

Zephyr 4, Kevin was left to "tinker with it" and ended up adding a white vinyl roof and a set of whitewalls. By then, the big Ford interest was really underway and that desire for one was still there. "At the time I wasn't into Mark IIs because of the rock 'n' roll thing. I just liked the way they looked and the way they were put together," he says.

Having left school, Kevin started working with a mobile mechanic, but changing clutches and doing general servicing on newish cars didn't really appeal to him, so he went into a motor factors, doing the drop-offs to garages. Soon he was put in charge of running the spares shop his boss had bought. Lunchtimes were spent going through old parts catalogues – and that knowledge is still stored away in Kevin's head and proves useful on a daily basis.

Despite running a spares shop with a local catchment area, Kevin was soon offering mail order parts to people with Mark Is and IIs. He'd unearthed a large collection of suspension bushes and told the Mark II Owners' Club, ending up supplying the club with a variety of spares.

Mk I vs Mk II?

"I love the way Mark Is drive, but I also love the looks of a Mark II – every time I see one it puts a smile on my face."

Mk I thoughts...

"You can see how it's based on the American 1949-51 Ford that's nicknamed the 'Shoebbox'. Designers and engineers started with a blank sheet of paper, but they had to incorporate Macpherson struts in the front – if they weren't used, the Mark I wouldn't have ended up looking like it did. It was a scientific influence and not an aesthetic one."

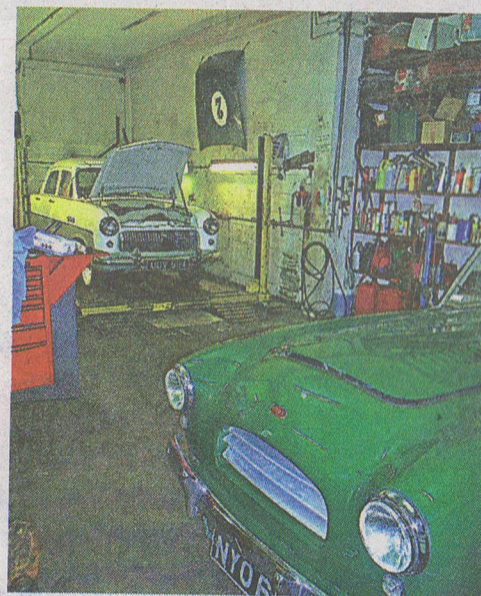
At the same time he was working on other people's big Fords, spurred on by the restoration work on his own Zodiac, which, while not being ropey, needed a bit of attention: "I'd parked it up for a couple of months, and when I opened the back door, the rear footwells were full of water. The rear screen rubber had perished, and when I took it out I thought I ought to repaint the whole car – but then that would make the engine bay look untidy, so a full restoration started from there."

The big step came in late 1998 when Kevin left his job at the spares shop and opened up Zodiac Motor Services. Since then, he's never looked back. And his continuing enthusiasm for Mark Is and IIs shines through, although he's happy to tackle Mark IIIs and IVs as well.

Whether it's a minor tune-up or an-MoT check-over, or something more heavy-duty such as a new set of inner and outer sills, Kevin will do it. His passion for the big 50s Fords means he won't cut corners and never uses low-quality replacements. Many of his customers have used him for years.



Kevin Dipchan: a Ford aficionado since the 1960s



Any car with a Ford engine is welcome at ZMS

Kevin is happy to work on any car powered by a Ford engine. When CCW visited, an ultra-rare Allard Palm Beach was in for some carburetor work. Kevin had fabricated a six-branch set-up to help the triple carbs breathe properly, including a major re-jetting. Elsewhere in the ZMS premises, a bead-blasted Mark II shell was having new sills and panelwork before going back to its owner for reassembly. ZMS doesn't just do mechanical work – it'll undertake painting and trimming too, although Kevin favours full re-trims as part of a total restoration rather than simply patching up interiors.

These days there's a difference in Mark Is and IIs when it comes to what work is required. "Most Mark Is are in good condition and they're kept that way, requiring servicing and, say, a set of brake shoes every now and then, while we're still seeing Mark IIs being discovered and needing work to make them roadworthy. Whatever the job, I still enjoy working on these cars. With regular jobs you

Other cars he likes...

"We've not just seen Fords and Ford-powered cars in here," Kevin says. "We've also looked after Citroën Traction Avants and DSs, Austin Princesses, Vauxhall PAs, and PB Veloxes and Crestas – we even look after a local 1959 Chevrolet Impala. And I've still got a great love for Rover P5 and P5Bs."

On one-owner cars still being found...

"If someone bought a brand new Mark II, they would have to have been in their 30s to afford one, and that would make those owners in their 80s now. That means it's still possible for one-owner cars to turn up."



Kevin's knowledge of parts is encyclopaedic

can almost work on autopilot but I enjoy problem-solving. You've got to have imagination and enthusiasm to do this job," Kevin says.

So whether it's a small job to get your Mark I or II through its MoT, or some serious attention to revive a much-loved but tired Ford friend, ZMS will help you keep them on the road.