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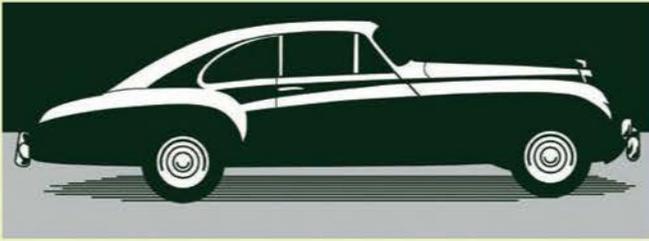
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Kelsey Publishing Ltd, The Granary, Downs Court,
Yalding Hill, Yalding, Kent, ME18 6AL, United Kingdom
+44 (0)1959 541444

Editorial

Editor Paul Guinness . rrb.ed@kelsey.co.uk

Art Editor Mark Baker, mark_baker04@yahoo.co.uk

Contributors

Nigel Boothman, Peter Lavers, Andy Thwaites, Richard Gunn,
Lewis Houghton, Gregory Owain

Advertisement Sales

Talk Media Ltd

CEO David Lerpiniere, david.lerpiniere@talkmediasales.co.uk

Sales Manager Garry Brookes, 01732 442245,
garry@talk-media.uk

Advertising Production

Talk Media Ltd

Production Manager Nick Bond

Artwork Enquiries 01732 445325, production@talk-media.uk

Management

Managing Director Phil Weeden

Subscription Marketing Director Kevin McCormick

Retail Director Steve Brown

Fulfillment Manager Andy Cotton

Events Manager Kat Chappell

Print Production Manager Georgina Harris

Print Production Controllers Kelly Orriss, Hayley Brown

Subscription Marketing Managers Dave Sage

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Customer service and subscription postal address:

Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver Customer Service Team

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Yalding, Kent, ME18 6AL, United Kingdom

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Back in the driving seat

We're fortunate here at *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* to have a very loyal readership, with many of you having supported us from day one – and hopefully that means my name will be familiar to most. In fact, it'll hopefully ring a bell with anyone who's been following us for at least two years, as it was only in the spring of 2022 that I stepped away from the role of editor after four years. And now I'm back.

It's always good to try new things in life. Equally, though, it's important to know when something is right – and that's certainly the case here. The four years that I previously spent as editor of this magazine were an absolute pleasure, enabling me to meet passionate enthusiasts and marque experts on a regular basis. Of all the magazines I've edited over the last 30 years, this was the one that made me feel most 'at home' thanks to the sheer enthusiasm and friendliness of the Rolls-Royce and Bentley scene. And so when Nigel Boothman announced he was moving on due to other work commitments, my decision was an easy one to make.

I'm grateful to Nigel for keeping the magazine in fine health over the last two years. But he's not escaping completely, as he'll continue to write for us – and as this issue shows, will still be sharing his Silver Shadow ownership experiences. Meanwhile, I'm looking forward to getting back into the swing of things, featuring rather fine cars in the months ahead. A photographer who's contributed to the magazine for many years recently asked me: "Is settling back into *RR&BD* like putting on a pair of comfy slippers?" And the answer has to be yes, as this is a title I was proud to previously edit for a total of 25 issues – and one that I'm delighted to be back with again. So, stay with us on the journey as we find more cars, meet more people and discover more fascinating history about all things Rolls-Royce and Bentley. Enjoy the (sumptuous) ride!

Paul Guinness

rrb.ed@kelsey.co.uk

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OPEN-TOP BATUR UNVEILED

Following on from the hand-crafted Bacalar 'barchetta' and Batur coupé is Bentley's latest ultra-exclusive limited edition, the Batur Convertible – its most expensive offering ever, with each of the 16 production versions set to cost in excess of £2 million.

The new drop-top represents the third bespoke model line from the company's Mulliner coachbuilding

division and, as before, is derived from the Continental GT. This new two-seater will be one of the last cars to feature Bentley's 6.0-litre twin-turbocharged W12 engine, which ends production this summer.

As in the coupé version, the W12 will be tuned to give 740bhp and 738lb. ft of torque. Bentley has yet to issue full performance figures, though the open-top car is likely to match its hardtop sibling's 209mph top speed

and 0-62mph time of 3.4 seconds.

No two examples of the Batur Convertible will be the same, thanks to the Mulliner division's unlimited personalisation options. Bentley says that customers can choose the colour and material used for "practically every surface", with an "infinite" number of paint choices available as well as hand-painted graphics. The material used for the convertible top itself is also down to each individual Batur Convertible buyer.



HYBRID GT SET FOR LAUNCH

Bentley has released the first images of its next-generation Continental GT, set to feature a brand new hybrid drivetrain that makes it the marque's most powerful production model yet.

Effectively a major update of today's third-generation GT, this will be the first Bentley to use its maker's 'ultra-performance hybrid' set-up, which mates a new 4.0-litre V8 with a single electric motor. The two combined will send up to 771bhp (and 738lb.ft of torque) to all four wheels, making it more potent than the W12 fitted in the ultra-exclusive Batur.

Despite the likely extra weight caused by electrification, the end result should

be a 0-62mph time quicker than the 3.6 seconds claimed for the old 650bhp Continental GT Speed, although Bentley has yet to publish any detailed performance figures. The plug-in hybrid (PHEV) set-up will also deliver 50 miles of electric-only driving between charges, contributing to an official CO2 emissions figure of less than 50g/km.

The latest Continental GT will also feature new dual-valve dampers as well as uprated active anti-roll bars, plus revised torque vectoring and four-wheel steering systems.

The new PHEV set-up replaces Bentley's previous V8 and W12 engines, with the Continental GTC and Flying



Spur set to be similarly updated later this year. The Bentley Bentayga will offer a pure-combustion engine until 2026, at which point it will go hybrid-only. The V6-based PHEV in the Bentayga and Flying Spur remains on sale.

Since the launch of the original Continental GT in 2003, the model has helped to transform its maker's fortunes. Within four years of its debut, Bentley's annual sales had climbed from around 1000 cars a year to more than 10,000. A second-generation model was unveiled in Paris in 2010, initially with W12 power but having the later addition of a 4.0-litre V8, while a third-gen GT followed in 2018 based on a new purpose-built platform. Early next year, in fourth-generation guise, the 100,000th example of the Continental GT will roll out of the Crewe factory.



EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

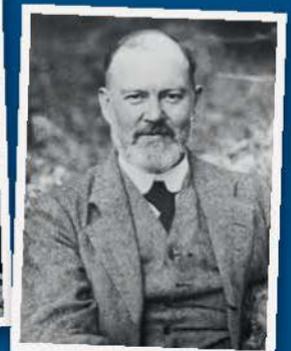
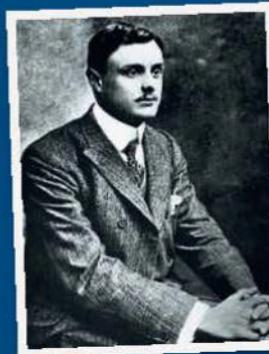
Rolls-Royce Motor Cars celebrated the 120th anniversary of the first meeting between Henry Royce and The Hon Charles Stewart Rolls on May 4th, an encounter that marked the start of an engineering legend and what would eventually lead to 'the best cars in the world'.

Andrew Ball, head of corporate relations and heritage at Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, commented: "From a modern perspective, 1904 can feel impossibly distant from our own times. But it was an age of unprecedented invention, innovation and technological progress, in which many of the things we now take for

granted first appeared. Rolls-Royce was born into this extraordinarily dynamic, creative world and would go on to shape it profoundly and irrevocably."

Ball continued: "Looking back, the meeting of Rolls and Royce seems somehow predestined, the arcs of their respective careers up to that point making it appear almost inevitable. In fact, it came about through a web of chance connections and overlapping relationships;

Below: May marked the 120th anniversary of Charles Rolls' (left) and Henry Royce's first meeting.



without these, given their vastly different backgrounds and social circles, it might never have happened at all."



FACELIFT FOR CULLINAN

After six years on sale, the Rolls-Royce Cullinan has been treated to a mid-life facelift, with refreshed styling, an overhauled interior, updated technology and a wealth of new options. The latest Cullinan, which is available with an even more extensive range of personalisation options than before, is expected to start in price at around £330,000 in its home market.

The changes are described as “the most extensive Series II development in Rolls-Royce history”, with designer Anders Warming explaining that he wanted to focus on the “verticality” of the luxury SUV, drawing a link between the Cullinan’s towering proportions and the “illuminated skyscrapers in the megacities where Cullinan is increasingly at home”. In an interview with *Autocar* magazine, Warming said: “We wanted to have a more sheer aesthetic, a more modern, monolithic appearance in the front. That being said, we didn’t want it to be like a wall either. We wanted to have that more beautiful reference.”

The front of the Cullinan has been restyled with “simple feature lines and crisp edges”, the most obvious change being LED daytime-running lights that now run down the edges of the front end, joining with a new lower bumper arrangement that’s angled up at the sides to apparently give the effect of a yacht breaking through water. The grille has also been given a new look, framed top and bottom by horizontal chrome bars, while a new protruding edge below it is meant to give the impression of a plinth.

There is a new style line on the side of the Cullinan, running from the brake light to the middle of the rear wheel, and the rear valance now kicks up at the back and is painted high-gloss black to better reflect the road and

“create a sense of motion on these fixed forms”. A new rear bumper rounds off the body design changes, while the wheels are one inch larger than before at 23 inches.

Biggest change inside the Cullinan is the new full-width glass panel across the dashboard, with an illuminated cityscape motif in front of the passenger, like that in the Spectre. The dashboard also features a new display ‘cabinet’ housing an intricately detailed analogue clock and a miniature stainless steel version of the Spirit of Ecstasy.

The Cullinan remains mechanically unaltered, with its 6.75-litre V12 producing 563bhp as standard and 591bhp in the Black Badge flagship.

Personalisation options are greater than ever, with new paint and material choices that include Grey Stained Ash (a metallic-effect open-pore wood trim) and Duality Twill, an intricately patterned seat fabric made of bamboo fibres.





1927
3 4 LITRE

SPEED MODEL 200BHP LE MANS REP



1924
3 4 LITRE

BLUE RN



1928
4 LITRE

LE MANS REP NUMBER 7



1926
3 4 LITRE

3 4 1/2 WITH ORIGINAL COACHWORK



1928
4 LITRE

THREE GENERATIONS OF ONE FAMILY OWNERSHIP



1924
3 4 LITRE

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UNIQUE PHANTOM

A 1926 Rolls-Royce Phantom with Brougham de Ville coachwork and a unique interior, originally created by Charles Clark & Son of Wolverhampton, has come to market via London-based Charles Prince Classic Cars. Chassis number 76 TC was commissioned in 1925 by Clarence Gasque, an



American living in London and a director of Woolworths.

The car was ordered as a surprise gift for Gasque's wife, Maud, who was a Woolworths heiress. Gasque commissioned Charles Clark & Son to create this stunning Brougham De Ville, while stipulating that the car's interior should have a French Rococo theme. The specification took what would normally have been a cost of £800 for the body to an astonishing £6000, making it potentially the most expensive Rolls-Royce of the time.

The seats are covered in French Aubusson tapestry, the interior door panels are in the finest satinwood marquetry, the metalwork fittings are in gilt, and there is hidden interior lighting – plus a ceiling painted with cherubs. The ormolu fittings are of the highest quality, made especially by Elkingtons.

Gasque died only 18 months after taking delivery of the Phantom, which was subsequently owned by Stanley Sears, a famous car collector. It has spent time in Japan in more recent years, but has now returned to London and is being offered for sale in original and little-used condition. For more photographs and details, visit www.charlesprinceclassiccars.com.



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BLURRED LINES

What was Rolls-Royce up to when it borrowed not only Bentley's full-pressure turbo engine but also a famous Bentley nameplate? We find out with some rapid road miles through Scotland

WORDS: NIGEL BOOTHMAN PHOTOS: LEWIS HOUGHTON



It's the first thing you notice as a passenger. Settle into that throne-like left front seat and glance over the fine, pale burr of the veneers, and there it is, under the ventilation controls: *FLYING SPUR NUMBER 50 OF 50*. A special car, then.

Yes, but the truth of those numbers is a little blurred, like other aspects of this car's identity, as we'll discover later. The original claim was that a mere 50 would be built. That would make this lovely example something even more sought-after than it is already, but demand for the unusual package – a long-wheelbase Rolls-

Royce with the brutal punch of Bentley Turbo R power – was larger than anticipated, so it seems Crewe allowed the definition to drift towards 'no more than 50 in each market'. In fact, no fewer than 134 were constructed, with a split of left- to right-hand drive of 92 to 42.

None of which explains the plaque in Robert's car, chassis 55644. Of the 134 cars, only 11 were built after this one, so well over 50 had been built in all when it was completed. However, only 37 had been right-hand drive. So, who was counting to 50? Well, as Rolls-Royce and Bentley historian Marinus Rijkers discovered,

the counts were divided up by market rather than steering position, and even then, they cause some head-scratching. In an article written for *The Spirit*, the magazine of the RREC's SZ Model Register, Marinus revealed that American market production was exactly 50 while UK and European production exceeded this number, yet the target for the third 'rest of the world' market wasn't reached.

NUMBERS GAME

What happened was an elegant little fib. Customers' cars were delivered with 'Number 25 of 50', for »



FEATURE CAR

1995 ROLLS-ROYCE FLYING SPUR



instance, with no hint that there might be another car sharing that number in another market. Even amongst Crewe's jet-set customers, it would take an enormous stroke of ill-luck to find two plutocrats sitting next to each other at some exclusive dinner, only for both to find they owned a car claiming to be Flying Spur Number 25.

About half the cars shared a number with just one other, but between numbers two and 29, most were shared between three cars and in a couple of cases (nine and 10) between four cars! What a cheek. Marinus produced an amazing table in his article, listing all the repeats from one to 50; but even with such impressive detail, few readers



This particular Flying Spur stands out from the SZ crowd thanks to its unusual Wildberry paintwork.

“Customers’ cars were delivered with ‘Number 25 of 50’, for instance, with no hint that there might be another car sharing that number in another market”

would notice the oddest thing of all: the numbers add up to 129 cars, not the 134 built in total. So, five received no number at all, for reasons we can only guess at. Customers’ specific requests? Forgetfulness? Embarrassment at this whole minor deception?

Perhaps we’re better off looking at the rest of the specification and not worrying too much about the

numbers. It is supposed to be a Rolls-Royce Silver Spur with a 1995-spec Bentley Turbo R engine, and to a large extent, it is. But as you’ll be starting to realise, nothing about the Rolls-Royce Flying Spur is straightforward.

The development car, a Canadian-spec Silver Spur, had its engine replaced with a standard Turbo R engine in a program beginning in November

1993, but by the time the cars began to be produced around a year later, there had been a little ‘mission creep’ from such a straightforward idea. For example, should Rolls-Royce adopt the Bentley’s spring and damper settings to make the car handle in a more sporting manner, or should they leave everything as standard for a Silver Spur? It’s usually stated – or perhaps »



The interior of Robert’s Flying Spur features Parchment hide with Wildberry piping.



“The vendor turned out to have sold the car new, when he was a salesman working at a dealership in Yorkshire”



The SZ-series Rolls-Royce was in the autumn of its career by the time the Flying Spur was unveiled.

assumed – that the former decision was taken, but those who have driven the cars don't necessarily agree.

IDENTITY CRISIS

One or two private owners we have spoken to, including the owner of this example, have described Flying Spurs as lacking the Turbo R's firmer ride and flatter cornering. Is it possible that Rolls-Royce found a half-way point between Silver Spur softness and Turbo R tautness? Then there's the engine itself. *Autocar* thought it made 360bhp at 4200rpm in their 1995 test; other sources say 340bhp, while the latest Bentley specification would have meant 385bhp. Then again, the engine was said to be same as that installed in 25 turbocharged Corniche models called the Corniche S. The Bentley-badged equivalent, called Continental S, supposedly gave 402bhp at 4000rpm. It makes you long for the old days, when all you were told was that the power output was 'sufficient'.

Finally, there's the name. As we all know, Flying Spur was used for the four-door coachbuilt Bentley Continentals of the S-series, from 1957 to '65. Rolls-Royce had never before borrowed a Bentley name for one their cars, but in this case it did fit rather well. For a start, they had no plans to use the name on a Bentley – the Turbo R,

Continental R and Azure looked like a stable model range. Then there was the obvious fact of basing this fast Rolls-Royce on a Silver Spur to start with. What do you get when you turbocharge a Silver Spur? A Flying Spur, obviously. As a footnote to all of that, it's worth remembering that Bentley's most famous nameplate – Continental – was used first by Rolls-Royce on the short-chassis Phantom II models, so this cross-pollination went both ways.

CLUB CONNECTIONS

After all those loose ends in the car's origin, let's hear about this particular example. It's owned by Robert Daniel, a keen member of the RREC's Scottish Section, and it lives in the Glasgow area – which means easy access to lots of pretty country, like the stretch of the Crow Road that you see in our photographs. Robert has had the car for almost 10 years and has covered nearly 30,000 miles during that time, so he knows it very well. His history with Rolls-Royce goes back a good bit further, though – to the early 1990s, when he acquired a Silver Shadow and was encouraged by a friend to join the RREC's Scottish Section.

"I found them to be a great bunch of people," he recalls. "That was 30 years ago! Since then, I've been on the committee, been the Section's

chairman from 2004 to 2006, and it looks like I've been roped into doing it again." It's a very active section with around 170 members up and down Scotland, and they organise two long weekends a year, trying to cover both ends of the country.

Robert also does a lot for the Sporting Bears charity, offering rides at car shows for which the passengers pay a fee to the charity and the car owners offer their time and petrol for nothing. The emphasis is mostly on sports cars but Robert says a big, posh limousine often does well: "It's sons taking fathers out for a spin for Fathers' Day, birthdays and so on. Some want to go sedately, some want to find out what's under the bonnet. The Scottish section of the charity is known as the Polar Bears, by the way..."

The story of his Flying Spur is entwined with the RREC as Robert's first encounter with it came at the club's Annual Rally: "I had my Silver Shadow and was quite happy with it, but I saw this Flying Spur offered for sale and got chatting to the owner. He turned out to have sold the car new, when he was a salesman working at a dealership in Yorkshire. So, his signature was on the original sales invoice. There was a thick folder of history and it looked good."

Too good to resist, in fact. Not only does it have that eye-catching '50 of 50' claim, it's also incredibly well- »

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FEATURE CAR

1995 ROLLS-ROYCE FLYING SPUR

optioned; there are screens in the backs of the headrest and a video player, plus a car phone and electric reclining rear seats that go down a long way for a truly luxurious sprawl. There's a Bond film (*The Living Daylights*) playing on the video as we climb in for a look. A couple of lifetimes ago (Robert's words!), Robert served in the Royal Engineers but did some parachute jump training and eventually a HALO jump – High Altitude, Low Opening, which is very James Bond. We doubt any other Flying Spur owner can make that claim...

The colour is Wildberry, complemented by a Parchment hide interior with Wildberry piping. In the flesh, it's a striking colour with a lot of metallic content in the paint that really pops in direct sunlight. So, what's the car been like to live with?

"It gave me a little more trouble than the Silver Shadow, such as needing a new steering rack not long after I bought it," says Robert. "I had the Shadow for 18 years before that and looked after it, but it was a slightly less complex car than this. One example of the kind of problems I've had that a Shadow wouldn't suffer from was the engine cutting out suddenly after strong acceleration. It took ages to get to the bottom of it, but it was eventually sorted by a guy called Scott at Bentley Glasgow, who decided to try replacing the throttle control sensor – and it's been fine since."

OFF THE LEASH

The only change Robert has made to the car has been to add two leather

straps for umbrellas in the boot, where an impressive collection of plaques from RREC Scottish Section tours were residing on the day of our photo shoot. He runs the car on Super Unleaded and it lives not in a garage but in a Carcoon at the side of the house, which has protected it well for its current mileage of 95,000. Now we know what it's like standing still, it's time to go for a ride.

"I have been known to drive it enthusiastically," admits Robert, with modest understatement. From the passenger seat the experience is no different from a ride in any other Silver Spur; the poorly-maintained road surface can't upset the quality. Then, all of a sudden, the difference is revealed. Robert pulls out to sweep past a slower-moving car and there's no more than a subdued 'whoosh' »

RETURN OF WILDBERRY

We think Wildberry was first offered as a paint option on Rolls-Royce and Bentley models in 1992, arriving just at the right moment to join a rebirth of brighter, bolder colours on new cars. Think of the yellows, purples, bright blues and bright greens seen in the '90s on everything from rally-bred Lancias to Porsches. The majority of Rolls-Royce and Bentley customers would not be tempted towards anything so gaudy, but Crewe was wise to offer Wildberry – and one or two other new hues – that allowed less conservative buyers to express themselves.

It was perhaps most often seen on Bentley Continental Rs, but there are plenty of Brooklands and Turbo R models also surviving in Wildberry (or Wildberry Mica as it should be known), plus rather fewer Silver Spirits and Silver Spurs. Yet it didn't disappear entirely when fashions changed around the turn of the century and a Germanic uniformity of silver, blue and black began to emerge.

We recently saw for sale a 2010 Bentley Flying Spur in 'Special Order Wildberry', and the colour was offered on the Arnage throughout its run. While this article was in preparation,



however, Rolls-Royce sent out a press release about a new special edition Cullinan, the Re-Belle Collection, featuring 'sophisticated, regal Wildberry encapsulating the depth of rich silk velvet'. As with all fashion trends, its time has come again.





“The Flying Spur pulls off that remarkable trick of the largest, fastest cars: it feels like this shouldn’t be possible”



Robert Daniel has enjoyed owning his Flying Spur over 10 years and 30,000 miles.



According to Autocar, the turbocharged 6.75-litre V8 made 360bhp in Flying Spur spec.

FEATURE CAR

1995 ROLLS-ROYCE FLYING SPUR

“The instincts were right – Rolls-Royces can be fast and exciting while remaining true to the brand values”

The Flying Spur combines hugely impressive mid-range acceleration with unrivalled refinement.

from under the bonnet, but we sink back in our seats and the scenery reverses towards us. The Flying Spur pulls off that remarkable trick of the largest, fastest cars: it feels like this shouldn't be possible.

It feels composed through the bends, too, and Robert says the brakes are more than up to the job. We're back to the issue of comparison with a Turbo R, and even if the suspension and braking are more Flying Lady than Flying B, it's hard to imagine driving it hard enough on public roads to expose any flaws in the set-up. It rather kills the idea that the Flying Spur isn't nice

SPECIFICATION

1995 ROLLS-ROYCE FLYING SPUR

LENGTH: 5370mm / 17ft 7in

WIDTH: 1915mm / 6ft 2in

WEIGHT: 2387kg / 5252lb

ENGINE: 6750cc V8, OHV, Garrett T5 turbocharger

POWER: 360bhp @ 4200rpm

TORQUE: 552lb.ft @ 2000rpm

TOP SPEED: 130mph

0-60MPH: 6.9 seconds

PRICE NEW: £148,545 before options

to drive because it lacks the Turbo R's dynamics. Indeed, it copes well with the power, which perhaps isn't surprising when you remember the Active Ride damping. Don't think, for instance, that this is a 1990s equivalent of the Mulsanne Turbo, which asked standard Bentley suspension to cope with the cornering speeds generated by 300bhp.

NOT UNDERSTATED

If anything, it's the colour that makes this car seem a left-field choice today. It's a more showy, attention-grabbing look than the usual sober colours seen on Silver Spurs, and combining the engine's volcanic power with these visuals makes it almost brash by period Rolls-Royce standards. Imagine it in Royal Blue or Larch Green – it would be so understated as to be a genuine 'street sleeper'.

Robert and I discuss what a Flying Spur is worth today and we settle on something like 20 per cent over a standard Silver Spur of equivalent age and condition. It should be more, really. It adds a whole new dimension to the experience of owning a Spur and doesn't lose anything by it.

In its day, the Flying Spur was a surprising and not particularly

committed move into the performance sector by Rolls-Royce. It encroached on Bentley's market share and, while not quite a badge-engineered Turbo R (the gear selector remained firmly on the steering column, for example), it reduced the gap between Crewe's two brands. It was also based on a model already 15 years old, in turn based on one from 1965, which gave it a mountain to climb when comparing ergonomics and dynamics with the largest, fastest and costliest German cars of the mid-1990s. Yet the instincts were right – Rolls-Royces can be fast and exciting while remaining true to the brand values, as the company has shown since its Goodwood re-birth. Indeed, their Black Badge editions of recent years have gone far further into what used to be Bentley territory than any previous Rolls-Royce, and you only have to look at the annual sales figures to see how profitable this has been.

The 1995-only Flying Spur remains a fascinating wrinkle in Rolls-Royce production history, and perhaps an under-appreciated option for anyone with a hankering for an SZ-era car. ■

THANK YOU: We grateful to Marinus Rijkers (www.rrsilverspirit.com) for his help with Flying Spur facts and figures.

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MARKET WATCH

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



'STANDARD STEEL' STYLE

Described by Richard Biddulph of Vintage & Prestige as “overall a nice example at a competitive price point”, this 1963 Bentley S3 looks an interesting proposition for anyone seeking a V8-powered ‘Standard Steel’ S-series and who prefers the quad-headlamp aesthetic.

Chassis number B382CN was delivered new on April 8th, 1963 to Mr Eric Colston JP of the Hoover

Vacuum Company. It certainly stands out thanks to its “excellent” Masons Black paintwork, with the Bentley’s original pale grey interior being in “good order with light patina to the driver’s seat”. The woodwork is also said to be in very good condition and as it left the factory, including the walnut picnic tables in the front seat backs.

The S3’s odometer currently shows 12,811 miles, so we can safely assume

that 100,000 needs adding to that. The car comes with assorted books, papers, MoT certificates and an original owner’s manual. It also has a service history from Broughtons of Cheltenham, and Vintage & Prestige is currently carrying out a service and brake overhaul to ensure it’s ready for its next owner.

The last 30-odd years have seen the Bentley enjoying an uneventful career, having been in the hands of just one owner between 1991 and 2019. Upon his passing, the car was acquired by its most recent custodian, who had known it for many years. Prior to that it resided in the USA for some years, during which time a modern air conditioning system was fitted, as was a Clarion sound system with rear speakers.

This looks like a very useable and eye-catching example of what’s arguably the best S-series Bentley of all – and in Masons Black, it will always turn heads. The S3 carries an asking price of £48,000 and you can find out more by calling Richard on 07967 260673 or by visiting www.vandp.net.



NEC AUCTION RESULTS

It was a mixed bag of Rolls-Royce and Bentley results for Classic Car Auctions at the Classic Car & Restoration Show, held at Birmingham's NEC back in March, with a number of lots failing to find buyers in the sale.

One of those that did change hands was a 2004 Bentley Continental GT, a superb looking example with just 28,000 miles under its wheels; the sagging headlining was a downside to this car, but it still went on to achieve an impressive £27,000 on the Sunday of the sale. Another Continental GT also exceeding its estimate was a 2006 example with the Mulliner trim package, a 116,000-mile car that was offered with no reserve but carried a guide price of £10,000-£12,000; on the day there were enough bidders to result in a final sale price of £15,750.

A number of cars on offer ended up changing hands post-sale for undisclosed sums, including a 1999 Rolls-Royce Silver Seraph that had covered just 66,000 miles, had been with its latest owner for 16 years, and was offered at a tempting sounding guide price of £20,000-£25,000. Also subsequently sold for an undisclosed price was a 2001 Bentley Arnage Red Label, another 66,000-mile car that again seemed realistic in its pre-sale estimate of £15,000-£19,000.

It was less good news for several entries that failed to find buyers, including a couple of SZ-generation saloons. Perhaps bidders were deterred by what seemed like rather ambitious estimates, with a one-owner 1985 Silver Spirit (an 88,000-mile example with white paintwork and fitted with chrome wheelarch trims) being guided at £10,000-

£12,000, while a 1990 Silver Spirit II finished in Royal Blue and with a mileage of 60,000 was estimated at £12,000-£15,000. Among the Bentleys that remained unsold, meanwhile, was a 2005 Continental Flying Spur that

had covered just 56,000 miles – a well-presented example, originally guided at £12,000-£15,000.

For further details of these and other classics in the NEC sale, head to www.classiccarauctions.co.uk.



This 116,000-mile Continental GT smashed its guide price to sell for £15,750.



Among the cars failing to sell were a 1985 Silver Spirit and a 1990 Spirit II.



This 56,000-mile Flying Spur guided at £12,000-£15,000 didn't find a buyer.



The 66,000-mile Silver Seraph was sold after the auction for an undisclosed price.



Another car sold post-auction was this tidy 2001 Bentley Arnage Red Label.

AUCTION TRACKER

We take a look at the latest auction trends for Rolls-Royce and Bentley classics, with some fascinating year-on-year comparisons

WORDS: PETER LAVERS IMAGES: VARIOUS

This issue's Auction Tracker covers the full 12-month period from the beginning of May 2023 to the end of April 2024, with the trend assessed on a 12-month rolling basis versus the previous two months – referred to as the two-month (2m) trend. As I have been writing this column for a year now and have built up the database to cover 24 months, I am now able to also present the year-on-year trend – the latest data set versus May '22 – April '23. This I refer to as the 12-month (12m) trend.

DON'T PANIC

I don't usually start with individual auction results, but I saw a post on social media lamenting the low value realised (just £5520) by Bonhams for a Bentley MkVI at the Goodwood Members' Meeting in April. This result isn't unique – there have been several occurrences of 'steals' recently, particularly for motor cars offered at no reserve. A friend of mine picked up an absolute bargain Silver Shadow II at Historics in March, snapping it up for just £7480.

It's easy to see this as a sign of the market crashing for a particular model range or era, but this is where the database comes into its own. The actual data for MkVI and R-type saloons does indeed show a small dip in the 2m trend because of this result, but the average value achieved on the 12m trend is up. For Rolls-Royce SY saloons, values are also trending up despite some lower-



Just £5520 saw this Bentley MkVI changing hands in April.



This Silver Shadow II looked a steal at £7480 via Historics.

than-estimate individual results.

The actual market position for our beloved marques is relatively stable. Over £33.5 million has again been spent (up 22 per cent since my first

Tracker column), and the number of motor cars offered for sale is almost exactly the same as my last report; the sale rate is slightly down but average values are up on the 2m basis.

| | Total Market | | | Physical | | | Online | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|----------|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|
| | Latest 12m | 2m Trend | 12m Trend | Latest 12m | 2m Trend | 12m Trend | Latest 12m | 2m Trend | 12m Trend |
| Offered for Auction | 1802 | -0.1% | n/a | 546 | -4.4% | 19.2% | 1256 | 1.9% | n/a |
| Number Sold | 914 | -2.6% | 24.7% | 348 | -4.7% | 3.0% | 566 | -1.2% | 43.3% |
| Total Value of Sales | £33.5m | -0.1% | 22.1% | £18.3m | -3.1% | 12.6% | £15.2m | 3.8% | 35.8% |
| Average Value | £36,644 | 2.6% | -2.1% | £52,605 | 1.7% | 9.4% | £26,830 | 5.0% | -5.2% |

Please note that this table does not yet include all 12m 'offered' trends because the online houses only retain the information on cars sold, not unsold, so we will have to wait a little longer before I can present that data. It's clear, however, that the latest 2m sale rate is poor. We can't therefore describe it as a strong market, but the fact remains that more people are spending significantly more money at auctions

than they were last year.

Adding the 12m view to the physical/online results emphasises the extent of the volume shift to online (43 per cent more sales). In average value terms, however, physical auctions have strengthened, whereas online results have weakened. This suggests that the switch to online has tended to occur for lower-priced models. This is not exclusively the case, however, as a quick

look at collectingcars.com will confirm.

The picture by marque shows a bigger reduction of Rolls-Royce sales numbers than Bentley on the 2m trend, but with a better recovery in average value. Versus 12 months ago, the volumes for both marques are significantly up, but with only Bentley improving in average value. Together, these suggest that Bentley is the more stable market at the moment.

| | Rolls-Royce | | | Bentley | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|----------|-----------|----------------|----------|-----------|
| | Latest 12m | 2m Trend | 12m Trend | Latest 12m | 2m Trend | 12m Trend |
| Offered for Auction | 673 | -1.8% | n/a | 1129 | 0.9% | n/a |
| Number Sold | 355 | -4.1% | 22.8% | 559 | -1.6% | 25.9% |
| Total Value of Sales | £11.2m | 2.3% | 10.2% | £22.3m | -1.2% | 29.1% |
| Average Value | £31,654 | 6.6% | -10.3% | £39,813 | 0.3% | 2.5% |

MODEL RANGE TRENDS

The latest trends for model ranges where 12 or more cars have been sold (one per month on average) are presented in the tables below. Project cars are excluded from these figures.

Fewer Rolls-Royce models have been tracked this issue because of the poor sale rates achieved.

On both the 2m and 12m trends, it's good to see the mainstream post-war saloon models holding steady or on the rise. As mentioned in the introduction, the Silver Shadow (SY) range is

| Rolls-Royce Model Ranges | Ave. Value | 2m Trend | 12m Trend |
|-----------------------------------|------------|----------|-----------|
| Goodwood 4-dr/SUV | £110,492 | 7.2% | 0.8% |
| SY saloons | £12,181 | 3.1% | 14.0% |
| Silver Cloud I, II & III | £26,347 | 1.2% | 2.4% |
| SZ saloons | £9,943 | 0.6% | 9.4% |
| Goodwood 2-dr | £124,922 | -1.8% | -31.7% |
| 20HP-Wraith saloons | £23,162 | -2.1% | -20.6% |
| Silver Ghost/ Phantoms I-III 4-dr | £67,724 | -11.7% | 4.4% |

| Bentley Model Ranges | Ave. Value | 2m Trend | 12m Trend |
|---------------------------------|------------|----------|-----------|
| Bentayga | £77,578 | 13.3% | 6.5% |
| New Mulsanne | £54,474 | 2.0% | -7.5% |
| Cricklewood Bentleys | £385,932 | 1.0% | -6.5% |
| T Series/T2 | £13,428 | -0.2% | -3.1% |
| Continental GT | £23,504 | -1.7% | -4.8% |
| MkVI/R-type saloons | £17,885 | -3.7% | 1.5% |
| S-series saloons | £27,625 | -4.2% | 26.6% |
| Continental R, T & Azure | £46,974 | -4.4% | -6.7% |
| SZ nat-asp saloons | £8,832 | -4.5% | -1.3% |
| MkVI/R-type two-door & special | £60,533 | -4.5% | 20.1% |
| Arnage | £16,352 | -6.0% | -19.6% |
| S-series Continental/coachbuilt | £209,504 | -8.7% | 50.2% |
| SZ Turbos | £8,998 | -10.2% | -13.3% |
| Continental Flying Spur | £12,298 | -13.6% | -17.1% |
| Continental GTC | £33,001 | -14.0% | -16.7% |

performing particularly well, with some pristine examples recently offered (but not all sold) through carandclassic.com.

In my March/April column, I mentioned that the pre-war 'small' Rolls-Royce saloons are in the doldrums, and the latest figures bear this out. Now would be a good time to snap one of these up.

With over 200 more Bentleys sold in the last 12 months, we are able to report on many more model ranges with sufficient data to present the trend. The table shows that the marque's 2m and 12m average values, which are both slightly up, can hide a very mixed picture at model range level.

It is very interesting to note that the five ranges with the highest average values are all up on either the 2m or the 12m trend, which has helped fuel the overall marque growth figures.

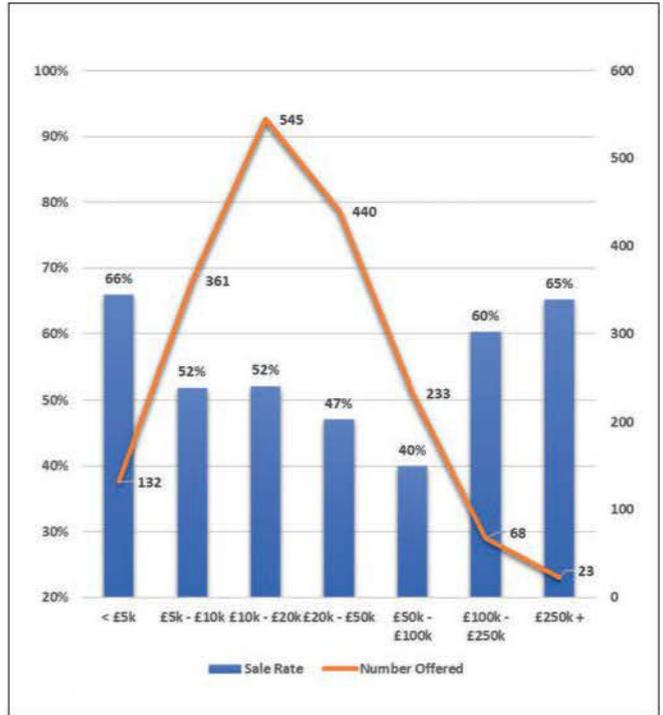
SY Bentley values are stable, but the gap has been closed versus Rolls- »



This project Silver Seraph achieved £11,000 including fees.



The best part of £3000 was paid for each of these half-scale Bentleys.



Royce. The previous generation – the S-series – has a tiny premium over Silver Clouds, having rallied significantly over the year. This shows that for these vehicles, condition and provenance are more important than the badge.

SZ Bentleys are in the doldrums, being on average the least expensive entry into Rolls-Royce or Bentley ownership. I couldn't believe it when a lovely Mulsanne Turbo sold on carandclassic.com for just £5000. One day the market will wake up to just how significant this model is in Bentley's history.

The two models at the bottom of the table are struggling at auction, registering significant drops on both trends and currently having a frankly awful circa 30 per cent sales rate.

PRICE RANGES

I have previously promised to give occasional updates of sales rates by price range (the per cent that sold by ranges of 'lower estimate'). Where estimates haven't been given, I have again inferred values based on actual estimates and results data.

The results are not what I was expecting. The highest value motor cars (£100,000-plus) are achieving the best sale rates as the lowest (albeit from a low number offered). I wonder if this is because people are holding

off entering higher-value vehicles because of the widely reported softness of the market? These figures tend to suggest that it's worth an entry while supply is still relatively scarce.

The lowest (sub 50 per cent) sales rates are occurring in the mid-value ranges, and even in the lower value groups the sale rate barely exceeds half of those offered. The lowest estimate range (below £5000, almost all projects) only has a 66 per cent sale rate in the current market, suggesting that even here there's an over-supply of cars requiring restoration or significant recommissioning (see above).

WEEKEND WORK?

Our friends at Bangers and Cash often refer to complete barn finds as "requiring some weekend work", and I have previously commented on the recent rise in the number of 'project' cars offered for sale. I exclude cars offered for 'spares' from the database as it's a fair assumption that somebody has made the call that the car is unsalvageable, but the remaining vehicles offered as projects are an important market barometer – they make up around 10 per cent of the overall auction market.

I'm happy to report that the aforementioned over-supply of cars

offered has tapered off in the last two months, with a rise of only 1.7 per cent. About two-thirds of them sold (they're not being given away!), with an average value of just over £8200.

What? I hear you cry! How can the average be so high? Well, don't assume all projects are derelict SZs and SYs. In the most recent two months, Historics has sold a S3 Continental DHC for £68,000 (plus two Corniches for £17,000 and £19,000), Mathewsons a Silver Seraph for £11,000, H&H an R-type DHC for £37,000, and Bonhams a 1927 3 Litre for double its low estimate at £101,000 – all projects! I'd love to know if that last car is going to receive a full restoration or be run as an 'oily rag'.

If you're looking for a project, now is indeed a good time to look whilst supply is plentiful.

Finally, did you notice the two children's vintage Bentleys auctioned by collectingcars.com at the end of April? They were both highly detailed half-scale representations of 'Blower' Bentleys that were won in a newspaper competition back in 1972. The green version sold for £2988 and the red one achieved £2700. I wonder if they will be enjoyed again by little children, or go into the collections of rather bigger kids? Needless to say, these sales haven't been added to the Auction Tracker database... ■

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1913 Rolls Royce Silver Ghost Colonial Open Drive Landauette 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
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1920 Rolls Royce Silver Ghost Henri Binder Victoria Hood.
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DOORS OF PERCEPTION

Car doors work in a way we take for granted, but every now and then a perceptive mind looks for improvement... as demonstrated by this clever James Young design on a Derby Bentley

WORDS: NIGEL BOOTHMAN PHOTOS: GREGORY OWAIN



Moving away from the conventional idea of a side-hung door on hinges, opening outwards, has made for some interesting cars. There are those with gullwing doors, like the Mercedes 300SL, and the scissor idea as seen on the Lamborghini Countach. There are butterfly doors, rising over the windscreen pillars of the McLaren F1, the little Toyota Sera and more recently the BMW i8. But doors that move on an axis parallel with the side of the car, without rotating, are much more unusual. The BMW Z1 of the late 1980s and the Kaiser-Darrin of the 1950s offered doors that slid away into the bodywork, but we can find only one other car with

a similar parallel-action door to this Bentley, and that was a striking machine from 1938 powered by a Hispano-Suiza engine – the Saotchik-bodied streamliner built for Xenia Dubonnet.

In the Bentley's case, the doors look entirely conventional when closed. You expect them to open like any other rear-hinged 'suicide' door typical of cars from this era, but moving the handle and pulling gently causes the door to move out and then backwards, the whole panel remaining parallel to the side of the car as it articulates on two rectangular pieces about a foot long, both hinged at one end on a supporting pillar behind the front seat and at the other end, in the »



After seeing his first parallel-door Bentley at the age of 12, Richard Edgell is now the proud owner of this glorious example.

FEATURE CAR
1935 BENTLEY 4¼ JAMES YOUNG DHC



This ingenious design of door opening system is complex but eminently practical, particularly in tight spaces.

door itself. It looks complicated but in concept it isn't... although getting everything to line up and operate smoothly is more of a challenge.

To modern eyes, the set-up has two advantages over a conventional rear-hinged door: first, it offers a stronger support than a normal brass hinge screwed into an ash B-pillar; and second, the doors can be fully open both sides, with the car only a few inches wider than it is when the doors are closed. They may not have had many multi-storey car parks in 1935, but it's rather handy nonetheless. Yet neither of these plus-points are what drove its creation. In fact, it was created by accident... or rather, in response to an accident. Historian and author Tom Clarke told the story in *The Flying Lady* in 2007.

It seems that George Wenham, works manager of James Young Ltd in Bromley, Kent, was enjoying lunch at a pavement café on the Champs Elysées in Paris, when he witnessed a car pulling into the kerb. The door, a conventional 'suicide' type with hinges at the rear, flew open prematurely and knocked over a female pedestrian. Wenham, we think, reached for a napkin or a cigarette packet and



Richard commissioned expert Gary Sergent of Norwich to rebuild and retrim the Bentley's interior.



“The door, a conventional ‘suicide’ type with hinges at the rear, flew open prematurely and knocked over a female pedestrian”

began sketching alternative ideas that could prevent a similar mishap, one of which became this cantilevered system. The design was the sensation of the 1935 Olympia Motor Show, but only four 3½- and seven 4¼-litre Derby Bentley cars were fitted with these doors, with at least one car having one parallel door on the passenger side and a conventional ‘suicide’ door on the

driver’s. They remain, then, something of footnote in the history of car design, albeit a fascinating one that was bound to attract a man with a long-standing connection to James Young.

RARE DISCOVERY

Richard Edgell grew up in Bromley and used to look into James Young’s window

at the age of four or five, but perhaps a more significant moment occurred when he turned 12. “I saw one of these parallel-door cars on a suburban street in Bromley, and I thought it was very striking, so it stuck in my memory,” Richard explains. “I didn’t see another one until I was 50, when I was thinking of buying a Silver Ghost. Having looked at a lot of them, they felt like too much »

The restoration of this unique survivor has been carried out to an extremely high standard.



“Despite the unpromising underside, the Edgells were able to use the car for plenty of outings and expeditions”

of a responsibility, and just then I saw this James Young parallel-action door drophead advertised at The Real Car Company. So, I went to see it.”

It wasn't quite the fated-in-the-stars moment it might have been, because this car had suffered a good deal by 2008 and was something of a thinly-disguised project, as Richard describes: “It looked great but underneath it was without doubt the worst chassis I had ever seen. Most of the chassis lubrication seemed to be missing, the springs were a medley of blacksmiths' rejects, and the wiring looked like an accident in a spaghetti factory. The engine was a 4¼ unit from a later car but seemed to pull quite well – as did the brakes, mostly to the left as I recall. At first, I said I could not possibly pay so much for a car needing so much attention, but once I got home I began thinking how much I liked those doors. Then there was the Bromley connection, and I was 50 and had just waited 38 years since I'd last seen one... not impossible I'd be 88

before I saw another! So, I bought it.”

The Bentley had come most recently from Spain via Switzerland, and America before that. Despite the unpromising underside, the Edgells were able to use the car for plenty of outings and expeditions, including trips to the south of France and Scotland. On the latter, it began making funny puffing noises from the engine when many hundreds of miles from home, and the ensuing rebuild revealed some of the ‘make do and mend’ maintenance that was to reappear elsewhere in the car.

“The block was cracked and there were five solid pistons teamed with one with a split skirt, all of them relying on big-end bolts from a Bentley S1,” says Richard. The bent front axle was repaired too, and following a rewire, complete suspension rebuild and the engine rebuild, Richard wrung several more years of use out of the car before ‘decision time’.

“Five or six years later it was getting pretty tatty,” he explains, “so

I found David Wall in Norfolk who came highly recommended, and he and his chap worked on it for three and a half years, off and on and right through Covid. During this time I had most of the upholstery rebuilt and trimmed by Gary Sergent of Norwich. I got it back in April 2022. There were a few details to sort out, and still are, but it's now a lovely car.”

PUTTING IT RIGHT

That's a very rapid summary of some involved and highly skilled work, in the course of which David Wall discovered one of the worst bodes that he (or Richard, or we...) had ever heard of. Richard hadn't realised quite how far aspects of the bodywork had deteriorated until he embarked on a bit of DIY: “It started innocently enough with the purchase of new bonnet rubbers for the scuttle. These were missing, as were the clips to hold them in place. To fit these, you need 4BA



The process of transforming the car into a fully open experience is time-consuming... but well worth the effort.

nuts and bolts. To fit these clips in turn you need to get behind the scuttle. The advice given by Fiennes was to take the body off, which seemed a little drastic, so I thought about a convincing and economical alternative. Model engineers use bolts or set screws with one size smaller heads, so that by tapping the firewall with a 3BA thread it's possible to fix the clips without disturbing the scuttle, and still have the correct 4BA head showing. I was very impressed

with my efforts to fit the new rubbers, which looked just right. Then I shut the bonnet... and found out the reason why the old rubbers had been removed. The scuttle had dropped and was nearly half an inch below the new bonnet line once the new rubbers had been fitted."

Clearly, the time had come to get to the fundamentals. Richard drove the car up to Norfolk and waited for news of what would emerge from under the aluminium skin. The wings

had been restored more recently, so there wasn't much to fear there, but when your scuttle is slowly descending onto a chassis that remains fixed, there must be mischief. There was, and it had been going on for a long, long time.

"On the nearside of the car, in the front corner of the sill forward of the door aperture, there was a lump of something," says Richard. "It was replacing a piece of rotted-out timber and was supposed to be helping »

FEATURE CAR

1935 BENTLEY 4¼ JAMES YOUNG DHC



support the scuttle on that side. What they had chosen to use was concrete.”

Yes, concrete. On the other side, the bodgery didn't reach such depths, but there was still a nasty lash-up replacing rotten timbers, this time with angle iron welded to the chassis.

This theme of relying on the chassis itself as a fixing point rather than putting strength back into the body was repeated elsewhere, as Richard describes: “At the rear of the car, someone had again gone to great lengths to avoid removing the aluminium skin. Instead, they had inserted various pieces of softwood, mahogany and putty where new ash timber was needed. To give some strength to the thing various pieces of square-section steel tube had been used, including some body mounts welded to the chassis and attached to a new boot frame constructed from angle iron.”

In keeping with the lack of attention paid to a sinking scuttle, no attempt had been made to keep things true while this work was done, meaning one side of the boot was ¾in higher than the other. In the end, the work required much new timber created with traditional coachbuilding skills, though most of the aluminium skin survived. And the doors themselves? The mechanism proved sturdy, and alignment wasn't much more



Flashback to 1986, when this fascinating Bentley was based in the USA with a previous owner. Photo by Ken Karger

difficult than for a conventional door. All that was left, then, was to enjoy the car. Not difficult, now it's in better condition than it's seen for nearly 90 years.

TOP-DOWN STYLE

B56EF is looking its best on a summer's day in rural Hertfordshire, the black wings and Rolls-Royce Velvet Green bodywork suiting the car's understated beauty extremely well. From a few paces back, the balance of the proportions is as good as one would expect from any Derby Bentley drophead by a well-

known builder; not particularly low-slung or raffish but with a long wing line and steeply-raked screen to offset the rather upright, squared-off boot.

With the roof up, the pram irons add a swirl of brightwork to the car's form, breaking up the outline of the roof frame under the fabric. But the sun's beating down and it would be a shame not to let some fresh air into the cabin. Making the heavy roof descend, however, is rather involved. Richard describes the usual solution of sending companions off for a cocktail in the hotel bar while the operation proceeds. Perhaps that's the



price you pay for a really good, warm, weatherproof roof when it's required.

First, Richard pushes the pram irons down, releasing the roof's tension, then opens both doors, undoes the catch halfway along each side of the roof above the door aperture, unfastens straps that run from the half-way rail behind the driver's head to the cant rail, and then things begin to fold. It's rather like a post-war Tickford drophead coupé roof, with the hinged side timbers folding back to buckle up above the back of the driver's seat. Then we can lift the roof fabric off the cant rail, roll it back to meet the folded side rails and use those straps we mentioned before to hold the roll in position.

Having reached this Sedanca de Ville posture, Richard says it's time to re-tension the roof with the pram irons and flop down for a well-earned rest. What's it like to drive with the roof in this form? "Not too bad, at least up to moderate speeds," says Richard. "It's a bit un-aerodynamic but it looks so stylish."

After taking a deep breath, stage two of roof folding is accomplished by releasing the pram irons once more and

"In the front corner of the sill, there was a lump of something. What they had chosen to use was concrete"

gently easing the frame and fabric back, ensuring it all kinks in the right place, before covering it in the exquisite hood bag created by the trimmer, lined with the same material as the roof itself. Some of the usual wrestling with the tight-fitting bag and its stud fasteners finishes the job. Not a task to relish in reverse, should the heavens open.

Otherwise, it's a very practical machine as pre-war cars go, with plenty of performance from the 4¼-litre engine fitted some decades ago in place of the worn-out original 3½-litre unit, plus comfortable seating for four and a large boot with a particularly well-equipped tool tray. The parallel doors have only two small downsides; first, that the structure on which the inboard end of each door hangs makes it a little harder than usual to get into and out of the rear seats; and

second, that they latch both front and rear. Richard says you soon get in the habit of making sure both latches are properly fastened before you pull away.

FIRST OF A FEW

There is no other car with precisely this body – it's unique. After it was built, James Young designed other bodies around the patented doors, but this body shape is essentially a 1934 design. It was created in what seemed to be an implausibly short space of time, even given the electric pace at which teams of 1930s craftsmen got through their work. The car was delivered to its first owner in late July 1935, barely six weeks after the chassis was delivered in June. Did George Wenham and his artisans really turn a cigarette packet sketch into a working drawing and then reality, all »

FEATURE CAR

1935 BENTLEY 4¼ JAMES YOUNG DHC



Post-restoration, this unique Derby Bentley provides lively performance and effortless cruising.

“Making the roof descend is rather involved. Richard suggests sending companions off for a cocktail in the hotel bar while the operation proceeds”

in the space of a month and a half?

Well, yes... and no. Richard only discovered the answer to this conundrum during the strip-down work carried out during the restoration: “There, underneath the trim, we saw the original B-post, painted black, with three slots cut for conventional hinges. So, it seems James Young took an existing body and put the new doors on it.”

That makes more sense. Six weeks is still quick work to draw, create and trial fit the mechanism, and then to

trim and paint it, but it was enough to prove to Wenham that a patent was worth filing. This was duly done on July 20th, 1935, within days of the first registration. The co-patentee was one Archie Pass of the large London car dealer, Pass & Joyce Ltd, who probably had a financial interest in James Young, before the coachbuilder was then purchased by Jack Barclay in 1937. Barclays then commissioned several other cars with these doors, including a Phantom III Saloon Coupé that Sir Malcolm Campbell described

as “one of the finest examples of the coachbuilder’s art I have ever seen”.

B56EF’s first owner was a Mrs Pringle of Lynbridge House, Tavistock, Devon, and in her care it was photographed while decked out as a giant Union Jack for the coronation of King George VI in 1937. After that, it led a busy life through a number of owners and covered a huge mileage, causing that engine swap and the increasingly rustic methods employed to keep the body together. But Richard has had a chance to take a philosophical view about all that: “The restorer said he had found examples of bodgery in my car that he had never seen in 40 years of repairing old car body frames. To be fair to the generations of bodgers, the structure was weighty and strong, and their efforts had kept a high-mileage and interesting car on the road for decades beyond its expected lifespan.”

For that, we have to be grateful. It’s been wonderful to meet this survivor of a time when ideas from a café table could become features of new cars just months later, and it puts a unique gloss on the already accomplished Derby Bentley package. How clever of Mr Wenham to come up with it, and how wise of Mr Edgell to preserve it for posterity. ■



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ANNUAL RALLY COUNTDOWN

The RREC looks forward to its most important event of the year, which is set to attract owners and enthusiasts from around the world

The most highly-anticipated event of the Rolls-Royce and Bentley enthusiasts' calendar, the RREC's Annual Rally & Concours d'Elegance, is just around the corner. This year, the club has worked tirelessly to put together a memorable, enjoyable and fascinating event for all attendees.

The weekend kicks off with an organised tour of the Burghley House grounds on Friday, June 21st, and ends with the presentation of the Concours d'Elegance prizes on the Sunday afternoon. In between, there's a hog roast on the Friday night, a charity auction in aid of Macmillan

Cancer Support during the Saturday evening Fizz & Canapes event, and a Sunday cream tea. This is all in addition to the 40 traders attending, the Bonhams auction, technical seminars and club register, and the 120th Anniversary celebration marquees.

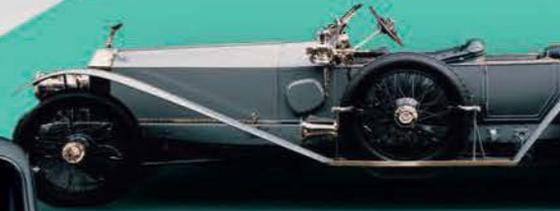
Inevitably, of course, the Annual Rally will also see a plethora of fantastic cars, from SU 13 – or Little Su as she is known, one of the few 10hp cars still in existence – right the way up to a Rolls-Royce Spectre that's being brought along by Rolls-Royce Motor Cars. Other cars of interest include a 1913 Silver Ghost, the oldest of this year's attending club cars; a

1979 Phantom VI Seven-Passenger Limousine by Mulliner Park Ward, previously on display at the Geneva International Motor Show in Qatar; and 72 MG, the fastest production Silver Ghost ever made, on display in the Bonhams tent.

Tickets to attend this year's Annual Rally can be purchased via Eventbrite (www.eventbrite.co.uk). Simply search for 'RREC' and enter the code 'RRBD' for a discounted price. Alternatively, you can purchase your tickets on the gate at Burghley House over the weekend of June 21st-23rd. We look forward to seeing you there! ■



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FULL SPEED AHEAD!

It's another packed summer for BDC members, both on the road and in the motorsports arena, with Concours and Silverstone at the heart of the club's calendar

The motoring season is now in full swing, and plenty is going on at the Bentley Drivers Club to keep members entertained.

As highlighted in the last issue, the club's two main events on the annual calendar, the Concours d'Elegance (July 20th-21st) and Silverstone race meeting (August 10th), will be taking place over the summer.

Concours Sunday, to be held in the countryside environs of Walton Hall in Warwickshire, will feature the traditional judging in club members' Bentleys in the two main categories: Concours (for those cars which members have paid to be formally appraised) and Patina (where members turn up and have their car blind-judged).

To make a real weekend of it, two main activities will take place on the Saturday: a 60-mile driving tour around the Cotswolds with a stop for lunch followed by a drinks reception and gala dinner in the elegant surroundings of Walton Hall itself. The weekend will also boast a special Derbys theme, following the stylish model's 90th anniversary celebrations last year, with a special display of cars belonging to club members.

Talking of anniversaries, this year

sees a significant motorsports-related milestone for Bentley: the centenary of the marque's first (of six) victories at Le Mans. BDC Silverstone will be commemorating this with a special race for some 40 vintage Bentleys from the era in which WO's 3 Litre scored its maiden triumph in the famed 24 Hours in 1924. The John Duff Trophy and Frank Clement Cup (named after the winning drivers that year) will be among the highlights of the day's programme, along with the Bentley scratch race for the Times Challenge Trophy, with Ben Eastick seeking his fourth successive victory.

April was an eventful month for the club, with the third annual Talks Day – organised by the Bentley Memorial Foundation (WOBMF) in conjunction with the BDC – and the Annual General Meeting taking place, both at a packed clubhouse in Wroxtton.

Esteemed cars designer Peter Stevens proved a more than popular Talks Day replacement for former Bentley Motors chairman and CEO Adrian Hallmark, waxing lyrical about the various projects and marques with which he has been involved during his illustrious career. Peter was joined by Brian Gush, former

director of motorsport at Bentley Motors, who spoke about the brand's modern-day racing activities, and former WOBMF chairman Ken Lea, who told the story of the recreation of the Bentley Corniche, of which he was the project's mastermind.

The AGM saw interim club chairman Mike Warner formally elected as chairman and Andrew Day succeeding Duncan Wiltshire (recently named as chairman of the Royal Automobile Club) as club president, both men serving their second terms in these roles.

In the competitions field, the BDC and vintage Bentley flags have been flown with distinction in both circuit racing and classic endurance rallying. Among the top BDC performers were Tim and son Oliver Llewellyn (VSCC Spring Start at Silverstone), Nick Sleep and daughter Jess (Generations Rally), and Clint Smith and son Brad (Flying Scotsman rally).

Meanwhile, the club's Regions, both in the UK and overseas, have been busy hosting a variety of exciting spring tours, trips, visits and other activities for their members – with more of the same to come during the next few months. For more details of the BDC, visit bdcl.org.



Bentley's first Le Mans victory in 1924 will be celebrated at BDC Silverstone.



Ken Lea with the Corniche at Talks Day at the clubhouse.

Bentley

DRIVERS CLUB

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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.

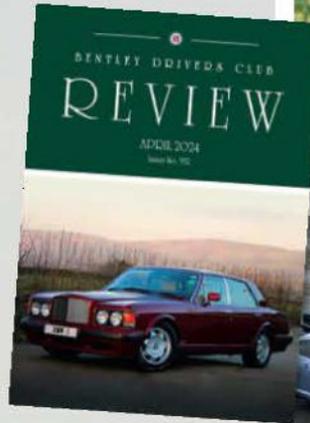
No matter what your inspiration, the BDC can help enhance your Bentley ownership and take your appreciation of this classic marque even deeper.

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.



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TECHNICAL GUIDE

CONTINENTAL GT FRONT PADS & DISCS

Our technical series continues with a front brake disc and pad change on a 2003 Bentley Continental GT, giving a glimpse into how the professionals tackle it – and how you could do so at home

WORDS: ANDY THWAITES PHOTOS: FLYING SPARES

Welcome to our sixth *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* technical guide. Having introduced you to our most modern test car, a 2003 Bentley Continental GT, for routine service jobs in the last issue, we're sticking with it for this one – focusing on renewal of the front brake pads and discs.

Brakes are, of course, safety critical. Please don't take chances with diminished performance. The GT is new enough to have wear sensors, but older cars will let you know in their own way – vibration, lack of responsiveness and eventually screeching or grinding. We always recommend changing pads and discs together, and always in pairs – front two or rear two together, never just one corner.

As with the oil change, because we're lifting the GT, it is vital to put it into 'Jack Mode'. If you don't, the self-levelling system will exhaust its air trying to maintain ride height, risking suspension collapse when

lowered. You have been warned!

On the subject of lifting, if you're using a jack and axle stands, please make sure they're up to spec. The GT weighs almost two and half tonnes, which is more than some cheap kit is designed to handle. And remember to chock the back wheels.

We should talk a bit about tooling as well, as sometimes you really notice the benefits of quality kit. Having a 17mm socket with a plastic sleeve is a great example, as this helps to protect the wheel when using an impact gun. On some GT models, you have to remove the Bentley centre cap first, but on ours (an early car) we could proceed straight to the setscrews.

Another top tip is to secure the brake caliper. Don't let it hang under its own weight as this can damage the brake hose. Before driving, we recommend giving the brake fluid level a quick check, and remember to be gentle with new brakes – ideally no hard braking for at least

a couple of hundred miles to enable the new pads and discs to bed in.

We'll do something different next time, maybe on the Arnage or Silver Spirit II. 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 FRONT DISC & PAD CHANGE

1



Prep: we always recommend fitting new pads when replacing discs, so gather everything you need, including PPE.

2



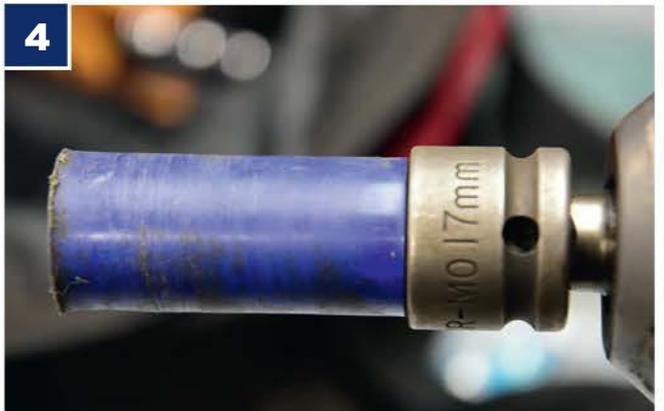
Important! Engage 'Jack Mode' by switching on the ignition and pressing and holding both the ride height and damper buttons for five seconds.

3



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

4



Use a 17mm alloy wheel socket to remove the wheel setscrews.

5



Take the road wheel off and put both the wheel and setscrews somewhere safely out of the way.

6



Now you can see the disc and caliper assembly, unclip the retainer to the caliper – it usually sports a Bentley logo.

7



Take off the dust cover to gain access to the 7mm allen socket headed bolts.

8



The caliper guide pins can now be removed.

9



Now, disconnect the pad wear sensor.

10



The caliper can now be removed, taking care not to disturb the brake line connections.

11



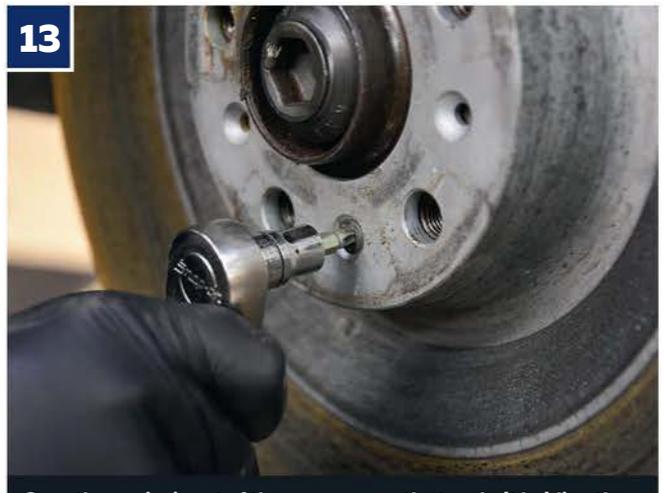
Remember! Never allow the brake caliper to hang under its own weight. Here, we secured it to the upper suspension arm.

12



Using a 21mm socket, remove the caliper carrier setscrews.

13



Once the carrier is out of the way, remove the torx bolt holding the disc to the hub.

14



Now you can remove the old brake disc.

15



Give the hub assembly a light clean to remove any corrosion and dust build-up.

16



Remove the old brake pads from the caliper.

17



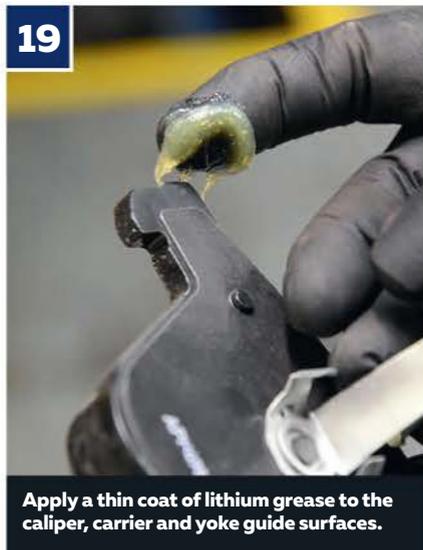
Give the caliper and carrier a good clean, using pure methylated spirit for the caliper housing.

18



New disc! Fit the new brake disc and secure with the torx bolt, torque tightening to 4Nm.

19



Apply a thin coat of lithium grease to the caliper, carrier and yoke guide surfaces.

20



Refit the caliper carrier using brand new setscrews (not the tatty old ones!) and torque tighten to 190Nm.

21



New pads! Fit the new pads into the caliper assembly, double checking for correct orientation.

22



Now the assembly can be offered up to the disc. Refit the guide pins through the caliper and into the carrier, torque tightening to 28Nm.

23



Refit the dust caps to the guide pin housing.

24



Carefully reconnect and secure the pad wear sensor.

25



Reclip the Bentley logo retainer back into the caliper assembly.

26



You can now refit the road wheel and torque setscrews.

27



Release 'Jack Mode' by pressing and holding the ride height and damper buttons, check the brake fluid level... and make sure you're gentle with the new brakes!

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2009 Model / 58 Bentley Arnage R. Finished in Anthracite with 18 inch alloys and an electric sunroof. Fitted with sports suspension and rear park camera. The interior is in Oatmeal with Beluga carpets and Burr Walnut veneers. Only 36,000 miles with FSH. This car is in outstanding condition and has to be seen **£39,999**



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**



2008 Model / 57 Bentley Continental GTC. Finished in Diamond Black Metallic with a new Mohair Black hood and fitted with Speed 20 inch alloys. Beluga interior with Piano Black veneers and just 51,000 miles with a full history file. Immaculate condition throughout, priced at only **£31,950**



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**



2004/04 Bentley Continental GT. Finished in Sapphire Blue with 19 inch split rim alloys. The interior is in Portland with Nautic secondary hide and Granite carpets with Walnut veneers. Supplied by us 9 years ago and has been maintained regardless of cost. Immaculate condition throughout and value at only **£19,999**



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 S Rolls Royce Silver Seraph. Finished in Midnight Blue with a Cream coachline, white wall tyres and chrome wheels. Magnolia interior leather piped in French Navy with French Navy carpets piped in Magnolia, Walnut veneers and picnic tables in the rear. Only 66,000 miles with outstanding service history **£35,950**



1997 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**



1987 D Rolls Royce Silver Spirit EFI ABS. Finished in Royal Blue with Cream coachlines. The interior is Cream piped in French Navy with Cream carpets piped in Cream and Walnut veneers. This is a stunning car which we have known, serviced and maintained regardless of cost for 15 years. Value at only **£21,250**

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FEATURE CAR
SILVER SHADOW II



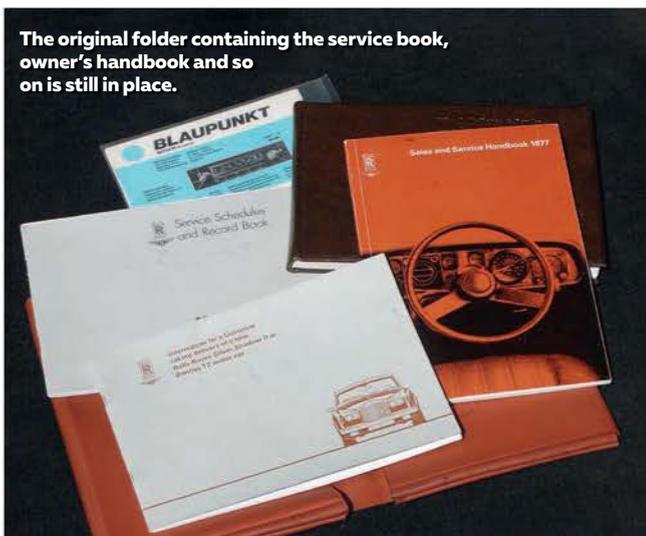
FINAL FLOURISH

We take a trip to Kent-based Ghost Motor Works to sample a fine-looking Silver Shadow II – a car with a comprehensive history and impeccable road manners

WORDS & PHOTOS: PAUL GUINNESS



FEATURE CAR SILVER SHADOW II



The original folder containing the service book, owner's handbook and so on is still in place.

By the time the Silver Shadow II was being unveiled to the world in February 1977, Rolls-Royce's top-selling saloon had been on sale for the best part of 12 years. It had, of course, received numerous updates during that time, essential for it to retain its 'best car in the world' status; but there was no doubt that for its final few years on sale, with increasingly tough competition arriving by the late '70s, a significant upgrade was required.

The most obvious visual changes that arrived with the Silver Shadow II were its plastic-faced alloy bumpers with polyurethane side pieces, while below the front bumper was a spoiler

“It offered the kind of sharpened-up handling and more precise steering that luxury car buyers of the time expected”

(aimed at improving high-speed stability) and a pair of front fog lamps. Inside, meanwhile, the Silver Shadow II boasted a new-look fascia with revised instrumentation, while the air conditioning was upgraded to a split-level system. Most important of all, however, was the adoption of rack and pinion steering and a major overhaul of the suspension system, ensuring

that the Silver Shadow II offered the kind of sharpened-up handling and more precise steering that luxury car buyers of the time expected.

The motoring world was well aware that a new generation of Rolls-Royce was to be announced by the start of the '80s, which meant the Silver Shadow II was inevitably destined for a short career by marque standards. But the improvements it ushered in were extensive enough to widen the car's appeal, leading to a total of 10,560 examples (including 2135 of the extended-wheelbase Silver Wraith II) being built by the time it was usurped by the new Silver Spirit in late 1980.

A particularly early example of the Silver Shadow II is what we have here, built in May 1977, registered to its first keeper in July of that year, and now for sale with Ghost Motor Works at the time of writing. Having seen it advertised, we couldn't resist taking a trip to Kent to see the car for ourselves – and to remind ourselves why the Silver Shadow II remains one of the most popular choices among today's buyers.



The two-tone paintwork even extends to the bootlid, giving it a distinctive look.

IMPRESSIVE HISTORY

Even by classic Rolls-Royce standards, this particular example comes with an impressive history, which includes an original folder containing the all- »

GHOST MOTOR WORKS

Founded by Charles Baseley way back in 1972, after he'd completed a five-year Rolls-Royce apprenticeship at Hythe Road, London, Ghost Motor Works has evolved to become a highly respected independent marque specialist. For the last 24 years it's been based at Claygate Cross, a tiny hamlet fewer than 20 miles east of Sevenoaks, Kent, offering the ideal combination of rural tranquillity and ease of access to the M26 and M25 motorways.

There are now up to 10 people working at Ghost Motor Works at any one time, a team that has included Frankie Batchelor for the last 12 years. Frankie handles all car sales and is often the customer's first contact with the company. "I really enjoy meeting the clients and helping them in their search for the right Rolls-Royce or Bentley for them," he explains, "even if it does mean I spend a lot of my time moving cars around to make them accessible!"

Car sales account for around half of Ghost Motor Works' business activity, and the company always has a wide and varied selection of vehicles available. "We don't tend to specialise in any particular era," explains Frankie, "as we have a broad range of clients who appreciate Rolls-Royces and Bentleys of all different ages. We find that the Silver Cloud and SY ranges are particularly popular, although the SZ is a strong seller now. Obviously, we also have clients who prefer the pre-war era."

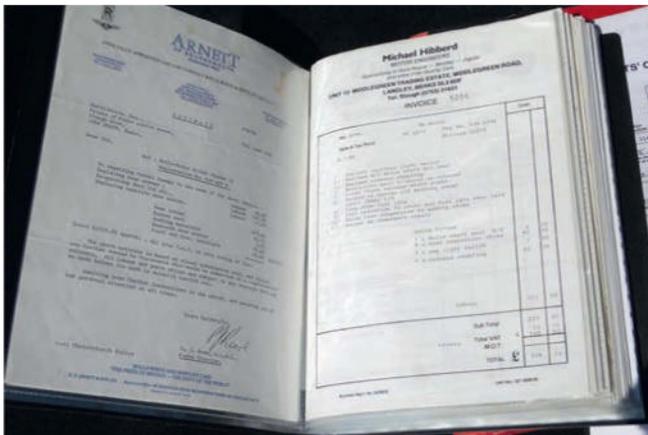


Frankie Batchelor has been with Ghost Motor Works for the last 12 years.

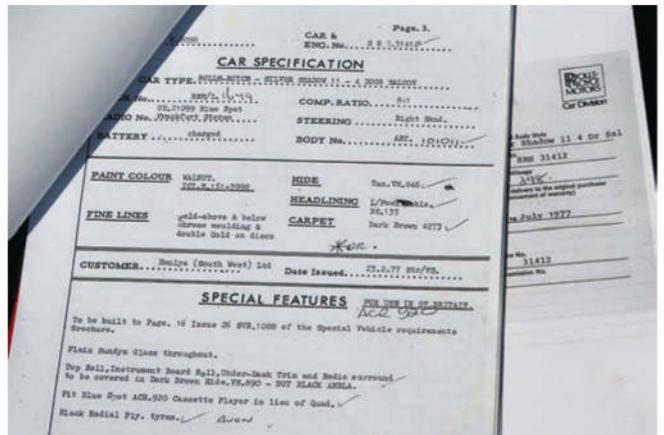


Equally important to Ghost Motor Works is its extensive workshop area, where a team of skilled specialists can carry out just about any task – from a basic oil change through to full-scale restoration:

"Several of our guys were trained at Jack Barclay," explains Frankie, "which means they have in-depth knowledge and huge amounts of experience when it comes to working on the older classics."



This A4-size folder is packed with paperwork and invoices, which make fascinating reading.



A copy of the factory specification sheet shows the car came from Crewe with all-Walnut paintwork.

FEATURE CAR
SILVER SHADOW II



“What makes this particular Silver Shadow II stand out from the crowd is its two-tone colour scheme of Walnut over Silver Sand”

important service book, customer information book, owner's handbook and more. There are also copies of the warranty acknowledgement and factory specification sheets, and it even boasts every MoT certificate

it's had issued over the years.

Even more interesting is a separate A4-size folder packed with paperwork and invoices showing previous work carried out, giving a real insight into this example's career. Back in 1989,

for example, it was sent to Royce Service & Engineering for (amongst other work) the removal and specialist refurbishment of the radiator shell. Just one year earlier, meanwhile, the car had found itself at the official



The original interior in Tan hide with Brown piping is very well-preserved.





This home-made cocktail cabinet adds a touch of period charm!



The Rolls-Royce's original woodwork remains in superb condition.

Rolls-Royce distributor, Arnett of Bournemouth, where it was treated to around £1500 worth of remedial work for "repairing vandal damage to the rear", with a copy of the invoice being submitted to Christchurch Police.

What makes this particular Silver Shadow II stand out from the crowd is its two-tone colour scheme of Walnut over Silver Sand, although back in 1977 it emerged from the gates of Crewe

painted only in Walnut (colour code ICI M 151-3998). The Silver Sand was added at a later date, and to these eyes looks really attractive; the two-tone treatment even carries through to the bootlid, which is unusual but effective. The car's interior remains original, with its Tan hide being piped in Brown for a suitably period look that complements the external treatment, while options fitted at the factory include the dashboard

top roll, knee roll and radio surround all being trimmed in Brown hide. The original over-rugs also remain in place, and are remarkably well-preserved.

The car has obviously been well-cared for throughout its career, with no shortage of servicing and general maintenance carried out. Its odometer currently stands at 75,870 miles, although the vast majority of those were added during its early years. »

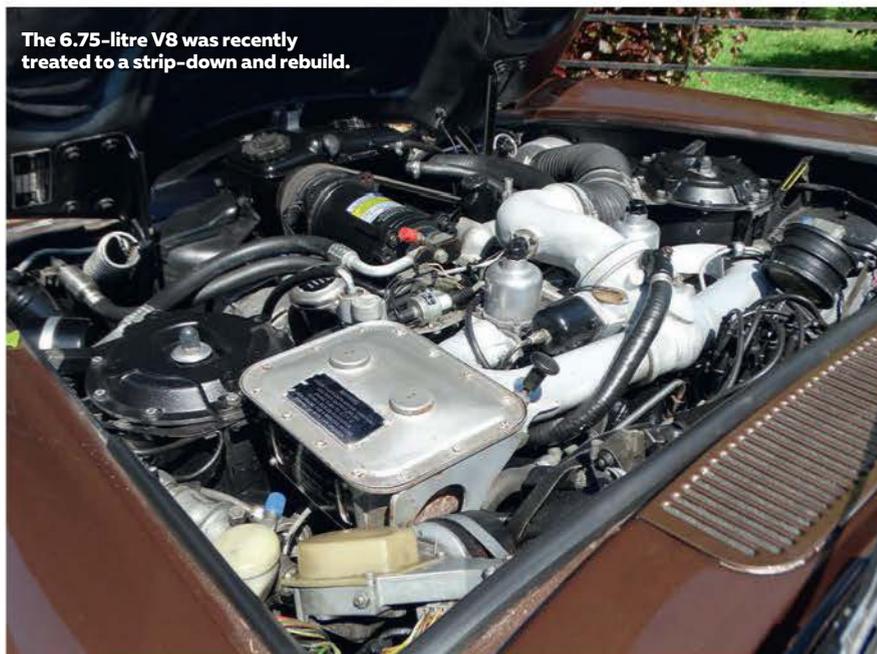
FEATURE CAR SILVER SHADOW II

Invoices from the late '80s show 60,000-plus miles already recorded by then, while MoT results from the early 2000s suggest that only around 200-400 miles were then being added on average each year. Indeed, it looks as though the car has seen very little use for the last decade and a half.

ON THE ROAD

Despite such little use, Ghost Motors picked up on a slight engine noise once it arrived in stock, and so took the decision to investigate further. The engine was stripped and fully inspected, with the noise being traced to a piston that was duly replaced, together with all new liners and seals. The powerplant was fully checked (there were no signs of wear) and carefully reassembled, since when it has been faultless and now sounds silky-smooth. On the day of our photo shoot, the car performed impressively, with the V8 barely audible whilst potting around rural Kent, and sounding pleasingly refined as the main roads appeared and there was an opportunity to put it through its paces.

Super-smooth gear changes complement the gloriously muffled V8, as does suspension that's rattle-free and highly effective. This car still soaks up the bumps as well as you'd expect from a well-maintained Silver Shadow II, while the rack and pinion steering remains sharp and precise, and the brakes perform faultlessly. While some examples of similar age



The 6.75-litre V8 was recently treated to a strip-down and rebuild.

“Even by classic Rolls-Royce standards, this particular example comes with an impressive history”

can feel 'loose' from behind the wheel, with obvious wear to their drivetrain, this eye-catching survivor retains the tautness that differentiated the second-generation model from its predecessor.

The car continues to impress at a

standstill, with its two-tone paintwork being extremely well-preserved and presented to a high standard, with only a couple of small areas of microblisters from years ago. The chromework presents well, and the interior remains in superb condition in terms of its upholstery, carpets, over-rugs, headlining, and veneered dashboard and door cappings. There's even a hand-made cocktail cabinet inside the glovebox, still stocked with glasses and miniature bottles of Pernod, Campari and other period gems; it may be a bit kitsch for some tastes, but we think it adds a certain charm and shows just how well-loved the car has been previously.

The asking price for this fully prepared, particularly early Silver Shadow II is £29,000, a figure that doesn't seem over-ambitious considering you're buying from a marque specialist with all the advantages this brings. With the added recent benefit of an engine strip-down and reassembly by in-house experts, it's a car that should provide a hassle-free ownership experience – as well as being a Silver Shadow II that, thanks to its eye-catching colour scheme, will attract more attention than most. ■





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SILVER CLOUD OR S-SERIES?

Thank you for your Silver Cloud feature in the May/June 2024 issue of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver*. I found it very interesting, providing a real insight into how these cars drive as well as giving useful tips for anyone thinking of buying one today.

I'm in that group, as I really like the idea of a 'Standard Steel' Silver Cloud or S-series. I've owned a succession of Silver Shadows over the years, as well as a couple of SZ cars. But now that my budget is a bit more generous thanks to a recent inheritance, I'm

tempted to fulfil my long-term dream of having an earlier car.

Personally, I prefer the styling of the S-series to that of the Silver Cloud. I think the more curvaceous radiator grille suits the lines of the car just perfectly, but these things are subjective. What's more important is that I buy the best car that I can find for my budget, as I'd want to keep it long-term and don't really fancy the idea of a project. Something that's mechanically sorted and presentable is fine, as long as it's also solid; I don't expect cosmetic perfection as I'm more interested in having a car that I can use and enjoy rather than try to win any trophies with.

I suppose the other obvious question is whether I go for a six-cylinder or a V8 version, especially as I've seen a couple of Bentley S1s that seemed decent value. For me though, a Rolls-Royce (or Bentley) needs a V8 – and having had later cars with that classic V8 under the bonnet, I'm not sure I'd be happy with a straight-six S1 or early Cloud.

I'll keep looking anyway, checking the online ads as well as the auction listings. Buying at auction doesn't concern me as long as I can give the car a good check-over before bidding. So, I'll keep you posted on progress and let you know what I eventually end up with. Wish me luck!

David Hargreaves
Wilmslow
Cheshire

A 'Standard Steel' Silver Cloud or S-series in good order makes a great buy, David. Do let us know how you get on with your search. Whichever version you end up buying, maybe we could feature it in a future issue? – Ed.



JAMES YOUNG RARITY

I recently came across this Jack Barclay advert from 1966, showing the new Silver Shadow two-door saloon by James Young. I've always been a fan of this particular conversion, and am probably the only *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* reader who thinks it's a better looking design than the hardtop Corniche!

James Young built just 35 of these two-door saloons, with the last one being finished in 1967. I guess Mulliner Park Ward's own two-door Silver Shadow (later relaunched as the Corniche) effectively killed it off.

I think that's a shame, as I like

the James Young car's understated look. It kept the same roofline and back window angle as the four-door Silver Shadow, as well as the standard rear wing line. To me, the more curved rear wings of the Corniche look as bit over-styled by comparison. I'd love to know if I'm the only one who thinks this.

Sebastian Gee
Via email

What do other readers think? Was the James Young two-door an understated beauty, or did MPW do a finer job with what became the Corniche FHC? Let us know via rrb.ed@kelsey.co.uk – Ed.



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CONTINENTAL GT FAN

It was great to see the Continental GT being given some technical coverage in your last issue (May/June). I've owned three of these so far, my current one being a 2005 Mulliner GT that I bought two years ago with 45,000 miles from new. I've since added another 15,000. I'm probably not brave enough to tackle many DIY jobs on the car, but it's really interesting to read about it from an expert's point of view.

I've probably been lucky with my GTs, as all three have been pretty reliable. They're obviously not cheap cars to run, and any job carried out by professionals is going to be expensive. The price of even fairly basic parts (particularly electrical items) can be scary, with every switch or sensor being about 10 times the price of the same item used elsewhere within VW. And don't get me started on the price of decent tyres. But the thrill I get from driving my GT more than makes up for the financial downsides.

It's over 20 years since the original GT launched, so I like to think of it as a modern classic. I think it's aged really well, and still looks amazing out on the road. It's a car that turns heads, but doesn't do it in a brash way. And as the first of the 'new generation' models under VW control,



it certainly deserves its place in Bentley history.
Stuart Death
Via email

Like most, we've heard a few horror stories from former Continental GT owners who have been bitten by big bills and major repairs; but when you delve into the details, these are often cars that are very high-mileage or have been neglected. A GT with no service records and a long list of previous keepers is never a good idea, while a low-



mileage car such as yours with a decent history can be a very tempting buy. Any other Continental GT owners out there willing to share their experiences? – Ed.

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THE SPIRIT OF EXPERIMENTATION A SPECTRE CALLS

Before the new electric Spectres of today, Rolls-Royce used the name for a series of 10 experimental cars that introduced V12 engines and led to the pre-war Phantom III

WORDS: RICHARD GUNN PHOTOS: ROLLS-ROYCE MOTOR CARS, KELSEY ARCHIVE

Rolls-Royce has recently embarked upon a bold new chapter in its long history with the first deliveries of the Spectre, its inaugural electric model. However, these silent luxury leviathans are not the first use of the Spectre name. Perhaps in keeping with their more environmentally friendly nature, they have recycled their supernatural title from earlier Rolls-Royces that represented an equally significant leap forward in technology and evolution during the 1930s.

The 10 experimental Spectres of 1934-37 were constructed to prove the new V12 engine partly designed

by Sir Henry Royce, as well as other features of the Phantom III, in an attempt to wrest back the accolade of 'The Best Car in the World' from American upstarts such as Cadillac, Packard, Lincoln and Pierce-Arrow, as well as European rivals such as Hispano-Suiza. But the Spectre was also Royce's last significant project... and one he wouldn't live long enough to see through to completion.

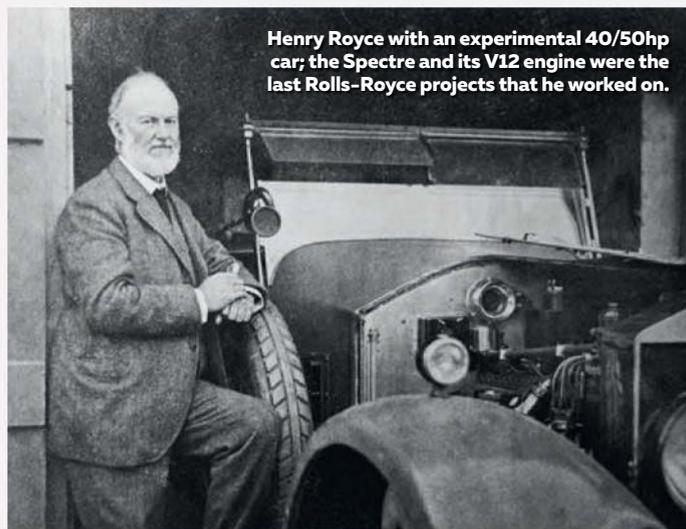
The Spectre name goes back even further than these immediate pre-World War II prototypes, to a 40/50hp chassis completed in 1910. Following on from 1907's *The Silver Ghost* (which would subsequently

lend its designation as a collective catch-all for all 40/50hp models), *The Silver Spectre* was built as a trials and demonstrator car in August 1910. It remained with Rolls-Royce until 1915, after which it was sold to the War Office and ultimately ended up with a firm of motor engineers in Sheffield in 1933. Beyond that, nothing else is known about it.

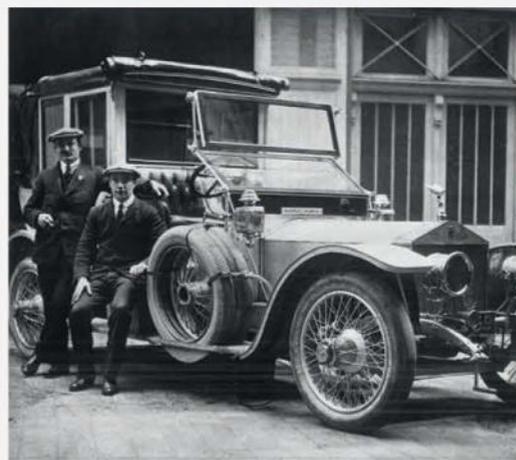
At the same time that this original Spectre faded into the ether, work was under way on cars that would carry on the title. Several prestige marques on both sides of the Atlantic had introduced V12-engined automobiles, including the British firm of Daimler with its Double-Six. Cadillac had even gone one four further with its V16 of 1930. These new V-machines left Rolls-Royce languishing; as superb as the company's Phantom II flagship was, it was a straight-six car competing for buyers who easily had enough



The nameplate carried by the very first Rolls-Royce to be given the Spectre title, *The Silver Spectre* of 1910.



Henry Royce with an experimental 40/50hp car; the Spectre and its V12 engine were the last Rolls-Royce projects that he worked on.



The name of the prototype Phantom III's harked back to *The Silver Spectre* 40/50hp of 1910.

money to afford its smoother and more powerful V12 competitors. For Rolls-Royce to keep up, it would need its own twelve-cylinder model.

This was despite Experimental Department engineer William Arthur Robotham finding himself "overwhelmed by the relative disparity between the Rolls-Royce engineering department and those I was seeing in Detroit" when he visited the USA in 1932. However, the firm did have two distinct advantages: it already had experience of building V-type engines thanks to its aviation work from World War I onwards, and it also had the towering mechanical genius and perfectionism of the newly-knighted Sir Henry Royce to call on as its chief engineer.

Work had begun on a new V12 engine in 1930, with Royce's efforts split between his home in West Wittering, Sussex, and his villa in Le Canadel in southern France, where he spent winters for the sake of his health. He had a team of engineers at both locations. The decision to choose a V12 configuration was based on the company's aircraft engine experience plus, in the opinion of Royce, it represented a good compromise between six and 16 cylinders. Plus, he felt, if Rolls-Royce had built a 16-cylinder unit, everybody would have considered him mad.

CHASSIS ATTENTION

By 1932, progress on the 7338cc aluminium-block V12, with its 60-degree banks and twin ignition systems (necessitating two distributors, two coils and 24 spark

plugs) was sufficiently advanced that attention could be turned to the chassis it would power. In April of that year, 69-year-old Royce returned from France to Sussex but was already quite ill. During this time, he told a colleague "I shall never live to see this new car", and sadly he was right; on April 22nd, 1933, less than a month after his 70th birthday, Sir Henry passed away.

Royce's place was taken by A.G.

Elliott, who had worked alongside him for many years, albeit "with Royce looking over my shoulder and approving everything I did!" Without that pervading presence, the V12 became overly complex, to the point where it became a nightmare to dismantle and overhaul. Elliott also wanted to change the traditional Rolls-Royce radiator grille, favouring a raked-back inverse-V-shaped one. Such a style may have been »

"Rolls-Royce already had experience of building V-type engines thanks to its aviation work"



The 7.3-litre, 60-degree banked V12 engine, as used in the Spectres and subsequent Phantom IIIs.



As well as V12 competition from the USA and mainland Europe, Rolls-Royce also had a British 12-cylinder rival in the form of the Daimler Double-Six.



It was the new American V-engined machines that really prompted Rolls-Royce to explore the idea of its own V12; this is a 1934 Cadillac V-16 alongside actress and singer Marlene Dietrich.

fashionable, but some things were beyond the pale... and Elliott was 'persuaded' that the Pantheon grille was to remain strictly as it was.

However, there were some radical touches. The chassis design featured a central lubrication system, sending oil to all vital areas of the car. There were also built-in hydraulic jacks, in the event of a car failing to proceed due to a puncture. However, the most significant advance was independent front suspension. This was based on a General Motors design employed by rival Cadillac, facilitated by a former Rolls-Royce of America engineer who had joined GM and proved an essential liaison between Derby and Detroit. Naturally, Rolls-Royce

“The Phantom II was a straight-six car competing for buyers who could easily afford its smoother and more powerful V12 competitors”

carried out its own refinements.

By 1934, the time had come to build complete prototype cars for testing. Three were initially ordered and allocated the chassis numbers 1-S-I, 2-S-I and 3-S-I. However, these were soon changed to the designation that Rolls-Royce had established for its experimental cars back in 1919,

using the appropriate suffix of 'EX'. Thus 30EX, 31EX and 32EX were assigned instead. But to maintain the secretive nature of these machines, they were also given the suitably stealthy codename of Spectre.

The initial Spectre, 30EX, took shape during summer 1934, with a black Park Ward enclosed limousine body. The coachbuilder, not then fully-owned by Rolls-Royce, was told that it was for fitment to a wide-framed Phantom II for security reasons. Registered RC 2406, it began road testing in November 1934 fitted with four carburettors, although it later proved slightly quicker with a single Stromberg – albeit top speed was still only 88mph, not the sort of figure that would be tolerated from a 7.3-litre V12 car these days. It lost its body in November 1937, after which tests were mainly confined to its gearbox, before this very first 12-cylinder Rolls-Royce was scrapped at the end of 1939.

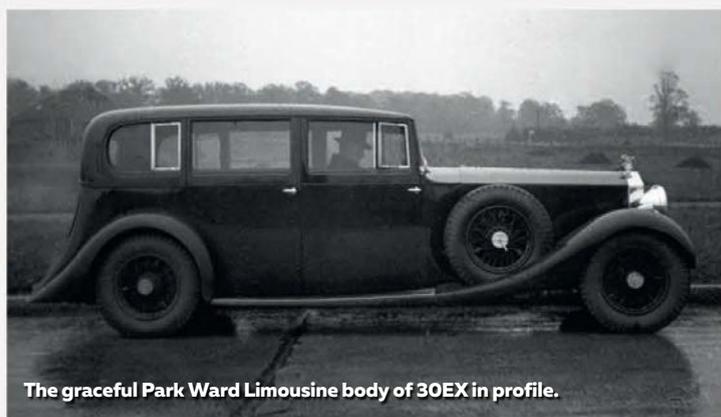
The next Spectre was 31EX, also with a Park Ward limousine body, albeit in dark blue and black with a taller radiator. Completed in February 1935, RC 3055 departed for France in October of that year, the intention being to achieve 10,000 miles of



The first V12 Spectre, 30EX, during testing.



The original Spectre chassis, 30EX, during the installation of its Park Ward body at Derby; for reasons of secrecy, it wasn't fitted by Park Ward itself.



The graceful Park Ward Limousine body of 30EX in profile.

testing. Unfortunately, it didn't come anywhere close to that, for within a month it was involved in a crash with a French cyclist, who was killed in the accident. 31EX's driver escaped unharmed, but his passenger suffered a broken arm. The Rolls-Royce was so comprehensively damaged that it had to be dismantled, with some of its parts reused.

LONG-DISTANCE TEST

The career of 32EX would prove rather longer. Again, Park Ward did the coachwork honours, this time coming up with a grey aluminium Continental Touring Saloon shell. As RC 2545, it also headed for mainland Europe in May 1935, visiting France, Germany and Switzerland, where it was defeated by the challenging Stelvio Pass and overheated. Nevertheless, it completed 20,000 miles before returning to the UK, albeit not without quite a catalogue of engine issues.

Exactly a year after its first continental jaunt, 32EX set off again, this time for France and Spain, and notched up another 10,000 miles before a broken rear axle prompted its repatriation. Then in summer 1937, it was across the channel again after several upgrades and modifications. These seemed to do the trick, for its next 15,000 miles overseas were largely trouble-free. By May 1938, however, 32EX was no longer required and, with 67,000 miles on its odometer (and having been comprehensively repaired, too), it was sold into private hands. As the most-travelled of the original three Spectres, it formed the basis for the production Phantom IIIs.

After the three experimental cars, the following Spectres were destined for Rolls-Royce's Sales Department, primarily intended as Phantom III demonstrators (the new model having been announced in October 1935, with first deliveries in July 1936). 33EX was more or less a replica of 32EX, albeit with its Park Ward saloon body in steel rather than aluminium, and finished in red. It entered service towards the end of 1935. After just over a year of showing off to customers just what Rolls-Royce's new V12 was capable of, RC 3168 (as it was registered) did find itself transferred »



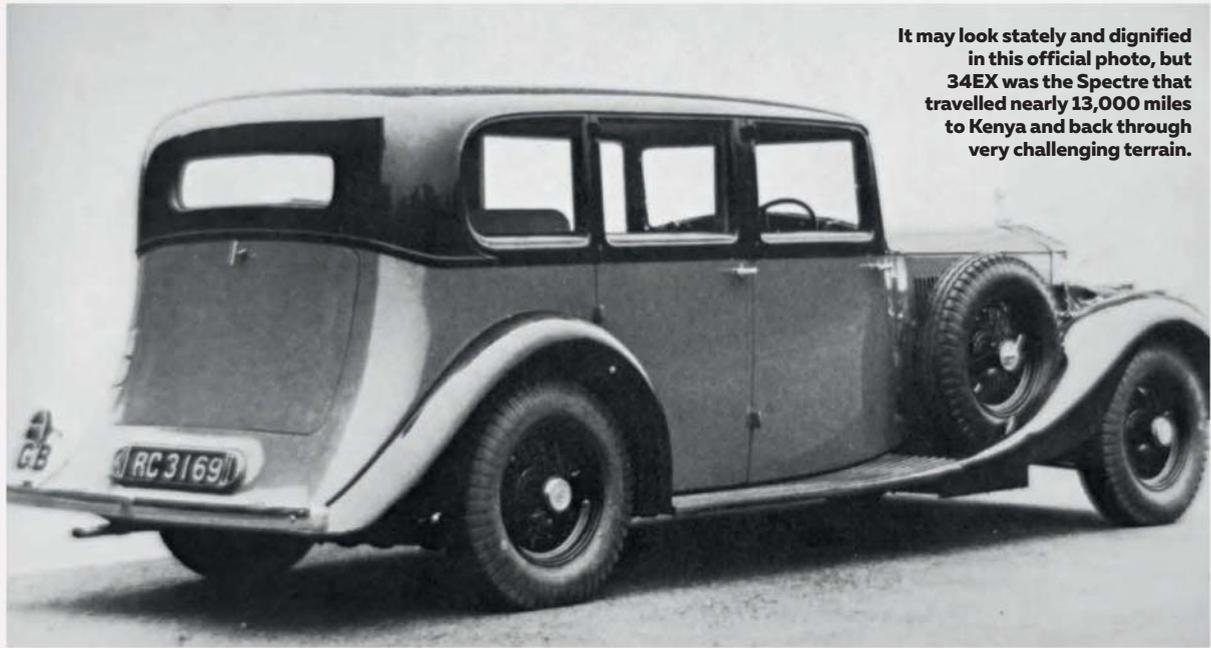
On the left is 31EX (albeit wearing the RC 2406 numberplate of 30EX) with its non-standard radiator grille, alongside the next Spectre – 32EX.



The second Spectre, 31EX, was destroyed in a crash in France less than a year after it was constructed.



The Spectres paved the way for the production Phantom IIIs of 1936-1939.



It may look stately and dignified in this official photo, but 34EX was the Spectre that travelled nearly 13,000 miles to Kenya and back through very challenging terrain.

to the Experimental Department where it underwent mechanical and body tests, with the aim of improving the production Phantom IIIs. It was sold on in late 1937.

Chassis number 34EX (registration RC 3169), also from late 1935, was topped off with a stiffened Park Ward fawn and black limousine body, almost identical to that of the by-then defunct 31EX. With over half a year to go before the first Phantom IIIs reached their

new owners, it was initially used for tyre testing before being employed as demonstrator around London. It then embarked upon the most extraordinary adventure of all the Spectres, being handed over in February 1937 to Humfray Symons, motoring correspondent for *The Sunday Times*, for an epic publicity drive from London to Nairobi, the capital of Kenya.

Symons dubbed it the 'Propaganda Tour' and, along with

Rolls-Royce test driver 'Hoppy' Hamilton and photographer H.B. Browning, 34EX travelled through France, then by steamship to Algeria and through the Sahara Desert to Nigeria, French Equatorial Africa, the Belgian Congo, Uganda and Kenya. Having left London on February 22nd, 1937, 34EX's 3519-mile trip as far as Kano, the second largest city in Nigeria, was achieved in a record 125 hours – faster than could be managed by air. But the onward journey was bedevilled by tyre issues, thanks to the Spectre's weight and the need for lower pressures to successfully negotiate sand. By Fort-Lamy, the capital of Chad in French Equatorial Africa, all four tyres were wrecked and there were no spares left. New ones had to be flown out by Imperial Airways, which took some time (another Phantom III might have been quicker) and incurred a shipment fee of £63 – an additional cost that Rolls-Royce was somewhat upset about. Hamilton was probably quite happy that things were taking longer than intended, seeing as he was on the princely sum of £5 a week from Rolls-Royce.

The next 3000 miles, through to Nairobi, were trouble-free, after »



When 34EX sailed from Marseille to Algiers as part of the 'Propaganda Tour' to Nairobi, it was carried on board the Compagnie Generale Transatlantique's Ville d'Oran steamship.



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THE SPIRIT OF EXPERIMENTATION ROLLS-ROYCE SPECTRES

which Hamilton serviced the Spectre and the three men headed for home again. By Algiers, Symons had clearly got bored of the whole adventure and decided to fly back to London, rather unsportingly leaving Hamilton to drive home with a very ill Browning, who'd caught black water fever. By April 21st, the Spectre was back in Derby, having notched up 12,851 miles over two months of difficult conditions and inhospitable terrain. Yet, just one mile from the factory, it broke down and had to be towed in. Overall, it had recorded an average speed of 32mph. When examined, it was found to be in generally good order, considering its ordeal. Not one to waste a valuable resource, Rolls-Royce had it repaired and fitted with a new body – this time a Hooper saloon – and sold it on during May 1938.

ANOTHER ACCIDENT

None of the subsequent Spectres had nearly so active a life, at least during their Rolls-Royce days. 35EX was another Sales Department

When 34EX found itself without any tyres – spare or otherwise – in Chad, new ones had to be flown out by Imperial Airways, at the great cost of £63.

demonstrator, again completed by the end of 1935. The pale green Park Ward Continental Touring Saloon was registered RC 3170. After 22,000 miles of demonstrating, it was transferred to the Experimental Department in May 1936 and, following some UK testing, was dispatched to France in January 1937. It was almost immediately involved in an accident in Paris but repaired by local carrosserie, Van Vooren. It proved somewhat unreliable during its 20,000 miles of testing – probably just as well it wasn't the

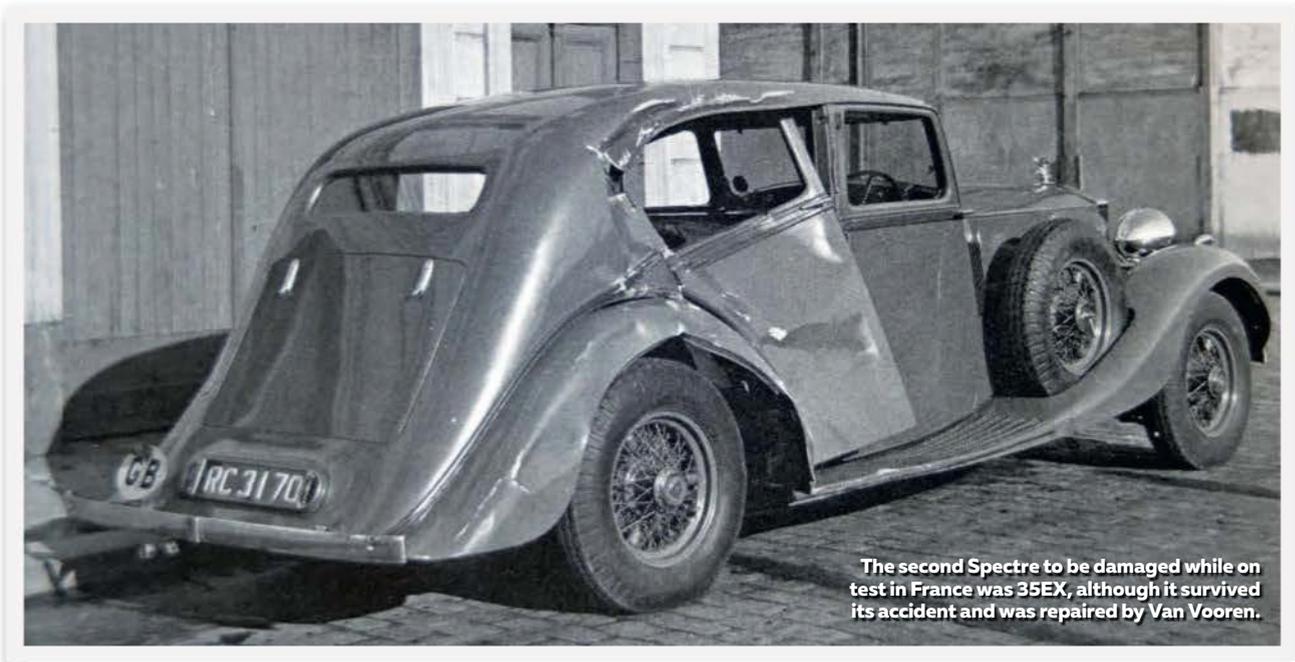


Spectre sent to Kenya – and received several modifications when it returned to Derby, as well as proper body repairs by Park Ward. In summer 1939 it was prepared for sale to a private owner, but the outbreak of war delayed its dispatch and it didn't reach its new owner, a Lieutenant Colonel in Warwickshire, until October 1942.

Hooper provided the bodywork



After its epic trip to Nairobi and back, 34EX is unloaded from the ship that's just carried it home over the English Channel.

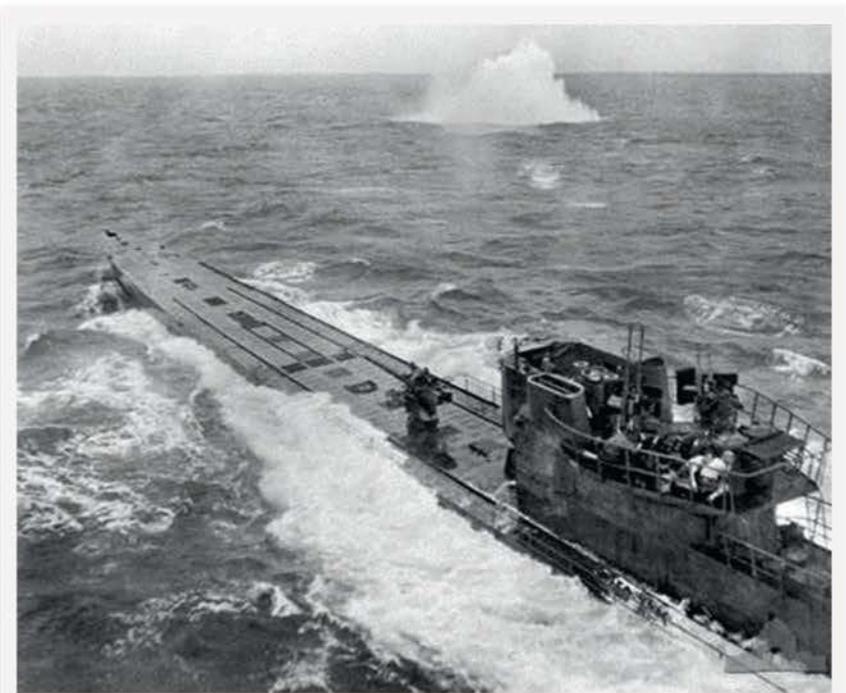


The second Spectre to be damaged while on test in France was 35EX, although it survived its accident and was repaired by Van Vooren.

“By April 21st, the Spectre was back in Derby, having notched up 12,851 miles over two months of difficult conditions”

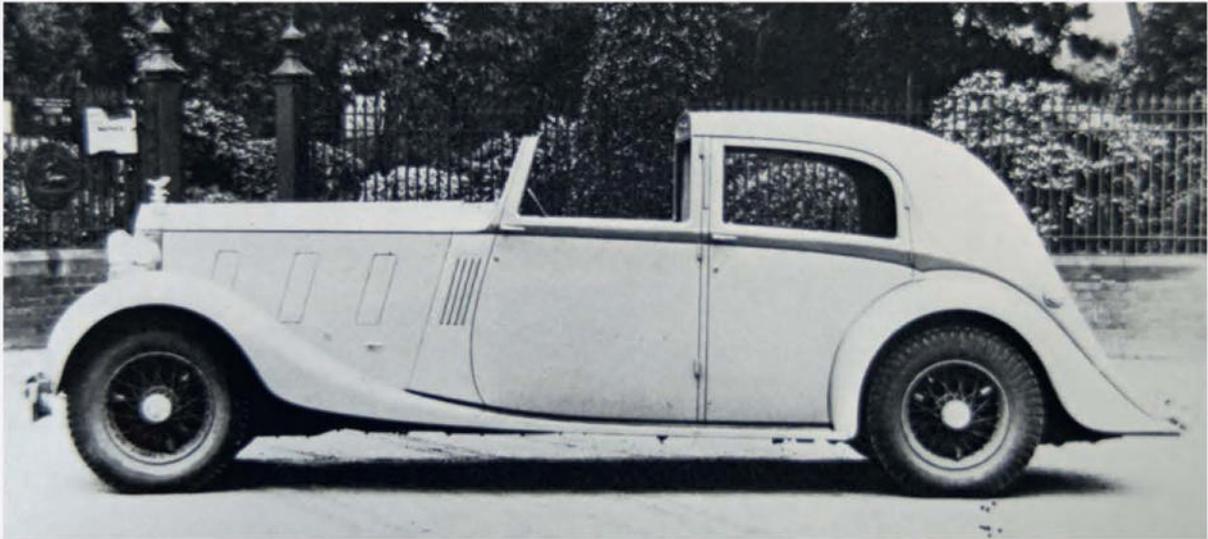
for 36EX, thanks to the impression the coachbuilder had made on Rolls-Royce when it showed off a limousine body on a mocked-up Phantom III chassis at the London Motor Show in October 1935. RC 3695 was registered in March 1936 and used for general development work, including running at Brooklands. It was also used for testing new features before Rolls-Royce sold it after October 1937.

It was back to Park Ward for the shell of 37EX, although the grey Continental Touring Sedan de Ville wasn't strictly new when the car was completed in June 1936. The body had previously been displayed at the 1935 London Motor Show, again using a faux Phantom III chassis. After being registered as RC 4090, it undertook clutch, fuel and cooling tests and, like its immediate predecessor, also went to Brooklands. It was reconditioned in November 1937 for sale but didn't actually pass out of the company's hands until 1941. Even more remarkably, the Spectre was shipped to the USA – despite it being the height »



Despite the threat from German U-boats, 37EX was shipped to its new American owner across the Atlantic during 1941.

THE SPIRIT OF EXPERIMENTATION ROLLS-ROYCE SPECTRES



The Park Ward Sedan de Ville coachwork of Spectre 37EX.

of the Battle of the Atlantic, with German U-boats preying on Allied convoys. Fortunately, it made it.

Chassis 38EX varied from its sisters by being a long-wheelbase version, with an extra eight inches. Its black-over-maroon body was a limousine pattern, built in steel by Park Ward. Other variations included a wider dashboard, lower-g geared steering and the rear seat mounted lower down, something possible

due to the added length. The car, finished at the close of 1936, seems to have been used by the Rolls-Royce School of Instruction before (as DGT 367) it was sold, roughly a year after its construction.

The final Spectre, 39EX, was a prototype for a proposed Continental Phantom III. Both its chassis and coachwork – a two-tone grey Barker saloon – were lightened to improve performance. After its

completion in June 1937, carrying registration RC 4922, it was tested against a production Phantom III at Brooklands and found to be only slightly faster, although it did manage to shave five seconds off the sprint to 70mph. After some alterations, the Spectre was due to be sent to France, but then all development work was cancelled due to disappointing sales of the Phantom III. The Continental scheme was to go no further. After just 4627 miles of use, 39EX was scrapped at around the start of 1939, although its body was sold on and used on a standard chassis.

The Spectres paved the way for the final great Rolls-Royce of the pre-war era, as well as helping to enhance the Phantom III breed once production was under way. As demonstrators, they also proved to customers how well-built and capable they were – even capable of surviving the occasional jaunt to Kenya and back. These last models to feature the direct input of Sir Henry Royce remained the marque's only V12 cars until the Silver Seraph of 1998. So, it is perhaps very fitting that the latest Rolls-Royces to feature a new and advanced means of propulsion – today's electric Spectres – give a nod to their predecessors with their name. ■



Today's electric Spectre; for Rolls-Royce, its powertrain is just as revolutionary a step forward as the V12 was for the 1930s Spectres.

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20/25: THE INTER-WAR SUCCESS STORY



With 2024 marking the 95th anniversary of the 20/25, we take a look at this bestselling small-horsepower Rolls-Royce and examine the reasons behind its success

It's hard to bring the Rolls-Royce 20/25 into any conversation without also discussing its predecessor, the 20hp. This was the car that helped to expand its maker's share of the luxury market from 1922 when it launched as a more compact, more affordable alternative to the 40/50 'Silver Ghost'. It could, of course, all have backfired

if the 20hp (or Twenty, as many refer to it) had been a compromise in terms of quality or engineering excellence; but everyone who experienced the newcomer knew that this was a car worthy of the Rolls-Royce name.

As part of Rolls-Royce's planning for the 1920s, Henry Royce was interested in the latest trends that were being

adopted by the American automotive industry, and was keen for the crucial new 20hp to be seen as a modern, high-quality offering. The 3128cc six-cylinder engine designed for the new Twenty was Rolls-Royce's first to feature an overhead-valve layout and was highly praised by the world's motoring press. Rather less impressive was the »





A wide range of 20/25 body styles was available via Britain's top coachbuilders.



20hp's three-speed transmission (with central gearchange), and so in 1925 the Twenty adopted a four-speed gearbox with a right-hand change.

Although the 20hp is often referred to as the 'small' Rolls-Royce, it was still a hefty machine by standards of the time. It was, however, more compact and more affordable than the 40/50, making it ideal for the increasingly important owner-driver market that demanded Rolls-Royce levels of engineering in a car less gargantuan than the Silver Ghost or – from 1925 – the Phantom. Nevertheless, the Twenty had to be capable of continental touring in the Rolls-Royce tradition

Upon the Twenty's debut in 1922, *The*

“The engine size was increased from 3128cc to 3675cc, with this latest version of the six-cylinder unit offering unrivalled flexibility”



Motor magazine was one of the first British titles to review it, and wasn't shy when it came to praising the newcomer: "In writing of this new 20hp Rolls-Royce as a smaller car, some qualification is needed. It is in no sense a small car as is usually understood, its appearance being large and imposing; it is only when one sees it alongside the 40-50hp model that one appreciates the difference in size. The new chassis has a wheelbase of 10ft 9in, which is well above the average, and the body space is very large when compared with the overall length of the car, an arrangement made possible by the compactness of the new engine."

It was the 20hp's ability to accommodate generously proportioned »

OWNING A 20/25

According to the 20-Ghost Club, owning a 20/25 these days is not dissimilar to the 20hp experience, albeit with useful extra refinements: "The things that delight are the same, only better, and on later models the chore of lubricating so many nipples is greatly reduced by the central chassis lubrication system."

There's no shortage of 20/25 survivors, with a wide array of body styles available, explains the club: "The cars are still coachbuilt and the proportions of the 20/25 are

excellent, leading to some very attractive bodies being produced on these chassis. Many resembled those on the Phantom II except on a smaller scale. These cars are very practical as they are not too big for short local journeys and can be parked rather more easily. Equally, they are reasonably economical both to run and to maintain, once in good order."

To find out more about the 20-Ghost Club's 20/25 experiences and recommendations, visit <https://20-ghost.org>.

“The extra power was deemed essential by the late '20s, when other upmarket manufacturers had caught up with Rolls-Royce”



bodywork that helped it to become a favourite among Britain's high-end coachbuilders of the 1920s, with Mulliner, Thrupp & Maberly, Barker, Park Ward and Hooper being among the most prolific users of Rolls-Royce's latest offering. A wide choice of bodywork was therefore available to customers, although the 20hp was particularly popular with limousine-style coachwork. A total of 2940 chassis had been produced by Rolls-Royce by the time the 20hp was finally replaced in 1929 by the bigger-engined 20/25 – a model codenamed Goshawk during its development.

IN WITH THE NEW

The newcomer was set to build on its predecessor's success, with the 20/25 going on to be the most popular Rolls-Royce of the inter-war period, with a total of 3824 finding customers – the vast majority of them in the UK. This meant that the 20/25 managed to average sales of 546 a year, easily beating the 20hp's impressive annual production rate of 420 chassis.

Such popularity was well-deserved,

as the 20/25 offering numerous refinements to ensure it remained competitive. The engine size was increased from 3128cc to 3675cc, with this latest version of the six-cylinder unit offering unrivalled flexibility in top gear, combined with near-silent running.

The increase in engine size came about by increasing the bore of the existing engine from 3in to 3.25in, with the stroke remaining unchanged at 4.5in. As James Taylor explains in *Coachwork on Rolls-Royce Twenty, 20/25, 25/30 and Wraith* (Herridge & Sons, 2021), Britain's horsepower rating system of the time was instrumental in the newcomer's choice of name: "The new car was called a Rolls-Royce 20/25, the initial figure perhaps intending to stress its connection with the earlier Twenty, and the second figure indicating that it was now rated as a 25hp model. In fact, by the RAC method it was rated at 25.4hp."

Taylor also explains that the latest engine "had a swept volume of 3675cc – although Rolls-Royce usually quoted it as 3669cc."

The extra power was deemed essential by the late '20s, when other upmarket manufacturers had caught

up with Rolls-Royce. The Twenty suddenly seemed behind the times in terms of performance and cruising ability, and so the 20/25 usefully offered a top speed well in excess of 70mph (depending on the style and weight of its coachwork) and the ability to cruise comfortably at 60mph.

The same four-speed gearbox from later examples of the 20hp was carried over to the 20/25, still with a right-hand gearchange, while powerful all-wheel servo-assisted brakes ensured confident stopping even when the largest, heaviest coachwork was fitted. Among a range of improvements announced in 1932 was the addition of a Bijur 'one-shot' lubrication system, which meant easier chassis maintenance – a major advantage for chauffeurs and owner-drivers alike.

REGULAR UPGRADES

Improvements to the 20/25 began before then, however, as James Taylor explains in his fascinating book: "Rolls-Royce kept abreast of developments from rival manufacturers by increasing the 20/25's performance in small



This special 20/25 'Trials' car was built by Windover on Ivan Evernden's orders.

increments. Thus in 1930 the engine's compression ratio went up from 5.25:1 from its original 4.75:1, and then again in 1932 to 5.75:1, when the change was accompanied by a new high-lift camshaft. Meanwhile, almost unnoticed, the wheelbase had been extended in March 1930 by three inches (from 129in to 132in) in order to meet demand for more roomy coachwork."

Other upgrades included thermostatic control for the 20/25's vertical radiator shutters in 1932, along with synchromesh on third and fourth gears. In 1934, the 20/25 was treated to updated carburettors and a DWS built-in jacking system as standard, and in '36 there were changes to a hypoid

rear axle and Marles cam-and-roller steering. By then, though, the 20/25 was heading towards the end of its career, and would be replaced by the 25/30 before the end of the year.

There is, however, an interesting Bentley sidenote to the 20/25 story, following Rolls-Royce's acquisition of the bankrupt marque in 1931, as highlighted by author James Taylor: "The Bentley name was too widely respected for Rolls-Royce to discontinue it altogether, and instead the company broadened its product offerings by developing the new 3½ Litre model that was released in 1933. With a tuned version of the 20/25's engine... the Bentley's chassis was developed

from the lightweight one designed for the Rolls-Royce Peregrine that was drawn up as an economy variant of the 20/25 but did not enter production."

The role played by the 20/25 in the history of Rolls-Royce is indelible, for not only did it become the company's most successful model of the inter-war period, bringing sufficient cashflow to enable ongoing development of the Phantom family, it helped the British coachbuilding industry to thrive throughout the early 1930s. However, the fact that the 20/25 also played an instrumental role in the revival of Bentley under Rolls-Royce stewardship might almost be called its greatest achievement of all. ■



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STAFF CARS

WINS AND LOSSES

That long list of small jobs referred to in the last issue hardly gets shorter, as new quirks appear whenever an old flaw is cured

WORDS & PHOTOS: NIGEL BOOTHMAN

In the last report, I was happy to keep making marginal gains. Or in other words, to keep sorting out tiny issues in the hope that they would add up to a big improvement. Which, to be fair, they did. I continued in the same vein rather than tackling some of the larger tasks left because, well... it was easier.

The first of these small jobs involved replacing a fuse in the drop-down fuse panel under the dashboard. We removed it almost two years ago, just after the car arrived, because leaving it in place allowed a horrid noisy buzzer to sound

whenever the door was open. Removing it did away with the buzz and deprived us only of minor luxuries like the remote fuel filler release and some interior lighting, so out it stayed. But no longer.

Investigating the buzz led me to a relay fastened to an under-dash bracket with another, similar one. Putting a finger on each when the buzz was sounding revealed which one was trembling with noisy fury. I took it off the bracket and examined it, then went online to find out what this devilish thing was supposed to be in aid of. It appears that the noise is only

meant to occur when you leave the headlamps on and turn the engine off, take the key out and open the door. Or possibly when you open the door and leave the key in the ignition. But either way, it was malfunctioning; it sounded whenever the door was open, regardless of other conditions. This, especially on a car that's often being worked on, was very annoying but easily fixed. Removing one end of the little jumper wire that connected two terminals on the same relay silenced it, leaving other functions unaltered. So, I can now open the fuel filler flap at the »

touch of a button and enjoy the well-designed interior lighting in both rows of seats. Oh, and the Kienzle clock works.

FUEL GAUGE FIX

While playing about in this region, I decided it was time to investigate the fuel gauge. It was stuck at a reassuring but false one-third full, and Andy Thwaites at Flying Spares advised me to look for faults by starting at the back and working forwards. I lifted the new boot carpet, peeled back the insulation and there was the sender unit, under a protective plate. It all came undone

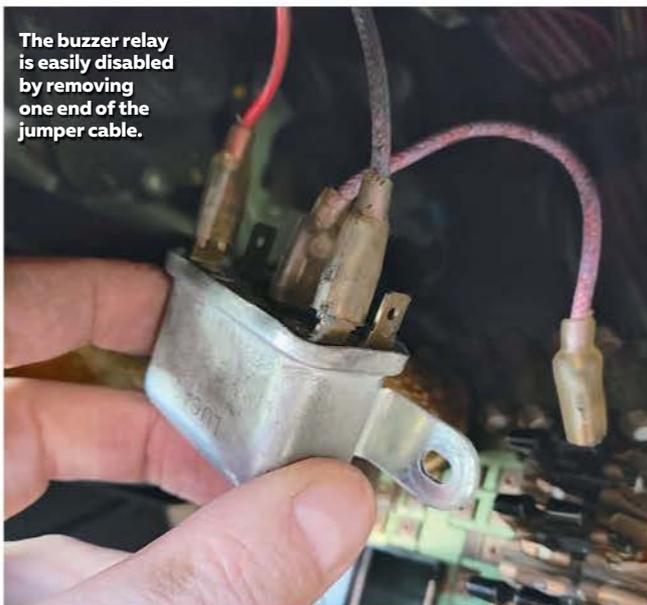
easily enough and I was able to prise the sender gently up off its gasket. What emerged looked like something left to rot in a damp cave rather than a healthy electro-mechanical device fit for service, and the float arm was seized solid – hence the consistent reading, regardless of fuel level.

I took my time in removing the fluffy corrosion with a stiff nylon brush, then drenched it all in an excellent switch cleaner and lubricant called Servisol, adding a squirt of Würth penetrating fluid for good measure. A bit of pressure on the float rod actually got it moving, stiffly at first,

but with increasing smoothness as I worked it back and forth with more fluid. Soon, it would drop under its own weight and rise at what must be a similar pressure exerted by the float. I put it all back together and was pleasantly surprised when I turned the ignition on and saw a new reading on the gauge. Adding more fuel at the petrol station saw it rise by a suitable amount, so I'm daring to call it fixed.

UNDER-PROTECTION

My partner in this restoration, Findlay Wyatt, has a father with a four-post





...with the float soon dropping under its own weight.



Hey presto, a working fuel gauge!



Servisol has been handy in reviving many furred-up contacts.



Once again into the tedious job of removing a door card.



Tiny screws must come out from behind the escutcheons.



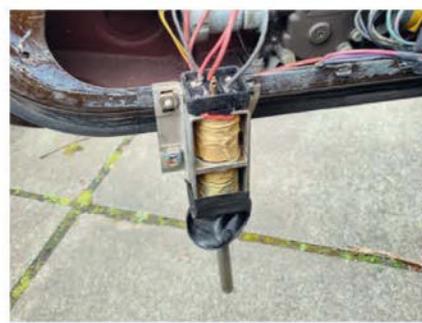
Worst of all is access to these two small bolts.



The reason for this task is lacquer jumping off in sheets.



Numbers on the back of the door timber, tied to the car to ensure they all match.



Testing the solenoid in situ by hanging it on a door card fixing hole.

ramp and we were very grateful to borrow this one Saturday to go right through the various surfaces under the car, brushing off surface rust and protecting everything either with rust converter or Swarfega Duck Oil (or both). I'm a real convert to Duck Oil – it's rather like WD40 would be if it didn't evaporate. Buy it in five-litre cans and decant it into squirty bottles and it not only does the job any penetrating fluid would do, it can be sprayed,

brushed or rubbed onto any potentially vulnerable chassis component or floor section to leave a dark, oily-rag finish that repels water. However, the ramp in question is outside... and we chose to do this on the day when one of those Atlantic storms hit Scotland, so there are no photos to record the event! Still, it's good to know the car is a little less vulnerable underneath.

Finally, on to one of the more significant jobs on the list: freeing up the

central locking mechanism in each door and, whilst there, removing and restoring the veneered timber door cappings. I decided to start on the nearside rear door, having got to know how they go together when investigating the offside version (see Staff Cars, March/April 2024 issue). I won't repeat the process, except to say that those two bolts holding on the armrest (and therefore the door card) must be about as tricky to remove as any on »



With the end plate removed, the plunger can slide out.



Helpful family cats involve themselves in most jobs.



Removing the end plate from the solenoid housing.



Spinning splunger in a drill allowed polishing, albeit to no avail.



The aim will be to retain a dark tint with new lacquer.



At least the car is now in use, with the odometer recently rolling over to 70,000 miles.

the car. To restore solenoid function, I was hoping my previous approach of grabbing one end of the central plunger in a drill and whizzing it round would suffice to remove or break up any corrosion; but no such luck this time.

Testing it in situ showed it was getting stuck in the 'up' position. I was obliged to knock back the rivet-like fixings for the top of the solenoid housing and remove the end plate, allowing the plunger to come out for a proper clean and polish. It went back together and, to my grief, it was no better. So,

despite a free-moving plunger, it was one of the coils at fault, not the amount of grot within. Can it be rewound or the break located and repaired? To be continued... but refurbished solenoids are well over £200 including VAT.

The central locking fix was meant to be a quick, incidental job made possible by the real reason for removing the door cards: those timber door cappings. A Silver Shadow-owning friend on Facebook, Melissa Jardine, achieved very impressive results with a DIY job involving careful sanding back and

then lacquering by hand with a soft brush, using enough coats to cut it back through increasingly fine grades of wet-and-dry paper before polishing to the required finish. I'm tempted to emulate this, but I need to take advice about colouration. The photo shows how dark the old lacquer is, and I don't want to end up with much paler door cappings than dash. With a sensible, cautious approach I hope I can return them to as-new appearance without sending them away somewhere and writing a blank cheque. I guess we'll find out! ■

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• **PERSONAL CHOICE** •

MARQUE OF RESPECT

Three years after acquiring his first Rolls-Royce at the age of 23, Callum Simpson introduces the various examples he's since gone on to enjoy

I just wanted to share my own personal story and my passion for Rolls-Royce, which started with my family, who owned numerous Rolls-Royce and Bentley models over the years. These included many Silver Shadows as well as a coachbuilt Bentley. As a result, I've always been totally fascinated by them.

Whilst attending shows, I always dreamt of owning my own Rolls-Royce, but felt it was always out of reach at such a young age. All of that changed, however, when I purchased my first one – a very early (1981) Silver Spirit. I was shocked and pleasantly surprised by just how cheap the insurance was, despite me being only 23 years old at the time. Sadly, though, my ownership was short-lived as some bodywork was needed, and so I decided to let the car go.

What I really had my eyes on at the time was a Silver Shadow II. It turned out that a good friend of mine who looks after my cars, Andy McKnight, had just such a model that he'd mechanically recommissioned over a number of

years. With some persuasion, he said he'd be willing to sell it. And as Andy had done an apprenticeship with Weybridge Autos, I knew I would always have someone to look after the car should I need to have any work done or simply seek advice. I subsequently enjoyed many happy miles, attending Hampton Court's Concours of Elegance and various other events, as well as using it for taking the dogs out!

The only thing that Silver Shadow II needed was some paintwork and attention to the woodwork, but after receiving eye-watering quotes I came to the conclusion that it would be cheaper to purchase another car – one that already had excellent bodywork and a smart interior. This is what led me to purchase my 1972 Silver Shadow, which I bought blind at the beginning of 2023 after a long chat with the dealer and having seen various videos and photographs. I was happy with what the dealer told me, as well as the overall condition of the car. It was a beautiful specification, finished in Shell Grey over Black Pearl with a Cherry Red interior. The history file was very extensive, with



Callum's first Rolls-Royce was this particularly early Silver Spirit.



The Silver Shadow II was sold after Callum received eye-watering quotes for its refurbishment.



This 1972 Silver Shadow was bought blind by Callum at the beginning of 2023.

the factory build sheets and even the original bill of sale.

The car did need some brake work, so I booked it in with Andy and he found that both brake pumps had failed. After having them refurbished along with some other minor work, the Silver Shadow was back to health just in time for the Concours of Elegance again at Hampton Court. The car performed really well and looked stunning on display, although I didn't enjoy driving it as much as I did my previous Shadow II; you can certainly tell the difference with the steering set-up between the two models.

This led me on to my fourth Rolls-Royce, a Silver Spirit II. I wanted a later fuel-injected model, mainly due to them being better equipped and more user-friendly amongst modern-day traffic. I stumbled across a '91 example just 10 minutes down the road from me, a car that was owned by Legends in Time founder, Peter Ratcliffe. Due to ill health, he was selling some of his very impressive collection. I liked the fact that this particular Spirit II had had in excess of £10,000 spent on an overhaul due to being off the road for a long period of time, with most of the work being carried out by Frank Dale & Stepsons. It really does show, as the car runs like clockwork and drives superbly. »



At the age of 26, Callum is now the proud owner of this splendid looking Silver Spirit II.



Below: The interior of the Spirit II remains in excellent condition.

My ownership of the Spirit II has been brief so far, as I purchased it only in November 2023. I took it to the New Year's Day classic gathering at Brooklands as well as other events since then, and it always proves to be such a joy to drive. For me, there is no greater experience than being behind the wheel of a Rolls-Royce; I have owned many cars, including classic Minis, Porsches and Mercedes, but the Rolls-Royce will always be my favoured choice.

People often remark on my age (I'm now 26) and seem surprised that I own such a car. But I'm so pleased that I took the plunge in the end, getting to experience these classic models. I hope that at some point my next car will be a Bentley, ideally either an Arnage or a Continental GT, both of which have a great deal to offer. ■



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

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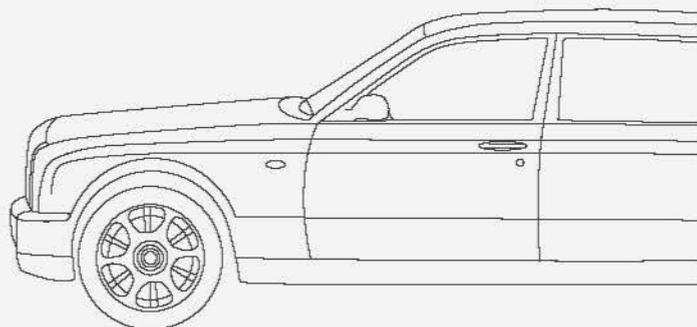
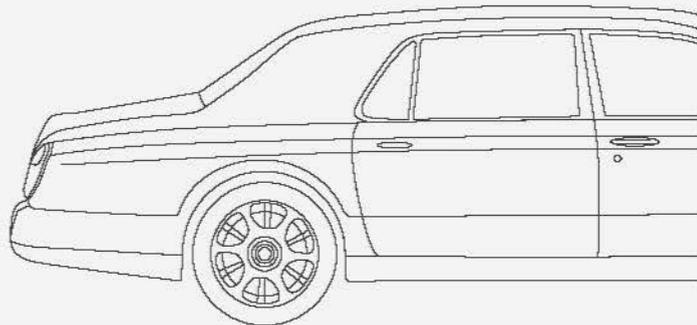
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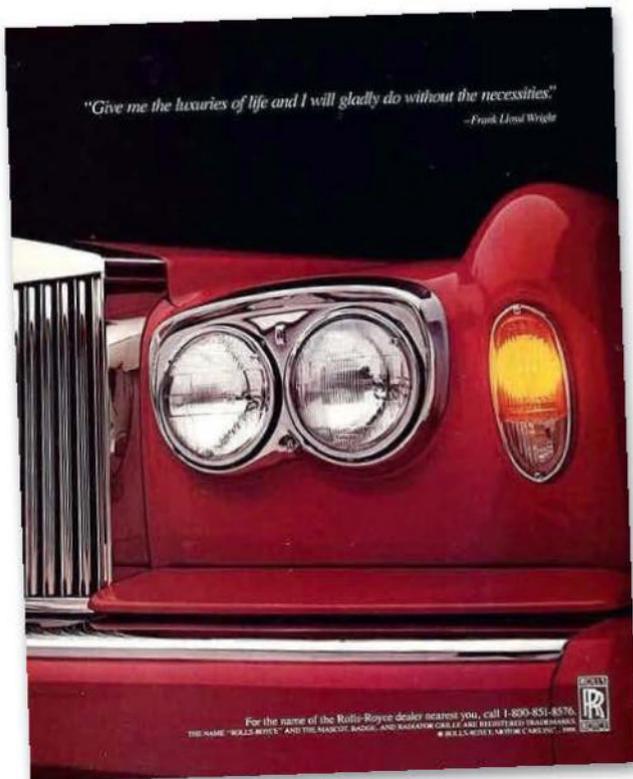
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FROM THE ARCHIVES

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

WORDS: PAUL GUINNESS



◀ LUXURIES OF LIFE

In this American-market advert, Rolls-Royce went for a simple approach to promote the latest Corniche, with a close-up image of the car's front end, above which was a simple quote from renowned architect and writer, Frank Lloyd Wright: "Give me the luxuries of life and I will gladly do without the necessities". When it comes to advertising, this is the perfect example of 'less is more'.

STILL A ROLLS-ROYCE ▶

Published in May 1977 was this advert for Appleyard, a UK Rolls-Royce retailer with a total of five different outlets. The ad was published in *Motor* magazine alongside a road test of the new Silver Shadow II, and recommended that potential buyers visited an Appleyard showroom in Leeds, Harrogate, Huddersfield, Carlisle or Glasgow in order to view this latest model.

The advert asked readers a direct question: "Isn't it advisable to purchase the world's finest motor car from the top service specialists in the country?" And it had this message of reassurance for anyone tempted by the £22,809 Silver Shadow II: "Appleyard invite you to verify that in a changing world, a Rolls-Royce is still a Rolls-Royce..."

Rolls-Royce and its new Shadow
No two are identical

A Silver Shadow has to be its own car. Each car is made individually, and virtually by hand. In these days of ever more technically automated mass production, this may seem absurd. But if the Rolls-Royce is to retain its traditional and unique balance of safety, convenience, silence and speed, comfort, reliability, distinction and durability, there is no other way.

It makes possible a policy of continuous development. More than 2000 improvements distinguish today's car from the first Silver Shadow of 1965.

Among other advances, the Silver Shadow II adds four-level automatic air conditioning, rack and pinion steering, modified front suspension, re-designed front and rear glass, padded, wrap-around bumpers and a new bolt-on exhaust system to an already formidable specification.

Hand building makes every last detail to be tailored to suit the owner, carefully selected by Rolls-Royce. Handlet car will have quite the name pattern. But extra water will be cut and just added in case it is needed soon, perhaps for the car. Silver comes from the rollers you have created as 10 years are still coming, precautions have to be taken.

It allows every craftsman to take personal responsibility for his own work. As each operation is completed, he signs his name on the list by signing the pre-printed second book, which accompanies each car on every step of its three-month journey through the factory.

Individual craftsmanship gives each cover the opportunity to expose his talent, his personality even his car. So no two Shadows are ever identical - any more than two men.

If you feel the time has come to step out of the shadows into a Shadow, the Silver Shadow II awaits inspection at your local Rolls-Royce Appointed Distributor. If you do not know how to find it, he can be located by telephoning 01-629 8000.

ROLLS ROYCE
MOTOR CARS

Makers of the best car in the world



IMPROVING THE BEST

The debut of the Silver Shadow II in 1977 saw Rolls-Royce publishing a series of press adverts to promote the newcomer, including the two shown here. Issued for the home market, their aim was to emphasise just how much of a step forward the Silver Shadow II represented, with each advert boasting that "more than 2000 improvements distinguish today's car from the first Silver Shadow of 1965".

This was to be expected, of course, given just how much the Silver Shadow had already evolved during its initial 12 years on sale. The first advert, however, also stressed the car's individuality, explaining that each car was made

Rolls-Royce and its new Shadow

Think of it as a long-term investment

To begin with as an investment in dedicated engineering. Safety, silence, speed and smoothness, comfort, distinction, reliability and longevity. The outstanding values of a Rolls-Royce.

...depend on patient, precise engineers who are never satisfied. So the new Silver Shadow II is distinguished from the original 1965 version by more than 2000 improvements. Many

are modifications in detail introduced continuously over the years. But those appearing for the first time now on the Silver Shadow II are Mark-apart. They include: automatic two-level air conditioning, rack and pinion steering, modified front suspension, a re-designed front and rear glass, padded, wrap-around bumpers and a new four exhaust system.

All this on top of an already formidable technical specification. The alloy V-8 engine, unique dual-linking system, ultra-sensitive self-leveling suspension and the widespread replacement of mechanical linkages by electrical devices, spring immediately to mind. But the list is endless.

Then, of course, the Shadow II is an investment in craftsmanship.

It gives without saying that only the finest materials are used: supple leather, deep-rib Wilson carpeting of pure/wool wool and in order to choose the right material to upholster the car.

But the most precious and lavishly used material of all is time. The car is virtually handmade by craftsmen who work to exacting standards. Then they lay their reputation on the line by signing for each operation they perform.

Finally, of course, the Shadow II is an investment.

Choice owners, deep-rib Wilson carpeting of pure/wool wool and in order to choose the right material to upholster the car.

But the most precious and lavishly used material of all is time. The car is virtually handmade by craftsmen who work to exacting standards. Then they lay their reputation on the line by signing for each operation they perform.

Finally, of course, the Shadow II is an investment.

You will own a car that is completely satisfying, completely individual, completely attuned to your needs and your personality. A Silver Shadow has no identical twin - not even another Shadow.

Its ability to carry you further faster, with less fatigue and less cost than any other car you have ever driven will be a lasting asset. And its value will still be appreciable long after a lesser car will have gone to the scrapyard. A glance at the cars for sale columns of your newspaper will assure you of that.

If you now feel yourself ready to consider investing in the Shadow II, contact your local Rolls-Royce Appointed Distributor. If you do not know how to find it, he can be located by telephoning 01-629 8000.

ROLLS ROYCE
MOTOR CARS

Makers of the best car in the world

"virtually by hand" to ensure that no Silver Shadow had a twin... "not even another Silver Shadow".

The second advert, meanwhile, described the Silver Shadow II as a "long-term investment" thanks to the fact that "its value will still be

appreciable long after a lesser car will have gone to the scrapyard". Rolls-Royce enjoyed the longest life expectancy of just about any marque, suggested the ad: "A glance at the 'cars for sale' columns of your newspaper will assure you of that".

BENTLEY FLAGSHIP ▶

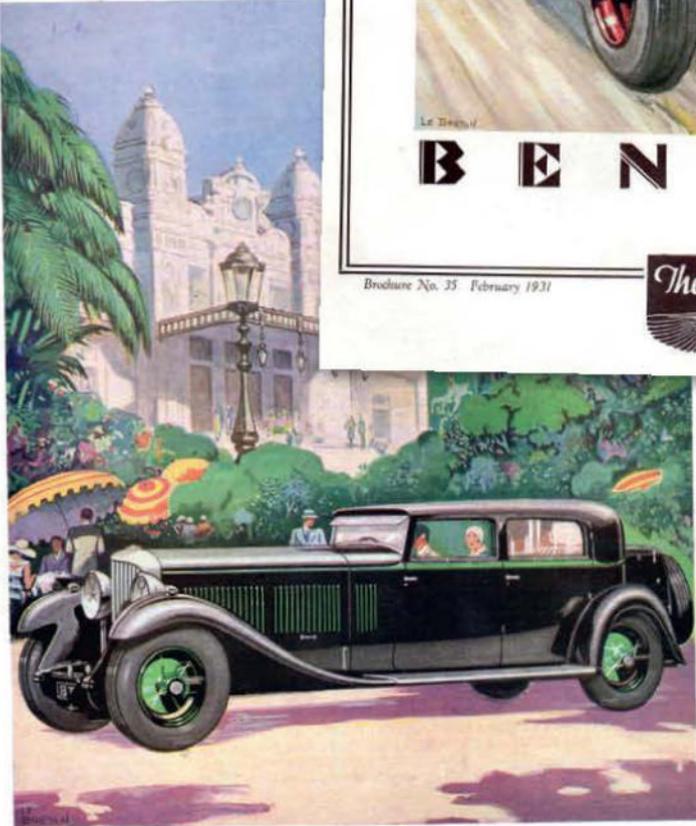
The final model launched by Bentley before the company's collapse in 1931 and its subsequent rescue from receivership by Rolls-Royce was the appropriately named 8 Litre, boasting 7983cc straight-six power. With an overhead camshaft, four valves per cylinder and twin-spark ignition, the engine itself was a highly advanced design for the time; and it also offered extreme flexibility, with enough torque for the 8 Litre to accelerate effortlessly in top gear from a walking pace.



BENTLEY

Brochure No. 35 February 1931

The 8 LITRE

BENTLEY MOTORS LIMITED
POLLEN HOUSE, CORK STREET, LONDON, W. 1
Telegrams: "Bentmotlin, Plowse, London" Telephone: Regent 6911

DIRECTORS
W. O. Bentley, W. G. Bentley, Sir Hubert Healey, J. K. Currah, H. Pile, R. V. Wainell

When the 8 Litre made its debut at the London Motor Show of October 1930, its output of 220bhp was hugely impressive for the time. The newcomer's list price of £1850 also generated headlines, as this was one of the most expensive cars on sale that year. The 8 Litre's timing could have been better, however, with the onset of the Great Depression (following the stock market crash of October 1929) having a major impact on worldwide sales of luxury cars.

This particular brochure for the 8 Litre dates from February 1931, featuring stylised illustrations by famed motoring illustrator, Jack Le Breton.

ULTIMATE CONVERTIBLE ►

Effectively a convertible version of the Continental R, the Azure provided Bentley with a bespoke new flagship when it made its debut in 1995. A total of 1087 examples of the first-generation Azure were hand-crafted during its seven-year career, a respectable figure considering how expensive (even by Crewe standards) this stunning soft-top really was.

By 1996, the Azure's first full year on sale, this range-topping Bentley cost £215,000 in the UK, at a time when the Continental R was listed at just over £180,000. Indeed, so expensive was the Azure, you could instead have bought two Rolls-Royce Silver Spirit IIIs and still have £5000 left over for an exotic holiday.

Not surprisingly, this US-market advert highlighted the Azure's upmarket status, suggesting in its headline: "You don't park it, you position it". The text beneath the image explained that the Azure was "as sensuous as it is sporting", with an opulent leather-and-walnut interior that could "accommodate four occupants in traditional Bentley style".

Bentley.
You don't park it, you position it.



Beneath the stunning lines of the Bentley Azure is the sophisticated technology of a 150 mph supercar. Its turbocharged, intercooled 6.75 liter V-8 engine can launch it from standstill to 60 mph in 6.3 seconds.

Inside, this Bentley is as sensuous as it is sporting. A sumptuous leather cockpit, enhanced by hand-polished burr walnut veneer, will accommodate four occupants in traditional Bentley style.

For lease or purchase information and nearest dealer,
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The Reward of a Lifetime.

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ELEGANT AND INDIVIDUAL ▲

One of the classic Rolls-Royce brochures from the late '70s is this publication for the Corniche, featuring both the fixed-head and convertible versions of the time. Although famously derived from the Silver Shadow's SY-series platform, the Corniche was hand-built by Mulliner Park Ward – the specialist coachbuilder operated by Rolls-Royce since 1961, following the firm's merger of its HJ Mulliner and Park Ward divisions.

The brochure described the Corniche as "an elegant and completely individual motor car, either a saloon

or a convertible with a power-operated hood". Both versions were, of course, beautifully finished to the highest standards, with "hand-cut, hand-fitted Connolly leather" and "rich Lombardy veneers" used throughout the interior, while beneath the surface could be found "some of the most advanced engineering in the world".

The brochure's copywriters boasted that the Corniche was "the grand tourer *par excellence*", an upmarket and exclusive offering that was "as practical as it is elegant".

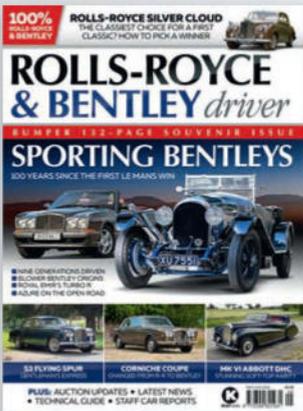
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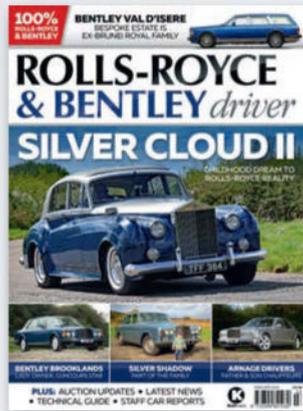
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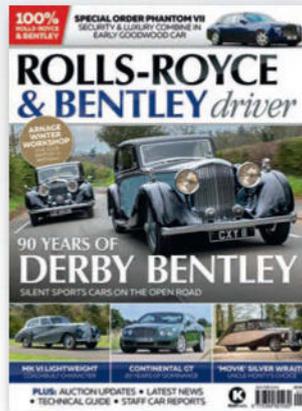
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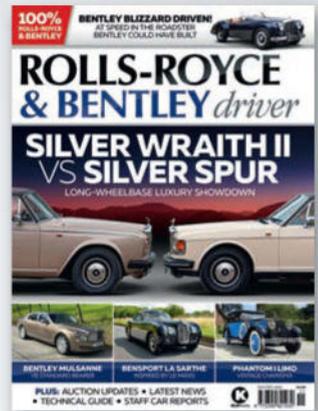
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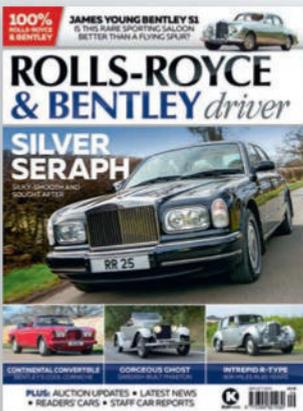
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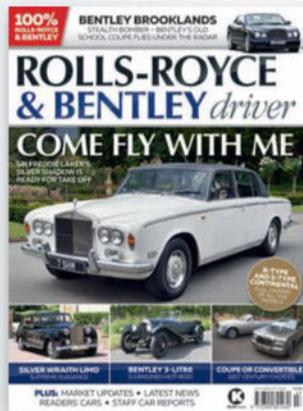
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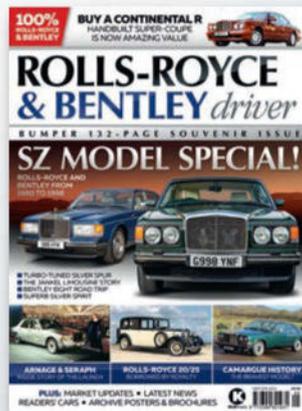
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PAUL GUINNESS

Our returning former editor ponders the current state of Rolls-Royce and Bentley, and wonders which marque has the 'best' custodian

There's no doubt that both Rolls-Royce Motor Cars and Bentley Motors are currently in fine commercial fettle. The two marques, which were inextricably linked for more than 70 years, are now enjoying record sales and headline-grabbing profits, as well as achieving major export earnings for the UK. By any standards, this is a good news story.

Rolls-Royce has been under BMW custodianship for more than 21 years now, reinventing itself via the launch of the all-new Phantom at the start of 2003. And Bentley has been under Volkswagen control for the last quarter of a century, VW having emerged victorious in the battle for that particular brand as well as the

“Both marques have to look to the future, hence the debut of Rolls-Royce’s all-electric Spectre”

historic Crewe factory. As we look back on the progress made by both Rolls-Royce and Bentley since the dawn of the millennium, however, it's interesting to ponder which marque has the 'best' custodian.

I put 'best' in inverted commas, as these things are inevitably subjective. Does 'best' mean the company that helps its brand to generate the biggest profit, which ensures its long-term survival at a time when the automotive landscape is changing at an

unprecedented pace? Or is 'best' the parent that most successfully embraces (and understands the importance of) its marque's history? Does the fact that Bentley is still based at its long-term home of Crewe give it an edge over Rolls-Royce in terms of enthusiast appeal? Or does the Rolls-Royce image still reign supreme as 'the best car in the world', aided by the unrivalled opulence and stateliness of the current Phantom?

Both marques have to look to the future, hence the debut of Rolls-Royce's all-electric Spectre. Bentley, meanwhile, has announced that its inaugural electric offering has been pushed back to 2026, as the firm focuses initially on expanding its range of plug-in hybrid models. It will be fascinating to see how each company faces up to the demands of ever-evolving legislation, the challenges of electrification, plus increased competition from automotive upstarts.

The Rolls-Royce and Bentley buyer demographic has, of course, changed over the years. There was a time when both marques appealed primarily to 'old money', while the arrival of the Silver Shadow and T-series in 1965 saw a whole new generation of owner-driver clients flocking to the showrooms. We should perhaps bear that in mind before we criticise what many see as the 'gaudy' colour choices and personalisation preferences of some of today's Rolls-Royce and Bentley buyers, particularly in major export markets.

So, putting such personal opinions to one side, we have a simple question to pose. Out of BMW's ownership of Rolls-Royce and Volkswagen's custodianship of Bentley, which company do you consider to be the best (and most successful) corporate parent of the 21st century? We'd love to hear your views. Email us at rrb.ed@kelsey.co.uk. ■



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