

LONG TERMERS

Porsche 911 Carrera 4

If last month was uneventful enough not to be worth writing about, this month has been a completely different story.

You might remember me mentioning the small crack that was spreading across my windshield. Well, the little starfish grew into a bloody octopus, so I had to get something done about it. I'd settled on just having the crack patched up for the time being, but after it was done I wasn't particularly enamoured about the job. The crack itself was okay, but the screen was pitted with myriad small marks. At certain times of the day it caught and streaked the light so badly it looked as if I was accelerating into hyperspace, which would be entertaining enough right up until the point I hit something because I couldn't see where I was going. It had to go.

After a quick call, the insurance company arranged to have someone come to the office and replace the screen there and then. When the bloke arrived, he told me that it would be a straightforward job and would only take 20 minutes to fit the screen. Two hours later, it was finally in.

Apparently, the windscreen had been glued to the rubbers and refused to be budged. The only way it was coming out was by brute force and a hammer; so a couple of decisive blows later, the old screen was finally consigned to the bin. After a shaky start, the new windshield looked great and I thought it a good job all round. Except for the fact that the interior was now a minefield of broken glass.

I couldn't believe it – tiny shards of glass were everywhere. I've cleaned it twice since, but I'm still cutting my fingers on slivers embedded into the upholstery. Every time I turn on the fan, shards get blown around the cabin, which obviously isn't what you want. Needless to say, I wasn't a happy man. And to sour my mood even further, I managed to break the arm off the rear windscreen wiper.

I was cleaning around the car when I caught the sponge on the wiper, and it just snapped off. I can only assume that it had turned brittle with age, as it didn't take much persuasion to expire. So again, it was back to the classifieds.

I searched through the back pages of this mag and found a company called Lodge Sports, who supplied a secondhand part for £10.

Replacing the wiper should be a simple enough task, but the old arm seems to be clutching tenaciously to the car. I've put some WD-40 on the retaining nut to see if that will expedite matters, but I've yet to get around to trying it again.

I've also been having some problems with the engine stalling periodically. Quite often while driving, the idiot lights on the dash will illuminate for no real reason and the engine cuts out. This only used to occur whilst potting around town, but it recently happened on a busy dual carriageway, and on one occasion the car failed to start completely. Suspecting some problem with the alarm system, I called the AA out, and was told by the technician that the fuel pump relay to the DME was faulty. I've since installed a new unit and the problem has been solved.

This won't go down well with some of you, but I've bought another car. A BMW. Before you brand me a traitor, I only bought the car to save racking up the miles on the 911. I love the Porsche to bits, but sometimes it's just not practical. To solve the problem I bought an old E28 525e to bomb around in, which I've been able to run on the money I saved by switching the 911's insurance policy to a classic car one.

To be honest, it's probably the best thing I could have done. By saving the Carrera for the weekends it's become an event to drive again. After driving the daily hack, the Carrera just feels so alive, so responsive. The steering is go-kart quick and the brakes sharper than Oscar Wilde's wit. I hadn't fallen out of love with the Porsche, but it's nice to have a second honeymoon.

Ian Hunt

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911 CARRERA 4

Total Mileage: 122,850

Mileage this month: 827

Cost this month: £95 + a BMW 525e

