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Simplicity of older cars still very much appreciated...

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This 1995 Jaguar X300 was an advanced car for its time, but happily still incorporated a 'proper' mechanically operated handbrake, a cassette player and clear traditional-looking instrumentation. Hooray!

Photograph © Kim Henson.



Britain's motorists still love analogue driving with simplicity chosen as the biggest advantage of older cars.

Lancaster Insurance tells us...

- Nearly half (45%) of drivers say simpler mechanics are the biggest benefit of older cars
- New research highlights Britain's affection for classic motoring, with drivers valuing simplicity, fewer electronics and analogue driving experiences.

A new survey has revealed that Britain's motorists appreciate many aspects of older vehicles, with nearly half of those surveyed citing simpler mechanics as one of the biggest advantages of driving a classic or older car.

The research by classic car insurance specialist **Lancaster Insurance** surveyed 500 drivers and found that 45% of Brits believe simpler mechanics are a key benefit of older cars, while 43% value having fewer electronic systems, and a similar proportion (42%) appreciate the simpler controls in older cars.

The findings suggest many drivers continue to enjoy the more analogue driving experience offered by older vehicles, with around a third (33%) highlighting manual gearboxes as a benefit and almost one in four (23%) valuing the more direct mechanical feedback they provide.

The benefits of older cars

- Simpler mechanics (45%)
- Fewer electronic systems (43%)
- Simpler controls (42%)
- Manual gearboxes (33%)
- More direct mechanical feedback (23%)
- Heavier steering wheel (18%)
- Digitally disconnected (17%)



- Nostalgia and memories (17%)
- The impact on the senses (16%)

This comes as modern vehicles are increasingly being fitted with technology-based controls such as keyless security, touchscreens, voice commands and advanced driver-assistance systems.

When asked about driving preferences, more than a quarter of respondents (27%) said they preferred driving in previous decades, compared with 22% who said they preferred driving today.

The survey also revealed the older car features motorists miss most. CD players topped the list (28%), closely followed by manual handbrakes (27%). Other missed features included:

- Heaters with simple slide controls (21%)
- Pop-up headlights (20%)
- Switches and buttons instead of touchscreens (19%)
- More colourful interiors (19%)
- Cassette players (19%)
- Key-turn door locks (18%)
- Analogue driver dials (18%)

When asked which decade produced the best cars, the 1990s emerged as the most popular choice (15%), narrowly ahead of the 2000s (14%) and 1980s (13%).

The research also found that appreciation for older vehicles increases with age. More than six in ten drivers aged 65 and over (65%) cited simpler mechanics as a major benefit, while almost six in ten (59%) valued fewer electronic systems.

Yvonne Gosney at Lancaster Insurance, said: “While modern vehicles offer incredible technology, safety and convenience, our research shows there is still a real appreciation for the simplicity and character of older cars.

Many drivers enjoy being more connected to the mechanics of a vehicle, whether that’s



through a manual gearbox, physical controls or simply not having to navigate multiple digital systems.

It's also clear that features many people grew up with, from CD players to manual handbrakes, continue to hold a special place in motorists' hearts. For classic car enthusiasts in particular, that analogue driving experience remains a big part of the appeal."

Over 3,000 classic cars and bikes from across the decades will be on display at The Lancaster Insurance Classic Motor Show. The UK's biggest indoor car show takes place at the NEC Birmingham on 13th - 15th November 2026.

Methodology

- Research conducted via Toluna 501 UK adults on behalf of Lancaster Insurance.

About Lancaster Insurance

Lancaster Insurance Services have been insuring classic & specialist vehicles since 1984. Lancaster Insurance is a part of the group of companies owned by Markerstudy Group.