

The miracle Minor's Mecca

TEN YEARS AGO "Minor" magazine advised readers to move to Minor's Mecca. For those who did, and kept their cars in good condition, they got the USA badge against inflation and now worth up to \$4,000. In fact, the model's increasing value lifted Minor's badge, the reader's used car price guide, in increasing it to 1977. In that year Charles Ware opened the Minor's Mecca Centre in Bath.

Since then Ware's presence has become a Minor Mecca, so much so that he regularly attended less an old Minor will last outside the city's limits. He has also overcome the old car owner's biggest problem, the availability of spare parts.

Inevitably, new production runs on a model range there is a general run-down in parts manufacture. So, to walk the Minor Ware's early connections with the Minor plant in Cowley, Oxfordshire, and the persistence in providing them with to knock up tools for engine and body parts has meant the Minor has not only come to get their shop handles. And it came where it, have recently 100,000 production, that has 1987 was.

He is currently making wing panels and woodwork for the

1987 specification (not well known) and for the "half combined" heater and can foresee the day when he will be asked up to manufacture everything from hoppers to boots.

In 1986 years, the Minor's Mecca Centre has grown from a personal hobby into a flourishing business with 28 employees and a £1 million turnover. A combination of enthusiasm, hard work and fair play has brought the enterprise to the attention of investors. Publication of a comprehensive spare parts catalogue designed to double its a working manual in continuity there are plans to open workshops and spare centres in London and the Home Counties; designs for a new car based on the layout are for example advanced for production of a prototype to start later this year.

Ware is a committed conservationist. He has already made and has a million with old buildings and is well known for his interest with old cars. He is in his late 60s, widely travelled but with a working-class pretence he relays his own ideas. He says that a lot of dealers have jumped on the Minor bandwagon "with three new Minors and two parts. He paid £2,000 for a convertible.

The price job was excellent, but afterwards the car was rusted away. I couldn't have afforded more than £500 for it."

Being from Ware is unlike any other used car purchasing experience. For £200 (the lowest in a price range that rises to around 14,000) you get 1988 worth of spare car, fuel and oil, and when you are asked if he offers a guaranteed service on being the car up to customer conditions.

He believes in an honest approach to buying a car. "I had a call from a lady in Lincoln wanting to sell her Minor. A lovely car, low mileage, excellent condition, a real beauty. Her dealer offered her £100 and it was obviously worth twice that to me. She was delighted.

"A couple of weeks later I had another call from a village girl in Lincoln. "She had her Minors car for £100. For a few days she is, are you interested?" In all it brought 10 real beauty from the village. "She was buying down's part."

• Further information from Charles Ware, Minor's Mecca Centre, 40th Street, Lower Bristol Road, Bath, Avon Glos, Bath 2025 29491.

Clive Graham-Ranger

