



# CMC Masterclass

Paul Briggs reports on an interesting and enjoyable visit to the Bridgnorth-based Jaguar specialist in October

A combined group from the E-type and XK Clubs visited Classic Motor Cars Ltd (CMC) in Bridgnorth, Shropshire on 8 October for another great Masterclass. The weather had been typically wet for most of the week, but on the day of the visit 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 afield as Edinburgh, West Sussex, Somerset, Kent and even Ontario, Canada.

Louise Gibbs, General Manager of the E-type Club, 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 various demonstrations and discussions.

**Gearboxes and Differentials:** Malcolm Walker took us over the fundamentals of the best oils and also why they should be used. He was quickly hit with a wide range of questions and experiences, and he did an excellent job of tackling them. Some of the key takeaways included the fact that not all E-types were fitted



- Top: A selection of E-types lined up outside the CMC Bridgnorth premises with owners eager to learn from the latest Masterclass.
- Above: Discussing the finer points of bodywork restoration during a talk and demonstration by Luke Martin.

with limited-slip diffs. That was a surprise. Also, EP (extreme pressure) oil should not be used in the E-type gearbox, as the synchros need a little friction to work properly – stick with a mono grade. For a 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 and refit 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 is custom tailored to each individual car. Just be aware that under the front wheel arches, stone chips thrown up from the tyres will dent aluminium more than steel. Key takeaways included the suggestion to soda-blast the chassis/body if you are doing a complete strip-down, as anything else, including chemical treatments, is not as good. For outer panel fabrication, use 1.5mm thickness for aluminium and 1.0mm 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 was a black art. We were taken

- Right: Luke Martin demonstrates the art of using an English wheel to form compound curves in body panels.
- Below: The group quickly discovered that much skill and patience is required to make and modify bodywork.





- Left: The hand tools used to finish bodywork panels and to refine their shapes to fit an individual car have remained unchanged over the decades.
- Below: Brett Eggar provided the group with an introduction to tuning multiple SU carburetors using an air/fuel ratio meter.

was fitted with a high-lift camshaft and was rated at over 300bhp. Of course, he fired it up for us and it sounded out of this world!

It was so good to see that CMC is supporting apprenticeships, which they have run since 2015. The company has also been majority-owned by the employees since 2016, and you really could see the passion and the drive that the team has for their company and supporting its customers.

CMC also sells classics, and the 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 a 1978 Datsun 260Z manual coupé, as the value of this model is increasing 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 was soon drawing to an end, and we then fired up our Jaguars, not forgetting a lovely Alvis TD 21 and a Porsche, to enjoy the last of the afternoon sun.

- Below left: An impressive buffet lunch was provided.
- Below: Members had the opportunity to buy and take home books from the Porter Press catalogue.
- Bottom: The Masterclass provided a fantastic opportunity to ask questions and to receive expert advice.



through clay-bar application, ceramic coatings, waxing and how to clean chrome with 00-grade wire wool. I didn't know, but there are seven grades of wire wool, with 00 the finest of the medium grades and 0000 the finest overall. Dan showed us that wire wool also works on glass without causing scratches. We were, however, a little distracted, as he was talking to us with 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, which managed to achieve a top speed of 192mph, but with the potential for 200mph. This car has been restored by the CMC team to concours standard and looked as immaculate as if it had just been built.

*Engine Tuning:* Brett Eggar gave us a whirlwind introduction to tuning multiple SU carburetors and how to diagnose where you may be going wrong. I think I learnt more from him in an hour than I had during the past 10 years. His depth of experience in motorsport and engine building is impressive. There was so much information on tuning the SUs over and above the details provided in 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 (AFR) meter which indicates whether the engine is running too rich or too lean. It is far more accurate than lifting the carburettor pistons and seeing how the revs change. CMC also sell AFR meters. Brett showed us, with great pride, the work he'd done on an XK 150 FHC with a partly hidden fuel-injection system from Jenvey (the company is located on the same trading estate). The car

