

We Make Our Bow

On 14–15 February 1997 a hardy group of Derby Bentley owners and enthusiasts met at Dale and Marcia Powers's home in Anna Maria, Florida. People came from the frigid north and from sunny California just to start the Derby Bentley Society. The graciousness and kind hospitality of Dale and Marcia set the tone for the entire time and should easily continue through the life of the society.

Members present for the founding were Cliff & Joyce Alexander; Bob & Joan Brod; Phil & Sue Brooks, Akin Davis; Dick & June Dosik; Ed Gehringer & Marge Sosa; Ken & Mermie Karger; John & Helen Kronholme; Dave & Barb Myers; Billie & Charlie Nagler; Dennis &

Ann Marie Nash; Harry O'Connor; Dale & Marcia Powers; Gail & Barbara Reingold; Blythe Stason; Steve & Sally Styers; Fred & Anne Ward; Adrian West & Kate Hutchins; and Charles & Hettie Wolfe.

We have a tremendous amount of work to do yet. The bylaws as voted in Florida are being tidied up by a Boston lawyer, the membership form is being put into rough shape for presentation to the membership for corrections, additions, and deletions. The officers for the coming year have been elected (see page 8) and they are energetically making plans for the coming two years.

Frankly, we had a ball! In addition to setting up the society, we got

a chance to examine Dale's dove grey 1937 4¼ Carlton Roadster (B55KU) close up and personal. We also had an unparalleled opportunity: between the business meetings we pawed through Dale's warehouse of parts (he threatened to weigh us all in and out), bought a few goodies for the cars undergoing restoration, and learned a great deal about the cars themselves. To make it a complete weekend, our about-to-be-elected fearless leader (Gail) offered to buy lunch for Adrian West and Ed Gehringer. They accepted with alacrity and bothered only to peruse the prices on the menu—thus inaugurating his chairmanship in proper style.

What Is the Derby Bentley?

The Derby Bentley is a car built by Bentley Motors (1931), Ltd., a subsidiary of Rolls-Royce, Ltd., at its works in Derby, England, from 1933 until shortly after the start of hostilities in 1939, at which time production ended. It was a car built to a different standard than a Rolls-Royce and for a different clientele, a clientele wanting the reliability of a Rolls-Royce in combination with the handling and styling of a sports car.

Both makes shared a common factory and common engineering, yet they were very different from each other. The Bentley was a much fleeter car, and it lacked the ponderous coachwork that was so often mounted on the Rolls-Royce chassis. Bodies mounted on the Derby Bentley chassis tended to be swoopier (to coin a word) and much more streamlined. The mere difference in the grill shapes, of course, had a great deal to do with the style of coachwork mounted.

Bentleys built at Cricklewood (pre-1932) really share nothing with their Derby cousins as regards engineering and design. The Cricklewood cars tended to be little more than thinly disguised racing machines. The Bentleys built at Crewe (post-1945) likewise have little or nothing in common with their predecessors built at Derby. Indeed, postwar Bentleys and Rolls-Royces tend to be an example of badge-engineering.

Thus the Derby Bentley stands unique. The same model was built over a six-year period, the engineering being constantly improved. There is no relationship to any other Bentleys built before or after.



Newsletter's Name

We decided to call this publication *On the Road* after considerable thought. When Derby Bentleys were made Bentley Motors (1931), Ltd. put out an occasional publication called *On the Road* for owners of the cars. Its pages featured the cars in various locales and included articles about touring (many reprinted from *Autocar*). Since the emphasis of our new Derby Bentley Society is on the cars and touring, the argument for adopting the title *On the Road* became compelling. We ran the idea past the company to ensure there would be no objections. That hurdle cleared, Ted Reich supplied a rare original (No. 11), from which we had the masthead made. We chose to use Caslon typeface for the newsletter text and headlines because it is compatible with the typeface used in the 1930s *On the Road*. Our newsletter will emphasize touring and restorations and repairs, and, unlike our predecessor namesake, we plan to provide the readers with the chassis numbers of cars that grace our pages.