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EDITION

# FORD SHAPING BRITAIN



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## FORD: SHAPING BRITAIN



Many readers will no doubt recall the Transit advertising slogan selling the ubiquitous van as 'The backbone of Britain' but the slogan could apply to pretty much all of Ford's history in the British market, throughout which the combination of no-nonsense engineering and marketing sophistication saw the blue oval a permanent fixture in the sales charts.

From affordable entry-level cars in the postwar years which helped many drivers into their first four-wheeled vehicle, the range took on a dose of transatlantic glamour in the 1950s with dramatically styled cars like the Anglia 105E and Consul before virtually inventing the fleet market which it was to dominate for so long.

Company car drivers of the 1960s and 1970s could have recited the badging and options list of Escort and Cortina models off by heart, such was their dominance in the market, while those higher up the ladder could enjoy a taste of real upmarket motoring in the Granada. Meanwhile, the people pounding the motorways doing the real work were at the helm of the Transit – a van so popular that its name became an accepted word for any mid-size panel van.

In the sixth issue of Ford Memories we focus on Ford's role in shaping the British automotive landscape from

the days of the Anglia, through the launch of the Cortina and its evolution through four distinct generations – or five if you're feeling picky – to the advent of its replacement which shocked the world with its daring aero style but which went on to become another best-seller – as explained by our comparison with the Sierra's competitors of the day, the Montego and Cavalier.

The Sierra's replacement, the Mondeo took Ford into a new era of driving dynamics and like the Transit even entered everyday language when the term Mondeo Man was coined back in 1997.

Whether your interest in the Ford marque is purely a passing one or whether you're driven by a deep nostalgia for the days when every street scene had at least a handful of Ford products in shot, we've got something for you in this publication. One thing we're sure of: nobody will be able to flick through these pages without recalling treasured memories of family trips, holidays and life's milestones without there being a Ford in the background somewhere. After all, it's been the Backbone of Britain longer than any of us can remember.

**Paul Sander**  
Editor, Ford Memories

# FORD: SHAPING BRITAIN

The fleet favourites, the load-luggers and the sales office pin-ups, we look at the Fords that helped shape the motoring fabric of Great Britain.





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## FORD MEMORIES

**Kelsey Media**  
5 Yalding Hill, Downs Court  
Yalding, ME18 6AL

### EDITORIAL

**Editor:** Paul Sander

**Sub Editor:** Dan Williamson

**Contributors:** Simon Woolley, Paul Wager, Marc Stretton, Mike Renaut and Jeff Ruggles

**Art Editor:** Panda Media  
paul@panda-media.co.uk

### ADVERTISEMENT SALES AND PRODUCTION

Tandem Media Limited

**Managing Director:**

Catherine Rowe: 01233 228750

www.tandemmedia.co.uk

**Account Manager:**

Laura Crawte: 01233 228754

laura@tandemmedia.co.uk

**Ad Production Manager:**

Neil Hepden: 01233 220245

bookazine@tandemmedia.co.uk

### MANAGEMENT

**Chief Executive:** Steve Wright

**Chief Operating Officer:** Phil Weeden

**Managing Director:** Kevin McCormick

**Subscription Marketing Director:**

Gill Lambert

**Senior Subscriptions Marketing Exec:**

Dave Sage

**Retail Director:** Steve Brown

**Print Production Manager:**

Georgina Harris

### DISTRIBUTION

**United Kingdom:** Marketforce,  
2nd Floor, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf,  
London, E14 5HU.

Tel: 0330 390 6555

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**Republic Of Ireland:** Newsread

Tel: +353 23 886 3850

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HERITAGE: ANGLIA 105E



# Anglia 105E

Looking for an Anglia project to restore, Bill Reynolds got more than he bargained for – in more ways than one.

Words: Marc Stretton



**M**ore than 40 years after spending his courting days in a Ford Anglia, Bill Reynolds decided it was time to own a 105E again. And, when Bill spotted what looked to be a suitable car in very good condition, he bought it.

The only trouble was that on the

weekend the purchase was made, he was miles from home, supposedly supporting his son, Lee, at a race at Castle Combe and the car was another 50 miles away in Berkshire.

No problem: Bill pinched the race car trailer, headed over to Newbury, picked up the 1959 Anglia, dragged

it home to Church Stretton in Shropshire, and then returned to be in the pits at Combe on the Sunday. What could be easier?

"I had my first Anglia in the early Sixties, when my wife-to-be was a trainee nurse at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham," says Bill, "so



"I wanted a piece of motoring history, with all the original paperwork included, and that's what I got"





Smoke Grey and Imperial Maroon is a winning combo.



the car had many miles put on the clock in the time I owned it.

“Eventually the diff blew up and that was that, my Anglia ownership was over. I’ve always wanted another from that day on, though, but it was only in 2010, after 30 years of semi-serious looking for one, that this car came along.”

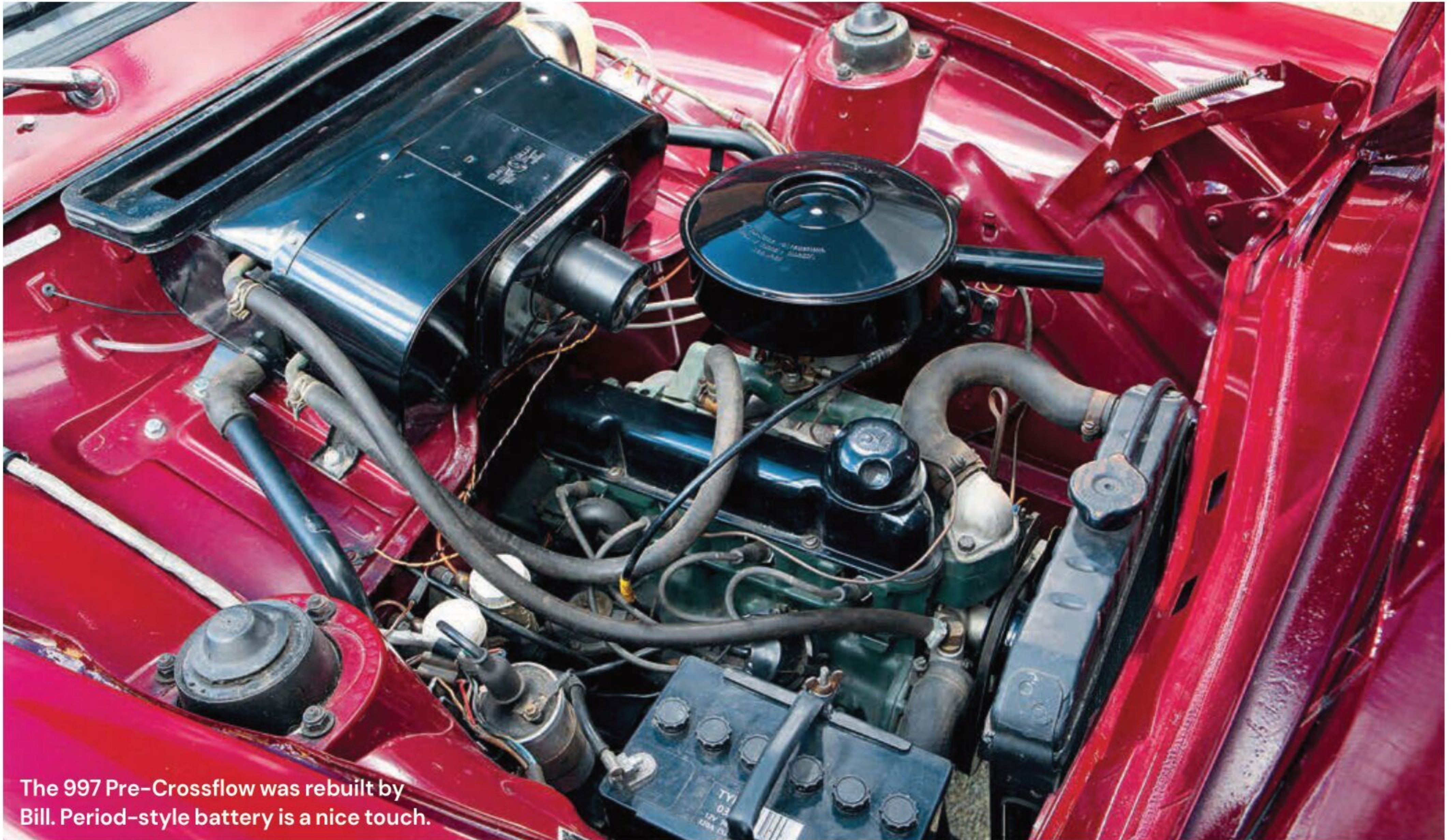
The real draw with the 1959-built and 1960-registered De Luxe was that it appeared to be in excellent original condition, and came with piles of documentation, including the old buff logbook, the original bill of sale from The Farm Garage ‘main Ford dealer’ in Epsom, and even a small booklet, dated 1959 and called *Dagenham Visit*, which probably means the first owner, Mr PE Herman, had a factory trip before he bought the Anglia in the first place.

Bill continues, “I wanted a piece of history, and with all the paperwork included that’s what I got. Unfortunately, when I inspected the Anglia back at home, I hadn’t quite got the solid, original car I’d expected.

“The first clue was when some of the letters in with the documents revealed that Mr Herman had quite a few dings in his new Anglia – there were several repair receipts from the 1960s included, so there was ancient damage covered up in places.

“Then on closer inspection, the top of the front wings, the door bottoms

## HERITAGE: ANGLIA 105E



The 997 Pre-Crossflow was rebuilt by Bill. Period-style battery is a nice touch.

and the sills were not as solid as at first thought either.

"The rest of the Anglia wasn't too bad, though, with most of the floor and chassis rails in excellent shape, but what I'd thought was just going to be a sympathetic restoration was definitely going to be something a bit more full-on."

### GOOD SERVICE

As luck would have it, Bill knew exactly the repair workshop to carry out the project. Longmynd Service Station is a well-known local garage, with a classic car restoration department that is so well thought-of that it has helped out on a few recent TV programmes.

And its proprietors? That'd be Bill Reynolds and his son, Lee. Bill set the garage up in 1968 and it's grown into the biggest independent garage in the area.

Bill says, "The Anglia was mounted on a spit and blasted to a bare shell, apart from inside the boot, but I'll explain why later. The front wings were frilly at the front lip, along the

top edge and behind the wheelarch, so had quite a lot of attention.

"Work was also carried out on the doors, and sill-ends, with small repairs also needed to the rear floors just ahead of the wheel tubs. Plus the inner sills and inner wings, windscreen surround, boot lid corners and rear arches all needed minor work.

"Everything was done by cutting out all rotten metal, with repair sections fabricated rather than

going for complete panels."

With all the welding finished, the shell was prepped and resprayed in its original two-tone shades of Smoke Grey over Imperial Maroon.

Bill explains "Leaving the inner boot area untouched was an idea I got from a chap at a show, who said it would be good to leave one section with its original paint, to show how good the car had been when bought. That was a nice idea, so I went with it."



Inside the boot was deliberately left untouched.



Bill wanted an Anglia just like car one he owned 50 years ago.



Standard skinny steels hide the original drum brakes.



Anglia came with bucket-loads of history when bought.

## RESTO LOG

When Bill wanted an Anglia to restore, he probably hadn't intended to take one on needing quite so much graft, but it's all in a day's work for someone who restores classics for a living.



First task was to strip the Anglia right down to a bare shell in Longmynd's dedicated workshop.



The numerous body repairs included making up and letting in repair sections to the bottoms of both doors.



The Anglia shell was stuck on a spit and blasted to a bare shell everywhere except the boot.



A full respray was added in the original and very-period Ford colours of Smoke Grey over Imperial Maroon.



Interior retrim was the only job farmed out, and sticks closely to the original spec.

**“One day I may upgrade the running gear, but for now I want it to be as historic as can be”**

### COMING TOGETHER

Putting the Anglia back together was a doddle for Bill, who has rebuilt hundreds of classics over the years.

The car's original 997cc Pre-Crossflow was rebuilt by his own hand, along with all the standard-spec suspension and drum braking system, electrics, drivetrain and exterior trim and brightwork.

A rotten spares car supplied any parts that were too far gone on

Bill's Anglia, to keep costs down and originality levels up.

Only the specialist task of retrimming the interior to as-new factory PVC spec was out-sourced, and this work was handled by PJM Motors in Market Drayton.

“One day I may upgrade and tune the running gear,” Bill says, “but for now I want the car to be as historic as it can be – just like the one I owned nearly 50 years ago.”

HERITAGE: PREFECT 107E



# Prefect 107E

Paul Gershon's 1960 Prefect is the only 107E police survivor, and six decades on, this unique car shows there's life after law enforcement.

Words: Emma Woodcock



**S**top, in the name of the law! Traffic grinds to a halt and people stare whenever Different Class Cars's Paul Gershon or Andrew Laid drive past in their Prefect 107E police car.

Paul Says, "Absolutely everyone gives you a thumbs-up or flashes

their lights. The amount of attention is truly unbelievable."

With its original black paint, bumper-mounted supplementary lamps and roof-top siren, the 1960 saloon echoes the replica 100E cop car used in long-running drama *Heartbeat* but with one very

important difference: Paul's car is the real deal. It's the only known existing 107E that survived in the line of duty.

A 107E police car would have been a rare sight back in 1960, too. Many forces still relied on the Wolseley saloons they'd bought in the immediate post-war years.

## HERITAGE: PREFECT 107E



Two-tone interior must have cut a dash in the police station car park.



Being a later Prefect means this one came with the 105E's 997cc Pre-Crossflow motor.



Control box operates the fully-working blues-and-twos.



No classic police car is complete without extra props.



The 107E was created by combining the running gear of the new Anglia 105E with the established four-door body from the Prefect 100E, but the 107E proved far less popular than its relations and just 38,000 were built, due in part to a short, three-year production run.

Paul's Prefect defied the odds and likely joined Essex Police as a supervision car, which suggests the Ford was reserved for more senior staff members.

Paperwork is thin on the ground but period modifications confirm this 107E worked for a living. The Pye Vanguard two-way radio mounted under the dashboard is a 1960s' original, while the zip in the headlining would have given officers quick access to the roof-mounted warning light. Those features are enough to convince the experts: the Police Vehicle Enthusiasts' Club is satisfied this car is the real deal.

#### AMPLE EXTRAS

A raft of other additions might not be authentic – Paul can't be sure – but they still help the saloon look the part. Blue spot lamps are hard to miss, while the roof-box works with a dash-mounted control panel to provide a period-correct soundtrack.

Paul smiles, "It takes me back to my childhood in the 1960s. My garage is full of automobilia and the Ford fits in perfectly. I just love looking at it."

An adoring public agrees. People of all ages, from previous magazine feature car owners to Japanese tourists, gatecrashed our photoshoot just to see the 107E.

Thanks to sympathetic renovation work, the Prefect easily withstands close-quarters inspection.

"The majority of the bodywork is solid and original but we did some fabrication to perfect it," Paul adds.

Building on sill, valence and rear chassis member repairs by a previous owner, he recently sent

the car to Karl at Kore Design and Restoration in Romford to eradicate any remaining rust.

"He does the metalwork for all my cars and the quality is always amazing," Says Paul. Karl let new metal into all four doors and rebuilt a jacking point, before respraying both sides of the 107E.

The rest of the paintwork remains untouched, helping the Ford strike a balance between preservation and pragmatism that runs through the car.

A regular show-winner with its previous owners, the Prefect benefited from new front seats and a replacement engine before the current keepers found it, so Paul further enhanced the Ford by revising the in-car wiring and refurbishing the pitted steelies with London firm Creative Wheels.

A full service, new steering ball joints and a drag link to match will soon complete the Prefect's mechanical overhaul.

## "The Prefect was probably reserved for more senior staff"



## HERITAGE: PREFECT 107E

Paul's hoping the Prefect can be used for filming work – revival of Heartbeat, maybe?



### PREFECT PERFECTION

Paul says, "I'm a perfectionist. It's a painful, time-consuming process but I want the Prefect to be the best it can be. This car is art more than anything, so it has to be a lovely object to behold."

A thorough detailing session with Andrew Edson ensures the 107E police car gleams. This wasn't just buffing the bodywork and refreshing the interior. Andrew also cleaned out, painted and dressed the inner wheelarches, before investing half a day in machine-polishing the engine bay.

"It was a three-stage detailing job. Andrew's attention to detail is just fantastic," says Paul.

Paul would know – he has plenty of experience rescuing classic cars: "I brought a Rolls-Royce Corniche back from the dead a couple of years ago and the whole experience took 18 months. That was so difficult that it put me off doing full restorations by myself."

His collection includes a Mini Moke, pristine Mercedes-Benz R107-generation SL, Triumph Herald and a

retro three-wheeler, so the Prefect 107E finds itself in varied company.

He adds, "It drives really well for a classic car, and nothing else I've ever owned gets as much attention."

### GOOD USE

That immediate visual appeal is exactly why Paul agreed to buy the Prefect in the first place.

He says, "We buy classics together because we enjoy them, and I loved the Ford from the moment I saw it up

for sale. A 1960s' police car is such a quirky little thing."

The only job left is to find a way for the 107E to exercise its talents. Filming work, show appearances and rentals are all possibilities, and the car may eventually go up for sale again.

Not just yet, though, as Paul explains: "I still like looking at it – the nostalgia means a lot to me."

In an age of reflective liveries and screaming sirens, the modest black Ford is a ticket back to bygone times.

## THE POLICE FORDS

From Model Ts to RS Cosworths, Paul's Prefect is part of a long tradition of Ford police cars in the UK. Other early Fords to work in law enforcement include the Model T, E493A and Zephyr and Zodiac range (made famous in Dixon Of Dock Green, right) before the Anglia 105E gained traction as one of the very first 'panda cars' used by constables on patrol. Cortinas, Escorts, Granadas and Sierras followed. Some forces needed more performance, so Lotus Cortinas – including a custom run of



four-door Mk2 versions – saw active duty, followed by the Mk1 Escort Mexico and Mk2 Escort RS2000, the Capri 2.8i and several Cossies. Even an RS200 received blues-and-twos – if only for a promotional photo.





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1964 Thames 400E pick-up, on the 2017 HCVS Sprat & Winkle Run. Owned by the Ellis family vehicle body-building business from new, stored when its working days were over, and now preserved by the next generation.

# Thames 400E Range

Peter Simpson tells the story of Ford's 1950s' van that set new standards in a rapidly-changing market.

These days, many people think of the Thames 400E as the van that, in 1965, Ford replaced with its radical new Transit, and in doing so transformed the whole 15–35cwt van market. By comparison, the 400E seemed ancient.

That, though, isn't really fair. Less than eight years earlier, in November 1957, the 400E was the smart new kid on the block and a massive step forwards. Its predecessor, the E83W Fordson, dated back to 1938, and with a side-valve engine and transverse leaf springs front and rear, wasn't exactly state of the art then.

The 400E, though, was slap-bang up to date in 1957. It looked the part. But more than that, it was the part. From important stuff like forward-control layout and 180cu.ft payload capacity within an 84in wheelbase, down to neat touches like the unique semi-ribbon speedometer display, it was very new, very exciting, and very, very Ford.

It went well too – thanks to its modern 1703cc OHV engine, the 400E's 60mph-plus top speed was, compared to its predecessor's 40mph with a following wind, warp-factor seven.

Customers took to it, too; in less than eight years, Ford sold 187,000 of the 400E family. On a year-for-year average, that beats 370,000 Bedford CAs over 17 years from 1952 to 1969. That's an oversimplification, of course; the CA's year-on-year sales rose and fell significantly during that time. The main point, though, is that the Thames 400E was up there with it.

## BIG CHANGES

The 1950s was a period of great change within the medium-size van market anyway. In 1952, Bedford's



Plain vans are now among the rarest 400E variant, despite probably being the single most plentiful made. This superbly-restored example is a regular prize winner, but is also used, as the sign-writing implies, to transport classic motorcycles.



Very late minibus in BOAC livery; you may just spot the unusual Ford brand name on the nose instead of the more usual Thames.

CA sent shock-waves through the entire market-sector. New layouts were needed to maximise loadspace within overall length. Driver convenience and comfort mattered too – albeit strictly in that order – and with increased loadspace came demand for greater payloads. By 1960, 15cwt rather than 12cwt was the norm, and the race to 17cwt was starting.

But at least as important as payload weight was payload capacity, and one has only to compare a typical early-Fifties' 12-to-15cwt van such as the Trojan or

Standard Vanguard with the 180cu. ft 400E to see what progress had been made. Even the Standard Atlas, despite being flawed in other ways, could take 180cu.ft.

To catch up, Bedford offered a LWB CA from 1959 – though at 162cu. ft even this was smaller than the Ford. What is significant, though, is that the LWB CA became, effectively, the standard CA instantly; the SWB version, though still made, accounted for a minority of sales. Things had moved on, and though Bedford had started the revolution, Ford was now powering it.

BMC's J2, introduced in 1956, was even bigger at 200cu.ft, but as this was sold only with 15 and 16/18cwt weights it was, arguably, in a class above from the start. BMC certainly seemed to think so; hence the separate, smaller range (J4) from 1960 covering the 10-to-12cwt class.

Ford of Britain in the late 1950s was also very different; it operated completely independently of Ford of Germany. Each had its own model range, which were totally different, even down to the Brits using imperial measurements and the Germans metric. While neither made much impact in the other's home-market, anywhere else (including elsewhere in Europe) was open to both, and in many markets completely different British and German Fords were direct competitors.

Apparently, it was Henry Ford II who saw the absurdity and got the two sides to work together, with the Transit being the first pan-European Ford made, in broadly identical form, in Britain and Germany.

#### THE 400E ARRIVES

The 400E was introduced in November 1957 (production having started in September) following, in classic Ford style, studies of all the rivals. The overall design was, unsurprisingly, Stateside-inspired and forward-control with the engine under the cab; this was to maximise loadspace within the overall length.

Unlike Bedford and BMC, the Thames had a separate chassis, although for ease of construction, on so-called closed back versions (with the van-type body) the cab and body were welded to the chassis outriggers, and there was no rear crossmember.

Open-back 400Es had outriggers designed for bespoke bodywork to be bolted on, and the cab was also bolted on so it could be removed and/or modified. Unlike most of its rivals, the 400E was never offered with sliding cab doors.

## MODEL PROFILE: THAMES 400E

Independent coil-sprung wishbone front suspension was used at the front; Macpherson struts were considered but would have protruded too far into the cab, while at the rear a leaf-spring live axle was used, but with two longitudinal springs rather than a single transverse one. The 1703cc four-cylinder engine came, slightly modified, from the Ford Consul, along with the three-speed gearbox. At this stage the Bedford CA came only with 'three on the tree'. From June 1961 a diesel option courtesy of the Perkins 4.99 engine was offered.

The 'closed' versions were factory-made as vans and 12-seater minibuses (which were, for taxation purposes, commercial vehicles) plus eight- and ten-seater estate cars, which were considered cars so subject to purchase tax. They were soon discontinued first time round, but reappeared later.

That, though, didn't stop the Ford marketing operation swinging into gear with a de-luxe version featuring chrome bumper overriders, side mouldings and window surrounds, along with a passenger-side external mirror. This was typical Ford: all very noticeable, but nothing that cost much or, in reality, mattered much. Few de-luxe estate cars were sold.

Special bodywork options included in the sales brochures and built by approved suppliers ranged from pick-up type drop-side trucks (Ford offered an entirely in-house pick-up with steel-sided body from 1961) through ambulances, gown vans, mobile shops, milk floats, Luton-style vans and tower wagons, and even a small refuse collection vehicle.

The most unusual use of the 400E chassis/cab was the Powertruc, a mobile compressor truck where, ingeniously, a Ford 592E diesel engine powered both the Hydrovane rotary compressor and the vehicle. These carried Powertruc branding up front instead of Thames.



Pick-ups were popular but seem to survive in disproportionately high numbers. There was a choice of steel bodywork from the factory or wooden produced by outside body-builders.

### WHAT'S IN A NAME?

At this point we probably ought to go into make/model designations a little, as these can be confusing. First – and perhaps most important of all – most of the 400E family weren't technically Fords at all, even though their manufacturer was never any secret. Until March 1965 all Ford commercial

vehicles were branded Thames (in the same way as Fordson had been used on commercials pre-war and still was on tractors). It was only after the Thames Trader lorry was replaced by the D-Series in 1965 that the Ford name was applied. But on the 400E range, this lasted just five months before production ended in August.



Campers were popular too; this Dormobile conversion was restored to a very high standard by Peter Bridger.



The forward-control layout was designed to maximise payload within the overall length.

Secondly, while the name 400E is often used to describe the whole range, strictly speaking it applies only to the 10/12cwt chassis with petrol engines. The 15cwt vans and 12-seat buses were designated 402E, and all vehicles with the Perkins diesel engines were 406Es. At first the 'E' number formed part of the

chassis number, but from November 1961 a new Vehicle Number system was adopted.

There were also, of course, 400E caravanettes from all the usual suspects: Martin Walter, Cathorpe, Kenex, Airborne and Peter Pitt – and that is by no means an exhaustive list. All officially-approved camper

conversions were listed in Ford's *Holiday Adventures* brochure.

Finally, and talking of Martin Walter, the firm also offered a 400E Utilabrake – these were intended mainly for use by farmers and the like, and had windows in the back, and a second row of padded seats behind the drivers. Then, behind these, there were short, inward-facing seats intended for occasional use only; the back part was intended to carry goods most of the time. The Utilabrake was a good idea, but really it worked better with the wider Bedford CA.

### EXPORTS

Ford's Dagenham and subsequently Langley (Slough) plants produced RHD and LHD versions of the 400E, and the latter was exported widely, including into mainland Europe where, as already noted, it competed with Ford of Germany's Taunus van.

Other major export markets included Commonwealth countries – CKD vans, minibuses and chassis-cab units went in significant numbers to Australia and New Zealand for local assembly, and assembled vehicles went to South Africa, Canada and, until 1962, America, with smaller numbers finding their way to Asia and South America. In Denmark, where Ford had an assembly plant, there was a lengthened version powered by the Ford Zephyr six-cylinder engine.

### NOT MUCH CHANGED

Once launched, little was done to the 400E in terms of development, and the only visible difference between the first in 1957 and the last in 1965 was that the badge said Ford rather than Thames.

Production had moved from Dagenham (hence the Thames name) to Langley (Slough) in 1961 to free up space for, among other things, the Cortina line, and from January 1963 a slight mechanical upgrade had taken



The mid-1960s Ford of Britain and Ford of Europe existed as totally different entities, each with its own range of models that shared absolutely nothing. This, in pick-up form, is a Taunus Transit – the German Ford rival to the Thames 400E – of which 255,824 were made at the Cologne factory.

## MODEL PROFILE: THAMES 400E



Look carefully; this one isn't quite what it seems at first glance: 400Es were always popular with customisers.

place with the 1703cc petrol engine gaining a little extra power (55bhp low compression, 58bhp high) and a four-speed all-synchro gearbox as an option, although 'three on the tree' remained standard. A stronger back axle accompanied the four-speed gearbox. Just over a year earlier, Bedford offered a four-speed option on the CA.

In truth, these changes were as much about the Mk2 Consul having been replaced by the MkIII Zephyr 4 and the more powerful engines being in production than any desire to improve the 400E. The four-speed 'box, too, had been introduced for the Zephyr 4. Work on the Common Van (Aka Transit) project had started in 1960, and with lots happening on the car side too, it's probably hardly surprising that the 400E – which was selling well anyway – was left largely to its own devices.

Buyers were a mixed bag of fleets, small companies and sole traders. Some went to public utilities, including regional gas and electricity boards, and national fleets known to have used them included Whitbread

Breweries, Currys, Weetabix and various parts of the Rank organisation.

But Britain's biggest single fleet buyer of light vans – the GPO – made very limited use of the 400E. It bought just 22, of which 16 were Powertrac self-mobile compressors. Three were bought as telephone stores vans, and a single prototype



Engine access is, as usual on forward-control vehicles, a bit restricted, although being able to adjust a carburettor while on the move can be an advantage.

each of mail van and telephone utility van were tried, but didn't result in any orders. Curiously, Oxford Diecast modelled 400Es in Royal Mail and Telephones livery.

The final one is a mystery. In 1966, the telephones manager bought 1961 400E 6738CD from Brighton Corporation. Very odd, and the only explanation we can think of is the GPO taking over a Corporation function of some kind, and the van moving over as part of that. It is, though, known to have retained its (blue) Brighton livery.

### SECOND-HAND SCENE

Though production ended in 1965, many 400Es remained in regular revenue-earning service right up to the late 1970s. Many smaller concerns who bought a 400E new hung onto them – especially if they had been used on light duties – and ex-fleet examples found new homes with tradesmen and small business owners who appreciated the compact dimensions and high capacity, simple mechanical layout, good driving manners and excellent parts availability. The chassis



Cab access was good. Heater was optional but is definitely a plus point for year-round use, although in summer the engine alone can make the cab a little too toasty.

construction also enabled many to be modified for specialist purposes such as breakdown recovery or as car transporters; many a 400E chassis was extended in ways that would be frowned upon today.

A lot were also bought for non-commercial purposes like motorcycle transport and, of course, homemade

camper conversions, and many a scout troop spent years holding jumble sales and collecting waste paper to buy a second-hand 400E minibus, which, being based on Ford car components, could also be used to teach basic vehicle mechanics.

As usual with old vans, though, there were aspects that are recalled

with rather less rose-tinted pleasure. One was the vacuum-operated wipers that slowed right down when the engine was pulling hard – which often tended to be when they were needed most. The gear linkage also wore with age, leading to imprecise changes and, not infrequently, locking up mid-change. Freeing this usually meant crawling underneath and ‘adjusting’ with a hammer. The writer also recalls unladen 400Es being slightly unstable when cornering in wet weather and/or a strong and gusty side-wind.

Until the late 1970s, 400Es were still a fairly common sight. By 1980, though, they all seemed to have disappeared. Natural aging was clearly a consideration and some parts availability issues were emerging. The main killer was probably a significant tightening of the MoT at the end of 1977. It seems incredible now, but until then structural repair sections didn’t have to be welded; they could be brazed, or even pop-riveted. Now, many past MoT patch-ups needed reworking to get through a test, and that wasn’t cost-effective.

A number did live on in a different form. The mini-Yank looks made them ideal vehicles for customising, and the separate chassis carrying all the structural loads made radical bodywork mods easier. A detachable cab that could be raised a few inches also opened up lots of bigger engine possibilities.

Today, the whole 400E range is highly collectable, and though the plain vans were the most numerous made, they’re now one of the rarer types. The Ford 400E Owners’ Club caters for them, and provides many member services including a regular club magazine *Thamesline*, technical advice, access to club and other spare parts sources and access to historic records. They also attend events as a club.

To find out more, go to [www.ford400eownersclub.co.uk](http://www.ford400eownersclub.co.uk).



Ribbon-type speedometer is bound to bring back a few memories; we’re pretty sure this was unique to the 400E.

## HERITAGE. CONSUL MK2



Everyone has a different story as to how their interest in classic cars came about. Colin Gilderson's is unusual.

"I'm 6ft 10in tall and needed a car I could fit in," explains Colin. "I thought the column-mounted gear

lever on a 1950s' classic might offer more interior space and spotted this 1959 Consul at Affordable Classics back in 2000 when I was 20 years old. It looked very good and original, so I bought it before I'd even passed my driving test. With hindsight a car

with vacuum wipers wasn't the best choice as my first car, but I did it."

As time passed, the Consul had issues: "The original engine had been swapped in the 1970s and the current one had wear to the rocker shaft. In 2001 I bought a



# Expert consultation

When Colin Gilderson bought this 1959 Consul it turned out to be full of hidden rust. Getting it repaired was far from straightforward.

Words: Mike Renaut



Consul engine that had supposedly been used in Ford's 1962 motor show display and never been run. The block had been smoothed of all casting marks and came with chromed bolts and exhaust – they went black as soon as it got hot. It

was inspected and found to be like new, so once it was run in – with several incidents of overheating because it was so stiff – it became quite reliable.”

Colin continues, “Like every old Ford, rust slowly started to appear

on the bodywork. By 2008 it was breaking out around the headlights so I had all that repaired, but then there was more in the doors and the rear arches were bubbling. I went to a local company for the repairs and although it seemed fine at first, they

“You could see right through the car once the rust had been cut out — it had been hiding rot for decades”



bodged it. They even messed up the doors, so I had to drive home with the back ones tied together. Within two years all the rust came back.”

And there was worse bodging yet to discover...

### THUNDERBIRD WAS GO

In the meantime, Colin had bought a 1964 Thunderbird that turned out to have engine problems and took up most of his time and money.

“By 2012 the Consul’s doors had become hard to shut and someone who looked at it said the sills had rotted out. I put it under a cover on my driveway and it festered there for three years — suffering until the Thunderbird was finished.”

The guy who’d rebuilt the Thunderbird’s V8 suggested Colin

contact Steve Downs at SD Classics.

“With rot on the wings, doors and bonnet I took the car to Steve’s for assessment. It turned out the doors only needed some adjustment — I’d thought it was ready for scrap. The original plan was to sort out a few bits and get it back on the road, then do more jobs the following winter to spread the cost. But when Steve removed the front wings there were several bodged repairs — patches over more patches over rot that were clearly decades old.

Steve continues the tale: “Colin booked his Consul in for a week. I re-aligned the doors after finding the catches weren’t fitted correctly. Then he asked that I remove the front wings and we found serious corrosion at the base of the

A-pillars. He was still thinking in terms of a little tidy-up since we never really had a clear picture of how bad the car was. I repaired the front wings, then he asked me to take care of the door bases and a niggly on the bonnet.

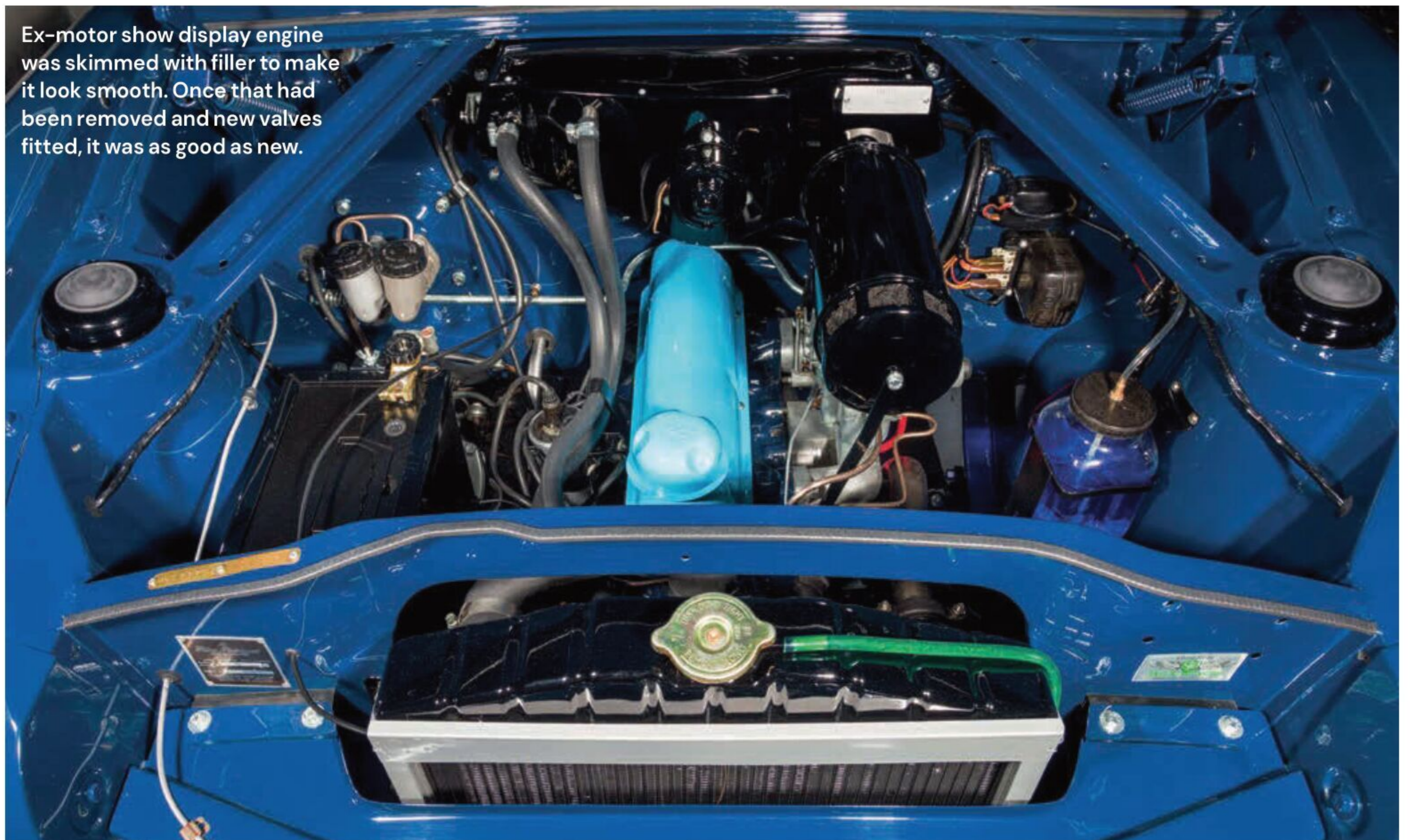
“When Colin mentioned fixing the rear quarters I warned him it could be a can of worms because from underneath I could already see three layers of metal where there should only be two. There was a 4mm gap between the inner arch and the outer wing.”

The company that bodged the previous repairs had used a pair of repair panels, put them together with mastic, tacked them to the top of the wheelarch every 4in and then covered the whole thing in filler.



Removing the front wings started the whole restoration ball rolling for Colin and Steve. Fortunately, the Mk2 is now totally solid.

Ex-motor show display engine was skimmed with filler to make it look smooth. Once that had been removed and new valves fitted, it was as good as new.



## HERITAGE: CONSUL MK2

Steve says, "It was certainly an unusual technique. I made up new rear arches and the inner and outer lower corners. I'm used to working on classic Ferraris and Bentleys where you can get all the parts; there's virtually nothing for Consuls, so we made up new sections from scratch. The rear inner wings were rotten, as were the ends of the sills and the rear valance."

Colin adds, "You could see right through the car once the rust was cut out. It had been hiding rot for decades." All the glass was then removed, since rust holes had been spotted in the C-posts under the trim and under the roof paint.

"Every panel on the car had rust or dents in some way. If I'd known how involved it was going to be I wouldn't have done it piecemeal. I'd had Steve painting the front panel by panel, but the newly repainted front of the car stood out against the other panels. So we backtracked and it ended up being bare-metalled."

### BLUE BY YOU

Steve continues, "Colin said he wanted the engine bay done, so in the end the car came completely apart. I think only the dashboard stayed in. We painted it in Ambassador Blue two-pack – a base coat then clear lacquer, flattening it with 2000 then 3000-grit. It's now a nice car. It was a good project to work on."

Everything mechanical was replaced, including all new suspension and brakes, slave and master cylinder, clutch and propshaft bearings. The rear axle went for a rebuild to Kevin Dipchan at Zodiac Motor Services, who also supplied a refurbished steering box.

The engine had by then covered 15,000 miles, and one cylinder was discovered to have low compression, so the valves were replaced.

Colin explains, "The engine head and block were stripped, since the paint had been flaking off. It was



The Mk2's trim was repaired rather than recovered to keep it as original as possible. Correct steering wheel was sourced to replace incorrect part.

discovered the block had been given a skim of filler to make it look smooth and free of casting marks. It was repainted the same original blue, but I had all the chrome plating removed since it just discolours."

Finally, the Consul was complete. "Would I do it again? No, definitely not," laughs Colin, "Steve was doing the restoration work but I was dealing with logistics – finding and buying bits. Having never done it

before, I found it really draining. At one point I was sourcing suspension bushes and a workmate asked if I'd found new top bushes. I had no clue what they even were until he explained they virtually hold the front suspension in place. Things like that were a steep learning curve."

Much of the trim was sent for rechroming, the headlining was replaced, and the seats carefully repaired retaining as much of the



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## THE THREE GRACES FROM THE TOP

Launched in 1956, the Mk2 range offered base-model Consul, Zephyr at mid-range and Zodiac at the top. Taking styling cues from the 1955 Ford Fairlane, the Mk2 Consul, model 204E, was identified by shorter front wings since it only came with a four-cylinder petrol engine, although a Perkins diesel was optional. The roof profile above the gutters was lowered in 1959, producing what's known as the lowline version, which also had redesigned lights, dashboard and other details. From 1962 the Consul name was transferred to the new Cortina model.

original material as possible.

"I obtained a steering wheel for a standard Consul since it had come with a half horn ring, which was incorrect for the base model."

Various rubber seals came from the owners' club, other hard-to-find parts came from Kevin, along with much specialist advice.

"I was down to Steve's every couple of weeks to see how it was

going," says Colin. "Without his skill and enthusiasm the car would have probably been scrapped, as the rot was immense. His work was flawless.

"I wanted it as close as possible to original. I didn't know much about old cars when I first got the Consul, but now it's just passed the MOT and I'm waiting for dry weather so I can collect it. It's like a brand-new car and I can't wait."

## RESTO LOG

With Colin's Consul assessed, the planned light rebuild turned into a full restoration.



With the front wings removed and serious rot discovered, out came the complete running gear.



A previous bodge to the rear quarters was found to feature three skins held together with mastic.



Steve had no choice but to carefully cut it all off and start again, mainly using hand-made sections.



Steve worked through the car methodically, saving as much of the good, original metalwork as possible.

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HERITAGE: CORTINA MK1 FLEET



# Cortina Mk1 Fleet

James Clarke is one enthusiast who has always had plenty of love for the unloved, but now others are seeing things his way thanks to this almost-unique, fleet-spec Mk1.

Words: Jeff Ruggles





**Y**ou've got to have sympathy for the base model in a car's range, because it never has much of a future. Ignored in favour of sportier and more luxurious versions, used as donors to create replicas or simply employed as workhorses and discarded, there aren't many enthusiasts who would aspire to own

an entry-level derivative.

Fortunately, in James Clarke we've discovered a man who does and, as a result, he now holds the keys to what is probably the rarest Mk1 Cortina in the country.

"I take on cars that others wouldn't – the real basket cases – and they all tend to be basic ones," says

James, who also owns a four-door Mk1 Escort in 1100L flavour, a rare 2.3 pre-facelift Mk2 Granada Talisman and a '61 fleet Anglia. His Purbeck Grey '66 Aeroflow Cortina is even more exceptional because it's believed to be the only four-door fleet model in the UK.

But that's not all, for this has to be

## HERITAGE: CORTINA MK1 FLEET

**“I take on classic Fords that others wouldn’t – the real basket cases – and they all tend to be basic ones”**



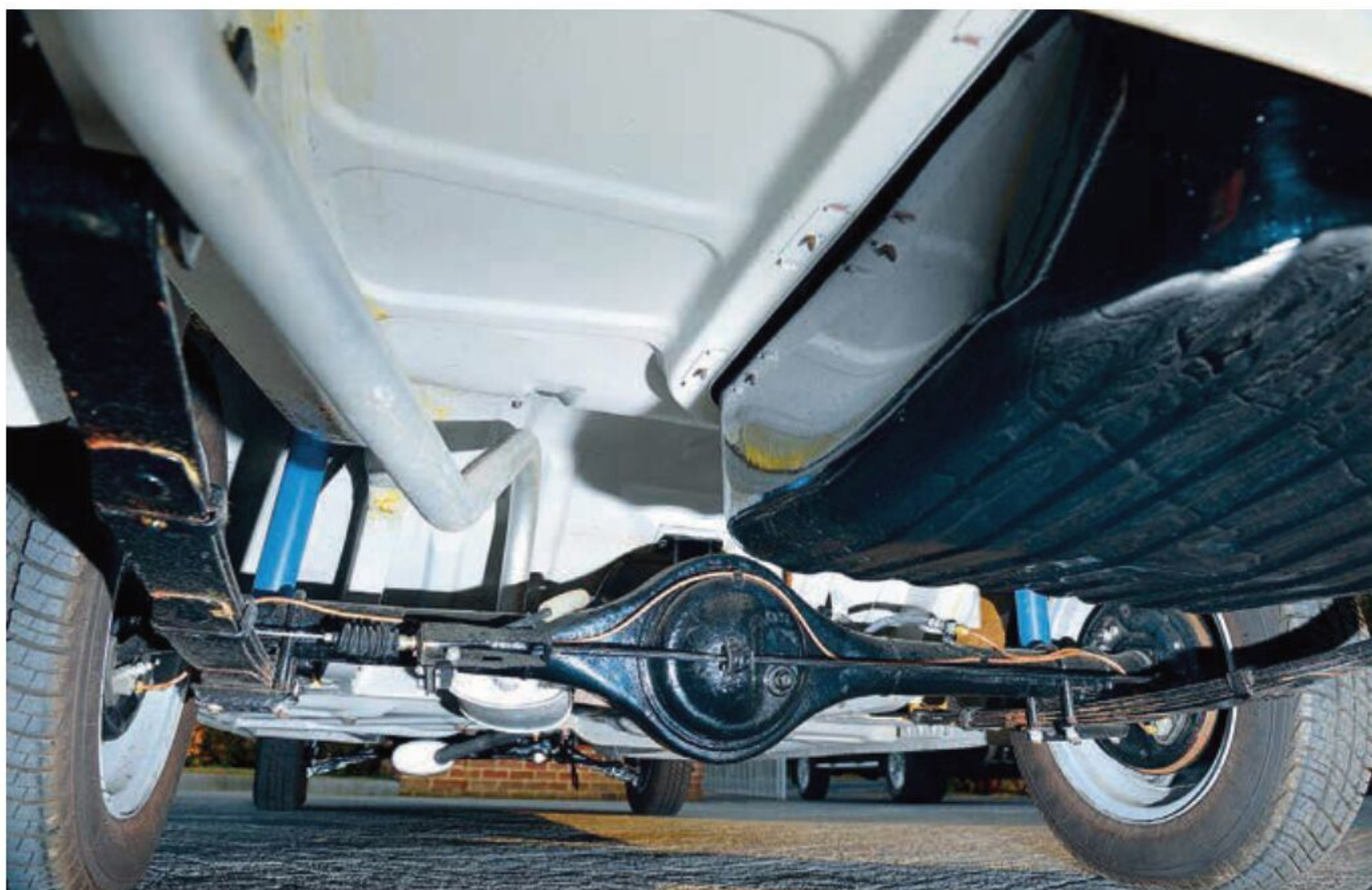
Finished car has gone down a storm on the early Cortina scene, picking up numerous trophies.

one of the most impressive recent restorations. At last year’s Mk1 Cortina National Rally, James not only won the prize for best fleet car, he also netted the coveted Supreme Champion award. It’s a remarkable turnaround for a car that was purchased in 2011 as a rotten garage find, so how did it all come about?

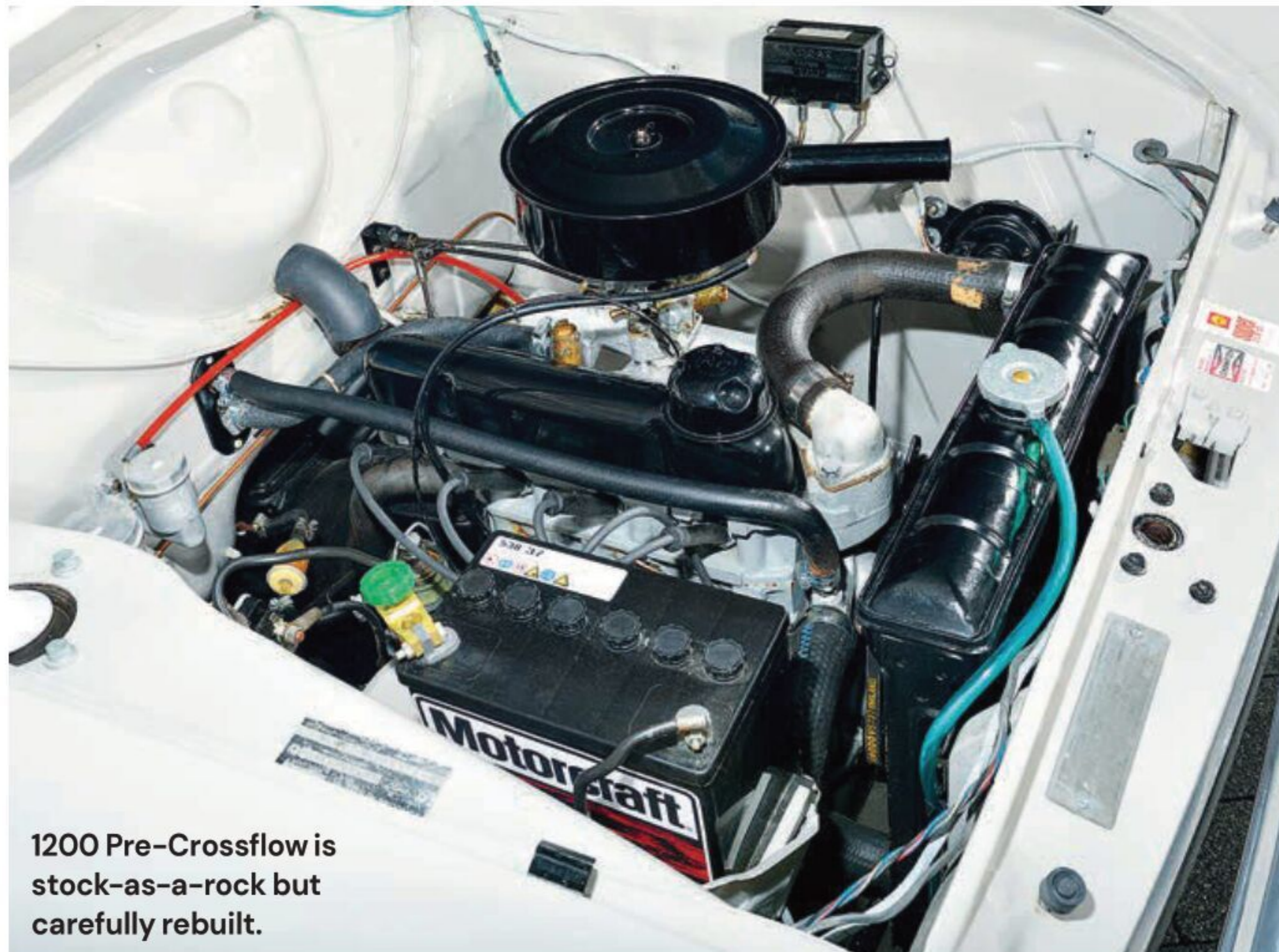
### SOLE SURVIVOR

James recalls, “I was looking for a Cortina and this one came up for sale. The seller had bought a bungalow in Wales, and the car had been left behind in the garage. Being a fleet car I knew it was rare, but didn’t know how rare it was.

“I got in contact with Marcel Bosman,



The underside has been cleaned and detailed, too.



1200 Pre-Crossflow is stock-as-a-rock but carefully rebuilt.

the Mk1 Cortina Club's historian, and got a mail back saying the club only knew of one four-door fleet model in the UK, and it turned out to be my car. There's another in Ireland, but mine's the only one in the UK as far as they know."

As added bonus, the car's seller also found a huge amount of paperwork, featuring the original bill of sale, handbooks, tax discs, MoTs and even letters from Customs.

As James discovered, the car

originally belonged to Mr and Mrs Chambers, who worked in the Forces. It was registered in the UK in 1966, before the couple moved to Germany in 1967 and took the car with them. As a result it received a special plate under the bonnet, as well as a steering lock and new number plates. When the owners returned a couple of years later, the car was reunited with its original UK registration.

Mrs Chambers died in 1979, and though her husband had the car made roadworthy again in the mid-1990s, he passed away a short while later and the car was left to decay in the garage.

"It was rotten as they come," says James. "It had to have rear quarters, floorpans, four new doors, wings, a brand new bonnet, strut tops, the lower front valance; most things.

"Most people wouldn't bother doing a four-door, but being a rare fleet car I had to. My friend Gary does all my welding. It's something I'd love to learn, but when you've got £2500-worth of wings you need to be 100 per cent confident."

Indeed, James is fortunate that he's got plenty of good pals to help with his various projects.

He explains, "I've never taken the car to a restoration garage as



Interior is stunning and testament to James's persistence in tracking down rare parts.

## HERITAGE: CORTINA MK1 FLEET

such, it's all through friends." One of these pals, Kevin, works at Balgores bodyshop in Sudbury and was able to apply the fresh Purbeck Grey paint, while James's best friend Rob is a senior technician at Ford, as well as a big Cortina fan, and helped to put the car back together.

"They're superb blokes," adds James. "I do as much as I can myself, but I couldn't do the cars without these boys helping me."

Mechanically, every inch of the Cortina has been completely overhauled, and the original 1197cc engine has been totally rebuilt. James is a real whiz when it comes to unearthing parts, and has used new-old stock items wherever possible.

He says, "I went all over the country. That's the best part of it for me, the challenge of finding the parts."

Other items that had to be sourced included the steel headlamp rings, which are unique to the fleet model, and the trim. The door cards and ultra-rare three-piece rubber floor coverings are original items, but the seats had to be retrimmed to factory spec by a friend of Kevin's who does upholstery as a sideline.

"So much is unique to a fleet car," says James. "You can't just go and get a second-hand seat set of seats from a De Luxe or something like that as the pattern is different."

### DOUBLE WINNER

The car was completed in time for the 2013 national rally, and won Best Restoration. James returned in 2014 to clean up in terms of awards, but the story doesn't end there. At the 2013 event James was approached by a chap called Alan, who offered him a matching '66 two-door in the same Purbeck Grey.

"I didn't want to restore another car, but then I thought it would be the ultimate to have two exactly the same. So after a year, I ended up buying it," says James.

Although the bodywork on the two-door car was better than on the



Fleet range came with basic, painted headlamp trims.



Back to base: Ford didn't even give you a boot mat.



Slatted front panel is unique to the base/fleet models.

four-door, James admits it fought him every step of the way.

But this story has a happy ending, as he was able to get both cars to the 2015 national show. Against some ultra tough competition, James's fellow club members voted

the two-door as the Supreme Champion for 2015, meaning he had made history by becoming the first person to win in consecutive years.

That's one heck of a turnaround for the model nobody wanted, and credit to James for keeping the faith.

### THE FLEET Mk1s

The base-model Mk1 Cortina, now commonly referred to as the 'fleet' model due to its target buyers, is a very rare beast. Its integral painted steel grille, body-colour steel headlamp surrounds and lack of chrome distinguish the exterior from plusher models, and it's similarly basic inside. The trim pattern is unique, while a heater and a passenger sun visor were optional extras. Rubber mats cover the floors, and the simple dash makes do without even a temperature gauge. With only around a £25 cost saving over the De Luxe, it wasn't very popular



at all. Most of the survivors are left-hand-drive two-door cars sold overseas — James's right-hand-drive four-door is thought to be unique in the UK.

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# Cortina 1600E

Ian Mills owned one of the best 1600Es in the country, then it was rear-ended and side-swiped by an uninsured driver. Now the same car is back and even better than before.

Words Marc Stretton

What do you do if you own a classic Ford, wished for since childhood, that is in excellent condition? Do you: A) Just enjoy it on runs and taking it to shows? B) Spend a fortune replacing virtually every component down to individual nuts and bolts with OE parts, or C) Try not to cry when an uninsured idiot rearranges the shape of your rear end and side panels? If the answer to these is 'all of them' then your name's probably Ian Mills from Wrexham.

Ian, a seller of modern cars and vehicles during the week, has been a weekend Cortina-man for more than 27 years, as that's how long he's owned a Mk1 version of this Ford classic. In more recent years the first-generation car has been joined by a pair of Mk5s in the form of a 2-litre Ghia S and 2.3 Ghia but it was a Mk2 that Ian was really after to relive childhood memories.

"Dad had a Deluxe Mk2," he recalls, "but he did it up to look like a GT. And because of this car I'd always wanted a Mk2, but for me it had to be the 1600E. In my young eyes, if you had a Lotus you were a boy racer, but if you had the E you were the King!"

## MISSED OPPORTUNITY

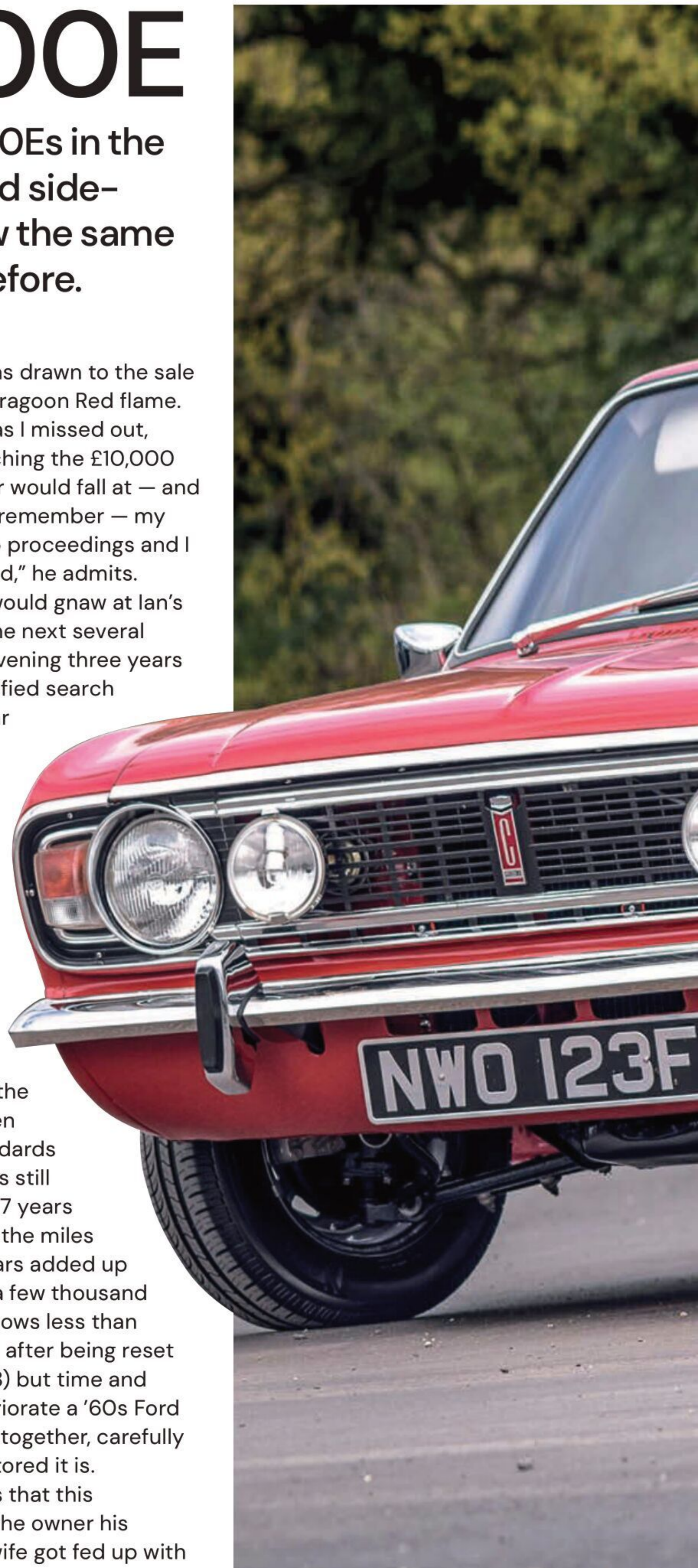
The chance to own one of the best 1600Es in the country arrived for Ian on March 18, 2009 when a fully-restored example came up for auction at Brightwells in Leominster. Described in the catalogue with clichés such as; 'in better-than-new condition' and 'the finest 1600E on

the planet' Ian was drawn to the sale like a moth to a Dragoon Red flame.

"The trouble was I missed out, because approaching the £10,000 mark the hammer would fall at — and this was in 2009 remember — my wife put a stop to proceedings and I left empty handed," he admits.

That decision would gnaw at Ian's regret bone for the next several years, until one evening three years ago when a classified search revealed a familiar Cortina. The car that Ian bought on this second bite was still an immaculate early Series One car. The E had been restored between 1994 and 1998, after languishing in a barn for many years, and the job done had been to such high standards that the finish was still incredible some 17 years later. Admittedly, the miles done in those years added up to no more than a few thousand (the odometer shows less than 10,000 miles still, after being reset to 00000 in 1998) but time and rust usually deteriorate a '60s Ford however well put together, carefully driven and dry-stored it is.

"The story goes that this restoration cost the owner his marriage, as his wife got fed up with





## HERITAGE: CORTINA 1600E



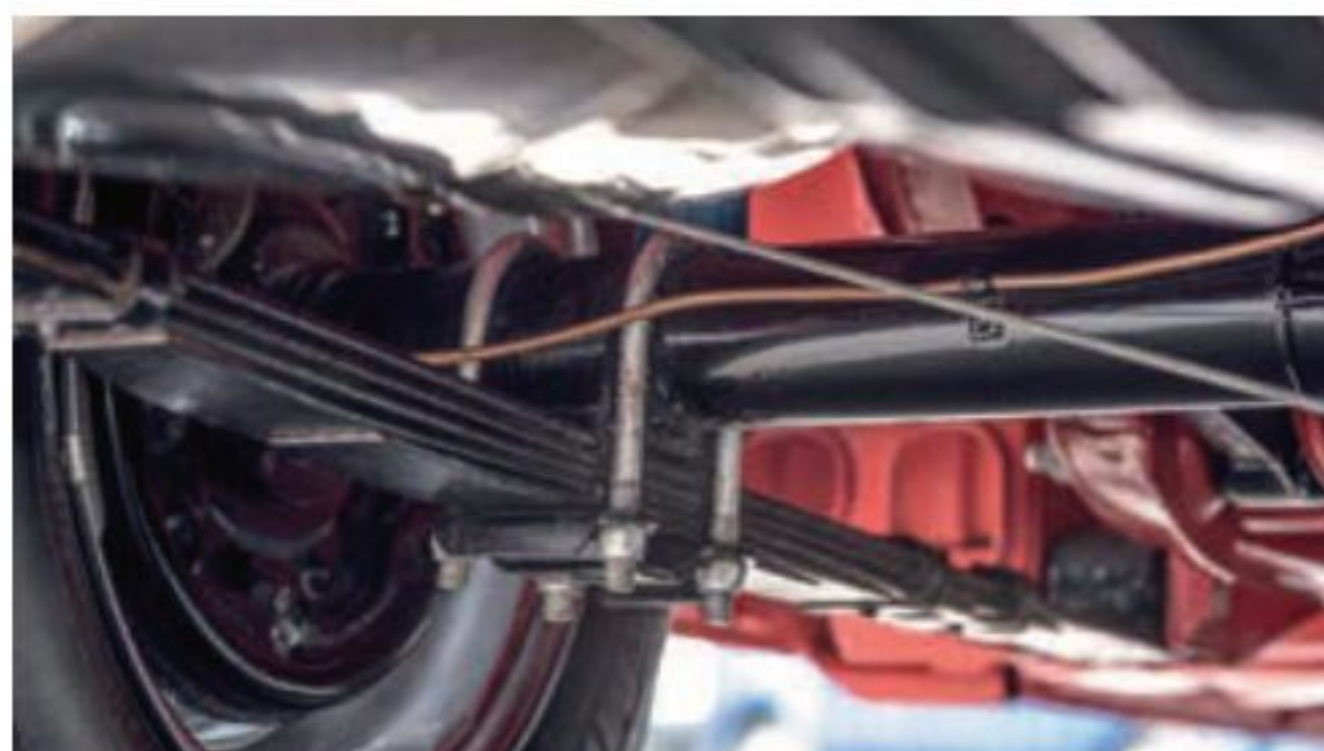
“Ilan’s work almost came to nothing when an uninsured driver smashed into the back of the cortina”



The early Crossflow engine is in great shape, and looks the part too..



Ilan’s gone to town sourcing OE parts like the Ford battery.



The level of finish underneath is show-winning, also!





all the time and love he was giving to the car," Ian reports. "Luckily my wife realised how much I'd regretted missing out on the Cortina first time around, so I was in the clear when buying it this time!"

"I can really appreciate how many hours the soon-to-be-divorced man must have put in," he adds, "as although he'd started with a solid, but tatty barn-find, the final metalwork report included inner and outer sills, inner and outer wheelarches, a new door pillar on one side and a complete front-end including inner wings, too. Apparently, he went

through three donor cars just getting the best bits of to use.

"You'd find it hard to tell where the newer metal is on the car," Ian adds. "I'd certainly want this guy to restore a car for me if I could find him."

#### **PARTS PERFECTION**

Despite Ian buying such a good car, there were things for Ian to concentrate on, apart from enjoying the drive from the Lotus-sprung, GT-powered 1600E.

"My main indulgence has been to replace anything on the Cortina that isn't 100 per cent perfect, so I've

searched high and low for as many OE parts I can find and fitted them," Ian says. "At one time the rear panel had been painted gold, so that went back to black and a set of Minilites were replaced by the correct Rostyles. The back-to-original task has gone to the extreme of replacing most of the glass, rubber, chrome and nearly every nut and bolt on the car for a brand-new look as well. It's cost me more and more of a fortune in recent years with the inflation in Ford prices, but has been worth it," he says.

But all Ian's attention to detail almost came to nothing on Fathers'



## HERITAGE. CORTINA 1600E

Now superbly repaired and back in rude health, Ian's looking forward to hitting the road with the 1600E this summer.



How good does this interior look? Colour-coded period radio is a great addition.



Day in June 2016, when an uninsured driver smashed into the back of his pride and joy as he was parked up. "There was extensive damage to the rear-end and he then followed up by scraping down the side of the car," Ian tells us. No-one was hurt though," he adds philosophically... "but only because I was stopped from throttling the idiot!"

"Fortunately, I do have a trade contact with bodywork," Ian says. "Lee Davies at Autokraft in Wrexham is, at least, equal in skills to the first restorer of my Cortina, and the only person I could trust to get the car back to its pre-accident condition."

Again, the quality of the original work carried out to the E helped Lee in getting the shape back to perfect without too many hassles, as there were no bodes or masses of exposed filler to contend with, just nice clean and thick metal under the paint.

"But I did add a bit of time pressure to Lee's work," Ian says, "as I had been booked to be on the Pride of Ownership stand at the NEC in November, and told him I really wanted to be there. We made it... just."

#### SHOW TIME

So, this show season Ian will, thankfully, be back driving his excellent E to meets and shows with his clubs; Clwyd Practical Classics and North Wales Classic Fords, as well as further afield to the likes of the Classic Ford Show, of course.

"I'm also heading for something a bit different this year, by attending a detailing event in Coventry in June called Waxstock," he says. "Last year my son Nathan won there with his Escort, so to beat him it's going to take a really special car... like his dad's 1600E. We'll see who's crowned the King!"

Thanks to: Lee at Autokraft Wrexham (01978 755890), and my family, especially Nathan and Alex for polishing duties.



Level of finish in the interior is testament to Ian's dedication.

# Bottle job

Delve into the Coke bottle-styled world of the Mk3 as it celebrates its 50th anniversary with our complete lowdown.

Words: Dan Williamson, Simon Woolley



It's hard to believe it's been 50 years since Ford started building the Mk3 Cortina — a car so different from its predecessors that it could definitely be called all-new back in 1970. Car companies, especially Ford, tended to play it safe — new bodies with old engines, new engines in old bodies, but rarely both at once. In the case of the Mk3 though, there was a real technical step-up, with a brand-new engine, gearbox and suspension under that distinctive Transatlantic-style body.

Delve into the finer details of the different versions, and check out some of the stories behind owners' stunning examples starting over the page.



# KNOW YOUR MK3 TERMINOLOGY

## BISCUIT WITH YOUR COKE?

**Biscuit trim:** Large, square-shaped seat pattern found on early cars, which loosely resembles equally-'70s Nice biscuits

**Boomerang:** Arrow-shaped centre section of pre-1973 steering wheels which resembles the Aboriginal Australian throwing stick

**Coke bottle:** The affectionate term given to all Mk3 saloons, but specifically refers to the kick-up over the rear arch

which echoes the lower part of a Coca-Cola bottle.

**Facelift:** Mk3s built after September 1973 are referred to as Facelift models, easily identifiable by their rectangular headlamps, and more European-style flat dash and seat trims.

**Tombstones:** The distinctive, gravestone-style front seats fitted to pre-Facelift (and late Facelift) GT models



### Cortina Base & L

**Engine capacity:** 1298cc, 1593cc, 1599cc or 1993cc

**Years produced:** 1970 to 1976

**Price when new:** £914

**Coke-bottles for the masses:** the basic Mk3 and Cortina L arrived in October 1970 with 1.3/1.6 Crossflow or 2-litre Pinto powerplants as two/four-door saloons and estates. Base models had single round headlamps, front discs, rubber matting and fixed-back seats. The L added colour-keyed interior with recliners, trimmed door cards and carpets, fag lighter, reversing lamps, rubber bumper inserts and chrome window surrounds. A bench front seat was optional. September 1973's facelift brought a flat dashboard and swapped the Kent for a 1.6 Pinto. December killed the 2-litre L but added an L Decor 1.3 or 1.6, then January 1975 brought black grille, cloth seats, hazard flashers and servo brakes; L gained rectangular headlamps and heated rear windscreen. Two-doors were deleted in May 1976, and all Mk3s were gone by August.



### Cortina XL

**Engine capacity:** 1298cc, 1593cc, 1599cc or 1993cc

**Years produced:** 1970 to 1976

**Price when new:** £1061

XL was the safe and sensible Cortina badge, adding extras for a little more cash. Atop the L's range of engines and equipment, the XL gave buyers contoured seats with rear armrest, map pockets, wood-effect dash and door cappings, vanity mirror and illuminated glovebox. Outside were full hub caps, shiny drip rails, wheelarches and rear panel, and the two-door had opening rear quarter windows. From February 1972 the two-door 1.3 was dropped, followed by the 1.3 four-door in June; hazard flashers became standard. The two-door 2-litre XL disappeared in April 1973, then September brought flat soft-feel dash, rev counter, rectangular headlamps, heated rear screen and 1.6 Pinto. Two-doors disappeared in 1974, and October 1975 added black/silver back panel, black grille and real wood fascia.

### Cortina Big Six

**Engine capacity:** 2495cc or 2994cc **Years produced:** 1972 to 1976

**Price when new:** R2741

South Africa's Cortina Mk3 began with a 1.6 Crossflow, joined in 1972 by the 2-litre Essex V4 — or Pinto for the rare GT. But in 1972 Basil Green fitted a V6 into a GT to create the 155 bhp Perana, after which Ford's Port Elizabeth plant built its own 1973 version with a 2.5 or 3-litre Essex unit. Nicknamed Big Six, the tagline stuck, and V6 Cortinas had Big Six badges on the boot lid. Offered as a 2500L saloon or estate, 2500XL saloon or estate (with rectangular headlamps, colour-matched hubcaps, GXL-type seats and leather steering wheel), the range was briefly joined by a 3000 GT, followed in 1974 by the 3000XLE — offered only as a four-door saloon in flat-dashboard facelift form. Optional extras included vinyl roof, metallic paint, automatic transmission and shaded windscreen.



## DEFINITIVE GUIDE: MK3 CORTINA

### Cortina GT

**Engine capacity:** 1593cc, 1599cc or 1993cc **Years produced:** 1970 to 1976 **Price when new:** £1112

Oh-so-cool, the Mk3 Cortina GT had quad headlamps, black grille, black back panel and full wheel covers (Rostyles were optional), while the cockpit wore glorious tombstone front seats, centre armrest, rev counter, sports steering wheel and centre console with gauges. Two-doors (with opening rear quarters) and four-door saloons were offered with 1.6 or 2-litre engines; servo brakes and stiffer springs were standard. Sports steel wheels were fitted from winter 1971, June 1972 brought hazard flashers and rubber bumper inserts, then the two-door 1.6 was dropped in April 1973. September's facelift meant 2-litre was standard, but rectangular headlamps and low-back recliners reduced the appeal. Cloth upholstery and tombstone seats returned in December 1974, plus circular spot lamps and overriders. A wooden fascia appeared in October 1975, but the GT disappeared in 1976 — never to be replaced.



### THIS ONE'S MINE: Mark Rogers 1973 2-litre GT

One of four Mk3s that Mark owns, this Marine Blue four-door had been used as a company car from new by the previous owner. "I bought it from him in 2007, and it had been off the road for 15 years by that point," says Mark. "I drove around in it for six months to work out what needed doing, then decided to do a quick restoration — only it took seven years." The car had been rust-proofed with Dinitrol from new so the bodywork was in good shape — just needing localised repairs to the floors and boot. "The rear arches are still the originals," Mark reveals. "The car was ordered with the optional cloth trim and the boomerang for the steering wheel, and thankfully it was all intact and in great shape. I did all the work myself apart from the powdercoating and the final coat of paint, and I'm really pleased with how it's turned out."

"I've made a few changes — the car's lowered 2 inches and I've fitted the wider Mexico steels, plus earlier this year I fitted a five-speed 'box though I've kept the four-speed gearknob so no-one is any the wiser!"



## THIS ONE'S MINE:

### Paul Runton 1972 2-litre GT

As the Chairman of the Cortina Mk3 Club, you'd expect Paul to have a few Mk3s on his driveway, and indeed he does, but it's this rare, Electric Blue two-door that always jumps to the front of the queue when Paul and his wife, Gail fancy a drive out. "We've had it eight years now, and we came across it after a guy I was talking to told me I could have it, if I could get it out of his garage. It had been in there since 1977 so it took a while but it was worth it. The bodywork, thankfully, was in good shape – it still has its original front wings," Paul continues, "and while the tan interior was thankfully intact, a mouse had been living in the headlining and trashed it – we managed to get hold of a four-door one, which Gail then modified to fit. The car was painted by a local VW specialist and it's held up really well, though we've just had the rear arches redone. We take the car all over the UK to shows – it'll sit happily on the motorway at 70 all day – though people are always pointing out that it has the wrong grille fitted, but this is how it came from the factory. We think it was assembled during one of Dagenham's many strikes at the time, and so they used the GXL grille as that was all that was available."



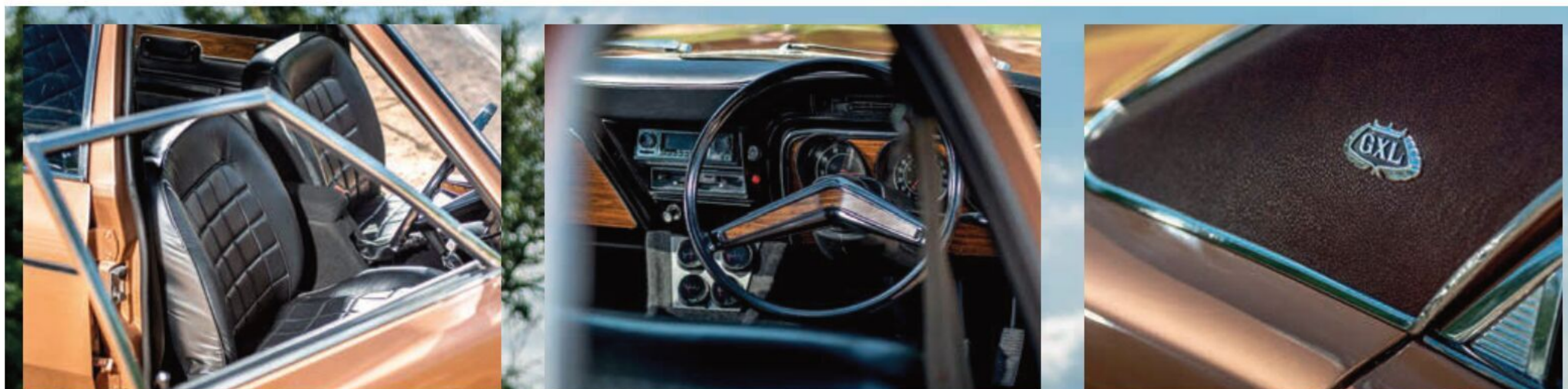
## Cortina GXL

**Engine capacity:** 1593cc or 1993cc **Years produced:** 1970 to 1976 **Price when new:** £1291

"The best Cortina ever made," was how Ford described the GXL, with "aggressive performance, combined with luxury features." Yes, really. Based on a 1.6 or 2-litre GT two-door or four-door saloon, the GXL added Rostyle wheels and fancy trim. There was XL brightwork around the windows and wheelarches, bodyside rubbing strips, shiny back panel, vinyl roof (in black or parchment), motifs on the rear pillars and GXL badge on the quad-headlamp grille. Inside were GT instruments and steering wheel, mated to XL wood-effect plastic, sculptured seats and heated rear window. Like the GT, sports steel wheels arrived in winter 1971. May 1972 witnessed the disappearance of the two-door GXL but hazard flashers became standard for the four-door. The GXL never made it into facelifted Mk3 style, instead replaced by the 2000E in September 1973.



## DEFINITIVE GUIDE: MK3 CORTINA



### THIS ONE'S MINE:

#### Joy and Gary Sherwin 1972 2-litre GXL

Gary's no stranger to restoring Cortinas, but even he admits he took on a challenge with this one. Bought as a part-finished project, the previous owner had turned it into a mini Mustang with heavily-reworked front panels and a V6. "It took two solid years of grafting to put the bodywork back to standard and replace any rotten panels and sections," Gary admits. "It came from the factory in Fern Green but I'm not a fan so I went for Copper Brown instead, along with a Tobacco Brown vinyl roof — that wasn't easy to fit and took a few attempts, but I'm glad I persevered." Luckily, the missing running gear was easier to sort: "I already had a reconditioned Pinto and with a bit of work, I was able to use the five-speed 'box that came with the V6. Everything on the inside is how it should be, though I retrimmed the seats in the black vinyl XL patten rather than the GXL trim as I prefer it. The car's run like a dream since it's been finished," Gary continues. "We've been doing events in it with the Cheshire and Great Manchester Police, raising money for charity."

### Cortina Savage

**Engine capacity:** 2994cc **Years produced:** 1972 to 1976 **Price when new:** £1915-plus  
Savage by name and a bit of a beast by nature, the tuned Mk3 took over from the Mk2, stuffing an Essex V6 beneath a Cortina's bonnet. Conceived by ex-racer Jeff Uren, the Savage was converted by his firm Race Proved, which in Mk3 form tackled as many as 100 transplants. The basic spec, on sale from 1972, offered a Zodiac-type 3-litre engine and gearbox. It was 136 bhp as standard, although many were tuned with Weslake modifications (bigger carb, manifolds and so on) for 170, 180 or 190 bhp packages. Best of all was the 218 bhp Tecalemit mechanical fuel injection – 0–60 mph in 6.7 seconds, and 128 mph maximum. Uprated springs and wishbones were fitted, while options included Mati exhaust, monotube dampers, better brakes, steering damper, Dunlop alloys and fantastic Specialised Mouldings fibreglass bonnet with scoops and UREN badges. A tamer Cheetah was also offered, with 118 bhp 2.5 V6.





## Cortina 2000E

**Engine capacity:** 1993cc **Years produced:** 1973 to 1976 **Price when new:** £1780

Ford's plans to replace the 1600E with the Mk3 2000E had all the ingredients: 2-litre GT underpinnings and a luxury-spec interior, boasting wood veneer door/dashboard cappings, cut-pile carpets, deep-padded Savannah cloth seats with map pockets and armrests, carpeted lower door cards, extra soundproofing, radio and centre console with clock. Replacing the GXL, the 2000E was launched in September 1973 as a four-door saloon with rectangular headlamps, sports steel wheels with trim rings, side rubbing strips, bright mouldings around the windows and wheelarches, plus black or tobacco-coloured vinyl roof. Tinted glass and door mirror became standard, and a 2000E estate appeared in September 1974. October 1975 added front headrests. The limited-edition 2000E Olympic saloon and estate of May 1976 had laminated windscreen, map lamp, driving lights and metallic paint — in gold, silver or bronze; 500 were produced.



### THIS ONE'S MINE: Mike Jarman 1975 2000E

Two things that Mike told us about his late, Sunset Red Mk3 immediately jump out — firstly that the car has never been restored, and secondly that it's been in Mike's family since 1979. "My brother bought it back then to use to get to work," says Mike, "and even though it was his daily, he always looked after it." Mike's brother parked it up in the late '90s, deciding he wanted something more modern, then in 2004, not wanting to let it deteriorate, Mike took it over. "It needed brakes and a few service parts to get it back on the road, but that was it," reveals Mike, who's the Cortina Mk3 Club's Historian. "I've tried to keep it as original as possible ever since — if you look closely, there are a few areas on the bodywork that are starting to look a little tired, but I'm loathed to restore it. It still drives like new — it's only done 53,000 miles."



# DEFINITIVE GUIDE: MK3 CORTINA

## Cortina Estate

**Engine capacity:** 1298cc, 1599cc, 1993cc **Years produced:** 1970 to 1976 **Price when new:** £1086

Huge even by modern standards, the Cortina Mk3 Estate's massive rear loadspace was available in almost any configuration except GT. The 1970 launch range offered 1.3, 1.6 or 2-litre base (with plain boot floor), L (with rubber load mat) or XL (with loop-pile-carpeted floor) — all had a folding rear seat and optional front bench. Specs were otherwise the same as four-door Cortina saloons, although the XL lost its rear armrest, bright drip rails and rear panel appliqué. February 1972 dropped the basic 2-litre and 1.3 XL, and all 1300cc wagons were gone by April 1973. September 1973's facelift added a fast dashboard and driver's door mirror to all estates, plus bodyside stripe on the XL model. September 1974 introduced a 2000E Estate with tinted glass, vinyl roof and rear screen wiper (also on the XL from October 1975). A similar tail continued into the Mk4 estate of September 1976.



### THIS ONE'S MINE:

### Gareth Walker 1972 2-litre L Estate GT

"My Dad bought this Estate new, and it was the family car for years before he sold it to me for £50," Gareth reveals of the Tawny Brown 2-litre, which is reputed to be the last surviving bench-seat model in the UK. "I was in the building trade at the time and for 20 years it got everything thrown in the back of it. When it started to get tired, I parked it up, but I couldn't get rid of it. Then after 13 years I made a start on the restoration." Deciding to do all the work himself, Gareth hadn't let himself in for an easy time — the floors and much of the chassis rails had gone — and it was six years and numerous panels and repair sections before the car was solid again. "The car's still not really finished," he admits. "I want to tidy up the interior a little more and I'd like to have another go at painting it. I'm just glad it's up and running — my Dad couldn't believe it when I first brought it over to show him; I don't think he ever thought it would make it back on the road again."



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# Mission of mercy

Rare Ford Transit Wadham Stringer ambulance conversion G UW 365N is also a bit of a television celebrity as Bob Weir recently discovered.

**K**enny Moffat is an ambulance paramedic / technician with the Scottish Ambulance Service.

He was brought up in the area and spent some of his childhood years involved with the Summerlee Heritage Centre in Coatbridge.

"The Summerlee Heritage Centre is one of the most important industrial heritage sites in Scotland," he explained. "I used to live close to the museum and was a member of the 'Friends of Summerlee'. The 'Friends' is a voluntary organisation that supports the activities of the museum. I spent some of my teenage years restoring and driving their collection of steam engines. I even learned to drive on steam engines and passed my class G licence. We used to show the engines at events like local gala days. They were very popular with members of the public, and it was great fun taking part."

Kenny enjoyed his time with 'The Friends of Summerlee', and it also whetted his appetite for classic vehicles.

"When I left school I joined the Army and spent several years with the Scots Guards. I spent most of my service career with the first battalion on ceremonial duties in London. I then joined the ambulance service and have been with them ever since. I have always been interested in old ambulances."

Kenny has been interested in light commercials for many years and has owned several classic vehicles.

"My first commercial was a 1955 Austin A30," he recalls. "I eventually moved the vehicle on and acquired a 1935 Austin 12/4 Ascot. I then bought a pre-WW2 1933 Morris Minor, followed

by a 1959 4-door A35. I acquired the Ford Transit ambulance in 2019."

G UW 365N was new to the Ministry of Defence and based at Puriton in Somerset. The chassis was built in 1974 and the body the following year, when the vehicle was registered.

"The ambulance served its time at the Royal Ordnance Factory," Kenny explained. "Although the vehicle didn't see a lot of work, it was always on standby. The Transit was driven regularly by the site's fire officer, and there was a doctor and nurse on hand in the event of an emergency."

Emergency appliances which were based on one particular site, generally have low mileages and G UW 365N was no exception.

"Most of the vehicle's mileage would have been run up on training exercises," said Kenny. "When the Transit was finally stood down and sent for auction in 2002, the Ford was only showing 10,200 on the clock. The ambulance was then acquired by a company specialising in providing classic vehicles for television programmes."

"The vehicle's CV includes appearances on *The Bank Job* with Jason Statham, *Heartbeat*, *Inspector George Gently*, and *The Royal*. The film company kept the Transit for a few years, before moving it on in 2007."

Fitting out emergency appliances was also a specialist task, and G UW 365N was supplied by Wadham Stringer based at Waterlooville in Hampshire. The company was formed in 1968 with the merger of Wadham and Stringer Motors.

Wadham was an old established company and had been founded at Waterlooville in 1905. By the 1960s



they had expanded into vehicle distribution, engineering, and coach building, and employed a workforce of 1000. They had also tried their hand at chassis conversions, and these included ambulances based on the Morris FG and LD chassis.

Stringer Motors had been started at Melksham, Wiltshire in 1942 as



a distributor of Austin cars and commercial vehicles. Stringer was a family run business, and by the mid-1960s was looking to increase its number of distribution outlets. The merger with Wadham was a logical step and created one of the top specialist chassis companies in the field.

The 1970s was a period of change and rationalisation in the motor industry, and in December 1979 Wadham Stringer was taken over by Tozer, Kemsley and Milbourn (Holdings) Ltd, or TKM. TKM decided to retain the Wadham Stringer name because of the company's good reputation. By this stage

Wadham Stringer was also handling agricultural equipment and machinery, although it was still fitting out ambulances to order as late as the mid-1980s.

By 1987 part of TKM's core business was car retail and they combined Wadham Stringer with some Kenning franchises to form

## HERITAGE: FORD TRANSIT AMBULANCE



Wadham Kenning. The company was eventually acquired by the Inchcape Group and the Wadham Kenning name was phased out in 2001.

"I spotted the Transit on an Internet site," Kenny recalls. "The then owner was Ian Davison from Sunderland, although I believe the Ford had also spent time with enthusiast Ronne Black at Alnwick. By this stage, the ambulance had run up 13,000 miles."

"I drove down to England and met up with Ian a couple of times at a café on the A66. I had a good look at the ambulance and the vehicle was in reasonable condition, given its age. I noticed that the body needed a spot of welding, particularly to the upper panel in the windscreen. It had rotted right through and you could actually see daylight. I



2-litre V4 was the standard petrol offering, though some emergency vehicles actually came with a V6 3-litre unit.



decided to go ahead and buy the ambulance, and we were able to come to an arrangement.”

The history of the Transit Mk1 is well known to most enthusiasts and the Ford was the top light commercial of its generation. The first vehicles were built in the summer of 1965, at the company’s factory in Langley, near Slough. The first model was a short-wheelbase, petrol van with a 610kg payload.

The keys to the Transit’s success was its broad track and large number of different body styles. These included long and short wheelbase panel vans, a pick-up truck, minibuses, and crew-cabs. The most expensive model was a 15-seat custom bus.

The new model was an instant success and had the longest production run of any subsequent Transit. The Mk1 was available in the UK with the Ford Essex 1.7 litres or 2 litres V4. The Perkins 4-108 diesel unit was also an economical if sluggish option. Later types featured Ford’s in-house 2.5L York diesel instead.

“The Transit was highly adaptable and could be used for a wide

variety of tasks,” said Kenny.

“That’s what made it so popular. The surviving Mk1s are sought-after by enthusiasts, although the vehicles often have condition issues particularly with the bodywork.

The Wadham Stringer ambulance body was made from glassfibre in three sections. The bodies were still prone to wear and tear, however, and according to Kenny the light at the front of GUW 365N had been leaking water for some time. This had inevitably caused some damage and was at the top of Kenny’s ‘things to do’ list.

“In the end I had to arrange to have the windscreen taken out so we could do the welding,” he said. “Although I am fairly handy with tools, I paid to have this work done by a local enthusiast. Fortunately, the vehicle was always kept undercover, so there has never been a serious rust issue. I’ve had the Transit up on jacks and can vouch that it is solid underneath.”

Kenny recalls there were several other items that needed some attention.

“I had to renew the front springs, and fit a stainless-steel exhaust,” he explained. “The wheels have all been powder coated and I’ve fitted a new set of tyres. The engine has been overhauled and the seats have been upholstered. I am always conscious of the need to maintain a vehicle’s authenticity and was careful to make sure the covers were contemporary to the period. The work took several weeks and cost me about £3000.

“The vehicle’s specification is an Essex V4 two litre engine driven through a four-speed gearbox. I’ve driven it a few times, and the Ford is currently showing 21,000 miles on the clock. The Transit is straightforward to drive, and the two litre engine means it can keep up with the traffic. That said, I tend to avoid motorways.”

Emergency vehicles are usually relieved of all their accessories



Modern and user-friendly cab layout was a key Transit selling-point.

## HERITAGE: FORD TRANSIT AMBULANCE



Busman's holiday – owner Kenny Moffat works as a paramedic! Inset: Lots of period equipment.

and equipment before being sent to auction. This used to result in endless trips to autojumbles to source the missing parts. Fortunately, the introduction of the Internet has improved the availability, although it can still involve a lot of hours trawling through the specialist websites.

"Fortunately, the television prop company had restored some of the accessories," said Kenny. "When I acquired the Ford it even had the 'Heartbeat' (North Riding Ambulance Service) writing still on the side.

"I've also added a few bits and pieces, including a new period first aid kit, a box splint, spinal board and chair. Of course, a 1970s ambulance would only have had a fraction of the equipment that is regularly used on modern ambulances, as

paramedics were only introduced in the late 1980s. Ambulances from the Transit's era were only designed to take the patient, or casualty to hospital. That was the stretcher bearer's job, and they were only given a minimum of training. The Transit ambulance was capable of carrying up to ten people, and the other passengers would have probably been family members."

Although Kenny's wife is a bit lukewarm about his classics hobby his teenage son is a big fan. "Ross will be sixteen next year, and he is very keen for me to hang on to the ambulance," said Kenny, who is also the driving force behind Lanarkshire Classic Car Club. Kenny started the club two years ago, and it has already attracted a healthy number of members."

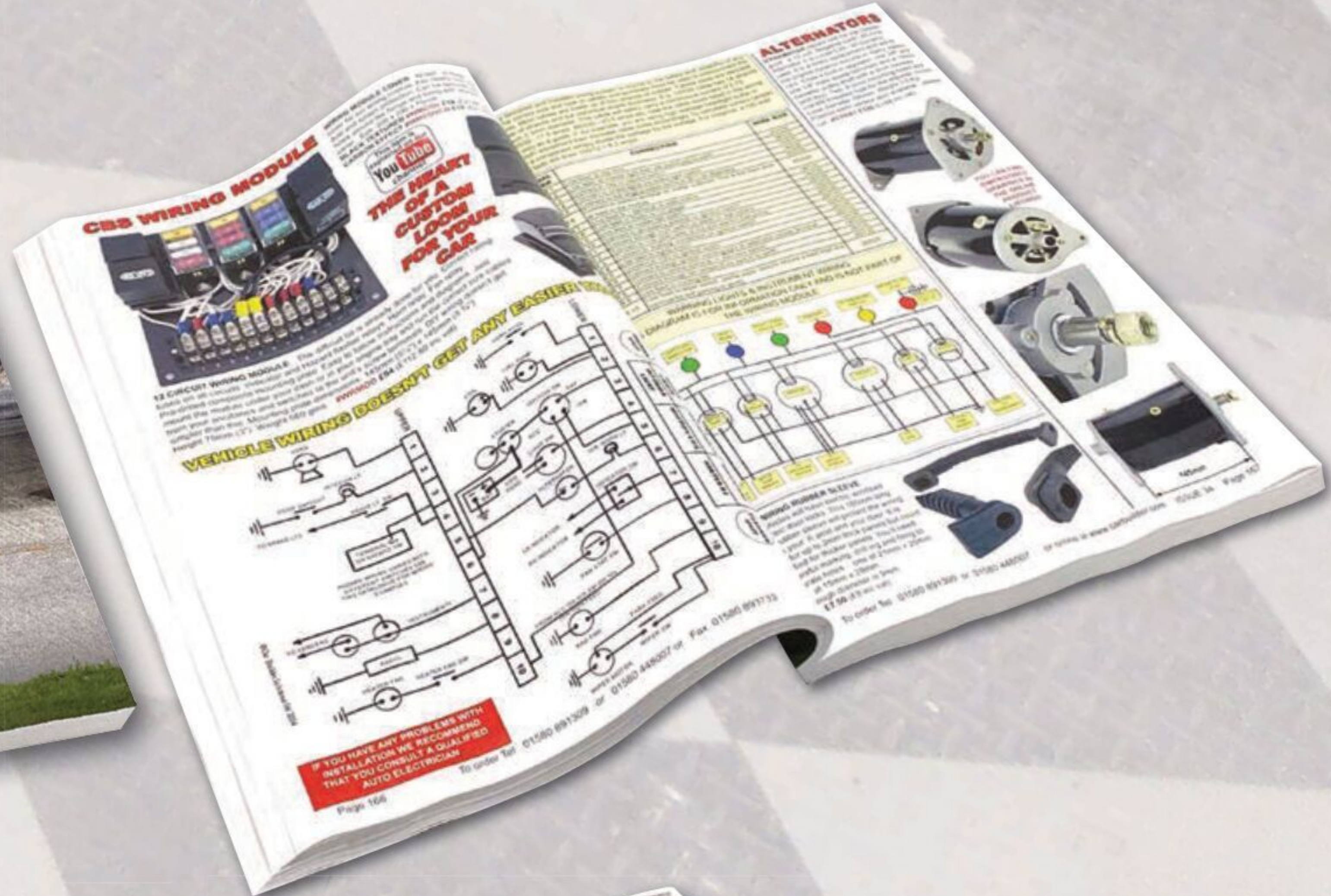
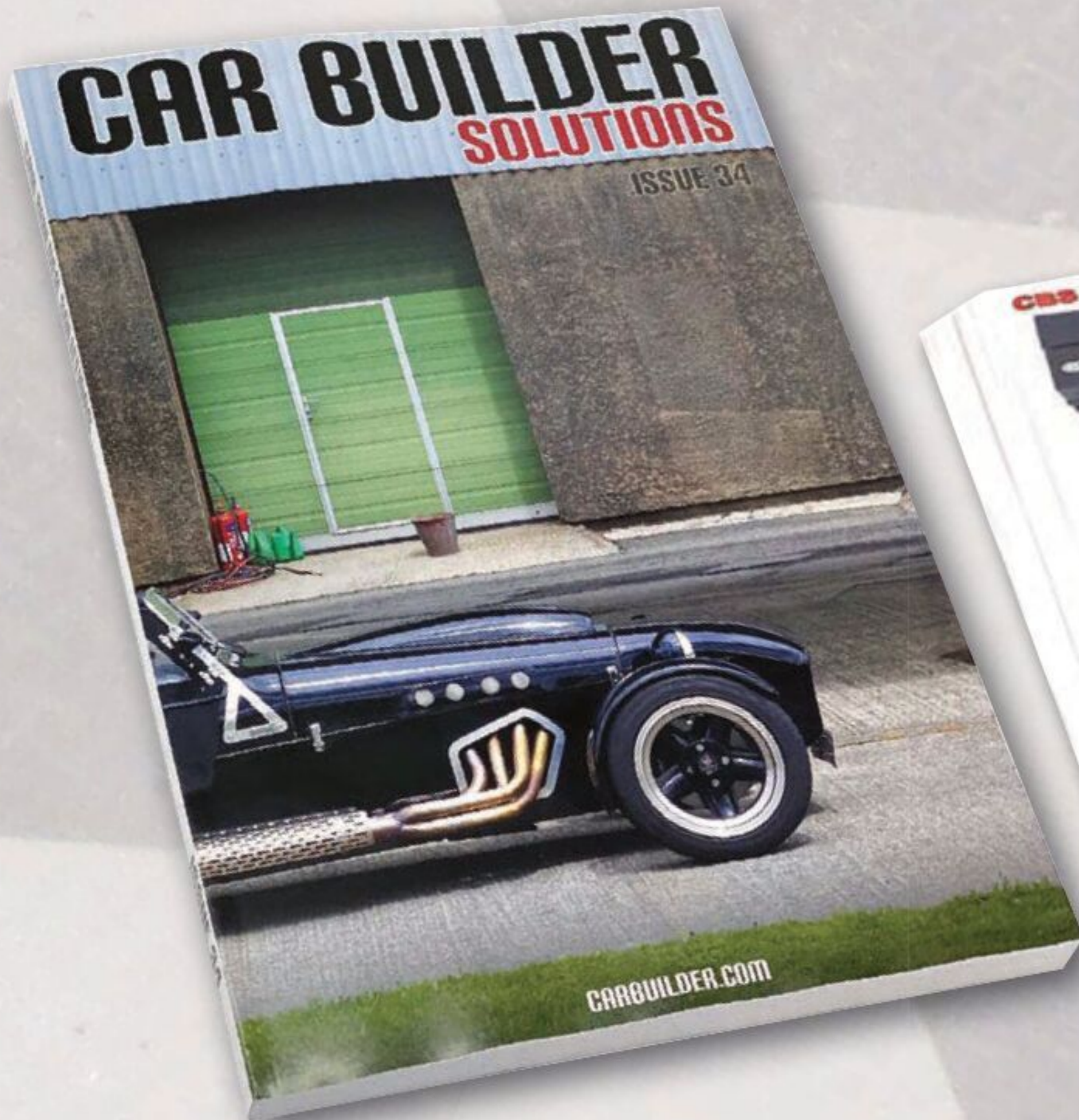
"We don't charge a membership fee and try and raise as much money as possible for the Children's Hospices Across Scotland (CHAS)," he explained. "Things have obviously been a bit difficult with lockdowns etc, but hopefully they will return close to normal in 2022.

"Ross also lends a hand with the vehicle's servicing and maintenance, which is a big help. As for the future I fancy taking the Transit on the North Coast 500 route at some point. For the uninitiated this is a 516-mile tour around the north-west of Scotland starting and ending at Inverness Castle. The route has become very popular in recent years and apart from seeing some stunning scenery, it would be nice to put the Transit through its paces."



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FAMOUS FORD: CONSUL GT



# London calling

Against all odds the Consul GT from *The Sweeney* survived filming and, following an extensive restoration, is back out on the streets. We discover where it's been since 1976...

Words: Mike Renault



## FAMOUS FORD: CONSUL GT



Other than metalwork, 95 per cent of the car remains original

Yes, this is the genuine Consul GT from *The Sweeney*. Not a tribute or replica. The owner is Mr S, who prefers to keep his identity private, so we meet in a secret location where he confesses all

"When I was 19 I swapped a three-year-old Mk1 Cavalier for a Consul GT that I rebuilt and took to an early AGM for the MK1 Granada Owners' Club," remembers Mr S. "The *Sweeney* Consul turned up and attracted a lot of attention. The chap had only owned it a month and we got chatting, I showed him my GT and he took my number in case he wanted more info or parts for the car — which was fairly rare even then. Around three months later he phoned explaining he was

buying a Lamborghini and did I want to buy the Consul? In May 1988 we struck a deal. "He'd bought it from the Thames Valley Auto Trader, and there were six previous owners before him. I had a mate in the trade so was able to check the VIN and the engine numbers to confirm the car was exactly what it was said to be. Years later I was lucky enough to talk with Peter Brayham, who was stunt coordinator on many *Sweeney* episodes and had arranged for Ford to supply the Consul GT from its press fleet — hence the NHK numberplate. He confirmed various aspects of the car were correct including the extra bracing across the bulkhead, and the sump and fuel tank guards underneath.



GT's 3-litre V6 was carefully rebuilt, using as much of the original components as possible.



Top: The car was fitted with optional power steering. Above: Bulkhead gained extra strengthening.



Driving lamps are the originals, having survived numerous car chases.

These parts were optional extras for the European market fitted by Ford when the Consul was new in anticipation of it being used for stuntwork. Peter Brayham also confirmed there never was a second stunt car and stunt drivers were on strict instructions not to damage the Consul – though inevitably it happened.”

Built in March 1974 with optional power steering and sunroof, the Consul went on longterm loan to Euston Films until 1975 when Ford phased out the Consul model and loaned the production a Granada S replacement. Although it still appeared on screen into 1976, the Consul had its various scratches and dents removed, then was sold through

## FAMOUS FORD: CONSUL GT

internal auction in 1975 to a Ford main dealer for onward retail sale.

The GT's second owner was a Kent policeman. "He drove it to work every day and got a lot of mickey-taking," laughs Mr S, who has spent the past 30 years tracking down his car's history. "Everyone knew it was the Sweeney car but it wasn't that big a deal then. One chap owned the Consul twice, apparently only selling it to stop his wife getting the car during a divorce."

Another former owner was a paramedic who took full advantage of the spacious boot for his kit, as did a lady who used it for meals-on-wheels delivery. At one point it was stolen and recovered by police an hour later. "The Consul was fine but all the meals were gone... She sold the car to a couple who lived in the same block of flats — it stayed virtually within Slough right up until I bought it."

### CRUNCHY TIME

"I drove it for four months but the MoT guy said it needed a lot of

structural work to pass its next ticket. Mechanically it was OK, but it had been poorly repainted and had drooped on the front passenger side following a recent crash — years later when we completely stripped the front end the nearside front chassis leg popped back into place with a huge bang. I could have repaired and plated over the rotten jacking points, sills and chassis legs but it was prolonging the agony, and another winter would have killed it, so in 1989 I stripped it to a rolling shell with my friend at his barn in Devon." The Consul stayed there for the next 14 years while Mr S collected the panels needed for repairs. "Back then I had no idea how to restore it or even where to go for advice," admits Mr S. "When my friend needed his barn the car stayed in my garage until 2004 when I left the Consul with a restorer in Bedfordshire. He started work on the offside undertaking repairs and fitting new panels, he even fabricated a new rear valance when I couldn't find one.

"I had to have a break to recoup some funds and during this time we had a difference of opinion so I moved the Consul to a different restorer. They had a great fabricator who noted the offside rear wing had been mounted 6 mm too low. He fixed that, fitted a new rear panel, repaired the boot floor, fitted both inner wheel tubs and outer wings, reskinned three of the doors, added new inner and outer sills then replaced virtually everything ahead of the bulkhead barring the offside chassis leg and inner wing. I know it sounds like it's a virtually new car but so much was rotten that it couldn't have been repaired to a satisfactory standard. Other than metalwork, 95 per cent of the car remains original — including the driveline and the interior.

### PUT THE BOOT IN

"I was then contacted by someone offering all sorts of structural panels; he proved invaluable during the body restoration and again later when I had



"The consul was used for a good amount of fast driving and the occasional car chase"



Incredibly, the GT's interior has survived all the filming and years of neglect — complete and intact — with only the headlining needing to be changed.

the underside of the shell sandblasted and it blew out all the previously repaired pinholes in the boot floor. The same guy had a new-old stock Ford boot floor, but warned me it couldn't be fitted if the bodyshell was assembled because the floor was the first thing fitted at the factory. By then that fabricator who'd completed the metalwork had emigrated, but in 2013 I was given the details of a garage in Cumbria who had an old-school bodyshop technician working for them. He said he could fit the boot floor, but wouldn't reveal the

method. I made him promise not to cut anything up and two weeks later it was ready. It looked perfect — I still have no idea how he did it."

Once the shell was complete Mid Beds Vehicle Restoration were tasked with putting the car back together. Mr S continues, "The whole interior went back in including the carpet, only the headlining was beyond saving. The engine was stripped; the block and heads were acid washed, the bores were honed, the crankshaft polished and new bearings, big ends, pistons and rings

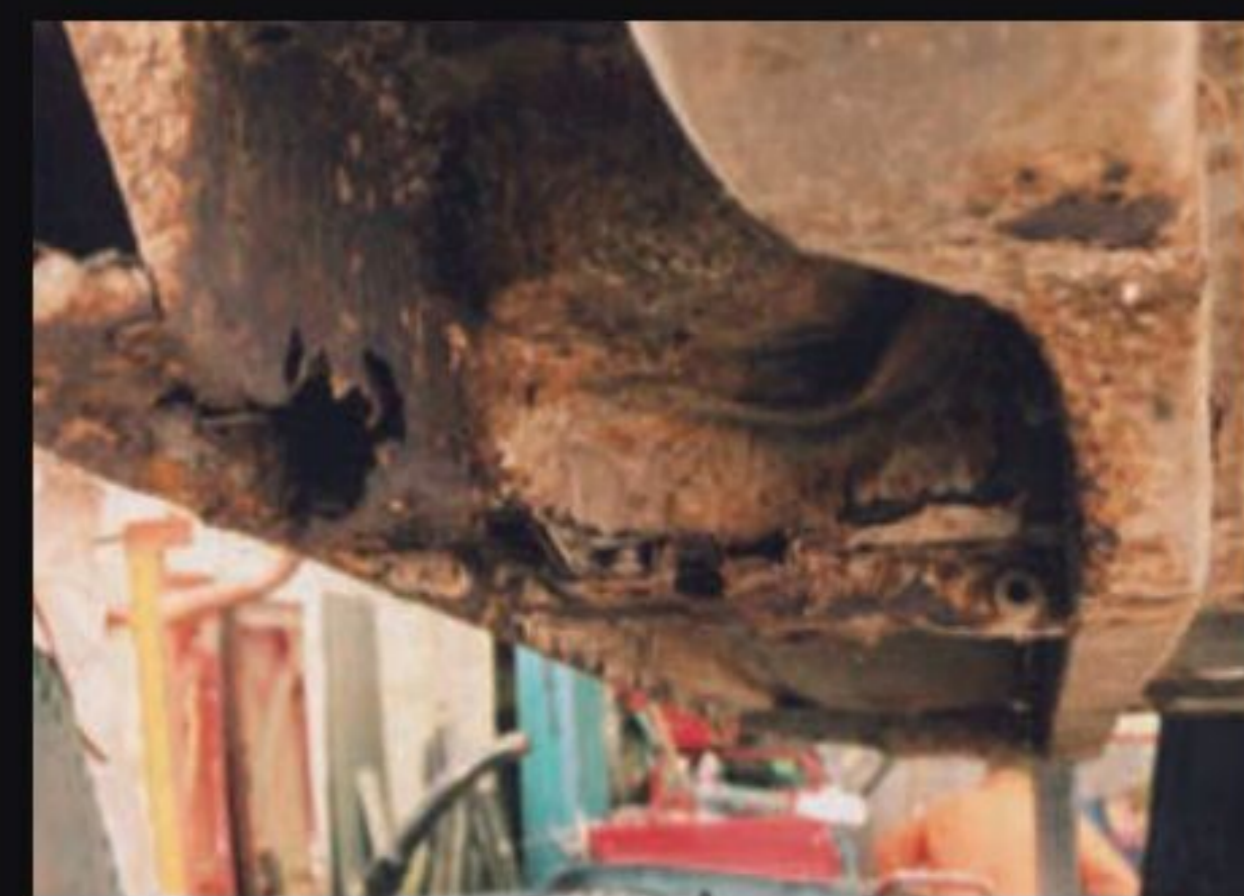


## RESTO LOG

The Consul's journey back to solid condition was a long a tortuous one — both for the car and owner.



Mr S first came across the car in 1989, and even then it was looking tired and in need of a rebuild.



After discovering galloping rot, he decided a full restoration was the only option for this iconic car.



Finally, after several decades the shell was complete again, and ready for paintwork.



Now wearing fresh coats of its original Copper Bronze, the car could begin the fitting-up stage.

## FAMOUS FORD: CONSUL GT



fitted. It had only done 72,000 miles but had obviously sat for a long time in storage. MBVR also rebuilt the gearbox and the differential – the oil in both still looked fresh.”

“The wiring needed a few small repairs where an alarm was fitted previously, new headlights were added but the iconic driving lamps are the originals that only needed a polish. Every piece of glass is original too, the rear bumper was replaced since that was badly dented. The car also had Ghia-spec rear end trim fitted on the bootlid and wing tops so they were changed for the correct GT pieces.

“The plan was for the car to look like it did when it left the factory

but I didn’t want a concours example,” admits Mr S. “It had to be resprayed because of all the fabrication work but the interior looks more obviously used. MBVR finished the car for me in August 2019 and it debuted at the Classic Motor Show that November. Since then it’s largely been in storage although I did a 60-mile drive for fun last weekend and I’ll be using it for car shows whenever I can.”

“I’m very proud of it. People usually recognise the car, but then I put it on the driveway at the weekend and my neighbour said ‘nice Cortina’. We then chatted about classic cars for a half an hour and never once mentioned The Sweeney...”



Now beautifully restored, the large boot was handy for storing shooters!

### THE COPPER’S CONSUL

#### THE SWEENEY AND THE GT ON TV

The Sweeney debuted on ITV on January 2, 1975. A gritty police series revolving around the work of London’s Flying Squad, a branch of the Metropolitan Police dealing with armed robbery and violent crime, the series was preceded by ‘Regan,’ a television film made the previous year. John Thaw played Detective Inspector Jack Regan, Dennis Waterman his Detective Sergeant George Carter, they frequently bent the rules to get results and the series was popular for its lack of glamour and the way the good guys didn’t always win. Their car for the first and much of the second series was this bronze 1974 Consul 3000GT, it was used for a good amount of fast driving and the occasional car chase, most notably in ‘Stoppo Driver,’ – episode 10 of the first series. Along with two full-length movies, The Sweeney continued for four TV series until December 1978 and remains highly regarded today. Watch it on ITV4.





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# Simple but effective

Few readers will dare to dispute the Ford Cortina's claim to significance in the British car market, but in terms of classic cars it tends to be the Mk1 and Mk2 incarnations that get the column inches. There's a good reason for that, since Ford's Archbishop (as it was codenamed during development) really shook up the mid-range car market in the mid-

1960s and took Ford to a position it retains today.

The essence of the Cortina was a desire by Ford to repeat the success of its Anglia 105E with a larger car, as a gradually more affluent society was looking for increased sophistication in their transport at the same time as the fleet market was gaining speed, with the sales rep as an emerging breed.

The Cortina provided just that, being a larger car all round with tangibly more glamour than the Anglia. Under the skin, though, it was little more sophisticated than its smaller brother, since it used the lessons learned with the 105E to good effect. The Cortina was cheap to make and cheap to buy, but was modern in its appearance and driving appeal, offering just the right



The original Cortina had things all its own way but by the time the Mk4 came round the competition had got its act together. We revisit the 1970s' rep's favourite.

Words: Paul Wager

amount of glitz to tempt the buying public into the showrooms.

Key to its appeal was keeping the weight down, something that was achieved by using aerospace principles in the bodyshell design and that allowed the Kent crossflow engines to deliver lively performance.

Underneath was found the by-then standard layout employed by Ford's larger cars: MacPherson

struts at the front and a leaf-sprung live rear axle. Again, the decision to keep it simple paid off in terms of production cost and easy handling.

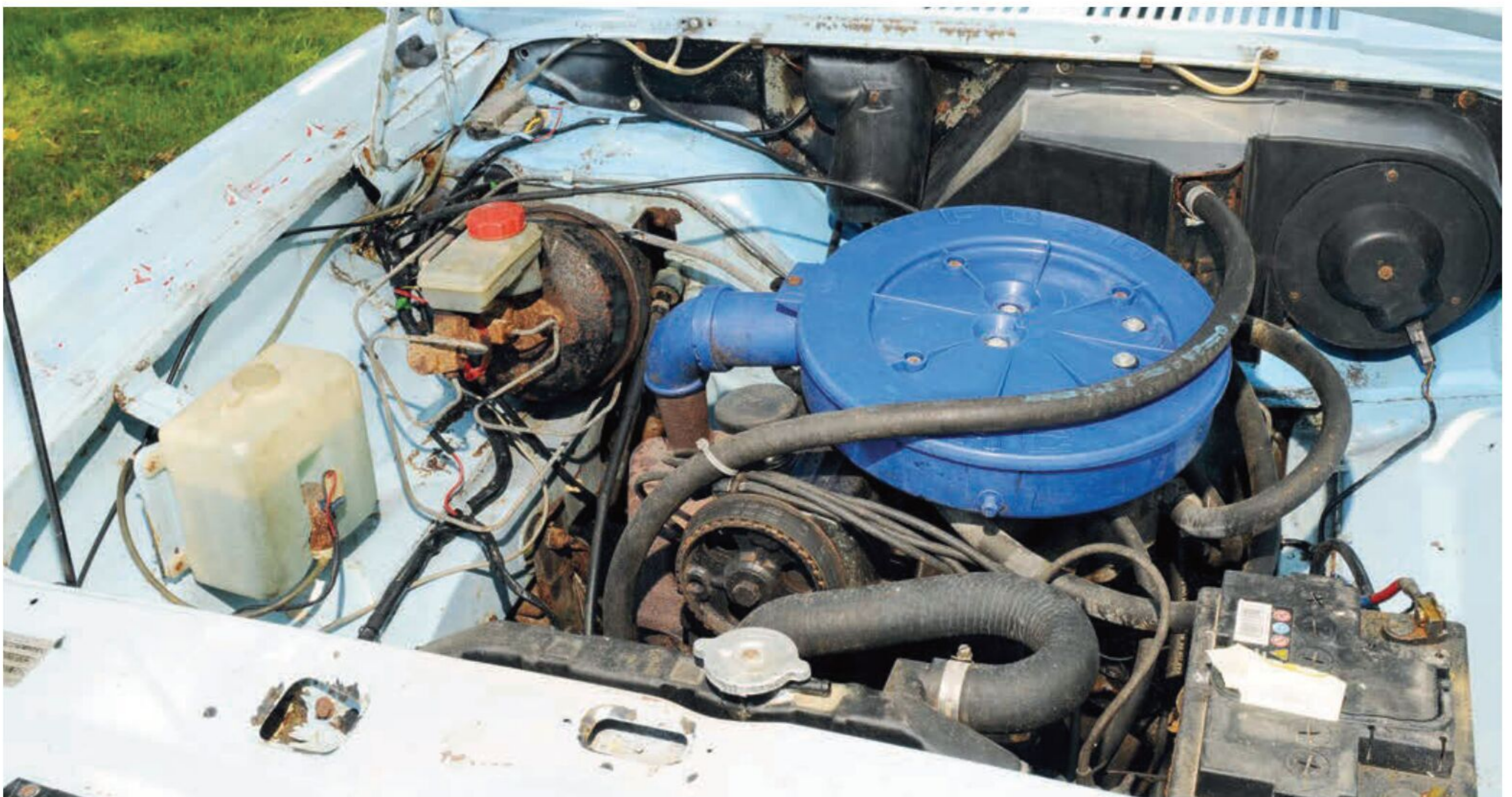
This was in contrast to the rival product being engineered simultaneously by Ford of Germany which although it was a similar size as the British car, used a V4 engine and front-drive layout to create what would become the Taunus 12M.

The very existence of this in-house rival was what drove Ford of Britain chairman Patrick Hennessy to instigate the Archbishop programme in the first place. When he discovered that the German car was due for launch in late 1962, national pride (the war hadn't long been over, remember) dictated that any British equivalent would have to beat it to the showroom.

## CLASSIC ROAD TEST: FORD CORTINA Mk4



"The Cortina was cheap to make and cheap to buy but was modern in its appearance"



In 2.0-litre form the overhead-cam Pinto motor would power the Cortina to a top speed of 105mph, usefully faster than most of the opposition. It wasn't the most refined unit but it was tough – as proved by its later use as the basis for the Cosworth YB turbo powerplant.



Given that Hennessy only discovered the existence of the Taunus project in 1960, that didn't leave very long. But, unbelievably, the first Cortinas were ready in the showrooms for the car's September 1962 launch. In a display of slick marketing typical of Ford, production began sufficiently far in advance of launch for each dealer to have two examples in the showroom for launch day.

As history has recorded, the Cortina was an immediate success and would endure through five different model generations until the name was finally sidelined by the Sierra in 1982.

In a parallel with Jaguar's first XJ, that original Cortina didn't boast any single particularly ground-breaking feature but careful attention to detail meant the whole added up to something greater than the sum of the parts.

In practical terms, this meant there was very little direct competition on the market that could offer the same combination of space, performance

and modernity. In 1962/63, buyers of a mid-range family saloon could also choose the smaller, front-drive and Hydrolastic-suspended BMC 1100/1300, the slightly larger and rather ponderous BMC Farina saloons, the Vauxhall Victor FB and... Well, that was about it, really.

Everything else was either smaller or larger than the Cortina, or much more expensive, with the Victor offering the only real competition. It was perhaps no coincidence that this was also the product of a marketing-savvy Detroit-based multinational, GM.

Fast forward a few years, though, and by the time the Cortina had entered its fourth generation in 1976, the opposition had very much caught up. For the £2000-odd asking price of the Cortina 1.6L saloon we now had the Avenger and Hunter from the now Chrysler-controlled Hillman, Triumph's Toledo, the Vauxhall Viva... Oh, and the Marina, which was a panic-stricken BL's riposte to the Cortina.

Meanwhile, those brave enough – or just wanting something that started first time every time and came with a standard FM radio – could opt for the Datsun Bluebird or Toyota Corolla.

Despite the increased pressure from the competition, the Cortina continued to sell strongly and was rarely out of the top ten thanks to its popularity among fleet buyers.

By then, of course, the company car market was big business and the Ford product planners knew how to give the cars brochure appeal. The adoption of the new overhead-cam Pinto engines also allowed the Ford to outpace the opposition model for model.

The car we're driving here is the perfect example of the Mk4 in fleet spec. A 1978 2.0 GL, the 100bhp Pinto pushed it to a top speed of 105mph, which gave the company car user-chooser vital bragging rights over his Red Barrel of a Friday night. The fact that the standard GL



The Mk4 Cortina's square looks were a familiar sight on every suburban estate during the 1970s. The 2.0 badges were status symbols in the office hierarchy, but GL spec still only gave you a single door mirror, no headrests or rev counter.

## CLASSIC ROAD TEST: FORD CORTINA Mk4



The Cortina GL's faux-wood dashboard was considered the height of luxury among image-conscious fleet drivers.

came with a 120mph speedo but no headrests or rev counter says it all, really: the clever bit was in the marketing, as under the skin the car was really a heavily facelifted Mk3.

This meant wishbone front suspension in place of the original's MacPherson struts, coils and trailing arms at the rear, a raised driving position and generally more modern demeanour. For the evolution from Mk3 to Mk4, the car gained a considerably larger glass area, making the interior feel more spacious than it in fact was.

The Mk4 is generally reckoned to be the rarest of all the Cortinas, since rust prevention was never the best – it was improved considerably for the Cortina 80 – and the model was sold for only four years.

There's no manual choke in this '78, so the Ford VV carb needs a few pumps to get going, but within a few seconds the Pinto is growling away and it's time to hang the suit jacket in the window and head up the M1 to sell those newfangled photocopiers.

I briefly owned a Cortina of the same vintage a few years ago, mine being the lesser 1.6 L, and although

I didn't own it for very long I was struck by how modern the car felt in some ways, and this example gives the same impression.

The steering is unassisted, of course, but is light enough not to notice it and the driving position with its high-set dashboard has more in common with modern cars than 1960s' Cortinas. The clutch is light and progressive and the four-speed 'box (there was never a standard-fit five-speeder in a Cortina) shifts sweetly.

From behind the wheel the Cortina feels a world away from late 1970s' Triumphs, for example, and very different from the wooden-feeling Marina. The Cavalier offered a similar driving experience, with the Bluebird being closer still to the Ford, which is perhaps no surprise given the fact that it was widely regarded in period as a Japanese copy of the Ford.

You don't need me to tell you how hard a Cortina can be driven and although we didn't treat this low-miler to sideways antics on the Westcott site, I know from experience that the Cortina is an easy, if rather unruly vehicle to drive

The Mk4 Cortina is a rare survivor, but prices are rising for good examples, especially those with a V6 Essex under the bonnet and a Ghia badge on the tail and C-pillar.



quickly. Its handling is progressive in a typical rear-drive way and it's all very predictable.

The Pinto engine is a willing partner in such antics, too. It's never the most refined powerplant and can be thrashy when, well, thrashed – but it gets the job done and feels unburstable most of the time. With just the four ratios, though, a rep-friendly motorway cruise can be a noisy business.



A simple illustration of the Cortina's appeal comes after I've been driving the car for a good couple of hours.

It's by and large so modern to drive that I've simply forgotten its age, and when I find myself chatting to a truck driver, he simply doesn't believe me when I tell him the Ford turned 40 a few years back. That explains perfectly why the Mk4 version of the car was still a contender even as the 1980s dawned.

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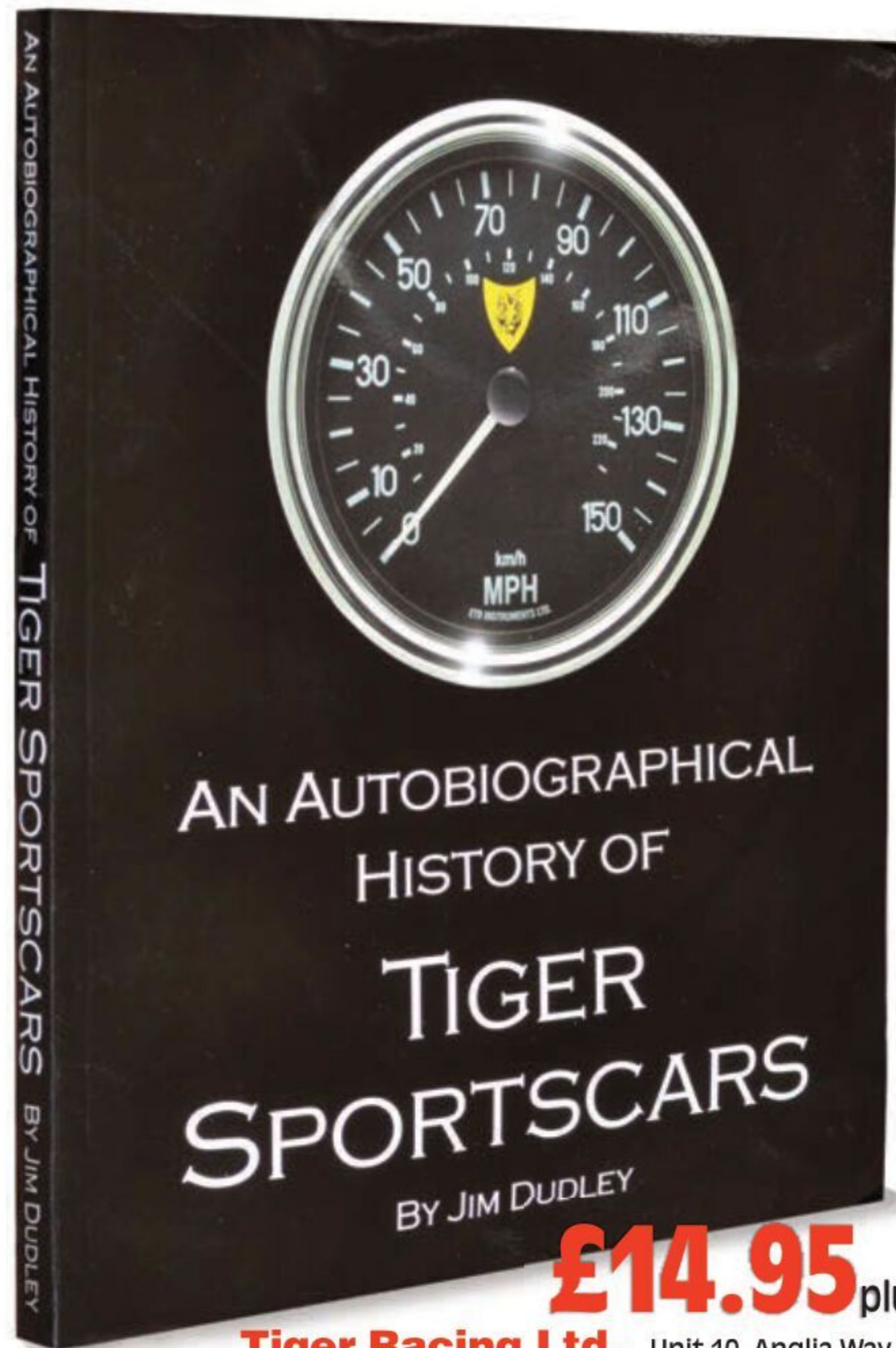
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# One step beyond

Saved after being left standing for over two decades, this Granada 2.8 Ghia X has undergone an extensive and highly detailed restoration – way beyond the usual rebuilds.

Words: Mike Renault

**T**he worst thing you can do to any classic car is to leave it unused in damp conditions. This 1983 Granada 2.8 Ghia X was left parked for 23 years. Owner, Davey Farrell has just got his car back after an incredibly extensive restoration.

“I first heard about the Granada in 2017,” explains Davey, “it had been left at a garage in 1994 after the timing cog broke a tooth. The garage put in an engine with just 1500 miles on it and replaced the exhaust and brakes, but the owner was injured at work and couldn’t afford to pay his bill so the car just sat in the corner.”

Davey offered to buy the Granada but the garage owner, who had since received the car’s V5 in lieu of payment, wanted £5000. “I offered

him £2000 once I heard it running and then we came to a deal. I’m a builder and he urgently needed work done to his house, so I did that in exchange for the Granada.” Davey then contacted Neil Dawson at KD Kustoms UK. “I’d planned to restore it myself but in the month I’d owned it I hadn’t even had time to wash the car. I thought it looked solid, but Neil soon found a lot of hidden rust.”

“It was rotten,” remembers Neil, who began the restoration in September 2018, “the outside had surface rust, but once we’d done the stripdown there was serious rot in the front chassis legs and inner wings. We ended up replacing the entire front end, constructing a jig to keep the





## HERITAGE: MK2 GRANADA



The Cologne V6 had only covered 1500 miles but was still stripped and checked as a precaution — then fully detailed.



“We did almost everything — there’s over 5000 hours of work in this car”



The underside is every bit as good as you'd expect. Stainless steel exhaust carefully follows the pattern of the original.



whole thing straight. We fabricated new inner wings and the slam panel, I got hold of some new-old stock front wings and sourced a new bonnet, too."

"Many of the hard-to-find parts came from stock car racers who were all extremely helpful. I visited racers in Lincolnshire six times — a 12-hour round trip from here in Scotland — and what I couldn't find we made."

That even included new A-pillars: "We folded them out of sheet steel in-house," continues Neil, "and also replaced sections of the floor, the boot floor and crossmember, rear arches and rear screen surround. I bought one headlight surround but we had to make the other." The rear valance, all the jacking points and even the petrol filler flap also had to be replaced.

Every piece of the car was gradually removed, stripped, cleaned and repaired.

## RESTO LOG

Whether you're an enthusiast or bodyshop, restoring a Mk2 Granada is no mean feat, but it had to be done.



Originally Champagne Gold, Davey was adamant the colour be changed to also-correct Caspian Blue.



Stripping the shell revealed plenty of horrors, with many of the repair sections having to be fabricated.



After some serious hours — and miles finding panels — the body was ready for in-house prep and paint.



Meanwhile Neil busied himself tracking down the correct-colour, and stupidly rare, interior trim.

## HERITAGE: MK2 GRANADA



### FEELING BLUE

"I wanted to put my touch on the car," adds Davey, "so had Neil repaint it from the original Champagne Gold into Caspian Blue." That meant sourcing a new interior since the existing brown one would clash terribly.

"We got a Ghia interior from a racer and had to swap all the fabric parts over to keep the X's heated front seats," remembers Neil. "We had the seat covers and seatbelts in the bath at home cleaning them — my partner Kara is very understanding, in fact she did a lot of the work to restore the interior."

It's here this particular restoration goes somewhat above and beyond what you might normally expect as Neil admits he "got carried away

with the details". Take the engine for example. "Davey asked we just paint the engine block and inner wings, but in the end we refurbished every individual part," smiles Neil.

"I spent an entire week on that alone. Every seal and belt, the radiator, the water pump... it was all stripped and rebuilt. Of course, all the gaskets had rotted. We painted the fan blades the correct yellow because we couldn't get the correct finish from cleaning and polishing alone. The dipstick was painted with the correct band of red — I researched that, too. The overflow tank and other plastic parts were cleaned and degreased in the dishwasher at home. Everything had rust from sitting; even the sump had holes in it."

Everything underneath was media blasted, rebuilt and epoxy coated then the floor covered in tinted Raptor lining. "We were going to lacquer it but it would have looked too shiny." The suspension, axles and brakes had all their components replaced. "We also fitted a new stainless steel exhaust specially made to match the original one."

The interior had the dashboard and steering wheel leather-filled and dyed to match the new colour scheme. "We took the instruments apart and refurbished them, used chrome paint on the dials and polished the lenses. The wood was sanded and relacquered." Another great example of the pains KD Kustoms went to is the parcel shelf. "You often see them sitting uneven,"

**"I spent weeks researching images — right down to where the factory seam sealer goes..."**



Correct blue cloth interior sourced from enthusiasts all over the UK, though the dash had to be dyed.

explains Neil, “we removed the old cardboard backing, carefully smoothed the material then fixed it to an aluminium plate so it will never bend. It was attached using a spirit level to ensure it’s perfectly aligned.” The speakers received new custom-made hessian cloth covers

and the radio/cassette was stripped and painstakingly rebuilt. Neil even found a company in Germany to make a brand-new radio aerial to original factory specifications. “I spent weeks researching images of Granadas,” admits Neil, “right down to where the factory seam sealer

goes. I’m obsessive about things like that, sealer has to be equally applied on both sides or I do it again.”

Everything didn’t go completely smoothly: “We replaced the gearbox the day before you guys took the photos,” admits Neil with a laugh, “when we were installing it one of the rods chipped a tooth off a cog, I did a 12-hour drive to get another one and we fitted it that night. There’s also a tiny pinhole in the front glass because I just couldn’t find a brand-new windscreen anywhere. It came with the Hella round spotlights and I sourced the oblong 2.8i ones at Ford Fair. Some parts were far harder to find than I’d expected – the Granada Mk1 and Mk2 Driver’s Guild were very helpful.”

When it came time for paint the exterior got high-build primer, three coats of base and four of lacquer. “We then did two of base and two lacquer on the inside,” explains Neil, “every inch of that shell is painted and polished, you can lift the carpets and find shiny paint. The bumpers were stripped but after a quote of over £4000 for rechroming we ended up powdercoating them instead, and so far only one person has spotted they’re not chromed. We did the same with the side trims and the door handles.

“There’s over 5000 hours of work in it. We did everything in-house other than powdercoating the wheels – they were blasted and acid dipped. I tried to find period tyres but they were silly money, so these are the closest equivalent. When it’s someone else’s money you can’t go completely mad, but we did bring it in for the budget I’d originally quoted.”

Is owner Davey happy with the car?

“I’ve only just got it back, so not had a chance to drive it,” he admits, “but it looks stunning. I’m really looking forward to having some fun in it. But only during dry weather!”

Rest assured, this Granada is never going to get wet again...



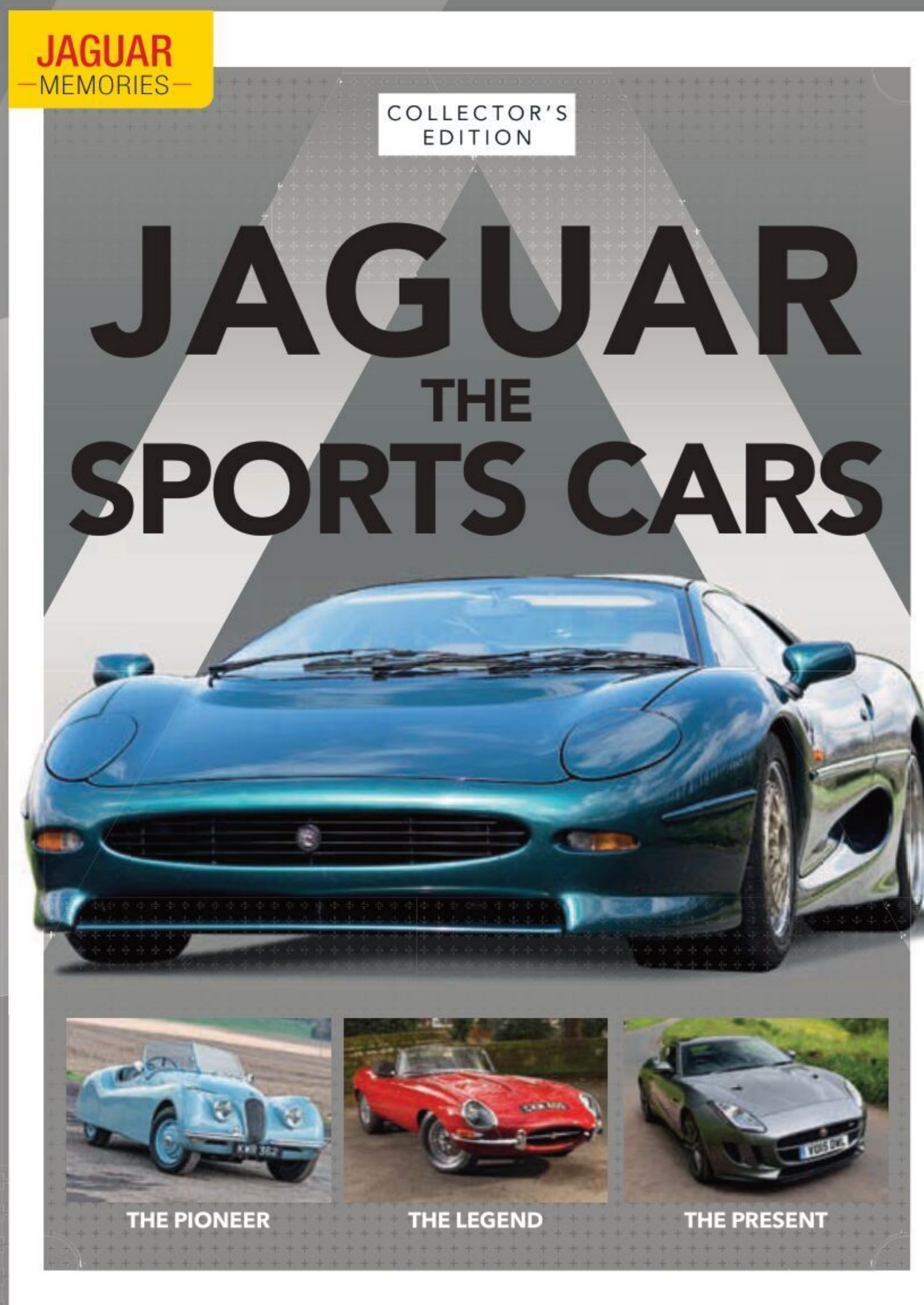
Davey, right, is over the moon with the finished car Neil and his team have produced.

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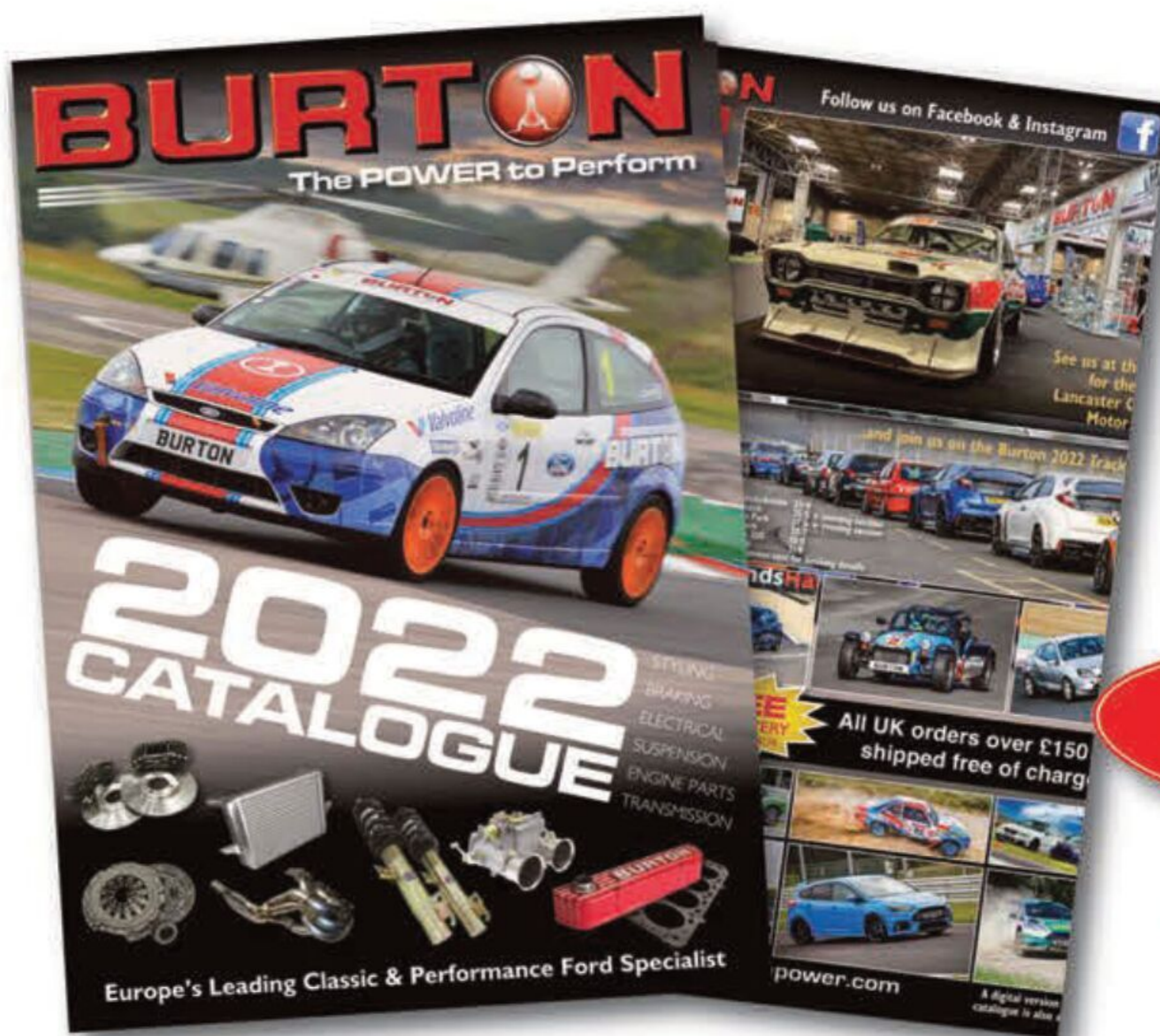
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# Sales force

Once part of the street furniture, these three fleet favourites have all but disappeared now. We revisit the Sierra, Montego and Cavalier fleet wars.

Words: Paul Wager

Anyone out there remember 'From A to B: tales of Modern Motoring' screened by the BBC back in 1994? If so then there's a good chance you'll remember the hapless sales rep chugging up the M6, close to tears at the humiliation of being demoted from a fuel-injected Astra to the plodding Maestro Clubman diesel.

We lost most of a morning's work recently chuckling at the helpless rage of our unlucky Maestro pilot but it serves to point out just how much the fleet market has changed

in the last couple of decades, especially in the UK where badge snobbery rules supreme.

Back in the late '80s Mercedes was still turning out plodding Beirut taxis, VW shifted loads of Polos and Golfs but not much else and BMW was only just gaining momentum in the fleet market, hampered by its sparse equipment levels and lack of diesel options.

The volume makers were riding high though with the Sierra and Cavalier available in everything from bargain

basement stripper with wind-up windows and hubcaps to XR4x4 and SRi versions which were really capable sports saloons. This was something of a golden age for Austin Rover too: the Maestro and Montego had been a long time coming and were hampered as ever by the compromises forced on them by tiny development budgets compared to Ford and GM but were keenly priced and available in everything from spartan to MG Turbo trim.

All three of these cars were once a



common sight on our roads but have been replaced by the ubiquitous silver BMW 3-Series in today's traffic jams. The rarity of the mid-range Sierra, Cavalier and Montego makes them a genuine contender for the classic tag these days which was all the excuse we needed to revisit them.

#### **FORD SIERRA**

The Sierra outsold the Montego by a big margin but there's an even bigger difference in the number left today; some ten times as many as the Montego have survived.

When the Sierra was conceived it was as a replacement for the long-serving Cortina which in sales terms if not technical sophistication was going to be a very hard act to follow.

Unusually for a maker generally known for its conservatism, Ford or Europe chose revolution rather than evolution, following the craze for

aerodynamic-looking concept cars to create something which looked nothing at all like the Cortina.

The hope of course was that the futuristic shape would give the car an air of high-tech even if the mechanical bits were largely Cortina-derived. Not of course that there was much wrong with that back in 1982: what fleet managers wanted was dependable hardware which didn't go wrong and was easy to fix when it did, which in turn meant none of this fancy front-drive business.

The world was prepared for the startling new shape by a series of Probe concept cars which progressively revealed the shape. Inside, things were also a long way from the Cortina, with a high-set dashboard and developments like trip computer and 'lights on' display on up-spec models.

It was aerodynamic, too – turning in a Cd of 0.32 which was identical to the Audi 100's Cd 0.32 which the German maker felt was so great it had to be written on the side windows. Unfortunately, that also brought its own problems in the shape of iffy crosswind stability in early models which was fixed by the addition of 'ears' behind the rear side windows.

It's often described as a Cortina in drag, but although the engines and transmissions may have been carried over from the Cortina, the Sierra gained independent rear suspension which allowed its rear-drive layout to carry the handling fight to the best of the front-drivers. And also came in useful when the V6-powered XR models and turbocharged Cosworth variant came along.

Sales took off slowly for the Sierra but Ford's marketing muscle

## TRIPLE TEST: '80S FLEET FAVOURITES

(for which, read ability to discount massively) soon saw it storming ahead, taking number two spot (after the Escort) in 1982, although the war with Vauxhall saw it slip the following year.

The Sierra returned to number two spot in 1987 though, thanks to its mid-life facelift which saw some 1200 changes and the car grow by 4cm. The booted Sapphire version was also launched, while options like heated front screen, anti-theft locks and ABS kept it ahead of the competition.

The following year the 1.8 Pinto was replaced by an 1800 version of the Escort's CVH engine which was smoother, more powerful and lighter, giving the mid-range Sierra improved handling with much improved economy, while the last of the Cortina ties was severed in 1988 when the 2-litre Pinto was replaced by the twin-cam 'I4' unit available with Ford's high-tech EEC-IV electronic fuel injection.

Keeping things fresh for 1990

were the LX and GLX, while gradual improvements were continually added to keep the blue oval ahead of the competition – which by now included the likes of Peugeot as well as the home-grown contenders. Incredibly, the Sierra held fifth place in the sales charts even in 1992 – the year it was in fact discontinued to make way for the Mondeo.

The Sierra we have here is a 1989 G-registered example belonging to Jim Christie, a man who by his own admission "just loves Sierras" and who is deeply involved with the Ford Sierra Owners' Club ([www.fordsierraclub.co.uk/](http://www.fordsierraclub.co.uk/)). Jim's had more Sierras than he cares to remember and this 2.0 GLX was acquired through a club colleague who had bought it from its elderly owner. Jim had planned to use it as a stop-gap while his daily driver Ghia was being welded but its general condition was so good that when an engine problem forced the Ghia into retirement Jim decided

to keep hold of it. As he points out, it's oddly highly-specced with items like fuel injection, heated screen, power steering and ABS which just weren't common on mid-range cars of this era. As bought the car had suffered the ravages of a drill-happy mobile phone fitter which explains why Jim has fitted the later hooded dash and other Ghia trim parts.

The GLX runs the twin-cam 2-litre 8-valve engine which in 2.3-litre 16-valve form also found its way into the Scorpio and Galaxy and part of the fun with old Fords is their tuning potential. To this end, Jim has fitted uprated cams and injectors together with a 4-2-1 exhaust manifold which have made the Sierra noticeably more lively – and which enabled him to post an impressive 45-50 mpg on the run up to our photo shoot. As he says, that's diesel territory and an illustration of how Ford improved the car through its lifetime – as Jim points out, his GLX is a crossover





between the older Cortina-derived technology and the new generation of electronics.

Jim uses the Sierra as his daily driver and given Ford's reputation for lousy parts supply of its older models, what's that like? Pretty easy, reckons Jim. Service parts are easy to come by with engine parts being easily obtained although some parts can involve more work to track down and Ford dealers can still come up with a surprising amount of the mechanical parts. Trim is harder to get hold of – especially switchgear – although plenty of Sierras are still being broken up and kit car builders tend to prove a useful source of parts, since they typically want only the running gear and will be happy for the Sierra club to take the rest off their hands.

A good Sierra is a delight to drive, especially for those who prefer the rear-drive way of doing things, which explains why the frantic Cosworth versions were so capable. With the benefit of hindsight it's easy to see how late-model Sierras like this bridged the gap between the basic Ford engineering of the Cortina era and today's well regarded class-leading products.

#### **AUSTIN MONTEGO**

"The Montego Countryman estate is a lovely car," sighed a student friend wistfully during one of those "what's your ideal car?" sessions back in the early '90s. To be fair he was a dyed-in-the-wool Brummie but considering everyone else had named cars like the Escort Cosworth and Peugeot 205 GTi, it shows just how the image of the Montego had been lifted.

The Montego of course grew out of the Maestro programme which was a do-or-die effort by BL/Austin Rover to distance itself from the doldrums of the Marina, Allegro and Maxi era but to dismiss it as simply a Maestro with a boot is to do it an injustice. In reality, the Maestro was rushed through to production to meet the 1983 launch date, while the Montego – which



## TRIPLE TEST: '80S FLEET FAVOURITES



appeared a year later – benefited from more development work.

Notable among these was the new S-Series 1.6-litre engine which allowed the Montego to receive a lower bonnet line than the Maestro. The car's wheelbase was also some 21/2 inches longer than the Maestro which allowed the styling to work better in the Montego's larger proportions.

The need to share the Maestro's doors forced some styling compromises on the Montego, although Roy Axe was given a last-minute opportunity to tidy things up and took the chance to give the car an improved dashboard which subsequently appeared in the Maestro.

The Montego was the more important of the pair for the fleet market and the delay between the hatch and saloon allowed engineers to address the teething problems experienced by the Maestro, the result being that the Montego was a much better developed product despite reliability issues with early cars.

There was nothing new about the engineering of either car: it was a thoroughly conventional steel-sprung layout using MacPherson struts front and torsion beam rear axle openly admitted by Austin Rover to be a copy of VW's Golf layout. Engines ranged from the distinctly underpowered 1.3 A-Series to the 86 bhp, 1.6-litre S-Series and the O-Series in 100 bhp carb or 115 bhp injection form.

Although press reaction was largely positive, the Montego failed to set the fleet world alight in the

face of savage discounting by Ford and GM, something which market research later discovered to be a result of the car's lacklustre image.

A programme of development was then instigated which quickly brought us the 2.0si in 1987 and the direct-injection Perkins diesel in 1988 together with a neat facelift. Rover's identity crisis was in full swing at the time, since the cars lost their Austin badging in favour of a plain 'Montego' although it never received the Rover tag for the UK.





By 1990 the Maestro had been axed, but the Montego soldiered on, getting gradually more luxurious until the last estate left the line in 1994. The appearance of the class-leading direct injection Perkins diesel gave it a last-minute sales boost and oil-burning Montegos appeared as late as P-registration thanks to the MoD stockpiling an order of dark blue DLX saloons.

Today there are around 500 Montegos of all flavours still registered with DVLA which makes

it rarer than some accepted exotics. So what's it like to run one today? The car in our photos is owned by David Ketley and is one of the pre-facelift examples, being a 1987 2.0HL. David is only the car's third owner and it's covered just 40,000 miles since leaving Cowley 25 years ago. David reports that parts supply isn't a problem – at least, not yet. Service parts are commonly available, while many mechanical parts are shared with other BL/ Rover Group products of the era: for

example, the starter motor on the 2-litre is shared with the Rover 800.

Again, it's trim which will pose the most issues, reckons David, especially model-specific items – you can easily find a driver's seat, but finding a particular colour or pattern might be hard work. Having said that, the cars are still being dismantled in reasonable numbers so there are plenty of used parts about. And of course if you need a door, then they're handily interchangeable between Maestro and Montego.

Living with the car is not far removed from a modern, mentions David. The lack of PAS on his 2.0HL is noticeable but the driving experience is hassle-free with not even a manual choke to worry about and David has been using the car daily since last year. Astoundingly, he's seen as high as 44 mpg on a long motorway run which for a 30-year-old 2-litre carb-fed engine is not bad going at all.

They're easy cars to work on, too – one legacy of being designed with the fleet market in mind. Most tasks you might want to attempt are easy



## TRIPLE TEST: '80S FLEET FAVOURITES

DIY and the front wings and bumpers are bolt-on panels.

### VAUXHALL CAVALIER

The Cavalier was one of the first attempts by a multinational at a truly 'world car'. We'd seen rebadged Opels before in the case of the Chevette and then the Mk1 Astra but the Cavalier was designed around the 'J car' platform developed by Vauxhall parent GM in Detroit and Opel in Germany, intended to form the basis of both US and European market mid-size cars.

This was achieved largely by modifying the existing Mk1 Astra platform and retaining its front-drive and transverse engine. Like the Montego, this layout provided better interior space than the rear-drive Ford and Vauxhall's overhead cam motors were lively enough to be competitive: the 1300 Cavalier produced the same 75 bhp as the larger 1600 Pinto in the Sierra and the 1600 turned in 90 bhp which was on a par with the 2-litre Ford motor.

Styling was very obviously Vauxhall and the Cavalier was a neat piece of work. Crucially, it was offered in both hatchback and saloon variants which gave it the potential to take sales from both Cortina and then Sierra. In 1983 the range was broadened by the addition of the 115 bhp injected 1.8 which gave the car 115 mph pace, while an estate and a diesel were also added to the line-up, all helping the Cavalier to take the number two sales spot from the Sierra in 1984.

A facelift in 1985 saw a revised grille and rear lights, while a further facelift in 1987 brought in the smoother grille and sporting LX and LXi models. Big news though was the new 130 bhp 2-litre engine for the SRi giving the car a 125 mph top end and 0-60 mph in just 8 seconds complete with tartan Recaro seats.

By then the Sierra was coming up fast on the outside and had retaken its sales spot, but GM of course



had the Mk3 Cavalier waiting in the wings for 1989.

The car in our photos belongs to serial Cavalier owner John Jones who got his first Cavalier in 1991 and who reckons this one might just be one of only three surviving examples of the pre-facelift GLS. Sporting an amazing 46,000 miles, which the pile of old MoTs and tax discs suggests is probably genuine, he admits it's a work in progress and has already tidied up the front end, with the sills and doors next on the list.

Parts support for the Cavaliers is not too bad reckons, John who says service parts are easy to come by.

John's owned both MkII and MkIII Cavaliers and given that his

partner runs a Montego is able to make an informed comparison between the two, something which can essentially be summed up in the comment that the Montego has the better ride but the Cavalier the edge on handling. The Cavalier's gearshift can be notchy but more precise than the slightly rubbery Montego action, but the big difference in daily use reckons John is the storage space which is "light years ahead" in the Cavalier. These things made a big difference to your 1980s rep and you don't want to find the (manual) window winder in your Montego won't work because it's jammed against a Spandau Ballet cassette.

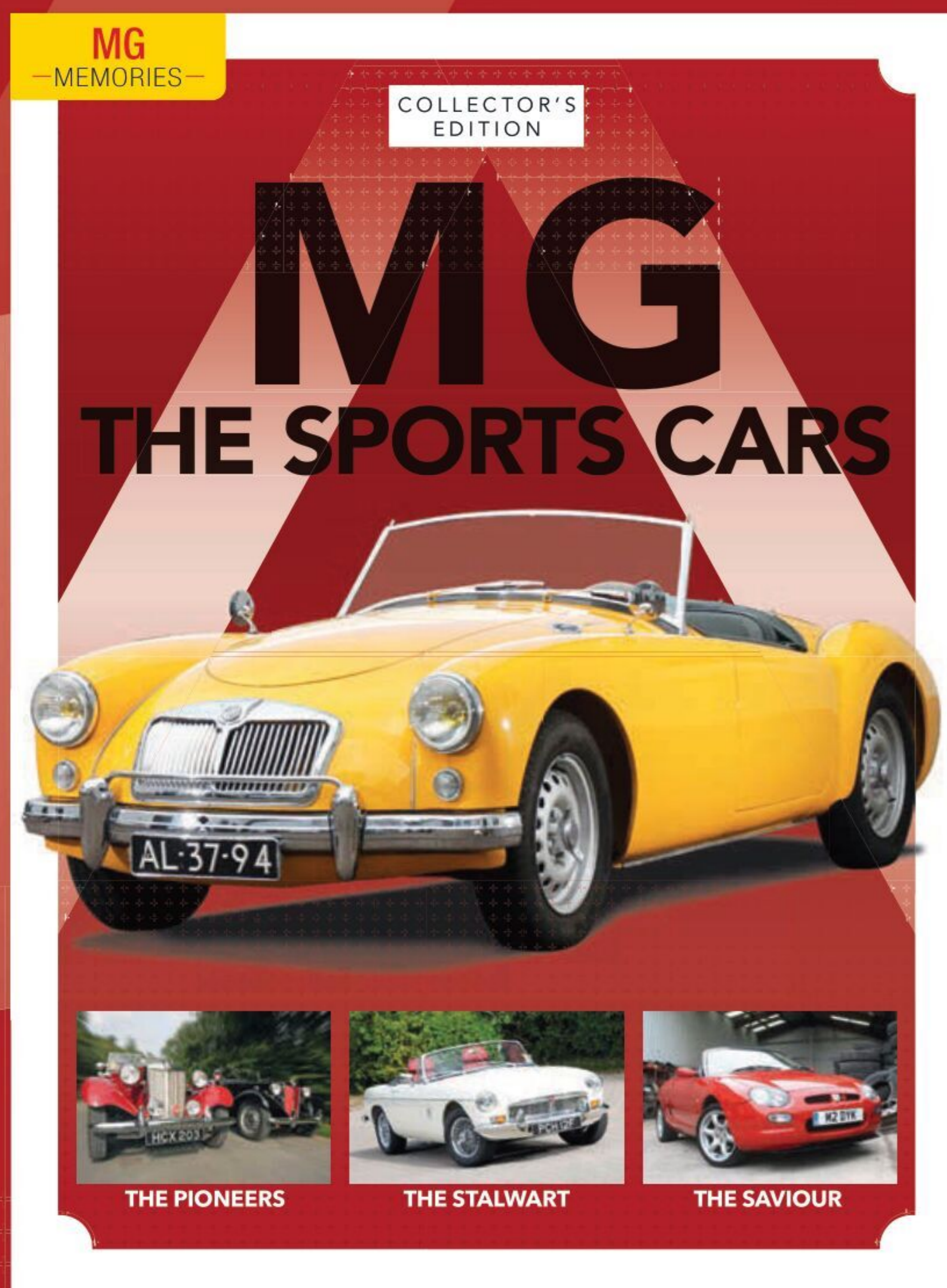




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## CLASSIC ROAD TEST: MONDEO MK1





# World leader

The car which shot Ford to the top of the class is now an endangered species. We revisit Mondeo Man, 20 years after the first generation was replaced.

Words: Paul Wager

The term Mondeo man has long since passed into common usage and although it was originally coined to refer to the thousands of traditional Tory voters in Kent who swung to Labour in the '97 election, it's since come to be used to signify respectable, average... and perhaps rather dull.

Ironically, the Mondeo itself was far from dull when it launched and indeed was something of a shock from Ford. If you weren't watching at the time then remember, the firm's previous volume fleet offering was the Sierra, which owed a lot to the Cortina in its layout. With the Japanese coming up fast on the outside, the French leading the handling race and the growing popularity of lease deals making the German competition ever more attainable, Ford really needed to sharpen up.

This was illustrated by the reception to the early MkV Escort at launch, which gave rise to the famous Autocar cover "The new Escort meets its rivals... and loses."

With the competition now including cars like the Peugeot 405 which were genuinely fun to drive, the Sierra's replacement needed to be a big step on from the Sierra and so it was.

An all-new design, there was no question that the Mondeo would be front-wheel drive. It was now expected in this part of the

market and the firm also needed to distance itself from suggestions of any carryover from the Sierra. One thing which was carried over was the dimensions of the older car though, which had been proved to fit the garages and driveways of Britain perfectly and the Mondeo is just 50 mm shorter than the Sierra.

Development work on the Mondeo began in the late '80s and pre-programme studies were completed in the USA before work moved to Europe in 1987. Prototypes wearing modified Sierra bodysells were running by late 1989 and the project was given the codename CDW27 – signifying the C/D market segments with the 'W' to signify the project's status as a 'world car.'

Ford had been more successful than many at the world car game and with the MkIII Escort having been successfully sold around the globe in different forms, it was having another go with the Mondeo which would become the Mercury Mystique and Ford Contour in the USA. Whereas the European and North American Escorts had begun similar but ended up differing significantly in their execution, the Mondeo was destined to be very much one car for all markets and in order to avoid any conflict of interest, a single engineering team was given responsibility. In this case it was Ford of Europe which took ownership of the project.

It's the world car nature of the project which gave the car its name, Mondeo being an entirely fabricated

## CLASSIC ROAD TEST: MONDEO MK1

word intended to suggest ideas of global reach.

The styling was the result of an internal competition between Ford's studios in Dearborn, Cologne, California and Ghia in Turin. It was the Cologne proposal which was selected for further development and its status as a world car meant that the bodyshell passed more crash tests than almost any other car: the need to satisfy so many different local regulations meant it was subjected to 150 crash tests to exceed all the European and American standards.

The result was a particularly neat if rather anonymous car and few will argue that it has stood the test of time remarkably well. In fact the 1997 facelift which introduced the enlarged headlights and bow-tie front end style was nothing like as cohesive and suffered the unfortunately flimsy bumpers, still to be seen flapping their way along our motorways.

Much like Jaguar's use of the low-volume XJ-SC Cabriolet to test

a new engine in the marketplace, Ford first introduced its new 16-valve engines in the MkV Escort XR3i in 1991. At this stage, the new generation of engines was still known as Zeta, a tag which would subsequently be modified to Zetec after Lancia claimed ownership of the series of Greek names.

Part of the blame for the lacklustre reception of the MkV Escort can be blamed at the carryover use of the old CVH engine but when the Mondeo was unveiled there were no excuses: the entire range was powered by the new, modern 16-valve units, ranging from 1.6 through the popular 1.8 to the range-topping 2-litre. A 2.5-litre V6 would arrive shortly after launch and the diesel was the only old-tech unit in the range.

Interestingly, although the engines are all but identical to those used in the contemporary Escort range, the Mondeo installation of the Zetec sees the engine inclined 8° forwards to allow a lower bonnet line and the

bigger car also employed 'torque roll axis' engine mounts, unique plastic induction manifold and different exhaust manifolding in the interests of drivetrain refinement.

The Zetec drove through the MTX75 gearbox, essentially the MT75 box as found in the late Sierra, but adapted to front-wheel drive while a 'floating' arrangement for the shift mechanism minimised movement at the lever.

Underneath the Mondeo, it was all very different from the Sierra as you'd expect, with the new car using subframes at both ends to reduce NVH. The front end used MacPherson struts connected to lower wishbones mounted on the subframe, the use of a full wishbone rather than a single arm allowing more precise longitudinal wheel location.

At the rear end, the layout was dubbed Quadralink by Ford and as the name suggests, it employs four links per wheel: two horizontal transverse arms pivoting from close to the car's centre, a trailing arm on each side and the strut itself.





**“An all-new design, there was no question that the Mondeo would be front-wheel drive”**



**The Mondeo used modern engines from the word go, with the CVH and Pinto consigned to the history books. The four-cylinder cars used the Zetec 16-valver, later joined by the 177 bhp Duratec V6.**



**“My first impression is of how modern a two-decades-old Mondeo still feels”**



Although a more costly system to produce, the layout allowed more control over camber and toe-in under cornering over a larger range of suspension travel. An added refinement which was by then becoming common was the use of 'compliance steer' by using deformable bushings in the rear suspension to provide a degree of passive rear steer. The estate meanwhile, used a double wishbone system to maximise the load space by providing a flat floor, the system given the name 'Control Blade' and later used on the Jaguar X-Type to accommodate a driven rear axle.

All this meant that the Mondeo was state-of-the-art in car design when it went on sale in January 1993 and the reaction from the press was overwhelmingly positive. After all, it needed to be right and Autocar's issue following the launch described it on the cover as "the new high-tech Ford that has to be best."

During development, Ford engineers had apparently consciously chosen not to use the Sierra as any kind of benchmark, choosing instead to measure their achievements against the Honda Accord, Peugeot 405, Toyota Carina, GM's Cavalier/Vectra and VW Passat. With goals like this, it's easy to see why the Mondeo was so good. And good it was. Anyone who was issued a company Mondeo in the '90s will remember it fondly and I'm no exception. I've covered thousands of miles at the helm of various first-generation Mondeos and I don't recall ever having been disappointed by one. The 1.6 was the entry-level and the 2-litre was relatively rare, meaning the bulk of fleet sales were the ubiquitous 1.8, usually in LX trim and more often than not in Radiant Red or Tourmaline Green. The Mondeo was a superb motorway cruiser, seemingly at its best loping along at a steady 90 mph cruise in those pre-speed camera days, with impressive refinement and the

standard-fit radio cassette providing remarkably good sound quality through big standard speakers.

The car could also rise to the challenge when asked to hurry though and the free-revving Zetec would chase the redline smoothly even with well over 100,000 miles showing, while the modern suspension meant it was easy to drive the Mondeo really very hard across country.

Since the Mk1 was replaced by the facelift model in 1997 though, I can't remember the last time I experienced the Mondeo in its original form, but stepping into this example was like bumping into an old friend.

The lack of remote locking dates the design, but settling into the cabin I remembered the light and airy feel of the interior. The dashboard is set low compared to modern cars, which contributes to the feeling of space and the control layout is second to none. OK, so cars didn't come with so many gadgets back in the early '90s but everything from the indicators to the door handle and gearshift is well positioned and clearly properly thought out. The Mondeo after all was a car without compromise and there's nothing in the everyday driving experience which grates, except perhaps for the lack of any cup holders.

This particular car boasts the GLX badge on the back, which was a rung above the humdrum LX, but it's hard to see quite what the extra spec bought you: there's no air conditioning or alloy wheels but you did get supposedly better velour trim, those lattice wheel covers and the magnificence of the tilt 'n' slide sunroof which has all but disappeared today.

This particular car is also unusual in that it's an automatic. The V6 and later four-pot models used the four-speed CD4E box, but in this '95 example it's a three-speeder. It

## CLASSIC ROAD TEST: MONDEO MK1



Mondeo's cabin remains an ergonomic masterpiece, but low-set dashboard marks it as being from another era. Standard-fit sounds were unusually good for the day, but the three-speed automatic kills the fizz of the manually-shifted cars.

frankly doesn't suit the Zetec engine at all, but in moderate driving it serves well enough.

At traffic speeds, my first impression is of how modern a two-decades-old Mondeo still feels. Power steering was standard across the range and the handling and brakes don't feel massively removed from a car half its age, while the rigidity of the bodyshell helps with the lack of squeaks and rattles.

What is more impressive though as speed rises is the car's simply superb ride quality. The Mondeo doesn't feel like a softly-sprung car in the Rover 75 mould, but its ride at motorway speeds is at once both comfortable and poised. The

14-inch wheels help of course in an age where the current Mondeo is routinely seen on 17s but it lacks the restless nature of many a modern mid-ranger over broken surfaces.

It's quiet too, although prodding the three-speed auto into kickdown mode does release a sudden buzzing as the Zetec heads towards its 6000 rpm limit. In the manual car that's part of the appeal though, with the Mondeo rowing through gears nicely when needed.

This example is also notable for being a saloon rather than the more common hatch, but with folding rear seat backs, it's a practical car and can still swallow a bicycle when required.

Our classic road tests usually see us in possession of the car for just a couple of hours but in this case I had a full week with it, in which time I clocked up some 300 miles.

Impressively, after a non-stop 122-mile sprint from Cambridgeshire to Gloucestershire, I stepped out of the car feeling as fresh as I did the following week in a new Skoda Superb and that's praise indeed: Ford really did move the game along with this car.

They're a rare sight now though and if you wish you'd got in on the act with all the other modern classic Fords currently breaking auction records, then a Mk1 Mondeo is worth saving.

### THE COSWORTH MONDEO

As soon as the Mondeo was launched, journalists were asking when we'd see a successor to the legendary Sierra RS Cosworth but Ford sources were coy about the prospects of a performance model.

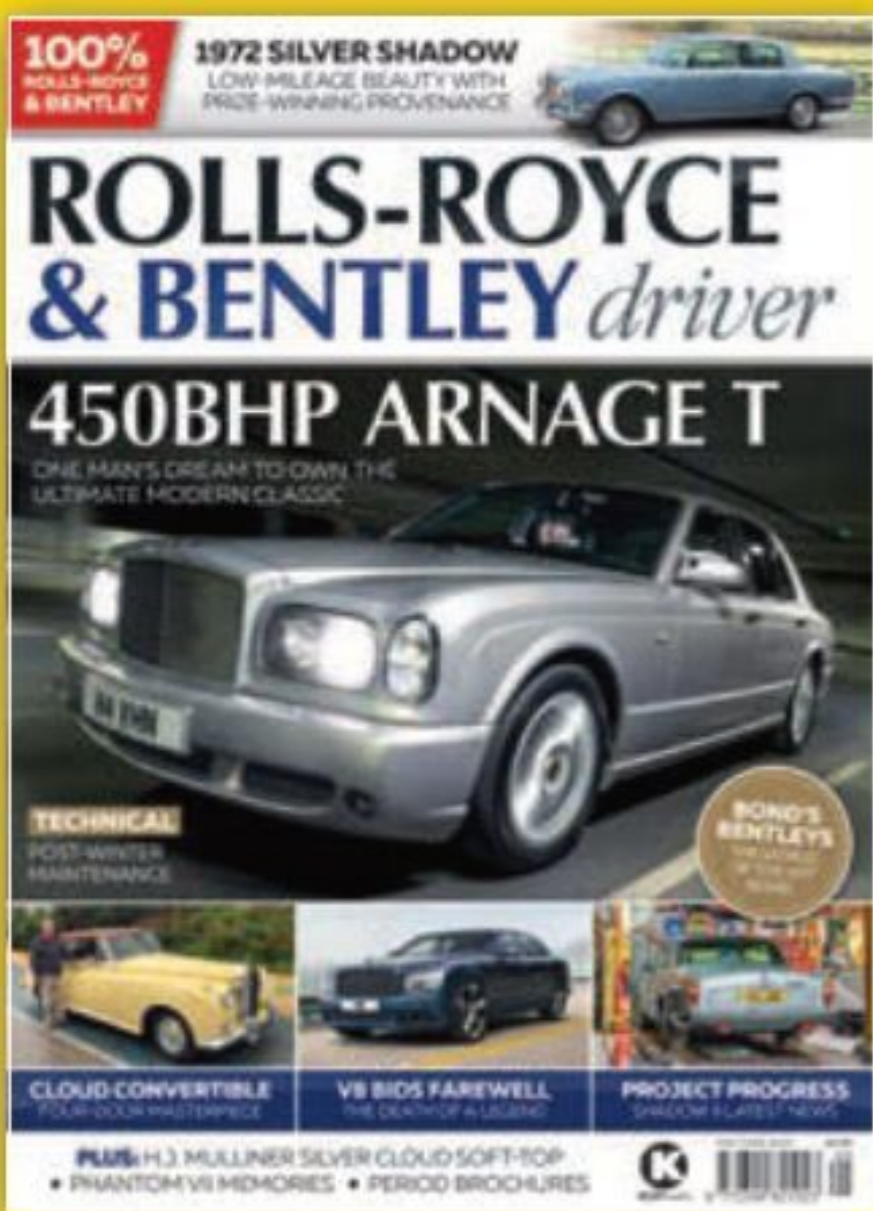
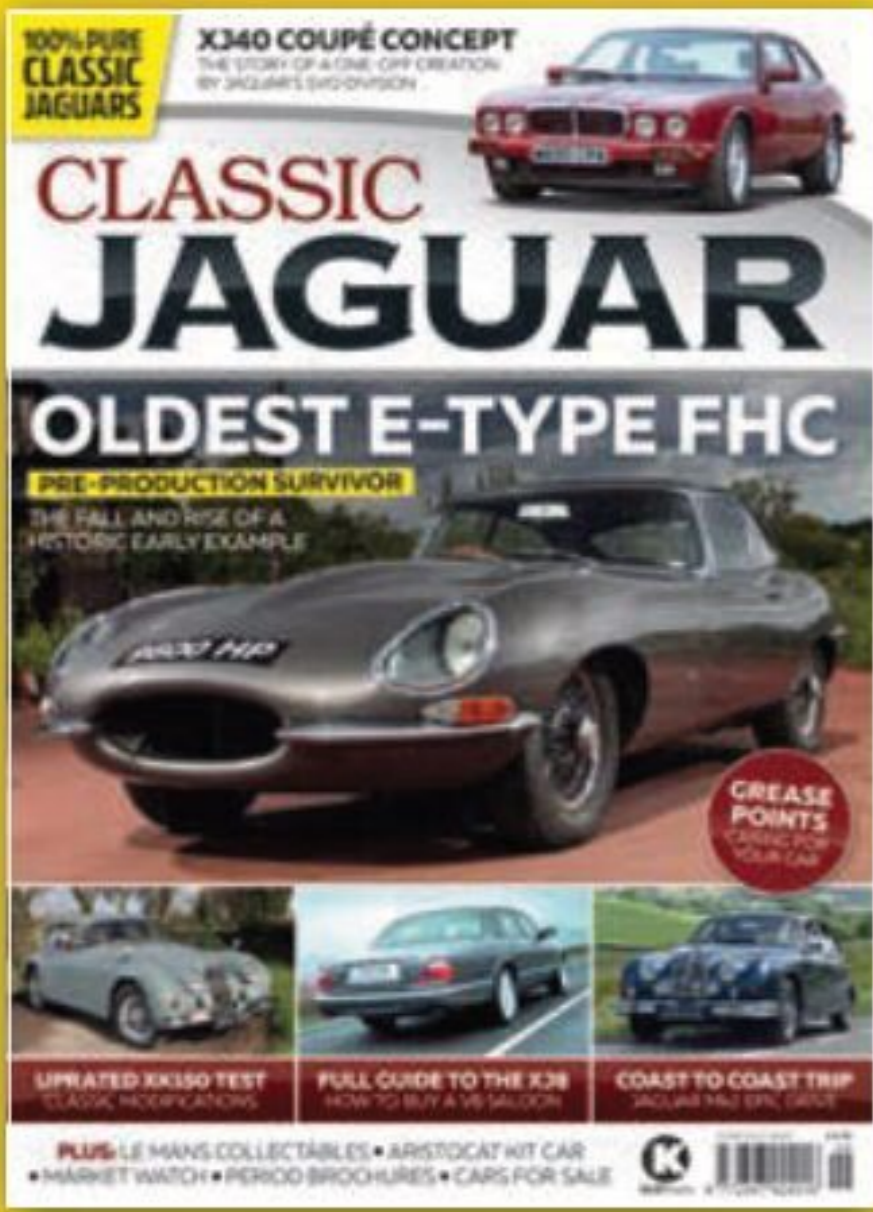
In the short-term, a Mondeo Si was offered, complete with bodykit, 16-inch wheels, striped seats and lairy Citrine Yellow paintwork. It boasted a trick adjustable damper set-up but under the bonnet packed the regular 2-litre.

A four-wheel drive option was also added to the range briefly but was never paired with the 3.5-litre, 177 bhp V6 engine introduced in 1994 and was dropped in 1996.

We had to wait until the facelifted Mondeo for the first performance model, the 200 bhp development of the V6 badged as ST200. Offered only in the trademark blue paint of the Ford Racing brand the firm was pushing at the time, the ST200 was a fine car but lacked the punch of the Cosworths. The RS mantle would eventually be reborn with the Focus and we've yet to see a truly hot Mondeo.







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# HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

We take a road-trip back to the start of Ford in the UK, looking at the early vehicles that kick-started our love affair with the Blue Oval.



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# FORD: SHAPING BRITAIN

The fleet favourites, the load-luggers and the sales office pin-ups, we look at the Fords that helped shape the motoring fabric of Great Britain.



It's pretty much a dead certainty that any archive photograph of a British street scene from the last 70 years will have at least one Ford product in the background, whether it's a district nurse in an Anglia, an Escort panda car or a Transit making deliveries. As the van's advertising slogan proudly claimed, the blue oval badge has been 'the backbone of Britain' for longer than most of us can remember and in issue six of Ford Memories we celebrate Ford's long presence at the top of the sales charts.

From the introduction of American style glamour with the Anglia 105E to the Cortina which almost invented the fleet market, through to its daring aerodynamic replacement the Sierra and on to Mondeo Man, we cover the cars everybody remembers from significant moments in their life. On the way we compare the Sierra to two of its contemporary competitors in the shape of the Cavalier and Montego, while we also take a fascinating commercial break with a Thames 400E and a Transit ambulance. Whatever your preferred shape of Ford, you'll find something in here which stirs at the memories.

