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1930 BENTLEY 4 1/2 LITRE BLOWER

1930 4½ Litre Blower Bentley (Original Fifty)

- Likely the first production Blower to leave the works
- Built to homologate the Birkin team cars
- Retains original engine fitted to chassis (the first production Blower engine) and original Vanden Plas coachwork
- Mille Miglia veteran, offered after 40 years in a revered Bentley collection

Chassis SM3905 is the earliest of the prized "original fifty" Blower Bentleys, from the first series of twenty-five, exactly rebuilt to Birkin team car specification.

Likely the first production Blower to leave the works, its engine SM3904 was the first production Bentley Motors supercharged engine, after SM3901, SM3902 and SM3903 allocated to the Birkin team cars. First delivered to Captain W. D'Arcy Hall of Abercynying, Brecon, Wales, and registered as EU919, she was bodied by Maythorn as a fixed head close coupled saloon, or sportsman's coupé, one of just two Maythorn Blowers and the only coupé.

With a selection of private owners noted in the file, and after the usual gap in the war years when private cars were laid up due to petrol rationing, by 1945 records show she had been fitted by Manchester coachbuilders Knibbs & Parkyn with a drophead coupé body, changed in 1958 for the original Vanden Plas sports four-seater body she wears today. According to the accompanying Dr. Clare Hay report, the original Amherst Villiers supercharger no. 108 remains, with a ribbed centre casing fitted replacing the plain casing.

Purchased by the great American enthusiast and collector Ann Klein in 1961, renowned Bentley experts Elmdown Engineering were commissioned to rebuild SM3905 to the pattern of the Birkin team car YU3250. Standards of accuracy were very high, having rebuilt the No.2 short chassis Birkin Blower and with access to the long chassis car rebuilt by Harry Rose. The Vanden Plas body was retained with cycle wings and the bonnet remade with straps, notably gaining a Birkin-style 48-gallon tank, Zeiss lamps with stoneguards, engine turned dash with racing instruments, and Birkin-style stoneguard over the carburettor side of the supercharger.

As rebuilt, she appeared at the 1962 Bentley Driver's Club Snowball Run, with W.O. Bentley himself and Elmdown's Tony Townshend photographed alongside. Ann and Bill Klein then brought the Blower to the United States joining their famed collection in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania. She was featured in the book *The Great Cars* by Ralph Stein in 1967, and on display at the Henry Ford Museum in 1969. Circa 1979 she was sold to renowned collector Y. Hayashi of Japan. Later she was acquired by a long-term owner in Europe who is active in the Bentley Drivers Club, very attractively remaining little changed since Townshend's rebuild. She competed in the Mille Miglia in 1999.

One of the prized "original 50" built to homologate the five Birkin team cars, and described by Clare Hay as very likely the first production Blower to leave the works, chassis SM3905 has a special historical significance. A charismatic and highly impressive vintage speed machine, this Blower represents the ultimate sporting Cricklewood Bentley, and is certain to draw a crowd at any of the most prestigious and exclusive motoring events.

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