



Will discusses all things Minor with Charlie's son, Zac.



All varieties of Minor on display at Charles Ware's.

CHARLES WARE'S MORRIS MINOR CENTRE

Would our 17-year old contributor and Minor fan, Will, be inspired by his visit to this world-renowned Morris Minor specialist?

WORDS BY WILL ARMSTON-SHERET PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEZ HUGHES

I jumped at the chance to visit Charles Ware's Morris Minor Centre near Bristol. I had hoped to meet Charlie himself but was shown around by his son, Zac, instead. Zac said he didn't know much about cars and was actually a musician. However, a lot of Charlie's knowledge seems to have rubbed off on him over the past 35 years. In our throwaway society visiting a place dedicated to the repair and refurbishment of Morris Minors on such a scale was out of this world.

The pace of work was phenomenal – I tried to count the number of Morris Minors there, but many were being moved from one workshop to another so that it was impossible to arrive at an accurate figure. There were five or six in the finishing shop, with another dozen in the welding, bodywork and

mechanical sections. In total about 20 cars actively being worked on, were joined by about 15 for sale making a total of about 70 on site

Charles Ware has about 25 employees with over 400 years combined experience. They seemed to be working flat out, achieving results I can only dream of getting on my Minor at home. With all this skill, a nut and bolt restoration using about 500 hours of labour only takes about three months. Looking at one of their rebuilt cars it was clear that it was effectively new. Absolutely everything had been replaced. I'd love to have taken one home with me, but alas I was £15,000 short.

I was at the workshops for three hours, during which time one Morris Minor had its windscreen replaced, the foam in both front

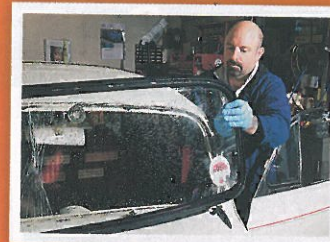


Will was keen to pick up tips from the staff.

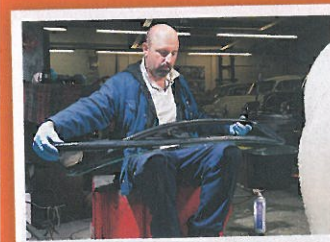
? **DID YOU KNOW?**
The most popular colours for cars at Charles Ware are Almond green, Old English White and Maroon B.

QUICK TECH

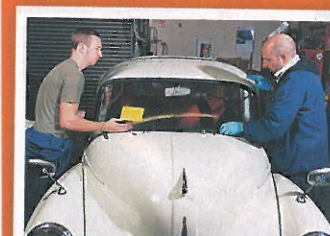
Fitting a windscreen



1 Take it out
Remove the old screen and inspect the windscreen surround, clean off any old sealant. Make sure the aperture is smooth to ensure an easy fit.



2 And stretch
Stretch the rubber around the screen. Thread cord under the lip of the seal and douse with a non-corrosive lubricant (not washing up liquid).



3 It's a fit up
Next, offer up the screen to the aperture, and push into position. Working from inside, pull the cord so that the lip of the rubber is taken over the surround.



4 Seal the deal
Wipe off lubricant and then fill the gaps between the rubber, glass and the aperture with sealant. Fitting the finishing strip will push excess sealant out.



A full nut and bolt Minor resto can be completed in around three months.

“Charles Ware has 25 employees with over 400 years combined experience”



Inspecting the windscreen fit and finish

seats changed, and a new parcel shelf fitted. The day before the car had been converted to LHD. It was just flabbergasting to see how much they achieved in the time.

A lot has changed since the Morris Minor was conceived. For day-to-day driving a few modifications were recommended by Zac – halogen headlights, a servo on the brakes and an alternator. I'd also recommend fitting seats with headrests and electric washers.

Young driver appeal
Surprisingly a Minor is still an ideal car for a young driver. It's a car you can repair, run and insure without the costs becoming astronomical or practicality being sacrificed; there aren't many cars that over 60 years after being designed can claim that. Young drivers often end up spending thousands of pounds insuring a modern car. Thankfully insurance on a Morris Minor is much more reasonable. In fact the Footman James Young Drivers Scheme even allows for you to learn to drive in a Moggy. A Morris



The firm has around 70 cars on site at any one time.