

Works rally Haldane Q595 TDS.

Hi there,

Reliving some memories recently and came across your register, thought that you might be interested in my story.

I first saw a Haldane at the Scottish Motor Show – it was the 100 model, and was very impressed. As chance would have it the factory, if you could call it that, was about 3 miles from where I lived and I passed regularly on my way to and from work.

So it was that I became friendly with Peter (Girvan) who worked there and the idea of building one came to fruition. The deal that I struck was that because I was local, I would buy the kit parts as I went along, thus spreading the cost.

The chassis was a 100 series chassis to which they had recently added a cross member under the sump to stiffen the front end – not a good mod., ground clearance was a real issue. Subsequently Haldane moved to East Kilbride and the operation became much more professional, but I had by then a good relationship with everyone.

So it was that I asked them if they would be willing to produce a works rally specification body shell, to which they agreed. In due course this was produced for me and as luck would have it, it was the last body to come out of the factory before they went into receivership. Unfortunately this gave me some problems because the latest body wasn't designed to fit the 100 chassis, however with much help from Peter both practically and in terms of sourcing parts, particularly the windscreen and pillars, I ended up with a complete Haldane on the road, the very last one.

I would love to have kept it, but we had started a family by then and it made a useless family car and I ended up having to part with it – I have no idea where it is now. But I have wonderful memories, I never got round to fitting side windows or a hood, so it was permanently open, even in the snow! Its the only car I have ever shed a tear over when it went down the road.

The engine is a story in itself. I got in contact with a small company that specialised in converting Sierra's into diesel taxis by taking the petrol engine out and replacing it. They had a twin-cam engine lying that they offered me if I could pick it up. The place was 30 miles away and by the time I got there with a trailer they had sold it to someone else!

In its place they offered me a 2 litre Pinto from a transit van. It was very cheap and I intended to rebuild it anyway, so I took it. I picked up a copy of Haynes 'How to tune a Pinto engine' and the end result was quite impressive, although sitting in traffic was a bit of a problem. Having said that it was my every day work transport, I got quite adept at driving in rain with one hand on the wheel and the other with a chamois cleaning the water from the inside of the windscreen.

Leon Fuller



