

# Grundy Mack

If you are worried that buying a classic car from a dealer means paying through the nose, fear not! At Grundy Mack you can buy with confidence at prices similar to the private market. Jonathan Hill went to Huddersfield to investigate their sales and service

**H**UDDERSFIELD is a wonderful place. Approaching from the top of the moors, along the A642, the clouds parted, the sun shone and a rainbow welcomed me to the scene below. Rows of regimented terraced cottages, their slate roofs glinting in the morning sun an immediate transportation to a bygone era of lightly wisping chimney stacks, trams and classic cars. Ah, classic cars! How fitting that this idyllic scene should be the home of Grundy Mack. Two showrooms full of desirable classic cars; pinch me, am I dreaming or is this heaven on earth?

Grundy Mack is the brainchild of Nick Szkiler, a businessman with an Austin/Rover background. After a stint as area manager for Rocar, Nick returned to Huddersfield at the launch of a Jaguar/Land Rover dealership, becoming Dealer/Principal Director. It was a lot of fun but he left in 1991 to start a business as a broker of Jaguars and modern cars.

However, Nick has always had a love of classic cars, especially Jaguars, and an initial dabble with an Austin Healey 3000 Mk1 produced astonishing results: the phone didn't stop ringing. Nick bought another at a similar, reasonable price, to check it wasn't a fluke. The same thing happened. Grundy Mack was born.

From the outset, Nick followed a deliberate path, analysing the areas of the trade he thought he could service and leaving those he couldn't well alone. Company policy is to provide good quality classics at a price which Nick and his staff would personally pay for a particular car. Buying from Grundy Mack means you won't pay top dollar, but you will come away feeling you bought wisely.

Grundy Mack currently have eight full and part-time staff. Included is Roger Tinker, an ex-Rover MoT tester who inspects every car with a critical eye. After his fastidious attention to detail, every car gets an outside MoT, meaning it has really been tested twice. One salesman is a 68-year-old motor trade man who's familiar



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with most models since he's sold them when they were new! Wendy's the voice on the end of the phone and 'does everything; if it moves, she sorts it.' Deputy Sales Director, Kevin Hewitt, is an ex-Jaguar Assistant Service Manager, and not forgetting the invaluable maintenance staff, not least of which is Grundy Mack's own female valet, a wizard with the T-Cut but extremely camera shy; she just couldn't put her duster down!

So what's a typical Grundy Mack customer? Most are between 35-55, looking for a car they aspired to when younger. Or

wanting an example of their first car to relive earlier years now the kids have flown the nest.

Part of the Grundy Mack service is that they will part-exchange any car for a classic. They've recently turfed a client out of a '94 Ford Maverick in favour of an MGA. They like to encourage repeat business, often taking back a car in part-exchange for another of better condition or type. One customer has had seven cars in two-and-a-half years, part-exchanging every time.

Nick finds the majority of clients are not looking for a car which needs work. Rather, it's condition that sells, people want to enjoy rather than fix them. Nick's targeting of the market has paid off, with few clients having to seek finance and many realising a classic car is both fun and less of a depreciating asset than a modern machine.

Nick Szkiler is confident of the current market. He reports that prices for the more popular classics are up between five and ten per cent on two years ago. E-types and MkII Jaguars, hit so hard in the recession, are recovering strongly. He reckons that British family cars of the '50s are currently good value, reflected in an MO Oxford he has, in near show condition, priced at £2,975. He suggests that cars for restoration have not risen in value since restoration costs make them commercially prohibitive. Grundy Mack deal in all cars, from pre-first war to the mid-'70s; they've even got an Austin Allegro, but then it has only done 13,000 miles!

With an increasing number of European export enquiries and sales in the region of 350 a year, the future looks bright for Grundy Mack. Nick has an average stock of 80 cars for sale and has seen his turnover double in the last year. If you want to buy a classic car with confidence, Grundy Mack provide a service which is second to none. Their extensive report service, coupled with copious photographs available of their current stock, means distance is no object; they'll ship a car anywhere. Give them a call, they'll be glad to hear from you. And Huddersfield alone is worth a visit! 