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DRIVERS CLUB NSW MAGAZINE

APRIL – JUNE 2025 EDITION



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FRIDAY 1 AUGUST 2025

Please send copy and images to:

Gregory May: gregmay01@bigpond.com

Copy: Please send as a Word document

Images: Please save all images as **high resolution JPG**.

PLEASE NOTE: Do not supply images in a Word document as they will not be suitable for print.

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On the cover and contents page:

On the circuit at Club track day at Pheasant Wood Circuit, Marulan

Photo by MKVIMEDIA



CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

Dear fellow Bentley enthusiast,
It is hard to believe that we are almost in the middle of the year which I feel has only just started.

However, your committee has been busily planning and organising events to hopefully keep you interested and to motivate you to get those cars on the road. A full coverage of activities to date is covered in this magazine.

At the last meeting of your committee, we resolved the following:

We acknowledge that are primarily a social club, brought together by a shared interest in motoring and cars.

In order to ensure that our Club remains vital, vibrant and viable we need to renew and increase our membership.

Ciaran Jordan at MKVimedia has offered to be our Media Manager for which we are most grateful. Ciaran has taken over the recording of our events and the creation of content for our magazine and our website, and will mastermind the content on YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram. All of these will improve awareness of our Club which will hopefully lead to new memberships.

We need to have a think tank to come up with new and interesting runs and driving destinations.

Consideration should be given to diversifying our club runs from not only Sunday events, but also to mid-week runs and weekends away.

Consideration should also be given to invitation runs with other car clubs. To this end, Brian Burgoyne has already reached out to the Packard and Daimler Clubs.

We need to move on with the submission and adoption of the updated Articles of Association in line with the provisions laid down by the Department of Fair Trading. These will be circulated and a date set for an EGM to approve these.

We need to update the Club website to show the full year calendar of events, which can then be clicked on to see further detail. (Ciarin to follow up)

So, as you can see, we are on the ball and doing our very best to keep things relevant and interesting. Any contributions which any of you feel that you might be able to make would be much appreciated.

Best wishes,

**GREGORY MAY, CHAIRMAN
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Whatever is rightly done, however humble, is noble – Henry Royce

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BENTLEY DRIVERS CLUB NSW REGION

UPCOMING EVENTS

MON 07 JUL	COMMITTEE MEETING Online	8:00 PM
SUN 13 JUL	COFFEE & CARS 280 Penrose Road, Bundanoon	12:00 NOON
SAT/SUN 26/27 JUL	CHRISTMAS IN JULY Gardener's Inn, Blackheath. Overnight stopover from \$110 pn Event Captain: Gregory May	12:00 NOON
MON 04 AUG	GENERAL MEETING Bentley Alexandria Showrooms, Sydney	6:00 PM
MON 01 SEPT	COMMITTEE MEETING Online	8:00 PM
SUN 14 SEPT	WO BIRTHDAY LUNCH Bendooley Estate, 3020 Old Hume Highway, Berrima	12:00 NOON
MON 06 OCT	COMMITTEE MEETING Online	8:00 PM
SUN 19 OCT	TRE BAMBINI 70 Albert Street, Berry	12:00 NOON
SUN 02 NOV	CONCOURS DÉLEGANCE Gibraltar Hotel, Bowral	12:00 NOON



The Wollombi Run

Sunday 9 March 2025

Report by **Gregory May**

Despite threatening wet weather, it was a fine day for our Northern run to The Wollombi Tavern.

We were greeted by locals Mike and Jane Young, who run the Capers Guest House nearby.

The Wollombi Tavern is a rustic affair and the staff were delighted to

see us and keen to please.

Although they had set up for us outside under the trees, when the rain gave us a spray, we decided to retreat indoors.

The locals seemed to be impressed by the line-up of cars, which were dotted around the area, due to a rather limited car park.

There were 17 of us who made it there for the day, including a surprise appearance by Anthony Liberiou and his brother Chris.

The guest list was as follows:
Allan and Beverley Simpson
in their latest Bentley
Continental GT
Coralie Ogle and





Stephen Blundell in his Bentley
Mulsanne
Ed Ryan in his beautiful black
Bentley Arnage
Graham Lawrence in an
impressive Jaguar
Gregory May in a Bentley
Continental R
John and Margaret Lackey in a
Bentley S1
John and Sue Sheehy in an
impressive Bentley Arnage
Len and Di Cave
Mike and Jane Young in a
beautifully restored Derby
Bentley
Anthony and Chris Liberiou in a
Range Rover.

After lunch a number of us
set out on what we were told was
an easy walk to Mike and Jane's

'Capers', which proved to be a
challenging up hill climb rather
than a stroll. However, we were
all delighted on arrival at what is a
historic and very beautiful sprawling
stone home. It is beautifully
furnished, and all bedrooms
have ensuite bathrooms. It enjoys

marvellous views over the Wollombi
Valley.

Mike and Jane laid on
afternoon tea complete with
homemade cake and biscuits which
was most enjoyable and a great end
to the outing.





Club Track Day at Pheasant Wood Circuit

Sunday 27 April 2025

Gregory May reports, with photographs by **MKVimedia**

This was a first Club Track Day that I am aware of, and despite appalling weather in Sydney and the Coast generally, 26 brave souls headed down to Marulan to Pheasant Wood race circuit.

Surprisingly, we were greeted by clear skies, which lasted from our kick off at 9.00am until 2.00 pm, when the rain made an appearance

for a while, which gave us time to pause for a break.

We were particularly fortunate on the day, as there was only one other team using the track. After the initial briefing, the deal was basically 15 minutes on the track, alternating between the two teams.

We all had to clear our cars of moveable objects, wear helmets which could be brought or hired for

the day and purchase a track license for the day.

It was obvious that we had some experienced drivers in our midst, particularly Len Cave, who ate up the track at amazing speed.

Alan Wellington had kindly invited Gene Phillips to come along and provide some on track guidance and support which was particularly welcome to me.







The track duelling was entertaining to watch, particularly between, Len Cave, Phillip Sidebottom and Anthony Ralph.

Whilst all of the track action was happening, Alan Wellington was busily cooking up a storm on the BBQ, providing much needed refreshment.

Ciaran Jordan, along with Matt and Marvin from Mark V1 Media, were busy capturing the event from the air and on the ground. For those who were not able to make the day, it can be viewed on:

www.youtube.com/@BentleyDriversClub-N.S.W

It was a great success, and as a result, we plan to make a track day a regular event on our calendar.

The attendees on the day were as follows:

Len and Di Cave
 Anthony and Toni Ralph
 Philip Sidebottom and Dianne
 Peter Cashman
 Araik Arakelian and his brother George
 Rohan Wellington and Chase
 Christopher Wellington and Noah
 Gene Phillips
 Andrew Grant
 Toby Thomas, his father Paul and mother
 Ciaran Jordan and two photographers, Matt and Marvin
 Garth Selig and Francis
 John Lackey
 Gregory May
 Alan Wellington









The Laggan run

Sunday 18 May 2025

Report by **Gregory May**

It was a chilly day, but the sun was shining and there was no rain to be seen.

We were expecting a high turn out for this event, but ill health and the coincidence with the Rolls Royce National Rally in Newcastle softened our numbers. Consequently, we received many apologies for not being able to attend on the day.

Nevertheless, seven of our intrepid members and friends took on what was a most enjoyable drive down the Hume to Goulburn through Crookwell and on to Laggan.

Most of us met up at Goulburn and carried on in convoy from there.

We stopped to take in the huge wind farms on the way to Crookwell, where it was indeed jolly windy.





On arrival in Laggan, we were met by Bill Aslanidis, who had set off early and made a day of the touring.

We received a warm welcome at the Laggan Hotel, and hours of good food and bonhomie followed. I can certainly recommend this establishment to anyone travelling in the area.

We drove back, roughly in convoy and I think that all who participated would agree that it was a thoroughly enjoyable experience.

Those who attended were:
Peter Seligman in a Bentley Brooklands.

Alan Wellington and
Gene Phillips in a Bentley Turbo R

Bill Aslanidis in a Bentley Continental GT

Stephen Blundell in a T Series 2 door Continental.

Gregory May and Garrath Will in a Bentley Continental R







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Quick Pit Stop





BENTLEYS ON THE ROAD

This evocative piece of artwork, which many Club Members will have spotted hanging in the Clubhouse at Wroxtton, is the creation of Club Member Stuart Barraclough. Painted to commission in the 1990s, the picture features a 4½-litre Blower alongside a first-generation Azure convertible, the pair followed by a 6½ Litre, all motoring through the rural Scottish countryside.

The 1930 Blower, incidentally, was a one-time Bentley Motors demonstrator and featured in the Gracie Fields film *Sally in our Alley*. Now part of the Heritage Collection at Crewe, it has taken part in numerous events and concours, including the Mille Miglia.





PAUL CARTER'S 'EDDIE HALL' DERBY

Hall right now!



“ *Having been enthused by Eddie Hall's success in motorsport in the 1930s and '50s, I was delighted to acquire one of the four Derbys actually driven by him: chassis B106GA* ”

PAUL CARTER'S 'EDDIE HALL' DERBY



Paul in EYV 405 on his way to sixth place in the Bentley scratch race at BDC Silverstone last year

Inspired by Eddie Hall, established BDC motorsports competitor **Paul Carter** has not only procured one of the Le Mans hero's former Derby 4 1/4s but restored and recreated its striking bygone bodywork, as he explains. Images: Courtesy of Author, Review archives, Nick Edwards and Mick Herring

Early in 1999 I was driving back home to England having successfully completed the Winter Monte Carlo Rally in my 1932 Alvis 12/60. I was in convoy with a number of other competitors, including fellow BDC Member Elliott Dale who was driving his beautifully restored and highly competitive Derby rally car.

Elliott suggested swapping cars for the journey across the Alps. This was to be my first drive in a Derby and what a delightful experience it was – swapping the Alvis' small 1600cc engine for the Derby's more potent 4250cc unit, with synchromesh gearbox and added comfort, was a sheer joy.

It was truly a versatile, powerful 'silent sports car'. WO had again worked his engineering magic, transforming a staid Rolls-Royce chassis and engine into a 'supercar' of its period.

Having been enthused by Eddie Hall's success in motorsport in the 1930s and '50s (*see panel*) – a very much forgotten part of Bentley's motorsports history, I believe – I was delighted to take possession, in 2019, of one of the four Derbys actually driven by him: chassis B106GA, first registered in 1936. (Whether it was loaned by Rolls-Royce Bentley or actually owned by Hall is unresolved.)

I acquired EYV 405 from another BDC Member and good friend, Stuart Anderson – also a keen motorsports competitor who has considerable experience of building well restored, fast Derbys.

B106GA was initially delivered to the experimental department in Derby on 26 February 1936. It was then uprated to the same race specification as B35AE – with a race-developed 4 1/4-litre engine, Hartford shock absorbers and high ratio back



Eddie Hall and the 3½-litre B35AE, sporting the original Offord/Potts body, on their way to the first of three successive Ards TT runners-up placings in 1934



With B35AE boasting an uprated 4¼-litre engine, Eddie Hall recorded the fastest ever average speed for the Ards TT of 80.81mph in 1936

axle. The car was then dispatched to James Ridlington to be fitted with the redundant Offord/Potts body which had recently been removed from B35AE and equipped with the streamlined shell in readiness for the 1936 Le Mans.

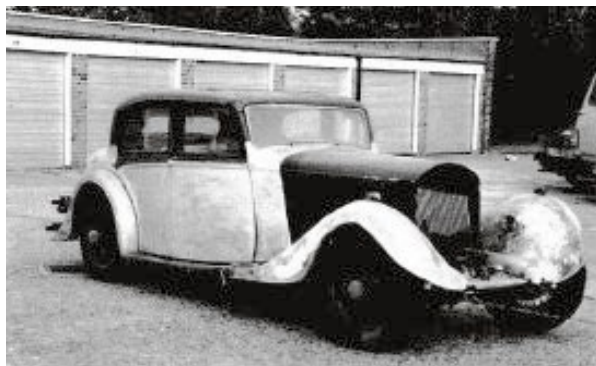
EYV 405 was duly pressed into service as the practice/T car and travelled with B35AE – whose engine had by now been uprated to the new 4¼ unit – to Ulster for the ill-fated 1936 Ards race (when, sadly, eight spectators were killed); Hall consistently took a spare car to all significant race meetings.

The Yorkshireman was first across the line in the race – ultimately the last Ards TT to be held – but classified second on handicap... for the third year in a row. Hall had achieved the highest average speed at each



EYV 405 shows off its recreated 1936 Ards TT Ridlington bodywork

PAUL CARTER'S 'EDDIE HALL' DERBY



B106GA came complete with a careworn Mulliner Park Ward body when Paul purchased the chassis from Stuart Anderson



Bespoke Bodywork was tasked with carefully crafting the streamlined Ridlington-type shell for EYV 405

of the Irish races – indeed, in that year's event the Derby set the fastest ever race average speed (80.81mph), allowing Bentley to conclusively demonstrate its superior performance, handling and stamina against a wide range of British and European sportscars.

In October 1936, George Ratcliffe, one of the stalwarts of the Experimental Department who had worked with Hall throughout his racing career, organised a series of test sessions at Brooklands – the plan was to compare the performance of B35AE (the race car) boasting the Ridlington body against B106GA (the practice car) fitted with the older Offord/Potts shell.

Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, B106GA proved to be some 3mph faster (at an average speed of 108.27mph). Both cars had 4¼-litre powerplants and an engine swap ultimately reduced the gap to 1.5mph. This not only proved that the fresher engine, N9BT which was originally fitted to B106GA, was producing more power but, more importantly, demonstrated that the older, cruder Offord/Potts body was, in fact, more aerodynamic and 'faster' than the 1936 Ards TT (Ridlington) body.

As the prospect of war loomed in 1938, B106GA was returned to the Bentley factory – much to Hall's irritation – and the chassis and engine converted back to standard specification. The car was subsequently sold to the Rootes Motor Company and fitted with a Thrupp & Maberly aluminium four-door saloon body which survives to this day.

The service records for the car from Bentley Motors show that there were three further owners up until 1966. Thereon, the logbook highlights two further owners up until EYV 405's acquisition by Stuart Anderson.

Having purchased the restored chassis from Stuart, and having also developed a 4¼-litre race prepared engine myself, I had to decide which coachwork I should commission: should it be the Offord/Potts bodywork (as fitted to B106GA in 1936) or the later Ridlington body (also from '36), as fitted to B35AE, which currently resides in the Revs Institute Collection in the US?

A previous owner, Nicolas Haran in 1989, had sought Bentley Motors' advice as to which bodywork would be best suited to the chassis. I have a letter from Bentley collector James Fack which provided direction: *'In my view, the Potts body had been an exceedingly rough piece of work with photos showing the screws that attached the body to the dual framework crudely protruding from the outside. A masterpiece of period coachbuilding it was emphatically not, just a bare, light racing shell built for one purpose only. It would be well for you to consider if a Derby Bentley racing car is what you really want and need!'*



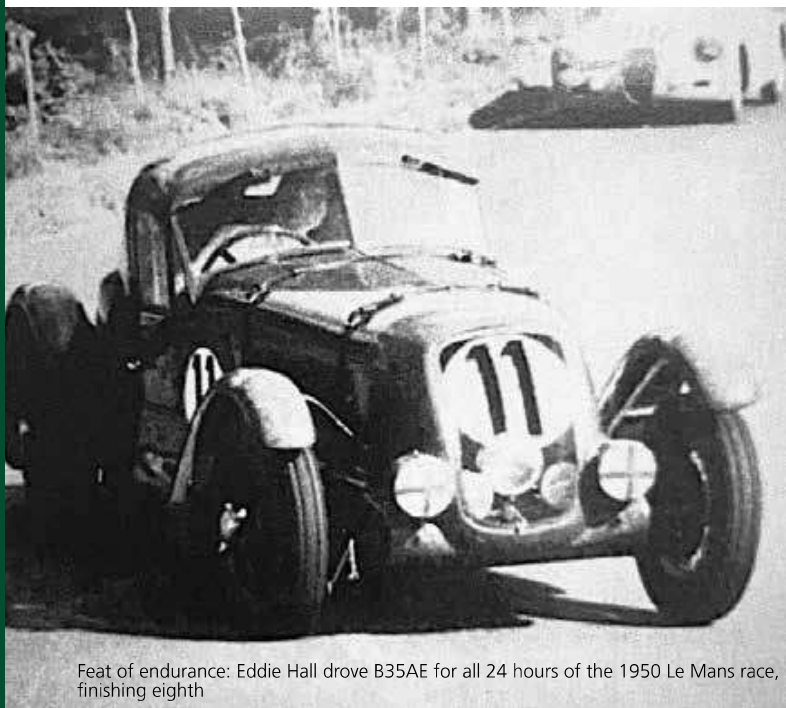
The recreated shell of B106GA nears completion



EYV 405 also features a fabricated version of B35AE's Le Mans 1950 hardtop



PAUL CARTER'S 'EDDIE HALL' DERBY



Feat of endurance: Eddie Hall drove B35AE for all 24 hours of the 1950 Le Mans race, finishing eighth

EDDIE HALL: MR VERSATILITY

At the outbreak of World War II, Eddie Hall left England for Canada where he had significant business interests and thence moved to South Africa in the 1940s.

He arranged for B35AE, including its original Abbott body from 1934, to be shipped to South Africa. What happened to the Offord/Potts body, however, is unknown (possibly it was scrapped). Hall competed with the car in a number of events in South Africa, using both body configurations.

He then returned to Europe for his racing finale, participating in the 1950 Le Mans race with B35AE – Hall's efforts in the race, in which he achieved the rare feat of driving all 24 hours single-handed to finish eighth overall, having passed into folklore.

By this time, incidentally, the Derby's Ridlington bodywork had been further modified with the fitting of a hardtop and streamlined radiator faring featuring enclosed headlights, the lessons from the Brooklands test of 1936 having been learned.

Aside from racing Bentleys and earning a BRDC Gold Star in 1933, Hall (1900-1982) represented the Great Britain bobsleigh team at both the 1927 European Championships (where they won) and the following year's Winter Olympics. He was also an accomplished photographer.

This concentrated my thoughts and I concluded that my preference would be to build an elegant, competitive car that could be used for both circuit racing and long-distance rallying.

I decided, therefore, to recreate the elegant Ridlington '36 TT bodywork; furthermore, I also opted to make the requisite adaptations to convert the car to the 1950 Le Mans trim – necessitating the construction of an aluminium hardtop with side screens and aerodynamic radiator faring with enclosed headlights.

This now enables B106GA to be eligible to enter motorsports events in both pre- and post-war categories with the accompanying FIA Historic Technical Passport.

“I decided to recreate the elegant Ridlington '36 TT bodywork; in addition, I have fabricated the 1950 hardtop and radiator faring”



To help facilitate the project, it was most helpful that the 1936 Ridlington bodywork drawings were featured in a *Review* magazine article, written by James Fack, entitled 'The Bentleys of E.R. Hall'. I also flew out to the Revs Institute in Florida whose staff kindly let me photograph the sister car, particularly to ascertain its exact methods of construction. I then commissioned Chris Allen, of Bespoke Bodywork in Farnham, whose superb craftsmanship created a beautiful car to precise standards.

In the last two years EYV 405, configured in both 1930s and '50s trim, has competed in various events including those at BDC Silverstone – the Bentley handicap (2023) and Times Challenge Trophy Bentley scratch (2024).

My ambition for this year is to compete in the '50s plateau race at the Le Mans Classic (3-6 July) – my entry has been accepted! My goal is to be clocked in excess of 120mph down the Mulsanne Straight and, with a fair wind, finish eighth or better – recreating the extraordinary achievements of Eddie Hall and B35AE in 1950. 🏆

PAUL CARTER'S 'EDDIE HALL' DERBY



Paul's pride and joy:
YSV 494 (left) and DY0 883

PAUL'S DERBY DAYS

The acquisition of my first Derby came in 2001. The car was advertised in the *Advertiser & Diary* as a '1936 4¼ Derby Special with racing pedigree, campaigned by BDC member Chris Jonas'. I duly bought YSV 494, nicknamed The Cockroach, with the plan to carry out a full nut and bolt restoration ahead of entering the car in the 2007 Peking to Paris Motor Challenge.

This we (Paul and navigator Vincent Fairclough) succeeded in accomplishing, finishing third overall. The car performed impeccably, particularly on the long stages, over exceedingly rough terrain, in Mongolia. YSV 494 (chassis B79GP) then went on to win several other events, triumphing on the first two Flying Scotsman rallies in 2009 and 2010.



Paul campaigns DY0 883 at BDC Silverstone in 2011

A second Derby, registration DY0 883 (chassis B51JY), was to follow when I commissioned Bob Petersen to recreate the Eddie Hall (B35AE) model as entered in the 1936 Le Mans 24 Hours. Hall's car (produced in 1933) was fitted with an elegant, streamlined body constructed by James Ridlington and updated further with a larger 4¼ litre race-tuned engine and a higher ratio back axle – in practice for the race Hall was timed in excess of 120mph down the Mulsanne Straight. Regrettably, due to a general strike in France, the event was cancelled on the Saturday morning, denying Bentley the strong possibility of a sixth victory at Le Mans.

The Derby returned to England to be prepared for that year's Ards Tourist Trophy in Ulster, with the Ridlington bodywork being substantially modified, and possibly even replaced by a new shell, for the event. This coachwork, however, remains to this day on the car which now forms part of the Revs Institute Collection in Florida, and continues to be used regularly.

Bob Petersen built me a great car which I rallied and raced in numerous events. This included a memorable victory in the inaugural Benjafields Pre-War 24 Hours race in Portimao, Portugal, in 2014, co-driven by Nick Swift and my good friend, fellow BDC Member Bill Cleyndert.



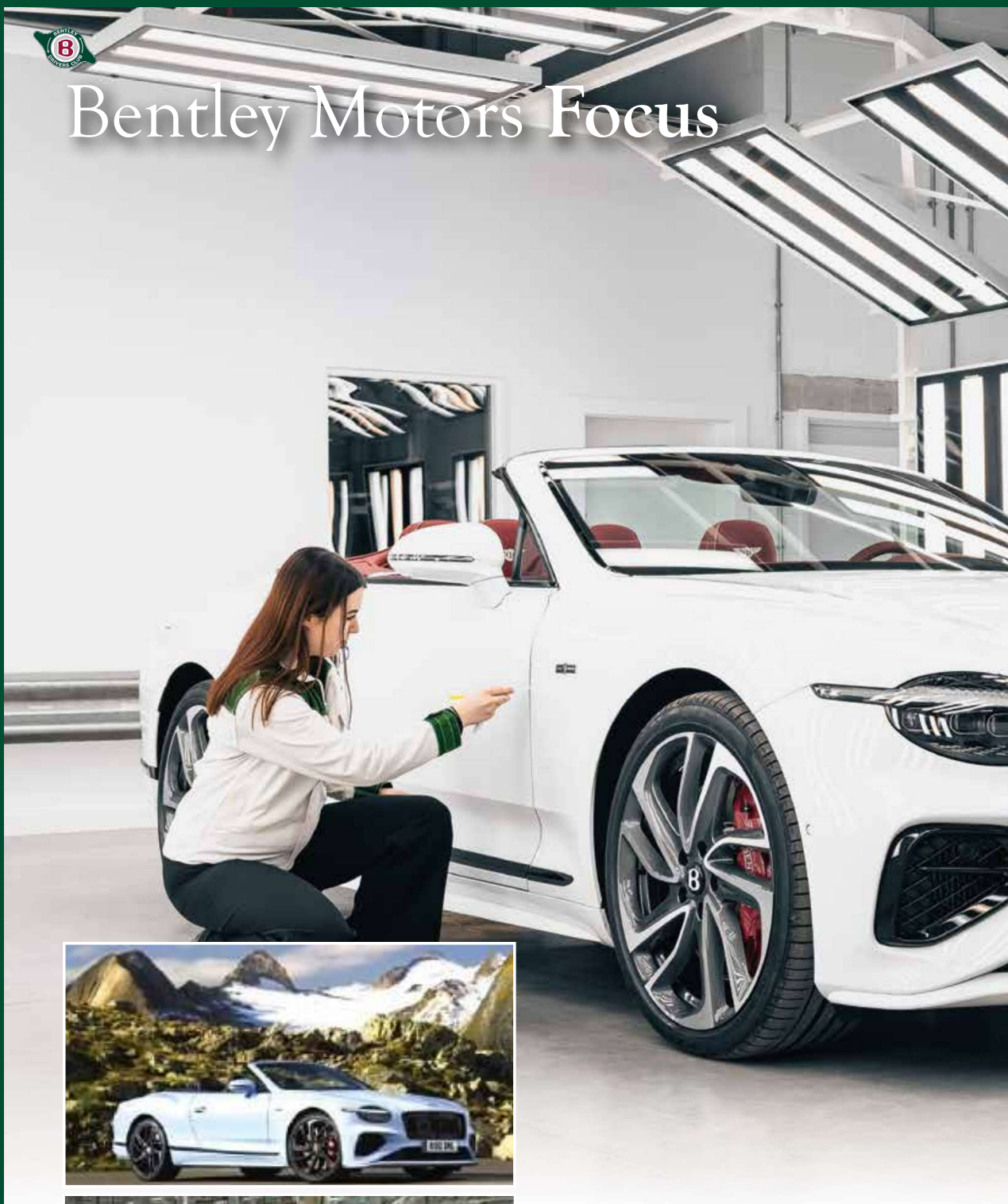
Paul and Vincent Fairclough finished a fine third in YSV 494 on the 2007 Peking to Paris Motor Challenge

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2025 • BENTLEY DRIVERS CLUB • REVIEW 9



Bentley Motors Focus





CREWE RAISES THE BAR

Bentley has officially opened its new state-of-the-art Excellence Centre for Quality & Launch (*main image*). The Crewe facility will be pivotal to the brand's preparations for the marque's first-ever Battery-Powered Electric Vehicle (BEV) due to be launched next year.

- Two models book-ending Bentley's illustrious production life took pride of place on the company's stand at the celebrated Salon Retromobile classic-car show in Paris in February. A Speed Six Continuation Series car built by Mulliner (*inset*), Crewe's bespoke and coachbuilding division, was showcased. Also on display was the new fourth-generation Continental GTC Speed (*inset*), featuring the all-new Ultra Performance Hybrid powertrain, which marries a four-litre V8 engine with a 190PS electric motor.
- The latest fourth-gen Continental GT has extended its trophy cabinet with a trio of prestigious 'Best Car' and 'Best Company Car' awards presented by influential auto publications in Germany and Switzerland.
- Axel Dewitz (*inset*) has been appointed as Bentley's new Board member for Finance and IT, succeeding Jan-Henrik Lafrentz.

Images: Courtesy of Bentley Motors





TECHNICAL: R TYPE RESTORATION



Bespoke is best!

Restoring any Bentley is no easy task. Here, US Member **John Parks** offers a detailed account of the work he undertook when overhauling his 1954 R Type. Images: Courtesy of Author

Being a lifelong Anglophile car enthusiast, I was fortunate to find this particular R Type, B223WG, in central Illinois in 1987. Unfortunately, it was in deplorable condition: cracked block, flat tyres, inoperative brakes and rusted circumferential edging essentially carved out of body filler. However, early trials and tribulations

were followed by over 30 years of happy Bentley motoring.

So one might ask: Why change it? Well, 'bespoke' has a nice ring to it and bespoke Bentleys seem to proliferate. As a former automobile designer and enthusiastic amateur fabricator, I readily admit to not being a purist as such, but perhaps too critical at times of existing

design and willing to make some changes, hopefully for the better. However, it's been important to not make the changes too obvious and to honour the integrity of original designs. Besides, in relative retirement, projects such as this keep me occupied and productive while allowing me to better understand and appreciate the many challenges of automobile design and manufacturing.

Following numerous other restorations and builds over the past 50 years, it was decided, against the



Structural changes included assembling a temporary internal bridge structure to help accurately reposition the lowered roof. Also shown is the lengthened cowl, and relocated and raised cowl vent



Inside the shell, showing the lengthened door, re-sited B pillar with additional structure and 'gooseneck' hinges



The final version: B223WG, in two-door configuration, featuring increased windscreen angle, front wing swage and chrome stone guard

advice of friends, to modify OYK 4 and transform her from a four-door saloon into a two-door coupé. Ideally, this would present a model Bentley never produced, with intentions to appear 'factory', at least to the untrained eye. And, as a devoted fan of the British production *Victoria*, naming it the Victoria Coupé seemed perfect.

I should mention that, aside from outside assistance with the seat upholstery and chrome plating, the rest of the work I endeavoured to accomplish in my garage, including all fabrication, interior trim, paint and



John takes a break from filling, sanding, filling, sanding...

EARLY CHANGES

Years prior to the recent modifications, major rust problems on my R Type had already been addressed with new wing edging and reshaping of the rear wing openings. Wing lamp sockets were also changed to accommodate dual filament indicator bulbs.

Of special note, I discovered that the original instrument panel indicator switch has two separate circuits and contacts, which allow not only for the use of the original trafficators but sequential turn signals, too, when implementing a flasher unit.

This R Type featured the GM Hydramatic transmission, connecting through a new single-piece driveshaft to a Ford Bronco rear axle, utilising a 2.75:1 axle ratio versus the original 3.73:1. There is no acceleration penalty as first gear is extremely low, but engine rpm is significantly reduced at speed. (If I recall correctly, Bentley discovered this with the R Type Continental.)

Eliminating the archaic mechanical/hydraulic brake system also permitted use of conventional vacuum powered, dual-circuit hydraulic brakes – a real safety and maintenance improvement. Standard tube shocks are used at the rear with rebuilt original units at the front.

body work.

I elected to lower the top by 1.5 inches, lengthen the cowl five inches, increase the windscreen angle and, of course, build two larger doors.

These changes in proportion would hopefully give a less formal and more sporty appearance. Thus, the beginning of an intense, five-year endeavour.



Most of the basic bodywork now complete

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TECHNICAL: R TYPE RESTORATION

External design and fabrication

I realised early on that some system would be required to accurately relocate the top, B pillars, windscreen and so on, as once the top was cut from the main body structure I would essentially be working in open space. Therefore, a removeable internal bridge-like slide structure was created that accurately allowed for lowering and moving the top structure, including the sunroof rearward. Thankfully, the chassis frame structure is very robust and nothing sagged during the process.

It was important to retain the Hooper-influenced 'bustleback' rear styling, a signature design element. I also added a swage line to the front wings to complement the rear wings, a feature that somehow eluded the original Mk VI, R Type design but was reinstated in the S series.

Other external changes included the addition of a rear under-bumper valance panel and integrated tail lamps versus the factory 'stuck-on' units. The tail-lamp assemblies incorporate fabricated brass chrome-plated frames and lenses that were cast in urethane. Also, prior to the body changes, I had observed at speed that the open cowl side vents, despite the vent doors facing forward, would actually draw inside air outward rather than forcing fresh air in, seemingly indicating a low-pressure area. Relocating the cowl vents to a higher position made a significant improvement, correctly reversing the airflow.

The new 'suicide' doors are obviously much heavier than the



Redesigned door-glass garnish mouldings. The new lower and longer lengths required piecing together nine separate parts for each door, with similar modifications needed for the three-quarter glass garnish mouldings. The job necessitated some faux woodgraining while utilising original burled walnut veneers

originals, and substantial 'gooseneck' hinges were fabricated that not only retained rear hinging but allowed the doors to have additional clearance to the body when opened.

Interior design and fabrication

Viewed from above, and because of the body contour, moving the windscreen rearward necessitated making the glass and frame wider, and also meant widening the instrument panel. Especially challenging was lengthening the mahogany door garnish mouldings while the burled walnut veneer inlays were retained as much as possible. Each door garnish moulding was fabricated from nine separate pieces, utilising parts from the original front and rear doors. Some faux painting was required, and the original veneer book-matched feature was sacrificed, but the changes to the veneer are hardly noticeable.

With the cowl lengthened by five inches rearward, the brake pedal and accelerator assemblies were redesigned, requiring cutting and lengthening the steering column as well, utilising a universal joint and new mountings. Obviously this eliminated the rear shock-absorber adjuster on the steering wheel, but the original rear shocks were long gone anyway. The little lever on the wheel, however, remains for posterity.

The door panels, seating and interior trim are all bespoke and upholstered in the finest Austrian leather and Wilton wool carpeting. Three-point seat belts, while obviously not period authentic, are also integrated into the overall design. The front seats are highly modified Jaguar XJ6 units, with backs made tiltable for rear-seat access, and incorporate the original Bentley picnic tables and underseat toolkit. A power-window



The revamped engine bay highlighting the modified air cleaner and fresh-air intake


TECHNICAL: R TYPE RESTORATION



system utilises original crank handles for activating microswitches. LED lighting is utilised throughout the interior and a modern sound system is also integrated. The heating and air conditioning system has been designed to bring in fresh air from the left front wing grille and the blower/evaporator unit under the instrument panel directs air through vents that have replaced the original speaker outlet at the top of the instrument panel.

Mechanical

Those familiar with R Type mechanicals have undoubtedly discovered that the original radiator structure was not designed for easy repair or restoration. An independent 'horsecollar' now supports the new removeable aluminium radiator, air conditioning condenser core, engine side panels and bonnet.

Additional effort went into making the engine compartment more attractive. Rather than the dominating original air cleaner/silencer, a revised system was designed that takes in fresh air from the right front wing grille, better exposing the SU carburettors and engine valve cover. Prior to my ownership, the valve cover and carburettors had been stripped of their original black paint and polished. Considering WO's original efforts that exposed and highlighted engine components rather than trying to hide them, this seemed like a reasonable and positive alteration. Discrete fibreglass side panels in the engine compartment hide wiring, connectors and relays. 



Swage lines were developed for the front wings to complement the rear-wing design



The new interior featuring a bespoke door panel, garnish mouldings, tilt-back seats and 'gooseneck' hinges



Smart bespoke tail lamps and an under-bumper valance now adorn B223WG whose wheelbase has remained unchanged

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ROAD TEST HEAD TO HEAD: CONTINENTAL GTs

Which is the better Continental GT: the Convertible or the Super Sports? **Mike Haig** joins two fellow Club Members for a head to head road test to discover the answer. Images: Courtesy of Author

Who would have imagined, back in 2003 when Bentley launched the modern Continental GT, that over two decades later it would still be going strong? Now in its fourth generation, the GT remains unmistakably true to its original design – and, more impressively, it holds the title of the most successful Bentley ever produced.

While it has always commanded a premium price tag when new, its longevity has made it increasingly accessible in the pre-owned market. This means that more enthusiasts than ever can experience the exceptional blend of power, luxury and craftsmanship that defines the Continental GT.

The idea behind this feature is to set head-to-head two distinct, earlier models of the Continental GT: the relaxed, yet undeniably capable, **Convertible (GTC)** against the more muscular and focused **Super Sports**.

My goal is not only to test drive both cars but also put the owners behind each other's steering wheel and hear their impressions. Our test route is designed to simulate real-world driving – not a racetrack thrash but the kind of journey any proud Bentley owner might take on a fine spring day.



Serenity

Fitz Stevenson – Convertible (GTC)

Fitz is a legally trained business advisor turned semi-retired classic car enthusiast. He currently serves as the Secretary of the Midlands Region and purchased his 2012 Continental GTC from Bentley Birmingham nearly

three years ago. With its understated graphite paintwork, oxblood interior and an options list that seems to tick every box, the car appealed to Fitz for its elegance and comfort.

Used primarily as a summer tourer, Fitz and his wife, Joan, describe the GTC as “like driving a sofa on wheels”



Fitz Stevenson in the cockpit of his 'sofa on wheels' Convertible

ROAD TEST HEAD TO HEAD: CONTINENTAL GTs



Continental cousins:
GT Convertible (*left*)
alongside the GT Super Sports

versus brawn

(I can confirm the seats are every bit as plush as that sounds). Although not one to push the limits, Fitz loves knowing there's power on tap when needed. Since purchase, the GTC has been faultlessly reliable, with regular servicing keeping it in top form.

TECH SPEC

	Convertible	Super Sports
Year	2012	2010
Engine	6.0-litre W12 twin-turbo	6.0-litre W12 twin-turbo
Power	567bhp	621bhp
0-60mph	4.8secs	3.7secs
Top speed	195mph	204mph
Transmission	6-speed auto	6-speed auto
Drive	All-wheel drive	All-wheel drive



Harry Johnson aboard his 'fantastic in every way' Super Sports

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ROAD TEST HEAD TO HEAD: CONTINENTAL GTs



Relaxed and elegant – the open-top GTC

Harry Johnson – Super Sports

A busy man managing his family's agricultural estate, with both commercial and leisure interests, Harry is a BDC Board member and currently serves as the Club's Competitions Captain. His weapon of choice? A 2010 Continental Super Sports, finished in stealthy gloss black, acquired two and a half years ago.

This particular Super Sports is Harry's second attempt with the model, having been underwhelmed by a previous example. But this car, purchased from an Aston Martin dealer and carefully vetted by a Bentley main agent, is "fantastic in every way." With 55,000 miles now on the clock it's regularly driven and clearly well loved.

The W12 engine in both cars

remains, of course, a marvel of engineering: equal parts brute force and silky refinement.

The test drives

First up, Fitz took the wheel of Harry's Super Sports followed by yours truly. Then Harry climbed into the GTC, again with me taking a turn afterwards. Our feedback – unsurprisingly – had much in common.



Focused and muscular – the Super Sports

ROAD TEST HEAD TO HEAD: CONTINENTAL GTs



The Super Sports' slimline seats hail from the Bugatti Veyron



Both cars' small, deeply recessed minor instruments is a small negative

“ Each model is a true Bentley in spirit and performance, each offering its own distinctive flavour of luxury and power ”

The Super Sports is every inch the driver's car. Its sharpened steering, immediate response to input and dynamic handling make it feel far more agile than its weight and size would suggest. Yet comfort is far from sacrificed. Road noise is well suppressed, and while the ride is firmer it's far from harsh. Throttle response is superb: press down and the acceleration is borderline savage (not that I tested its full potential... honestly!).

Inside, the cabin is a glorious place

to be although I'd mark both models down slightly for having small, deeply recessed minor instruments. Fitz preferred the softer, more luxurious seats in his GTC whereas Harry informed us that the slimline seats in his Super Sports were sourced from none other than the Bugatti Veyron. No wonder they feel racier.

As for the GTC it retains all the performance credentials of its hardtop sibling but with a softer, grander touring feel. It's poised, fast

and powerful but with an elegance that makes it feel entirely suited to long, open-road drives. And, of course, there's the added glamour of top-down motoring.

Harry, who once lived in Monaco, recalled being invited by Bentley to the launch of the original GTC. He described driving it along the French Riviera – roof down, sun blazing – as one of life's great pleasures. Were he still living there today he said he wouldn't hesitate to choose the GTC again.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Both owners are firmly committed to their respective models and wouldn't swap them for anything else. Their advice to prospective buyers? Due diligence is key: these are sophisticated machines, and a thorough inspection and service history are essential.

As for me? It's hard to pick a clear winner. The Super Sports thrills with its raw edge and dynamic feel. The GTC charms with comfort, style and wind-in-the-hair appeal. Perhaps with a longer drive in both I might be swayed – but, for now, I'll happily sit on the fence.

Whatever Bentley you drive – be it a WO, Derby or an early Crewe model – these modern GTs carry the torch beautifully. Each is a true Bentley in spirit and performance, each offering its own distinctive flavour of luxury and power.

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The Super Sports boasts larger front air intakes, along with a bonnet vent, compared to the GTC





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