

1937 MORRIS 10/4

Restoration of the year



The car was mobile, fairly rare and in generally good shape. Besides, the McSaveney's loved the shape of the old Morris!

Specifications

1937 Morris 10/4 Series III

MOTOR overhead valve, 1292cc

GEARBOX four speed

BRAKES hydraulic

OPTIONAL EXTRAS Luggage grid. £1-10

Spare wheel cover, black or matching colour

'Jack All' built-in hydraulic jacking system

This model Morris was made for twelve

months, only 13,719 being produced. A total

of 34 are known to be at present in the

hands of enthusiasts in England.

Footnote Jim has just been able

to obtain the complete built-in hydraulic

jacking system for the car and he will install

it after a complete overhaul

Many of us like to think back and reminisce about when we were teenagers or in our early twenties.

James McSaveney, of Woolston, Christchurch, is no exception. He and his wife Bernice remember a time during the late fifties when they were courting and all the good, happy times they had together in Jim's 1934 Austin 10/4. Towing a 12 foot 6 inch Cresta Craft pleasure boat to the water for fun and games is just one of the many happy memories they have of that old Austin.

Some 31 years later, they decided how great it would be to own another and so the search began. But, alas, not one for sale. Many months were spent hunting through newspaper advertisements but without success.

Then one day Jim spotted an elderly

gentleman driving a 1934 Austin 10/4 so he followed him to where he stopped in New Brighton. Was he interested in selling? Not on your nelly. The gentleman had owned it from almost new and he was not giving it up now!

Then on Queen's Birthday weekend of 1986, Jim and Bernice spotted an

Home Restoration

James McSaveney won Restoration Of The Year at the Canterbury VCC with this Morris 10/4. Almost all of the work was undertaken at home by James and his wife Bernice



Jim McSaveney poses proudly with the painstakingly-restored 1937 Morris

advertisement in the newspaper for a 1937 Morris 10/4 with 92,102 miles on the clock.

With the purchase of a 1934 Austin 10/4 looking as likely as winning the Golden Kiwi, they decided to go and have a wee peep. The McSaveney's liked the shape of the Morris, although they thought that some people might see it as ugly.

To them it had character, it was quite well made and the

interior well appointed for its vintage. Over the years, Jim had seen many cars lying around in garages or rotting away under trees, while this Morris 10/4 was mobile and fairly complete. Having been in the motor trade for most of his working life he also knew it had become fairly rare by 1986. So the asking price of \$1250 was paid out and the McSaveney's became the proud new owners.

A few days later, they had a visit from a gentleman who said he had seen it advertised for sale by the previous owner and asked if he could have a look, as his parents had owned one while they were living in Geraldine when he was a young lad. Jim led him out to the garage where the stranger immediately began checking little details, like the tiny crack in the bakelite dash. Upon checking the body and chassis numbers with figures

he had written on a piece of paper, the delighted gentleman declared that this was the very car his parents had owned.

HE HAD BEEN HUNTING IT DOWN for years and at last he had found it! His mother, now in her eighties, was going to a reunion shortly and he wanted to buy it to take her in, as well as restore it for sentimental reasons.

During the following few months, this chap pestered Jim and Bernice to sell it to him and the price offered progressively rose to \$3000. The longer they owned it, the more the McSaveney's came to like the old girl, so they stuck to their guns and refused to let her go. Feeling sorry for the gentleman, however, they offered to lend it to him to take his mother to the reunion.

INITIALLY, JIM DROVE IT AROUND for six months, after sorting out the brakes and wiring. Once the warrant expired it came off the road for what was to be a tidy-up. But, like many restorations, one thing leads to another and before you know it, hey presto! a bare chassis.

Over the next two years, Jim worked away at the mechanics and with the help of a friend, John Gale, rebuilt the rolling chassis, after Peter Bell reconditioned the motor.

As king pins and shackles were not available, these items, plus many bushes etc, had to be especially made.

NEXT WAS THE BODY AND THIS IS where Jim surprised even himself. He replaced all the woodwork, and there is



Jim receiving the Noel Beecroft trophy from VCC branch chairperson Marilyn McKinley

a lot in this model. The actual body shell went to three different panel-beaters before it was finished. After stripping the paint back to the bare metal by hand with paint-remover, Jim tackled the paint job. After two years working patiently away, he unveiled an immaculate body in black-cherry Dulon.

Next came the running boards. This job was admirably carried out by Gavin Love, who made up a new set that Jim says are better than the original.

After searching locally for the correct grain vinyl, Jim's brother in Australia came up with the precise grain and a colour that matches the maroon paint work. In the early years of his working



Bernice and Jim combined their skills to re-upholster the car themselves in Australian-sourced vinyl

Vintage Car Club of NZ

(Canterbury) Leigh Crawthorne 03 768 1467
(There are VCC branches New Zealand-wide)

Morris Register of NZ

C/O 32 Catkin Crescent, Papatoetoe,
Auckland. Secretary: Veronica Crosland,
09 278 5860 a/h, before 8pm

life, Jim had worked for a motor trimmer, so combining his skills with his wife's, who had been a machinist, they re-upholstered the Morris themselves.

The seats and door panels were sent out to a professional, though. The total package looks just magnificent and I can assure you the photos accompanying this article do not do justice to the interior.

ALL THE METAL POLISHING WAS entrusted to Dennis Gooch of Universal Metal Polishers, while chrome plating was carried out by Superb Platers. A new set of Dunlop C49 525/16 tyres was fitted after Jim had sprayed the wheels in enamel. (Anyone out there got a good set of 16-inch wheel trims for sale?)

A new wiring loom was made up by Brian Hickey. Jim well remembers walking into the restoration tent at the Canterbury Annual Swap Meet to view the many working displays there.

Upon reaching the machine that covers wiring looms with the old-type cotton braiding, lo and behold, here was his own loom in action. Then one day

in January 1994, son Shane came home and proudly announced that he was getting married in October and that Dad had to have the Morris finished by then as he and his fiancée wanted to use it as their wedding car! Well, more was completed in the next seven months than in the previous two years. Just one month before the big day, she was finally completed.

Unfortunately, the McSaveney's forgot to write to Motor Registration and put the registration on restoration file.

Consequently, the registration expired and they had to put the old girl (by this time they had nicknamed her 'Mildred') through all the new VIN process.

THE DAY AFTER THE WEDDING, THE Morris 10/4 – with a very tired family on board – was driven on its first official outing. The occasion was the Annual Canterbury All British Day.

This was followed by the Annual Homestead run with the Canterbury Branch Vintage Car Club a month later.

In April of this year, the Morris competed in the Annual Post Vintage and Post War Vehicle rally, which is also run by the Canterbury VCC.

On the 11th June, the 'Restoration of the Year' Rally was attended, followed by the judging of the vehicles put forward, in the spacious club rooms. At the AGM of the Canterbury VCC, Jim McSaveney, with his 1937 Morris 10/4, was announced as the winner of the Noel Beecroft trophy for vehicles manufactured between 1932 and 1960.

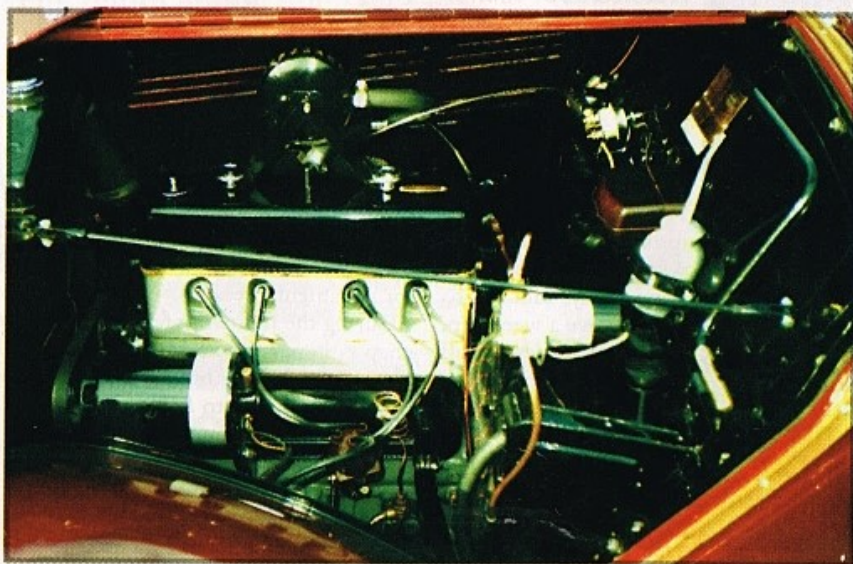
And so ends the story of one immaculate British pre-war car, which I would say is the best of its model in New Zealand, if not the world. Jim, however, is not afraid to admit that there are just a few things he does not like about the car.

The main one is that the steering is reasonably heavy at low speeds and the Morris is a little hard in the suspension. (Or is it because we are all getting too soft with our late-model vehicles?)

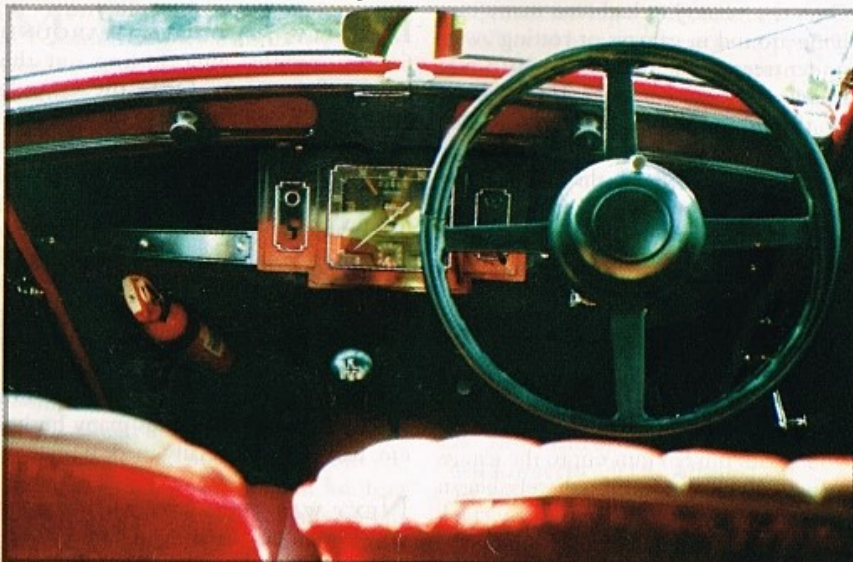
TREVOR STANLEY



Maroon vinyl imported from Australia



Series III overhead valve four cylinder motor



The Morris has a huge steering wheel in relation to the size of the car