



**Footman
James**
We share your passion

Motor Trade Today

December 2013



Welcome to Motor Trade Today; a newsletter designed with the Motor Trader in mind

If you do have any feedback on this newsletter or would like to feature in a future edition of Motor Trade Today then do get in touch on motortrade.today@footmanjames.co.uk

Featured Garage: Paul Matty Sports Cars

This month's 'Featured Garage' is Paul Matty Sports Cars; a Lotus specialist who deals with sales, repairs and restoration. Paul Matty Sports Cars has previously won Club Lotus Dealer of the Year, while also becoming the leading UK Lotus specialist.

We visited Paul Matty to ask him a few questions regarding his business and the motor trade industry in general.



Tell us about your business?

I established the business in 1976 with my wife June. The business has steadily grown over the years, with the emphasis on quality and reliability, to become the leading UK Lotus specialists covering all aspects of Lotus cars.

We have a dedicated team of 15, most of which have been with us for more than 25 years.

Tell us about your background, how did you get into the motor trade industry?

I was brought up in a council house with my mom, as my dad passed away when I was 13. She wanted me to be a draughtsman so I trained to do this but I had always had a love of cars and went to my mom and told her this. She said you are a long time working so you'd better pick something you like.

My brother in law was a mechanic and he got me an apprenticeship with Winchurch Garage; after 8 months I wore out the guy who was training me as I was very enthusiastic and was like a sponge with my thirst for knowledge of cars. He left and I ended up taking over the bay myself. I was only 16 and not old enough to drive a car but here I was working on them.

I had always wanted to work at Ashmore Brothers, who had a Lotus franchise, so I wrote to them for a job. They weren't interested but I didn't give up - I wrote around 10 letters to them, I would call them up, knock on the door and wait outside for them, until eventually they agreed to give me a job.

I loved working there and I became the garage manager at 19. I would still be there today if it hadn't closed.

Can you give us some history about how the business came about and how it has evolved?

When Ashmore closed, I went into partnership and had a garage in Halesowen. I got married and split from the partnership and have been working for myself for the past 38 years.

I just wanted to do servicing and restoration and found premises on a new industrial estate but the business soon reached a point where we needed to find bigger premises.

I found a dis-used Ford garage nearby in Old Hill which I used as the workshop and lock up garage part. It had a showroom attached which I had my arm twisted into taking on. It took me several years to be able to afford to stock the showroom fully but I had the best piece of advice I have ever had from another motor trader. Alan Reed told me 'even if it takes you 10 years don't borrow any money to stock the garage' which I followed and we own everything ourselves to this day.

I still had a bit of an issue as I had the other units on a lease on the industrial estate which I was paying for. I was helping Chris Smith as the time who went on to create Westfield. He was building these vehicles from home having just started and I agreed to leave him my ramp which sealed the deal for him to take over these units.

I soon outgrew the Old Hill site and moved to where I am today.

What was your first car?

It was an Austin A35

What do you enjoy about your business?

I am lucky enough that it allows me to indulge in my hobby of motorsport. I am a huge supporter and we sponsor the Lotus Hill Climb Championship, which is the biggest single marque championship. We all take part, my wife, service manager, sales manager, part manager, it becomes a bit of an inter business competition.

How would you say the industry has changed over the years?

Computerisation - cars are so reliant on electronics nowadays you can spend hours diagnosing a fault which can cost a £1000 to find and cost £5 to repair. If the technology you use breaks down that can cause real delays.

Also a lot of businesses don't want to work on the cars now. At some point there will be a severe skills gap, as the traditional skills needed to repair the classic cars are being lost.

What would you say are the challenges for your business in the future?

Health and Safety regulations are a challenge; they seem to be getting much more onerous. Just keeping yourself legal takes up a lot of my time.

What vehicle would you most like to own?

A Lotus 49 - there was 8 made and I know where all 8 are. They are probably around £1,000,000 to buy.

Read the full interview at: <http://www.footmanjames.co.uk/blog>

Many thanks to Paul Matty for taking the time to speak with us. You can find out more about Paul Matty Sports Cars by visiting their website: www.paulmattysportscars.co.uk

If you would like your garage to feature in our 'Featured Garage' section then please contact us on: motortradetoday@footmanjames.co.uk



Staff in the Spotlight

This month as part of our 'Who's Who at Footman James' feature we interviewed Jon Radford – Commercial New Business Executive.



What is your job title?
Commercial New Business Executive

What do you do?

I arrange quotations and policies for new customers who are seeking insurance for their business needs, specifically for classic and modern motor trade insurance, commercial, combined fleet etc; basically I can help with most types of business insurance.

Do you have any insurance specialisms?

Having always worked in the insurance industry I have a good knowledge of most types of insurance. However in the past 17 years I have specialised in the motor trade insurance market.

How did you get into insurance?

I have always had a passion for cars and motorbikes and enjoy meeting new people from all walks of life, so insurance seemed to fit!

What was your first car?

A Triumph Spitfire 1500CC, in British Racing Green.

What is your dream car?

Lamborghini Aventador – any colour – I'm not fussy, with a split screen VW camper as a backup.

Can you tell us about any interesting cases or clients that stick in your mind?

I honestly find that all cases have their own individual nuances, whatever the size of the business. Add in the owner's passion and priorities and they all become interesting.

Can you tell us a bit about you?

One of my favourite pastimes is driving. I've always had cars including classics cars such as a Triumph Spitfire, GT6, Ford Escort Mk1 and

bikes. I currently have a Harley Davidson Fat boy. I almost went into car design as my first job but elected to enter the exciting world of insurance instead!

If you where a vehicle, what type of vehicle would you be?

The Lamborghini - understated, refined and reliable!

What tips would you give to motor trade customers?

To always check that your cover meets your needs, especially having sufficient sums insured.

Talking through the different aspects of cover with a motor trade specialist can make all the difference and answer any questions or queries.

If you don't currently insure with Footman James and would be interested in Jon arranging to visit you to discuss your insurance needs, give him a call directly on 07718 268508 or email him at jon.radford@footmanjames.co.uk

How to become an accredited MOT test centre

We spoke to Mike Westerman, MOT Training Manager at VOSA, in regards to MOT tester training. He told us everything we needed to know about how a garage can become an accredited MOT test centre and also how you can become an accredited MOT tester. VOSA currently receives approximately 5,000 applications a year to train new MOT testers, and there are currently 22,500 accredited MOT garages throughout the UK.

How would a garage become an MOT test centre?

The first step is to acquire the Requirements for Authorisation 2009 from the VOSA website. These requirements will give the minimum dimensions required for the varying acceptable layouts for the required class of vehicles the garage is wishing to test. The plans of the proposed test bay should be drawn up and scaled. These then need to be submitted to the local VOSA office along with a completed VT01 application form. Again this form will be found on our website. At this point no ground works should be started – only when Agreement in Principle is gained from VOSA should any excavations etc take place. Once the work is completed then VOSA will check the site to ensure it meets the drawings originally submitted.

The Authorised Examiner (AE) will need to attend a statutory 2 day MOT training manager course at one of VOSA's training sites across the country. This course will be free of charge to the appointed AE. Any further courses for the site manager or other staff will be charged.

Q. Do you visit them before they can become an accredited centre?

There will be at least one visit to ensure that the site meets the agreed site plans as approved during the Agreement In Principle process. Depending on circumstances there may be other visits as well, before the garage is signed off as a fully operational MOT test station.

Q. How many applications a year do you get and how many are accepted?

We receive many applications per year some of which fall by the wayside due to size restrictions, financial changes in terms of the applicants or those that have a change of heart. Since 2005 when MOT Computerisation was introduced

the number of authorised garages has risen from 18,400 to approx 22,500..

Q. What is involved in the training to be an approved MOT accredited tester?

The candidate has to be proposed by an existing authorised garage. The VT78 form needs to be completed by the candidate and endorsed by the Authorised Examiner of the nominating garage. The application should be supported by copies of the candidate's qualifications. If they cannot, or do not have, the appropriate qualifications then the candidate will first have to sit an NTTA assessment at their local VOSA site. This is a 1.5hr multiple choice assessment based on vehicle technology. This is to show us that the understanding of the candidate equates to someone with the appropriate qualifications. Once the application is received by VOSA the form is checked for qualification evidence, driver licence information and the nomination from the AE. These details missing are the main reasons for rejection.

The candidate will then have to attend and pass a 3 day course at their local VOSA training site. There are two assessments; one based on the MOT requirements and one on the use of the computer system. Both must be passed before the candidate will be allowed to the next stage.

The next stage is to practice their routine back at their own site before informing the local Area that they are ready for their practical assessment. Once this has been successfully completed the tester is allowed to start testing properly for their MOT garage.

Any tester can test at a number of test stations, so long as at each station the AE has given approval and they appear on the list of testers for that station.

Q. If someone wants to MOT test several classes of vehicle does he/she complete the training for the different classes, or is it all combined as one?

There are two training courses; one which covers motorcycles and the other covers classes 3, 4 and 7. The motorcycle one is two days and covers both classes of motor cycles. The tester MUST have the appropriate licence before being accepted into the training system. The Class 3, 4 and 7 course is a 3 day course; again the tester MUST present their licence before the training starts or they will be refused entry.

Q. The feedback we have from classic car customers is that they are still getting their vehicles MOT'd as they have a legal duty to maintain the vehicle in a road worthy condition and an MOT is evidence of this. Have you seen any impact in the move to no longer MOT a classic vehicle??

The trade that deal with classic cars have reported a reduction in the numbers of vehicles coming in for test since the pre 1960 vehicles became exempt on 18th November 2012. This included ALL classes of vehicle from motor cycles through to buses. Commercial vehicles have had this exemption for some time, so long as they are not used for hire or reward. However, we do not have any figures to support their feedback or otherwise.

It is correct that although pre 1960 vehicles are no longer required to have an MOT the owner still MUST ensure the vehicles remain in a roadworthy condition, at least to the level of the MOT requirements.

Read the full interview at: <http://www.footmanjames.co.uk/blog>