

# THE CAR RESTORERS STORY

*By Roger Clark*

After 13 years of enjoyable kilometers in my fully restored E Type Jag I decided to upgrade to a 5-speed gearbox as the synchromesh between 2nd and 3rd gear had worn out and was leaking quite badly.

Simple job you would think, not so and here is my story.

After a considerable amount of research, I decided to buy a 5 Speed conversion kit from “The Driven Man” in America. The Gear box is a Tremec which is sold widely around the world. I ordered and paid for this in October 2020, and I really began to think I had done my dough as it did not arrive until February It came in a complete kit with no instructions, and I then appreciated the enormity of the challenge I had set myself.

Now for the simple job of installing, or so I thought!! As anyone knows who has spent time working on E Type motors there is truly little room for hands and even less for old Farmers hands.

It was a major job to remove the motor, well more than a day accompanied by lots of swear words but out it came with no problems and the next stage began. The gear box was fitted to the motor, and I began to think this was a relatively simple job. (You know what thought went through my head) and this phrase came back to haunt me many times. Work began in earnest and after another day of work the job was done. I noticed while installing the clutch plate there was no free play in the lever where there should have been. Alarm Bells and some of my early optimism began to dissipate.

My brother is a mechanic, took one look at it and said, “That won’t work you will have to pull the motor out again”.

Out came the motor again and the next step was to contact “The Driven Man”, the company that had supplied the gear box. After numerous attempts, too many to count, I was finally connected to a voice instead of a machine. I talked to some Technical Advisor and after being told the problem he said he would investigate it. Nothing Happened.

So, more phone calls and emails that were ignored, finally we got a different voice. This guy asked for measurements and photos. Again, nothing happened. You are beginning to get the picture now. No surprise!

At this stage, any patience I had was rapidly disappearing, so I carried on and this time we got another voice and were eventually put in touch with the Managing Director.

Not good enough he said, just not acceptable. Wonderful I thought, after all this time my problems were about to be behind me. Yeah Right!!

After explaining my plight yet again he was most apologetic and said again it was just not good enough. He asked for more photos and measurements and as he was in the same building he would go and see the faceless voice in the parts department and talk to him.

Eventually he got back to us, and full of apologies admitted 600 of these had been sold but that one had been badly machined, and we need to take it to a toolmaker, five minutes on a lathe would fix the problem.

Feeling more optimistic that things were going to progress I installed the motor and gear box

back in the car. Imagine my disappointment, no I do not think you can, when I tried to turn the rear wheels, and something stopped this happening. Off with the gear box cover again and I found the rubber block that supports gear box was too short and the universal joint of the drive shaft was hitting the body.

Off with the gear box cover and out came the glued carpets then I packed the gear box up 6 millimeters. The problem solved I thought.

The next job was to install the interior cover of the gear box and console. To my horror it would not fit over the gear box. I will not describe what I thought and said at this point. Again, the gearbox cover comes off and I discovered that part of the new gear box was too wide for the cover to fit over. Grinding part of the cover to make it narrower was successful and I was able to reassemble the trim.

The next job was to assemble the speedometer drive on the side of the gear box and to my dismay I could not find it. I had been in a big mess for months at this stage and thought I had put it somewhere safe. Not so. At this stage I wondered if I really wanted to finish the job and I had decided my lovely E Type was free to a good home.

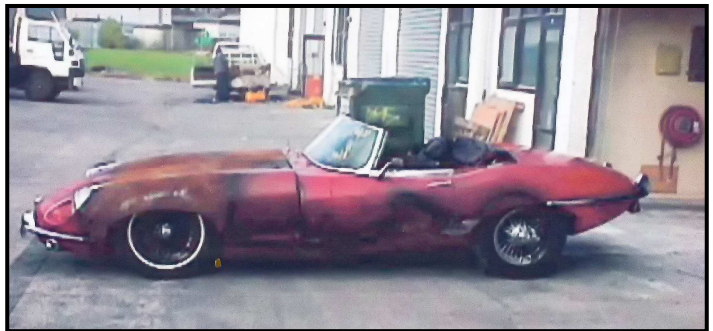
Another phone call to the company to order one and I was told I had not lost it, I had to take it off the old one. Great - another problem solved! The only thing to come out of this was a very tidy shed.

I sense the yawns, but the tale is not over yet as there was not enough access from under the car and the job had to be done from the top. No prizes for guessing, yes off comes the interior trim, the console and gear box cover again, and finally success.

At long last after several months of utter frustration, anger and, concern to name a few of the emotions I had experienced with a few more days work my car restoration was finally complete and I have fallen in love with it all over again.

*Roger*

**BEFORE**



**AFTER**

