



PRESS RELEASE: National Transport Trust (NTT) Awards 2026

Michael Knowles receives the President's Award at the 2026 NTT Awards

The successes of W O Bentley's cars in the 1920s at the Le Mans 24 hour race are legendary. NTT President Lady Judy McAlpine was very taken when she saw car number 10, registration YW 2557, at the recent Brooklands GP100 event. This particular car came third at Le Mans in 1929 and now Michael Knowles of Salcome, Devon, its re-creator receives the President's Award.



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By the early 2000s the company needed a new owner and a new location. No suitable candidates appeared, but preservation steam faced a severe skills shortage and a threat to its future. Hence was formed the Boiler and Engineering Skills Trust (BESTT) of which Gordon has been Chairman since 2013, designing and delivering training to support the safe repair and maintenance of heritage steam boilers.

Until 1927, the competing cars were very recognisable as road-going Bentleys, and indeed they were driven to, and in most cases back from, the race. In 1928 race two cars were built rather differently. No more slab fuel tank on the back of the car, no more spare wheel in the front wings. A much more stream-lined body was designed with the tank and spare wheel hidden in the faired –in tail and built by Vanden Plas in Kingsbury, north London.

By this stage neither of the Bobtail cars, as they became known, had its original chassis. The surface of the Le Mans circuit was notoriously harsh, and cracked chassis were common. The third chassis of the other Bobtail was discovered under a saloon body in 2012, and so the opportunity to recreate YW 2557 was taken up.

The new body was created on the newly discovered original Bobtail chassis and running gear, and every effort was made to create the car exactly as it would have looked in 1928 when it left the Cricklewood factory. Even the paint, Parsons Napier Green, was matched to a 1926 Parsons Paint catalogue sample.

Commenting on the award, Lady Judy McAlpine says, "This is a stunning recreation of a wonderful car and our congratulations go to Michael for all his excellent work."

The National Transport Trust

Founded in 1965, (as the Transport Trust), the National Transport Trust is the UK's only national charity established to promote and encourage the preservation and restoration of Britain's unique transport heritage in all its forms – by air, land (road and rail) and water (sea and inland). The Trust is managed within a very streamlined structure, with the Board of Trustees representing the wider interests of the nation, for whose benefit the Trust exists.

Help us to help them

In order to help the UK's the preservation movement the Trust depends on its members and therefore encourages all those who share our aims to join us. Membership of the Trust is open to private individuals and affiliated organisations. You can help us to help others too; become a member, donate to the trust or you might even consider leaving the trust something in your will. This last part is vital to our work, see here for more: [National Transport Trust legacies](#)

National Transport Trust

Old Bank House, 26 Station Approach, Hinckley Wood, Surrey, KT10 0SR, London
United Kingdom

Tel: 0207928 6464

Email: info@nationaltransporttrust.org.uk

Web: www.nationaltransporttrust.org.uk

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