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1930 BENTLEY SPEED SIX GURNEY NUTTING WEYMANN SALOON

Chassis Number: NH2741

London society in the 'Roaring Twenties' - as it has become known - must have been a thrilling era in which to live; an age of glamour, flapper girls, film stars and the all-new jazz music. Onto this heady stage the Cricklewood Bentley was born and was soon to become the 'must-have' accessory for all the great and good in town.

The Speed Six was introduced to this dazzling climate at the Olympia Motor Show in October 1928 as a sports version of the 6.5 litre Standard Six road car. The Standard Six was never intended as a sporting chassis but results achieved on-track during the 1928 racing season made it painfully clear that the 4.5 litre engine was rapidly becoming underpowered in comparison to the competition. Given this, proprietor, W.O. Bentley, allocated an early Standard Six chassis to the company's racing shop so that it could be developed for the 1929 season. Le Mans rules required that cars raced must be production catalogue models. This ensured that the Speed Six was quickly introduced for sale to the general public. Out of 544 6½-litre examples made in Cricklewood, just 182 were to Speed Six specification.

Differences between the speed and standard versions include an uprated engine - complete with twin SU HVG5 carburettors - providing an increase in power from 147 to 160bhp. Visually, a new radiator shape and bulkhead with parallel sides rather than the tapered radiator of the Standard Six was fitted. On the racetrack, the Speed Sixes were phenomenally successful with Barnato and Birkin winning the 24 Heures Du Mans in 1929 and Barnato and Kidston taking the honours at La Sarthe in 1930. The 1930 success was the fourth in succession at Le Mans; quite some feat. So proud was W.O. Bentley of the Speed Six that he declared it his favourite car.

This example, chassis NH2741, was dispatched from Bentley headquarters to coachmaker, Gurney Nutting & Company Limited of Chelsea on 27 November 1929 with instructions to produce a Weymann saloon body. Known for their stylish designs, Gurney Nutting was a fashionable choice, clothing one quarter of all the Speed Sixes built and holding a royal warrant to boot. Of those Speed Sixes that Gurney Nutting bodied, just sixteen Weymann saloon bodies are thought to have been built on 11'6"/11'8.5" wheelbase chassis, of which NH2741 is the sole survivor. Furthermore, there are only four surviving Speed Sixes with four-door Weymann saloon bodies in existence, one by H.J. Mulliner, two by Freestone & Webbs and this one by Gurney Nutting.

Body completed, NH2741 was delivered to its first owner, a Mr. M.F.B Ottley in Canterbury, Kent. It was Ottley's second 6.5 litre Bentley, having earlier owned a Standard Six example. Period service records show that the Bentley's second owner was HSG Buckmaster of Gerards Cross and the third A.P.F. Dempster of Leatherhead, Surrey, who acquired the Bentley in April 1934. A couple of years later, NH2741 was purchased by Nelville Melto Bligh of Bedford. He used the Bentley sparingly, running it only during the summer months and retiring it completely between 1940-47 and again in 1948.

In 1958, a car dealer, Performance Cars, advertised NH2741 in July's edition of *Motorsport* magazine. Lieutenant Colonel Brainerd, an American Air Force man serving in the UK at the time of the Suez crisis, spotted the Bentley, fell in love with it and shipped it to his home in the US. He lovingly maintained the Speed Six for some thirty years, preserving its originality whilst also keeping NH2741 roadworthy. In the late 1980s Englishman David Low, who wished to acquire the Bentley and bring it home to the UK, approached Brainerd with an offer. Mission completed, NH2741 has resided in Berkshire, UK until recently, being used as family transport to and from the Isle of Wight for annual family holidays and various jaunts to Bordeaux in France. Having been painstakingly looked after by Elmdown Engineering through the decades, the Speed Six is accompanied with a large and detailed history file, detailing much of the work completed, amongst other period documents and a recent inspection report by pre-war Bentley authority, Dr. Clare Hay.

This outstandingly original Bentley, which as a very late Speed Six was constructed with all the Le Mans-bred updates, including a stronger camshaft and a C type gearbox, retains its remarkably original leather interior and exterior fabric. It has been fitted with a new high ratio axle by specialist, Graham Moss and is regularly used by the owner, being a solid and reliable family car. Recently awarded third in the prestigious Prewar Preservation Class at the 2017 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, NH2741 presents a special opportunity to acquire a one-of-a-kind and unrepeatable Speed Six Bentley saloon. The elegance of the Roaring Twenties awaits!

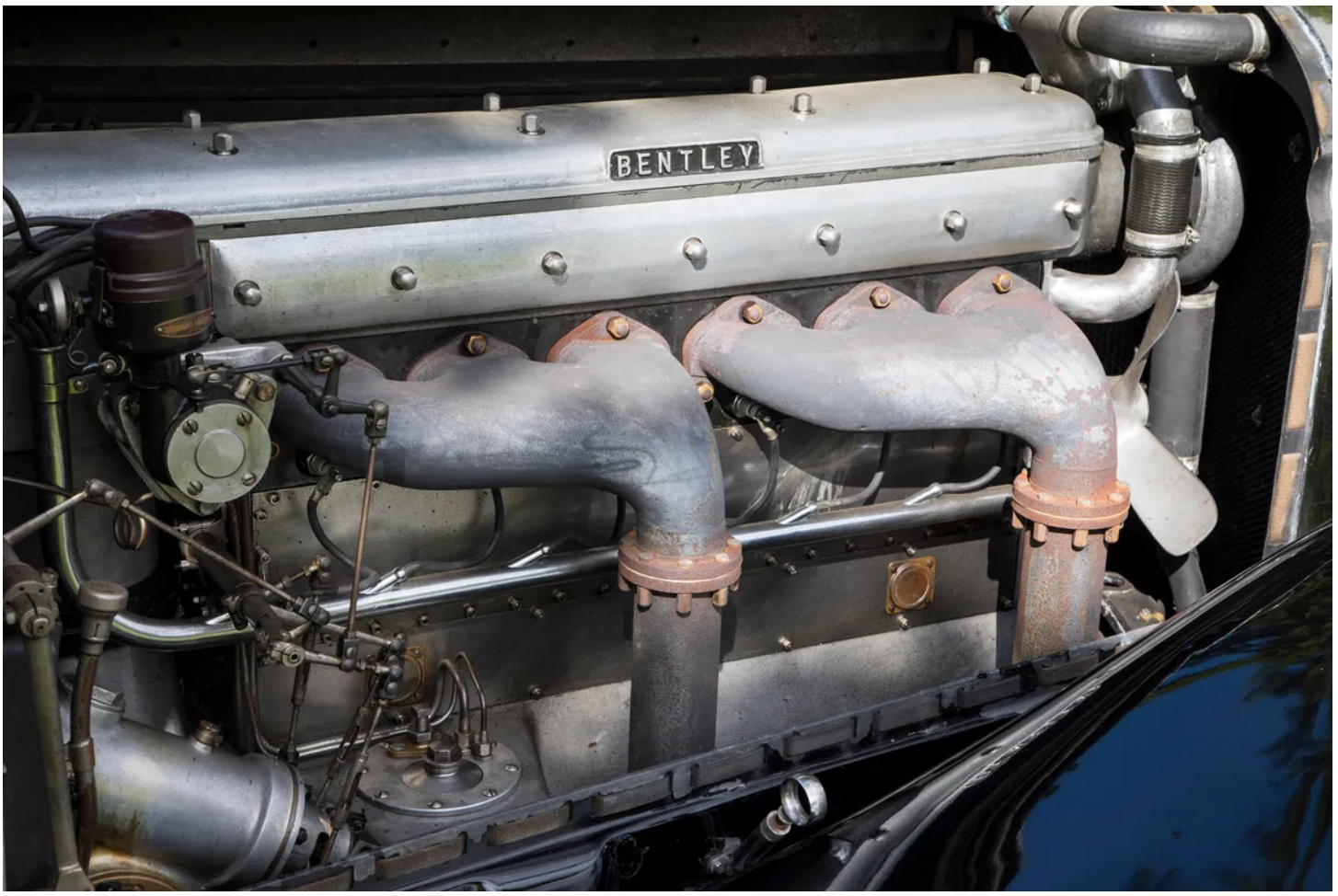
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