

Why I practice Y-D-I

For many enthusiasts, one of the joys of owning a classic car is either doing a complete rebuild, or at the very least, maintaining it to a very high standard. It is people like this that are likely to win most concours events at exhibitions and shows. These are the D-I-Y'ers - the Do it Yourself brigade.

Me - I prefer to practice Y-D-I....You Do It! I admire greatly the D-I-Y'ers, especially when you see what they have done to their trusty steeds - but it's not for everyone - especially for those like me who can't remember how to open the bonnet!

I first realised that I really didn't have a clue when I was about 12 and I decided to take my bicycle to pieces so that I could clean it, repaint it, and then rebuild it. The paint never took (no-one told me you had to at least rub down the original paintwork), and when it came to rebuild it - I didn't know where to start!

But that didn't mean I was willing to give up! Far from it! I continued to try and repair first my bikes, and then my early cars with various degrees of success. Actually I think that sentence would sound better if it read: *I continued to try and repair first my bikes, and then my early cars with various degrees of failure* - as, if I'm honest, I failed each time. It was basically the lack of the right tools, the lack of the right experience, and, maybe, to a certain extent, the lack of desire to get under, into or over a dirty engine on a wet Wednesday in February!

Don't get me wrong - I'm not thick - I'm a member of MENSA, and have been for a number of years - but when it comes to repairing or rebuilding cars - I'm as much use as a chocolate fireguard! I remember one of the cars I had in my early twenties was a Triumph Spitfire - my introduction into open air motoring - and I loved it. The trend, at that time, was for smaller and smaller, leather covered steering wheels. So I purchased one that was slightly smaller than a cotton reel. I thought this was really cool - until I tried to work out how to fix it. I could remove the centre cover from the original wheel - but there was no way I was going to be able to undo the huge nut that held it in - I just didn't have any spanner that big. Come to think of it - I didn't have any spanner - full stop!

So, after a friend fixed it for me, I then got offered (cheap - you know...) an ammeter to add to the car. I couldn't resist as I thought the more dials the car had, the better it looked. (And yes - I was one of those guys who used to add "go faster" stripes to the car!!). Anyway, I managed (somehow) to fix the ammeter to the dash board - didn't actually work - but, hey - who cares - it looked great!

Then I took the car for a drive, together with new cotton reel steering wheel and (non working) ammeter gauge. Hood down - wind in the hair stuff - feeling very pleased with myself - until I went to wind the window down, and smashed my hand against the new gauge! I had fitted it with the driver's door open, so hadn't noticed the fact that it fouled the window winder every time you moved it by any more than a quarter of a turn! So I

had 3 choices - have a multi dialled Spit with fixed windows; accept the fact that I had to open the door to open the window, or remove the dial. The latter won, and the ammeter got confined to a box in the garage, and eventually thrown away!

So, why tell you all this? Well, firstly to bring comfort to all those TVR drivers who, like me, are not D-I-Y'ers and don't know their left handed side thrommits from their double ended mastaclonic scrotham joints and wouldn't even notice if their revolving clacker was knackered! Perhaps you, like me, read the articles about how a club member rebuilt an early Grantura, when all they had to start with was half a chassis, some sellotape and a cheese and pickle sandwich, and think "there must be something wrong with me if I can't do that!" Well - there isn't. In fact, when it comes to the choice of working on the car on a freezing cold and wet day or standing in the warm in David Gerald's showroom (my local TVR dealership - there you are chaps - told you I would get the plug in), looking at other TVR's whilst they fix mine, I know which one I'd go for every time!

And secondly, I have written this article because I really want all those D-I-Y'ers to take pity on me (and all other Y-D-I'ers) when we turn up at TVR events and can't get the boot open, or there's a problem under the bonnet. You see, deep down, I do think you D-I-Y'ers are awfully clever! And, to a certain extent, I wish I could do what you can do! By the way - whilst I have your (undivided) attention - you know the bit that sticks out - just to the left of the oil thingy

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