

If I had known then what I know now would I have bought 71 DXC aka ST 1 back when I first saw it on that Welsh Hill Farm or even got involved – that's a hard one to answer!

When I first went to see the car back in 1991, the idea of owning a genuine Saint Car was paramount and to be fair I was without doubt looking through rose coloured glasses in terms of what was there and what it would take to get the car back on the road following the years of neglect, did not come into the equation. The reality was much more of a coming down to earth experience, one I got the car home and restoration started, involving problems with suppliers, parts going missing, a disastrous paintjob, missed deadlines etc; etc; and the breaking of a very good friendship! To be fair the positives do out way the negatives and now the car is on the road, much of the pain is just a distant bad memory.

The turning point has to be getting the car resprayed, thanks to member Jonathan Bell by Flybe Engineering at Exeter and the final fitting up of the new interior by Richard Felton in Doncaster, plus transportation of the project all over the country by Jim & Sean Skeet, and that all came together just in time for the unveiling of the car at the 2012 Classic Motor Show on the Volvo Enthusiasts Club Stand at the NEC Birmingham by Malcolm Christopher one of the original production team of The Saint.

I had been approached the previous year by a writer from one of the other major Classic Car Magazines about doing an article on the cars restoration but having been messed about with promises, that in the end never came to fruition. Just prior to the NEC Show I was contacted by Danny Hopkins, Editor of Practical Classics with a view to them featuring the car as soon as it was on the road. I agreed but no timescale was put forward and Keith Moody the Deputy Editor and keen 'Volvo Man' would be given the assignment I was told.

My aim originally was to get the car ready for the summer of 2013 so I could finally enjoy the car after 7 years hard slog. In reality due to ill health, the goal posts were moved and a revised date was set for the car to be completed, MOT'd and on the road in time for a return to the Classic Motor Show in November 2013. As the year progressed I was contacted by Keith Moody to see if there was a possibility of getting the car finished earlier than planned, so it could be photographed, driven etc in early September, so the car could feature in their December issue which would, along with the car, be available at the NEC Show.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2013, 71 DXC went for its first MOT in over 40 years and passed with flying colours.

A week later I met Keith Moody and Photographer Laurens Parsens for the photo shoot. The day could not have been worse! It started with light drizzle which during the day progressed into torrential rain. With only around 12 miles on the clock of 71 DXC since its total rebuild I was as you can imagine rather concerned about the weather, the car had never been out in the wet since restoration started but it was soon to be christened and also we needed to be careful of possible damage to the very tight engine.

The shoot started with some road shots (on a private road?) with Laurens hanging out of the back of Keith's MPV and me following, taking up various positions on the road at sometimes nerve racking distances! Once these were in the can, it was off to my workshop due to the rain, for more shots of the car. While Laurens set up the various lights etc Keith and myself set about cleaning and drying off ST 1 ready for the next batch of photographs which included photographing almost the entire car. This in fact took most of the day and all that was left for me to do was to drive the car at speed (You have got to be joking!) while Laurens captured this on film from a static point. Our first 'location' was a tight bend on the edge of the village where my workshop is situated. As I drove back and forth, being told to go quicker,(in a car with new tyres and it pouring rain!!!) I was getting a little uneasy as the back of the car drifted away several times. A change of location to a straight piece of road and the photo was again in the can.

All that was left now was for Keith to Road Test the Car. I don't know who was more nervous me or him. Returning from the road test his face said it all and his complimentary remarks really made my day '... a wonderful car. It's a real honour to drive one this good'.

In the end I think Keith comment sums it all up and why it was worth doing. The car has already given so many people so much pleasure and my hope that it will continue to do so for many years to come. The car is a real icon that deserved to have be saved. Long live The Saint!

Many thanks Keith and Laurens for a great day.



**What's it like to drive?**

**Keith Moody gets behind the wheel**

With just 12 miles on the clock since its rebuild, Kevin was understandably concerned that I was gentle with his car. And given what it could be worth, so was I.

On the day of our road test and photoshoot, the rain was hammering down. 'Good on Kevin for letting me take it out in this weather,' I think. Then I spin the wheels doing a hill-start out of his road and wonder if he's thinking the same thing.

You sit low down in this coupé, but you've still got great visibility of the road and the edge of the car. The interior is a lovely place to be, with fresh red leather



seats and thick light green carpets. The ride is sporting, but not overly firm, and the engine is keen to pull, although it isn't as free-revving as it should due to the fact that it's barely run in. But it doesn't detract from a wonderful car. It's a real honour to drive one this good.

**Keith Moody of Practical Classics Road - Tests the 'Original' Saint Car 71 DXC aka ST 1**