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Classic car challenges

Owning a classic vehicle can be an unpredictable business at the best of times. No matter how hard we try to consider every eventuality during the buying process, and no matter how well-maintained we keep our cars, they have a habit of creating problems (or challenges, if you're an optimist) on a regular basis. Few experiences, however, compare to that of Sam Skelton's, whose Bentley Mulsanne Turbo is introduced in this issue.

Sam edits one of our sister titles here at Kelsey Media, and has previously contributed to *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver*. And so, when he announced a few months back that he was looking for a Bentley Mulsanne (or a Silver Spirit if the price was right) that he could buy, work on and improve, we immediately decided it would make an interesting new series for the magazine. In each issue, we would cover the trials and tribulations of running a Mulsanne on a fairly tight budget, reporting over perhaps a twelve-month period. At least, that was the plan.

Sadly, however, what started out as the ideal project car – bought for a sensible sum and made roadworthy without spending a fortune – ended in near disaster. It was an experience that left Sam shocked but thankfully unhurt, although his Mulsanne wasn't so lucky. The full story starts on Page 50.

As ever, of course, this issue of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* covers a broad spread of models of all ages, from an in-depth Silver Seraph and Arnage buying guide through to Bentley MKVI, Silver Spirit and Phantom III feature cars. We also take a look at the Bentley Specials that proved so popular in the 1970s, we recall the career of David Plastow (the man responsible for rescuing Rolls-Royce's car division) and we hear about a reader's Silver Shadow that's been something of a TV star. Oh, and don't forget to catch up with the recollections of two former Rolls-Royce employees in our 'We Were There' series, starting on Page 92.

Before I sign off, though, I'd like to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who has been in touch over the last couple of months. *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* enjoys an incredible amount of feedback from its readers, for which we're very grateful. It's what makes the magazine truly yours.

Paul Guinness

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UNIQUE ROLLS-ROYCE COLLECTION TO BE SOLD BY BENTLEY



Bentley Motors is selling this Phantom IV State Landauette, as used by the Royal Family



The world-famous Phantom IV is expected to achieve between £1m and £2m

Bentley Motors has announced that a number of historic Rolls-Royces are to be sold at auction. The sale, due to take place at the Goodwood Revival on September 8th, includes the 1950 Phantom IV State Landauette – chassis number 4BP5 – that was used extensively by the Royal Family before moving to the RREC's Hunt House headquarters, where it has been on loan to the Sir Henry Royce Memorial Foundation for the last ten years.

The landauette bodywork was fitted by Hooper & Co, and the car became a well-known favourite of Her Majesty The Queen's. Measuring 19 feet and 10 inches (6.05 metres) bumper to bumper, and tipping the scales at 6045lb (2742kg), this one-off special can 'still propel its occupants in drawing room comfort at over 110 mph', according to the

RREC. The Phantom IV – which has been owned by Bentley Motors since 2000 – is being auctioned by Bonhams and is expected to make between £1m and £2m.

Also likely to attract strong bidding is the 1960 Rolls-Royce Phantom V 'High Roof' State Limousine that is being sold via the same Bonhams sale, estimated at between £1m and £1.5m. Six other Rolls-Royces from the Bentley Motors collection will also be offered, including a 2002 Corniche Convertible (officially the last Rolls-Royce ever built at Crewe), which is expected to make between £180,000 and £220,000, plus the last ever Silver Seraph produced – with just 128 miles recorded and an estimate of £70,000-100,000. A long-wheelbase Silver Seraph Park Ward (also from 2002) is expected to sell for £70,000-110,000, while the very last Corniche IV is likely to achieve up to £250,000. A 1985 Silver Spur Centenary (said to be the 100,000th Rolls-Royce built) carries an estimate of £80,000-100,000, while a 1979 Phantom VI (a car that has been used on occasions by the Royal Household) has the potential to make £400,000-600,000.

Malcolm Barber, co-chairman of Bonhams, commented: "This is a remarkable collection of cars, and one that beautifully illustrates the history of one of the most celebrated and prestigious companies in the world. Rolls-Royces have been present at countless historic events in recent British history, and the heritage fleet encapsulates the most significant models produced by the marque."

For further details of the forthcoming Bonhams sale at the Goodwood Revival, go to www.bonhams.com/auctions. ■

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What's your opinion of Bentley Motors' decision to sell eight significant Rolls-Royces from its heritage collection? Does it make sense, given the fact that Rolls-Royce is a separate marque – or perhaps you think Bentley should have retained the cars? We'd love to hear your views. Drop us an email (rrb.ed@kelsey.co.uk) and we'll publish a selection in the next issue.



The Phantom V State Limousine used by HM The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh could fetch up to £1.5m



Among the eight Rolls-Royces being sold by Bentley Motors is this 1979 Phantom VI



This 1995 Corniche IV is likely to make £200,000-250,000 at Goodwood



The very last Silver Seraph to roll out of Crewe carries an estimate of £70,000-100,000



EX-BARNATO BENTLEY HEADS FOR AUCTION

A 1929 Bentley 4½ Litre that was supplied brand new to three times Le Mans winner Captain Woolf Barnato is coming to market this autumn, courtesy of H&H Classics. This matching-numbers survivor (chassis NX3457) was originally fitted with open Vanden Plas four-seater coachwork but has since been rebodied in the style of a Le Mans car.

During its current ownership,

the Bentley has received plenty of mechanical fettling, apparently involving tens of thousands of pounds and hundreds of man hours. H&H has suggested an estimate of £750,000-850,000 for this special Bentley, which is due to be auctioned on October 17th at the Imperial War Museum, Duxford. For further details or to view the catalogue, go online to www.handh.co.uk.

BIGGER THAN EVER

This year's Lancaster Insurance Classic Motor Show – which takes place at the NEC, Birmingham on November 9-11th – looks set to be bigger than ever thanks to the addition of an extra hall, making it the world's largest gathering of classic car clubs. Around 300 clubs will be taking part, each one interpreting this year's show theme of 'Built to Last'.

The addition of forty extra clubs means that the 2018 show will see more than 3000 classic vehicles on display, with 650 specialist traders and dealers also taking part. Silverstone Auctions will be holding their usual NEC sale, while the Restoration Theatre and Discovery Live Stage are also sure to attract the crowds.



Tickets for the Classic Motor Show are on sale now, priced from £26.50 for adults and £16.50 for children (aged 5-15 years). For more information or to order online, go to www.necclassicmotorshow.com.



NEW FROM SC PARTS

SC Parts Group, a specialist in spares and accessories for classic British cars, has expanded its range of Rolls-Royce and Bentley offerings. The latest line-up includes this high-performance starter motor for all models of Silver Shadow and T-series, plus 1980-86 examples of the Silver Spirit.

The high-torque starter motor uses a powerful 1.5kw motor running through a reduction gearbox, turning the engine over faster, more powerfully and for longer. The starter motor is available from SC Parts Group for £327 plus delivery costs. Also available are alternators, ignition kits and brake pads for a range of Rolls-Royce and Bentley models, with full details available via www.scparts.co.uk.



CULLINAN ON TOUR

Essex-based marque specialist and official Rolls-Royce retailer P&A Wood held an invitation-only open evening at the beginning of July, giving customers a chance to see the all-new Cullinan up close – for one night only. Attendees were given a chance to try the Cullinan and to tour the P&A Wood showrooms and workshops, as well as sampling an array of tasty treats.

Rolls-Royce is reporting strong demand for the Cullinan, with no shortage of orders from customers around the world since the car's official unveiling in May. The first customer deliveries are due in early 2019.

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SPECIAL MULSANNE

Bentley's latest limited edition model – the Mulsanne W.O. Edition by Mulliner – has been announced, designed to pay homage to the founding father of the company. And uniquely, it even incorporates a genuine piece of Bentley history into each of the 100 examples that are due to be built.

Inside this special edition, a slice of

the original crankshaft taken from W.O. Bentley's personal 8 Litre car – the last model he designed for the company – will be set into the armrest, ensuring that each W.O. Edition by Mulliner has a direct connection with the past.

Other keys features include a colour-split interior cut from Heritage Hide (designed to reflect the patina of a

vintage Bentley), Beluga black wheels and a hand-finished cocktail cabinet. Onyx paintwork comes as standard, as well as special centenary badging (to commemorate Bentley's first 100 years) on the self-levelling wheel centres and door treadplates. Deliveries of the Mulsanne W.O. Edition by Mulliner are due to start early next year.

SYKES SKETCH SOLD ONLINE

Among the many lots in a recent online auction of automobilia hosted by H&H Classics was this original sketch of the Spirit of Ecstasy, signed by Charles Sykes. Although undated, the drawing was thought to be from 1910 and was being sold framed and glazed, roughly A5 in size.



The owner's father had apparently been the personal gardener and handyman of Charles Sykes, and the sketch had been in the same family ownership ever since. H&H described it as 'one of the most important pieces of Rolls-Royce ephemera to come to market in recent years', and suggested an estimate of up to £1000 for the sketch – which was being sold with no reserve.

In the end, however, this small but historically significant item sold for a top bid of £7875. If you're the proud new owner of the drawing, we'd love to hear from you via rrb.ed@kelsey.co.uk.

PRESLEY'S SILVER CLOUD ON SCREEN

Due for release in the UK on Friday, August 24th is *The King*, a brand new film that charts a fascinating musical trip across America's troubled past, framed alongside the ups and downs of the life of Elvis Presley – with Presley's 1963 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud being used throughout.



From Memphis to New York, Las Vegas and beyond, the journey traces the rise and fall of Elvis as a metaphor for the country he left behind. According to writer and director Eugene Jarecki, the film "paints a visionary portrait of the state of the American Dream and a penetrating look at how the hell we got here".

Presley's left-hand drive Silver Cloud III was built to his own specification on March 21st, 1963 and came complete with a Blaupunkt Koln radio, Firestone whitewall tyres, electric windows to all doors, a microphone and air conditioning, while a special centre rear armrest was ordered containing a writing pad, mirror and clothes brush.

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• THE TIME TO BUY •

ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER SERAPH AND BENTLEY ARNAGE

Replacing the long-running Silver Spirit family was this brace of new models, coinciding with major ownership changes for the two marques involved. We take a look at the pros and cons of Crewe's final Rolls-Royce saloon and its Bentley sibling

WORDS: PAUL GUINNESS PHOTOGRAPHY: KELSEY ARCHIVE & BENTLEY MOTORS





Designing a replacement for any long-running Rolls-Royce is arguably an unenviable task, given that the newcomer has to be one of the finest luxury cars in the world – one capable of appealing to traditionalists and new customers alike. Creating a Rolls-Royce saloon for the 21st century, however, was a particular challenge back in the 1990s, partly as it had to be so much more than ‘just’ a Rolls-Royce.

The previous decade had seen the revival of the Bentley marque after many years of stagnation, with the launch of the Silver Spirit-derived Mulsanne leading to the hugely admired Turbo R – the model that finally reinstated Bentley as a maker of high-performance luxury offerings. And so when Rolls-Royce began developing a successor to the ‘SZ’ range of cars, it had to consider the prominence of Bentley – and had to make decisions about just how different from its Rolls-Royce cousin that version should be.

In the end, the new Silver Seraph and Bentley Arnage of 1998 shared essentially the same bodysHELLS (following the trend of their predecessors), with their radiator grilles and bonnet pressings being the obvious differences. But it was under those bonnets where the contrasts were greatest, despite both cars featuring BMW-supplied powerplants

– a 5.4-litre V12 in the case of the Rolls-Royce, while the Bentley sported a 4.4-litre twin-turbo V8.

This was the first time that Rolls-Royce Motors had brought engines in from an outside supplier, a decision that met with raised eyebrows from many marque traditionalists; and yet it was a clever move, with the refinement of the V12 ideally suiting the Rolls-Royce (the marque’s first V12 since the Phantom III of the 1930s), while the allure of a turbocharged V8 was perfect for the performance-hungry Bentley fan. Unfortunately though, major changes at Crewe were about to affect the future direction of each marque, with the Silver Seraph being forced out of production after just four years.

CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP

Rolls-Royce Motors was created in 1973 when the car side of the business was de-merged from Rolls-Royce Ltd, the latter having been nationalised in 1971 after its financial collapse. Rolls-Royce as a motor manufacturer was now a separate entity, and in 1980 it was sold to Vickers. The company remained under Vickers control until 1998, when a deal was struck with Germany’s Volkswagen to pay £430m for the Crewe factory and all rights to the Spirit of Ecstasy, plus the shape of the Rolls-Royce radiator grille.

What it didn’t buy, however, were the rights to the Rolls-Royce name.

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

During those tense corporate discussions, Volkswagen feared that BMW might cease the crucial supply of engines, and therefore drew up plans to safeguard Bentley by reintroducing the former British-built V8 from the old Turbo R – launching what became known as the Arnage Red Label in October 1999. The BMW-powered version continued in production for a few more months, albeit now badged as the Arnage Green Label and sharing the newly strengthened bodysHELL dictated by the extra weight of the Red Label’s 6.75-litre powerplant.

The final Silver Seraph was built in 2002, in readiness for BMW’s official takeover of the marque in January of the following year – which saw Rolls-Royce Motor Cars (as it became known) opening its new headquarters »

THE TIME TO BUY SILVER SERAPH & ARNAGE



The Arnage T was the most powerful Bentley saloon of its era

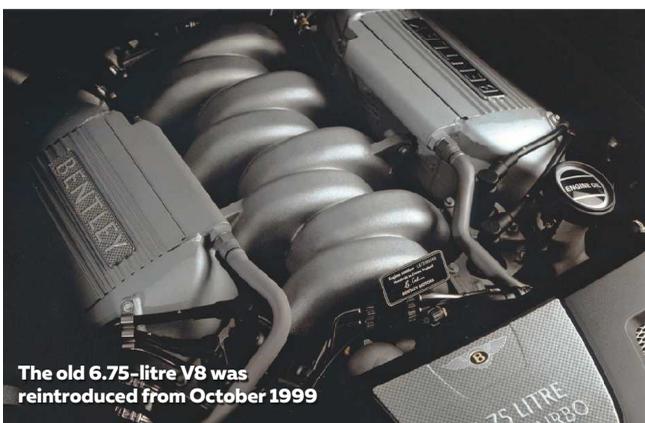
and assembly plant at Goodwood. VW kept the Arnage in production right through to 2009, however, carrying out numerous updates and introducing extra derivatives during that time.

CHOICE OF MODELS

If you prefer the less sporting image of a Rolls-Royce to its more driver-focused Bentley cousin, then the Silver Seraph makes a sound choice. It offers various advantages too, not least that of exclusivity; during just a four-year career, a mere 1570 examples of the Silver Seraph were sold worldwide, making it the most exclusive modern-classic Rolls-Royce saloon of today. The fact that its BMW-supplied V12 powerplant is ultra-reliable and capable of taking



The long-lived Bentley Arnage remained in production through to 2009



The old 6.75-litre V8 was reintroduced from October 1999



The Arnage's interior has a distinctly sporting style



The Silver Seraph employed BMW's 5.4-litre V12 powerplant

high mileages with ease (as long as it's maintained well) simply adds to the Silver Seraph's already strong case.

For many enthusiasts, however, it simply has to be a Bentley. There's an argument for opting for the twin-turbo BMW-powered original, as again this is an engine with a reputation for high-mileage reliability; but for many marque fans, a Bentley isn't a proper Bentley unless it's got the old 6.75-litre British-built V8 under the bonnet.

You certainly get more choice by opting for an Arnage, as Bentley carried out numerous improvements throughout its eleven-year career, adding extra models along the way. The extended-wheelbase Arnage RL (measuring 9.8 inches more than the standard model) arrived in 2001, bringing with it a thorough reworking of the old L-series engine – now featuring Bosch engine management and twin Garrett T3 turbochargers in place of the single T4. The Arnage R (to replace the Red Label) and more powerful Arnage T arrived in 2002, employing the same updated engine but with the T tuned to produce 450bhp (making it the most powerful

“The new Silver Seraph and Bentley Arnage shared essentially the same bodysHELLS, following the trend of their predecessors”

Bentley of its time) to the R's 399bhp.

Further changes came in 2007, when the turbochargers were again replaced (this time with low-inertia Mitsubishi units) and six-speed ZF automatic transmission was introduced. The engine's cubic capacity also marginally increased (up from 6749 to 6761cc), pushing Arnage R and T outputs to 454 and 493bhp respectively.

Limited edition models came along at various points during the Arnage's career, including the Le Mans (of which 153 were built) of 2001, the Diamond Series of 2006, and the Final Series of 2008 – with 150 promised by Bentley to mark the end of Arnage production early the following year.

BODYWORK ISSUES

The obvious advantage of buying a modern-classic Rolls-Royce or Bentley rather than a member of the

Silver Shadow or Silver Spirit families is the relative lack of rust issues. But that doesn't mean the Silver Seraph and Arnage are guaranteed to be corrosion-free; after all, the oldest cars are now twenty years old, and not all of them will have been cherished in more recent times.

It's not unknown for both models to suffer from rust around their sills and rear wheelarches, as well as in the rear suspension mount areas. Such issues will normally only affect early models, but you still need to be vigilant when giving any Silver Seraph or Arnage a check-over. Watch out for signs of bubbling paintwork, and be suspicious if you spy any relatively fresh-looking paint in localised areas.

Check all outer panels for any signs of rippling, and make sure that they line up perfectly – with neat shut lines and no 'proud' areas. These were the first Rolls-Royce and Bentley »

THE TIME TO BUY SILVER SERAPH & ARNAGE



The Silver Seraph's more traditional detailing sets it apart from the Arnage in terms of interior finish



monocoque saloons to have their bodyshells built in-house at Crewe rather than produced by an outside supplier; they were inevitably built to a high standard, which means that any issues two decades later are likely to be down to subsequent repair work.

The fairly tall and blunt front ends of these cars can lead to damage from road debris, so be on the lookout for signs of stone chips and damage to the (expensive to replace) radiator grille. And check all four corners for bumper scrapes or signs of respraying, as the sheer bulk of the Silver Seraph and Arnage makes them vulnerable to damage. You should also carefully examine each of the alloy wheels for

signs of peeling lacquer or damage caused by kerbside parking.

ENGINE AND TRANSMISSION

Whichever member of the Silver Seraph and Arnage family you're buying, make sure it comes with a full and detailed service history showing maintenance via main dealers and/or reputable marque specialists. Low-priced cars that lack evidence of on-time servicing are almost certain to be a false economy and will be more difficult to sell on at a later date.

The V12 engine in the Silver Seraph was shared with the E38-generation

BMW 750i, and enjoyed an excellent reputation for longevity. This normally-aspirated unit is inherently tough, as John Tupper of marque specialist IntroCar explained in an interview last year for *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver*: "The 5.4-litre V12 is bombproof. It's a very good engine." The BMW-supplied V8 used in the earliest Arnage is also a reliable unit, though as with any turbocharged model (twin-turbo in this instance) you need to ensure that the turbos themselves are in a healthy state. The earliest Arnage produced 349bhp when new, but relies on those twin turbochargers for its impressive performance.

Most Arnages you see for sale will

“This was the first time that engines had come from an outside supplier, a decision that met with raised eyebrows from marque traditionalists”



be powered by Bentley's long-running V8, reintroduced by the firm for the 2000 model year. Many enthusiasts prefer the driving style of these larger-engined versions, particularly as they brought with them a massive boost in torque (from 413 to 603lb.ft.) for dramatic mid-range acceleration.

The engine underwent major changes during the life of the Arnage, to such an extent that virtually nothing is interchangeable between a Red Label's powerplant and a later model. Whichever version of that Bentley V8 is in your Arnage, it will be capable of covering high mileages with ease, although early examples in particular have had head gasket issues, as IntroCar's John Tupper explained: "A big problem with the 6.75-litre V8 is that the head gaskets tend to fail at between 60,000 and 80,000 miles. A lot has to come out of the engine bay to do the job, and so you'll be looking at £4500-5000 in total. If you're looking at one, ask whether this work has been carried out."

Internal corrosion is rare, although

it's not unknown for overheating to be caused by snapped fan belts or leaking hoses. Make sure you listen out for 'knocking' pistons, a sign that the engine has previously overheated.

Whichever automatic transmission (five- or six-speed) is fitted, it should again be trouble-free when maintained well. Carry out the usual checks, making sure that it doesn't jump out of gear, that the changes up and down the 'box are fast and smooth, and that the kickdown facility works perfectly during mid-range acceleration.

RUNNING GEAR CHECKS

As with any car weighing the best part of two and a half tonnes, the suspension and brakes of a Silver Seraph and Arnage have a hard time – and on high-mileage cars, that can mean they're rather tired. Check for any undue clonks and knocks from the adaptive suspension, and make sure the car doesn't 'wallow' excessively when cornering – particularly on the Arnage, which came with firmer

suspension settings than the Silver Seraph to make it more of a driver's car.

If a Bentley in particular feels as though it's rolling and pitching when cornering at speed, you can assume there are problems with the suspension, the steering or both. The brakes have to work hard to bring such a hefty car to a halt, so check the state of the discs and pads to ensure you're not faced with an immediate bill – as a set of front discs and pads will set you back around the £500 mark, plus the cost of labour. Aside from normal wear, make sure the discs aren't corroded or warped, the latter being obvious via steering judder when braking from motorway-like speeds.

TRIM AND INTERIOR

Although the interiors of these cars are up to traditional Rolls-Royce and Bentley standards (aside from some disappointing ex-BMW plastic switches, of course), this doesn't mean they're immune from wear and tear – and that's when seriously»

THE TIME TO BUY SILVER SERAPH & ARNAGE



large bills can arise. Make sure that the high-grade leather used throughout is free of major damage, with no cracks or splits to spoil the overall condition. The appearance of creases can be improved dramatically via a leather renovation kit, but anything more severe will need the attention of a professional.

The same goes for the wood veneer, which should be in excellent condition and showing no signs of cracks in the lacquer or delamination; and you should carefully check the condition of the carpets (including in the boot), as wear isn't unknown on high-mileage examples. You also need to examine the headlining for damage and signs of sagging, as again this will be a horribly expensive job to have carried out by a professional.

WHAT TO PAY

Values of these cars vary widely, particularly when it comes to the Bentley – something that shouldn't

“The final Silver Seraph was built in 2002, in readiness for BMW’s official takeover of the marque in January of the following year”

come as a surprise given its lengthy production run. Prices start from less than £15,000 for a BMW-engined Arnage with a six-figure mileage, while closer to £20,000 should find you one that's seen less use and has a complete service history. Red Label cars (generally seen as more desirable by Bentley aficionados) start price-wise in the high teens, while £20-25,000 should find you a very well maintained example in good to excellent condition.

The later your Arnage, the more you'll be expected to pay for it – which explains why a car from 2007 or '08 that's seen very little use might carry a price tag of £55-60,000, while around half as much will buy you an Arnage R or T from around 2004 with 50-60,000 miles under its wheels.

Despite its much shorter career, the

Silver Seraph also has wide variations in terms of values, with exceptionally low-mileage late-model cars often advertised at £50-60,000. By comparison, an early example that's covered 80-100,000 miles (but which still comes with a full service history) can be picked up for as little as £20-25,000, with £30-35,000 buying one that's seen less use.

OUR VERDICT

Designed to replace the straight-lined Silver Spirit family two decades ago, the Silver Seraph and Arnage together, some welcome curves and a touch of modernity to the Rolls-Royce and Bentley range, albeit with a retro twist in terms of detailing. We think they've both aged rather well – and nowadays they offer a tempting alternative to an older classic from the Crewe line-up.

Your choice of model will depend on your personal preference when it comes to image and driving style, while in the case of the Arnage it will be influenced by whether you prefer Bentley over BMW power. In reality, however, either of the models featured here is capable of providing effortless motoring in a highly luxurious environment – and at a cost that looks particularly good value twenty years on from the Silver Seraph's and Arnage's eagerly-awaited launch. ■

Tech Specs	ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER SERAPH	BENTLEY ARNAGE T
Engine	5379cc V12	6749cc V8 twin-turbo
Power	322bhp @ 5000rpm	450bhp @ 4100rpm
Torque	361lb.ft. @ 3900rpm	645lb.ft. @ 3250rpm
Transmission	5-sp auto	5-sp auto
Top Speed	140mph	168mph
0-60mph	6.9 secs	5.5 secs
Suspension	Double-wishbone independent with adaptive damping	Double-wishbone independent with adaptive damping
Brakes	Ventilated discs all round	Ventilated discs all round
Weight	2400kg (5291lb)	2585kg (5699lb)

1975

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2002/02 Rolls Royce Silver Seraph Last of Line. Very rare, one of only 170. 2 owners, supplied by us 3 years ago. Only 58,000 miles with FSH. In Silver Tempest with St James coachlines. Electric sunroof and all Last of Line features. Interior in Light Grey, with Mulberry carpets. Immaculate. Only **£53,950**



2001 Model X Rolls Royce Silver Seraph. Finished in Royal Blue with whitewall tyres and privacy glass. Cotswold interior with French Navy piping and Walnut veneers including door inlays, with picnic tables. French Navy carpets piped in French Navy. Only 23,000 miles from new with FSH, known to ourselves **£55,995**



2000 X Bentley Arnage Red Label. Finished in Verdant Green with 18 inch alloys and Sandstone interior piped in Spruce Green, with Spruce carpets piped in Sandstone. Known to ourselves for over 8 years. Outstanding service history. Immaculate condition throughout..... **£22,950**



1998 R Bentley Turbo RT Limited Edition. One of only 250. Finished in unmarked Wildberry, with Magnolia interior piped in Mulberry and Mulberry carpets piped in Magnolia. Known to ourselves for last 12 years. Loved and cared for by a very fastidious customer. Superb and must be seen **£28,950**



1998 R Rolls Royce Silver Seraph. Finished in Royal Blue. Cotswold interior with French Navy piping and French Navy carpets piped in Cotswold. Modern sat nav, vanity mirrors, electric seats heated front and rear. Known to us for 15 years. Low mileage, FSH. Immaculate throughout..... **£36,750**



1992 K Rolls Royce Corniche Convertible Series III. Finished in Vermillion Blue with whitewall tyres and Cream interior piped in St James, with St James carpets piped in Magnolia and Walnut veneers. Only 14,000 miles with full history. Just amazing condition and will only go up in price. Only..... **£132,950**



1991 J Rolls Royce Silver Spur MK II Active Ride. Finished in Midnight Blue with whitewall tyres and Cream interior piped in French Navy, with Cream carpets. Electric rear seats and only 31,000 miles with FSH. Known to ourselves for last 10 years and maintained regardless of cost. An excellent investment. **£23,950**



1981 W Rolls Royce Silver Shadow Series II. Finished in traditional Georgian Silver with St James Red interior. This car has to be seen to be believed, with only 42,000 miles, over 20 services and a full MOT history. Also many invoices noting how the car was maintained regardless of cost. Unrepeatable at..... **£24,950**



1980 V Rolls Royce Silver Shadow II. Finished in Cardinal Red with whitewall tyres. The bodywork is completely unmarked throughout. Interior in Cream with St James carpets piped in Cream and Walnut veneers. Known to us for last 20 years and has a Full Service History. Immaculate throughout..... **£24,950**

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1954 Silver Dawn 4.9 Lovely car delivered to Australia new & back to UK in the 80's. Work done recently includes engine rebuild to 4.9 litres & too much more to list here! **£52,500**
1953 LHD Automatic Silver Dawn; **£49,500**



1928 20hp Park Ward 6 Light Limousine, Well known club car, one owner for 55 years! 80,000 miles over the last 30 years since restoration. Still drives beautifully and cruises well with overdrive; **£45,000**
Good choice of 20hp's



1920 Silver Ghost Very nicely re-bodied Tourer from the 1990s done to a high standard. Recently re-painted in a lovely shade of deep blue, with new hood, tonneau & excellent black leather & carpets **£185,000**



1951 Bentley Special Two Seat Roadster Fabulous rakish design professionally built to a very high standard - MKVI chassis with a Bentley T Type V8 & auto g/box - powerful & easy to drive; **£125,000**
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BOOK REVIEWS

We catch up on all the latest essential reading to arrive at
the *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* offices

BENTLEY MkVI (ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER WRAITH, SILVER DAWN & SILVER CLOUD, BENTLEY R-SERIES AND S-SERIES)

Author: Martyn Nutland

Publisher: Veloce Publishing
(www.veloce.co.uk)

ISBN No.: 978-1-8458-4068-6

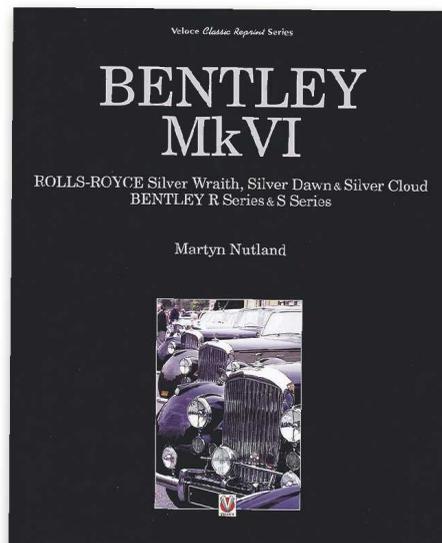
Price: £35.00

Part of the Classic Reprint series from Veloce is this 176-page hardback dedicated to the various Rolls-Royce and Bentley best-sellers of 1947-65. Its rather lengthy and certainly non-catchy title might not grab the reader's attention, but the content within certainly does – and is as relevant today as it was when the first edition of this hefty volume was published in 1997.

The Bentley MkVI itself obviously features heavily, with the in-depth text detailing every aspect of the car's design, development and production.

Period illustrations are also used throughout, helping to bring to life the story of this innovative post-war model and its importance to the Bentley marque. The subsequent R-Type and Rolls-Royce Silver Dawn derivative are equally well covered, as are the Bentley S-series and Silver Cloud that followed. The book also includes sections on Bentley specials, competition cars and coachbuilt models, as well as details of the chassis numbers used for each generation.

Particularly interesting, however, is the brief chapter entitled Views & Opinions, which explains how rival manufacturers began offering similar levels of refinement and luxury from the 1950s onwards, leading some motoring journalists to question whether Rolls-Royces and Bentleys were still the best cars in the world. Happily, however, motoring writer John Bolster disagreed when writing for *Autosport* magazine in August 1964: 'It would be trite to remark that



there is no other car like a Rolls-Royce. Sometimes one dares to wonder if foreign makes have at last surpassed the Rolls, but to drive one is to realise that the great machine is held higher in public esteem than ever it was.'

JOIN THE ADVENTURE: AN INTRODUCTION TO VINTAGE AND CLASSIC CAR RALLYING

Authors: Liz Wenman,
Heidi Winterbourne and Peter Hall

Publisher: Rally Round
(www.rallyround.co.uk)

ISBN No.: 978-1-5272-2248-9

Price: £9.50 (plus £2.75 p+p)

Aimed at newcomers to the world of classic and vintage rallying is this brand new title from Rally Round, the company founded by lifelong motorsport fan Liz Wenman and the name behind some of the world's most spectacular rallying adventures. Thanks to launch of this 112-page softback, Liz and her colleagues are able to explain to first-timers how to get involved.

Rally Round has so far organised rallies across four continents, including events in Bhutan, Burma (Myanmar) and Japan, as well as South America, New Zealand and, of course, throughout much of Europe. Whichever one of the UK's rally organisers you choose for your first classic adventure, however, you'll find plenty of useful information within this sensibly priced book.

It's a title featuring invaluable advice on how to get started in classic and vintage rallying, from deciding how far you want to travel (and how long you want to be away for) through to preparing your rally car, choosing and packing your essential spares and equipment, and understanding the different types of rallies staged worldwide.

There is also a section on

health and safety, as well as plenty of top tips for making your inaugural classic rally a success. If the idea of taking your classic Rolls-Royce or Bentley on a rallying adventure appeals to you, an essential first step is to spend less than a tenner on this information-packed book.





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MARKET WATCH

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



SILVER WRAITH FINDS A NEW HOME

When we called in on Kent-based Ghost Motor Works for our Specialist Visit feature in the last issue of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver*, we were particularly taken with this superbly restored Silver Wraith Sedan de Ville, built in 1946 by H.J. Mulliner. In recent years, an astonishing £100,000-

plus has been spent on restoring the car, which made its asking price of £85,000 seem perfectly realistic.

Chassis number WTA65 was delivered to H.J. Mulliner on November 26th, 1946, with the body type selected by the customer being design 7019. This was apparently number six of just 13 Silver Wraiths to have

this body fitted – and following its no-expense-spared restoration, is almost certainly the best of today's survivors. Its complete history file contains full details of the extensive renovation work of recent years (all carried out to the highest standards), as well as some earlier information and factory build sheets.

Chatting to Frankie Batchelor of Ghost Motor Works since our visit, we weren't surprised to hear that this beautifully presented Silver Wraith is now sold. If you're its lucky new owner, we'd love to hear from you! Drop us an email via rrb.ed@kelsey.co.uk.



EARLY MPW TWO-DOOR

Peterborough-based Colbrook Specialists usually has an interesting selection of classic Rolls-Royces and Bentleys for sale, one of its latest arrivals being this early example of a pre-Corniche two-door by Mulliner Park Ward. First registered in October 1967, this 73,000-mile car has had just four owners from new, with the third one keeping

it for an impressive 38 years.

Finished in Regal Red with a beige interior, PRC 808F underwent light bodywork restoration nine years ago, since when it has covered an average of just a thousand miles each year. It comes with its original handbook, factory build sheet records and full toolkit, as well as the original supplying dealer number plates and copies of various magazine

features in which it's appeared.

Colbrook Specialists has maintained this special Rolls-Royce (one of just 369 MPW two-door cars built with right-hand drive) for the last thirty years, and describes it as a 'special car looking for a special owner'. If you think that might be you, the asking price is £44,500. More details can be found via www.colbrookspecialists.co.uk.



SPARES OR REPAIR

There's rarely a shortage of down-at-heel Silver Spirits on the market, often advertised as spares cars or potential restoration projects... if you're feeling brave enough. And at the time of writing, this one's no exception – a 1983 car that's described by its vendor as being in 'quite poor condition' and suitable for spares, although apparently 'not unsaveable given the time'.

Based in Northern Ireland, the seller of the Silver Spirit explains in his online advert that he rescued the car from a garden and, having rebuilt the carburettor, managed to drive it on private land. He admits that 'some body repairs' are needed, and a quick glance at the various photographs he includes in his advert confirms the extent of these.

There's obvious rot in the front wings (particularly the front lower corners), the rear panel, around the



base of the rear screen and in other problem-prone areas. Inside the car, meanwhile, the leather looks to be in reasonable condition but the wood veneer has faded badly.

Some online research reveals that this Silver Spirit failed its last MoT in 2011, with a list of problems that included corrosion around the rear subframe mountings and rear suspension mounts, as well as issues with the



brakes, various lights and so on. And that was nearly seven years ago...

As this issue of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* goes to press, the asking price of the Silver Spirit is £2995 (which includes delivery to the UK or Ireland), although the vendor is open to offers. We've seen cheaper Silver Spirits in similar condition; but if you're feeling tempted, you can contact the Antrim-based seller on 07702 985246.

ONE OF FOUR BUILT

The concept of a Rolls-Royce shooting brake conversion is nothing new, but this particular example based around a 1959 Silver Cloud I is one of the rarest. Unveiled by coachbuilding specialist Harold Radford at that year's New York Motor Show, this impressively practical machine started out as a long-wheelbase saloon before being given the estate car treatment.

Just four of these superbly finished estate cars were produced, comprising two each on the standard and long-wheelbase Silver Cloud chassis. The lower portion of each car's bodywork remained largely

unaltered, while the glass area above the waistline extended upward and rearward to create an estate-style load area. The tailgate was horizontally split into two separate panels, with the rear screen opening upwards and the lower section hinging down.

This rare survivor is well-known in Rolls-Royce circles, having been restored to a concours-style standard. The Sand and Sable paintwork is complemented by tan-coloured leather, with impeccable attention to detail throughout. If you've £650,000 to spend on your next classic and you crave real exclusivity, call P&A Wood on 01371 870848 or go online to www.pa-wood.co.uk.



LOW-MILEAGE TURBO R

You can, of course, spend a great deal less than this example's £26,995 asking price on a perfectly presentable Bentley Turbo R – but with this being a late-model long-wheelbase car that's covered just 39,000 miles from new, it's easy to see why Rolls-Royce and Bentley specialist Stewart Walker Ltd has

given it that price tag.

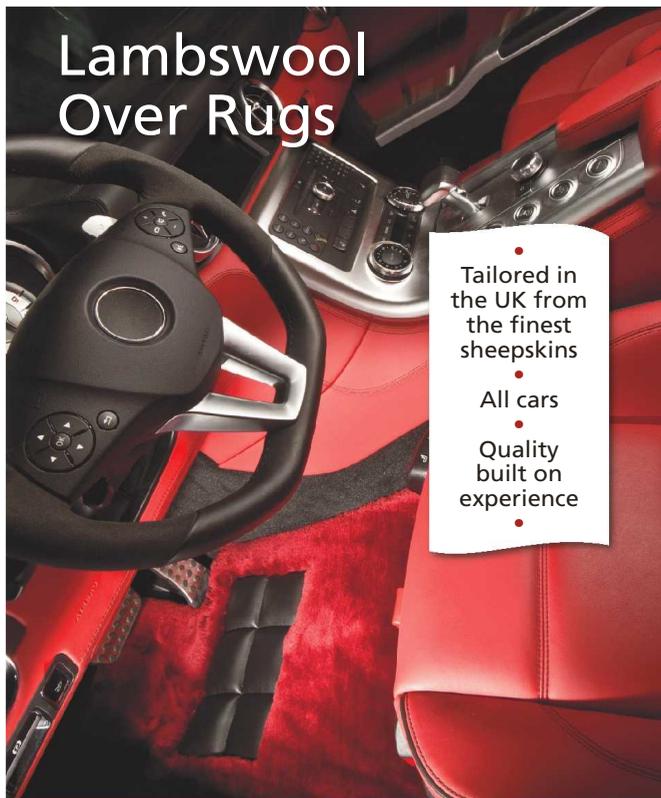
The factory-fresh Racing Green paintwork with original red coachlines is described as 'unblemished', while the Magnolia leather upholstery (piped in Spruce) and Conifer carpeting are also said to be in perfect condition. Stewart Walker explains more: 'This two-previous-owner car has

just been released from a family collection' and apparently shows 'no signs of wear or corrosion on the bodywork or underneath'.

Described as 'one of the finest for sale', this sounds like an interesting choice for any Turbo R aficionado seeking one of the ultimate examples. More details can be found via www.stewartwalkerltd.co.uk.



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POST-WAR SPLENDOUR

Back in 1949, this magnificent James Young-bodied Bentley MkVI would have been quite a head-turner – and now is once again, thanks to the restoration efforts of its current owner

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: DAVE BOWERS

In the post-war era of the late 1940s, a time of austerity and make do and mend, this Bentley MkVI – sporting coachbuilt bodywork by James Young – would have made quite an impression on the streets of Manchester. Built by Bentley in 1948, the rolling chassis (number B453CD) was delivered to James Young's Bromley-based factory the following January, when

the firm's 'C11' four-door coachwork was added, as specified by the Manchester-based engineering firm that was to be the car's first owner.

These days, the Bentley finds itself in the enthusiastic hands of John Wilson, who has previously owned and restored a number of desirable classics, including a Rolls-Royce Corniche, a brace of S-series Bentleys and an Alvis TD21 drophead coupé. It's the kind

of experience that proves invaluable when taking on any new restoration, although a coachbuilt Bentley can bring its own unique challenges.

"The razor-edged body that coachbuilder James Young provided is almost entirely of aluminium construction, but with a heavy-gauge steel bonnet and side panels," explains John. "The design is unusual for the time for not featuring any visible

sills or running boards, thanks to the doors being six inches deeper than you'd find on a factory-built MkVI. The aluminium bodywork caused me plenty of problems thanks to oxidisation and cracking in places, particularly along the swage lines of the wings, which called for specialist aluminium welding repairs. The body panels are largely of bolt-together construction, which at least made their removal relatively easy."

Once the body had been removed from the chassis, John began revealing the ash frame beneath: "This required a serious amount of work. One of the worst jobs involved making up a new A-post in ash by copying the original one that had rotted out. I managed to save the one on the other side, however, by splicing in a repair section."

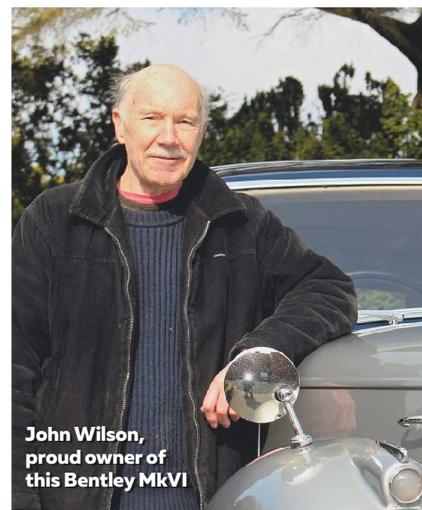
Another difficult job involved replacing the woodwork that supports the rear wheelarches, as well as dealing with rot to the wooden frame supporting the rear window aperture: "Considering this was a coachbuilt car, I was surprised by what I discovered. The rear window frame is notorious for leaking, but mine was so rotten that I could squeeze the wood and it would simply give way. The rear window was held in place by a piece of poorly fitted

half-inch beading, and the glass was secured with household putty! I made a replacement frame to secure the rear window, this time out of solid walnut."

MECHANICAL WORK

While work continued on the structure of the car (including replacing the corroded boot floor), John began taking a look at the state of the Bentley's mechanicals. This might have been a coachbuilt model, but it obviously employed the same running gear as a factory-built MkVI: "The brakes, steering and suspension – coils at the front, leaf springs at the rear – didn't require much attention," explains John. "Even the brake shoes were in good condition and were re-used."

The same went for the 4257cc six-cylinder sidevalve engine, which was running well when John bought the car: "Upon examining the valve gear and cylinder head, I found everything to be in good shape, as were the crank, mains and big-end bearings. The engine was full of gunge, however, and so it had to come out. I needed to re-ring the pistons, but then I couldn't find the right size of piston rings – the ones I looked at were either too wide or too narrow. I bought a set of slightly oversized rings and asked a



John Wilson, proud owner of this Bentley MkVI

local engineering firm to widen the piston grooves by 10 thou' so that the new rings could be fitted, which obviously saved me the trouble and expense of a new set of pistons."

With the valves then reground, John was happy with the end result: "The engine was spot on again." One of his biggest challenges, however, was replacing the car's worn clutch plate, something that proved to be a good deal more difficult than any of the engine work: "Changing the clutch plate wasn't easy, as it »



Seven decades on, the elegant lines of the James Young bodywork still look glorious

FEATURE CAR

BENTLEY MKVI JAMES YOUNG



The 4257cc six-cylinder engine now runs superbly once again

THE RESTORATION



The front A-pillars were particularly rotten on John Wilson's Bentley MkVI



The entire front end was removed for bodywork repairs with the engine out



The bodyshell was braced to ensure there were no problems with distortion



The engine received new piston rings, re-ground valves and other essential work



The mostly aluminium panels of this James Young body are bolted into position



The rear window frame was totally rotten, which meant making an exact replica

proved to be impossible to get at the gearbox in the normal way by going underneath the car. An old Rolls-Royce engineer suggested to me that the best way was to get the engine and gearbox out as a whole. But as there were so many mechanical linkages getting in the way – for the hand and foot controls, fuel lines and other connections – that needed to be undone in the engine bay, I decided it would be easier to remove the front seats and the front floor panel in order to gain access to the gearbox.”

One concession to modernity that John always insists on is the fitment of an electronic fuel pump, having been let down by the mechanical type numerous times in the past. As he drove me to our photo shoot destination, he explained how the Bentley is only happy when running rich: “The engine needs a very rich fuel mixture, although this wouldn’t have been much of an issue with an expensive car like this when new. When I tried to run on a weaker mixture, the engine didn’t like this at all. Annoyingly, the adjuster screw on the twin SU HD6 carburettors is underneath the carb body, unlike the adjusters on my Bentley S2 and S3 that are so easy to access.”

COSMETIC ATTENTION

By the time John had the Bentley ready for its long-awaited respray, he was already three and a half years into the project – but at last he could see the finish line ahead. The car’s new paintwork was entrusted to Paul Irving, of Irv’s VW Restorations in Barrow-in-Furness, someone that specialises in VW camper vans but also has experience of a wide range of classics. The end result speaks for itself, with the excellent finish being complemented by bumper-to-bumper re-chroming courtesy of Coventry-based Marque Restore.

When it came to the interior, John chose to have the seats reupholstered in the same colour and texture of leather as that supplied by James Young: “Although the condition of the seats didn’t look bad in the photographs that I saw before I bought the car, I decided it was worthwhile having the work done, with CJ Auto Trim of Preston doing an excellent job for me.”

The wood veneer dashboard was also suffering, with sections of



The woodwork has been fully restored using European Walnut veneer



CJ Auto Trim of Preston did an excellent job of reupholstering the seats

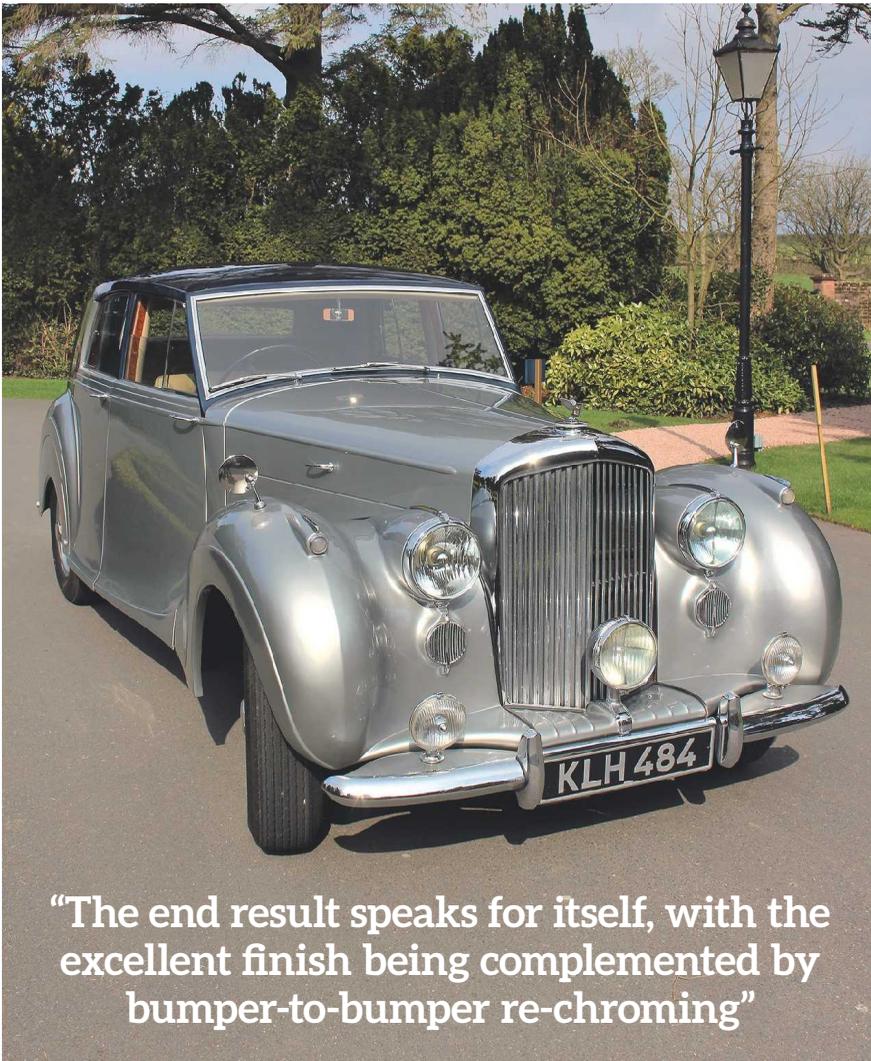
“Once the body had been removed from the chassis, John began revealing the ash frame beneath”

veneer either missing or falling away. Each piece was carefully removed and replaced with European Walnut veneer and polished to a fine gloss by classic car trim specialist Chapman and Cliff. John's extensive contacts in the Rolls-Royce and Bentley world then furnished a replacement Smiths speedometer, as the one that the car came with was badly marked; and although the wind-up dashboard clock had gone missing, he managed to procure an electrical one, once fitted to a factory-bodied Bentley MkVI: "I was very glad to find this clock, as locating a wind-up one would have been very expensive. I did, however, check that the clock face was exactly the same in both versions."

With the Bentley finally complete and back on the road, how does proud owner John rate the driving experience? "The car has very good brakes, hydraulic at the front and »



FEATURE CAR BENTLEY MKVI JAMES YOUNG



“The end result speaks for itself, with the excellent finish being complemented by bumper-to-bumper re-chroming”

mechanical at the back, and I've had no problem setting them up. They can't compare with modern cars, of course, but they're not bad at all. The gearchange being on the right-hand side, next to the driver's door, does take some getting used to, but you soon adapt to working the gears without really thinking about what you're doing. The handbook advises starting off in second, which you can do most of the time as first is really just for hill starts. And there's so much torque from the engine, you can keep it in top gear even on long, steep inclines once you're on the move.”

Although this wasn't a particularly large car by Bentley standards, a James Young-bodied MkVI was more likely to have a chauffeur at the wheel than an owner-driver when new, which explains why the space behind the steering wheel is fairly restricted, with roominess and comfort being reserved for occupants in the rear. Nevertheless, John finds it perfectly adequate – and reports that a six-foot-tall friend of his can drive the Bentley without difficulty.

The MkVI also lacks power-assisted steering, of course, although John doesn't find this to be a particular chore on most journeys: “All in all, it's a very nice car to drive on the open road. You just tend to avoid any particularly tight spots thanks to the absence of power steering, as it takes a bit of muscle to get this car going where you want it to go at low speed.” ■

THE JAMES YOUNG STORY

Having taken over Bromley-based J.K. Hunter in 1863, James Young was a well-established carriage maker well before the arrival of the motor car. The company's first order for a motor body came in 1908, with the creation of a one-off design for a local MP, based around a Wolseley chassis. The first James Young body built upon a Rolls-Royce chassis was delivered in 1912.

James Young switched to building lorries, armoured cars and ambulances throughout much of World War I, with the eventual cessation of hostilities seeing the firm focusing on Rolls-Royce chassis for private clients, creating bespoke designs based around models like the Phantom II and III, 20/25 and 25/30. The firm survived the worldwide depression of the 1930s, but was later acquired by Jack Barclay Limited, the London-based Rolls-Royce and Bentley dealership.

The onset of World War II saw the company switch to manufacturing aircraft parts, finally reverting to car bodies in the post-war years – achieving success with its own variations on the Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud and Phantom



V theme. James Young's involvement with Rolls-Royce diminished in the era of the monocoque-bodied Silver Shadow, however, as the idea of a separate chassis fell out of favour. It did, however, launch its own two-door version of the Silver Shadow, of which just 35 examples (plus 15 of the Bentley T-series) were built during 1966 and '67.

Bright news for older cars

Older Rolls and Bentley cars can be challenging to drive in modern traffic conditions. The main issue is one of visibility and the failure of other road users to understand outmoded methods of signalling. Modern cars have brighter lights and sharper indicator systems and motorists see what they expect to see, or in this case, don't.

Better Car Lighting of Warwickshire have been busy developing neat and invisible solutions to make these cars safe and convenient to use in modern traffic. At the front, special replacement LED bulbs have been developed to give white sidelights but change to



orange for indicating. These are a straight swap for the originals. If the current bulbs are single circuit, alternative bulbholders can be fitted to make use of these new bulbs.



The bulbs in semaphore arms can be upgraded to bright orange flashing ones, to make them useful instead of decorative. At the rear of early cars, the tail and brake lights are often very dim and again, the lack of orange flashing indicators can be a safety issue. Better Car Lighting can help here too. Most of the usual suspects



have conversions available which not only give brighter tail and brake lights, but also have orange flashing indicators which shine through the red lens.

All models are catered for, and as these upgrades are designed in-house, tech support is always available.

All of the other lights, including dashboards, interior, etc. can be upgraded and a great deal of equipment designed to make these cars safer and more comfortable is available.

For more details, visit www.bettercarlighting.co.uk or call 0121 773 7000



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PERSONAL CHOICE

Here at *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver*, we invite readers to share photographs and stories of their much-loved cars. Check out this latest arrival...

1967 ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER SHADOW

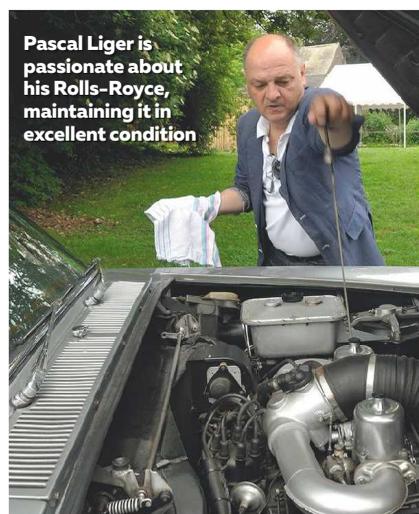
OWNER: PASCAL LIGER

Ask anyone what the most filmed Rolls-Royce of all time is, and you're likely to get a variety of different answers. So many Rolls-Royces have appeared in movies and on TV over the years, it's hard to decide which one is potentially the most famous. For me, however, it has to be chassis number SRH2971 – my very own Silver Shadow, a car that has appeared in an amazing variety of films and programmes since it first emerged from Crewe in 1967.

I'm now aged 54, but as a young boy I was in awe of the Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow. The idea of owning such a car was a dream of mine from the age of about 11, and it was an ambition that grew stronger over the years. I remember watching classic British TV series that

would be released on French television in the 1970s, shouting out every time I managed to spot a Silver Shadow. I knew that one day I would buy one of my own. My father even took me to the nearby Paris Motor Show, where I stood staring at the cars on the Rolls-Royce and Bentley stand. I was enthralled.

Fast-forward to 2012, when I spotted the car you see here advertised by a dealer in Kent. My decision to buy a Silver Shadow saw me travelling to the UK, where I knew I'd find a better selection than in my home country of France. The specialist that I visited had more than fifty Rolls-Royces in his showroom, the first time I'd ever seen so many together. It was a fabulous experience and, of course, I felt like



Pascal Liger is passionate about his Rolls-Royce, maintaining it in excellent condition



This 1967 Silver Shadow is now in France, owned by a lifelong enthusiast of the marque



The right-hand drive Rolls-Royce looks at home against this typically French backdrop

a young boy in a toy shop. Just the one Silver Shadow was available, however, with little known about its history by the dealer. All he could tell me was that the mileage was correct (going by its past MoTs) and that the previous owner had been a wedding car company based in Portsmouth.

I proudly drove the Silver Shadow back to France (via the Portsmouth to St Malo ferry) and immediately joined the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club, asking if it could provide me with any information on my newly acquired car. I provided the club with the chassis number, and a few days later a file arrived from its incredible

archive department. The file contained photocopies of invoices and paperwork dating back to the car's delivery date in October 1967 right through to the 50,000-mile mark, fifteen years later.

I learned that the car had been delivered to Robert B. Massey's dealership in Market Weighton, East Yorkshire. It was used as a demonstrator model before being sold to an Edinburgh-based builder in March 1968. The file also contained a black and white photograph of the Silver Shadow, together with an insurance paper mentioning the cost of some repairs, on which was written 'Insured

by MGM British Studios'. And it was this information that encouraged me to find out more about the car's past.

HISTORY LESSON

I have since found out that the original registration number was MWF 435F, which was changed to OPH 2 in the 1970s and was swapped several more times in the ensuing years. If you look closely at the front, you'll notice that the sidelights on the wings aren't originals; they were added later to make the car look newer, as Rolls-Royce only fitted those from around 1971.

In the weeks that followed, I discovered that from September 1968 the car was owned by Kingsbury Motors of London, a large rental company that was popular in the 1960s, hiring out vehicles – including police cars, military vehicle and hearses – for action films. My research shows that the company closed at the end of 1982, at which point the Silver Shadow was sold to Quality Cars Garage of Exmouth, Devon.

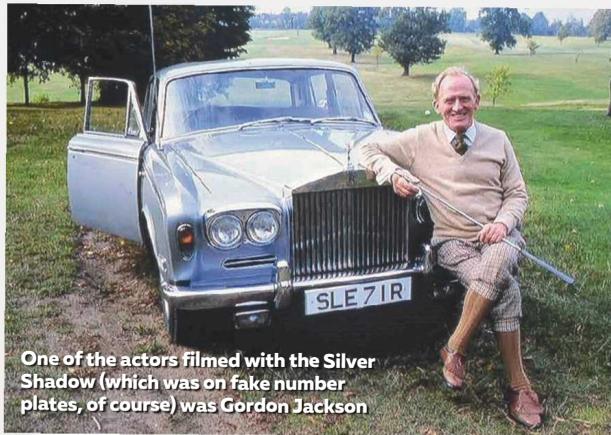
Little by little, I have managed to discover the amazing history of my Silver Shadow and the many films and TV programmes it has appeared in over the years. To my amazement, I found out that it's the very car I saw many years earlier in *The Persuaders* (a very popular series here in France) and in *The Avengers*. But I also discovered that my Silver Shadow has been driven by Leslie Phillips, Roger Moore and Stephen Boyd (in his last role), and »



Proud owner Pascal enjoys taking his Rolls-Royce to classic car events throughout France



Pascal's Silver Shadow appeared in *The Avengers* with Patrick Macnee – shown here on the back seat



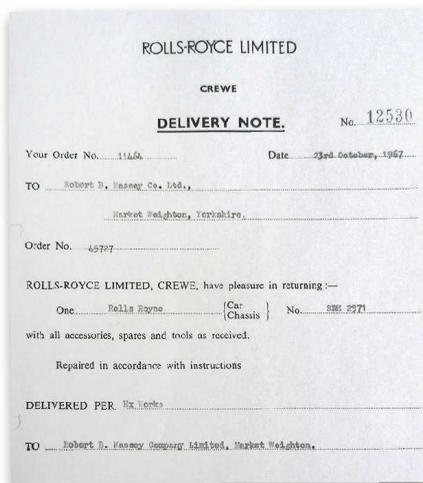
One of the actors filmed with the Silver Shadow (which was on fake number plates, of course) was Gordon Jackson

has been filmed alongside actors like Patrick Macnee, Romy Schneider, Martin Shaw, Gordon Jackson, John Wells, Shirley MacLaine, Hywell Bennett, Linda Thorson, Denholm Elliot, Denis Waterman, George Cole, Dave King, Jenny Linden, Tony Curtis, Geoffrey Keen, Donald Houston, Pierce Brosnan, Ian Ogilvy, Trevor Eve... and probably many more. The car was apparently involved in an accident during the

filming of MGM's 1970 movie, *My Lover, My Son*, with damage to its nearside front wing and front panel, hence the insurance paper mentioned earlier.

I've created a website about my car (www.shadow1967.com) and have since made contact with many people that were involved with Kingsbury Motors, the company that owned

my Silver Shadow from the late '60s through to 1982. However, I'd love to hear from anyone else who recognises my car or perhaps has some extra information about its history. I can be contacted via my website, or you can email the editor of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* (rrb.ed@kelsey.co.uk), who will forward all correspondence. ■



Among the history that Pascal has collected is this original delivery note from October 1967



The Silver Shadow suffered damage to its nearside front during the filming of *My Lover, My Son*

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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full-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 Media, Cudham Tithe Barn, Berry's Hill, Cudham, Kent TN16 3AG.

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THE MEN BEHIND THE MARQUE

DAVID PLASTOW

The collapse of Rolls-Royce and the separation of its two divisions saw David Plastow – chief executive of the car side of the business – making some tough decisions and ambitious requests. We take a look at how it all came together

WORDS: JEREMY SATHERLEY PHOTOGRAPHY: SIR HENRY ROYCE MEMORIAL FOUNDATION / ROLLS-ROYCE



Britain's broadsheets were waxing lyrical about Rolls-Royce's latest two-door model in March 1975, when the eagerly-awaited new Camargue was finally unveiled. *The Guardian* praised its maker for being 'the most profitable British motor manufacturer', while the *Daily Telegraph* described Rolls-Royce as 'still the ultimate'. The *Financial Times*, meanwhile, called the Camargue a 'superlative Rolls'. The reaction from the press could scarcely have been more encouraging.

For Rolls-Royce Motors' chief executive, David Plastow, this was something of a personal triumph, as just four years earlier the firm barely had enough funds available to present a decent press launch. The story goes that at the end of the company's stay near Monaco in early 1971 to present the new Corniche, the hotel manager was "Très désolé, monsieur", but he would have to insist on cash to settle the bill. A whip-round from the executives saved the day, but it couldn't be denied that Rolls-Royce's all-too-recent collapse over an over-ambitious aviation contract had reduced its credibility to an all-time low.

Ironically, Rolls-Royce's car division had been doing well up until that point, with the 1965 introduction of the Silver Shadow and Bentley T-series bringing impressive sales volumes throughout the late '60s. This fact wasn't lost on the official receiver, Rupert Nicholson of auditors Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co. A tough but reasonable man, Nicholson was prepared to give the car-making side a second chance, provided he could work with someone with the necessary

vision and a realistic strategy. And fortunately for Crewe, that key person was David Arnold Stuart Plastow.

SCOTTISH SERENDIPITY

Born in Grimsby in 1932, Plastow came from a family of two-wheeler enthusiasts. His grandfather began manufacturing bicycles in 1880, becoming a national racing champion on a penny-farthing, while his father also made cycling equipment and raced motorcycles for Norton, until a seized engine sent him over the handlebars. After grammar school in 1950, David joined Vauxhall at Luton, entering a five-year apprenticeship as a machinist fitter. By 1957, however, this ambitious young man had become a sales manager for the firm, at which point a drive up to Glasgow to deliver a Vauxhall Velox to the Scottish Motor Show proved fortuitous.

Plastow later recalled a chance encounter: "I found myself having tea with another driver, who turned out to be the Scottish manager for Rolls-Royce, and he said, 'Would you like to drive my car?' I replied, 'I would. Would you like to drive a Velox?' He was a very polite man, and so he drove my Velox!" When David sampled the Rolls-Royce, however, it proved to be "a big turning point in my life". So much so, one thing led to another and he joined Rolls-Royce as the motor division's Scotland and North of England representative, based in Edinburgh.

Back then, a young married couple with a baby, living in a rented flat, would often have depended for transport on a 1940s Morris Eight or perhaps an Austin A30 on 'easy terms'. But not the Plastows: "I was earning around £600 a year... it was all pretty basic," said David of his situation, "yet we had a new Rolls-Royce parked outside. We didn't have any other car in those days, so we used it for shopping and everything else". His naturally charming and courteous demeanour made him an ideal candidate for selling Rolls-Royces and Bentleys, and so it was not surprising that by the late 1960s he was sales and marketing manager for the whole car division.

LACK OF SUPPORT

While he had an outstanding product to sell in the Silver Shadow and Bentley T-series, Plastow had no autonomy over how the cars could



David Plastow and the Camargue – the car that attracted a year's worth of orders at its launch

be priced to greater advantage. The motor division at that time was an integral part of Rolls-Royce Limited, and all decisions had to be approved by the main board, composed largely of aero-engine people with little experience of car manufacturing.

Plastow later commented: "We were starved of capital in the 1968-69 period [and] weren't even allowed to buy the machine tools we needed." Despite this, the car division was running as a successful business, while the aviation side was not. Author Richard Feast explained the situation in his 2003 book, *Kidnap of the Flying Lady*: 'The engineers had acquired unchallenged pre-eminence because of Rolls-Royce's tremendous historical achievements. But the decision-makers often had only a tenuous grasp of

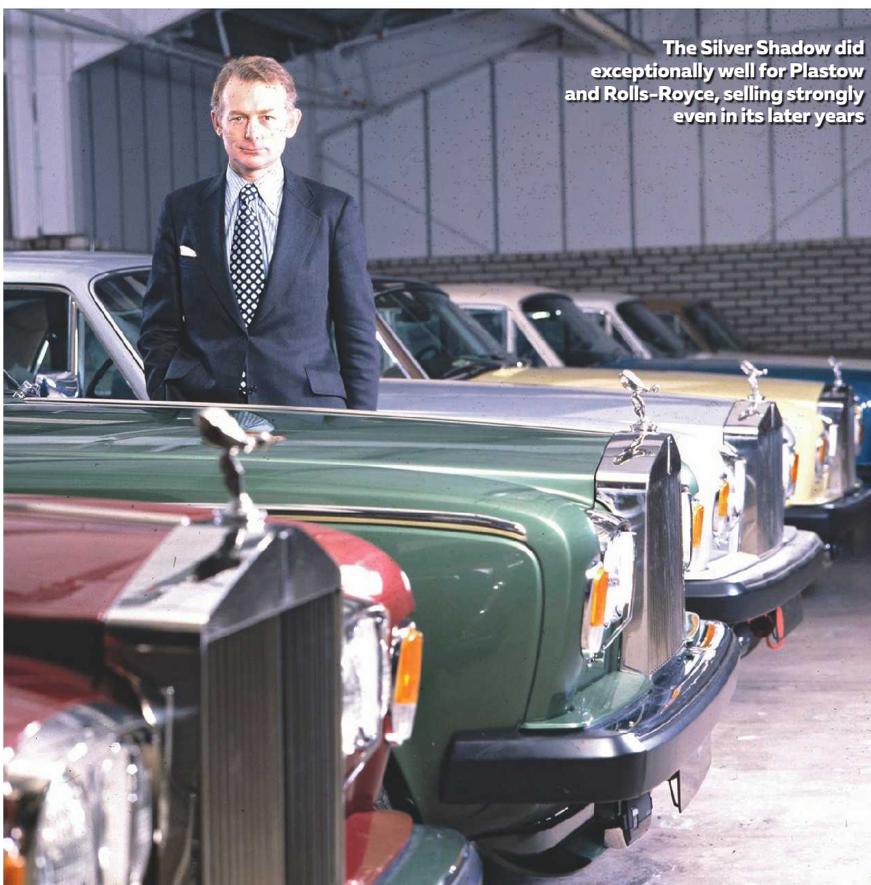
financial and commercial reality'.

The reality in this case was that the company, in its rush to corner a slice of the new big jet market, had over-extended itself by securing the contract to build the RB-211 engine for Lockheed's TriStar. Its unrealistic promises, rash price guarantees and delivery targets could only tempt fate and, sure enough, costly hitches occurred. Persistent troubles with the turbofan blade material delayed development schedules and budgets overran by scores of millions. The Conservative government of the time reluctantly granted Rolls-Royce a £90 million bail-out in November 1970, but to no avail. On February 1st, 1971, with all shares suspended on the Stock Exchange, the entire world heard the news that Rolls- »

THE MEN BEHIND THE MARQUE DAVID PLASTOW



Shown here with a Bentley S3, Plastow became a fan of Crewe products after driving his first Rolls-Royce in 1957



The Silver Shadow did exceptionally well for Plastow and Rolls-Royce, selling strongly even in its later years

Royce Limited was bankrupt.

David Plastow, meanwhile, was just one month into his new appointment as the car division's managing director. Rushing the news to his employees at Crewe before they saw it first in the papers, he and his team could only sit tight and wait for receiver Nicholson's next move. The solution was not long in coming: the aero side would be nationalised (much against Edward Heath's will, whose manifesto had promised privatisation of state-owned institutions) and the car division would become an independent company, with Plastow as its group chief executive.

"A MILLION, PLEASE"

First priority was to continue with the launch of the Corniche. Essentially a repackaged Mulliner Park Ward two-door saloon and convertible, it was nevertheless a means of showing the world that the company now known as Rolls Royce Motors was very much in business, even though things were rather hand-to-mouth behind the scenes. With just £5000 to spend on a press reception hosted with nine Corniches in the south of France, all the receiver could offer was luck, which only ran out with

“Rolls-Royce’s collapse over an ambitious aviation contract had reduced its credibility to an all-time low”

the alleged affair of the hotel bill.

The Corniche, however, proved to be the shot in the arm that the company needed. Buyers responded to the extent that used examples were soon selling for more than the price of new ones. Even more importantly, demand for the whole range of Silver Shadow-based cars carried on through the aftermath of the October 1973 Yom Kippur war, with its quadrupling of oil prices and the cutting of production by OPEC (the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries). In 1974, an unprecedented half of all Rolls-Royce Motors’ production was exported; US sales rose by 18 per cent and the Middle East was buying close on 100 cars a year, compared with only ten in the late ‘60s.

Where other manufacturers were concerned, escalating fuel prices ensured that performance and luxury were taking a big hit. The American car industry was in a downsizing panic, beset by President Gerald Ford’s goal to improve fuel economy by 40 per cent, and with GM committed to spending \$3 billion to redesign its range by 1980. By contrast, it was almost as if Plastow and his team were enjoying a charmed life. At the end of December 1974, for example, Aston Martin at Newport Pagnell was forced to close down for nine months; and yet discerning buyers were queuing in enough numbers at Rolls-Royce’s door for a confident Plastow to progress with his new-model programme.

Work on the Camargue had begun before the bankruptcy, after which, a few months into 1971, Plastow and receiver Nicholson met at Mulliner Park Ward’s Willesden factory to view the full-sized wooden mock-up and to discuss progressing ‘Delta’ (as the Camargue was codenamed) to production.

“What do you want? What can I do?” asked Nicholson.

“Well, can you give me a million, is that alright?” was Plastow’s polite request.

“Good. What else?” replied the receiver. It was like rubbing Aladdin’s lamp. And so Plastow asked to buy a small factory next door at Crewe in order to extend the production line, as he later recalled: “Thanks to Nicholson,



we were actually allowed to get on with it – he was just a great man.”

EXCLUSIVE TWO-DOOR

With the Camargue, a large coupé styled by Sergio Pininfarina, Plastow boldly staked all on exclusivity to justify the highest price (close on £30,000 – or around £245,000 at today’s values) for maximum profit margin. One facetious journalist remarked it was enough money to hire London’s Whitehall Theatre for five weeks to watch private performances of the contemporary farce, *Pyjama Tops*, questioning whether it was a good time to launch such a car. Plastow replied that it was perfect timing: “It’s a massive reinstatement of what Rolls-Royce Motors stands for, just as the Corniche was launched in 1971. Our customers expect the best and are prepared to pay for it. They are also paying for exclusivity, which is why the Camargue is being

Above: The controversial Camargue offered “motoring in Technicolour and not monochrome”, according to Plastow

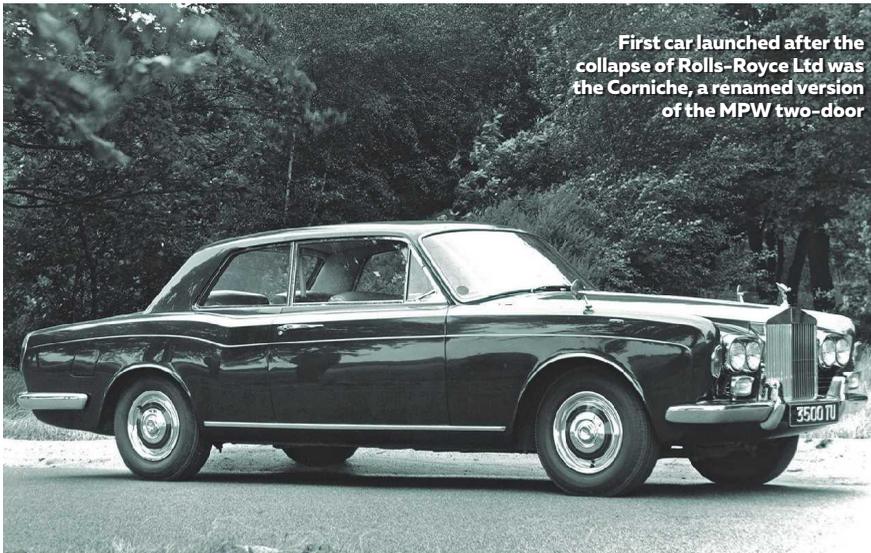
built in very limited numbers.”

Plastow went on to describe the Camargue as “not a GT, but a very beautiful two-door that will sustain high-speed cruising with a unique interior environment. We like to feel we have created a new type of motor car in a rather subtle way.”

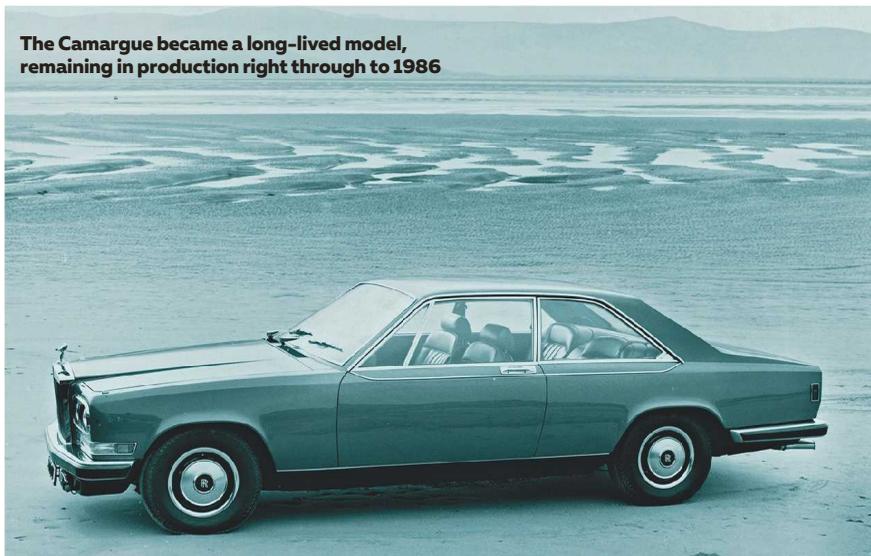
Subtle? Well, with Pininfarina’s attempt to stretch his Fiat 130 Coupé style around a Shadow platform, it wasn’t exactly a shrinking violet – although, of course, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. *Financial Times* journalist James Ensor wrote that it was ‘the best-looking Rolls-Royce yet designed’, but *Motor Sport* magazine scathingly concluded that ‘elegance and dignity must have fallen off the drawing board’, with the spectacle of its 3½-inch wider body sitting on the Silver Shadow’s track giving an »

THE MEN BEHIND THE MARQUE

DAVID PLASTOW



First car launched after the collapse of Rolls-Royce Ltd was the Corniche, a renamed version of the MPW two-door



The Camargue became a long-lived model, remaining in production right through to 1986



The long-awaited Silver Spirit family was Rolls-Royce Motors' crucial new design for the 1980s

impression of 'the derrière of a very fat man astride a very small motorbike'.

Despite such divided opinion, Plastow could rejoice in the fact that at launch, the first fifty Camargues – representing a whole year's production – had already been sold "unseen and unpriced", enabling customers "to go motoring in Technicolour and not monochrome". Ironically, much of that demand came from OPEC countries, the very people who were making it difficult for the rest of the world to run big cars.

ARRIVAL OF VICKERS

With Rupert Nicholson having assured Plastow early on that he was doing a good job, Rolls-Royce Motors went public in May 1973. Surprisingly, apart from unsuitable approaches from what Edward Heath called "unpleasant faces of capitalism" – the Lonrho Group and Hanson Trust – no car manufacturer had expressed any interest at the time in acquiring Rolls-Royce Motors. With the possible exception of Daimler-Benz, other companies either hadn't got the experience of making cars at this exalted level, or the one group big enough nationally to take it on – British Leyland – had a mess of its own to sort out.

For the time being at least, with global sales picking up in the mid to late '70s, Rolls-Royce Motors didn't need anyone else. In 1978, sales reached a best of 3347 cars – which was as good as it would get for the next twelve years. Destined to stay in production until 1986, the Camargue proved a cost-effective tool, not only in terms of sales but as a showroom attraction, drawing in buyers towards other models.

No car manufacturer can stand still, though. Planning had started back in 1972 for the Silver Shadow and Bentley T-series replacements, with all the attendant cost implications – and the company was now reaching the point where it needed more reserves. Plastow approached the Vickers engineering group, of which he had been a non-executive director since 1975. Although it had recently lost its main ship and aircraft-building activities to nationalisation under a Labour government, he still saw Vickers as suitable merger material: "They had a decent bit of money in the bank, so I decided that if I could persuade them to become a part of it, then we



The launch of the Mulsanne marked the start of Bentley's resurrection after disappointing sales in the '70s

“In 1978, sales reached a best of 3347 cars – which was as good as it would get for the next twelve years”

would have a broader base for funding. This made a difference, because we became a bigger company and Rolls-Royce could be improved as a result.”

To begin with, the merger marked a successful start to the 1980s, although with his appointment as managing director of Vickers plc, it did mean that David was now one step removed from the helm at Rolls Royce Motors, replaced by George Fenn. Debuting in October 1980 under the new regime, the Rolls-Royce Silver Spirit, long-wheelbase Silver Spur and Bentley Mulsanne – featuring bodywork styled by Fritz Feller on Silver Shadow underpinnings – returned a very satisfactory 3200 units during the first full year of production in '81. But hopes of achieving 3500 sales the following year were dashed when demand dropped by 25 per cent. This time, Rolls-Royce Motors couldn't

avoid being dragged down by a prevailing economic slump and ever-climbing energy prices, in company with all other manufacturers.

BENTLEY'S REVIVAL

The elevation of the Bentley brand during the troubled '80s to something more than a badge-engineered Rolls-Royce, however, was a positive factor and of great portent for the decades to come. Plastow admitted that he had been criticised for neglecting Bentley in the '70s, but as he said: “In the short term, what we had to do was show that Rolls-Royce Motors had not been trampled down by the aero problem. We had to go like hell at 'little old Crewe' to sell as many Rolls-Royce cars as we could in order to give the impression that everything was fine.” This had been

vital in the all-important US market, where Rolls-Royce was a byword for quality but awareness of Bentley almost non-existent by comparison.

Under ex-Jaguar Rover Triumph man Peter Ward's stewardship as Rolls-Royce Motors' chief executive, Bentley's recovery began with the high-performance Mulsanne Turbo of 1982, followed by the 1985-92 Turbo R – a 325bhp four-door projectile limited to 135mph because there were no suitable tyres to handle the weight above that speed. A 'budget' Bentley Eight represented the new entry model from 1984, but even this evoked the glory days of the vintage Bentley with its wire-mesh grille.

The Bentley revival strategy paid off, with combined sales almost approaching halcyon '78 levels by 1990, with noticeably more customers placing their money on the rejuvenated »

Turbocharging the Mulsanne to create the Turbo R revolutionised Bentley sales, giving the marque a major boost



“The Bentley revival strategy paid off, with combined sales almost approaching halcyon '78 levels by 1990”

winged-B. Sadly, however, it was short-lived, with another slump in global demand for cars bringing more worries. In September 1991, it fell to Sir David Plastow (knighted in 1986 for services to export and now Vickers' chairman) to announce the unwelcome news: “I said at the annual meeting in April that our sales were running at half the previous year, which is a very difficult situation to manage, and I'm afraid they have continued at that low; in fact the third quarter was a little worse.” Nor did the situation improve, bumping along at around 1400 sales annually between 1992 and 1994.

Sir David retired from Vickers in '92, jokingly to “improve my golf”. But he was soon lured from the green to become a very hands-on chairman of the Inchcape motor distribution group for three years, during which time he was also deputy chairman of TSB, chairman of the Medical Research Council, a patron of the Samaritans and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

COMPANY SPLIT

After Vickers sold Rolls-Royce Motors to Volkswagen in 1998, the subsequent

parting of the marques caused Sir David, who was ever watchful from the wings, some concern: “My initial reaction to selling off Rolls-Royce and Bentley was one of horror. I thought we ought to keep the two brands together. They had been linked for 70 years and I was so cross I almost wrote a letter to the *Daily Telegraph*!” All such consternation subsided, however, as he later admitted there were advantages to the Volkswagen and BMW ownership of Bentley and Rolls-Royce respectively: “The more I think about it, the more I think they are doing a good job. We were making 3000 cars a year at Crewe; now Bentley are making 10,000. It's staggering! The Rolls-Royce people are not making as many cars because

it's a different product, but they are doing a very good job, too”.

There's little doubt that Sir David Plastow was the right man at the right time when the chips were down at Rolls-Royce Motors. He was young and driven enough to take risks and to be confident of the outcome. Unavoidable troughs may have outweighed the peaks in the later Vickers years; but without his courageous and optimistic leadership of the 1970s, Rolls-Royce and Bentley might have perished there and then, instead of surviving to flourish under German ownership today, with all that implies in terms of substantial resources and the well-being of British-based jobs and craftsmanship. It's a situation of which Sir David so sportingly approves. ■

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Bentley DRIVERS CLUB

Founded by enthusiasts for enthusiasts. The Bentley Drivers Club is proud of its ethos: a club of friends who share a love of all things Bentley. It's also the only club directly affiliated with Bentley Motors.

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

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

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

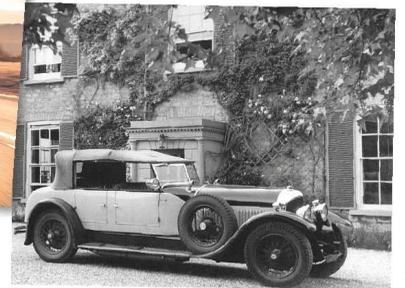
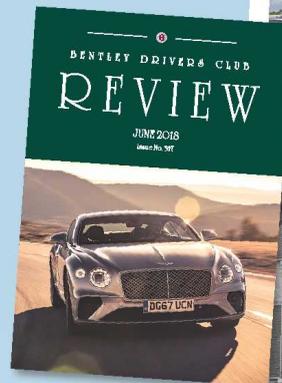
A great feature of our club is the excellent events we hold, both at home and abroad. These include our annual long-established Concours d'Elegance and Silverstone race meeting plus numerous tours and social occasions organised by our ever active Regions worldwide.

And 2019, of course, marks the centenary of the Bentley motor car, commemorated

by special events throughout the year - so what better time is there to join us?

Members enjoy a range of benefits with the BDC:

- Bi-monthly Review and monthly Advertiser & Diary publications plus frequent e-newsletters
- Access to comprehensive archives through the club's association with the WO Bentley Memorial Foundation, providing a deep insight into the marque's history
- Access to the spares schemes, covering the three key eras of Bentley production
- Favourable insurance rates and service plus undisputed valuations (for insurance purposes)
- Club forum offering the chance to discuss all things Bentley.



Driving adventures... Driving exhilaration... Driving friendships

We look forward to welcoming all Bentley enthusiasts to the Bentley Drivers Club



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STONOR PARK SPECTACULAR

Stuart Newman reports on the Bentley Drivers Club's major event of the year, at which a wonderful 3½ Litre Drophead Coupe won Best in Show



The garden party feel of the Concours d'Elegance, featuring the cars in the judging class

A beautiful summer's day helped to ensure that the Bentley Drivers Club's 72nd Concours d'Elegance was a huge success, with club members and visitors making the event at Stonor Park, in the heart of the Chiltern Hills, one to remember. Indeed, a buoyant club chairman, Ron Warmington, declared on closing the show: "This has been the best Concours the club has yet delivered."

With the traditional garden party atmosphere setting the tone, the event attracted a wonderful array of 300 Bentleys, with 29 of these being members' cars (vintage, Derby and Crewe models) judged in the main Concours class. The overall

winner was a beautiful 1935 3½ Litre Drophead Coupe, with proud owner Henry Robet receiving the W.O. Bentley Memorial Foundation trophy. Top award in the Patina category, meanwhile, was claimed by Alan Osborn, whose lovely 1953 R-Type earned him the Bentley Trophy.

The Inter-Regional Challenge (for the Kensington Gardens Challenge Trophy) was won by the Mid-West Region. The team consisted of Roy Partridge (1950 MkVI), Tim Forbes (1927 4½ Litre Vanden Plas) and John Dixon (Continental GT Coupe). Laurence Modiano's gorgeous 1955 S1 Continental Drophead won the Pirelli Ladies' Choice prize.

Aside from the judging, there was

plenty to keep visitors occupied, with two stunning displays – each showcasing a dozen magnificent Bentley examples – attracting the visitors. Chief judge Philip Sandwith presented the Exhibition Cars class, designed to offer a living history of Bentley, which he described as "some of the finest examples of a Bentley you will see". Members' models ranged from a 1922 3 Litre to a 2008 Continental GTC, and also included a 4½ Litre (1928), Speed Six (1930), 8 Litre (1931), MkVI (1949), S1 Continental (1956), Turbo R (1987), Continental R (1997), Azure (2006) and two 4½ Litres (1936 and 1939).

Nic Waller served up an eclectic display entitled 'W.O. Bentley: A Life



Overall concours winner was this elegant 1935 3½ Litre Drophead Coupe



The wonderful W.O. Bentley display, which included Jonathan Wood's 4 Litre Drophead Coupe



The Bentley Motors display – showing the latest Continental – can be seen bottom-right



The Mid-West Region won the Inter-Regional Challenge for the best team of three models



Stonor Park house made the perfect backdrop for the Exhibition Class display



Alan Osborn's 1953 R-Type earned him the Bentley Trophy for winning the Patina class



Allan Winn demonstrated the Napier-Railton, on loan from the Brooklands Museum



BDC chairman Ron Warmington closed the show in style

and Career in 12 Cars', to help mark the 130th anniversary of W.O.'s birth this year. This collection featured cars (not just Bentleys) ranging in age from a 1914 DHP 12/40hp 2-litre through to a 1958 Armstrong Siddeley Star Sapphire, and included a 6½ Litre, a 3 Litre, a Speed Six, Pink Floyd musician Nick Mason's 4½ Litre, an 8 Litre owned by Bentley Motors, a 4 Litre, a Lagonda M45R Rapide and a brace of Aston Martins (a 1953 DB2/4 and a 1954 DB3S).

The Bentley Motors area featured the new-model Continental GT, which attracted a host of interested visitors

keen to get behind the wheel, while the company also showed off a GT3-R, Mulsanne and Bentayga. The W.O. Bentley Memorial Foundation marquee also drew plenty of visitors during the day, with a particular attraction being John Hamperl's lovely 1934 Derby 3½ Drophead Coupe (known as 'Cherries and Custard'), while the BDC's own club shop did its usual roaring trade.

When it came to lunchtime, members and guests were able to enjoy some delicious fare – and retire from the sun – in an elegantly decorated and laid out marquee. Diners were also able to view

a video promoting next year's Bentley Motors Centenary Extraordinary Drive.

Prize giving was held on the main lawn in front of the impressive house, with recipients parading around the path to the presentation area in their winning cars. Philip Sandwith announced the winners, with Lady Stonor presenting the main award to Henry Robet. Closing the show, Ron Warmington declared: "Next year we are going to be at Blenheim Palace. We have had 300 Bentleys here today – we are going to have 700 more than that in 2019!" ■

THE ANNUAL GATHERING

The *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* team paid a visit to the RREC's Annual Rally at Burghley House, joining around 4000 other enthusiasts for a memorable event

To describe its Annual Rally as the highlight of the RREC's calendar would be something of an understatement. Over the last six decades, this yearly event has grown in size and stature, to the extent that it now attracts more than 4000 visitors – all of them there to soak up the atmosphere, to meet up with old friends and to admire more than a thousand vehicles, many of them taking part in the

ever-competitive Concours d'Elegance.

As usual, the gates of Stamford's Burghley House opened to visitors on the Friday, giving early attendees a chance to enjoy the many trade stands – and to buy those all-important spares and accessories – before the major crowds arrived over the weekend. It gave us the perfect opportunity to chat with traders and to catch up with some of the UK's most respected

specialists, a long list that included P&A Wood, IntroCar, Flying Spares, The Real Car Company and many more.

This year's event included a parade on the Saturday celebrating the 1948 Earl's Court Motor Show, while throughout the weekend club member Mermie Karger gave visitors a chance to driver her magnificent 1913 Silver Ghost. Live music was provided by Todd Miller and The Joe Loss Orchestra, while Holloway's Auctioneers hosted the usual sale of vehicles and automobilia. Glorious weather throughout the long weekend helped to ensure the success of this year's Annual Rally.

Many thanks to the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club for inviting us to this splendid event. We're already looking forward to next year's extravaganza... ■



Burghley House provides a glorious backdrop for the RREC's Annual Rally



The event always attracts overseas fans, including the Dutch owner of this Silver Spirit



Benspoint exhibited this partially-built example of its bespoke La Sarthe coupe



The IntroCar marquee did a roaring trade selling essential parts and accessories



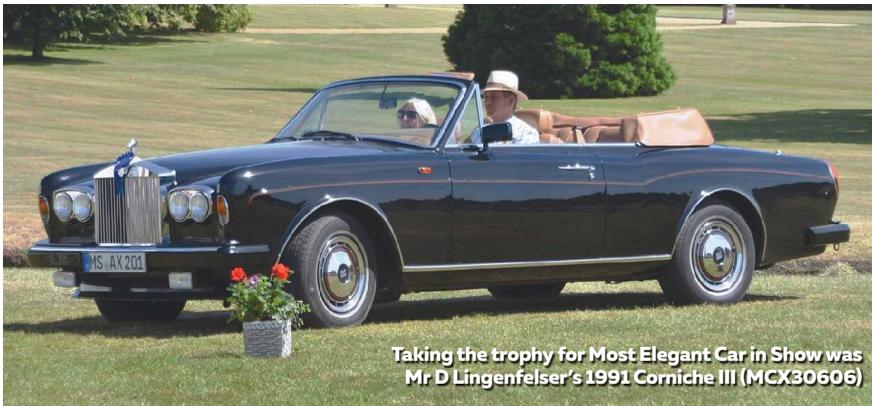
Vintage & Prestige Classic Cars had an eclectic mix of Rolls-Royces on its stand



The Real Car Company sold an impressive total of four cars at the Annual Rally



P&A Wood's impressive line-up included this historically significant 1911 Silver Ghost



Taking the trophy for Most Elegant Car in Show was Mr D Lingenfelser's 1991 Corniche III (MCX30606)



The coveted Best in Show rosette is the ultimate accolade



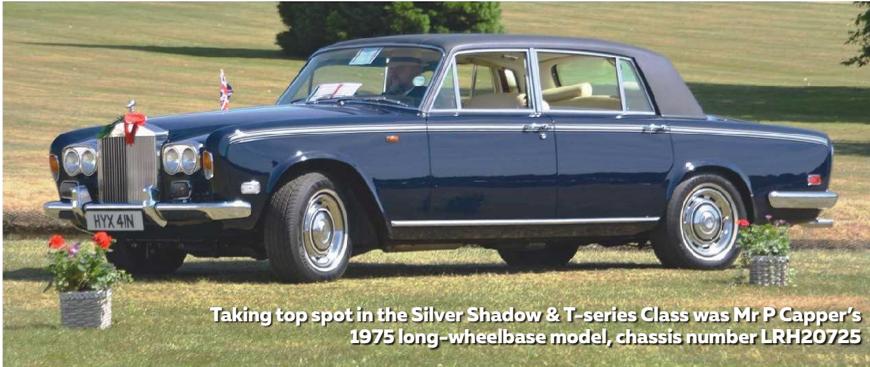
The winner of Class 11 was this 1953 Rolls-Royce Silver Dawn (chassis number SNF59) owned by Mr R Bunger



Winner of the Conservation Class (Pre-War) was chassis number GLG2, the 1934 James Young-built 20/25 owned by Mr B Symes



The Best in Show award went to this 1934 Bentley 3 1/2 Litre by Gurney Nutting (chassis number B55BL), owned by Mr D Neidhart



Taking top spot in the Silver Shadow & T-series Class was Mr P Capper's 1975 long-wheelbase model, chassis number LRH20725



Coming second in the Phantom I Class was this 1928 model with coachwork by James Young (chassis number 92UF), owned by Mr R Jewers



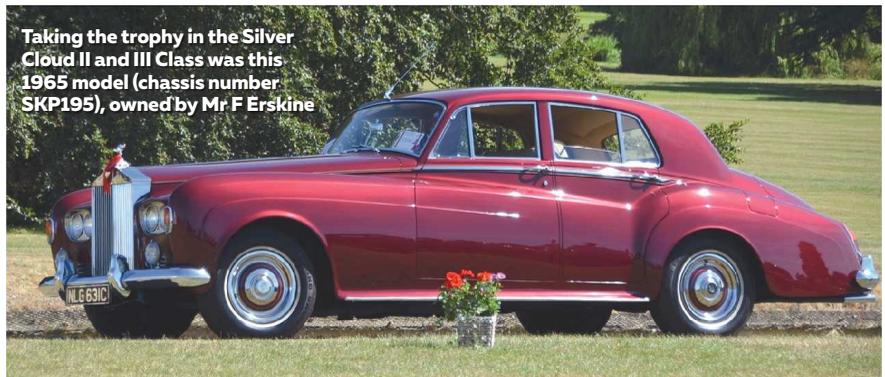
The Elegance Award in the Silver Ghost Class was Mr A White's 1910 Phaeton-style example, chassis number 1278



Winner of the Bentley 4 1/4 Litre and MkV Class was this 1937 example by Vanden Plas (chassis number B63HM), owned by Mr P Bourgeois



The Phantom I Class winner was Mrs C Luscombe's wonderful 1928 model (chassis number 31WR)



Taking the trophy in the Silver Cloud II and III Class was this 1965 model (chassis number SKP195), owned by Mr F Erskine



The Silver Ghost Class trophy went to this 1914 Kellner-built car (chassis number 67RB), owned Mr D Magee



The Elegance Award in the 25/30 and Wraith Class was this 1939 James Young car (chassis number WHC31), owned by Mr J Farrar



THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB FOR
**ROLLS-ROYCE
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ENTHUSIASTS



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FROM DELIGHT TO DISASTER

Having promised himself a Bentley by the time he hit thirty, our contributor's ambition was finally realised – though his period of ownership was tragically cut short by fire

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: SAM SKELTON

When I was seven years of age, I was sat in front of the television one Thursday night watching Quentin Willson enthuse about just how much car you could get for £13,000.

His choices were a Mondeo, an Astra Convertible or a Bentley Turbo R. There followed about five minutes of Crewe-based rhapsody, explaining just how bargainous a Bentley could be if you bought one cleverly. And

from that moment on, I was hooked. It was a dream car that looked like it could one day become a reality, and so I made up my mind that I simply had to have one before I turned thirty. Later, of course, I took stock of the



“I’d buy a car for little over its breaking value – say, £3000 – and if a £5000 bill came up, I could then break it”

situation and decided that a Turbo R might be a bit silly. The EFI systems can be difficult to repair if they break, plus I didn’t want anything to do with Active Ride. Perhaps the Turbo was a silly idea too, as previous experience with a Volvo T5 had taught me that things can get pricey and complex when they break. I therefore found myself searching for a carburettor-clad Mulsanne – or a Silver Spirit if such a car came up more cheaply. Oh, and I also employed what some might call foolish logic.

I had a 1994 Jaguar Sovereign as a daily driver last year. It came my way for free, with 170,000 miles under its wheels. It was tired inside and out, but despite the tatty arches it was solid, everything mechanical and electrical worked, and it did me proud for 15,000 miles. If anything big were to have broken, no problem – I could profit by stripping it, given that it only ever owed me a total of £90. In the end, however, I sold the Jaguar for a healthy profit. It’s possible to lose big sums on a poorly maintained Bentley too, and so I decided to employ a similar strategy. I’d buy a car for little over its breaking value – say, £3000 – and if a £5000 bill came up, I could then break it to recoup as much as possible. If I was lucky and found a good

one, however, maybe I would reconsider.

My strategy proved unfruitful at first. I went to see a very promising looking 1982 Rolls-Royce Silver Spur, which I’d found for sale on Facebook Marketplace. Finished in Oyster Grey with a grey leather interior, it certainly looked the part. But the walnut was flaking, the leather was torn and it ran on about six cylinders at best. There was also a Godawful racket from a rear corner, which could have been a seized metal-on-metal brake or a bearing – I still don’t

know. The roof was rotten at both ends under the vinyl, and I was too scared to look underneath despite its apparently clean body. I felt that the asking price of £3500 was simply too much, although it later sold on eBay for £4000 – only to reappear halfway across the country on Facebook a week later at £2200. I could have been tempted at that price, but my experience had soured the car for me.

I decided to put my search on hold, determining that either I would save harder to increase my budget or I’d wait »



Sam was delighted to finally fulfil his dream of Bentley ownership »

PROJECT CAR BENTLEY MULSANNE TURBO

for the right car to find me. That's how I came to be idly browsing eBay while at a mate's house, as earlier in the week I'd goaded him into buying a pair of old Peugeots (sight unseen) on eBay, and so it was natural that when I found a cheap and poorly advertised Bentley he would do the same. Usually I resist

by pointing out the lack of MoT and the huge fail sheet, but this one was different. Granted, it was last MoT'd in 2015, but that test had simply lapsed – not failed. There was no history of any real corrosion, and everything worked. The snag, however, was that there were just 15 hours left on the auction,

which meant not enough time to view.

The advert described it simply as a 'White Bentley' – and from the fact that it was a 1983 car, I deduced it was a Mulsanne. After all, a Turbo would have been listed as such. There was one interior photo (plus one from another Bentley) and a selection of decidedly poor photographs seemingly taken from a wedding car brochure. The advert explained that this and another Bentley from the same seller had been part of his wedding car business, and that they'd been 'good earners in the past'. The car had been 'gathering dust for the last couple of years' and so the vendor had 'decided to let them go with great reluctance'. He admitted, however, that this and the other Bentley 'both need a little TLC'.

It wasn't exactly confidence inspiring, and so I did the only sensible thing and bought a white ex-wedding Bentley from a seaside town, MoT lapsed, sight unseen.

BARGAIN BENTLEY?

In reality, it wasn't quite as silly as I've made it sound. There may not have been time to view the car but there was time to phone the seller and ask him a number of probing questions.



As an ex-wedding car, the Mulsanne boasted a very tidy interior



Sam took his Bentley for an MoT test at Kim Cairns on the day of collection



An excessive hydrocarbon reading was partly caused by a sticking choke flap

“The rear arches were a bit fillery and the rear spheres solid, but it looked good underneath from what I could see”

I learned that the Bentley was solid, it had been used for wedding work and it had originally been green. I was also told that if I won the auction and wasn't satisfied with the description I'd been given, I could walk away with no negative feedback or comeback of any kind. The car was sitting at £2300 when I made the call – which realistically is scrap money, especially for a Mulsanne wearing alloys and the quad headlamp upgrade.

I entered my top bid of £2676.43 (never a round number) with just ten seconds left. It was mine... for six seconds. I was suddenly outbid! I scabbled at the keyboard in desperation, somehow entering a maximum of £2800 and breaking my own round-number rule in the process. The auction ended and the car was indeed mine, with a final purchase price of £2775.79.

As an afterthought, I asked about the history file of the dangerously cheap Bentley I'd just bought, having never been within fifty miles of it. “Oh, there's not much – maybe a couple of old MoTs,” was the answer. Dammit.

But just when this was shaping up to be the comedy decision of the century, fate threw me a helping hand. I came across an old online advert for the car I knew only as a ‘White Bentley’, with this earlier ad confirming that it was indeed a Mulsanne – except that it had an engine bay photograph, which showed a turbocharger. I asked a friend in the trade to do an HPI check to obtain the VIN for me, and the T in the seventh position told me it was a turbocharged car. For well under £3000, it looked as though I'd bought a Mulsanne Turbo with no real rot.

When I finally viewed the car a few days later, things got better. Sure, the

rear arches were a bit fillery and the rear spheres solid, but it looked good underneath from what I could see, and it pretty much all worked. The meagre history file I was expecting turned out to include a full book pack, the warranty, a service book stamped up until 2000 and an inch-thick wad of bills thereafter. Not a complete history, but enough for such a cheap example.

The vendor and I exchanged paperwork and bank details, and I drove my new car away. I'd booked it in for an MoT with a classic car specialist in Snettisham, Norfolk, and the forty-mile drive from Cromer gave me chance to get to know my latest acquisition. It pulled left slightly – the tracking needed doing – and the hopping at the back showed me that the spheres needed sorting sooner rather than later. The horn didn't work, nor did the electric windows or cruise control, but apart »

“The experience had been mildly unnerving, and several weeks later I still have flashbacks to that moment”

from that everything seemed fine. Once I arrived at Kim Cairns Classic Cars, we got the Bentley up on the ramp and discovered more good news. The rear spring perches had been changed, the sills were good, and the handbrake cables had recently been replaced – all trouble spots, and all things that I didn't need to deal with. I entered it for the test feeling fairly confident.

My confidence was misplaced, however, as the car failed. A misfire was chucking unburned fuel into the exhaust and sending the hydrocarbon emissions reading high. It was also idling high, the wipers needed replacing, the horn needed repair and there were a couple of small leaks. Nothing huge, however, and so I left the Bentley with Kim to sort out. I also asked him to take a look at the gas units – otherwise known as spheres – for me. I own a number of classic Citroens, and so the technology and its sources are familiar to me. I made use of my contact network and sourced a set of suitable units from sphere-shop.co.uk for £75 delivered.

It transpired that my excessive hydrocarbon reading was partly caused by a sticking choke flap, and partly by the fact that only five of its cylinders were functioning properly. There was one dead plug and two dead leads, all of which was rectified. A bill of £499.06 covered my MoT, plus the work needed and the cost of fitting the new spheres. That took my investment to



The Mulsanne failed its MoT test... but not drastically

£3314.85, and gave me a fully MoT'd and road-legal Bentley. More than the theoretical £3000 I wanted to spend, but not by enough to matter.

PLANNING AHEAD

Having got my Bentley home, it was time to sit down and make a list of all the things that I wanted to buy to put it back to Mulsanne Turbo specification, and all the things I needed to make it work as it did when new. Realistically, there was a long list of jobs to do and a long list of parts to get.

Firstly, the items I was going to need to make it look like a Mulsanne Turbo again. Steel wheels and Bentley hubcaps were obviously a priority, as alloys only came along in 1985 with the Turbo R. Rectangular headlamps too, as well as a pair of Lucas FT8 fog lamps – ideally black-backed but I'd take chrome at a push. The rear arch stoneguards were missing, so I wanted a set of those; and to finish it off, the sills and valances needed to be painted matt black again. With all that done, my Bentley would look like a Mulsanne, even if it was the wrong colour.

In the spirit of bargain Bentley ownership, I decided to sort these items as cheaply as I could. I went hunting online, looking for cars being stripped, which is how I came across Tom Ball of Ipswich, who was breaking a 1985 Silver Spirit. Surely he could provide most of what I needed? A pair of headlamp assemblies for £160 and the stoneguards for £40 the pair were usefully cheap, as was the set of pristine Bentley hubcaps I found being advertised on Facebook Marketplace for £100. As I have friends in Ipswich, I had these items collected and will be retrieving them myself at a show later in the year. I even got a good set of FT8s from eBay for £35 delivered.

My Bentley was hopefully going to look perfect... although there's one minor snag: the car doesn't exist any more. It flooded whilst cranking in a car park in Peterborough, following a



The AA was called when the car failed to start in Peterborough

shopping excursion with my girlfriend, Francesca. Having initially called fellow journalist Jack Grover for assistance, I then phoned the AA.

DISASTER AWAITS

The AA technician busied himself with the starter when it failed to crank, but to no avail. Jack suggested that perhaps it had hydraulically locked, and the AA patrolman pulled a spark plug to check. Petrol flooded out. We had our solution. So the AA guy removed all the spark plugs and found a similar story in each. He called me across, told me he had isolated the ignition, and asked me to get in and crank to purge the cylinders through the plug holes.

My suspicion is that he pulled the king lead from the distributor, but I can't be certain. Idiotically, I trusted the actions of a professional, as I'd been more concerned with my girlfriend's aching feet and rapid dehydration. On the third crank, and with Francesca and Jack both watching aghast, the fuel and surrounding vapour ignited. Jack had been photographing for this feature, and captured the shocking photo (see below) as the spark combusted. I stayed in the car long enough to switch off

the ignition – thankfully I'd pulled the fuel pump relay, which the AA had failed to do – and then ran like hell.

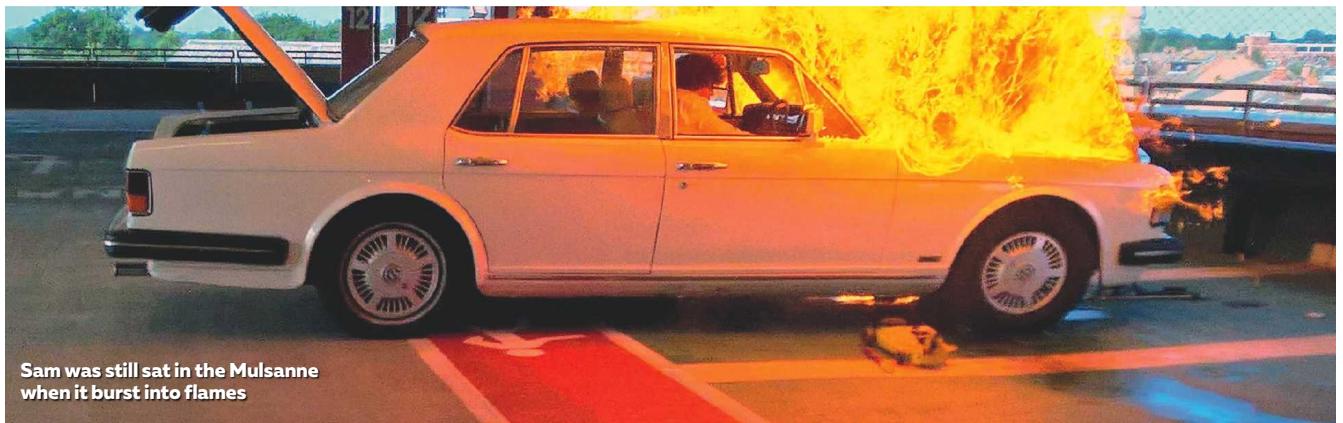
Having called 999, I made a formal statement to the police and the car park operatives. The experience had been mildly unnerving, and several weeks later I still have flashbacks to that moment. The AA admitted liability for the incident, and has met the agreed insurance value of the car and contents. The AA official I dealt with was less happy about paying my increased insurance premium until I sent him a copy of a letter from my insurer stating that the increase was

solely caused by this incident. As the AA had caused it, my uninsured loss was eventually accepted, with the AA paying my first year's additional premium.

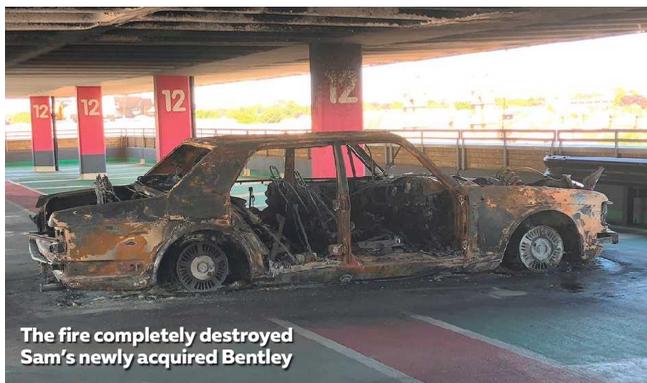
Although the whole experience has put me off the Solex 4A1 and early carburetted Turbos, I will be replacing this car with an EFi model at some point. The EFi may be harder to mend but it's infinitely safer. Whether I'll let the AA near its replacement, of course, remains to be seen. Meanwhile, if anyone has a pre-Active Ride Turbo R EFi or Mulsanne S EFi for sale for a modest sum, and would like to see it in print, please contact the magazine. ■



The Bentley 'failed to proceed' after a shopping excursion



Sam was still sat in the Mulsanne when it burst into flames



The fire completely destroyed Sam's newly acquired Bentley



The car park was closed while the fire was brought under control



POWER AND PRESTIGE

The Phantom III deserves its place in history as the first ever V12-engined Rolls-Royce. We take a look at its important role and catch up with an impressive survivor

WORDS: PAUL GUINNESS PICS: VINTAGE & PRESTIGE CLASSIC CARS

Although few onlookers would have predicted it at the time, the all-new Phantom III of 1936 was to be the only V12-engined Rolls-Royce for the next 62 years. Not until the arrival of the Silver Seraph in 1998 would Britain's most famous luxury marque go the V12 route once again, despite the fact that it seemed such a logical new direction in the mid-1930s. With Rolls-Royce facing stiffer competition from American manufacturers in particular, a switch to V12 power – an increasingly popular format across the Atlantic – was a welcome move.

The Phantom III was the final car that Sir Henry Royce had a hand in developing, although its launch wouldn't come until three years after his death in 1933. It was also to be the

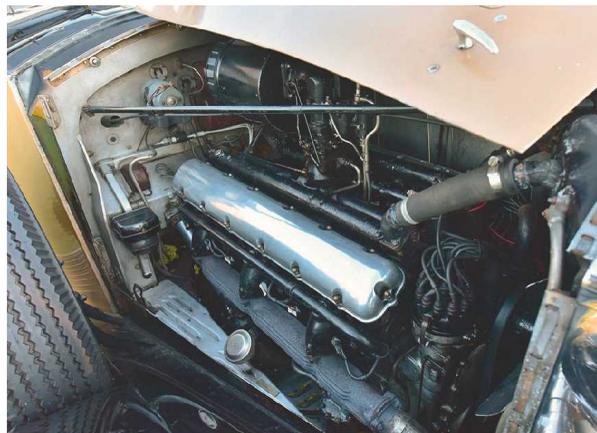
last large Rolls-Royce launched prior to World War II, and was inevitably an exclusive offering – with just 727 chassis being built in total before production officially ceased in 1939.

One extra chassis was built the following year, although the bespoke nature of each car meant that some coachbuilders were still delivering completed examples of the Phantom III into the early '40s. Firms that famously used the Phantom III chassis included the inevitable foursome of Park Ward, H.J. Mulliner, Hooper and Thrupp & Maberly; but whichever bodywork was chosen, at the heart of each car was Rolls-Royce's mighty new 7.32-litre V12 engine, producing an impressive 165bhp at 3000rpm.

Innovative new design features for the time included two spark plugs

per cylinder, two ignition coils, two distributors, plus a single Zenith two-barrel carburettor. The cylinder blocks were angled at 60 degrees and were of the skeleton type (with wet liners), while the cylinder heads were aluminium. Power was transferred to the rear end via a manual four-speed transmission (featuring synchromesh on all but first gear), with an overdrive gearbox being introduced in 1938.

The Phantom III featured on-board jacking, as well as a one-shot chassis lubrication system that was operated by a lever inside the chauffeur's compartment. The heavy-duty chassis boasted independent front suspension, a coil-sprung system complemented by a semi-elliptic set-up at the rear. By luxury car standards of the time, the Phantom III was a highly advanced



“One of the most fascinating aspects of this Phantom III is its incredibly comprehensive history”



design – as well as one of the most upmarket offerings of the late '30s.

SURVIVING SEDANCA

One of today's most impressive survivors is chassis number 3CM119, a Phantom III Sedanca fitted with coachwork by H.J. Mulliner in 1938 and currently on sale with Vintage & Prestige Classic Cars after twenty years with its most recent owner. During that lengthy period of ownership, this Rolls-Royce was treated to a full engine rebuild that included twelve new pistons and liners, as well as a new camshaft, new carburettor and so on. Combined with the car's standard-fit hydraulic tappets, this rebuild has resulted in an engine that runs superbly, with what Vintage & Prestige describes as 'uncanny silence – as only a V12 can do'.

Compared with a Phantom III that might have received less mechanical

attention in recent years, EXC 200 should be all set for many more miles of reliable motoring, making it ideal for long-distance cruising pre-war style. The engine is said to run at a healthy steady temperature of 70-80 degrees, with an oil pressure reading of 25psi under load and 15psi at idle. Vintage & Prestige praises this Phantom III for having a 'go-anywhere feel to it', with effortless cruising (at a comfortable 60mph or so) in modern traffic.

It all points to a car that is ready to be enjoyed, particularly as it was fastidiously maintained by its previous owner – with an oil and filter change every six months. New tyres were fitted relatively recently (including the still-unused spare), which means one less job to do before its next custodian sets off on an adventure.

This is certainly an extremely well-presented Phantom III, with its Black and Sand paintwork being very impressive but with a welcome hint

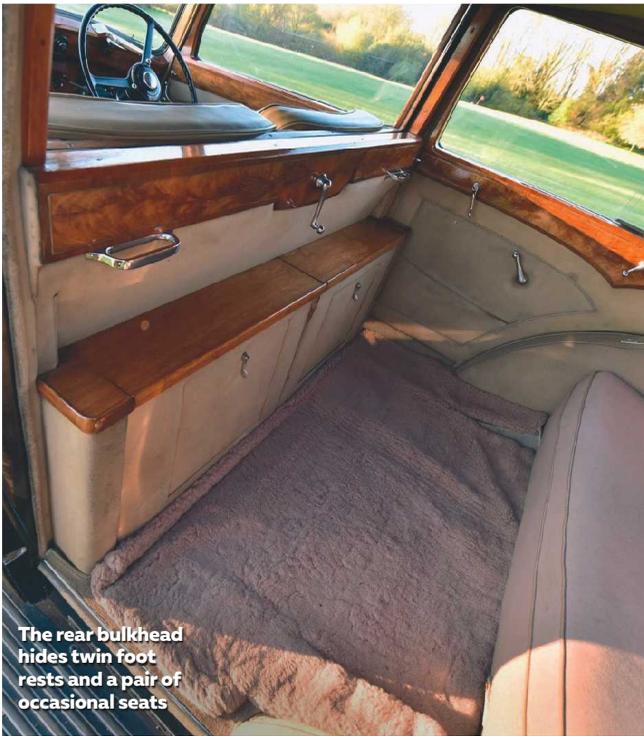
of patina. The sedanca roof operates well (making the car a joy to drive during the summer months), with the metal roof centre sliding back easily, followed by the two sedanca arms that are then stowed behind a vanity panel, secured by sturdy latches. This makes it one of the neatest sedanca-style roofs of its time, with a sleek, uncluttered appearance when open.

ON-BOARD PATINA

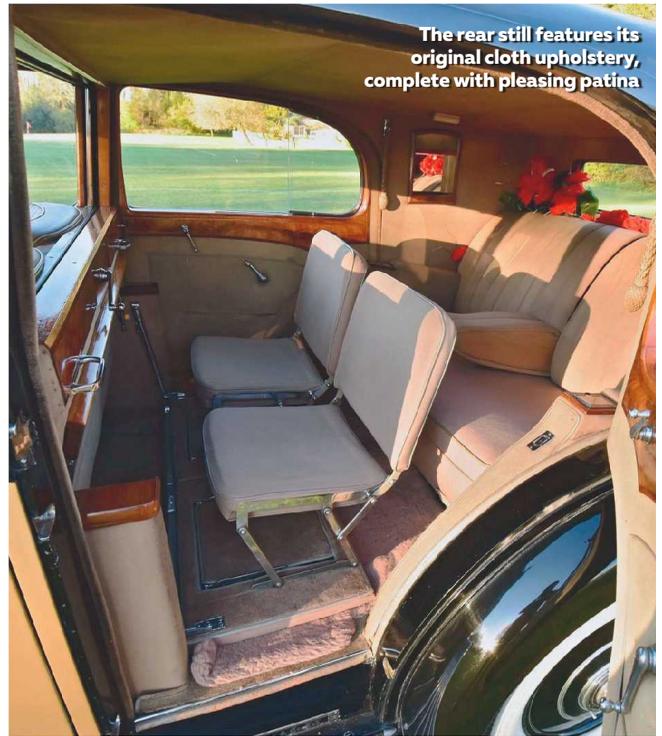
The interior of this Phantom III is just as impressive, with the leather front seats having been re-upholstered (by specialist coach-trimmer Gary Wright of Milton Keynes) some years ago, plus new carpets and door cards fitted at the same time. The end result is an immaculate driving compartment, albeit with a pleasingly original look.

The rear compartment still has its original cloth, which has some minor imperfections but is wonderful to »

FEATURE CAR ROLLS-ROYCE PHANTOM III



The rear bulkhead hides twin foot rests and a pair of occasional seats



The rear still features its original cloth upholstery, complete with pleasing patina

see in its untouched state. Twin foot rests fold out of the bulkhead in the rear, as does a pair of occasional seats to allow up to seven people to travel in style. Just about everything on board works as it should (from the reassuring 'clunk' of the doors to the dashboard lights and instrumentation), although the original internal windscreen wiper fitted to the dashboard has been disconnected at some point. The car still has its full kit of original tools in the tray within the boot lid, with larger tools safely stowed under the front seats.

One of the most fascinating aspects of this particular Phantom III is its incredibly comprehensive history, which even includes copies of the original order form, its old-style logbooks, folders packed with receipts and invoices dating back many years, copies

of period photographs of the car's many adventures, and details of the various prizes it has won – including the Touring Class for the Phantom III at the RREC's Annual Rally of 2004.

A particularly fascinating adventure for EXC 200 was when Aston Martin transported it to Switzerland's Furka Pass in 2008 in order to recreate the *Goldfinger* scenes over a five-day period. This isn't, of course, the *Goldfinger* car but it was deemed suitable for the project, and as a result was featured on TV as well as in a UK classic car magazine and the motoring section of *The Telegraph*.

If you have a six-figure sum to spend on a pre-war Rolls-Royce, this Mulliner-built Phantom III – with an asking price of £125,000 – is an intriguing proposition. Not only does it boast one of the best-looking bodies

offered with the Phantom III chassis, its no-expense-spared engine rebuild and other essential works make it ready to be pressed into immediate service by its next owner. So... who fancies a pan-European touring holiday in opulent pre-war style? ■

FURTHER DETAILS

For more information on this Phantom III Sedan by H.J. Mulliner, call Vintage & Prestige Classic Cars on 01375 379719 or go online to www.vandp.net. The company offers a wide array of pre- and post-war Rolls-Royce and Bentley models from its impressive Essex-based showroom, with full restoration and re-trimming facilities also on site.

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1926 Rolls-Royce Phantom I, The Phantom of Love
£1,100,000.00



1930 Rolls-Royce Phantom I York Roadster
£290,000.00



1934 Rolls-Royce Phantom II Continental Sports Saloon
£185,000.00



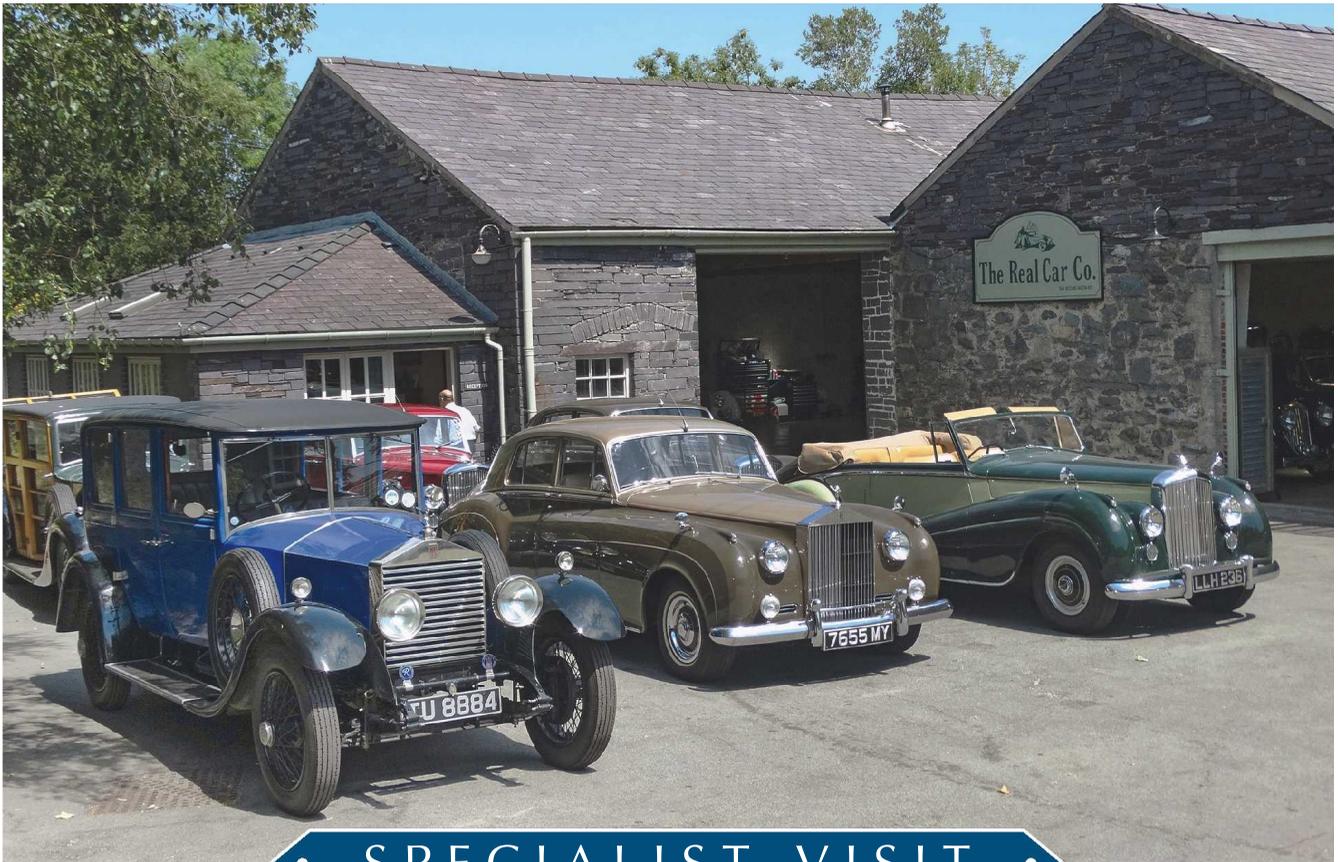
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• SPECIALIST VISIT •

THREE DECADES OF DEDICATION

Located in picturesque North Wales is The Real Car Company, one of the UK's leading retailers of pre- and early post-war models. We called in to sample their tea and to learn more about the business

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: PAUL GUINNESS

For any company specialising in classic and vintage Rolls-Royce and Bentley models, a 30th anniversary is something of a landmark event. It takes guts, determination, expertise and probably more than a bit of luck to stay in business – and to thrive – for an impressive three decades. But it's something that Ian Johnstone and Ray Arnold of The Real Car Company were able to celebrate last year.

"We certainly had our ups and downs during those early years," recalls Ian, who teamed up with Ray in 1987 in order to specialise in pre-war and early post-war Rolls-Royces and Bentleys, "with the low point being the economic downturn that occurred at the start of the '90s. The classic car boom years of the late 1980s had gone, and there was a sudden drop in demand across the market – with prices at the top end famously suffering."

Fortunately, however, The Real Car Company had enjoyed strong demand up until that point, which meant that when the downturn came it was able to weather the storm. "We'd done well during our first few years in business," explains Ray, "and so we were in a decent position when the market suddenly changed. We managed to keep going, and by the mid-1990s we were seeing strong growth once again." In more recent times, demand for



The historic buildings owned by the company make a fitting showroom for the cars



A stock level of around forty cars is usually kept by The Real Car Company



This Bentley S3 was undergoing preparation at the time of our visit



Cars are fully checked and prepared for sale before being advertised

The Real Car Company's services has remained remarkably constant, with an average of a hundred cars being sold each year – although sometimes as many as 120 can pass through Ian and Ray's hands. And for a company specialising in earlier models than some of its rivals (with cars of the 1920s through to the '60s being the main focus), that's an impressive sales tally.

The two enthusiasts met in North Wales back in 1985, when Ian bought a Derby Bentley from Ray – who at that time was running his own exhaust centre near Bangor. The two shared a passion for older Rolls-Royces and Bentleys, with Ray occasionally buying and selling any car that interested him. As the pair became more acquainted, however, they both realised there was a potential business opportunity, leading to the official

launch of The Real Car Company in '87.

By the following year, the duo had moved the business to its current location in the tiny village of Coed y Parc, in the county of Gwynedd. The collection of buildings dotted around the central courtyard were once all part of the historic Penrhyn slate quarry that still operates to this day, with expansion of The Real Car Company over the years enabling it to take over more of the site. These days, the 19th century stone buildings and generous courtyard are all occupied by the company, with Ian and Ray acquiring the entire site in 1991.

RURAL LOCATION

So is being in a relatively remote location ever a disadvantage? "Not at all," insists Ian. "Let's face it, if anyone

is willing to travel here to view a car, then there's every chance they're a serious buyer. We try to have viewings only by appointment, as it means we can have each car ready for test driving when required. But sometimes we'll get interested parties simply dropping in to take a look at our stock."

Standing in the yard, gazing around at the collection of cars glinting in the sunshine and the historic workshops that house the rest of the stock, all set against the dramatic backdrop of a slate quarry and mountainous terrain, it's easy to see the appeal of the location. It's a tranquil spot, with some idyllic roads available to any prospective purchaser wanting to take a car for a drive. But how has the business changed over the years?

"The arrival of the internet certainly had a major effect," explains Ian. "It's »

SPECIALIST VISIT THE REAL CAR COMPANY



Among the company's many artefacts is this original ex-Crewe drawing board



Ian and Ray boast an impressive collection of books, manuals and other paraphernalia



An average of a hundred cars a year are bought and sold by Ian and Ray



The company's speciality is mainly models from the 1920s through to the '60s



This 1921 Silver Ghost Open Drive Landauette makes an imposing sight

now easier than ever to get our stock in front of an international audience, and we tend to sell around 30% of our cars to overseas buyers. That's a percentage that hasn't altered much over the years, but the way in which customers find us and communicate with us has certainly changed."

Most of The Real Car Company's stock is acquired from sellers in the UK, with fewer cars now being imported from the USA than in the firm's early days. Today's currency exchange rates make imports potentially more expensive, although such rates can be an aid when it comes to attracting overseas buyers.

DEDICATED TEAM

There's a team of about ten working at The Real Car Company at any one time, a figure that includes Ian and Ray, as well as Sue – without whom the office

"These days, the company tries to have between forty and fifty cars available for sale – an impressive figure"

wouldn't run as smoothly as it does. In the workshops there are fully trained and highly experienced technicians preparing cars for sale, whilst others work on longer-term projects: "Some of the cars we buy require some degree of restoration or recommissioning work, and we obviously make sure that they're fully prepared and ready to use before we offer them for sale," says Ian. "We do, however, sometimes sell cars as projects, especially if we've managed to acquire one that's interested us and can be sold on to an enthusiastic owner looking to make it their own."

An example of the latter was the Rolls-Royce 20/25 featured in the Market Watch section of our July/

August 2018 issue, a barn-find car that was in running order but hadn't been on the road since 1970. It was described in the firm's advertising as 'very scruffy but correct and complete', and was being offered in untouched condition for £25,000. It was a pleasure to see it for ourselves during our visit to The Real Car Company, although it was already sold and awaiting collection by its new owner.

These days, the company tries to have in the region of forty cars available for sale, an impressive figure considering the single-car stock that the duo had in the beginning: "When we first started the company, we had just the one car – as that was



This original 20/25 H.J. Mulliner Sports saloon is due for collection by its new owner



Original framed drawings adorn many of the walls of The Real Car Company



£42,500 will buy you this glorious Rippon-bodied 20hp limousine from 1926



Ian Johnstone (left) and Ray Arnold have enjoyed three decades of working together

all we could afford," recalls Ray. "But that sold very quickly, and before we knew it we had four or five more on our hands. It's been a long-term process of expansion, but the stock level we're at now has remained fairly constant for a good many years."

As you might expect with a specialist company that has been in business for so long, plenty of cars have been sold by Ian and Ray more than once: "We'll often get one returned to us that we sold some years earlier, maybe because the owner fancies a change," explains Ian. "Sadly, though, it can also happen when the owner passes away, and the family then instructs us to find a caring new owner for the car."

At the time of our visit to The Real Car Company, there was a fascinating selection of stock awaiting our perusal, with some of the earliest cars we spotted including a 1921 Silver Ghost Open Drive Landauette (with Elliott

bodywork) and a good selection of Rolls-Royce 20hp derivatives from the late '20s. Silver Cloud and Bentley S-series models can invariably be found at The Real Car Company, as can 20/25s, Silver Wraiths and a plethora of pre-war Bentleys. The company's healthy turnover of cars means that fresh stock is constantly arriving, details of which can be found via the 'Arriving Soon' section of its website.

Aside from being an enjoyable experience in itself, a visit to The Real Car Company reinforces the fact that certain pre-war models still offer exceptional value for money compared with some of the most iconic post-war designs. Various 20hp limousines are on offer at the time of writing, with bodywork by the likes of Connaught, Park Ward and Rippon; and with asking prices for such well-presented survivors ranging from £37,500 to £45,000, it's easy to appreciate the temptation of

these impressively usable machines.

More than three decades after they first hit upon the idea of creating a business together, Ian Johnstone and Ray Arnold still get a thrill from buying and selling the kinds of cars that fascinate them – with an ever-expanding customer base being the ultimate proof of their success. ■

THANK YOU

Grateful thanks to Ian and Ray of The Real Car Company for inviting us to spend a day at their beautifully located headquarters. To find out more about their current stock, go online to www.realcar.co.uk or call 01248 602649. Or to see some of the company's cars being driven around North Wales, check out The Real Car Company's own channel on YouTube.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

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

WORDS: PAUL GUINNESS PHOTOGRAPHY: VARIOUS

ADVANTAGE APPELYARD

Published in May 1977 was this advert for Appleyard, a Rolls-Royce retailer with a total of five different outlets. The ad was published in *Motor* magazine alongside a road test of the new Silver Shadow II, and recommended that potential buyers visited an Appleyard showroom in Leeds, Harrogate, Huddersfield, Carlisle or Glasgow in order to view this latest model.

The advert asked readers a direct question: 'Isn't it advisable to purchase the world's finest motor car from the top service specialists in the country?' And it had this message of reassurance for anyone tempted by the £22,809 Silver Shadow II: 'Appleyard invite you to verify that in a changing world, a Rolls-Royce is still a Rolls-Royce...'

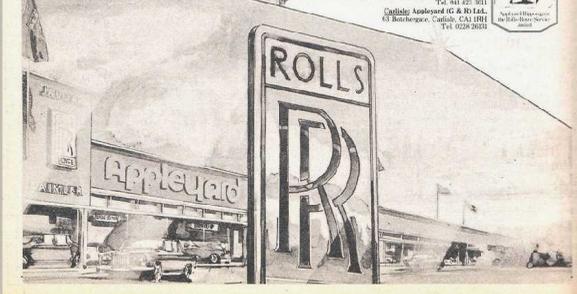
ROLLS-ROYCE RETAILERS

Reflect a moment: isn't it advisable to purchase the world's finest motor car from the top service specialists in the country? Appleyard invite you to verify that in a changing world a Rolls-Royce is still a Rolls-Royce...and that Appleyard service remains as always – uncompromising.



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Tel: 041 62 3011
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67 Borthwick, Carlisle, CA1 1RH
Tel: 0228 30261



SILVER SHADOW AT THE NEC

This official press photograph was issued by Rolls-Royce to promote the latest Silver Shadow II. It might not be the most exciting image, especially as it's a monochrome effort (as the vast majority of press photographs were at the time). But it's interesting for its use of Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre as the backdrop, a venue that officially opened its doors to the public in February 1976.

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

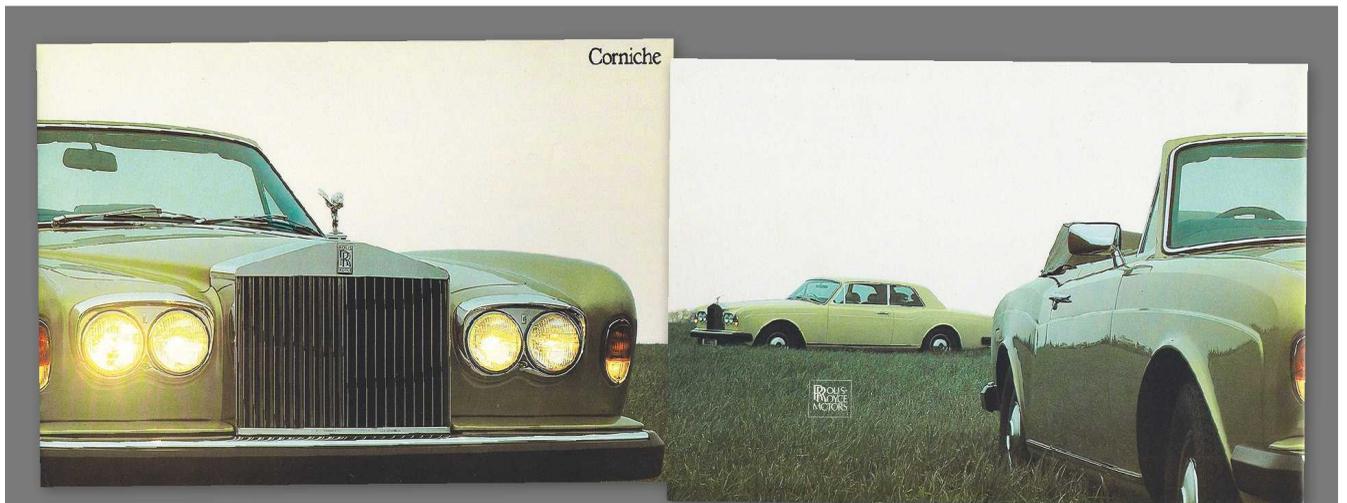
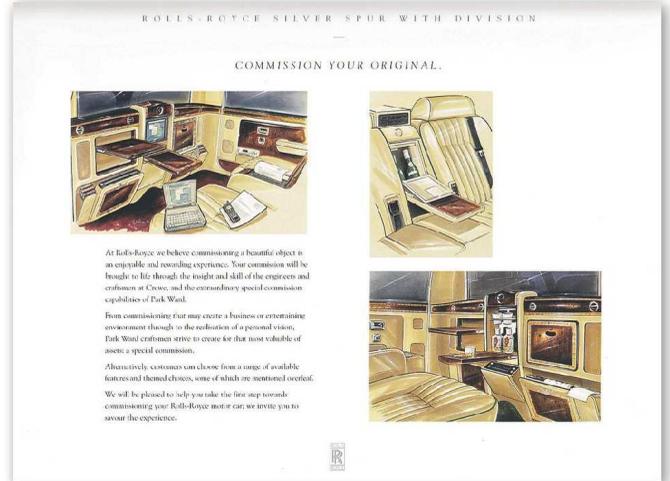
STRETCHING THE POINT

If the standard Silver Spur simply wasn't long enough for your needs, Rolls-Royce had the perfect solution via what was officially marketed as the Silver Spur with Division, as shown in this dedicated four-page brochure. The text within explained that the 'Silver Spur with Division has

a wheelbase 14 inches longer than the Silver Spur', which meant there was room for a 'spacious, private rear passenger compartment with an electrically operated glass division'.

The accompanying hand-drawn illustrations showed how the Silver Spur with Division's interior was the

perfect office on wheels, with two of the latest innovations of the time – a laptop computer and mobile phone – both featured. This latest limousine also came with a built-in bureau between the rear seats, an in-car phone, a fax machine and even a VHS video recorder with built-in monitor.



TWO-DOOR EXCLUSIVITY

A classic publication from the late '70s is this lavish brochure for the Corniche, featuring both the fixed-head and convertible versions of the time. Although derived from the Silver Shadow saloon, the Corniche was a far more exclusive offering – hand-built by Mulliner Park Ward, the specialist coachbuilder operated by Rolls-Royce since 1961,

following the firm's merger of its H.J. Mulliner and Park Ward divisions.

The brochure described the Corniche as 'an elegant and completely individual motor car, either a saloon or a convertible with a power-operated hood'. And of course, both versions were beautifully finished to the highest standards, with 'hand-cut, hand-

fitted Connolly leather' and 'rich Lombardy veneers' used throughout the interior, while beneath the surface could be found 'some of the most advanced engineering in the world'.

The brochure's copywriters boasted that the Corniche was 'the grand tourer par excellence', an upmarket and exclusive offering that was 'as practical as it is elegant'.

CHAUFFEUR TRAINING

Just as the July/August issue of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* went to print, featuring Ian Adcock's recollections of attending Rolls-Royce's official chauffeur school, we came across this copy of the company's customer magazine from 1983. By sheer coincidence, this particular issue of *The Journal* had its very own feature on the in-house chauffeur training of the time, with reporter Paul Tritton heading along to experience it for himself.

This accompanying photograph showed one of the course's latest



Bob Alexander, the school's latest graduate. Driving is only part of his job.



graduates, Bob Alexander, alongside his employer's 1973 Silver Shadow. Each successful candidate since 1927 had been given a badge number, with almost 300 awarded in the first two years alone: 'Rather than start the numbering sequence at No.1, someone had the idea of starting at No.2000,' explained the article. 'The latest recipient, Bob Alexander, is the proud owner of badge and certificate No.6586.'

Does anyone know what became of PLM 325L (DVLA records suggest it's not been taxed since 2016) or Bob, that newly qualified Rolls-Royce chauffeur from 1983?

REMEMBERING THE SPECIALS

Bentley MkVI-based specials have for many years been part of the classic motoring landscape. We take a look at some of the more celebrated offerings... along with a few wildcards

WORDS: RICHARD HESELTINE PHOTOGRAPHY: VARIOUS

There has rarely been a shortage of Bentley 'chops'. Indeed, they've been commonplace almost as long as Bentleys have existed, with most having been modified to improve their performance on-track. The 1960s and '70s, however, witnessed the emergence of 'specials' made in series; the types of cars for which appearance took precedence over (or was at least given

equal credence to) outright speed, if only in the eyes of their creators in some cases. MkVI and R-type saloons cost buttons at the time, and donor cars were readily available.

So it was that a cottage industry of specials builders emerged, with the likes of Mallalieu, Syd Lawrence and Johnard at the forefront. Some made headlines for all the right reasons, while others went the way of the dodo – sometimes

because partners split or they forgot to factor in a business plan. Oh, and in one or two cases, Rolls-Royce stamped on them due to copyright infringement.

What follows is a rundown of some of the more celebrated specials builders, along with a few more outré one-offs. They might not be to all tastes, but they're nothing if not noticeable. And to some owners of the time, that was all that mattered.

SYD LAWRENCE SPECIAL

Syd Lawrence's association with Bentleys stretched back to 1926 when he joined the firm's service department. Prior to that, he had been employed at the British Anzani Engine Company as head of research and development. He became an independent Bentley specialist in 1932, and started racing his first special in the late 1940s.

Lawrence's Southgate Motors concern began offering MkVI-based roadsters in 1972, each car featuring a glassfibre body and a six-inch shorter wheelbase relative to the donor car. Five years later, the second-generation version came online, this latest strain boasting new (and much more attractive) rear bodywork, larger headlights and



a redesigned exhaust system with exterior downpipes. Prices started at £17,500 (or around £120,000 in today's money), with the brochure trumpeting via random capitalisation: 'Unfashionably, the Syd Lawrence

Special is BUILT TO LAST. The robust chassis frame is not prone to rust and the rugged major components were designed with quality as top priority: an excellent sports car and a very fine investment'.



MALLALIEU BARCHETTA / MERCIA / OXFORD

Nobody did more to popularise the concept of the production Bentley special than Durham 'Derry' Mallalieu. A successful Bugatti racer and restorer of pre-war thoroughbreds, he left the UK for Norwalk, Connecticut in 1959, and six years later constructed his first MkVI-based roadster – a skimpy device that attracted plenty of column inches in the specialist press, as well as requests for replicas.

Mallalieu returned to Blighty in 1971 and set up business in a small workshop on the site of a disused railway in Abingdon. Three years later, the first Barchetta had been completed by Mallalieu and a couple of trainee metal-shapers. While ostensibly similar to the USA-made car, it was markedly more attractive and constructed on a standard MkVI chassis, albeit with the engine and transmission repositioned rearwards by 18 inches. It was sold for a none-

too-shabby £6500 (around £75,000 in 2018 money), and was followed by a third car for which Mallalieu Engineering made major chassis alterations.

Sadly, though, the company founder passed away in November 1975.

The by now nine-strong staff assumed control and all subsequent Barchettas featured steel rather than ash body frames. But by this time the firm was already pushing on with a sister model, the Mercia, which was initiated by an American customer. Though again based on a MkVI, much of the chassis aft of the bulkhead was new, while the aluminium body over an aluminium frame was less square-rigged than your typical Bentley special. While the design had been mapped out as far back as 1974, the prototype wasn't completed until the following year. It tipped the scales at 1270kg (2800lb) and, with 4.5-litre straight-six power, was said to be good for around 110mph depending on

axle ratios. A third model, the Oxford, came online in 1977 and boasted flowing wings and a gently tapered rear end.

There were, however, one or two bumps in the road. In July 1980, Bentley Motors Ltd obtained judgement in the High Court against Mallalieu Engineering (aka Mallalieu Cars), which stated that it had to delete all reference to the marque in its literature and remove Bentley emblems from the cars. It was of little consequence, however, as demand for its wares had clearly ebbed, and diversifying into all manner of schemes (such as manufacturing the William Towns-designed Microdot city car and developing a bizarre Chevrolet Camaro-based contraption for a New York would-be motor mogul) came to naught. The firm tanked a year later. Anywhere between 36 and 52 Bentley specials were fashioned by Mallalieu, depending on whose estimates you credit.

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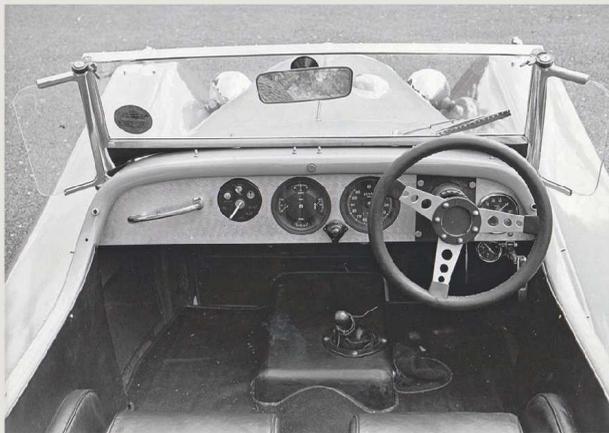




MIKE KING RACING

From his Nissen hut buried deep into Forestry Commission land in Liphook, Hampshire, ex-Cooper Cars man Mike King hand-crafted a raft of replicas of Bugattis, ERAs and other pre-war greats during the late 1970s and early '80s. This Bentley MkVI-based machine, however, was one of his more shadowy creations.

King completed the build in 1981 and intended it to be the first of a limited production run. The bodywork was hand-shaped from aluminium, the front axle being moved further forward relative to the donor car to lend it the appearance of a 'W.O.-era' Bentley. The car remained unique and its current whereabouts are unknown.



JOHNARD DONINGTON

Unlike many Bentley MkVI-based specials, the Donington was actually styled... and it showed. The brainchild of Yorkshireman John Guppy, this rakish two-seater was conceived as far back as 1970, but the prototype wasn't completed until August '75 when it was entered into a Bentley Drivers Club race at Donington. Indeed, Guppy and business partner John Goddard were still finishing the car whilst it was in the pits.

Powered by a 6.3-litre Bentley V8, the car made an instant

impression – to the point that the duo decided to put it into limited production. A second prototype was completed in 1977 with a glassfibre body penned by Guppy and Dudley Beck, but reworked extensively by Neville Trickett, a designer whose resume included everything from beach buggies to seismic supercars. The redesign resulted in an appreciably shorter centre 'tub' and a longer aluminium bonnet.

The production Donington was released later that same year and, with

optional V8 power, could have been yours for an eye-watering £14,500 (roughly £99,500 now, adjusted for inflation). The build of each car involved more than a thousand man hours, and the factory literature claimed a top speed of 135mph and a 0-60mph time of seven seconds.

As many as 16 examples were made by Johnard Vintage Cars of Blandford Forum, Dorset, and later by Halse Engineering of Sussex. The never knowingly inconspicuous Elton John was said to have been a customer.

SHRIVE SPECIAL

While perhaps not the prettiest of cars, the Shrive Special was well-received at its launch. Essentially a body swap, the donor car's chassis remained largely unchanged save for shortened hind quarters. The point of the exercise was to take a time-ravaged MkVI with a frilly body and replace the saloon outline with something that bit jauntier.

Conceived by Geoffrey Shrive, and bodied in glassfibre, as many as 36 Shrive Specials were made during the 1970s, with the majority heading Stateside. In *Bentley Specials & Special Bentleys*, author Ray Roberts commented: 'In its favour, the conversion in no way interferes with the basic geometry of the Bentley-built chassis except that the weight load is reduced.'



GOODA SPECIAL

Distinct from other cars featured here, the R-Type-based Gooda Special eschewed pre-war styling for something that bit more contemporary. Chassis B77ZX left the factory in 1954 and was originally registered RTU 28. The conversion occurred in 1966, by which time the car was owned jointly by Robert (Bob) Gooda and Brian Dumps.

The fastback body was fashioned by Peel Coachworks of Kingston-upon-Thames, while the headlight treatment owed much to the then current Rolls-

Royce Phantom VI. Remarkably, the bonnet-line was some four inches lower than before. The Gooda Special also emerged somewhat shorter than a regular R-type (4634mm to the original 5090mm), although the wheelbase remained unaltered.

The 4887cc straight-six was still mated to the factory three-speed automatic when the car was entered in the August 1967 Bentley Drivers Club race meeting at Silverstone. It was entrusted to Dumps for the five-lap Handicap Race that kicked

off the seasonal fixture, although the car failed to last the distance. Co-owner Gooda emerged victorious in his S3 Continental, which was described somewhat dismissively by Gregor Grant in his *Autosport* report as a 'Rolls-Bentley'.

This one-off was later sold to the USA and appeared in an episode of 1970s TV detective show *Vega\$*. In 2014, it made only its second-ever track foray, when Will Arif steered it on its bump-stops during the inaugural Members' Meeting.



MARK SIX ENGINEERING / LAWRENCE-TUNE RAPIDE

Legendary Morgan tuner Chris Lawrence fashioned all manner of left-field creations, from twin-engined sprint cars to the beautiful Monica super-saloon. His move into creating Bentley specials, however, happened more by happenstance than planning. In the mid-1970s, he was approached by S.R. (Nik) Cookson with a view to finishing a MkVI special that had been commissioned by a wealthy Cornishman.

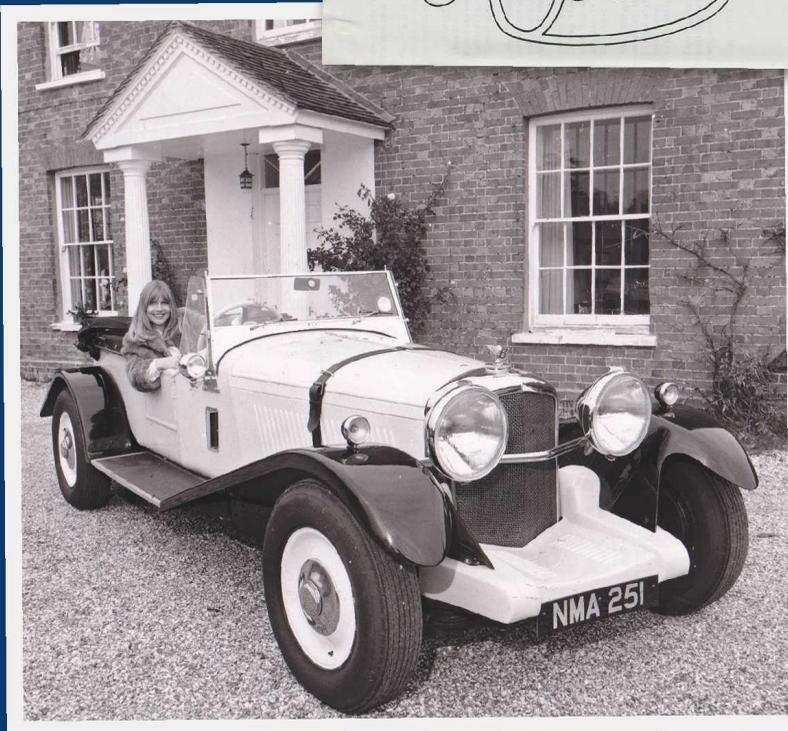
Depending on whose version of history you believe, Lawrence then decided he could do better by himself and initiated his own take on the theme. In 1978, he created the prototype Mark Six which featured an aluminium body and glassfibre wings moulded off those borrowed from a 1932 Vanden Plas-bodied Bentley. Two- and four-seater versions were offered, with options stretching to vinyl-clad coachwork to mimic the fabric-body style of yesteryear.

Lawrence's creation was tested by *Autocar* magazine in December 1979, with a clearly smitten Michael Scarlett concluding: 'Generally, [this] is a very pleasing machine of great individuality and distinction, and done, in my opinion, with rare good taste and without undue ostentation'. This positive ink led to a rush of enquiries to the point that a run of 35 cars was mooted. A further five were made before Lawrence abruptly upped sticks and moved to California. There, the former Le Mans class winner attempted to kick-start production Stateside, but the scheme unravelled amid much acrimony. That, and lawsuits.

MARK SIX ENGINEERING

PRESENTS THE

Rapide



HARRY ROSE MkVI SPECIAL

Bentley Drivers Club stalwart Harry Rose was a well-known specials builder long before he created his first MkVI-based machine. In addition to campaigning a brace of 4½-litre vintage Bentleys, he also chopped a Derby-era car before following through with a two-seater based on an R-type. In the late 1960s, however, he began offering a glassfibre body suitable for fitment on a shortened MkVI frame, with the floor moulded in for extra strength.

The bodies were made by Neville Trickett's Siva concern, with the official brochure of the time trumpeting an all-in weight of 1320kg. A variety of engines were employed, with Rose's own car featuring one lifted from an S1 Continental that was equipped with a turbocharger. Rose died in September 1970, but a four-seater variation on the same theme continued to be offered by Siva and funded by T-shirt magnate, Peter Barnes.



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YOUR SHOUT

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Send an email to rrb.ed@kelsey.co.uk or write to: The Editor, *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver*, Kelsey Media, Cudham Tithe Barn, Berry's Hill, Cudham, Kent TN16 3AG

SILVER DAWN OWNER

I have just received your latest issue (July/August 2018), which in my opinion continues to build on your already well-established reputation. I note that you are also building strong relationships with the trade and advertisers, which I think is working very well – and I know of one dealer in particular who is delighted. In my opinion you are combining excellent articles with very good design and presentation.

I found your article on the history of the Silver Spirit very interesting (and it was good to see Marinus Rijkers' letter also included), but I note that you did not include the Silver Dawn – sometimes referred to as Silver Spirit IV. This surely ranks as the last 'real' Rolls-Royce. Mine is known as 'Merlin IV' (my first 'Merlin' was a 20/25) and is often the centre of attention at local classic car events, with people keen to ask questions.



I know it is hard work producing a publication like yours, but you are certainly knocking 'the opposition' for six. Well done... and keep going!

Peter Edwards
Warwickshire

Thank you for your kind words, Peter. We do our best to ensure plenty of variety in the magazine, and we're delighted to know that you're enjoying it – Ed.

THAT'S MY BENTLEY!

I've been reading *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* ever since I bought my Bentley RT. As I was reading the July/August issue, however, I came to Page 77 (the feature on chauffeur training) and, to my amazement, spotted a red Bentley with the registration number R145 ECA. This is my actual



car, currently registered as VWD 7.

Sometime after that photograph was taken, the car was modified to Hooper conversion spec (with the small rear window), which makes it a particularly rare RT. It has been off the road until recently, and is now receiving some recommissioning and repair work. I would love to hear from you if you have any history or further photographs of the car, or if you're interested in featuring it in the magazine.

David Adams
Via email

Well spotted, David! I'm afraid we don't have any more archive photographs of your car, but we would certainly be interested in featuring it in the magazine at some point – Ed.



FLYING ACE

With reference to the Bentley R-Type feature published in the July/August issue of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver*, you make mention of the car's first owner being Major Egbert Cadbury and then show a photograph supposedly of him. However, I can confirm that the gentleman in the photo is actually Major James Byford McCudden, VC, DSO, DFC, MC, MM, Croix de Guerre – one of England's top-scoring aces during World War I.

Major McCudden flew – amongst others – DH2s and SE5As, one of which he is seen seated in here. His official score was 57 victories, although he probably achieved more. His speciality was intercepting the high-flying German two-seater artillery observation aircraft, which could reach over 20,000 feet by 1917.

McCudden wrote his life story, *Flying Fury*, and delivered it to his publisher just days before he was killed in a flying accident in 1918. It is probably the best book on flying and fighting in World War I that has ever been written. His description of trying to fly and fight at 20,000 feet without oxygen is fascinating, and only once does he refer to how terrible he felt after a flight like that.

John Starkey
Via email

Thank you for that fascinating insight, John. We're delighted to be able to put the record straight via your email – Ed.



NOT ENOUGH LEGROOM

I am a Rolls-Royce collector, owning seven cars here in Germany, and I very much appreciate your magazine. My congratulations on your excellent work.

I noticed that you're running a report on the Seraph in the September/October issue. I own a Seraph, and what I really hate is the very limited legroom on the driver's side. I am 1.85 metres tall, and every time I'm behind the wheel I have to drive with bent legs.

When driving over long distances, it is particularly awful. I find myself sitting 'like an ape on a grindstone', as we Germans say. Back in 1992, Mercedes-Benz made extensive studies into the necessary interior dimensions of a luxury saloon, which is why you can fully stretch your legs in a W140-series S-Class.

My recommendation is that you only buy a Seraph if you're not bothered about driving with bent legs or if you are no more than 1.6 metres tall.

Dieter Philippi
Germany

Many thanks, Dieter, for getting in touch. Would other Silver Seraph owners care to comment? As ever, we'd love to hear your views and experiences – Ed.



QUESTIONING THE CULLINAN

With reference to your question about the new Cullinan raised on Page 7 of the July/August issue of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver*, I would like to share the following thoughts. In my humble opinion, Rolls-Royce's move towards the global SUV market is a step too far if one clings to the classic perception of the brand, as I do.

Personally, I don't like the Cullinan. It agonises me that a brand like Rolls-Royce tries to please rap stars and Russian oligarchs rather than lords and statesmen. In other words, the one-dimensional values of a world defined and driven by competition and a wry notion of 'strength' and 'weakness', of 'winners' and 'losers', that is no longer associated with certain values.

On the other hand, the change in Rolls-Royce's model policy merely reflects the overall development of society itself, in which parvenus become rich and access to the upper class no longer requires living up to higher standards of education, manners, taste or style. From that point of view, Rolls-Royce's move seems quite right. However, I still mourn the loss of class and of understatement that once made Rolls-Royce a truly noble brand.

Christopher von Greverode
Via email



READER'S PHOTOS

I thought I'd send you a couple of photographs for possible publication in your fantastic magazine. One is an image of two Rolls-Royce 20/25s, taken at a classic car show that

was held at Wynyard Hall Gardens, near Stockton on Tees, back in June. I know the owner of the car furthest away from the camera.

The other is of a very sorry looking



Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow that I spotted parked on a driveway in East Sussex, whilst I was on holiday last year.

Robert Lazenby
Via email



AS GOOD AS NEW?

If you yearn for the days when the Silver Spirit was still in production, why not consider the next best thing? We hitch a lift in a 1988 example that's seen remarkably little use

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: PAUL GUINNESS



If you were lucky enough to be taking delivery of a brand new Silver Spirit back in 1988, your chosen dealer would be charging you in excess of £73,000 for the privilege. That was the list price of the standard car, before any of the options boxes had been ticked on the order form, ensuring that even an 'entry-level' Rolls-Royce was one of the most exclusive saloons available at the time.

This particular Silver Spirit was registered on April 9th that year, with Dutton Forshaw South supplying the car to its Kent-based first owner.

Finished in Windsor Blue and featuring a Parchment interior with contrasting blue piping, it was a handsome machine. What makes it particularly interesting all these years later, however, is the fact that the car has yet to be passed on to its second owner. So impressed was its original keeper, he not only kept his Silver Spirit in immaculate condition, he also held on to it for a remarkable three decades.

Only now has this thirty-year-old Rolls-Royce come to market, offered for sale for the first time ever – with fewer than 17,000 miles showing



The remarkably unworn interior is all-original, even down to the unused and still gleaming ashtrays



on its odometer. In fact, by the time Charles Baseley (of Ghost Motor Works fame) invited us aboard to experience it for ourselves, the Silver Spirit had covered exactly 16,979 miles – and looked just as it would have when it first hit the road in April 1988.

“The original buyer of the car, a Mr Keeble, used it only sparingly,” explained Charles, as he showed us around the Silver Spirit. “But unlike a lot of today’s very low-mileage

examples, it wasn’t taken off the road. He kept it maintained and MoT’d throughout his ownership, and so it has a comprehensive service record via main agents and – in later years – the independent specialist, Sargeants of Goudhurst.”

A quick glance at the Silver Spirit’s MoT history proves the point, with each test being carried out on time and – during the last decade in particular – with very few miles covered each

year. Back in 2008, for example, the mileage stood at 15,925, which means that just over a thousand miles have been covered in the ten years since.

ORIGINAL SURVIVOR

This particular Silver Spirit is the perfect example of how an original, little-used car can be more appealing to the purist than even the most fastidiously restored version. During any restoration, »

FEATURE CAR

ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER SPIRIT



Having covered fewer than 17,000 miles, the 6.75-litre V8 still performs faultlessly

it's all too easy to miss the odd detail or perhaps even over-restore certain areas beyond their original factory look. But in the case of a car that's seen very little use and has been cherished from new, its originality will always shine through.

That's why the paint finish of this Silver Spirit looks exactly as it did when it left Crewe thirty years ago, as does

the incredibly well-preserved interior. The blue carpeting and lamb's wool over-rugs are completely unworn, the Parchment leather is equally immaculate and the headlining is unmarked. The carpet in the boot is just as superb, and everything in the perfect-condition tool kit looks like it's never been removed.

Then there's the smell. Climb

aboard this exceptional Silver Spirit and you're immediately struck by its unmistakable 'new car smell'. Even after all this time, this stunningly original Rolls-Royce smells just as it would have done in 1988, when it was awaiting collection from the showroom of Dutton Forshaw South.

Out on the road, the new-car impression continues. As Charles Baseley manoeuvred the Silver Spirit out of the Ghost Motor Works premises and headed on to the lanes that surround Claygate Cross, just a few miles from Sevenoaks, it felt as though we'd been transported back to the late '80s. The car made effortless progress as the narrow lanes gave way to winding B-roads, with not a creak or a squeak to be heard as the original suspension soaked up the imperfections with ease.

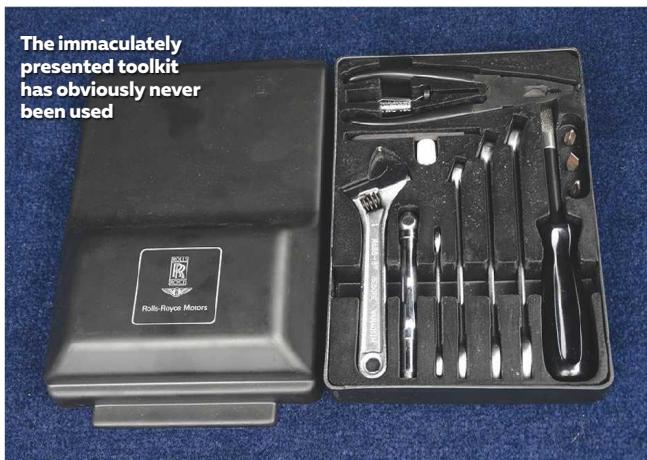
Being chauffeured in a Silver Spirit is a familiar experience, of course. But what makes a ride in this particular example so special is its genuinely as-new feel, with its 6.75-litre V8 sounding as smooth and refined as the day it was built, complemented by barely discernible gear changes up and down the GM400 transmission.



**“What makes a ride
in this particular
example so special is
its as-new feel”**



**The immaculately
presented toolkit
has obviously never
been used**



“It drives just as they did when they were brand new,” explained Charles, as we made steady progress around rural Kent. “It’s the closest I’ve been to driving a brand new Silver Spirit since they went out of production.”

And he’s right. This is one Silver Spirit that, thanks to its unusually low mileage and fastidious care over the years, still has that new-car feel that is so difficult to recreate through even the best restoration. The only downside

from a buyer’s perspective is that such a car will always command a premium on today’s market, hence the £27,500 asking price in this particular instance.

In Silver Spirit terms, that’s a lot of money. After all, this is one Rolls-Royce model that can still be picked up in decent condition for a four-figure sum. But it’s easy to see why this 1988 car has the price tag that it does, given its exemplary condition and exceptional history. For any Silver Spirit fan craving

one of the finest and most original Series I models that we’ve come across, it’s surely a tempting proposition? ■

THANK YOU

We’re grateful to Ghost Motor Works for allowing us access to this low-mileage Silver Spirit. To find out more about the car, call 01732 886002 or go online to www.ghostmotors.co.uk.



• SPECIALIST UPDATE •

RAPID EXPANSION

We take a trip to Buckinghamshire to meet the team behind The Beaconsfield Workshop and to learn more about the success of this relatively young company

WORDS: PAUL GUINNESS PHOTOGRAPHY: GORDON BRUCE

Compared with some of the specialists we get to visit whilst on our travels, The Beaconsfield Workshop is a relatively recent enterprise, having officially opened for business in June 2015. Inevitably, however, the names behind the company – Martin Hawes and Dave Redrup – have decades of experience between them, enabling this Buckinghamshire-based success story to offer an impressive array of high-quality services for Rolls-Royce and Bentley owners around the UK... and beyond.

Martin and Dave have actually been working together since 2010,

but saw an opportunity to create The Beaconsfield Workshop five years later. Their initial base in Beaconsfield Old Town was soon outgrown, and these days the company operates from brand new purpose-built premises in a rural location less than a mile away. The workforce includes full-time bodywork and paint specialists, technicians and a couple of hard-working apprentices, ensuring that just about any aspect of servicing, repairs and restoration is catered for.

The company has invested heavily in new equipment, including the latest state-of-the-art STL Cyclone paint ovens – ensuring that even the largest

Rolls-Royces and Bentleys can be accommodated and worked on to the highest standards. Accident repairs, resprays and restoration work are all carried out in-house, with the team at The Beaconsfield Workshop being used to both pre- and post-war classics as well as newer Rolls-Royces and Bentleys, including the Continental GT.

Many Buckinghamshire-based owners now rely on the company for their later-model maintenance, with workshop manager Chris Hancock (formerly of Bentley Pangbourne) heading up this aspect of the business, aided by the latest diagnostic equipment. In reality though, just



Hi-tech paint ovens have proved to be a wise investment for the company



A lot of time is spent on hand-finishing to ensure a superb post-respray result



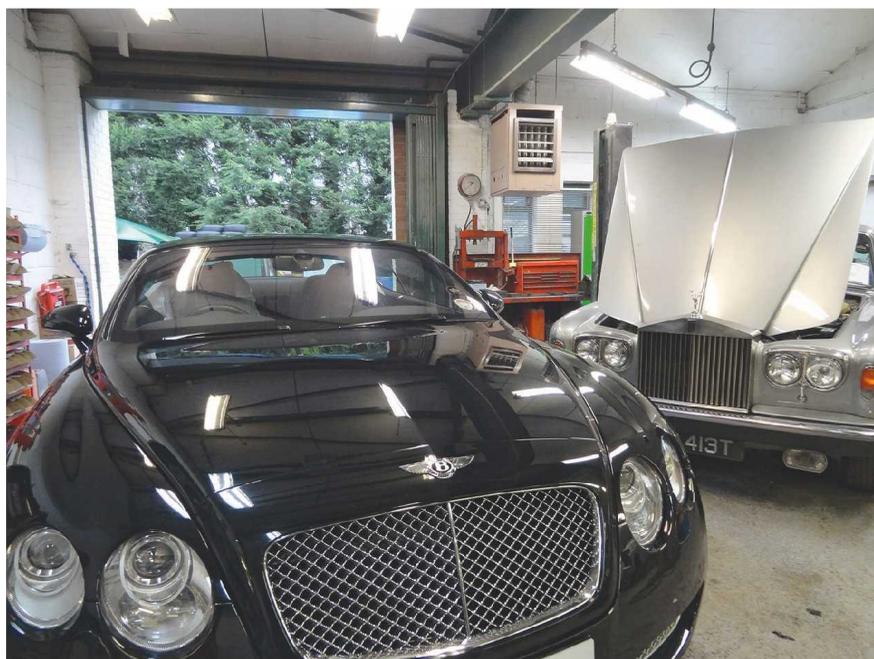
The latest diagnostic equipment is essential for today's modern classics



Every aspect of restoration work can be handled by The Beaconsfield Workshop



This 1972 Corniche Convertible was in for work at the time of our recent visit



Rolls-Royces and Bentleys of all ages are serviced, repaired and restored in-house

“The company has invested heavily in equipment, including the latest STL Cyclone paint ovens”

about any mechanical work can be undertaken on any Rolls-Royce or Bentley, from the most basic service through to major overhauls.

Dave Redrup is the man responsible for the superb paint finishes achieved at The Beaconsfield Workshop, and has both the experience and knowledge needed when refurbishing a classic of any era: “Most modern bodyshops are satisfied with a few coats of paint and a finish straight from the gun,” he explained to us. “We add sufficient extra layers to allow for lots of hand finishing, which is what makes our work a cut above the rest.”

So impressive are the results

achieved, the company is one of very few to be officially approved by Lotus Cars, as well as being the preferred choice of numerous prestige dealer networks. Major restoration work is undertaken, as are minor dent repairs at the other end of the bodywork scale, with no job being seen as too small. One of the most fascinating projects, however, was the full restoration of a Silver Wraith owned by the Emir of Kano, Northern Nigeria, which involved replacing the ash framework, completely rebuilding the alloy and steel body, re-trimming the interior, fashioning a new hood and refurbishing just about everything mechanical.

The Beaconsfield Workshop might be one of the newer specialists we've had the pleasure of visiting this year, but its reputation is clearly spreading. Any guesses as to how long it will be before it outgrows its premises once again? ■

MAKING CONTACT

For more information on The Beaconsfield Workshop or to book your car in for servicing, repairs or restoration work, call 01494 675211 or go online to: www.thebeaconsfieldworkshop.co.uk.

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ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE

With Bentley's venerable L-series V8 celebrating its 60th anniversary next year, we look back at its ongoing development of more recent times

WORDS: IAN ADCOCK PHOTOGRAPHY: ROLLS-ROYCE / BENTLEY MOTORS

Now in its 60th year of production, the V8 engine that originally powered the Silver Cloud II and Bentley S2 models is one of the longest-lived automotive powerplants of all time. That in itself is a sobering thought. But when you also consider that today's lustiest version of the classic L-series pushes out a mighty 530bhp (plus 811lb. ft. of torque), making this turbocharged behemoth more than 2.6 times as powerful as its forebear of 1959, you begin to realise what a special engine it is – one that has undergone the most astonishing levels of development and re-engineering over the years.

Although the original 6230cc

V8-equipped Silver Cloud's output of 200bhp doesn't sound particularly impressive by today's standards, let's not forget that its power-to-weight ratio was world-beating by standards of the late '50s. It was also a highly advanced design, with a two-plane crank, silicon-aluminium block, short stroke and over square dimensions. Indeed, much of its design principle was guided by Rolls-Royce's previous experience with V12 aero engines.

Rolls-Royce's then chief engineer, Harry Grylls, stipulated that "the bearing surfaces should be large enough to allow a 20 per cent

increase in power and torque over its lifetime". That was forward-thinking, of course, although it makes you wonder what Grylls – who died in 1983 – would have made of the L-series in its latest incarnation.

STEADY DEVELOPMENT

By 1965, the V8's output (although officially described by Rolls-Royce simply as 'adequate') had edged up to 225bhp, and four years later

The current-model Mulsanne uses the latest development of the V8 that first appeared six decades ago





In latest-spec twin-turbo guise, this behemoth of an engine produces an impressive 530bhp

its capacity grew to 6.75 litres by increasing the stroke. In six-and-three-quarter guise, the V8 went on to power every subsequent Rolls-Royce and Bentley (until more recent years), with a major change coming in 1980 via the introduction of Bosch K-Jetronic fuel-injection in order to help meet emissions regulations.

A bigger upgrade arrived in 1982, however, when the first Mulsanne Turbo was launched, bringing back to life the concept of the 'blown' Bentley. With 300bhp (and 442lb.ft. of torque) available, this latest version of the V8 used a Solex downdraught carburettor in a sealed box pressurised by a single turbo. The better-handling Turbo R then followed, complete with fuel injection and an additional 20bhp and 44lb.ft. Power increased again in 1994 (this time to 355bhp), and yet again in 1998 with the adoption of Zytek injection and an intercooler to give the Continental R engine 419bhp.

For a short period in the late 1990s, the venerable V8 was being assembled by Cosworth, but production shifted back to Crewe following the acquisition of Bentley by Volkswagen. The launch of the Silver Seraph and Bentley Arnage

“A bigger upgrade came in 1982, with the Mulsanne Turbo bringing back to life the concept of the ‘blown’ Bentley”

in 1998 saw BMW engines (V12 and V8 respectively) replace the long-running L-series in the company's four-door line-up, although the Bentley Azure and subsequent new-generation Rolls-Royce Corniche continued to use the ubiquitous British-built V8. By the start of 2003, Rolls-Royce found itself under BMW stewardship, bringing to an end the marque's long-running involvement with the L-series engine.

RE-ENGINEERING JOB

Bentley, meanwhile, introduced an updated management system and twin Mitsubishi turbos to replace the Garret T3s, raising power and torque of the L-series to 500bhp and 737lb.ft. respectively by 2007. But just four years later, the engine was completely re-engineered – more than half a century on from its original launch. Although Bentley had considered introducing V8, W12 and W16 engines

from elsewhere within the Volkswagen empire, with development work starting as early as 2006, it was discovered that none could deliver the lazy, low-revving characteristics of Crewe's own twin-turbo V8. Simon Atkinson, module leader of chassis power train at the time, told me: “The V8 delivers that relaxed feeling in a unique way. Because it's a high-capacity engine and only eight cylinders, we have a very big piston face that helps to deliver a large amount of torque combined with a long, 99.06mm crank throw.”

Atkinson went on to explain that the engineering team wanted to achieve three fundamental targets from re-engineering the existing powerplant: “One, emissions regulations and the company's commitment to reducing CO2 by 15% by 2012. Two, because it's the halo product, Bentley wanted a very refined engine, which the old one wasn't particularly. And three, we needed to reduce weight »

TECHNICAL UPDATE L-SERIES V8 ENGINE

across the engine in order to aid refinement and CO2 and to offset some of the car's additional features."

In the end, the only aspects of the engine that remain unchanged were the headline power figures of 752lb. ft. of torque at just 1750rpm and 505bhp at 4200rpm. Working closely with specialist engineers Grainger & Worrall and using the latest FEA block casting techniques, a weight saving of 7.7lb was achieved. Likewise, the cylinder heads were redesigned to integrate secondary air rails injecting extra air into the exhaust stream, creating an additional burn that lit off the catalysts more rapidly.

Other weight saving measures included five-ounce lighter pistons, three-ounce lighter con-rods and a significant 30lb reduction in the crank assembly, partially achieved by incorporating a 0.8-inch axial hole but also by eliminating sludge traps designed to capture oil debris in the days before synthetic lubricants.

A Hilite International cam phaser operating through 47 degrees managed to improve CO2 emissions and fuel consumption at idle and low engine speeds, whilst developing more torque at higher engine speeds. But the big advance in fuel economy (now up to 16.7mpg over the EU combined cycle) was the introduction of a variable displacement system that shuts down two outboard and two inboard cylinders under specific conditions, effectively turning the engine into a V4 firing on A1, B3, B2 and A4 cylinders.

Simon Atkinson explained more at the time of that latest development: "The engine has a central camshaft that



The L-series V8 first appeared in 1959, powering the Silver Cloud and Bentley S-series from then on

"Bentley introduced an updated management system and twin Mitsubishi turbos to replace the Garret T3s"

drives the tappet or lash adjuster, with a push rod driving a rocker arm to open and closes the valves. On the variable displacement system we've introduced a new tappet arrangement controlled by an electrically-driven solenoid, which de-latches a couple of pins and slides within itself, thereby no longer passing the motion of the camshaft onto valves – and so the valves stay closed whilst the camshaft rotates."

By cutting fuel to the remaining cylinders and closing the valves, it effectively turned those pistons into air springs, compressing the air on the upward stroke and expanding it on the way back down to return the energy. The twin turbos maintained the same rotational speed as if all eight

cylinders were operating, however, ensuring instant response when the driver stepped back on the throttle.

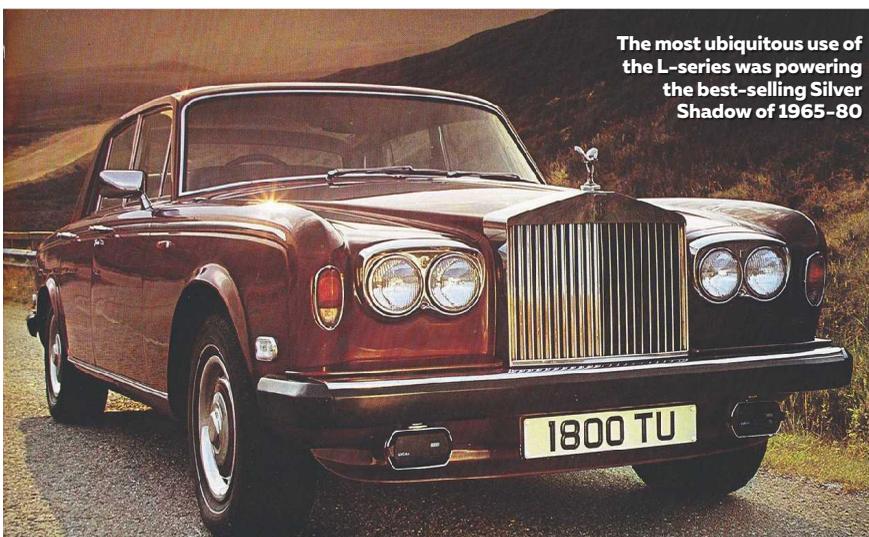
FURTHER CHANGES

The engine was given another lease of life in 2014, with a redesigned top end to match the improvements made to the bottom end in 2011. Direct injection was considered at the time, which could have resulted in a further power increase and extra efficiency, but this would have been at the cost of increased particulate emissions, hence Bentley's decision to stick with MPI.

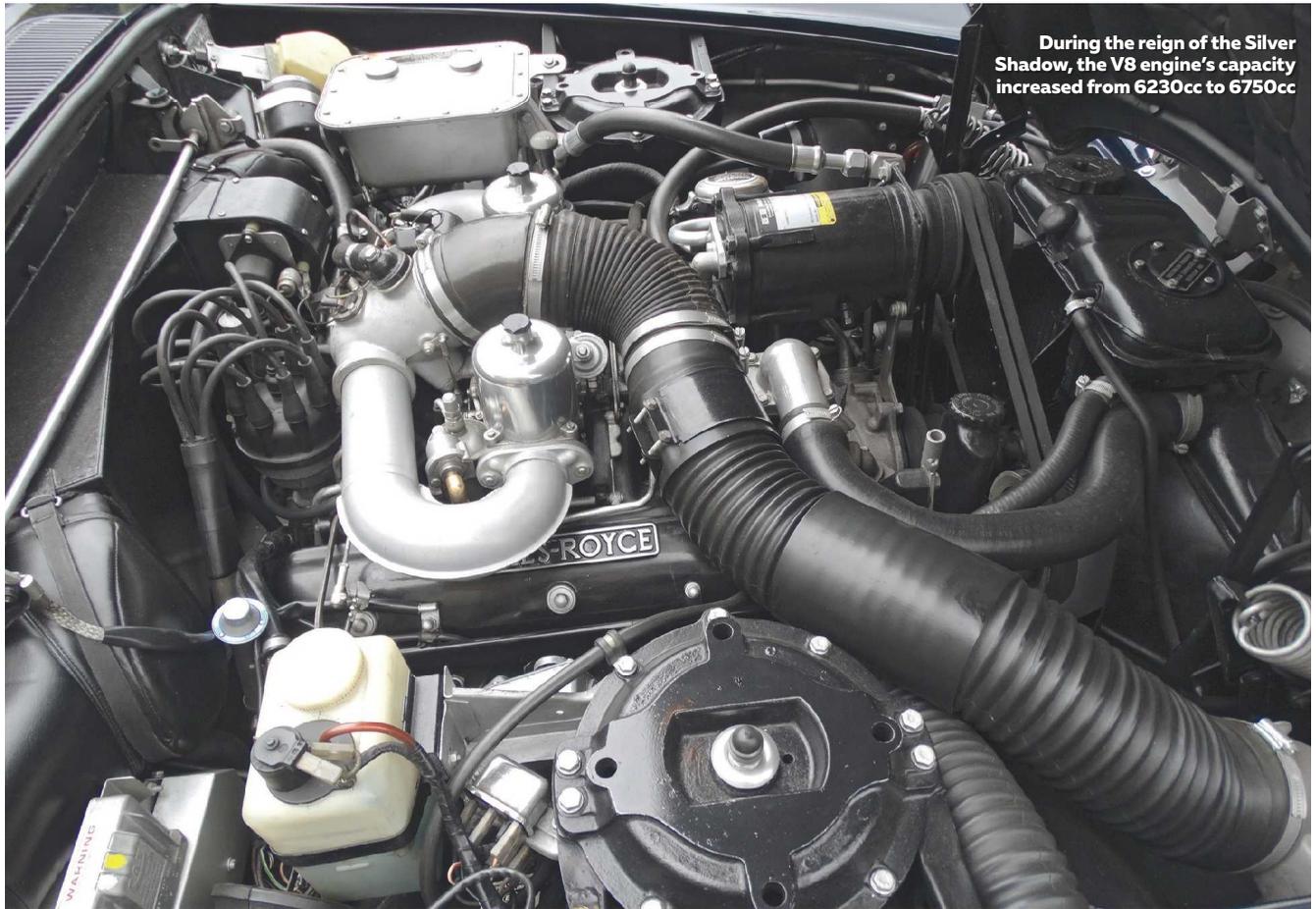
The piston crown and inlet port combustion chamber were redesigned to increase tumble and to propagate faster combustion without incurring knock, with CFD techniques making sure the airflow into the cylinder was very controlled. The offset spark plugs were moved to a more central location, with the latest 12mm long reach versions being used together with Bosch EV14 injectors to promote a lower droplet size for a better spray pattern.

There was a 16% reduction in valve train friction by re-profiling the cams to allow valve control with lower spring forces – about 30% on the intake side and 10% on the exhaust, resulting in a 16% reduction in friction. And because of that reduction in energy, lighter sodium-filled valves were used.

Knowledge gained from the cylinder-deactivation programme helped to improve the company's software strategy, thereby reducing the penalty



The most ubiquitous use of the L-series was powering the best-selling Silver Shadow of 1965-80



During the reign of the Silver Shadow, the V8 engine's capacity increased from 6230cc to 6750cc

incurred during the transient mode between V4 and V8 configurations. This helped to generate the 811lb.ft. torque figure mentioned at the start of this feature, plus a mighty 530bhp: "We haven't hit the transmissions limit yet," claimed head of powertrain engineering, Paul Williams, at the time. Despite such figures, there was a 15% reduction in CO2 and an improvement in fuel economy to 20mpg on the EU cycle, although owners could expect even more. "We're very proud that in real life you get better than you achieve on the cycle," said Williams.

So where does this leave the venerable V8 power unit and its ilk beyond 2018? Is this the beginning of the end for large-capacity petrol engines? Not necessarily. Lamborghini has recently hinted that 'electrification' has a role to play in its future portfolio, as has Ferrari. And back in 2014, Paul Williams told me that a hybrid concept of the Mulsanne was certainly the next step forward: "If you combine it with a parallel hybrid concept, you get 70% fuel economy benefit, so there's no reason why you can't have a

large-capacity engine... and still have really good fuel consumption, with at least a 30-mile electric range."

That's an intriguing prospect and one that was realised the same year at the Beijing Motor Show, where Bentley displayed a concept plug-in hybrid system that increased power

by up to 25%, reduced emissions by 70% and delivered a driving range of at least 30 miles on electric power alone. For companies like Bentley, it's easy to see the appeal of plug-in hybrids as a way of mixing traditionalism with today's demands when it comes to economy and emissions. ■



The first-generation Bentley Azure employed a 385bhp turbocharged and intercooled version of the venerable V8

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& BENTLEY** *driver*

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SILVER SHADOW: THE FULL STORY

We take a detailed look at the development, history, success and enduring popularity of the Silver Shadow – the first monocoque-bodied Rolls-Royce.



NINETY YEARS YOUNG

Our editor goes touring in a 1928 Rolls-Royce 20hp, a much-loved Mulliner-bodied four-door saloon in remarkably original condition.



BENTLEY ON TOUR

We get to experience this glorious 1928 Bentley 4½ Litre in the UK, just before it's shipped to the USA for a series of long-distance rallies and adventures.



THE CAREER OF GRAHAM HULL

We tell the tale of one man's thirty-year career at Rolls-Royce, his rise to the role of chief stylist and his involvement in some crucial designs.



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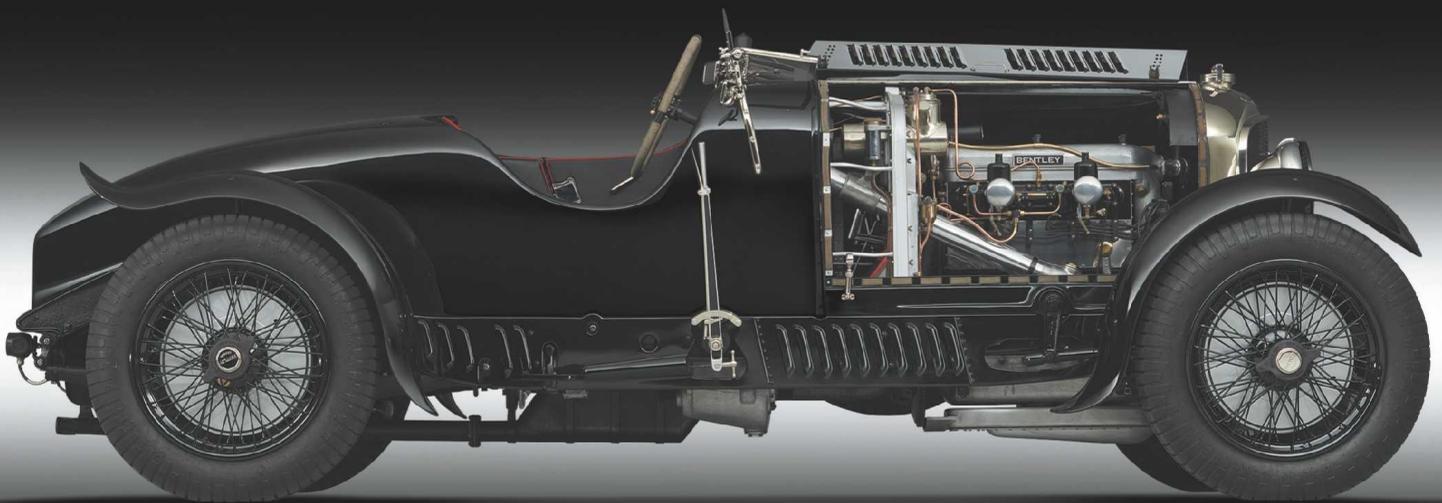
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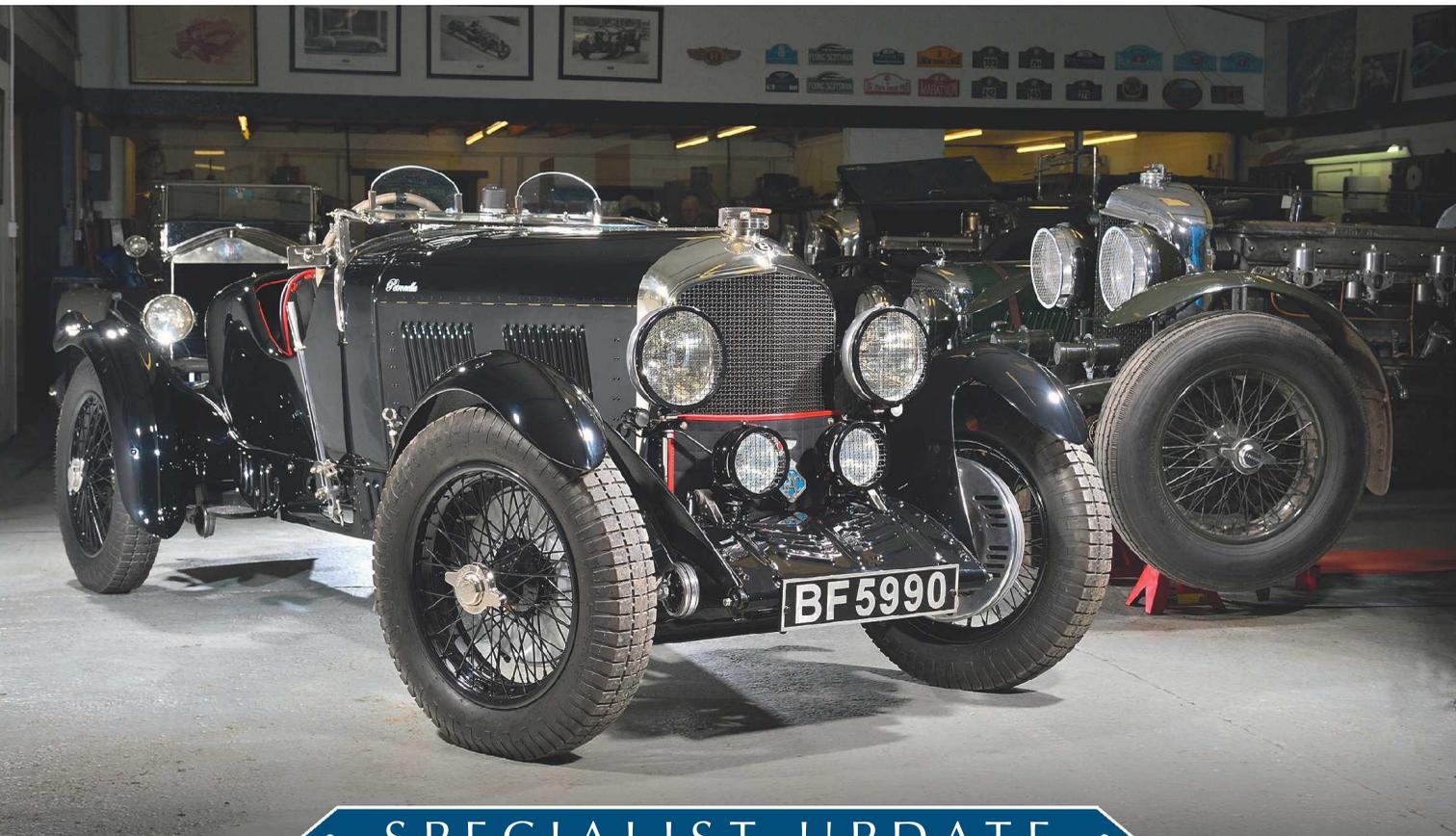


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VINTAGE EXPERTISE

Based in rural Warwickshire is one of the UK's major specialists in vintage Bentleys – a company with a loyal following and an expanding customer base

WORDS: PAUL GUINNESS PHOTOGRAPHY: MATT WOODS & PAUL GUINNESS

It was in the last issue of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver* that we featured Petronella, the one-off homage to a 1930 4½ Litre that had been built for 'Bentley Boy' Woolf Barnato. The idea was to create a vintage Bentley that employed a period chassis and the engine from a 4½ Litre (albeit in modified 5.3-litre guise), but fitted with various upgrades for modern-day reliability. It was to be the ideal car for long-distance trials and rallies, something that VBE Restorations boss, Tim Cresswell, knows a great deal about. Anyone who read our July/August

issue will know that we came away hugely impressed by Petronella, a unique machine that offers the best of both worlds in terms of vintage appeal and usability. But what about the company that created it – and the man who now heads up VBE Restorations?

Tim's father, Richard, founded the firm in 1993, after enjoying a fascinating career at Jaguar, where he joined as an apprentice and ended up as test driver, eventually taking over from Norman Dewis as head of vehicle proving. He was involved in numerous major projects that included the XJ6

prototype test programme, but left in the early '90s in order to pursue his VBE dream. His new company proved to be a success, and Tim (who'd gone on to train as a mechanical and turbine engineer) subsequently joined his father in 2007. Richard retired in 2016 but sadly passed away shortly afterwards, leaving Tim to continue the success of VBE Restorations.

IN-HOUSE EXPERTISE

What makes this Warwickshire-based firm stand out from many of today's independent specialists



All aspects of vintage Bentley maintenance and restoration are handled in-house



A line-up of pre-war Bentleys awaiting the attention of the VBE team



Full engine rebuilds and upgrades account for a major part of the company's turnover



Body panels can be created by hand thanks to the in-house expertise at VBE



Company boss Tim Cresswell lives and breathes pre-war Bentleys

is the work it's able to carry out in-house, with a car's final paintwork being just about the only aspect of restoration or recommissioning that's outsourced. Considering that the VBE team consists of no more than eight specialists at any one time, it is remarkable just how many different tasks can be carried out within the superbly presented workshops.

Everything from engine rebuilds and upgraded differentials through to body panel forming and upholstery re-trimming can be done to a high standard by this carefully selected team. "These cars were pretty much hand-built when new," explains Tim, "which makes machining parts for them an essential part of the restoration process. Doing everything in-house means we're able to keep an eye on quality, accuracy and timescales, which is obviously a

"VBE Restorations has become renowned among vintage Bentley owners for the quality of its work"

major benefit to the customer."

Over the last quarter of a century, VBE Restorations has become renowned among vintage Bentley owners for the quality of its work, performing everything from a basic service through to a full-scale rebuild. The company even offers owners a choice when it comes to the finish of any restoration, catering for those craving a concours-style finish as well as owners who prefer to retain as much of their car's patina as possible: "The years of patination that accumulates over the years is something that VBE tries to protect and celebrate as part

of the car's history," confirms Tim. "The individual characteristics and patina ooze from every orifice, and we treat its history with the utmost respect during any restoration."

Upgrades are also available, with a keen eye on aesthetic originality in each case – which means that anyone tempted by hydraulic brakes, a magneto-to-coil update, an overdrive conversion or an upgraded diff for their pre-war Bentley can ask the team at VBE Restorations to achieve the desired result. Twenty-five years on from its creation, this vintage Bentley specialist company is enjoying a deservedly strong following. ■

FURTHER MEMORIES OF MULLINER PARK WARD

Loyal reader Ron Mitchell brings us more memories of his time spent working in the drawing office of Mulliner Park Ward during the 1970s – including the company's recruitment of ex-Aston Martin panel beaters

IMAGES: RON MITCHELL / ROLLS-ROYCE MOTORS

In previous instalments of my tales from Mulliner Park Ward, where I worked in the 1970s as a body draughtsman, I've mentioned 'Oil Barrel', the bespoke new Phantom VI designed specifically for Her Majesty the Queen. The story of its body-in-white (BIW) build is interesting in itself, a process that started on the surface plate in the Experimental Department building of MPW's Willesden headquarters in around 1977.

It is likely that Willesden was chosen not just because it had the necessary space, but also because Sid Fletcher (head of the Experimental Department, formerly of H.J. Mulliner) and George Bolton (his ex-Hooper assistant) could devote the necessary time to this special build. I remember standing between the front wings of the 'Oil Barrel' BIW, literally in the engine bay, examining the carefully crafted

body structure and thinking: 'Wow, this is being built for the Queen!'

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders had provided the funds necessary for this new Phantom to be built. Following the work at Willesden, the BIW was transported to Hythe Road for mounting to the chassis after the running gear had been installed. The exterior body panels were then hand-crafted – using traditional methods – by the same staff who built the standard-model (if there is such a thing) Phantom VI. Not so traditional was the raised roof of 'Oil Barrel', with a new windscreen and higher side windows also being tooled up. The unique rear roof area was made from a Perspex moulding.

Black over Garnet (a deep maroon) was the Queen's preferred body colour combination. I also remember being told that Her Majesty insisted on plain

West of England cloth to be fitted to the rear compartment, with no extras.

OFFICE CHAT

In previous issues of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver*, I touched on some of the day-to-day chat in the drawing office at MPW. This was almost inevitably about cars and rarely about anything else, with "What makes a classic?" being one of the biggest discussions. The question was brought up by Dick Mann (he always had questions, which led to stimulating discussions) and I don't think it was ever truly resolved, as each of us maintained a slightly different understanding of 'classic'.

In terms of Rolls-Royces and Bentleys, it was generally agreed in the drawing office that almost all models were – or would become –

Ron recalls examining 'Oil Barrel' whilst at the body-in-white stage of its build





The standard Phantom VI was hand-built at MPW during Ron's time there

classics in their own right, although arguably not the Camargue at that time. Discussions frequently included personal design preferences when it came to bodywork from a wide range of coachbuilders, a great example being H.J. Mulliner versus Mulliner Brothers. The former was not only high-end, but my personal view is that this company always had the edge when it came to the most elegant designs of automotive bodywork, right through to the 1960s. By comparison, Mulliner Brothers of Birmingham (yes, these folks were related) concentrated on supplying contract bodies to high-volume chassis manufacturers.

An early and very fortunate decision made by Louis Antweiler, the man in charge of Mulliner Brothers at the

time, was to supply various bodies for the hugely successful Austin Seven, while in later years it manufactured bodies for Hillmans, Humbers, Daimlers, Lanchesters and the like. It faced tough competition, however, with author Nick Walker (in *British Coachbuilders 1919-1960*) suggesting there were 429 coachbuilders working in the car industry during that period.

NEW RECRUITS

Prior to my move to MPW in January 1976, another famed builder of bespoke models (albeit of the sports car variety) was, of course, Aston Martin. The previous coachbuilding name based in the same manufacturing buildings at Newport Pagnell was Tickford, and

prior to that Salmons. Sadly, however, Aston Martin had declared bankruptcy in early 1975 – which wasn't the first and certainly wouldn't be the last time that the company faced financial ruin. The doors to all the buildings were suddenly locked one day, with no warning given to the workers.

Many of those fine craftsmen and strongly committed local staff found themselves out of work, although quite a few panel beaters soon gained employment at MPW. The reason for this was that MPW had gone through a prolonged strike and was desperate to restart production, with these newly hired panel beaters enabling this to happen. A coach was used to transport them from Newport Pagnell to Willesden (about an hour's drive) each day for many weeks, giving the new recruits time to eventually secure living quarters closer to MPW.

There was another brief dispute at MPW while I worked there, with the drawing office staff being asked to support a shop floor strike by not working for one morning. I therefore took a book to work and planted myself in the back of an almost-finished Corniche. I had a wonderful read for a couple of hours, whilst enjoying the aroma of Connolly leather. I'm pleased to say, however, that no more strikes took place before I left the Mulliner Park Ward division of Rolls-Royce Motors in October 1978. ■



The Corniche – another MPW model – provided Ron with comfort during a strike

CONTROLLING THE SHAKES

With the first ten years of his working life spent at Crewe, Tony Spillane was involved in many aspects of Rolls-Royce development. In the third instalment of his story, he details how vehicle shake was reduced for the Silver Spirit

ILLUSTRATIONS: TONY SPILLANE

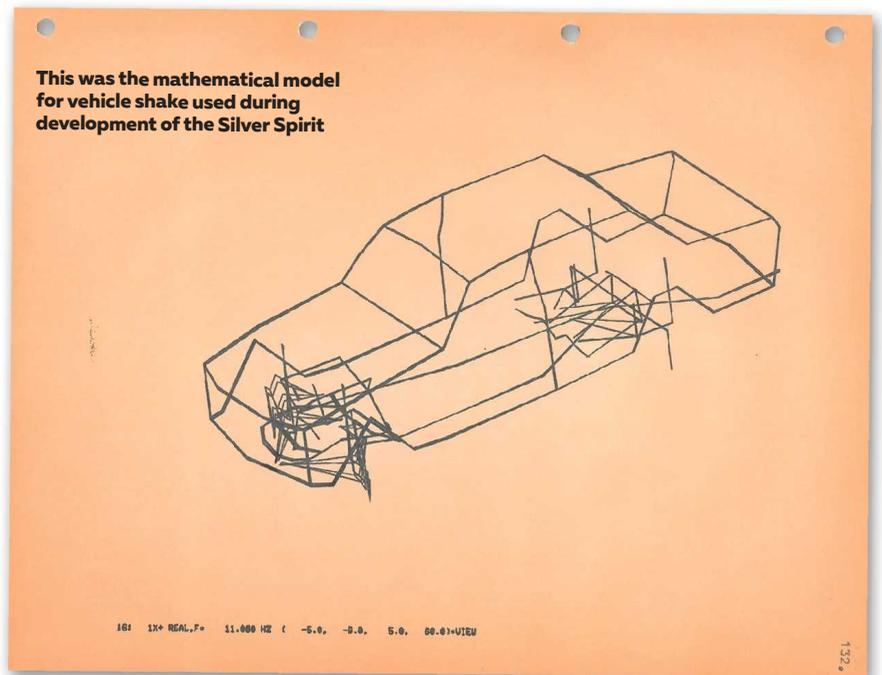
As its name suggests, vehicle shake is a low-frequency vibration that can be triggered by imperfections in the road. It feels like the whole vehicle is shaking for a second or two, although on certain road surfaces and at a variety of vehicle speeds the shake can become almost continuous – at which point it then becomes very unpleasant. Not surprisingly, Rolls-Royce was keen to keep vehicle shake to a minimum, hence my involvement in its reduction during my time there.

For a Rolls Royce, the typical shake frequency was around 10Hz (Hertz, or cycles per second). We had a favourite local road and speed that would tend to excite a continuous shake if the car was that way inclined. This meant that we could record it with accelerometers and a tape recorder, for subsequent frequency analysis, as well as comparisons with other vehicles. We measured at front passenger position (on RHD vehicles) and recorded at both foot (floor) position and occupant seat position, using a glassfibre mould that the occupant sat in on top of the seat.

Vehicle shake is a resonance effect. School physics dictates that the resonant frequency can be calculated if the mass and the stiffness are known. That's easy to calculate for a known weight on a known spring, bobbing up and down. On a car, however, there are many masses and many parts of flexibility – not just the rubber mounts but also the tyres, road springs, plus structural parts like subframes and even the bodyshell. How do you calculate what's going on? Simply ask a computer...

SPACE-AGE TECH

In the mid-1970s, of course, there weren't many computers that you could ask. Fortunately, however, man



had landed on the moon by then, and part of that programme was NASA's development of a computer structural analysis programme going by the name of Nastran (NASA Structural Analysis). An American company called SDRC (Structural Dynamics Research Corporation) began applying Nastran to automotive analysis, and when it arrived in Europe I persuaded my boss that I should get involved with the program.

A mathematical model of the Silver Spirit (a car that was still in its development stage back then) was made in order to get an understanding of the fundamentals of vehicle shake. The program worked by representing the car as a set of elements, such as mass, inertia, stiffness, links, geometry co-ordinates and so on. The whole car was modelled, particularly the bodyshell (main structural members), the subframes and suspension, the

rubber mounts, and the power unit mass and inertia. The computer then calculated the resonances (natural frequencies and mode shapes), making it possible to apply a vibration input and calculate vibration output levels at selected locations.

Back in the '70s, there wasn't a big enough computer in the UK to do this, and so the data had to be transmitted to Brussels and analysed on an overnight batch run, which meant we could look at the results the next day. The data decks were in the form of punched cards (around 2500 per vehicle model), and one mistake on one card was enough to invalidate the computer run. This work was conducted at SDRC's UK office in Hitchin, Hertfordshire.

We needed a quantification of our favourite local shake road as input data for the computer model. Fortunately, I had a contact at TRRL (the Transport

and Road Research Laboratory), which had recently developed a road profile measuring machine. Towed behind a Ford Granada, it was a long rigid trailer with three lasers mounted on. As it went along, it measured the vertical height of the road surface on a continuous basis, giving us the input data that we needed.

REDUCING SHAKE

The results of the computer model were like a light bulb coming on! It turned out that the shake resonance on Rolls-Royce cars wasn't just one natural frequency, but three that were close in frequency and which interacted with each other. It was necessary to control them individually, but also control how they interacted together, by influencing both magnitude and phase. As many things were not realistically changeable, such as the stiffness of the body structure, the mass of the power unit and so on, most of the changes were in the engine mounts and front subframe mounts. Of course, this had to be done without compromising the previous reductions in engine and road noise.

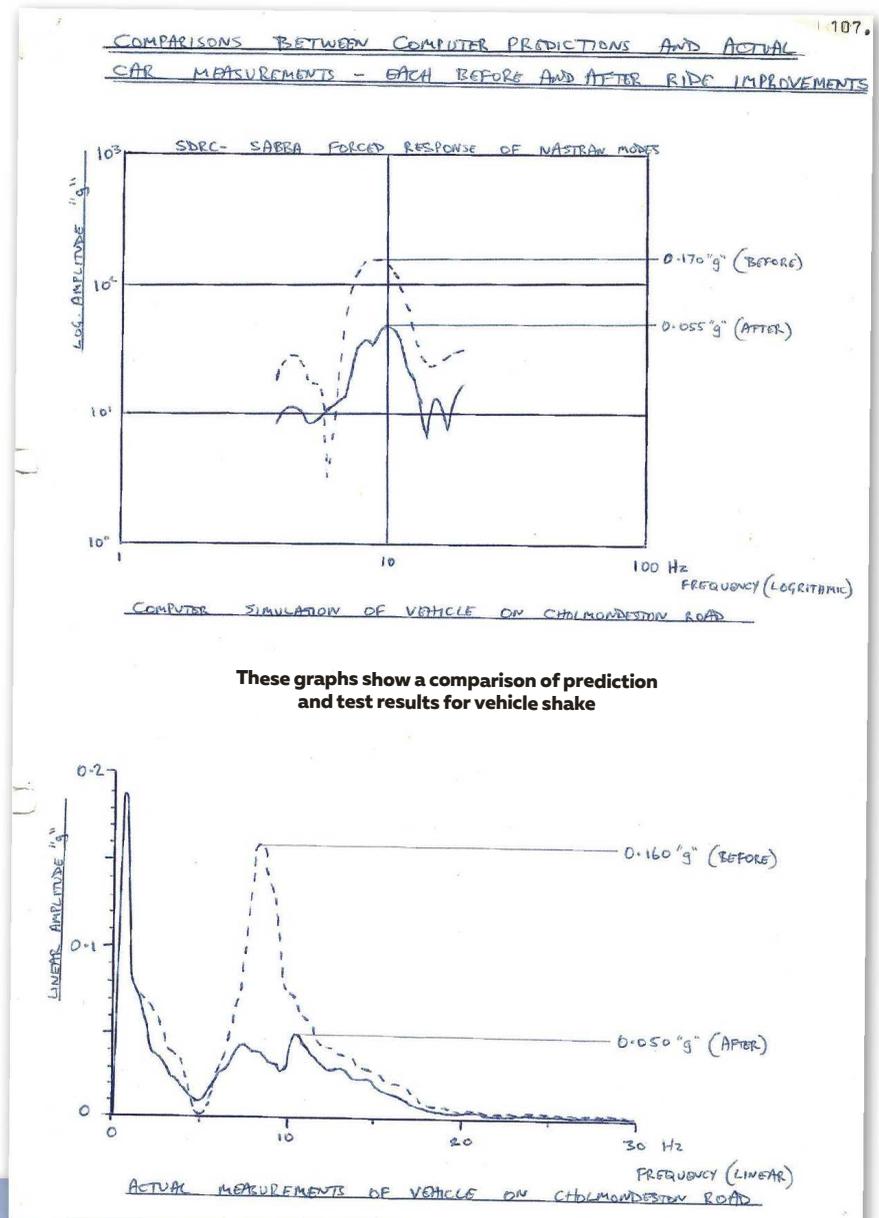
Previous work on SBH6879 had shown that a major redesign of the engine mounts, subframe mounts and the front subframe itself could give a great result, but at this stage of the Silver Spirit development program the changes had to be more production orientated. Experiments were conducted by adding more damping into key areas, to give more control of some of the natural frequencies. The company's Mercedes-Benz 6.9 SEL had miniature hydraulic dampers

The work carried out by Tony helped to create the Refinement Package for the Silver Spirit



fitted across its main rubber engine mounts, and similar units were tried in various locations, as determined by the natural frequency mode shapes. Eventually, a system was developed that controlled the shake whilst maintaining the noise benefits.

By now, the above changes were being grouped together to form what was known as the Refinement Package. It was fitted to the pre-production Silver Spirits, and also to a prototype SZ10 that was used as part of a 50,000-mile endurance test. I'll take a look at the productionisation of the Refinement Package in the November/December issue. ■



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BENTLEY

EIGHT



1987, 86,000 Miles, £13,000. Windsor blue, matching interior, EFI, Alpine stereo, present owner 14 years. New MoT, personal plate. Suspension brakes of steering overhauled. Please call 01732 843377.
1389

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1947, £23,000. In an attractive colour combination of Georgian silver with soft burgundy leather interior, walnut veneers, dark red carpets and set off with whitewall tyres. Still bears its original Yorkshire registration number. Both eye catching and a delight to drive with smooth gearbox and excellent brakes. The car is reliable and performs well in modern traffic. Please call 01288 361022 or 07939 760166.
1992

TURBO R LWB



1997, 41,000 miles, £18,750. LWB turbo R, Finished in the superb colour of royal blue with magnolia hide interior piped royal blue, headrests front and rear, magnolia hide head lining, with royal blue top roll dash, glass like finish burr walnut veneers, lambswool over rugs, quilted door panels, rear centre opening armrest, airbags, power seats, side quarter Bentley badges, power windows, air conditioning, stereo system, tinted glass, expensive chrome wheels. Please call 01322 669081 (T).
3147

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4043

S3



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3774

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4052

T2



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ROLLS-ROYCE

ROLLS ROYCE



1977, 105,000 miles, £13,995. Gold coachwork with tan interior. Excellent looking car with extensive history files and it has recently been serviced. Please call 07860 266949, Merseyside.
3387

ROLLS ROYCE



1976, £14,995. Silver shadow one. Original build sheets, complete service history, every MoT certificate, Hand books and service book, Bonham's catalogue dated 21st of June 2008, "Rolls Royce And Bentley Motor Car Sale" at Kelmars Hall, Northampton from where it was sold and spare keys. Last serviced January 2018, Brake service February 2018, Both invoices supplied. The beige leather interior is beautiful. Please call 01246 451772 (T).
3496

CORNICHE CONVERTIBLE



1983, 77,000 miles, POA. UK example. Mason's black with contrasting black hide piped cream. Please call 01246 451772 (T).
3510

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3625

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MISCELLANEOUS FOR SALE

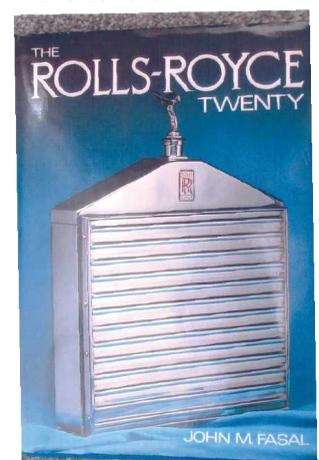
ROLLS ROYCE AND BENTLEY

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3778

THE ROLLS ROYCE TWENTY



£85. By John M Facel, comes with dust cover 1979 1st edition, 560 pages. Please call 02083 997541, Surrey.
3445



PAUL GUINNESS

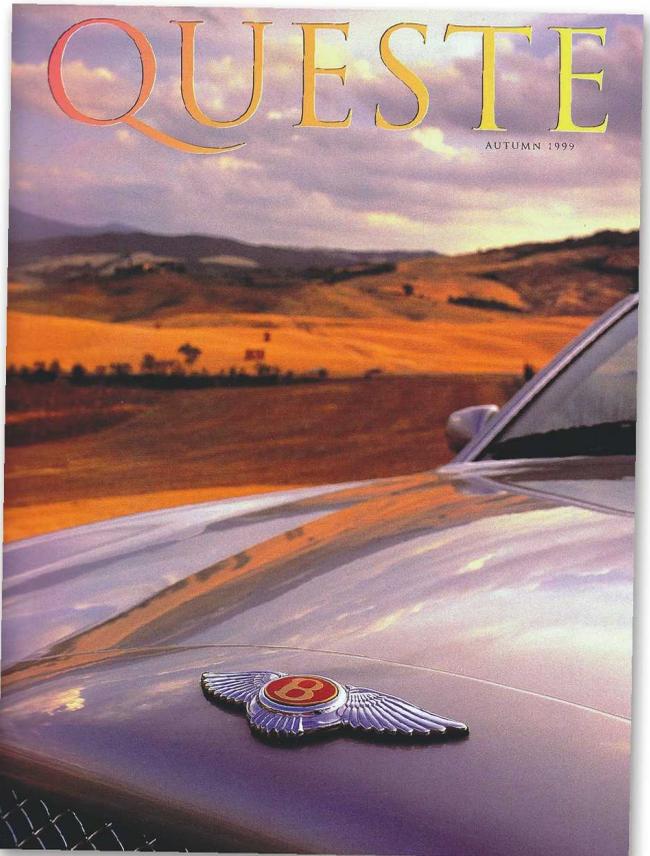
Back in 1999, Volkswagen was keen to assure Rolls-Royce buyers that the Silver Seraph still had a future – and that it would eventually move from Crewe to a new location

As the CEO of Volkswagen Group from 1993, Ferdinand Piëch inevitably played a major role in the company's acquisition of Bentley and (temporarily) Rolls-Royce five years later. It proved to be a complex situation, with Rolls-Royce Motors owner Vickers striking a deal with Volkswagen to buy its Crewe factory, plus all rights to the Spirit of Ecstasy mascot and the shape of the Rolls-Royce radiator grille. In a separate deal, however, BMW paid £40m to licence the Rolls-Royce name and logo, which meant that VW was effectively unable to launch a new Rolls-Royce.

After lengthy negotiations between the two German companies, it was agreed that Volkswagen would continue to produce existing Rolls-Royces until the end of 2002, with BMW still supplying engines. From January 2003, however, all Rolls-Royce rights would then switch to BMW, leaving Volkswagen with Bentley. And, of course, that's the ownership situation that still exists today.

I was therefore intrigued to come across an interview with Ferdinand Piëch in this particular issue of *Queste* (the customer magazine for Bentley and Rolls-Royce owners), published in the autumn of 1999. The discussions between BMW and Volkswagen had concluded by then, which meant that the latter company would continue to build Rolls-Royces for another three years or so. Inevitably, however, Volkswagen's priorities would be focused on Bentley.

When asked whether the future of Rolls-Royce still looked rather uncertain, Piëch responded: "At present we are taking very good care of both marques, using the special capabilities of Crewe to build world-class Bentley and Rolls-Royce motor cars as only Crewe can. Of course, you are right to imply that there will be further developments to come, because of the particular circumstances under which BMW is currently set to assume responsibility for the Rolls-Royce brand in 2003. Exactly how that will work out remains to be seen. We continue to build the Rolls-Royce Silver Seraph to the very highest standards but the main focus of our development plans has naturally been concentrated on Bentley."



"We continue to build the Rolls-Royce Silver Seraph to the very highest standards"



Within the same feature in *Queste*, meanwhile, was a second interview, this time with Tony Gott, chief executive of Rolls-Royce & Bentley Motor Cars. And again, the short-term future of Rolls-Royce cropped up in conversation, although Gott was keen to allay any fears: "The position at Crewe is that everyone will continue for the foreseeable future to cherish and enhance the Silver Seraph, which was born here. As things presently stand, it is envisaged that it should move home sometime around the end of 2002 – where to exactly has not to date been announced. Until it is, the craftsmen here continue to attend assiduously to commissions, to apply their unique skills on behalf of both marques."

In the end, of course, the Silver Seraph didn't move to another plant. Instead it was quietly phased out altogether just prior to BMW taking over responsibility for the marque, making it one of the shortest-lived Rolls-Royce saloons of all time. ■

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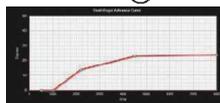


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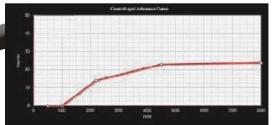
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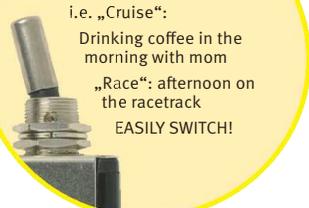
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