

TEE ONE TOPICS

(An occasional bit of bumf distributed among owners and others interested in the maintenance and care of Proper Motor Cars)

Number 17 September, 2002

Disclaimer

The Tee One movement is not in any way affiliated nor associated with the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of Australia nor any other organisation. Its aims are to spread knowledge and information about proper motor cars that would not normally appear in club journals nor any other publications readily available to the public.

The knowledge of owners and enthusiasts that is shared in these gatherings is offered/received without any form of guarantee or authority. Individuals are solely responsible for their own cars and actions and the use to which they put the information gained.

As I write, George and Laraine Shores are winging their way to Vancouver, the first step in a long awaited visit to their daughter in London. Little has happened on the local scene other than a steady queue of cars with intriguing problems. The last Rolls-Royce has been made and put to rot in a Crewe based collection and the Bentley GT Continental has had its first showing. Apparently the tag is about \$377K which by other standards seems less than



New Bentley Continental GT

stratospheric. VW seems to have gone overboard with presentation and all participants on the production side seem more than happy. The sad thing about these cars is that they will simply destroy themselves for lack of maintenance as will those examples of comparable makes. The big problem as I see it is diagnosis. My dear old '93 Fairmont has a plug under the dash for a purpose built computer to analyse what is going on in the various black boxes on the car.

Apparently from about 1990 RR and B cars have similar fittings and desirably one has a range of plug in computers to swap with those in the car until the thing runs properly. Hardly the sort of equipment the enthusiast would have in his garage even if he could afford it. By the time the now new GT has finished with its third owner, the car will be screaming for maintenance, the hapless fourth owner will be unable to afford it and it will sit rotting in someone's backyard. Mind you I think this is part of a global plot to get cars off the road but nobody listens to me!!!



If there is one good thing about this announcement, it might shut the carpers up about the demise of the original factory arrangements. All that remains is for the new manufacturers of the Rolls-Royce to present as exciting a car as above and we should all be happy. Clearly their predecessors were quite incapable of doing so largely through no fault of their own!

TERRIBLY BRITISH DAY

Sunday 1 December 2002

It's on again but this time at Old Parliament House. This will be a much nicer setting and hopefully with good weather will attract a wide audience. Thanks to those who have already offered their cars for our display. Give some thought to any interesting bits that you may have kept from repairs done during the past year. The Tee One Group is about the cars and not about social outings. The general public is interested in how Rolls-Royce puts cars together and we are the people to show them. We will have displays similar to those of last year and plan on getting power so that videos etc can be on view. Any other ideas give me a call.



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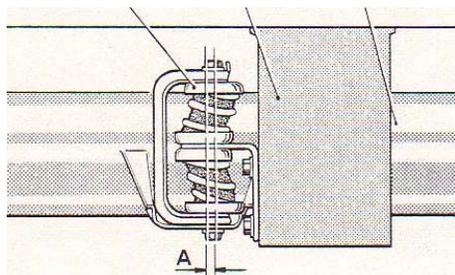
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EXHAUST PIPES AND 9/11

That week was harrowing, albeit necessary lest we forget the odds that the human race faces these days. For the second time I watched a documentary that speculated with some authority about the reasons for the collapse of the New York towers. The bottom line was that the intense heat from the aircraft fuel heated the steel structural members to a point where they deformed and failed to carry their designed load.

The interesting physical fact that was stressed by the narrator was that iron/steel heated to a relatively low temperature, softened and deformed under gravitational loads or any other stresses that may be applied to it. The point at which steel starts to melt is very much higher.



Well all this is to suggest an explanation as to why a perfectly fitted exhaust system on a Silver Spirit would shift to the point of clouting various body sections producing a noise guaranteed to put your teeth on edge. We often overlook the temperatures the exhaust system reaches. I cannot quote figures but suffice to say that that dear old engine under load with a wide throttle can pretty quickly bring

the exhaust manifolds to a healthy glow clearly visible at night if you happen to be riding in the engine compartment, and the temperature of the system tapers off towards to the end of the pipes. And so temperatures back as far as the 'B' post of the car can certainly get to a point where the pipes soften and if there is some pressure on them, they will distort. The drawing above shows an exhaust mount used by Rolls-Royce since the days of the Cloud III. It illustrates the necessity of allowing for expansion and contraction of the exhaust system. The idea is to set up the mounts with a 1/4" offset when cold and when the system heats up if all the sums are correct the mount should be sitting square!!

The only precaution the observant owner can take is to get under the car – preferably - when it is comfortably hoisted and check that there is adequate clearance around the system to avoid rumbles and knocks.

A BIT OF A DAMPENER

Owners of right hand drive cars may never have seen this fitting – the steering damper. Basically a rotary damper, the left hand idler shaft on which the steering tie rods depend, is carried in this damper and its movement is as the title suggests damped to avoid shimmy and other unpleasant steering peccadilloes. The damper uses oil as a medium, the same as that poured into the transmission and the level should be right up to the plug which is arrowed. It



doesn't use oil, just leaks it and then very slowly. To get oil in there I find a hypodermic with a bit of plastic tube on it does the job very nicely.

Whilst on the subject of steering, owners would do well to check the condition of their steering joints and particularly the boxes. Months ago several working bees devoted themselves to installing filters on the low pressure return lines in the hope that years of

sludge would be plucked out of the system and prolong the life of these units. A simple test for the box is to run the car up on ramps and have someone swing the steering wheel from side to side with the engine running. With load on the wheels any looseness will quickly become apparent.

The following came from the official website and is a lengthy albeit handy reference

Bentley Motors and Rolls-Royce Motor Cars

There are just a few months left to run before the world's most famous car marques - Bentley and Rolls-Royce - separate after 71 years together. On December 31st 2002, the Rolls-Royce marque leaves Crewe and becomes part of BMW AG; Bentley, owned by Volkswagen AG, remains at the historic Cheshire site.

Since Volkswagen AG bought Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Limited from Vickers in 1998, considerable investment in Crewe and the product line-up has propelled Bentley to a leading position in the rarefied market for high performance, luxury cars. Meanwhile, the company's stewardship of the Rolls-Royce brand, which is held under licence from BMW AG until the end of 2002, has seen the Crewe company launch the Park Ward limousine, a new Rolls-Royce Corniche convertible and a new model year Silver Seraph saloon.

When Crewe relinquishes the Rolls-Royce marque, it will be with sadness, but with the satisfying knowledge that it has nurtured the marque with which it has been involved since 1946, and with which it maintained its standing.

Background to the sale of Rolls-Royce & Bentley marques

On Friday, June 5, 1998 the announcement that Volkswagen AG had won the take-over battle for the ownership of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Ltd, beating off competition from BMW AG came as some surprise.

The final decision was taken by the shareholders of Vickers Plc, owner of Rolls-Royce Motors, at an extraordinary general meeting at which Chairman Sir Colin Chandler announced that 5.1m shareholders had voted in favour of Volkswagen AG and 109,000 against. The meeting had been stormy, with angry outbursts from small investors who wanted to keep the company British.

Volkswagen AG's offer had been the highest on the table - £430m - although the total consideration could be up to £470m to reflect the rise in working capital in the business. The deal meant that Volkswagen AG comfortably beat a £340m bid from BMW.

Following the sale it was necessary to address the issue of the Rolls-Royce name. The marque was then owned by Rolls-Royce Plc, the aero engines group which has strong business links with BMW and had backed its bid. In fact, Crewe had never owned these rights and since 1971 had operated under licence from Rolls-Royce Plc. The final negotiated outcome, agreed with all parties, and was that BMW would acquire the rights to the Rolls-Royce name and other trademarks associated with Rolls-Royce, including the Spirit of Ecstasy. In addition, BMW would continue to supply engines and other components to Bentley and Rolls-Royce at Crewe. From January 2003, Rolls-Royce's would be built elsewhere by BMW. Of course, none of this affected Volkswagen AG's ownership of Bentley and the Crewe site.

The future for Bentley & Crewe

Bentley Motors, under the investment plans instituted by its owner Volkswagen AG, has embarked on a fresh chapter of unprecedented expansion. These plans are not only financial - £500 million in product development alone - but include considerable intellectual input, and incorporate the sharing of both companies' experience and expertise.

The world-class new facilities that have resulted from the injection of resources at Crewe are giving full rein to the skills of the Crewe workforce, ultimately to the benefit of all Bentley customers.

From the leading-edge body shop, paint shop and assembly line to the IT systems, design studio and test centres, the 21st century facilities that distinguish Crewe today, demonstrate that a commitment to craftsmanship is enhanced by using the latest and best tools for the job.

A key element in Bentley Motors' plans for the future is the launch, within the next two years, of a GT coupe. The GT coupe reflects not only the pure performance and luxury "DNA" of Bentley Grand Tourers from the past, but also the leading-edge design and engineering skills of Bentley in the 21st century.

Bentley & Rolls-Royce - Chronology

- 1902 Hon. Charles Stewart Rolls starts up C.S. Rolls and Co.
- 1904 Henry Royce builds his first car and founds Royce Ltd in Manchester.
- Charles Rolls signs an exclusive distribution agreement with Royce and Rolls-Royce is founded.
- 1910 Charles Rolls dies in flying accident.
- 1919 Walter Owen 'W O' Bentley opens London office to design and build sporting cars. Exhibition chassis shown at London Motor Show.
- 1921 The first Bentley model, the 3 Litre is built in Cricklewood.
- 1923 Bentley contests first ever Le Mans 24 hours race and finishes fourth
- 1924 Bentley wins Le Mans 24 hours race
- 1927-30 Bentley wins Le Mans 24 hours race four years in a row.
- 1931 Depression hits Bentley sales and the company goes into liquidation.
- A bid by Napier to acquire Bentley is beaten by Rolls-Royce. Bentley production moves to Derby. W O remains with the company as a consultant.
- 1933 Henry Royce dies.
- 1946 Production moves from Derby to Crewe. The first car built there is a Bentley Mark VI.
- 1952 R Type Continental launched
- 1971 W O Bentley dies.
- 1971 Rolls-Royce suffers crippling losses following technical problems with RB211 jet engine. Government rescue plan splits aerospace and automotive divisions; rights to Rolls-Royce trademark stay with Rolls-Royce Plc. Rights to Rolls-Royce grille and Spirit of Ecstasy belong to Rolls-Royce Motor Cars. Rolls-Royce Motor Cars licenses its name from Rolls-Royce Plc.
- 1980 Rolls-Royce Motor Cars is acquired by Vickers Plc, a defence and engineering corporation.
- 1991 Vickers discusses sale of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars.
- 1992 Rolls-Royce Motor Cars contracts with BMW for supply of air bag systems.
- 1993 Rolls-Royce in discussions with Mercedes-Benz on engine supply.

- 1994 BMW and Rolls-Royce reach an agreement for BMW to develop engines for the new line of Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars.
- 1997 Oct Vickers Plc puts Rolls-Royce Motor Cars up for sale. BMW, in aviation engine joint venture with Rolls-Royce Plc since 1990, is considered the most likely buyer.
- 1998 Apr Vickers Plc formally accepts £340 million takeover offer by BMW.
VW AG announces better offer.
- 1998 June VW AG agrees to pay Vickers Plc £430 million for Rolls-Royce Motor Cars including Bentley Motors subject to shareholder approval. VW also agrees to acquire Cosworth Engineering from Vickers Plc for an additional £120 million. Volkswagen AG announces a £500 million product development investment programme for Bentley Motors at Crewe
- 1998 July Agreement is reached as follows: BMW acquires Rolls-Royce name and logo from Rolls-Royce Plc for £40 million and licenses VW AG to use name to the end of December 2002.
- 1998 Launch of Bentley Arnage Green Label & Rolls-Royce Silver Seraph
- 1999 Launch of Bentley Arnage Red Label.
Bentley Motors announces decision to launch new car, codenamed MSB, the first of which is later confirmed as a GT coupé.
- 2000 Jan New Rolls-Royce Corniche in Los Angeles.
- 2000 Mar New Rolls-Royce Park Ward launched at Geneva Motor Show.
- 2001 Bentley returns to Le Mans and takes third place overall.
- 2001 Last of line series models for Rolls-Royce Silver Seraph announced
- 2002 Last of line series models for Corniche and Park Ward Announced
- 2002 Last ever Rolls-Royce (A Corniche) is presented to press on August 30th at the Crewe factory
- 2003 1 Jan BMW AG assumes the rights to use the Rolls-Royce marque.

This newsletter is put together by Bill Coburn as his personal contribution to the repair and maintenance of Rolls-Royce and Bentley Motor cars. Readers are cautioned to make their own decisions about the accuracy or otherwise of the contents. Every effort is made to disseminate what appears to be worthwhile information in the hope that the lonely owner will have some idea of where to start! Should you wish to communicate with the Editor he can be contacted at any of the following cavacharles@bigpond.com 02 62965893 FAX 62965892 or Post Office Box 8 MAWSON 2607 ACT.

MASCOT ALARMS



Thanks to the authorities worrying about the lady filleting the odd pedestrian that got in the way Flying Ladies have been fair game to the Jealous Bastard Class. Not that the practice started then. Parking caps were invented the day after the first Lady was screwed onto a Ghost radiator. All the Cloud series had rigidly fastened mascots and dummy filler caps. The Shadow brought in the falling over spring back item and the Spirit brought in the disappear into the radiator novelty. The mascot other than on the last mentioned

design is held in the top of the radiator by a hexagon socketed grub screw approached from the rear as seen here on a Silver Spirit. A lot of owners do not realise that a parking cap is available for these cars which consists of a matching plug which sits on a spring in the grille. The plug is pushed down against the spring and the grub screw tightened. If you don't use a spring the best way to get the plug out is to upend the car!



So you want to startle people fiddling with the lady? Fit a mascot alarm. There are plenty of home made variants on this modification but here is how the factory did it on a Silver Spirit. Here is a stout aluminium bracket mounted on the header tank. The foot of the mascot which is spring loaded sits just above the whole seen in the picture. The switch which is mounted within slots in the bracket pokes up the hole until the internal contacts

break. This is where you can decide whether the slightest touch will set off the alarm or not have it blow until the lady gets into an uncomfortable posture.

And here is the switch fitted. Not a good view. For those that are familiar with the pre-



Shadow gear changes you will recognise the isolator switches used for operating the reversing lights and forcing the neutral start situation. The home made variants usually fall down in this department by using a micro switch similar to that used on the window mechanisms and the blower switches. These are not waterproof and a good blast from a hose or foray into a deluge can produce the most embarrassing cacophony. The alarm of course is hot wired and connected either to the horn or a separate noise maker.

GENESIS

Well I have had a number of nice calls and letters saying that people like the TEE ONE TOPICS. It all helps to know that readers enjoy the pages. I certainly enjoy putting it together and with some encouragement will continue to do so. From some of the remarks directed to me it is fairly likely that many readers have little or no idea of the 'Topics' genesis.

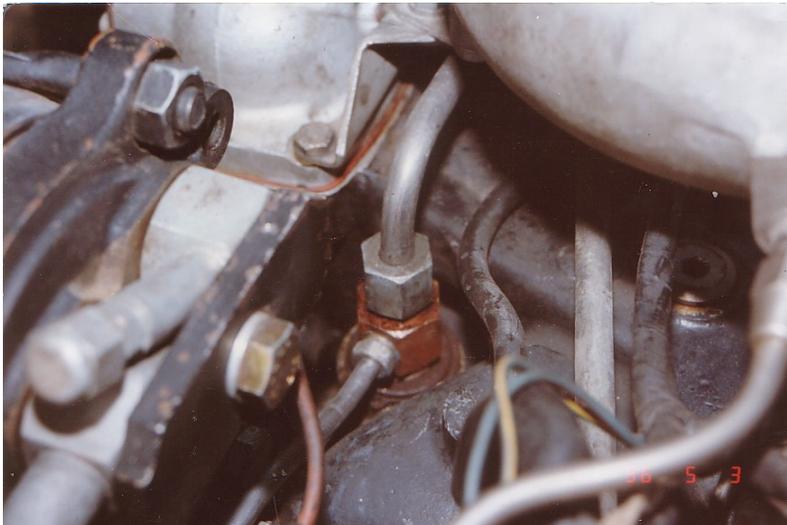
Most of you will know my great friend George Shores who suffers from severe spasms of spontaneous generosity as some of you will bear witness. George was responsible for the establishment of the Self Help Groups in the Canberra Branch of the RROC of A and the conduct of numerous technical sessions. For a variety of reasons the principal one being liability in the event of an accident, some Canberra members were not comfortable with members working on their cars in concert with one another. This aversion became so unpleasant that George announced that he would run the sessions outside the Club environment.

And so we met back in May last year at the Holt Auto Port and proceeded to pull cars to pieces, swap information and help each other generally. I was so impressed with the camaraderie, general knowledge and dedication of those present that I offered to write up the detail we had shared and so these notes were born. They are now distributed to nearly 60 members of the RROC and non-members and we are in the process of compiling an index having passed the 200 page mark.

Ideally the 'Topics' should offer information on diagnosis, spares and their after-market versions, repair techniques, general information on the marque. Anyone who cares to contribute will be more than welcomed.

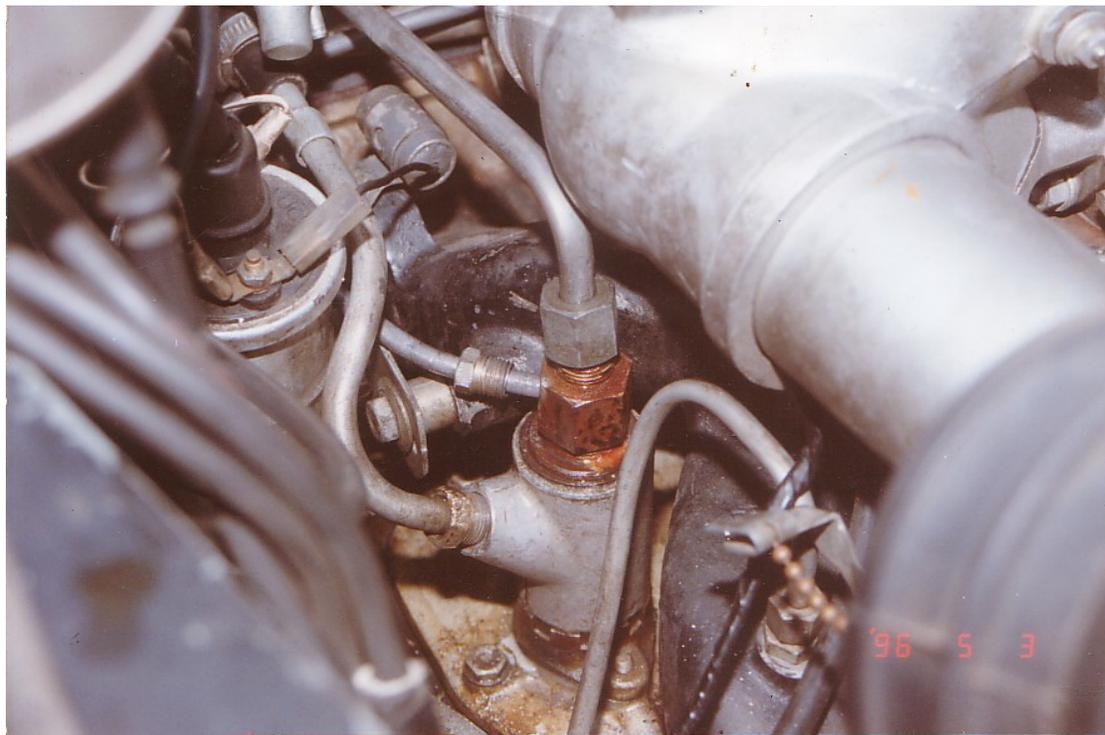
A PUZZLEMENT

One of my European correspondents sent me a couple of pictures to, as he said 'test my



knowledge' of the post Cloud cars. And I share with you the puzzle. Those of you who have worked on the top of the top of a Shadow engine would immediately recognise the front hydraulic pump sitting behind the air conditioning compressor. Sitting on top of the pump is the outlet pipe which feeds the accumulators. But closer examination reveals another union with another

pipe feeding from it. The question was where did it go? My correspondent who is given to taking the Mickey out of me regularly declined to send a second photo which he said would explain all. And so some weeks later the second one arrived.



And here it is. The pipe led to the outlet of the rear pump! Again I was left to ponder why would one want to connect the two systems when the designers had deliberately, in the interests of safety, kept the two well apart. Seems the answer lay in the rear pump which was effectively inoperative because of insufficient lift from a worn camshaft lobe. Ingenious of course and avoided lifting the engine out and restoring the camshaft which has to come out of the engine from the rear. Unfortunately relying on one pump for two accumulators is a bit of 'eggs in the basket' engineering.

Again I have pinched material from the Bentley web site. This is a fresh view of the legendary continental of which we still have a few examples left in Australia. It was prompted by the promotion of the new GT Continental which claims provenance from its 50 year old forebear.

1952 Bentley R-type Continental - The Story

THE ULTIMATE AUTOMOTIVE STATUS SYMBOL

Britain at the beginning of the 1950s was a sober place. The Second World War may have ended five years earlier, but for many the austerity continued, commodities as germane to the British way of life as tea were still subjected to rationing.

It must have seemed that the Labour Government's Chancellor of the Exchequer; a hair-shirted devout Christian and confirmed vegetarian called Sir Stafford Cripps; felt the British people would benefit from

a period of prolonged asceticism. Cripps piled on the taxes and froze wages in an almost fanatical battle against inflation. However there was one piece of good news; on May 26th 1950 petrol rationing finally came to an end. After a decade, the British motorist was finally able to use his/her car as frequently as he liked... should he/she be fortunate enough to possess one. Four days later on May 30th, the Whitsun holiday, the British motoring public responded in droves. The AA described it as an all-time record, with traffic packed solid ten miles out of London. After ten years of rationing the Briton's love affair with the motorcar was, if anything, more passionate and ardent than before.

This news must have been of considerable satisfaction to a benign bow-tied, pipe-smoking figure in the British Midlands. Chief Project Engineer Ivan Everden was Director of Bentley's Experimental Department. Rolls-Royce had owned Bentley since 1931 and those purists who had admired the raw power of the Bentleys that had dominated the 24 hour races of Le Mans during the 1920s were complaining that, under the new owners, the cars that wore the winged B on their radiators were losing their edge. Ivan Everden was to silence those critics in a most remarkable manner. In 1950 he started work on a top-secret project. Known as Corniche II its aim was to create a fast yet refined, two door yet full four seater grand tourer, which would, as the Bentley marque's eponymous founder put it in 1919, be 'a good car, a fast car, the best in its class'. This car would become famous as the R-Type Continental.

Just before the outbreak of the Second World War, in 1939, a revolutionary looking 4-litre Bentley, styled by the French Georges Paulin and built by boutique French coachbuilder Pourtout, had torn around the Brookland's motor circuit achieving the quite remarkable distance of 114 miles within an hour. Called the Embiricos Bentley, after its plutocratic owner Andre Embiricos, this was a true supercar, forty years before the term was coined. Flat out on the new autobahns, it travelled at speeds in excess of 120mph. Even today 120 miles per hour is a fair lick, over sixty years ago, such speeds were barely credible. To a contemporary motorist such velocity must have seemed more appropriate in the realms of the science fiction of HG Wells and Fritz Lang than on the open road. Imagine the pre-war motorist pottering along at a bone shaking 50mph in his Morris Eight, Renault or Volkswagen Beetle. Suddenly he notices an impossibly fast-moving object on the road behind him. Before he has time to react, this low-slung, road-devouring, torpedo-shaped blur has streaked past him and into the distance. It must have seemed like the future had arrived... in the 1930s.

The Embiricos Bentley with its mechanical enhancements, streamlined design and lightweight coachwork was a phenomenally advanced car; just how advanced was demonstrated in 1949, a decade after it had stormed round the Brooklands circuit, when it was entered privately at Le Mans and finished sixth. This car established the pattern upon which Ivan Everden would improve in the early 1950s when he was given a cautious go-ahead to develop the R-Type Continental. Remarkable as it may seem now, management opinion was divided as to the expense of developing a new model and also whether there would be a market for such a high-powered and expensive car. Bentley's stupendous achievement; creating a luxurious car that could eclipse the performance of many sports cars, with grace, effortlessness, style and comfort, what is more bringing it to the market in such a short space of time; becomes even more extraordinary when set in the context of the world as it was in 1952 when the R-Type Continental made its debut.

Petrol was not the highly sophisticated propulsion fuel that we know today; it was impure low octane rubbish, hardly suited to powering precisely engineered, high powered, sporting luxury cars. Nor were contemporary tyres the robust radials of today. The normal six-ply tyres of the day, when tested by Bentley for the new car, were only able to last for 20 miles, ten minutes motoring at the Continental's quoted top speed of 120 mph. As well as the non-standard tyres, there was non-standard bodywork, everything that could be done to lessen the weight of this full four-seater luxury car was done: aluminium body panels were placed onto a revolutionary light alloy frame. Perhaps the most immediately noticeable change for the driver was apparent before he had even pressed the starter button; the bulky armchairs associated with Rolls-Royce motoring had been replaced with functional, yet elegant bucket seats. Every ounce mattered, so that although a radio was included in the price of the car, it was only fitted at the customer's request.

Performance was staggering: a raised compression ratio, specially modified exhaust (responsible for the distinctive note of the R-Type Continental as well as delivering another 25bhp) and other performance modifications, coaxed what was, for the time, remarkable power from the six cylinder 4566 engine. Compared with the Mark VI Standard Steel Saloon it was able to achieve a top speed that was 20% higher. The R-Type Continental was able to cover a quarter of a mile from a standing start in 19.5 seconds. This figure must have been astonishing in the fifties. After protracted testing on

the high speed roads of Continental Europe, the R-Type Continental was lent to the Autocar magazine and Crewe held its breath as the automotive press subjected the car to rigorous and spirited motoring. On September 12th 1952, the Autocar magazine published its verdict. 'It brings Bentley back to the forefront of the world's fastest cars, and its tremendous performance makes this one of the outstanding in a long series of Road Tests.' This was not just the best car in its class; it redefined its class. 'The acceleration from rest to 100 mph (36.0) has not been approached by any other saloon car in The Autocar's experience and has been equalled by very few open sports cars'. There was, quite simply nothing else like it on the roads anywhere in the world.

Performance aside, it was the car's striking appearance that must have made such an impact on the road users of the early 1950s. The R-Type Continental was, and still is, a staggeringly beautiful car; its raised front wings sweeping across the doors before tucking neatly into the rear 'haunch' of the car. Its raked, curved windscreen, its elegant fastback and its fin-like rear wings are pure automotive sculpture. However this was beauty with a purpose: the R-Type Continental was the first Bentley to benefit from experiments conducted in the wind-tunnel at Rolls-Royce's aeronautical test facility. The car's comparatively small front area improved aerodynamic performance while the rear fins, as well as striking a defiantly modern note, dramatically improved the car's stability at high speed.

'Much more could have been done than was done,' said Evernden of the revolutionary and pioneering work that had gone into the R-Type Continental, 'but the purpose of the exercise was to reduce the aero drag of an orthodox car and not to make a space capsule for an astronaut.' As man was not destined to travel into space until the following decade, it is fair to say that this was space age technology in a car truly ahead of its time. Of course this came at a price. When the car was offered on the home market at the end of 1952, it cost £7,608 3s and 4d, by comparison the new Ford popular of 1953 came in at £390, which roughly equates to one car for the price of 20. But then that too was part of the appeal; as well as being the fastest production four-seater in the world, it was the most expensive. And during the early 1950s, you could not call yourself a millionaire playboy until you had one of these elegant rocket ships in your garage - it was the ultimate automotive status symbol.

The roll call of those who bought these exceptional cars new is impressive. Agnelli, Guinness, Embiricos, Onassis, Niarchos, Mavroleon, Jack Barclay, H I M the Shahinshah of Iran, Rockefeller, Prince Frederick of Prussia, Sir Alfred McAlpine and the Emperor of Bao Dai, are just a few of those who were fortunate, tasteful and rich enough to drive the new Bentley. These were the members of what would become known as the jet set, men who headed countries, corporations and aristocratic dynasties and who were united by their impeccable taste in cars. The majority of these cars have long outlived their first owners; many are raced highly competitively in rallies or still used on a daily basis. They drive beautifully: docile around town, exhilarating at speed and effortless at all times... just as one would expect of a Bentley. Of the R-Type Continentals, 193 were bodied by HJ Mulliner, a handful by other coachbuilders.

The Autocar of 1952 put it rather well. 'This Bentley is a modern magic carpet which annihilates great distances and delivers the occupants well-nigh as fresh as when they started. It is a car Britain may well be proud of, and it is sure to add new lustre to the name it bears'. Half a century later it remains an automotive icon, one of very few cars that truly deserves to be called a design classic.

THE BLOODLINE CONTINUES...

The launch of a totally new two door Bentley is always an event. It does not happen often, but when it does it is automotive history in the making. The very nature and character of Bentley makes its two door cars very special; the unique, intoxicating cocktail of luxury and performance under the same sleek two-door skin, is something that is not in the gift of many motoring marques; however it is one of the many things that Bentley is superbly good at. A two door Bentley is a very special kind of car and it speaks of a very special kind of motoring: sporting yet effortless; exhilarating yet civilised; high speeds and long distances are achieved in near silence and almost indecent comfort.

There is no denying that a two door Bentley is a statement. When, in 1930, Bentley chairman and Le Mans winner Woolf Barnato accepted the now famous bet to race the Blue Train from the Cote d'Azur, claiming that he could be at his London Club before the train pulled into Calais, he won the wager in a Bentley Speed Six Coupe. As previously mentioned, the same decade gave birth to another remarkable two door Bentley; The Embiricos Bentley, a head-turner that was truly ahead of its time.

Shortly after the Second World War the Bentley Mark IV Cresta, an extremely rare car, bodied by Pinin Farina, caused a sensation in 1948 and then of course the R-Type Continental in the early 1950s helped re-establish Bentley as the grand tourer par excellence of the post war world. In many senses the notion of the modern two-door, four-seater coupè, that is so central to the spirit of Bentley, can be traced back to that seminal car. Before Rolls-Royce bought the company, the cars made by Bentley were an expression of brute power. Ettore once paid Bentley the sly compliment of saying 'My friend Mr Bentley builds the fastest lorries in the world.' And at times during Rolls-Royce's ownership, there were very real fears that Bentley was being neglected at the expense of Rolls-Royce. However it is also true that during the many years of its ownership by Rolls-Royce the Bentley marque has periodically sought to reassert itself and the R-Type Continental was born out of just such a desire for reassertion.

That the R-Type Continental's success allowed it to evolve beyond the Mark VI Bentley into the SI, SII and SIII series, demonstrates that the allure of the two door sporting Bentley, a very different thing from a mere two door sports car, was an enduring one. During the late fifties, two door Continentals derived from the S series saloon demonstrated the same qualities that had attracted discerning and demanding drivers to the original car. The advertising from Bentley and its coachbuilding partners stressed the car's thoroughbred nature. 'Really striking acceleration and handling characteristics' caroled an advertisement in the Motor of October 1955. 'The front seats have been "anatomically" designed to give better grip when cornering at speed' was the proud boast of an advertisement in Auto sport's October 18th number of 1957. And the performance of these desirable cars took another leap at the end of the 1950s, with the arrival of the 6230cc V8 engine.

It was during the 1960s that the company seemed to take the almost conscious decision to let the Bentley marque become dormant, allowing the once proud name to slip into a coma. The introduction of the monocoque Silver Shadow, Bentley-badged 'T' Series, all but killed off the coachbuilders who had created such ingenious and striking bodies for Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars. The Silver Shadow was to become the most successful model to come out of Crewe, while coachbuilders Mulliner Park Ward (HJ Mulliner had been acquired by Bentley and Rolls-Royce in 1959 and merged with Park Ward) created the two-door car that was to become famous as the Corniche.

However if Crewe was happy to see Rolls-Royce succeed at the expense of Bentley, Bentley customers and indeed other parts of the automotive industry were not. In 1968 Italian coachbuilder Pininfarina, creator of the startling Cresta of exactly 40 years earlier, presented a Bentley T1 bodied as a two-door fastback. With its distinctive, aggressive styling and sweeping lower roof edge line that became the line of the upper rear wing, this car was clearly intended to evoke the spirit, speed and style of the R-Type Continental. Although this car was a one off, it is significant in that it represents an interstitial stage in the story of the two-door Bentley.

Crewe management also saw potential in Pininfarina's design, although not as a Bentley. After a prolonged delay a derivative of the design went into production as the controversial Rolls-Royce Camargue. Although hardly ever specified as a Bentley, it is interesting to note that for road testing, Cam argues always appeared with the Bentley grille. However by the early 1980s there were signs that the Bentley marque was beginning to reassert itself, offering a more driver-oriented, high performance form of luxury motoring, with its turbo charged four door cars. Moreover the Bentley version of the Corniche, now available only as a convertible, was renamed the Continental, a clear indicator to those familiar with Bentley's history that a two door Bentley was acknowledged as having a core significance to the marque.

Of course this was just a prelude to arrival of the Bentley Continental R, which was already being planned in the mid-Eighties. However there were some customers who could not wait until the launch of the Continental R. A small number of Bentley Continentals was commissioned with a turbo charged engine and specially modified body to cope with such a vast increase in power. While other customers approached coachbuilder Hooper to create a two door version of the hugely powerful and critically acclaimed Bentley Turbo R. When launched in 1991 the Continental R received a rapturous welcome, it received a standing ovation at the Geneva motor show of that year. It must not be forgotten that at the beginning of the 1990s, economic downturn and a conflict in the Middle East might not have made the best climate in which to launch a mighty two door car with a retail price approaching £200,000.

But there were so many customers for this splendid car that its numbers had to be rationed and the company allowed it to spawned an entire model series: the Continental T, the Continental SC and the higher performance highly individual Continental Mulliners. To drive a two door Bentley is to

appreciate at once the true continent-crossing characteristics of this unique British marque. A two door Bentley is an uncompromising driver's car, yet perfectly capable of transporting four people, and their luggage, from one end of Europe to the other at speeds that make a Bentley seem a viable and far more pleasurable alternative to rail and even commercial air travel.



AN ALARMING SITUATION



One of our group asked a professional installer to fit an alarm system to his Silver Spirit. He was fussed by the fact that the little light that flashes to warn would-be thieves and which is often fitted in the little grille in the centre of the top roll never sat straight. Removal of the roll showed why. Under the grille in the roll is a very delicate sensor that alerts the air conditioning system to strong sunlight. To protect the sensor the

factory installed a heavy steel barrier around it precisely where our installer man managed to drill the grille. The solution was to replace the grille and fit the light in a back corner. Not a terribly difficult thing to work out I would have thought!

PLAN AHEAD



Restorers know of the difficulty in bringing switch boxes back to life after having been gouged by swinging keys and drunken drivers. From the Shadow II the factory screwed a face to the box which is based on 3/16" plastic sheet. Ingenious, as it allows a whole variety of languages and symbols insisted upon by the various customers. It also allows peripheral lighting as can be seen in the picture.

It occurs to me that aspiring restorers of Spirits should get in now and buy a few of these while they are available.

Shaw Sedgewick wrote of his experiences with modern ignition systems after reading my burst on distributors. He wrote:

As a relatively new owner of a 1981 Shadow 2 I do however take issue with your criticism of the Lucas twin contact distributor on page 197.

I had previously a lot of experience with this distributor on a Daimler Majestic Major and have nothing but the highest praise for it. This distributor is beautifully made, hardly ever needs servicing and the points last for years.

Four months after I acquired my Shadow with its electronic unit in 1998 (Christmas night actually) the thing died without any warning. At great expense the module and the stabiliser were replaced and away we went. Two months later the stabiliser failed again and was replaced under warranty. At this time I was very ready to throw away this example of modern ignition and put in the older twin contact distributor which you criticise. However this mystery was solved when the electrician and myself discovered that the previous owner had bypassed the Otter switch to bring on the auxilliary fan and had run a lead directly from the coil to the fan. This meant the auxilliary fan came on as soon as the ignition was switched on. This unfortunately overloaded the voltage stabiliser and burned it out quite quickly.

The problem was solved by getting rid of the offending lead and fitting a new Otter switch from MIDEL suited to an E Type Jaguar which come on at 83°C somewhat earlier than the RR one which can come on too late.

All is now well but I must say that I really would prefer the older twin contact distributor. It is the best distributor I have ever seen. Thank you for your journal.

I tend to agree with him. Frankly, electronic ignitions are quite beyond me at present but I suppose I will have to get with the strength. About a year ago I had a stranger in my yard crying that his ignition no longer worked and would I help. I drove to the other end of Canberra to see the car, identified the chassis number and phoned the agents only to be told that they had the replacement units in stock but the Factory had condemned them as faulty. The advice was use a local product, Cobra as I

recall. I found one in Sydney after a number of phone calls and phoned all the detail to the owner who was en route to Sydney. That was the last I heard of it until some months later my mate Peter ran into the owner who said to tell me that the car was running well!! What a charmed life these people lead!!

As to Shaw's distributor I wonder whether we are on borrowed time. A few weeks back I asked at an AutoPro shop for a point file and the guy did not know what I was talking about! I found one at Repco!

Cheers

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