

Full Chat...

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35 UP FOR WORLD FAMOUS MORRIS MINOR CENTRE...

ON 25TH MAY 2011 the famous Charles Ware's Morris Minor Centre Ltd. will be 35 years old.

Its founder, Charles Ware, is now in his 76th year. In 2009 he fell ill and was in hospital for nearly six months. For all those that know him he'd like them to know that although he is no longer working he is feeling much better and recovering well.

Charles son Zac has been taking time out to help, and told CMM: "It has been hard for the business to lose such a cornerstone but we are glad to say that we too are recovering."

Many things have changed since 1976 when the company was started in Bath. At that time there were an estimated 250,000 Morris Minors on the road in the UK. This number has dropped to around 20,000 registered vehicles, 14,000 on the road, an unknown number in garages and back lanes and many more around the world, turning the everyman common moggie into a rarer breed.

The Centre employs 23 people with a combined experience of over 300 years, 14 of whom are in the workshops welding, grinding, prepping, remolding, spraying, trimming, rebuilding and repairing engines, fitting Series III upgrades, varnishing and fitting wood. In fact doing every restoration and mechanical job that a Morris Minor owner could ever need. All under one roof.

Without a doubt, part of the continuing success of the Morris Minor is due at least in part to the work of Charles Ware and all the people who have worked at the centre over the years.

Series III
In 1982 Charles Ware published *Durable Car Ownership*, which argued that a well looked after Morris Minor can last longer and cost less for the owner than within the modern patterns of car ownership. This philosophy has inspired many classic car enthusiasts, not just Morris Minor owners.

or look of a classic design. The Recognition of the soundness of Charles Ware's philosophy and it's practice came in 2003 when he went to the Houses of Parliament and was presented with the Green Apple Environment Award, a national certificate of merit awarded by The Green Organisation for Environmental Best Practice

"Though restoration has been the core of the business for most of its lifetime we now find that the demand for one of our rebuilt Minors (based on the Series III modifications introduced in the '80s) is outstripping the supply" said Zac.

Very popular
"It seems that everyone wants an as new Morris 1000. Our convertible/ tourer conversions are proving very popular, while our rebuilt Travellers have buyers ready often before we've even found a donor car!"

"Our parts department has maintained its reputation for excellent quality and high standards in its mail order delivery. It has sent parts to customers all over the world: from Jamaica to Johannesburg, Europe to the Americas. We are in the process of updating the web catalogue to provide photos as well as the traditional workshop manual diagrams."

Both Zac and Charles were at last month's Bristol Classic Car Show. Said Zac: "This was our first car show in a few years but we felt it was time to start showing the quality of our rebuilt, to order, range of Morris Minors as everyday driving vehicles. It also give us an opportunity to test the waters on our new range of merchandise; from the headlights logo on t-shirts and mugs to the highly sought after Morris Minor door brooch, available in sterling silver and gold. We

think they're rather nice!"

There's lots more happening for the Bristol based specialists this year. After a loaning a maroon Traveller to the *The Plant and Nursery Guide* stall at the Hampton Court Flower Show last year, the Morris Minor Centre is proud to announce that one of their rebuilt Travellers is to be the centre piece of the Guide's garden at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show (18-29 May).

Nostalgic
The Smoke Grey finish is the inspiration behind the nostalgic Cornwall beach holiday theme of the garden that is being designed by Claudia De-Yong, a six-times winning medalist at the RHS Hampton Court Flower Show.

Tom Ford, journalist and travel writer has recently finished filming a nostalgic trip down the A303 using a white Traveller restored by the Centre a few years ago. The

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results will be seen on BBC4 later this year.

In April 1991 The Durable Car Company, making Morris Minor body panels, started as a joint venture between Dhanapala Samarasekara and Charles Ware after Dhana saw an article in *The Guardian*. The factory, based in Bataduwa, Galle, uses traditional panel beating skills and employs local people. It continues to supply our parts department and workshops - and celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2011. *The Businessman, The Buddhist And The Morris Minor* is a 1991 film about the venture and is now available to view on Youtube.

Zac's know-how is also helping the Centre stay right up to date: "We are also in the process of rebuilding our website to include videos and photo tours of our workshops and the restoration that takes place within."

Thirty five years and still going strong, Charles Ware's Morris Minor Centre Ltd., is ensuring that a great British motoring legend just goes on and on and on...

●(Top left) Outside the famous Morris Minor Centre. (Right) Charles Ware and his son Zac pictured at last month's Bristol Classic Car Show.



CHARLES WARE'S MORRIS MINOR CENTRE

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