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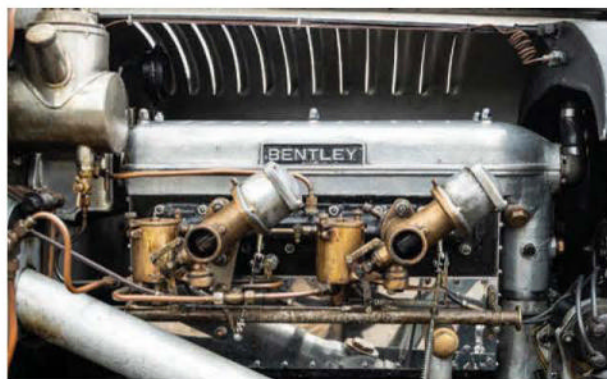
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An Independent Publication

Kelsey Publishing Ltd, The Granary, Downs Court,
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Subscriptions

Six issues of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver*
are published per annum

UK annual subscription price £35.94

Europe annual subscription price £39.00

USA annual subscription price £39.00

Rest of World annual subscription price £42.00

UK subscription and back issue orderline: 01959 543 747

Overseas subscription orderline: 0044 (0) 1959 543 747

Toll free USA subscription orderline: 1-888-777-0275

UK customer service team: 01959 543 747

Customer service email address: subs@kelsey.co.uk

Customer service and subscription postal address:

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Kelsey Publishing Ltd, The Granary, Downs Court, Yalding Hill,

Yalding, Kent, ME18 6AL, United Kingdom

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Digital issues and subscriptions

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Distribution

Great Britain: Seymour Distribution Limited,

2 East Poultry Avenue, London EC1A 9PT

Tel. 020 7429 4000, www.seymour.co.uk

Northern Ireland and the Republic Of Ireland:

Newspress, Tel: +353 23 886 3850



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Celebrating 60 years

Regular readers will have noticed that this issue of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* feels chunkier than normal, thanks to it boasting an extra 32 pages to enable us to celebrate 60 years of the Silver Shadow. It's an anniversary that simply can't be ignored, given how significant this hi-tech newcomer was to the company when it debuted in 1965 – remaining its best-selling model for the next decade and a half.

It's hard to overemphasise just what a change the Silver Shadow (and its T-series Bentley sibling) represented 60 years ago. This was the car that brought Rolls-Royce truly into the modern era, introducing monocoque construction (a first for Crewe) and sophisticated hydropneumatics for the innovative new suspension and braking systems. What sat under the bonnet was familiar stuff, with the L-series V8 having made its debut in the Silver Cloud II six years earlier; but in every other respect, the Silver Shadow marked a true revolution.

If it hadn't been so impressive, of course, it couldn't have enjoyed such a lengthy run, although Rolls-Royce took the sensible step of announcing updates and improvements on a regular basis to ensure it remained competitive. The biggest change came late in the model's career, with the Silver Shadow II of 1977 bringing enough of a facelift to enable more than three further years of success. Whichever Silver Shadow is your favourite derivative, check out our special anniversary section that starts on page 45. It's a celebration of an all-time great.

Meanwhile, don't forget that the best way of ensuring your copy of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* every two months is to subscribe. Wherever you live (UK or overseas), simply visit <https://shop.kelsey.co.uk/rrb> and check out the latest offers for your particular region, with subscriptions available in both print and digital guises. Not only will it save you searching the shelves, it'll save you money as well. It's what we call a win-win!

Paul Guinness

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ROLLS-ROYCE & BENTLEY *driver*

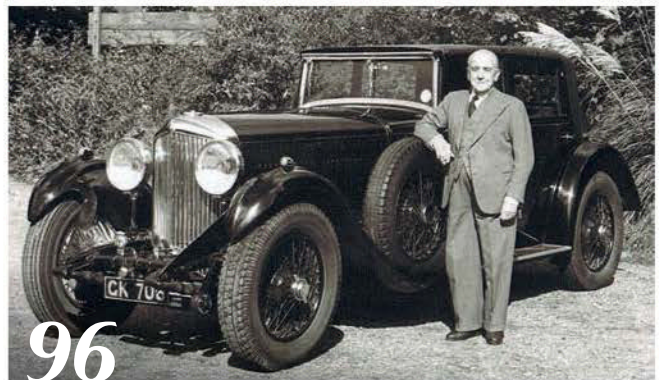
"In July 1936, Barnato had the aerodynamic HJ Mulliner body removed from B2DG and fitted to his new 4¼ Litre"



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SUBSCRIPTION
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PAGE 90





TRADITIONAL LEATHER



Heritage Leather, first developed by Bentley Motors' Mulliner division for the Continuation reincarnations of the Blower and Speed Six, can now be specified on the company's latest models.

Supplied by Bridge of Weir, Heritage Leather is claimed to give the interior of a modern Bentley the look and feel of one from the 1930s, with a two-tone finish and haircell grain. It is currently offered in two colours traditional for the period and identified in original records of historic Bentleys: Ox Blood Red and Parsons Napier Green.

To showcase this new tailoring option, Bentley commissioned an example of the latest-generation Continental GT Mulliner to mirror the Factory Works Speed Six Continuation Series. Both cars (shown above) are finished in the same Bedford Grey exterior paint, and feature Heritage Leather upholstery in Ox Blood red.

During the development and testing of the Blower Continuation Series, the hide provided the best tactility and

authentic manufacturing techniques for the development of Mulliner's Continuation cars, delivering the same durability rating as found in today's modern Bentley.



MULLINER FLEET ORDER

Bentley Motors has announced a new collaboration with The Galaxy Hotel, based in Macau, China, which has just taken delivery of the largest ever fleet of bespoke Flying Spur Mulliner models. In a move that's said to underscore the growing demand for luxury, chauffeur-driven experiences, nine of the four-door Bentley saloons were added to

the hotel's fleet at a recent ceremony.

The Galaxy Hotel collaborated with the team at Mulliner to design the luxury saloons. Each car features Pale Brodgar Mulliner paintwork detailed with the signature emblem of The Galaxy Hotel, which is hand-painted on the two front doors. Custom Galaxy Hotel puddle lamps are also

included, to welcome guests as they step aboard. Inside, meanwhile, there's Wellness Seating all round, which includes Seat Auto Climate and Postural Adjust that measures and maintains the perfect body temperature and varies the pressure on occupants' muscles throughout their journey.

The latest Flying Spur Mulliner is built around Bentley's new Ultra Performance Hybrid powertrain, which is capable of near-silent pure-EV driving for up to 47 miles – making it ideal for Zero Emission Zones or city travel. The full electric mode can be deployed at speeds of up to 87mph.

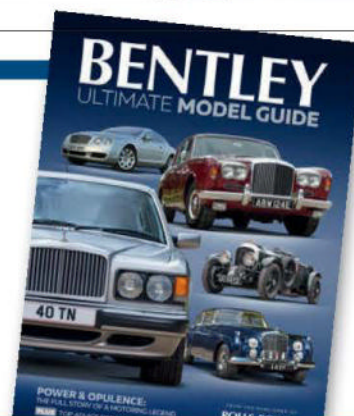
This latest hotel deal follows on from the successful collaboration with The Peninsula London, which saw four Bentley Bentayga hybrids becoming part of its in-house chauffeur fleet. Building on this relationship, The Peninsula Hong Kong commissioned a further eight Bentayga EWB Azures, which now form part of its house car offering.



BENTLEY CELEBRATION

The recently published *Bentley Ultimate Model Guide* bookazine is still available at the time of writing, this 132-page publication being dedicated to the history of Bentley and the models that made it such a motoring legend.

It tells the whole Bentley story, from the start of it all in 1919 through to the best-known models of the 21st century. It's packed with fascinating history and amazing feature cars, as well as buying advice for some of the most popular post-war models. To order a copy, priced at £14.99 plus shipping, visit <https://shop.kelsey.co.uk/product/bentley-ultimate-model-guide>.





BESPOKE ALBUMS

Aimed at prestige vehicle owners who want the ultimate in personal accessories, MYCARALBUM is a new service that can transform your Rolls-Royce or Bentley (classic or modern) into what's described as a "stunning photographic album".

MYCARALBUM says that it goes "beyond standard photos", capturing the essence of your car in "exquisite detail". The bespoke books can even include service history and scannable video links, offering a "truly immersive experience". To find out more about the various different packages available, head to www.mycaralbum.com.



FOUNDATION PICNIC

The Sir Henry Royce Memorial Foundation has announced a Summer Celebration Picnic for Sunday, July 13th – and all Rolls-Royce and Bentley owners and enthusiasts are invited to join in the fun, taking place at Grove Farm, Shutlanger, near Towcester (NN12 7ST), from 11am.

The Foundation is hoping for a strong turnout of cars, owners and picnic hampers in the glorious surroundings of Grove Farm, to celebrate the engineering excellence of Sir Henry Royce, his contemporaries and associates. It's an opportunity to view the cars and enjoy the friendship that the Foundation brings. There will also be a safari across the farm to 'The Follies' and a little light music for everyone's entertainment.

To book your place, fill in the form at <https://henryroyce.org.uk/events>. Or if you have any queries, call Howard Gibbons on 07956 260422.

ONE-OFF CULLINAN

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars has announced the completion of a one-off build known as the Black Badge Cullinan Daisy, inspired by a client's favourite hiking trail and featuring a wood sandblasting technique that creates a striking three-dimensional effect. A unique Daisy motif extends to the coachline, bespoke umbrellas and illuminated treadplates.

The commissioning client behind the Black Badge Cullinan Daisy commented: "My love for the outdoors has been a driving force behind both my personal passions and professional success. The inspiration for this commission came from a field of daisies on my favourite trail in the High Tatras mountains – a place I return to when I need to clear my thoughts."

Martina Starke, general manager of Bespoke Design at Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, explained the challenges involved: "This commission challenged



us to explore how natural motifs can be translated through craft and materiality. From the delicately etched Blackwood to the daisy

detail hidden inside the umbrellas, we told the client's remarkable story through unexpected textures and an entirely new palette."



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A photograph of a red 1935 Bentley 3½ Litre drophead coupé parked on a wooden surface. The car is shown from the side, with its top down, revealing red interior upholstery. The background features a blurred view of a park or estate with trees and a fence.

CHANGE OF IDENTITY

We head to California to sample an intriguing Derby Bentley – a stylish 3½ Litre drophead coupé that, in the hands of a famous owner, experienced a change of coachwork early on in its career

WORDS & PHOTOS: STEVE NATALE



FEATURE CAR

1935 BENTLEY 3½ LITRE

Chassis B2DG was originally owned by Woolf Barnato and his wife, who ordered the car in March 1935.



In the 1930s, it wasn't unusual to dispatch an older late-model luxury car back to its original manufacturer or coachbuilder to have it rebodied with something newer and more fashionable. In the case of this particular Bentley, however, the opposite was done – the old body on this car was removed and fitted to a newer car. Who would do such a thing, and why? The story of how chassis number B2DG came to exist as it does today is particularly interesting, and at the centre of the story is none other than Woolf Barnato – one of the original 'Bentley Boys' and a key

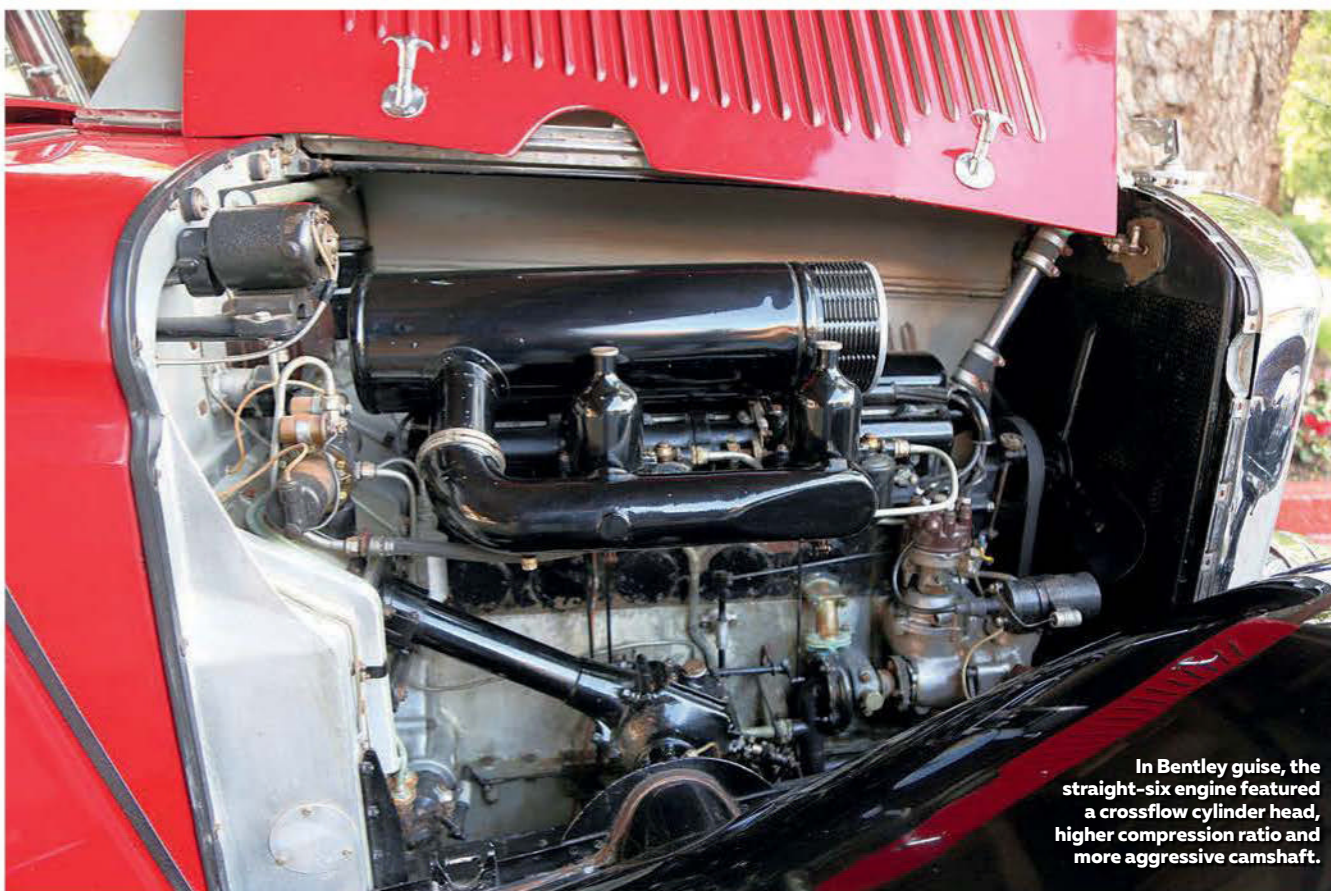
figure in the storied history of Bentley.

Known to his friends as 'Babe', Barnato was a sportsman, racer and promoter. He was also extremely wealthy. Born Joel Woolf Barnato in 1895, he was the son of Barney Barnato, one of the most powerful and influential British businessmen of the late 19th century, who amassed a fortune with his gold and diamond mining interests in South Africa. Sadly, Barney Barnato passed away when Woolf was only two years old.

Woolf Barnato became the quintessential British sporting gentleman, entertaining himself with

yachting, cricket, the equestrian arts and competitive swimming. He also loved cars and was very impressed with Bentleys, even though he was a personal friend of Ettore Bugatti. Woolf purchased his first 3 Litre in 1925, and soon he and his friends began successfully racing their Bentleys. Despite a Bentley win at the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1924, however, the company was in serious financial trouble.

Wanting to save the company that built the cars he loved, Barnato made an arrangement with WO Bentley, becoming chairman of the company



In Bentley guise, the straight-six engine featured a crossflow cylinder head, higher compression ratio and more aggressive camshaft.

in exchange for his financial backing, which would be provided through a financial services firm created for that specific purpose. With the influx of cash from Barnato, he not only saved Bentley but personally went on to win at Le Mans three straight times behind the wheel of a Works car. He even famously raced a train between France and England, using a Bentley on public roads... and won. The good financial situation did not last long for the company, however, with the effects of the Great Depression resulting in the sale of Bentley to Rolls-Royce in 1931 – a story covered in depth further on in this issue of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver*. Barnato went on to rejoin the board of what was by then known as Bentley Motors (1931) Ltd in 1934.

BARNATO'S BENTLEY

Later that same year, Woolf Barnato ordered a new 3½ Litre, chassis B2DG. The official order form for the car, dated March 20th, 1935, was originally in the name of Capt. Woolf Barnato, although 'Capt.' was subsequently crossed out and replaced with 'Mrs'.

Interestingly, the original coachbuilder's name, Thrupp & Maberly, was also crossed out in favour of HJ Mulliner.

The original HJ Mulliner body was a sleek Streamlined Drophead Coupé with a disappearing top and dramatic sloping quarter panels, boot lid and rear fender skirts, with the design being the same as Mulliner's London motor show car of 1934. By 1936, however, with Bentley debuting its new 4¼ Litre, Woolf Barnato inevitably wanted one of the latest models as soon as possible.

Another new Streamlined Drophead Coupé from HJ Mulliner would have taken many months to create if the normal process was followed, which was to order a new chassis from Jack Barclay and then send it to the coachbuilder. Instead, Barnato ordered B121GP with a plan in mind. Records indicate a Vanden Plas pillarless saloon coupé body was specified, but again the coachbuilder's name was crossed out



B2DG originally featured the same HJ Mulliner coachwork as this 1934 motor show car.

and replaced with HJ Mulliner instead.

Unusually, in July 1936, Barnato then had the aerodynamic HJ Mulliner body removed from B2DG and fitted to his new 4¼ Litre. His first car was then fitted with new drophead-style coachwork by Park Ward, which it still proudly wears today.

Mrs Woolf Barnato subsequently sold the Park Ward-bodied B2DG in December 1937 to a Mr Dennis Williams of London, who sold it to a Mrs RW Johnson of London in 1955, »

FEATURE CAR

1935 BENTLEY 3½ LITRE



The body that B2DG has sported for most of its career is this handsome drophead coupé design by Park Ward.

“Mrs Woolf Barnato subsequently sold the Park Ward-bodied B2DG in December 1937 to a Mr Dennis Williams of London”

according to records. The whereabouts of the car are then unknown until the late 1970s, when it appeared in the USA and was owned by WD Sims, chief judge of the Northern California chapter of the RROC. The car was then acquired by Rolls-Royce and Bentley enthusiast Charles Spangenberg in 1988. By this time, however, B2DG was in need of complete restoration, a task that was performed by its new owner. Spangenberg went on

to exercise his Bentley regularly, participating in rallies, tours and club events, including the RROC International Meet in Monterey in 2004.

As for the original body that was fitted to chassis B121GP, this also still survives today in beautifully restored condition.

B2DG IN 2025

We were lucky enough recently to

spend the best part of a day with this wonderful Derby Bentley thanks to its current caretaker, Brian Murphy, at Blackhawk Rolling Art, near Danville, California... and it didn't disappoint.

It's now well over 30 years since the restoration of this handsome 3½ Litre, and it still looks amazing. There is something about an old Bentley or Rolls-Royce that allows them to age gracefully, like no other car. The subtle patina of the paint and brightwork, as »



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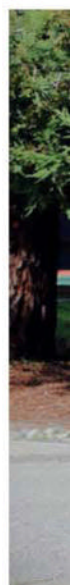
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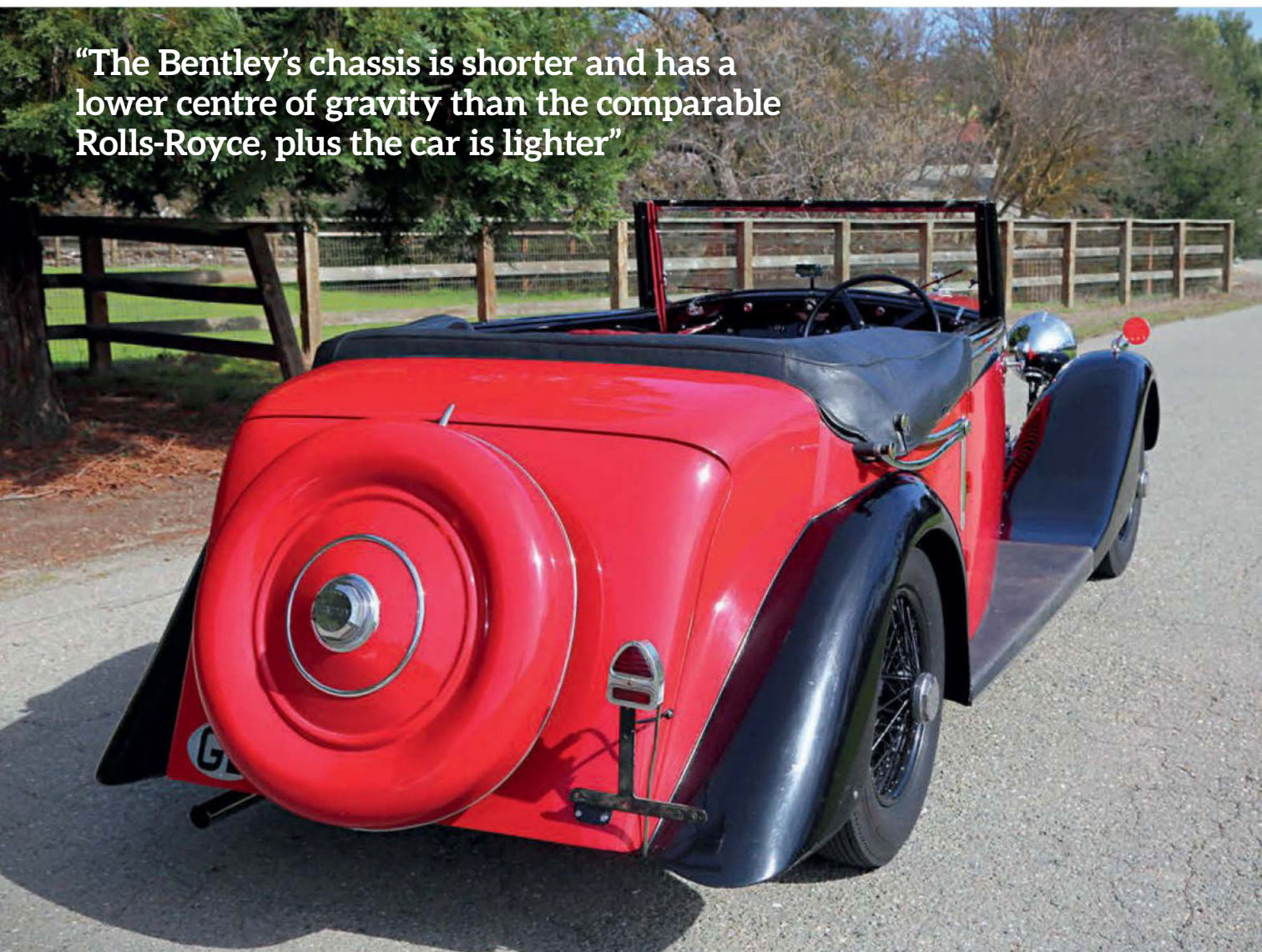


View the watch

FEATURE CAR
1935 BENTLEY 3½ LITRE



“The Bentley’s chassis is shorter and has a lower centre of gravity than the comparable Rolls-Royce, plus the car is lighter”



The car's high-quality restoration was completed well over 30 years ago, and it still looks superb today.



The impressively well-presented interior provides an ideal driving position and a comfortable experience for all on board.

well as the suppleness of decades-old leather, reveals an old-world charm and character that I find captivating. These cars somehow become even more elegant with age, and this one's particularly good looking, with the proportions of its Park Ward coachwork being balanced, elegant and sporty.

Bentleys produced during this period were assembled at the Rolls-Royce factory in Derby, hence being generally known as Derby Bentleys today. They share much of their mechanical make-up with the Rolls-Royce 20/25, the drivetrain of the Bentley being largely the same. The big difference, however, is under the bonnet, with the Bentley version of the company's straight-six engine being enhanced

by a crossflow cylinder head, a higher compression ratio, a more aggressive camshaft and twin SU carburettors. These modifications turn the relatively pedestrian performance of the Rolls-Royce 20/25 into the 'Silent Sports Car', the strapline famously seen in Bentley's advertising promotions of the time.

ON THE ROAD

Being behind the wheel of B2DG is a comfortable experience, with the steering wheel, pedals and gearshift being neatly placed and easy to reach and operate. The engine is responsive and runs exceptionally well in this car, and the gated shift helps guide the driver to the next gear. As

I spent more time behind the wheel, I remembered that these cars like to be double-declutched when shifting from first to second, but a single clutch in the other gears is sufficient. The transmission has four forward gears, although first gear is very low and not necessary unless starting out on a gradient. Interestingly, only the top two gears are fully synchronised.

The Bentley's chassis is shorter and has a lower centre of gravity than the comparable Rolls-Royce, plus the car is lighter, resulting in remarkably sporting handling characteristics for a model of this vintage. The steering is heavy, but quick and with no slack – this Bentley goes just where you point it. There's plenty of driver entertainment, and it's »

FEATURE CAR

1935 BENTLEY 3½ LITRE

This glorious Bentley 3½ Litre still impresses with its eager performance and effortless cruising capability.



amazing that any car produced in 1935 can handle so well. If we're impressed now, you can just image how much they were appreciated when new.

Michael Ellman-Brown, the author of *Bentley – The Silent Sports Car, 1931-1941*, features an array of period letters in his book from new Bentley owners. One 3½ Litre buyer was

impressed enough with his new Bentley to write: "It is, on consideration of all its qualities, the best high-speed motor car I have ever driven on the road, and I have tried most of them. Besides the really powerful brakes, the outstanding virtues are the excellent steering and leech-like roadholding. These make the car handle more

safely than anything I have driven while maintaining a high average."

Another owner felt compelled to write: "Its greatest fascination, to me, does not lie solely in its speed. The acceleration, roadholding and braking are such that here is a car which is safety perfected. That delightful synchromesh gearbox with its intriguing third will, to me, be 'a joy forever'. So, I could go on talking about every outstanding feature, such as perfect steering and excellent springing, showing that every part has been designed and produced with infinite care and blended into a unique chassis which is, in more senses than one, 'the Rolls-Royce of sporting cars'. The 3½ Litre Bentley is the latest and, in my opinion, the greatest of all the models bearing that famous name and the finest car of its type yet produced."

With a famous original owner and a fascinating early history, the fact that this particular Bentley has survived, been restored and is in good hands today is something to be celebrated. Perhaps one day, B2DG and its 4¼ Litre cousin – B121GP, which wears this car's first body – will appear at an event together. If so, we'll certainly want to be there. ■

Our contributor, Steve Natale, enjoyed his time spent at the wheel of this intriguing Bentley.



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MARKET WATCH

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



IMMINENT AUCTION

A 1995 Bentley Continental R will be going under the hammer with Anglia Car Auctions (<https://angliacarauctions.co.uk>) soon after this issue of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* goes on sale, offered at a guide price of £30,000–£35,000. The odometer shows a

mileage of just over 47,000 and the car has a valid MoT until April 2026.

This particular Continental R has apparently been part of a private collection since 2007 and has been in storage since 2014, although it does run and drive. Paperwork includes the

V5C 'log book', owner's handbook, service and maintenance booklet, plus the service book with stamps up to 37,987 miles in April 2007. If you like the idea of recommissioning this good-looking coupé, the auction takes place over the weekend of June 14th–15th.



LOW-MILEAGE SILVER SPUR

Among the cars that Flying Spares has available at the time of writing is this 1994 Silver Spur III, which has covered just 19,000 miles from new and is now back on the road after a number of years spent in storage.

Featuring white paintwork and a grey leather interior that's described as "in fantastic condition", this eye-catching Rolls-Royce has recently passed its MoT and had the advisories from the test professionally sorted. It's now ready to be enjoyed and gradually improved by its next owner, making it ideal for any SZ-generation fan seeking a straightforward rolling project.

Flying Spares calls this an opportunity to acquire a "running and driving example of Rolls-Royce craftsmanship, with the potential to refine further – if desired". The asking price is £11,000, and you can find out more via www.flyingsparses.com or by calling +44 (0)1455 292949.



LONG-WHEELBASE TURBO

A late-model Bentley Turbo RL that was entered into the most recent auction of Newcastle-based WB & Sons ended up smashing its tempting-sounding pre-sale estimate of £4000-£6000, finally selling for £7630 including fees.

The Bentley was originally supplied by HR Owen in London and was first registered in March 1997. It came finished in Rosewood metallic with contrasting Sandstone hide. The mileage at the time of its latest sale was 77,000, and it boasted a large history file that included the original book pack (complete with service book containing 19 stamps via main dealers and Bentley specialists) and a folder full of receipts for maintenance, including replacement head gaskets at 60,000 miles. If you're this Turbo RL's latest owner, we'd love to hear your plans for it.



PARK WARD RARITY

A particularly rare example of a Bentley S-series Continental is this 1958 example, said to be one of just 16 cars built to design number 872 in right-hand drive by Park Ward. It's a later-specification example, and it comes with what the specialist selling dealer describes as "all the 'S1' Continental factory mechanical upgrades".

This particular Continental was delivered new to South Africa, where it spent the majority of its career. It's now back in the UK and is available via Frank Dale, having been restored and prepared in the company's workshops. It looks stunning in the attractive colour scheme of Shell Grey with contrasting black leather interior – and it can be yours for £250,000. Visit www.frankdale.com to see more photographs of this handsome machine.



AUCTION TRACKER

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

WORDS: PETER LAVERS IMAGES: VARIOUS

This issue's Auction Tracker covers the full 12-month period from May 1st, 2024 to the end of April 2025. It was set up over two years ago to monitor the UK auction market, logging every Rolls-Royce and Bentley that comes to market via a physical or online auction house. The database now consists of over 4500 motor cars offered for sale, with results recorded in order to track sales rates and values by marque, model range and auction house.

Trends are assessed on a 12-month rolling basis (to eliminate seasonality) versus three comparable periods:

- The numbers published last time (to the end of Feb '25) – the 2m trend
- Versus year-on-year (May '23 to April '24) – the 12m trend
- Versus 24 months ago (May '22 to April '23) – the 24m trend

MARKET CONTRACTION

In the latest two months, the UK auction market has contracted slightly (down one per cent) in motor cars offered and sold. The total amount spent has dropped by a more significant four per cent, resulting in an average value reduction of over three per cent.

The figures versus 12 months ago are much more dramatically down, with only the sales rate registering green and values showing double-digit falls. However, the number of motor cars sold versus 24 months ago is significantly higher, albeit at lower average values.

	Total Market			
	Latest 12m	2m Trend	12m Trend	24m Trend
Offered for Auction	1636	-0.6%	-9.2%	n/a
Sales Rate	52.3%	0.0%	1.6%	n/a
Number Sold	856	-0.7%	-6.3%	16.8%
Total Value of Sales	£28.1m	-4.0%	-16.1%	2.4%
Average Value	£32,817	-3.3%	-10.4%	-12.3%



Cutting the data by physical versus online sale shows a dramatic difference by channel. Physical auction houses retain the best sales rates and highest values achieved, yet are still losing share to online.

£100,000-PLUS WOES

Regular readers will be aware that I have previously diagnosed one of the main causes of the market malaise to be

the 'top end'. For this issue, I thought I'd give some substance to this assertion by presenting the total sales value data split by motor cars achieving over £100,000 (typically only around 50 units in any given 12-month period) and those achieving less than £100,000 (the vast majority by volume).

The resulting graph is fascinating. The sub-£100,000 market grew nicely to the end of 2023 (driven by online growth) and has then only gently

	Physical				Online			
	Latest 12m	2m Trend	12m Trend	24m Trend	Latest 12m	2m Trend	12m Trend	24m Trend
Offered for Auction	439	-3.5%	-19.6%	-4.1%	1197	0.5%	-4.7%	n/a
Sales Rate	68.1%	-1.1%	4.4%	-7.7%	46.5%	0.6%	1.5%	n/a
Number Sold	299	-5.1%	-14.1%	-11.5%	557	1.8%	-1.6%	41.0%
Total Value of Sales	£13.4m	-5.8%	-27.0%	-17.8%	£14.7m	-2.2%	-3.0%	31.7%
Average Value	£44,693	-0.8%	-15.0%	-7.1%	£26,442	-3.9%	-1.4%	-6.6%

declined. The £100,000-plus segment by contrast has proved far less stable, and currently sits at its lowest value since I started tracking the data.

TOP PERFORMERS

Rather than randomly select individual results to illustrate the market, I'm introducing a new feature in this column that presents the top sales performers in the latest two months (March and

April 2025), in six categories:

- **Modern Classics** – all models from Arnage/Silver Seraph launch in 1998 up to 2015.
- **SZ** – Rolls-Royce Silver Spirit-derived saloons and Bentleys from Mulsanne to Turbo RT, 1980 to 1998.
- **SY** – Silver Shadow and Bentley T-derived saloons 1965 to 1980.
- **Post-War Standard Steel** – from MkVI to Silver Cloud III, 1946 to 1965.

- **Post-War Coachbuilt** – any model with bodywork produced by a coachbuilder (company owned, independent or 'special') from 1946 to 2015.
- **Pre-War** – any model produced before 1939

These categories produce a varied range of delightful motor cars. Surprisingly, five of the top performers this time are Rolls-Royces.

MODERN CLASSICS



2014 Wraith
£66,500, CollectingCars

SZ



1997 Silver Dawn
£17,600, Bonhams Online

SY



1968 Silver Shadow
£19,000, Manor Park

POST-WAR STANDARD STEEL



1960 Bentley S2
£44,800, H&H

POST-WAR COACHBUILT



1959 Silver Cloud DHC
£167,200, CollectingCars

PRE-WAR



1912 Silver Ghost
£195,500, Bonhams

MARQUE TRENDS

The 2m picture shows a similar trend for both marques. Rolls-Royce volumes are significantly down versus 12 months ago, but the sales rate and average value are slightly up. Bentley volumes are down less on the 12m trend, but average values are down on all the trends, reflecting that there are more Bentleys than Rolls-Royces in that all-important £100,000-plus segment.

MODEL RANGE TRENDS

The latest 12m and 24m trends for model ranges (excluding projects) averaging one sale per month are presented here. Eight Rolls-Royce

ranges have enough data to show a trend, with two up versus 12 months ago, one stable, and five down. It is, however, an even split up/down versus two years ago.

Goodwood four-door models again top the table, reflecting increasing numbers of newer models being traded in the classic auction market.

It is good to see the 'large' Derby Rolls-Royces making a comeback, although some may consider an average price of just over £100,000 to be a bargain for such magnificent machines.

SZ models have held on to their improved values versus two years ago, but remain less valuable on average than

their SY predecessors despite these losing ground in the latest 12 months.

Silver Seraph models were the stars of the show in some of my early columns but values appear to be falling at auction, despite them still commanding a premium over the best SZ models (and their Arnage siblings).

Silver Cloud saloons and 'small' Derby Rolls-Royces are also on the slide, and convertible Corniches/Silver Shadow DHCs are looking remarkably good value. Maybe a good summer will bring out some more buyers?

Of the Bentleys auctioned, 10 model ranges have sufficient data to present the trends, and eight of these are up »

	Rolls-Royce				Bentley			
	Latest 12m	2m Trend	12m Trend	24m Trend	Latest 12m	2m Trend	12m Trend	24m Trend
Offered for Auction	553	-0.9%	-17.8%	n/a	1083	-0.5%	-4.1%	n/a
Sales Rate	55.5%	0.1%	2.8%	n/a	50.7%	-0.1%	1.2%	n/a
Number Sold	307	-0.6%	-13.5%	6.2%	549	-0.7%	-1.8%	23.6%
Total Value of Sales	£9.9m	-3.1%	-11.7%	-2.7%	£18.2m	-4.4%	-18.3%	5.4%
Average Value	£32,303	-2.5%	2.1%	-8.4%	£33,105	-3.7%	-16.8%	-14.7%

in average value on the 12m basis.

S-series saloons are the biggest climbers, but this range includes coachbuilt four-door models, so a few of these appearing in the mix produces a big swing. (Incidentally, coachbuilt four-door Silver Clouds are included in the corresponding Rolls-Royce model range, but rarely come up).

Bentley SZ saloons have improved in value significantly on the 12m and 24m trends (when in my view they were seriously undervalued), with the best ones making a great classic choice.

The immediate pre- and post-war Bentley models have recovered well in value, with auction estimates being much more realistically set in recent months. The 'large' Bentley two-door range (Continental R onwards) is also

on the rise, reflecting their comparative rarity and excellent usability.

The modern classic Bentley saloons (Continental Flying Spur and Arnage) have seen improving values this year but are down versus the 24m trend. The former have been relatively unloved at auction, with an over-supply situation that also affects its two-door siblings. These sit at the bottom of the table with sales rates barely achieving 50 per cent.

months. Three of them were projects, but all looked economically restorable. An eBay sale saw a credible £14,300 achieved for a well-specced example (pictured), which reportedly required little work. We'd love to hear from you as to whether that's correct if you're the buyer of this particular Corniche. ■



PROJECT CHOICE

The Rolls-Royce Corniche FHC (or Two-Door Saloon if you prefer) is a rare motor car, with only around 1100 produced between 1971 and 1980), so it was great to see four examples popping up for auction in the latest two

Rolls-Royce Model Ranges	Max. Value	Ave. Value	Min. Value	12m Trend	24m Trend
Goodwood 4-dr/SUV	£268,200	£143,508	£32,000	29.9%	30.9%
Silver Ghost/Phantoms I-III	£208,259	£101,749	£31,250	10.3%	19.0%
SZ saloons	£28,125	£9,892	£3,600	-0.5%	8.8%
SY saloons	£30,375	£11,576	£4,500	-5.0%	8.4%
Silver Seraph	£75,576	£28,433	£17,600	-6.7%	-4.4%
Silver Cloud I, II & III	£41,500	£24,532	£11,000	-6.9%	-4.6%
20HP-Wraith	£71,814	£28,125	£11,440	-7.9%	-29.3%
Silver Shadow/Corniche DHC	£96,320	£47,110	£30,552	-12.3%	-27.4%

Bentley Model Ranges	Max. Value	Ave. Value	Min. Value	12m Trend	24m Trend
S Series Saloons	£115,000	£46,428	£9,200	68.1%	112.8%
SZ Turbos	£24,000	£11,673	£3,999	29.7%	12.4%
SZ Nat Asp Saloons	£19,783	£10,307	£3,450	16.7%	15.2%
MkVI/R Type Saloons	£65,040	£21,714	£9,184	21.4%	23.2%
Derby Bentleys	£132,250	£75,527	£34,146	15.7%	69.3%
Continental R, T, Azure & Brooklands	£212,400	£52,108	£20,325	10.9%	3.5%
Continental Flying Spur	£39,396	£13,304	£5,500	8.2%	-10.3%
Arnage	£37,750	£16,699	£8,680	2.1%	-17.9%
Continental GTC	£162,200	£31,802	£13,500	-3.6%	-19.7%
Continental GT Coupe	£91,000	£19,164	£6,649	-18.5%	-22.4%

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NOT THE BEST OF STARTS

We meet the owner of a 1986 Silver Spur, the first custodian of which was Lord Weinstock – a Rolls-Royce client so unhappy with his car that he ended up threatening legal action

WORDS: PAUL GUINNESS PHOTOS: GREGORY OWAIN



Imagine how excited any of us would have been back in 1986 if we'd just taken delivery of a brand new Silver Spur, built to order and to our own specification. It's the kind of scenario that most of us could only dream about at the time. But then imagine how we'd feel if that very same Rolls-Royce turned out to be a disappointment, with faults that saw it being returned to Crewe for rectification and labelled on internal paperwork as the 'Complaint Car'.

Unfortunately, that's what happened with this particular Silver Spur, which was delivered to Lord (Arnold) Weinstock – a Rolls-Royce customer of long standing – in early '86. He was a hugely successful businessman,

famous for instigating the 1963 merger between his father-in-law's Radio & Allied Industries Ltd (which he'd joined in '54) and the General Electric Company. He became the largest shareholder of the latter firm in the process, and was its managing director through to his retirement in 1996. Interestingly, Weinstock was also a director of Rolls-Royce (1971) Ltd following the state rescue of the company that year, which led to the car side of the business being separated.

Given his success, it's no surprise to learn that Lord Weinstock was a loyal client of Rolls-Royce's, ordering a succession of cars over a period of three decades. But it was with the Silver Spur you see here that his patience was truly tested, as he became increasingly frustrated by his latest new car.

TROUBLES AHEAD

Soon after taking delivery, Lord Weinstock expressed disappointment in the car, citing faults with its high-speed driving in particular. By May 1986, correspondence between Lord

Weinstock, Broughtons of Cheltenham (the supplying dealership) and Rolls-Royce Motors was really getting under way, with the Silver Spur in question being described by its disgruntled buyer as "unsatisfactory and unacceptable". In a letter to Broughtons dated May 27th, Lord Weinstock stated: "I have heard nothing further to our telephone conversation of last week about the Silver Spur with which you have supplied me."

With what he claimed were more than 2000 miles having been clocked up during the car's various return trips to Crewe and subsequent road tests by engineers, Lord Weinstock was understandably annoyed, telling Broughtons that "we are reaching the point when there really will be no alternative for me other than to abandon my long practice of using only British cars, and Rolls-Royce products for the last thirty years." He continued: "The standard of engineering and service appears to have so deteriorated that there is little hope left that customers will ever get value for the heavy price they are asked to pay for Rolls-Royce products." »

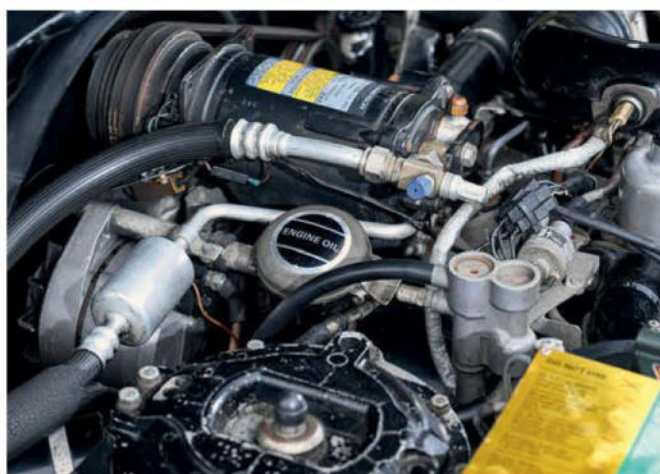


FEATURE CAR

1986 SILVER SPUR



When it was little more than 18 months old, the Silver Spur was back at Crewe having new valves fitted due to poor idling.



Chris first encountered this Silver Spur as a teenager, when he worked for a local wedding car company.

The letter was understandably taken seriously by all concerned, and on that very same day an internal memo was issued by James Arrowsmith of Rolls-Royce's UK Sales Operations, stating: "Lord Weinstock has again rejected his motor car and it is being delivered to Crewe tomorrow by Broughtons. I have asked Mike Bond to have the '86 Silver Spirit loan car, which has just been serviced, available for Broughtons to take away for Lord Weinstock."

The same memo explained more about the ongoing issue: "The complaint is the same as the previous one, namely that the car is noisy at 80-90mph, and when we get the car in I suggest we carry out a road test to assess whether there has been any significant change in the car from the time it was last returned to Lord Weinstock." It concluded by stressing the need for urgent but thorough action: "We have the car for a fortnight, so obviously we have to decide fairly quickly, in conjunction with Engineering, what we are going to do."

Within a week, however, Lord

“Lord Weinstock expressed disappointment in the car, citing faults with its high-speed driving in particular”



Weinstock was once again writing to Broughtons, prompting a reply from one of the dealer's directors, Charles Wake, dated June 3rd. From the dealer's response, it appears that legal action had been threatened: "You ask me to confirm that in the event of your being advised to refrain from taking me to Court, I will do my best to get rid of your Silver Spur, and minimise the loss involved. The answer is yes, of course, but with considerable regret and deep depression."

Meanwhile, back at Rolls-Royce, a further internal memo was issued by James Arrowsmith on June 4th, confirming what further work was being authorised to deal with the noise and lack of refinement at high speed: "In conjunction with Engineering, we are now modifying the car to incorporate some 1987 specification changes and the car should be ready for testing again later this afternoon. Depending on the results of that test and again working with Engineering, we will be making some further changes with a view to trying »



STRETCHED WHEELBASE

The inevitable long-wheelbase version of the new-for-1980 Silver Spirit was launched as the Silver Spur, boasting a 124-inch wheelbase – an inch longer than its Silver Wraith II predecessor. For the Silver Spur, however, instead of the bodysheils being modified after production, a different 'body in white' shell was built by Pressed Steel.

The extra length was created in front of the rear seat and extended floor panels, with a double-skinned transmission tunnel also fitted to

serve as a heater duct to the rear.

Lengthened rear doors were fitted, as was (obviously) a lengthened roof skin, created on early Silver Spurs by welding two standard panels together.

Rolls-Royce claimed that the work was so neat, it was hard to find the join, although the majority of Silver Spurs came with an Everflex roof. Perhaps surprisingly in view of the extra length, the Silver Spur weighed in at just 60kg over the weight of a regular Silver Spirit.

FEATURE CAR
1986 SILVER SPUR



to complete the car by early next week, and then Charles and I will be returning it to his Lordship." The same memo also confirmed the possibility of further action, with Arrowsmith suggesting that "regardless of the outcome, we are going to be faced with some claim for compensation."

It would appear that the Silver Spur continued to suffer problems, as a worksheet from December 1987 (around 18 months later, by which time there were almost 29,000 miles on the odometer) showed that

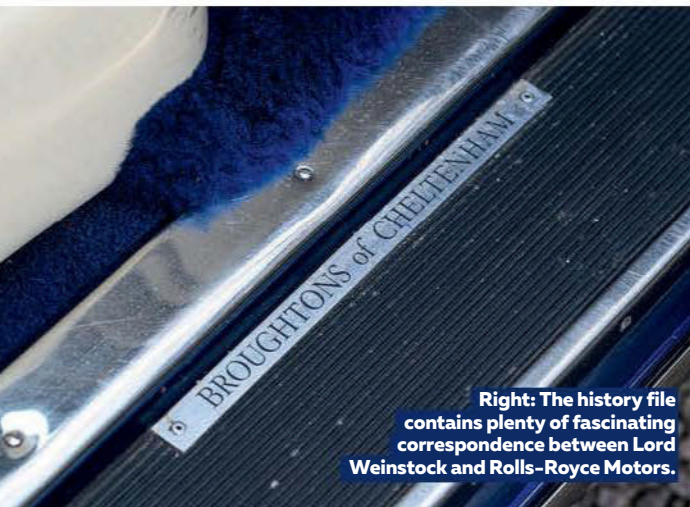
it was back at Crewe undergoing remedial work, including having its cylinder heads removed and all valves replaced due to what was described as poor engine idling.

TODAY'S OWNER

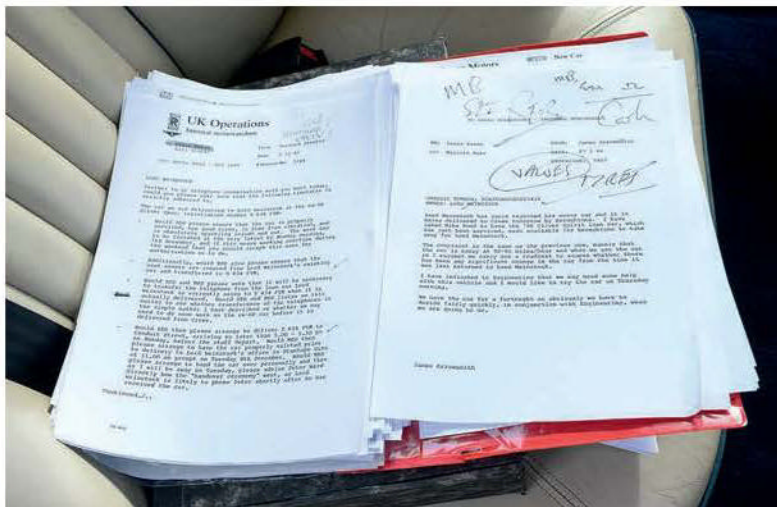
Looking back now, of course, the paper trail between all parties concerned makes fascinating reading. No matter how high the engineering standards of Rolls-Royce at the time, it was inevitable that the odd car might

have faults or issues. However, the manner in which Rolls-Royce dealt with this particular case was, it seems, exemplary, with the company doing everything it could to ensure that its valued customer had a Silver Spur he could be happy with.

Thirty-nine years later, any problems that the Silver Spur had when new are long forgotten, with the correspondence from those times simply enhancing the history of a car that its current owner has known since he was a teenager. "I've always »



Right: The history file contains plenty of fascinating correspondence between Lord Weinstock and Rolls-Royce Motors.



FEATURE CAR
1986 SILVER SPUR



The Parchment hide and Dark Blue piping of the interior suits the car well, and is nicely preserved.





“The Silver Spur remains in decent condition, with its Royal Blue paintwork being largely original”

had a thing for Rolls-Royce,” admits Nottingham-based Chris Donnelly-Williams, “ever since I was a child. And funnily enough, this Silver Spur was the first Rolls-Royce I ever washed, when I was about 15 years of age.”

That’s because Chris managed to find himself a part-time job with a local wedding car company in around 2001, and the owner of that company happened to have this particular Silver Spur. Chris instantly fell for it and, in much later years, with the car having been sold on to another business that he knew the owner of, he asked if he could have first refusal if it ever came up for sale again. Meanwhile, to satisfy his craving for an SZ-generation Rolls-Royce, Chris invested in a 1983 Silver Spirit in 2019 – an impressive example, good enough to win the Touring Class trophy at the RREC’s Annual Rally.

He was, of course, well and truly hooked, finally achieving his Rolls-Royce ownership dream. But that Silver Spirit wasn’t destined to stay with him for long, as by 2021 the Silver Spur that he’d desired since his teens was finally made available... and, as promised, Chris was given first refusal.

Although Chris runs his own wedding car business these days, with a Bentley S-series and an S3 amongst his fleet,

the Silver Spur is very much his own rather than part of the official line-up. It remains in decent condition, with its Royal Blue paintwork being largely original, while its interior (finished in Parchment with Dark Blue piping) is equally well-preserved: “As with any of these cars, there are always jobs to be done, and at some point I want to get a few very minor areas of bodywork attended to, mostly around the wheelarches. But it’s been well looked after and still looks smart.”

When Chris acquired the Rolls-Royce, the previous owner had transferred his private registration number from it, and it was assumed that a 1986-style ‘C’ registration replacement would be issued. Strangely, however, rather than giving it an appropriate C-prefix plate, DVLA chose to provide a 1965-style C-suffix one instead. Chris has no idea how or why this could have happened, but at least it provides an extra talking point at shows and events!

The car had been used relatively little in the few years prior to Chris’ ownership. It had been taken for an MoT each year, but between tests it had sometimes been driven only a few hundred miles. And so, as is often the way, there were one or two failures once Chris started adding

more miles and using the Silver Spur more regularly: “When I bought it, I had a major service carried out by Starman’s, the Rolls-Royce and Bentley specialists that are local to me. They said it was a very good example, and apart from the usual tasks – such as new belts and fluids, plus sorting out a sticking choke – there was little extra for them to do. However, once I started driving it more, the radiator went, the water pump failed, and various other minor things. But all of that’s to be expected when a car has been fairly inactive for some years.”

The Silver Spur currently has around 123,000 miles under its wheels and continues to provide Chris with pleasurable, effortless motoring. After waiting so long to own the very first Rolls-Royce that he came into contact with at work, he’s unlikely to be selling it anytime soon. And so, compared with the dissatisfaction experienced by the car’s original owner back in 1986, it makes this the proverbial happy ending. ■

WEDDING HIRE: Chris, the owner of this Silver Spur, runs Nottingham-based Premier Limos & Wedding Car Hire. For details of the services and the Bentleys he has available, visit <https://>

• 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

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

I read your 'Battle of the Brits' article [May/June 2025 issue] with great interest, as I had the pleasure of owning both a Daimler Double-Six Coupé and subsequently a Bentley T2. Firstly, though, I have to declare an interest, as during the late '70s I was a director of three of the Rolls-Royce Motors small group of companies privatised following the

collapse of the aero business in 1971.

It was in 1979 that I purchased the Daimler Double-Six Coupé, which I regarded as probably the best-designed car in the world at that time. Not only was it beautiful but its V12 engine was as smooth as silk and immensely powerful. Of particular significance was the Daimler's all-independent suspension, which

managed to combine sufficient stiffness to give excellent handling combined with a cat-like tread that made the car impervious to low speed 'bump thump' – something that plagued our cars at that time and for many years afterwards.

Regrettably, however, that was the end of the good news. Although fundamentally sound, the Daimler



suffered from minor imperfections, largely due to negligent transfer of design to manufacture. Underfloor body panels were improperly arranged and allowed water leaks, and the two door windows would not seal into the structure, thus permitting wind noise at speed. Cheap electrics were also a plague – the engine management system, fuel pump changeover switch (the car had two fuel tanks, one in each rear wing) and other minor controls all had problems. Then on one high-speed motorway run, a rear tyre blew out causing much bodywork (but fortunately no personal) damage; Dunlop assisted with the repairs and provided five new tyres, which questioned the original tyre selection.

The car was sold readily to an eager buyer and I then purchased

a Bentley T2. The Bentley was to my mind attractive (not beautiful), the engine provided a top speed of about 110mph, and the new rack and pinion steering was a big improvement. The suspension was good but rather soft. I initially fitted the factory-optional stiffer springs, but later reinforced these with stiffer anti-roll bars developed by Harvey Bailey, whose father was chief chassis engineer in the 1930s.

So far, so average. But the fact that just set the car apart was the sheer quality of every component used – from the bonnet release catch to the switchgear, giving the Bentley a sweetness of operation that just set it apart from 'ordinary cars'.

At that time, in its early years, Rolls-Royce Motors was looking at

possible mergers or acquisitions, and I suggested in a paper to the board that we consider a way to acquire Jaguar Cars from British Motor Holdings. The discussions, which included our providing a diesel engine for a new Leyland 16-ton truck range, fortunately came to nothing. Jaguar later went on to be acquired by Ford, with the latter then discovering that virtually the entire suites of machine tools had to be replaced at vast cost – to the eventual benefit of the Tata Group, of course.

I now have a Tata Group Range Rover as my excellent daily driver, but continue my loyalty and delight with Bentleys by having a Continental R for high days and holidays.

Robert Hickman CBE
Andover, Hampshire

FACEBOOK RESPONSES

In a Facebook post back in late April, to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the 'Standard Steel' Silver Cloud, we asked our followers to post photographs of their own examples... and as usual, they didn't disappoint! Here are our favourite three photographs selected from the many replies:



Leroy Curtis: "My favourite Silver Cloud is my 1958 saloon in Sage Green over Smoke Green."

The magazine's Facebook page has grown tremendously over the last 12 months, with posts appearing most days and our number of followers likely to hit 10,000 quite soon. If you're not yet with us, you're missing out! Head to www.facebook.com/RollsRoyceAndBentleyDriver and click 'Like' or 'Follow'.



Clive Barber: "My lovely Silver Cloud III – fantastic looking motor cars."



Rob Ward: There was no comment left with this particular photo, but we think it's a great image.

CENTRAL LOCKING WOES

Your May/June issue was another wonderful one, which I read from cover to cover as usual. Of particular interest, however, was Nigel Boothman's 'One Step Forward...' Staff Car report on his Silver Shadow.

The piece about the central locking brought back memories of problems I had after my Silver Shadow II was resprayed. They took off the doors, bonnet and bootlid, removing the wires and so on, but on reassembly I found that the central locking on the left-hand rear door would only work when it felt like it. Oil, grease and cleaning did no good. Three replacement solenoids also did no good, working for a few days but then failing.

It took about two years to

discover that it's the position of the solenoid that is critical. There is about 10cm possible movement if the bolts are loosened. It's trial and error to find out which works, but I did succeed and everything now works perfectly. I hope this helps.

John F Neale
Trustee
Sir Henry Royce Memorial Foundation

Nigel Boothman writes:
I'm grateful to John Neale for his recollections of this exasperating experience. It certainly gives me something else to try when I revisit this issue, which is very nearly defeated already. Hopefully this is the final cure!



DEALERSHIP MEMORIES

I write from Brisbane, Australia, having read your request for recollections of York Motors ['From the Archives', May/June issue]. I visited the new car showroom in William Street and the service centre in Alexandria many times, so thought I'd write in with my memories. I'm also sending you a photo taken in the late 1960s or early '70s of William Street, where you can just make out the showroom sign (Rolls-Royce) between the Toyota York and the Thrifty signs.

My father was managing director of a company that provided him with a new Bentley S-series 'Standard Steel' saloon (B207BC). Several months later, the chairman

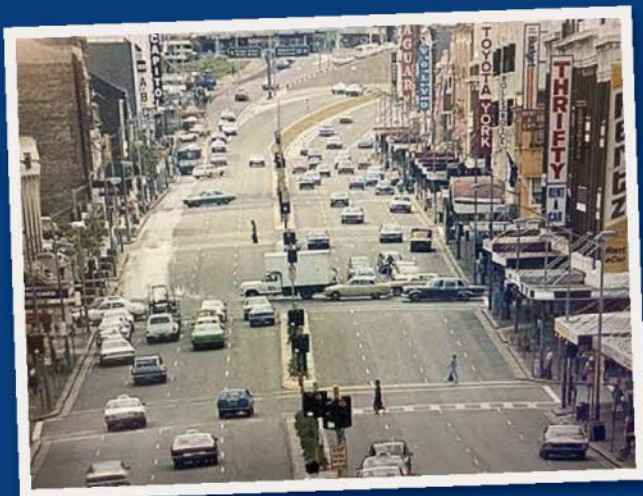
of the company was also provided with a new Bentley (B406CK), with both cars being supplied through York Motors (Sales). The dealership's William Street showroom was small by today's standards, but perfectly functional.

I often accompanied my father's driver whenever B207BC went to the workshop, based in the industrial suburb of Alexandria, for a service. At that time, the service manager was Bert Ward, or Mr Rolls-Royce as he was affectionately known. He was a true gentleman, and on my visits he always took time to show me around the workshop and explain what was being done to individual Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars. When Bert Ward retired, Don Appelby succeeded him; Don was also more than happy to let me walk around the workshop. I remember that York Motors used a small-sized sheet for their invoicing, pink in colour and of course typed up; what wasn't small, though, was the value of each invoice!

One of my favourite cars often seen in the workshop was a Bentley Continental Drophead by Park Ward (BC109AR), owned from new by Charles Lloyd-Jones, chairman of a major up-scale retailer. He was friendly with my parents, and we had beach houses at Palm Beach, north of Sydney. I used to swap my Sunbeam Alpine with the Bentley (not a bad swap, I thought).

York Motors always held an invitation-only event in the William Street showroom whenever a new series was introduced, and I attended the launch of the 'Series 2' cars in early 1960 and the 'Series 3' ones in early '63. The company ensured these events were low key and nothing like some of the launch events we get these days.

On the sales side, a few years later the York Motors Rolls-



EMERGENCY SERVICES

Whilst not aspiring to own a car of either make, I am very interested in their history and am therefore a reader of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver*. I wonder if a suitable subject for an article would be emergency service vehicles.

In the 1930s, Hong Kong had two or more purpose-built fire appliances on Rolls-Royce chassis. Many more existed in Britain, often in village fire brigades when a local owner had donated an older car after buying a new one. (I believe Goring-on-Thames had two.) These were sometimes adapted to carry a small pump or to tow trailer pumps.

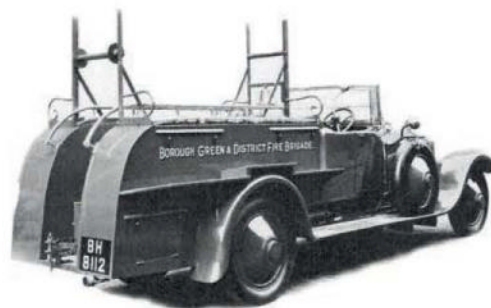
The creation of the Auxiliary Fire Service just before the outbreak of World War Two led to many more vehicles being provided; one in Glasgow was an ex-hearse. There is a preserved Rolls-Royce pump in Switzerland that was reported to be one of the ex-Hong Kong pumps rebuilt with a saloon body.

There were many more Rolls-Royce

ambulances, some purpose-built; or as wartime improvisations, others were adapted into canteen vans for the emergency services. Such vehicles, being large and well-powered, were ideal for the role of carrying a five- or six-man crew and towing a pump.

One Rolls-Royce donated to the village fire brigade at Borough Green, Kent, was adapted by Bonallack & Sons, but on the formation of the National Fire Service in 1941, it was replaced by a standard towing vehicle for a trailer pump. The story goes that the car was hidden from the NFS local headquarters to prevent it being scrapped, and much later was acquired by someone in Devon who intended to restore it. I do not know its eventual fate.

I have a number of pictures of such adapted Rolls-Royce and Bentley vehicles, but most are photocopies or are in books and so



are not easily available to publish. No doubt there are other sources.

Brian Baxter
Reading, Berkshire

Many thanks, Brian, for taking the trouble to write in. I think this is an excellent idea for a future feature. In the meantime, we've found an old image of the Borough Green fire tender that was adapted from a 40/50 'Silver Ghost' by Bonallack & Sons (photo credit: coachbuild.com) – Ed.

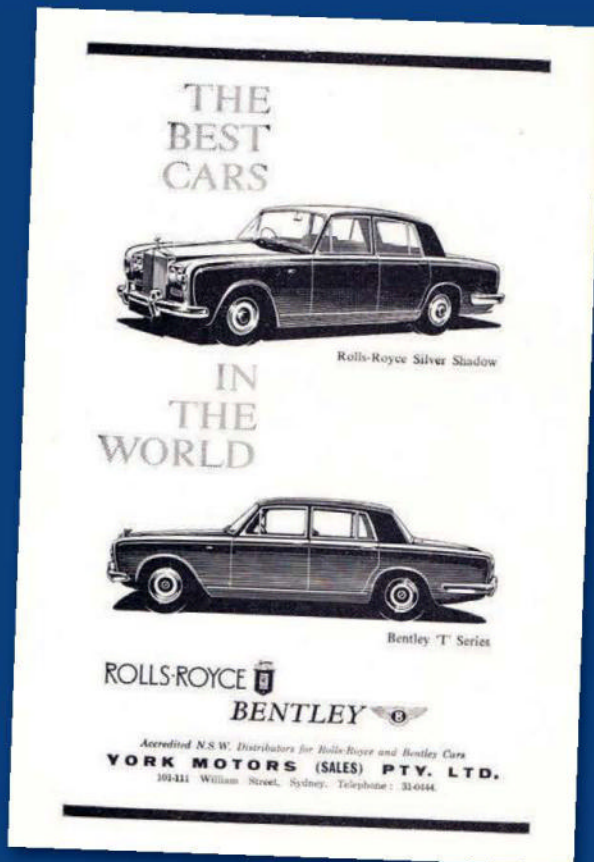
Royce and Bentley representative was Alwyn Hancock. I became friendly with Alwyn, and he would invite me onto the Rolls-Royce and Bentley stand at the Sydney Motor Show over the years. We used to lunch occasionally, and he was always happy to show me (and let me drive) the latest versions of the Silver Shadow and T-series demonstrators.

The demonstrator cars were changed periodically and were often in an 'interesting' standard colour. I remember on one occasion driving a Silver Shadow (finished in Smoke Green) home from the workshop. As fate would have it, that car was bought by a near neighbour of my parents.

In early 1966, Alwyn brought the first Silver Shadow to arrive in Australia (SRH1011, finished in Shell Grey with a Blue interior) to my father's office for a demonstration test drive. This car was initially based in Victoria (Kellow Falkiner) and when we were in the car it had the Victorian registration JLD 760. It was used by York Motors for demonstration in Sydney and Brisbane (through sub-agent UK Motors). Alwyn told me that the drive to/from Sydney to Brisbane was "interesting" as the car did not "handle all that well at speed", although the road was not great.

Fast forward to today, and I am now retired and living in Brisbane. I am attached to the Office of the Governor of Queensland and one of the vice-regal vehicles is the Phantom VI (PRH4731) that was delivered new to Government House Queensland via York Motors (Sales) in January 1973. I was instrumental in obtaining a copy of the build sheets from the Rolls-Royce Foundation, which includes a copy of the sales invoice.

Clement Foster
Via email



FEATURE CAR
UNIQUE SILVER WRAITH



RISE OF THE PANTECHNICON

As controversial now as it was when new,
Nubar Gulbenkian's radically styled 1947 Silver Wraith is back
on the road at last, following its latest thorough restoration

WORDS & PHOTOS: BILL WOLF

An article in *The Autocar*, dated October 17th, 1947, commented on the car that you see here: "Not everyone will care for the very advanced frontal appearance, but there can be no doubt that it is extremely striking". It proved to be a prescient comment, of course, as Rolls-Royce literature is sprinkled with condescending remarks about Nubar Gulbenkian's streamlined Silver Wraith, built around chassis number WTA62. "How right of Rolls-Royce Ltd to oppose all attempts to modernise that radiator," opined Anthony Bird and Ian Hallows in 1964; and in their 1984 book, *The Complete Works*, Mike Fox and Steve Smith described the car

simply as "the ugliest Rolls-Royce ever".

The unique Silver Wraith's original owner, Nubar Gulbenkian (1896–1972), along with his father Calouste Gulbenkian (1869–1955), had virtually controlled the world's flow of oil before, during and after World War Two. Nubar lived life relishing his extreme wealth, and was somewhat eccentric. As he developed his ideas for this car, he worked closely with the design team of Hooper & Co. He financed a trip to the Paris Motor Show for himself and the celebrated designer Osmond Rivers in 1946 to gather styling ideas for the car that he eventually christened The Pantechnicon. Although Rivers was involved with

the project, the chief designers were H.A. Fox and, later, A.G. Firmin. The coachwork is, of course, a one-off.

The archives show that Rolls-Royce Ltd garnered little enthusiasm for the car's design, and at one point the company threatened to withhold its customary guarantee. They were especially disturbed about the faux grille, and they insisted that the Rolls-Royce Pantheon-style grille remained in place behind it. It is still with the car today.

Can we blame Nubar Gulbenkian for his daring? Consider the styling of Silver Wraiths in 1947 (and even up to 1959, when the last one was delivered), with the majority harking »



A period shot of the Silver Wraith, complete with appropriately attired chauffeur at the wheel.



The eccentric Nubar Gulbenkian, the man responsible for this one-off Hooper-built Rolls-Royce.

FEATURE CAR

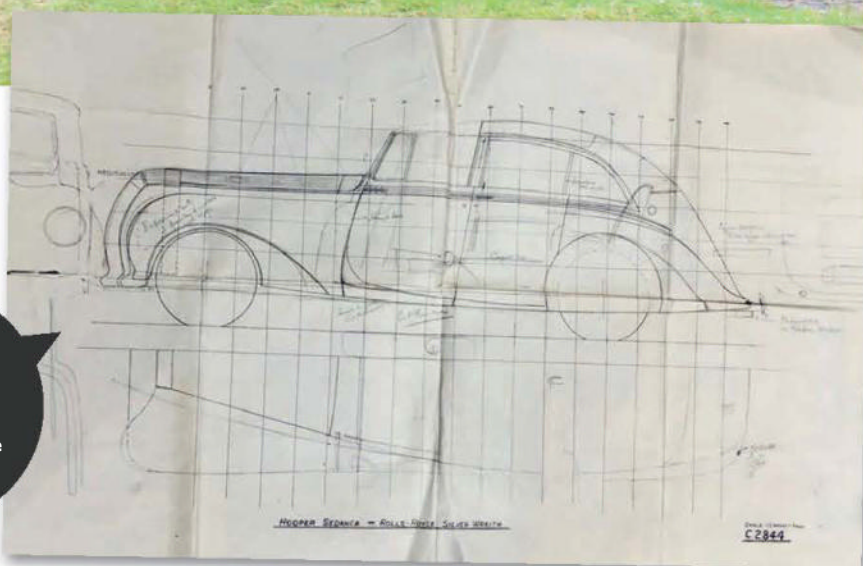
UNIQUE SILVER WRAITH



back to a pre-war style. In his 1965 autobiography, the oil magnate offered his view of this situation: "I felt that a modern car should be streamlined, curved and should look as though it had been designed by someone who had never seen horse-drawn carriages and had been presented for the very first time with the task of building a body around an internal combustion engine."

This 1947 Silver Wraith has travelled extensively through the decades, from England to Canada, to the USA, and then to Jersey in the Channel Islands. But Gulbenkian's experiment in art deco design has now found a home in Edinburgh, Scotland... and is finally roadworthy again. Marcus Dean acquired it in April 2020 and, with valuable assistance from Colin Atkinson, proceeded to carry out most of the work himself – the paintwork being the salient exception. The restoration was all but completed some four years later, in June 2024.

This original Hooper drawing for chassis number WTA62 shows off its highly distinctive silhouette.



"I have had the privilege of photographing this remarkable machine no fewer than three times"

PHOTOGRAPHY VISITS

I have had the privilege of photographing this remarkable machine no fewer than three times.

In Jersey, in 2018, when it was under the custody of the late John Dick, I found the car in rather rough condition. It had to be pushed out of the garage. Piles of parts, covered in dust, filled the interior and the boot, and boxes of spares were stored in the garage attic. A restoration, under the direction of Colin Hyams, had started several years before but was

aborted. Hyams had acquired Hooper in 1980, with John Dick investing in the company three years later; Hooper & Co was subsequently known for the modern Hoopers, based around the SZ series, with restyled two-door Bentleys and stretched Rolls-Royce limousines of various lengths among them. So, it was natural that Dick and Hyams would have an interest in

JERSEY VISIT

Bill Wolf first photographed this unique Silver Wraith in 2018, when it was based in Jersey and was in the custodianship of the late John Dick. It was in rather rough condition then, and had to be pushed out of the garage.



Hooper's most infamous creation.

Hyams had introduced some styling changes for The Penttechnicon (a cut-out in the rear spats and the headlamp grilles set vertically) that were eventually 'set back to specs'. Mr Dean also discarded the body filler that seemed to be holding the coachwork together.

In October 2023, I visited Edinburgh to photograph the car when the restoration was still in progress and the interior still unfinished. Then returning in June 2024, I found that the restoration was 99.8 per cent complete; a few minor trim pieces and weather-stripping still needed tweaking at that time.

Fitting the body panels, especially the sliding front hood panel, had been problematic, and there is circumstantial evidence in the records that these problems were there from the beginning. The reason can be inferred from the fact that Mr Gulbenkian kept pushing Hooper to finish the car by the contractual date of April 1947, the »

FEATURE CAR

UNIQUE SILVER WRAITH

"Gulbenkian's experiment in art deco design has now found a home in Edinburgh"



delivery date being somewhat later in September of that year. Reading over the correspondence between Mr Gulbenkian and Hooper, and inter-office Hooper memoranda, I sensed a reluctance on the part of Hooper to have even taken on such a project.

On both visits to Scotland, I admired the quality of the paint finish, which radiated an admirable depth that just gleamed in the sunshine. Hooper listed the colours as "metallic gunmetal

bronze in two shades – the darker, X.20267, on top of the body and the hood, with X.20266, but with 'more metal' in it, for the body sides and fenders". The owner did considerable research to recreate these body colors as close to the original as possible, keeping in mind that vintage colour photographs are not necessarily accurate and that vintage paint chip samples deteriorate through time.

On my second visit to Scotland, I

got to see the finished interior. The original cloth upholstery for the rear was done in two shades of fawn, while the front seat is leather. Mr Dean found the original rear upholstery too dark and drab for his tastes, and decided to use brighter colours for the rear seat.

The owner's decision to change the upholstery offers a glimpse into his take on the nature of the restoration. To him, this is not a "let's ship the car to Pebble Beach" project, but rather "let's



A previous restoration of the car had been started many years ago, but was eventually aborted.



Marcus Dean has owned the Gulbenkian Silver Wraith since April 2020.



The Rolls-Royce has since undergone a full restoration.



Now almost complete, the latest work has been carried out to a pleasingly high standard.



The engine was removed and rebuilt, and is now running as it should – for the first time in a long time.



The fully restored interior now looks magnificent, with excellent levels of detailing.



The Gulbenkian car's current owner has chosen a different colour scheme for the cloth-upholstered rear.

enjoy the car, appreciate its uniqueness, drive it". So, yes, it will probably never be a 100-point participant at a major concours; indeed, he isn't even sure if he wants to show it at all. Perhaps he will change his mind, as it would

certainly be a huge hit and a fine contribution to any RREC rally or meet.

During my last visit to photograph this one-off Rolls-Royce, I witnessed it being driven on a public street for the first time in decades. Feeling

quite privileged to be part of this rather historic event, I was truly enjoying myself, happily ensconced in the luxury of the rear cabin. Yes, the mighty Pantechnicon was back where it belonged... on the road again. ■

Silver Shadow 60th Anniversary

with the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club

Saturday 16th August

Celebrate one of the most successful cars in Rolls-Royce history!
All Silver Shadows and derivatives (SY models) are
welcome to register.



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60 Years

OF THE SILVER SHADOW

CELEBRATING A ROLLS-ROYCE REVOLUTION



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The full story of the hi-tech model that transformed the fortunes of Rolls-Royce.



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We jump aboard a Silver Shadow LWB and head for this world-famous destination.



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Some of the most memorable and most successful Silver Shadow period adverts.



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Professional advice on how to upgrade your Silver Shadow to electronic ignition.

THE START OF A REVOLUTION

To mark the 60th anniversary of this best-selling Rolls-Royce, we take a look at the history of the Silver Shadow – the saloon originally tasked with reinventing ‘The Best Car in the World’

WORDS: PAUL GUINNESS PHOTOS: ROLLS-ROYCE MOTOR CARS,
BENTLEY MOTORS, KELSEY ARCHIVE



From their debut in 1955, the Silver Cloud and S-series had been highly successful models for Rolls-Royce and Bentley respectively, proving particularly popular in 'Standard Steel' guise and maintaining healthy sales for a whole decade, aided by the launch of the all-important L-series V8 engine in '59 and a visually successful update three years later. It was obvious, however, that the two marques would each need a successor during the 1960s in order to stave off more modern competition.

This meant a whole new approach for 'The Best Car in the World', with a fresh focus on technology and up-to-the-minute design, which inevitably meant that the Silver Shadow shocked traditionalists when it took a bow in 1965. It made headlines worldwide, not only for its drastic change of style compared with its predecessor, but also for its levels of hi-tech ingenuity. But it was a technique that worked, because moving Rolls-Royce technology forward in such a profound way enabled the Silver Shadow to enjoy an extended career, with the four-door saloon remaining in production for an impressive 15 years, benefiting from numerous updates during that time as well as a major overhaul in the latter part of its career.

Although the Silver Shadow marked a monumental change of direction compared with its Silver Cloud predecessor, there was one visual element carried over to the new



Prototypes began to appear in the late 1950s and early '60s, codenamed Tibet for the Rolls-Royce derivative.



The front-end treatment of this Bentley Burma concept featured a full-width grille design incorporating quad headlamps.



The Silver Shadow made its motor show debut in 1965, ready for the '66 model year.

generation. Yes, the newcomer inherited the quad-headlamp look that had originally arrived with the Silver Cloud III of '62, providing an aesthetically successful link between two radically different generations of Rolls-Royce.

NEW BREED OF BUYER

The Silver Cloud had, of course, retained the traditional separate-chassis layout that enabled Britain's dwindling numbers of specialist coachbuilders to offer their own bespoke versions. But car design was evolving rapidly by the start of the '60s, which meant that Rolls-Royce's chief stylist, John Blatchley, faced a dilemma when it came to creating a suitable successor, particularly as even at the upper end of the new-car market there was a noticeable shift in demand.

There would always be wealthy »

“Work on a Silver Cloud successor began while that car was still in its infancy, with John Blatchley focused on the need for modernity”



The Silver Shadow inherited its predecessor's 6.2-litre L-series V8, later increased to 6.75-litre capacity.

buyers who wanted – and could afford – the ultimate in traditionalism and prestige, which explains why Rolls-Royce continued to enjoy steady demand for the handbuilt-to-order Phantom V limousine. But as the 1960s dawned, John Blatchley knew that a successor for the Silver Cloud family needed to cater for a new breed of buyer – the owner-driver who didn't employ a chauffeur. The newcomer needed to offer the kind of luxury that a Rolls-Royce always should, albeit in a slightly more compact, more manoeuvrable package.

Blatchley also knew that the way the car was built needed to change. The use of monocoque construction might have caused consternation among Britain's coachbuilders, but it was a must for any new Rolls-Royce that needed to bring extra sales and increased profits to the car-building side of the business. Adopting a modern monocoque layout would enable the new model to be both lighter and smaller than the Silver Cloud, which in turn would

EXCLUSIVELY BENTLEY

Up until the arrival of the Silver Shadow, Bentley tended to rival Rolls-Royce when it came to sales success. The Silver Cloud of 1955-65, for example, was actually outsold by the Bentley S-series equivalent, with the early 'S1' in particular being significantly more popular than the Silver Cloud at that time.

The generation before had also seen Bentley enjoying considerable success in the luxury car market. The 1946-52 MkVI sold over 5200 units in total, with its R-Type successor

of 1952-55 (derived from the MkVI and featuring modified rear styling) attracting 2323 buyers. By comparison, the Rolls-Royce Silver Dawn (another MkVI derivative of 1949-55) achieved a mere 760 sales.

The arrival of the innovative new Silver Shadow in 1965, however, marked a remarkable fall from grace for the Bentley marque. Rolls-Royce's first monocoque-bodied model went on to be a major success, with 19,497 of the original four-door saloon (prior to the Silver Shadow II

of 1977) being sold over 12 years. By comparison, just 1712 of the Bentley T-series (before the T2 of '77) attracted buyers, leading Rolls-Royce to contemplate dropping the Bentley marque altogether when work began on a Silver Shadow successor in the 1970s.

Fortunately, however, that never happened, and Bentley went on to enjoy renewed appeal – and booming sales – throughout the '80s and beyond, largely thanks to the success of the high-performance Turbo R.



have an effect on performance and fuel economy. Importantly, it would also enable Rolls-Royce to build in larger numbers than before.

What became the Silver Shadow of 1965 wasn't just modern in terms of its construction, of course. It also needed to offer a smoother ride, much-improved handling and more stability at high speed than the Silver Cloud, hence the adoption of fully independent suspension. And with Citroën being world leaders in terms of suspension technology, Rolls-Royce wisely chose to licence the French firm's hydropneumatic system, albeit redesigned at Crewe to incorporate conventional coil springs. The hydraulics provided self-levelling to maintain the car's ride quality irrespective of load, as well as powering its four-wheel disc brakes to ensure reassuringly strong stopping power.

One of the few elements of the Silver Shadow that was carried over from the Silver Cloud III was its 6230cc V8, a unit that was capable of endowing »



Racing legend Stirling Moss inspecting the 1967-model Silver Shadow at the Earl's Court Motor Show.

the smaller, lighter newcomer with superior performance compared with its predecessor. In every other respect, however, the Silver Shadow was a genuinely new design, hailed as "the most radically new Rolls-Royce for 59 years". Indeed, not since the original Silver Ghost had there been a Rolls-Royce so genuinely advanced compared with the competition.

STYLING DILEMMAS

Work on a successor to the Silver Cloud began while that car was still in its infancy, with John Blatchley focused on the need for modernity: "Styling [the Silver Shadow] was very much an architectural exercise... the specification demanded it be lower, narrower and shorter with more luggage space and a bigger petrol tank. My

biggest challenge was getting all this paraphernalia, plus passengers, into a car that still looked right."

Prototypes began to appear in the late 1950s and early '60s, codenamed Tibet (for the Rolls-Royce) and Burma (for the Bentley), the original plan being to make the Bentley the smaller of the two. Even at that early stage, the final shape of the Silver Shadow was beginning to emerge, although the wraparound screens and reverse-angle rear door windows made those initial cars look dated compared with

"The Silver Shadow made its official motor show debut at Earl's Court in the autumn of 1965"

the eventual production model.

The grille treatment of the early prototypes was also controversial, as Blatchley experimented with numerous options (including a full-width grille design incorporating quad headlamps) before deciding on the final version. Martin Bourne, another member of the Rolls-Royce design team from 1959, recalled the many changes made during the Silver Shadow's early development: "Hardly a day went by when some small detail of its appearance wasn't being considered."

Rolls-Royce was also working with the British Motor Corporation (BMC) at this time, the idea being to adapt one or two of the bigger company's models into a higher-volume Bentley employing Crewe's 4.0-litre, six-cylinder F60 engine. And so while Blatchley and his team worked on development of the Silver Shadow, he also created a front and rear restyle of the Vanden Plas Princess 3 Litre (codenamed Java) to accommodate a Bentley grille between stacked quad headlamps. This eventually evolved into Java 3, a concept with definite overtones of the Silver Shadow. In the end, however, the idea of a BMC-based Bentley came to nothing.

MOTOR SHOW LAUNCH

The Silver Shadow made its motor show debut at Earl's Court in the autumn of 1965, with *Autocar* magazine explaining that a "new Rolls-Royce is an event of a decade". It hailed the newcomer as "the most advanced and intricate car the company have introduced", thanks to such headline features as monocoque construction and that all-independent self-levelling suspension. The Rolls-Royce stand of '65 featured three examples of the Silver Shadow, finished in Shell Grey, Regal Red and Dawn Blue.

Members of the motoring press were highly impressed with the newcomer, of course, with Basil Cardew of the *Daily Express* describing it as "smaller, roomier, lighter, swifter" than its predecessor. John Blatchley's brief that the Silver Shadow should be lower, narrower and shorter than before (the Silver Cloud was



CAMARGUE DERIVATIVE

Although not strictly a version of the Silver Shadow, the new-for-1975 Camargue shared essentially the same floorpan. It appeared nine years after the debut of the last two-door Rolls-Royce (the Silver Shadow Mulliner Park Ward Two-Door, later renamed the Corniche), and was certainly one of the more controversial members of the clan thanks to its distinctive styling by Pininfarina.

It was also one of the most expensive cars on sale in the UK, and remained so throughout its career. By 1980, for example, a brand new

Silver Shadow II would have set you back £41,960, at a time when the hardtop Corniche could be had for £62,479. But both cars looked almost bargain-like compared with the Camargue, which 45 years ago carried a list price of £76,120.

Rolls-Royce described the Camargue as an "elegant and sophisticated two-door saloon of exceptional grace and beauty". By the time the last Camargue was built in 1985, however, fewer than 530 examples had been sold worldwide, reinforcing its reputation as one of Rolls-Royce's most exclusive models.



three and a half inches wider and seven inches longer), whilst offering more space for people and their luggage, had been well and truly delivered.

How would the Rolls-Royce and Bentley fans of old take to such an advanced design, though? Bentley Drivers Club president Stanley Sedgwick borrowed a new T-series in 1966, and was immediately impressed: "I accepted the design of the body for what it was. I liked it and I think the S-Types really did look dated beside the car. The more I saw of the car, the more I considered it better-looking than any of its contemporaries."

There were inevitably complaints from the company's more traditionally minded clients, some of whom couldn't initially accept the Silver Shadow's modernity, not least its lack of a separate chassis. There were, however, sufficient well-heeled luxury car buyers worldwide who were willing to give the Silver Shadow a chance, ultimately ensuring it was the most successful individual Rolls-Royce model of the 20th century.

REGULAR UPDATES

The standard Silver Shadow saloon did exceptionally well for itself, surviving for a decade and a half before finally giving way to the new Silver Spirit of 1980. Throughout that time, however, Rolls-Royce carried out worthwhile upgrades and improvements to ensure it stayed ahead of the luxury car pack.

Many of these changes were subtle, such as the early adoption (at the

end of 1965) of a lighter brake pedal movement, while October 1967 saw a Saginaw power steering pump replacing the original Hobourn Eaton type, complementing the car's Saginaw recirculating-ball steering system. At the same time, the car's opening front quarter light windows were changed to fixed units, while in 1968 the Silver Shadow received a revised handbrake, higher-ratio steering, an uprated front anti-roll bar (as well as a rear anti-roll bar for the first

time, although not on US-spec cars), and the latest GM400 automatic transmission from General Motors.

The Silver Shadow's interior also saw changes, with the original-style dashboard – colloquially known as the 'Chippendale' – being replaced by a new-look design as early as 1968 on left-hand drive cars, while right-hand drive versions kept the original dashboard through to May '69. A completely redesigned dashboard was required thanks to changes in American »



The Silver Shadow inevitably formed the basis of a Bentley version, as shown in this early T-series publicity shot.

60 YEARS OF THE SILVER SHADOW HISTORY OF AN ICON

safety legislation, hence the new-look version featuring extra padding as well as a rejigged instrument layout and a modern-looking centre console.

Rolls-Royce made a habit of improving on what had already been developed by other manufacturers, of course. Its use of monocoque construction wasn't exactly an industry first, yet the Silver Shadow's bodyshell was widely recognised as the stiffest of its kind at the time; and while the company took the sensible approach of licensing Citroën's suspension

technology, it found ways in which it could be upgraded to suit the company's exacting standards. The same principle also applied to that latest automatic transmission, as Malcolm Bobbitt explained in *Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow, Bentley T-Series, Camargue & Corniche* (Veloce Publishing): "Although the GM400 gearbox was brought-in direct from America, the electric selector actuation was not part of its specification and this, therefore, was added at Crewe. Rolls-Royce was the only manufacturer to fit electric

actuation to this type of gearbox – which allowed the lightest finger-tip control – and whilst such cars as the Cadillac were fitted with the same unit, ratio selection was operated manually."

Other relatively early changes to the Silver Shadow included the deletion of self-levelling front suspension in 1969, which might have seemed like a retrograde step at the time. In truth, however, the self-levelling front end had relatively little work to do, and its deletion actually managed to improve the car's handling and steering (which



Among the most memorable Silver Shadow period photographs was this one, showing Crewe's latest model in Piccadilly Circus.

some testers had found to be a little vague). The biggest upgrade at the end of '69, however, ready for the 1970 model year, was the introduction of the latest 6750cc version of the venerable L-series V8, created via a redesigned crankshaft, which in turn lengthened the stroke. Although Rolls-Royce refused to disclose any power or torque figures, it was estimated that the Silver Shadow now had somewhere in the region of 220bhp at its disposal.

The difference in driving style was immediately noticeable by all those who tested the car, as Malcolm Bobbit explained in his Silver Shadow book: "John Bolster, testing the 6.75-litre-engined Silver Shadow for *Autosport* in December 1970, was impressed at how much low-speed torque had been improved. Overall speed had also increased, and he found the car easily achieved 118mph."

MAJOR OVERHAUL

The process of improving the Silver Shadow continued unabated, although disaster occurred in 1971 with the collapse of Rolls-Royce, following difficulties with its aero-engine division. The appointed receiver realised the importance of 'business as usual' for the car-making side of the company, however, and ordered that production of the Silver Shadow should not be affected.

As part of the company's restructuring, the car-making division separated in 1973 as Rolls-Royce Motors, but this was something of a double-edged sword; the firm was now free from the risk of being dragged down by the troubles of a parent

"The newcomer inherited the quad-headlamp look that had originally arrived with the Silver Cloud III of 1962"



February 1977 saw the launch of the significantly upgraded Silver Shadow II, as shown in this launch-year monochrome image.

group, but resources were much more slender. Although ideas for a Silver Shadow replacement had been part of management discussions for some time (the original plan being for the car to enjoy a 10-year production run), its eventual successor wasn't to appear until the start of the '80s – which meant extending the life of

the company's best-selling model.

Sales of the Silver Shadow held up very well once the company was reconfigured as an independent car manufacturer, with 2720 Rolls-Royces being built in 1973 – up from just over 2000 per annum at the start of the decade. But it was obvious that a facelift would be required at some »

FINAL BODYSHELL

With the Silver Shadow due to be replaced by the Silver Spirit for the 1981 model year, this photograph shows the old car's final bodyshell being produced by the company then known as Pressed Steel Fisher (PSF). The image features workers at PSF's Cowley-based 'V' plant gathered around the last 'shell. But they needn't have worried about the loss of the Silver Shadow, as PSF was gearing up to produce bodyshells for the Silver Spirit at the company's nearby 'R Building'.

The Silver Shadow was an important model for PSF, with around 65 bodyshells being built each week by the late 1970s – three decades after the company became involved with Rolls-Royce body production.





“Sales of the Silver Shadow held up very well once the company was reconfigured as an independent car manufacturer”

point if Rolls-Royce was to retain its ‘Best Car in the World’ reputation, hence the announcement of the Silver Shadow II in February 1977.

The most obvious visual changes included plastic-faced alloy bumpers with polyurethane side pieces, while below the front bumper was a spoiler (aimed at improving high-speed stability) and a pair of front fog lamps. Inside, the Silver Shadow II boasted a new-look fascia with revised instrumentation, while the air conditioning had been upgraded to

a split-level system. Most important of all, however, was the adoption of rack and pinion steering and a modified suspension system, ensuring that the Silver Shadow II offered the kind of sharpened-up handling and more precise steering that luxury car buyers of the late 1970s expected.

Production of the Silver Shadow II officially ceased in late 1980 (although some cars weren’t dispatched from Crewe until early the following year), at a time when Rolls-Royce was preparing itself for the launch of its

successor. What had been a hugely successful model for the company was finally being consigned to the history books, although its open-top Corniche cousin was scarcely halfway through its production run by then. During its 15-year career, the Silver Shadow had gone from being a cutting-edge design packed with modernity to the highly respected elder statesman of the luxury saloon world. It left the automotive stage with dignity – and it remains one of the most prolific classic Rolls-Royce models of today. ■

PRODUCTION FIGURES

Silver Shadow (1965-77)	16,717	Bentley T-series MPW 2-dr (1966-71)	98
Silver Shadow LWB (1967-77)	2780	Bentley T-series James Young (1966-67)	15
Silver Shadow II (1977-80)	8425	Rolls-Royce Corniche 2-dr (1971-80)	1090
Silver Wraith II (1977-80)	2135	Bentley Corniche 2-dr (1971-80)	69
Bentley T-series (1965-77)	1712	Silver Shadow MPW Convertible (1967-71)	505
Bentley T-series LWB (1967-77)	9	Bentley MPW Convertible (1967-71)	41
Bentley T2 (1977-80)	558	R-R Corniche Convertible (1971-95)	5160
Bentley T2 LWB (1977-80)	10	Bentley Corniche Conv (1971-95)	533
Silver Shadow MPW 2-dr (1966-71)	568		
Silver Shadow James Young (1966-67)	35		
TOTAL			39,882

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1935 Bentley Speed 8 Petersen Lemans Special
£350,000.00



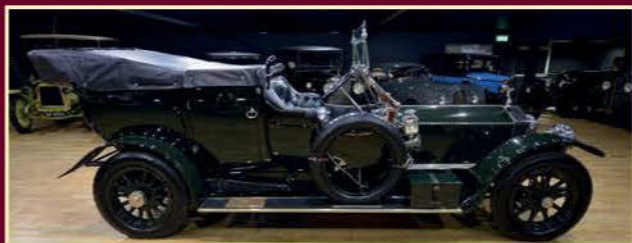
1931 Bentley 8 Litre Vandenplas Style Tourer
£680,000



1925 Bentley 3 Litre Gurney Nutting Tourer
£185,000.00



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



1912 Rolls Royce Silver Ghost Parallel Bonnet
€780,000.00



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



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



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

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THE TWO-DOOR DERIVATIVES

Despite the Silver Shadow's monocoque design, Rolls-Royce saw potential for a coachbuilt variant... and in the process, created one of its longest-running and most desirable models

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

When the company officially went into receivership on February 4th, 1971, what soon became known as Black Thursday proved a pivotal day in the history of Rolls-Royce. It wasn't the car manufacturing arm that was in financial trouble, but the aviation side, brought down by development costs and other problems associated with its RB211 turbo-fan engine. The vehicles may have been

bringing in money, but Rolls-Royce was losing many millions elsewhere.

It was a very real threat to the future of the cars, through no fault of the division itself. But there was some good news on the horizon, as the official launch of the Corniche – the name for the latest Silver Shadow-based two-door models – was scheduled for the following month, giving Rolls-Royce a chance to emphasise it was looking to the future. The issue of receivership was

resolved in the end, of course, as vital defence contracts saw the government stepping in to save Rolls-Royce, while the car side became a separate entity, sold off in 1973 to become Rolls-Royce Motors. The Corniche, meanwhile, went on to be a success, outlasting by an impressive 15 years the Silver Shadow on which it was based.

The 1971 unveiling of the Corniche was seen as a major morale boost during those troubled times, although

in reality it wasn't actually that fresh a design. Instead, it was a mild reworking of the two-door Silver Shadow saloons and convertibles that had been around since 1966, when they'd proved to the world that monocoque construction didn't have to mean the end of coachbuilding. Although the number of independent coachbuilders had been in decline since World War Two, there were still Rolls-Royce and Bentley customers who wanted something a little more than a standard saloon.

Two main coachbuilding establishments were left by the dawn of the Silver Shadow era. One was James Young Ltd, with over a century of experience behind it; and the other was Mulliner Park Ward (MPW), Rolls-Royce's in-house specialist. The latter had been formed by the amalgamation of HJ Mulliner and Co (founded 1897) and Park Ward (established in 1919) in 1961, after Rolls-Royce had snapped up the former in 1959 and the latter in 1939.

Despite MPW having the distinct advantage of being part of Rolls-Royce, it was James Young that managed to be first with a bespoke version of the Silver Shadow, launching its two-door saloon in late 1965 – not long after the regular Silver Shadow had made its debut. It was a significant achievement, although closer examination revealed the early launch was possibly due to the James Young two-door being little different from the standard four-door saloon. The front doors were elongated and given new handles, fresh metal was put in where the rear doors had been, and the B-post was

"The 1971 unveiling of the Corniche was seen as a major morale boost during those troubled times"



Bill Allen (seen here after retirement, with the last Corniche built) was the stylist behind Rolls-Royce's two-door saloons and convertibles.

moved back. Inside, there were some alterations to the wood trim and leather seating. But in reality, little else was done – except for a premium of £1214 being added to the price of

a four-door model, at a time when a standard Silver Shadow cost £6556.

The combination of a high price and lack of distinction when compared to the standard cars ultimately cost »

The first two-door version of the Silver Shadow to hit the market was James Young's, as shown in this 1965 styling sketch.



JAMES YOUNG LTD.

TWO DOOR SALOON, SILVER SHADOW

S.Y. 150.



A 1969 Jack Barclay advert for the Silver Shadow, using an MPW Two-Door Convertible as its main image.



The 'Coke bottle' swathe line – particularly apparent on the soft-top – helped the Corniche to stand out from the Silver Shadow.

James Young dearly. In the end, only 50 examples of its two-door offering would be built up until 1967, 35 of which were Rolls-Royces and 15 were Bentleys. The firm went out of business one year later.

MPW TWO-DOOR

By comparison, MPW had all the benefits of Rolls-Royce expertise and assistance on its side, which included chief designer John Blatchley and his deputy, Bill Allen. It was the latter who was most responsible for the more individualistic look of the MPW two-door vehicles, adding a then-fashionable 'Coke bottle' flick to the rear quarters. This echoed current styling trends, mostly in the USA – with machines like the Buick Riviera and Corvette Sting Ray – but also emerging in the UK with vehicles such as Vauxhall's HB-series Viva. It put MPW – and thus Rolls-Royce – rather ahead of the curve, although there was also a sporty echo of the earlier Bentley S-series Continentals in its line.

The two-door MPW Silver Shadow saloon and its Bentley counterpart were first seen in public at the March 1966 Geneva Motor Show. At £8150 for the Rolls-Royce (the Bentley was £50 less) before taxes, it was even more expensive (by £380) than the James Young variant, but it was a more individualistic creation with up-to-the-minute looks.

Those wanting something even more special had to wait until October 1967, when Rolls-Royce was able to show off MPW's convertible at that year's London Motor Show. The delay was due to the extra work needed to make an al fresco variant, with extra underbody strengthening required and the need to come up with a power-operated hood that met Rolls-Royce's demanding standards. This took a week to put together in its own right, with an entire car taking around 20 weeks from start to finish (including having to travel between MPW's works in Willesden, London, and Rolls-Royce's factory in Crewe). It was not a process to be remotely rushed. The Rolls-Royce convertible cost £8550, the Bentley £8500 – and that was before taxes, which would take both comfortably into £10,000 territory.

Unlike the James Young cars, which no doubt had their demise hastened by the arrival of the MPW

The two-door James Young cars were handsome, but their similarity to the four-door models meant they lacked any real distinction.



two-doors, the models met with both critical acclaim and sales success. Rolls-Royce strengthened their appeal by deciding to introduce some upgrades on them before they filtered down to the standard saloons. For example, they were the first to get the new GM400 gearbox, with air conditioning being standardised in spring 1969; on other Silver Shadows and T-series', this change didn't come until the end of the year. And this policy of advance innovation would continue into the Corniche years, with better brakes, cruise control and improved suspension all being seen first on the two-door models.

But why the name change to Corniche, with its unfortunate timing of March 1971? Well, during 1970, such sweeping changes were being planned for the two-doors that the upgrade was given the codename of 'Project Gamma'. And so it seemed logical to give the revamped production cars a different name as well. There was also a desire, however, to make them stand out even more from the Silver Shadow saloons on which they were based, and bestowing upon them the name Corniche seemed the perfect way of doing this.

There was perhaps something ponderous but also a little anonymous about the designations 'Mulliner Park

Ward Two-Door Saloon' and 'Mulliner Park Ward Two-Door Convertible' that these hand-built offerings had had from the start. Calling them Corniche made sense, being snappier, classier and definitely more evocative, and the decision was made to use the same moniker on both the Rolls-Royce and Bentley models. The latter marque was being comprehensibly subsumed by its parent company at the time, which explains just 139 Bentley MPW cars had been built compared with 1075 of the Rolls-Royce versions prior to their metamorphosis into the Corniche.

CORNICHE ARRIVAL

The 'sweeping modifications' that came in with the Corniche weren't that considerable by ordinary car company standards, but for Rolls-Royce they did represent quite a sea change. For starters, the V8 engine was heralded as offering 10 per cent more power. At the time, Rolls-Royce

"Despite a 10 per cent price hike, the Corniche built upon the success that the MPW two-doors had started"

famously didn't reveal its outputs (they were always 'sufficient'), but it represented around 20bhp on top of the existing 200bhp, allowing for an increased top speed of 120mph.

The interior was also reworked, with more wood – including on the steering wheel – and a rev counter and new centre console. The radiator grille was made deeper and new wheel trims were fitted, which also aided brake cooling. Plus, of course, there was the fresh badge on the bootlid, although Rolls-Royce strangely neglected to mention that its font was based on something that designer Martin Bourne had strayed across in *Reader's Digest* magazine.

Despite a 10 per cent price hike, the Corniche built upon the success that the MPW two-doors had started. And the upgrades continued, either concurrent with or ahead of the Silver Shadow saloon. In 1977, for example, the bulkier (and arguably less attractive) shock-absorbing bumpers of the Silver »

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

With the 1980 launch of the Silver Spirit marking a major change of style for Rolls-Royce, the following March saw the end of the Corniche saloons, which by then were priced at £62,000 – but the convertibles (costing an extra £4000) continued. There were tentative plans to update the convertible using the Silver Spur – the long wheelbase variant of the Spirit – but these didn't progress beyond the full-sized mock-up stage, probably because decapitating this

more angular, bulky design didn't lead to a very graceful result. And so the elegant old-style Corniches continued, albeit with regular enhancements.

STEADY UPDATES

The Corniche II was announced in 1986 – for the USA that is, as the rest of the world had to wait until 1988. Aside from revamped seats and anti-lock brakes, the most noticeable

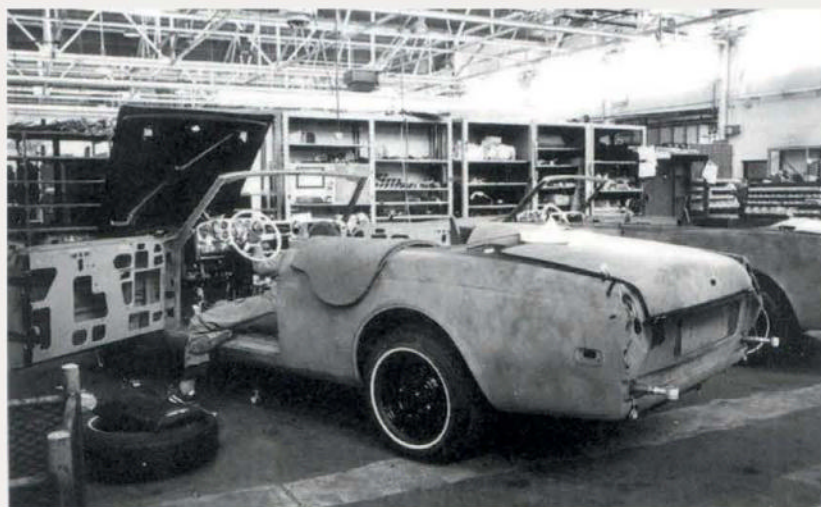
upgrades were new wheel trims as well as colour-coded bumpers and door mirrors. However, with the continuing renaissance and differentiation of the Bentley marque throughout the 1980s, those convertibles with Bentley grilles were now called Continentals instead of Corniches – a welcome revival of a great Bentley name. Further marking out these Winged-B cars were dashboards with separate round instruments more redolent of Bentleys of the past than Rolls-Royces.

It only took until 1990 for the Corniche III to come along, by which time anti-lock brakes and Bosch electronic fuel-injection were also being fitted. For the III, alloy wheels made a belated appearance, airbags were fitted into the revised interior, and a CD player became an option. Under the skin, a more advanced electronically-controlled suspension was installed, enhanced even further with the Silver Spirit's adaptive ride suspension for the Corniche IV of 1992, which also got a four-speed automatic transmission, a heated glass rear screen instead of plastic, and twin airbags. One year later, engine power went up again by the customary 20 per cent.

Also in 1992, there was a commemorative model for the Corniche's 21st birthday, featuring even plushier trim and Ming Blue paintwork with a cream-coloured hood and magnolia upholstery. Just 25 were built, each one being identified by a special numbered plaque inside. One could be yours for a mere (deep breath) £165,271. The Sultan of Brunei bought three...

However, it wasn't all celebration. All the convertibles were now being built at Crewe, because Rolls-Royce was planning to shut Mulliner Park Ward's Willesden factory, a task it eventually carried out in 1994. By then, however, the writing was all on the wall for the ageing Corniche and its Continental counterpart. Despite its updates, it was still based on a car that had debuted in 1965; and as timeless and distinguished as the design was, it couldn't last forever.

The end came in 1995, three decades



From 1992, all Corniche and Continental models were built at Crewe, with MPW's Willesden factory closing in 1994.



Bentley versions of the MPW two-door cars – and the subsequent Corniche – were always the rarest of them all.

years after the Silver Shadow's launch. And to mark the occasion, 25 Corniche S models were built with turbocharged V8s, echoing the eight 300bhp Bentley Continental Turbos that had previously been constructed. They bought total Corniche variant production to 6823, a figure that comprised 6262 Rolls-Royces and 561 Bentleys. It was a fitting send-off for a car that had managed a remarkable survival at such an exclusive level, linking several different periods of Rolls-Royce history. Not bad for something that stylist, Bill Allen, was convinced wasn't going to last. "You know, this is never going to sell, it's far too old fashioned," he'd confided to colleague Martin Bourne prior to launch. Thank heavens he was wrong about that, because he got so much else spot on. ■



Developing the two-door models meant designing a pair of folding front seats for access to the rear.

LIVING WITH A SILVER SHADOW

Sixty years after its debut, the Silver Shadow offers a tempting ownership experience... but what's it really like to own this Rolls-Royce bestseller, and what should you look out for?

WORDS & PHOTOS: PAUL GUINNESS



With the history of the Silver Shadow already being well covered in this issue, what's it like to actually own and run one of Rolls-Royce's most important models all these years later? Most of today's custodians will tell you what a rewarding experience it is, albeit with the usual caveats applying... including making sure that you buy the very best example for your budget. The excitement of acquiring a 'cheap' Silver Shadow soon wears off once previous neglect and well-hidden corrosion issues make their presence felt, inevitably resulting in hefty bills.

Opinions will often vary, of course, when it comes to which version – and era – of Silver Shadow makes the best buy now. Many purists favour the earliest models, presented in original spec with 6.2-litre power and ideally the 1965-style 'Chippendale' dashboard still intact. Others will point to the extra power advantage of going for a slightly later 6.75-litre Silver Shadow, while many will suggest that the much later cars are by far the best buys, benefiting from the improved handling and steering that arrived via the Silver Shadow II of 1977.

Whichever version most takes your fancy, however, you'll find the ownership experience to be broadly similar. But what are the important points to bear in mind when buying and running any Silver Shadow in 2025?

MECHANICAL CONCERNS

One potential concern with the long-running L-series V8 is corrosion of the block if the correct concentration of coolant hasn't been used, though this shouldn't be a problem on a well-maintained example – and only the bravest of buyers chooses one with no history. Worn tappets can also be an issue on high-mileage cars, while 6.2-litre versions can suffer from rear main oil seal leaks. Twin SU carburettors fuelled all Silver Shadows, and you should ensure these are set up properly.

Pre-1970 Silver Shadows used Hydramatic automatic transmission, subsequently replaced by a General Motors-sourced Turbo Hydramatic 400 unit. Both of these gearboxes



Buying your Silver Shadow from a reputable specialist should ensure you get a fully prepared car that's ready to enjoy.



There are plenty of cheap projects available, but restoring one costs far more than buying a car already in decent condition.

are robust but still need checking for wear, such as slipping or jerking when swapping ratios. Check the condition of the fluid by removing the dipstick for the gearbox; if the fluid is black, has bits in it or smells burnt, the gearbox will need overhauling.

Although the self-levelling hydropneumatic suspension and braking system on these cars seems complex, there's no shortage of specialist help out there. When maintained well, the system is very

effective and usually proves reliable even over high mileages, although you should still be on the look-out for potential problems. Take a regular look at your car's profile, for example; if it's sitting low at the back when the engine's running, you can be sure it's developing issues with the self-levelling system. Very early Silver Shadows had self-levelling front and rear suspension, although the front set-up was deleted quite early on as the rear did most of the work. »

60 YEARS OF THE SILVER SHADOW

OWNING AN ICON

If any knocks come from the front end when you're driving, the cause is likely to be worn ball-joints – another well-known weakness.

Silver Shadow brakes are a complicated triple-circuit set-up, so again check the history file for signs of any recent maintenance or repairs. If there's an issue and you need a braking system rebuild, it's an expensive proposition. Check for

signs of fluid leaks, and listen out for any knocking under braking as this suggests a worn hydraulic pump.

It's important that a Silver Shadow is used on a regular basis, as the hydraulics in particular can suffer when subjected to long periods of inactivity. Specialists often suggest that an owner should budget £3000 per year in terms of ongoing maintenance, although some years this hopefully

won't all be needed, enabling you to build up a 'buffer' for the future.

BODYWORK ISSUES

Once you're the proud owner of a Silver Shadow, it's essential that you keep its bodywork in tip-top condition, as any neglect that leads to potential repairs can be very expensive. On the plus side, repair sections (for areas such as rear wheelarches and rear lower corners) are available from specialists, but you'll need to factor in the cost of having them professionally fitted, finished and resprayed. Paintwork repairs to Rolls-Royce standards are famously costly.

When buying a Silver Shadow, the condition of its bodywork has a major bearing on its actual value, given the cost of both structural and cosmetic restoration work. Inner sills and inner wings need inspecting; and although the underside of the car (including the floorpans) generally lasts well, the suspension mounts all round need checking for rot.

The outer sills can corrode, particularly at the front and rear ends, as can the front wings where they join the sills. The bottom front of each outer wing can rust, along with the lower front valance that it meets, and rust can also attack the bumper brackets. Wheelarches are prone to rot, particularly the rears, and it's not unusual to see the lower rear quarter panels suffering from bubbling paintwork and poor quality repairs.

If an Everflex roof is fitted, you need to carefully examine around the front and rear screens for any signs of bubbling, which will mean rotten metalwork beneath. And while we're on the subject of trim, keep an eye on the chrome bumpers of a pre-1977 Silver Shadow, as these can blemish and start to corrode – and buying replacements or having your existing bumpers re-chromed is a costly business.

INTERIOR CHECKS

When it comes to a Silver Shadow's interior, as an owner you want to keep up with maintenance, which means regularly treating the high-quality leather to keep it supple and crack-free, and properly checking everywhere for signs of dampness and potential leaks – particularly if your car isn't garaged all year round.

Some Silver Shadow aficionados favour the earlier cars, suggesting they represent the model in its purest form.

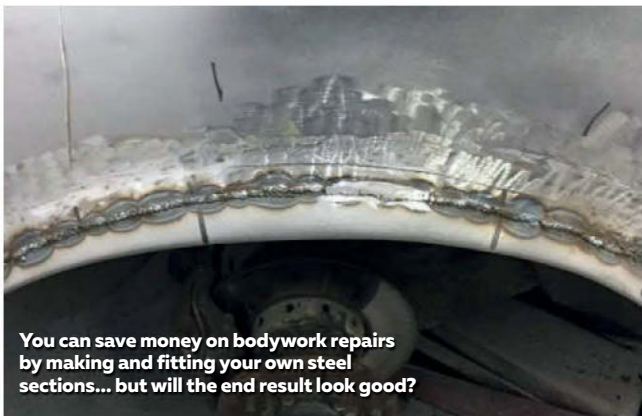


Has the Silver Shadow you're thinking of buying been maintained by a marque specialist, with paperwork to prove?

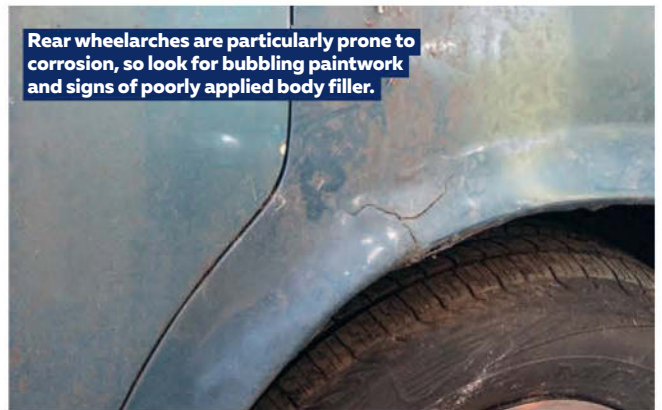




Flying Spares is an invaluable resource for used parts from stripped cars, particularly interior and exterior trim.



You can save money on bodywork repairs by making and fitting your own steel sections... but will the end result look good?



Rear wheelarches are particularly prone to corrosion, so look for bubbling paintwork and signs of poorly applied body filler.

Water might enter through a faulty screen seal, which means the surround has probably corroded; to effect a permanent repair, the screen and dash-pad will have to be removed, and it's a complex job to let new metal into the corroded area and then match in fresh paintwork.

Today's buyers know that an interior refurbishment is prohibitively expensive, which means making sure your car's wood-veneer trim is in perfect order; any flaky lacquer or splits in the surface could indicate issues with damp, while damage from the sun is also common. Carpets and over-rugs should also be free of damp.

When buying your Silver Shadow, you'll hopefully have chosen one with leather that's well-preserved, checking for cracks, splits, fading and general

"Opinions often vary when it comes to which version – and era – of Silver Shadow makes the best buy now"

wear and tear. Minor damage can be repaired by specialists, but it won't come cheap. Companies like Flying Spares in the UK can help to keep costs more realistic, however, thanks to large stocks of secondhand seats and trim; it's always worth contacting them to see what's currently in stock.

BUDGET AWARENESS

Whether you're based in the UK, the US or elsewhere, finding a Silver

Shadow that fits your budget shouldn't be too difficult... as long as that budget is realistic to begin with. Sale prices have been rising over the last decade, which means that the days of superb survivors being snapped up for 'low thousands' are long gone. Having said that, considering the level of craftsmanship, luxury and upmarket status that the Silver Shadow offers, it still represents excellent value for money and should prove to be a reasonable investment. »

60 YEARS OF THE SILVER SHADOW

OWNING AN ICON



Rot like this around the lower corner of a wing can be an expensive fix, although repair panels are available.



Professional upholstery repairs and restoration are expensive, so keeping your interior immaculate is important.



Finding an independent marque specialist that you trust can be key to enhancing your overall ownership experience.

“Considering the level of craftsmanship and luxury, the Silver Shadow still represents excellent value for money”

In the UK, you can pick up a Silver Shadow needing some cosmetic improvement (particularly at auction) for just £5000–£7000, while £10,000–£12,000 will find one that's more presentable. Around £15,000 should get you a decent survivor with plenty of paperwork, although a superb example with a low mileage and an impeccable history can easily top £20,000–£25,000. You'll often pay more for a Silver Shadow

II (a popular choice thanks to its improved driving style, although not all marque enthusiasts appreciate the modernised looks), while a long-wheelbase model can command a heftier price thanks to its extra rarity. Bentley derivatives of the four-door saloons tend to be similarly priced, despite them being much scarcer.

In the US, companies like the Beverly Hills Car Club always has a good selection of Silver Shadows

available. At the time of writing, these start at well under \$10,000 for a fresh-out-of-storage example that needs recommissioning, while a presentable Silver Shadow II that's had the same owner for the last 30 years can be yours for around \$15,000. You'll obviously pay more when an immaculate, low-mileage example comes into stock, but these go to show the potential value of this classic Rolls-Royce on the US market. ■



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Stock: 18523 - 1925 Rolls-Royce Springfield Silver Ghost Left-Hand-Drive

Introducing this beautiful and extremely rare post-World War One 1925 Rolls-Royce Springfield Silver Ghost Left-Hand-Drive. One of the very last left-hand-drive Silver Ghosts, which only were made in the final series of this Rolls-Royce model being manufactured in Springfield, Massachusetts. Do not miss this great opportunity to acquire this dual cowl Ascot Sport Phaeton body Springfield Silver Ghost that is mechanically sound. For \$385,000



Stock: 18635 - 1982 Rolls-Royce Silver Spirit

This 1982 Rolls-Royce Silver Spirit featured with only 51,848 miles on the odometer. Finished in its factory exterior color Exeter Blue complemented with a beige interior with a veneer trim. Contact us today to learn more about this offering and start your experience towards owning a piece of British motoring history that is mechanically sound. For \$14,750



Stock: 18456 - 2000 Bentley Azure

This low-mileage 2000 Bentley Azure featured with only 36,847 miles on the odometer. Fully equipped with a 4-speed automatic transmission, V8 6.75-liter Twin-Turbocharged engine. Look no further than this Bentley Azure that is mechanically sound. For \$49,950



Stock: 18589 - 1991 Rolls-Royce Silver Spur II

A low-mileage 1991 Rolls-Royce Silver Spur II finished in its exquisite factory color Light Oyster and Dark Brown Everflex complemented with a Mushroom Hide Piped Dark Brown interior. Comes with an automatic transmission, 6.75 V8 engine, power steering, and fuel injection. This British classic that is mechanically sound. For \$22,750



Stock: 18177 - 1990 Rolls-Royce Silver Spur II

Introducing this 1990 Rolls-Royce Silver Spur II featured with only 53,328 miles on the odometer and fresh out of the dry state of Nevada. Finished in its factory color Magnolia combined with a tan interior. Start your experience towards owning a piece of British motoring history that is mechanically sound. For \$19,750



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

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



Stock: 17507 1982 Rolls-Royce Corniche

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



Stock: 18396 - 2006 Bentley Continental Flying Spur

Introducing this stunning 2006 Bentley Continental Flying Spur that is finished in its factory color Diamond Black complemented with a black leather interior and burled-walnut trim. Powered by a 6.0-liter W12 Twin-Turbo engine that offers 551HP. The vehicle's condition makes it an ideal choice for those looking to invest in a piece of automotive history. For \$19,950



Stock: 16523 - 1990 Bentley Turbo R

This elegant 1990 Bentley Turbo R featured with only 46,840 miles on the odometer available in White with Beige interior. Equipped with an automatic V8 transmission, cruise control, and air conditioning. An extremely clean Bentley Turbo waiting for a new home that is mechanically sound. For \$15,750



Stock: 18126 - 1965 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud III Left-Hand-Drive

Presenting a 1965 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud III Left-Hand-Drive that is finished in a captivating Black Pearl exterior gracefully complemented with a red interior with a veneer trim. This example also comes with an owner's manual, adding to its provenance and historical significance. Do not miss this great opportunity to acquire this timeless British classic that is mechanically sound. For \$46,500



Stock: 18071 - 1952 Bentley Mark VI James Young

Introducing this extremely rare 1952 Bentley Mark VI James Young Coupe Right-Hand-Drive finished in a Regency Red, which is perfectly complemented by a sand beige interior. With its elegant two-door coupe design, this British classic exudes timeless sophistication. If you're in search of a timeless classic that combines elegance, performance, and prestige, look no further than this exclusive Mark VI that is mechanically sound. For \$59,950



Stock: 17823 - 1997 Bentley Brooklands

Introducing this exclusive 1997 Bentley Brooklands Trophy Edition featured with 46,067 miles on the odometer. This example is #25 of only #28 that were produced of this special edition to honor the 75th anniversary of Bentley's first participation in the Isle of Man TT race. This is an extremely rare opportunity to acquire a Bentley Brooklands that is in optimal condition and is mechanically sound. For \$29,950



Stock: 17552 1968 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow Drophead

This 1968 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow Drophead featuring coachwork by H.J. Mulliner Park Ward finished in Ivory complemented with a Beige interior. Crafted by the renowned coachbuilder H.J. Mulliner, Park Ward Limited. In addition to its timeless design, this Silver Shadow comes with a range of special features that set it apart from the rest and is mechanically sound. For \$36,500

Please check our website as we have cars being delivered daily to the showroom

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BOUND FOR BEAULIEU!

To help celebrate six decades of the Silver Shadow, we take a trip to the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu, aboard one of the finest long-wheelbase survivors

WORDS & PHOTOS: **PAUL GUINNESS**

Of all the variations on the Silver Shadow theme, the long-wheelbase version remains one of the rarest and most sought after. Available with or without a chauffeur's division when new, this lengthier Silver Shadow boasted an extra four inches in its wheelbase, making it substantially

roomier in the rear. So, when we recently decided to take a bit of a road trip along some of England's south coast, ending up at one of the world's most famous motoring museums, the longer version of the Silver Shadow seemed the ideal choice.

The car in question will be familiar to anyone who's been with us since

the early days, as Paul Cousens' 1975 Silver Shadow long-wheelbase was featured in our Summer 2018 issue. Seven years later, the car remains in outstanding condition, now having a total of nine concours awards and class wins to its credit. Despite its superb presentation, however, it remains a car that's very much used.



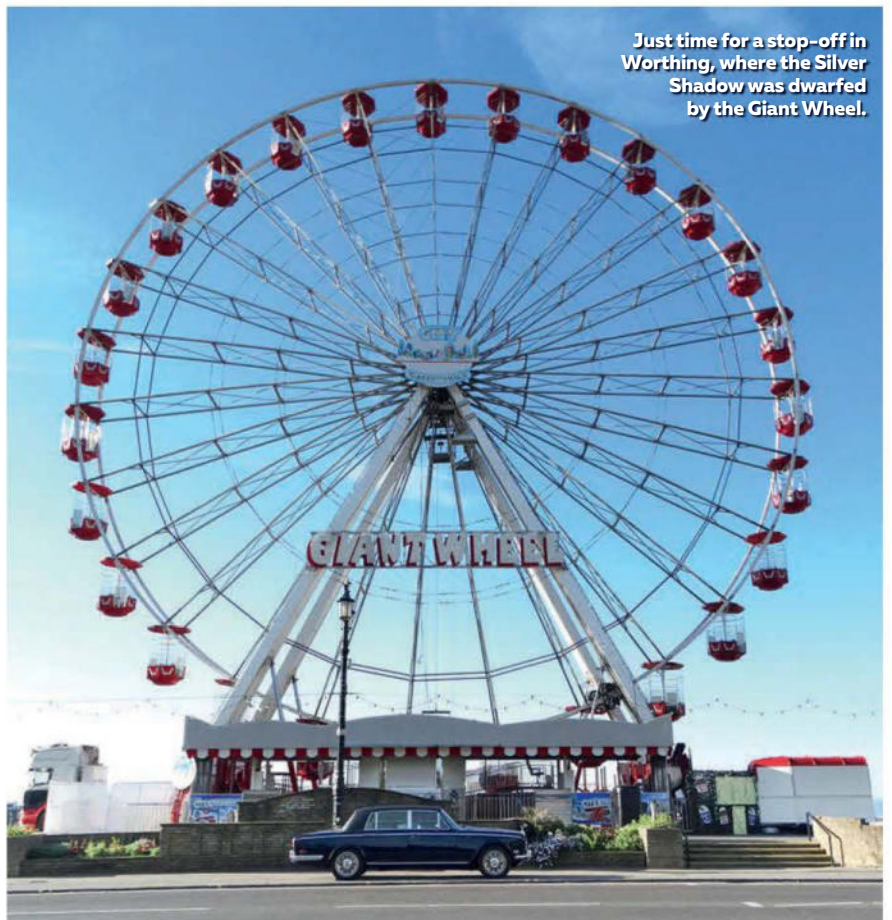


Our trip to Beaulieu began at Widewater Lagoon, situated at the westerly end of Shoreham beach.

Paul acquired it back in 1997, when it showed a genuine 63,000 miles on its odometer; and since then he has taken the mileage to 127,000, well and truly making the most of his Silver Shadow once its restoration was complete.

The car certainly needed work when Paul acquired it from Danny La Rue, the Irish-born entertainer and female impersonator, who became a household name in the UK in the 1970s thanks to his regular TV appearances. At the same time that La Rue owned this long-wheelbase Silver Shadow, he was also the proud possessor of a regular Silver Shadow and a Silver Cloud, although the car featured here was his preferred mode of transport for London. With La Rue's cherished registration number – DLR 2 – each end and his chauffeur up front, it would have been an imposing sight. By the time the car was finally about to be sold, however, this Silver Shadow wasn't in the best condition, as current owner Paul admits: "It still looked lovely from a distance, if you squinted... but close-up it was a different story, and parts of the car were a mess."

Nevertheless, Paul went ahead with the purchase and was delighted with his latest acquisition: "For me, the ultimate Silver Shadow was always the long-wheelbase model »



Just time for a stop-off in Worthing, where the Silver Shadow was dwarfed by the Giant Wheel.

60 YEARS OF THE SILVER SHADOW

ROAD TRIP TO BEAULIEU



The Rolls-Royce coped effortlessly cruising at speed on the A27 and subsequently the M27.

but without the chauffeur's division, a feature that robbed the car of the extra legroom created by the four-inch increase in wheelbase."

EXTRA SPACE

Compared with the standard Silver Shadow, the long-wheelbase version was an exclusive offering when new. It was a story that began via a pilot run of just 10 'extended' cars (one of them for Princess Margaret) in 1966/67, deemed to be successful enough for the long-wheelbase model to become a full-time member of the Silver Shadow family. Deliveries to American customers began in 1969, with home-market cars being offered from the following year.

The difference in price was considerable, with the long-wheelbase Silver Shadow costing £10,643 upon its debut (or a hefty £11,348 with chauffeur's division), at a time when the standard-length model could be had for 'only' £9272. Interestingly, most of the long-wheelbase Silver Shadows were ordered with the division, which perhaps wasn't too surprising given the model's obvious appeal to the



Off the main roads and heading towards the New Forest, picturesque scenery matched the perfect weather.

chauffeur-driven end of the market.

The arrival of the usefully updated Silver Shadow II for the 1977 model year saw the continuation of a long-wheelbase version. From then on, however, it would be badged as the Silver Wraith II, which meant that after little more than six years on sale in Britain, the model officially known as the Silver Shadow long-wheelbase was no more. It bowed out after worldwide sales of 2780 cars; and even with the later Silver Wraith II taken into account, just 4915 examples from the extended-wheelbase family were sold globally.

Unless you view a standard Silver Shadow alongside a long-wheelbase model, many onlookers would be hard-pressed to realise there was an extra four inches in the latter's wheelbase. But the difference that those inches make on board can't be missed, with rear seat passengers suddenly able to stretch their legs in a way that's simply not possible in the back of an 'ordinary' Silver Shadow. For a car that's regularly used for road trips with friends, the advantages are obvious.

SOUTH COAST DRIVE

For the purposes of this feature, we decided to take Paul's Rolls-Royce on a little road trip along part of the south coast of England, starting off from Shoreham-by-Sea (where I live, in West Sussex) and ending up at the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu. For such a well-travelled car, it would be an easy and effortless journey, far removed from the adventures that Paul has previously enjoyed behind the wheel, which have included a trip to Le Mans and a drive to southern Spain, the latter followed by two weeks spent exploring the area in style.

The only thing in common with Spain on the day of our planned journey was the weather, with 2025 providing us with a remarkably good spring by UK standards. As Paul pulled up outside my home in Nellie (his nickname for the car), I was reminded just what a superb example this is, its glorious Oxford Blue paintwork glinting in the sunshine. It's certainly a looker, with its superbly preserved Everflex roof (a feature of the long-wheelbase models, hiding the extra metal in the roof panel) enhancing its overall appearance. And it's a similar story inside, with the beautifully restored woodwork and thoroughly rejuvenated leather

"Compared with the standard Silver Shadow, the long-wheelbase version was an exclusive offering when new"



There are thought to be around 5000 wild ponies living in the New Forest, grazing on common land.



We finally arrived at the Beaulieu Estate, home to the National Motor Museum and Palace House.

both looking as good as when the car left the factory half a century ago.

Our drive began at around 7am, when we headed over the road bridge at the end of Shoreham High Street (part of the A259 cost road), crossing the River Adur and then veering off left in the direction of Shoreham beach. At the most westerly end of the beach we park up for the first photographs of the day, positioning the Rolls-Royce next to Widewater Lagoon – a pretty expanse of water that's landlocked by a man-made shingle bank and is home to herons, swans, cormorants,

kingfishers and other wildfowl. It proved to be an ideal backdrop, getting our day of driving and photographing off to a strong start.

Back on the A259, we headed west towards the seaside town of Worthing, where there was just time for a few quick snaps on the seafront before we resumed our journey. By the time we reached Goring-by-Sea, however, it was time to leave the A259 and to drive inland, heading towards the faster-moving A27 and then continuing west.

Being on a major dual carriageway and travelling at motorway-style »



Parked up outside the main museum entrance, with Beaulieu's hard-working vintage bus in the background.

“The Montagu Motor Museum proved very popular, and in 1959 it moved into a larger, bespoke building”

speeds confirmed just what an astonishingly refined machine a well-sorted Silver Shadow still is, six decades on from the model's debut. The engine note remains muted, the super-absorbent suspension makes light work of the UK's notoriously potholed roads, and the comfort provided by the armchair-quality seating remains unsurpassed. A spell on the back seat also reinforced to me just how usefully more spacious the long-wheelbase model is, with the kind of legs-forward seating position that's simply not possible in a standard-spec version.

Our time on the A27 went by remarkably quickly, despite the hefty mileage involved, as we passed by familiar-sounding towns like Arundel, Chichester and Havant. As we headed

in the direction of Portsmouth, the road then evolved into the M27, giving us a chance to put some motorway miles under the Silver Shadow's wheels, attracting countless admiring glances from fellow motorists as we did so. By the time we were on the outskirts of the New Forest, however, Silver Shadow-owning Paul announced that he'd be taking a detour, giving us an opportunity to explore this picturesque part of southern England and to stop off for more scenic photographs.

Pausing at Ipley Cross, only a few miles away from our destination, we were able to witness some of the famous wild ponies of the New Forest, curious as to our antics but too nervous to come close. It's thought that there are around 5000 ponies

roaming the common land of the New Forest, with their grazing helping to keep the grass short and neat, which in turn helps many rare plant species to thrive in this unspoilt terrain. Driving around the New Forest requires care, of course, as groups of ponies can often be found ambling across the road; but it gives this particular part of the UK a unique appeal.

ON TO BEAULIEU

Back in the Silver Shadow, and just a handful of miles later we found ourselves entering the grounds of Beaulieu's National Motor Museum, where we'd arranged to meet Bryn Jones from the venue's PR team. Our plan was to carry out more



The vehicles on permanent display include a 1925 Rolls-Royce Phantom (one of the first of its type) and a 1930 Bentley 4½ Litre 'Blower'.

photography in and around the grounds, as well as to have a quick tour of the museum itself... and the whole experience didn't disappoint.

The history of the National Motor Museum is fascinating, with its origins dating back to 1952, when Edward, 3rd Baron Montagu of Beaulieu, opened Palace House to the public. Five veteran cars were displayed in the entrance as a tribute to his father, John, 2nd Baron Montagu of Beaulieu. John Scott Montagu had himself been a motoring pioneer, having campaigned for motorists in Parliament. In 1899, his recently acquired 12hp Daimler became the first car to enter the yard of the House of Commons at Westminster, and just three years later he launched a weekly journal called *The Car Illustrated*, as well as a monthly title simply branded *The Car*.

By 1956, the motoring display in Palace House had grown and was moved into converted wooden outbuildings to create the first Montagu Motor Museum. And that same year, Edward, Lord Montagu, followed in his father's footsteps by launching his own motoring publication, *The Veteran & Vintage Magazine*.

The Montagu Motor Museum proved very popular, and in 1959 it moved into a larger, bespoke building. Public interest in old vehicles continued to grow, and by 1972 the Montagu Motor Museum was being replaced by the National Motor Museum, run as an independent entity and backed by a charitable trust. The purpose-



Among the museum's exhibits is its famous 1909 40/50hp 'Silver Ghost', acquired by Lord Edward Montagu in 1954.

built building was opened by HRH The Duke of Kent in July 1972.

The National Motor Museum celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2022, when it also announced a new strategy for its future development. This new vision focuses on improving the museum's spaces, equipment and interpretation for younger visitors, as well as upgrading facilities for the conservation and restoration of over 285 display vehicles. Greater access will also be provided to the

museum's internationally-acclaimed stored collections of more than 1.9 million items of automobilia.

A visit to the National Motor Museum remains a fascinating experience for fans of all veteran, vintage and classic vehicles, but particularly so for Rolls-Royce and Bentley aficionados. Among the many exhibits of interest to the readers of this magazine is Beaulieu's famous 1909 40/50hp 'Silver Ghost', which was acquired by Lord Edward Montagu in »



Lord Montagu himself (Ralph Douglas-Scott-Montagu, the 4th Baron Montagu of Beaulieu) turned up to meet Paul, proud owner of the Silver Shadow.

“The 50-year-old Silver Shadow provided the kind of refinement, opulence and comfort that the model was renowned for when new”

1954 and subsequently rebodied in a Roi des Belges coachwork style. Other interesting cars on display, however, include a 1925 Rolls-Royce Phantom that was bought brand new by John Scott Montagu at the model's motor show unveiling, plus a 1930 Bentley 4½ Litre 'Blower', a 1914 40/50hp Alpine Eagle, a 1933 Phantom II with Sedan de Ville coachwork by Barker & Co, and a well-presented 1968 Silver Shadow.

We would highly recommend a visit to the museum, where you can spend several hours admiring so many rarities dating back to the early days of motoring, as well as rather

more recent classics. It's open daily, and visitors can save money by pre-booking their tickets online in advance.

WELCOME SURPRISE

With the weather continuing to be favourable during our day at Beaulieu, we emerged from the museum keen to get more photographs for this feature. Having already photographed the Silver Shadow outside the main entrance, however, as well as in front of a separate building currently housing the 'We Had One of Those' displays of period family cars, it was suggested



Palace House – the Montagu family home since 1538 – made a superb backdrop for this part of our photo shoot.

that we drove round to Palace House for what was surely the ultimate backdrop. This stunning building was once the gatehouse to the medieval Beaulieu Abbey, and has been the Montagu family home since 1538. These days, it's open to the public and represents an enchanting trip through time, whilst motoring fans can also enjoy seeing Lord Edward Montagu's unique library as well as display cases full of automotive artefacts. The story of the Spirit of Ecstasy is well told via an extensive display, while tributes are paid to Charles Sykes, the sculptor responsible.

We were, of course, delighted to hear that the current Lord Montagu himself (or to give him his official title, Ralph Douglas-Scott-Montagu, the 4th Baron Montagu of Beaulieu) had approved our visit. But we were even more thrilled when we were told that he was keen to meet us, appearing outside Palace House and showing what was genuine interest in Paul's long-wheelbase Silver Shadow. The two chatted for some time, with Lord Montagu taking the driver's seat and having fun with what was a particularly hi-tech quadrophonic sound system when this particular car was built. He seemed in no rush, and was happy to be involved and photographed. Proud owner, Paul, told us afterwards: "I never expected that – it's made my year!"

By now we were feeling a little peckish, and so the Rolls-Royce was manoeuvred once more, this time to an area opposite Beaulieu Abbey, where Paul proceeded to lay out a fine example of a picnic, with Rolls-Royce crockery, cutlery and other accoutrements being immaculately presented upon a table bearing a Rolls-Royce tablecloth. With champagne, cucumber sandwiches and a rather delicious Victoria sponge soon consumed, we began to reflect on what had been a day well spent.

The drive from West Sussex to Beaulieu had been effortless, with the 50-year-old Silver Shadow providing the kind of refinement, opulence and comfort that the model was renowned for when new... particularly in long-wheelbase guise. And the return journey proved to be equally pleasurable, despite heavier traffic and lengthy queues in hot conditions. The car had performed faultlessly throughout the day, and our destination had



An enjoyable day was rounded off by a suitably stylish picnic, a feature of so many Rolls-Royce adventures!



Palace House is home to countless fascinating motoring artefacts and items of Beaulieu family memorabilia.

been a joy to experience.

If you've never been to the National Motor Museum, or perhaps you've not visited in recent years, then make sure you add it to your list of 'must go' places for this year. Whatever mode of transport gets you there, you won't regret making the effort; but should you happen to arrive in Rolls-Royce style, as we did, the experience will be even better. ■

THANK YOU

We're indebted to Bryn Jones from the National Motor Museum's PR department for all his help in arranging our visit and for guiding us throughout the day. To find out more about the museum and this year's planned events, as well as the many other attractions at Beaulieu, head online to www.beaulieu.co.uk.

FROM 'CHIPPENDALE DASH' TO SHADOW II

Reader Kelvin Lee reveals the remarkable story of his father's long-running Silver Shadow love affair, which saw a succession of brand new examples delivered

PHOTOS: KELVIN LEE

My father, Malcolm Lee, earned his money the hard way and was never known for spending thriftlessly.

It was therefore quite a shock, when upon seeing a newspaper photograph of the new Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow for the very first time in October 1965, he announced that he was going to buy one. Half-term week coincided with the Earl's Court Motor Show, and as a car mad 11-year-old I was excited to be taken there as a treat.

As soon as we arrived, we headed straight for the Rolls-Royce stand, but unfortunately entry was by invitation only and, despite Dad's plea that he had come to the show specifically to order a new Silver Shadow, we weren't initially allowed on. Dad was able to pull a few strings, however, and eventually we did

get invited onto the stand to have a good look at the car that he had set his heart on. Although they still wouldn't accept an order on the day, they agreed to pass Dad's details on to their distributor, PJ Evans in Birmingham.

A few days later, Dad received confirmation from PJ Evans that his name was now on the waiting list, although "due to the huge interest received following the Motor Show", they couldn't predict a delivery date. Dad wasn't too concerned at the time, as he had only recently taken delivery of a new Humber Imperial, so he was prepared to wait a little while. However, by October 1967, having already waited two years with still no indication of when he might receive delivery, his patience was wearing thin. He wrote a strong letter to Rolls-

Royce, threatening to cancel his order unless they could deliver his car by the following March, when he would be due to change his current car. Although he received a very apologetic letter from their UK Commercial Manager, strongly advising against cancelling his order, it gave little comfort as there was still no indication of a delivery date.

Determined not to be beaten, Dad called in to PJ Evans' showroom for a meeting with their Sales Manager, Michael Burley, who admitted that existing Rolls-Royce owners received preference over new customers, and suggested that delivery may be speeded up if Dad established himself as an existing Rolls-Royce owner by buying a secondhand model. He accepted this advice and asked Michael to contact him as soon as a used Silver Shadow came into stock, which happened in February 1968 when PJ Evans phoned asking whether he might be interested in a 1966 model that was arriving in part-exchange.

JCR 609D was finished in Metallic Sand with Beige leather, and had just over 40,000 miles on the clock. There was slight damage to the rear seat squab, and the asking price of £6750 was probably more than it had cost new. However, the exterior seemed unmarked, the colour suited my mother's taste, and Dad was tempted by the suggestion that he would almost certainly get his money back when the time came to trade it in for his new Silver Shadow.

To disguise the car's age, Dad started looking for a personalised registration plate. Our three-letter surname was a bonus, because LEE registrations had been issued during the late 1950s in the fishing port of Grimsby, and



so secondhand cars with LEE plates were now plentiful around the town. A Morris Minor Traveller registered LEE 543 was found for sale at Grimsby Motors for £240 and the transfer was completed in time for delivery of the Silver Shadow on March 1st, 1968. Ironically, though, Dad was then offered a Bentley S-series locally for just £1200, complete with the registration LEE 999.

THE START OF IT ALL

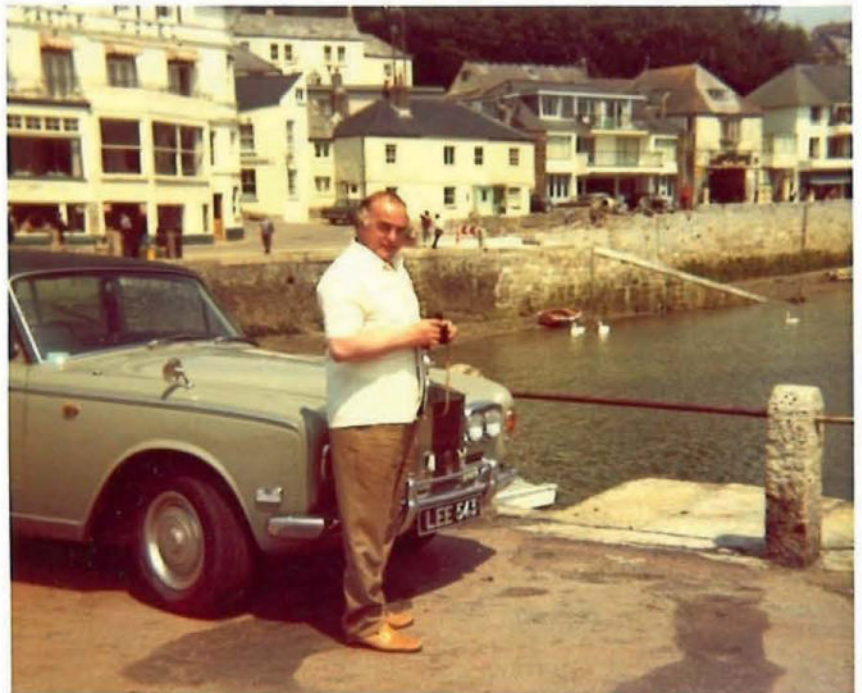
Dad was, of course, thrilled to have achieved Rolls-Royce ownership at the age of 49, although he probably never imagined he would now own a Silver Shadow for the rest of his life. Whether buying the secondhand Silver Shadow helped to move his order up the waiting list, or whether it was just pure coincidence, but four months later, in July 1968, Dad was notified that the car he had ordered in October '65, would be ready for delivery later that year, and he was invited to choose the specification upon payment of a £300 deposit.

As my parents had not yet tired of the Metallic Sand of the current car, order number R8330 shows the same was chosen again, although this time with Tan leather upholstery, Light Fawn (beige) headlining and Sandringham Beige carpets. Refrigeration (air-conditioning), green Sundym glass, wing mirrors, a badge bar and a GB plate were also specified. The model had already received various updates to the specification, the most significant being a new three-speed transmission,

plus a redesigned dashboard with a centre console and more padding.

Unfortunately, I have no record of this car's chassis number, which was

"PJ Evans' Sales Manager admitted that existing Rolls-Royce owners received preference over new customers"



originally due for delivery in the middle of November. That would have been in time for Dad's 50th birthday in early December, but delivery ended up being delayed by a month, and so he decided to wait until January 1st, 1969 to have it registered. PJ Evans' Michael Burley delivered the car to our home on New Year's Day, and I remember him lifting a huge bouquet of flowers out of the boot and handing it over to my mother. Sadly, nobody thought to take a photograph of the two almost identical cars, both with LEE 543 plates, parked side-by-side on our drive. The hand-over all seemed to be quite convivial, although from a letter received from Michael Burley just a few days later, it seems that Dad was very unhappy with the significant depreciation of the 1966 car during his 10 months of ownership.

This experience didn't deter Dad from immediately ordering his next Silver Shadow, though, to be delivered three years later; and when it came to choosing the specification this time, it



“Dad continued to use the Shadow II as everyday transport, clocking up an average of 7000-8000 miles a year”

was probably my mother who decided to go for the colour combination of non-metallic Sage Green with a Dark Green Everflex roof and Beige leather upholstery. Extras included wing mirrors, a badge bar, and a knee roll and console trimmed in hide. The new car (SRH12203) was delivered on January 4th, 1972, the price including Purchase Tax being £10,122.50. I believe that this car was later owned by a Mr Thornton, who owned a bearings company in Shropshire.

Again, Dad placed an order for his next car to be delivered three years later, and in October 1974 my parents were invited to a party celebrating the opening of PJ Evans' new showroom in Wolverhampton, where they originally specified Willow Gold with a Dark Brown vinyl roof, Beige hide upholstery and Beige carpets. Extras specified included opening front quarter lights, picnic tables to the front seats, Sundym glass, Avon tyres, Rolls-Royce badges fitted to the rear quarters, Lucas Quartz Iodine headlamps, Light Walnut woodwork, and an electric sunroof. Dad later asked for the colour choice to be changed, however, to Golden Sand. This car (SRH20788) was delivered on March 4th, 1975 and was used

for my elder sister's wedding in June of that year. I have always preferred the look of this model with its wider track, radial tyres and flared arches.

SECOND GENERATION

As usual, Dad had his name down for a three-year delivery, and in February 1978 he gave his (or rather, my mother's) specification for a new Silver Shadow II, which by now had a retail price of £26,740.35. There's a comical story regarding the original specification of this car, as my mother had recently watched a television repeat of the film, *The Yellow Rolls-Royce*, which gave her the romantic idea of having... yes, a yellow Rolls-Royce. I have to say that this would never have been Dad's choice, but because she seemed so keen on the idea, and for the sake of matrimonial harmony, he agreed to order his Shadow II finished in Champagne.

The specification also included twin fine brown coachlines to the waist and wheel discs, Beige (VM3234) leather upholstery piped in Dark Brown (VM890), Fawn (BE173) headlining, and Honey Gold carpets. Extras included lambswool rugs (£45.34), a Dark Brown

Everflex roof (£445.77), electric sunroof (£737.00), Rolls-Royce badges to the rear quarters (£17.25), Dark Brown hide to the top roll (£89.80), Beige hide to the instrument board and radio surround (£43.58), a badge bar, and the lightest possible woodwork available.

PJ Evans' Sales Manager, Martin Atkinson, was obviously concerned that my father might not be happy with this colour combination, and so when a Silver Shadow II in Champagne came into the showroom, he invited my father to call in, just to make sure it was what he wanted. My parents both went, and even my mother reluctantly agreed that the colour was a little too flamboyant for Dad. May 17th, 1978 duly saw order number R5601 amended, with the colour changed to Pewter and the Dark Brown Everflex roof deleted in favour of painted Moorland Green. The amendment moved the rota number from 37 to 42 and delayed dispatch from the works until October 17th, with SRH35408 eventually being delivered on November 7th, 1978 (just a month before Dad's 60th birthday) at a cost just over £29,100.00, which included 23 gallons of petrol at £0.81 per gallon.

From correspondence on file, it seems that Dad was again very disappointed with the trade-in value he was offered for SRH20788. He hawked it around other dealers, but failed to get a better price and so finally PJ Evans took it in part-exchange and the car was re-registered as JND 914N.

As previously, Dad had placed his order for a new Rolls-Royce upon taking delivery of the Shadow II, so his new car would have been due in late 1981 or early '82, by which time the Silver Spirit had been introduced. PJ Evans had become Evans Halshaw, and Sales Manager Martin Atkinson was very keen for Dad to trade in his Shadow II for a new Spirit, even lending him one for a couple of days while his car was in for a major service. Dad just couldn't take to the Silver Spirit's styling, though, likening it to a Ford Zodiac MkIV. And the other issue was the price, with the Silver Spirit costing over £40,000 against the trade-in value of his Shadow II of just £20,000. As he was doing fewer miles by then and still loved



his Shadow II, Dad therefore decided to keep it for a few more years.

Interestingly, he also had a small collection of Ford Model Ts and was a keen member of the Model T Register, attending their rallies around the UK. Although not most people's idea of an ideal tow car, a tow bar was nevertheless fitted to Dad's Silver Shadow II... and the sight of a Rolls-Royce trailering a Model T at club rallies apparently caused quite a stir.

ACCIDENT DAMAGE

Sometime during the mid to late 1980s, Dad had someone in a Range Rover run into the back of his Shadow II, which meant a new bootlid being fitted. The repairs were carried out by a local bodyshop and Dad decided to have various blemishes rectified at the same time. Unfortunately, after a few months, cracks started appearing in the new paintwork, so he arranged for the bodyshop to take the car back and rectify it while he was abroad on holiday for a couple of weeks. After a few days, the owner of the bodyshop phoned asking me to call in to discuss a problem with Dad's car. When I arrived, I was shocked to find the lower half already stripped to bare metal; they had apparently used the wrong paint when previously painting the car, and the only way to properly rectify it was to strip back to bare metal and start again.

The bodyshop claimed to be performing a £4000 bare-metal respray but offered to do it for £1000, even though Dad was expecting the paint to be rectified free of charge. The main problem, though, was the car wouldn't be available in time for a Model T rally that Dad had booked for shortly after his return from holiday. Realising how bitterly disappointed he would be to miss the rally, I quickly fitted a tow bar to my Opel Monza before my parents flew back from holiday. As predicted, Dad hit the roof when he returned to find his car was still in the bodyshop, and although he wasn't too happy about the £1000 bill, his main concern was missing the Model T rally. My offer of a tow car at least helped ease the situation, and when he eventually received his Shadow II back from the bodyshop, he was secretly over the moon with the result.

Dad continued to use the Shadow II as everyday transport, clocking up an average of 7000-8000 miles a year. He



sadly passed away in November 1993, by which time the car had 133,000 miles on its odometer. The day of Dad's funeral would also have been his 75th birthday. My elder sister's request for a Rolls-Royce hearse hadn't gone down well with the undertakers, who were very proud of their fleet of brand new Daimlers; but then a miscommunication problem meant that only two instead of the expected three limousines arrived to convey family. Predictably, elderly members of our extended family immediately plonked themselves in the funeral cars, so when my mother and sisters came out of the house there weren't any seats available.

The only option was to see if Dad's beloved Shadow II, which had now been sitting in the garage for a couple of months, would start... and luckily it did. It was also clean and had sufficient fuel. However, as I was feeling far too emotional to drive it myself, that task went to my brother-in-law who followed the hearse with my mother and three of my sisters on board. We all felt it was a fitting tribute and, to a degree, made up for Dad's last journey being in a Daimler.

I am pleased to say that SRH35408 is still in my ownership and has been significantly refurbished since I inherited it from my mother, although that story will be for a future article. ■

MARKETING THE SILVER SHADOW

Among the many memorable adverts and brochures issued by Rolls-Royce to promote the Silver Shadow and its siblings were these, each one a classic in its own right

WORDS: PAUL GUINNESS

EARLY PROMOTION ►

This stylish leaflet dedicated to the new Silver Shadow dates from 1966, showing the latest Rolls-Royce against the backdrop of a suitably modern (and obviously upmarket) home. This was the most advanced car to be launched by Crewe, and so employing a touch of modernity in its marketing made sense.

The reverse side of the leaflet contained the full spec of the car, along with cutaway drawings to show its generous internal and external dimensions.



◀ TOTALLY NEW T-SERIES

Taken from a Silver Shadow and T-series brochure first published in 1966 is this image of the Bentley derivative. The brochure was a lavish and colourful affair, designed to show these crucial new models in all their opulent glory. And, of course, the wording used throughout was full of praise for the ultra-modern duo: "The new Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow and Bentley T-series motor cars have been introduced after many years of continuous development by Rolls-Royce engineers, paying the meticulous attention to detail which is part of the company's tradition."

COACHBUILT TWO-DOOR ►

The new Corniche of 1971 wasn't the first official two-door variation on the Silver Shadow theme. That accolade goes to what was officially sold as the Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow Mulliner Park Ward Two-Door, shown on this single-sheet promotional leaflet.

It was a simple publication, featuring a handsome red MPW Two-Door on the front and a list of the car's technical specification on the reverse. Power came via the Silver Shadow's familiar 6230cc V8, while the car's unique craftsman-built coachwork was hailed by Rolls-Royce for its "stressed steel monocoque construction of great strength and rigidity".





HEADLINE NEWS

The headline of this simple-looking ad from the Silver Shadow's early days featured a headline familiar to every fan of the marque, simply claiming the newcomer to be "The best car in the world". It was one of those adverts that still quoted Conduit Street, London, as the contact address for the company, while the accompanying text boasted that the Silver Shadow "improves upon even the traditional Rolls-Royce standards of comfort, silence and safety".

WHEN SHOULD YOU SELL? ▶

This US-market advert posed an interesting question: "When should you trade in your 1976 Rolls-Royce?" Issued that year, it went on to offer several suggestions, including 1979 – at which point your three-year-old Silver Shadow "still smells like new". So, how about 1986? Your 10-year-old car might have almost 100,000 miles under its wheels by then, but being a Rolls-Royce it would still be in fine fettle.

The advert suggested you might even want to keep your Silver Shadow until 2011, by which time it would be 35 years old. But the ad insisted that "it won't be dated styling that people admire" about your car, but rather the fact that your Rolls-Royce represents a "worthy and almost timeless investment in the highest art of four-wheeled transportation".

UNLIKELY COMPARISON ▼

Dating from the late '60s is this US-market advert from the American Motors Corporation, which cheekily chose to compare the latest AMC Ambassador with the Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow thanks to both cars coming with air-conditioning. The Ambassador's two main rivals – the Chevrolet Impala and Ford Galaxie – lacked air-con as standard, but did the AMC really have anything else in

common with the Silver Shadow?

Yes, according to the advert: "The Rolls-Royce uses coil springs in its seats. So does the Ambassador. The Rolls-Royce has deep-dip rustproofing. So does the Ambassador." It was all rather silly, of course, as the \$2918 Ambassador was certainly no rival to the \$19,600 Silver Shadow; but at least the ad provided a bit of entertainment value.

An unfair comparison between

Because the Ambassador comes with an air conditioning standard, we thought it much more unfair to compare it to the Chevrolet Impala or the Ford Galaxie, which list for about the same price.

So we chose the renowned Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow 4—dome Sodom for comparison.

It goes without saying that the Silver Shadow, which costs \$189,000, is impeccably built. And we wouldn't have the effrontery

to suggest that our Ambassador, which lists for \$29,100, is built from Rolls-Royce parts.

But the Rolls-Royce, like the Ambassador, comes with air conditioning standard. The amiability doesn't end there:

The Rolls-Royce has individually adjustable reclining seats. They're available only on the Ambassador.

The Rolls-Royce has a body construction. So does the Ambassador.

the Rolls-Royce and the Ambassador.

And when you pay \$2918 for an automobile, we feel you have every right to all the comfort, luxury and value we can give you.

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American Motors

American Motors Corporation • Detroit, Michigan • 1984



The Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow



The Ambassador DPL

WHEN SHOULD YOU
TRADE IN YOUR 1976 ROLLS-ROYCE?

When most people purchase a new automobile, they already know how long the relationship will last. They recognize, from the outset, that they are buying one of the numerous vehicles will rapidly lose both its value and its appeal.

Fortunately, there is an alternative to this idea: The Volvo 700. Since Volvo is the Volvo Group's "Cruiser," traditionally known for its more elegant, engineered and more costly cars, the company built the 700 as the "entry car" of the Volvo Group's new line. Since 1974, more than 100,000 have been sold on the North American 2000 cc. Volvo 700. Volvo built on its reputation for reliability and safety.

[illegible]

ENR Management is important with any job. But Mike Ryan, owner's manual, reminds you that after about 30,000 miles you should let your flexible brain and the leading system. It is interesting to see



IMPROVING THE BEST

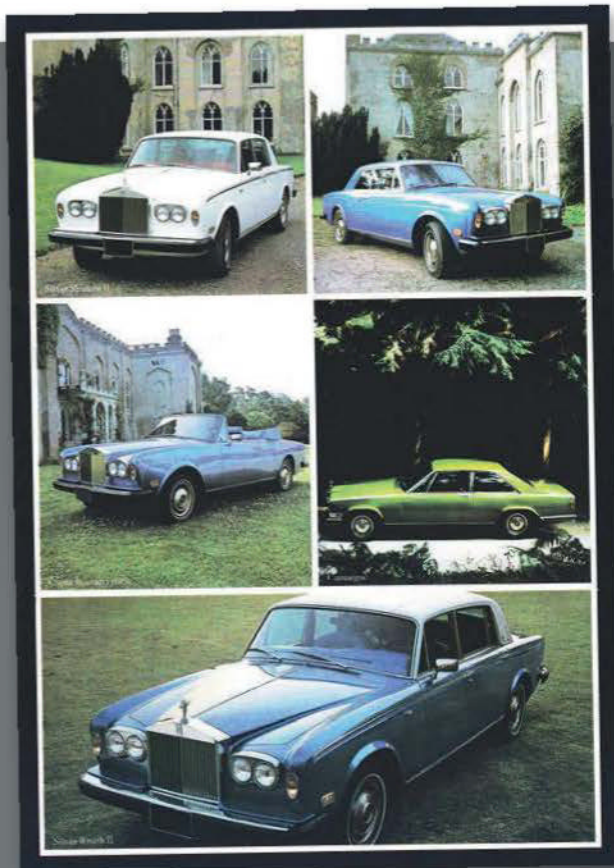
The debut of the Silver Shadow II saw Rolls-Royce publishing a series of press adverts, including the one shown here. It described the newcomer as a "long-term investment" thanks to the fact that "its value will still be appreciable long after a lesser car will have gone to the scrapyard". Rolls-Royces enjoyed the longest life expectancy of just about any marque, suggested the ad: "A glance at the 'cars for sale' columns of your newspaper will assure you of that".



AMERICAN LINE-UP ▶

Carrying a front-page headline of "The heart and soul of a masterpiece" was this fold-out US-spec leaflet from 1978, which featured the full SY-generation Rolls-Royce range once it was extended to its A4-size maximum. And it was an extensive line-up, starting with the Silver Shadow II and finishing via the exclusive two-door Camargue. In between came the Corniche Saloon, Corniche Convertible and the Silver Wraith II, the latter being the second-generation name for the long-wheelbase Silver Shadow.

But what did Rolls-Royce mean by the headline mentioned at the start? Well, it was all rather romantic: "Through the finer workings of man runs a common, many-stranded thread. It is readily identified in art, literature and music, but is just as present in architecture, science and engineering." As the leaflet explained, "it is elusive, intangible, rare... but plain for all to see."



SHADOW II AT THE NEC ▲

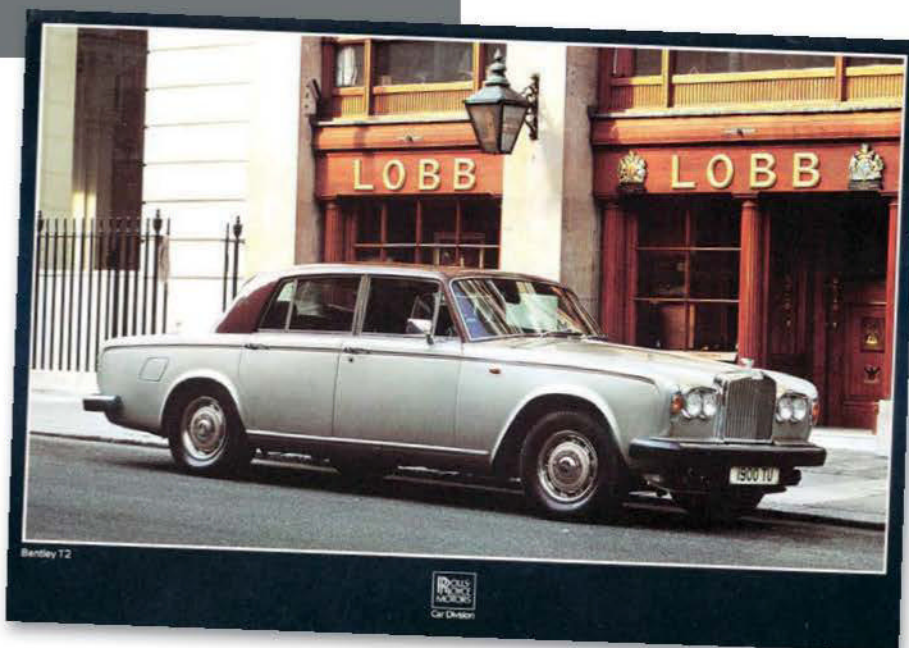
This monochrome press photograph was issued to promote the Silver Shadow II. It might not be the most exciting image, but it's interesting for its use of Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre as the backdrop, a venue that officially opened its doors to the public in February 1976.

We suspect the photograph was issued in October 1978, when the British International Motor Show was held at the NEC for the first time ever, having made the move from its traditional base of London's Earl's Court. That inaugural show attracted a record-breaking crowd of 908,194 car enthusiasts, many of them no doubt perusing the official Rolls-Royce stand during the event. Were you among them?

BENTLEY EXCLUSIVITY ▶

When the Silver Shadow evolved into the Silver Shadow II in February 1977, the Bentley T-series adopted the same updates, relaunched as the T2 and featured in this double-sided leaflet from 1978.

As before, the Bentley derivative ended up being by far the most exclusive choice, with just 558 standard-wheelbase T2s built compared with 8425 Silver Shadow IIs. And when it came to the 'extended' versions, the difference was even more stark, with a mere 10 long-wheelbase T2s produced – a figure dwarfed by the 2135 Silver Wraith IIs that rolled out of Crewe.





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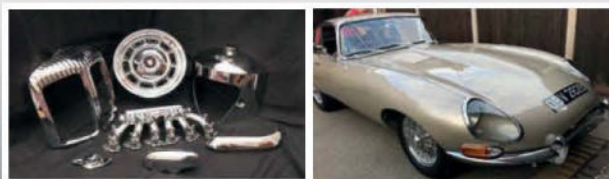
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1963 Bentley S3 Continental MPW Two Door FHC Well finished in soft white, good chrome, grey leather & full length Webasto roof. Recent attention to suspension, brakes & more – amazing how modern a 60 year old car can feel! £95,000

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1975

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2016/66 (2017 Model) Bentley Bentayga W12 Mulliner. In special order Moonbeam Silver. Panoramic roof with roof rails, 21 inch 5 spoke diamond cut alloys and 5 seat interior with Terrain Specification, Touring Specification, Front Seat Comfort Specification and Veneer Specification. Only 46,000 miles with FSH..... **£63,950**



2009/59 Bentley Arnage R Mulliner Special Order. Only 13,900 miles from new, in Sapphire Blue with Chrome grille, 20 inch Final Series alloys, electric sunroof, picnic tables, cocktail cabinet and a host of other extras. Magnolia interior with French Navy secondary hide. Full Bentley history, immaculate throughout..... **£46,950**



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2006/06 (2007 Model) Bentley Continental GTC. in unmarked Silverlake with Nautic Blue hood and 19 inch alloys. Magnolia interior with Nautic secondary hide, massage seats and Birds Eye Maple veneers with door and rear quarter inlays. One owner since 4 months old, with FBSH. 31,000 miles, serviced every year, immaculate..... **£30,950**



2000 W Bentley Arnage Red Label. Finished in Stellite Silver with 18 inch alloys, with Beluga interior piped in Slate Grey with Walnut veneers. Previously supplied by ourselves, only 54,213 miles and a very comprehensive history clearly showing it's been maintained regardless of cost. Fantastic value, only..... **£21,250**



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..... **£82,950**



1992 J Bentley Silver Spirit MK II. Finished in Royal Blue with whitewall tyres. Parchment interior piped in French Navy, with matching carpets and vanity mirrors to the rear. Outstanding condition throughout. Just turned 90,000 miles with a full history..... **£17,999**



1986 C Rolls Royce Corniche Convertible. Finished in Aurora with a new Spruce Green Mohair hood and Champagne interior piped in Spruce with Spruce carpets and Walnut veneers. Upgraded radio unit including sat nav, DAB and park camera. Known to us for 23 years. 68,000 miles with FSH, immaculate..... **£89,950**



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SILVER SHADOW ELECTRONIC IGNITION

As part of the Silver Shadow's 60th anniversary celebrations, Flying Spares explains what's involved in carrying out a useful electronic ignition conversion on this perennially popular classic

WORDS: ANDY THWAITES PHOTOGRAPHY: FLYING SPARES

With our 12th Technical Guide coinciding with this issue of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* being a celebration of 60 years of the Silver Shadow, it's an ideal opportunity to take a look at one of the model's most useful and worthwhile upgrades.

We're talking about an electronic ignition conversion, with the work being carried out as always by Flying Spares. We aim to give you an insight into how the professionals tackle the job, hopefully encouraging you to do the same at home if you're the owner of a car that could benefit.

The Silver Shadow being worked on here – appropriately finished in silver – is a 1969 example with 35,000 miles on its odometer, a car that's ripe for an ignitor upgrade. Flying Spares actually dismantled a very similar model a couple of years ago – another 1969 example in silver, featuring the 6230cc engine. That car's previous owner had had it for nearly three decades and initially enjoyed it as intended, but later years saw it

becoming almost an ornament on his driveway. By the time Flying Spares acquired it, the whole bodysell was extensively corroded and the only sensible option was to dismantle the car and refresh the salvageable parts, helping to keep other Silver Shadows on the road as a result. Thankfully, the one you see in the step-by-step photographs – although far from pristine – is well worth restoring.

The Pertronix electronic ignition kit being used is one of Flying Spares' bestsellers, and is a highly reliable way to convert your distributor from the original points system. It fits neatly inside the distributor cap, so isn't visible externally, but it delivers twice the voltage to the spark plugs, increasing both horsepower and fuel economy as well as extending the life of your plugs.

We always recommend fitting it in combination with a new chrome Flamethrower coil – another popular, well proven part – and we took the opportunity to upgrade a few other bits as we went along, replacing old with new to give the whole ignition system

the best chance of performing well.

Just a quick reminder: if the car has been running, please allow the engine to cool before you get started. It can be fiddly enough working in and around the distributor area without making life more difficult with hot components! And 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 +44 (0)1455 292949 or email sales@flyingspares.co.uk.

ABOUT ANDY

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



ELECTRONIC IGNITION CONVERSION

1



It's important to get prepped with all the essential PPE and kit that you're likely to need.

2



Lift the bonnet of the Silver Shadow and apply protective wing covers for keep your paintwork damage-free

3



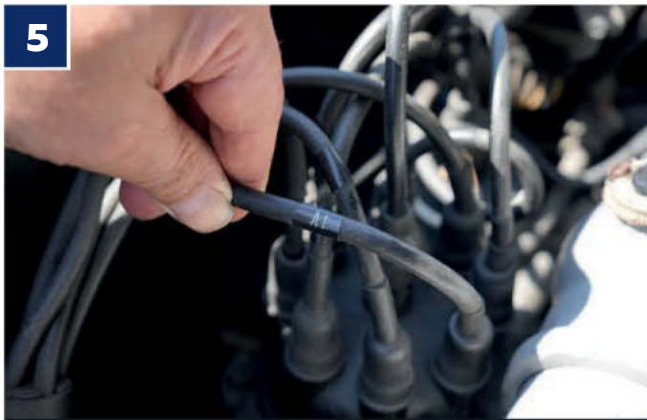
You should also protect your car's interior with seat covers, floor mats and a steering wheel cover.

4



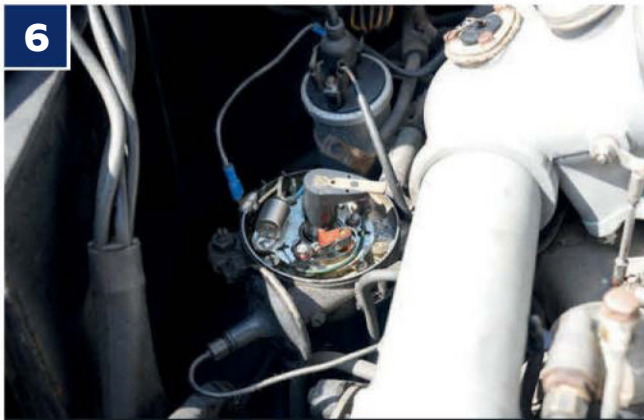
As usual when working on any vehicle electrical system, it is best practice to disconnect the battery first.

5

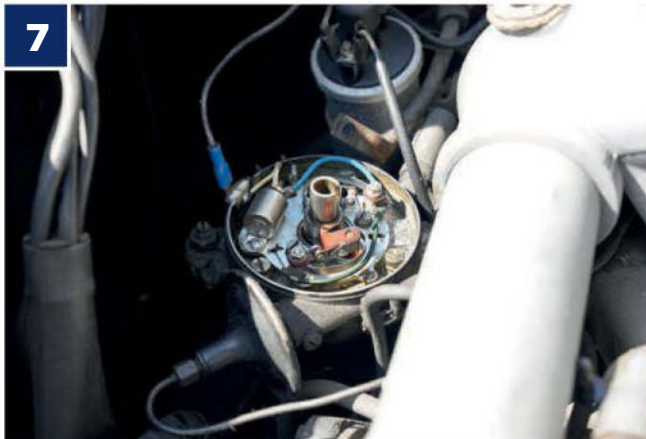


Right at the start, make a note of the HT lead rotation order. With 'Bank A' on the right when viewed from the driver's seat, the firing order should be: A1, B1, A4, B4, B2, A3, B3, A2.

6



Now, remove the distributor cap from its housing by pulling away the two clips on both sides. The cap will lift up giving access to the internals.



7

Next, you need to remove the rotor arm, condenser, ignition points and plate.



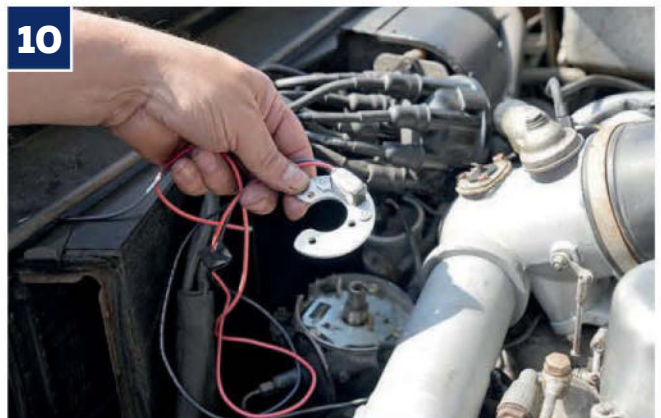
8

Disconnect the wiring to the coil for the parts you're removing, so that you're left with only the main plate inside the distributor.



9

You can now fit the electronic conversion kit. Here, we used Flying Spares' ever-popular Pertronix ELEC3 kit, along with a Pertronix 1.5 Ohm coil.



10

Fit the main conversion plate to the distributor housing using the securing screw provided. It will only fit one way, with the main pickup pointing towards the 'B Bank' cylinders.



11

You now need to slot on the rotating shaft pickup, secured by the HEX design.



12

Fitting the rotor arm is the next stage. Again, it will only go in one way due to the slotted design.

ELECTRONIC IGNITION CONVERSION (CONTINUED)

13



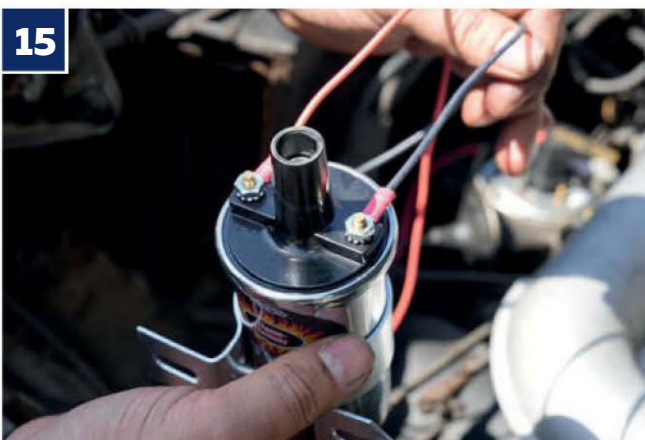
Feed the conversion kit wiring loom through the housing and insert it through the weather-proofing gromet, ensuring correct alignment.

14



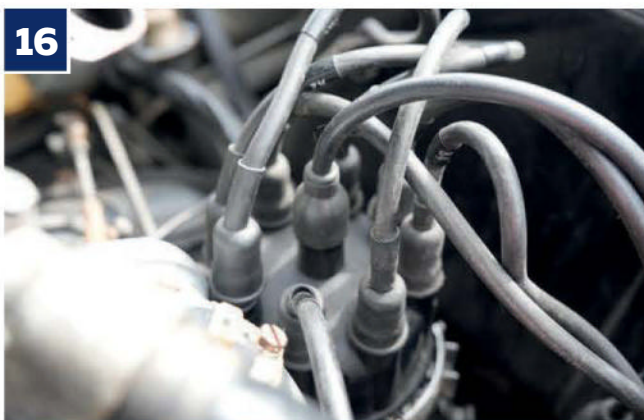
You're now in a position to fit both the new distributor cap and the new coil.

15



Double check that you've made the correct positive and negative connections, and then tighten the nuts

16



Now, refit the main coil king lead from the coil to the distributor cap, along with the other HT leads in the correct firing order. Secure cap back in place with two clips... and you're nearly there.

17



Finally, reconnect the battery, start the engine and run it until it's warm.

18



All good? The last step is to give your Silver Shadow a road test. Once fitted, this kit should improve your car's starting, as well as overall reliability.

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JOIN THE BIG BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION!

There's not long to go now until the biggest SY-generation gathering of all time – and here are the details of how get involved

As you've been reading in this issue of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver*, 2025 marks the 60th anniversary of the Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow and the innovative SY-generation motor cars. So, to celebrate this milestone, the Middlesex Section of the RREC is organising a unique event at the historic Brooklands Museum, taking place over the weekend of August 16th/17th.

Event admission tickets are on sale exclusively to pre-registered attendees and are selling fast. Hundreds of SY cars are already pre-registered, joining us from all over the UK and Europe – and you can help us to break all records by bringing along your Silver Shadow/Shadow II, Bentley T-series/T2, MPW/Corniche, Silver Wraith II or Camargue. All SY owners – both club members and non-members – are very welcome, but all cars must



Brooklands is the venue for a massive SY get-together to mark the Silver Shadow's 60th anniversary.

be pre-registered in order to buy tickets and attend.

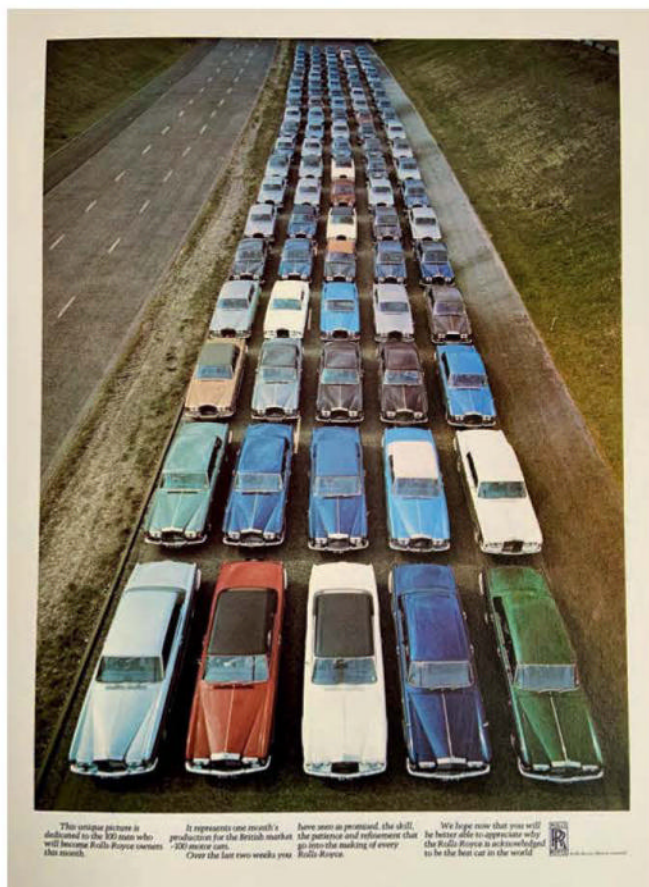
The Saturday will see all the SYs gathered on Brooklands' famous finishing straight for the recreation of the iconic '100 Shadows' photograph, inspired by the 1970s Rolls-Royce publicity shot you see here. There will be a programme of SY technical seminars run in conjunction with the RRBSA, and a chance to explore all the fascinating motoring and aviation exhibits that Brooklands Museum has to offer. In the evening, there will be a black tie celebratory dinner in the historic Brooklands Clubhouse, with a champagne reception in the legendary ERA shed, surrounded by GP cars from the 1920s and '30s.

Then on the Sunday, the SYs will waft their way from Brooklands on a picturesque route through the English countryside for our SY Diamond Anniversary Road Run.

Register today! To attend this once-in-a-lifetime event, don't delay as tickets are strictly limited and are selling out quickly. Simply email silvershadow60event@gmail.com with the following information:

- Your full name.
- Your car's model, marque and year.
- Chassis number.
- Colour.
- Registration number
- Your mobile phone number.

We'll then be in touch with further details about ticket availability and payment, hotel rates and more. So, join the SY-mphony of Shadows and let's make 2025 a diamond year to remember. ■



The original 1970s photograph that influenced what promises to be a weekend to remember.



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rrec.org.uk





Lifetime Achievement Award recipients: Jimmy Medcalf, Peter Morley and Harvey Hine (photo: Stuart Newman).



Robin Ward's Arnage was the fastest Bentley at the BDC Sprint at Mallory Park (photo: Mick Herring).

LEADING FIGURES HONOURER

New Lifetime Achievement Awards have been presented to three of the BDC's most prominent figures, recognising their influence on club and Bentley matters over many years

Three legends of the Bentley Drivers Club have been deservedly honoured, with each receiving one of the club's newly introduced Lifetime Achievement Awards at the 88th Annual General Meeting. Harvey Hine, Jimmy Medcalf and Peter Morley – whose collective membership exceeds 200 years – received a standing ovation from their fellow members when they accepted the accolades in recognition of their unstinting efforts and success on behalf of both the club and the Bentley marque over many decades.

Harvey played a major role in the BDC's Competitions scene over many years, as well as being a contributor to *The Technical Facts of the Vintage Bentley* and actively involved in the club's Vintage Spares Scheme. Today, he remains a valued advisor on insurance matters.

Past President and Chairman Jimmy is arguably the world's leading expert on the Vintage Bentley and continues to freely advise fellow club members, both at home and abroad – assistance which has proved invaluable to owners of WO Bentleys over many years.

Peter, meanwhile, is regarded as one of the club's most prominent and successful racing drivers, having started competing in the 1950s and campaigned the iconic 24-litre Napier Bentley (which he created with the late David Lewellyn). Son Clive and grandsons Stuart and James have now taken on the family motorsport mantle.

In presenting the accolades, President Andrew Day said the awards were "clearly all very well deserved. These three people represent everything we aspire to in our club: generosity of spirit, friendship, kindness and a sense of fun."

A host of meritorious trophies was handed out at the April meeting, including the Bentley Drivers Club Award for outstanding service to the club, to former Midlands Region Chairman Tom Commander. Meanwhile, the club's main officers, including Chairman Mike Warner, were all returned to their existing posts on the main board following voting.

A few weeks prior to the AGM, also at the clubhouse in Wroton, the fourth edition of the increasingly popular Talks Day drew another sell-out audience,

which enjoyed a varied collection of fascinating presentations. The story of the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu's race-against-time project to restore and re-run the Sunbeam 1000HP Land Speed Record car at Daytona Beach in March 2027 held attendees enthralled; likewise, the history of the Aston Hillclimb, at which WO Bentley competed, and which was due to celebrate the centenary of its final event in May with a day of activities. Sandwiched in between was an entertaining recounting of his 60 years in motorsport by Mike Wilds, a world sports car champion in the 1980s, who also competed in Formula One during the previous decade.

Talking of motorsport, the return of the club's Sprint meeting after several years' absence drew a fantastic field of 160 vintage, classic and modern cars – including 12 Bentleys – to Mallory Park in late April. The Arnage of Robin Ward, who set a new Bentley lap record at BDC Silverstone last year, was quickest of the marque's cars.

Elsewhere, as we went to press, plans for the club's two main summer events – the 77th Concours at Walton Hall, Warwickshire in late June, and the 77th BDC Silverstone race meeting in early August – were well under way. Among the highlights of Concours is a homage to the Continental in all its various forms, featuring a display of members' cars.

Finally, the club has reported the sad passing recently of two notable figures: former Club Secretary Barbara Fell and leading Competitions figure Adam Stacy-Marks.

For further details of the Bentley Drivers Club, visit www.bdcl.org. ■

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NOT A MEETING OF MINDS

Ninety years ago, WO Bentley left the company that he'd created, not long after its takeover by Rolls-Royce. A clash of personalities meant it wasn't a happy period for the respected engineer...

WORDS: RICHARD GUNN PHOTOS: RR&BD ARCHIVE EXCEPT WHERE CREDITED

It should have marked the start of an engineering dream team when, in 1931, Rolls-Royce bought arch rival Bentley. With it came the services of founder Walter Owen (WO) Bentley under contract, bringing him into the same orbit as Sir Henry Royce. A fruitful partnership between the two engineering giants could have led to great things, but instead the pair didn't get on and Bentley found himself sidelined.

When WO's contract came up for renewal in the summer of 1935, he promptly left. So, did Rolls-Royce miss out on the opportunity to make use of Bentley's skills and experience? Or was him being employed by the firm that had subsumed his own an arrangement that simply couldn't work for WO?

Whatever his mechanical knowhow, WO Bentley was no businessman. From the moment he founded the firm named after him in 1919, its finances

were always fragile. He was too focused on building and perfecting cars to concentrate on business matters and left that side of things largely to his brother, Horace Bentley. Had international acclaim and patronage from the affluent motoring set not flooded Bentley's way following its win at the 24 Hours of Le Mans race in 1924, it would probably have just disappeared during the mid-1920s; just another underfunded low-volume specialist British car manufacturer. Nevertheless, by 1925, WO felt compelled to approach Lord Nuffield of Morris Motors regarding a potential merger. The fleeting negotiations ultimately came to nothing, but had Bentley become part of the Morris conglomerate, it might well have ended up as a British Leyland brand several decades later. One can only imagine how that might have been...

Instead, the firm's saviour was Woolf

'Babe' Barnato, a flamboyant playboy of (very considerable) independent means. Barnato was willing to finance Bentley to the tune of over £100,000 and pay off its creditors, but only in return for control of the company. From 1926, WO found himself a mere employee (albeit briefly sole managing director and then chief engineer), while there was no role at all for brother Horace. It was a bitter compromise and comedown for WO, but it at least allowed the firm to survive and he could devote all his energies into designing cars without worrying about cash.

There were subsequent Le Mans laurels each year from 1927 to 1930, none of which would have happened without Barnato's involvement. However, despite these triumphs and growing sales as a result, the Wall Street Crash of October 1929 catapulted Bentley back into dangerous financial straits. This coincided with



For WO Bentley, the move to being a Rolls-Royce employee brought an end to the more exciting and glamorous days of the 'old' Bentley company (photo: Bentley Motors).



Bentley's first Le Mans victory was in 1924. WO Bentley (centre) is pictured with drivers Frank Clement (left) and John Duff (photo: Bentley Motors).



WO Bentley found himself contracted to Rolls-Royce between 1931 and 1935, but was frustrated that his engineering skills were barely used.

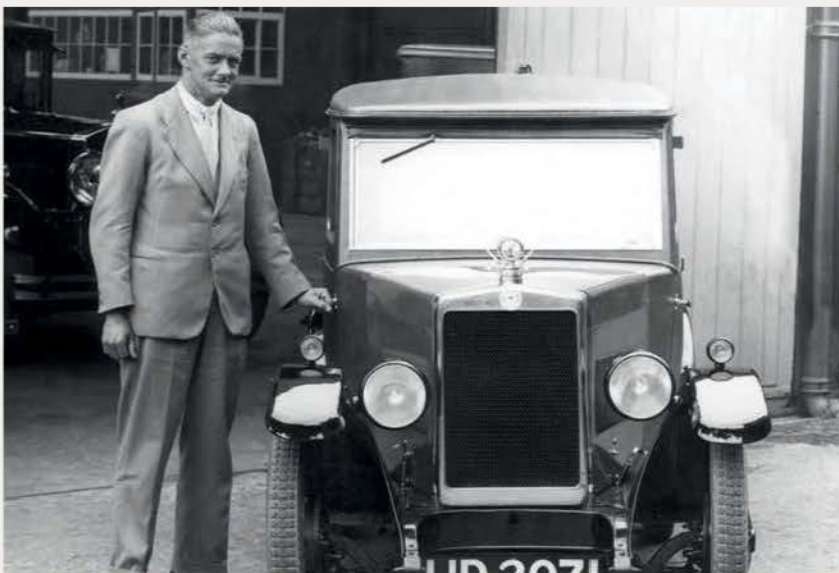
a growing discontent between WO and Barnato, after the latter had endorsed supercharging – a concept that WO thought would “pervert its design and corrupt its performance”.

Barnato’s interest in Bentley was also waning; having had four Le Mans victories on his watch, he felt he’d proven the company’s sporting credentials. He announced that Bentley was withdrawing from motorsport in July 1930, with his advisers recommending that he sell the firm. Even for a millionaire – at a time when that really meant something – there were only so many losses that Barnato was willing to stomach.

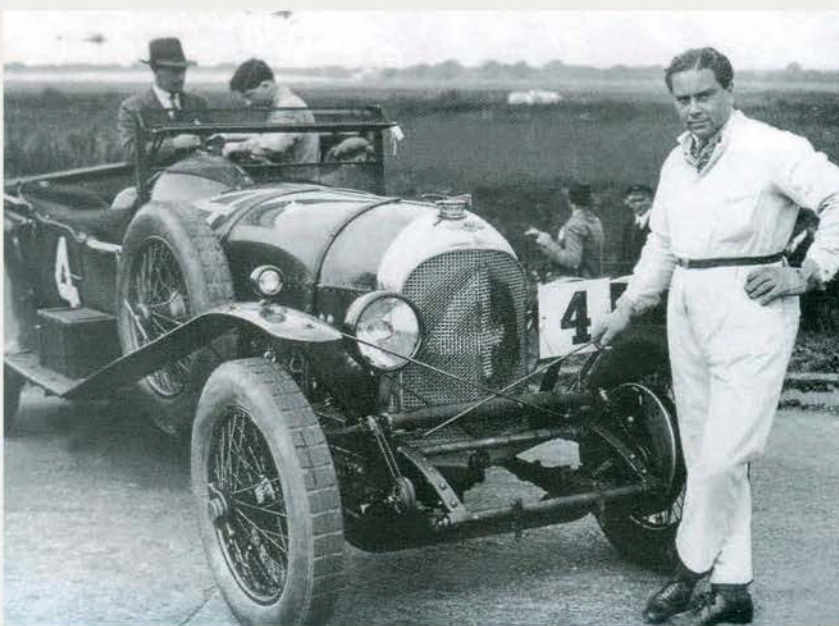
In June 1931, an approach was made to Rolls-Royce suggesting a partnership, within which it would manufacture components for Bentley, there would be shared sales and servicing policies, and WO would provide technical services. In return, Rolls-Royce would have considerable say in how Bentley operated. However, when it became clear just how dire things were, Rolls-Royce decided to pass – at least at this stage. Bentley went into receivership within weeks and its assets were put up for sale.

It was Napier who initially showed interest in taking over. The company had built high-performance cars (in WO’s words, “some of the finest cars in England”) between 1898 and 1924, making it in many ways a precursor »

“Had Bentley become part of the Morris conglomerate, it might well have ended up as a British Leyland brand several decades later”



In 1925, WO Bentley approached Lord Nuffield to see if there was a possibility of Bentley merging with Morris. Fortunately, it didn’t happen.



In 1926, Woolf ‘Babe’ Barnato bailed out Bentley at a cost of £100,000. Under his control, WO Bentley became just an employee of the company he’d founded.

“The judge, who took displeasure at his courtroom being transformed into an impromptu auction, instructed both parties to return with sealed bids later that day”

to Bentley. It had concentrated on aircraft engines since but was looking to restart vehicle construction due to a downturn in the aviation market. Acquiring bankrupt Bentley, with its established reputation and dealer network, seemed a good way forward. And it seemed so certain that the deal (for £103,675) would be done that WO even started working for Napier on a new 6¼-litre six-cylinder model, and there was also the prospect of aero engine involvement.

Then, in November 1931, came a very large spanner in the works courtesy of the British Equitable Central Trust (BECT), an organisation with no apparent motoring industry connections. It put in an increased offer on the very day of the court proceedings intended to ratify Napier's purchase. The judge, who took displeasure at his courtroom being transformed into an impromptu auction, instructed both parties to

return with sealed bids later that day. This resulted in Napier upping its offer to £104,775, but BECT's tender was for a very substantial £125,275. It had won.

MYSTERY COMPANY

So, who was behind the mysterious British Equitable Central Trust, and why were they so keen to grab Bentley that they offered over £20,500 more than Napier? According to WO, after a few days of “acute anxiety”, he only found out via his wife, who had been at a cocktail party and overheard somebody saying that their firm had taken over Bentley. The gentleman in question turned out to be Arthur Sidgreaves, managing director of Rolls-Royce. BECT had been engaged to bid on Roll's Royce's behalf in order to keep its involvement secret.

Just as Sidgreaves was being somewhat indiscreet, it appears WO may have been quite discreet in his

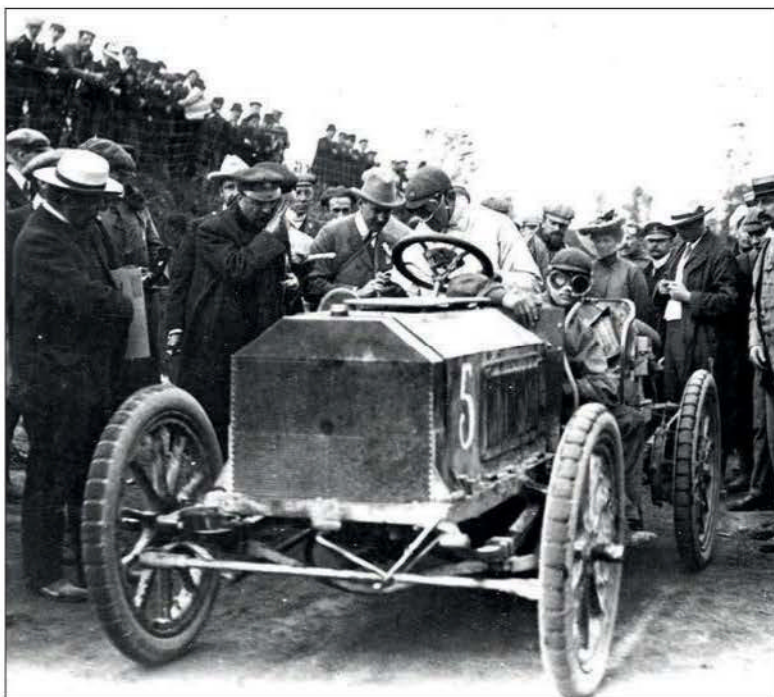
autobiography when mentioning his ‘wife’, because it seems that the woman involved was Margaret Hutton, then WO's mistress. He'd only marry her in 1934, although the divorce from his wife at the time, Audrey, was closer than he realised.

WO later described this period as “distasteful and distressing to think about”, as he had been looking forward to working for Napier and seeing Bentley revived. It has been speculated that Woolf Barnato may have been responsible for passing on information about the Napier bid to Rolls-Royce (WO somewhat sarcastically noted in his autobiography the “extraordinary coincidence” that a “fraction more than that offered by Napier's” had been submitted). It's also believed that Barnato concurrently but secretly bought a significant number of shares in Rolls-Royce. Certainly, in 1934, Rolls-Royce made him a Bentley director.

Three weeks after the sale, Sir Henry



In 1930, Bentley won Le Mans for the fifth time, but owner Woolf Barnato (right) announced soon afterwards that the company was to withdraw from motorsport.



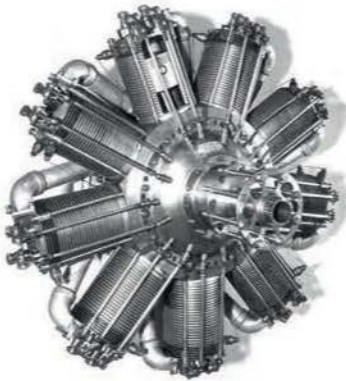
Napier planned to purchase Bentley in 1931 but was outbid by Rolls-Royce. WO was looking forward to working for Napier because it had a similar motorsport heritage to Bentley.



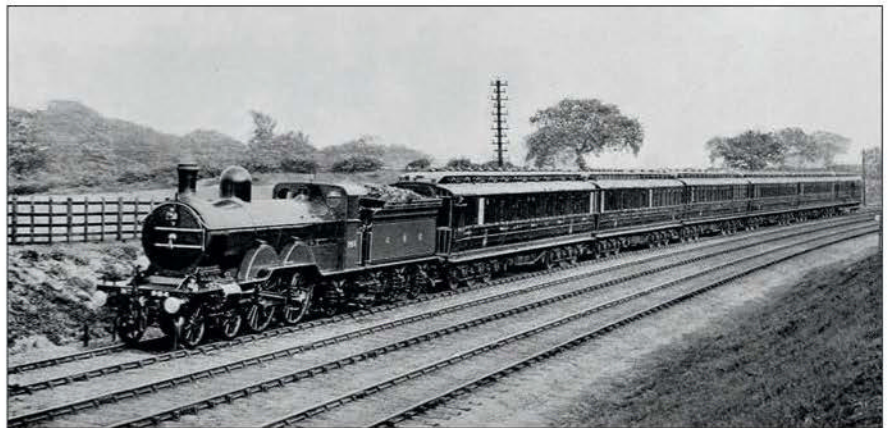
The 8 Litre was seen as a challenge to Rolls-Royce's luxury machines, and was probably one of the reasons why Rolls-Royce chose to purchase its competitor (photo: Bentley Motors).



Sir Henry Royce met with WO Bentley in late 1931 to discuss job opportunities, but the meeting didn't go well, with a clash of personalities between the two engineers.



WO Bentley had designed aero engines such as the BR1 during World War One, yet his expertise in this field wasn't remotely tapped by Rolls-Royce (photo: Bentley Motors).



Both WO Bentley and Henry Royce had worked as apprentices for the Great Northern Railway in their youth, but WO was slightly higher up the pecking order.

Royce summoned WO to meet him in London. WO was bemused: "It seemed inconceivable that Rolls-Royce should want to employ me. What could they do with me? They had their own design staff, and it seemed to me that I would be as embarrassing as a prisoner of war after the armistice signing." With that kind of attitude, it was unlikely that the meeting would be fruitful. And it wasn't; it seems both men were trying to disparage the other. Royce kicked things off by saying "I believe you're a commercial man, Mr Bentley?", with WO responding: "Well, not really. Primarily, I suppose I'm more a technical expert." Royce's replied:

"You're not an engineer then, are you?"

This seems an almost inexplicable comment from Royce. Nobody, whether in the motor industry or not, could have been unaware of WO's engineering achievements; his cars had won Le Mans five times and Rolls-Royce had evaluated one of the new large and luxurious Bentley 8 Litre models in 1930 because it felt it represented such a threat. It was probably one of the major influences in it buying Bentley, for it's likely that Napier would have carried on building the model and had the resources to develop and market it properly. In addition, WO had consulted with

Rolls-Royce over its Royce-designed Eagle aero engine during World War One, which resulted in it being fitted with aluminium pistons. And Bentley had also created his own aircraft engines – the Bentley Rotary 1 and 2 – while the conflict was on. The BR1's extensive and successful use in Sopwith Camels had earned WO an MBE in 1920. Royce simply couldn't have been unaware of how good an engineer the man across the table from him was.

The retort must have stung Bentley, but he got his own back by telling Royce: "Yes, I suppose you could call me that. I think you were a boy in the Great Northern running sheds »

“Nobody, whether in the motor industry or not, could have been unaware of WO’s engineering achievements”



At Rolls-Royce, WO Bentley was initially the assistant to Percy Northey, head of the technical department for sales – but it wasn’t a role that remotely made use of his extensive expertise.



WO’s initial position at Rolls-Royce saw him as little more than a glorified sales assistant at the company’s Conduit Street showroom in London (photo: Rolls-Royce Motor Cars).

at Peterborough a bit before I was a premium apprentice at Doncaster.” This was a comment designed to put Royce firmly back in his place, for being a premium apprentice with the Great Northern Railway was a step up from the young Henry’s indentured apprenticeship as a 14-year-old, in return for his aunt paying £20 a year. WO’s father paid £75 per annum for his son. Doncaster was also the main GNR

engineering workshop; Peterborough was regarded as merely a lower status satellite depot. WO had established his credentials, which were (at least initially) better than those of Royce.

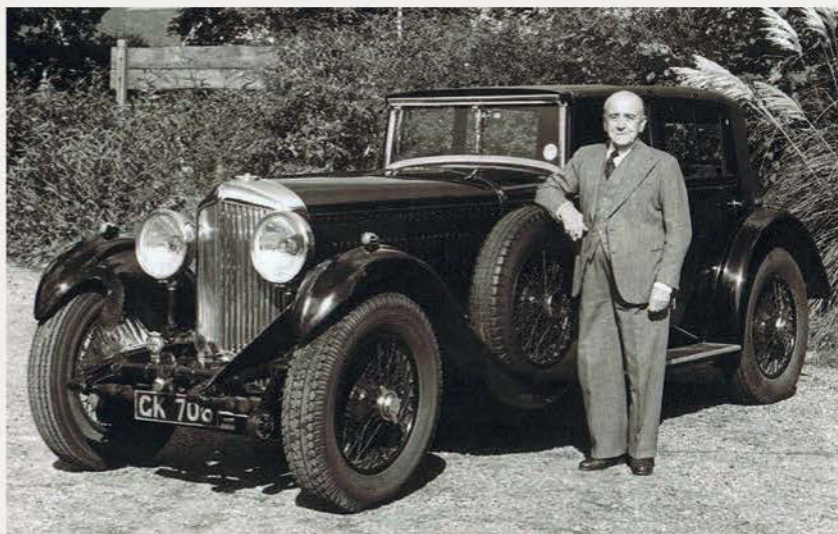
RESENTMENT, RIVALRY

There was clearly some resentment and rivalry between the two. For WO, this meant that when he was offered a job,

it was as an assistant to Percy Northey, head of the technical department for sales (which liaised with the factory). All he had to do was attend morning sales conferences, answer specialist questions, and make sure that demonstration cars were available and in good order. It was a role well beneath him. WO initially turned it down, and understandably so, as Napier had offered him a proper engineering job. But Rolls-Royce pointed out that when it had purchased Bentley, it had also acquired the services of its founder.

WO sought to buy himself out of the agreement, but that was rejected. Napier then mounted a legal challenge, but to no avail. There was no way out and WO had to begrudgingly accept what was little more than a position as a sales assistant, which he described as being “safely placed out of harm’s way”. While the antagonism between him and Royce at their meeting probably contributed to WO being pushed into such a lowly role, it seems likely that Rolls-Royce also wanted to keep him away from its engineering secrets, in case he gave them to any rivals once he did eventually leave. Rolls-Royce also made him agree to a clause that, when he did depart, he would be unable to use the Bentley title for any car or aero engine for 10 years.

All this was hardly a way to make WO feel valued and worthwhile, or



WO Bentley loved his 8 Litre model and was devastated when Rolls-Royce made him give it up to be sold by Jack Barclay (photo: Bentley Motors).

instil any loyalty for the new regime in him. To add insult to injury, he was also ordered to give up his own beloved Bentley 8 Litre, which was sold on by Jack Barclay after he'd had to personally drive it to the showroom and then walk home. Rolls-Royce also stopped production of the model (which WO seems to have regarded as his greatest creation) and disposed of all spare parts, as if to try and erase it from history. This happened against the backdrop of WO seeing the firm he'd founded being systematically dismantled around him, plus his second wife Audrey instigating divorce proceedings because of his affair with Margaret Hutton. The 43-year-old must have felt utterly wretched.

WO's involvement with the first cars to bear his name under Rolls-Royce ownership was minimal. The 3½ Litre featured the Rolls-Royce 20/25's 3669cc six-cylinder engine, albeit with modifications such as a twin-SU carburettors, higher compression and a sportier camshaft to make it more powerful. It also had a shortened chassis. WO was able to test the new model and make recommendations but not personally contribute to its design and engineering. That must have rankled, for he no doubt had plenty of ideas.

When 'The Silent Sports Car' was launched at Ascot in September 1933, WO was one of those who took journalists out for demonstration drives. He also got revenge on the proprietor of the town's Royal Hotel, John Fothergill, who had penned *An Innkeeper's Diary* in which he described WO as a "timid little man" following a previous encounter. He »



When Rolls-Royce acquired Bentley, it closed down the old Cricklewood factory in north London, a place where WO Bentley had been very happy (photo: Bentley Motors).



The 3½-Litre was the first new Bentley to be produced under Rolls-Royce ownership, with WO Bentley having very little input into the model (photo: Richard Gunn).



This impressive gathering at Crewe was arranged to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the Derby-era cars (photo: Bentley Motors).



From 1934, when he became technical adviser to Rolls-Royce's managing director, WO was able to make trips to the Derby factory, which he enjoyed much more than working in London.



In summer 1935, WO Bentley was contractually allowed to quit Rolls-Royce and went to be chief designer for Lagonda, swapping London and Derby for Staines... (photo: Richard Gunn).



After he left for Lagonda, WO Bentley attempted to lure away Harry Grylls (the future chief engineer of Rolls-Royce) to work with him, but he didn't take the bait.

invited him out for a passenger ride at the end of the launch event and then proceeded to scare him so much with his spirited driving that Fothergill was left in no doubt that the man behind the wheel was anything but timid.

At least testing Bentleys and making recommendations to improve them made more use of WO's expertise than just working in a showroom. He was able to take one experimental 3½ Litre (chassis 2-B-IV) over to the continent on trial during his honeymoon with Margaret, after they'd married in January 1934. Afterwards, he was allowed to use it as a company car. His insightful suggestions undoubtedly allowed Rolls-Royce's team to improve it, to the point where WO declared that "taking all things into consideration, I would rather own this Bentley car than any other car produced under that name". It seemed like, three years into a job that had originally seemed intended to diminish him, he was feeling at least a little more content.

Rolls-Royce also seemed more pleased with WO, because during 1934 he was elevated to the position of technical adviser to the managing director. While this still didn't allow him to get properly involved on the engineering side, it did mean he could make weekly trips to the factory. "To leave the dreariness of the London offices behind and head for Derby was like a tonic, and my days there were the happiest and most interesting of my time at Rolls-Royce," he wrote in his autobiography. He was also tasked with evaluating cars from other manufacturers, to see how they measured up to Bentleys and Rolls-Royces. Hispano-Suizas, Railtons, Alvises and Lagondas all passed through his hands, with that latter marque proving especially important before long.

WHICH WAY TO JUMP?

In summer 1935, WO's contract with Rolls-Royce came up for renewal. He was offered a further five years with the company at quite an increased salary. However, there was still to be no design or engineering involvement and neither was there the offer of a directorship, which was something he'd been hoping for. While he was deliberating, Lagonda got in contact. It was in the process of being resurrected out of receivership and needed a new

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Lagonda saw WO Bentley as an asset, unlike Rolls-Royce; this 1937 American advert pointed out that Lagondas were "engineered and built by WO Bentley".

designer. The marque had much in common with the old pre-Rolls-Royce Bentley in that it produced both performance and luxury machines, and participated in racing. In fact, while WO was trying to choose which way to jump, Lagonda won the 24 Hours of Le Mans event with an M45 Rapide. It was the first British triumph there since Bentley in 1930.

WO may well have considered that a positive sign, but he delayed his contract decision just a little longer until the takeover of Lagonda by wealthy barrister Alan Good was completed, coming just a week after the June Le Mans victory. In the meantime, WO had found out that Rolls-Royce was also interested in buying Lagonda but Good just managed to get there first. No doubt this also gave WO a great deal of secret satisfaction; there wasn't going to be a repeat of what had happened previously with Bentley, Napier and Rolls-Royce.

So, WO announced that he was leaving to be the technical director for a competitor. Five years of feeling unfulfilled and overlooked were coming to an end. In his autobiography, WO credited "the persuasion of my wife and friends, who knew how frustrated I felt, for making me take the plunge. Though I've paid for it dearly, not for one

"To add insult to injury, WO was also ordered to give up his own beloved Bentley 8 Litre, which was sold on by Jack Barclay"



Whilst at Lagonda, WO Bentley and his team created the Lagonda V12 model, which was both fast and luxurious and a real threat to Rolls-Royce (photo: Bonhams).

moment since then have I regretted the decision." Not only did he escape but he also lured away some prominent Rolls-Royce employees, including Stewart

Tresilian (who had worked on the aero engine side) to be Lagonda's new chief designer, along with the company's gearbox specialist, Charles Sewell. WO also tried to poach development engineer Harry Gylls (who would become Rolls-Royce's chief engineer in 1957), but to no avail. The exodus of WO and other staff must have left Rolls-Royce questioning how they'd handled things over the past few years.

At Lagonda, WO and his team refined the M45 into the LG6 and LG45R Rapide and were also responsible for the magnificent (but also magnificently expensive) Lagonda V12. It was the sort of car that should have given Rolls-Royce considerable cause for concern, and probably would have done had World War Two not inconveniently broken out. Lagonda also returned to Le Mans for the 1939 24-Hour race, but the two V12s entered were unable to scoop the laurels and finished third and fourth behind a Bugatti and a Delage.

Rolls-Royce returned to haunt WO and Lagonda after hostilities ceased. There were plans to launch a new, smaller Lagonda with a 2580cc six-cylinder engine. It was christened the Lagonda-Bentley in the belief that, as 10 years had expired since »



Post-war, WO came up with the 2.6 Litre model. It was originally to be called the Lagonda-Bentley, but Rolls-Royce instigated legal action over use of the name (photo: Bonhams).

“After the death of Sir Henry Royce in April 1933, WO might even have been regarded as the natural choice to succeed him as chief engineer”



Derivatives of WO Bentley's 2.6-litre engine lived on in Lagondas and Aston Martins, under David Brown's custodianship, until 1959 (photo: Richard Gunn).



The Aston Martin DB MkIII was the last car to use WO's 2.6-litre Lagonda unit, albeit enlarged to 2.9 litres by the time it was discontinued in 1959.

WO had left Rolls-Royce, he was free to use the Bentley name again. Rolls-Royce argued that it was now a trademark and the case went to court. Lagonda lost and had to pay £10,000 in damages, which left owner Alan Good with little choice but to sell the company. It was snapped up by tractor

and gearbox industrialist David Brown, fresh from purchasing Aston Martin.

Part of what convinced Brown to get his chequebook out was a demonstration of a Lagonda-Bentley with WO at the wheel. The car eventually went into production as the Lagonda 2.6 Litre in 1948 – with

its Bentley suffix deleted – and its engine powered both Aston Martins and Lagondas through to the DB MkIII in 1959. WO chose not to join Lagonda, however, and opted for retirement and some consultancy work.

It's tempting to speculate what might have happened had Rolls-Royce made more use of WO's considerable engineering talents and knowledge. He might have given the first Derby-produced Bentleys some more individuality, and his publicised involvement would certainly have enhanced their credibility in the eyes of buyers. He could also have contributed greatly to the design of Rolls-Royces like the V12-engined Phantom III and aero engines such as the Merlin, which was in early development while he was under contract. And, after the death of Sir Henry Royce in April 1933, he might even have been regarded as the natural choice to succeed him as chief engineer. Rolls-Royce could have benefited greatly from having WO fully on its side.

Of course, there's a valid argument that Rolls-Royce did perfectly well for itself despite sidelining an engineer who was at least the equal of Royce. But how much better might it have been if only a tense 1931 meeting between two great automotive minds had gone better? ■



After his time at Lagonda, WO Bentley retired (albeit with some consultancy work) but enjoyed the continuing interest in his earlier cars.



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AUSTRALIAN ADVENTURE

Members of the Australian Chapter of the 20-Ghost Club recently embarked on a tour of Tasmania, the beautiful island state situated some 150 miles off the south-east coast of the Australian mainland

WORDS: RICHARD HOLDSWORTH PHOTOS: MICK MATHESON, MURRAY STACK

Among the 19 cars from the 20-Ghost Club that enjoyed the two-week tour of Tasmania were four Silver Ghosts, three Phantoms, a trio of Phantom IIs, two 20hp models, one 25/30, and two Rolls-Royce Wraiths. Notable examples included Ben Stafford and Kathleen Lakey's 1925 Phantom, which drove all the way from Queensland; Andrew and Margaret Bayley's 1929 Phantom II; the 1924 20hp owned by Rod and Bambi Hanson; and the 1934 20/25

of Ian and Sue Berg, a car that you'll be reading more about very soon in *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver*.

Australia has a rich heritage when it comes to the earliest Rolls-Royce models, with the country being a leading market from the outset. It is recorded that 570 Rolls-Royce and Bentley models were imported to Australia before World War Two, with 244 being complete cars featuring coachwork built in the UK, while 189 were given bodies by Australian coachbuilders. There

were then a further 137 'late arrivals' or pre-owned cars, to give the grand total already mentioned.

To give some idea of the importance of this market, some 130 examples of the 20hp were imported between 1922 and 1929, compared with only around 50 crossing the Atlantic to the United States and 100 going to India. Of those 130 bound for Australia, around 70 were bare chassis and were bodied by local companies, of which Smith & Waddington of Sydney – plus Melbourne body builders, Martin & King »



The group got to enjoy spectacular Tasmanian views and scenery throughout the 15-day tour.



The splendid Phantom II of Andrew Barley, the director for the 2025 20-Ghost Club tour.



Just some of the 19 Rolls-Royces that were greeted with blue skies for the 20-Ghost Club's tour of the beautiful island state of Tasmania.



Murray and Christine Stack's beautiful 25/30 featuring Molyneux coachwork, with a panoramic view of Hobart in the distance.



Tasmanian mountain roads proved no problem for the 1931 Phantom II owned by Trevor and Judy Eastwood.



John Wagstaff's 1924 40/50hp is certainly one of the most unusual variations on the Silver Ghost theme.



Ben and Kathleen Lakey drove the entire 3000-mile round trip from Queensland in their 1925 Phantom.



A particularly stylish Rolls-Royce taking part was Ian and Sue Berg's glorious 1934 20/25.



Rod and Bambi Hanson and their 1924 20hp tackling some of the challenging terrain.

and Waring Bros – were noteworthy.

In addition to the 20hp cars imported as new, it's thought that a further 30 were subsequently brought to Australia as used vehicles, giving an overall total of 160 cars. It is estimated that around 130 survive today, of which 64 are associated with the Australian Rolls-Royce Owners' Club or the 20-Ghost Club. Not surprisingly, these cars have survived well in Australia, with the warm and relatively dry climate being a contributory factor, as is the Australian owners' dedication to the marque. Indeed, it's thought that there is an 85 per cent survival rate in Australia as against some 45 per cent worldwide.

TOUR OF TASMANIA

The owners of cars from the 20-Ghost Club came from far and wide for the Tasmanian tour. Although the majority were from just across the water in Victoria, one couple travelled from New South Wales, two were from within Tasmania itself, and three couples drove all the way from the 'Sunshine

"Australia has a rich heritage when it comes to the earliest Rolls-Royce models, being a leading market from the outset"

State' of Queensland – a 3000-mile round trip. Two couples arrived from Western Australia, although their cars are stored in Melbourne.

The cars gathered in the city of Geelong, west of Melbourne, for the overnight voyage on board the luxury ferry, Spirit of Tasmania, arriving in Devonport. A drive to Strahan then followed for a three-night stay, which included a boat cruise along the Gordon River to the World Heritage site and the Brickendon Heritage Gardens, which features trees planted by early settlers 180 years ago.

The group visited Hobart and explored some of the historic buildings in the capital city of Tasmania, including High Peak – built in 1888 as a summer retreat for Charles Henry

Grant, who arrived from Marlow, Buckinghamshire, in 1872 to oversee the construction of the first railways in Tasmania. The Duke and Duchess of York were entertained at High Peak when they visited the island in 1901.

There was an excursion on a heritage train across the Iron Bridge at Teepookana, once a thriving port town in the early days of Tasmania, and a 'wilderness' tour followed by a visit to the Salmon Ponds, established in 1861 and now the oldest trout fishery not only in Australia but in the southern hemisphere.

The group returned to Mainland Australia, again by the Spirit of Tasmania, 15 days later, with the tour having been voted an overwhelming success by all who took part. ■



The 1924 50/50hp Silver Ghosts of Mick Matheson and John Wagstaff – the former with Smith & Waddington coachwork, and the latter remodeled as an Australian 'ute' many years ago for farming duties, and now fully restored.

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In conversation with... **BERNARD PRESTON**

In the second instalment of this new series, we meet up with Bernard Preston – a man who enjoyed a fascinating and varied career at Crewe during four and a half action-packed decades

WORDS: PETER LAVERS PHOTOS: BERNARD PRESTON, PETER LAVERS

With a career spanning over 45 years at Crewe, Bernard Preston has a unique 'from the inside' perspective of the highs and lows that the company enjoyed and endured before the marques were separated under new ownership. When he started, the last MkVIs were being delivered, Silver Dawns were export-only, and separate chassis were still being manufactured for coachbuilders to work their craft on. For some of that career, Bernard was "the man from Rolls-Royce" (a roving service engineer), which is a role that is now embedded in the folklore of the marque. As we shall see, some of that

legend is not without foundation.

Sandbach born and bred, Bernard started as an office boy in the Progress Office on January 3rd, 1953, under Alan Brogden and opposite the chassis assembly line, finally retiring on June 1st, 1998, which was coincidentally the day that Volkswagen took over. I also worked at Rolls-Royce Motors during Bernard's latter years and knew him as a highly respected director and an ever-present stabilising figure within the company.

With his quietly spoken, enthusiastic and gentlemanly approach, Bernard inspired, encouraged and influenced the teams that he led and worked with, always getting things done in a way

that brought people with him... and as far as we know, making no enemies in the process. That he survived so many crises and changes of leadership is testament to how much the company valued Bernard.

PL: Bernard, we're not going to do justice to five decades and, by my count, 16 different roles at the company in a few pages. But can you give me a quick run-down of your time working at Crewe?

BP: It's hard to believe that I started less than seven years after the first Bentley MkVI rolled off the production line at Crewe [May 1946], when the company was run by ex-Derby men. I started my apprenticeship in late 1953, and at the end of it had to do National Service. This turned out to be particularly useful, as I became a T2 and later a T1 technician, proud to wear the 'hammer and pincers' insignia on my arm, and qualified to work on Alvis armoured vehicles, which had high pressure braking and steering systems with hydraulic power stored in an accumulator. Does that sound familiar?

Once back at Crewe, I worked in Engine Repair and Technical Publications before settling in Service Engineering in 1963 under Stanley Bull, Service Director at the time. I became Manager of Car Repair on Monday, February 1st, 1971, and this led to other roles in Product Assurance and Worldwide Service through to 1985.

My career then took a different direction. I became Product Planning Director in 1985 and Director of UK Operations in 1987. In 1993 I was appointed Director of Quality (more of that later), and this led to my final role as Director of Associate and Dealer



Bernard Preston welcoming Princess Diana on to the Rolls-Royce stand at London's 1991 Motorfair.



Some of the 1953 apprentices having fun with a spot of apple bobbing!



After completing his apprenticeship at Crewe, Bernard went on to do his National Service.

Affairs for the last year of my career, during which time we were on the team together launching the Bentley Arnage and Rolls-Royce Silver Seraph. [You can read Peter's account of those launches in our May/June 2023 issue – Ed.]

I have therefore played some part in every Crewe model built under Rolls-Royce Ltd, Rolls-Royce Motors and Vickers ownership, and been involved in the launch of many of them.

PL: That is indeed an impressive career. Tell us about some of your proudest moments.

BP: Some of my early proud moments were to do with Geoffrey Fawn, a man whose name may prompt dislike or even hatred from those who were there or who've studied Rolls-Royce history. Let me explain. During the time when we were producing the Silver Cloud II and III, Engineering was busy developing two new cars – a large Rolls-Royce with a V8 engine and a smaller Bentley with a new six-cylinder engine. The development costs were huge, but we were supported financially by our parent company, Rolls-Royce Ltd. As time went on, however, it was realised that the company couldn't afford to develop and manufacture two such individual cars. Therefore, two cars became one and SY emerged as the Silver Shadow and T-series.

SY was a new, complex design with unitary construction and a power hydraulic set-up to serve a new braking and height control system. The car was launched in 1965, but it proved difficult to manufacture, being so different from

previous cars. Rolls-Royce Ltd were not happy and as build targets failed to be met, Geoffrey Fawn was sent to sort Crewe out, replacing Dr Llewellyn Smith as Managing Director. His methods were brutalist and direct; he replaced lots of people, and was likely to appear in any department at any time – even on nights – to gee people up and get them working harder and faster.

His methods worked. Production numbers increased, quality improved, and service problems were being solved. By 1968 the Car Division was in profit, and thereafter annual profits improved with better and more reliable cars being produced. I firmly believe that these

years of Fawn's leadership, although difficult for some, paved the way for David Plastow and the receiver, Rupert Nicholson, to create an independent company in 1973 in the aftermath of Rolls-Royce Ltd's dramatic bankruptcy and nationalisation.

During all of this, I managed to get on well with Geoff Fawn, which undoubtedly aided my career, and under his direction I became involved in many service issues that were solved to the benefit of both quality and reliability. This is where the myths you mentioned about "the man from Rolls-Royce" come in, and I'm happy to confirm that there's at least some truth to the tales. I joined »



Crewe's hard-working Service Centre team, photographed in 1975.

“Engineering was busy developing two new cars – a large Rolls-Royce with a V8 engine and a smaller Bentley with a new six-cylinder engine”

the newly formed Service Engineering team in 1963 and, because of my National Service experience, became the hydraulics service expert for the Silver Shadow. Because of this, I attended the first three customer complaints of brake failure on the Shadow.

The first was to a customer in Birmingham, who used every expletive

known to man to describe the directors and engineers of the company. His car had suffered a brake master cylinder misfire problem, and the brake pedal dropped to the floor. I showed him how the braking system still retained 70 per cent of its operation in this situation, and he was blown away by its fail-safe engineering and the

fact that I drove the car back to Crewe in this ‘failed’ condition.

I was then sent to France by Geoff Fawn to sort out a brake failure on a new car. I flew out to Paris, met a Franco-Britannic technician, and we went on the overnight train to Limoges. We knocked on the customer’s door at seven o’clock the next morning. The customer, who had been ranting at the dealer the day before, melted. He had only called FBA at 11am the day before, and here was a man from Crewe on his doorstep 20 hours later. I got a “Bloody well done, son!” from Fawn for that. Such are careers made.

The third was an even bigger adventure. I was dispatched to Rome during a very hot August. On my arrival, the dealer tried to contact the customer, but he wasn’t there. I had to wait in Rome over the weekend, but on the Monday his office was open and his secretary informed us that he’d driven to Cortina in the Dolomites. The customer was delighted to hear that I was in Rome and said that he would meet me in Milan and fly me to Cortina to see the car (including a beautiful flight over Lake Como). He was mightily impressed and wouldn’t even allow us to stay in the humble hostelry we had booked, putting us up instead in the Grand Savoy Hotel in Cortina and hosting us for dinner, telling all his friends about the great lengths “the man from Rolls-Royce” went through to respond to his call. We diagnosed a sticking brake pump. Another big tick from Fawn.

At about this time, I also played a part in the ‘disappearance’ of the Silver Shadow’s front levelling. We’d had problems with leaking hoses, particularly those feeding the front levelling valve. The service fix was to blank the system off at the front. Fawn was against this initially, but when we demonstrated that the front levelling made very little difference to standing height, he was keen. We blanked off his car, then secretly blanked the front levelling off on John Hollings’ car as well. A month later, Fawn told Mr Hollings what



Bernard Preston was involved in the launches of various models. Shown here is the 1977 launch team for the Silver Shadow II.



The entire Rolls-Royce Motors Service Training crew of 1980.

we'd done and asked if he'd noticed any difference. He was rather taken aback but confessed that he hadn't, and the decision was made that very day to remove the system with great benefits to cost and reliability.

Then there's the Green Shed. After one of Fawn's usual weekly visits to our office to ask about service problems, he asked me to take him to the Green Shed. As we walked down the back of the test beds, he confided that when he first came to Crewe, he'd found it "lazy and complacent", but he hoped he'd done some good. We went into the Green Shed and found cabinet upon cabinet full of pre-war drawings for every model back to the early days of the company. Some of the drawings in the lower drawers were damaged by mice, and rainwater had badly affected many drawings in the upper cabinets. Fawn went mad, and this visit initiated the process to transfer the salvageable drawings to the RREC and later, when I was Product Assurance Manager, for the transfer of Chassis Records to Hunt House. The RREC, then under Eric Barrass, and the Bentley Drivers Club lauded the salvation of these vital pieces of history at that year's inter-clubs meeting in the Café Royal, Regent Street (sadly, these annual gatherings have long-since ceased).

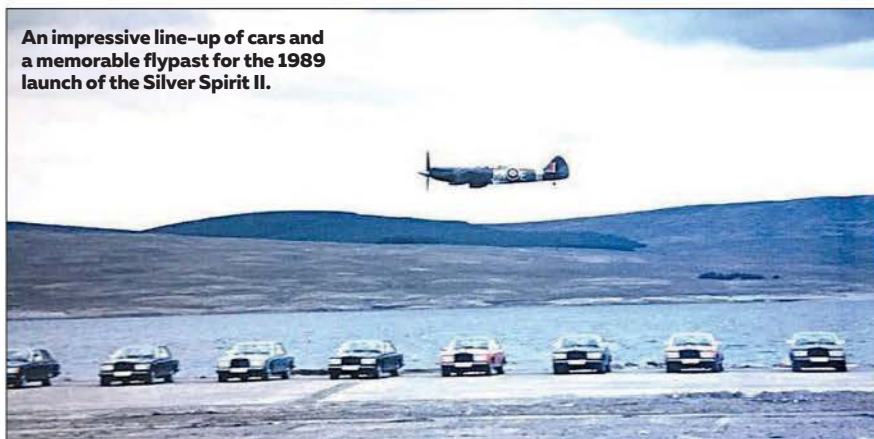
I also had the great privilege of overseeing the Silver Ghost's restoration. By the 1980s, AX201 was getting very tired and drove terribly, something that Andrew Wood drew my attention to. I took on the challenge and asked P&A Wood and Stuart Gordon coachworks to estimate costs to restore the car. To help make the case to the board, I asked how much it was worth for insurance purposes and discovered that it wasn't even separately insured – it was just lumped in with our transport lorries and demonstration cars as a company vehicle! I got it professionally valued and proposed its restoration to the board in 1988, at which point the car was valued at £12m. I'd never heard Peter Ward swear before! He said if it was worth that much, I should go ahead and do it. I project-managed the car to completion and then organised the Silver Ghost Charity Tour from John O'Groats to Land's End, which raised over £50,000 for the NSPCC. This was a real highlight of my career and meant that later on I also successfully proposed and oversaw the restoration by P&A Wood of our 1905 »



Bernard and his colleagues gathered for Crewe's 1982 Service Conference.



Another team shot, this one taken in 1983 for a gathering to mark 50 years of Avon tyres.



An impressive line-up of cars and a memorable flypast for the 1989 launch of the Silver Spirit II.



The John O'Groats to Land's End Silver Ghost Charity Tour of 1990, organised by Bernard, raised over £50,000 for the NSPCC.



Paul and Andrew Wood of P&A Wood fame joined in the post-restoration celebrations with AX 201.



Bernard (centre) photographed at the 1991 unveiling of a brand new locomotive, the Sir Henry Royce.

10hp (SU 13). Two very proud events.

Latterly in my career, I held the role of Director of Quality. In previous years, quality had come at a great cost because of the way we did things – there was simply too much rectification required and not enough getting it right first time. This meant our break-even point was much too high, so we took inspiration from Henry Royce's famous quote and launched the 'Strive for Perfection' programme, in which we trained the complete workforce in Total Quality techniques in two swathes over two years. There was only so much we could do with SZ, but these principles helped in engineering and manufacturing for P3000/2000 (Silver Seraph and Arnage), which is something I am very proud of.

There are so many more stories I could tell, so I'll just summarise some other highlights that come to mind. I followed Jack de Manio around Europe recording for the BBC, and as part of that trip visited the two Silver Shadows in Moscow purchased by the Kremlin, as well as visiting the Gorky Museum to see Lenin's half-tracked Silver Ghost. And as Service Centre Manager, I modernised repair practices and restored many lovely old motor cars, including the Bentley S2 owned by Niki Lauda. The Service Centre included Engine Repair, in which the foreman and two of his fitters had built

the Merlin engines during the war.

I was also the team leader of the groups that supported car launches in Spain (Silver Shadow II) and the south of France (Silver Spirit), our job being to get them there and prepare them for test drives with the press and dealers. Nigel Cornelius and I reorganised the UK Dealer Network in 1982/83, and on the service side we created a new Authorised Service Dealer and Authorised Coachwork Repairer network. This led to me becoming head of Service Worldwide in 1983 to co-ordinate all service activities across the world.

Whilst I was Product Planning Director, we introduced the 1987 model year updates, with the most significant changes since launch – including ABS and electronic fuel injection worldwide. At the end of 1986, Peter Ward switched the planned Corniche replacement to be the first unique Bentley since the 1960s Continentals – the Continental R.

As Director of UK Operations, I was responsible for the 'Great Drives' promotional events, which increased Bentley sales, and planned a special award for deserving Rolls-Royce customers (the 'Lalique Oscar'), but regretfully this was cancelled due to the 1990 downturn. A happier memory from that time was when we launched the Bentley Continental R to UK dealers before its official reveal in Geneva.

Being part of Silver Seraph and Arnage launch team was my final highlight, revealing the Rolls-Royce to staff, dealers and customers at Crewe, and engaging in the Bentley launch activities at Le Mans.

PL: And what about the challenging periods?

BP: There have certainly been several, and these were the times when I might well have lost my job! Way back in the 1961 Budget, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Selwyn Lloyd, stopped company directors offsetting their company cars against tax. This affected our UK sales dramatically, and so the workforce was reduced by 500 in order to cut costs. My role was made redundant, but I was fortunate to be offered a place in the Car Repair Department because many good men had taken voluntary redundancy and moved to local commercial vehicle companies, Foden and ERF.

I've mentioned the bankruptcy »

"Quality had come at a great cost because of the way we did things – there was simply too much rectification required"



Bernard Preston and Andrew Wood in 1997, alongside Rolls-Royce's fully restored 1905 10hp, SU 13.



Bernard and colleagues gathered for the 1998 official launch of the Silver Seraph, one of his final highlights at Crewe.

of 1971, but there was even greater upheaval when we merged with Vickers plc. The entire board of directors was sacked at the 1982 Motor Show, and Richard Perry appointed Managing Director with a new board selected from across the motor industry. Many people were made redundant, and I felt fortunate to keep my job.

Then in 1990 there was a global economic downturn resulting in catastrophic company losses of £60m, which nearly sank Vickers. Motor car sales fell by over a half, resulting in a painful workforce reduction of around 2500 staff... and again I survived. I firmly believe that Vickers decided this was the time for Rolls-Royce to be sold, and thereafter everything was done with such a sale in mind.

This, of course, happened in 1998. By then it was my time to bow out, having enjoyed every day of my time at Rolls-Royce. I'd had a wonderful career and enjoyed many experiences in many countries, working with outstanding engineers and some lovely, brilliant people.

PL: Finally, what reflections do you have about the company you left compared with the company you joined, and are you hopeful for the future of the two marques?

“In 1990, there was a global economic downturn resulting in catastrophic company losses of £60m, which nearly sank Vickers”



The Silver Seraph and Arnage Project Team, photographed at Crewe in 1998.



Peter Lavers (interviewer for this feature) alongside Bernard Preston in more recent times.

BP: During my time with the company, it tried on a number of occasions to create two distinctive marques, but low sales volumes with low profitability and very high development costs to meet worldwide regulations meant that we simply could never afford it. Now, under BMW and Volkswagen ownership, I believe that their unique brand attributes and qualities will shine through ever more distinctively.

I do regret the split of the brands, the loss of British ownership, and the end of the 'old company', but the sale was inevitable after the 1990/91 crash. Volkswagen and BMW are both superb engineering companies with resources we could only have dreamed of. Bentley is back to being a true 'silent sports car', and Rolls-Royce is still the quintessential large luxury saloon, with coachbuilt specials that hark back to earlier years. So, yes, I am hopeful that both companies keep expanding and maintaining the principles of the two marques. Bentley's growth has certainly been very good for the town of Crewe, and I hope it continues. ■

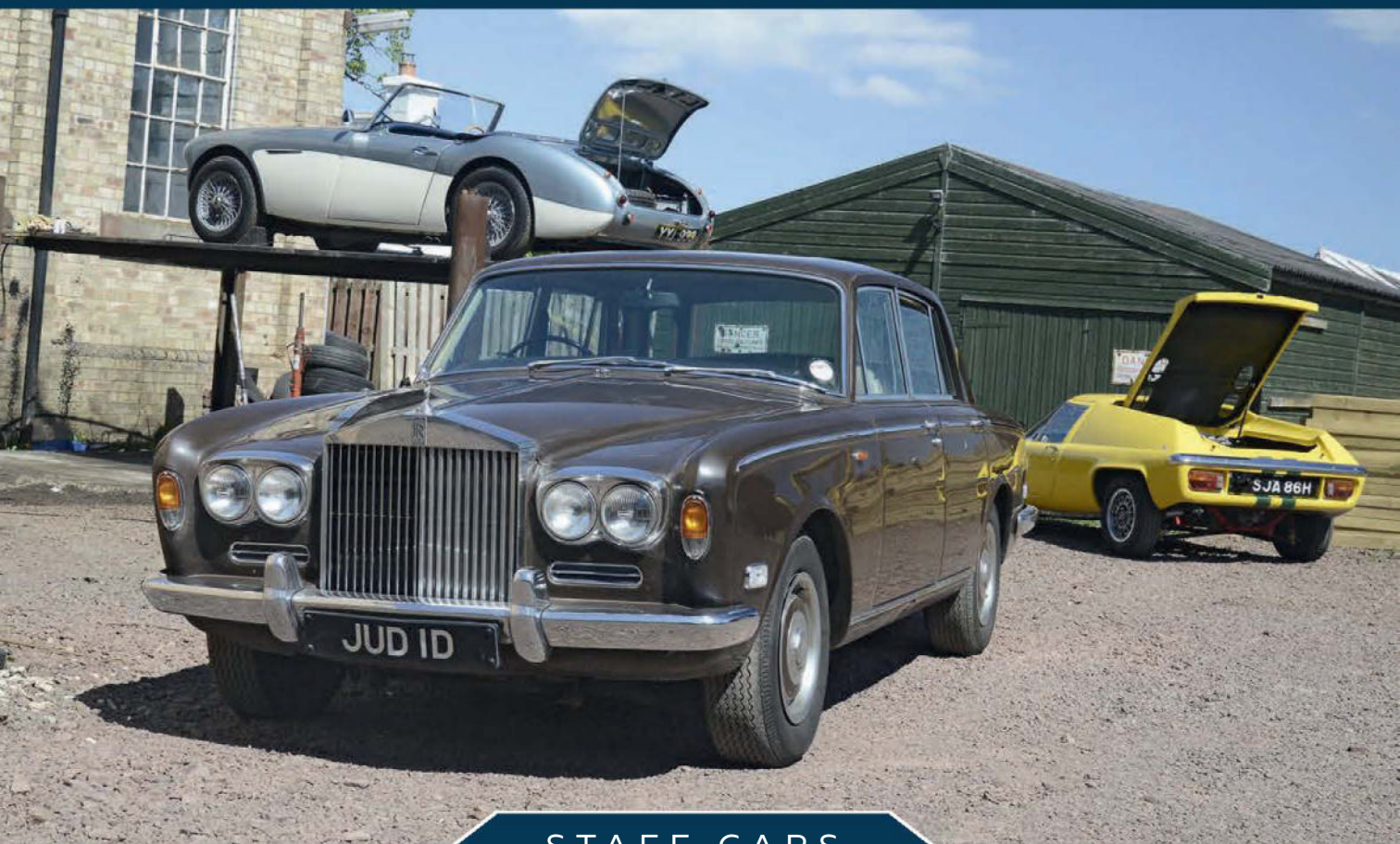
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STAFF CARS

A GLOSS ON THINGS

Starting fault fixed, woodwork refinished, and only some reassembly and paint correction to do. Could it all be coming together at last?

WORDS & PHOTOS: NIGEL BOOTHMAN

Our last report covered some progress (if that's the right word) that seemed to bring with it as many setbacks as it solved. Professional attention to the switchbox only delayed rather than eliminated the starting fault, while a replacement electric window motor failed just days later. Combined with the cold fingers and gloomy weather of a Scottish winter that reasserted itself well into March, it was difficult to summon up much enthusiasm for the poor old Silver Shadow.

Well, what a difference a few weeks can make! Come the beginning of May, I was enjoying a warm day's work, as fellow car nuts John Wyatt and Robb Halley allowed me to borrow a patch of

gravel at their yard, near Edinburgh.

First of all, credit must go to my local Rolls-Royce and Bentley specialist, Ross McLeod of Mulsanne Motors, based in Dalkeith. I was gloomily expecting to bear the cost of a replacement switchbox or, at the very least, that of a rebuild kit and several hours of fiddly labour; but as I already had the dashboard timbers off the car, Ross had the old switchbox out in a trice. He took it to bits and quickly identified the flaw, and it was an unusual one: a crack in the bus bar, a brass piece running through the mechanism and carrying current as different parts of the mechanism touch it during various functions. Being a hairline crack, cleaning up the car's earth points (as I'd done recently) was

enough to keep things flowing – just – until time and motion did its work and the crack opened to a non-conductive extent. With it soldered up and fixed, the car now starts as it's supposed to.

ON THE WIND-UP

Faults like that cracked bus bar can seem almost malevolent, and I had the same feeling about the fresh failings of the electric window motor on the front passenger door. If you've taken the door cards off a Rolls-Royce or Bentley of this era, you'll know it's not a speedy process, and the thought of doing it all again – and spending yet more money on spares – was demoralising. But why did the old one fail? It seems

Flying Spares came to the rescue with a reconditioned window motor.



Testing the new motor with a power probe – all is well.



The new motor shown here safely installed.



It's possible to mis-fit this escutcheon and its cover plate.



Fixings for the top roll trim are tiny and tricky.



The naked dashboard was not a pretty sight.



it could have been my own mistake.

The chromed escutcheon around the window switch looks symmetrical, but isn't... or not quite. Ross McLeod noticed I'd managed to replace it in such a way that the window switch could jam in the up or down position, which may have burned out the motor. I thought they would have a failsafe in them, so perhaps it just expired of old age like the previous one. Whatever the reason, it was Flying Spares to the rescue again as they dispatched a reconditioned window lift motor the same day that I ordered it.

Fitting the replacement was easy enough, once I'd transferred the bracket from the old motor and changed the connectors from female to male, and once again I had swift and effective electric windows in all four doors. And that meant it was time to tackle a really fiddly job.

TOP ROLL? TOP HOLE!

There is a thin, bow-like strip of timber between the dashboard's top roll and the windscreen. It almost always suffers from long-term contact with

the sun, and mine was no exception, despite the car spending almost 35 years in a garage at Blenheim Palace. The lacquer had lifted in sheets, leaving most of the wood as bare and dull as a park bench. The same expert refinishing as applied to the doors had rendered the bow (actually two pieces, touching in the centre) shiny again, which meant I had to reinstall it.

This involved refitting some vanishingly tiny screws that I managed not to lose, using one hand to press the wooden bow into place, another hand to position the fixing, and my »

third hand to turn the screwdriver. Well, not exactly that, but the longer we work on old cars the more we find ways to get by without extra limbs, don't we? I was delighted when it was secure once again and I could replace the top roll, which incidentally is made of glassfibre. I wonder how many Silver Shadow owners would know a large piece of their car is GRP?

Replacing the fixings that attach the top roll to the dash fascia and elsewhere was straightforward, but refitting the veneered timber slabs that finish the dash was not. It's a ticklish process, especially with fragile older veneer and lacquer, as some force is required to push them past the padding on the dash roll. I chose not to have

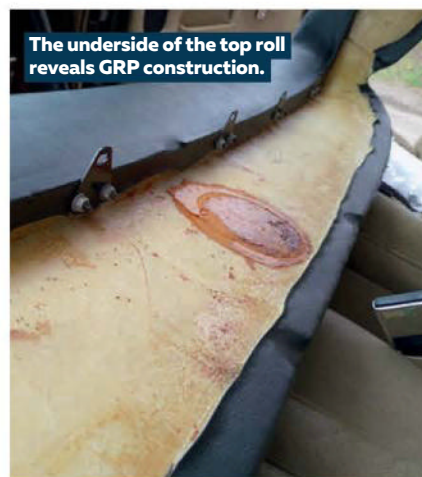
"The problem is that the paint is largely the original coat of cellulose Marlborough Brown from 1972"

these sections refinished as they're merely aged rather than cracked or damaged; I think they suit the mellow look of the rest of the car. Once they were in place, it was just a case of fitting the ventilation knobs, which are secured to their shafts with the tiniest Allen screw known to man. I think it's 1/32nd of an inch, but if you don't have such a tool to hand (and this time I didn't) you'll find you can whittle down

a matchstick with your penknife and force that into the screw, gaining just enough grip to turn it all the way home.

MAGIC MOP

I've never been much good at polishing cars. Yes, you're probably wondering what could possibly be difficult about it – apply polish, rub well, buff it off again. But I always seemed to end up



with swirls or tough cloudy residue that I couldn't remove very well, and an inconsistent finish. At various times I've bought DA and rotary polishers, and while these have produced good results on modern clear-over-basecoat paints, I was nervous of trying them on JUD 1D. The problem is that the paint is largely the original coat of cellulose Marlborough Brown from 1972, and it's been polished to mere microns thick already; burning through it with a machine seemed terribly easy. So, I looked to YouTube for advice.

Nothing quite answered the case, but I picked up a few tips. Not having the professional systems of hi-tech foam pads and matching compounds, I went with the gentlest polish I could find in the garage – a bottle of Autoglym's Super Resin Polish – and a sheepskin mop on a large-diameter DA (or dual-action) machine. Following the tips I'd learned, I first tackled part of my old camper van as a test piece (so far, so good) and then followed a set process.

First, dampen the mop. Apply a few splodges of polish to the mop. Mist the panel with water and dab the polisher over it to spread the polish around. Turn on the polisher only when in contact with the panel, then work it around for a few passes until the polish starts to look hazy and dry and wants to grip the mop. Next, wash the haze off by cleaning it firmly with a damp or even sopping wet towel. Finally, dry and buff the panel with a bone-dry microfibre towel.

The resulting gloss was a revelation – see the mirror-like reflection in the photo. There are still numerous paint chips, flakes and scratches to attend to, and I need professional advice on a coating that will retain the shine and prevent it rapidly oxidising again. But for the first time, I had a really



Better weather makes for happier working conditions.



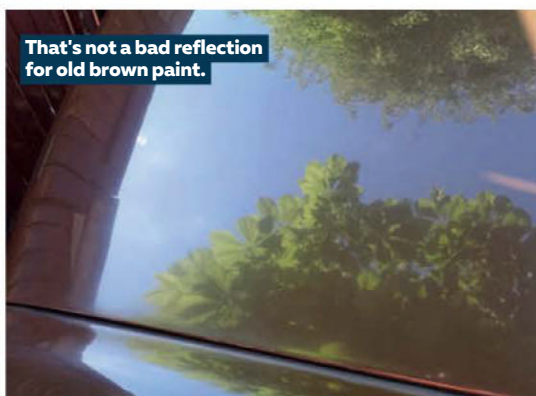
Polish and water... a crucial combination.



Before (left) and after the polishing process. What an improvement!

shiny, smart Rolls-Royce – one that boasted refinished interior timbers and ran like a sewing machine, even if I still must replace compliance cushions in the subframe to stop it

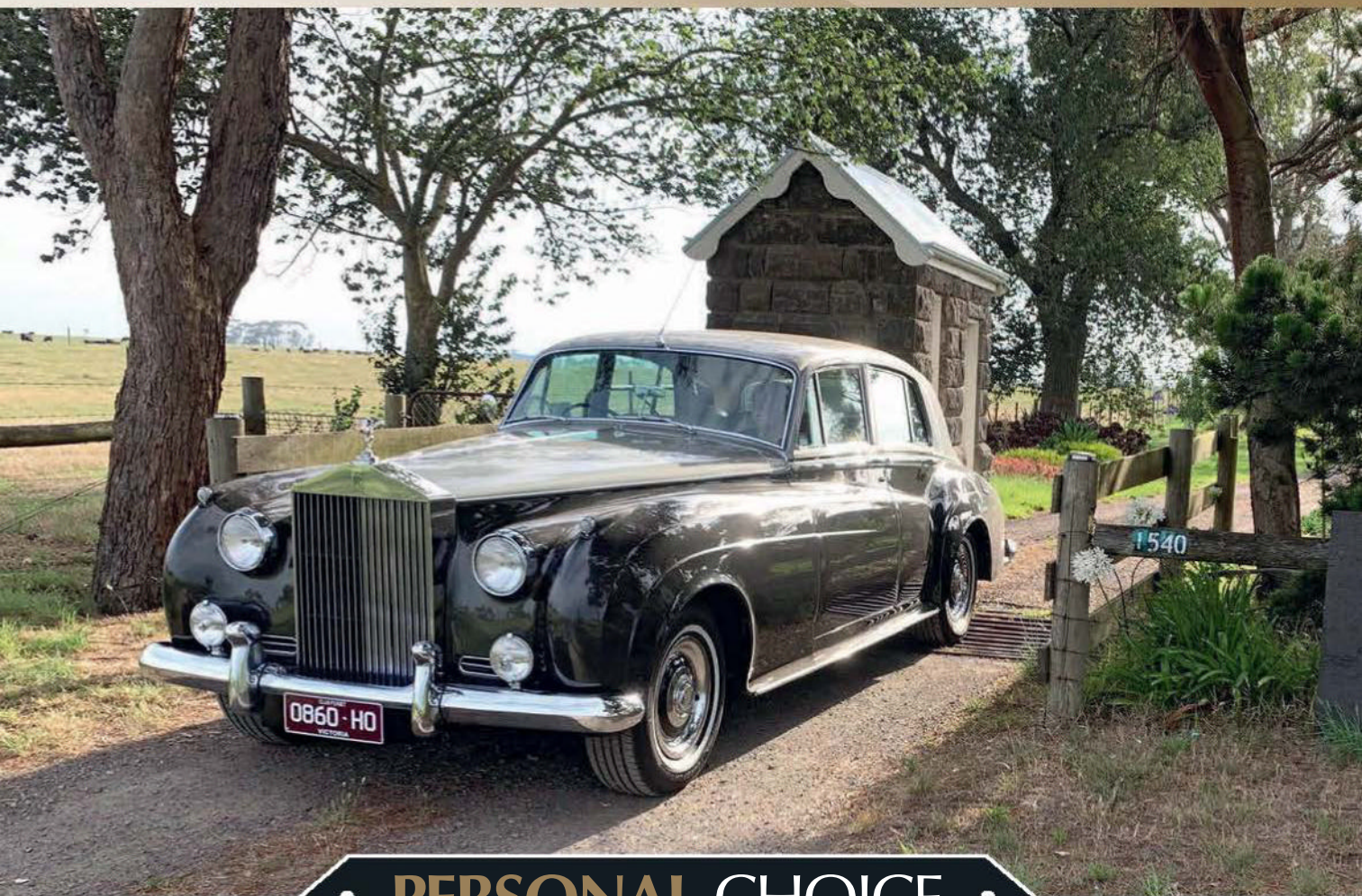
thumping over potholes. It was a glorious sunny evening, so the next step was obvious: away we went to eat fish n' chips under the Forth Rail Bridge and to watch the sunset. ■



That's not a bad reflection for old brown paint.



A lovely evening for fish and chips... in a lovely car.



• **PERSONAL CHOICE** •

EXCELLENCE WAS EXPECTED

Australia-based Ean McDowell tells us about his 4600km round trip aboard his splendid Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud II – a car that coped perfectly with the adverse conditions

Several months ago, I bought a very rare car that's in need of restoration, and I've been corresponding with many people since. It seems that probably only two of these cars were sold in Australia 75 years ago, and I wanted to meet those who'd either bought them new or who now have similar models (albeit different body styles) and many years of experience. Two in particular live reasonably close to each other, but they are about 2200km from our home in Beeac, Western Victoria, Australia... which meant that visiting them was a fair trip.

Selecting the month to make the journey was easy, as I wanted to go as soon as possible after Christmas. Selecting the vehicle, however, was not so straightforward. The choices eventually came down to either an Isuzu (which would be reliable and would have good features – including air conditioning – but would ultimately be boring) or a classic Rolls-Royce. The latter presented a chance of coming home on a flat-top truck, but at least it would be interesting. Whether or not it made it, I could talk about the trip for a long time after. And so I decided to take my Silver Cloud II; after all,

who knows how much longer it will be possible to drive old cars? Besides, 2025 marks the 70th anniversary of the release of the original Silver Cloud, and this would be my way of celebrating.

Preparation for the trip was not a big deal, mostly involving checking the fluid levels, tyres and so on, as the car is in good condition and regularly serviced. I packed some tools, spare belts and hoses, as well as a good trolley jack. Getting a flat tyre was a real possibility that I wanted to prepare for... easy in a modern car, but not so easy in an old Rolls-Royce. I also took not one but three fire extinguishers (I've had the



John Bolster, writing in *Autosport* after the Silver Cloud's launch, said: "This will still be a glorious car in 45 years' time, just as my 1911 Rolls-Royce is today". In this case, make it 65 years later...

"Preparation for the trip was not a big deal, mostly involving checking the fluid levels, tyres and so on"

experience of a carburettor Rolls-Royce catching fire before). Silver Clouds are also known to have a drinking problem (they don't go far on a tankful), and so I took 10 litres of spare petrol, some engine oil, and some water.

With clothes, a pillow for roadside naps, some snacks, a battery-operated pump, and some cardboard to place around spares for the project car that I might be lucky to pick up, the boot was reasonably full. I went to a lot of trouble to make sure nothing could scuff or damage the boot lining, and I wanted to keep the inside of the car almost empty. About 200km after leaving home, however, I realised I should have taken the driver's handbook and workshop manual just in case, but I forgot... and really the only documentation I had was a road map of NSW, as I wanted to use some of the backroads rather than the state highways and freeways. Whilst avoiding the heavy traffic and the big cities, I was also conscious that secondary »



Ean's Silver Cloud II turned over 100,000 miles on this epic trip; being a Hong Kong car until 1985, it didn't cover a huge mileage with its original owners.

roads might add to the difficulties of a possible 'fail to proceed' moment.

EPIC JAUNT

The total trip on completion was 4600km, spread over six days of driving, with a couple of days off. There was plenty of time at the wheel for thinking, or for discovering little things on the car that needed improving. I even found myself listening to minor noises... wondering, for example, whether leaves were rustling inside the driver's door... and if that was the case, how did they get in? I was never bored with the scenery. In the words of one of our great poets of the past, I was constantly aware of the "vision splendid of the sunlit plains extended" as I looked out.

The obvious benchmark was questioning how many miles per gallon the car returned; but despite keeping all the receipts, I don't think I'll work it out. I am guessing it will be somewhere in the region of 14-15mpg in the old terms. The car didn't use any appreciable oil, and didn't require the water to be topped up,



despite the fact that the outside daily temperature rarely dropped below 38 degrees centigrade, and several times climbed to over 42 degrees.

The Silver Cloud II was happy (and near-silent) cruising at 100km/h, and

several times it edged up to 130. I was tempted – although I didn't try it – to do 160km/h (or the old 100mph), but in Australia such a speed is a jailable offence if you get caught. I am sure the car would be good for it, though.



The car has previously been resprayed in its original colour scheme of Shell Grey over Black Pearl, with Sundym glass on all but the windscreen.



“The car was happy – and near-silent – cruising at 100km/h, and several times it edged up to 130”

Silver Cloud steering has a reputation for wandering, and I found that the more I tried to manage it, the more it wanted to wander. When I relaxed, the car seemed much better. Lights and wipers have certainly improved over the years... and, yes, it did rain when I was in the rainforest for a day. The air conditioning struggled at the daily maximum temperatures. Design faults are few, but a Silver Cloud could certainly do with a vent at foot level; the four-in-one gauge is a long way away; and one thing I would say is that after six days in a row, you can't get out of an old Rolls-Royce as fresh as you get in.

Nevertheless, I think I made the right choice. The modern car would have done it easily, but the Silver Cloud proved to be comfortable and quiet – and 65 years on, it showed that it could do such an epic road trip just as well. ■



Ean steered clear of the major routes on his long-distance trip, travelling on roads that were generally deserted.

SHOW US YOUR PRIDE AND JOY

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

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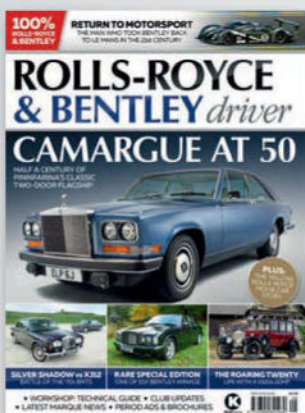
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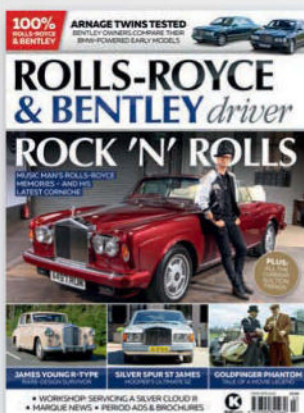
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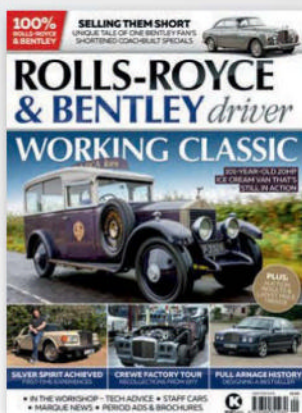
**MAY/
JUNE 2025**

- Early Camargue Restored
- Bentley's return to Le Mans
- Owning a Rolls-Royce 20hp
- Silver Shadow vs Jaguar XJ
- 'The Yellow R-R' movie tale
- Rare limited-edition Arnage



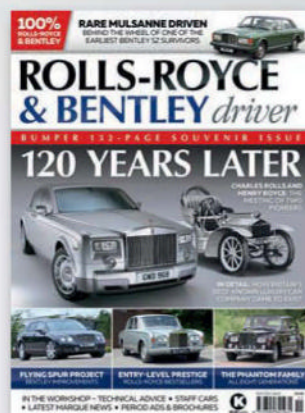
**MARCH/
APRIL 2025**

- Rick Parfitt Jnr's Corniche
- 1954 James Young R-Type
- Goldfinger's Phantom III
- Early Arnages experienced
- Hooper's special Silver Spur
- Silver Cloud III DIY service



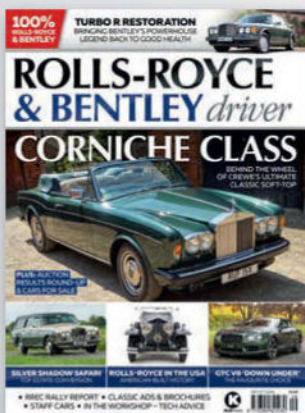
**JANUARY/
FEBRUARY 2025**

- 1923 20hp ice cream van
- History: Bentley Arnage
- 1977 Crewe factory tour
- Unique McLeod Bentleys
- Silver Spirit ownership
- Servicing a Silver Seraph



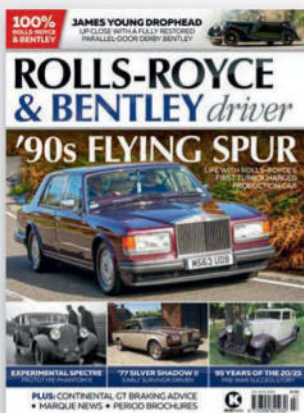
**NOVEMBER/
DECEMBER 2024**

- 'Bumper Issue' – 132 pages
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- History: From 20hp to Ghost
- Phantom I to Phantom VIII
- The Spirit of Ecstasy story
- Early Mulsanne road trip fun



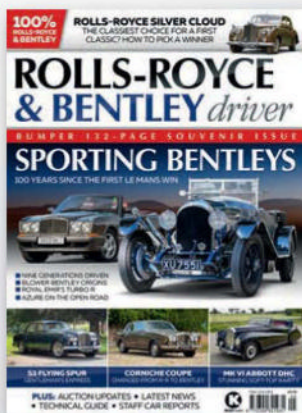
**SEPTEMBER/
OCTOBER 2024**

- Corniche Convertible tested
- Owning a Bentley Turbo R
- Rolls-Royce US experiment
- Estate-spec Silver Shadow
- 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
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- Sporting Bentleys special
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PAUL GUINNESS

Our editor explains his affection for the Silver Shadow in its 60th anniversary year, as well as revealing a family connection



My father was a Rolls-Royce enthusiast through and through. He'd always had a passion for the separate-chassis

models, and so it came as something of a surprise when, in the early 1980s, the first classic Rolls-Royce to arrive home with him was... a 1970 Silver Shadow. It wouldn't have been his ultimate choice; but knowing my father, it would have been one of those financially-beneficial opportunities that was too good to miss.

The Silver Shadow proved to be just the start of his Rolls-Royce and Bentley ownership, with the next acquisition being a 1957 Bentley S-series that, according to DVLA records, has been off the road since 1986. (If you happen to own SZ 7777 now, I'd love to hear from you.) This was ultimately joined by a succession of Silver Wraith models of various different styles from numerous coachbuilders, as he acquired more cars to boost what was becoming a burgeoning local wedding car service in the West Midlands.

My father fell into the wedding car

"The first Rolls-Royce I ever drove was my late father's Silver Shadow, and since then I've enjoyed countless others"

business purely by accident, thanks to that inaugural Silver Shadow. What had started off in life as a maroon-hued saloon ended up resprayed white in later years. It wasn't until he'd acquired the car, however, that Dad appreciated its commercial potential, marking the start of a long era of running old Rolls-Royces funded by his part-time wedding services.

That Silver Shadow arrived at the family home when I was just 18 years of age. I'd passed my driving test eight weeks after my 17th birthday, and was enjoying life aboard my ancient Ford Anglia. But imagine the joy of seeing a Silver Shadow arriving on the driveway... and the excitement of being told that, on those occasions when my father was feeling generous, I could get behind the wheel.

With the benefit of hindsight, of

course, that particular Silver Shadow wasn't the best around. Although its previous respray had been done to a decent standard and its interior was tidy, it wasn't the most immaculate or the most fastidiously maintained example of its type. And yet... and yet I absolutely adored that car. Imagine being able to jump aboard a Silver Shadow at the age of 18 and head out onto the local roads, cruising effortlessly along the nearest high street, driver's window down... no doubt looking nowhere near as cool as I thought I did. But after a childhood of 'ordinary' family saloons, and the experience of running a 20-odd-year-old Ford as my first car, that old Silver Shadow felt like it was from another world.

Ever since then, I've adored the Silver Shadow. For me, it's not only one of the most sensible ways of accessing classic Rolls-Royce ownership, it's also one of the most practical of all classic cars. This is a machine that was finished to the highest standards, as capable now as it was when new; there are few cars of comparable value that offer the same combination of opulence, long-distance comfort and sheer overall style as a Silver Shadow. And the fact that you can still pick one up for a sensible sum these days is surely the icing on the classic cake.

The first Rolls-Royce I ever drove was my late father's Silver Shadow, and since then I've enjoyed countless others. It's an all-time favourite of mine, and so putting together this special 'Silver Shadow at 60' issue of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* has been a joy... particularly as I also happened to turn 60 earlier this year. I hope you've enjoyed reading the magazine as much as I've enjoyed working on it. ■



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