



# Edna the E-type Pt8

Tom Fussey reports on the work done on his Series 1.5 2+2 over the winter months

She's finally back. After three months of snag-list rectification, we thankfully have Edna back in the garage. Let's be honest, even with all the previous work done on her, she leaked. She didn't particularly like gearchanges. She always sat too low at the front. She didn't brake in a straight line. And she liked to wobble the steering wheel at anything above 50mph.

So, it was off to Angus Moss at Moss Jaguar in Letchworth for a winter hibernation and fix. As I mentioned in my previous article, Angus had already performed a minor miracle on her last time around, when he quickly diagnosed and fixed the sticking rear brake issue – after four years of us trying other specialists. And it took him and his team less than an hour! Now we're reunited with our E, I felt it time to provide an update on the car, and the service we received.

Previously, our work (eg, engine rebuild) had been the major tasks that made a big, tangible difference to the car's condition and hence helped to (very approximately) justify themselves due to the increased valuation. But not this time; these jobs were primarily for my benefit – to improve the driving experience, not the residuals. Coupled with the fact that most classic car prices are in a bit of a lull currently, and the 2+2s still remain relatively unloved, I



- Top: all finished and now riding nice and high at the front
- Above: Edna pictured during the dismantling process

knew the costs involved would be painful, but I hoped ultimately worthwhile from an overall ownership perspective.

Prior to starting the work, Edna was called into action one final time at the end of last summer, as star attraction at Monty's subtly themed fourth birthday party. You may remember the E-type goody bag treats in my previous article. I failed to mention another epic cake; this time it was a recreation of our garage complete with a pair of iced mechanic's legs sticking out from under the E – a fairly normal sight in our family!

Keys were eventually handed over in late November, and Angus kept us updated with progress. As ever with these cars, progress always uncovers new issues, and causes some additional ones too. As part of the front upright rebuild (one of the few parts of the car we hadn't really touched, other than having uprated brakes fitted), the brakes were to be re-bled. However, the bleed nipples were wound in so tight to the aluminium brake caliper housing that both bleed nipples sheared. Not a great start! Some 'gentle' persuasion with a blowtorch was needed to free them, and to prevent damage being done to the pads and internals, the brakes themselves had to be totally dismantled. A full brake service was not on the



- Above right: Monty's cake complete with fake Tom underneath Edna
- Right: a pretend scene to match Monty's birthday cake – including fake legs



job list, but the scope creep had unexpectedly, and unavoidably, started.

As part of the upright rebuild (front bearings were actually found to be OK), Angus also suggested having all the suspension parts nickel-coated for longevity. Another cost, but they do look good and will hopefully last better

than the previous painted coats. The brakes themselves had never bitten correctly, and it turned out they had been plumbed incorrectly, with the fronts biting before the rears. Thankfully we're now all untangled, and brake feel and performance is fantastic. One job down.

Edna always sat too low at the front in my opinion, and thankfully Angus even suggested as much without prompting when I first visited. To remedy this, the reaction plate for the torsion bars was checked and



- Left: gentle persuasion of bleed nipples
- Below left: cracked steering column
- Below: new heat shields abound to protect alternator and servo

- Right: more new heat shield underneath, and (below) the old and new throttle pedals



found to be heavily modified and no longer fit for purpose. Rather than just replacing this with a like-for-like item, we now have an SNG Barratt adjustable design, so hopefully any further mods will be a doddle. To get to the reaction plate meant taking the exhaust off and, while this was off, Angus and his team fitted a comprehensive heat shield under the car (between the silencer boxes and the chassis). I'd managed to miss some critical washers when I last fitted new exhaust brackets – causing the

material to age prematurely – so these bits, plus lots of other minor mods, were carried out.

Edna is now riding slightly too high at the front, but we'll drive her for the summer and see if she settles a little. If not, it's going to be a much easier job to wind down the reaction plate mounts a quarter-turn.

The gearbox has always been reluctant to change from first to second, to go into first in the first place and to change down from third to second. It was also too easy to nearly miss second and find reverse when changing down from third. So, another job for Leon (the technician leading our build) was to adjust the lever to give a much more positive action. This he's managed to do brilliantly and, although Angus and he fear the

gearbox needs a more thorough rebuild (it was a rebuilt unit from Lanes, but it's never been very happy), they've made some big gains here. Having a manual was important for my driving enjoyment, so it's a relief that we've now got a lever that is performing so well. I've no doubt I will eventually need to do a more thorough lever rebuild, but for now the step-change in tactile experience is a good result.

The choke cable for one of the carbs (Edna is still on US-spec Strombergs) was badly frayed and not pulling correctly on the carbs when cold. All is now replaced, and the cold-temperature starts are far better than before – requiring only one or two seconds of crank before bursting into life. The idle appears to be higher than I remember, and the clutch

doesn't feel totally happy with life pulling away in first. The latter isn't anything I can pin on Angus and the team – likely one of those many niggles that is impacted by other improvements on the car, and it may well be something that I can learn to drive around!

While on the subject of the pedal box, Angus also elected to rebuild the throttle pedal mechanism because there were various parts of the puzzle that were incorrect, from the pedal itself through to the bulkhead pivot bracket.

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They also modified the manifold butterfly valve to bring a much more immediate throttle performance. It feels faster, and fast enough for our young-family-GT motoring.

Leon noticed that the steering also felt heavy and, upon closer inspection, found that the steering column support itself needed rewelding at the point of the upper bearing/bush. While fixing this issue, he also noticed the boded starter motor cable – an issue we knew all too well because this add-on cable used to get tangled on the steering column and upon hard steering would pull itself off the starter motor altogether, leading to many times where the engine couldn't be persuaded to start at the next time of asking. With the original loom unpicked, the correct starter wire was found, mended, extended, re-terminated and fitted. Small steps but the improvements were beginning to add up. Sadly, so was the bill!

Alongside various other jobs, including new lower rear suspension arms, new windscreen sealant and lots of new heat protection for the servo and alternator, Edna was nearing completion – at least for this year. Now finally back in my hands, the engine feels much more lively and eager with better pedal feel from throttle and brake. The gear lever, while still not perfect, at least feels like it could be persuaded to improve with further use. And the overall ride and look of the car, with the front now proudly orientated correctly, means that we have a spring/summer of exciting motoring head of us. Already on the job list for next year are the strange clutch behaviour from standstill, the higher idle and a few other minor tweaks. Substantial credit must go to Angus and his team because these jobs never pan



out as expected. There's no doubt we've got a substantially better car, and I'm forever grateful to Angus for his efforts.

While we're very much in a cost-negative situation now, nobody promised us non-stop financial gains and it's fast becoming irrelevant anyway. The kids love riding in Edna and hence we'll never be allowed to sell her. And who knows, by the time they're driving, the E-type – as with similar classics – could be quite an interesting asset for them to figure out what to do with. As long as they, like us, enjoy it by driving it, then I've done my job!

We hope to see many of you at the club summer meet, if not before. As ever, we'll probably be near the back of the convoy nursing some new issue, with kids rammed in the back but with smiles all round.

- Top: reaction plate comparison – Tom's is the top one, the bottom one is for comparison only. He had a variable level type fitted
- Above: shiny new front suspension parts after zinc coating