

IRISH
VINTAGE
Scene

From
the **Archives**

Issue 6 - 2020



OPEL KADETT COUPE

A HIGHLY ORIGINAL STUNNER



PAGE 4-9 LIL' BLUE COUP

On paper the Opel Kadett 1.2S coupe is no exotic, with a small ohv engine and a fairly basic equipment specification. However, its curvaceous styling and lively driving style make it a joy to own, as Frank McDaid can attest.

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN ISSUE 73 JUNE 2012

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PAGE 10-14 THE DIESEL HORSE

German tractor-maker Fendt have always had a pioneering spirit, and have been responsible for some very advanced tractors down through the years. We go back to their roots with Martin Keelan's award-winning 1942 Diesellox.

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN ISSUE 22 MARCH 2008

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PAGE 20-24 BROUGH JUSTICE

Having spent almost forty years sitting derelict in a shed, this Brough Superior 680 really deserved to find a new owner that would restore and cherish it. Luckily, that's the way it worked out.

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN ISSUE 57 FEBRUARY 2011

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PAGE 26-30 THE TURNING TIDE

Although Billy Frahill had never owned a vintage or classic vehicle in the past, about four years ago the chance sighting of a classified advert for this ex-Maltese Bedford 15 ignited memories of his childhood spent in and around the lorries his father used to drive. Now, having restored his truck to fine condition, he's a fully-fledged member of the vintage community.

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN ISSUE 84 MAY 2013

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PAGE 32-37 SHORT CIRCUITS

When a childhood passion turns into an adult obsession, great things can come of it. Des Earle's very special Vauxhall Chevette HSR replica is one such example.

**RETRO
CLASSICS
Magazine**

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN ISSUE 20 JANUARY - MARCH 2016

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Welcome to Irish Vintage Scene's dip into the archives. In this free online magazine we go back in time to pick out some of our readers' favourite features from our fourteen-year history, as well as looking at a fondly-remembered event from the past, and a competition too. We will notify you every time each new 'From the Archives' becomes available, and will email you a convenient link to this free read, so you'll never miss an issue. Thanks for reading,

Thomas Heavey

Thomas Heavey, Managing Editor.

ALSO

PAGE 3 COMPETITION

PAGE 14-17 RIAC SHOW 2013

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who wants to win...

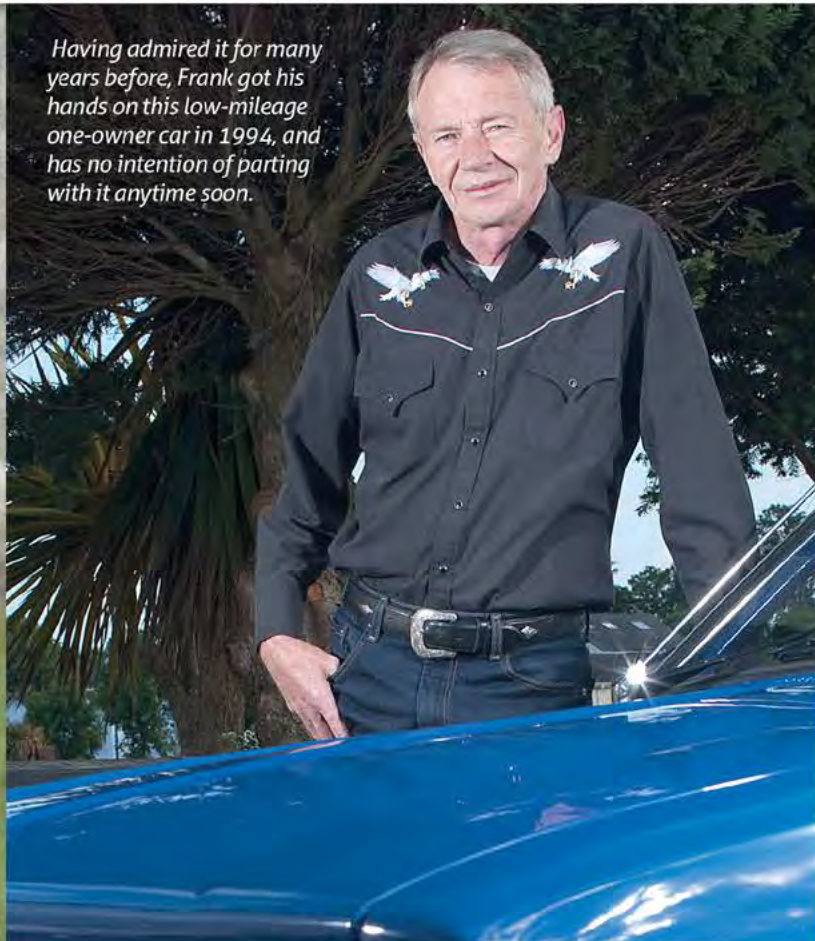


Put your car-spotting skills to the test here, by telling us what kind of car this is! The winner will be picked at random from the correct entries received, and will win **a year's subscription to Irish Vintage Scene**. Simply click [HERE](#) to enter! (Winner announced 29th May)



Identify the car? **(click here)**

Having admired it for many years before, Frank got his hands on this low-mileage one-owner car in 1994, and has no intention of parting with it anytime soon.



The Kadett C Coupe marries practicality with racy coupe looks better than most. It's a pity that there aren't more of these gorgeous cars still around.

ON PAPER THE OPEL KADETT 1.2S COUPE IS NO EXOTIC, WITH A SMALL OHV ENGINE AND A FAIRLY BASIC EQUIPMENT SPECIFICATION. HOWEVER, ITS CURVACEOUS STYLING AND LIVELY DRIVING STYLE MAKE IT A JOY TO OWN, AS FRANK MCDAID CAN ATTEST.

While the Opel Kadett C was designed first and foremost as an unpretentious, practical and economical family car, it quickly gained a reputation as being as fun to drive as it was easy to run. Although Opel had strayed little from the layout used in the preceding Kadett B for this newcomer, the C was extremely well received upon its launch in 1973, its simple but handsome styling and roomy interior being only the tip of its iceberg. Both two and four-door saloon bodyshapes were available, as well as a handy three-door estate, with the three-door hatchback 'City' version following soon after to meet the threat of VW's new Golf head-on. However, pick of the bunch had to be the coupe model, with its fastback rear end and redesigned side windows giving the simple Kadett a glamorous new appeal. Most Coupes were powered by the same 1.2-litre OHV unit fitted to most of the saloons, but in its 'S' guise it produced a little more power and torque, resulting in a lively 60bhp and almost 90Nm of torque. This was ample for an everyday car of the era, and when combined with the rear-wheel-drive Kadett's slick-shifting four-speed gearbox, light weight and well-located coil-spring suspension it made for an entertaining and competent driver's car while also returning good fuel economy. There was nothing particularly exotic in the Kadett's simple specification (such as the four-wheel disc brakes and independent suspension of comparable Fiats of the time, for instance) but what was there was tried, tested and easy to fix should something go wrong, making it a success in markets all over the world from Southern Ireland to South Korea. Indeed, even though in these parts the Kadett C was replaced by the all new front-wheel-drive Kadett D in 1979, the basic C platform continued in production in other parts of the world badged as a Chevrolet until the late nineties, an indication of its versatility and refinement.



Lil' d

From
the **Archives**

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Blue Coupé

Words & Photography by Andrew Pollock andrew@irishvintagescene.ie

As the eighties and nineties passed the Kadett C population gradually dwindled in Ireland, to the point that nowadays they are far from common on the collectable car scene here. It's rather surprising that they haven't drummed up as fervent a following as rivals like the Ford Escort and VW Beetle, but it does have to be said that classic Opels are enjoying something of a resurgence in recent times, with several active clubs now organising various events and displays around the country. The relationship that Frank McDaid has struck up with his Coupe, however, predates such organisations, as he has owned it since 1994 and knew the car well before that. A long-time car fan, Frank had met the lady owner of the Kadett on the dog show circuit in the early nineties, and had long admired the Opel from afar. It turned out that the owner was something of a car enthusiast herself, with an interest in coupes and sports cars, and had bought the Kadett brand new at the end of 1978 (it wasn't registered until the following January, hence the 1979 Carlow registration number). "I had told her way back to let me know if the car was ever put up for sale" Frank smiles; "I forgot about it for a while, but about three years later on a February night I got the call. She wanted it to go to me because she knew I was into cars and that I'd take care of it." Although she was seventy years of age at this point, the previous owner's taste for sporty cars remained undiminished, as after she sold Frank the Kadett she went off and bought herself a brand new Nissan 100NX!



Even the original bumpers have survived in excellent order. Frank has rustproofed and painted their inner surfaces to preserve them for the next thirty years.

Although a standard Kadett saloon from the B-pillars forward, that fastback tail gives this coupe a dramatically more attractive profile.



With only 76,000 genuine miles on the clock the tough but lively 1200 OHV needed nothing more than a good service and a cosmetic makeover, and has plenty of life left in it yet.





"It was a good summer, and so I asked myself 'what am I going to do with this car; sell it or restore it?' I decided to restore it, and that kept me going over the next few summers."

THE RESTORATION 2



Although the body was rust-free there was the odd dent and mark, plus the paintwork had seen better days, so Frank stripped the car before thoroughly rust-proofing it and prepping it for a new coat of paint. The brakes and suspension were also rebuilt, while the interior was given plenty of elbow grease to bring it up like new.



The original interior has fared very well, although the previous owner's love for her dogs meant that Frank had to give it a serious dose of the steam cleaner!



Although this coupe would have been near the top of the Kadett range in 1979 the interior is relatively basic. Nonetheless this car cost a cool £4,175, considerably more than the equivalent saloon version.

Delighted with his luck, Frank wasted no time in getting the Kadett back to his home in Swords, Co. Dublin, and found that even though the mechanicals and paint were in need of attention the car had survived in amazingly rust-free condition. However, due to work and various other commitments he admits to letting it stand for many years, to the point that it was in danger of deteriorating. "In 2006 I had a health scare and was off work, so I had time on my hands" Frank explains. "It was a good summer, and so I asked myself 'what am I going to do with this car; sell it or restore it?' I decided to restore it, and that kept me going over the next few summers." Even though the body was in really excellent condition, and in need of no welding whatsoever, Frank stripped out the interior and removed the doors and wings in order to sand down and rustproof all of the concealed surfaces under the car, as he was determined to preserve it for the future. "I put it up on a couple of big jacks and spent three or four days sweating underneath it with an angle grinder" he laughs; "I got it all nice and clean, and gave it a coat of Permatex rust treatment before painting it." The bumpers and the rest of the exterior trim were also carefully removed and cleaned, while the interior received the mother of all valets thanks to the previous owner's penchant for her pooches... "It took me six months to get the smell of dogs out of it" Frank laughs; "the seats were so thick with dirt the pattern couldn't be seen, so I had to use a big steam cleaner on them."



LEFT: We first came across this car at the 2010 Durrow Vintage Show, when our editor Tom Heavey presented Frank with the Irish Vintage Scene trophy for 'Most Original Car'.



The distinctive Rostyle-type wheels came in for just as much attention as the rest of the car during the rebuild, and are finished to perfection.



After tipping away at the car in his spare time over the summers of 2006 and 2007 Frank finally had the car ready for paint in summer 2008, and he enlisted the considerable skills of Paddy Tuite for this all-important finishing touch. "Paddy is the biz for paint" Frank beams. "When I got the wheels sandblasted and primed he put the silver coat on and asked me to fit the tyres, but not to blow them up. When I took them back to him he finished the rims again and lacquered them, so there was no scratching from fitting the tyres." As the car had survived so well over the preceding thirty-odd years, even retaining its original radio, Frank was adamant that everything would remain correct and so had Paddy reapply the deep factory blue. Indeed, he has resisted the temptation to make even the smallest deviation from standard throughout the car, and this ethos also extended to the mechanicals; with only a genuine 73,000 miles on the clock the engine needed nothing more than a good service, while the brakes and suspension have all been rebuilt to original specification using parts Frank has picked up from various sources, both at home and abroad. "There's the odd part that's hard to get" he explains; "for instance the fuel tank sender unit was giving me fierce problems, but I was lucky that one came up on eBay about two months ago. It was in Austria, and it went for a good price too."

After being off the road since 1994 the revamped blue coupe finally made its debut at Frank's biggest local show, the NEVCC Mosney Car Show in 2009, where it received plenty of admiring looks. Indeed, it has received plenty of attention at every show it's attended, its originality and high standard of finish marking it out. "The attention that car gets!" laughs Frank; "you get people taking pictures out of the windows of cars, and there was even a bus driver alongside us one day and here he was with the camera out!" It was at the Durrow Vintage Show in 2010, when it took one of the major awards, that it caught our eye, and even though it's taken us 'til now to get the feature in the bag the car has lost none of its impact. The 1.2S Coupe is a rare combination of stunning style and eminent practicality, and its rarity relative to the rest of its Kadett C brethren will ensure that it remains a highly collectable and much admired classic into the future.

OPEL KADETT 1.2S COUPE – QUICK SPEC

Years Produced: 1973 to 1979

Body: Two-door fastback coupe

Engine: 1196cc OHV 4-cylinder

Output: 60bhp

Transmission: RWD, four-speed

Front Suspension: Independent coil-sprung wishbone

Rear Suspension: Coil-sprung live axle

Top Speed: 95mph

0-60mph: 18 seconds

From
the **Archives**

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THE DIESEL

German tractor-maker Fendt have always had a pioneering spirit, and have been responsible for some very advanced tractors down through the years. We go back to their roots with Martin Keelan's award-winning 1942 Dieselross.



Martin with young Mathew aboard the Dieselross at the Cooley '07 event.



HORSE

Words & Photos by **Andrew Pollock**
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Based in BMW country near Munich in southern Germany, Fendt's Marktoberdorf assembly plant currently has a workforce of 1,800 and is supplied with components by the nearby Baumenheim works, which employs another 700. Fendt have something of a reputation for innovation in the tractor industry, having introduced the infinitely variable Vario transmission in 1996, the panoramic-view Xylon tractor series in 1995 (which had no bonnet as the engine was mounted

under the cab floor), GPS-guided steering in 2004 and just recently a huge six-wheeled concept tractor, the TRISIX. A part of the AGCO empire since 1997, Fendt's attention to detail and forward-thinking engineering has always come at a premium, as their tractors are relatively expensive compared to more mainstream models; nevertheless they are very highly thought-of by tractor enthusiasts, and their machines are considered some of the very best in the world.

For such a hi-tech operation it's amazing to think that the whole thing started in the family forge eighty years ago, when the Fendt brothers Hermann, Xaver and Paul, with guidance from their father Johann, built their first tractor using a stationary engine and the chassis components from a mower! The resultant machine soon became christened the 'Dieselross' (the German for 'Diesel Horse') and, thanks to its small size, reliability and simplicity, demand indeed grew for these



Bought in Dundalk in 1999, it was sourced from Belgium where it had spent most of its life, and a small French plaque on the bonnet indicates that the tractor also has French origins.



Twin-cylinder diesel is dominated by the cooling fan and ducting.



Ingenious split front axle is leaf-suspended.



Attractive sidelights are also German.



Belt pulley is easily removable to gain access to PTO.

machines as an alternative to the horse. Xaver Fendt and Co. was established in December 1937, and by the following year the 1,000th Fendt tractor had been built.

By then the move from horse-power to tractor-power had gained huge momentum in the small farm sector, and Fendt put in plenty of development work to ensure that their machines were at the top of their game. Even at the outbreak of World War II they produced a small tractor equipped with a two-cylinder engine and four-speed gearbox, and the company later released an unorthodox 'tool-carrier' tractor with a large frame incorporated into the chassis, allowing space for four different mounting points for implements. As mentioned earlier, Fendt went on to develop even more radical systems in later years; unusual as some of them may be, they always put a strong emphasis on practicality and reliability.

Martin Keelan from Collon, Co. Louth is a big fan of the Fendt marque, and indeed German machinery in general, and has quite a collection built up at this stage. "I'm a great admirer of the German tractors", he confirms; "they have a nice character to them and always have unusual features." He has owned his stunning 1942 Dieselloross for nine years now. Bought in Dundalk in 1999, it was sourced from Belgium where it had spent most of its life, and a small French plaque on the bonnet indicates that the

tractor also has French origins. The plaque suggests that it was sold by Almacoa, based on Rue de Rocroy in Paris, who were the official and exclusive distributors of Fendt tractors in France. The Almacoa concern also used to import other equipment including Oliver's, and assembled Cletrac machines under licence for a time.

The parts situation for a classic Fendt obviously isn't as well-developed as, say, a Ford or MF, but luckily Martin didn't need many new parts when he took delivery of this machine. "It's hard enough to get parts" he explains, "you'll get them alright but it just takes a lot of time. I was lucky in that sense; I rewired it, sprayed it and put a new set of tyres on it and that was it". In true German style the tractor's model number, F17L, is easily deciphered; F for 'Fendt', 17 for '17 horsepower' and L for 'luft' which is German for 'air' (this air-cooled model was also available with a water-cooled engine, hence the designation). Complete with an electric starter, the engine is surprisingly smooth for a twin and can run at very low revs indeed thanks to its large, heavy flywheel.

Under the engine is a rather clever front axle arrangement; two long, tapered suspension arms run from a central mount out to each front wheel, and housed inside these arms is a single leaf spring. The result is a simple but effective independent suspension system,

which works a treat according to Martin. Moving towards the rear of the machine finds the six-forward/two-reverse gearbox, which is all ingeniously operated from one gearstick, and the neat belt pulley at the rear can be quickly removed by unscrewing the large 'tap', exposing the PTO shaft. While the tractor isn't equipped with hydraulics or any kind of lift, the large drawbar arrangement gives plenty of flexibility for implements. The attractive little sidelamp/indicators on the rear wings are rather fascinating; while not original, they are nonetheless German Hella units and appear to be period correct. Martin sourced these at the Dorset Steam Fair a few years ago, and they certainly fit the wings perfectly and suit the tractor to a tee.

Anyone who has seen this machine at the vintage shows will realise how well-detailed and mechanically fit it is, and Martin was rewarded for his efforts at the excellent Durrow show in April 2007 when he won the trophy for 'Best Post-1930 tractor'. Buoyed by this achievement, he may soon get around to restoring the 1954 single-cylinder Fendt he has waiting in the garage, but his hands are full for the time being with a rather special steam-powered project that he hopes to have up and running within the year. We at Irish Vintage Scene wish him the best of luck with his project, and will be keeping tabs on his progress so watch this space...



Just part of Martin's collection with three Fendts, a Ransomes track machine and an amazingly-low mileage Austin Allegro. The Massey 135 is in Martin's family from new.

THE RIAC NATIONAL CLASSIC CAR SHOW 2013

ON THE 9TH OF FEBRUARY THIS YEAR THE DOORS OPENED ON IRELAND'S VERY OWN FLAGSHIP INDOOR VINTAGE AND CLASSIC CAR SHOW AT THE RDS SIMMONSCOURT, DUBLIN, AND ALL MARKERS INDICATE THAT THIS INAUGURAL EVENT PROVED TO BE A GREAT SUCCESS.

WORDS & PHOTOS BY ANDREW POLLOCK
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The organising RIAC's stand was graced by Jonathan Bewley's 1900 Gladiator (left), a regular entrant on the RIAC Pioneer Run every year, as well as one of the undoubted stars of the show, the Hispano-Suiza Alfonso XIII. This extremely rare sports car was first registered in Dublin in 1913, and was unofficially timed at 90mph in North Co. Dublin in 1919.

While the passion that exists in Ireland for vintage and classic cars has never been in doubt, and countless excellent old car events take place the length and breadth of the country every year, there has certainly been a space in the calendar for a flagship national indoor classic car show for some time now. After many, many months of research and planning, this finally came to pass on the 9th and 10th of February this year, when the doors opened on the RIAC National Classic Car Show. Organised by the Royal Irish Automobile Club, with support from AXA Insurance, Irish Vintage Scene Magazine, The Irish Veteran & Vintage Car Club, MSL Volkswagen and Ford Ireland, the show generated a lot of interest from as early as the middle of last year, when news of the event first started to circulate.

Despite all of the organisation that had gone into the event in the preceding months, the days leading up to show weekend were busy for us here at Irish Vintage Scene. With the show programme to publish, the stand designs to finalise and show cars to coordinate for not only our own stand, but that of our sister title, Retro Classics Magazine, there wasn't a spare minute, but as the finishing touches went onto our stands on the Friday evening myself and the rest of the team were satisfied with our presentation. The appearance of event manager Bob Montgomery on The Late Late Show that night, along with three of the display cars and well-known enthusiast Jim Boland, only heightened our expectation for what the following day might bring.



One of the fastest cars of its time, the Alfa Romeo 8C 2300 is powered by a supercharged twin-cam straight-eight to provide a top speed in excess of 120mph. Today, this is one of the most sought-after and valuable vintage sports cars of all.

RIAC SHOW 2013 PRIZE WINNERS:

Car of the Show: 1936 Mercedes 500K, The Mercedes-Benz Collection

Club Car of the Show: 1904 Speedwell, Tommy Sheridan

Club Stand of the Show: Connacht Pre-War Enthusiasts



The IVVCC stand was positioned just inside the main entrance, and had some stunning machinery to savour: The 1928 Mercedes-Benz S-Type, 1929 Lancia Dilambda rolling chassis and 1928 Bentley 6.5-litre shown here were just a few of the standouts being exhibited.



A large contingent of members of the West Cork Vintage Club travelled up by bus in support of their stand at the event, which had two very different cars on display: Mark Page's 1931 Alvis 12/60 Beetleback, and the Ford Cortina Mk2 previously owned by former-Taoiseach Jack Lynch.



The Irish Vintage Scene stand was graced with two very special, Irish-conceived automobiles. The first, the Shamrock, was the product of an ill-fated 1960 attempt at full-scale production of a US-market car in Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan...



...While the Silver Stream was the brainchild of a Kildare engineer, the prototype for a prospective run of luxury cars in the years approaching 1910. This unique car has survived in remarkably original condition, and before this show had not been seen in public for some time.



The Citroën Car Club's display cars reflected the diversity evident in the cars built by that manufacturer over the years. Here, a utilitarian 2CV rubs shoulders with a low-slung Maserati-engined SM coupe.



Not all of the dream machines at the show had four wheels. Noel Barber's 1936 Brough Superior SS80 drew much admiration on the Munster VMC&CC stand.



The special feature stand of the Mercedes-Benz Collection had some of the standout cars of the event, including this magnificent 1936 500K, which took the award for 'Car of the Show'.

As the show was something of an unknown quantity (the last time the RIAC organised a motor show at the RDS was in 1908!) there was much debate as to its prospects right up until d-day, but all doubts were soon dispelled when the doors were unlocked at 10am on Saturday the 9th. It was as if a floodgate had been opened, and within minutes the venue was buzzing. Indeed, by midday the place was so busy that I abandoned any ideas of getting any photos of the many display cars, deciding instead to capture them the following morning just before the doors opened. General feedback we received from showgoers was also very positive in the main, with near universal praise for the sheer quality of the vehicles on show. Indeed, there were some extremely rare and highly valuable machines to be perused, matching the best of any other European or American event you could think of; this reflects well on the Irish old car scene in general, and this seemed to be appreciated by everyone we spoke to.

While Sunday's attendance was slightly down on the Saturday, there was still a great atmosphere to be enjoyed (aided, no doubt, by the showing of the Ireland versus England rugby game on a big screen in the catering area). As on the preceding day, Leo Nulty was busy interviewing motoring personalities on the central special feature arena, while Bobby Kerr of Newstalk broadcast his business show live that morning from the show, interviewing a number of the organisers, supporters and car owners as he did so. By the time the event began to wind down late that afternoon everyone on the Irish Vintage Scene was certainly tired, but delighted that this inaugural show had gone so very well. In particular, the two rare Irish-built display cars on the Irish Vintage Scene stand, the 1960 Shamrock and the 1909 Silver Stream, had gone down a real treat with showgoers, marking it out as certainly our most memorable display to date, and one that will indeed be difficult to improve upon.

Even though the event was a resounding success for a first effort, I'm sure that the organisers will have plenty of feedback, constructive criticism and advice to be reflected upon for the next show, which will be able to build considerably on this year's. Thanks to its positive exposure within the mainstream media, and its showcasing of our hobby in an ultra-professional manner, this event is good for all old vehicle enthusiasts in this country, and I for one would love to see it continue to succeed well into the future.



The Celtic Old Vehicle Owners Club is no stranger to putting on a great display; their stand featured a number of interesting vehicles, including the club's Morris J-Type van, Thomas Harrington's super-rare, RHD Irish Peugeot 301, and the freshly-restored Heinkel Tourist scooter of Paddy Byrne, among others.



Representing Lucas Oil at the event, garage equipment enthusiast John Twohig (left) was fascinated by the fully-restored 1950s Champion spark-plug test bench of Harry Cole (right), which was on display on the Blessington Vintage Car & Motorcycle Club stand.



Event supporters AXA Insurance put on a highly diverse display, with exhibits ranging from a modern Porsche 911 GT3 supercar to the beautiful and freshly-restored 1945 Allis-Chalmers WC tractor of Clive Evans from Delgany, which was bought new by his father. AXA's trademark VW combi was, of course, as popular an exhibit as ever.



The most talked-about exhibit had to be the prize-winning display by the Connacht Pre-War Enthusiasts, mainly as a result of this 1937 Hudson Terraplane "barn-find" and its skeletal driver.



Not only was this 1896 Benz Velo the oldest car at the show, it is the oldest car in Ireland. It lay derelict on a farm in Co. Tipperary from 1907 to 1984, before being rescued by Denis Dowdall. Its restoration was completed in 1986, and it appeared on both The Late Late Show and the Mercedes-Benz stand at the RDS Motorshow that year.



The folks on the Irish Festival of Speed stand were busy publicising this year's event, which takes place at Greenmount Raceway in Tipperary on the 3rd and 4th of August. Their racing Mini Cooper display car was a fine example.



You can always rely on a classic Alfa to cut a dash, so the three beauties on the Alfa Romeo Owners Club stand attracted much attention.



Gracing the Tullow Vintage Club display was David Brennan's beautiful 1950 Ford V8 Pilot, as featured in this magazine last year.



This 1909 Star roadster was formerly discovered in the undergrowth of a large garden in Hampshire, after which it was the subject of a three-year restoration. It looked great on the Clonmel VV&CCC stand.



Noel Kavanagh's 1926 Ford Model TT truck and its owner-built miniature sidekick have been featured in this magazine in the past. Together, they make a very special exhibit indeed.



AXA Insurance had their 1923 Matchless Model J sidecar combination on show. This fabulous vehicle was restored many years ago by Maurice Bryan, who we were sad to hear unfortunately passed away just before this event.



There were a number of legendary Irish vintage racing cars on show, just two being Edmund Cassidy's MG-based Iona Special (right) and Kieran White's Riley twin-cam-engined TRS (left).

IRISH VINTAGE SCENE WOULD LIKE TO SINCERELY THANK THE OWNERS OF OUR TWO DISPLAY CARS FOR MAKING THEM AVAILABLE FOR OUR STAND AT THE SHOW, AS WELL AS MAURICE RODDY FOR HIS GENEROUS ASSISTANCE WITH TRANSPORTING THE SHAMROCK.



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LEFT: Having restored and owned all kinds of vintage and classic motorcycles over the years, Paddy has found his ideal machine in this Overhead 680.

From the Archives

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN ISSUE 57 FEBRUARY 2011

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As anyone with an interest in vintage motorcycles will know, the Brough Superior wasn't only superior in name. The company was the brainchild of George Brough, who in 1921 decided to leave his father's already quite successful motorcycle manufacturing firm to create his own style of machine. The nickname of "the Rolls-Royce among motorcycles" was soon part and parcel of the image of Brough Superior, as George's philosophy was to build the finest machine he could, regardless of cost, using both components of his own design and the best of those that he could source from outside companies. As a result Brough Superiors were very expensive to buy, and were produced in small quantities throughout the lifespan of the firm, but this rarity only added to the mystique of the brand. It wasn't all about exclusivity, however, as Brough Superior machines enjoyed thorough competition breeding thanks to George's passion for motorsport. George's aim was to build motorcycles that had scorching performance, but also possessed real refinement and balanced handling, and he tirelessly tested his prototypes

(sometimes to destruction) in order to achieve this aim. Indeed, the first motorcycle he built for himself at the end of World War One consisted of little more than a mighty 1,000cc JAP engine in a low-slung, lightweight frame, a contrivance that screamed speed from every angle.

Over the years Brough Superior produced some legendary motorcycles, with the SS100 model now the most sought-after by collectors. This machine was named after its top speed, with each example tested and guaranteed by the factory, which is mightily impressive performance given that we're talking about road bikes of the 1920s and 1930s here! The SS100 model has recently entered auction history, as the 2008 sale-price records were over £160,000 was smashed in October 2010 at a H&H auction in the UK, where an example sold for a staggering £286,000. This, combined with the fact that less than 400 were built during their run from 1924 to 1940, means that you won't exactly be falling over SS100s at vintage bike gatherings, but there were many other machines built by George Brough that are highly worthy of admiration.



BROUGH JUSTICE

HAVING SPENT ALMOST FORTY YEARS SITTING DERELICT IN A SHED, THIS BROUGH SUPERIOR 680 REALLY DESERVED TO FIND A NEW OWNER THAT WOULD RESTORE AND CHERISH IT. LUCKILY, THAT'S THE WAY IT WORKED OUT.

Words & Photography by Andrew Pollock andrew@irishvintagescene.ie

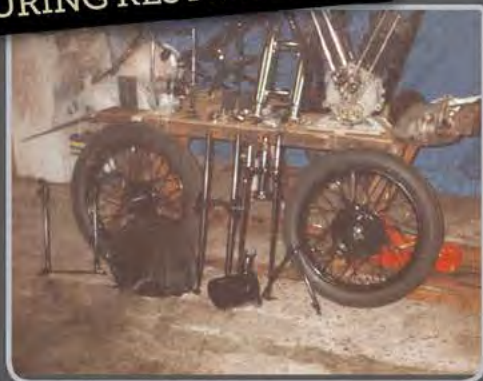
FEBRUARY 2011



With its low-slung frame and rocket-ship exhausts, the Overhead 680 is the consummate vintage sportsbike.



DURING RESTORATION



Looking like a large model kit, this photo shows the midpoint of the restoration, with many parts ready for reassembly.



The brand new cylinder barrel, as machined by the owner from a cast iron billet. Note the four drillings running all the way through, to mount the barrel using the head bolts.



One of the 680's most memorable outings was when it carried Paddy and his wife Rena around northern Scotland, where George Brough used the quiet, twisting roads to test his creations.

One of these was the Overhead 680, built between 1926 and 1936. Powered by a V-twin JAP engine featuring new-fangled overhead-valve heads, George Brough is quoted as describing the machine as 'a SS100 in miniature' at its launch, and the 680 definitely boasted all of the "proper" Brough Superior styling cues such as low-slung styling and those interconnected double-barrel exhausts. Its beauty was more than skin deep though, as the bike was built to George's exacting standards of quality, featuring Castle front forks, Royal Enfield wheels and a Sturmey-Archer gearbox, to name but a few. The list of accessories was also long, with toys like Lucas lighting, Jaeger gauges and Lycett-Aero saddles part of the package. The durability and performance of Brough Superior machines is the stuff of legend, and by virtue of its OHV engine the 680 was one of the very finest, if not THE finest, sub-750cc motorcycle of its time, capable of carrying its rider in competition while also promising to return him or her back home safely and in comfort at the end of the day.

As a long-time vintage motorcycle restorer and enthusiast, Paddy Guerin from Cork was well-aware of the Brough Superior marque, but because of their rarity and infrequent appearances on the open market, he wasn't exactly on the lookout for one. However, a small advert for a Sotheby's auction in Old Bike Mart in 1998 caught Paddy's eye, as it mentioned that a 1931 Overhead 680 was

to go under the hammer that December. The previously unrecorded machine had just emerged from under a tarpaulin, where it had lain partially stripped since 1960 following the death of its owner. The advert raised Paddy's eyebrow, and he decided to take a trip to the auction to take a stab at picking up the old Brough. To his great surprise there wasn't a huge amount of interest in it on the day, and he unexpectedly came away as the new owner for what he felt was a very fair price. So just what had he bought? "It was standing up on its wheels, but it was very loosely assembled" Paddy explains; "I didn't like the look of the back barrel, which had been repaired around its base, and there were a few obvious bits missing." Luckily enough, Paddy made contact with a specialist at the same event who was able to supply the main parts that were missing, namely the Lucas headlamp and the chain-case, so the project was off to a good start; "I started into it the day I got it home!" he laughs. To his delight, having obtained a copy of the works records for the bike Paddy established that it was still a 'matching numbers' machine, even down to the fuel tank, which has a numbered lead disc soldered to its underside.

However, there was plenty of work ahead before he could enjoy the fruits of his purchase on the open road. First port of call was to disassemble the machine, both for easy access to the mechanicals and to repair and paint the frame. Once the engine was

out, Paddy made a quick assessment of the V-twin, and he didn't like what he saw. "The rear barrel obviously wasn't its own one" he remembers. "The finning is normally bigger and wider on the back barrel of a V-twin to catch more of the cooling air, but on this one the finning was narrower, so it looked all wrong." One of the few problems suffered by these JAP V-twins was cracked barrels around the base flange (usually caused by the force of a piston seizing), and as this one had been repaired in that area too, Paddy was adamant that the barrel wasn't staying on the engine, and that was it. This presented a problem, as in 1999 you couldn't just buy a new item off the shelf. Unperturbed, Paddy looked to his own considerable engineering skills, and simply machined a brand new replacement out of a billet of cast iron; nice when you know how! After six hours of lathe-work, the new barrel was ready for stress-relieving, which involves heating it to 550 degrees Celsius in a ceramic oven before leaving it to cool overnight. After final machining to the mating faces and cylinder bore, the job was complete. To prevent the base from cracking in the future, Paddy took the precaution of boring the barrel so that it could be mounted using extra long head bolts, effectively sandwiching the barrel tightly between the cylinder head and the crankcase, so no longer relying on the brittle base flange to hold it in place. A new liner was also made for the front barrel from the same material, so both pistons are back to standard size.



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BROUGH SUPERIOR



The rest of the engine refit was straightforward in comparison, as service parts like bearings and seals are fairly readily available. The bottom end was rebuilt, and ancillaries like the carburettor and oil pump were reconditioned. Paddy describes the magneto as “the heart of a vintage bike”, and taking no chances the magneto was fully rebuilt by Vincent Sheridan from Limerick. While Paddy handled the painting duties on the frame, mudguards and smaller parts, he outsourced the half-chrome fuel tank to Ger Conlon, and it made a fine finishing touch to the restoration.

Anyone familiar with Paddy will know that he doesn't mollycoddle his vintage machines; they are restored to be used, not to be sat in a glass case (on the day of our shoot he was busy repairing his Indian Scout, which had scored a barrel while on a road trip in Norway). However his Brough Superior has come in for the most use of all, and over 15,000 miles have been put under its wheels since its restoration was completed in mid-1999. You can see from our photos that this Overhead 680 looks just as one would have looked back in the thirties, with oil on the exposed rockers, grease on the suspension joints, wear on the handlebar grips and tank sides, and plenty of road rash in evidence around the mudguards. “It's bound to get knocked around; it's used, and there's no more about it” Paddy states. “It's beautiful on the road, and there's a very potent engine in it; the overhead-valve is a totally different bike to the sidevalves.” The legendary Brough Superior reliability and build quality has very much been in evidence, as the 680 has given no hassle since its rebuild, and has carried Paddy and his wife Rena as far as the top of Scotland without drama. That trip took in some of the routes that George Brough himself used to test his motorcycles back in the day, the twisting, undulating but smooth and quiet roads making the perfect handling circuit. Undoubtedly this Brough Superior is Paddy's favourite machine, his first choice on any road run, and as he says himself, all of his other bikes could go, but the 680 isn't going anywhere. George Brough built his bikes to excel in every area, and this quality still inspires fierce loyalty in these machines, eighty years on.



Both barrels of the V-twin are fed by an Amal 1.125-inch carburettor. This bike's reliability is such that Paddy tells us he never needs to use the choke when starting.



Handlebars feature both conventional and inverted handles. Both sides feature twist grips, one for the throttle and one for the advance/retard mechanism.

Thanks... Paddy would like to give a special mention to Dave Fouhey of Murphy's Engine Overhuls, Cork (021 4313434, www.murphyengines.ie) for his assistance during this restoration.

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The Turning Tide

Words & Photography by Andrew Pollock
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Although Billy Frahill had never owned a vintage or classic vehicle in the past, about four years ago the chance sighting of a classified advert for this ex-Maltese Bedford J5 ignited memories of his childhood spent in and around the lorries his father used to drive. Now, having restored his truck to fine condition, he's a fully-fledged member of the vintage community.



From
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Billy (right) received plenty of help during the project from (L-R) his brother-in-law Pat and his son, Paudie, as well as his own son, Aaron.



This Bedford JS has undergone a complete transformation from its garishly-liveried existence in Malta, and is now a very fine example of the breed.



This old vehicle hobby of ours has a habit of sneaking up on you. It can take as little as going for a spin in a friend's old car, a change in your circumstances that sees you able to take on a new pastime, or even just the finding of an old photograph from your childhood, to start you down the slippery slope. You know how it happens; you're "just browsing" the classifieds, then you spot something you like. The next thing you're heading off every Sunday morning to the local shows or road runs, eager to catch up with your fellow enthusiasts. The classic and vintage vehicle movement is a hugely sociable and active hobby to be part of, no matter what part of the country you hail from, and you're sure to make more than a few lasting friends in the process. It's something that the whole family can get involved in, too, so you could be into a lot worse, as the man said.

Billy Frahill from picturesque Cobh in Co. Cork is a case in point. Five years ago he didn't own any manner of classic vehicle, yet today many of his Sunday mornings see him jumping into his freshly-restored Bedford truck to take off to a local event, where he enjoys nothing more than chatting about old lorries and meeting the many buddies he's made along the way. The seeds of his new pursuit were set a long time ago, in his childhood in fact, when he showed an early interest in his father's truck-driving and car repair activities. "I was reared in trucks as a young fellow" Billy confirms. "My father's buddy had a truck, and my father used to drive trucks, repair tractors and repair cars, and he also had his own small Transit truck." From those early days Billy developed an interest in engines and mechanicals, and for many years since has worked as a marine engineer, where big diesels are the stock in trade.



The cab interior is largely original, and is basic but comfortable. Billy is planning a revamp in here next winter to really finish off the project.





The big six-cylinder Perkins 6354 is a familiar beast to Billy, as it was used in many industrial and marine applications. This one replaced the original six-cylinder petrol at some stage in the truck's past, but runs nicely after some remedial work was performed.



THE RESTORATION



The Bedford looks a lot different now than how it did when it arrived on Irish shores following its importation from Malta. As is usual, the cab restoration was the most difficult part of the project, with a lot of elbow grease and fabrication being needed before the panels were ready for paint.

As mentioned, although he hadn't dived into classic vehicle ownership at any stage, Billy enjoyed reading various magazines on the subject and reminiscing about his younger days. Then, four years ago, the next step was taken after spotting this Bedford for sale in Co. Kerry. "I was looking through some classifieds and this one flashed up in front of me, and I said 'right; I'm buying that for my fiftieth birthday'" he explains. "I was working morning, noon and night at the time, and I just thought 'why not?'" The 1961 Bedford J5 was a short-wheelbase tipper that had been imported from Malta not long before; anyone who's been to the island will know just how many old vehicles are still on the road working for their keep (the recently decommissioned fleet of old buses was the stuff of legend for decades), and this old timer is believed to have been carrying and tipping builders' rubble up until 2002. It was hand-painted in the usual colourful livery of traditional Maltese vehicles, and the load bed and roof were pretty battered after its builders' duties, but it was reasonably sound. It certainly wasn't without its problems, but after taking a good look at it Billy was confident that, between his own engineering skills and the contacts he'd built up over the years, he would be able to put the truck to rights and have some fun with it.

This is the part of the story where we usually state that the vehicle was brought home to be stripped down to its component parts for a full rebuild, but in fact Billy has a different approach, and one that makes a lot of sense. "The enjoyment is being out on the road and meeting the lads, so we spread the work out over a few years" he explains. "I kept it on the road, but did the body one year, the cab the next and so on." On the advice of friend Ned Kiely from Milford, who knows his stuff when it comes to the old lorries, to say the least, one of the first steps taken was to extend the back of the tipper bed by a foot to improve the truck's proportions; the original setup was very short indeed, which gave the old Bedford a rather curtailed appearance. "We camouflaged that so you wouldn't see it was lengthened" Billy confides, adding that it was certainly a good move as it's improved the truck's lines no end. The scratched windscreen was replaced, and the air-assisted brakes were also inspected and fitted with new parts obtained from Girling in England, before Billy was able to head onto the road in his very distinctive lorry, which boasted new paint on the load bed but still the old Maltese paintwork on the cab.

After enjoying the vintage truck scene for a summer, it was back into the workshop over the off season for its next stage, this time the cab being the main focus of attention. Billy's brother-in-law Pat and his son, Paudie, had helped out with the load bed the previous year, and so got stuck in again when it came to the cab work, both for valuable assistance and, as Billy states, for the enjoyment and social aspect too. The many, many layers of thick paint on the cab were removed the old-fashioned way ("handraulic", Billy laughs), requiring five gallons of Nitromors stripper in all, before the bodywork repairs could begin. The front wings, door bottoms and the bottom of the rear panel all needed a fair bit of work, so Billy brought his engineering skills into play by fabricating and tacking in new sections in stainless steel, which were then finished off by a professional welder. The lustrous new red-and-black paintwork was applied by ace bodyman Paddy Dunne, with the finishing touch being some beautiful signwriting by Les Delacour, which brings the reason for the project in the first place, Billy's father, William, back into the frame. The original exterior trim, what there is of it, was good enough to be reused, and before long the truck was looking resplendent in its new livery.

The mechanicals also received a further freshen-up. The hydraulic tipping mechanism, run off a pump driven by the gearbox, was inoperative and so this was removed and rebuilt by Billy, who also changed the engine's front crankshaft seal and reconditioned the injectors and injector pump. Incidentally, the Perkins 6354 six-cylinder diesel under the bonnet now isn't the original motor, as this truck would have left the Bedford works in 1961 with a six-cylinder petrol engine. The diesel was obviously fitted at some point in the truck's past in Malta, a fact that Billy is happy about as he knows these units well because of their widespread use in marine applications. Of course, the truck's much-improved fuel economy is another big plus, particularly as Billy gets so much use out of it!

Since the last batch of work was completed two years ago Billy has put plenty of miles under the Bedford's wheels, and greatly enjoys the social aspect of taking part in vintage events. "I was on a run last weekend, and the amount of lads that came down to me smiling, saying 'that brings back memories for me', that's what it's all about" he beams. Even though he has ideas about picking up another classic truck in the future, and is currently helping a friend restore a Fordson 4D, Billy's more than happy to enjoy his J5 for now, with a makeover for the interior the task being set for next winter. After spending fifty years without a classic vehicle, it looks like Billy is set to immerse himself in the hobby for the next fifty!



Another of Billy's brothers-in-law, Norman Allen, got involved by creating this lovely art piece for Billy's truck. If you like the look of it, and would like something similar for yourself, drop Norman an email at Nallen665@gmail.com.



That attractive livery isn't a vinyl sticker; it's proper painted signwriting, and really looks the part, evoking the memory of Billy's father's truck-driving days that were the genesis for this project.



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Words by Cathal O'Toole, Photos by Andrew Pollock



Archives

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Although this is Des' first classic car project ever, he's been harbouring a serious lust for these McRae-era Vauxhalls since the early eighties.



WHEN A CHILDHOOD
PASSION TURNS INTO AN
ADULT OBSESSION, GREAT
THINGS CAN COME OF IT.
DES EARLE'S VERY SPECIAL
VAUXHALL CHEVETTE HSR
REPLICA IS ONE SUCH
EXAMPLE.

To really get across what a feature car is all about, we, as writers, have to put ourselves in the head of the owner. It helps us understand where they've come from, what their car represents and, of course, why. This feature is slightly different in so far as, this time, I will need you, the readers, to try and get into Des Earle's mind to see why a retired butcher from Ferns in Wexford, who has never had a classic car before, embarked on making a dream a reality. To get you started, clear your mind of all things high-tech, park your instant life, forget about your Sky box and ready-to-go meals and instead go back to a time when things weren't as cluttered as they are today. I want you to imagine that the most explosive news from the time will be that a group called Buck Fizz will make front page news when they rip their skirts off as part of their performance, health and safety are just two words and not a ruling on how we live, and most importantly motorsport is loud, lairy and in your face. So, fire up your Soda Stream, pop that cassette tape you made from Larry Gogan's chart show into your ghetto blaster, and let's get this feature started!

Back in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when cars like this Chevette were ripping up the country roads during rallying events, Des was a massive fan. In fact, he speaks with such passion and enthusiasm that you are left in no doubt! "The basic reason I did that car was Jimmy McRae in 1980 at the Circuit of Ireland Rally" he smiles. "I loved rallying at the time - It was so far removed from anything I knew. The locals back then only tootled along in everyday cars like Chrysler Avengers, Ford Escorts and old Beetles, and then you go to a Circuit of Ireland Rally and you see these guys coming over the hill in the air and the sparks flying when they landed. The noise was unreal, and you were sucked in." Following an eBay purchase in the UK, this 1980 Chevette was brought to Ireland for what can only be described as the mother of all transformations. When you look up the meaning of "unrecognisable" in the dictionary, you'll probably see a photo of

Des' Chevette beside it. The body was surprisingly solid and rust-free, with the only area needing attention being the sills, but friend and ace-engineer David Gormley soon sorted that out, as well as welding in a transmission tunnel from an automatic model with an eye to future modifications...

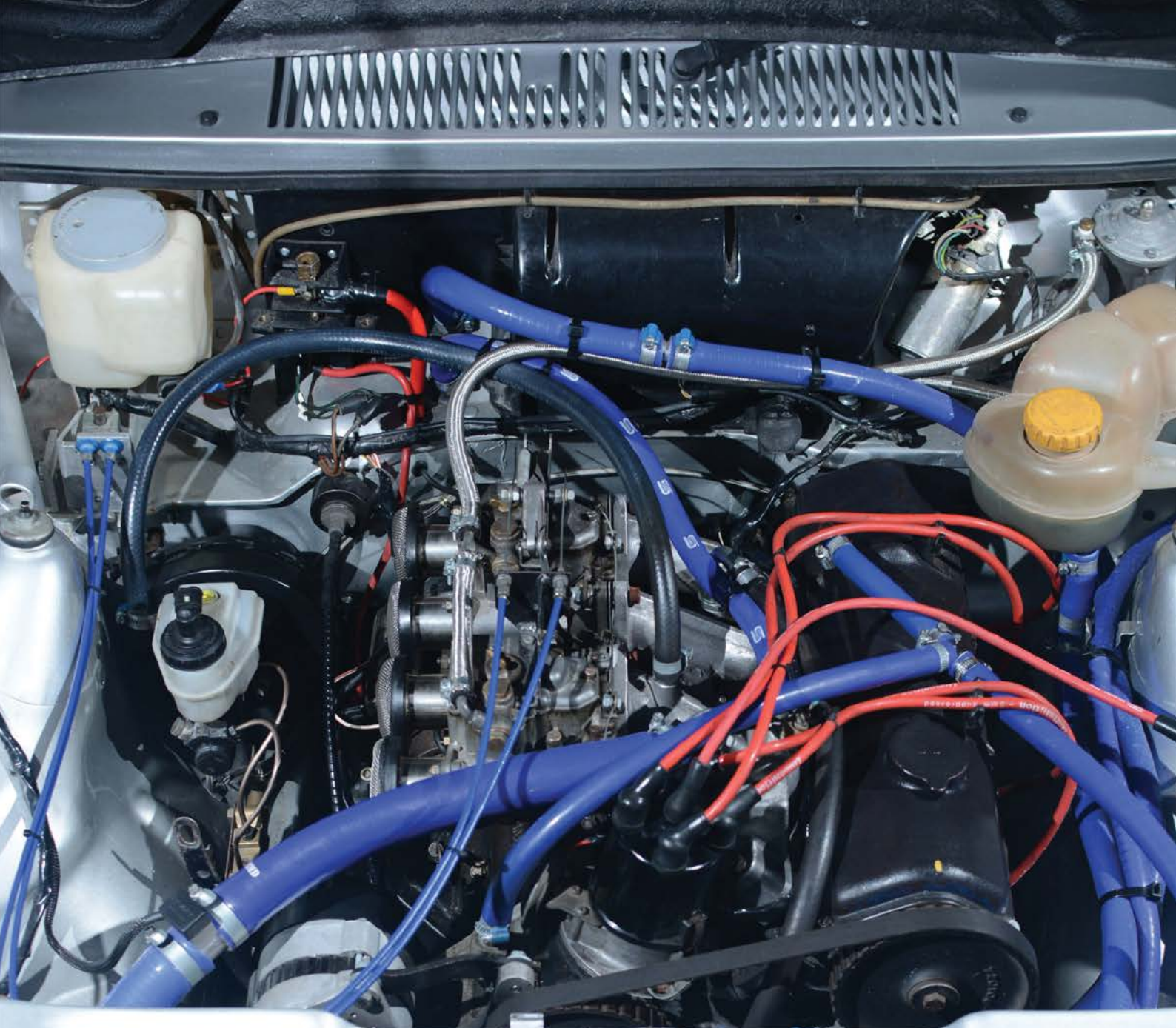
With the rust issues sorted, the real work could begin. Having done his research, Des knew exactly what to buy and fit. "The kit came from TJ Motorsport in the UK, and the whole front wing is fibreglass, the bonnet, back arches, skirts, nose, and spoilers" Des explains of the wide-arch HSR bodykit. "It lightens it big time, and I wanted it wide." The tarmac-type HSR kit really is a serious piece of kit, with massive arches, a bulging bonnet, and aggressive air dams and spoilers at each end to give the kind of hard-nosed rally image that Des was going for. However, once the kit was fitted Des identified something that he didn't like, entailing modifications to the rear end - the area below the rear bumper was a very open affair, exposing the more tender bits of the Chevette's undercarriage. To remedy this, a new rear valance was fabricated which not only protects the Chevette's dignity, but also lines up perfectly with the trailing edge of the rear arches and gives the pumped-up car an even wider stance from the rear. The arches were also mated to the steel shell properly too, with new inner arch sections made up in metal to bridge the void between the two. And, to complete the look and stiffen the chassis, a very comprehensive welded-in roll cage was fabbed up by Dave (he's a handy man to have around) which even takes in the front strut tops on its travels. With the kit fitted and fettled, Thomas Murphy was brought in to lay on some paint, both inside and outside, and all to an equally high standard. As well as the gleaming silver, Thomas is also responsible for the livery that replicates so well McRae's Circuit-winning 1980 car - the Castrol stripes are hand painted, not graphics, and Des points out that the vinyls that are on there are under the lacquer now, so "they are there for good".



The elegant alloy shifter stirs a Ford Type-9 gearbox.

Des very much built this car for himself and his own memories, and is more into taking off on a lively spin through the countryside than sitting polishing it at a show. It's a real "memory lane" car, to be sure.





Castrol



Even though an XE is smaller, lighter and probably more efficient, Des tells us that he loves getting a reaction from the old-time Vauxhall guys when he opens the bonnet – once the 2.3 is spotted, it's smiles of approval all round.

Moving to matters mechanical, Martin Flanagan got stuck into fitting the rebuilt 2.3-litre slant-four for the project – while many might have used a more modern two-litre XE red-top, Des was adamant that the unit would be too new for the car. He wanted all of the feel and sound of the cars he remembered from the old eighties rally days, and it's also hard to argue against his point that a 2.3 in one of these Chevettes is just "right". The engine received a big-valve cylinder head from a former rally car, onto which is mounted a pair of twin-40 Webers and a full competition exhaust, while a bellhousing adaptor allowed the fitment of a five-speed Ford Type-9 gearbox to its rear, complete with quick-shift lever. A shortened and balanced propshaft runs back to a Manta B axle, which further helps to pack out those cavernous rear arches. More knowledgeable Chevette fans will no doubt be delighted to note that Des also moved the front suspension forwards, as on the long-wheelbase 'works' cars, both to centre the front wheels in the new arches and also to improve handling. This measure also allows the engine to sit well behind the front axle line for better weight distribution, and with the radiator now living way down in the nose (plus the battery and fuel pump living in the boot) there's plenty of room to work around the engine too.

The wheels under this car are worth special note, and not just because they look and fit fantastically well. Finished in gloss white, these Compomotive MLs were a special order due to their specs, which are 8x15-inch ET-7 on the front and 9x15-inch ET-12 on the rear. With such alloy to cover, the tyres are unsurprisingly fat, with 215/45x15s Toyo Proxes on the front and 245/40x15s Avon CR500s out back, which is actually a control tyre for several Caterham racing championships. Undoubtedly it's an impressive wheel and tyre package, but it's even more special in this case as they were sponsored by his son-in-law, Larry Timmons – he's met with Des' approval for sure, especially as his name is now on the co-driver's door too!

The interior is a stripped affair as you would expect, but as this was always going to be a road car a few home comforts were going to be needed, such as window winders, switches etc that were missing or broken in the original car. Des had no choice but to buy another one or two donor cars along the way to pick up these components. It's all very competition focussed, as the red roll cage snakes around and under the dash, itself filled with extra instruments and faced with a suede Sparco steering wheel. Cobra buckets and Securon harnesses keep Des in his place, and a total lack of soundproofing or trim make for a real rally car driving experience, which is just what Des was looking for in the first place.

So, what's it like to live with a full rally replica every day? "She's done a couple of years, and I do get it out and drive it" Des beams. "I wouldn't be a big man for the shows, I'd just go for a spin somewhere. By Jesus, you'd stop the traffic with it!" Des tells us that from a driving perspective the Chevette is more than able to cruise along at whatever speed you want, but by rights if you had a passenger you'd want an intercom. "It was never meant for comfort – it was meant to do what it does. You don't head off to Donegal for the weekend in it with the suitcase! It wasn't built for that. You don't even want a radio- you just let the window down and enjoy the noise." And, what a noise it makes. Just like McRae 1980 cresting a hill at full tilt, you really do hear this Chevette coming as it crackles, barks and snarls, and to know that it's an authentic 2.3 making the music is all the better. Des has definitely succeeded in achieving his goal with this, his first project and only project, but would he do it again? "I drove Opels years ago, and although this was my first classic car build it's probably a once-off thing for me really" he tells us. "I like being at cars though, so you never know. If I had the money, my dream car would be a road-going Darrian T9..." he winks. We will see what the future brings.



The cockpit is all business – Des wanted this to sound and reel like a rally car, and he's really succeeded in that. There isn't even a headlining in there, and the impressive cage runs under the dash and out to the front suspension too.



Twin forties give a huge power boost to this engine thanks to its big-valve competition head, but perhaps most importantly they make an epic sound too.



The fantastic levels of finish are to be found all over this car, including in the boot. No room for the suitcases in here anymore though!



THANKS

Des would like to give special thanks to his son-in-law Larry Timmons, David Gormley for his engineering skills, Martin Flanagan for the mechanical work and Thomas Murphy for the paint.

The uber-wide stance of this tarmac HSR lookalike is perhaps most evident from the rear. Note the newly-fabricated lower rear valance to smoothen out the lines.





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