

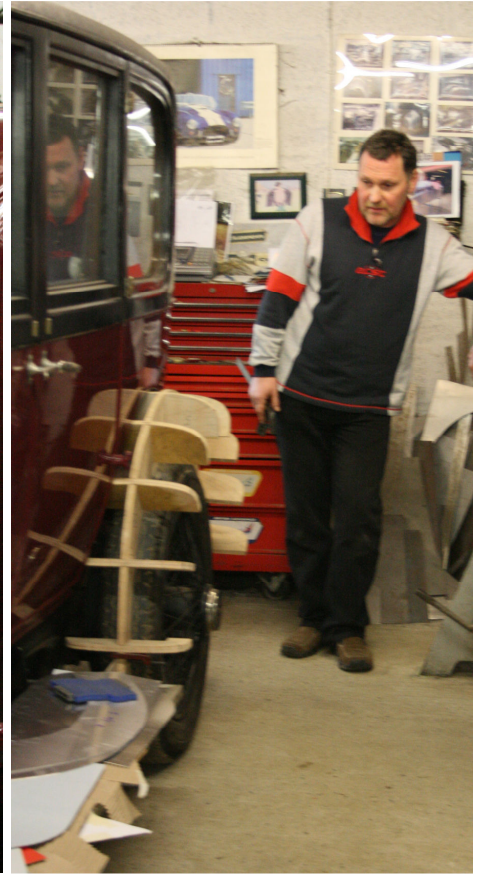
New wings

Readers might be interested in the photographs showing how new wings are made.

GXL39's wings were in a bit of a state and needed restoring. After having the layers of paint and polyester shot-blasted off (in places the polyester was nearly an inch thick), I was advised that all four wings were just about repairable – but not worth the bother! A pity. They were original, and still had the Hooper body number stamped underneath, but 80 years of bumps, dents, corrosion, patching and welding had left them seriously weakened and misshapen, hence the thick polyester. The new wings were made by Derek Vertenten who has a small specialist workshop in rural Devon. Derek did his apprenticeship in the aerospace industry and is trained to roll aluminium skins to micro-tolerances, so to him vintage cars offer a different range of challenges. His welding skills are such that he can make complete bodies in highly polished-aluminium. He made the body for a replica le Mans W O Bentley, which can be glimpsed in the background of one of the photos, and recently completed the amazing recreation of the coachwork on John Fasal's "Indian" Silver Ghost 32PP.

Derek decides on the shape required by analysing photographs, measuring original components, if available, and by using his specialist knowledge of the fashions and aesthetics of the period. He then makes wooden frames, called bucks, over which to shape the raw aluminium (or steel) sheet. "Buck" is a technical term used in the aerospace industry to describe the frame on which the alloy outer skin is fitted. The bucks are made to fit to the car, with due allowances for the thickness of the skin. After completing the mudguards on one side, the bucks are transferred to the other side, and the ribs are reversed on the longitudinal spine. In this way Derek ensures that pairs of mudguards are good mirror images of each other.





“Indian” Silver Ghost 32PP