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120 years of perfection

Although we still have another issue of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* set to be published before the end of the year, the one that you're reading right now is dated November/December thanks to the quirks of the publishing industry – which means it's the final one to feature a 2024 cover date. So, with that in mind, we thought we'd end this year with a bang, bringing you a 132-page special issue that's a guaranteed treat for anyone with an interest in Rolls-Royce history.

It's 120 years since the first meeting of the Honourable Charles Stewart Rolls and Frederick Henry Royce at the Midland Hotel, Manchester. It was a meeting that almost didn't happen, yet it was one that would ultimately lead to the creation of the world's best known luxury car brand – a status that the marque still holds today. That inaugural meeting and the events which followed are fascinating, and it's a story told brilliantly by Richard Gunn, starting on page 34.

We also take a look at the history of the 40/50hp 'Silver Ghost', the machine that established Rolls-Royce as the maker of the "best car in the world", and we explore the Spirit of Ecstasy – the specially commissioned sculpture that became the most recognised motoring emblem of all. The pinnacle of Rolls-Royce prestige is revealed as we examine all eight generations of Phantom and explain the timeline of this longest-running motoring nameplate, and we also reveal how the sub-Phantom models that began with the 20hp and continue with today's Ghost have provided Rolls-Royce with healthy production volumes over the years.

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"Given the success of later Bentley-badged SZs, it's easy to forget just what a rarity this particular car is"



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T-SERIES JOINS COLLECTION

The world's oldest Bentley T-series, a standard saloon in Shell Grey, has returned to Crewe after 59 years – fully restored as the latest addition to the Bentley Heritage Collection. Chassis number SBH1001 was used in early publicity and featured in many original press reports, following its launch – alongside the Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow – at the 1965 Paris Salon de l'Auto.

When found under a cover in storage, the car had not run for decades and was missing several key items, including its entire interior. Its significance as the first T-series prompted the decision to recommission it, preserving as much of the original car as possible. Mike Sayer, head of the Bentley Heritage Collection, explains: "The T-series is one of the final two pieces of the puzzle to complete our rejuvenated Heritage Collection. Our chief communications officer, Wayne Bruce, and I quite literally found it under a tarpaulin in the back of a warehouse."

After a group of Bentley apprentices started the process of dismantling and assessing the car, the recommissioning of the T-series was entrusted to P&A Wood, the company's partner for Heritage Collection projects. Louise Wood, daughter of co-founder Andrew Wood, led the project, supported by coachwork manager Dave Lowe.

Key elements of the car's drivetrain proved to be in surprisingly good condition for a car that had been unused for so long, with the engine needing only a thorough service and the gearbox some minor adjustment. The rear axle was also in a good state and required only new seals.

Major challenges for the team included a missing dashboard, no interior trim, a wiring loom in pieces without a detailed diagram, corrosion around the rear subframe, and previous poor-quality crash repairs. The team sourced an early donor vehicle that was at the end of its life, which helped when it came to sourcing obsolete parts and trim.

The bodyshell required extensive work once stripped, with poorly executed accident repairs and inconsistent panel gaps being the main issues. One rear wing was corroded and had to be replaced, after which the entire vehicle was given multiple coats of 2k high-build primer, each coat being carefully sanded down once dry. "Although we're using modern two-pack finishes, we tried to do everything in the old Crewe way," says Dave Lowe. This included a final sand-down with 8000-grit abrasive followed by machine polishing. The brightwork and bumpers were cleaned and polished but not re-chromed, therefore preserving the original patina.

For the ultimate touch, the T-series has even been reunited with its former press office registration number, 1900 TU. At the time of writing, the car has just joined the 45 other cars in the Crewe-based Bentley Heritage Collection, where it will remain on permanent display.

CHANGES AT ROLLS-ROYCE

As part of a dramatic overhaul of the BMW Group's design operations, Anders Warming (pictured) has been replaced by Domagoj Dukec as director of design at Rolls-Royce Motor Cars. The move will see Warming instead heading up BMW's global Designworks operation.

Warming has steered Rolls-Royce's design department for the last three years. Cars launched under his stewardship have included the electric Spectre, the refreshed Cullinan and Phantom, and the £20m Droptail.

Rolls-Royce CEO, Chris Brownridge, has hailed the "substantial and lasting" impact that Warming has had on the brand, saying that "his wealth of experience and creativity have instructed our future aesthetic direction".



BDC UNVEILS GT RACER

A Bentley Continental GT race car has been unveiled by the Bentley Drivers Club with a view to launching a new affordable one-make race series specifically for these models.

The 650bhp racer has been conceived by the BDC in conjunction with motorsport specialists M-Sport, and was officially unveiled at the club's annual race meeting at Silverstone in August. Designed to be driven on both the road and the racetrack, the GT was developed over a two-year period and is said to offer enthusiasts "easy access to budget-level competition".

The racing special is based on a 2010 Continental GT Speed, and features lowered suspension, modified front cambers, a bespoke race exhaust, front/rear brake cooling ducts and a standard ECU unit. It runs on bespoke 20-inch Oz M-Sport race wheels with Pirelli P Zero Trofeo RS tyres.

Externally, the car boasts GT3-inspired body panels (front wings, front panel and splitter, plus rear wing, bumper and diffuser), while the cabin is fitted with a Sparco race seat, harness and steering wheel as well as an FIA-standard lifeline fire suppression system.

"The BDC is renowned for its vintage racing, but unveiling an affordable 21st century Continental GT for competition purposes allows us to offer something different and contemporary – and bring the Bentley brand to a whole new range of competitors," says well-known historic racer, Ben Eastick, of the BDC Competitions team.

The BDC is looking for a minimum of 10 orders to be placed from interested competitors to make the project viable. The overall cost to order a race car, including converting a donor car, is around £100,000 including VAT.

"We believe that in order for the project to work, the cars must be able to hold their resale value," Eastick explains. "In order to achieve this, we felt it was important that Bentley Motors and M-Sport, who designed and built the GT3 cars, should be involved. This has been reflected in the car's finalised design and specification."

Although Bentley Motors is not officially backing the project, it has given the BDC guidance and support as well as providing OEM CAD designs. For more information on the car and the proposed race series, call Ben Eastick on +44 (0)7769 974975 or Simon Worthington on +44 (0)7712 596959.





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Overall winner was this 1937 Phantom III Convertible by JS Inskip.

CONCOURS TROPHY WINNERS

The 13th Concours of Elegance, held over three days at London's Hampton Court Palace in September, saw success for a number of superb Rolls-Royce and Bentley gems. Over 14,000 guests enjoyed an incredible display of privately owned road and competition motor cars spanning over 100 years of automotive history.

The Best in Show winner – uniquely chosen by the Concours car owners themselves – was a stunning 1937 Rolls-Royce Phantom III Convertible (chassis number 3CP18) featuring American-built coachwork by JS Inskip. In the decades classes, a 1927 Bentley 3 Litre Boat Tail Speed Model – making its first public appearance in 60 years after undergoing a three-year painstaking restoration – took the 1920s trophy, while a '31 Bentley 8 Litre Saloon by Freestone & Webb came third in the 1930s section.

Amongst the Special Awards, the Best Pre-1940 English Coachbuilt Car class saw the two marques sweeping the board, won by a 1938 Bentley 4¼ Litre Barouche de Ville by James Young, with a 1925 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost Barrel-Sided Tourer and a 1939 Bentley 4¼ Litre MX Sedanca Coupe by Hooper coming second and third respectively.



Best Pre-1940 English Coachbuilt Car was Bentley 4¼ Litre Barouche de Ville.

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REVISITING A RARITY

We get to re-experience a splendid example of the original Mulsanne – the normally aspirated model that achieved little sales success but which led to the later reinvention of Bentley

WORDS & PHOTOS: **PAUL GUINNESS**




Our day began at The Smuggler's Rest pub, overlooking the English Channel.

Arranging to meet somebody at a pub is never a chore for me, although on this occasion it isn't to enjoy any alcoholic offerings. Instead, it's to meet the owner of a particularly early Bentley Mulsanne, a rare example of a luxury saloon that almost didn't see the light of day. But we'll explore that fascinating slice of history later, because as I peer into the distance I can see the unmistakeable shape of a Bentley grille and the familiar sight of SZ oblong headlamps heading towards me. The owner of the car in question, also called Paul, flashes those lights and eases his way into the car park where I'm waiting.

Our meeting point is The Smuggler's Rest at Telscombe Cliffs, situated on the A259 coast road in East Sussex. Our plan for the day is to cover a fair few miles in a 1982 Mulsanne, a splendid survivor that we featured some years ago but which has now undergone some recent rejuvenation. It's an interesting example of one of the rarest members of the SZ family, and it's to be our mode of classic transport for the next few hours.

Paul takes the wheel first, and as we ease out of the car park and on to the A259, we find ourselves heading east. West would have taken us towards the bright lights of Brighton, but on this occasion we're taking a leisurely trip towards Eastbourne, stopping off at a few of the scenic sights of East Sussex en route. Almost immediately we find ourselves driving through Peacehaven, after which the A259 follows the coast towards Newhaven, still a busy port town with its regular ferry services to Dieppe.

I admire the interior of the Mulsanne as we motor along. "I've recently spent quite a lot of money in here," admits proud owner Paul. The leather has been brought back to life, other trim has been replaced where necessary, and the previously tatty door cappings have been re-veneered and relacquered.

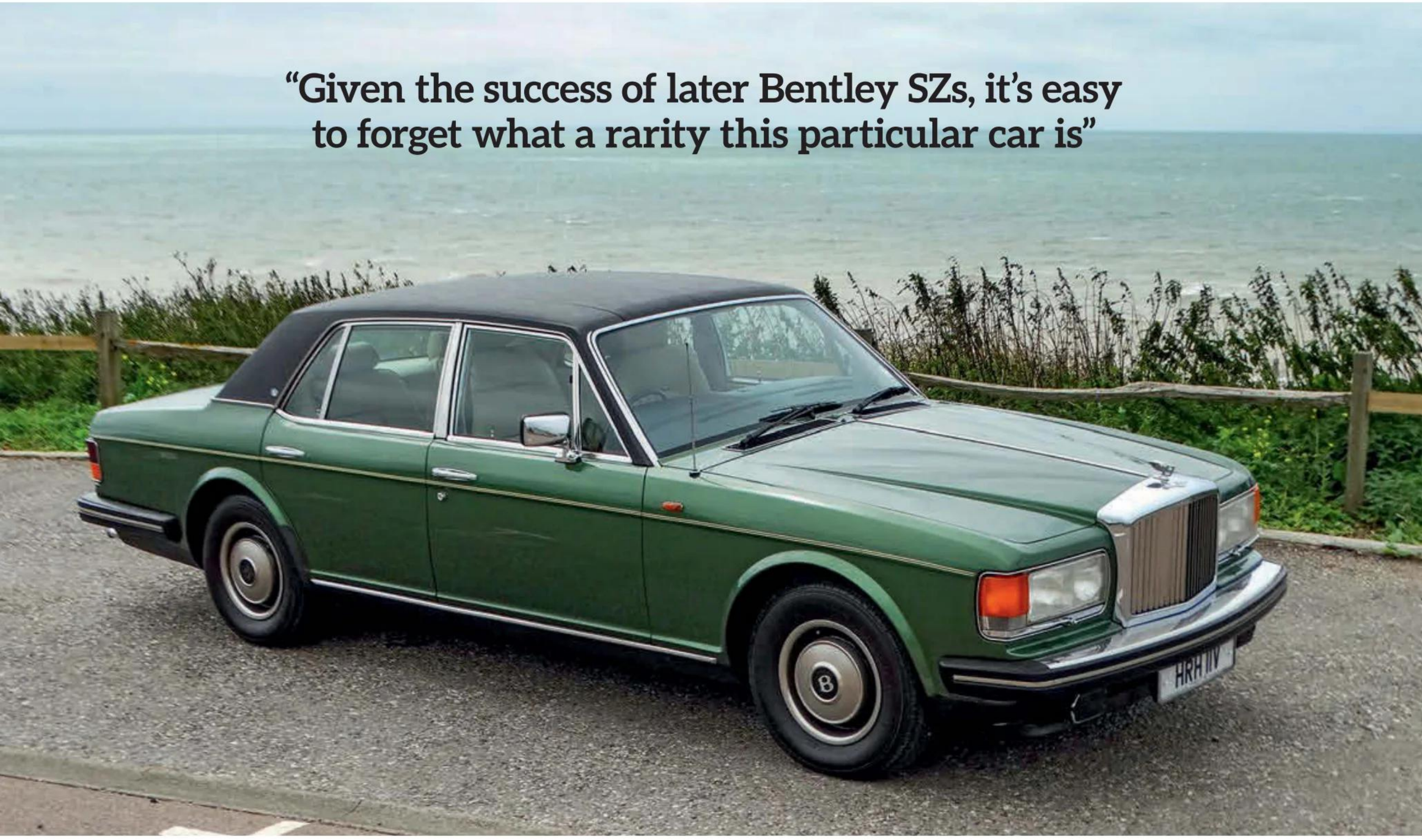
The end result looks superb inside, although the car has also benefited from expenditure elsewhere: "Poor health forced me to take it off the road a while back," explains Paul, "during which time I decided to make other improvements as and when I could." That's why early 2024 saw the Mulsanne heading to a marque specialist for a thorough going-over, which included fitting new sills, replacing the suspension spheres, and carrying out a major service and MoT ready for its return to the road. Some minor paintwork was done at the same time, after which this smart survivor – lovingly known as Walter, after WO Bentley himself – was looking and driving better than ever.

It's certainly performing well on the day of our mini road trip, something that I appreciate as soon as I take the wheel. The hills and twists of the coast road are barely noticeable, the effortless power of that well-tuned 6.75-litre V8 complementing the reassuringly precise steering and perfect-for-me suspension set-up, which combines superb ride comfort with the kind of handling prowess that would have been alien to the Mulsanne's T-series predecessor a decade earlier.

RARE EXAMPLE

Given the success of later Bentley members of the SZ family, it's easy to forget just what a rarity this particular car is. Think of an early example and most people will probably conjure up images of the Mulsanne Turbo that debuted in 1982, bringing with it blistering performance but less than perfect handling, or the subsequent Turbo R that proved to be such a major hit thanks to its firmed-up suspension and confident road manners. Before that sporting duo, however, there was the naturally aspirated Mulsanne that we see here.

Back in 1980, at the SZ generation's official press launch in Nice, Rolls-Royce finally announced that its latest Bentley »



was to be called Mulsanne – a name with obvious motorsport connotations, despite the fact that the newcomer was simply a Silver Spirit in all but name (and radiator grille). Indeed, at first glance the new Mulsanne appeared to be even more of a badge-engineering exercise than the T-series and T2 before it. At least those forebears had employed a different bonnet pressing compared with that of the Silver Shadow, specially designed to fit the Bentley grille more successfully. For the Mulsanne, however, even such a relatively minor change couldn't be justified, given the costs involved and the likely early sales volumes of the latest Bentley.

In Graham Hull's fascinating book, *Inside the Rolls-Royce & Bentley Styling Department 1971-2001* (Veloce, 2014), the company's former styling chief describes how costs were kept to a minimum when developing a Bentley derivative of the new SZ range: "Although the SY had a specially-shaped bonnet to match the rounded corners at the back of the Bentley 'header tank', the funds were not available to do this for SZ. The radiator shell was styled to look right from the front with a slight mismatch at the back – a compromise that later came home to roost when MD Peter Ward pointed out the mistake to me."

Hull's book highlights the pressures placed upon Rolls-Royce's engineers, who were given the risk-laden task of creating the next generation of Crewe-built saloons: "The Engineering Department had been straining every sinew to meet the market's towering expectations of a new Rolls-Royce. With Bentley's survival hanging by a thread, Styling and Marketing managed to mask the marque's vulnerability with just a radiator shell and the name Mulsanne."

Until the announcement of the Mulsanne Turbo in 1982, onlookers could be forgiven for wondering why Rolls-Royce had bothered to persist with the Bentley brand, given how the Silver Spirit would inevitably dominate the SZ family's sales. It's therefore rather surprising that the company chose to keep the standard Mulsanne in production right through to 1987, well beyond the 1982-85 career of the Mulsanne Turbo and even overlapping that of the 1985-on Turbo R. Indeed, the Mulsanne was still available to order even after the launch of the new entry-level Bentley Eight (in 1984), and would be until the arrival of the Mulsanne S three years later.

Despite its seven-year career, however, sales of the standard Mulsanne were never spectacular. By the time the last example was built in '87, just 531 had been sold worldwide. By comparison, the subsequent Mulsanne Turbo almost matched that figure in only three years. And to put it further into perspective, we should remember that 30,460 SZ-generation four-door saloons were built in total, 11,910 of which were Bentleys – and over half of them the Turbo R. By any standards, the original Mulsanne was always a scarce sight.

INDIVIDUAL SPEC

Few people we encounter on our trip along the Sussex coast seem aware of this early Mulsanne's rarity, but they don't hesitate to comment on what is a very attractive example. It's still finished in its original hue of Forest Green, complemented by Beige hide upholstery with green piping (plus green carpeting throughout) that the »

BENTLEY ON TOUR

Proud owner Paul has certainly made the most of his Mulsanne since its return to the road earlier in 2024, including a trip from East Sussex to Scotland back in the summer – an experience that saw the Bentley covering 1872 miles in effortless style. After an overnight stay in London, Paul headed up to Mathewsons' auction house in Yorkshire, visiting both the original Thornton Le Dale site and the latest premises at Pickering, where he spent time with Derek Mathewson himself – head of the family that stars in the *Bangers & Cash* hit TV series.

The trip to Scotland saw Paul visiting Glencoe, then on to Ballater for the Highland Games. "Driving a classic Bentley with HRH number plates around Royal Deeside was one way to get noticed!" he laughs. "And throughout the trip, the Mulsanne proved to be the perfect cruising car, coping with narrow roads and steep inclines as well as dealing with the many miles of motorway driving – it was an absolute joy." The holiday also saw Paul visiting the excellent Grampian Transport Museum.

On his return, this proud Mulsanne custodian ventured along to his first ever Bentley Drivers Club Summer Concours, where the car was awarded a Highly Commended rosette – a fitting tribute to a machine that, after 12 years in Paul's hands, remains impressively well-presented.
















"Back on board the trusty Bentley, it's a short drive from Beachy Head to Eastbourne itself"

original owner specified. Ordered in the late summer of 1981, the Mulsanne was delivered to Byatts of Fenton the following February, prior to being dispatched to its first owner – a Mr B Hall of Prestbury, Cheshire – that same month. The Bentley was adorned with Mr Hall's own 'private' registration number (30 BEL), but has obviously been re-registered since, currently sporting 'HRH' plates that are also something of a talking point.

Current owner Paul still has the original order forms from when the car was configured, which show some interesting requests from Mr Hall, including velour headlining, a leather-covered rear parcel shelf and footswitch-operated Fiamm Avanti air horns – features that would have added to the standard »





car's £52,113 list price of the time.

Paul has owned the Mulsanne since 2012, when he flew from Southampton (his nearest airport at the time) to Edinburgh, and then enjoyed an effortless drive back south. Paul had been to see the car a few weeks earlier, and considered it the ideal addition to his collection. The paperwork still with the Mulsanne shows that it was serviced at Crewe throughout its early years, and it's a car that has obviously been extremely well looked after, with Paul being its third fastidious owner.

Not surprisingly, the Mulsanne does turn heads, particularly at Rolls-Royce and Bentley gatherings: "I like the fact that I can look down a row of similar-looking SZ saloons and there, amongst all the Royal Blue Silver Spirits, sits my Forest Green Mulsanne," smiles Paul. "The fact that it's an early normally aspirated car makes it all the more special to me."

DRIVING PLEASURE

As we stay on the A259 we soon find ourselves in Seaford, which back in the Middle Ages was one of southern England's major ports but these days mostly attracts residents looking for a peaceful life on the south coast. We drive through, stopping a little further on in the village of Friston, where we park the Bentley next to the Church of St Mary the Virgin (which lies just off that major A-road) for photographs. It's the briefest of stops, however, as we're soon once again luxuriating in the armchair-like quality of the Mulsanne's front seats, heading back on to the main road and in the direction of Birling Gap.

Situated on the Seven Sisters, not far from Beachy Head, National Trust-owned Birling Gap is famous for its row of coastguard cottages that were built in 1878 – not all of which survive now, however, due to the effects of coastal erosion. Those that do still stand are occupied, although how long they will continue to be there isn't certain due to the speed at which the chalk coastline is retreating. At some point it's thought that further demolition will be inevitable, but hopefully not for a long while yet. In the meantime, a periodically replaced metal staircase leads down to the enclosed pebble beach and the Seven Sisters cliffs, with this spot being a magnet for tourists and sightseers.

On the day of our visit, a weekday in late summer, the whole area is teeming with coaches and cars, which makes it awkward for any prolonged photography sessions. There are people everywhere, but we manage a few snaps of the Bentley – and its ever-patient custodian, Paul – in any rare spots where we're free of traffic and parked vehicles. We figure we might have more luck at nearby Beachy Head, and so we take the logically named Beachy Head Road from Birling Gap, enjoying spectacular scenery as we wind our way towards this renowned chalk headland that lies to the east of the Seven Sisters.

Beachy Head is owned by Eastbourne Borough Council, which bought the 4000 acres surrounding it in 1929 to save it from development. Part of the South Downs National Park, it's officially the highest chalk sea cliff in the UK, rising to 162 metres above sea level and providing visitors with incredible views that stretch towards Dungeness in the east and the Isle of Wight in the west – and on the day of our visit, despite overcast weather conditions and a lack of sunshine, the effect is quite stunning. Parking the Bentley atop the cliffs proves impossible, as vehicular access doesn't stretch to the edge... for obvious reasons; but we manage to find some quieter spots than before, even if one of them is a turning area specially reserved for buses. Well, the Mulsanne is a hefty beast, after all.

Back on board the trusty Bentley,



The sights of Eastbourne included the old Caffyns showroom containing a 1933 Rolls-Royce 20/25.

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Finished in special order Sunset Red Pearl with Barley hide interior, contrasted with special order Sunset hide for the top roll and steering wheel air bag having an embossed winged "B". This beautiful motor car is not to be confused with the average car of this type, we at RR&B Garages have supplied and maintained this car regardless of cost since 2005 for the past 5 owners. The car has now covered 60,000 miles with an impeccable service history, it is in outstanding condition inside and out and has the addition of Mulliner front wing vents.
Previously awarded BDC concours first in class still in a condition to be a contender again.

£59,950

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ROLLS ROYCE SILVER SPIRIT II 1990
Rhapsody Metallic with Parchment hide
£29,950

WANTED!

HIGH QUALITY MOTOR CARS FOR STOCK

Rolls-Royce Bentley SPECIALISTS ASSOCIATION

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

SAD SIGHTS IN THE USA









A number of down-at-heel Rolls-Royce and Bentley 'projects' are heading to auction with RM Sotheby's in October, as a major collection goes under the hammer. "For decades, the mythical collection of Rudi Klein has sat in the hot California sun, some of it covered, some of it exposed to the elements," explains the auction house, which has named the forthcoming auction 'The Junkyard: Online'.

Many different marques are represented, and among the Rolls-Royces and Bentleys on offer are a 1979 Silver Wraith II, a right-hand drive 1963 S3 'Standard Steel' saloon, and a derelict but particularly early (1965) example of a T-series – all of them described as being for "parts only".

Rarest of all, however, are the remains of a 1956 Bentley S1 Continental Two-Door Saloon by Park Ward. If we're right in our assumption that it's Park Ward's handsome Design 701 of 1955-57, then it's one of only 69 such cars ever built – but in such a decrepit state now, does it stand any chance of ever being restored? Only time will tell.

For details of this fascinating online sale, which takes place on October 26th, visit https://rmsothebys.com/auctions/rk24.







HIGH-MILEAGE HERO

You might assume that for a Silver Spirit to sell via a dealer within two hours of hitting the market, it has to be something special. And in the case of this 1985 example, you'd be right... although not necessarily for the reason you're expecting. What makes this survivor stand out is that, despite being in very presentable condition both inside and out, it had covered a total of 260,000 miles at the time of its sale in September.

Finished in Royal Blue metallic with a Champagne interior, this smart example had had just four previous owners and came with a comprehensive service history, which showed 42 services being carried out by Rolls-Royce dealers and marque specialists throughout its career. The engine was apparently rebuilt at 212,000 miles and, according the Turn Two Classics, the selling dealer, it still "performs beautifully today". Among the paperwork were the car's original order form and build sheets, as well as a huge wad of bills, old invoices and previous MoT certificates.

Priced at £7995, this high-mileage Silver Spirit sold almost immediately. Obviously, we'd love to hear from you if you're its proud new owner.













FASCINATING FLYING SPUR

Any example of HJ Mulliner's S-series Flying Spur of the late 1950s and early '60s is a desirable machine, these hand-built four-doors being as superbly crafted as they were stylish. They're among the most sought after coachbuilt cars of their era, and usually attract plenty of interest when they come to market. The example shown here, however, is particularly fascinating.

Chassis number BC109CZ was built in 1962 on the S2 Continental chassis, finished in special order (and very eye-catching) Light Green with Champagne hide upholstery. The original owner, a Mr H Green, then kept the car for the best part of 30 years, using it as his daily transport throughout that time – and covering almost 440,000 miles in the process!

Mr Green was determined to keep his Bentley in perfect running order, and maintained it impeccably throughout his ownership. Since the late 1960s, it has been looked after by P&A Wood, the renowned marque specialist that's now tasked with finding this special survivor a new home.

The most recent custodian bought the Flying Spur in 1998, taking its total mileage to 458,000 since then. What's described as an "exceptional and extensive history" includes hand-written notes of the work carried out on the car throughout the last six decades, as well as a collection of invoices, letters and more.

We don't know of a higher-mileage coachbuilt Bentley of this age, or one that's been maintained by the same specialist for over half a century. It's an eye-catching and very special survivor – and at an asking price of £145,000, it's surely tempting for anyone seeking one of the most intriguing Flying Spurs you're ever likely to find. For more details, call +44 (0)1371 852000 or head to www.pa-wood.co.uk.

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	1760	-2.1%	n/a	476	-5.4%	-6.8%	1284	-0.8%	n/a
Sales Rate	51.6%	1.3%	n/a	67.9%	3.6%	1.9%	45.6%	0.7%	n/a
Number Sold	908	0.4%	11.4%	323	0.0%	-4.2%	585	0.7%	22.4%
Total Value of Sales	£33.6m	0.6%	14.0%	£18.2m	3.0%	7.3%	£15.4m	-2.1%	23.0%
Average Value	£37,004	0.1%	2.3%	£56,391	3.0%	12.0%	£26,299	-2.8%	0.5%

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

REMARKABLE RESILIENCE

Against the backdrop of a 'soft' classic car auction market, I am again delighted to report a stable Rolls-Royce and Bentley auction market, with most key indicators registering amber (±1.5%) or green (1.5%+).

Overall spend is up to the second highest I've recorded, in spite of the number of motor cars offered for sale dropping (for the first time since I started this column). The number sold has slightly increased, which has resulted in a moderate but encouraging sales rate increase – all despite some high-profile no-sales, such as Gooding & Co's stunning R-Type Continental offered in August.

The last quarter of 2023 was strong, so it will be interesting to see if this resilience holds.

A fascinating trend has emerged when considering the physical versus online auctions. The number of motor cars offered via physical auction has clearly gone down, yet the total and average value has gone up. This represents a clear shift towards value over volume.

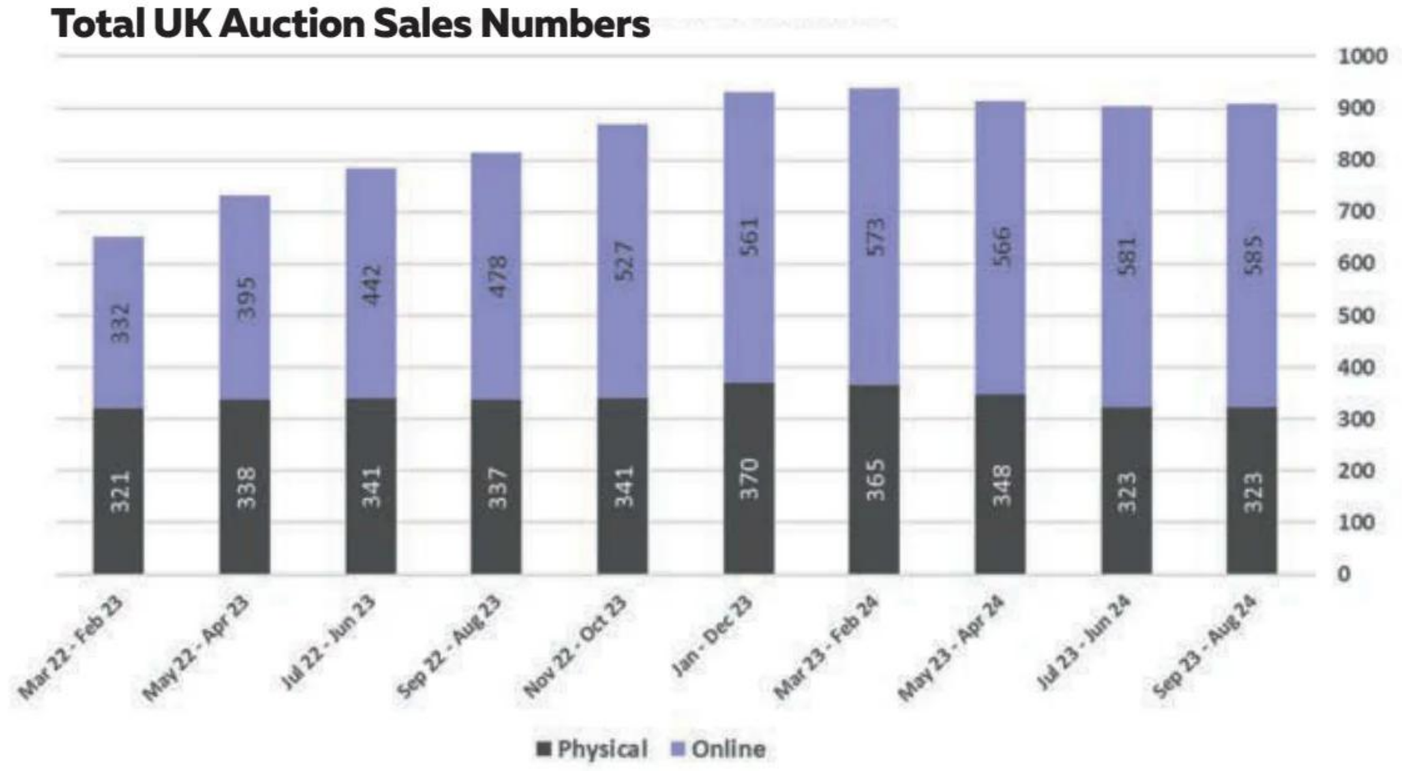
The chart shows that physical auction sales numbers have fluctuated since I started the Tracker, and currently are very similar to where we started. The value of the 323 sold in the latest 12m period (£18.2m), however, vastly exceeds the value of the 321 sold in the first period, which was 'only' £15.7m.



Among the no-sales in August was Gooding & Co's stunning R-Type Continental.

The online houses are correspondingly up in sales volumes but down in value. However, this is not universally the case – you will see from the graph that Collecting Cars has the highest average value of sales out of the top 10 auction houses.

Total UK Auction Sales Numbers



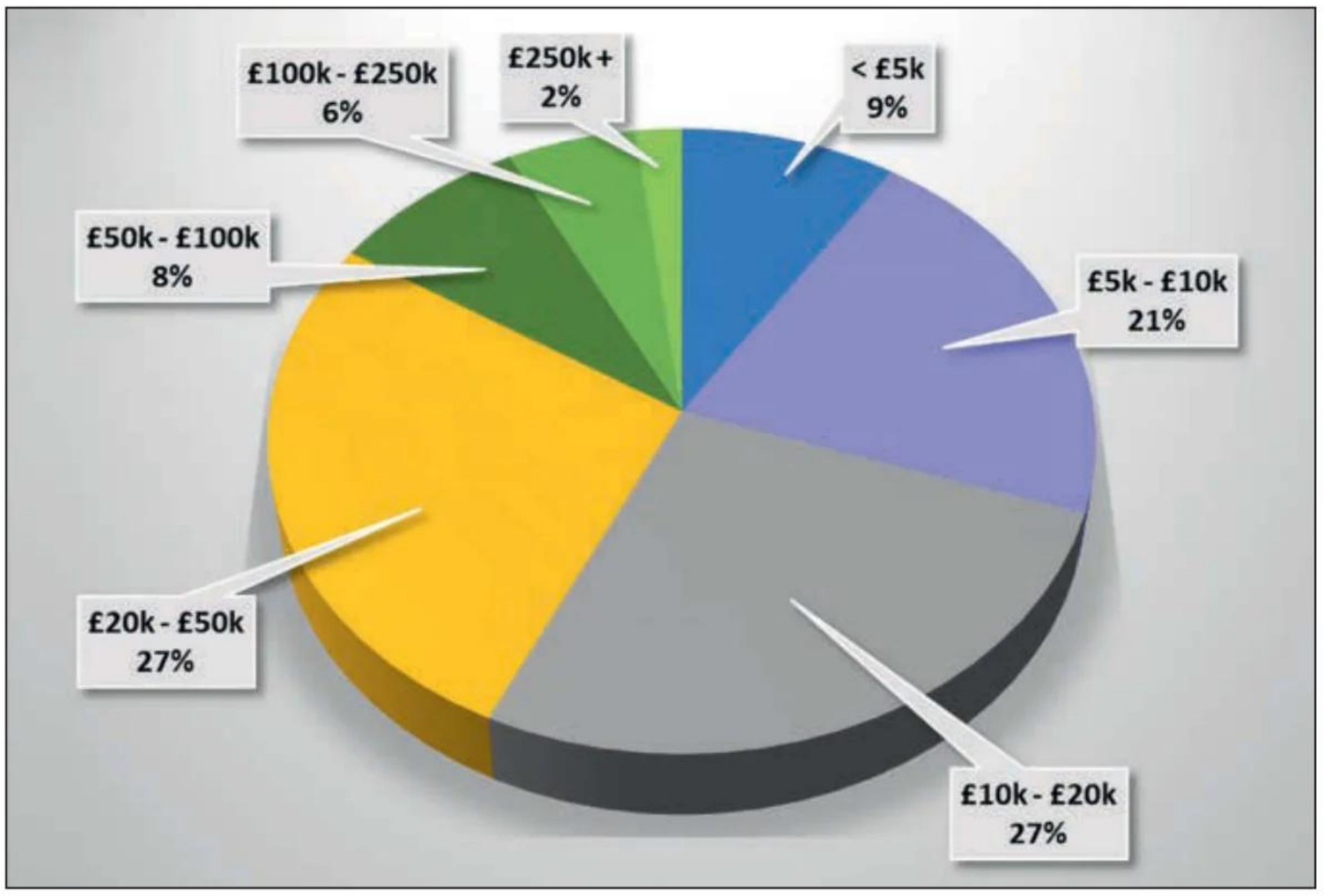
SALES BY PRICE BAND

For our 'pie chart of the month', I thought I'd break sales volumes down by band of price achieved, which reveals another fascinating story. The headline-grabbing £100,000-plus sales account for only eight per cent of the total Rolls-Royce and Bentley market by volume (not value, of course). At the other end of the scale, sub-£5000 volumes – all projects – account for nine per cent of the market.

Nearly half (48 per cent) of all the motor cars sold fall within the £5000-£20,000 range, which I think emphasises that the classic Rolls-Royce and Bentley market is dominated by genuine enthusiasts who buy, use and love their motor cars, rather than speculators or pure collectors.

MARQUE TRENDS

The picture by marque shows that all of the fall in motor cars offered for sale is accounted for by Rolls-Royce. Sales numbers and overall value have correspondingly fallen, but the average value has held up. Bentley is on a much more positive trajectory, with volumes and sales rate improving and average values holding up.



MODEL RANGE TRENDS

The latest trends for model ranges where 12 or more cars have been sold (that is, one per month on average) are presented here. As usual, project cars are excluded from these figures.

Of the Rolls-Royce models, it is good to see Derby saloons and limousines recovering somewhat after some very poor results last year. These are indeed fabulous motor cars, and in my view are undervalued, having been tainted by the 'pre-war curse'. Bonhams Online sold a magnificent 1926 20hp Hooper Six-Light Saloon in July for just £22,000!

There have been no dramatic falls in average value, but it is concerning to see SY and SZ Rolls-Royce models again on the slide. Car & Classic sold a sought-after Anniversary edition 1979 Silver Shadow II for just £14,500, which I think is excellent value.

On the 'strange' side of things, meanwhile, much online chatter was generated by eBay's sale in August of a Silver Spirit pick-up. Words fail me! However, it attracted 24 bids and sold for £9500. Perhaps that's cheap for an incredibly distinctive promotional vehicle? I'd love to hear from the buyer...

	Rolls-Royce			Bentley		
	Latest 12m	2m Trend	12m Trend	**Latest 12m**	2m Trend	12m Trend
Offered for Auction	609	-7.9%	n/a	1151	1.2%	n/a
Sales Rate	54.7%	1.3%	n/a	50.0%	1.5%	n/a
Number Sold	333	-5.7%	1.8%	575	4.4%	17.8%
Total Value of Sales	£11m	-6.1%	10.5%	£22.6m	4.2%	15.8%
Average Value	£33,097	-0.5%	8.5%	£39,266	-0.2%	-1.7%

With many more Bentleys being auctioned, we have data on twice as many model ranges, with the table showing six models increasing or holding steady on the 2m basis, and six on the slide.

S-series saloons are the stars of this column's show, with Car & Classic selling three fabulous examples in July and August, including the one overleaf – a recently restored 1964 S3 that sold for nearly £49,000. Their predecessors (MkVI and R-Type saloons) are also doing well.

It is good to see SZ Turbos and Continental Flying Spurs recovering in the last two months; people seem to have noticed just what bargains can be had. Bonhams Online sold a beautifully spec'd low-mileage 1997 Bentley Turbo RT in July for just under £22,000. That's a lot of motor car for the money, and represents the ultimate incarnation of the model that brought the Bentley marque back from the brink of extinction.

Even with the higher running costs associated with the turbocharged »

Rolls-Royce Model Ranges	Ave.Value	2m Trend	12m Trend
Silver Ghost / Phantoms I-III 4-dr	£69,678	4.4%	25.1%
Goodwood 4-dr/SUV	£117,618	4.3%	11.5%
20hp-Wraith saloons	£23,206	0.5%	-12.5%
Silver Cloud I, II & III	£26,242	0.1%	5.5%
SY saloons	£11,093	-1.6%	-8.9%
SZ saloons	£9,924	-1.7%	-5.4%



Bonhams Online sold this superb 1926 20hp Hooper Six-Light Saloon for £22,000.



Peter reports that SY and SZ Rolls-Royce values have again been on the slide.

drivetrain, tyres and so on, I believe that these are still thoroughly usable and enjoyable grand tourers that will take you anywhere you want to go with great style, presence and speed.

Elsewhere in the table, we see that WO Bentleys are holding up in value, beating the pre-war trend, but for some reason the latest coupes and convertibles are slipping back – an unusual result for the summer months. There is perhaps an oversupply of Continental GTs and GTCs, and I thought the stunning 1996 Bentley Azure with just 31,000 miles sold by Collecting Cars in August was a steal at £50,000.

Not in the table but countering this trend was the 1989 Bentley Continental sold by Iconic at Silverstone in August. With under 10,000 miles under its wheels, this was as near as you could get to as-new condition, and a lucky buyer was willing to part with over £163,000 for the privilege of being its next owner.

Bentley Model Ranges	Ave. Value	2m Trend	12m Trend
S Series Saloons	£35,427	13.6%	30.3%
SZ Turbos	£9,017	7.6%	-19.1%
Continental Flying Spur	£13,559	6.2%	-44.8%
MkVI/R Type Saloons	£20,059	4.2%	10.1%
Cricklewood Bentleys	£431,139	0.0%	20.9%
SZ Nat-Asp Saloons	£9,750	-1.5%	7.2%
Arnage	£16,418	-3.4%	-9.0%
MkVI/R Type 2-dr & Special	£56,323	-4.5%	10.7%
New Mulsanne	£53,140	-4.7%	-2.0%
Continental R, T & Azure	£46,134	-4.8%	0.2%
Continental GT Coupe	£22,144	-5.8%	-13.5%
Continental GTC	£31,528	-10.4%	-19.0%



Car & Classic achieved almost £49,000 with this recently restored 1964 Bentley S3.



A stunning 1996 Bentley Azure with just 31,000 miles was surely a steal at £50,000.

TOP 10 AUCTION HOUSES

It's time again for my six-monthly review of the top UK auction houses for Rolls-Royce and Bentley sales. As it's biannual, I have deployed a 6m trend in this table – comparing sales versus six months ago (data from March 1st, 2023 to the end of February 2024). The table is ranked by numbers sold.

These houses represent a massive 89 per cent of the motor cars offered for auction in the last 12 months. eBay continues to achieve the highest volumes of trade, but has by far the lowest average value and sale rate. This is the first downturn recorded of offerings through eBay, so perhaps the dire success rate is shifting sellers elsewhere?

Car & Classic remains the second best seller by volume, but has lost some share to Bonhams Online, probably because of the latter's RREC collaboration in June. Collecting Cars has a poor success rate, but the highest average value of the top 10; it has a good track record selling the more modern classics (those since the BMW/VW takeovers), so is worth considering as a seller of such a vehicle.

Elsewhere, Historics and H&H are vying for fifth spot, and Mathewsons remains a very popular choice to sell. Brightwells, ACA and CCA are also worth consideration as established alternatives with decent sales rates.

	Offered	6m Trend	Sold	Sale Rate	Ave. Value
eBay	589	-2.2%	182	30.9%	£10,925
Car & Classic	261	-13.9%	146	55.9%	£26,473
Bonhams / Cars Online	159	59.0%	117	73.6%	£50,020
Collecting Cars	167	20.1%	83	49.7%	£58,854
Historics	98	2.1%	71	72.4%	£36,379
H&H	92	-11.5%	70	76.1%	£33,704
Mathewsons	107	-7.8%	63	58.9%	£16,669
Brightwells	31	3.3%	24	77.4%	£26,787
Anglia Car Auctions	26	-18.8%	22	84.6%	£12,852
CCA	32	10.3%	20	62.5%	£17,265

MAN CAVE SPECIAL!

Finally, Iconic sold something in August that I suspect many of our readers would love to have in their man (or woman) cave! Yes, a fully working Rolls-Royce Merlin engine went under the hammer. Beautifully presented and with 'comprehensive starting instructions', it sold for just under £53,000. Am I jealous? Yes! ■

‘Brightling’



Despite its 10.95mm height, the Trident C60 Pro 300 ‘Lumiére’ leaps from your wrist. (Just like it jumped off this page.) Its brightness results from proudly protruding indices and the logo they encircle. Featuring facets finely machined to tolerances of 0.03mm, these mini-monoliths are super-legible in daylight. But it’s the Globolight®, the unique luminous ceramic from which they’re hewn, that produces their astounding, super-brilliance at night. And inspired this timepiece’s name. The light show doesn’t end there. Carved from titanium, the 41mm case incorporates a second sapphire crystal displaying its super-accurate movement. But it’s not the back of this beautiful tool watch you’re buying into. Is it?

Do your research

Christopher Ward

christopherward.com

YOUR SHOUT

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

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

CORNICHE AMBITIONS

The 1982 Corniche that adorned the front cover of your last issue [Sept/Oct] was what prompted me to buy the magazine, as a soft-top Corniche from the early '80s is my idea of automotive heaven. I remember watching this particular car on TV, driven by Oz Clarke and James May, so it was a lovely surprise to see it in your magazine, with seven pages devoted to it.

A Corniche of that age is my ultimate, as it's 'modern' enough to have benefited from the various upgrades that occurred during the 1970s, but it's old enough not to have become overly 'flashy'. The later models, which so often seem to be finished in some horribly bright colour, can be too gaudy for my tastes. And I'm not a big fan of the later trim treatment either.

The Scots Pine paintwork of the car you featured suits it perfectly, ensuring that the car looks distinctive but elegant. Whether I'll ever get to own such a machine, I've no idea given the asking prices that they attract now; but in the meantime, my 1986 Silver Spirit satisfies my Rolls-Royce craving on a sensible budget.



Jason Craddock
Via email

FAMILIAR TALE

I read with interest the story of Michael Campbell's 1990 Bentley Turbo R [Sept/Oct issue] and the huge amount he's spent with specialists getting the car in perfect running order. A lot of people would have been shocked to see him spending so much, when the car is worth nowhere near such an amount. But I think they miss the point.

What Michael wants is a car he can jump into and know that it will get him to the south of France with complete reliability. The sum spent to get his Turbo R to that state is obviously worth it, as far as he's concerned. It's now a highly useable example of one of the best long-distance classic cruisers.

My own Turbo R has also been a bit of a money pit over the last couple of years. Or rather, it would have been if I weren't able to do so much work on it myself. I'm lucky in that I have the experience and equipment to work on my own cars, which saves a lot of money and also gives me something of a routine now that I'm retired. So, good luck to Michael and his long-distance adventures!



Roger Shenton
Via email





GOODWOOD GREATNESS

I very much enjoyed your article on the Phantom VII [Sept/Oct issue, The Final Page] and the challenge faced by BMW in making it feel like a genuine Rolls-Royce rather than a badge-engineered 7 Series. To my mind, they totally nailed the brief. It is the experience of a Rolls-Royce that is wholly unique – the serenity, the ease and simplicity, the calm. No other car feels the same, including (sadly) modern Bentleys.

I am fortunate enough to have owned a 1997 Silver Dawn, a 2016 Wraith and a 2019 Bentley Continental GTC W12 in recent years. As the final hurrah for the Rolls-Royce SZ, the Silver Dawn was arguably Crewe's last creation and it still feels very much the hand-built carriage, albeit one with modern facilities. It is the finest car I have ever owned in terms of experience and brings me Zen-like levels of calm with every outing.

Astonishingly, the Wraith is not far behind and similarly feels to be travelling on a different plane to mere motoring. BMW have captured the elegance of minimalism and the joy of simplicity in a world that seems to thrive on complexity. No need for flappy paddles, just an engine that always knows which gear you want it in and a dashboard that can be as simple as you like, with delightful quality almost everywhere. Of course, it doesn't feel as bespoke as the SZ, but it does feel built to very much the same ethos, by people who really understand serenity.

The Bentley, by contrast, is a great car with an epic drivetrain and a gorgeous interior. It is a car to be impressed by, but not one that steals your heart. Ultimately the experience is very different to that of a modern Rolls-Royce – it feels like an unstoppable locomotive, but lacks the soul for serenity.

The other stand-out element of the modern Rolls-Royce experience is the whole ownership environment, which is truly exceptional. They understand the interests and desires of their clientele in a way that is unique amongst motor manufacturers. Certainly, Bentley feels much closer to the mainstream in that regard.

As with all things, each to their own and no doubt my feelings are heavily tainted by all sorts of biases as well as age. But I certainly believe that we should be very proud of the Goodwood Rolls-Royce cars as maintaining the best traditions of the brand.

Simon Burtwell
Via email

Many thanks for sharing your experiences and photographs, Simon. Amongst our readers, who else has direct experience of owning both classic and modern-day Rolls-Royce models? We'd love to hear from you – Ed.

IAN CAMERON

I was saddened to read in the Sept/Oct issue of *RR&BD* of the passing of Ian Cameron. During his time as chief designer at Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, he played such an important role in the future direction of the marque and particularly in its complete relaunch via the all-new Phantom of 2003.

The quotes you included from motoring journalist Steve Cropley were particularly fascinating. How incredible that Mr Cameron managed to sneak him into the company's top secret design studio at the end of 2000 – armed only with a notebook – to give him a glimpse of how the new Phantom would look, so far ahead of its official launch. I can't think of a better example of trust between two real gentlemen.

Donald Fox
Via email

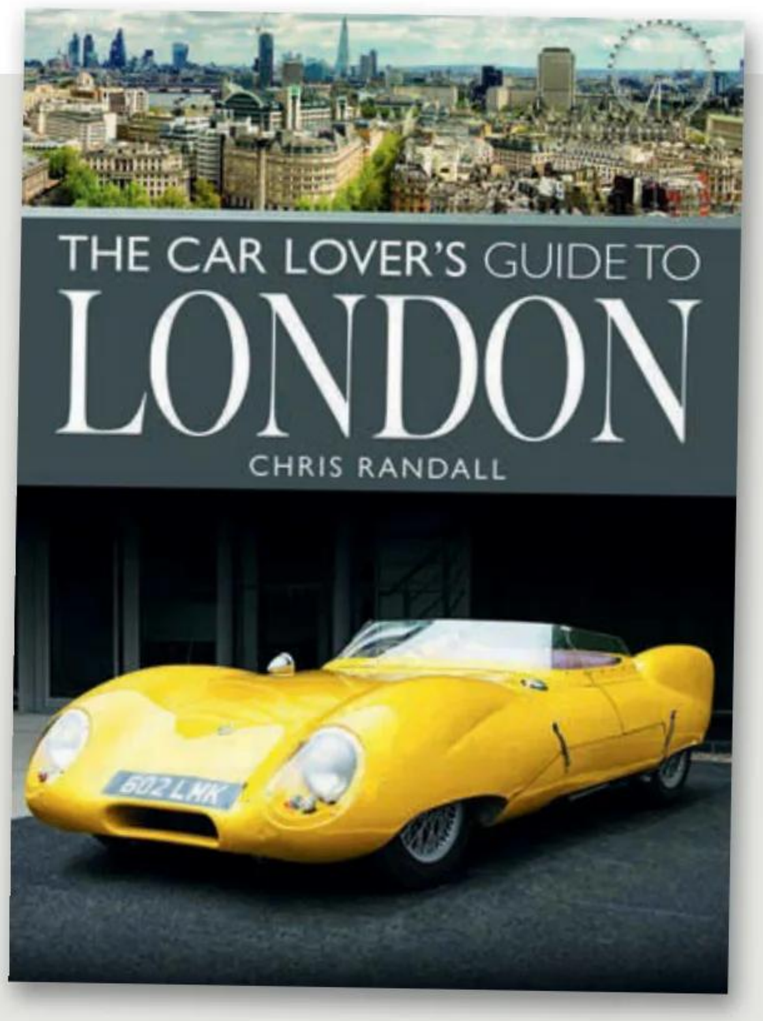


LONDON LEGENDS

Motoring writer and *RR&BD* contributor, Chris Randall, has been in touch to tell us about his new book, *The Car Lover's Guide to London*. As Chris says, "London isn't exactly short of interesting buildings, but tucked away amongst the traditional gems are some places that relate to another part of its history – that of the automobile."

Thanks to Chris's love of both London and the car, he's managed to "combine them both by taking a closer look at some of the fascinating places that brought these two things together". Happily for us, there are sections of the book featuring the London locations that played such an important role in the early days of both Bentley and Rolls-Royce, with details of where the buildings are and what became of them, as well as both period and modern-day images. But with so many other British marques also featured, it's a genuinely fascinating read for any motoring history buff.

The Car Lover's Guide to London is a 136-page paperback, published by Pen & Sword books (***www.pen-and-sword.co.uk***) and now available at £14.99. Quote ISBN 978-1-39904-965-8 when ordering from any retailer.



FINEST CUSTODIAN

In the July/August issue of *RR&BD* (The Final Page), you pondered the question of which marque has the best custodian: Rolls-Royce with BMW or Bentley with VW. I have to say – and it pains me to do so – that the powers-that-be at BMW have consigned the book on style and elegance to the dustbin.

I have tried to find some redeeming features with the new generation of Rolls-Royces, but I cannot... which is such a shame. However, to me the latest Bentleys do have a degree of style and elegance, contrasting with the harsh and almost brutish Rolls-Royce look. So, VW is the finest custodian in my humble opinion.

Stephen Williams
Croydon, Surrey

What do other readers think? As ever, your letters and emails on this subject are welcomed – Ed.



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1982 Rolls-Royce Corniche - Stock: 17507

This low mileage 1982 Rolls-Royce Corniche featuring coachwork by Mulliner Park Ward with merely 27,742 miles on the odometer. Dressed in Nutmeg Brown, the exterior is beautifully contrasted by a tan interior. If you're in search of a classic car that combines elegance and opulence look no further than this British classic that is mechanically sound. For $56,500



1959 Bentley S1 Long Wheelbase - Stock#17428

Introducing this left-hand-drive 1959 Bentley S1 Long Wheelbase that is finished in a two-tone color scheme of silver and black perfectly complemented by a luxurious red interior. With its timeless appeal and legendary craftsmanship, this classic is a true automotive masterpiece that will appreciate in value over time and is mechanically sound. **For $49,950**



1948 Bentley Mark VI Right-Hand-Drive - Stock#17891

This exquisite 1948 Bentley Mark VI Right-Hand-Drive that is dressed in a captivating blue over silver exterior. Equipped with a 4-speed manual transmission, inline-six-cylinder engine, and SU dual carburetors. Look no further than this Mark VI that is mechanically sound.
For $24,750



2000 Bentley Arnage Red Label - Stock#17690

This 2000 Bentley Arnage Red Label featured with 65,617 miles on the odometer. Dressed in its factory color of Black. Equipped with an automatic transmission, 6.75/400 HP V-8 engine, and power steering. Do not miss your chance to own this Bentley Arnage that is mechanically sound.
For $19,950



2004 Bentley Continental GT - Stock#17421

This stunning 2004 Bentley Continental GT that is finished in its exquisite factory color Spruce complemented with a Saffron interior and Walnut veneers. Fully equipped with an automatic transmission, and a 6.0-liter 12-cylinder Twin-Turbocharged engine. Look no further than this Bentley Continental GT that is mechanically sound **For $32,500**



1982 Rolls-Royce Corniche - Stock#17535

This 1982 Rolls-Royce Corniche featuring coachwork by Mulliner Park Ward with only 39,588 miles on the odometer. Comes in Silver Sand Metallic and a Copper Brown interior. Equipped with an automatic transmission and a V8 engine. If you're in search of a classic Rolls-Royce then look no further than this British classic that is mechanically sound.
For $52,500



1991 Rolls-Royce Silver Spur II - Stock#17127

This 1991 Rolls-Royce Silver Spur II featured with 73,509 miles on the odometer. This timeless classic is a true testament to the craftsmanship and opulence that Rolls-Royce is renowned for. This classic luxury vehicle that exudes timeless elegance and offers unparalleled comfort and is mechanically sound. **For $19,750**



1993 Bentley Continental R- Stock#17703

This 1993 Bentley Continental R featuring coachwork by Mulliner Park Ward. This rare gem is a true collector's dream, being one of only 285 examples produced for the year 1993. If you are in search of a truly luxury vehicle, look no further than this Bentley Continental R that is mechanically sound.
For $22,750



1986 Rolls-Royce Corniche II Convertible Stock #17774

This 1986 Rolls-Royce Corniche II Convertible features coachwork by Mulliner Park Ward and finished in a color scheme of black combined with a beautiful tan interior. Equipped with an automatic transmission and a V8 engine. An elegant British classic that is ready to be enjoyed and is mechanically sound.
For $44,500



1960 Bentley S2 Saloon - Stock#17632

This 1960 Bentley S2 Saloon Right-Hand-Drive that is finished in white complemented with a grey interior. This 4-door Saloon is equipped with an automatic transmission with steering column control, and V8 engine. An extremely elegant British classic that is ready to be cherished and is mechanically sound.
For $18,750



1961 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud II Long-wheelbase Saloon - Stock#15640

This left-hand-drive 1961 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud II Long-wheelbase Saloon that is finished in a color scheme of black combined with a tan interior. This LWB is equipped with an automatic transmission and a V8 engine. A very presentable and prestigious Rolls Royce that is mechanically sound. **For $46,500**



1953 Bentley R-Type Left-Hand-Drive - Stock#16325

This 1953 Bentley R-Type Left-Hand-Drive that is finished in Silver combined with a Gray leather interior. Equipped with a column-mounted manual transmission, 4.5-liter straight six engine, and dual carburetors. An extremely elegant British classic that is ready to be enjoyed and is mechanically sound.
For $32,500



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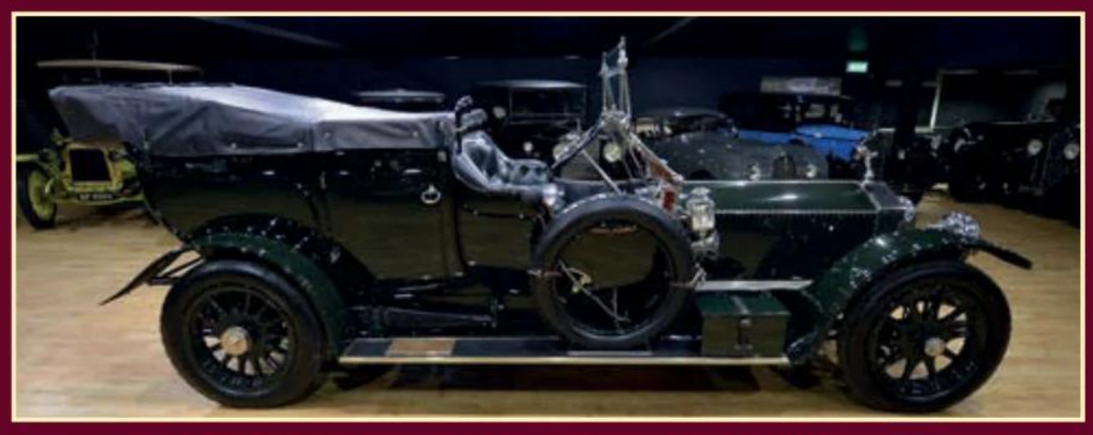
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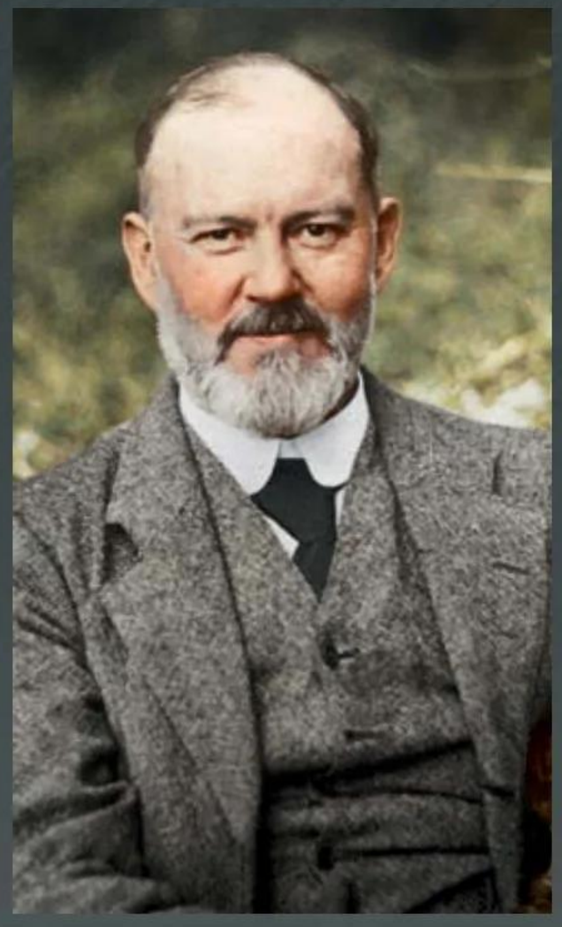
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120 Years OF ROLLS-ROYCE

The meeting of two motoring pioneers – and the legend they created





34 WHEN ROLLS MET ROYCE

An in-depth look at the events of 1904 and the coming together of Charles Rolls and Henry Royce





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A look at all eight generations of one of the longest-running monikers in the history of motoring



48 SPIRIT OF ECSTASY

The fascinating story behind the world-famous Rolls-Royce emblem and the people behind it



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How this fledgling company created "the best car in the world" – and started a great tradition





81 ENTRY-LEVEL PRESTIGE

The sub-Phantom offerings that have proved to be Rolls-Royce bestsellers for over a century

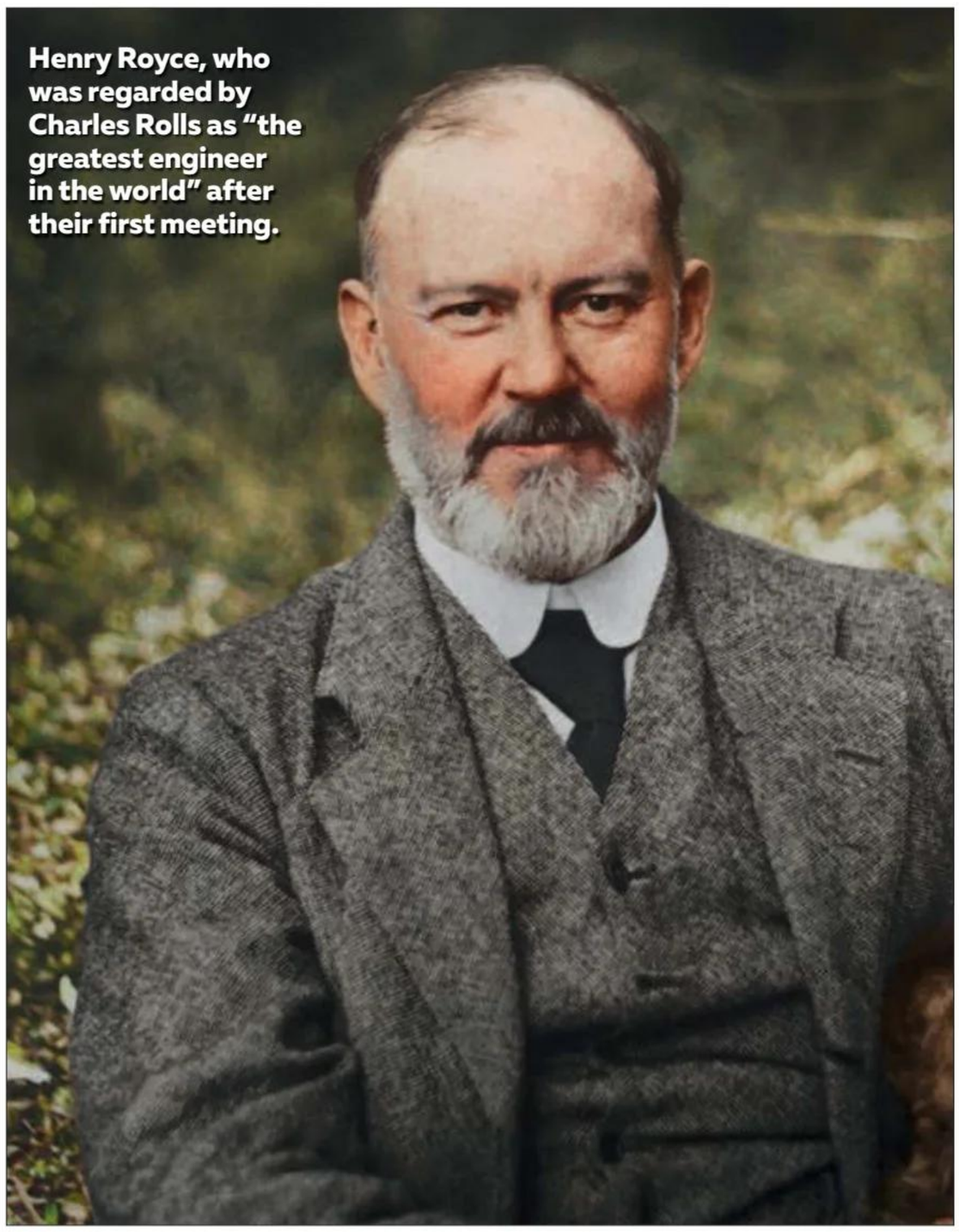
1904
WHEN ROLLS MET ROYCE

As 2024 draws to its close, we turn the clock back 120 years to 1904 and forensically examine the pivotal year that saw a very significant meeting take place in Manchester

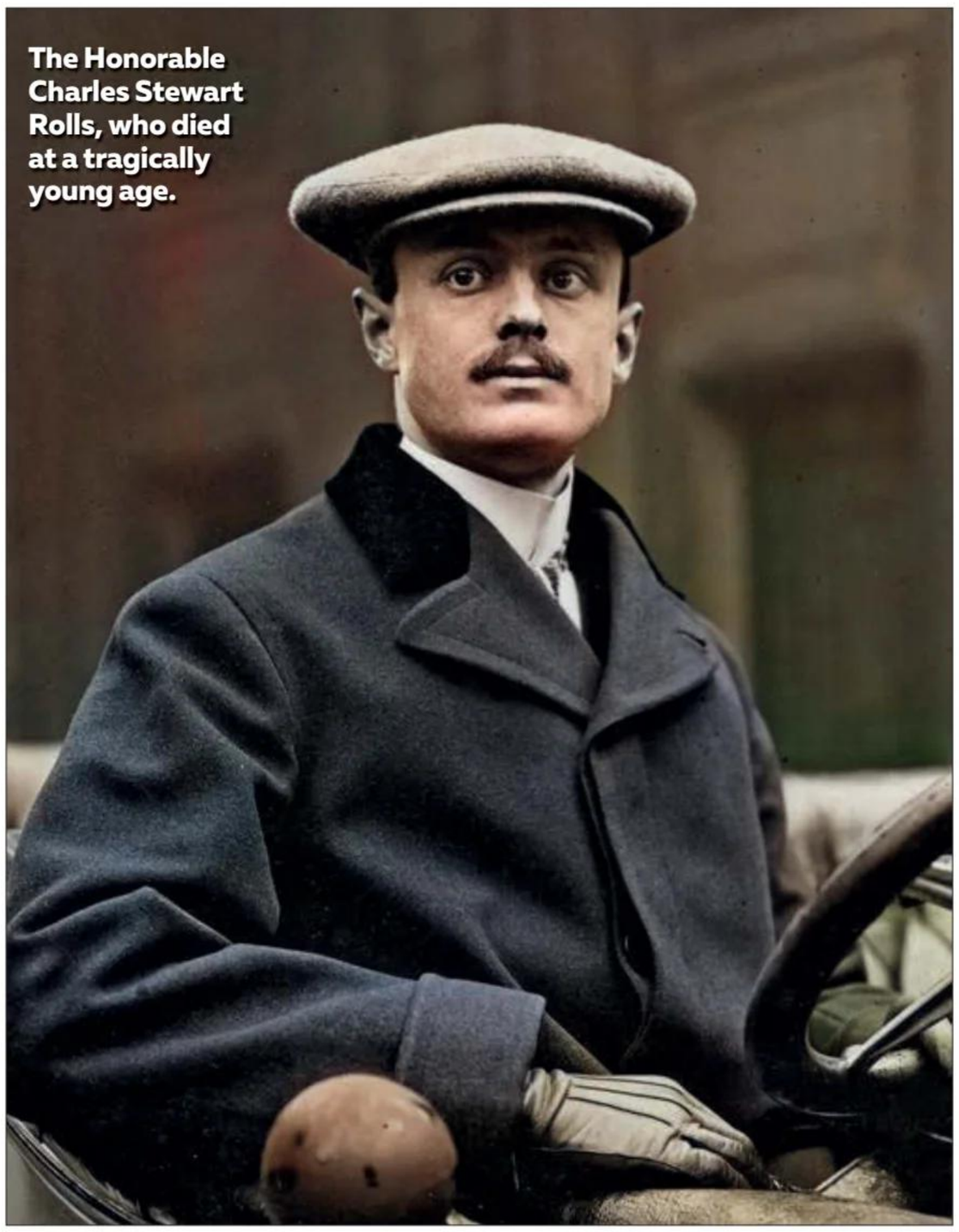
WORDS: **RICHARD GUNN** PHOTOGRAPHS: **KELSEY ARCHIVE & ROLLS-ROYCE MOTOR CARS**

One hundred and twenty years ago, a bold experiment began. It was to be the first in Rolls-Royce's history because it would ultimately kickstart Rolls-Royce history itself. It might seem a little strange to refer to the events of 1904 as an experiment, but for Charles Rolls and Henry Royce, the decision they took to enter into a business partnership probably was a leap into the dark for the pair of them. Royce had only just built his first car, perhaps as more of a whim than a serious economic prospect; and yet in the May he met with somebody who wanted to sell as many cars as he could make, as well as design and develop new ones.

In turn, that man, Charles Rolls, was taking a considerable chance on someone with no prior background in or real experience of building vehicles. It might well have finished off his business and ruined his reputation if he'd got it wrong. But fortunately for both men, and for the future of British luxury motoring and aircraft



Henry Royce, who was regarded by Charles Rolls as "the greatest engineer in the world" after their first meeting.



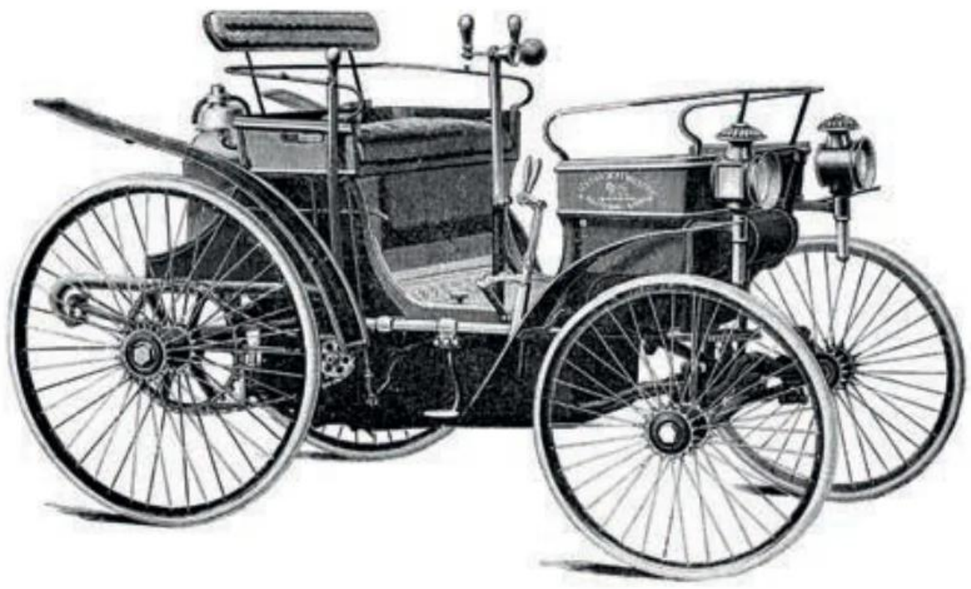
The Honorable Charles Stewart Rolls, who died at a tragically young age.



Henry Royce's first powered vehicle was a De Dion-Bouton Quadricycle like this; it may have had four wheels, but it could scarcely be called a car... and the brakes were terrible.



The C Rolls & Co showroom at Lillie Hall, a former skating ring, in Fulham during 1903; Rolls-Royces would join these vehicles the year after this photo.



The first car of Charles Rolls was a Peugeot 3¾hp Phaeton, acquired in Paris in October 1886; CS Rolls & Co would subsequently import Peugeots into Britain.

engines, the risks paid off in a very big way. Yet it almost all didn't happen.

At the start of 1904, the Honourable Charles Stewart Rolls was a 26-year-old member of the British gentry and one of the UK's foremost motoring pioneers; he'd bought his first car, a secondhand Peugeot 3¾hp Phaeton, in October 1886 during a trip to Paris. His subsequent fascination with mechanical travel prompted him to set up CS Rolls & Co in a disused skating ring in Fulham, West London, during January 1903. Here, he specialised in supplying quality three- and four-cylinder imported Peugeots, Panhards and Minervas to quality customers such as MPs, the aristocracy and even the occasional royal.

Like most of the upper classes of the era, however, Rolls had an innate belief that anything built in Britain was superior to even the best of the rest and felt frustrated that this simply wasn't the case with homegrown automobiles. "I always had a sort of feeling that I should prefer to be selling English instead of foreign goods," he'd later remark. "In addition, I could distinctly notice a growing desire on the part of my clients to purchase English-made cars... at the same time I could not come across any English-made car that I really liked." The UK's motoring industry had been handicapped by legislation, tradition »

"I always had a sort of feeling that I should prefer to be selling English instead of foreign goods"

and suspicion, and was languishing behind more liberated France and Germany during the early Edwardian era. Rolls may have really wanted to sell prestige British cars but there just weren't any around at the time.

Somebody with broadly similar views was 40-year-old Frederick Henry Royce, who came from a somewhat poorer background as the son of a miller. In 1884, he'd established FH Royce & Co in Manchester and had progressed from making domestic electrical items to dynamos, electric motors and cranes by the close of the 19th century. His first foray into motoring came in 1902 when he purchased a De Dion-Bouton Quadricycle during recuperation from a bout of the ill-health (largely through overwork and perfectionism) that would plague him throughout his life. The four-wheeler may have been extremely basic (with brakes so bad that Royce had to build a rockery at the end of his garden to stop it disappearing into his neighbour's premises), but it allowed him to escape into the fresh air of the country away from the dingy and claustrophobic Cooke Street factory in murky Manchester. It probably also sowed the seed that automobiles were something that Royce Ltd (as the business had been renamed in 1899) could diversify into to help boost its finances during a difficult economic period provoked by the Boer War.



In 1903, Henry Royce purchased a Decauville 10hp, the shortcomings of which prompted him to start building his own cars.

DECAUVILLE DEBUT

The catalyst for this to happen came when Royce upgraded from the Quadricycle to a more fully-formed Decauville 10hp during 1903. While the French machine was an improvement on its predecessor, in Royce's view its reliability still left much to be desired. It had even broken down when Royce had gone to pick it up from the local railway station. By May 1903, Royce felt compelled to take it apart to see if he could improve on its flaws. Ultimately, he decided to build three cars of his own, albeit based on the Decauville's design. The intention to sell these via Royce Ltd was signalled by the firm's list of products being expanded to include 'Royce Petrol Motor Cars'.

So, as 1904 dawned, Rolls was looking for a quality British car builder capable of rivalling the best that Europe had to offer, and Royce was about to embark on just such a project. The problem was that the two were separated not just by the 200 miles between London and Manchester but also by their different social classes. They'd probably never even heard of each other, let alone had an opportunity to meet.

Royce got his first two-cylinder 10hp engine running by September 1903, while the car it was to be installed in took shape alongside at Cooke Street. It differed from the Decauville by being an F-cylinder head layout, with a mechanically-driven overhead inlet valve and side exhaust one, while the French unit had an atmospheric »


Henry Edmunds was the middleman who brought Charles Rolls and Henry Royce together and brokered the agreement between them that led to Rolls-Royce.


Claude Johnson, who Charles Rolls reputedly visited on the evening of his Manchester meeting with Henry Royce.

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its first test run, from the Manchester factory to his Knutsford home and back. Its inaugural voyage was heralded by the cheers and the banging of hammers and castings by employees as it left Cooke Street. The round trip of around 30 miles was performed faultlessly.

The second prototype was soon completed and was given to Ernest Claremont. This was the machine so often shadowed by a support horse; but to give Claremont his due, Royce constantly tinkered with it and tried out modifications that did affect its reliability, to the point that a sign was affixed where passengers could see it stating: "If the car breaks down, please don't ask a lot of silly questions".

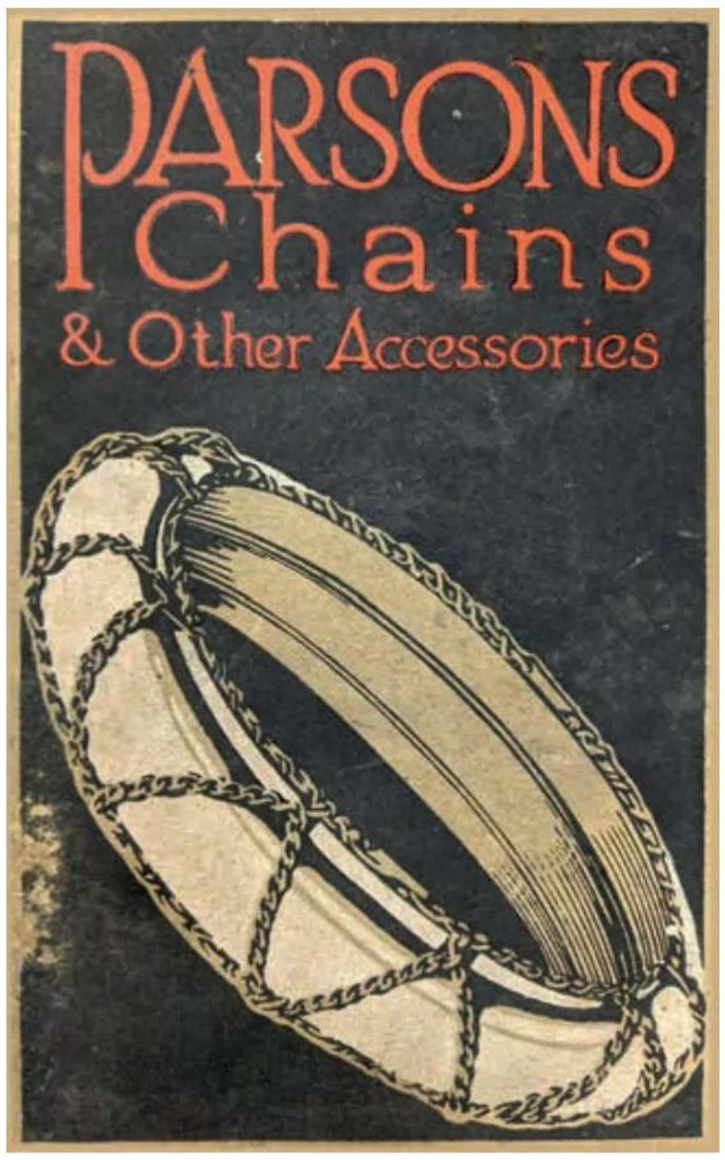
One of those impressed by Royce's 10hp was Henry Edmunds, the chairman of nearby electrical cable manufacturer WT Glover. He was also a shareholder in Royce Ltd, as well as a friend of its founder. And, as a committee member of the Automobile Club, he also knew Rolls, for the Honourable Charles held the same position within the organisation. Mindful that Rolls was searching for British cars of suitable refinement to sell, Edmunds had already sent a letter to London on March 26th, extolling the virtues of Royce and his forthcoming new car and suggesting a meeting between the two parties.

The stage was now set for Rolls and Royce to meet. Except it wasn't... quite. The ever-busy Royce was still working hard on his other automobiles and felt unable to take time out to travel all the way down to London to demonstrate his car. It was similar for Rolls; he was already negotiating with other car builders to sell their products and didn't really feel compelled to speculatively travel up to Manchester. The fact that Royce had made a two-cylinder machine and Royce preferred models with three, four or more cylinders didn't exactly help the impasse.

DURABILITY TRIAL

Edmunds now tried a different tack. Another feather in his cap was that he was the chairman of the wonderfully-named Parsons Non-Skid Company Ltd, whose main product was a form of tyre chains intended to help stop the poorly-braked vehicles of the era from skidding on the loose-surface roads that were the norm throughout Britain. The Automobile Club had organised »

"Great trouble was taken to get the engine running as silently as possible, something that would become a trademark of all subsequent Rolls-Royces"



It's likely that Charles Rolls first saw the prototype Royce 10hp when it took part in the Side Slip durability trial around London in April 1904, demonstrating Parsons non-skid wheel chains.



Ernest Claremont, Henry Royce's business partner and the recipient of the second Royce 10hp prototype, which he never really trusted to be reliable.



Charles Rolls driving the Duke of Connaught in the first prototype Royce 10hp during a south coast inspection of military forces in 1904.

the 1000-mile Side Slip durability trial followed by braking and skid tests over 11 days from April 18th, 1904.

Edmunds convinced Royce to allow his 10hp to demonstrate the Parsons' contraption in the London-based competition where, presumably, Rolls would be able to see and appreciate it without the inconvenience of having to go all the way to Manchester. Edmunds did the driving himself during the event.

The Royce performed so well during the trial that, even before it had ended, Rolls had written to Edmunds suggesting a meeting in Manchester. He may even have driven the car while it was down south, although there's no proof of this. The date set was Wednesday, May 4th, 1904 and the venue was the Grill Room at the Midland Hotel in Manchester, an impressive and sprawling Edwardian Baroque structure. It had only opened the year before, to serve passengers arriving at Manchester Central railway station. That made it very convenient for Rolls and Edmunds to travel up together by train in time for the lunchtime rendezvous with Royce.

Edmunds later recalled that as the two discussed the forthcoming meeting in the dining car of the train en route, Rolls said it was "his ambition to have a motor car


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FH Royce & Co became Royce Ltd in 1899, and it was under this company name that the first Royce and Rolls-Royce cars were constructed.



One of the three Royce 10hp prototypes outside the Cooke Street, Manchester, premises of Royce Ltd.

connected with his name so that, in the future, it might be a household word just as much as Broadway or Steinway in connection with pianos or Chubbs in connection with safes". That would certainly come to pass.

"I think both men took to each other at first sight and they eagerly discussed the prospects and requirements of the automobile industry, which was then still in its early infancy," Edmunds continued. What specific plans or business arrangements were made over lunch went unrecorded but the final decision to enter into a partnership was taken on that day. What is certain is that after the meal finished, Rolls was treated by Royce to a drive in the second Royce 10hp prototype (the first not having yet returned from London) and was immediately impressed by its smoothness, power and quietness – even given that it was only a two-cylinder machine.

According to urban legend, while Rolls was driving the 10hp accompanied by Royce, he stopped to help a local doctor who had broken down in a »

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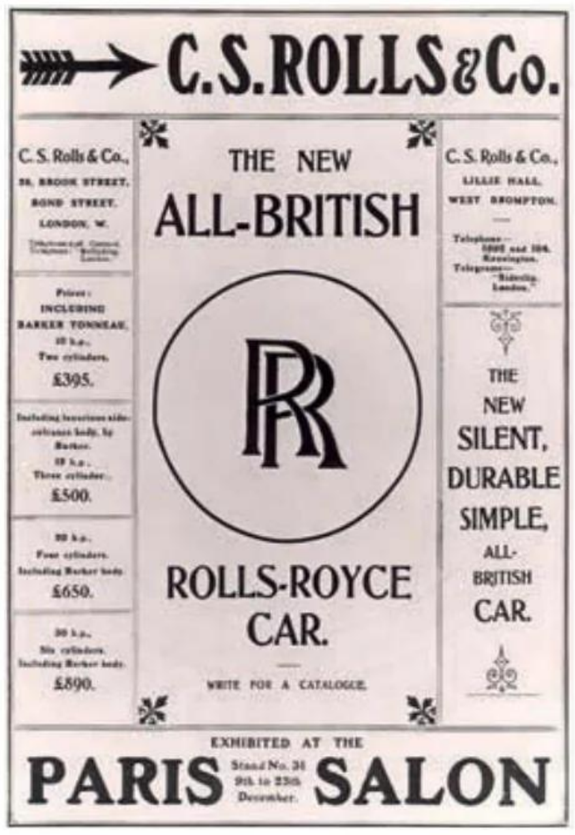


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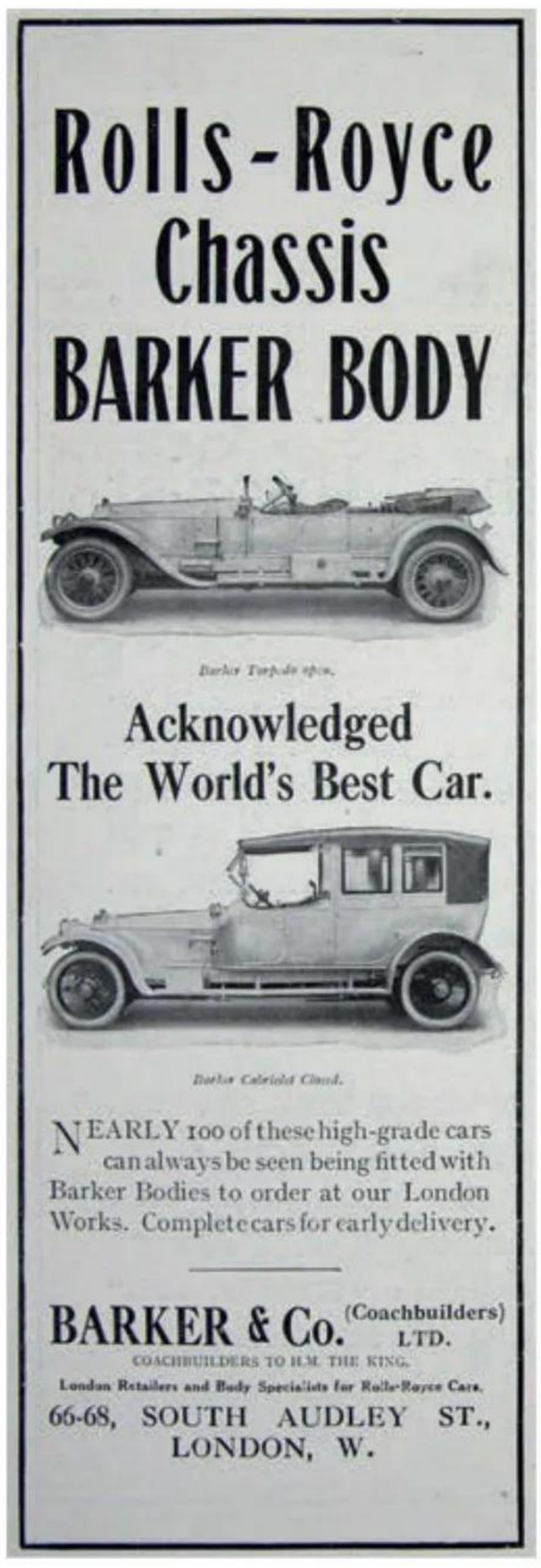
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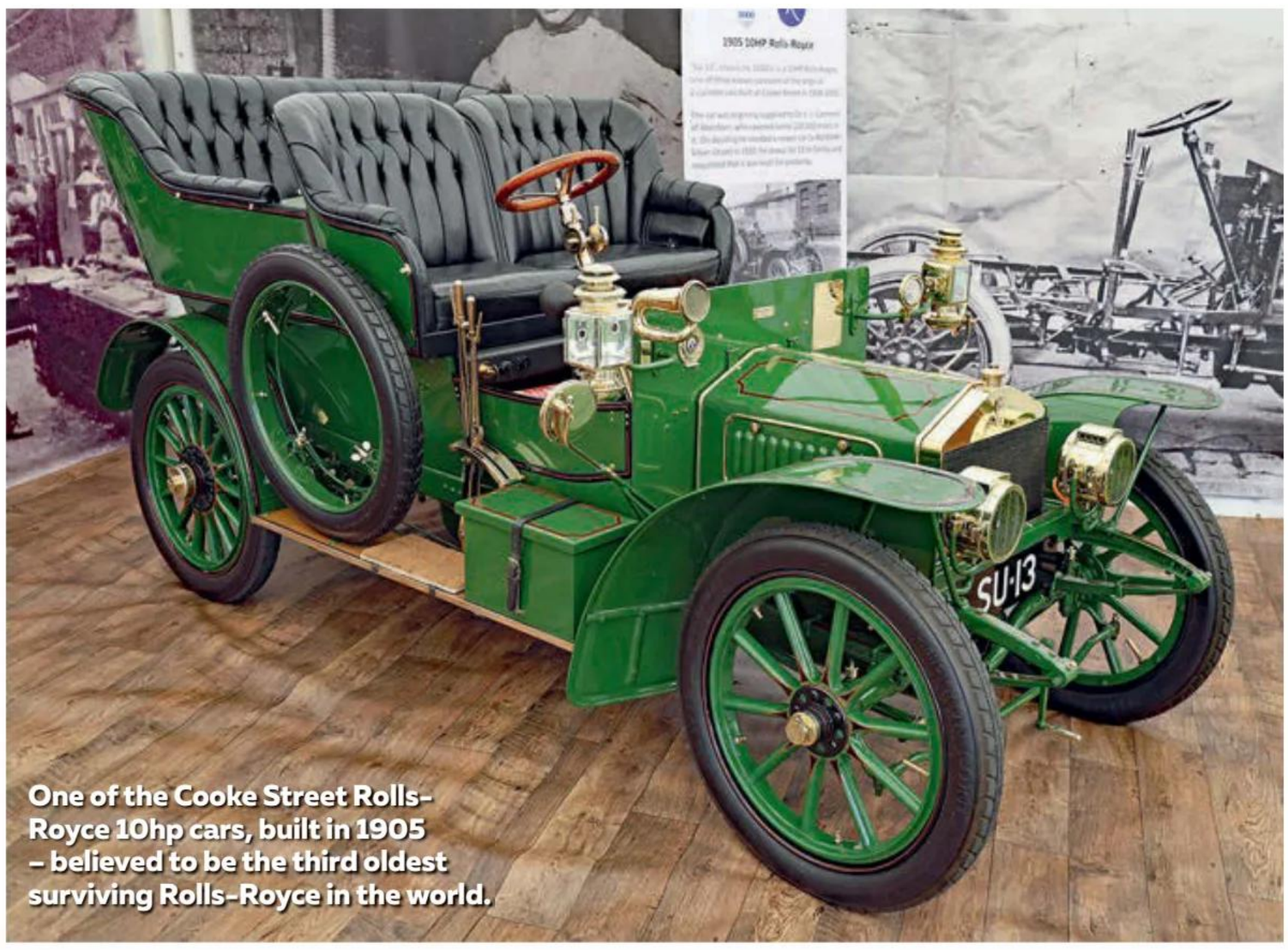
Early CS Rolls & Co marketing for Rolls-Royce, the "new, silent, durable, simple, all-British car" with prices from £395 to £890 including Barker bodywork.



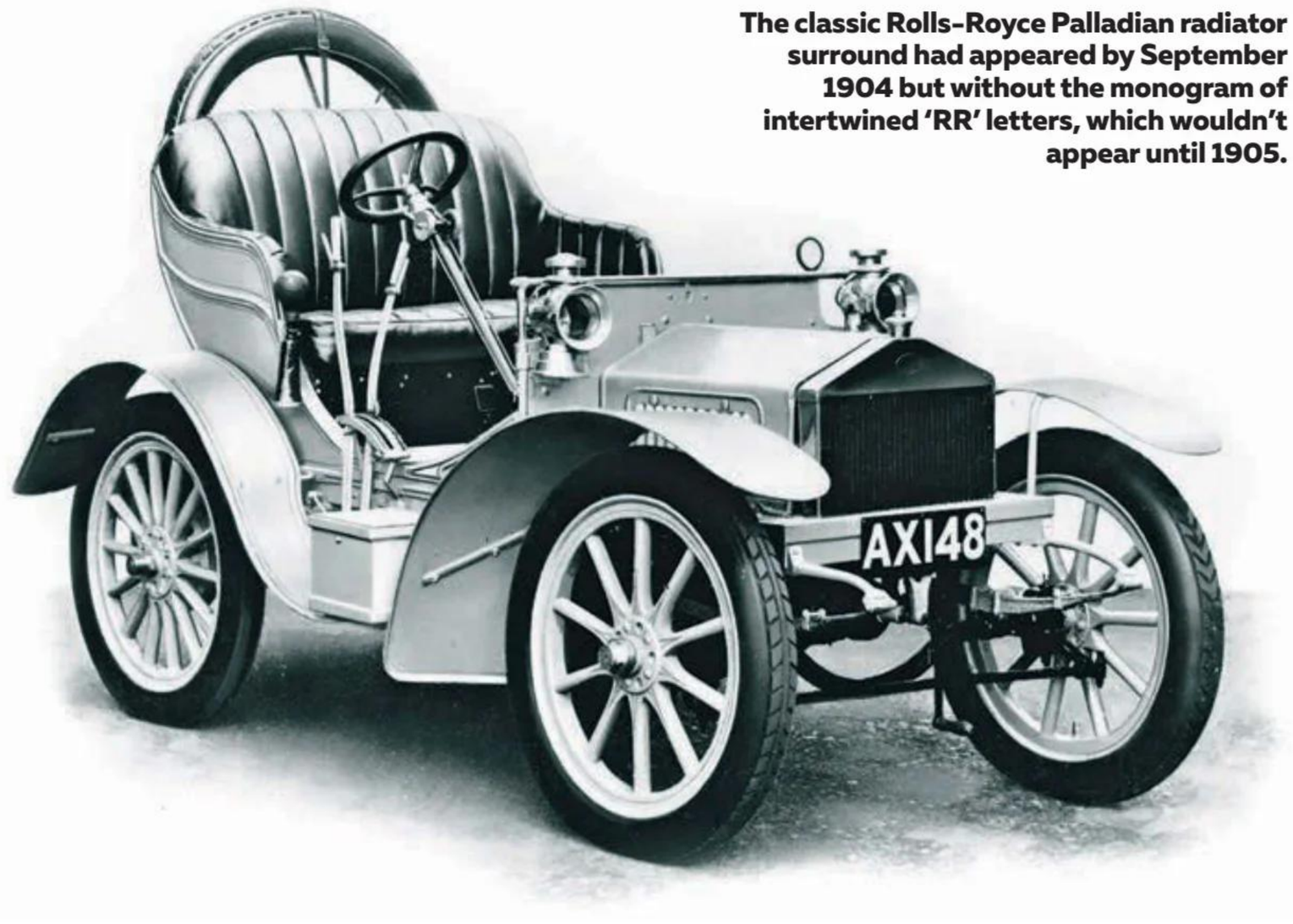
Barker & Co would be associated with coachbuilding for Rolls-Royces right from the very first cars, and the connection would continue for many years afterwards.

Mors. The man, unaware of who his saviours were, told them that he'd acquired it from CS Rolls & Co in London, who he'd been informed were reasonably honest, if that was possible in the motor trade. Royce saw the funny side, Rolls apparently didn't. Fortunately, it didn't take long to ascertain that the Mors had merely run out of petrol and the doctor was soon on his way again, with reputedly no idea of who had just helped him.

When Rolls arrived back in London that Wednesday evening, he went straight to the flat of Claude Johnson, his business partner. Johnson would become highly important in the future Rolls-Royce as the first managing director who kept the company running after the death of Rolls and long-term illness of Royce. His significance would earn him the title of "the hyphen in Rolls-Royce". But all he knew at this stage was that Rolls had just met a person he enthusiastically described as "the greatest engineer



One of the Cooke Street Rolls-Royce 10hp cars, built in 1905 – believed to be the third oldest surviving Rolls-Royce in the world.



The classic Rolls-Royce Palladian radiator surround had appeared by September 1904 but without the monogram of intertwined 'RR' letters, which wouldn't appear until 1905.

in the world". Johnson would soon develop the same opinion after he met with Royce and had a chance to check out the 10hp himself.

Discussions between Rolls and Royce continued for the next few months, with Edmunds acting as the middleman. It seems a draft deal had been thrashed out by the August. On the eighth of that month, Royce wrote to Edmunds saying: "With reference to Mr Rolls taking our manufactures, he has at present in his possession an agreement we have got out on those lines, and with reference to his suggestion that you should be named as umpire, I should be most happy to agree to this as I know your anxiety would be for everything to be quite fair on each side". He further went on to thank Edmunds for the introduction which was "promising well, and I think we ought to be of great service to each other".

"The contract taking shape was for CS Rolls & Co to take and sell all the cars that Royce could build"

ALL HE COULD BUILD

The contract taking shape was for CS Rolls & Co to take and sell all the cars that Royce could build. They would be supplied in chassis form and CS Rolls & Co would be responsible for the bodywork, a policy that had previously been established with its imported vehicles. The coachbuilder Barker, based in Charing Cross, was the usual partner for this task. Most importantly of all, every car would carry the Rolls-Royce name. There was also a plan to build three-, four- and six-cylinder vehicles, in addition to the two-cylinder ones that Royce had already showcased.

Before he commenced work on these first Rolls-Royces, with an initial run of 20 10hps being called for »



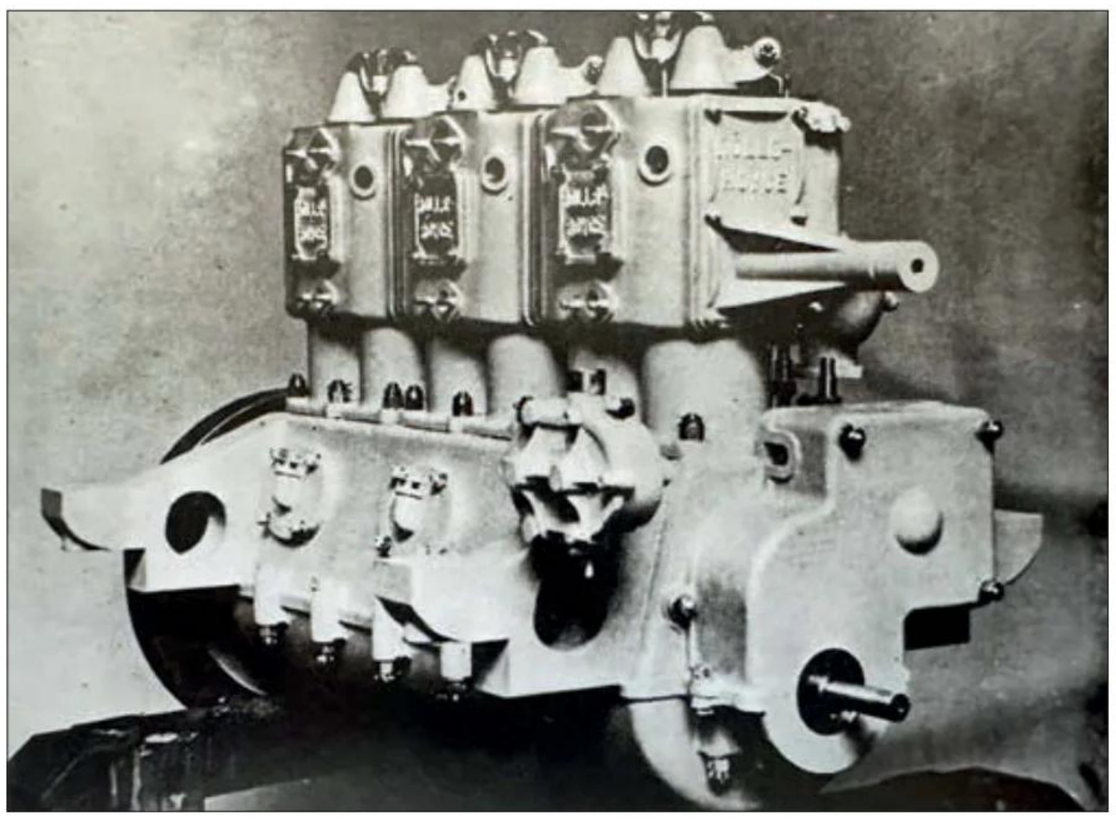
The 1904 Paris Salon de L'Automobile ran from December 9th to 25th and was chosen as the venue at which Rolls-Royce was launched to the world.



At the 1904 Paris Salon, only a six-cylinder engine for Rolls-Royce's largest and most expensive car, the 30hp, was on display; actual vehicles didn't follow until 1905.

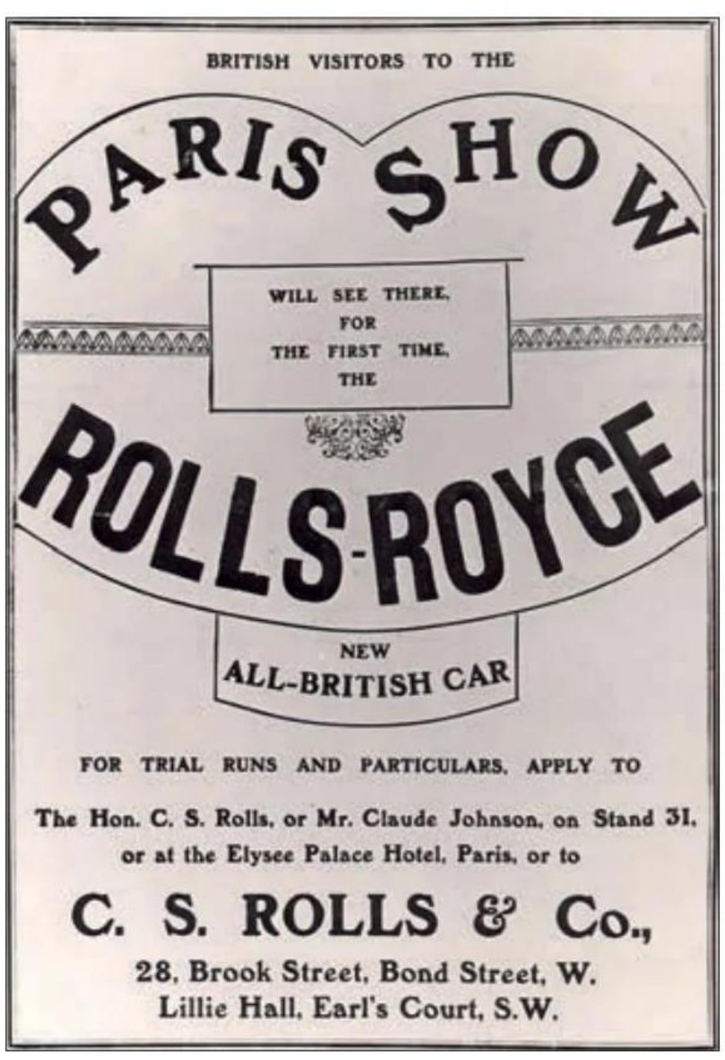


As well as the first prototype Royce 10hp, the fourth Rolls-Royce to be built – chassis number 20154 – was driven out to Paris for exhibition at Salon de L'Automobile in December 1904.

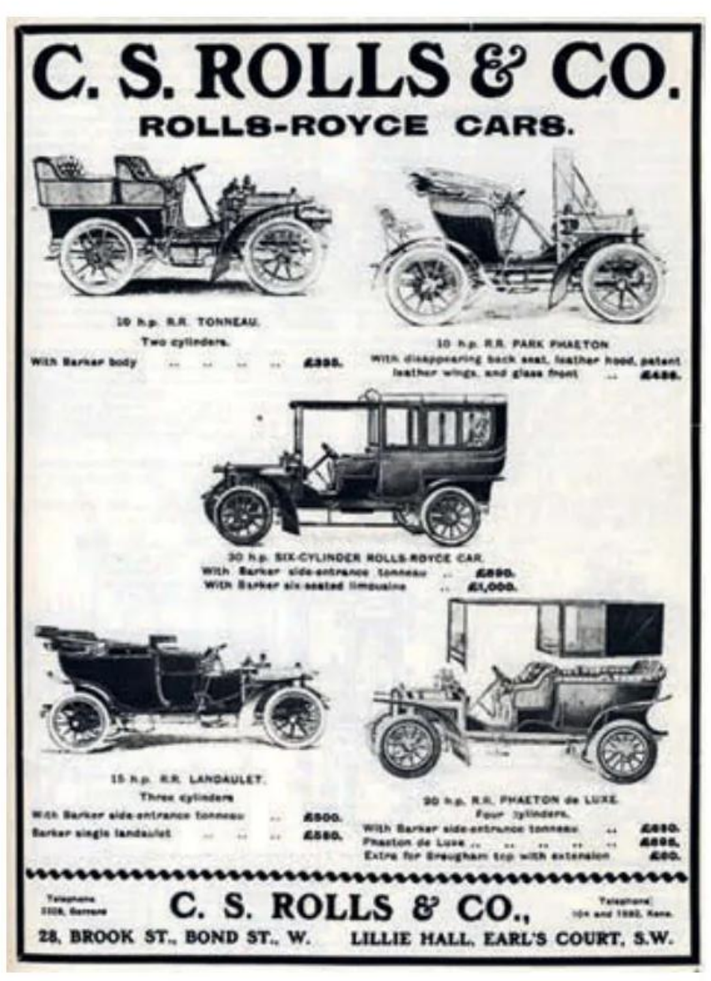


The Rolls-Royce six-cylinder 30hp engine, as displayed at the Paris Salon, was essentially three 10hp two-cylinder units mounted on the same crankcase.

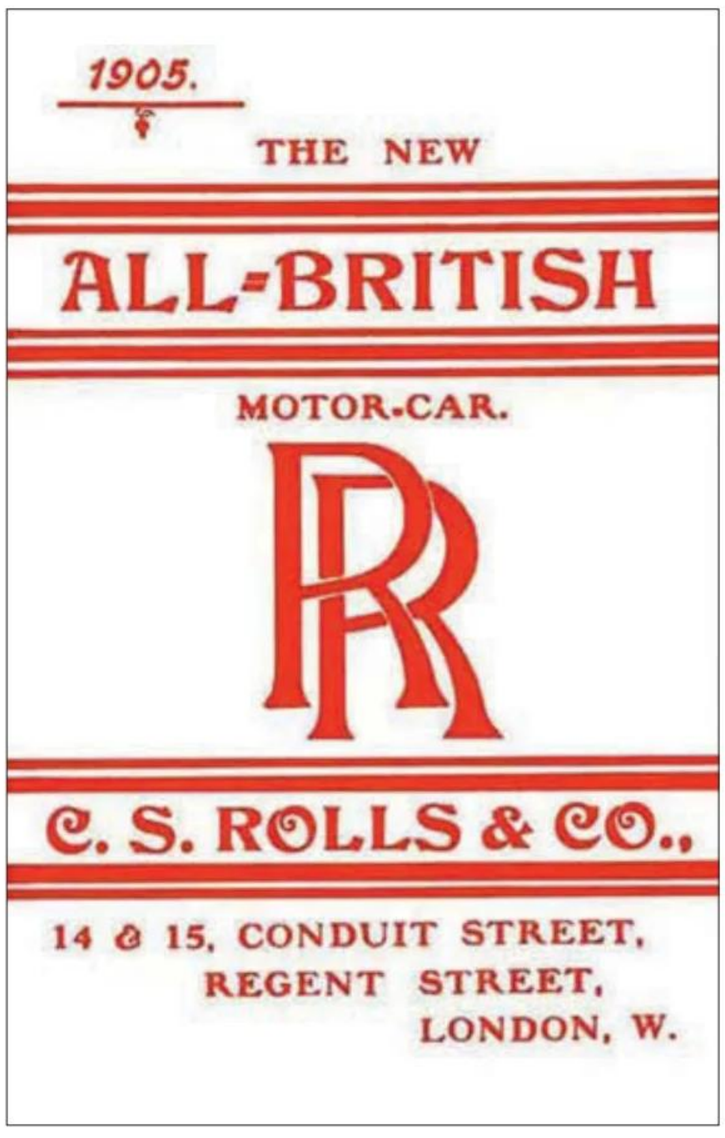
"The Paris Salon commissioners were sufficiently impressed to award a special diploma and medal for the elegance and comfort of the Rolls-Royce cars"



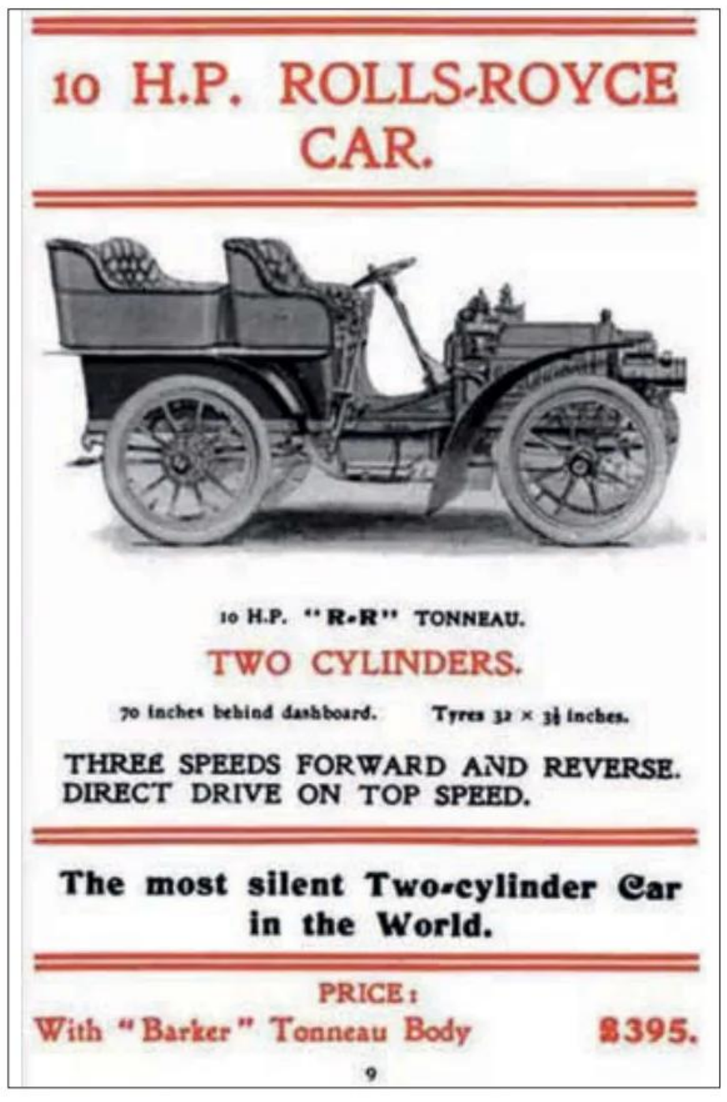
An advert for the debut of Rolls-Royce at the December 1904 Paris Salon de L'Automobile.



An advert from the December 17th, 1904 issue of *The Autocar*, detailing the entire new Rolls-Royce range – from 10hp to 30hp, with Barker-supplied coachwork.



Rolls-Royce's first ever official catalogue, issued in early 1905.



A page for the 10hp from Rolls-Royce's first ever catalogue of 1905, heralded as "the most silent two-cylinder car in the world".

(although only 16 would eventually appear), there was the small matter of finishing the third prototype 10hp. Of these three Royces, Rolls famously used the first one to drive the Duke of Connaught (Queen Victoria's third son and Commander-in-Chief of the British army) on a military inspection tour of the south coast, under the auspices of the Motor Volunteer Corps. Rolls wanted to persuade the Duke that his officers should upgrade to cars from their traditional horses. During the day-long trip, the 10hp managed 220 miles without any incident.

That car was still dismantled not long afterwards, with parts from it subsequently used in the second Royce two-cylinder machine – the one that had been presented to Ernest Claremont. This was eventually given to his wife, Minnie, before passing out of family ownership. In 1921, it was donated to Manchester University where it was inexplicably scrapped, although its engine was kept. Rolls-Royce was responsible for the demise of the third prototype, which was originally sold into private hands but then reacquired by Rolls-Royce and used as a works runaround until 1923, when the company decided to scrap it. The decision was even more unfathomable than that of the university, as by then Rolls-Royce was well-established and the company must have realised that it was the oldest surviving (Rolls-) Royce in the world and the genesis of all that followed it.

There were also technical issues to overcome before proper manufacture of 10hps to sell to the public could begin. Royce had to resolve prototype issues that included overheating, spark plug-oiling, carburation concerns, crankshaft bowing, braking deficiencies and chassis rigidity.

A solitary production two-cylinder Royce 10hp (chassis 20150) was completed in mid-summer 1904, presumably before Royce was completely certain that he had a deal with Rolls. But the chassis that followed it, 20151, was to carry the Rolls-Royce name, even though no formal agreement had yet been signed. Designated the Type A and featuring a 1.8-litre engine with three-speed gearbox, this very first Rolls-Royce had its engine completed by August 21st, with the complete machine being delivered to Paris E Singer (of the Singer

Sewing Machine Company dynasty) the following month. When the second 10hp (chassis 20152) was also finished in the September, it was notable for the stately and angular radiator surround set into its Barker coachwork, reputedly inspired by Rome's Pantheon temple – marking the start of the Palladian shape of things to come.

As 1904 neared its close, Royce applied for a place at December's Paris Salon de L'Automobile, then regarded as the world's leading motor show. There was no certainty that it would be granted, as space was awarded by ballot and Rolls-Royce was a completely unknown entity. Fortunately, Rolls was lucky and the Grand Palais exhibition in the French capital, running from December 9th to 25th, became the international launch venue for Rolls-Royce.

Two cars were chosen for Paris. There was the first Royce, which was driven by Charles Rolls and Claude Johnson to Southampton and then from Le Havre to Paris after the ferry crossing. Accompanying it, with a C Vivian Moore at the wheel, was the fourth Rolls-Royce 10hp, chassis number 20154. This had been completed in November primarily as a show car and had Barker Park Phaeton carriagework with two occasional rear seats. Also taken over the Channel was an incomplete 15hp (three-cylinder) chassis and a 20hp (four-cylinder) model with a body but no engine, as well as examples of the materials used for their construction. An obviously frantic and frazzled Royce had also managed to put together a six-cylinder 30hp engine, effectively three two-cylinder units attached to a common crankcase.



During 1905, CS Rolls & Co added the little-remembered Orleans marque to the list of vehicles it sold, despite the fact that it was now selling its 'own' Rolls-Royce cars.

"ALL-BRITISH CARS"

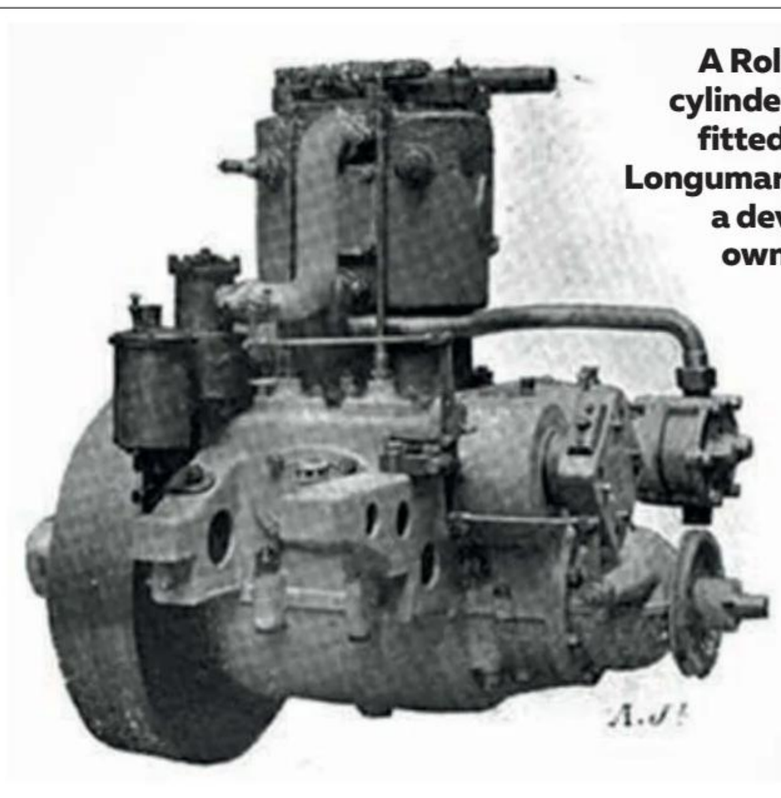
The Autocar magazine of December 10th, 1904, celebrated the "all-British cars in the midst of France's best" and trumpeted that the "design and workmanship of these cars are excellent throughout and the exhibit reflects great credit on those responsible for its being beneath the roof of the Grand Palais".

Another publication seemed very willing to give that credit to Charles Rolls by writing that "his long connection with the motor car industry and his intimate knowledge of all the best-known foreign and British automobiles have no doubt proved invaluable to Mr CS Rolls in perfecting the design and details of the new all-British car, which his firm, Messrs CS Rolls & Co, has put on the market under the name of the Rolls-Royce car". Royce was only briefly mentioned later as the manufacturer: "A firm of engineers who has won a reputation for the high-class work it has carried out for the admiralty".

It wasn't just the ever-patriotic British who loved the new kid on »



Rolls-Royce rapidly outgrew the Royce Ltd factory in Manchester, and the company's new and much larger plant in Derby opened in July 1908; Henry Royce did much of its planning.



A Rolls-Royce two-cylinder 10hp engine, fitted with a French Longumare carburettor; a device of Royce's own design would replace it.

ANNIVERSARY ISSUE
120 YEARS OF ROLLS-ROYCE



SPIRIT OF ECSTASY: CREATING AN ICON

It's one of the most famous motoring symbols of all time, yet wasn't without controversy during its early years. We examine the story behind Rolls-Royce's Spirit of Ecstasy

WORDS: **RICHARD GUNN** PHOTOGRAPHS: **KELSEY ARCHIVE & ROLLS-ROYCE MOTOR CARS**

It is an irony of motoring history that the person who is thought to have inspired one of the most famous, most recognisable automotive symbols of all time remains almost unheard of. But outside of the Rolls-Royce enthusiast circle, that's certainly the case with Eleanor Thornton, whose name is generally unknown but whose image as the Spirit of Ecstasy is globally revered. So, how did a Victorian girl from humble London origins end up gracing some of the most elegant, most expensive cars ever built?

Eleanor's story is shrouded in myth and fable, includes an illicit affair, and ends in tragedy during the Second World War. And her early death meant Eleanor never got to see just how well-known and much-loved her sculpture-in-motion would ultimately become.

Nelly Thornton was born on April 15th, 1880, in Cottage Grove, Stockwell, south London. It was not the most salubrious of areas, bordering one of the many railway lines fanning out from Victoria station. Her Australian father, Frederick, was a telegraph engineer supposedly employed by the electric apparatus and machinery manufacturer, Latimer Clark Muirhead & Company, although the firm's successor doesn't have any records of him. Her mother was Sarah Anne, who some believe was Spanish thanks to her daughter's striking, rather Mediterranean good looks and the 'Velasco' name that Eleanor later appropriated. However, the truth seems to be that Sarah Anne's parents were true Londoners. As well as Nelly, the Thorntons also had another daughter, Rose, in 1887.

Nelly's family were at least affluent enough to send her to school, where she stayed until the age of 16. By then, she'd formalised 'Nelly' to 'Eleanor' and inserted 'Velasco' between it and her surname, presumably to appear more exotic than she really was, as she seemed keen on the idea of pursuing an acting career. However, the need for a more secure income also saw her »



Eleanor helped organise the Thousand Mile Trial of 1900, in which John Montagu came third with his Daimler.



Claude Johnson, managing director of Rolls-Royce, who commissioned Charles Sykes to create what would become the Spirit of Ecstasy.

"Eleanor assisted Johnson with organising the Thousand Mile Trial across the UK, won by a certain Charles Stewart Rolls"

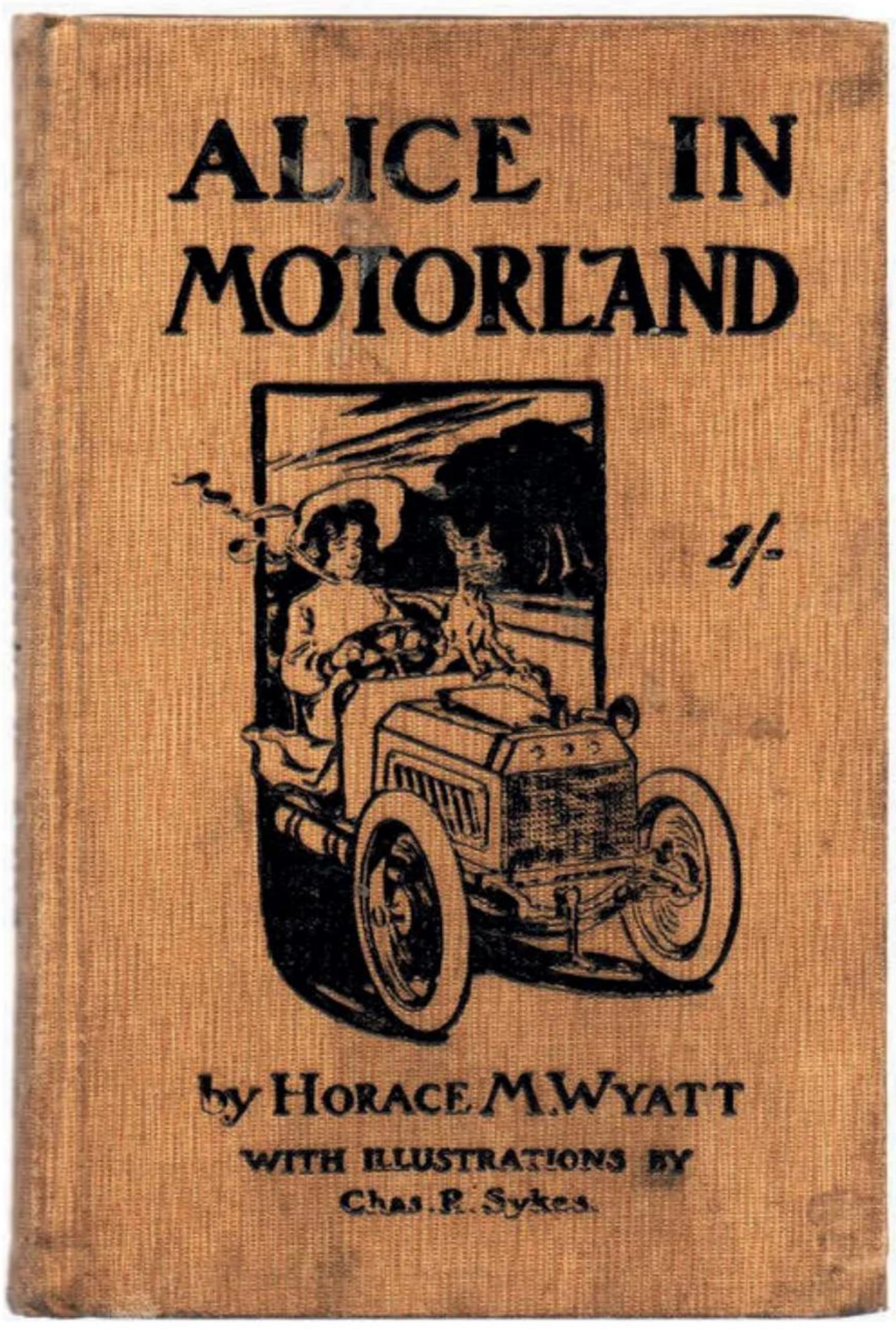
take a job as a secretary for the newly-formed Automobile Club of Great Britain. This cemented her future path in life, for her boss there was Claude Johnson, later to become Rolls-Royce's managing director and, as he described it, "the hyphen in Rolls-Royce".

During her time there, Eleanor assisted Johnson with organising the 1900 Thousand Mile Trial across the UK, won by a certain Charles Stewart Rolls, albeit driving a 12hp Panhard. In third place was the Daimler of John Walter Edward Douglas-Scott-Montagu, a few years before he inherited the title of Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, in Hampshire. As one of the well-heeled motoring pioneers of the day, he would have been introduced to Eleanor while she worked for the organisation.

The two seemed to hit it off, and in 1902 Eleanor left the Automobile Club and went to work for Montagu as his personal secretary and on his new *The Car Illustrated* publication, Britain's first motoring magazine. The two also fell in love, despite Montagu being married. The affair remained largely secret, even when 'Thorn' (as Montagu affectionately nicknamed his mistress) gave birth to an illegitimate daughter, Joan, in 1903. To avoid scandal and because of the social mores of the era, the baby was given up for adoption, although Montagu continued to provide for her. It seems that Lady Cecil Kerr, Montagu's wife, not only knew about the relationship but actually condoned it, even becoming a friend of Eleanor's in the process.

CHOICE OF MODEL

An associate of both Eleanor and Montagu was the sculptor and illustrator Charles Sykes, via his freelance work for Montagu's periodical. Before long Eleanor started modelling for Sykes, appearing on the front cover of *The Car Illustrated* and as 'Alice' in *Alice in Motorland*, an automobile-orientated 1904 pastiche of *Alice's Adventures in*



Eleanor Thornton provided the likeness for Alice in 1904's Alice in Motorland parody serialisation, illustrated by Charles Sykes.

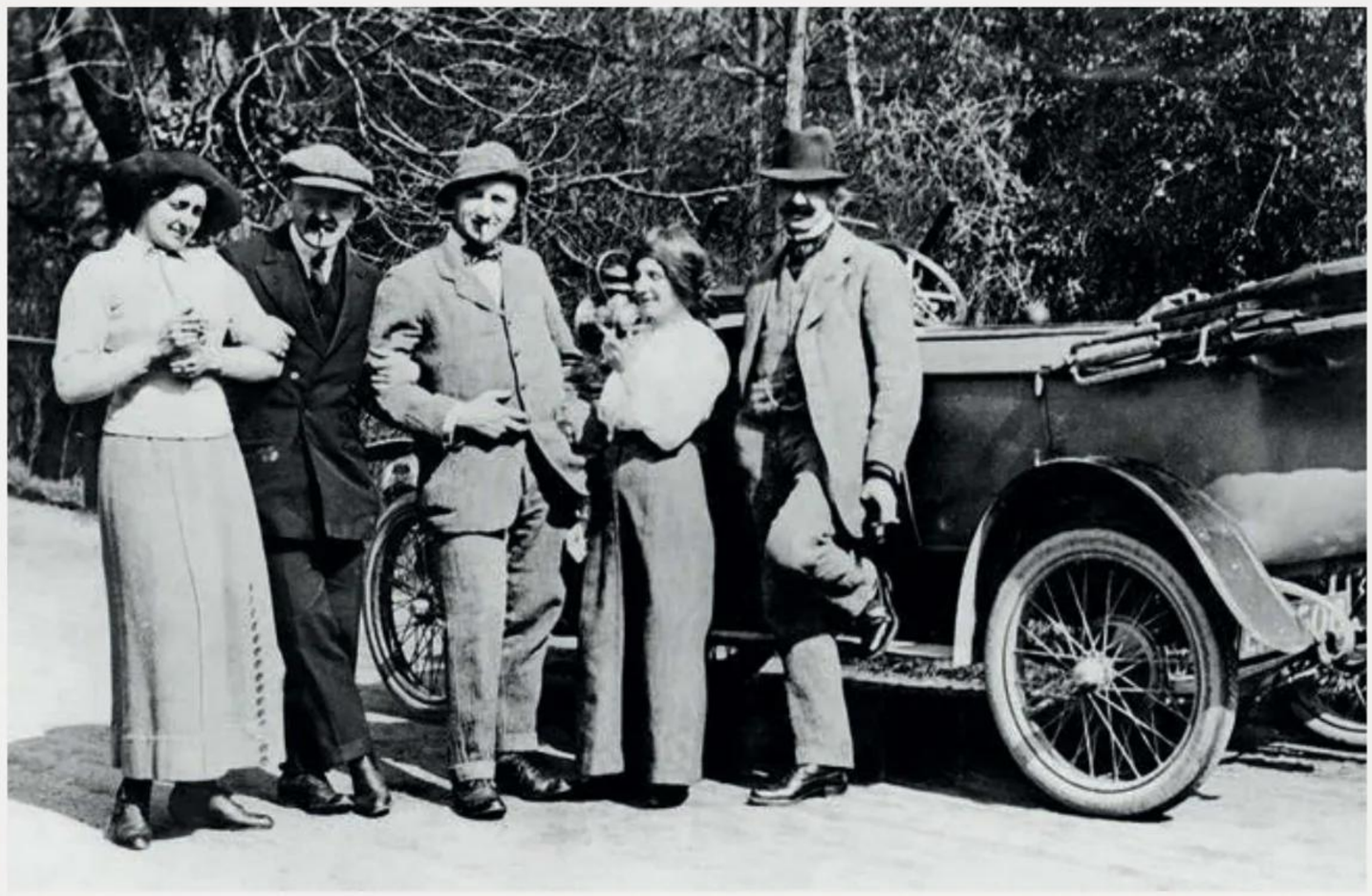


John Douglas-Scott-Montagu in *The Car Illustrated* magazine's London offices, where Eleanor Thornton worked alongside him.

Wonderland, written by Horace M Wyatt with drawings by Sykes.

It therefore seemed only natural that when Montagu decided he wanted a personalised mascot for his 1909 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost, he should turn to Eleanor and Sykes, commissioning the sculptor to immortalise his secretary and mistress in cast form. The marque's cars already had the intertwined 'R's as their badge, but radiator ornaments were the choice of the owner. Sykes' artistic representation of 1910, christened The Whisper, portrayed Eleanor with robes flowing behind her and a finger raised to her lips, symbolising the secret love. Those who didn't know the truth generally assumed it was a reference to Rolls-Royce's very quiet engines, a convenient misinterpretation under the circumstances and a myth that persists to this day.

Simultaneously, Rolls-Royce itself »



Eleanor Thornton on the left, along with sculptor Charles Sykes (centre), who would immortalise her in cast metal on the front of Rolls-Royces.



Eleanor Thornton is widely acknowledged as the little-known woman behind the Spirit of Ecstasy.



The moustachioed John Douglas-Scott-Montagu in military uniform during or shortly after the First World War.

was becoming concerned about some of the other mascots ending up on the front of its cars. The company considered many – such as caricatures of policemen, cats and dolls – not quite befitting of the prestigious image it wished to project. Claude Johnson had become the firm's managing director a few years previously and set about finding a more appropriate decoration that could be offered as an official accessory. He also turned to Sykes, having been introduced to him by Montagu, to see what he could come up with.

The brief that Johnson gave Sykes was he wanted something along the lines of the Winged Victory of Samothrace statue in the Louvre, more commonly known as Nike, the Greek Goddess of Victory. Sykes managed to convince him that something a little softer (and not headless) would be more appropriate and decided to modify The Whisper, again using Eleanor as inspiration. This time, she was portrayed as bent forward, with her cape-draped arms outstretched behind. Initially known as the Spirit of Speed, it was Johnson who bestowed on it the name that persists today; "the spirit of ecstasy, who has selected

"Remarkably, Henry Royce wasn't keen on the radiator decoration when it was unveiled in February 1911"

road travel as her supreme delight... she is expressing her keen enjoyment, with her arms outstretched and her sight fixed upon the distance".

At this point, it should be noted that while Eleanor definitely was the model for The Whisper, it's less clear-cut if she actually posed anew for the Spirit of Speed. The weight of opinion suggests she did – after all, it was a fresh creation, albeit based on The Whisper, and she was still one of Sykes' favourite models. Friends at the time also presumed it was her. But until his death in 1950, Sykes never spoke publicly about Eleanor, probably out of respect for his friendship with her and Montagu.

Among those who dispute that Eleanor sat (or rather stood) for the statuette was Sykes' own daughter, Jo, who didn't feel a person could have adopted the position for long enough to be sketched. She also regarded Eleanor as rather too "strong" and "statuesque" to be the delicate, sylph-like Spirit. However, Montagu's son, Edward (the National Motor Museum founder, who died in 2015), expressed his "absolute certainty" that she posed. So did John Montagu's doctor and confidant, Reggie Ingram, who said: "They shouldn't have put Eleanor's head on it". The evidence is further strengthened by the fact that, after the death of Eleanor's sister, Rose, among her possessions was a solid silver Spirit of Ecstasy that Sykes had given to Eleanor. And there's the 1911 photo that shows her with Montagu's Silver Ghost, which has been posed in such a way that both the lady and the mascot are deliberately in shot, as if trying to confer some link between them.

STANDING, KNEELING

Remarkably, given its intrinsic links with



The start of the Thousand Mile Trial at Hyde Park Corner on April 23rd, 1900 – an event won by Charles Rolls, with John Montagu third.



The Whisper mascot was commissioned by Lord Montagu and modelled for by his secretary and mistress, Eleanor Velasco Thornton.

the cars bearing his name, Henry Royce wasn't keen on the radiator decoration when it was unveiled in February 1911. He felt that it infringed the driver's vision, and to a certain extent he was right. Therefore, from 1934 to '39, and then 1946 to '56, a kneeling version was created, again by Sykes, to allow a better view on the new sleeker, sportier saloons of the era, after which a smaller standing variant was adopted instead.

Since the original, there have been eleven variations on the theme. The first mascots were silver-plated, but nickel or chrome alloy took over in 1914 in order to discourage thieves. Now though, your new Rolls-Royce can come with its Spirit of Ecstasy in stainless steel, 24-carat gold, illuminated frosted glass or matte black and studded with diamonds. Whatever would Charles Sykes have made of it all?

Eleanor herself wasn't around to see just how significant her statuette would become. She didn't even live to see it become a standard fitment, which happened in the early 1920s. Four years after she became the 'face' of the Best Car in the World, she was on the P&O's SS Persia near Greece, en route to India via Aden (in what is now Yemen), where Montagu was to take up a military command during the First World War. The ship was torpedoed by a German U-boat on December 30th, 1915. Montagu survived but Eleanor was one of the 343 (of 519 on board) who died. Her lover was saved by his newly-invented inflatable waistcoat, after which he and a handful of other passengers survived in a damaged lifeboat for three days. »



Eleanor alongside one of the Montagu family's Rolls-Royces in 1911, the same year the Spirit of Ecstasy (or Speed, as it was initially dubbed) was unveiled.



The Winged Victory of Samothrace – the incomplete Greek statue that inspired Claude Johnson, who initially wanted something similar for the front of his company's cars.



The Spirit of Ecstasy, created to discourage less appropriate mascots from degrading Rolls-Royces, and inspired by the earlier The Whisper.

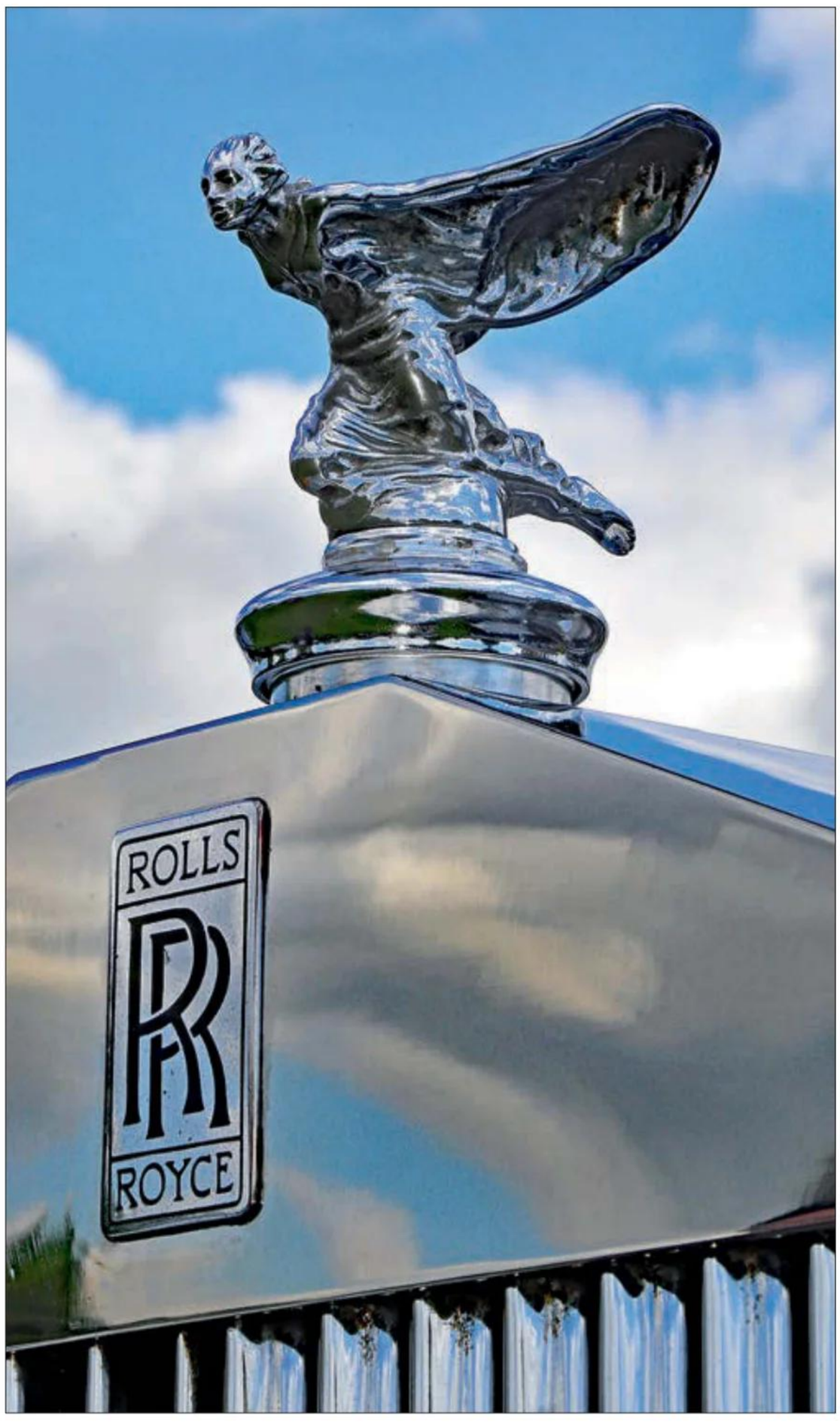
Shortly before the pair sailed, Eleanor sent a letter to Lady Cecil, who had expressed herself "glad that Miss Thornton was going to Aden" with her husband. "You have the satisfaction to know that he will be well looked after," wrote Eleanor. "I do not think for one moment that there will be any trouble in the Med, but supposing? The Lord will have an extra chance, for there will be my place in the boat for him, even if he has to be stunned to take it."

Eleanor's body was never found. She is remembered today by a plain memorial plaque in Beaulieu parish church, which cites her as serving Montagu "devotedly for 15 years". The church is within the grounds of the National Motor Museum, and nearby are the two surviving castings of The Whisper out of only four ever made. One is on display in the Montagus' ancestral Palace House, a place Eleanor would have known well, and the other tops a Rolls-Royce 40/50 New Phantom in the museum. Her real legacy, however, is the thousands of motor cars built since 1911 on which she is the crowning glory, distinguishing them from lesser machines – and she'll still be there on Rolls-Royces of the future. As she led then, she leads now... even if few people know who she truly was, or be able to whisper her name. ■

"Eleanor's real legacy is the thousands of motor cars built since 1911 on which she is the crowning glory"



The tablet put up by Lord Montagu in Beaulieu parish church that memorialises Eleanor Thornton "who served him devotedly for fifteen years".



A later Charles Sykes reinterpretation of the Spirit of Ecstasy saw the figure adopt a less obstructive, kneeling posture which lasted from 1934 to '56.



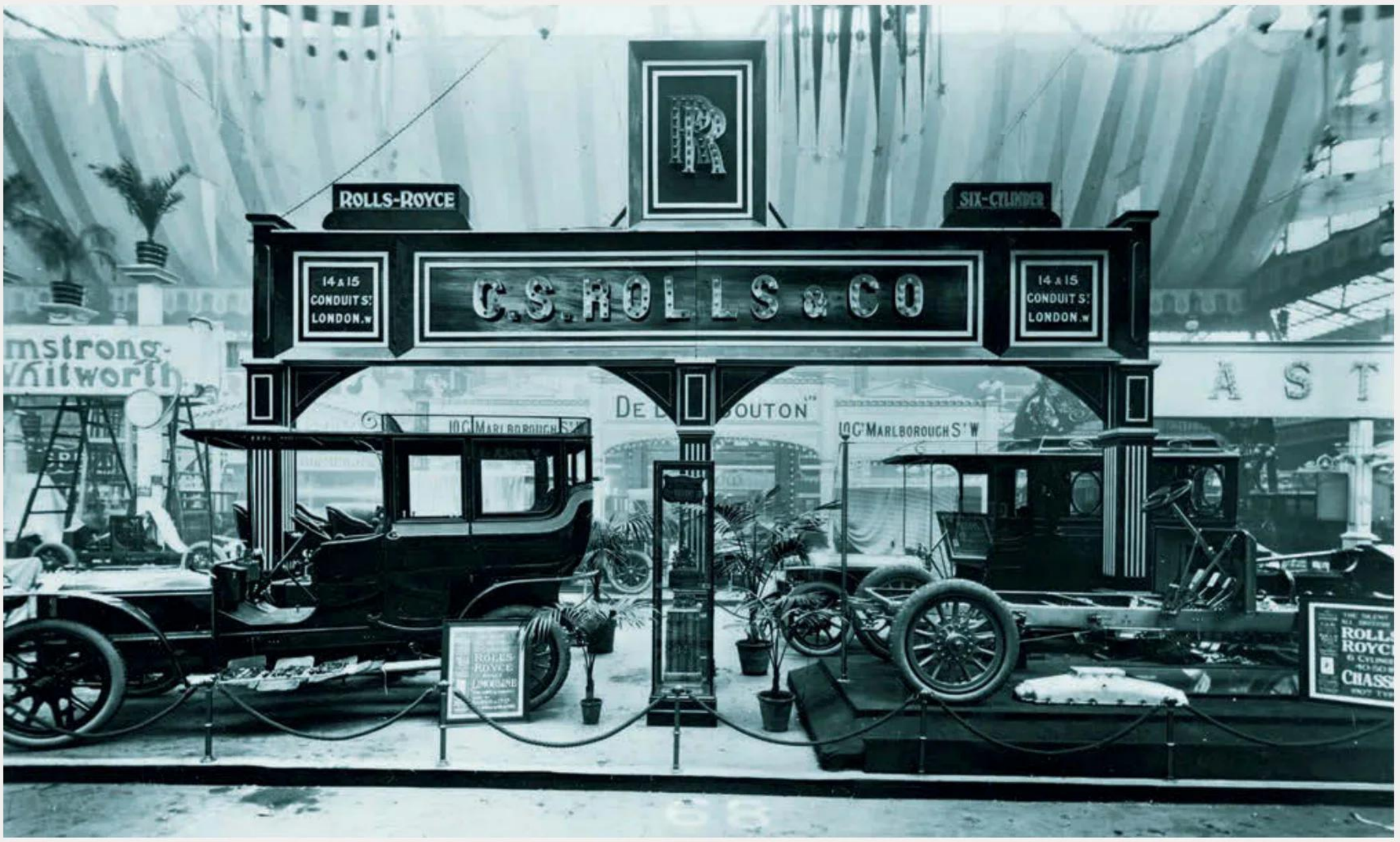
Charles Sykes in later life, with his daughter Jo; he would never discuss Eleanor, but Jo had her doubts that she was the Spirit of Ecstasy model.

THE SILVER GHOST STORY

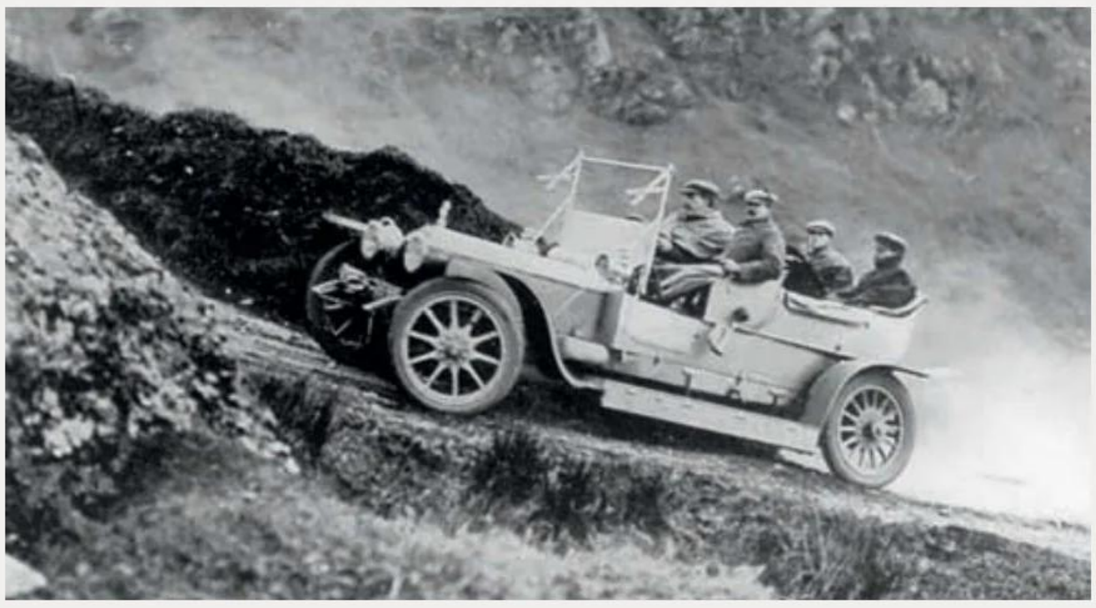
The 40/50hp was the model that established Rolls-Royce's reputation as the maker of the world's finest cars, largely thanks to the achievements of one very special example

WORDS: **JON BURGESS** PHOTOS: **KELSEY ARCHIVE & ROLLS-ROYCE MOTOR CARS**





The 40/50hp made its public debut on the CS Rolls & Co stand at the 1906 Olympia Motor Show.



The 40/50 went on to prove itself in reliability trials worldwide, reinforcing its reputation for durability.



The intrepid James Radley photographed on the Pordoi Pass during the 1913 Alpine Trial.

When *The Autocar* magazine hailed Rolls-Royce as the maker of "the best car in the world", it created an expression that would continue to be associated with the company for many decades afterwards. The particular model that prompted this gushing honour was, of course, the 40/50hp, which had debuted in 1906. What's particularly remarkable, however, is that the partnership between Charles Rolls and Henry Royce had been formalised just two years earlier, while Rolls-Royce Ltd itself wasn't officially founded until eight months prior to the 40/50's launch.

The 40/50hp was a genuinely remarkable machine truly worthy of the accolade bestowed upon it by *The Autocar*. Twenty years after Karl Benz had invented his Patent-Motorwagen, most automobiles were still underpowered, primitive, slow, unreliable and prone to shaking themselves to bits on the atrocious roads of the era. By comparison, the 40/50hp was incredibly well-built, powerful and robust in terms of its mechanicals and quality of engineering.

This was proven by AX 201, an early example retained by the company as a demonstrator. Finished in eye-catching aluminium paint and christened 'Silver Ghost', it would become famous thanks to its exploits during the Scottish »





ALPINE TRIALS

The early years of motoring saw numerous trials and challenges to prove the durability of the motor car, one of the most torturous being the Alpine Trials of 1910-on. Rolls-Royce built upon its reputation in 1913 with three modified Silver Ghosts making up an official works team, plus a privately-entered example.

The cars performed faultlessly over the 1820-mile course, a route that took in northern Italy and modern day Slovenia, as well as much of Austria. It was a severe test of engine, gearbox and brakes, with the competing cars tackling inclines in excess of 27 per cent. The exceptional performance of the Rolls-Royces drew universal praise, with observers amazed that a group of luxury tourers could climb such steep inclines at high speed.

Reliability Trials of 1907, as well as the 15,000 miles of tests it successfully completed straight afterwards. Such was the enviable reputation for quality and reliability it forged for itself and Rolls-Royce, all 40/50s soon became known as Silver Ghosts.

To understand the significance of the Silver Ghost, it's important to look at the automotive influences of the time. As the Hon Charles Stewart Rolls became more involved in the early motoring scene, he was increasingly frustrated by the fragility and unreliability of most of the cars on sale. From competition experience gained largely in France, he was more aware than most that the quality and reliability of cars would have to improve if motoring was to have any future. No wonder Rolls had so much technical advice to offer in his contemporary article, *The Caprices of the Petrol Motor*, which covered just about every malady a car was capable of, ending with the following wisdom: "Don't spill the petrol over your clothes and then strike a match to light your pipe".

How Rolls came to join forces with Henry Royce has already been dealt with, beginning with their inaugural meeting at the Midland

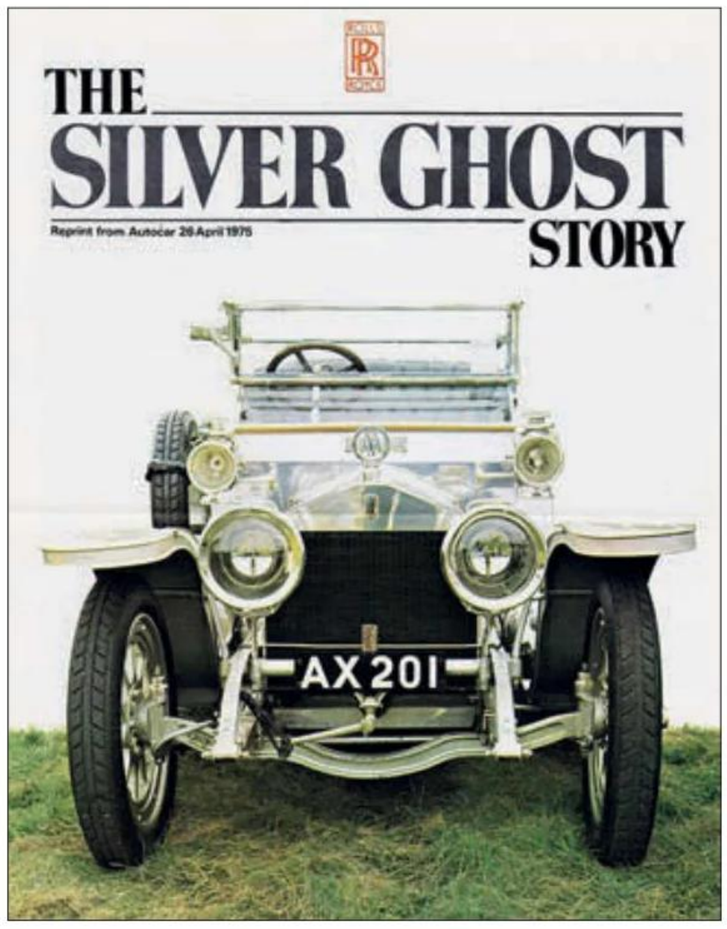


FATE OF THE SILVER GHOST

AX 201, often referred to as today's most valuable car, was sold to a customer in 1908 and remained in private hands until Rolls-Royce bought it back in 1948. It was then owned by Bentley Motors from the end of the 1990s, as part of the purchase of Bentley and the Crewe works by Volkswagen. AX 201 is now once again in private hands, having been sold by Bentley for an undisclosed sum in January 2020.







***Autocar* magazine published this tribute to the Silver Ghost in April 1975.**

Hotel, Manchester, in 1904. A range of models was famously displayed at the Paris Salon in the December, of which the four-cylinder 20hp proved the most successful, providing the two men with the confidence to officially register a new company in March 1906: Rolls-Royce Ltd. Then, just eight months later, came the firm's new flagship model, unveiled at the Olympia Motor Show as the 40/50hp.

WORLD BEATER

Setting new standards of attention to detail, the 7036cc square-engined six-cylinder 40/50 was a revelation. It attracted those seeking "ordre, luxe, calme, volupté et beauté", as technical writer Laurence Pomeroy Jnr put it, finding "these qualities combined... in a degree not rivalled by any other make or model". CS Rolls wasted no time in extolling the virtues of the 40/50 to high-end customers, such as American millionaire Paris E Singer (who bought one of the first cars off the line), the Guinness family, press baron Lord Northcliffe, the Marquis of Bute and the Duke of Northumberland, to name but a few.

By now, with Royce concentrating entirely on the engineering side, Rolls was supported in his marketing efforts by the company's managing director, Claude Johnson, whose promotion of the 40/50 can be looked back upon as a masterpiece of early motoring PR. With production under way by early 1907, Johnson selected the 12th chassis (number 60551) on the short 135-inch wheelbase as his publicity vehicle and ordered a semi-Roi des Belges open body from Barker & Co. It was specified that the coachwork should be painted silver and that the upholstery would be in green leather. Lamps and other external fittings were to be silver plated. Johnson called it the Silver Ghost thanks to its appearance and what he called its "extraordinary stealthiness".

Trial runs in the car were arranged for the press, with *The Autocar* of »

"The Rolls-Royce continued to run with the regularity of a train, and so the distance was increased to 15,000 miles"

April 20th, 1907 reporting: "The running of this car at slow speeds is the smoothest thing we have ever experienced, while for silence the motor beneath the bonnet might be a silent sewing machine."

The Silver Ghost was driven to Bexhill on May 3rd, then north to Glasgow, all under RAC observation. It then went on to cover the tough route proposed for the 1907 Scottish Reliability Trial before returning to London. In just 12 days, the new Rolls-Royce completed 2000 miles under official observation, recording a best fuel consumption of 23mpg for one section. Apart from punctures, mechanical adjustments carried out during the 12 days amounted to only one hour and 28 minutes.

Friday, June 21st saw the Silver Ghost, accompanied by 40/50s driven by Charles Rolls and Harry Swindley of *The Autocar* carrying press representatives, leaving London for Glasgow and the Scottish Reliability Trial. Glasgow was reached by 6pm on the Sunday, with no mechanical troubles (just the inevitable punctures) experienced en route. The 747-mile Trial was covered over five days, with the competing cars experiencing poorly surfaced mountain roads and some steep climbs, such as the one-in-seven Rest and Be Thankful on the first day's Glasgow to Perth run. It was on the second day – Perth to Aberdeen – that the Silver Ghost suffered its only involuntary stop since leaving London 629 miles earlier, occurring near the long Calmwell Hill where the road climbs to 2200 feet. The fault was traced to the petrol tap shaking itself shut, something that could hardly be classed as mechanical failure. Aside from that single incident, the Rolls-Royce made non-stop runs each day and gained the gold medal in its class for hillclimbing speed, reliability and fuel consumption.



40/50HP GOES TO WAR

In 1914, Rolls-Royce's legendary 40/50hp found itself facing its biggest challenge to date. August that year saw Britain becoming embroiled in the First World War, which meant the country was in urgent need of military machinery. The outcome was the Rolls-Royce Armoured Car, a fighting version of the Silver Ghost that easily equaled its civilian counterpart by being the best of its type on the planet. It proved so capable that examples even went on to serve in the Second World War.

Along the way, these Silver Ghosts with attitude initially served in France, Germany's African colonies, Gallipoli, Russia and India. They then excelled themselves in the Middle East, where they enhanced their reputation still further alongside Major Thomas Edward Lawrence – better known as Lawrence of Arabia – during the First World War's Arab Revolt against the Turks. Lawrence later said: "A Rolls in the desert was above rubies... great was Rolls and great was Royce! They were worth hundreds of men to us in those deserts."

FURTHER CHALLENGE

Johnson was determined to extract even more publicity from the experience, however, and on Monday, July 1st he set off from Glasgow to London in an effort to break the world record for a 'non-stop' run, which stood at 7089 miles. ('Non-stop' in that context meant without an involuntary stop on the road, apart from punctures, so routine maintenance and even repairs and replacements were allowed at the end of a day's run.) All such attention would be logged by RAC observers. The Glasgow to London distance was 512 miles and this route was reversed for the return journey between the two cities.

On arrival in London on Tuesday, July 2nd, Johnson handed the car over to Charles Rolls, although the driving would be shared later on by Eric Platford and mechanic Reginald Macready. Running day and night, the miles soon mounted, and just a week later a total of 4558 had been covered.

The original plan had been to complete 10,000 miles under RAC observation, but the Rolls-Royce continued to run with the regularity of a train, and so the distance was



increased to 15,000 miles. That figure was reached on the night of Thursday, August 8th after the Glasgow to London route had been covered 27 times, with 14,371 miles driven without an involuntary stop. Only the petrol tap incident had marred the 15,000-mile total. Servicing, repairs and replacements (excluding tyres) over the distance took just over 40 hours, including around eight and a half hours to grind in the valves after 7500 miles.

After completion of the record-breaking mileage, AX 201 was driven direct to the RAC garage in London. Rolls-Royce had announced at the outset that the Silver Ghost would be stripped by the club's engineers and the cost of putting her back into as-new condition ascertained. After a thorough technical examination and dismantling, there was no wear measurable by micrometer in the engine, gearbox, rear axle or brakes. To bring the car back to 'new' condition, two front wheel pivot pins, one steering rod tie pin, the ball tip of the steering lever, magneto driving joint, fan belt and petrol strainer were replaced. The steering ball joint's sleeve was refitted and the valves were reground. The RAC report stated: "Had the car been in the hands of a private owner, no replacements would have been considered necessary." The cost of all replacements and servicing during the 15,000 miles, plus the aforementioned replacement parts, came to £28 and five shillings.



AX 201 has been the subject of many official Rolls-Royce publications, including this celebratory brochure.

Thanks to such an outstanding feat by AX 201, news of the 40/50's durability and reliability spread worldwide, justifying *The Autocar's* claim that this was indeed the finest motor car in the world. Britain finally had an automobile of the highest quality in production, from a manufacturer that would go on to be revered for its engineering excellence. ■

1975

HANWELLS OF LONDON

2024



2017/66 Bentley Continental . 4.0 GT V8 S in special order Hallmark Silver with seven spoke diamond cut alloys. Only 39,000 miles with full Main Agent history. Beluga interior with Linen stitching and embossed Flying B's, park camera, NAIM sound system plus many more features. Immaculate condition **£56,950**



2015/15 Bentley Flying Spur Mulliner W12 Finished in Onyx with electric sunroof and 21 inch alloys. Linen hide interior with secondary hide in Beluga and Piano Black veneers, with Comfort Specification, rear parking camera and Convenience Specification. Only 49,000 miles with Full History. Immaculate **£45,750**



2010/10 Bentley Continental GTC Series 51 This beautiful example is in White Pearl with Black mohair hood, 20 inch alloys and adaptive cruise. The interior is in Linen and Beluga, with contrast stitching, Piano Black veneers and rear park camera. Only 61,000 miles with FSH. Immaculate, must be seen.....**£35,950**



2009/09 2010 Model Bentley Continental GT Mulliner in Granite with 20 inch Mulliner alloys, with chromed lower front grille. Beluga interior stitched in Linen with Linen embossed Flying B's, Burr Walnut veneers, rear park camera and 3 spoke steering wheel. Only 49,000 miles with FSH. Immaculate **£29,975**



2005/05 Bentley Arnage T Mulliner. Finished in Beluga with 19 inch alloys and wing vents designed by Mulliner, with full Mulliner interior in Beluga, with contrast stitching and embossed Flying B's. Only 55,000 miles with history. Immaculate condition.....**£29,950**



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**



1997 P Bentley Continental T. Wide Bodied in Black Sapphire with 18 inch 5 spoke alloy wheels. Parchment interior with French Navy piping, Dark Blue carpets with Parchment piping and Burr Walnut veneers. Known to us for 6 years and maintained to the highest standard. 65,000 miles, immaculate throughout.....**£84,950**



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PHANTOM FAMILY
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Usurping the 40/50hp almost a century ago was the original Phantom, the model that marked the beginning of eight different generations of flagship perfection

WORDS: **CHRIS RANDALL** PHOTOGRAPHS: **KELSEY ARCHIVE**

With next year being the centenary of the Phantom, we can expect various celebrations from Rolls-Royce Motor Cars. The nameplate that first appeared in 1925 is still going strong, with the latest Phantom continuing to perform the role of Rolls-Royce flagship. But while the Phantoms of yesteryear were the favoured transport of royalty and the aristocracy, today's model is as likely to be seen in a rap video as it is parked outside the Ritz or depositing VIPs onto a glitzy red carpet somewhere.

The world has changed, and the Phantom has had to change with it. What remains intact, however, is the attention to detail that buyers of any Rolls-Royce flagship have traditionally demanded, with recent offerings retaining an impressive level of hand-finishing by craftspeople, despite so many of the components – not least the spaceframe structure – being produced elsewhere and imported. It's all a sign, of course, that Rolls-Royce is now part of a highly successful automotive giant.

The world of motoring is full of long-lived nameplates, but we can't think of any other still in production that was first launched almost a century ago and remains current. For any model line to continue for so long with relatively few breaks, it has to be something special... and each generation of Phantom has been exactly that. So, let's take a look at the story of these most aspirational, most expensive members of the Rolls-Royce family – a tale that begins way back in the mid-1920s. »



Chassis number 10UMC – one of around 3500 examples of the original Phantom – is an early car featuring four-door tourer coachwork by Hooper & Co.

PHANTOM

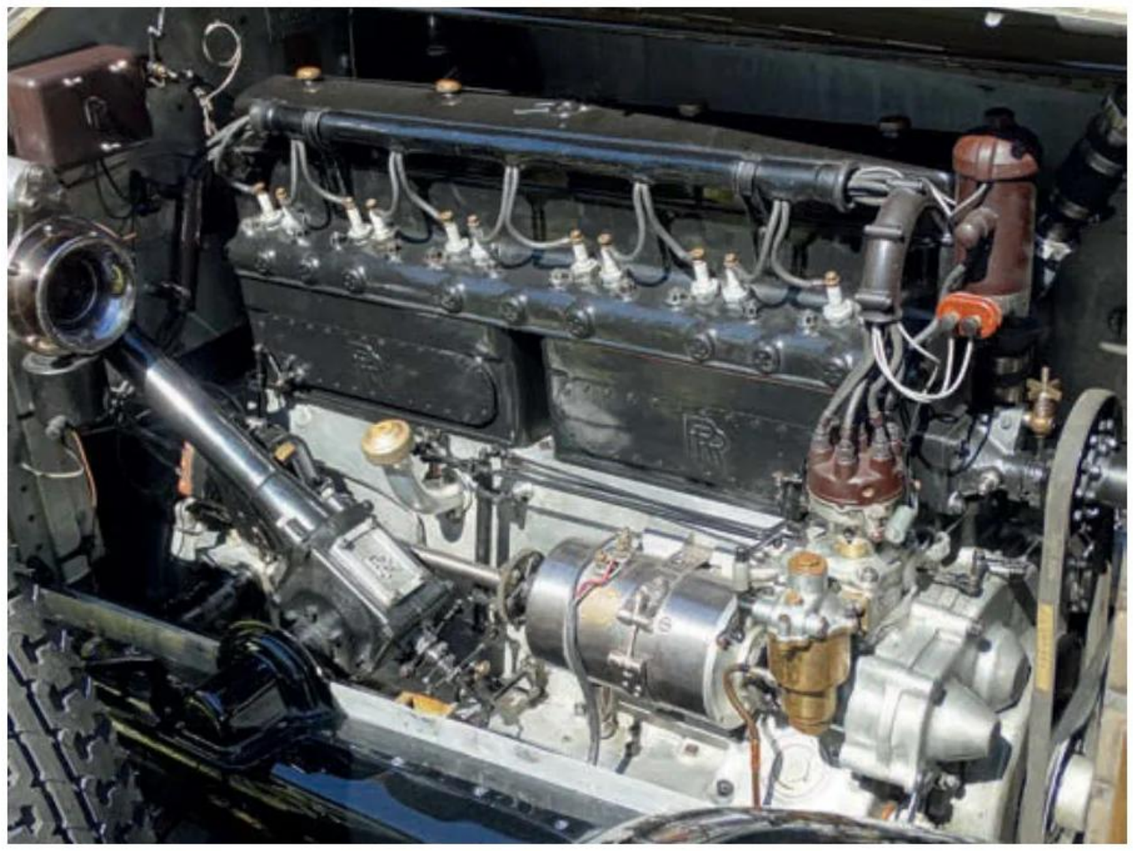
We already know that the 40/50 Silver Ghost wasn't the first Rolls-Royce, but it is the one that many associate with the earliest days of the marque. It did much to establish the company's reputation, but at the beginning of the 1920s it was becoming clear that something new was going to be needed. Development soon got under way and the result was the New Phantom (known as the Phantom I retrospectively) that arrived in 1925.

Henry Royce's generally conservative approach ensured that the newcomer shared much of its chassis with its predecessor, but there would be a completely new engine: a 7668cc seven-bearing straight-six featuring overhead valves rather than the earlier sidevalve layout, as well as having a longer stroke but narrower bore. The later version would get an aluminium rather than cast-iron cylinder head, but in original form it was good for around 95bhp; that increase was handy, as the car had grown substantially compared to the Silver Ghost, gaining weight along the way.

Superbly engineered, it led *The Motor* magazine to say: "The engine runs in silence at all speeds, not a tap or click being audible from the valve gear". But the engine wasn't the only improvement, with the Phantom now featuring brakes on the front wheels and a servo that was mechanically driven from the transmission, the latter available in three- or four-speed form. It was all enough to attract a list of discerning clients, including John Scott Montagu, the 2nd Baron Montagu of Beaulieu, who bought his at the 1925 London Motor Show; it would later be used as a mobile canteen during the Second World War.

The Phantom was built at both the Derby works and the Springfield factory in Massachusetts, and while numbers differ slightly depending on source, they would seem to amount to around 2267 and 1244 respectively. Although UK production ended a little earlier, the Phantom would continue to be built in the US until 1931. There were detailed differences between the two, but all offered the depth of engineering that buyers expected. As was customary for the time, a client's choice of bodywork meant engaging their favourite coachbuilder, and in the UK it would read like a who's who of the very finest, with names such as Mulliner, Hooper, Thrupp & Maberly and Windovers offering suitably upmarket Phantom coachwork options.

Barker, too, would body a number of the cars, which was appropriate given that Charles Rolls had once declared that "all his cars would be fitted with Barker coachwork". Not the case, of course, but they were a personal favourite of his. Famous European













coachbuilders would also apply their talents to the new model, amongst them Zagato, while the versions built in America often carried bodywork built by Brewster & Co and named after English towns… which meant you could choose from the likes of the Ascot, Henley, Newmarket and more.

All manner of popular body styles would appear, from limousine and tourer to landaulette and Sedanca de Ville, although one particular car stood out from the others. Having started life as a Hooper cabriolet, a Phantom found its way to the Belgian coachbuilding concern of Jonckheere, where in the 1930s it gained streamlined coupe bodywork that became known as the 'round door'. It was as far from the formality of most Phantoms as it was possible to get.

Having been an unqualified success, one that only added to the reputation for excellence, it was no surprise that Rolls-Royce was ready to continue a model line that would – after a hiatus of a few years – still be with us today.



PHANTOM II

Conservative in approach it may sometimes have been, but Rolls-Royce knew how to build on a successful car – and that's exactly what it set out to do with the second Phantom. The timing of the launch, just before the infamous Wall Street crash of 1929, might have seemed an inauspicious beginning, but while it did mean that fewer would be built – a little less than 1700 – it was still very much the right model at the right time. The chassis and suspension had both come in for a major redesign, the latter now featuring semi-elliptic leaf springs all round, and there was a central lubrication system of a type already employed on the US-built first Phantom.

Being lower than before, the new chassis allowed for similarly lower bodywork. While none could exactly be called rakish, most of those constructed by the usual roster of coachbuilders tended to look a little less formal; and as this would be the car to take the company into the rather more stylish 1930s, it certainly moved things in an appropriate direction. It's also worth noting that all of the chassis – available in 144in and 150in wheelbases – would be made at Derby, the Springfield plant having closed in 1931 after ending production of the first model.

It wasn't just the chassis that had received attention, though. Although it was the same 7668cc engine as before, the new crossflow cylinder head contributed to a 30 per cent increase in power, taking output to around 120bhp. Also new was attaching the gearbox directly to the back of the engine, taking drive to the rear axle via an open shaft rather than the torque tube employed previously. In a further development, the early 1930s saw synchromesh for third and fourth gear, with the same for second gear a few years later. Small changes perhaps, but ones that vastly improved ease of use and ensured that the Phantom wasn't in danger of being left behind by an increasing number of pretenders to the luxury car crown.

There's one further version that needs to be mentioned before we move on, though, and that's the Continental. It was the last model overseen by Henry Royce before his death, and the changes were aimed at improving the Phantom's high-speed touring credentials. It had started out as a one-off for Royce's personal use, designed by Ivan Evernden and featuring a four-seat body by Barker.

Designated '26EX', the key Continental differences were a shorter wheelbase, firmer suspension, a lower steering column and revised rear axle ratio... and the enthusiastic reception







The Phantom II Continental – such as this one with Barker & Co coachwork – was introduced in 1930 and was designed for long-distance cruising, making use of a shorter wheelbase.





when it was displayed in Europe convinced the company to offer it as a regular model. A total of 281 would be built, a number of them bodied by the likes of Barker, Freestone & Webb and Gurney Nutting. The Continental proved a popular addition to the range, and the enticing specification and ability to cover many miles at speed and in comfort attracted a number of high-profile owners, with Woolf Barnato and Noel Coward said to be amongst them.

It would have been hard to find a finer way to travel than aboard a Phantom II, especially if you could have afforded a Continental; but as the middle of the decade approached, Rolls-Royce had already begun to develop a third generation, which was to prove a major advance over what had gone before.

PHANTOM III

Henry Royce passed away in 1933, which meant he never got to see development of the next Phantom model... but he would almost certainly have approved. Indeed, he was very much aware of the need to ensure that ground wasn't lost to rivals, especially from America where luxury vehicles were being developed apace. Ten experimental cars were built, which were codenamed Spectre (inspiring the name for the electric Rolls-Royce that appeared some 90 years later), and their extensive testing was a vital part of ensuring that the Phantom would uphold the marque's hard-won reputation for excellence.

That only a little more than 700 Phantom IIIs would be made before car production stopped ahead of the Second World War makes this one of the rarer generations, the onset of hostilities bringing what was a very promising car to a premature end. Launched at the 1935 Olympia Motor Show, it was a technological masterpiece, not least because it was the first Rolls-Royce to be powered by a V12 engine.

Given the company's experience with V12 aero engines, it's easy to see why adopting such a configuration for the road was such a natural progression. The 7.3-litre unit, with 60 degrees between cylinder banks, was impressively advanced for its time, from its 24 spark plugs to a sophisticated lubrication system that was able to provide oil at different pressures to different parts of the engine.

Offering in the region of 165bhp, the V12 was notably more powerful than the inline 'six' that it replaced, and little could touch it for high-speed touring ability, even if it did come at the expense of fuel economy; think 10mpg or so. Later versions were uprated to around 180bhp with the addition of a revised cylinder head and solid rather than hydraulic tappets, making for genuine 100mph performance, and a small number of examples also benefited from an overdrive gearbox. Incidentally, it was possible in-period to have the solid tappets fitted to earlier cars, and while it's not entirely clear as to the benefits, it's thought that it may have improved reliability.

There were no question marks over the engine's power and speed, but the Phantom III's chassis had also been developed for much-improved handling and refinement. Not only was



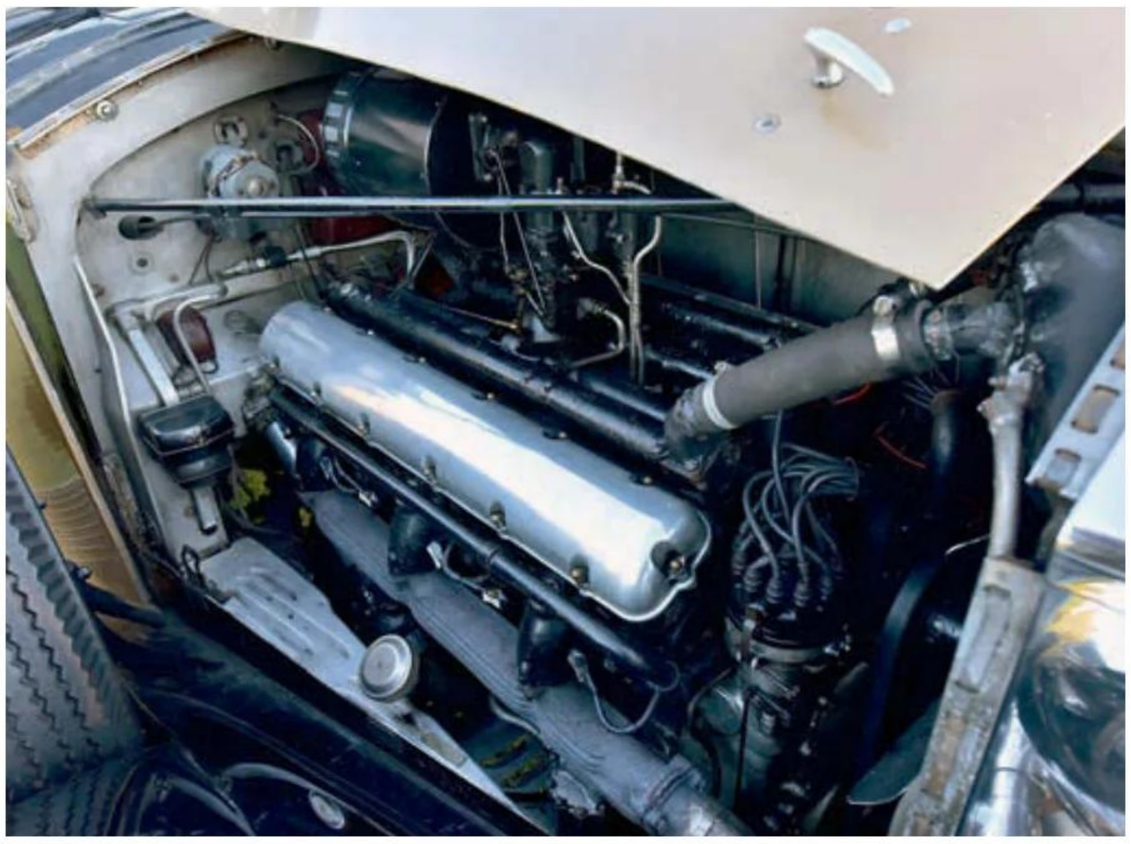
it lighter than before, it now boasted independent front suspension, while an anti-roll bar had been added at the rear. Built-in hydraulic jacks featured, too. Together, all of the myriad changes would greatly improve the experience for passengers, with the Phantom III being impressively smooth and quiet. Period adverts extolled these very virtues, and with the new chassis allowing for greater interior space and comfort, it was clear that the company saw the car as a notable step forward.

There was still a wide range of coachbuilt bodies to choose from, and there were some very elegant versions. They were helped by the fact that the V12 engine was shorter than the six-cylinder, allowing for a shorter bonnet that provided coachbuilders with greater scope when it came to overall proportions. The first example, which was delivered in August 1936, sported a saloon body by HJ Mulliner, and it wasn't until after war had begun that the very last Phantom III would be sold.



Despite the proliferation of body styles, it was clear that most were very much rooted in tradition... but not all of them. It's well-worth mentioning the rather special example bodied by HJ Mulliner for the chairman of de Havilland Aircraft Ltd, Alan Butler. Chassis 3AX79 received unique streamlined coachwork, it's most notable feature being the reverse-rake windscreen; and there were some special interior touches, including a Smiths altimeter. Delivered to Butler in February 1937, it would be used during the Second World War by a number of important people, Winston Churchill among them, although its use by Field Marshall Montgomery would come to see it known as 'Monty's car'.

Examples such as that one were exceptions, though, and the company was fully aware that such a traditional approach would need to change for the model that followed when production resumed after the war.









Chassis number 3CM119 is a Phantom III Sedanca fitted with coachwork by HJ Mulliner in 1938 *(pics: Vintage & Prestige)*



This well-known Phantom IV (chassis number 4AF20) features Sedanca de Ville coachwork by Hooper and was built for the Aga Khan III, the 48th Imam of the Nizari Ismaili community.





to be delivered to the Royal household, as the late Queen Elizabeth II also had a Hooper-bodied Landaulette; that car was returned to Rolls-Royce in 2002 and would fetch £800,000 when it was sold at auction in 2018. The car featured automatic transmission, electric windows and a special heating and ventilation system. Princess Margaret had one, too – chassis number 4BP7 with HJ Mulliner coachwork, delivered to Clarence House in July 1954.

It had certainly cemented the link between Rolls-Royce and the Royal family, but the Phantom IV would have a number of other high-profile owners. They included the Shah of Iran, Emir of Kuwait and the Aga Khan, while General Franco of Spain ordered three, all of them armoured.

This exclusivity is certainly a fascinating part of the model's history, as is the fact that 16 of the cars are thought to still exist. But by 1956 its time was up and there would be a three-year wait for the next Phantom – one that was to usher in a whole new look for a line that had already been around for three decades.



This particular Phantom V (chassis number 5VD19) was completed in early 1965 and at some point was owned by Princess Alexandra and her husband, Sir Angus Ogilvy.

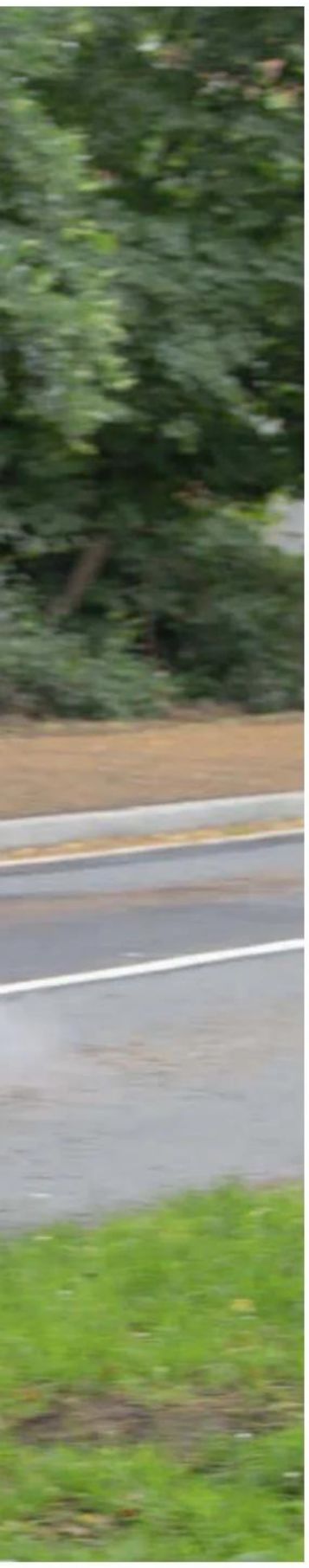
PHANTOM V

This was to be the model that broke with tradition, introducing buyers to a Phantom that was a little more in keeping with the modern(ish) age. Gone was the formal styling with distinctly separate wings and huge headlamps, to be replaced by a 'saloon' (and occasional landaulette) with a far more integrated look. In fact, its appearance would remain pretty much the same right up until the early 1990s – impressive longevity by any measure.

The Phantom V borrowed its chassis from the Silver Cloud II, while power came from a 6.2-litre V8 with aluminium block and heads, pushrod valve-gear and a pair of SU carburettors. Power was delivered to the rear wheels via GM's four-speed Hydramatic automatic transmission, braking was by huge drums all-round, and power-assisted steering made light work of manoeuvring this leviathan. At 20 feet long and weighing in at 2.7 tonnes, it was a suitably imposing machine. A reassuringly spacious and luxurious one, too, not to mention being as expensive as you'd expect.

As is often the case with such cars, the exact number produced can be difficult to pin down, but the general consensus is that around 832 were built, with around three quarters of those bodied by Park Ward and most of the remainder by James Young.

While the Phantom has often been chosen by the great and the good, it is perhaps a reflection of the wider appeal that as well as Royalty (the Queen and Queen Mother both had one), a new generation of celebrities would be drawn to the Phantom V. Amongst them were the likes of Elton John, Elvis Presley and Liberace. Oh yes, and John Lennon. His car would become the most famous of all, the black model being delivered to him on June 3rd, 1965 and featuring an extravagant specification befitting of his star status. In fact, he would later spend a couple of thousand pounds on further upgrades that









included plenty of audio equipment. But it's what happened to it later that would see Lennon's Phantom V pass into music and motoring folklore, turned into a car that you either loved or loathed (and more than a few fell into the latter camp). It was despatched to Surrey-based coachbuilding firm J P Fallon, who commissioned Steve Weaver to give it a controversial paint job; usually described as psychedelic, the precise inspiration isn't clear, but Romany art was certainly some of it. This famous oddball is currently owned by the Royal British Columbia Museum in Canada.

As for the model itself, the Phantom V was treated to an update for 1963 that saw it gain a more powerful engine and revised styling, which featured four headlamps... and that was pretty much how it remained until production drew to a close in 1968.








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PHANTOM VII

The story of how BMW came to acquire the fabled British marque has been told many times, so we'll not repeat it here. Suffice to say, though, there was plenty of anticipation – if not a little trepidation – from enthusiasts and motoring press alike when it came to the new German owner's first model. Getting it wrong would have been unthinkable.

To say the Phantom VII was different to what had gone before would have been a massive understatement; and while the monolithic appearance wasn't everyone's cup of Earl Grey, there was no questioning the depth of engineering, nor the levels of comfort and luxury. In terms of those last two, the latest Phantom was little short of impeccable, but it would also combine that with the sort of performance and driveability that a modern Rolls-Royce deserved.

Designed by Marek Djordjevic, the new model used an aluminium spaceframe that was constructed in Germany before being shipped to the impressive new Goodwood factory, where each car was lovingly assembled. The imposing grille (featuring a retractable mascot) and rear-hinged back doors certainly delivered a sense of occasion; and while there were plenty of BMW 7 Series bits hidden away beneath, there was no doubt that the company understood exactly what was required. The level of finish was breathtaking; and if you needed a demonstration of that, consider that each coachline took three hours to apply by hand using squirrel and ox hair brushes. Mass production this wasn't.

BMW's own saloon also donated the basis for the 6.75-litre V12 engine, a sophisticated unit that delivered its 453bhp and 531lb.ft of torque through a six-speed automatic gearbox. Performance was effortless, and despite the car weighing in at 2500kg it could hit 60mph in 5.7 seconds and go on to 149mph. Not that most owners would have indulged in such antics, but it was nice to know they could if they wanted. More likely was enjoying the impressive ride and handling courtesy of adaptive air suspension, and when it came to cars at this level there was nothing to touch it.

The Phantom VII was as special as you'd have expected inside, too, and buyers could choose pretty much anything they wanted in terms of trim and fittings. There were some nice touches, though, including the 'starlight' headliner that looked like the night sky (hundreds of tiny fibre-optic lights were fitted by hand), the 'power reserve' gauge in place of a rev counter, and a sat-nav screen that was hidden behind a rotating panel. BMW was fully aware that owners didn't want clutter and complication, ensuring that the standard interior was suitably restrained.
Again, most of the parts you couldn't see – such as the iDrive infotainment system – were borrowed from contemporary BMWs, albeit suitably well-integrated. If you had to ask, the cost of entry to this most exclusive of clubs started at £250,000, but it comes as no surprise that most buyers spent an awful lot more than that.

Unlike the 'old days', there was to be no standing still with the Phantom. The regular model would be joined by the Drophead Coupe and a Coupe in



Launched at the start of 2003, the Phantom VII marked the start of a new era for the marque, with BMW now in full control of the newly named Rolls-Royce Motor Cars.

2007 and 2008 respectively, while by 2012 it was time for an update. Making its debut at that year's Geneva Motor Show, the revised Phantom didn't depart far from the original, the most obvious external difference being the adoption of rectangular LED headlights in place of the previous round items. Other changes were of the detailed variety and would have required an eagle-eye to spot, but they acted as a suitable refresh for a design that was now nine years old. And while the engine was essentially unchanged, although now a touch cleaner in terms of emissions, it was linked to an eight-speed automatic transmission. Changes inside were just as subtle and mainly amounted to some simplification of the dashboard layout and updates to the infotainment system.

Keen to maximise the car's undoubted appeal, a large number of special editions would appear over the years, including the Centenary Edition of 2004, the Phantom Black, and the Phantom Silver that marked the 100th anniversary of the Silver Ghost. Each was strictly limited in number and suitably exclusive. In all, production of the Phantom VII would amount to some 10,300 examples, far eclipsing that of any previous model to wear the badge.









PHANTOM VIII

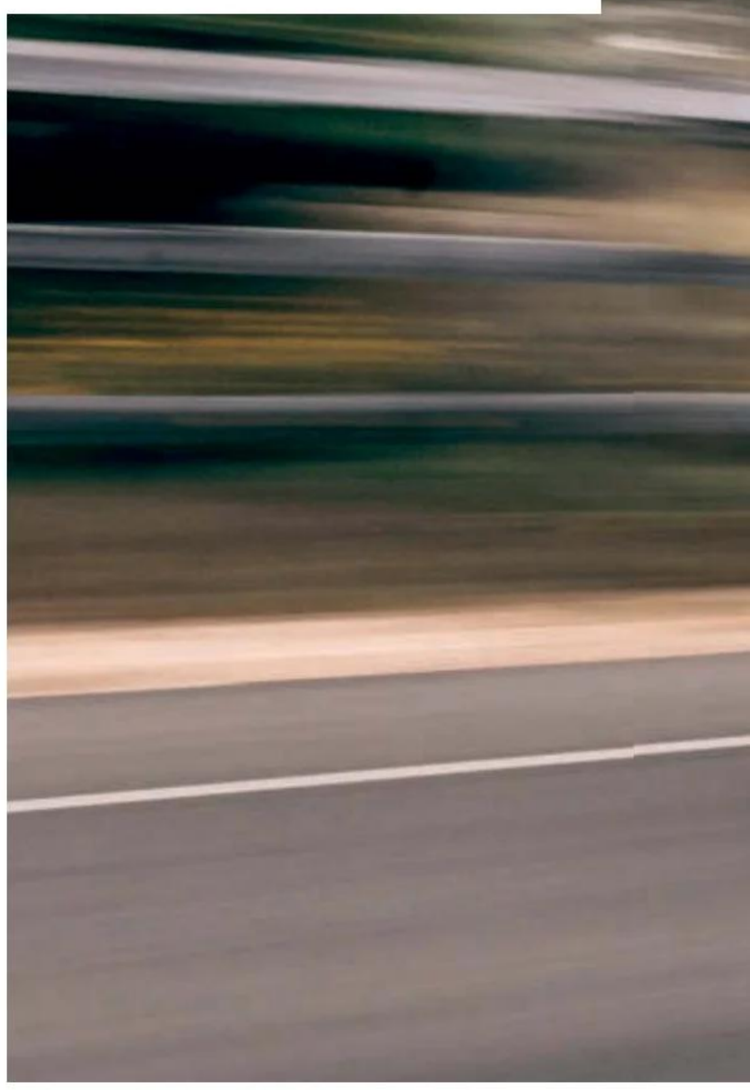
We've reached the point where we bring the story bang up-to-date, with this latest model likely to see the famous Phantom nameplate through to the end of Rolls-Royce's internal combustion era. How enthusiasts view that is a debate for another time; but if this is to be the last petrol-fuelled Phantom, it's a marvellous way to sign off.

While it might have looked broadly similar to the seventh-generation car, the newcomer of 2017 represented a notable advance over what had gone before, not least in being the first car to be built on the new 'Architecture of Luxury' platform that would also underpin the likes of the Cullinan. The body was now 30 per cent stiffer, and overall refinement was further improved; the new model boasted acoustic side glass, 130kg of sound-deadening material, and even foam-filled tyres to limit road noise. It's no wonder that it weighed in at a hefty 2560kg in regular wheelbase form (or 2610kg for the Extended Wheelbase), despite the new model being 80mm shorter overall.

The exterior wasn't quite as similar as it looked, though, and closer







inspection would have revealed a sleeker appearance along with a grille that was flush-fitting and more raked back than before. LED headlights with a laser high beam were a further nod to technology, and it was easy to see how the Phantom had appeared to reach its zenith with this new incarnation.

Plenty was new on the mechanical front, too, and while power still came from a 6.75-litre V12, it was now twin-turbocharged for increased outputs of 563bhp and 664lb.ft of torque – enough to shove the mighty limousine to 62mph in 5.5 seconds and on to an artificially limited top speed of 155mph. Also, the new ZF eight-speed automatic transmission was linked to the satellite navigation system, allowing it to predict gearshifts to suit road conditions. Rear-wheel steering also featured, while the heavily-revised air suspension benefited from the 'Flagbearer' system that scanned the road ahead and made continuous adjustments in the name of even better ride and handling. There were also active anti-roll bars that disengaged when not being called into action.

The Phantom VIII was still the epitome of luxury inside but new technology had been incorporated, such as a head-up display and the 'Gallery' – a glass-covered panel across the fascia that could feature whatever artwork or design the owner wanted. How you viewed such things was a matter of personal taste, but it was a demonstration of just how far the Phantom had come from the traditional 'wood and leather' luxury of earlier days. And cabin refinement was so impressive that some reviewers thought it almost unnaturally quiet (something that Rolls-Royce's own engineers had also apparently expressed concern about).

Improved technology would be a feature of the subsequent Series II version, in particular the Rolls-Royce Connected system that allowed the owner to interact with the car via the 'Whispers' app. Exterior changes were fairly negligible in truth, but an illuminated grille was one difference, and there were new paint finishes and wheel designs – including a retro-looking disc design – to keep things fresh. Other changes included a slightly thicker steering wheel rim for improved tactility, the ability to close all four doors at the touch of a button (not just the rears as before), and the option to do away with leather in the rear and replace it with a textile that included bamboo fibres instead.

It was a fitting update for the flagship model, and while things are unlikely to stand still for the remainder of the decade, the Phantom still deserves the title of "the best car in the world". More than a century after that phrase first appeared in print linked to Rolls-Royce, it's reassuring to know that it remains relevant.



Debuting in 2017, the Phantom VIII continues to perform the role of Rolls-Royce flagship, despite the arrival of the best-selling SUV-style Cullinan.

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Rolls-Royce's plan to offer a high-quality model below the Silver Ghost began more than a century ago with the 20hp, marking the start of a long line of sub-Phantom success stories

WORDS: **PAUL GUINNESS & PAUL WAGER** PHOTOGRAPHS: **KELSEY ARCHIVE**

While Rolls-Royce achieved early success and generated headlines worldwide when its 40/50hp model was hailed as "the best car in the world", a phrase that would continue to be applied through successive generations of Phantom flagships, the company knew that real commercial success lay in expanding its line-up. The new marque's engineering was to the highest standards, and would remain so through the decades to come; but not every well-heeled buyer wanted a car of such massive proportions, hence the need to offer a 'downsized' alternative.

No Rolls-Royce is small, of course; but when the 20hp made its debut more than a century ago, it was notably less massive than the Silver Ghost. It proved an immediate success, justifying not only its existence but also the subsequent development of its many and varied successors. The idea of an entry-level Rolls-Royce had become a reality, and would remain with us through to the 21st century.

So, while the company has traditionally done well with its flagship designs, epitomised via eight different generations of Phantom as well as extended-wheelbase versions of its regular models, Rolls-Royce has also relied on smaller offerings to make up the bulk of its sales over the last century or more.

That's why, over the next 15 pages, we're paying tribute to those entry-level models – and revealing the reasons behind their success. Without these cars, Rolls-Royce wouldn't have become the super-luxury success story that we all so admire.



THE 'TWENTY'

The 1922 launch of the 20hp (or 'Twenty') marked an important moment in Rolls-Royce history, the result of a crucial decision to expand beyond producing a single-model chassis. The 40/50 'Silver Ghost' was renowned for its impeccable standards of engineering, but also for its vast size and high pricing. The company realised there was a gap in the market for a smaller, more affordable model capable of achieving increased annual sales.

The 20hp was particularly suited to the needs of the owner-driver, representing a whole new market for the company. It was noticeably more compact than a Silver Ghost in every respect, with an engine that was half the size and a chassis that was around two feet shorter. It was a model that became particularly popular with the professional classes, giving them a reliable and distinguished car without the cost or ostentation of a Silver Ghost or the subsequent Phantom.

Henry Royce was keen for the 20hp to be seen as a modern, high quality offering. The 3127cc six-cylinder engine was Rolls-Royce's first to feature an overhead-valve layout and was highly praised by the motoring press. Early cars featured a three-speed transmission with a central gearchange, but in 1925 this was changed to a four-speed 'box with a right-hand change. The 20hp was also upgraded to all-wheel braking.

Upon the 20hp's debut in 1922, *The Motor* magazine was impressed by the







newcomer: "It is only when one sees it alongside the 40-50hp model that one appreciates the difference in size. The new chassis has a wheelbase of 10ft 9ins, which is well above the average, and the body space is very large when compared with the overall length of the car, an arrangement made possible by the compactness of the new engine."

It was the 20hp's ability to accommodate generously proportioned bodywork that helped it to become a favourite among Britain's coachbuilders of the 1920s, with Mulliner, Thrupp & Maberly, Barker, Park Ward and Hooper being among the most prolific users. A wide choice of bodywork was therefore available to customers, although the car was particularly popular with limousine-style coachwork – a fact that caused some consternation at Rolls-Royce, with the 20hp being best suited to more lightweight body styles in terms of its power and driving style.

A total of 2940 chassis had been produced by the time the 20hp was finally replaced by the bigger-engined 20/25 in 1929. The 'Twenty' had been a success story, proving that Rolls-Royce could indeed expand its range – and its customer base – without diluting the company's enviable image and reputation.









20/25, 25/30 & WRAITH

The 20hp's successor, the 20/25, made its debut at the 1929 Olympia Motor Show and went on to be another major success, with a total of 3824 built. It offered various refinements over its predecessor, including the engine being increased in capacity via a larger bore. As James Taylor explains in *Coachwork on Rolls-Royce Twenty, 20/25, 25/30 & Wraith* (Herridge & Sons, 2021), this latest engine "had a swept volume of 3675cc – although Rolls-Royce usually quoted it as 3669cc."

The 20/25 offered a top speed well in excess of 70mph (depending on the style and weight of its coachwork) and the ability to cruise comfortably at 60mph. The same four-speed gearbox from later examples of the 20hp was carried over (still with a right-hand gearchange), while powerful all-wheel servo-assisted brakes ensured confident stopping even when the heaviest coachwork was fitted.

Among a range of improvements announced in 1932 was a Bijur 'one-shot' lubrication system, which meant easier chassis maintenance. Upgrades for the 20/25 began before then, however, with the wheelbase being extended by three inches (to 132 inches) in 1930 to better accommodate bigger coachwork. That same year saw the engine's compression ratio increasing to 5.25:1 from its original 4.75:1, while in 1932 it was changed again (to 5.75:1) to complement a new high-lift camshaft.

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

By then, the 20/25 was heading towards the end of its career, and would be replaced by the 25/30 in late 1936, with this latest iteration bringing a 4257cc engine upgrade (again via a larger bore), ensuring a top speed in excess of 80mph. The chassis remained much as before but now featured hydraulic dampers all round. The 25/30 was to be short-lived, but did prove successful – with more than 1200 produced during its two years on sale.

The subsequent Wraith of 1938 brought further refinements, including independent front suspension with self-adjusting dampers. Just as important was its extra four inches in chassis length, enabling more upmarket coachwork choices to be made. The chassis also featured a built-in self-jacking system. The 4257cc six-cylinder engine, meanwhile, now boasted a crossflow cylinder head for the first time, bringing extra power and performance.

The Wraith was also short-lived, however, with Rolls-Royce officially ceasing production in 1939 to focus on the war effort. Just 492 examples of the Wraith were ever built, but it remains an important part of the pre-war Rolls-Royce success story.

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ROLLS ROYCE

BENTLEY



SILVER WRAITH & SILVER DAWN

The Silver Wraith was the first post-war model announcement by Rolls-Royce, unveiled to the press in April 1946, just a month before the arrival of the smaller Bentley MkVI 'Standard Steel' saloon. Both models used a brand new chassis design, though the Silver Wraith's was seven inches longer (at 127in) than the MkVI's. This latest Rolls-Royce proved to be a big hit, enjoying a 12-year career and sales of 1883 cars via mostly British coachbuilders.

Around 20 different bodywork styles were available for the Silver Wraith, the vast majority of them being built by five famous companies. HJ Mulliner headed the list with a total of 518 cars, while in second place was Park Ward (480), followed by Hooper & Co (469). James Young and Freestone & Webb built 217 and 120 Silver Wraiths respectively.

The Wraith's 4257cc engine continued in the Silver Wraith until 1951, when it was increased to 4566cc capacity. For the model's final three years on sale, however, it benefited from the 4887cc unit that arrived via the Silver Cloud of







1955, by which time the Silver Wraith was seen as distinctly old-fashioned compared with its latest sibling.

The Silver Wraith's role as the most affordable Rolls-Royce disappeared as early as 1949 when the marque announced the new Silver Dawn for the all-important US market. Derived from the MkVI, this latest model represented the first time that a Rolls-Royce had been created from a Bentley rather than the other way round. But its arrival was significant for Crewe, as North American buyers tended to favour Rolls-Royce over Bentley at that time, giving the Silver Dawn an obvious advantage in terms of consumer awareness.

The Silver Dawn was finally made available to British buyers from late 1953, by which time the Bentley equivalent was the R-Type – an update of the MkVI, featuring an extended boot-line for extra luggage space. The Bentley restyle proved successful, with around 2300 R-Types sold during its three-year run, adding to the MkVI's worldwide sales of around 5200 units.

Grille, badges and minor trim aside, the R-Type was virtually identical to the British-spec Silver Dawn but was slightly cheaper at £4400, compared with £4750 for the Rolls-Royce. By the time the Silver Dawn was being replaced by the Silver Cloud in 1955, fewer than 800 examples of the first 'Standard Steel' Rolls-Royce had rolled out of Crewe, making it notably less successful than its entry-level predecessors. Nevertheless, the Silver Dawn had provided the marque with some useful extra sales, as well as reintroducing the concept of a smaller, more affordable Rolls-Royce to buyers of the 1950s.



SILVER CLOUD

The idea of an entry-level Rolls-Royce stepped up a gear in 1955, with the stylish new 'Standard Steel' Silver Cloud (and its Bentley S-series cousin) being significantly larger than the Silver Dawn that had gone before. Penned by in-house chief stylist John Blatchley, the newcomer managed to combine contemporary styling trends (such as a curved, raked windscreen) with the kind of overall look that wouldn't alienate traditionalists, including thick C-pillars as an obvious nod to earlier designs.

With its separate chassis, live rear axle, conventional suspension and imposing size, the Silver Cloud marked a continuation of Rolls-Royce's lineage while also seeing a break with tradition. The channel-frame chassis of previous models was replaced with one made from welded box sections that improved rigidity by 50 per cent, while the rear suspension now included a Z-link control rod to improve axle location and roadholding. The Silver Cloud's fully-hydraulic brakes were a first for Rolls-Royce, as was standard-fit automatic transmission.

The familiar six-cylinder inlet-over-exhaust engine was used in 4887cc guise, with the Silver Cloud capable of topping 100mph. Four years after the car's introduction, however, Rolls-Royce announced its all-new V8 engine, the L-series unit that would go on to enjoy an astonishing six-decade career. The new 6320cc engine – fitted to what was now known as the Silver Cloud II – was deemed essential if Rolls-Royce was to make further inroads into the American market, where V8s ruled the automotive roost.

It was a welcome move elsewhere too, with the British motoring press praising the latest engine's extra power and smoothness. At an estimated 190-200bhp, the new V8 offered around 25 per cent more performance and noticeably better acceleration than the outgoing six-cylinder; and with a raised final drive ratio, the Cloud II was also a quieter and more refined cruising car.

Three years after the 1959 arrival of the second-generation Silver Cloud







came the logically monikered Silver Cloud III, bringing with it the biggest cosmetic change since the debut of the original, plus a host of under-the-skin updates. Most noticeable upgrade was the adoption of quad headlamps, which at a stroke gave both the Rolls-Royce 'Standard Steel' saloon a more modern appearance as well as greatly improving its illumination. The radiator grille was also lowered in height by 1.5in, with the bonnet being sloped to suit, a move that increased forward visibility as well as giving the car even more of a svelte look.

In standard-wheelbase guise (long-wheelbase versions were also available), the Silver Cloud III remained the most affordable Rolls-Royce of its time. But major change was coming, with the mid-1960s seeing the complete reinvention of what an entry-level car from Crewe should really be like.









to the aforementioned suspension and braking accumulators.

Early models (up to 1970) employed the V8 in its familiar 6230cc guise, featuring twin SU HIF7 carburettors, but Rolls-Royce wasn't shy when it came to giving its latest model regular updates. The first of these came in 1968 when the four-speed GM Hydramatic-derived automatic gearbox was replaced on home-market cars by the GM400 three-speed torque converter-equipped unit. The biggest change to the Silver Shadow's impressive technical specification, however, took place in 1970 when the swept volume of the car's V8 powerplant was enlarged to 6750cc.

Further big changes came in 1977, with that year's heavily-revised models being designated the Silver Shadow II and Bentley T2, while the Rolls-Royce's long-wheelbase stablemate (a member of the family from the early days, featuring a four-inch stretch) was rebadged as the Silver Wraith II. One of the most notable changes at this time was replacing the Shadow's recirculating ball steering with a more responsive rack and pinion set-up. This major move, together with extra improvements to the suspension settings, markedly improved the car's handling and helped negate the tendency to understeer. Changes to the suspension geometry of the latest Rolls-Royce and Bentley included increasing the track both front and rear, while the overall wheelbase was increased by just over half an inch.

Externally, new rubber-faced alloy energy-absorbing bumpers identified the Silver Shadow II, although these heavy-gauge items had been fitted to US-market cars since 1974. Another useful identifier to single out the revamped Shadow was the deletion of the small grilles located beneath each headlamp, while among the subtle changes inside was the upgrading of the already impressive air conditioning to a new split-level system.

Silver Shadow II production came to an end in 1980, with many of the innovations and modifications introduced for the second-generation model being carried over to its successor, the Silver Spirit. During its 15-year production run, the Silver Shadow had proved to be a massive success by Rolls-Royce standards, with over 30,000 examples of these SY-generation models produced (including the various coachbuilt versions). Indeed, this was the best-selling entry-level Rolls-Royce of all time – a testament to the company's skill at both adopting and adapting the latest in automotive technology.



SILVER SPIRIT

Launched in 1980, the Silver Spirit continued where its long-running predecessor left off, providing Rolls-Royce buyers with an impressive new entry-level model via an updated version of the Silver Shadow's platform. The Silver Spirit inevitably offered super-luxury motoring, this time wrapped in a slightly larger, more modern looking package that would take the company through to the late '90s.

The need for a bigger car was particularly felt in the USA, but creating extra mass whilst using the Silver Shadow's underpinnings was a challenge. Clever detailing and styling tricks, however, managed to make the Silver Spirit appear deceptively larger despite it being only marginally longer and wider. This was done by enlarging the glass area by 30 per cent, lowering the waistline and using less decorative trim, together with more angular lines, a flatter bonnet and a more horizontal design to the front and rear lights.

Under the skin, the majority of the early Silver Spirit was Silver Shadow II, up to and including most of the interior architecture. The drivetrain was also the same, with the 6.75-litre V8 and three-speed GM400 automatic transmission being from the outgoing model, although later cars saw the arrival of four speeds. Indeed, the Silver Spirit range was upgraded steadily throughout its 17-year lifespan, the first major change occurring in 1987 with the fitment of fuel-injection.

Two years later, the Silver Spirit II was launched complete with Active Ride technology and a minor facelift. Zytec fuel-injection and a four speed gearbox followed for the Spirit III, while the Silver Spirit IV of 1996 was facelifted via a revised grille, new bumpers and further interior revisions. The 1998 arrival of the Silver Seraph finally brought the curtain down on the SZ family, bringing to an end one of the longest-lived and most commercially successful Rolls-Royce saloons.







The inevitable long-wheelbase version of the Spirit was launched as the Silver Spur, boasting a 124in wheelbase – an inch longer than that of its Silver Wraith II predecessor. But the Silver Spirit also formed the basis of other interesting derivatives, marking the rejuvenation of Bentley as a sporting marque via the Mulsanne Turbo of 1982 and the more accomplished Turbo R of three years later. For a brand that was on the verge of being phased out altogether at the start of the '80s, it was quite a turnaround; and turbocharging even came to the Rolls-Royce line-up in 1994 with the limited-edition Flying Spur. But it was the always Silver Spirit that would be the entry point for Rolls-Royce buyers of the time – and even on today's classic scene, it's a model that remains one of Crewe's best-value offerings.













SILVER SERAPH

When the Silver Seraph was finally unveiled at Geneva in February 1998, it marked the end of a long and fairly torturous process, with work having begun on it in the second half of the '80s. But the wait was worthwhile, for here was a car that remained true to Rolls-Royce's reputation for luxury whilst simultaneously bringing the marque up to date in terms of styling and aesthetics.

Indeed, the look of the Silver Seraph marked a dramatic change of direction for Rolls-Royce, bringing some new-found curvaceous to the range after the square-lined approach of the previous Silver Spirit. Work on the car's styling actually began in earnest in 1990, with its conceptual design being frozen by June of the following year.

Designing a replacement for any long-running, commercially successful Rolls-Royce is inevitably a challenge, given that the newcomer has to be one of the finest luxury cars in the world. Creating a Rolls-Royce for the 21st century, however, took this to another level, particularly as it had to be so much more than 'just' a Rolls-Royce. The previous decade had seen the revival of the Bentley marque after many years of stagnation, culminating in the Turbo R; and so when Rolls-Royce began developing a successor to the SZ range, it had to consider the prominence of Bentley and make decisions about just how different from its Rolls-Royce cousin that version should be.

In the end, the new Silver Seraph and Bentley Arnage that arrived in early 1998 shared essentially the same bodyshells, with their radiator grilles and bonnet pressings being the major visual differences. But it was under those bonnets where the contrasts were greatest, despite both cars controversially featuring BMW-supplied powerplants – a 5.4-litre V12 in the case of the Rolls-Royce, while the Bentley initially sported a 4.4-litre twin-turbo V8. It was a particularly clever move in the case of the Silver Seraph, with the refinement



of a V12 ideally suiting what would be the first twelve-cylinder Rolls-Royce since the Phantom III of the 1930s. Unfortunately, however, major changes at Crewe were about to affect the future direction of Rolls-Royce, with the Silver Seraph being forced out of production after little more than four years.

Rolls-Royce Motors had been created in 1973 when the car side of the business was de-merged from Rolls-Royce Ltd, the latter having been nationalised in 1971 after its financial collapse. Rolls-Royce as a motor manufacturer was now a separate entity, and in 1980 it was sold to Vickers. The company remained under Vickers control until 1998, when a deal was struck with Germany's Volkswagen to pay £430m for the Crewe factory and all rights to the Spirit of Ecstasy, plus the shape of the Rolls-Royce radiator grille. What it didn't buy, however, were the rights to the Rolls-Royce name.

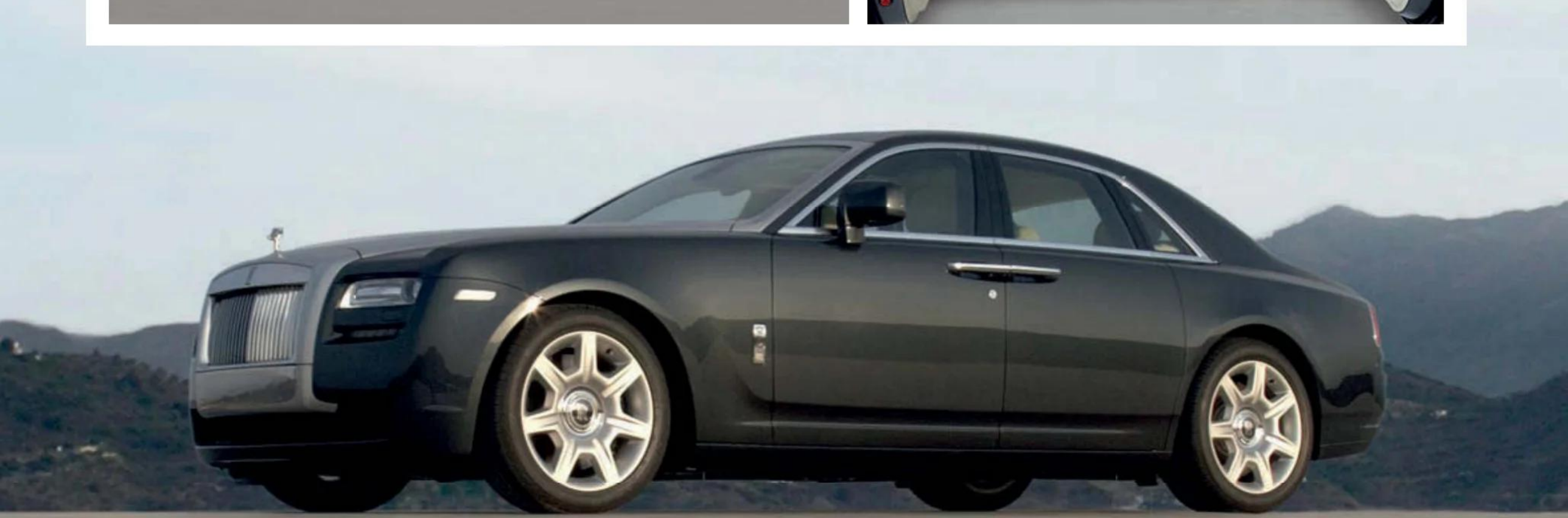
In a separate deal, BMW (which had already agreed to supply engines for the Silver Seraph and Arnage) paid £40m to licence the Rolls-Royce name and logo – which meant that VW was effectively unable to build a new Rolls-Royce. After lengthy negotiations between the two German companies, it was agreed that Volkswagen would continue to produce existing Rolls-Royces until the end of 2002, with all rights to Rolls-Royce then switching to BMW in January 2003, leaving VW with Bentley.

This explains why the very last Silver Seraph was built in 2002, with the following January seeing Rolls-Royce Motor Cars (the new company, under BMW control) opening its official headquarters and assembly plant at Goodwood. During just over four years of production, a mere 1570 examples of the Silver Seraph had been built, making it one of the most exclusive modern-classic Rolls-Royce saloons of today.

More significant, however, was the fact that the first of the all-new models from BMW-controlled Rolls-Royce was to be the Phantom, representing the storied model's seventh generation. It pushed the brand further upmarket once more, with the limousine-like Phantom VII being priced in the UK from £250,000 in 2003 compared with the Silver Seraph's final list price of just over £169,000. Rolls-Royce was aiming its latest leviathan at a very different kind of customer, and it would take until 2009 for the marque to reintroduce the concept of a smaller, more affordable saloon.







GHOST

With the Phantom VII successfully re-establishing Rolls-Royce in the limousine-status sector of the market, the company focused on expanding the range via three new versions: the logically named Phantom Extended Wheelbase, Drophead Coupe and Coupe. But there remained space below for a less gargantuan, entry-level alternative, which eventually arrived with the unveiling of the new Ghost in 2009.

Although based on a platform shared with the BMW 7 Series of the time, the Ghost's wheelbase and track width were different, and it also benefited from Phantom-style air springs for the ultimate in ride quality and refinement. The familiar BMW-developed 6.75-litre V12 that powered the rest of the range ensured superb performance, and the Ghost soon became a popular choice among Rolls-Royce clients who felt that downsizing from a Phantom was appropriate, as well as attracting newcomers to the marque. The subsequent arrival of a Ghost Extended Wheelbase in 2011 successfully reduced the gap (in terms of both stature and pricing) between Rolls-Royce's entry-level model and its flagship, while a major update of both versions brought a host of visual and technical updates to keep the model fresh.

The Ghost proved to be a big seller by Rolls-Royce standards, leading to the launch of a second-generation range in 2020. However, stung by criticism of how much 7 Series componentry was used in the original model (which in reality, was only around 20 per cent), BMW ensured there was more of a bespoke approach this time round, with the newcomer sharing the same Rolls-Royce-only platform as the Phantom VIII and Cullinan.

This latest Ghost featured all-wheel drive, all-wheel steering, and a 'Planar' suspension system that incorporated additional dampers and mass designed to suppress high-frequency vibrations. It was also the first Rolls-Royce to feature an illuminated radiator grille, with the spokes lit by lights housed in the top of the grille. The arrival of a Black Badge edition in 2021 brought extra performance, with the 6.75-litre V12 being turned to produce 592bhp, helping to lift sales as well as transforming the Ghost into one of the ultimate high-performance super-saloons.

The Ghost remains the entry-level model of today, with prices starting from around £260,000 in the UK – although most clients spend significantly more than this thanks to the success of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars' limitless ways of making a car truly bespoke.

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TECHNICAL GUIDE

BENTLEY GTC: ELECTRONIC PARKING BRAKE MOTOR REFIT

Our technical series continues with the common task of replacing the EPB motor on a Continental GTC, giving a glimpse into how the professionals tackle the job – and how you could do so at home

WORDS: **ANDY THWAITES** PHOTOGRAPHY: **FLYING SPARES**

Welcome to our eighth technical guide, brought to you via the experts at Flying Spares. Having looked at gas spring sphere replacement on a Rolls-Royce Flying Spur in our last issue, this time we're back to Bentley. Here we have a rather tasty Continental GTC that's in need of an all-too-common repair: fitting a new electronic parking brake (EPB) motor.

Before we get started, there are a couple of important points to mention. First, as covered previously, whenever you're working on a GT or GTC, it is vital to put it into 'Jack Mode' before lifting. If you don't, the self-levelling system will exhaust its air trying to maintain ride height, risking suspension collapse when lowered. You have been warned!

Second, the final part of this job involves initialising the new motor, and that requires diagnostic kit. If you don't have your own, you might like to take advantage of the Flying Spares loan scheme. The company can lend you a VAS5054A diagnostic laptop with Bluetooth OBD dongle, the same as they use at the factory. If that's of interest, simply speak to the Flying Spares sales team for more details.

There are a few telltale signs that an EPB motor might be on its way out: an exaggerated whining noise, or the parking brake sticking and getting noticeably harder to apply or release. Sometimes one might fail completely, and you will feel a lack of grip on one side; sometimes they both wear out at around the same time.

Often the plastic casing will crack, and this will usually be highlighted by an MoT advisory. No surprise really, when you consider the many, many EPB cycles, plus repeated exposure to the heating and cooling of the brakes. Once water gets in, that's a real problem.

The good news is that Flying Spares has introduced this part as a standalone aftermarket item. The EPB motor was previously only available either as a genuine product from Bentley or in a bundle with the caliper. The company is always looking to fill gaps in its range and provide more quality and choice, hence this addition.

As always, 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, get in touch with Flying Spares on 01455 292949 or send an email to **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.



BENTLEY CONTINENTAL GTC: EPB MOTOR REFIT

1



Prep: gather all the personal protective equipment and tools that you'll need for the task ahead.

2



Then lay out the parts from the EPB motor kit to ensure everything is present, correct and readily to hand.

3



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

4



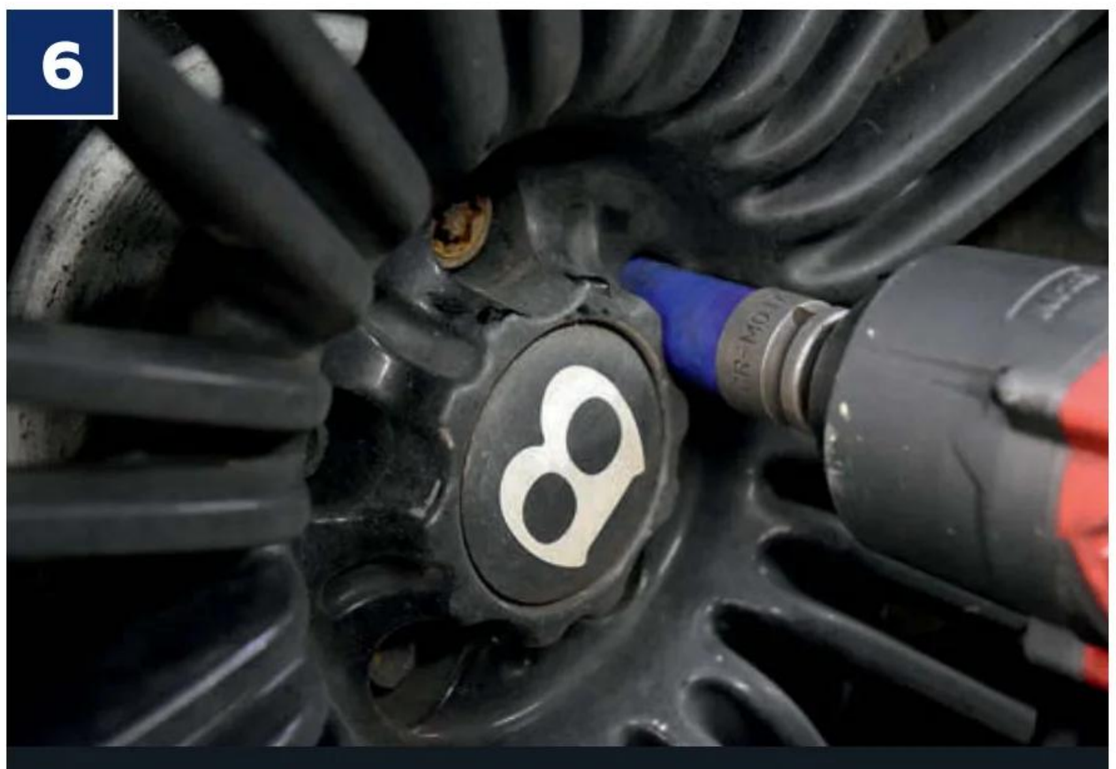
With 'Jack Mode' displayed in the driver information panel (and self-levelling disabled), you can safely lift the car in 'Park' with the handbrake applied.

5



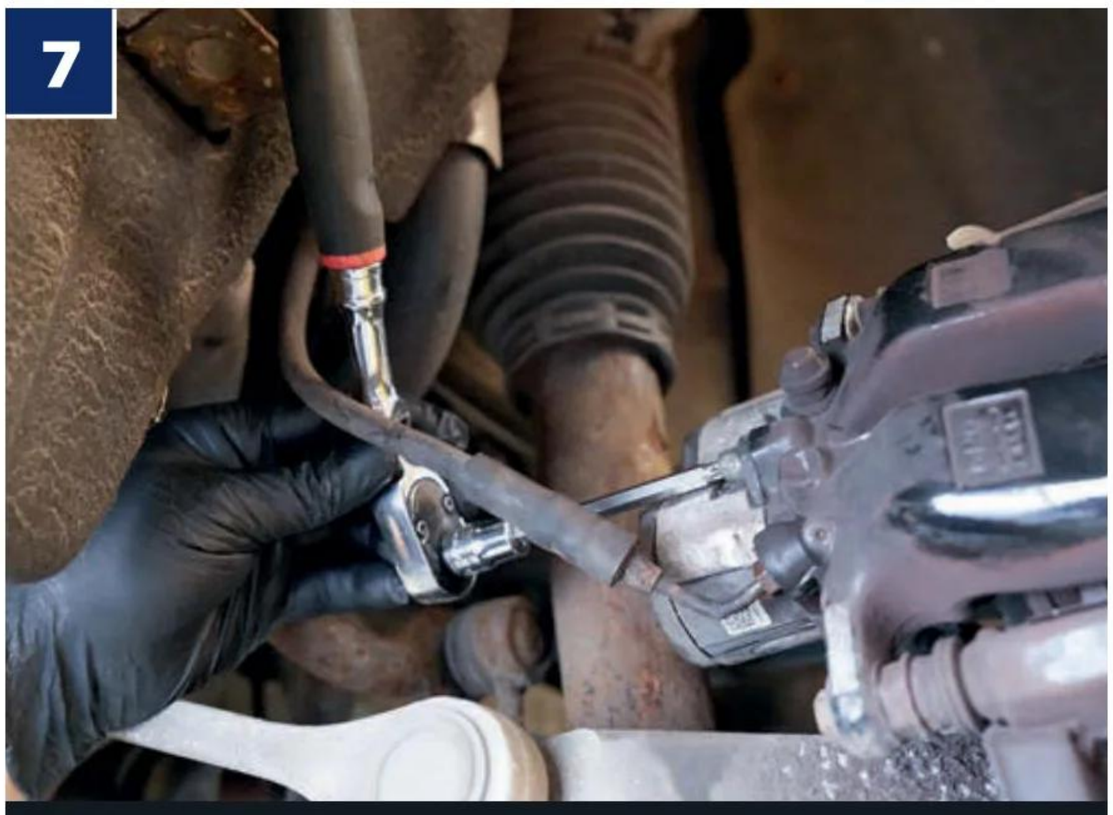
Using a 17mm alloy wheel socket, ideally with a plastic sleeve, remove the road wheel to gain better access to the EPB motor bolted to the back of the caliper.

6



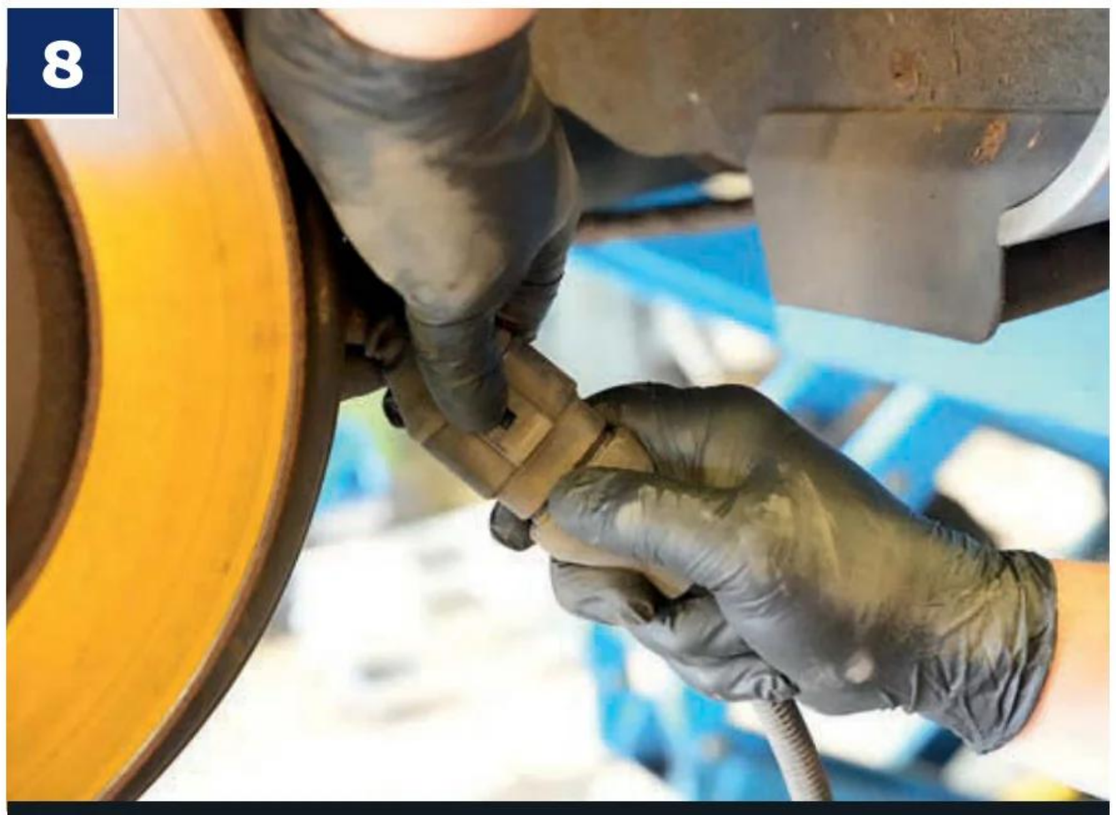
On some models you will need to remove the Bentley centre cap first, but here we only had to remove the wheel setscrews.

7



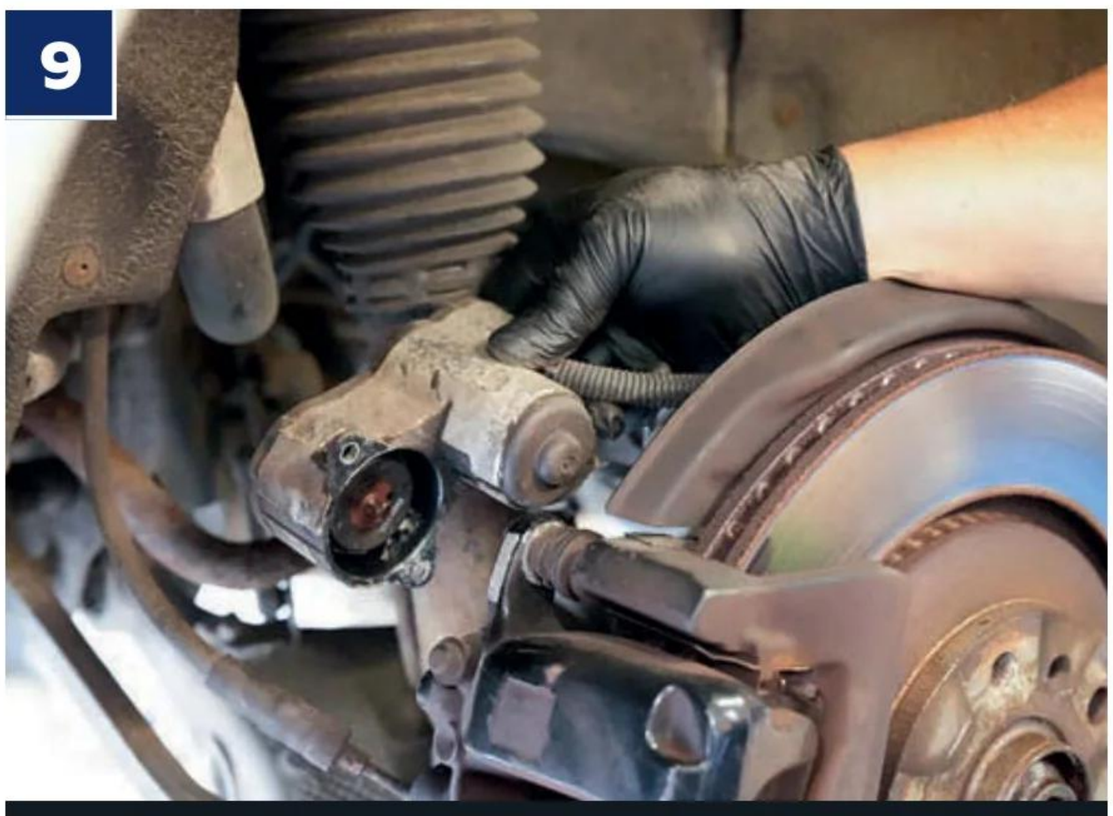
Remove the two setscrews holding the old motor to the hub assembly and pull the unit away.

8



Disconnect the wiring from the old EPB motor loom to the main harness.

9



The old EPB motor can now be removed completely and safely disposed of.

10



New parts! Replace both the C-clip and the motor body 'O' ring using the new parts from your EBP motor kit.

11



Now, fit the new EPB motor to the hub assembly, taking care not to catch the 'O' ring.

12



Torque down the two new setscrews supplied in the kit to 12nm.

13



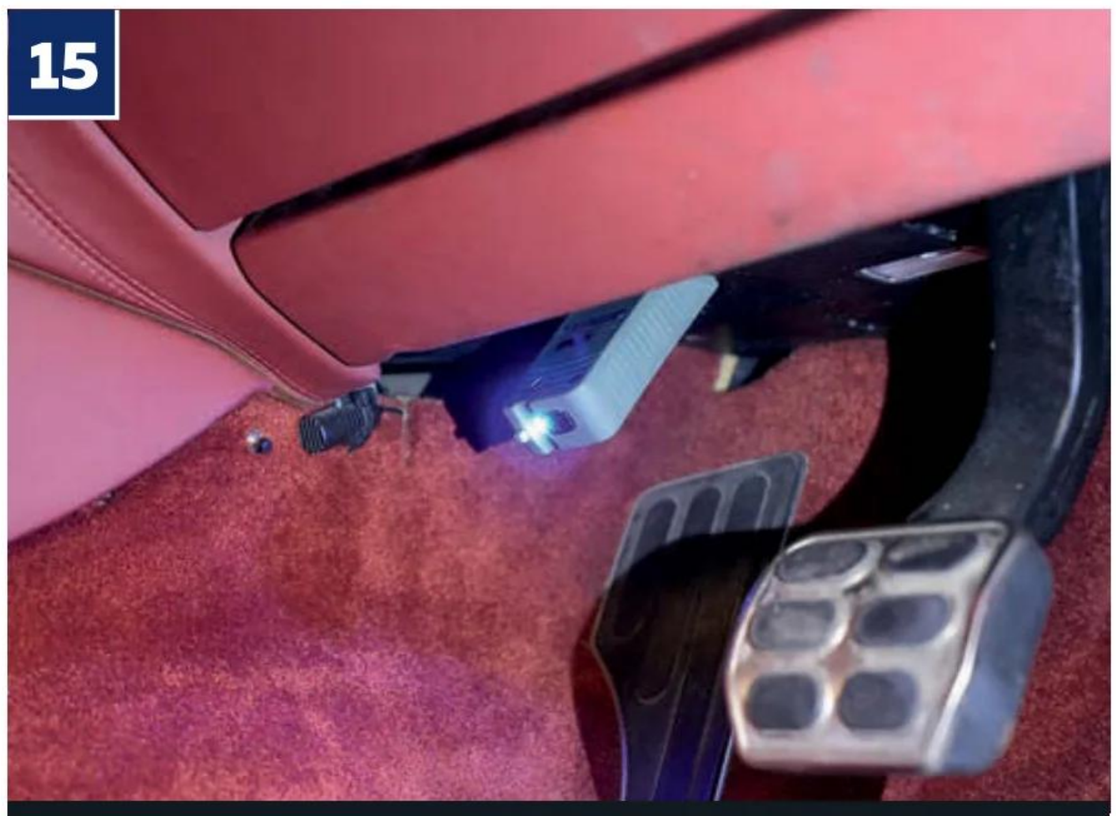
Reconnect the main loom plug and place it into the mount.

14



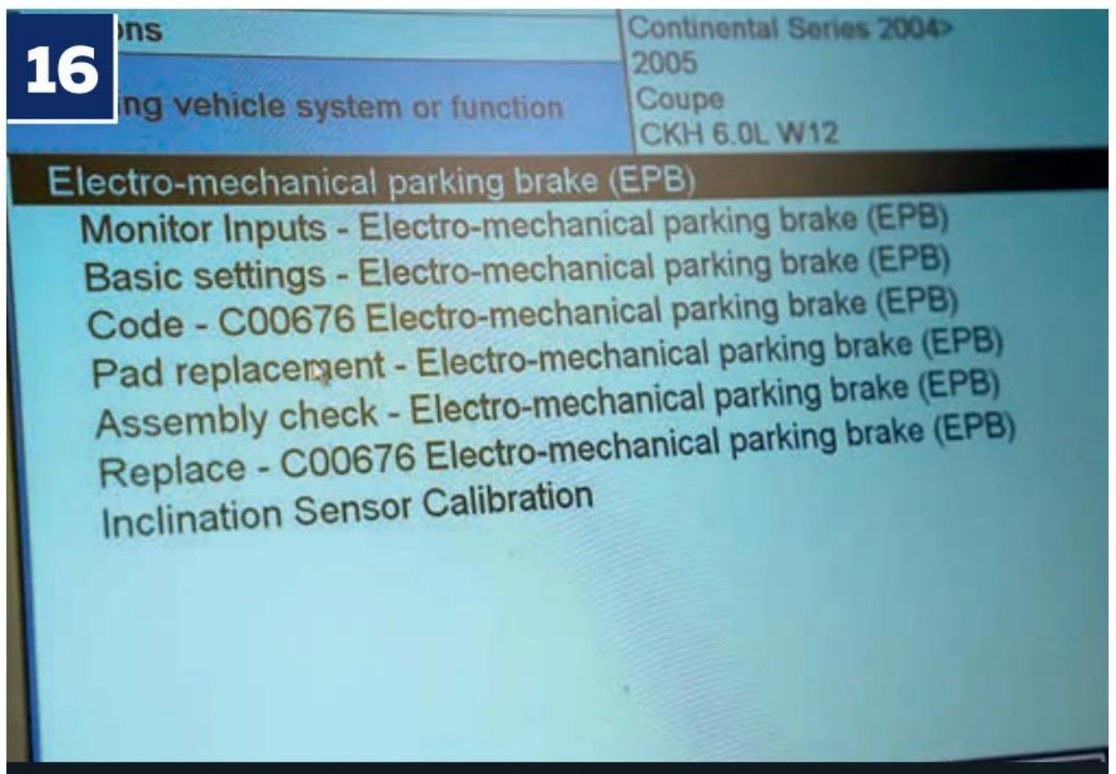
Now, before reaching for the diagnostics tool, put both the main vehicle batteries on charge to eliminate any system drain.

15



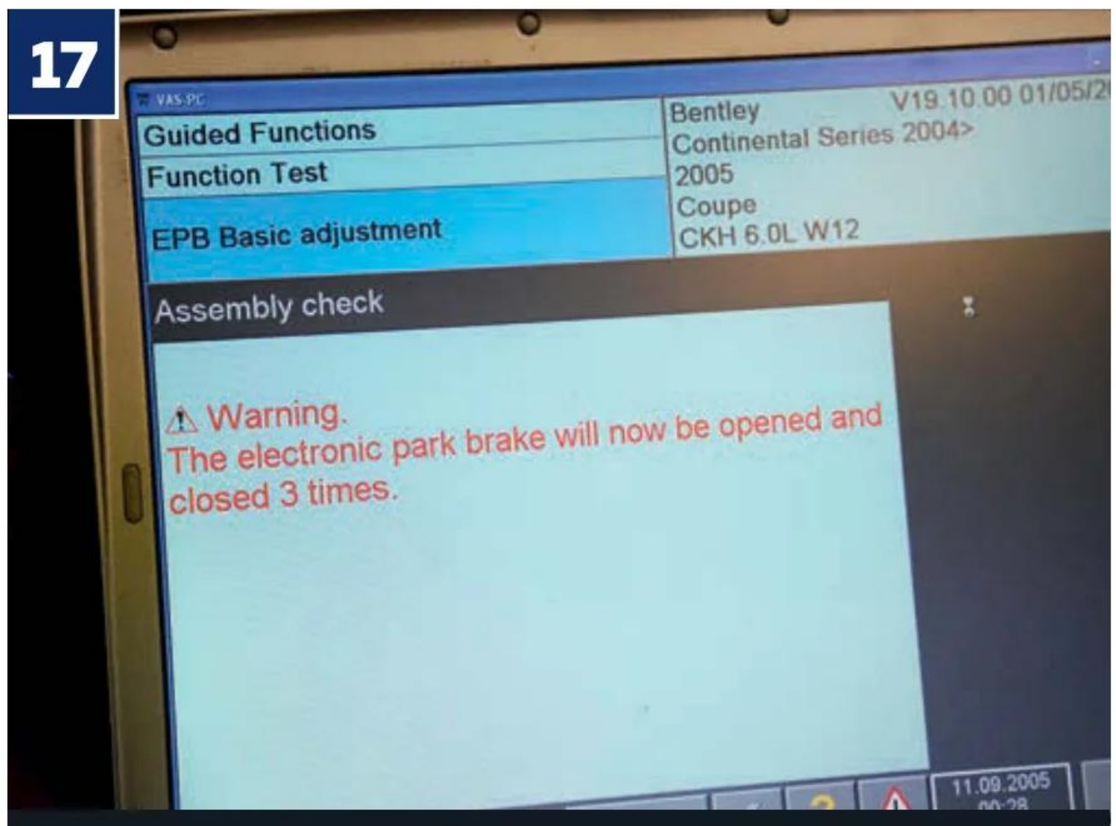
Connect the diagnostic tool and select 'Guided functions'. Then enter the relevant brand, type, model year, version and engine code.

16



Press right arrow for next screen, select 'Electro-mechanical parking brake (EPB)', then 'Pad replacement – electro-mechanical parking brake (EPB)'.

17



Follow the on-screen instructions to take the new motor through the calibration procedure.

18



Refit the road wheel, lower the vehicle and test the parking brake. Finally, go for a test drive. All working? That's job done!

ROLLS-ROYCE & BENTLEY *driver*

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WORDS: **LYDIA CHAPMAN**
PHOTOS: **ANDREW HONOUR**

PRIME POSITION AT SALON PRIVÉ

RREC members put on a stunning display at one of this summer's finest concours events, celebrating 120 years of Rolls-Royce

A variety of magnificent Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars took prime position at Salon Privé on Saturday, August 31st, claiming the stunning and grandiose Great Court at Blenheim Palace as their home for the day. The Great Court is offered to one or two prestigious car clubs each year at Salon Privé, and for 2024 – which celebrates 120 years since Rolls and Royce first met – it was the RREC that had the privilege of parking in this glorious space to display no fewer than 76 club cars.

Members travelled from near and far to attend, with participants representing 10 of the 18 UK sections, including Central Southern, Wales and East Anglian. The club cars on display were similarly varied, the oldest being a 1913 Silver Ghost, and the newest two 2024-registered Bentley Bentaygas. The cars, nestled on the cobblestoned Court, gleamed throughout the day despite the cloudy weather, and attracted crowds attending Salon Privé as well as guests visiting the Palace.

Of course, no Salon Privé show is complete without concours, and this year club members Richard and Diana Balsdon were selected as our judges' winner of the RREC Lockton Club Trophy. Richard's 1982 Rolls-Royce Camargue turned many a head as he drove it onto the Salon Privé stage to collect his trophy. A worthy winner.

The RREC would like to thank members who travelled to attend the show this year, many of whom stayed overnight locally to ensure they were at the event well in time (some even as early as 7.30am). The club is already looking forward to attending Salon Privé 2025. See you there! ■



The oldest RREC member's car was this 1913 Silver Ghost.


Richard Balsdon's 1982 Camargue was a worthy winner at Salon Privé.



Bentleys lined up in the Great Court at Blenheim Palace.

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WORDS: **STUART NEWMAN**
PHOTOS: **STEVE SHELLEY & MATT WELCH**

SUMMER OF SUCCESS

The BDC's Concours d'Elegance saw a magnificent 1936 4½ Litre named Best in Show, with Clive Morley and Ben Eastick then winning the two main races at Silverstone

Trevor Kells' superbly restored 1936 4½ Litre Tourer, clothed in eye-catching Vanden Plas bodywork, was named as the overall Concours winner at the BDC's 76th Summer Concours at Walton Hall country estate, Warwickshire. A delighted Northern Ireland-based Trevor was presented with the prestigious WO Bentley Memorial Foundation Trophy by Kathy Warner, wife of club chairman Mike.

The 1961 S2 of Trevor's fellow club member, James Clough, won the coveted Bentley Motors Trophy as the overall Patina class winner.

In all, 17 awards were presented in the various Concours and Patina classes. Past club president Jimmy Medcalf enjoyed the distinction of claiming three awards with his magnificent 1924 3/4½ Litre Vanden Plas: the P&A Wood Trophy (best amateur owner restored car) and the Daks Trophy (Master Class); Jimmy's car was also part of the three-strong Eastern Region team, alongside daughter Carol (2018 Continental GT W12) and Brian Rivett (1936 Derby 4¼ Vanden Plas), which claimed the Kensington Gardens Trophy (Inter-Regional Team Challenge).

Graham Barrett took home two prizes with his lovely 1956 S1 Continental Mulliner/Park Ward Fastback: the Frank Dale Trophy (best R- or S-Type Continental) and the Ivor Gordon Trophy (best MkVI, R- or S-Type). Graham's car also later won the overall Bentley Trophy prize at the Concours of Elegance at Hampton Court.

Adding their own flavour to the day was a wonderful display of almost 30 members' Derbys, with club member Jeremy Marshall Roberts, an acknowledged expert on the model, conducting an informed commentary.

Meanwhile, at the 76th BDC Silverstone race meeting, experienced Bentley racer Clive Morley scored a dominant victory in the John Duff Trophy & Frank Clement Cup race, to commemorate the centenary of Bentley's first win (of six) in the famous Le Mans 24 Hours. Clive, driving a 3/4½ Litre, won the 40-minute race for Vintage Bentleys by almost 52 seconds, having started from pole position and leading throughout. Second was Matt Walton (3/8 Litre), with Clive's son James (3/4½ Litre) third in a superb field that featured more than 20 vintage Bentleys. Delighted newcomer Shaun Harborne, competing in his debut race meeting, collected the 3 Litre award.

Ben Eastick took his fourth successive Times Challenge Trophy victory (equalling Michael Higginbotham's feat of 2017-2020) at the wheel of his powerful T Type, leading from lights to flag to win the Bentley scratch race by a lap. Lewis Fox (driving Ewen Getley's 3/4½ Litre) was second, and Paul Andrew (MkVI Special) third.

Special mention must also be made of Robin Ward (T Type Special), who shattered the 12-year-old BDC lap record by almost four seconds on his way to winning the BDC Open race. Meanwhile, Harry Johnson, a successful racer who owns the car that Robin drove, has been appointed as the club's new Competitions Captain, succeeding Ben Eastick, who has resigned due to family-business commitments. ■

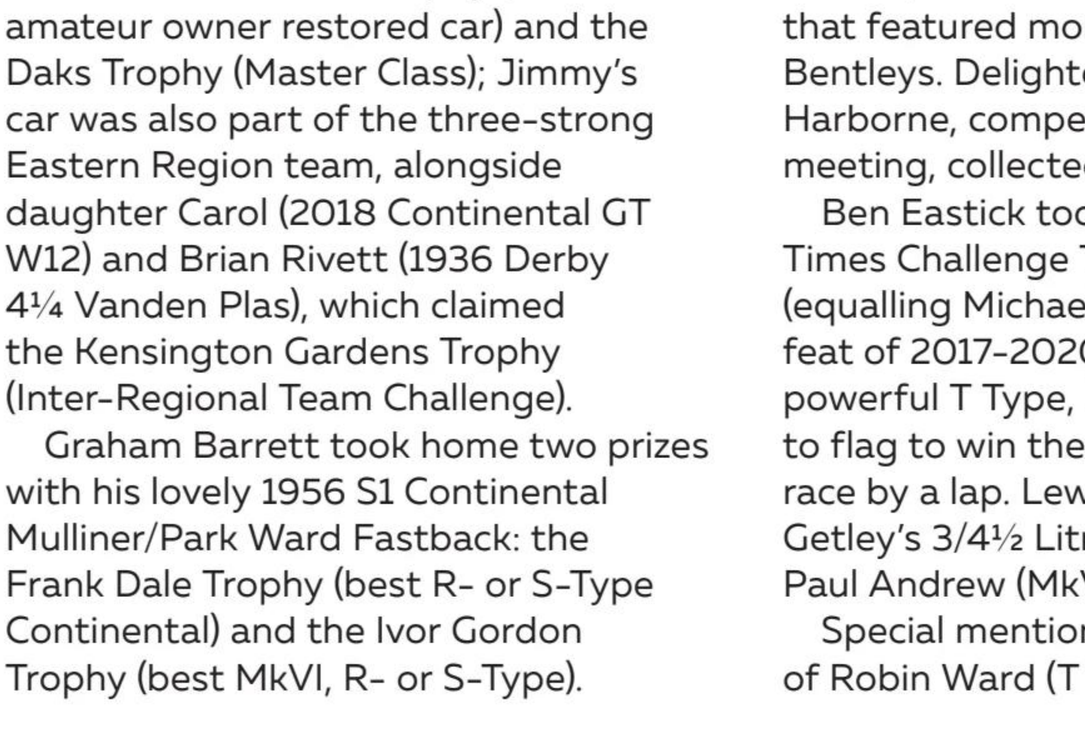


Clive Morley won the John Duff Trophy & Frank Clement Cup race.



Ben Eastick claimed his fourth Times Challenge Trophy victory.

For more information on the Bentley Drivers Club, visit www.bdcl.org.



Concours winner Trevor Kells, with wife Hilary, shows off the WO Bentley Memorial Foundation Trophy.



Patina category winner James Clough was awarded the Bentley Motors Trophy.

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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.

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PROJECT CAR

SPUR OF THE MOMENT

Our colleagues at *Classics World* have been running, maintaining and improving a 2008 Continental Flying Spur… but how did it all go in the end?

WORDS & PHOTOS: **PAUL WAGER**

Anyone who reads *Classics World* magazine on a regular basis may already recognise the Bentley featured here; and if you're an avid follower of the *Classics World* YouTube channel, you'll no doubt recognise it as the star of numerous videos, put together by the team with support from our friends at IntroCar. So, as the project draws to a close with the sale of the 2008 Flying Spur project car in question, what's the experience been like – and what are the conclusions that can be drawn?

After an unfortunate experience with a Continental GT that we purchased via a non-specialist dealer, we decided to go the four-door route, with this particular Flying Spur attracting our attention. It had covered a chunky 143,000 miles but was in simply lovely condition, having spent a lot of its life as a VIP chauffeur car. The service book was fully stamped up, the Mulliner interior was pristine, and it came with the glorious feature of massage seats… front and rear.





The cost of the oil needed for a quick change reminded us just how physically big the W12 engine is.



Running costs can soar, like when a set of front discs and pads set us back a hefty £1200.

together without a single broken clip.

Further good news came via an MoT pass, although we're grateful for the expert attention of Nigel Sandell's resident Continental expert, Jonny O'Neill, for spotting a few things during his initial assessment of the car that would have been definite fails. One advisory, though, was wear in the balljoints of both front lower arms; I'd noticed that a slight rattle had developed on the nearside since the car was last checked over, and it underlines just how hard these heavy cars are on their underpinnings. The Flying Spur weighs in at 2.5 tonnes and our potholed roads do it no favours at all, so owners do need to be prepared for frequent suspension issues.

On the plus side however, although the front lower arms are a Bentley-specific part, project sponsor IntroCar can supply the arm complete with balljoint for £200, and fitting is a straightforward job. Indeed, with a suitably beefy jack and axle stands, it could even be a DIY task. For now though, the car was safe and legal, which meant that our ownership experience hadn't been as costly as expected. Major expense has been limited to a replacement nearside rear P Zero at £258 and a set of front discs and pads at a hefty £1200, which makes the 40,000-mile service at £146 for parts and £500 for labour look good, although the oil at £238 reminds you just how physically big the W12 engine is. We also fitted a replacement CV joint and upper arm to the front offside at £178 for parts and £168 for labour, plus a pair of ignition coils and a set of plugs, totalling £275 for parts and £200 labour.

"It's one thing to write knowledgeably about these cars but quite another to deal with the practical realities of ownership"

LIFE WITH A SPUR

All of which means the Flying Spur hasn't been a cheap ownership experience, but hasn't sprung any terrible surprises. So, looking back over our six months or so with the car, what's it been like to live with?

For any of us, it's one thing to write knowledgeably about these cars but quite another to deal with the practical realities of ownership. Having 'invested' in a Continental GT that turned out to have numerous issues (including major overheating that involved either a £900-plus thermostat or the entire front end being removed to replace the water pump), we ended up exchanging it for the Flying Spur, which taught us two valuable lessons. First, at the cheaper end of the market, the four-door Flying Spur seems to attract a more caring owner less inclined towards dubious modifications and more inclined to regular maintenance. Second, it's not well known that Bentley incrementally improved these cars in the early years and the post-2006 examples can be a lot easier to live with in terms of more affordable parts and generally improved reliability.

Unsurprisingly, it seems that VW Group modified the design to improve parts commonality with other models, especially engine parts, and this does »





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"The first of these failings was almost a scheduled repair, in that I've been trying to get around to it for months"

route, and the following morning I jacked the driver's side of the car up slightly and removed the aluminium cover over the rat-trap. In case you don't know, this is the unflattering nickname for the intimidating collection of hinges, brackets and pipe junctions that form a nexus for the three braking systems. The switch, said Ross, is right at the front and can't be missed, and he was right – a plunger moving between two copper blades with a wire each side. Removing the bracket that mounts it, rather than removing the switch from the bracket, is the way forward.

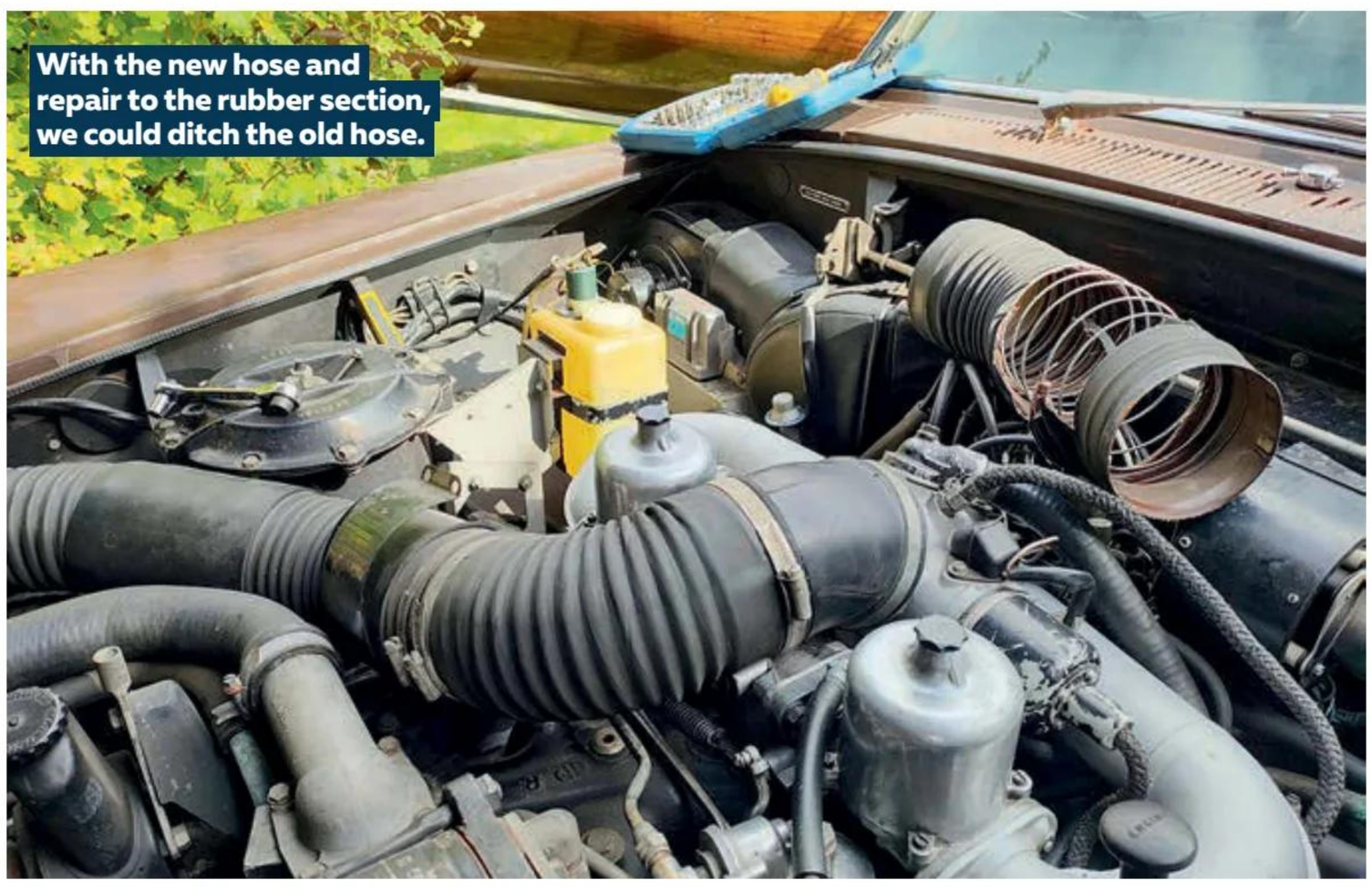
TORCH SOLUTION

Once it was off, the fault suddenly made itself apparent. One of the copper blades dropped away and fluttered to the ground, obviously cracked and ready to fall off as soon as I touched it. Where would I find something to replicate it and produce a quick fix? Luckily, an old pal with a similar weakness for ageing cars had come to visit, and Julian had a very good idea. "Got any broken torches? Old fashioned battery torches usually have a copper strip like that in the switch."

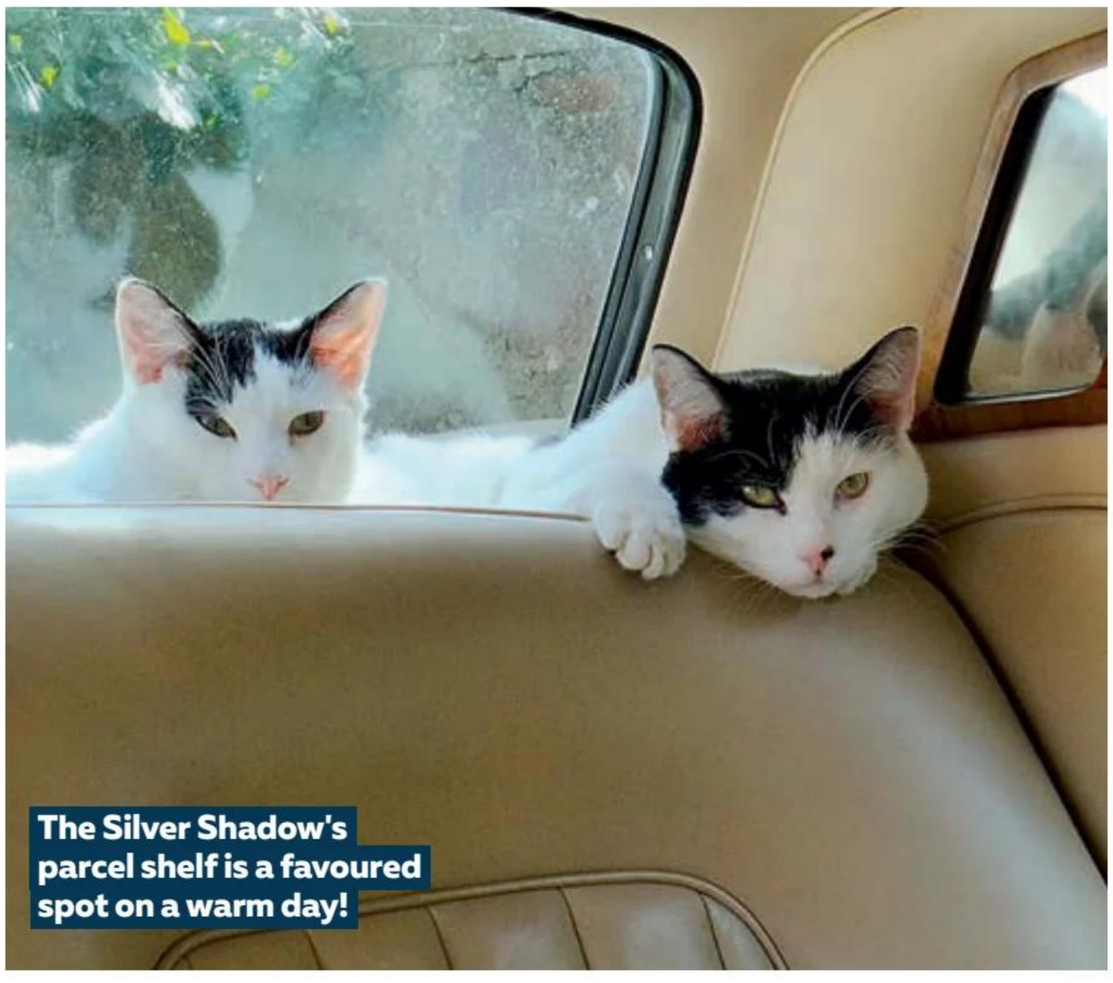
He was right. One butchered torch later, I had a bent piece of copper held into the switch's pole piece



...and was wiped smooth as soon as it began to cure.



With the new hose and repair to the rubber section, we could ditch the old hose.



The Silver Shadow's parcel shelf is a favoured spot on a warm day!

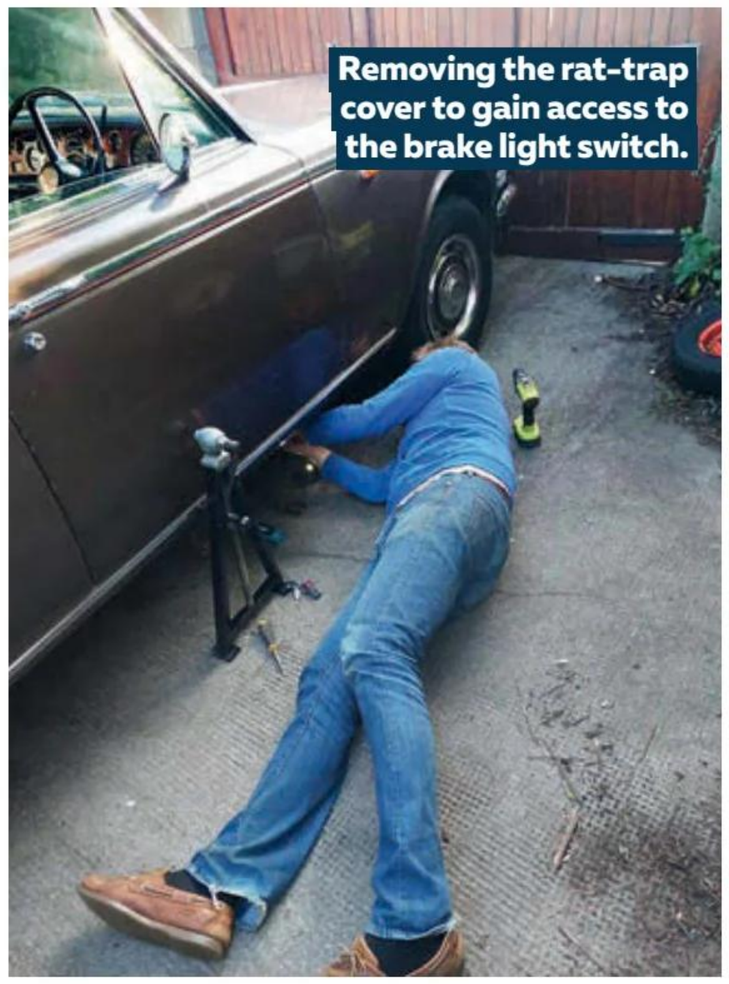


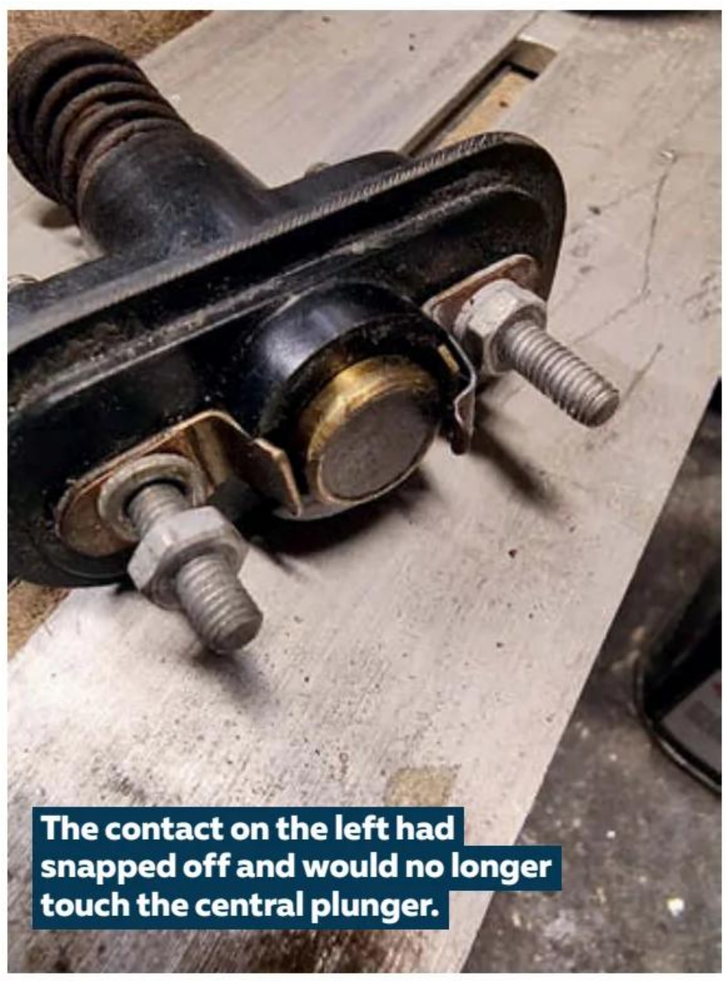
At work for *RR&BD*, but without functional brake lights.

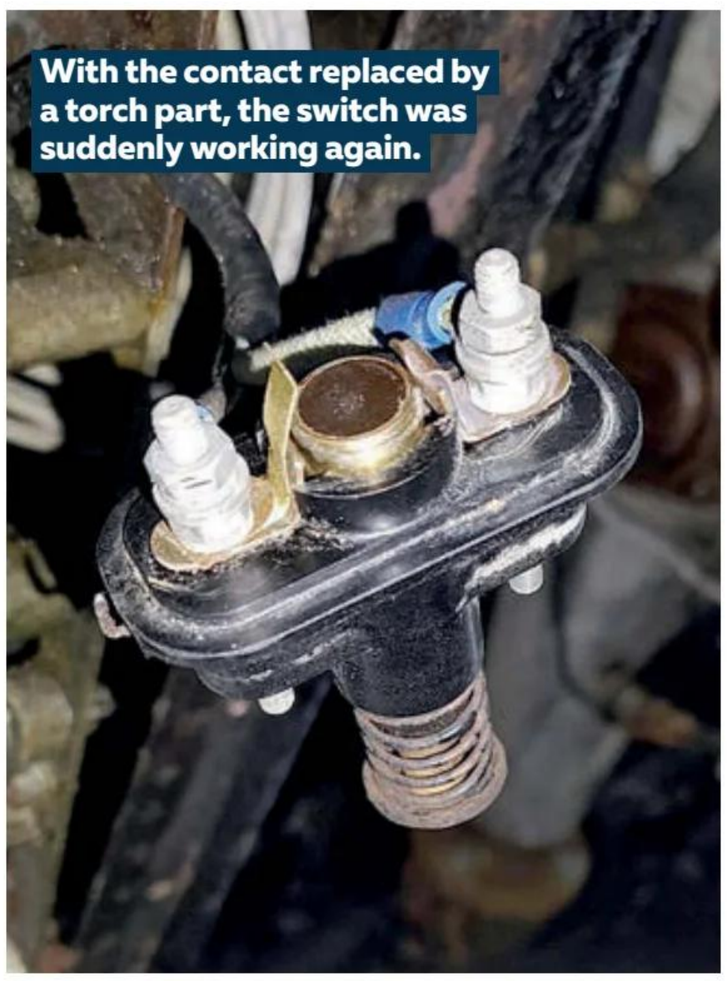
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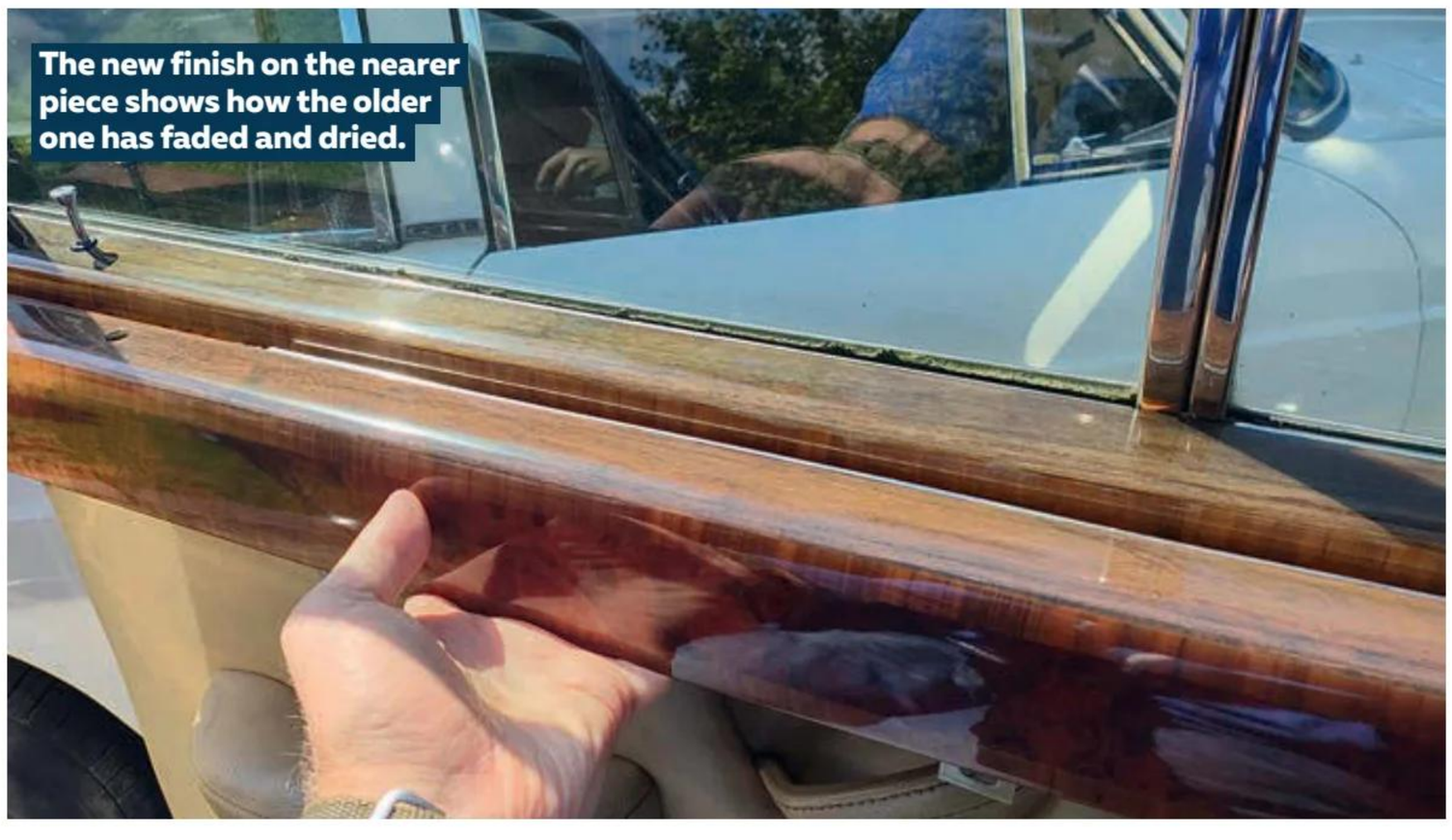


A trip to Mulsanne Motors to identify a fault inevitably has many perks.


Removing the rat-trap cover to gain access to the brake light switch.


The contact on the left had snapped off and would no longer touch the central plunger.


With the contact replaced by a torch part, the switch was suddenly working again.


The new finish on the nearer piece shows how the older one has faded and dried.

with the little BA nuts and washers, and the switch could be tried when plugged into the wiring under the car. Plunger pushed down, and Jules says "On!" and we have brake lights again. I refitted the switch and its bracket properly and replaced the cover, and we went off to collect some other pals from the railway station and the airport, a role which the car performed with considerable aplomb.

It would have been nicer still if I'd got round to refinishing the door cappings. Only one has been done, after I chickened out of a DIY solution and took it to Sean Diggin, a furniture maker and restorer near Edinburgh. Sean's guys were able to relacquer the top surface of the wood fillet and blend it into the existing lacquer on the vertical surface, which hadn't suffered in the same way and seemed a shame to strip off. Unfortunately, getting the pieces of wood off is quite involved, as I detailed previously with the tedious task of stripping down the doors. It needs a chunk of time allocated to it, which is something I haven't found.

Another task that's still on the list is the isolation of the mysterious clunk from the rear nearside corner that's heard and felt over potholes. Having sorted out all the points where the exhaust pipe could thump the car, the low amplitude bumps no longer create a rattle, but the big ones really do. I fear it means investigating the suspension in that corner – something to do with the self-levelling ram or a worn-out bush, perhaps? To be continued... ■

STAFF CARS

PURE ENJOYMENT

Since his last Staff Cars feature in our March/April issue, Peter's Bentley T-series has had a major service, a minor glitch, and has provided over 4000 miles of enjoyable motoring

WORDS & PHOTOS: **PETER LAVERS**

I very much enjoy reading Nigel Boothman's Staff Cars reports on the ups and downs of recommissioning and running his 1972 Silver Shadow. He and his partner in the project have undertaken much of the work themselves, referring to specialists as and when necessary, and I'm sure many *RR&BD* readers will do the same. However, there will be others – like me – who will regularly use the services of companies that are part of the Rolls-Royce and Bentley Specialists' Association. And in my case, it's A&S Engineering that I entrust with the servicing and maintenance of my motor car.

When I booked the Bentley in, I asked the proprietor, Paul Brown, to carefully check the car over as well as conduct the service. Although I trained as an engineer at Crewe, I'm very conscious that designing and developing motor cars is very different to maintaining 50-plus year old classics. I really appreciate the thoroughness that Paul and Neil at A&S took, knowing as they do that I drive my T-series regularly and like to 'press on'.

The expertise that one pays for isn't just for the work completed but also knowing what to look for. Beyond the major service regulars, what resulted was a long list of relatively minor parts replaced or adjusted. Exactly what I wanted to give me the confidence to jump in and go anywhere.

The only issue I've had with the Bentley this year was in April, when I could hear a constant whirring sound when I switched on the ignition. I knew immediately that it was an actuator within the HVAC system, which opens and closes the flaps when you change the temperature settings on the lovely chrome switches in Series I SYs. One motor was stuck in a continuous cycle! A quick look in the handbook showed me which fuse to remove to disable it, and A&S duly rectified the situation a few weeks later.



Peter's much-loved 1972 Bentley has been used in all weathers throughout 2024.

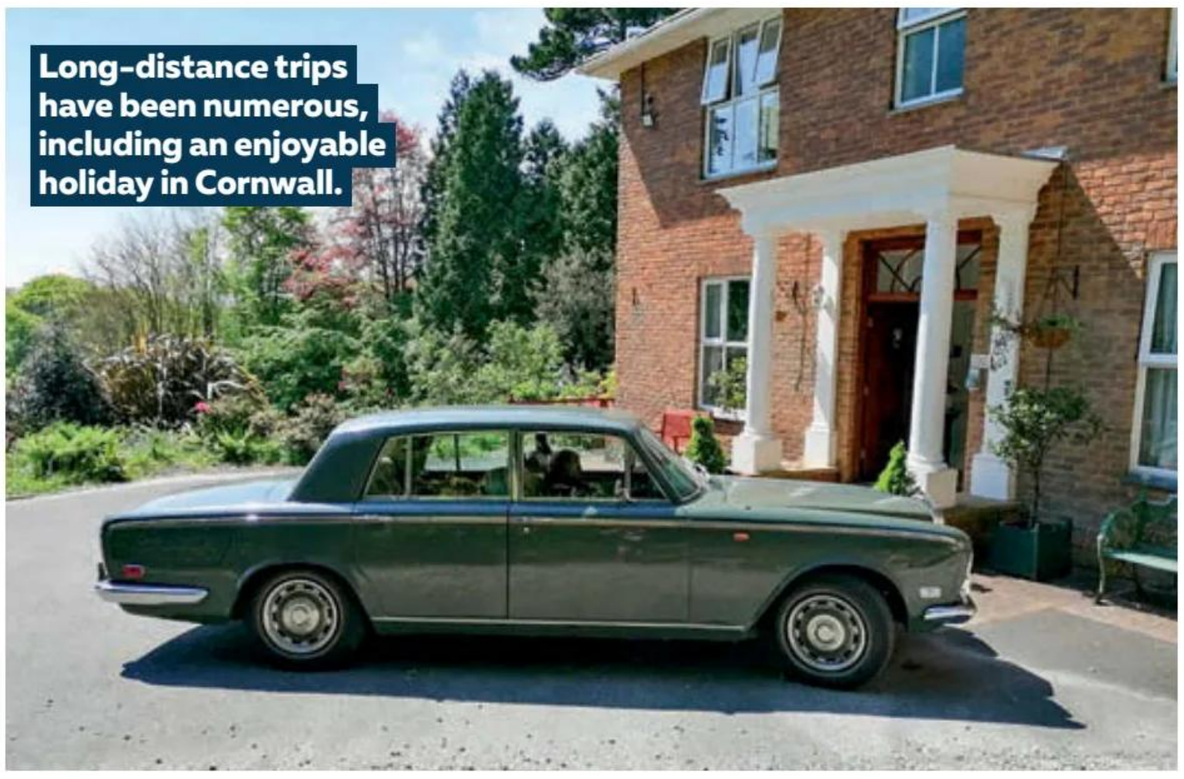


The T-series enjoyed good company at this summer's Alton Classic Car Show.

TRUSTY COMPANION

With just over 4000 miles covered since my last report, taking the T's total to almost 126,000, I have really made the most of it throughout the year, using it as my main vehicle (the weather hasn't been good enough to use my MG as much as I'd like). I have undertaken long trips to see family

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Long-distance trips have been numerous, including an enjoyable holiday in Cornwall.


When Peter's daughter moved into her student accommodation, the Bentley was the workhorse.



One of the event highlights of 2024 was Peter's trip to the BDC's Silverstone race meeting.



The only issue experienced this year was a fault with the actuator within the HVAC system.

in Cornwall and Cheshire, enjoyed social gatherings with my little group of classic car owning friends, and I've attended numerous local, regional and national gatherings and events.

I also proved how capacious the SY is when I moved my daughter into her second-year student accommodation in September. It's amazing just how much you can squeeze into the boot and on the back seat!

My Bentley definitely isn't a show winner, but everywhere I go I get appreciative comments and have friendly chats with people who recognise the quality of these motor cars. Do say hello if you bump into us, or follow the story on Instagram (@laverspeter) or in the 'Eccentric Hobbyists' Facebook group.

Is there still more to do on it? Yes! Has ownership been worth the expenditure? Absolutely! ■



The Bentley has been a regular attendee at various local classic car gatherings and pub meets.

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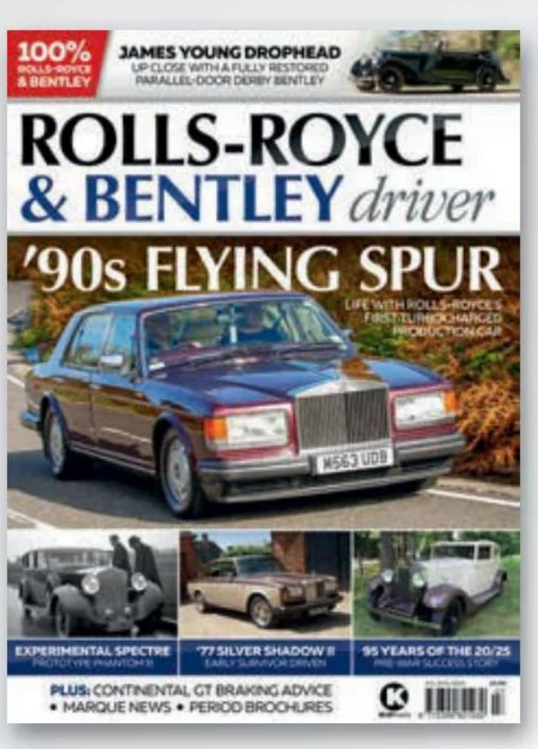
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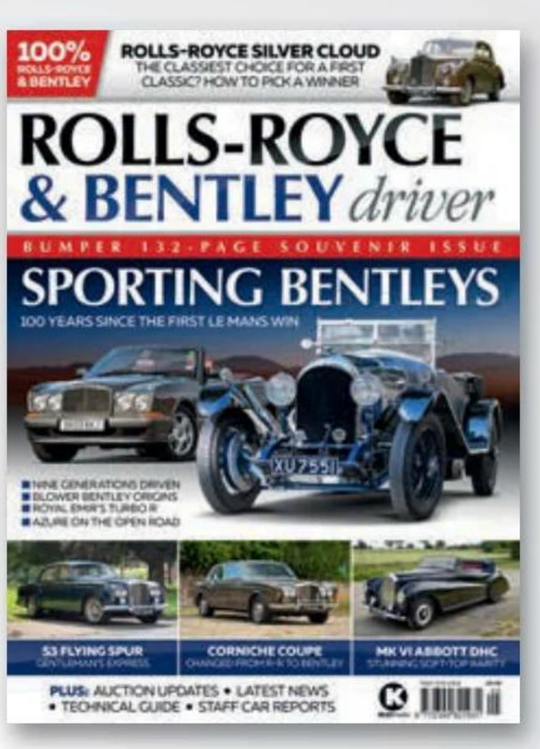
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- Bentley GTC in Australia
- RREC's 2024 Annual Rally



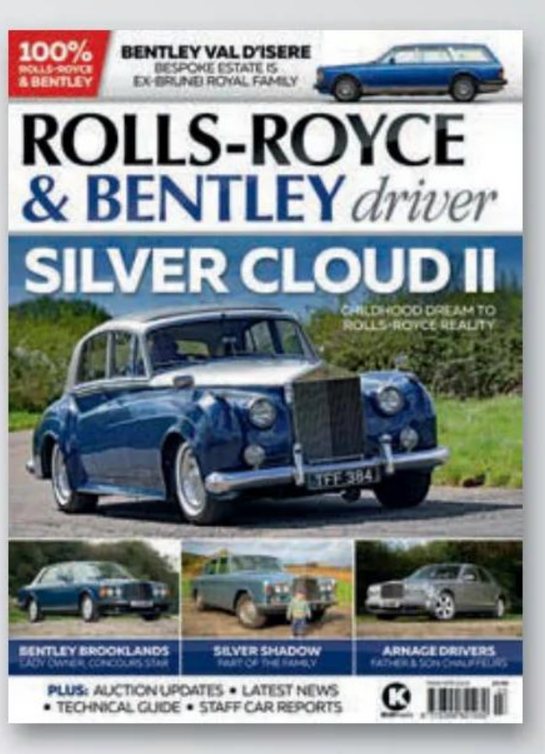
JULY/ AUGUST 2024

- 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



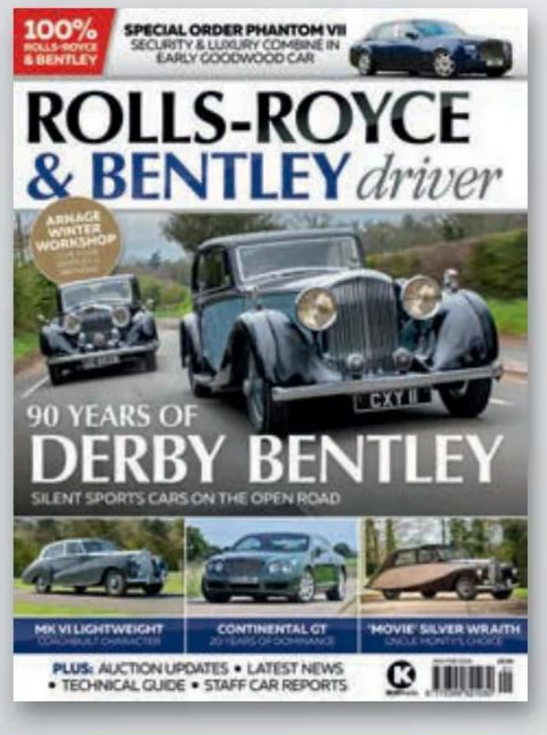
MAY/JUNE 2024

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



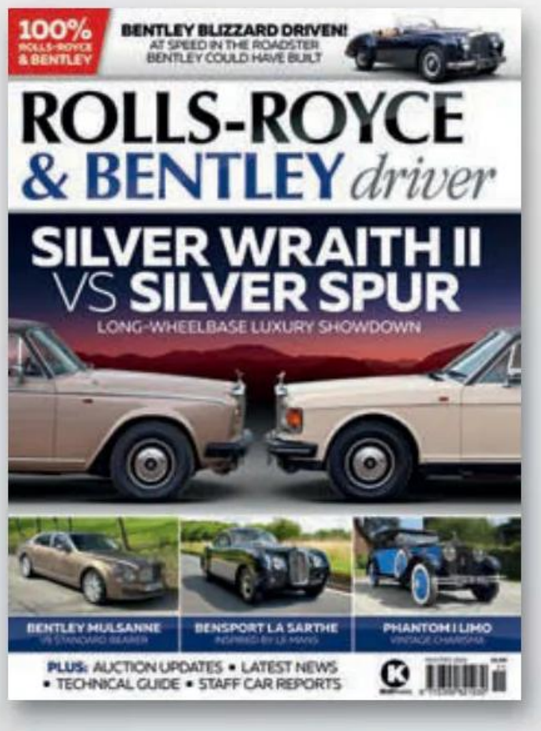
MARCH/ APRIL 2024

- 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



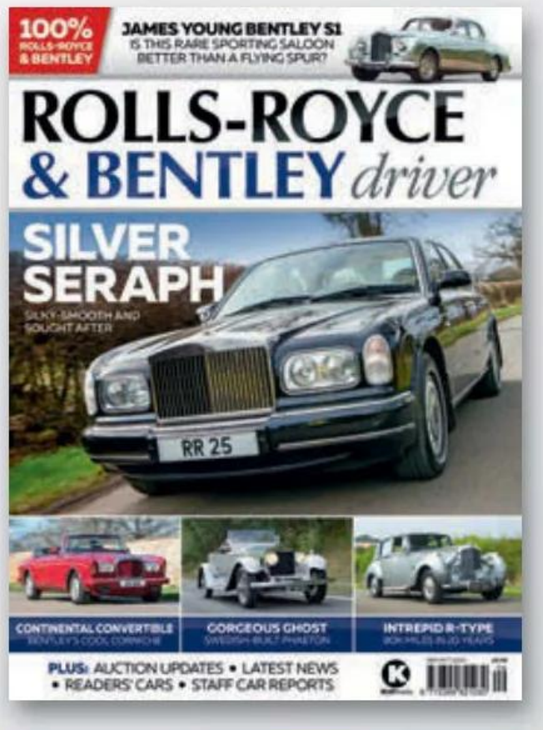
JANUARY/ FEBRUARY 2024

- 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 Blizzard
- 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



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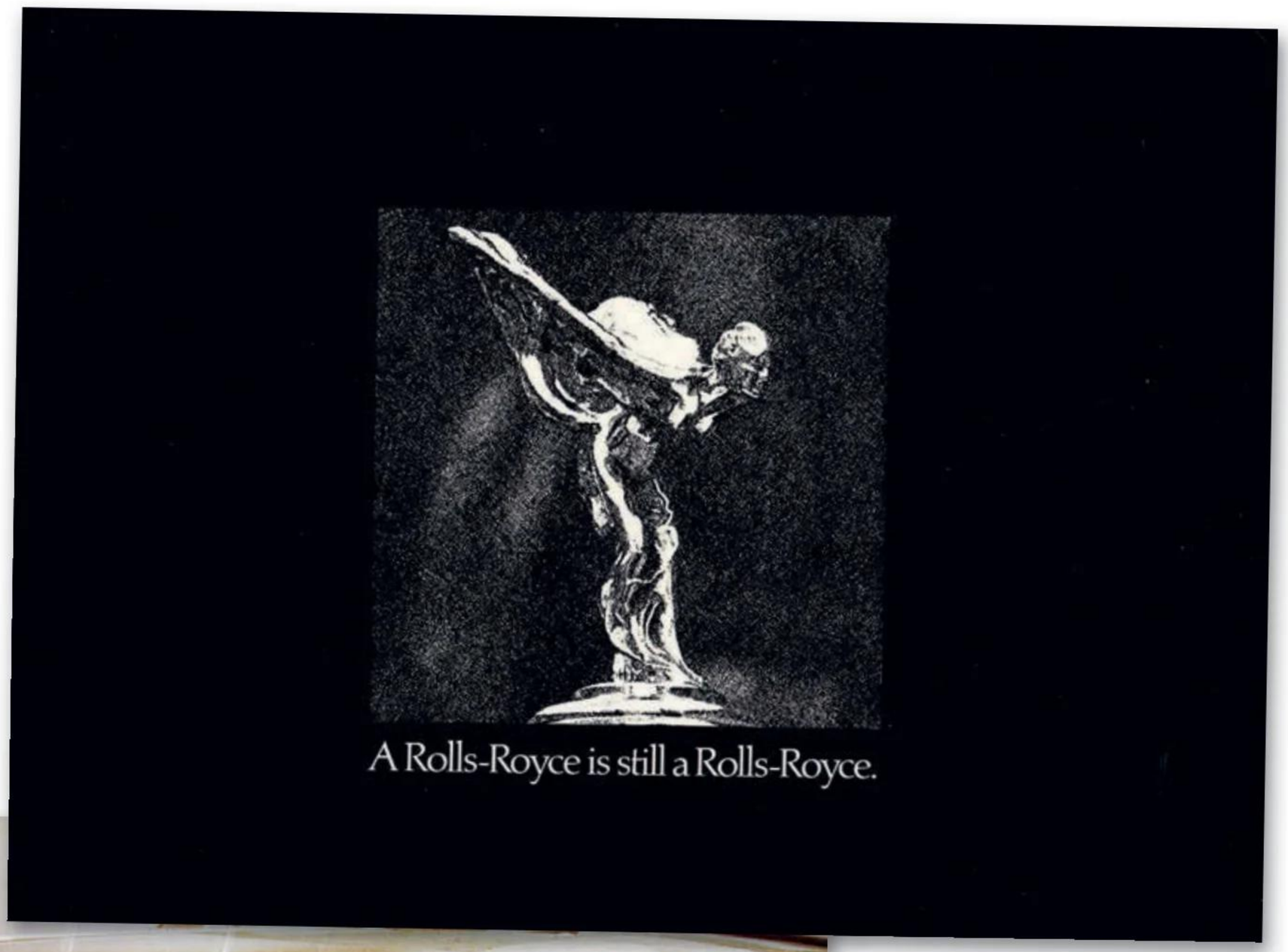
We take a look at some of the most fascinating, most innovative and most successful Rolls-Royce and Bentley models via an array of period brochures, adverts and images

WORDS: **PAUL GUINNESS**

RETAINING THE QUALITY ▶

The front cover of this 1975 brochure for the Silver Shadow and Corniche model ranges announced that "a Rolls-Royce is still a Rolls-Royce". A decade on from the original Silver Shadow's introduction, the company insisted that its emphasis on quality and luxury was still very much intact: "The skill, patience and refinement that go into every Rolls-Royce motor car are unchanged".

The pages within the brochure went into great detail about the craftsmanship involved in the production of the Silver Shadow and Corniche, with the latter being "hand-built by traditional English coachbuilders at Mulliner Park Ward". Photographs of gleaming new models were included, alongside the assurance that "your Rolls-Royce, by the time you see it, will have the immaculate gleam of the Silver Shadow on the opposite page". And thanks to the quality of the car, "with a little care, it will look like that for years".



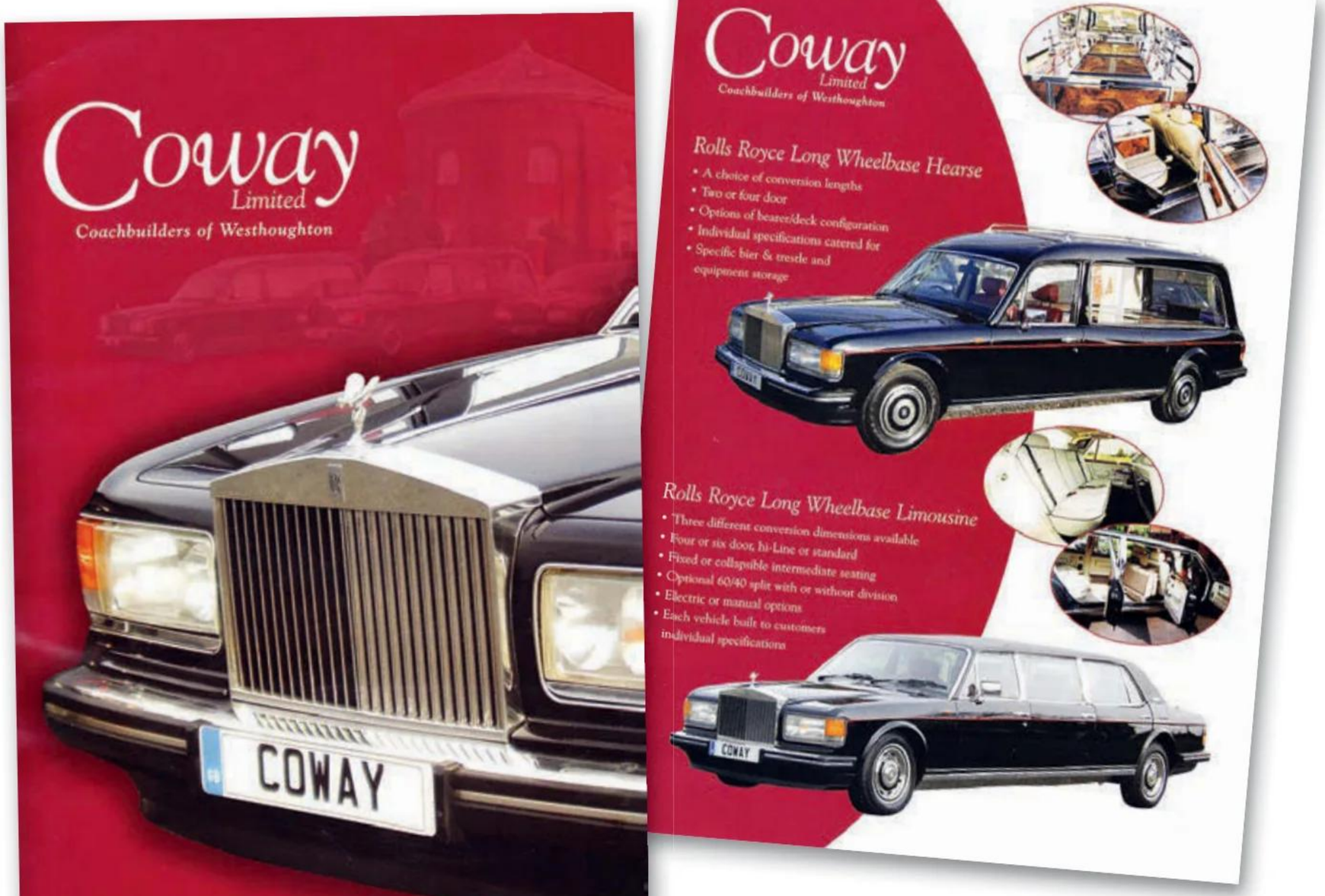


COACHBUILT SPECIAL ▶

Amongst our period brochure discoveries is this one from Conway Ltd, a Lancashire-based coachbuilder that specialised in SZ-based vehicles for the UK's funeral trade. Based on a 25,000sq.ft. site and with 25 employees at the time, this was a major concern by modern-day coachbuilder standards. And it was successful too, thanks to what the brochure called the company's "wealth of experience and knowledge in vehicle design, craftsmanship and engineering".

Funeral directors were able to choose from a range of different specs for their new Silver Spirit-based vehicles, with the hearse being available in a choice of conversion lengths and with two or four doors. There were various options when it came to the bearer/deck configuration, plus other ways in which to make your particular hearse bespoke.

The company's extended limousines, meanwhile, offered three different choices of conversion dimensions. Four or six doors could be specified, along with hi-line or standard roof heights. Each limousine could be ordered with or without a chauffeur's division, plus either fixed or collapsible intermediate seating. Each limousine was "built to customers' individual specifications", ensuring the maximum level of personalisation.



TYRE SUPPLIER ▶

The headline of this interesting old advert made a rather obvious point: "Rolls-Royce don't make their own tyres". The company did, however, demand the best tyres for its latest models, which is why it joined Aston Martin and Bristol in fitting Avon tyres as standard – including to the Bentley range.

This Avon advertisement explained how "Rolls-Royce have a name to live up to... for being the best car in the world". And as it then pointed out, "everything about the car has to live up to that name – including the tyres". The suggestion was that if companies like Rolls-Royce were happy to fit Avon tyres as standard, "wouldn't you feel happier with them underneath you?"





CREWE COLLECTION ▶

This classic photograph from 1952 shows the latest Silver Dawn (still then an export-only model) heading up of a row of Bentley R-Type 'Standard Steel' saloons. The Silver Dawn is obviously a left-hand drive example and is shod with whitewall tyres, which suggests it would shortly be heading to the USA.

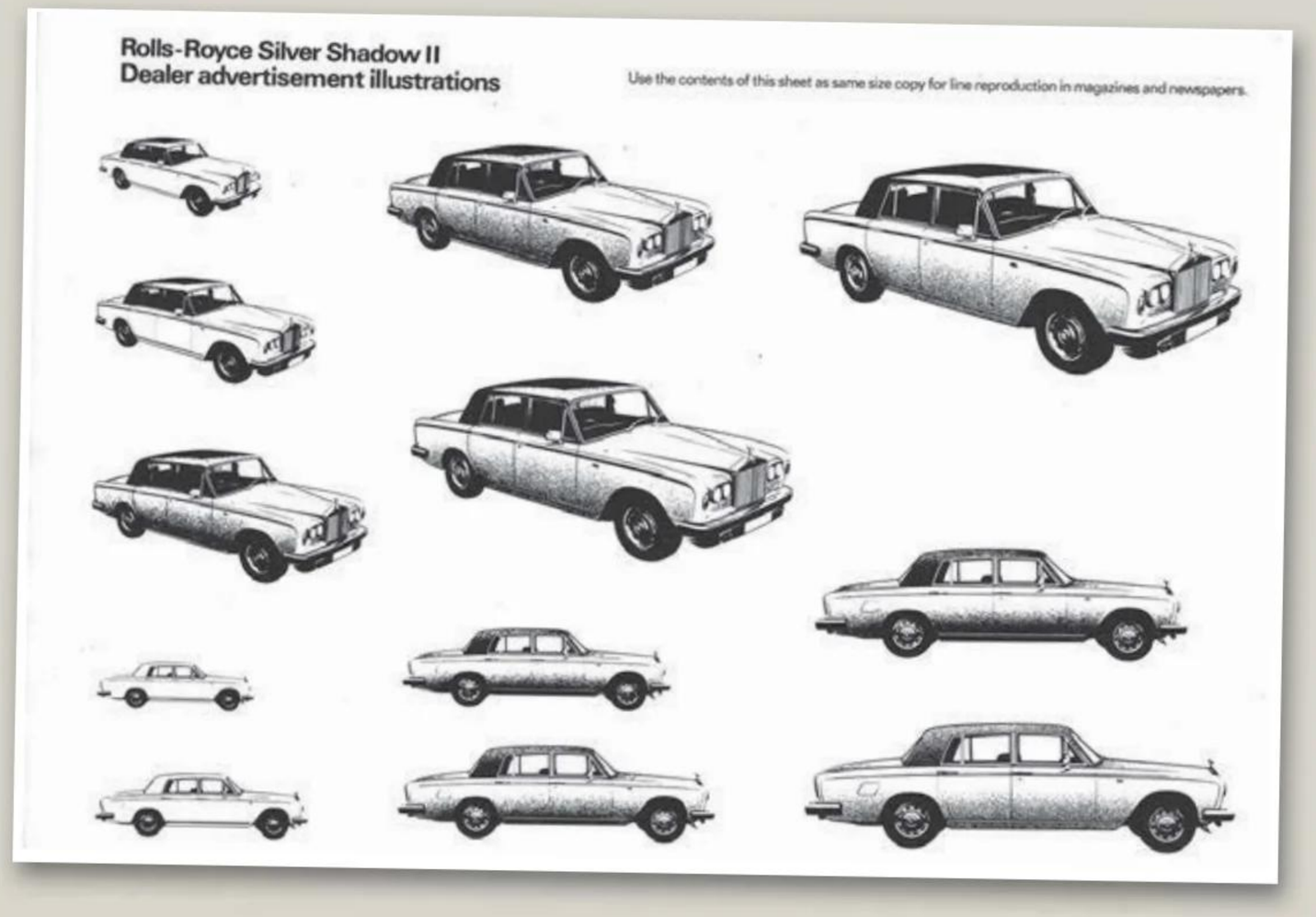
The Bentleys, however, all appear to be right-hand drive, which we assume means they're bound for British buyers.

The photograph was taken at the famous Crewe factory (where both the Silver Dawn and R-Type were produced), work on which first began in 1938 – seven years after Rolls-Royce's acquisition of Bentley. The 'Standard Steel' bodies of the Silver Dawn and MkVI/R-Type, however, were built by Cowley-based Pressed Steel Company, an independent manufacturer of bodywork since June 1930, when Morris Motors' previous involvement in the firm was officially severed.

ADVERTISING HELP ▶

There was a time when car manufacturers would supply their dealers with illustrations of their latest models for use in advertising, enabling each dealership to plan its own local adverts whilst retaining the uniform look required by the maker in question. And what we have here is a set of "dealer advertisement illustrations" for the new Silver Shadow II of 1977.

Each dealership would have received sheets like this every time there was a new model announcement or specification updates, with this particular example stating: "Use the contents of this sheet as same size copy for line reproduction in magazines and newspapers". Find a 1977 Rolls-Royce dealer advert now and there's every chance it will feature one of the drawings shown here.



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BENTLEY MARK VI



1951, 71620 miles, POA. 4.25. She's had well in excess of £100,000+ spent over her lifetime with receipts and records to match. The Bentley is best appreciated in person she's stored at Mckenzie Guppy, Blandford Forum Dorset. Please call 01258480029, South West.

122642

ROLLS-ROYCE 20/25



1931, POA. (Jan) Ch.No.GTR38 L.W.B. body by Mann Egerton. O.I.R.O 21k. A good solid vehicle. For more information and pictures, please email mail@chrishatt.me.uk. Please call 01271 830633, South West.

122500

ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER SPIRIT

1988, 98000 miles, £4,000. Head done ancillaries to be fitted. New sills needed, electrics have been renewed, four new avons, hole in floor plate, gold. Please call 07867996405, South West.

124578

ROLLS-ROYCE 20/25



1934, 20000 miles, £46,000. A lovely example from Park Ward coachbuilder. A real favourite with the family for some years. Recently repainted exterior and new upholstery in red. Two spare wheels and luggage trunk. Please call 07769680991, East of England.

123726

ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER SPUR



1986, 42000 miles, £20,000. The service book shows regular Rolls-Royce main dealer servicing from new until 2003 and thereafter at independent specialists until 2022. In my ownership servicing has been carried out by the experienced car restorer and car restoration project manager for the TV shows Car SOS and Guy's Garage. Please call 07931212859, South East.

122821

20/25 PARK WARD 'BROUGHAM DE VILLE' SEDANCA



1934, £55,000. Very attractive & delightfully different with Sham Canework & Opera lamps, lovely condition throughout, impressive history file inc full engine rebuild with new head & block. Please call 01248 602 649.

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1939, £97,500. Chassis 3B50. A chance to own a unique Bentley with great history/provenance. Used as a test bed during WWII on official business, every journey logged, enabling the all new MKVI launch in 1946. Very sound but a bit scruffy, runs/drives well, MoT'd. Please call 01248 602 649.

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ROLLS-ROYCE PIII BARKER SEDANCA DE VILLE



1937, £78,500. A magnificent machine in lovely condition originally built for the 1937 London Motor Show & the most expensive car there! Well cared for, very comprehensive history file, most tools. Please call 01248 602 649.

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BENTLEY 4¼ VANDEN PLAS 3 POSITION DROPHEAD COUPE



1937, £99,500. Handsome, desirable & practical with wind up windows. About £200k spent by last 2 owners on restoration including MX g/box, engine rebuild & much more. Please call 01248 602 649.

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BENTLEY MKVI 'BIG BORE' PARK WARD DHC



1952, £79,500. A bright, cheerful & desirable 'Long Wing' 4½ example. Very sound, excellent door fit & driving very nicely. Could do with some cosmetic improvement. Please call 01248 602 649.

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BENTLEY S2 FOUR DOOR SPORTS SALOON



1962, £39,500. One owner for 55 years who has looked after it well & kept a good history file. Original colours of Dawn Blue & Shell Grey, smart Blue/Grey leather, drives very well. Please call 01248 602 649.

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BENTLEY S3 CONTINENTAL 'CHINESE EYE' TWO DOOR DHC



1963, £195,000. Fabulous condition after a 1,200 hour restoration inc. very high quality repaint & new hood. Drives beautifully. Please call 01248 602 649.

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25/30 HOOPER SIX LIGHT LIMOUSINE WITH SUNROOF



1936, £36,500. Very spacious, occasional seats & fresh Black leather to front. Impressive frontal aspect – P100 h/ls, Trumpet horns. New cyl head, rad re-core, runs & drives sweetly. Please call 01248 602 649.

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PII CONTINENTAL HJ MULLINER TWO DOOR DHC



1932, £250,000. Fabulously sporty, stylish & probably unique, 2 seater with dickey seat – one family 1960's to 2018 & comes with interesting history. New cylinder head, original tools, drives beautifully. Please call 01248 602 649.

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BENTLEY BADGE



£95. 1983 Total Vintage Bentley Tour Bentley Driver Club No 16. Original. Post free. Please call 02083997541, South East.

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PAUL **GUINNESS**

Our editor recalls the launch of Bentley's first SUV, an 'interesting' looking device that would lead to the production-ready Bentayga three years later

It seems like only yesterday that Bentley Motors risked the wrath of traditionalists by launching the Bentayga (its first production SUV), despite this upmarket 4x4 making its debut at the 2015 Frankfurt Motor Show. Nine years is a long time for a single model to remain in production, but thanks to regular updates and engineering changes, the Bentayga remains extremely popular among those SUV buyers with the biggest budgets.

Before the Bentayga, however, there was another SUV from Bentley: the EXP 9 F concept, unveiled at Geneva in March 2012. But to say it divided opinion would be an understatement – and not just because it was a Bentley SUV. The EXP 9 F had been designed by Dirk van Braeckel, who had moved across to Bentley from elsewhere within the Volkswagen Group in 1999. He was responsible for the look of the original Continental GT of 2003, as well as the subsequent Flying Spur, Brooklands and Mulsanne – so with a pedigree like that, why did the EXP 9 F look… well, awkward? The ingredients were there for this to be a true contender in the luxury SUV sector, including Bentley's glorious W12 engine; but there was, if I recall correctly, little praise for the overall look of the car.

"Before the Bentayga, there was another SUV from Bentley: the EXP 9 F concept"

Surely Bentley could do better… and surely it wouldn't put into production an SUV that managed to generate so much negativity? In the end, it didn't. July 2013 saw the company announcing that a production-ready SUV would be launched two years later. And when it finally emerged, the Bentayga was indeed a major improvement over EXP 9 F, retaining a certain amount of Bentley-esque style – including the curvaceousness of the rear haunches – but in a toned-down, less gawky way. Not everyone approved, but the Bentayga was a far more accomplished looking device than EXP 9 F ever was, and I like to think it's aged rather well over the last nine years.

Anyway, a recent house move saw me going through piles of magazines and coming across the March 7th, 2012 *Autocar*, which included a four-page splash on EXP 9 F. The magazine was full of praise for the concept, highlighting that the announcement of Bentley's concept was "to show how a 180mph, £150,000 model would look in production". And the article quoted Bentley CEO of the time, Wolfgang Durheimer, who knew what was as stake: "We want it to be the most prestigious, fastest and most expensive SUV money can buy".

At the time of EXP 9 F's reveal, board approval for a Bentley SUV had still to be granted; and given how mixed the reaction was to the show car, any production plans could easily have been cancelled. But Bentley saw sense, restyled the vehicle, and launched the Bentayga to great success three years later. A Bentley SUV might not be to every enthusiast's taste, but it's hard to deny the logic of producing one – and making a decent profit from it.

Meanwhile, almost 13 years on from the EXP 9 F's arrival, I'd love to know what you think about it now, and how it compares with the Bentayga that we eventually got. Which do you prefer? As ever, drop me a line at **rrd.ed@kelsey.co.uk**. ■



The EXP 9 F divided opinion when it debuted in 2012.

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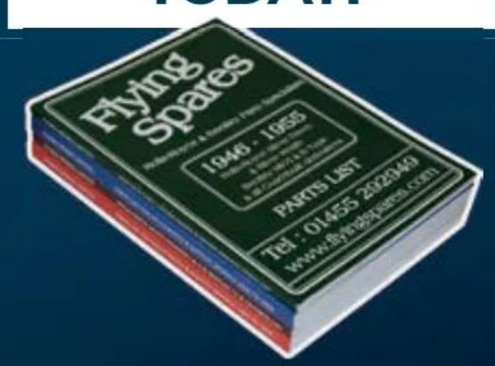
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