

Children - Cars - Why?

By Tony Eley



My son's car died at the end of our road. Died is the wrong word because it wasn't peaceful. It banged to an end, came to an end, choose your own version. The end was noisy and complete!

He had to get back to Wales so we lent him my wife's car. His car, a Peugeot 305 owes us nothing. Originally mine, then my wife's then shared by the children as they learnt to drive it's ten years have been eventful.

Cosseted in it's youth, serviced regularly, cleaned, polished and cared for it had fallen on harder times. In it's dotage it had accompanied my son on his voyages in Scotland and Wales. Unexpected contact with dry stone walls, sheep and other livestock had it bent but unbowed.

My son left for Wales. I talked to the garage. the timing belt had snapped with damaged to the cam shaft and cylinder head. It looked like the end of the road.

I found a cyliner head and camshaft in Ashbourne, the garage agreed to fit it - at my risk and within 48hours the car was purring again.

I phoned my small boy. We wanted his mother's car back before it it met a Welsh wall or sheep! We agreed to meet the following day half way up the M6. The plan worked!!

His car ran up the motorway like a bird. I parked it in the North bound service area and walked across the bridge. Half way across I passed my son. We tossed and caught keys as we greeted each other and passed like ships in the night. The boss's car was fine. I drove home.

Four hours later my small son phoned. (Did I say he was six foot two?) - he doesn't normally phone.

“Home safe?” I asked

A pregnant long drawn out “Yes” - the kind that means NO

“I’m home - but the car burst into flames on the motorway!”

“Are you OK?” A foolish question - he’s phoning!

“Yes. I stopped the car, got out, got the fire extinguisher and put it out”, So cool. “ But I didn’t think I should drive it so the AA brought us home”

He hosed out the engine compartment, sat in the drivers seat and started the car!!! The cause of the fire - well it seems that the new oil filler cap did not fit too well and had somehow or other blown off - (I blame the speed he drives), oil had sprayed into the engine compartment and ignited - and his swift action with the extinguisher had prevented significant damage - the car lasted another year!!

