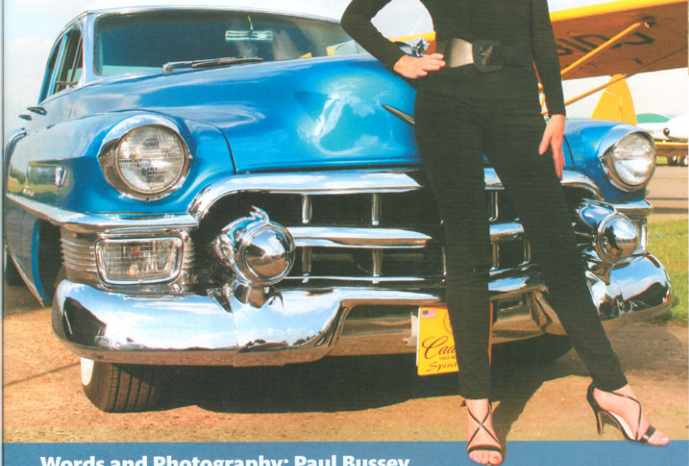


True Blue

Paul and Sue Jackson's 1953 Cadillac Four-Door Sedan might have been a long time coming, but they've sure made up for it since its arrival on these shores three years ago...



Words and Photography: Paul Bussey

PAUL JACKSON NEVER GOES anywhere unnoticed, the stunning metallic blue paintwork, acres of gleaming chrome and the sheer size of his Cadillac dictate maximum visual presence on the road – and that's before even mentioning his lovely partner Sue riding shotgun! The car has fitted very well into their leisure activities, which include the Fifties Rock'n Roll music scene, Jive dancing, and of course their love of American cars. Like so many other UK enthusiasts, the catalyst to spark Paul's lifelong interest in American cars was seeing

them on television as a kid, the occasional chance encounter by the roadside and lots of toy cars too. Paul always knew that one day he would drive a Yank, but as we all know, other things come along and dictate what we do in our lives and the dream remains just that.

Paul has been a keen follower of motorbike speedway ever since the late Sixties, and even went as far as having a go himself in the early Seventies. However, he soon realised that he wasn't going to make the cut in that particular two-wheel

sporting discipline and so he found himself racing quads, in speedway and grass track racing instead, which he accomplished with some degree of success. In July 2002 Paul and the quad club supported the Damn Yankees American Car Club's Summer Slam at North Weald Airfield, in Essex, and he found his desire to own a Yank totally rekindled, however, at the time all his spare cash was spent on quad racing, still, this didn't stop him window shopping.

Two years later Paul was back at North Weald again for the Summer Slam and this

time he started asking questions about how he could become more involved in the American car scene. He was pointed in the direction of purchasing a copy of *Classic American Magazine* which lists all the various car clubs, monthly meets, American shows and so on.

Shortly after Paul had a bad accident when racing his quad which resulted in a broken leg and he spent four months off work recovering, which gave him ample opportunity to read *Classic American Magazine* from cover to cover. Paul's enthusiasm for owning an American car was now well and truly whetted and he was absolutely amazed at what was available.

'I initially wanted to own something just a tad different that wasn't normally seen at shows,' he recalls. 'I also quickly discovered the best cars didn't come cheap, so I set a budget and stuck to it. I also struck up a good rapport with fellow bike racer John Kulin of Golden Chariots International Vehicle Importers (see at www.goldenchariotsinternational.co.uk or call: 01902 790797). John's help and advice was invaluable for a complete beginner like me.'

'We spoke regularly about sourcing a car from the USA, import duties and all the fine details. Then in May 2005 John brought my attention to a 1953 Cadillac four-door sedan that was being advertised in Victoria, Vancouver Island, BC, Canada. The car had spent all its life on Vancouver Island and had been used for prom concerts, weddings and advertising. I decided to go ahead with the purchase of the Cadillac, a deal was struck with the vendor, money was transferred and then I had to wait seven weeks for the car to be shipped to the UK.'

The Cadillac duly arrived in the UK at Chatham Docks in Kent, and as the previous owner had declared the car was in good running order, Paul decided he would drive it back to his Hertfordshire home. The car was covered in dust and the first problem was finding the fuel filler cap! 'Then I remembered that the MK2 Ford Consuls had their filler cap under the number plate, so there I was looking for the secret button,' he remembers. 'This was eventually traced to the rear number lamp reflector which when pressed released the lamp cluster. With fresh fuel in the tank the battery was connected and the engine eventually fired up and my brother and I headed for Hertfordshire.'

Paul was delighted to find that the car drove like a dream and also relieved there were no traces of billowing smoke or steam emanating from anywhere. On arrival at Paul's home, the car was washed and polished and he stood back to admire his new pride and joy. 'It's usually at times like this when you realise that you've made a costly



mistake, but I was extremely pleased with my purchase,' he admits. 'The following weekend I completed a service, which included replacing the points, condenser and plugs, which I sourced from a local motor factor. All that remained now was to get the car UK registered. There wasn't any paper work with it, so I had to start from scratch, which wasn't a major problem. The wait for my registration number was nearly as bad as waiting for the car to arrive at the docks!'

Eventually the Cadillac was road legal, just in time for the August Bank Holiday, so Paul and Sue cruised off to attend the NASC 31st Street Rod Nationals at Trinity Park, Ipswich, Suffolk. The car performed beautifully and Paul reckoned he was getting as much as 20mpg. Over the next two months the car was used most weekends to attend as many events as possible.

The positive attention it was receiving from other enthusiasts and the public alike gave Paul a fantastic buzz, in fact as much as he'd got in his quad racing days. Paul and Sue clocked up around 1800 miles over the next two months. Then a chance meeting with the owner of a 1957 Pontiac that had appeared on the front cover of *Classic American Magazine*, at an event at Thruxton Airfield, led to a return to the Fifties music scene for Paul.

The following Saturday saw Paul and Sue, together with the Pontiac's owners at the Hot '50's Rock'n'Roll Club, in Guildford. With the show season all but finished for another year, Paul and Sue spent much time at music gigs and even started dance lessons learning to jive! Although



the Cadillac was in reasonably fine fettle, Paul decided to complete a few improvements, which included a full respray, rechroming of the brightwork and the fitting a new set of wide band whitewall tyres. Early in 2006 R.C.J. Metal Finishers in Hoddesdon, Herts, were entrusted with the rechroming, whilst a friend of a friend completed the respray.

'I set a budget for him to work within and for that I got a very good job,' says Paul. 'Once all the work had been completed I then fitted the set of whitewall tyres. The comments I received from passing motorists and the photographs they took, made it all so much more worthwhile. Future projects will include tidying up the interior and door cards.

'The whole experience of sourcing, importing, owning and completing some restorative work on the Cadillac has been very pleasurable. A lot of knowledge has been gained along the way and a host of new friends too. If anyone is reading this magazine for the very first time with the thought of purchasing their first Yank, I hope that my experiences have been helpful to assist you in your decision to go for it!' Meanwhile Paul and Sue have been out and about in their Cadillac at every opportunity, enjoying Rock'n'Roll music gigs, American car shows and generally getting as much pleasure as possible from cruising in their Yank.

Paul has made the transformation from 'greenhorn' to a fully fledged member of the American car fraternity in quite a short time. Hopefully their story will inspire lots more folk to follow in their footsteps! 🇺🇸

Photographic location by kind permission of East Herts Flying School at Pansbanger Aerodrome, near Hertford, Hertfordshire

210bhp 331cu.in. V8. Air cleaner is an aftermarket unit



wide whitewalls echo the Cadillac's white roof treatment

