
1934 Bentley 3 1/2 Litre

Lot sold	USD 54 275 - 81 413 GBP 40 000 - 60 000 (listed)	Drive	LHD
Year of manufacture	1934	Condition	Used
Chassis number	B20CR	Location	
Number of seats	2	Fuel type	Petrol
Drivetrain	2wd	Exterior colour	Other
Lot number	536		

Description

1934 Bentley 3½-Litre Sports Saloon

Coachwork by Park Ward

Registration no. JN 4933

Chassis no. B20CR

'One's impression, when seeing the new 3½ litre Bentley for the first time, is that here we have an absolute thoroughbred. Its low build, its graceful lines, and yet sturdy appearance, all make for a car capable of high speed, combined with the utmost safety and comfort. This impression was intensified when I had an opportunity of handling the car under very adverse road conditions.' - Sir Malcolm Campbell, writing in *The Field*.

Although Rolls-Royce's acquisition of Bentley Motors in 1931 robbed the latter of its independence, it did at least ensure the survival of the Bentley name. Launched at Ascot in August 1933, the first of the 'Derby Bentleys', as they would come to be known, continued the marque's sporting associations but in a manner even more refined than before. Even W O Bentley himself acknowledged that the 3½-Litre model was the finest ever to bear his name. Based on the contemporary Rolls-Royce 20/25hp, the 3½-Litre Bentley was slightly shorter in the wheelbase and employed a tuned (115bhp) twin-SU-carburettor version of the former's overhead-valve six. Add to this already remarkable package an all-synchromesh four-speed gearbox and servo assisted brakes, and the result was a vehicle offering the driver effortless sports car performance in almost absolute silence. 'The Silent

Sports Car', as it was swiftly dubbed, had few peers as a tireless long-distance tourer, combining as it did traditional Rolls-Royce refinement with Bentley performance and handling. In total, 1,183 3½-Litre models were manufactured and a further 1,235 of the successor 4¼-Litre.

The Derby Bentley was, of course, an exclusively coachbuilt automobile and as befitted its sporting nature was almost always fitted with owner-driver saloon or drophead coupé coachwork, the 'standard' designs being the work of Park Ward. Of the 2,418 examples manufactured (including the subsequent 4¼-Litre model) almost 50% were bodied by Park Ward, that offered here being one of them. Founded in 1919, Park Ward had had forged its not inconsiderable reputation bodying Bentleys, Rolls-Royces and other quality makes, and in 1933 received the ultimate 'vote of confidence' when Rolls-Royce bought a minority stake in the Willesden-based coachbuilder, taking full control six years later.

Chassis number 'B20CR' was bodied with Park Ward's 'standard saloon' coachwork and delivered to Arthur Mulliner Ltd for their customer, Maitland Keddies Esq of the Keddies department store chain, the guaranteed being issued on 6th November 1934. Copy chassis cards on file record three further owners, the last of whom, Dr A B K Wilson, acquired the Bentley in July 1952.

The Bentley spent some time in France during 1989 - 2007 before being repatriated to the UK in 2007 by the Real Car Company. The current owner purchased the Bentley from them in October 2007. Works carried out since then include installing a Fiennes full-flow spin-off oil filter; rewiring the electrics (done by Philip Cordrey); replacing the fuel pumps; new front road springs; and fitting a new voltage regulator box. The body appears sound, the doors opening and closing correctly, while the black paintwork is believed to be (largely) original, as are the seats (the interior headlining has been replaced). The chassis has been oiled regularly and the car runs and drives very well, the engine displaying good oil pressure. Removal of the sunroof, and a cigar lighter fitted inside the glove box are the only notified deviations from factory specification. Accompanying documentation consists of an old French Carte Grise (issued 1989), a V5C Registration Certificate, and the aforementioned copy chassis cards. Greatly enjoyed by the enthusiast owner, this stylish Bentley sports saloon is only offered for sale due to his downsizing his collection.

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