



1931 – Bentley 4.5 Litre Blower Vanden Plas Tourer Le Mans Style

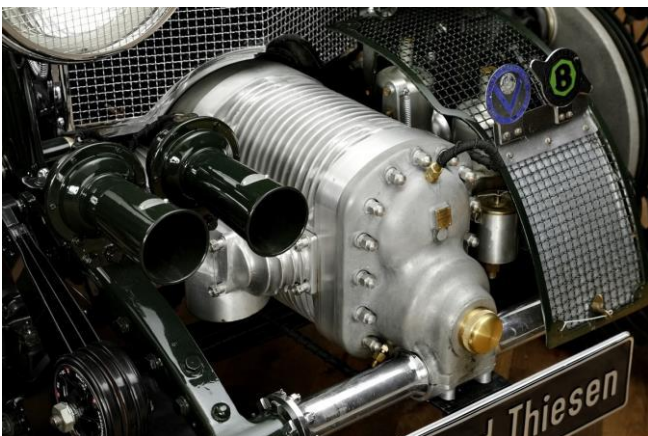


- One of only 50 factory-built 4½-litre Bentleys with supercharger
- Complete original rolling chassis with gearbox, chassis frame, front and rear axle, steering gear as well as original bonnet
- Equipped with a race-ready engine and supercharger from Neil Davis
- Original engine completely overhauled by Bentley but without using the original crankcase; this engine, the original crankcase and original supercharger are available and included
- History fully known, report by Bentley expert Clare Hay and comprehensive 200-page book documentation
- Perfect for concours and historic racing events worldwide

EBERHARD THIESEN



AUTOMOBILE RARITÄTEN SEIT 1972





This Automobile

The 4½-litre supercharged Bentleys from the period 1929 to 1931 – commonly named as "Blowers" – are among the brand's most legendary early models. They date from the era when Bentley cars were very successful in motor racing and won the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1924, 1927, 1928, 1929 and 1930. At the time, Bentley was still under the technical direction of founder W.O. Bentley but already under the management leadership of Woolf Barnato. A wealthy investor, bon vivant and racing driver who belonged to the illustrious group known as the "Bentley Boys". The idea of supercharging the 4½ litre model came from Sir Henry "Tim" Birkin, another "Bentley Boy" and racing driver, in 1929.

This Bentley 4½ litre "Blower" is one of only 50 factory supercharged models produced by Bentley for racing homologation to Le Mans specification for customer sale. A further five 4½ litre supercharged cars went directly to Tim Birkin for intended race entries. The chassis is a standard supercharger chassis from the second series of 25 chassis (MS 3926-3950) with a ribbed supercharger housing. According to the available documentation, after its last test at Bentley Motors in Cricklewood on 9 September 1931, it was fitted with an open four-seater "Sport" body by coachbuilder Mayfair in black paint with grey speckled leather. According to the Bentley Drivers Club, this car is probably the only supercharged example to be fitted with a Mayfair body.



It was then taken over by the Bentley dealer Jack Barclay Ltd. in London (this dealer still exists today) in November. According to the contract of sale dated 13 November 1931, the car was sold to Alexander & Garner in Manchester at a price of GBP 1,075. It was registered on 16 November with the registration number "GT 8771", which would accompany the car for the rest of its life. However, the buyers probably only acted as intermediaries and the car then went to its first owner, J. R. Quayle from Blackpool. He was the mayor of the town and already owned an earlier 3-litre Bentley model from 1924. A factory service log with technical specifications exists for this late Blower-Bentley, which contains consecutive entries up to 1939.

In 1935, the Bentley came into ownership of H. St. M. de Trafford of Haselor Hall, Tamworth, Staffordshire, who owned the car during the Second World War and until 1951. At this time, the car was still fitted with its original Mayfair body, as shown on historical photographs from the period. The subsequent owner was E.O. Hamblen-Thomas, who owned the Bentley until 1956. He was followed by Ian S. Burge as the fourth owner until 1960. He had the car fitted with an

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original four-seater Vanden Plas sports body with fabric upholstery (based on a wooden frame) and matching helmet wings, which came from another Bentley 4½ Litre chassis without a supercharger. The exact origin cannot be verified and relates to the rear body section for the passengers. According to existing numbers, the bonnet is still the original of the first Mayfair body.

In October 1960, this Bentley in its "new" design was purchased by Carl B. Seaman in Columbus, Ohio (USA). He had the car restored and in particular rebuild the Vanden Plas bodywork from 1961 to 1963, with 80% of the ash wood frame renewed and a new fabric outer skin and new leather inside applied. The car returned to the UK in 1972 and had five further owners until 1995, whose names and respective periods of ownership are all known and documented.



In the mid-1980s, a comprehensive restoration was carried out by the well-known Bentley specialist Dick Moss. The wooden frame of the bodywork was reworked again. Subsequently, in 1985, the Bentley won first place in its class at the Bentley Drivers Club Concours in Kensington Gardens. In 1995, the car was sold at auction in Pebble Beach to its penultimate owner in the UK, who remained loyal to this "Blower" for 17 years.

This Bentley has been with its current owner in Germany since 2012, who has used it intensively at numerous events and rallies since then. Since acquiring the car, he has had its condition and originality examined, including material analyses. At a recognised specialist workshop for classic cars in Germany, the car underwent several stages of a comprehensive restoration with the overhaul of technical and mechanical components, the installation of a new engine and supercharger and the creation of a new body similar to the previous design as a Vanden Plas Open Tourer Le Mans Style.

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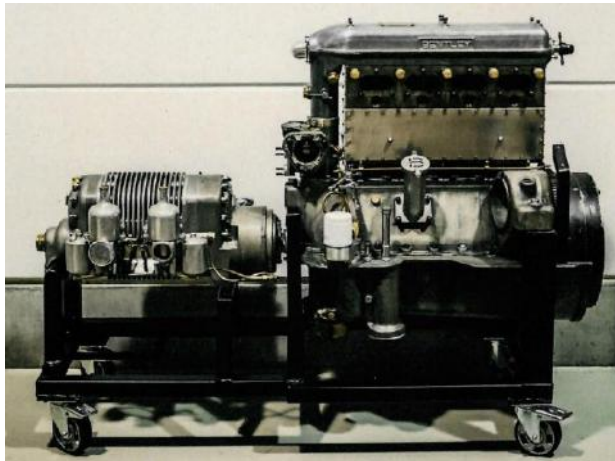


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The bodywork renovation was carried out with the help of experienced wood technique specialists. They created a new wooden frame, which was mounted on the chassis frame. The wooden frame was then re-covered with a faithful to original Rexin upholstery from "The Vintage Fabric Company". This brand was revitalised in 2015 by Clare Hay and R.C. Moss and uses the working methods and machines of the 1920s and 1930s to manufacture the special covers for vehicle bodies of the time. The aluminium panelling was also renewed. In variance from the previous body design, there is only one door on the left-hand side (instead of two).



A new engine to the appropriate specifications and a new supercharger with SU HO8 carburettors from Neil Davis are currently installed for the drive unit. The engine is equipped with a ribbed 4-gallon oil sump in a so-called Birkin design with ventilation. The original engine was rebuilt by Bentley in the past. It has a replacement crankcase and oil sump, as both were damaged by a broken connecting rod.



This previously fitted engine is mounted on a separate stand together with the original supercharger and starter motor ("matching numbers") and is included with the vehicle. The original crankcase from the delivery is also available and part of the delivery package.

The completely original rolling chassis from 1931 includes the chassis frame, the "D-Type" gearbox, the front and rear axles, the steering gear as well as the bonnet and switch panel, all of which are stamped with the corresponding number.

Like many vehicles of this type and era, this Bentley has had an eventful history with various owners, restorations and modifications. This makes a comprehensive and complete documentation of the history all the more important. This Bentley has it – it is summarised in a 200-page book with many explained details, photos and graphics as well as its current status. It includes a report by the renowned Bentley expert Dr Clare Hay.

This Bentley 4½ Litre as a rare genuine "Blower" differs from the many complete recreations on the market due to its high degree of originality and its well-known history. The excellent restoration to the highest standards ensures reliable performance and functionality – perfect for high drivability and the ultimate "Bentley Boy" experience.

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Chassis MS3938
 1935
 Jack Barclay Ltd. Reg No. G.T. 8771.
 Engine MS3940 13/6 inch valve 1931 43 lbs L & C. FT. 9. 9. 8. 8. 12. 11. 36.
 Chrom plated parts B.M.B. RR. 53 Pistons KE 965 - belated valve. Molybdenum bronze guides
 5 inch valve Rod. F. 795 lb. 10' 10" W.B. D type gearbox 7249. Carrys rear springs
 Woodhead front. 8" D. Friction. Hyd. SR2. 5M3480 bearings. 019 VC.
 J. R. Gwyle 598 Lyham Rd. Blackpool, Lancs.
 1934
 1935
 1936
 1937
 1939

Service Protocol Bentley

Jack Barclay LIMITED
 MANAGING DIRECTOR JACK BARCLAY
 DIRECTORS A. J. BARCLAY & J. BARCLAY

HEAD OFFICE
GEORGE STREET-HANOVER SQ.
 CORNER OF MADDOX STREET
 LONDON-W.1

TELEPHONES
 MAYFAIR 4152 (4 LINES)
 BRANCH SHOW ROOMS
 34 BRITTON STREET
 NEW BOND STREET W.1

TELEGRAMS
 BENTLEY
 SERVICE DEPARTMENT
 25 CHEVAL PLACE
 KNIGHTSBRIDGE SW7

Order No. 517 Sales No. 100 Chassis No. MS 3938

I, the undersigned Alexander A. Garner
 residing at Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester.

Hereby order from JACK BARCLAY, LTD. the undermentioned car.
 MAKE AND H.P. OF CAR See Specifications in line summary
 TYPE OF BODY Open Sports 2-seater by Morrison & Lawrence Co.
 COLOUR OF PAINTING Black
 UPHOLSTERY Spangled grey leather
 Price of Car or Chassis, with standard equipment as per Manufacturers' Catalogue £ 1075 s. - d. -
 and subject to the conditions of such Catalogue (Subject to any alteration in manufacturers' price before delivery.)

EXTRAS (not included in the above price)
Extra spare wheel, tyre and tube
Radiator muff.

I hereby declare that the second-hand motor car Registered No. MS 3938 is my own property and is free from any lien or charge whatsoever.

The above Car is required by me on the 10th November 1935

I pay as deposit on account of the purchase price of the above Car the sum of £ 1075 which sum shall form part of the purchase money if I duly complete this contract.

If I do not take delivery and/or pay the balance of the purchase price of the Car hereby ordered within eight days from despatch of invoice or of advice note to the effect that the Car is at my disposal, JACK BARCLAY, LTD. shall be at liberty, if they think fit, by notice in writing to determine this contract and the deposit shall be forfeited, but without prejudice to their right to recover from me any loss whatsoever which may be sustained by them through my default.

Date 10th November 1935 Name Alexander A. Garner

Sales contract Jack Barclay 1931



Showroom Jack Barclay, London



original Vanden Plas bodywork

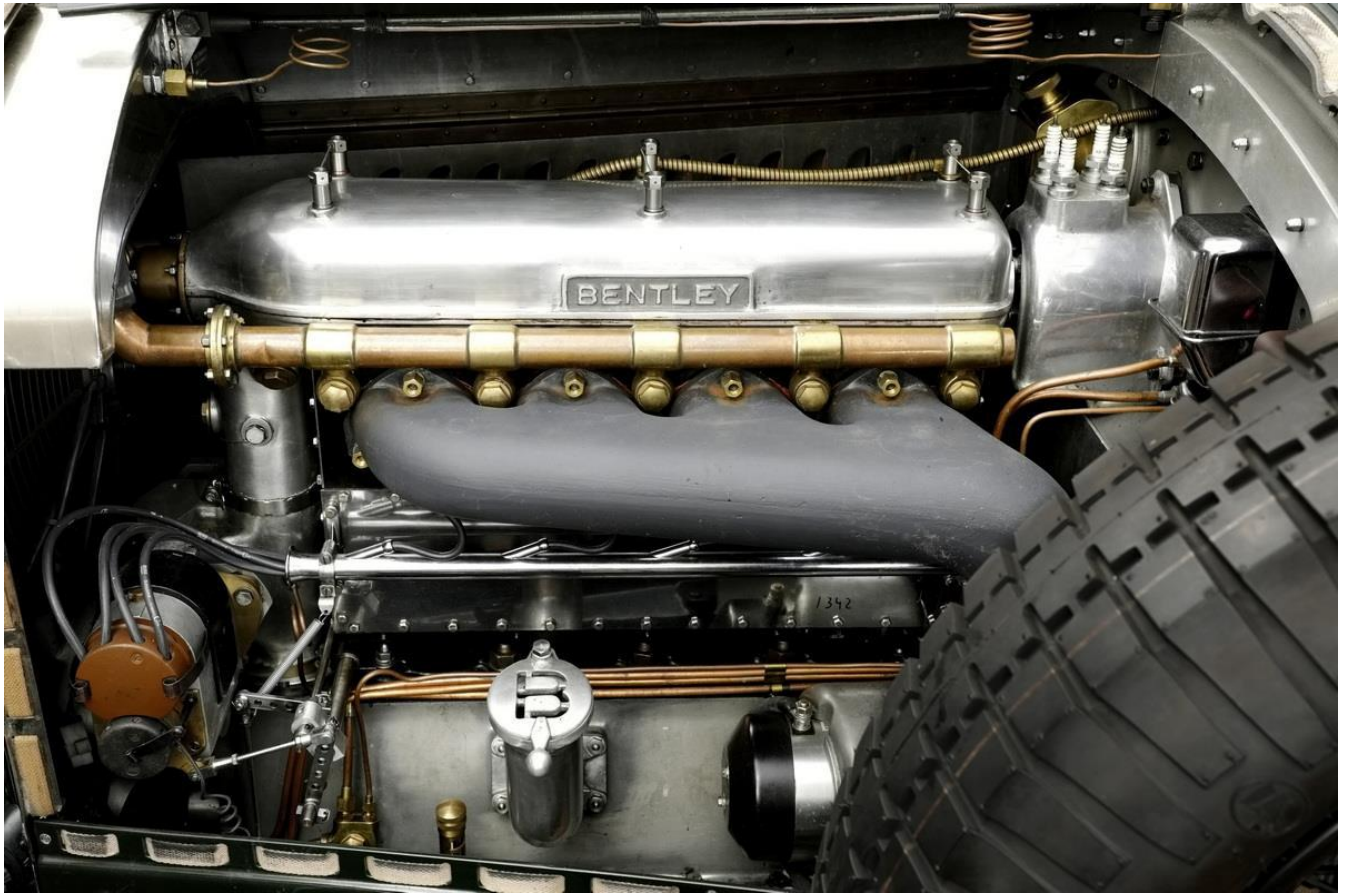


original Vanden Plas body in the 1960s

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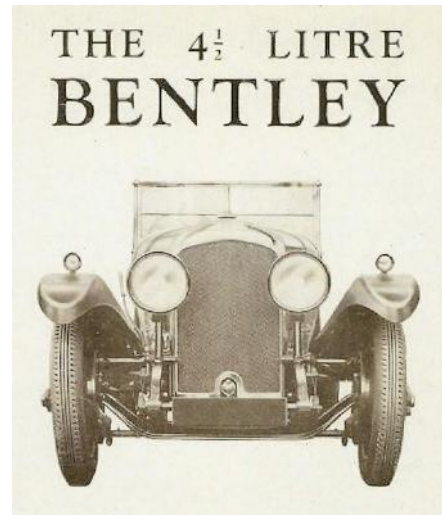
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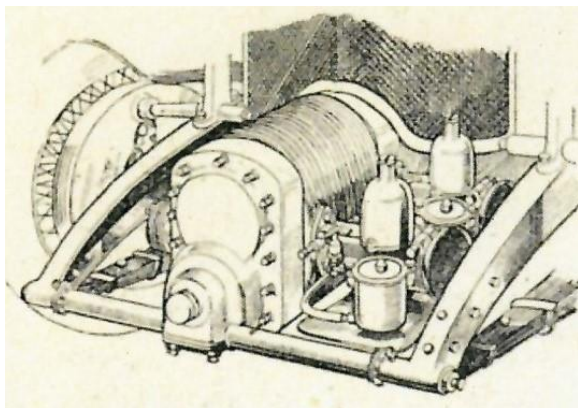


Model History

The Bentley 4½ Litre had its debut in 1927 and succeeded the 3 Litre model. As was customary at the time, Bentley only offered the rolling chassis (chassis with engine and gearbox) fitted with bodies from various coachbuilders, including Vanden Plas, Mayfair, Mulliner and Park Ward. The engine of the 4½ Litre was technically derived from the 6½ Litre six-cylinder by removing two cylinders. This resulted in an in-line four-cylinder engine with a capacity of 4,398 cc, which was very advanced in construction with four valves per cylinder. It was considered to be very reliable and resilient, which was an important basis for Bentley's motorsport successes. The 4½ Litre boosted the brand's popularity and sales with victories on the most important racetracks, such as the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1928 and 1929.



From 1929, a more powerful version with a supercharger was also available, which became known as the "Blower". This variant goes back to the racing driver Sir Henry "Tim" Birkin, one of the legendary "Bentley Boys", who rejected a larger engine with more displacement due to the higher weight. Instead, he considered using the then new supercharger technology, which Mercedes Benz was using successfully in motor racing. On his own initiative and financed by sponsor Dorothy Paget, he converted his own 4½ litre model with a Roots supercharger at the beginning of 1929. This idea was not supported by W.O. Bentley, as he followed the principle: "There is no substitute for displacement. Except with more displacement." Nevertheless, Birkin received five 4½ litre models with superchargers developed by Amherst Villiers from the then company director Woolf Barnato, also a "Bentley Boy". A further 50 "Blower" vehicles were produced for the Le Mans homologation. The Birkin team cars and the factory Bentley with supercharger were the most powerful British sports cars to compete at Le Mans and Brooklands. The installation of the supercharger increased the output of the 4,398 cc engine from 110 to 175 hp and a top speed of around 200 kph was achieved.

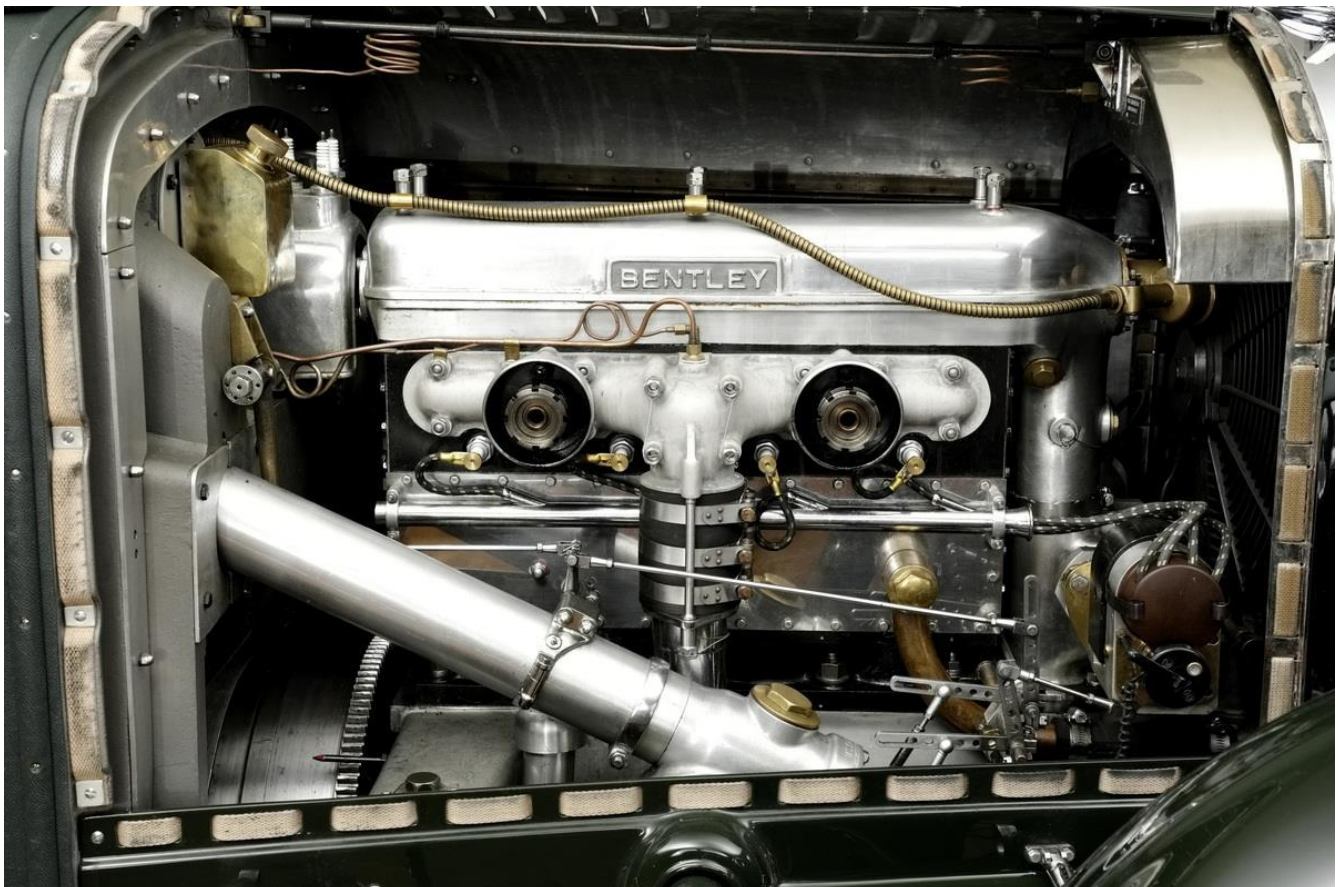


However, sales of the supercharged road vehicles were anything but a success: fuel consumption was clearly too high. In addition, the "Blower" failed to achieve any major racing successes. Apart from the fastest race lap at the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1930 and a second place at the French Grand Prix in Pau in the same year, they did not achieve much. As a result, the price of the road models eventually had to be reduced from the original GBP 1,475 to GBP 1,150 in order to reduce stocks. Today, however, the 50 "Blower" factory-built Bentleys are among the most sought-after and coveted pre-war collectors' cars.



Data & Facts

Year of production	1931
Quantity	720 units as 4½ Litre, including 50 supercharged cars for homologation (sales) and 5 racing cars (Tim Birkin)
Bodywork	4-seater open tourer Vanden Plas, Le Mans style
Colour scheme	British Racing Green, black leather interior and soft top
Engine	Four-cylinder in-line engine with supercharger (finned housing) Neil Davis, water-cooled, overhead camshaft (OHC), 4 valves per cylinder, 2 SU HO8 carburettors, dual ignition
Displacement / Power	4,398 cc, approx. 175 hp at 3,500 rpm (factory data)
Gearbox	manual, 4-speed "D-Type Laycock overdrive", unsynchronised, lateral splitter gearstick inside right
Brakes	Front/rear drums, cast iron drums
Empty weight	1,727 kg
Top speed	approx. 200 km/h (factory specification)
Documents	German H-registration, former UK title, FIVA passport, Clare Hay Report, comprehensive book documentation (200 pages) on history, restoration/overhaul and status of the car





Appendix

Location	Hamburg, Germany	
Price	on request (VAT not to be shown)	
Contact	Eberhard Thiesen	+49 (0) 172 – 459 34 35
	Bastian Hubald	+49 (0) 170 – 23 93 189

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