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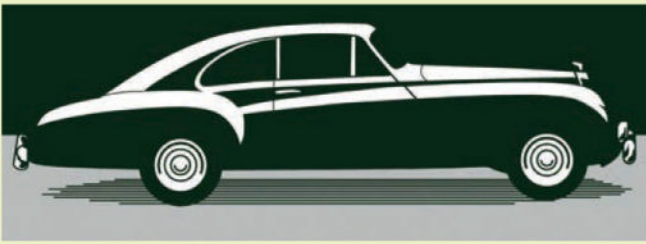


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Kelsey Publishing Ltd, The Granary, Downs Court,
Yalding Hill, Yalding, Kent, ME18 6AL, United Kingdom
+44 (0)1959 541444

Editorial

Editor Nigel Boothman, rrb.ed@kelsey.co.uk

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

Contributors

Richard Gunn, Richard Holdsworth, Lewis Houghton,
Gregory Owain, Steve Natale

Advertisement Sales

Talk Media Sales

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

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

Advertising Production

Talk Media Sales

Production Manager Nick Bond

Artwork Enquiries 01732 445325, nick@talk-media.co.uk

Management

Publisher Gareth Beesley

Managing Director Phil Weeden

Subscription Marketing Director Kevin McCormick

Retail Director Steve Brown

Fulfillment Manager Andy Cotton

Events Manager Kat Chappell

Print Production Manager Georgina Harris

Print Production Controllers Kelly Orriss, Hayley Brown

Subscription Marketing Managers Dave Sage

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

Customer service and subscription postal address:

Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver Customer Service Team

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

Yalding, Kent, ME18 6AL, United Kingdom

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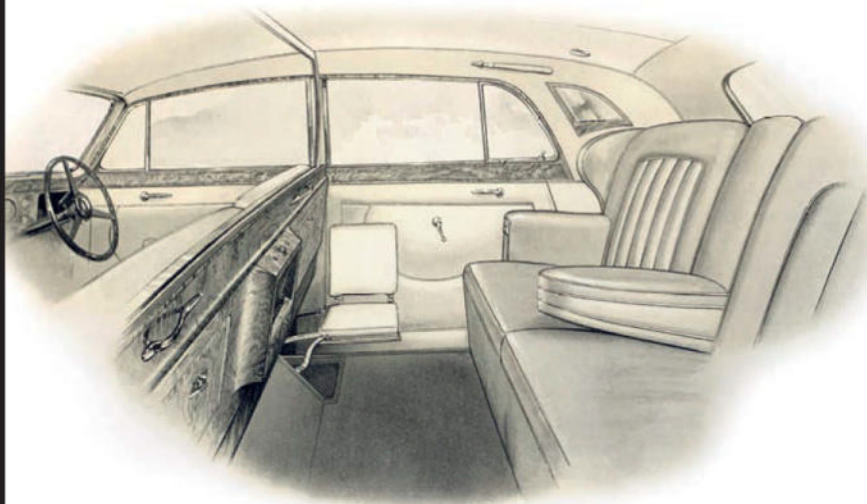
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First class travel

It's a little ironic that the first owner of our cover car, Sir Freddie Laker, invented the concept of no-frills air travel. Skytrain was a single-class offering; no turning left for champagne and caviar. Sir Freddie, though a personable man of the people, enjoyed the good things his courage and hard work had bought him, including first-class travel whenever he was on the ground, in the form of this Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow.

That agreeable feeling of holding a first-class ticket is common to many of the cars we cover in *RR&BD*, and this issue's selection is no different. Well, except perhaps for the 1926 Bentley 3-litre on page 48, re-engineered to accelerate much quicker and hold a higher cruising speed than any standard 3-litre ever managed. More akin to riding on the hotplate of the mighty steam loco that towed those first-class cabins, perhaps? Elsewhere, a capacious 1954 Silver Wraith limousine (catalogue sketch above), a thunderous Bentley Brooklands and two Goodwood-era Rolls-Royce Phantoms certainly will replicate the sensation of a first-class berth. Our Anatomy Of...series features perhaps the ultimate high-speed luxury conveyances of their day, the Bentley R-type and S-type Continentals, starting on page 56.

For those of us with a keen eye on the market, we can introduce an important new feature this issue. The first edition of our Auction Tracker appears on page 22. It's compiled by Peter Lavers, who is a Bentley owner, long-standing subscriber, recent contributor (see the May/June issue - 'Silver Seraph and Arnage launch: I was there') and auctioneer. Peter worked for Rolls-Royce and Bentley Motor Cars at Crewe for 18 years, where one of his roles was as Manager of Market Analysis. He is now a customer and database management consultant, so I hope you agree he is well qualified for the task of tracking and analysing the UK auction trends on our behalf. I hope you enjoy his first column, and the rest of this issue.

Nigel Boothman

rrb.ed@kelsey.co.uk

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Bought new by airline tycoon Sir Freddie Laker, this 1975 Silver Shadow has been well used but well pampered too, including by its latest keeper

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ROLLS-ROYCE & BENTLEY *driver*

“Cornering is a joy, leaning out into the wind-blast on a right-hander”



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Can modern two-door pairing live up to the great name?

SUBSCRIPTION OFFERS

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BENTLEY BLIZZARD LIVES AT LAST

Photography: Russell Dixon Productions & Gunhill Studios.

After many years of development, research and craftsmanship, the first road-going Bentley Blizzard has been completed. As we go to press, the final trimming tasks have been finished and plans are being made for the car's first public appearances.

The Blizzard has been created by a partnership of Padgetts Motor Engineers, the well-known Bentley R-type Continental experts, and engine specialists Chesman Motorsport. The car is a realisation of an idea from 1950 by Ivan Evernden, then Chief Projects Engineer at Rolls-Royce. He and John Blatchley are thought to have guided designer and painter Cecily Jenner, who created the only surviving sketches of a two-seat open roadster, based on a Bentley Mk VI chassis and mechanical components. These sketches inspired father-and-son team Stephen and

Chris Pearson of Chesman Motorsport to work with Jeremy Padgett and create the real thing, as part of a limited series of 15 hand-built cars.

Blizzard Motor Cars, the company formed to complete the project, was exhibiting full-scale models as long ago as 2019. With the Covid pandemic intervening, moving on to a fully completed, roadworthy car has been time-consuming. Chris Pearson described the current state of the project.

'We did mechanical tests in winter, before paint, checking the fit and finish and giving the car a shakedown to eliminate any unwanted noise or other snags. So the final stages have been cosmetic. The next step is to invite some long-term followers of the project to experience the finished car. We have at least six people who are in serious discussions about

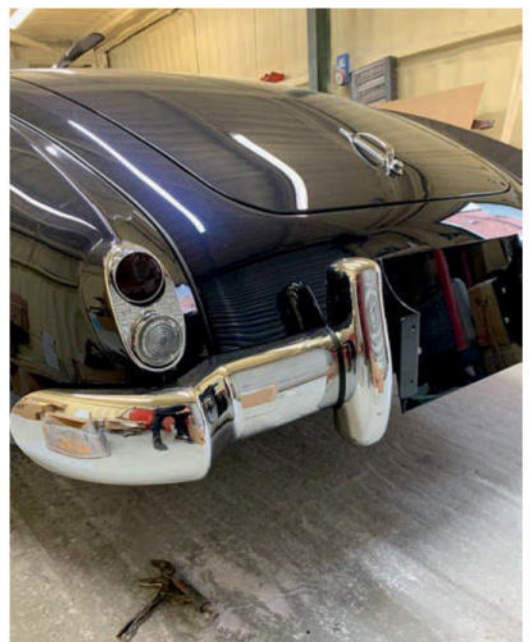
acquiring one of the completed cars, but understandably, they have wanted to see the finished product first.'

FACTS AND FIGURES

The Blizzard is built on a period Mk VI or R-type chassis and retains much of the mechanical specification (albeit updated, or made better than new) and a tuned version of the original engine, so each car is effectively a coachbuilt re-bodying of an existing Bentley. The engine specification is impressive: 4.9-litre capacity, like the later R-type Continentals, but with a triple-carb conversion for a dyno-tested 207bhp and 270lb ft of torque. Chris Pearson estimates the Blizzard's weight at perhaps two-thirds that of an R-type Continental, yet with an extra 50bhp under the bonnet. This, teamed with a modern five-speed manual



Full-scale mock-up seen in 2019 - now the real thing is ready



A sneak preview of the finished car - this deep blue is the chosen colour



A Bentley rolling chassis transformed to Blizzard specification



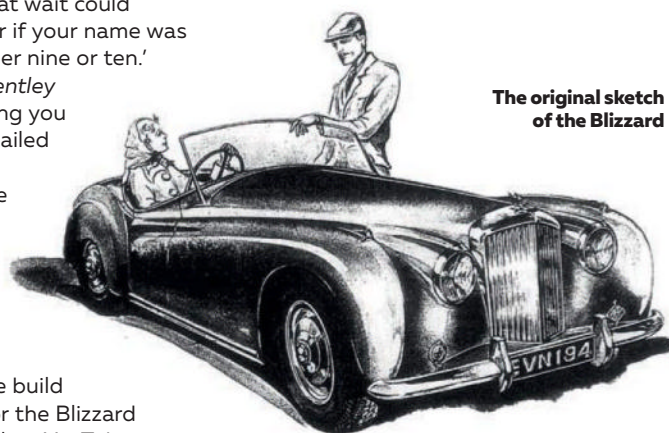
Stephen Pearson, Chris Pearson and Jeremy Padgett

gearbox (automatics or original four-speed manuals can be specified too) should give the Blizzard performance to rival the car Evernden imagined it taking on – the Jaguar XK 120.

'The five-speed gearbox really allows the driver to get the best out of the uprated engine,' said Pearson. 'It permits the performance and higher cruising speeds we were seeking, but importantly it also allows a central position for the gearstick, which is much more natural for most people than having the lever to the right of the driver's seat. It also avoids the issue of having to step over or around the gear lever when getting in and out through relatively small doors.'

perhaps 12-18 months for the first few chassis, but that wait could obviously be longer if your name was down for car number nine or ten.'

Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver hopes to bring you one of the first detailed features on the completed example when we visit Blizzard Motor Cars for a road test in the near future. Those wishing to see more about the build story can search for the Blizzard Motor Cars channel on YouTube.



The original sketch of the Blizzard

SOMETHING TO BUILD ON?

The car is bodied in aluminium, just as the team believe Bentley would have specified from a coachbuilder, with other items such as the windscreen frame and the radiator grille all created from scratch by traditional methods. The entirely hand-made, bespoke nature of every panel and the ground-up restoration of every chassis component makes for both a considerable lead time and a price that's firmly in the category of 'if you have to ask': something in the order of £850,000 + VAT and upwards, depending on the customer's preferred specification. But compared with other hand-made re-creations or 'continuations' based on 1950s sporting cars – think Aston Martin or Jaguar – the price is almost modest.

'Our aim is to have three cars in production at any one time, once the orders are confirmed,' said Pearson. 'This should mean lead times of



Shown here before plating and painting, the new body has impressive presence



Hand-made brass screen surround is like sculpture



Impressive symmetry after thousands of hours of coach-craft

AUSTRALIAN ROLLS-ROYCE ANNUAL RALLY 2023: THE ADELAIDE HILLS

Words & Pictures: Richard Holdsworth

The annual concours of the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of Australia is rotated between States, and this year it was the turn of the South Australian Branch, with State President Michael Henningsen and rally coordinator Rory Poland at the helm. They organised a highly successful event enjoyed by owners and enthusiasts from virtually all corners of this vast country. One of the first to arrive and demonstrate the desire to be involved was part of the Queensland contingent, Brain Carson, who made the 6000-kilometre (3800-mile) round trip in his 1988 Bentley Mulsanne S. There was a mix of cars representing many of the models built by Rolls-Royce and

Bentley, the oldest attendee being the 1913 Silver Ghost owned by Julian McNeil right up to the latest Goodwood models courtesy of several Club members.

Staged over five days from Wednesday to the farewell breakfast on the Monday morning, the rally was based in the town of Hahndorf in the Adelaide Hills, some 30 miles from the centre of Adelaide. This area was the destination for many settlers from Bavaria and elsewhere in Germany back in the 1880s and Hahndorf is now regarded as the most intact existing German settlement in Australia. Many of the excursions during the five days were to world-famous wineries in the Hills area and the nearby Barossa Valley and Fleurieu Peninsula south of Adelaide. On the Saturday evening, following concours judging, guests were treated to a German theme at The Haus, a renowned hotel, restaurant

and conference venue at Hahndorf.

The concours attracted 37 entries divided into 14 classes with trophies awarded to winners in another nine specialist categories. The winner of the Bentley Derby class was Wayne Fitzgerald's 1934 3½-litre drophead coupe by Park Ward and the car went on to carry off the concours Overall Winner trophy. Since Mr Fitzgerald bought the car in October 2010 it's been extensively restored from an incorrect cream-over-black to the specification in which it left Park Ward; extensive works to engine and repairs to the chassis were also required.

The Derby attracted the judges' attention with its immaculate 'as-new' condition with the body in black and contrasting burgundy pin-stripe and the spare wheel now mounted correctly at the car's rear. One departure from the original was the addition of the Fitzgerald family crest to the doors.

Other notable class winners were Rory Poland who won both the Best Australian Coachwork Trophy and the 25/30 hp class with his beautifully presented 1937 25/30 model with bodywork by Martin & King of Melbourne. Peter Forbes' 1951 Mk VI saloon by James Young took the Bentley VI and R-Type class and while the Post-War Original Coachbuilt Trophy went to Ken King's 1988 Bentley Continental. One of the oldest cars in the Rally – Adrian Akhurst's 1921 Silver Ghost Tourer with bodywork by Vintage Motor Garage of Sydney – took the Pre-Ghost and Silver Ghost trophy.



Gerald Swinnerton's striking 2004 Continental GT took the award for best Bentley and derivative.



Best Bentley VI and R-Type went to Peter Forbes' 1951 saloon by James Young.



Yu Yang's glorious 1963 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud III.



Wayne Fitzgerald and partner, Ruth, with the overall winner at the 2023 Australian Rally held at Hahndorf in South Australia. The car is the splendidly restored 1934 Derby Bentley drophead coupé with bodywork by Park Ward.



The oldest car in the rally, 1913 40/50hp.



Dean Sullivan, left, and State President of the South Australian Rolls-Royce Owners' Club, Michael Henningsen, right, congratulate Wayne Fitzgerald for overall winner of the 2023 Australian Rally and Concours.



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BLOWER



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4 LITRE

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1927
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FIENNES PARTS SURVIVES IN NEW OWNERSHIP

Fiennes Parts, a crucial source of supply for pre-war Rolls-Royce and Derby Bentley spares, has been rescued from the collapse of the Fiennes Restoration group and will continue trading.

The business will carry on under the same name, but will move premises in the hands of three new directors. Emily Anderson will run the business day to day, supported by Paul Dyas and Stephen Owens. Emily's father, Stuart Anderson, has also been closely

involved. They are now setting up new premises and completing the immense task of bagging up, moving and cataloguing the inventory.

'We're all from a Derby Bentley-related background,' said Emily. 'Dad and I have a collection of these cars, some in rebuild and a couple that we compete with, racing and rallying. When news of receivership came, we went to view Fiennes Parts to see what might be available for our cars, but the more

we looked into it, the more we realised there was no-one else who covered the same range if this business vanished. So we thought of acquiring it ourselves, and we had a pretty brief window to attract investors and seal the deal.'

What was initially a sealed-bid process for a job-lot of parts expanded to become an arrangement that included the intellectual property rights, manufacturing rights, data, drawings, patterns and the website. As we go to press, the final details of acquisition for the website remain to be sorted, but the business is already able to fulfil orders sent by email.

'We anticipate being fully up and running in a month or so,' said Emily. 'At that point, buyers will be able to enter a chassis number as before and order parts or send us a query. For now, people can get in touch via emily@fiennesparts.uk.'

The new premises for Fiennes Parts are in Tamworth, adjacent to the business owned by one investor, which will be able to assist with picking and packing orders. Emily and Stuart Anderson have been identifying local engineering businesses that can help with the continued manufacture and supply of stock, as Fiennes Parts do not anticipate manufacturing anything in-house. They hope to add another employee in six to eight months to assist with the operational side of business.

'For now, we are identifying gaps in the stock and getting the business moving,' said Emily. 'We knew we could make it profitable but making lots of money is not the primary objective here. We want to sustain a supply of parts for these cars to ensure they can still be used and enjoyed.'



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FLYING FIRST CLASS

Sir Freddie Laker was the flamboyant entrepreneur who invented no-frills air travel. When he wasn't airborne, he covered many miles in this Silver Shadow, recommissioned by its new owner and back on the road

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: NIGEL BOOTHMAN

As we waft around the leafy streets of this Manchester suburb, it's not difficult to put yourself in the mindset of a 1970s millionaire. The houses are large and gracious, the pavements wide, the sky often crossed by an

airliner clambering out of Manchester Airport and away to warmer climes. We're riding in a 1975 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow bought new by Freddie Laker (not Sir Freddie until a few years afterwards), a man who managed to combine business ambition with a

sense of fun that made his employees, and later his public, adore him. When asked by a schoolmaster what he wanted to be when he grew up, young Freddie said 'a millionaire', and was scolded for his cheek. But he meant it. There was one clear millionaire's



choice in the otherwise depressed market of mid-Seventies Britain; the Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow and its Bentley siblings, in saloon, coupé or convertible form. You didn't quite need to be a millionaire to afford one, but at a time when the average annual

salary was £2168 and the average house price £8915, a Silver Shadow cost £14,830. Out of reach, then, save for the landed gentry, stars from the world of entertainment and business tycoons. It tended to be those in the latter category, like Laker, who actually

used their cars. Drop into the driver's chair of this example and the long-softened seat springs tell the story of the 130,000-odd miles it's covered, the first half of those with Laker, but just as many in its second long-term ownership. So yes, it's well used, but »



Bramhall Hall makes the ideal backdrop for a black & ivory Rolls-Royce

it's also been very well looked after.

The car's new owner, Hassan Mustafa, has a habit of rescuing impressive Bentleys, Rolls-Royces and other luxury marques that are down on their luck. He appeared in our March / April 2020 issue with his fabulous 1968 Bentley T saloon, shimmering in Mason's Black outside



the equally monochrome Bramhall Hall, a Tudor stately home we visit on our day out with this car too. For all its gentle patina and well-used feel, the Rolls-Royce is fighting fit and presents extremely well. Hass is no stranger to the loud pedal and confidently squirts the big saloon through gaps in the traffic on a wave of torque. The brakes, engineered to stop well over two tons with total assurance, do just that.

This is a first-series Silver Shadow, though a late one, so while there is Opus electronic ignition under the bonnet there is also a steering box rather than a rack-and-pinion system. It's probably not a set-up that shows itself well when being hustled through fast bends or tight junctions, but once you get the hang of it, it can be deeply satisfying and relaxing to drive. An excellent tip is to use the armrests – this keeps your elbows pinned down near your

sides, and forces you to feed the slim steering wheel through fingertips, not whirl it round like a rally driver. You can still change direction smartly enough but you no longer feed steering inputs too quickly, and upset the front end.

ANOTHER SY, DOWN ON ITS LUCK?

It's fun to enjoy the illusion of being a plutocrat of nearly 50 years ago, but how did Hassan come to own this interesting piece of history?

'Back in the autumn of 2021 my uncle, Tony Illias, told me about a car that had been sitting in a collection for some time,' says Hassan. 'Tony has various other Silver Shadows and Bentley T-series coupés, so he didn't need another project. He asked me if I'd like to buy it and I asked him to send me some photos, which looked

SIR FREDDIE LAKER: OUR KNIGHT OF THE AIR

To remember Freddie Laker and his great adventures in the airline business you need to have been around in the 1970s and early 1980s, and ideally in the UK. For a while, he was one of the most familiar and celebrated figures in the country, a salesman with a flair for publicity and an iron will to do things his own way. He's chiefly known these days for two things: the creation of Skytrain, the first of many low-cost carriers that would come to redefine the industry, and Skytrain's spectacular collapse in 1982 with debts of more than £250m (\$380m), then called the largest corporate failure in Britain. Dig a little deeper into his story and you find a man whose only strategic error was expanding his business too fast, and perhaps not being sufficiently ruthless in dealing with those who sought to put him out of business.

In 1971, Laker applied for a licence to launch a transatlantic airline that would charge just a third of what the flag carriers asked, run as a one-class-fits-all service with no pre-booking and walk-up sales that did indeed resemble train travel. The next six years were spent wrangling with licence rejections, appeals, changes in government policy, protests from established rivals and legal challenges. When Skytrain

finally took to the air in 1977, the main rivals immediately offered their own cut-price fares at the expense of massive losses. After a profitable first year for Skytrain, these rivals effectively conspired to put Laker out of business, and after some undercapitalised expansion and a perfect storm of economic ill-luck, that's what happened in 1982. Laker sued 12 airlines and won an out-of-court settlement for \$50m, with British Airways paying a further \$35m and eventually an £8m personal payment to Laker including his legal costs.

Such was the popularity of this Rolls-Royce driving adventurer that within days of Skytrain's collapse, a group of private citizens set up Freddie's Friendly Fund, to which members of the public chipped in, raising £4m. Impressive as this was in the days before crowdfunding, it was a drop in the ocean of Skytrain's debts, even after the proceeds from a benefit concert by The Police and a pop single released by six singing stewardesses. But Sir Freddie bounced back, quitting Britain after what he felt (with some justification) to be a series of enormous betrayals by fellow airline bosses, bankers and



government, to launch Laker Airways from his new home in the Bahamas. It flew many American and transatlantic routes until it was wound up in 2005, the year before Laker's death at the age of 83.

very nice. The service history was apparently immaculate, and he said the car's first owner was Sir Freddie Laker.'

Hassan admits to not knowing who Sir Freddie was (Hass is annoyingly youthful), so he looked him up and soon discovered the history of Skytrain and Laker Airways. Quite a major figure in aviation history and a significant name in any car's history folder, which added interest. But does a service history count for much when the car's been off the road for years?

'The brakes had to be done, the timing, all the filters and so on, but I was happy with that as it's what I'd do anyway, with any car I'd bought. Tony did the deal and I bought the car, then brought it up here to Manchester and booked it in with John at Bowling-Ryan (*Manchester-based Rolls-Royce & Bentley Specialist - Ed*) where it spent about four or five weeks, getting »



Engine bay, detailed by Hassan, presents really well

COVER STORY ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER SHADOW

the work I mentioned plus new fuel lines, plugs, leads and distributor cap. It started and drove when I bought it, but it wasn't safe to assume everything was working without this attention.'

Hassan took the car back and gave it a thorough detailing at home, working over the paint with a clay bar to remove the years of road grime and impurities that a soap-and-water approach might not touch. He cleaned up the engine bay sympathetically and cleaned and conditioned the leather. Hassan has leather restoration experience thanks to the tired hide he found in his Bentley T. He taught himself various techniques, including the subtle use of fillers to fill cracks and a spray gun to apply the dye. Indeed, it led Hass to set up Car Leather Doctor, a weekend business he started to help out fellow enthusiasts, and he's had a fair bit of work in the Cheshire area, covering a few Ferraris and lots of



Porsches ('The bolsters always go,' says Hass) and his uncle's 'Pagoda' Mercedes 280SL. But back to this Silver Shadow.

OWNERS WEALTHY, AND WISE

Freddie Laker was an extremely busy man when he bought the car in 1975, which he registered FAL 1 for Frederick Alfred Laker. He was fighting a series of court cases to allow his much-delayed Skytrain project to get off the ground, both literally and figuratively (see box on page previous page). This and other business commitments saw him put something like 75,000 miles on the Silver Shadow in the four years he owned it, during which time it accompanied him all over the UK and must have worn a groove in the fast lane of our motorway network. It would be interesting to know whether he put so many miles under the wheels of his previous Rolls-Royces, one of which was a Silver Dawn he owned in the late 1960s. In 1978, following the successful launch of Skytrain the previous year, he was knighted. By 1979, Skytrain was going well, and we think Sir Freddie treated himself to a new car, moving the Silver Shadow on.

This Rolls-Royce's next owner was a lady with the memorable name of Mrs Twentyman-Turnbull, who re-registered the car RAO 77 and lavished enormous sums on its upkeep, receipts for which survive in the history folder. It was given a respray in 1979, shortly after Laker sold it, probably because of the car's heavy use in those first four years, but »

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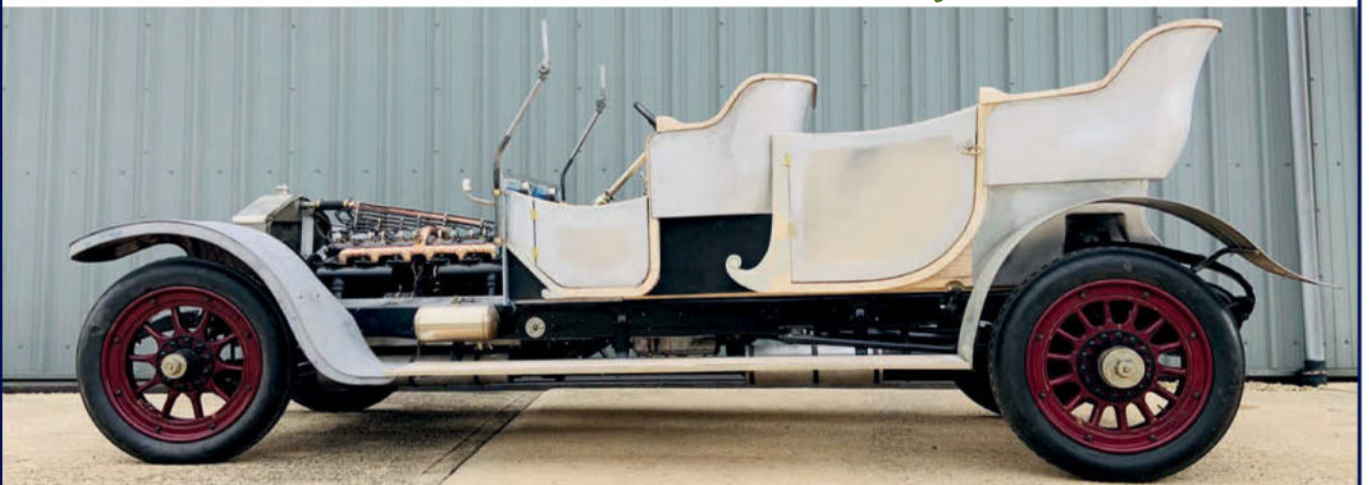
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COVER STORY

ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER SHADOW



Everflex roof is in fine condition

then again several years later. In the late 1980s it required a new automatic transmission and over the years, numerous other mechanical bills suggest it was given whatever it needed. The rising mileage is confused a little by the fitment of a new speedometer in 1982, but the regular receipts suggest it was Mrs Twentymen-Turnbull's only car and saw plenty of use.

The next change of hands seems to have occurred when it sold to a Mr Bishop in the late 1990s, the RAO 77 plate remaining with the car, and the mileometer showing something over 50,000. Sold once again in 2007, the car was still on the road and using up service parts as detailed in the history folder for a year or two more.



Black leather hide benefits from Hassan's skilled reconditioning



Eight-track player doesn't really get used...



...but cruise control certainly does

It appeared at South West Vehicle Auctions just before Hassan bought the car, so after a recent flurry of owners, it's found a stable home once again.

Hassan particularly fancied a car with an Everflex roof, so he was delighted to find that the condition of the covering and the metal beneath appeared to be excellent. The previous re-paint had been done to a high standard, too, so this will be one ageing Silver Shadow that doesn't require expenditure on bodywork. It's time to stretch the car's legs a bit, heading out towards the airport for a bit more communing with the spirit of Sir Freddie. We get the chance to open the taps on the dual carriageway and the Rolls-Royce dispatches the miles in relaxed luxury,

so it's almost a shame to rein in and find the little side-road that leads to Runway Visitor Park. This is an interesting spot at the far end of one runway, where a fiver buys you a couple of hours parking and plane-watching with a shop, a café and several old aeroplanes to enjoy.

Sadly, none of them wear the Laker livery. Indeed, the closest to Sir Freddie's heyday is a Trident 3 in the colours of British European Airways, one of the bitter rivals from the Skytrain days. No wonder the Rolls-Royce looks a little haughty and self-conscious as we pose it next to the old airliner for a few photos. Sir Freddie Laker's memorial really lies in the disruptive, game-changing businesses he inspired, advised and in some cases mentored – Virgin

Atlantic and Easyjet, amongst others. This car makes a fine memorial too. Hassan Mustafa has invested plenty of time and money to ensure it runs like it did in 1975 and looks every bit as good, and with that leather care business and a very busy day job in the legal sector, Hass is something of a go-getter himself. Sir Freddie would approve. ■

THANK YOU

We're grateful to the staff of Bramall Hall, near Stockport. More details of this impressive venue can be found online: www.stockport.gov.uk/topic/bramall-hall. Thanks also to Runway Park: <https://www.manchesterairport.co.uk/at-the-airport/attractions/>



Trident 3B and Silver Shadow are near contemporaries - one is looking fresher than the other!

MARKET WATCH

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

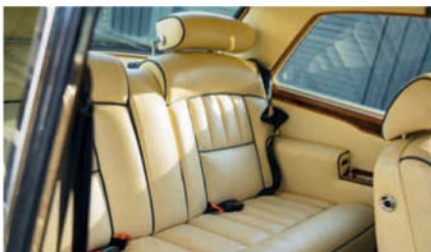


TWO-DOOR EXCLUSIVITY, TWO DIFFERENT ERAS

Two contrasting machines caught our eye when viewing the stock of Hexagon Classics in London recently. The older car, a 1977 Rolls-Royce Corniche fixed-head coupé (designated rather modestly as the 2-Door Saloon by Rolls-Royce), looks rather younger than its years thanks to Le Mans Blue metallic paint and the later alloy wheels. Its condition must contribute to the youthful feel too – just 24,500 miles in 46 years.

This car was sold new in Norwich through Mann Egerton & Co Ltd in May 1977 and has had £14,000 lavished on it for a thorough re-commissioning back in 2019, which probably signifies the end of a long period of storage that contributed to the remarkably low mileage. At £69,995, it's a sum that would buy a nice but not remarkable convertible, but it must be amongst the best saloons around.

This variant – a Corniche series II (as opposed to the later Corniche II of 1986) in fixed-head form sold only 328 examples in the four years



it was offered, and this is one of the first. In those days, buyers wishing to turn heads even more sharply could opt for the new Camargue, but nowadays it seems likely that the continued production of the Corniche saloon did much to take away

sales from the opulent Pininfarina coupé. The older shape would outlast the younger one, of course, remaining in production to 1995.

By then, Bentley was offering the Continental R, and a new era of performance-focused coupés updated the sporting Bentleys of the 1950s. That car's spiritual successor in the VW era was the Brooklands coupé, a model we examine in much more detail from page 26. There happens to be one at Hexagon too, a 2009 model with an even tinier mileage than the fixed-head Corniche: just 8750 on the clock. What do you think – would the two models have appealed to similar buyers, albeit 30 years apart? The driving experience is vastly different, as perhaps is the image, but a similar sense of exclusivity hangs around both of them, due to more than mere price (the Brooklands is asking £139,950). Want the very best you could have bought at the time, with a minimal chance of seeing another one on the road? They have that much in common, at least!





Do you prefer the classic elegance of this R-type Empress...



THE BRITISH EMPRESS...IN CALIFORNIA?

There are currently two different Hooper 'Empress'-bodied Bentleys for sale with the same dealer in California, the Beverly Hills Car Club. The older car is a 1954 R-type, built to design 8294 in an elegant Burgundy over Tan, and apparently a California car all its life. It has some appealing features like electric windows (imagine that in 1954!), a valve radio and automatic transmission. It's priced at a dangerously tempting \$39,500, which rule-of-thumb suggests is what it might cost British buyers in Sterling, once safely landed here.

The Empress Line look was created by Osmond Rivers at Hooper & Co for

Daimler, supposedly with input from Sir Bernard Docker's colourful wife Norah. Rivers referred to his designs as the 'New Look', but the word Empress became attached to the coachwork intended for Daimler. When commissioned to produce similar bodies for Rolls-Royce & Bentley, Hooper refrained from using the Empress name, but the rest of the world seemed happy to call a spade a spade, and such cars are still commonly known as Hooper Empresses.

Rivers updated the concept through the 1950s and Hooper offered an 'Evolved Empress' look from 1955 – and BHCC has one of those too. This is

an early S-series saloon in silver over black with a somewhat patinated blue hide interior, but like the other car, is running and described as mechanically sound. BHCC's proprietor, Alex Manos, has this one up for just \$36,500. Alex produces regular videos and diary updates called Alex's Car Tales on the company's website (beverlyhillscarclub.com), including one on the S-series Empress. They're worth a look, but be warned: with 24 Rolls-Royces and 10 Bentleys in stock as we went to press, in all conditions from bargain-basement project to impressively smart, it's a serious distraction!



...or the more daring curves of the younger S-series Empress?

AUCTION TRACKER

This new addition to the magazine will track auction results and examine trends in the Rolls-Royce and Bentley market. In this bumper-sized first instalment, our expert reveals what's to come

WORDS: PETER LAVERS PICTURES: VARIOUS

Full disclosure – I love classic car auctions! They are a great day out and a chance to look over a wide selection of classics in a friendly atmosphere. I really like that they are a completely transparent and level playing field. Private individuals directly compete with traders on an equal basis, with the results – good or bad – available for all to see.

This is mostly the same for online auction sites. The digital shift was already emerging pre-Covid, and it continues to grow. The standard of buyer information and presentation

has improved massively, and it's fascinating to watch bids coming in over days rather than seconds. The only challenge as an analyst looking back over results is that unsold vehicles 'disappear' from the websites, so it looks like there was a 100% sale rate a year ago!

BIG PICTURE

I'm tracking every Rolls-Royce and Bentley offered for sale by the auction houses that deal with classic cars or prestige/enthusiast vehicles. That means the odd nearly-new car will appear, and plenty of the younger classics from 2003 onwards. I'm excluding cars offered as 'for spares' – although there's a grey area between these and projects or barn finds (which are both included).

This first analysis covers physical and online auctions in the UK for the 12-month period from 1 May 2022 to

30 April 2023. Its primary purpose is as a market tracker, rather than an individual motor car valuation service. The values achieved vary considerably even within models, so the best it can do is give you a price range to bear in mind.

What it does do is tell you the strength of the market into which you may place your vehicle, overall and by model range (numbers permitting). Against the gloomy economic outlook, I am happy to report that I have identified 926 Rolls-Royces and Bentleys offered at auction in the UK during this period. 722 were sold, with a total value of over £27m, underlining how valuable our marques are to the classic car industry and wider economy. These figures are both actually up in the year to April, although the average sale value is down by 4% on a 12-month rolling basis (explained below). The dashboard for the overall market is as follows:

Most Popular Auction Houses		
1	CarandClassic	171
2	eBay	118
3	Bonhams / The Market	105
4	H&H	91
5	Historics	87

	Total Market		Rolls-Royce		Bentley		Physical		Online	
	Latest 12m	Trend	Latest 12m	Trend	Latest 12m	Trend	Latest 12m	Trend	Latest 12m	Trend
Offered for Auction	926	20.4%	368	18.7%	558	21.6%	455	8.1%	471	35.3%
Number Sold	722	11.1%	284	10.1%	438	11.7%	335	5.3%	387	16.6%
Total Value of Sales	£27.2m	5.9%	£10.1m	7.2%	£17.1m	5.1%	£16.2m	3.5%	£11.0m	9.5%
Average Price Achieved	£37,667	-4.7%	£35,562	-2.7%	£39,032	-5.9%	£48,229	-1.7%	£28,524	-6.1%

Some interesting trends are apparent:

- 50% more Bentleys than Rolls-Royces are being both offered and sold at auction
- Online sales volumes easily eclipse the physical auction houses' throughput, but it's the opposite when it comes to value. Yes, online values are much lower on average, but there are still high achievers – 17 motor cars in the period achieved over £100k online, 31% of all sales achieving

that value. These ranged from a 1934 Derby Bentley (CarandClassic, £121k) to several recent models, the highest achiever being a 2018 Cullinan sold on CollectingCars for £315k. eBay's biggest result was a 2010 Ghost at just over £63k

■ The fall in average sale price is somewhat accounted for by this increase in online sales, and by an unusual 50%+ increase in project vehicles. Similarly, big mix changes

between models can contribute to a trend, which is why the model breakdowns help colour in the picture. In the current period 50% more Goodwood-built 4-door Rolls-Royces were offered, which tend to be of higher value even though their average sale price has reduced slightly

MODEL RANGES

In my analysis I have identified 39

different model ranges, for example 'Rolls-Royce SZ Saloons', which covers all variants of Silver Spirit, Silver Spur & '96-'98 Silver Dawn models. In the most part, this categorisation generates enough data for analysis and trending per range. Reporting on all these in every issue would take over the whole magazine(!), so instead I will

present highlights each time, with deeper specific analyses per edition.

GETTING TRENDY

As this magazine is bimonthly, I am tracking the trends on a 12-month rolling basis. For each issue I will add the data from the latest two months and drop the data from 14

and 13 months ago – and then compare the two. In this way we will have a 'finger on the pulse' of the market while also always looking at whole-12-month cohorts to eliminate seasonal factors (sorry for all the data science!).

The trend tables for the model ranges where 10 or more examples were offered for sale are as follows:

ROLLS-ROYCE MODELS

Trending Up	Stable	Trending Down
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Silver Shadow DHC and Corniche Convertible Silver Seraph Derby 'Small' Saloons - 20HP, 20/25, 25/30 & Wraith 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Silver Cloud I, II & III saloons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SZ saloons – Silver Spirit, Spur, Dawn etc. Silver Shadow 2-door Saloon and Corniche Fixed Head Goodwood-built 4-door Models Silver Dawn & Silver Wraith SY saloons – Silver Shadow, Shadow II & Wraith II

I very much hope that the slight uptick in values of the 'small' Derby saloons continues – these fabulous motor cars have previously been affected by the general downturn in demand for pre-war vehicles.

BENTLEY MODELS

Trending Up	Stable	Trending Down
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continental Flying Spur Arnage - all variants Mulsanne Turbo, Turbo R & LWB Continental GTC - all variants Cricklewood Bentleys - all models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SY Saloons - T Series and T2 Continental R, T & Azure - all variants S Series Continental - all variants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Mulsanne SZ Nat Asp Saloons - Mulsanne, Eight, Brooklands etc. S Series Saloons MkVI & R Type Saloons Continental GT Coupe - all variants MkVI & R Type Convertibles and Specials

It is good to note a small increase in Cricklewood-built models, which other market tracking columns still rate as on the slide. Those columnists are undoubtedly tracking over longer periods. Perhaps our 2-monthly moving 'finger on the pulse' is showing the start of a resurgence?

spotlight on the SZ range of motor cars (1980 – 1998), and these models make up the largest cohort in the auction database (190 saloons offered for sale). They are dear to my heart, as I started at Crewe in 1982 and was involved in some way with every iteration and variant.

Breaking them down by marque and then further for Bentley models into turbo and non-turbo variants reveals some fascinating insights.

It's remarkable how little values vary physical vs. online compared with the market overall, with even the lowest values achieved (project cars – included but not tabulated here) being similar. They show that the non-turbo SZ models are effectively worth the same, and on the decline, but that the turbo models are picking up and establishing a premium over their counterparts. There are definitely bargains out there!

SZ SPOTLIGHT

The May/June edition turned the

	Auctioned/Sold		Highest Achieved		Physical Average		Overall Average		Online Average	
	Latest 12m	Trend (sold)	Latest 12m	Trend	Latest 12m	Trend	Latest 12m	Trend	Latest 12m	Trend
R-R Silver Spirit, Spur, Dawn etc.	65 / 45	4.7%	£29,250	=	£9,541	-10.4%	£9,024	-10.8%	£8,647	-10.8%
Bentley Mulsanne Turbo, Turbo R & LWB	60 / 50	16.3%	£26,000	=	£10,696	9.2%	£10,443	9.0%	£10,190	10.6%
Bentley Mulsanne, Eight, Brooklands etc.	65 / 51	27.5%	£31,500	=	£10,123	2.3%	£9,032	-5.9%	£7,982	-14.6%

INDIVIDUAL HIGHLIGHTS



CELEB ENDORSEMENT

The 1968 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow DHC once owned by Sir Michael Caine grabbed headlines at H&H's March sale, achieving a within-estimate £135,000 and eclipsing the ex-Maurice Gibb 1973 Corniche Convertible (£108,000 at Silverstone's August auction).

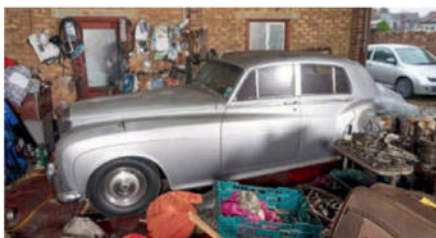


Just one day after this achievement, an ex-Sir Elton John 2004 Bentley Continental GT sold on CarandClassic for £49,000, surpassing his 1992 Continental R, which sold last September for £39,500 on the same platform.



A DEFINITIVE AUCTION SUCCESS

CCA at the NEC in March sold a striking, one-owner 1979 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow II for an above-estimate £37,125. Its 15.5k miles, two-tone paint and matching leather/Parkertex interior certainly made it stand out from the crowd. I believe that it had been unsold by a dealer for some time before it was offered for auction at a similar price point to its auction result – a great example of when an auction can make the difference!



TWO ENDS OF THE SILVER CLOUD / S SERIES SCALE

April also witnessed opposite ends of the scale for fans of the Silver Cloud and S-Series models. Bonhams sold a gorgeous 1963 Silver Cloud III for nearly double the estimate at £54,050, whilst Historics sold

a no-reserve 1964 S3 project for £16,240 – a motor car that had been impeccably looked after before being stored and so hopefully will soon be back on the road giving the motoring enjoyment that it was built for.



LIMITED EDITION ARNAGES

It was heartening to see a 2001 Bentley Arnage Le Mans edition selling in March at H&H for a within-estimate £20,700 – a good price for an early L410 P2000 model. Conversely, a Ralph Lauren edition Arnage of the same year failed to sell on eBay in April. Coincidentally the H&H car was bought by a friend of mine, so I look forward to getting it alongside my T-Series and another friend's Mulsanne Le Mans edition.

As has often been mentioned in the magazine, Rolls-Royce Silver Seraphs continue to easily eclipse Bentley Arnage values, with Historics selling a beautiful 2000 model (above) for a recent high of £42,560.



VERY SPECIAL

Have you noticed that the vast majority of Specials out there are on Bentley chassis rather than Rolls-Royce? Twelve Bentley and two R-R specials (one made to look like a Bentley!) were offered in the last 12 months (10 selling), and a highlight for me in the most recent sales was H&H's 1948 Bentley Mk VI Special, which sold for

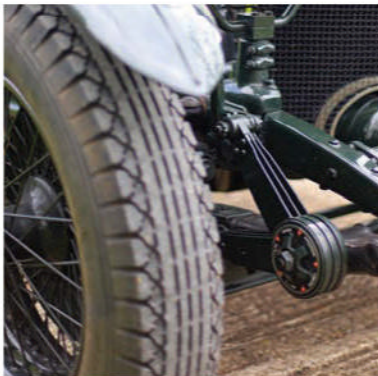
£102,667 in March. What a beauty! Two other remarkable creations were also offered – Dore & Rees' 1955 R Type La Sarthe and Bonhams' 1950 MkVI by Racing Green, imitating a Le Mans Speed Six – but both failed to sell. These perhaps reflect the reported slower market for higher value cars (something I'll investigate another time).

WHAT INTERESTS YOU?

What would you like to see in this column? Please get in touch with the Editor. As long as there's enough data I'd be happy to take a look and report back. ■

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STEALTH BOMBER

Say 'Bentley Brooklands' and most will remember the four-door saloon of the 1990s rather than this low-production coupé, which now seems one of the best-kept secrets of all high-performance luxury cars

WORDS / PHOTOS: NIGEL BOOTHMAN / LEWIS HOUGHTON

It's quite a place to be. There's more room in here than in the superficially similar but older Continental R, with heaps of seat adjustment both in height and reach so anyone can get comfortable. The front seats are splendid, a fine mix of sumptuousness and support, being slightly more bolstered than those in the car's Arnage saloon relatives. There is a button on the dash that drops all the side windows with one touch; hard to resist once you've discovered it. Yet despite the size, the impression for the driver is of looking out through a somewhat 'pillarbox' view. It has a low roofline, a steeply raked windscreen and a rising hump over the main instruments in the dash. With the seat adjusted for a comfortable view out, I can fold the sun visor down and obscure the entirety of the view forward. Some of the quirky old ergonomics have survived well into the VW-controlled company, and as we'll discover, this feeds into a rather Crewe-era character for this 2008 car.

The steering always has a bit of weight – a one-finger waft-mobile this is not. The ride is interesting. Even without the SPORT button pressed, which stiffens things considerably, it feels as though it's set up to allow the car to be driven *terribly* quickly and still feel secure. At low speed, you can tell a lot of effort has gone into controlling this huge mass of around 2700kg, with

excellent insulation from the smaller bumps and ripples. But larger holes are not something you float over like you might in a four-door luxury liner; whatever the clever damping can do, the spring rates are too high for that.

It's beautifully trimmed, even by Bentley standards. There's a different feel from the W12-engined cars with their shared Audi/VW architecture, even down to an errant squeak from behind the steering wheel that sounds like leather rubbing on polished timber. Once again, old-school Bentley, not 21st century. There are eyeball vents and organ-stop plungers for the ventilation, familiar to any Arnage owner and indeed owners of previous generations. There are two hinged covers for parts of the dash, obscuring vulgarities like the radio fascia and ashtray, while elsewhere there are business-like black buttons with a rather alarming option: 'ESP OFF'. Feeling brave?

Before we venture out of Edinburgh and find a route along faster roads to the Forth bridges, it's worth placing this car in Bentley chronology. The Brooklands made its debut at the Geneva show in 2006, where Bentley's intentions were clear: this would be a more expensive, more exclusive option than either the Arnage or Continental GT, with lifetime production limited to 550 units. It was »





FEATURE CAR 2008 BENTLEY BROOKLANDS



Despite low roofline, anyone can get comfortable in highly adjustable, superbly trimmed cabin

'If your objective is luxurious comfort at all times, with immense performance on a whim, it's hard to imagine a more capable car.'

a natural step after the announcement of the new Azure (originally called the Arnage Drophead Coupé) in April 2005, a two-door, four-seater drophead on the same wheelbase as the Arnage saloon. It replaced the previous Azure, based of course on the SZ-generation Continental R. So did the new Brooklands take the place of the Continental R itself...or had the Continental GT already done that?

It's an interesting question. The Continental GT was proving an enormous success in all ways but one: it was selling in such numbers that exclusivity was draining away. It was also noticeably different in feel, in style and in mechanical origin to the last of the Crewe-era cars, the Arnage. But its immensely potent W12 engine gave Bentley a problem – how do you sell a limited-production

halo model like the Brooklands with fewer cylinders and less power than the standard Conti GT? By 2007, that W12 was making 551bhp at peak, or just over 600bhp in the GT Speed.

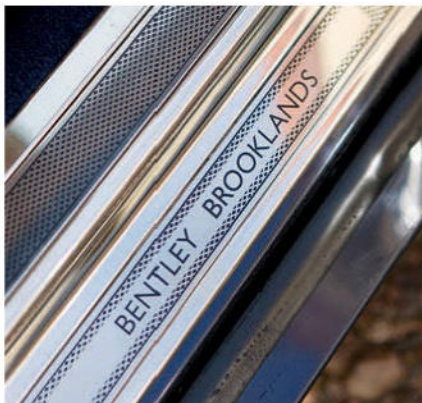
First, you go for exclusivity – that limit on production – and second, you find another way to make the driving experience a rare thrill. Bentley's engineers knew there was yet more potential in the ever-developed L-series V8 and concentrated on torque output rather than power. For the Brooklands, they started with the 500bhp Arnage T engine and worked on increased flow through the inlet tract and exhaust, also playing with the turbos, the camshaft profile and the engine management to increase power to 530bhp, but mainly to release an amazing 774lb ft (1050Nm) of torque at 3250rpm, a world record

for any production petrol engine at the time. So what does it feel like?

Setting off smoothly is a little tricky. A faint touch of the throttle produces a whispering, gentle getaway, but as you add what feels just a millimetre or two more, the immense flood of torque spills over and pushes the car forward. This problem becomes a benefit if you drive in a more spirited manner, but that brings its own challenges, not least in hanging on to your licence. It is startlingly fast, responding with near-violence at any point of the rev range, at any speed. The automatic transmission is never flustered but sometimes you wonder whether it's required at all. The venerable L-series V8 is very low-revving by modern standards (4500rpm redline) but even so, you reach that 3,250rpm torque peak quite



Parking sensors make up for lack of rearward visibility



easily, especially if you use the Tiptronic feature and select the gears yourself. In fact, the torque curve would reveal planet-spinning figures well below that, so even when the engine is barely off idle there is this colossal force waiting to hurl you along. And what if you really dig in, and push that large accelerator pedal right down into the carpet?

It's like a piano falling down a lift shaft. That's a silly metaphor, but perhaps it captures something of the way such a heavy object can accelerate in a plunging, exponential way, until you wonder if it would ever stop. The numbers suggest it will eventually settle to a top speed of something over 180mph, but this doesn't really tell the tale. Bentley's own figures timed the car leaping from 30mph to 50mph in 1.6 seconds, and on to 70mph in another 2.4 seconds. The 0-60mph time is 5 seconds dead; I bet it's not much more from 60mph to 120mph. All of this drama occurs with no more than a subdued boom from under the bonnet and a well-muffled whoosh from the »



Do drilled pedals make a useful weight saving in a 2700kg car?



'Bentley's intentions were clear: this would be a more expensive, more exclusive option than either the Arnage or Continental GT, with lifetime production limited to 550 units.'

exhaust, and then suddenly you have to ease off and it all settles back to normal. It left the photographer and I looking at each other, eyebrows raised, as if to ask, 'did that really just happen?'

It did. It's a strange experience, which because of the lack of any wheelspin or nose-in-the-air dragster behaviour, doesn't feel entirely car-like. A fighter jet on a steam catapult, launched off an aircraft carrier? Yes, but look at your surroundings – if your objective is luxurious comfort at all times, with immense performance on a whim, it's hard to imagine a more capable car. You would expect some compromise in cornering behaviour, but it just goes where it needs to go and has grip levels

you would be insane to test on any public road. The brake pedal is firm and the brake discs are the size of dustbin lids; like the tyres, they seem to be a long way from their performance limits even in press-on driving.

There are a few tiny disappointments. The analogue radio-CD isn't easy to use, the seat heaters aren't very potent and the climate control takes its time to assert itself. There is a massage function in the seats which starts working on me unexpectedly, and the controls are nowhere I can spot while on the move. The reaction to the Brooklands from passers-by is interesting. Sometimes there's a slight frown, not necessarily because they disapprove, but because

they're not sure what it is. And if they're keen enough on cars to clock the winged B, they seem unsure whether to adore it as an impressive classic or resent it as an opulent modern device. One passer-by at the marina where we stopped for a few photos offered us a 'nice car, mate'. We could only agree.

It is very much a 21st-century car built in the manner of the classic Bentley. It looks, and feels, a good bit older than it is, except in terms of performance, but that's a compliment rather than a criticism. There is a modern car underneath trying to get out, but a modern car that's been retro-fitted with a few SZ-generation thumps and wobbles over rough city streets and



The source of all that titanic performance: re-worked, twin-turbo V8 with more than 1000Nm of torque



The scenery is about to jump into fast-forward

non-intuitive minor controls. In my seating position, I can't see the switches for the steering wheel position, boot release, fuel flap release or headlamps.

It would take a little getting to know, I think, and would be all the better for that. The Brooklands would start to shrink around you and you'd be less nervous of being unable to see the nearside front quarter or either of the rear corners. The boot is rather on the mean side for such a big car – one large suitcase and one small one, perhaps, but for the chance to spend a week crossing Europe in such a machine, you'd pack carefully, wouldn't you?

If you went into the showroom in 2008 and tried one of these and a

Continental GT, you'd notice a difference in scale and proportion, even though the diamond-stitched interiors, the quad headlamps and some of the dash furniture were signs of a close relationship. Get out on the road and the difference would be amplified significantly. Old-school Bentley versus new Bentley, the former priced at £236,455 before options, at launch – almost exactly twice what a Conti GT cost at that time. Much more hand-built than a Continental GT, much more exclusive, much more spacious inside and by my reckoning, more comfortable too.

This one has only covered 20,000 miles and has been looked after like a favourite daughter, so it's as close as

we could get to experiencing a new Brooklands in 2008, when the first deliveries began. It's been something of a revelation; one that showed how conscious Bentley still was of its heritage and its traditional customer base. Why? Because the car it sets out to remind you of, both visually and in the imperious way it covers the miles, is the Continental R. That car saved Bentley in the 1990s, when the SZ saloons were barely breaking even, but the Brooklands never needed to play that role. Indeed, even with the huge list price it's doubtful the company made much money from this limited production run, thanks to the labour-intensive build – the roof and rear »

‘So what the Brooklands represents is the last range-topping Bentley coupé with the amazing old V8. That sounds a decent investment to us.’



quarter-panel had to be hand-welded, for example. So it exists only for two reasons: partly because of the arrival of the Rolls-Royce Phantom Coupé shortly after this car, which couldn't really go unopposed, but mainly because Bentley wanted to reassert some credibility as a maker of the very finest, most luxurious, most impressive performance cars in the world.

Job done, I'd say. By 2011 the last one had sold and production ceased. They now appear on the market for about half what they cost new, which is vastly less than a current Continental GT. Why compare the Brooklands with a new GT? Because it wasn't directly replaced. The L-series V8 lived on in the Mulsanne saloon until 2020, but despite a flirtation with a convertible concept for that car back in 2014, no

two-door coupé version ever emerged. So what the Brooklands represents is the last range-topping Bentley coupé with the amazing old V8. That sounds a decent investment to us.

It leaves just one point to consider – with that status, such performance and such heritage, why isn't the Brooklands better known? There's one obvious answer: this car is the heir to a long tradition of fast, graceful, expensive two-door Bentleys with a very famous name, but that name had been co-opted by Bentley's new management for use on the entry-level model. Yes – the Brooklands is really the last true Bentley Continental. ■

Thanks to: Derek Mowat (derekcmowat.co.uk) for the generous loan of this car, which is currently for sale

SPECIFICATION

2008 BENTLEY BROOKLANDS

LENGTH: 6752cc L-series OHV V8, twin Mitsubishi turbochargers

TRANSMISSION: ZF 6-speed automatic with Tiptronic feature

POWER: 530bhp@4000rpm

TORQUE: 774lb ft @3250rpm

CHASSIS: Steel monocoque, independent front and rear suspension via coil springs, wishbones, adaptive electro-hydraulic dampers

LENGTH: 5411mm (17ft 9in)

WIDTH: 1910mm (6ft 3in)

WEIGHT: 2725kg (5622lb)

TOP SPEED: 184mph

0-60MPH: 5 seconds

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

BERNARD L KING'S CARS SOLD WHILE BOOKS LIVE ON

After the loss of the much-respected Rolls-Royce and Bentley author and publisher Bernard L King in November 2022, I thought readers would like to know that Bernard's cars found new owners at H&H Auctions' Pavilion Gardens sale on Wednesday 26th April. His Bentley Continental R was sold for £32,625 and his Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow went for £23,625, both prices including buyers' premiums. I would also like readers to know that Complete Classics, Bernard's publishing business, will continue to produce and sell books.

Bernard and I knew each other for more than 17 years and he left Complete Classics to me. I am to complete three more books in his name as he would have wished. The revised CC7 20 HP book should hopefully be finished for the RREC Annual Rally at Burghley, and then in 2024 we will complete CC10, on the Rolls-Royce New Phantom from 1925 to late 1929. This will be followed by CC14, the Database book of the Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow, Bentley T-series & Corniche covering every car built, hopefully for 2025. Complete Classics has a basic website which will be revamped later this summer – see www.completeclassics.net. Anyone can reach me on rrab@completeclassics.co.uk.

Unfortunately, we have lost one of the greatest historians of Rolls-Royce and Bentley. His name won't be forgotten, and I hope to do him proud with the tools I have been left to print and produce other titles in his stead.

Thomas Dinsdale



BENTLEY VICTORY ON SYNTHETIC FUEL

I thought *RR&BD* would like to know of a landmark result for historic motorsport, and one that could show the way forward for many owners of vintage Bentleys and indeed other older cars. On Monday 1st May, 21 vintage Bentleys lined up at the Castle Combe Circuit to fight for the spoils over two 20-minute races. Both race victories were taken by William Medcalf, founder of Vintage Bentley, in a 3/4 1/2-litre consignment car. After setting the fastest time of the day in qualifying, Medcalf crossed the line powered by 100% synthetic fuel, closely followed by three of our clients in their respective WOs to take the win. We've completed a series of tests with our chosen partner, P1 Performance Fuel, and the comparison proved successful across the board; test tube product mixing demonstrated zero change or erosion in comparison with E5 petrol, whilst diagnostics from a full rolling road dynamometer test and set-up indicated positive performance gains. At Goodwood's 80th Members' Meeting we presented the first three Bentleys to ever compete on synthetic fuel, with all three finishing the Trofeo Nuvolari. Securing the win at Castle Combe



completes our certification – this is the future! The fuel is a carbon-neutral liquid produced from converting alcohols into synthetic hydrocarbons in the presence of a catalyst, using renewable energy for electrolysis. Costs will come down significantly from later in 2024 (it's now about £7 a litre) and it should represent a long-term solution for the whole scene. As William says, these cars were built to be driven, raced and rallied – long may it continue in a sustainable way, which we have proved is possible.

Anna Wilkinson
Vintage Bentley
West Sussex

PHANTOM MEMORY

Just to thank you for yet another excellent issue (March / April 2023); an interesting range of articles and as always, a lovely range of cars. In particular I enjoyed these two features: Bentley Continental Flying Spur (p.66-69), a lovely-looking car though I preferred it in another colour than grey, and that Rolls-Royce Corniche (p.38-

45). What a gorgeous colour scheme – Nutmeg and Parchment complement each other beautifully. There's a wonderful stunning array of beautiful cars on pages 78 to 83, what a lucky chap Robin Foster was to be able to see and photograph such a range of Phantoms. Seeing the Phantoms in London streets reminds me of

the time when I saw in Jack Barclay of Berkeley Square, before their recent refurbishment, a stunning Phantom VI Landaulette in a sort of light green with a dark brown hood and upholstery. It was quite a day! Sorry to ramble on – keep up the excellent work!

Stephen Williams
Croydon, Surrey



**PSYCHEDELICA,
SWISS STYLE**

While on a visit to Basle, Switzerland recently to visit the museum there for the Picasso exhibition we stayed at 'Les Trois Rois' hotel beside the river. This is their Bentley hotel car...not to everyone's taste, maybe John Lennon's? Wonderful magazine, much appreciated!
Andrew Hope Morley

PSYCHEDELICA, AMERICAN STYLE

In 1965 John Lennon bought a new Rolls-Royce. Two years later he had it painted in a psychedelic design. In the early 1970s, when I was a teenager, I saw that car when it toured America. I made a vow to myself that if I could ever purchase a Rolls-Royce, I would psychedelicize it. A few years ago, I made that childhood dream come true! I hired an art firm but guided them through it. The head artist was very talented, so we only went through

four changes before I gave the final approval. Every time I take it out, I get compliments, surprise, and questions from strangers who want to know the story behind it! When stopped at traffic lights, I've had people get out of their cars to take pictures of it... both fans of The Beatles and twenty-somethings who are barely familiar with them.
John Yaeger
 Surprise, Arizona USA



Lennon's Phantom V



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1934 Bentley 3 1/2 HJ Mulliner Two Door Four Seat S/Saloon

Attractive & unusual – still very smart after a 'body off' restoration finished in 1990 recorded with loads of photos! Re-bore & pistons, Drives beautifully, sunroof & lovely red leather interior **£75,000.**

Nine other interesting pre-war Bentleys: open/closed, 3 1/2, 4 1/4



1932 20/25 Carlton Two Door Drophead Coupe

Handsome, compact, multiple award winner in 1980's, well-cared for since, one fastidious owner last 25 years. Refreshingly bright & cheerful, sound in wind & limb & driving very nicely; **£85,000.**

15 pre-war Rolls-Royce – 20hp, 20/25, 25/30 & Phantoms



1937 Bentley 4 1/4 Vanden Plas 3 position Drophead Coupe

Handsome, desirable & practical with wind up windows. About £200k spent by last 2 owners on restoration including MX g/box, engine rebuild & much more, all documented. **£36,500.**

UNIQUE 1939 Experimental Bentley 4 1/4 - see website/video.

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2014/14 Bentley Continental GTC Speed. Finished in Damson with a Black hood and 21 inch Speed alloys in Dart Tint. The interior is in Beluga with contrast stitching in Damson and Black carpets with Piano Black veneers. Totally unmarked with full history, immaculate condition throughout, **Only £57,950**



2012/62 Bentley Flying Spur Mulliner. Finished in unmarked Hallmark Silver with 20 inch Mulliner alloys and electric sunroof. The interior is in Linen leather with contrast stitching and Beluga secondary hide. Fitted with rear park camera. Only 50,000 miles with FSH. Known to us for last 6 years..... **£37,250**



2008 / 2009 Model Bentley Azure. Finished in Anthracite with a Black hood and 19 inch six spoke alloys. The unmarked interior is in Magnolia, with Beluga secondary hide, Burr Walnut veneers and carpets in Beluga. Only one owner from new and just 42,000 miles with full Bentley history. Amazing value at **£127,950**



2008/08 Bentley Arnie T Mulliner Sports Combination) in Black Sapphire with 19 inch two piece blade design alloys, electric sunroof and Flying B mascot. Cotswold interior with dark stained Burr Walnut veneers and picnic tables. Only 47,000 miles with 3 former keepers and FSH. Immaculate condition..... **Only £46,950**



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1963 Rolls Royce Silver Cloud III LWB By James Young. One of only 8 in the world. This beautifully elegant car is finished in unmarked Dove Grey over Astrakhan with Beige interior and picnic tables. The wood veneers are like new. Only 84,000 miles with history. Only 2 owners. Totally immaculate throughout **£149,000**

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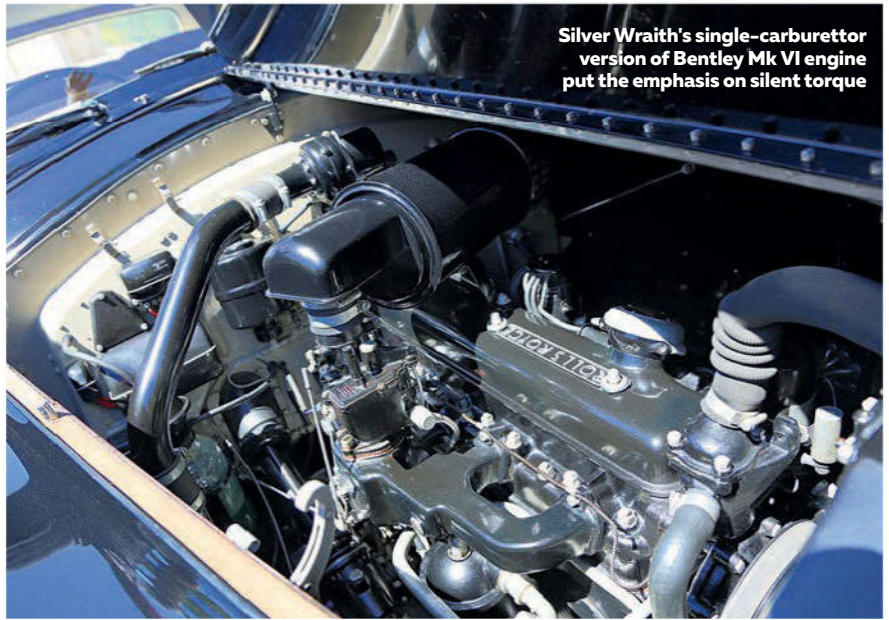
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AS FINE AS A PHANTOM?

Rolls-Royce's first brilliant post-war design is as enjoyable to drive now as it was then, and in this James Young-bodied form, a rare and imposing sight – especially in the USA.

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: STEVE NATALE



Silver Wraith's single-carburettor version of Bentley Mk VI engine put the emphasis on silent torque



The Silver Wraith was the first large-chassis Rolls-Royce produced after the second World War. The market for expensive, hand-crafted luxury automobiles was somewhat limited in the post-war era, with most people having more urgent needs. The economy was in recovery and automobile production was severely curtailed by shortages of raw materials. Additionally, highly priced luxury automobiles had become subject to a prohibitive purchase tax. Adding to these difficulties, petrol was rationed and only available with coupons.

Times were tough, however the

company needed a new model to remain current and move forward to ensure its success in the post-war era. It was with great care and sensitivity to the current economic situation and public opinion, that the executives of Rolls-Royce launched the production of the new Silver Wraith in 1946. A decision was made that would help the company, streamline engineering and production efficiency: Rolls-Royces and Bentleys would not continue to be built in strictly separate series as they had been in the past. They decided to make as many parts of the chassis, engine and gearbox identical for the different makes and thus interchangeable.

The Bentley Mark VI, which used a seven-inch shorter frame, had the same major technical components as the Silver Wraith. The Silver Wraith would outlive the Mark VI and in fact it survived until 1959, having been modernized step by step with important improvements such as an automatic transmission becoming an option in 1952 and power assisted steering in 1956. An engine bored out to 4,566 cc had been phased in in 1951 and in 1954 capacity was increased to 4,887 cc. There were only small differences between the Silver Wraith and the Mark VI under the bonnet. A camshaft with lower lift (providing more torque gained at low »

FEATURE CAR ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER WRAITH



Distinctive James Young 'face' seems grandest and most imposing on Silver Wraith chassis

revolutions) than that of the Bentley, and a single Stromberg carburettor instead of twin SU carburettors were the only modifications, though in 1956 the Silver Wraith was equipped with twin SUs as well. The need for yet more power had become inevitable because the weight of the additional equipment had hampered the car's performance. By the end of 1954 all Silver Wraiths were fitted with automatic transmission. A total of 1,783 examples of the Silver Wraith were produced before production ceased in 1959.

Following their pre-war tradition

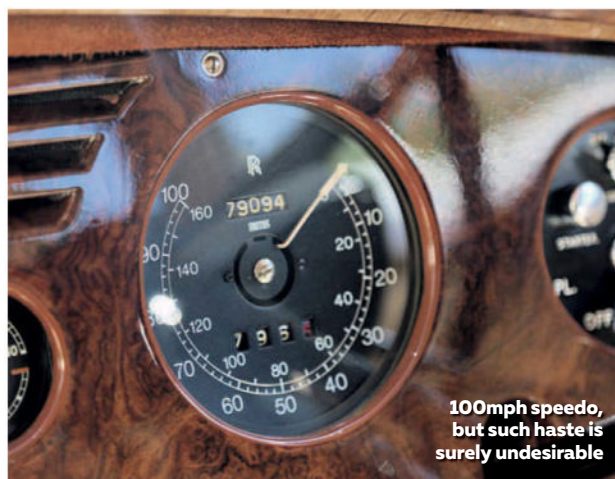
of manufacturing a rolling-chassis only, Rolls-Royce delivered these cars to be bodied by independent coachbuilders who created many elegant and memorable designs. James Young Limited had a good relationship with Rolls-Royce and bodied many of their cars over the years.

The coachbuilder's roots can be traced back to 1863 when Mr. James Young bought J. K. Hunter's company. They produced a full range of high-quality carriages including landaus, but were most famous in James Young's time for their lightweight

Bromley Brougham. The first car body they created was made in 1908 on a Wolseley chassis for a local Member of Parliament. During the First World War they created ambulances, lorries and armoured cars on Darracq and Hudson chassis. In the 1920s and early 1930s, James Young produced standardized bodies for Sunbeam and Talbot along with individual commissions often on Bentley and Rolls-Royce chassis. James Young Limited joined the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders in 1922, setting up their own stand at the SMMT's 1925 London Motor »



Plush bench seat for long drives in this Touring Limousine



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FEATURE CAR ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER WRAITH

Very formal in all-black, the shape looks lighter in two-tone colour schemes



Show at Olympia and exhibited a Chrysler all-weather sedan as well as a Lanchester saloon. The firm patented designs for parallel opening doors and a new way to manufacture roofs that did not emit a drumming noise.

In 1937 James Young was acquired by London Rolls-Royce dealer Jack Barclay and he persuaded Scotsman A. F. 'Mac' McNeil to leave J Gurney Nutting & Co to become James Young's chief designer. These two events, combined with the end of the depression, resulted in a sharp rise in James Young's sales.

During the Second World War James Young built aircraft components, mobile canteens and canvas covers. The factory was destroyed and all records lost in 1941, the second year of the Blitz. The factory was rebuilt, but it

was hit again – this time by a V1 flying bomb – thought production continued.

After the war, coachbuilding resumed. James Young selected some of its Silver Wraith designs, including the model featured here, to be displayed at the 1953 and 1954 Earls Court Motor Show and the 1953 Paris Salon de l'Automobile.

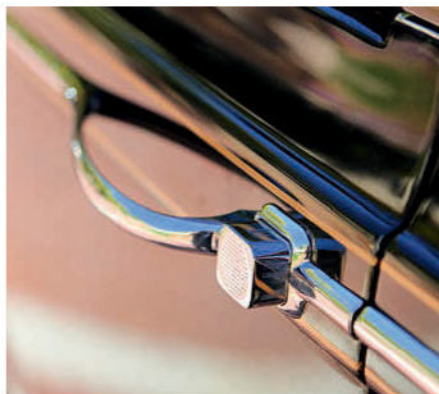
WAXING LYRICAL

Silver Wraiths from this period are well respected and have a reputation for reliability and being easy to drive and maintain. We recently caught up with noted Rolls-Royce expert and collector Michael Kliebenstein and asked him to reflect on the Silver Wraith.

'As a great admirer and experienced

driver of all great Rolls-Royce cars from Silver Ghost to Phantom VI, I would be hard pressed to deny that the Silver Wraith is superior in practically every aspect to, say, a Phantom II or a Phantom III,' he said. 'The Silver Wraith's driving characteristics will be found almost equal in terms of smoothness and silence. Indeed, the Silver Wraith model encapsulates all the traditional Rolls-Royce values and even as an early post-war car, it qualifies as the quintessential traditional Rolls-Royce to own and use. It is also the easiest and simplest to maintain with many parts shared with the more available Bentley Mark VI, Silver Cloud or Rolls-Royce Silver Dawn models, and most of these are parts that are easy to find.'

Kliebenstein, who is known for driving





Electric division, folding footrests, wool cloth upholstery and a drinks cabinet with radio speaker

his vintage Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars often and for long distances, currently has a 1949 Rolls-Royce Silver Wraith with Hooper close-coupled touring limousine coachwork.

‘With certain cars, and they are few and far between, you immediately build a bond, a deep relationship, and a well set-up Silver Wraith is one of them. If you respect the car, the car will respect you. Travelling around Europe in a Silver Wraith along long winding roads is something I really enjoy. You immediately sense the authority of the car. The chassis makes a very favorable impression on all roads indeed, even in the hilly bits of Italy or Switzerland. I crossed the San Bernardino Pass and the Brenner Pass twice over the last years in mine. A majestic experience. There is something magical, or Zen about wafting along through beautiful scenery in a Silver Wraith. The sound and behavior of that other-worldly machine pulls you in like a warm blanket. Slowly but surely, you enter this magical motoring fantasy world - making you feel as though you were driving on clouds with a serene, dreamlike quality.’

“In 1937 James Young was acquired by London Rolls-Royce dealer Jack Barclay and he persuaded Scotsman A. F. ‘Mac’ McNeil, to leave J Gurney Nutting & Co to become James Young's chief designer.”

Not everyone chose to drive them in such a blissed-out mood. In 1950, Mike Cooper drove a new Rolls-Royce Silver Wraith Sports Saloon by Park Ward in the Monte Carlo Rally, winning the Concours de Confort, despite having collided en route with a French *camion* and crushing a front wing. A true testament to the ruggedness and reliability of these cars.

OUR SUBJECT CAR

This elegant 1954 Silver Wraith, DLW 125, is one of 28 Silver Wraiths constructed by James Young with design number WRM 30. The aluminium

body design featured distinctive double swaging on its wings. The design cues were so splendid and modern that they (as well as some influences from designs by coachbuilder H.J. Mulliner), were adapted in 1955 for the successful Silver Cloud standard steel saloon. According to the factory specification sheet, dated November 11, 1954, it was equipped, as it is now, with an automatic gearbox, Silver Dawn headlamps and pair of fog lamps in place of the standard centre lamp. The sumptuous interior features a leather driver's seat with the rear compartment trimmed in plush wool broadcloth. The interior also features a power operated divider glass providing »

FEATURE CAR

ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER WRAITH

'Large luggage boot' boasted by brochure is compromised by spare wheel, but not by cleverly-hidden tool tray



privacy when indulging in a taste of whisky (or whatever your preferred tippie might be) from the pewter decanters stored within the superbly finished burl walnut rear cabinet. The cabinet also houses Waterford crystal glasses and picnic trays, of course.

This Silver Wraith was delivered new to the Mayfair showroom of Jack Barclay Limited on June 14, 1955. In January of 1956 it was purchased by its first owner, Sir Maurice Bloch of Glasgow. Sir Maurice founded a family distilling business, Bloch Brothers

Distillers Ltd., and played an active role in community work. In 1937 he was knighted 'for political and social services'. In 1954 he gave up his large business to devote himself to more civic duties and philanthropy, however he retained his Silver Wraith the rest of his life. Sir Maurice died in 1964 and the car was subsequently sold to a Mrs. Lisa Liba Greenburg, also a resident of Glasgow. The last recorded time the car was registered in the UK was in December of 1966. At some point DLW 125 found its way to American

shores where it was acquired by Rolls-Royce collector Hamilton Dixon of Rome, Georgia. Mr. Dixon brought the car to noted Rolls-Royce restoration specialist Ralph Curzon who performed a comprehensive restoration on it. Hamilton Dixon was an active member in the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club, during which time he received numerous trophies at club events and concours shows. In 2016 it was acquired by the Blackhawk Collection in California and has been exhibited at the prestigious Blackhawk Museum on a regular basis. ■





Rolls Royce Phantom 11 Sedan de ville 1934
COACH BUILT BY THE FAMOUS WINDOVER, FINISHED IN
MASONS BLACK OVER YELLOW - **£275,500**



Rolls Royce Silver Dawn 1955 - Finished in the period colour of sand
over sable with beige hide interior - **£86,750**



Bentley Empress line 1956 Finished in two tone green, with fine coach
lines to compliment the coach work, matching hide interior **£65,750**



ROLLS ROYCE PHANTOM SIX STATE LIMOUSINE 1972
WITH CHERRY RED HIDE LEATHER TO THE FRONT. ONLY
18,000 MILES FROM NEW - **£ 165,000**



Rolls Royce 20/25 1934 -Finished in Masons Black over Maroon, rear
touring trunk with all tools and compartments. **£57,750**



Bentley Bentayga 2019 - Centenary Model V8 far two many
extras to list only 27,000 miles from new. **£115,000**



Bentley 1964 series 111- Finished in Dawn blue over Silver ,with dove
grey hide interior, picnic tables to rear **£48,750**

ESTABLISHED 1969

For further details and pictures of the cars, please go onto our website: www.peterjarvis.net
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MEET THE EXPERTS

A.J. GLEW

Established more than 25 years ago, A.J. Glew quickly became one of the foremost specialists and parts suppliers for the Silver Ghost and Phantom I & II – and now they're branching out further

PHOTOGRAPHY: NIGEL BOOTHMAN

How did you get started?

'My father was originally apprenticed to Rolls-Royce and went on to work for them for several years more, before joining an independent Silver Ghost specialist, working for them for a number of years. In 1997 he decided to go it alone and started the company A J Glew with the help of my mother, Susan, with myself coming into the family business over 10 years ago.'

Then the business made a name in Silver Ghost circles?

'Yes, that's what we became known for;

with 90% of our work being Ghosts and Phantoms, we're somewhat of a specialist! We cover every aspect from full restorations to events preparation, service and repair. We have a Silver Ghost and a 20/25 of our own, and while we know the models inside out, we've always turned our hand to whatever our customers have.'

But you've always been slightly 'word of mouth', haven't you?

'It's amazing how few people know that we're here, outside Moreton-in-Marsh – most of our work is through

word of mouth and longstanding clients. We've never needed to advertise that much, though we do a bit more of it now that a younger generation is coming into the scene.'

What do you have in at the moment?

'A client asked us to help with his Edwardian Locomobile. The owner races it and wanted to improve the handling. So we designed new hubs, fitting to the existing stub axles, to enable the fitting of the pre-war Dunlop wheels, with huge 34 x 5 inch tyres. This will reduce the un-sprung weight enough to get some control back – you can hardly lift each of the old wheels. We made transfer plates for the external contracting-band brakes, so they can still be used...it's an example of some of the bespoke work we can do.'

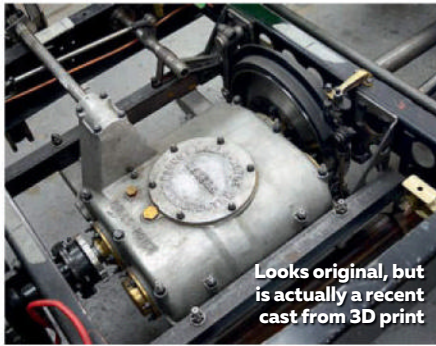
What about Rolls-Royce & Bentley?

'This 1908 Silver Ghost is a huge project. Not very much of the car survived, and what did was beyond use, requiring a lot of it to be re-manufactured. For the gearbox casing, we borrowed one from a donor car and had it 3D scanned. All kinds of new parts have had to be manufactured bespoke, using modern technology for this car – new axle tubes for either side of the original differential housing, a new bulkhead, a new copper fuel tank which, because of the bodywork, is different from other Ghosts. Very early radiators like this were tube and plate – we've had to get tube drawn to the correct size and wall thickness, with special tooling made up to assist in the manufacture.'

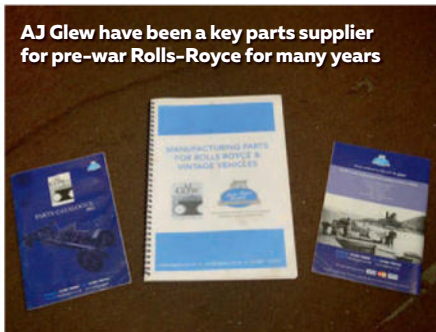
'Then there's a lovely Phantom II with a Gurney Nutting body that needs a new clutch release bearing. It used to be the owner's grandfather's car



Frazer Glew and team with Silver Ghost restoration project



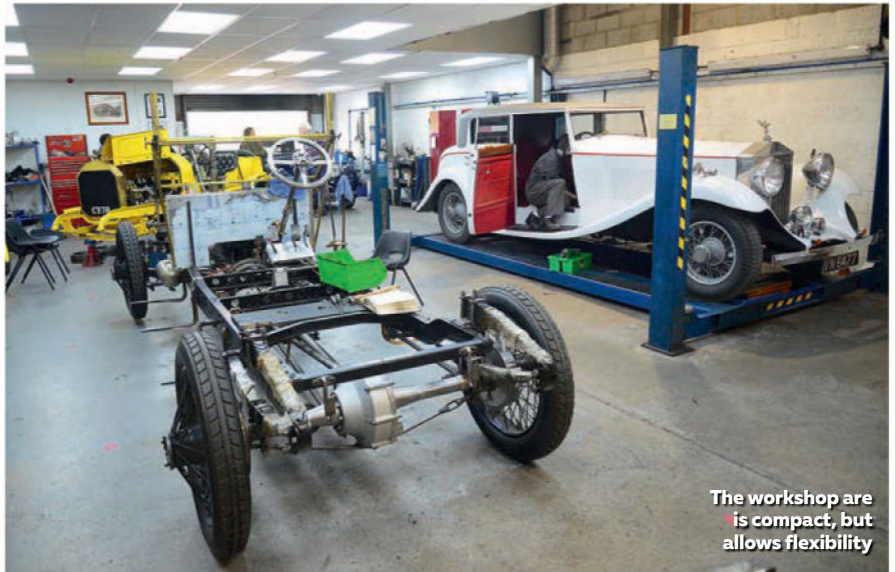
Looks original, but is actually a recent cast from 3D print



AJ Glew have been a key parts supplier for pre-war Rolls-Royce for many years



Just part of AJ Glew's fully-equipped machine shop



The workshop are is compact, but allows flexibility



Upstairs, more machining and rebuilding work - Phantom gearbox



Derby Bentley dropped in for a service



Special copper tank made for mid-mounted location

and later went to America, where it had a towbar fitted for towing a race car, but it's now back to standard. There's also a Derby Bentley in for a minor service and a number of Silver Ghosts here for pre-rally preparation including two 1914 Ghosts doing the Alpenfahrt this year, one of which is an original Radley-bodied car.'

Tell us more about spares – you make and sell spare parts?

'Yes, we publish an online parts catalogue, offering approximately 250 components and where possible we machine to Rolls-Royce specification, but we are also able to manufacture bespoke parts for

“For the gearbox casing, we borrowed one from a donor car and had it 3D scanned. All kinds of new parts have had to be manufactured bespoke, using modern technology”

any project as required, having our own fully equipped machine shop.'

What about car sales or storage? And do you have a waiting list for work?

'We do not consider ourselves car salesmen; what we can do is more like car procurement, where we can match

the right car to the right person. We have a separate building in which we are able to store customers' cars either waiting to be worked on or those that are up for sale. As far as a waiting list goes, we work around customer needs, tour dates, rally dates and long-term restorations. We try to please all! ■

FEATURE CAR
BENTLEY 3 / 5.3-LITRE





A QUART IN A PINT POT

Thanks to the close similarities of Bentley's 3-litre and 4 ½-litre engines, using the larger capacity unit to power the lighter 3-litre chassis has long been popular. But what happens if you go a stage further, in search of even greater performance?

WORDS: NIGEL BOOTHMAN PHOTOGRAPHY: LEWIS HOUGHTON

Like so many of the best engines, the 4 ½-litre Bentley unit was developed to win races. The superiority of W O Bentley's highly advanced overhead-camshaft, four-cylinder, 3-litre engine seemed unlikely to continue long at Le Mans by 1926, which turned out to be a disappointing year for Bentley on track. The Lorraine-Dietrichs and Aries cars were faster, and the huge new 6 ½ -litre Bentley wasn't seen as a likely replacement at that time, so something had to be done with the 3-litre to extract more urge. Quickly, and with as little expense as possible.

A new cylinder block, very like the 3-litre but with a larger 100mm bore, gave a good deal more capacity even after it was teamed with a stronger, shorter-stroke crankshaft that permitted the borrowing of sturdy connecting rods from the 6 ½. The bearing journals were larger and therefore more durable but little else was changed, so the new engine retained the 3-litre's camshaft drive and four-valve per cylinder layout. Being so similar on the outside, the new engine went into the standard 3-litre Bentley chassis of 10ft 10in wheelbase,

and hey presto – a new model.

Yet it was the sole factory-entered 3-litre Bentley that won at Le Mans in 1927 after a pile-up that damaged all three cars and took the two new 4 ½-litres out of the race. Despite this inauspicious start, the 4 ½-litres were soon gathering trophies and of course returned victorious from Le Mans the following year, when Woolf Barnarto took his first win. But this is all just background to the phenomenon of the Bentley 3 / 4 ½. It's been a familiar designation in VSCC and BDC programmes for many decades, as it didn't take long for enthusiast owners to see the potential for swapping a few major engine components and transforming the performance of an old 3-litre... especially one of the short-chassis models. Special builders took things further with light cut-down bodywork on ever-shrinking wheelbases, but it was the dual-purpose roadgoing sports cars that could hare round race tracks at weekends which defined the 3 / 4 ½ for most fans. As Johnnie Green said in his 1969 book *Bentley – 50 Years of the Marque* 'even now, 42 years later, this 4398cc engine still provides the most popular and most reliable

“It didn’t take long for enthusiast owners to see the potential for swapping a few major engine components and transforming the performance of an old 3-litre.”



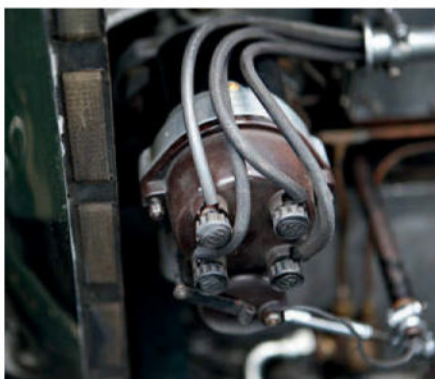
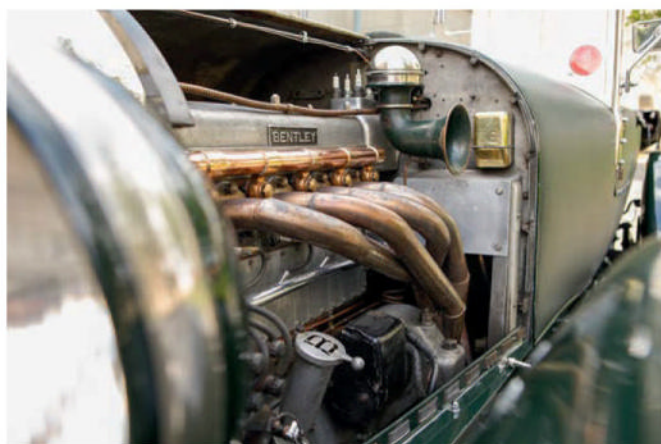
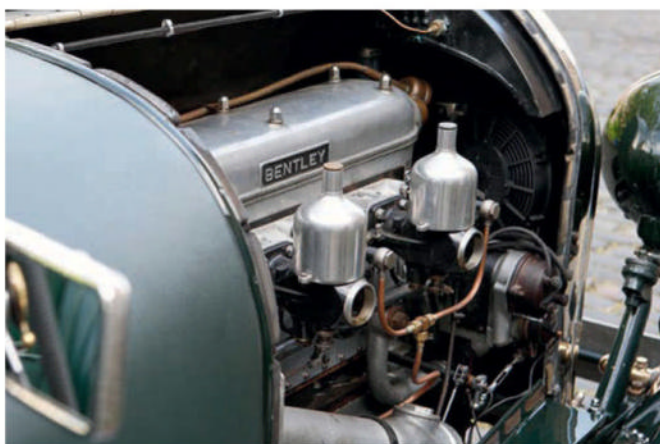
Nick points out the few clues to the state of tune - four-branch manifold, below right, is one.

means of having fun in club races.’

The car in our photos was bought in 3 / 4 ½ form by Nick Gould back in the year 2000. Nick’s motives were the same as for many others who fancied this combination of larger engine in smaller Bentley. As he shows me around the car in the mews by his Edinburgh city-centre garage, Nick tells the story.

‘I bought it to keep up with a friend who had a faster vintage Bentley. I had a standard 3-litre at the time, but I wanted something a little more potent. This one was shabby, but okay, and I became aware of it just after the birth of our first son. I hadn’t driven it, so my wife Jane went down to see Stanley Mann – her first trip away after our son arrived – and she phoned up to say “when are buying this car then?”’

This soon led to an eventful drive back home to Scotland from Stanley Mann’s place in Radlett, Hertfordshire, during which the dynamo drive fell off. But once





Slight positive camber of front wheels is apparent head-on

fixed, the car was pressed into a pattern of regular year-round use that was to continue for six or seven years. What does Nick know of the car's origins?

'It began life as a 3-litre saloon belonging to cabinet minister – a Mr Margerison, I think. Eight years later with its second owner, it went back to the works for a new Vanden Plas tourer body, the cheapest "£100 body" they called them. It was always a 9ft 9 ½ wheelbase chassis, so in appearance it hasn't changed since the 1930s.'

There is a long period for which the

ownership hasn't yet been listed, but Nick came to know the gentleman who had the car before he did, going back to around 1980. However, ancient history feels less relevant when you have to deal with a major engine issue.

BIG PROBLEM LEADS TO BIGGER ENGINE

'The first big mechanical job I faced was when a piston crown came off,' says Nick, 'I had the work done by Jock McKinnon and Simon Adams. They

designed a new crankshaft, made modifications as necessary to the crankcase and obtained a new block casting from NDR Bentley. This built the capacity out to 5.3-litres but because it's all balanced and breathing better through bigger carbs and a four-branch exhaust manifold, and because we took 30lbs off the flywheel, it revs harder. It'll go to 3500rpm but doesn't really need to, because of all the torque.'

This set-up is teamed with the standard gearbox and the longest back axle ratio available. Plus, for »

FEATURE CAR BENTLEY 3 / 5.3-LITRE



60,000 miles in 20 years – Nick has made proper use of his car

true motorway-crushing ability, a Laycock overdrive. Twin cooling fans pull the temperature down as long as you remember to catch it before you've spent too long in thick traffic, and the whole car came together as Nick's fantasy vintage Bentley.

Nick had the radiator rebuilt after a high-capacity water pump caused it to disgorge its corroded old innards, and another major change was the

swap from a cone clutch – which struggled with all that twisting force – to a modern single-plate type.

'The original starter motor wouldn't get it going, so there's now a stronger one from a Bedford truck,' says Nick.

What's noticeable about the car as we persuade it around Nick's narrow, stone-built corner of Edinburgh isn't an aggressive state of tune but docility. It's good as gold, starting

and idling obediently, which Nick says it continues to do even after an energetic blast on fast roads.

'What you've got now is a car with 150bhp where there used to be 70bhp,' says Nick. 'I forget what the torque figure is, but it's huge, so the tyres don't last long any more.'

Nick runs the car on 750-size Blockleys, slightly larger than the 3-litre would have worn originally, but not much. Consider the size of the contact patch versus any 1980s hot-hatch with the same power, half the torque and about half the weight... these boots have a lot to cope with.

'I got it as a high-speed touring car, and after the modifications and the fitment of the overdrive it's very happy at 70-85mph,' says Nick. 'One of the best drives I ever had was coming through Peebles in the Scottish Borders by moonlight, on the way back from Goodwood, with the Bentley setting off car alarms as we went past. It's still quite a heavy car to drive, or at least to steer, but I've done 60,000 miles in it in 20 years.'

In all that time, Nick reckons he's had the hood up about twice. It does work nicely though, as the body was





An open road and a warm day - vintage Bentley heaven

“This built the capacity out to 5.3-litres but because it’s all balanced and breathing better through bigger carbs and a four-branch exhaust manifold, it revs harder.”

completely rebuilt around 15 years ago by local body and paint wizard Willie Ramsey and repainted too.

‘It has the loudest horn in the world, like a ship’s hooter – it’s a Bosch, but goodness knows where it came from,’ says Nick. ‘It’s been there since the year dot, I think.’

The instruments sit in a great big piece of African hardwood left to Jane by her great aunt, and Wille Ramsey turned it into a dashboard. He burned out two drill motors doing it, apparently, but it looks tremendous. Nick takes the wheel and we find our way out of town towards quieter, faster roads and some open scenery. He tells me more about starting a post-Covid car meet, a ‘coffee & classics’ group on Facebook after feeling an urge to do something positive in lockdown, which is how I came across him and his wonderful car. At that first meeting in 2021, we were all still masked

up and drenched in hand sanitiser, with barely a dozen attendees on a damp Wednesday morning outside a roadside café. Two years later, Nick’s group has more than a thousand members and it’s become a struggle to find places that can fit everyone in, if even a tenth of the membership turns up.

‘I knew that I liked meeting people and blethering about old cars, and I thought perhaps other folk might enjoy it too. I had no idea it would take off to this extent though.’

A DAUNTING DRIVE?

Nick is a relaxed chap, and disarmingly generous – when we arrive at a little coffee shop-cum-garden centre he sends me off to drive the Bentley and declines to come along as a passenger, having found a sunny table, with a cup of coffee ordered. I’ve observed the

starting procedure (not much beyond ‘switch on, press the starter’ when the car is warm and ready), and anyway, it seems a bit of a pussycat. Climbing into the flat little seat and tucking my legs under the dash focuses the mind, however. The wheel is huge, of course, to move the steering beneath the weight of that mighty engine. The pedals seem right out in front of me, the accelerator a little brass button between the larger drilled plates of clutch (left) and brake (right). The gear lever is where my right thigh wants to be.

Luckily, it’s a layout I’m well used to, albeit in a different 1920s marque, but that doesn’t make it easy. Moving from one crash gearbox to the next, even across cars of the same make and model, can be a steep learning curve – the amount of flywheel effect, the state of tune, the throttle response and a few other factors all feed into »

FEATURE CAR BENTLEY 3 / 5.3-LITRE



Overdrive, tall back axle and extra power make it a total mile-eater



Lift finger-hook to select reverse



Clockwise speedo, anti-clockwise tacho

getting the timing right. Or more likely, wrong. Still, no time like the present...

Retarding the ignition timing on the steering wheel quadrant would be wise on a cold engine, but it doesn't need much help now, so with a double-check that we're in neutral, I thumb the starter button and there's a whir-whirr WHUMP as the mixture lights up. Prod the accelerator gently and the bass-rich sound of the Bloody Thump (the traditional nickname for a vintage Bentley's throbbing soundtrack) is already present. Because of the high rear axle ratio, we'll start in first rather than straining anything by asking the car to set off in second, and away we go on a wave of torque, with no real need to touch the accelerator until we're rolling out of the café's car park and onto the

road. Gentle throttle up to about 15 or 20mph, clutch down, into neutral, clutch up, clutch down again and into second. All done in less time than it takes to say.

By some miracle it goes in silently but progressing to third, I linger slightly too long getting the lever across the gate and we get a bit of a graunch. The weight lost from the flywheel is significant and you almost have to hurry through the H-pattern gate to get each gear home in time, before the revs drop away even further than you need them to. Likewise, changing down for a junction or an exciting blast through a corner is done with a quick throttle blip and a nifty movement into the lower ratio – there's no throttle lag at all.

Into top, and with the road opening out before us, the car can do its party

trick. With most vintage cars, even Bentleys, you expect a bit of elasticity between throttle input and response. A primitive carburettor wheezes mixture into a convoluted inlet tract, some long-stroke, low-compression pistons slowly gain impetus and turn the crankshaft faster, so you gather speed. But it's not like that here.

Perhaps it's exaggerated by the short travel of the pedal, but even a modest prod produces an instant, near-linear response. It bellows its impressive war cry and charges forward, gathering more and more pace until the wind is pulling your hair out and you wonder how sympathetic Police Scotland will be to the driver of a nice old car. The speedometer and the rev counter are large, handsome instruments that

“It bellows its impressive war cry and charges forward, gathering more and more pace until the wind is pulling your hair out.”



would be hypnotic if there weren't so much else going on to hold the driver's attention: the speedo (left) starts at one o'clock and swings clockwise, while the rev counter (right) starts at 11 o'clock and swings anticlockwise. In overdrive top, they must move in synchronicity...each 500rpm increment probably adds 15mph.

Luckily the brakes feel up to the job, at least by vintage standards, which means you still must think ahead and try to anticipate what other road users are likely to do. But a firm shove drags the speed off rather well. Cornering is a joy, leaning out into the wind-blast on a right-hander and pulling that cord-bound wheel round by keeping it close to your chest. This elbows-out approach is aided by the Vanden Plas body's

cutaway in the place where a driver's door would be, if there were one, but again and again it's the instant power that takes your breath away. It's mightily impressive and would be interesting to compare with a 4 ½ 'Blower', a heavier and less wieldy car. The tall gearing and the effortless shove must indeed make this a consummate mile-muncher on the motorway. It's no fun in an open vintage car having to breathe the soot and mix it with the trucks in the slow lane.

After burning enough 99-octane fuel to get a good feel for the car, it's time to return it to its owner. Or rather its ex-owner, as Nick had been pondering the sale of this exciting machine for a little while after his 20-year anniversary with it rolled past. It is indeed with a new keeper as you read this, and Nick

has (for the moment, anyway) got the vintage Bentley thing out of his system. He took an honest but somewhat needy 3-litre with the conventional sporty 4 ½-litre mod and turned it into a really smart, really well-sorted machine with even more capacity and power, and in doing so, piled on the miles like a sales rep. If that doesn't represent the right kind of use for a sporting Vintage Bentley, I don't know what does.

Oh, and one final thing, which may be an insight or may be irrelevant. What has Nick bought to replace the Bentley? Has he had enough of muscular open-air motoring where you hang on for dear life while an oversized engine heaves you towards the horizon? Apparently not. The new steed in the stable is an AC Cobra! ■

AN ANATOMY OF... **THE BENTLEY R- AND S-TYPE CONTINENTALS**

Few cars have had quite the same impact as the R-Type Continentals and their S-Type successors. And the style of these most beautiful of Bentleys continues to resonate today

WORDS: RICHARD GUNN PHOTOGRAPHY: KELSEY ARCHIVE/RICHARD GUNN

In the 104 years since Bentley was established, it has been responsible for some extraordinary cars. There were the original 3-litres of the 1920s that helped cement the marque's sporting reputation with Le Mans wins and the added bonus of annoying Ettore Bugatti so much that he was prompted to dub them 'the fastest lorries in the world'. Then there were the potent and domineering supercharged 4½ litre 'Blowers' of a few years later which may have upset founder W O Bentley but are still regarded as among the most evocative of all vintage cars. What might W O – or Bugatti, for that matter – have thought of the turbocharged machines of the 1980s that hauled the marque out from the shadow of

Rolls-Royce and made it a force to be reckoned with again? They too have a special place in Flying B history.

But there is a particular range of Bentleys by which all others are measured; so much so that modern models still reference to them in their styling, marketing and names. We're talking, of course, about the Continentals of 1952 to 1966, those magnificent coachbuilt creations so synonymous with mid-20th century speed, style and splendour. Typified by the stunning-looking lightweight R-Types of H J Mulliner, the Continental is regarded as Bentley's post-war zenith. The word 'iconic' may be overused these days, but for these thoroughbred classics, it is entirely justified. They are, without a doubt, some of the most desirable

and striking automobiles ever built.

While the Continentals were machines of the 1950s and 1960s, their origins date back to before the Second World War. The name itself was reused from an early 1930s' series, albeit not Bentleys. In 1930, a special short-wheelbase version of the new Phantom II was created for the personal use of Henry Royce who was finding his large Phantom I something of a handful. He had Rolls-Royce's body designer, Ivan Evernden, come up with a Phantom II with six inches chopped from its wheelbase. It also featured a tuned engine, stiffer suspension and 'close-coupled' body – one where the back floor was lower than the front, which allowed for a contracted length, lower rear roofline and more rakish





The 1939 Bentley Corniche provided much inspiration for the post-war Continental. Although the original no longer exists, this is the recreation reborn in 2019.



It was the shortened Rolls-Royce Phantom II Continental range of the 1930s that gave its name to the post-war Continentals. This one has Barker & Co bodywork, as did Henry Royce's original machine.



OLG 490 was the first R-type Continental; note the split-windscreen that was a feature of the prototype but not carried through to the production cars.



The shape of the 1938 Bentley Embiricos was one of the main influences on the post-war Continentals.



The sole Pininfarina-bodied R-Type Continental was quite radical by comparison to most of those that emanated from British coachbuilders. Its deep wraparound rear screen was just one of the many distinguishing features.

appearance without compromising interior space too much. This Barker-bodied car was originally intended as a one-off. However, when it won a major prize at the 1930 Biarritz Grand Concours d'Elegance, the decision was taken to make the short-wheelbase chassis with stiffer, five-leaf springs available to customers. The 281 cars that resulted, with various bodies, were dubbed Continentals.

So that gave rise to the name. The style was first inspired by two cars from later in the decade. The first was a 1938 Bentley 4¼-litre created for André Embiricos, a Greek magnate and racing driver, featuring gorgeous swooping streamlined styling by French designer Georges Paulin. It was built by Parisian coachbuilder Pourtout. This in turn gave rise to a 1939 prototype Bentley MkV with similar glorious flowing looks from the pen of Paulin, albeit this time constructed by Carrosserie Vanvooren in Paris. Dubbed the Corniche, it was undergoing endurance testing in France when World War Two broke out. While the chassis made it back

'Typified by the stunning-looking lightweight R-Types of H J Mulliner, the Continental is regarded as Bentley's post-war zenith'

to Britain, the body – which had been damaged during its French trials – was totally destroyed when the docks at Dieppe were bombed. A replica was recreated by Bentley in 2019, while the Embiricos Bentley survived the war intact and even raced at Le Mans.

Both these aerodynamic machines had input from Rolls-Royce's development team, which included Ivan Evernden. But while the company focused on the Allied war effort, all thoughts of a high-performance Bentley were cast aside. Even after the conflict ended, the more mainstream Bentley MkVI and Rolls-Royce Silver Dawn were the main focus of the new factory at Crewe. But once they were in production, and Rolls-Royce was assured that its luxury vehicles still had a place in the post-war

world, thoughts turned once again to a special Bentley model, utilising the forthcoming R-Type chassis.

REVIVAL OF THE CORNICHE

As 1946's Bentley MkVI had ushered in the era of the 'Standard Steel' saloon, with a factory body, so the task of designing the coachwork for the proposed Bentley was taken in-house rather than given to an outside concern. The main responsibility fell to Evernden and Rolls-Royce's soon-to-be chief styling engineer John Blatchley, who started work in 1950 on what was initially known as the Corniche II project. Even the name proclaimed that the plan was a revival of the pre-war idea; not cancelled, »

just postponed and updated.

The Corniche II followed similar principles to its stillborn predecessor, though with two doors rather than four. It was to be a coupé with a considerably sleeker appearance than the saloons. Even the traditional Bentley grille, normally sacrosanct and not to be messed with, was allowed to be lowered by one and a half inches, although Evernden did subsequently admit that he would have preferred a nose that was lower still, citing the Volkswagen Beetle and Citroen DS as paths he might have taken with a freer rein. 'However, this car had to be recognised as a Bentley, so the most

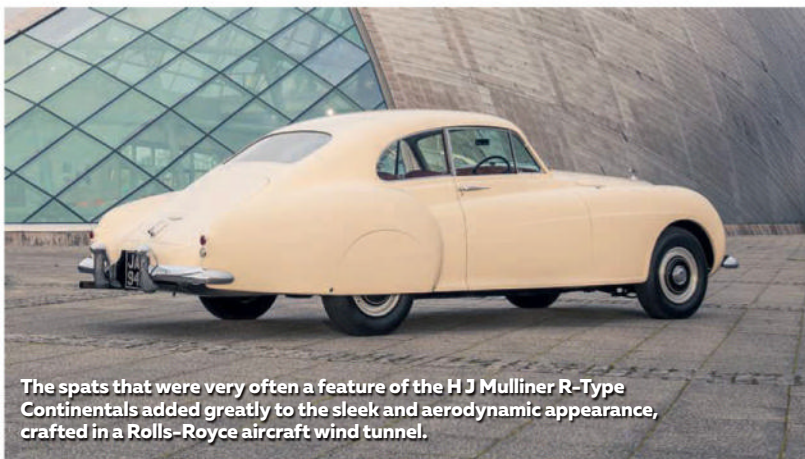
I was able to do was to reduce the radiator height,' he noted. The initial designs showed a resemblance to the pre-war Paulin cars, especially in the long, tapering tail, but with more modern and substantial lines. It should also be admitted that similar fastback shapes had emerged from other coachbuilders and manufacturers by then, and it's likely that the two designers would have been aware of influences as diverse as Pininfarina and Cadillac.

Having been set down on paper by Evernden and Blatchley – although the latter was modestly happy to attribute most of the design to his colleague – a scale model was

produced, which then benefitted from Rolls-Royce's aeronautical experience by being wind tunnel-tested. This allowed further refinement, including a wraparound windscreen and small rear fins which gave stability at speeds of 120mph and beyond. 'Much more could have been done... at the expense of still greater sacrifices, but the purpose of the exercise was to reduce the aero drag of the orthodox car and not to make a space capsule for an astronaut,' reflected Evernden.

The prototype Corniche II was built by H J Mulliner rather than by Rolls-Royce's own coachbuilder, Park Ward, as it had developed a lightweight construction system using metal tubing instead of the usual ash framing. And although the car was longer and wider than a Standard Steel saloon, it weighed almost 400lbs less (3700lbs compared to 4060lbs) thanks to this method – something crucial not just for greater speed but also for safety, as 120mph was worryingly close to what the tyres of the day could handle. Completed in August 1951, this experimental machine, using a MkVI chassis, was registered 'OLG 490' and thus nicknamed Olga.

Trials with Olga produced a top speed of 119.75mph. This wasn't just down to weight and »



The spats that were very often a feature of the H J Mulliner R-Type Continentals added greatly to the sleek and aerodynamic appearance, crafted in a Rolls-Royce aircraft wind tunnel.

THE BOND BENTLEY

One of the more famous – if fictional – drivers of a Bentley Continental was Commander James Bond, the world's most un-secret secret agent. While Ian Fleming's spy may be best-known for his movie Aston Martins, in the original books he was resolutely a Bentley man. He owned three throughout the books written by Fleming; a 1930 4½-litre 'Blower', a 1952 Bentley MkVI and, from Thunderball in 1961, an R-Type Continental. Dubbed 'The Locomotive' and described as 'the most selfish car in England', Bond acquired it for £1500 after its previous 'rich idiot' owner had crashed it, and then spent a further £3000 having its original damaged body replaced by H J Mulliner with an angular, two-seater affair. To create his hero's Bentley, Fleming wrote to Rolls-Royce's chairman, Whitney Straight, to enquire whether such a car – which he envisaged as a cross between a Continental and a Ford Thunderbird – might actually exist. He was referred to H J Mulliner who informed him that, yes, one did. A 1954 example with the usual Mulliner shell had been crashed during 1956 and been rebodied by Henri Chapron of Paris to a unique Mulliner two-seater drophead coupe design, with



a square-cut rear end that matched Fleming's description of a 'knife-edged, rather ugly boot'. It's believed that Fleming encountered the car in London during 1960; one year later Thunderball was published with the description of The Locomotive that closely matched it. While the Chapron Continental, chassis BC63LC, still exists, it did have its back end modified in 2005 to more closely match the original blueprint, as Chapron had executed the build rather badly. More recently, a Bond enthusiast has recreated the Bentley exactly as described in the books.



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MARQUE HISTORY

BENTLEY R- & S-TYPE CONTINENTALS



1957 Bentley S1 Continental.
This one was sold new to the Bamford family, of JCB digger fame

aerodynamics alone, as there were higher gear ratios plus modified carburation, induction and exhaust manifolds boosting the power of the 4566cc six-cylinder engine to 153bhp compared to the standard 140bhp – although, of course, Rolls-Royce was coy about those figures. It was, however, totally fine with being lauded as the maker of the fastest four-seater car in the world.

When the H J Mulliner production cars followed Olga, there were only minor tweaks. The roofline was lowered by another inch and the divided windscreen became a single piece. The name changed too; during 1951 the decision was made to drop Corniche II in favour of the

Continental tag. Production began in February 1952, four months ahead of the R-Type saloons. At £7608 3s 4d, the fastest four-seater on Earth was also one of the most expensive.

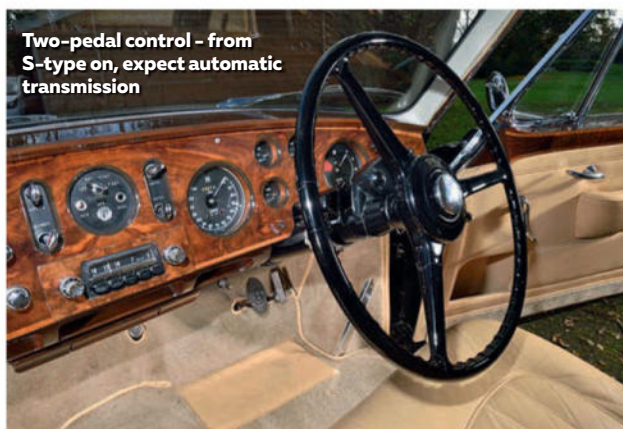
In total, 208 R-Type Continentals were built between 1952 and 1955, with 108 of those for the UK market. While the vast majority were H J Mulliner creations emanating from its Bedford Road works in Chiswick, London, it didn't have a total monopoly. There were four Park Ward drophead coupés and two saloons (styled by Rolls-Royce's own John Blatchley), five Franay variants created in France and three Grabers constructed in Switzerland. A single Pininfarina originated

from Italy. Some of the continental Continentals adopted a more radical appearance, eschewing curves for more slab-sided styling. In the case of the futuristic Pininfarina version, a wraparound back window was also incorporated. But with 193 Mulliners made overall, these became the defining Continental look. However, even H J Mulliner stepped away from the norm on occasion; one designed in collaboration with its engineer owner, Captain R G McLeod, during 1955 also went for a Pininfarina-esque wraparound rear screen, albeit with shortened fastback bodywork.

While the Continental was always intended to be lightweight – or as lightweight as any post-war Bentley



Tall rear lights mark out S-type fastback



Two-pedal control - from S-type on, expect automatic transmission

‘The brochures described it as “flowing and purposeful, and free from any needless excrescence” – the latter an important consideration in a world where American trends were leading to all manner of automotive excrescence’



For the S2, H J Mulliner updated its Continental body, incorporating a notchback tail with wraparound rear window.



A 1961 Bentley Continental S2 drophead coupe with Park Ward lines. The hooded headlamps were a distinctive feature that suited the rest of the very modern styling.



The four-door versions of the Continental were designated Flying Spurs.



The Park Ward S2s of 1959 onwards ushered in the era of ‘straight through’ wing styling, thanks to Norwegian designer Vilhelm Koren. This is a 1961 car.

could ever be – accessories such as radios and plusher seats soon pushed weight up towards 4000lbs. To compensate, engine capacity increased to 4887cc in May 1954, giving an estimated 165bhp. But these more powerful versions weren’t around for long; the final Continental chassis was dispatched from Crewe to H J Mulliner on 18 February 1955 (and delivered when finished to its owner in May 1955). On 29 March, the first S-Type Continental chassis followed it.

ONTO THE S-TYPE

The new S-Type chassis was more rigid than its predecessor and incorporated suspension, brake and steering enhancements, along

with a better-breathing and higher compression version of the existing 4887cc engine. Park Ward had bodied its first R-Type Continentals in 1954 as Blatchley-penned drophead coupé and two-door saloon styles, which it carried over to the new platform with hardly any changes. H J Mulliner did enact more modifications to its Evernden-conceived coupé, but the styling still closely resembled that of its predecessor. The shell was slightly lengthened, the waistline raised and the rear wings received some finessing. The brochures described it as ‘flowing and purposeful, and free from any needless excrescence’ – the latter an important consideration in a world where American trends were leading to all manner of automotive

excrescence! Notably, even with the increased power (which by 1956 was believed to be 178bhp, thanks the fitment of bigger SU carburettors and yet another rise in compression), the early S-Type Continentals weren’t as fast as their predecessors. The bulkier chassis and additional luxury and equipment saw to that.

Of the S1 Continentals, H J Mulliner and Park Ward took the lion’s share of the bespoke work, bodying 218 and 185 respectively. James Young Ltd was responsible for 20, although they were difficult to tell apart from the Park Ward cars, while Hooper supplied six to its customers and Graber and Franay created one each. In 1957, the first four-door Continental appeared – an H J Mulliner offering officially »

known as the Flying Spur in reference to the family crest of Mulliner's managing director Arthur Johnstone. While the Flying Spur did have direct input from Rolls-Royce's Blatchley and Evernden, collaborating with Mulliner chief stylist Herbert Nye, the Continentals had originally been conceived as lightweight two-door aerodynamic Bentleys. The Flying Spur really didn't conform to that formula, as elegant as it was. It also prompted others to offer four-door Continentals, with James Young and Hooper subsequently diverging from their two-door policy.

Summer 1959 saw significant changes. They were heralded by the introduction of the new 6230cc V8 engine for the S-Type and Silver Cloud-based models, resulting in the S2 Continental. Power increased to around 200bhp and improved brakes were fitted, although they

were still drums throughout, rather than the discs that others were adopting. H J Mulliner and Park Ward took the chance to update their two-door bodies. The former incorporated a wraparound rear window, albeit not as dramatic as seen on some previous R-Types. The boot was also enlarged, making the car less a fastback coupé and more a notchback saloon. It looked fresher but less dramatic; less graceful. Park Ward went further, with a 'straight-through' wing line – in other words, no undulations along the entire length of the car – for its two-door drophead coupe. Responsible for the look was Norwegian stylist Vilhelm Koren. To a certain extent, it foreshadowed the Silver Shadow and T-Type, still some six years away, although it wasn't until 1963 that a fixed-head coupé belatedly joined the drophead.

The only other coachbuilders in the S2 game were James Young and Hooper, the latter building just a single four-door saloon shortly before it ceased coachbuilding in 1959. There were 40 James Young S2 Continentals, 125 Park Wards and 222 H J Mulliners between 1959 and 1962. The field contracted still further during 1961 when H J Mulliner and Park Ward merged to form Mulliner Park Ward as an inevitable outcome of Rolls-Royce's acquisition of H J Mulliner in July 1959.

The final hurrah for the S-Type Continental was the S3 of autumn 1962. Just as the Standard Steel Silver Cloud and S-Type saloons sprouted four headlamps, so did the Continentals. The feature looked especially effective on the Park Ward machines, where they were angled downwards towards the grille. Of the 312 S3 Continentals that appeared, Mulliner Park Ward was responsible for 291, James Young produced 20 and Graber put together a single example over in Switzerland.

As with the R-Type, there were »



On the Park Ward S3s, the paired headlight configuration didn't sit well with the recess between bonnet and wings when horizontal. Fortunately, the sloping installation proved highly effective.



One of just 20 James Young S3 Continentals, with styling that was somewhat similar to the H J Mulliner cars. This 1965 example was displayed at the Geneva Motor Show of that year.

PRODUCTION FIGURES 1952-1966

R-TYPE CONTINENTAL – TOTAL 208

H J Mulliner: **193**

Park Ward: **6**

Graber: **3**

Franay: **5**

Pininfarina: **1**

S1 CONTINENTAL – TOTAL 431

H J Mulliner: **218**

Park Ward: **185**

James Young: **20**

Hooper: **6**

Graber: **1**

Franay: **1**

S2 CONTINENTAL – TOTAL 388

H J Mulliner: **222**

Park Ward: **125**

James Young: **40**

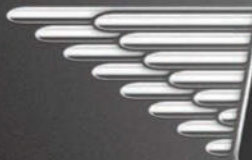
Hooper: **1**

S3 CONTINENTAL – TOTAL 312

Mulliner Park Ward: **291** (98 to H J Mulliner style, 193 to Park Ward style)

James Young: **20**

Graber: **1**



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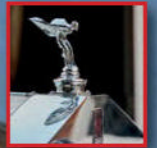
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The original H J Mulliner R-Type Continental has influenced the 21st century range of Continentals, both in name and looks.

some more unusual offshoots. Captain R G McLeod again collaborated with H J Mulliner, this time on two Continentals. One was a 1960 S2, the other a 1964 S3. His favoured trademark of a truncated rear end made both look ungainly and unbalanced, with the 1964 car bearing a distinct (some might say unfortunate) resemblance to a BMC 1100. Which was probably not quite the effect its owner and creator intended.

While production of the Continental was intended to cease in summer 1965, the final chassis wasn't finished until November 1965, with the completed car dispatched to the customer in January 1966. Thus the Continental briefly ran alongside the new Silver Shadow and T-Type. There was, at least initially, no Continental variant of these monocoque machines. When the two-door offshoots were given their own name in 1971, they

finally reused the Corniche moniker. In 1984 though, the Continental name was revived for the Bentley version of the Corniche. It's been in continuous use on several different Flying B vehicles ever since.

But whatever the Continentals of today are like, and those that will undoubtedly follow, the originals of the 1950s and 1960s still cast a very long shadow. The best, most beautiful Bentleys ever made? The argument is a very compelling one. ■

THE
IC IntroCar
VIEW

John Tupper,
managing director
of IntroCar, says:



It is not an uncommon opinion that 'standard' Rolls-Royce and Bentley models are rather undervalued. All you need do is compare their prices to Aston Martins, Porsches, Ferraris and other luxury vehicles of their day.

The same cannot be said of a Continental. While the vertiginous acceleration in prices has abated somewhat, owning a Continental normally represents a non-trivial investment, and one reserved for the deep-pocketed aficionado. Happily, such vehicles are well-served by a decent number of skilled professionals around the world, many of whom are thoroughly experienced

in the restoration and maintenance of these thoroughbreds. They need searching out, and the further one gets from the UK the further apart such businesses tend to be, but it is worth finding them if the value of your Continental is to be preserved.

There are subtle mechanical variations that a seasoned professional will know about (for example, altered differential ratio or higher compression engine compared to non-Continental models), but in the main, availability of spares for the running gear is not a worry as they share a great deal with Standard Steel models of the era, and these are well-served. The coachbuilder really will affect the value. Mulliner fastbacks (beautiful machines) are at the pinnacle, but others are a modest fraction of the cost. Do your research and look at values of similar models by the same coachbuilder.

The usual caveats around the mechanics remain, but my main advice to a prospective buyer centres on bodywork. Originality, or the lack thereof, will affect value.

Here you really are in the hands of an expert, as little in the way of parts lists were ever available, so if a piece of trim has been substituted only an expert who knows or has worked on similar models will be able to tell. It is not unheard of for an ostensibly pretty restoration to be let down by substitution of missing or damaged parts for something that will propel the car rapidly (and cheaply) onto the showroom floor.

Have the bodywork thoroughly inspected for cracks, corrosion and coverups and check the way the doors shut. Aluminium bodies can be prone to nasty cracks. Look out for cheap paint jobs as a thorough bare metal restoration costs a lot. A car prepared to look shiny to the casual observer or impulsive buyer may have hidden a multitude of sins. Read up and consult an expert. I do not usually plug the Rolls-Royce and Bentley Specialists' Association - I'm on the board, so I've an interest - but here I think it is a good place to start. I'm not among the experts, but quite a few members of the RRBSA are.

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SUMMER SENSATIONS

The eagerly awaited Concours d'Elegance and race day at Silverstone will once again be the highlights of the Club's summer calendar

With the warmer weather now here, the Bentley Drivers Club is gearing up for its two main annual events of the season: the 75th editions of both Summer Concours & Party and the BDC Silverstone race meeting.

The Concours, at Kelmarsh Hall & Gardens in Northamptonshire, will again be a two-day event on 8-9 July, with all the glitz and glamour of the main judging day of club members' cars on the Sunday preceded by driving trips and an evening gala dinner the previous day. In 2022 Michael Dacre's beautiful 1936 Derby 4¼ Three-Position Drophead Coupe, clothed in stunning Veth & Zoon bodywork, was named the Best in Show. Which car will secure the coveted WO Bentley Memorial Foundation Trophy this time around?

The Concours judging category is sub-divided into various classes based on production era (Vintage, Derby or Crewe), with the finest example across all being named Best in Show. Meanwhile, club members' cars attending the show, but not entered

into the Concours category, will still be judged for class prizes in the Patina category – with the best example landing the Bentley Motors Trophy. A further award up for grabs is the Kensington Gardens Trophy for the Inter-Regional Team Challenge, when each Region of the club is invited to put forward a team of three cars. Adding further lustre to the day's proceedings is expected to be another superb display of vehicles from the Bentley Motors Heritage Collection. Entry on the day to the Concours is £45 per car.

Once the dust has settled on the Concours it will be kicked up once again in a less sedate fashion when the racing roars into life at BDC Silverstone on 12 August. A packed programme featuring nine thrilling races in the afternoon, preceded by morning qualifying, will once again provide spectators with the finest historic club racing. Bentleys will be to the fore, but spectators will also see plenty of other classic marques, including Morgan, Aston Martin, Alfa Romeo, Talbot, Riley, AC, Austin Healey, Lotus, Triumph, Jaguar, Allard and MG.

Highlight will be the blue-riband

Bentley scratch race for the Times Challenge Trophy (TCT), the event also incorporating the Pre-War Challenge for other marques. Club Competitions Captain Ben Eastick has won the TCT for the last two years in his distinctive and powerful T-Type single-seater. Can he make it a hat-trick?

The competition will surely be fierce, as it will be in the Bentley handicap, won last year by Oliver Llewellyn (3/8 Special) and the Bentley open & allcomers races. Complementing these will be the BDC Classic Challenge including the Morgan Techniques Trophy, while all the regular, and popular, supporting races will also take place, featuring the Aero Morgan Challenge double-header, Ecurie Classic Racing and FISCAR ('50s sports cars). This year the club also welcomes the Aston Martin Owners' Club with its St John Horsfall Trophy race. Look out, too, for the lunchtime track parade of around 100 gorgeous club members' Bentleys, of all models and ages.

Tickets (prices TBC) can be booked via Silverstone Circuit (www.silverstone.co.uk). ■ www.bdcl.org



Rural Kelmarsh Hall & Gardens will host the Concours d'Elegance (image: Kelmarsh Hall)



Oliver Llewellyn (3/8 Special) will again be one to watch at BDC Silverstone (image: Chris Dicken)

Bentley

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Off track, some simply enjoy driving their Bentley on the road, frequently in the company of other enthusiasts.

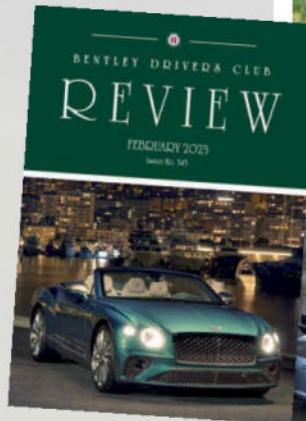
No matter what your inspiration, the BDC can help enhance your Bentley ownership and take your appreciation of this classic marque even deeper.

A great feature of our club is the excellent events we hold, both at home and abroad. These include our annual long-established Concours d'Elegance and Silverstone race meeting plus numerous tours and social occasions organised by our ever active Regions worldwide.

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FINAL DETAILS FOR BURGHLEY

The International Club for Rolls-Royce and Bentley Enthusiasts' Annual Rally 2023 is now only weeks away

If you're a Rolls-Royce or Bentley enthusiast, then you won't want to miss the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club Annual Rally & Concours d'Elegance. This event is widely considered the largest gathering of Rolls-Royce and Bentley motor cars in the world and takes place each summer. This year's event is taking place at Burghley House from the 23rd of June until the 25th of June.

The event is open to members and non-members of the club and typically attracts a large number of attendees from around the world. In addition to the impressive display of Rolls-Royce and Bentley motor cars, there will also be trade and other stands, automobilia for sale, as well as class judging and a parade of prize-winning cars.

Burghley House, the returning venue for this year's event, is a magnificent Elizabethan stately home located in Lincolnshire, England. The house and its

beautiful gardens are open to the public throughout the year, and the estate also hosts a number of other events and activities. If you're planning to attend the event, then you'll need to act quickly as tickets are on sale and selling fast. To purchase tickets please visit the members' section of the RREC website at rrec.org.uk, or if you're not yet a member, call The Hunt House on 01327 811788.

In addition to the impressive display of motor cars and other activities, there is also a Black Tie Dinner at the event. The evening will begin in the Old Kitchen with a welcome drink, followed by a tour of the staterooms with Burghley guides. The tour will end in The Orangery restaurant, where you will enjoy a sumptuous seated dinner consisting of a starter, main, dessert, and cheese board per table. Each person will also receive half a bottle of wine, a glass of prosecco or sparkling elderflower on arrival, and tea or coffee at the end of

the meal. This is a fantastic opportunity to socialize with fellow members in a grand setting, and we hope you will join us for this wonderful evening.

On the Saturday night of the Rally, there is also a delicious hog roast meal with salads, featuring two premium rare breed Gloucester Old Spot hogs, fresh soft large round baps, apple sauce, coleslaw, and mixed leaf salad. You definitely don't want to miss this feast! It's a great way to unwind after a day of admiring beautiful motor cars and socializing. The hog roast meal is included in the ticket price for the event, so be sure to mark your calendars and make plans to attend the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club Annual Rally & Concours d'Elegance at Burghley House in June.

The Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club Annual Rally & Concours d'Elegance is an event that shouldn't be missed by any Rolls-Royce or Bentley enthusiast. With so many beautiful cars on display, as well as a range of other activities and events, it's sure to be an unforgettable experience. ■



A ghostly gathering of 40/50hp models



Stunning 1933 Phantom II coupé draws admirers



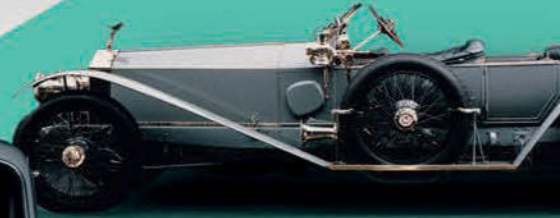
Phantom II Sedan



Much younger Phantoms are welcome too



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TWO-DOOR DELIGHTS

We've featured many Australian-owned cars in *RR&BD*, but they're usually venerable classics. This pair of Goodwood-built Phantoms shows that 21st century Rolls-Royces are a hit Down Under, too.

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: RICHARD HOLDSWORTH

It is a natural question for the casual motoring observer who hasn't had the privilege of owning a Rolls-Royce: just how good are the cars built under new ownership at the Goodwood factory in Sussex? The short answer is heaped with positives if the opinion of two Goodwood car owners in Australia is anything to go by.

Ray Delaney and Ralph Plarre have, between them, owned no less than 14 Rolls-Royce and Bentleys and still own both pre-Goodwood and current models. These two Phantoms are both 2009 production; Ray's is the Coupé and Ralph's the Convertible. We will endeavour to assess just how good they are – do they live up to a standard

that allows the traditionalists to get over Britain's greatest motoring jewel ending up in German ownership?

How this happened is a story in itself, and one we've covered in detail several times in *RR&BD*. As a quick re-cap, Vickers let it be known late in 1997 that Rolls-Royce would be sold, but employees and observers alike



Open-air motoring or
fixed-head privacy - which
would you choose? »

assumed this would simply be an orderly handover to BMW, with whom Crewe were already closely associated thanks to the use of BMW drivetrains and other parts in the forthcoming Arnage and Silver Seraph models. So it appeared until the summer of 1998 when BMW's bid of £340 million was gazumped by a larger bid from Volkswagen AG,

who acquired the Crewe plant and almost everything else... apart from the crucial rights to use the Rolls-Royce name and logo. BMW swooped in and bought these for a mere £40 million, and Volkswagen found itself unable to make Rolls-Royces beyond the end of a hastily negotiated short-term agreement that saw the last

Silver Seraph completed in 2002.

ROLLS-ROYCE GOES TO THE COUNTRY

So BMW went off to the leafy West Sussex countryside close to the historic Goodwood race track and built a brand new state-of-the-art production facility »

FEATURE CARS

ROLLS-ROYCE PHANTOM COUPÉ & CONVERTIBLE



Side view shows thick C-pillar and windscreen support shared with Convertible

to continue a tradition that went back to the days of Charles Rolls and Henry Royce. However, it would be foolish to conclude that simply buying a name and building a new factory was the end of the matter. Immediately after the acquisition of the Rolls-Royce brand, BMW set about understanding exactly what this name and heritage meant. And to do so, they acquired a base in the heart of London's most affluent area – the typical customer's domain! The base chosen was an ex-Westminster Bank building, and it was soon filled with the people who knew what Rolls-Royce was all about, how the cars were conceived, created and built, the heritage. The building, affectionately dubbed 'The Bank' was where the future of Rolls-Royce was to be moulded.

To lead this team was Ian Cameron, a Briton who had been recruited from Jaguar's design department to BMW back in 1992, where he was involved in the design of the 3-series and Z8 sports car. But it was 1999 when he was given the daunting task of creating the new Rolls-Royce car range. Rolls-Royce technicians, engineers and stylists were recruited, and they even sought the opinion of Rolls-Royce's Chief Styling Engineer from 1955 until 1969, John Blatchley, then in his late eighties and living in retirement nearby. He approved.

The new Rolls-Royce cars were to have a unique chassis platform rather than a shared basis with any BMW model, with a body and interior retaining traditional Rolls-Royce design cues. Aluminium was chosen for the

majority of the body construction while final assembly, including all body, paint, wood, and leather work, was to be completed to each customer's individual specification. The engine would be a BMW V12 producing 454hp and driving through a six-speed automatic transmission.

Some idea of the attention to detail of the construction of the cars can be understood when one learns that the aluminium extrusions for the spaceframe would be produced in Norway using hydroelectric power, then shaped and machined in Denmark and finally hand-welded in Germany.

ROLLS-ROYCE DOWN UNDER

We can call on the experience of our two Goodwood Phantom VII owners to learn how well all this planning and preparation worked out. We are meeting Ray Delaney and Ralph Parre in the Australian state of Victoria, initially at the airfield at Tyabb on the Mornington Peninsula, some 40 miles south of Melbourne. Then, as a contrast, further north almost in Aussie 'bush' country. But why the airfield? Well, it has many connections with Rolls-Royce not the least being the adjoining aero museum, aptly named The Old Aeroplane Company, the home of several Rolls-Royce engined aircraft, one being a Curtiss Warhawk which served in the Second World War.

It is Ray Delaney who we can thank



Curtiss Warhawk fighter makes an impressive photo-bomber!



This is what the lucky Phantom driver is presented with. And some good reading at his side!

for introducing us to this fascinating aspect of Rolls-Royce history and this venue, a real mecca for aircraft from a previous era. But fear not, this is not all about aircraft, even though one of Ray's other pastimes is classic flying machines. He joined a consortium involved in rescuing a number of North American T-28D aircraft from Laos that had been used in a covert CIA programme named Farm Gate during the Vietnam conflict. These fighter planes, adapted for low-level bombing, were then left to rust when the Vietnam war ended in 1974.

This man has also owned, or still owns, an amazing array of cars from his first, an MGA (bought when he was 17), moving up through several Jaguars, Porsches, Mercedes and Ferraris (he was President of the Australian Ferrari Register) and he has raced many times and with many cars including his Ferrari 275 GTB. Our interest lies in his current garage which also hosts a 1999 Bentley Continental R alongside the Phantom VII. Previously, Ray Delaney has enjoyed no less than six Rolls-Royces and Bentleys.

But back to my initial question – just how good are the cars that are »



Two Rolls-Royce v12s share this photo with Ray Delaney

FEATURE CARS

ROLLS-ROYCE PHANTOM COUPÉ & CONVERTIBLE

the epitome of Englishness but now built by a German-owned company?

I ask Ray Delaney first. His is the beautiful 2009 Rolls Royce Phantom VII Coupé, a car that was delivered new by the Sydney Rolls-Royce dealer and then traded in by the original owner ten years later having covered just 34,000 km (21,200 miles).

Ray tells me, 'I had been looking at another Goodwood Coupé in Melbourne when this car popped onto the internet. Compared to the Melbourne car, I preferred the colour combination, lower Kms, the more attractive asking price and the fact it was coming from the official Rolls-Royce dealer with a two-year factory warranty and two years' complimentary servicing, so it was the car to choose.'

RAY TAKES DELIVERY

Because of Covid travel restrictions in Australia at that time, Ray was not able to get to Sydney to drive or inspect the car, but he negotiated a price acceptable to both parties and they shipped the car to him via Rolls-Royce in Melbourne. Ray took delivery in February 2020.

'To my delight, I found the Coupé whisper quiet, the engine turbine smooth with surprisingly good performance while the gearchanges are imperceptible. My wife, Michelle, and I have enjoyed the car on several long trips up the east coast of Australia to Metung, Merimbula and across to Canberra a couple of times – a



Restricted 3/4 view is forgiven by graceful coupé styling

round trip of some 2000 miles – as well as a few weekend journeys into the wine region of the King Valley in north-east Victoria. It is a fantastic touring car and appears to shrink in size when driving on flowing mountain roads. And it's also surprisingly economical at cruising speeds.'

Ray confirms that the Phantom VII is, in fact, narrower and lighter although a tad taller than a Bentley Mulsanne of the similar vintage. 'But it has a presence and I never tire of looking at it. And the standard of workmanship and outstanding quality built into every part is incredible.'

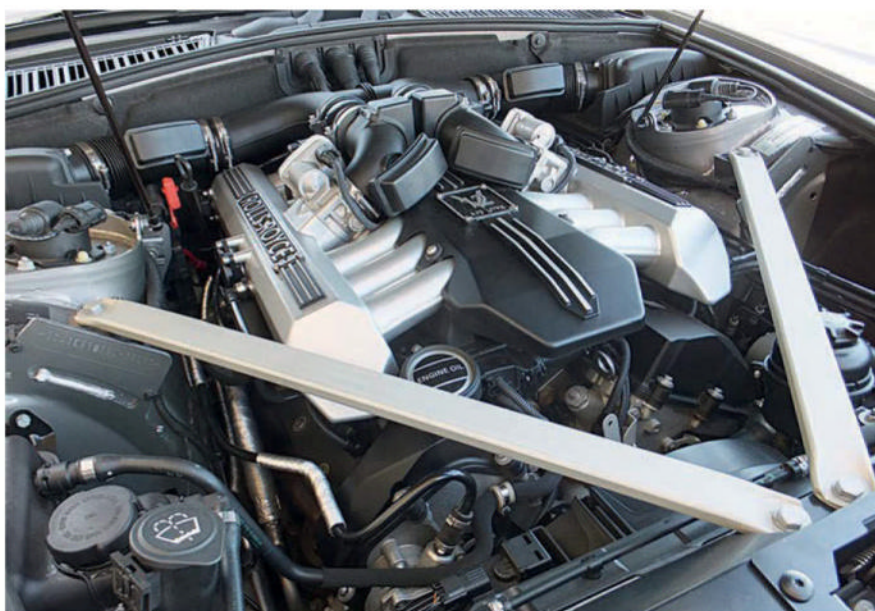
Any downsides? Ray smiles...

'You can hardly call it a fault, but for

long trips and a fair stack of luggage, some fastidious owners could find the boot a bit on the smallish side!'

So to the key question: how does the Goodwood Phantom stack up against the other Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars Ray has owned? It is a testament to the reception by the world's motoring press for BMW-era Rolls-Royces that Ray bought the car unseen; now he has more than enough time to pass judgement on his Goodwood car and the words that ring in the ear are those of the workmanship and outstanding build quality from the ground upwards.

'The attention to detail and build quality is simply incredible. I haven't the slightest regret in taking what »



6.75-litre capacity echoes older models, but this one's a BMW-sourced V12



Yes, the logo always remains upright!

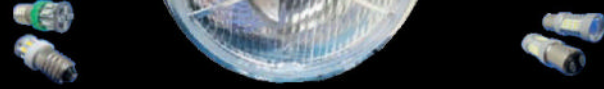
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FEATURE CARS

ROLLS-ROYCE PHANTOM COUPÉ & CONVERTIBLE



The most imposing convertible made this century? It's hard to deny



Ralph Plarre loves the colour combination - note the stainless bonnet

was quite a bold step in buying solely by what others said.'

Probably the closest equivalent in Ray's personal experience would have been his 2008 Continental GT Speed, his daily driver for many years. Ray says that its ability to cover vast distances effortlessly in great comfort placed the car on another level from most other cars he had owned...until that point, anyway. Others in his experience include a 1979 Rolls-Royce Corniche FHC that was only sold when the search for the Phantom began, a 1977 Bentley T2 saloon that he entered in the 1996 Melbourne Grand Prix Rally, a 1926 Bentley 3-litre Vanden Plas tourer and one car he doesn't intend selling, a 1999 Bentley Continental R Coupé. To impress a man who's lived with all of those, the Phantom must be worthy indeed.

RUBBER STAMP FROM RALPH PLARRE

The views of Ralph Plarre are no less enthusiastic although he stresses it was not always so when it first came to the car's looks.

'My initial response to pictures that I first saw of the Phantom VII was absolute shock and horror! So



Crimson roof and Consort Red leather look superb with Flame Mahogany timber



big, so bold and to my eyes not at all attractive... it was beyond anything I had ever seen before.'

Ralph says he felt it was as vastly different to his expectation of a replacement for the softly styled Seraph as he could possibly imagine. But when he drove a demonstration car, that experience was at a total contrast to what his eyes had told him. Ralph smiles,

'It was akin to the ugly duckling magically turning into a magnificent swan. It had taken me about two years to get it, and that's when the love

affair started to take over my heart. I desperately wanted to own one!'

Ralph Plarre has been a Rolls-Royce enthusiast ever since a new burgundy coloured Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud 3 swished past his Melbourne suburban family home when he was just 17 years old. In 1991 he finally took the step of acquiring a car – it was a 1972 Corniche Drop Head Coupé and he and his wife, Marg, joined the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club, remembering that '...we met the nicest bunch of people ever!'

Other cars carrying the Rolls-Royce

and Bentley badges passed through their hands, and then came the 'ugly duckling' incident. Although Marg shared Ralph's initial doubtful view of the newcomers from Goodwood, used prices started to drop and combined with numerous sightings of what he terms 'these increasingly handsome beasts', the right car was found and a 2005 Phantom VII four-door saloon in silver was welcomed into their keeping.

'I soon got to know the car well. When prepping for Club concours judging, I could not fault one single »

FEATURE CARS ROLLS-ROYCE PHANTOM COUPÉ & CONVERTIBLE



area. The finish of every detail was beyond anything I had experienced in any car. I wanted to add our personal touch and I fitted 22-inch Kahn wheels to replace the original 20-inch wheels and wrapped the bonnet, roof and boot lid in midnight sapphire. Although my wife initially took the same stance as her namesake and was not for turning, she had no regrets and with great satisfaction we took the car to numerous concours events all over Australia.

'Then in 2017, I spotted a 2009 Phantom VII Drop Head Coupé being offered for sale. The car was in Moonstone with a crimson roof, Consort red leather and Flame mahogany timber, complete with stainless bonnet and teak deck, just 6000 Km on the clock and as new! My heart fluttered, although my wife yelled at me, "No, we already have one with four perfectly good doors, so we don't need one with only two silly doors that open the wrong way!"'

Ralph says the rest is history. 'We sold the beautiful 2005 Phantom VII to a Club member who still adores the car,

and for me the ownership experience with both the Goodwood Phantoms has been nothing short of magnificent. The build quality is 100 per cent, the ride and handling are sensational for what the car is – a huge convertible – with absolutely no sign of body flex that is often felt in soft-top cars. With the roof up the silence is quite uncanny.

'In my view the Phantom VII Coupé and Drop Head hark back to the glory days of Phantoms when no expense was spared to produce an exquisite, extravagant motorcar that represented the very best of its type. The fact that Rolls-Royce

says no more Phantom Coupés or Drop Heads are to be built simply adds to the ownership experience.'

Other marque cars sharing the garage of Ralph and Marg Plarre include a 1989 Rolls-Royce Corniche II Drop Head, a 1935 Derby Bentley DHC by Park Ward, a 1965 Bentley S3 standard steel saloon, 2011 Bentley Mulsanne and finally a 2015 Bentley GTC V8S.

Ralph and his wife have enjoyed first-hand experience of how the Goodwood cars are built. When they were on holiday in the UK a few years back, they were collected from their London hotel by a chauffeur driving an extended wheelbase Phantom VII and spent the day at the new facility in Sussex. 'We watched the quiet controlled efficiency and meticulous attention to detail at every stage of build as car bodies and components slowly advanced through this spotless environment. It was a revelation.'

Ralph Plarre and Ray Delaney agree that the name of Rolls-Royce, with a reputation built up over the past 118 years, cannot be in safer hands than with the new German owners and their operation in the English countryside. Those are the final reassuring words that we hear as we part company with these two dedicated Australian Rolls-Royce owners. ■

THANKS TO: Judy Pay of the Old Aeroplane Company, Tyabb, Victoria.



After 14 other Rolls-Royces and Bentleys between them: Ralph and Ray approve!

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A COUPLE OF UNICORNS

John Crowley-Clough's cars would be an unusual sight in the UK, but in Australia they're as close to the mythical one-horned beast as you're likely to get

WORDS & PICTURES: JOHN CROWLEY-CLOUGH, VICCI CROWLEY-CLOUGH

People have said my two Bentleys are as close to unicorns as you will see in the world of old cars. The first one (which I've owned for around 20 years) is a 1966 T-series James Young two-door, chassis CBH 1342. James Young made 15 Bentleys and 35 Rolls-Royces to this design and we believe my car may have been the first one to be constructed. It's in Graham Robson's book on the Shadow, Corniche and Camargue on pages 68 and 69 and shown with the UK registration 2 HAA. The car was made for a gentleman called Harry Archer and we know that the photos in the book are of this car because that was Mr Archer's personal registration number. The car had been imported into

Australia sometime in the 1990s and was in a bit of a sorry state when I bought it. Cosmetically it was in reasonable condition, however the engine had been allowed to overheat and both cylinder heads were cracked, the gearbox was awful, and the suspension was virtually in a state of collapse – BUT it was a James Young and had been on my list for many years, so after about 15 minutes of negotiation with the dealer, it was mine.

TRIBULATIONS... AND TRIALS

There followed a couple of years of waiting for mechanical work to be completed and a couple of adventures

whereby the car had to be hidden in a friend's garage while the dealer sorted out his disagreement with our local tax authorities, lest they decided to impound it. Eventually the car was in a reasonably roadworthy condition and could be registered, so in 2005 my son and I entered the Bentleys Down Under tour organised by the Western Australia BDC. This was a coast-to-coast trip with the idea being to start with your rear wheels in the Indian Ocean and finish with the front wheels in the Pacific. We met many, many interesting and very friendly people on that tour and the organisation was outstanding.

Given that our farm is in Victoria, we had to get to Perth on the other side of Australia for the start. This involved



Another blast from the past - John's previous two-door SY, an MPW version



The 1954 Bentley R-type saloon John used to own

John talks of renewing the paint - looks pretty good from here!



driving about 800KM to Adelaide and boarding a train to Perth - overall about 3 days of travel. I remember being a bit shocked at the time because there were only expensive first-class sleeper cabins available when we booked our trip. I hadn't counted on this turning out to be the cheapest way to travel because all food was included in the fare and a 15-year-old boy has an appetite equivalent to a large swarm of locusts!

Unfortunately, we missed the rally start in Perth so had to go chasing the pack and eventually managed to catch up with them at a vineyard near Margaret River. A small herd of 58 Bentleys and their occupants is also roughly equivalent to a swarm of locusts, and over the next month or



James Young car's interior is a smartly-piped grey hide

so we drove, ate and drank our way across Australia (we even managed to eat all the oysters available at the Ceduna Oyster Bar in South Australia which is a bit of a feat) eventually arriving in Terrigal, NSW to get our front wheels wet. The BDC put on a fabulous black-tie dinner to finish off a memorable experience.

Everyone on the tour complained about following our car because of the smell of burning oil. Even though the cylinder heads had been repaired the remainder of the engine was very tired. By the end of the trip, we were using almost as much oil as petrol so a full rebuild was carried out over another two-year period by a local Melbourne specialist.

HORSING AROUND

At one stage I had a tow bar fitted. You might think that is sacrilege, but the fact is that I can't stand snobbery. We used to take my kids to pony club using an old Nissan Patrol and ancient horse float. We were never organised (try running a business, a farm and a family with four demanding teenagers) so their gear was invariably dirty, or bits were missing and boots never properly polished. Think of a cross between *The Darling Buds of May* and *Steptoe & Son*. A couple of children in



Arrow—straight waistline differs from MPW
Corniche 'Coke bottle' hip

the pony club started picking on my kids, having inferred that we were just not good enough to be members. I don't want to offend, but you know the type of people – very judgmental, and appearances mean everything.

Rather than confront the situation head on, I had a local specialist build and fit a tow bar kit in a way that it could be removed without any damage to the chassis. We used the Bentley to tow our old float to pony club for the next few months and I continued to do my bit by running the barbecue at lunch time. Nothing was said but it was

amazing that the attitude changed, and we were once again welcomed into the club. I took the tow bar off in 2018 and we finally bought a new Nissan Patrol for towing last year, but the kids have grown up and left home so it's just me and my wife taking the horses to events.

Since the engine rebuild, we have followed the '20 day/ 20km' rule, which says you shouldn't leave the car more than 20 days without a run, and do no less than 20km when you do take it out. We've had almost trouble-free motoring. At some point in the next few years, we will get the paint off and do some



S3's graceful form is accentuated by handsome two-tone paint

cosmetic work but for the time being it's just a case of drive it and enjoy.

ENTER THE GIANT

Since the 1970s I've had a few Mk VIs, an R-Type and a '66 MPW two-door but never an S3. Everyone who has one raves about the driving experience and build quality. A few years ago, I was working in Edinburgh and saw an Australian advert for an interesting S3. I thought 'Ah yes, one day I'll buy that car'. In 2018 I retired and came home to Australia so rationalised my little collection of cars but still only had one Bentley and no S3...until 2021 when I was fortunate enough to buy the Jolly Green Giant.

This car is a 1963 S3 long wheelbase without division. Chassis number is BAL 10. The car was made for a Swiss gentleman and was delivered in Geneva so is right-hand drive, but has a speedometer in km/h along with many special features. He had all the extra length put into the front seat runners and also had a hand throttle fitted (unfortunately now missing) which leads me to believe that he may have suffered some form of leg injuries.

According to the excellent book *'Every Cloud Has a Silver Lining'* there were 34 LWB Bentley S3 chassis of which 10 were made by Park Ward using the standard body shape without a chauffeur division. 5 each in RHD and LHD. It appears my car was the second one made.

We have most of the receipts and invoices since new (many in French which is a problem with my awful schoolboy massacre of their lovely language) and know that the car also spent time in USA (New York) and the UK (Devon) before making it down under about five years ago. The speedo currently registers 185,000km which seems about right.

The car features in James Taylor's *'Original Rolls-Royce and Bentley'* book



S3's dash is as attractive as they come



Extra legroom is vast in LWB S3

in its original colours but has been respayed in a pleasing and correct two-tone (bonnet colour matches lower body colour for Bentley, bonnet colour matches upper body colour for R-R) since arriving in Australia. The previous UK owners carried out a great deal of work rectifying corrosion in the rear of the car so overall it's in very good nick.

Inevitably, there are a few things that we need to work on (sagging

rear springs, rebuild the front shock absorbers, bits of electrical rectification, new carpet and attending to the front passenger seat) but that's just normal in the old car world. We haven't yet had many adventures in this wonderful piece of engineering but plan on a long and entertaining future with it. I have noticed that it makes people smile when I drive it around – I hope it does the same for RR&BD's readers. ■

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BACK TO BASICS

We're getting close to having a roadworthy, useable Silver Shadow, so it's about time we got it running really smoothly.

What's that old metaphor about a can of worms?

WORDS & PHOTOS: NIGEL BOOTHMAN

We finished the end of the last update in a state of mild frustration – all the efforts with the gearbox actuator had merely improved things a bit rather than curing it, allowing it to select Park perhaps once in three or four attempts. Then we'd discovered a front brake caliper seizing on. It all felt like baby steps, but baby steps in the wrong direction.

Findlay, my partner in this restoration, suggested cleaning the carpets with a special detergent-sucking vacuum cleaner he'd borrowed, and as a way to

make us feel better about our progress, it was a useful idea. Within minutes of attacking each footwell, the cleaner's waste-water tank resembled a jug of Guinness, such was the concentration of grime it picked up. We think the late Duke and his passengers were smokers, and while any smell of stale tobacco seems to have dissipated after 35 years in a garage, the ash and smoke residue hadn't gone anywhere. Until now.

Encouraged by Fin's success, I took all the spares, tools and boxes of old parts out of the boot, hoovering it properly for the first time since

we've had the car. It soon became obvious how sad the boot carpet is; it looks as though something mildly corrosive has spilled onto it in one patch, while other areas are just threadbare or tattered. However, there's plenty left for a pattern, so this will be the one piece of interior trim in JUD 1D that gets replaced.

Having given the car something of a cosmetic birthday, we turned our attention to the sticky front brake. We'd figured out previously that it was the rear of the two calipers on the driver's side, and a phone call to



Receiving a 'birthday', the car is readied for carpet cleaning



The boot carpet is in poor shape and will be replaced



Home-made caliper piston push-back tool



So to Mulsanne Motors for expert checks

our pal Stephen (who had done so much work to the car after it arrived) revealed that he'd noticed the same thing when we were first getting the car moving, and had cured it temporarily by removing the pads and working the piston in and out of the caliper. We wanted to get the car mobile and roadworthy as soon as possible for a trip up the road for the fitting of our lovely new Avons from Vintage Tyres in Beaulieu, and as Stephen's fix had lasted several months of occasional use, we thought it was worth a try.

A TEDIOUS PROCESS

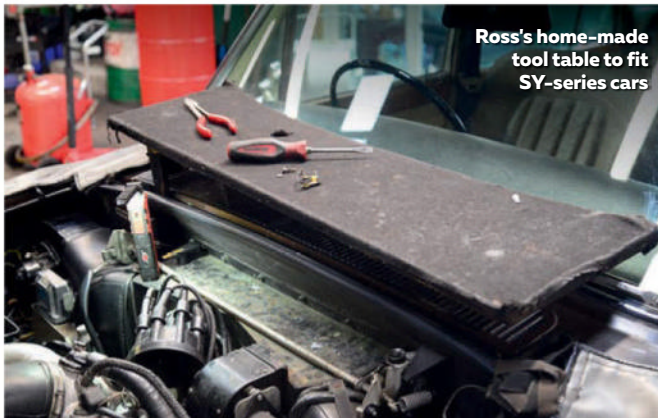
I welded up a push-back tool from two pieces of steel. It's a simple right-angle shape to insert where the brake pad would normally go; a quick twist forces the caliper back. This would be a simple job in a car with a conventional master cylinder and no more, but on a Silver Shadow's high-pressure hydraulics, the

“When our local Rolls-Royce & Bentley specialist, Ross McLeod of Mulsanne Motors, offered to have a look at the baseline settings, I bit his hand off”

routine goes thus: jack the car up and remove the wheel, turn the ignition on, but do not start the engine. Repeatedly press the brake pedal until the warning lights come on the dash to signify that the system is de-pressurised, then turn the ignition off. Withdraw the brake pads' retaining pins and lever the pads out. Attach a tube to the bleed nipple and immerse the other end in a container of old hydraulic fluid. Slacken off the bleed nipple, then use the tool to push the pistons back in. Nip up the bleed nipple, re-insert the pads, start the engine and when the

brake warning lights go out, press the pedal a few times to pump the pistons out and press the pads onto the disc. Turn the engine off and go back to the beginning. Repeat, perhaps six times.

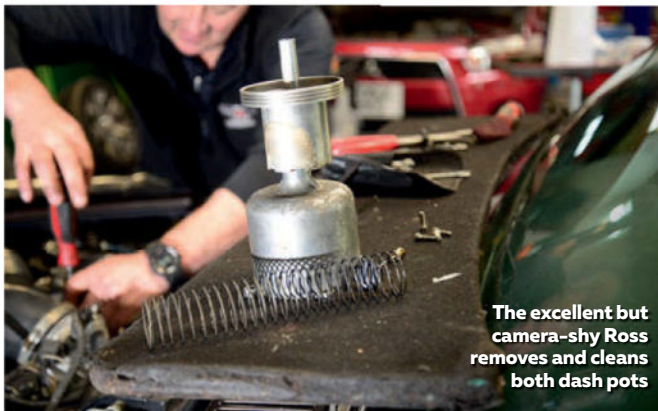
Tedious, isn't it? But after about half an hour's effort, the piston was moving in much more smoothly and popping out smartly on the first push from re-pressurised brakes. When we have more time, we'll rebuild the caliper properly with new seals, but for now it seemed worth another temporary fix. However, we hadn't ever been happy with the way the car behaved while »



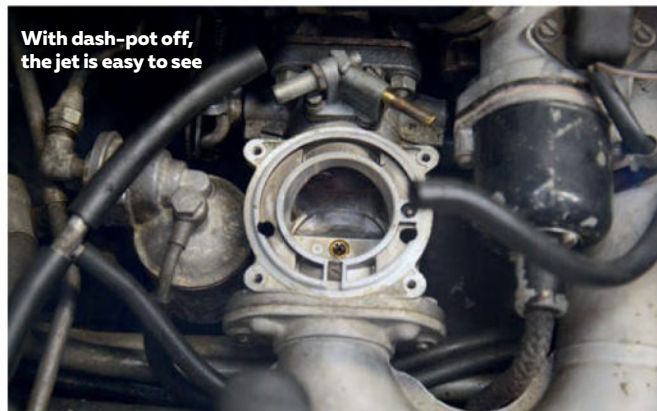
Ross's home-made tool table to fit SY-series cars



Diving into the distributor first - and all is well



The excellent but camera-shy Ross removes and cleans both dash pots



With dash-pot off, the jet is easy to see

warming up and we knew the carb and choke adjustments were a bit of a guess following the recommissioning work last year. So when our local Rolls-Royce & Bentley specialist, Ross McLeod of Mulsanne Motors in Dalkeith, offered to have a look at the baseline settings, I bit his hand off.

BACK TO BASICS

Ross served his time on SY-generation cars when he began an apprenticeship with Edinburgh's Rolls-Royce agent more decades ago than he'd like me to print. One relic of those days is the excellent little baize-covered table he made to rest on the scuttle and screen of any Rolls-Royce requiring attention. With that in place, Ross started on the ignition side of things, removing the distributor cap and the points to check their condition. After cleaning them up on an oil stone, he re-inserted them on an oil stone, he re-inserted them and flicked the engine round on the key until the points were held open by the nose of the cam. After adjusting the gap to the correct setting, he replaced the cap and moved on to look for timing marks on the crankshaft damper. Someone has been there before, as Ross discovered

a neat dab of white paint on the mark. But was the timing where it should be? With the strobe hooked up, it looked to be some way off what Ross expected.

He checked the data, and we soon found that this car is early enough to run with the timing mark showing at TDC itself, not 15 degrees before, so happily the timing is spot-on. On to the carburetion, then. Ross removed the dash pots to drain and re-fill the oil.

'A lot of people use engine oil in here, but that's too thick,' he says. 'If you don't have the correct dash pot oil, the closest thing is actually ATF, but we use this which is supplied by Burlen, the SU carburettor people, so it's the best thing.'

With the dash pots off we could see the jets, which Ross found were set a little too low. Using a special tool that overcomes some of the awkward access, Ross adjusted the heights to 1/16th of an inch below the deck height, which he regards as a safe starting point. While he was working in this area, he noticed something else.

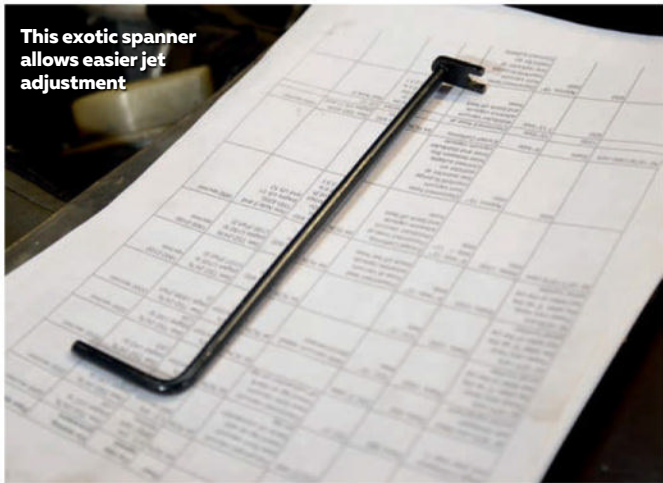
'I can tell that the big rubber seals around the base of the jets have perished,' he says. 'You know by pushing the bottom lever down, the

mixture control that moves the jets. It's stiff and doesn't return properly; this means the rubber seals have gone brick-hard. The carbs will have to come off, be stripped and the jets replaced.'

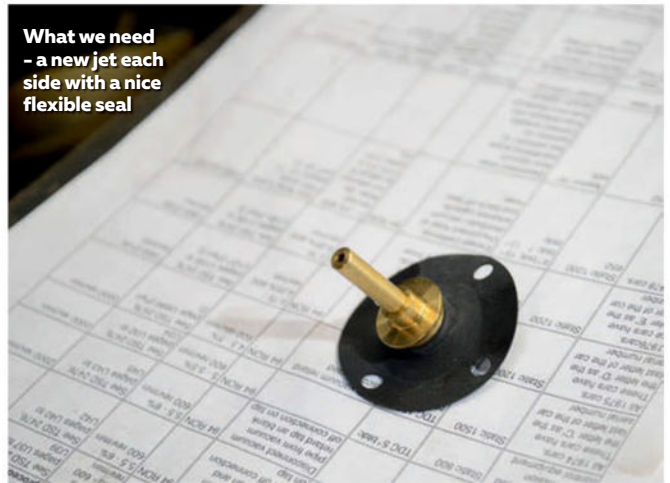
But not today...it's a fairly involved job for a quick Saturday morning check-up and the fault doesn't prevent us checking the rest of the settings. That said, you really need a stone-cold engine for choke adjustments, so Ross fell back on 40-odd years of experience and put the choke's fast idle where he thought it should be. As he did so, he talked me through some of the more obscure fittings to the twin SUs. There's the emissions capsule in the throttle linkage, a little oil-filled damper, and right over on the nearside inner wing is the weakener filter that maintains a depression on one side of the carbs in an effort to reduce fuel consumption. It's a far cry from the SU carburetion on older, simpler classics.

FINDING FAULT

Once he was content, Ross started the engine and made further adjustments to mixture and hot idle, listening for slight changes in engine speed as



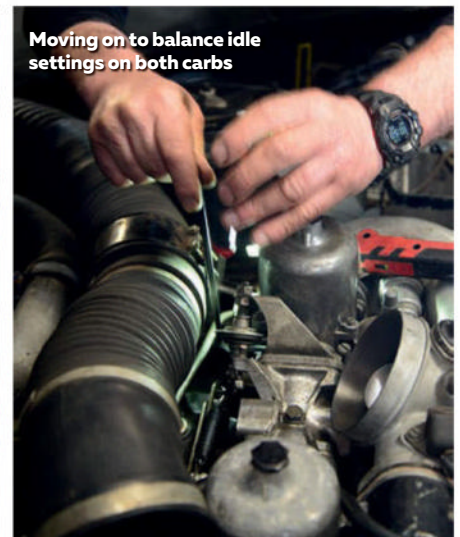
This exotic spanner allows easier jet adjustment



What we need - a new jet each side with a nice flexible seal



Setting the fast idle for the choke mechanism



Moving on to balance idle settings on both carbs

he tweaked the jets, also ensuring the carbs are balanced as regards their idle stops. But it was still (in Ross's words) a wee bit lumpy at idle, even though it revved cleanly enough here in the workshop.

'Have you changed the spark plugs?' I nod. 'Then we might not get it any better until the carbs have been stripped and new jets fitted. What about the floats - were they replaced?'

Here, I had to check with Stephen, but we think new plastic ones were fitted last year. Ethanol attacks old brass floats and causes leaks. We may also have a problem with a needle valve in one or other carb's float chamber, as we've had the odd flood of petrol from the overflow pipe that suggests the valve is not sealing as it should, albeit only on cold-start after a long lay-up. We put the tools away and set off for a brief test drive with Ross behind the wheel, and sure enough, »



Intake hose needs replacing



In disgrace, having thrown fuel on newly-painted floor

the engine seems less than happy.

'There's not much pull, is there?' asked Ross, and it was the same symptom I felt on the way over to Mulsanne Motors. Alright at very light throttle, unhappy with much more. Ross said he'd like to know if the fuel filter is flowing properly – we fitted a decent-looking used one from a friend, but a new one might be wise – and whether the fuel pumps are putting out what they should. This is something Ross would test simply by seeing how long they took fill a gallon can.

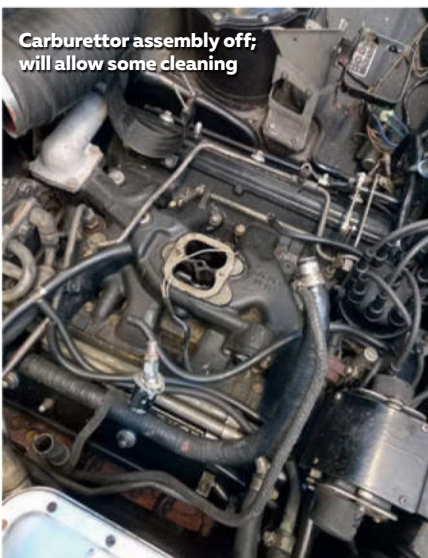
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Still, it's all we could do for that day, and I knew what I had to order from Flying Spares. With thanks to Ross, I headed back to our storage unit, only for the car to get more and more sickly until I was obliged to pull

over and try the throttle without any load to get the revs back up. When I struggled back into the yard, I switched off and checked there was a space inside our unit to aim for, amongst the other cars. I climbed back in and started up, and the guys who share the unit (and were painting part of the floor that day) waved their arms in disgust as the Silver Shadow trailed in a stream of 99-octane petrol from the overflow. What happened? A sunken float, a stuck needle valve?

With no time to find out, I had to pull the car cover on in disgust and wait for another day. Once the spare jets, needles, seats and gaskets arrived from Flying Spares, I soon found time to nip back to the unit and remove the carburettor assembly – tricky by normal SU carb standards, but not as intimidating as it first looked. The whole lot is now on the bench in my garage at home, awaiting investigation. Will we have a leak-free, smooth running car next time? And will that mean we can finally take it to have its new boots fitted? Fingers crossed, as usual. ■



Carburettor assembly off; will allow some cleaning



On the bench and awaiting attention

Flying Spares

Excellent



Based on 2,365 reviews



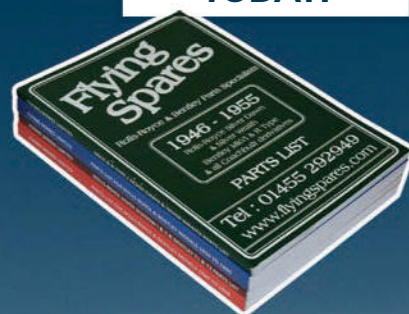
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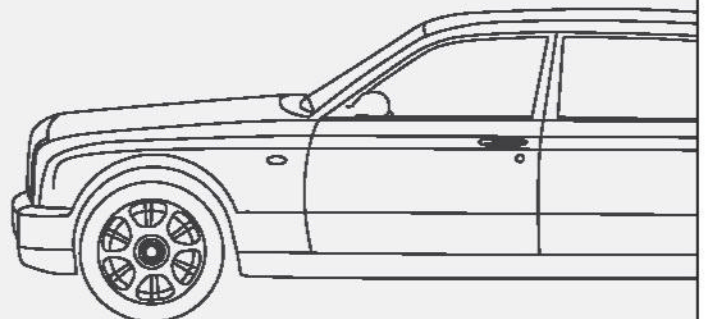
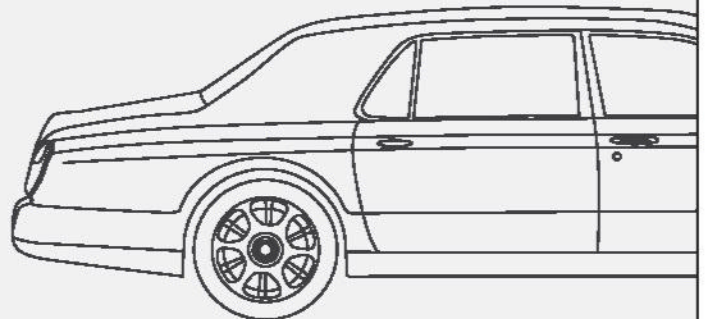
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NIGEL BOOTHMAN

The role of a really good car book should be multi-faceted – informative history, accurate technical information, lovely pictures...and above all, a certain effect on the reader

As car fans, motoring enthusiasts or petrolheads (call us what you will), we are susceptible to the appeal of a car described in print. It's the reason you've picked up this magazine. After all, it offers none of the physical thrills of driving a Rolls-Royce or a Bentley and it doesn't even smell of expensive leather. But we do our best to communicate what it's like to encounter the cars we feature. We aim, in fact, to make you wish you were there in the driving seat.

A good car book should do even more. With hundreds of pages given over to one topic, and perhaps hundreds of photo plates to illustrate it, it should be a total immersion that leaves you thinking about little else except how you could own one of these fantastic machines. Or is that just me?

The production values seem to have an effect, so an impressively weighty hardback tome of fine paper and pin-sharp images develops an aura that a more cheaply-produced volume cannot match. When that's teamed with a worthy subject, like a couple of examples on the shelf next to me –

“It should be a total immersion in a topic that leaves you thinking about little else except how you could own one of these fantastic machines.”

John Fasal's *The Rolls-Royce Twenty* and Lawrence Dalton's *Rolls-Royce – The Derby Phantoms*, the effect is profound. After absorbing all kinds of facts and figures about changes in the specification from one year to the next, or enjoying one of Mr Fasal's interesting side-alleys such as the art of heraldry and its relationship with coachbuilding, I go window shopping. Turning the plates and deciding between this body or that, noticing that everything with Grebel headlamps seems to be charming, or imagining how potent a Phantom II Continental with a Weymann body ought to feel.

It's the same with younger cars, if not worse, as these can be dangerously attainable compared with my Weymann-bodied PII fantasy. If I spend 20 minutes with James Taylor's *Bentley*

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As a final thought, it was nice to hear from Thomas Dinsdale of Complete Classics (see Your Shout, p. 34) about the forthcoming titles from this producer of books on our favourite marques, despite the loss of the great Bernard L. King. Three decades into the age of the internet, there's still no substitute for a good book. ■



Fasal's tome on the Twenty even has a beautiful bookmark



Window shopping for Arnages - why not?

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