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Access all eras

We're covering a vast range of different eras in this issue, kicking off chronologically with an in-depth look at Rolls-Royce's American dream. To crack the US market, the company set up its own plant at Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1921. And over the next 12 years, almost 3000 Rolls-Royces were assembled there, with ready-built cars helping to satisfy impatient buyers' demands in a way that the British factory couldn't. It's a fascinating tale and I'm grateful to writer and automotive historian, Richard Gunn, for telling the tale so brilliantly.

Bringing things more up to date, we've a twist on the Silver Shadow theme via a potentially unique shooting brake version that was built by The Chelsea Workshop more than 30 years ago. It not only survives in fine fettle but is kept busy as a classic workhorse, ferrying four dogs (and their two owners) around, as well as towing a classic caravan on a regular basis. And talking of active cars, we also meet the custodian of a Bentley Turbo R, a machine that's cost a hefty sum in maintenance and upgrades but which now provides the ultimate in long-distance European motoring.

In addition, there's a how-to guide aimed at SZ owners, a trip 'down under' to meet the owner of a Bentley Continental GTC, and an update on Nigel Boothman's troublesome Silver Shadow. We also pay a visit to the three-day extravaganza that is the RREC's Annual Rally – so if you were there, check out the report that starts on page 80 to see if your car is included.

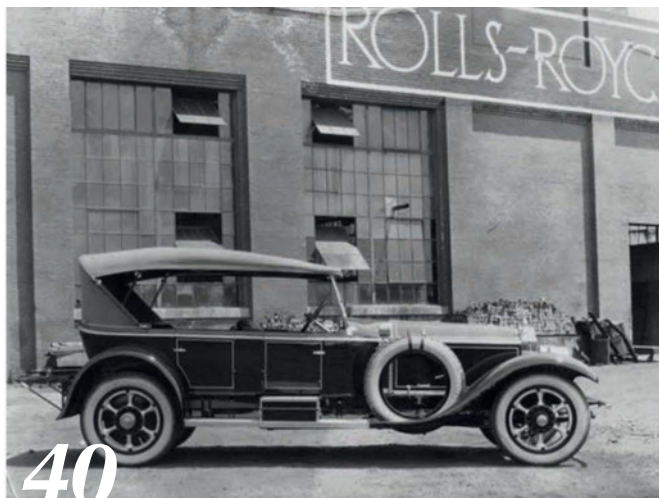
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GT SPEED GOES HYBRID

Bentley's latest Continental GT Speed has been officially revealed, the first car to use the company's Ultra Performance Hybrid powertrain. As an evolution of the previous model, the Continental GT carries over much of its bodywork and interior technology; but with Bentley Motors claiming that 68 per cent of the car's components have been replaced, it's enough of a redesign for it to be homologated as a new car.

Headlining the update is the addition of a new V8-engined PHEV powertrain, which replaces the outgoing W12 that has served the company so well for over 20 years. But a loss of four cylinders doesn't mean any loss of power, as the petrol and electric motors combine to produce an astonishing 771bhp – making this Bentley's most powerful road car yet.

Due to be introduced to the Flying Spur saloon and Bentayga SUV as well, the plug-in hybrid powertrain mates an updated version of Bentley's 4.0-litre V8 with a 188bhp electric motor within the automatic gearbox, its energy supplied by a 25.9kWh battery under the boot floor. Bentley claims that the car can drive up to 50 miles with the engine off at speeds of up to 87mph.

As well as its most powerful, the latest GT Speed is also Bentley's fastest ever production car, with a claimed top speed of 208mph and the 0-62mph (0-100km/h) sprint in just 3.2 seconds. The GTC soft-top version that's also being launched adds only 0.2 seconds to that time.

The GT's 'chassis' has been substantially upgraded, gaining a brand new stability control set-up, an updated anti-roll system, plus new suspension components that allow for "more sophisticated tuning options".

With the battery mounted at the back, the Continental now has 50/50 weight distribution and is "inherently balanced during dynamic driving", says Bentley. When set to Dynamic mode, the drivetrain is tuned to let the rear axle slip slightly, giving the driver greater control of power deployment mid-corner, albeit with a "safety net to bring the car back in line if required".

Despite being based around the previous generation, the latest GT features a new look aided by styling cues from the ultra-exclusive Batur and Bacalar, the most obvious being a new headlight design with an 'eyebrow' motif – something that will become a feature across Bentley's new-generation models. The bodywork also features fewer creases and lines than before, as well as a reworked rear end, ensuring that the newcomer stands out from its predecessor.

Deliveries of the latest GT Speed are expected to start in the autumn, with a UK list price of £236,000 before options.





INTERNS HEAD TO ROLLS-ROYCE

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars has welcomed the company's intern 'Class of 2024-25' to its Goodwood headquarters. The 90 new arrivals are all undergraduates, studying a variety of degree courses at universities around the UK.

During their 13 months with Rolls-Royce, the interns will work alongside experienced engineers and designers, as well as professionals in departments including finance, sales and marketing, IT, human resources and corporate communications.

To ease the transition from academia to the workplace, the new interns were invited to Goodwood for a networking day, an event led by the current intern cohort who

offered their new colleagues an opportunity to learn more about the Internship Programme. The event also allowed the new intake to meet their future managers, teammates and peers, building relationships and making connections ahead of their formal start date.

While an internship does not guarantee a job with the company in the future, many return after graduating to build long-term careers with Rolls-Royce, going on to take up supervisory, management and leadership roles. To find out more about career opportunities at Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, visit www.rolls-roycemotorcars.com/careers.

IAN CAMERON, 1950-2024

The former chief designer of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, Ian Cameron, has died in an attack at his home in Germany. His body was found at Herrsching, Upper Bavaria, on July 12th.

Cameron, 74, who died from knife wounds, was the director of design at Rolls-Royce between 1999 and 2012, during which time he took the lead in shaping such pivotal models as the Phantom and Ghost.

A statement from Rolls-Royce Motor Cars says: "We were deeply shocked and saddened to hear of the death of Ian Cameron, who... played a significant role in shaping Rolls-Royce from when it was first acquired by BMW Group and moved to its home at Goodwood, West Sussex. During Ian's tenure, he led the design team for all

Phantom family and Ghost models, creating thoroughly contemporary motor cars that remained sympathetic to the marque's design lineage."

Paying tribute to Cameron in *Autocar* magazine, motoring journalist Steve Cropley explains more about the early design process for the new Phantom: "Well known for bold thinking but a stickler for authenticity who swotted up on Rolls-Royce history, Cameron based his core team for five months in a former Barclay's bank building overlooking London's Hyde Park, the sort of territory already inhabited by Rolls-Royces."

Cropley was the first journalist to see what would eventually become the Phantom of 2003. He was snuck into the company's top-secret design HQ at the end of 2000 armed with



only a notebook, as he recalls: "My notebook sketches turned out to be pretty terrible but they did provide a bit of guidance for a professional illustrator in a story published on April 4th, 2001. I'll never forget Cameron's beguiling humour and candour that night, and the extent of his trust, given the potential risk involved. I'll also always remember his passionate but entirely plausible explanation of the need for a radical design approach to the headline aspects of the new Rolls-Royce."



MICHELOTTI MARVEL

A one-off 1968 Silver Shadow custom-built by renowned Turin coachbuilder Giovanni Michelotti at the request of Pierre Scapula, a world-renowned interior designer and collector of antique jewellery, has recently found a new home via a French auction house.

Scapula designed this unique car to his own taste, commissioning Michelotti to carry out the work. According to auctioneer Aguttes, the end result was "a testament to its owner's refined taste and appreciation of luxury", with a design that "harmoniously blends the classic elegance of Rolls-Royce with the best of Italian made-to-measure design."



Opinion may be divided over just how successful the transformation was, but there's no doubting the car's head-turning ability. And set against a pre-sale estimate of €25,000-€45,000, someone liked it enough to pay €36,720 including fees.





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AUCTION BARGAINS

The Bonhams Online auction hosted in conjunction with the RREC's Annual Rally at the end of June brought an interesting mix of results, as Peter Lavers mentions in this issue's Auction Tracker. One highlight, however, was a 1973 Silver Shadow described by

Bonhams Online as a "lovely example with the original invoice and a significant history file". With 66,000 miles showing, and with the car coming complete with the cherished registration number 100 ATV, its final sale price of £9040 including fees

sounds like something of a bargain.

Meanwhile, a 1990 Bentley Eight that was entered into the sale without a reserve and was described as "well used, and the vendor says *running well*", ended up changing hands for just £3940 including buyer's premium.



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OPEN-TOP OPULENCE

Getting behind the wheel of a Corniche Convertible is rarely a disappointing experience... but during our recent trip to rural Kent, this example managed to impress even more than usual

WORDS & PHOTOS: PAUL GUINNESS



The debut of the two-door Silver Shadow by Mulliner Park Ward – Rolls-Royce Motors' in-house coachbuilding division – as early as March 1966 was a surprise to many, following on from the successful launch of the four-door range only the previous year. James Young famously got there first with its own take on the two-door theme,

but there was no doubt that MPW's effort was notably more stylish, with a touch of curvaceousness to its rear flanks in order to separate it from the saloon on which it was based.

A two-door hardtop inevitably lends itself to being transformed into a convertible, hence Rolls-Royce's October 1967 unveiling of its new soft-top flagship at that year's London Motor Show. The delay was

due to the extra work needed to make an al fresco variant, with extra underbody strengthening required and the need to come up with a power-operated hood that met the company's demanding standards.

The hood alone took a week to put together in each case, with an entire car taking around 20 weeks to build from start to finish – including having to travel between MPW's »



“The Corniche – particularly in soft-top guise – built upon the success that the original MPW two-doors had started”



Rolls-Royce's factory in Crewe. It was not a process to be rushed, and was obviously labour-intensive thanks to MPW's hand-crafted panelwork.

Rolls-Royce boosted its MPW two-doors by announcing upgrades on them before they filtered down to the four-door saloons. They were the first to get the new GM400 gearbox, with air conditioning then being standardised in spring 1969. And this policy of advance innovation would continue into the Corniche years, with better brakes, cruise control and improved suspension all being seen first on the two-door models.

The Corniche name officially appeared in March 1971, giving the soft-top model a simpler moniker than

the previous Mulliner Park Ward Two-Door Convertible. But this was more than just a rebranding exercise, as the Corniche's V8 came with 10 per cent more power than before, pushing it to around 220bhp (though this figure was inevitably not confirmed). The Corniche also boasted a redesigned interior, with more wood, a rev counter and a new centre console. The radiator grille was made deeper and new wheel trims were fitted, which also aided brake cooling.

Despite a 10 per cent price increase, the Corniche – particularly in soft-top guise – built upon the success that the original MPW two-doors had started. And the upgrades continued, with the new-style shock-absorbing bumpers of the Silver Shadow II being adopted in 1977, along with the

same front air dam, slightly flared wheelarches, rack-and-pinion steering and enhanced suspension. Then during 1979 the rear suspension from the forthcoming Silver Spirit was adopted, notably improving road manners.

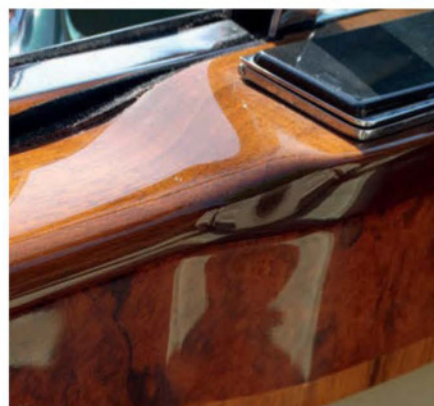
The improvements continued in the '80s and beyond, with the Corniche II debuting in the US market in 1986, while by 1990 the Corniche III brought with it anti-lock brakes, Bosch electronic fuel-injection, alloy wheels, airbags and other examples of modernity. The Corniche IV came in 1992, adopting the Silver Spirit's adaptive ride suspension as well as four-speed automatic transmission, a heated glass rear screen instead of plastic, and twin airbags. The end finally came in 1995, though, with



just 25 turbocharged Corniche S models being built to complete a total Corniche production run of 6823 cars.

SUPERB SURVIVOR

With Corniche hard-top production ceasing as early as March 1981, it's not surprising that the Convertible accounts for a huge proportion of the model's total production run. These days, this soft-top MPW-built classic remains highly sought after, with hefty asking prices of the best »



FEATURE CAR
1982 ROLLS-ROYCE CORNICHE

“With improvements carried out during the range’s first few years on sale, there’s a lot to be said for a Corniche from the early ’80s”



examples as a result. But if you’re in the market for just such a machine, which model should tempt you the most?

There will be purists who argue that the early cars are the ones to go for, whether that means a launch-spec Silver Shadow MPW Two-Door Convertible or one of the first of the Corniche-branded cars. However, with so many improvements carried out during the range’s first few years on sale, there’s a lot to be said for one from the late 1970s or early ’80s. Not everyone will appreciate the later-style bumpers and front air dam, but the same could be said for the Silver Shadow II – and whatever your feelings on the aesthetics, there’s no doubting the benefits elsewhere.

To experience a Corniche of this vintage, we recently headed to Kent-

based Ghost Motor Works to take a look at the 1982 Corniche Convertible you see here – and to get behind the wheel on what was a gloriously sunny day. As the car came into view, with Ghost’s sales specialist, Frankie Batchelor, manoeuvring it into position for our first set of photographs, we were inevitably impressed. With just 60,000 miles under its wheels and a detailed history showing it to be an extremely well cared-for example, this Scots Pine survivor gleamed in the sunshine; and as the immaculate green mohair hood glided its way back, revealing immaculate burr walnut veneer trim and the original Beige hide interior, complemented by Beige Wilton carpets and overrugs, we were looking forward to our rural drive.

Given the car’s low mileage and evidence of regular maintenance, we

weren’t surprised to find the 6.75-litre V8 sounding gloriously smooth at idle, with no hint of any rattles or errant noises to spoil the serenity. But it was only when we’d completed the first section of photography and were able to finally get behind the wheel that the engine truly started to impress.

Emerging onto the narrow lanes that surround Ghost Motor Works’ headquarters in Claygate Cross, a tiny hamlet fewer than 20 miles east of Sevenoaks, there was little opportunity to put the Corniche through its paces. Instead, we settled back into the armchair-like comfort of the front seats and enjoyed every moment of slowly cruising those lanes, the roof-down experience giving us an opportunity to make the most of the superb views across that picturesque part of Kent. What



The tidy engine bay reveals a 6.75-litre V8 that – aided by its low mileage – remains in fine health.



helped, though, was the near-silence of the V8, particularly when compared with some of the higher-mileage examples we've driven over the years.

GATHERING PACE

The super-smooth impression continued once we finally hit a main road and

were able to apply some extra right-foot pressure, revealing an impressive level of acceleration. Obviously, any convertible being driven with its roof down tends to feel sprightly, but here was genuine performance – and even as the revs rose, the engine provided supreme refinement throughout the effortless gear changes. With the side

windows lowered and the hedges at the side of the road becoming increasingly a blur, the loudest sound was that of the wind rushing past us as we savoured the ultimate in early '80s open-top motoring.

On a variety of different road surfaces, this Corniche's suspension also impressed, as it soaked up bumps, »

FEATURE CAR

1982 ROLLS-ROYCE CORNICHE



“The super-smooth impression continued once we hit a main road and were able to apply some extra right-foot pressure”

potholes and other imperfections with consummate ease. It was when we came to a succession of bends on the more major roads in that part of Kent, however, that the advantages of a Corniche from the start of the 1980s became most obvious. Not only does such a car benefit from the suspension improvements of the Silver Shadow II, it also boasts the subsequent rear-end upgrade that arrived in 1979, which gave an inkling of how the forthcoming Silver Spirit would handle and ride. Find such a Corniche that's been as cherished as this particular example and you'll have one that rides as smoothly as a Rolls-Royce should but which also offers enough firmness through a series of S-bends to impress with its lack of 'wallowing'. Combine that with the precision of rack-and-pinion steering and the reassurance of

improved brakes, and you arguably have the pick of the bunch.

At the time of our visit, this car was on sale with an asking price of £78,000, which seemed perfectly sensible considering the overall condition of its coachwork, paintwork, interior and mechanicals. Adding to its appeal was a hefty history file that included the original handbook folder, complete with two stamped service books, plus a large collection of invoices from Rolls-Royce specialists. In its marketing, Ghost Motor Works justifiably described this Corniche as “one of the finest we have seen”, so we weren't surprised to hear that by the time we began writing this feature, the car had been sold and now forms part of an enthusiast's private collection. No doubt its latest custodian has



This Corniche was once owned by RDS Television and was used in the *Oz* and *James Drink to Britain* television series, starring *Oz* Clarke and James May.

already benefited from one of the most stylish, most rewarding modes of summertime classic motoring. ■

THANK YOU: We're grateful to Frankie Batchelor of Ghost Motor Works for providing us with this 1982 Corniche Convertible. For details of the company's latest stock, visit www.ghostmotors.co.uk or call +44 (0)1732 886002.

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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



TOP-SPEC BENTLEY GT

Anyone in the market for a rather special modern classic might be tempted by this 2016 model-year facelift Bentley Continental GT V8 S in Mulliner Driving Specification. The 75,000-mile example is finished in special-order Onyx with a full Black Pack – a carbon-fibre splitter, skirts and rear air diffuser, complemented by gloss black 21in alloys.

The interior is finished in Beluga hide with Alcantara headlining,

Piano Black woodwork, plus cooled and heated massage seats.

This second-generation GT, which was first registered in September 2015, is described by Stewart Walker – the Bentley specialist who's selling the car – as in "superb condition". Not only does it represent "the peak of the model", it also boasts an array of extra-cost options which you'll find listed online.

To find out more about this special

Bentley, which is being offered at £42,995, visit www.stewartwalkerltd.co.uk or call +44 (0)7831 800727.

SUPREME SILVER SPIRIT

Although the Silver Spirit often represents the best value when it comes to classic Rolls-Royce ownership, the finest have been increasing in value for some time now, particularly if it's a low-mileage example that's been cherished from new.

This 1990 Silver Spirit, finished in Rhapsody Metallic, is one such car, having covered just 40,000 miles and coming complete with an "impeccable service history". According to marque specialist RR&B Garages, which has maintained the car for its current owner, this superb survivor is "not to be confused with the average of this type". It is said to be in outstanding condition inside and out, and is claimed to be "one of the best".

The Parchment hide interior is piped in Royal Blue, with the top roll and carpets – protected by lambswool overrugs – also being in Royal Blue. It looks absolutely stunning, as you'd expect with such a low mileage.

With an asking price of £29,950, this particular Silver Spirit will probably be beyond the budget of many enthusiasts of the model; but for the kind of



potential buyer who wants one of the best-preserved examples, there's a lot to like here! Find out more at www.rrbgarages.com or call +44 (0)1527 876513.



READY TO ENJOY

Of all the Silver Clouds, the third-generation model continues to hold the most appeal for many marque enthusiasts. It offers the classic L-series V8 that made its debut via the Silver Cloud II, but combines it with the added aesthetic appeal of quad headlamps, which ushered in a whole new style for Rolls-Royce. And this particular example, currently on sale with The Real Car Company, looks interesting at £39,500.

Chassis number SDW59 is described as a "very smart and sound example", featuring its original Garnet colour scheme and

beige leather interior. The car is said to be "all correct" and "very nicely presented", boasting the all-important tools, handbook and so on. It also benefits from a great deal of body renovation that's apparently been "correctly done", accounting for much of the £50,000 that's been spent on the car in recent years. All of the work is documented with invoices in the history file.

This Silver Cloud III apparently drives very well, and will come MoT'd and fully prepared and serviced. For more details, call +44 (0)1248 602649 or head to www.realcar.co.uk.



LOW-MILEAGE ARNAGE

With only 36,000 miles under its wheels, this particular example of the Bentley Arnage R – said to be in "outstanding condition" by its selling specialist dealer – comes complete with a two-year warranty for its £39,999 asking price.

This 2009-model twin-turbo Arnage is finished in Anthracite with an Oatmeal leather interior, Beluga carpets and burr walnut veneers. It features 18in alloys, an electric sunroof and a rear parking camera, and it's also fitted with "sports suspension".

There's a full service history to confirm the Bentley's low mileage, and (handy for anyone travelling in or out of London) the car is ULEZ-compliant.

To arrange a viewing or for more information, check out <https://hanwells.net> or call +44 (0)208 567 9729.

AUCTION TRACKER

We take a look at the latest auction trends for Rolls-Royce and Bentley classics, picking up on some fascinating results in what is an unpredictable market

WORDS: **PETER LAVERS** IMAGES: **VARIOUS**

	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	1798	-0.2%	n/a	503	-7.9%	3.3%	1295	3.1%	n/a
Number Sold	904	-0.3%	15.5%	323	-7.2%	-5.3%	581	2.7%	31.4%
Total Value of Sales	£33.4m	-0.9%	11.8%	£17.7m	-3.4%	-0.3%	£15.7m	3.5%	29.4%
Average Value	£36,956	0.9%	-3.2%	£54,775	4.1%	5.3%	£27,050	0.8%	-1.6%

This issue's Auction Tracker covers the full 12-month period from July 1st, 2023 to the end of June 2024. Trends are assessed on a 12-month rolling basis versus the numbers published two months ago (2m trend) and year-on-year versus July 2022 to June 2023 (12m trend).

HOLDING STEADY

I am hearing and reading lots of doom and gloom about the state of the classic car auction market, but I'm pleased to report that the Rolls-Royce and Bentley auction market remains stable.

Overall spend is down by very slightly on the 2m trend and remains at over £33m, which is significantly more than 12 months ago. The number of motor cars offered for sale

is remarkably stable at circa 1800, and again around 900 motor cars have been sold. This equates to a sale rate of just 50 per cent, however, which is low and reflects the continuing trend online, which has much a lower sales success.

It's a clear sign that we can't describe the market as 'strong', but it is nevertheless holding up; there are lots of enthusiasts out there spending significant amounts of money at auction.

Average values are again up on the 2m basis, particularly for the physical auctions, which seem to be doing a good job retaining higher value cars despite the shift to online – for example, the Bonhams Online RREC collaboration.

SALES vs AUCTION ESTIMATES

Those of you who read mainstream classic car magazines will be familiar with the pie charts for individual auctions that show the percentages of cars sold above/within/below estimate.

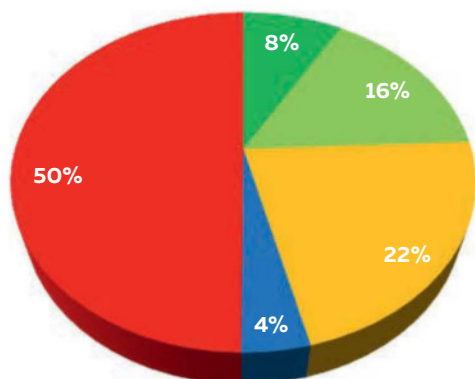
I thought it would be fun to carry this analysis out for the whole Rolls-Royce and Bentley auction market. The trouble is, most online auctions do not publish low and high estimates, so I have had to infer these figures based on actual estimates and sales values by model range.

The results are shown here. They reveal that of the motor cars sold, nearly half of these are above or within estimate, with a slightly smaller proportion selling below estimate – a sure sign of a pragmatic market where the very best examples can still sell. You may be surprised that only four per cent have been sold with no reserve, but this figure is based on originally published data (i.e., does not include last-minute reserve lifting).

MARQUE TRENDS

The picture by marque shows fewer Rolls-Royces offered and sold in the latest two months, but still up on the 12m basis and at higher values across the board. Bentley shows a more mixed picture, with volumes up on the 12m basis but down in the most recent figures, and average values slightly down (but still well above Rolls-Royce).

RESULTS vs. ESTIMATE - TOTAL MARKET



■ % Sold Above Estimate ■ % Sold Within Estimate
■ % Sold Below Estimate ■ % Sold No Reserve
■ Unsold

	Rolls-Royce			Bentley		
	Latest 12m	2m Trend	12m Trend	Latest 12m	2m Trend	12m Trend
Offered for Auction	661	-1.8%	n/a	1137	0.7%	n/a
Number Sold	353	-0.6%	12.8%	551	-1.4%	17.2%
Total Value of Sales	£11.7m	4.5%	16.2%	£21.7m	-2.6%	9.5%
Average Value	£33,251	5.0%	3.0%	£39,329	-1.2%	-6.6%

MODEL RANGE TRENDS



This smart 2016 Rolls-Royce Dawn was sold by collectingcars.com in June for £146,000.



Back in May, CarandClassic sold a 27,000-mile Silver Shadow II for £25,000.

The latest trends for model ranges where 12 or more cars have been sold (i.e., one per month on average) are presented in the tables below. Project cars are excluded from these figures – they account for around 10 per cent of the market and can therefore skew individual model figures significantly.

The Goodwood-built Rolls-Royce models top the table this issue, with all recent sales being achieved through collectingcars.com. A smart 2016 Dawn was sold by them in June for £146,000.

SZ models have recovered somewhat lately, perhaps to the detriment of SYs, which have dropped back in average value despite some good results in May and June. CarandClassic sold a 27,000-mile

Silver Shadow II in May for £25,000.

Silver Clouds are holding steady, but pre-war saloons and limousines continue a slow decline in average value.

The Bentley picture for the model ranges with sufficient data for analysis is much more positive. The table shows 11 models increasing or holding steady on the 2m basis, and eight on the 12m trend.

There is now a clear gap in value between the S-series range and its Silver Cloud brother, with values significantly up this year. Its predecessor, the MkVI/R-Type, is also doing well. A good example was the S3 sold by Brightwells in June for £39,200.

The second biggest riser up the table

are the SZ naturally-aspirated models – the Eight, Mulsanne/S, and Brooklands, which are recovering from a low base.

Manor Park Classics sold a well looked after Bentley Eight in May for a well-above-estimate £12,400 despite it having 100,000 miles on the clock.

Cricklewood Bentleys seem to be bucking the pre-war trend, perhaps because of the profile raised from the coverage of their first Le Mans win 100 years ago.

The Continental GT-derived models have recovered somewhat in the latest period, but are down on the 12m trend. Early examples are regularly sold for under £10,000 nowadays, so do take a look if you're tempted.

The surprising decline is within the Bentley Turbo R range, which seems to have fallen from favour; 11 per cent fewer have been offered and all but one in May and June were offered online. This result is also despite the rather extravagant 'shooting brake' that was sold in May by CarandClassic for £24,000.

SIGNIFICANT SALES

My Auction Tracker database was greatly assisted this issue by two events: the RM Sotheby's auction »

Rolls-Royce Model Ranges	Ave. Value	2m Trend	12m Trend
Goodwood 2-dr	£128,293	2.7%	-13.9%
Goodwood 4-dr/SUV	£112,730	2.0%	7.8%
SZ saloons	£10,093	1.5%	-14.8%
20HP-Wraith saloons	£23,086	-0.3%	-13.9%
Silver Cloud I, II & III	£26,210	-0.5%	3.8%
Silver Ghost / Phantoms I-III 4-dr	£66,772	-1.4%	19.1%
SY saloons	£11,275	-7.4%	-7.8%



This good example of a Bentley S3 achieved £39,200 at auction with Brightwells.



Manor Park sold a well looked after Bentley Eight for £12,400, despite its 100,000-plus mileage.

at Cliveden House and the RREC collaboration with Bonhams Online around the club's Annual Rally.

All but one Rolls-Royce or Bentley were sold by RM Sotheby's, and one particularly caught my eye – the 6½ Litre Sedan de Ville, which sold for £404,000. I totally understand why so many W.O. Bentleys have been re-bodied as Le Mans style racers, but I am grateful that some saloons have survived and are selling for good sums. Most, after all, were built as saloons.

I was delighted to see the RREC and Bonhams Online trying something different this year, and it seems to have been a success. Between June 25th and 28th, they offered a great mix of 43 motor cars, 33 of which were recorded as sold at the time of writing.

Only 12 of the sold cars achieved within or above estimate, however, which underlines the point made about it being a 'pragmatic' market. Sellers were willing to let their cars go for



RM Sotheby's achieved an impressive £404,000 for the Bentley 6½ Litre Sedan de Ville.

Bentley Model Ranges	Ave. Value	2m Trend	12m Trend
S-series Saloons	£31,189	12.9%	47.4%
SZ Nat-Asp Saloons	£9897	12.1%	5.7%
Cricklewood Bentleys	£431,139	11.7%	14.8%
MkVI / R Type Saloons	£19,246	7.6%	11.1%
Continental GTC	£35,170	6.6%	-7.7%
Arnage	£17,002	4.0%	-13.4%
Continental Flying Spur	£12,764	3.8%	-14.3%
Continental R, T & Azure	£48,465	3.2%	-0.3%
New Mulsanne	£55,759	2.4%	3.4%
Continental GT Coupe	£23,514	0.0%	-4.3%
Bentayga & New Flying Spur	£77,578	0.0%	6.5%
MkVI / R-Type 2-dr & Special	£58,978	-2.6%	10.1%
SZ Turbos	£8381	-6.9%	-25.8%

reasonable sums and there were some real bargains to be had, particularly from the pre-war saloon/limousine category previously mentioned. One such of note was a 1939 Wraith, highly regarded as the ultimate development

of the pre-war small-chassis Rolls-Royces, which sold for just £20,600.

Indeed, 19 of the motor cars offered were pre-war, of which 14 sold, with a highlight being the 1924 40/50 that sold for £130,000. ■



Someone paid £24,000 for this rather extravagant 'shooting brake' via by CarandClassic.



A bidder snapped up this 1939 Wraith for a very tempting £20,600 with Bonhams Online.



Among the 19 pre-war cars offered by Bonhams Online was this 1924 40/50, which achieved £130,000.

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FEATURE CAR
1990 BENTLEY TURBO R

WORK IN PROGRESS

WORDS: PAUL GUINNESS PHOTOS: GREGORY OWAIN



The desire to own a Bentley Turbo R resulted in the 'blind' purchase of this 1990 example, a car that has gone on to cause major expenditure for its latest custodian. We meet up with him to find out more...

Buying any classic car 'unseen' is always a risky business. It's something that every buying guide you read and every automotive expert you listen to always insists you should never do; and yet, at some time or another, many of us will have made a buying decision without

seeing the car in the metal. And among those buyers is South Wales-based Michael Campbell, the latest custodian of this tidy looking Bentley Turbo R.

Michael is no stranger to buying and collecting classics, with his current line-up comprising 13 different cars across numerous different

marques. The Bentley obviously stirred something inside this man of eclectic tastes, as he's since gone on to purchase a 1975 Silver Shadow and a 1964 Silver Cloud III James Young Continental, while his much-loved Azure is also a previous *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* feature car. »



FEATURE CAR

1990 BENTLEY TURBO R

The 1990 Turbo R was advertised for sale in June 2020... and was bought 'unseen' by Michael Campbell.



So, what was it about owning a Turbo R that prompted Michael to buy this particular example just over four years ago? "I've always like the model," he explains. "I appreciate just what a change of direction it was for Bentley, and the positive effect it had on the marque."

Like most of us, Michael's search for the ideal example began online, and in June 2020 he spotted G940 JJC advertised privately. With his time split between Singapore and the UK at the time, Michael wasn't in a position to arrange a viewing, but the car certainly sounded promising. It had covered just 64,000 miles, with history to prove, and it looked smart in its original Graphite Grey paintwork with contrasting Silver Stone hide. The car had cost its first owner a hefty £90,900 including extra-cost options back in 1990 – and 30 years later, Michael was able to snap it up for a hard-to-

resist £7995. Here was one of the world's best high-performance luxury saloons of its time, now available for the price of a secondhand supermini.

FULL CHECK-OVER

"After buying the Bentley, the first time I saw it for myself was when I was back in the UK in September 2020," says Michael. "I drove it a few times and took it to Bicester Heritage, the classic automotive hub that hosts regular meets. Then in the October I dropped the car off at RR&B Garages and asked for a full report on what needed doing to make it reliable and usable."

The Bromsgrove-based Rolls-Royce and Bentley specialist carried out a thorough inspection, as requested, the end result being a report that ran to seven pages in total. It wasn't the result that Michael had hoped for or expected, but at least he knew

the extent of the work required and could now prioritise the various jobs, leaving any non-serious ones for later when both time and funds allowed.

"Early in 2021, the Bentley went back to RR&B for some of the planned work," he explains, "which included replacing the jacking points, fitting new rear dampers and front springs, new suspension ball joints, replacing the steering rack, changing the brake discs and pads, fitting new fuel lines and more." It was an extensive list, which explains why the final bill came to around £19,000, but Michael was delighted with the work carried out. He wanted to make sure his Turbo R was reliable enough to provide reliable, effortless trips to France whenever he headed there on holiday.

Just a few weeks later, though, the car was back at RR&B, although this time the emphasis was on comfort and personal preferences: "I had the air



Proud owner Michael has a dozen other classics in his impressive collection.

conditioning upgraded in April 2021, and also had a new sound system fitted as I wanted to be able to stream music. At the same time, the headlamps were upgraded to LED units, and a seat motor and both door mirrors »



TURBO R: BENTLEY'S SAVIOUR

Given the record sales figures of today's Bentley range, we sometimes need reminding that just over four decades ago the marque was in danger of extinction. Bentley sales represented only around five per cent of Crewe's output by the end of the '70s, and the launch of the Silver Spirit and Mulsanne in 1980 did little to alter that ratio. But then something remarkable happened.

Rolls-Royce boss, David Plastow, and a team of engineers set to work on a side project, the aim being to embrace new technologies in order to give the firm's long-running V8 a performance boost. The obvious answer lay in turbocharging, although with forced induction still a young science at the time, the development team was reluctant to share Plastow's enthusiasm. Nevertheless, progress was made via at least one turbocharged Silver Shadow and a Camargue, with outside development help coming from race outfit Broadspeed. Further concept cars were built, and the end result was the launch of the Mulsanne Turbo at the Geneva Salon of 1982.

The newcomer boasted a 298bhp version of the venerable V8 (the 'adequate' power output having been revealed by German regulations), a red Turbo boot badge, body-coloured grille and... well that was about it. No wonder road testers found the cars alarming and exhilarating in equal measure, the reason being that Rolls-Royce simply didn't have the resources to develop the new car and engine at the same time.

The Mulsanne Turbo's unruly handling was addressed in 1985 when the Turbo R was introduced, that 'R' allegedly signifying Roadholding. Legend has it that Crewe's chassis

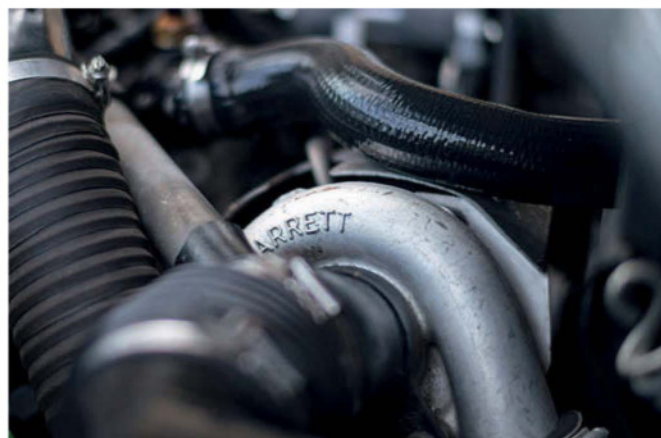
engineers showed their proposed suspension changes to Rolls-Royce engineering chief Mike Dunn, who told them to go away and make it twice as stiff again... which they duly did. The result was a 100 per cent stiffer front anti-roll bar, a 60 per cent uprated rear bar, firmer dampers with uprated rebound, a 50 per cent firmer power steering set-up and a Panhard rod to reduce sideways movement of the rear subframe. To these changes were added lightweight 15-inch alloy wheels shod with 275/55 tyres, and a deeper front spoiler.

The result transformed the car, and road testers of the day were amazed by the way in which the big saloon could be flung around like a GTI. The popularity of the Turbo R turned Bentley's fortunes around, with the marque suddenly attracting a much-needed younger buyer. It proved so successful that Bentley was outselling its Rolls-Royce sister marque by 1991. Indeed, the attractiveness of the brand in the late 1990s to current owners Volkswagen can be directly attributed to the success of the Turbo R.

The popularity of the 'blown' Bentley helped to fund more ongoing development than had traditionally been given to Crewe products, with the Turbo R being incrementally improved right through to the end of its career. In 1988, the troublesome four-barrel Solex carburettor was replaced by Bosch fuel-injection, and in '89 the cars gained adaptive damping to good effect, with a four-speed automatic from 1990 and a chargecooler in '96. Power outputs rose too, with the final Turbo RT packing an outrageous 400bhp and an even mightier 590lb.ft. of torque.

FEATURE CAR

1990 BENTLEY TURBO R



“I dropped the car off at RR&B Garages and asked for a full report on what needed doing to make it reliable and usable”

were replaced. With the cost of the expensive radio unit and so on, I had another bill to pay, this time for £6000.”

BACK IN USE

Michael had driven a total of 900 miles in his Bentley by the time it arrived back at RR&B Garages in June 2021, this time for an MoT test and for a new alternator to be fitted. He continued to put more miles under its wheels,

including a trip to the Goodwood Revival in the September. Indeed, the car was then being enjoyed more than it was being worked on, with Michael experiencing fast, luxurious classic motoring combined with the kind of reliability he had sought from day one.

Another MoT and a full service fell due by June 2022, with the Bentley also being treated to a new tool tray. Problems with the electric windows and the cruise control were sorted at

the same time, and a seized subframe damper was freed up. And by the following month, Michael was enjoying his time behind the wheel once again, taking a trip to Burghley House for that year's RREC Annual Rally. A few weeks later, he embarked upon the long-awaited inaugural drive to France in the Turbo R, a 2000-mile round trip that proved to be an effortless and thoroughly enjoyable experience.

The summer of 2023 saw the Bentley »

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FEATURE CAR

1990 BENTLEY TURBO R



having yet another annual test, by which time its mileage stood at 71,700. Michael had certainly been putting it through its paces throughout the previous couple of years, so inevitably a few minor jobs were attended to at the same time as the MoT, including

re-gassing the air conditioning and sorting a leak from the windscreen. The most expensive job, though, was fitting a new steering rack and gaiters, which contributed a significant amount to the total bill of £4400.

Michael is a stickler for detail and, as

with his other cars, he's kept accurate records of everything he's invested to date in his Turbo R. And the total figure? That's an eye-watering £36,461, which doesn't even include the purchase price of the Bentley. So, is he happy with what he's spent? "There are always unexpected expenses with any old car, but with a Rolls-Royce or Bentley there's obviously even more cost involved unless you make the mistake of doing everything on the cheap," he says. "I wanted to futureproof the Bentley and give it long-term reliability, and I've been very pleased with the standard of work carried out."

Everything that's likely to cause problems has now been fully sorted, and Michael is enjoying the kind of high-speed, long-distance trips that any well-prepared Turbo R excels at: "I love driving it. It feels even more hunkered down than the Azure."

So, is this Bentley now completely to Michael's satisfaction? Well, not exactly: "It looks okay but there are some small areas of bodywork that could do with some attention. I'll get these localised repairs seen to at some point, although eventually I'll be looking at a »



“He continued to put more miles under its wheels, including a trip to the Goodwood Revival in the September”



Fully prepared and running superbly, this Turbo R still impresses with its power and performance.



“Michael is a stickler for detail and has kept accurate records of everything he’s spent to date on his Turbo R”

complete respray for the car.” Given his exacting stands, though, this is likely to result in a very large bill, so we can understand him being in no hurry.

During his four-plus years of ownership so far, Michael has tackled the Turbo R’s necessary jobs in a sensible, logical order, focusing on

the work that helps to prevent future mechanical issues and electrical problems, setting the car on a path to reliability and ensuring it’s more than capable of the French trips he enjoys so much. “This car’s definitely a keeper,” smiles Michael, “so I don’t begrudge the money I’ve spent so far.”

Meanwhile, when it comes to future plans, this classic fanatic seems well and truly smitten with the finest products from Crewe: “I could be tempted by a Bentley R-Type or Rolls-Royce Silver Dawn at some point, but we’ll have to see. I might need to sell something else from the collection first...” ■



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BENTLEY CONTINENTAL R COUPE 1998

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Year: 1996
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ANNUAL RALLY & CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE

Complementing this issue's five-page show report on the RREC's 2024 Annual Rally, the club pays tribute to all those involved in the event's success

Thank you very much to those of you who supported us this year, through either volunteering, sponsoring or simply attending the RREC's tremendous Annual Rally and Concours d'Elegance at Burghley House.

During the week prior, I watched from Paris with bated breath, as numerous systems of inclement weather loomed and circled. Thankfully, however, we were blessed with excellent conditions, leaving the backdrop of flora and fauna alive, but without the need for the

tractors that were waiting on standby.

Our aim for 2024 was to look to the past and bring it to the present, to better the experience for all and deliver an event that was back on par with what the RREC should deliver. It was wonderful to see old friends and make new ones, whilst also in the company of some of the most magnificent vehicles in the world.

Thanks to the investment that was made in engaging with technology providers, we have captured much of the

event digitally, including videos of the wonderful seminars that are now cast onto YouTube to be viewed as well as featured in both online and print media.

The event could not have taken place without the tireless work of the team at The Hunt House, supported by many volunteer marshals, judges, committee members and our creative problem-solving event manager, Philip Robinson.

As our chairman has already discussed, it is now time for something a little different next year... ■





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FULL SPEED AHEAD!

The 76th editions of the BDC's two flagship annual events – the Concours d'Elegance and Silverstone Race Meeting – provided members with plenty of summer fun

As this issue went to press, club members were eagerly anticipating the BDC's two main annual events: the Summer Concours and Silverstone Race Meeting.

The 76th annual Concours was held for the first time in the rural environs of Walton Hall, in Warwickshire, with a full weekend of activities on the programme. Sunday saw the focus, as ever, on the awards for the best Bentleys across various classes – including the crowning of the Best in Show for the prestigious WO Bentley Memorial Foundation trophy. We'll reveal the overall winner in the next issue...

As befitting the event's garden party-style ambience, enhanced by the soothing sounds of a jazz band, members and guests enjoyed browsing all the different types of Bentley on show and relaxing over a delicious buffet lunch.

Saturday has acted as the perfect curtain-raiser with Tom's Tour, a 60-mile jaunt around the countryside punctuated by a stop for lunch at a welcoming hostelry, organised by member Tom Commander. On returning to Walton Hall, members and guests readied themselves for the evening's

entertainment: a drinks reception and black-tie gala dinner inside the historic Grade II listed 16th century house.

Throughout the weekend, a wonderful collection of members' Derby Bentleys were on display, paying due homage to the elegant and enduring model that celebrated its 90th anniversary last year. Derby expert Jeremy Marshall Roberts was also lined up to provide an informative commentary about the models.

Three weeks later, the annual BDC Silverstone Race Meeting – by coincidence also the 76th edition – was held, with the day's special theme being a celebration of the centenary of Bentley's maiden win (of six) at Le Mans. To commemorate that 1924 success in the legendary 24 Hours, a special 40-minute, two-driver race for WO Bentleys was held for the John Duff Trophy & Frank Clement Cup, in honour of the two winning drivers that year.

Complementing that event was the meeting's usual blue-riband race: the Bentley scratch for the Times Challenge Trophy, with Ben Eastick – who recently stepped down as the club's Competitions Captain – bidding for his fourth successive victory at the wheel of his potent 6.2-litre supercharged T-Type single-seater.

Eight events were on the usual packed programme, including the BDC Open & Allcomers race and the Pre-War Challenge (run alongside the Bentley scratch race), plus events for Morgans, Aston Martins and FISCAR. Who will be the winners of the two main Bentley races? Check out the next issue...

The day also saw the ever-popular Bentley track parade, when around 100 club members' cars of all ages and models enjoyed a couple of laps of the circuit during the lunch break. It was also hoped there would be demonstration laps from the Blower Continuation Car Zero, provided by Bentley Motors, but this had still to be confirmed at the time of writing.

The ball was set rolling for this year's meeting in fine style the day before, with the traditional members' Touring Assembly featuring a relaxing drive around countryside. This ended at Silverstone in time for the usual evening paddock party for members and BDC Silverstone race competitors, officials and marshals, held (as last year) in the hallowed surroundings of the BRDC clubhouse. ■

For further details of the Bentley Drivers Club and its many activities, visit www.bdcl.org.



The stylish Derby was honoured at the Concours d'Elegance.



The centenary of Bentley's first Le Mans win, courtesy of Duff (left) and Clement, was celebrated with a special race at Silverstone.

Bentley

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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.

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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.

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- Access to comprehensive archives through the club's association with the Bentley Memorial Foundation, providing a deep insight into the marque's history
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THE SPIRIT OF EXPERIMENTATION

THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT

It was in 1921 that the fledgling Rolls-Royce took the bold step of opening a new factory in the USA – although, as we discover, the fortunes of this New World enterprise were to prove mixed

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

Today, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars is owned by BMW. However, the German parent company has recognised that part of what so defines the marque, and helps make it globally successful, is its quintessential Britishness. While BMW parts are now used in current Rolls-Royces – most notably engines – the headquarters, design centre and manufacturing facilities remain in the UK. And the plant's Goodwood location is one that further reinforces the British motoring heritage,

just a stone's throw from the renowned historic racing circuit.

However, just over a century ago, when the firm was still in its infancy, Rolls-Royce did experiment with diluting its national identity. With the United States becoming a vitally important but faraway market, the firm took the decision to open a factory there. It was an episode that lasted just over 10 years but ultimately ended in failure thanks to the Great Depression. And it hasn't been repeated since. However, from

1921 to 1933, almost 3000 Rolls-Royces were assembled in Springfield, Massachusetts, helping to cement the marque's image in the USA. The company would successfully build on this base with its subsequent vehicles... even if they did have to come across the Atlantic first.

The first Rolls-Royces to find their way to America were exhibited at the 1906 New York Motor Show, but it wasn't until 1913 that moves were made by Claude Johnson, Rolls-Royce's managing director, to forge a proper sales network in the New World. An obvious handicap was the 45 per cent tax for imported vehicles



Rolls-Royces were first seen in the USA at the January 1906 Automobile Club of America Show in New York, but it took time for the company to establish itself in America.



It was Rolls-Royce's managing director, Claude Johnson, who spearheaded the decision to set up a factory in the United States.

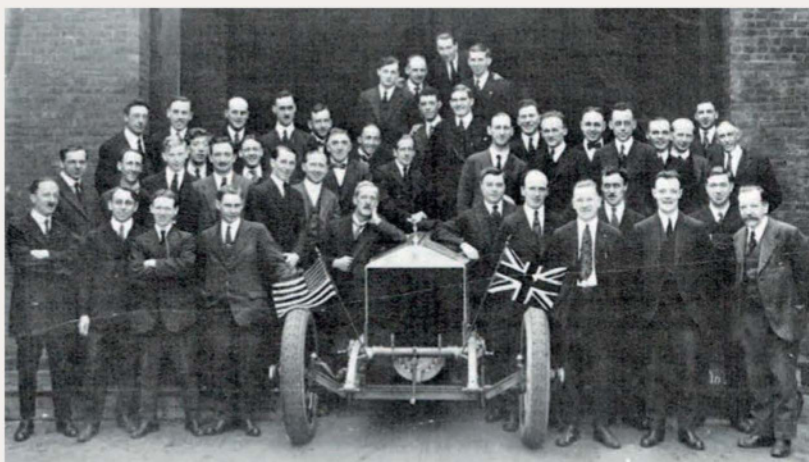
which, for already expensive cars like Rolls-Royces, significantly pushed up prices. But then an even greater barrier came along: the outbreak of World War One in 1914. While this postponed Johnson's project, it did allow Rolls-Royce to establish useful links with American industry as components for some of its aero engines were made in the country.

In 1919, Johnson returned to his pre-war plans. Import tax had by now fallen to 33 per cent, but this was still a hefty enough tariff to make constructing cars in the USA seem beneficial. Johnson considered entering into a partnership with an existing car maker and allowing manufacturing rights, but in the end decided that retaining more control would be wiser in order to maintain quality. Thus, Rolls-Royce of America Incorporated was founded in November 1919.

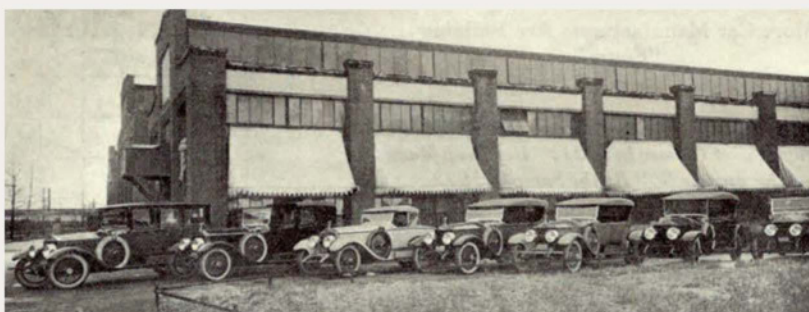
SPRINGFIELD SEARCH

The search for a factory eventually settled on Springfield in Massachusetts. While it was some distance from America's vehicle-building heartland around Chicago and Detroit, it had a ready supply of skilled manpower and was situated between the prosperous cities of Boston and New York, both of which were regarded as major markets. The site chosen was the old Wire Wheel Works plant, which had started life as the Hendee Manufacturing Company constructing Indian-badged motorcycles. When Rolls-Royce took it over, the seven buildings over seven acres were being used to store ordinance by the US Army. Rolls-Royce's optimistic plan was to fill them with 1000 workers within a year, producing at least 380 chassis per annum.

Early marketing stressed that what Rolls-Royce of America was going to produce would be identical to Rolls-Royce of Great Britain, with 53 personnel sent out from Derby to make sure this happened. By July 1920, the first 40/50hp sidevalve engines had been built but no frames, so something else that needed to be sent from Derby was the Silver Ghost chassis to put them in. However, by the close of »



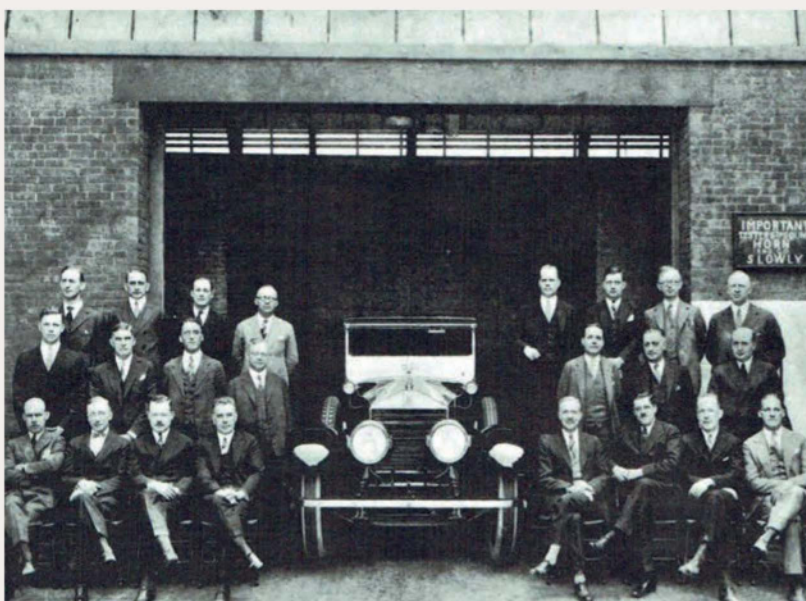
Anglo-American celebrations as the first Rolls-Royce chassis rolls out of the Springfield factory in January 1921.



It's 1922 and a line-up of 40/50 Silver Ghosts – or Springfield Ghosts, as they were often nicknamed – await their new owners outside the factory.



Outside the Springfield factory, possibly during its first winter of operation over 1920/21.



A rather posed meeting of sales and maintenance representatives at Springfield.

that year, US manufacture of these was also under way. The first was complete by January 1921 and was driven in bare form by its new owner, factory owner Wallace Potter, to the nearby Merrimac Body Company to be fitted out. By March 1921, five chassis a day were being finished.

When Ernest Hives, Rolls-Royce's Experimental Department head, visited Springfield, he was impressed by what he saw. He also discovered that some American-made components – such as magnetos and chassis parts – were less expensive but better quality than what was being used back in Derby. How good some of the local coachbuilders were also surprised him. "The best American bodies are better-built and better-finished than the English," he noted. "They were made to more practical designs and have better fittings." Consequently, the policy of making sure that Derby and

ROLLS ROYCE

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ROLLS ROYCE

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LOS ANGELES - Albert J. Russell 951 South Flower Street	MONTREAL - Ginsberg Motor Co. 288 St. Catherine St., W.
BUFFALO - Shultz Motor Sales, Inc. 249 Delaware Avenue	HABANA, CUBA - Wm. A. Campbell O'Reilly 2 and 4

An advertising illustration of the Springfield works, with its seven buildings covering seven acres.

TO BUILD a motor car so that it shall serve its owner permanently, as his house does, and not transiently, as does his apparel.

To build it with every thought for those who will ride in it—for their safety, their comfort, their convenience and for their sure arrival, however far the destination, however rough the way.

To build it with every thought for the man or woman who has invested in it—not only that its service may be long, but that there may be no interruptions for repairs, and no unforeseen expense.

To build it so that it shall yield the utmost mileage from the fuel that it burns, not because the saving is important, but because efficiency includes economy.

To build, in all, not the most luxurious motor car in the world, but the most perfect—remembering that perfection respects all details, and ignores not one.

This is the point of view from which, twenty-two years ago, the Honorable C. S. Rolls and Mr. F. H. Royce approached the task of building a motor car. This is the point of view which makes the Rolls-Royce to-day at once the finest motor car in the world and the most economical investment in private transportation in its field. This is the reason why no Rolls-Royce has ever worn out.

Ten exclusive Rolls-Royce designs in open and closed coach work.

The four-five passenger phaeton,
\$10,900

ROLLS-ROYCE, Springfield, Mass.
Branches: New York, Boston, Chicago
Representatives in London 1923

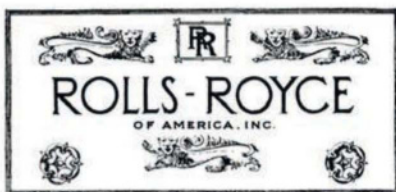
ROLLS-ROYCE

ROLLS ROYCE

A January 1923 advertisement referencing 10 exclusive Rolls-Royce open and closed bodywork designs, as part of the Custom Coach Work programme.

Springfield cars were total facsimiles was abandoned after just 25 vehicles.

Differences between British and American buying preferences also soon became apparent. In Britain, Rolls-Royce's well-heeled customers would order a chassis for their coachbuilder of choice to then construct a shell for, a convoluted process that took several months. Most Americans, accustomed to mass production, wanted finished machines and they wanted them quickly. Thus, decades before Rolls-Royce started offering standard bodies in Europe, Rolls-Royce of America introduced what it dubbed Custom Coachwork, with stock designs from builders such as the handy local Smith-Springfield, Springfield Body Corporation and Merrimac, plus the New Haven Carriage Company, Brewster, and Biddle and Smart. This all contributed to the growing rivalry between Springfield and »



Rolls-Royce of America branding, playing on the company's regal British associations by featuring the three lions of England as well as Tudor roses.

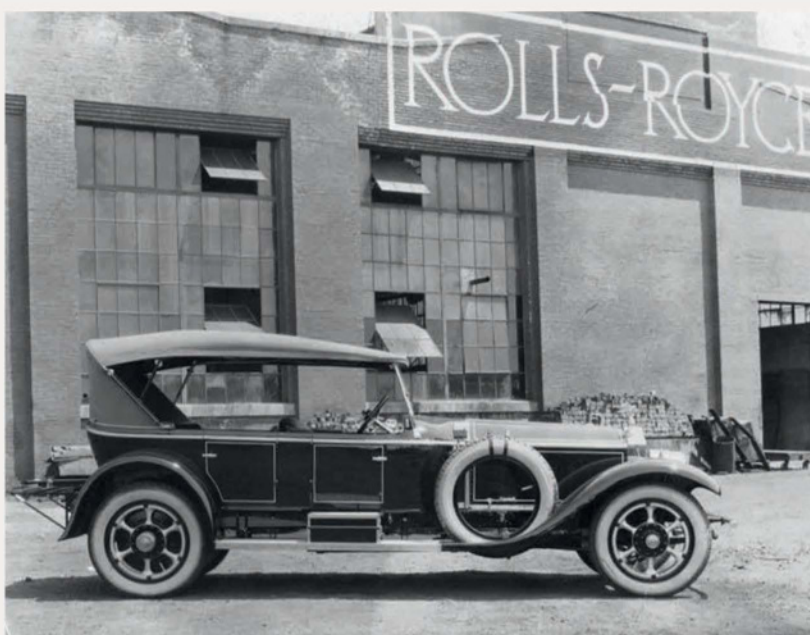


After Ernest Hives visited the USA, he was impressed enough to push for differences to be permitted between American- and British-built cars.

“Just over a century ago, when the firm was still in its infancy, Rolls-Royce did experiment with diluting its national identity”

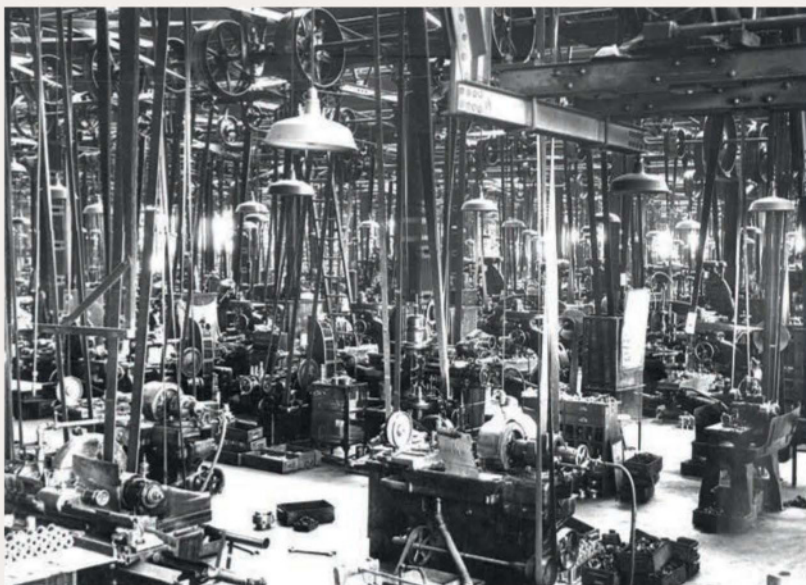


The 28th president of the United States from 1913 to 1921, Woodrow Wilson was a high profile owner of a Springfield Rolls-Royce 40/50 Silver Ghost.

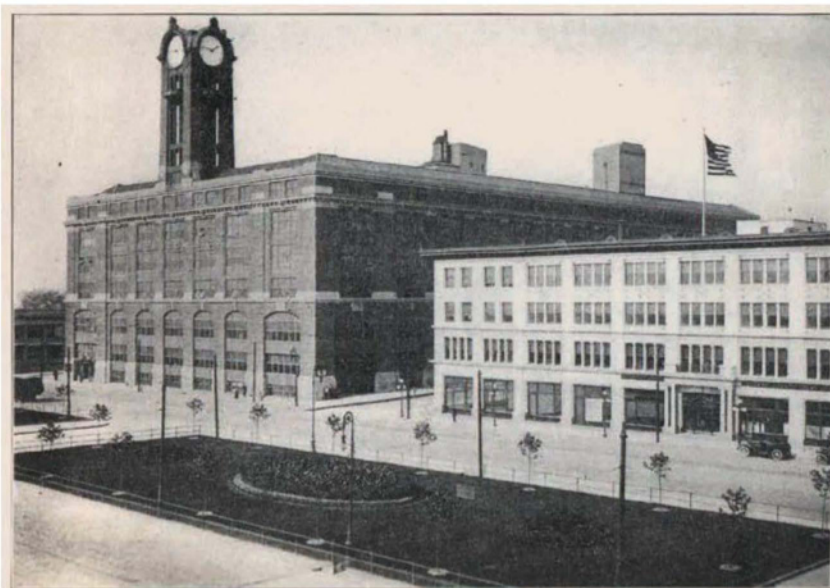


A newly-completed Rolls-Royce poses in the sun outside the Springfield factory.

“Impatient American buyers could have their finished automobiles in a fraction of the time their European counterparts had to wait”



The crowded and quite dangerous looking interior of the Springfield factory in 1930.



ORNAMENTAL GARDENING, BRIDGE PLAZA, LONG ISLAND CITY.

The Brewster coachbuilding factory (left) in Long Island City, which Rolls-Royce of America acquired in 1926 but later lost when it was repossessed.

its British parent, typified by the factory signs that began to appear proclaiming “Let’s beat Derby”.

The fitment of American equipment increased, too. The Bosch Magneto Company (the North American arm of the German manufacturer, Robert Bosch) supplied ignition parts while Britain doggedly stuck with its Watford and Lucas components, despite their suspect reliability. The Dunlop wheels that were used in Europe were also swapped for US-made wire ones with a recessed centre hub lock.

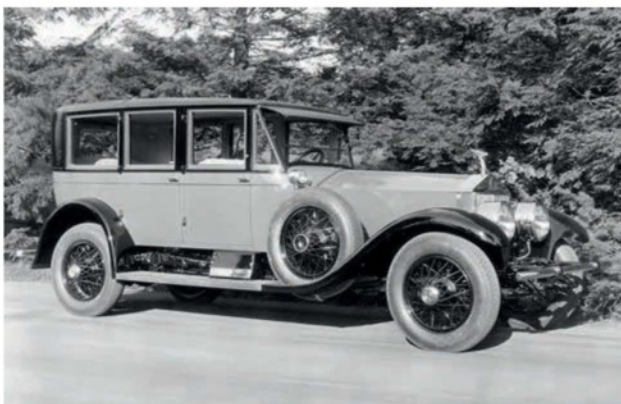
In 1922, the ailing Smith-Springfield concern was acquired by Rolls-Royce of America, along with the nearby factory of the defunct Knox Automobile Company. Most of the management and craftsmen were moved to the ex-Knox plant to set up an in-house coachbuilding firm – again, well ahead of Britain, where it would be another decade before Park Ward was taken over in stages. Rechristened the Custom Coach Works, Rolls-Royce of America could now offer a range of standard shells, albeit with some very English names such as the Piccadilly (a two-seater roadster), Arundel and Pickwick (saloons), and Pall Mall (open tourer). When customers ordered a Rolls-Royce, they chose the body style from a catalogue, with up to 25 of the most popular ones stockpiled so they could speedily be fitted, trimmed and painted. Impatient American buyers could therefore have their finished luxury automobiles in a fraction of the time their European counterparts had to wait.

AHEAD AND BEHIND

While ahead in such areas, however, the American arm did lag behind British Rolls-Royces in mechanical development. Derby led the way, and Springfield only got significant technical upgrades when they’d been proven, a case in point being the introduction of four-wheel brakes. On British cars, they superseded the anachronistic rear-wheel only system in 1924, but Springfield wasn’t able to start installing them until 1926, by which time most other American competitors had been fitted with them for years.



This 1925 40/50 HP Silver Ghost, with Brewster bodywork, is an early left-hand drive car.



A 1926 Rolls-Royce 40/50 with rather handsome Brewster saloon bodywork.



A 1926 Silver Ghost Special Riviera Town Brougham by Brewster; note the large cylindrical US-spec headlamps, usually a feature of Springfield cars.

Another idiosyncrasy was that left-hand drive wasn't introduced until 1925, after a thousand 40/50hp models had already been built at Springfield with their steering wheels on the right. To be fair, right-hand drive whatever the country was common between the wars, but given American preferences, it's surprising it wasn't adopted sooner.

The advent of left-hand drive also brought three-speed transmissions. While this may sound like a retrograde step, given that four-speed gearboxes had been standard on British 40/50 Silver Ghosts since 1913, it was more

in-keeping with how Americans liked to drive – manually shifting cogs as little as possible. Also new were grilles with vertical shutters instead of horizontal ones, something that would soon spread to Britain as well.

In 1925, the New Phantom replaced the old 40/50 Silver Ghost model at Derby, but the usual lag meant Springfield didn't start constructing it until late '26, after having expended considerable effort to make the new 7668cc six-cylinder overhead-valve engine left-hand drive-friendly. The need to relocate the carburettor to retain the linkage to the hand

controls was a complex operation. As a stop-gap, 100 Phantoms had to be imported from Britain to satisfy demand for this latest Rolls-Royce.

Left-hand drive and three-speed gearboxes helped Springfield sell a record 409 cars during 1925, and the New Phantom seemed set to boost this prosperity further. In fact, such was the air of optimism that Rolls-Royce of America decided to buy the coachbuilder Brewster in January 1926. The old-established company, dating from 1810, had been supplying bodywork under the Custom Coach Work programme, but by the mid- »

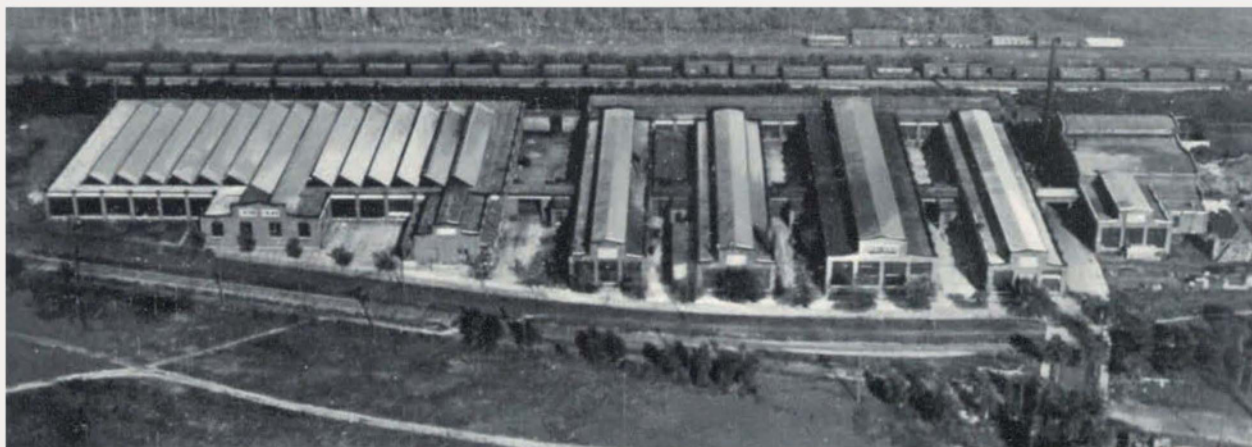
“Such was the air of optimism that Rolls-Royce of America decided to buy the coachbuilder Brewster in January 1926”

1920s was in financial trouble – not least because it had lost its position as Rolls-Royce’s New York distributor.

With Springfield’s own Custom Coach Works now lacking enough capacity to meet demand, the

opportunity for larger premises complete with a workforce already experienced in Rolls-Royce methods seemed too good to miss. The plant was located in Long Island City in Queens, New York City, but many of

the Custom Coach Works’ employees were transferred while newly-completed chassis were driven from Springfield to Long Island City – a mere 140 miles or so – fitted with a temporary seat and, if the driver was



The layout of the Springfield factory from the air; the buildings survived through to 2011 before they were demolished.



Crowds outside the New York Stock Exchange in the wake of the Wall Street Crash, which would ultimately signal the demise of Rolls-Royce of America.



Unemployed men queuing up outside a soup kitchen during the Great Depression – a time when many who could afford Rolls-Royces didn’t want them because of the wealthy image portrayed.

lucky, some weather protection. Rolls-Royce of America could now offer customers 28 standard bodies and fully-complete Phantoms could even be purchased direct from showrooms.

However, the confidence proved premature. While 1926 and '27 proved successful, and '28 saw 400 Rolls-Royces manufactured, 1929 brought the Wall Street Crash. The USA was plunged into the Great Depression, which soon spread throughout the world. Many of Rolls-Royce of America's customers found their fortunes wiped out. Even those who financially survived didn't want Rolls-Royces because they were such conspicuous displays of wealth at a time when so many were struggling. Some of the old Brewster facilities were used for storing mothballed cars whose owners no longer wished to be seen in them.

TRoubled Times

Rolls-Royce of America was in serious trouble. There was no money to retool for the new Phantom II introduced



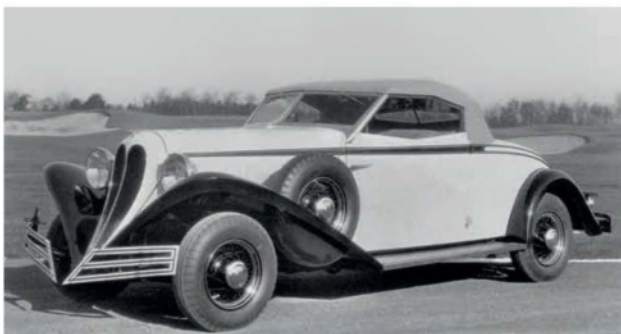
After the 40/50 Silver Ghost, Rolls-Royce of America moved onto the New Phantom; this one has a Brewster body.

back in Britain, and in 1931 just 100 Phantoms were sold, mostly assembled from spare parts. A further 73 Phantom II chassis were shipped from Britain, but for a 10-year-old factory that had aimed to construct 380 cars a year, that it was now only managing a quarter of that figure was disastrous. A further 100 Phantoms were assembled, again from spares,

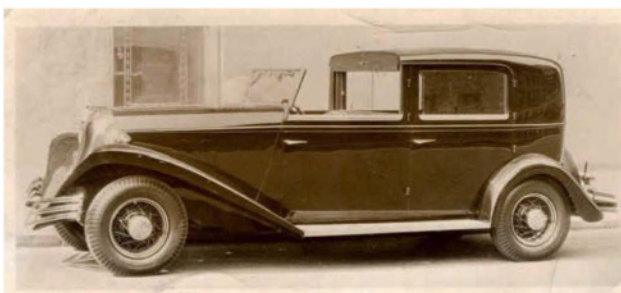
in 1932, with 17 Phantom II chassis crossing the Atlantic from Derby. In 1933, though, only 50 Phantoms emerged from Springfield to use up the last parts, supplemented by 30 Phantom II chassis sent from Britain. That same year, the Brewster family, who still had an interest in the Long Island City coachworks, repossessed the plant, thus »



Pierce-Arrow was one of the companies initially considered as a possible builder of Rolls-Royces under licence; ironically, it later ended up being combined with the Springfield organisation.



The Brewster Roadster – with Ford V8 power and chassis – didn't impress Rolls-Royce back in Britain, which had the American division change its name to the Springfield Manufacturing Corporation.



One of the Ford V8-powered Brewster town cars, which upset management in Derby because it was sold in Rolls-Royce showrooms.

“Rolls-Royce of America could now offer 28 standard bodies, and fully-complete Phantoms could be purchased direct from showrooms”

ending Rolls-Royce of America’s ability to build its own bodies.

Seeking some way of generating money, 135 Ford V8 chassis were purchased in 1934, given modish Art Deco bodies and sold as Brewster town cars and convertibles via Rolls-Royce dealerships throughout the USA. This didn’t sit at all well with Rolls-Royce back in Britain, with the company vociferously objecting to being linked with mere Fords, however stylish they were. As a result, Rolls-Royce of America was compelled to change its title to the Springfield Manufacturing Corporation in August 1934. This also partially insulated the British parent from any bad publicity that would surround the bankruptcy regarded as imminent; Rolls-Royce didn’t want to be associated with a high-profile collapse.

In June 1935, that inevitable bankruptcy arrived, with the former Rolls-Royce of America formally liquidated in June 1936. But there was one final drama to play out. The Springfield Manufacturing Corporation and its assets were purchased by financier Dallas E Winslow, who specialised in snapping up companies in receivership. He’d recently acquired the Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company – ironically one of the firms Claude Johnson had



The Rolls-Royce legacy is remembered in many museums and collections around the Massachusetts area, such as this 1927 Phantom of the Collings Foundation.

considered giving a manufacturing licence to back in 1919 – and combined the two defunct businesses. But what neither he nor Rolls-Royce seemed to realise was that Winslow’s acquisition also gave him rights to Rolls-Royce’s blueprints and build methods. Derby had to act swiftly in order to sort the situation out.

The scenario had some parallels to 1998, when BMW grabbed the rights to the Rolls-Royce brand name and logo after Volkswagen thought it had successfully bought both it and Bentley that year. For one final time, Rolls-Royce of North America – or at least the husk of it – was well ahead of the European curve. Nevertheless, when Winslow auctioned off his new acquisition (which had reverted back to Brewster and Company Incorporated) after just a year, not only were 41 Rolls-Royces and Pierce-Arrows part of the deal, but there was also a “large stock of Rolls-Royce parts, jigs, dies, machinery and

equipment”. Derby cannot have been best-pleased.

Ultimately, Rolls-Royce’s US manufacturing experiment failed. But, given the depth of global recession that enveloped it, this was probably unavoidable. Rolls-Royces were cars for good times, not bad. Nevertheless, Rolls-Royce of America did enable the British company to establish foundations and a dealership network that it could expand on when times improved after the war. And its output of 1703 40/50 Silver Ghosts and 1241 Phantoms meant that 2944 Rolls-Royces were sold that might otherwise not have found US homes, helping to instil brand loyalty. It also demonstrated the benefits of ready-made bodies; Rolls-Royce back in Britain wouldn’t belatedly follow suit until the Standard Steel design for the Bentley MkVI of 1946. While the grander scheme may have faltered and failed, some of its ideas helped to shape the future. ■



It wasn’t until 1946, with the Bentley MkVI, that Rolls-Royce in Britain started offering standard bodywork, over 20 years after Rolls-Royce of America had introduced a similar idea.



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2000 Rolls-Royce Corniche
Stock#16228

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



1949 Bentley MK VI Saloon
Coachwork by Freestone & Webb
Stock#18393

This right-hand-drive, Saloon Coachwork by Freestone & Webb, two-tone blue exterior Light blue interior, with complementing dark blue piping and carpets, creates a visually stunning contrast, 4-speed manual transmission, 4,257cc OHV inline-six-cylinder engine, and 3-spoke steering wheel. Mechanically sound.
For \$29,950



1976 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow
Stock#17085

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



1953 Bentley R-Type Left-Hand-Drive
Stock#16225

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



2004 Rolls-Royce Phantom
Stock#16907

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



1953 Bentley R-Type Saloon
Stock#17180

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



1961 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud II
Stock#15640

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



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

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



1991 Rolls-Royce Silver Spur II
Stock#17127

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



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

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



1934 Rolls-Royce 20/25 Saloon
Stock#17110

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



1936 Rolls-Royce 20/25 Sedan
DeVillie by Park Ward
Stock#16687

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



1990 Bentley Turbo R
Stock#16523

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

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TECHNICAL GUIDE

SZ-SERIES: GAS SPRING SPHERE CHANGE

Our technical series continues with rear gas spring sphere replacement on a Rolls-Royce Flying Spur, giving a glimpse into how the professionals tackle this job – and how you could do so at home

WORDS: ANDY THWAITES PHOTOGRAPHY: FLYING SPARES

As this is our seventh *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* Technical Guide, the series is entering its second year – and we're grateful for all the positive feedback we've received to date. Having recently looked at routine service jobs and front brakes on our 2003 Bentley Continental GT test car, this time we'll be looking at rear gas spring sphere replacement on a 1995 Rolls-Royce Flying Spur.

The job is interesting and common enough, but this particular car really is a bit special. Marked 'Number 2 of 50' on the dashboard plaque, finished in Wildberry Burgundy and with only 69,000 miles on its odometer, this was definitely one for resale rather than dismantling. And while we still have it here at Flying Spares, it would be rude not to show it off!

While the gas spring sphere process is similar on a lot of 1980s and '90s

models, even up to 2003 on the Bentley Azure, doing it properly involves bleeding the hydraulic system, and we can't go into detail on that here without taking up the whole magazine. Remember, this is safety-critical – so for the hydraulic bleed part, please refer to your owner's manual or, alternatively, call the Flying Spares Service Team who will happily provide the relevant info.

So, on to the sphere change itself. If you notice that your suspension has hardened or the car is riding higher than usual, this is a prime suspect. The aftermarket parts are relatively low cost, and so as you're going into the system it makes sense to do both at the same time. In terms of tooling, you'll need a good selection of sockets and screwdrivers, plus an oil filter wrench to remove the old sphere, as well as a bleed bottle and mineral fluid.

This is one of those jobs that can make a massive difference. Suddenly,

your ride height will be back to where it should be, and ride comfort will be so much better that you'll wonder why you didn't do it sooner.

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 we 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.



FLYING SPUR REAR GAS SPRING SPHERE CHANGE

1



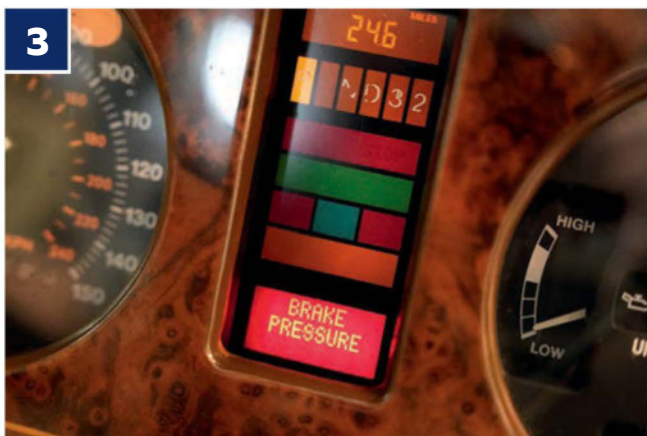
Prep: gather everything you need, including PPE. Apply protective wing covers, seat covers, steering wheel cover and floor mats, then lift the bonnet.

2



It is best practice to depressurise the braking system first, so switch on the ignition and pump the brake pedal 50-60 times until pedal resistance fades.

3



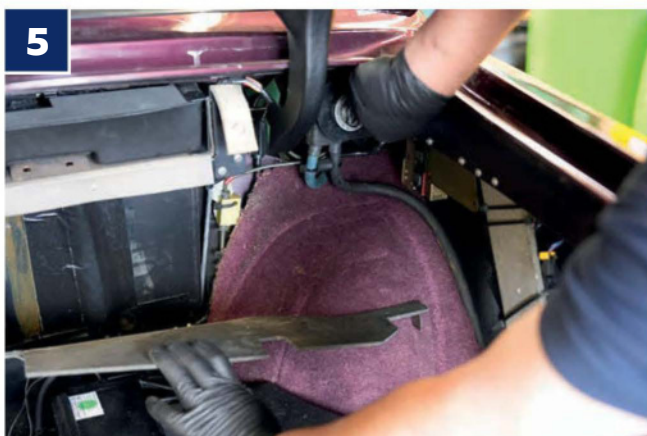
Once the fascia 'STOP' and 'BRAKE PRESSURE' warning panels are flashing, you can switch off the ignition.

4



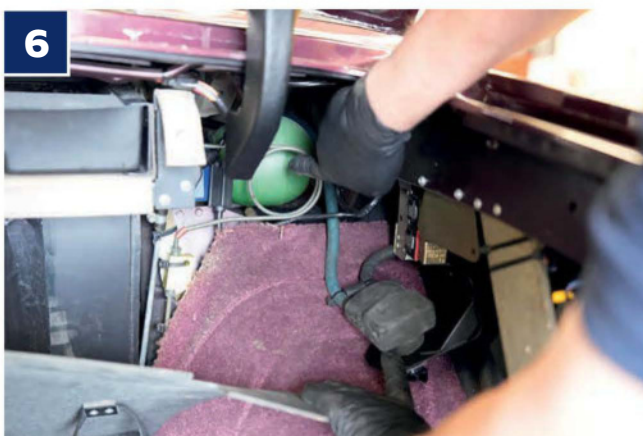
Next, switch off the battery isolator and disconnect the battery terminals.

5



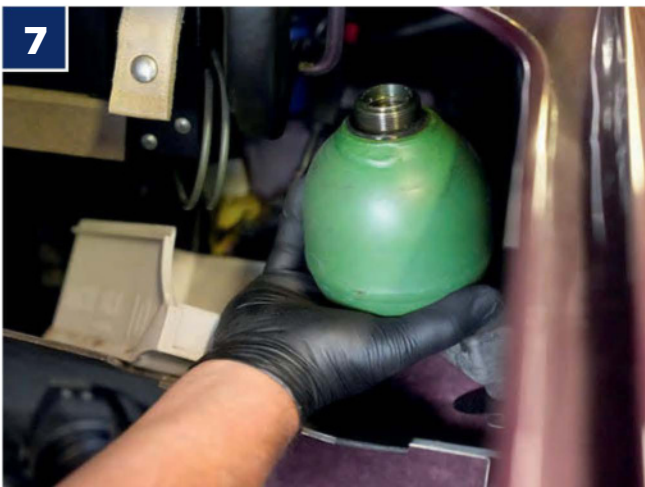
Remove the setscrews securing the battery master switch mounting bracket.

6



Disconnect the coiled feed pipe from the variable damper valve, keeping a cloth handy to catch any excess fluid.

7



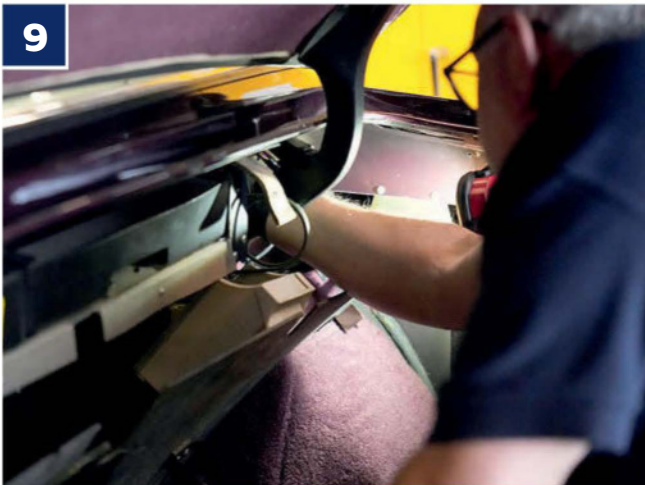
Now, use an oil filter wrench to remove the old gas sphere.

8



Place the absorbent cloth around the area to soak up any remaining fluid.

9



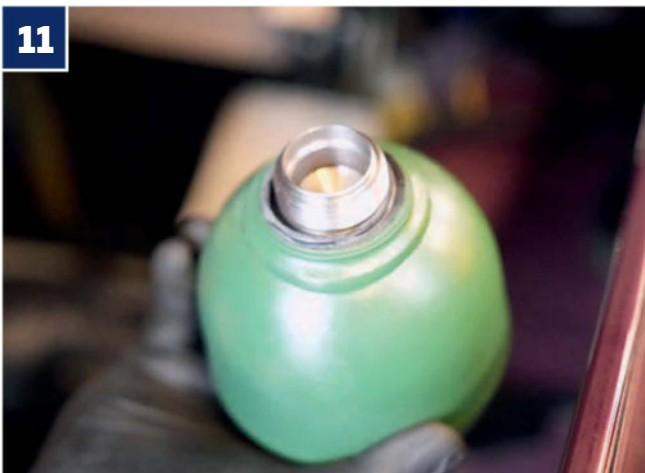
Clean the area thoroughly and dry – we used compressed air.

10



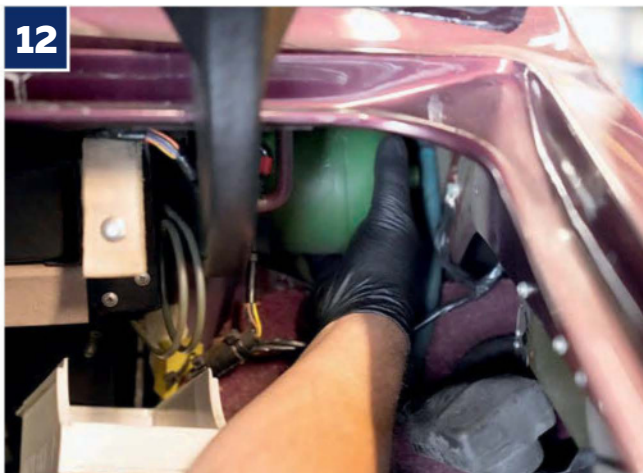
Remove the protective cap from the new sphere.

11



Lubricate the new sealing ring with clean hydraulic system mineral fluid.

12



New sphere installation! You can now fit the new sphere, hand tightening to a good level.

13



Reconnect the coiled feed pipe.

14



Refit the battery master switch, ensuring clearance between the cable connections on the back and the gas spring.

15



Reconnect the battery terminals.

16



Top up the hydraulic system mineral fluid.

17



Now bleed the hydraulic system (see introductory notes) and check for leaks.

18



Finally, take the car for a quick road test and recheck for leaks. All clear? That's job done!

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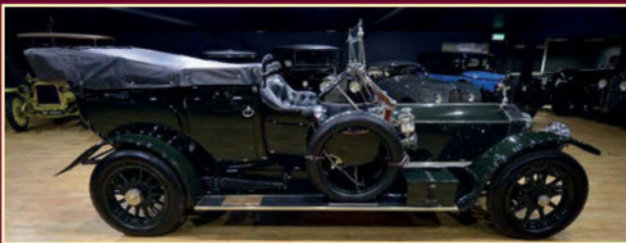
1931 Bentley 8 Litre Vandenplas Style Tourer
£680,000



1925 Bentley 3 Litre Gurney Nutting Tourer
£185,000.00



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



1912 Rolls Royce Silver Ghost Parallel Bonnet
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1930 Rolls Royce Phantom 2 Barrel Sided Tourer
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WORD FROM CANADA

Welcome home, Paul Guinness! I have just received my copy of the July/August 2024 issue here in Canada, delivered to my doorstep. I read every page of this magazine – in fact, it's the only one that I do read cover to cover, and I was happy to



see you back in the driver's seat.

I have been with the magazine from the start, after you personally found me a few early copies. Unfortunately, I do not own a Rolls-Royce or Bentley, but since my early childhood have always had a taste for these cars and what they stand for. I do, however, have many scale-model examples.

My favourite car from all of them is the Camargue. Why, I have no idea. It just shows so much grace and pedigree.

At the end of the last issue, in your Final Page column, you asked readers which they like the most – Rolls-Royce or Bentley – now that they are

their own companies. Some people will say both, some will go one way or the other. For me, though, it's Rolls-Royce as this is the marque to beat every time. BMW has done a great job of keeping in line with the pedigree. I know times are changing, but I feel they are doing a fine job.

Anyway, fantastic to see you back in the driver's seat. Let's hope you have many more miles to travel!

Andrew Crane
Via email

Thank you for your kind words, Andrew. It's great to be back – Ed.

SNOW 'DOWN UNDER'

In reply to Alex McKuhn's photographs of a Bentley in St Moritz (*Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver*, May/June 2023), I wanted to show that we also have snow here in Australia – not in such famous locations as St Moritz, but nevertheless well-supported and loved. I have attached a couple of photos showing B4YD [1954 Bentley R-Type] in the snow, heading towards Mt Hotham in the Victorian Alps in 2023, during a touring event called 'Heads in the Clouds'.

On another matter, I would like to know how long a mail subscription of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* would take to reach Australia. At present I can get the magazine about two months after it's available in the UK.

Gerhard Altdorffer
Via email

Thank you for the photos – that must have been a great event to take part in, Gerhard! For subscriptions to Australia (and elsewhere), we're obviously at the mercy of 'the post'. All subscription copies of the magazine (UK and overseas) are dispatched on the same day, but I wouldn't like to quote a likely delivery time for Australia as that's all down to the efficiency of postal system – Ed.



BEST CUSTODIAN?

In our July/August issue, editor Paul asked which of today's custodians is the 'best' as far as our readers are concerned: BMW with Rolls-Royce, or Volkswagen with Bentley? Then, just a few days before going to print with this, the September/October issue, we published the same page on Facebook and received these great responses:

Peter Lavers: As someone who worked at Crewe, I have to acknowledge the reality that both the old companies are dead and gone. I had the pleasure of knowing people who started when 'WO' and 'R' were still around, and that connection has been lost. Having said that, I believe both marques are in good hands and are being well managed in the market we're in. I wish them well.

Steven Horton: Rolls-Royce with its Coachbuild department and Bentley with Mulliner and Continuation both do incredibly well. Huge profits are to be made as these products are 'created' in incredibly small numbers. The Rolls-Royce Boat Tail, for example, is limited to three models at circa £30 million each. The Bentley Batur and Bacalar models are limited to 18 examples each at circa £2 million a pop. With models like this keeping the coffers healthy and the board directors and shareholders happy, both firms can concentrate on producing a volume of excellent cars for the enthusiast and discerning client.

Rolls-Royce is now a 'luxury brand', according to the previous CEO, and its customers are invited to buy a Spectre. All BMW needs to do is to look after the brand and continue to make ultra-exclusive motor cars for it to thrive. I absolutely love both marques, but look back with nostalgia to when Rolls-Royce and Bentley were definitively the Best Cars in the World. As a résumé, both brands are in very safe hands and long may they both continue.

Charlie Reaser: Given Volkswagen's ownership of some very sporting brands, its custodianship of Bentley is, to my mind, quite appropriate. Once again Bentley is a 'wind in your hair, thunder in your ears' sort of automobile in the spirit of the Cricklewood models of yore. That's not to discount BMW; the Goodwood Royces seem to have gone from strength to strength as far as style, presence, and their bespoke offerings are concerned. BMW has done well in its stewardship of the Rolls-Royce name.

David Irvine: In my opinion, the first Goodwood Phantom by BMW was (and still is) the best car from the two.

THE FINAL PAGE



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 2023. 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

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

"Both marques have to look to the future, hence the debut of Rolls-Royce's all-electric Spectre"

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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JULY/AUGUST 2024 RR & BD


Brian W. Heitman: I have always owned Mercedes SL roadsters, but the dealership was always trying to get me to consider a Rolls-Royce or Bentley. I finally chose a Bentley GT Speed. I appreciate the German drivetrain and the British hand-stitched interior. It was the best choice for me because it's a driver's car and fits my personality better. I still have my last SL63, though, and can't imagine selling it.

Mark Willenbrock: Until one or the other decides to start using a bespoke drivetrain, to me it's just badge engineering with added bling. The Goodwood cars hide their real identity better in my opinion, but both Goodwood and Crewe are effectively just putting together a box of parts from Germany. In the old days, owners of a Rolls-Royce or Bentley (or Aston Martin) would raise an eyebrow at the likes of Jensen, for example, for using a proprietary drivetrain, yet this is exactly where both companies are now.


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f t i

ON SAFARI!

We take a trip to Norfolk to meet the long-term custodian of this potentially unique Silver Shadow shooting brake – arguably one of the most useful of today’s SY-series survivors

WORDS: PAUL GUINNESS PHOTOS: GREGORY OWAIN



Before the widespread adoption of the SUV that so dominates today's market, an estate car was traditionally the default choice for buyers in need of a load-lugging workhorse. These were cars designed for the specific purpose of hauling around hefty loads and perhaps even commercial chattels, with so many of the world's mass-market manufacturers offering their own variation on the estate theme. From the smallest British-built Mini Countryman to the most gargantuan

American station wagon, there was an estate to suit every need. Or almost.

One sector that was generally neglected was the super-premium estate car. I'm not talking about the well-proportioned, well-equipped executive estates that proved popular for many years, with the huge success enjoyed by Volvo encouraging companies like Mercedes-Benz to join the fray. No, I'm talking about further upmarket than that, with neither Rolls-Royce nor Bentley offering an official factory-built estate – or shooting brake, as

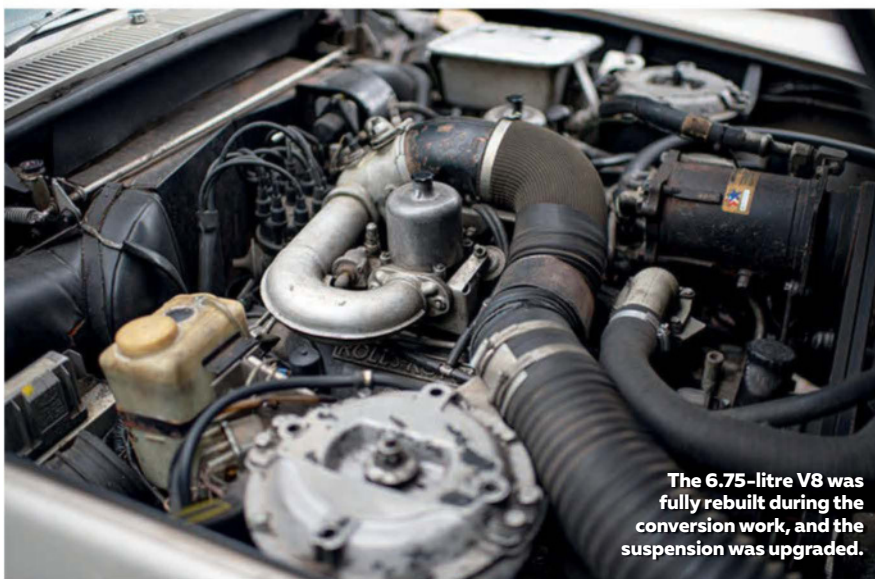
such an opulent machine would no doubt have been named. It's perhaps understandable, given the potential for an official estate car to dilute the image of Britain's two most prestigious marques. And so, as companies like Harold Radford & Co managed to spot this gap in the market, they began offering their own coachbuilt conversions to 'estate car' spec.

In the case of Radford, many of the Bentley MkVI and R-Type conversions of the late 1940s and early '50s retained the regular saloon car shape »



FEATURE CAR

1976 SILVER SHADOW SAFARI



The 6.75-litre V8 was fully rebuilt during the conversion work, and the suspension was upgraded.



For this particular conversion, the top half of the horizontally split tailgate came courtesy of a Range Rover.



The cleverly designed rear side storage areas hide the battery, rear washer bottle and toolkit.



but incorporated a horizontally-split two-piece tailgate and a folding back seat for the kind of versatility that country estate owners and shooting fans would have benefited from. Others though, offered an extended roofline and an estate car profile, particularly once the Bentley S-series and Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud appeared in 1955.

Rolls-Royce estates actually pre-date Harold Radford's efforts, with a small number of British coachbuilders also creating innovative designs based around the small-chassis models of the 1920s and '30s, while in more recent times we've had occasional estates built from SY and SZ saloons, and even the Silver Seraph. The estate featured here, however, is rather different – believed to be a one-off, designed and created by The Chelsea Workshop in the late 1980s or early '90s and based around a 1976 Silver Shadow.

BESPOKE CONVERSION

Known since its conversion as the Silver Shadow Safari, this distinctive looking

“This distinctive looking load-lugger has been known since its conversion as the Silver Shadow Safari”



load-carrier remains in the hands of long-term owner Iain Salmon, who lives in mid-Norfolk and is a Rolls-Royce aficionado. The story behind this particular car is fascinating, with the conversion being commissioned by a game reserve in South Africa. The idea, we assume, was to offer the ultimate in upmarket game reserve tours aboard a bespoke Rolls-Royce shooting brake, with the Silver Shadow Safari set to be shipped upon completion of the year-long project.

The finished car was even registered on South African plates in readiness for its new overseas career, but for some unknown reason it never left the UK... much to current owner Iain's delight. "Fifteen or so years ago, my partner and I were looking for a vehicle that was suitable for our dogs and which could also tow our caravan," he recalls. "We considered various options, including a classic hearse – although we were advised against that. Then, in October 2008, we spotted the Silver Shadow Safari for sale with Classic Automobiles, based then in south



The Rolls-Royce is used as the main towing vehicle for Iain's 1972 Carlight Continental.

London. It was exactly right for us."

It wasn't the first time that the Safari had been offered for sale, as just three years earlier, in December 2005, it had been entered into a Coys auction with a guide price of £45,000-£55,000 but had failed to attract a buyer on the day.

Iain suspects that The Chelsea Workshop converted up to six Silver Shadows into estate car spec, although

he believes this one – known as the Safari – may well be unique in its design. Walking around it on the day of our photo shoot, we were struck by the neatness of the conversion and the attention to detail, particularly inside. There was far more to this car's build than adding an estate-like rear end, as this particular Silver Shadow was rejuvenated and substantially »

“The extension of the roofline to create an estate involved designing bespoke rear side windows for the load area”

Iain Salmon spotted the Silver Shadow Safari for sale in October 2008.

upgraded as part of the process, being treated to a full engine rebuild and all-new suspension that also incorporated a Harvey Bailey-spec rear end to better suit the shooting brake role. It was the bodywork of the car, however, that involved the most work.

The extension of the roofline to create an estate involved designing bespoke rear side windows for the load area, with a slightly curved bottom edge to exactly match the Silver Shadow's gently sloping rear wings. Meanwhile, the challenge of creating a two-piece horizontally split tailgate was solved via a top section from a Range Rover, with the bottom section being made from the original bootlid (albeit now bottom-hinged) and fitted with additional metal to square everything up. An Everflex-style roof was added, which extends down the rear pillars and part of the tailgate, along with a 'full-length' Tudor Webasto sunroof for a touch of open-air appeal. The

bottom half of the car was sprayed to a high standard in British Racing Green, neatly contrasting with the original Silver Sand factory colour.

The interior of the Silver Shadow also received major work, with new leather where necessary followed by a full Connolising of the upholstery. The steering wheel was also trimmed in leather, the wood veneer was stripped and relacquered, new Wilton carpets were fitted, and green-tinted glass (as well as a new screen featuring a green top strip) was also installed. The new estate-style load area, meanwhile, was treated to full carpeting plus two (one each side) built-in storage boxes, with one side housing the battery and rear washer bottle and the other having space for a general toolbox; back in 2005, however, Coys suggested that the storage allowed space "for the retrospective installation of secure lockable gun boxes".

Bringing the whole project together,

from design to completion, was a long and labour-intensive process, one that Coys suggested had cost the South African game reserve "in excess of £50,000". Assuming the work took place in around 1990, that would equate to a conversion cost of around £120,000 today. Now wonder the same auction house, when listing the Silver Shadow Safari for sale almost two decades ago, suggested the end result would be "equally at home on the grouse moors of Scotland or the dunes of Abu Dhabi".

PERFECT WORKHORSE

All these years later, the Safari's main usage is rather more down to earth, providing opulent transport for Iain's golden retriever, German shepherd and two dachshunds. It also sports a towing bracket, and is regularly used for hauling around a 1972 Carlight Continental – a hefty, »



FEATURE CAR

1976 SILVER SHADOW SAFARI



“The interior also received major work, with new leather where necessary followed by full Connolising”

upmarket caravan that measures 18 feet in length. For staying over at classic vehicle events, as well as for more general holidays and weekends away, it's arguably the ultimate combination in terms of period luxury caravanning.

One change that Iain soon made after buying his unique shooting brake all those years ago was to remove the Silver Spirit wheels that had been fitted during the conversion, preferring

instead a more original look. He has maintained the Safari well ever since, entrusting it to the marque experts at Colbrook Specialists (now Colbrook R&B) for all servicing and any necessary repairs, including sorting out the car's slightly rough running and some minor electrical gremlins soon after purchase. The Safari's total mileage is unknown, but it remains in fine working order and continues to provide practical motoring

with a luxury twist whenever the need for dog and caravan transport arises.

Iain may well have a few small areas of bodywork attended to at some point, including the front air dam that was fitted during the conversion work; but until then, this remains a smart, usable and genuinely attention-grabbing Silver Shadow that's arguably among the most useful examples ever built. Lucky dogs, we say. ■



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FEATURE CAR
2015 BENTLEY GTC V8 S



ATTRACTING ATTENTION

Our Australian correspondent meets up with the proud owner of this unique Bentley GTC, a car with an interesting tale behind its attention-grabbing colour scheme

WORDS: RICHARD HOLDSWORTH
PHOTOS: CHRIS BARBOUR





Ralph Plarre is a lucky man. He lives in a delightful suburb of Melbourne, has a wife who shares his enjoyment of Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars, and boasts an impressive classic collection featuring a variety of prestigious marques – a line-up that includes such mean machinery as a Ferrari 599 GTB and a Porsche 991 GT3. Today though, it is Ralph's Bentley GTC V8 S that he's bringing along to our photo shoot in the Yarra Valley, one of Australia's finest wine growing areas.

"Welcome to Yarrowood," Ralph says, and all eyes turn to the magnificent Bentley in dark metallic green as it comes to rest on this crisp autumn day. His journey has involved a variety of roads, including the suburban streets of Melbourne, the twists and turns of the hills around Kangaroo Ground and the straight, fast stretches into the Yarra Valley. "The GTC is just the best all-rounder," enthuses Ralph. "It's quick and it's smooth, just so easy to drive. It's also not ostentatious and, despite the [second generation] design being well over ten years old, its lines are bang up to date... even ageless."

Ralph Plarre has owned ten different

"This new GTC V8 S arrived in Australia in 2015, finished in its factory hue of Hallmark Grey"

Rolls-Royce or Bentley cars over the years, including such classics as a 1935 Derby Bentley Drophead Coupe with Park Ward coachwork, a 1972 Rolls-Royce Corniche Convertible, a Corniche II that went on to win numerous concours awards, a Bentley S3 and a Mulsanne. Then there are the 'other' marques that have graced Ralph's driveway, such as a 2008 Ferrari 599 GTB Fiorano and, more recently, a 2018 488 Spider, as well as Porsches that have included two Boxsters, a 1985 944 Turbo (since traded for a 928 S4) and his favourite from the Stuttgart fold, the 2018 991-series 911. Ralph has also been a fan of American metal, and was president of the Cadillac Car Club in Melbourne back in the 1990s.

So, how do the other cars in Ralph's collection compare with his V8-engined Bentley? "Compared with the Ferrari, the GTC is a mellow cruiser and a

more relaxed drive – not, of course, as dramatic, theatrical or fast as the V12 Ferrari." And the Porsches? "Again, the Bentley is a more relaxed car, obviously not a racetrack machine. I call the Porsche a cross between a ballet dancer and a prize fighter. A real driver's car that comes alive when you get serious. Great cars, of course, for the right occasion but the GTC beats them all."

ADVANTAGE V8

This new Bentley GTC V8 S arrived in Australia in 2015, finished in its factory hue of Hallmark Grey... which we'll come back to later. Ralph and Margaret came across the car for sale in more recent times, and snapped it up without question. It has been a firm favourite ever since, but how does it compare with the W12-engined



Bentleys that came before, of which Ralph has plenty of experience? Despite the V8's output of just over 520bhp being down on the W12's power, he appreciates certain advantages: "In my experience, the second-generation Bentley powered by the V8 benefits from being lower in weight, resulting in a car that's nimbler and with less tendency to understeer when cornering."

Independent road tests confirm Ralph's words and suggest that the extra power of the W12 is not that dramatic, with acceleration and top speed only marginally greater. But Ralph tells us that there's more to this GTC than simply the engine having eight rather than 12 cylinders: "The car just wafts along with utmost ease. There is so little road noise and no wind to ruffle Margaret's hair with the hood down and the wind deflector in place. It's an option I would thoroughly recommend for all journeys, not just long-distance motoring. And I find the economy to be good – maybe four fewer cylinders has a hand in this, but also critically the cylinder de-action facility, which I find seamless in operation."

Ralph says the car's adjustable »



Any GTC is a head-turner, but this particular example attracts more attention than most.

FEATURE CAR
2015 BENTLEY GTC V8 S



The second-generation GTC was unveiled in 2011, with the V8 version being added the following year.



The Mulliner interior of this limited-edition GTC V8 was one of the first things that attracted the car to Ralph.



“Glancing at the photographs of the Bentley, you’ll already know that something drastic has happened”

suspension is also excellent: “You can adjust the ride from soft to firm to perfectly suit the road conditions and your driving style. And the driver is equally reassured by those disc brakes, which are enormous – when it comes to stopping quickly, you’re never caught wanting! Accelerating through the gears is seamless, smooth and quick – it’s an eight-speed ZF automatic gearbox and, like the rest of the car, I cannot find fault.”

Ralph’s GTS is fitted with the optional sports exhaust, which he says has extra resonance whether at idle or when hitting top revs: “It sounds like an Aussie V8 Supercar... it turns heads!”

SURPRISE IN STORE

Glancing at the photographs of the Bentley, you’ll already know that something drastic has happened since it was acquired by Ralph, with the Hallmark Grey paintwork having seemingly been banished.

But appearances can be deceptive, as this particular GTC hasn’t had a respray, but has instead been treated to a high-quality wrap. There may, of course, be traditionalists reading this who are now about to leave the page in dismay. But with Ralph living in Australia with a climate that is, like the UK, becoming increasingly volatile, as well as facing the challenge of regularly travelling on Outback dirt roads where the tarmac has run out, he insists that wrapping a car as prestigious as a Bentley actually makes sense.

Ralph’s involvement with wrapping all started around a decade ago when he decided to embark upon an adventure. He and Margaret bought a 2009 Toyota Land Cruiser and set out on a lap of Australia, taking in some of the most inhospitable places on Earth – the kind of experience that was sure to cause cosmetic damage even to one of the toughest 4x4s of all. “There’s the intense heat of the day and the freezing temperatures of the night,”



Ralph Plarre has owned a number of different Rolls-Royce and Bentley models over the years.

says Ralph. “And then you meet an on-coming road train on an unmade road and there’s that great storm of dust and rock that he throws at you...”

Ralph didn’t want to come back from the 10,000-mile trip with the Toyota looking like it had been to war, so he »

FEATURE CAR

2015 BENTLEY GTC V8 S



The 4.0-litre twin-turbo V8 in the second-generation GTC V8 S pushed out 521bhp when new.



Ralph appreciates the performance of the V8 GTC, despite it being less powerful than the old W12.

“Wrapping was the obvious answer, a process that proved to be remarkably straightforward”

came up with a solution: “Wrapping a car was something new to me but I’d heard some great reports from those who’d tried it.” He had the entire front of the Land Cruiser wrapped in clear film – and once home in Melbourne after three months of enduring everything that Australia could throw at it, the Toyota still looked virtually brand new beneath the wrap.

As a convert, Ralph went on to wrap a MINI JCW followed by a Toyota Yaris GR before deciding to try the same technique on the Rolls-Royce Phantom VII that he owned at the time. “The car looked good in factory silver but I thought this could be lifted if I applied a dark metallic Sapphire Blue to the

roof, bonnet and boot,” he explains.

“This wasn’t going against company edict, as Rolls-Royce Silver Clouds of the late 1950s were offered with a similar two-tone paint scheme.”

A couple of years later, with Ralph toying with the idea of buying another Bentley GTC, he was told about this V8 S in Concours Black Series spec, complete with a Mulliner interior in Baluga and linen quilted trim. Finished in Hallmark Grey, the car looked good... but Ralph felt it could do with something more. Wrapping was the obvious answer, a process that proved to be remarkably straightforward: “To make the job as trouble-free as possible and, of course, less expensive, it’s important

that the original colour is compatible with the new. With my Yaris, black to grey meant we didn’t have to wrap inside the doors and other areas, which resulted in it being much simpler. On the other hand, a red car wrapped in blue is going to look awful if you don’t wrap pretty well everything – and that’s both expensive and fiddly!”

The technology involved in wrapping has developed over the years, with specialists Grafico explaining to Ralph about a new product from the USA by the name of Inozetek. “It’s a company that produces the most magnificent range of super-smooth glossy colours, including pearlescent, metallic and solid colours in wrap,” says Ralph. “This new product changed everything and, after much soul searching, Margaret and I decided to wrap the GTC in Midnight Green.”

The end result is certainly eye-catching: “To say we are delighted is an understatement. For a fraction of the cost of a repaint, we have a completely





bespoke Bentley GTC that looks terrific. It's also easy to clean, and if we ever change our minds or any subsequent owner has any doubts, the original colour can always be reinstated."

While we were up close with Ralph's Bentley in the Yarra Valley, with ace photographer Chris Barbour capturing this head-turner on camera, we were certainly impressed with the end result. Since the shoot, however, the car has been treated to another layer of the latest paint protection clear film, which not only adds even more lustre and shine but also reduces still further the chances of stone chip damage. While any second-generation Bentley GTC is a car capable of attracting admiring glances, Ralph Plarre's unique example takes this to another level. ■

THANK YOU: We're grateful to the Yarrawood Estate (www.yarrawood.com.au) and winery, based in the Yarra Valley region of Victoria, for providing the photo shoot location.



Achieving the perfect wrap result on any car requires a high level of specialist skill.



Ralph also personalised his old Phantom VII, transforming the silver car by applying a dark metallic Sapphire Blue to the roof, bonnet and boot.



Finished in Hallmark Grey, this is how the Bentley GTC looked prior to the wrapping process.



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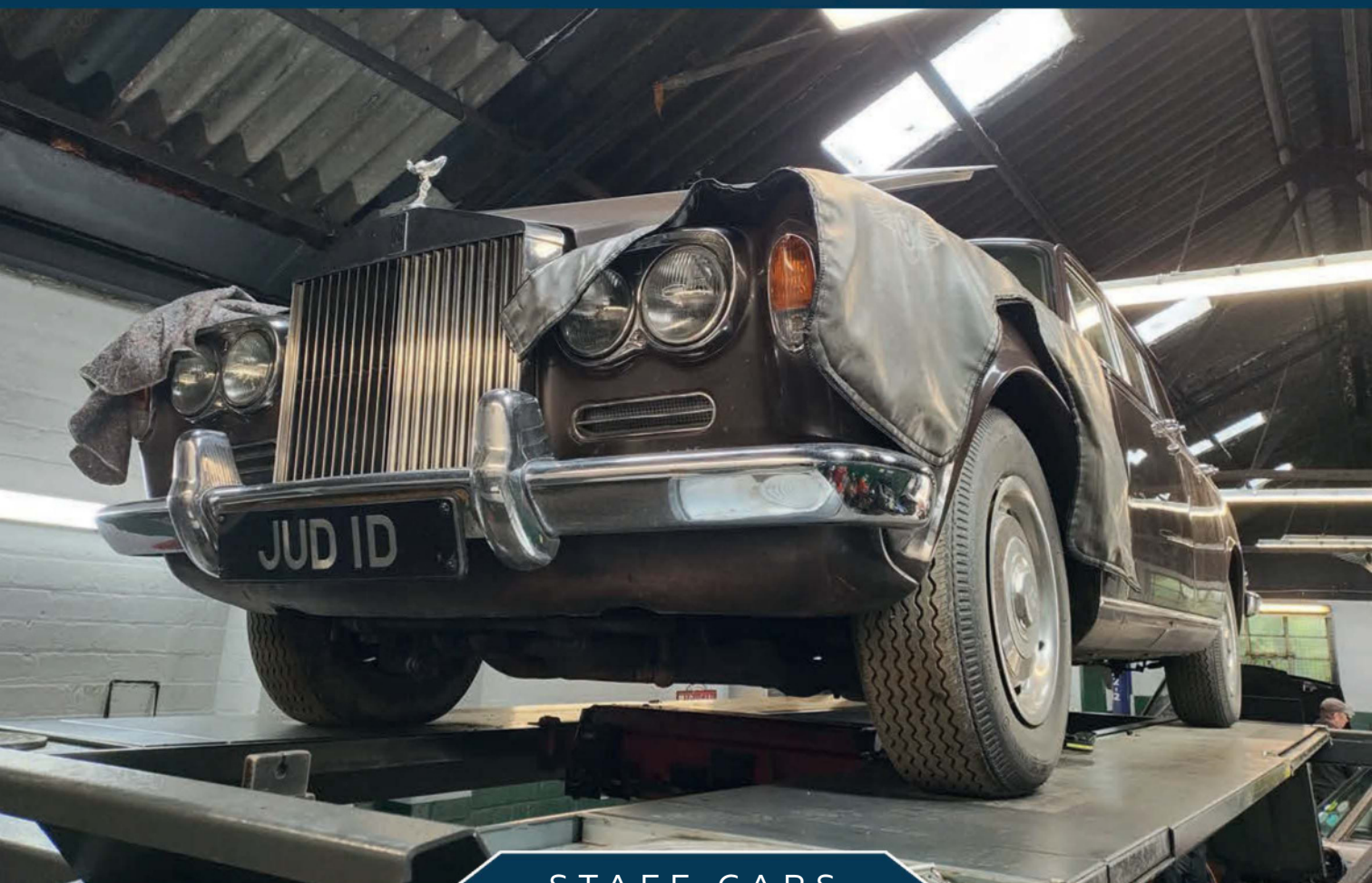
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STAFF CARS

SUMMER PROGRESS

We hoped progress might be of the Royal kind, involving a tour around the kingdom, but we'll settle for a month when nothing new goes wrong

WORDS & PHOTOS: NIGEL BOOTHMAN

There's a Spanish saying mentioned a few times in Patrick O'Brian's marvellous Aubrey-Maturin novels: "May no new thing arise". It's one I feel like repeating. Change, so the saying implies, is usually a change for the worse. That pessimistic statement is perfectly true when your 52-year-old Rolls-Royce is, at last, going nicely after 36 years off the road and two years of recommissioning work.

The last report ended with relatively minor cosmetic considerations, like the refinishing of the door cappings, which has not moved on very far. That's mainly because I had a long think

about doing it myself and decided to ask an expert first. The expert in question, a talented local furniture maker and restorer, can do a much better job than I can, but I'm not sure yet whether I can afford it. So, that job hangs fire while I consider my options.

Anyway, I was soon distracted by other worries. A brake pressure warning light came on and refused to extinguish itself, and this seemed to me and my project partner, Findlay, to coincide with a slightly harder, less effective brake pedal. There was also the continuing issue of a 'clonk' from under the car when encountering a pothole, and the

old challenge of getting the transmission to select Park – still unsolved after 18 months of on-and-off fettling. Time for some professional help.

A MAN WHO KNOWS

Faults with the hydraulic braking system on an SY-series car can be identified by a patient amateur, given plenty of time, access to the workshop manual and, ideally, a pressure gauge. At best, I could summon two of those three. I was also missing the crucial fourth factor you get from decades of professional experience: knowing that when a car does X, it's »

STAFF CARS 1972 SILVER SHADOW

usually Y or Z that's to blame. Hence, it took our friend and Rolls-Royce mentor Ross McLeod, of Mulsanne Motors in Dalkeith, less time to diagnose and fix the brake fault than it would have taken me to find the right page in the manual: a broken spring in the front brake pump. Off with the inlet manifold, out with the pump, and soon done.

Just as valuable was Ross' patience in getting to the bottom of the Park selection fault. He and I had previously proved that the steering column selector, gearbox actuator and transmission itself were all healthy enough, so the flaw must be in the thick rope of wiring loom that passed from column to bulkhead plugs to actuator. Ross managed to trace two pins in the multiplug on the actuator that weren't doing their job, followed the associated wires up into the loom and found corrosion that had caused

them to break. Resoldered, rewrapped and done. For the first time, we had a car with a working Park function.

Ross even identified a common cause of under-car clonking, pointing out the tunnel in the crossmember that the exhaust passes through, and he immobilised that with a collar. Feeling joyful, I picked up the car and made plans to attend our fantastic local Coffee & Classic meeting, on this occasion a good way outside Edinburgh on the far side of a steep climb over a hill called Soutra. Potentially a risky trip.

JOYRIDING, AND THEN...

I needn't have worried. The trip down to the meeting near Lauder was a delight, the car climbing the hills and wafting around the bends with the kind of serenity its designers intended. It stopped a bit better, too. The only

fault left to annoy me was the under-car clunk, or perhaps one of the under-car clunks. With the exhaust silenced, it's possible to isolate this noise as coming from somewhere under or behind the nearside rear passenger seat. Something in that side of the rear suspension assembly, then...bush, damper, spring, cone, load levelling ram? To be continued.

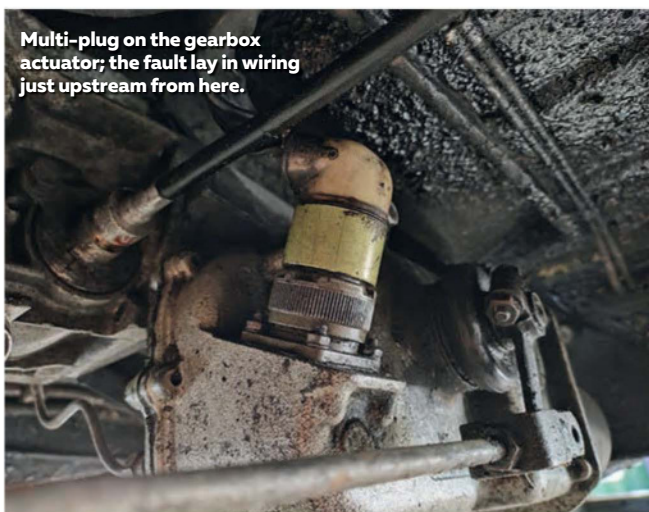
After that pleasing trip, with 50 miles on the odometer and the car's behaviour just as I'd hoped, it was difficult to stop using it. Do the kids need a lift somewhere? Time for a quick supermarket trip? Let's take the Rolls-Royce. The only slight irritation was the faff of putting such a long car away safely each time, with some millimetric precision needed to fit it between other cars and the driveway gate. But then, while getting the car out for another joyride, there



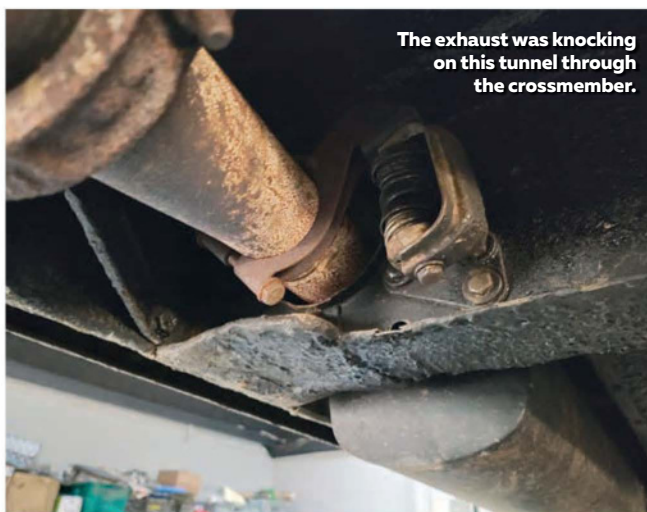
Back amongst the always-interesting car park at Mulsanne Motors.



Up on the ramp for investigation of the gearbox wiring fault.



Multi-plug on the gearbox actuator; the fault lay in wiring just upstream from here.



The exhaust was knocking on this tunnel through the crossmember.

was a stream of hydraulic fluid from under the left side of the engine and plumes of smoke where it splashed the exhaust downpipe. Now what?

Peering under the car made it clear that the leak was from somewhere near the pair of accumulator spheres, or their valve bodies, or the nest of associated pipes. Once back on the driveway and up on the ramps, I got a better look, and it really did seem to be weeping from the join between the two hemispheres of the front accumulator. Had the pressure from the new spring in the front pump pushed the ageing sphere over the edge?

HOME SERVICE

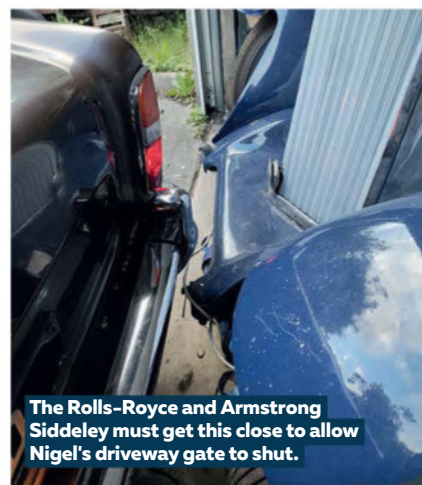
Once again, we were grateful for Ross McLeod's wisdom, but this time we would be doing the work ourselves. Flying Spares came to the rescue with »



At last, there's actually a Park function when the selector sits here.



Silver Shadow, Austin 7 and Chevron B16... a typically diverse sample from the Coffee & Classics meets.



The Rolls-Royce and Armstrong Siddeley must get this close to allow Nigel's driveway gate to shut.



Onto the ramps for inspection. Note the shiny, reflective paint!



A fluid leak from the seam in the front accumulator sphere.

a new sphere and Ross advised us on the best way to remove it. They come out with the valve body attached – input, output and return pipes must be

disconnected and plugged to prevent the fluid reservoir draining, then fixing bolts and a bracket across the base of both spheres are removed too, and you

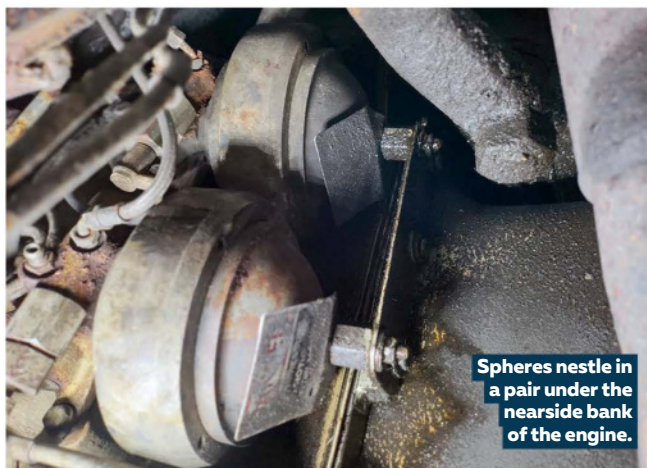
can wriggle it out past the exhaust.

Ross suggested we bring the new and old spheres to him, and he used the correct tool to remove the old sphere and fit the new one to the valve body. Back I went and refitted it, a fiddly task, and then bled it – a job I'd previously tried from under a ramp, but it's actually easier on a jack with the front nearside wheel removed, going in from the side. With the car back on all four wheels and a nervous test drive round local streets, the brakes felt rather better and more powerful and there were no leaks. A sense of satisfaction began to rise up from my work boots, but soon descended again when the *other* brake warning light – Circuit 1 – came on, and stayed on.

With no leaks and no drop or change in brake performance, I'm moderately hopeful that it isn't a real fault at all, but a failing either of the switch in the valve body or the nasty, greasy wiring and the push-connector we'd been meddling with during the accumulator job. We'll see. But in the meantime, may no new thing arise. ■



Findlay shown working hard to remove the sphere and valve body.



Spheres nestle in a pair under the nearside bank of the engine.



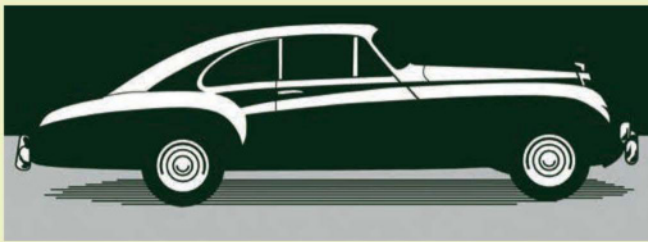
The old sphere still on the valve body, with the reconditioned item waiting its turn.



The reconditioned sphere from Flying Spares; it needs red rubber grease before mating with the valve body.



Bleeding the sphere using the nipple to the left of output pipe.



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BACK TO BURGHLEY HOUSE

The RREC's 2024 Annual Rally and Concours D'Elegance saw the best Rolls-Royces and Bentleys from around Europe gather for a masterclass in the marques' machines

WORDS & PHOTOS: RICHARD GUNN

The Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club once again packed out its traditional venue of Burghley House, near Stamford, for its Annual Rally and Concours D'Elegance. The show's home since 2015 saw over 600 cars make the June pilgrimage to this ever-popular and always spectacular yearly celebration of all things Rolls-Royce and Bentley.

With the Elizabethan stately home forming a beautiful and somewhat appropriate backdrop (given its starring role as Windsor Castle in royal drama *The Crown*), owners arrived with their cars from all over Europe. Models ranging from a 1905 two-cylinder 10hp right through to the latest

electric Spectre were in attendance. And refreshingly, most seemed to be driven to the rally rather than trailered, whatever their age and value – a testament to their inherent qualities.

Away from the displays, traders did roaring business; even a Rolls-Royce Merlin engine from a 1942 Hawker Hurricane was up for grabs for anybody with a spare £60,000. There were also plenty of dealers with a mouthwatering selection of classics, while Bonhams Cars Online's auction included a striking 1922 Rolls-Royce 40/50hp Alpine Eagle – the fastest production Silver Ghost ever made. Elsewhere, there were experts and luminaries from the world of Rolls-

Royce and Bentley delivering talks and seminars, while commemorative exhibits marked 120 years since Henry Royce met Charles Rolls and the centenary of Bentley's first Le Mans win.

The highlight of the three-day gathering, however, was (as always) on the Sunday, when gleaming rows of Concours d'Elegance entrants, polished to perfection and sparkling in the sun, lined up for judging. It was Stephen Horne who scooped the coveted Best Car in Show award for his stunning 1932 Graber-bodied Rolls-Royce 20/25 Drophead Coupe – a well-deserved win for a magnificent machine and a fitting finale to this year's very successful meeting. ■



A Rolls-Royce Merlin V12 aircraft engine gave popular – and very noisy – running demonstrations throughout the day.



Among the exhibits featuring bodywork by Hooper was this 1956 Silver Cloud.



To help commemorate the 100th anniversary of Bentley's first Le Mans win, this 1924 Bentley 3 Litre was on special display.



Stephen Horne scooped the big Concours D'Elegance prize, winning Best in Show for his lovely 1932 Rolls-Royce 20/25 with Drophead Coupe coachwork by Graber of Switzerland.



'Little Su', one of just three known survivors of the original two-cylinder 10hp models built by Henry Royce at his Cooke Street works in Manchester over 1904-05.



Perfectly matching the bright, sunny weather of the rally was this 1986 Rolls-Royce Corniche II.



The commemoration of the 1904 meeting between Charles Rolls and Henry Royce included a 1901 10hp Decauville – the model that inspired Royce to start building his own cars.



Auto Couture Motoring displayed this 1953 Rolls-Royce Silver Wraith with Hooper Sedan De Ville bodywork, originally commissioned by the oil baron, Nubar Gulbenkian.



This 1926 Rolls-Royce 20hp features six-light enclosed saloon bodywork by Arthur Mulliner of Northampton.



Richard and Tina Bascoe with their 1926 Rolls-Royce 20hp with aluminium Windovers Tourer coachwork – a car that, engine aside, is all original.



A contrast in Continentals: a 1963 Bentley S3 variant alongside its 1955 R-Type equivalent.



A 1965 Silver Cloud III Drophead Coupe by Park Ward, which in an earlier yellow colour scheme appeared as Daniel Craig's car in 1996's *Our Friends in the North* TV series.



This Bentley R-Type (a former RR&BD feature car) with Freestone & Webb 'Empress' bodywork was one of the 1952 Earl's Court Motor Show cars.



Rolls-Royce Motor Cars brought things right up to date by bringing along the latest electric Spectre model to show off.



One vehicle that attracted the crowds was this 1933 Phantom II, fully restored and fitted with a 27-litre Rolls-Royce Meteor V12 tank engine – with 860bhp and 1620lb.ft of torque.



AJ Glew specialises in Rolls-Royce 40/50 Silver Ghosts, Phantom Is and IIs, plus the 20hp, 20/25 and 25/30 cars.



Just four streamlined Teardrop Sedan Coupes were built by Gurney Nutting in 1949, distinguished by their teardrop-shaped rear quarter windows, based on a Bentley 4 1/4 Litre chassis.



When new, this 1933 Rolls-Royce Freestone & Webb Owner Driver Saloon was exported to Batavia, the capital of Dutch East Indies (now Jakarta, Indonesia).



The official D Moore & Co stand, one of the many dealers displaying at Burghley.



For those wanting to future-proof their Rolls-Royces and Bentleys, Evic was showcasing its electric conversion technology for 1960s and '70s models.



Part of the Yohan Poonawalla collection, this 1979 Phantom VI was used as transport for Queen Elizabeth II and King Charles III (when the Prince of Wales) on state visits abroad.



The Vintage & Prestige stand inevitably featured a fine range of available classic Rolls-Royces.



A Tudor Grey 1958 Bentley S1 Continental Flying Spur and a Burgundy 1963 Bentley S3 Continental – both by H J Mulliner – were two of the cars being sold P&A Wood.



The Flying Spares marquee – a regular feature of any RREC Annual Rally and always popular with attendees.



Among the cars being auctioned off by Bonhams Cars Online was this 1921 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost, one of the examples built at Springfield in the USA.



The P&A Wood stand featured a mouthwatering selection of cars up for sale, including this Vermillion 1991 Corniche III – one of just 453 made.



An ideal car for a summer's day blast to Burghley – a 1928 Bentley 4½ Litre in racing trim.



This 1934 Phantom II Kellner Continental Sports Saloon brought home multiple awards for its owner, Simon Bibby, in the Concours D'Elegance.



Built for the Maharaj Kumar of Udaipur in India, this 1927 Phantom has a long wheelbase chassis, Hooper coachwork, side-mounted Grebel searchlights, gun racks and a Red Ashay 'Butterfly Girl' glass mascot.

The five competitors for the coveted Best in Show award: 1969 Silver Shadow Drophead Coupe by MPW (owner Joseph Bell), 1954 R-Type Continental by HJ Mulliner (owner Jonathan Lyons), 1932 20/25 Drophead Coupe by Graber (owner Stephen Horne), 1956 S1 Continental Drophead Coupe by Park Ward (owner David Wilkie), and 1963 Silver Cloud III (owner Roy Allan).



Angie and Paul Douthwaite visited the event from Surrey with their 1986 Rolls-Royce Camargue – a car that's been in the family for 30 years and has "90 per cent original paintwork", says Paul.



Applying the finishing cleaning touches to his 1963 Bentley S3 (a car modified to a drophead in the 1980s) is Joey Jooris, who drove it over from Belgium for the event.



Ralph Bunker with his 1923 Barker-bodied Open Tourer 20HP, which scooped first prize in the *Conservation Class up to 1940* Concours d'Elegance category.



Lavish picnics are all part of the Burghley experience – and here Tony and Sharon Baines and their son Peter, from Chesterfield, enjoy one by their 1975 Silver Shadow.

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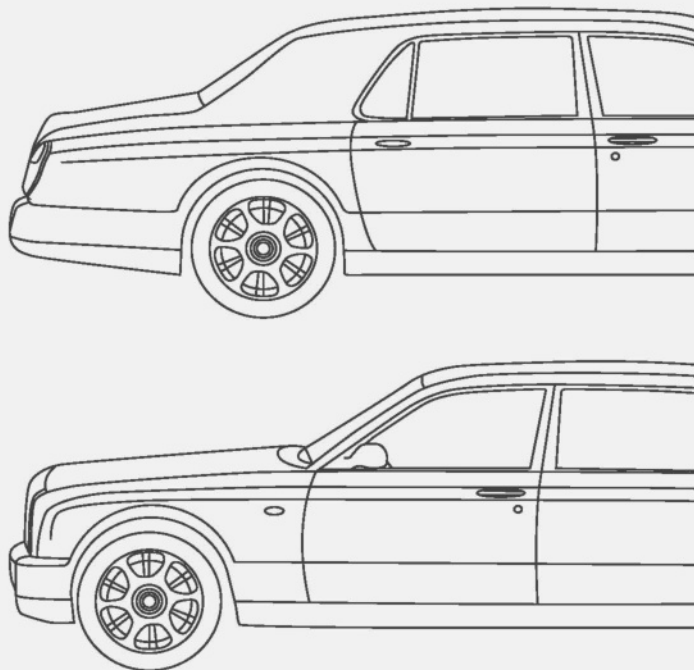
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2000 X Rolls Royce Corniche Convertible MK V 6.8 V8. Finished in Amethyst with a Black hood and 17 inch alloys. Pale Grey leather interior piped in French Navy with French Navy carpets and Walnut veneers. Only 26,900 miles with full history. Absolutely stunning, a rare piece of motoring history**£133,950**



1998 S Bentley Arnage Red Label Look Alike. Finished in Meteor Blue with electric sunroof and 18 inch Red Label alloys, with Magnolia interior piped in French Navy and French Navy carpets piped in Magnolia. Full Service History, outstanding condition and must be seen**£15,999**



1998 Bentley Turbo RT limited edition Mulliner. One of only 10 RHD cars manufactured for the UK, these cars were only sold by invitation. Finished in special order Kensington Green with Spruce Green interior. With just two owners this really is a stunning example. A rare opportunity to purchase a very rare car.....**£POA**



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**£17,250**

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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



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ARNAGE STATION WAGON ▲

Neatly coinciding with this issue's feature on a one-off Silver Shadow shooting brake built by The Chelsea Workshop is this later advert for Van Genaddi Design, a US-based company that described itself as "master coachbuilders" and offered its own Bentley Arnage-based estate. Each conversion was said to feature "flawless hand-formed bodywork", with the company's craftsmen

managing to combine "traditional European coachbuilding techniques... with state-of-the-art engineering".

This was the perfect car for anyone craving a truly upmarket station wagon in the early 2000s, as the ad explained: "Our shooting brake program, developed exclusively for Bentley and Rolls-Royce automobiles, addresses your requirements for the ultimate

personal luxury wagon."

According to the advert, the company also offered the new Continental GT with a retractable hardtop conversion, but we've no idea how many of either model were built – or, indeed, what happened to Van Genaddi Design. If any of our American readers can provide more information, we'd love to hear from you.



◀ SUNROOF PERFECTION

When it came to folding fabric sunroofs, Tudor Webasto was the biggest name in the UK at one time. The company's sunroof conversions were high in quality, ensuring that they appealed to owners of prestigious cars who fancied a touch of fresh-air motoring, and so we weren't surprised when we came across this period advert featuring a Silver Shadow.

Offering the ultimate in quality, it's not surprising that, according to the advert, a Tudor Webasto was "the only folding sunroof accepted as a standard extra for Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow and Bentley T-series motor cars". But what if you wanted one fitted as an aftermarket accessory to your existing car? Then a trip to London was the ideal solution: "Have it installed by Roof Installations Ltd of Clapham, London's main Webasto fitting station, and you'll see why they're the authorised Webasto fitting agents to Rolls-Royce – they do the job really expertly and quickly!"

THE ONLY REAL ALTERNATIVES ▶

Among the adverts issued for the new Silver Shadow II during its launch year of 1977 was this monochrome offering, with a headline that posed this intriguing question: "What are the alternatives?" Naturally, the text beneath insisted the only genuine alternatives were the other cars built in Crewe: "Should the elegant, ultra-refined Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow II not meet your requirements completely, one of the following probably will."

The advert went on to mention the Silver Wraith II with its "even larger rear passenger compartment" that was available with or without a division, plus the Corniche – a car that was "especially adapted to long-distance cruising" and was available in both hardtop and convertible guises. Then there was the "long, low and spacious" Camargue, a car that was "styled by Pininfarina with hand-built coachwork by Mulliner Park Ward", while at the top of the range sat the Phantom VI – described as "a limousine in the grand manner providing supremely luxurious transportation for up to five passengers".

Finally, for anyone who wanted the ultimate in prestige but from a marque that was "historically identified with racing success", there were the "Bentley counterparts of the Silver Shadow II and the Corniche saloon and convertible", each one featuring the marque's "distinctive radiator and winged 'B' mascot".

Rolls-Royce and its new Shadow

What are the alternatives?

If you want to see in your car a uniquely harmonious blend of safety, silence, smoothness and speed, comfort, reliability, discretion and longevity.

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If in short, you want the best car in the world, then the alternatives are limited.

Should the elegant, ultra-refined Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow II not meet your requirements completely, one of the following probably will.

The Silver Wraith has an even larger rear passenger compartment than the Shadow, is available with or without a division, and has automatic air conditioning. The rear window is smaller for added privacy and the roof is covered in leathercloth.

The Corniche is especially adapted to long-distance touring and can cruise effortlessly at speeds of up to 120 mph. There is a two-door saloon and a convertible version with power-operated hood.

The Phantom VI – a limousine in the grand manner, providing supremely luxurious transportation for up to five passengers. A car for the most important formal occasions. Long, low and spacious, the striking Camargue two-door saloon is styled by Pininfarina with hand-built coachwork by Mulliner Park Ward.

Admittedly the alternatives make your decision even more difficult. But a call on your Rolls-Royce Appointed Distributor will clarify your mind wonderfully. If you do not know him already, he is listed on the facing page.

Mulliner Park Ward. The ultimate in comfort, grace and safety. Finally, the Bentley counterparts of the Silver Shadow II and the Corniche saloon and convertible. Sporting in character with the distinctive radiator and winged 'B' mascot, historically identified with racing success.

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ENTRY-LEVEL EXCELLENCE ▶

The all-model Bentley brochure of 1988 inevitably contained full details of the Continental (as the Bentley version of the Corniche was known by then), the high-performance Turbo R and the highly luxurious Mulsanne S. Then, of course, there was the entry-level Bentley Eight shown here, a model that offered relatively good value while still managing to retain the feeling of opulence that buyers expected.

The brochure boasted that the "distinguished pedigree of the Bentley Eight is suggested by its distinctive mesh grille, handsome alloy wheels and purposeful new headlamps", while the famous 6.75-litre V8 engine ensured "smooth and effortless performance". It also pointed out that, despite being the most affordable Bentley, the Eight didn't compromise on luxury: "An interior trimmed in fine hide,



straight grain walnut veneer and Wilton carpet make the Bentley Eight a most elegant motor car."

Back in 1988, a brand new Bentley Eight (without any extra-cost options or personalisation) cost from £59,968.

The next most affordable Bentley was the £69,972 Mulsanne S, while the Turbo R demanded a much heftier outlay at £84,966. To put that into perspective, the average house price in the UK in 1988 was just £55,000.





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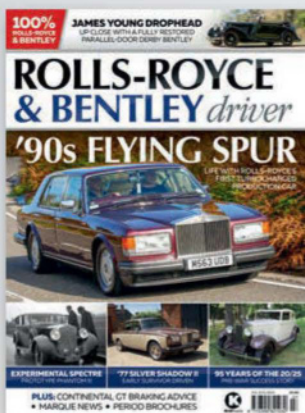
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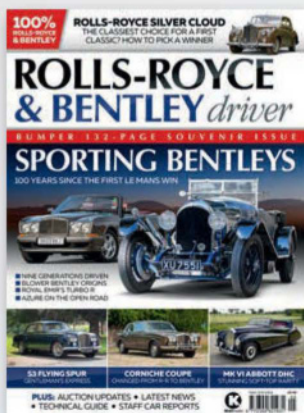
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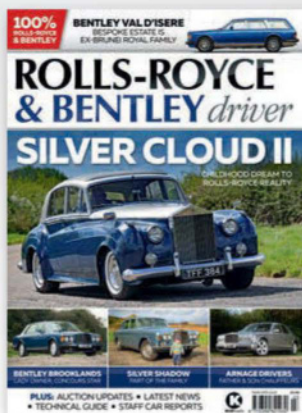
**JULY/
AUGUST 2024**

- Life with a '95 Flying Spur
- James Young Derby Bentley
- Silver Shadow II road test
- 1930s Spectre prototypes
- 95 years of the R-R 20/25
- Continental GT discs/pads



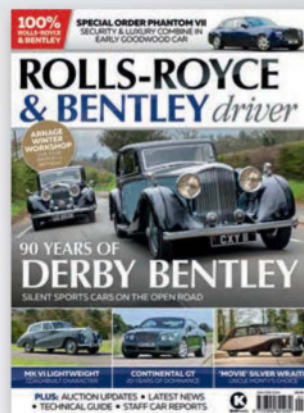
**MAY/JUNE
2024**

- Sporting Bentleys special
- Origins of the 'Blower'
- Cricklewood & Derby duo
- 1950 MkVI Drophead Coupe
- Mulliner's S2 Continental
- Bentley Azure rare edition



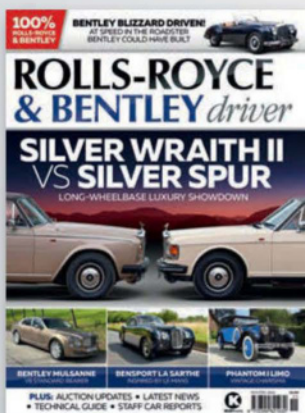
**MARCH/
APRIL 2024**

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



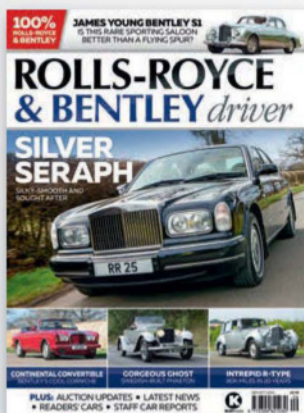
**JANUARY/
FEBRUARY 2024**

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



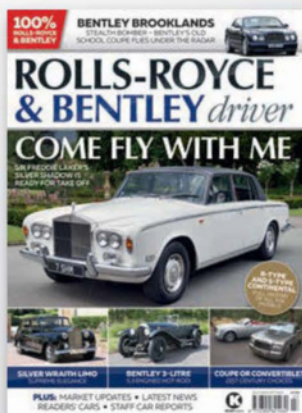
**NOVEMBER/
DECEMBER 2023**

- Silver Wraith II vs Silver Spur
- Bentley Blizzards
- Bensport La Sarthe
- Phantom I Barker Limo
- Bentley Mulsanne
- Bentley S3 reunited with chauffeur



**SEPTEMBER/
OCTOBER 2023**

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



**JULY/
AUGUST 2023**

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



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PAUL GUINNESS

Our editor rediscovers a UK magazine from the start of 2003, when the all-new Phantom VII was making its official debut

More than 21 years after the official launch of the new Rolls-Royce Phantom, it's a model that retains the ability to shock. Its almost simplistic styling of gargantuan proportions brought Rolls-Royce into a brand new era, marking a fitting start to BMW's custodianship that officially began on January 1st, 2003. And all these years later, it's a machine that still turns heads.

It's hard to overemphasise the impact that the Phantom VII had when first unveiled, resulting in the newcomer being the cover star of motoring magazines throughout the world. And among them was the one you see here: the February 2003 issue (on sale in January that year) of *Car*, one of the most popular British automotive monthlies at that time.

The front cover featured both the latest Phantom and the new Aston Martin V8 Vantage, hence the main headline: "Great Britons". But it was the Rolls-Royce that was gifted the most coverage, with an impressive 12 pages dedicated to the machine that *Car* still referred to as RRO1. BMW had yet to reveal the newcomer's official title at the time of the magazine going to print, although *Car* did mention 'Phantom' as the most likely option.

So, what did Paul Horrell, the author of those 12 pages, think of the newcomer? He initially referred to public preconceptions that this was going to be a BMW with the Rolls-Royce treatment: "The team responsible for this astonishing car knew they were pushing against this mountainous weight of preconception. Who'd want to be known as the people who put the Spirit of Ecstasy on some engorged 7-series?"

The article went on to explain, however, that the newcomer was a true Rolls-Royce, as well as a major step-up from the previous Silver Seraph in terms of stature: "If the design alone leaves an impression, just wait until you see the size of it." This car was 13 per cent longer than even the biggest Mercedes-Benz S-Class, as well as being significantly wider and boasting 21-inch wheels. Then there was its aluminium spaceframe construction, independent rear 'coach doors', and the promise of on-board modern luxury and refinement simply unrivalled back in 2003.

Car magazine concluded its extensive coverage of the all-new Rolls-Royce by explaining the following: "The Phantom had to be a car apart, essentially simple in concept but engineered to the highest standards, as Henry Royce would have demanded." And although no journalists had driven it at that point, all the signs were positive: "For the moment, we don't know how the Phantom drives, but dynamics have never exactly held back any of the BMW group's extensions."

Now, in 2024, how do most of us feel about the Phantom VII? For me, it's a modern classic that marked a startling



"It's hard to overemphasise the impact that the Phantom VII had when first unveiled"

reinvention of Rolls-Royce under new ownership. But there are many more enthusiasts who struggle to see any classic status (current or future) for the Goodwood-built models. As ever, we'd love to hear your views... so do drop me a line via rrb.ed@kelsey.co.uk.

Meanwhile, the Phantom that *Car* featured at the start of 2003 also just happens to be the front cover star of our own next issue, which celebrates 120 years since the meeting of Charles Rolls and Henry Royce. For more details and to pre-order your copy, check out page 87. ■

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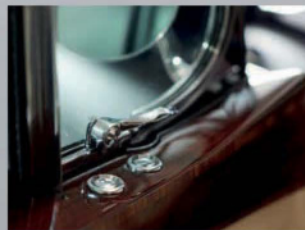
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