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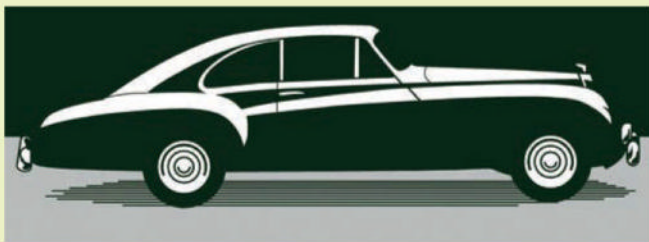
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Bentley Bloodlines

A 90th birthday might not be as important as a centenary, but the Silent Sports Car Club threw a fine party, regardless. Why wait? In ten years, who knows where we – and our cars – will be. We have a report on page 22 and before that, a close encounter with two lovely Derby Bentleys only a year apart in age, but differing in coachwork and engine size. Almost exactly 70 years passed between the arrival of the Derby Bentley and that of the Bentley Continental GT, so we mark a 20-year anniversary for that model in this issue too. As revealed in our insightful history by ex-Bentley engineer Andy Feaver on p.42, the Bentley brand was in an oddly similar position to that of 70 years before: a new owner and a need for an entirely new model, with an equally new engine. The subsequent success of both cars is striking.

In 2003, Rolls-Royce was innovating too. The first Phantom VII was handed over a minute after midnight on New Year's Day, and some 19 cars later, along came the magnificent specimen we feature on page 30. Now in happy long-term ownership, it was built to a unique specification for a special client. Perhaps not quite as special as Nubar Gulbenkian, though. The Armenian-British oil millionaire was one of the most colourful figures in post-war Britain, commissioning a string of sometimes bizarre, sometimes beautiful Rolls-Royces. The car on page 56 is one of the latter kind, and in the 1980s had a memorable role in the cult film *Withnail & I*. On page 68 we meet a Bentley Mk VI with a Mulliner saloon body, created using the same revolutionary technique as the R-type Continental's coachwork. And for those with a somewhat younger Bentley, we're tackling a winter service for the Arnage on page 80.

Enjoy the issue.

Nigel Boothman

rrb.ed@kelsey.co.uk

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ROLLS-ROYCE MARKS 'A GRAND SUCCESSION'

A week after we go to press, Torsten Müller-Ötvös will retire from his role as CEO of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars. He has served in the post for more than 14 years, second only to Claude Johnson in time at the head of the marque. On December 1st 2023 his successor, Chris Brownridge will begin his tenure. Brownridge has risen fast from his appointment as UK Sales Director for BMW in January 2018, before which he was MINI Regional Director for the UK and Ireland. He took the step up to become BMW's CEO in June 2021 and has made the move to Rolls-Royce after less than 18 months in post.

When Müller-Ötvös took up his appointment, Goodwood produced just two models, the Phantom and the Ghost. Under his leadership, the Rolls-Royce Wraith and Dawn were introduced, as was the Cullinan, the first SUV in the marque's history. This year sees the introduction of the Spectre, the car that begins the marque's transition to a fully electric product portfolio by the end of 2030.

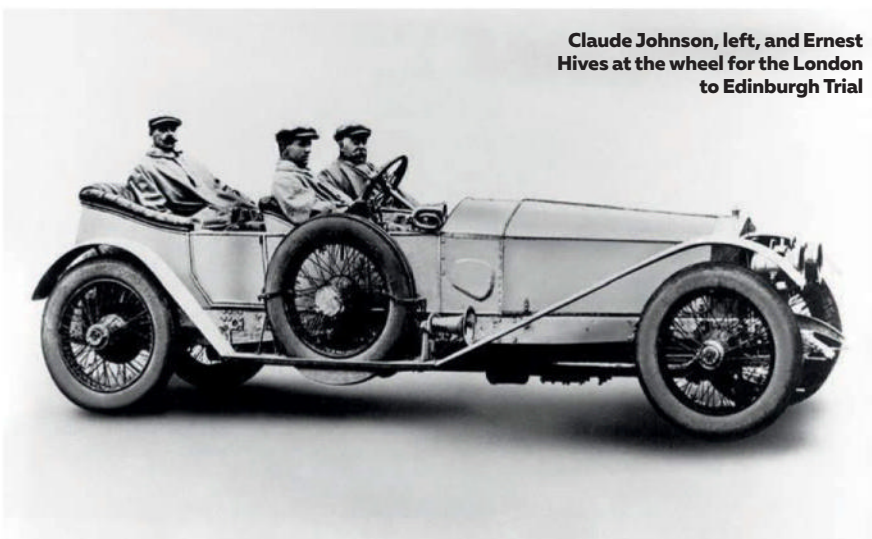
Another recent move has been the conception and launch of Black Badge, the edgier, more subversive Rolls-Royce alter-ego. This venture



Torsten Müller-Ötvös, left, hands over to Chris Brownridge

seems to have broadened the brand's appeal significantly, and it's this changing profile that will mark out Müller-Ötvös's time in charge of Rolls-Royce. According to the company's

own data, the average price of a Rolls-Royce in 2010 was around €250,000 and the average client was aged 56; today, the average price has doubled to around €500,000



Claude Johnson, left, and Ernest Hives at the wheel for the London to Edinburgh Trial

and the average age of a Rolls-Royce client is just 43. Whether Chris Brownridge maintains this direction towards a younger image and an unabashed pursuit of ultra-luxury bespoke offerings will be interesting to watch, but the company's rising sales (1000 in 2009 versus 6000 in 2022) suggest he'd be rash to do otherwise.

Perhaps anxious to remind us that Rolls-Royce is in touch with its heritage, despite a 'transformation from an automotive manufacturer to a true luxury house', the company released a retrospective of previous leaders to mark the change in CEOs. This paid tribute to three men with a huge influence on Rolls-Royce: Claude Johnson, Ernest Hives and Dr Frederick Llewellyn-Smith.

'Though perhaps less familiar in the public mind, Claude Johnson is probably the most important and influential figure in the annals of Rolls-Royce apart from the founders themselves,' said Andrew Ball, Head of Corporate Relations and Heritage. 'A larger-than-life character, Johnson was evidently a force to be reckoned with; it was his energy, enthusiasm, vision and dedication that made Rolls-Royce a household name around the world. Even today, he's still known as "the hyphen in Rolls-Royce" – a fitting tribute to a truly remarkable man.'

Also mentioned was Ernest Hives, the man who at 17 had been Charles Rolls' chauffeur before joining Rolls-Royce as an experimental tester in 1908. Hives set up a fully-fledged experimental department, which helped develop Rolls-Royce's aero engines as well as its automotive products. In 1937 he was appointed a Board Director and General Works Manager. During the Second World War, Hives oversaw production of some 160,000 Merlin aero engines and in 1946, became Managing Director and in 1950, Chairman of the Board. He retired in 1957. Hives was succeeded by Dr Frederick Llewellyn Smith – known simply as 'Doc' – a man with a clear eye for the future of Rolls-Royce's technical approach to car building: it would be with the Silver Shadow that his bold vision was finally realised with its chassis-less, semi-monocoque design.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES AT BENTLEY

Bentley has announced a record number of vacancies for what it calls 'Future Talent', creating 164 trainee opportunities for 2024 at its Crewe factory. Excitingly, over a third of these are in the Research and Development side of the business, as Bentley continues in its aim to become the leader of sustainable luxury mobility.

This includes a Five-in-Five plan, introducing five new fully electric cars in just five years and bringing carbon neutrality across operations by 2030.

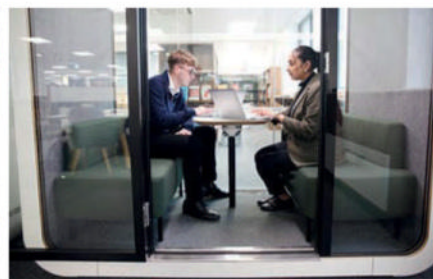
Commenting on the new roles, Dr. Karen Lange, Member of the Board for Human Resources at Bentley Motors, said

'Our trainee programmes were first established over 40 years ago and to continue to set record recruitment levels is a testament to our commitment to supporting future talent, and the importance that they play in moulding the future of our company. We are seeking

talented individuals from various backgrounds to realise our ambitions, as we remain committed to enhancing diversity and offering upskilling opportunities across numerous areas.'

Of the 164 2024 roles, 34 are for three or four-year Apprenticeship positions, 29 are two-year Graduate roles, and 101 are for 12-month Industrial Placements. Additional departments include Manufacturing, Sales and Marketing, Finance and Human Resources. In parallel to the vacancies opening, Bentley has welcomed its 117-strong 2023 cohort to join the 4,000 colleague workforce in Crewe, including a record high 50/50 gender split of the new starters.

Career opportunities across the company for Graduates and Industrial Placements are available on www.bentleycareers.com now, with Apprentice applications opening in February 2024.



COST OF DRIVING SHOOTS UP – FOR CLASSICS TOO?

Analysis by British finance and tax experts RIFT has revealed that the cost of keeping a car on the road, not including fuel, has risen by 27% in a year. This figure is based on the typical costs associated with a modern car in regular use, and reveals even the average runabout is now costing £1200 each year in servicing, insurance, road tax and an MoT test. Of these, the greatest influence has been the startling rise in insurance costs. Premiums are up 40% annually, while at the same time, half-year financial results from some insurers have recorded a healthy year-on-year increase in revenues, suggesting they are more than covering costs. In addition, servicing has risen by 10% and road tax by 9%, both more than current inflation figures.

Yet owners of historic vehicles should be hit much less severely. Owners rarely use main dealers at their ever-increasing hourly rates, those cars over 40 years old pay no road tax and insurance costs are significantly lower already and rising more slowly: Uswitch estimates a national average premium of £401, though even this is skewed by the high sums charged to under-30s. The value of the market as a whole has risen only 1.7% this year, which isn't a precise measure of premium rises but suggests the 40% figure seen for everyday cars is well beyond the rise in the classic market.

Fuel costs have fluctuated without settling back



to their previous levels. Running a Bentley Turbo R at 17mpg for the typical 3000 miles often set on a limited-mileage insurance policy costs £1226.47, according to the latest fuel-price data from the RAC for November 2023. Expensive, but more enjoyable than handing £1200 to insurers and dealers for a year in a modern hatchback!

STUCK FOR A CHRISTMAS GIFT?

Even if you'd rather imitate a grizzly and hibernate throughout the Christmas period, you may be grateful for this gift idea brought to us by Bentley's Communications Team. Crewe is offering four different teddy bears, priced between £65 and £80, and each with its own character.

Top of the tree is Special Edition Signature Bear, with flexible joints

and a double-ribbon neck tie, plus a fetching Bentley-branded ear stud. He is supported by the Engineer bear in white and green pit overalls and a matching cap. This fellow is kitted out with three sewn-in tools for the pocket of his overalls: a spanner, a screwdriver and a wrench.

More dashing still is the Heritage Racing Bear in flying jacket, goggles

and polka-dot scarf, borrowed apparently from Sir Henry 'Tim' Birkin. If you prefer a more homely teddy, less likely to take the Blower for a spin when you're not looking, there is Cosy Knit bear with his diamond-patterned jumper and bobble hat. All are 40cm tall and arrive in a Bentley-branded dust bag.

See shop.bentleymotors.com.





1928
4 1/2 LITRE

THREE GENERATIONS OF ONE FAMILY OWNERSHIP



1924
3 1/4 LITRE

A WINNING FORMULA



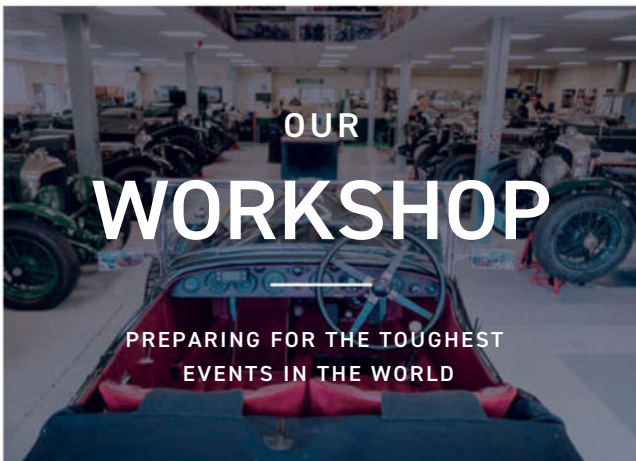
1930
4 1/2 LITRE

THE LAST KNOWN 4 1/2L FREESTONE & WEBB SALOON



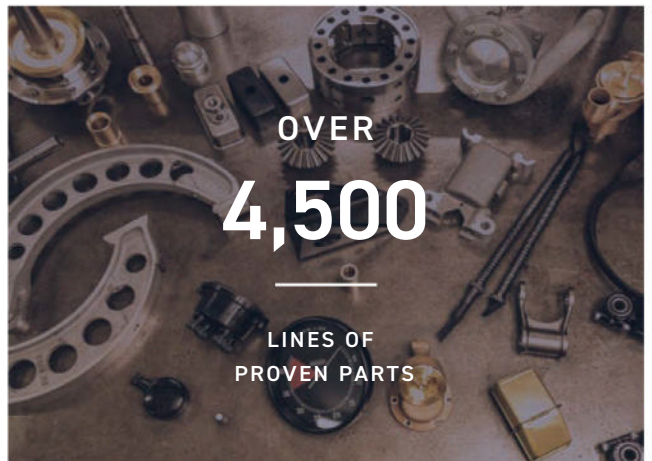
1927
6 1/2 LITRE

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SILVER CLOUD II HIDES POTENT SECRET

The hot-rodding of classic Rolls-Royce and Bentley models often enrages those who think the cars were nearly perfect in standard form. This new example is at least respectful of the car's appearance, both inside and out, and takes the 'sleeper' approach to concealing enormous performance potential in a form that looks almost original.

The car made its public debut at SEMA, the Las Vegas car event originating with the Specialty Equipment Market Association and recognised as the trade show for the hot-rod, custom build and aftermarket modified car industry. Major manufacturers get involved too, though not Rolls-Royce – not yet, anyway. This 1961 Silver Cloud II has been built by Ringbrothers, the company established by Connecticut-based custom car builders Jim and Mike Ring. They've established a reputation for blending fierce performance with fine engineering, and in a market where extremes are often sought, restrained good taste. Their products are usually 'restomods', or cars restored with various modifications built in, often quite extensive. For them, though, a Rolls-Royce was something of a departure.

'We can't pick what the owners want, and it was refreshing to do something other than a Camaro or a Mustang,' said Mike Ring. 'We invested over 3,400 hours in fabricating, painting and engineering this project. It combines Rolls-Royce's past and present with a 640-horsepower American accent.'

Yes, the venerable L-series 6.25-litre V8 has made way for a supercharged General Motors LT4 V8 of very similar capacity, but with 640bhp and 635lb ft of torque, sent to a new *ten-speed* Bowler automatic gearbox. Amazingly, this is all constructed on an entirely new chassis, which opens the question of whether it remains a Rolls-Royce at all. Custom 18-inch wheels allow the 15-inch discs required to tame

the car's immense pace, while coilover suspension waves goodbye to the Silver Cloud's cushioned ride. Nonetheless, many nods to Rolls-Royce remain, even in a totally re-imagined interior that now features a 'starlight' headliner like a 21st-century Phantom. The customer who commissioned this work also has a new Rolls-Royce Ghost – which came second to the Silver Cloud in a quarter-mile drag race. God bless America.



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HP:	3	2 x 2.5
Wattage:	2200	3600
Litres Per Min.:	410	540
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Air Disp:	14.1CFM	14CFM	14CFM
MWP (BAR/PSI):	10 / 150	10 / 150	10 / 150
HP:	3	3	3
Wattage:	2200	2200	2200
Litres Per Min.:	399	397	399
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Output Current:	40-145 Amps	40-180 Amps	40-200 Amps
Amps at 60% Duty:	155A	200A	225A
Rod Size	1.0mm - 4.0mm	1.0mm - 4.0mm	1.0mm - 4.0mm
Wire Size (Gas)	0.6mm - 0.8mm	0.6mm - 0.9mm	0.6mm - 1.0mm
Wire Size (No Gas)	0.6mm - 0.9mm	0.6mm - 0.9mm	0.6mm - 1.0mm
Dims (LxWxH):	440x210x280mm	440x210x280mm	435x210x280mm
Weight:	12.5kg	15kg	15kg
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Inc. VAT Price:	£144.98	£184.99	£214.99
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90 YEARS OF DERBY BENTLEYS

The first Bentleys built under Rolls-Royce ownership had a lot to live up to, yet the Silent Sports Cars became some of the most admired Bentley models of all. We take to the road in a 3½-litre example and a 4¼-litre successor.

WORDS: NIGEL BOOTHMAN PHOTOS: GREGORY OWAIN

If ever a car-maker's financial success was at odds with the glory it generated on track, it was Bentley in the 1920s. In truth, it wasn't unusual even for apparently successful marques to scrape through

near bankruptcies from time to time, as an expensively developed new model failed to increase sales as anticipated, or racing exploits cost even more than the resulting publicity could recover. Walter Owen Bentley had lost control

of his company in 1925 when Woolf Barnato paid off the debts and acquired a majority shareholding, but W.O. worked on alongside his new Chairman to inspire the company to further glory at Le Mans and elsewhere. Barnato,



though, found the need to inject tens of thousands of pounds into the business every year – millions, in today's terms.

After the Wall Street Crash in 1929, Bentley's market began to shrink rapidly and even Barnato had his limits, so in July 1931 the receivers were called in. Napier appeared to be front runners to buy their old rival, but instead the winning sealed bid of £125,000 came from the British Central Equitable Trust. This was, of course, a front for Rolls-Royce Ltd, but at the time not even Walter Bentley knew this until the deal was done. It's easy to see parallels between this bit of subterfuge and the tangled episode of Volkswagen and BMW competing to buy Rolls-Royce and Bentley in 1998, but more of that later.

With the deal done, this left Rolls-Royce with a significant challenge: you've bought Bentley, now what will you do with it? Blood-and-thunder four-cylinder cars like the 4½-litre

were not going to find favour with Rolls-Royce, which left the surviving six-cylinder models: the 8-litre and its scaled-down sibling, the 4-litre. The larger car was a magnificent beast but a direct threat to the Phantom II and the smaller one was expensive to build and slow to sell. Why not, then, create a new Bentley to capture a slightly less costly niche in the market?

The first thoughts were apparently for a considerably smaller car than their 'small' Rolls-Royce models, with a foot less in the wheelbase than the 20/25 and a standardised close-coupled saloon body. Rolls-Royce had been spending much time and money even before the Bentley acquisition on developing a new model to slot in beneath the 20/25, probably in the 18hp class, and it was this Peregrine prototype that gave rise to a solution. The engine for the Peregrine was causing some head-scratching; a new 2.75-litre straight-six

that might be expanded into a 3.15-litre straight-eight, while a separate engine project called Japan I was underway to give the 20/25's 3669cc straight-six a new crossflow cylinder head. Meanwhile, there were distractions galore: aero-engine work was charging ahead, development for the Phantom III's V12 had started, the Cricklewood works were sold in 1932 and Sir Henry Royce was ailing badly – he eventually died in April 1933, though after he had seen and approved the first prototype that would become the Derby Bentley. Ernest Hives, who had been head of the experimental department before becoming works manager, decided that the Japan I engine should be fitted to a Peregrine chassis and bodied as a sports saloon by Park Ward. The result was so promising that all other work on smaller models ceased, and the new Bentley had its starting point.

That starting point brought with it »

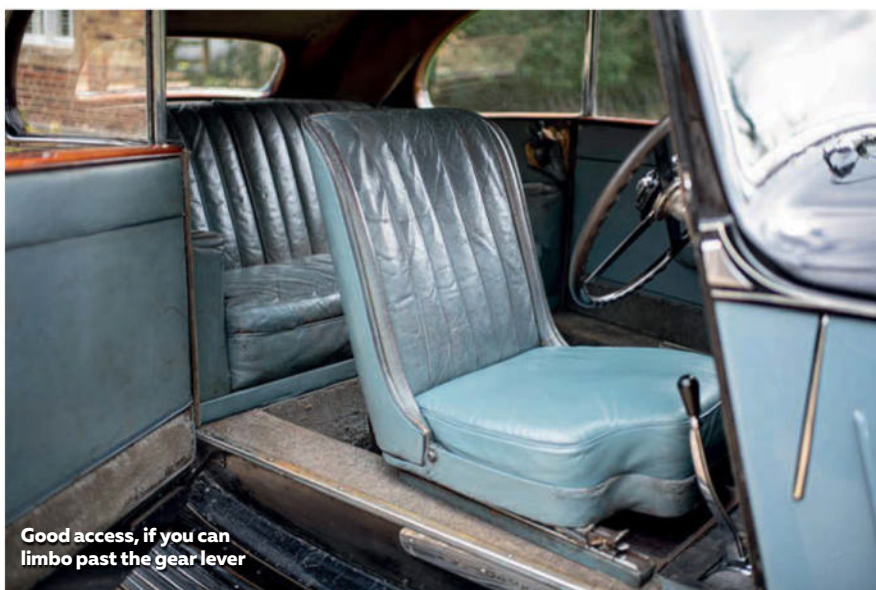


Barker coupé's shape is sleek and delightful

some Rolls-Royce characteristics that transformed the way Bentleys would drive: a synchromesh gearbox, a silken ride, a whispering engine and servo-assisted brakes. This would be a very different car from anything raced at Le Mans. Production began at Derby in

late 1933, getting properly underway early the next year. The first customer cars and the first dealer demonstrators were delivered from February 1934. W.O. Bentley was involved in testing as the new model was developed, and though he became disillusioned with

his role at Rolls-Royce and left to join Lagonda when his contract ended in April 1935, owners of Derby Bentleys (especially the first year of production) have always been able to defend themselves against any bar-room jibes about only the Cricklewood cars being proper Bentleys – 'mine was built on W.O.'s watch too'. What's more, Woolf Barnato owned one of the first 3½ litre cars and later, two 4¼ models. If that wasn't enough, there's the oft-quoted line from a report that W.O. sent back to Derby during the testing phase: 'Taking all things into consideration, I would rather own this Bentley car than any car produced under that name.'



Good access, if you can limbo past the gear lever

MEETING YOUR HEROES

It's impossible to know all this without longing to meet one of these Bentleys in the flesh. Luckily, we have not one but two to examine today: Richard Edgell's 1936 3½-litre Barker coupé, and Kingsley Sleep's 1937 4¼-litre Thrupp & Maberly saloon. Although only a year apart in age, they represent the main evolution the lifespan of the Derby Bentley – from the smaller



Nickel-silver dashboard is a rare, glamorous indulgence

engine to the larger. Richard explains:

'The first 1934 saloons that came along were quite light, and got steadily heavier, just as all coachbuilt cars did during this era. The increase in capacity was meant to cope with that, and of course it mirrors the increase in engine size from the Rolls-Royce 20/25 to the 25/30.'

Does the larger-engined car offer advantages on the road? The difference is smaller than the model names might suggest: 3669cc plays 4257cc; a gap of 588cc.

'I think you only notice the difference in power when you lug up a long

4th-gear hill,' says Richard. 'A 4¼ will cruise up it and possibly accelerate, while the 3½ gets a little "buzzy". They say the smaller engine is sweeter, but that seems to be the wisdom whenever there is a comparison between a smaller and larger version of the same unit. All in all, the difference in performance between the two is not big; you'd find a greater contrast between light-bodied tourers and heavy saloons with identical engines.'

Richard's car, chassis B174FB, is a half-way point between those two styles. The dashing coupé bodywork could be Vanden Plas or Gurney Nutting rather

than the usually formal Barker, such is its grace. The flowing line that edges the lighter blue paint on each flank, topped with a large swoosh of brightwork, is just the right side of raffish. There is a lot of glass area thanks to the relatively advanced feature of eliminating the B-pillar after door-top height – what you see above that is only window framing. It's undeniably a sporting car and would have made a tremendous demonstrator...which was indeed its role.

'It was one of two built to this exact design, though another few were bodied by Barker with a similar swept-tail shape,' says Richard. 'It was used as a »

COVER STORY DERBY BENTLEY ANNIVERSARY

Not a bad angle
anywhere: see how
flowing lines join at tail



demonstrator for six or seven months and reputedly loaned to the Maharaja of Jaipur when he was in London, before being sold with 3000 miles on the clock at end of 1936. The buyer, an Army officer, kept it until 1955. I have a letter from that time that states he was the only person who ever drove it, and that he liked it very much although it always leaked. But it was no longer suitable for family and dogs. The upholstery does show some evidence of active dogs!

This car went to America in the 1962, after which it enjoyed a more retiring life. At that time, it had already done 119,000 miles and has covered only

124,000 now. It came back to UK in 1999 and went to a collector in the north of England who drove it just 100 miles in more than 20 years before it went back to the dealer who had imported it. Richard had gone to see the vendor in the summer of 2022 because he sold some interesting Jaguars, but as Richard recounts, the trip ended in a surprising manner.

'This chap had made a living from selling cars since he was a teenager. I found out he was therefore quite good at selling cars...and I ended up buying this Bentley!'

It was a runner but not much more.

The A-post was rotted out entirely thanks to a leaky windscreen and a semaphore aperture, both of which had been allowing water in to rot the ash framing, and the wiring was terrible. Richard had the car re-wired and the A-post has been tackled too, but apart from some improvements to original but tired hide and the rotten front carpets (hence the missing front seat on the day of our shoot!), Richard is trying to do as little as possible to what remains a very original car with some splendid features. Check out that nickel-silver dashboard!

'I haven't used it much yet,' he says. 'The engine runs very well. It was overhauled in 1942, and the back axle was done by Rolls-Royce in 1957 which cost £150 then! I know of someone who has spent over £30,000 having a back axle done nowadays...'

Richard has taken sensible precautions like removing the sump to clean out the sludge traps, while the engine, brakes and steering have been serviced to keep it all fit. When Richard's car was starting its life as a Barker demonstrator, the new 4 ¼ -litre model was already a few months old – though it wasn't presented as a new model at all, to start with. Admitting that the existing Bentley might not have enough puff if the coachbuilder got carried away was a ticklish business, as was the idea that recent buyers of the model would find their car suddenly obsolete. So from February 1936, Rolls-Royce let it be known that an extra £50 would purchase »



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Such swift saloons embarrassed many sports cars in their day

an optional quarter-inch increase in bore size and a few detailed changes.

Weight was up by around 150kg if comparing like-for-like saloon bodies of 1934 and 1937. Slight increases in gadgetry (radios were becoming popular, for instance) the size of doors, wings and especially luggage capacity all added up to the equivalent of two extra passengers. Another 588cc was

just about enough to stop anyone minding, after all they were still highly competitive in performance terms. The final 3½-litre cars were sold in 1937, and at least nine examples were converted in period to the larger engine.

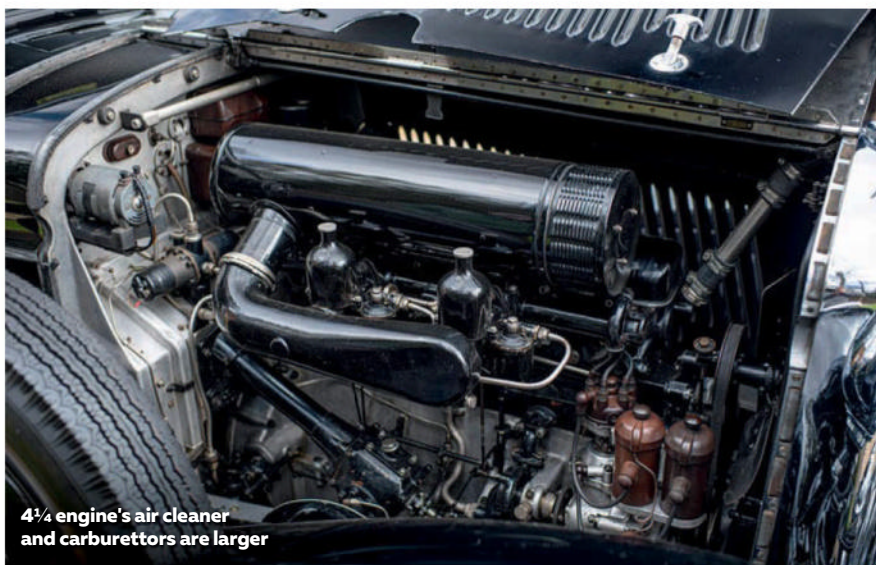
You need to be in the know to tell them apart visually. A 3½ has the fuel filler inside the boot lid and uses a four-spoke steering wheel, plus

smaller carburettors and a smaller air-intake silencer; all but the first 4¼s has a three-spoke steering wheel, a petrol filler flap visible on the outside, larger carbs and silencer under the bonnet. But as with all coachbuilt cars, there are bound to be exceptions.

BEAUTIFUL TO BEHOLD

Speaking of coachwork, it's an important topic for the Derby Bentley. Although the praise for the cars' road manners, performance and engineering were lavish when it was new, these undoubted strengths could be eclipsed by the coachwork when it comes to sustaining the model's popularity in more recent times. Derby Bentley production happened to coincide with a golden age in the styling and construction of coachbuilt bodies, taking in aspects of art deco and even futurist design and streamlining, roving across all tastes from the modest and reserved to the most theatrical.

Rather in the way that beautiful people make any old set of clothes look good, the low, sleek proportions of the Derby Bentley chassis seemed to suit almost every style of body, all set off by the handsome 'face' of that



4¼ engine's air cleaner and carburettors are larger

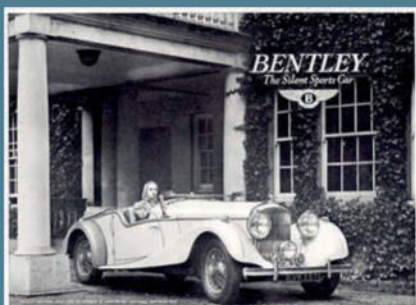
SELLING THE 'SILENT SPORTS CAR'

Quite who deserves the credit for that splendid slogan is not certain, but there is a clue in a Daily Telegraph report from October 1933, recounting a luncheon given to mark the new car's launch: 'Mr W.M. Cowan said

their aim had been to produce not a racing car but a very fast sports car, very safe and very silent.'

If not Mr Cowan's idea, perhaps someone from Rolls-Royce attending the same lunch mentioned the

thought to their advertising agency – or perhaps it was conceived early in the development of the car. After all, it works as a mission statement as well as a sales pitch. Press advertisements usually remained simple: the name of the marque, the slogan below, then a picture of a jolly nice car in a jolly nice setting. It might suggest travel (pretty rural locations), status (an ivy-clad stately home with an immense portico) or adventure (an unlikely ski-jump over a handsome saloon). The same slogan was used for four-door and two-door cars, open and closed, showing that to Rolls-Royce, these were all sports cars – regardless of coachwork. Once behind the wheel, it's tempting to agree.



Bentley grille and large headlamps. The process by which many were created is fun to consider now – with so many coachbuilders based in London, Bentley would send built-up chassis down by rail to their own special siding in West London, after which each one would be driven, naked, to its tailor.

Today, it's the most adventurous and glamorous tourers, sedancas and drophead coupés that attract the highest prices, but that leaves a great many saloons to offer better value – not least because some of these are just as rare, or have just as many intriguing features as the open cars.

Kingsley Sleep's 1937 Thrupp &

Maberly saloon, chassis B75JY, is one of five cars made to this body design, with its unusual semi-streamlined form and pontoon front wings. Kingsley thinks only two of these cars survive with this body, as he explains.

'I know one of them is still around, as I once parked alongside it at the RREC Annual Rally. Even then, there are detail differences, so they're all unique.'

There's a step between the front and rear floors which has us scratching our heads a bit – in aid of more legroom? This car was delivered to Oliver Watney of the Watney brewing family on July 22nd 1937, when he was High Sherriff of Oxfordshire. At some point after

that it seems to have passed through the hands of Harold Radford, later known for his own unusual coachwork conversions, and whose dealer plate is in the door jamb. The previous owner before Kingsley was Lord Braybrooke of Audley End, whose House of Lords parking sticker remains in the windscreen. Perhaps it would still provide free parking in central London... well, would you turn such a car away?

This is another highly original Bentley, showing just over 3000 miles which is almost certainly 103,000, as Kingsley knows it's been around the clock but it's just too good to have covered 203,000.

'As far as I know, it's unrestored,' »

COVER STORY DERBY BENTLEY ANNIVERSARY

Shorter 'pontoon' wings give dash to a fairly formal shape



says Kingsley, 'and it does have some nice features. The sunroof is a good tight fit and works very well, and because the sunroof drains work the roof doesn't leak. The lever-actuated driver's window is fast and smooth, but quite a lot of cars have that feature.'

It's terrific, actually – better than any electric or handle-wound window, though the other three doors have to make do without one. Kingsley has owned the car for 22 years, and has a James Young all-weather two-door as well (folding roof but wind-up windows), plus a Bentley S1, but this is his favourite – driving it is 'like a hand in a glove', says Kingsley. He's enjoyed plenty of miles in it, including a rally in Australia in 2004. There have been occasional scary moments.

'We were on a rally in Teesdale, and I realised there was an ominous knocking sound which turned out to be number three main bearing,' says Kingsley. 'I

got it to P&A Wood, who dropped the sump and managed to do the bearing repair in situ, so the bill wasn't as fearful as I expected and nothing like the cost of a full engine rebuild. Everything is so well made that if we mend the bits that are broken, it will carry on.'

LIVING WITH A DERBY

Both Kingsley and Richard believe that keeping it as it was helps too – frequent dismantling and restoring or rebuilding makes it less likely they'll behave as they once did. The same is true for the coachwork – original cars that haven't rotted usually have excellent door shuts. So what are they like to live with today? Is there anything to choose between an early car or a later one? Those offered from 1938 with overdrive gearboxes sometimes attract a premium.

Most 4¼ cars retained the same axle ratios as the 3½ (4.1:1, with the taller

option of 3.91:1) until the overdrive 'M-series' cars came along in 1938 with a .85 top gear giving an effective 3.66:1 final drive. When overhauling axles on earlier cars, especially 4¼s, many now choose to fit a high ratio crownwheel and pinion which is near-identical to the M-series final drive ratio. Because they were such fast cars by 1930s standards, people would really use all that speed when they could, for instance in Europe's fast new roads, and run the white metal bearings in the 3½ engine. A solution was found by using shells of solid Hall's metal, a tin alloy, for the 4¼. Very few cars will be on their original white metal bearings, but try to find out for sure before you do long motorway trips at full speed!

Kingsley finds 60mph a comfortable cruise in his car, with modifications when necessary.

'On the motorway, you get mixed up with the lorries at that pace, so you



Interior equipment includes superb window lift, below left, and comprehensive tool tray in the boot



need to go faster or slower than that to get some peace, but the car is well capable of sitting at 70mph if required.'

Fuel? A Derby Bentley doesn't need E5 from an octane point of view, but it's wise to leave E5 in it for storage. Kingsley uses a lead substitute but Richard doesn't, reasoning that these are low-revving engines, rarely pushed beyond 3000rpm, and aren't at much risk of valve seat erosion. The parts supply across all variants is good, as is specialist support and of course it's all backed by a thriving club scene – see the report on the 90th birthday celebrations on the following pages. That said, they can be expensive cars to repair, so buying a sound example and looking after it is crucial if you prefer to avoid open-wallet surgery.

'The engine block and cylinder head are about £7000 each,' says Richard, 'if you need them. But they were so well made that to get the detail right costs

money – people want to do a proper job.'

Standards should be maintained, after all. We'll finish our agreeable day out with a glimpse of what Derby Bentley motoring can be like at its best, as described by Richard Edgell. Technology meets build quality, wrapped in beautiful bodywork, and all you really need is the right place to enjoy it.

'They are lovely to drive on the Continent,' says Richard, 'where the roads are really smooth. Then you can do 70mph knowing the wheel won't be wrenched out of your hands by a pothole, like it is here. Let's say you're in one of the cars made after late 1934 with adjustable dampers and a control for 'hard' and 'soft'. Each damper is pressurised by a little pump driven off the gearbox, and it really works. If you're coming to a roundabout and you want to carve round and carry on straight, flip it to hard and it goes through nice and flat. When you reach

a poor surface, put it back to soft.'

Certainly, it was a persuasive package in its day – Derby made around 500 Bentleys a year, versus 200 in a good twelve-month for Cricklewood. Here we're back to that parallel with more recent times, as VW took over and relaunched Bentley once again. The Derby 3½ cost £400 less than its predecessor, just as the Continental GT was rather more affordable than the Continental R. Greater sales and a profitable business ensured the marque survives, yet the Derby cars had their traditionalist critics who saw Bentleys only as tall, Cricklewood-built locomotives emitting the 'bloody thump'. Rather like those who feel Bentleys ought not to use German W12s, and should have Crewe-built V8s?

Funny how perspective changes over time. But after 90 years of Derby Bentleys, any debate about their greatness has long since faded away. ■



A BIG BIRTHDAY

Autumn 2023 marks 90 years since the launch of the Derby Bentley, commemorated with a major event created by the Silent Sports Car Club, presented over four days in late September. Andrew Feaver attended for *RR&BD*.

WORD: ANDY FEAVER PHOTOS: ANDY FEAVER, RICHARD EDGELL, COLIN HUGHES, EILEEN SIMMONS

The year 2023 signifies several important milestones for Bentley, among them being the 90th Anniversary of the launch of the Derby Bentley – the Silent Sports Car. To mark the anniversary, the Silent Sports Car Club put together a never-to-be-repeated event; a four-day rally, centred at Cranage Hall, Cheshire. The club, a friendly and enthusiastic bunch, exists for those who own, are interested in, or who admire Derby Bentleys. As the organisers of both the 70th and

75th anniversary gatherings for the Derby Bentley, they had set their sights on surpassing all that had gone before. The seven-strong organising committee worked for some 18 months to assemble 102 Bentleys for the event, in what is thought to be the largest gathering of the Derby-era cars in history.

The weekend kicked off on Thursday 21st September, with guests arriving at Cranage Hall, a former country house, which has been a luxury hotel since 1998. After registering and collecting

the all-important rally plate and road book, guests were able to look forwards to a weekend of adventure.

On Friday the rally made a visit to the Bentley factory at Pym's Lane, Crewe, where guests had a range of conducted tours. These included a tour of the production facilities, as well as a behind-the-scenes visit to the new Mulliner workshop, where the latest Continuation 4½ litre Blower and Speed Sixes were being finalised. Everyone was enormously impressed with the



Car parks full of rare and lovely Bentleys at Cranage Hall in September

Best bib and tucker for Saturday's reception and dinner



redevelopment of the site into a modern campus, skilfully incorporating the original 1938 Rolls-Royce aero engine shadow factory buildings with new facilities in concrete and steel. The Bentley colleagues spoke with great passion and enthusiasm about their work, leaving everyone impressed and with high hopes for the future.

LEARNING FROM THE LEARNED

Friday evening saw the first of a series of talks on the Derby Bentley. Stephen Robotham, the son of W.A. (Roy) Robotham gave an enlightening Q&A session on his memories of his father's work, as a key member of the engineering team, either side of World War II. One lovely touch was that Stephen was introduced to the audience by Bob Hickman, one of the attending guests, who held the

distinction of being the first apprentice hired by W.A. Robotham in the post war re-organisation of the company.

Saturday dawned bright and sunny, perfect for the planned 'driving day'. The organisers had come up with a range of suggested destinations for guests, with many taking the recommendation of a drive up over the Derbyshire peaks to the beautiful village of Hartington. We all reconvened back at Cranage Hall for the evening, where we were treated to a champagne reception, hosted by Bentley Manchester, who had also brought along one of the latest Bentley Continental GTs in Azure specification. The early evening sunshine and the fine brick frontage of the hall provided a wonderful backdrop for an impressive line-up of cars.

Kicking things off was the unique assemblage of the 1939 Bentley MkV Corniche (14-B-V), from the Bentley Heritage Collection, the 1939 Bentley 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ -litre Experimental saloon (3-B-

50) and Janet and Ken Lech's 1939 Bentley MkV H.J. Mulliner saloon (B30 AW). Each car holds an important place in the Derby Bentley story and they represent the culmination of the Silent Sports car era, sadly cut short by the outbreak of war in September 1939.

Guests were then treated to a new tableau of Derby Bentleys – this time featuring cars curated to represent key examples from the many coachbuilders on the Bentley chassis. Gems from Park Ward, H.J Mulliner, Vanden Plas, Thrupp and Maberly and Hooper were all in evidence, as well as the famous 1933 Bentley 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ litre Sports Saloon by Park Ward (B15AE), which was the first Derby Bentley registered and one of the two cars used to demonstrate the new model to the press in August 1933.

BIB AND TUCKER

Everyone then went to don black ties and best evening gowns and, on our return, saw that the MkV Corniche was to be the guest of honour at the evening meal, proudly centre stage inside the hotel dining room. Getting the car into the hotel was very reminiscent of the 3-litre Bentley being brought into the Savoy after winning at Le Mans in 1927, or the Speed 8 Bentley in 2003!

The delicious three-course meal that followed was punctuated by a series of speeches. Firstly, a short word of welcome and thanks from Mike Sayer – Head of Product Communications and Bentley Heritage – on behalf of the company. Simon Taylor, the respected automotive journalist, commentator and keen Derby Bentley owner, gave his thoughts on the Derby Bentley, its peers and the experiences of owning one today.

The final speech of the evening »

Corniche, 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ Experimental car and rare MkV showed culmination of Derby era



EVENT REPORT

DERBY BENTLEY 90TH ANNIVERSARY



Fascinating B-60-engined Experimental saloon is missing link between Mk V and Mk VI



Welcome invaders included this 1930 4 1/2-litre and the 1925 3-litre, below left



1939 4 1/4 Hooper saloon

was given by Ken Lea, former Rolls-Royce & Bentley Head of Engines and Board Member for Manufacturing, on the resurrection of the Bentley MkV Corniche. Ken is, of course, well known in Bentley circles and he gave an emotional account of the struggles to save the car, which resonated with this audience in a unique way. It was, in short, a fantastic evening, where you sensed you were witnessing history.

The weather gods were not kind on Sunday, with guests waking to low cloud

and squally showers. Undeterred, the cars set off to convene at Chatsworth House for last stage of the rally weekend. With the magnificent house and the Capability Brown landscape as the background, the organisers arranged the 100+ Derby Bentleys to be grouped by coachbuilder for display. This allowed Neill Fraser to conduct a walking lecture, covering the coachbuilding, styling and development of the Derby Bentley. It was a complete tour-de-force and it included two senior

members of the current Bentley Styling team, hanging on his every word!

All guests enjoyed their picnic at Chatsworth and it was great to share the cars and their stories with each other and the members of the public who came to see the display. Non Derby Bentleys of all eras were thoroughly welcomed too, all adding to the spectacle. The sun even came out on the way home! A brilliant event and a fine testament to the efforts of the organisers. ■



Corniche made perfect dinner guest: silent and beautiful!



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AUCTION TRACKER

Following the highs and lows and analysing the Rolls-Royce and Bentley trends within the UK auction scene: this edition's tracker covers the 12-month period from 1 November 2022 to the end of October 2023, with the trend assessed on a 12-month rolling basis.

WORDS: PETER LAVERS PICTURES: VARIOUS

VOLUME OVER VALUE

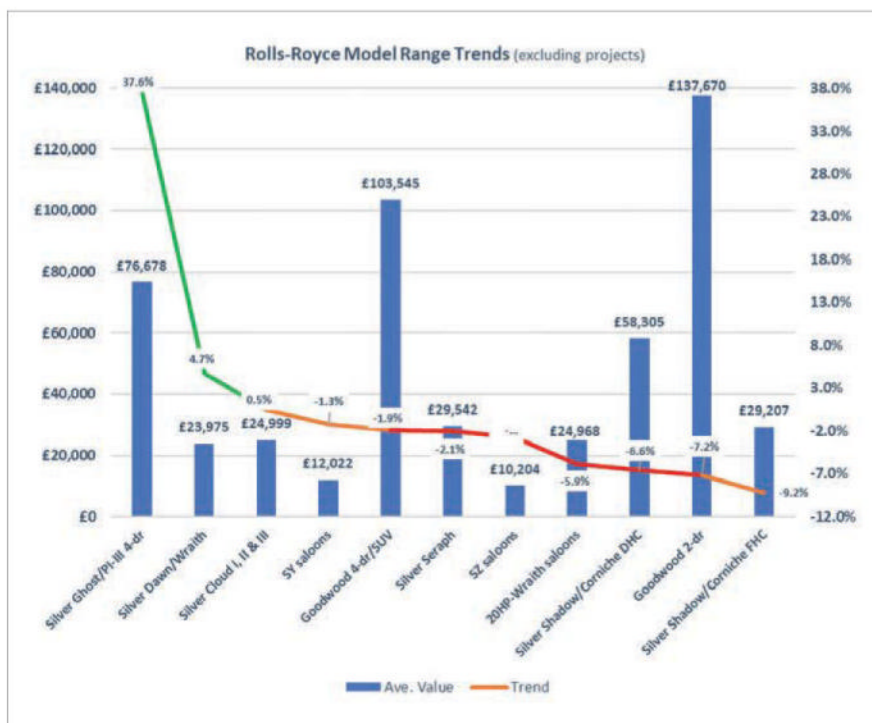
I'm sure most readers will also subscribe to magazines that track the general classic car auction market, and the consensus is that the market remains soft but that it is by no means a time to panic. One article caught my eye recently in *Classic*

Cars magazine where John Mayhead noted that 'Although the number of cars offered rose, the mean sale price and sell-through rates were significantly down'. John concluded that sellers are holding on to good cars rather than letting them go

at lower-than-expected values, i.e. there isn't a 'fire sale' in the market.

The situation in the Rolls-Royce and Bentley auction scene is remarkably similar. The number of motor cars sold has again increased to 860, but overall and average values have decreased:

	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	1546	16.5%	629	16.9%	917	16.2%	550	7.6%	996	22.1%
Number Sold	860	5.5%	353	8.0%	507	3.9%	341	1.2%	519	8.6%
Total Value of Sales	£28.7m	-2.7%	£10m	0.0%	£18.7m	-4.0%	£15.2m	-10.2%	£13.5m	7.6%
Average Value	£33,361	-7.8%	£28,255	-7.4%	£36,915	-7.6%	£44,678	-11.3%	£25,925	-0.9%



How can more cars be sold at less value? Well, there has again been a large increase in project cars offered for auction vs. last time (46%), which accounts for some of the decrease, but the phenomenon is also apparent at the top end of the market. Gooding & Co's September 2023 auction sold the same number of Rolls-Royces and Bentleys as in 2022 (five), but because of the mix of models, the value of those sales was down by over 50%! This result alone accounts for the overall drop in total (and physical) sales values. As witnessed previously, the online auction market continues to be the driver of growth, although the physical auctions aren't dead in the water yet.

MODEL RANGE TRENDS

ROLLS-ROYCE MODELS

Only two Rolls-Royce ranges (where >15 motor cars have been offered)



Bonhams' September sales boosted pre-war Rolls-Royce 4-door values

have increased in average value by more than 1%. Pre-war 'large' saloons posted a massive rise thanks to Bonhams' excellent September sales, plus the immediate post-war Silver Wraith & Silver Dawn models are strengthening in value.

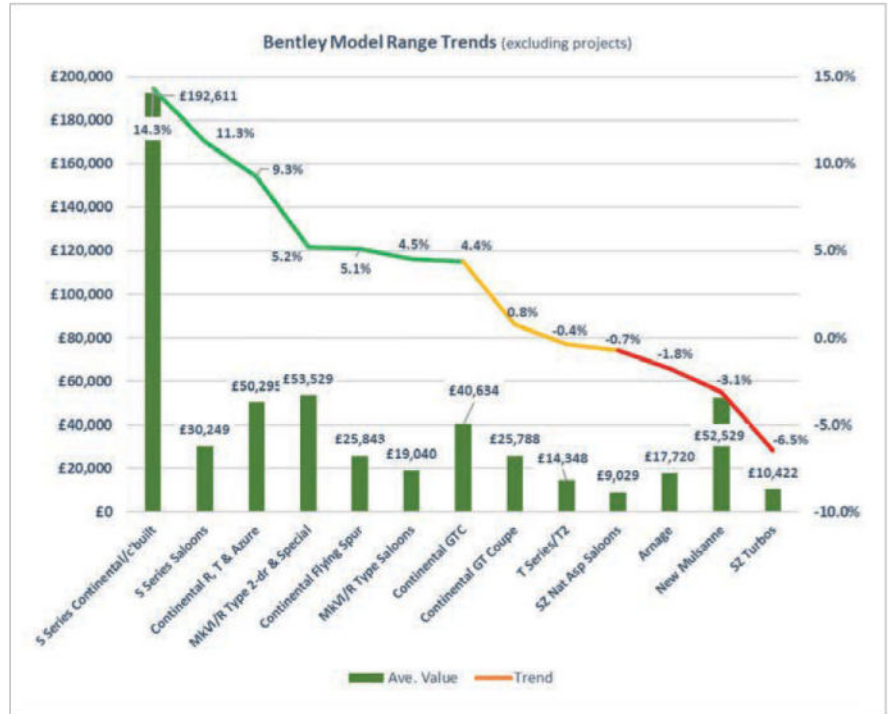
Silver Clouds and Silver Shadows have held steady, but all other model ranges have fallen, albeit only slightly for BMW-powered saloons.

SZs remain the most affordable (to buy!) models, and pre-war 'small' saloons are now on a par with their post-war counterparts.

The most significant falls have been seen in two-door models, which rather counters the received wisdom that the market is always stronger for tourers and coupes than for saloons.

BENTLEY MODELS

Conversely, seven Bentley models have attracted higher average prices this time – and there's a mixture of saloons and coupes!



S Series two-door and four-door models top the list, followed by Continental R/T & Azure models. A further three models have held relatively steady.

Arnage models slipped a bit further after their big fall last time, but the biggest drops were seen in the new Mulsanne and Turbo R model ranges. Indeed, the SZ Bentleys match their Rolls-Royce counterparts as the most affordable models available at auction.



Bentley Continental R, T and Azure models sold well at Manor Park Classics (R, £51k), Bonhams (T, £90k) and on CarandClassic (Azure, £99k, shown here).

	Volumes	Highest Achieved		Physical Average		Overall Average		Online Average	
		Offered / Sold	Latest 12m	Trend	Latest 12m	Trend	Latest 12m	Trend	Latest 12m
S Series Continental & Coach-built 2 dr	21 / 9	£330,000	0.0%	£210,000	10.0%	£192,611	14.3%	£53,500	-32.5%
R Type Continental	4 / 2	£541,000		£521,750		£521,750			
MkVI & R Type Coupe, Convertible and Special	22 / 16	£102,667	0.0%	£58,141	-2.6%	£53,529	5.2%	£45,842	12.9%

I have included Specials within this category as they often attract good prices and it is interesting to note that the physical auction houses dominate this part of the market, with only seven online sales out of the 27 motor cars sold in the latest period. It is also apparent that just a few more sales of Bentley Continentals would provide a positive contribution to the overall market. Bonhams at their two sales in November had a fine selection from across these models. Buyers at Goodwood could choose from two gorgeous R-Type or S1 Continental models (the S1 sold for nearly £320k) and a MkVI Special sold at Beaulieu for over £70k (surely less than the cost to build it?). Elsewhere Gooding & Co sold a magnificent Park Ward bodied S2 Continental DHC for just under £200k, but CarandClassic failed to sell the S2 Continental 'McLeod Special'.



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

SOMETHING SPECIAL AT SOTHEBY'S

RM Sotheby's offered a number of remarkable Rolls-Royce and Bentley motor cars at their London sale on November 4th including a Bentley 8-litre 'Silent Bloc' saloon by Vanden Plas (sold for £601,250) and a 1958 S1 Continental Drophead by Park Ward, from 22 years of ownership by Jamiroquai frontman, Jay Kay, which sold after the auction for an undisclosed sum. Yet the most unusual of them all is still seeking a new owner: a 1991 Bentley Turbo R Drophead Coupé by Pininfarina, one of two made on the instruction of the Brunei Royal Family, and yours for £400,000.

The Brunei Royals commissioned a short run of two- and four-door convertibles through a gentleman called Alfred Tan. In 1990, Mr Tan chartered a plane to fly then Bentley and Rolls-Royce CEO, Peter Ward, from London to Turin. There, discussions with Sergio Pininfarina would lead to the creation of a pair of two-door convertible Turbo Rs,

along with a brace of four-door versions. One of each flavour were said to be destined for Brunei, while one of the two-door cars—the very machine offered here—was retained by Hong Seh Motors, Mr Tan's Singapore-based business.

Following its successful completion at Pininfarina, chassis 44366 was personally tested by Mr Tan on the toll roads between Turin and Milan prior

to being shipped to Singapore, where it entered his private collection. There it remained until 2022, when with only 741 km on the clock, it returned to the United Kingdom to receive remedial attention at marque specialist P&A Wood. A staggering £76,057 was subsequently spent bringing the car back to showroom condition. Where next for this unrepeatable soft-top supercar?



A CORNICHE FOR £20,000?

California may be the place to find bargain two-door Rolls-Royces, and specifically the Beverly Hills Car Club. Alex Manos of well-known dealer BHCC currently has two Corniche FHCs and one convertible, with the soft-top 1978 car being the least costly of all: \$24,750. At this price, it is of course a project, and handing a sad Corniche to a specialist and telling them to make it nice again is a sure path to a huge

overdraft. But for someone with time and skills to spare, a US market car with sun damage, rough paint and little apparent rust apart from the boot floor isn't a bad place to start. For another \$5000, a running two-tone 1978 FHC in Tudor Grey over Willow Gold is described as 'mechanically sound', with only 27,519 miles on the clock. Up to \$37,500 buys a 1977 Coupé looking sharp

in black with a black vinyl roof and a chocolate brown interior. It's showing just 30,657 miles and sports a record of \$29,000 spent on upkeep from 1986 to 2017. Oh, and if you need a hint to the delights and potential downfalls of Corniche ownership, you'll find a Corniche Owner's Guide on our sister website, prestigeandperformancecar.com, produced in collaboration with Alex Manos.



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How ridiculous that this car should be 20 years old. It dates from before the era of smartphones, something that seems to have been with us for ages. In 2003, Roger Federer won his first Grand Slam at the age of 22 and broadband internet was a welcome novelty. Around the time in late November that Concorde made its last flight, this car was probably nearing completion. It's the 20th Rolls-

Royce Phantom built (though not registered until 2004) and was thus one of the first of the Goodwood-era Rolls-Royces. Yet in looks and above all in feel, it's hardly aged at all.

'It's still like a new car,' says Stephen Fabman-Beker. 'You press the start button and it fires after a nanosecond. It drives exactly as it did when I acquired it more than 13 years ago: perfectly smooth and silent.'

One advantage of being unusually

bold with the styling is that it can take a long time to age, if you judge it well. Step outside the pattern other designers follow, and you don't fade with the fashion. Rolls-Royce has almost always been good at building cars that were slow to date, usually by being deliberately conservative. But that wasn't the accusation aimed at the BMW-run firm when the first images of the new model were released to the world. Rather the opposite, and there

FOR THE LONG RUN

This early Phantom VII may be the finest long-journey car money can buy, but it's also the one its owner has held onto for longer than any other Rolls-Royce or Bentley. An interesting history and unique features only add to the appeal

WORDS: NIGEL BOOTHMAN PHOTOS: GREGORY OWAIN



are plenty who were never charmed by the car's rectilinear form. But in the years since, there are also many of us who have been won round as time has passed, and now admire the Phantom's imposing presence. When you see how little Rolls-Royce chose to change the basic design for the Phantom VIII (and then only in 2017!) you must acknowledge the original as a success.

Simply looking contemporary doesn't guarantee the car will feel current

from the driving seat, but even the first Phantom VII packed in enough cutting-edge features to raise an eyebrow today. Yes, the electric door-closing button was fun, but it's what lies beneath that matters more. The monocoque features a twin-layered floor containing various electronic components, sound deadening and sub-woofers for the 14-speaker sound system, while also reducing the 'hump' for the propshaft to virtually nothing.

The structure is aluminium and keeps the weight down to 20kg less than an Arnage, despite the Phantom being 18 inches longer, three inches wider and four inches taller. Oh, and sporting a quad-cam V12 rather than a pushrod V8. Stephen's car will achieve 26 or 27mpg on trips down the French autoroutes, whispering along at 80mph. How? Cylinder deactivation turns the V12 into a V6 once up to speed and allows economy »

Even on a sodden road, the Phantom is totally sure-footed



“The car was ordered by Gerald Cavendish Grosvenor, sixth Duke of Westminster, and one of the wealthiest people in the country”

almost double that of Stephen's other 6.75-litre car. That is a Bentley Continental R, a wonderful and much-loved machine but very much a product of the previous century.

ONE VERY SPECIAL ORDER

So far, what we've mentioned has been common to all Phantom VIIs, more correctly known simply as Rolls-Royce Phantoms, in either Series I (2003-2012) or Series II (2012-2017) form. This one, though, is more than a little bit special. The car was ordered by Gerald Cavendish Grosvenor, sixth Duke of Westminster, and one of the wealthiest people in the country. It was the first of three he owned, taking delivery of a second one when this car had been with him a year, then a third after two years, and after the third year this one was moved on to its second owner. It seems to have covered around 10,000 miles a year in the hands of the Grosvenor Group but it was more than a company car, as it features

both aesthetic and highly practical quirks that reflect the Duke's taste and needs. Stephen shows us around.

'The interior leather is in a shade known as Corn Silk and it's enhanced with deep navy blue carpets and rugs, and with woodwork that I have not seen on any other Phantom. The veneers have been cut across the grain of the wood rather than on a "drum", as is usual. The name PHANTOM has been embossed into the leather above the glove box, pressed in with some enormous weight to ensure the indented wording will not ever come out again.

'There were many small details I came across over the years, like the button in the headlining. It is quite small and has SOS written on it. I eventually realised this button, when pushed, would make contact with whomever you had set up an agreement with. It could be your personal security man, or the police or a car-tracking company. Speaking of Tracker, the theft preventative people, it was through them that I came across another interesting feature.'

When insuring his car, Stephen discovered there was a requirement for the Phantom to be fitted with a tracking device. There are various places these can be fitted, most obviously in the boot.

'On fitting said tracker in the boot,' says Stephen, 'the fitter informed me that he could not complete the job because the car had a thick bullet-proof plate under the rear seat which he could not drill through. Also, he said he could not open the rear near-side door from the outside, but he could from the inside. Further investigations confirmed the Duke of Westminster requested this security feature to ensure he or any VIP could not be pulled from the car.'

The under-seat protection was clearly a measure to guard against bomb blasts and it reminds us again of the age of this car. In 2003, people in the Duke's position in the UK were not only potential subjects for kidnap but as high-profile targets, retained a fear of attack by Irish Republican factions that hadn't bought into the Good Friday agreement. The world



The Phantom's best feature? Dash and wheel mix tradition and clarity perfectly



Tiny SOS button to connect you with your security detail



Car's own phone handset hid in slide-out tray



Note 'Power Reserve' dial - more fun than a rev counter



Not bad for a 20 year-old screen, is it?

may be still more terrifying today, but history changes the reasons. That one of these features caused some strife for Stephen adds a bit of humour, though he admits to being livid at the time.

'The bad news for me was that having a door you couldn't open from the outside was an MOT failure! All you do is operate the handle twice, and it opens, but the technician didn't know this, and I hadn't shown him. So instead of the usual pass I had one of those nasty red FAIL sheets. Now, come MOT time, I remind the tester of this unusual anomaly.'

A HISTORY OF FINE CARS

Stephen's own history with interesting cars goes back to 1995 when he



Embossed name in dash hide is a feature of some early Phantoms

purchased a 1967 Jaguar, the first of a few leaping cats. Visits to his mother were made all the more enjoyable by having some exciting transportation, as she was quite a lover of fine automobiles.

'One day she quietly suggested the Jaguar was difficult to get out of with any finesse and she would like me to consider a car that she could slide in and out of with ease,' recalls Stephen. 'Never, ever doing »

Instantly recognisable on the road, from any angle - a Rolls-Royce trait?



“The fitter informed me that he could not complete the job because the car had a thick bullet-proof plate under the rear seat which he could not drill through”

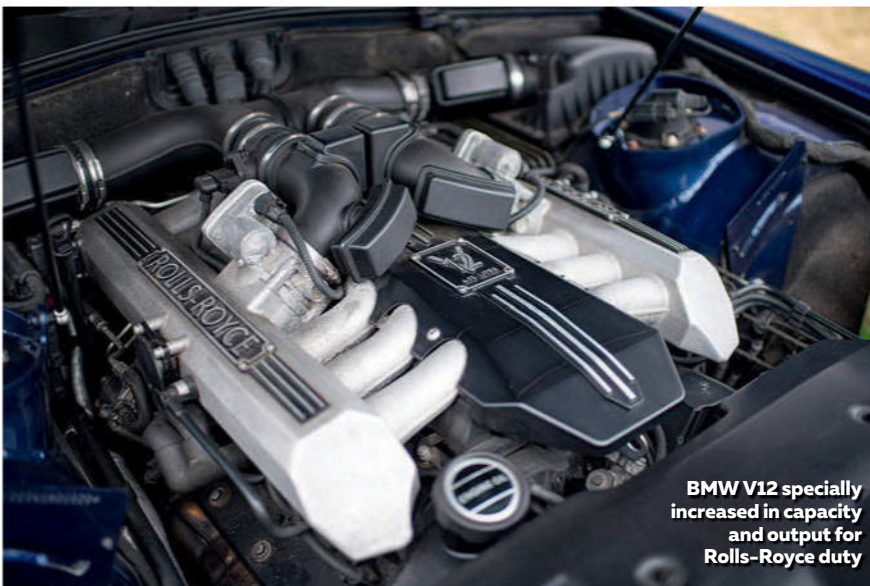
anything I was told to do, this suggestion seemed a good one as I had seen a Bentley Mulsanne for sale in a recent *Autocar* magazine, and to cut a long story short, I purchased it. Mother liked it and so did I!

Thus began 23 years and counting of Rolls-Royce and Bentley motoring, and as Stephen puts it, the new and

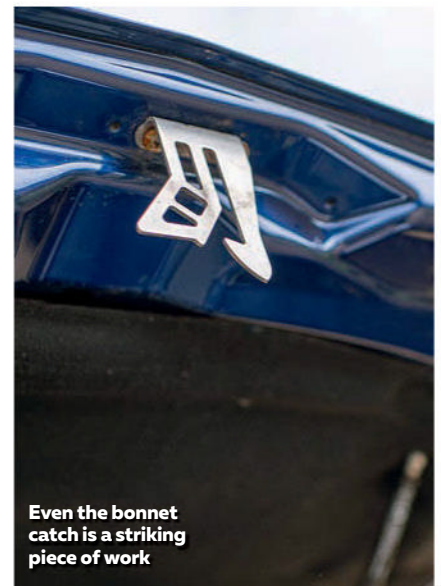
most enjoyable pastures of the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club. The RREC became more and more a part of life, as Stephen joined his local South East Section's Committee, took on the editor's role after creating the Section Magazine, then became Secretary and finally Chairman. It was in connection with the circle of friends and

acquaintances made through the RREC that Stephen acquired this Phantom.

'In 2009 I had a fixed-head Corniche, and as lovely as it was, I couldn't get used to the slight offset of the pedals. After 12 Rolls-Royces and Bentleys I knew what I liked, so I mentioned to my friend Richard Hollands, a full-time classic car dealer before he retired, »



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Stephen enjoying the rare treat of riding in the back

The colour, by the way, is thought to appear on only four or five other Phantoms. It's said that a customer saw this car while it was in build, having been painted in this special shade of Royal Blue, and declared that he would have his car that colour as well. Rolls-Royce asked the Duke of Westminster's permission, which was declined...so future versions of the colour were tinted with a drop of black paint and called Westminster Blue, perhaps as a tribute, perhaps out of mild spite. Stephen advises taking the tale with a pinch of salt, but it's a good story.

A COSTLY COMPANION?

What has the Phantom been like to live with? They have a reputation for producing frightening bills if anything goes wrong. Stephen reports that the car has been remarkably good and that only two things have cost four-figure sums to sort out, with the more costly being no fault of the Phantom's.

'The run-flat tyres it uses were incredibly expensive - £1200 each at one point,' says Stephen. 'So Rolls-Royce decided to produce new wheels allowing the fitment of different tyres... the problem being that the old tyres went out of production and the new

that I was thinking of selling the Corniche and finding a Phantom - which was fatal! Meanwhile, my partner Len and I had just bought a Bentley S-series with the SCT 100 body by James Young, a real favourite of mine. We had a bit of a gathering at home to celebrate with friends from the club and Richard appeared and told me he'd brought my new Phantom.'

Despite Stephen's sensible observations that he'd just bought another Bentley and hadn't even begun to market the Corniche, the Royal Blue

Phantom made rather an impression.

'When I first saw the Phantom, I thought I could not have found a more wonderful motor car. The impressive stance was beguiling, the colour was mesmerizing and the interior was the most beautiful leather everywhere. Most Rolls-Royce models also offer these qualities, but the Goodwood Phantom was so different, so modern and so large that I believe all previous Phantom models from P1 to P6 would be flattered to see this modern iteration.'

Road-hugging stance is one reason the shape has been slow to age



wheels cost £7000 a set! Add that to the more reasonable new tyres – only £500 each – and it’s a £9000 bill.’

The second issue was with the air suspension, which eventually to become vulnerable to leaks, like all air suspension systems.

‘Nigel Sandell has a young ex-Rolls-Royce apprentice who travelled down to see the car with the computer that talks to all three computers in the Phantom,’ says Stephen. ‘You don’t even need to plug it in – just stand nearby and they connect to each other. Anyway, the young man said he knew exactly what was wrong but the car would need to go up on a ramp to sort it out.’

Away it went to Nigel Sandell’s place in south-west London in a covered transporter and when Stephen rang the next to find out if they’d had a chance to investigate, it was already fixed.

‘The bill was £1700, and I think at least half of that was the transportation. But for an air suspension failure on a car like this – and the first real fault of any note in 13 years – I think that’s pretty good. It’s also a welcome sign of how the cost of ownership on these cars is coming down.’

Stephen points out that he was

paying £240 per hour at the Rolls-Royce main dealer he previously used for servicing and MoTs, and that insurance had hovered around the £1200 to £1400 mark for the first ten years. But that dropped suddenly to £450 about 18 months ago, and Stephen believes more and more young apprentices trained by Rolls-Royce on these cars are finding positions with independent marque specialists, where hourly rates are much lower. In other words, the cost of upkeep may have dropped almost as far as the cost of entry: £50,000 buys an early car with higher miles, £70,000- £75,000 brings older but cherished low-milers into play. These cars were around a quarter of a million pounds when new; a 2023 Phantom offers no change from £400,000.

You will have gathered by now that Stephen regards the Phantom as more than capable of living up to the Rolls-Royce name and tradition; the question ‘is it worthy?’ doesn’t even arise. The esteem in which the car is held became apparent when Stephen and Len realised they had to down-size somewhat from a growing collection of vehicles. They decided to retain just one Bentley and one Rolls-Royce – as well as three little sidevalve Fords, Stephen’s

other passion, but that’s another story.

‘We had to pick the ones we genuinely wanted – we had to be honest with ourselves,’ says Stephen. ‘After owning all sorts of things over the years including a 20/25, various Silver Clouds and S-series, both Corniche convertible and fixed-head, and others, it came down to the Continental R and this Phantom. I’ve owned it longer than any other Rolls-Royce or Bentley I’ve had. After 13 years and nearly 50,000 miles, I still love the car as much as I did on the first day, and the story continues.’ ■

SPECIFICATION

2003 ROLLS-ROYCE PHANTOM (AS STANDARD)

ENGINE: 5834mm / 19ft 1in

WIDTH: 1990mm / 6ft 6in

WEIGHT: 2560kg / 5644lb

ENGINE: 6749cc DOHC V12

POWER: 453bhp@5350rpm

TORQUE: 531lb ft@3500

0-60MPH: 5.9s

TOP SPEED: 149mph

COST NEW: c. £240,000, before modifications

YOUR SHOUT

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

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



THE BENTLEY CORNICHE

We would like to clarify certain aspects of Richard Gunn's article 'The Spirit of Experimentation' on the Bentley Corniche which appeared in the September/October 2023 issue. I write as a Trustee of the WO Bentley Memorial Foundation and have consulted in detail with Ken Lea, who was the instigator and leader of the Corniche project from its conception in 2001 and is familiar with the surviving original documentation about the Corniche in the Experimental Files and in the Evernden and Robotham papers. Ken is also the Chairman of the WOBMF.

Our first point concerns the origins of the Bentley 3½ Litre. Mr Gunn states that it was 'based on the Rolls-Royce 20/25'. The 'Bensport' (the internal codename for the new car) was not a

warmed-over 20/25, as has sometimes been stated, but was developed as a separate model. It was based on a new chassis and lighter rear axle which had been designed for the cancelled 'Peregrine' Rolls-Royce (an abortive project for a smaller car in the 18 HP class), and the power source was an uprated and significantly redesigned version of the Japan 1 engine originally developed as a possible replacement for the 20/25's engine. While the 3½ did use the 20/25's gearbox, this was a matter of simple expediency because the new box with centre gear lever (together with a central handbrake) intended for the 3½ was not ready for production in time.

Continuing with the subject of transmissions, the overdrive gearbox was not introduced at the launch of

the 4¼ Litre in 1936, but rather in 1938 and was fitted to the last two series of 4¼, the MR and the MX. Moreover, a newly designed gearbox was fitted to all Mk Vs including the Corniche.

Mr Gunn states that the Embiricos, or more correctly the Paulin Bentley was 'cramped and uncomfortable'. Ken Lea has driven the car and confirms that this is not the case; legroom and headroom are similar to those of other Derby FHCs and visibility is better than most. The car was of course designed as a 2+2, not a full four-seater.

The possible factory entry for Le Mans 1940 would not have been the Corniche saloon, but the proposed Competition Comet, with a roadster body which was to have been designed by Paulin. The Comet was the model in the Rationalised Range which

combined the new 8-cylinder B80 engine with the Corniche chassis and was specifically intended to counter the performance of the faster models of the Lagonda V12 range.

The wording of the article implies that independent front suspension was fitted only to the Corniche, whereas all Mk Vs were equipped with it.

It was Georges Paulin who visited the Rolls-Royce factory at Derby, not Marcel Pourtout. While Paulin felt frustrated after the first visit because of his lack of English language skills, he had in fact made a positive impression, which resulted in his second visit and the offer of an exclusive contract by Rolls-Royce, which due to the war was never completed.

The article states that '...the Corniche's repatriated chassis was left untouched' after its arrival at Rolls-Royce's Derby factory following the accident on August 8th 1939. The chassis assembly was actually dismantled for examination but work then stopped. Internal memoranda suggest that damage to the chassis and running gear was substantially less than had first been thought.

The number of Corniches constructed also requires clarification. We read that '...in reality seven Mk V Corniche chassis had been delivered to Vanvooren and four had already received bodies when France fell.' In fact, only one Corniche, the prototype on chassis 14-B-V, was completed with coachwork. None of the four Corniche production chassis completed at Derby was delivered to France. It was Vanvooren bodies for the Corniche, not completed cars, that were sent from Paris to Châteauroux for wartime storage.

We turn next to the story of the



Corniche project since 2001. The article states that '...a plan was hatched to recreate the Corniche in its entirety.' In fact, the initial and conditional stage of the project was to reconstruct a fully operational chassis and running gear. It was only in 2006 that the decision to proceed with bodying the chassis was taken.

Finally, further explanation of the sequence of events around the completion of the car is also desirable. The article states, 'Looking for something special to celebrate the forthcoming centenary [of Bentley Motors in 2019] the company... decided to complete the Corniche.' The Corniche was already at body in white stage when delivered to the Bentley factory at Crewe in September 2018. The Mulliner division carried out the last phase of work – painting

the car, making and fitting the interior trim and final body assembly including the intake grilles etc.

KE Lea

NJH Smith

**WO Bentley Memorial Foundation,
Wroton, Oxfordshire**

Thanks to Nigel Smith and Ken Lea for those corrections. Both Richard Gunn and I are sorry these mistakes made it to print; they represent a mixture of errors and assumptions of our own making, and a reliance on some sources that lack much detail and accuracy when compared with the archives of the WOBMF. We're also grateful to acknowledge all the very hard work and effort put into the reconstruction of the Corniche from 2001, before Bentley's Mulliner division completed the final stages from 2018 to 2019 – Ed



**EV CONVERSIONS
– YES...**

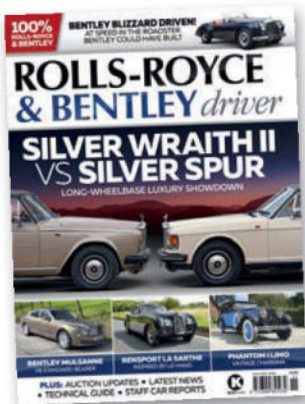
In response to the question at the end of your news story on the electrified Phantom II, I can only say that I found it impossible to read the piece and see those pictures without wanting to try the car out. It ought to be wonderful – a potentially unbeatable combination of silence, smoothness, power and style, and therefore a Good Thing, as readers of *1066 And All That* will remember. Yes, an H.J. Mulliner Phantom II saloon is a rare car but not unique, so I don't feel that in this case we have lost an irreplaceable piece of history. As to your more general question about Rolls-Royces or Bentleys being more suitable for EV conversion than other classics, I would agree (after a bit of hesitation) about Rolls-Royce but less so with Bentley, where

even in badge-engineered eras the expectation was for a more sporting image. Yes, they would be faster in electrified form, but it's about more than performance data, as we know. With an open mind,
Lucas Allen
London SW1

...AND NO!

One word to your question about classic Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars being suitable for conversion to electric: NO. Anyone who wants a classic car at all; they want a retro-novelty they can tell their friends about without feeling guilty. Doing it to a Rolls-Royce or Bentley is worse; it ruins a genuinely fine car

rather than yet another Mini, Jaguar, Porsche or VW. Battery-only electric cars will turn out to be a massive mis-step, and converting classics to this format reduces the number of historic vehicles and could shorten the car's life rather than prolonging it.
Julia Wilkinson
Guildford
Surrey



TWO-CAR CONTRAST

I enjoyed the piece in the Nov/Dec edition of your magazine comparing the Silver Wraith II and the Silver Spur, and enclose pictures of my chestnut Silver Wraith II which shares a home with my 2005 Arnage T.

I have been car mad since an early age. My parents used to take me to the Motor Show at Earl's Court when I was a youngster, probably to keep me quiet! I did an apprenticeship mostly at Kennings Motor Group in Norwich and started my own business in 1980, a small workshop with a few cars for sale. After that I started buying

and selling cars within the trade – what a wonderful way to spend your life. I bought my first Rolls-Royce over twenty years ago and caught the bug. To date, including the ones that have just passed through my hands, I have owned around forty one Rolls-Royce and Bentley motor cars. My two cars are very different – the Rolls-Royce is a lovely cruiser whereas the Bentley is a bruiser. They are both wonderful to drive but in different ways.

Alan Reeder
Norfolk



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2007/57 Bentley Continental Flying Spur Mulliner. Finished in Silver Tempest with electric sunroof and 20 inch Mulliner alloys. The interior is in Cotswold with contrast stitching in Beluga, Walnut veneers and electric rear seats. Only 49,000 miles. Immaculate condition throughout.....**£26,250**



2006/55 Bentley Arnage T Mulliner Level 11. Finished in beautiful Moonbeam Silver with Le Mans wing vents, quad exhausts and 19 inch split rim alloys. Beluga interior with contrast stitching in Cornsilk, Walnut veneers and picnic tables. Only 55,000 miles with FSH. Immaculate condition and amazing value**£31,950**



2001/51 Bentley Arnage Red Label. Finished in Peacock Blue with Barley interior piped in French Navy, Dark Blue carpets piped in Barley and secondary hide in French Navy, with Burr Walnut veneers. Known to ourselves for 16 years with full history. ULEZ compliant and in outstanding condition throughout.....**£23,950**



1996 Model/N Bentley Continental R. Finished in beautiful Wildberry with 17 inch Limited Edition wheels. Magnolia interior with Walnut veneers and embossed Flying B's. Only 79,000 miles and has been maintained regardless of cost, with FSH. Immaculate condition throughout. A future classic offered at only.....**£46,950**



1980 V Rolls Royce Silver Shadow Series II. Finished in 1980's classic Walnut with Gold fine lines and London Tan interior. Lockable centre cocktail cabinet, Walnut veneers and Fawn carpets bound in London Tan. Only 30,000 miles with lots of history. A stunning car realistically priced at only**£36,950**



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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BUILDING THE BENTLEY CONTINENTAL GT

WORDS: ANDREW FEAVER

PHOTOS: WO BENTLEY MEMORIAL FOUNDATION, BENTLEY MOTORS LTD / PAUL JONES

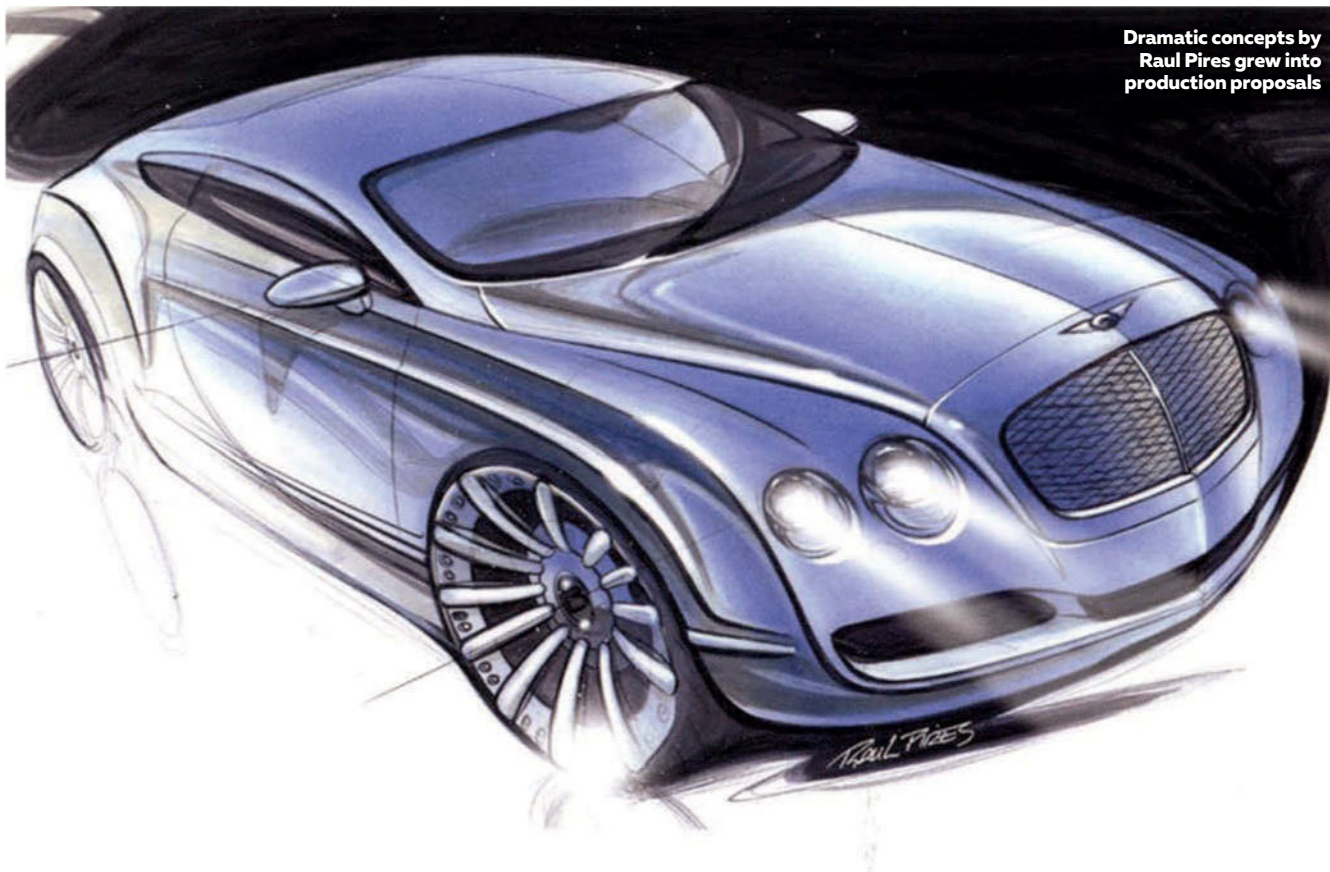
The first Bentley introduced after Volkswagen's takeover would be the most important new model for 70 years. Now, two decades on from the launch, those with hands-on involvement give us a glimpse of the Continental GT's creation.

I joined Bentley in August 2003 as a graduate engineer and was lucky enough to witness first-hand the revolution of Bentley under new owners VW. My career took me through a range of engineering roles and finished as the Module Leader for Body and Exterior on the current 3rd generation Continental family

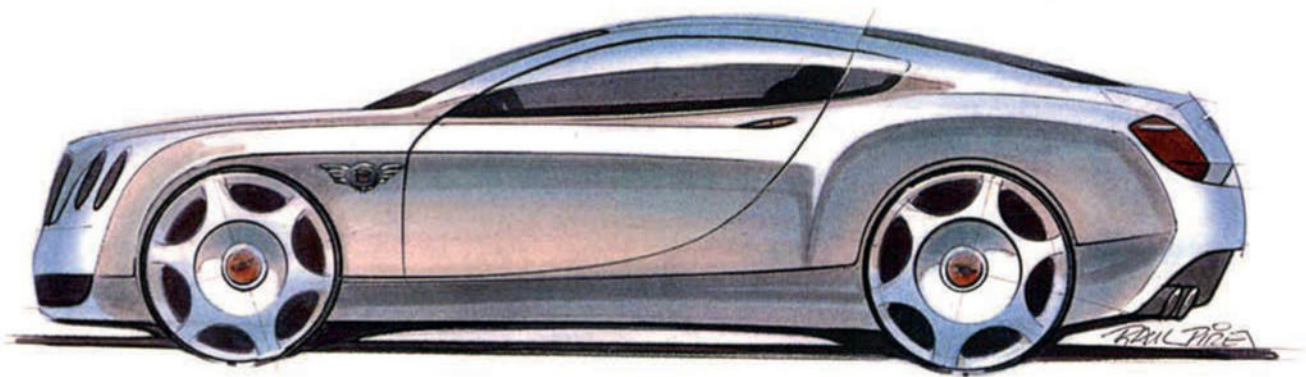
in 2020. I am passionate about the company's recent history and the 20th anniversary of the launch of the Continental GT is a great opportunity to tell, for the first time, the full story of what actually happened, through the eyes of those who were there.

The Continental GT, in its 552bhp all-wheel drive 190mph+ majesty,

was a car that, in many ways, was a long time coming. It was the first all-new, ground-up product of the revitalised Bentley, stepping out from the long shadow of 67 years with Rolls-Royce. The idea which would eventually become the Continental GT began in the early 1990s, when Bentley and Rolls-Royce were owned

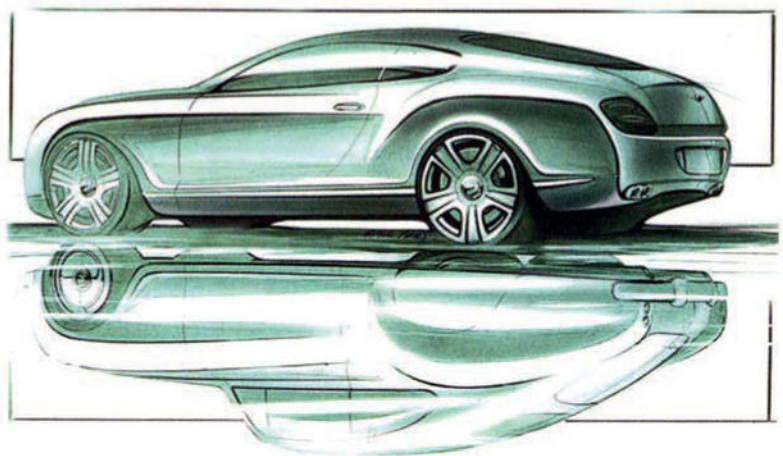


**Dramatic concepts by
Raul Pires grew into
production proposals**



by Vickers plc. The R&B board were pressing Vickers for investment to replace the ageing SZ series of vehicles and broaden the company's appeal, capitalising on the renewed interest in the Bentley brand and its sporting character. Bentley's star had been rising throughout the 1980s, with the launch of the Mulsanne Turbo in 1982 and its replacement, the Turbo R in 1985 and clearly found a buying public keen on the combination of performance and luxury, and sales began to outstrip those of the Rolls-Royce alternative.

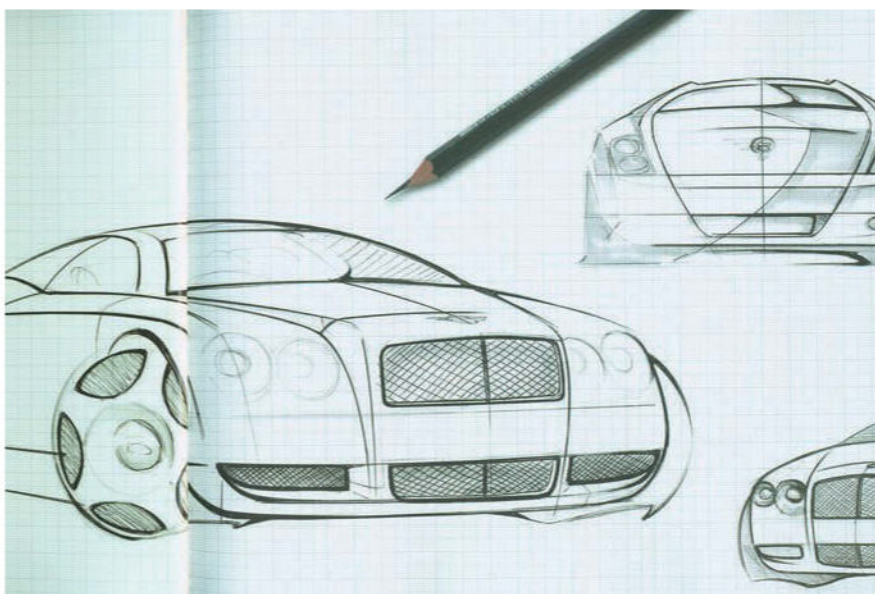
However, Vickers' resources were very limited. Global recessions in the early 1980s and then early 1990s meant that there was little cash to invest in new products. An opportunity did present itself, through the vast wealth of the Sultan of Brunei, and his brother Prince Jefri, who encouraged the company to develop a series of new products, which included the



Bentley Project Java – a stunning two-door coupé built on the BMW 5-series (E34) platform. It was unveiled to the world at the 1994 Geneva Motor Show and received a rapturous

response, but ultimately the car would not make it into series production. Prince Jefri would have six coupés, six convertibles and six estate cars built for his own use. Nevertheless, Project Java sowed a seed and confirmed that the world did indeed have an appetite for a 'Mid-Sized Bentley' or MSB.

By 1996 an updated version of the Java was under development, this time to be based on the newer E39 BMW 5-series platform. At the time, it all made perfect sense as the new Rolls-Royce Seraph and Bentley Arnage (P2000 / P3000 projects) were well under way, using a lot of thinking and hardware from the BMW 7-series. The P1000 or MSB would slot in below these two larger saloons. Close co-operation between Crewe and Munich was encouraged, as Vickers eyed up selling their automotive assets to BMW, with Rolls-Royce Ltd's blessing. All this came to a juddering halt when the deal to sell the two brands made a dramatic turn, with Volkswagen outbidding BMW for the company, »



HISTORY FEATURE

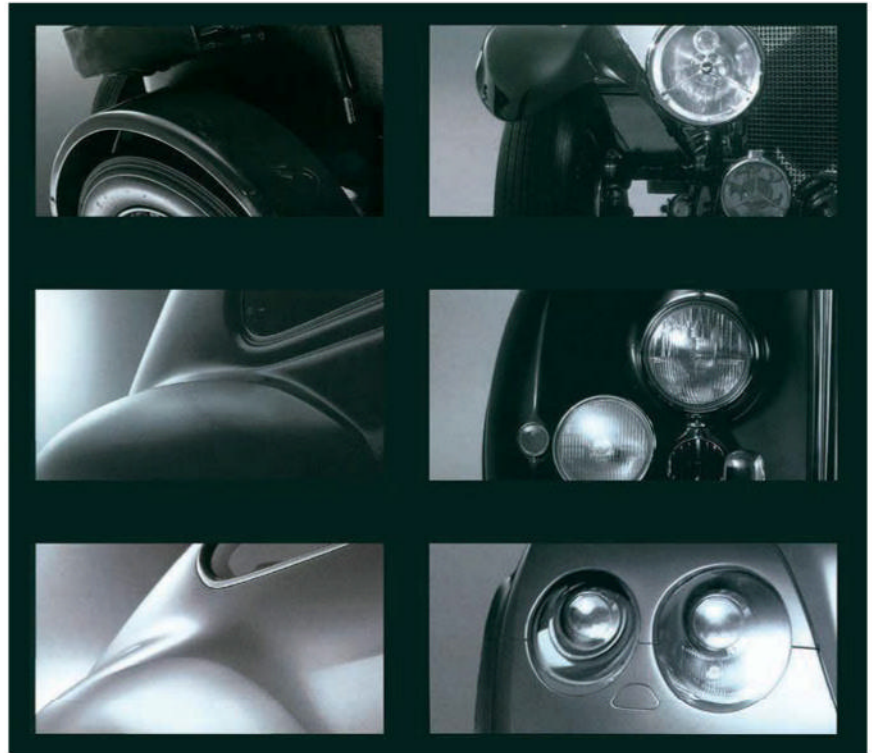
BENTLEY CONTINENTAL GT

only to find that they didn't end up with the Rolls-Royce brand, after all.

With VW now in control at Crewe, the idea of the MSB was looked at afresh. With ideas flowing between Wolfsburg and Crewe, Bentley needed someone who could clearly articulate what this new MSB would be. The man chosen was Dirk van Braeckel, who had risen to prominence with his neat stylistic redevelopment of Skoda. Under Dirk, the fiery young Raul Pires would lead the exterior development of the car, with Robin Page leading the interior design.

Van Braeckel's team created a very clear vision for the new car. Looking at the key silhouettes of the Cricklewood Bentleys and the R-type Continental, they aimed to deliver the next generation of this series for the new millennium. The hewn-from-solid appearance with the muscular haunches gave an indication of the vehicle's performance potential, while acknowledging the glamorous lines of the 1950s R-type. The pillarless windows could be dropped at the touch of a button, giving a light and airy feel to the cabin. The long V-shaped bonnet and sizeable radiator grille were both modern interpretations of styling features which anyone could recognise as a true Bentley.

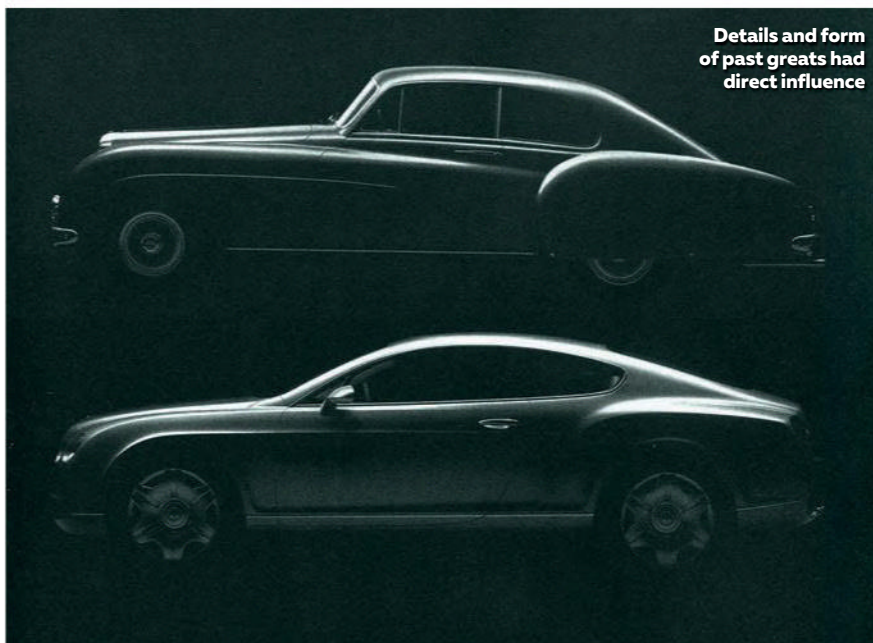
The interior of the car was no less remarkable. Here Van Braeckel and Robin Page were able to successfully marry the traditional walnut and leather



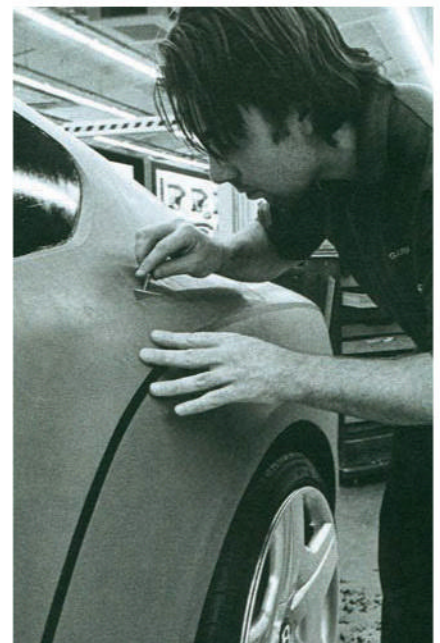
with modern screens and multi-way adjustable seats. The car was a true four-seater, with a lot of consideration given to the rear seat occupants. They had their own reading lights, centre console with stowage covered by a tambour door – that flexible hard covering composed of slats, sliding back in a track. The front seats were fitted

with slim headrests and integrated seat belts to maximise the view forwards.

From the driver's seat, the Bentley character of high power and torque at low revs was to be instantly recognisable. The 6.75-litre L-series pushrod V8, as fitted to the Arnage, was not suitable for the new GT as it would not fit. Instead, all the high- »



Details and form of past greats had direct influence



JONATHAN LAYFIELD, CHASSIS ENGINEERING

Jonathan joined Rolls-Royce and Bentley from Nissan in 1998 as the Systems Principal Engineer for Chassis. At about the same time, VW Group had begun the development of the two competing luxury saloon car projects under Dr Ferdinand Piech's direction: the D1 programme that became the VW Phaeton, with its steel body structure, and the D3 programme that became the second-generation Audi A8, with its much lighter aluminium structure. Unknown to Jonathan, the D1 programme would be central to his career for at least the next decade.

'The VW D1 chassis had a maximum 18-inch brake package; the Audi D3 a 17-inch brake package,' says Jonathan. 'Both vehicles had their maximum speeds capped at 250km/h, and as the kinetic energy the brakes have to dissipate squares with increasing speed, the additional 75km/h that the GT would achieve added a huge amount of energy into the system. There was simply nothing on the shelf which could cope with the braking requirements expected for the new Bentley.'

The chassis team soon realised that they were going to be testing the frontier of braking technology, because the level of kinetic energy being dissipated was unprecedented in a road car. And it was not just the brakes which would struggle; the tyres were going to be under an equal level of stress. Jonathan describes this challenge.

'Consider the two front tyre contact patches, each about the size

of an A4 sheet of paper. During an emergency ABS braking manoeuvre from 320km/h, the target slip between tyre and tarmac converts about 15% of the braking energy to heat at the front tyre contact patch. Within the first second of braking from top speed, the tyres would be heated at a rate of 150kW – directly in the contact patch. The resultant temperature rise presented its own challenge for the stability of the tyre adhesion performance. Optical pyrometer measurements on the car revealed tyre surface instantaneous temperatures of more than 240°C.'

High-speed brake testing also revealed the potential for the tyre bead to slip on the wheel rim. Thousands of hours were spent evolving and refining the bespoke Pirelli PZero tyres to withstand these demands, along with all the other related attributes required. Bentley even had to introduce a production tyre assembly lubricant that, once dried, glued the tyre to the wheel!

The last major challenge the chassis team faced was an issue that occurred during a VW Group hot weather sign off drive (Sommerfahren – or SoFa) in South Africa. During braking from high speed, the car had begun to weave from side to side. It was most puzzling and required a complex investigation into the behaviour, again at VW's Ehra-Lessien test track.

'The brake pads too were at the limit of what was possible,' says Jonathan. 'Normally brake pads are only part cured, leaving some of the phenolic resin in the pad matrix



material in an uncured state. A "cure front" moves through the pad, as it's used up, ensuring that a cured pad surface is presented to the brake disc. However, so much heat was being generated under braking that the pads were being instantaneously cured through their whole structure, giving off steam and turning them momentarily into a gas bearing, rather than a brake pad! The only solution was the development of grooved pads which would channel any gas build up away from the disc surface in the event of a high-speed stop.'

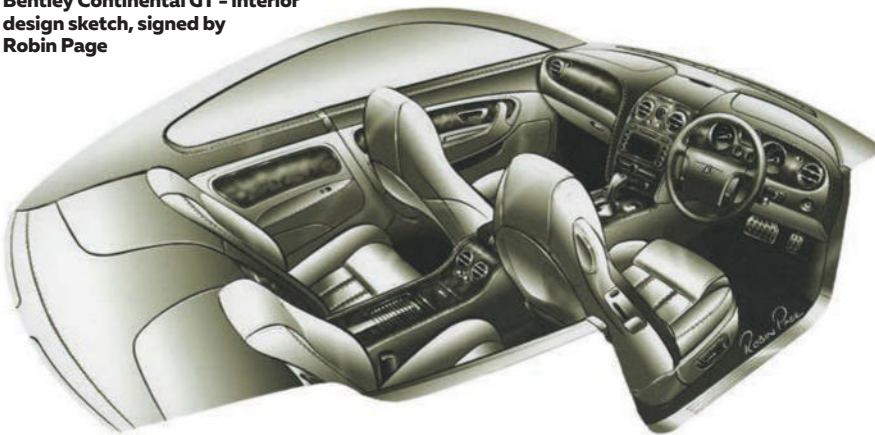
Why was this behaviour only found at the SoFa test? 'The outgassing only became critical when new "green" brake pads were tested at top speed. Until then, the development tests were always preceded by a brake bedding cycle...not always the case in the hands of customers! So we added a green performance requirement to the test catalogue.'



HISTORY FEATURE

BENTLEY CONTINENTAL GT

Bentley Continental GT - interior design sketch, signed by Robin Page



performance engine options were considered from across the Volkswagen Audi Group and it came down to a choice between the twin-turbo V8 from the Audi RS6 or the yet to be launched 6.0-litre W12 engine, provided it too could be turbocharged. The W12 is a masterpiece of packaging, giving 6-litres displacement and

the smoothness of 12 cylinders in an engine slightly shorter than the 4.0-litre V8. Coupling the now twin turbocharged W12 to a 6-speed ZF automatic gearbox, driving all four wheels, the car was endowed with true GT performance – in any gear and in all weather conditions.

Chris Cole, the Continental GT's »



CHRIS COLE, PROJECT LEADER

Chris's career began as an apprentice at Rover in Longbridge at 16 years of age. He rose through the ranks to become the Engineering Manager for the R50 Mini, where he was responsible for getting the engineering of the car completed and signed off for production. With the planned move of the Mini project from Longbridge to Cowley in the summer of 1998, Chris felt that 'a move to Rolls-Royce and Bentley for a new challenge seemed like a good idea!'

He was appointed to the new MSB project team, charged with delivering the new Continental family of cars.

'The first key questions to answer were "what do you want the new car family to be and in what order should the different variants – coupé, saloon, cabriolet – be launched?"'

Chris says it felt that they were being asked to create new business cases every two or three weeks, each with a different set of assumptions – would they be basing the new Bentley on the VW D1 Phaeton platform, the Audi D3 A8 platform, a yet to be defined

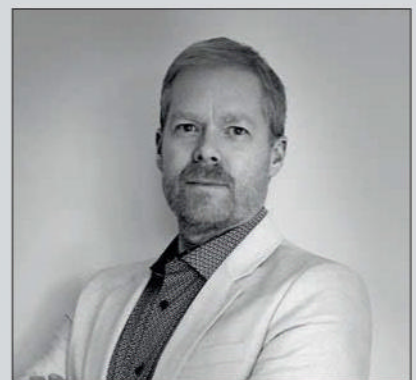
Bugatti or even a Lamborghini?

'Each of the ideas was considered in detail, and it soon came down to a decision between either the VW D1 or the Audi D3. Interestingly, neither project was being offered as a platform within the VW Group – that's to say that each brand earmarked to use the components got some say in how they were to be developed, and then shared in the cost of them. Instead, Bentley was simply allowed to use the components and then make them work in the best way possible.'

A key project innovation was the creation of 'Room 1501'.

'This physically brought all the key members of the team together in one place,' says Chris. 'It was housed in a new glass-and-steel office in the middle of the Continental GT assembly line and its name reflected the target for 2003 – building 1501 cars for wholesale by the end of the year.'

This target had been set some 24 months earlier and the scale of the challenge was put into perspective by knowing that the company was



building only 700 to 800 Arnages annually. Room 1501 doesn't exist today, but stood beside the track at the start of the Final 1 section of the line where the third generation of Continental GTs are now lowered from their carriers onto their wheels.

'This room had both office space and an open meeting area housing a car, and was the beating heart of the project,' says Chris proudly. 'This location, in the main build hall in Pym's Lane, was the foundation upon which the success of the launch would be based.'

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“The scale of the design, engineering and manufacturing tasks to achieve all these goals was immense”

Project Leader, remembers a key appointment that got the ball rolling.

‘Dr Franz-Josef Paefgen’s arrival from Audi, as Bentley’s new CEO in 2002 was crucially important in getting the Continental GT programme to crystallise and make some decisions,’ he says. ‘Tony Gott had departed and was later to join BMW and Rolls-Royce, and so the calm Anglophile Paefgen helped to set the tone for the company.’

Chris explains one tactic employed to deliver on the turnaround plan required by Dr Paefgen.

‘McKinsey & Company, the management consultancy, were brought in to help create a Task Force which would see the project through to launch. In doing so, the Product Line structure, which we still use at Bentley today, was put in place. Module Leaders are responsible for individual systems, such as Body or Electrical, with Simultaneous Engineering Teams and Functional Project Leaders for Quality, Manufacturing and so on.’

The engineering of the car was to be no less ground-breaking for



Dr Franz-Josef Paefgen – Bentley CEO 2002 – 2011

Bentley than the new styling. Jonathan Layfield, who jointly headed up the Chassis team, remembers how the platform options shaped up.

‘The top specification D1, used by the VW Phaeton, and the D3, used by the second-generation Audi A8 projects seemed to be a sensible starting place for the development of the Bentley GT, as they offered similar chassis characteristics and were both to be powered by the naturally-aspirated 6.0-litre W12 engine.’

However, relatively early in the programme, Jonathan’s team met the first of many challenges with the new car. He recounts the tale with a wry smile, but at the time it must have been difficult to grin about.

‘It was at this point that the biggest challenge of the whole development programme was laid down – the car was to have an unlimited top speed and it would be powered by a now twin-turbocharged version of the W12 engine. This was far in excess of what the donor D1 and D3 programmes had developed their systems to cope with. The aim was to create the fastest four-seat car in the world! What had not been fully understood at this point was the implications that this would have on the car’s brakes.’

For the full story of the challenge to develop the car’s brakes and tyres, see Jonathan’s interview covering the chassis engineering of the Continental GT on page 45. Thankfully, there were some odd moments of light relief. During one cold sign-off drive event (*Winterfahren* or *WiFa*), the chassis team were busy trying to install a later-level ESP software calibration during the evening’s work, in preparation »



Cold weather testing – assessing the car for snow packing performance. Note the VW Transporter pulling the sledge to stir up snow in front of the car





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Coachwork By Hooper & Co
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1952 Bentley R Type Saloon
Stock#16182

Finished in White complemented with a Tan interior, this original California car is equipped with a manual transmission, inline-6 engine, dual carburetors, and Smith's instrumentation. An extremely elegant British classic that is ready to be enjoyed and is mechanically sound.
For \$18,750



2000 Rolls-Royce Corniche
Stock#16228

Featured with merely 10,954 miles on the odometer and finished in its factory color Black with matching interior. Equipped with an automatic transmission, V8 engine, 4-wheel-disc brakes, side marker lights, Spirit of Ecstasy hood ornament. An extremely refined British that is mechanically sound.
For \$89,950



1954 Rolls-Royce Silver Wraith Park Ward Limousine
Stock#16085

Finished in Red complemented with a Grey leather interior. Equipped with a GM-sourced Hydramatic transmission, 4.6-liter straight-six engine, and B.F. Goodrich white-wall tires. A very presentable and prestigious post-war Rolls Royce that is mechanically sound.
For \$59,950



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

Finished in Black with Tan interior, This LWB is equipped with an automatic transmission, V8 engine, Birmingham SU dual carburetors, single exhaust outlet, and Smith instrumentation. A very presentable and prestigious Rolls Royce that is mechanically sound.
For \$49,950



1990 Bentley Turbo R
Stock#16523

Featured with only 46,840 miles on the odometer available in White with Beige interior. Equipped with an automatic V8 transmission, cruise control, Bentley hubcaps, and B.F. Goodrich tires. An extremely clean Bentley Turbo waiting for a new home that is mechanically sound.
For \$16,750



1978 Rolls-Royce Corniche
Stock#16225

Featured with only 27,519 miles on the odometer is finished in a two-tone Willow Gold and Tudor Grey with a Black interior. Equipped with an automatic transmission, V8 engine, and Jaeger & VDO instrumentation. A highly desirable British classic that is ready to be enjoyed and is mechanically sound.
For \$29,950



1963 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud III
Stock#16153

Finished in Old English White complemented with Brown interior. Equipped with an automatic transmission, V8 engine, SU dual carburetors, sunroof, single exhaust outlet, and Smith's instruments. An extremely presentable and opulent Silver Cloud III that is mechanically sound.
For \$56,500



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

Finished in Silver with Grey leather interior and equipped with a column-mounted manual transmission, 4.5-liter straight six engine, dual carburetors, and Smith's instrumentation. An extremely elegant British classic that is ready to be enjoyed and is mechanically sound.
For \$32,500



1984 Rolls-Royce Corniche
Stock#16814

Coachwork by Mulliner Park Ward and finished in its factory color Claret complemented with Beige interior, this original California car is equipped with an automatic transmission, V8 engine, and Jaeger & VDO instrumentation. An elegant British classic that is mechanically sound.
For \$44,500



1986 Rolls-Royce Corniche II Convertible
Stock#15662

Featuring coachwork by Mulliner Park Ward and finished in Black with Tan interior. Equipped with an automatic transmission, V8 engine, power steering, dual exhaust outlets, side marker lights, and Kumho tires. An elegant British classic that is ready to be enjoyed and is mechanically sound.
For \$42,500



1979 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow II
Stock#16049

Finished in its factory color Shell Grey and Velvet Red interior. Equipped with an automatic transmission with steering column control, V8 engine, four-wheel-disc brakes, power steering, and Jaeger instrumentation. An elegant British classic that is offered at a great value and is mechanically sound.
For \$16,750

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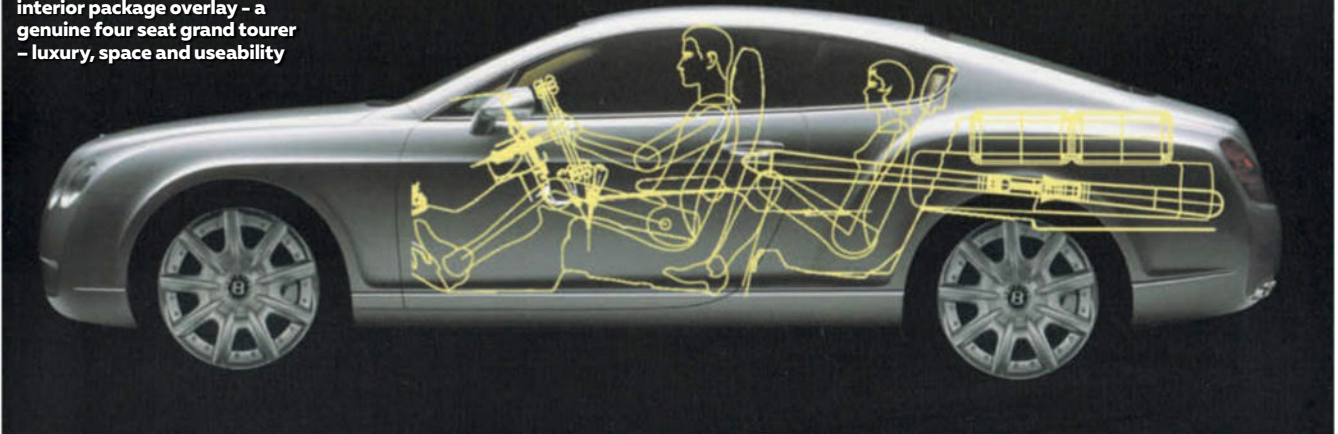
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HISTORY FEATURE

BENTLEY CONTINENTAL GT

Bentley Continental GT - interior package overlay - a genuine four seat grand tourer - luxury, space and useability



for the following day's drive. The GT, as many owners know, is a hungry beast for electrical power and early prototypes suffered worse than production cars, as their ECUs did not go into 'sleep mode' to save energy, due to their immature development level.

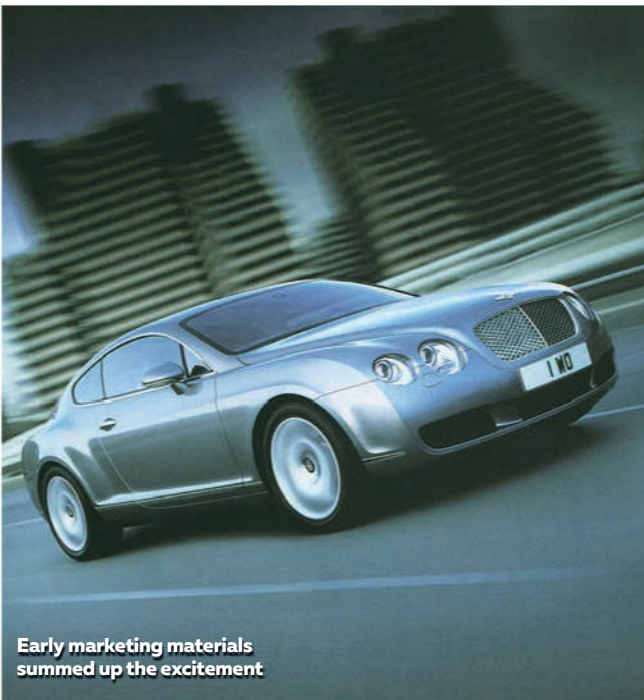
'Try as we might,' Jonathan says, 'the calibration wouldn't load, even with the engine running, as the battery voltage kept dropping. In desperation we tried connecting a battery charger to the car and running it. Then it seemed to have stabilised, only for the cheap workshop charger to overheat. There was nothing else for it but to start again, but this time blowing an airline

into the charger to keep it cool! One rather tired workshop fitter said, "this must be the only time we've uploaded new software using compressed air!"

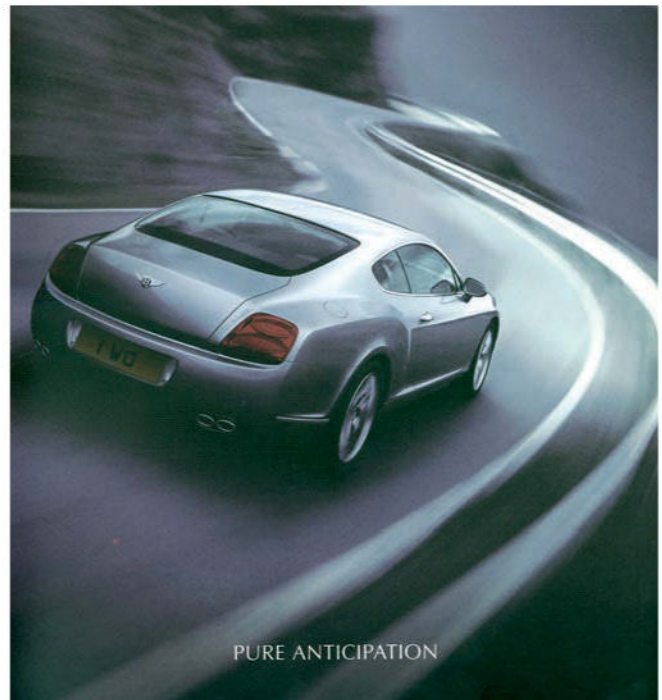
The car was conceived to have a list price of about £100,000. It would be smaller than current Bentleys and would be capable both of stupendous performance and of covering great distances in supreme comfort. It was envisaged as being a car that could be used every day and so accrue big mileages, and a vast amount of work was put in to ensuring that this was possible. The scale of the design, engineering and manufacturing tasks to achieve all these goals was immense.

It would require a wholesale change to every aspect of how the Bentley business operated - from how the car was designed to how it was assembled and even how it was marketed.

From an idea which first emerged in the early 1990s, to its final unveiling to the world at the Paris Motor Show in 2002 and its dynamic debut at the 2003 Goodwood Festival of Speed, the development of the Bentley Continental GT was over a decade in the making. It may have taken its time, withstanding some of the biggest changes in the company's history, but as others have said - 'Good things come to those who wait!' ■



Early marketing materials summed up the excitement



PURE ANTICIPATION

CLIVE WALKER, BUILDING THE PROTOTYPES

When Clive retired in 2016, he was able to look back on a 40-year career that had taken him from apprentice sheet metal coppersmith to Prototype Build Manager for the Continental GT and beyond.

'I joined Mulliner Park-Ward when it was being set up again in the old Experimental shop in the early 1990s,' he says. 'I was offered a role to bring my sheet metal skills to bear on the earliest of the "Blackpool Projects" – the range of cars built by the company for Jefri Bolkiah, Prince of Brunei.'

These were the Nepal Racing Estate, Project 130, Project 140, P260/P270 – codenames and projects, many of which were built in single figures and almost all have never officially appeared in any Rolls-Royce and Bentley product history. Clive later moved to become the Senior Engineer in the new Engineering workshop, 'productionising' prototype car builds in a workshop environment.



The Continental GT in the workshop at the Cold Weather Proving ground inside the Arctic Circle. Joe Shannon (top) looks on. The location for the "compressed air software upload" story



A prototype Continental GT bumper being brought through the Engineering Workshop

He remembers that 'rumours began to circulate that there was to be a Project Java replacement – and this was to become the Continental GT.'

In late 2000, Clive started a 12-month period of commuting to and from Wolfsburg on a bi-weekly basis, where he and his team attempted to solve the challenge of how to build the prototype: 'A car you have never seen before, using systems and technology not used by Bentley on any other vehicle!'

A logical, methodical approach was best, so Clive and his key lieutenants Howard Spencer and Phil Lockett set about planning the prototype builds on a huge roll of brown paper, laid out in the workshop. Using what they had learnt from their many hours in Wolfsburg, allied to their large collective experiences of building production cars and MPW special projects, they were able to secure agreement to get the prototype Continental GTs built at Crewe.

'To put it into perspective,' he says, 'the plan for the Continental GT was for 24 prototypes, as well as probably three times that number of line built



Prototype testing – Gavin Hart, (far left), from the Engineering Workshop keeping the early cars running in challenging conditions



Inside the Bentley Engineering Workshop, showing prototype Continental GT bodies waiting to start assembly



pre-production cars and press cars – well over 100 in total. By contrast, the last large pre-production build of cars at Crewe, for the re-introduction of the 6.75-litre L-series V8 into the Arnage, had between six and eight pre-production cars in total!'

In the end, the first four prototypes were built in Hall 64 of VW's huge *Versuchsbau* (or prototype build hall), which was logical as they had recently completed the prototype build of the VW D1 Phaeton.

'Bentley and VW colleagues worked side-by-side on these cars and the knowledge and skills required to build the new GT was slowly transferred. This allowed Crewe to take on the building of the remaining 20 prototypes, though in the end, only 19 were built, as only one of these cars was specified as a right-hand drive car. Being a singular version of a prototype, it always found itself at the back of the queue for parts. Proto 222, painted black, never did see the light of day!'

DRIVING THE CONTINENTAL GT

As the first of the VW-era Bentleys celebrates its 20th birthday, we compare the original GT with the current model and revisit some highlights along the way

WORDS: PAUL WAGER PHOTOS: PAUL WAGER / BENTLEY MOTORS LTD

It may have been tortured wrangling of the high-level corporate kind which saw one of the most quintessentially British automotive marques end up in the hands of a German people's car maker, but few could argue that the Volkswagen Group has been a very effective custodian of the Bentley brand.

Few things illustrate that better than sampling the cars which bookend 20 years of the reborn Continental, something which we were recently able to do courtesy of Bentley Motors' own 2004 example. As you can imagine, Bentley's own heritage car is as good as they come and indeed could almost pass for a fresh-off-the-line example, which makes it a perfect

illustration of just what a step-change the Continental was from previous Bentleys; not only the SZ-based cars but the likes of the Arnage too.

The leap between generations is obvious as soon as you enter the car. Anyone who knows their VW Group products will find something familiar about the flip-key remote fob and a clued-up parts spotter will also notice familiar shapes dotted around the cabin which recall various bits of Audi and VW switchgear. Closer examination however reveals that few visible parts are identical to their mainstream equivalent – a sliver of knurled aluminium or a bright surround

servicing to cleverly disguise their origins. And of course, it must be said that if you're going to borrow interior fittings from anywhere, then Audi is probably the best place to start.

Thumbing the 'start' button on the console wakes the mighty W12 and it sounds like literally nothing else – except perhaps a pair of Golf VR6s idling in close vicinity, the unit being effectively a pair of VW's narrow-angle V6s siamesed together. The headline figures speak for themselves: 552bhp and 650Nm of torque aren't to be





argued with, although the counterpoint is the Continental's hefty 2.5-tonne kerb weight which translates to 10mpg economy around town and renders the car an entirely different proposition than for example the lightweight aluminium approach adopted by Jaguar, itself now seeking to emulate Bentley's premium market success.

In its first two generations, the Continental employed the six-speed ZF 6HP gearbox, a conventional torque converter automatic which was used by several of its competitors and initial progress is much as you'd expect from a heavy, powerful car: slot the centre shifter into drive, give it a prod and the Continental glides away from the kerb.

At slow speeds, it feels relatively anonymous other than the distinctive exhaust note, and despite the mammoth power and torque on tap it's

“Thumbing the 'start' button on the console wakes the mighty W12 and it sounds like literally nothing else – except perhaps a pair of Golf VR6s idling in close vicinity”

easy to trickle along residential streets, even from cold. You sit lower in these modern Bentleys than in the older cars, which makes it feel at once more conventional and less of an occasion yet also less ponderous at speed.

Once out of urban speed limits though, a flex of the ankle reveals the car's absurd potential. The officially quoted top speed of the Continental is 198mph which is fast by any standards, yet the massive torque of the W12

means it gathers speed with little drama: no waiting for boost, just a firm and steady shove towards the horizon accompanied by a deepening of the exhaust note and the hedges suddenly going backwards rather faster.

This being 2003, the designers obviously felt obliged to offer the then new-fangled paddle shifters to give an approximation of a manual shift. Unfortunately, this being 2003 they also fixed said paddles to the »



“In 2011 the big news was the addition of a 4-litre turbocharged V8 powerplant...in reality it does nothing to diminish the character of the Continental”

column rather than the wheel, meaning that they're inevitably out of reach when required. The box itself is also somewhat ponderous by today's standards, needing time to think when a downchange is requested, something which translates to the 'manual' mode too. Whether using the paddles or the shift lever, there's a noticeable pause before the box responds which means that other than on steep descents the manual function is best left alone, since the ZF is at its best in fully automatic mode – and certainly that suits the effortless nature of these cars.

Such is the torque on tap that the Continental's all-wheel drive was more a necessity than a marketing gimmick, and it does give the car an immense feeling of security. Naturally, given its weight and bulk, it feels somewhat nose-heavy going hard into a corner and turn-in isn't exactly in the 205 GTI league, but it acquits itself well. The overall feeling is like the late

'90s Audis with the quattro all-wheel drive layout which displayed an initial nose-heavy character, but certainly it feels a whole lot more secure than it would if just the rear axle was driven.

The four-wheel drive also works with the all-round air suspension to give the Continental an unexpected soft-roader ability. Via the central controller the system can be raised, giving the car useful extra ground clearance for negotiating a muddy show field or rutted country car park without bashing the costly underpinnings. The downside is the low-speed thump which all air suspensions seem to generate when fat tyres combine with potholed British roads, but at anything above urban speeds it does provide a remarkably serene ride quality.

Jumping from the original car to the second generation is nothing like the culture shock between the Arnage and Continental which can be explained by the very simple fact that the post-2011

model is really an extensive facelift of that 2003 car. Exterior and cabin were restyled as you'd expect but the big news was the addition of a 4-litre turbocharged V8 powerplant. Emissions and efficiency were the twin pillars of thinking behind the introduction of the smaller engine but in reality it does nothing to diminish the character of the Continental. By any standards the 500bhp V8 with its 660Nm torque remains a fast car and is less costly to live with, its 26mpg offering a usefully longer range while in older age it's generally easier to own too. As you'd expect, from behind the wheel the second-generation car is a very similar experience to the 2004 example, the revised infotainment being easier to operate and the design improved at detail level, something which makes the car feel generally more refined.

When the third generation arrived in 2018 it bought with it an all-new platform, shared with the Porsche

SUPERSPORTS

The pinnacle of the W12-powered cars was announced in 2009 as the limited-edition 621bhp Supersports featuring ZF's 'Quickshift' technology which halved shift times and enabled double downshifts. The Supersports would make a limited-edition return with the second generation, production limited to 710 cars in recognition of the 710PS power output. Bentley retains examples of both first and second-generation Supersports in its heritage collection.

The Supersports is very obviously different from the regular GT as soon as you open the door. Gone are the rear seats, a slender carbon strut brace and neatly trimmed shelf taking their place, but when you stab the starter button it's clear that this is more than a cosmetic job.

There's a harder, more metallic



edge to the exhaust note, with just a hint of crackle and pop, while the rest of the experience is no less purposeful. It takes a lot to eclipse the regular W12-engined GT, but the 700bhp Supersports is in a different league altogether, offering explosive acceleration and equally

impressive stopping power from the ceramic brakes, while the whole car feels generally more alive and wired in a way the regular GT never is. The added jeopardy of sitting on the left in a two-metre-wide car on narrow Cheshire B-roads only heightens the experience.

Panamera although the W12 and V8 options remained, as did the all-wheel drive. The use of aluminium in the bodywork shaved nearly 100kg from the kerb weight, while the ZF automatic was replaced by a dual-clutch unit shared with Porsche where it was marketed as the PDK.

There's no doubt that the changes make the third generation technically superior by some way, with the entire bodyshell feeling noticeably more rigid and refinement levels right up there with the class leaders. Indeed, driving the current model – whether the now-discontinued W12 or the V8, now up to 542bhp and 770Nm – makes the 2003 car feel dated with its busy engine note, intrusive exhaust and slow gearbox, yet it's those things which give the original its character. The appeal of the current model comes from tricks like the rotating centre display and extensive personalisation options, but if you taped over the badges it could just be yet another state-of-the-art high-end car. All of which is perhaps exactly what the engineers behind it wanted to achieve. Certainly there's no avoiding the fact that the current Continental is a crushingly capable machine.

As an illustration of how Wolfsburg revitalised Bentley's dated technical offering however, an early Continental GT is hard to beat. ■



FEATURE CAR

ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER WRAITH HOOPER SEDANCA



A COLOURFUL CHARACTER

This is one of a few Rolls-Royces built for the oil millionaire Nubar Gulbenkian and probably the least outrageous, yet it was still enough of a head turner to find itself a movie role in a true cult classic

WORDS: NIGEL BOOTHMAN PHOTOS: GREGORY OWAIN, KLAUS-JOSEF ROSSFELDT



You might think that with various highly personalised Rolls-Royces in his life, Nubar Gulbenkian would have cherished them above all other transport. But which of his cars is featured as a sketch on the back cover of his memoirs? The dust jacket of *Pantaraxia: An Autobiography* (Hutchinson, 1965) depicts none of the above, but rather an Austin FX4 taxi modified by FLM Panelcraft with a brougham-style body, carriage lamps and wickerwork covering on the exterior panels. Perhaps he liked it for its silliness, perhaps because it was unique – after all, plenty of people had Rolls-Royces with eccentric

coachwork – or perhaps because it was the most practical for London use. Gulbenkian's famous remark on the car went thus: 'It will turn on a sixpence – whatever that is.'

Nubar Gulbenkian was the son of 'Mr Five Per Cent'. His father, Calouste Gulbenkian, was known for the extraordinary deal that guaranteed him 5% of the proceeds of Middle Eastern oil, back in the first days those fields were developed. Despite being born into vast wealth, Nubar wasn't content with the life of an idle playboy and became a shrewd and successful businessman in his own right. He enjoyed his wealth quite publicly and played up to the image of

an extravagant foreign potentate. His family was Armenian and though he divided his time between Paris, London and the South of France, he was educated at Harrow and Cambridge and regarded himself as British. He also held an Iranian passport, which came in handy during some cloak-and-dagger wartime adventures. After the war ended, Gulbenkian settled down in his flat near the Ritz with his third wife, and began to enjoy himself.

His first automotive project was the creation of a vast, rounded, semi-streamlined body on a Rolls-Royce Silver Wraith chassis, built for him in 1947 by Hooper and viewed with some horror by Rolls-Royce – not »

FEATURE CAR ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER WRAITH HOOPER SEDANCA

least because he had discarded the traditional Palladian grille. For more on this car and Gulbenkian's others, see the box-out on page 61. Gulbenkian was uncharacteristically humble about 'Pantehnicon', as it was called, admitting in his memoir that 'I am sorry to say the effect I achieved, while certainly striking and distinctive, was not an unmitigated success'.

STRIKING OUT AFRESH

By 1952 he had commissioned a dramatic four-door Silver Wraith tourer, also by Hooper, and very like chief designer Osmond Rivers' 'Docker' Daimlers. Hooper's 'New Look' coachwork aligned nicely with Gulbenkian's taste and soon afterwards, he ordered the Silver Wraith you see here. The new car was delivered in August 1953, built to design 8359 – the only one made, as with all Gulbenkian's cars. The body number was 9889 and the car wore the private plate NSG 2, for Nubar Sarkis Gulbenkian. The body style is, of course, a Sedanca de Ville, Gulbenkian's somewhat outmoded preference. Few customers in 1950s

"I never feel totally dry unless I can see someone else who is totally wet"

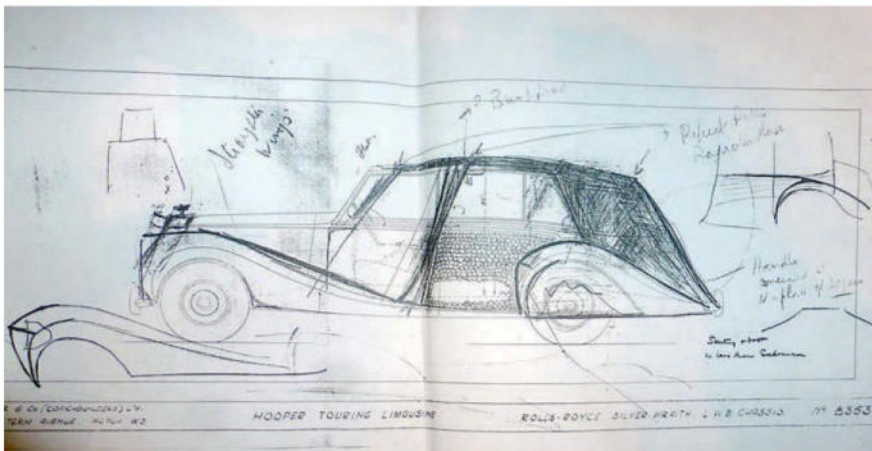
Britain still felt that their chauffeur should be exposed to the elements. 'I never feel totally dry unless I can see someone else who is totally wet,' was Gulbenkian's explanation!

His other personal touches were made in the interior. For some reasons, Gulbenkian didn't like wood on dashboards or waist-rails – his cars were specified with alternative coverings. Here, we have reptilian hide. Hooper's original file on the car, saved by Osmond Rivers, contains patterns of 'lizard skin', so it is indeed from a species of lizard. Gulbenkian may have been a bit of a car nut, but he didn't begin driving until he was 65. His cars, therefore, were made for him to enjoy from the back seat. Yet he still insisted on not only a clock but a speedometer mounted on the division, to ensure his man was making decent progress.

All of this is still just as Gulbenkian left it when we visit the car with its current owner, Anthony Kearsley.

Anthony acquired the car after the passing of the previous owner, his friend Rob Riding, a noted car collector based on the Isle of Man. Rob invested a vast sum reckoned at more than £185,000 in the restoration of this car with M.J. Pickles of Macclesfield, but the work has concentrated on the mechanical parts and the coachwork, leaving the interior delightfully original. Entering the 'owner's cabin' is a thrill, the rear-hinged doors opening far enough for a gracious passage in and out, while the seats are as deep as an oil well – superbly comfortable, and perfect for a post-prandial snooze.

The line of the C-pillar keeps a feeling of privacy without making it gloomy or claustrophobic in here, and there are reptile-skin ashtrays to catch the cigar stubs in the front of both armrests. The silver lever below them reclines the seats. It's a broad car, this – extra shoulder room in the cabins was one of the attractive features of Osmond »



Hooper's original sketch showed many features, including an inclined radiator shell, which didn't appear in the finished product



Graceful spats are a vital feature of the styling



Anthony shows us the process of extending the roof



Down goes the rear section...



and shuts with a click

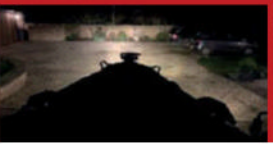
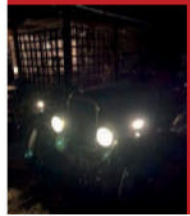


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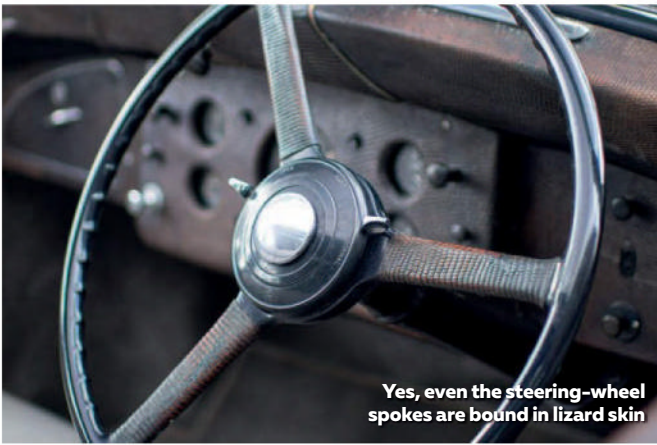
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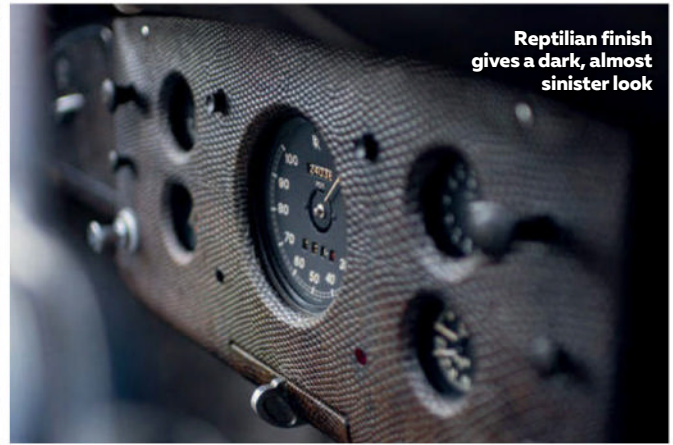


FEATURE CAR

ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER WRAITH HOOPER SEDANCA



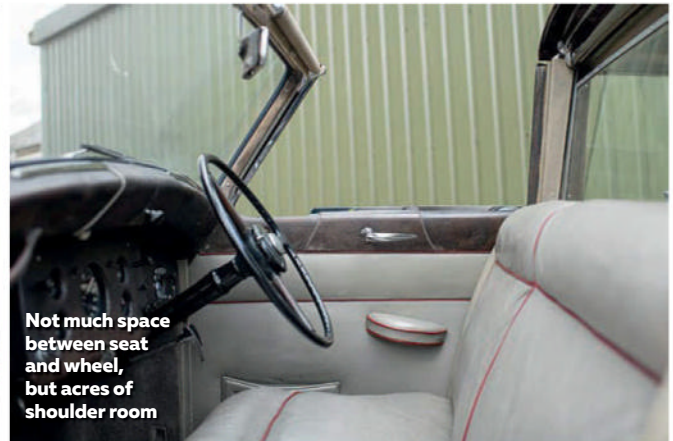
Yes, even the steering-wheel spokes are bound in lizard skin



Reptilian finish gives a dark, almost sinister look



Peculiar sun-blinds are stiff but effective



Not much space between seat and wheel, but acres of shoulder room

Rivers' New Look designs. Wind up the electric division, wide and shallow like a Panavision cinema screen, and this quiet, soft, thoroughly pleasant space is perfectly isolated. But Gulbenkian's crack about a soaking wet chauffeur is all for a laugh, really – the slide-out

sedanca roof is extremely convincing and probably weather-tight.

Anthony shows me the process of bringing it out and back again, and it's clearly a fine bit of engineering by Hooper. A T-handle unlocks the panel, the rear section of the roof lifts like

a car bonnet and the sedanca panel slides forward on tracks. Down goes the rear section again and you have a conventional closed limousine. Life in the front, therefore, need not be damp and cold. There are electric windows in each door and the driving position is quite low; well out of the wind if the roof is back. The familiar right-hand change manual and equally unassisted steering makes the car something of a handful at parking speed, but once away, the smooth, quiet engine and docile nature of the Silver Wraith make it unthreatening to drive – you just have to remain aware of its size.

Long after Gulbenkian's ownership, this car found its way to Frank Dale & Stepsons and into the collection of James Crickmay. James is no longer with us, but his son Giles has plenty of memories of the car.

'It was always around – I remember driving it up to the RREC annual rally one year and we used to use it quite a lot. It's not that tricky or cumbersome and that Sedanca roof is ingenious. We also had Gulbenkian's Perspex-top car for a while (see box-out – Ed) but I was nervous of



Wide front seats can be treated as one bench

WEIRD OR WONDERFUL? – GULBENKIAN'S OTHER CARS

Nothing quite lived up to the ambition and daring of the first Gulbenkian Rolls-Royce, Silver Wraith chassis WTA62, named 'Pantehnicon'.

As Nubar himself put it:

'Hitherto, motor-cars had been merely an adaption of the old horseless carriage; I felt that a modern car should be streamlined, curved and should look as though it had been designed by someone who had never seen horse-drawn carriages and had been presented for the very first time with the task of building a body around an internal combustion engine.'

Success or failure on that score is in the eye of the beholder, but after a few misadventures this amazing

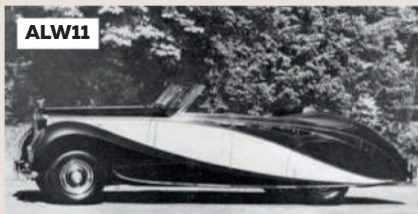
machine is now in private hands and nearing the end of an in-depth restoration. Let's hope we see it again soon. Gulbenkian's next adventure was the swoopy four-door Silver Wraith tourer on chassis ALW11, very close to Osmond Rivers' designs for Sir Bernard and Lady Docker's Daimlers, right down to the stacked headlamps behind curved Perspex screens. This car must have proved surplus to Gulbenkian's requirements soon after, as it was in Nigeria by 1955 and was used to transport the Queen on her visit the year after.

Meanwhile, Gulbenkian had commissioned another Silver Wraith, almost as dramatic as the

Pantehnicon. This car, chassis LELW74, featured a Perspex roof on another swooping Osmond Rivers body and was supposedly built for the South of France, where all occupants would surely be roasted alive on sunny days. It wound up as a static exhibit in a nightclub before being repatriated and restored. The Austin FX4 taxi by Panelcraft mentioned at the start of this article had a sister vehicle, slightly less OTT, and there was one more Rolls-Royce, too. It's not mentioned often, but its story is told on Klaus-Josef Rossfeldt's excellent website, rrab.com. Silver Cloud II, chassis LCA39, was bodied in 1961 by FLM Panelcraft, yet again a Sedanca de Ville. The Gulbenkian features were all there: no wood on the dash, rear-hinged back doors and a spacious rear compartment with a speedometer and a clock. It survives and has recently been beautifully restored and returned to dark green over light green.



WTA62



ALW11



LELW74



Austin FX4



LCA39

driving that, with the irreplaceable roof, while this one was really useable and enjoyable. I'm very fond of it.'

UNCLE MONTY'S MOTOR

The Frank Dale dealer plate remains in the door jamb, and with an O1 London dialling code, dating it to 1990 or before. We think, as does Giles Crickmay, that the car was in his father's ownership when it was used in the film *Withnail & I* in 1987. The film has become something of a legend, depicting the dissolute, chaotic life of two 'resting' actors in the bohemian London of the late 1960s, and their disastrous attempt at going on holiday to the Lake District. They are followed by *Withnail's* eccentric, predatory Uncle Monty, another thespian but one with private means – and a Rolls-Royce. Monty drives the boys from the cottage in the fells to Penrith (acutally

Stony Stratford, outside Milton Keynes) to buy pairs of wellington boots, but they spend the money on gin and cider before terrorising the tea rooms.

The Silver Wraith's appearance only lasts a minute or so, but it does a wonderful job of marking the contrast between the scruffy, drunken actors and the flamboyant but superior Monty, who hisses 'Get away from the car!' when the two young men pile out of the rear compartment and stand waiting for their five-pound notes. Bruce Robinson's film conjures up the street scenes of the late 1960s very well, partly because the cars are often scruffy; something other directors should remember when hiring concours classics to represent typical daily drivers of times past. This Silver Wraith would have been a splendid piece of fading glory, 15 years past its prime and distinctly outmoded by a changing culture.

Very like poor Uncle Monty, then.

Today, this car could serve a number of roles. Rob Riding's restoration has left it in close to prize-winning condition and you could have an entertaining time presenting it at some of the more celebrated concours events. Then again, it still makes a useable, enjoyable family treat in which every picnic or trip to a car show becomes an event. Though it's sober and sensible compared with other Gulbenkian creations, it has extraordinary presence and a huge power to turn heads. Whether driving it or riding in it, it's a mobile special occasion.

We'll leave the last word to Anthony Kearsley. He may well be familiar to readers as the owner of a large collection of Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars, many of which he operates through his business, Auto Couture. He owns our cover cars from the »

FEATURE CAR ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER WRAITH HOOPER SEDANCA

previous issue, too. This Silver Wraith is a car Anthony admired when Rob Riding owned it, and since Rob's passing, it naturally means a lot to Anthony.

'It's a showstopper – as a car to arrive in, there's nothing to touch it. Rob put so much into this car's restoration because he admired it a great deal, and so do I, but I prefer not to drive it on narrow country lanes; Uncle Monty would never have got into the wilds of the Lake District in it! It's a significant part of the fleet to me, but it could be available for sale. I think it's beautiful and I want lots more people to see it.'

Hear, hear. Let's hope this amazing machine is soon the centre of attention once again. ■



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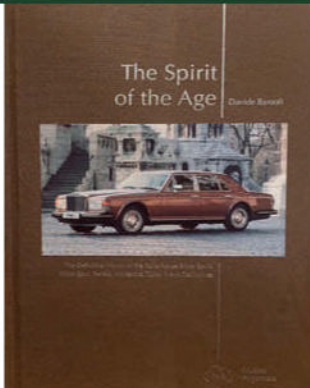
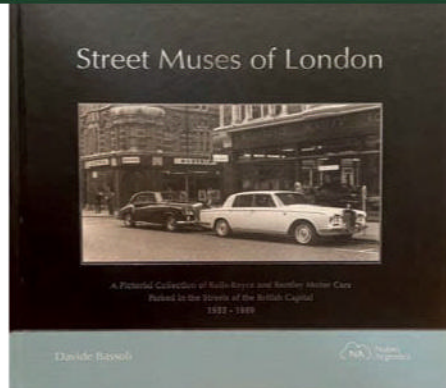
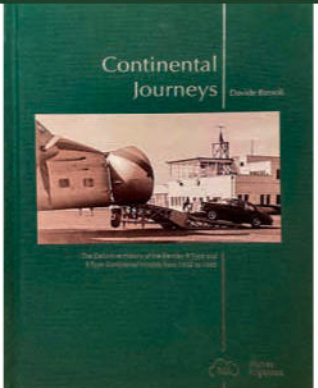
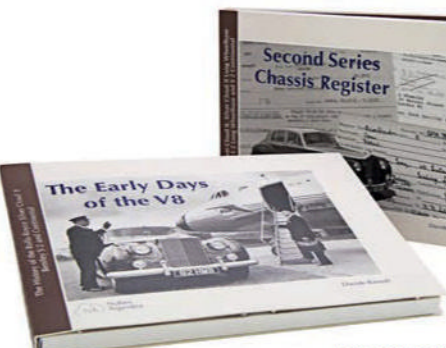




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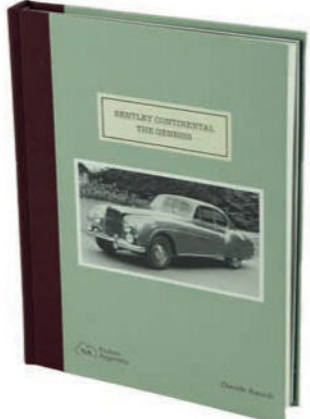
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Winter always presents a good opportunity for Club members to reflect on the past year, while looking ahead to an exciting calendar of events planned for the next 12 months

As 2023 draws to a close, we can look back on another successful year for the Club, and particularly reflect on the past motorsports season. At the end of November, the second annual black-tie Competitions Dinner saw the presentation of awards across a variety of categories, with the most coveted accolade being the Frank Clement Memorial Trophy for Racing Driver of the Year.

As we closed for press, the name of the winner was still unknown, but several names had good reason to be in the frame. One is Competitions Captain Ben Eastick, recipient of the award in 2022 who claimed his third successive victory in the blue-riband Times Trophy Bentley scratch race at the Club's 75th annual BDC Silverstone race meeting in August.

Another is the evergreen Clive Morley, a double Racing Driver of the Year who has also enjoyed another competitive season including being the first BDC driver across the line in a special Le Mans Centenary Bentley race at the Le Mans Classic meeting. Clive's son Stuart has, as always,

shown impressive speed in whatever Bentley he has raced and has played a pivotal role in the development of the Blower Continuation Series car on behalf of Bentley Motors. And Oliver Llewellyn, like Stuart another former Racing Driver of the Year, has picked up trophies in his celebrated 3/8 Special.

Meanwhile, special mention must be made of the Getley sisters, Anna and Louisa (daughters of regular Bentley racer Ewen), newcomers who have impressed with their speed and skills. Hopefully their performances will help inspire a new generation of fellow young people, particularly women, to take up the sport. The Club's successful motorsport participants will also be recognised at the Club's yearly Competitions Day, to be held at the end of January, when drivers, budding racers, officials and marshals meet at the Clubhouse to discuss a plethora of Bentley racing matters.

Still on the subject of awards, we offer our hearty congratulations to Nick Harley whose splendid 1939 Derby 4¼ Sedan Coupe by Hooper earned the overall Bentley Trophy prize at Hampton Court's annual Concours

of Elegance in September. Runners-up awards were presented to Nick's fellow Club members James Clough, with his elegant 1961 S2 saloon, and Stuart Worthington of Phantom Motor Cars, with his pristine limited-edition 2001 Continental R Le Mans Edition. For James it was a second success at the Concours after he won the Bentley Trophy outright with his S2 in 2018.

While our Regions will be enjoying their Christmas parties during the festive season, celebrating in the traditional Bentley manner(!), the hard work continues behind the scenes confirming arrangements for events in 2024. Central to this, as ever, are the Club's two big summer occasions: the annual Concours and BDC Silverstone (slated for Saturday 10 August).

In addition, we have the now popular Talks Day at the Clubhouse (Saturday 6 April) featuring a trio of guest speakers, still to be confirmed, and complemented by the Wroxton Motor Show. Plus, the Club will be pushing out the boat to celebrate the centenary of Bentley's inaugural win in the Le Mans 24 Hours in 1924 – watch this space... ■ www.bdcl.org



New young racers Anna Getley (here, at BDC Silverstone) and sister Louisa performed with distinction during 2023 (image: Matt Welch)



Nick Harley's 1939 Derby 4¼ secured the Bentley Trophy at the 2023 Hampton Court Concours (image: Sara Boatwright)

Bentley

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While some follow in the tyre tracks of the iconic 'Bentley Boys', competing in races and rallies, others have taken pleasure watching their modern-day counterparts in the most recent GT3 race cars.

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SILVER SHADOW WORKSHOP

One of the most popular Rolls-Royce models made an excellent subject for an expert-led technical workshop run by the Club's East Midlands Section, at home in a city with so much Rolls-Royce heritage, Derby.

On Sunday 15 October, a bright and sunny day, visitors from all over the UK and Europe - including Denmark, Germany, Italy and Switzerland - gathered in Derby for a day of facts

and friendships, at our East Midlands Section's Silver Shadow Workshop.

Hosted by Mike and Christina Wild at their modern facility on the outskirts of Derby, there were five technical focuses that ran in parallel through

the day: bodywork, electrics, the hydraulic systems architecture, engine hydraulics and routine maintenance; each with a specialist tutor. There was opportunity for hands-on experience fitting seatbelts, as well as plenty of demonstrations by our team of experts.

There was also a mini-exhibition of engines, including a 6.75-litre Bentley version of the familiar V8, a Bentley Turbo V8 and the Rolls-Royce IOE straight-six that was used in the Vanden Plas Princess 4-litre R. These engines were borrowed by Reg White for the event.

The Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club hosts several regular technical workshops and seminars throughout the year, some at the Club's Headquarters - Hunt House in Paulerspury, Northamptonshire - and others run locally by Sections, like this one. All workshops are exclusive to RREC members and are available to book online.

Thinking of becoming a member of the RREC? Join online today via our website: www.rrec.org.uk





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FEATURE CAR
BENTLEY MK VI MULLINER 'LIGHTWEIGHT'

LIGHTNESS OF TOUCH

WORDS: NIGEL BOOTHMAN PHOTOS: GREGORY OWAIN





Some of the most popular coachbuilt bodies on the Bentley MkVI chassis were the advanced 'Lightweight' saloons by H.J. Mulliner. While their lightness may only have been relative, their individuality and character was never in doubt. Today, they're something of a bargain, too.

Say hello to LXU 595, also known as chassis B193HP, a Bentley Mk VI bodied to 'Lightweight' saloon design 7243 by H.J. Mulliner and delivered to Brooklands of Bond Street in February 1951. Here it acquired its London registration; the LXU series was introduced the same month the car was delivered. The first owner was due to be HW Carrington of Carrington & Dewhurst Ltd, a successful Lancashire-based manufacturer of woven rayon fabric. But poor Mr Carrington expired before he could take delivery and the car seems to have passed to another industrial concern, Bomford Pollard Ltd, apparently a subsidiary of Carrington's.

It's fun to imagine our car transporting forthright northern industrialists and their clients between the company's various sites in Rochdale, Bradford and elsewhere, but it's also intriguing to consider why they chose it in the first place. After all, the Standard Steel saloons were fine cars with an established image by 1951, and they were not inexpensive – nearly £3000 at launch in 1946 and just over £4000 by the time the R-type took over in 1952. That equates to eight new Austin A30s, three Jaguar Mk VIIIs or two Daimler Regencys. Yet even the most keenly-priced coachbuilt saloon Bentley was at least a third as much again as the Standard Steel offering.

Looking at the options from a present-day point of view makes it seem strange that anyone would pay so much more for a slightly different external appearance with no real changes to internal accommodation or luxury, performance, ride and handling, economy or any of the other factors we're supposed to consider when choosing a car. So we need to see things as the affluent

buyers of the early 1950s would have done. These people had spent their adult lives in an era when the best cars had coachbuilt bodies, usually with no option for a standardised factory body. Such customers were often traditionalists and would be as familiar with tailor-made suits and boots as they were with coachbuilt cars. It was, in other words, entirely normal to choose your favoured high-quality British marque and then place an order with a coachbuilder for the shape that appealed most to you. Yes, it cost more than the Standard Steel option, but one suspects most of the people who bought coachbuilt Mk VI Bentleys didn't consider anything else.

ABUNDANT OPTIONS

Our 'Lightweight', design 7243, was a popular choice. H.J. Mulliner clothed more Mk VI chassis than any other coachbuilder, though if you're not a Mk VI aficionado many of them require a second look to mark the differences from the Standard Steel model. Their best-seller, design 7059/C and the very similar 7122 accounted for 125 and 36 examples respectively, adding longer front wings and a rear quarterlight to the standard form, but not a lot more besides. Design 7220 was another strong-selling shape (64 were made), a more rakish form with a higher, longer tail. Our design, 7243, appeared on 41 Mk VI chassis and looked a generation younger than the alternatives, including the Standard Steel saloon. No surprise, then, that it lasted through R-type production as well, with another 34 examples produced.

In the flesh, it's perhaps a taller, more formal car than it appears in these photos. From the side, you could be forgiven for thinking it's a late 1950s »

FEATURE CAR
BENTLEY MK VI MULLINER 'LIGHTWEIGHT'



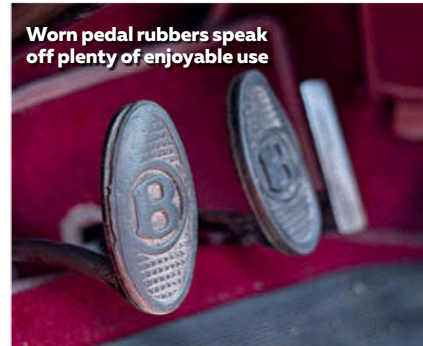
This model's best angle? Rear three-quarter is very graceful



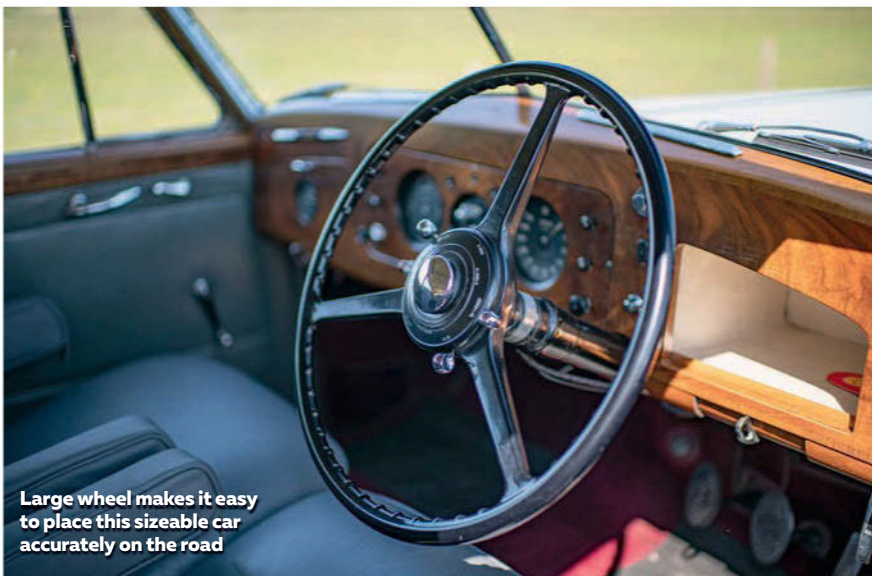
Main dash veneer has a dramatic grain pattern



Note two armrests per seat - almost throne like



Worn pedal rubbers speak off plenty of enjoyable use



Large wheel makes it easy to place this sizeable car accurately on the road

contemporary of the S-series saloon, but walk around the front and it's as though the high, rather narrow-looking nose seems to alter the proportions. The two-tone paint (not always a feature of this example, which has been all one colour at times in its past) lifts it nicely, helping to separate the airy glasshouse from the car's deep flanks. Those little swages rolling back from the top of each wheel arch are a good touch too - just like the speed lines some of us applied to a doodle of a fast car when we should have been paying attention at school. But why 'Lightweight'? Surely most coachbuilt bodies used aluminium panelling rather than steel, so what makes this one special?

The difference here is in what lies beneath the panelling. H.J. Mulliner had achieved success before the

MULLINER'S MISSION TO MODERNISE



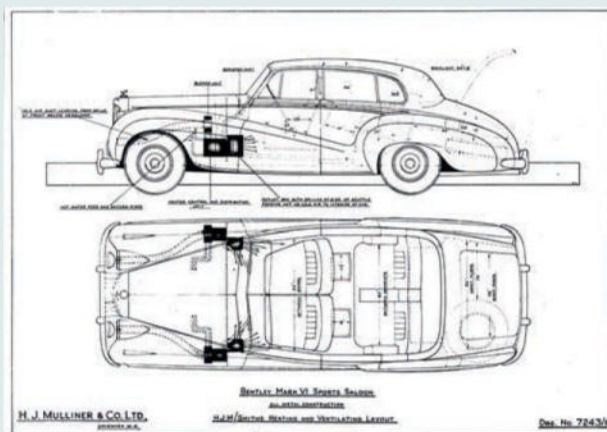
In an article written for the RREC *Bulletin* No 161, Arthur Talbot Johnstone, formerly a managing director of H J Mulliner, mentioned a perceived need by 1948 for modernised coachbuilding methods. It seems they knew Rolls-Royce were interested in producing a high-performance Bentley based on the pre-war Corniche, which of course became the R-type Continental, and which demanded a weight saving. Before that car took shape, Johnstone accompanied Mulliner's technical director Stanley Watts to Italy to visit Farina, Ghia and Bertone. They were impressed by Touring in Milan and considered licensing their Superleggera system of a steel tube frame with aluminium panels.

Instead, Watts and Johnstone decided a further improvement could be made by using aluminium for the supporting frame as well. They consulted British Aluminium who offered extrusions of an aluminium alloy called Reynolds Metal in various cross-sections, which led to the construction of three prototypes. These were what Johnstone described as a 'special two-door, sloping back design', given number 7210, one of which (B9EW) is pictured above. *The Autocar's* Motor Show report of 7th October 1949 describes this car as being framed in T-section aluminium with 16-gauge skin, weighing 350lb (159kg) less than the steel equivalent – presumably the standard saloon.

Later in the *Bulletin* piece, Johnstone writes: "This method of construction was then more generally adopted by H. J. Mulliner on models built from about

1952 onwards, being known as the 'lightweight' bodies.

So H.J. Mulliner's new six-light, four-door saloon took a significant step forward not only in style, but in structure. This was design 7243, marketed as the 'Lightweight' saloon and exhibited only a year after the coupé, at the 1950 Motor Show. Customer deliveries began in 1951. We're indebted to Tom Clarke for the photos and line drawing reproduced here; the car is the first Lightweight, ch B355GT, and the drawing is Mulliner's plan view and side elevation with the layout for the Smith's heating and ventilation system.



war with a fine three-way blend of beautiful styling, high craftsmanship and technical innovation. The last of these three manifested itself when peace came in an ambition to move away from traditional wood-framed bodies to something less labour intensive, lighter and more durable. They found an excellent way to achieve this, as detailed in the box-out above.

H.J. Mulliner built both the R-type Continental prototype, 'Olga', and production models using this method of construction, which entered production in 1952. Before that, they also employed the technique for design 7243; the car in our pictures was the fifth example built. We haven't found a record of the kerb weight for a Mk VI with this body, but we can make an educated guess. A Standard Steel saloon in 4¼-litre

form is 37cwt (4144lb or 1884kg) with five gallons of fuel aboard. The R-Type Continental was built to a target weight of 34cwt (3808lb or 1727kg). Our car can't be quite that svelte, thanks to the extra pair of doors, but then again, the 4½-litre R-Type started around 25kg heavier than the small-bore Mk VI, so perhaps we can hope for a 100kg saving over the Standard Steel saloon.

It's not transformative, but it's handy. After all, Rolls-Royce were obliged to increase the capacity of their inlet-over-exhaust straight-six from 4257cc to 4566cc and then 4887cc as coachwork grew and expectations increased, just as the Derby Bentley 4¼ and Rolls-Royce 25/30 needed their extra capacity in the 1930s. So trimming the weight of a passenger and his luggage off a saloon was not to be sniffed at, especially if the

bodywork would prove more durable. Here, we're in subjective territory without using tables of survivorship to compare between different coachbuilt models, but it feels as though a lot of these 7243 saloons have survived, doesn't it? There are always one or two for sale and they seem at least as familiar as the more numerous Mulliner four-door six-light saloons with their ash-framed construction.

FEELING THE BENEFIT

If there's one place the advantage of this weight loss should be felt, it's behind the wheel. This car is mechanically very fit, having only covered a few hundred miles since a huge spend seven or eight years ago, covering various aspects. So it »

FEATURE CAR BENTLEY MK VI MULLINER 'LIGHTWEIGHT'

Falling coachline at waist height
echoes wing and window line



idles well and generally feels very smooth, though that limited usage reveals itself in a slight stiffness that's apparent in a few of the controls, and the way it moves over poorer surfaces. But it's ever so comfortable, with lots of fore and aft adjustment in the broad, accommodating seats, which have the nice feature of an armrest in each side rather than relying on a door-mounted rest.

The handbrake is less awkward than most under-dash umbrella handbrakes and it releases easily, so away we go. The gearbox and clutch are lovely, bar a tiny bit of judder on take-up, and here the car's relative drop in mass from a steel-bodied model is instantly apparent, and perhaps helped by the lowish gearing. It's easy to forget that cars of this age were created before we had any motorway at all, and relaxed cruising at 70mph wasn't expected to be the norm. As a result, it starts to feel quite busy at 55mph and beyond, but that's mainly because there's so

little awareness of engine and driveline at lower speeds. Doubtless it would steam up the M6 to its old haunts in the industrial north at the speed limit without complaint. Around here, near Vintage & Prestige's Northampton premises, third is a useful go-anywhere gear that covers walking-speed crawls in traffic right up to a surge of acceleration onto a dual carriageway.

Simone Della Corte, V&P's showroom manager, had been using the car as his runabout in the days before we arrived for the photoshoot, and it's easy to see why. The car's condition – smart and sound without being the kind of concours candidate you'd fret about, combined with the comfortable, airy cabin and easy controls make it a charming option...even in a showroom full of far more glamorous and costly vehicles. The clap-hands format of the doors makes for better access to the rear seats than in a steel saloon, where the rather narrow door reveals an armrest you need to swerve on your

way in. Here, there's even a capacious boot; perhaps a need to carry visitors' luggage was another reason this body was chosen by its first owners.

A final dip into the hefty history folder reveals that this car passed from Bomford Pollard to the Yorkshire Engineering & Welding Co Ltd in 1961, following an engine overhaul at 41,000 miles. It then moved on to its first private owner, Stanley North, a bandleader in Bradford, who used it until 1975 before it spent a period off the road. In use again from 1981, it changed hands after North died in 1988, eventually settling between 1990 and 2004 with Godfrey King, then technical adviser to the RREC on post-war Bentleys. Adventures since then include some time in Sweden, when it enjoyed the heftiest 'D' service you're likely to encounter, costing SEK 330,000 (more than £30,000) and including a tow-bar devised by renowned model expert Norman Geeson – now removed. »



Split windscreen a rare old-fashioned touch on this design



Clap-hands door opening is not pillarless, but still gives good access

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1913 Rolls Royce Silver Ghost Colonial Open Drive Landaulette by Barker.
£685,000



1910 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost "Rois-Des-Belges" style tourer by Cadogan
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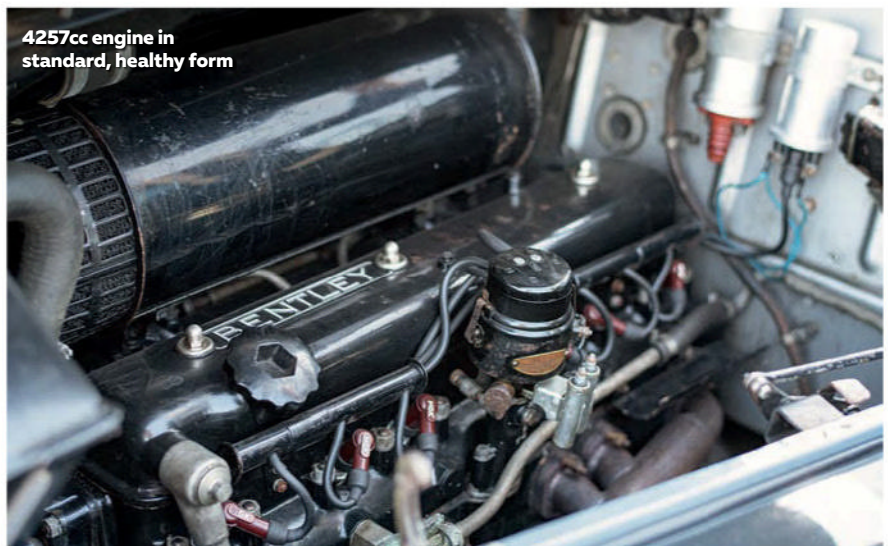
FEATURE CAR BENTLEY MK VI MULLINER 'LIGHTWEIGHT'

**A fast car in its day,
the old lady can still
pick up her skirts**



Bentley Mk VI saloons came in all sorts of shapes and have enjoyed all sorts of histories, but they have one thing in common – they tend to endure. This one, probably thanks to its forward-thinking Mulliner construction, has endured better than many despite a busy early life as a company car and a long, active history as a cherished classic. It's been fascinating to see what the extra £1000 or so over the 'normal' Mk VI saloon would buy in 1951, and rather tempting to note that such cars are no longer separated by the 35% price hike they represented when new. ■

THANKS TO: Vintage & Prestige, vandp.net, 07967 260673, Tom Clarke, Will Morrison, Marcus Dean



**4257cc engine in
standard, healthy form**



**An easier route in
and out for rear seat
passengers than in
Standard Steel saloon**

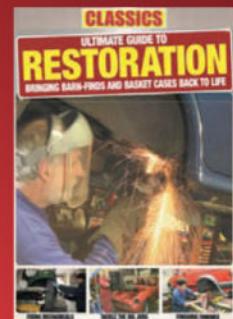
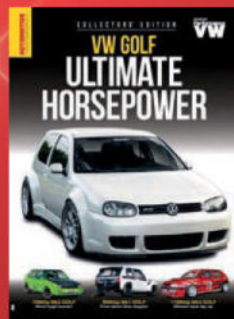
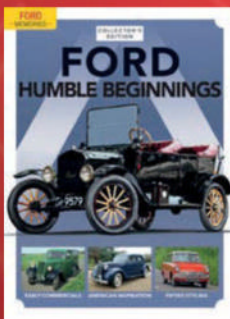
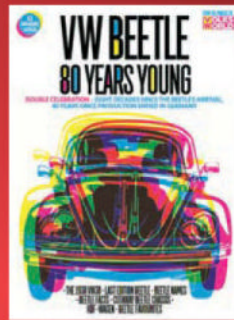


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TRIED, TESTED AND TRUE

We've all seen those reports in classic car magazines where a writer visits a dealer to assess a car for sale. Gabriel Bennett thought the Bentley Brooklands featured in our sister title *Classic Car Buyer* sounded so good, he took the plunge!

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY: GABRIEL BENNETT

I retired from secondary school teaching after 33 years and received a lump sum. I considered how I might invest it whilst deriving more enjoyment than seeing it as a bank balance – and earning what was in 2015 a pitifully low rate of interest! There was one obvious answer for a lifelong petrolhead... buy a classic Rolls-Royce or Bentley.

The following year, I read an article by Jack Grover in *Classic Car Buyer*, one of their 'Tried and Tested' features on a car I thought was very

attractive. I sallied forth to Colbrook Specialists near Peterborough, the nation's classic car capital! There I viewed and test drove a 1991 Bentley Eight in superb condition and a 1997 Bentley Brooklands in equally good condition, but with 140,000 on the clock. Knowing the strength of the venerable V8, this did not worry me, and the extra luxury and power of the light-pressure turbo won the day.

When new in 1997, my car was collected from the factory by her one and only previous owner, a fine art

dealer. He specified the mesh grille from the Bentley Eight, Mulliner chrome wheels, rear picnic tables, full door cappings of figured burr walnut (listed on the specification report amongst the non-standard features) and all finished off with VanDyke brown paint – an exclusive colour, then made to order only. It's a rare Brooklands LWB model, one of only 37 examples made in right-hand drive in 1997, and it lists some other oddities as special features: grab handles to both rear seats, and a polished fire extinguisher in the boot.

I had to get used to the enormous torque available from the 6.75 litre V8 with the light-pressure turbo. At first it took off like a raging bull, but I've learnt to 'feather' the throttle now and all is serene and gracious! Passengers often remark on the quality of detail in the finish of the interior, with its finely figured walnut picnic tables, pillar mounted reading lamps, chromium plated switches and gorgeous smelling hide seats. It's also very roomy in the back thanks to the extended wheelbase, which would soon come in handy.

WEDDING DUTY

Like many owners of these desirable cars, I have offered my services for special occasions. I have used her for my nephew's wedding and a friend's marriage too, but she is NOT a wedding hack. Later on, my Bentley was also used in an article about servicing costs on Rolls-Royce & Bentley cars in CCB. Yes, it costs more than a cheap »



Tried & tested

Jack Grover
Deputy editor
Bentley Brooklands LPT

Year: 1987 Price: £10,200
Mileage: 141,000
MOT: 11 months
Contact: M. Colbrook Operations
Broom, Cambridgeshire
Tel: 01753 633757
www.classiccars.com/uk



In 1992 Bentley rationalised the lower end of the range, and instead of two naturally-aspirated models, the 'basic' Eight and the Mulsanne S, there would be one, the Brooklands – the famous banished oval circuit in Surrey boomed large in the merge's history.

The Brooklands was identified by its painted radiator shell, front chin spoiler and slightly redesigned dashboard. The venerable 6.75-litre V8 engine received new cylinder heads, leading to a useful 20 per cent hike in power. But even this wasn't deemed enough to keep the entry-level Bentley as far ahead of its competition in the performance stakes as was deemed suitable and so for 1986 the Brooklands received the turbo-charged V8, but with the boost pressure reduced and without the same suspension settings as the 'proper' Turbo models. Called the Light Pressure Turbo (LPT), the driver of the blown Brooklands now had 300 horsepower at their command, not to mention 443lb/ft of torque at 2000rpm.

The lucky first-time buyer also had the extensive Bentley options list and Crew's craftsmen at their disposal, and the buyer of this Brooklands made full use of them. He was a fine arts dealer and used the car for regular trips into London, covering between 10,000 and 12,000 miles a year. He also, via a special order, had the Brooklands painted in this deep Van Dyke Brown colour. All the interior leather is in a complementary brown hide while the carpets and headlining are of fawn-coloured material. The original buyer (and sole owner) also specified the chromed radiator shell from the superseded Eight model, chromed five-spoke alloy wheels, an untrimmed steering wheel and, for some reason, asked for the high-level brake lamp to be deleted. He also opted to collect the car from the factory himself.

The Brooklands has covered over 140,000 miles since then, although since it boasts a full service history from a combination of main dealers and specialists (plus some recent brake work by Colbrook's) it doesn't really show it. There are a few spots of touched-up paint but that's to be extremely picky – for an 18-year old car with these miles on the clock it is superb, inside and out.

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automatic takes up the immense torque with a snappy-smooth action and the Brooklands glides along the roads with a suitable feeling of aloofness, its long-travel coil springs absorbing any imperfections totally and easily. And yet even without the 'full worked' suspension the Brooklands feels remarkably light-footed for a car of its size and bulk.

This is a massive car. You look out over the huge, amber-painted expanse of bonnet spread before you, with the Flying B mascot almost a speck in the distance, hovering up the white centre line of the road. And two Transit vans parked on opposite sides of a wide street suddenly get you bracing to a crawl and checking the wing mirrors to make sure you can fit them through the gap. But the Brooklands is so smooth, so quiet and takes every aspect of driving so completely in its stride that none of this causes any stress. You just sit there, being hugged in the seat's heated leather embrace and watch the scenery pass by with a curious detachment.

Until you reach a motorway. Having barely taken the Bentley over 40mph and 1800rpm for the best part of half an hour, it comes as a huge surprise when you squeeze the accelerator deep into the carpet, the gearbox drops a speed and, with a muted, almost far-off rumble the V8 dips deep into its huge mid-range torque supply, the turbo-charger howling up cold, East Angles air at the rate of nearly 40,000 litres per minute. It's all so refined

and effortless that it doesn't feel as if the car is doing the work. It's more like it's being picked up and pushed along from behind.

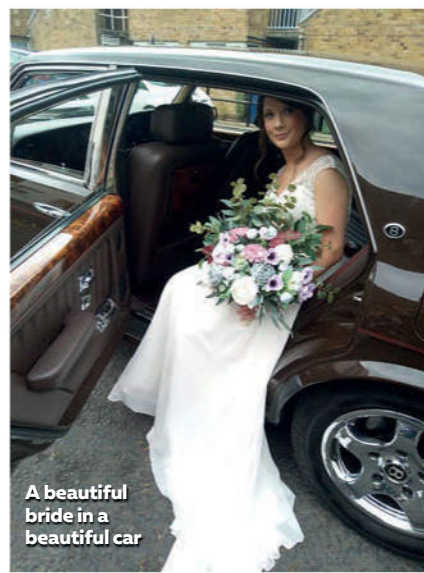
It seems very appropriate to be driving the Bentley alongside the East Coast Main Line near Peterborough, seeing as how W.O. Bentley began his career designing locomotives to pound along these tracks for the Great Northern Railway a century ago. Etienne Bugatti may have dismissed Bentley as 'the world's fastest tonner' but I'd say it's much more like being in control of a powerful railway engine, albeit one trimmed in burned walnut and leather hide and with a radio playing Rossini overtures.

VERDICT
Prices for 'Eighties Bentleys have been steadily rising over the past few years, mainly in regard to the Turbo versions. This 'junior Turbo', priced at just under £11,000, looks like an utter bargain. The high mileage, the fact that it's a Brooklands and the 'like it or loath it' colour keep the value relatively low but I can't see why that counts for much. It's an utterly sublime driving experience in a car that's in excellent condition and it still carries 'Bentley-ness'. **CCS**

ON THE ROAD
The Bentley drives as well as it looks too. The big V8 sits into action with a wuffy bark but from then on is virtually invincible – the climate control makes more noise. The four-speed GM

TECH SPEC

ENGINE:	6750cc
POWER:	300bhp
TOP SPEED:	140mph
0-60SEC:	7.9 secs
ECONOMY:	18mpg
GEARBOX:	4-sp auto



“At first it took off like a raging bull, but I've learnt to ‘feather’ the throttle now and all is serene and gracious!”

runabout, but perhaps less than you might fear. Colbrook continue to service and MoT her and she has cost me on average £500 a year. It is true that I keep the mileage down...at about 20mpg, driven gently, I have to. But what a glorious experience driving

her is. I have had no problems except a slight reluctance to engage reverse after months of standing but it is only a very temporary issue, having happened three times in seven years. Colbrook Specialists have been superb, tailoring the annual visit to my budget and

the car's needs. The conclusion which fits my experience is that they are affordable for maintenance although the fuel costs are horrendous. At least I've managed to do without garage storage – she sits in a car port under two fitted breathable cloth covers and



Now, can Gabriel get those ribbons to stay where they're supposed to go?



Extra legroom of Brooklands LWB is apparent here



Mighty 300bhp turbo's V8 rests serenely beneath plastic covers



Picnic tables - not often specified in the Bentley Brooklands

connected to an AA battery maintainer.

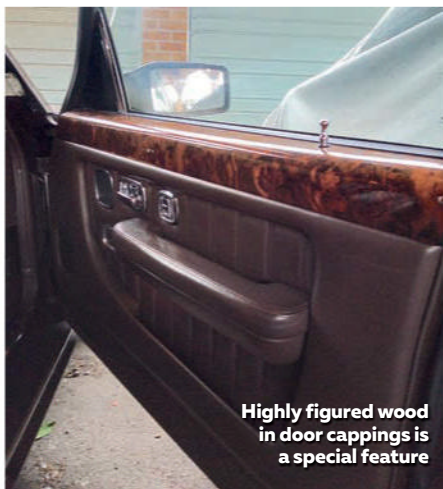
The craftsmanship is superb and merely sitting in the car makes you feel good. However, as a machine to drive (*look away now, Bentley fanatics! - Ed*) I would choose my Jaguar XJ8 every time. In the Bentley you are conscious of being in a huge metal box that takes up more than its fair share of the road. The Jag, on the other hand, fits like a glove. It is sometimes difficult to relax totally in the Brooklands, because you are guiding such a behemoth. Of course, the sense of occasion is unparalleled.

Problems to sort? There are a few tiny areas of electrolytic corrosion at the very top of the doors just below the windows. Being made of aluminium it is not rust but a curious 'crazy paving' pattern under the paintwork. It develops very slowly and will be dealt with as and when. Even Rolls-Royce and Bentley products corrode after 26 years!

For me, it is the perfect balance of the stateliness of what is a 50 year-old design by Fritz Feller with the more modern refinements of the last of the SZ range before the much more recently designed Arnage. I'm lucky that I was guided by Jack Grover and Colbrook to this particular car, and I don't regret one second. We'll never part! ■



Chocolate-coloured cabin is a delightful place to drive



Highly figured wood in door cappings is a special feature



Figuring and shine on the burr walnut veneers is superb

SHOW US YOUR PRIDE AND JOY

If you fancy seeing your own Rolls-Royce or Bentley within these pages, it couldn't be easier! We're interested in any model of any age – and even its condition isn't important, as we're just as keen to see ongoing projects as we are potential prize-winners. All you need to do is email us a small selection of

good quality jpeg images – and we'll do the rest. Within your email, don't forget to tell us a bit of history about your car, details of any work carried out, or perhaps your future plans for it. The more information, the better!

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size. The higher the resolution, the larger we can use your images. If you'd prefer to send non-digital photographs by post, that's also no problem. Simply write to: The Editor, *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver*, Kelsey Publishing Ltd, The Granary, Downs Court, Yalding Hill, Yalding, Kent ME18 6AL.

TECHNICAL GUIDE

WINTER SERVICE

Our new technical series continues with winter servicing, giving a glimpse into how the professionals tackle these jobs – and how you can do so at home, too. Our guide is Andy Thwaites of Rolls-Royce & Bentley parts specialists Flying Spares.

WORDS: ANDY THWAITES PHOTOS: FLYING SPARES

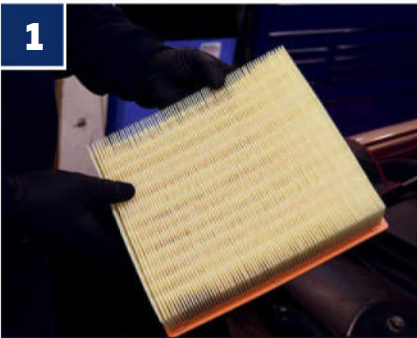
Welcome to the third of our *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* technical guides. For the first two – summer servicing and front brakes – we used our Rolls-Royce Silver Spirit II,

so this time it had to be a Bentley! We'll walk you through winter preparation tasks on our 2001 Arnage Red Label test car, starting with air and pollen filters, then spark plugs, hydraulic fluid and tyres, and finally screenwash and

coolant. We won't go into engine oil here as we covered that in the July/August issue. Please note that the Arnage evolved significantly over its production run, so make sure you get the right parts for your specific model.

AIR FILTER CHANGE

1



Preparation: purchase the correct products and put on PPE including overalls and gloves.

2



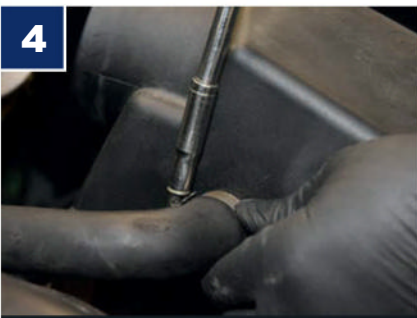
Locate the air filter assembly in the offside front (O/S/F) inner wing towards the headlight.

3



Remove the main hose between the air box and cold side of the turbo. It is retained by two jubilee clips.

4



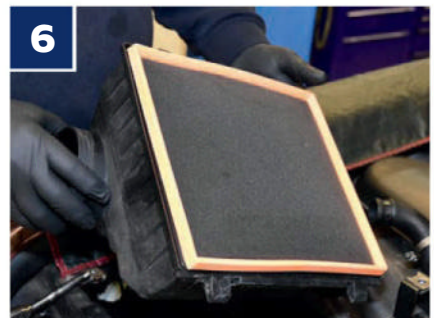
Once removed, there are two other breather hoses which can now be removed. These are also retained by jubilee clips.

5



The air box lid assembly can now be separated from the lower assembly, and retainer clips can be unclipped.

6



Remove the filter element and fit the new one. Then reverse the procedure to put everything back together.

Air filters are a low-cost but vital service item, preventing dirt and debris from entering the engine. They are prone to becoming very clogged, which hampers airflow and affects performance, so we recommend replacing them annually. Similarly, pollen filters – some people call them cabin filters – stop unwanted particles from entering the interior. Neither job is particularly difficult, and you'll definitely notice the difference if they haven't been changed for a while.

It's good practice to replace spark plugs regularly for preventative maintenance. If your car struggles to start, or misfires, or your engine light comes on, then they are prime suspect number two, after the battery. Then we're into essential checks – hydraulic fluid level, tyres, screenwash and coolant. On tyres, while the minimum legal level is 1.6mm, experts advise around 3mm for best traction. Remember the 20p

test – if the outer band of a 20p coin is still visible, you need new rubber.

Keeping antifreeze/coolant at the right level is another easy win. As well as altering the freezing point to prevent icing (which can lead to split hoses or pipe leaks), it also raises the boiling point to guard against overheating. Screenwash, you don't need me to tell you about...but don't run out!

Next time, we'll look at steering racks, pumps and hoses. In the meantime, the usual caveats apply. Please note that these articles are intended as general guidance only. For model-specific instructions please refer to your owner's manual. Finally, and I can't emphasise this enough: safety is paramount. Please use the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and dispose of waste products responsibly. Good luck and mind your head!

If you have any questions,

queries or tips please get in touch on 01455 292949 or email sales@flyingspares.co.uk

ABOUT ANDY

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



POLLEN FILTER CHANGE

7



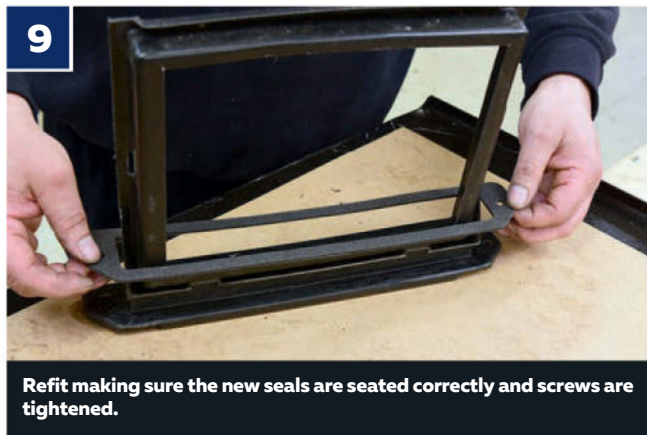
Remove the pollen filter cassette screws and carefully lift out of scuttle aperture. Apply pressure towards windscreen if necessary.

8



Unclip the pollen filter cassette from the pollen filter frame and replace the filter element.

9



Refit making sure the new seals are seated correctly and screws are tightened.

SPARK PLUG CHANGE



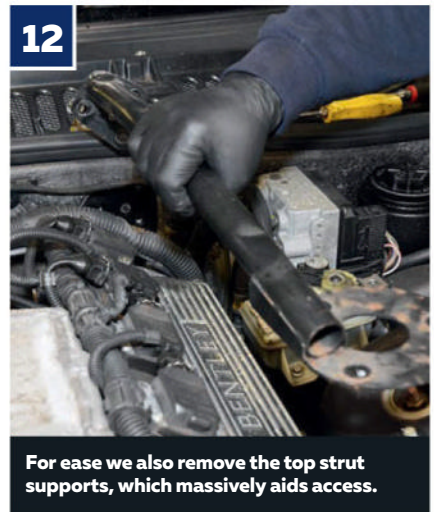
10

Put the bonnet in its service position by disconnecting bonnet struts to lift bonnet higher. Then place a bolt through threaded section of the hinge to secure safely.



11

Remove all the engine covers to gain access to the necessary areas - careful as they are often brittle due to age.



12

For ease we also remove the top strut supports, which massively aids access.



13

Working from front to back, remove all high tension leads from each spark plug. I find it easier to do one bank at a time.



14

Remove the spark plugs from the cylinder head ports. We use a universal joint (UJ) socket with a long extension bar.



15

Install new spark plugs! Use a feeler blade to check the distance between the centre and side electrodes. In this case 0.9mm.



16

Screw each spark plug into the thread by hand. Then torque tighten to between 25-30nm.



17

Refit the high tension leads to the plugs and put the strut supports back.



18

Start the engine. First time, no stuttering and all running smoothly?

HYDRAULIC FLUID CHECK

19



The central hydraulic fluid system reservoir is located in the inner O/S/F wing.

20



Unscrew the cap and you will see a mesh section. The fluid should be just touching the lower part of the gauze.

21



Top up with the correct grade hydraulic fluid as required.

TYRE TREADS & PRESSURES

22



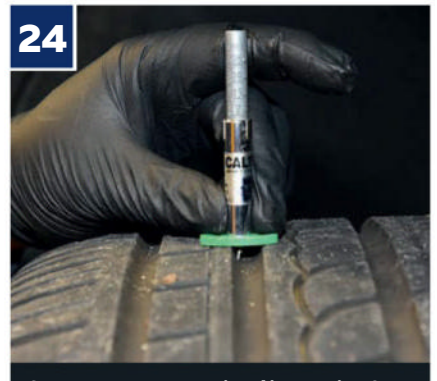
Use a tyre pressure gauge to check all four fitted tyres and don't forget the spare!

23



Pressures should be 30-33 PSI on the fronts and 32-40 PSI on the rears; the higher figure if carrying passengers or heavy loads.

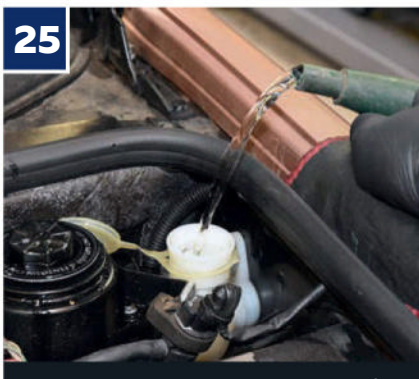
24



Conduct a thorough visual inspection for tread wear, bulges or cuts, ensuring no groove is under the 1.6mm legal limit.

SCREENWASH & COOLANT

25



In winter, a screenwash solution of 30% isopropyl and 70% water will protect down to approx. minus 10 degrees C.

26



For coolant, use an antifreeze testing tool to check the concentration level is between 45% and 55%.

27



Carefully refit and secure all the engine covers. Job done!

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NEW RUBBER, OLD FAILINGS

Still fighting a series of engine faults – or maladjustments – meant it was time to take a few easy wins by attending to other jobs on our tick-list

WORDS & PHOTOS: NIGEL BOOTHMAN

Surely it's time we got this car running as it should. Though we made the car start and run steadily enough soon after we acquired it in 2022, it never drove well, seeming terribly down on power or responsiveness. An attempted tuning session with our local Rolls-Royce & Bentley specialist, Ross McLeod of Mulsanne Motors in Dalkeith, near Edinburgh, established that nothing was too far from where it should be, but that the carburettor jets were seized. Serious doubts existed over the state of the fuel supply – a bad pump? Blocked lines? Sort these flaws and it should be fine.

This was enough to provoke a carburettor rebuild, which I performed myself with the kit available from Flying Spares. All seemed to go well enough, with clean components going back together with new jets, correct

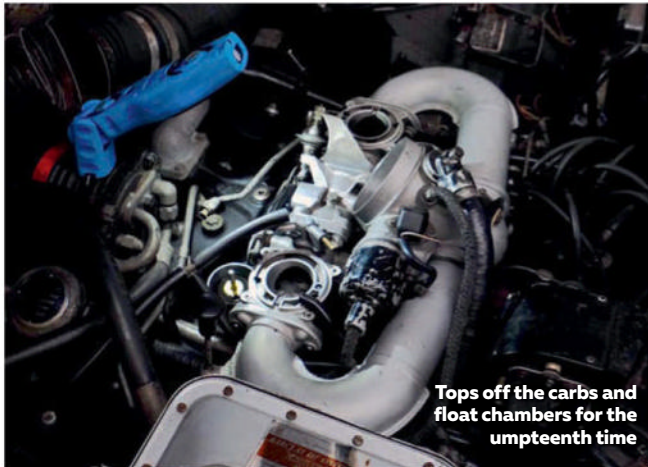
float-height settings and so forth. Yet back on the car, we couldn't get it to start. As recounted a couple of issues back, the plain washer that should sit on top of the inlet manifold fixing was sitting below it, causing a huge air leak – all my own fault. When back together as it should have been, it started straight away.

Stupidity over with, surely? Sadly not. Though starting well enough, the engine would die after a short period. After racking my brains and carefully checking through what I'd done, I eventually discovered that both of the two new cylindrical fuel filters in the float-bowl lids had been inserted the wrong way round, which more or less blocks fuel flow. The originals had been almost totally obscured in horrid crusty sediment so I was looking forward to seeing how the engine would run

with proper fuel flow. The mistake was maddening, but an easy fix. And at last, we had a car that started on the button, ran smoothly at higher revs with the automatic choke doing its thing, then dropped back to a smooth idle after a prod of the accelerator. Off we went for a triumphant drive. Or rather we didn't.

SUCCESS OR SULK?

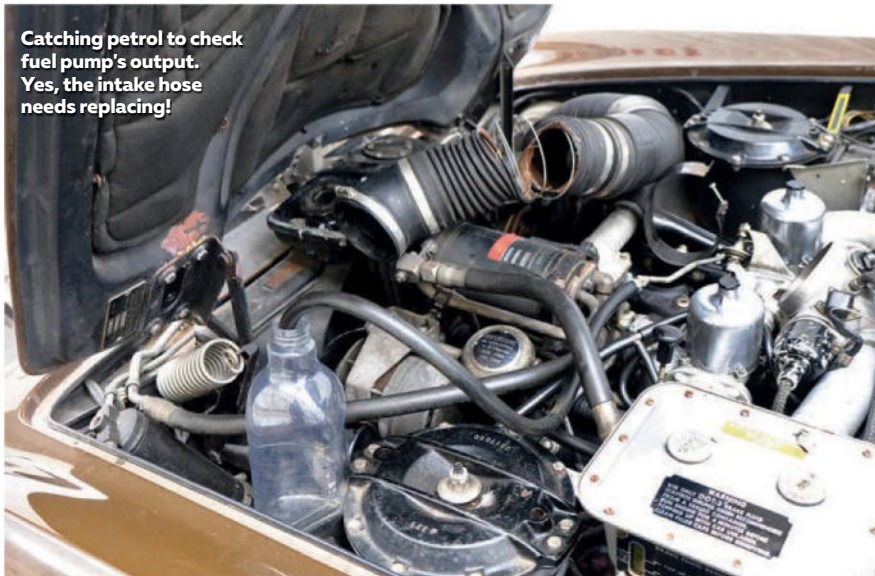
The car refused to pull hard enough to get out of second gear. When flooring the pedal we heard pops and spits from the engine. What on Earth was up with it? It sounded as though it was excessively lean to me, so I dropped the jet height slightly and played with the bypass screw on each carburettor, which made a positive difference, but not enough to be called a cure. And I couldn't see why this engine



Tops off the carbs and float chambers for the umpteenth time



Checking float fork setting with 11mm bar



Catching petrol to check fuel pump's output. Yes, the intake hose needs replacing!



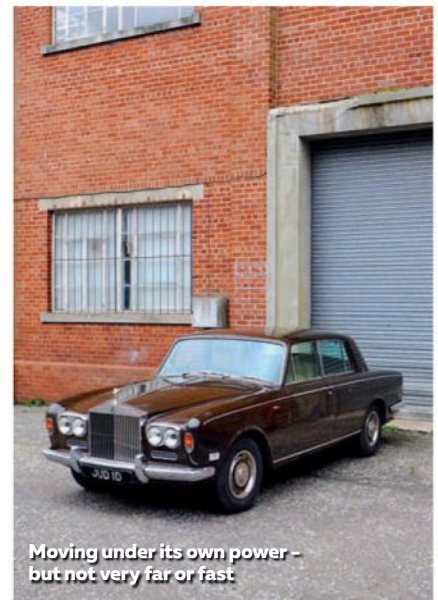
A blowtorch helped create the small right-angle spanner needed for jet adjustment

should need settings so far off the 'book' settings just to trundle along at 35mph. Something else is going on, and as we're convinced that the fuel pumps are shifting enough fuel (tested by running them into a large empty bottle for 25 seconds and seeing the right amount come through), it can't be the pumps, or blocked lines. Also, both the ignition timing and float height are where they're supposed to be, so it's time to put ourselves back in the hands of Ross McLeod and see if wiser heads can get to the bottom of it. By the time you read this, we should have made progress – at last.

So to other tasks. It had been many months since Vintage Tyres had supplied the lovely Avon radials that fit these earlier Silver Shadows without the flared wheel arches, but the car's lack of mobility had made it a pain to get

the wheels near a tyre machine. With the energy born of frustration, Findlay (my partner in this restoration) and I took a Friday afternoon off and drove the car out of the storage unit to park it where we had space to work around the car. With a set of four two-tonne axle stands (that's 2000kg capacity each, not as a team) and the excellent Rolls-Royce jack, we soon had the car up in the air and the wheels off. In they went to a crowded Volvo SUV, along with the supple new equivalents, and off we all drove to my pal (and Fin's father) John Wyatt's business, where there is a tyre machine and a wheel balancer.

John patiently showed me which levers to press to make the machine do its jobs, both removing old tyres and installing new ones. Soon enough, we had all four swapped and awaiting inflation. But several months of storing »



Moving under its own power – but not very far or fast

“Step One was just to get the door card off with the door locked shut. Possible?”

the tyres squashed together had left the beads pushed in near the tyre centre-line, so getting them to grip the edge of the rim, make an airtight seal and inflate was a bit of a trial. Hint – you have to shove one bead on and then hope it retains its grip while you push the wheel onto the other bead and inflate it at the same time. Definitely a two-man job. Then came the challenge of balancing them, which revealed that tall old-fashioned tyres can require a fair bit of weight to overcome variations in manufacture.

By the time we'd defeated all four wheels, it was dark. Re-fitting them was performed by headlamp light thrown from the Volvo, and for the

first time since we'd had the car, it was running on fresh, legal, factory-recommended tyres. Let's hope we can use them soon, winter or no winter!

CARD TRICK

While waiting for our slot in Ross's busy schedule I attempted to fix another annoyance. The driver's side passenger door lock had seized in the 'down' position and I was very reluctant to try and force it. I researched the problem by watching some helpful YouTube videos from Ronnie Shaver, a Californian Rolls-Royce specialist who has covered a huge number of issues on SY and SZ-generation cars – see

@rollsroycenut on YouTube. Seems the central-locking solenoid in each door that thumps the lock up and down can corrode internally and seize. Repair is by dismantling, cleaning and lubricating.

But that would be Step Two. Step One was just to get the door card off with the door locked shut. Possible? With care, I managed to lever off the two chromed plates covering fixing screws in the window switch and internal door handle, after removing the rear seat squab to give myself room. In doing so I found a pen that the Duke of Marlborough or one of his passengers must have borrowed...it's marked 'AMERICAN EMBASSY LONDON'! The final trick to removing a Silver Shadow's »



Getting to grips with the tyre machine to remove the old rubber



Paint inside rims was remarkable – wheels are in great condition



Tyre soap helps new rubber to slide over wheel rim



It's lucky modern cars' headlamps throw so much light



Rear seat squab removed to make it easier to tackle door

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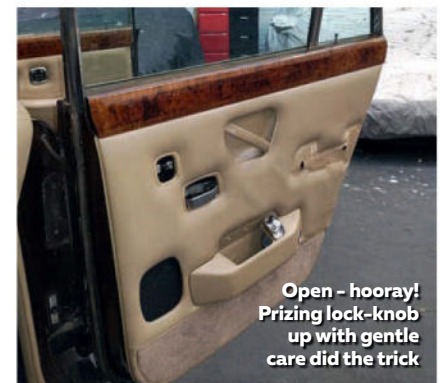
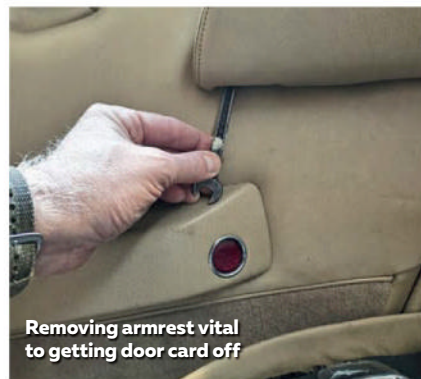
“I’ll also be able to remove the door capping – all the others must come off too – to refinish the lacquer, which is lifting off in some places”

rear door card is to reach up inside the armrest with a 2BA spanner (a slim 3/16 BSF will work) and remove two bolts. The second was nearly impossible, but I eventually got a look at it by rotating the armrest once the first bolt was out. So now it should all just come off, right?

Not quite. The edges of the door card are secured by plugs and need to be prized away from the door. It’s

hard to see how you’d do this with the door closed, though I think some rough treatment with a hooked trim removal tool might do it. Choosing the lesser of two evils, I decided I’d first try to lever up the door button using a plastic bar, protecting the wooden door capping with a pad. And guess what? It started to move with only a bit more pressure than I could exert with

my fingers. Corroded, but not solid. So the door opened and I could take the card off. At this point I ran out of time, but it means I’ll soon be able to peel back the black plastic water shield and get to the solenoid. I’ll also be able to remove the door capping – all the others must come off too – to refinish the lacquer, which is lifting off in some places. A busy December beckons. ■





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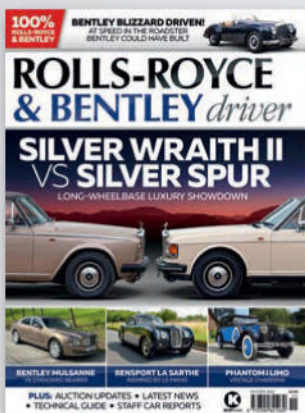
CATCH-UP TIME!



If you've missed out on some of the previous issues of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver*, don't worry. It couldn't be easier to grab some of our great back issues! Check out the sample list below and then head online to:

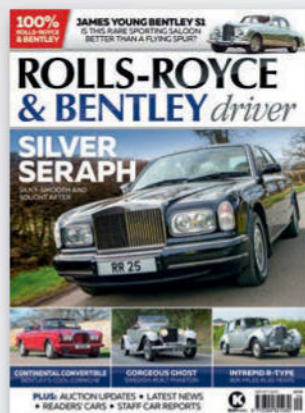
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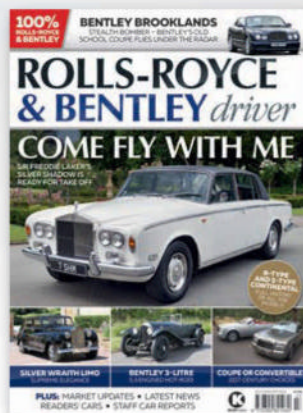
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- Silver Wraith II vs Silver Spur
 - Bentley Blizzard
 - Bentsport La Sarthe
 - Phantom I Barker Limo
- Bentley Mullanne
- Bentley S3 reunited with chauffeur



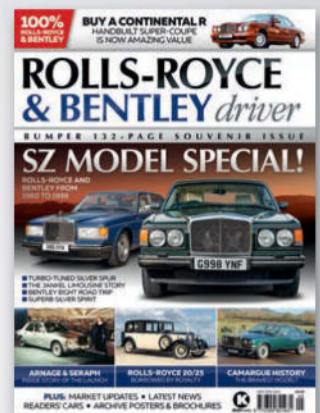
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- Bentley Continental Convertible
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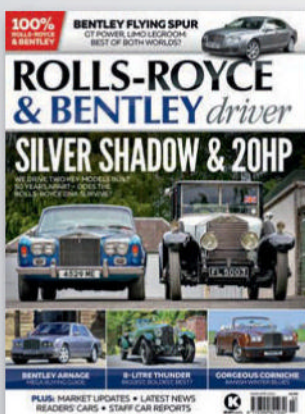
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 - Bentley 3/5.3-litre
- Phantom VII coupé & convertible
 - Silver Wraith Limousine
 - Bentley Brooklands coupé
- R-type & S-type Continental history



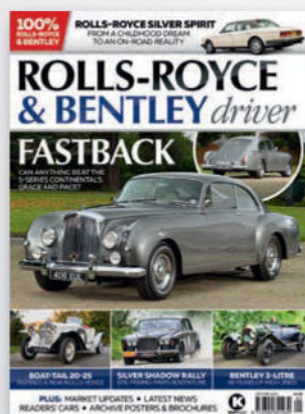
**MAY/
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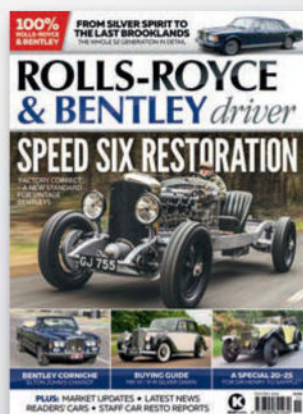
**MARCH/
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- Silver Shadow & 20hp compared
 - Arnage Buying Guide
 - Bentley 8-litre driven
 - Gorgeous Corniche
- Flying Spur: GT power, limo legroom
- Rolls-Royce 25/30 sports saloon



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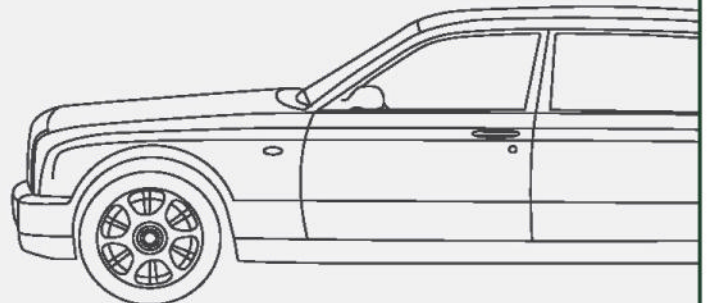
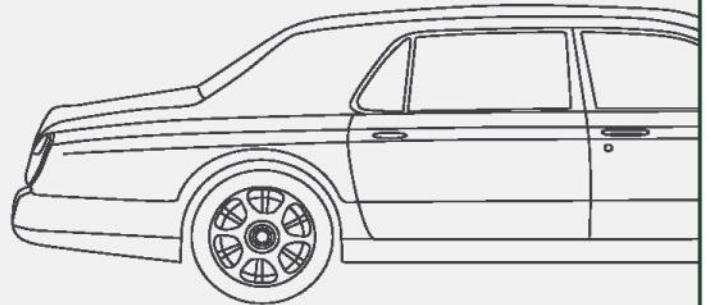
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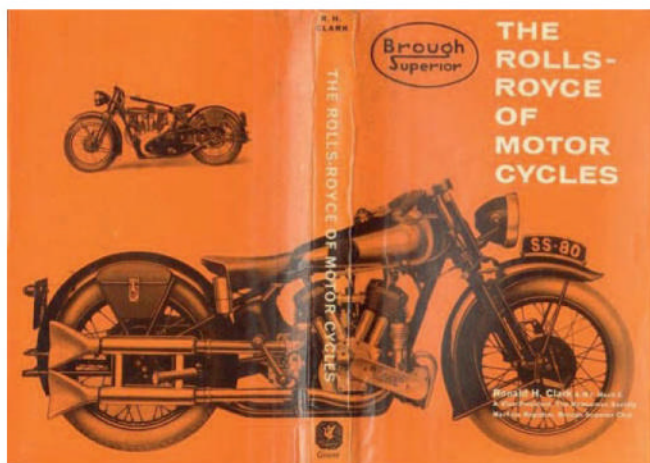
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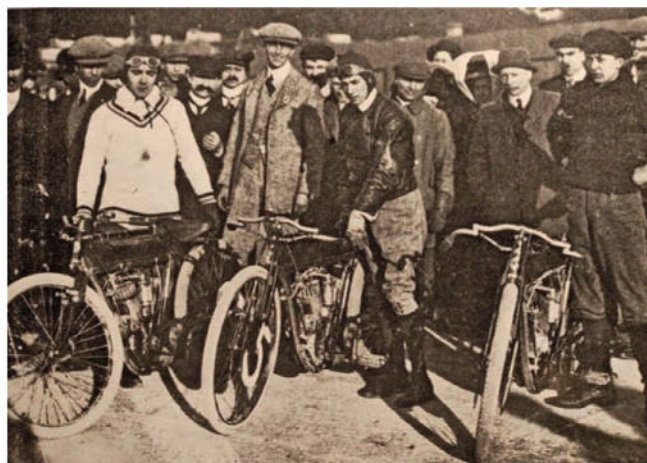


NIGEL BOOTHMAN

Neither Rolls-Royce nor Bentley ever produced a motorcycle, which allowed another marque to benefit from the comparison.



George Brough's bikes were widely regarded as such



W.O. in his cricket jumper, left, at the 1910 Brooklands TT

I was, as usual, looking at an online auction catalogue when I should have been working. I had employed a time-saving tactic and searched for the terms BENTLEY and ROLLS-ROYCE, but I was surprised when the latter search produced a motorcycle. It was, of course, a Brough Superior. The search had picked up the first line in the description: 'So often known as the Rolls-Royce of motorcycles...'

Comparisons of this sort have been used on everything from speedboats to sofa-beds, but this one has been particularly persistent. Coined, says the re-incarnated Brough's website, by a journalist working for *The Motor Cycle* in the 1920s, it's also claimed in various

places that George Brough used the phrase to advertise these large, powerful, well-engineered machines with Rolls-Royce's consent, granted after evaluating one of the bikes. Can anyone confirm this generous attitude?

It inspired me to look for a genuine Rolls-Royce motorcycle. Or even a one-off Royce, or a unique Rolls. No luck, so far. F.H. Royce's early engineering life was spent on the railways and as an electrical engineer, before his attempts to improve on feeble De Dion and Decauville cars led him down a four-wheeled path. Although a photo exists of the Hon. Charles Rolls on a Bollée motor tricycle, his twin obsessions were cars and aircraft, such as the Wright Flyer in which he lost his life.

Turn to Bentley, though, and you

find much more two-wheeled action. Walter Owen Bentley bought a primitive motorcycle when still an apprentice in 1907, then infected his brothers Arthur and Horace with the same enthusiasm and all three began to enter arduous long-distance trials. Arthur Bentley survived a comically gruelling John o' Groats to Land's End trip on his Triumph in 1908, setting a record for the fastest trip at that point – 41h 28m. Eventually W.O. gave serious thought to a career as a motorcycle racer instead of continuing his apprenticeship, like Royce, in the railway industry. There's a super photo of W.O. in what looks to be a white cricket jumper, pictured before the Tourist Trophy race at Brooklands in 1910 as a member of the three-man Indian team – they took a 1-2-3 finish, with W.O. in second.

Yet W.O. never seems to have been tempted to build motorcycles under his own name. You can find other people's imaginings of a Bentley two-wheeler on the internet, and there really is at least one firm producing motorcycles with Rolls-Royce engines: Marine Turbine Technologies and their Y2K Superbike, which uses a 420hp 250-C20B turboshaft engine from a helicopter. Sir Henry may have shuddered, but I suspect W.O. would have been intrigued. ■



R-R turbine-driven Y2K motorcycle will hit 237mph



Industrial designer Thomas Angebault imagined this two-wheeled Bentley EV concept

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