

# TIME LY PROPOSAL

When Carl Gaywood commissioned a rebuild of a 2+2 E-type, he had only one date in mind – his wedding to Siobhan Namus

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**C**ARL GAYWOOD is something of a romantic. Rather than simply propose to his girlfriend, he rented a Series 2 E-type open two-seater from Bespokes, in London's Kings Cross, and scooped Siobhan off to the Cotswolds. What could the lady do but accept?

Jaguar wasn't Carl's first choice for a classic; he liked the Teutonic build and reliability of a Mercedes, but when he enquired at Bespokes for a rental, it hadn't the model he sought, so the E-type was the next best thing. It soon turned into the best thing; after that drive, he was hooked.

The purity of the Series 1 held the greatest appeal, but Carl and Siobhan were planning a family, so a 2+2 it would be. A self-admitted novice, Carl set out on the hunt, seeing cars so dodgy that even his limited experience sensed trouble. One car was promising, a deep shine and looking good, surely this was the one? Seeking advice, he was pointed in the direction of Angus Moss, who agreed to inspect the car. Angus saw beneath the shine and advised that it would need an extensive restoration. So Carl rejected the car, and asked Angus if he could find something better. Restoration wouldn't be a barrier but the car would have to be rust free.

Angus contacted Harry Fulford in California, who turned up a running, driving, Series 2 2+2 automatic – the perfect candidate. That was in 2015. Carl entrusted the work to Angus and E-conic, but had no idea how long the project would take, expecting completion well before their marriage date in August 2017.

When it arrived in the UK, it was confirmed that this E-type would be the perfect base. Mice had eaten through some internal trim, but that was going to be changed for high-back Mazda-based seats anyway.

Although the car drove okay and changed gears well enough, Carl wanted the reassurance of total reliability. Angus had by then discovered Fix Auto in Stevenage, a top-level bodyshop, approved by Jaguar and Aston Martin. With a good working relationship established with operational director Richard Harrington, the bodyshell would be despatched for a complete job. The underbonnet would be left as a connection to the car's previous life.

Everything was removed from the shell in E-conic's workshop (including the period air-

conditioning) and placed aside, allowing the body and appendages to be despatched to Fix Auto. Carl wanted to keep as much originality in the car as possible, but was not averse to sensible upgrades.

A Federal State emission car, it came with twin 1.75in Stromberg carburettors. The SU Carburettor Company still manufactures a complete conversion kit, to include inlet manifold, three 2in SU carburettors and all fittings, such as throttle rods. This set (and fuel pump) sounded perfect, although Angus did have some difficulty later when connecting the kick-down lever from the Stromberg set up to SU.

Angus works on the principle of using the best specialist for individual trades. The engine went off to Classic and Modern Engine Services, while Alan Slawson of AJS Engineering overhauled the differential. He found everything to be in excellent shape, requiring only new bearings, and setting up to factory specification. A1 Premier Transmission overhauled the automatic gearbox.

Now it was time to discuss reliability upgrades. Later sealed-for-life bottom ball-joints are a given. Series 2 brakes are so good they just needed to be overhauled and refitted; likewise, the excellent cooling system with powerful twin fans.

Ignition woes from the standard system has prompted a number of alternative solutions, and, in this case, The Distributor Doctor was selected to provide an upgraded system based on the original distributor, using the standard cap. A modern Denso alternator sorted charging the system, while a high-torque starter

*Reversing lights were relocated into the rear light housing, when previously they would have skirted the square numberplate.*

motor gave the cranking a little more urgency.

A new wiring harness should be on every restorer's shopping list, but it is amazing how many try to make do. Not here. Dialling in the minor alterations, a new loom came from Autospars.

Knowing that Carl would use his car in all conditions, lighting came under the spotlight and modern H4 headlights were adapted. With separate relays providing the power for dip and main beam, the dash switch engaged the relay, allowing the higher power to flow without going through the switch.

Never keen on the standard rear-end treatment, Angus suggested a revision to the rear numberplate arrangement: an oblong numberplate would allow the use of straight exhaust pipes. As a result, reversing lights were relocated into the rear light housing, when previously they would have skirted the square numberplate.

The interior came in for some re-working while retaining the soul of the E-type. Carl wanted head restraints, which fitted in well with the upgrades that Angus offers, and Mazda MX-5 seats were chosen.



**ABOVE LEFT:**  
Rebuilt 4.2-litre engine now wears triple SU carburettors from the SU Carburettor Company  
**ABOVE RIGHT:**  
Plenty of room for son Charlie as he grows

They are easily adapted and, with the high back manufactured in, are perfect. The expected difficulty in fitting rear seatbelts evaporated as mounts were already present in the bodyshell.

Meanwhile, the obsolete air-conditioning system had to go, and as Carl would be doing most of his motoring in the UK, he decided he would have little use for it. There was quite a bit of kit to be removed, which showed how crude the system was, but it did result in losing the small shelves beneath the dash. Hopefully, they can be reinstated at a later date. As a temporary fix, the radio tower would be modified, but just for the wedding.

One area that proved problematic was the automatic gearbox kick-down cable. The original part as used on the Stromberg carburettors would not cross over and a replacement had to be found. Angus trawled everywhere for a replacement suitable for three two-inch SU carburettors, eventually tracking down the correct part in Finland.

Changing from left- to right-hand drive is an almost routine job, although fitting the bulkhead pipes is always a dreaded job. Then, with everything assembled and the car running beautifully, a leak sprouted from the automatic gearbox. Without knowing what was responsible, the gearbox was

removed and returned to A1 Premier Transmission – there was a vital deadline to meet. The guys at A1 were on the job immediately, impressing Angus by their efficiency and attitude to a problem, and traced the fault to a snagged main oil seal. After a quick turnaround, and with the gearbox back in the car, the rest of the shakedown went smoothly.

The wedding date was set in stone for 5 August, the E-type was delivered in time on 20 July, and Carl couldn't wait to start driving it. Even though he hadn't gone more than a handful of miles when the windscreen wiper ceased operation, nothing was going to stop him enjoying it. Despite light drizzle, he drove on and found that he couldn't stop driving. At over six feet tall, Carl luxuriated in the extra seat adjustment and height offered by the 2+2 and felt immediately at home and comfortable.

This E-type was going to spend a lot of time in London, so had to be ready to deal with traffic without disgracing itself, especially for the wedding. Come the day and the E-type rose to the occasion, almost basking in the inevitable attention on the day, but not so brash as to deflect every eye from the bride. From Islington Town Hall, the couple and son Charlie drove to the York & Albion in Camden, with its Gordon Ramsey restaurant. Carl kept the romance going, too, by organising the honeymoon for the same place in the Cotswolds where he had proposed to Siobhan.

Carl is convinced that the route he took was the right one for him. He recalls the rusting shells he saw at the restoration shops and the months of welding

## OWNER'S STORY

### SERIES 2 E-TYPE 2+2

each needed. His car escaped that indignity and the extra cost and time required. So far, only the wiper motor has blotted an otherwise exemplary record and that was easily fixed.

Now the car is pushed into regular action as the family take in as much of England as they can. Both Carl and Siobhan are keen that Charlie see as much of the country as possible and if that view is from the back seat of an E-type, which he loves, so much the better.

Carl is also happy to drive into London, especially on a Sunday when the traffic is relatively light. On one visit to the Tate, he managed to park the car in full view of the gallery. He couldn't help but smile about the many passers-by stopping to take a look at the mobile art form as he was admiring the masterpieces in the Tate.

I'm reminded of how practical a 2+2 E-type is immediately I open the long door, allowing generous access to an equally spacious interior. There is no ducking to avoid the roof, or bending the knee to climb inside; the action is smooth and without fuss. The MX-5-based seats have been trimmed to match the original Jaguar style and look as though they have been there since the very first day of production.

With so much glass area in here, the outside world is on full display. Being a Series 2, the windscreen has a steep rake, making it not only easy on the eye, but also extending the dash top. Most instruments are in the familiar position of the early cars', although the switches are now rocked, rather than toggled, as in the Series 1 XJ6. I have fun in adjusting the seat, and it goes so far back I struggle to reach the pedals.

CME did a fine job with the engine as it lights up

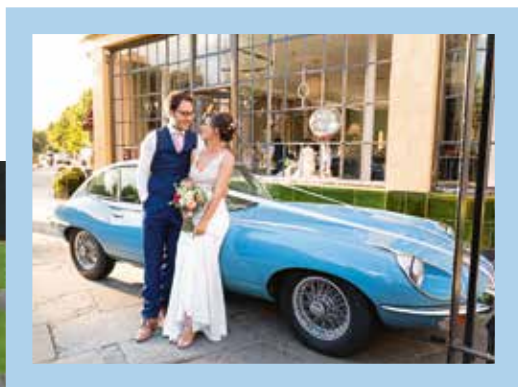


**ABOVE:**  
High-back Mazda MX-5 seats suit the 2+2

after a few turns of the high-torque starter motor. In what initially seems strange for me (my E-type is manual), I select drive and we're on the move, the automatic gearbox sorting the ratios for me, but after a few minutes it seems the most natural thing in the world, as I waft around the lanes close to the garden city of Letchworth. It's responsive, too, offering a decent level of performance and the right gear when needed – kick down, and the ratio drops, revs rise and the car gets serious.

It handles well, too. With standard Boge dampers, I am once again impressed by how they combine a smooth ride with efficiency when pressed. Those three-pot Series 2 front calipers have a mean bite and are able to slow the car with ease. There is no opportunity to take in any high-speed cruising, and, with due respect to the owner, neither would I. But I can fully appreciate every sentiment behind Carl and Siobhan's choice.

When asked about future intentions, Carl replies, "We intend using this car so much that Angus will have to do another restoration in a few years' time." It seems they are intent on doing their level best to wear out an E-type. And, as we know, that could take a very long time. JP



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