60 Not Out!! ‘Car Mechanics’ magazine still helps motorists get the best from their vehicles… Special celebratory issue out on 15th March.

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Author: Kim Henson

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SPECIAL ISSUE ◆ SPECIAL ISSUE ◆ SPECIAL ISSUE ◆ SPECIAL ISSUE ◆ SPECIAL ISSUE ◆ SPECIAL ISSUE
132-page 60th ANNIVERSARY COLLECTORS' EDITION
CAR MECHANICS
SAVING YOU MONEY SINCE 1958
LED worklights & underbonnet lamps
9 PRODUCTS ON TEST
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Vauxhall 2.0 CDTi
Oil pick-up pipe seal renewed
Installing a home garage inspection pit
Maintaining a Nissan electric van
WIN
Air Equipment with tools
Clarke
1 prize worth over £313
SEE PAGE 22
60th ANNIVERSARY
34 pages of nostalgia
The 20 greatest leaps in motoring technology
Sixty years of classic CM covers
The cars we were driving in 1958
Engines: the best and the worst
The craziest ads in CM's history
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1960s
1970s
1980s
1990s
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Kim Henson

reports on one of the longest-running motoring magazines – going strong after 60 years, despite huge changes in car technologies and fashions.

In the spring of 1958 a new motoring magazine caused something of a stir; the first issue of ‘Car Mechanics’ appeared, with the cover date April 1958. Like its long-established rival ‘Practical Motorist’, it aimed to help advise readers on how to maintain, repair, improve and modify their cars, in addition to which it also regularly assessed new and used vehicles. Both magazines assisted readers in saving their hard-earned cash, while at the same time keeping their cars in top condition; over the years many readers have enjoyed, and taken great pride in, doing so (and indeed many still do).

‘Practical Motorist’ had first appeared as a weekly magazine in 1934, closing down as World War II took grip and paper supplies for printing it became unavailable, in addition to which private motoring ceased for the duration, of course.

This magazine was re-started in monthly form in May 1954, and had this sector of the market to itself until ‘Car Mechanics’ made its debut four years later. The two titles were highly competitive for sales over the next four decades or so, until, sadly, ‘Practical Motorist’ ceased publication in 1997… Another would-be competitor title, ‘Popular Motoring’ had also been vying for sales during the 1970s/early 80s, but was taken over by ‘Practical Motorist’ in 1982.

Since 1997 ‘Car Mechanics’ has continued on its own in the market, and has flourished despite the changing trends in vehicle styling, design and construction, and despite the increasing complexity of motor cars over the years.

It has managed to achieve this by keeping up to date with its coverage of technical matters (including readable explanations of complex vehicle systems and how they operate) and step-by-step overhauls of mechanical and electronic systems, while sticking to its core theme of helping readers with a wide range of technical abilities. These vary from keen amateurs who take pride in looking after their cars to independent motor mechanics/garage proprietors. Some of these readers are just starting out with working on cars; others are

highly experienced with vehicle work, but the magazine still helps them all with useful information often not available elsewhere.

These days, in addition to 'mechanical' overhauls such as cam belt and clutch changes, and coverage of all aspects of vehicle operating systems, there is necessarily much emphasis on electronic management system diagnostics. Indeed the magazine's 'Electronic Diagnostic' series has so far covered over 280 different vehicles/systems, having been running continuously for more than 23 years!

To celebrate 60 years of 'Car Mechanics', a very special, 132 page Anniversary Special Edition has been produced, and is scheduled to appear in shops on Thursday 15th March (if you would like to buy a copy, don't delay once the magazine is published – this issue will sell out very quickly). In addition to all the usual features on modern vehicles, this issue takes an affectionate look back at 60 years of covers used on the magazine, and also looks at the cars people were driving in 1958, the best and worst engines of the last six decades, and the craziest adverts in the magazine's history.

In addition, there are reminiscences from several of CM's writers who have served the magazine over the years, plus a servicing feature on a 1958 Austin A35 – produced in the same year that the magazine started of course.

COMING SOON: In celebration of the magazine's 60 years, 'Car Mechanics' will have a stand at the 'Practical Classics' Classic Car and Restoration Show at the NEC, Birmingham, Friday 23rd to Sunday 25th March 2018.

PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE…

I must declare a personal interest, since my late father Ron bought a copy of the first, April 1958 issue of 'Car Mechanics', and continued to buy the magazine each month, as well as 'Practical Motorist' (and others) over the next 25 years or so.

I joined ‘Practical Motorist’ as a staff writer in 1978 and worked on the title until July 1985 when its owner IPC Magazines ‘pulled the plug’; I then pursued my own freelance motoring writing career. However the magazine was bought by several of the staff and continued to be produced for some years, eventually changing hands several times before sadly it closed in 1997. I freelanced for the magazine until the mid-1990s.

I also started freelancing for ‘Car Mechanics’ in 1988, so have now contributed to the magazine during half its lifetime so far!

I am delighted that the magazine continues to be published, and is still helping the motorists of today. It has been in the hands of just two editors for the last 23 years, since 1995; Peter Simpson was at the helm from 1995 until 2008, since when it has been guided and produced by Martyn Knowles. Both are highly experienced and well-respected in the automotive publishing world, and have been enthusiastic in producing a magazine that is helpful and relevant to the needs of the magazine’s readers – which helps explain why it is still going strong!

Long may it continue…



Enthusiasm reigns… Peter Simpson (left) edited ‘Car Mechanics’ from 1995 until 2008, with Martyn Knowles (right) then taking the helm; he is still Editor today.

Sad Footnote from Kim:

Very sadly, legendary motoring writer Ted Connolly, long-time contributor to ‘Car Mechanics’ and Editor of ‘Classic Van and Pickup’ magazine, passed away last month and yesterday, 5th March, Ted’s family, colleagues and friends paid tribute to him at his funeral in Kent. Many past and present members of the ‘Car Mechanics’ team were there and, with many others, recalled happy memories of Ted, who was a ‘larger than life’ character and a true professional in the automotive writing world. He had worked on newspapers and edited several motoring magazines, and was liked and respected for his enthusiasm for vehicles,

his professionalism, the encouragement he always gave to fellow writers, and his wicked sense of humour. He was great to work with, and will be sadly missed. I feel priviliged to have known him. We had all been looking forward to meeting Ted again at the ‘Car Mechanics’ stand at the ‘Practical Classics’ Classic Car and Restoration Show at the NEC (to take place Friday 23rd to Sunday 25th March)…