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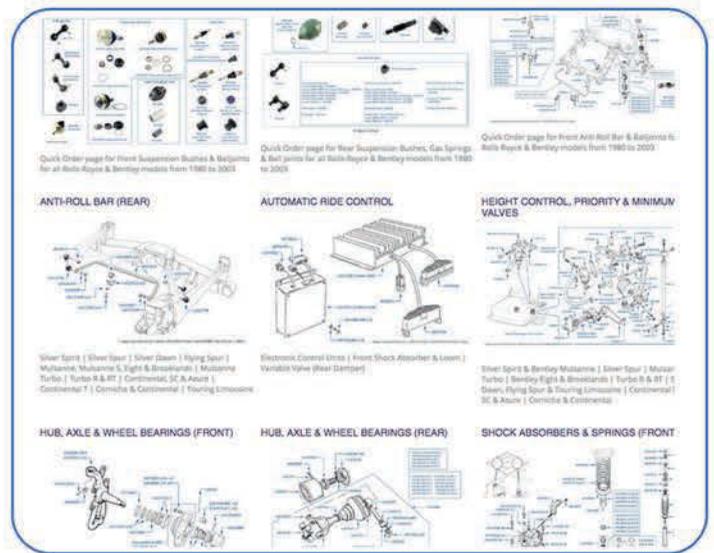
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## It's about the people...

Since this is a motoring magazine, it's all about the vehicles, right? We always try to provide features you can enjoy, including pictures to impress, aiming to bring all the technical details, the driving experience, even trying to conjure up the smell of the things for your entertainment. But at the end of the day, that's just metal, oil, petrol, plastic, cloth and expensive leather and there's so much more in this issue, as we want to pay tribute to the very special people behind the cars. Firstly, we can introduce Peter Eatenton and Larry Hawkins, two school friends who can now claim over 100 years of Rolls-Royce and Bentley experience at The Chelsea Workshop; then there's the flamboyant, knowledgeable and hugely entertaining Richard Biddulph, proprietor of an Aladdin's Cave of glorious motor vehicles, hidden away on a tired Essex industrial estate; to top that is enthusiast Barry Eastick, who had the passion, drive and sheer cheek to get Rolls-Royce to help him produce the unique single seater racing Bentley; and finally, keeping it sporting, we have also enjoyed the company of William Medcalf and learnt about racing a vintage Bentley. And all that's before we include W O Bentley in our Men Behind The Marque archive series; an unassuming, fascinating and talented enthusiast and businessman who gained the worthy sobriquet of 'the Honourable Engineer'.

It has been a great pleasure to meet these enthusiasts (excluding Mr Bentley, of course!) as they have made working on this issue a personal and professional joy. In the end, no matter how good, how wonderfully restored or how technically marvellous, the vehicles can only take you so far, it's the people that give them soul and meaning.

Here's hoping you get as much pleasure from reading about these people as I have meeting them.

## Nigel Fryatt

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# ROLLS-ROYCE & BENTLEY *driver*

"Well, I guess I got a bit carried away at the time. I just wanted something faster to race."



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# THE PHANTOM FUTURE

New aluminium spaceframe, new V12 engine, same old principles

**I**N OUR LAST ISSUE, we reported on the exhibition of Phantoms taking place at Bonhams on Bond Street, London as a preliminary to the announcement of the brand-new model. Here we can reveal the latest Phantom, and as would be expected, it arrives with some significant new engineering 'firsts' that point the way to future Rolls-Royce models.

A brief glance at the exterior is - dare we say it? - a little underwhelming. Modern motor manufacture and design seems to be besotted with the 'family resemblance' theme, where externally at least there is a disappointing caution from stepping away from producing anything that actually stands out in the model range - be that new product from BMW, Jaguar Land Rover or it seems, those intending to produce the 'Best Car in the World'. Of course, that is probably the biased view of a magazine dedicated to some of the greatest classic cars ever produced, but this new Phantom doesn't, in our view, have quite the imposing elegance, road presence, dignity and authority of classic Phantoms. Under that less than inspiring skin, however, it is fair to say that the latest Phantom is an awesome statement of engineering intent, and certainly worthy of such a famous name.

In announcing the new Phantom, Rolls-Royce does not hold back in its disparaging remarks about other 'so-called luxury manufacturers' who 'realise economies of scale by sharing platforms with mass market manufacturers.' Who can they mean?

The comments are unnecessary in our view given the impressive technical specification of this Phantom. Rather than having a standard monocoque, this new model has an all-aluminium spaceframe, which is lighter, stiffer and claimed to ensure the Phantom VII will be even quieter. More significantly, perhaps, this new 'Architecture of Luxury' framework will be used on all future Ghost, Wraith and Dawn models. The Phantom is said to be some 30 per cent stiffer than its predecessor, which when linked to the chassis control systems, like the latest version of the self-levelling suspension, will improve ride, handling and comfort. A stereo camera system in the windscreen will 'read' the road ahead, adjusting the suspension proactively, rather than reactively (up to speeds of 100kph). Impressive.

Under the bonnet and behind that famous radiator grille is a completely new 6.7-litre V12 engine. Whereas the previous model was normally-aspirated,



this mighty unit has twin turbochargers which produces a prodigious low-end torque of some 900Nm from only 1700rpm. And while power outputs were previously not mentioned, this V12 is officially said to deliver 563bhp; the word 'sufficient' probably covers it! Power is passed through the ZF eight-speed gearbox, which features Satellite Aided Transmission (SAT), linked to the windscreen camera so information can be transferred to the electronic suspension systems.

Our initial comments about the new Phantom VIII design are, of course, subjective. What is not in question is the actual engineering quality of this vehicle, which once again should set the benchmark for the ultimate luxury production car; a worthy successor, no question.



## ROLLS-ROYCE AT GOODWOOD

THIS YEAR'S HIGHLY popular Goodwood Festival of Speed saw Rolls-Royce becoming even more involved. The course car this year was a Rolls-Royce Ghost Black Badge, complete with LED race lights and Goodwood livery. The car was driven by a team from Rolls-Royce Motor Cars and completed some 85 runs of the hillclimb, a total of 200 miles. The most powerful RR model at the event, however, was a Wraith Black Badge, which was included in the Supercar shootout and recorded a speed of 102mph as it crossed the finish line at the end of the 1.6-mile climb. The car was driven by experienced endurance racer, Joerg Weidinger.



# THE DEFINITIVE BENTLEY DESIGN?

BENTLEY'S DIRECTOR OF Design, Stefan Sielaff, was recently asked which Bentley design 'defines the brand' and how that influences future models. Interestingly, the 'most innovative statement of its time', according to Sielaff, was the 1952 Mulliner R-Type Continental and he commented: "The surfaces of this model feature sharp lines against positive and negative curvature – permitted by traditional yet more time-consuming production methods. This DNA will find its way into future Bentleys, but with lightweight, modern treatment.

"That's before we even talk about

the proportions forming the basis for our current model range. The striking power line, muscular rear haunches and swooping, fast roof line – we will continue to be inspired by these proportions in the future."

As you would expect, he strongly believes there will always be a market for luxury cars, but interestingly comments that some customers in the future "may ask for vegan materials – ecological, sustainable. This is why we are looking at developing protein leather, stone veneers. There will be a mixture of technology and aesthetic in the future."

## ELECTRIC SPEED SIX

MONTEREY AUTO WEEK in the United States this August was the chosen venue for the debut of the EXP 12 Speed 6e concept, an electric sports car concept that is claimed to bring together 'sustainable materials' (see separate story) with battery driven performance. All manufacturers it seems need to be following the electric gravy train at the moment and, who knows, maybe this modern Speed Six will one day go into production, but somehow even if engineering problems with range, re-charging and battery materials for electric cars can be resolved, would you want a 'plug-in' Speed Six Bentley sports car? Looks good, though.



# AN ENDURING VICTORY

IN AN ISSUE that has a major feature on the massive growth for historic rallying (page 14) and an interview with vintage Bentley specialist and enthusiastic racer, William Medcalf (page 22), it is appropriate that we can report that Bentley Motorsport has won this year's Blancpain GT Series endurance title. The final round at Barcelona was something of a rollercoaster for the team, however, following a crash from one Continental GT3 during qualifying, requiring a rapid, complete front-end rebuild. The mechanics got the car to the grid, albeit at the very back of the 49-car field. By the end of the race, drivers Guy Smith, Oliver Jarvis and Steven Kane had managed to rise through the pack to 19th place. The Vince Abril, Andy Soucek and Maxime Soulet Continental GT3, climbed up into the top ten and in position to take the drivers' title as well, but a mechanical failure with



90 minutes to go put paid to that. However, the team's lead going into the final round was good enough for them to claim the overall team title. Bentley

Motorsport is expected to announce plans for 2018 shortly, there are no prizes for anyone predicting it will go for more of the same next year.

## 2017 CONCOURS TROPHY WINNER

SOME 12,500 ENTHUSIASTS visited this year's Concours of Elegance at Hampton Court this year, where some 1000 of the greatest classic cars around were on display. Some of the cars were particularly rare, including a Bugatti Type 57C Atalane Rollback and best in show went to the Lancia Astura Aerodynamico Castagna. The UK's car clubs put on fabulous displays and credit must go to the Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost

Taj Mahal, which according to a panel of judges (including HRH Prince Michael of Kent) was good enough to win the prestigious RAC Club Trophy. The car was originally owned by the Maharaja of Nabha and features a larger tank (fuel stations being rather rare in India back in the day), a louvered bonnet and a special electrical system, as specified for its original life as a demonstrator for the Bombay Rolls-Royce sales office.



## NEXT ISSUE



### FIRST CHOICE FOR MANY

THE SILVER SHADOW is the first choice for many a buyer wishing to join the world of Rolls-Royce, and in the next issue we will offer the best advice as to what your first year of ownership may entail. We will also take a look at the one Rolls-Royce that manages to get itself into the Worst Cars Ever Built charts; the Camargue. The most expensive production car of its time, is it really that bad, or indeed a real luxury bargain to be had today? We will be taking a visit to the Bentley Club House, and hopefully getting a very special Phantom drive. All this and all the usual regulars. Don't forget to send us details and photographs of your Rolls-Royce or Bentley for our Personal Choice section. If you are having trouble finding where *Rolls-Royce and Bentley driver* is on sale, why not subscribe? Full details of how to do this are on page 42. You can have the magazine delivered direct to your door and never miss an issue. Issue Four of *Rolls-Royce and Bentley driver* magazine will be on sale on Friday 19th January 2018.

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## REMARKABLE BARN FIND

*Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud I*  
**Chris Browne**

In 2009, my wife and I were having dinner with friends and one of them, who knew of my interest in Rolls-Royce (I owned and had restored a 1979 Silver Shadow II, which won

several awards from the RREC), and he mentioned that he knew of a neglected Shadow which had been walled up in a wartime Nissen hut in the grounds of a dilapidated country house in the wilds of Nottinghamshire and wondered if I might be interested in it as a restoration project. He knew the vendors who were acting as executors for the recently deceased owner Jack Denman, who had been a very successful theatrical agent in Nottingham in the Fifties

and Sixties. He had, however, fallen on hard times towards the end of his life and died in relative poverty. My friend offered to introduce me to the vendors, who were cousins of the deceased and were executors of the estate.

I had a close, like minded friend, David Whitehead, who I had met on one of the many technical seminars both he and I had attended at the RREC headquarters. When we first met, we had a lot in common as we had both purchased Silver Shadows which required restoration and had both attended many Club seminars to enable us to learn how to carry out the work ourselves. On discovering that we had so much in common, David offered me the use of his workshop to service my own car, which was only 15 minutes from my home. We did a few odd jobs working on our respective cars and soon decided it would be a good idea to take on a restoration project together to make use of the skills we had both learned. It seemed sensible that David and I should check out this vehicle together.

On arrival, we were taken to the Nissen hut in the grounds. The hut was quite derelict with a leaky roof and broken windows and the doors were barred with stout wooden battens. When we eventually managed to open the doors, we were staggered to find



All the hard work was worth it! Chris and David, with mentor John Creasey of Flying Spares, as they won the best personal restoration at the RREC Rally in 2015.



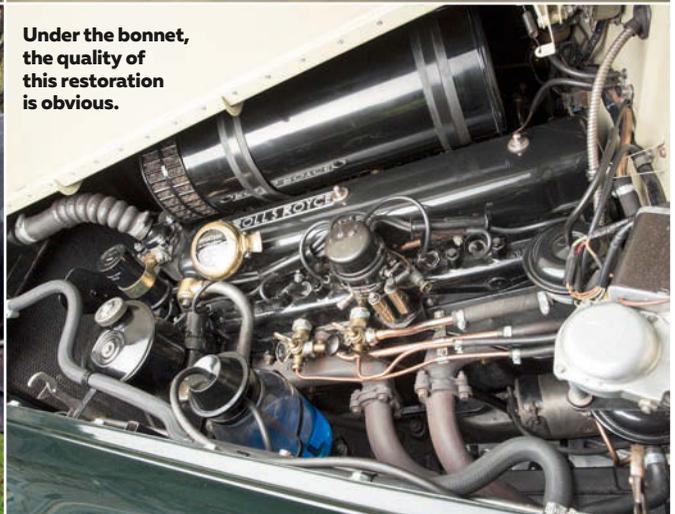
**As Chris discovered his Silver Cloud. The gentleman peering into the gloom is one of the executors of the deceased owner.**



**It took a lot of work to get to this point, with the Silver Cloud primed, ready for its first coat of paint.**



**Not the most obvious place to find a much-neglected Rolls-Royce.**



**Under the bonnet, the quality of this restoration is obvious.**

not a Silver Shadow but a much rarer Silver Cloud 1. On making further enquiries of the vendors, we found that the car had been owned from new by Jack Denman, had the original registration number VWX 1 and had done less than 27,000 miles from new. We felt enormously fortunate to have found a genuine barn find car which, in view of its history, was quite a rarity. After a quick discussion with David, we decided we must buy the car as it was an ideal candidate for a full restoration. The vendors already had two offers for the car from dealers who intended to break the car for spares. As the car had great sentimental value for the vendors who remembered the car from new, they were reluctant to sell it to be broken up so David and I promised to fully restore it and when it was completed, they would be the first people to be taken out in it. We put in an offer which was considerably lower than those offered by the breakers.

The vendors asked for a couple of days to think it over and I received a phone call two days later to say that they appreciated what we intended to do with car and were prepared to accept our offer. Needless to say, we were highly delighted but little did we know what we had taken on.

On getting the car back to the workshop, our first jobs were to recommission the car as it had not run for seven years. We spent nine weeks bringing the car up to a safe condition and an MOT certificate was duly obtained, with no advisories.

We had decided that we would carry out a complete ground up restoration. In our innocence, we thought we would do it in about six months working every day. The more we worked on the car, the more it became clear that it had to be done properly so no time limit was set. In the end, it took us four and a half years working four or five day weeks and we estimate we worked

a total of over 6500 man hours! We finished the car the day before the 2015 Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts Club Annual Concours and Rally. We had arranged to give a presentation of our restoration at the rally and also entered the car for the best personal restoration of any Rolls-Royce and Bentley.

To our great surprise, we were awarded the Douglas Wood Trophy for the best personal restoration. The car has since been displayed at the RREC North of England rally at Harewood House near Leeds, and the Classic Car Show at the NEC in Birmingham on the Rolls-Royce stand.

We have to give thanks to our friend and mentor, John Creasy of Flying Spares, without whose advice and experience, the project would never have been completed. The photograph shown here was taken just after we found out that we had won the trophy for the best personal restoration – we were pleased and very surprised!

## ROYAL CONNECTION

*Rolls-Royce various*  
**Rachel Winter**

I am so very pleased that there is a new magazine dedicated to Rolls-Royce owners and enthusiasts and thought you might like to hear my story.

I started by offering to valet a local neighbour's 1976 Silver Shadow at the age of 12, back in Cape Town, South Africa. The family were so shocked, but they decided to give me a chance to see what I could do and suffice to say I impressed them. This was my way of earning 'pocket money', and over time, and via my growing reputation, by the age of 16, I was caring for 10 luxury cars including four Rolls-Royce models. Also, I actually drove that first Silver Shadow at the age of 12 – on private land, of course.

This upbringing led me to start as a chauffeur, driving a 'client' home after his car had been repaired and he offered me my first proper job. I was able to get advice from my uncle Edward who was back in the UK, and he convinced me to accept and I have not looked back since.



**Rachel has worked as a chauffeur for 26 years, a job she 'wouldn't change for the world'.**

see our feature on page 36, believe that they actually worked on this Rolls-Royce when working for the company. *Small world, isn't it? – Ed).*

In the last 26 years, I have managed to work for five private families, three blue chip companies and for the governments of South Africa, Israel, Canada, UK and Germany. I have had formal military and police advanced driver training and am licensed to carry firearms overseas. Being a 'Protective Chauffeur' and driving Rolls-Royce limousines is a great job and I would not change it for the world!

Most of my family have at some stage worked for Rolls-Royce Motor Cars in one capacity or another and the uncle I called all those years ago was the Head Chauffeur to HM Queen Elizabeth II for 27 years, which in total was actually 34 years of Royal employment. He sadly passed away back in 2004, however, his service with the Queen and her family was exemplary and he retired to one of the 'Grace and Favour' cottages on the Windsor estate at Queens Gate.

Edward's favourite job was doing the long runs to Highclere Castle, Sandringham and Balmoral. Included here is my one remaining photo that I have left of him, it was taken inside Balmoral back in 1985, with 'Canberra 1'. (*Interestingly, Peter and Larry of The Chelsea Workshop,*



**Enjoying driving Lady Gordon Bennett's 1910 commissioned Silver Ghost 20/25.**



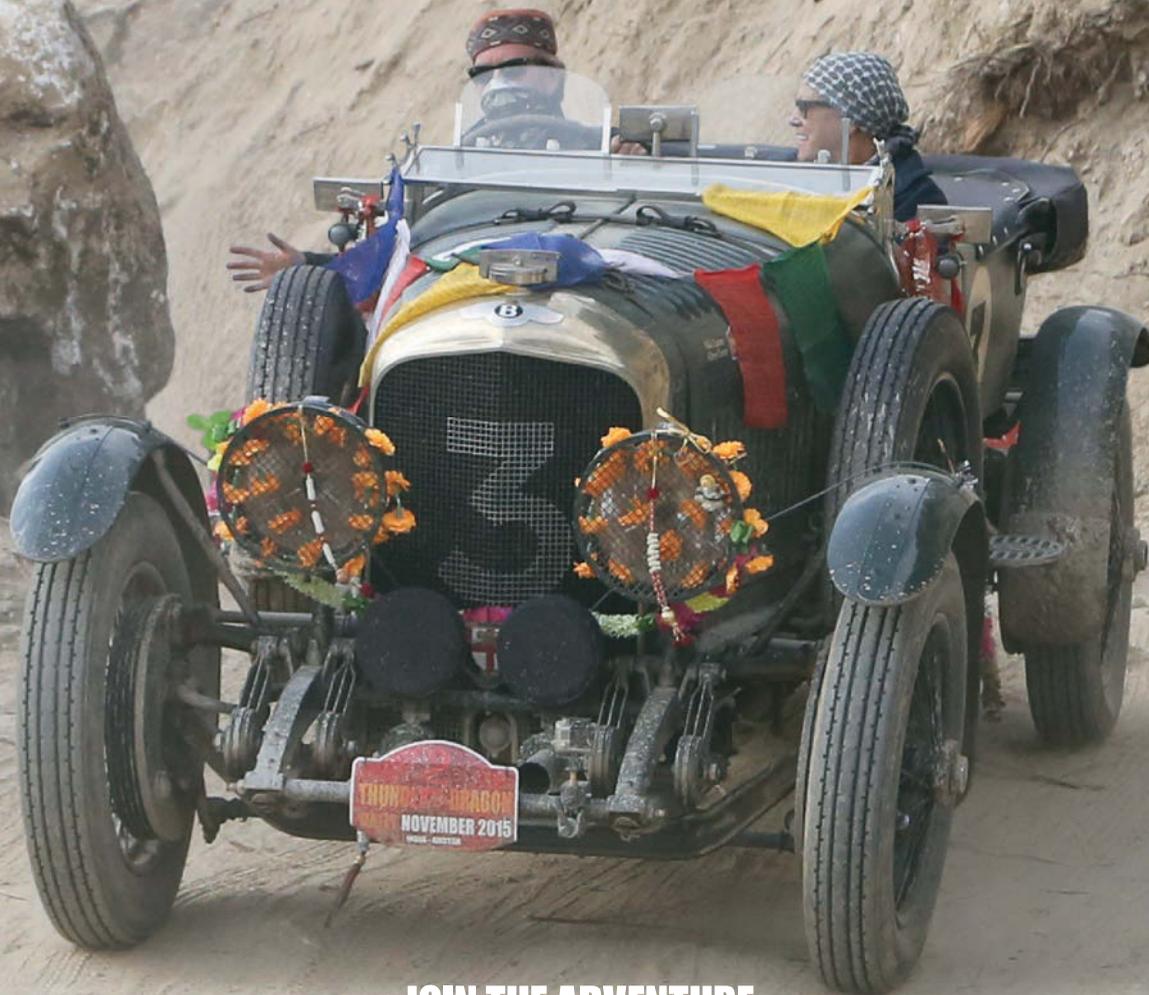
**Rachel's uncle Edward, the Queen's chauffeur for 27 years, standing proudly alongside 'Canberra 1'.**

## SEND IN YOUR PRIDE AND JOY

We want to hear from you, either just a simple email, but especially if you have some photographs and details of your Rolls-Royce or Bentley. Or both! As you can see from the selection of contributors published here, we are interested in all models, all eras and even in all conditions.

Please email the best quality images you have, and don't let the computer reduce the resolution when sending. The higher the resolution, the bigger we can use your photographs! Email to Rolls-Royce and Bentley driver magazine at **rrb.ed@kelsey.co.uk** with the subject title

saying PERSONAL CHOICE. If you don't wish to email, we love to receive letters, which you can send to: The Editor, Rolls-Royce and Bentley driver magazine, Kelsey Media, Cudham Tithe Barn, Berry's Hill, Cudham, Kent, TN16 3AG. We look forward to hearing from you!



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# VIVE LA DIFFERENCE

This is rallying – but not quite as you might imagine. When the team at Rally Round get involved, all the senses are stimulated, and there's not a scotch egg in sight...

WORDS: PETER HALL PHOTOGRAPHY: RALLY ROUND

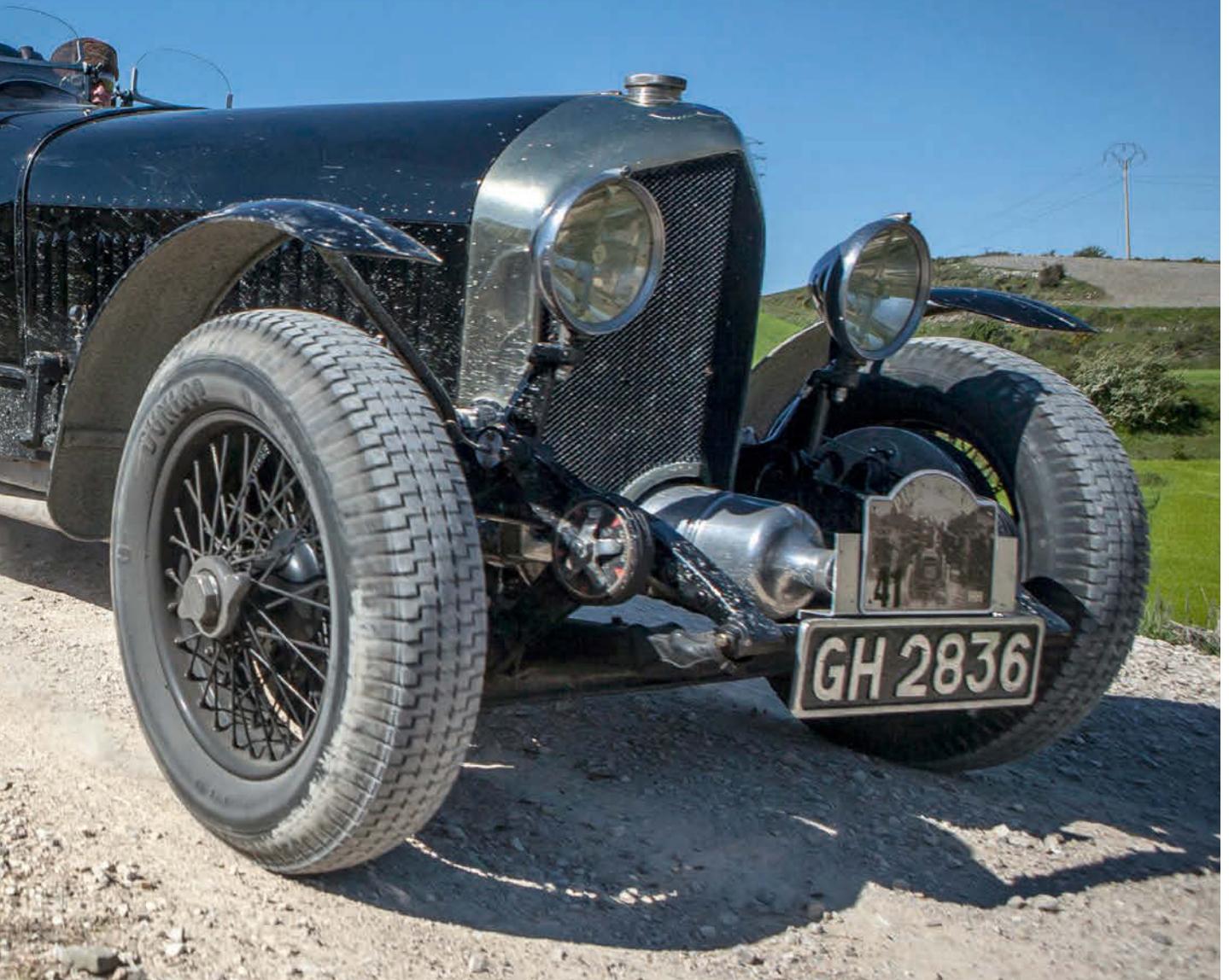


**1929 Bentley 6.5-litre of Robert and Jane Abrey makes light work of Spanish gravel on the 2013 Paris-Madrid Rally, which marked the 110th anniversary of the ill-fated Paris-Madrid race of 1903 and completed the original route.**

Imagine a typical classic rally car. What comes to mind? A braying Escort Twin Cam? A snorting Austin-Healey MkIII? A flying Mini Cooper? Now imagine the setting. A Scottish lane, perhaps, or a Welsh forest? You can probably see the participants too - blokes with beards, wearing string-backed gloves, bobble hats and mud-spattered anoraks with pockets full of pens, string, stopwatches and spanners. And it's raining, of course.

All of the above is true enough. Yet there is another side to the sport. Picture a youngish couple in a Rolls-Royce Corniche, top down, gliding past gilded temples on a dusty road in Burma. Or a Silver Cloud in the »

**Red dust, Silver Cloud - Alastair and Dorothy Caldwell make tracks on the 2014 Road to Mandalay Rally in Burma (Myanmar).**



## CLASSIC RALLYING RALLY ROUND REPORT

otherworldly, snow-capped highlands of New Zealand. Or a pre-war Bentley, garlanded with flowers, on a Bhutanese mountain pass festooned with colourful prayer flags. Think of any Rolls-Royce or Bentley model you like in a breathtakingly beautiful location - no matter how remote - and Liz Wenman probably has a photograph of it.

Liz is the pioneering founder and director of Rally Round, a Surrey-based organisation that runs classic rallies with a difference. Already a veteran of two Mille Miglias, in 2010 she and husband

David took part in a notoriously gruelling endurance rally from Beijing to Paris, and realised that although the scenery was beyond spectacular, they simply didn't have time to fully explore and enjoy it; so, Liz had an idea. Rather than break your precious car on rocks and potholes, snatch what sleep you can in cheap hotels and exhaust yourself on a madly competitive, devil-take-the-hindmost dash from A to B, why not slow things down a bit, add some rest days and sightseeing excursions, upgrade the accommodation (and the

food) and allow more opportunity for socialising with your fellow travellers, not to mention the locals? Why not make the whole rally experience more accessible to novices, not least those wives and girlfriends who would enjoy motorsport a lot more if it encompassed visits to see the lotus weavers of Inle Lake or the most exclusive kimono shop in Tokyo? Who wouldn't want to take a dawn balloon flight over the temples of Bagan, a boat cruise on Milford Sound, a walk up to Bhutan's legendary Tiger's Nest monastery or a stroll around Machu Picchu? Who for that matter wouldn't want to stop for tea in Darjeeling or try a roadside coffee in Colombia? Having gone to the trouble and expense of reaching such remote and enchanting places, why would you rush past them at high speed?

With a frisson of competition still provided by daily 'regularity' sections - brain-teasing exercises involving the maintenance of a precise average speed over an unknown distance on challenging roads - and a few timed race circuit laps to satisfy press-on drivers, Rally Round has attracted a new cohort of classic and vintage car owners who not only want to enjoy their vehicles beyond the usual confines of a Sunday drive in the country but to explore the four corners of the world. Indeed, it's the gentle and entirely optional nature of such competition that has drawn such a wide variety of marques and



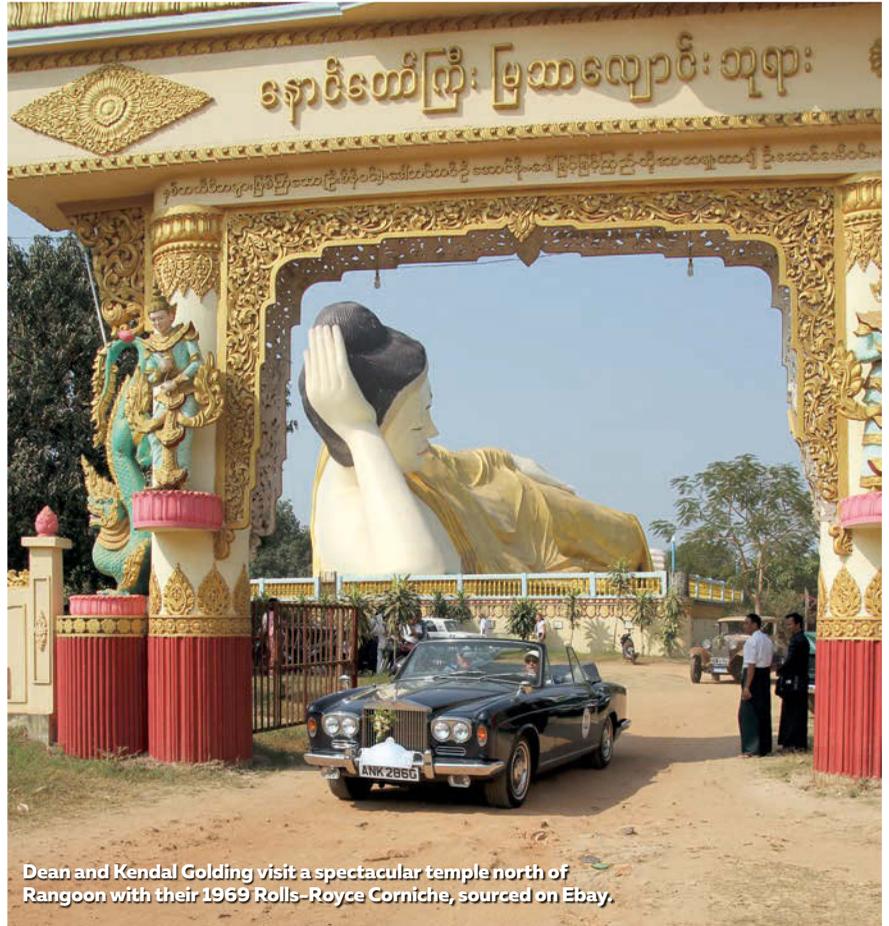
**Pioneering Rally Round boss Liz Wenman (left) and experienced rally organiser Heidi Winterbourne wait for competitors to arrive at a timing point on the 2016 Haka Classic Rally in New Zealand.**



**1929 Bentley 4.25-litre of Peter and Philip Little gears up to cross the Pyrenees on the 2nd Paris-Madrid Rally in 2014.**

models to Rally Round events, cars that need not be the fastest of their type. Highly-modified road rockets have no advantage in an average-speed contest, least of all when their newfangled electronic ignition leaves you stranded in the middle of nowhere, notwithstanding the efforts of the rally mechanics in their mobile workshops, whose job is to ensure that nobody gets left behind. Far better to put your faith in old fashioned mechanical simplicity and basic engineering quality - not to mention comfort over long distances - which is why Rolls-Royce and Bentley models are so popular. If they do fail, it's usually possible to put them back on the road with minimal resources, or the attention of a rural blacksmith; we know of one pre-war Bentley driver who replaced a broken propshaft with a length of scaffolding liberated from a nearby building site.

The best cars in the world keep on running while less substantial machines fall by the wayside. A good example is the 1963 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud III campaigned by former McLaren F1 team manager Alastair Caldwell on events worldwide (including a Trans-America rally that covered 18,000 miles in eight weeks). Alastair specialises in winning rally trophies with unlikely or apparently unsuitable cars - he has several to choose from, lucky man - and he's very happy to point out that his Rolls-Royce is entirely standard. With his mother Dorothy in the passenger seat - now 99 years young, with an entry in the Guinness Book of Records confirming her status as the world's oldest rally navigator - they successfully completed two of Rally Round's most spectacular long-distance events, the 2300km



Dean and Kendal Golding visit a spectacular temple north of Rangoon with their 1969 Rolls-Royce Corniche, sourced on Ebay.

**“A frisson of competition is provided by 'regularity' sections - brain-teasing exercises involving the maintenance of a precise average speed over an unknown distance on challenging roads”**



A breathtaking road on the 2015 Thunder Dragon Rally through the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan.

(1430-mile) Road to Mandalay Rally through Myanmar (Burma) in 2014 and the 5354km (3327-mile) Haka Classic Rally that explored the North and South Islands of New Zealand in 2016. The car is no slouch either, despite the complete absence of go-faster modifications; when a Haka Classic rival in a 1965 Mercedes-Benz 230 S asked Alastair to explain the Cloud's greater turn of speed, he simply quipped, "Because I push the accelerator pedal further down than you do!" One thing he's never pushed is the horn, which hasn't worked in all the years he's owned the car.

Somewhat less grand is the 1969 Rolls-Royce Corniche drophead rallied by Dean and Kendal Golding. Dean once dabbled in circuit racing but »



Where next? 2016 Charles Jarrott Trophy winners Robert and Jane Abrey settle back into their 1929 Bentley 6.5-litre on the Paris-Vienna Rally and prepare for the next stage.

had no rally experience at all when he and Kendal signed up for Rally Round's groundbreaking 2014 Road to Mandalay Rally, eager to explore a fabulously beautiful country that had been closed to the outside world for half a century. They found the Corniche on eBay, of all places, and had barely driven it before packing it off to Yangon (formerly Rangoon) for the start of the rally. Nevertheless, it sailed through the event without problems, and made a return to rallying last year on Rally Round's Samurai Challenge in Japan, which followed the spring flowering of the cherry blossom over 4660km (2896-miles) from Fukuoka to Lake Toya. Its only notable fault along the way was a failure of the electric window switches, probably the result of storage in humid conditions; needless to say, the couple simply dropped the roof and carried on regardless, cheerfully enjoying uninterrupted views of the dramatic Japanese scenery.

While the Golding's Corniche is at the younger end of the classic category (defined by Rally Round as cars of a type in production before 1969, or the mid-1970s on some events) you will frequently see vintage (pre-war) Rolls-Royces rallying. The 1925 Silver Ghost of Chris Evans is a regular participant, although the oldest entered on a Rally Round event to date is the 1917 Ghost

**“They had all driven through a world-famous Champagne estate where the vines had recently been sprayed. Rally doctor John Llewellyn, identified the condition as Bolly Rally Rash, and prescribed a hair of the dog”**



In their 1928 Bentley 3/4.5-litre, Irish crew Andrew Bailey and Philippa Spiller descend Austria's famous Stoderzinken hillclimb on the 2016 Paris-Vienna Rally.



**Former McLaren F1 boss Alastair Caldwell and his mother Dorothy - the world's oldest rally navigator - pause near Bagan, Burma, on the 2014 Road to Mandalay Rally. Alastair's 1963 Silver Cloud III cruised to third in class and seventh overall.**



**Chris and Nick Evans with their 1925 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost on the 2016 Paris-Vienna Rally.**



**1917 Silver Ghost of David Royds and Natasha Newman on a skid-pan test on the 2016 Paris-Vienna Rally.**

of David and Natasha Royds (still considerably younger than the oldest competitor of all, a 1903 Napier that ventured out of the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu to take part in the 2014 Paris-Madrid Rally). However, the pre-war classes are usually and perhaps predictably dominated by sporting Bentleys, which often band together (in threes) to win an event's team prize. The 2016 Paris-Vienna Rally was a case in point, with Bentleys winning more silverware than any other marque; prepared by West Sussex specialist William Medcalf, the cars of Andrew Bailey and Philippa Spiller (1928 3/4.5-litre) and David and Julia Little (1930

4.5-litre) not only finished second and third respectively in the over-4000cc vintage class but secured the team award along with vintage category winners Robert and Jane Abrey (1929 6.5-litre). It's worth noting that the team competition is open to all; it's a measure of the unpredictability of classic rallying that the three-car Bentley team were in fourth place on the penultimate day of the event, yet thanks to consistency and reliability they overtook all their rivals on the final morning, not least the previously front-running team consisting of a 1958 Jaguar XK150, a 1967 Volvo 123 GT Amazon and the classic-category-winning 1969

Jaguar E-Type. So much for progress. Paris-Vienna was one of Rally Round's period-dressed European rallies, held over six days in each summer, which are inspired by the city-to-city races of the early 20th Century. The premier award is the Charles Jarrott Trophy, named in honour of Britain's first motor racing hero and presented to the vintage category winner, so these events do tend to attract more pre-war entrants than the longer rallies that might spend the best part of a month in far-flung lands. No less sociable, with leisurely lunch and refreshment stops in picturesque locations, the shorter events suit busy »

## CLASSIC RALLYING RALLY ROUND REPORT

people (including schoolchildren - the youngest Rally Round participant to date was an 11-year old girl, who not only successfully navigated her Dad's Jaguar E-Type from Paris to Madrid but finished second in class). They also serve as an introduction to the sport for novices, although, as the aforementioned Goldings proved, it's possible to buy a car on eBay and enjoy an adventure on the far side of the world with no previous experience whatsoever. You don't need a master's degree in map reading, either, as the rally route is invariably set out in a comprehensive road book with 'tulip'

### “A breakdown is never less than frustrating, albeit less so when it happens in one of the loveliest spots on earth”

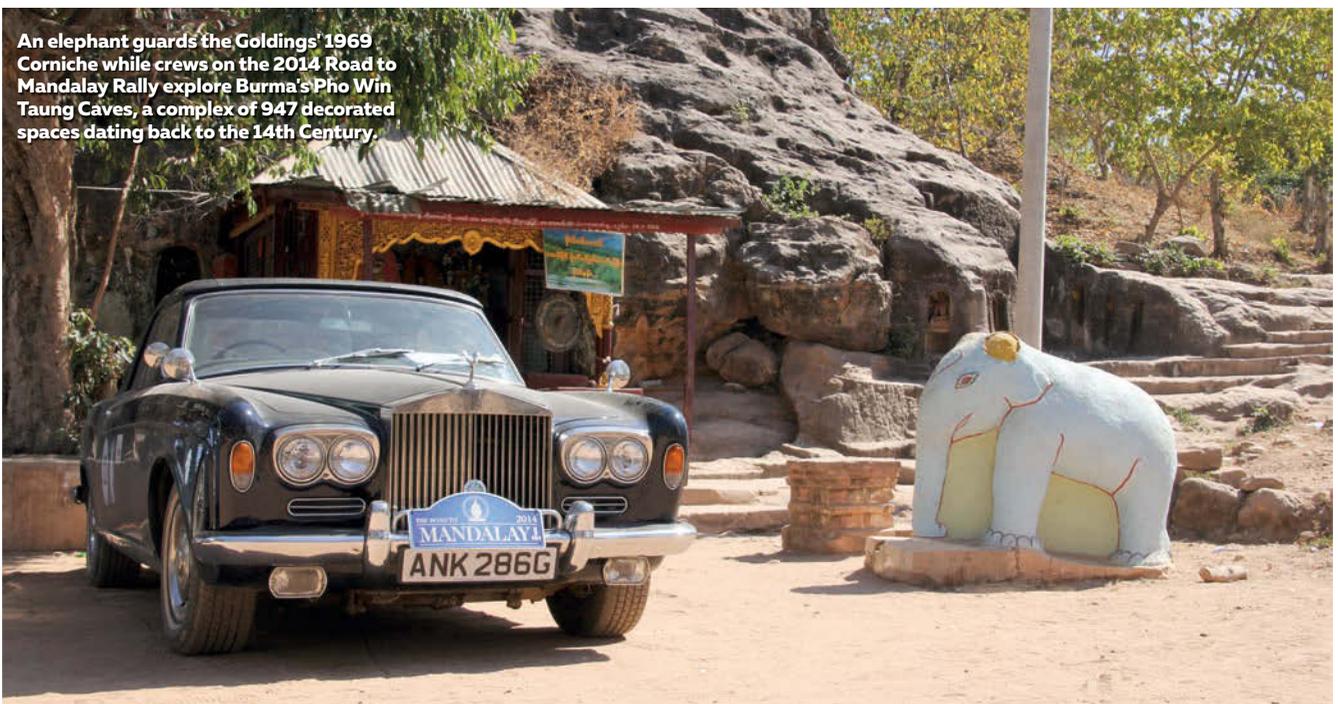
diagrams illustrating every junction, distances and lots of other useful information. Nevertheless, even for a Rolls-Royce, careful car preparation is always recommended; a breakdown is never less than frustrating, albeit less so when it happens in one of the loveliest spots on earth. A stunning view of the Himalayas, with or without the assistance of friendly locals who appear

from nowhere bearing sweets and pots of tea, is usually preferable to the hard shoulder of a British dual carriageway.

Assistance is one thing you need never worry about, at least not on a Rally Round event where the schedule is relaxed and success in competition is less important than having a good time. At this level, rallyists are generally friendly, like-minded folk who are only too willing to help or offer more or less expert advice, and the organisers always provide at least two teams of skilled, well equipped and amazingly resourceful mechanics to keep everyone on the road. Indeed, customer care remains central to the company's raison d'être, hence its determination to preserve its enviable safety record by avoiding high speeds, car-breaking terrain, long hours or night driving. The most serious mishap to befall anyone on this year's Paris-Prague Rally, for example, was a mild skin rash that mysteriously affected a handful of crews in open-topped cars; it transpired that they had all driven through a world-famous Champagne estate where the vines had recently been sprayed. Rally doctor John Llewellyn, formerly of the Foreign Office, identified



En route from Paris to Vienna in 2016, driver Chris Evans checks the Silver Ghost while navigator Nick examines the road ahead.



An elephant guards the Goldings' 1969 Corniche while crews on the 2014 Road to Mandalay Rally explore Burma's Pho Win Taung Caves, a complex of 947 decorated spaces dating back to the 14th Century.



**The Caldwell's 1963 Silver Cloud III on a dramatic timed test around the temples of Bagan during the 2014 Road to Mandalay Rally.**

the condition as Bolly Rally Rash, and prescribed a hair of the dog.

Should you be inspired to find out more about classic rallying in style, your first port of call should be the Rally Round website and then the all-female Rally Round office. Here, alongside company boss Liz Wenman, you'll find highly experienced event co-ordinator Heidi Winterbourne, who over the course of 20 years has personally organised more than 40 major rallies worldwide, including a complete circumnavigation of the globe. Meanwhile, out in the field, as it were, is internationally renowned route designer Kim Bannister, who has been involved in rallying for 40 years and has run acclaimed events through more than 65 countries. On joining Rally Round last year, he summed up his thoughts on the company and the sport itself: "Liz and Heidi have worked really hard to establish Rally Round as a standard-setting organisation, meeting the need for exciting, safe and sociable rallies and focusing on customer service. I'm sure that's the way forward for classic rallying and I'm looking forward to exploring new horizons and contributing to the success of future events."

Those future events are many and varied, including rallies in Africa, South America, India, several parts of Europe from the islands of the Mediterranean to the Low Countries and pretty much all points in-between, including an epic, three-stage journey around the world, via Beijing, Singapore and Anchorage, Alaska. The next short event is the Paris-Amsterdam Rally (17th-23rd June 2018), which will celebrate the 130th anniversary of the

world's first long-distance journey in a motor car (by Bertha Benz in 1888) and the 120th anniversary of the first international motor race (the Paris-Amsterdam-Paris contest of 1898). Participants of any experience level are welcome, particularly novices, who will be offered every possible assistance

and special pre-event briefings on the basics of rally timing and navigation. Interested? For details, event brochures, advice, videos and more, visit the website at [www.rallyround.co.uk](http://www.rallyround.co.uk) or get in touch with the Rally Round team - email [info@rallyround.co.uk](mailto:info@rallyround.co.uk) or telephone +44 (0)1252 794100. ■



**The hills are alive with the sound of sporting Bentleys, in this case the 1929 4.25-litre of Peter and Philip Little on the 2014 Paris-Madrid Rally.**

# AN EXCEPTIONAL VINTAGE

We visit William Medcalf to learn what it takes to prepare a vintage Bentley for one of today's extraordinary historic endurance events. What we discover, however, is an engineering company that would certainly have fascinated W O Bentley. We were blown away, and that wasn't just from the drive in the Super Sport...

WORDS: NIGEL FRYATT PHOTOGRAPHY: NIGEL FRYATT, WILLIAM MEDCALF



William on the 2010 Paris-Peking in his 3-litre Super Sport; first in class, second overall, the self-prepped Bentley ran faultlessly.



The company showroom at Liss in West Sussex, evocatively dressed with period products.

There's a neat, small wooden grab handle on the inside of William Medcalf's 3-litre Bentley Super Sport. It's firmly secured to the bodywork, necessarily so, as I am gripping it with my right hand as we pick up speed through the West Sussex country lanes. But it's not gripped in fear, just the practicality of keeping my arm away from William's elbows as he demonstrates just how a 90-years old sports car can remain as relevant, reliable and ridiculously good fun to pilot at speed. You can always tell when a car wants to be driven fast, and when it's a struggle, and there's nothing forced about this demonstration; that the thing is also capable of covering thousands of miles, climb mountains, cross deserts, and traverse rough dirt roads, all at considerable speed from Paris to Peking for 37 days non-stop, suddenly becomes more understandable. It also becomes ridiculously desirable.

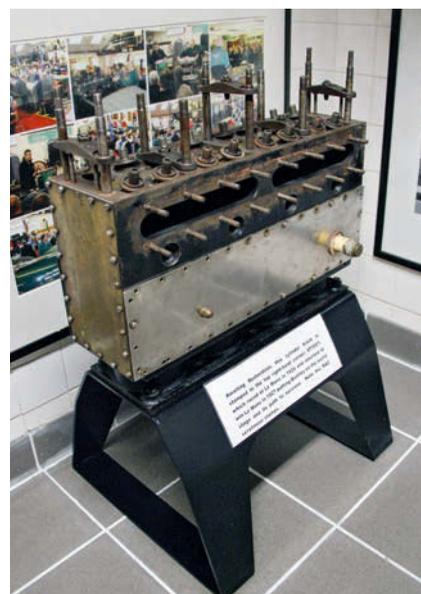
But then you don't need to be in William Medcalf's presence long to be pulled into the world of vintage Bentleys, historic endurance rallying and the wonders of W O Bentley's engineering prowess. To say Medcalf was born into the world of vintage

Bentleys is not far from the truth. Back in 1979, when only five-years old, he accompanied the family on a driving holiday; in William's case, a nine month, 28,000-mile road trip around America. All the sights were

visited - Disneyland, Niagara Falls - but it was the time spent sitting on his father's lap steering the family 3/4½-litre Bentley (shipped to America for the holiday) that he remembers the most. After that, William Medcalf »



The man himself; William Medcalf sits proudly in his glorious Bentley 3-litre Super Sport. 'Many thanks for the lift, William'



This cylinder block ST3001, which won Le Mans in 1927, presently on display in Medcalf's smallest room... worth paying a visit.



**The Medcalf family Speed Six, on display in the showroom, but is certainly not for sale.**



**A very rare Bentley Speed Weymann. Only 15 short chassis models with a sports engine were built, all except this drophead version were saloons. This Bentley is for sale in the showroom.**



**The Medcalf workshop, complete with authentically restored 4 ½-litre drophead by Victor Broom, alongside an immaculate Le Mans replica; both await their lucky new owners**

was never going to be an accountant or a shoe salesman, was he?!

Medcalf Senior was a toolmaker by trade, and ran the family garage. William rebuilt his first car at 12, a Morris Minor ("I had about nine of those in all") and after he had been to college to study engineering, Dad offered him the opportunity to use a spare lock-up to start his own business. "So, off I went with my little bag of tools," says William, "and I started working on Bentleys in Edmonton, north London."

Things have obviously changed somewhat when you pull into the car park of the present premises at Liss in leafy West Sussex. The company having rapidly out-grown north London, now has the space to run a fascinating, and very surprising business based solely on vintage Bentleys – a genre that you might feel rather narrow and specialised, after all, built between 1922 and 1932, there were only 3000 ever produced and probably only 1600 left. However, there is a lot more to William Medcalf Ltd than initially appears.

Life could have been very different, however, had William stayed in north London, but in 2007 he was invited to join a client as a riding mechanic on that year's Paris-Peking endurance rally. It was a gamble as it takes a lot of time away from the business and when the diff broke in the middle of the Gobi Desert in Mongolia, he could have been forgiven for thinking that it had been a bad idea, but then in many ways, that busted diff changed his life.

"This was a big changing point. I discovered that if you can mend something on an event like that, you are invaluable. It's an environment where you can excel, you can walk on water," explains William. "But actually, that's exactly the situation you don't want to be in. The Gobi Desert isn't the place to have a major breakdown and so it occurred to me that I should be prepping cars before the event, so they don't break down. In 2010, we returned in a car I had prepared, and it won its class and came second overall, which was fantastic." More important, however, William had realised the new direction the company should go in.

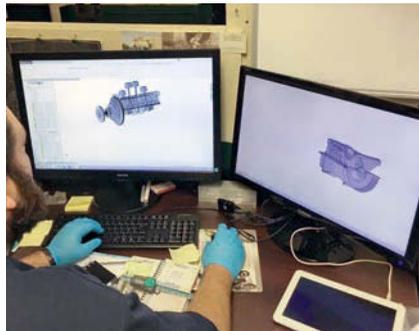
Today, endurance rallying is big business (see our feature on page 14). There are a growing number of very successful people around the world who want to compete on these tough events, and for them the vintage Bentley just has to be the perfect vehicle. While W O Bentley wasn't

greatly enamoured with motorsport, he wanted to build fast, reliable cars, engineered not to break. Motor racing in the Twenties and Thirties was not as today, where cars race on smooth, grippy tarmac. In those days, quite a lot of surfaces were actually loose, and it was endurance events that caught the public's imagination, culminating in the 24 hours of Le Mans, where the Bentleys were particularly successful. It is interesting to note therefore, that these original racing Bentleys were once disparagingly called 'fast lorries' by Ettore Bugatti, but that is exactly what you need on the Paris-Peking. However, things can always be improved...

"If you intend competing in a vintage Bentley," William says with a knowing smile, "there are 20 things that I can guarantee you will break if you don't change them. So, you can either wait until that happens and we will repair it, or you can take the advice and change it before the event so it doesn't break." It will come as no surprise that a completely new competition diff, and strengthened driveshafts are high up on this list. These improved specification components are part of the William's Benchmark Precision Engineering business, the majority of which are actually made on the premises.

Wander through the impressive 'period' Bentley showroom, and even if you are not a traditional engineer, the smell of oil, the impressive traditional lathes and the hustle and bustle of a busy workshop is a delight. For a vintage Bentley owner, probably used to always having the best in the business, it will immediately be obvious that William Medcalf's reputation is well-earned, but that it is not just about one man. There are only 24 staff in total, but somehow there seems to be more and like William, many have impressive experience in the business, whether it is at senior engineering level at Rolls-Royce, or working on CAD (Computer Aided Design) technical drawings for McLaren. Parts are designed and where possible, built in-house. New parts are put on William's Bentley Super Sport where, "if I can't break them, we know they are good enough."

The traditional is still an important part of the William Medcalf business, some clients want the sympathetic, original restoration, which can see them hand-painting the bodywork



**Vintage maybe, but 21st century technology certainly. William Medcalf Ltd has its own CAD computer system to design new parts.**



**William Medcalf builds modern day parts for its historic racers. Benchmark competition diff (right) alongside standard version.**



**It all starts here - fresh Bentley chassis stripped and ready...**

## **New parts are put on William's Bentley Super Sport where, "if I can't break them, we know they are good enough."**

and keeping the nickel-plated bonnet hinges to proudly show the dull patina of age. When the client demands, original parts will be sourced, or produced exactly to original specification, wooden frameworks will remain if possible and when sections need repairing, William Medcalf has a cabinet maker on hand to fabricate new sections, using the same wood, of course. Others want a restoration to produce an original Bentley that is frankly better today than it was when it left the factory. This is never better illustrated than in the workshop where two vehicles sit side-by-side, soon to be collected by their new owners. One, a rare 4 ½ -litre drophead by Victor Broom has a beautifully hand-painted body and wears its age, dulled metal finish and worn leather trim with pride. It sits alongside a 4 ½-litre Le Mans

replica that looks as close to perfection as it must be possible to get.

Gleaming and immaculately trimmed (in-house, of course) and ready for its new owner, a young man who has only just passed his driving test!

Opposite this 'new' Bentley sits the bare chassis of a Bentley William describes as "one of the most historic Bentleys on the planet". It is one of the original racing models, known as EXP4. "When we started to look at the car," William continues, "so much of it doesn't make sense. For example, all Bentleys have 12 louvres in the bonnet, this one has 13! Even today, we are still learning." Sadly, the full story on this Bentley will have to wait...

So far, so traditional. Restorations, servicing, repairs and rebuilds alone would keep many a business busy and one might even say, content. Not so »

## HISTORIC ENGINEERING WILLIAM MEDCALF

William Medcalf. The administrative systems running behind the workshop would put many modern main dealerships to shame. William is forever striving to improve the process, the efficiency and the service to the client. Producing your own specialist parts helps, but these need to be produced so they are ready in advance, not when they are discovered they are needed at the last minute. All restoration work is documented assiduously, this is not a company that keeps all its knowledge stored in the memory of the 80-year old engine builder only to lose it all when he retires. Here, the knowledge will be available for generations. Add to this mix the need to have fully-prepped competition cars finished on time, so they can meet the shipping date for their wealthy owners to enjoy driving on some of the most exciting and arduous endurance events around the globe, and you have an edge to the business that makes it similar to today's modern multi million-pound racing teams; it's just that here in sleepy West Sussex they are working on 90-years old racers...

Our tour with William was coming close to the end, or at least that was what we thought, but there was one more surprise. In a small, unassuming office, just off the main workshop sits a young Chinese engineering graduate, Dongni. Having graduated from Cranfield University, via an engineering degree in France (a language she had never spoken until her arrival in that

country), she has joined William as part of the Government-supported Innovate UK Knowledge Transfer Partnership scheme. "This is a great scheme, and we are so pleased to be involved," explains William. "It took us about 18 months to get accredited to the scheme, and now we work in partnership with the engineering department at the University of Surrey." The aim? "I want to build the ultimate vintage Bentley race engine!"

Dongni is tasked with analysing everything about the Bentley engine, using all the very latest analytical computer programmes available, to question everything and see if it can be improved. "It's great because Dongni can come to me and say 'why is it like this?' and I can reply 'because it's always been that way' and then we can investigate further. We might just improve the water pump impellor for example, because Dongni has discovered that it doesn't need to be quite as big. Making it smaller might reduce the effort needed by the engine to turn it, effectively giving the engine more power. Small gains, improving, always questioning, but doing everything the way W O would have done in the past, but using modern techniques."

The aim is to have a virtual engine by the beginning of next year, which can then be built in the workshop. It can then be used by William, tested in competition, further tweaked and improved to eventually be available

as a client product. This effectively future proofs the business, and makes it so much more than just a traditional vintage Bentley specialist. Indeed, working through the Knowledge Transfer Partnership William has also had a University Professor with a Doctorate in supply chain management analyse just how his company works, "and that was really eye-opening," he says with a smile.

Blasting through the country lanes in William's glorious Super Sport could easily have disguised what is really happening behind the doors at William Medcalf Ltd. The motoring memorabilia and huge graphics from old images of Bentley's past successes are certainly to be celebrated, but not wallowed in. There's a future in vintage Bentleys and it's evident in the passion and enthusiasm of William Medcalf, that it's a future W O Bentley would surely have approved. More than that, W O would have been in that back office with Dongni, questioning, suggesting and participating in the whole process. We will be back William, to follow this story, that's for sure. ■

### CONTACTS

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[info@vintagebentley.com](mailto:info@vintagebentley.com)



All restoration work is done in house wherever possible, including trim and upholstery.



Ready to race? Not yet, this Bentley was recently bought at auction for a customer who wants to go historic endurance rallying... and not break down. It will get the full Medcalf treatment.



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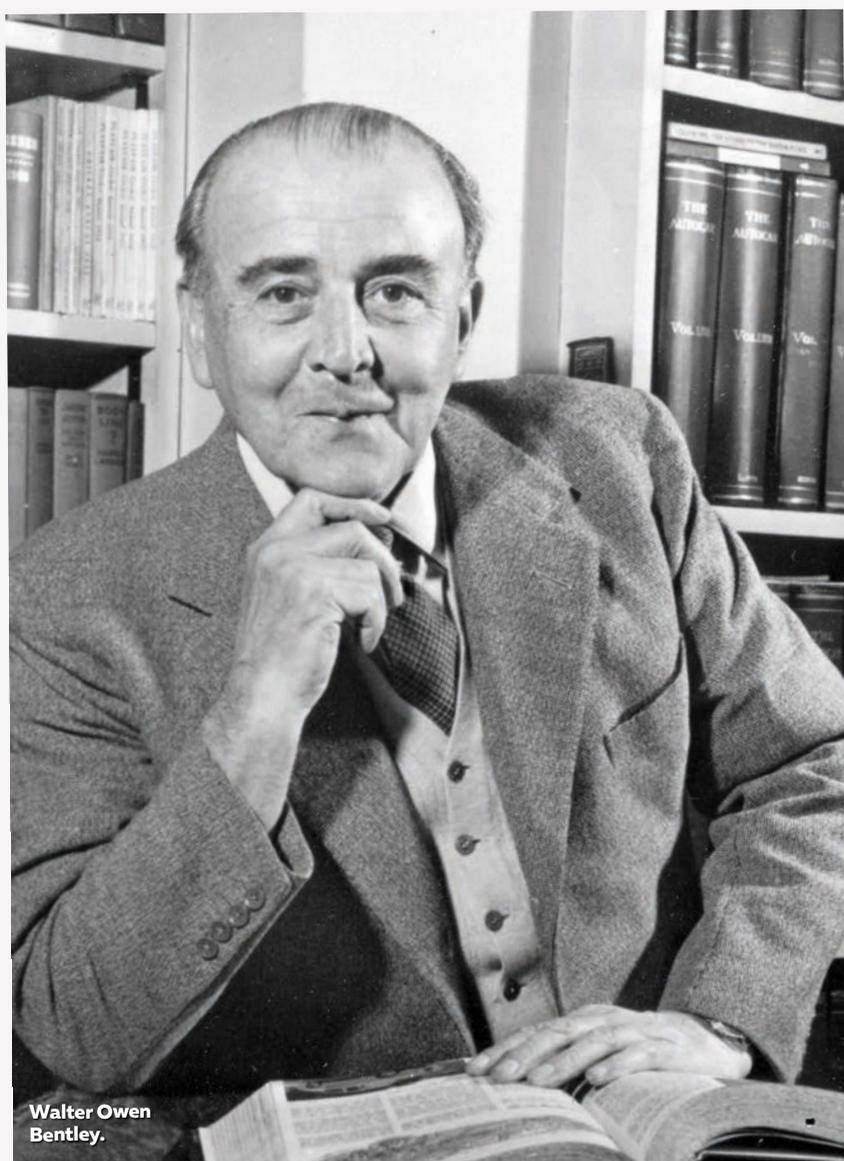


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# THE MEN BEHIND THE MARQUE: W O BENTLEY

‘W O’ belonged to an unassuming generation which didn’t crow about its talent, but quietly and competently got on with the job, even when fair play took second place to cut-throat commercialism. We take a look at ‘the Honourable Engineer’

WORDS: JEREMY SATHERLEY PHOTOGRAPHY: BENTLEY MEDIA, RREC



Walter Owen Bentley.

The hospital matron stood in the loft doorway, looking menacing. “She says we’re to stop this row at once”, said Gallop. “There’s a man ill next door”.

“Tell her to go away!” I shouted back. What was the illness of one man? In here, the birth of a new engine was taking place. ‘A happy sound to die to – the exhaust roar of the first 3-litre Bentley engine!’ someone remarked with awful irreverence later.

“We gave it 20 minutes on the bench”, continued Bentley. “Then I told Nobby Clarke to switch off, perhaps the poor man was really ill, though I fear my conscience wasn’t struck until later. On that exciting morning in October 1919, I had too many things on my mind”.

The hospital patient might have suffered less had the overhead valve gear been better machined and the later wet sump fitted. But for Walter Owen Bentley – known to everyone as ‘W O’, the happy event in that New Street Mews off Baker Street was the realisation of a technical dream begun during the First World War, not to be set down on scraps of paper until January, 1919. Yet it took only one ensuing decade of vintage Bentley production, in its various forms, to establish the winged-‘B’'s cast-iron reputation as one of the most famous marques in the world, even if, on W O’s watch, it never made a profit in the process.

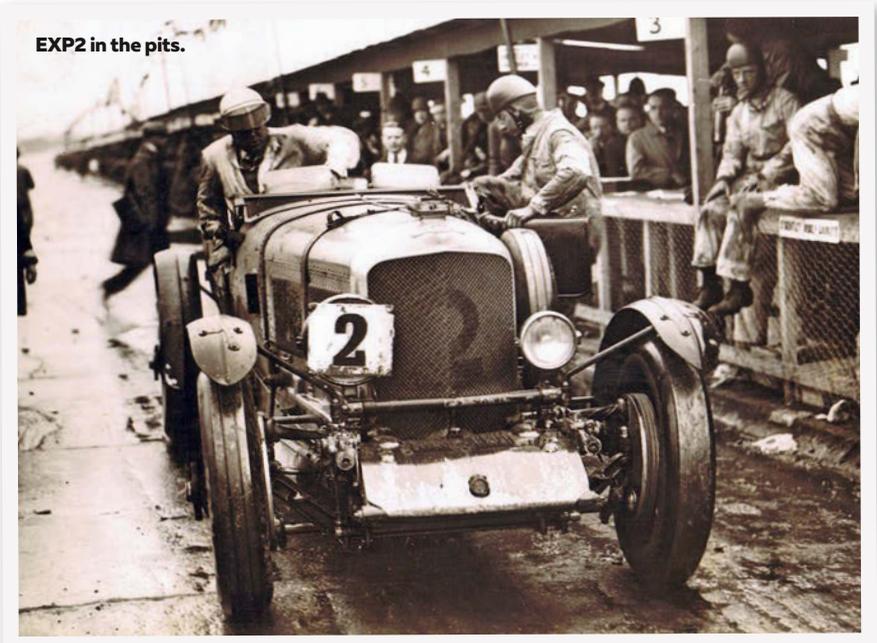
## **RAILWAYS, TAXI CABS AND PISTONS**

As with Sir Henry Royce, Bentley began his training with an apprenticeship in locomotive engineering with the Great Northern Railway, but there the

comparison ends. Royce was born into a poor miller's family and had to give up his apprenticeship when an obliging aunt could no longer pay for it. W O by contrast, born September 16, 1888 in London's Hampstead, came from a solid middle-class family with servants, was educated privately at Bristol's Clifton College, and had his apprenticeship covered by his father, Alfred. Legend has it that Bentley liked locomotives more than cars. But for someone who had once dismissed motors as 'disgraceful vehicles that splashed people with mud', he was soon having plenty to do with them. Leaving Great Northern in 1910 to study theoretical engineering at King's College, London, he went on to manage the maintenance of the National Motor Cab Company's fleet of 250 Unic taxis. And in his leisure hours, he raced a 5hp Rex motorcycle and bought his first car, a second-hand Riley V-twin.

By 1912 W O and his brother 'H M' (Henry Milner) were in business as Bentley & Bentley Ltd, motor agents for the French-manufactured DFP (Doriot, Flandrin et Parant). Its latest model, the 2-litre 12/15, was eagerly promoted by the brothers, who soon had it setting a 10-lap record at Brooklands of 66.78mph. Then in 1913, while on a visit to the DFP factory in Courbevoie, W O suggested the casting of a few experimental sets of aluminium pistons to extract more performance.

The idea worked. The pistons, composed of 12 per cent copper and 88 per cent aluminium, allowed cooler running with higher revs and compression to give the DFPs further record-breaking performance at Brooklands over 1913-14. It proved a game-changer for Bentley; on the outbreak of war his idea was accepted by the Admiralty for use in the Royal Naval Air Service's aero engines. Given a commission in the RNAS, he was despatched on a presentational tour to Ernest Hives at Rolls-Royce, Louis Coatalen at Sunbeam and the Gwynne factory in Chiswick. Rolls-Royce and Sunbeam both adopted the idea, but the French firm of Clerget, whose engines were being built under licence by Gwynne, were unwilling to incorporate the changes. So the Navy authorised W O to redesign the Clerget engine – which he did apart from retaining the original camshaft – for building at the Gwynne and Humber factories. His design became the BR1, or Bentley Rotary, followed by the larger BR2. At Humbers it brought Bentley »



## THE MEN BEHIND THE MARQUE W O BENTLEY

together with their Frank Burgess, later his design support at Bentley Motors, and S C H 'Sammy' Davis, who as part of the Bentley factory team would win the 1927 Le Mans against all odds in a badly-damaged 3-litre. Sammy recalled that whenever anyone at Humbers started ranting about development problems, "We always turned W O on to the official concerned, for no man could shake W O when he was certain of what he wanted and intended to have it".

### 'TO BUILD A GOOD CAR, A FAST CAR...'

With the drawing-board assistance of the ex-Humber Frank Burgess and Harry Varley from Vauxhall, plus Clive Gallop working on the engine, W O had the first complete 3-litre ready for testing by January 1920. He had been influenced in its design by the 1912 Peugeot and 1914 Mercedes racers. Yet apart from its lengthy stroke of 149mm for good slogging power, there was nothing archaic about the engine's 16-valve, overhead-cam layout with a cross-flow head, pent-roof combustion chambers and the famous aluminium pistons, mated to a high- and close-ratio four speed gearbox. With brother 'H M' having raised the necessary capital to build the car at Cricklewood in North London, the 3-litre was launched in September 1921, with wealthy young owners finding the acceleration through the gears a revelation for a 16hp car. Not only that, but it was solid and



Le Mans winner preparing for celebrations at The Savoy.

reliable. Competition achievements soon followed in Brooklands events and hillclimbs. One car finished 13th in the 1922 Indianapolis 500, and with W O also driving, the marque won the team prize in that year's Tourist Trophy, while the first Le Mans in 1923 saw a privately-entered 3-litre finish fourth, as a prelude to Duff and Clement winning in 1924.

Although by 1927 the 3-litre had become outclassed, its finest hour must have come in that year's Le Mans when an example called Old Number Seven,

driven by Sammy Davis, crashed into an existing pile-up at White House Corner which had just eliminated Clement and Callingham's new 4½-litre Bentley. Only just driveable, the 3-litre was extricated and after some crude fettling in the pits and substituting a torch for a broken headlamp, Sammy deliberately omitted to inform W O of the bent chassis, and went on to win outright.

### PERFECTING THE FORMULA

The 3-litre having met Bentley's aim 'To build a good car, a fast car, the best in its class', he applied the same mechanical formula to a logical succession of larger models. The six-cylinder 6½-litre of 1925, with Rolls-Royce standards of silent running, catered successfully for the heavy bodywork of the carriage trade, while its twin-carburettor spin-off, the 1927-30, 100mph Speed Six, was W O's favourite model and was the most successful in competition, winning Le Mans in 1929 and 1930. Meanwhile, for the hearties who liked their performance with a goodly dollop of 'bloody thump', the 4½-litre of 1927-31 met their needs in full. Powered by what was essentially two-thirds of a Speed Six unit, this big-four lunker could manage 92mph even with saloon bodywork and had the most tuneable of the Bentley engines. It too was a Le Mans winner - in 1928 - and filled 2nd, 3rd and 4th places in the 1930 24 Heures behind the winning



1927 victory dinner held at The Savoy five days after the Le Mans victory.

## “Only just driveable, the 3-litre was extricated and after some crude fettling in the pits, Sammy deliberately omitted to inform W O of the bent chassis, and went on to win outright”

Speed Six. At the other extreme was the magnificent luxury-class 8-litre of 1930, capable of 100mph regardless of bodywork, and too close for comfort as a Rolls-Royce Phantom II rival. High-end customers included matinee idol and film star Jack Buchanan, who bought the works demonstrator, and the Duke of Kent. W O's own 8-litre – registered GK 706 – is now maintained by Volkswagen and brought out regularly for events, pulsating with a delightful 'drainpipe' tickover and emitting a melodious, lorry-like whine through the gears. The only lemon in the pack was the 1931 4-litre, a potentially good car hampered by its cut-down 8-litre chassis, and insisted on by the directors as something cheaper to sell during the Depression. But it was a car W O would have nothing to do with.

### BLOWER BOTHERS

The 'tuneability' of the 4½-litre wasn't lost on racing team member Sir Tim Birkin, who wanted a supercharged version for competition. He set up a small company at Welwyn (Birkin & Couper Ltd) specifically to produce these variants, which produced 240bhp with a Roots blower fitted. But W O, who preferred to add litres for extra performance, was apprehensive from the start: "They would lack in their preparation all the experience we had built up in our own racing department",

he commented "I feared the worst". He was proved right. The second of the first two Birkin cars, rebodied as a streamlined single-seater, certainly broke Brooklands' Outer Circuit lap record. But his other team cars were dogged by persistent mechanical failures and by 1930 Birkin was not only personally broke but had also lost the financial support of wealthy race horse owner, the Hon Dorothy Paget. W O granted Birkin's Blowers a last chance by allowing their entry in the 1930 Le Mans – a surprisingly sporting gesture, considering that not only did none finish, but Bentley had already been saddled with producing 50 road-going versions as a condition of the Blowers' entry.

### END OF AN ERA

W O's first decade in business seemed otherwise to have had everything going for it: charismatic cars, remarkable sporting achievement, a wealthy client list of P G Wodehouse-style characters from the pages of Who's Who, and its association with the gossip-column lifestyle that surrounded the Bentley Boys who drove for the team. Yet during the whole of the original Bentley Motors' existence, it never made a profit. So what went wrong?

For a start, cost control was negligible, caused by having to contract-out some 80 per cent of the car's content and be at the mercy of suppliers. »

## BRITISH SPEED BID IN ITALY.

### MR. BIRKIN AND CAPT. BARNATO.

SPECIAL "DAILY MAIL" NEWS.

By THE MOTORING CORRESPONDENT

Two millionaire British sportsmen with a British motor-car are to attempt to win from the Italians in their own country their most coveted racing prize.

They are Mr. H. R. S. Birkin and Captain Woolf Barnato, and theirs will be the first British entry in the Italian 1,000-miles race, which this year will be



Mr. Woolf Barnato. Mr. H. R. Birkin

run on April 12 and 13. They will drive a supercharged Bentley turn and turn about.

Mr. Birkin and Captain Barnato have made a tremendous reputation in France by winning the Le Mans endurance race several times. Mr. Birkin's cars have won or been placed in most of the other big races of the last few years.

The Italian 1,000-miles race is one of the most difficult in the world. The route begins at Brescia, and passes through Bologna, Florence, Rome, Ancona, Padua, and Verona. The prize money totals nearly £4,000. The cars race through the towns at tremendous speeds.

The race will be another round in the fight between Bentleys and Italian Alfa-Romeos. An Alfa-Romeo has won the race on the last two occasions.

Another British car, an Aston-Martin, will be driven by Mr. H. S. Eaton. The British contingent will be under the control of Mr. H. Kensington Moir.



1929 Bentley 4½-litre  
Birkin 'Blower'.

Brescia 1000 Miles - Daily Mail article.

## THE MEN BEHIND THE MARQUE W O BENTLEY

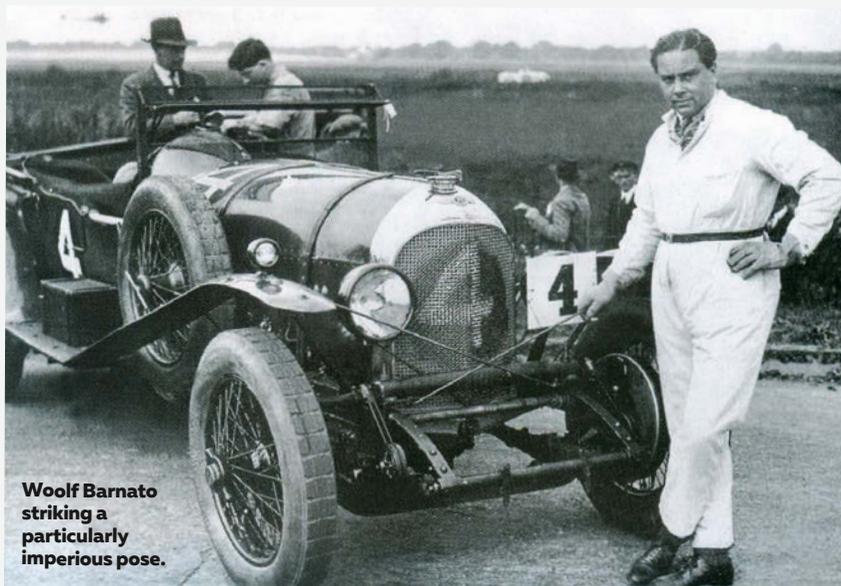
The only standardised items Bentley could obtain were the Rudge wire wheels, the electrics and steering wheel. Otherwise, "We had to design almost every individual component from universal joints to gearboxes, from back axles to distributors", recalled W O, and outside firms did the rest. "By 1922 we had become not manufacturers of motor cars as we had intended, but assemblers and testers".

The testing element was also significant, as there was little money to spend on exhaustive development before releasing a new model to the public, necessitating many improvements and updates 'on the hoof' as part of a gentlemanly after-sales service to keep the customer happy, representatives even travelling abroad to put things right. Needless to say, this was another costly commitment,

as was the firm's involvement in racing. In 1924 Bentley Boy Woolf Barnato, son of a diamond magnate, put in £143,000 and was installed as chairman, probably to W O's relief, as he didn't enjoy board meetings. Annual production was maintained at 300 cars, but profits continued to elude the company, followed in 1929 by the ripple effects of the Wall Street Crash. In July 1931 when Bentley Motors was



W O at the wheel.



Woolf Barnato striking a particularly imperious pose.



1930 Brooklands - where Bentley built its reputation for speed and reliability; Clement and Barnato are in the No 2 6.5-litre.

unable to pay its weekly wages bill, Barnato pulled the plug, and receivers were called in. Aero-engine and former prestige car manufacturer Napier of Acton were favourites to take over the assets, to the extent of W O beginning discussions with them for a Phantom II-rivalling Napier-Bentley. But at the last minute the mysterious British Central Equitable Trust put in a higher bid. The Trust turned out to be a Trojan horse, containing Rolls-Royce.

## THE ROLLS-ROYCE SENTENCE

Rolls-Royce's successful £125,000 bid enabled it to close Bentley's Cricklewood works and service station, thus ensuring there were no more new 8-litres to outshine their vapour-locked Phantom IIs during hot summer days. The Flying Lady effectively made W O her corporate prisoner, having blocked his intention to join Napier on aero-engine development by including the man and his name as part of her newly-acquired assets. Relations with Royce generated little rapport, Sir Henry affecting ignorance of W O's engineering prowess, thinking him a 'commercial' man, which Bentley emphatically was not. Now tied to a three-year contract as a so-called development engineer, W O was assigned to customer liaison and testing the soon-to-be-launched Derby-built 3½-litre car which was to bear his name, but with which he was to have no hand in the design. The new regime's removal of his personal 8-litre must have added to the



Two 4.5-litre Blowers outside the pits on practice day Le Mans 1930.

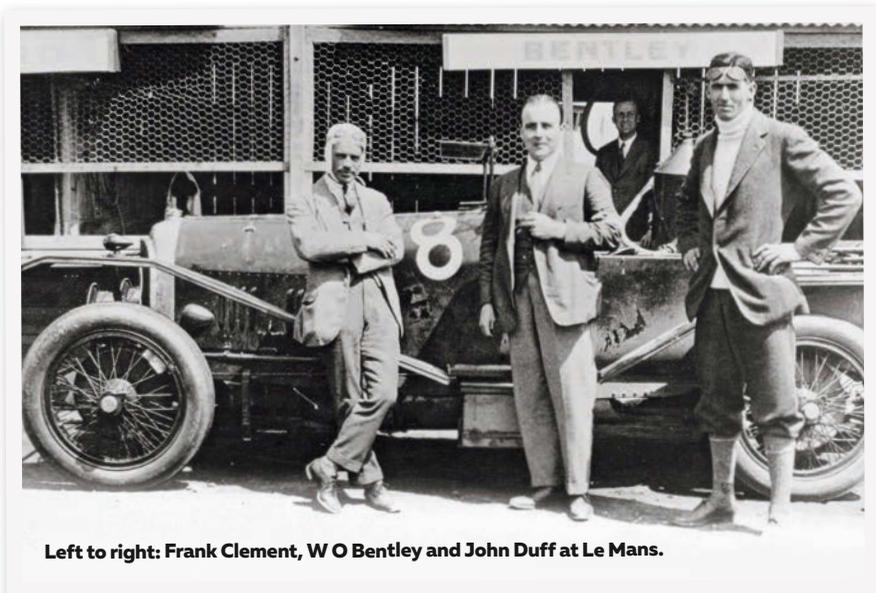
humiliation, but the long Continental test trips on which he took himself with the 3½-litre were something of a compensation. At a time when few British manufacturers bothered with exhaustive pre-production workouts, his observations must have been of great value to Rolls-Royce, with comments such as: "The weakness of the frame in front and hard spring movement causes the car to be almost unbearable on bad pavé, and the wings, lamps, bonnet and body get rattled very badly - the most unpleasant feature of the car. Dust enters the luggage compartment, making the toolbox deep in dust", and "Front wings have too little clearance when on full lock at outside edge". But he was good enough to concede that the Bensport, as it was known in the works, was otherwise

"an excellent car on the road, light and easy to handle, with surprisingly good performance allied to quietness".

## LAGONDA AND CONSULTANCY WORK

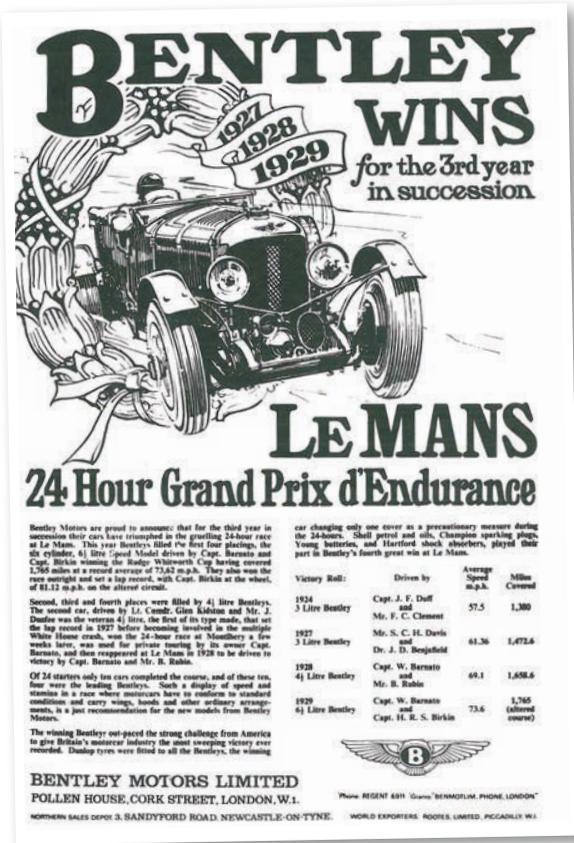
When his contract ended in 1935, W O left with a sense of relief to join Lagonda as technical director where he worked on the Lagonda V12, a double-overhead camshaft 4480cc supercar capable of 7-105mph in top gear. Acceleration from 0-70mph came up in under 18 seconds and "in all respects save braking, it was up to the best standards of 1960", commented historian Michael Sedgwick. W O also renewed his involvement with Le Mans, when two lightened V12s came third and fourth in 1939. For a Bentley-associated car, the V12 was a relatively high-revver - all the way to 5500rpm, at a cost of 12mpg.

W O remained with Lagonda throughout the Second World War, engaged in armament production and beginning work on a new 2½-litre model. This employed twin-overhead camshafts again, and featured the independent suspension he had so favoured, but lacked the necessary resources for, when producing his own Vintage models. An exceptionally smooth performer, capable of over 90mph, 2½-litre production was halted in 1947 through shortage of materials and the factory was closed down - the culmination of an unhappy period for Lagonda, during which it had been sued by Rolls-Royce for using Bentley's name in some wartime advertising. But gear manufacturer David Brown acquired the company and ensured that Bentley's engine was used in both the relaunched »



Left to right: Frank Clement, W O Bentley and John Duff at Le Mans.

“At a time when few British manufacturers bothered with exhaustive pre-production workouts, his observations must have been of great value to Rolls-Royce”



**BENTLEY WINS**  
for the 3rd year in succession

**LE MANS 24 Hour Grand Prix d'Endurance**

Bentley Motors are proud to announce that for the third year in succession their cars have triumphed in the grueling 24-hour race at Le Mans. This year Bentley's filled the first four placings, the six cylinder, 4 1/2 litre 4-speed Model driven by Capt. Barnato and Capt. Birkin winning the Dodge Whitecourt Cup having covered 1,565 miles at a recent average of 73.62 m.p.h. They also won the race outright and set a lap record, with Capt. Birkin at the wheel, of 81.12 m.p.h. on the altered circuit.

Second, third and fourth places were filled by 4 1/2 litre Bentley's. The second car, driven by Lt. Comdr. Glen Kidston and Mr. J. Duerle was the veteran 4 1/2 litre, the first of its type made, that set the lap record in 1927 before becoming involved in the mid-air White House crash, won the 24-hour race at Montlhéry a few weeks later, was used for private testing by its owner Capt. Barnato, and then reappeared at Le Mans in 1928 to be driven to victory by Capt. Barnato and Mr. S. Birkin.

Of 24 starters only ten cars completed the course, and of these ten, four were the leading Bentley's. Such a display of speed and stamina in a race where mechanics have to maintain in standard conditions and carry wings, hoods and other ordinary arrangements, is a just recommendation for the new models from Bentley Motors.

The winning Bentley out-paced the strong challenge from America to give Britain's motorcar industry the most sweeping victory ever recorded. Dunlop tyres were fitted to all the Bentley's, the winning car changing only one cover as a precautionary measure during the 24 hours. Shell petrol and oil, Champion sparking plugs, Young batteries, and Hartford shock absorbers, played their part in Bentley's fourth great win at Le Mans.

Victory Roll:	Driven by	Average Speed m.p.h.	Miles Covered
1924	Capt. J. F. Duff and Mr. F. C. Clement	57.5	1,380
1927	Mr. S. C. H. Davis and Dr. J. D. Benjfield	61.26	1,472.6
1928	Capt. W. Barnato and Mr. S. Birkin	69.1	1,658.6
1929	Capt. W. Barnato and Capt. H. R. S. Birkin	73.6	1,765 (altered course)

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MONTAGU MOTOR MUSEUM, Beaulieu, England  
Seen at the Montagu Motor Museum is this 1928 4 1/2 litre Bentley, with its designer, W. O. Bentley, at the wheel. A similar car won the Le Mans 24-hour in 1928.

Cette Bentley de 4 1/2 litres de l'an 1928, représentée avec son dessinateur W. O. Bentley au volant, se trouve au Musée de la Rétrospective Automobile Montagu. Une voiture analogue remporta le rallye des 24 heures du Mans en 1928.

Dieser 4 1/2-Liter-Bentley aus dem Jahr 1928 mit seinem Konstrukteur W. O. Bentley am Steuer steht im Montagu-Kraftfahrzeugmuseum. Ein ähnlicher Wagen siegte 1928 im 24-Stunden-Rennen von Le Mans.

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MM22/68/10

Above: 1929 Bentley Le Mans poster.  
Right: Postcard featuring W O Bentley in pre 1933 car.



2½-litre and his new Aston Martin DB2 of 1950. In modified form it survived up to DBS production in the late 'Sixties.

Meanwhile W O had embarked on a project for Armstrong Siddeley Motors in a consultancy set up at Kingston with Donald Bastow, a former Rolls-Royce engineer who had worked with Bentley at Lagonda. The brief was to design a new engine and chassis for a six-cylinder car, and a possible sporting model. Three twin-overhead-cam engines, of 2993cc with one lined-down to 2.3-litres, were built. Colonel Siddeley later cooled on the sports car, but a 3-litre unit installed in a Graber-bodied 18hp chassis notched up 5000 miles and ran well. However, ASM's concerns over mounting costs halted the project in 1949. W O was very gracious about it, though privately glad the contract was over. Not all the work was wasted, as the new Sapphire's crank was alleged to have been inspired by the Bentley/Bastow designs, as was some of the chassis, though it didn't include Bentley's independent rear suspension.

## APPRECIATED AT LAST

In retirement, W O was in no hurry to be reminded of some of the difficult phases of his career and was initially reluctant when approached by prominent vintage Bentley enthusiast Stanley Sedgwick to become patron of the revived Bentley Drivers' Club. "It was clear to me that the idea of encouraging ownership and preservation of the old Bentleys was an enterprise which he regarded with little enthusiasm and considerable misgiving", said Sedgwick. Eventually however he was won over, and Bentley enthusiasts worldwide became regular visitors to his cottage at Shamley Green near Guildford, where a Morris Minor was to be seen in the drive. He was too kindly to turn anyone away, and "derived much pleasure from Club activities and seeing the loving care bestowed upon 'his' cars", continued Sedgwick. Only once did he strike out in his later years, in the correspondence columns of *Motor Sport* magazine. There he countered Alec Ulmann's mischief-making suggestions, in the Vintage Motor Car Club of America's Bulb Horn magazine, that he had cribbed Clerget's and Hispano-Suiza's designs respectively for his aero engines and the Bentley 3-litre. W O made a very good fist of defending himself and demanded a written apology. He died aged nearly 83 in August 1971, but the Bentley Drivers' Club continued to include his



W O with his beloved 8-litre, GK 706

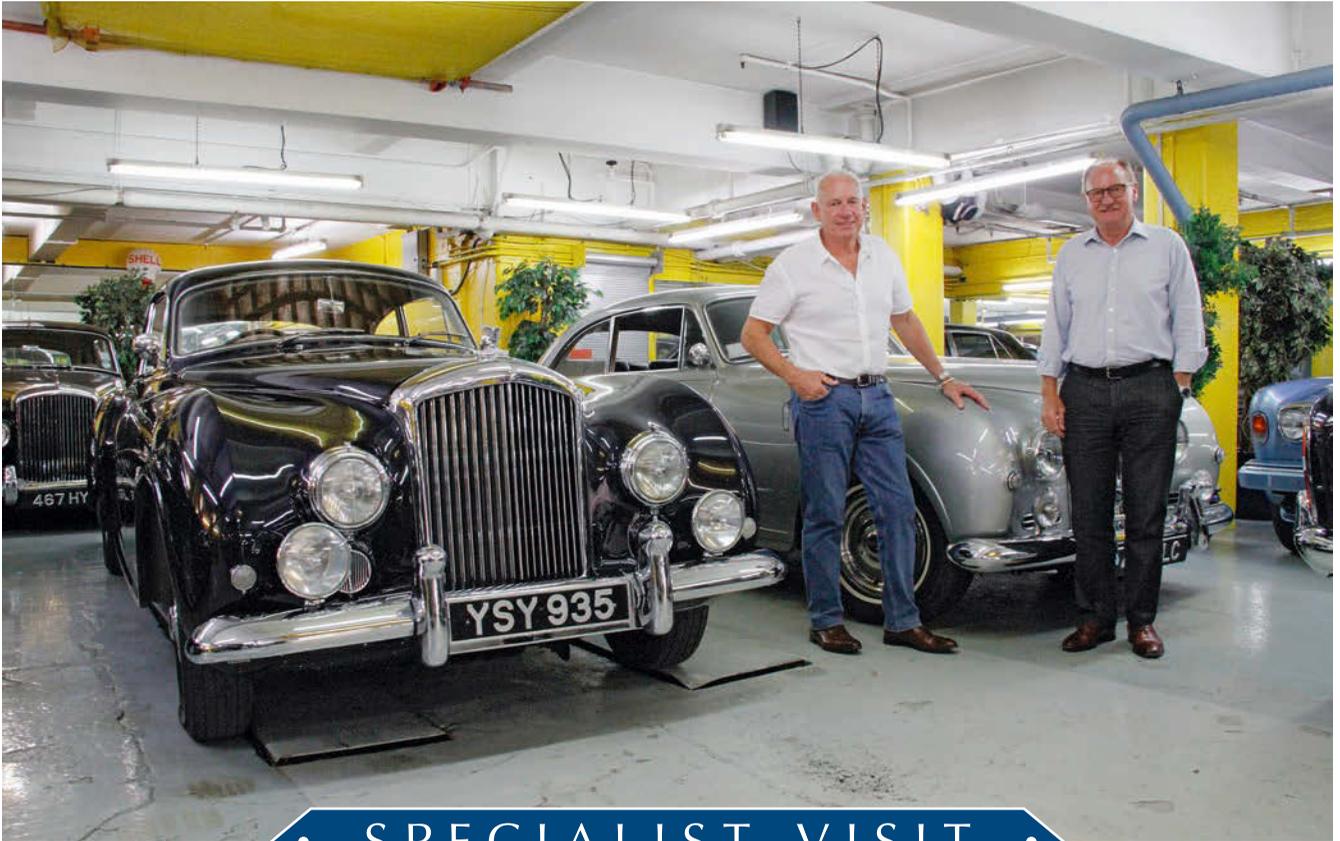
wife Margaret in its social events.

In its acknowledgement of the great man, the current Bentley Motors interprets the 'relentless pursuit of luxury and performance' begun by W O – and continued by the brand today – as a beneficial 'contradiction in terms'. Yet there was no contradiction about the man himself. W O was straight as a dye: honourable, single-minded in his approach to honest,

effective engineering and achieving his objectives without riding rough-shod over anyone else. In reminding us also of his contribution to aviation in the First World War, *Autocar's* one-time technical editor, the late Jeff Daniels, praised him as 'more of an engineering polymath, and more gifted than some historians give him credit for'. In short, an underrated and typically unassuming gentleman of the old school. ■

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• SPECIALIST VISIT •

# THE CENTURIANS

Friends from their school days, these two former Rolls-Royce apprentices can now jointly claim 100 years of experience of the marque. Is it any wonder that their cliental is now global, and the vehicles they work on extraordinary?

WORDS: NIGEL FRYATT PHOTOGRAPHY: NIGEL FRYATT AND THE CHELSEA WORKSHOP

It's a short walk from London's Sloane Square to The Chelsea Workshop yet the first thing you see is the magnificent Art Deco Nell Gwynn House, designed by British architect George Kay Green. It's an impressive building in such a prosperous part of London and you can only wonder about the intriguing histories and activities that may have occurred in the apartments since the 1930s, how many modern day 'Nell Gwynns' will have visited over the years? Less flamboyant is the sign indicating the premises of one of the most

interesting Rolls-Royce and Bentley businesses you could want to visit.

Underground, basically in the basement of Nell Gwynn House, we arrived by walking down the ramp to watch a smart Silver Shadow being reversed into the tight confines of the garage, a nervous voyeurism given the lack of space, but the driver knows exactly what he is doing, calmly being directed by partner Peter Eatenton. This relaxed atmosphere continues as we are also guided by Peter to the office, passed two vintage petrol pumps, to meet the other half of

the centurions, Larry Hawkins.

The calm and relaxed atmosphere of the place is all down to these two friends and business partners. Meeting as schoolboys, they joined Rolls-Royce Motors as apprentices in 1967, 10 years later leaving to set-up their own company: "I said to Larry, if we don't leave now we'll be here for life." They had learnt a lot, back then, an apprenticeship was valued, but it wasn't easy: "They would try to wear you down. They'd give you a piece of metal and saying plus or minus a thou, make a tool out of that. You'd work on it for days,



With former owner Sir Elton John, this Bentley S1 Continental Fastback is a favourite of both Peter and Larry.



The unassuming entrance to The Chelsea Workshop is down a ramp and into the basement.

then it would get checked, and then be told, 'no, not good enough, start again' and they would throw it away." And Larry adds: "And you would never be told what was wrong with it. But it taught you just how good you had to be to work on these cars. It couldn't just be good enough, it had to be the best." It's not surprising, perhaps that Rolls-Royce Motors only took on 38 apprentices in London each year in the Sixties and that after 12 months there were only 19 left, but two of them were good mates Peter and Larry.

Progressing in the company, as fully trained mechanics they were now regularly sent to the Middle East and Africa to look after the Rolls-Royce models used by Heads of State, with Peter explaining that one such trip took him to the French Gabon, to look after President Henry Bongo's vehicle and other similar bomb proofed models, in places like Nigeria and the Middle East. But when the opportunity came for them to leave in 1977 and set up their own business in London, it was at a time when a lot of Middle Eastern interest – and money – was arriving in the capital.

"I hired a Rolls-Royce for my wedding from Jack Barclays in Cheyne Walk. I said I can't afford to pay you for the hire, but I'll service one of your cars in lieu of payment. We then took over a few bays there to work on cars and quickly took over the place." You recognise very quickly that Peter knows the value of a pound, and even in those early days, was ready to deal. "We were in the right place at the right time," he admits, and an article in the Sunday Times in 1981 saw the business take off – the power of the press, you see.

The difference with The Chelsea Workshop and other establishments that buy and sell exclusive cars, is that these »



The company's workshop is based at Battersea and covers basic servicing to serious restoration projects.

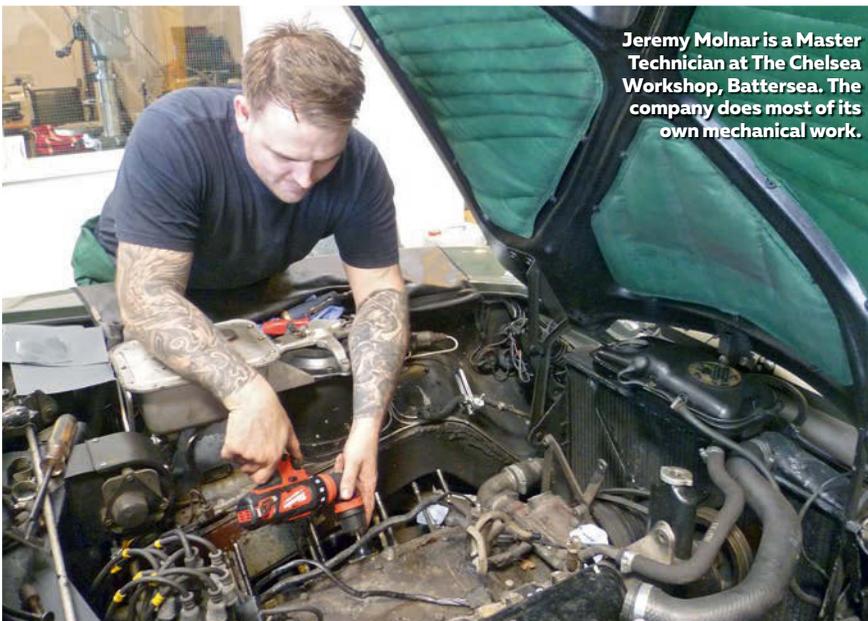
## **“I couldn't afford to pay you for the hire, but said I'll service one of your cars in lieu of payment. We then took over a few bays there and quickly took over the place”**

guys knew how the cars actually worked, could service, repair and restore, were prepared to get their hands dirty doing so, and appreciate the hours needed to build a reputation. A new body shop

in Wandsworth was opened up in 1979 to cope with the growing business of restoration. The speed of growth can be seen by the fact that in 1982, they actually opened a workshop on Wilshire

Boulevard, Beverley Hills, California with six staff from the London office. It was the best position you could have, but in the end, a legal real estate situation meant they had to either buy the premises or leave. “Unfortunately,” says Peter, “there were too many noughts on the end of the price for us. We thought about it, but after having been in the best position, we couldn't move to a lesser place, as it would look like you are not doing well. We were very busy in the UK and Europe, so we decided to come home. We'd got it out of our system.” Working in California, and taking work away from the official Beverley Hills Rolls-Royce dealer, was a valuable experience building Peter and Larry's reputation and gained them some important clients, many of whom now ship their cars to Chelsea when needed.

Business certainly boomed in London, and by the early 1980s there were some 36 employees, with a larger restoration and servicing premises in South London to complement the basement garage in Chelsea. Of course, having been in business so long, Peter and Larry have had to survive no less

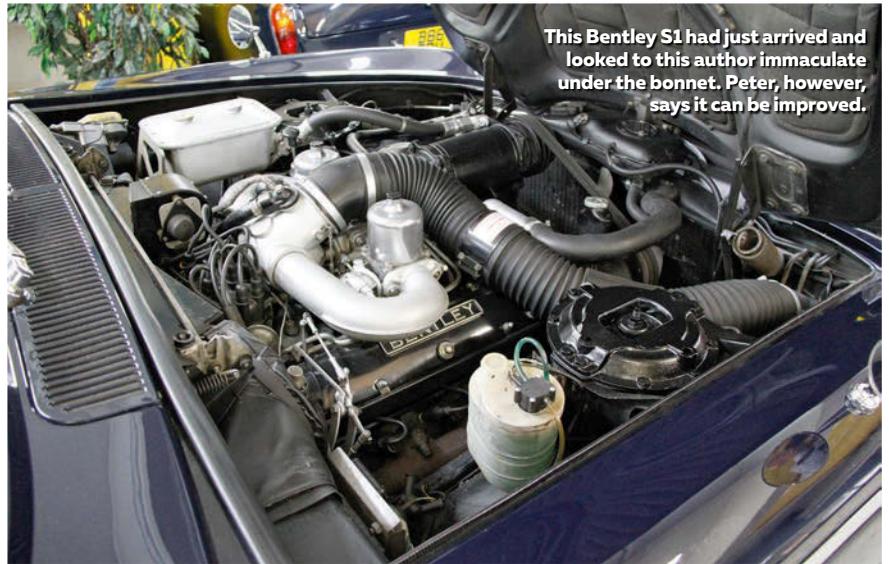


**Jeremy Molnar is a Master Technician at The Chelsea Workshop, Battersea. The company does most of its own mechanical work.**

than three recessions and during one, it became obvious that there might not be enough regular work for staff involved in the body and trim department. The ingenious solution was to set these guys up with their own company, allowing them to do other work, and still provide a service to The Chelsea Workshop. All mechanical work, including engine rebuilds is done in house, for both servicing and restoration, with the surprise being that service costs are only £80 an hour – a lot less than many mainstream dealerships looking after more obvious mass produced vehicles. And that cost is the same, “whether you are a plumber with his first Rolls-Royce, or a Head of State with your own fleet,” says Peter.

Staffing levels are now around 12, with the intention of taking on two new apprentices later this year, a laudable idea, not without its problems as Peter explained: “These days as soon as you train them, after a couple of years they think they are big time Charlie potato, and leave to go it alone. It’s frustrating really, but we’ll take a couple of school leavers. We always buy them their own set of tools, although we are told not to, and then we’ll train them up. But the risk is we’ll lose them.”

Despite this risk, it’s very obvious that both Peter and Larry want to give others the same opportunity they have had. But you’ll be working hard. Asked whether they get their hands dirty working on the cars these days, the response “No” arrives almost before I’ve finished the question. “We only get dirty now if we fall over. But we’ve put in the years. When we started, it was regular to do 18 hour days, and even work on Christmas Day. You had to. We were building the business, it was hard, but it was worth it.” As you are reading this,



This Bentley S1 had just arrived and looked to this author immaculate under the bonnet. Peter, however, says it can be improved.



two London school leavers will probably have started their apprenticeships with The Chelsea Workshop, here’s hoping that they actually appreciate what they are being offered.

But at the end of the day, it’s about

the cars, and a wander around the basement is a delight for any enthusiast. Asking if there’s a favourite on the floor and Peter’s quick to comment on a grey Bentley S1 Continental Fastback, with coachwork by H J Mulliner parked there. Graceful and rare, since less than a hundred right hand drive versions were built, it also has a provenance to add to its appeal. Previously owned by Sir Elton John, it is now owned by Peter and Larry. “We tried to buy this car when John put all his cars up for auction about 18 years ago at Christies, but Alan Sugar out bid us. The car then ended up owned by a guy in Brazil, but he never took it out of the country, so we offered him a healthy profit and now we have got it. Cars are like grandchildren, they keeping coming round!” »



Left: This 1979 Silver Cloud convertible in the corner was previously owned by the late comedy script writer Alan Simpson.

## SPECIALIST VISIT THE CHELSEA WORKSHOP

**Right: Sadly not awaiting a restoration but due for the rubbish bin, this Turbo R was bought just for its engine and gearbox.**

If you are interested, it might be for sale at around half a million, and it sits alongside an R-Type Continental worth more than double, but it's hard not to follow Peter's logic and prefer the model once owned by the millionaire pop star pianist. However, the great thing about The Chelsea Workshop is that it's not all about million pound machines and we spy a bodyshell in the corner, possibly a Turbo R awaiting restoration we ask? "No, we just bought that for spares, all I wanted was the engine and gearbox," says Peter. What follows is a wonderful story about a regular Middle Eastern client who wanted the powerful Turbo R engine fitted to one of his Silver Shadows to create a unique Q-car, with which he could startle other road users. Unique? Hardly, since it's the second one they have built for him. The remaining bodyshell looks in excellent condition, so it's surprising to hear "the rubbish men will have that. It should actually have gone by now. We might sell the interior trim, otherwise it will just go", says Peter, who also admits he bought the Turbo R for only £11,000, "and it was one of the best I've ever driven. And I've driven a few." The delight from the thought of the modified 'boy racer' Silver Shadow now existing, is countered by the loss of a perfectly usable Rolls-Royce. Now is certainly the time to buy one while you can (see our feature page on 86).

My spirits were revived when looking under the bonnet of a 1968 Bentley T1, which from my untrained eyes looked like a recently restored example, but was actually just a well looked after, 84,000 mile, one owner car, although sadly the owner had just passed away. Peter intends, "just bringing it up to scratch", and it will then be offered for sale – and worth looking out for. Then



**“The rubbish men will have that. It should actually have gone by now. We might sell the interior trim, otherwise it will just go”**

there's the Bentley S3 that one client owned as a student, drove down to his parents in St Tropez and left it there for years. Peter and Larry have restored it, despite explaining that the cost was more than it would be worth. It wasn't a problem for the wealthy owner, but you sense it wasn't money that drove the decision, it was sentiment and emotion.

We turn around and spot an imposing 1979 Silver Cloud convertible in the corner that they have known for years. Owned by the late comedy script writer Alan Simpson, Peter then comments that he used to drink with Simpson's partner Ray Galton in a London boozier. Yes, you could spend a lot of time with these two guys and their collection of Rolls-Royce and Bentley vehicles, everything has a life and a story of its own, and the quality of the vehicles in the basement of Nell Gwynn House look flawless, and inviting, although getting them up the narrow ramp and then on to the crazy west London

streets still remains a touch daunting.

The personal service that owners receive from these two characters is obvious, even from our very brief encounter, and it's not surprising that they have a global client base with some customers having been with them for three decades or more. It may have been hard at times, surviving three recessions cannot have been easy, but both Peter and Larry wear their joint 100 years of experience lightly. Time now, perhaps, to wind back a bit? "Maybe a little," says Peter with a smile. "The company runs very well on its own now. But you've got to keep your hand in a little bit, haven't you? Maybe we'll grow up one day." ■

### CONTACT

#### THE CHELSEA WORKSHOP

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# MORE THAN JUST A RACE MEETING...

The Bentley Drivers Club's popular annual race meeting – an institution on the British motor-racing calendar – once again saw another day of fantastic club racing at its very best at Silverstone on Saturday 5 August.

Regarded by the Club as 'more than just a race meeting', it was the good old days revisited as Members and spectators alike mixed frenetic track action and the more sedate Bentley track parade with socialising and browsing the myriad paddock attractions on a sunny summer's day.

The event, which prides itself on generating a friendly and relaxed atmosphere for car enthusiasts of all ages, drew an excellent crowd to witness arguably the largest gathering of Bentleys from the legendary marque's almost 100-year history anywhere in the world.

Bentleys of all ages – many raced by Club Members – shared the entry list with Morgans, Austin Healeys, MGBs, Triumphs, ACs and Lotuses all tackling the testing National circuit at the historic Northamptonshire venue.

The usual exciting mix of scratch and handicap races was supplemented by events for the AR Motorsport Morgan Challenge, FISCAR (Fifties Sports Car Racing Club) and Equipe GTS series in a packed nine-race programme.

The BDC celebrated victories for two of its Members: Bert Degenaar, competing in only his third ever race having earned his race licence just a few weeks ago, took the honours in the Padgett Motor Engineers Bentley Handicap Race at the wheel of Club colleague Ewen Getley's gorgeous 1924 Bentley 3/4½. In the P&A Wood Bentley Race and Pre-War Team Challenge, it was BDC members Michael Higginbotham (1948 MkVI Special) who claimed a convincing victory over the similar car of Paul Forty by 11 seconds in the race for Pre-1966 chassis cars. Running just ahead with a 10-second start was an event for Post-1966 cars, which was won by Simon Worthington (1990 Turbo R), with Ben Eastick in the 1966 T Type in second place (see page 78 for a full feature on this very intriguing single-seater Bentley).

The former event – in which the 16-car grid was made up entirely of BDC Members in models ranging from Richard Frankel's vintage 1921 TT



**Bert Degenaar (Bentley 3/4½), winner of the Padgett Motor Engineers Bentley Handicap Race.**  
Photo credit: Peter de Rousset-Hall



**Simon Worthington (Bentley Turbo R), overall and class victor in the P&A Wood Bentley Race for Pre-1966 and Post-1966 Cars & Pre-War Team Challenge.**  
Photo credit: Peter de Rousset-Hall

3.0-litre to the 'younger' 1990 Turbo R of Simon Worthington who set the fastest lap – saw a thrilling race with Degenaar narrowly prevailing over Stuart Worthington's Bentley MkVI Special by just 0.96 seconds.

Elsewhere, Jonathan Abecassis scored two victories at the wheel of his rapid Austin Healey 100/4, his first a narrow win shared with Richard Woolmer in the two-driver FISCAR race, before following it up with a solo success in the Bic Healey Trophy & MG, Morgan Challenge. Oli Bryant and Keith Ahlers (Plus 8s) enjoyed two fantastic scraps, taking a win apiece in the AR Motorsport Morgan Challenge double-header.

One of the highlights of the BDC's annual social calendar, this year's meeting also featured the traditional and popular lunchtime track parade of more than 80 Members' Bentleys.

Among the fabulous array of cars on show, ranging from vintage Blowers to the more modern Continentals and all models in between, was a Bentayga believed to be making its UK track debut.

Ron Warmington, BDC Chairman, commented: "Yet again we enjoyed a fabulous day's racing, coupled with a fantastic array of Bentley models in the parade, on what is always one of the highlights of our Club's social calendar. And I was delighted to see plenty of Members and spectators enjoying the many attractions and stalls in the paddock."

**For more information contact:**  
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# CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB FOR ROLLS-ROYCE AND BENTLEY ENTHUSIASTS



Tim and Pia Sierra, who actually shipped their Rolls-Royce all the way from Florida to take part in the tour, attempt Test Hill at Brooklands.



Long serving members of the RREC - that's over 40 years - gather at RREC HQ, The Hunt House, 12 August 2017, a fantastic gathering.

## Ailsa Plain Events Manager

From a group of just 11 people in rural Oxfordshire in 1957, to nearly 8000 members worldwide today, the RREC has grown from strength to strength in its 60-year history. In celebration of this fantastic milestone, the Club has gone to great lengths to make every event in 2017 one that will be remembered for many years to come.

The real Diamond in the Crown was the Club's Round Britain Tour, which was organised by the Silver Ghost Register, spearheaded by its Registrar, Andy Courtney. This event, in celebration of the 110th Anniversary of the Achievements of the Original Silver Ghost AX201 in the 1907 Scottish Trials and Endurance Run, saw some 52 Rolls-Royce and Bentley motor cars (including 16 Silver Ghosts) spend 18 days travelling around England, Wales and Scotland, following large sections of the Rolls-Royce London to Glasgow Endurance Run. Cars were shipped from as far afield as the USA, Australia and New Zealand to take part. Over 1800 miles were covered, taking in some of the most breathtakingly beautiful routes in the Great British countryside. The

event concluded in Rutland on 22 June, ahead of the Club's Annual Rally just a few miles away at Burghley House, which started on 23 June.

Readers will already be aware of our Diamond Jubilee Annual Rally and Concours d'Elegance at Burghley House, which featured in the last edition of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley driver* magazine. With some 1400 cars attending over the course of the weekend, it was the biggest event the Club has held in recent years. We are delighted to announce that the prize for Best Car in Show was awarded to Mr and Mrs Robet's 1935 Bentley 3 ½-litre Special Drop Head Coupe.

The Touring Trophy was awarded to Mr & Mrs Dolan's 1908 Silver Ghost Wilkinson Roi des Belges Tourer, which had also taken part in the Round Britain Tour.

The Club reached its official Diamond Jubilee on Friday 11 August 2017, and on Saturday 12 August the Club Chairman, Johan Vanden Bergh, hosted a garden party at the RREC Headquarters in Paulerspury for members who have been in the club for 40+ years, as well as those who have rendered outstanding service to the Club. Over 150 people attended - rekindling old friendships and reminiscing about the early days.



RREC Chairman Johan Vanden Bergh awarding Mr and Mrs Robet and Mr and Mrs Dolan with their trophies at the Annual Rally with the magnificent Burghley House in the background.

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# LAST OF THE LINE

We take a trip in our time machine once again, and this time return to Crewe to help build the very last of the line Corniche Convertible. Our time travelling pilot, and former Rolls-Royce PR manager remembers the people he met on the line, recalling comments which today are extraordinarily apposite.

WORDS: IAN ADCOCK PHOTOGRAPHY: PETER ROBAIN

Three and a bit decades have passed since I stepped off the train onto Crewe's grimy station platform. It was like a scene from one of those old 1950's black and white British movies that television companies love to replay on

dull Sunday afternoons in February.

Dank drizzle soaked into my Burberry, the station was deserted except for the occasional porter. I lugged my suitcase up the station steps and onto the pavement opposite the hotel that would be home until I found somewhere

of my own. Red neon lights spelt out its name, 'The Crewe Arms', the 'm' had failed in the 'Arms'. Somehow that summed up the place in those days. A grimy, north western town known for two things: railways and Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Limited, where I was to

start the next day as PR Manager.

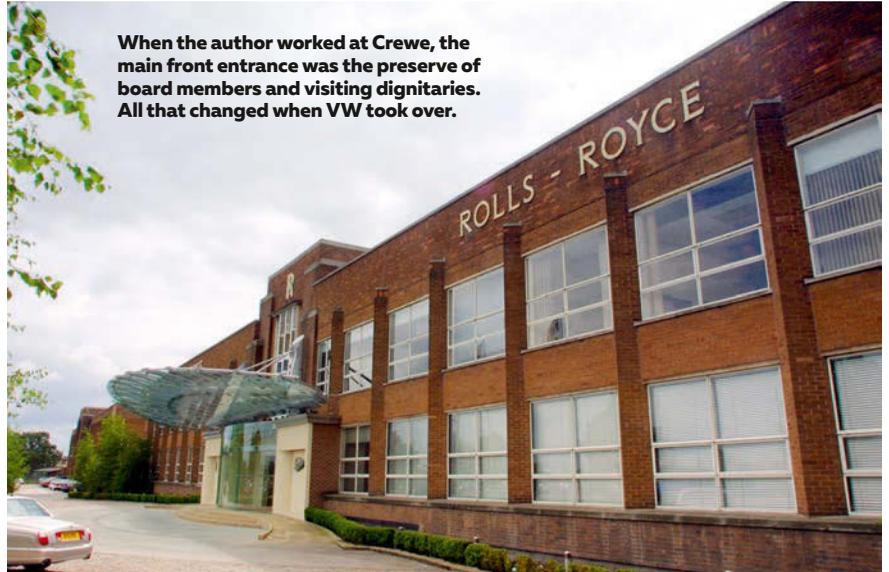
Twenty years on and I found myself driving back to Crewe with photographer, Peter Robain. We pass the soon to be closed Chester Barrie factory and there before us is the same hotel, tinted up with glossy paint and its sign with all the letters working. A lot had changed in the intervening years. The railway works had all but gone and there was the inevitable superstore village on the outskirts of the town.

My geography of Crewe was a bit hazy after the intervening years and that, combined with new road schemes leads me down the wrong road. "Coronation Street", I said to Peter. Terraced red brick houses, front doors that open onto the pavement, I half expected to see Elsie Tanner and Ena Sharples walking past. It becomes a little more familiar and I look for the black water tower emblazoned with Rolls-Royce, so we can turn right into Pym's Lane.

Except there is no water tower, it has gone. Later we learn that it had been demolished the previous day by the factories new owner, Volkswagen. It's not the only piece of history that has or will disappear from Crewe.

Whereas my first visit to Crewe was filled with the eagerness of starting a new job, this journey and the subsequent ones Peter and I would make over that summer were tinged with sadness. I was there to help build the last Rolls-Royce to come out of Crewe.

After 56 years and 70,997 Rolls-Royces, production was ceasing. It



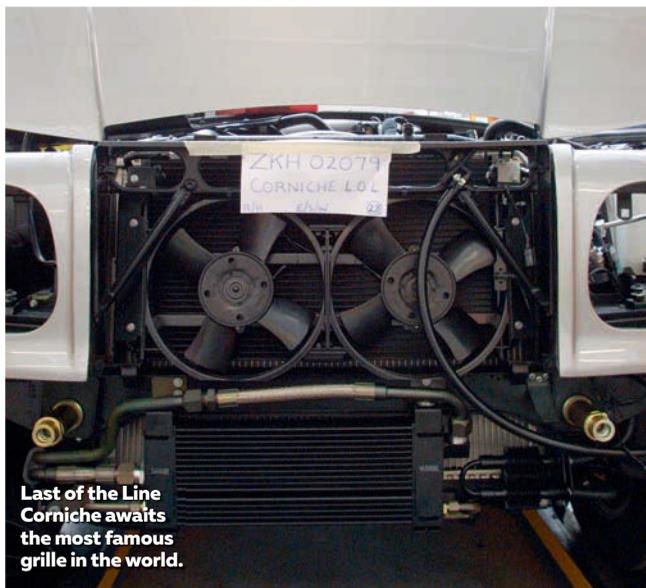
**When the author worked at Crewe, the main front entrance was the preserve of board members and visiting dignitaries. All that changed when VW took over.**

would recommence at Goodwood under its new owners, BMW at the beginning of 2003. In the future, Crewe was to be dedicated to Bentley production.

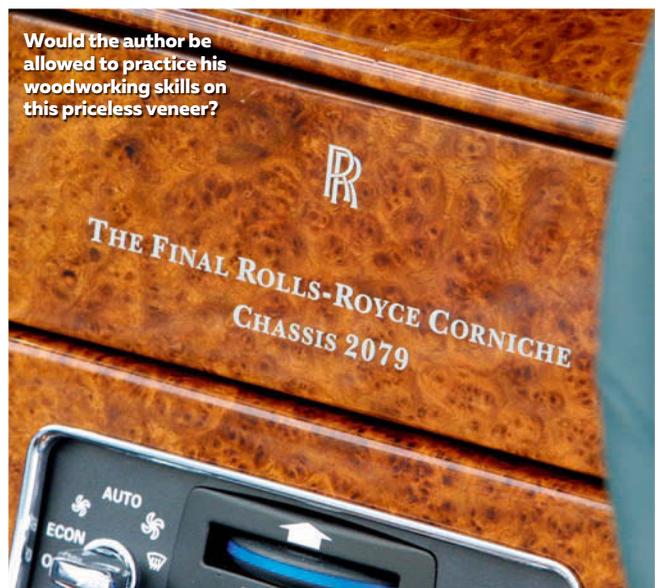
The shenanigans surrounding the sale of Rolls-Royce and Bentley by its former owners, Vickers plc and the role played by Rolls-Royce Aero engines has been well documented, but as I learnt over the following weeks, it was not one that went down well with all of Crewe's workforce.

Crewe wasn't built as a car factory. Its origins pre-date the Second World War when it was a greenfield site dedicated to producing the Merlin aero engine, an example of which is proudly displayed in the factory museum. The men and women I met would tell me how parents

and other relatives worked at Royce's during the war, how they were working the night a stray bomber returning from a raid on Liverpool unloaded its deadly cargo and happened to hit part of the factory. The bomb damage could still be seen in some of the roof girders and is proudly pointed out to me by an anonymous worker, mumbling, "And now they bloody own us....". Obviously disenchanted with Bentley's new German ownership and emboldened by my promise not to reveal his name, he continued: "We had some good bosses here: Dick Perry and Tony Gott were alright, engineers they were. You could talk to 'em. I didn't think much of that Graham Morris and as for Paff-who? Never seen him." »



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## TIME TRAVELLING BUILDING A CORNICHE



It takes years to perfect skills in the leather shop, from inspecting hides for the slightest flaw to immaculately stitching the hide.



ZKH 02079, the last Crewe Rolls-Royce, is a Corniche convertible finished in Silver Ghost paint with a spruce leather interior, the same colour combination as its famous predecessor.

By the time I get to the production line the painted bodyshell has been mounted on what looks like a huge roasting spit and turned on its side. This allows me, Steve Worthington

and David O'Hara to work at fitting all the hydraulic, brake and fuel lines. My task is to fix the exhaust heat shield into place with a pneumatic riveter, a job easier written about than done but one I manage to achieve without wasting everyone's time. The fact that no one will ever see that part of the car is hardly the point, this is the last Crewe Rolls-Royce and no matter how

insignificant my contributions, I don't want to let the men and women whose lives are centred on Royce's down. David O'Hara, a 23-year veteran at Crewe, tells me his grandfather worked on the Merlin production line and that "We've got to bring the new Bentley up to Rolls-Royce quality." He is more pragmatic about the loss of the marque, he's pleased to have a job in an area



In a world of robotics, all that is needed to space the stitching on a steering wheel was a modified dining fork.



The author left his soldering skills behind in the Fifth form.

**“That was designed by Sir Henry,” Marshall talks in a reverential tone as if the marque’s founder is still alive, “It’s a simple ball and socket, but perfectly designed so it never needed changing.”**



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where they’re few and far between, unlike Steve Worthington who is genuinely remorseful about losing Rolls-Royce and thinks the new one he has seen in scoop pictures looks “horrible.”

As I work on the line at various stations, it’s hard to think this is the same factory I knew in the 1980s. Nowadays it’s almost clinically clean, it sparkles with new paint and

bright sunlight streaming through the glass roof means Peter hardly ever needs a flash or use special settings for artificial lighting.

Back in the early 1980s, the Pym’s Lane factory was anything but clean, tidy or bright. When built, Number One machine shop was the longest single span building in Britain. It was where Rolls-Royce assembled engines

starting with grey castings left out in the elements for months to weather and mature. The machine shop reeked of vegetable and mineral oils, scorching metal, and swarf was everywhere. You had to keep a sharp look out not to emerge from the shop with greasy clothes. Yet, despite all that, the fascination of seeing an engine machined and assembled by hand never »

## TIME TRAVELLING BUILDING A CORNICHE



The old factory was no clinical assembly operation, it was full of olde worlde idiosyncrasies.



New assembly processes included turning the bodyshell on its side for ease of assembly where necessary.

palled to me or visitors I took round.

Nowadays, a completed engine and gearbox arrives on a shrink-wrapped pallet ready to be mounted on its sub-frame and the body dropped into place. That was my next port of call, but before doing that I was side-tracked to help Lance Arrowsmith with the suspension struts. "Twenty-four years I have been here and an uncle of mine was here for 45. Everyone around Crewe knows it as 'Royce's', it will be very difficult to sell it as Bentley."

Helping Lance and then Dave Green and his colleagues work on marrying the body shell to the running gear, I sense for the first time a real loss among the Crewe workforce. As if an old friend has suddenly died. "It's cleaner and better organised now," Dave tells me "and VW have been good owners up until now. Trouble is they're more secretive, for all their faults, Vickers had more open briefings."

"The important thing is not to lose the craftsmanship," says Marshall Slade who hands me part of the V8's throttle linkage, "That was designed by Sir Henry," Marshall talks in a reverential tone as if the marque's founder is still alive. "It's a simple ball and socket, but perfectly designed so it never needed changing." I have a feeling the BMW Rolls-Royce won't use a 70+ year old design in its new car and then, with a sorrowful note Marshall adds "We used to make them here at Crewe, now they're machined outside." When I ask him if the quality is the same, he just smiles and raises an eyebrow.

Quality, of course, is a byword at Rolls-Royce, for so many the epitome of luxury motoring. There may be better built cars and more precisely engineered ones, but none have the indefinable air that a Rolls-Royce possesses. Some of that was lost in the Silver Seraph, »



Brave of R-R to let the author loose on the suspension.



... but he wasn't allowed near the V8 engine!

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## TIME TRAVELLING BUILDING A CORNICHE



but this last Corniche has it to spare.

Over the years, economics has forced Royce's management to whittle away at the hand made element. Nuts, screws, bolts were turned at the factory, there was a foundry and a plating plant. Most of that has gone, the work sub-contracted out to suppliers.

What has been retained are the core elements of a Rolls-Royce, the immaculate leather, the perfect wood and the radiator. But even those have been sanitised in the name of progress.

Men like Ken Bowker spend 10 hours

selecting and cutting the 15 hides it takes to trim a Corniche. It looks easy but spotting a tiny fly scar takes practice, "I reckon it took me 24 months to learn this job," said Ken who has been doing it since 1974 and with a little dig at those who will be trimming next year's Royce's, "They won't have the same people or skills as there are here."

He means women like Chris Hughes and her team that sew the hides using machines working at an alarmingly fast rate, or Ian Snelson who has spent the last 20 or so years assembling rear

Like that old joke about 'How many men does it take to change a light bulb?'. It obviously takes three to tighten one nut in the Corniche engine bay.



Being over six-foot is not an advantage when trying to assemble a Corniche.





Installed by hand, but with millimetre accuracy.

**“Over the years, economics forced management to whittle away at the hand made element. Nuts, screws, bolts were turned at the factory, there was a foundry and a plating plant.”**

seats and headrests “I take real pride and pleasure in doing the complete job and seeing it finished, fitted to a car.”

Men like Ian and Kevin Brown, who take six hours hand sewing the hide steering wheel covers, bring their own dedication and pride to a seemingly mundane task, “I never get the chance to be bored, because you have to concentrate all the time to get it right,” Ken tells me. On his bench, I notice a blunt knife and fork, “I modified the knife to push the leather into place without scarring it and the fork tongs are exactly ¼-inch apart, I use that for marking where the stitches go.”

I once achieved 27 per cent in woodwork when at school – at least 10 behind everyone else, so the thought of working on the Corniche’s Amboyna veneer was daunting. Obviously, the veneer shop had been in touch with my old woodwork master and I was relegated to sanding and polishing, while the marquetry to produce the ‘Flying Lady’ inlay on the waist rails is now done by laser and not by hand. Where’s the romance in that, anyone – even me – can push a button?

“Exactly,” says Ian Mumford in radiator build, while Peter Airey looks on. “These radiators aren’t like the old ones,” says Ian, “even you could make one with a bit of practice.” The assemblies are pre-formed, older employees like Peter (and Ian in his earlier days at Crewe) used to hammer and solder the most famous car grille in the world from flat sheets of metal. So proud of their work were they that they’d stamp their initials on the inside »



Inspecting for the slightest blemish in the coachwork or interior takes years of painstaking dedication.



## TIME TRAVELLING BUILDING A CORNICHE

so that, if the radiator was damaged, the man who built it would repair it. "Nah," asks Ian, "why should I do that now? When you had to butt the joints and flow the solder, hand build the radiator then I'd put my initials on it. I was proud of that. Now....." His voice trails off as the tea hooter blows.

You sense some unease as I polish the Corniche's radiator. Someone has rushed off to the section leader complaining that an untrained person is working in his area, "There's trouble at mill..."

Not once during all the time I spent at Crewe that summer was there any dissent or questioning from unions, or about health and safety. The men and women just wanted to talk about their jobs, Rolls-Royce and the pride they had in the marque.

It's not much like when I joined the company some 30+ years ago...

My first job at Rolls-Royce press and public relations department was to announce 1500 redundancies. Recession bit and it bit hard in 1982. A year later the factory went on strike for five, six weeks, as I was reminded by someone who recognised me as the 'company spokesman' of the time. One day I was taking a customer



round the factory chatting to men and women about their jobs and how they cut the leather, selected the veneers, made the radiators. The next day they were striking, spitting and throwing cups of scalding tea and coffee at me as I went through the picket lines accompanying the then CEO, Dick Perry. And now it's over. The signs are

coming down, the linked R's, the Spirit of Ecstasy and Sir Henry's quotes strung over the production line along with the water tower are all gone.

Even the Silver Ghost is leaving Crewe and going to VW's theme park museum in Germany where it will stand alongside the car that I can claim to have helped to build. ■



Out for its first test drive. And I can say that I helped build it!

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# THE ONLY WAY IS ESSEX

Behind the warehouse shutters on an undistinguished Essex industrial estate lies an extraordinary world class collection of vintage and classic cars. We take a trip to Vintage and Prestige and meet the company's remarkable owner to find out more

WORDS: NIGEL FRYATT PHOTOGRAPHY: MATT WOODS

It's like a personalised Selfridges for classic car enthusiasts. As we were preparing this issue in July, the famous London department store opened its Christmas department, to much clamour and disgruntlement. Vintage and Prestige can go one better than that, since walking into the company showroom must seem like Christmas every day if you love vintage and classic cars.

Yet our journey for the magazine's

visit didn't start so encouragingly. Pewter dull grey clouds and furious weather warnings of monsoon rain matched the untidy industrial estate that the satnav directed us to. Vintage and Prestige is located in Grays, Essex, a place best described as unpromising, the industrial estate displaying all the usual hallmarks of badly parked cars and battered Transit vans, assorted metallic junk, with triffid-sized weeds growing through rusty fencing, yet as we slow

to check we are in the right place, a Bentley Mk6 glides effortlessly passed; follow that car is the obvious reaction.

You can spot the Vintage and Prestige warehouse, since it is smartly painted, and has an assortment of Rolls-Royce and Bentleys parked randomly around it. Pressing the security buzzer on the reception door and I am invited in by sales manager Paul Cox, whose immaculate, dark three-piece suit and vivid tie make me wonder if I am

Whichever way you look,  
the quality of the vehicles on  
display assaults the senses.



significantly underdressed. Climbing the stairs and entering the showroom floor (under two imitation ivory elephant tusks, one sporting a pith helmet on its tip) and it's difficult not to turn into a gibbering child visiting Hamleys toy shop for the first time... Classic car heaven? Well, it's close and it's certainly not even Christmas.

Upstairs in the small, somewhat cramped and busy office, owner and proprietor Richard Biddulph sits in front of three enormous iMac computer screens in his signature stripped blazer, contrasting striped shirt and large bow tie, with only the Persian cat missing from his lap to complete the image of being the smiling super villain in a James Bond film (of the Sean Connery or Roger Moore era, of course). »



## SPECIALIST VISIT THE ONLY WAY IS ESSEX

Richard will be known to anyone attending the major classic car events, or those who watched the Channel 4 TV programme *Million Pound Motors*, but if anything, the flamboyant dress merely highlights the fact that he's a dedicated vintage and classic car enthusiast and someone who answers my questions with a confidence and directness that is as refreshing as it is informative.

"This all started as a hobby that got a bit out of hand really. I can't wait to get out of bed in the morning, every day is different. This week I took the sleeper train to Edinburgh, jumped into a Bentley Mk6 we have downstairs and drove the 400 miles back here. You can't get better than that, can you?" But why base your business here? "Because it's cheap," he replies instantly. "We need a lot of space and the costs here are affordable." The honest and direct reply does also highlight the fact that actually the Vintage and Prestige HQ is perfectly situated some 15 minutes off the M25 just north of the Dartford Tunnel, so great for continental visitors arriving by road, and not that far from Gatwick, Heathrow and Stanstead airports.

**"I couldn't bring myself to sell the cars I owned, but as an enthusiast your tastes change. Finally, you sell them, and then go out and buy some more."**

Of course, you don't just turn a hobby into a multi-million pound business overnight, yet Vintage and Prestige has only been trading for 10 years, Richard having had a previous career in Silicon Valley, USA, running his own cutting-edge, 'new tech' company. Deciding, very astutely, that it was the time to sell up, finding himself well-financed he decided to take a year off: "I was always a car enthusiast, and decided to spend some of my money on a Rolls-Royce, so I bought a Phantom I and had it shipped to the US, where I had some fantastic adventures in it along the west coast. It was one of the busiest years of my life." You can actually read the story of Richard's first Rolls-Royce on the blog that runs from his Vintage and Prestige website. In fact, you will see that although he initially intended to buy a single Phantom, when he viewed the

car there was another alongside, and so he bought them both. It's a philosophy that continues with the business today.

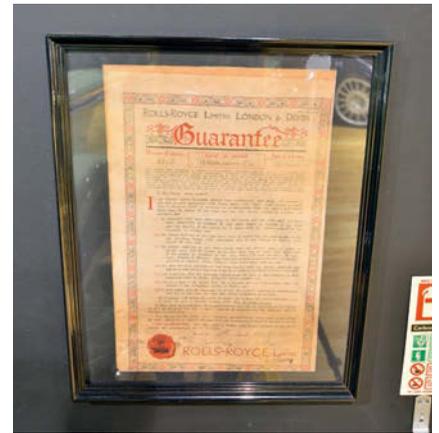
"As a collector of cars," he explains, "I have been on both sides of the fence. I realised quite quickly that to start with I couldn't bring myself to sell the cars I owned, but as an enthusiast your tastes change. Finally, you sell them, and then go out and buy some more."

In what is really a very short time, Vintage and Prestige has grown into a significant sales operation in the global classic car market, selling around 200 to 250 cars a year, of which at least 50 per cent are Rolls-Royce or Bentley models. I ask what that represents in turnover, not expecting him to disclose, yet get the immediate reply, "Probably over a million pounds a month. We can go on the website and see what we have sold so far this



Good enough for Marie Antoinette, yet produced for the heiress of the Woolworths empire in 1926.





year, it's all there. There are also a few deals that happen behind the scenes. We have a further warehouse across the road that we can show you, plus there's our workshop. We are currently looking to acquire next door so we can knock through and extend the showroom and have more cars up here."

Business is booming, but there's a lot of doom and gloom on the predicted post-Brexit world, so has that affected the market? "The UK is flat at the moment. No question about that. UK prices have plateaued or even dropped a bit, but fortunately around 60 per cent of our stuff goes overseas. Foreign markets like Hong Kong, Switzerland, Australia and lots of Europe are strong. I guess the recent drop in Sterling has helped our customers, and we are certainly still very busy."

There are presently 12 people working at Vintage and Prestige, split equally between the office and sales staff and those involved in the workshop. While sales are the main business, "we also have restorations and rebuilds being done at other specialist outlets that we oversee. Plus, any vehicle that we bring in here gets



Feeling a little underdressed, Editor Fryatt discusses buying a Phantom with owner proprietor Richard Biddulph. Well, he can dream...

a full PDI before we put it up for sale. That Bentley that I drove back from Scotland did start to overheat a couple of times so we will look at that here. It could be just a new thermostat, but if it needs a new radiator then it will get one. We won't let any vehicle go out of here until we are completely happy

with it. All the vehicles get driven to make sure we are happy with them."

## THE GRAND TOUR

We were itching to see some of the vehicles in the warehouse, so were pleased when a visitor arrived who »

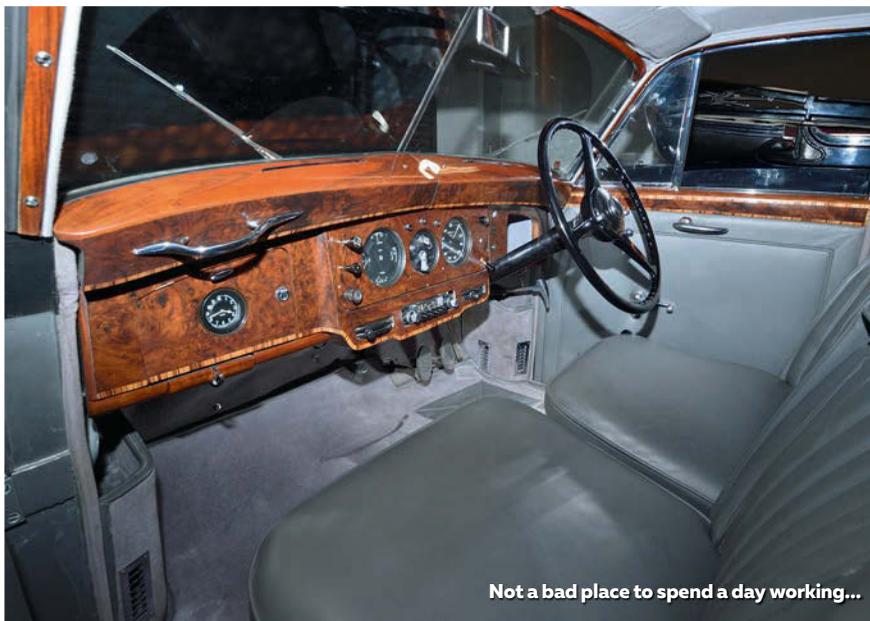
## SPECIALIST VISIT THE ONLY WAY IS ESSEX

Richard had just driven this Bentley Mk 6 down from Edinburgh and it had yet to be cleaned but looked resplendent in its Tudor over shell grey paintwork.

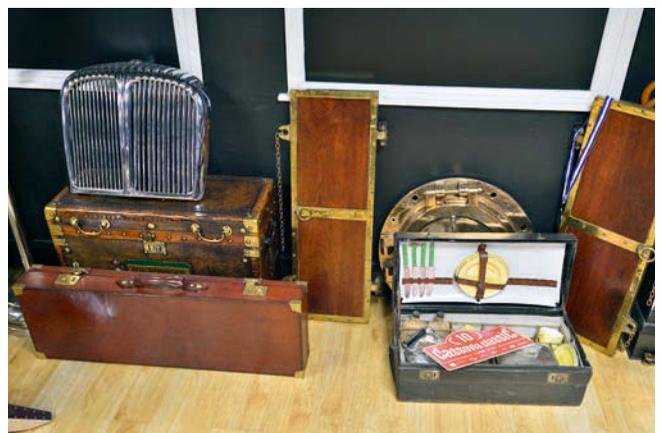


was much more important than us, and Richard had to excuse himself and we were introduced to Vintage and Prestige's newest member of the sales and valuation team, Christoff Cowens. Yet another smart suited staff member to shame our dress sense, but it didn't matter as we stood in the master showroom. It's not only the cars that assault the senses, but also the motoring memorabilia that adorn the walls and floor. The massive riveted, aluminium wing table and 'bar' shine in the spotlight, with a Phantom carburettor its centrepiece looking as new as the day it was built and proudly displaying the official warning; 'This carburettor is accurately adjusted, and should not be altered without first consulting Rolls-Royce Ltd.' That's told yer...

We walk passed a paddle shift Morgan Aero 8 to look at an emerald green 1965 Bentley S3 Continental Mulliner Park Ward drophead. Now green isn't everyone's favourite colour for a car, but this was ordered and owned by the King of Denmark and "It's unusual as it has those headrests on the front seats", explains Christoff. The green leather is somewhat striking but it's a superb model. There are assorted Phantoms, a 1934 Phantom II Continental Sports Saloon that came from an owner in Maidenhead, and has the wonderful registration plate HOE 1 for sale at £185,000, alongside a Phantom I Tourer by Wilkinson. In the centre of the floor is a pale blue Silver Shadow II being cleaned and prepped for the visit of a prospective buyer, and this is the kind of treatment that you can expect at Vintage and Prestige. The Silver Shadow isn't the typical Rolls-Royce on sale here, with a lot of Pre-War models dominating, but it gets the same treatment.



Not a bad place to spend a day working...





Very green perhaps, originally commissioned by the King of Denmark, this Bentley S3 Continental Drophead is looking for a new home.

"If we are looking to sell a Phantom," says Richard, "we would put it in the middle here and perhaps have a couple of other Phantoms either side, for the client to compare." Richard hasn't forgotten his experience of first viewing that original Rolls-Royce where he went away buying two!

We cross the road to the second warehouse, which is not as smartly dressed as the main showroom but stores an amazing 1926 Phantom I, which has become known as the 'Phantom of Love'. It was commissioned by American businessman Clarence Gasque as a gift for his wife Maude, who was the heiress to the Woolworth's empire, and Clarence was the finance director. A passionate enthusiast for French 18th Century history, the rear compartment would surely be something that Marie Antoinette would have been proud of, with exquisite tapestry and upholstery and an even more extravagant painted ceiling complete with flying cherubs. There are even small French porcelain vases, each with its own bunch of enamel flowers, the sheer opulence is overwhelming. There is a sad tinge to the story as the husband died quite soon after delivering his 'gift' and the wife put it into storage, since then it has been owned by enthusiasts in Japan and the US and is now available in Grays, Essex.

We have to confess here that some of the most interesting models to this writer were neither Rolls-Royce, nor Bentley. There was the Frazer-Nash Le Mans racer, which OK is a replica of the Werner Oswald original, but »



The Editor's Choice: Sir Malcolm Campbell's Phantom II awaits the return of its engine. What a wonderful colour.

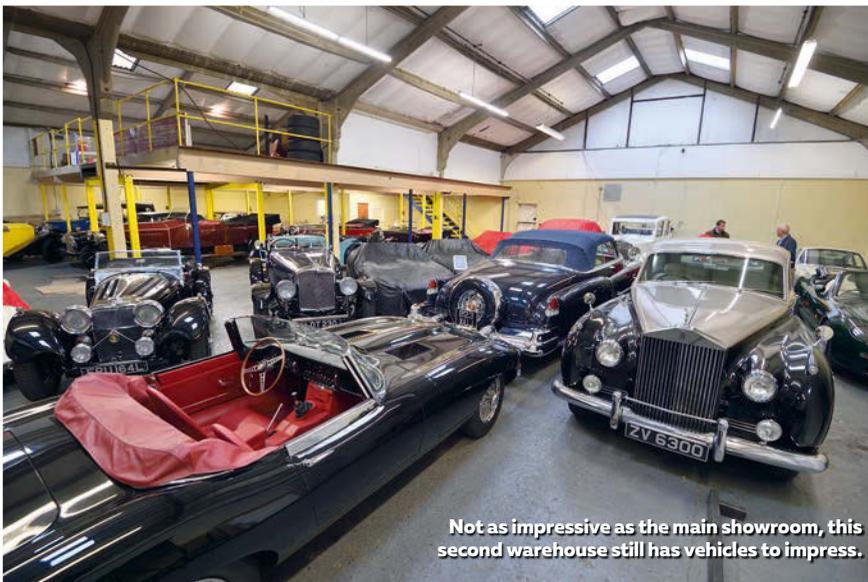


This Silver Shadow II is being prepared for viewing by a prospective buyer.

**“Should you open the garage door on my retirement chateau, probably somewhere in France, the first car you will see will be a Phantom of some kind.”**



**Phantom menace: 1934 Phantom II Continental and 1929 Phantom I Tourer await new owners.**



**Not as impressive as the main showroom, this second warehouse still has vehicles to impress.**



**All vehicles get a full PDI: this model suffering from overheating and so the water pump was removed...**



**...to reveal a broken impeller shaft. A new one is on order and will be fitted, with the vehicle tested, before it is offered for sale.**

eligible for both open air road fun and historic racing. Alongside this was a magnificent Hispano Suiza, which Richard declares, “is a wonderful drive”, and fitted with a British coachbuilt body. For those of us with more modest budgets, there was also a recently restored Frogeye Sprite that I could have happily driven home, even in the monsoon rain we experienced that day. And we cannot fail to mention probably the smallest vehicle there, which is Christoff Cowen’s own Austin Seven Brooklands, retrimmed by its owner and waiting the fitting of a supercharger. Not surprisingly, this is probably the only vehicle here not actually for sale.

Heads spinning with all we had seen, and lusted after, we are led through the second warehouse’s back door, through the puddles, and over a couple of rusting steel girders into the workshop, only to be knocked sideways by the sight of the glorious pale blue 1933 Phantom II Continental that regular readers might recognise from the last issue. This was Sir Malcolm Campbell’s very own Phantom and it resides in this workshop awaiting the return of its engine, which is away being rebuilt. The schoolboy enthusiast in me had to sit behind the wheel, something that is easier said than done given the limited space between the steering wheel and the seat squab and the fact that the gear lever is on the right-hand side. I was later told that it is easier climbing in from the passenger side and sliding across. Quite how you would pilot this beast up to its reputed 95mph is anyone’s guess, but it was a great place to sit and certainly made my day.

This is the workshop where the Vintage and Prestige vehicles all get their official PDI. The Rolls-Royce being worked on while we were there

had been overheating and was quickly diagnosed to have a problem with its water pump. Further investigation and stripping down of the pump disclosed that the main shaft had actually sheered. A replacement had been sourced and would be replaced within days and then the car can return to the showroom.

Unless you are seriously in the market for one of these marvellous machines, this is not a showroom that you can visit, but there is an option and that is to check out the company's website [www.vandp.net](http://www.vandp.net), which has to be one of the very best in the business, the quality of the images in particular being spectacular. "We take a lot of time with our photography," Richard proudly exclaims. "People actually buy direct from what they see on the site. You can form a good opinion of the vehicle, we have a 10-grand camera and it shows. We take a lot of effort taking the pictures." Richard actually being one of the photographers, which can at times mean getting up a 4am in the summer to catch the best light. With around £40million of stock in the combined warehouses, taking cheap 'roadside' shots of cars for sale is not on offer.

We completed our visit to Vintage and Prestige sitting atop a 1901 single-cylinder Renault 4.5hp, a veteran of many London to Brighton Rallies, and



**The Vintage and Prestige workshop checks all vehicles for sale as soon as they arrive.**

we ask Richard what the future holds, since this is a hobby, will he ever retire? "Eventually, yes, I will sell the business." But will he remain a collector. "Oh yes, should you open the garage door on my retirement chateau, probably somewhere in France, the first car you will see will be a Phantom of some kind."

From first to last it seems, Richard Biddulph is a true Rolls-Royce enthusiast. For those with the budgets to match, there has to be a Rolls-Royce, Bentley or other classic car hiding behind the shutters of this warehouse on an obscure Essex industrial estate

that will appeal. Neither Selfridges, nor Hamleys, can match what Vintage and Prestige has on offer. ■

## CONTACT

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Tel: +44 (0) 1375 379719  
[www.vandp.net](http://www.vandp.net)



**The 1901 Renault appears equally at home among the Rolls-Royce and Bentleys.**

# OH LUCKY MAN!

A restoration of this quality takes time, knowledge, experience and a great deal of enthusiasm, something that John Smith of Wren Restorations has in abundance. We take an envious look at his work on this 1958 Bentley S1 Continental Park Ward Drophead Coupe

WORDS: NIGEL FRYATT PHOTOGRAPHY: MATT WOODS



**Y**ou don't have to speak to John Smith, proprietor of Wren Restorations, for very long to understand not just the enthusiasm he has for Rolls-Royce and Bentley models, but the pride he takes from this concours-winning Bentley: "It's something I have wanted to do for the last 40 or so years, but never been able to find the funds, as it's so difficult to get ahead of the game. Rolls-Royce and Bentley has been my thing since a very young age, but this was my first

crack at a full nut and bolt restoration of this level, where the intention was to see if we could win some awards." John's natural modesty then shines through as he admits, "and we were totally blown away with what we won!"

Of course, any restoration has to start with an original vehicle, and John certainly found an interesting one. This 1958 Bentley S1 Continental Park Ward Drophead Coupe was just one of only 50 RHD models, and it arrived to its first owner equipped with a power

operated hood, power steering and a radio. Coachbuilders Park Ward handed the Bentley over to HR Owen on 30th July 1958, where its first owner was Mrs Herbert Jenkins of Lady Cross Lodge, Brockenhurst, Hampshire. Surprisingly perhaps, Mrs Jenkins obviously grew bored of effortless and elegant cruises through the New Forest and after just 18 months she sold the car to Jack Barclay's in London. The Bentley's second owner, however, took a different view. Mr Gilbert Luck part



exchanged his Bentley Standard saloon (along with £1000) to become the car's second owner, where he kept the car until 2013, and then only handing the car to his son, Guy, who in turn passed it onto Mr Luck's grandson. The car had been well looked after during this family ownership and registered only 65,000 miles. The maintenance receipts alone showing that some £47,000 has been spent over the 50 plus years that it has been with the Luck family.

"The car was certainly well looked

after", explains John. "But it was getting a little tired cosmetically. There was nothing really wrong with the car, so it was a perfect candidate for a restoration; it was just not good enough to keep in original condition."

And it was a complete body off, chassis up restoration that was completed by John's company. There is a full photo diary on the Tudor and Black website ([www.tudorblack.co.uk](http://www.tudorblack.co.uk)), the sales, storage and general maintenance arm of John's restoration

company. Now, before you get the impression that this is a major operation, with John sitting back in a big posh office, ordering hordes of smartly overalled technicians about, nothing could be further from the truth. This gorgeous Bentley was restored directly by John, plus his valued right hand man, Evaldas, and one other mechanic! If that isn't impressive enough, the whole thing only took them two years, and the attention to detail is spectacular. »

## FEATURE VEHICLE

### 1958 BENTLEY S1 CONTINENTAL



**This was a full nut and bolt restoration, all done within the Wren Restoration workshop.**

All the glass is new and had to be made by a specialist (and John had some spare sets made). He also went to the trouble of finding the original copper rivets to use around the radiator shell; since these are no longer made, many top restorers will simply pop-rivet here, but John wanted to make it look as original as if it had just left the factory. All areas of the car had such attention and he smiles when he remembers that they even found some

original silk binding for the headlining. Again, this is no longer produced, and many others simply roll the headlining over at the edges, but John wanted it to be exactly as it had left Park Ward.

Under the bonnet, there was a bonus for John. The Bentley had actually received a new 4.9-litre six-cylinder unit from Rolls-Royce during the 1960s. This was all documented in the extensive files that came with the vehicle, since then, the engine had only

covered 30,000 miles. Just to make sure, however, the engine was stripped down and completely overhauled to confirm that everything was to the levels expected. Plus, of course, the engine received a full cosmetic upgrade. The result, therefore, is that this beautifully restored Drophead Coupe also has a very low mileage original engine under its smart Mason Black and Gunmetal paintwork.

"We managed to find these tiny details, which are insignificant on their own, but when you put them all together, they make a difference. We covered a lot of ground in those two years, getting it just right, and that's what helped us win the awards."

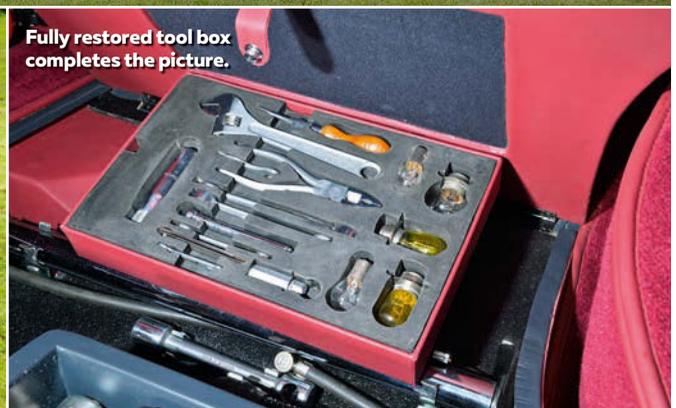
It was the period detail that saw John decide to keep the original personalised number plate, which obviously related to previous owner Gilbert Luck. "We thought it went so well with the car, we couldn't change it." In many ways, the car is 'almost' a one owner model when John got the car, so you can see



**Probably the best angle of this spectacular car?**



**Quality trimming everywhere.**



**Fully restored tool box completes the picture.**



Shoes off before you step in here!

his point. You do wonder, however, what Mr Gilbert's grandson thinks when he sees the car today – does he perhaps now regret selling?

The Bentley made its show debut during the 2016 season and simply swept the board, winning the Bentley Drivers Club Concours Best in Show, the Best Crewe Built Car in Show, and Best 'R' Type or 'S' Type Continental in Show. If that wasn't enough, and let's face it, that would be quite enough for many owners, the vehicle also took the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts Club Best in Show 'Elegance', Best in Class 'Concours' and Best in Class 'Elegance'. And let's remember that this work was all done by just three people, in a small Suffolk workshop, where they also continued to do the 'normal' paying work for other customers!

"I absolutely love going in the workshop. I can't get enough of it. I work silly hours sometime, but sometimes you just have to in order to get all the work done." Bouyed by »

**"We managed to find these tiny details, which are insignificant on their own, but when you put them all together, they make a difference"**



Better than originally built? Quite possibly.

**FEATURE VEHICLE**  
1958 BENTLEY S1 CONTINENTAL



John Smith takes a well-earned spin in his wonderful restoration.

**“They are serious investments, and not cars to be driven and that’s a shame, but when you have a car this perfect, owners dare not use them as they will deteriorate”**



this success, Wren Restorations has now doubled in size, to six employees and they are about to expand the existing premises and will look to double again to around 12, to enable John and the team to take on new projects of a similar size to this Bentley restoration, while allowing them to continue with other smaller restoration and general maintenance projects.

Naturally, John did need to use other experts for the project and was keen to mention Joe Crabtree for the wood polishing (and when you look at the facia in the pictures, it’s easy to understand why), Matthew at Strong and Turton, who “pulled out all the stops” with the interior red leather trimming, and Derby Plating for all the chrome work. As John said: “With a restoration like this, even 97 per cent just isn’t enough, it has to be even higher.

And I can’t thank the others involved enough, for all their excellent work.”

Take a good look at Matt Woods’ excellent photographs here, since it may be a while before you get to see this Bentley in the metal. The project was a joint one for John and a good friend and fellow Rolls-Royce and Bentley aficionado, who invested the finance into the project to purchase and restore the vehicle, originally with the intention of keeping the car himself. It proved, however, to be such a success that it has now been sold on further and is now in a private collector’s own garage. It remains in the UK, so we can hope that it will at least make some appearances at shows and events, as would John: “I look forward to seeing the car again sometime, but people invest a lot of money into these cars these days. They are serious investments, and not cars to be driven



**A new 4.9-litre unit had already been fitted, but it didn't look this good!**

and it's a shame in some ways but when you have a car this perfect, owners dare not use them as they will deteriorate. But shows are good things for this as you always need to fettle a car before a show, and that way you keep on top of things. If you don't do anything with the car, it will still deteriorate even if it is left standing in a private garage."

After many years in the business, this Bentley is John's most prestigious and successful project to date, and it has certainly whetted his appetite further. "We are looking for more major projects, and have increased the staffing and space in the company to do this. We look after other vehicles but Rolls-Royce and Bentley is my thing. I'm not RR trained, but I am self-

taught over a lot of years. I can tell you about every nut and bolt of a Mulliner Park Ward car. Rolls and Bentley Continentals in particular have always been what I am really interested in."

If this Bentley S1 Continental Park

Ward Drophead Coupe restoration is anything to go by, those bigger projects will soon be finding their way to Suffolk and Wren's newly-expanded workshop, and as we say, this time, luck will certainly have nothing to do with it.. ■



**To the victor, the spoils.**

## CONTACTS

**Wren Restorations /  
Tudor and Black**

Unit 2, Wren Business Centre,  
Wrentham, Suffolk, NR34 7LR  
Tel: (+44) (0) 1502 675104  
[www.tudorblack.co.uk](http://www.tudorblack.co.uk)

# FROM THE ARCHIVES

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

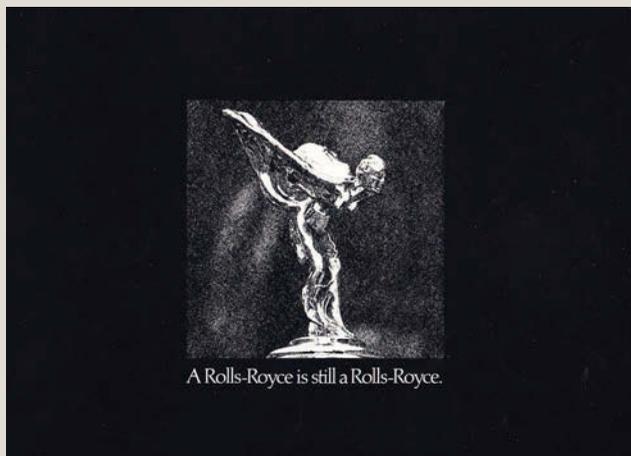
WORDS: PAUL GUINNESS PHOTOGRAPHY: VARIOUS

## RETAINING THE QUALITY

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

The pages within the brochure went into great detail

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



## LAST OF THE LINE

This press photograph was issued to mark the final series of the Silver Seraph model line, the last Rolls-Royce to be built at the world-famous Crewe plant. Designed by Roy Axe and launched in 1998, the Silver Seraph marked a major change of style over its Silver Spirit predecessor, with a more curvaceous look in-keeping with the latest trends. Sadly, however, the Silver Seraph (unlike its Bentley Arnage cousin) was destined for a short career thanks to the ongoing changes within the company.

This process had begun with Vickers' sale of Rolls-Royce Motors to Volkswagen in the same year that the Silver Seraph appeared, which led to a subsequent agreement for BMW to become the custodian of Rolls-Royce from January 2003. The final Silver Seraph was produced in 2002, by which time it carried a list price of £169,000.



## MOTOR SHOW PRESENCE

International motor shows have tended to play a major role in the history of Rolls-Royce, with many of the marque's most famous models being officially presented for the first time at such events. A new Rolls-Royce will always attract attention; but when it's unveiled in front of a large crowd of journalists, potential buyers and motor industry VIPs, its arrival somehow seems all the more headline-grabbing.

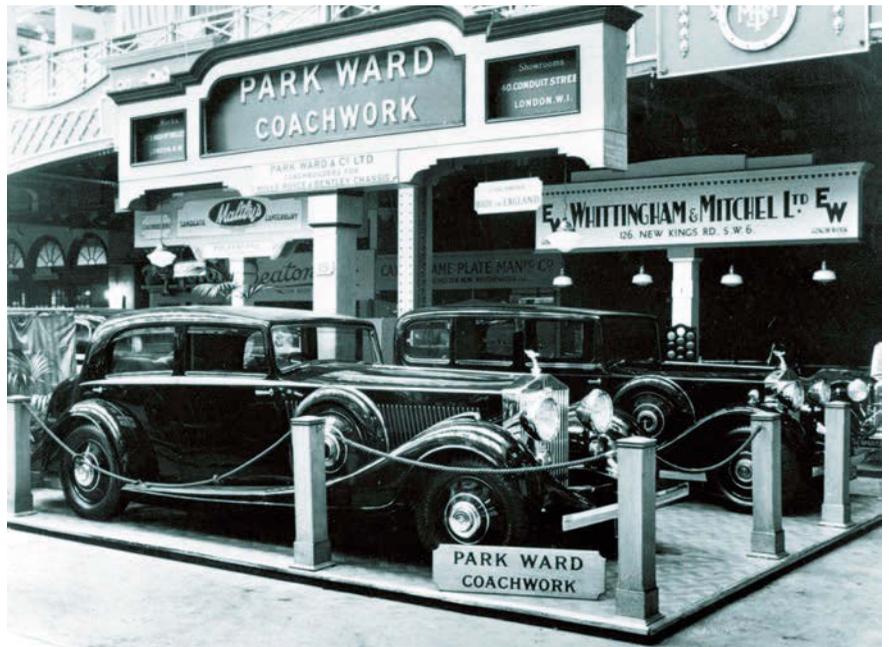
At risk of stating the obvious, however, these two images are from the marque's early days of motor show experiences. Indeed, the first image dates from the year when Rolls-Royce Limited was formed, and shows the official stand of CS Rolls & Co at the 1906 Olympia Motor Show. Taking pride of place were numerous offerings, including what was proclaimed as the 'silent all-British



six-cylinder single limousine', a model that was ideal 'for town and country'. A Pullman limousine was also on show, as was a '1907-type 40-50hp' rolling chassis – the latter aimed at Britain's expanding network of coachbuilders.

The second photograph shows the 1933 Olympia Motor Show stand of

Park Ward & Co Ltd, described as 'coachbuilders for Rolls-Royce and Bentley chassis'. It featured the latest Rolls-Royce Phantom II models, which by then were roughly halfway through their 1929-36 career – and were firmly established as among the ultimate luxury saloons for wealthy buyers.



## PRE-WAR LUXURY

Announced in September 1933 was the all-new Bentley 3½ Litre, the first new model since the takeover of the company by Rolls-Royce – and also the first of the so-called Derby Bentleys thanks to it being produced at the new parent firm's Derby-based factory. The 3½ Litre was a less sporting model than many of its Bentley forebears, but it offered the kind of style, quality and luxury that appealed to many of the marque's well-heeled customers.

This early brochure for the 3½ Litre saloon boasted about its 'exceptionally attractive appearance and low overall height', as well as its suitability for long-distance motoring: 'The sliding sunshine roof and commodious built-in luggage locker make it eminently suitable for touring'. At £1460, however, the new 3½ Litre saloon was only for the wealthy few.



## DURABILITY AS STANDARD

Every Rolls-Royce ever built has been the result of extreme testing before launch, to ensure that the company's high standards of engineering, durability and reliability are maintained with each new generation. This is as true now as it was 111 years ago, when the new 40/50hp Rolls-Royce was unveiled at London's Motor Show. By the following year, with the new model on sale internationally, Rolls-Royce made history by producing the first car to break the world record for a non-stop run of 14,372 miles. That model was the Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost, which would remain in production for almost two decades.





### CITY SLICKER

We don't know much about this superb photograph that we recently came across in the Rolls-Royce press image archives, but we wanted to include it anyway. We reckon it dates from the tail end of the 1960s, or perhaps the very start of the '70s; either way, it's an absolute cracker.

Any Silver Shadow was an eye-catching sight when new, but with its whitewall tyres and Rolls-Royce's 'RR 1' registration number, this particular example was even more attention-grabbing than usual. Even when set against the bright lights of Piccadilly Circus, with its enormous advertising hoardings promoting such new-generation essentials as Coca-Cola and Skol International Lager (remember that?), the Silver Shadow managed to stand out, combining modernity with the kind of opulence we expected from a Rolls-Royce.

### CREWE COLLECTION

This classic photograph from 1952 shows the latest Silver Dawn heading up of a row of Bentley MkVI saloons. The Silver Dawn is a left-hand drive example shod with whitewall tyres, which suggests it would shortly be heading to the USA. The Bentleys, however, all appear to be right-hand drive, which we assume means they're bound for British buyers.

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



### AMONG THE CLOUDS

The Silver Cloud was undoubtedly one of the most elegant of all the post-war Rolls-Royces, as well as the last of the traditional separate-chassis models before the arrival of the monocoque Silver Shadow in 1965. Available from the factory in a choice of standard or long-wheelbase guises, the Silver Cloud was revered for its elegance and its

perfect proportions, and sold strongly through its three-generation career.

The first Silver Cloud arrived in 1955, featuring 4887cc six-cylinder power. This was usurped by the almost identical looking Silver Cloud II in 1959, the biggest change being the adoption of Rolls-Royce's new 6230cc V8. The final incarnation – the Silver Cloud III – used the same

powerplant, but was cosmetically updated via quad headlamps, new wheel trims and numerous improvements to the interior.

A total of 7372 Silver Clouds were built over a 10-year period, among them the two featured in these period press photographs showing an extended-wheelbase Series II and a standard-length Series III.





## END OF AN ERA

With the Silver Shadow due to be replaced by the Silver Spirit in late 1980, this wonderful photograph shows the final 'Shadow' 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 bodysells for the Silver Spirit at the company's nearby 'R Building'.

The Silver Shadow was an important model for PSF, with around 65 bodysells being built each week by the late 1970s – 30 years after the company first became involved with Rolls-Royce body production.



## HIGH-PERFORMANCE LIMOUSINE

When it comes to rarities within the Silver Spirit family, the Flying Spur is near the top of the list – with a mere 134 examples sold during its brief (1994-95) career. It was notable for using the same extended bodysell as the standard Silver Spur, but beneath the bonnet sat a turbocharged version of the legendary 6750cc V8.

Naturally, Rolls-Royce chose not to disclose power and torque figures for the Flying Spur, but estimates suggest it was capable of 130mph-plus, hitting 60mph from rest in 6.9 seconds. Those were impressive figures for a Rolls-Royce measuring 211 inches in length and tipping the scales at almost 2.4 tonnes. But such capability didn't come cheap, hence the Flying Spur's launch price of £148,545.



## STAYING ALIVE

If it hadn't been for badge-engineering, Bentley would almost certainly have been a thing of the past long before the arrival of Rolls-Royce's new Silver Shadow in 1965. Fortunately, however, following the tradition of the Silver Cloud that had gone before, the new 'Shadow' spawned its own distinct Bentley version in the shape of the T-Series. And so, Bentley lived to fight another day.

The arrival of the new T-Series meant a major change for Bentley, as this was the first car from the company to feature monocoque construction in place of a separate chassis, not to mention sharp, angular

styling, all-independent self-levelling suspension and disc brakes all round. The Bentley's 6230cc V8 was enlarged to 6750cc by 1970, giving the T-Series improved performance to match its superlative ride, its smooth GM400 transmission and its opulent feel.

Shown here are a couple of early press shots for the T-Series, each one in glorious monochrome and featuring Bentley's world-famous '1900 TU' registration number. The first image was shot on a sodden beach, the other on a deserted motorway; it's a good job the cars were rather more glamorous than their respective backdrops.





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1975

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OF LONDON**

2017



**1999 T Bentley Arnage Red Label Look Alike.** Finished in Masons Black with limited edition Le Mans alloy wheels and colour coded bumpers. Magnolia interior with Black piping and Black carpets piped in Magnolia. Only 84,000 miles with history. Immaculate condition ..... **£21,750**



**2002/02 Rolls Royce Silver Seraph Last of Line.** Very rare, one of only 170. 2 owners, supplied by us 3 years ago. Only 58,000 miles with FSH. In Silver Tempest with St James coachlines. Electric sunroof and all Last of Line features. Interior in Light Grey, with Mulberry carpets. Immaculate. .... **Only £56,950**



**1996 H Rolls Royce Silver Spirit MK IV.** Finished in Wildberry with Cotswold interior and Mulberry carpets. This car has only covered 74,000 miles, with Full Service History and has been known to us for over 10 years. Unmarked condition throughout and highly recommended ..... **£23,750**



**1995 H Bentley Azure.** Finished in Acrylic White with a Black hood, 17 inch alloys and a chrome radiator. Soft Black interior with Piano Black veneers and Black carpets. Only 28,000 miles with Full Service History. Known to ourselves for many years. Last owner for 15 years. Immaculate condition throughout ..... **£59,950**



**1997 P Bentley Turbo RL MK IV.** Finished in Peacock Blue with Parchment interior, with French Navy piping and French Navy carpets piped in Parchment, complemented with Walnut veneers. This car is in stunning condition throughout. Known to ourselves for last 6 years and loved and cherished by the previous owners. .... **£18,950**



**1997 Model P Bentley Continental R.** Finished in Racing Green with a matrix grille and limited edition 17 inch alloys. This very rare car has only covered 33,000 miles with a Full Service History. With London Tan interior and contrasting carpets and headlining, this model is increasing in value and would make a very good investment. Only..... **£49,999**



**1989 G Rolls Royce Silver Spirit ABS EFL.** Finished in Graphite with Silverstone interior. Walnut veneer inlays. This magnificent example is not to be missed. Known to ourselves for many years. Full Service History. Immaculate and outstanding value at only ..... **£14,950**



**1982 K Rolls Royce Corniche Convertible Series III.** Finished in Vermillion with a Magnolia hood and Magnolia interior piped in St James, with St James carpets piped in Magnolia and Walnut veneers. Only 14,000 miles with Full History. Just amazing condition and will only go up in price. Only..... **£132,950**



**1981 X Bentley T II.** Probably the last T II to have been built. Finished in Caribbean Blue with Dark Blue coachlines and whitewall tyres. Cream interior and Cream carpets. Fitted with picnic tables and rear seat belts. Known to us for the last 6 years maintained regardless of cost. 77,000 miles with FSH. A unique opportunity to buy a very rare car. .... **£37,950**



**1980 V Rolls Royce Silver Shadow II.** Finished in Georgian Silver with French Navy Everflex roof and Slate Grey interior, with French Navy piping and French Blue carpets. Only 47,000 miles with history. Over £21,000 recently spent on brakes and suspension plus many other items. Fast appreciating, not to be missed. Immaculate ..... **£34,950**

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This excellent action shot, taken by James Beckett, is from this year's BDC event at Silverstone. Period Bentley in the background emphasises just what a significant step this was when first built.

# A SINGLE-MINDED MAN

As a true Bentley enthusiast, Barry Eastick enjoyed his club motorsport, but wanted something a little different. The result is the only officially supported Bentley single seater race car ever built

WORDS: NIGEL FRYATT PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMES BECKETT, EASTICK FAMILY AND NIGEL FRYATT

This is a remarkable story of a remarkable Bentley, and for a motoring magazine, that is surely enough. In this case, however, there is so much more, as it is a story of a father and son partnership that spans the years and will keep what has to be one of the most intriguing British club racing cars ever built, not just alive as a highly-polished museum piece, but as it was designed to be used, on the track. Add to that the fact it has an MoT, can be driven on the

road and is the only single seater racing car ever sanctioned by Rolls-Royce, and perhaps the word remarkable is under cooking it somewhat.

Now before today's management at Rolls-Royce gets at all concerned, perhaps sanctioned is a little strong, after all, Rolls-Royce doesn't 'do' motorsport, but as this tale is revealed, you will see that the project was certainly 'aided and abetted' from the very top table at Crewe. Credit must go where credit is due, and without

the assistance and support of the then chairman at Rolls-Royce Motors, Sir David Plaistow, back in 1973, it would not have happened. But the real credit, the enthusiasm and the imagination to build this car has to go to Barrington (Barry) Eastick, Bentley owner, driver, former racer and long-time member of the Bentley Drivers Club who modestly, but with a twinkle in the eye, will tell you: "Well, I guess I got a bit carried away at the time. I just wanted something faster to race."

The Eastick name may not be familiar to all readers, but for those of us old enough to remember the sumptuous, if somewhat sticky delights of Golden Syrup, it's the Easticks we have to thank. Working for Tate & Lyle, brothers John and Charles Eastick first produced this wonderful stuff back in 1882, before eventually setting up on their own sugar enterprise, Ragus. This family business is run today by Barry's sons and it's one of those, Ben, who shares his father's passion for racing, and that desire to always try and go just a little bit faster.

To fully appreciate the story, we have to go back to Barry's father, Douglas who was a true Bentley man, and owned one of the very first 8-litres. When Barry passed his driving test, it was the done thing to buy your son a car. At the time, Barry insists that those with money would buy their sons MG sports cars, but it seems things were tight in 1952 and extraordinary as it sounds today, Barry's first car was actually a 4 1/2-litre Bentley, purchased for the princely sum of £100! Various similar models followed until he bought one that he could use in motorsport events. The racing bug bit, and since it was the time of the Bentley Mk6 Specials, Barry went to Alan Padgett, the Bentley Special guru of his era, to build him such a car. Much club racing success followed, including European flying kilometre records in Belgium (132mph), making this Mk6 Special one of the most successful ever built, and it is still raced today. But for Barry, however, it wasn't enough: "I wanted something a little faster."

To aid this quest, Barry decided to write to Sir David Plaistow, then chairman of Rolls-Royce, to see if the company would like to help. Holding the original typed letter today, printed on wafer-thin A5 notepaper, transports you back to a time where correspondence had a value, not as a hastily thrashed out email, destined for the recipient's computer trash bin. And Barry had a plan, this was no casual shot in the dark. He knew that for the launch of the Silver Shadow/T Type in 1965, two rolling chassis (complete with suspension, engine and gearbox) had been built and even given chassis numbers, SSSC1 and SSSC2. One had been used as an engineering training tool and then pensioned off to the Rolls-Royce museum in America, while the other one was used as a display at various motor shows around the world. It had surely retired from



**Father and son: Barry and Ben Eastick, racing is certainly in their blood.**

those duties and it was that chassis, SSSC2 that Barry was after to turn into a single seater racing car.

The written response from Sir David, produced it has to be said on a much higher quality of notepaper, as befitted Rolls-Royce, is a joy to read. While nothing could be 'official' and the whole thing had to be 'at arm's length', the answer was a resounding 'yes', and a price of £1100 was agreed upon, and a cheque was written. Amongst the astonishing amount of documentation that still exists on this vehicle, the officially stamped receipt, neatly signed by the head cashier, has to be one of the most charming. Cliché comment though it might be, these were different times. Indeed, nothing like this would happen today and it is to Sir David Plaistow's credit that he made the decision. He believed that

Barry Eastick was both serious and capable of making this project work, and he was right on both counts.

## **BUILDING A SINGLE SEATER**

Given the previous relationship, it was logical for Barry to turn to Alan Padgett to build the single seater, especially after all the success of his previous Mk6 Special. Padgett too was keen, and his correspondence and plans for the car can be seen in the sketches drawn in light blue ink with a fountain pen on several letters the two men exchanged. However, it soon became clear that this was perhaps a project too far for Padgett, who despite his abilities and experience was only a one-man company. The decision was made to take the project away from him »

# MOTORSPORT BENTLEY T TYPE SINGLE SEATER

**A. E. PADGETT**

Motor Engineer

ROLLS - ROYCE & BENTLEY SPECIALIST

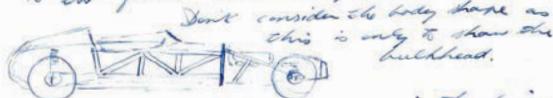
Tel. Pocklington 2478

FIELD HOUSE,  
BARMBY ROAD,  
POCKLINGTON,  
YORK. YO4 2DW.

23/6/74

Dear Barry,

I am now engaged in making a nice aluminium bulkhead and will incorporate the front tubular frame which will give added strength to the front end sub-frame.



Don't consider the body shape as this is only to show the bulkhead.

I am looking forward in the design to try and get every thing thought of now in order to save mistakes or alterations later.

What do you think about Bill's letter? He goes on about the hp time as though the important thing is to achieve a record lap, cheaply, and in any type of car! See you soon  
Alan Padgett

2/7/75

Dear Barry,

I have re-made your exhaust system (nearly finished) like this:



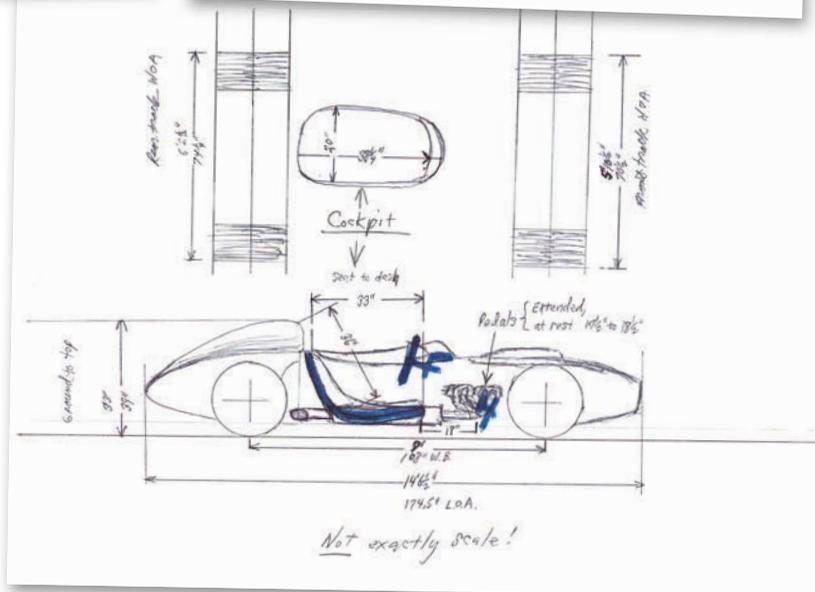
It will be quite free flowing and reasonably efficient and certainly pretty!

I have made a mock up nose for your approval but have M.T. like now and he should go today.

## Alan Padgett's pen and ink drawings on his letters to Barry Eastick reflect the amateur nature of club motorsport in the 1970s.

and offer it to Lyncar, a professional motorsport outfit building F5000, Le Mans, hillclimb and even a couple of F1 race cars. Lyncar were one of the small British motorsport concerns building Grand Prix cars long before it was necessary to have multi million-pound sponsorship budgets. It also helped that the Lyncar workshop was on the same Slough trading estate as the Ragus family sugar factory, enabling Barry to keep a good eye on the project.

The majority of the engineering was done by Martin Slater of Lyncar, and he is someone the Easticks are keen to track down, as Barry explains: "We would love to see him again, and love him to see the car. We are trying to find him, but so far with no luck." One of Slater's major inputs was to change the design of the chassis from a tubular affair, to a box section, thereby making it stiffer. It was tested on the McLaren test rig at the time and the box sections, designed to hold the all independent suspension, attached to that original Silver Shadow ladder frame central core, significantly improved the stiffness. The F1 connection didn't end there, as the body was designed by Maurice Gomm and produced



Not exactly scale!

**"Well, I guess I got a bit carried away at the time. I just wanted something faster to race."**

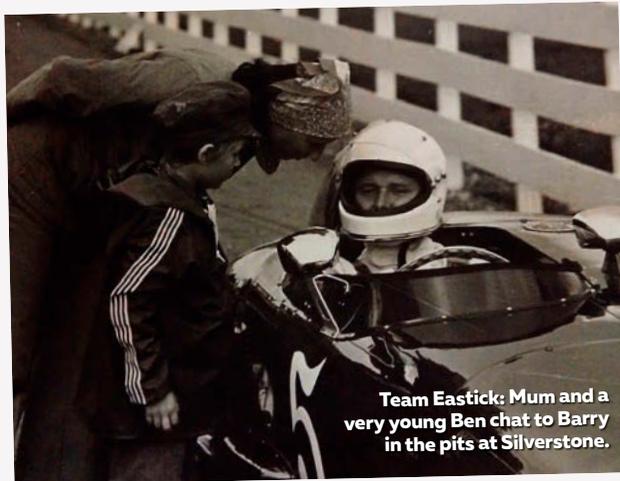
alongside the works Ford Escort rally cars and Graham Hill's Shadow F1 racers. The Bentley single seater pedal box is pure 1970s Grand Prix car.

The body shape is a glorious appreciation of a front engine historic single seater. The nose has a touch of BRM about it (better than a

mock Bentley radiator cowl that was originally tried), while the rear reminds this writer of those wonderful American front engine racers that dominated the Brickyard at the Indianapolis 500 - before the Brit teams of Cooper and Lotus arrived with their 'funny' rear engine race cars.



Barry put the single seater on pole for the 1977 BDC event at Silverstone. And then it rained...



Team Eastick: Mum and a very young Ben chat to Barry in the pits at Silverstone.



It's a long way from the driver's seat to the front nose, quite intimidating even when you just sit in the car, and that extra length can all be blamed on Barry and that 'little bit faster' niggle. Not satisfied with the Bentley's standard 6230cc V8 engine, which was fed by rather meagre SU carbs, he decided to fit a supercharger! This was going to be a Bentley Blower single seater.

In his original plans, Alan Padgett had written to say, 'on no account should you fit a supercharger to this chassis'. Indeed, Barry had investigated using a turbocharger, but Rolls-Royce

had said from their tests it was not suitable for this engine, so Barry contacted Mercedes-Benz UK to discuss both turbocharging and fuel injection. In the end, however, a Roots type Allard supercharger was fitted.

The position of the supercharger, right at the front, elongated the Bentley, added weight, and limited the handling but it was designed to race at Silverstone, which at the time was a triangular circuit of three very long straights, and only three corners making it all about power, not nimble changes of direction. Although not tested officially at

**Above: Forty years later, back at Silverstone, and the competition was still a very different shape to the Eastick single-seater. Photograph courtesy of James Beckett**

the time, the Bentley was thought to be putting out around 600bhp, but Ben is confident that figure was probably around 750bhp (and as we will explain, he is about to find out for real if that estimate is correct).

## ON THE ROAD AND TRACK

The Bentley T Type single seater made its debut at the Bentley Drivers Club »

## MOTORSPORT BENTLEY T TYPE SINGLE SEATER

annual Silverstone meeting in 1976, but broke a layshaft in practice. With the pressures involved in running a large sugar refinery business, racing had to be put on hold for a while but Barry and his Bentley returned to the BDC meeting the following year. He broke the Club's lap record in the April test day, and for the actual race meeting in August, Barry put his unique Blower Bentley on pole and led the race. Unfortunately, the heavens opened after a few laps and it began raining, hard. A wet track, and an extremely powerful, long wheelbase, front heavy race car - complete with standard Silver Shadow recirculating ball steering - do not make a good combination and by Barry's own admission, he lost it coming out of Copse, spinning numerous times and resulting in heavy damage to the front suspension and subframe.

While it was quite a shunt, the inherent strength of the car was proved and repairs were made... so Barry could use the car to drive to work! The supercharger was not refitted when the repairs were made, and the Bentley handled considerably better. New bodywork was produced to cover

the wheels, lights fitted, together with all the other necessities to make it road legal, including a standard Silver Shadow traffic horn. Most importantly, however, it remained a single seater; the wings were added, but there was no butchering of that sleek Maurice Gomm bodywork.

Barry used the car as his work transport along the M4 in the summer months for three years before selling to a car collector in Wales, who never raced it, but kept it in a private museum. It changed hands a further couple of times before being sold to an enthusiast in America.

And that really should be the end of the story.

Both Barry and son Ben credit the American enthusiast Bob Halpern for "keeping the flame alive". He loved the car, kept all the parts, both for road and track, including the now redundant supercharger, and while he didn't race it, the Bentley T Type single seater became well known in all the right classic vehicle circles, including Meadowbank and Pebble Beach. During this time, Ben followed what was happening with the Bentley since, "I've always wanted it.



**The official chassis plate on the front bulkhead. Stamped with SSSC2, giving this unique race car the full Rolls-Royce/Bentley heritage.**

But mother said I shouldn't have it and never wanted it back. Then dad said he'd buy it back as long as I didn't race it but I thought well, that's no good."

Ben has carved himself a strong reputation in historic racing, piloting his Jaguar D Type, so he had some idea of what he would be getting himself into, but the asking price at the time had risen to some \$2.5million, and to acquire the Bentley would have meant selling his beloved D Type, something »

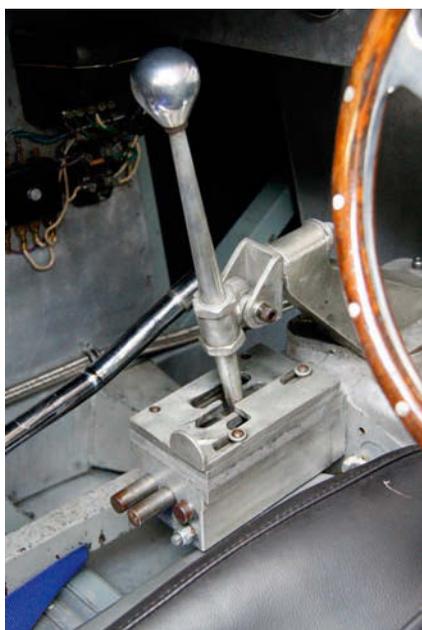


**Standard Bentley V8 engine is a tight fit - it has been in there for 40 years...**



The cockpit today: wood-rimmed Moto-lita steering wheel, plus 'on-off' instruction above ignition ("mum's nail varnish" says Ben). Also note standard turn indicator switch on the right!

**"When I first sat in the car," explains Ben, "I thought what have I done? I'm going to kill myself!"**



Beautifully machined gear selection, linking to R Type transmission.



Front and rear suspension was designed specifically for the Bentley's ladder frame chassis, and is a work of engineering art.



## MOTORSPORT BENTLEY T TYPE SINGLE SEATER

he was reluctant to do. The car changed hands a further couple of times in America, before one winter evening last year while surfing the web checking what had happened to the Bentley, Ben saw it was again up for sale.

"I decided to call the seller, thinking that when he knew who was after it, the price would be silly money, but I was wrong." It seems the owner loved the car and appreciated its history and knew that really what needed to happen

was for it to be returned to the UK to be developed and raced as it was originally designed. "The owner said he would sell it to me for what he paid for it, so I got the car for £278,000, including taxes." The Bentley T Type single seater was coming back to its rightful home.

"When I first sat in the car," explains Ben, "I thought what have I done? I'm going to kill myself! From the driver's seat you couldn't even see the front. But then over the next few weeks,

each time I came over to see the car I sat in it and it seemed to get shorter."

The timing of the purchase couldn't have been better, and the excellent condition gave Ben the confidence to drive it, firstly on a demonstration run at the Flywheel Festival at Bicester, and then at this year's annual Bentley Drivers Club race meeting at Silverstone; the meeting being exactly 40 years after Barry had last raced it there.

What is most extraordinary, however, is not the timing, nor the fact that it was competitive, straight out of the shipping container, but that it drove at all. The engine, while it had been regularly run, has never been out of the chassis, nor has the R Type Continental gearbox been opened up. Ben and his team simply did a leak down test, changed the seals and fluids, poured in some fuel and fired her up. The brakes were overhauled, and harder pads fitted, the servo was taken off the steering (but it remained recirculating ball) and the Minilite wheels were crack tested. Apart from that, it was much as it had left the UK all those years ago.

Not only was it competitive, leading its race until the slick shod modern machinery managed to catch it, but nothing broke. "It was overheating a little," says Ben, "but then the engine hasn't been run full throttle for 40 odd years."

While Silverstone this August must have been a highly emotional meeting for the Eastick family, in true racer fashion, and following what



**Imagine this on the M4 today! The Bentley is fully road legal with the additional wings and lights fitted. Ben has also been able to retain the original registration number.**



**The original Rootes type Allard supercharger has been kept with the vehicle all its life and will be reunited at a later date.**



**This is the space designed for the supercharger – it will be back when Ben rebuilds the racer. Originally it made the racer 'nose heavy', prone to understeer. Hopefully this can be reduced**

appears to be the family motto of 'wanting to go a little faster', this is still not the end of the story.

This winter the Bentley will receive a complete nut and bolt strip down and rebuild. Ben is now a partner in Classic Performance Engineering, a historic motorsport business based on the impressive Bicester Historic industrial estate, and therefore has the expertise available for just this job. His extensive historic racing experience will also be an advantage (something father Barry didn't have to the same degree) plus they will be able to use more modern components in areas like suspension and steering (they will be a fitting rack and pinion unit from a newer Bentley model). The plan is to keep the car original, but actually develop it, first just with the V8 engine fitted, and to run it at Silverstone's BDC meeting next year. If all goes well, the supercharger will then be fitted: "That may be a problem", Ben says with a smile, "but we have got to do it". It is then hoped that the Bentley T Type single seater will make its Goodwood racing debut in 2019, which just happens to be the centenary Anniversary of the Bentley car.

It seems, therefore, that this story still has some way to go, and we look forward to following the forthcoming instalments. There is simply no Bentley like this in the world, and it's given added heritage due to the tacit support at the time from the Rolls-Royce top

## If all goes well, the supercharger will then be fitted: "That may be a problem", Ben says with a smile, "but we have got to do it".

brass. But at the end of the day, all race cars are merely made of metal and pumped full of oil and petrol. What makes this Bentley T Type single seater truly unique is the man behind the amazing, if somewhat crazy, original

project. Barry Eastick, we tip our hat to you, and wish Ben every success as he endeavours to follow the family motto and "go a little bit faster".

As we told you at the start, this is indeed a remarkable story. ■



**Ben and Barry inspect the Bentley as it was rolled out of the shipping container, back in the UK after many years in the US. Barry points out just where that supercharger is supposed to fit.**





• TIME TO BUY •

# BENTLEY TURBO R

Claimed by some to be the last of the best British Bentleys, the Turbo R seems reasonably priced at the moment – some would say ridiculously low. If a high performance luxury saloon is something you fancy this could well be the model for you

WORDS: NIGEL FRYATT PHOTOGRAPHY: KELSEY MEDIA ARCHIVE

Checking the market, it does seem that a Bentley Turbo R could be a potential performance saloon for many an enthusiast, with prices remarkably low for what is on offer. Some care must be taken, and running costs and potential future service and repair bills have to be included in the decision, but come on, you could then claim

to own a Blower Bentley, after all!

Now of course, we are stretching things a little with the Blower Bentley moniker. This is usually attributed to the supercharged version of the monster 4½-litre sports car that attacked the Le Mans 24 Hour Race in 1930, (ironically the supercharged versions proved far less successful than the normally aspirated model

that won in 1927, 1928 and 1929, yet seem to have gained in kudos as the years have passed). We just like the idea of so naming the Turbo R, as this is a serious mileage-munching express now available for a lot less than the £100,000 plus price it would have cost when new.

It also has a link with Le Mans as it is the model that followed the



Mulsanne Turbo that arrived in 1982, a powerful enough model in its own right – effectively a performance version of the Rolls-Royce Silver Spirit, which led commentators at the time to declare that perhaps it was a little too fast for the chassis and suspension. This followed the familiar trend for Bentleys being merely re-badged and re-radiated Rolls-Royces, but the arrival of the Turbo R in 1985 changed that. This was a true performance Bentley, one that W O Bentley would surely have approved of.

That said, it is perhaps ironic that the 'R' in the title didn't represent anything as exciting as Race, but the rather more prosaic Roadholding. Effectively the company was admitting that the Mulsanne Turbo wasn't quite as good as it needed to be for what was under the bonnet and that work had to be done to harness all that power.

So, instead of producing a Mulsanne Turbo II, the marketing men decided to give it a completely different model name. Indeed, at the time, name changing and

model tweaks were common and can still lead to some confusion.

The Mulsanne superseded the very successful Bentley T-series models in 1980 and became the Mulsanne Turbo, in both short and long wheelbase, two years later. In 1984, a slightly lower specification model, the Eight arrived, before the Turbo R a year later.

In 1988, a Mulsanne S appeared, fitted with the same dashboard as the Turbo R. The Brooklands then replaced the Mulsanne S and the Eight in 1994. We get a Turbo R Sport in 1996, the short wheelbase option is dropped a year later leaving the Turbo RL (for long wheelbase), with the final model being the Turbo RT launched in 1997.

The Turbo R was then succeeded by the Arnage. Quite a complex history, perhaps, and these name changes were actually relatively minor technical and specification tweaks, which in some ways help to reinforce the significance of the Turbo R. The model continued in one form or another from its launch in 1985 to its final model year in 1998 and a dozen

plus years in production proves its popularity. There should be a model out there to suit your pocket.

## BEHIND THE WHEEL

The Turbo R was the fastest saloon of its time. *Car* magazine tested a long-wheelbase Turbo R version and achieved 0-60mph in just 6.6 seconds, while the top speed was limited to 135mph.

For a vehicle of this weight and size those are impressive figures. Driving one today you will immediately appreciate that this is a big saloon, but visibility from the driver's seat is good – you'll just be taking care along narrow country lanes.

While the transmission is what today we would consider to be a somewhat old-fashioned column change, three-speed automatic (changed for the later models), that does little to restrict the performance, which will allow the Turbo R to surprise a lot of more modern machines in its ability to accelerate. »



**“Prices are rising and that’s because they are the last of the British Bentleys, the last of the best.”**

This deeply enjoyable characteristic is thanks to the Turbo R’s enormous torque, most of which is available at remarkably low revs. But while similar power was available with the Mulsanne Turbo, the chassis and suspension changes mean that your passengers will not be disturbed if you decide to enjoy yourself.

The ride and handling is improved on the active suspension models and your major problem will be keeping an eye on the speedo and avoiding breaking the speed limit. As ever with a vehicle that is quiet, comfortable and smooth, speed rises a lot quicker than you sometimes realise.

Some control will be needed thanks to the fact that it’s a large 2.4-tonne lump with what by today’s standards is an enormous 6.75-litre V8 engine, on to which has been bolted a turbocharger. It will therefore drink fuel with almost righteous fervour. On average, sensible driving might see you average 14mpg. Put your foot down and that will drop to single figures. If this is to be a daily driver then you will need deep pockets to satisfy its thirst.

## TALKING TECHNICAL

The engine started life in the Mulsanne Turbo in 1982 when Rolls-Royce added a massive Garrett AiResearch TO4 turbocharger to the venerable 6.75-litre V8 engine, boosting power up to around 300bhp (or ‘sufficient’ as

Rolls-Royce would have you believe).

As we have explained, it was too much for the Mulsanne’s chassis and the Turbo R has some significant changes (important as the first models also had a power boost to 330bhp). This involved primarily increasing the roll stiffness of the vehicle considerably. The rear suspension has a Panhard rod securing the rear axle, keeping it in place when all the power is unleashed during serious cornering. The power steering was also tweaked to give it a heavier, more sporting, feel. Larger section tyres were now fitted to the alloy wheels.

The early model Solex carburettor system (from the Carmargue) was replaced on post 1986 models with the fitting of Bosch Motronic fuel injection, reputedly improving fuel consumption, but all things are relative. An ABS braking system was fitted in 1987 – quite important given the power and weight of the Turbo R.

The important point to remember is that the Turbo R was developed during its production life and one of the most important and significant changes occurred in 1988 when it received adaptive ride control, which electronically controlled the shock absorbers to match both the road conditions and the driving style. At the time, this made the Turbo R a very sophisticated luxury saloon. It is, however, essential when looking to purchase today,

that you ensure that the vehicle has received all the necessary servicing by an expert as this is not a system you will be repairing at home!

At the end of 1991 the column shift three-speed gearbox was replaced by the GM four-speed, but it was 1994 that saw one of the most significant changes when Rolls-Royce sent the engine to Cosworth for some work. This resulted in 1995 with the Turbo S model that had an intercooler and a new engine management system.

This raised power to around 385bhp, with the torque ramped up to 533lb ft. This is available from as low as 2000 and 3450rpm, giving you effortless performance.

Production of the shorter wheelbase options ceased in 1996, leaving only the long wheelbase version offering, as you would expect, considerably more rear passenger legroom.

## WHAT COULD GO WRONG?

As you would expect from a Rolls-Royce, this was a well put together car and should be pretty tough. Don’t forget, however, that it was hand built. So if there is some corrosion that means new bodypanels are required. They may not slot together like a VW Golf and you’ll need someone with skill to fit them. Wheelarches in particular can be very expensive to replace.

The early model Solex carburettor

versions can suffer from poor hot starting and the cure seems to be to let the engine cool down – simple, but not very practical. For that reason alone the later fuel-injected models tend to be the more popular.

On a test drive, do make sure the engine runs well when both hot and cold and doesn't exhibit any pinking. As with many large capacity V8 engines, it is essential that decent anti-freeze has been used during its life and also check the simple things like worn or leaking hoses and damaged fan belts.

Engine management errors can be repaired relatively inexpensively, but far better to find a car that has had a well looked after service history from a Rolls-Royce specialist. Check the paperwork carefully. The age of the engine will mean that minor oil leaks are likely, but you want to avoid a car that has left nasty black stains on a driveway.

Post 1994 cars must have their head gaskets changed at 40/50,000 miles, so find a car that this has been done since the job is not cheap and could cost up to £5000. You can use this to have a significant lump chopped off the price, but we'd advise finding a car where the work has already been done.

Both the three and the later four-speed GM automatic gearboxes are well known units and pretty strong, but the later version is certainly a lot smoother in operation. On your test drive, however, make sure that there is no jerking. Again,



it's back to that service record to make sure the fluids have been changed when they were needed.

The handbrake is part of the hydraulic braking system and needs to be regularly adjusted. It is recommended that the whole system is serviced at 96,000 miles or six years and this simply has to be done by a specialist. Models fitted with the adaptive damping system should impress with the comfort and level ride. The activation rods at the rear can seize and would need to be freed off, which would be a relatively inexpensive repair. However, if it's a problem with the ECU or worn rear suspension spheres, costs can start to escalate.

You are unlikely to modify a Turbo R's mechanicals, but it is worth talking to the experts about upgrading brake pads and tyres. Things have changed quite a lot since this car was launched and both these items can be considered 'consumables' thanks to the prodigious power available, so it's worth getting the very best of both fitted.

Inside the Turbo R you should be enjoying the comfort that comes from Connolly leather, Wilton carpets and walnut trimmings. In a well looked after car, while these might show some signs of age, be aware that buying a Turbo R with any serious interior damage will be costly to repair. »



## THE TIME TO BUY PERFORMANCE BARGAIN

There are some great products on the market that can revive leather seats, but tears or stains can be a problem. Check that the walnut dash hasn't delaminated as that will be expensive.

### EXPERT ADVICE

We spoke to Rolls-Royce and Bentley specialist Ghost Motors, based near Sevenoaks, to find out more about the Turbo R and discovered that the company had actually sold three that very week (01732 886002, [www.ghostmotors.co.uk](http://www.ghostmotors.co.uk)).

Interestingly, all of them were going abroad – the recent drop in the value of sterling helping – but it seems the model has always been popular in Europe, especially Germany.

We were interested to know what specific advice Ghost Motors could give a buyer and the answer was emphatic: "If you are going for a post 1994 car, these are the versions that have the engine tuned by Cosworth and the problem there is head gasket failure. These have to be changed every 40/50,000 miles and it's not a case of 'if', but when they will fail if not changed.

"It's a serious job as well,

probably costing £4000–£5000. So, make sure it has been changed, and confirm that by seeing the paperwork and the invoice."

If that was the case with the later models, was there a version that Ghost Motors could recommend?

"It's worth looking for a 1993 car as this has the later interior improvements, including the gear lever moving from the column to the centre console. Importantly that has a properly built Rolls-Royce engine and you should avoid the head gasket problem. But as with any car like this, make sure that it has been looked after by either a main dealer or a specialist. This is not the car that any regular back street mechanic should be looking after.

"These vehicles are still available at a reasonable price – £15,000 to £20,000 should buy you a very nice vehicle – but prices are rising and that's because they are the last of the British Bentleys, the last of the best."

### WHICH MODEL TO BUY?

The Turbo R has had a relatively long production run, during which time there have been a number of

upgrades, some quite significant. This means you will have an interesting choice to consider. Early models, especially those built before the fuel injection was fitted, can be found for under £10,000, which is a lot of luxury for little money, but does come with the caveats already mentioned.

You are more likely to be looking for a version with the active suspension, either the 'pure' Rolls-Royce versions up to 1993, or the models breathed on by Cosworth – more power, but make sure that the head gasket has been changed. A budget of between £15,000 and £20,000 should find you a very decent Turbo R and given the specification, performance, elegance and driving experience on offer that has to be a bargain by any standards.

If you are considering a Turbo R, remember this is a complex vehicle and check its history carefully. If unsure, get some specialist advice. You'll be taking the vehicle there for servicing, so you have to include that (and the vehicle's thirst) into your annual budget.

But this Blower Bentley could become a real joy to own. 'Buy now' also seems to be the advice as prices appear to be ridiculously low – and that probably won't last. ■



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# THE ROLLS-ROYCE A-TO-Z

Taking an entertaining skip through the history of Rolls-Royce, Paul Guinness looks at some personal alphabetical milestones of the company's extended history

**A**lthough Charles Rolls and Henry Royce first entered into business together in 1904, it was two years later that the partnership was formalised by the creation of Rolls-Royce Limited. During the next 111 years, Rolls-Royce became famous for the quality of its engineering, achieving excellence in the motor car, aviation and military vehicle fields. Here we take a look back at some of the marque's highlights in the automotive field via this A to Z feature, taking in some of the crucial names, locations, models and achievements that helped to shape the brand.

From the earliest cars sold through

Charles Rolls' London-based showroom through to the very latest that are hand-assembled at the company's current Goodwood headquarters, every Rolls-Royce has been engineered to an extraordinarily high standard, enabling its maker to spend much of the last century hailing its models as the best cars in the world.

The Silver Ghost of 1906 set new standards in engineering quality and durability, paving the way for such iconic successors as the Phantom of 1925, the Wraith of 1938, the Silver Dawn of 1949 and the long-running Silver Cloud series of 1955-on. The company really entered the modern era with the

more youthful Silver Shadow of 1965, and reinvented itself again 15 years later via the Silver Spirit – as well as the various badge-engineered Bentley versions that achieved major success.

Through various changes of ownership, the Rolls-Royce name has continued to thrive, and even in the 21st century – now under BMW control – the company does impressively well thanks to an expanded line-up. Rolls-Royces is now the world's most successful manufacturer in the super-luxury sector of the market. Not bad for a marque created via a business arrangement between a skilled engineer and the owner of an early car dealership.

## A IS FOR... ALPINE TRIAL OF 1913

The early years of motoring saw numerous trials and challenges to prove the durability of the motor car, one of the most torturous being the Alpine Trials of 1910–on. It was in the 1913 event, however, that Rolls-Royce achieved worldwide fame, with three modified Silver Ghosts making up an official works team, plus a privately-entered example.

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



## B IS FOR... BMW

There was some confusion in 1998 when Rolls-Royce owner Vickers struck a deal with Volkswagen to buy its Crewe factory, plus all rights to the Spirit of Ecstasy mascot and the shape of the Rolls-Royce radiator grille. In a separate deal, however, BMW (which was already supplying engines to Rolls-Royce Motors) paid £40m to licence the Rolls-Royce name and logo – which meant that VW was effectively unable to build a new Rolls-Royce.

After lengthy negotiations between the two German companies, it was agreed that Volkswagen would continue to produce existing Rolls-Royces until the end of 2002, with BMW still supplying engines. From January 2003, all Rolls-Royce rights would then switch to BMW, leaving Volkswagen with Bentley (the other marque acquired by VW under the 1998 agreement with Vickers).



## C IS FOR... CREWE

The 'Crewe era' was the most long-lived for Rolls-Royce car production, easily beating the previous success of the Manchester and Derby factories. Following the company's acquisition of Bentley in 1931 and its expansion within the aircraft industry throughout that decade, Rolls-Royce needed extra factory space and began looking for a new site.

The railway town of Crewe offered superb transport infrastructure and no shortage of skilled labour. A site was chosen on the outskirts of town and construction began in July 1938. Nowadays the Crewe factory is the home of Volkswagen-owned Bentley Motors.



## D IS FOR... DROPHEAD COUPÉ

If you had around £360,000 last year to spend on a brand new convertible, you would have taken a look at that year's Phantom Drophead Coupé, which Rolls-Royce described as "the Phantom's free-spirited alter ego". But, of course, the soft-top Phantom isn't the first of its kind, with predecessors like the HJ Mulliner-converted Silver Cloud drophead-coupé being considered just as opulent during their time.

The most successful of all drophead coupé Rolls-Royces, however, was the Corniche Convertible that ran from 1966 right through to 1995, making it the longest-lived of all the Rolls-Royce production models – although just 5146 cars were built during that 29-year run. The Corniche name reappeared in 2000, when a short-lived two-door convertible based around the Silver Seraph was launched.



## E IS FOR... ENGLISH LEATHER

Rolls-Royce has traditionally used the finest hide in all of its cars, as you'd expect from a marque that's regularly claimed to produce the best in the world. Back in the 'Seventies, the company boasted that the Silver Shadow's seats were "upholstered »



## HERITAGE A-TO-Z OF ROLLS-ROYCE

in the best English leather from Connolly Brothers". Rolls-Royce went on to explain that it used "eight complete hides in each motor car, carefully chosen for their consistent quality, colour and texture". The floor, meanwhile, was "carpeted from door to door in deep, soft Wilton tufted pile".

### F IS FOR... FAB 1

Throughout the original Thunderbirds series, Lady Penelope was chauffeured around (by the ever-obedient Parker) in a bespoke six-wheeled pink Rolls-Royce bearing the registration number FAB 1. Series co-creator Gerry Anderson explained that for Lady Penelope's personality and "the role she played in International Rescue, it could only be a Rolls-Royce".

With four wheels, up front and a bulletproof glass canopy, it was certainly an eye-catching variation on the Rolls-Royce theme. Made from plywood and measuring seven feet in length, the original FAB 1 cost an amazing £2500 to build in 1964. Subsequently, every young boy of the 'Sixties lusted after the Dinky version shown here.



### G IS FOR... GOODWOOD

Rolls-Royce might be under German ownership these days, but its modern-day location couldn't be any more British – Goodwood, West Sussex. Officially opened for business on January 1, 2003, the Goodwood plant is the headquarters of BMW-owned Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, as well as its manufacturing and assembly site. It covers almost 250,000 square feet and employs more than 800 people.



Acquired from the Earl of March, the site formed part of his Goodwood Estate. The initial build cost was around £200 million, with famed architect Sir Nicholas Grimshaw designing a state-of-the-art building featuring the UK's largest 'living roof' made up of sedum plants.

### H IS FOR... ERNEST HIVES

One of the most significant figures in the early history of Rolls-Royce was Ernest Walter Hives, who was employed by the firm for almost half a century. After a stint as Charles Royce's chauffeur, Hives moved to Napier before his career at Rolls-Royce began in 1908 as a tester. By 1914 he was head of Rolls-Royce's experimental department thanks to his skills as an engineer, and in 1937 Hives was appointed as works manager and became a company director.



Hives oversaw production of Rolls-Royce aero engines throughout the Second World War and in 1946 became the company's Managing Director. By 1950, Hives had not only gained a peerage (becoming Baron Hives of Hazeldean) but was now the Chairman of Rolls-Royce, a role he retained until his retirement seven years later at the age of 70.

### I IS FOR... INGENUITY

When an early pioneer of motoring decides to build his own car because he's dissatisfied with what's already in production elsewhere, you know the end result is going to be impressive. That was the case with Henry Royce, who by 1904 had used his engineering acumen to build a total of three high-quality motor cars.

By the following year – and before the creation of Rolls-Royce Ltd. in 1906 – CS Rolls & Co. issued a brochure for its new range of 10hp to 30hp cars, each of which was claimed to be a "model of accurate and scientific construction". And to reassure anyone who had doubts about such a new marque, the brochure explained that "the Rolls-Royce car is no experiment".

10 H.P. ROLLS-ROYCE  
CAR.

10 H.P. "R•R" TONNEAU.  
TWO CYLINDERS.  
70 inches behind dashboard. Tires 32 x 34 inches.

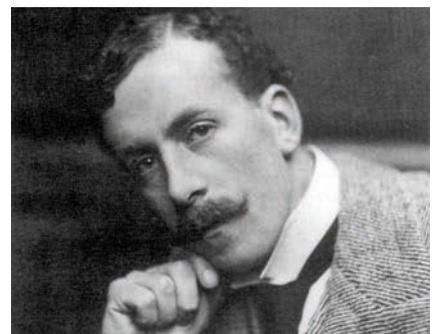
THREE SPEEDS FORWARD AND REVERSE.  
DIRECT DRIVE ON TOP SPEED.

The most silent Two-cylinder Car  
in the World.

PRICE:  
With "Barker" Tonneau Body £395.

### J IS FOR... CLAUDE JOHNSON

Self-described as "the hyphen in the Rolls-Royce name", Johnson played an important role in the early history of the firm. Rolls-Royce was very much a three-man team, with Royce producing the cars, Rolls promoting and selling them, and Johnson being active in the business side of things. It was, for example, Johnson who persuaded Rolls and Royce that the company should simplify its range to a single model – the 40/50, known as the Silver Ghost upon its launch. It was an inspired move, with this focus on one design enabling Rolls-Royce to build "the best car that money can buy".



### K IS FOR... KING GEORGE V

King George V (formerly the Prince of Wales until the death of his father in 1910) was a keen follower of the motor

car during its infancy, fascinated by the invention that was taking Europe and America by storm. The earliest production Rolls-Royces came with coach-built bodywork by Barker & Co., a company that had held the Royal Warrant for many years and was coach-maker to His Majesty the King and HRH The Prince of Wales 110 years ago. King George V continued the Rolls-Royce connection after ascending the throne, and is shown here aboard a very early model.



## L IS FOR... LONG-WHEELBASE

Soon after the Silver Shadow's launch, Rolls-Royce began development of a long-wheelbase version, with a pilot run of just 10 cars built (one of them for Princess Margaret) in 1966/1967. The project was deemed a success, and Rolls-Royce decided to make the long-wheelbase a full-time member of the Silver Shadow family.

The difference in price was considerable, with the long-wheelbase Silver Shadow costing £10,643 upon its debut (or a hefty £11,348 with a chauffeur's division) at a time when the standard-length model could be had for 'only' £9272. 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 chauffeur-driven end of the market.



## M IS FOR... MULLINER PARK WARD

Park Ward and HJ Mulliner were independent London-based coachbuilders before being acquired

by Rolls-Royce in 1939 and 1959 respectively, finally merged into a single subsidiary in 1961 by the creation of Mulliner Park Ward.

One of the new division's most notable achievements was the launch of the bespoke Silver Cloud III Mulliner Park Ward, available in coupé or convertible guise and instantly recognisable thanks to its slanted quad headlamps. Mulliner Park Ward was also responsible for the 1966-on Corniche and production of the ultra-prestigious Phantom VI.



## N IS FOR... NUMBERS

Rolls-Royce has always fascinated the followers of automotive statistics. Play a game of car-based Top Trumps and you'll usually win with a Rolls-Royce card when it comes to price, engine capacity and more. Go back 30 years, for example, and Rolls-Royce produced the two most expensive cars on sale in the UK: The Camargue and Continental Convertible at £83,122 and £83,558 respectively. They made the entry-level Silver Spirit look almost bargain-like at a shade under £60,000. And things haven't changed all that much!



## O IS FOR... OPULENCE

Aside from the excellence of its engineering, Rolls-Royce has always been renowned for the luxury and opulence of its motor cars. That's as true today as it's always been. And even in the 'Seventies, when traditionalists might have balked at the notion of the Silver Shadow's bodyshell being produced by Pressed Steel Company Ltd. (which also mass-produced 'shells for a wide range of BMC and Rootes cars) on-board opulence was guaranteed.

"Inside your Rolls-Royce is a private world of your own" boasted one brochure from 1975, a world that featured "luxurious carpeting, the

rich aroma of real leather, and the visual artistry of the wood-workers".



## P IS FOR... PININFARINA

Italian styling by Pininfarina was the order of the day for the new Camargue, launched by Rolls-Royce in 1975 and immediately seen by purists as a controversial offering. Why? Because instead of this being an ultra-luxurious saloon in the grand tradition, the Camargue was a two-door coupé with angular styling that divided opinion.

Although based on the Silver Shadow platform and sharing the same 6750cc V8, the Camargue couldn't have been more different. It was also massively expensive, which helps explain why just 531 examples were built during its 11-year career – most of them finding buyers in the Middle East.



## Q IS FOR... QUIET PLEASE!

Rolls-Royces have long been known for providing ultra-quiet transport, a feature that in the 'Fifties led to a rather impressive claim: "At 60 miles an hour the loudest noise in this new Rolls-Royce comes from the electric clock". That quote actually came from the technical editor of The Motor magazine, but was soon adopted by Rolls-Royce for its marketing. It made an unforgettable headline »

# HERITAGE A-TO-Z OF ROLLS-ROYCE

in this American advert for the Silver Cloud, and was subsequently re-quoted countless times.



"At 60 miles an hour the loudest noise in this new Rolls-Royce comes from the electric clock"

What makes Rolls-Royce the best car in the world? There is really no magic about it -

- 1. The 60 miles an hour the loudest noise comes from the electric clock, upon the "Electric Clock" of our watches. There are no other noise-producing accessories.
- 2. Every Rolls-Royce engine is run for seven hours a full 24-hour test, and each car is run for 100 hours of actual road testing and road work.
- 3. The Rolls-Royce is designed as an automobile and is a pleasure to drive rather than a luxury automobile.
- 4. The car has power steering, power brakes, and automatic gearshift. It is very easy to drive and to park. No chauffeur required.
- 5. The finished car spends a week in the final works, being hand-trimmed. There is a well-paid 100 man staff. For example, the engine is a masterpiece of hand work, which.
- 6. The Rolls-Royce is guaranteed for three years.

A total of three two-cylinder Royce cars were built by the time their creator was introduced to Charles Rolls. A deal was struck in December 1904, which saw Rolls selling all the cars that Royce could build - a range of two- to six-cylinder models that would be called Rolls-Royce. The partnership was formalised in 1906 by the formation of Rolls-Royce Limited. Tragically, Charles Royce died in an aircraft accident as early as 1910, at the age of 32. Henry Royce passed away in 1933 at the age of 70.

## S IS FOR... SILVER SHADOW

Prior to the Silver Shadow, Rolls-Royces had been traditional in the extreme, their separate-chassis designs, coach-built bodywork and ultra-stately image ensuring their continued appeal to 'old money' buyers. But times were changing by the 'Sixties, with plenty of younger, wealthy customers looking for something a tad more modern.

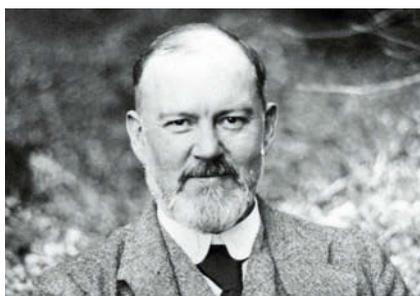
That's where the new-for-1965 Silver Shadow came in, with relatively low-slung styling and various innovations like independent self-leveling suspension and all-disc braking. Britain's most upmarket brand had entered a whole new era, and the Silver Shadow went on to be the most successful Rolls-Royce of all time, with around 30,000 sold by the time production ceased in 1980.

more than a decade, producing a daughter, who Eleanor gave up for adoption. But tragedy was to strike in December 1915, when the SS Persia - on which Scott-Montagu and Eleanor Thornton were sailing to India - was torpedoed by a German U-boat. Eleanor drowned, along with hundreds of her fellow passengers, but Scott-Montagu was amongst the survivors.



## R IS FOR... ROLLS (AND ROYCE)

Born in 1877, Charles Rolls was an early motoring entrepreneur, establishing one of Britain's first car dealerships - CS Rolls & Co. - to import Peugeot and Minerva vehicles. By contrast, Henry Royce was 14 years older than Rolls and a skilled engineer who specialised in manufacturing dynamos; he bought his first motor car (a De Dion) in 1901, but three years later built his own car after becoming dissatisfied with the quality of others.

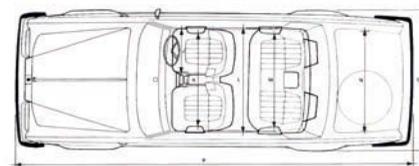
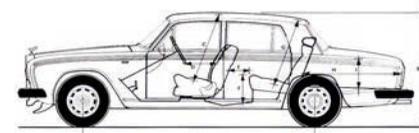


## U IS FOR...UNITARY CONSTRUCTION

Up until the launch of the Silver Shadow in 1965, Rolls-Royce had always relied on separate-chassis construction, a major advantage to those coachbuilders

## T IS FOR... ELEANOR THORNTON

Otherwise known by her nickname of 'Thorn', Eleanor Thornton is thought to have been the model behind Rolls-Royce's famous Spirit of Ecstasy emblem, having posed for sculptor Charles Sykes. Eleanor was employed as secretary to John Edward Scott-Montagu (the second Baron Montagu of Beaulieu) from 1902, in his capacity as editor of The Car Illustrated magazine. The two had a secret affair for



offering bespoke bodywork at the time. But the arrival of the revolutionary newcomer of the mid 'Sixties saw Rolls-Royce adopting a unitary body design (otherwise known as monocoque construction) for the first time ever. The world's most prestigious brand had finally entered the modern era with a model that would go on to enjoy a highly successful 15-year career.

## V IS FOR... VOLKSWAGEN (AND VICKERS)

Rolls-Royce Motors was created in 1973 when the car side of the business was de-merged from Rolls-Royce Ltd., the latter having been nationalised in 1971 after its financial collapse. Rolls-Royce as a motor manufacturer was now a separate entity, and in 1980 was sold to Vickers.

Both Rolls-Royce and Bentley remained under Vickers control until 1998, when a deal was struck with Germany's Volkswagen to pay £430 million (compared with an offer of £340 million from BMW) for the Crewe factory and all rights to the Spirit of Ecstasy, plus the shape of the Rolls-Royce radiator grille. What it didn't buy were the rights to the Rolls-Royce name... the solution for which can be found under 'B is for BMW'.



**Volkswagen**

## W IS FOR... WRAITH

The original Rolls-Royce Wraith was launched in 1938, powered by the



same 4257cc straight-six engine found in the previous 25/30 but featuring larger valves, a new crankshaft and a crossflow cylinder head. The Wraith was an advanced machine for the time, boasting coil-sprung independent suspension among its list of modern features. Production ceased in 1939 with the outbreak of the Second World War, after a run of just 491 cars.

Updated variations on the same theme entered production in the post-war years, albeit now known as the Silver Wraith. The Wraith name finally disappeared in 1959 but was to be resurrected in 2013, when Rolls-Royce unveiled a newcomer featuring stylish two-door fastback styling.

## X IS FOR... (E)XTREME TESTING

Every Rolls-Royce ever built has been the result of extreme testing before launch, to ensure that the company's high standards of engineering, durability and reliability are maintained with each new generation. This is as true now as it was 110 years ago, when the new 40/50hp Rolls-Royce was unveiled at the London Motor Show. By the following year, with the new model on sale internationally, Rolls-Royce made history by producing the first car to break the world record for a non-stop run of 14,372 miles. That model was the Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost, which would remain in production for almost 20 years.



## Y IS FOR... THE YELLOW ROLLS-ROYCE

Who remembers this movie from 1964, starring Ingrid Bergman, Rex Harrison and Shirley MacLaine? Amongst the big-name stars was the brightly-hued 1930 Rolls-Royce Phantom II that gave the film its title and which featured throughout. Set mainly in the pre-war years of the 'Thirties, The Yellow Rolls-Royce focused on the trials and tribulations of the car's

numerous owners, set against some of Europe's most spectacular backdrops.

Critics of the time weren't over-complimentary, with the New York Times describing the film as a "pretty slick vehicle that is pleasing to the eye and occasionally amusing, but it hardly seems worthy of all the effort and the noted personalities involved".



## Z IS FOR... ZENITH COLLECTION

The Phantom that marked the launch of BMW-owned Rolls-Royce Motor Cars in 2003 has ceased production, and will be replaced in 2018 by the next generation model based around the company's all-new aluminium architecture. However, the Phantom Coupé and Drophead Coupé won't be replaced, and have ended their days via a 50-car 'special edition' run known as the Phantom Zenith Collection. The very last Phantom Coupé and Drophead Coupé from the Zenith Collection was built in November 2016.





## IAN SEABROOK

Recalling a 'sports' car Bentley special that was exceedingly curious, and most peculiar to drive, but so pleasing that such eccentricity still actually exists

A visit to the Real Car Company ([www.realcar.co.uk](http://www.realcar.co.uk)) in Bethesda, North Wales is always a pleasure.

It is a land of stunning scenery, and a vintage or early post-war Rolls-Royce or Bentley is a fine way to experience such dramatic countryside. This company always has some beautiful examples of both breeds in stock, but every now and then, they stock something a little outside the norm.

A few years back, Ian Johnstone introduced me to a very unusual special that they had for sale. Back in the day, many thought the best thing to do with a rotten Bentley MkVI was throw away the bodywork, especially the standard steel body, and create something a bit more sporty. With the right attention to detail, you could build something with a whiff of the 1930s, for a fraction of the cost – and with a few more creature comforts.

The problem is, this is rather harder to achieve than you might expect. For a start, the grille of a pre-war Bentley will tend to be behind the front axle line, whereas that of the MkVI is rather further forward. That means the looks are already compromised without a certain amount of re-engineering. Secondly, while a standard steel body may look fairly short by saloon standards, turn the car into a sports car and the vast length of its wheelbase becomes more apparent. So, you really need further work to shorten the chassis and propshaft. This car had none of these things, so it ended up with something of a 'jolly kit car look.' It really is most strange, with a slightly crowded frontal appearance matched with rear bodywork that had more than a whiff of a horse drawn carriage. We never got to experience the weather gear – thankfully Snowdonia is capable of sunshine – but we suspect you'd find it easier to just get wet.

That aside, it was great fun to drive. Without the weight of a saloon body, performance could certainly be described as entertaining. First

**“...a slightly crowded frontal appearance matched with rear bodywork that had more than a whiff of a horse drawn carriage”**



**Curious Bentley MkVI 'Sports' proved far more captivating than its unconventional looks suggest.**



**Gearshift ends up stuck beneath driver's knee.**

gear was largely redundant, which is good, for the lever sprouted from the floor right under the driver's right knee. This is because the driving position, with a lowered seat, rather encouraged a 'knees out' stance. Ergonomics another failure point then.

Yet, the eccentricity of this car was very much part of its appeal. I would say we had far more fun in it than we would have with a saloon. The wind was entirely in



**Six-cylinder engine provides amusing performance thanks to light weight.**

the hair, the road felt enchantingly close and the long wheelbase made it very stable when cornering on Snowdonia's beautiful, twisty roads.

In terms of visuals and driving position, it can hardly be regarded as a success. After a nice run through the countryside, though, my view was that I couldn't care less about those criteria. I felt it rude to ask for another go, but that thought was very much on my mind. ■



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