

MYTH BUSTER

Debunking the most common old wives' tales



FORD CORTINA MkIII

1 A TAUNUS BY ANY OTHER NAME...

At first glance, the Ford Cortina MkIII looks like the contemporary Taunus from Ford's German arm. It's actually very different. Most of the outer panels are unique, the engine ranges are largely different (including V6 units for top-of-the-range Taunuses) and there was a coupé variant for Deutschland too. It's what was beneath the surface and inside the cabins that was practically identical. Although Ford of Europe had been created at the end of the 1960s, there was still a fierce rivalry between the British and German sides of the Blue Oval, which led to the divergent models.

2 FAKE WOOD!

...as Donald Trump might have tweeted about the MkIII. Fords – and indeed many cars of the Seventies – weren't best-known for their sophisticated levels of taste, and higher-spec 'Tinas like the GXL became somewhat infamous for their garish plastic 'wood'-clad interiors. However, not all MkIIIs resorted to fake timber. The 2000E of 1973 did return to the real thing, with actual teak used for its dashboard and door cappings. As good as it looks though, many people still believe it's not genuine.

3 IS THERE LIFE ON MARS?

Or rather, what is the *Life on Mars* Cortina, the most famous of all MkIIIs thanks to the time-travelling detective TV series? The show is set in 1973 and Detective Chief Inspector Gene Hunt's metallic brown love is meant to be a 1972 GXL. However, it's actually a 1974 vinyl roof-clad 2000E, disguised with a GXL grille and quad-headlamps and dashboard from an early 1974 model. A genuine 1972 GXL would have had an even earlier dash with deep-dished instruments. **Richard Gunn**



The faux GXL was auctioned in 2007, making £12,800 for Comic Relief.

LEGISLATION

MOT EXEMEM
- YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Tax-exempt classics will be exempt from annual roadworthiness tests in less than three months. Here's how your car will be affected – and what you can do about it



The Department for Transport (DfT) will exempt most vehicles over 40 years old from an annual MoT from 20 May.

It will make most pre-1978 classics made exempt from both MoT and road tax on a rolling 40-year basis, with only vehicles that have been 'substantially modified' subject to an annual roadworthiness test. Currently, only vehicles registered before 1960 are MoT exempt.

The thinking behind the decision, according to the DfT, is that these cars are 'usually maintained in good condition and used on few occasions'. It also exempts classics from how the MoT test will be changing in the future to keep up with new technology in electric and hybrid vehicles.

The DfT's decision was taken after looking at road traffic accident statistics, and its view is that an increased level of exemption will not lead to a greater number of crashes.

The Government has posted a full breakdown of its guidance – tinyurl.com/hadzg2v

What classics are going to be affected by MoT exemption?

Any pre-1978 classic and then others annually after that on a 40-year rolling basis. There is the caveat, though, that if it's been 'substantially modified', your classic won't be exempt, no matter how old it is. Currently there are 197,000 vehicles exempt from MoT testing. The DfT is expecting that an additional

293,000 vehicles (or 1 per cent of cars on the road in the UK) will not require an annual MoT test as a result of these changes.

What counts as 'substantially modified' on my classic?

This is based on an adapted version of the DVLA's eight-point system, but essentially if any replacements are made to the same pattern as the original, it won't count as a substantial change.

Changes away from the original versions of the chassis or monocoque bodyshell (including any subframes), alterations to the type and method of suspension or steering and changes to the cubic capacity of the engine away from the car's original are all classed as substantial changes.

However, alternative cubic capacities of the same basic engine and alternative original equipment engines are not considered a substantial change. The DfT deems it acceptable if changes have been made because original parts are no longer reasonably available, or if the changes have been made in order to improve efficiency, safety or environmental performance. The DfT has accepted that its view on 'substantially modified' may change after going live with this system in May.

Will the exemption be automatic?

No. The process is one of self-declaration and if you don't declare that you want your car to be exempt you will still be expected to get an MoT each year.

MoT exemption requires you to send your V5 to the DVLA to declare your

car a Vehicle of Historical Interest (VHI). Vehicles registered on a Q-plate as kits or built-up classics are not entitled to be declared as VHIs until 40 years after they were registered. All vehicles the DVLA recognised as pre-1960 are exempt until 20 May 2018, but the regulation will require every vehicle from that point on to be declared as VHIs in order to continue to be exempt.

What's going to happen to my 1980s classic?

It will become tax and MoT exempt at 40 years old. Although, even after that, if your car has been substantially modified, you may have to continue getting an MoT.

Will my pre-1960 car need an MoT if it's been substantially modified?

Any modifications made before 1988 will not count as substantially modified and this is on a rolling 30-year basis. If you look at the DfT's guidance and you have made big changes away from the original, then yes, you still have to get an MoT.

Can I still get my tax-exempt car MoT-tested?

You can still submit your classic for a voluntary MoT test and you will still, like all vehicle owners, need to ensure that it meets the legal requirement of keeping your vehicle in a roadworthy condition at all times. The DfT says just 6 per cent of pre-1960 vehicle owners currently submit their vehicles to voluntary testing.

What is the FBHVC's view on this?

The Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs' view is that it is down to all users

of historic vehicles to satisfy themselves of their vehicle's roadworthiness every time they use them. It says that its discussions with the DfT in the lead up to May have been 'open and collaborative' and it has strived to take the views of all classic car enthusiasts into account.

Why is CCW proposing putting tax-exempt classics through the revised MoT test?

We aren't! CCW has always argued that they should have some form of independent inspection in the interest of keeping classics safe – but not necessarily the MoT. The revamped test places emphasis on more modern vehicles, and this could actually make it harder for some classics to pass. We encourage every classic owner to have their car checked over by a specialist, though.

Will it affect my classic car's insurance premium?

Classics specialist Hagerty Insurance told CCW it does not require an MoT-exempt owner to produce an MoT certificate as part of its terms. All owners will still have to take reasonable steps to keep their vehicle in a roadworthy condition to remain insured.

Will having no MoT affect my classic's value?

Justin Lazic, Classics Central owner, says having an MoT is likely to improve the price and speed of sale for your car. Hagerty agrees that an MoT can help a sale and would still encourage owners to get one done voluntarily if they're thinking about selling. **Tom Seymour**