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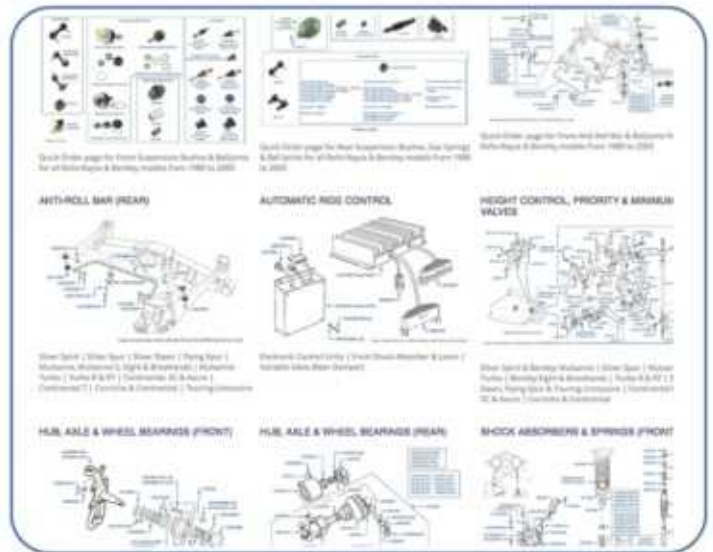
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## Keeping it original...

Firstly, a very big thanks for all the kind comments about the magazine. It seems that our first issue has gone down very well, and here's hoping that you will also enjoy Issue Two – we have aimed for much of the same, only different!

For all the immaculate concours winning, beautifully restored Rolls-Royce and Bentley models that exist, it's wonderful that in this issue our cover car is as original as they come, despite being 65 years young. You can add to that the fact that Peter Gunn's Freestone and Webb coachbuilt Bentley R-Type was bought – unseen – on eBay! It wears its patina of age with a grace and grandeur that you have to admire; we absolutely love the car.

Following a remarkable car, we have the story of a remarkable man with our biography feature on The Hon Charles Stewart Rolls; he led a short but extraordinary life and we have some superb period photographs, courtesy of the Henry Royce Memorial Foundation archive, to illustrate Jeremy Satherley's excellent piece. Then there's our trip in a time machine where Ian Adcock remembers a drive made 17 years ago, in what was the last Corniche Convertible, around some significant Rolls-Royce landmarks... and some less well-known. Plus... well I will leave that for you to discover.

Very importantly in this issue, however, we have also included details on some readers' vehicles. This is going to be an important part of the magazine in the future, so do let us know about what you own, full details on how to be included in this feature are on page 13. We are waiting to hear from you!

We certainly hope that there's something in Issue Two to entertain and, maybe even inform. Enjoy.

## Nigel Fryatt

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“I thought the chance of seeing my name in a RR logbook was the stuff of fantasy”



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This glorious Freestone and Webb coachbuilt Bentley R-Type was bought, unseen, on eBay!



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# INTERNATIONAL RESCUE

## Amazing 48-hour recovery keeps vintage Bentley on the road in Japan

WHEN CHRIS LINN'S 1929 Bentley came to a halt with a serious mechanical failure, little could he have believed that one telephone call and a mere 48 hours later he would be back on the road. The reason? Chris was competing in Rally Round's 3000-mile Samurai Challenge in Japan with navigator Christopher Myles – not quite the place to find a replacement driveshaft and differential for a 90-year old vintage rallying Bentley.

The call went through to William Metcalf's Vintage Bentley HQ in West Sussex, nestling in the gentle South Downs of the UK, it's a long way from Osaka, Japan. William Metcalf's establishment has a global reputation for preparing and running vintage Bentleys for competition, and as soon as the call was received, a rescue plan was hatched. The unexpected broken driveshaft had also damaged the differential as the British pair drove away from Osaka airport, before the start of the rally that was due to take them from Fukuoka in the south, to Lake Toya in the north, and they could have been forgiven for thinking that they would have to forfeit the event entirely.

However, within half an hour of receiving the call, William Metcalf's own Bentley was up on axle stands having its driveshaft and diff removed. The next day, technician Tyler Kinley was battling with airline staff to allow him to take some 60kg of luggage on board his flight to Japan. On arrival, Kinley



took a taxi direct to the garage that Lunn had found, where the Bentley was waiting to be repaired. Just six hours later he had completed the repair, the Bentley was ready to get to the start of the event and Kinley was ready for his return flight the next morning.

"Nothing is too much trouble for our clients," explains William Metcalf. "If we need to take parts to the other side of the world, you can be assured we will be on the first flight out. If you race or rally, the importance of completing the course is all that matters. We will do all we can to

ensure our clients cross the line."

The replacement parts were part of Metcalf's Benchmark range, specifically designed and produced for competition, able to endure the increased stresses of endurance rallying – a tough challenge for modern machinery, let alone vintage vehicles. Metcalf has himself competed in many such events, having driven his first Bentley at the age of 12! These Rally Round events sound absolutely fascinating, and we will be delving more into this branch of historic motorsport in the next issue of *Rolls-Royce and Bentley Driver* magazine.



**"Can I ask, did you pack all your luggage yourself, Sir?"**



**The offending broken driveshaft and stronger replacement part.**



**Tyler Kinley flew out to Japan to personally repair the Bentley.**

# THE BENTLEY KINK

ROLLS-ROYCE AND Bentley models became something of *de rigueur* for British pop stars in the Swingin' Sixties, even it seems, if they were unable to drive at the time. This 1960 Bentley S2 was bought by Sir Ray Davies, frontmen of The Kinks back in 1966, reputedly at the request of his then wife, as he explains: "I succumbed to the pressure and purchased a second-hand Bentley from Hadleigh Green Garage in Barnet in 1966. I was told that the car belonged to George Greenfield, who was Enid Blyton's agent. My then wife drove it on my behalf because I was unable to drive at the time. We went on holiday in the Bentley to Cornwall, an exotic spot in England, which was our family outing with my two daughters in the back with their buckets and spades. While on one holiday in Mullion, I sat in the back seat of the Bentley and wrote the follow-up to *Lola*, called *Apeman*, on a Spanish guitar I kept in the back." The car went 'on tour' with The Kinks, but fans started to write on it in lipstick and so the band's manager Ken Jones promptly 'retired' the car to the garage.

Such provenance only added value to the S2 when it came under the hammer at Silverstone Auctions this May. The Bentley has been in long-term storage since 1991 and will now require some restoration work (getting rid of all those lipstick smears) and was offered for auction direct from the ownership of Sir Ray. One lucky new owner paid £29,250 for the S2, whether he or she is a big Kinks fan was not revealed.



**Always a Dedicated Follower of Fashion, Ray Davies was also a non-driving Bentley owner, helping to make him a Well Respected Man and avoid the Dead End Street...**



**The Bentley S2, once owned by Sir Ray Davies of The Kinks has sold for £29,250.**

## BENTLEY SINGLE SEATER

THIS HAS TO be one of the rarest Bentleys ever; the only Bentley race car actually sanctioned by Rolls-Royce. Built by Barry Eastick, the chassis is the prototype for the Silver Shadow/T-Series, it was powered by a supercharged V8, and in 1976 broke the

Bentley Silverstone lap record. After just three races it was sold and spent most of its time in Florida, USA. Barry's son, Ben, has bought the car and returned it to the UK. We hope to have the full story of this fascinating car in a forthcoming issue.





# ROLLS-ROYCE 'SWEPTAIL' RETURNS

THE CONCEPT OF the coachbuilt Rolls-Royce is alive and well. This is the stunning new Rolls-Royce 'Sweptail' (named as a nod of appreciation to the 1920s and 1930s versions) and produced for one lucky owner as his idea of the ultimate two seater Rolls-Royce. The car made its debut at the *Concorso d'Elegance at Villa d'Este* this May where Torsten Müller-Ötvös, Chief Executive Officer, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars said, "Sweptail is a truly magnificent car. It exudes the romance of travel for its own sake, and immediately places 'Sweptail' in the pantheon of the world's great intercontinental tourers. Rolls-Royce's history as the world's leading coachbuilder is at the very core of its identity as the world's leading luxury brand. The arrival of 103EX shone a light on the future of Rolls-Royce in this field, and 'Sweptail' is proof, today, that Rolls-Royce is at the pinnacle of coachbuilding. We are listening carefully to our most special customers and assessing their interest in investing in similar, completely exclusive coachbuilt masterpieces. At the same time we are looking into the resources which will allow us to offer this unique service to these discerning patrons of luxury."

The very special customer in this case approached Rolls-Royce in 2013. As a collector of distinctive, one-off items, including superyachts and aircraft, he wanted a similarly special motor car.

The modern 'Sweptail' is in honour of models like the 1925 Phantom I Round Door built by Jonckheere and the 1934 Phantom II Streamline Saloon by Park Ward. The result is a grand and imposing coupe where the rear 'pays homage to the world of racing yachts'. A panoramic glass roof highlights the unique interior.

Coachbuilt Rolls-Royce and Bentley models have always intrigued and challenged the test of time, and still for many are the most important and beautiful models ever produced by either marque. It will be interesting to see whether 'modern' coachbuilt models like this 'Sweptail' will be afforded such titles in the future. In the meantime, it will certainly be one man's very special Rolls-Royce – one like no other built before.



## BIRD IN THE BENTAYGA

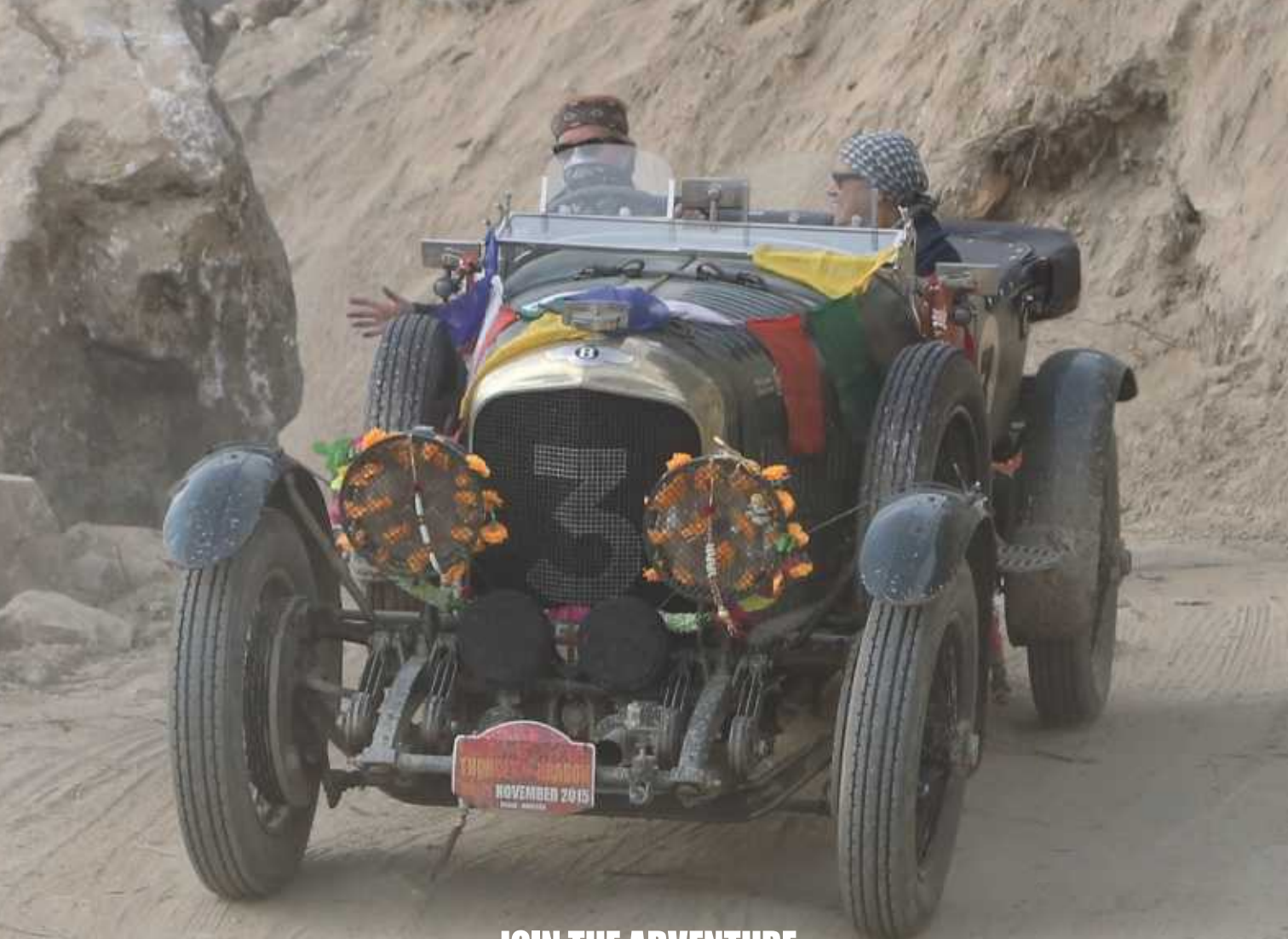
Bentley's personal commissioning division, Mulliner, has hand-crafted a bespoke installation for the Bentayga to house all the equipment necessary 'for an enjoyable falconry expedition'. These amount to having two individual natural-cork-trimmed units installed to carry all that is necessary for the falcon, with the second unit designed to carry refreshments for the falconer and their guests. The marquetry of the Mulliner units is based on the Saker falcon, which has been used in this sport for thousands of years, with exceptional examples of the breed reaching an astonishing \$1,000,000 for a single bird. Over 430 separate pieces of marquetry are used by the Crewe-based craftspeople, the units taking some nine days to assemble.



## CHINESE DAWN

You have to wonder what Henry and Charles would have made of it all. Although, perhaps the idea of selling Rolls-Royce cars to China would not have surprised them at all, but it is certainly a very important market for the company today. It seems that communism and luxury motor car ownership go well together, and this year's Shanghai International Automobile Industry Exhibition saw a number of special models unveiled. A series of Dawn models were displayed under the banner 'Dawn – Inspired By Fashion'. There was also a Wraith Black Badge and a Ghost Black Badge and an exclusive model for the China market, the Ghost Sartorial Collection.





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# GENERATION WRAITH

HAVING SING SO energetically that he hoped he would, 'die before I get old', it must have seemed rather ironic to rock star Roger Daltrey from The Who when he was invited to see a new collection of nine Rolls-Royce Wraiths that have been 'Inspired by British Music'. At least he has lived long enough to be in a position of buying one of these models, not perhaps high on his list of priorities when he shared the stage with the whirlwind guitarist Pete Townsend and the later drummer Keith Moon, who gained the urban myth of having driven his Silver Shadow into a swimming pool, but that was then... How times have changed. Each special Wraith model has been created in collaboration with, and to celebrate the legacy of, some of the UK's best known aging rockers. The cars were presented at London's Sanderson Hotel with the artists that created them. Alongside Daltrey, the rockers included Francis Rossi and Giles Martin of Status Quo, Nick Mason of Pink



**Stars and their cars (from left): Nick Mason, Francis Rossi, Giles Martin and Roger Daltrey.**

Floyd and Sir Ray Davies of The Kinks (who at least can now drive his Rolls-Royce, see page seven). If you think this all seems a little ridiculous for these millionaire rock stars to be involved,

it's worth noting that a proportion of each car's value was donated to charities selected by each musician, including the charity much championed by Daltrey, The Teenage Cancer Trust.



**Who would have thought? Roger Daltrey, looking today every inch a Wraith customer.**



**Well at least Sir Ray Davies can now drive a Rolls-Royce (see story page seven).**



**A star looks at the stars. Giles Martin enjoying the view of the star studded head-lining.**

## NEXT ISSUE



### ARE YOU CONVERTED YET?

IN ISSUE THREE of *Rolls-Royce and Bentley Driver* magazine we will be taking a detailed look at a superb Bentley S1 Convertible – probably the best in the world? Well it is, if all the awards it has won mean anything... Plus we will be taking a look at classic rallying; what it takes to prepare a post-war vehicle for an endurance event; we meet a man who helped build the very last Corniche; look back at W O Bentley's life, plus all our regular archive, buying and owning features. All content is subject to alteration, but one thing we can guarantee is that we will do our best to produce another issue packed with all things Rolls-Royce and Bentley. If you don't want to miss an issue, why not subscribe? Full details are on page 40. Issue Three of *Rolls-Royce and Bentley Driver* magazine will be on sale Friday 20th October.

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## MAN AND BOY

*Rolls-Royce Silver Spur*

**David Wall**

I have just finished reading the superb first issue of *Rolls-Royce & Bentley Driver*. Thank you and everyone at Kelsey Media for a superb magazine.

Fortunately, I fulfilled my dream of owning a Rolls-Royce in 2015, when I purchased my Silver Spur; it needs a little work, but that adds to

the charm. In the 1960s and 1970s, my father worked for Avis Chauffeur Drive and drove Phantoms, Silver Shadows as well as other top marques including Cadillac, Daimler, and even a Mercedes-Benz 600 Pullman.

As my father had been trained at the Rolls-Royce driving school, he drove many rich and famous people all over Europe. He was involved with President Carter when he came to the UK for one official visit. During the 1970s, my

father was used by Avis in the USA to advertise their chauffeur drive operations and was photographed alongside a Phantom, unfortunately I no longer have a copy of this.

The photograph shown here is one of me aged about seven, with one of the Avis Phantoms that my father drove. Every time I drive my Rolls-Royce Silver Spur, it fills me with pride. Seeing the Flying Lady at the end of the bonnet really makes driving feel a privilege.

## NOT LOST, BUT FOUND

*Roll-Royce Mulliner  
Park Ward two-door*

**Brian Wadsworth**

In the first issue of *Rolls-Royce and Bentley Driver*, on page 86, there is a "From the Archives" feature by Paul Guinness which displays an historic photograph of the early Mulliner Park Ward two-door car bearing the registration number PRC 808F. This was kindly drawn to my attention by Philip Sage. Mr Guinness notes that the car has an MOT until March 2018, "and is presumably still in use". He goes on to say, "if you are the owner, we'd be delighted to hear from you".

I am indeed the owner of PRC 808F. She is not only "in use", but in fine fettle despite her (near) 50 years and 72,000 miles on the road. The photographs here show the car in her current state. The number plates bear the Mann Egerton of Derby dealer stickers and the car is complete in every detail, fully functional and entirely original apart from four minor concessions to



safety and modernity (radial tyres, halogen main beam headlamps, a high torque starter motor and period style door mirrors). I am pleased to say that she is still proceeding comfortably and silently, thanks to Colbrook

Specialists near Peterborough whose proprietor, Colin Ayres, first worked on this car as an apprentice, aged 17.

As the car's third owner since new I am looking forward to marking her 50th birthday in five months' time.

**We want to hear from you!** These pages will be reserved for any thoughts, comments, compliments or otherwise, about the magazine. Most important however, is that this is where we hope to display your pride and joy, full details of how you do that are at the bottom of the page.



## AGELESS ARNAGE

*Bentley Arnage*

**Roy W Painter**

Let me firstly congratulate you on the magazine, just what we Bentley and Rolls-Royce drivers needed and not before time.

Having owned many Bentleys since 1970, I was really interested in your critique on the Arnage, especially having just purchased a genuine 17,000 miles, 1999 Green Label that has undergone a no expense spared upgrade to a Red Label. Now in my mid 80s, the effort of doing a three point in a two and a half ton Mk V1 had become increasingly difficult, which coupled with the gear change on the right-hand side does not make for easy driving, so like many of my fellow members of similar years in the BDC, and under pressure from my co-driver spouse, we decided to 'Go Modern', but what is modern? For me, my unique 1968 T1 convertible embodied everything good about Bentleys, pleasing looks, power of a Centurion tank, its own personality, a car that had to be driven and still the best of British. But despite all of the above it was noisy, draughty and like all old ladies, needed consent attention.

My decision was also influenced that over the last ten years I have noticed a perceptible but accelerating change in the models attending meets and rallies. Rather than the Derbys, MKV1s, Phantoms and the odd Fast Back, it's the later Bentleys from the early 1980s

that now dominate the club meets. Is this due to the increasing price of classics now bought for investment or, as I suspect, a change in club members who no longer wish to arrive dishevelled from driving a 60-year old car.

Having reluctantly made the decision to change, it was what to change to. What was it to be? A Flying Spur, Turbo, Arnage, Green or Red label, a Continental GT? We really were spoilt for choice. Fortunately, through club members we were able to drive many of the models and having done so, came to the conclusion that the Continental GTC ticked all the boxes.

spoke to me; I knew this was the one and things only got better. It was a 1999, genuine two-owner, with only 17,000 miles on the clock, full service history, Green Label upgraded to a Red Label, including sunshine roof, and built-in satnav. Taking it for a test drive confirmed everything; comfortable, great looks, easy to handle, it really did fit the bill.

If there was a disappointment it was, of course, that as a Bentley man through and through, the BMW input didn't go down well. However, a few quick calls to other members and restorers quickly allayed my concerns.

**“Although a superb car, it is not a classic with its own character, it takes no effort and does not need driving”**

So, the search began and although we were spoilt for choice I followed the old maxim, you only get what you pay for. After many fruitless journeys looking at what was in some cases, absolute rubbish, a price pattern and choice emerged. However, finally I thought I found the right Bentley; a 2004 Continental GT GTC, black with magnolia upholstery and performance that that left nothing to the imagination.

However, just before deciding we looked around the dealers stock and low and behold there was a Bentley Arnage in Wildberry livery gleaming in the sunshine that immediately

So, the deal was done and the car has lived up to all my expectations; easy driving, with admiring glances even from other BDC members.

On the down side, unfortunately, although a superb car, it is just a production car that I cannot fault, but it is not a classic with its own character. From turning the key, it takes no effort and does not need driving. I do not feel part of it and it does not talk to me or become part of my personality. Nostalgia, maybe, and a small price to pay to be able to continue driving a superb piece of engineering at my age with the wonderful Flying B in the right place.

## SEND IN YOUR PRIDE AND JOY

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

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

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

# THE PHANTOM COLLECTIVE

To celebrate the next generation of Phantoms, Rolls-Royce is collecting The Great Eight together for an exhibition at Bonhams, on Bond Street, London. Here are three very special models. If only cars could talk...

**T**he greatest Phantoms of the last 92 years will be on display at Bonhams, in Bond Street, London at the end of July, celebrating the model and paving the way for the next generation.

**Below: Monty's Phantom III; note the raked front windscreen. We can only wonder what was discussed in the back of this Rolls-Royce...**

Publishing schedules mean that we can only show you three of the eight models chosen, since Rolls-Royce is only announcing one version at a time. That said, these three are pretty special, you would have to agree.

The Phantom is claimed to be the longest existing nameplate in the world of motoring history, first launched in 1925. Interestingly, when

it was being developed the project was code-named Eastern Armoured Car, giving anyone interested the impression that the company was building a military vehicle, as had been seen in the First World War. It is also said that sections of armoured plate were left 'lying around' the factory to confuse anyone curious enough and to keep secret what it took to build 'the best cars in the world'.

The model was something of an instant success, and not just because of its looks and luxurious appointment, but also because of its engineering toughness. At the General Motors test ground in Michigan, no car at the time had been able to complete two laps of the four-mile circuit at full throttle without damaging the engine's big ends. The Phantom I was tested and completed the circuits, averaging an impressive 80mph, without failure.

The Phantom II followed in 1929, with the last version under development before Sir Henry Royce passed away





being the Phantom III; he died two years before it was launched in 1935. The Phantom IV in 1950 was originally a one-off for the then Princess Elizabeth. However, when unveiled, a further 17 exclusive models were produced. Phantom V was produced between 1959 and 1968 and 516 were built, with clients as varied as the Queen Mother and John Lennon. Imagine, indeed.

The Royal connection was continued with the Phantom VI, built between 1968 and 1990. 2003 saw the latest Phantom VII, built at the new home of Rolls-Royce, Goodwood in West Sussex. This model lasted for 13 years, ceasing at the end of last year. What next, we wonder?

What we have here are two very special Phantoms. One was owned by Fred Astaire and has been loaned to the exhibition by its owner, the Petersen Museum in Los Angeles. We particularly like the top hat and cane, neatly displayed in the rear.

But it has to be the Phantom II of Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery, 1st Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, no less. A man nicknamed 'the Spartan general' because of his austere lifestyle, obviously made an exception when it came to personal transport. During



**Left and above: Fred Astaire's Phantom I clearly displays the style and glamour of the era. The top hat and cane being important additions, of course.**

regularly used to transport Monty to Downing Street, the War Office and Prime Minister Churchill's country residence Chequers. It even made it to Europe, visiting the NATO Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers- Europe in Rocquencourt, near Versailles, France. What was said, and what was decided in the back of this majestic automobile? If only cars could talk. But then, being a Rolls-Royce, one suspects that it would remain the height of discretion, even today. **NF**

the Second World War, Monty actually had three Rolls-Royce models at his disposal; two Phantom IIIs and a Silver Wraith. It is the 'Butler' Phantom that will be displayed. Originally built for Alan Samuel Butler, chairman of the De Havilland Aircraft Company, the body was produced by H J Mulliner, and noted for the sloping windscreen which was said to improve the aerodynamics by some 15 per cent – a design the result from being built for an aircraft manufacturer, perhaps? Of course, with this vehicle, it is as important to consider who was driven in it and what was said, rather than the undoubted engineering qualities. The car was



**STOP PRESS:** As we closed for press with this issue, the third Great Phantom was announced. This 1933 Phantom III Continental was owned by Sir Malcolm Campbell. The coachbuilt body was by Barker, and it had some bespoke spec; a wireless set, fire extinguisher, spotlight, a klaxon horn and a nine inch longer exhaust pipe, "to create an exhaust note closer to the Blue Bird's roar". What a hero.



# AGE CANNOT WITHER HER

The first time Peter Gunn saw his 1952 coachbuilt Bentley R-Type in the metal, after he had bought it on eBay, was when it was delivered to his home. Seven years later and he's still smiling about his Freestone and Webb coachbuilt delight

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY: ROB HAWKINS





**T**aking a gamble on buying a 1950s Bentley without inspecting it may seem suicidal to many, but when Peter Gunn took the plunge, he confesses he knew what he was letting himself in for, and wasn't too afraid of the potential work that he may be faced with. He had attempted to build several Bentley MkVI Specials over the years, without getting much further than a part built rolling chassis, before either funds or enthusiasm ran out.

The 62-year old health and safety trainer has been tinkering with cars for most of his adult life. In the 1980s, he built a well-known replica of an MG TF, called the Gentry, and is believed to be the first person to fit a Rover V8 under its bonnet and a Jaguar independent rear suspension set up at

the rear. His list of previously owned cars were mostly bought as restoration projects and include several Alvis TD 21s, an Alvis Grey Lady convertible, a Daimler Barker Special Sports, various Jaguars including a D-Type replica, and a 3.0-litre V6 Morgan.

Peter had always admired the Empress body style on either a Rolls-Royce, Bentley, or Daimler chassis, as designed and built by the coach builder Hooper, never really expecting to have an opportunity to own one of these rare cars. Back in 2010, he'd just sold a Derby Bentley project, so like most petrol heads, he had some space in the garage and cash burning a hole in his wallet.

Trawling through eBay, he came across the photos of what was described as a Bentley R-Type Empress, and after studying the photographs

closely, immediately started bidding. He suspected at the time that it was a Hooper bodied car, having no idea that Freestone and Webb also built a few of this body style as well. On contacting the seller it was described as complete and a runner, but in need of restoring as it had been stood under a car port for several years, after its previous owner had passed away. The seller, a dealer, knew nothing of its history, other than there was a box of papers that came with the car. Peter was sufficiently convinced to take the gamble and was fortunate enough to be the successful bidder. Once the transaction was complete, he organised for the Bentley to be delivered from London to his home near Wakefield in West Yorkshire.

With the car safely in the garage, the inspection could begin, and to »

# COACHBUILT AGE CANNOT WITHER HER

quote Peter, "My first surprise was to find it was not a Hooper bodied car. The coachbuilder's plate, in a cardboard box in the boot, stated Freestone and Webb. The second surprise was the overall condition of the car both inside and out, which was generally very good, with only a few localised repairs being required."

The third and most important surprise for Peter was the total originality of the car. "In the boot and under the bonnet all the tools were in place, together with the original handbook, and the box of papers turned out to contain the full service history from 1952," he explains. "After a full service, a new set of tyres, and a few adjustments to the brakes the car was taken for an MOT, which it passed with no advisories."

The car that Peter had bought was found to be chassis B12RT, fitted with engine B6R, officially called a Bentley R-Type, with body design 3093/A by Freestone and Webb of Willesden in London. This makes it the sixth R-Type rolling chassis to be built at the factory. According to the factory build sheet, it is one of the original cars to be called a Bentley 7, which was to replace the Mk6, but at the time of its manufacture in 1952, Jaguar had already released their Mk7, so a new title was allocated for the Bentley to avoid the clash of numbers. Further research with the Bentley Drivers Club unearthed that it was a Freestone and Webb official

## Right: Original, typed, Works Instruction form, describing Peter's car as a Bentley 7.

motor show car and appeared in advertisements during 1952 and at the Earls Court International Motor Show between 22nd October and 1st November that year. The car was on the Freestone and Webb stand 104, which it shared with another Bentley R-Type (chassis B4RT), and two Rolls-Royces, all with different body styles. Peter has found a photo from the motor show, which shows the Freestone and Webb stand in the distance, but is hoping he can one day find a photograph that shows his car.

The title Empress was owned and used by Hooper, so Peter is not sure if the Freestone and Webb body was ever officially called an Empress. Freestone and Webb made a total of nine of these models between 1952 and 1955 and this car was the first one. This particular model is classed as a six-cylinder special sports saloon four-door six-light. The six-cylinder refers to its 4.5-litre straight six engine under the bonnet, which is fed by a pair of SU carburettors. Being

**B12RT**

Order No. 112888  
 1952  
 1952  
 1952  
 1952  
 1952  
 1952  
 1952  
 1952  
 1952  
 1952

**CAR OF CHASSIS SPECIFICATION—WORKS INSTRUCTION**

Car Type: BENTLEY 7  
 Chassis No.: B12RT  
 Body No.: 3093/A  
 Make: G.W. 2240

Free Rear Spring: L.I.L. 225/2000  
 Steering Position: R.H.  
 Switch and Ignition: 2-2  
 Battery Type: Standard 6-CELL  
 Body Style: Coachwork  
 General Body Finish: Freestone & Webb Ltd.

**SPECIAL FEATURES**

Bentley 7. Painted Lead required after first 25000.

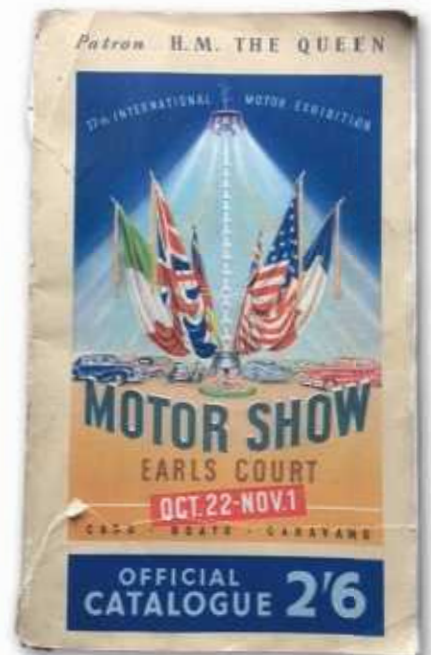
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a four-door saloon, the rear doors are hinged against the B-posts, whereas the Hooper version had suicide doors, which were hinged against the C-posts. The six-light in the description refers to the number of side windows – three on each side. This model is also a six-seater, with room for three passengers up front and three in the rear.

Peter has sourced an original Earls Court Motor Show guide from 1952

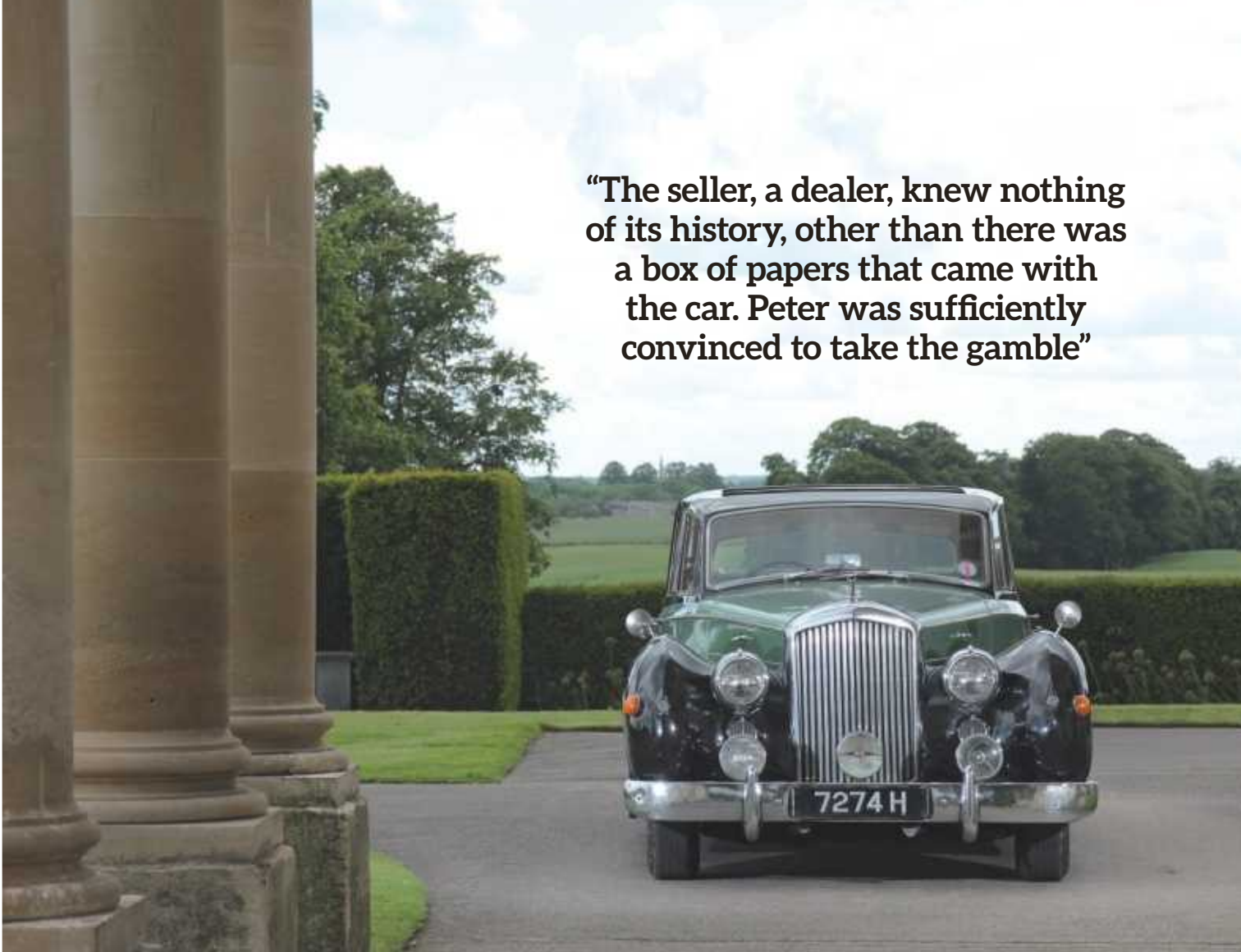


Advertisement for the car from *The Motor* magazine, 22 October, 1952.



The Bentley went on display at the Earls Court Motor Show.

**“The seller, a dealer, knew nothing of its history, other than there was a box of papers that came with the car. Peter was sufficiently convinced to take the gamble”**



and details of his coachbuilt Type R are listed, along with an advertisement showing his car. The description of the model states that the woodwork inside features olive ash Burr Butt veneers and the pastel green leather upholstery was all made at Freestone and Webb along with the bodywork. Peter has since discovered the rolling chassis was delivered to Freestone and Webb in June 1952, and the car was ready for the motor show by the end of October. Most of the body consists of handmade aluminium panels over a timber frame, the front wings and bonnet being steel. The four months spent making this show car must have been very testing for a vehicle that is 16ft 10in long, 6ft 1.5in wide and 5ft 3.5in tall.

The motor show literature reveals some interesting points about this coachbuilt Bentley, including the black and special jeweesence green paintwork, which nowadays would be classed as a metallic finish, along with other features that were regarded as sought after on a motor vehicle. For example, the description states

the windscreen is curved for greater visibility. Peter points out that at the time, most windcreens were flat, so this was quite novel and worth promoting. The literature also states that “The car is also fitted with Freestone and Webb air-conditioning.” There’s no air conditioning condenser or sophisticated climate control. Instead, there’s an air feed that can direct air drawn from the front of the car, across the radiator and in through the front footwells, »



**Rare original handbook in its original green plastic wallet, which came with the car, bears the unlucky number XIII, which Peter believes wasn’t usually used by the superstitious people at Bentley.**



**Peter Gunn feels very lucky to have found his coachbuilt Bentley on eBay.**

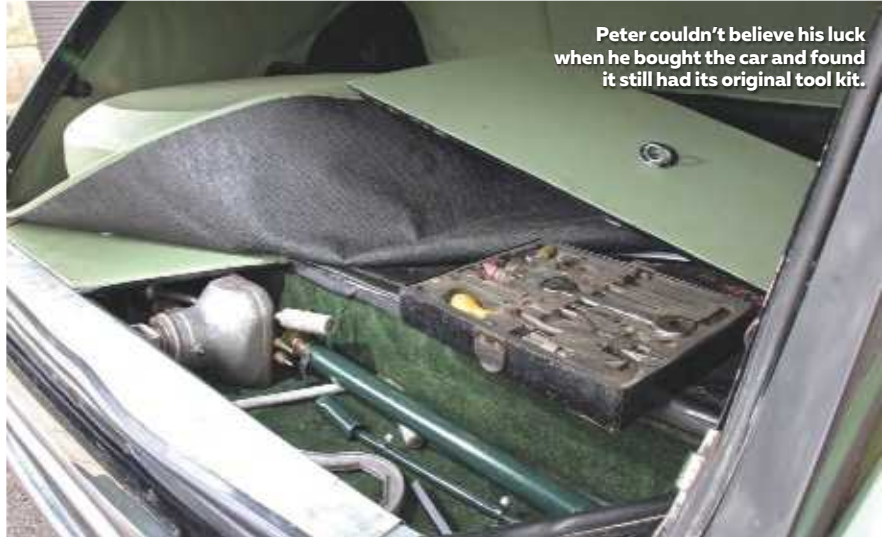
## COACHBUILT AGE CANNOT WITHER HER



**Spacious boot would have originally been filled with matching green luggage.**

aided by an electric fan. If warm air isn't required, this feed can be closed off.

It's amusing to read and see this level of technology, especially since air conditioning has advanced so much. However, it's admirable to see that a coachbuilder like Freestone and Webb were keen to impress their potential customers with technology. Their target market was the chauffeur driven super rich, so attention to detail was a must. Looking over Peter's car, the detail is everywhere. Open the



**Peter couldn't believe his luck when he bought the car and found it still had its original tool kit.**

front passenger door and there's a small compartment inside the door, which stores a picnic set. The driver's door has a similar compartment for a flask and two decanters. Drop down picnic tables are fitted into the backs of the front seats, with sliding trays from under the dashboard in the front, complete with cup holders. There's a heated rear window, push-button radio, full length sunroof, and fabric pull-down sun blinds for both the driver and front seat passenger.

Assuming this car would usually require a chauffeur in the driver's front bench seat and two passengers in the rear, the potential use of the extra two seats up front was carefully considered, with the rake of the driver's seat back adjusted separately, together with an armrest. It also originally came with a full set of matching green luggage, unfortunately no longer with the car.

When this coachbuilt Bentley went on sale in 1952, it had a price tag of £6500. At the time, the average »



**Original semaphores have been replaced with indicators at the front and rear corners.**



**For all Bentley Drivers**  
*- and enthusiasts*



We invite ROLLS ROYCE & BENTLEY driver readers to our Silverstone race meeting



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**“The West German Embassy wouldn’t have looked so good using a German car in London so soon after the war, so maybe they wisely chose to use a British car.”**



annual earnings were £250, so such a car in modern day money would cost £650,000. Peter has calculated you could have bought an Aston Martin DB2, a Jaguar XK120 and a Morris Minor at the Earls Court Motor Show, and then gone out and bought a large detached house, for the price of this car. What’s also interesting about the

sale is the fact that in 1952, buying a brand new car was very difficult. Most had to be sold for export to help boost Britain’s economy, with seemingly the exception of high priced luxury cars. According to the paperwork Peter has for his car, it was ordered by a company on the 11th March 1952, but wasn’t delivered to them until August 1953.

Within one month of taking delivery of the Bentley, the first owner sold it to the West German Embassy in London, so the car would have been seen in and around Whitehall, and possibly on occasion at Downing Street. As Peter explains, “The West German Embassy wouldn’t have looked so good using a German car in London



**Sunroof slides inside the roof panel.**



**Passenger door is deep enough to hold a picnic set.**



Olive ash Burr Butt veneer dashboard houses a clock, speedometer, switch panel and a combined ammeter, fuel level, coolant temperature and oil pressure gauge.

so soon after the war, so maybe they wisely chose to use a British car."

The car stayed in the ownership of the Embassy until 1979, and Peter has documentation concerning their diplomatic plates that were used on the car – registration 159D150.

A Doctor L. Shears of Harley Street, who invented an artificial knee joint in 1952, bought the car in 1979 and had it valued the year after at £15,000. At the time, he also had another Freestone and Webb coachbuilt Bentley, which was valued at £10,000. He apparently used the car as his daily drive, while visiting his patients in and around London. Amongst the paperwork that came with the car, there is a letter from the doctor addressed to the London Metropolitan Police, complaining about being clamped whilst visiting a patient. The Met duly replied, apologising for the error and refunding the fine!

The car was eventually sold by Doctor Shears' son after the owner had passed away, and Peter has now owned it for the last seven years. He admits he's »



The rear seating area was designed to accommodate the chauffeur-driven super rich. Centre armrest can be lifted up to seat three in the back. Rear picnic tables include a vanity mirror. Note the driver's seat back is separate and has rake adjustment.

## COACHBUILT AGE CANNOT WITHER HER

going to struggle to find anything rarer or in his opinion, more special than this, so it appears to be one to keep. However, he's not overly protective of its rarity (he knows of only one other Freestone and Webb bodied R-Type in the UK). As we take photographs of the car in front of Brodsworth Hall near Doncaster, a toddler runs up to it with a mum in tow, and Peter kindly opens the driver's door and asks if the two of them want to sit inside. Several other visitors to the hall ask to take photographs when passing by and Peter is only too keen to let them sit inside the car.

With the milometer reading almost 65,000 miles, the past MOT test certificates suggest the true mileage is an extra 100,000. Peter is rarely reluctant to drive his Bentley, spending many a weekend attending car shows ranging from local events

to the NEC Classic in November and the Restoration Show in March, where the car has been on display. "The car is wonderful to own, is an absolute delight to drive, great fun to be out and about in, and wears its patina and age with pride," he says. ■

### MANY THANKS

*Rolls-Royce and Bentley Driver* magazine would like to thank English Heritage ([www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)) for access to Brodsworth Hall and Gardens to photograph Peter Gunn's Bentley. Based near Doncaster, Brodsworth hosts two classic car shows every year.



16-inch diameter steel wheels are shod with Dunlop cross-plys.



Tucked away inside the engine bay, there's a starting handle and a couple of syringes, which Peter suspects are for lubrication



Lockable petrol filler cap is accessed at the nearside rear quarter.



Door locks were made by Yale. The driver's side still has its sliding cover.



# Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club

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# THE MEN BEHIND THE MARQUE: THE HON CHARLES STEWART ROLLS

For a man to have 'No Occupation' recorded on his death certificate, the Hon Charles Stewart Rolls achieved rather a lot in his mere 32 years. We take a look at the aristocrat and his life on the other side of the Royce hyphen

WORDS: JEREMY SATHERLEY PHOTOGRAPHY: SIR HENRY ROYCE MEMORIAL FOUNDATION/RREC



All hell was breaking loose. Horseless carriages were passing through the village, and the rural community was gripped by terror. "Every other man climbed up a tree or a telegraph pole to get out of your way; every woman ran away across the fields; every horse jumped over the garden wall as a matter of course; and every butcher's cart... bolted off, scattering various parts of animals about the road".

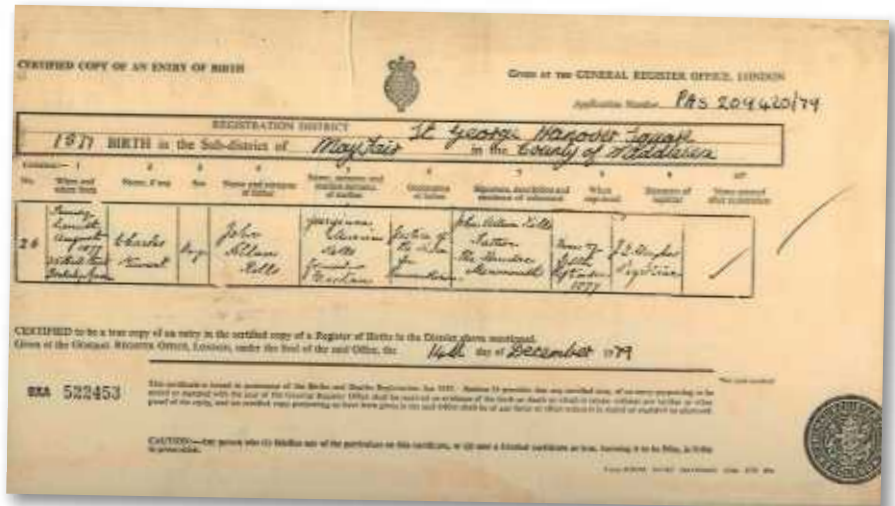
Such was the Hon C. S. Rolls' observation on a typical turn-of-the-20th Century occasion. But was he chastened by such a response? As someone who'd been entering motoring competitions before the 19th Century was out, and who fearlessly raced an express train neck-and-neck between Otley and Guisley during the 1900 Thousand Miles Trial, this was hardly likely. To quote historian Piers Brendon, 'Sporting gentry easily adapted the manners of the hunting field to the pursuit of motoring'. But while he was part of a petrolhead set that included R J Mecredy, whose antics at the wheel rendered him 'seriously mistaken for the Anti-Christ', and Frank, Earl Russell, dubbed 'a limb of Satan', Rolls showed a sense of purpose and commitment which stood him well apart from such Toads of Toad Hall.

Charles Stewart Rolls was born in 1877, the third son of John Alan Rolls, first Lord Llangattock, whose barony had been created in 1892 in recognition of the family's long

tradition of distinguished public service and extensive property ownership in London and South Wales. The family seat was The Hendre, in Monmouthshire: a vast, ornate Victorian edifice expanded from an 18th Century shooting lodge, which today serves as the clubhouse of the Rolls of Monmouth Golf Club. It was here that Charles took an early interest in practical householding when at the age of nine he rigged up an electric bell from his bedroom to the stables, and shortly after was reputed to have overseen the installation of an electrical system for the whole house – making it the first private dwelling in Monmouthshire to be so equipped. It displayed the beginnings of a skill set that would bridge the social gap when Rolls met Royce.

It was also an element that influenced his choice of study when he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge in 1895 to read engineering, in which he graduated with an MA in 1898. Such a choice was untypical for a man of his social level at a time when the classics, law or theology were more usual subjects for the sons of noblemen. During his university years, he was already active with both wheel and wing, prominent in long-distance competitive cycling as captain of the University Bicycling Club, experimenting with paper-and-balsawood model planes (and launching them, it's said, from the auditorium balconies of London's Albert Hall!), and combining personal savings with a paternal loan to buy his first car, a second-hand Peugeot 3¾hp, in 1896.

The Peugeot was Rolls' springboard to a restless pursuit of better-performing cars on both road and track, while weathering a background of Establishment disapproval. The Emancipation Act of 1896 repealed 1860s legislation restricting a self-propelled vehicle to 4mph, preceded by a man carrying a red flag, and raised the speed limit to 14mph. But far from being a celebration for liberated drivers, the subsequent Emancipation Run was notable only for its many breakdowns and an injured child, which hardly boosted the image of British motoring. Bickerings over the running of the Motor Car Club, formed that year by the unscrupulous automotive entrepreneur Harry J Lawson and suspected of largely serving his own commercial interests, led to the founding of the Automobile



The birth certificate of C.S. Rolls

**“Such a choice was untypical for a man of his social level at a time when the classics, law or theology were more usual subjects for the sons of noblemen”**



The London home of C.S. Rolls

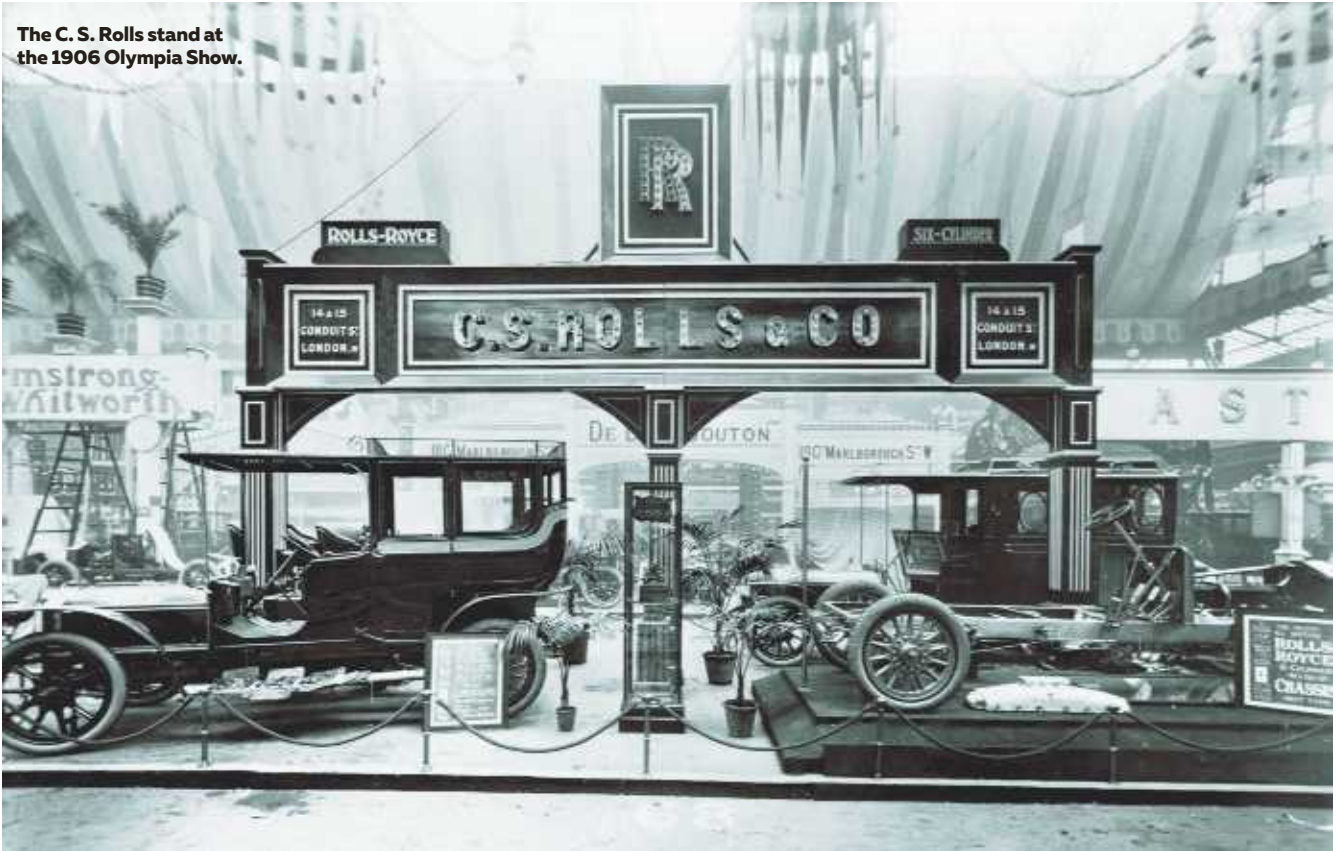
Club of Great Britain, which was to become, in 1907 with King Edward VII's blessing, the Royal Automobile Club. It was set up by engineer and component manufacturer Frederick Simms with Roger Wallace, QC, in the chair, 'to form a Club of good fellows who met together for fighting the Battle of Automobilmism'. Many of the founder-members were blue-bloods, Charles Rolls among them, although he soon became noted

for his meanness, bringing his own sandwiches into the club dining room rather than fork out for a meal.

From competition experience gained largely in France and distinguished by a flying-start kilometre record, reaching over 80mph on the Duke of Portland's extensive drive in an 80hp Mors, Rolls was more aware than most that the quality and reliability of cars would have to improve if motoring was to have any future or respect. Driving an »

**THE MEN BEHIND THE MARQUE**  
**THE HON CHARLES STEWART ROLLS**

The C. S. Rolls stand at the 1906 Olympia Show.



unnamed car, the 180-odd miles from Paris to Calais, for instance, he suffered a disintegrating water pipe, slack drive chain, three punctures, cylinders glowing red-hot, oil-contaminated brakes and two burst ignition tubes. Then in the 1903 Paris-Madrid race, his Panhard's engine vibrated free

of the chassis. Yet such cars were examples of the better marques. No wonder Rolls had so much technical advice to offer in his contemporary article, The Caprices of the Petrol Motor. It dealt comprehensively with just about every malady a conked-out car was capable of and ended

with the cheery words, 'Don't spill the petrol over your clothes and then strike a match to light your pipe'. So far it had been a question of Rolls promoting the best of what was available, and that came from France, Belgium and Germany. He furthered



THE CAMBRIDGE "QUAD," 1895.

In the old days when long-distance paced racing attracted huge gates, "quads" and quinquiplets formed an inspiring feature of the sport. The riders in the above photograph, which is produced by the courtesy of the Hon. C. S. Rolls, now so well known in motoring and aviation circles, are, from left to right the Hon. C. S. Rolls, Stewart, Kenny, and Dr. Garwood. This quartet paced competitors in several of the classic long-distance races of the period.



Driving certificate: C.S. Rolls is qualified to drive mechanically propelled vehicles.

Early days, cycling in 1895.

this by becoming a motor trader, beginning in 1897 with the purchase of a Daimler-powered Panhard et Levassor – for a then-considerable £1400 – which had won the Paris-Marseilles Race. By 1902, aided by a £6600 contribution from his father, he was trading from Lillie Hall in Seagrave Road, Fulham, SW6, selling Clément, Krebs-Panhard, Minerva and Mors cars to wealthy society customers. Even by pre-1914 social standards, it was apparently acceptable to sell cars and be a gentleman. What did smack of ‘trade’ however was Rolls’ engineering knowledge and his application of it, often seen getting his patrician hands dirty underneath a car – when he was not sleeping there to save on hotel bills, that is. Not that this would have concerned Rolls in the slightest. What did matter to him, as an ardent patriot, was his desire to sell a British car that was as good as, or better than the competition, and up until now there hadn’t been very many of those. Their development had been hampered by what American motoring pundit C Y Knight called ‘the Tom-fool red flag law’, which once repealed left ‘no English manufacturers of consequence to fill the demand for cars’. ‘High-class people of England looked upon the homemade cars with a feeling akin to contempt’, added Knight, a situation Rolls dearly wanted to change.

## MEETING HENRY ROYCE

The catalyst in bringing Rolls and Royce together was Henry Edmunds, a company director, electrical engineer, keen motorist and Automobile Club member. At the time, 1904, Henry Royce’s company, Royce Limited, of Manchester, had only just branched into cars as an offshoot of the principal crane manufacturing business. Edmunds happened to meet Henry Royce’s partner Ernest Claremont during a share deal, and as a friend of Rolls was very interested to hear from Claremont about Royce’s new 10hp twin-cylinder car, which promised ideal sales material for Lillie Hall. A meeting was suggested but the dour Royce refused to go to London, so Rolls travelled to Manchester to meet the bearded perfectionist at the Midland Hotel. The two entrepreneurs were from very different backgrounds. But miller’s son Royce warmed to Rolls’ electrical knowledge and engineering qualifications and a bond was soon



**C. S. Rolls, ballooning.**



**C. S. Rolls driving the Princess of Monaco, Lady Mary Scott and Tommy Sopwith.**

## “Miller’s son Royce warmed to Rolls’ electrical knowledge and engineering qualifications and a bond was soon established”

established, especially after Rolls took a run around the city in the new car. Here at last was the British quality he had sought for so long, enough to justify the formation of Rolls-Royce Distributing Limited, by which Rolls gave up all his other agencies to sell only Royce’s output.

Rolls lost no time in demonstrating one of the cars to Queen Victoria’s third son, the Duke of Connaught (Charles had first connected with

royalty at The Hendre, driving the future King George and Queen Mary in 1900). Good though the 10hp was, capable of 30mph at 1000rpm with above-average noise suppression, Rolls wanted more than two cylinders to sell. So three, four and six-cylinder models were added in time for the December 1904 Paris Salon which was no mean feat, achieved largely by Royce standardising many parts. Of these, the four-cylinder 20hp proved »

**THE MEN BEHIND THE MARQUE**  
**THE HON CHARLES STEWART ROLLS**



**1904 Rolls-Royce - CS Rolls with HRH Duke of Connaught**

the most successful, also distinguishing itself in the 1905 Tourist Trophy on the Isle of Man (or 'Isle of Manslaughter' as many called it, the circuit consisting of 52 miles of sharp bends, hills, bridges and stone walls). Driven by Rolls and future company employee Percy Northey, Royce's two 20hps were the fastest in the field but only Northey's

car finished, coming in second after Rolls stripped the gears on his car and retired - claiming, perhaps to cover embarrassment, that the vehicle had been tampered with. However, he more than made up for it the following year when he won the TT in a 20hp outright. On another occasion he averaged 35mph over 22 hours with a 20hp

between Monte Carlo and Boulogne, which astounded fellow enthusiasts.

**ROLLS-ROYCE LIMITED IS FORMED**

1906 was a significant year for the principal partners with the company's title officially registered as Rolls-Royce Limited in March, and the procuring of new factory premises in Derby as fundamental to separating crane from car production. Helped by a timely injection of capital from Bradford woollen manufacturer A H Briggs, the way was set fair for the manufacture of Royce's new 40/50hp car which had appeared at the November 1906 Olympia show. Setting new standards of finish and attention to detail, the square-engined (114.5 x 114.5mm) 7036cc six-cylinder 40/50, or Silver Ghost as it came to be known, was a revelation. It attracted those seeking 'ordre, luxe, calme, volupté et beauté', as monocled technical writer Laurence Pomeroy Jnr put it, finding 'these qualities combined in the Silver Ghost in a degree not rivalled by any other make or model'. One could just imagine Rolls the salesman extolling these virtues to high-end customers such as American millionaire Paris E Singer (who bought one of the



**1906 Tourist Trophy Race, light twenty, with riding mechanic Eric Platford.**



## “Rolls stalled and crashed it almost immediately, going “up with a wallop and down with a thud”. Three weeks later, he was winning Aero Club awards”

first cars off the line), the Guinness family, press baron Lord Northcliffe, the Marquis of Bute and the Duke of Northumberland, to name but a few.

By now, with Royce concentrating entirely on the engineering side, Rolls was dynamically supported in his marketing efforts by the company's managing director, Claude Johnson. Johnson had known Rolls since the founding days of the Automobile Club, acting as its original secretary with exceptional organising skills. To him went the credit of arranging the successful 1900 Thousand Miles Trial, which happened to be won by Rolls in a Panhard. The cars may have sounded like ‘an avalanche of tea trays’, ‘piddled petrol’ as Rudyard Kipling put it, or dropped oil and nuts and bolts in their wake; but the Trial had made the most convincing case to date for the new-fangled automobile. Wherever the entrants stopped off, at a stage or for a break, it enabled people up and down the country to get acquainted at close quarters with vehicles many would never have seen before, perhaps helping to ease certain prejudices.

When Johnson tired of internal politics at the Automobile Club, he

resigned to manage Rolls' car agency in Fulham, and by natural progression of events became an indispensable part of the team with the advent of Rolls-Royce Distributing and Rolls-Royce Limited. As soon as Rolls began handling Royce's cars, Johnson lost no time in scoring prominent Club members who continued to deal in foreign makes. Later on, his promotion of the new 40/50hp was a masterpiece of early-motoring PR. Selecting the aluminium-painted, 13th example to be made (the actual Silver Ghost), he and Rolls personally crewed it on two exacting trials: a 2000-mile run accomplished entirely in direct third and top gear between Bexhill and Glasgow – returning nearly 21mpg – followed by a 15,000-mile test revealing negligible engine and transmission wear and emphasising the advantage of a well-constructed live axle over drive chains (a Wolseley-Siddeley got through two sets of chains over a similar distance).

### ROLLS TAKES FLIGHT

Johnson's input was just as well, for around this time Rolls was becoming increasingly preoccupied with flying



**The Tourist Trophy winner's certificate.**

exploits, to the extent of exchanging his executive position for a non-executive directorship from 1909. All had begun with an ascent in a balloon from London's Crystal Palace in 1898, prompting him to cultivate ‘balloonacy’ as a proper sport instead of a fairground attraction. Supported by individuals like Frank Butler and his daughter Vera – the first woman to be booked for speeding – he founded the Aero Club as an Automobile Club subsidiary in 1900, with the Club acquiring balloons to be piloted by professional handlers. By 1905 however the Club was issuing »

## THE MEN BEHIND THE MARQUE THE HON CHARLES STEWART ROLLS



**C. S. Rolls, behind the wheel, and Eric Platford pose for a picture after winning the 1906 Tourist Trophy Race on the Isle of Man.**

certificates of competence to its own members and Rolls gained his the following year, impatient to buy a balloon that would be good enough to enter in the Gordon Bennett international contests. He found one in the 80,000cu ft Britannia, produced by the Short Brothers off London's Tottenham Court Road, and came in fourth out of 16 entrants in October 1906 despite ditching in rural Norfolk, and being given up initially for lost.

Although Rolls' achievement

enhanced the reputation of British ballooning and earned him a gold medal for endurance from the French Aero Club, his ultimate goal was powered flight. A 1907 trip in the French Ville de Paris airship was a clincher, Rolls having already met the pioneering Wright brothers while Stateside for the 1906 New York Motor Show. When the Wrights later set up aircraft interests in France, Rolls wanted to buy their new Flyer machine, but had to wait while contractual formalities diverted

its manufacture, under licence, to Short Brothers. Meanwhile he gained some useful flying experience over 1909 in a Short glider – the first of its type ever built by that firm – Rolls' unkempt-looking Silver Ghost Mulliner tourer and aircraft trailer becoming a familiar sight at a favourable launching point on a hill at Eastchurch, in Kent.

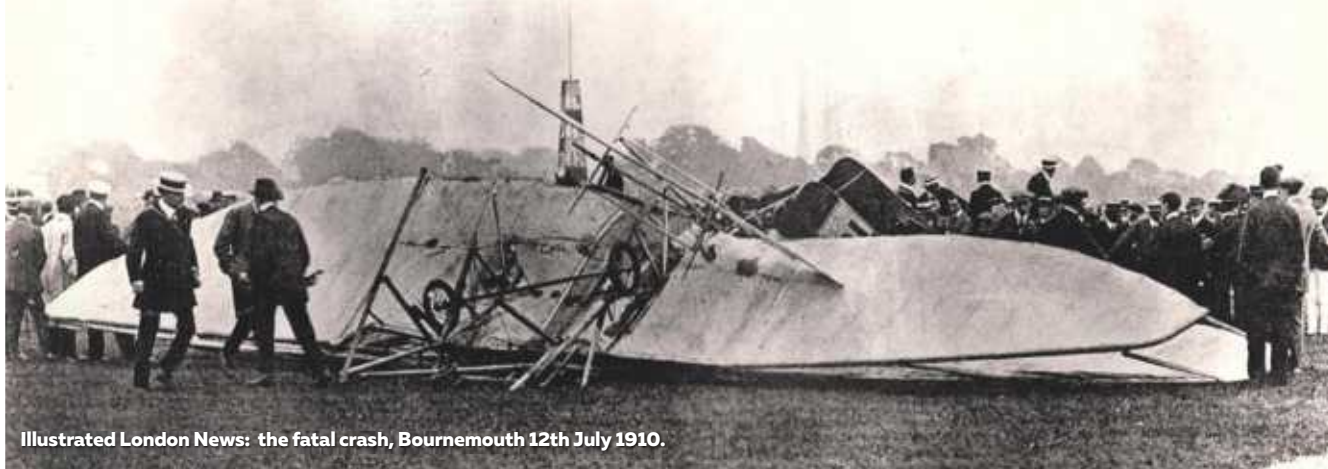
The Flyer (renamed the Short-Wright No 1 by Shorts) was eventually delivered in October 1909, but Rolls stalled and crashed it almost immediately, going "up with a wallop and down with a thud". However, after an intensive three weeks of repairs, the plane was winning Aero Club prizes for Rolls, beginning with a 250-yard hop and culminating that November in a straight-line mile at a record-breaking 60 feet. Soon he was achieving distances of 15 miles and after gaining the Aero Club pilot's certificate, celebrated with the purchase of three more craft, one of which was to bring him both triumph and disaster – a French-built and powered Wright biplane. Rolls took it to Nice in April 1910, establishing another world record by flying an aggregate of 50 miles over open sea, and followed it up in June with his crowning achievement – a non-stop return crossing of the Channel, the first man to do so in heavier-than-air flight. Lavished with medals and trophies

**The fatal last flight.**





**“The story of Rolls’ short life is a rare example of how privilege and the old-boy network worked; not just resulting in a world-famous motor car, but in helping to improve standards and therefore the acceptability of both the car and powered flight”**



Illustrated London News: the fatal crash, Bournemouth 12th July 1910.

from both British and French sources, Rolls went on to Wolverhampton later in the month, to win Lord Plymouth’s prize for the three fastest air laps.

Such success was too good to last. On the 12th July 1910, Rolls was at Southborne in Bournemouth with the French Wright to join a flying event for the town’s centenary celebrations. Shorts had just modified the tailplane to Wright’s recommendation, which rather concerned Rolls’ mechanic. But Rolls went up anyway, as part of a landing competition held in blustery conditions which had already damaged three aircraft. When it was his turn he came in very low over the grandstand,

realised he was undershooting and pulled back the stick, but the tailplane broke up under the strain. Rolls was thrown out on hitting the ground and was killed instantly.

He was just over a month away from his 33rd birthday, victim of the first-ever powered-aeroplane fatality in Britain. He had no descendants to further his footsteps, while the First World War claimed his two brothers, also unmarried, rendering the Rolls male line extinct. But the story of Rolls’ short life is a rare example of how privilege and the old-boy network worked in our favour; not just resulting in a world-famous motor car carrying

his own name, but in helping against the odds – and taking risks along the way – to improve standards and therefore the acceptability of both the car and powered flight for the general public. What might we have expected of him beyond 1910? A First World War air ace? An influential patron of motor sport... a motoring-friendly politician... an airline operator? He would certainly have been gratified by Royce’s wartime entry into aero-engineering, something ‘the old man’ had earlier resisted. As Lady Llangattock stated in a eulogy to her son: “Such as he have made England great in the past, and on such as She must depend for her glorious future”. Not bad for a man of ‘no occupation’. ■



Funeral of C.S. Rolls, Llangattock, 1910.

THE BODY OF THE Hon. C. S. Rolls,  
LLANGATTOCK. 1910.

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Rolls-Royce Corniche at The Hendre, home to C.S. Rolls, the third son of Lord and Lady Llangattock.

# TIME TRAVELLING

This very special trip, conducted some 17 years ago, has become more memorable, and significant, with the passing of time. We take a trip aboard our time machine as the author recalls a journey in one of the very last model Rolls-Royce Corniche Convertibles built to some significant sites in the manufacturer's history

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY: IAN ADCOCK

It's a Saturday morning, 17 years ago and Monmouth's market bustles with activity as locals and visitors to this sleepy Welsh border town scour the stalls for a bargain. Few, though, take any heed of the statue in the lee of the town hall. Even the royal blue Rolls-Royce Corniche that I have parked opposite elicits little response from the shoppers.

The statue's subject is clothed in the country tweeds of another era: belted jacket, flat cap with side flaps buttoned under the chin. One hand is swooping a model bi-plane through the air, just like a little boy.

The inscription is simple and clear: Charles Stewart Rolls, 1877-1910. Followed by a brief description of a brilliant life snuffed out at the age of

33 when he became the first Briton to die in an air crash. But it isn't for that he is remembered, nor winning the first 1000-mile Reliability Trial in 1900 or as a founding member of what eventually became the Royal Automobile Club, but as half of the most famous car marque in the world – Rolls-Royce.

Born in 1877, Charles Stewart Rolls was the third son of Lord and

Lady Llangattock of The Hendre, an extensive estate just a few miles from his memorial. His privileged life took him to Eton and then Cambridge where he became one of the first students to own a car and regularly drove the 140 miles from Cambridge to home, albeit in two days – far longer than the train journey.

When I visited The Hendre all those years ago, it was a sad reminder of its glorious past. Trapped between Japanese developers who had landscaped the park land into a golf course and wanted to renovate the house into a member's club and the local council that, for whatever reason, wouldn't then allow any renovation of the listed building.

There's was a heavy sense of sadness as I wandered through the rapidly disintegrating Hendre house, footsteps echoing, dust swirling like dervishes as doors creaked open and shut. It wasn't difficult to imagine Rolls' life there, the servants and

maids, evenings spent by roaring fires, the aroma of fine cigars and cognacs mingling with the inconsequential chatter of the privileged.

Outside, the dark blue Rolls-Royce Corniche glistened in the sun. Rolls would no doubt have marvelled at its speed and performance – 137mph and 8.5 secs to 60mph – and being a racer, he would have been intrigued by its adaptive suspension that keeps the big car on an even keel. But, like me and countless others he would be saddened and bemused at the tawdry turmoil Rolls-Royce had been put through at the time.

The slave market auction of Rolls-Royce by its parent company, Vickers was, in my opinion, a shameful chapter in contemporary motoring history. The fact that Rolls-Royce (1971) plc, which owns the rights to the Rolls-Royce insignia and symbols, were culpable in discarding the car maker to BMW made it all the more dishonourable.

Launched at the Los Angeles Motor »



**C.S. Rolls' memorial in Monmouth, complete with bi-plane.**



**The statue to Sir Henry commemorates Rolls-Royce's efforts during the Second World war, not his cars.**



**A poor reminder of Royce's time spent in Manchester.**

The school that Sir Henry attended as a child.



This awful pub in Moss Side, Manchester is an insult to Sir Henry Royce.



On the road to Sir Henry's birthplace – is there a finer bonnet to travel behind?

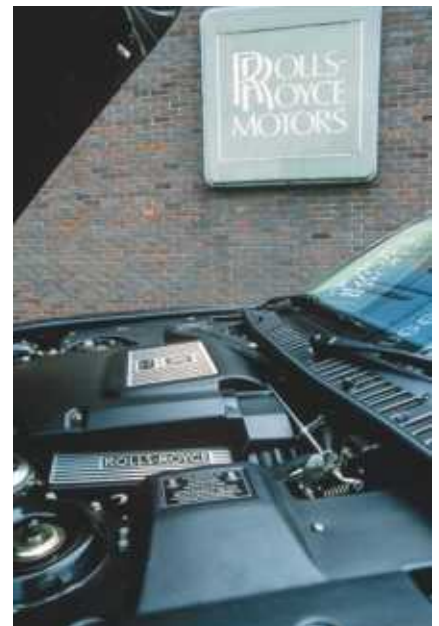
Show, where the rich and famous queued and pleaded to get on the waiting list for this £250,000 motor car, the Rolls-Royce Corniche could end up having a very special place in the annals of the company.

My musings at the time meant that unless there was a dramatic reversal of fortune, the Corniche would be the last Rolls-Royce to be designed and engineered in Crewe. That was why I was driving this particular Crewe-built Corniche; to pay homage to a glorious past and remind myself of what was and what might not be.

Conspicuous wealth such as that displayed by the Corniche is often met with disdain and the envy of jealousy, "If I can't have it, why should you?" attitude. But I encountered that only twice during the two days I spent with the car. For the most part people admired the lines Rolls-Royce chief designer, Graham Hull has penned. And it was, still is, a handsome car in the same way that Clipper ships of old were handsome. Its flowing lines and sheer size – 213 inches from bumper to bumper – only add to the nautical analogy.

The Corniche, unlike the similarly sized Bentley Azure to which it owes the floorpan, powertrain and suspension, only felt out of place on the Shropshire's sinuous roads as we headed north towards the car's birthplace, Crewe.

While the Azure, with its more



The Light Pressure Turbocharged V8 epitomises the silken power delivery you'd expect from a Rolls-Royce.

powerful turbocharged V8 engine and firmer suspension settings could be hustled along at greater speeds, the Corniche is for cruising, there I go again with another maritime comparison. With the roof down and looking through the windscreen and along that imperious bonnet to the 'Spirit of Ecstasy' leading you onwards like a galleon's figure head, your hands resting lightly on the Connolly rimmed steering wheel, it is the closest sensation you'll ever come on dry land to helming a yacht.

The Corniche is the ultimate antidote to road rage. Let other motorists hurl themselves past you in lesser machines, engines revving, gears straining, the Corniche gives you time in abundance to enjoy the serene beauty of the English countryside and still proceed at a rate of knots that has you calmly pulling up behind your overtakers at the next junction.

Bizarrely Crewe, where the Corniche was built, is the first scene of jealousy. A knackered Nova full of shaven-headed louts screams past, the little car's engine almost drowned by their abusive language. The irony is that their relatives probably helped build the car they were so disdainful of.

Although Crewe was Rolls-Royce's post-war home, it started life as a greenfield factory built before 1939 to manufacture Merlin aero engines that powered the Spitfire, Hurricane and Lancaster 'planes which helped save our island nation from Hitler's dreadful tyranny.

Early on a Saturday evening the Crewe factory is a ghost town with just the security guards keeping watch. The avenues between the factory buildings as silent as the 324bhp engine which powers the Corniche.

In a time of high-revving engines the slow heart beat of a Crewe V8 is an anachronism, yet one perfectly suited to the marque. Rolls-Royce made the error of using BMW's V12 to power the Seraph. Fine engine it might be in a Munich 7-series saloon, but it didn't feel right in a Rolls-Royce. In fact, it made the British car feel just as if it had been engineered in Munich, the main shortcoming being that unforgettable surge of torque, almost from tick-over, the big V8 gives. Add a low-pressure turbo to the V8, as in the Corniche, and you ride a wave of power unparalleled in any contemporary car.

There's a forlorn air about the Rolls-Royce factory on a Saturday evening, accented by signs welcoming you to »



The second Rolls-Royce factory in Nightingale Road, Derby.

**“Early on a Saturday evening the Crewe factory is a ghost town with just the security guards keeping watch”**



This is Royce Road, Alwalton.



Where the Corniche started its life, at Crewe.

Crewe 'The Home of Rolls-Royce and Bentley', but for how long? Set in relief on the red brick office block, the script reads ROLLS-ROYCE MOTOR CARS CO. LTD. Surely, Volkswagen, owners of Bentley and the factory, can't, won't deface the building by removing that and the creamy linked R's above the main entrance when they finally hand over Royces to BMW in 2003? But, in fact, that is exactly what happened: the Crewe factory no longer shows any allegiance to the 'Spirit of Ecstasy', all traces seemingly expunged not only from the factory, but Crewe itself. Only the memories remain.

Royces? Aren't they Rollers or Rolls for short? Not to the true enthusiast, for it was Sir Henry Royce who created the engineering ethos behind the marque. Rolls joined him in 1904 to help with sales and marketing from his Fulham showrooms.

Henry Royce's engineering life started in a small back street factory in Cook Street, Manchester an hour's drive north of Crewe. Sadly, Cook Street no longer exists, there isn't even a trace of it and asking the

## "There's no sign of the mill, but a local was proud enough of the village's most famous son to spend time talking"

local police, tourist offices and even at Manchester's Industrial Museum elicited blank incomprehension. I did find it once, many years ago on the 60th anniversary of Royce's death. A blue plaque high up on the wall of a dingy high-rise denoted its location in Moss Side, an area once notorious for drugs, gang warfare and as violent as the Bronx or Harlem.

The tower block has been torn down and replaced by bijou terraces in a vain attempt to bring a semblance of normality to this deprived neighbourhood. I found a few streets named after Royce and even the Sir Henry Royce pub, a dishevelled, squalid shack that deserved to be torched. A wino, nursing the mother of all hangovers incoherently rambles on about how Rolls-Royce started here. Then, with breath heavy with alcohol from a lifetime's boozing asks

for the money to subsidise another day's oblivion. Quickly, with a sigh of relief and sadness, Moss Side and Manchester is left behind, heading towards Derby across the Peak District.

Grey clouds and chilled air threatened rain as we climbed the 1500ft high roads. But a rapid stop, the press of a button and seconds later the roof had latched itself onto the header rail, encapsulating us in a serene world of Connolly leather, Wilton carpeting and exquisite veneer.

Royce transferred his growing car company from Manchester to Nightingale Road in Derby in 1908. It is here that the company's attention was turned from cars to aero engines, supplying the war effort in 1914-18 and then expanding into a business that is now the area's biggest employer.

The original RR factory still stands; back then it was sheathed in



**Above and above right: The statue to Sir Henry commemorates Rolls-Royce's efforts during the Second World war, not his cars.**



**Entrance to The Hendre, became a Japanese-owned golf club in 2000.**



This head of C. S. Rolls and that of Henry Royce (left) overlook the lawn where the Corniche was photographed at The Hendre, are virtually weathered away.



The imposing entrance to the Crewe factory.



The welcoming sign at Crewe, sadly no longer so welcoming.

skeletal scaffolding for renovation work and outside the main office block half a mile off, there's a statue to the great man himself.

Sixty miles or so to the south and east lies the tiny village of Alwalton, Royce's birthplace. The son of the local miller Royce educated himself to the level of a genius engineer. There's no sign of the mill today, demolished for its stonework decades ago, but a local was proud enough of the village's most famous son to spend time talking. He explained that the local church has a plaque to him, but our arrival coincided with Sunday Evensong, not an appropriate time to wander in and take pictures.

With evening clouds closing in, I turned the Spirit of Ecstasy towards

home wondering if this really was the last of the Crewe Rolls-Royces. Looking back today, what I didn't know 17 years ago was that VW would continue to build Royces at Crewe for another two years, with engines supplied by BMW until the new RR factory at Goodwood was commissioned. That both brands have been runaway successes under their new ownership is of no doubt, but is it VW or BMW that has done more to preserve the ethos that is Bentley and Rolls-Royce?

In the early years of their tenureship errors were made in both camps: BMW's original take on the Phantom in 2003 was, stylistically, less than handsome. I distinctly recall a number of eminent car designers being less than impressed by the design and

proportions when unveiled at Detroit in 2003. Equally, you could argue that VW's first take on the Continental with its long front overhang lacked the elegance and proportions of older models that bear the same name.

Over the years both marques have evolved designs that sit more easily with their respective histories without becoming retro. And when it comes to manufacturing there is an argument that VW has invested more in the 'Britishness' of the Bentley brand than BMW has done with Rolls-Royce, which owes more to the engineering and manufacturing prowess of Munich than Goodwood.

As for me, what I prefer is to remember that wonderful drive all those years ago; a different time, certainly. ■

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• THE TIME TO BUY •

# AMBITION FULFILLED!

A lifelong love of Silver Shadows resulted in the purchase of a second-generation Silver Mink stunner that Dan Furr very nearly walked away from...

WORDS: DAN FURR PHOTOGRAPHY: DAN SHERWOOD

**B**uy with your head, not with your heart. That's what they say, isn't it? "There's no such thing as a cheap Rolls-Royce."

That's another classic quote. These are sentiments that can be easy to ignore when you've spent your formative years in awe of a particular make or model of car, only to be presented with what appears to be an affordable example of your dream drive later in life.

My birth in the late 1970s means that I grew up in Thatcher's Britain, the era of the status symbol. Across the media, rich businessmen, pop stars and television personalities were regularly photographed leaning against Royce-badged land yachts. On the silver screen, a mullet-wearing Elton John rocked up in B120 WYM (a Tudor Red Bentley Continental) in the video for his hit single, *Nikita*. James Bond was assisted by a twin-ton Silver Shadow II in *License To Kill*. Stories of rock musicians driving their

Rollers into swimming pools excited me. My young mind was fascinated by these incredible-looking machines.

I was firm in my belief that the Shadow and its derivatives were unlike anything else the automotive world had to offer. Their distinctive styling and uncompromising road presence assured me that these large barges were to be celebrated, but the fact that they cost much more than the value of my parents' house was enough to assume that the chance of ever seeing my name on the logbook of a 'Royce was the stuff of fantasy.

Fast-forward to the present day, and I'm the proud owner of SRH40385, a late Silver Shadow II registered in November 1980 and originally sold by Jack Barclay, the UK's largest and oldest Bentley dealer. I bought the car in 2014 after spotting it in the classifieds of a popular online auction website. I must admit, I wasn't looking to buy a Rolls-Royce, but having just

sold a car (and being in the habit of monitoring the steadily increasing values of classics) an evening of trigger happy mouse clicking saw me request information from the seller. You might argue that was the point of no return!

The Shadow in question was presented in a finish of what I can only describe as 'primer grey'. This unusual shade appealed to me, and I saved the ad in my watch list, half expecting my enthusiasm to die down within a day or two. It didn't. Furthermore, a quick investigation revealed to me that the car had been on sale for a couple of months. I figured this meant there was room for negotiation on the already agreeable asking price. The seller was happy to entertain offers. It was time to start the three-hour journey north from my home in Cambridgeshire to where the car was holed up near York.

"That can't be the same Shadow!" I said to my fiancée, Sharon, when we arrived at our destination. The car was



light blue. Silver Mink, to be precise, but definitely not grey. Damn you, camera phone colour correction errors! To make matters worse, I detected signs of a respray that had been left to dry in a moisture-rich environment.

When fired up, the car's engine produced less of the purr associated with a smooth-running L-Series, and more of the angry growl of a muscle car. I crawled beneath the beast and discovered an OEM exhaust system with a nearside silencer that had more in common with Swiss cheese than solid metal. No matter – it was a bargaining point and a complaint I considered to be an easy fix.

Inside the car, beige leather with special order blue piping left a lot to be desired. Dry hide with surprisingly deep cracks featured on each upright, along with evidence of poor upholstery repair work and walnut in questionable cosmetic condition. A flick through the accompanying history file revealed

details of a light restoration that occurred in 2003 (when Silver Mink replaced original Caribbean Blue), but since that time, the car had only been treated to the minimum requirement of servicing and MOTs. At least expensive lambswool over-rugs were being included in the sale!

A test drive of the six-and-three-quarter-litre V8 put a massive grin on my face, but I couldn't help feel that an extensive catalogue of fixes would soon make this wafting wonder an expensive purchase no matter how few pennies I was able to secure it for. I was ready to walk away. "Think of the potential!" cried Sharon, offering the heart that was to overrule my head. "Yes, there's lots to be done, but you're handy with a set of spanners, and if you can get the car for a good price, much of the remedial work will be easy for you to sort," she stressed. Faced with that logic, who was I to argue?! Armed with her encouragement,

I managed to knock the already heavily reduced asking price down by a further three grand and set off in my very own Rolls-Royce. Eek!

Even today, seeing a Shadow on the road is something of an event. The journey home gave me a taste of things to come – I don't think I've ever experienced so much attention from fellow road users. As I travelled down the southbound A1, drivers of less exotic machinery reduced their speed before positioning their four-wheelers alongside my own. Repeatedly, a camera phone (supported by grins of excitement and the occasional 'thumbs up') delivered bursts of octane-fuelled flash photography, only for the budding Lord Lichfields to speed off as soon as the shot had been captured.

Zig-zagging between the lanes ahead of me, these very same action snappers were unable to resist getting a glimpse of my new car's chrome-laden, six-foot wide front end in their rear-view »

**THE TIME TO BUY  
AMBITION FULFILLED!**

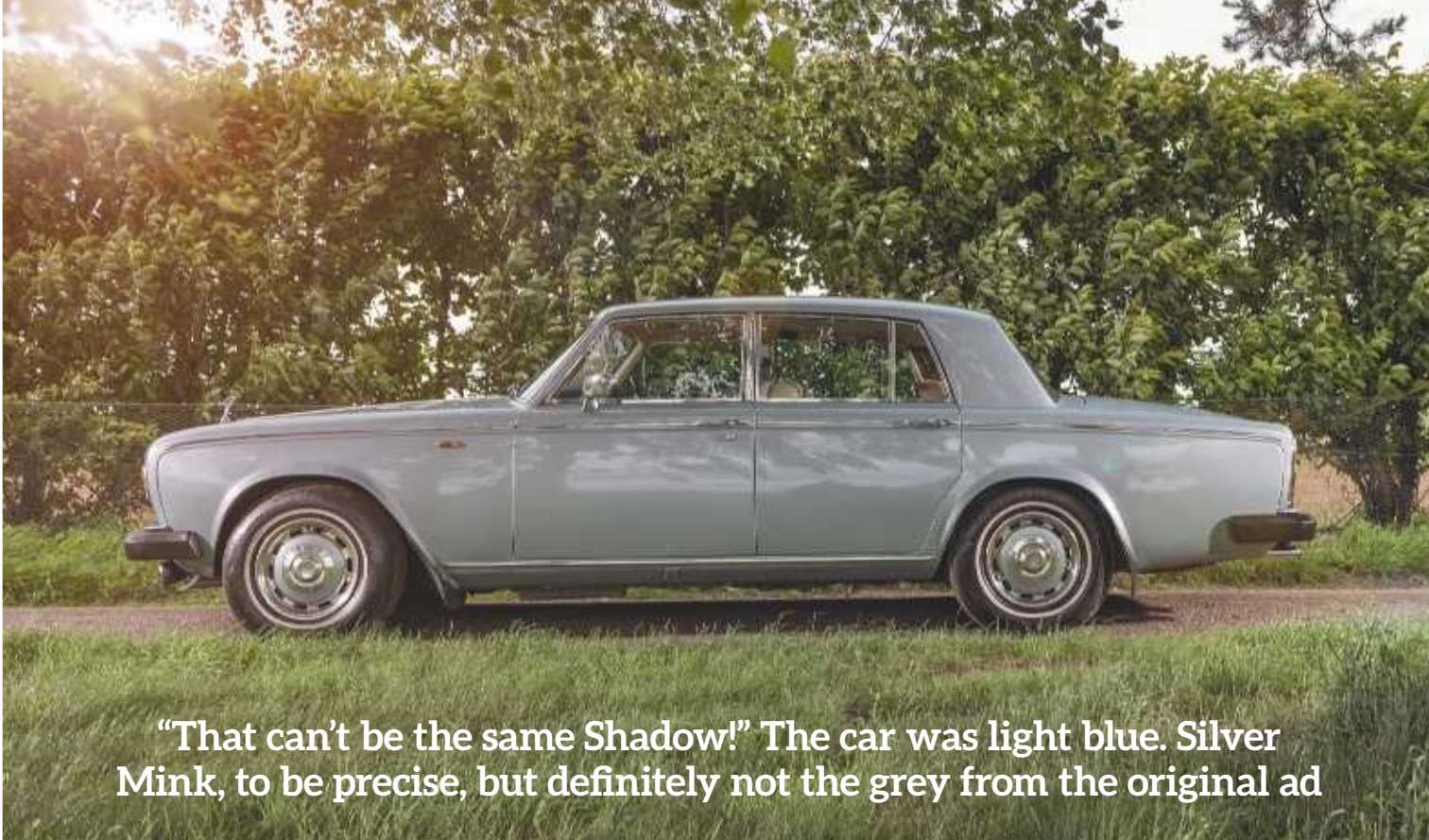


mirrors before they remembered not to crash. I'm delighted to report that my trip home was completed free of accident, although it would be churlish of me to pretend not to understand the want to gawp at such a beautiful profile. Whether the focus is those instantly recognisable front lights, that iconic grille, The Spirit of Ecstasy or a combination of each and every one of the car's superb styling features, a Silver Shadow II is a sight to behold.

I was quick to call one of the leading providers of new and used Rolls-Royce and Bentley parts, Flying Spares, for advice regarding the service items needed for my new toy. Bentley-branded fluids, filters, washers, spark plugs and replacement chrome windscreen wiper arms (not to mention a beautifully presented leather-wrapped chrome key fob decorated with the Rolls-Royce emblem) landed on my doorstep a short while later. You may be surprised to learn that the cost of service parts for a Shadow is in keeping with most modern hatchbacks, although the same can't be said when it comes to fuel consumption. Not that one buys a 'Royce with concern for mpg in mind!

The cockpit of a Silver Shadow II is a wonderful place to be. I can't help but imagine how amazing some of the technology present must have seemed at the car's original point of



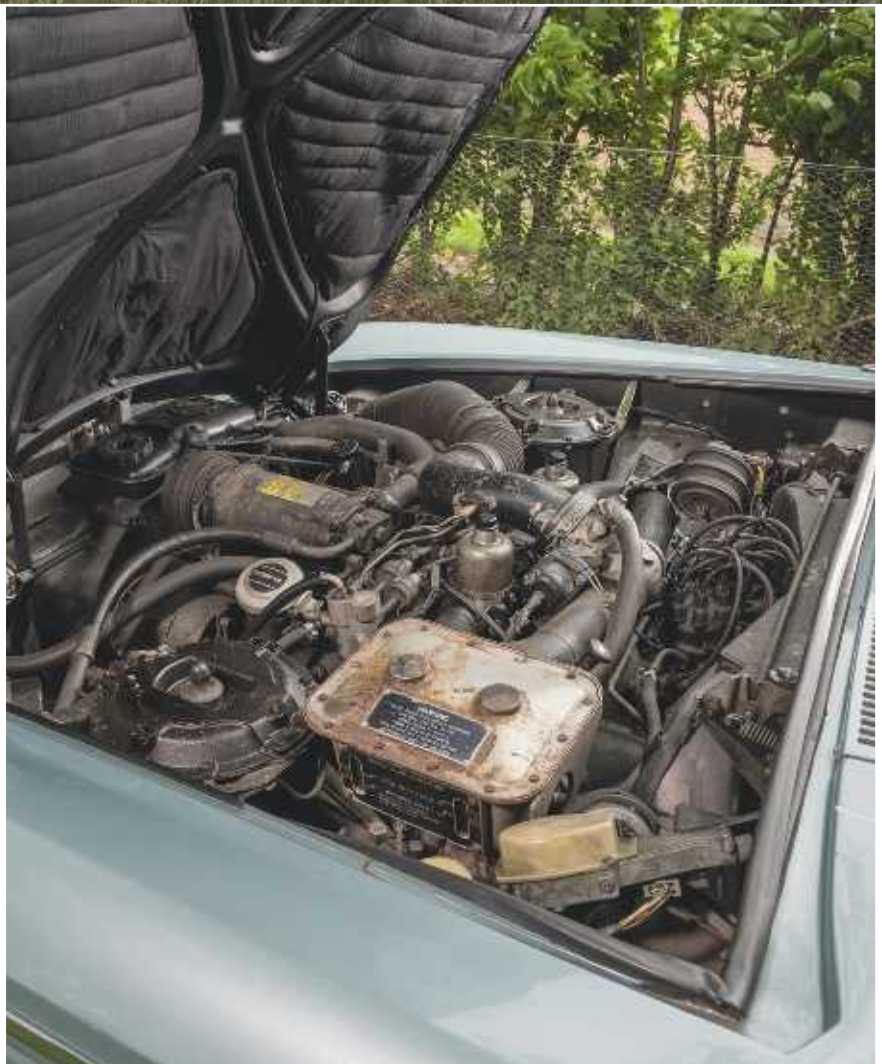


**“That can’t be the same Shadow!” The car was light blue. Silver Mink, to be precise, but definitely not the grey from the original ad**

sale. Dual zone climate control, air conditioning, eight-way electrically adjustable seats, cruise control and power windows might sound like features we take for granted today, but they were more in keeping with science fiction in the mid-to-late 1970s! I’m also struck by the number of cigar lighters dotted about my Roller’s cabin. In the modern world, these make for handy smartphone charging points!

After servicing the car, my first order of business was to work out what I was going to do about its tired interior. Replacement seats or a retrim seemed like the obvious solution. After all, leather so badly damaged couldn’t possibly be repaired... could it?! Before I could hop back online and begin the search for a donor vehicle’s bum huggers, a friend pointed me in the direction of Simon Walters, owner of automotive detailing and interior restoration outfit, Cambridge Conours. Simon assured me that advances in the development of modern leather treatment products means that even the most damaged hide can be restored without the need for fresh material. I took him at his word and handed him the keys to my car. Work your magic, Walters!

To say that I’m amazed at the outcome of his handiwork is an understatement. I cannot stress enough just how bad the furniture wear and tear I inherited with my purchase was, yet Simon has managed to make »



**THE TIME TO BUY  
AMBITION FULFILLED!**



the seats appear as though they've been barely sat in. Just look at that rear bench. Indeed, the results are so extraordinary that we're going to dedicate a feature to them in the next issue of *Rolls-Royce and Bentley Driver*, highlighting how 'repair and restore'

maybe a more suitable and more cost-effective approach to revitalising the hide in your ride than a retrim.

I patched the car's corroded exhaust to stop it blowing before sourcing a used mild steel system from a breaker for little more than £200. A full

stainless exhaust is on the cards, but depending what's worn and what's not, the standard system's fixtures and fittings may be as expensive as the pipework itself. One to file under 'nice to have', not 'need to have'.

I paid a similar amount for a full





**“My Silver Shadow II certainly won’t be a contender for any Concours d’Elégance silverware any time soon, but I love driving the car”**

complement of matching interior wood. My intention is to restore each part before replacing the car’s damaged walnut. My only other major purchase has been a set of Bilstein B6 heavy duty monotube sports dampers that should improve handling and stability (without sacrificing ride comfort) when compared to OEM Boge parts. I’m also eyeing up a Harvey Bailey coil spring and enlarged anti-roll bar kit.

I’ve yet to fit the shocks, instead spending my time enjoying the car on leisurely drives around the nearby North Norfolk coast road. It’s an absolute joy to be behind the wheel of such an incredibly well-built piece of automotive engineering, and those of you who have only been a passenger in a Silver Shadow II (yes, I know that’s how it’s supposed to be) will be surprised at how poised the car’s cornering is thanks to the presence of rack and pinion steering.

Of course, if I look close enough, there’s a seemingly endless list of jobs to do. An overhaul of the car’s brakes, a lick of paint, new window seals, chassis rustproofing, the removal of

mid-1990s audio equipment, a coolant dump, hydraulic system maintenance (including the restoration of the currently-tired mineral oil reservoir) and the application of fresh rubber are all jobs registering on my radar. Despite the threat of these tasks, however, I’m pleased to be able to be in charge of a useable, reliable ‘Royce that didn’t break the bank and has cost no more than a Ford Focus to service and maintain. Famous last words!

If you’re tempted to buy a Silver Shadow II, but you don’t want to pay top dollar, then my advice is to ignore examples sitting at either end of the ‘price and condition’ scale and opt for a model located somewhere in the middle. Yes, there are neglected examples out there that should be left well alone, but it’s also true to say that there are genuine bargains to be had, especially if you’re happy to get your hands dirty and are brave enough to enter into negotiations on price. And don’t be put off by what many consider to be high mileage motors. These cars need to be used, and an example showing signs of regular

action shouldn’t be dismissed if it comes with clear evidence of a sensibly observed service and maintenance schedule. Besides, you’ll more than likely feel less worried about using a Rolls-Royce with a few battle scars than one in pristine condition.

My Silver Shadow II certainly won’t be a contender for any *Concours d’Elégance* silverware any time soon, but I love driving the car, I love tinkering with it, and I love looking at it. And at the end of the day, that’s pretty much all I want from my dream drive. ■





# ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER SPIRIT

For many enthusiasts, the Silver Spirit has been overshadowed by both its predecessor and similar saloons from the same era wearing a flying 'B', rather than the Spirit of Ecstasy. We look at this underappreciated saloon and explain why it's definitely worth investigating

WORDS: CHRIS HOPE PICS: KELSEY MEDIA ARCHIVE

**W**hen the Silver Shadow was introduced in 1965, it represented a huge leap forward for Rolls-Royce in design terms, with its unitary construction, all-round disc brakes and, perhaps most impressive of all, a fully-independent self-levelling suspension system. Contrast this with the car's replacement, which was announced in

October 1980, and the Silver Spirit didn't quite hit the high notes of what was the game-changing Silver Shadow. In fact, it would be fair to say that the Spirit started life as little more than a rebodied Shadow; built on the same platform with the exception of a revised rear suspension set-up. Throughout the Silver Spirit's 18-year production life it would undergo several further improvements,

which meant, little by little, that it would offer an increasingly sharper, tighter and more driver-focused experience.

This evolution was perhaps being driven by the shift in power occurring between Rolls-Royce and Bentley at the time, led by a changing global market. German competition in the form of the Mercedes-Benz S-Class and the BMW 7-Series, plus a plethora of home-grown





The same 6750cc V8 engine used in the Silver Shadow was used throughout its production run, before being retired in 1998.

(and then Ford-financed) Jaguar saloons and the plush machines emerging from the newly-formed Lexus marque, were rewriting the rules on what a luxury saloon should be. Crewe had to respond.

In less than two decades (i.e. the lifespan of the Silver Spirit) the Bentley marque would not only be revived, but find itself well on its way to becoming the dominant of the two brands. Compare Silver Shadow production (Series I and II) with its badge-engineered T1 and T2 equivalents and the Bentleys were outnumbered by Rolls-Royces some 10 to one. This shrunk to just two to one in the case of the Silver Spirit and the variety of naturally-aspirated and turbocharged saloons from the 'Mulsanne family'. That's not all; by the late-'Nineties (towards the end of these cars' production) four sporty Bentleys were being sold for every one Rolls-Royce.

As well as being remembered for not being as revolutionary as the Silver Shadow and the model that oversaw

the Roll-Royce brand marginalised by Bentley, the Silver Spirit did develop something of an image problem; the car's styling, though pleasingly modern for contemporary car buyers with its wide stance and low waistline, hasn't aged as well as the Shadow's timeless shape. The earlier cars especially are angular and boxy even by 'Eighties standards – certainly, a Silver Spirit is not what you'd call an archetypal Rolls-Royce in its appearance. Some commentators were also unsure of the car's somewhat awkward-looking front end: Twin headlights were retained from the Shadow, but these were now contained within boxy covers that also incorporated the sidelights and indicators, and were located close to either side of the car's squatter radiator.

So, where does all this leave the Silver Spirit today? Well, examples aren't as popular as either the car's predecessor or any of its Bentley-badged equivalents. However, just because these are machines that have »



In order to comply with European safety laws, the iconic Spirit of Ecstasy mascot was made retractable.

## THE TIME TO BUY ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER SPIRIT

been overlooked doesn't mean that they aren't without their plus points. There is in fact plenty to like about a Silver Spirit.

### SPIRITED AWAY

At the very least the Silver Spirit should be considered the ultimate evolution of the Silver Shadow line. Styling aside, the more modern-looking Spirit incorporates a revised rear suspension set-up to silence critics who grumbled about elements of the Silver Shadow's road manners that weren't quite as good as the rest of the car. For the Silver Spirit, handling and ride comfort were both measurably improved through tweaking the existing semi-trailing-arm lay-out with repositioned dampers and pivot arms – the latter allowing for greater camber as the wheels rise and fall over uneven ground. Noise generated by road vibrations were also noticeably cut by adding two additional cross tubes to the subframe.

The wishbone and coil sprung front suspension from the Shadow was essentially carried over, as was its 6.75-litre V8 engine, which was again mated to the GM400 three-speed automatic transmission. Crucially then, because the Silver Spirit is based so extensively

on the Silver Shadow, which by the end of its 15-year life had pretty much all of its inherent faults ironed out, these machines are also arguably the most reliable of the post-war Crewe-built cars.

The interior of the Silver Spirit is also improved. Its cabin is slightly larger than the Silver Shadow's; there's a greater degree of glasswork and separate back seat squabs replaced the bench seat. Other than that, it's as you'd expect; plush lambs' wool over-rugs line the floors, there's a large burr-walnut veneered dashboard and lots of leather. What's more, the same up-high driving position as the Shadow shrinks what is a bulky car, making it a surprisingly easy car to drive and place on the road.

From a historical viewpoint, this is also the last Rolls-Royce to be powered by the firm's own venerable V8 before the switch to BMW engines for the Silver Seraph. As such, the Silver Spirit has genuine classic pedigree – when it bowed out in 1998, so too did a tradition dating back to 1959.

## “At the very least, the Silver Spirit should be considered the ultimate evolution of the Silver Shadow line.”

The Spirit also uses mineral oil in place of brake fluid for the ride height hydraulics and brake system. Aside from boasting better lubricating properties it's non-hygroscopic, which means components generally last longer. Best of all though, the Silver Spirit range offers plenty of choice.

### WHAT'S IN A NAME?

So far, we've only mentioned the Silver Spirit in this article, but in addition to this standard saloon there was also a long wheelbase version, known as the Silver Spur. The Spur was an additional four inches longer than the Spirit and replaced the outgoing Silver Wraith II. However, unlike the Wraith, the Spur was made available to customers from the very beginning and sold in healthy numbers – in fact, for the Series II and Series III cars, Crewe actually built more Spurs than standard Spirits (albeit the total number of cars produced was a small fraction of the cars produced in



The cabin is, as expected, all wood and leather, with a clean uncluttered design.



The Silver Spirit is admittedly rather angular and some argue it is the car's styling that means it has been overlooked by many enthusiasts.

the 'Eighties). The specification of the Spur was no better appointed than the Spirit, but buyers were attracted to these cars as the longer wheelbase translated into greater space for rear passengers (some feeling the revised separate seats meant that the space afforded in the back wasn't overly generous by Rolls-Royce standards).

From 1987, Bosch K-Jetronic fuel-injection was standardised across the range for all markets (cars for North America and Japan had been fitted with fuel-injection from the beginning of production in 1980). The V8 engine was also heavily revised, with the number of component parts reduced by some 40 per cent and lower-friction pistons working in tandem with fuel-injection to increase both power and economy by around 20 per cent. However, any potential performance increase was offset by the car's higher gearing, again to aid economy. Some enthusiasts may prefer a Spirit with its fuel fed by twin SU carburettors – Patrick of Royce Service and Engineering says the early cars run quieter than the fuel-injected ones, which in turn are better behaved while warming up – crucially though, there are plenty of examples of both for enthusiasts to choose from.

Also in 1987, anti-lock brakes were introduced in addition to electrically reclining backrests now being fitted to the front seats. Previously, between 1980 and 1984, the interior was retrograded in order to greater »



## FLYING SPUR

Two years into Rolls-Royce Silver Spirit/Bentley Mulsanne production, the Mulsanne Turbo was released. The car wasn't outwardly much different to the equivalent Silver Spirit, though under the bonnet a Garrett AiResearch turbocharger had been fitted to the 6750cc V8. This upped power by nearly 100bhp to an undisclosed but retrospectively calculated 300bhp.

It would not be until May 1994, 12 years later, that a Rolls-Royce would receive similar treatment to create the Flying Spur – Rolls-Royce's first

turbocharged saloon. Aside from the car's revised air dam and Flying Spur badging there were few clues as to what this machine could do. At the time, *Autocar* magazine claimed that the Flying Spur it tested was capable of 0 to 60mph in just 6.9 seconds. It could also keep going on to 140mph, which also made the car (at the time) the fastest machine ever to wear the Spirit of Ecstasy mascot.

Although Rolls-Royce had only originally intended to produce 50 examples of the Flying Spur, 134 were produced between 1994 and 1995.

## THE TIME TO BUY ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER SPIRIT

**The Silver Spur, unlike its predecessor the Silver Wraith, sold in healthy numbers and actually outlasted the standard Spirit, which bowed out in 1997.**



resemble the Silver Shadow, and the suspension was progressively stiffened for better road holding. However, it wouldn't be until 1989 that the Spirit would be officially revised to become the Series II Silver Spirit.

The main change for the Spirit II was the introduction of 'adaptive damping'

whereby the car's electronically-controlled Boge dampers can now adjust between three positions – soft, normal and hard – within one hundredth of a second. In practise, this ensures the Spirit has a very soft ride that firms up as speed increases and when the system senses cornering or braking.

It can even detect the brow of a hill and stiffen the suspension accordingly to prevent the car from bottoming out. Visually, the Spirit range also now sports a revised air dam. The long-wheelbase Silver Spur also boasts electronically adjustable rear seats.

The second-generation Spirits and Spurs were replaced by the Series III family in August 1993. Electronic fuel-injection replaced the mechanical Bosch system and a new inlet manifold was introduced. Combined, these two changes saw power rise to 240bhp. In addition, the seats were restyled for greater comfort and airbags were fitted as standard. Two years prior to this, the three-speed GM400 automatic gearbox was retired after first being introduced in 1966 on the left-hand drive Silver Shadows. It was replaced by GM's new four-speed 4L80E unit.

The fourth revision (simply referred to as 'the Silver Spirit' and with no Series IV designation) came towards the end of the car's production. Changes this time were largely cosmetic; the wraparound bumpers, front and rear, now extended into the wheelarches to give the ageing Spirit a more modern look. In 1997, the Silver Spirit bowed out though the Silver Spur endured and was joined by a second long-wheelbase »



**Many opted to buy the long wheelbase version of the Silver Spirit – the Silver Spur – thanks to the extra space for rear occupants.**



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## THE TIME TO BUY ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER SPIRIT

The Series II Silver Spirit, introduced in 1989, incorporated electronically adjustable dampers that adapted automatically to different driving conditions.



car – the Silver Dawn. This moniker had been revived for use on American export cars since 1995 and was now being used to differentiate between the Spur, which now had the same 'light turbo' engine as the Bentley Brooklands,

and the unblown long wheelbase car.

It's again worth pointing out that Series I cars do make up the lion's share of the entire production – over 14,000 examples of the 18,000 built – with less cars being made as years wore on. Still,

if you are interested in a specific model year car, there are enough examples out there for it to be possible to find several for sale at any given time.

### WORTH CONSIDERING?

This being a Rolls-Royce, peerless craftsmanship, superb engineering and luxurious appointments are a given, however, due to the period which the Silver Spirit and Silver Spur span you're able to pick up a machine that's as modern as you feel comfortable. Whether that's an early carb car, which is essentially a progression on the Silver Shadow line (meaning that what's underneath the body; the platform, running gear and engine, dates back to the 'Fifties) or a later, more electronic-heavy machine is up to you. The 'Nineties cars make great alternatives to the unblown Bentley Mulsannes – they have a different air to them; quieter and softer – and benefit greatly from a leaner running V8, more comfortable seats and added safety features (such as ABS and airbags).

But it is the price you need to pay for a Silver Spirit or a Silver Spur that is probably the most attractive plus point. Affordable models are available, but remember to include running costs, which can be prohibitive on cars that haven't been well cared for. If there's a Silver Spirit out there with your name on it, you're likely to be buying an appreciating asset. ■



Rather unimpressive official press shot from 2004 – it appears as if the vehicle has been abandoned by the roadside!

Tech Specs	Silver Spirit I	Silver Spur III	Flying Spur
Engine	6750cc V8	6750cc V8	6750cc V8 (turbo)
Power	200bhp	240bhp	300bhp
0-60mph	10 secs	10 secs	7 secs
Top speed	120mph	128mph	140mph
Economy	12-15mpg	14-16mpg	12-15mpg
Weight	2245kg	2275kg	2275kg
Price new	£49,629	£104,774	£148,545

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# THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB FOR ROLLS-ROYCE & BENTLEY ENTHUSIASTS

**Johan Vanden Bergh** Chairman

Ever since the RREC was formed 60 years ago, the 'Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts Club', as it was commonly known, has been catering for the best interests of the cars of two of the world's most iconic brands, Rolls-Royce and Bentley, and, of course, their drivers. The Club's interest in both brands is a natural development from the fact that Rolls-Royce bought the Bentley company in 1931 (leading to the birth of the Silent Sports Car) and that both marques were manufactured together in Derby, and then Crewe, from 1933 until 2002, when the production of motor cars came to a final end, following the sale of both marques in 1998. But it doesn't stop there as the RREC now also sports both a Goodwood Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Register and a Continental GT Register to look after the newest models that both companies have on offer.

Other than catering for two brands, the RREC has always been very much an enthusiasts' club. Ownership of a proper motor car is not required and one might even argue that it is better to join the Club without one. Buying or commissioning one's Rolls-Royce or Bentley is a very delicate and hugely captivating experience and there really is nowhere better to start this journey than amidst the rich experience and advice of the RREC's 9000+ members who will tell you

exactly what to look out for and what car might be the right one for you.

To this end the RREC benefits from direct access to probably the single most important asset for any RR and B enthusiast: its vast and unique archive that is housed with the Club's dedicated Charity – the Sir Henry Royce Memorial Foundation. The Hunt House Archives – so named after the RREC's Headquarters – hold the chassis cards and construction and test records for over 100,000 Rolls-Royce and Bentley motor cars. Whatever car you might acquire, chances are that we can supply you with its unique history. Or, you need a part that is no longer available, then reproduction is possible based on the original drawings.

The RREC really is about three things: cars, people and their history. This comes very much together in the Club's unique seminar programme to provide technical instruction for each and every model built, courtesy of a fully equipped workshop and classroom. However, if you are not interested in the greasy fingers bit, chances are that you might want to join one of the RREC's national events, whether the Club's unique and yearly *Concours d'Elégance* in June (full report on page 82) or the many regional and overseas events and rallies throughout most of the year. To make sure that there is always something of interest around the corner, the RREC is

organised in geographical sections that each operates a busy event programme. Every Section event is open to any Club member, regardless of whether you're living in the Japan section's area or in Wales or South Africa. The RREC really covers almost the entire world. Additionally, the Club also operates model specific Registers to foster both camaraderie and technical knowledge with respect to a particular model.

All of the above is well-chronicled in the Club's in-house bi-monthly magazine, *The Bulletin*, complemented by the Advertiser, keeping you fully appraised about the Rolls-Royce and Bentley car market. The RREC has a longstanding partnership with RH Specialist Insurance that guarantees you, amongst other things, free and automatic salvage return on all vehicles over 20 years of age, on top of your agreed or market value pay out.

For the true connoisseur, Rolls-Royce has always been a bit of a contradiction: a luxury motor car with a very majestic appearance, yet seriously fast. Originally built by the finest engineer mankind has ever produced, yet of working class origins and sold by a member of the aristocracy. Similarly, the RREC is an eclectic collection of people of all walks of life, united by an unwavering passion for two of the world's best car brands – Rolls-Royce and Bentley. [www.rrec.org.uk](http://www.rrec.org.uk)



The Hunt House, RREC Headquarters and comprehensive archive.



SZ Register cars at the International Weekend at Folkestone in 2015.





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# BENTLEY DRIVERS CLUB

**Ron Warmington**  
Chairman

By the time you read this, our club members, joined by many visitors who share our passion for all things Bentley, will have enjoyed a memorable day in the historical setting of Sudeley Castle & Gardens at our annual Summer Rally and *Concours d'Elegance* (full report on page 78).

This long-standing show serves as the focal point of our hectic calendar of events each year, and it was magnificent to feast our eyes on the scores of classic Bentleys of all vintage which adorned the opulent grounds of the picturesque Cotswolds venue. We were pleased to welcome many would-be members whom I hopefully look forward to meeting at other BDC gatherings over the coming months.

Turning our attention to forthcoming events and we are now eagerly anticipating a meeting of a slightly more active variety – our annual BDC raceday at Silverstone on 5th August.

This year's will be our 68th consecutive meeting at the famed Northamptonshire circuit and we are again anticipating bumper grids with a collection of classic Bentleys of all ages supplemented, as ever, by marques including MG, Morgan, Aston Martin,

Bentley Drivers Club's 68th annual raceday will be held at Silverstone on 5th August.



The BDC returns to Hampton Court Palace for the *Concours d'Elegance* on 2nd and 3rd September.

Porsche, Austin and AC. Among the highlights of a packed race card will be the traditional Bentley scratch and all-comers handicap races.

Adding glamour to proceedings will be our ever-popular on-track Members' Bentley Parade which will feature a glorious array of classic models of all vintage shown off by their proud owners.

Incidentally, many of our members will be getting in the mood for the following day's race action by enjoying a slightly more sedate ramble – in their beloved Bentleys, of course – from our clubhouse near Banbury to Silverstone on the Friday. The 90-mile Touring Assembly will meander through glorious English countryside and include a welcome pit-stop for a delicious lunch at a rural pub before arrival in time for a hearty hog roast and pit-lane parties at the circuit. Adult tickets for raceday cost just £12 at the gate with children under 15 admitted free of charge.

Once the chequered flag has fallen at Silverstone, we'll be studiously polishing our cars in readiness for the sixth *Concours d'Elegance* over the weekend of Saturday 2nd

and Sunday 3rd September.

The showcase event is being held this year at Hampton Court Palace – a welcome return three years after our previous successful sojourn – and we are proud that 60 members' Bentleys have been invited to appear on display in such celebrated and scenic surroundings.

Among the highlights is sure to be the presentation of The Bentley Trophy which celebrates the finest examples of Bentley models, from the earliest iconic Blowers to the later luxurious Mulsannes, owned by our members. The judging contest will be held as part of Sunday's Bentley Day, in association with Bentley Motors, whose team in Crewe has personally crafted the trophies with the veneer used in the factory. In addition, the Annual *Concours* for the Club Trophy will also be held, which will see members' Bentleys going head to head with cars from other clubs.

Events such as this and the Summer Rally and *Concours d'Elegance* at Sudeley Castle amply demonstrate the top-class calendar of events enjoyed by our members each and every year. [www.bdcl.org](http://www.bdcl.org)

# We know tyres

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# POST-WAR TYRES

What's the lifespan of a tyre? What are tread wear indicators? What do load ratings mean? Find out these answers and more with our guide to wheels and tyres for post-war Rolls-Royce and Bentley models

WORDS: **ROB HAWKINS**  
PHOTOGRAPHY: **ROB HAWKINS, VARIOUS**

**T**he tyres on a vehicle are the only part that maintain contact with the surface you are driving over, so they surely deserve a lot of respect and regular attention. Sadly, many of us are guilty of assuming the tyres on a vehicle are okay if they are set to roughly the correct pressure and given a quick glance over every now and again. After all, the consequences

of discovering a nail stuck in the tread, or a crack across the sidewall can turn into a logistical headache. And then there's the dilemma of which tyres to choose when you do change them. Will wider tyres offer more grip? Does the same brand at all four corners really make a difference? Over the following pages, we've attempted to answer these questions and more



by speaking with the experts at tyre manufacturers and stockists including Longstone, Vintage and Blockley.



## TYRE WEAR AND DAMAGE

If the tread of a tyre is worn excessively down the middle, it may have been overinflated. Check the depth of the tread, tyre pressure and replace the tyre if necessary. This problem could also suggest the width of the wheel is too narrow for the tyre.

If the tread is worn around the outside and inside edge, the tyre pressure may be too low. One worn edge on the front tyres suggests the

tracking or geometry needs to be checked, or the car has endured hard cornering. Scrubbing of the sidewall also suggests hard cornering that's too much for the pressure in the tyre (i.e. the tyre pressure is too low).

Uneven wear around one or both edges of the tyre can suggest the tyre is starting to collapse and should be renewed. It may sound noisy when the car is driven (similar

to a worn wheel bearing).

Bulges or tears in the sidewall are problems that should not be ignored. This type of damage or defect can result in the tyre suddenly deflating (blowout), so replace the tyre immediately.

Small cracks in the sidewall are usually a sign the rubber is perishing, which means the tyre is no longer gripping as well as it should because the rubber is changing, the tyre should be renewed.



## TREAD WEAR INDICATORS

One of the most confusing aspects of car tyres concerns the legal limit of wear. In the UK, the legal limit is 1.6mm across 75 per cent of the tyre, but only where tread wear indicators are found between the tread. These tread wear indicators (TWI for short) look like small squares of rubber between the tread. If there are no TWIs in a particular part of the tyre, then this area may not apply to the worn legal limit.

Some tyres have grooves within the central three-quarters of the tread that were not originally cut as deeply as those that contain the TWIs. These grooves may be below the required minimum tread depth requirements, but providing the primary grooves meet the minimum requirements, the tyre will pass. However, you should also adopt a common sense approach to worn tyres. If the areas that do not have TWIs are worn and bald, the level of wet weather grip offered must surely be reduced, so consider renewing the tyre.

While the UK stipulates a minimum depth of 1.6mm, this is much greater in some European countries (as much as 3 or 4mm), and also, countries such as Germany require winter or all-season tyres to be used when the weather is cold. For further information, see our separate panels on Winter tyres and All abroad for winter.



## TYRE LIFESPAN

Tyre manufacturers appear to recommend a maximum of six or seven years for a tyre, even if the tyre is hardly worn. Over time, the structure of the tyre will weaken, resulting in a breakdown of the sidewall and a greater risk of air escaping, or at worse, a blowout. Light and heat cycles add to the ageing process.

Most tyres have a date stamp displayed on the sidewall as a four-digit number, which explains when it was manufactured (all road tyres manufactured since 2000 have a four-digit code). The first two digits represent the week number, and the last two are for the year. The photograph here shows a tyre with a date stamp of 4614, which means the tyre was manufactured in the 46th week of 2014.

According to Vintage Tyres, there are three main mechanisms of tyre ageing. The first they explain, involves rubber becoming more brittle. During the manufacturing of the tyre, sulphur is used to link rubber molecules together during vulcanisation with the application of heat and pressure. This helps to give the rubber its elastic properties and strength. However, when the tyre is

used, it absorbs energy in the form of light, heat or movement, so the tyre continues to vulcanise, and this ongoing vulcanisation causes the rubber to become stiffer and more brittle.

The second mechanism of a tyre ageing is oxidation, which Vintage Tyres explains involves oxygen and ozone from the air compromising the strength and elasticity of the rubber and the integrity of the rubber to steel bond. The heat and oxygen cause cross linking between polymer chains, causing the rubber to harden, and scission of polymer chains results in reduced elasticity.

The final cause of tyre ageing is the breakdown of the rubber to steel-belt bond, which according to Vintage Tyres, will occur due to water permeating through a tyre and bonding with the brass plate coating on its steel belts. This weakens the steel to rubber bond, resulting in reduced tyre strength and reduced heat resistance. If compressed air used for inflation is not completely dry, tyre strength will be affected over time. Vintage Tyres warns that unused tyres will also become more brittle, weaker and less elastic with exposure to water, air, heat and sunlight.

## THE WRONG TYRES

It is possible to fit the wrong tyres, and we've seen different width tyres across a rear axle, which was only identified at an MOT test where the car failed for this reason. Many specialists recommend sticking with the same brand and type of tyre

for all four of the wheels to ensure the same level of grip is maintained under cornering and braking. This is particularly important on vehicles with ABS and traction control, but it's also important on older models, especially using the same brands

and type of tyre across each axle to help maintain grip under braking and cornering. Vintage Tyres points out that incorrectly matched front/rear tyres can cause serious over/understeer problems, possibly caused by differing ply ratings.

## FEEL THE WIDTH

Is there a benefit from fitting wider tyres than recommended, or a different profile? Can the handling for example, be improved with wider tyres?

"Tyres that are too wide will increase road feedback, increase noise level, increase drag and make heavy steering, and generally wider tyres are also taller which will increase gear ratios," explains Ben Field of Vintage Tyres, who also explains, "Wider wheels increase track width, provide greater contact area and so can improve performance under certain conditions."



## SLOW PUNCTURES AND LEAKY WHEELS

If a tyre regularly needs inflating, check there are no nails or other objects sticking into it that are plugging the hole and resulting in a slow puncture. If the tyre is in good condition, have it removed, the wheel cleaned where the tyre is fitted and resealed to help reduce the risk of air escaping.

At the same time, have the valve renewed to help prevent air escaping.

Driving with a tyre that's almost flat is dangerous because the tyre will overheat, resulting in a greater risk of damage and a blowout. Lower pressure in tyres also reduces its directional stability.



## WINTER TYRES

A summer tyre is designed to disperse water and the tread is designed to keep itself clean, but when the temperature drops, the rubber becomes hard, so the grip is less effective. Winter tyres have a compound which remains softer at low temperatures over normal tyres, so they are less affected by cold temperatures and thus offer greater levels of grip when cold. The tread is sometimes deeper, which in theory should help to dig into snow. However, the tread is designed to ensure more snow sticks to the tyre, which helps to improve the grip because snow sticks easily to snow.

As a general rule, a winter tyre is designed for the rubber to be more supple below 7 deg Centigrade, and when there's snow on the ground, the tyre is designed to hold the snow. But it is wrong to consider winter tyres just as snow tyres, and you will perhaps be surprised just how often (early morning and evenings) when the average temperature in the UK drops below that 7-degree C limit. Braking on damp tarmac in a chilly November morning will be much more efficient when driving on winter tyres



**Dave Dineen of Micheldever Tyre Services Limited explains, "Below 7 degrees centigrade, winter/cold weather tyres provide greater safety margins."**

– they make a significant difference.

Winter tyres usually have a symbol on the sidewall that looks like three mountain peaks. This is not to be confused with all-terrain tyres and tyres with the M+S symbol (mud and snow) on the sidewall. These

tyres don't offer the same flexibility as winter tyres when cold. In most cases, it would be better to choose a suitable tyre for winter according to the intended use. If you are travelling abroad, then a winter tyre may be essential (see All abroad for winter).

## ALL ABROAD FOR WINTER

According to the AA, there are a variety of rules and regulations concerning whether winter tyres must be used in certain countries during winter months. Germany for example, requires all cars to be fitted with winter tyres or all-season tyres when conditions are cold. In Finland, tyres with M+S marked on the sidewall must be fitted from December to the end of February. Switzerland doesn't enforce the

fitting of snow or winter tyres, but if a vehicle is not adequately equipped to travel through snow and this results in you creating a traffic jam, you could be fined.

The minimum tread depth is also greater in many other countries. Whereas the UK stipulates a minimum tread depth of 1.6mm, Austria and the Czech Republic require a minimum depth of 4mm, and Sweden

and Slovakia state 3mm.

Several countries including Austria, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy, Norway and Switzerland all require snow chains to be carried in a vehicle during the winter months and used when local signs or road conditions dictate. Snow socks are not counted as an alternative to chains, although you may get away with it depending on conditions, or the mood of the gendarme on the day.



These snow chains from Polar Automotive are supplied in a carry bag, enabling them to be easily stored in a vehicle, which is a legal requirement in some countries.



Snow chains must be carried during the winter months in France.

## SIDEWALL CODES

- 335** The width of the tyre in millimetres across the widest point, not across the tread.

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- 35** The height of the tyre's sidewall as a percentage of its width (profile). In this case, it's 35 per cent of 335mm, which equates to 117.25mm.

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- R** Radial tyre.

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- 15** The diameter of the wheel required to fit the tyre. Measured in inches.

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- 93** Load rating. 82 is suitable for a load of 650kg (this may be more than the recommended maximum load for the vehicle).

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- W** Speed rating, ranging from J (100km/h, 62mph) to ZR (over 240km/h, 149mph). W means 270km/h, 168mph

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- E2** E-marking indicating the tyre conforms to European standards.

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- 0207509** Usually a reference to the E-marking or a reference code for the tyre.

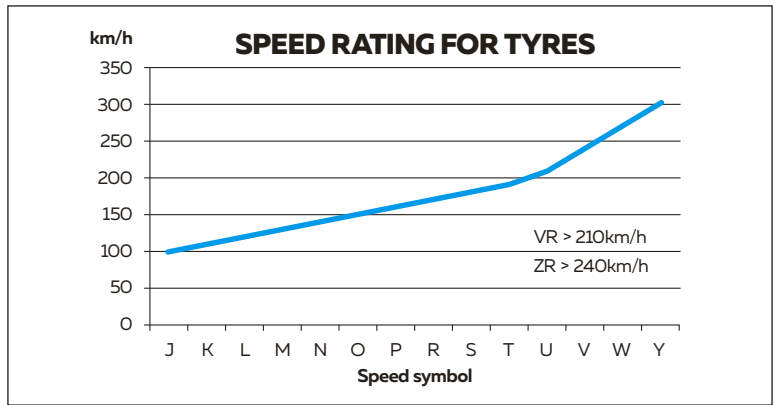
## RACING RUBBER

Race tyres will usually have sizes and other codes displayed on the sidewall, but the information may be different to road tyres. The photograph here shows a Michelin road legal TB5R rear compound, semi-slick, road legal race tyre (the R in TB5R stands for rear). The word Course is French for track use, but the tyre has an E-marking, so it can be used on the road. The dimensions show 29/61 R15, which indicates the tyre's footprint is 29cm wide (290mm), the diameter is 61cm, the tyre is a radial and fits onto a 15 inch diameter wheel.



## LOAD AND SPEED CODES

The speed rating of a tyre is indicated as a letter or two letters on the sidewall of the tyre. The chart shown here illustrates the maximum speed the tyre has been tested to for one hour. The load rating or load index is a number ranging from 62 to 125 and represents the maximum weight in kilos the tyre can support at the designated speed for one hour continuously. 62 is the lightest at 265kg, whereas 125 can hold 1650kg. Most tyres are in the middle at around 90, which represents 600kg. Note this figure in kilos isn't for the entire car, so a 90-rated tyre can be used on a car that weighs more than 600kg.



## TYRE PREFERENCES: LONGSTONE

"The Mk6 was originally fitted with 650/670X16 India tyres, which haven't been around for some considerable time. The R-Type moved onto 670H16 Dunlop RS5," explains Dougal Cawley at Longstone Tyres. "Dunlop no longer make historic road tyres, so the only cross-ply tyre I could recommend would be the 670H16 Avon Turbo Speed. We predominantly recommend the 670VR16 Avon Turbosteel radial tyre as we are getting such good reports about it. Silver Clouds were originally fitted with 820H15 cross-ply tyres, of which we have a selection including white walls. However again, we tend to get good results from fitting some of the range of radial 235/75R15 tyres that we offer. We have the facility to have a high-quality white-wall built into the side wall of top quality tyres (Michelin and Pirelli). The advantage with this is you can choose the size of your white wall."

Dougal continues to explain that, "It is worth pointing out that these cars, having such tall side-walled, cross-ply tyres, benefit from changing to a radial tyre which make them so much more relaxing on modern motorways by diminishing the wandering. Hence with

the early Silver Shadow we recommend 205VR15 Pirelli Cinturato instead of the cross-ply 815X15 offered in period."

From 1973 through to the nineties, Rolls-Royces and Bentleys were fitted with 235/70R15 tyres. "I have a Silver Shadow which, although the original Avon is available and cheaper, I have fitted the Michelin

235/70R15 XVS," says Dougal.

"Without doubt this asymmetric tyre makes a dramatic improvement to the handling and directional stability of the car. In fact, I made a short film to demonstrate it [www.youtube.com/watch?v=nKRf4Mp980Q](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nKRf4Mp980Q). Since then I have done 110mph in the car on an autobahn and it felt superb."





## WHITE WALLS

Alan Holmes has a Rolls Royce Silver Spur III, and bought a set of Michelin XVS radial tyres with whitewalls from Longstone. "After I took delivery of the car with its new tyres having been fitted, I initially drove away from my office thinking only of the appearance of the car with its distinctive whitewalls," he comments, "but within 200 yards I had to turn a sharp corner and negotiate a roundabout followed

by a further sharp exit. Wow! Suddenly I was unexpectedly made to focus on something I'd temporarily forgotten about - the fact that the new XVS asymmetric tyres offered such a dramatic improvement in handling and stability. The car behaved quite differently to the floaty feeling I was used to, and it suddenly became much more of a driver's car, with a greater feeling of connection to the road."



**Longstone Tyres have used Michelin XVS tyres on their own Silver Shadow and have found this "asymmetric tyre makes a dramatic improvement to the handling and directional stability of the car."**



**For early Silver Shadows, Longstone recommend fitting Pirelli Cinturato 205VR15 tyres instead of the cross-ply 815X15 offered in period.**

## TYRE PREFERENCES: VINTAGE

"Generally speaking, we would recommend fitting the original size as replacements and to that end we have developed with Avon Tyres in Wiltshire, a complete range of high-speed cross-ply tyres for the early post-war cars," says Ben Field at Vintage Tyres. "These tyres are available in 15 and 16-inch diameter and are rated up to 130mph and range from 525-16 to 890-15. We also offer from stock, the original Dunlop style tyres in the Ensign range, all manufactured in the UK to the original specification. As tyre technology developed, radial ply tyres began to be fitted as original equipment; these tyres generally offered better road holding, improved water and braking, performance, together with greater tyre life. It has now become quite commonplace to retrofit radial tyres in place of certain cross-ply tyres, the most common amongst these is the Avon 670VR16. This tyre was specifically developed as a radial replacement to the earlier 670-16 cross-ply tyre and is a perfect option for many Bentley and Rolls-Royce motor cars."



## OUR THANKS GO TO:

**Blockley Tyre Company Ltd**

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• SPECIALIST VISIT •

# THE PHILOSOPHER'S TALE

Keeping any classic vehicle on the road can mean searching for parts and the Rolls-Royce and Bentley market is no exception. However, we went to visit IntroCar to learn one man's philosophy that will ensure many more models now have a very positive and secure future

WORDS: NIGEL FRYATT PHOTOGRAPHY: INTROCAR AND NIGEL FRYATT

**W**hen the recently graduated philosophy student went for his first day at work at what he later described as a 'friendly but chaotic' Rolls-Royce breakers in Kingston back

in 1993, his first job was to make the tea. Fast forward to our visit today and John Tupper still makes a very good cup of tea, but as we sit in the IntroCar boardroom, it's obvious that a lot has changed, much of it driven by a

particular philosophy about providing the very best service possible to customers. And it doesn't take long to realise that it isn't just an improvement in the location that has made the difference; it goes a lot deeper than that.



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The location, however, is interesting in that the IntroCar premises are built on the site of the original Connolly leather factory in south London; known of course, for providing leather to Rolls-Royce Motorcars, and to the British Royal family, so the strong links of the location add an extra ingredient to the story. That area of South Wimbledon has changed beyond recognition over the years, and the IntroCar premises are tucked onto a small industrial estate in a residential area crammed with parked cars and ridiculously busy traffic and seems somewhat incongruous with its purpose of keeping some of the best cars ever built in fine fettle.

IntroCar will soon be celebrating thirty years in the business of spare parts, having been started back in 1988 by Struan Erskine, a man who had spent decades involved in the Rolls-Royce and Bentley business. Erskine was selling Rolls-Royce and Bentley motor cars, often to US customers, which meant he had been trading with spares for a long while and one day realised that he had a significant collection within his garage, leading to the logical development that he could sell these used spares. Of course, it was more than just a simple commercial decision, years of experience in both the Rolls-Royce and the Bentley marque were vital to get IntroCar started. However, back in the late 1980s, the classic car market was very different to what we have today, there weren't many people around looking after Rolls-Royce owners with spare parts and the business grew. This developed so that the company would buy cars and dismantle them, selling the parts. But today, as Managing Director, John Tupper admits, the actual set-up in the 'scruffy and chaotic' Kingston location didn't appear to have a specific direction, although it was working OK. Tupper, however, had become addicted to the industry and while confessing that when he started work his mechanical and engineering knowledge was limited, he could see that things could grow and develop, but to do so, there needed to be some significant changes, as he explained:

"People would phone up and ask for parts and we'd say, yes, I think we've got that and then run out the back to find it and send it out. However, I'd worked my way up from making the tea and packing, doing all the general stuff and into sales and it became obvious that actually the owners of these cars didn't want second-hand parts as such, but



The original warehouse in Kingston - 'friendly but chaotic'.



John Tupper examining one of the Prestige Parts.

preferred new parts that were both readily available and reasonably priced."

This had been reflected in that the business had actually been moving away from this and they were buying a lot of new spares from Rolls-Royce dealers as well as finding other spares from different suppliers that would do the same job, selling on to customers. Indeed by 2000, only around 10 per

cent of the business was second-hand, which made John Tupper, by then the General Manager looking after all aspects of the company to ask: "Why do people still think of us as car dismantlers?" It also became obvious that there was more money to be made with the new spares, for one thing it was easier than acquiring vehicles and dismantling them, and new products »

## SPECIALIST VISIT INTROCAR



Product examination and testing is comprehensive.



IntroCar's comprehensive stores.



The IntroCar sales team offer expert advice.

seldom go wrong – not something you can guarantee when you unbolt a part from a crashed or MOT failed vehicle.

The move, therefore, for IntroCar in 2000 was to turn the business into a company that primarily sells new spares, with some used or reconditioned parts to fill in any of the gaps, when needed. To make this happen, IntroCar took over a company called Healey Brothers that had mainly been in the business of manufacturing new spares. This put the company on the right road, but it wasn't until Tupper was contacted by Pete Buckles (formally of Cox and Buckles, which later became Moss) who offered advice and the all-important introductions to the specialist aftermarket vehicle spares manufacturers. This new association has been hugely beneficial and has transformed the IntroCar business, which has quadrupled in size in the last 10 years and is continuing to grow very fast, over 20 per cent in the last year alone. As John explained:

"We exist because we try to stop people buying used spares. Take brake calipers, no one just puts a used caliper

straight on a car. People will spend eighty to two hundred pounds on reconditioning a used caliper, and buying new bits and pieces for it. You will have to clean it, parts of it will be loose, parts of it will be seized. By the time you have done that, logic and maths tell you to put a new one on. Buy a new caliper from us and there's no surcharges, no exchange units, which is something we have tried to get rid of, since more than 60 per cent of our business is overseas, so exchange parts were a nightmare. Plus, we give a two-year warranty on everything we sell, and for products in our own brand of Prestige Parts, we give three years' warranty. No-one else does that."

The example of the calipers is not just that they are new, but that they are built by exactly the same supplier that produces brake calipers for today's BMWs, and this is where IntroCar differs from other suppliers.

"Ours are made in the very same factory that makes calipers for the BMW production line," confirms Tupper. "Now the only way to get in there is to place a very large order... well, a large



New calipers are built at BMW's production facility.

order for us. There are four basic specifications of calipers for models built from 1965 to 2003, and the minimum we order is 500 pairs of each, so in total that's 4000 calipers at a time. That's a lot of calipers. But the upshot is that a reconditioned unit will probably cost a customer around £250, whereas we can offer a new manufacturer specification version for £279."

But throughout the classic car market, there are those who always want to keep their vehicles 100 per cent original, and many Rolls-Royce and Bentley owners are no different, so is there any



The distinctive packaging of the Prestige Parts range.



Continental GT disc brakes.

resistance to buying non-genuine parts?

"Absolutely. You have to be honest and say that if an original part is available new and it's available at a decent price, then that's everyone's first call. We stock as many original parts as we can, but we only really exist because some parts are either no longer available or it's too expensive.

"We have a long-term philosophy here, and that's what makes us different. Those 4000 calipers may well be 10 years' stock, but we are prepared to do that. Sometimes you can only get a part made if you are prepared to order enough for 10 years, not everyone will do that, or can do that. We do."

The long-term philosophy is highlighted by a story that Tupper tells regarding a problem with a fuel sender unit for an early Spirit, which they became aware of from a video on YouTube. A customer had bought the sender from IntroCar, and on the YouTube clip he could be seen throwing it across the garage, because he was so upset with it. The world of social media meant that this was shared and was hardly the kind of publicity any company

**"It became obvious that owners didn't want second-hand parts as such, but preferred new parts that were both readily available and reasonably priced"**

could want. Ironically, the part was actually bought direct from Bentley's current supplier, so the unit wasn't a newly produced IntroCar product, but a piece of original equipment. The casing for this new product was plastic, where in the past it had been metal. The unit was attached to a metal plate, but with the new 'plastic' covered version, fitting wasn't simple; if you were in the industry you knew to take the mounting plate off, make a simple modification to allow the new version to fit correctly. If you didn't do this, you would have a problem... and a potential fuel leak, hence the original YouTube clip from the angry customer. Once this was discovered, however, Tupper decided to have a new mounting kit made, which they now send out with the official Bentley product, complete with a simple set of instructions. As you

can imagine, this completely changed the customer's view of the company, and any future Facebook posts are now made with that customer clicking 'Like'...

Issues like this are important to the Rolls-Royce Specialist Association, an important industry body that is now over 30-years old that links all the companies involved in remanufacturing spares. Shared knowledge and experience keeps the standards high, and has over the years kept many a Rolls-Royce and Bentley on the roads that might otherwise have found their way to a dismantler! The RRSA is also valuable to IntroCar when it comes to testing any new products being produced. It is a very collaborative association, despite the obvious commercial pressures that there could be between members, since at the end »



**Original parts are available.**



**Photographing parts for the website.**

of the day they are all in the business to be successful and make a profit, but this working together approach appeals to Tupper: "There is a really strong ethic. They are very much about the preservation of the marque, doing things the right way, not the cheapest and often not the easiest. I am very supportive of that association."

The benefits to making new spare parts is obvious, and explains in simple terms where you find IntroCar in 2017. This philosophy is, however, hugely capital intensive and the company has some £8million of stock on the shelves in South Wimbledon – a figure that would surely have bemused the Connolly brothers working with those hides on the same site at the turn of the century, times have indeed changed.

And that's never more obvious than when you investigate IntroCar's website. Obviously, in today's market you need to be able to buy online but Tupper has taken this beyond what you could expect, as he explained: "We wanted people to buy online, but not



**Air intake grille - this is manufactured by a UK business that normally makes parts for aerospace applications and uses a special glue originally designed for the Eurofighter Jet!.**

just the major parts, we wanted our entire database on there." Now, if you know the specific part number that you are after, that's not too difficult and you can search for that and find the 'live' availability, and there are 264,000 lines, so that in itself is a massive database. IntroCar goes a step, and it's a big step, further in having what Tupper calls 'Look Books' which are individual web pages direct from the official parts books, with all part numbers linked to the pictures and then linked to IntroCar's EPOS (electronic point of sale) system. This means that the website and the ordering, sales and dispatch systems have to 'talk' to one another, and that's impressive. IntroCar's internal EPOS system is in

**Right: Tool tray mouldings – the original and the new IntroCar replacement. Rubber tool trays for the Silver Cloud are no longer in production. In order to remanufacture the rubber tray, John Tupper had to locate an original tool kit, which he purchased for \$1600 while travelling in the United States. “We needed original tools to make sure that they would fit perfectly in our new tray” explained John, “then we could make a quality replacement tray.**



fact the same as that used by the high street retail medical chain Superdrug.

Each page has a drawing from the original parts book, some of which are scans from original microfilm. The drawings have a heritage and even on a high-resolution lap top screen still have the glorious texture of what in many cases was a technical drawing done by hand, which allows a customer to link ‘live’ to the IntroCar stores, check availability and buy instantly. When selecting, the customer will be able to see if it is available as a genuine part, an aftermarket option, a Prestige part or even if it is available as a used option. And it’s quite obvious listening to John Tupper explain all this, that it’s something of a personal project, that involves him spending a number of hours each day building.

“My job at IntroCar is like spinning plates, but this is a really nice part of that job. This is my magnum opus. This database has everything, not just all the major parts, which other companies do perfectly well, but this has every nut bolt and washer. That’s the important bit.”

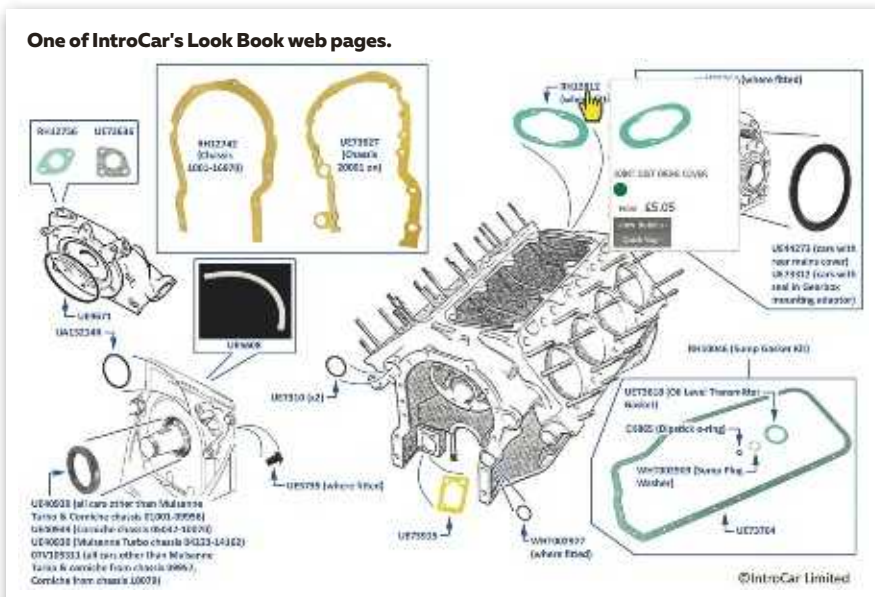
This project was actually launched last year, but IntroCar is a relatively small company, with around 20 employees,

and so it is taking Tupper time to build. The company has completed pages for Rolls-Royce and Bentley models built between 1946-1980 and is now working on the period 1980-2003 and they expect to have this classic model section complete by the end of this year, a potential total of some 2700 web pages. He will then move to the more modern options and estimates that in total there will be around 4500/5000 pages – although, of course, it will never actually be finished as new models will continue to be added, and changes made to original stock.

Even if you have no specific need for a spare part, check out this website, since if you have an interest in Rolls-Royce and Bentley engineering, this is a fascinating resource and quite addictive. It’s intuitive and so easy to find what you are looking for. And it’s being built by a relatively small team, with Tupper

leading the way and then three other IntroCar staff involved in making sure it is all linked and categorised correctly. Besides being labour intensive, it also needs a significant financial investment, which with a smile Tupper suggests is “probably bonkers for a small company like us.” But it is certainly unique in this industry and will be the bedrock for IntroCar’s future development and it has to be said, for the continued existence and preservation of the global garage of Rolls-Royce and Bentley models.

Tucked away in the popular, yet congested residential area of South Wimbledon, there’s little from the outside that shouts about what is behind the doors at IntroCar. There are three Rolls-Royce and Bentley models in the car park, used as test ‘mules’ for new parts before they are allowed to be on the shelves and sold to customers, but it is all very understated. It is all very different from when that young philosophy student walked through the door to accept the post of tea boy and general dog’s body. But then philosophy is all about wanting to understand how and why people do certain things and how to use that to build a better life. It’s fair to say, therefore, that the influence John Tupper is having on this business is certainly making life better for Rolls-Royce and Bentley owners searching for the correct spare parts to keep their beloved models running smoothly. And the man still knows how to make a decent cup of tea. ■



## CONTACTS

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# FROM THE ARCHIVES

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

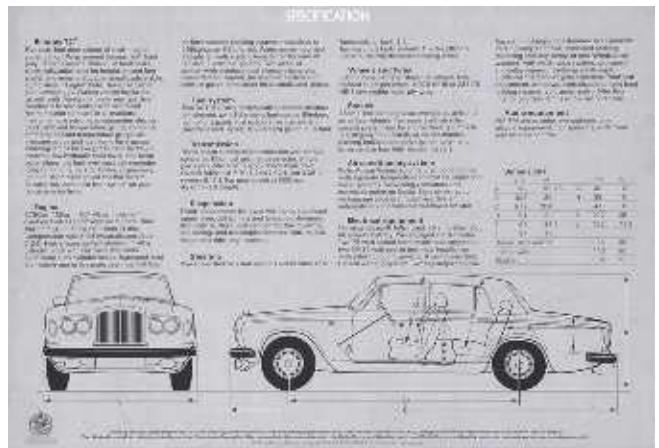
WORDS: PAUL GUINNESS PHOTOGRAPHY: VARIOUS

## THE SUBTLE APPROACH

Compared with its Silver Shadow cousin, the Bentley T-series – virtually identical in all but grille and badging – was very much a niche offering. Available in both two- and four-door guises (the former being effectively a badge-engineered Corniche), the T-series enjoyed the same long career as its Rolls-Royce equivalents but was always the underdog in terms of sales. Although more than 25,000

standard-length Silver Shadows managed to find buyers worldwide, a mere 2261 of the regular four-door T-Series (including the T2 of 1977-80) were produced. But when it came to long-wheelbase derivatives, the differences were even more startling; a total of 4915 Silver Shadow LWB saloons (later badged as the Silver Wraith) were built between their debut in 1969 and their demise 11 years later,

compared with just 19 of the same-length Bentley T1 and T2 models. This single-sheet leaflet for the T2 dates from 1978 and is a fairly modest affair. But at least the T2 offered numerous updates over its T1 predecessor, with suspension modifications improving its handling and the adoption of rack and pinion steering helping the car to feel more precise than before.



## WRAITH ELEGANCE

Two great company names are connected with this particular image, supplied to us by the Sir Henry Royce Memorial Foundation, the first being that of Jack Barclay Ltd – the world-famous dealership founded almost exactly 90 years ago and whose name appears at the bottom of the print. Jack Barclay Ltd is still with us, of course, albeit now part of the HR Owen group and famed for being the oldest Bentley dealership in the world.

The second name associated with the photograph is Thrupp & Maberly, the London-based coachbuilding firm that produced numerous special-bodied models using Rolls-Royce chassis over the years. Shown here is a four-door Wraith saloon built by the company in



1939, the year in which Rolls-Royce supplied Wraith chassis to a variety of coachbuilding specialists.



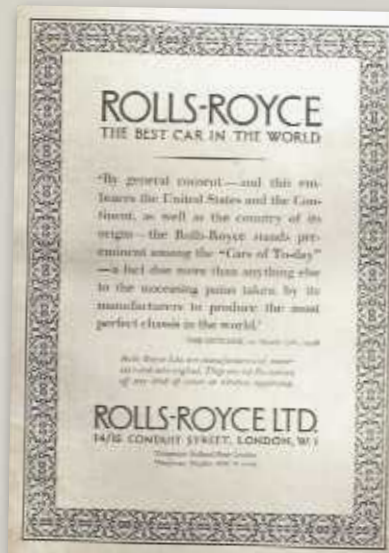
## FAMOUS NAMES

Rolls-Royce's press office archives aren't short of period photographs of famous faces either posing alongside or simply enjoying various models from the company's glorious past. One that recently caught our attention, however, is this monochrome shot of renowned actor James Robertson Justice, photographed at Vancouver International Airport with a rather befitting Silver Cloud. If ever a car and driver were perfectly matched, this is surely that occasion?

Justice will be best remembered by many of us for his starring role as Sir Lancelot Spratt in various hospital-based comedy films, the first being *Doctor in the House* of 1954. But he was known amongst his friends for being a car fanatic, and even took part in various motorsport events – including Brooklands' Thousand Mile Race of 1932 (at the wheel of a Wolseley Hornet Special) and the following year's Brighton Speed Trials.

## EARLY ADVERTISING

Published in *The Autocar* in May 1928, this illustration-free Rolls-Royce advert was a simple affair, with most of the space taken up by a quotation from *The Outlook* in March of the same year. The words that were lifted were inevitably praiseworthy, concluding that a Rolls-Royce was so special thanks 'more than anything else to the unceasing pains taken by its manufacturers to produce the most perfect chassis in the world'.

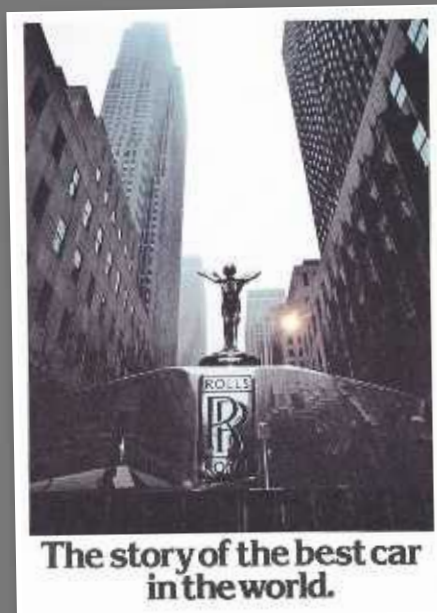


The headline boasted, of course, that Rolls-Royce was 'the best car in the world', while towards the bottom of the advert the text explained that 'Rolls-Royce Ltd are manufacturers of motor cars and aero engines'. It also usefully stressed, however, that the company was 'not the makers of any kind of razor or wireless apparatus'.

## THE FULL STORY

June 1977 saw Rolls-Royce Motors issuing this handy A5-size brochure to explain the history of the company as well as to promote the latest line-up, all within just twenty pages. It was an excellent effort though, with plenty of information for history buffs as well as for fans of the then current line-up. Perhaps inevitably, the front cover described the publication as: 'The story of the best car in the world'.

The pages within covered everything from the first meeting of Charles Stuart Rolls and Frederick Henry Royce through to the creation of such iconic models as the Silver Ghost, the 20/25hp, the Wraith and the Silver Cloud. The second half of the brochure, however, focused on the company's latest range, at the top of which sat the Phantom VI Limousine and Phantom VI Special Landauette, the latter model designed 'specifically for state occasions' and featuring an 'electrically operated folding roof over the rear compartment'. Oh, and just to reassure any VIPs worried about a lack of exclusivity, the brochure stressed that the Landauette was 'built only to special order and production is strictly limited'.



**ATTENTION TO DETAIL**

When Rolls-Royce issued a lavish new Silver Shadow brochure in 1975, it understandably focused on the quality of the car and the company's attention to detail, with several pages featuring special-effect monochrome images like the two shown here. The close-up shot of the Silver Shadow's radiator grille was accompanied by text that confirmed the high levels of 'skill, patience and refinement that go into every Rolls-Royce motor car'.

The second illustration showed the 'steel and aluminium bodyshell of a Rolls-Royce' which would have spent several days to prepare: 'Trained eyes will pore over its surface, searching out every tiny imperfection as it is inspected, corrected and inspected again'. Only then was the bodyshell ready to receive its 'ten or more coats of primer, filler and paint'.

The second illustration showed the 'steel and aluminium bodyshell of a Rolls-Royce motor car'.



*Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow saloon', which would have spent several days 'undergoing a process of painstaking preparation'. The company relied on its craftsmen to ensure a perfect finish for the 'shell, with each one taking several*

*days to prepare: 'Trained eyes will pore over its surface, searching out every tiny imperfection as it is inspected, corrected and inspected again'. Only then was the bodyshell ready to receive its 'ten or more coats of primer, filler and paint'.*



**THE RISE AND FALL**

The final model launched by Bentley before the company's collapse in 1931 (and its subsequent rescue from receivership by Rolls-Royce in November of that year) was the 8 Litre, a behemoth of a saloon boasting 7983cc straight-six power. With an overhead camshaft, four valves per cylinder and twin-spark ignition, the engine itself was a highly-advanced design for the time; and it offered extreme flexibility too, with enough torque for the 8 Litre to accelerate effortlessly in top gear from a walking pace.

When the 8 Litre made its debut at the London Motor Show of October 1930, its output of 220bhp

was hugely impressive by standards of the time. The newcomer's list price of £1850 also generated headlines, as this was one of the most expensive cars on sale that year. The 8 Litre's timing could have been better, however, with the onset of the Great Depression (following the stock market crash of October 1929) having a major impact on worldwide sales of luxury cars.

This particular brochure for the 8 Litre dates from February 1931 and was kindly supplied to us by the WO Bentley Memorial Foundation. We adore its Art Deco look and the stylised illustrations of the 8 Litre by famed motoring illustrator Jack Le Breton.



**SPIRIT OF ECSTASY**

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

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



## BUILDING AN ICON

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

The railway town of Crewe offered superb transport infrastructure and no shortage of skilled labour, and so a site was chosen on the outskirts, with construction beginning in July 1938. This official monochrome photograph dates from around 1964 and shows the front of the typically '30s-looking factory, outside which a pair of Silver Cloud III saloons and a brace of Bentley S3s are parked.



## FORTY YEARS AGO

Taking a look at the Rolls-Royce range of 40 years ago is a fascinating exercise, especially when it comes to prices. Back in 1977, the entry-level Rolls-Royce was inevitably the Silver Shadow, which was listed back then at £24,248. And if we ignore the built-to-order Phantom VI (which didn't appear in official price lists at the time), the dearest model on offer was the Camargue, priced at a hefty £42,951 – making it by far the most expensive two-door saloon of 1977.

Thanks to the wonders of online calculations, we've ascertained that the 1977 price of a Camargue is the equivalent of £284,335 in 2017. So how does that compare with today's Rolls-Royces? The closest equivalent to a modern-day Camargue (and the only two-door hardtop in the range) is the Wraith, which starts at £240,768 – and suddenly seems something of a bargain!

## PRODUCTION AT CREWE

These two period photographs were obviously taken at Crewe, although there's quite an age gap between them. The first one shows the finishing touches being applied to a line-up of Bentley MkVI saloons, each one receiving a final polish and check-over before leaving the factory. A team of men and women set to with their cloths,

while on the floor we can see what appears to be a tin of polish. The photograph is undated, but we suspect it's from the latter part of the MkVI's 1946-52 career.

The second photograph dates from the late '50s and shows a trio of S1 bodysHELLS having rectification work carried out by Bentley craftsmen, each car featuring various

chalk marks showing where minor issues needed sorting. Even the tiniest imperfections would have been spotted, marked and then dealt with, ensuring that each S1 'shell' was in tip-top condition before making its way through to the paint shop. Bentley buyers expected perfection, after all... and the experts at Crewe knew how to supply it.



## THE TOUGHEST TEST

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

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



## AMERICAN APPROACH

The USA has always been an important market for Rolls-Royce, particularly in the inter-war years when American coachbuilders would produce their own bespoke bodywork for the chassis shipped over from Britain. Among the biggest specialist names was Brewster & Co, a New York-based coachbuilder that actually pre-dated the automobile. By the time this advert appeared in the American press in 1927, Brewster-bodied Rolls-Royces were seen as the epitome of success.

Intriguingly, the advert seemed to be focusing on a wealthy female clientele, boasting that *'the appeal of Rolls-Royce to women of good taste is inevitable'*. It went on to explain that *'this motor car carries the assurance that it is worthy of its owner'*, and that *'every line of this car expresses quiet elegance'*.



## STRETCHING THE POINT

Although an extended-wheelbase version of the long-running Silver Spirit was offered for many years (badged as the Silver Spur), there were some customers who demanded even more space, opulence and prestige. And so, in the model's twilight years, came an even longer derivative, launched in 1996 as the Rolls-Royce Park Ward Limousine – boasting

an extra 24 inches over the Silver Spur, as well as a raised roofline.

These two official press photographs give an idea of the scale and luxury of the Park Ward Limousine, with a pair of rearward-facing fold-down seats helping to provide sumptuous accommodation for up to five people behind the electrically-operated chauffeur's division. Any VIPs craving

a drink whilst being chauffeured in style, meanwhile, could take advantage of the lead crystal decanter and goblets that came as standard in the on-board cocktail cabinet. Production of the Park Ward lasted three years, during which time only around 50 cars were built – just seven of which are thought to have been bought by UK-based customers. ■





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# VARIETY FARE

One of the hottest days of the year saw the Bentley Drivers Club arrive in some style at Sudeley Castle near Cheltenham, where the manicured grounds were the perfect setting for the club's annual Concours

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY: PAUL WAGER

**T**he popularity of the Bentley Drivers Club annual event was summed up by the sheer number of cars in the 'non-Bentley' parking area which was even expanded by late morning to accommodate the number of visitors that had arrived.

As for the Bentleys, cars in attendance ranged from the '20s

right up to the current day. Chatting with club Chief Executive Steve Miller, it was also interesting to discover how ownership of the Continental GT and its derivatives is increasing among the membership. With these cars now well within the realms of the affordable modern classic, it proves the club's comment that you don't have to own an expensively restored

or big-value vintage model to join in.

Having said that, the standard of the cars competing in the concours displays was simply stunning, but unlike many concours events, it was also obvious that most of these cars had driven to the event and weren't merely show queens. It was especially heartening to see the drivers of the vintage cars firing them up and heading »



A J Trahar's 1959 S1 Continental....



... and from the same year, the same owner's S2 Continental.



To the victors, the spoils.



Paul Adams 1959 S2.



Marcus Scott-Russell's 1952 special took the very important Ladies' Choice award. The car is one of eight built by JP Evans of Mold, North Wales in 1989/1990. It's based on a MkVI chassis with the 4.5-litre, six cylinder Rolls-Royce designed engine and certainly looks splendid.



Anthony Fabian's 1936 4.5-litre.



Paul Hoddinott's 1954 R-Type.



As you would expect, Vintage and Prestige had some great vehicles on display at the Rally, including this impressive 1930 6.5-litre long chassis Vanden Plas style tourer.



Continental art car was created for last year's Goodwood Festival by Peter Blake, the legendary artist behind the Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club album cover.



## SPECIAL EVENTS

### BDC SUMMER CONCOURS

home at the end of the day rather than winning them on to a trailer.

Concours at this level is still a serious business though and the prize-giving saw a table loaded with silverware which was a sight in itself.

Aside from the individual winners, the event also includes a Regional Challenge with each area presenting a 'team' of three cars. As expected, the standard was high and the winner was the North West region with its selection of Continental R, Continental GT Speed and Ken Lee's 3.5-litre Derby.

The grounds and castle offered a welcome relief from the heat, alongside the draw of the big play area for the younger visitors. General consensus among the members we chatted to was that the change of venue had worked well and most were looking forward to returning next year. ■

*If you are thinking of joining the Bentley Drivers Club, check out the website at: [www.bdcl.org](http://www.bdcl.org)*



**A driving test challenge was laid out in an adjacent field, complete with Bentayga.**



**Kenneth Jackson's 1989 Continental.**



**Stunning 1950 Mk6 was displayed by Peter Wilson.**



**Ron Warmington's 1929 'Birkin Blower' is the real deal, with its Amherst Villiers supercharger.**





Donald Rees's 2000-model Arnage Red Label.



Looking so smooth - Timothy Quin's 1955 Mulliner R-Type Continental. And so graceful



Raymond Marsh's replica 'Blower' was created by Petersen using a 1936 Derby as a donor car. These excellent Petersen Blowers are well regarded for their superb attention to detail.



Joe Stewart's 1968 S3 (right) and a 1961 Mulliner Flying Spur.



Open Bentley roadster, a stately home and beautiful summer sunshine. Perfect!



Christopher Pack's 1953 R-Type Mulliner.



Brian Tait's 1987 Bentley Turbo R - offering a lot of saloon for a very reasonable budget.



The T1 has become something of a rare sight. This is Steve Moore's smart 1968 example.



Silver Shadows with the majestic Burghley House in the background.

# DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER!

This year's Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club Annual Rally was the 60th Anniversary, making it an extra special event. Here are some personal highlights from the Editor on what was a spectacular display of Rolls-Royce and Bentley models

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY: NIGEL FRYATT



**W**hat would those original club members have thought about this year's Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club Annual Rally? They would have been impressed, that's for sure. And anyone who went to the glorious grounds of Burghley House, near Stamford in Lincolnshire last month will owe these early pioneers heart-filled thanks for that original advertisement put into the *Oxford Mail* back in 1957. At the first event, some 14 cars were in attendance, this year it must have been in the thousands, but as ever, it wasn't just about quantity, it was the quality that mattered.

It felt a little embarrassing to turn up in one of our publisher's fleet cars since, you may be surprised to know, there aren't any Rolls-Royce or Bentley models on the company car pool... However, at least it was

a BMW, so there is a link! We were politely shepherded to a car park away from the stars of the event by the smiling RREC marshals, ably supported by a local Boy Scout troop.

The stars of the event were all neatly parked in specific model and age sections on the very dry grass in front of Burghley House. It was an impressive sight. Obviously, the sounds of the cars moving around were majestically quiet, which only helped emphasise the growling roar and majesty of the display Merlin V12 engine that was regularly fired up over the weekend, courtesy of Flight Engineering. And we could hear 'the real thing' as a Spitfire made an imposing fly past on Sunday, culminating with a respectful wing tip farewell. Just as loud were some of the gentleman's trousers on display, but it was all very good natured, even the judges were in good humour as they »



Now white isn't everyone's idea of an ideal colour for a Rolls-Royce, but Messrs S and A Buck-Honour won the Best In Class, Elegance for their sparkling Rolls-Royce Corniche convertible.



This 1941 Merlin engine was originally fitted to a Bristol Beaufighter, but now a wonderful show exhibit, which was 'fired up' regularly – and what a fabulous noise it makes!



Just the perfect name for the Silver Shadow II of Belgium's Mr Y Smets, one of the best looking versions we spotted all weekend.



1965 Bentley S3 Continental, owned by Lord Anthony Bamford. Is there a better-looking sports saloon? A firm favourite of the Editor



This 1938 Rolls-Royce 25/30 Woody Shooting Brake was pampered by one family for 50 years. Apparently, the garage it was stored in had a bay window so the owners could see the car from their kitchen! Previous to that it was owned by a Russian Princess living in the UK in the 1960s.

## SPECIAL EVENTS RREC ANNUAL RALLY

climbed over, under and through the cars in the *Concours d'Elegance*. If you won an award, then we would say you certainly deserved it after these guys have given your car the 'once over'! And, of course, there was also lots of money being spent in the excellent trade area, and all the important names were there.

What we have here is a photographic report of some of my favourite vehicles, not all winners in the concours perhaps, but they helped make it an excellent day as far as I was concerned. ■

*Don't forget that you do not need to own a Rolls-Royce or Bentley to be a member of the RREC. In fact, if you join this would be a great event to attend to see what was on offer as there were vehicles across all model ranges, and all prices, for sale. We would recommend it. Find out more at [www.rrec.org.uk](http://www.rrec.org.uk).*



**Elegance and style was in abundance all weekend. This Phantom V James Young Limousine was actually driven to the Rally all the way from the Netherlands by its owner, Mr R Richard.**



**There was a wonderful assortment of models, of all colours, at this year's RREC Rally.**



**One of the Editor's highlights had to be the awesome La Sarthe, built by Bensport and displayed in the IntroCar marquee. This bespoke newly built Bentley special looks superb, encapsulating the spirit of the era perfectly. Only 24 models will be built and we hope to be bringing you more about this amazing vehicle in a forthcoming issue; this is certainly one special motor car.**



**Fancy polishing this? Stunning preparation work on this 1910 Silver Ghost 40/50hp.**



**This 1927 Rolls-Royce Phantom I 40/50hp was once owned by the Maharaja Kumar of Udaipur. Amazingly, it is claimed to have covered less than 20,000 miles.**



Flying Spares had a great display of vehicles ready to purchase.



A real international event, Hans Treurniet brought his immaculate last of the line Rolls-Royce Corniche convertible from the Netherlands to Burghley House.



The RREC judges certainly gave each vehicle a serious once over!



Mr and Mrs D J Sewell's 1964 Silver Cloud III and similar models line up in the sunshine.



Fancy a restoration project? This 1934 Bentley 3½ Park Ward Drophead Coupe has been laid up for 30 years, and has had only two owners! The engine runs 'sweetly' apparently.



Glorious 1939 Bentley 4¼-litre MX Vanden Plas Open Tourer, restored by P & A Wood.



Mr P Parsons in his Bentley MkVI. Timeless, it allowed us to reflect on a quieter era.



Not an 'original' colour perhaps, but is very tasteful. This 1930 Rolls-Royce Phantom I York Roadster has had a sympathetic restoration.



There were new models to match the classics, but the older vehicles really held the day.



# UNDERSTANDING THE CLASSICS

Rolls-Royce has had its fair share of ups and downs over the years. We take a discerning romp through the classics, from the launch of the highly significant Silver Shadow, to the company's complex break-up and sale to foreign hands

WORDS: JACK GROVER PHOTOGRAPHY: KELSEY MEDIA ARCHIVE

**F**or over 110 years the name Rolls-Royce has been used as a synonym for excellence in any given field, even if the firm has dedicated itself almost solely to producing luxury cars and aero engines. But Rolls-Royce is no longer a single entity. The most direct successor is the current Rolls-Royce Holdings, one of the world's leading engineering firms that is best known for its aero engines.

The cars are now built by the entirely separate Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, owned by BMW and based at Goodwood. Meanwhile the Crewe factory, which built Rolls-Royces from 1946 until 2002, is now the home of Bentley (a Rolls-Royce subsidiary since 1931) and is in the hands of Volkswagen. Of course, all these operations can trace their lineage to the original Rolls-Royce Limited founded by Charles Rolls and Henry

Royce in 1906; today it's particularly interesting to follow how we reached this situation, and what the future may hold.

Let's enter the story in 1955 with the launch of the Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud. Although this was touted as the first truly 'new' Rolls-Royce car since the Second World War it was still built on a separate ladder chassis, its 4.9-litre six-cylinder engine was smooth and slow-revving in the tradition established



**The Silver Cloud was the first truly post-war Rolls-Royce and a fine car (pictured is a later Silver Cloud III) but it was mechanically and stylistically conservative.**

by the Silver Ghost back in 1906 and the rear axle was still live and hung from leaf springs. The quality, luxury and refinement were as superlative as ever, but it was a decidedly traditional car in its engineering, styling and character. This was something of a problem for a company that had a reputation for excellence in all areas to keep up. The same year the Silver Cloud was launched the Citroën DS redefined the cutting edge of automotive engineering,

especially when it came to ride comfort, stability and brakes, thanks to its high-pressure hydraulic system. In terms of sheer engineering innovation, the Mini of 1959 packed more design effort into its diminutive frame than any Rolls-Royce had done for many years. Stylistically cars such as the Rover P4 (which the American press at the time rated as second-only to the Rolls-Royce when it came to refinement) and the Mercedes-Benz 'Ponton' were leaving

the Silver Cloud far behind. By 1962 the Morris 1100 – a small family saloon – was boasting unitary construction, front-wheel drive, independent rubber and fluid suspension, front disc brakes and rack and pinion steering. Rover was about to redefine the upmarket saloon car with the P6, which would be another leap forward for design in mass-produced cars. And all the while the Silver Cloud continued with its essentially pre-war design.

It wasn't just the cars that were changing – the world was changing too. The 'Fifties had seen living standards rise massively all over the Western world and in the space of 15 years, people had gone from hankering over any car, even if it was a pre-war 'banger', to aspiring to something stylish, fast, comfortable and advanced. The existing Rolls-Royces were rooted in the days of the 'motor carriage' where wealthy owners were chauffeured everywhere, but it was becoming much more acceptable for owners to drive themselves. Roads, and especially towns and cities, were becoming more crowded, making an 18-foot long Silver Cloud unwieldy and excessive. At the same time, motorways were spreading around the world, not least in Britain, making rapid intercity travel by car a reality. Rolls-Royce was far from alone in finding its cars far from optimal for the rigours of »



**The ground-breaking Silver Shadow radically changed people's expectations of what a Rolls-Royce could be.**





Introduced in 1959, the Rolls-Royce L Series V8 would power the Silver Shadow family and nearly all its successors and variants.

hours of high-speed travel and the new way of driving put new demands and expectations on a luxury car.

## SHADOW DANCING

To meet the demands of this new world, Rolls-Royce would have to build a smaller, lighter and much more advanced car that would be built in relatively large numbers and at a relatively low cost to fill the emerging market gap between the likes of Jaguar, Mercedes-Benz and Lancia in Europe and Lincoln and Cadillac in North America and the Silver Cloud. Work on developing such a car, which would by necessity be entirely new, started in 1956 and various directions were explored before the characteristics of the new model began to crystallise. One of the most dramatic innovations was the decision to adopt a monocoque body – a first for a Rolls-Royce and a clear departure from the established way of a hand-built bespoke carriage. But it was inevitable; it would greatly improve the car's interior space while allowing the external dimensions to be trimmed down. It reduced the overall weight and the centre of gravity, improving fuel consumption and high-speed handling.



The Bentley version of the Silver Shadow, the T-Series, was a half-heartedly rebadged version of the Rolls-Royce.

And it was the only construction method truly suitable for the production volumes Rolls-Royce was anticipating.

Fully independent suspension was another new adoption necessary to reclaim the marque's reputation for peerless comfort and to further help produce the high-speed abilities required. Rolls-Royce saw no shame

in going to the undisputed master of suspension technology at the time and acquired a license to use Citroën's hydropneumatic suspension technology, although the actual parts used were designed at Crewe and built by Rolls-Royce's own contractors. Unlike the Citroën system, the Rolls-Royce was sprung by conventional coil springs,

**“To meet the demands of this new world, Rolls-Royce would have to build a smaller, lighter and much more advanced car in relatively large numbers and at a relatively low cost”**



The two-door Corniche, assembled and trimmed by hand at Mulliner Park Ward, would remain available until the early 'Nineties.

with the hydraulics providing self-levelling to maintain the ride quality regardless of load. The hydraulic system also powered four-wheel disc brakes to provide reassuringly strong stopping power for a car which, even if it was light by Rolls-Royce standards, weighing over two tons. Stylistically the new Rolls adopted a square-cut 'pontoon' style with flush lines running from stem to stern unbroken by any traditional features, such as wings, headlamps or running boards or landau tops. The only remotely 'parts bin' element of the new car was its engine, which was the 6.2-litre V8 first used in the Silver Cloud and Phantom V in 1949, but developed with the upcoming new car very much in mind. The engine was smoother, more compact, more powerful and lighter than the big straight-six it replaced.

After nine years of development, the new car was announced in October 1965 as the Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow and the Bentley T-Series – there was no difference between the two other than the Bentley's simpler grille (made from chromed press steel rather than handmade from brass like the Rolls-Royce item) which allowed it to be priced £50 lower than the Silver

Shadow, although at well over £6500 the cars still cost twice the price of a Daimler DR450 and four times as much as a Rover 3-litre. But it was half the price of a fully-equipped Phantom V limousine and a third of the price of a Mercedes-Benz 600 Pullman.

The Silver Shadow was justifiably

described as “the most radically new Rolls-Royce for 59 years” – not since the original Silver Ghost had Crewe made a car so thoroughly ahead of its competitors. It was praised to the hilt by all who drove it, with its sublime ride quality and high-speed refinement, while it was also agreed to be the first Rolls- »



For those that hankered after a traditional Rolls-Royce, where you hired a separate driver, the Phantom VI remained available in all its imposing, separate chassis, bluff-fronted glory.

## HISTORY UNDERSTANDING THE CLASSICS

Royce that was genuinely enjoyable to drive, with sure-footed roadholding and responsive handling that belied its great size and mass even on twisting Alpine roads or narrow English lanes.

### CAUTION, TURBULENCE

But the good reviews and undoubted pride that those at Crewe could take in their achievement in the Silver Shadow was small comfort to Rolls-Royce's accountants. The majority of the firm's activity and profits came from its aero engine division and the development of the Silver Shadow had, inevitably, incurred heavy costs in the motor car division. This was entirely expected but it took a distressingly long time for those costs to begin to be recouped. As a car designed fairly explicitly for its home market, the Silver Shadow was stymied by a string of chancellors of the exchequer, on both sides of the political spectrum, who introduced wage caps and purchase taxes that continually restricted demand for Rolls-Royces and threw off Crewe's predicted production numbers. Even before the launch of the Silver Shadow in 1963 the car division had lost £300,000 and by 1966 it was losing over £1 million per year. Production was hovering at around 1000 cars per year – huge volumes by Rolls-Royce standards but nowhere near enough to

be profitable given the huge investment in technology and equipment.

But Rolls-Royce as a whole remained profitable and Crewe went as far as to launch the final development of the Phantom, the Phantom VI, concluding the development of a lineage that had begun in 1925. This car, with a price tag of well over £12,000, was built in very small numbers – well under 20 cars per year – but remained available until 1990.

Unfortunately, the aero engine division was about to enter problems of its own. In 1965 Rolls-Royce had signed an agreement with Lockheed of the USA to be the sole engine supplier for its innovative new airliner, the Tristar, and the engine would be the RB211, which used an innovative and unique 'three spool' design and carbon fibre fan blades. Unfortunately, however, Rolls-Royce hit recurrent problems with the RB211's development and after many delays and over £190 million spent the project was still not complete by 1970. Rolls-Royce then announced that it lacked the funds to continue the project and that even if the RB211 made production the firm could not build it profitably for the price contracted with Lockheed.

Rolls-Royce declared insolvency in January 1971 and Lockheed was forced to suspend the Tristar project, which in turn put its own finances in peril;



**Rolls-Royce Limited overextended itself in developing the highly advanced RB211 turbo-fan jet aircraft engine, which led to the coming becoming insolvent in 1971.**

then international politics took over. As the engine supplier to the RAF and dozens of air forces worldwide, Rolls-Royce was vital to Britain strategically as well as economically. Similarly, the American government would not look kindly upon having one of its major defence contractors brought down by the failure of a British company. Prime minister Edward Heath nationalised Rolls-Royce Limited, bringing an end to the original firm founded in 1906. The new entity in government hands was Rolls-Royce (1971) Limited. It was widely agreed that the focus had to be on resuscitating the aero engine division and completing the RB211 project. To that end, the motor car division was spun-off in 1973 as Rolls-Royce Motors.



**The Camargue was a Silver Shadow with a sumptuously-appointed coupé body designed by Pininfarina. It was the most expensive car in the world at the time.**

The car division had been strangely unaffected by all this turmoil. Production of both the Silver Shadow and the Phantom VI had not been affected and, indeed, just two weeks after Rolls-Royce Limited went into receivership the company announced a new model – the Corniche. This was a variant of the Silver Shadow available as a two-door saloon or cabriolet with bodywork built by Mulliner Park Ward, the London coachbuilder that had been owned by Rolls-Royce since 1939. MPW had offered similar bespoke versions of the Silver Shadow since it had been launched but this was the first time such cars were available 'off the peg'.

## BIGGER, NOT BETTER

When Rolls-Royce Motors gained its new-found independence in 1973, the existing product plan remained in place. Towards the end of the 'Sixties it had been decided that a model was needed in the range, which combined the sheer luxury, prestige and price of the Phantom VI with the modernity of the Silver Shadow. The Shadow's unparalleled transcontinental high-speed cruising abilities had led many reviewers to ponder its potential as a grand tourer and Rolls-Royce acted on the same lines, proposing that the new car should be a large, luxurious coupé in the manner of the old Bentley Continentals; by this time the Bentley marque was essentially dormant with Bentley T-Series making up only five per cent of Silver Shadow production, with Crewe not even seeing fit to remove the Rolls-Royce badges from the T-Series' instruments or the engine's rocker covers.

Unusually the design work was contracted to Pininfarina, which was instructed to produce a car that could be built by Mulliner Park Ward on a variant of the Shadow platform and running gear. The result was the stupendous Rolls-Royce Camargue. When it was introduced in 1975 it was the most expensive car in the world, selling for £29,950 in the UK – or twice the price of a Silver Shadow (which then retailed at £14,830). The Camargue's V8 engine was tuned in comparison to its stablemates and it boasted a world-leading two-zone climate control system, which Rolls-Royce said had taken eight years to develop. Unfortunately, the Camargue was released in the middle of troubled times with much of the world reeling from a recession caused by the 1973 Energy Crisis. The car's styling was also



With the introduction of the Series II Silver Shadow, the long-wheelbase model was renamed the Silver Wraith. This X-reg example was one of the very last to be built.



The replacement for the popular Silver Shadow was the Silver Spirit. Its launch in 1980 coincided with the sale of Rolls-Royce Motors to the Vickers engineering firm.

highly controversial, with its forward-raked grille and strangely plain rear styling coming in for particular criticism. The sheer price of the car proved to be something of a psychological stumbling block, with *MotorSport* magazine wondering if it represented "the biggest rip-off in the motoring world or the most profitable sales gimmick ever". Only 530 Camargues were built in 11 years and it remains for many enthusiast as one of the few truly unpopular Rolls-Royces.

The Camargue did feed back into the Silver Shadow, with the Series 2 model (called the T2 in Bentley parlance, although very few were made) introduced in 1972, featuring both the Camargue's climate control system and its rack and pinion steering. Combined with a raft of suspension revisions and a larger 6.75-litre engine to keep power competitive while meeting stringent

American emissions regulations, the Silver Shadow was now even more of a Rolls-Royce for the 'owner driver'. It was also hitting its stride in terms of sales, despite the economic troubles, finding itself in a unique market position above mass-produced luxury saloons but below hand-built oddities such as the Camargue. Production was now averaging just over 2000 four-door cars per year plus around 800 two-doors, which was just enough to cover its costs. Peak production would actually be 1978, when 3347 were built.

## CHANGING PARTNERS

But it wasn't enough to fund the development of the Silver Shadow's replacement, which was now becoming a pressing requirement. The model, intended to have a ten year production »

life, was already approaching 15-years old and it had taken nine years to develop. Even assuming that the next Rolls-Royce wouldn't be quite as radical as the Shadow, financial pressure meant that it was still unlikely that a new Rolls-Royce would be ready before the mid 'Eighties. In 1980 Rolls-Royce Motors was acquired by the engineering firm Vickers. This was the rump of the Vickers-Armstrong industrial conglomerate that had built the Vickers Viscount airliner which, powered by Rolls-Royce Dart engines, had been the world's first turboprop airliner. The Rolls-Royce Avon engine propelled the Vickers Valiant nuclear bomber and the Conway engine had powered the Vickers VC10 airliner. Mergers, demergers and nationalisation in the aircraft and shipbuilding industries meant that by 1980 Vickers was concerned mainly with armaments manufacture and marine propulsion systems, but there was plenty of shared history between the two names already.

This secured Crewe's long-term future but just a few days after the sale was announced came the reveal of the Silver Shadow's successor, the Silver Spirit (also available in long-wheelbase form as the Silver Spur and in Bentley form as the Mulsanne). These were really just their Silver Shadow/Wraith/T-Series predecessors with modernised styling

## **“It seems a fixture of Rolls-Royce history that the company always changes hands just as a new generation of cars is launched”**

and a few minor technical changes, with a lower body waistline, greater glass area, more aerodynamic detailing and, most strikingly of all, rectangular integrated headlamps. The design of rear suspension was also revised to improve refinement and further improve the amount of boot space, but it remained fundamentally the same concept as that used on the Shadow. The last four-door Shadows were built in 1980, bringing the production total to just over 25,000 cars. The Corniche would remain available until 1995, adding nearly 5000 cars to that total, but even without it the Shadow was still the most successful Rolls-Royce in the marque's history – a distinction it maintains to this day.

### **BENTLEY RETURNS**

The Bentley Mulsanne was of particular interest. The man appointed by Vickers as Chairman of Rolls-Royce, George Fenn, could scarcely believe that a marque as prestigious as Bentley had been allowed to wither away. Other directors brought in from outside Rolls-Royce agreed, especially Managing

Director Peter Ward (recruited from Unipart) and Engineering Director Mike Dunn (a former Alvis, Rover and Leyland engineer). Under Vickers ownership Ward and Dunn were to transform Rolls-Royce into a more modern and less idiosyncratic company – one of Dunn's first acts was to start buying Crewe's nuts and bolts from an outside source instead of making them in-house at vast expense. The emphasis on Bentley in the Vickers years wasn't simply a case of correcting a historical snub but was seen as crucial to the future of the company. The Silver Shadow had introduced an unwelcome tension in the design of new Rolls-Royces which now had to at least make a token effort at being 'driver's cars' as well as the ultimate in comfort and refinement. Those two aims were mutually exclusive. On top of this, just as in the early 'Sixties, tastes were changing. Wealthy car buyers no longer hankered for supreme luxury but wanted faster, sharper cars and were happy to turn to the likes of BMW, Mercedes-Benz and Jaguar to get them. It was unthinkable for Crewe to make a sporty Rolls-Royce but it could make essentially »



**The original Mulsanne Turbo was the first Bentley in decades to be significantly different from its Rolls-Royce sister. Under Vickers ownership Bentley was revived to give the firm a credible sporting and performance image, the significance of which can still be seen in its latest model range.**

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just that and badge it as a Bentley.

The original Mulsanne (the fact that it had its own name, and one named for the famous long straight at Le Mans, was significant), like its T-Series predecessor, was just a rebadged Silver Spirit, but in 1982 real change appeared in the form of the Mulsanne Turbo, which added a Garrett turbocharger to the 6.75-litre V8. A forced-induction Rolls-Royce would have been utterly beyond the pale but Bentley had a long history, albeit with superchargers, going back to the 'Blower' Bentleys of the 'Twenties. With 50 per cent more power than the Rolls-Royce, the Mulsanne Turbo was otherwise largely unchanged other than some minor cosmetic differences, but it nonetheless gave buyers a real reason to opt for a Bentley for the first time in nearly 30 years. In 1984, the Bentley Eight arrived to provide a new 'entry level' model priced just below the psychologically important £50,000 mark (or £6500 less than the Mulsanne). With a wire mesh grille, cloth seats and steel wheels the Eight was still a fine luxury saloon and brought new, younger buyers to Crewe's doors who, it was hoped, would trade up the range in years to come.

The real spirit of Bentley was resurrected in 1985 with the launch of the Turbo R. With around 330bhp available (Crewe still followed the tradition of never officially revealing the power output of its cars) the Turbo R also gained thoroughly reworked suspension with lower, stiffer springs, uprated dampers, much stronger anti-roll bars and a Panhard rod on the rear suspension. Sharper steering geometry was also used and the interior gained bucketed leather seats to complete

## **“The Turbo R was a critical and sales success, such that in the ten years to 1990 Bentley sales had gone from making up five per cent of Crewe’s output to 50 per cent”**

the sporty image. The Turbo R was a critical and sales success, such that in the ten years to 1990, Bentley sales had gone from making up five per cent of Crewe's output to 50 per cent. The range was continually re-jigged to keep up with changing tastes – the Eight and Mulsanne were both replaced by the Brooklands model in 1992, which gained a low-pressure turbo in 1996. The Turbo R itself was upgraded several times and ended the decade as the fastest four-door saloon car in the world. Many of the mechanical and interior improvements developed for the Bentley range were also adopted for the Silver Spirit, which was evolved through four models during a production run that lasted until 1999, meaning that it had a longer life than the Silver Shadow. If the Shadow and the Spirit are considered as variants of the same basic design then it lasted for 34 years and was never really challenged for its place as the world's foremost luxury car.

### **ASSETS SPLITTING**

But the Spirit's long life wasn't purely down to its sheer excellence but also due to Vickers' ultimate lack of resources to develop a true replacement. Work had begun on a completely new model to supersede the Shadow-based Rolls-Royces and Bentleys in 1988 and detailed development work

began in 1990. By 1991 the design was 'frozen' and approved by the Vickers management. But the project was then put on ice in the aftermath of the vicious economic recession of the early 'Nineties, which also saw the end of production of the Corniche and the Phantom VI, cutting the last ties to the original Rolls-Royce Limited. Another sign of those ties being loosened was the daring decision to buy in the engine for the next car. The venerable 6.75-litre V8 was deemed to be too long in the tooth and its refinement and efficiency were falling behind its rivals. The new generation would use BMW power units – a 4.4-litre V8 for the Bentley and a 5.4-litre V12 for the Rolls-Royce. Production of the new models, the Arnage and the Silver Seraph respectively, would not begin until 1998, ten years after development began.

It seems a fixture of Rolls-Royce history that the company always changes hands just as a new generation of cars is launched, and so it was with the Seraph. Although Vickers could take great pride in resurrecting Bentley and guiding Rolls-Royce through two largely successful decades, the investment required was huge and the returns were minimal. Shortly after the release of the Seraph, Vickers offered Rolls-Royce Motors for sale. The obvious choice for a buyer was BMW, which was looking to expand its operations (having already acquired Rover in 1994) and was already



**Still clearly a descendant of the Silver Shadow, the Bentley Turbo R (this is a relatively late example) was the ultimate sports saloon, able to offer unparalleled comfort, refinement and impressive performance.**



**The stalwart 6.75-litre V8 engine did equal service in Rolls-Royces and Bentleys through the 'Eighties and 'Nineties, with the latter gradually receiving a turbocharger on all models, and a significant power hike.**



The long-delayed Silver Seraph finally laid to rest the Silver Shadow underpinnings used on almost all Rolls-Royces since 1965.

involved in the company. But in a surprise move, BMW was outbid by Volkswagen, which offered an extra £90 million on top of BMW's bid of £340 million.

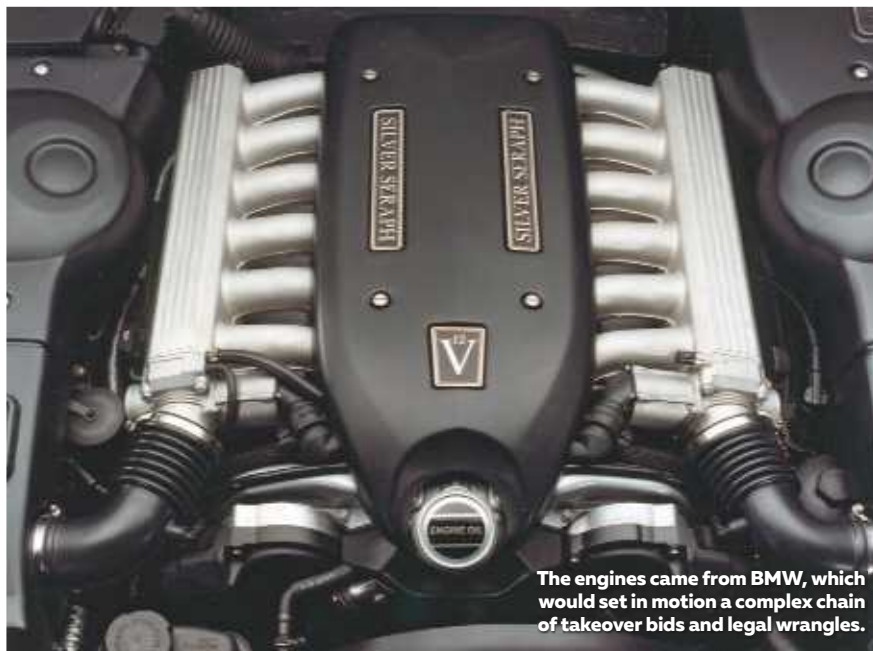
But that wasn't the end of the matter. When the car and aero engine divisions of Rolls-Royce had been split in 1971 it had been agreed that the latter would have ultimate ownership of the name and 'RR' logo, with the former having the rights to the distinctive radiator grille shape and the famous Spirit of Ecstasy bonnet mascot. With the sale of Rolls-Royce Motors, Volkswagen had acquired the Crewe factory, the grille and the mascot, but not the rights to name or badge. The engine maker was by now in private hands again as Rolls-Royce Holdings and, by coincidence, had a deal with BMW to manufacture a range of jet engines in Germany. This meant for £40 million BMW was sold the license to the name and logo but had no factory and couldn't use the grille shape or mascot!

This bizarre situation led to Volkswagen quickly re-engineering the Bentley Arnage to use the old Rolls-Royce V8 engine. VW had already stated that its main interest was in the higher-volume and more profitable Bentley range and so a deal was reached with BMW. From the start of 2003, BMW would gain the use of the Rolls-Royce name, badge, grille

and mascot. Volkswagen would retain Crewe, the rights to the V8 engine, the Bentley marque and all the existing Rolls-Royce/Bentley designs and assets; from that date, Rolls-Royce and Bentley officially split, with BMW forming Rolls-Royce Motor Cars to build an all-new range of cars in an all-new factory at Goodwood, and Volkswagen

forming Bentley Motors to continue building Bentleys (and eventually developing new ones) at Crewe.

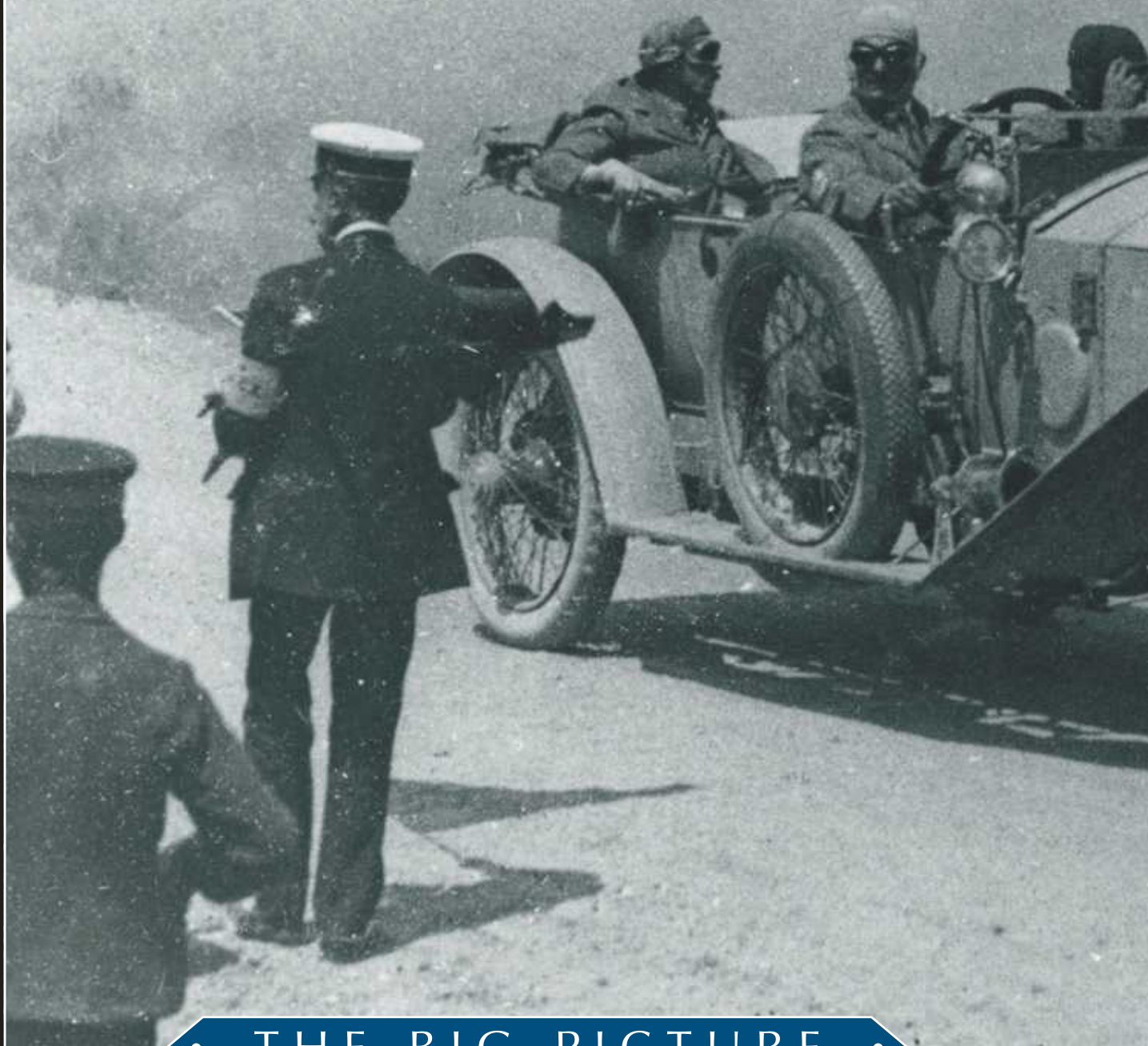
Today, the combined output of Crewe and Goodwood exceeds the number of Silver Shadows built in the peak years of the 'Seventies. But it's fair to think that the story is probably not finished just yet... ■



The engines came from BMW, which would set in motion a complex chain of takeover bids and legal wrangles.



Happy days



• THE BIG PICTURE •

**The last competitive victory ever in motor racing for the Rolls-Royce brand. Carlos de Salamanca wins the 1913 Spanish Touring Car Grand Prix**

WORDS: NIGEL FRYATT PHOTOGRAPHY: ROLLS-ROYCE MOTOR CARS PRESS CLUB



This issue we profile the motorsporting exploits of The Hon C.S. Rolls (see page 26). Sadly, it seems that his early death saw a loss of enthusiasm for the Rolls-Royce marque to participate in such events. This marvellous picture of Carlos de Salamanca taking victory in the 1913 Spanish GP, held at Guadarrama, just outside Madrid, can be seen as a final flourish. Averaging some 54mph, it was a comprehensive victory; Happy Days indeed! A sole Rolls-Royce entry made it to the following year's Austrian Alpine Trial, but that was it for the company and international motorsport. You have to wonder what might have happened had Rolls not had his fatal flying accident...



## IAN SEABROOK

The dangers of a job that exposes you to so much desirable machinery, and how love isn't always found in the obvious places.

**A**s you'll have noticed, there's been a change at the helm of *RR&BD*. That's entirely down to the fact that there are insufficient hours in the day for me to produce three magazines at once. Something had to give!

It wasn't easy passing over *RR&BD* though, especially as the response to the first issue has been very heart-warming indeed. Thanks to all those who got in touch, but I'm sure Nigel will be able to keep things going very nicely indeed.

That first issue was wonderful to put together, meeting dedicated specialists, enthusiastic clubs and some very passionate owners. But, I found myself falling dangerously in love with a rather unexpected machine during a visit to Ghost Motors ([www.ghostmotors.co.uk](http://www.ghostmotors.co.uk)). I was there to shoot the delightful Silver Cloud that was our cover star for issue one. I liked that car very much indeed, but amongst Ghost Motors' fine stock of vehicles, it was a Silver Spur II that really caught my eye.

That in itself isn't surprising. Finished in Nordic Blue, this is already a fine-looking car. But, your eye is immediately drawn to the Tahiti Blue dashboard covering. The colourful theme continues throughout the interior, with Tahiti hide mixed with more Tahiti, including on the steering wheel. I'll concede that this part works less well, but the blast of colour with the carpets, piping and dashboard



Who says bright colours don't work on large cars?

top are a welcome indulgence I feel.

The woodwork is special too, burr elm rather than the usual walnut. Overall, I felt it was very pleasant indeed, and that was before I'd driven it anywhere.

On the road, the fuel-injected version of the legendary L-Series pulls with the expected effortless manner, while promising as much as 20mpg on a run. The active ride keeps things nicely composed, while the pantograph driver's wiper is a personal pleasure point. Sadly, it got good use on the day of my

test drive. All the better to enjoy the graceful movement of the mechanism.

All of this was available, at the time of the test drive, for just £24,000. This felt like good value for money to me, especially given what some classic cars are fetching on the market these days. Someone must have agreed, for the car has since been snapped up. If you were the one who bought it, then I truly congratulate you. It's a delightfully colourful machine and one I wish I could have taken home myself. ■



The colour of the steering wheel perhaps a bit much. Blue rugs are ace.



The interior wood detail of this Silver Spur is simply delightful.



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