



# JAGUAR E-TYPE FORUM

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## This month's introduction from Gareth Key

there you can post your own topic on it, and as you'll see there are some very experienced and knowledgeable members who use it. They can offer all sorts of advice and tips (you can Personal Message them off-Board) on how to get various bits and pieces and how to fit them etc.

You could also search the *Jaguar Enthusiast* magazine back issue index to see if anything has been published on the subject before and the Recommended Suppliers list in the Member Zone has been compiled from members' feedback.

There is an unanswered post on the Board from an Australian visitor to our shores who has a 1965 OTS with a steering wheel that needs some TLC. Can anyone recommend an outfit that will refurbish the original steering wheel - i.e. refurbish the wood?

Then let's not forget that we have a wealth of information in our midst through our Club technical experts. Ken Jenkins and Colin Ford have incredible

knowledge on these cars and Dave Marks can help as well. These chaps are there to help and as they work on the cars, they know a lot about them. Particularly try Colin Ford as he has a lifetime of knowledge of running, and restoring E-types, the only cars he works on now.

Another avenue may be to try your local Club Region to see if anyone's had experience in the area in question, contact details are similarly published in the magazine and on the Club's website.

Unfortunately I didn't note the aforementioned French member's details but I haven't seen a post regarding his handbrake query, so I hope he has got it sorted.

All these services and more are provided by your Jaguar Enthusiasts' Club and in an increasingly competitive environment we are constantly striving to improve them. As an example you can now view issues of our Club magazine online and it is available on iPhone, Android and iPad as well.

We value your comments and feedback on what is on offer so please let us know what you think, whether it be good or bad. We would like to hear whatever you have to say now rather than when you've left us (not that we don't actually expect it to come to that). Remember E-types enable enjoyment!

This month Paul Skilleter reports on a recent visit to an E-type specialist.

## Ballast coil or not? Replacement gearbox? Stick-on number plates? Where can you find the answers?

Some time ago I had a telephone call from a member in France with a query about his handbrake assembly that unfortunately I couldn't answer, and so I suggested that he contact S.N.G. Barratt and if that didn't bear fruit, to post it on the E-type Forum's Bulletin Board. If you have a query such as this that I can't personally resolve I would normally initially recommend a visit to the Club's website [www.jec.org.uk](http://www.jec.org.uk) where once you've registered as a member you can check out the Bulletin Board for any thread along the same lines. If there's no answer

## If you go down to the woods today...

### Paul Skilleter visits New Forest Classic Cars and finds some big (E-type) surprises!

Photographs by Paul Skilleter.

**M**ost of us interested in E-types know the major players in the restoration field, and along with these are a number of smaller concerns rebuilding maybe a car or two a year for customers. But what is more unusual is an entirely new high-level entry into the field. That doesn't happen every day.

As on a fairly regular basis I have cause to go through the Ampress Industrial Estate on the fringes of Lymington, in Hampshire, I couldn't help noticing the arrival in a large, modern building with posh smoked-glass front showroom. of a company I wasn't familiar with – New Forest Classic Cars. And in that





showroom were displayed a number of what looked like rather tasty E-types... Who were they? Who was behind it all? No-one in the local classic car fraternity seemed to know. But what with one thing and another, I didn't get round to investigating any further until now, some two years after first seeing their premises.

So it wasn't until just recently that I pulled up in the (reasonably) faithful X-type estate, and got to meet Matt Draysey, one of the management team at New Forest Classic Cars. Yes, he told me, the company had actually been on the estate for about four years, but had moved into the present building two years ago. And yes, their main business was restoring 'Series 1' E-types – most, intriguingly, coming from a stock of some twenty barn-find cars they held in store.

## A Hampshire lad

As for Matt's own background, like me he's Hampshire born and bred, and his exposure to old cars came early as his mother used to work for Michael Ware, then curator of the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu. "This was the catalyst for my love of anything with an engine", Matt says. However, as a young man he didn't 'go into cars' but instead trained as a technical illustrator. His motoring enthusiasm found an outlet in restoring cars at home (and in fact his latest project, a 1968 Mini Cooper S, was completed just a few months ago). Only when he was made redundant did he decide to embark on a full-time career in the motoring field. Discovering NFCC, which at that time operated out of much smaller premises on the estate, he made an approach and was taken on – initially to work on the shop floor with the cars themselves.

Matt is honest enough to say that this early stage in the company's development was "A bit of a false start" and progress was relatively slow. But a customer who could see the very real potential which existed, bought the company and proceeded to invest a substantial sum, resulting in a

more ambitious, forward-looking business plan and the move to the present larger building within the same estate. Matt is now part of the management team, along with a staff of seventeen, the owner preferring to remain in the background.

## Barn-find E-types



*'As found': this 1964 3.8 litre E-type is a fairly typical Californian fixed head, sun-baked but with a solid structure – an ideal basis for a quality restoration.*

NFCC's major activity is restoring E-types. Fortunately, with the old business came a stock of unrestored cars, some XKs but mostly E-types, many discovered in the US. These cars were acquired some years ago and now represent a valuable asset, as raw material like this is increasingly hard to find and a lot more expensive to purchase these days – especially 3.8 and Series 1 4.2 litre E-types. Some of these cars have now been restored, it being part of the company's strategy always to have



*New parts come from a variety of sources but many are obtained from SNG Barratt.*

finished E-types in the showroom ready to be driven away by those who want such a car immediately. Otherwise, cars can be restored to exactly the specification required by each individual customer, upgraded or completely standard.

NFCC has the advantage of the company's owner taking a long-term view of the business. This has allowed a considerable investment to be made in infrastructure, and I was impressed most of all, I think, by their decision to carry out as much work as possible in-house. NFCC considers that this is essential to maintain control over quality, and to meet production schedules. So unlike many medium-sized restoration companies (and some large ones!), NFCC has on-site its own closed-loop metal blasting booth (big enough to process an entire bodyshell), its own state-of-the-art paint shop and oven, and its own trim shop. This is apart from the more normal body and engine shops. "The only outsourced work is such as major engine machining and diffs, plating, and specialist items like instruments", says Matt. "We are planning to bring some of these outsourced tasks in house so they can keep up to our quality control and schedules."

NFCC do, of course, buy-in new parts and inevitably these are mostly modern reproductions, as original parts for E-types are now almost unobtainable. Matt says they have been careful to build up a close relationship with key suppliers, large and small. For body parts they call upon the services of Martin Robey and to an extent Hutsons, while Fosseway Performance supply such as aluminium radiators and uprated brakes.

NFCC do much of their business with



*The main workshop and assembly area at NFCC. Servicing and upgrades are offered to E-type owners, although usually this work is restricted to owners of the company's restored cars.*



*New body parts are ordered as necessary from such as Martin Robey. If the original shell is particularly poor, major elements like the full under-structure may need replacing with a sub-assembly as shown here.*



S. N. G. Barrett. Matt has found that it is more efficient to obtain a variety of spares from one company like Barratts, rather than spend time shopping round possibly dozens of individual suppliers even though this occasionally might shave a few pounds off some prices. In return Matt finds that S. N. G go out of their way to get parts out to him quickly, and if there is a shortage, NFCC is well up the list to obtain the earliest delivery.

## Build schedule

NFCC are unusual in that when a car goes through the restoration process it is not accompanied by a conventional job card, on which everyone who works on that particular vehicle enters the hours they've spent on it and what they have done. Instead, with each car is a build schedule which defines the jobs and ensures that the parts arrive in the correct sequence. At the end of each day office personnel review progress with the technicians involved, so that any difficulties or parts shortages can be quickly identified and the situation corrected.

That comes from the important advantage of being a one-model specialist: by now NFCC knows quite accurately how long it should take to rebuild an E-type, which of course is vital when costing the job and fixing the retail price of the restored car. At present, NFCC's output is potentially four E-types fully restored in six months, but this could be expanded and larger premises, specially built, are being actively considered.

## The restoration procedure

For their rebuilds NFCC have devised a series of standard procedures which, although basically common sense, are worth setting out here because apart from describing the processes, they may act as useful guidelines to anyone contemplating



*The engine bay is examined for missing parts (here the air cleaner has vanished), so that a search for replacements can begin immediately. Note the home-made additional header tank on this 3.8 – probably a doomed attempt to counter overheating which was, in fact, more than likely to have been silting of the original aluminium radiator which is still in place*

the restoration of any sort of Jaguar.

Firstly, with the rebuild project taken from the store and into the workshop, a comprehensive survey and assessment is undertaken. This is carried out before so much as a single nut or bolt is removed, because the more complete the car is, the easier it is to spot missing parts. If there are parts missing, then a search for replacements can be put in hand immediately, so that shortages are less likely to hold up the restoration later on (and it can take weeks or even months to find some E-type parts which are not currently reproduced).

At the same time a comprehensive photographic survey is done, which will help with reassembly and will provide a record for the eventual owner. Only then is the car booked into the workshop and the stripping process begun. At this time a schedule is drawn up, a master document on which all work is listed and progress noted. This schedule can be referred to at any time to establish exactly what has been done or remains to be done, and how the work is proceeding in terms of time spent.

As each part is removed it is examined closely and identified as needing



*Suffering from years of Californian sunlight, this interior will need completely retrimming; the inspection will also identify any missing trim 'hardware'.*



*The car is also examined by the trimmer; in this fixed head an unusual Hardura toe-board covering was found, and it will be carefully reproduced.*

replacement or refurbishment. Those who will assemble the car later on carry out the dismantling, including the trimmers who will be able to spot features which others might miss (for example, the passenger toe-board trim found recently in an early 3.8 litre fixed head which is rare and not often mentioned in books). All the original parts are stored on shelving dedicated to that car, from where they can be retrieved for reconditioning. Over a period of time, new or refurbished parts will be placed in the same area, awaiting the reassembly process.

## Stripped and blasted...

With the bodyshell stripped, it is taken for blasting and then on to the body shop. There, replacement parts are installed and local repairs made. Towards the end of the process, the all-important final fit of bonnet, doors and trunk lid are not fixed until a slave engine block and rear suspension assembly are installed – this ensures that the body is subjected to the same torsional stresses it will experience when the car is on the road, which is enough to influence panel gaps. Bumpers and other exterior parts are offered up to check for fit, prior to the



*Cars are kept intact for the initial assessment, as missing items are then more easily spotted. Unrestored cars like this one are becoming much more expensive, even though E-type prices generally have stabilised after the '50<sup>th</sup> year' increase in 2011.*





Only when the initial assessment has been made does dismantling begin.



With the body stripped and blasted to remove paint and rust, it goes to the body shop where panels are repaired or replaced.



Individual components will be classified as needing refurbishment or replacement, and kept on racking dedicated to that car. To further avoid confusion, parts which need to match the car's body, like the tail lights seen here, are labelled with the job number.



Repaired, the body along with bonnet, doors and trunk lid or hatch are prepared for painting and taken into the in-house paint booth.

shell, along with doors, trunk lid and bonnet, being taken to the paint shop.

Meanwhile the engine will also be stripped and assessed, and parts sent

out for machining as necessary (a local machine shop with thirty eight years experience is used); then comes balancing and reassembly of the new and reconditioned components. The finished engine is then run on a test bed before being installed in the car. Needless to say the gearbox, suspension front and rear, brakes and all other

mechanical and electrical parts are overhauled or replaced as required.

The final stage is the build-up of the painted shell with all exterior and interior accessories, installation of the engine and drivetrain, suspension, brakes, wiring loom and finally the trim. This work is usually done by those who dismantled these items in the first place,



In parallel with work on the body, the car's mechanical items are rebuilt. This is a restored power unit in the engine shop.



The rear suspension is refurbished and will be offered up to the car as a unit.





*With all major parts restored or replaced, the build up can begin. This is a 3.8 litre car coming together, with a Fosseway radiator in place. This LHD bronze fixed head is to standard specification complete with bellows servo. The detail finish is impressive and experts are consulted on originality issues.*

but as parts are fitted in a predetermined, standardised sequence, others can take over if required. Road testing and final 'sorting' follows, before the finished car reaches the showroom or the customer.

In terms of paint and trim, the default is to restore a car to its new factory specification as defined by the Jaguar Heritage certificate (which is obtained for each car), including right- or left-hand drive, and paint and trim colours. However, a car can be built to any specification if a customer selects a vehicle from the list of restoration projects, when sales co-ordinator Vincent Franzese will explain the options and endeavour to meet any specific requests. Lists of built cars and restoration projects can be found on the company's website ([www.newforestclassiccars.com](http://www.newforestclassiccars.com)). Prices

depend on specification but start at around £150,000 for a 3.8 litre roadster, or a little less for a fixed head – and if you think that's expensive, try costing a ground-up, professional restoration of a typical 6-cylinder E-type and you'll wonder how they do it for the money!

Matt acknowledges that compared with some they are still the new boys on the block, and have some way to go in establishing recognition. Restoring cars is no picnic, not even a teddy bear's one, but down in the New Forest the right basics appear to be in place for a very successful business.



*Seats are trimmed from scratch; this is a useful comparison showing the difference between 3.8 litre open two seater (left) and fixed head seats, the latter being markedly broader and taller.*



*If not pre-sold, a finished car will go to the showroom after passing its shake-down tests.*



*New Forest Classic Cars have their own fully-fledged trim shop. Complete hides are bought-in and care is taken to use the same batch for one car, as colour batches vary. Trim can be standard or in accordance with a customer's requirements.*



*This wooden jig has been made so that the curvature of the card backing will be taken into account when stretching the Vinyl over it.*



*All sorts of upgrades are offered, including 5-speed gearboxes, Weber carburetors and Classicfabs branch exhaust systems as shown here.*