# Golden Oldies? Many recent and future classics are not currently being used and enjoyed…

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## Many modern and future classics are among the nearly two million cars in Britain registered as being ‘off the road’…

## Kim Henson reports.

A national study carried out earlier this year for Kwik Fit, one of Britain’s leading automotive service and repair companies, brought to light the fact that many of the most popular car models sold in the UK in the 1970s, 80s and 90s are currently off the road (i.e. registered with a Statutory Off Road Notification or ‘SORN’). Of course this doesn’t necessarily mean that they are ‘down and out’ for good, but a large number of them may

well be ‘resting’ in a garage, driveway or garden, or in some cases undergoing restoration.

It is perhaps surprising to learn that large numbers of the cars that were favourites among Britain’s buyers of new cars just a few decades ago, are out of use.

Kwik Fit looked at the data for all car models showing at least 10,000 examples still registered in the UK (i.e. excluding makes and models with fewer than 10,000 examples remaining), to establish which ones had the greatest proportion not registered for road use. Please note that the numbers of registered vehicles, and the percentages of these shown as not being registered for road use, will have altered slightly since this study was published in April 2016 (using statistics produced by the Department for Transport).

Interestingly, although the Ford Sierra (which made its debut as successor to the highly successful Cortina in 1982), was one of the most popular models of the 1980s, Kwik Fit’s survey indicated that in April this year some 75 per cent of the examples remaining in Britain were not currently being used on the road.

Two more models that are widely regarded as having changed everyday motoring in this country now find themselves almost as neglected, with 67 per cent of BMC/BL Minis and 63 per cent of Peugeot 205s registered as being off the road at the time of Kwik Fit’s survey. Vauxhall’s Cavalier showed a similar trend, with 61 per cent out of use, and the later, Rover versions of the original type Mini were similarly under-used, with 58 per cent ‘resting’.

Roger Griggs, Communications Director for Kwik Fit, commented, “Our analysis of the data shows that significant numbers of some of the most popular cars of previous generations are still in existence, but not being seen on the road. It may be that our collective love for these models stops them heading for the scrapyard, with their owners believing that they will get them back on the road some day, and we would certainly encourage them to keep these much-loved cars in working order”.

He added, “Sometimes all that’s keeping these cars from daily use are some new tyres and a valid MoT certificate. As we (at Kwik Fit) offer fixed price servicing for most makes of car,

anyone with a vehicle currently registered as being off the road can come to us and see how much it would cost to get it back road legal and running well – it may be a lot less than they imagine and more cost-effective than buying a new car".

The top 10 car makes and model with the highest proportion registered off road (table includes only models with more than 10,000 vehicles in the UK)

| MAKE AND MODEL | TOTAL IN THE UK | NUMBER REGISTERED AS SORN | PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL REGISTERED AS SORN |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ford Sierra | 13,651 | 10,277 | 75% |
| Austin Mini | 23,166 | 15,416 | 67% |
| Peugeot 205 | 17,135 | 10,767 | 63% |
| Vauxhall Cavalier | 10,449 | 6,357 | 61% |
| Rover Mini | 28,813 | 16,810 | 58% |
| Ford Escort | 58,085 | 33,651 | 58% |
| MG Midget | 14,216 | 7,096 | 50% |
| MG MGF | 21,655 | 10,227 | 47% |
| Mercedes 300 | 12,876 | 6,061 | 47% |
| MG MGB | 36,046 | 16,512 | 46% |
| Mercedes 200 | 14,060 | 6,368 | 45% |

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|---|---|---|---|
| Saab 900 | 10,273 | 4,287 | 42% |

When looking at the cars with the highest numbers off the road, the Volkswagen Golf topped the list with nearly 61,000 lying idle. In addition there were over 57,600 Ford Fiestas and 53,800 Vauxhall Corsas registered as being off the road, plus 50,400 BMW 3 Series models and 48,400 Vauxhall Astras similarly unused and completing the top five.

The table below makes fascinating reading too:

The top 10 car models with the greatest number registered off road

| MAKE AND MODEL | NUMBER REGISTERED AS SORN | TOTAL IN THE UK | PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL REGISTERED AS SORN |
|---|---|---|---|
| Volkswagen Golf | 60,875 | 1,102,638 | 6% |
| Ford Fiesta | 57,612 | 1,523,111 | 4% |
| Vauxhall Corsa | 53,873 | 1,244,538 | 4% |
| BMW 3 Series | 50,447 | 705,022 | 7% |
| Vauxhall Astra | 48,467 | 1,121,893 | 4% |
| Ford Focus | 43,129 | 1,508,036 | 3% |
| Renault Clio | 38,041 | 613,193 | 6% |
| Ford Escort | 33,651 | 58,085 | 58% |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Peugeot 206 | 32,769 | 405,686 | 8% |
| Ford Mondeo | 32,715 | 477,127 | 7% |

## A bit about Kwik Fit

## Did you know…

Established in 1971, the Kwik Fit Group is one of the largest independent automotive parts, repair and replacement specialists in the world. Kwik Fit has over 600 service centres across the UK and more than 200 mobile tyre fitting vehicles, making it the UK's leading tyre, exhaust, brake and MoT specialist.

Details of its range of products and services can be found at kwik-fit.com

Customers can also follow the company at @kwik fit.

Kim says, " Whether or not you regard cars of the 1980s and 90s as classics, most of these models are in much more rapid decline, numbers-wise, than their predecessors of earlier years, and many cars typically 20 to 30 years old are increasingly being regarded as classics of their time. While Kwik Fit's survey looked specifically at models with over 10,000 surviving examples left, in many cases the far less numerous types are in danger of disappearing altogether!

Furthermore, to many young enthusiasts (who need to be encouraged if the classic car movement is to survive and prosper!) all these cars are seen as 'old and interesting' and in general these vehicles are still relatively inexpensive to buy, thus providing an affordable way of driving something with more character than today's models.

That's not to say that they are not practical and useable; they are, for people of all generations.

In future we at Wheels-Alive will be looking more closely at what's available in terms of the various models of these decades. Make no mistake that surviving examples need to be saved NOW, or in a very few years there will be hardly any left to preserve… Golden oldies? I strongly advise buying now to avoid disappointment later!"

Note to readers: Perhaps the above approach from Kim explains why he currently finds himself the proud owner of no less than six cars dating from the 1980s/90s… (as well as some older classics). All of them ARE on the road, regularly used and enjoyed.