

The Case of Old Bentley Number One

HUBBARD vs. MIDDLEBRIDGE SCIMITAR LIMITED

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

QUEEN'S BENCH DIVISION

Royal Courts of Justice, London.

No. 90/MJ/2474 - 27th July 1990

Before: MR. JUSTICE OTTON

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MR. M. ROSEN, instructed by Carter Faber, London EC4Y 9AY, appeared on behalf of the plaintiff.

MR. R. SLOWE, instructed by Dibb Clegg, London WC2A 1NE, appeared on behalf of the defendant.

JUDGEMENT (As Revised)

MR. JUSTICE OTTON: In this action the plaintiff, Edward Hubbard, seeks specific performance of a contract entered into with the defendants, Middlebridge Scimitar Limited, on 7th April 1990. The subject matter of the agreement is what is said to be a Bentley Speed 6 Racing Car known as "Old Number One".

The plaintiff agreed to sell this car for £10 million, in exchange for the assets of Middlebridge Scimitar Limited valued at £3.2 million, plus £6.8 million in cash. When the agreement was reduced into or evidenced in writing the car was described as "Bentley. Known as 'Old Number One'". The defendants subsequently resiled from the deal when they suspected the authenticity of the car.

[T]he principal character in this action is...two tons of motor car referred to throughout as Old Number One, and it is the integrity, provenance and pedigree of this vehicle which have been under scrutiny.

It was produced for my inspection in Lincoln's Inn. It looked beautiful and the magic and sheer power of its engine evoked excitement and nostalgic memories of the past; but looks and sounds are not everything. The defendants maintain that it is not worthy to bear the name "Old Number One".

Between 1921 and 1930 W.A. Bentley, the founder of Bentley Motor Cars, took a passionate interest in motor racing. To many, even today, motor racing in the 20s and 30s was the Golden Era. The rapid progress in mechanical engineering during and after the first world war brought together a remarkable fraternity of drivers, engineers, industrialists and enthusiasts who all shared a passion for racing cars. Drivers were legendary -- Captain Babe Barnato, Kitson, Sammy Davies, Sir Henry Birkin, Clive and James Dunfee to name a few of the "The Bentley Boys" as they were known. Wally Hassan and Nobby Clarke and others were the master mechanics and expert engineers who developed the racing car to the limits of technology, science and the state of the art of their day, and who had to satisfy the insatiable demand of the drivers for ever faster motor cars.

They strove to be, and were, world beaters particularly on two circuits -- Le Mans and Brooklands.

Origin

The car, which was later to be known as Old Number One, started life when it was selected at random from the Standard Six production line in preparation as the Bentley team entry for the 1929 Le Mans race. At that stage it was technically known as a rolling chassis, consisting of a chassis or chassis frame, an engine, steering column, suspension and wheels. It bore the chassis number LB2332 and the engine number LB2336. It was taken to the racing shop where it was stripped down and rebuilt to a higher specification by Wally Hassan, the master mechanic, and others.

It was the second Speed Six to be built. It had a six cylinder, 6+ litre engine, with a non-detachable head in the form of a conventional internal combustible engine. On 24th April 1929 the car was registered bearing the registration number MT 34484. The car that I saw bears this registration number today.

Racing History

The racing history of the car began at Brooklands in the Double twelve race in 1929, so-called because the race was run in two successive twelve hour daylight periods. In the interval the cars were locked up for the night. It did not complete the race, in circumstances of some mystery but probably because it suffered from a defective dynamo. In 1929 it entered the La Mans race and because its engine capacity of 6+litres was the largest in the field it was assigned the race number of No. 1. It was driven by Captain Barnato and his co-driver was Sir Henry Birkin.

At page 264 of Mr. Hay's book there is a short description of the race as follows:

"The Speed Six, driven by Birkin, was first away on the flagfall and apart from the problems with shifting ballast on the Clement Chausan 4½ litre and the retirement of the Earl of Howe in No. 11 with magneto trouble, the four Bentleys held the first four places virtually from beginning to end. At one point the Chrysler of Stoffel and Benoir reached third place but gradually the American challenge faded and W.O. (I.e. W.O. Bentley) reduced the speed of all cars to a fast tour. W.O.'s policy of not showing the potential of the cars irked the drivers. Jack Dunfee stopped at the pits and said I say, W.O., do you want me to get out and push the bloody thing? I've just stopped and had a drink at the Hippodrome', and he had one too. Shortly before 4 p.m. the cars slowed, formed up in line astern and at flagfall the victorious team cruised over the in finishing order: No.1, No.9, No.10, No.8, all Bentleys."

The cars in those days were driven back to England through France, via Paris, and one can imagine the victorious scenes which greeted the cars on their route back. They were driven by the engineers and mechanics. When they arrived at Cricklewood they were examined in length and depth.

As Mr. Hay in his expert's report says,

"It is important to realize that racing cars are invariably changed during their careers, to incorporate improvements and modifications, and because of hard use and accidents. This was effectively summarized by Nobby Clarke, head of the racing shop 1926 - 1929 and team manager at La Mans between 1926 - 1930 as follows in 1974: One must realize that the international reputation of the Company was at stake, and there had to be no mistakes made, by me or anyone else in authority. We therefore changed bits and pieces under racing conditions which under normal conditions could have been allowed to run on. Remember that once the starter's flag has dropped, it is too late to think I wish that I'd changed this or that".

The plaintiff's experts, Mr. Hay and Mr. Guppy, with the aid of a remarkable series of photographs, the Bentley stripping records and service records, have been able to trace the way the car changed between each race, often significantly. Bentley Motors incorporated bits to latest specification when these were available. The changes are largely non-contentious between the parties and thus I can set them out in summary form.

Within a matter of weeks after participating in the Double Twelve race on 10th May, photographs taken in June 1929 show the Van den Plas body cut away for the driver's elbow was deepened. The body catches and straps had been changed; the petrol tank bar at the rear changed and Lucas headlamps substituted for Smiths. The chassis fairings had been removed and the handbrake changed to cable and adjuster pattern. It

was essentially in this form that it arrived at Le Mans where it is noted that two horns had been added to the front. The fishtail exhausts required to placate the residents in the vicinity of Brooklands had been removed and a straight-through exhaust system substituted. It was in this form that it won the race at Le Mans.

A fortnight later, on 29th June, it was back at Brooklands for the 6 hours race. The back axle internals had been renewed along with the exhaust valves, and all the valves springs and rear drums. The Smith headlamps had been refitted and the former bonnet straps had again been changed. It won at 75.88 miles per hour and suffered slight damage.

Within a fortnight it had been modified and prepared for the Irish Grand Prix at Phoenix Park. The back axle internals had been removed; the fishtail had been refitted to the exhaust; the windscreen removed and aero-screens fitted direct to the body. In this form it took second place.

On 17th August 1929 it was ready for the Isle of Man TT Race. The fishtails were removed and a ballast bar added to the front of the chassis. Unfortunately the car crashed, suffering damage to the front end of the chassis, front axle, shock absorbers and brackets. The bonnet and magneto were replaced.

Even so, by 12th October 1929 it was ready for the 500 miles race at Brooklands. A new 600 cylinder pattern differential and Spicer shaft had been fitted. The car was rebodied -- the four seater Van de Plas was removed and replaced by a two seater form with fishtail or fishtail, new petrol tank and a fly-off handbrake had been fitted direct to a compensator. The gear lever was cranked outside the body with no reverse catch. The car in this form took second place.

Thus by the end of the 1929 season the car was overdue for a major overhaul. This must have taken a considerable period of time because there are no photographs between October 1929 and June 1930 when the car was entered for the Le Mans. In the intervening period two new Speed 6's were built to a new 1930 specification and the 1929 winner was similarly rebuilt. It is common ground between the experts and accepted by the defense that of the 1929 Le Mans winner possibly only the pedal shaft and the compensator survive.

The changes in the car can be readily seen from the series of photographs taken before and during the race. The car was again driven by Captain Woolf Barnato. There was a formidable challenge from a supercharged 7 litre Mercedes Benz. Because of the Mercedes Benz' larger engine capacity it was assigned the No. 1 race number. The next three numbers were assigned to the three Bentley Speed 6's because they were of

6½ litre capacity, and No. 4 was assigned to the car bearing chassis number LB2332. Thus it was racing as No. 4.

No-one has suggested that this car which won the 1930 Le Mans was a new car, merely that it was a metamorphosis from the 1929 car. The 1930 car was a continuous process and an evolutionary stage of the car's development. The modifications were clearly justified by the win and the increased average speed of 76.88 mph.

After this race Bentley Motors retired from racing and the car passed to Captain Barnato as his private motor car. Captain Barnato was a rich man and had many cars, including several Bentleys, but he always regarded MT3484 as his racing car. The registration book shows the alteration in ownership.

Shortly afterwards it was noted that there was a change to the windscreen and a standard exhaust system with silencer had been added.

Following its success at Le Mans it was prepared for the 500 miles race in October at Brooklands in 1931. The parts changed included the clutch stop, clutch shaft and linings, the offside stub axle with kingpin bearings, hubsteering arm, brake shoes and track rod. Five new main bearings and crankcase were fitted. For this race the Le Mans body was removed and replaced by the racing two-seater with its petrol tank.

At this stage I must refer to the evidence of Mr. Walter Hassan. He told me that in 1930, Barnato, who was the Chairman of Bentley, asked Hassan if he would join Barnato to look after his team of cars. He was well familiar with what had happened to the car which had won Le Mans twice. Mr. Hassan was part of the team which had prepared the car for Le Mans on both occasions. I accept that Mr. Hassan and Captain Barnato considered that the same car had won both races. Captain Barnato having retired from racing himself, still took an active interest in the car. MT3884 was registered in his name in the log book on 5th July 1930. I am satisfied that after the 1931 500 mile race Captain Barnato asked Hassan to rebuild the car with whatever he thought was necessary to bring it up to a condition whereby it could race for several more years.

There was a fire in 1932 at Arden Run, the country seat of Captain Barnato where he kept his motor cars, and was the center of activity both socially and otherwise for the Bentley Boys. As a result, the rebuild could not take place at Arden Run and it was conducted in a used garage in Mayfair, again owned by Captain Barnato.

The car in its new form and with the 6½ litre engine made its first race appearance on Easter Monday 1932 in the British Empire Trophy Race. It did not win and was deprived of third place. Captain Barnato was not used to his racing car not winning or

taking a place -- even when he no longer raced the car himself. He thought the car was too slow. He was at that time on the Board of Rolls Royce. Using his influence he managed to obtain an 8 litre engine. There was only a week or so to the October race. He instructed Hassan to take out the 6½ litre engine and install the 8 litre engine. Hassan described how it went in easily. As he put it: "I did not have to do anything other than pull out the three bolts and put the other engine in and bolt it in again and connect up the clutch."

Mr. Hay, the expert called on behalf of the plaintiff, pointed out many parts from the Speed 6 -- namely the handbrake, radiator cap, droparm wings etc. As he put it in his report:

"It is clear that the rebuild represented an evolutionary stage in the development of the car, as in the 1929/1930 rebuild by Bentley Motors."

The final preparations for the 500 miles race at Brooklands included a cowl which was added to the scuttle in place of the aero-screen. There are many pictures of the car during the race and of the terrible crash. History records that the car went over the top of a bank at an estimated speed in excess of 120 mph causing Dunfee to lose control. He was thrown out of the car and received fatal injuries. The car appeared to break up and turn over, and there are several pictures of its sorry state when it came to rest. Not unnaturally, Barnato was very upset at the death of his friend. The car was recovered but it never raced again.

It is at this stage that mystery and myth start to surround the car. Commentators writing many years later seem to have formed the view that the car had suffered so much damaged that it was irreparable. This may well have been engendered in part by the dramatic newsreel film record. The doubting Thomases underestimated the skill of Wally Hassan. He examined the car. He told me: "The body was of course ripped off but all the mechanics, the mechanical parts, were all perfectly OK. The RAC held an inquest on the thing and no mechanical fault was found as a cause of the crash." Later he put disarmingly: "We were just able to clean it up and we had a new body built for it, a coupe body this time." The original 6.5 litre Speed 6 radiator was put back on the car. This item was very unusual because Captain Barnato had had all the cars successes inscribed upon the radiator and insisted that the radiator was incorporated in the car in the 1931 rebuild and the 1932 repair after the crash. The significance of this gesture appears hereafter.

Mr. Hassan, being an engineer, did not go along with the name Old Number One. That was a creature of the enthusiasts and no doubt journalists and other writers of the day. He knew it by the chassis number which, as he told me, is the true identity of any

car. He knew it through out as LB2332. This was the number it carried right from the beginning when he first helped to assemble it way back in 1929. His power of recollection I found to be most impressive, although I am bound to say he appeared to tire towards the end of his evidence.

To the suggestion that the 1929 car had ceased to exist in 1932 he said "Well it did not, because the bulk of the car was fitted within the new side-members so that it was the same car, same wheels, same axle, same steering column, same clutch, same gear box." He then went on to describe what prompted the change of the chassis frame. The 4.5 litre cars all broke their chassis frames, one during the Le Mans race, one on the way home between Le Mans and Dieppe and one on the road from Newhaven to Cricklewood. This caused some anxiety. He also gave more details of his instructions, which were to put together as many parts of the first car, the 6.5 litre car, as possible within the two new side-members. They knew it was going to be used in the 500 miles race later that year and that they should build the car accordingly.

As he said in terms: "It was never the intention that it should be a new car. It was just the old car with new side-members which we had had problems with previously with them cracking. We took the best steps we thought possible to put the strongest chassis in. All the other parts were ex the body that had become known as Old Number One: engine, gear box, clutch, radiator, brakes, axles, all the sort of stuff which go together to make a car." He estimated that between 90 and 95% of the 1930 car went into the 1932 car. In the light of Mr. Hay's and Mr. Guppy's evidence I consider that this is an over estimate and the percentage was more likely to have been 70%, which was reduced when the 8 litre engine was substituted for the 6½ litre engine. This engine change did not require substantial modification to the chassis frame, gear box or axle.

Later he also uses expressions such as "the new track car was down through the trees on the entrance below" referring to the crash when the car had come to a standstill, and later "Barnato kept what was left of the car for some time and did nothing with it. Then eventually he decided that it should be rebuilt as there was not a lot of damage." There are other passages, notably where he seems to suggest that the car which was built which finally incorporated the 8 litre engine and which was entered for the race in 1932 at Brooklands in which Dunfee was killed was in fact a new car and not a continuation car of the 1929, 30 and 31 seasons.

Subsequent History

The subsequent history of the car can be summarized as follows. Following the 1933 rebuild it was fitted with mulliner fixed head coupe body. Captain Barnato drove the car as a road tourer in this country and in the United States. There was trouble trying to get fumes out of the car. Apparently even Wally Hassan could not cure that defect.

In 1936 he sold it to a Major Hartley-White who sold it back to Captain Barnato and in 1939 the car was acquired by H.M. Bentley. In 1957 the car was acquired by a Michael Quinney. He and Alan Paget rebuilt the car with a two-seater body. In 1960 the car was purchased by a Mr. J. Ward in Lincolnshire. He sold it in 1966 to David Tunnick in the United States. In 1988 the car returned to the United Kingdom when it was offered for sale on the 5th December 1988 at Sothebys. It was not sold and the car passed to Stanley Mann, a celebrated vintage car dealer and then to Edward Hubbard.

Hay's Opinion

Based on all this data and information, it is Mr. Hay's considered opinion that none of the 1929 Speed 6 survives with the exception of fittings which is impossible to date. Of the 1930 Speed 6 he believes that only the following exist on the car as it is now, namely pedal shaft, gear box casing and steering column. Of the 1932 car, the 4 litre chassis and 8 litre engine form in which it was involved in the fatal accident, he believes that the following exist: the chassis frame, suspension (i.e. springs, hangers, shackles and mountings), front axle beam, back axle banjo, rear brakes, compensating shaft, front shock absorbers and mountings, the 8 litre engine, some instruments and detailed fittings.

On this analysis, and having examined the car as it exists today after Mr. Hubbard's rebuild of it, he has come to the conclusion that this car is a direct descendant of Old Number One Speed 6, the car that won at Le Mans in 1929 and 1930. The car has been rebuilt several times to reach its present form but has a continuous documented history from 1929. He is surprised why its identity is in question and he fails to understand how anybody could seriously argue that this car is not, by its continuous history, Old Number One. As he put it: "there is most certainly no other car that has any claim whatsoever to be Old Number One."

Barnato-Walker's testimony:

Mrs. Diane Barnato-Walker is the daughter of the late Captain Barnato. She was a surprise witness and contacted the plaintiff's solicitors of her own initiative when she read of this action in the newspapers. She was born in 1918 and was 14 years old as the time of the 1932 Brooklands crash. She was present at the 500 miles race and saw Clive Dunfee driving Old Number One, as she put it, in what she called gray primer. She was standing next to Jane Baxter, a celebrated actress of the day, who was married to Clive Dunfee. She witnessed the fatal accident.

Her recollection of the car has been rightly described by Mr. Rosen as "vivid". She had recollections of being driven by her father in the car in the grounds of Arden Run and how he used to time the car down the long drive. On the balance of probabilities,

this was after it had ceased to be the property of Bentleys and had been acquired by Barnato as his personal racing car. This must have been after the 1930 Le Mans race and thus she must remember it in its Brooklands form in 1931 and 1932. However, the fire at Arden Run was in January 1932 so it is more likely that she remembers the car in that form at Arden Run in its 1931 form.

After the crash she remembers the car being rebuilt in its fixed head coupe form. She has fond memories of being collected in the car from her mother's home in North London by the chauffeur, de Holmes. He would stop at Lyons' Corner House at Marble Arch and buy her and her sister large yellow sweets which they would enjoy on the journey down to Arden Run in Surrey. It was a two-seater coupe and all three sat together in the front seat. It was very cramped. She recognized the car from a photograph. She recalls how fond her father was of the car. He treated it rather like a pet dog; he would often pat it on the radiator and say "Hello, Old Number One". Her father was deeply upset over the crash that killed Clive Dunfee, but he still regarded the car with great affection and she remembers him taking it to California.

I must, of course, heed Mr. Slowe's apt comment that some witnesses, with the passage of time, become more sentimental about the old days than actual events may warrant. I did not find Mrs. Walker such a person. She gave her evidence with great clarity and care but with evident pride and was patently trying to assist me in my task. She was, of course, of impressionable age and no doubt has great affection for the Bentley Boys whom she obviously knew well as visitors to Arden Run. She produced her cherished autograph album and I was privileged to see their entries. I have no hesitation in accepting Mrs. Walker's evidence. The importance is that so far as Captain Barnato was concerned, he regarded the car in its various forms from 1929 when it first won Le Mans until he sold it in 1936 as one single entity. It goes a long way to disprove the contention of the defendants that the winner of the 1929 and 1930 Le Mans died, lost its identity, disappeared into mere legend and myth and that a new car arose from its ashes.

Slowe's Case:

As against this I have to consider Captain Barnato's letter in the Autocar in May 1943. This was in response to an article dealing with the history of the car up until 1931 and asking for information as to what happened to it after that. The inquirer had referred to it as "No. 4" and Barnato (who was by this time on war service in the RAF) in his letter in reply refers to the car in similar terms. Nothing turns on this: 4 was of course its race number in the 1930 Le Mans. Mr. Slowe relies very heavily upon this passage:

"It was after this race (the 1930 Le Mans) that I retired from race driving. I had the car de-tuned and used it on the road as a sports tourer including taking it down to the South of France in the late summer of 1930. In 1931 at the request of Jack Dunfee, I again had No.4 put into racing trim with its single seater body from the 500 miles race of that year... The car's final appearance was in the British Empire Trophy Race at Easter 1932, when it was deprived of third place by being given the checkered flag a lap too early. After this it was found that dear old No.4' had cracked her chassis frame and I decided to rebuild the car with a drop frame chassis similar to the 8 litre for the 500 miles race. When the car was completed it was found that the extra weight of the new chassis reduced its performance, so an 8 litre engine was put in instead...It was in this raceClive was killed. I rebuilt the car for the road, put a coupe body on it.....the original radiator with its inscriptions I still have somewhere. This radiator was badly damaged when the car went over the top in the...1932 race and a new 8 litre type was fitted when the car was adapted for the road; in fact one might really say that the inscribed radiator is all that remains of Old Number One." (? four)

Mr. Slowe submits that this is clear evidence that the car ceased to exist after the British Empire Trophy Race at Easter 1932. When it was found that the chassis frame was cracked Captain Barnato decided to rebuild the car with a new chassis and engine. This was a break in the continuity of the car and thus the 1929 and 1930 Le Mans winner ceased to exist for ever.

Young's Test:

In the course of cross-examination Mr. Hay was asked to consider propositions set out by Mr. Hugh Young, a well known enthusiast in his field. He postulates three tests for the integrity of a motor car:

1. Historical continuity;
2. Physical originality; and
3. Owner's intent.

In answer to Mr. Slowe he accepted that those were three reasonable criteria to apply when trying to assess the provenance of a motor car. Applying them to the car in question he was satisfied that the historical continuity test could be passed with 100%; in other words it was unbroken and that was sufficient to establish the integrity of the car, bearing in mind that this is a racing car.

As to physical originality, he frankly conceded that the car which was produced failed this test "dismally". It cannot by any stretch of the imagination claim to be the physical original of the winner of any of its races. This could only have been established when it drove across the winning line at the end of each race, or possibly when it was being driven back through France by the mechanics to Cricklewood before it was stripped down either in 1929 or 1930, or indeed after any of its other races.

As to owners intent, Mr. Hay did not think much of that as a test and attached very little importance, if any, to it in the context of the car. I take a slightly more generous view of that aspect. Intent of itself would of course be nothing. It may be the owner's or creator's intent to preserve the continuity of the car by building a replica, but that would in itself not make it a genuine car or authentic. However, in this case I think there is sufficient evidence for me to draw the inference that nothing that Captain Barnato did or said, or any of the contemporary evidence can be said to be inconsistent with an intent on his part, a desire on his part to preserve the continuity of the car in his own memory and in others'.

Conclusions

I am satisfied that the car which was the subject matter of the contract for sale on 7th April is the Bentley known as Old Number One. The car can properly be referred to as Old Number One. This is borne out by the logbook, the Bentley service records, the Bentley Drivers Club register, the evidence Wally Hassan, the evidence of Mrs. Walker, the evidence of Mr. Hay, the evidence of Mr. Guppy and the application of Hugh Young's criteria.

The name has been used to describe a particular racing Bentley in a succession of forms from its first registration, its first appearance in the Double 12 race at Brooklands in 1929 and successive races at Le Mans, Brooklands and other locations until it crashed, and thereafter when it was rebuilt in 1932.

I find that thereafter it continued to be known as and was properly called Old Number One, until its reappearance in the United Kingdom in December 1988 and its purchase by Edward Hubbard. I also find that the plaintiff has faithfully, sympathetically and accurately restored it to its last known racing form, i.e. the form it was in in Brooklands in 1932 when it crashed. There has been no break in its historic continuity from the time when it first emerged from the racing shop in 1929 until today.

CLASSIFICATION

The car is not and cannot be considered to be, or be known properly as the "original" car which won either the 1929 or 1930 Le Mans. It would have to be composed of the same parts with which it left the racing shop or replaced by identical parts over the period of its existence, or the form for which it was prepared for the start of either race, or the form it was when it won. Degrees of originality, such as "nearly original", "almost original" or "completely original" have no meaning in the context of this car. It could properly only justify the description of "original" if it had remained in its 1929 Le Mans or Double Twelve form, even though such things as tires, radiator, fuel tank had to be replaced (more than once) due to the ravages of time or use.

It cannot properly be described as "Genuine" Old Number One. This is a broad and practical description but more befitting a racing car which has had an active continuous life with no occasion when it disappeared into limbo or changed its character in any way. Old Number One has had a continuous life. It has never disappeared into limbo. It is arguable that it changed its character when after the 1932 rebuild it had a fixed head coupe body and it was used for touring in the United States, or later when it underwent its Mark Quinney transformation to the sorry state in which the plaintiff first saw it.

It cannot properly be described, as the defendants in effect contend, as a mere "resurrection" (another of the Jenkinson descriptions). Neither after the 1931 rebuild nor after the crash in 1932 did it reach the end of its useful life. The car in its then form (on each occasion) did not die, was not abandoned nor cannibalized, nor gradually dismantled and used as a source of spare parts for other cars. It did not reach the stage that such components as existed were gathered together to form the basis of a new car "from the bare bones or ashes of the original another one appeared . . . a resurrection from the dead, or from the graveyard". In 1930, 1931 and 1932 I am satisfied it was rebuilt substantially from its component parts and remained throughout a living entity.

At any one stage in its evolution it had indubitably retained its characteristics. Any new parts were assimilated into the whole at such a rate and over such a period of time that they never caused the car to lose its identity which included the fact that it won the Le Mans race in two successive years. It had an unbroken period of four seasons in top-class racing. There is no other Bentley either extinct or extant which could legitimately lay claim to the title of Old Number One or its reputation. It was this history and reputation, as well as its metal, which was for sale on 7th April 1990.

Thus, in summary, the expression "Old Number One" is the famous name in history of a vintage Bentley racing car. It is justifiably applied to the car which in a

succession of forms raced at Le Mans between 1929 and 1932 when it crashed. It is the "authentic" "Old Number One".