



Concours Preparation, the Way to Peace and Harmony!



I suppose my unbeknown start towards Concours preparation would be my father, who after he left the RAFVR in Oct 1946 went back into civilian life and purchased his first motorcycle and sidecar as our family transport, and after a number of newer models in both BSA and Ariel his last purchase in 1958 (he died in 1966) was a brand new Ariel 650cc Huntmaster twin (Canadian export model) with Swan single chair, as by this time I was riding pillion! He always kept them both spotless, spending many hours outside his garage cleaning and polishing whilst I as a young boy watched in fascination. His bike was his passion one that got passed onto me. So my tale begins...

You have to remember that this was all done in the UK, where all vehicles are subject to rain, mud, snow, salt and surprisingly occasionally some sun! With older cars you can remove enough dirt and muck to grow quite a few plants and there is no requirement (like in some countries) to be legally required to have an oil free engine bay etc.



In 54 years of motoring, I have had over 35 cars plus a few scooters / bikes and restored quite a few of these over the years but from my first car a A35 Van (James Hunts final mode of transport) it has been my goal always to have as clean a car as one possibly can, thus every purchase was cleaned and detailed as best I could afford at the time with lots of time and effort to keep them looking as best I could, and I had some pigs in my time!

Engines were worked on, cleaned and painted, panel and paintwork was done, rattles stopped and some modified etc. etc. I have owned both a BMW 5 series and a 6 series which were the first cars I really went to town on entering them in show and shine shows.



My mate Tony's Concours engine bay!

It was not until I got my first Porsche 911SC that this became my obsession, spending every hour on the car (24 hrs straight on the next day after I bought it). Sometime earlier I met Tony Ruggles, now a close friend and Porsche lover, (winner of the PCGB National Concours at Highclere and runs a business servicing and repairing Porsches and other high end cars), at club night and it was he who got me to enter my first Porsche Club Essex Region Concours after a couple years of ownership. Simple he said, make sure the car is as clean as it can be all over including underneath and keep it



standard and see how it goes. After the event ask for your score sheet and we will go through it to see what needs to be done.



After a 24 hours clean the day after I bought it

Sure enough, I did not win a prize but took a plaque for Spirit of Concours – so a result in a way.

We analysed the scores I got and found, for initially little cost, I could achieve maybe a 3rd place next year, so began the effort to make it happen a point at a time.

I became a regular face at my local OPC dealer in Hatfield to the point when they gave me a seat and put me in front of the micro fiche to pick my own parts as well as above the normal 10% PCGB discount, sometimes even more if it was a no longer required part.

The Engine and gearbox came out on Xmas eve at my house so that I could spend a couple of months underneath cleaning and restoring as well as detailing the engine etc so Xmas Day, Boxing Day was spent under the car and ongoing. You get to know your car very well lying underneath it for many hours! This was a regular occurrence every year over the winter months. Luckily, I had a large double garage and an oil-fired portable heater.



Once back on the road at the end of March it was duly entered again that year in the same Concours to which I got a 3rd place, narrowly missing second! Now it was time to get serious... one point can make all the difference.

The following year again with some more work at reasonable prices I gained a 2nd. It's surprising what you can do on a limited budget and lots of hours in it but it does pay off in the end. Attention to detail is the only thing that counts and yes there were toothbrushes, cotton buds and make up brushes used as well as copious amounts of cleaning products and micro fibres / dusters!



Before cleaning/detailing/replacement parts etc. commences

In an effort to get a 1st during the following year, the car was treated to many new shiny parts, lots more cleaning and eventually a full glass out, doors & wings off etc, respray (but that's another story) and when it was all finished it looked fantastic.

Many days and hours all over the car, much midnight oil burned and on the Saturday before the event the car was still on axle stands, no wheels on it and no interior which was still waiting to be put back in and many other bits laying on the garage floor polished or repainted yet to be refitted



on the car. Only one problem, I was at Silverstone on that day until late afternoon. So an all-nighter was done finishing at 5.00am just in time for a shower, breakfast and get going!



Engine bay as detailed as you can get after restoration

Try driving 35 Kms without trying to touch the brakes!

Once there, more cleaning to be done along with many other entrants but my car did stand out.

Judging began, after a couple of hours and some lengthy deliberation the results were announced. I had taken 1st place!

What a happy bunny I was!

All tool kit, electrical pump (Porsche), service books and drivers manual in the correct folder, jack, wheel brace, space saver wheel and of course your PCGB windscreen badge were all part of the inspection and points.

The Essex Concours judges were the PCGB ones at national level so there was no favouritism here and yes white linen gloves did get used!



The car went to many Concours after that with good results and was driven over most of France, Belgium and Germany for several years in all weathers so on return cleaning over several days became the norm but you just have to drive them, no garage queens with me.



After full restoration

Here in Western Australia you have the pleasure of mostly great weather, no snow and no salt and most cars here regardless of age are fairly clean underneath so the effort required is not so extensive unless you are absolutely OCD – yes I am working on it!

So people. It's easy as my mate Tony said, lots of time, patience, cleaning products and various implements to help clean those hard to get to areas, not minding getting dirty (it washes off) and the rewards are a deep satisfaction that you have achieved something that other Porsche lovers can appreciate. Of course, you can always take the easy route out by getting someone else to do it – at a massive cost – but where's the joy and satisfaction in that! I will always do mine it never goes near a car wash or anyone else.



I had slightly modified my car over the years with RUF wheels, Momo steering wheel and a 3.2 Carrera lower front panel with the recessed spotlights but all these could be replaced in an hour with the original parts.



Fully Done!

Just remember the car needs to be as it left the showroom, it can be updated with options that were available for that year and model but no drainpipe exhaust, nodding dogs or furry dice. My car left the distributor with no spoilers, 15" cookie cutter wheels and Pasha interior but the options listed for that year were front and back spoilers, 16" Fuchs either 7" X 6" or 8" X 7", lower front fog lights as well as black leather interior so those were added by me.

With my car, all the painted metal work was powder coated and all the nuts, bolts, washer's worm clips and bright work were all re zinc plated at very reasonable prices, better than purchasing new and if you have an air cooled 911 the fans and casing are NOT painted but natural aluminium as cast with a light grey colour. I had mine bead blasted and then soaked in silicon spray left for a day then washed off – looked as good as the day it was fitted! Plus remember tyres don't come from

the factory with very shiny rubber, its matt black as standard (used to use black boot polish) and the centre cap Porsche emblem shield bottom must point towards the valve!

So, there must be a couple of you out there, who with a slight push in the right direction could join the very small company of current entrants in the clubs Concours if not this year then next – SIMPLE!

We need your cars.

I am here to help you on your way should you need it so long as it involves coffee!



1st Place – Water Cooled –2003 996

Still winning in 2018 - Brad Bradshaw - Master Concours Participant and his car takes part in every club social run still no garage queen - a shining example to others!