

Trevor Wilkinson 1923 – 2008

It is with great sadness that we must announce that founder of TVR and Patron of the TVR Car Club, Trevor Wilkinson, aged 85, passed away peacefully in hospital in Menorca this morning, 6th June 2008, after a long illness. He was surrounded by friends.

Trevor was born in Blackpool on 14 May 1923. He was educated locally but left school at the age of 14 and started an engineering apprenticeship at a local garage. In 1946, at the age of 23 he bought a wheelwright's business in Beverly Grove, Blackpool, renaming it Trevcar Motors the following year for selling and repairing cars and light engineering.

In 1947 he built his first car, a special 2-seater body on an Alvis Firebird chassis for himself. He then started TVR Engineering, derived from his name – TreVoR – and was joined by Jack Pickard. It was their intent to build their own design of cars.

The first made its appearance in 1949: an alloy 2-seater body on a multi-tubular steel chassis with the springs in the front suspension rather famously derived from the supports of the bumper of a Brighton fairground car. It was sold for £325. The second one built is still in existence, is in beautiful condition and is owned by a TVR Car Club member based in Yorkshire.

Trevor then designed what was to become the tradition underpinnings of multi-tubular backbone chassis.

The first 'production' TVR was the Mark 1, later name Grantura, with a glass-fibre body of a design which remained, in modified form, until the M-type was replaced by the angular wedge design Tasmin in 1980.

Trevor left the company in April 1962 just before TVR's first and rather unsuccessful entry into the Le Mans 24-hour race. Trevor went on to set up his own engineering business with Jack Pickard, specialising in glassfibre.

He moved to Minorca late in life, spending as much time as possible on his beloved little yacht.

He was a quiet, reserved man, much loved by those whom he allowed into his circle of friends. He seemed unaware of the awe in which he was held by all TVR enthusiasts.

He was aware of the serious nature of his final illness but, according to a friend, took it in stoical fashion that was typical of the man.

He lived to see TVRs finish triumphantly at Le Mans and last year's golden anniversary celebrations of TVR's founding by him.

In his last few weeks in hospital Trevor received many cards from well-wishers around the world. He was well known locally and was described by a close friend as 'part of the local furniture'. He will be sadly missed by us all.