

Surprise discovery of Costello V8

Brian Davey took his time, but has finally brought the restoration of a very rare MG to completion. It was worth the wait, as the quality finish is a credit to all involved.

Around 24 years ago, my daughter decided that she would like an MG. I went out looking on her behalf and found a suitable four-cylinder car. I couldn't get hold of either my daughter Paula or her husband Barry whilst viewing my find, so decided to purchase it anyway as it was a nice example of an MGB GT. Then when I got home, I discovered that her husband had also bought an MGB GT that very same day, but he had found a V8 version.

My daughter started using the car I'd purchased as it was less thirsty, and the V8 was left on the verge in the village

where she lived. Whilst parked there, the car suffered damage from cattle being moved between fields who stepped through the tailgate glass. Undeterred, my son-in-law started to restore the car, but wasn't to finish it as tragically he passed away at the age of just 39. This was obviously a huge shock to us all, but as time passed I decided that I would take up the project and finish what he had started.

I went along to my local MG club and told them about my plans. The fact that I had a V8 aroused some initial interest, but that was nothing compared to the reaction my answers to

further questions evoked.

'Are you sure that it is a 1972 car?'

'Yes I am. It was first registered on February 21, 1972. Why?'

'Well, does it have a regular front grille?'

'No, it is different to the normal one. More a kind of eggbox design.'

'And is there a bulge in the bonnet?'

'Yes, and it is made of fibreglass, not steel.'

'How about the wheels. Are they normal?'

'Well, they again are different to the standard fitment.'

It turned out that the car my



Brian Davey is proud of his Costello – and has every right to be.

son-in-law had purchased was an original Ken Costello conversion. Quite a surprise!

The project got off to a good start, but went off the rails somewhat due to mistakes being made and I became a bit disillusioned about the whole project. I got a bit more enthusiastic after attending an open day at Devon Classic Cars in Ermington (www.devonclassiccars.com, 01548 831393), where the owner

Peter Collis seemed to know a lot more about the V8 cars, having raced his own monster V8 MGB Roadster for many years. The restoration remained on the back burner though until my retirement, when I started working on it once again. I then met Peter around 12 months ago at an autojumble at Hatherleigh. He had been keen to buy the car at one point and offered to assist in bringing the project to



Devon Classic Cars are also proud, and had Brian's car on their show stand.



completion. I decided to take him up on his offer. Enlisting professional help was the correct thing to do, as the project had so far been inching forward for 22 years.

Initially I gave Peter the engine, gearbox and overdrive to restore. He and his team at Devon Classic Cars did such an excellent job, I decided to send the rest of the car to him to complete. They fitted the engine and gearbox, re-wired

the car, completed the underside refit of the brakes and piping, refurbished the body and trim as necessary and fitted a complete interior including a full length Webasto roof. The finishing touch was refurbishing a set of Wolfrace alloys and finally, after all those years, getting an MoT. It was so nice to eventually see the parts I had been collecting for so long finally fitted to the car.

So there you have it. Having



Brian's car rides on a set of refurbished Wolfrace wheels.



Pure Costello – bonnet bulge and non-standard grille.

myself restored Vauxhall DXs in my younger years, I wanted the car to be correct and am happy that it is now in as near concours condition as possible. I won't be chasing any trophies as I have done in previous

years with my pre-war Vauxhalls, though. My daughter still calls it 'her' car, but I'll be the one racking up the miles. And it has to be said, I will be racking them up rather more quickly than I do in my Vauxhalls!



Badging on tailgate gives only a subtle hint as to what lies under the bonnet.



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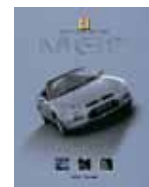
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