

GETTING STARTED IN CLASSIC TRIALLING - STAGE 3

VEHICLE PREPARATION

Now you've chosen your vehicle ...

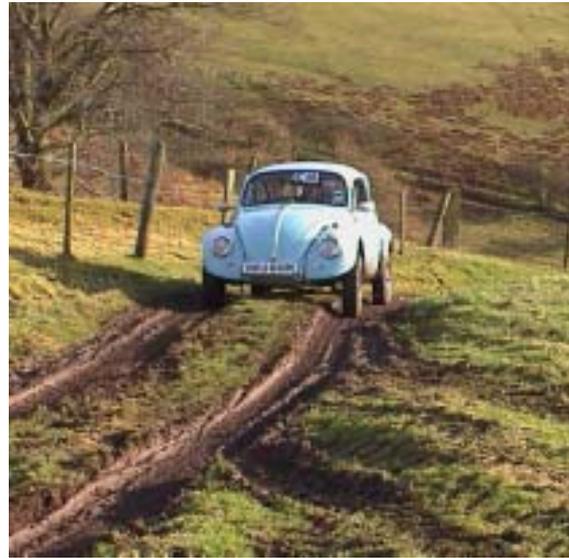
Preparing a vehicle for Classic Trials can, as with most motor sport, be as simple or as complex as your pocket will stand. Almost all preparation apart from the basic necessities will come as a result of your experience gained when competing. Thus this guidance is really aimed at the absolute beginner on two, three or four wheels.

Although it is common sense, ensuring that a vehicle is in good enough condition to withstand the rigours of competition is something that can get overlooked in the rush to fit the very latest engine management whizzo chip or snazzy motocross decals. All suspension components and mounting points, steering gear, wheel and headrace bearings, swingarm bushes, cables, hydraulics and electrics should be checked and rechecked, and refurbished or replaced as necessary. Too often a trials car will fail to complete an event because something relatively minor has seized or broken, or a bike will fail scrutineering because of several loose spokes.

Having done that, there are only two other areas that really need attention in order to get started with a car - suspension and under-body protection. If at all possible without compromising road handling too much, a car should have its suspension raised by whatever means are appropriate in order to improve clearance on rutted or rocky lanes. Together with some stout protection for engine and gearbox this will ensure that a car can at least be driven up a Section purposefully without causing heartache to its crew.

The task of preparing a bike is made easier by the fact that a modern trials, trail, or production enduro bike, will have adjustable long travel suspension, good ground clearance, and be built to withstand the hard work. If using a road or older machine then building in those features found on modern on/off road bikes will obviously improve performance and ensure the bike survives better. A map or route card holder on the handlebars is necessary, together with sufficient tools to mend a puncture or replace a blown bulb.

With all vehicles, two hours sensible preparation on a regular basis can save two wasted days over a trials weekend. End of sermon!



Giles Greenslade in his Class 4 VW Beetle at the top of Gatten's Gamble on the 2003 Clee Hills Trial. Photograph courtesy of Roger MacDonald.



Andrew Brown in his Class 7 Marlin on the restart of Putwell 2 in the 2003 Edinburgh Trial. Photograph courtesy of John Salter.

Two very different cars on two 'observed sections' with very different surfaces - but both in wonderful countryside.