

STARDUST

“ ... frozen in time. ”

Like a lot of car enthusiasts I never thought I would come across a 'barn find' (dry garage to be exact).

In late Feb 2017 a family friend told me of an 'old wreck' in an 'old man's garage' that had to be 'dealt' with along with his estate/house etc after he had passed away in the November of 2016.

As far as they were concerned it was just an 'old Ford' that their dad (Tom) had loved once but had stood unused since 1978 and needed moving to the scrap yard ASAP.

I was the only person they knew who had any interest or knowledge of Capris, so I agreed to drive down to Bristol on a cold Thursday in early March 2017.

On arriving and after a few handshakes and an offer of a coffee I was lead to the 1970's designed double garage at the rear of the property, I was expecting a mess in the house, garden and surrounding area as I'd been told that Tom was a loner and had passed away aged 95. But I was pleasantly surprised to see weeded borders, mowed lawns, a very tidy house and garage area all still furnished as if it were still 1976.

The side door was unlocked and we stepped into a slightly dark garage, and there in the far corner was the unmistakable shape of a Capri.

“ ... the smell of 35 years of standing hit me. ”



1974 MKII Capri 1600cc XL GMH 808N - Nottingham Autokarna, Wollaton Hall June 2019

The main door was opened and leaves blew into the garage to reveal a 1.6 Ltr 1974 MkII Capri XL in Stardust Silver (I was later to discover it was built at the Halewood plant in 1974).

And this showed in the level of poor quality in many things on the car, paint condition being one of the bad areas, basically paint straight onto metal!

My first reaction was “Wow”, a perfect vinyl roof! One look at the tyres, all original and in good condition.

The key (two keys, one unused) were passed to me and I unlocked the driver's door, it was stiff but opened perfectly, no drop, I peered inside, the smell of 35 years of standing hit me, then I peered at the clock, 18,230 miles

I stood back and started asking questions through my now tepid cup of coffee.

I was informed that GMH 808N was bought new by Tom in October 1974 from Reynolds Ilford Ford dealership for £1701.63

It was bought for his wife as a present. It was registered in her name and for the next 4 years it potted between home, her work place and the shops. It was serviced twice by Reynolds the main dealer and went through one MOT with no advisories, plus had a new clutch fitted as it was slipping.



A mates trailer was used to transport GMH 808N back to Nottingham - paid for in beer tokens!

Tom was a meticulous person - his attention to detail is evident in his record keeping of the car; maintenance records; his little hand written notes in both his Haynes manual; the Ford workshop manuals he acquired; his notes are all annotated with, dates, costs, mileages in neatly hand written pen. Notes were made on all of the service part boxes he bought as spares, even after he had removed items, these including charge times, dates and 'ampage' before and after charging the battery.

Sadly in 1978, Tom's wife, who he must have adored passed away suddenly, it would seem that his life was then frozen in time, the car was covered up, just as she had left it, her driving 'pumps' left on the transmission tunnel in front of the gear stick; her 'brolley' on the back seat; her cigarette stubs in the ash tray with lip stick still visible; her sun glasses and a 1970's windscreen de-icer can still in the glove box. >