



CMC Masterclass

Paul Briggs reflects on an interesting and enjoyable visit to the Bridgnorth-based Jaguar specialist

Photos by Louise Gibbs and Paul Briggs

Another great Masterclass took place on 8 October, when a combined group from the XK and E-type Clubs visited Classic Motor Cars Ltd in Bridgnorth, Shropshire. The weather had been typically wet for most of the week, but on the day the sun was shining and so were the classics. There was a growing level of excitement from the group as more and more Jaguars arrived in the extensive car park. People had really put some effort into getting to Bridgnorth, coming from as far as Ontario (!), Edinburgh, West Sussex, Somerset and Kent, to name a few.

Club manager Louise Gibbs introduced the group to Tim Griffin, who is Production and Engineering Director for CMC. We were then split into groups and taken into a series of spacious and immaculately ordered workshops for the demonstrations and discussions.

Gearboxes and differentials: Malcolm Walker took us over the fundamentals of the best oils and also why. He was quickly hit with a wide range of questions and experiences, and he did an excellent job of tackling them. I'll just cover some of the key takeaways. Not all E-types were fitted with limited slip diffs – that was a surprise. Don't put an EP oil in the gearbox because the



- Top: Luke Martin demonstrates how to form panels using an English wheel
- Above: Dan Brown covered detailing. The car that everyone is standing around is the unique Aston Martin Bulldog, which CMC has recently restored



- Clockwise, from left: Brett Eggar passes on a few tips to do with engine tuning; XKs, saloons and E-types in the car park; E-type body buck; more detailing tips; a welcome coffee in the showroom



synchros need friction to work properly – stick with the mono grade. For your typical Jaguar gearbox, you can get away without any special tools to strip and rebuild the box, although you may need a press to remove bearings.

Panels: Luke Martin explained the basics and how to form shapes and build up complex panels such as a front wing. We quickly realised that not only do you need skill and patience to make or modify panels, but also space and quite a lot of special tools and equipment. CMC produces its own aluminium E-type bonnet, which will be custom-tailored to your car. Just

be aware that under the front wheels, stone chips thrown up from the tyres will dent more so than steel.

Key takeaways were, soda-blast your chassis/body if you are doing a complete strip down – anything else, including chemical, isn't as good. For outer panel fabrication, use 1.5mm for aluminium and 1mm for steel. Structural panels are generally of a thicker gauge.

Detailing and vehicle care: Dan Brown took us over basic detailing, which for most of us is a black art. We were, however, a little distracted because he was talking to us with



- Above and right: more tips from Luke Martin, including the shaping of smaller panels and taking a close look at a stripped-down E-type



the backdrop of the Aston Martin Bulldog. Originally code-named Project K901, it was meant to transform the face of motoring, but by the time of its launch in 1980, the UK was stuck in recession, along with an oil crisis.

The project was canned and only one car was ever made; it managed 192mph but had the potential for 200mph. This car was restored by the CMC team to concours standard and looked as immaculate as if it had just been built. We were taken over clay bar application, ceramic coatings, waxing and cleaning chrome with 00-grade wire wool. I didn't know but there are actually seven grades of wire wool, with 00 being the

finest of the medium grades and 0000 being the finest overall. Dan showed us that wire wool also works on glass without causing scratches.

Engine tuning: Brett Eggar gave us a whirlwind introduction to tuning up multiple SU carburetors and how to diagnose where you were going wrong. I think I learnt more from him in an hour than I had for the past 10 years. His depth of experience in motorsport and engine building was impressive.

There was so much information on tuning the SUs over and above the JLR workshop manual, that I'm hoping we can do a separate session with him and publish it in the magazine.

Key to success is an air-fuel ratio meter to know if you are running too rich or lean. It takes out the guesswork of lifting the pistons and seeing how the revs change. CMC also sells the AFR meters.

Probably the best part was him showing us with great pride the work he'd done on a XK 150 FHC with a partly hidden fuel injection system from Jenvey. Jenvey is also on the same trading estate. It was fitted with a high-lift camshaft and was rated over 300bhp. Of course he fired it up for us and it sounded out of this world!

It was so good to see CMC is supporting apprenticeships, which it has run since 2015. Plus it has been majority-owned by the employees since 2016 and you really could see the

passion and the drive that the team had for their company and supporting their customers.

CMC also sells classics and its showroom had quite a large range of cars, from a 1958 XK 150 S to a 1964 Daimler V8-250 and a wide range of E-types. There was a lot of interest in the 1978 Datsun 260Z manual coupé because the value of this model is doing well and could be a very nice investment.

Lunch was awesome and it was also a great opportunity to buy some quality books from Porter Press as well as chat to the other club members. The day soon shot by, and then it was a great time for us to fire up our Jaguars, not to forget a lovely Alvis TD 21 and a Porsche, and enjoy the last of the afternoon sun. 🏎️



- Left: oh no it isn't...
- Below: Malcolm Walker talking everyone through gearboxes and general maintenance

