

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## 1965 Aston Martin Short Chassis Volante - Brought back to life



**We spoke to Peter Stratford of Goodwood Green Classics recently about a car he was bringing back from South Africa for restoration in the UK. It turns out the car has a fascinating history and the whole project makes interesting reading for those brave enough to attempt a restoration and, in effect, to bring a car back to life.**

One of the things that makes it so interesting is the availability of Aston Martin Works Service records for the car from new.

The following interview with Peter also appears on his website - [www.goodwoodgreen.com](http://www.goodwoodgreen.com)

"This car (Chassis Number DBVC 2330/R) was sold new on the 25th October 1965 and was originally supplied in Pacific Blue (not the current colour) with Beige Leather Trim. Fog lamps were fitted as extras and the car had an automatic transmission.

"It seemed to spend a lot of time at the factory almost straight away and I am sure that this car was the subject of many a heated exchange between the original owner and the Aston Martin Factory and Service Department. At only 568 miles a new rear axle was fitted, about two weeks after it drove out of the showroom. By the 7th December 1965 the car had covered only 978 miles and went back to the service department for another axle to be fitted and some minor service work. Problems obviously persisted and on the 8th January 1966 the car was returned to have a replacement gearbox fitted. Just in case, another rear axle was fitted at the same time! By March, things were still not going well and the car went back once again. With 2301 miles on the clock, another rear axle was fitted. On the 4th April the car was once again at the works. According to the service sheet a second replacement gearbox fitted and a new torque converter. The car then seems to have behaved itself for a period of about 14 months until 4th December 1967. This time a new engine was fitted, although the record does not show why. This engine, number 400/2361 is still with the car.



"The vehicle was then sent to Capetown South Africa and we believe it was still with the first owner. There is a slight gap in the history as no records have been found to confirm any history or work until 1971.

"The car appeared advertised for sale in the Cape Argus Press and was spotted by Engineer and car enthusiast Jerry Welz. There was a slight complication however in that the car was offered for sale without an engine by the official receiver. Jerry wasted no time and his offer on the car was accepted. Jerry, well known in local motoring circles, had previously seen an Aston Martin 4 litre engine at a local garage where it had been sent for repair but never collected. A deal was struck and with both parties satisfied, the garage finally got paid

for their work and Jerry now had an engine for his new project.

"The engine of course, turned-out to be the original engine, which for one reason or another had become separated from the car. Jerry immediately started work to put the car back together and began by rebuilding the engine just to ensure it met his high standards. The best laid plans often give way to more pressing needs and with two growing sons, a business to run and all that sunny South African weather, the Aston project became sidelined and the years slipped by while the Aston patiently waited in the garage.

"I first spoke to Jerry in 1998 when a passing enthusiast mentioned the car and also that some parts were needed to complete the project and suggested I may be able to help. Parts were dispatched and various phone calls made to discuss technical problems. I finally went to visit Capetown in March 2001, had a good look at the car and discussed its future with Jerry, who by now also had at least four other cars to complete. A deal was discussed and an agreement reached. The car was to return to the England after 33 years in the sun. It was finally loaded into a container in March 2002 and was brought to our workshop in London. I hope to show Jerry the car complete and running and who knows, he may come and check-out our workmanship and test drive the car."

*Editor's note: Whilst the early reliability history of these cars may seem frightening the standards achieved by reputable restorers nowadays ensure a car that is in effect 'better than new'. Not only modern conveniences such as power steering (I know Peter has an original Factory set up available for this car), air conditioning and FM stereo systems can be added discreetly but also modern rust proofing techniques should ensure the old chassis rot is a thing of the past. 'Works Service', run by the Factory at Newport*

*Pagnell, is currently restoring a DB6, with a famous past owner in the pop music business, with a coated chassis treated in exactly the same way as production DB7 and Vanquish.*

***They do call Aston Martin a 'Car for Life'.***

Photos: Peter Stratford

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