assembly from the engine.

12



With the oil filter removed, clean down the filter housing and sump plug area using a degreasing solution.

13



You can now fit the new sump plug and sealing washer, torque tightening to 40nm, and give the inside of the oil filter bowl housing a good clean.

14



Place the new filter element within the bowl and fit a new sealing O-ring to the filter housing.

15



Now align the filter assembly (with the new filter) up to the engine housing, torque tightening the filter bowl to 23nm.

16



New oil! Remove the oil filler cap and fill with approx. 12.5 litres of the correct grade new oil, which is fully synthetic 0W-40

17

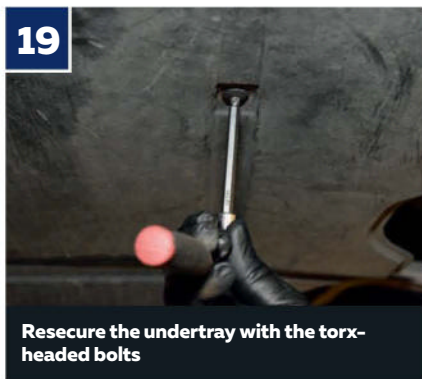


Allow car to remain level on the ramp for two minutes before rechecking the oil level. Top up if necessary.

18



Nearly there... screw the oil filler cap back on.



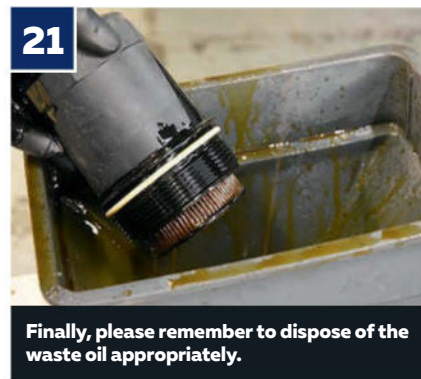
19

Resecure the undertray with the torx-headed bolts



20

Release Jack Mode (and restore self-levelling) by pressing and holding the ride height and damper setting buttons for 5 seconds.



21

Finally, please remember to dispose of the waste oil appropriately.

GT WIPER BLADE CHANGE



1

Select the correct new wiper blades, which are part no. 3W2955425DP (for right hand drive models)



2

Switch the ignition on, turn on the infotainment display, and press the 'Set Up' button.



3

In setup, select 'Other functions', then 'Maintain & Service', then 'Wiper Change'.



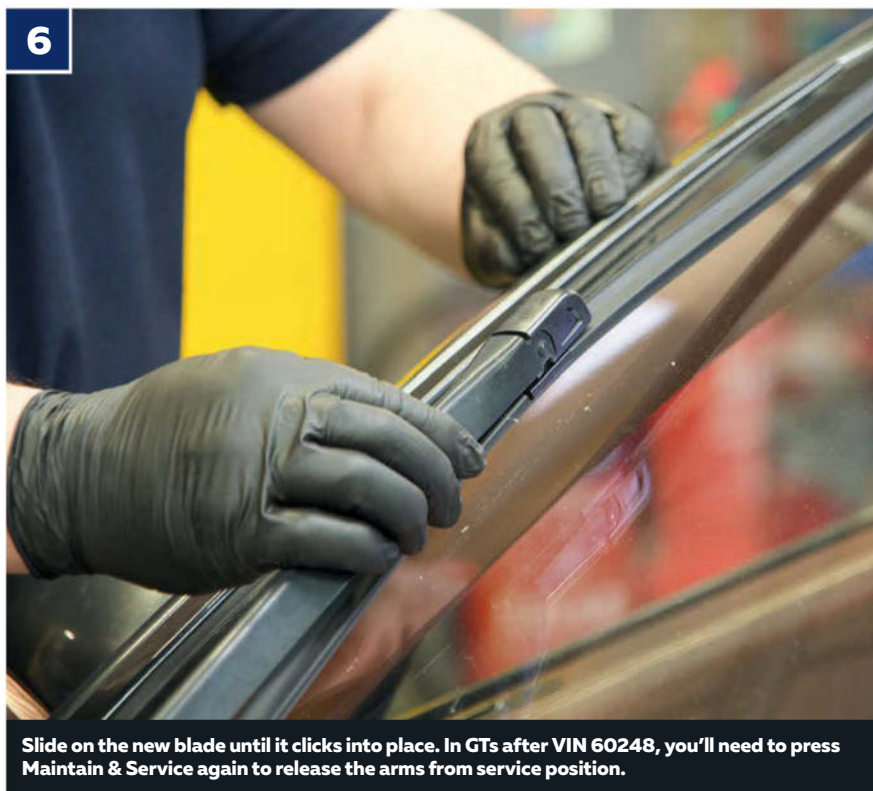
4

With Wiper Change selected, the arms will move into the service position. You can now proceed with the blade change.



5

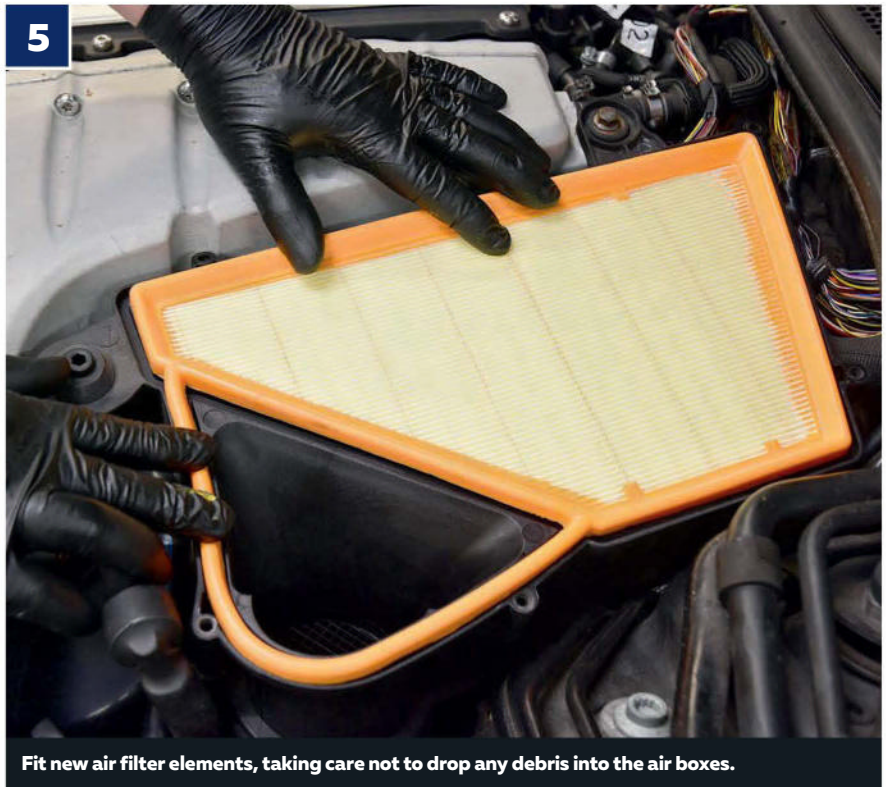
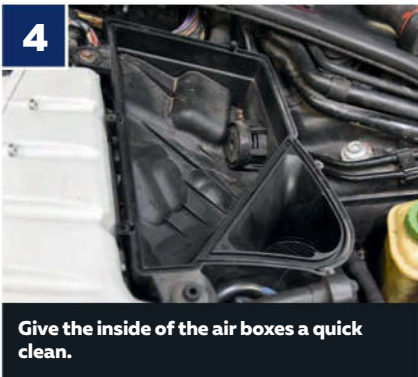
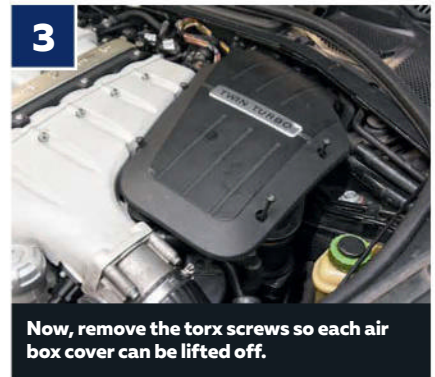
Squeeze the release tab/button where the blade meets the arm to release the old blade.



6

Slide on the new blade until it clicks into place. In GTs after VIN 60248, you'll need to press Maintain & Service again to release the arms from service position.

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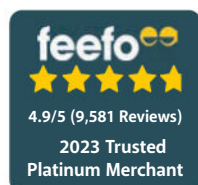
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MARGINAL GAINS

Two years into the refurbishment of our Silver Shadow, the jobs left to do seem small – and many small improvements make a big difference

WORDS & PHOTOS: NIGEL BOOTHMAN

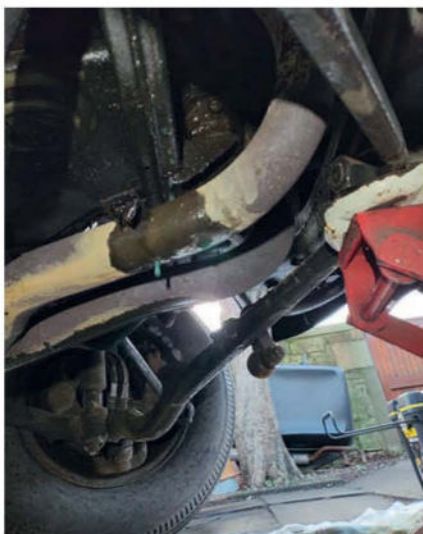
At the end of the last report, the Silver Shadow was busily creating a shiny green puddle under the front of the engine. The water pump, having held back the coolant for 35 years of storage, had given up the struggle once the car found itself in use again. A phone call to Flying Spares sorted the arrival of an exchange unit, but in late January it was dark and wet and cold, and the prospect of dismantling everything around the front of the engine and then lying in a freezing puddle (indoor storage was lost, temporarily but at short notice) did not appeal. I chickened out and handed the car over to Ross McLeod at our local Rolls-Royce & Bentley specialist, Mulsanne Motors.

Of course, Ross has done enough of these to replace water pumps in his sleep, so the job was soon finished and I went back to pick up the car and the grotty old pump, so it could be sent back to Flying Spares as a repairable core. Ross had a quick look at the ignition timing and carburettor settings too, and the Silver Shadow did seem to be running more smoothly and happily. This in itself can be a little deceptive, I think – even an approximately correct Rolls-Royce V8 is a silky runner compared to almost anything else, and this one started on the button, the auto-choke working perfectly until knocked back by the first stab of throttle. Yet over the weeks following, it became clear it wasn't

pulling quite as it should, once we were beyond town speeds. More of that later.

THE LOUDEST THING IN A ROLLS-ROYCE...?

The next on the list of small annoyances to tackle was the noisy heater fan. The blower is a barrel-type unit that rotates in a housing on the bulkhead, up on the driver's side. The fan and its motor are mounted on the housing via three studs embedded in rubber bushes, to allow for the torque from the fan motor and shocks from the road to move the assembly a little without damaging anything. One of these bushes had split, and the fan was now fouling the inside of the case. It still



Uh-oh...time for a new water pump



Any old iron? Failed water pump will go to Flying Spares to be remanufactured



Old water pump was stiff, and corroded on sealing face

moved a bit of air but made an awful racket, to the point where pedestrians would turn their heads and stare if I rolled past with the demister going.

I built up the bush with rubberised glue and held it in position overnight with some tape, half expecting the whole lot to fall to bits again the moment I touched it, but it seemed remarkably firm, so I re-fitted it to the car. With the fan held away from the housing, there were two instant benefits: the horrid noise was gone and the fan was free to run up to speed, resulting in a vast improvement in airflow. I hesitate to say this for fear of provoking the motoring gods, but the car's complex heating, ventilation and cooling system seems to work almost as it should, at least for the first two aspects – the air conditioning needs recharging and a leak check.

Another small 'win' to tick off is the reinstatement of the boot carpet. Regular readers may remember that I'd left this item 300 miles from my home, where it had been skilfully finished with the correct black leatherette binding by my mother and her faithful sewing machine. A visit down south to see the folks provided a chance to roll up the carpet and bring it home for a moment of truth – had my cutting and mum's binding left us with a well-fitting carpet? Yes indeed, and very nice it looks too.

THE HOME STRAIGHT

You can tell a restoration or



Ugly but strong - rubberised glue fixes bush and steadies motor

recommissioning job is nearing the home straight when attention turns to in-car entertainment. The eight-track player is a Waltham (not a brand about which I can discover much online) and gives us hints of how nice it can sound with a decent tape. But only on track 3 because the track-change function is kaput. I tried my usual go-to repairers of vintage audio equipment, Wilkinsons Hi-Fi of Nelson, Lancashire, but they draw the line at car kit, sadly. I'm hoping Facebook enquiries will lead to a vintage car audio specialist who can actually fix old machines rather than modify them to play Bluetooth signals and DAB radio.

A less trivial upgrade will be the



Fan motor happily ensconced on the housing

fitting of the correct windscreen washer bottle. The original had deteriorated into something hopelessly brittle over time, so it was already in fragments when we acquired the car. The replacement, which Flying Spares can offer as a second-hand part, is the far side of £50 which stings a bit, but there's a nice rectangular holder for it and the lid and motor mechanism from the old bottle are still intact, so there's no option really. And what price a clean, clear windscreen?

Back to that running fault. Well, 'fault' is too strong, but on a trip along the motorway to the Forth Bridge, there was a distinct lack of urge beyond »



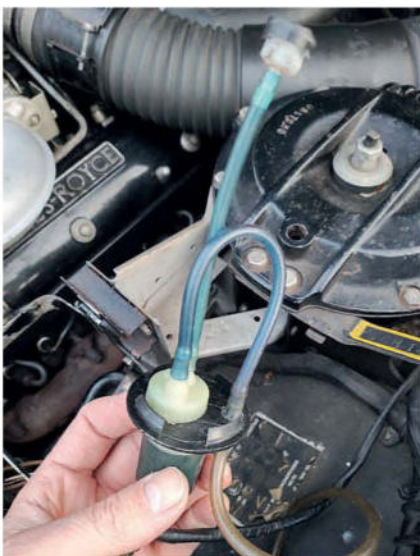
Will the carpet fit? The moment of truth



New boot carpet, edged and fitted - like a bought one!



Waltham eight-track has only been playing track three



Surviving pump and piping requires new washer bottle

about 55mph, (or rather 60mph – the speedo is under-reading) and on hard acceleration at any speed there was a bit of fluffing and occasional spitting back. Could the timing have slipped again? One sunny Sunday afternoon out with the kids, I thought I'd investigate. A quick grope down the back of the engine revealed the distributor clamp bolt was no longer nipped up tight, so I moved the distributor clockwise a fraction to advance the timing and tightened it.

Yes – it was better already. No spitting back, a bit more power. We stopped again to advance it a bit further, and this time the kids said 'whoa, Dad!' when the acceleration threw them back in their seats. It felt more responsive everywhere and the idle speed was now a little too high, suggesting we'd never quite got it timed right before making carb adjustments the last time. So the



Pausing to advance the timing - it makes quite a difference!



The distributor clamp bolt is tricky to reach

next day, I started the car from cold, reduced the fast idle on the choke mechanism to a sensible speed, let it warm up and blipped the throttle to disengage the choke, then adjusted the main idle screw on the throttle stop.

The list of jobs left to do is large, but it's a large list of small jobs. It's been (at times, anyway!) a joy to revive this highly original, single-owner car and a



Nipping up the lock nut on the throttle stop after adjusting the idle

revelation to find how much of its built-in quality and splendid engineering still impresses when out on the road today. This is my last issue as editor of *RR&BD*, but you may well see JUD 1D in the Staff Cars pages again as we get closer to the finishing line. Thanks to all those who have offered their help and experience on the two-year trip to put this charming barn find back on the road. ■

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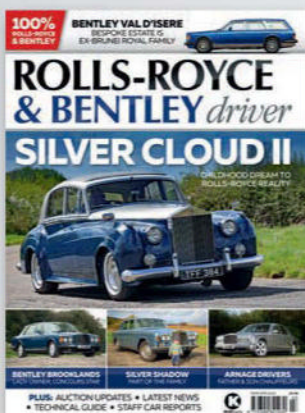
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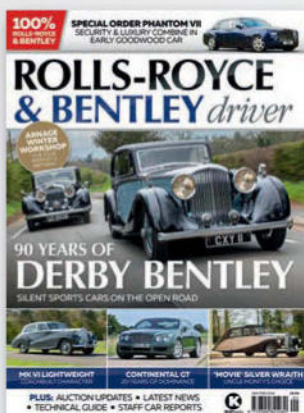
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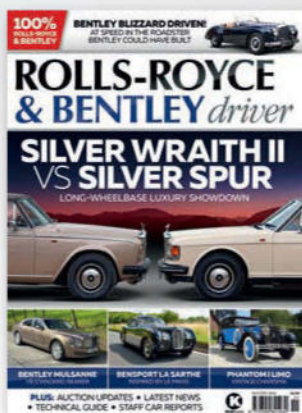
MARCH/ APRIL 2024

- Silver Cloud II – boyhood ambition
- Bentley Val d'Isere, Brunei 'special'
- Father & son Arnage chauffeurs
- Young family's Silver Shadow
- Bentley Brooklands: prize magnet!
- SZ steering rack replacement



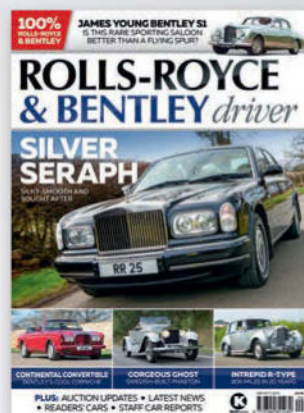
JANUARY/ FEBRUARY 2024

- 90 years of Derby Bentley
- 'Uncle Monty' Silver Wraith
- Continental GT origin story
- Mk VI Mulliner Lightweight
- Special-order Phantom VII
- Arnage Winter Service



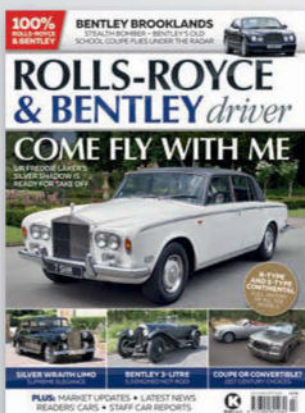
NOVEMBER/ DECEMBER 2023

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- Bentley Blizzards
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- Phantom I Barker Limo
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- Bentley S3 reunited with chauffeur



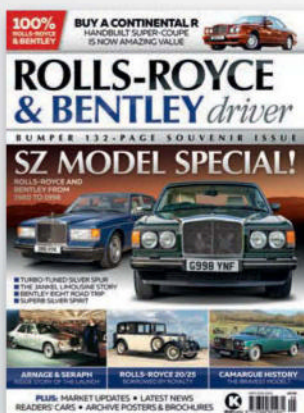
SEPTEMBER/ OCTOBER 2023

- Rolls-Royce Silver Seraph
- Bentley Continental Convertible
- Swedish-bodied Silver Ghost
- James Young Bentley S1
- 80,000 miles in an R-type
- New workshop feature



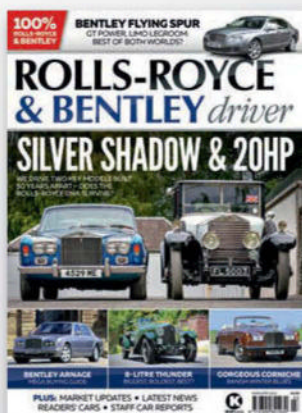
JULY/ AUGUST 2023

- Freddie Laker's Silver Shadow
- Bentley 3/5.3-litre
- Phantom VII coupé & convertible
- Silver Wraith Limousine
- Bentley Brooklands coupé
- R-type & S-type Continental history



MAY/ JUNE 2023

- SZ-generation bumper issue!
- Continental R Buying Guide
- Rolls-Royce Camargue history
- Arnage & Silver Seraph launch story
- Rolls-Royce 20/25
- Jankel Limousines – new research



MARCH/ APRIL 2023

- Silver Shadow & 20hp compared
- Arnage Buying Guide
- Bentley 8-litre driven
- Gorgeous Corniche
- Flying Spur: GT power, limo legroom
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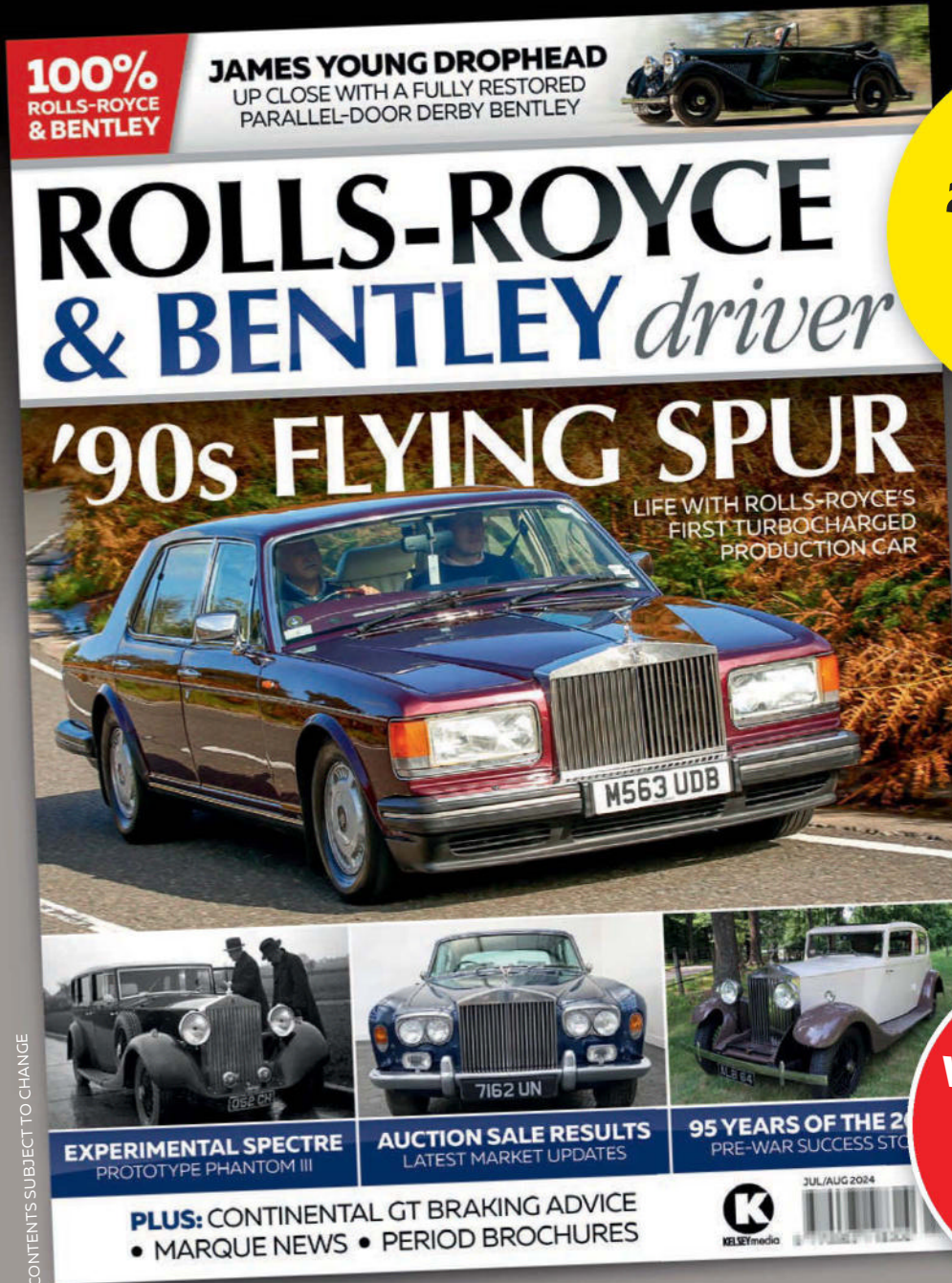


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NIGEL BOOTHMAN

Two years have flown by – so what were the greatest cars encountered while occupying the Editor's chair?

The one downside of becoming Editor on a car magazine used to be reduced contact with the cars themselves – you went from being a road tester, technical writer or features editor to passing the day in meetings with people in suits. But publishing is no longer so profitable that every magazine can run with a large staff, and indeed on a great many titles like *RR&BD* the Editor finds he is not only the boss, but also the chief sub, the features organiser, the road tester and the staff writer. Sometimes photographer too. Still, at least it means I've been able to drive lots of lovely cars. Which stick in the mind?

I experienced a bit of a shiver in Chris Broom-Smith's 20/25, a special 'Trials' car built by Windover to Ivan Evernden's orders, and sent to the south of France for evaluation by an ailing Sir Henry Royce. To sit where not only Evernden but Sir Henry almost certainly sat was memorable. So was another pre-war delight, Marcus Dean's unusual Wraith limousine with

"Speaking of power, I grew to love the way the turbocharged cars from the SZ generation onwards delivered their horsepower – or rather, torque."

a rear seat wound out on a track to assist the invalid first owner. The subtle, silent, entirely gentle manner of a really good Wraith is a revelation, and more of a step on from the 20/25 and 25/30 than I'd realised.

I was converted to six-cylinder Silver Clouds by a few hours driving the car we borrowed from Nick Szkiler at the Classic & Sports Car centre in this issue – so capable, so well sorted; not the overweight machine I feared it might be. A car with that same four-speed automatic but channelling V8 urge, Derek Mowat's Bentley S3 Continental DHC, showed me the pinnacle that Crewe reached just before the SY generation arrived. Power to spare, grace and beauty; it was hard to top.

Better than its successor, the Shadow MPW Drophead? Quite possibly.

Speaking of power, I grew to love the way the turbocharged cars from the SZ generation onwards delivered their horsepower – or rather, torque. It's all there, just off idle, waiting like a floodtide behind a lock gate. How very Rolls-Royce (or Bentley) to be the opposite of all other turbo'd cars, which need spooling up and only go wild from 4000rpm onwards. By the time you hit that figure in a Turbo R, you're already breaking the speed limit. The most potent example I tried, an Arnage-based Bentley Brooklands coupé, was mind-boggling. Those cars are remarkable, under-appreciated, Ferrari-squashing masterpieces.

But throughout these experiences, I was slowly converting a 1972 Silver Shadow from inert barn find to edgy runner to useable classic. It's been one of the most satisfying experiences I've had working on an old car, because the effort has been worth it: it turns out to be a delight on the road. Most Rolls-Royce and Bentley motor cars exceed your expectations, but when you can park up, look back at it and think 'yes, that's mine', it's better still. ■



Bentley Brooklands, blurring time and space



'Trials' 20/25 made a memorable encounter



Whisper-quiet Wraith looked old fashioned; didn't feel it



At the wheel of a fabulous S3 Continental DHC



Two years on from this, JUD 1D moves all by itself

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