

## 1957 BENTLEY S1 CONTINENTAL PARK WARD DROPHEAD COUPÉ ADAPTATION

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#### BENTLEY

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Year: 1957

Chassis no: BC49CH

Registration:

161XUL

Price: £500,000

#### VEHICLE DETAILS

##### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION / SERVICE HISTORY

1957 Bentley S1 Continental Park Ward Drophead Coupé Adaptation

Chassis Number: BC49CH

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1 of just 45 RHD S1 Continental chassis bodied by Park Ward to its Design Number 701, this car was Subject to an extensive restoration which included conversion to Drophead Coupé format by noted specialists A&B Price. The car was the beneficiary of approximately £200,000 worth of expenditure with marque specialists such as Jonathan Padgett in the previous ownership.

Mentored by A.F. McNeil at J. Gurney Nutting & Co Ltd during the mid-1930s and subsequently promoted to Chief Designer there, John Polwhele Blatchley joined Rolls-Royce during WWII. A stylistic influence on every generation of Bentley from the MkVI through to the T-Series, he took control of in-house coachbuilder Park Ward's designs from 1952 onwards and was later credited with penning the Rolls-Royce Corniche. Decidedly elegant but with various a la mode twists such as its subtly integrated vestigial tail fins, Park Ward's Design Numbers 700 and 701 for the Bentley S1 Continental chassis were typical of Blatchley's creative ethos. Evolving through issues one and two, later versions of the sleek, two-door Drophead Coupé and Fixed Head Coupé variants utilised the same tail-lights as the Standard Steel Saloon integrating them into the base of the tailfins.

Park Ward bodied a total of sixty-nine Bentley S1 Continental chassis to its Design Number 701 (with forty-five being to right-hand drive specification) with a further eighty-nine Drophead Coupés to Design Number 700. The aluminium clad Drophead Coupé is considered to be one of the most desirable Bentley Continental variants and therefore examples today are regularly seen for sale at more than £1,000,000. This has resulted in a small number of Fixed Head Coupes being converted to Drophead Coupe specification.

According to Martin Bennett's authoritative book 'Bentley Continental, Corniche and Azure', chassis BC49CH was bodied by Park Ward as a Fixed Head Coupe to its Design Number 701. Delivered in November 1957 to A. Beatty, it was initially registered as 'UXF 100'. The 'A. Beatty' in question is understood to have been Sir Alfred Chester Beatty; an American-British mining magnate who moved to London from New York City in 1911. Known as the 'The King of Copper', his donations were pivotal to the establishment and survival of what is now The Institute of Cancer Research. Little else is known about the four-seater's early history until 1990 when the previous owner entrusted it to A&B Price for restoration and conversion to Drophead Coupé specification.

'161 XUL' was purchased from marque specialists Frank Dale & Stepsons and has been lavishly maintained and improved to the tune of over £200,000 since. Acknowledged specialist Padgett Motor Engineers have thoroughly overhauled the original engine, not to mention attending to the automatic transmission and back axle. The hood has been re-profiled and renewed in Dark Green mohair, while the interior upholstery, boot and wood veneers have been refurbished (the associated SimTrim of Spalding bills totalling £50,000 plus). The cubbies to the driver and passenger doors house a seemingly unused picnic set, while the dashboard contains a digitalised Becker Mexico stereo.

The green paint is like new & suits the car very well. To the interior are hides of the highest quality that are sumptuous to sit upon. The interior woodwork has been removed & re-finished to a similarly high standard. A thick & correct leather hood bag fastens easily into place keeping the hood tidy & snug when in the down position. Lowering it is as simple as undoing two latches & throwing it rearwards.

The car needless to say drives superbly feeling more like a new car than one 75 or so years old. Performance is brisk with the ability to cruise in unruffled silence at speeds far in excess of those allowed on British roads. The gear box is very smooth & kicks down readily when called upon to do so. The engine runs cool with high oil pressure evident. Simply put the sum of its parts add up to a sublime driving experience.

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