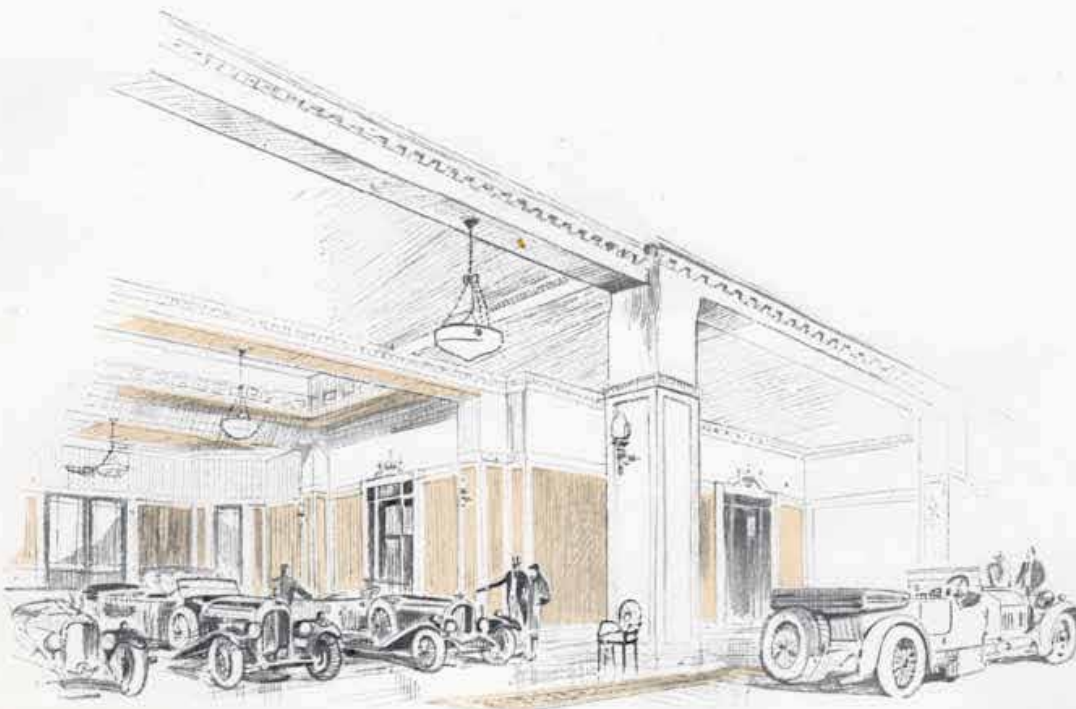



## Report on 4½ Litre Bentley Chassis TX3239



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Catalogue No. 26 Issued October 1928.





**Clare Hay**

Clare Hay has been a Bentley fan since she was 13.

She wrote a book on the car when she was 23.

Hay, who recently visited Sydney, Melbourne and Perth as a guest of the Bentley Drivers Club of Australia, has had a deep interest in the marque since she was admitted, as a 13-year-old boy, to the Bentley Drivers Club C-list for non-owner enthusiasts.

She gained full membership five years later after buying a 3.0-litre project car.

In all, she has written 10 books on the special cars of Walter Owen Bentley. "I used to hang around the London old-car dealers in the school holidays, which is how I met Chris Renwick, who later bought Dalton Watson, the publishers," Hay says.

What makes a vintage W.O. Bentley so special?

"Beautifully engineered sport cars, fantastic cars to drive, their racing history giving them part of the mystique - about as good as you could buy in their day," Hay says.

Clare Hay

*Clare Hay.*

# Report on 4½ Litre Bentley chassis TX3239

This report follows on my inspection of this car at Patrick Blakeney-Edwards' on 27 May 2010, revised 4 May 2014.

## Documentation.

On the next page is a copy of the Bentley Motors Service Record for chassis TX3239. It was built as a 1928 model 4½ Litre with, correct for a 1928 model, "D" type gearbox no.7138 (I have not checked the number but I understand it to be the original box). The original engine number was TX3241 (confirmed in 2010). The chassis was the standard 10'10" wheelbase, and the back axle the standard 15/53 (3.53:1) ratio. The chassis was despatched to Vanden Plas for bodying around March/April 1928, to order for Bentley Motors ("Our Own Body Order"). The completed car was returned to Bentley's works at Cricklewood and passed off Final Test on 16 June 1928, the day the five-year guarantee was issued (GE—guarantee expires—date in the Service Record of 16 June 1933).

The original Vanden Plas was body no.1486. This number can still be seen stamped into the longitudinal floorboard runners (from underneath) and into the nearside bottom timber, in front of and to the left of the passenger seat. A copy of the Vanden Plas body record is reproduced below. The body was a standard sports four-seater open body finished in blue pebble-grain fabric supplied by Weymanns and trimmed in Carreras FA51 blue hides, with the chassis and wings finished in Lactoloid X609, colour not specified, with the wheels stove enamelled to match. Originally the bonnet was to be fabriccovered, but this was cancelled before the body was finished, and an extra charge is noted for the special hides. The spare wheel must have been side-mounted as a luggage grid is specified, with a fabric cover for the spare wheel. Scuttle ventilators are specified along with an Easting rear screen and separate coconut mats for the floor. A small driving mirror and the client's bulb horn were fitted, along with the Barker headlamp dipping mechanism. The windscreen is also specified, with four panes rather than the usual three with a centre divider to the lower pane. The completed car was registered YW6279, a London registration number, but unfortunately the London records were destroyed by the GLC in 1979. TX3239 was supplied by **FRANK SCOTT**, a major dealer in Newcastle, to **F. SCOTT JOPLING**.

It seems from the Service Record that Mr Jopling didn't get on with the clutch, originally the cone clutch fitted to the 3 Litre and early 4½ Litre chassis. With the 4½ Litre engine the cone clutch needs a pretty strong spring, so Bentleys designed a plate clutch fitted as standard to 1929 and later model 4½ Litre cars. A plate clutch was fitted to this chassis by Bentleys in November 1931. The Service Record continues through to March 1936 with only minor work listed.

Mr Jopling kept TX3239 until at least 1955. The second recorded owner is **L. GOLDSMITH**, who kept the Bentley until 1984. It was exhibited in the **BICKTON MOTOR MUSEUM** for many years. It was then bought by **BRIAN VERRALL**, and I inspected the car in 1989 when it was sold to an American owner, **A. LAMPERT**. It was in very original order then, with repair work visible to the exterior fabric (there was a join below the windscreen pillar on the driver's side). I understand that TX3239 experienced some damage due to fire in 1999 and has since been restored. A. Lampert gives it to the prestigious dealer **GREGOR FISKENS**, who sold it in 2010 to **FEDERICO ALVAREZ CASTILLO**, of Argentina.

## Inspection of Car.

As now the chassis, running gear and body of TX3239 are exceptionally original (noting of course the plate clutch fitted by Bentleys in 1931). The steering column, front axle beam, back axle banjo and differential unit are all numbered TX3239. The chassis frame is the correct early pattern with no reinforcing brackets above the strut gear uprights and with narrow flanges to the bottoms of the chassis side rails (these were deepened and extra reinforcing added above the strut gear brackets after frame failures at Le Mans in 1928). There is a welded reinforcing strip to each chassis top channel below the body. VdP put a felt strip between the body and the chassis top flange, and this traps water, so corrosion here is common with original cars. The chassis has the correct early pattern bulkhead, B&D friction shock absorbers all round, correct 4½ Litre petrol tank, and so on. With the exception of modern wiring beneath the scuttle and a modern petrol pump the chassis looks to be entirely original.

The body is the original VdP body with, so far as I can tell, the original front seats with their drop catches and runners, original rear floorboards, and original hood frame (the windscreen was away for plating). The spare wheel carrier also looks to be correct. The Barker dipping headlamp mechanism and the luggage grid are listed in the VdP body record. The Lucas P100 headlamps are most likely a later fitting, a 1928 model 4½ Litre would have been fitted with Smiths headlamps new.

Chassis TX 3239 Reg. No. YW 6279. Vanden Plas Sports 4 seater  
 Frank Scott. Newcastle on Tyne. Our Own Body 1  
 Engine TX 3241 15/53 axle ratio 1928 4½ litre G.E. 16.6.33.  
 D type gearbox 7138. 10'10½" W.B.  
 7.8. or Aldsworth Manor, Embsay, Wants.  
 Mr. Jopling. 6/o E. Jopling & Sons Ltd. Pallion Steel Works, Sunderland.  
 27.9. Wide clutch liner & high carbon ring fitted.  
 1930  
 29.8 1 clutch spring sent to owner.  
 1931.  
 3.2. 1 clutch cone lined & strengthened & 1 clutch spring sent to Frank Scott 15.4.12  
 Mileage 17  
 clutched cone & ring sent to owner. 12.8.1 Top leaf for front spring sent to Frank Scott. 30.11. En  
 decarbonised. Plate type clutch fitted. Steering wobble rectified. F.W.Bs relined.  
 1935  
 7.8.1 front spring sent to owner. Mileage 26,477.  
 1936  
 27.3 Engine decarbonised. Block rebored to 100.57mm. New pistons & rings fitted. Rod. repaired.  
 F&A rod overhauled. Track checked. Flywheel teeth trimmed up. Front foot brake relined.  
 8. As adjusted. New shockle bush fitted.

(Above) Bentley Motors' Service Record for chassis TX3239. The right-hand side is obscured by a piece of reinforcing tape. (Opposite) VdP body record no. 1486. This was copied from the original book at Beaulieu with a hand-held camera, as the originals are too fragile to copy otherwise.

The external battery tray to the nearside running board is as fitted to a 1928 4½ Litre, with the original "Y" shaped supporting arm from the gearbox cross-member still in place. The body has been retrimmed inside and out, with modern black PVC material to the exterior and red hide to the interior. The trim is not exactly to original VdP pattern. The instrument panel has been remade, some of the instruments are incorrect (detailed below).

Since this report was first written in 2010 TX3239 has been rebuilt again, I presume in Argentina, with some further changes made to the body, as detailed below. A long-range petrol tank has been added with the spare wheel relocated to the nearside.

Clare Hay 5 May 2014

Clare Hay.

452

Order No. 1486 Order ~~1486~~ 15366  
 Chassis Bentley 4.2 Litre Date 19th April 1925  
 To be sent in \_\_\_\_\_ Price \_\_\_\_\_  
 For Bentley Motor Co. and Finished by 27th May 1925  
 of (Frank Park) (Car. & S. 1925) Price: £ 179 net  
 Body by Standard Sports Car Co. Est. Bk. Fo.  
Weyman Blue Rattle finish on seat  
Black covered table to match body. Bk. seat. (Cannery - 28)

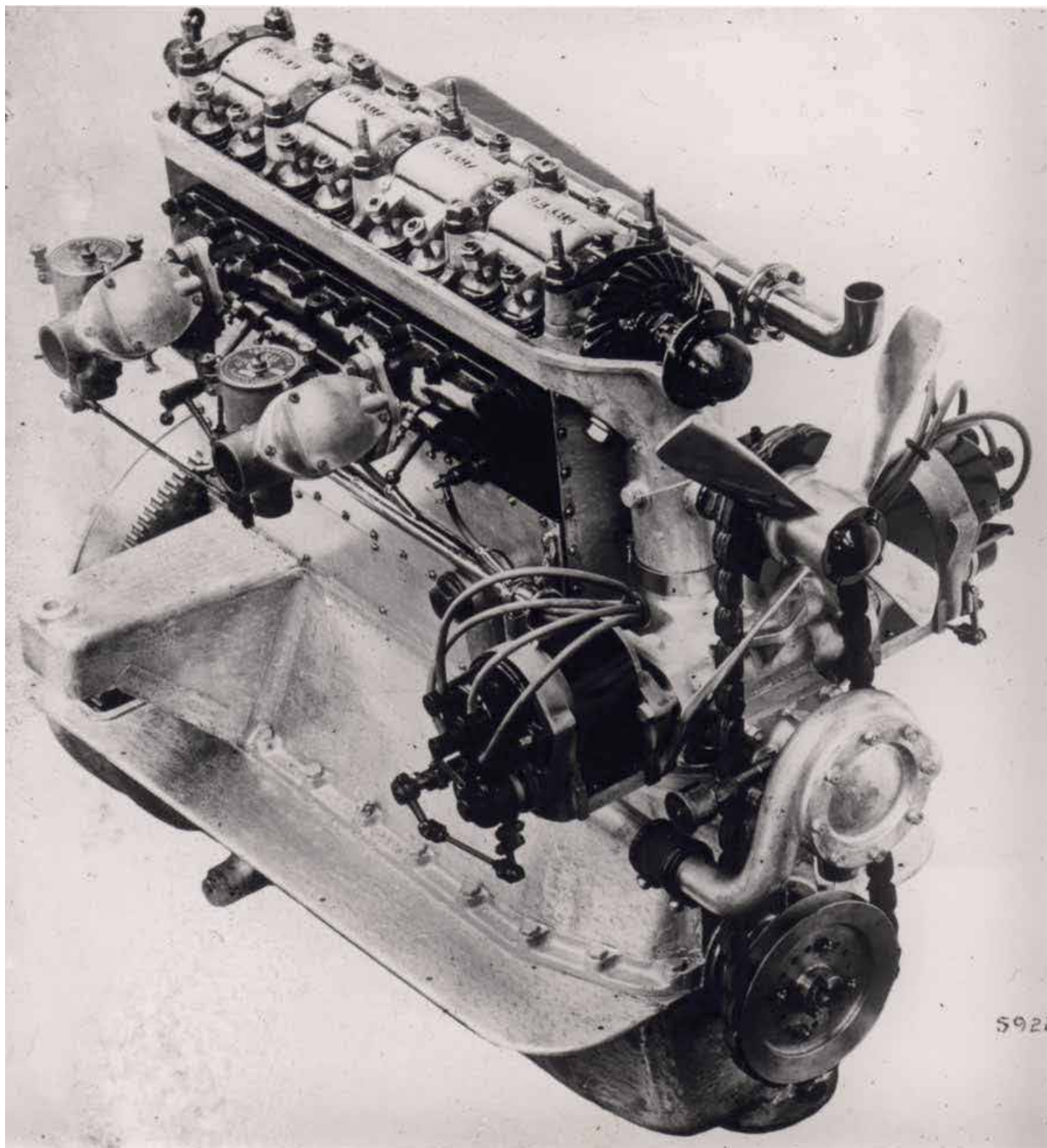
Wings \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bogies \_\_\_\_\_  
 Steps \_\_\_\_\_  
 Upholstery Carson Blue S.F.A.

Front Seat \_\_\_\_\_  
 Painting Min. & Class. Painted X 609 1. White with enamel on metal  
 Joiner \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mountings \_\_\_\_\_  
 Heraldry \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tyres \_\_\_\_\_  
 Lamps \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mats \_\_\_\_\_

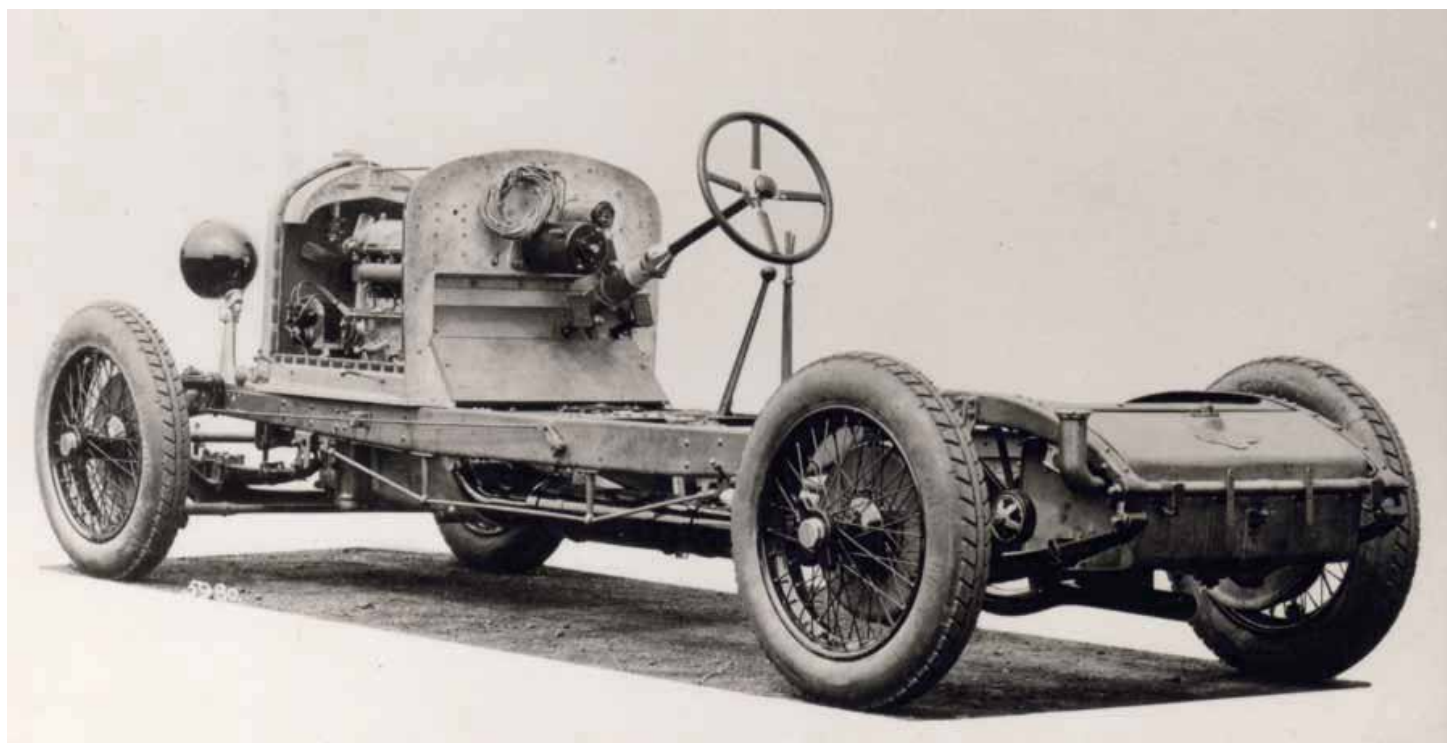
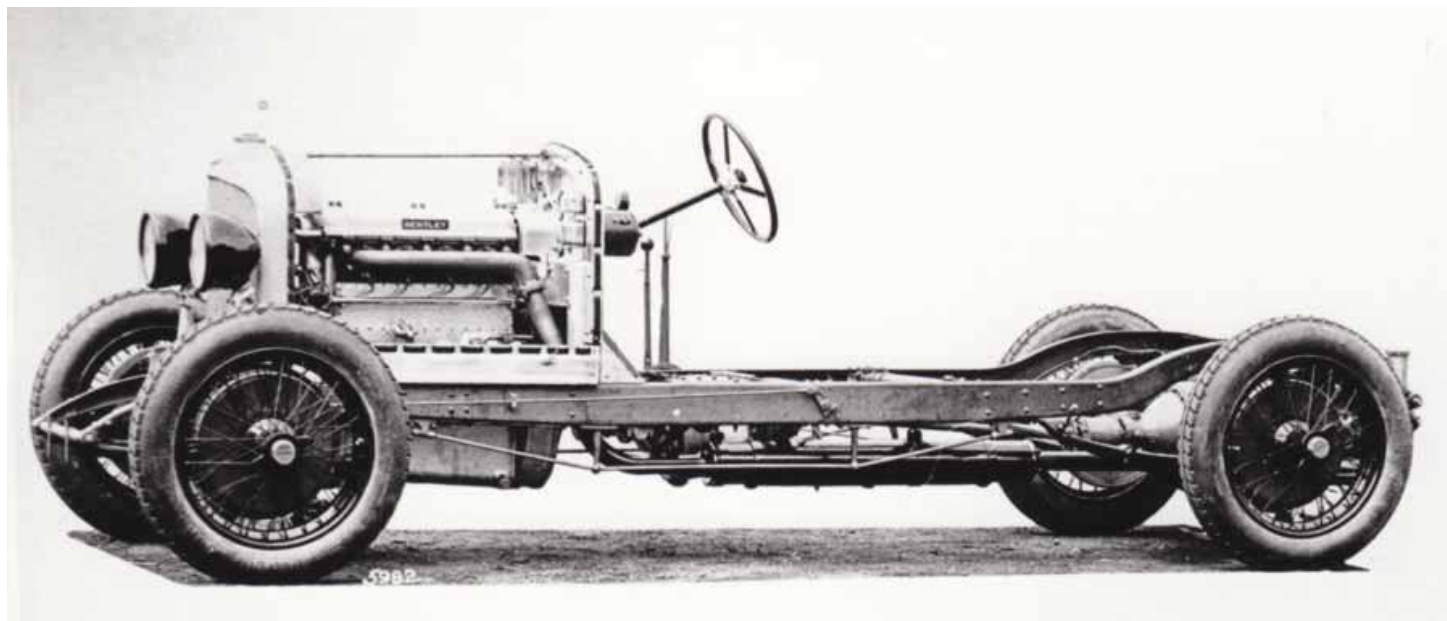
Extras \_\_\_\_\_  
 Credit - withdrawal of charge for dinner, minor services 7444  
 Small Ventilators £2 15. - 15%  
 Spare Wheel Cover in same material as body £5.12.6 - 15%  
 Detachable Luggage Box £9. - 15%  
 Rigid Screen divided in 2 with a centre pillar £3 15 net  
 Account made to front & feet (not to wheel with the sliding foot 1925) £3.15  
 Check over Ball Horn to be fitted  
 Small Dinner Table to be fitted £1.1 - 15%  
 Barker Puffy Handbag Bracket £1. - net  
 Back Panel to be divided in 2 to be fitted  
 Special Hides £3 10. - 15%  
 12.6.25. Sum. 7444. £10.12  
 30.6.25. Credit 381. 17/11/25

No. Plates \_\_\_\_\_  
 Remarks \_\_\_\_\_



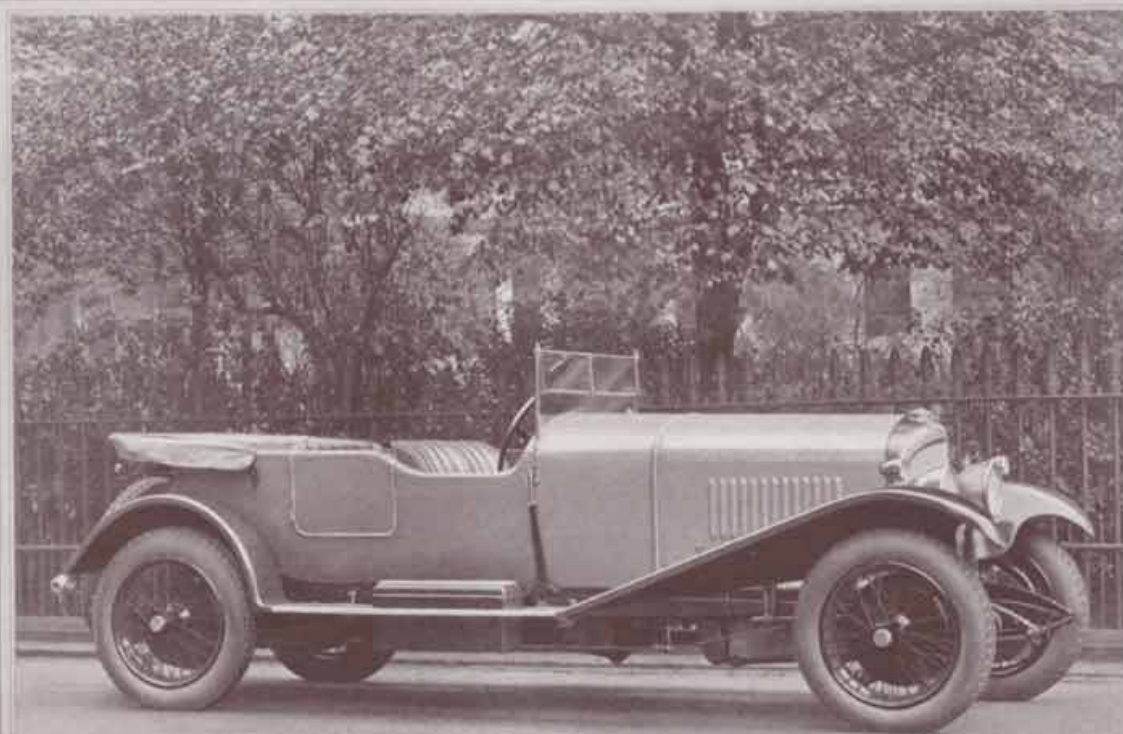


Chas K. Bowers photo of the new 4½ Litre engine in July 1927, as the chassis photos opposite. The engine has twin SU G5 “sloper” carburettors, large pattern water pump, and ML GR4 magnetos. This shows well the top bevel gears for the camshaft drive and the duralumin rockers in separate rocker boxes, operating the four valves per cylinder. The hand scraped finish shown was applied to all production engines and not just to engines prepared for publicity photos/handbook illustrations.



These photos show a very early production 4½ Litre, somewhat earlier than TX3239. This chassis has Hartford friction shock absorbers, whereas TX3239 is fitted with Bentley & Draper friction shock absorbers (introduced at chassis NT3131). The steering wheel is the 3 Litre pattern solid wheel fitted as standard to the first 60 4½ Litre chassis, TX3239 was fitted with a sprung Bluemel wheel with reeded grip. The engine has the early ML GR4 magnetos, whereas TX3239 was fitted with ML ER4 magnetos (introduced at chassis HF3192). The bonnet catches are the early screw-down pattern, replaced by ring-pull catches prior to TX3239. The chassis has the “C” type gearbox, whereas TX3239 was fitted with a “D” box from new. The small Smiths headlamps are most likely the pattern fitted to TX3239 from new. There are many gaps in the surviving photos and there are no good chassis/engine photos contemporary with TX3239. There are also surprisingly few period photos of Vanden Plas sports four-seater, those surviving either being of non-standard cars (in particular FB3309 built for a Siamese prince) or of a couple of early cars (chassis ST3006 and ST3015) or of a very late car (chassis AD3668).





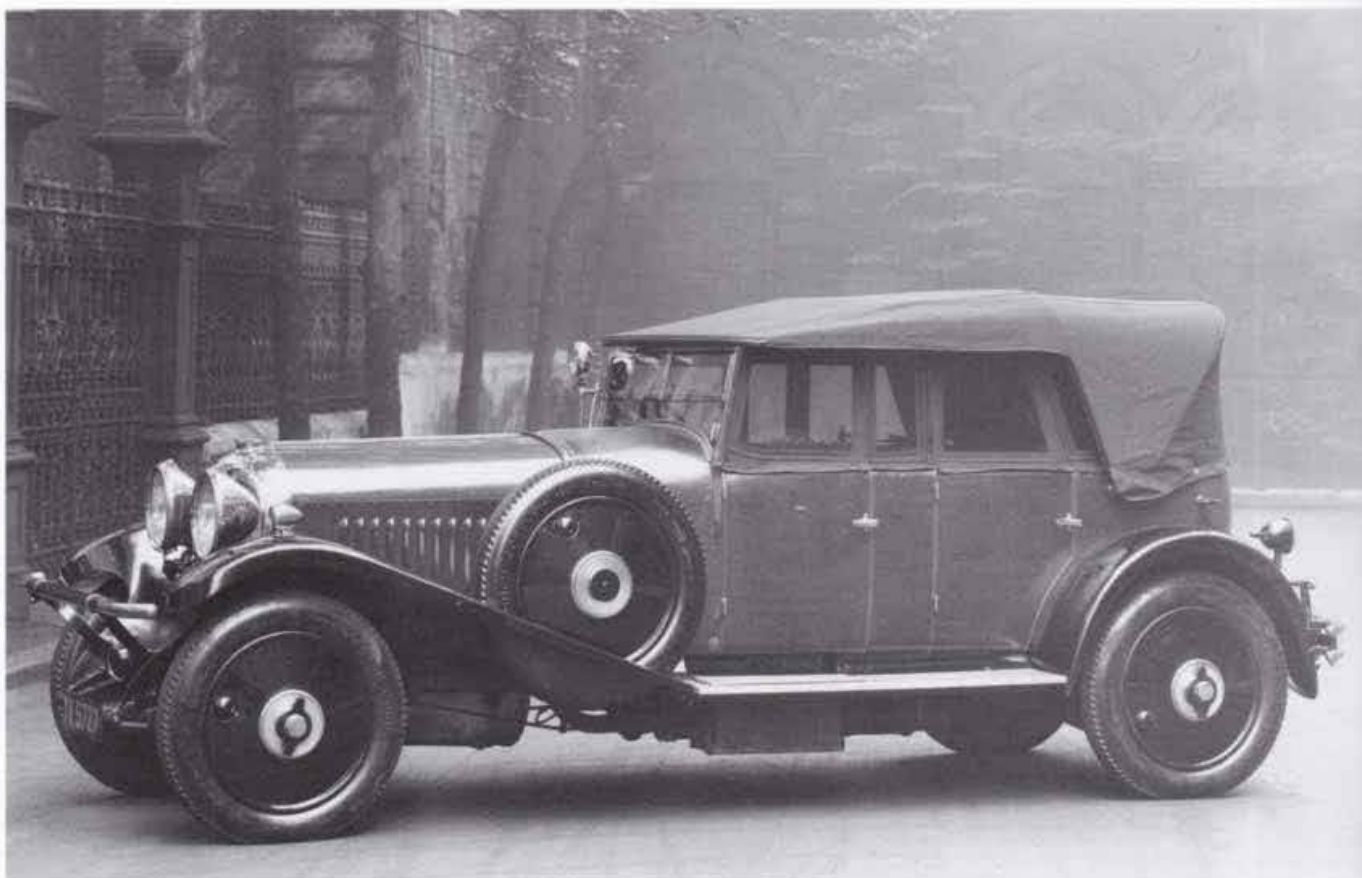
### SPORTING FOUR-SEATER £1,295

**T**HIS is a very attractive design following the well-known lines of the Three Litre model. The bodies are covered with fabric, ensuring lightness and flexibility, but can be supplied to order with aluminium panels, if required. Three doors are fitted, the hand brake lever is outside and the front seats are separate and adjustable. An efficient set of side curtains

is included, stored when not in use behind the rear squab, a tonneau cover for the rear compartment is supplied and the spare wheel is carried on a strong bracket over the petrol tank. The screen is straight with divided top half and fitted with Triplex glass. A reasonable choice of colours both in the fabric panels and leather upholstery is available.

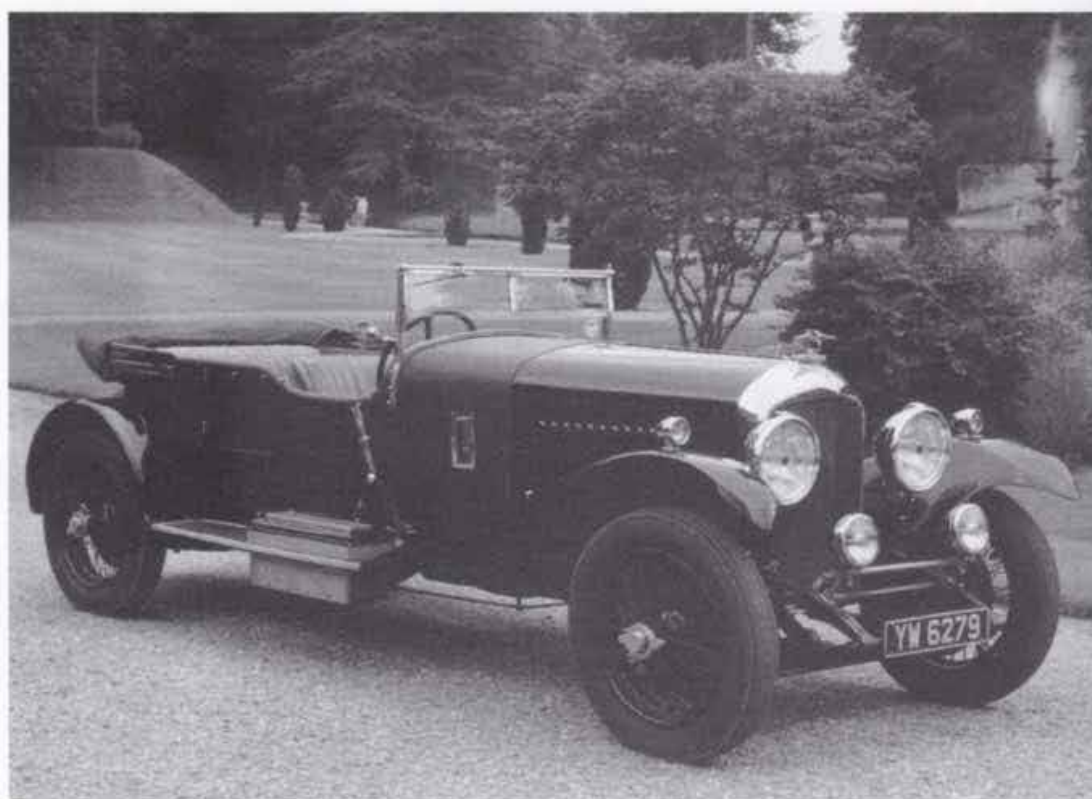


## COACHWORK ON VINTAGE BENTLEYS



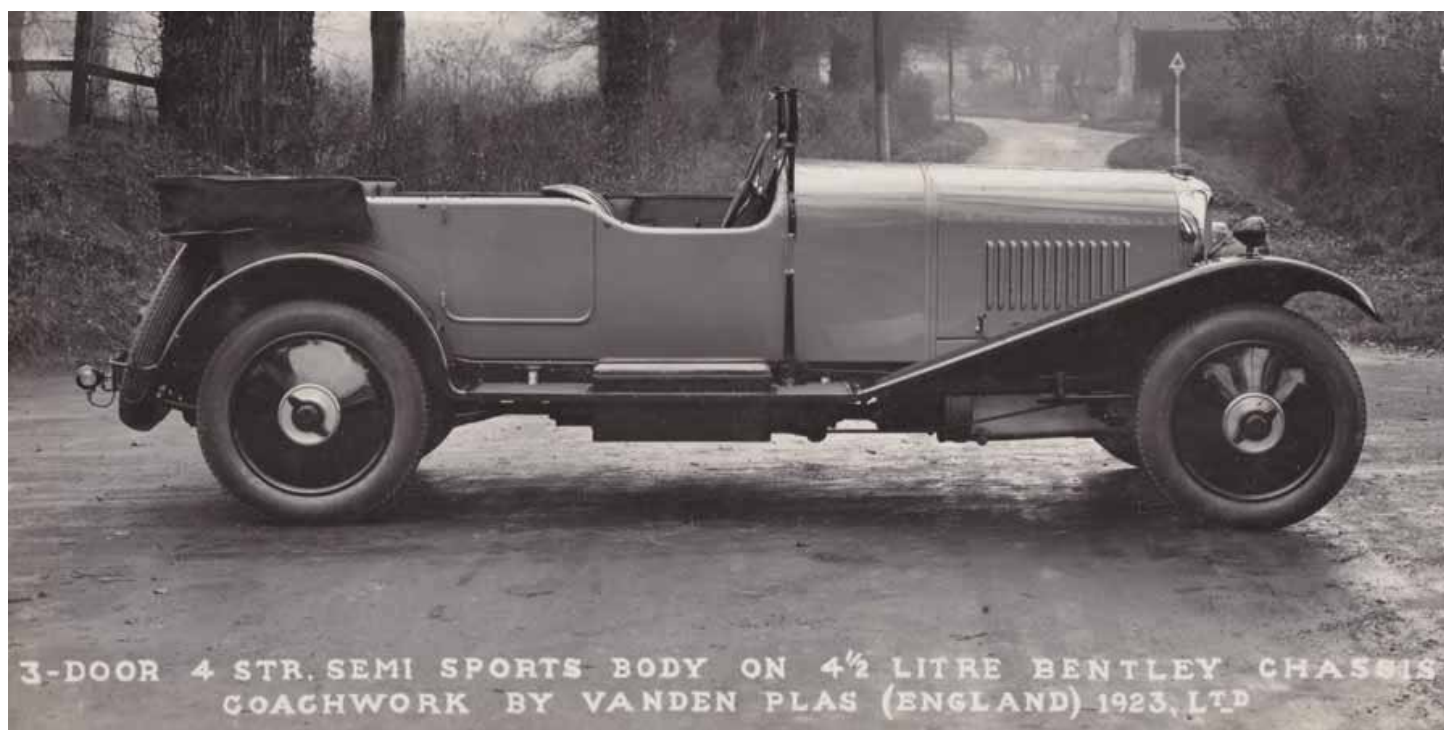
*A Harrison tourer on a 4½ Litre chassis (HF3184). Although the panels appear to be fabric-covered, it is unlikely that the car is of Weymann construction as by this time, mid-1928, Harrison were wedded to their patent "British Flexible" system.*

*There is everything to be said for restoring these cars to the same standard, and the same specification, as when they left the factory. This is a Vanden Plas tourer on 4½ Litre chassis TX3239, from mid-1928*



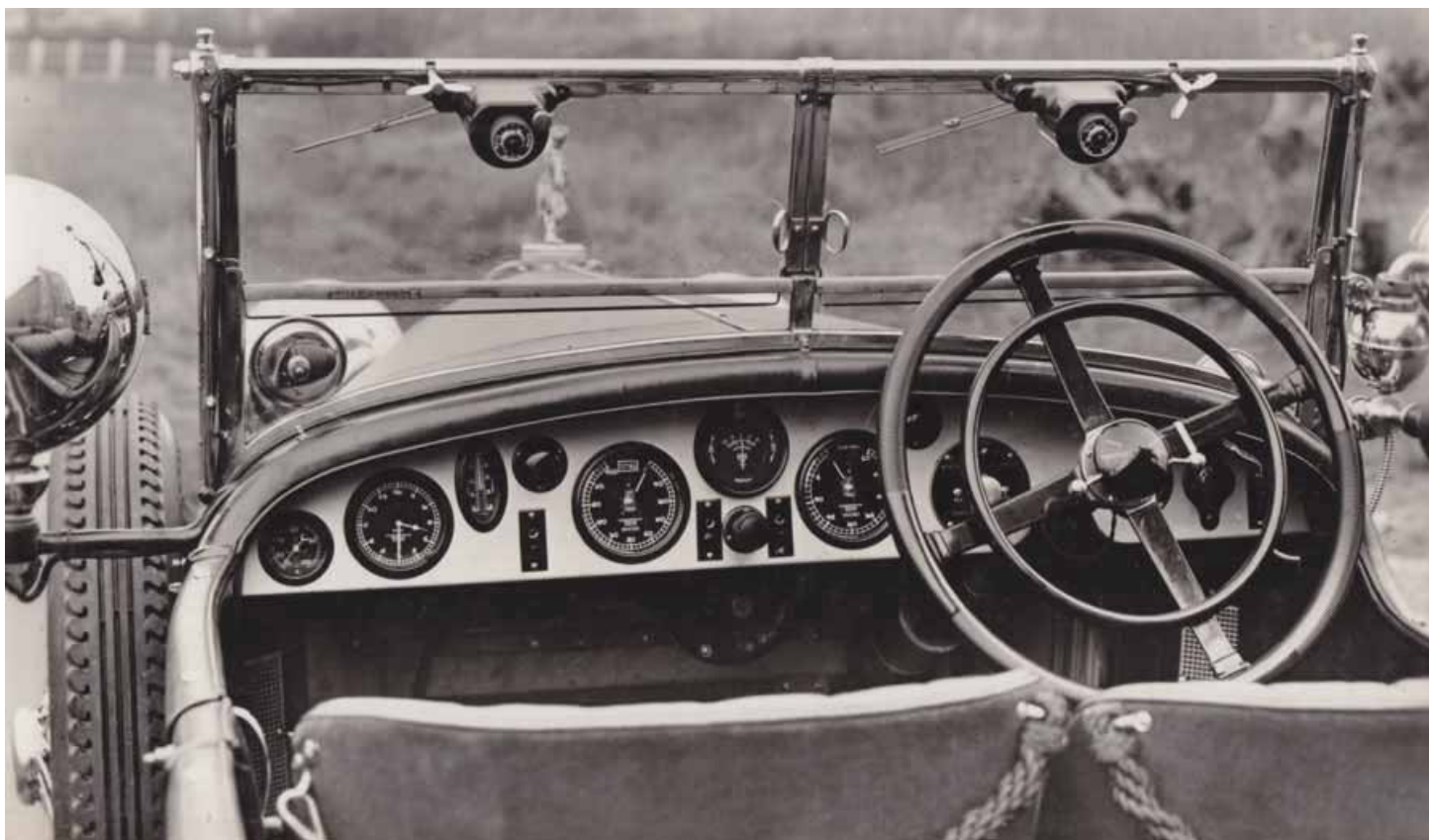
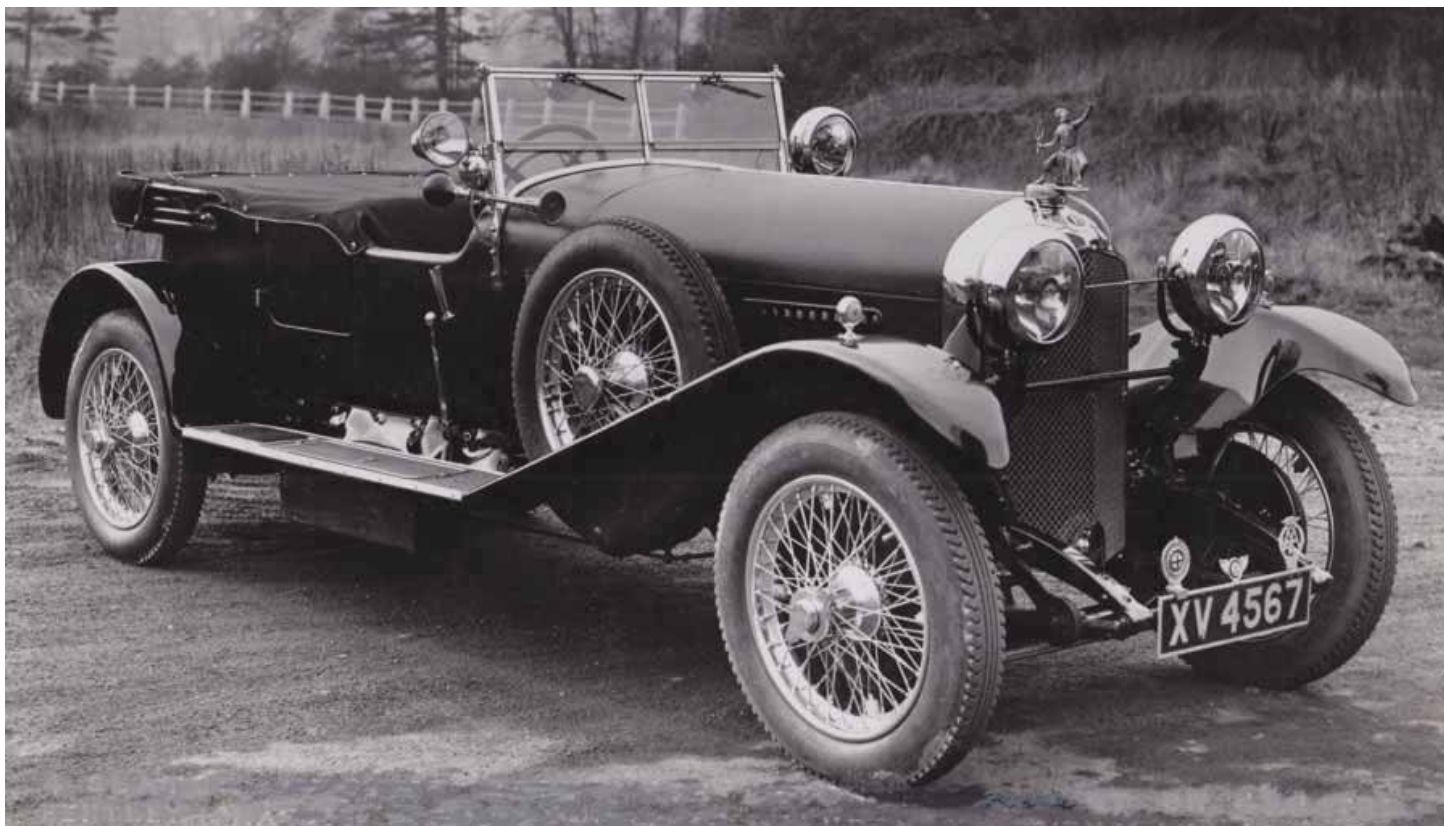
(Opposite) From Bentley Motors' catalogue, for the standard sports VdP four-seater body. 148 of these were built, out of a production run of 665 cars. Roughly 70 survive. The photo is of a very early chassis, the body design changed slightly over the years but Bentley Motors used this photo in all the 4½ Litre catalogues. (Above) TX3239 as featured in Nick Walker's book *Coachwork on Vintage Bentleys*. By the time this photo was taken the Barker headlamp dipping mechanism had been removed.





(Above) There are few surviving period photos of Vanden Plas sports four-seater bodies on the 4½ Litre chassis. The top photo shows an early chassis ST3015 with a metal-paneled body with extra deep rear door, the lower photo a late chassis AD3668 with a fabric-covered body. The principal differences are in the windscreens (raked to the later car) and the toolbox (flush fitting to the later car).





This is chassis FB3309, a slightly later chassis than **TX3239**, fitted with a special sports four-seater body for H.E. Chao Phya Rama Raghob of Siam. This has a Barker dipping mechanism as fitted to TX3239, but with special Grebel headlamps. The instrument panel is broadly similar to the standard panel but with extra switches and with the instruments lettered in Siamese.





Period instrument panel photos are extremely difficult to come by, these are all later photos. These show two later cars (XF3506 and XF3509 respectively, above) and a near-contemporary car (PM3254, right). The arrangement is broadly similar, but with some adjustments depending on whether a rev counter was fitted originally (this was an extra). XF3506, top, is standard with no rev counter, with the correct Jaeger clock, Smiths bezel switch/ammeter, oval Hobson Telegauge, and pull-out dash-lamp. XF3509 has a rev counter in place of the clock and lacks a Ki-Gass. PM3254 (right) has the Smiths bezel switch/ammeter in the place of the clock, a Jaeger rev counter added, and the clock pushed over to the right of the steering wheel. All three cars have the correct oval Hobson Telegauge.







(Above) Three photos of TX3239 circa 1989 when owned by Brian Verrall, and a fourth taken on a North American Vintage Bentley Meet in the 1990s. The Barker dipping mechanism can be seen between the headlamps with the operating lever outside the body behind the handbrake. The Lucas P100 headlamps are most likely a later alteration.



(Left) Instrument panel. This is more or less to standard 4½ Litre pattern, with Jaeger instrumentation. The Jaeger clock is a chronograph rather than the standard clock. The Smiths bezel switch/ammeter should be black face and the dashlamp should be a Homa pull-out lamp. The rev counter is driven from the back of the dynamo and not as standard from a drive box fitted to the front of the camchest. The Ki-Gass is not connected up and the Hobson Tele gauge is missing. (Right) Original Bentley Motors switchplate, numbered TX3239. The switches are not original, this is common as the original switches were not a good design. The gap between the steering column and the instrument panel is far too tight (it should be about ¼").





(Left) Detail of the welded-in reinforcing plate to the chassis top flange, nearside, going into the wheel arch.  
(Right) Detail of the plate clutch with plate clutch pedal shaft fitted by Bentleys in 1931.



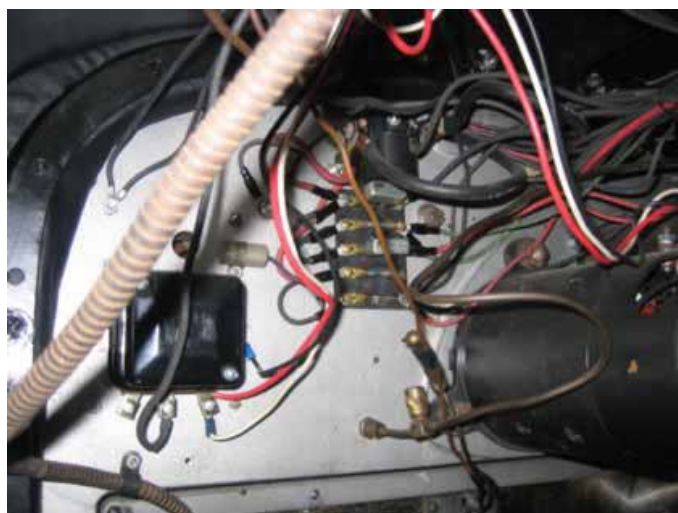
(Above) Vanden Plas body number 1486, stamped into the longitudinal runner to the rear floorboard (left) and the bottom timber to the nearside in front of and to the left of the front passenger seat (right). These numbers were stamped to ensure that floorboards, seats, windscreens, etc went back to the correct bodyshell after going through detail shops at Vanden Plas' works at Kingsbury.



(Left) Original pattern lock as used by Vanden Plas with offset catch (the modern replicas have a central catch).  
(Right) Original pattern Vanden Plas seat runners, heavy bronze section, with original pattern VdP drop catches engaging in drilled steel plates screwed to the floorboards.



(Left) Back axle banjo and differential casing, both numbered TX3239. The ratio, 15/53, is the standard 3.53:1 ratio for a 4½ Litre. (Right) Nearside rear detail, showing the early pattern B&D friction shock absorbers fitted as standard to the 1928 model 4½ Litre, and standard 4½ Litre tank but with the side filler neck blanked off and extra top filler added (this is a common modification as the original filler neck is a very poor design).

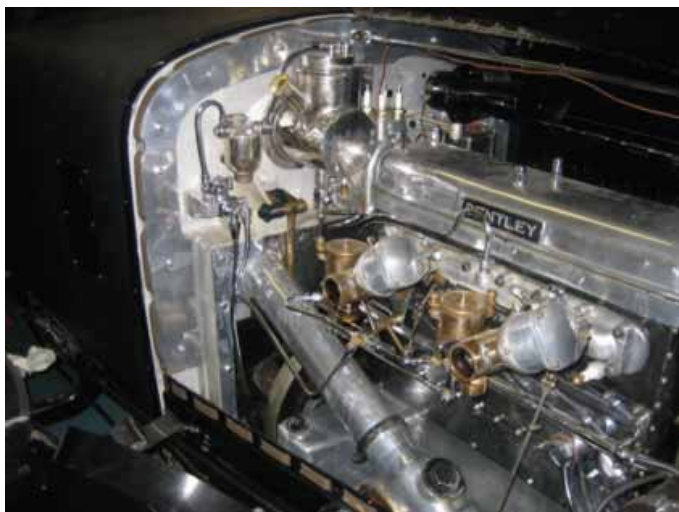


(Left) Maker's cast plate fitted to the hood mechanism. This is a good indicator of an original hood frame, as replica hood frames usually have a flat steel or brass disc. (Right) The wiring beneath the scuttle is largely modern.



(Left) Detail of front axle beam, stamped TX3239. (Right) Offside front suspension/brake detail. The brakes are the early non-servo pattern, correct for a 1928 model 4½ Litre, as is the early pattern B&D friction shock absorber with long upper arm (the later pattern have a much shorter upper arm).





(Left) Engine compartment offside, showing the early pattern bulkhead with wiring conduits running around the outer periphery of the bulkhead casting. The tap arrangement below the Zenith filter is for the modern pump arrangement. The Ki-Gass pipework is fitted to the inlet manifold but isn't connected to the instrument panel control. The SU G5 "sloper" carburetors are correct for a 1928 model 4½ Litre. (Right) Steering box, numbered TX3239.



(Left) Nearside of the engine compartment, showing, correct for a 1928 4½ Litre, ML magnetos (either ER4 or GR4), thermostat housing, Smiths starter motor, round flange exhaust manifold, Smiths cut-out and fuse box to the front face of the bulkhead. (Right) Nearside engine bearer showing the original engine number TX3241 and the original pattern clip for the starting handle.





Since this report was originally written in 2010 TX3239 has been rebuilt again, I presume in Argentina, in the form seen here. A cutaway has been added to the body to the nearside, a long-range petrol tank added with the spare wheel relocated to the nearside, and a fold-flat windscreen added. The rear wings have been shortened similar to those fitted by Harrison, and the scuttle panelled in metal. Bonnet straps have been added and the headlights are now Marchals. Double front shock absorbers are fitted together with driving lights with stoneguards, and a stoneguard to the radiator. The exterior is still black, with the interior retrimmed in green.



TX3239 as now. The hood fittings have been retained with the hood itself removed. The front view shows the double shock absorbers, extra driving lights, and stoneguards to these lights and to the radiator.



Details of TX3239 as now, showing the Barker dipping lever and mechanism, new running boards, double bonnet straps and metal panelling to the top of the scuttle and the fold-flat windscreen. The rear view shows the long range tank with the original Bentley filler cap to the nearside, with a Hobson sender gauge to the offside. The rear wings are similar to those made by Harrisons for chassis HF3193, delivered new to Argentina.





The instrument panel as now, with two aeroscreens behind the fold-flat screen and a Winged B Bentley mascot to the radiator cap. The switchplate has been refinished in black, with the Barker dipping mechanism bar retained with the Barker maker's plate.





TX3239 along with other Bentleys on the Viaje Machu Pichu.

Clare Hay 5 May 2014

Clare Hay.