

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY JIM PATTEN



A ROLLING STONE...

Very few people drive the cars they specialise in, but Angus Moss from E-Conic Cars does, taking his E-type out regularly and driving it abroad several times each year

THE NAME Angus Moss is, perhaps, more well-known through his E-type specialist company E-Conic Cars, which he has been running for five years. We have featured several cars prepared by his company before, but the car here is his own personal E-type, a 1965 open two-seater that he has owned since 2008 when he bought it as a restoration project, already having four successful restorations under his belt.

Angus took two years to complete the restoration from effectively a barn find to show car, but showing wasn't what

Angus had in mind. Determined to remain true to the spirit of travelling abroad at least once a year, he has embarked on his travels to Europe, while still seeing as much of the UK as possible, and has driven to France, Holland, Germany, Italy, Switzerland and Austria in an E-type that has never let him down.

He says he doesn't run E-Conic Cars to amass a fortune; that comes from passion alone. Spending years in the corporate business world was enough for Angus and, when the opportunity to escape presented itself, he was out, determined to spend as much time as possible with his beloved

E-types. His severance agreement saw to that.

His interest in E-types began in 1976 when Angus bought his first – a 3.8 fixedhead coupe. Straight away, he used it as much as possible, including as the marital carriage when he married Karen in 1982. Everything was going well for him. The house was bought with a mortgage and there was even capacity in the budget to start a family. It was something as innocuous as the roof over their heads that would blot the years of continual E-type ownership. Deterioration had set in and there was a hard choice: sell the E-type

or suffer the consequences of defeat as the British weather invaded from above. However, some 18 months was about as much as his supportive wife could bear of an E-type-less Angus. She eventually pleaded with him to buy another E-type, even if it meant extending the mortgage.

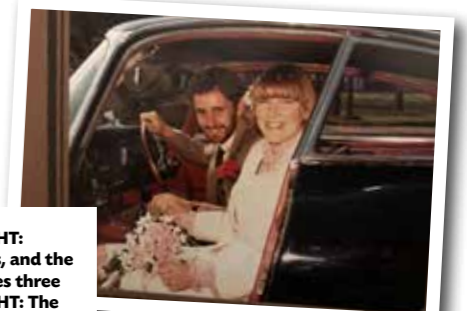
Three E-types followed, all 4.2 open two-seaters. All were projects and all were enthusiastically restored. There were patches of inactivity as business took him away for spells in India and the Middle East, but all the time he was unknowingly learning his trade, establishing contacts within clubs and with the specialists. The biggest learning experience came in the real-life nuts and bolts of the cars; finding the strengths and weaknesses; locating reliable parts sources and suppliers.

His interest was not so much to show his cars, but to get out and use them. And with that foremost in his mind, he began using them for extensive trips, never thinking that there might be any issues along the way, and there weren't. One problem of owning a nice E-type is that it sparks a desire in others, often resulting in an offer that cannot be refused. Hence the turnover of cars as his resistance to a sale proved futile.

His current car, a 1965 open two-seater, was sourced in 2008. Another project, it was typical of a complete but rotten shell, needing most body panels between the bulkheads, and external parts, too. Of more importance, it was relatively untouched so there would be no bodging or previous bad restoration work to undo. Angus was unfazed about the extent of the work involved – he'd seen and dealt with worse. Throughout his 31 years of ownership, he had an idea of what he wanted in an E-type, and he chuckles when he sees other owners who have been lured in by the promise of a better life with random upgrades, massive wheels and tyres, huge brake calipers and five-speed gearboxes.



Lovely interior features sports seats



ABOVE RIGHT: Marital bliss, and the E-type makes three
BELOW RIGHT: The E-type, as found



RESTORATION

E-TYPE

Angus does, though, acknowledge that there is a place for these parts on carefully engineered cars, where balance is taken into account, but to simply fit one part in isolation, without considering the implication of the greater picture, is a mistake. For instance, where a five-speed gearbox is used without considering the ratios, first can be so low that pull away is affected in second, making the fifth ratio redundant. Jaguar's all-synchromesh gearbox is very good and can be easily overhauled, so there is no need to change it, especially if the gain is simply for an extra ratio, possibly dropping the revs slightly in top while cruising.

Angus wanted to give consideration to other areas where the E-type could be improved to ease into our modern world. He wanted total reliability, which a few years back, the E-type would have given. But, with fragile reproduction replacement ignition parts and poor performance from overhauled charging systems, these areas have to be addressed. He also reflected on the braking system and tyres. When new, the Dunlop disc brakes were adequate enough, and they will perform up to a standard for gentle use. However, push them into duty on fast Continental roads where continual use is a necessity, and fade is inevitable. And, if the brakes are to be upgraded, so are the tyres – there is little point beefing up the braking system if the tyres can't give sufficient grip.

The main bodyshell was given over to The Hutson Motor Company, manufacturers of many E-type parts, including panels and sub-assemblies. All agreed that the car needed the usual repair sections, along with replacement engine frames and a new bonnet.



Rebuilt 4.2-litre engine is to fast road specification

“Angus’ interest was not so much to show his cars, but to get out and use them

Still immersed in the corporate world, Angus set about putting the various major components out for overhaul. He wanted the engine to be rebuilt to fast road specification, and the gearbox overhauled to standard configuration. His car had been supplied new with the optional 3.54:1 final drive ratio, which, with a quick engine, could easily be raised to 2.88:1, allowing a more relaxed cruising speed.

Cooling systems can be marginal, so the engine block was chemically cleansed to eradicate any build-up of silt. A new aluminium radiator, a Cambridge Motor Sport header tank and CoolCat fan made the system more effective, while an E-Type Fabs exhaust system expelled the gases.

Gradually, everything came together. Hutsons painted the completed shell, finished in gunmetal, which was a nice contrast to the red leather interior. A new wiring harness was constructed to include the various upgrades, like a modern

alternator, and as Angus prefers to drive with head restraints, he started to source what would become his sports seats. Eventually it was down to him to assemble the whole thing. He chose multi-piston brake calipers from Wilwood in America, fitted over ventilated discs, although he admits that vents were not really necessary. Dunlop 185 x 15in tyres are fitted to chrome wire wheels.

Angus recognises that the work will never be finished, especially when he discovers subtle improvements to increase



Visiting a war cemetery in Northern France





ABOVE: The pits at Reims
BELOW: Pozieres WW1
British memorial



the enjoyment. When the adjustable throttle pedal with accelerator cables made by Mangoletsi became available, Angus fitted one and was delighted with the result. There's also an ECU with coil packs instead of a conventional distributor. The original Radiomobile radio has been adapted for Bluetooth connectivity, while he sometimes uses a portable speaker of commendable quality. When Clayton Classics introduced its heating aids, he fitted the air guide into the air-flow section behind the heater, and used its uni-directional vents to replace the door-flap outlets. A Fiero heater fan drives warm air into the cabin with blistering efficiency.

When I arrive at the company's new premises in Letchworth, the cold wind is biting. Although the sky is the clearest of blues, the ambient temperature is, at most, 3degC – perhaps not the most obvious time to be driving an E-type, but that's exactly what I'm going to do (although the hood will be fully closed and the windows wound tight). After having a look around E-conic Cars' new premises, Angus opens the workshop doors and readies the car for our drive. By the time exit manoeuvres are completed, the engine has warmed,

spreading its heat to the interior. I sit behind the wheel in comfort, the chill eradicated by a blast of heated air as I reflect on what a fine looking car this is.

We head out of town towards Old Warden, close to Biggleswade and the Shuttleworth Collection of vintage aircraft and we're as warm as toast thanks to the efficient heater. The tyres are also warm now, and I am happy to exploit the performance, especially as the willing owner sitting next to me offers encouragement. Revs climb as the sweet 4.2-litre engine delivers its power, but I take care to change gear before the soaring tacho needle hits the red line. Given that the axle ratio is 2.88:1 instead of the usual 3.07:1, there is no discernible difference in acceleration. If anything, this car has the edge on most. But, as I see later when we cruise at motorway speeds, the mood adopts a laid back attitude, with the revs

far lower than a 3.07:1-equipped car, more akin to anything a five-speed could offer.

Handling is crisp and measured, neutral at this speed and easily controllable. Angus talks of different dampers, less firm but more action. They aren't needed, of course, but he is ever seeking subtle improvements. The brakes are superb and reward with gratifying instant retardation. I am very impressed with the steering; it feels light but with sufficient feedback to understand exactly what is going on. Could this be the result of using standard 185 width tyres instead of the upgraded 205? Perhaps, although I suspect that the rebuilt steering rack and modern pressed-in top ball-joints might say more about the efficiency than the rubber does.

As I start to bond with the car, I begin to stretch the limits. I need to take care, though, as mud in the lanes invokes its own invisible barrier, and I'm also mindful of the mess I am making in the wheelarches. Confidence grows as I accelerate hard, brake for a bend, swift change into second gear and feel the punch in the back as we hit a small straight, where I just manage third for a while, before going through the whole thing again, just for the fun of it.

On the drive back, I muse over the comfort of this car. There are no discernible draughts from around the doors or hood, and the seats are extremely comfortable. In fact, there is no reason why this car couldn't be used all year round. Which begs the question, why do owners neglect their E-types, treating them as possessions or ornaments rather than experiencing the terrific fun? On this freezing day in January, we had more pleasure than most do sitting in traffic on the hot August days. Why not do both? Angus does. He puts his money where his mouth is and wins every time. **JD**

Thanks to: Angus Moss (tel: 01462 686682; www.mossjaguar.com)