

MOTORING

# Putting style on the road with some aid from a kit

IN recent years there has been a growing interest in kit cars in Scotland, fostered by the Scottish Kitcars and Specials Club.

Scottish motorsport is full of low-budget, high-performance competition cars originally sold in component form.

And you do not have to look far to find either a Scottish agency for an English-based kit or a company providing a build-up service for kit owners who do not want to get their hands dirty.

What Scotland lacks is a history of companies prepared to manufacture kits. Ideas have

● Many motorists would like to own a classic car but lack the means to achieve this driving ambition. **DAVID FINLAY** shows how costs can be cut by building your own quality model from a kit

come and gone, but until now practically nobody has offered a kit for sale.

That, however, is changing. The Scottish industry is currently healthier, with three firms producing kits for different areas of the market.

Possibly the most successful area is that of the replicas. With prices of classic cars increasing, potential owners

are seeking cars which, although not the real thing at least look like it, and, more importantly, cost much less.

Haldane Developments, a company formed by the directors of John Haldane, of Cathcart, and Engineering Developments, of Blantyre, answers the needs of those who would like, but cannot afford, a Healey 100.

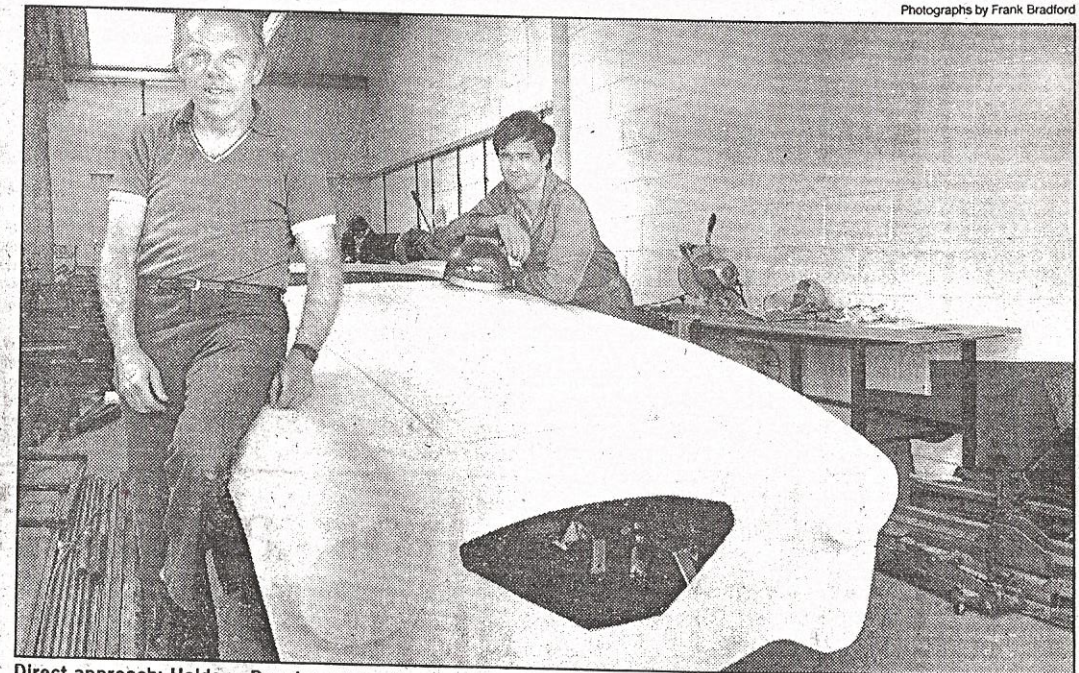
Although following closely the lines of the 1950s sports car, the Haldane, in fact, has a glass fibre body (farmed out to Solway Marine of Dumfries) and Vauxhall Chevette running gear.

The basic chassis is Haldane's own, while the preferred engine is Ford, either 1,600cc or 2,000cc. The otherwise worthy Chevette has a much smaller unit which would not provide the performance Haldane requires.

Including VAT, the price of the basic kit is £2,530. Alasdair Scott, a director, reckons a home builder could have a complete car on the road for between £4,000 and £6,000. Legislation prohibits the company from building complete, roadworthy cars, but it can provide a nearly complete vehicle for about £10,000. This sounds like serious money on its own, but a bargain when an original Healey can fetch £25,000.

The Wasp, built by Génie Kit Cars, first appeared in The Sunday Times Scotland last December. Since then, designer Robert Taylor's sports car has gone into production, with two kits each month coming from the Ancrum factory since Easter.

Mechanically, the Wasp features mainly Ford Cortina



Photographs by Frank Bradford

Direct approach: Haldane Developments directors Brian Harrison, left, and Alasdair Scott work on one of their car kits

parts, though a Fiat twin-cam engine can be fitted. There is even talk of future cars using the powerful V6 unit, but that will require a lot of development work.

Novice kit buyers are advised to ask for a test drive of a demonstration model before placing an order. In the case of the Wasp, this service is easily available — potential buyers over the age of 22 can have the car delivered to their home for a trial.

There are benefits to both

sides in this arrangement. The buyer knows what he is getting, and from Génie's point of view it makes the sales pitch all the more persuasive.

"Of all the customers we have had in the car, there was only one who didn't want to buy it, and he was a student who didn't have any money in the first place," said Taylor.

As with the Haldane, a nearly complete Wasp can be supplied by the firm. If you prefer to do the work yourself,

you should be on the road for about £3,000.

From the early days of kit cars, the Volkswagen Beetle has been useful in providing inexpensive, reliable parts. The FES Briton, built in Beith, Ayrshire, is designed to look like a 1930s roadster.

It manages to look nothing like a Beetle but is so heavily based on it that you can actually build one without taking the engine and gear box out of the Beetle chassis.

That is an extreme case, and

the company is more than happy to refurbish all the VW components for you. They will even supply the Beetle as they keep a large stock.

Just under £1,840 will buy the full kit, which can be built up to the same standard as the demonstrator for around £6,500.

That price assumes that the company is doing most of the work for you; left to your own devices Stan Forsyth, director, reckons you could have a car on the road for £3,000.



Racy replica: the stylish Healey low-cost lookalike is produced by Haldane Developments

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