

QUALITY REMAINS WHEN PRICE FORGOTTEN

It was September 1979 when I took my sons Andrew and Christopher with me to look at a 1933 Derby Bentley 3½ Itr Park Ward Saloon. (Reg No. BLU 133 Chassis No. B2CW). We arrived at the rural location at Chartwood, Gatwick, to be met by the elderly owner, a retired aircraft engineer, who told us his hobby was rebuilding engines.



1933 Bentley 3½ BLU133 Original owner Francis Day, cabaret singer and film star

He had completely rebuilt the Derby Bentley engine, which looked new sitting in an engine cradle in his workshop. That was the good bit. When he showed us the rest of the car in a tumbled down garage my heart sank. The radiator and bonnet were off, windows broken, the inside a wreck. My offer of £1,450.00, which was considerably less than the asking price, was accepted as I had the cash with me and a trailer behind the Land Rover. I collected the engine later in one of my transit vans. Back at the warehouse/workshop Bob was less than enthusiastic. "Don't worry Bob you told me everything can be mended." With the engine sitting in the chassis, the radiator and bonnet fitted and washed off, it looked better, well not much.



EVERYTHING IS FOR SALE

The 1933 20/25 Limousine (JJ2309) and the 20/25 Tourer (Reg. No. ALD 389) together with the 1973 Peugeot 504 family estate sadly went towards my divorce settlement to Carole in 1980. I just managed to afford a 1968 Morris Oxford which lasted me for longer than I would have wished. I still had the Rolls Royce Phantom, which was very popular as a wedding car but I did, however, feel that I would have to sell it to raise some capital at some time. At about this time a Rolls Royce Silver Shadow of 1971 vintage pulled up at the garage. The driver had seen my advertisement for a set of Rolls Royce 20/25 wheel discs for £25.00 (worth ten times that now). Having paid for them he enquired about the Bentley 3½ (Reg. No. BLU133). I told him it could be his for £2,500.00. He wrote a cheque and said that he would collect the car in three weeks. I also mentioned the Phantom II might be for sale. I said I would let it go for £15,500.00. "I am interested," he said but I would have to wait for a few weeks until an £80,000.00 deal went through. He took his briefcase from the Silver Shadow and left me with headed papers of companies he owned and their various contact phone numbers.

A few weeks later on a Friday, mid afternoon, on the bank holiday weekend, he turned up, again in the