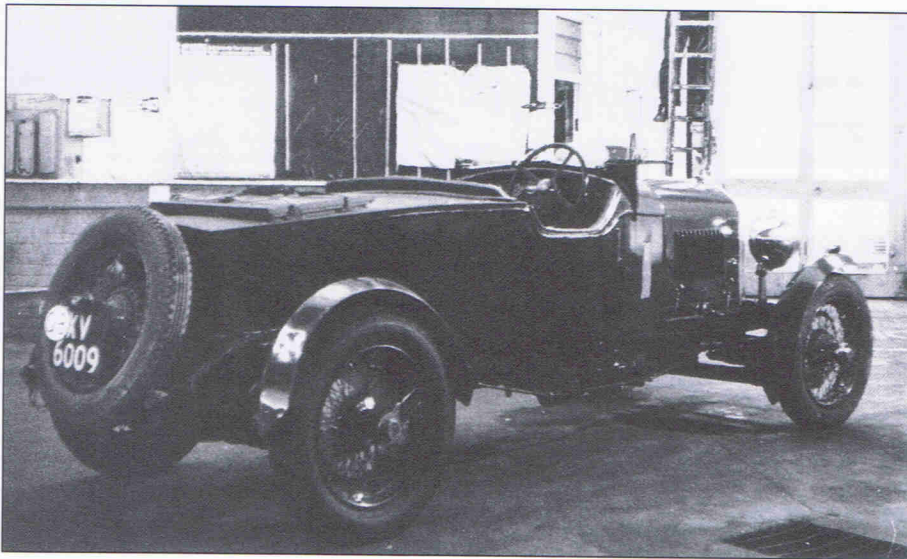


# THOMAS AND MILBANK SALES

Phillip was keen to become a partner in the garage but I was completely opposed to this having been down that road in the past. However we decided to set up a partnership in car sales only, and were to trade as Thomas Milbank Sales. This gave Phillip some extra capital and me 50% of profits instead of commission, I do not remember the percentage previously paid to me on his sales but it was certainly not 50%.

The quality of the stock improved. I remember Phillip bought one of the first Jaguar XJ V12s not long after its first introduction. It was very low mileage. It was not immediately obvious that it was a V12 as opposed to the normal 6 cylinder model. I suggested we had a pair of number plates made up just as "V12". It did the trick and caught everyone's eye. It sold almost immediately to one of my petrol account customers, Mr Pybus, a Company Director, whose wife and son became really good customers and friends.

In 1966 a customer, Ron Campbell, called at the garage for petrol. Upon seeing my Bentley MkVI, he remarked that he had an old Bentley, a 4½ which he had taken in lieu of a bad debt some years previously. He had not used the Bentley because of a very bad radiator leak together with an estimate of £800.00 for a rebuild.



Ron Campbell's Bentley 4½

After some badgering on my part, I persuaded Ron to get it on the road. A new battery, fresh petrol and lots of radiator leak sealing gunge, which did not stop the excessive discharge of water, the Bentley fired up with no trouble. With my set of trade plates fitted we were ready for the off.

The old Bentley created a lot of interest as we left the garage forecourt having not been cleaned for many years. It also had a rather hideous home-made wooden body to the rear of the two front seats which contained a central hatch for a third unfortunate small person.

It was one mile to the A3 Kingston by-pass and the Bentley was running very well. We got the speed up to 50mph when two lads in a Triumph Spitfire pulled up alongside. They pointed and laughed at Ron and I, in what to them, even in 1966, was a car of twice their age. Ron dropped into third gear, foot to the floor, which produced a cloud of smoke and rust from the ancient exhaust system, we saw the Spitfire disappear into the distance.

We managed the return trip from Esher before the radiator ran dry. The Bentley then went back into hibernation at Ron's house.

Over the following twenty years, I would enquire about the Bentley and Ron would say, "I will get it on the road one day. I have been quoted £1200.00 now for a radiator rebuild so it will have to wait."

In 1988 I took Ron out for a ride somewhere in my 1928 Rolls Royce 20. He was very taken with the car and asked me, "Was I still interested in owning his 4½ and how did I value it."