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# The Medcalf Times

WILLIAM MEDCALF LIMITED – The leading company in the world for the preservation of vintage Bentleys

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The Medcalf team – 10 cars prepared, supported and finished the Benjafield's 24



William encouraging Paul Carter to bathe in the warm glow (and chilled champagne) of his Benjafield's 24 success.

## All in the preparation

From a young age William Medcalf asked why nobody was racing vintage Bentleys like they used to.

"These cars were originally built for endurance competition, not the 20 minutes sprints which feature so prominently on programmes today". It's been a long held ambition of his to run such a test of stamina and, to prove that it could be done, he took two cars to Portimao in 2013 and ran them for 24 hours. As he predicted, the machinery stood up well as did their drivers who finished more than enthused by the prospect of more to come.

The word was out and the message was clear, this can be done if you want it to and three Benjafield's club members agreed to get the wheels rolling and to back the not for profit venture.

This was only the beginning though and there was a lot of work to be done before the flag dropped.

In their heyday the Bentley team was most certainly a force to be reckoned with. During the 1920's and 1930's they regularly notched up wins and podium placings sweeping all before them with dazzling driving and impressive sportsmanship.

As a team, they knew that reliability was as important as out and out speed so they placed a huge amount of importance on the preparation of the cars in the workshop. As a fully backed factory outfit they had access to brand new cars, the most highly qualified people and cutting edge engineering yet even they only prepared up to four cars for any one event.

With this in mind the slightly more modest but equally enthusiastic Medcalf team of 12 decided to up their game and took 10 of these same ninety-year-old cars and pre-

pared them to the same high specification that the original ones enjoyed for the upcoming Benjafield's 24 hour event. Gallons of midnight oil were burned in the Liss workshop to not only ensure the cars smooth running through what was sure to be a severe test, but to also bring them up to date to satisfy modern regulations.

During the 24 hours, the same team – with a little help from their friends, operated a strict schedule of servicing which meant that of the 10 'Medcalf' cars which had left the starting grid, all of them took the chequered flag the following day.

Understandably, William was very pleased with the result. "When you drive into the night it's majestic and then as dawn arrives it's extraordinary. I learned so much about the cars during this event. It showed what they are capable of if they're prepared properly and driven in the correct manner".

### From the editor

The pitter-patter of rain is a constant presence inside William Medcalf's workshop on a soaking November's morning. Around the cars exists a quiet but determined hum of activity, and it seems obvious that with weather like outside, today should be about tinkering, shaping, machining and ...well, hitting things hard with a hammer! It is not, surely, the

moment to be careering around the countryside in a million-pound pre-war Bentley. But my suspicions are alerted when a 1925 Super Sports abruptly bellows into life with its flatulent throb, and they're confirmed when William shouts across with a grin: "Here, take this cap. You might need it..."

There then follows a frankly hilarious passenger ride around the lanes that surround the Medcalf workshop. Exactly where we go I couldn't tell you, because there's rainwa-

ter in my eyes and my vision is a little blurred with the beat of the big 'four', but the greenery truly does flash past in a blur, and the overriding thought is simply thus: 'How can a near 90-year old car be this fast?' Cold, wind swept, but with a grin that stretches from one side of my face to the M25, we return to the workshop via a lurid powerslide and suddenly all is silent. I get it now. There really is nothing quite like a vintage Bentley...





Philippa Spiller at the wheel with Andrew Bailey on the clocks during the long lava field drive that was day 10 of the Vintage Cape Horn Rally.

# Cape crusaders

## Bentleys brave brutal gravel roads for Argentine success



Martin Hunt. Busy with the spanners in the underground parking lot at Termas de Chillan.

The Vintage Cape Horn is a new event in the historic rally calendar, taking place between mid-November and early December, and traversing the length of Argentina. The Medcalf stable had prepared two Bentleys for the event.

Martin and Olivia Hunt tackled the event with their usual gusto, but things didn't always go smoothly. The rough gravel roads played havoc with tyres, causing punctures galore for the competitors. Martin was to be found in the evening with all four wheels plus two spares off his car, cleaning the rims by hand and fitting new inner tubes. The hard graft paid off, though, and an excellent first in class was the Hunt's reward.

Just as impressive was Andrew and Philippa's third in class, given that it was Philippa's first serious endurance rally event on maps. Thanks to the stunning scenery of Argentina, and the challenge of the stages, it was an unforgettable event for all.



Philippa Spiller refuelling the Bentley from a can on the road from Esquel to Los Antiguos. This event tested the range of the 'smaller' cars.



# Full steam ahead to Scotland

## Eight Medcalf prepared Bentleys charge to Gleneagles

An incredible eight vintage Bentleys prepared by Team Medcalf set off on the Flying Scotsman rally, including a 'works' entry for William and new navigator David Kirkham.

The results sheet shows that the works car helped to win the team prize, and that Medcalf and Kirkham were fastest on almost every test, took the class and the overall win, in an emphatic demonstration of the power of good preparation.

However, that doesn't recall the moment of high drama that could have so nearly put a dramatic end to Medcalf's challenge of the toughest historic rally in Britain - and perhaps put Kirkham off the maps for good. William takes up the story: "It's something I think

David will remember for a long time! We set off first on a stage at Belvoir Castle. It was a wet morning, and the tarmac was very 'green'. On the third bend, the Bentley - travelling at quite a pace - left the Tarmac and headed across someone's quite fine lawn. We managed to get it straightened up just in time for a big dip at the bottom of the hill. The car, and us, were thrown up into the air, at which point David looked up and remarked that we should be somewhere over there. It was quite a moment!"

Recovering quickly to the task in hand, Medcalf and Kirkham surged on to the end of the stage, finishing just one second off the target time despite their unplanned aerobatics.



To the Manor Born. Louise Cartledge shows how to arrive in style at Raby Castle during the Flying Scotsman.



William and David Kirkham savour the moment in Gleneagles. After three punishing days the Super Sports did them proud and came in ahead of the pack.



The Endurance Rally Association  
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**The Endurance Rally Association** congratulates all those who ensured they were running across the track for the start of 24 hours of vintage racing. A great idea and congratulations to William Medcalf and his gallant team in making it all happen. Thinking of challenging new events is something we know all about at The Endurance Rally Association. We are off for ten days down Adventure Road with our Sahara Challenge, driving from Madrid to Marrakesh - and hope all those who have raced for 24 hours will now come and join us in an endurance event with a difference.



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All welcome. Modern classics enjoying themselves on a vintage Bentley track day with Katerina getting to know her Austin Healey.



Taking the racing line and entering the pits. Drivers used this as a shakedown for the 24 hour event getting to know the limits of their cars.

# Goodwood track days in the sun

A real highlight of the year was the Medcalf Collection's Goodwood track days in March and July. Friends were invited to bring their cars and to try out some new. The resulting automotive mishmash saw vintage Bentleys sharing track space with everything from a Ferrari F40 to a classic racing Mini Cooper S.

However, this year the event in July was more than just good fun at the ever-impressive Goodwood venue: it was also an opportunity to prepare for the Benjafield 24 hour event to be held later in the year. To that end, Medcalf engineers used the time wisely, practising pitstops and monitoring maintenance schedules that would become crucial for the safety of car and driver over 24 hours. It was also a chance to school the 24 hour drivers in the art of making the big Bentleys last the distance: a 'no brakes and top gear only' style was taught, with racing lines that conserve momentum and unload the strain on the cars.





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A P A S S I O N R E A L I S E D

# Back to school

## Tech day with BDC

For the past decade William Medcalf has held technical days for the W. O. Bentley Memorial Foundation. They are always a popular fixture in the calendar, and it's not hard to see why. With countless great cars to look at, lunch, and the opportunity to hear Medcalf engineers speak about various technical aspects, it's a fun day of learning. The added attraction this year was the new engine dyno, which was demonstrated by running up a freshly built unit from the engine department.

The day does have a more serious side, as William explains: "It's all about promoting good, safe stewardship of the cars – more important than ever with no MOTs. I believe none of us own Bentleys; we are only caretakers for the next generation. We want to see owners take responsibility for their cars, and if in some small way we can encourage that to happen, then I'm happy".



Pay attention at the back. Yet another well attended seminar followed by a good lunch.





*Out of Africa. Keith and Norah Ashworth make light work of the Classic Safari Challenge.*

# Classic Safari Rally



*Here they are gliding through the Namibian desert between Fish River Canyon and Clanwilliam.*

## Ashworths' African Adventure

Keith Ashworth got out of bed one morning and decided what he really needed in life was a vintage Bentley. A visit to the Medcalf Collection resulted in the acquisition of a 4½ Litre then preparation by the Medcalf team for the Classic Safari Challenge, a marathon of an event over 20 days and 8,000 kilometres around South Africa.

With big game and stunning vistas for company, Keith and wife Norah set off on an amazing adventure, and although Keith is more used to racing a Caterham – a car more different to rallying than a Bentley would be hard to imagine – that didn't stop him claiming victory in his maiden event, ahead of a Dodge and a Lagonda on the podium.

## Brands Minifest



### Mini magic at Brands Hatch

The Medcalf business may well be wall-to-wall vintage Bentleys, but there's always room for a different strand of car appreciation, and one such joy for William is the world of historic Minis. In particular is a 'Works' Swift-one Cooper S that he races in things like the Spa 6 hour. There was just time in May to squeeze in the Brands Hatch Minifest. "I love to support the festival", says William. "It's very competitive, and it's door handles all the way. Funnily enough, the driving style is very similar to that of a Bentley: it's all about sliding and no brakes!"

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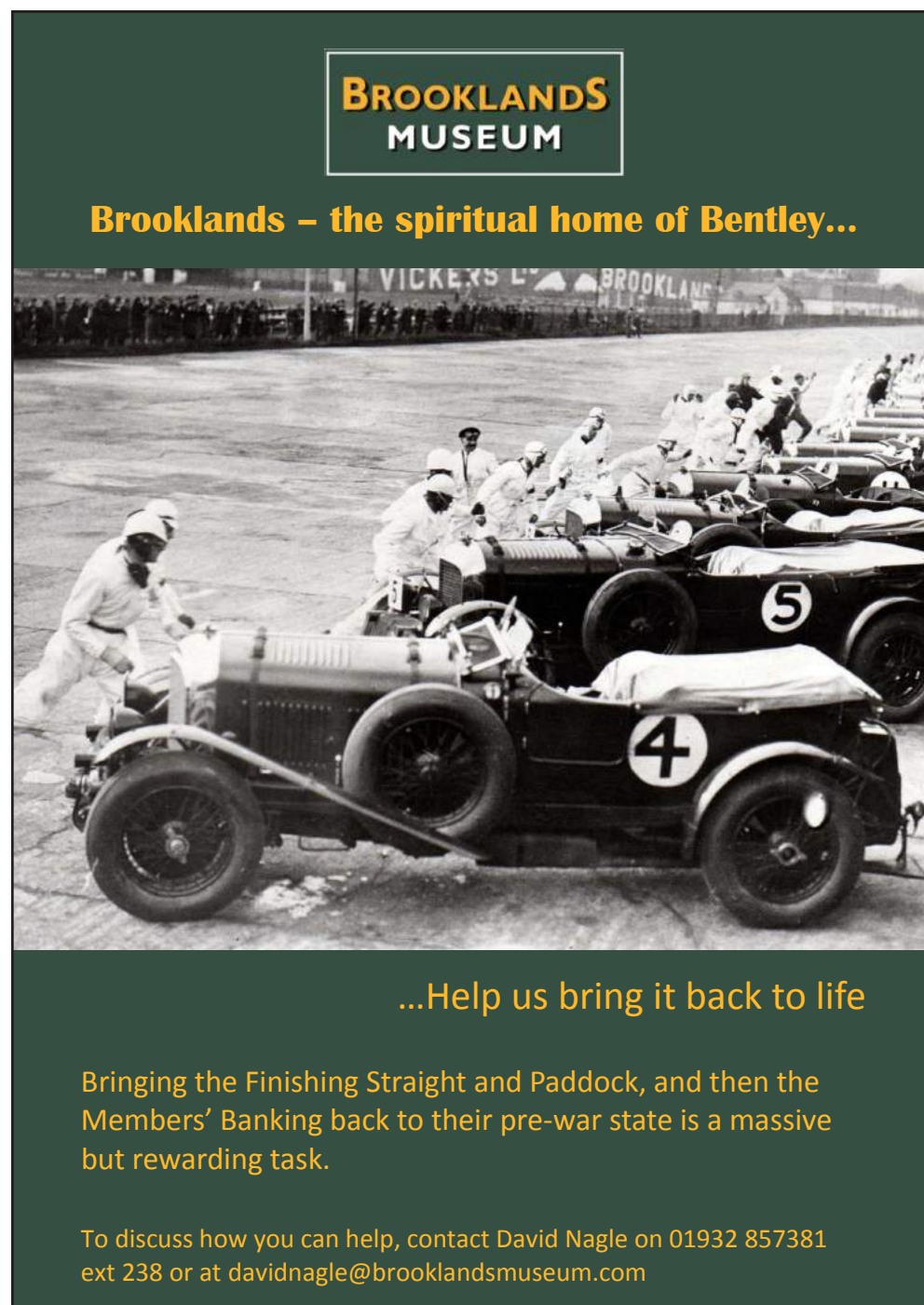
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Embracing the very latest in cinematography, the Pacey Hassan Special helps reach out to a new generation of Brooklands' enthusiasts.

To add to the realism of the film, it was decided that adding competitor cars would enrich the experience. "We were honoured to be asked to prepare and drive the Pacey-Hassan Special in the filming", says William proudly. The land speed record Delage was also recruited to join the shoot, prepared and driven by Patrick Blakeney-Edwards.


And there was to be a sting in the tail for all, which thankfully created a spectacular finale rather than an expensive heap of twisted metal. At the end of a particular filming sequence the cars made moves to retire to the pit lane, only for a last minute misunderstanding resulting in the Napier, Bentley and the Delage spearing off for safety in all different directions. "It was a spectacular starburst of cars", remarks William rather wide eyed "it certainly must have been for the camera man stood helplessly in the middle of the track: with his tripod, as pre-war leviathans passed by just inches away on either side. We all bought the cameraman a few beers in the bar that night!"



"That little car does incredible mileage' remarked William Medcalf with a smile. "We have to keep a close eye on it when it calls in for a service".

Around 200 classic cars gathered at the famous alpine ski resort for a fun few days of great driving on spectacular roads, wonderful scenery and plenty of good beer. As usual, the Medcalf team prepared a couple of cars for the event which is split into the Sport Trophy section of the determined rally driver, and the classic driver for those happy to cruise. Plenty of fresh air and great fun!

The inaugural running of the Endurance Rally Association's Alpine Trial beautifully captured the essence of the great Alpine rallies of the past. Based around Annecy, there were numerous hillclimbs and timed sections to conquer, with frequent severe height changes. "You needed a powerful, light motor car for this one", remarks William Medcalf, bringing home the 'First vintage Bentley across the line' with navigator Tony Brooks in a Bentley Super Sports. "I'd love to see it become a regular event",



The Medcalf Team are delighted with their new engine dyno cell, which offers customers reliable power figures before and after an engine rebuild, as well as pure data to assist in developing performance modifications – before an engine goes anywhere near a car.



# A Day In The Life

By Gillian Carr

## Portimão was the scene of a history-making 24-hour endurance race for pre-war cars. The inside story – from an all-female Bentley team

Aspirations and goals are essential elements to a fulfilling life; they are what motivate us to get out of bed every day to earn a living. William Medcalf set out his stall higher than most, however. Since he was a child, the vintage Bentley specialist has been enthralled by the Bentley Boys' exploits at Le Mans and Brooklands in the 1920s and '30s. His dream of seeing those old cars back on track for a full 24 hours never abated and the approaching 90th anniversary of Bentley's first win at Le Mans was the inspiration he needed to turn his dream into reality.



*A long way from Norfolk. The Abrey Bentley well on its way to clinching the Brooklands Team Award leaves Saturday behind and heads into Sunday.*

History was in the making, then. And not only that: the race would also feature the first ever all-female Bentley 24-hour team. But more of that later

William is a proud member of the Benjafield's Racing Club, formed 24 years ago and inspired by the ethos of Dr Dudley Benjafield – better known as 'Benjy' – and his 1920s Bentley racing comrades Woolf Barnato, Sir Henry 'Tim' Birkin, Glen Kidston, Sammy Davis, John Duff and, of course, WO Bentley. The club's members are buoyant extroverts who compete and party like their pioneering forefathers.

Club president and Bentley specialist Stanley Mann asked William to take on the mantle of competitions captain in 2012. And during a holiday in the Algarve, William visited Portimão circuit and was enthused by its myriad challenging corners pitched on gradients and angles that flowed together, as well as by the 'anything goes' attitude of the Portuguese operating team.

To overcome club members' incredulity, he transported two vintage Bentleys to the Algarve for a 24-hour test run, and they demonstrated that the track could be driven at speed in top gear without touching the brakes. William then presented his findings to the club and its patron, HRH Prince Michael of Kent.

'I knew the hardcore pre-war racers were going to be tough to convince, as the 24-hour was such a leftfield challenge,' he says, 'so I set the ball rolling in the field of endurance rallyists who thrive on unique challenges. They'd think nothing of hurtling a vintage Bentley across the Gobi desert.'

Scepticism began to fade, the entry list filled and William's workshop took on beautiful examples of WO's finest creations in preparation for Portimão. His dedicated army of mechanics worked tirelessly to prepare ten vehicles that were far from natural racing machines. Not only did the cars have to be capable of running for 24 hours, their charging systems would also have to cope with powering additional lights in the dark for 12 of those hours.

Closer to the race, I'd received an email: 'Wanted: female racing driver with experience of racing pre-war cars and preferably vintage Bentleys'. The longest race I had completed in a vintage Bentley was all of ten minutes alongside Julian Majzub in his glorious Keston Pelmore 4½ Litre at the Bentley Driver's Club Silverstone event a few years ago, although I've enjoyed lots of road miles aboard several examples of Cricklewood's finest export. This was going to be my biggest motoring challenge yet.

So there was an air of nervous anticipation as we sipped champagne at the welcome reception in the heat of the early-October Algarve evening. The Friday before the weekend's race had seen a driver's briefing and familiarisation laps: three in daylight and three in the dark. Gantry lighting had been erected to illuminate the gloomier extremes of the circuit, but this was the least of our worries as all four ladies on my team – Katarina Kyvalova (owner of our 1928 4½ Litre Bentley), Georgina Riley, Georgina Bradfield and self – had to grapple with the intricacies of a newly installed plate clutch.

There are few things more intimidating than piloting someone else's pride and joy, but we were heading for disaster if we couldn't master a gearchange between us. William's patience prevailed and he coached us on the quick shift, which requires more aggression than the gentle cone-clutch change we'd been used to. The car was perfectly prepared and sailed through scrutineering; all that remained was to adorn it with our team decals. The 'Bentley Belles' and 20 other teams were about to embark on the biggest challenge of their motor sport careers.

Benjafield's had constructed a beautiful period pit, to serve as a fabulous backdrop to the safety car: the Pacey-



Hassan Bentley special. And suddenly the flutter of butterflies increases as William turns over its 4½-litre engine and drives out to open the track: our pre-event preparation time has evaporated and it's time to start. Stopwatches are poised for action and cars line up in traditional Le Mans style. Drivers dash across the track and erect the cars' hoods, ready for the first 20 minutes of the race following Stanley Mann's drop of the Portuguese flag.

Although we'd established a strict schedule for the 'Bentley Belles', we're jostling for position as everyone wants to be involved in the thick of the action. The first five hours rattle by and darkness falls after a stunning shepherd's delight sunset. Smooth driving is key to finishing and we try to use top gear only and no braking. Carrying speed through the tight corners certainly tests the nerves but the mantra proves to be correct as the only mechanical issue we encounter is a seized brake shoe, which costs us half-an-hour while Medcalf's boys work frantically to free the hub.

The Lagonda 3 Litre of VSCC friends Andrew Howe- Davies, Tony Lees, Tim Parker and Tim

Greenhill is spluttering with a damaged valve, but some ingenious engineering sees the 'Grey Lady Boys' continue into the dusk. There are no other major mechanical issues in the field and the only activity in the pit garages is of cars receiving methodical service checks.

Circuit-driving in the dark is an exhilarating experience; your braking points are consumed by the gloom and as Saturday wanes into the early hours of Sunday there is an eerie feeling that we are the only certified lunatics doing something so utterly ridiculous at this time in the morning. The pit wall becomes quieter as supporters retire, and off duty drivers try valiantly to catch some shut-eye. As the night draws on, the camaraderie grows as teams will each other through the graveyard period, when it seems daylight will never reappear. Then the first hints of dawn arrive and a much-needed second wind finally takes hold.

I prefer the dark driving experience, although you have to fight with your psyche to focus ahead as faster approaching cars' headlights can easily distract and knock you off your line. I drive for a near-two-hour stint from 4.30am and feel empowered by the mental challenge of



Answering to a higher power, William Medcalf supplicates himself before the track management at Portimão and is almost banned before the event has begun but as he always says, 'trouble is a good place to be'. Months of planning, cajoling and preparation were about to come to fruition.



Christian Schenk hard at it during the night time familiarisation session.



Andrew Bailey leads the Le Mans charge across the Tarmac as the flag drops on the historic Benjafields 24.



Curt Bloss leads Mike Thompson's Chrysler through the dawn as Sunday morning arrives.





Andreas Pohl looks concerned as a Lagonda suffers in the pits.



Almost finished. The champagne is put on ice along the pit wall with thirty minutes of driving time left.



staying sharp when your body is sapped of physical strength and your brain is crying for a rest.

With six hours to go, everyone has the bit between their teeth to get their cars to the finish, having completed more than 2000km and around 500 laps. Only one car retires (with a gearbox issue) and the positive atmosphere never wanes. Although William Medcalf's passionate team of mechanics has barely snatched a wink of sleep, their pit bay is awash with smiles as they faithfully stick to their scrupulous service schedule on the ten vehicles in their care – and the chequered flag is in their sights. In the dying minutes, the Pacey-Hassan is lit up once again and heads out for one last time to herald the end of the race.

Anyone who has attended Le Mans will know that swell of excitement as the cars cross the line: it's a unique experience, like an army returning from a great war. The fleet of chargers arrive to a scene of jubilation in the pitlane.

William addresses the drivers: 'We've done it. Now go and party!' The pitlane is awash with champagne bubbles and tears of joy as we celebrate in the heat of the Portuguese afternoon, yet an eerie silence follows as we thank XV 3207, patting its fabric body, now sticky with champagne. It has been a magnificent steed and looks relieved to be resting alongside the cars with which it has shared the Portimão circuit for 24 hours.

Three awards are presented: the Spirit of Benjafield's Award goes to Paul Carter, Bill Cleyndert and Nick Swift, who shared Paul's 1936 Derby Bentley. The Endurance Rally Association Award for Sportsmanship is presented to Gerd A Bühler and his team of Dr Karl Schäfer,



Jeremy Brewster back on track after a late night pit stop.



The Bentley Belles. A job well done and a time to celebrate. Messrs Riley, Kyvalova, Brewster and Carr tuck into some fizz.



A master at work - Glyn Perry working on the gearbox of car 8.





*As the sun sets on Portimao, the Pacey-Hassan safety car slithers around the track one more time before settling down for the night.*

Thomas Feierabend and Jochen Bader, who drove his 1938 BMW 328. Finally the Brooklands Team Award is presented to the 1925 Bentley 3/4½ Litre team of Robert Abrey, Matthew Abrey, Julian Riley and Robert Fellows. Despite having no previous track experience, the Abrey family operated their team very professionally, crossing the line with only one gallon of fuel left.

Will there be another race? Clearly there is a thirst for an event that offers far greater reward than a blink-and-miss-it scratch race on an unloved British circuit. It was an incredible feat for 20 of the 21 cars entered to cross the line with no serious mechanical issues, and the participants who were new to endurance racing cannot wait to do it again. Even those with experience found something new; Marc-Remo Kündig, who participates in modern endurance racing, says he learned more about driving and car control in the Benjafield's 24 than in any other event.

So what now for the 'Bentley Belles'? We became the first all-female team to complete a 24-hour race in a pre-war car, but Katarina muses that this is just the start: 'Watch out for the Bentley Belles – we are planning lots more!'.

The work of William Medcalf, Philippa Spiller and their team has secured Benjafield's Racing Clubs' place in motoring history. Like so many others who participated, my own personal achievements have been engulfed by sheer pride that I was experiencing a man's dream of a lifetime become reality – a great lesson in life that anything is possible, and even more so behind the wheel of a pre-war car. It is a rare and privileged thing to be privy to someone's dream, but to be right in the heart of it is a rare gift. William's dream fostered others who in-turn fulfilled their own ambitions and his 'Bentley Boy' forebears would be bursting with pride.

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# HERO 1,000 mile trial

First British motorsport trial recreated – when an unexpected obstacle lay around a blind corner, the Medcalf boys were pushed to the limit to keep their Bentley in the event.



*Making a splash. 1000 miles is a long way.*

First run in 1900, the 1,000-mile trial was the first reliability and endurance trial to be run in Britain, and effectively introduced large sections of the population to the motorcar. In 2014 the RAC, in conjunction with the Historic Endurance Rallying Organisation, set out to recreate the event as closely as possible, instigating a seven day challenge from Woodcote Park Clubhouse near Epsom to Edinburgh, and back again.

A very special addition to the entry list was a 1925 3-litre Bentley works team car from the 1925 Le Mans 24-hour race. In 2014 it was driven by Duncan Kensington-Moir, the grandson of Herbert Kensington-Moir who had shared the 3-litre with Dudley Benjafield in the 1925 race. Duncan was co-driven in this event by Robert Coucher.

It was to be an eventful week for the Medcalf team, and not necessarily for the reasons they might have predicted. On day two the Bentley rounded a country lane corner to be confronted by a milk tanker. Although the driver did everything he could to avoid an accident a collision was inevitable and the car was badly damaged. Their rally may well have ended there had it not been for the car's owner, Jonathan Turner, picking up the phone to William who simply stated that "None of my cars has ever not finished a rally".

The Medcalf team swung heroically into action, collecting the car within hours and spiriting it back to the workshop. Once there it was repaired with a non-stop 48-hour collective effort that pushed the engineers to the maximum. The freshly repaired car was MOT'd, and then driven back up to the ongoing rally where it's original driving crew made the finish.

The icing on the cake for the team was receiving the "Against All Odds" trophy by the RAC: "We are truly humbled to be recognised for our efforts," says William Medcalf. "It was a superhuman effort by the whole team"



*Nothing that won't rub out with a bit of elbow grease.*

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A P A S S I O N R E A L I S E D

## The last Alpine paradise



The Ennstal Classic prides itself on offering Alpine motoring how it used to be, with largely deserted passes and great motoring. As the event is open to cars built up to 1972, the Medcalf-prepared Bentleys were up against some stiff opposition, with the eventual top three comprising of Ferrari Dino, Jaguar XK150 and Porsche 911. Nevertheless, it was the driving and enthusiastic spectator support that provided the biggest smiles on a memorable event.

## 4th Regis Tap Rally: Supporting those in the air

"We love to support good causes here", says William Medcalf; this is a charity-run event in aid of the Sussex Air Ambulance service, so we're delighted to be a checkpoint on the event. We open the doors, serve coffee, let people take a look around and use the facilities if they need to. It's important to put something back into our chosen passion".



# Turas Mile Mile

## Rallying the Irish way

A week long rally around Ireland, the Wolseley Car Club's event sees 80 pre-1939 cars navigate through beautiful scenery, and their drivers having the time of their lives. Where else but in Ireland would tulip directions include an advisory to wait five minutes – when a pub just happens to be nearby, and a pint of Guinness requires that very same amount of time to settle!

It didn't rain - not even a drop, and with cars from all over the world it was a very successful event. They might even have had a little race up and down the beach when no one was looking. Ahem.



*After a good lunch, Nicky, one half of the Bailey birthday boys decided it would be a good idea to use the ford rather than the bridge to cross this river. Once rescued by a local 4x4 we heard that this wasn't the first time this had happened.*



*Linking Bantry Bay and Adare the Healy Pass was typical of the beautiful scenery enjoyed by the competitors during the Wolseley Rally Turas Mile Mile in September this year.*

# The Medcalf teams grows

The latest recruit to the 12-strong William Medcalf team is Paul Jęastrzebski. As a qualified MOT tester, Paul brings considerable experience of vehicle safety and inspection. "Paul brings a great skill set to the company", confirmed William Medcalf. "He's diversifying into vintage cars, and is already a

great member of the team. Everyone here works so well together, they all love cars and most do their own motorsport in some form or other. We all take great pride in our work: every inch of this workshop is alive, there are no dead projects lying around, we do love a good deadline!"



*Paul Jęastrzebski*

# Argentina

## South American Bentley appreciation society

When the Club de Automoviles Clasicos visit you know there is going to be a party! From Argentina to the Goodwood Revival, where better to start the weekend but at William Medcalf Ltd. A tour of our workshops and engine development department broke the language barrier. "We took them out in a few cars and they had a great time. Next year we're going to organise a proper event – they're a great bunch of enthusiasts and it's lovely to share the love for the cars with friends on the other side of the world. The look on their faces when the Pacey-Hassan burst into life was priceless..."



*Argentina is a big beautiful place with lots of great driving but it doesn't have the Revival or William Medcalf.*

# Brooklands 12/12

## Trouble on the banking

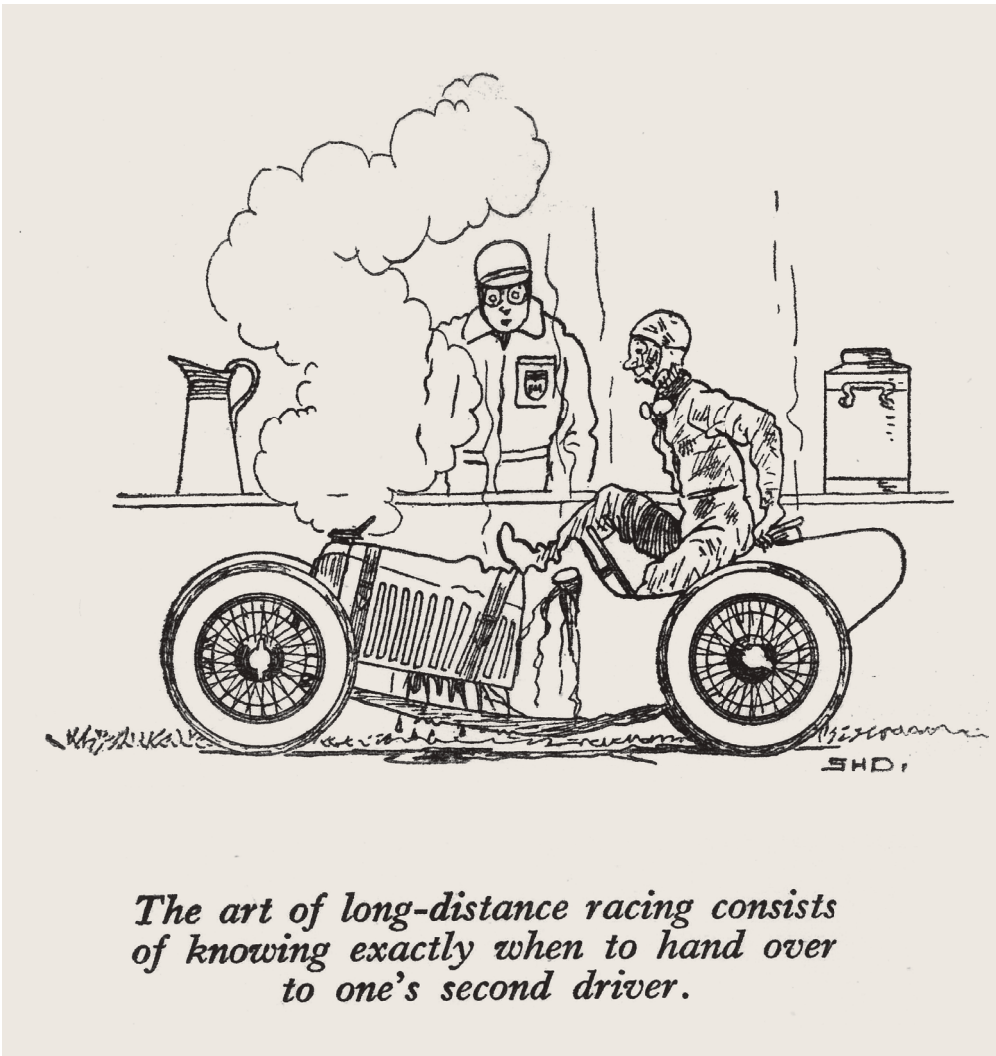
Team Medcalf isn't used to being beaten by a challenge, but at the fabulous Brooklands Double Twelve event in June red tape got the better of the teams engineers. They had been invited to bring the iconic Pacey-Hassan Special to the event, only for it to send the circuit's noise meters into meltdown with its strident exhaust sound. There was nothing they could do but to withdraw the car from the event, and place it on silent display outside the museum. "Next year we'll develop a new exhaust to ensure it can run", says William with obvious determination. The Pacey-Hassan will return, quieter but no less appealing than ever.



# Spitfire vs Messerschmitt

## The Battle of Petersfield

RJ Mitchell's finest is a permanent fixture above William Medcalf's workshop, thanks to a beautiful scale model that hangs from the ceiling, but things were taken a step further when the inimitable sound of a Rolls Royce Merlin was suddenly heard overhead recently. Rushing outside – like any petrol head would do – the engineers were stunned to see a Spit pursuing an ME109 in a brutal dogfight. What could be happening? It turned out to be a filming sequence for a Guy Martin documentary about the rebuild of a rare mk1 Spitfire dug up from the beach in Northern France. That day no one went back to work and the phone rang and rang (sorry).



# 240bhp and counting!

240bhp: that's the maximum at-the-flywheel power figure, a Medcalf developed Bentley has achieved this year. The firm remains tight-lipped about where, and in what car this figure was achieved, but is justifiably proud to have reached this milestone.




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# Living the Dream

By Shannon Mullen

How the Benjafields 24 brought the Le Mans Grand Prix to life for one Bentley girl



I knew before I booked my flight from Boston to Portugal that the Benjafields 24 would be an adventure, even for a spectator. As a film producer developing a major motion picture about the Bentley Boys, I hoped to find out firsthand what a twenty-four hour motor race might have looked, smelled and sounded like in the era between the World Wars.

I had never heard of the Le Mans Grand Prix before my first encounter with a prewar Bentley at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts. It was Ralph Lauren's blower, built in 1929 for the Hon. Dorothy Paget, and it was unlike any vintage car I'd ever seen. I knew immediately that there had to be an epic story behind that car and I was determined to find out what it was. A placard on its pedestal hinted that it had been driven by one of the Bentley Boys, a group of British playboys who had fought in the First World War, and lived fast and fabulous

lives in their pursuit of victory in the world's toughest endurance race.

Since then I've lost count of how many books and archival news articles I've read about Woolf "Babe" Barnato, Sir Henry "Tim" Birkin, Dr. Dudley Benjafield, Commander Glen Kidston and Sammy Davis (to name a few), as well as W.O. Bentley himself, and the stalwart mechanics who kept the Bentleys running. I also took rides in the cars the Bentley Boys drove and got behind the wheel once myself.

But the great race they so famously dominated remained something of a mystery to me until the practice day before the start of the Benjafields 24. At dusk that evening I had the privilege of riding in Jonathan Turner's 1928 3-4 ½ L Bentley for a few enchanting laps around the circuit, the car gliding along the straights through the descending darkness as though racing at night was the most natural pastime in the world.

The next day I felt like I was on a film set as I climbed into a booth above the starting line and watched the drivers line up on one side of the track for the Le Mans running start. They waited for the gun in charged silence, then sprinted across to their cars and tore off for the first lap. I passed the hours watching and filming pit stops, taking pictures and making notes, talking with the drivers and watching from the track wall as the cars passed like clockwork. I had always wondered what it would be like to stand in the pits after dark and see those huge headlights appear in the distance, then hear the roar of their engines as they flew past like a pack of fighter planes. The reality of it all was every bit as cinematic as I'd imagined.

Overnight I took unexpected delight in passing a few hours holding up lap times for Turner and his team. I noticed that the drivers fell into a hypnotic rhythm as the night wore on into a spectacular dawn, and before we knew it the finish was a few hours away, an infectious energy spreading with the daylight. By the time I was ushered onto the track to wave the checkered flag it seemed impossible that twenty-four hours had passed.

The cars took one final lap then lined up three abreast in the pit lane and I stood back to watch the drivers' faces through a shower of champagne. Everyone was elated but exhausted, and I saw more than a few tears flowing. I was standing in another scene from the movie, so much like the black and white photographs I'd seen of the Bentley Boys perched on their cars, smoking and drinking champagne in the heady seconds after their historic wins.

Despite the skill, discipline and heroic physical effort required to drive the Bentleys built in those days for twenty-four hours, I believe that Le Mans was something of an escape for the Bentley Boys. It was the sort of adventure that they felt was increasingly rare in their era. When asked why they raced, Sammy Davis – the writer among them – explained, "There are no dragons, and few worlds, to conquer as each age becomes, I think, a little more humdrum, a little more caught up in the money-making side of business."

I've always been able to relate to that sentiment on a personal level. As a storyteller, I understand it in a new way after watching the Benjafields 24. Let the adventure continue on the big screen! Coming soon, to a theatre near you...

## The great Hill Brow Bake off

This year the Medcalf team have had to work extra hard to fight off the pounds as the standard of home made cakes hit the oven roof. The WAG's of the team kept everyone going when the pressure was on. But as we all know there can only be one winner and this years it was the home grown apples and almonds flown in from Italy that made the difference pipping the competition at the post. Bumble Nixon has been voted this year's Master Chef!

1. Preheat the oven to 160C/fan 140C/gas 3. Lightly grease a deep 20cm loose-bottomed cake tin.
2. Measure the flour, baking powder, sugar, eggs, almond extract and melted butter into a bowl. Mix well until blended, then beat for a minute.
3. Spread half this mixture in the prepared tin. Thickly slice the apples and lay on top of the mixture in the tin, piling mostly towards the centre. Using 2 dessert spoons, roughly spoon the remaining mixture over the apples. This is an awkward thing to do, but just make sure that the mixture covers the centre well as it will spread out in the oven.
4. Sprinkle with the flaked almonds.
5. Bake in the preheated oven for 1¼-1½ hours until golden and coming away from the sides of the tin.
6. Ingredients:
  - 225g self-raising flour
  - 1 level tsp baking powder
  - 225g caster sugar
  - 2 large eggs
  - ½ tsp almond extract
  - 150g butter, melted
  - 250g cooking apples, peeled and cored
  - 25g flaked almonds



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# Interview: Jamie Broome



## What's your background?

I've always had a passion for cars. My father was into them: he has a M45 Lagonda, but restored an E-type when I was younger that I helped with, and had all sorts of cars, including a Corvette. When I was born he was into steam, so there were traction engines around. I was then a time-served toolmaker for 25 years before a spell as a quality engineer working with Bentley Motors.

## What are your hobbies?

"Cars! I don't have any other hobbies. I own two American V8s: a 1969 Chevrolet Camaro SS 427 and a Kirkham Cobra replica. The Camaro has been on the Cartier stand at the Goodwood Festival – it's a seven-litre big block car, and I've owned it for 18 years. The Kirkham is a replica of the 427 S/C – it has a proper 427 Ford side-oiler V8 in it with a four-speed Toploader gearbox and side exhausts. It's very intimidating. I'm a petrolhead so this is my dream job to work with William.



## What's the hardest part of the working year for you?

"January February time, preparing the cars for the rallying season, especially if it's a Peking-Paris year. Engine-wise, the cars tend to go on forever, but we do of course rebuild them sometimes – I've got five on the go at the moment. When the pressure is on we all help out on whatever job needs doing, it's a great team effort".

## What was your greatest triumph of the year?

"It has to be the Benjafield 24: bringing all ten cars to the finish was special. We starting work on it earlier in the year, but by September the pressure was on and near the end the days were 6am to sometimes 11 at night, seven days a week. At the actual race I didn't sleep for 40 hours; I gave up trying to in the end".

## What did you learn this year?

"Getting my head around the engine more was the biggest thing. Just getting little things perfect like the pipework around the engine – you're always learning. Next year I'm looking forward to developing our engines on the dyno more, particularly our big block engines. I'll be heavily involved in that – and road testing them too".

## Which car inspires you the most?

"It has to be the Pacey-Hassan. I just love the car: the way it looks, the way it sounds and what we've done with it. It was over restored when we first got it, but we've returned the look and feel to her now, how it should be".

# Interview shorts:

## Jarrood and the ramp:

"A friend's Dad agreed we could use a plot of land. I do motocross every weekend – circuit racing on dirt. I had the facilities, I knew how to do it, so a group of friends and I said let's try and build this ramp. I bought the plans online from a company in the States: it's made from box section steel, then sheet plate and an expanded steel mesh on top for grip".

This is no ordinary ramp, however: "we're jumping around 100ft, 30ft high, then landing on a huge dirt ramp the other side we built with diggers and dumpers. It's just fun – something we do at the weekends; we take our hands off the bars, throw the bike sideways. You're hitting the ramp at 60mph..."

"I got referred to William via a friend. I guess building the ramp showed I was proactive and did things for fun, not just for work".



## Anthony and the Mini experience:

"I was very worried about my own safety", says engineer Anthony with a worried look on his face. "I'm an engineer: I make things out of different materials. You don't usually get to see how that transfers to going down the road and around corners".

"I've been out in vintage cars, but I've never been driven around a circuit on the limit the whole time", says Anthony, recalling the day he was a passenger at the firm's Goodwood track day, sat inside William Medcalf's Works Swiftune Mini Cooper S.

"It was just that realisation that every component is at the limit and has to perform perfectly. I never appreciated how a vehicle could stay on the road at those speeds and with such certainty. I was holding on – the engine was screaming and the noise goes right through you. It just didn't seem right!".



## New software for increased CNC capability

The machine shop has had a software upgrade to its CNC centres, adding the capability to model and assembly fit components in virtual reality before they're produced for real. This technology is now being used to machine everything from a complete crankcase to the tiniest of widgets.



# The End Of An Era

And the start of a new one.

William has been the spares controller of the Bentley Drivers Club Vintage Spares Scheme for over a decade. He has very much enjoyed chatting to and advising the members as well as supplying essential spare parts to keep their cars on the road. He has used his energy to develop the range of products and improve the service to the members. However, recent changes in the management of the scheme and the inability to develop the scheme for the good of the members have inevitably been frus-

trating. This has inspired William to create a business that he hopes can truly serve the vintage Bentley fraternity.

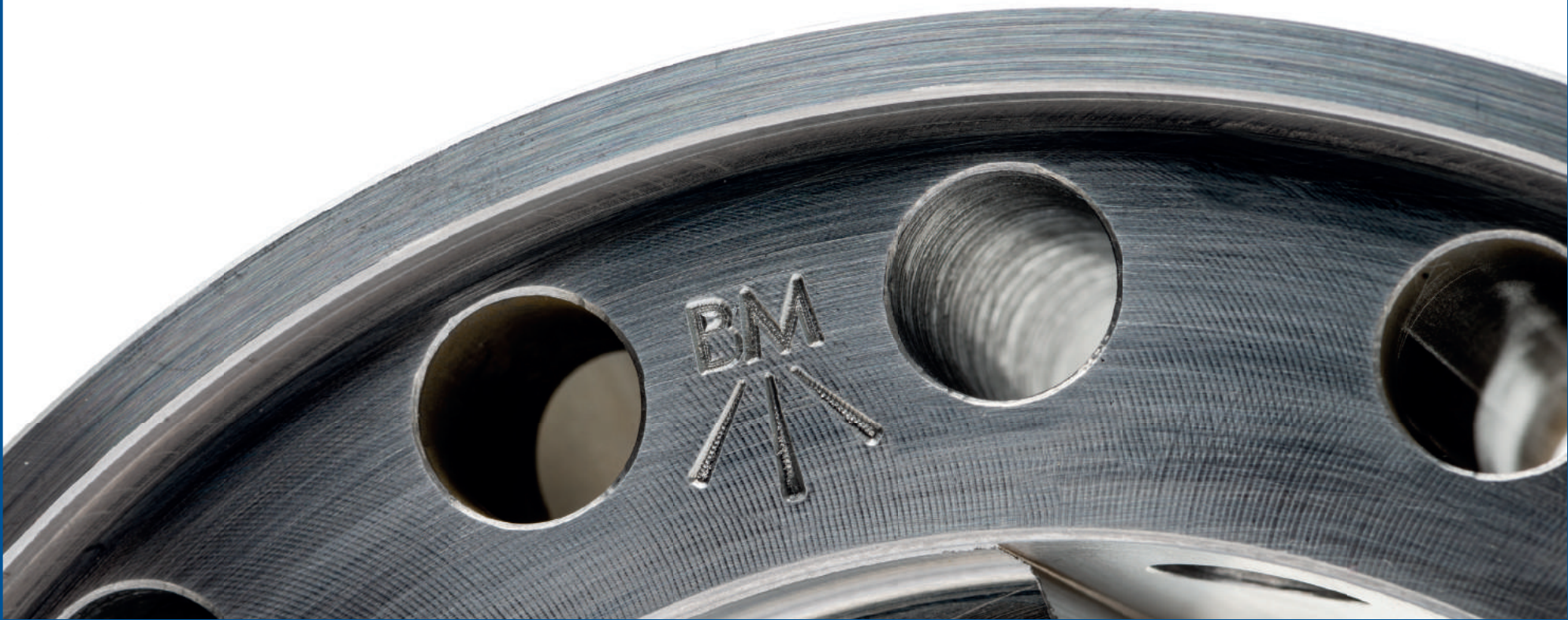
We are pleased to announce the creation of a new company called 'Benchmark Precision Engineering Ltd' dedicated to the supply and distribution of vintage spares and components.

Launching the new company William said that "I can now focus my full attention on Benchmark and we look forward to supplying you in the future".



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