

Morris 8 Coupe – “the backstory”

Documentation supplied by Dieter de Roo of Belgium included ownership records of the Coupe from 1967 to 1985.

The car was re-registered in Masterton in 1967 by Peter Emery [Reg No EG3388]. It had a second Masterton owner (5170 miles) and then was sold to Te Kuiti in 1970 where it apparently was in a collection until 1972 and travelled very few miles. The next two owners were in Te Rore and Ohaupo (west of Te Awamutu) for several years.

In 1985, the car was again re-registered [Reg No MH365] at Waiuku (South Auckland) and immediately purchased by Bob Whyman (Rotorua), who undertook a full



restoration of the vehicle. Bob owned the car [MX1936] until 2006 when he sold it to a Christchurch dealer for export to the United Kingdom.

Recollections from Peter Emery (Carterton)

Contact has been made with Peter, a motor engineer, who was able to relate his involvement with the Coupe.

Peter purchased the Coupe in an “as is – where is” unregistered condition in 1966. He cannot remember seeing it being driven around Masterton and thinks the seller may have originally come from Wellington.

Peter has an understanding that the Coupe body was one of three manufactured at NZ Motor Bodies workshop in Jackson Street, Petone. (NZMB is renowned for building coach bodies for buses).

Peter remembers the Coupe had a Series E engine fitted, which needed a full rebuild, including fitting a Series I head and manifold. He also fitted a 4 speed Series E gearbox. Some of the woodwork in the body had deteriorated, which a colleague replaced for him, and he gave the body steelwork a general tidy up.

Peter did not fully finish the rebuild. He sold the Coupe to a work colleague, Michael Robinson, for funds to buy a section to build a new home – then helped his colleague to finish the rebuild. Peter had previously had a couple of Morris Eights in his youth.

The car was painted bright yellow, and Michael used it for 5,000 miles before he sold it in 1972 to new owners in Te Kuiti.

SUMMARY OF THE BACKSTORY.

- The Coupe body style appears to be a Special production (3 units)
- Ownership history from 1935 to 1966 unknown except registration ceased and mechanical alteration had occurred.
- Peter Emery rescued and restored the car in 1967
- Six different owners between 1967 and 1985 (and possibly parked up during later years).
- Bob Whyman purchased the car in 1985 (again recently re registered) and undertook a full restoration.
- Bob owned the car for 20 years.
- The Coupe was exported to Kevin Burke in UK, who did some restoration and ultimately registered in UK.
- Dieter de Roo (Belgium) purchased the Coupe in the UK in 2016 – again undertook a full restoration carefully ensuring it is to correct M8 specification. He now enjoys driving and showcasing the unique Coupe around Belgium.

Morris 8 Coupe - "The continuing story"

The continuing tale! – notes from current owner Dieter de Roo in Belgium. (English is Dieter's third language)

On 3 Aug 2016, I went from Belgium to the UK to look at the M8 Coupe-1934. On 10 Aug 2016, the car became my property, I was super happy with it.

Just some history of the car now:

The woman, to who I bought the car from, was meanwhile divorced from Kevin Burke, who bought the car from New Zealand on 25/04/2006. When the couple broke up, she got the car through the court.

The car had been for sale in UK for some time, at a very high price. In addition, according to many people, I heard later, Mrs was not open to negotiation, as she thinks, everyone would "steal" the car away from her; and make extra money from it behind her back....

When the car was sold in NZ and shipped to them by Dr Heins Classics Ltd; out of Christchurch NZ, a general budget restoration began. The brakes & steering were restored, so not renewed, and all the electrics were repaired where needed, but a full new interior and upholstery was professionally fitted.

Then some welding was also done on the car, and it was repainted, in their garage, with cellulose paint in a Maroon and black colour combination. Inside upholstery is raspberry red seats and door panels, with vanilla colour roof lining. A very nice combination.

But unfortunately, their restoration budget was very limited; so many things were just quickly refurbished instead of thoroughly restored.

Mr. Kevin Burke had the car towed to the big annual Morris Meeting in Thorsby Park, since it was not yet running and therefore not registered, it was shown to the general public, with the original NZ plates attached. These are also now in my possession.

The car was later presented on a towing truck for technical inspection and could only be registered much later in the UK, because an M8 Coupe, according to the registration department, never existed. So, through a time-consuming procedure, it was finally put on license plate on 30/04/2015.

Between April 2006 and April 2010, the car was refurbished back then. Unfortunately for Kevin Burke, the divorce was already a fact by then, so he never drove it registered on the road. The lady I bought the car from couldn't start or drive it, because of her lack of knowledge about the car.



Rust, rust, and so by 2015 there was no longer any question of the car running, let alone driving and braking. Since the car was purchased and restored at her expense, she wanted as much as possible to get back the money invested, which her ex had spent on it. Not so easy, partly because the paintwork showed many paint and sanding errors and the car didn't drive anymore.

The first informal contacts by me to her were not easy, because of her high level of suspicion, and especially to someone who lived in Belgium. When I finally arrived in UK, by a coincidence we appeared to have a mutual friend, and so her mood with me changed completely. However, her high price was non-negotiable.

But love is blind, and yes, real beauty is on the inside, but... she was so beautiful on the outside, with her super sleek figure, and especially her beautiful curves at the back. (I mean with that not here cheap, she had already a new friend)

The sale was closed, and once I had brought the car to Belgium, everything was dismantled and thoroughly technically restored, which proved to be necessary. I also placed a complete reconditioned engine in it because I had that in stock, and I want my vintage cars to be in perfect technical order. Meanwhile, the car was already largely repainted in the same colour.

In August 2017 I took the car again to the big annual Morris Meeting at Thorsby Park to show the car now effectively driving, but sadly I fear the car will now never return with me to the UK.

Currently the M8C stands next to its younger friend; an M8 2-seater convertible 1935; Left hand driven by the way. Together they can also chat a bit against a Split window Morris Minor convertible, 1953, also left-hand drive.

These cars are together in my temperature-controlled garage, together with some other Pre-war and early post war cars, all in ready to use condition. All cars are used very frequently by me. and mechanically maintained by me.



Dieter's two Morris Eight cars – Coupe and Sports

So, despite having some cars, both my M8's are my favourites. They are the slowest and the smallest of the cars I have, but my favourites. They have something, which I have not had with any other car as of driving experience. With my M8 Sports I have already driven several long-distance rallies totalling over 2500km, without any technical backup. With the Coupe I will never do this, because this beauty is my absolute apple of my eye & most beautiful body style for me. She deserves regular rest, because the car is very well documented, both with invoices and photos, and here I note, that this car has never rested for several years in an old barn or something. So, no long distance runs with my little Coupe



In the meantime, I also managed to find the life cycle after 1967 and where car has driven each time in NZ. Some owners have had the car only 1 year, some other people 2 to 3 years. The last owner in NZ had the car + 20 years. And he left a farewell letter in the car, very touching.

Should I be of any help in a restoration process of a M8C, or you want pictures from the past or present; just ask. If would you like a more detailed text of the life and current stories, just let me know, I'm happy to give you more info. Just whenever to give me some time, I have a busy business life, but I consciously make time for my cars, to drive and working on them. Everything I do myself, I have a very well-equipped workshop for this so I can do everything myself.

Contributed by Dieter De Roo - Brugge, Belgium