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Servicing & MOT

Electric vehicle & hybrid servicing

Specialist tuning

Performance parts fitting

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RALLY TEC - The garage that cares

Here at RALLY TEC we really do care about our customers and their cars, which is why we combine traditional customer service with modern diagnostic technology to provide levels of service that are rarely matched.

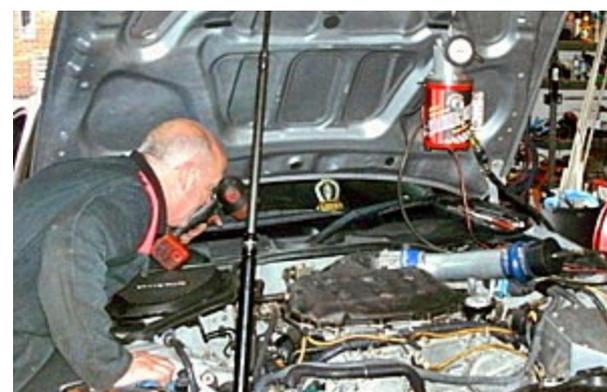
We offer specialist tuning and diagnostic work as well as routine servicing.

We are long established and you can benefit from our 30 plus years of experience.

We may not be the cheapest but we strive to be the best.

So if you are looking for a garage in Boreham, Chelmsford or surrounding areas of ESSEX, why not give RALLY TEC a try?

Incidentally, don't be puzzled by the company name, we work on all kinds of cars now. In reality these days only a few of our customers are motorsport drivers.



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Servicing

We offer routine servicing for most modern cars;

- An **oil service** (Oil & filter change)
- An **interim service** (Minor service)
- A **full service** (Major service)

We offer **bespoke servicing for classic cars**, high performance vehicles & for motor sport applications. The service plan and schedule is fully customised to meet your needs

Our workshop is also fully equipped for **servicing of Electric Vehicles & Hybrid vehicles**.

Whilst we are not an MOT testing station if you **need an MOT** we can arrange this for you, when we service your vehicle.



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Oil Service

Our oil service includes:

- Draining the engine oil, via the sump plug
- Fitting a new quality oil filter
- Refilling with the appropriate quantity and grade of engine oil
- Refitting sump plug and checking for leaks

We drain the oil hot, the traditional way, via the sump plug, as we believe this removes more residue and contamination than simply pumping it out the dip stick tube.

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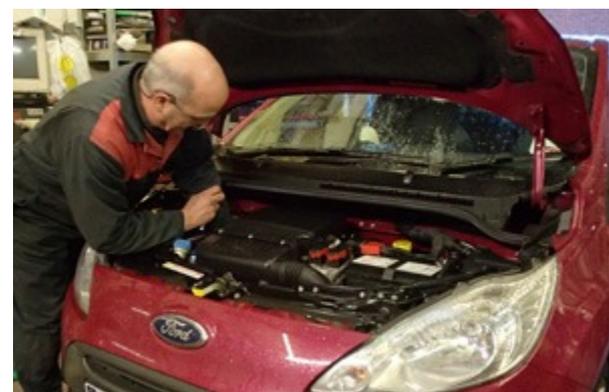
Interim Service

Our Interim service includes:

- Testing the water content of the brake fluid
- Using a refractometer to test the engine coolant concentration
- Fitting a new oil filter
- Changing the engine oil
- Refilling the screen wash reservoir
- Examining the air filter and spark plugs and replacing if necessary
- Inspecting the tyres and inflating to the correct pressure, including the spare
- Resetting the vehicle's service light where applicable
- Road testing the vehicle
- Stamping the service book (where supplied by customer)

An interim service is also known as a minor service.

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Full Service

A Full Service usually includes:

- Testing the water content of the brake fluid
- Using a refractometer to test the engine coolant concentration
- Fitting a new oil filter
- Changing the engine oil
- Fitting new air filter
- Fitting new cabin filter
- Refilling the screen wash reservoir
- Examining the spark plugs and replace if necessary
- Inspecting the tyres and inflating to correct pressure, including the spare
- Verifying that the battery is secure and in serviceable condition
- Checking the operation of external lights
- Checking the condition and tension of auxiliary belts
- Advising the customer if timing belt is due for replacement
- Checking effectiveness of windscreen wipers and washers. Fitting new wiper blades if required.

- Checking the level and appearance of power steering fluid
- Checking the handbrake operation
- Checking the clutch operation (where applicable)
- Visually inspecting the HT system (where applicable)
- Visually inspecting under bonnet components and hoses for leaks
- Resetting the vehicle's service light where applicable
- Road testing the vehicle
- Stamping the service book (where supplied by customer)

A full service is also known as a major service

Note: This list is a typical example. The actual work performed will depend on the make & model of the motor vehicle.

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Classic Car Servicing

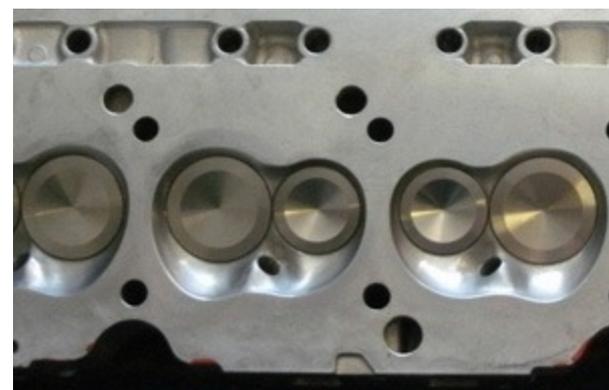
Classic cars have very different servicing needs to their modern counterparts. There are some things where there is no substitute for experience, we frequently work adjusting and balancing carburettors and testing and setting timing and points. Rest assured we have all the necessary imperial & specialist carburettor tooling necessary to work on your vehicle.

The classic car service is bespoke, however commonly includes:

- Carburettor adjustment and balancing
- Adjustment of points & ignition timing
- Cleaning and re-gapping of spark plugs
- An oil change using low detergent mineral oils with ZDDP (Zinc Dialkyl Dithiophosphate)
- Inspection of the suspension, brakes and steering box
- Topping up the cooling system with Inorganic Additive Technology (IAT) products with additional corrosion inhibitors when we service your vehicle (most classic cars could be damaged by modern OAT antifreeze)
- The application of anti corrosion wax & greases to vulnerable parts.

Where new parts are not available, fortunately we can clean, repair & recondition most original parts to prolong their useful life, enabling you to keep your classic car where it belongs - on the road being driven and enjoyed

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Electric & Hybrid Vehicle Servicing

It's true, an electric vehicle won't need an oil change, but it still needs regular specialist servicing to maintain the safety and reliability of the vehicle.

At RALLY TEC we have the required skills, tools and diagnostic equipment to service your Electric Vehicle or Hybrid Vehicle safely and efficiently.

A typical EV service comprises of:

- inspection of the high voltage components
- Inspection of the high voltage wiring loom
- Reading the Diagnostic Trouble Codes
- Using diagnostic equipment to ascertain the health of the high voltage battery pack
- inspecting the charging socket and cleaning the drain to prevent water accumulating
- Testing the 12 volt battery
- Fitting a new cabin filter
- Testing the brake fluid
- Checking thermal management fluids
- Inspecting the cooling system for leaks
- Checking the lights – many LED lamps cannot be changed without special tools
- Inspecting the wheels and tyres
- Replacing the windscreen wiper blades (if required)
- Refilling the screen wash reservoir

Naturally for hybrid vehicles in addition to the above, the internal combustion engine (ICE) will need to be serviced in the usual way.

We also perform fault diagnosis and repair of electric vehicles and hybrid vehicles.

We are also equipped to **test the integrity of the high voltage system.**



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MOT

We are happy to arrange your MOT for you.

Our MOT arrangement service includes:

- Our staff collect the car from your house or other location (within a 5 mile radius)
- Carrying out pre-MOT checks to ensure that lights, windscreen washers etc are working properly, to avoid the risk of failing an MOT on such a minor matter
- Taking the vehicle to be tested at a local MOT testing station
- In the unfortunate event of the vehicle not passing we will provide a no obligation estimate for the required repairs
- Our staff returning the vehicle to your house or other location (within a 5 mile radius)

Note: We do not undertake MOTs on site, as we are not a MOT testing station

Your vehicle will be covered by our motor trade insurance whilst it is being driven by us, and for vehicles that are not taxed, this is not an issue as we can drive the vehicle using our trade plates.

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Specialist tuning

Many owners of classic cars are finding it increasingly difficult to find garages with sufficient experience of working with carburetors, but here at RALLY TEC we have the skills and knowledge you require.

We have experience in downdraught and side draught, Weber, Stromberg, Solex, Su, Dellorto, Holley and Carter Carburetors.

We also have the equipment and expertise to correctly balance multiple carburetor installations.

Don't just think we work on old cars, no, we also have experience with advanced set up of fuel injection systems. So if you want that little bit more from your track day, hill climb, autotest, or even your fast road car, give us a call and we can discuss what we can do for you.

Note: we do not undertake porting and polishing, crankshaft grinding, or cylinder reboring here, for that you will require the services of an engine builder; however we will be more than pleased to tune and setup your engine once the rebuild has been completed.



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Performance parts fitting service - 1

As the owner of a performance or modified car, you will probably have a good idea of exactly the type of performance parts and upgrades you want fitted, but maybe you do not have the specialist equipment, tools, or garage facilities to fit them yourself?

That is where our performance parts fitting service comes in. You order and supply the parts and we will fit, test and adjust them for you, to ensure you are getting the optimum benefit from your upgrades.

We also undertake work on fabricating custom wiring looms for the fitment of additional lights, gauges, horns and so forth. Don't let your cherished vehicle be let down by substandard or unreliable wiring. Insist on the best, here at RALLY TEC.

For classic cars we offer repairs and upgrades using materials that maintain the period appearance of your vehicle, where cloth, or matt black looming tape and plain copper terminals are the order of the day.

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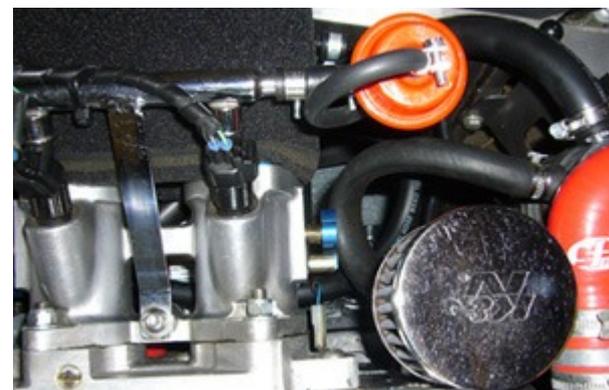
Performance parts fitting service - 2

For those with competition in mind, we can install heat resistant ceramic cloth or high temperature silicon for cable protection, to cope with the extreme under bonnet temperatures. You wouldn't want to lose power, just as you're leading the field round the last bend before the chequered flag, now would you?

We can install a wide range of performance parts including:

- Air filters & induction kits
- Suspension upgrades
- Polyurethane suspension bushes
- Additional lights
- Performance exhaust systems
- Brake upgrades
- Silicon hose kits
- Electronic cooling fan control
- Electric water pumps
- Fuel system upgrades, pressure regulator, free flowing filter & high pressure hoses
- Under bonnet 'dress-up' kits
- Fast road cams
- Suspension strut braces

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Fault finding & diagnostics - 1

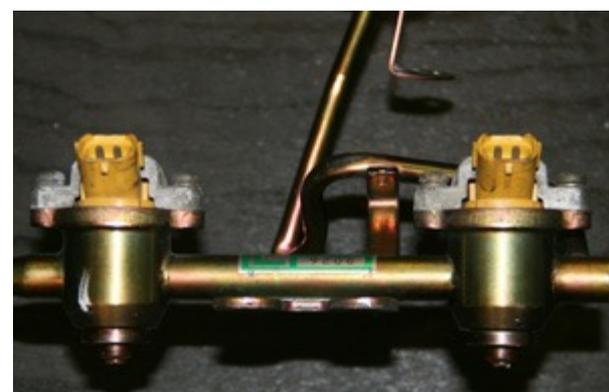
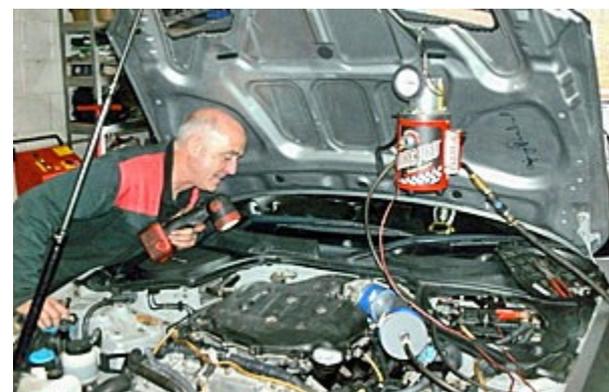
We have many years of experience in advanced fault finding and diagnosis, with a wide range of specialist diagnostic equipment at our disposal, for example:

- Analogue & multi channel digital oscilloscopes
- Advanced diagnostic software
- Serial data readers, both live & data logging
- Diagnostic Trouble Code readers
- 4 gas exhaust analysis equipment
- Rolling road (dynamometer)
- Equipment for smoke and pressure test of induction system
- Fuel injector flow rate tester
- Radio frequency proximity cable tracing equipment
- Bore scopes
- IR thermal analysis equipment

There are two established methods of fault diagnosis used in the automotive industry.

The first is diagnosis by substitution, where an educated guess is made as to the most likely component to be causing the problem, then this component is replaced with a new one. If the problem does not go away then the next most likely component is replaced and so on.

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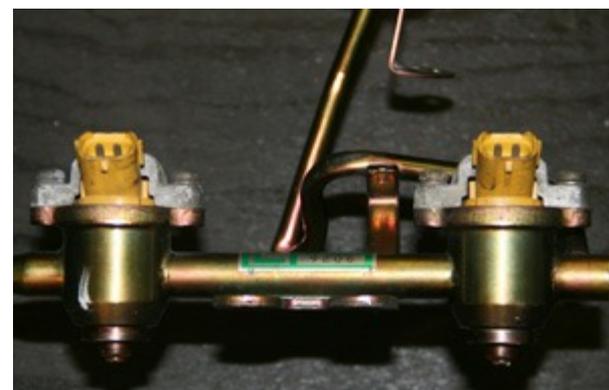
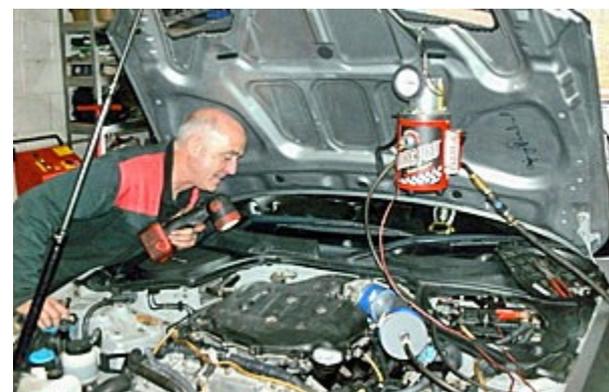
Fault finding & diagnostics - 2

The problem is that the root cause is not always determined by this method, and whilst the symptoms may be temporarily alleviated, if the component exchanged was not the cause of the issue but a symptom of it then sooner or later the trouble will come back.

The second method is to use inspection and testing. This is the route we favour. It may cost a little more initially, as time is necessary to undertake this testing, however this will lead to correcting the root cause of the issue and identifying all the affected components. The method involves identifying the system affected then performing end to end testing, measuring the inputs, outputs and power supply to each device until the defective component is identified.

If a methodical step by step approach is followed the cause of an issue will ultimately always be found.

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ASNU Fuel injector flow testing and ultrasonic cleaning

We are an [ASNU UK Service Centre](#)

Contaminated petrol or corrosion in the fuel system can obstruct the fine passageways within the fuel injector and lead to poor throttle response, rough running and loss of performance.

We can flow test and ultrasonically clean your fuel injectors, not only to correct injector flow rate but also to restore top performance and economy.

We offer this service for petrol injectors only.

Flow testing of the fuel injectors is for:

- Identifying a faulty injector
- Measurement of the maximum flow rate for mapping purposes
- Verifying that the injectors are a properly matched set

For cleaning of both petrol and diesel fuel injectors without removing them from the vehicle please see our [fuel injector cleaning \(In situ\)](#) page.



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Fuel injector cleaning (In situ)

We have a Fortron Injector Max Machine to clean both petrol and diesel injectors and assorted fuel system components without removing them from the vehicle.

This process is especially suitable for:

- Restoring maximum performance in performance cars
- Assisting with fuel efficiency in older cars
- Cleaning the system after contaminated or low quality fuel has been used

The potential benefits of fuel injector cleaning are:

- Improved MPG
- Improved power
- Lower exhaust emissions
- Smoother and more responsive acceleration

For flow testing and cleaning of petrol fuel injectors that have been removed from the vehicle see our [fuel injector cleaning](#) page.

This treatment is most effective when combined with our [induction system and throttle body cleaning](#).



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Engine induction system and throttle body cleaning service

We have a Sykes-Pickavant 53403500 machine, allowing us to clean the induction system components without removing them from the vehicle.

The primary components cleaned are:

- The air intake duct
- The throttle body
- The plenum chamber / air box
- The inlet manifold

The potential benefits are:

- Regaining maximum performance
- Restoring smooth and responsive throttle action (an absolute requirement for fast road driving)
- Removing the build-up of thick oily deposits, caused by the action of the Exhaust Gas Recirculation valve (EGR) and other emissions control components

This cleaning is particularly important for cars used mainly for short runs as they are more at risk of fouling up.

The engine oil and oil filter should be changed after cleaning.



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Engine vacuum system cleaning service

For petrol engines we offer a detergent based method of thoroughly cleaning the components in the engine's vacuum system.

Although this process is broadly similar to the solvent based **induction system and throttle body cleaning**, this process is detergent based and will 'wash' off oily deposits, cleaning the insides of the system.

The detergent solution is drawn into the vacuum port as a fine mist to maximise the coverage and cleaning effect.

The engine's vacuum system includes:

- Inside of the inlet manifold and plenum
- Inlet valves
- Cylinder head (intake side)

After all you wash the grimy deposits off the outside of your car, so it makes sense you should do the same for the inside of the engine too.

Note: This method does not clean the throttle body. This can be done separately if required.



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Car air conditioning testing & re-gas

To keep your car's air conditioning system operating at its best, it is recommended that the system is tested and recharged with cleaned refrigerant gas and compressor oil every 3 years.

At RALLY TEC it's a full air conditioning service, not just a top-up. Our IMI qualified technician will test the system, then recover the used refrigerant, enabling it to be recharged with the correct quantity of refrigerant and oil. If you wish to know more see our [information sheet](#)

Car air conditioning sanitising

If you have noticed a musty or unpleasant smell coming from your car's air vents, then mould, fungus or bacteria growing in the ducts and on the evaporator are almost certainly the cause.

Have your car's air conditioning and ventilation system professionally treated at RALLY TEC. We change the pollen filter, clean the air vents, and then use a powerful broad spectrum antimicrobial fluid that is drawn through the whole system to eliminate the unpleasant smells and the potential for adverse health effects.

The usual benefits of the treatment are:

- Eliminating unpleasant odours emitted from air conditioning systems
- Deodorising the car's interior
- Destroying bacteria on the evaporator
- Providing a healthier environment for driver and passengers

Note: R134a systems only - excluding hybrid and electric vehicles



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Ozone gas disinfection treatment

Is your car really clean?

At RALLY TEC we are pleased to be able to offer Ozone gas disinfection treatment for your car.

Ozone gas is particularly suitable for neutralising a wide range of bacteria, mould and even viruses inside your vehicle.

Once the treatment is complete the ozone quickly converts back in to oxygen, leaving no harmful chemical residues.

Ozone treatment is also effective against strong odours. It does not simply mask the smells it oxidises the molecules causing them.

Ozone treatment will substantially improve even difficult lingering smells like cigarette smoke, mould and pet odour. In many cases a single treatment will remove them altogether leaving your car smelling fresh.



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Battery, Alternator & Starter motor

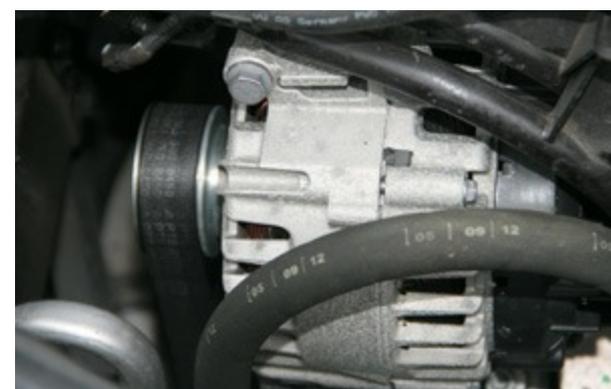
Not so long ago you could usually tell if your car's battery was failing. Typically the headlamps would not shine quite as bright, or the starter motor would crank the engine over a little slower than normal. It was a more simple time for the garage too, as most battery and charging system faults could be diagnosed using little more than a voltmeter and a "drop tester"

Things have moved on however. A modern car uses many computers, each system having its own ECU. The ECU and associated components are very sensitive to voltage fluctuations in your car's electrical system. Many seemingly random and unrelated problems often turn out to be battery or charging system related.

Here at RALLY TEC we can perform advanced diagnostic tests to verify the health of your battery, starter motor and charging system. Testing can include such things as alternator ripple current testing, cranking current profile testing, and alternator load tests, as well as measuring the battery's performance against its original specification.

A typical system test will include:

- Battery testing
- Alternator testing
- Starter motor testing
- Starter solenoid testing



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Vehicle inspection (Classic & Modern)

There are times when you need a professional documented appraisal of the condition of your vehicle. Have your vehicle inspected at RALLY TEC by our experienced technicians.

A documented report on the vehicle's condition can be useful:

- For assessing the condition of a classic car prior to restoration
- For providing documentary evidence to your insurer that a classic car is in a safe condition to be used on the road, as cars produced before 1960 no longer require an MOT
- For satisfying yourself that a classic car that was produced before 1960, and thus is exempt from MOT, is still in a road worthy condition
- On purchasing a second hand car
- After repairing or modifying a vehicle yourself
- Before using your car at a track day, or on the Nürburgring
- In preparation for entering a motorsport event

The report will be tailored to your requirements but might typically include: Vehicle structure, condition of visible mechanical components, engine health check, electrical system, fuel system, brakes, suspension & exhaust system



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Classic Cars

At RALLY TEC we are experienced in working on many classic cars including:

- Austin Healey 3000
- Aston Martin DB6
- Ford Escort & Capri
- Jaguar E-type & Mark II
- Jaguar XK 120 & XK140
- Jenson CV8
- Mini Cooper
- MGB & MG Midget
- Volkswagen Beetle
- **Austin A35**
- **Rover P5**

If you require quality work to be undertaken on your cherished classic car, then come and see us to discuss what we can do for you.

Our services include:

- **Servicing of classic cars**
- Classic car restoration work
- **Inspection and report on vehicle condition**
- Carburettor repair & adjustment
- Carburettor balancing
- **Specialist tuning**
- Setting ignition timing
- **Diagnostic work**
- Electronic ignition upgrades
- Servicing of the steering box
- Wiring loom repairs
- Installation of period switch gear & instruments
- Installation of lighting upgrades
- Electrical upgrades
- Metalwork repairs & modifications
- Installation of seatbelts
- Fitting of carpets & interior trim



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The Austin A35

This Austin A35 has a 948cc engine producing 34 BHP. She was made at the Austin Longbridge plant in Birmingham in 1958. When new she cost £583 and Road Tax was £12 10s 0d. This 2 door Saloon was first registered in February 1958. The Austin A35 can easily fit in the most compact of garages being only 11ft 4in (345cm) long and 4ft 7in (140cm) wide.

The Austin A35 has bags of character and almost everyone knows somebody who has driven one.

[Austin A35 photo gallery - page 1](#)

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Rover P5 Mk III Coupé (pictured above)

The Rover P5 was produced between September 1958 and March 1974. It is curious that these cars have not attracted a larger following amongst classic car enthusiasts as they are superbly made, very comfortable, perform and handle well.

Inside featured quality leather and extensive use of wood veneer. The Coupé models had four very substantial leather armchairs, and sufficient head and leg room for all but the tallest occupant.

The P5 utilised a 3 litre six cylinder engine which was exceptionally smooth and quiet, and whilst it is not exactly sporty, it is not slow by any means and has no difficulty keeping up with modern traffic.

The P5 was available as either a Saloon or Coupé, with either automatic or manual gearbox. In terms of quality and refinement it was easily a match for the Daimlers and Jaguars of its day.

The later P5B had a 3½ litre V8 engine, developed by Buick and a Borg Warner Type-35 automatic transmission. These provided a decidedly sportier drive. It comes as no surprise that these cars, especially the later P5B models, were very popular with the British government for ministerial use. Harold Wilson, Edward Heath and Margaret Thatcher used them as official transport.

Even the fictional Inspector George Gently (from the BBC detective series) drove one!

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the Good Garage Scheme

We have been a registered member of the Good Garage Scheme since January 2008.



We are committed to treating all our customers fairly, courteously, and in keeping with good business practice, in accordance with [the Good Garage scheme Code of Conduct](#)

the Good Garage Scheme *Customer Satisfaction Survey*

Please complete the form below (5 stars being the highest) or visit www.GoodGarageScheme.com and enter your comments in "Leave Feedback".

	*****	****	***	**	*
Helpfulness and attitude of staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Quality of contact about your vehicle?	<input type="checkbox"/>				
How pleased were you with the standard of work?	<input type="checkbox"/>				
General satisfaction overall?	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Type of work undertaken? Service MOT Repair
 Other please specify:

Where did you hear about our garage?
 Good Garage Scheme website Internet search (e.g. Google, Yahoo, Bing)

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Ford performance cars

These days we work on all makes of car, but we are still particularly fond of the fast Fords, which we have specialised in from the start. You can read more in our [company history](#).

We are one of the few remaining garages that is familiar with the K-jetronic fuel injection system and the turbo setup on the early Ford RS vehicles.

You will normally find at least one of the following being worked on in our workshop:

- Ford Capri RS (Dagenham's own muscle car)
- Ford Sierra Cosworth
- Ford Sapphire RS Cosworth 4X4
- Ford Fiesta RS Turbo
- Ford Escort RS Turbo
- Ford Escort Cosworth
- Ford Escort RS2000
- Ford Mondeo ST
- Ford Focus ST
- ... and of course the XR3i & XR4i

Due to our long association with working on these cars we have access to a vast array of test data and specialist tooling, some of it custom made, that you will be hard pressed to find elsewhere.

Back in 1988 we developed and fitted the first quick shift conversion for the Escort RS Turbo (fitted to car E999 EEV).

So if you have a classic Ford from the golden age of Rally Sport (between 1970 and 2000) that needs work, or just a good service, then bring it to us. Our workshop is barely 100 yards from the site of the old Ford Motor Sport facility & test track (1963 to 2003).



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Aston Martin

Resolved fuelling issues and leaking carburettor



Classic Mini

Located and cured engine oil leaks



Classic Mini

Corrected problem with rough idling and engine misfire



Ford Capri 2.8

Adjusted valve clearances and replaced faulty fuel injectors

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Ford Focus ST

Remapped engine ECU for improved performance



Jaguar E-Type

Carburettors setup and balanced



Lancia Delta Integrale

Converted headlamps for UK use and addressed problem with misfiring



Mazda RX7

Problem with starting diagnosed and corrected, brakes replaced, and general overhaul

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Mercedes 300SL

Located fault with fuel pump control circuit



Nissan 350Z

Rectified numerous issues with electrical system, located source of parasitic drain causing battery failure



Renault Clio

Engine management light was on, problem traced to fuel injection system and fault repaired



Volkswagen Beetle

Problem with lack of power traced to issue with exhaust system design, exhaust modified to correct this

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Advice & Tips - Fuel Contamination

This used to be the first thought some owners had years ago when there were more carburettors fitted to cars and the engine was found to be playing up.

Dirt and possibly water was suspected to have got into the carburettor which could have been picked up from a filling station.

The cure then was to clean the carburettor and fuel tank out, this then tended to lead to an improvement in the way the engine responded, if that was the only cause of the issue.

It would be nice to say that there has been a big improvement in the amount of cars being contaminated this way, with the fuel filtration systems fitted to the cars these days.

Water is always a difficult fluid to stop getting to the engine via the fuel, especially in petrol engines, as unlike diesel fuel filters, petrol engines don't have water traps built in.

Both petrol and diesel fuel filters are very good at filtering down to a very fine degree, but allowing the fuel to run down to a very low fuel level or even run out totally, is no good for the engine and can cause the filter system to work harder than normal.

Fine you say, that's what it's there for, very true, but excessive contamination caused by the above reasons, can lead to all sorts of other problems and considering that fuel filters are not always changed as regularly as we would like, especially in tank filters, it could pay to have them changed more often.

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Advice & Tips - Expectations

What do you expect from your local garage - honesty, reliability, value for money, prompt service, professionalism, regular contact and updates, friendliness and good old fashioned courtesy.

Hopefully you get all if not most of the above from the garage that you have built up a relationship with.

If you knew what was needed to repair your car, you may possibly try to sort it out yourself, especially if it isn't too involved or complicated otherwise like the majority of owners you are in the hands of your garage and you probably need to rely on them totally.

It can be very difficult and frustrating when you can't get across to your garage what you feel is happening with your car, especially if it happens to be an intermittent issue, it can even make you out as a fool as the problem may not occur while it is in for repair, and then within a short while of you picking it up it starts playing up again.

You know yourself that you wouldn't have booked it in if there was nothing wrong with it, but occasionally it may be hard to get your garage to understand this, especially if everything checks out, there are no fault codes and everything appears to be okay.

Sometimes unfortunately the only way forward from here, unless your car breaks down, is for the problem to become more regular and possibly until that happens it can become a waiting game, which can knock your confidence in the reliability of your vehicle.

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Advice & Tips - Autumn and Winter Motoring

Autumn and Winter can be a funny time of the year for motoring, generally on a day to day basis you would mainly just have to clean the moisture off the windows and then get on your way, when the temperature really drops though and you are now looking at frozen screens possibly inside and out, what are your options, do you happen to have your de-icer spray and scraper to hand, or if that's not the case do you go and boil the kettle up to pour hot water over the windows of your car as some owners do.

Pouring such warm liquid onto ice cold glass can defrost them quite quickly but it can also cause the glass to crack as well, especially if the windscreen has marks and chips there already.

It can be a great time saver if you are in a rush to get going, but it may also mean that you need to replace a window if a crack occurs.

Heated front and rear screens are an absolute boon in the frosty weather but keeping them on after the screens have defrosted can mean that your alternator is having to work overtime, especially with all the other loads that it has to cope with, most front windscreens heaters are on a timer and will switch off after a certain amount of time, but most rear heated screens tend to stay on once they are switched on, when your screen is clear, try remembering to switch the rear screen off.

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Advice & Tips - Servicing

Annual servicing doesn't appear to be high on some car owners priorities these days.

Servicing can sometimes be thought of as an unnecessary evil, unlike the annual MOT which is a legal requirement.

Some owners may feel that as their car has had an MOT they have carried out their obligation regarding maintenance.

What has been carried out, has been some very basic checks which on the surface may appear sufficient.

Visually things could seem fine, but below the surface things may not be all they seem.

With disc brakes, they are easier to inspect than drum brakes, which if not examined thoroughly on a regular basis could cause some serious problems.

Safety issues aside, neglecting your vehicle and not having it serviced more often can be a false economy, and may cost you even more in the long term, reliability can be compromised and fuel consumption can be affected.

It has been known that some owners don't even have their vehicles serviced in the first three years of purchasing them while still under warranty.

Failing to change the oil and filter annually could be the start of other engine problems occurring, over a greater period of time the efficiency of both of the above can deteriorate and possibly lead to contamination, oil pressure problems, and maybe ultimately engine failure.

It's not unknown for engine oil to thicken and also turn to a gel like substance which reduces the ability of the oil to lubricate and can result in expensive repairs.

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Advice & Tips - The unexpected

It's never easy when something you rely on goes wrong and you need to get it repaired, the hassle involved, the inconvenience, the cost.

Having to speak to your normal garage for something other than a service or MOT is hopefully not something you normally have to do.

When the unexpected happens to your car, things can become a little bit more complicated, more stressful for you.

If it's a noise, leak of some sort or light that has come on, things may not be so bad, as then you have the opportunity of booking it in and taking it somewhere to be looked at.

Sometimes though it always seems to happen at the totally wrong time such as when you're going to work.

What do you do now, who do you contact, how do you get help.

Maybe you're a member of a breakdown service preferably with home start if you're stuck at home.

It's quite surprising that there are still quite a few owners who don't have membership of any sort especially with today's intensively complicated cars

Sure it's not cheap to have, but even if you never use it from one year to the next it's worth every penny, knowing that when you suddenly hear that gut wrenching clunk or no noise at all or just the engine turning over and not starting that you have someone to help you.

With having a breakdown membership you will be helped wherever you are, and if it can't be repaired there and then it can be taken to a garage for assessment and repair.

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Advice & Tips - What is EOBD

It is the abbreviation for European On Board Diagnostics for motor vehicles.

There is a port on vehicles to allow general access to engine/ emission diagnostic fault codes and serial information.

This was instigated as a European (legislative) requirement to make vehicle manufacturers supply a common diagnostic port as previously there wasn't any cohesion between them and most manufacturers had their own type of port, which needed specific connectors, equipment and software.

Because of Mot emission testing and having the ability to carry out repairs in this area without being forced to go to the main dealer, it was felt necessary to allow other people outside the dealerships this connectivity as well.

Easy access to the engine computer for diagnostics and repair was seen as a prime requirement to allow everybody to diagnose and interrogate the engine control unit ECU.

This was set up for petrol engine vehicles from 2000 and for diesel engine vehicles from 2005.

A lot of emphasis is placed on the diagnostic capabilities of the modern vehicle through fault codes access and retrieval along with serial information.

Fault codes can give quite a realistic starting point in most cases for the diagnosis of problems, but they are not always the be all and end all in every case, and sometimes can be a red herring.

There are many components and situations that may cause a fault code to flag up but they may not always actually be linked to the specific problem that is present.

Sometimes there can be issues with the vehicle and no fault codes are found, it could be easy to assume in that case there isn't an issue as there are no codes.

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Advice & Tips - Dash Board Warning Lights

Most vehicles now tend to look like Blackpool illuminations when you switch on your ignition, with the amount of lights that can be there.

Engine management, abs, air bag, traction control, brake fluid level, disc pad wear indicators etc.

There are also the usual ones you may know such as alternator and oil pressure lights.

When you turn the ignition key on normally all the lights carry out a self test of their systems and then go out if everything is okay, though some only go out after the engine has been started or after the vehicle has been driven a short distance.

Most of the time your lights will be off, but occasionally you may see the odd light come on.

It's easy to panic, especially if you're not sure what the light may mean, it's worth looking through your handbook to see what the symbol means if you don't know or if you don't have a handbook then contacting your normal garage is your other option.

Seeing lights come on for no apparent reason can be a cause for concern, and obviously to prevent the possibility of an accident, especially when the brake, abs, traction control lights come on, it is wise to get them looked at sooner rather than later.

With regard to the engine management lights coming on, if left without further investigation, this could lead to heavier fuel consumption or possibly a hefty engine repair bill.

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Advice & Tips - What is a DPF?

This is the term used for Diesel Particulate Filter commonly found on the majority of modern diesel cars.

Diesel engines as a result of the combustion process produce solids of carbon also referred to as particulates.

When the engine is running these solids are expelled into the exhaust system and would be pushed out into the atmosphere if it wasn't for the DPF.

Because of the ever tightening emission laws that have been introduced, more ways have had to be found to enable the reduction of these particles.

Redeveloping the engines and fuel system to make them more efficient has helped tremendously, even then particles are still produced, so as much of these as possible have to be collected and prevented from leaving the exhaust system.

Hence the design and fitment of the DPF combined with the driving and regeneration cycles that have been introduced into the engine management system to assist with their collection and removal.

The system tends to work well generally, but in certain circumstances such as when the vehicle is used for short journeys, and frequent stop starts, this can overwork the DPF to the point that the DPF can struggle to keep itself clean and eventually may lead to it clogging up.

This could cause the engine computer to put an engine management light on and possibly put the vehicle into a reduced power mode.

A visit to the workshop for a forced DPF regeneration and maybe even a very expensive DPF replacement may be required.

You could help reduce this happening by using the best quality branded fuel that you can afford, and taking it on a longer run at a higher road speed than you would do normally.

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Advice & Tips - How important is your fuel?

Fuel whether it is petrol or diesel and the increasing cost of it can always be a topic for discussion.

Most owners tend to look at the cost of fuel as a necessary motoring expense, and perhaps in that case look to pay the lowest price possible, thinking that they are saving money.

The general perception of all fuels being of the same quality, wherever it is purchased from, be it from a supermarket or a branded supplier, is not necessarily correct.

Due to the refining of the fuel and the additives and quality of additives put in, can mean that your engine may not get the full benefit of the fuel you use.

The octane rating and quality of the fuel, can be very important for the general running of your engine, also how much power it produces, how well it helps clean the engine and components internally and the amount of miles that you may get from that fuel .

Using a branded fuel of the highest octane that you can afford, such as 97 ron petrol and the best quality diesel, can pay you back in all or some of the areas mentioned above.

With diesel cars, using top quality fuel, can help slow down the ongoing clogging and reduction of the efficiency of the diesel particulate filter found in the exhaust system of most modern diesel cars.

If this filter were to become badly clogged, to the point that it was not able to be regenerated by your vehicles engine management system, you may find that your vehicle could be forced into a reduced power mode, this may mean that your DPF might have to be replaced and your engines computer reset which can be very expensive.

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Advice & Tips - Under the bonnet

Looking under the bonnets of the modern motorcar can be very daunting and intimidating.

The manufacturers have a habit of shrouding over the engine bay, and this doesn't help you to carry out some important maintenance checks yourself.

Some owners can be under the impression that regular checks by themselves aren't required, as their vehicle is regularly serviced, or that they may believe that as everything is sealed, nothing needs topping up or looking at.

Unfortunately that's not true, there are still fluid levels that can be seen and accessed in most vehicles.

Using your vehicle handbook is a good place to start, especially in the case of opening the bonnet and keeping it up, which can be tricky to do, especially if you don't know where the bonnet release or bonnet stay is.

Your handbook should also be able to tell you what levels you can find and also where to top them up.

Care must always be taken when adding fluids, for example waiting until the engine is cool before checking or topping up the engine coolant, and making sure you are putting the correct fluids into the correct places.

Some engines tend to use engine oil between services and failure to maintain a good oil level can result in a lot of expense.

Regular checking of levels is important and excessive topping up of brake fluid, engine oil and coolant can also be helpful in letting you know, that there may be a problem occurring.

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Advice & Tips - Tyres

Tyres are a very important part of your vehicles structure that are normally left alone by most owners, other than the occasional checking of tyre pressures. Normally the only time they may get any attention paid to them, is if a puncture is found or the vehicle is having an mot or service, where it is brought to the owners notice that they may need replacing now or in the near future.

Perhaps when you have cast an eye over the tread on your own tyres, in particular the outer edges which are normally the most easily visible areas, they may have looked fine to you with plenty of tread left on them, unfortunately this can leave you with a false impression of their safe use.

Where you also need to check carefully is on the inner edge of the tyre tread, as sometimes the wear there can be far worse, to the level of being bald or even with the tyres inner cord or wire being exposed, which can substantially weaken the tyre.

This weakness, apart from the effect it could have on your licence and wallet, with points and fines, could have the worst effect of blowing out on you when you are driving, which at the very least can be frightening and at the worst could cause a bad accident.

Tyre condition and pressures, vehicle lights and under bonnet levels are still an important part in today's motoring, that needs to be carried out between services.

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Advice & Tips - The car battery

They haven't changed dramatically since they first became used on motor cars, they are still roughly the same shape and still contain acid.

The days of topping them up with distilled water has mainly gone as most of them are now non serviceable.

They do a remarkable job of providing enough power to start the car every time and then absorbing a charge back into itself from the alternator, ready for the next start.

A lot more electrical and electronic devices have been added over the years and to help cope with this, the alternator has been improved dramatically to handle these extra loads and maintain the battery level for trouble free starting.

Car batteries do last for many years before their replacement is required, but as always they tend not to get replaced until they let us down.

Sometimes you can get a bit of notice that the battery is on its way out, quite often though, it can be totally out of the blue, and normally when we least expect it.

It's not unusual for car batteries to last between five to seven years.

It's possible to help maintain your battery with a trickle charger or if leaving your car standing for long periods, you can use a specifically designed battery maintenance charger.

By making sure that you don't have more electrical items on than are necessary, especially when you are in slow moving traffic, this will help the battery keep a good level of charge and assist the alternator.

Heated rear screens being left on permanently doesn't help.

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Advice & Tips - Filters and the importance of their regular replacement

Most owners know that their cars have an oil filter and an air filter and the importance of their regular replacement, but some owners are unaware that the majority of cars possibly have a cabin filter and a fuel filter as well.

The cabin filter is there to stop dust and pollen particles entering the cabin, over time if this serviceable item is not replaced it can place an unnecessary load on the interior fan motor and this can cause it to fail.

This filter should be replaced at certain recommended service intervals, in some cases depending on where the car is used it may be that these intervals need to be reduced.

The pollen filter as it is also known as is not an expensive part, though if not changed a much more expensive fan motor may be required.

The ease of which it can be changed can vary quite considerably from car to car, which can sometimes mean that the filters that are not easy to access could be left for longer than we would like.

The fuel filter of petrol engines in the majority of cases are normally under the bonnet, sometimes near to the fuel tank and can occasionally can be found in the fuel tank it self.

The majority of manufacturers do have recommended replacement intervals on their service schedules but some don't.

If the filter is left unchanged eventually problems can start to occur.

Sometimes just by replacing the fuel filter problems that have been affecting the driveability of your car can appear to disappear as if by magic.

The efficiency of the filter deteriorates over time and mileage and it may be that it is not filtering the fuel correctly and this again could lead to premature failure of more expensive components.

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Advice & Tips - Fuel Cross contamination

On a previous occasion we touched on the subject of getting dirt and water into the fuel and overworking the fuel filter and system.

Something more current that seems to happen, is the chance that by mistake, you could end up putting the wrong type of fuel into your vehicles fuel tank.

You might think it could never happen to you, it's not a mistake you would make.

It may be easier to do than you might realise, especially as in most filling stations both petrol and diesel fuel nozzles are on the same pump.

Picking the wrong fuel nozzle up when your mind is on other things, such as when you are in a rush or possibly putting fuel into a vehicle you don't normally drive, can often lead to a costly error.

Some drivers do notice quite soon after the nozzle trigger is pulled that they have made a mistake, some drivers fill up the whole tank before they realise and unfortunately some drivers actually drive away from the filling station.

If you have realised your mistake and haven't actually started your vehicle then you are at the best point possible.

Most filling stations tend to have the number of a fuel retrieval specialist, who will for a fee, come out and extract the contaminated fuel, so you need to approach the staff at the station you are at and see if they can help you.

If they don't have a contact number of a specialist and you belong to a motoring association, then they should be your next port of call.

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Advice & Tips - Noises

Where do you begin with that, they can come from anywhere on a vehicle.

When your vehicle is stationary and the engine is running and noises are coming from under the bonnet or underneath your car, it is never easy to locate them.

Noises can come from the engine, con rods, pistons, tappets, camshafts, injectors, various pulleys, belts, gearboxes, exhaust etc.

Some noises may only occur while the car is in motion, which can significantly change the ease with which the noises are located.

There are additional noises that can come from movement of the vehicle such as the drivetrain, brakes, bearings, wheelhubs, suspension, bodywork and dash area.

Vehicles can produce several noises, it is then a matter of prioritising which ones in particular are of concern to the owner.

In many cases it can pay to go out on road test with the owner so that time can be spent, trying to locate the actual type of noise that is of concern and set about trying to locate and rectify it.

With curing some louder noises this can sometimes highlight other noises that didn't appear to be there, or have become more noticeable than before.

Alternator belt noises can be so loud, that it might appear that a water pump or other type of bearing is in the process of failing, whereupon spraying the belt with a thin mist of lubricant spray seems to make the noise disappear, much to the owners satisfaction.

Knowing what the noise is, in some cases can make everything less stressful as against not knowing which can be worse.

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Advice & Tips - Noises part 2

We touched on noises in general last time, oddly enough when an owner brought their vehicle in with what appeared to be a very noisy alternator belt and it got louder on full steering lock, the noise went when sprayed with a light spray lubricant.

It was decided that to cure the noise the owner was told that the serpentine belt required replacement and the car was booked in.

When the car was dropped off for repair, it was found that the noise was now worse and even doing it in the straight ahead position also there was a very bad vibration coming through the steering wheel and column as the steering was moved from left to right, which wasn't there before.

The noise/ vibration seemed to be linked and further diagnosis was required.

Belt adjustment is carried out by an automatic belt tensioner that maintains the correct tension without having to manually adjust the belt.

In a lot of cases when the engine is running you can see visually that the tensioning pulley tends to move about, in this case the movement appeared to be quite excessive, first thoughts might normally indicate that the replacement of the tensioner assembly would be required as well as the belt.

This particular vehicle had a diesel engine and in most cases diesel engine alternators have a clutch pulley which is there to help absorb the pulses of the engine when it's running.

When the pulley was looked at it was found to be seized, by replacing the alternator and belt the problem was solved.

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Advice & Tips:

Is your classic car ready for winter?

With the classic car show season drawing to a close, many classic car owners are preparing their cars for winter storage. For many it's a well practised procedure; however, if you're new to it, here are the basics.

If you've been putting off some larger maintenance jobs, now's an ideal time to get the work done. The first stage of preparation is to wash and dry the car to remove any corrosive muck, before ideally parking the car in a dry garage. It is wise to chock a wheel and then release the handbrake to prevent the brake seizing on. Next check the antifreeze concentration and also top up the corrosion inhibitors if required. After that we move on to the engine oil - even if the car has done limited mileage an oil change will remove the water and combustion products that may corrode the engine from within. Then we either charge and then disconnect the battery, or connect it to a battery maintainer. We must now give the petrol tank some attention - it is wise to add a fuel stabiliser to prevent the fuel going stale. Now we're on the home straight, just the tyre pressures to check and then inspect the engine bay and underside of the vehicle and treat any corrosion. Lastly use an anti corrosion product to protect the chrome and any unpainted metal under the bonnet.

Naturally you don't have to do it all yourself, and our [Classic car care information sheet](#) has more information

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RALLY TEC was established in 1981 by John "Jakey" Rule an ex Ford Motorsport rally engineer of 22 years experience with Ford Motorsport at Ford's competition facility at Boreham Essex.

He left Ford competition in 1979 to manage a private rally team for a resident of Monte Carlo for two years after which he came back to England and started his own business.

Shortly after starting RALLY TEC John was joined by his son-in-law Michael Kerins, who started his training in the industry in 1971, and qualified as a City and Guilds of London Institute motor vehicle service mechanic in 1975 with two credits and a distinction.

RALLY TEC soon outgrew our original premises in Beach's Drive Chelmsford and in 1983 relocated to our present location.

In 1988 John went into partnership with Michael. Unfortunately in 1996 John had to retire from an active role in the business due to poor health, leaving Michael to expand and develop the business. To this day RALLY TEC remains true to its roots and continues to specialise in performance tuning and most importantly service work and repairs.

In 2015 Stefan joined RALLY TEC bringing in much needed additional skills and experience from other industries, further enhancing and strengthening RALLY TEC's capabilities with his business acumen, knowledge and especially his advanced diagnostic skills.

We live in interesting times.....



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