



By appointment
to HM The Queen
motor car manufacturers
Bentley Motors Limited
Crewe Cheshire



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BENTLEY

Press Information

BENTLEY WORKS RACE CARS FROM PAST AND PRESENT RETURN TO LE MANS TO CELEBRATE CENTENARY

- **2003 Speed 8 that won Le Mans 20 years ago returns to famous track**
- **Laps La Sarthe for the first time since taking the chequered flag in 2003**
- **Two laps completed ahead of start of 24 Hours of Le Mans, as part of centenary parade**
- **Blower Continuation Series to race at Le Mans Classic**
- **Le Mans winner Guy Smith (GB) returns to the Speed 8 cockpit**
- **Speed 8 on display in Le Mans Museum until July**

(Crewe, 12 June 2023) The most famous race car of the modern Bentley era, the 2003 Speed 8, made its return to Le Mans this weekend to take part in the centenary celebrations of the ultimate motorsport marathon – the 24 Hours of Le Mans. The dynamic demonstration of the highly popular fan-favourite precedes the return of a new Works Bentley to Le Mans, with a pair of Blower Continuation Series cars to compete at this year’s Le Mans Classic.

The very same car that won the race in 2003 – Speed 8 chassis 004/5 – took to the track on Saturday afternoon as part of a centenary parade. It was piloted by Guy Smith, the same driver who took the chequered flag twenty years ago, as the car turned a wheel at the circuit for the first time since. After being reunited with the car and completing two laps of the circuit, Guy commented:

“This car delivered Bentley’s first Le Mans victory since 1930, and became the springboard for my racing career, and so it’s incredibly special to me. While I’ve driven it a couple of times since 2003, this is the first time it’s been back to Le Mans and driving it here brought back so many memories and emotions. It feels

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exactly the same as it did when it crossed the line twenty years ago. Bentley is part of Le Mans, and Le Mans is part of Bentley, and it's been an amazing weekend of celebrations of 100 years of history here.”

Le Mans Classic will then see a Works Bentley race at Le Mans for the first time since the victory in 2003 – as a pair of Blower Continuation Series cars take part in the Grid 1 race. Both the factory-owned Blower Car Zero and a customer car will be racing, with the former building on its recent first test race at Donington Park in the UK. The entries mark not only the first official Bentley entries to a Le Mans race since 2003, but also the return of a Works-supported Blower to the track for the first time since 1930, when the legend of the Bentley Blower was born.

As part of the rejuvenation of Bentley's Heritage Collection, Speed 8 004/5 has recently undergone a complete rebuild to return it to as-new standard as it was before its most famous victory. The car is one of eight motorsport vehicles in the Heritage Collection, all of which are maintained in running order alongside the 37 road-going members of the fleet, all of which will be road legal by the end of the year.

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The Speed 8 now stays at the circuit for the rest of June, on display in the Le Mans Museum until Le Mans Classic at the end of the month, where Bentley will have a significant presence and exhibition alongside the race programme. The Speed 8 will then make a number of other dynamic appearances this summer, before returning to Crewe to be positioned on display with its sister cars from 2001 and 2002, and the rest of the Bentley Heritage Collection, in three new and purpose-built areas that embed the fleet into any visit to Bentley's campus.



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Notes to editors

Bentley Motors is the most sought-after luxury car brand in the world. The company's headquarters in Crewe is home to all of its operations including design, R&D, engineering, Mulliner and production of the company's five model lines, Continental GT, Continental GT Convertible, Flying Spur, Bentayga and Bentayga EWB. The combination of fine craftsmanship, using skills that have been handed down through generations, alongside engineering expertise and cutting-edge technology is unique to UK luxury car brands such as Bentley. It is also an example of high-value British manufacturing at its best. Bentley employs around 4,000 people at Crewe.

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