

MOTORING NEWS

Car's history shocks owner

ME AND MY MOTOR

COMPANY boss Roger Byatt got a shock when he lifted the bonnet of his new car which had just been delivered by trailer from auction.

No, the engine hadn't been stolen and the radiator was still intact.

"I found a hand-engraved plaque which said it was the last one ever produced and it gave the names of the people who built it," said the 32-year-old market research director who plays a prominent part in the independent River Church in Cookham and Marlow.

Roger, of Maidenhead, knew the Scimitar he bought at the liquidation auction for makers Middlebridge Scimitar Limited was one of the last of its kind, but not the final one to roll off the production line.

"I couldn't believe it at first - I wondered if they had put it on all of them. I had been planning to get one for a while and joined the owners' club beforehand. I then did a lot of checking and was thrilled."

Roger added: "We bought it partly out of sentiment and

partly to avoid it falling into the hands of a non-enthusiast." Now he has put the car up for sale to help expand his business.

Type of car: A six-cylinder GTE-type 1990 Scimitar. It was designed by Reliant but built by Middlebridge. It has a 2.9 V6 injection engine as they used in the Ford Scorpio.

What other vehicles do you own?

We've also got a Rover 420 which is a company car.

When did you buy the car? I bought it the day Mrs Thatcher resigned (November 1990). I was at a liquidators auction for the makers Middlebridge Scimitar Limited and no-one could believe it at first - we all dashed out to our cars to listen to our radios to see if someone was winding us up.

How much did you pay and how much is the car worth now?

I paid £17,000 for it brand new. According to the owners' club, it's worth £25,000 to 30,000. It's only done 3,513 miles.

What attracted you to the car?



Roger Byatt shows off his Scimitar - the final one of its kind ever made

It's a classic British sports car and, unlike a lot of them, it looks good and it handles well. I also chose the automatic model - the manual gearbox was appalling.

What features do you enjoy most and why?

I love the handling and the power - it drives like it's on rails.

What is the car's worst feature?

The seals around the door - if you turn a hose on it or take it to the car wash it leaks terribly. It was a common problem.

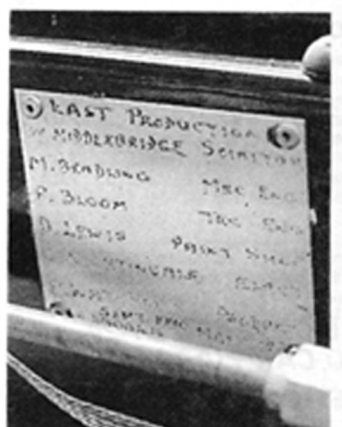
What is your favourite journey in it?

We enjoy the run down to the National Motor Mu-

seum down at Beaulieu (outside Southampton) because it's part motorway and a lot of it is countryside and you can open the car up. A lot of people down there know about cars. If you just park it and stand back for a bit people always come and watch - it's a nice feeling. I also love driving out to the Cotswolds passing through West Wycombe and out through Princes Risborough.

Anyone interested in buying Roger's car can ring him on on (0628) 799800 (home) or (0628) 70701 (work).

• Anyone with a motor we could feature can call Nick Hunt on (0494) 521212.



The hand-engraved plaque showing the car is historic