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NOT JUST A DAY JOB...



A marque for all seasons



Derek Reid, of Oldmeldrum, with some of his collection



The emblem on the front of the 1934 Austin 12

After a lifetime of restoring broken down old vehicles, Derek Reid has more motors than he knows what to do with. He told **Philippa Gerrard** about a few of his favourites

Not many people get to do what they love for a job, but for Derek Reid the daily grind is nothing short of a hobby. The 53-year-old from Oldmeldrum has had a passion for cars for as long as he can remember, and after training as a mechanic when he was a teenager, his obsession continued to grow.

In his late 20s Derek took a risk and went solo, opening his own garage. Now 25 years later, the garage is still running, and in fact it's more than just running, as Derek explained.

"It's not just a day job," he said.

"I'm a mechanic all day

and all night too, it's so busy," he laughed.

"I do enjoy it though, it's my job and my hobby.

"The only problem is trying to find enough time to spend on my own cars."

And with 15 of his own motors in the garage, finding enough gaps in his schedule to work on them all is no easy task.

A mix of old and new cars, it's impossible for Derek to pick a favourite.

"I didn't intend to end up with so many cars," he said.

"It just kind of happened over the years.

"For most of the vehicles I've owned it's been a case of building them up and restoring them.

"Then by the time I've fixed them up I've gotten to

know the car and feel too attached to sell it.

"I'm trying not to acquire any more though, as I'm constantly busy working on the ones I've already got!"

Amongst all his motors however, there is one which

"I'm a mechanic all day and all night too. The only problem is trying to find enough time to spend on my own cars"

Derek is particularly fond of: a 1965 red Austin 1100.

"I've had it the longest out of all the cars," he said.



"It's been about 30 years now actually.

"My first ever car was an Austin 1100 when I was young.

"This isn't the same one of course but I've had a few of them in my time and think they are good cars.

"This one was bought brand new by my grannie's sister in 1965, so it's actually the same age as me.

"She gave it to me when she was done with it.

"Cars at that time just rotted through, so it wasn't in a great state when I got it.

"People thought I was mad spending loads of money doing it up, but I just decided it was something I really wanted to do.

"It wasn't worth much

to sell but it was worth something to me, and I won't ever part with it now.

"I restored it in the 1980s when I got it but it was looking a bit tired recently, so I revamped it again just last year with all new wings, panels and doors."

With the Austin 1100 spick-and-span once again, Derek has more time to spend on another ongoing project of his, a 1968 Hillman Imp.

It's been a work in progress over several years, and is still in need of some TLC.

"It's about half restored," said Derek.

"I've been at it on and off as other things get in the way but I'm determined to finish it.



The interiors of the 1934 Austin 12, above, and the 1965 Austin 1100, below



A 1972 MGB GT.
Photographs by Kami Thomson



A 1934 Austin 12



Derek's 1965 Austin 1100 which dates from 1965



"The other week I was working on it and found some receipts in the passenger side from 14 years ago, so you can see how long I've been at it."

When he's not busy under the bonnet however, Derek likes to make sure his motors get some time on the open road, and is a regular at various car shows around Britain.

"I always try to make a point of going down to the Beaulieu autojumble outside Southampton," he said.

"It's one of the best places to buy parts for old

cars and there are about 2,000 stalls selling everything you can think of.

"It's said that if you can't find it at Beaulieu it doesn't exist."

"Every year I try to get away in my 1990 Volkswagen camper van too, I'm thinking about doing a west coast trip this summer."

"Last year I started out doing the North Coast 500 Run right round the top of Scotland, but when I got home it turned out I'd actually done closer to 700 miles, so I must have taken

a wrong turn somewhere," he laughed.

And with plenty of trips planned, Derek is keen to alleviate his one daily gripe: a lack of day-to-day driving.

"I've got so many cars that I don't get to use," he said.

"I live on the same site as my garage so I just need to roll out of bed and I'm at work. Most people hate their daily commute, but I'd love to have a journey to do every day."

And with a car for every day of the week, it's easy to see why.