

TYPE-CAST: The F-Type clearly gets its looks from the E-Type

HERE COMES BRIT'S NEXT WORLD-BEATER

It will be three years yet before we see the successor to the E-Type, and there's no doubt where the F-Type gets its looks from.

Due on sale in August, 2003, the F-Type is a sensational-looking motor that is bound to cause a mad showroom scramble.

Buyers will have the choice of a 240bhp, 3-litre V8 or a mighty supercharged 300bhp 4-litre V8, which will also be available.

Best of all, though, both versions won't

break the bank. Instead they'll be priced to compete with bargain sports cars like the Porsche Boxster and Audi TT, which means the F-Type should start at around £34,000, rising to £42,000 for a V8.

Why, oh why, though, did Jaguar take so long to replace the E-Type?

And how many foreign sports cars have been sold in Britain since 1974, when we could have been buying British?



YOU LOOK TERRIBLE: But at least the Multipla cures a hangover

Ugly little bug that will make you bawl

THE E-Type is arguably the world's most beautiful car. But there can be absolutely no argument that the Fiat Multipla is the world's ugliest.

And this week, incredibly, motoring's Quasimodo managed to get even worse.

I was exhausted and hung-over when I crawled into the office on Tuesday morning, and the usual pile of letters contained nothing to lift my gloom - until I opened the following hilarious Press release from Fiat.

It was entitled "The body beautiful just got better" and contained references to a "dynamic and sporty" look.

Come on lads. You may be on a different planet, but that doesn't mean to say the rest of us live there too.

Basically Quasi gets 17-inch alloys with pricey Pirelli P Zero tyres, a wrap-around body kit and rear spoiler and lowered suspension.

The result? Aaagh and yuk come close. Plus a bill for £2,414.

Anyway, just for a laugh I rang up Fiat to take the you know what.

And somehow, they persuaded me that I ought to drive one - during the same week as my elder son's birthday.

Sorry Dave, I know it's supposed to be a happy occasion, but ...

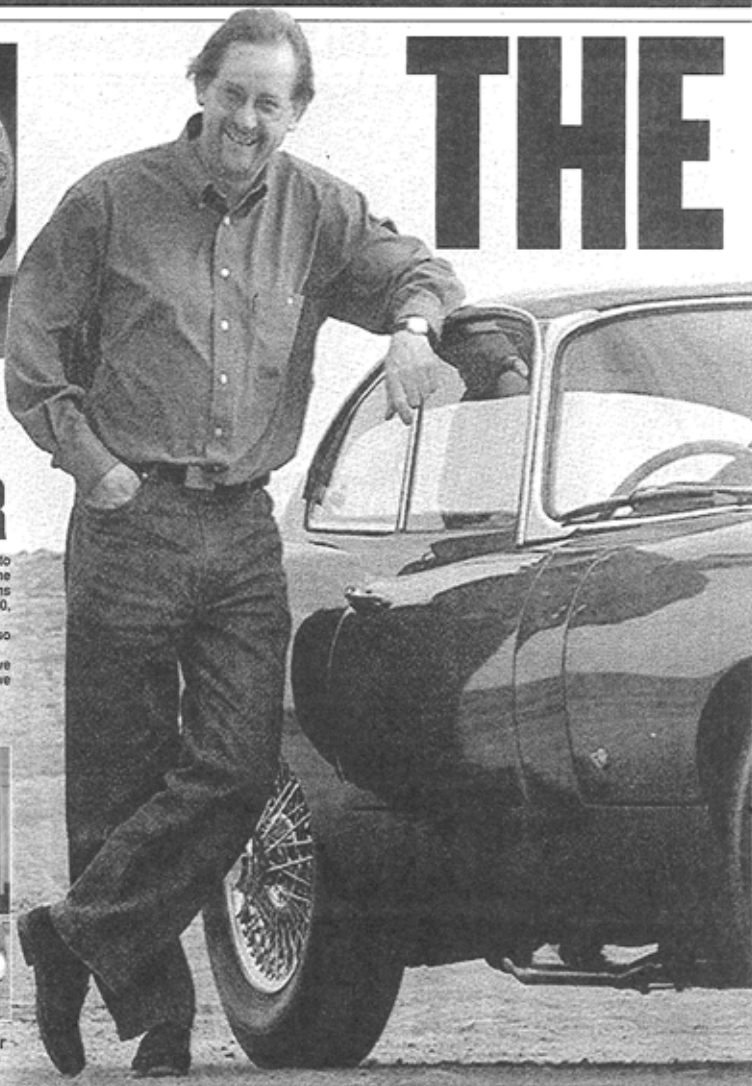
WINNERS of our recent contest to win four Grand Prix PC games are: Miss M Howarth, Kingstanding, Birmingham; Ray Scott, Hutton le Hole, Tyne and Wear; Mrs E Ashton, Abbey Hey Manchester and Mr and Mrs Stamp, Chichester, West Sussex. That's nice, they're sharing the prize. Next week, there's a brilliant contest to win a Clarion radio.

MILESTONES
PROVIDED BY **6**

THE first registration plate - A1 - was issued in London to Earl Russell following the 1903 Motor Car Act. He was reputed to have queued all night for it. The first number plates in the world were issued in Paris in August, 1893.

I'VE had whiplash and it's not funny. So it was quite disturbing to be told of a survey this week that revealed just one in five of all drivers and passengers have their headrests adjusted correctly. The report, by the Association of British Insurers, advises:

The top of your headrest should be at least level with your ears, and higher is better. If it is a fixed headrest that's part of the seat, make sure it is high enough to be level with the top of your head.



THE

I REALLY can't tell you which was bigger. The smile on my face ... or getting at least a quarter of a million quids' worth of motor safely back to the garage without bending it.

You see, last Monday I achieved a childhood dream. I drove an E-Type Jaguar. Only this wasn't any old E-Type. It was Chassis Number Two - the oldest E-Type left in existence in the world.

This was the very same car that brought the Geneva Motor Show to a virtual standstill when it was launched there in 1961. And thanks to a painstaking year-long rebuild that cost £100,000 and took 3,000 hours of labour to complete, it is identical to the brand new car that took the world by storm nearly 40 years ago.

The E-Type is totally and utterly to blame for my love of speed. I was about 10 years old when a friend of my dad's took me for a spin in one. I will never, ever, forget sinking into its leather seats and feeling very posh indeed.

I will never, ever, forget looking at the silly little grab handle on the dashboard and thinking how unnecessary it was in such a smooth car.

Thrill

And I will never, ever, forget hanging on to that handle as the car took off, leaving my stomach in the boot. The kick, the thrill, the sheer excitement it gave me has stayed with me forever.

So I was left with that massive bonnet-bulge lifting into the air and filling the windscreen.

Since then, of course, I've driven some truly terrifying cars.

The Nissan Skyline springs to mind as a bit of white-knuckle job, and of course it's considerably quicker than an E-Type.

But here I was, in a garage in Bridgnorth, Shropshire, and the feeling of excitement was far more frightening than any other car

MOTOR MOUTH
with **GEORGE FOWLER**
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could give me. I just couldn't believe that anyone could be so stupid as to let me actually drive the most famous car in the world.

Well drive it I did. And as I stepped into the seat, I couldn't help but remember the words of Nick Goldthorp, the man who masterminded its restoration.

"Listen, George," he said, "this car was built to be given a damn good thrashing. And that's what we're going to do."

He's not sane, I thought, as I settled down.

First thing I noticed was that the E-Type was not built for tall people. I'm only 5ft 7in and even I wanted the seat put back a notch, only it was as far as it would go.

But Jag had it sussed, and the adjustable steering wheel was eased back into the dashboard, so I was reasonable comfy.

Worse was when I reached for the safety belt. There aren't any.

Believe me, that is scary. Especially when your nose is only inches away from the windscreen.

Still, turn on the ignition, push the little button to start the engine, and, oh, the noise.

The sound of the twin tail-pipes is joy Nick's right, I thought. This car

IMAGE RATING

REAR MIRROR MONSTER: One of the best-looking cars of all time, along with Corvette.

PLAYTIME PLEASER: Adjustable steering wheel. Lots of dials.

NAUGHTY NIGGLES: No wing mirrors. No safety belts.

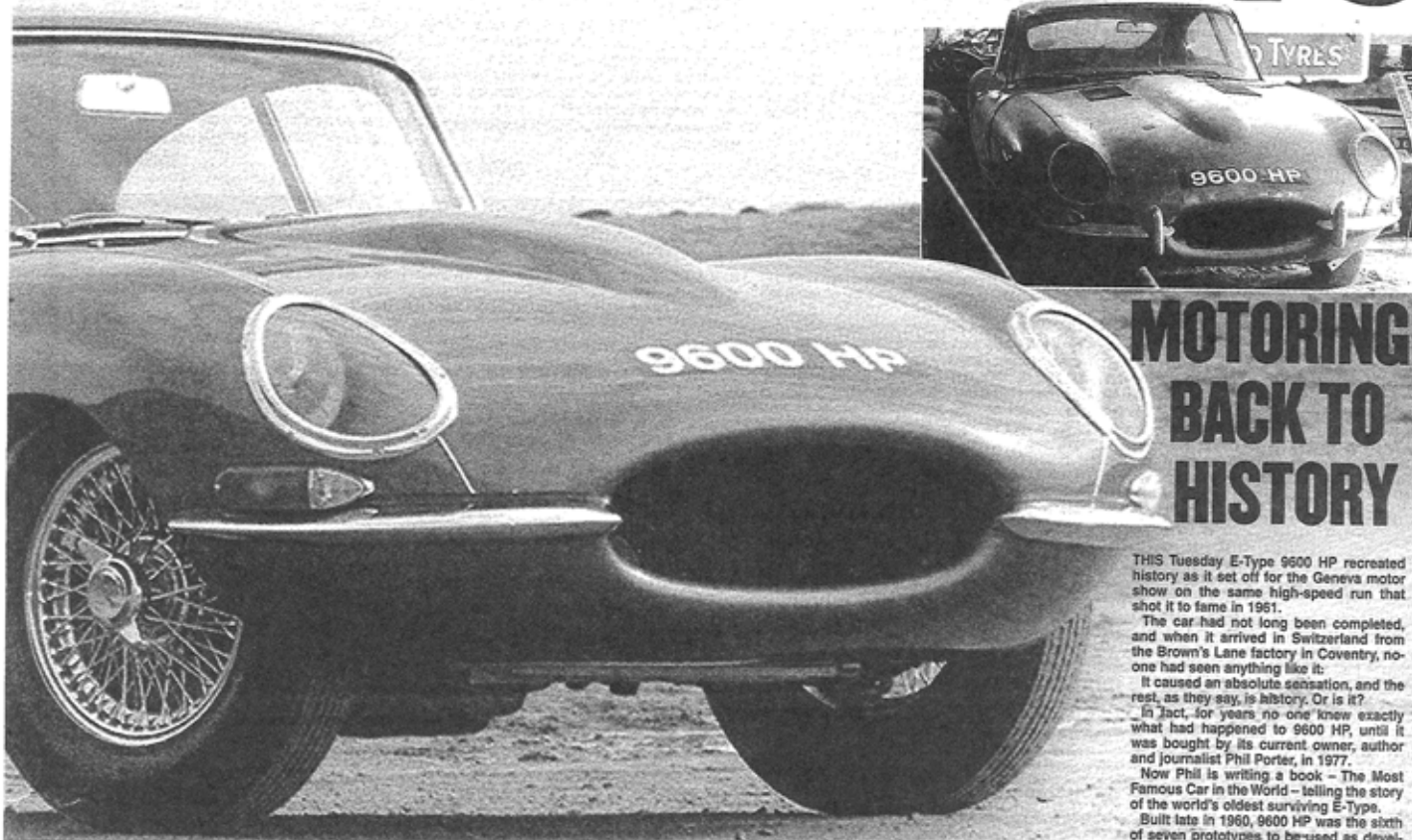
TASTY TOUCHES: Twin ashtrays on prototype.

WOULD AN ESSEX GIRL LIKE IT? The car to be seen in.

FACT FILE

PRICE: £2,000 (in 1961).
ENGINE: 3,761 cc, DOHC, six-cylinder in-line, 3 x 2-ins SU carbs (243bhp, 250lb torque).
TOP SPEED: 150mph; 0-60mph: 6.8secs.
MPG: Urban: 17-18mpg; overall: 23mpg.
INS GROUP: 15-18, on type.

JAG OF HEARTS



MOTORING BACK TO HISTORY

THIS Tuesday E-Type 9600 HP recreated history as it set off for the Geneva motor show on the same high-speed run that shot it to fame in 1961.

The car had not long been completed, and when it arrived in Switzerland from the Brown's Lane factory in Coventry, no-one had seen anything like it:

It caused an absolute sensation, and the rest, as they say, is history. Or is it?

In fact, for years no-one knew exactly what had happened to 9600 HP, until it was bought by its current owner, author and journalist Phil Porter, in 1977.

Now Phil is writing a book - *The Most Famous Car in the World* - telling the story of the world's oldest surviving E-Type.

Built late in 1960, 9600 HP was the sixth of seven prototypes to be used as development cars.

The rest, however, were quickly broken up, and only Chassis Two, (it was named out of order) remained.

Jaguar used it as a Press demonstrator for a few years and it even starred in a TV ad for Britain's first auto car wash - being driven by Stirling Moss.

In 1962 9600 HP was sold to its first proper owner, film director, artist and writer John Paddy Carstairs.

He had the car for three years before it was sold to former British Grand Prix driver Jack Fairman.

In 1968 Fairman sold 9600 HP for £350, and told its new owner: "One day, this will be a collector's item."

It passed through several owners, before Phil bought it nine years later, along with three other E-Types for a job-lot £2,700 - and stuffed it in his barn for 19 years.

"I knew exactly what it was," says Phil. "But it was a matter of finding the money and getting the right people to do the job."

He describes Bridgnorth firm Classic Motor Cars, who undertook the year-long £100,000 restoration project, as "the only set-up in the world who could have done such a painstaking job."

Don't be sad

REMEMBER Michael Caine's gorgeous bright red E-Type roadster that gets crushed by a JCB in the Italian Job.

Course you do. It's one of the most heart-breaking movie scenes of all time. Well you'll be delighted to know that the very same E-Type is alive and well.

It was part of the job lot that Phil bought along with 9600 HP...and has also been totally restored. Phil says: "The digger only damaged the bonnet and windscreen surround. It wasn't as bad as it looked."

is begging for it. On the road, the clutch change is long, and heavy. At slow speeds the lack of power steering makes getting out of the garage a chore, but once you get an E-Type moving, that's what it's best at.

And move it will. Up to 60mph it feels reasonably quick, but not sensational. But once you hit 4,000rpm it turns into an absolute blast, all the way to 6,000rpm.

At higher speeds you really appreciate the E-Type. It howls from 60-100mph like nobody's business. And you're well aware that there's stacks left.

After all, this was the car that Autocar magazine managed to get 150mph out of when they tested it back in 1961. On the M1.

There were a couple of other things that bothered me. Like the ancient Dunlop cross-ply tyres that follow every bump in the road and drift like crazy as you take a bend.

Nailed

And the steering. There are two ways to drive an original E-Type round corners.

Slow and posy: Or with your foot nailed to the floor as you fight the heavy huge and thin wooden steering wheel in a bid to prove who's the boss.

Guess which I chose? Well, you only live once. It was at the end of my hour of total joy in the E-Type, however, that I did discover one of its failings.

Unlike modern cars, whose brakes actually improve as they get hotter, the E-Type's tend to go the

other way. And coming into a sharp bend doing 80mph, with not a lot happening under your right foot, is a bit scary.

Especially when you remember how much the car is worth.

Still, I did it, and I would do it again. I would own this car, and drive it every day, in any weather, for any distance.

The E-Type was wonderful 40 years ago and it is still wonderful today.

Now what will the F-Type be like? Well, there's only another three years to wait to find out.

See ya. Yours,

Mr Smiley.



DASHED WONDERFUL: The E-Type now and (inset) how it was

CLASSIC WITHOUT TEARS

If you fancy buying an old E-Type, and even using it as your main car, it needn't be as expensive, or as worrying, as you may think.

I spoke to used Jag expert Russ Smith, of Practical Classics mag: "Obviously, the older the car you go for, the pricier it gets. Most popular are the 4.2-litre versions. They were introduced in 63/64 and ran until the early 70s.

Look out for cars with covered headlights. These are Series One vehicles and are the most popular.

You can pick up an E-Type for as little as £10,000, but for that it's

bound to need work. Coupes are a lot cheaper than roadsters, and a decent one should cost £15-20,000, while a really good roadster could set you back 20-30,000.

Mechanically, E-Types should still be sound and won't give you much trouble. It's the condition of the body that's most important.

Look for how well the panels fit. If they're not perfect, forget it. Watch out, too, for the chrome-work. It's very expensive to replace.

Another check is to open the bonnet and give it a good shake. It should be solid, with no clunking,

or lifting. Also, under the engine bay you should be able to grab a cage of metal. Give that a good shake, too, and if it moves, or the engine moves, you've got trouble.

If there are any signs of dampness you must look elsewhere, so lift up the carpets and feel carefully.

There's one final check that is a real tell-tale sign. Open the filler cap and make sure everything looks right in the entire area.

This is one of the most difficult and expensive parts to successfully restore, and is a very good sign to the condition of the rest of the car."