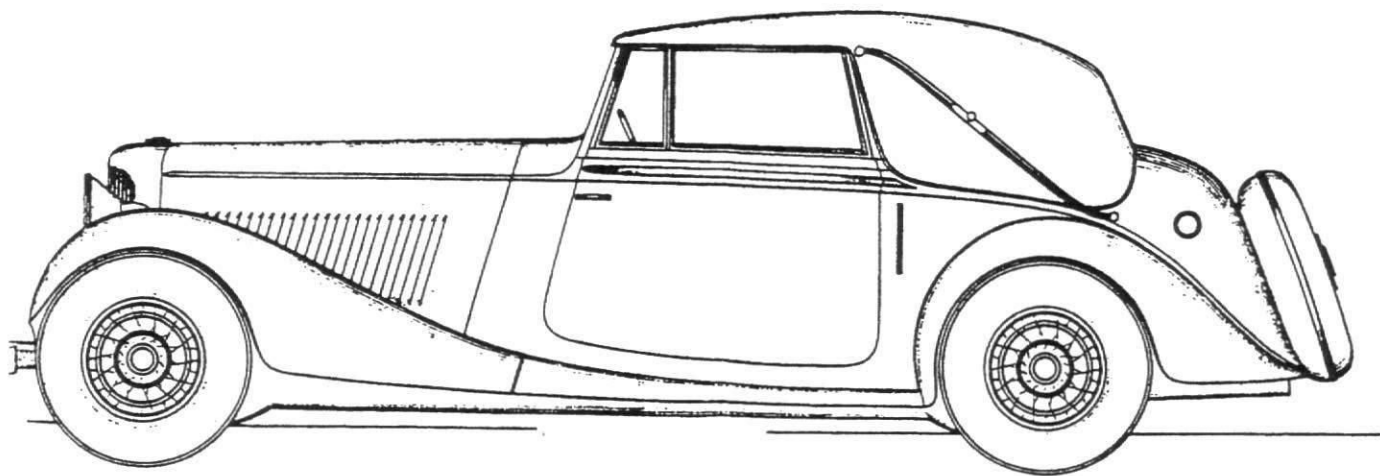


Y  
Yarns, Experiences  
and  
Trip Reports

# From Here to Ether-Ternity

by B154KT



I am a 1937 4¼ litre Vanden Plas drophead. After purchase in the spring in Ohio, I was trucked to a body shop in Batavia, NY (halfway between Buffalo and Rochester) for mechanical checkout and some cosmetic detailing. I was worked over, submitted to tapping and wrenching, sweated over and pampered for about 3 months. My black wheel discs were removed, and my wire wheels were painted cream to match the mid-section of my body (my wings and upper body are a royal blue). I had a new owner, Addison Yeaman in the Washington, DC area, who wanted to drive me home, but did not want to go alone.

The R-R guru of the Rochester area, Roy Bertch, and his aficionado friend, John Utz, had declared me roadworthy after 100 miles of test-driving. So, we started off on the afternoon of August 3, three of us, since Utz had brought his spouse along in case they needed an emery board (you think I'm kidding?). I was glad to leave that stuffy garage, even though the temperature was in the 90s.

My grille was pointed forward,

all set to go. Then gasoline gushed from under the engine. Raising the bonnet disclosed an overflowing carburettor. I had a sticky float valve. Utz ran for a hammer. A sharp tap fixed it but gave me a headache.

The fresh air seemed to revive me. My new owner and I breezed along for 300 miles (with an overnight stay in Williamsport, PA) without incident. My oil pressure and coolant temperature remained reassuring. Just my one-shot reservoir needed replenishment. The Utz's were following us in an air-conditioned Toyota (sissies!)

It was around Thurmont, MD, that I began to feel sick. I was losing strength and gasping for air. My muffler emitted random embarrassing flatulent pops. Fuel pump trouble was suspected but eliminated. A continuity check of my primary coil/distributor circuit revealed no problem. I limped along for another few miles to Frederick until we reached a shopping mall and found a restaurant where the humans had lunch. I waited outside in the sun with my bonnet up.

Evidently I excited the owner of a laundromat in the mall, because—let's face it—I am handsome. The decision was made to file my points with an emery board. This concurred with the unsolicited advice of the laundromat owner, a loud and enthusiastic man. It was done but didn't relieve my distress.

We continued south on I-270, stopping in the shade of every other bridge while the humans tried to comfort me, but hills which I breezed over at 60 in top gear now reduced me to a laborious crawl in second. I felt rotten and drugged, and I finally collapsed at the side of the freeway.

After a short rest, with Utz at the wheel, I was able to limp off at the Clarksburg exit and pull into a gas station. Arrangements were made to let me rest overnight and be flat-bedded to a suburban DC foreign car dealer the following morning. Off the flat-bed, the service people started my engine and it ran normally.

Now, gentle (mechanically-minded) reader, what do you think was wrong? Write the editors and let them know.

# From Here to Ether-Ternity: Help for B154KT

Issue 87-5, p. 3504, recounted the sad story of B154KT's drive from upstate New York to Clarksburg, MD, on her way to her new home in Virginia. The car asked readers to write with their diagnoses of the problem.

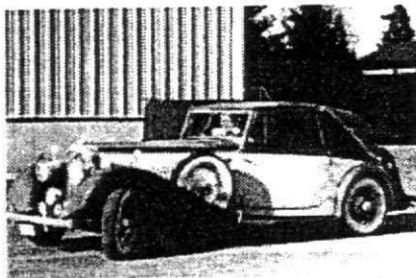
Several responses promptly came across the editorial transom. More than one person suspected a vapor lock, brought about by today's fuels in the summer's heat. Certainly the editors thought this might be the case at first.

Charles Peck, of Houston, TX, drew on his experiences with a 1933 20/25 Gurney Nutting sedan coupe that he bought in England in 1956. The car had been stored since the outbreak of war, and Peck had similar problems to those suffered by B154KT. Finally, an Exxon engineer suggested that if the car had been stored with leaded gasoline in the tank, the lead could have settled out and formed a gum which can be sucked up into the carburetor. Removing the tank and soaking the tank with two gallons of alcohol for two days, then running alcohol through the gas line to the carburetor and blowing it out, solved the problem. Peck thought that this solution might work.

B2DG, a 1935 Park Ward drop-head currently residing with W.D. Sims, of Lafayette, CA, wrote to B154KT as follows:

"Your saga recalls memories of my own 'delivery' trip from Loveland, Colorado to Lafayette, California in 1979.

"After two years languishing behind a huge Packard in a consignment garage, my present boss (in impulsive moment) purchased me. He had formed the idea that my obviously neglected appearance hid



a stout heart and that I could manage the long trip over mountains and deserts to California. And he was right. Despite being a little breathless at 11,000 ft altitude on the Continental Divide, some minor attacks of vapor lock which required the application of a snow poultice to my fuel pumps, plus sundry fuel and roof leaks which were bandaged with much duct tape, I arrived in California with no major assistance required.

"Recalling that trip and subsequently being dismembered for a bare-frame restoration from which I am only now recovering, I have puzzled with the boss, a retired engineer of varied background, over your August problem.

"Our best guess relates to some work the boss did years ago on the effects of lead (TEL) in motor fuel. Under city driving conditions he found that deposits of lead salts can adhere to the portion of exhaust valve stems which move in-and-out of the guide. When heated during highway operation these deposits can cause intermittent sticking of the valves. The symptoms can be precisely the flatulence and loss of power you describe. When fully cooled down, power returns.

"For correction, I recommend that you be inspected for valve stem deposits and general valve condition. New valve guides of proper fit may well be required. And finally, a diet of

very-low lead fuel should prevent recurrence of the malady."

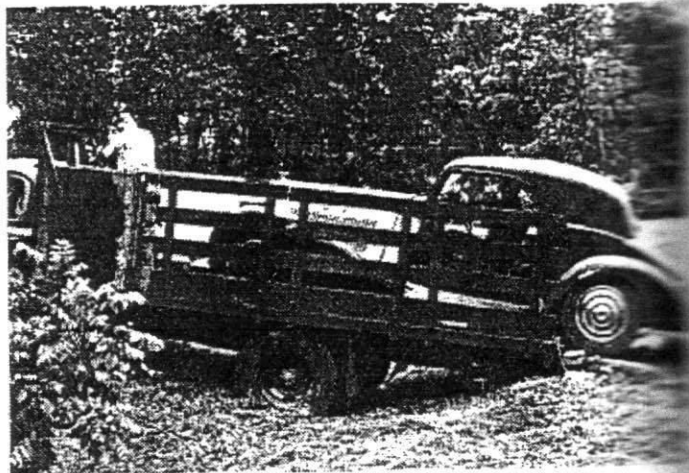
Finally, what did the local dealer—who actually sorted out the problem—have to report? Here's what they found:

"The car started and ran (of course!) as soon as it was off the flatbed truck. It did, however, have a dead miss on two cylinders (#4 and #5). Compression testing showed we had a good basic motor. The ignition system possessed many incorrect parts and was suffering from general neglect. The fuel system proved to be clear, but it was suffering from a partially inoperative pump. The fuel pump proved to have very dirty and corroded valves as well as valve seats which had come adrift. This caused fuel pressure leakage back into the feed pipe to the tank. Coupled with one inoperative solenoid and hardened diaphragms, this would render the pump incapable of delivering fuel at all if any percolation was taking place. This would virtually guarantee a failure on a day when the temperature exceeded 92°-93°F.

"With the fuel pump restored to correct function, and the ignition system sorted out and overhauled along with the rear carburetor piston unstuck and the carbs balanced, the motor went into 'full song.' It does run like a different car, and we were unable to provoke any falter or hesitations on roadtest."

We are happy to report that the car performs very well now. It was one of the three cars used for demonstration purposes at the Small Horsepower Technical Seminar in November, and it needed no major work.

We hope you have enjoyed this little saga. We have, and we've learned some fine points, too.



### FROM PUTTY TO PERFECTION? A BENTLEY RESTORATION PROJECT

Ed. Note: This member's report on a planned restoration was actually received in mid-1970. We're not sure of progress to date but this description of what he has undertaken is indeed mind-boggling.

I recently bought a dilapidated 3½-liter Bentley (shown in the accompanying photographs) and am embarking on a restoration. This is the first time I have owned such a worthy car and the first time I've tried to restore anything so I'll need lots of advice, guidance and moral support. My motivations are, of course, the entertainment of restoring the thing, then tooling around in the result.

The car was imported sometime prior to 1968 but when I don't know though I am trying to trace this information. It has chassis number B-159-FC and engine number D-6B-D and is apparently the last 3½-liter produced. The body is a four-place, two-door, three-window affair, painted dirty ivory and dark green (some I've talked to believe Van Vooren made the body).

The entire car, so help me, has been coated with a layer of putty, ranging from less than a sixteenth inch thick to two inches. There is paint underneath the putty — a couple of colors of green in fact — and no less than three colors of green on top of the putty! The putty hides many holes rusted through the metal of the darn thing (it is a steel body with aluminum hood) and seals off the former sunroof.

A headliner has been installed which conveniently ignores the existence of the sunroof. When the doors are opened they fall off as did the trunk when I opened it. All this and the car's engine runs and on all six cylinders though it does overheat. Just a minor problem, I'm sure!

David C. Denison, Va.

