

TALKING POINT - What makes a Classic Car.....

FAKE OR GENUINE?

GENUINE

“Truly what something is said to be; authentic”

“Actually produced by or proceeding from the alleged source or author”

“Possessing the claimed or attributed character, quality, or origin; not counterfeit”

“Not pretending; frank; sincere”

Is this a subjective point, with an answer which can differ quite properly, depending on the point of view of the individual – or is it just a matter of fact, pure and simple?

Are there any areas where changes can be accepted? Could upgrades, for safety or drivability for instance, be made whilst being able to maintain that the car is still original and genuine?

The reality of our cars is that in the past, when the values of, what we now regard as valuable vehicles, were very low, money was not necessarily spent on them, to keep them in good and original condition. In many cases during the life of a car, keeping its original condition was just not desirable.

So, that's it then, case closed. In the words of Clarkson, though – “Job Done then. No, not quite”.

Racing cars were almost always being repaired but were also always being changed and upgraded in period, to maintain their competitive position. When NOJ 393 was painstakingly restored, it was done so, to return it to its state as of the beginning of the 1955 Le Mans 24 Hour race – restored to a specific point in time, but what about the validity of things, such as:

Engine updates, in line with models subsequently introduced. Hot Rodding / modifications during the car's life. Specials or Prototypes, which might have changed during their life – although these are in small numbers.

What is the difference between a car just being “Modified” and “Modified in period” – and how far does “in period” stretch? Where do you stand, if you just change the car's colour from the original and what about cars that were limited edition / run out versions when new anyway - which are a hybrid between previous and following year models?

What if you just can no longer acquire a very specific and particular part. Is it a crime, to use an alternative, in order to keep (or get) the car back on the road? In this case, would the use of accurately reproduced parts be acceptable? Of course,

parts will have been replaced over the years, but how many of the parts of a car could be changed, before the car would become a reproduction? Are there any specific parts of a car, which effectively, define its identity? Be careful of Trigger's broom though – “20 years old and as good as new – It's had 5 new heads and 2 new handles”.

There are, of course, many schools of thought about classic cars. Do you meticulously restore the car with new parts or spend a lifetime looking for original period parts to use, or do you conserve and maintain, but do nothing to change or spoil the patina of the original paint.

Back in the earliest days of motoring, a whole car was not purchased complete, anyway. You bought a chassis and engine and designed and built a body to your specification. In those days, every car was a “Special”.

What about different parts from a single, particular car, being split up and used, perhaps by different people, to make more than one car. Is it such a stretch to think that, maybe of necessity, a car which was no longer usable, will have been broken up and its parts reused within or to make up another car, or maybe more than one other car?

I think that all variations of the theme are alright. It's just down to how you then describe it, isn't it?

Would it be right to claim a car, which you have constructed, and which perhaps includes a few genuine parts of another vehicle, to actually be that original vehicle, because it now contains some of it?

I guess that the difference comes down to the motivations of the individual - restorer, repairer, builder - and whether the work is being done with the intention of making claims of genuineness, or originality of the finished article.

In the end, it is just down to what you then say the new car actually is – how you describe it and what claims you make for it.

FAKE

“Not genuine; imitation or counterfeit”

“A forgery or sham”

“Made in exact imitation of something valuable with the intention to deceive or defraud”

“One that is not what it purports to be”

Why not have your say. Write to the editor.