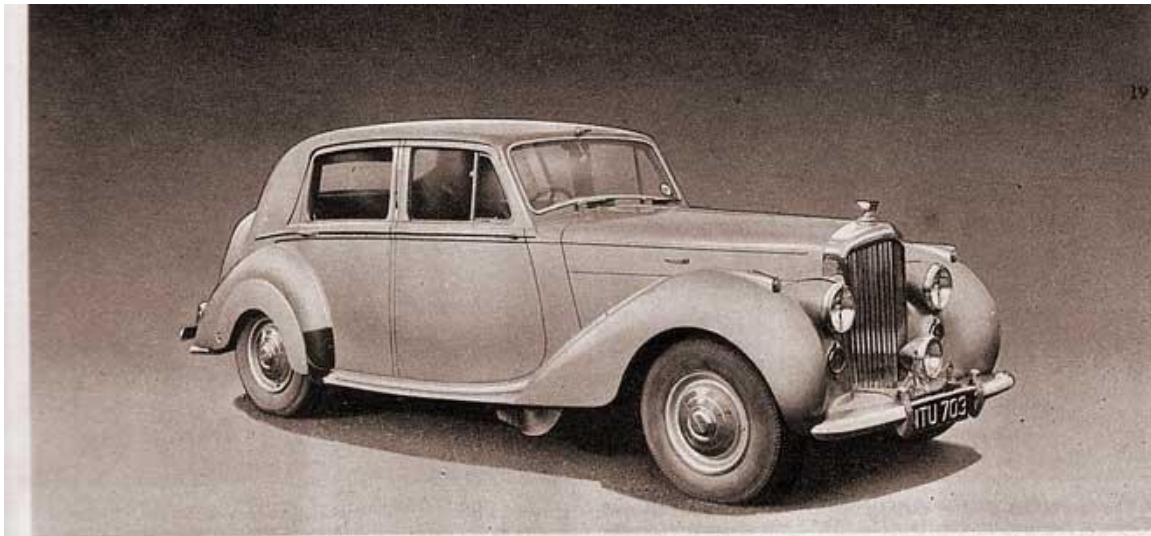


BENTLEY MARK VI ROAD TEST



DATA FOR THE DRIVER

BENTLEY MARK VI

PRICE, with four-door saloon body, £2,875, plus £1,598 14s 5d British purchase tax. Total (in Great Britain), £4,473 14s 5d.

ENGINE: 31.5 h.p. (R.A.C. rating), 6 cylinders, overhead inlet, side exhaust valves, 92 x 114 mm, 4,566 c.c. Compression Ratio: 5.4 to 1. 22.1 m.p.h. per 1,000 r.p.m. on top gear.

WEIGHT (in running trim with 5 gals fuel): 36 cwt 1 qr 18 lb (4,078 lb). Front wheels 48.6 per cent; rear wheels 51.4 per cent. LB per C.C.: 0.89.

TYRE SIZE: 6.50 x 16in on bolt-on steel disc wheels.

TANK CAPACITY: 18 English gallons. Approximate fuel consumption range, 15-17 m.p.g. (18.8-16.6 litres per 100 km).

TURNING CIRCLE: 41ft 2in (L and R). Steering wheel movement from lock to lock: 3½ turns. LIGHTING SET: 12 volt.

MAIN DIMENSIONS: Wheelbase, 10ft 0in. Track, 4ft 8½in (front); 4ft 10½in (rear). Overall length, 16ft 0in; width, 5ft 10in; height, 5ft 6in. Ground Clearance: 7.2in.

ACCELERATION

Overall gear ratios	From steady m.p.h. of			
	10-30	20-40	30-50	40-60
	sec	sec	sec	sec
3.777 to 1	8.2	7.5	8.0	8.2
5.001 to 1	6.0	5.8	6.3	7.1
7.500 to 1	4.2	4.4	5.5	—
11.113 to 1	3.6	—	—	—

From rest through gears to:—

m.p.h.	sec	m.p.h.	sec	m.p.h.	sec
30	4.5	60	15.2	80	28.4
50	10.2	70	20.1	90	39.0

SPEEDS ON GEARS

By Electric Speedometer	M.p.h.		K.p.h.	
	(normal and max)	(normal and max)	(normal and max)	(normal and max)
1st	20-36	32-58		
2nd	40-54	64-87		
3rd	70-85	113-137		
4th	100	161		

Speedometer correction by Electric Speedometer:—

Car Speedometer	Electric Speedometer
10	10.0
20	20.0
30	30.0
40	40.0
50	51.0
60	62.0
70	72.0
80	82.0
90	92.0
98	100.0

WEATHER: Dry; negligible wind. Air temperature 36 deg F.

Acceleration figures are the means of several runs in opposite directions.

Described in "The Autocar" of April 21, 1950.

Outstanding is the air of quality and refinement, coupled with clean functional lines, at once suggested by the Bentley with its standard steel saloon body.

BENTLEY Mark VI SALOON

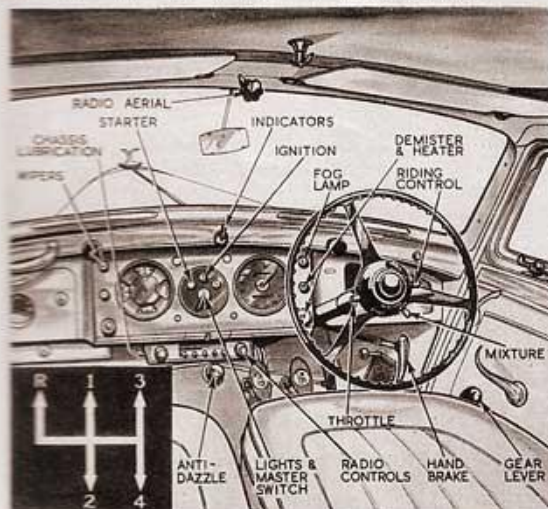
THE Bentley is by no means a cheap car; in fact, it is one of the most expensive vehicles produced in any country. Although it has often been argued that it is much more difficult to produce a cheap car of relatively good quality, the very fact that this has been done must influence the design and manufacture of the expensive product. To justify itself it must be superior in every way to a less expensive car; there is little doubt that the Mark VI makes a good job of living up to the extremely high standards aimed at by the manufacturers and demanded by the purchasers. There is no room or excuse for defects of even a minor nature that would be perhaps overlooked in a car costing half the price. Briefly, it is a car for the connoisseur who can afford to pay the price.

As with the previous model tested by *The Autocar*, the present car was fitted with a standard steel saloon body, but with the new 4½-litre engine, which is basically similar to its predecessor, the 4½-litre, except that the cylinder bore has been increased from 89 to 92 mm. This relatively small increase in engine capacity has resulted in a worthwhile gain in performance as compared with the previous engine and without any apparent increase in total weight.

When judged from outward appearances only, the Bentley has the air of a thoroughbred, and on first acquaintance with this model, even before one has actually entered the car, it creates the impression that it must go well and possess that extra something that the others lack. Once inside, the impression produced by its external appearance is substantiated by the quiet, tasteful interior which, in spite of being functional in every way, possesses a quality obtained only by craftsmanship.

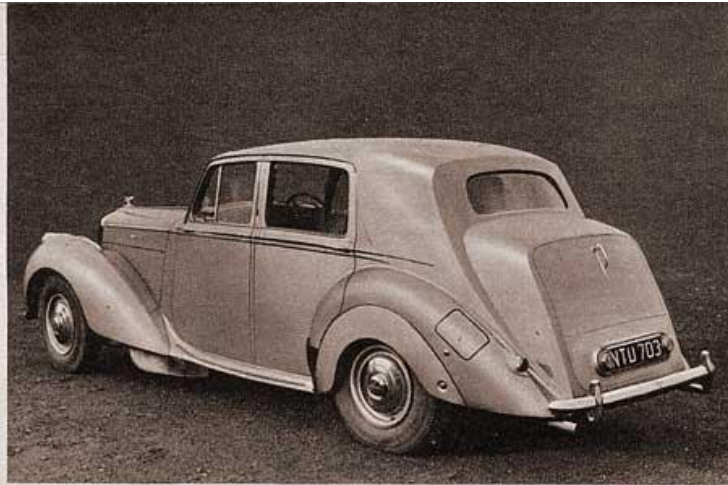
There are some cars which must be driven for a considerable mileage before the driver feels at home, while in others this process takes place in a very short space of time; it is in the latter category that the Bentley is placed. Because of the general silence and smoothness there is often a sensation of gliding in, rather than driving, this car, and this attribute, in conjunction with the positive yet light operation of all the controls, reduces driving fatigue to a minimum. Even after frequent use of the clutch, as when journeying through city traffic in a rush hour, there is no noticeable fatigue or left-foot weariness. Also, incidentally, there is ample foot room at the side of the pedals, a point that is particularly appreciated by a tall driver.

These items combine to give the car an ability to cover long distances at high average speeds without much effort. For example, in the hands of *The Autocar* staff the car covered a distance of over 1,200 miles in just over a week,





The traditional Bentley radiator is of course retained on this latest model. Both front wings are deeply arched and, both being easily visible, provide useful sighting points from inside the car.



The semi-razor edge rear-end treatment is balanced by the rear wing line. The rear doors are provided with a generous wrap-over to prevent the rear passengers' clothes becoming soiled by contact with the rear wing. There is no interference by wheel spats with checking rear tyre pressures. The fuel tank filler is concealed by the flap in the left rear wing, which can be locked. One Yale key serves the whole car.

most of this being done outside normal working hours. One trip of nearly 100 miles was covered in just over two hours, including the time taken driving through the built-up areas of two cities—an average approaching 50 miles an hour. On longer journeys it was possible to average 40 miles an hour including stops, as on a 250-mile journey from Cornwall to the outskirts of London.

On English roads it is not possible to obtain figures such as these unless a car has very good acceleration throughout the entire speed range. The ultimate maximum speed is not so important a factor as how quickly the intermediate speeds can be obtained, and here the Bentley records remarkably good figures; for example, 10 to 30 m.p.h. on second gear in just over 4 seconds, and 40 to 60 on top in a little over 8 seconds, and 0 to 80 m.p.h. in less than half a minute. Additional acceleration figures, not normally recorded—or even recordable on the average car—are:

	From steady m.p.h. of	
	50-70	60-80
	sec	sec
Top	9.9	12.1
Third	8.8	—

The excess power available for acceleration also gives the car extremely good hill-climbing ability. All normal main-

road hills can be swiftly climbed on top gear; or, if extra urge is required, the high maximum speed on third gear permits an early change down without risk of over-revving the engine. All the acceleration data were recorded on Pool petrol of approximately 72 octane; the maximum speed shown in the table was obtained in Belgium on fuel of slightly better quality. On English roads it proved possible to see speeds of the order of 91-93 m.p.h. with comparative ease; the more traffic-free straights of Continental roads enabled the genuine 100 m.p.h. mark to be exceeded. The exceptional fact of the speedometer fitted to the car tested reading *slow* from 50 m.p.h. onwards is noteworthy.

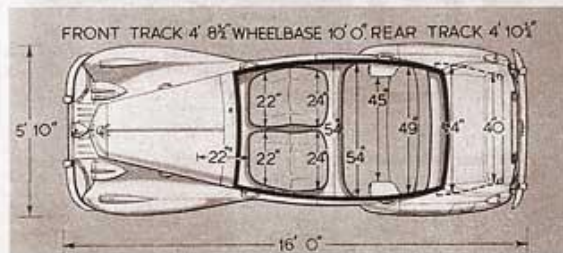
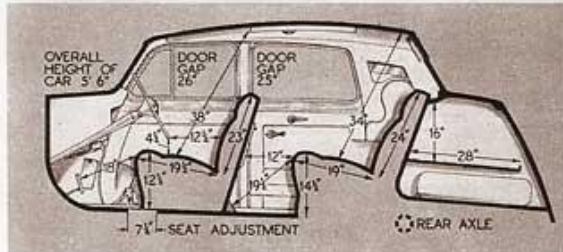
The familiar Bentley right-hand gear change is, of course, used on this model. It is very well placed and beautifully smooth and positive in operation, although perhaps a little more room between the lever and the door trim would be advantageous. Reverse gear is obtained by depressing the knob, which permits the lever to pass into the reverse position in the gate and prevents that gear being engaged inadvertently. On the car tested a slight difficulty in engaging reverse instantly was occasionally experienced.

Partly, perhaps, because of the driving position, combined with a good view of the front of the car, the Bentley very quickly creates the impression that it will handle well and

The separate front seats are well upholstered and extremely comfortable. Readily detachable arm rests are fitted inside both front doors. Movable toe boards and folding picnic tables all help to increase the rear seat luxury. There is a

pull down central arm rest in the rear seat. The fine woodwork and leather of obvious quality, but completely without ostentation, do much towards producing an atmosphere of well-being.





Measurements in these scale body diagrams are taken with the driving seat in the central position of fore and aft adjustment and with the seat cushions uncompressed.

obey the wishes of the driver. Both front and rear seat riding is good. Although the ride control lever at the centre of the steering wheel enables the suspension to be stiffened if necessary, on the car tested it was considered by one experienced driver that this gave most satisfactory results in the "normal" position for both normal and high-speed driving.

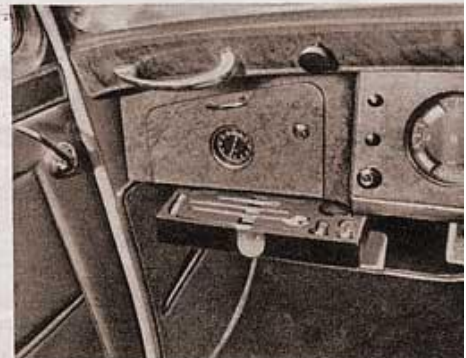
The steering is light, it has a good self-centring action, and with three and a half turns from lock to lock manoeuvrability in confined spaces is extremely good. In fact, it is possible to manoeuvre and control this car with greater ease than applies to some considerably smaller cars. When first considering the cornering qualities a driver may be a little disappointed, but this is because of the extreme silence of the vehicle as a whole, for unless frequent reference is made to the speedometer it can easily be travelling at least ten miles an hour faster than is apparent.

The mechanical servo brakes provide remarkable retarding power and can achieve, when necessary, what appears to be almost the impossible in safe stopping; also, compared with most other braking systems, the pedal pressures required are extremely low. In fact, as one member of *The Autocar* staff put it, "You have just to breathe on the Bentley brake pedal." On the test car a certain amount of initial fierceness of braking was noticed, but this disappeared by the time the performance figures had been taken, and here it should be stated that in spite of the increased number of high-speed recordings taken during this test no brake fading was experienced. At one stage there seemed to be a certain

Although the luggage locker has only a moderate capacity, the lid can be secured in the open position to form a platform. A separate lower compartment houses the spare wheel and tools. The current larger engined model is distinguished by the twin exhaust tail pipes.



Small tools of high quality and spare bulbs are neatly housed in a small lockable drawer below the fascia cupboard, which also can be locked. A passenger's grab handle is conveniently placed alongside the left-hand windscreen wiper knob. Radio is a standard fitment.



degree of unbalance between the two front wheels, but this also appeared to right itself after a few miles.

As mentioned previously, the driving position is extremely comfortable and the well-sprung cushions provide ample support where it is most needed. All minor controls are well placed, the hub of the steering wheel containing the ride control, starting mixture control and hand throttle in a neat grouping, while the others are arranged round the speedometer and the combined unit containing the fuel, oil and water temperature gauges and ammeter. A small push button on the fascia panel enables the engine's oil level to be measured on the fuel gauge, while a green light warns the driver when the fuel level is getting low. This light is rather disturbingly bright at night, if one is deliberately running with a low fuel level, and certainly it attracts the attention its function demands. A rheostat control to enable the instrument illumination to be graduated would be appreciated. There is a useful map reading lamp located under the passenger's grab handle. Although the driving mirror is rather small, the rear view is satisfactory.

The detail fittings are carefully chosen to blend with the general quality of the car. For example, in the space normally occupied by the rear quarter light in a six-light saloon, interior mirrors are fitted, each of which has concealed lighting, while on the right-hand side is also fitted a cigarette lighter. All the seats are trimmed with fine leather and there is a fold-down armrest at the centre of the rear seat. The heating unit is very efficient for both front and rear seat occupants, and ensures an ample supply of warm air for passenger comfort and demisting.

For a car of this size the enclosed luggage space is limited, but the locker lid can be secured in the open position to form a platform to which extra luggage can be strapped. In spite of their relatively small diameter, the head lamps are extremely powerful and have a very good range. The single dipped lamp system for anti-dazzle purposes was fitted, yet in the dipped position it gave ample light. Starting is at all times instantaneous. The car can be driven away from cold with the minimum of fuss and the mixture control be returned to the normal position in a surprisingly short space of time; the hand throttle is a useful and now rare fitting.

A large intake air cleaner supplies the twin S.U. carburettors. The tube running above the air cleaner is the demister intake. A neat inspection lamp is clipped to the bulkhead above the regulator unit and can be plugged into a socket on the fascia. As always, the engine is a model of good finish.

