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'R' Type Bentley Continental Reunion - Silverstone August 2002

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Having set themselves what they felt was a totally “Unrealistic target of 50 examples”, the Bentley Drivers Club were delighted with a commitment by the owners of over one third of the original 208 cars to be present at the annual BDC Silverstone race meeting, for the 50th anniversary of the model.

Based on a MkVI chassis in 1951, the prototype car, affectionately known as ‘Olga’ after its registration OLG 490, drew heavily on not only Bentley’s pre-war Streamline and Corniche designs, but also on the lightweight ‘Superleggera’ type bodywork of the Italian coachbuilders, which featured an aluminium body over a relatively lightweight metal framework. With a big-bore 4,566cc engine, streamlined bodywork (better than the later E-Type Jaguar!) and a weight loss of 3 cwt over the standard version, the car achieved 119mph in testing and, when production started in 1952, immediately became one of the most desirable cars in the world.

Due to the magnificent work by Christian Hueber and David Sulzberger of the Continental Register all but 6 models are now ‘known’, and over 80 were present at Silverstone. This may well turn out to be one of the largest gatherings of the model anywhere in the world. It should also be noted that the bespoke luxury goods manufacturer Dunhill, having chosen the ‘Conti’ as the personification of British elegance and style, have given the Club and Register tremendous support in this undertaking.

Action on track was, as usual, exciting and redolent of the very finest British traditions whilst the superb display of Continentals in the paddock gave one hours of enjoyment. Your correspondent was particularly taken with some of the ‘individual’ radiator mascots, some of which are shown below.

They truly are one of the most desirable cars ever made and the greatest post-war Bentley.



For further information on the Bentley Drivers Club please visit www.bdcl.co.uk/

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