



Grumpy Old Mechanic – Beware using very old fuel and ‘E10’ petrol in your classic

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Fuel – be careful what you use in your classic...

Our motor technician has had many decades of motor car experience and always tries to help car owners keep their vehicles on the road and running well... This time he offers a few words of advice about petrol...

He writes:

“I have always advised my classic car customers to use the best quality fuel they can find, and ideally these days to avoid using very old, stale petrol, or modern stuff containing more than five per cent (at the most) ethanol.

Yet some continue to risk their fuel systems, and a case in point is a lovely old Daimler which I am recommissioning for a customer. He had some very old petrol in a can (he must have had it for many years) and I advised him not to use it; the fuel had a stale smell and an even worse appearance!

Anyway, despite my advice he ran the engine for some time on this stuff and then left the car for a long while, after which it refused to start.

On stripping the carburettors I found a horrible mess, which took a considerable time to clean up. The float set-ups and the internal surfaces of the units were coated with a sticky tar-like substance, in this case due to the very ancient fuel used.



(Note too that, as explained in other features on Wheels-Alive, ethanol can destroy rubber, plastic and even metal components within fuel systems, and such deterioration may result a fire risk...).

The owner of the Daimler says that in future he will only use fresh petrol - and ensure that it is 'E5' grade (indicating up to five per cent ethanol) rather than the 'E10' mix (up to 10 per cent ethanol)."