

## Automotive Restoration: How to Find Classic and Antique Car Parts

Autojumbles - don'tcha just love 'em?

You go into a muddy field full of hope looking for that elusive 3/4 AF wingnut flange for your super-rare Aston-Siddeley Beaufighter. You know you're in for a hard day's rooting through boxes of useless tat, cracked lenses-for-obscurer-communist-t ransports, used oil filled with bits of redundant piston-ring, track-rod ends that no sane garage will never allow a MOT test certificate for and heaps upon heaps of other stuff which, had you a Moggy Thousand or a Triumph Dolomite you'd mortgage your kids for.

You hope you'll strike it lucky and by mid-day you'll be able to quaff your non-alcoholic real ale in the beer tent along with the other tweedies, but you know that as hopes go this one is quite forlorn, as you've trudded around several such autojumbles and you're beginning to recognise some of the parts so much that you've given them names like Malcolm and Tracy. It gets to you after a while. And then you realise, you wouldn't know the part you're looking for if it got up and bit you on the tucus because Aston-Siddeley were a company which, having built merely twenty cars, collapsed under the weight of its own logic.

It's a hard life, being a Classic-car nut. You can, if you're not careful, lose friends and alienate people by being wedded to autojumbles, so it's better to be a bit circumspect. A club is a fine place to start. Not only is it a place where the rustle of baggy tweed rubs elbow-patches with the ramrod of order, but it's also not so far removed from the settled order of nature that it sucks out your mind through your wallet. Whether it be the Aston Martin Owner's Club, the Rolls-Royce Enthusiast's Club or whatever the Austin Allegro aficionados are doing these days, a club will not only keep you grounded in the reality that makes your wife/husband and friends happy, but it'll also be a handy source for parts.

Whether they make parts or tell you what other cars can be plundered to keep your motoring dream alive, you can be sure they will be able to help. And even if they aren't, the local noggin-and-natter (usually monthly, 'though the central London contingent used to meet more regularly) will provide a handy source of people to have a good old barrack-room moan at. Then again, as long as the car isn't a one off from about five hundred years ago, it is usually possible to source parts - so it is possible that the people whose ear you bend at the noggin'n'natter could tell you where you can get the part you seek.

If, that is, they don't tell you where to go.