20 year old run-out special stays A Special One!

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A pretty picture to celebrate the Audi's 20th birthday and six years/ 18,000 miles with me, the second-longest I have ever owned a car.

In this eleventh instalment of a popular series, Jeremy Walton updates us on the enduring 7-year appeal of his 103,000 mile Audi TT quattro sport following 18,000-miles of ownership

(All words and images © Jeremy Walton).

Jeremy tells us…

I must apologise for the absence of this part work since August last year, but it is not for dramatic reasons. I have simply been busy writing what should be my last automotive book and the TT had been exemplary. I had to look hard to find three labour and parts bills, but there were some smaller items that were ordered online and that lacked receipts.

However, that statement tempted fate as the Audi went to a local garage as I wrote this, booked in for MoT and a full service, with a possible cambelt precautionary change to be advised as it was last replaced in 2020. I had the tidy Audi back in a day, MoT passed with no advisories and fully serviced for a total of £420.92p. It had actually been fully serviced less than a year and 4,000 miles previously and the cambelt was replaced under 13,000 miles ago of the recommended 80,000-mile interval.

What caught my eye was how much specific service items have escalated. A quartet of spark plugs now at £70, rather than £50 and 5-litres of 10W/40 oil demands a regular £50. I ‘only’ pay £65 an hour labour, but I know what main dealers now charge as the family Nissan demanded a new clutch and the shiny emporium charges out at £154 an hour, and they are far from the most expensive main dealerships.

Sure, many TT owners do things for a lot less than me, working on everything that’s practical for the home mechanic, but I don’t have those skills. As the Audi has been an exceptionally reliable and rewarding drive, I feel yearly garage costs are justified. That was not the case when I bought it in 2019, but now it feels much more ‘my car’ with a re-trimmed interior, updated [callipers and discs] braking, a set of Michelin Sport Pilot 5 tyres and extensively overhauled suspension, including replacement gas-dampers and original equipment standards from front and rear springs.

When I left the story in our August 12 2025 running report, there was a long list of garage advisories for this run-out 2006 special edition of Audi’s TT quattro sport, which features a slightly uprated [236 bhp] version of the turbocharged 20v motor and appreciably lower weight. I offset that diet by fussily carrying a full 8J x 18 inch spare wheel and tyre as these final first edition TTs do not carry a spare and the emergency sealant is long out of date in

this 20 year old.

My 18,000-mile experience has been a good one, but a half dozen items listed by my regular one-man servicing guru demanded some attention. Sadly we were not having joy getting parts, particularly original items—just a fact of life with old Audis and Fords, whereas BMW, Mercedes and Porsche back their past icons with comprehensive parts service. Yes, those prestige German marque parts can be expensive, but you can at least procure Original Equipment [OE] or equivalent parts, as I found out over 16 years BMW 6 Series ownership.

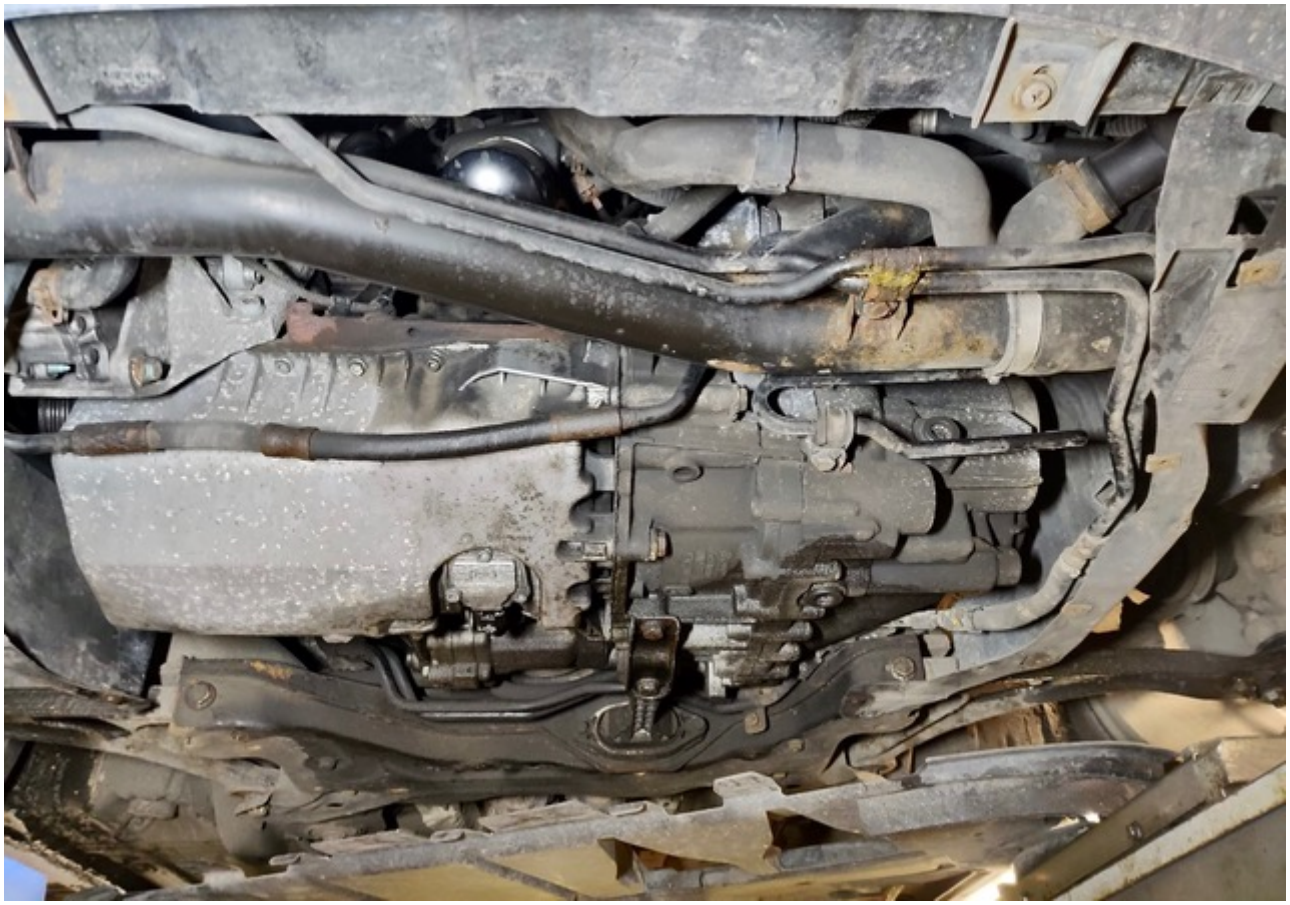
A couple of recommended replacement parts eluded us—a passenger door lock, power steering plumbing and an exhaust system heat shield. The door lock set into the noisy mode that frequently precedes failure, whilst the heat shield proved elusive on a more intense parts hunt. What definitely demanded immediate attention was a badly corroded hydraulic power steering pipe—several feet long and not an item you want failing.

After I got over the shock of seeing photographs of the less than pristine Audi underside, I was sent off to procure some parts following the expertise of another local specialist with specialist employees and multiple service bays. The exhaust heat shield proved to be the wrong part—actually for a Polo if you need one [!]—But, I had obtained the power steer-cooling pipe and a pair of Bilstein rear springs to pair up with the all-Bilstein damped suspension.



Tried another set of rear springs, this time from Bilstein, Ride quality—such as it is—improved, but still rides too high to my eyes. Brown package cost over £100 to cover replacement power steering pipe and exhaust guard.

Those items were fitted for precisely the estimated labour time at a cost of £267. I don’t have the bills for the parts to hand, but allow £250 as the Bilstein springs were on sale and the power steering component was priced in with that unsuitable heat shield.



Leaks!!

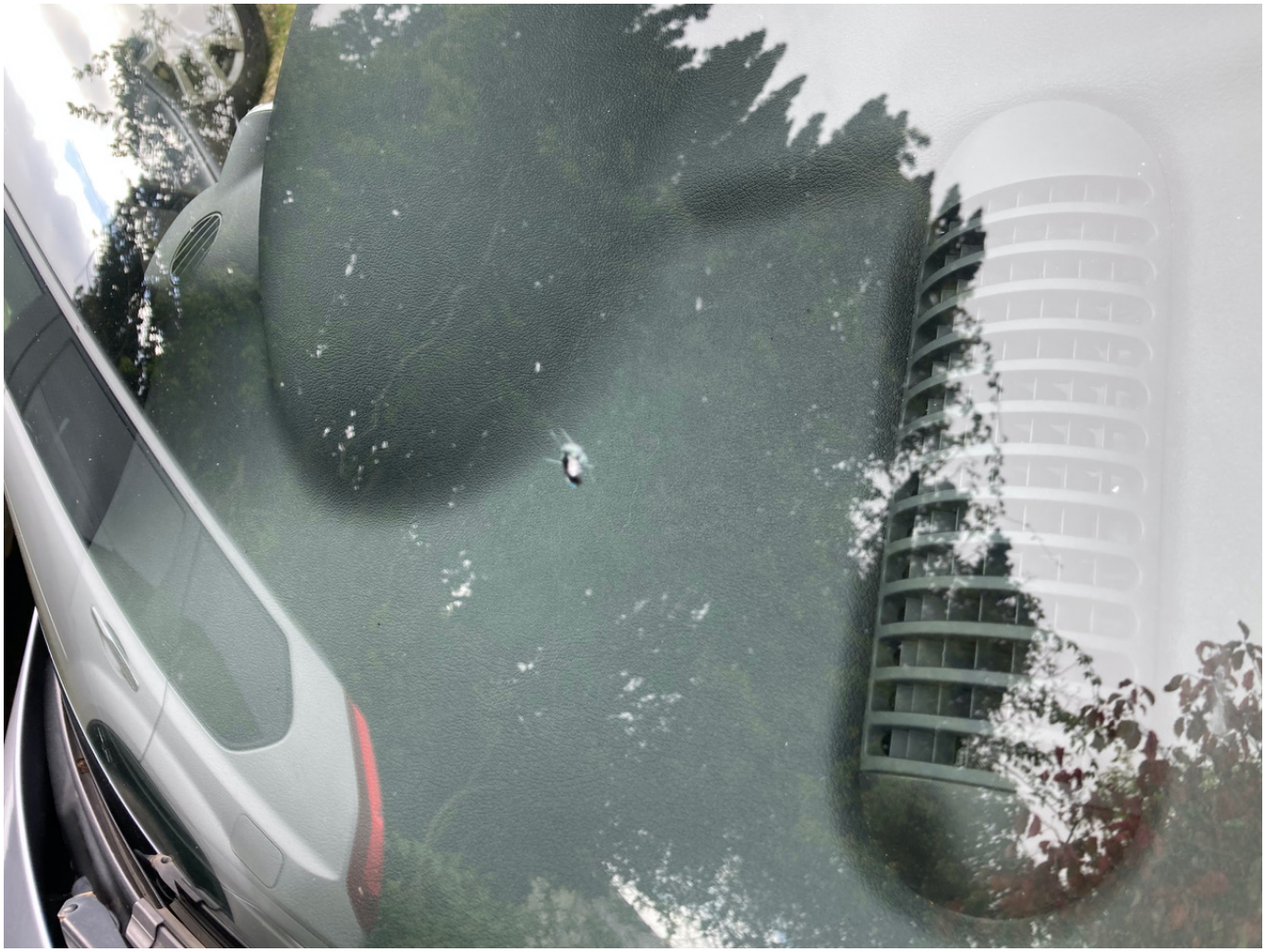


Not a pretty sight, but assorted leaks tackled, primarily from corroded power steering elongated plumbing.

Aside from a £7 bill for a tailored driver side carpet—which clipped straight into place and fitted just as promised (please see photo) —the cheapest bill I had in 2025-6 was to have the windscreen repaired. I did have a chip repair at Halfords previously, but that was on a sub-zero day and it was never truly satisfactory. This time I used my insurance policy windscreen excess and for £25 got a proper job done, including a fresh bullet hole that I got—along with an appropriate gunfire soundtrack—when travelling in 30-35 mph traffic past Stonehenge. The repair company was one my insurance company chose—not Autoglass for once—and they did a comprehensive job on a While-You-Wait basis.



Cheap and fast-fitted carpet fix to the driver's side, hiding the blemished original covering.



Windscreen is particularly vulnerable on low roofline Audi and has required remedial work, now predominantly paid by screen insurance.

Another useful contact came on the premium price Michelin Pilot Sport tyre replacement. Necessitated by swerving to avoid a school run oncoming SUV, resulting hard contact with pavement edge and cutting into a sidewall. I needed just a single 235/40 ZR 18-inch item. I had used Black Circles online service previously, but this March 2026 time I found tyreleader.co.uk significantly cheaper, with the same free—and very rapid—delivery service. Just one tyre cost £136 and I paid £10 fitting locally.



Fresh air service! Front Michelin and rim damaged, not by potholes but swerving to avoid oncoming fat Mercedes. Fitted tyre bill totalled £146, alloy rim demoted to spare use.

Recent longer trips—Lands End, Ealing, West London; Gaydon Museum (please see photo below), Portsmouth and several outings to Castle Combe race circuit—have benefitted fuel consumption. Now 32.3 mpg, but I should qualify that as I do use 97-99 octanes, Esso or Shell V-Power. These are E5-graded for 5% Ethanol content, as there are 20-year-old fuel lines and high-pressure pumps at work within that I feel uneasy about filling with E10 [10% bioethanol] cheaper petrol. Unusually these E5 higher-octane petrol grades were better value than previously as the recent Iran/Straits of Hormuz crisis has seen pump prices for diesel beyond that of premium petrol. Temporary? We'll see…



Welcome home! Winter trip to Cornwall was demanding, topped by A30 closure and a time consuming detour on the last leg.



Another TT trip souvenir, Gaydon yielded its usual horde of British motor industry exhibits and some interesting prototypes/record breakers, plus expanded coverage of Ford and Vauxhall cars.

As I sat and hoped TT passed MoT, the sell/no sell decision is far from over. The £760 road tax really hurts—especially as identical Audi TTs registered before 23rd March 2006 pay almost half as much! A replacement would likely be a more practical estate [I have dogs and I will be 80 years old shortly], but with high performance running gear. Current favourites are Mini Clubman Cooper S/JCW Works or [quite rare] Golf R. Both have to be of particular periods to combine 300 bhp with the right body and suspension specifications.

Any alternatives I should list? Suggestions welcome! –Jeremy Walton



Left to right: Ferrari V12, Aston’s Vanquish and considerably uprated McLaren. Dozing on a rare trip to London, these supercars adorned the basement during a supercar SSAFA military charity event. I attended as a speaker, making a case for Ford [!].



Exploring a local car hand-wash service. Excellent, but even better labour-saving results would come on our grubby and hard-worked family Nissan X-Trail.

Useful contacts

Garage work this period by: P&L Motors and Auto Services, both in Warminster, Wiltshire.

National Windscreens: Sub-contractor, Cary UK Ltd, Trowbridge, Wilts BA14 8PB. Tel: 01225 777277

Michelin tyres: One-off supplied very fast and at the lowest price I found from: tyreleader.co.uk

Bilstein supplies in UK, helpful online advice and fast deliveries: website www.bilstein-shocks.co.uk contact: support@bilstein-shocks.co.uk

Sad but true… Jeremy adds… Horrendous road tax rates [£760 annually] prompted selling this 20-year old Audi: www.carwow.co.uk delivered significantly the best offer in half dozen enquiries. Not sold currently, but jury is still out, just too much to pay the state on top of other taxes.