

Bygones

A Derbyshire man's mission to restore his dad's Hillman Minx will create a lasting legacy, says **EVA MILLETT**

A 91-YEAR-OLD man has restored his late father's 1957 Hillman Minx car to leave as a legacy for his grandchildren.

Paul Came, from Aston-on-Trent spent his life savings on renovating the car with Derby-based classic car restoring company Autorara.

The 1957 Hillman Minx Series 2 was originally owned by Paul's father William, who was an engineer in India.

The car was bought to Autorara in a poor state having been off the road for decades. Since March, over 500-600 hours of work has been spent on the car by mechanics at the company in a team of six to seven people.

"This is a straight from the heart kind of project," said David Stubbs, business director at Autorara.

"It was a unique project from our point of view because of the story behind it.

"It's been in the same family since the 1950s, it's the car he learnt to drive in and he wanted to restore it.

"It's the kind of thing we don't see often."

The restoration has been challenging due to time constraints and a low budget for the team at Autorara, however after months of hard work, the Hillman is just 10 per cent away from being completed.

"Choosing where we would create this restoration and still have this memory grabber was very much part of the process that Paul was involved in," said David.

"His daughter and grandchildren also came down.

"We were very lucky to have three generations all giving information about what the car means to them and their journey and personal connection to it."

Paul's father, William Came CIE, worked as a civil engineer for the public works department. While working in India, William mainly worked with irrigation systems turning arid areas into paddy fields which required a lot of water, as well as touring elephants.

During this time William found Hillmans to be very reliable and owned several while in India.

Post the period of Partition in India, William, Paul and his mother Gertrude Came had all come back to the UK and moved to Ringwood in Hampshire.

William bought the car in the late 1950s from the main Hillman Minx dealer in Bournemouth, which had displayed it as a show car with very low mileage.

"On the way back to Ringwood from picking up the car, dad decided to take the scenic route home," said Paul. He went past Hurn (Bournemouth) airport, which was also used by the RAF.

"As he drove past an RAF jet took



The Hillman Minx in the workshop at Autorara in Derby. Below: Paul Came spent his life savings on the project



Paul's labour of love to keep treasured 1957 car in the family

TEAM FROM CITY RESTORATION COMPANY WORK MAGIC ON CLASSIC NEEDING TLC

off and blew out the front windscreen of the Hillman.

"He had to drive back to the dealer and get a new windscreen, which fortunately they had in stock, and it got fitted the same day."

William was a keen gardener, so the car was used regularly for delivering fruit and vegetables to the local market in Ringwood, as well as lots of trips to Devon and London driving at 50-60 mph with no issues.

Sadly, after years of driving the Hillman, one day William hit a bus which had stopped at a roundabout going into Ringwood. Although the bus driver admitted it was his fault, William's insurance company

insisted on an eye test which he knew he'd fail - so he decided to hand his licence in at the age of 86.

After Paul's parents had both died, the Hillman stayed with him in a cottage he was renovating in Swindon for three years. He then spent time working in Iran, while he let the cottage to a family where most of the long-term damage to the Hillman occurred.

"It got severely damaged by rust and kids playing in it," said Paul.

"When I returned to England, the tenants left in a hurry, throwing the keys into the agent's door at 4am and owing two months' rent."

After retiring from Taylor Wood-

row Civil Engineering Contractors, Paul transported the Hillman to Denyer Classic Car Restorers in Chobam near Woking.

Paul moved to Richmond Retirement Village in Aston-on-Trent to be near his daughters. He brought the Hillman to Autorara about a year ago.

The car is now repainted, nearly fully restored and ready to be used at summer shows, before eventually being passed onto his children and grandchildren.

"It's a credit to the men and women who have worked on it," said Paul.

The team at Autorara worked

closely with Paul and his family throughout the project in order to maintain as much sentimental value as possible.

"This is a memory car," says David.

"Not a pristine, perfect restoration, but something that triggered memories within Paul.

"Those memories get passed on to his grandchildren, because they remember something on the dashboard."

In terms of the mechanical and structural work, the Hillman has had a full metalwork restoration, the bumper has been retained to preserve the story and patina; and some chrome work with original patina