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1949 BENTLEY MK 6 STANDARD STEEL SHOOTING BRAKE

BENTLEY MK VI HAROLD RADFORD SHOOTING BRAKE

BENTLEY

MK VI HAROLD RADFORD SHOOTING BRAKE

Year: 1949

Chassis no: B343CD

Registration: OS 7067

Price: £115,000

VEHICLE DETAILS

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION / SERVICE HISTORY

Vintage and Prestige are proud to offer this 1949 Mk VI Harold Radford Countryman Shooting Brake For Sale.

Finished in Tudor Grey with grey hide this car is in lovely and very usable condition.

Introduced in 1946, the Bentley Mark VI was the first postwar Bentley of Rolls-Royce design. The first Bentley Mark VI was delivered to its owner in September 1946, 16 months after VE Day. It was powered by a new 4.25 litre F-head six-cylinder engine featuring overhead intake and side-mounted exhaust valves and an aluminum-alloy cylinder head. A total of 5,201 Bentley Mark VI's were built between 1946 and 1952, with only 999 of that number having special coachbuilt bodies

Coachbuilder Harold Radford conceived the idea of the English Town and Country Saloon or 'Countryman' on the Bentley chassis. The aluminum body is covered with ash trim and mahogany veneer on alloy panels. A total of eight Mark I Countryman bodies were produced between 1948 and 1949. Another 37 Mark II and Mark III versions of the Countryman were built through 1959.

Below is an article from March 1949 in The Motorsport Magazine:

Last month we were able to spend a day trying and luxuriating in a Mk. VI 4 1/4-litre Bentley "Countryman." The "Countryman" body is made for the Bentley chassis by Harold Radford & Co., Ltd. and by Messrs. Leary & McReady, of Southgate, and Mr. Radford, a keen member of the Bentley Drivers' Club, uses one of these attractive cars as his personal means of transport.

The "Countryman" is a saloon in the "utility" body-style, and offers the sportsman a very smart car with unusually commodious luggage accommodation. The deeply-upholstered front seats can be adjusted to carry three persons, or used as separate bucket-type seats, with folding rests available for the occupants' right and left arms. High quality leather upholstery is used, imparting an air of luxury the instant one enters the car, While comfort is assured as each seat is adjustable both for position and rake.

Behind these seats is a raised floor of vast area, access to which is via a dropping tailboard at the rear, locked by two Budget locks having chromium-plated handles. Any amount of luggage can be accommodated, and a removable plated guard prevents any of it shifting forward against the front seats. Obviously, if required, many additional passengers can be made comfortable in this rear compartment, and the rear windows wind open.

The body is beautifully constructed, using normal Bentley steel floors surmounted by the aforementioned raised wooden platform at the rear. The two wide doors incorporate part of the front-wing fairings, have the usual dovetails and buffers, heavy cord "pulls," heavy-duty coach locks and winding quarter-windows and electrically-operated sliding windows. The latter function really beautifully, on pressing the appropriate one of two press-buttons on the side of each door. The windscreen slopes back and tended slightly to reflect the highly-plated controls in the steering-wheel centre. The rear window has an electrically-operated blind, which, like the windows, functions impeccably. Incidentally, for the finicky, it may be mentioned that handles can be used to wind the windows should the electrical gear prove unwilling.

The body is panelled and painted above the waistline, with visible framing below. There is choice of mahogany or walnut-veneered aluminium panelling, while the timbering is imported prime-quality oak or beech. The all-panel roof is lined with a light, washable plastic cloth. Painting on the bonnet, wings, etc., is to customer's choice, as is the colour of the upholstery and piping.

Outwardly the frontal aspect of this fine car is that of the standard Mk. VI — bumpers, spare-wheel mounting, bonnet, valance plates, etc., are standard Bentley practice. All joinery is mahogany-finished, and the at first confusingly-fully fitted-out instrument panel is a modification of Bentley's standard layout. At the rear the spare wheel is hidden behind the flap carrying the illuminated number plate, "stop" lamps and reversing light. The scuttle is an adaptation of the usual Bentley steel scuttle, incorporating the ducts for interior heating and de-misting, and rubberised felt is laid beneath the carpets to exclude fumes, such fume-exclusion being carried out to Bentley's recommendation. The exhaust pipe is chromium plated as seen beneath the tail. There is little need to describe the virtues of the Mk. VI Bentley as such, for it is known to be one of the finest fast cars built in this present day and age. Driving it, one derives satisfaction from the sense of being in a large car, yet, as this impression arose on first acquaintance, in heavy London traffic, obviously this car handles with the ease of a far smaller vehicle. Its refinement, too, makes this quality, applied to lesser cars that impress as silent, smooth and comfortably sprung, seem trite. The efficiency of the ride control applied to the suspension, the light steering, the ease with which the mechanical-servo brakes come on and the silken functioning of the engine, combine to offer a degree of weary-free travel fully comprehended only by those mortals who have handled the Mk. VI. It is good that Britain should build such cars.

Our day's driving showed up a number of interesting facts. At first acceleration in traffic seemed not impressive, until we remembered that a silent, seemingly-absent means of propulsion does not convey any suggestion of hurried action. Later, a standing quarter-of-a-mile was accomplished in 20 seconds dead, while a two-way run gave a mean time of 20.2 seconds. The speedometer went to 22 m.p.h. in first gear, 40 m.p.h. in second gear and 70 m.p.h. in third gear during this acceleration spell, before mild engine sound intruded. It also climbed to the magic 100-m.p.h. mark and beyond so easily that this became the expected reading whenever the road ran straight for a mile or so; nor was wind-noise obtrusive at this speed, while mechanical intrusion was nil. As impressive as driving the Bentley "Countryman" at a speedometer reading of 100 m.p.h., was to stand at the side of the road and watch it go by at that speed. It looked the essence of safety and stability, wheels glued to the road while those of other cars, going half the pace, danced and bounded madly.

The Mk. VI has supple suspension in the current manner, resulting in appreciable rolling if roundabouts are taken fast, and quite a lot of tyre-noise. But there is no gainsaying the fact that, with the suspension over-ride control at "hard," the car holds the road splendidly, and that with this control moved to "soft," when one feels the ride go relatively floppy, the placing still remains delightfully accurate. Really vigorous castor-action on the steering straightens the car easily after cornering in town. The brakes, too, are exceedingly good, and the speedometer needle falls from the 100-m.p.h. mark to Austin Seven gait even more quickly than it climbs the dial, at the merest touch on the brake pedal. Indeed, so powerful are these brakes that one is apt to put them on too fiercely in traffic, making the bonnet dip appreciably if the suspension is set to "soft "; however, at the end of the day we had largely cured this tendency and no doubt further experience of the car would eradicate it, for this is properly progressive braking. Alas, the handbrake is a pull-out device which stuck on one occasion and on another barked our thumb.

We missed, too, the rev.-counter and the joy of seeing the two white-tipped needles of this instrument and the speedometer sitting steadily in the same plane, at (was it?) 3,000 r.p.m. and 60 m.p.h. With so quiet an engine some means of telling its speed makes for neater driving, although we found we were not so hampered by the absence of a tachometer as we had expected to be. When the long bonnet is opened, the beautiful six-cylinder o.h.-inlet engine is seen pulsating on its rubber mountings.

The minor controls, lights and ignition switches, etc., all work in the impeccable Rolls-Royce manner, although the manual ignition advance and retard lever, on which it used to be possible to start these engines by briskly flicking it across its quadrant, has succumbed to the passage of time. Not that this Bentley "pinks" at any throttle opening or under any conditions. The gearbox is as silent as the remainder of the car and provides the finest gear-change of this type on any modern car. To say that changing gear is sheer delight is fact, not exaggeration, with the proviso that reverse position took all one's attention to locate.

As to details, the interior heater, beneath the passenger's seat, worked quietly and very effectively warmed the volume of air with which it has to cope in so large a car, while the radio functioned with the efficient manner we have come to expect of H.M.V. radio. A good, lockable cubby-hole is provided; the view in the mirror is somewhat blanked by the luggage "keep" behind the seats.

Mr. Radford is to be congratulated on placing such a handsome and useful body on

so fine a chassis. The total price of the "Countryman" is thereby kept within very reasonable bounds. This car should certainly be investigated by those seeking a fast luxury vehicle that is as practical as it is handsome. Particularly should it appeal to American connoisseurs who require a "100-m.p.h. stationwagon." Full details can be obtained from Harold Radford & Co., Ltd., Melton Court, South Kensington, London, S.W.7 (Kensington 6642), where the "Countryman" and other fine cars can be examined. — W. B

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