



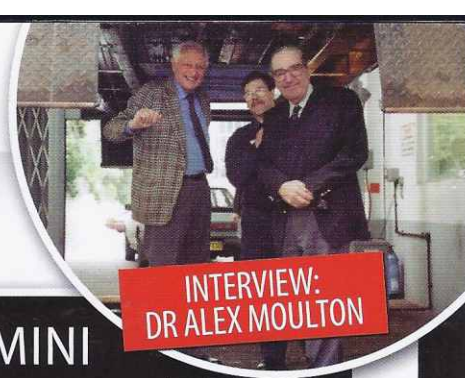
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SHOWTIME Retired Pick-up



INTERVIEW:
DR ALEX MOULTON

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IN FOR A PENNY

John Dynes had to interrupt his retirement to fund this extensive and superb Mini 95 Pick-up build...

Words: Monty Watkins . Photos: Jim Jupp

Around 10 times more Mini Vans were manufactured than Pick-ups. Like the Van, Pick-up was primarily sold to companies at a very cheap price. It was this cheap price, due to Purchase Tax relief, that did for most of them. Instead of being cherished by owner-drivers, they were at the mercy of companies and drivers who didn't care. When it came to repairs, it was usually more efficient to scrap the vehicle and buy a new one rather than invest in expensive welding and painting. Surviving Pick-ups were usually disposed of by auction so a few did fall into the hands of private owners. »

John Dynes



- » **Age:** 74
- » **Occupation:** Retired HGV driver
- » **What was your first car?** 1956 Ford Consul, £100
- » **Dream job?** Fishing editor
- » **Lottery win dream?** Fish more
- » **What does your partner think of your Mini?** "How bloody much?"
- » **Favourite film:** *The Fastest Indian*
- » **Music of the moment:** Country and western
- » **Favourite Mini suppliers:** Mini Sport
- » **Sum yourself up in three words:** Happy go lucky





“John believes that nearly every single panel was either replaced or reworked in some way”



Standard seats transformed by AC Coachtrimming. Original Pick-up customers had to pay extra for heater and rear view mirror.

When retired HGV driver, John Dynes, got this Pick-up, in January 2001, it didn't look too bad. His project was to get it rebuilt to show standard as close to showroom specification as he could manage. He didn't have any illusions as to what would be involved and sent the shell off to a body shop to be blasted for proper assessment. Once the paint and filler had been removed, there wasn't much doubt that he would be spending quite a lot of money on metalwork. In fact, the cab section was eventually separated from the doomed loadbay and John believes that nearly every single panel was either replaced or reworked in some way. "Trying to find parts for a Pick-up is a headache. Tom at Mini Sport was most helpful though."

Although this was a W (1980-81) registered Pick-up, it has the base model 850cc engine. Officially, the Mini 95 Pick-up 850 version was discontinued in November 1980 so this was a 1980 build even if it was registered later in 1981. Staying true to its original specification, John sent the 50,000-mile engine off to T&L Engineering of Bedford for reconditioning. Unlike many of the 850s in commercial use, it was not too bad so they stripped it down and reworked the head and block. Work included a skim for the block, regrinding the crankshaft and new valves and guides for the head.

That counts as quite a modest shopping list for the engine as, although the very low output of the 850 is kind to the gearbox, the 3.765:1 diff ratio means that the engine gets a real thrashing. Back in the early 1960s, the UK maximum speed limit for light commercial vehicles was very low. In 1963 it was raised from 30mph to a controversial 40mph so that short diff ratio makes sense when considered in original context.

Sadly, the local body shop didn't impress John and took three years to get the work done. Paintwork and some other bodywork was done later by Auto Crash Repairs, who get the thumbs-up for their excellent work. John, who was helped with the project by his son, Darren, and Darren's friend, Tom, then looked at the reassembly and interior specification. But it wasn't plain sailing. The roof had been

Mini Pick-up UK brief production history

- Austin Seven Pick-up and Morris Mini Pick-up launched January 1961 (848cc with 3.765:1 diff, launch price £360)
- Austin version renamed Austin Mini Pick-up from January 1962
- 998cc engine with 3.44:1 diff available as option from October 1967
- Austin and Morris labels dropped October 1969 in favour of Mini Pick-up 850 and Mini Pick-up 1000
- Pick-up 850 and 1000 renamed Mini 95 Pick-up 850 and 1000 from December 1978
- Pick-up 95 850 discontinued November 1980
- Pick-up 95 1000 discontinued May 1983
- UK total manufactured, including export: 58,179

(Source: www.minipickup.org)



Single central black pod and twin-stalk column are correct. Doorcards should be non-fluted. John fitted an oil pressure gauge under lower dashrail.



Dunlop Reverse Rims fill out the arches nicely on drum-brake Minis. Tonneau-type cover was made by AC Coachtrimming.

repaired to remove the sunroof that had been fitted. Sadly, the repair was not up to scratch so it was sent back for rectification. When it was time to repaint the roof, it was discovered that the manufacturer of the BL Inca Yellow paint which had been used was no longer in business and they had to have the whole Pick-up resprayed again in order to get the roof repair to match.

John chose AC Coachtrimming of Bedford to

help refurbish the original seats and re-cover them with non-standard black brushed nylon and yellow piping. The headlining frame had been cut to accommodate the sunroof so they remade the steel strips to achieve a complete new headlining. Instead of going for the optional Pick-up canvas tilt frame and cover, he got AC to make a fabric cover for the loadbay, with Lift-the-Dot and Tenax fasteners. BMC/BL never offered a

tonneau type cover for the Mini Pick-up load bay.

Elsewhere in the colour-coded interior there are slight variations from standard. The doorcards are the semi-fluted type, whereas Pick-up would normally have had a plain doorcard. Extra interior door handles were added and an auxiliary oil pressure gauge has been fitted under the offside lower dashrail. Standard Pick-ups were supplied without rear view mirror or recirculatory heater »

THE BUILD



"Shell was sandblasted by ourselves, which was a real bonus, but did it unearth some bloody big holes. Most of the old repairs had been stuck on and filled over."



After blasting: "Once blasted, make sure you prime the whole vehicle as it started to rust and we had to have it blasted again."



The body shop had to resort to some pretty drastic cutting and cleaning before a long list of new panels could be assembled.



New rear floor and arches in place before rear bulkhead was welded in. Precise panel alignment is the big challenge here.



New body sides and tailgate in place. Swaged shape of floor and bulkhead present some real difficulties for the restorer.



"The Inca Yellow was chosen because, when we sandblasted it back through the layers (which looked like a stick of rock) the very last colour was yellow."

but John has added both of these optional items. Door mirrors had been fitted when the car was purchased but they have been ditched in favour of the standard twin wing mirrors specified by UK commercial vehicle regulations of the day. Door pockets have been edged with black trim and the seatbelts are non-inertia type despite inertia type being standard from February 1974.

An unexpected problem was found when it came to fitting the glass. "The glazing was a huge problem, from the rear window not fitting to the side windows being unable to slide. Along came Auto Screens and job done." Otherwise

the interior is fairly standard. The padded two-spoke steering wheel, twin-stalk column, Cooper type chrome door levers and single-clock central pod in black are as you would expect.

In the pristine engine bay there is an aftermarket alloy rocker box with custom nuts and out the back there's a custom tow hitch. The rear quarter bumpers are correct for a later Pick-up although the rare 'stepped' type Rover P4 rear lights were replaced in 1978 by the larger Lucas 'trailer' type assemblies. Perhaps the most visible departure from standard is the fitment of Dunlop reverse rim 4.5x10 ventilated

steel wheels. These have the correct Van/S type wheel trims but the Pick-up was always fitted with standard 3.5x10 non-ventilated Mini/Cooper steel wheels. Outer sills for a Pick-up would have been the six-flute type from 1971.

Once the reworked engine had been refitted with a standard exhaust system and single SU HS4 carburettor, it was time to get it up and running for a test. "The engine rebuild was fairly straightforward until the run-up and testing, when it blew a core plug behind the alternator. The thermostat was removed and tested and found to be faulty, even though



Engine bay tidy and standard-looking, apart from rocker box. 848cc Pick-up dropped in November 1980 so this must be one of the last.



No more cement bags, gravel, paint pots, tool boxes, lawnmowers or ladders will be thrown in the back of this Pick-up.



Filler neck from the standard 6-gallon under-floor fuel tank.

“After sandblasting back several different layers and colours, it seemed that the original colour was yellow, so she was repainted Inca Yellow”


Spotless in all the right places! John's son, Darren, made the tow bar. Rover P4 rear lights were standard for Mini Pick-up until 1978, then replaced by bigger Lucas trailer-type unit.



Former HGV driver, John, probably on his way to collect a shipment of show 'n' shine trophies for his top Mini build.

it was a brand new one. We replaced the thermostat, testing it before fitting, and ran up the engine only to find, to our disappointment, that it had blown the head gasket as well.”

Once that had been fixed, John was on the road again in his bright yellow Pick-up. Why that colour? “After sandblasting back several different layers and colours, it seemed that the original colour was yellow, so she was repainted Inca Yellow.” The list of standard Pick-up colours for the era does not include Inca but Mini commercial vehicles were often sprayed in non-standard colours requested by fleet buyers, notably the

armed forces, AA, RAC, police and Post Office. A bright yellow indicates that this might have been an AA vehicle in a former life. Now, like John, it can look forward to a stress free retirement and lots of attention at Mini shows around the UK. 

John Dynes would like to thank: Auto Crash Repairs (Andrew and Pas), Andy Chapman of AC Coachtrimming, Auto Screens for sorting all the glazing problems, Autosmart for all the cleaning products, Tom at Mini Sport for having the patience of a saint and thanks again to my son, Darren, and his mate Tom.

Technical Specification

Modified 1980 Mini 95 Pick-up 850

- ▶▶ **Engine:** 848cc A-series overhauled by T&L Engineering . block skimmed . single SU HS4 . alloy rocker box . standard Lucas points ignition . cast iron one-piece manifold . mild steel single-box exhaust system . inertia starter motor . Hella leads . NGK plugs
- ▶▶ **Gearbox:** Standard all-synchro manual four-speed box . 3.765:1 final drive ratio . rod-shift . pre-Verto clutch
- ▶▶ **Brakes:** non-servo dual-circuit system . PDWA . copper brake pipe kit . standard hoses . Front: twin leading shoe drums . Rear: single leading shoe drums
- ▶▶ **Suspension:** Standard dry rubber suspension system . polyurethane bushes
- ▶▶ **Wheels/Tyres:** . 4.5x10 Dunlop LP918 reverse rim steel wheels . Falken Sincera 145/80x10 radials
- ▶▶ **Interior:** original seats retrimmed in brushed nylon by AC Coachtrimming . Newton Commercial carpet set . fluted doorcards . additional interior door pulls . black edge trim for door pockets . non-inertia seatbelts . optional rear view mirror . optional heater . standard black single-gauge central pod . two-spoke steering wheel . twin-stalk column . restored headlining frame . Smiths oil pressure gauge
- ▶▶ **Exterior:** Mini Pick-up bodysell, stripped, sand-blasted (twice) . most panels replaced . doors restored . new tailgate . sunroof aperture closed . sprayed BL Inca Yellow (code BLVC 207/FAB) . original style twin wing mirrors . tailor-made black load bay cover by AC Coachtrimming . tow bar fabricated by Darren Dynes . rear quarter bumpers . original hinged rear number plate . standard 6-gallon fuel tank . front screen laminated glass . rear screen toughened . door glass custom 4mm toughened instead of 5mm